



The Online Marketing Guide For Local Business

# DALLAS MEDIA

Internet Marketing For Local Businesses

**CAN A  
CHATBOT  
HELP YOUR  
BUSINESS?**



HOW THE LATEST  
**GOOGLE  
CHROME**  
CHANGES WILL  
AFFECT YOUR  
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The key to marketing a local business is to keep trying. Here are some proven strategies that you can implement today that can help you attract new customers and grow your business.

## Welcome To Our Magazine

Thanks for checking out our October 2016 issue of Dallas Media Magazine, your online marketing resource guide for small business. Each month we will be covering topics that resonate with local businesses just like yours.

Our goal is simple. We want to enable you to do big things online, and it all starts by breaking down the complexities of marketing your business online.

It doesn't matter if you're just starting out, or an established business owner in your local community, you can always benefit from increasing your brand's visibility online.

To your Success,

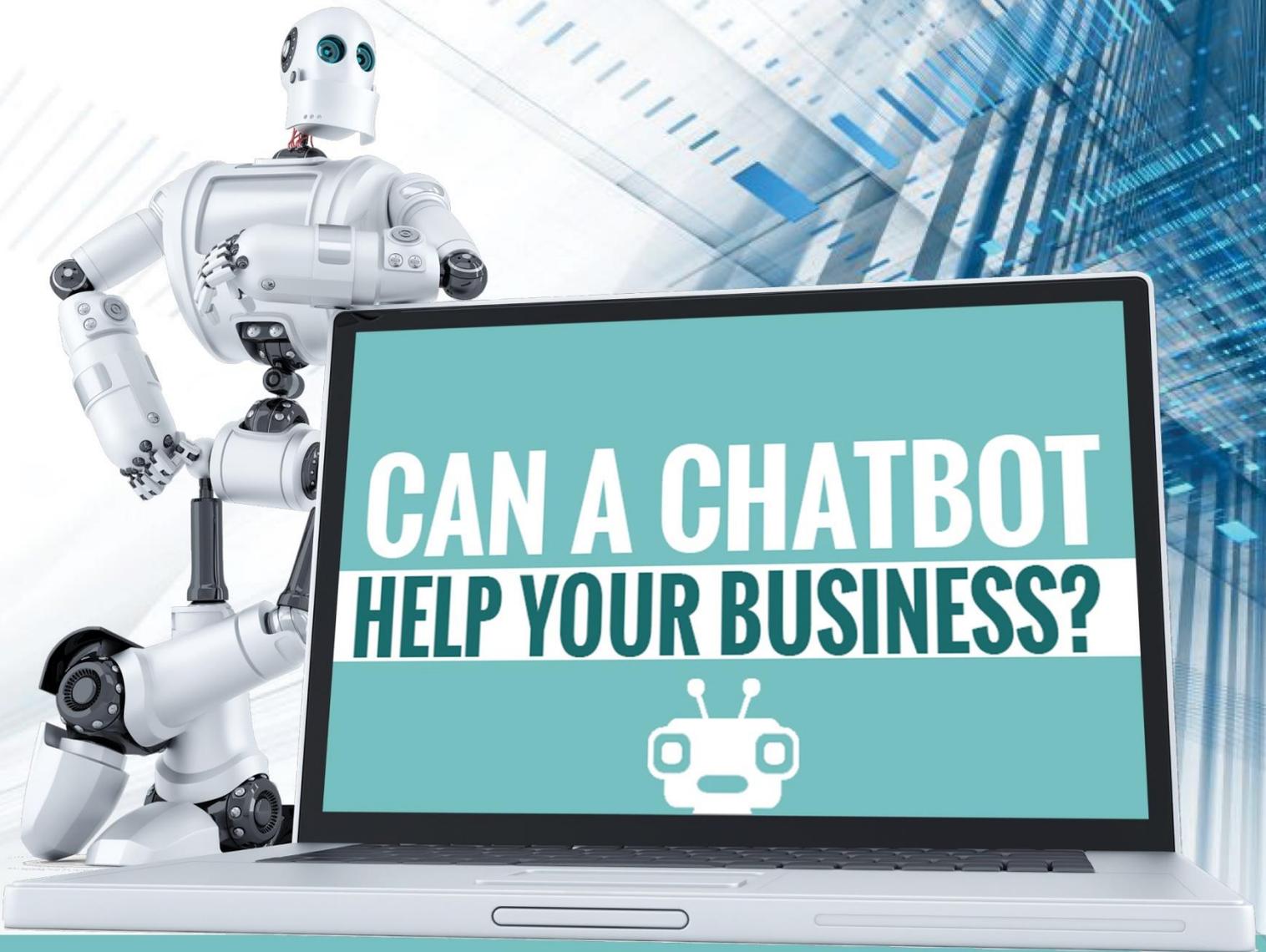
Robert Corrotto  
Editor

### BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Dallas Media Corp. We help small businesses connect with more customers online.

If you want to build your business, you need to market, it's that simple. But you can lose thousands of dollars if you don't know what you are doing. So we urge you to take action with some of the strategies we recommend.

For a more "hands off" approach, we offer affordable solutions and can deliver results. We hope you enjoy this issue of Dallas Media Magazine. Reach out to us anytime.



There is no question that technology has changed the way we do business, both as vendors and as consumers. While we may still have an occasional need to go to a store and stand in line at a customer service desk, a significant percentage of people do their shopping online – and they want their customer service to be available there too. Many companies have in-

tegrated customer service into their social media accounts, and some even offer live chat on their websites.

Those are all great options – but they also require you to pay a flesh-and-blood person to be on the other end of those interactions. What if there were another way? That's where chatbots come in.



# WHAT IS A CHATBOT?

Chatbots are the new kid on the technological block, so it's likely you haven't heard of them before. Basically, a chatbot is a computer program that integrates with an existing Messaging platform, such as Facebook Messenger, Slack, Discord, or Kik. The program is designed to interact with people based on their questions and comments. In other words, it's like a robot employee.

There are two basic types of chatbot:

1. Chatbots that function based on rules are simple to program, but also limited in terms of what they can do. They will respond only to very specific com-

mands, which means that if a user types words that it doesn't recognize, it will not respond.

2. Chatbots that function based on machine learning are designed using artificial intelligence. That means that they understand language, not just pre-programmed commands, and they can learn as they go. They are more complicated to design than rules-based chatbots, but also far more versatile.

You can program a chatbot to do almost anything, including:

- » Answering customer questions

- » Showing a customer available products
- » Subscribing customers to a newsletter
- » Providing news and updates

Despite what you might believe, it isn't all that complicated to program a chatbot that uses machine learning. If you hire an experienced developer or programmer, they can do it for you. If you elect to use a rules-based chatbot, you will have to make sure to provide customers with an option to talk to a live representative. The limitations of a rules-based chatbot can make it frustrating to deal with one if you don't know the proper commands.



**I can handle your customers most frequently asked questions and improve your visitor experience**



# HOW SMALL BUSINESS CAN BENEFIT FROM USING CHATBOTS

How can your business benefit from using a chatbot? A 2016 survey showed that 54% of respondents would prefer to interact with their favorite brands via a messaging service. As consumers grow accustomed to receiving service online that number is likely to increase. Using a chatbot is a good way to give your customers what they want without having to pay a live customer service rep to be available 24 hours a day.

There are two primary ways that small businesses can utilize chatbots to assist their customers, improve customer service, and increase sales.

## **Customer Service**

The first potential application that local businesses can have for chatbots is to provide their customers with necessary information and direction at all hours of the day and night. For example, a chatbot might be able to:

- » Let customers know what your store hours are
- » Give information regarding where you are

located, or which location is closest to a customer

- » Direct customers to products that meet their needs
- » Answer questions about a product's functionality or price
- » Record customer complaints or issues so you can follow up later

In other words, a well-designed chatbot can act like a 24-hour customer concierge, helping people understand your products and services and assisting them with problems.

## **Sales and Conversion**

The other potential application that a local business might have for a chatbot is to use it as a 24-hour sales assistant and conversion specialist. A lot of times, customers need some guidance while using a website. They might prefer to ask a question rather than navigating a menu or trying to find what they want on their own. A chatbot that is programmed to assist with sales can:

- » Take a customer's specifications or requests and present them with a list of products (Facebook has a chatbot that companies can use to show customers a carousel of product choices within the Messenger app)
- » Narrow the products down by size, price, or any other factor
- » Provide a clickable link that allows the customer to make a purchase right from the messaging app
- » Direct them back to the feed or post where they started

Having a chatbot that can do these things can help you convert a casual social media browser to a customer in just a few minutes. There might not be a real person behind the chatbot, but a well-designed chatbot can provide a level of personalized service that simply isn't possible on a website or even on the phone.





## HOW TO GET STARTED

If you want to design a chatbot for your business, there are some things you need to know to get started. The first is that, while it may be prohibitively expensive to hire someone to create a bespoke chatbot for your company, some designers are offering a variety of chatbot templates that can be adapted with specific functionalities to meet your needs. Some companies to check out include are Rapidfy and SaltMinesGroup

If your company has a presence on Facebook, you can also

check out their chatbot page to learn more about the options available. Their platform makes it possible to create a chatbot with the functionalities that will be most useful to your business, including some that allow you to show customers products and assist purchases. You can find more information on Facebook here.

You also have the option of trying to develop a bot on your own. There are a number of websites that provide basic guidance to help walk you through the pro-

cess. Here are a few to try:

Howdy's Botkit  
Api.ai  
Chatfuel  
Dexter

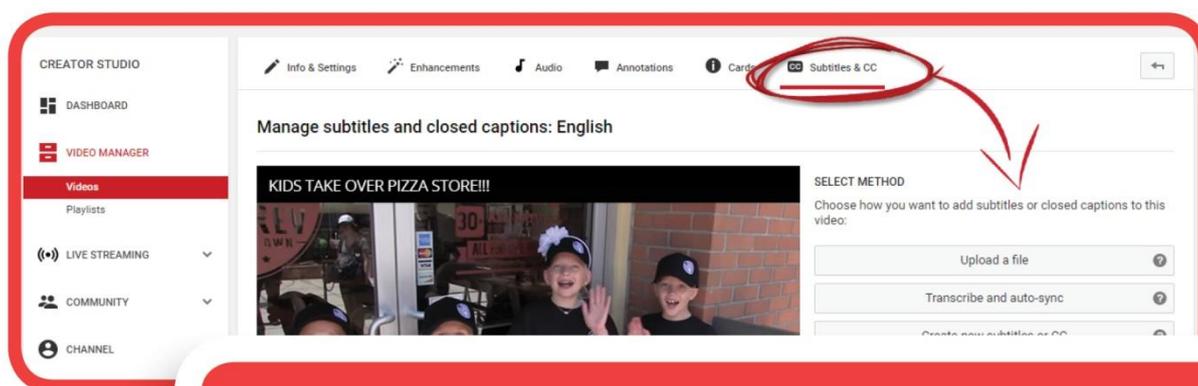
Chatbots offer small businesses a way to harness technology to provide customers with 24 hour service at a fraction of what it would cost to pay a round-the-clock staff. While there are some start-up costs involved, a well-designed bot can pay for itself in increased sales and customer satisfaction.

# 11 COOL YouTube FEATURES YOU'RE NOT USING YET

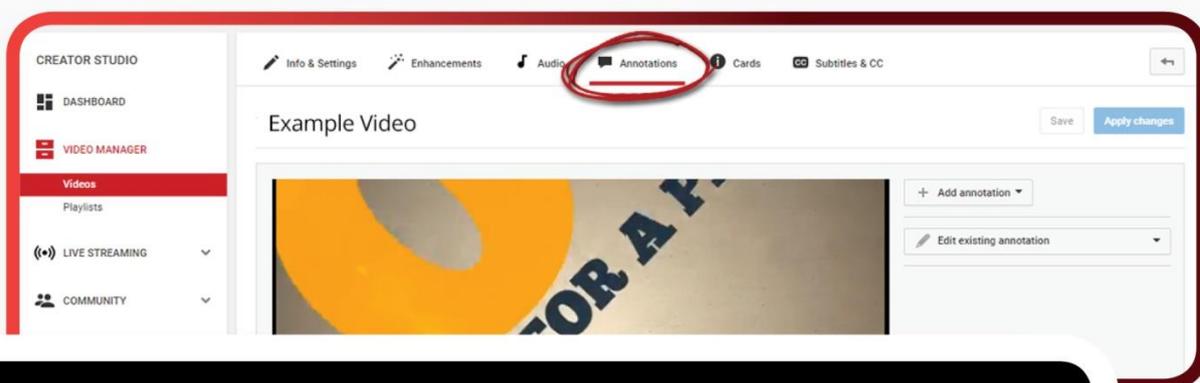
You probably already know that videos are a highly popular, highly shareable form of internet content. If you want to engage and entertain your customers, creating a compelling video and sharing it on YouTube is one of the best ways to do it. In addition to being one of the most highly-trafficked websites in the world, YouTube is also the world's second-largest search engine behind Google. And since it is now owned by Google, there are some legitimate SEO benefits you can reap by using YouTube to market your business.



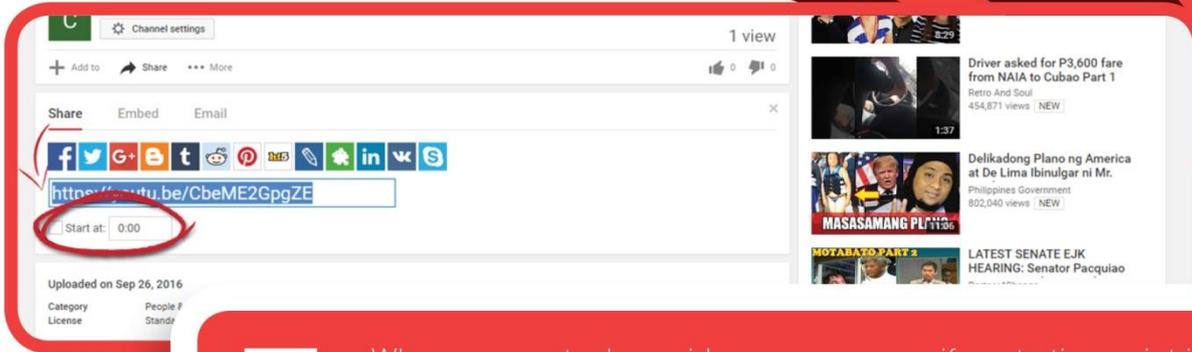
If all you're doing is uploading videos to YouTube, you might be missing out. Here are 11 cool features that you could be using to ramp up your marketing.



**1** YouTube will create a transcript of your video, and editing it – or uploading your own transcript – can help drive traffic to your video. The problem with sticking with the automatic transcript is that they can be very inaccurate. If you use keywords in your video, then transcribing it accurately can help move your video to the top of YouTube's search rankings – and Google's, too. To add a transcript, all you need to do is click the little "CC" icon under your video and paste in the transcript.



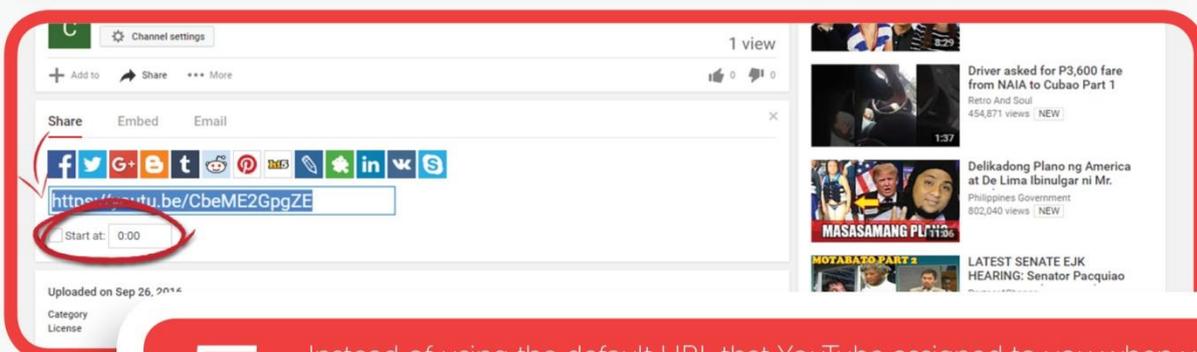
**2** After you upload your video, you can add clickable links to it using YouTube's Creator Studio. The links act just like a call to action button on your website. That means that you can prompt viewers to subscribe to your list, buy a product, or just visit your website. To add them, simply go to Video Manager > Edit > Annotations and then choose the annotations you want to add. There are five options, including speech bubbles, notes, spotlights, titles, and labels. You don't want to overdo it, but adding annotations is a great way to make your video interactive.



**3** When you post a long video, you can specify a starting point in the video instead of making people watch from the beginning. This is a great tool if you want to highlight a particular moment in the video. To use this feature, simply click Share and you will see a little box that says "Start at" underneath it. In the box, enter the time when you want the video to start (hours: minutes: seconds) and then post it. When people click on the video, it will begin playing at the exact spot you specify.



**4** If you have a lot of videos on your YouTube channel, you can easily organize them into playlists. For example, if you have created a series of demonstration videos, you might want to group them all together to make them easy for viewers to find. To create a playlist, simply click on Creator Studio > Video Manager > Playlists. From there, you can name your playlist and add as many videos to it as you choose.

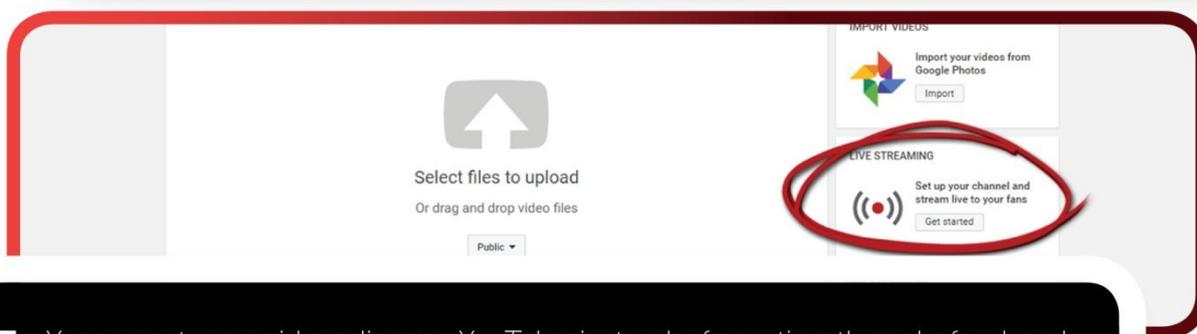


**5** Instead of using the default URL that YouTube assigned to you when you created your channel, you may be eligible to create a memorable, custom URL. To find out if you are eligible, go to your Account Settings by clicking on your profile picture, and then click Advanced. If you see a note that says "You're eligible for a custom URL. Claim it here," click the link and choose the name of your URL. Make sure to choose carefully and double-check your spelling, because once you have submitted the request you can't change it. You'll have to agree to the Terms & Conditions and confirm, and once you do you'll have a custom URL for your channel.

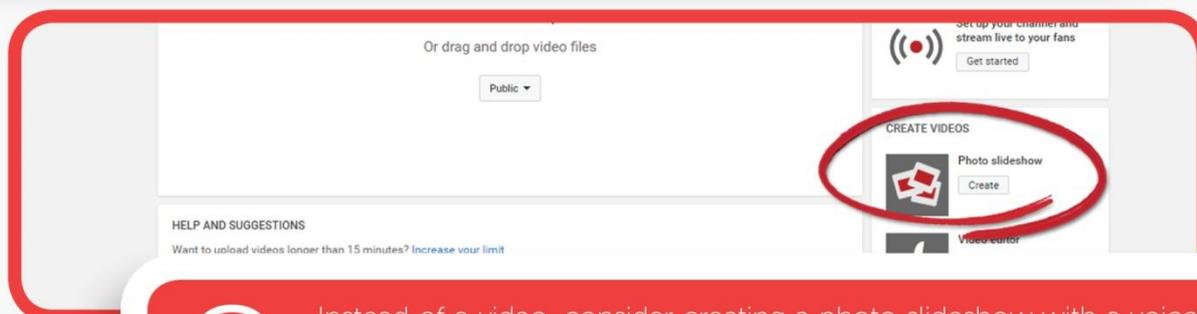


**6** YouTube offers its users a vast library of audio files and sound effects to use in their videos. All of the available files are royalty free, which means you can use them without paying for them. To access the library, simply

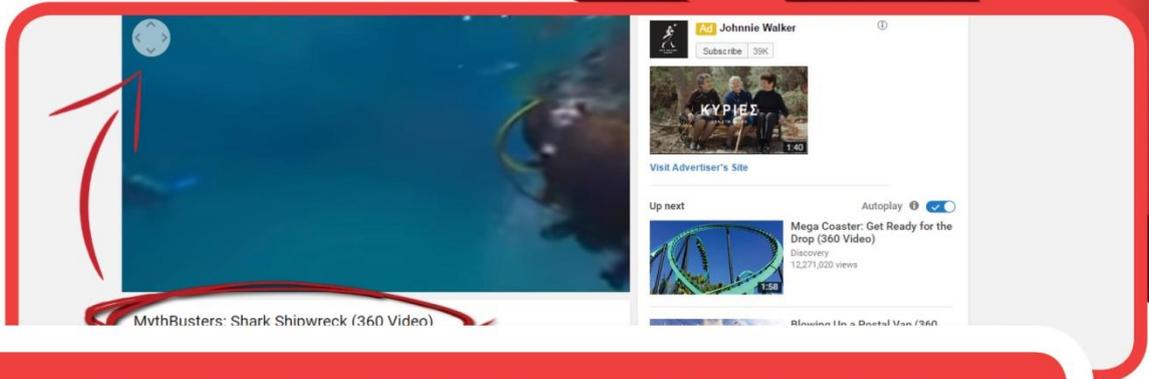
- go to Creator Studio > Create > Audio Library. From there you can browse sound effects and music clips and download them to use in your videos.



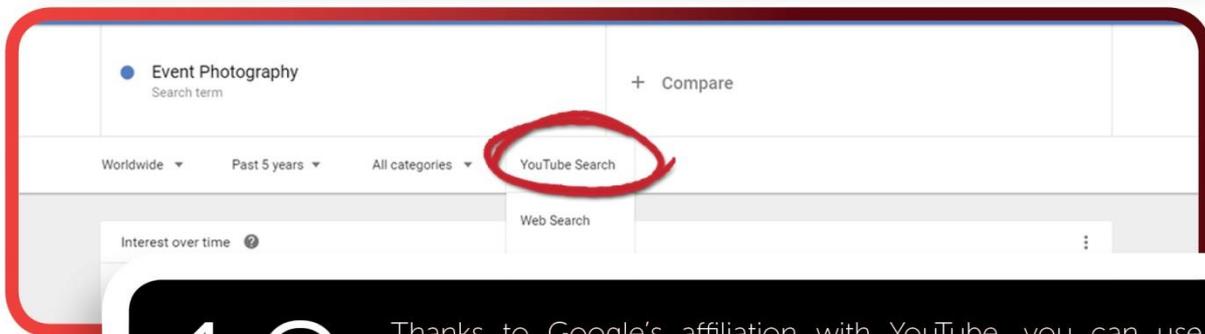
**7** You can stream videos live on YouTube instead of creating them beforehand. Live video has been getting a lot of attention lately with the addition of Facebook Live and apps like Meerkat. While many of the videos streamed live on YouTube so far have been news events such as the Democratic and Republican conventions, and sporting events, you can use them for marketing, too. A live video would be an effective way to preview a sale or demo a product. To live stream, simply click Upload and then choose the "Live Stream" option on the right-hand side of the page and follow instructions. After your video has concluded, it will be archived on your channel so people who missed seeing it live can watch it later.



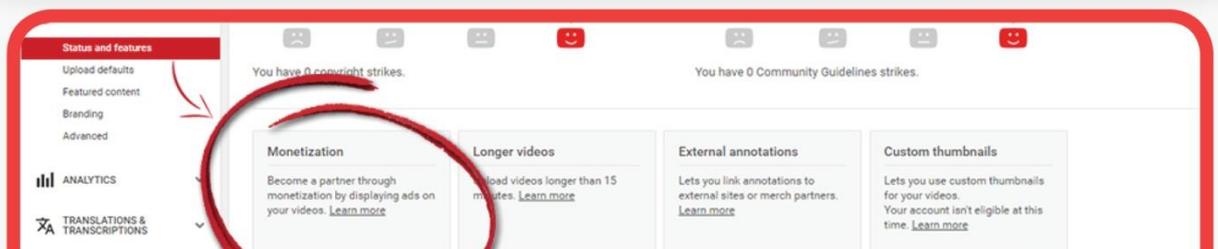
**8** Instead of a video, consider creating a photo slideshow with a voiceover or music behind it. To create a slideshow, log in to YouTube and click the Upload button. Click "Create Videos" on the right-hand side of the screen, and then select "Photo Slideshow" from the options. You'll be prompted to upload your photographs. The easiest way to do it is to put all of the photos you want to use into a single folder and then upload them all at once. Once they are added, you can arrange them, add effects and notations, and post the video to your channel.



**9** Another cool video creation option is 360 video, which you can create yourself if you have the tools to do it. You can find a list of compatible equipment here. When your viewers watch a 360 video, they can click to see different camera angles and perspectives. In other words, it gives your viewers a truly interactive and immersive experience.



**10** Thanks to Google's affiliation with YouTube, you can use Google Trends to find the best keywords to use in your YouTube videos. All you need to do is go to Google Trends and then click Explore Topics and type in a search term. Then you need to click Web Search > YouTube Search to view the results. It can be interesting and informative to see the differences between how people search on Google and how they search on YouTube – and understanding those differences can help you increase traffic to your videos.



**11** Finally, YouTube has a Creator Studio app that allows you to manage the videos on your channel on the go. You can do all kinds of useful things, including updating thumbnails, enabling or disabling monetization, and managing subscribers.

These features can help you create cool and memorable video content that will help you attract new subscribers – and turn those subscribers into paying customers.

[here](#)



# HOW THE LATEST GOOGLE CHROME CHANGES WILL AFFECT YOUR WEBSITE

Internet security is an ongoing game of cat and mouse. Web designers, programmers, and developers are always working to stay a step ahead of the scam artists and hackers whose intention it is to spoof websites, steal identities, and reveal hacked information online. Search giant Google is at the forefront of the battle, and they are introducing some big changes for their Chrome browser starting in January 2017.

As a local business owner, you can't afford to ignore changes in online security because they have a direct impact on your business. With that in mind, let's explore the upcoming changes so you know what to expect – and how it will affect your business in the coming year.



## WHY WEB SECURITY MATTERS

Online security is more important than ever before. It seems like hardly a month goes by without news of a new security breach. Email providers, banks, and retail outlets have all been victimized. These breaches are costly to everybody involved. The institutions whose security is compromised take a hit to their reputations, customers are at risk of having their credit cards used by thieves, and financial institutions have to issue new cards.



## HOW CUSTOMERS KNOW YOUR SITE IS SECURE

The sites that are safest to use are those that display https:// before their URLs. Sites that are not secured are usually preceded just by http://. Savvy consumers know that it is best not to hand out their credit card information – or any other personal information that might enable a thief to steal their identity, such as a full name, their mother's maiden name, and so on – on a site that lacks the https:// prefix.



## HOW GOOGLE CHROME IS CHANGING

At present, Google Chrome uses a relatively subtle designation to let their customers know whether a site is secure. On any site that uses the https:// prefix, Chrome puts the prefix in green and displays a little lock icon next to it.

Google has announced changes because they fear that the current designation is too low-key to be effective. Starting in January of 2017, their new display will feature the words **"Not secure"** before the URLs of sites starting with http://. They conducted a study that showed that customers were not perceiving the lack of a green lock as a warning that the site was not secure.

The "not secure" label is only the first step in their efforts to protect their users. Future updates will add the new warning to incognito browsing, and eventually the plan is to display a prominent red triangle as a warning.

Why should this matter? Because 71% of all local searches on Google's are done through the Chrome browser and that means that a large percentage of your online traffic will be discouraged from clicking on your website.





## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SECURE AND NON-SECURE SITES

While secure sites offer obvious benefits to your customers when it comes to the security of their credit cards and other personal information, there are some other benefits to changing your site.

1. When you have a secure site, it engenders a sense of trust in your customers. They feel comfortable sharing information with you because they know you have taken precautions to protect that information and keep it safe. Trust is a key component of any successful customer relationship.
2. When you have an SSL certificate (the certificate that adds the "s" to your URL) on your website, it helps customers confirm that you are who you say you are. Spoofed sites and phishing sites are rarely secure, so adding the certificate acts as a way of instantly verifying your identity online and reassuring customers that they are on a valid website.
3. The SSL certificate guarantees that any information you receive is secure and accurate, too. Without the certificate, it would be possible for a hacker to interfere with the data that comes into your site. With it, you can be confident that you are receiving the information that your customer or vendor intended you to receive.
4. Finally, having a secure site can actually benefit your SEO. Google now uses the https:// designation as a factor when evaluating websites and ranking them for search. That means that not having a secure site might be negatively impacting your Google search rank – and your traffic.

While there are some costs involved with adding the SSL certificate to your site, there is simply no reason not to do so.



## HOW TO UPDATE YOUR SITE

Now let's walk through the steps you need to take to obtain the SSL certificate and add it to your site.

1. First, buy an SSL certificate. You can get one from companies such as GoGetSSL or SSLs. You can choose the extended/organization validation display, which will show your company name next to the green lock in the Chrome bar, or the domain validation option, which simply shows the green lock.
2. Install the SSL certificate on your web server. You can find instructions for how to install based on which software you use by scrolling down on this page. After it is installed, you should run a test to make sure it is working properly. This tool from SSL Labs is useful.
3. Search your site and update all of your hard-coded URLs from `http://` to `https://`. This tool from Interconnect IT can help you do it quickly and painlessly.
4. Update all of the scripts on your page.
5. Add a 301 redirect to all of your new `https://` URLs. It is best to do this at the server level instead



of using a plug-in. If you skip this step, your search rank on Google could take a huge hit, so make sure to take care of this as soon as possible.

6. Update your `robot.txt` file to make sure that any blocking rules or hard-coded links are now pointing to your new `https://` address.
7. If your site uses a content delivery network (CDN), make sure to add the SSL certificate to that, too. If you don't, your site's visitors may end up with major problems. While you're at it, make sure to update your origin URL on the CDN, too.
8. Enable HTTP/2 support on your CDN. You can do it by clicking Zone > Manage > Edit > Advanced Features, and then choosing Enable HTTP/2.
9. Update all hard-coded links on your CDN to `https://` the same way you did on your own site.
10. Update everything on Google and have them crawl your website under the new, secure URL. That means you have to create a new profile under Google Search Console, create a new sitemap, submit a "Fetch and Crawl" request, resubmit your "disavow" file to avoid penalties, and update your Google Analytics account with your new URL.
11. Update everything else, including the URLs for your search engine ads, social media pages and ads, and so on. You should also migrate your social media share counts to your new site.

This might seem like a detailed process, but it is a necessary one. You have approximately three months to get your site updated before Google starts displaying the first warnings. That gives you plenty of time to do it right and reap the rewards of offering your customers a secure website.



# 7 LOCAL MARKETING STRATEGIES TO DEPLOY TODAY

As a business owner, you know that marketing is a guessing game. You can spend a ton of time and effort on a campaign only to have it fall short of your expectations. In fact, there's a marketing theory called the Pareto Principle that says that 80% of your results will arise from only 20% of your efforts. In real terms, that means that the majority

of what you do won't earn you any return on your investment – at least not at first.

The key to marketing a local business is to keep trying. Here are some proven strategies that you can implement today that can help you attract new customers and grow your business.

## 1 CHECK AND CORRECT YOUR ONLINE LISTINGS.

This strategy is very simple, and yet many local business owners overlook it because they don't understand how essential it is in helping them build their online reputation. Your company's name, address, and phone number – sometimes referred to as a NAP listing – must be consistent everywhere it appears online. If it isn't, it may dilute your online presence and lead to confusion. Even small differences, such as using Ave instead of Avenue in your address, can make a difference. Here are some of the places to check:

- A. Your website
- B. Google My Business (Google+)
- C. Your social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.)
- D. Crowd review sites (Yelp, Angie's List, etc.)
- E. Industry guides and references
- F. Online yellow pages and directories



## 2 WRITE A LOCAL GUIDE AND FIND A WAY TO LINK IT TO YOUR COMPANY

No matter where you are located, there are things that are unique about your area. Perhaps you own a store that sells bicycles and biking supplies. You might write a guide about the five best biking trails in your area and make it available online. Related ideas might include a list of the best picnic spots or free events within biking distance of your store. The idea is to provide value to your customers that they will then associate with you – and your business.

## 3 USE TWITTER TO INFORM AND ENGAGE YOUR CUSTOMERS

The important thing to remember when using any social media site is that you must be social first. Instead of bombarding your Twitter followers with sales pitches, simply share information that you feel will be relevant to your customers. For example, you might share articles relevant to your industry, local news, or information about local events. The more informative you are, the more likely it is that your followers will be receptive when you decide to Tweet about a sale or promotion.

**4****USE RETARGETING TO SOLICIT CUSTOMER REVIEWS**

You already know that customer reviews are essential to your success, but did you know that close to 90% of all consumers say that they check online reviews prior to visiting a local business? One way to ensure that your customers leave reviews is to remind them after they make a purchase. If you have an online store, you can embed a code on your sales page to retarget customers with an ad that says something like this: Enjoying your purchase? Please leave us a review at the site of your choice: Yelp, Google+, or Angie's List. You can include any review sites you want to include. The fact is that you may have many satisfied customers who simply have forgotten to leave you a review. Retargeting is a low-key way of reminding them.

**5****OFFER EXCLUSIVE SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTIONS**

This is a great way to build your Facebook and Pinterest followers. No customer is going to follow their favorite brand on social media if all they're going to get is a rehash of what they can find on your website – or on other social media pages. You have to give them something special, and one thing that can help to build customer loyalty and appreciation is handing out special deals and incentives. You might consider hosting a special preview event before a big sale, and making it exclusive to your Facebook followers – or offering a few special items for sale by featuring them on a Pinterest board. Whatever you do, make sure that your followers know that you are providing them with something unique because you value them.

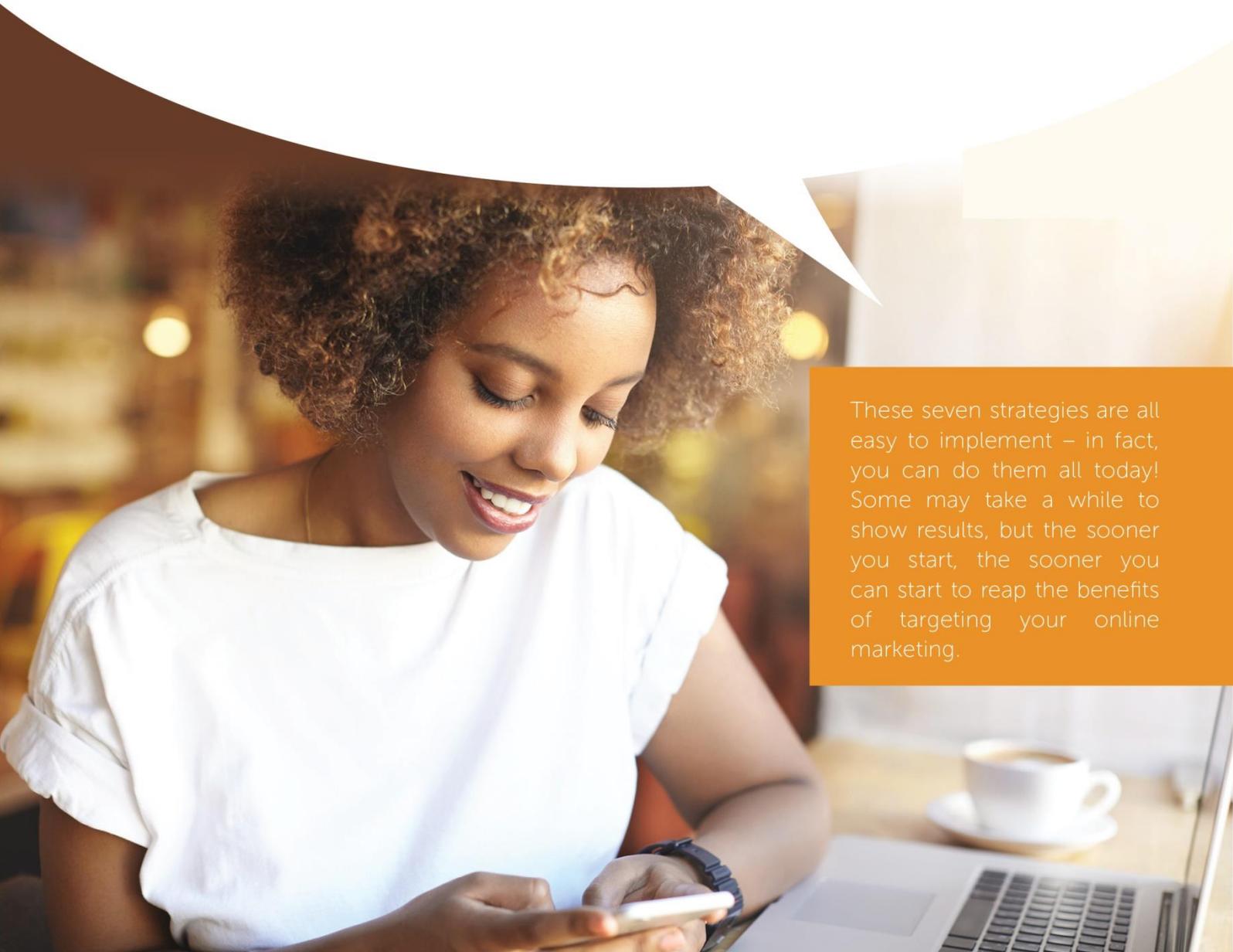
**6****TRY USING  
THIRD PERSON  
AD COPY**

A quick glance at Google will tell you that most companies use the first person when writing ads. However, it may be more effective to use a third party quote about your business if you want to attract customers. If you use a line from a customer testimonial or review as the headline in your ad, you'll be combining social proof – an essential element of online marketing – with your marketing. Given the importance of customer reviews, it's easy to see how this particular strategy could help increase your click-through rates – and your sales. You may already have a great review or testimonial in mind, and if you do, you can get that ad up and running today.

**7****ADD THE FACEBOOK “CALL  
NOW” BUTTON TO YOUR  
MOBILE ADVERTISING**

As of 2015, more searches were conducted on mobile devices than on computers, so you can't afford to neglect mobile advertising. Facebook advertising is versatile and affordable. If you want to target local customers on social media, one of the best ways to do it is to advertise on Facebook, specifying that you want your ad to be displayed to mobile users in your geographical area.

You can then select the “Call Now” button when choosing a call to action. The button allows mobile users to call your business by touching the button, instead of having to remember or write down the number to call later. It's a way of simplifying the process and making it easy for people in your area to call you.



These seven strategies are all easy to implement – in fact, you can do them all today! Some may take a while to show results, but the sooner you start, the sooner you can start to reap the benefits of targeting your online marketing.

# DOES ONLINE MARKETING SCARE YOU?

With all the different ways to market your business online it's hard to know where to focus your time and budget on. Are you reaching your audience effectively or flushing money and time down the drain?



## THAT CAN BE SCARY TO THINK ABOUT.

But it doesn't have to be. Schedule a complimentary strategy session and we'll show you exactly how to reach your audience online and generate more leads and sales.

*No gimmicks, just results*

Schedule your complimentary strategy session today by going to: [www.dallasmediacorp.com](http://www.dallasmediacorp.com) or reach us directly at **972-999-9279**