

LOCALWERX

3 ALTERNATIVE
AI PLATFORMS
(THAT AREN'T CHATGPT)
TO GROW YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS

LOCAL LOYALTY REIMAGINED:
MOBILE WALLET
DIGITAL PUNCH CARDS
& INSTANT OFFERS



7 UNDER-THE-RADAR
DIGITAL MARKETING
TOOLS YOU'VE PROBABLY
NEVER HEARD OF

SOCIAL MEDIA
ISN'T DEAD:
IT'S JUST DIFFERENT

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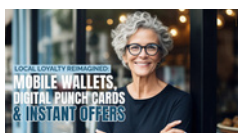
3 Alternative AI Platforms (That Aren't ChatGPT) to Grow Your Local Business 03



Most local owners know ChatGPT, but it's just one tool. Discover three powerful AI platforms (plus a bonus) that can streamline tasks, sharpen marketing,

and boost customer experience. Learn how stacking these tools helps you outpace competitors by solving problems faster and growing smarter.

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Paper punch cards and clunky apps are fading fast. Customers now expect seamless, instant rewards through mobile wallets they already use daily.

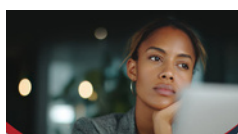
Discover how small businesses can leverage Apple Wallet and Google Wallet to create loyalty programs that rival big brands — affordable, frictionless, and designed to boost repeat sales without costly custom apps.

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Canva and Mailchimp are popular, but they're not secret weapons anymore. To truly stand out, you need tools that give you an edge before your competitors discover them. Explore seven hidden-gem platforms designed to save time, stretch budgets, and unlock new opportunities for small and local businesses ready to market smarter and grow faster.

Social Media Isn't Dead: It's Just Different 21



Think social media no longer works? The game has changed, not ended. Platforms now favor micro-content built for quick attention and real engagement. Discover how local businesses can adapt on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn — turning shifting algorithms into fresh opportunities to connect with customers, stay visible, and grow influence where it matters most.

Welcome To LocalWerx Magazine

Thanks for checking out our online marketing resource guide for small business. Each month we cover 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,
Karen Estrin

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

LocalWerx is the leading small business marketing service in the Phoenix area. We help small businesses build "marketing machine" to 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 that can deliver results. We hope you enjoy this issue of LocalWerx Magazine and feel free to reach out to us anytime.

A close-up of a robot hand in a dark suit and blue tie, pointing its index finger towards the title. The hand has a glowing blue light on its tip and concentric circles around it, suggesting a digital or AI theme.

3 ALTERNATIVE AI PLATFORMS (That Aren't ChatGPT) TO GROW YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS

Most local businesses hear “AI” and instantly think of ChatGPT. And while it’s powerful, stopping there is like buying a Swiss Army knife and only using the scissors.

Behind the spotlight, there are other AI platforms — each designed with different strengths. The businesses that learn to stack these tools are the ones that stay ahead of competitors, because they’re solving problems faster, marketing smarter, and delivering a better customer experience.

Here are three AI platforms (plus a creative bonus) that most local competitors aren’t using yet — and how you can put them to work in your business right now.



Claude

Turning Complexity Into Clarity

Claude, built by Anthropic, is the AI that thrives on clarity and structure. Where ChatGPT sometimes rambles, Claude feels like the colleague who can take a messy draft and polish it into something sharp, professional, and easy to digest.

How local businesses are using it:

1. Simplifying client communication. A CPA firm used Claude to rewrite tax letters into plain language, helping clients understand what actually mattered without calling three times for clarification.

2. Building trust with proposals. A home renovation company fed their standard bid

template into Claude and asked it to reframe the proposal so it was more persuasive and benefit-driven. Win rates went up immediately.

3. Creating professional handouts. A dental office had Claude draft pre-appointment instructions in a friendly, reassuring tone, which cut down on no-shows.

Prompts worth stealing:

"Rewrite this customer proposal so it's written at an 8th grade level, but still sounds professional and persuasive."

"Turn this list of services into a 1-page brochure text that highlights benefits over features."



Your Research + Marketing Sidekick

Gemini is Google's AI, and its biggest edge is how seamlessly it connects to the tools most businesses already use: Docs, Sheets, Gmail, and Ads. Where Claude is about clarity, Gemini is about insights and integration.

How local businesses are using it:

1. Competitor research on demand. A med-spa asked Gemini to scan local competitors' websites and ad copy, then summarize strengths and weaknesses. It was like getting a marketing consultant's report in minutes.

2. Instant ad campaigns. An HVAC company gave Gemini their budget, location, and main services. It suggested keywords, ad groups,

and sample ads they could drop straight into Google Ads.

3. Smarter GBP posts. A restaurant used Gemini to draft weekly Google Business Profile posts tied to trending local searches, keeping their profile active and visible.

Prompts worth stealing:

"Analyze the top 5 competitors in [city] who offer [service]. Give me a table of their offers, pricing, and positioning."

"Draft a Google Business Profile update about our fall promotion for [service] that highlights urgency and includes a clear call-to-action."



perplexity

Research With Receipts

Perplexity is the AI built for credibility. It doesn't just give you an answer — it cites where it found it. That makes it ideal for creating content with authority or making informed business decisions without guessing.

How local businesses are using it:

1. Publishing blogs with real stats. An auto repair shop used Perplexity to pull the latest recall data and weave it into blog posts, making their content timely and authoritative.

2. Creating customer FAQs. A vet clinic used it to fact-check answers about pet safety and

cite reputable sources, boosting trust with cautious pet owners.

3. Tracking industry trends. A fitness studio used it to research national wellness trends and adapt them locally, turning fresh insights into new class offerings.

Prompts worth stealing:

"Find three recent statistics on why customers prefer small businesses over chains in 2024. Provide sources." "What are the newest promotional trends in [industry] in the U.S., with citations?"



HONORABLE
MENTION:



Midjourney

Visuals That Make People Stop Scrolling

We live in a scroll-first world. If your visuals don't catch attention, your message never gets read. MidJourney is an AI image platform that can turn a single sentence into an ad-ready design in seconds.

How local businesses are using it:

1. Social ad campaigns. A local pizza shop generated mouthwatering images for Facebook ads that outperformed their stock photo campaigns by 3x.

2. Event promotions. A boutique created stunning seasonal sale flyers that looked cus-

tom-designed, without hiring a graphic designer.

3. Brand refresh ideas. A salon tested different logo styles and Instagram grid aesthetics in MidJourney before paying for a full rebrand.

Prompts worth stealing:

"A bold, modern flyer design for a [business type] in [city], advertising a fall promotion. Include space for a discount code." "A lifestyle image showing happy customers enjoying [product/service], created in a bright, photo-realistic style."



Don't Just Use AI — Stack It

Here's the truth: no single AI platform will solve everything. ChatGPT is great, but Claude makes you clearer, Gemini makes you smarter, Perplexity makes you more credible, and MidJourney makes you more visible.

The businesses that treat AI like a toolbox — pulling out the right tool for the right job — are the ones that will dominate their local markets over the next few years.

Your competitors are still asking ChatGPT for blog ideas. You'll be using AI to close deals, earn trust, and create the kind of marketing that makes people stop, click, and buy.



LOCAL LOYALTY REIMAGINED:

MOBILE WALLETS, DIGITAL PUNCH CARDS & INSTANT OFFERS

Why Old Loyalty Models Are Losing Steam

For years, the “buy 10, get one free” punch card was a staple for coffee shops, fitness studios, and local retailers. Later came branded apps that promised digital convenience but often ended up cluttering phones and going unused. The problem isn’t that customers don’t like rewards — they love them. The problem is friction. Nobody wants to carry around paper cards, and few customers will download yet another app for one store.

Big brands like Starbucks, Panera, and Walgreens have reset expectations. Their loyalty programs are seamless, integrated into the customer’s mobile wallet, and deliver instant gratification. Today, independent businesses finally have the ability to play the same game — without the massive cost of a custom app. Mobile wallets such as Apple Wallet and Google Wallet are already installed on most smartphones, and customers are trained to use them. That makes them the perfect platform for modern loyalty programs that are affordable, flexible, and built for small business.



Why Loyalty Needs a Reboot

The stakes are higher than ever for local businesses. Studies show that repeat customers spend 67% more than new ones (Bain & Company), and increasing customer retention rates by just 5% can boost profits by 25% to 95% (Harvard Business Review). Yet traditional methods are falling flat.

Paper punch cards often get lost or thrown away. Branded loyalty apps cost thousands to build and maintain — and most customers will never download them. According to Statista, 72% of consumers say they don't want to download another app for a single brand's rewards program. That's a dealbreaker for independents who don't have the brand power of a Starbucks.

What customers do want is frictionless convenience. And because Apple Wallet and Google Wallet come preloaded on most devices, they're already in use for things like boarding passes, concert tickets, and mobile payments. Tapping into that existing behavior is the smartest way for local businesses to reinvent loyalty.



How Mobile Wallet Loyalty Works

A mobile wallet loyalty card functions just like a paper punch card, but it lives on a customer's phone. They scan a QR code, click a link, or tap their phone at checkout, and the card is instantly added to their Apple Wallet or Google Wallet. From there, every visit can add a stamp or update progress toward a reward.

Beyond simple punch cards, mobile wallet programs can deliver:

- > **Instant offers:** Send time-sensitive discounts or seasonal promotions straight to the wallet. For example, a boutique could push out "20% off fall jackets this week only."
- > **Proximity notifications:** With geofencing, a customer walking past your store could get a nudge: "Hungry? Your free sandwich is waiting."
- > **Event and membership passes:** Turn loyalty into VIP access — from a "Summer VIP Smoothie Card" to a "Founders' Circle" for your best clients.

The technology isn't experimental anymore. It's already in use by global retailers, and the tools now exist for small businesses to launch programs in days, not months.



The Tools That Make It Possible

Until recently, mobile wallet loyalty was out of reach for independents because it required custom development. That's no longer the case. Platforms like Loopy Loyalty (loopyloyalty.com), PassKit (passkit.com), and Beaconstac (beaconstac.com/mobile-wallets/) have made it affordable and simple.

For less than \$100 a month, a local business can design a digital loyalty card, distribute it via QR codes or links, and track redemptions in real time. Compare that to a custom app, which can cost \$20,000 to build and still struggle to gain traction.

One case study from Loopy Loyalty reported a family-owned café that increased repeat visits by 20% in the first three months after ditching paper punch cards for mobile wallet loyalty. Customers loved the fact they didn't have to keep track of anything — the rewards were always right there on their phone.



The Business Benefits That Matter

The advantage isn't just convenience. Mobile wallet loyalty programs outperform traditional channels in measurable ways. Push notifications sent via wallet passes see open rates as high as 60–80%, compared to the 20% average open rate for email. That means your promotions actually get seen instead of buried in crowded inboxes.

Customers are also more likely to act on rewards that feel tangible and trackable. Watching a progress bar move toward a free haircut or seeing a limited-time discount expire in real time taps into basic psychology. It creates urgency and repeat behavior.

From the business side, these platforms provide data you could never get from paper cards. You can see how many active passes are in circulation, how many redemptions occur, and which offers drive the most traffic. That data helps refine campaigns and ensures you're not just guessing what works.

How to Launch Your Own Program

Rolling out a mobile wallet loyalty system doesn't have to be overwhelming. Start with one simple, universal reward that any customer can understand at a glance. For example:

- > A coffee shop: "Buy 9, Get 1 Free"
- > A salon: "Book 5 visits, get a free treatment"
- > A pizza shop: "Collect 10 stamps, your next large pizza is free"

Design the card using a platform like Loopy Loyalty. Share the QR code on counter signage, print it on receipts, and post it on your social channels. Customers scan, add it to their wallet, and they're in. From there, you can experiment with seasonal promotions, birthday rewards, or VIP tiers once customers are trained to use it.





Bonus Strategies to Maximize Impact

Mobile wallets become even more powerful when combined with other marketing channels. A few high-leverage moves include:

- > Promoting your loyalty card directly in your Google Business Profile posts, making it easy for customers searching online to join instantly.
- > Creating limited-time wallet passes that expire, driving urgency and repeat visits.
- > Developing tiered loyalty programs (bronze, silver, gold) that unlock different perks and encourage customers to climb levels.
- > Partnering with complementary local businesses. Imagine a single card that earns points at your café, the bookstore down the street, and the ice cream shop next door. It builds community while multiplying customer touchpoints.

The Future of Loyalty Is Already in Your Pocket

Loyalty hasn't gone away — it's just evolved. Customers still want to feel rewarded, but they expect the process to be instant, digital, and friction-free. Mobile wallet loyalty programs are no longer the territory of big brands. Independent businesses can now offer sleek, modern loyalty systems without expensive tech investments.

The payoff is real: higher retention, more repeat visits, and a direct line to your best customers. The businesses that adopt this now will own the customer relationship — while competitors are still handing out paper cards and hoping people remember them.

A man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a grey double-breasted suit, a light blue shirt, and a patterned tie, is sitting in a brown leather chair. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an office or library setting.

7 Under-the-Radar **DIGITAL MARKETING** **TOOLS YOU'VE PROBABLY** Never Heard Of

Every business owner knows about Canva, Mailchimp, or Hootsuite. They're great, but they're also crowded — everyone uses them, and they only take you so far. What actually moves the needle is finding tools that give you an edge before everyone else catches on.

The following are 7 lesser-known digital marketing tools that can help you save time, stretch budgets, and uncover opportunities your competitors don't even know exist. They're practical, affordable, and built with small and local businesses in mind.



TURN ONE VIDEO INTO MANY

Video marketing is powerful, but editing clips for TikTok, Reels, or YouTube Shorts can eat up hours. Opus Clip automates that process. Upload one long video — maybe a customer testimonial, a workshop, or a behind-the-scenes tour — and it instantly generates short, polished clips with captions and jump cuts.

Why it matters for local business: You can stretch one piece of content into weeks' worth of social posts, without paying for an editor.

Opus Clip → <https://www.opus.pro>

NEVER STARE AT A BLANK CAPTION AGAIN

Struggling to come up with posts that sound fresh every week? Postwise is an AI-assisted social tool that helps you brainstorm, draft, and schedule updates. It can refine your voice, suggest engaging hooks, and take the pressure off writing.



Why it matters for local business: A boutique owner could line up a month of Instagram posts in one sitting, complete with captions that fit their brand tone.

Postwise → <https://postwise.ai>



APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING WITHOUT THE BLOAT

If Calendly feels like overkill, TidyCal offers a simple, affordable alternative. It lets customers book appointments online, syncs with your calendars, and sends reminders — no fluff.

Why it matters for local business: Perfect for salons, consultants, mechanics, or any service business that wants hassle-free online booking without paying enterprise prices.

TidyCal → <https://tidycal.com>



LocalFalcon

SEE HOW YOU RANK ON THE MAP

Most businesses know how they rank in Google search at their main location. But what about five blocks over? Or in a neighboring ZIP code? Local Falcon shows you a heatmap of how your Google Business Profile ranks across different parts of your city.

Why it matters for local business: If your HVAC company ranks #1 in your own neighborhood but disappears just one town over, Local Falcon helps you spot the gap — and fix it.

Local Falcon → <https://www.localfalcon.com>

KEEP TABS ON AI SEARCH RESULTS

AI-powered search is becoming the new front door. The problem? AI doesn't always describe your business the way you'd like. Otterly.ai tracks how your brand is represented inside AI responses so you can see what customers are being told about you.



Otterly.AI

Why it matters for local business: Imagine if Google's AI overview suggested your competitor instead of you. This tool helps you stay ahead before misinformation costs you customers.

Otterly.ai → <https://otterly.ai>



SEODITY
ALL-IN-ONE SEO TOOL

Free SEO Tools

Niche Finder



FIND HIDDEN KEYWORD OPPORTUNITIES

Going head-to-head with big competitors on generic keywords is a losing battle. Seodity's Free Niche Finder helps you uncover low-competition, high-intent search terms.

Why it matters for local business: Instead of targeting "best dentist," you could find specific, overlooked queries like "same-day crown dentist near me" that attract customers ready to book.

Seodity → <https://seodity.com/free-niche-finder>



INSTANT IDEAS ACROSS MULTIPLE PLATFORMS

Sometimes inspiration comes from simply seeing what people are typing. Soovle pulls auto-complete suggestions from Google, YouTube, Amazon, Bing, and even Wikipedia.

Why it matters for local business: A bookstore could type “best books for...” and instantly get dozens of trending, real searches to build blog posts, social posts, or promotions around.

Soovle → <http://www.soovle.com>

SMALL TOOLS, BIG EDGE

The best digital tools aren't always the loudest ones. By adding just one or two of these into your marketing toolkit, you can uncover insights, save hours, or engage customers in ways your competitors won't see coming.

These aren't meant to replace your core systems like Canva or Mailchimp — they're meant to give you an advantage at the edges, where customers make their decisions.

SOCIAL MEDIA ISN'T DEAD:

IT'S JUST
DIFFERENT



The Myth of Declining Social.

Ask around and you'll hear it everywhere: "social media doesn't work anymore." Post reach is down, algorithms feel stacked against small businesses, and owners are tired of pouring effort into content that seems invisible.

But here's the truth: social media isn't dying — it's evolving. What worked five years ago no longer works today. The platforms have shifted from long, static posts to micro-content designed for quick attention and fast engagement. For local businesses, that shift is actually an opportunity.

Let's look at what's really working now on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn — and how you can adapt.



facebook & Instagram

MICRO OVER MACRO

A Minneapolis-based pizzeria shifted from text posts about daily specials to 15-second reels of pizzas being pulled from the oven. Within two weeks, their average engagement jumped from under 200 views per post to 3,500+ views per reel, with customers commenting “saw this today, had to come in.”

A local salon in Texas started running weekly Instagram story polls (“Which color should we feature next?”). Not only did poll engagement triple their story views, but the winning choice often sold out the same week.

Static feed posts still have a place, but they’re not where the attention lives. Stories, reels, and carousels dominate because they’re fast, visual, and designed for thumb-scrolling.

For example, a restaurant that once posted long text updates about weekly specials will reach far more people by posting a 20-second reel of the chef plating tonight’s feature, or a story with a poll asking “Which dessert should come back this weekend?” Engagement is doubling for businesses that lean into short video and interactive stories instead of static announcements.

Meta’s own data backs it up: reels are reshared more than 2 billion times every day across Facebook and Instagram. The algorithm rewards motion, sound, and interaction — not wall-of-text posts.



TikTok

THE NEW DISCOVERY ENGINE

A small boutique in Ohio began posting unboxing clips and quick try-on videos of new arrivals. One clip featuring a seasonal dress went viral locally (32,000 views), and they sold out of that product in four days.

A Florida coffee shop posted a 12-second TikTok of their barista pouring latte art hearts with the caption "made with love in Tampa." It racked up 50k+ local views, and customers started walking in asking specifically for "the TikTok heart latte."

TikTok isn't just for teenagers anymore. It's become a discovery platform where people actively search for local recommendations, tips, and ideas. In fact, 40% of Gen Z users say they search TikTok instead of Google when looking for places to eat or things to do.

Local businesses can win here by keeping it simple: short, raw, behind-the-scenes clips perform far better than polished ads. A boutique posting a 15-second "new arrivals unboxing" or a fitness trainer sharing one quick move of the day can build reach faster than months of boosted posts elsewhere.

The key is consistency and personality. TikTok rewards authenticity over production value, making it one of the lowest-cost ways for independents to go viral in their own community.



Linked in

THE OVERLOOKED LOCAL PLATFORM

A Chicago-based CPA firm posted a short video case study about helping a small business save \$25,000 in taxes. The post received 12,000 impressions and brought in four new clients within two weeks.

A regional contractor began sharing photo posts of before-and-after commercial projects. One post showcasing a renovated office space was picked up by a local business publication and drove inquiries from three new clients.

LinkedIn feels corporate, but it's quietly becoming a powerful space for local businesses. Decision-makers, professionals, and even B2C customers are scrolling daily. The difference is that they're looking for credibility and thought leadership, not entertainment.

For a local marketing consultant, an accountant, or even a trades company that serves businesses, posting short insights or case studies can establish authority. A quick before-and-after project showcase, a client success story, or even a post about community involvement can gain traction here.

LinkedIn posts with images or native video earn 2x higher engagement than text-only updates. And because fewer local businesses are active on LinkedIn, it's easier to stand out.



ADAPT, DON'T ABANDON

Social media isn't dead — but the way people use it has changed. The algorithm now rewards short, engaging, authentic content over static, text-heavy posts.

- On Facebook and Instagram, reels and stories beat announcements.
- On TikTok, short raw clips drive discovery and community reach.
- On LinkedIn, authority-driven posts position you as a leader.

For local businesses, the opportunity is clear: stop fighting yesterday's playbook and start leaning into what the platforms actually want today. The businesses that adapt will find that social media still drives attention, engagement, and customers — just in a different way than it used to.

YOU'RE GREAT AT WHAT YOU DO.

**–But That's Not
Enough Anymore.**

It doesn't matter how good
your business is....
If no one can find you.
Or worse— they find your
competitor first.

OUTDATED WEBSITE.

BURIED GOOGLE LISTING.

INCONSISTENT FOLLOW-UP.

It's not laziness.

You're just busy running the business.

That's where we come in.

We help local businesses cut through the noise, get seen
in the right places, and turn browsers into buyers.

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WE BUILD STRATEGIES THAT MAKE THE PHONE RING.

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