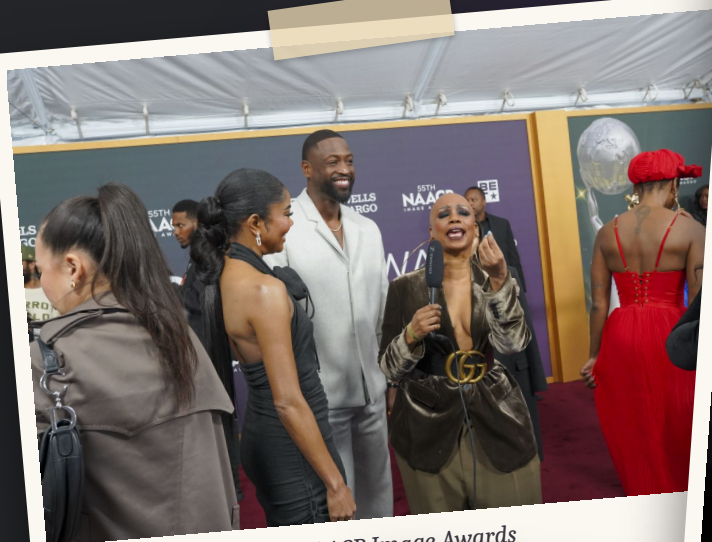




NAACP Image Awards



Live Music



Big Man's Camp



Red Carpet

FREE GUIDE • 2026 EDITION

Hooked.

The local business guide to video people actually watch. How to stop the scroll, hold attention, and turn views into customers.

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You Have Three Seconds.

That is how long someone gives your video before they decide to keep watching or keep scrolling. Everything about how a post performs gets decided in that window.

Most local businesses post and hope. The video is fine, the product is great, and the phone still doesn't ring. The problem is almost never the camera or the budget. It is the first three seconds, and what happens right after them. The good news is that this is a skill, and skills can be learned. I have used everything in this guide on accounts that pulled over 10 million views in a month, and I teach it to teams who had never edited a video before.

A hook is not a slow build. It is a claim, a question, or a visual that makes someone need to know what happens next.

WHAT'S INSIDE

01 **The Hook Formula**

Problem plus solution, and four ways to open strong.

02 **12 Fill-In Hooks**

Proven shapes with the blanks already marked. Steal them.

03 **Stack the Hook**

The five layers that turn a maybe into a stop.

04 **The Five-Beat Video**

A simple structure you can shoot this week, on your phone.

05 **Captions, Posting, and the Value Test**

How to make the post work after the video ends.

Problem + Solution.

The fastest way to stop the right person is to name the problem they already have. Your customer is living with it right now. Say it in their words, then show them the way out.

THE PROBLEM

Call out a pain or frustration your customer already feels. Be specific enough that they think, "that's me."

+

THE SOLUTION

Tie the hook to that pain, then land on what you offer that fixes it. Keep it short. The video does the rest.

SAME FORMULA. DIFFERENT BUSINESS.

LOCAL GYM

"You've signed up for a gym three times and quit by February. Here's why our members are still here in June."

PIZZA SHOP

"Tired of delivery pizza that shows up cold and soggy? We box ours so it survives the drive."

CONTRACTOR

"Your contractor stopped answering texts halfway through the job. We send a photo update every single day."

REALTOR

"Still scrolling listings every night and losing every offer? Here's how my buyers get in first."

Your hook changes with who you are talking to. The structure never does.

Four Ways to Open Strong.



Ask a Question

"Why does this always happen right before a busy weekend?"

Curiosity pulls people in.



Make a Bold Claim

"This is the number one mistake I see on small business pages."

Confidence earns attention.



Show, Don't Tell

Open mid-action: the pour, the reveal, the finished room.

Let the visual do the hooking.



Be Relatable

"If you've ever stared at your phone with no idea what to post..."

Name a shared frustration instantly.

12 FILL-IN HOOKS • SWAP IN YOUR BUSINESS

SHAPE	TEMPLATE
The Only Way	"This is the only way to [result] without [pain]."
The Lazy Way	"The lazy way to [get result]. It still works."
The List	"[3] things every [customer] should know before [buying / booking]."
Stop Doing	"Stop [common habit] if you want [result]."
You're Doing It Wrong	"You're probably [doing X] wrong. Here's the fix."
The Exposé	"Here's what really happens when you [order / hire / book]."
The Myth	"You've been told [belief]. It isn't true."
The Price of Waiting	"Waiting on [thing] is costing you [money / time]."
The Before and After	"[Thing] six months ago vs. today."
POV	"POV: you finally [solved the problem]."
Behind the Counter	"What [your job] looks like at [6 a.m.] that nobody sees."
The Local Callout	"If you live in [town], you need to see this."

One Layer Is a Maybe. Five Is a Stop.

A hook is not just the first line you say. The strongest ones fire several layers at once in the opening frame. Check all five before you post.

1 Motion or a Visual Surprise

Something moving, a hard cut, or an angle nobody expects. The eye cannot ignore movement.

2 Text on Screen

One bold line in the top third that promises the payoff. Most people see it before they hear anything.

3 The Spoken Line

Your voice or voiceover says the promise or the question. Same visual, better line, completely different results.

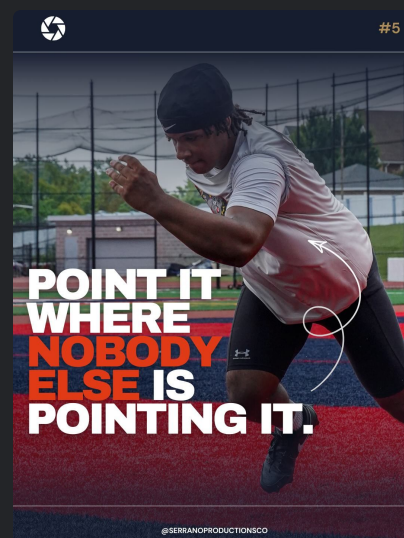
4 The Caption

People check the caption to confirm what they are watching. Treat its first line as a second hook.

5 Sound

Optional, but the right track adds energy. Match the music to the energy of the content.

Point the camera where nobody else is. Everyone films the obvious moment. The story is usually standing off to the side: the reaction, the crowd, the hands on the work. That is the shot people stop for.



A carousel I built on this exact lesson.

A Structure You Can Shoot This Week.

The videos that win are rarely long. The best reel I broke down for a recent workshop ran 28 seconds with 23 cuts. Fast, clear, and it never let you leave.

1

Hook

Promise the payoff in the first one to two seconds.

2

Context

One line on why it matters: a stat, a fact, or a bit of history.

3

Problem

Show it, don't just say it. Let the b-roll carry the story.

4

Solution

What you do about it, kept short and clear.

5

Payoff

Land the point, give the viewer something to do, then stamp your logo.

EXAMPLE • A LOCAL COFFEE SHOP, 25 SECONDS

Hook	Text on screen: "Your morning coffee is costing you 20 minutes." Open on a long drive-thru line.
Context	"The average drive-thru wait around here is over eight minutes."
Problem	Quick cuts: checking the clock, tapping the wheel, late to work.
Solution	"Order ahead on our app and walk right past the line."
Payoff	Hand grabs the cup off the counter. "Grab it and go." Logo.

Captions the whole way through. Most people watch with the sound off. If your point doesn't land in text, it doesn't land.

The Camera in Your Pocket Is Enough.

1

Framing

Put the eyes on the top third line, not dead center. Leave a little headroom and keep the horizon level.

2

Lighting

Face the window or light source. Never shoot with it behind you. Soft light beats harsh light.

3

Audio

Stay within two to three feet of the mic. Kill the fan, the AC, and the music before you roll. A quiet room beats a fancy microphone every time.



Eyes on the top third line, not in the middle.

EDIT AND EXPORT

Captions	Auto-caption, then proofread. Two to four words on screen at a time, bold and high contrast.
Transitions	A hard cut works 90 percent of the time. Fancy transitions distract from the message.
Effects	Overusing effects is a more common mistake than underusing them. Use one only if it fits.
Export	1080p minimum, MP4, 30fps (60fps for fast motion), 9:16 vertical.

PLATFORM	IDEAL LENGTH	WHAT WINS
Instagram Reels	15 to 30 seconds	Polished and visual. The cover image matters for your grid.
TikTok	15 to 60 seconds	Casual and timely. Trends move fast.
YouTube Shorts	Up to 60 seconds	Searchable. Treat the title like a mini headline.

The Video Stops Them. The Caption Closes.

Most people never tap "more," so the first line of your caption has to work on its own. Here is the structure I use.

- 1 Rehook**
Reintroduce the hook in a new way. The caption's first line is a second chance to stop them.
- 2 Foreshadow**
Right after the hook, hint at what's coming so they keep reading.
- 3 Teach**
This is where you nerd out. Explain the lesson or the value clearly.
- 4 Call to Action**
One clear ask at the end: comment a word, save it, book a call. Put it last, after you've earned it.

Hashtags

Three to five relevant tags beat twenty random ones. Mix one or two broad tags with two or three specific ones, then search them to see if they actually get used.

Consistency

Consistency beats intensity. Plan a week ahead, batch your filming in one sitting, and schedule it out. Post when your audience is actually online.

The Value Test. Before anything goes live, ask one question: what does the viewer walk away with? Social media can promote you, but it shouldn't only be about you. If the answer is "nothing, but we look good," rework it.

WHO WROTE THIS

Hi, I'm Jake.



I'm the founder of Serrano Productions LLC, a full-service media agency in Ewing, New Jersey. I've spent a decade behind the lens, starting in sports broadcasting and working my way onto Amazon Prime Video productions and the NAACP Image Awards red carpet.

Today I help local businesses turn the great work they already do into content that gets seen, shared, and called on. Video, photography, podcasts, and the strategy behind all of it.

10M+

views in 30 days
on one account

100K+

followers scaled
on one brand

800+

videos produced

1,100+

attendees at
sold-out events

Want me to look at your page? **It's free.**

Book 15 minutes. I'll review your page and tell you the first three things I'd change. No pitch deck, no pressure.

Let's spice up your marketing.



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