



LocalShops1.com is an award-winning organization dedicated to promoting and encouraging buying local. LocalShops1.com partners with local businesses, community-minded shoppers and charities to offer exposure and business. In just three short years, they have grown from a small, grass-roots organization to one that received an honorable mention from the Small Business Trends' nationwide Small Business Influencer Award.

**Community building requires the right channel.** LocalShops1.com embraced social media to spread the word and build a community. They knew community was essential to the success of their mission but they couldn't find the right fit that married

both audience reach and cost effectiveness. They tried using WordPress but as soon as they wanted to add additional features, they had to bring in a web person. The costs began adding up quickly. Then they chose a custom software solution, but again, as they added every feature they wanted the costs skyrocketed.

LocalShops1.com wanted software that would help them engage their members, provide a fun forum for connection, deliver an online store and serve as a professional-looking website. They needed a tool that could also help them manage their growing membership; one that could grow with them. A robust search feature and a system aimed at a more efficient means of accomplishing their daily tasks were essential. Administrative duties were not what the folks at LocalShops1.com wanted to be concentrating on.

They looked into YourMembership.com after they learned of them through the Tampa Bay Business Journal's social media awards. Upon further investigation, they realized they could get the features they wanted for an all-inclusive price, negating the need for a dedicated web-person and expensive add-ons.

### Off-the-shelf software with a customized feel.

LocalShops1.com was leery (initially) of giving up a full-time web person. However, the customer support at YourMembership.com won them over. They've found that opening a support ticket in the evening means (frequently) waking up to an answer in the morning. YourMembership.com's customer support calls when they say they will and provides service to technical, as well as novice, users and best of all, it's included in the service cost.

### Increased efficiency means more time spent doing what's essential for organizational growth.

Prior to using YourMembership.com, LocalShops1.com issued paper invoices. The process was time-consuming and inefficient. Memberships are now handled online and invoicing is much simpler. They have seen an increase in web traffic since launching the new site, many leading to conversions (visitors becoming members). **The average time spent on their site has increased 1000 percent.** Visitors are settling in and exploring LocalShops1.com's offerings.

LocalShops1.com recommends YourMembership.com to all member organizations, regardless of size and industry. "The invoicing and payment processing alone has increased our efficiency so that we have more time to invest in meaningful member interaction."

### Facebook isn't the answer; it's merely a component of your social media presence.

LS1 has a large following on Facebook®; yet they chose to create a private online community. LS1 knew for continued growth they needed a professional web presence. They wanted a branded site with archiving (as past history and conversations are all but lost to page users on Facebook). LS1 knew they'd be investing enormous time/energy in the community so housing it on a site with customer support and concern for their business needs was essential. Now they use Facebook as a bridge for drawing traffic to their private online community.