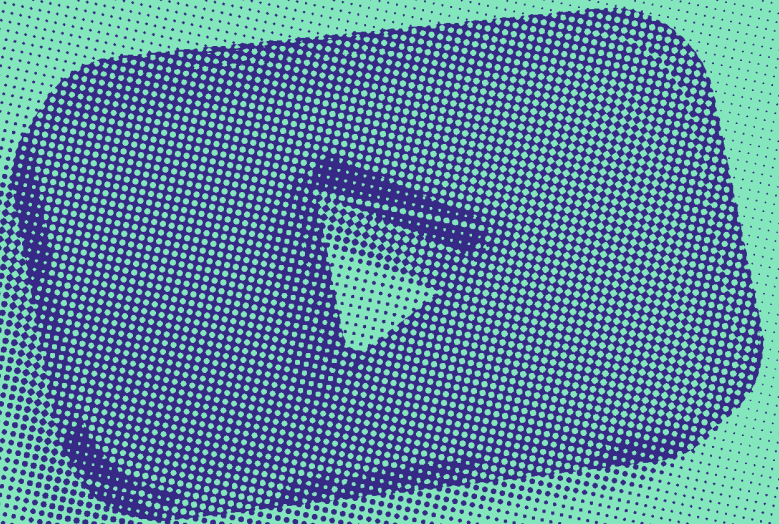
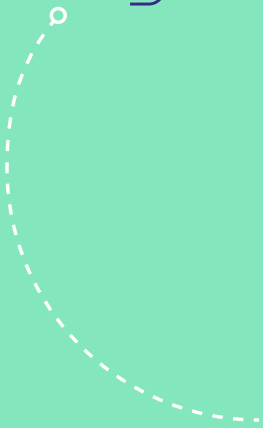


# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO YouTube Optimization



In the last decade, video marketing has stolen the spotlight as the breakout trend for both marketing professionals and consumers. According to a 2021 Wyzowl survey, **86% of businesses** use video marketing with eight out of ten marketers reporting that video has a direct, positive impact on their sales.



**of marketers believe that videos have increased user understanding of their product or service.**

As for consumers, viewers retain **95% of a message** when they watch a video compared to just **10% when reading**. What's more, people spend an estimated 100 minutes each day watching online videos.

**Translation: Video marketing is a tactic and content stream you can't ignore.**

While there are many avenues to pursue video marketing, YouTube reigns supreme as the best platform for getting eyes on your video content. It's the second largest search engine (and yes, it's owned by Google!) so it's an integral part of SEO success.

In this guide, we'll explore how you can leverage YouTube for video marketing and outline key techniques and strategies to drive traffic to your YouTube channel and videos as well as your brand's ability to rank organically for priority keywords.

# What you'll learn in this guide:

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# Why You Should Choose YouTube For Video Marketing

First, let's get the big question out of the way: **Why YouTube?**

- **YouTube offers tremendous reach.** YouTube is the second-most popular website in the world, with **over a billion users**, and more than 500 million hours of video watched each day. Those numbers are only growing month-over-month.
- **YouTube has a great return on investment.** Creating a YouTube channel is free – and could make you money – making the platform the most cost-effective global distribution channel for video content.
- **YouTube has built-in social sharing tools.** YouTube is a stand-alone social media platform where viewers can easily like, comment, and share videos, allowing businesses to directly connect with their audience on the platform. Plus, it's easy to embed and share your YouTube video into other content such as your website, blog posts, or on other social media outlets.
- **The YouTube algorithm helps businesses connect to customers.** YouTube is owned by Google, so it is an incredibly powerful video search engine. With the proper [search engine optimization \(SEO\) techniques](#), businesses can drive significant traffic to their YouTube channel and videos.

# Leveraging YouTube As A Search Engine

To get the most out of YouTube, it's important to treat the platform like the powerful social media channel and search engine that it is, rather than as a dumping ground for your video content. To set the stage for optimizing your YouTube content, let's first take a look at YouTube SEO basics.

Search engine optimization, or SEO, refers to the process of increasing the quality and quantity of website traffic by increasing the visibility of a website or webpage. YouTube SEO focuses on increasing video views and channel engagement.

Sharing your video content directly with your audience will only go so far. To attract new viewers (read: potential customers), you need to optimize your YouTube content so that new people can find the content you're creating and discover your services.

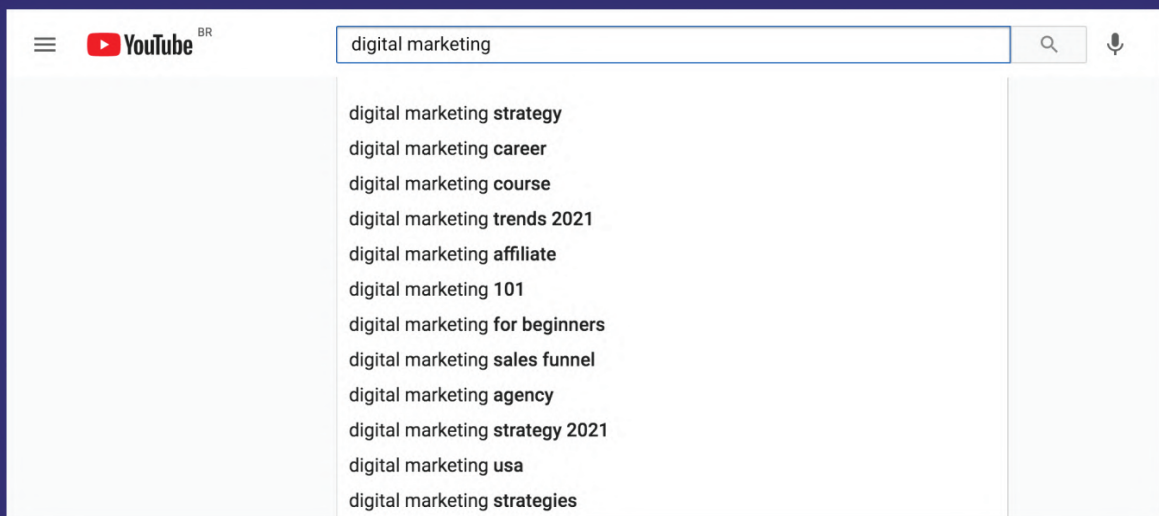
**Your customers are out there, and they are searching for content that solves their problems or answers their questions. With the proper SEO techniques in place, you'll direct their eyes towards you, not your competitors.**

## Research and Select Your Keywords

An essential part of the YouTube SEO process is researching and identifying keywords and phrases for your channel and videos. These keywords help YouTube's algorithm identify your niche, the type of content you create, and who your target audience is.

There are several ways you can conduct keyword research for YouTube:

- **Experiment with YouTube's autocomplete functionality:** If you have a keyword in mind, start typing the word into YouTube's search bar. The autocomplete feature will then show you the most popular phrases or questions with your keyword. This is just the tip of the iceberg for identifying popular keywords but is a great starting point.



- **Use keyword research tools:** There are several keyword research tools that help with SEO research such as Semrush, vidIQ, Ahrefs Keyword Explorer, and Moz Keyword Explorer. With these tools, look for keywords that have a high search volume but low competition so that your content is more likely to rank for them.



- **Peek at your competitor's channel:** If you find keyword research overwhelming, this is a less stressful alternative. Take a look at your competitors' most popular videos and make note of the keywords used in the titles, descriptions and video tags.

Try a combination of the above research techniques and generate a list of general short-tail keywords and specific long-tail phrases. You'll use these keywords for both your channel as a whole and for individual videos – more on this later!

# How To Optimize Your YouTube Channel

Before creating and uploading your YouTube videos, it's critical that you set up your YouTube channel for success. Your YouTube channel will serve as a primary traffic source for video views, so it's important that you don't overlook channel optimization.

Think of your YouTube channel as your business' homepage or storefront. You want to a) make sure people can find your channel and b) ensure that when they do, they will continuously engage with your content.

## Drive Traffic To Your Channel With Channel Keywords

Believe it or not, there are over 35 million YouTube channels on the platform – **35 million!** In order to stand out in the very crowded crowd, you must use channel keywords.

Channel keywords are keywords and key phrases that represent and define your channel. Return to the list of keywords you generated earlier and narrow down your list to 5 to 15 channel keywords, totaling between 100 to 150 characters.

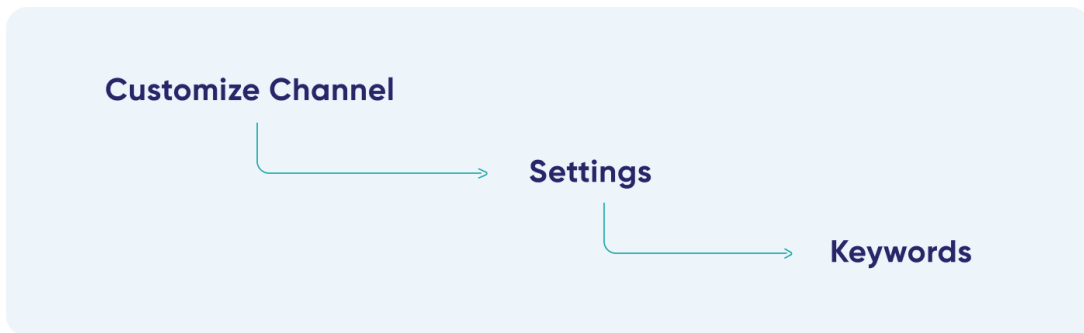
After you select your channel keywords, it's time to put them to use.

**PRO TIP** Your YouTube channel name should be one of your channel keywords.



From your YouTube channel, navigate to “customize channel” then “Settings”. Under the “Channel” menu, you’ll find a section called “Keywords”. Insert your channel keywords into this box and save. You’ll also want to include your channel keywords in your channel description.

## Customize Your Channel To Capture Your Audience



As soon as someone lands on your page, they should be able to identify your business and services, understand how your channel will be useful to them, and be eager to explore what you have to offer. To do so, focus on the layout, branding, and basic info sections under the “customize channel” section of your page.

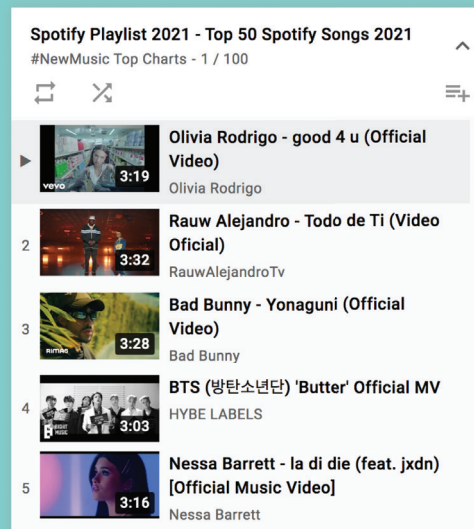
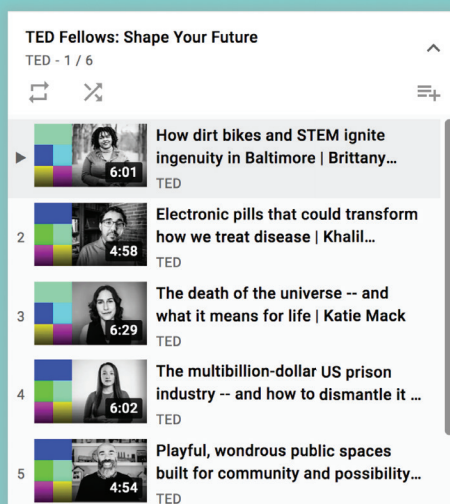
### 1. Layout

The layout is where you can customize the flow of your channel’s home page. Within this section, you can upload a channel trailer, select a featured video, and customize your video sections.

- **Channel Trailer** – Your channel trailer is an opportunity to make a first impression on people who’ve not yet subscribed to your channel. Select a short and sweet, eye-catching, and engaging video to upload to this section that makes clear what the viewer can expect from your YouTube content.

- **Featured Video** – Your featured video will be served to people who have already subscribed to your channel and are returning for more content. For this video, consider selecting your most recent upload, or important content like a video about your newest product.
- **Featured Sections** – The featured sections allow you to put specific video content front and center for the viewer. Creators typically choose to display recent uploads here, so that viewers can find the channel's latest videos. You may also consider adding playlists for other products or services you want to promote, like a webinar series you're trying to get off the ground. You can have up to 12 Featured Sections.

**PRO TIP** *Playlists are an excellent and simple way to increase your viewer retention. By grouping together like videos into a playlist, you'll offer your viewers a better experience, as they'll be able to easily access your related content. This is also beneficial to your SEO, as YouTube will recognize the relationship between your videos and recommend more content to viewers.*



## 2. Branding

The branding section is where you can update the look and feel of your channel. You can upload a profile picture, banner, and video watermark.

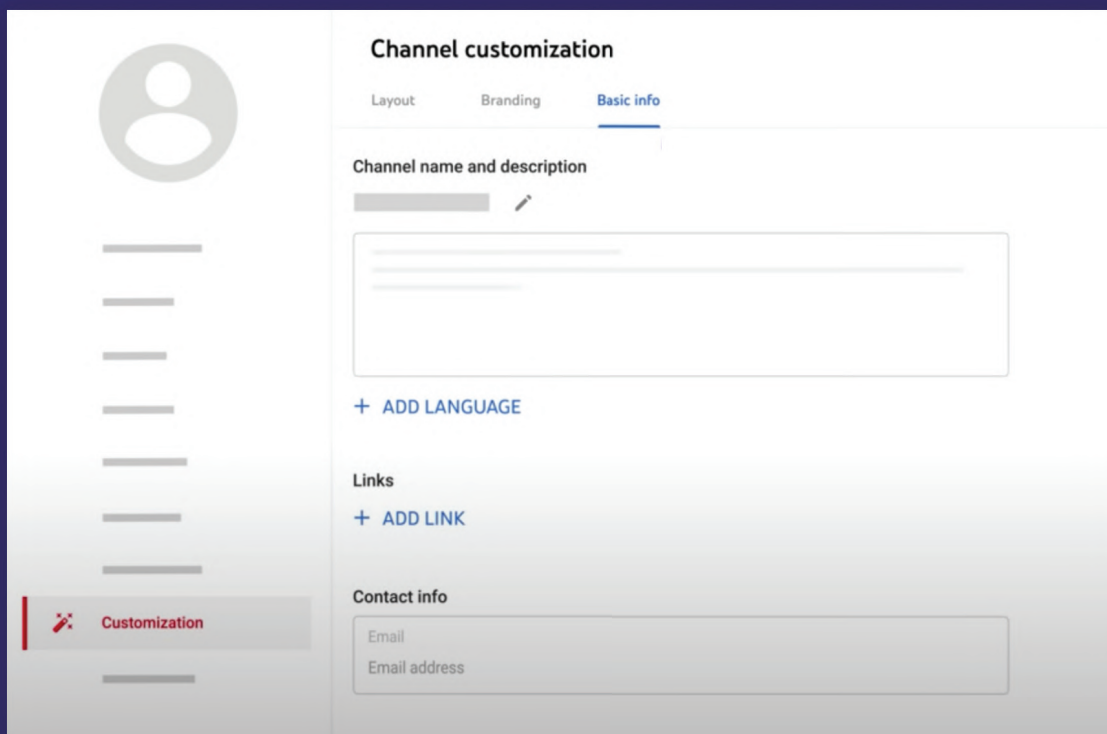
- **Profile Picture** – Your profile picture will show up at the top of your YouTube channel, as well as anywhere else your channel is presented, like in video comments. Businesses should typically use their logo as their profile picture as they are easily identifiable.
- **Banner** – Your channel banner is the most prominent feature on your YouTube channel, so it's important to create one that really stands out and tells your viewers exactly what to expect from your content.
- **Watermark** – Your video watermark will appear on the right-hand corner of your video. You can select if you'd like your watermark to appear throughout your video, at the end of your video, or on a custom timestamp. Viewers can subscribe to your channel directly from the watermark at any time.

## 3. Basic Info

In the basic info section, you can edit your channel name and description, your channel URL, links, and your contact information.

- **Channel name and description** – Your channel description is the prime opportunity to optimize your channel for SEO. Write a clear and concise channel description that includes the channel keywords you identified earlier, as well as your YouTube channel name.
- **Custom URL** – After your channel has reached 100 subscribers, you can edit your channel's URL to include your channel name.

- **Links** – The links you include in this section will appear over your banner on your channel page. We recommend adding a subscription link, your business' website, and other social media accounts you want your viewers to connect with you on.
- **Contact Info** – Add in the best email address for viewers to contact your company.



# How to Optimize Your YouTube Videos

After you've correctly set up your channel, it's time for the fun part – creating videos! Remember, if you're using YouTube as part of your video marketing strategy, don't treat your YouTube channel as the catch-all for video content. Instead, give your channel the justice it deserves, and create video content with your audience and the platform in mind.

## How To Create An Engaging YouTube Video

### 1. Perform Topic Research

Before diving into creating your video, take some time to research your video content, just as you would when creating any other type of content. You want to make sure you're creating high-quality content that your audience wants or needs.

- **Repurpose successful content** – Do an audit of the content you already have, such as blog posts, social media content, or eBooks, and consider what content could be recreated as a video. Take a look at your website and blog analytics to see where your audience spends the most time and what topics already attract the most traffic.

- **Dig deep into your keyword research** – Return to the keyword research you conducted earlier and generate video ideas from there. You already know that people are looking for this content on YouTube. Give them what they want!
- **Ask your audience** – Why guess what your audience is looking for when you could simply ask? Conduct a poll on social media to see what your followers are interested in. You can also connect with your customer support staff to see what topics customers are asking about the most.

## 2. Film and Produce Your Videos

A common concern among YouTube marketers is the length of their video. Does YouTube prefer long videos or short videos? You'll find people passionately arguing the pros and cons of both.

The best approach is to focus on creating informative videos that *get to the point and work for your audience*.

If it takes seven minutes to get your message across, great! 20 minutes? No worries. If you're uncertain what to cut out, ask yourself: Are these two minutes useful, or am I wasting the viewer's time? If it's the latter, cut it out.

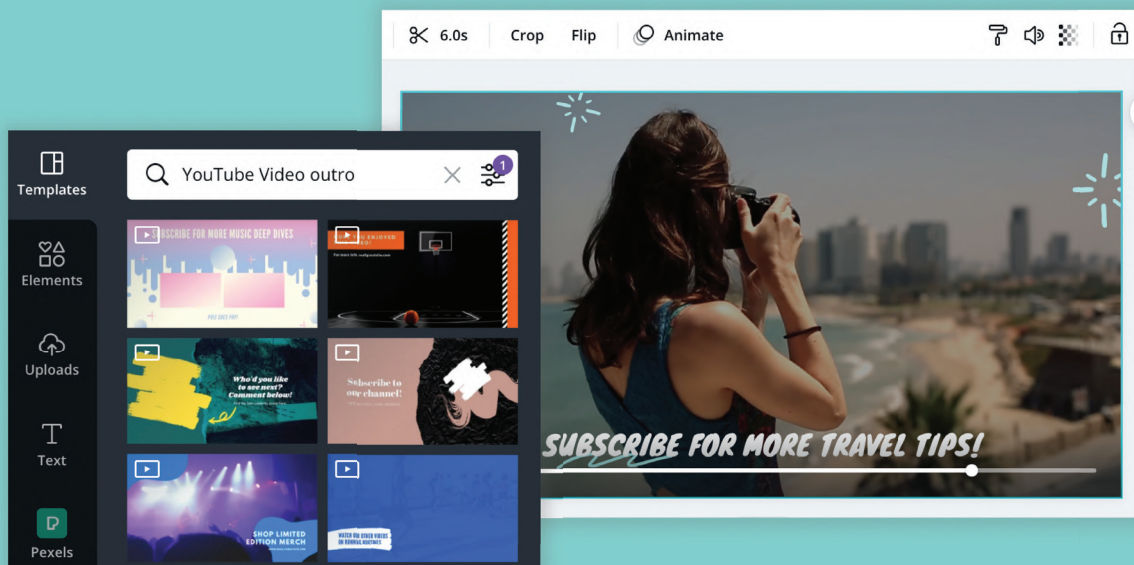
**While length won't make or break your video, what you do in the first 15 seconds will. Make it abundantly clear from the beginning that your video will solve your viewer's problem, so they don't click away.**

### 3. Create YouTube Cards and End Screens

Cards and end screens are user-friendly video add-ons that can drive traffic to other videos and content so your viewers stay engaged with your channel.

- **Cards** – White rectangular prompts that show up during the video and recommend related videos or content mentioned.
- **End screen** – A screen that can be added to the last 5-20 seconds of a video that includes links to other related videos or prompts the viewer to like, subscribe or visit your website.

**PRO TIP** Use a tool like Canva to create a 15-20 second end screen outro. Add this clip to the end of your raw video file before you upload your video. After your video is uploaded, you can add your end screen elements onto the template, without worrying about blocking any important content in your video.



## How To Drive Traffic To Your Video With Video Keywords And Tags

If a video is uploaded to YouTube but no one is around to watch it, does it get any views? You know the answer to this one!

While creating an excellent video should be your primary focus, if you don't optimize your video for SEO it could go completely overlooked.

**The YouTube algorithm focuses on three pieces of metadata: your video title, video description, and video tags.**

### 1. Video Title

Return to your keyword research and select low-competition, long-tail keywords to include in your video title. Be sure to follow the exact order and wording of your keywords.

For example, if you've identified *"YouTube SEO optimization"* and *"video marketing"* as keywords, your title should be *"How to Master YouTube SEO Optimization – Tips and Tricks for Video Marketing"*, not *"How Marketers Can Optimize YouTube Videos for SEO"*.

### 2. Video Description

Writing a great YouTube video description is an important step in optimizing your video. Make the most of this limited space by:

- Including the purpose of your video in the first 200 characters of your description
- Naturally incorporating keywords that are most relevant to your video's content – **Avoid keyword stuffing!**
- Avoiding corporate lingo, buzzwords, or internal company jargon that confuses viewers, especially when you're sharing educational content



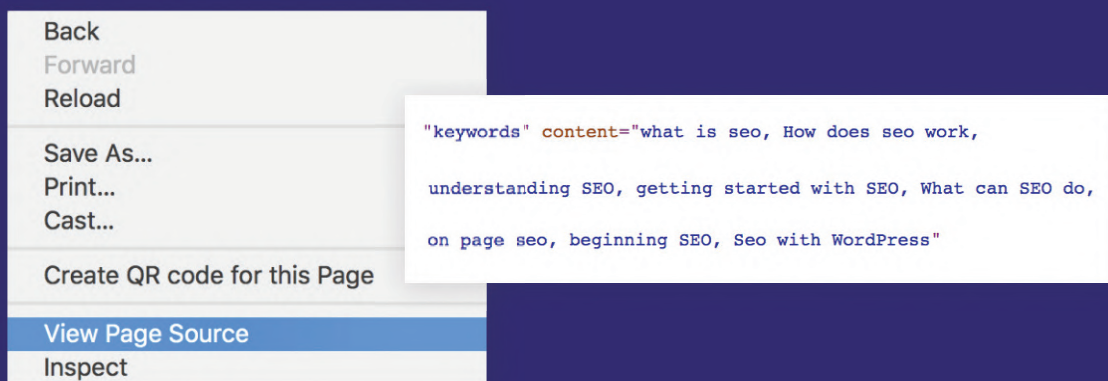
- Creating a boilerplate to add to the end of your video descriptions that includes a short business or channel description and your most important links

### 3. Video Tags

Video tags help YouTube match search queries to relevant videos and are yet another opportunity to use your keyword research.

According to YouTube, tags aren't as important as your title, thumbnail, and description for discovery, but they are helpful if your video's content is commonly misspelled. This way, users find you even if they type in a query that doesn't match the correct spelling in your video title.

**YouTube hides descriptive tags on videos, but there is a way around this. To find out what tags your competitors are using, right-click on the YouTube video's webpage page, hit "View Source Code", and do a CTRL (or Command) + F for "keywords".**



# Understanding Your YouTube Analytics

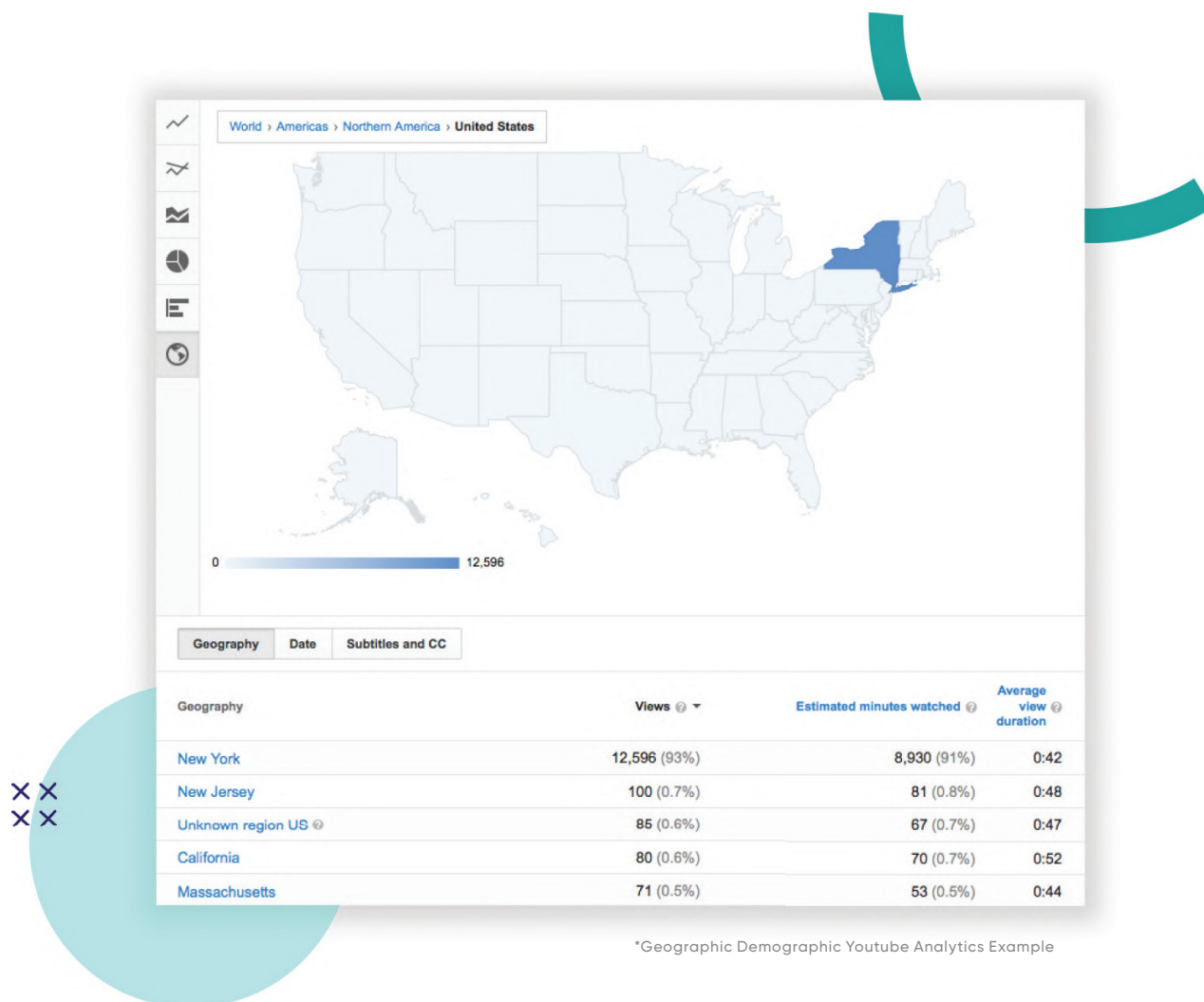
Congratulations on optimizing and publishing your YouTube channel and videos! Now it's time to look under the hood of your YouTube Analytics to make sure your hard work pays off.

YouTube Studio dashboard offers fairly robust analytics with several metrics including number of views, watch time, impressions, traffic sources, top end screen elements and audience demographics.

Your analytics can be overwhelming to examine at first, but you can avoid analysis paralysis by defining concrete YouTube marketing goals. From there, you can decide what metrics to focus on. For example:

- **Goal 1:** Expand your audience of women aged 25-32 by 20% by the end of Q2. Focus on your demographics and the number of subscribers as your metrics.
- **Goal 2:** Increase the average watch time of your videos by 5 minutes over the next three months. You'll look at traffic source types and bounce rates as your metrics.

- **Goal 3:** Expand brand recognition in a specific geographic area (e.g. expansion into the U.K., Canada). For this goal, track your geography metrics and number of subscribers.



Ultimately, your goals become the framework for understanding which metrics are relevant. Track these metrics against your goals regularly and adjust your video content, keywords, and outreach strategies accordingly.

# Accelerate Your Video Marketing Efforts With YouTube

YouTube is an exciting place for marketers and businesses looking to add video to their marketing toolbox – and it's not going anywhere anytime soon. If you've already dipped your toes in the YouTube water, we hope this guide propels your video marketing efforts forward.

If you've not yet dabbled with the video powerhouse – What are you waiting for? You've got everything you need to get started.

**Break a leg!**

# ABOUT AIMTAL

Aimtal is a digital +  
content marketing agency.

We're a remote-first company and have a team of brilliant marketing strategists, account managers, graphic designers, copywriters, and researchers who are committed to delivering delightful digital + content experiences to our customers and their audiences.

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