

RESULTS DIRECT GUIDE

Ready to Launch: Website Redesign Guide



Creating Your Website Strategy

- 1 Who are the critical audiences?
- 2 What are the tasks that we need users to be able to complete online?
- 3 What's our member value proposition?

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- **Start with organizational goals** & make sure the website strategy is in direct support of these goals
- **Define specific success measures** for the goals & determine data benchmarks
- **Talk with members directly** & better define their needs & expectations
- **Define the member value proposition** & what your association delivers better than anyone else
- **Conduct planning sessions** with staff leadership to define an aspirational vision
- **Contract with a website partner** to develop a phased roadmap
- **Define short-term (immediate) & long-term strategies (over next 2-3 years)** to reach website goals

Balancing Department Needs

- 1 How do we balance the needs of many departments?
- 2 How can we ensure accountability?

- **Break down silos** & create staff partnerships
- **Facilitate collaboration** with creation of cross-functional working teams
- **Look to current best practices** from the commercial sector & discuss how to apply them to your organization
- **Use research & data** to build your business case



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Budgeting for Success

- 1 Is the website viewed as a critical member engagement resource?
- 2 What are the budget & revenue goals?

- **Think of the website not as a communications tool**, but the central point of contact & engagement with your key stakeholders & the face of your association's brand
- **Establish measurable goals for the website** in building your business case, such as increase in member retention, reduction in membership grace periods, increase in event registration, increase in advertising & sponsorship, increase in content subscriptions & identification of membership prospects
- Research from ASAE shows that **associations typically spend 2-3% of annual revenues on each website redesign**. This goes up to 4-5% when investments are made in new tools/tech such as a content management system

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Choosing the Right Technology

- 1 Out-of-the-box or custom CMS?
- 2 Commercial or open source?
- 3 Who will host the website & maintain the software?

Define the business requirements:

Multi-site management?
Multi-lingual?
E-commerce?
Integration needs?
Usability for staff?
Federated search?

Understand the workplace culture:

Who owns the website?
Developers on staff?
Client premise hosting?

Determine scaling needs

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Focusing on Business Needs

- 1 Do we adapt the technology or the business process?
- 2 How do we work with non-technical staff to define the requirements?
- 3 What department bears the costs of the systems integration?

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- **Focus on the user experience** first & then back into the best technologies to deliver those experiences
- **Be open to revisiting your business process** ("we've always done it that way") to avoid costly customization
- **Sit down with staff teams & walk through their processes** with them, ask questions & identify the inefficiencies. Staff are more likely to support change that saves them time & aggravation
- **Focus on automating the highly repeatable tasks** (the 80/20 rule) to gain the greatest ROI. Don't focus on the exceptions which drive up complexity & costs
- **All departments share the benefit of quality systems integration** & should share in the costs of implementation

Prioritizing Website Features

- 1 What are the critical features for website launch?
- 2 What features can be deferred to future phases?

- **Bring in a 3rd party** to help
- **Start at the top**
- **Use data & analytics** to determine priorities
- **Determine what experiences will have the greatest positive impact** on members/customers & start with those

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Getting Your Team Onboard

- 1 How do we communicate what's possible & manage expectations?
- 2 How do we allocate staff responsibilities?
- 3 How do we get the team on board to support the project?
- 4 How do we garner executive support for the investment of staff time?

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- Encourage staff feedback & input throughout the process
- Conduct regular meetings that involve department heads to facilitate team collaboration
- Create a cross-functional Website Task Force (staff or include volunteers)
- Develop standard forms where staff can communicate challenges & ideas in an organized way
- Contract with a 3rd party firm to help encourage change & define needs
- Make participation part of goals
- Develop a shared calendar or project plan so all team members are aware of task deadlines & expectations

Migrating Your Content

- 1 How will content be migrated to the new site - automated process or copy & pasting?
- 2 How do we define business process (content governance) & adapt to the technology?
- 3 How do we maintain staff communication & transparency?

- **Create small working teams** that are responsible for reviewing & assessing content
- **Archive old content:** Don't migrate anything more than 3 years old unless there is specific data to back it up
- **Use budget as a reason** not to migrate everything
- **Determine the chain of command** for review of content & migration



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Planning for Mobile

- 1 How do we address having too many PDFs on the website?
- 2 How do we streamline complicated online forms & e-commerce?
- 3 How do we fix poorly written/structured content?

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- **Implement responsive design templates** with break-points for mobile
- **Review website analytics** to identify top accessed PDFs & convert to HTML
- **Consider the click area when writing content** & make sure items are easily “tap-able” on mobile
- **Increase use of images, call-outs of key takeaways, infographics & sub-headings** to make content easy to skim/scan
- **Simplify online forms** to limit the info collected to only the critical pieces
- **Optimize your page performance** to ensure quick load times
- **Eliminate dense paragraphs of text**, add executive summaries of important content & increase use of bullets

Focusing on User Experience

- 1 How do we determine what's intuitive to website visitors?
- 2 How do we prioritize audiences?

- **Create personas** to better understand the needs & behaviors of key audiences
- **Conduct an online Card Sort** to gain insights from users on what organization is intuitive
- **Include members** in the testing process & have them complete tasks (Tree Test) to validate the new website navigation before building
- **Turn unknown audiences into known audiences** via content capture forms

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Ensuring Ongoing Success

- 1 How do we best govern/manage going forward?
- 2 How do we ensure ongoing content quality?
- 3 How do we ensure ongoing brand adherence?

- **Ensure there is an ongoing budget** to support website iteration & improvement
- **Form a strong vendor partnership**
- **Allow staff the needed time** to maintain the website
- **Have a training program** in place
- **Create workflows** & identify a managing editor
- **Use strategy as a framework** to empower you to say “no”

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