

The Push and Pull of Attracting the Right Audience to Your Web Site

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Know yourself.

Know your audience.

Know your goals.

Questions to consider

Who are you?

Who is your audience?

What are your short-term and long-term goals?

How will your audience view your pages?

What content do you need to include?

Which content is static, and which dynamic?

What's the logical way to organize your site?

How will people find your site?

Who are you?

What is your mission or purpose?

What is the tone of your literature? What image do you want to project?

How do you want people to feel about you? Describe this in a couple of words.

What resources do you use now to communicate or achieve your goals?

What do people expect to find on your site?

<http://www.afsc.org/>

<http://www.pathways-usa.org/>

<http://www.fighthungerga.com/>

<http://www.acfb.org/>

Who is your audience?

Coalition or organization members
Contributors
Major donors
People needing emergency assistance
People seeking resources for others
Agency employees
Students
Other agencies' employees
Lawmakers
Volunteers
Board members
Community members

<http://www.afsc.org/>

<http://www.libertynet.org/hap/>

<http://www.secondharvest.org/>

<http://www.childabuse.org/>

What are your goals: short-term and long-term?

What do you want to accomplish with the Web site that you aren't able to do now?

What do you already do well? (Be careful not to sabotage it.)

What do you want your audience to do?

Your Web site might help you:

- Recruit volunteers
- Educate about an issue
- Receive donations
- Motivate political action
- Communicate effectively with the community you serve
- Reduce phone calls about basic information
- Discuss issues within a committee – even reach consensus
- Provide links to resources
- Advertise events and meetings

<http://www.afsc.org/>

<http://child-abuse.com/>

<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/>

Your audience might:

- Volunteer
- Donate money
- Call government representatives
- Give you feedback
- Tell you their stories
- Attend meetings or events
- Talk to friends about the issue
- Write letters to the editor

<http://www.workingforchange.com/activism/index.cfm>

<http://www.nwf.org/action/survey/>

<http://www.nwf.org/support/>

<http://caoc.com/homesafe/yourstory.htm>

Keep it simple

Consider connection speeds.

Grab visitors in 3 to 5 seconds.

Place important information “above the fold.”

Focus on your content, not snazzy graphics.

Use a readable font that is large enough, on a suitable background.

Keep line lengths short and use blank space.

Use Web-safe colors, sparingly.

<http://www.afsc.org/>

<http://www.pathways-usa.org/>

Identify content needs

- Scenarios
- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Casual conversations
- Goal reviews
- Tours of similar sites

Don't forget to include:

- Contact information
- Brand recognition (logos, slogans)
- Copyright information
- Privacy statement
- Membership information

Plan for updates

Dynamic content requires more resources.

People return to sites that change.

Organize the site to give you easy access to areas you need to update.

Schedule updates

Frequent (weekly or daily)

- News flashes
- News analyses
- Class registrations
- Community calendars
- Job listings
- Legislative action bulletins
- Chat/discussion areas

Infrequent (once a month)

- Newsletter archive
- Event photos
- Donor honor rolls
- Status reports on agency initiatives
- Employee spotlights
- Links to other sites
- Pages relating to specific campaigns

Rare (every year or so)

- Contact information
- Agency mission
- Agency values
- Members
- Corporate sponsors
- Issue background
- Basic information about your services
- Government contact information

Organize the site logically

Organize the site so that it is intuitive.

Don't bury information too deeply.

Never clutter.

Remember who your audience is.

<http://www.afsc.org/sitemap.htm>

<http://www.libertynet.org/hap/>

<http://www.nlchp.org/>

<http://child-abuse.com/>

Attract visitors

Get them once and keep them coming back.

- Send e-mail ticklers
- Include your URL on business cards and brochures
- Include URL in advertisements, sponsorships
- List with search engines
- Ask other agencies to link to your site
- Ask news outlets to include your URL when they report on your agency's activities

Resources

Effective Web design strategy

<http://www.onenw.org/toolkit/webdesign/>

<http://nonprofit.about.com/careers/nonprofit/msubtech.htm>
“Building an Effective Web Site”

<http://www.helping.org/nonprofit/inthefield.adp>

<http://www.tlc-systems.com/webtips.shtml>

<http://webdesign.about.com/compute/webdesign/library/weekly/aa091998.htm>

<http://www.nonprofitwebsites.com/> - download *Cutting through the E-maze*

Resources

Working with Web designers and developers

<http://www.onenw.org/toolkit/webconsultant.html>

Help building the site (for the HTML-savvy)

<http://www.webmonkey.com>

<http://www.w3.org/MarkUp/Guide/>

<http://werbach.com/barebones/download.html> “The Bare Bones Guide to HTML”