

The Four P's to Create Websites that Attract Donors and Constituents

Nonprofit Hub states that only 35% of nonprofits list their website as effective to growing their mission. And only half indicated that their website is responsive. Nonprofit technology has a ways to go.

Overview

Statistics indicate people connect with your mission on your website and want to donate online. And yet, data proves that only half of all nonprofits have a responsive website or any ecommerce available. Factor in that more than half of all people looking at your website are doing so on their mobile device.

In other words, nonprofits are missing their opportunity to increase contributions to make their nonprofit more successful.



According to GuideStar, people want a nonprofit's financial picture including how it spends money; the basics of the organization—its mission, approach, and make up; breadth and depth of the cause; and impact.

Purpose

A website needs a strategy — something you intend for your users to do. For nonprofit organizations, users need to understand your mission and goals, your stories and successes (how you make a difference), and how they can help through volunteering and contributing.

What's your mission?

You can include verbatim what's on your board documents and what you share with volunteers, but at the end of the day the mission needs to be understandable and relatable. People have to walk away from your mission with a clear understanding of how your organization hopes to make the world a better place.

The imagery should match that, too. If your nonprofit helps children, have pictures of children. If your nonprofit helps the planet, have pictures of the planet. Better still, have real images you've taken of your own constituents — the people or thing you're helping.

By listing goals, people will understand how you're trying to make a difference and how much you're trying to raise to do it. Your goals should include updates — like where you are in the process of meeting those targets.

Stories and successes

Stories are powerful, especially for nonprofits. People would rather watch your constituents telling their story than see your story, especially if your nonprofit helps people. Use video. It increases engagement and improves search engine optimization (SEO).

Successes should focus on how your nonprofit is making a difference. What's changed because of your organization? How is your nonprofit helping?

Donations and volunteering

Not everyone who visits your website will donate. That's a given. But ... they may decide to volunteer. Having their time is good, but it's proven that those who volunteer are more likely to donate.

For every 1,000 visitors, a nonprofit raises \$612.



People

Who are the people you serve? Who volunteers? Who donates?

Write with your audience in mind

Nonprofits are lucky in that they know — generally — the people who are donating to them. Writing to these different people and using their language is good marketing. And although you may not be in marketing, you'll need to understand when creating a website what they're expecting.

Is your nonprofit about health and wellness? Animals? These images and videos should be on your website. People will resonate with them.



Also, many marketing people determine related content and interests. For example, if your website is about the health and wellness of children, there could be educational information on the website.

Gen Xers, women who are married and graduated from college, overall are the biggest donors.



Plan

Make it easy-to-use and easy to navigate

When thinking of how to organize content, think not about being creative, but instead about conveying information. Often, these are the sections provided on a nonprofit: About Us, Contact Us, Our Mission, Programs, Events, Volunteer and Donate. You won't have all of them. And despite what you might think, Donate should be a large button that comes last in your list of options to do so it can get noticed.

Create clear calls-to-action

A call to action is the primary thing you want people to do on each page. On the Programs page, you'll want people to review the available classes or programs you have. And yet, probably the primary action for the site is to donate. Calls-to-action shouldn't be "click here." They should start with a verb and quickly convey what you want to say: Donate Now.

Make it responsive

What is it? It's ensuring optimal design for your website -- no scrolling or inability to see information.

Because more than 50% of people are using their smartphones and tablets to look at your website, you'll want to make your page responsive. Some people wonder about responsive versus creating a mobile app. Mobile apps are great for things to do while in the mobile app. Responsive is an easy and cheaper way, usually, to ensure your website displays on a myriad screens and sizes. In fact, you'll probably want to make your website responsive even if you do have a mobile app to ensure your website will be used correctly, no matter the browser or device.

Add eCommerce

Electric commerce, like PayPal or Kickstarter, can provide a way to donate without extending or implementing technology. By leveraging an organization outside your own, you can also ensure security.

Add social media

Social media, like Instagram, should be located on your site. In fact, you should have a presence in every major social media channel where it makes sense. For example, if your nonprofit is about businesses, maybe your primary channel is LinkedIn. Regardless, let people decide where they want to join you.

A photograph of a man in a light-colored shirt standing and pointing at a whiteboard in a meeting room. Several people are seated around a table, looking towards the whiteboard. The room has a wall made of horizontal wooden planks. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

Promote for performance

Ensure technology exists for promotion

- Social media — Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat
- Emails
- Newsletters
- Blasts
- Blogs like WordPress

Your marketing team will need these and more created, including links to events, programs, and other materials. Ensure they have everything set up to make that promotion easy.

Review performance — use analytics

See how your website is performing. Review bounce rate -- the rate at which people bounce away from your website -- views, visitors, and which content or pages are resonating.

Perform search engine optimization

Refine the words you use in your website to attract donors. By using the words your constituents and donors use, you'll increase people coming to our site and increasing donations.