

Association Website DO's and DON'Ts

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Make every dollar count by ensuring you implement the best decisions and avoid common pitfalls.

Your website is a portal to your association. The first thing many potential members see. The go-to place for members to find information and network. A showcase for your industry presence. The problem is most associations have limited budgets and resources to put toward this all important marketing tool. So, make every dollar count by ensuring you implement the best decisions and avoid common pitfalls. This list of association website DO's and unfortunate DON'Ts comes from association executive directors, association management company leadership, and web developers. Keep these tips in mind if you are thinking about designing or redesigning an association website.

- **DO** consider moving more information out of the members' only area. This will encourage potential members to join by "showing" rather than "telling" them about the value of membership and highlighting your association's vast knowledge of the industry. It may increase an individual's desire to link themselves to your organization and become a part of your community. You can still keep deeper content (e.g., practice-related discussions,

database access) restricted to members only.

- **DO** focus on simple navigation. Thankfully, the days of dual navigation panels and drill down menus are (or should be) behind us. Group your content in a way that will be meaningful to users, clearly label navigation with terms familiar to your members, and keep it simple.
- **DO** integrate your website with your membership database. Your members will love the ability to update their address, search for colleagues or pay membership fees online. It makes you look technologically savvy and saves staff time.
- **DO** keep content fresh and relevant. Members and other users need a reason to keep coming back to your website. Industry relevant news, updates on association events and educational offerings will keep your users involved and help your association appear current and informed.
- **DO** use a content management software application. This will allow your staff to make updates to website content and text,

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On the Road

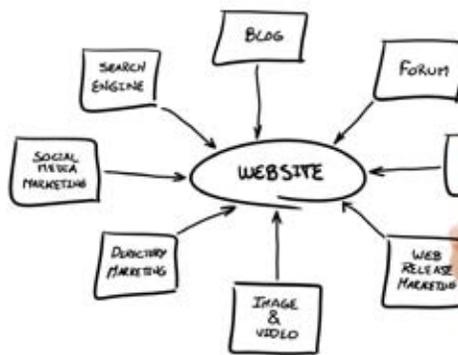
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Holiday Schedule

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keeping your website fresh and up-to-date without heavy programming fees. Choose one with a content approval process and the ability to set a future release date for updates.

- **DO** include a search function. One drawback of simple navigation and continually refreshing content is the need to ensure users can quickly find the information they seek. A robust search feature will solve this problem, reduce the number of frustrated website users and allow your site to be a true resource to members.
- **DO** use social media to communicate with members. For example, set-up a Twitter feed for your conference or use LinkedIn for discussion groups. Be sure to use social media to your advantage, but avoid sharing sensitive materials or



using less stable sites that may come and go.

- **DO** analyze your website statistics regularly to ensure your website is truly effective. Bounce rates, user browser details and navigation paths will help you tweak your site to continue serving your consumers and identify problem pages and navigation.
- **DON'T** let anyone else own your website content. Avoid using internet service providers, website design firms or management companies that won't release your website content and code, even if they agree to perform website services for less money. It will create problems down the road and likely end up costing you more in the long run.
- **DON'T** be too quick to adopt an open source platform for your website. Carefully consider all the pros and cons of each program. These programs may

provide a cost effective alternative, but can limit the portability of your website, especially if customized to fit your business. They may also lack technical growth and client support commitment.

- **DON'T** forget your users. Always remind yourself and your web design team of your target audience and anticipate their needs. Ask yourself: will they use this? Will they see value in that? If they are a highly mobile group of users, do not build an overly designed site with intricate moving parts that won't transfer to mobile devices – simply because you got carried away with the cool look of the design.
- **DON'T** use only generic artwork. Website images should be meaningful. Using stock art is okay, and is often the only option with a limited budget. However, be sure to choose images with meaning and a relationship to your field or users. You often see the same photo used in

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New Business:

The **National Association for Health Care Recruitment** (NAHCR) provides tools to promote the expertise and influence of health care recruiters through advocacy, education, and professional development. NAHCR is a member organization of over 800 individual recruiters employed in hospitals and health systems nationwide and is a “niche” organization which focuses on recruitment and retention. As of September 2011, AMP Management Services, a division of AMP, began providing full management services for NAHCR including executive leadership, executive office duties, board and committee support, membership services, marketing, and meeting and conference planning. For more information about NAHCR, please visit www.nahcr.com.

Web analytics is the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of internet data for the purpose of understanding and optimizing web usage and using the data to make recommendations to organizations to improve their bottom line. The **Web Analytics Association** (WAA) leads, unites and fosters the interests of the web analytics field by standardizing the terms, definitions and practices used in the industry along with influencing legislation and uniting web analytic professionals, consultants and end-users. WAA has also implemented a training and certification program to strengthen the professionalism in the industry. WAA selected AMP to provide computer-based

testing services for the Web Analyst Certification Program™. The WAA Web Analyst examination is now offered in over 250 AMP assessment center locations across the United States and internationally. For more information about WAA and its certification program, visit www.webanalyticsassociation.org.

Strategic Meetings...



Wade Delk,
Director of Governmental Affairs

The Hill. It's a place where agendas and initiatives can be made or lost, and most associations find themselves headed to the Hill at some point. Association leaders are often skilled at their business, but the Hill isn't your typical business environment.

While there are similarities when preparing for a business presentation and a Congressional office meeting, there are a few significant differences which can mean the difference between success or failure. With business meetings, you often need to get your message across to a group of individuals. In Congressional meetings, you are likely to only be meeting with one individual and you must keep them focused on your message. The staff members of Congressmen and Senators hear from numerous people and groups every week, so they are good at listening. Or, unfortunately in some cases, good at tuning you out while still giving the appearance of paying attention. They are busy and have a lot of people clamoring for their attention and time, so what you say needs to be noteworthy and interesting.

What can you do to get their attention, keep it and make them seriously consider your cause? Read on for a few tips.

1. Be Prepared...with multiple approaches

It is important to be well prepared for any type of meeting. Always do your research and fully understand the topic you are presenting. For a meeting on the Hill, it is beneficial to prepare even further, although your meeting may be even shorter. Come up with at least three different ways to explain your topic. Congressional meetings can be unpredictable and you never know what questions you will be asked, so being prepared is the only way to give your initiative a fair chance.

2. Be Flexible

In a business meeting, you likely have a feel for how much knowledge your audience has about the topic of discussion. On the Hill, this may not be the case, so don't assume you know the individuals level of understanding. This means you need to be flexible. After your introduction, ask them "what do you know about this issue?" Let them know it is okay if they don't know anything at all. Based on their answer, you can proceed. If you find out they know a great deal about your topic, you can't plow ahead with a script covering the basics. Luckily, you have prepared at least

three approaches to your topic, so you can change course and get right to the point. You do not have a lot of time to talk with Congressional staffers, and telling them what they already know is wasting valuable face time. So be flexible. With good preparation, this is easy.

3. Don't Rely on Visual Aids

In a typical business meeting, you often have the ability to use PowerPoint slides or other media in your presentation. On the Hill, you won't have the time or access for visual aids greater than a sheet of paper or two. Trying to rely on visual aids will make you seem unfocused and eat into the valuable time you have been granted. You must rely on pure presentation and conversation skills. Make your point with words and leave behind more information (e.g., talking points, position paper) for them to consider at a later time.

4. Keep Them Involved

Finally, make sure they stay engaged. Find ways to make them a part of the conversation. Use phrases like "If you were in this situation what would you do?", or "Do you know anybody that has been affected by this?" Make it a real question, not just a statement, and wait for them to answer. The more you can make them a part of the discussion, the more successful you will be. Often people become more engaged when you help them relate to your cause in some way. They will then be more likely to participate in the conversation, making your time with them more memorable. A memorable meeting is a good thing.

There is no magic "one size fits all" way to handle a meeting on the Hill and no surefire way to get Congressional representatives to do what you want, but you can maximize your chances of success by understanding that Congressional meetings are different than standard business meetings and preparing appropriately for the sometimes tricky audience. This will help to make your meetings with Congressional offices the best they can be.





publications across many disciplines and types of media. You won't fall into this trap if you stick to photos and graphics that are specific and relevant.

- **DON'T** treat Search Engine Optimization (SEO) as a one time effort. Designing a website with increased SEO is a must, but don't stop there. Keep your content fresh, find other relevant websites to link back to your site, and regularly search your own keywords to ensure they remain relevant and you maintain your search position.

Your website is likely your most important marketing tool, so be sure to take the time and resources to do it right. By keeping true to your mission and listening to your audience, you can create a dynamic website which is truly an extension of your association.

**CLEAR
Mid-Year Business
Meeting**

1/5/2012 – 1/7/2012
Charleston, South Carolina

ABC Annual Conference

1/17/2012 – 1/20/2012
Tampa, Florida

AMC Institute Annual Meeting

2/8/2012 – 2/10/2012
Rancho Mirage, California

**ATP Innovations in Testing
Conference**

2/26/2012 – 2/29/2012
Palm Springs, California

ABNS Spring Assembly

3/2/2012 - 3/3/2012
St. Petersburg, Florida



Happy Holidays
from AMP to you!

The AMP offices will be closed December 23-26
in observance of the Christmas holiday and
December 31-January 1, 2012 for
New Year's.

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Connected

Visit www.goAMP.com and join our mailing list to receive the eConnect newsletter or sign up for RSS feeds for news and press releases.

We look forward to seeing
you at one of these upcoming
On the Road events!

For more information about any
of our products or services, please contact the AMP
Marketing department at 913.895.4600 or visit our website at www.goAMP.com.

