

Website Promotion

Now that you have created a website and uploaded it into cyberspace, the next step is to promote it both online and offline in order to drive traffic to the site. Encourage your current donors, volunteers, and program participants to use the site and introduce new people to your organization through the information and resources contained on your website. Your website is a tool to engage new and existing friends of your organization and to encourage their further commitment and involvement with your activities. Therefore, it is important to integrate the website and its use with your organization's other ongoing activities and promotions.

Online Promotion

1. **Use page titles.** Each page on your site should have a title that includes your organization's name as well as specific information about the page. For instance, a page about your programs and services might be titled "Organization Name – Programs and Services."
2. **Develop meta tags.** Meta tags are in the heading of your website and are not visible using web browsers. They help search engines find and organize information about your website. Your **description** section should include one or two sentences about your organization's mission. **Keywords** that describe your organization and its activities should be listed and separated by commas. A good technique for choosing keywords is to pretend that you are looking for your organization's website on a search engine like Google or Yahoo! and include the words that you would have used in your search.
3. **Submit your site to search engines.** You can manually submit your site to each search engine from their site. There are also services available that will submit your site to multiple search engines all at once. Avoid paying costly fees for this service – it is fairly simple to do on your own. Visit individual search engine's sites for their submission procedure. It is *very important* that your site has page titles and meta tags before submitting it to search engines.
4. **Have links to your site put on other websites.** Make sure you register with Idealist.org and update your profile at Guidestar.org to include your website's address. Ask webmasters of sites that serve your target market to do a link exchange where each of you would put up a link to the others' site, sometimes with a brief description.
5. **Use email signatures.** In every email that you send out, include your contact information and a link to your website.
6. **Create an opt-in email list.** Gather email addresses submitted from printed and online forms and start a monthly newsletter by email that encourages readers to use various sections of the website. Always provide an opportunity to recipients to 'opt-out' of the list.
7. **Give people an exciting reason to visit your site.** This might include a contest, a free promotional item for visitors, or providing special information that is only available online.
8. **Turn visitors into repeat visitors.** Tailor your content to your target audience and include resources and interactive features to involve them in your online community.

Offline Promotion

1. **Include your website address** on all of your printed materials, including letterhead, business cards, newsletters, brochures, and flyers
2. **Create a flyer or postcard** to announce the new website. Send it to donors, volunteers, neighbors, and anyone else who is involved with your organization.
3. **Tell everyone about it!** Communicate the presence of your site, along with the benefits of using it, to everyone you meet.

To see how many people have visited your site, use a hitcounter. Detailed information about your site's visitors, including time and date of visit, their internet service provider name, the type of web browser they use, and the operating system that they use, are usually provided by either your hit-counter provider or your web hosting service.