



How to Create an Engaging **Membership Website**



We really can't emphasize the importance of your membership website. And we probably don't need to either - you *know* it's critical for attracting prospects and engaging your members.

But how your website looks and what type of content is housed there directly impacts how successful you are at actually accomplishing those goals.

To ensure your website is, in fact, effective, read on for a number of best practices, first, in regards to the public-facing side of your membership website, and second, in regards to the members-only section of your membership website.

The public facing side of your membership website

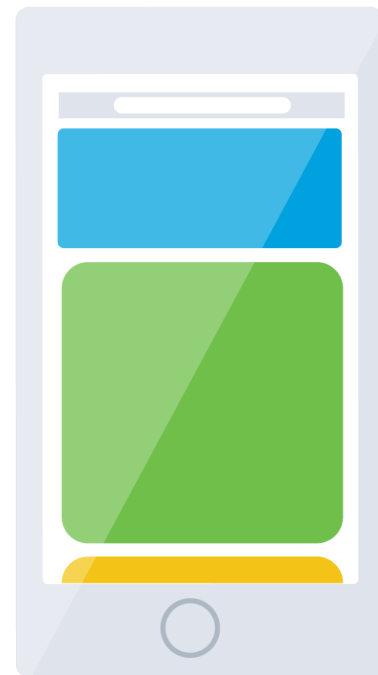
1

A mobile-friendly design

First and foremost, it's *crucial* that your organization's website is mobile-friendly. More than half of website traffic comes from a mobile device, so if your website isn't mobile-friendly, prospects and members are likely to leave...quickly!

In addition to utilizing a responsive web design template, take some time to do a little experimentation. On a mobile device, explore your website a little. Are the pages easy to navigate? Is the copy showing up correctly? (In other words, not distorted or cut off.) Are the calls-to-action (for example, those "Join here!" buttons) showing up correctly, and not only that, but actually easy to click and complete?

These are all components you'll want to test, and not only once, but each time you make any major changes to your organization's website.



2

Intuitive navigation

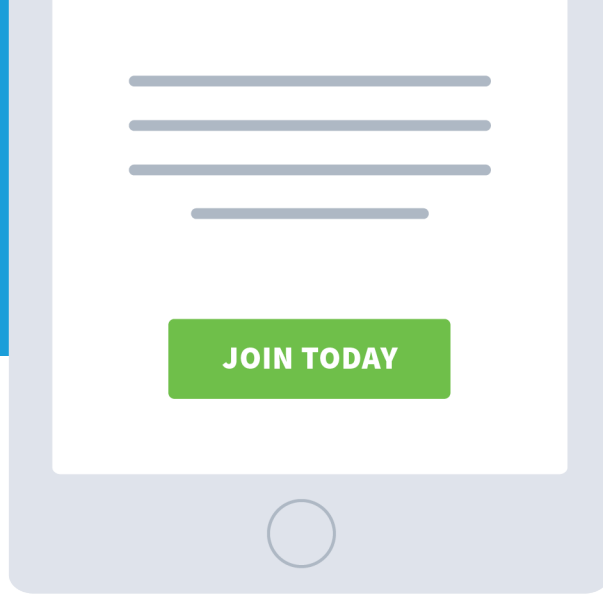
For your website to be engaging, it has to be easy to navigate. Visitors must be able to find the information they're looking for without even really having to think about it.

This is another area where you'll want to do some testing. But this time, we recommend having someone outside of your staff do the testing. Here's why: You and your other staff members are likely very familiar with your organization's website. You may have even been involved in the designing of your website. So naturally, you know where things are and it all makes sense to you.

Have someone who's never seen your website before do a little exploring. Can they easily find your mission? What about your contact information? And perhaps most importantly, do they know where to go and what to do to join?

Anything that's reported back as complicated or confusing, tweak it. The more intuitive your website, the more time visitors will spend there.





3

Compelling calls-to-action

Sometimes, in order to get people to engage with your organization's website, you have to tell them exactly how to engage and what to do next. And that's where calls-to-action, or CTAs, come into play.

You'll want to have calls-to-action placed all throughout your organization's website. *Join here. Register here. Click here to download.*

But those CTAs MUST stand out. You can have them in text form or button form (a combination of both is best), but either way, just make sure they're **clear** and **compelling**. What type of verbiage is going to get people to actually click? Below are a few phrases to try out, but note: You may want to do a little A/B testing to see what actually resonates.

CTAs for membership (to join):

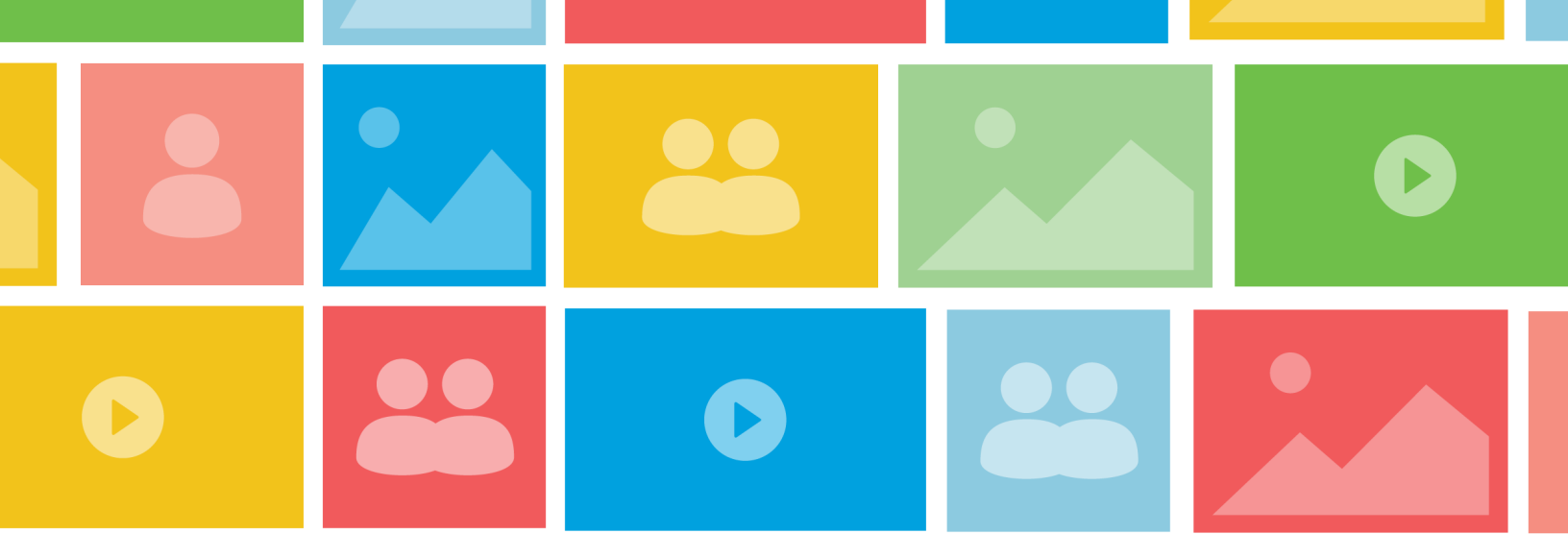
- Join today!
- Become a member
- Grow with us!
- Join the [Industry Name] community!

CTAs for events:

- Register now
- Reserve my seat
- I'll be there!
- I want to come!
- Save me a spot!

CTAs for content:

- Download now
- Learn more
- Get your copy
- Curious? Keep reading



4 High quality visuals

Think about how many websites you visit in a day. Well, all the people who come to your website (both members and non-members) likely visit just as many. So for your website content to stand out and really have an impact, high-quality visuals are a must.

If you don't currently have any high-quality visuals, it would be worth it to hire a photographer for one or two events, at least. You want to showcase your members and offerings (your annual conference with educational breakouts and networking opportunities, for example) in action!

Tip: If finances are tight, before going on the hunt for a professional, full-time photographer, check within your membership first. You may have someone who does photography on the side and wouldn't mind volunteering. Same goes for videography!

And speaking of videography, a few ideas for engaging videos to house on your membership website include:

- A recap of your Annual Conference
- Member testimonials
- Event testimonials
- A brief explanation of your organization's "why" - your mission!

The members-only side of your membership website

1

Fresh content

Engaging prospects on your website is one thing. But engaging members on your website is another, entirely. They're already paying dues, so it's crucial that they visit your website on a regular basis to take advantage of the many member benefits housed there.

To keep members coming back to your website, fresh content is key. Let's say one of your members logged in once last week. Well, what incentive do they have to login again this week?

There has to be something new.

Fresh content on the members-only side of your membership website could include:

- New blog posts
- New reports, white papers, webinar recordings, etc.
- Active conversations in your online social community
- New job listings (if you have a job board)*
- New events on your event calendar

Note: Job boards, in general, are a great way to provide your members with added value. That's a HUGE member benefit. If you're considering a job board for your organization, take a look at [MC | Job Board](#)!

2

Quick links on the member landing page

Getting a member to login is step one. Getting them to stay there and explore is step two.

When a member does login, the page they see upon login - which we tend to refer to as the member landing page - should have a number of “quick links” allowing them to easily take action. Think of that page almost as a launchpad for member engagement. There should be a quick link to their member profile, a quick link to renew, a quick link to view and register for events, etc.

Whatever you want your members to do or whatever they may need to do upon login, make sure it’s extremely easy for them to get to and complete.

Engagement tip: The member landing page is also a great spot to offer fresh content. Make sure you change the featured messaging fairly frequently to prevent your site from appearing “stale.” (Think along the lines of featured news articles or announcements.)

3

Pre-populated form fields

We mentioned earlier that the easier it is for people to interact with your organization’s website, the more likely they are to do so. And one MAJOR way to add in ease for your members is to pre-populate form fields.

Let’s say one of your members has attended an event before, and now they want to register for another. Well, as part of the registration process, would they have to enter all of their basic contact information (name, address, phone number, etc.) again? If you can have those fields pre-populate, that’ll not only save them time, but improve their overall experience.

How exactly do you pre-populate form fields? Well in this case, the easiest way would be to utilize a membership management system. With a software like that, your database would be tied to your website and CRM (among many other things), so pulling and displaying member info would be pretty easy.

Learn about a few membership management options - and key features - [here!](#)

4

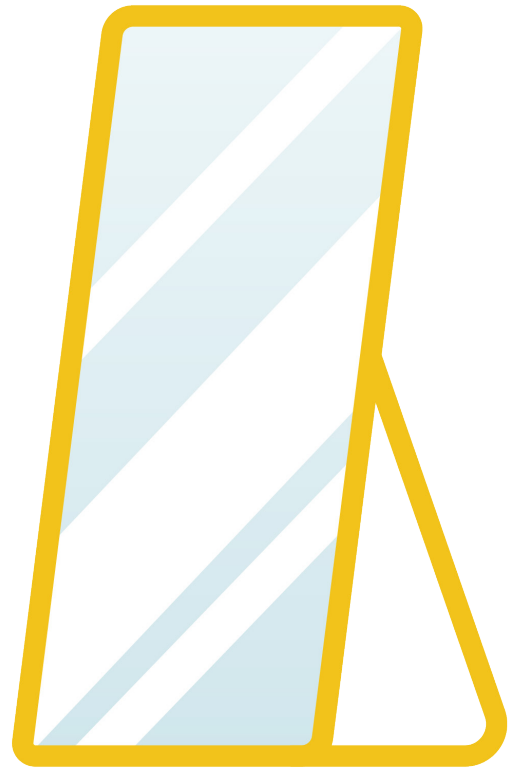
"You" language

Last but not least, for the members-only side of your website to be engaging, it must speak directly *to* your members.

Think about the content on the public-facing side of your membership website for a second. Likely, you may have some “we” language on there (*Our mission is to...*, *Our current board of directors are...*, etc.) - and that’s completely fine! But for the members-only side of your website, you really should have more “you” language in your content and messaging.

For example, if you’re spotlighting an event on the member landing page, rather than saying, “We’re hosting a networking event,” say something along the lines of, “Network with your peers and make long-lasting connections at [Event Name]!”

The difference? It shows the value in it for *them* - and that’s really what they care about!



You absolutely want to have an engaging membership website, but you also want to engage your members in other ways - via email, social media, your events, etc.

For a few more ideas and best practices, check out our free guide, **Membership Engagement for Small-Staff Associations!**



◀ **Click here to check it out!**

More about MemberClicks

MemberClicks offers all the tools that membership organizations need to make the most of the web. From online databases and event registrations to custom-designed websites and member communities, our products are tailor-made for professional associations, trade associations, and chambers of all sizes.

For more information:

- ▶ **Visit us at memberclicks.com**
- ▶ **or call us at 800.914.2441**

You absolutely want to have an engaging membership website, but you also want to engage your members in other ways - via email, social media, your events, etc.

For a few more ideas and best practices, check out our free guide, [Membership Engagement for Associations and Chambers of Commerce!](#)



More about MemberClicks

MemberClicks offers all the tools that membership organizations need to make the most of the web. From online databases and event registrations to custom-designed websites and member communities, our products are tailor-made for professional associations, trade associations, and chambers of all sizes.

For more information:

- ▶ Visit us at memberclicks.com
- ▶ Call us at [800.914.2441](tel:800.914.2441)



