

## Relief Sale Web Site Development Considerations

- I. People will judge your organization by your Web site content.
  - Percentage of population that use the Internet (2007)
    - Canada – 67.8%
    - United States – 69.7%
    - [www.internetworldstats.com/top20.htm](http://www.internetworldstats.com/top20.htm)
  
- II. Put processes in place.
  - A. Decide who is in charge of Web content and Web marketing.
  - B. Schedule updates and stick to the schedule.
  - C. Don't leave it to chance.
  - D. Use Web analysis tools to determine how people were directed to your site.
  - E. Change the Web site every year. This could be as simple as changing the lettering and background colors – causes people to pay attention.
  - F. Include keywords in your site (i.e. quilts, relief sales, benefit auction, MCC, chicken BBQ, handcrafted) to enable your site to appear in as many searches as possible.
  
- III. Decide on your goals.
  - Attendance, purchasing, awareness, etc.
  
- IV. Important considerations in designing your Web site.
  - A. Who is your visitor?
    - Customers, donors, church members?
  
  - B. Purpose should be highly visible.
  
  - C. How will people find the Web site?
    1. Put your web address and email everywhere.
    2. Use print materials to drive traffic to your site.
    3. Put items that change often on your site, then tell customers about it.
    4. Let customers request hardcopies of items such as brochures.
    5. Get as many Web links coming into your Web site as possible.
      - a. This will help your search engine rankings.
      - b. Ask organizations of which you are a member – donors, churches etc. - to link to your site and perhaps do reciprocal linking to their sites.
  
  - D. Decide what you have to offer that sets you apart from other activities competing for people's time and purchase decisions.
  
- V. Contents
  - A. People will return for good, relevant, updated content.
  - B. What do we know that people will be interested in reading and that helps further our goals?

- C. What makes people come back and tell their friends about it?
  - D. Don't let obviously old content stay on your site.
  - E. Focus on making "sticky" contents.  
Sticky content is compelling content that keeps customers/prospects on your Web site longer and keeps them returning.
  - F. Add online coupons
  - G. Post success stories
  - H. Refer to MCC happenings & news (perhaps links)
  - I. Pull latest news, events or other items from other areas of site to front page. Interesting articles on the home page draw many visitors.
  - J. Consider a newsletter page on your site with updates and requests – both for volunteers and proposed attendees.
  - K. Add a Press Release section on your Web site. Viewers can read of your activities and latest information. List the Press Releases in date order with the newest first.
  - L. Include year-round activities.
  - M. Include printable forms – i.e. donor forms.
  - N. Include testimonials on your Web site from satisfied customers.
- VI. Be credible.  
Even though phone numbers and email addresses are the most requested forms of contact information, having a physical mailing address on the site might be more important because it is one of the key credibility markers.
- VII Good site structure
- A. Make it easy to find important information.
  - B. Have a good design, *but design alone does not make it good.*
  - C. Put careful thought into site outline.
  - D. Don't let the site get confusing.
  - E. Along with main navigation, add organized links to crucial areas of the site on the front page.
  - F. Do not have any broken elements.
  - G. Make it easy to load, print, and search.
  - H. Advise them ahead of time if the form to be printed is in PDF format.
  - I. Avoid bad midi music, clip art, waving flags, barking dogs, distracting backgrounds, animated lightning bolts etc. (see [www.webpagesthatsuck.com](http://www.webpagesthatsuck.com))
  - J. The initial page should come up QUICKLY because many people still have the 56k modems and so accessing the site is slow.
  - K. Ask someone to try out your web site before going "live". If site is up and running, periodically ask someone to log on and give you their comments. Add a "give us your feedback" link.
- VIII Include Penny Power information and links to information sites such as [www.pennypower.org](http://www.pennypower.org) and [www.mcc.org/reliefsales](http://www.mcc.org/reliefsales) where they can find information regarding other relief sales..

- IX If you have the available expertise:
  - A. Reserve seating online
  - B. Pre-register for bid numbers
  - C. Allow people to place reserve bids.
  
- X Review other Relief Sale Web sites at [www.mcc.org/reliefsales](http://www.mcc.org/reliefsales).
  - A. If you have a tip that might help other relief sales, send to Relief Sale coordinator to post on list serv.
  - B. If you have questions about web sites, post your question on the Relief Sale List Serv or send to coordinator. Someone may have an answer!
  
- XI. Search online for free Web creation tips.

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