



WEBSITE DESIGN FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

INITIAL STEPS

Early on you will want to make decisions about:

- ☐ Who will be involved?
 - Board, committee, staff, clients
 - What roles will they play?
 - Content writers, brainstorming team, researchers, testers/evaluators
- ☐ Your timelines
 - When do you need the website completed?
 - How long will it take to gather information, write content and make decisions on the design?
- ☐ Your budget
 - What is your budget for the website?
 - Note: You can always add features and content to your site at a later date
- ☐ Will you need a password protected staff/board area?
 - Password protected pages allow staff and/or board members to share information
- ☐ Do you want a static site or Content Management System (CMS)?
 - See the [Black Cap Design blog](#) for information
- ☐ Who will manage content updates for the site?
 - Your team or the team at Black Cap Design?
- ☐ Review your existing marketing material – brochures, newsletters etc.
 - Is it up to date; will you be changing it in the near future?



Initial Steps continued:

- ☐ Agree on a decision-making process
 - Who will be involved in making decisions about design and content?
 - Who will be the primary contact person – the person who will liaise with Black Cap Design?
- ☐ Agree on the goals of the website
 - Who is your primary audience - clients, funders, donors, colleagues?
 - What message do you want to send?
 - E.g., caring, educational, engaging, entertaining
 - What is the primary purpose of the site?
 - E.g., to provide information, solicit donations, market your services, update clients, sell a product, recruit volunteers and/or raise awareness?
- ☐ Have staff and board members gather example sites they like
 - Ask them why they like these sites

Note: Members of your team may have different goals. For example, the Fundraiser in the organization may see the site as an ideal place to attract donors, while the Volunteer Coordinator may see it as a place to reach out to new volunteers, and the Executive Director may see it as a way of providing information to funders. It will be important to prioritize these goals, because each goal will require a different style and content delivery approach, in order to attract and capture the attention of these different audiences.



SITE STRUCTURE

In addition to a homepage you will likely require a number of primary pages and tertiary pages. The design and flow of your site will depend on the needs of your organization. Black Cap Design can assist you in this process. The list below outlines some pages you may want to consider as well as some possible content for those pages

☐ Home Page

- Mission Statement or an introduction to the organization (see about page)
- Goals of the organization
- Links to a donation area, volunteer area and/or a newsletter sign-up

☐ About Page

- Overview, description of the organization
- History of the organization
- Successes, past projects, awards, community involvement

☐ Contact Page

- Office address, phone number and general email
- Map and/or directions – e.g. 3 blocks east of ...
- Staff and board contact information (phone numbers, extensions, emails)
 - Pictures and bios
 - You could also have a separate Board/Staff page for this information (see Board and/or Staff Page, below)
- Contact form



Site Structure continued:

☐ Programs, Services and/or Projects

- One page or a page for each program, service and/or project
 - Including a summary, application guidelines, testimonials, pictures
- Application form
- Contact information

☐ Volunteer Information

- Application form
- Roles and training
- Volunteer appreciation events
- Testimonials
- Profiles of current volunteers
- Contact information

☐ Board and/or Staff Page

- Pictures (group or individual), profiles and contact information
- Annual General Meeting (date, location, pictures, summary)
- Annual Reports

☐ Fundraising

- Event profiles and pictures
- Thank-you notes
- Donation link

☐ News or Blog

- News, announcement and events (with a newsletter archive)
- Events calendar



Site Structure continued:

☐ Resources

- Links and PDFs with information for clients and/or community partners
- Links to funders
- Links to community partners
- Links to national organizations

☐ FAQ

☐ Site Map

- This makes it easier for people to find information on your site

☐ Password protected staff and board page

- Policies and procedures
- Minutes and reports
- Internal postings
- Job descriptions

☐ Careers/Job Postings

☐ Media Information

- Press releases
- Media package
- Images



IMAGES

Images on a website are very important. They need to catch the attention of your visitors and send a clear message. Therefore each picture needs to be optimized to work in the space you have available; you want to avoid blurry images. [Contact Black Cap Design](#) for more information about preparing images for your website.

Your site can have static images, transitioning images or an image gallery.

- ☐ Review your organization's marketing and/or design guidelines
 - Does your organization have a Style Guide consisting of a logo, colour scheme, and a list of preferred fonts?
 - Is there a guideline for marketing content/wording?
- ☐ What pictures do you want to include on your site?
 - People, buildings, events
 - Do you have permission to use the pictures - release forms?
- ☐ Will you purchase royalty-free stock images?
 - Stock images are professionally produced photos, illustrations and movie clips that are available for purchase online
 - Black Cap Design can assist you in finding stock images or we can find the images for you



CONTENT

You will need to write content for the site or hire someone to write it for you. Please contact Black Cap Design for information about our content writing and editing services. You can also [visit our blog for guidelines on writing content for the web](#). For example, keep it brief and include words you think people might search for when looking for the services you offer.

Note: If you have more than one person involved in writing material, it will help to set specific timelines for submitting their content.

You will need to decide what to include on your site:

- ☐ Is there information you must include?
- ☐ Can you use existing content as a guide e.g. your marketing material/brochures
- ☐ Do you have PDFs you can use?
- ☐ Do you have testimonials from clients you would like to include?

Note: For consistency, select one person to compile and edit the final version.

- ☐ Pull together all of the content you want to include on your site
 - Save content in separate files – one for each page
 - Review and discuss the content with the team – review it as if you were a visitor to the site
 - Does it flow well?
 - Is there a common voice, tone and message?
 - Will it meet the needs of a person visiting your site?