

The complete cause driven website

The pyramid approach to a powerful online presence



**Freerange
Future**

Creating for cause & culture



Who is this document for?

Nonprofit organisations that want to grow.

Nonprofit organisations keen to learn about best practice in digital marketing.

Nonprofit organisations who want to engage with their supporters more effectively.

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Who is this book for?

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Anyone who works in a cause driven organisation that is committed to excellence.

Charity, NFP, social enterprise, for purpose, CSR or community engagement within government.

New website projects or improvement to existing sites.

More than just financial success, a greater purpose drives you. You need a community around you to achieve this purpose; people to know, share, participate in what you do. People to believe in your purpose and perhaps for it to become their purpose too.

Your website is key to your success in achieving that purpose. It is a facilitator for building your community.

People won't be forgiving if your website is substandard, in fact a lack of professionalism will quickly undermine trust in your organisation. People won't flock to you just because you're doing good. You need to be excellent.

Perhaps you already have a site, perhaps you're about to embark on creating one. Within the pages of this book we've documented numerous insights, highly relevant to purpose driven organisations, that together form the pyramid approach for a *complete cause driven website*.

Embracing the pyramid approach will significantly enhance your efforts to connect with people and build a community around your purpose, ultimately supporting the tremendous success of your mission.



The pyramid approach for a cause driven website is a model of balance. It considers the needs of you and your community. It looks at the big picture, provides a strong foundation and strives for improvement.

This approach incorporates seven important facets of your site. Each layer of the pyramid influences the next.

BRAND Know yourself and powerfully communicate your purpose and values

STRATEGY Align your website with your business goals, approach your site with a long term plan

EXPERIENCE Understand what your community want and help them achieve it

CONTENT Communicate effectively with all your audiences

INTERFACE Build a site that encourages action

IMPROVEMENT Regularly make your site more efficient and effective

PLATFORM Ensure that your website has a foundation for success.

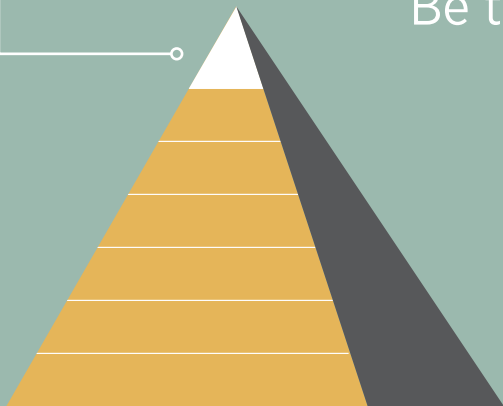


1.

Brand

People connect with your cause through shared values and an alignment of purpose. You must consistently communicate these throughout your website but most importantly you need to live your values and purpose every day.

Be the shining light that attracts a community.



Know who you are

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If you're going to build a rapport with people and develop a following, a community aligned with your purpose, you need to be very clear about who you are.

Every graphic designer will tell you that your brand is more than a logo, it's how you represent yourself in every touchpoint with the consumer, it's fonts and colours and consistent messaging. Well every graphic designer is half right. Your brand is more than a logo but it's not just a suite of expensive design work.

Your purpose is what you do and the change you seek. **Your brand is who you are and why you do it.** It's the values at the heart of your organisation. It's why you get up in the morning and why you work late. It's what sets you apart from most and brings your community to you.

People will be attracted and inspired by your purpose but it's shared values and beliefs that will create a community.

Your brand is the story you tell about yourself. It's your values and purpose and vision. Yes it's your logo, your website, all that design work. It's how you speak to people, how you engage your community.

Your brand is who you are.

So your website needs to look 'on brand' but it must also embody your values and tell your story. You need to be very clear what that story is. People should be able to understand your values, not just from a page called *Our Values* but because everything you say and do on the website is aligned with your values.

If you can't tell your story in a compelling way or if you're not living your values then you need to work on more than just your website.

[Download](#) 'Five steps to nonprofit brand brilliance'



Messaging

Simply put, messaging is the language you use to talk about who you are and what drives you. This expression of your cause is the essential points you make when you are reaching out to your community. A framework should be established to help you use your messaging consistently and appropriately.

Applying your messaging framework within the strategy, content and interface of your website will ensure that people clearly understand what you're working for and feel a strong affiliation to you.

MISSION

A powerful single sentence that sums up why your cause exists.

VISION

Another powerful single sentence that tells of what the future looks like with your mission fully realised.

VALUES

What are the strongest motivations for your cause? These must be articulated since cause driven organisations are led by values and those values are vital in connecting with community.

TAGLINE

A memorable phrase that works alongside your name to add context to your organisation or cause. A tagline might restate your mission or add a dimension of extra meaning for the community.

BRAND STORY

The power of story can build trust and endearment. Your brand story is the empathetic connection you tell of your cause that embodies your values in a way that resonates with your community.

NARRATIVE

This is how you tell your brand story. Who is your voice? What's your character?

POSITIONING STATEMENT

Your claim of expertise that sets you apart.

REASSURANCE STATEMENT

Who it is that you help and how you do it.

ELEVATOR PITCH

Combine your positioning statement and reassurance statement. Should be told in 30 seconds or less.



The first impression

People arriving at your site for the first time ask:

“
Am I in the right place?
Is this organisation credible?
Are they professional?
Do I fit in here?
What should I do on this site?
How can I help?
Why should I help?
”

The success of a website does not rest solely on visual design, but design plays a vital role in making a strong and positive first impression. Just like when meeting a new person for the first time, website users quickly make a subjective judgement on credibility and character. It happens subconsciously and in a split second. When meeting a person you don't resonate with in real life you'll probably tolerate them for a while, but website users will very quickly click away and find another site.

If you want to make a great first impression, consider these suggestions that we've modified from Women's Weekly *How to be charming at dinner parties*. Just joking. Although these tips probably would help you at a dinner party.

DON'T WASTE THEIR TIME

Be clear and get to the point so they know they're in the right place and what to expect on this site.

SHARE YOUR VALUES

Remember that people connect with you through shared values and purpose. You don't have to list your values on your homepage. You have to live them at all times.

HELP THEM ENGAGE

Don't overwhelm with too much info.

Be clear on what actions they can take and especially what you want them to do on the site.

KEEP YOUR WHOLE HOUSE IN ORDER

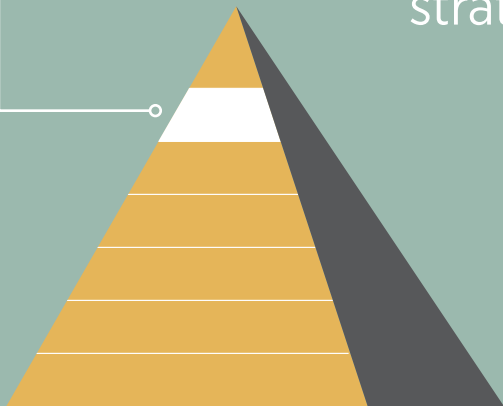
People don't always enter through your homepage. They might find a blog post or product page first. In this case they'll still have the same concerns so you need to make them comfortable wherever they land.



2. Strategy

Strategy is the high-level plan you develop to achieve long-term goals. It's not the tools or tactics that you use along the way.

Website strategy can be challenging to formulate because it is the coming together of many different organisational strategies.



Digital strategy

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When people talk about digital strategy they often mean their digital marketing plan but digital strategy is much more than marketing.

Digital strategy is a broad term that can involve every aspect of an organisation that is touched by digital. That scope can include sales, marketing, relationship management, support, IT infrastructure, governance, knowledge management, customer experience and more.

As you can see, your website has a role to play in most of these business functions and so your site is quite central to digital strategy but at the same time your website is going to be influenced by a number of other strategies.

We use the term *website strategy* to describe these overlapping priorities and to differentiate from the broad digital strategy.

BUSINESS STRATEGY

Your website is the public face of your organisation and more and more is becoming the engine room of your business. As such it should be significantly aligned with achieving your business goals. Depending on the focus of your organisation your business strategy will also incorporate strategies for

campaigning, fundraising and other key functions. These will include have your website as a central driver of success.

MARKETING STRATEGY

Your website isn't just a marketing tool but it certainly is important for achieving your marketing objectives. When planning the scope of your website, marketing goals should be layered on top of business goals, supporting and not overriding them.

CONTENT STRATEGY

Looking through another lens, your website is mostly made up of content. Whatever the purpose of that content it has common characteristics. Content is information with a purpose, format, audience and often a finite lifespan.

Content strategy defines the processes, governance and tools used to manage content within your organisation. Without a robust content strategy your website will quickly become unmanageable.

Content strategy is the key organising approach to supporting both business and marketing strategies.



Website strategy

So website strategy involves business, marketing and content strategy and often other competing priorities within an organisation's digital strategy.

Business and marketing strategies help us answer these questions:

What does the website aim to achieve?

Whom does the site aim to engage?

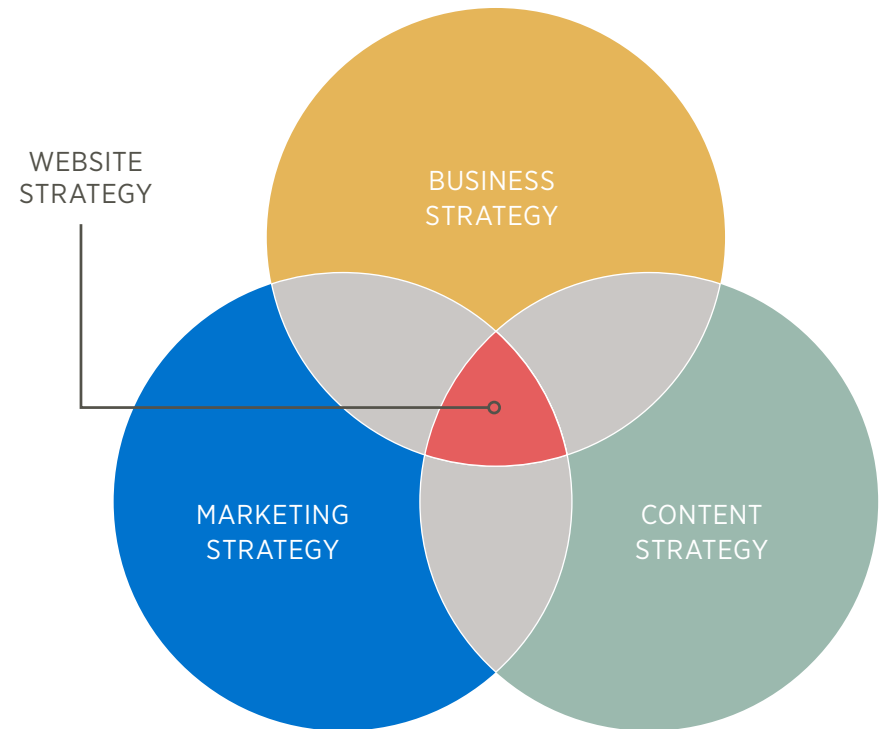
How will it engage those people in order to achieve those goals?

Content strategy facilitates that engagement and also supports the ongoing life of the site. The final aspect of a website strategy determines how you will go about creating and maintaining the site.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The standard approach to creating a website is to thoroughly research and document the scope of the site, design it, then build it. After launch this website will see regular content updates but perhaps little investment in continuous improvement, leading to another website being developed and replacing it within three to five years.

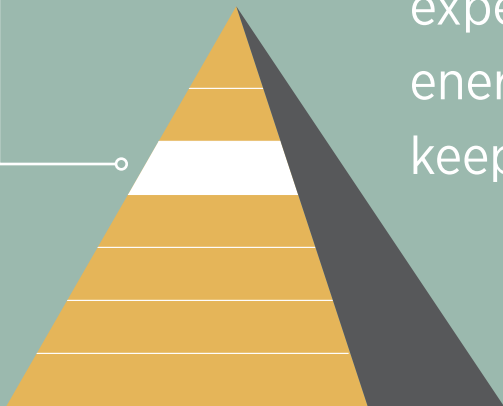
An alternative approach to implementation strategy has been embraced in recent years. Known as growth driven design or evolutionary web strategy, it is a form of continuous improvement. The approach involves launching a simpler website sooner in order to quickly get impact and test the effectiveness of the website in the real world. This website is regularly improved with new functionality which leads to a longer lived, more effective website and ultimately saves money.



3. Experience

Those who visit your website, who might support you and your cause, are more than just a member, donor or customer. They're individual people with their own goals, needs and quirks.

Successful purpose driven organisations focus on experience in order to achieve their purpose. They devote energy to understanding and supporting their people; keeping them happy, making things relevant and easy.



UX and UI

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In the web design business you'll hear lots of talk of UX and UI. Often these terms are used interchangeably but they are different things.

UX means User Experience

Where the customer experience encompasses all aspects of a person's interactions with your organisation, services and products, UX considers the interactions they have on your website. It's all about improving the quality of the user's experience.

UX focuses on understanding what your users need, what they value, their abilities and their limitations. It also considers your organisational goals and strategy. All of this knowledge is used in the design process to make it easier, quicker and more enjoyable for people to achieve their goals.

Since your audience is typically made up of many different people with widely different objectives and abilities, great UX requires specialist expertise and considerable experience to accommodate them all. It's a vital investment that significantly contributes to your website supporting your cause.

UI means User Interface

User interface design is one element of user experience. It's the parts of the website that a user directly interacts with, the face of UX. Being a face it needs to be readable, friendly, clear and consistent.

A good user interface has these characteristics

Strongly represents your brand

Consistent design and functionality

Easy for all users to find what they're looking for

Easy for all users to achieve their goals



Personas

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Thousands of people will visit your website over the years. Millions maybe. Each one a beautiful and unique snowflake. How can we possibly think about the diversity of individuals and accommodate the multitude of ways that they interact?

You can find many commonalities when you look at large groups of people. You don't have to consider every individual, you can in fact divide your audience up into a handful of groups, known as segments. The characteristics that define your segments include demographics like age, gender, income, education levels or psychographic aspects such as their goals, lived experience, beliefs and values.

A persona is a fictitious character that represents a segment. They have a name, a photo, a background story and a goal. Using personas in the user experience work of your website or when developing a marketing campaign helps you to have empathy and connection with people in your community.

For instance a website related to cancer might have three personas: a person with cancer, a survivor and a relative. These are three very different conversations to have which the site can focus on when once these personas are identified.

You can use insights from personas to help figure out what people want to achieve, how they would go about it and what you can do to help them achieve it.

How do you know which segment a person fits into, which persona represents them? Sometimes the information you have in your database is enough to determine this. Alternatively you could ask them questions to help them self-select into a segment or even better, can design your website so that there is a clear path for each persona to follow.

Download 'The secrets of compelling nonprofit marketing'



User journeys

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Not everyone who visits your website or sits in your database is ready to buy, donate, become a member or take the other actions that you want them to do. Your personas should take this into account, developing a theory of what they need to experience in order to take action. You can consider the steps people take from landing on your website to taking that action as a journey.

In fact, we often think of the customer journey with a wider perspective. It starts when they first encounter your organisation and continues through the relationship. User journeys span different channels. Perhaps they find you on social media, sign up to your mailing list and after a while they're inspired to take that action.

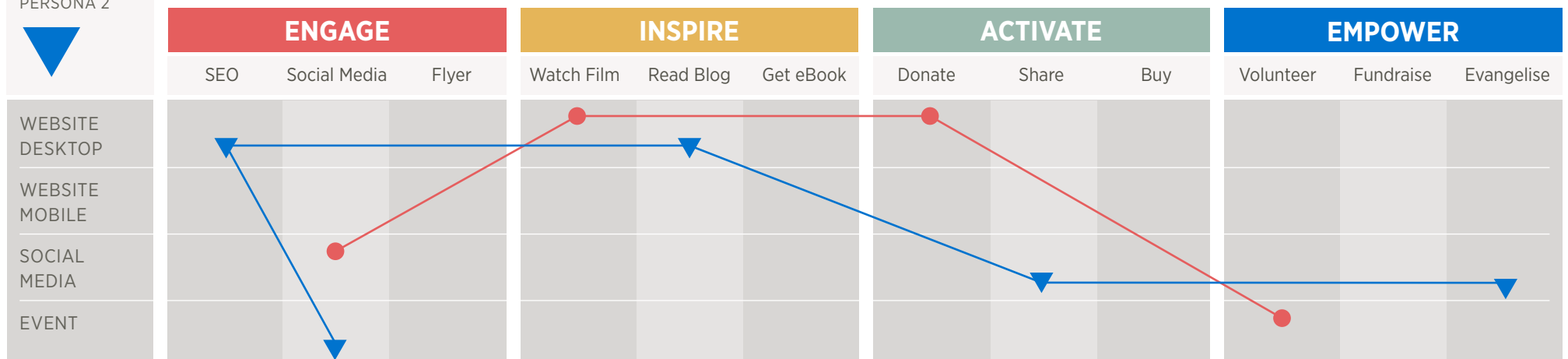
You can visualise this with a user journey map, a graphic tool that clearly describes each step in the journey. The map can include more than the channels and actions in the journey. You might find it insightful to map the emotions of the customer at each step or their level of affinity with you.

User journey maps can be a powerful tool for making things easier, faster and more impactful for your users as well as more effective for your organisation. Consider mapping the customer journey that people currently take in order to identify any problems, frustrations or inefficiencies. Then map a new journey that will address all these issues. It's a win-win, good for you and good for your users.

Angie
PERSONA 1



Simon
PERSONA 2



User testing

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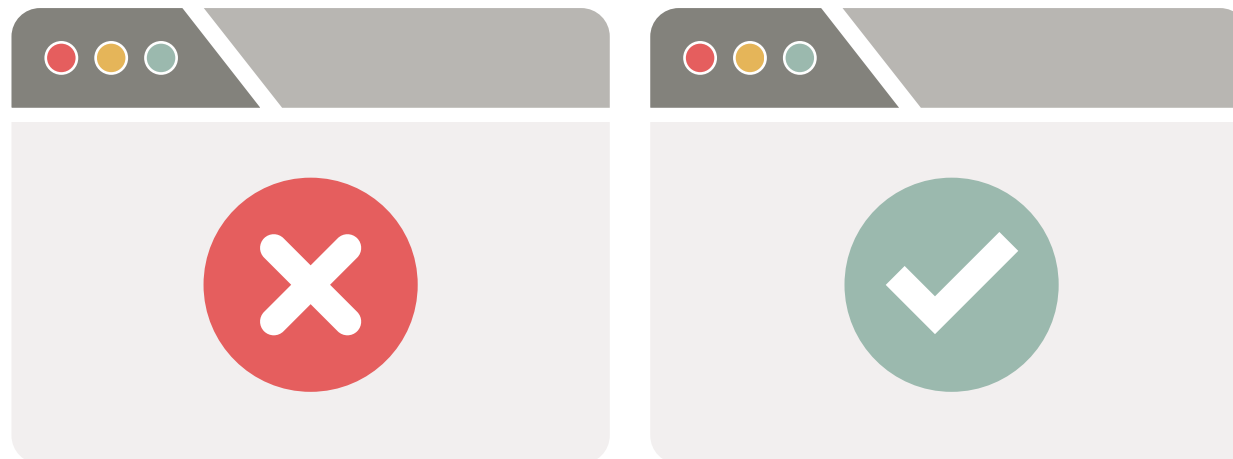
So you've got a clear idea of who your users are, what they want to achieve and how they'll go about it. Are you sure it's going to work? If you're wrong it could have a serious impact on your impact. Even if you're mostly right, you'll still be missing some opportunities.

The only way to be sure that your site is highly effective is to test it with real people. Your staff and your web developers are real people but not real enough for this. You both have a privileged perspective that can sometimes overlook problems.

Find other people to test your fully functional website or, while your site is being scoped and designed, people could test interactive wireframes or even paper prototypes. The earlier you can identify problems the better!

People within your community could be asked to test your site for you. With a clear test plan, an experienced facilitator and enough test subjects you'll be able to get some useful insights. There are also usability testing websites where you can recruit testers online that match your personas and then view videos of their interactions with your site. This is often simpler and quicker to manage than working with your own community.

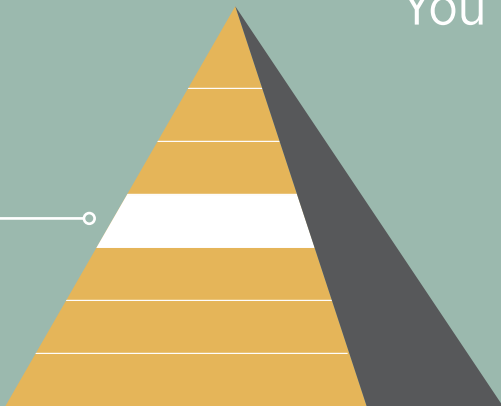
Sometimes things do work as we intend. In those cases it's great to know we're right.



4. Content

People visit your website for different reasons, from learning about what you're doing right through to supporting and championing your cause. The content in your website must be designed to communicate effectively to each different need.

You must engage, educate, move and align them.



Tell stories

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Story is a vital part of your brand and your story is key to connecting with your community. There are many opportunities for you to use storytelling to great effect.

Storytelling is a fundamental part of the human experience. We're told stories from a very early age and like to share them right up until the end. Stories cross cultures and generations. They enable us to share our most intimate experiences and hard learned lessons.

Stories are the most powerful way we know to connect with other people. For this reason, stories can be an extremely effective tool for purpose driven organisations, helping you to engage your community with highly personal and powerful impact. Purpose driven storytelling can facilitate your campaigning, volunteering, lobbying and membership efforts.

A very effective approach is to create a different story to engage each of your personas, a story that speaks specifically to their goals and experience.

Stories that your community will be interested in can span many topics: success stories of the work you've done, the personal stories of those you've helped, the work of your staff members, your origin story and of course that brand story.

Stories could be presented as short films, animations, narrated photo essays or purely the written word. Whatever the medium, an appropriate story well crafted is an effective tool to help you achieve significant impact.

**We presented a webinar
on storytelling. Go and
watch it now.**



Give to get

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**Is the purpose of your website just to provide information about your fundraiser and services?
No, it's to build a community.**

Offer more to visitors than just information on you and your services. Help to educate them on the underlying causes, politics, opportunities and people. Help them to become experts in the community and empower them to participate.

Create eBooks, infographics, videos and other forms of information rich and educational content. Regular content publishing will engage people until they are ready to take the next step on the journey with your cause.

Having a lot of content can be a good thing but as search engines are getting smarter and audiences more discerning, quality content is truly king.

When you're considering what content to develop for your website, consider these guidelines:

Offer a unique perspective

People love to understand where you're coming from and to connect with deeper meaning. If your position is different to others it stands out and so do you.

Provide real insight

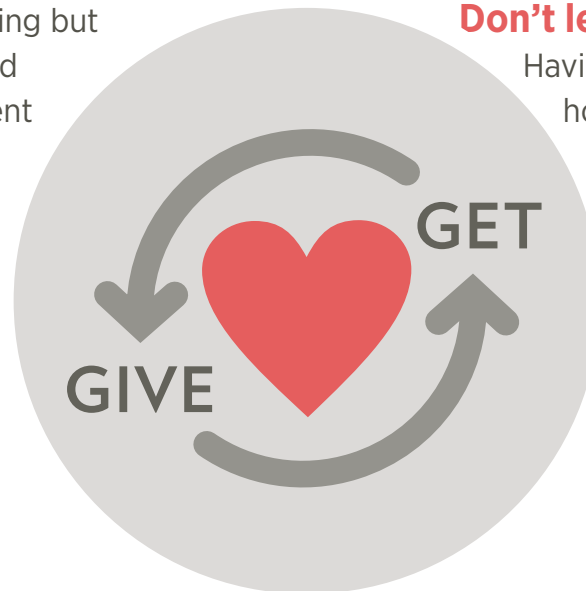
It's empowering to help share root causes and other information that gives people a deep understanding of your cause and the challenges you address. The more they can learn, the more they'll connect.

Don't let content get stale

Having news that's two years old on your homepage and events from last year won't impress visitors.

Include evidence

Your communication is more effective when you back it up with statistics, stories, awards or testimonials. Reference them with a source and give credit where appropriate.



Conversion

A conversion is when someone takes an action on your website, such as filling out a form, donating or purchasing. These are the key business functions within your website, generating revenue, growing your community. It's important that you focus on conversion in order to further your cause.

Conceptually we think of people as 'converting' from being just a visitor to your website into being a lead, then into a customer, donor or member.

There are usually a few people who are determined to convert, whether your website is supporting them in this process or not. For most people though, a little encouragement and facilitation will go a long way in helping conversion.

How can you convert better?

Firstly, consider that everything in this book is about making your website more credible, persuasive and efficient. These all contribute to helping with your conversion. Nevertheless, people will not convert as often as you'd like unless you approach conversion as a specific goal of your website. You need to give people every opportunity to convert and you need to encourage them.



4 Golden Rules of Conversion

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BE CLEAR

Be upfront about what you want people to do and what's in it for them and you. Be consistent in your messaging, people don't like surprises.

MAKE IT EASY

Remove fear from the equation. Make the conversion process as simple as possible. Don't ask for too much information in forms, this will quickly turn people off.

GIVE THEM OPTION

People interact with websites in different ways. Don't just rely on a single Donate button on your homepage. Consider where people interact with your site most and make sure there are plenty of different opportunities to convert.

ASK

Don't be shy in asking people to do what you want: to buy, subscribe or donate. And keep asking them. Gently.

There's a whole discipline related to improving conversion. On page 32 you can learn about Conversion rate optimisation.

Calls to action

A call to action (CTA) is quite a simple thing, in fact it's often just a button, but it's a vital element of conversion. A CTA is the gateway to people taking some kind of action on your website.

Simple CTAs are everywhere: Donate, Volunteer or Join are just three buttons you'll see on many purpose driven websites. These action based buttons have a clear meaning but are not at all compelling.

Effective CTAs encapsulate both the offer and the action that you want someone to take. They are more than a single word yet still succinct. They are visually more prominent on a page, use compelling, action oriented language and often an image.

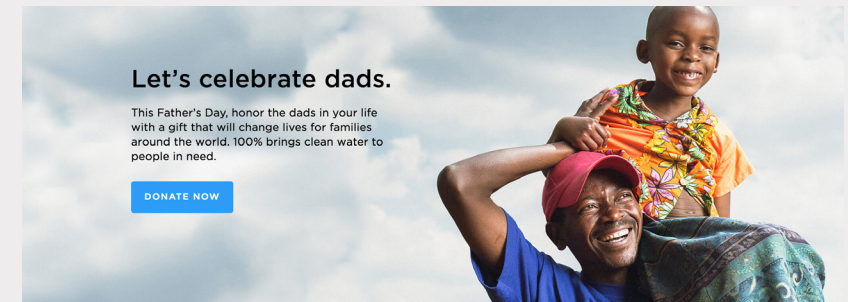
These actions are vital to the success of your cause so work hard to create compelling CTAs. Place them in different locations on your site, test variations and keep trying new things.



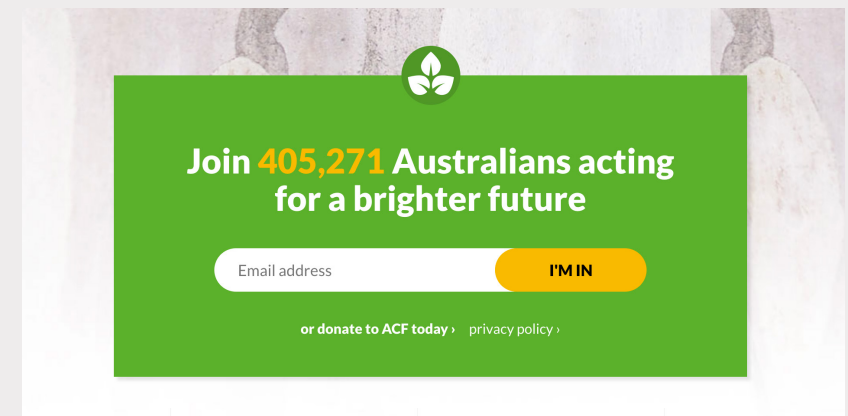
Examples of great CTAs

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Instead of **Donate**
(Charity Water)



Instead of **Join Now**
(Australian Conservation Foundation)



Blogging

Blogging is more than just content marketing. When you speak with an authentic voice, your blog is a way to continually grow and engage your audience, educate people on your purpose and develop a reputation in your sector.

If you have the resources to write a blog regularly it can be a transformative tool for your organisation. You don't have to write every day or even every week. Once a month would be enough. Set a regular schedule that is manageable for you and get different staff members to share the writing load where appropriate. Have a strong voice and say interesting things. If you can't write, find a copywriter to turn your notes into compelling posts.

Your community is vital to your cause. Taking the time to think, write and share important and compelling articles with them is generous and inclusive. It's also rewarding for you to go through this process regularly, reflect and participate in larger conversations.



Tips of cause bloggers

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WRITE EDUCATIONAL PIECES

This will help people gain a deeper understanding of your cause.

SHARE YOUR JOURNEY

Provide regular updates on your progress towards achieving your purpose.

TELL STORIES

Real stories of your wins, learnings, challenges and the people you've helped.

USE IMAGES AND INFOGRAPHICS

This will make your posts more eye catching.

WORK ON THE SEO

Over time your blog will receive a lot of traffic from organic searches (search engines).

HAVE AN OPINION

Rather than being neutral or impartial, a strong opinion stands out and gets heard.

USE CALLS TO ACTION

People are there on your site, engaged. Encourage them to take the next step.

Social media

Social media is a world (and an eBook) all of its own. Your organisation will no doubt commit to utilising one or more social channels. Social is like blogging in that it takes ongoing commitment to engage regularly and to provide value to your audience. In return your community builds and loyalty increases.

Social media is also an integral part of an effective website strategy. You need more people to visit your site and social media will drive traffic. People are highly likely to share inspirational or eye-opening cause related content. When they Like, Favourite, Pin or Share your content, their friends get to see it too. So it's in your best interests to make sure that people can do this easily.

SOCIAL PROOF

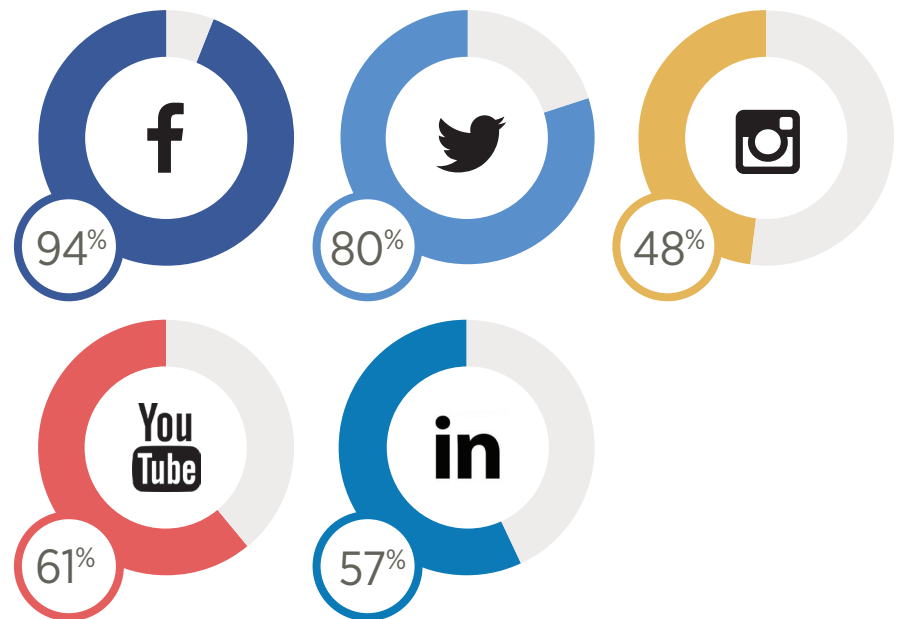
As well as the traffic that flows to your site from social media, being able to display the popularity of your social channels on your website demonstrates your credibility.

Use social media buttons that incorporate the number of fans or followers. Use share buttons that show how many times a piece of content has been shared. It's social proof to new visitors that you are doing something worth engaging with.

INSIGHTS

Look carefully at analytics to see the effects of social media on your website traffic. This knowledge will help you make decisions about resource allocation and content creation.

You'll probably find that most people visit from Facebook, it's just so much bigger than the other channels. This doesn't mean you should focus only on Facebook though. Remember your personas. Where do those people hang out? What are they interested in? Keep working to engage them.



Use rich content

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When you're creating content for your website, you should consider going beyond the written word, adding richer and more engaging elements. Using other forms of content can really help you get your message across and communicate complex issues.

Other content you should consider using:

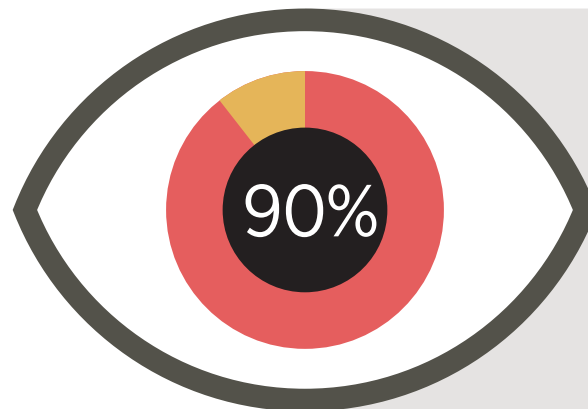
- Imagery, photography and infographics
- Video and screencasts
- Podcasts
- Interactive tools (e.g. games, calculators or forms)

Statistics are for information and validation. Photos of people and their stories, whether video, audio or written, are for emotional connection.

Sites who use infographics grow in traffic 12% more than those who don't.

On average, users only read 28% of words per visit. We receive five times the amount of information every day than we did in 1986. People receive a sense of information in 1/10 of a second.

High quality infographics are 30 times more likely to be read than text articles.



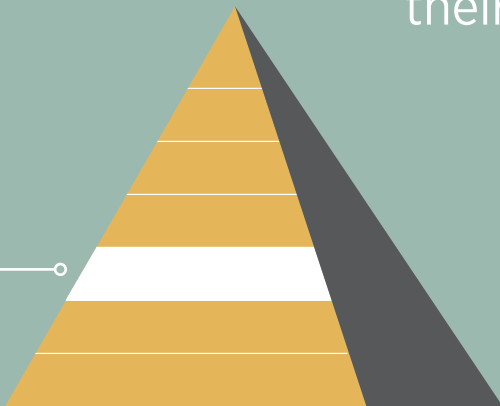
90% of information transmitted to the brain is visual.



5. Interface

A powerful website interface embodies your brand, supports your strategy and helps users achieve their goals with a minimum of fuss.

The most effective websites behave consistently and can be accessed by anyone, no matter what device they use or their abilities.



Website design elements

Your brand facilitates the building of relationships with your community, so the key to a strong website design is to consistently apply and reinforce your brand.

COLOURS

Your brand has a suite of colours. Use mostly the deeper, more neutral colours and select just one or two highlight colours to draw attention to elements in the site.

TYPOGRAPHY

Make sure your written content is legible: use typefaces, type sizes and type colors that are easy to read. To aid in reading use bullet lists, section headers, pull quotes and short paragraphs.

In the last few years, 'web fonts' have become popular. No longer are we stuck with Arial, Verdana and Times New Roman. Pretty much any font that could be used in print can be used online too. It's important that you choose fonts that are easy to read and that you don't use too many different styles but web fonts are a great way to make your brand application more consistent online.

IMAGES

Use dynamic images that comply with your brand. Resist using clip art and tacky stock imagery. Be thoughtful about the images you choose. Every image sends a subconscious message to your audience and sometimes the result is more damaging than it is effective. Meaningful, well targeted images help tell your story.

LAYOUT

Create a clear navigational structure and organise the content of your pages within a consistent grid. Let your content breathe: don't be afraid of white space. Avoid clutter!

ANIMATIONS AND GADGETS

Avoid interface bells and whistles. Don't use animation or unusual interactions for the sake of it, only where they effectively support your communication.

While design is vital to the success of your site, don't forget that users are there for information and to support your cause. A well designed website will convince someone to look closer but they won't visit again if what you're saying doesn't resonate or if they can't achieve their goals.



Navigation

A significant factor in keeping visitors on your website is having a straightforward and logical navigation system that considers the different ways that people explore a site and the varying needs of your community.

The IKO content model

Websites content can be broadly organised into three groups.

1. **Information** about your organisation
[About Us](#), [History](#), [Values](#), [Contact](#)
2. **Knowledge** about your cause and sector
[Blog](#), [News](#), [Resources](#), [Learn](#)
3. Products or services that you **Offer**
[Workshops](#), [Campaigns](#), [Membership](#), [Shop](#)

A standard approach to website navigation is to just put each of these content sections into the navigation, or if there are too many, then to organise them into groups of content along the lines of IKO.

4 Golden Rules of Navigation

However you structure your nav, these four rules will make sure it's usable and effective.

1. Keep the navigation simple. Make it logical and consistent.
2. Move important actions like Donate or Join out of the navigation so they stand out.
3. A sticky nav that is visible at the top of the page even as you scroll further down is actually very useful.
4. Include a Search box in the header. Some people just don't like using navigation!

Persona based navigation

A fine alternative to the IKO model is to organise your navigation around your user personas. For instance if your organisation works with children, parents and doctors you could literally organise your navigation into three sections, each with content relevant to those personas. It's an effective way to have multiple conversations and enable people to self select into the one that suits them.



Responsive design

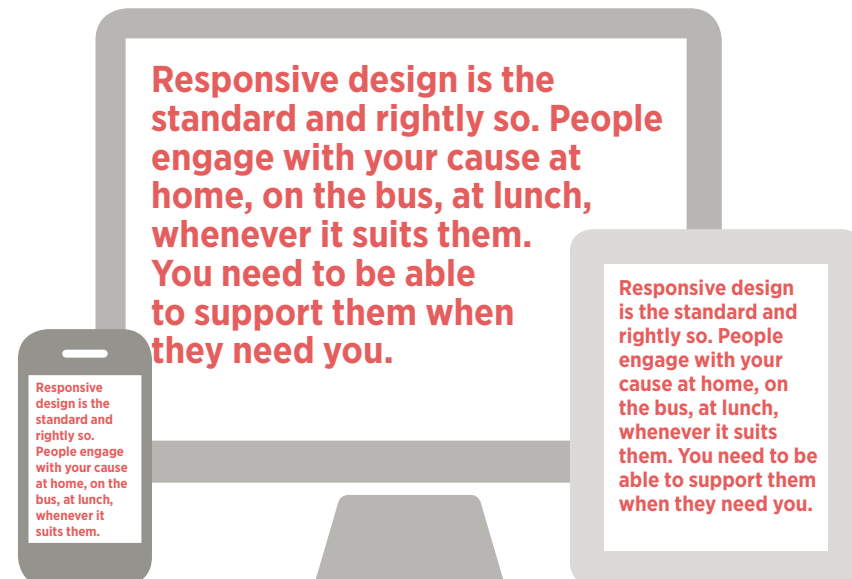
26

Often more than half of a website's traffic comes from devices other than desktop and laptop computers. People wanting to engage with your |cause may well be using a phone or tablet device.

Google has taken this statistic to heart and now penalises websites in it's search results that don't work well with mobile devices. Their preferred approach for this is the de facto standard: responsive design.

A lot of (bad) web design is a throwback to print design: a design fits neatly on a page and always looks the same. If it needs to display on a different sized screen it's a new design, an afterthought or it's just ignored. Responsive design takes a different approach: every user on every screen deserves a first class experience.

With responsive design there different display designs for a standard computer screen and for a phone screen. Also considered is a designs for a huge screen and a tablet. Each of these designs are variations on a single theme and they're fluid so they suit a range of similar screen sizes. For instance, the mobile layout will suit all smart phones not just the fixed size of an iPhone. This family of designs don't just vary in their width, they change in many subtle ways to optimise the experience for users on every screen. On an HDTV the font size would be bigger so you can read it from a distance. On a smart phone the sidebar might be below the main content instead of at the side so you get maximum reading room.



Browser compatibility

27

There are a tonne of different web browsers. In the past there was a lot of variation in how browsers would display content and so it took a lot of effort to accommodate them all. These days, web standards are much better supported so websites work more consistently across modern browsers.

Which browsers should your website support?

Microsoft Internet Explorer has always been the main culprit for doing things their own way. This harks back to when Microsoft was a giant monopoly and could do whatever they wanted. These days we shouldn't have to support old versions of IE, even Microsoft only supports IE11. Unfortunately people on older computers or in managed IT environments don't always get to upgrade. So in some cases you might want to support as far back as IE8.

Popular browsers these days are Chrome, Safari, IE 11, Microsoft Edge and Firefox. Chrome and Firefox update automatically, so we don't have to worry much about older versions of those. Remember as well that these browsers are also available on tablets and smart phones and even though they have the same name, they can sometimes display sites differently.

Ultimately the browsers you should choose to support with your website should depend on your audiences. If you have an older audience, government or schools, you will have to support much older browsers than if you're just dealing with young professionals. Look at your website analytics to determine what browsers people are using.

How to test thoroughly across browsers

It's a real challenge to test your website on different browsers. On Mac and Windows. On iOS and Android. It can be difficult enough for developers and it's virtually impossible for their clients. But there is a better way. Sites such as [Cross Browser Testing](#) offer an automated website testing service. You just enter the URL and pick which browsers to test (hundreds to choose from!) and in a few minutes it will show you a screenshot of your site in each. See a problem? You can actually use that browser online inside your browser and explore the site further!



Accessibility

28

In Australia, around 25% of people have some kind of accessibility challenge that affects their ability to use the internet. Whether or not you thought it was important to support the 2% of your users with old web browsers, it's clearly vital to develop an accessible website.

Disability is not always evident – beyond wheelchairs and guide dogs there is a spectrum of people who need assistance with things society at large takes for granted. By making your website accessible, you're ensuring that your cause is reaching the broadest possible audience and that you're supporting everyone within your community.

Accessibility doesn't just benefit users with a disability. Many of the practices for developing an accessible website are also relevant to these people on slower internet connections, older and younger users, people on mobile devices and people with low computer skills.

WCAG Level A is the bare minimum standard an accessible website must meet. Under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992, Cwlth), Australian federal, state and local government agencies must ensure that people with disabilities have the same fundamental ability to access information and services as others in the community. All government websites must

meet WCAG AA standard and often organisations funded by government must do the same.

What does accessibility look like online?

A lot of the technical aspects of accessible web design are not visible to the average user. In fact accessibility really looks like good design – clean, uncluttered and understandable. Videos, sounds and images must consider those with sensory impairments – descriptions, captions or descriptive audio.

It is a common misconception that sites with a clear accessibility focus are duller and less attractive than other sites. This is not the case. Done well, an accessible website can look as good or better than an inaccessible one.

Accessible Cause Driven
Website: Ebook Coming soon.

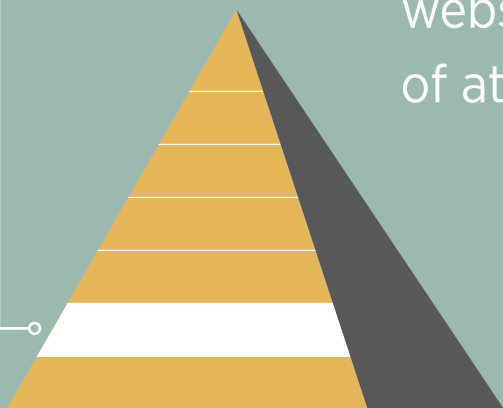
**REGISTER HERE FOR
EARLY ACCESS.**



6. Improvement

A powerful website doesn't stand still. You don't build it and then leave it unchanged for the next three years. You should be regularly analysing and improving your website to make it work more effectively.

Ongoing improvement will increase the lifespan of your website, drive more traffic to your site and reduce the cost of attaining new volunteers, donors or customers.



Analytics

If you've got a website, no doubt you have Google Analytics installed. It's estimated that 2/3 of the internet's top million most popular websites all use Google Analytics. However in our experience most people only use Analytics to see how many people visit their site and which pages are most popular. If this sounds like you, there is so much more in Analytics that would be useful to you.

Google Analytics is a powerful business intelligence tool. It can give you insights into your audience, content and campaigns. It's not about counting visitors. It's about getting important insights and improving your performance online.

Google analytics

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5 cool things you can learn

1. Use **Traffic Sources** to see how many people come via search, social media or other websites
2. **Site Search** will track what people are searching for on your site, so you can learn what's popular
3. The **Site Speed** metric is important. Some people will leave a slow site out of frustration.
4. **Affinity Categories** give you insights into who the people are who visit your site and are great for targeting similar people through advertising campaigns.
5. If you're running social or search advertising, use **Campaign Tracking** to get a deep understanding of how effective your campaigns are.

This is just the tip of the Google Analytics iceberg and there is even more to the field of website analytics than what Google offers. Since your site is a key tool for your organisation then you should be obsessing over it's performance and constantly striving to improve it. The only way to do that is an evidence based approach. So dive into Analytics!



Search engine optimisation

31

You're focused on your cause but how are people actually going to find out about it? Search engines can be a major source of website traffic. SEO is not the most glamorous subject but it's really important to understand how it works and to what degree you need to be concerned with it.

9 out of 10 times when people search, they don't go past the first page of results. And almost half the time they only click on the first result.

The more sites that are competing for top position on a particular search term, the harder it is to be number one. So if you want to be found in searches for 'disability services' or 'volunteering' you'll need to have good SEO.

But how do you actually do SEO?

Search engines will visit your site every so often, trying to figure out what each page is about and then use a whole range of measures to determine how 'authoritative' your website is.

These days search engines are pretty smart, so if you write a page that is easy for humans to understand, then it'll be understandable to search engines too. That's the easy part.

Being 'authoritative' is where things can get complex and hence SEO is a service that some organisations pay for. Whether you should be paying for it is a simple calculation:

If the value of new customers/donors/volunteers you'll bring in is greater than the cost of the SEO services then it could be a win. If you're not doing everything you can to engage, educate, move and align people on your site though, the SEO service won't be a highly efficient investment.

These quick tips are a teaser for our SEO eBook

Keywords are not at all important for SEO but the page Description is!

Accessible websites are fundamentally better for SEO

You should try to focus on one keyword in each page

Who you link to is almost as important as who links to you

SEO for the cause driven website: Ebook Coming soon.

**REGISTER HERE FOR
EARLY ACCESS.**



Conversion rate optimisation

32

We've already talked about Conversion and what makes things convert. Conversion Rate Optimisation (CRO) is the ongoing process of improving conversion in order to get the most out of your website traffic and get more donations, members or customers.

CRO is a best practice for all business websites but for cause driven organisations, where budgets are often tight for paid advertising and SEO, focusing on the efficiency of your website in this way can be a huge cost saving.

CRO involves reviewing the journeys that people take through your website to a point of conversion, such as registering, donating or purchasing. Google Analytics and other web measuring tools are used to analyse user interaction patterns and gather direct feedback, in order to pinpoint which sections of your website require improvement to convert better.

To improve conversion you may identify potential usability problems on a page or you might try different versions of web messaging with varying calls to action to see if conversion rates improve; you might play around with site layout and formatting to determine which one engages more visitors. While hypotheses are often based on observation and experience, results are determined through implementation and analysis.

To pinpoint which website changes have a positive effect on conversion, you'll need to validate your hypotheses using CRO tools such as [Optimizely](#). These systems enable you to show different variations of your website to different visitors and then monitors the conversion rate of each version, offering recommendations of their relative effectiveness based on statistical analysis.

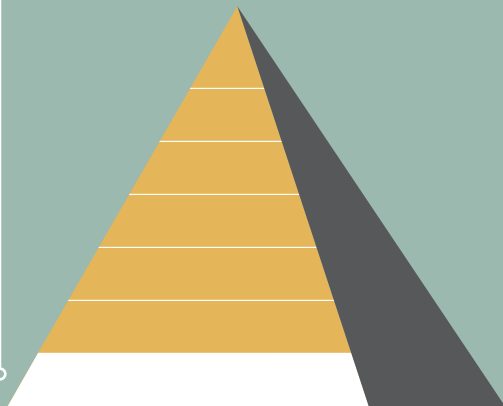
CRO projects will lead to measureable improvement in conversion but the process of measuring, testing, and improving your website should be continuous – feedback from the last round only marks the beginning of a new CRO testing cycle.



7.

Platform

The base of the pyramid is the platform on which you build your website. There are oodles of options when it comes to website platforms, some free and some costly. Ultimately you need to choose the right platform to support your strategy and to grow with you into the future.



Content management systems

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Often the choice of a CMS for a purpose driven organisation is a philosophical one, with open source being the key requirement. Since the CMS is the foundation of your website and it must support your organisation for years to come, the selection process should be more thorough than this.

You can sort CMSs into three broad groups, each with their own pros and cons.

A **licensed CMS** (such as [Sitecore](#) or [Craft](#)) is owned and developed by a single company. You pay a regular license fee to use it on your own web server. It usually has a rich feature set but not a lot of choice.

A **hosted CMS** (like [NationBuilder](#), [HubSpot](#) or [Squarespace](#)) is also privately owned but you don't have to worry about hosting, software updates or security as the CMS company takes care of all that for you.

Open Source CMS software (such as [WordPress](#) or [Drupal](#)) is free for you to use in its simplest form and open for you to modify to your needs. This doesn't mean it will come at no cost. You'll still pay developers to implement it for you and much of the more advanced functionality you might need such as an online store, donations or an event ticketing system may only be available as a paid extension that requires an annual fee.

BUDGET

The direct costs of a CMS are twofold. The up-front cost of implementation can greatly vary depending on the CMS used. Licensing is another consideration, both up-front and ongoing.

TECHNICAL

You absolutely need a CMS that is capable of supporting all your online marketing and business processes, now and over the life of the website. If a CMS doesn't do exactly what you need and you aren't willing to compromise, the cost impact of custom development or lost opportunity may be considerably more than you saved from choosing a cheaper CMS in the first place.

RESOURCES

Your choice of CMS limits which developers or agencies you can work with into the future. Choosing a licensed CMS or even a more obscure open source system may mean that you're locked into working with only one provider for the life of the site.

Another resourcing consideration is who you have within your organisation that can manage the website going forward and how much of the site you will have control over, rather than relying on contractors to make changes for you.



eCommerce

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Whether you're collecting donations, fundraising, signing up members or selling products your website needs a secure and reliable payment system.

These days the simple Donate button that leads to a Paypal form won't cut the mustard. There are specialist systems that will provide rich functionality for fundraising and events as well as specific plugins for your website to add advanced tools for different kinds of payments. It's also becoming more common to adopt a fully featured eCommerce system that can support all your payment needs.

ECOMMERCE SYSTEMS

Systems like [WooCommerce](#) have plugins that provide all the functionality you'll need. If you're doing lots of transactions this will save you money with low ongoing fees that offset your investment in eCommerce in the long term.

HOSTED ECOMMERCE

Just like when selecting a CMS, a hosted eCommerce platform is an important option to consider. Hosted systems such as [Shopify](#) are managed by the company that makes them. They take care of all the hosting, which means that security is usually top notch, negating much of the risk and stress for you in dealing with people's credit cards.

THIRD-PARTY PLATFORMS

An alternative option to collect funds for your organisation is to use a platform such as [Everydayhero](#) or [GoFundMe](#). These tend to have a useful feature set and although they are very cost effective to get started, their fees are significant. They're also quite generic, being used by a lot of organisations.

PAYMENT GATEWAYS

To collect money on your site you'll need a payment gateway. This sits between your eCommerce system and your bank and facilitates the transfer of actual money. Your bank probably offers a payment gateway but theirs may not integrate so easily with your eCommerce system. Commonly used gateways include [eWAY](#) and [Authorize](#) and a modern alternative that is becoming increasingly popular is [Stripe](#) – it is straightforward to work with and simple for you to manage.

INTEGRATIONS

Integrating your eCommerce with your accounting system and CRM is important because it removes a significant burden of reconciliation and manual data handling as well as giving you near real time oversight of your business performance. Modern accounting systems such as Xero have excellent integration with eCommerce but even older systems can be integrated.



Customer relationship management

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Customer relationship management (CRM) is the practice and tools used for nurturing and maintaining relationships with your community. When developing a website and selecting an appropriate platform for the site, your CRM requirements are an important consideration.

As a purpose focused organisation, it's vital that you do everything you can to build relationships with your community. Integrating your website with your CRM can save an enormous amount of time otherwise spent on manual data wrangling and can help you develop a deeper understanding of individuals. This understanding will give you insights into when to reach out to people to donate, volunteer, purchase or just to progress the relationship further.

If your organisation already has a CRM, you need to ensure that it can be integrated with the website platform you're considering. Sometimes this is a simple process but there could be considerable custom development required to get the systems speaking to each other.

If your organisation doesn't have a separate CRM then your website will most likely be it. Website platforms like NationBuilder and HubSpot have powerful CRM tools deeply integrated into them. CMSs like Drupal and WordPress have a number of plugins that will add useful CRM functionality. CiviCRM is a popular open source CRM that incorporates quite a powerful website CMS.

At the simple end of the scale, your CRM can track website forms that people fill out and resources they download but the integration can go much deeper, literally tracking every page view and interaction that people have with your website. This level of observation is a key enabler for marketing automation tools.

Think carefully about how your CRM fits into your website strategy. Dealing with a bad CRM integration can be a painful and long lived experience. Having no viable CRM at all is a lost opportunity.



Hosting

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You might think that website hosting doesn't matter too much as long as your site's reasonably fast to load pages and it doesn't disappear from the face of the web very often. Those two characteristics are known as bandwidth and uptime and they definitely are important measures of your website's performance. There are a few other things you should consider though.

LOCATION

Where your website is hosted can be important. Hosting on the other side of the world may be noticeably slower than a server in your own country. Privacy and data security regulations in your country may require that sensitive personal information is not stored offshore.

SECURITY

Poor security on your website could be the fault of out-of-date server or CMS software, weak passwords or many other factors. It's important that your website developers regularly run security tests on the server to ensure it's as safe as can be.

BACKUPS

Is your website regularly getting backed up? Is all your valuable data and content duplicated somewhere from which it can be easily restored if something goes wrong? A good

back-up regime will run frequently and enable you to jump back to different points in time if necessary.

THE CLOUD

These days pretty much everything is hosted in the cloud. If you're not clear on what the cloud is, don't stress. In some ways it's similar to hosting infrastructure of the past; massive data centres filled with servers. The difference is mostly in the software that manages those servers. Your site is no longer tied to a particular server, instead it may be quickly moved from one server to another in the cloud, or it can quickly be scaled to use more resources when needed. The benefit to you is that the cloud is flexible, reliable and better value.

HOSTED PLATFORMS

Some websites are completely managed hosting platforms, meaning the company that you license the website CMS from also takes care of the hosting for all their clients. Their bandwidth, uptime, security, etc are all usually excellent. Using a hosted platform when financial transactions are involved, especially for a fully hosted eCommerce system like Shopify, can be a very pragmatic choice because security risks are greatly diminished.



Conclusion

If you are really committed to your purpose you will leave no stone unturned. You will strive for excellence in everything that can help you achieve that purpose. Connecting with people is at the heart of every purpose and your website is crucial for supporting and nurturing those connections.

We created *The complete cause driven website* to show you what is involved in creating a highly effective website for your cause and to illustrate the interconnectedness of each aspect of your site.

It can be challenging to address every element in this book in a single project but that doesn't have to be your goal. Recognise that over time your website can mature and become a more powerful tool for your purpose.

Time for you to get back to making the world a better place.



About Freerange Future

Creating for cause & culture.

Our expertise in the disciplines of branding, marketing and digital enable our clients to achieve their membership, fundraising, campaigning, community and audience building goals.

Speak to us about taking the next steps.

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