

Nonprofit website writing that works

10 quick tips to transform your content

Another free resource from Collective Reach for stretched-thin, mission-minded marketers

1. Simplify.

This counts for both your core messages and your structure. In addition to spending time honing your core message, make your structure clear and concise. Keep your vocabulary and reading level at an accessible level, avoiding jargon.

Use short sentences. Make frequent paragraph breaks.

2. Make your writing scannable.

Use relevant subheadings and lists to help readers quickly determine if they can find what they're looking for on your page.

3. Don't bury the lead.

Journalists use the inverted pyramid to prioritize information, and you should, too. Keep your most important point "above the fold," so your audience doesn't have to scroll to see it.

4. Have a clear, simple call to action.

On every content page, invite your audience to engage with you in a way that relates to the topic at hand. For example, common nonprofit calls to action could be inviting your reader to subscribe to your e-newsletter, volunteer, donate, sign a petition or download a free resource.

5. Don't ignore (or fear) keywords, and don't abuse them.

You can use a tool like Yoast SEO (if you're using WordPress) to help you get the basics of SEO. Use your keywords in natural context; don't prioritize them over coherence (this is called keyword stuffing, and in addition to making you sound like a malfunctioning robot, it's going to hurt your rankings).

6. Link generously and intuitively.

This includes linking to internal content that relates to the topic or page at-hand, as well as external sources for more information. This is helpful to your readers, generous to those resources you use and helps with search engine rankings.

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7. Use active voice.

The passive voice is disliked by most readers. (See what I did there? I feel gross.)

8. Tell stories.

Your website should elicit emotions and forge a personal connection with your readers to inspire them to take action. Dry statistics and logical cases won't get you there. Don't forget to connect your content back to your big why.

9. Use your brand guidelines to maintain a consistent voice.

That doesn't mean your grant reports should be indistinguishable from your Tweets, but if you call the people you serve "patients" in one place, "clients" in another and "customers" in another, you're introducing a jarring incongruity for people who engage with you in varying media.

10. Write for your audience, not for yourself (or your CEO).

Keep your target audience personas in mind while you're writing. This can help with everything from selecting keywords to organizing information and determining reading level or use of jargon. Not sure you're getting it right? Don't be afraid to reach out to a few volunteers or donors to get feedback.

Keep this list somewhere handy to help you stay on track the next time you're writing a blog post or content page for your website.

Need more help? Visit collective-reach.com to get free resources in your inbox or learn how you can hire me to extend your reach and further your mission.

Cheers,

Reanna
Founder, Collective Reach

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