

Website Launch Marketing Checklist



Creating a new website is a big deal.

It's your association's most visible asset and is where most members engage with your organization. By today's standards it has to be more than brochureware. It has to be a tool for your organization to monitor, manage and track while your members collaborate, engage and learn.

To ensure success over the long term, you need more than just fresh content. You'll need a rock solid communications plan that covers launch marketing as well as post-launch activities. This list of best practices helps in that endeavor.

Launch Best Practices

Plan. Plan. Plan.

Building the website took project management and planning. Put as much effort into building a communications plan and timeline to market your new website so you can manage member expectations and get a "marketing bump" out of the effort.

Get Early Buy In.

Your most engaged members will be your biggest advocates for your new site (or your biggest detractors). Engage them during beta testing to get them excited about the site and help promote it when the site launches.

Prepare for The Worst.

Most website launches go smoothly. But sometimes they don't. Be sure to let members know some systems may be offline for a short period of time. Go ahead and plan for the worst and expect the best.

Don't Launch Just Before Your Conference.

Annual meetings and conferences consume staff resources. And when you are getting ready to launch your site, you need to make sure people are testing the site and adding last minute content. Preview the new site, but wait until after the event to launch. Plus, if something goes wrong with multiple systems connected to the site, do you want to be in web crises mode at your conference?

Marketing Tools and Channels

- ✓ **Email Blasts** to keep members informed and announce the new site
- ✓ **Email Newsletters** with announcements or promotional ads
- ✓ **Journal/Publication Articles and Ads** to highlight the new website and its features
- ✓ **Your Current Website** to capture members currently using your website
- ✓ **Email Signatures** on staff emails to drive members to the new site
- ✓ **Telephone Scripts and FAQs** for your member services team (or whoever answers the phone) to highlight the site or answer questions
- ✓ **Highlight video** by your Executive Director or other association leader to promote the site
- ✓ **Screen Capture Tour** to show members around the site and highlight the new features
- ✓ **Social Media** such as Facebook, Google+, Twitter and Linked In to keep members informed and promote the site
- ✓ **Private Online Community** to host a Q&A discussion about the new site
- ✓ **Press Release** to market the site in your industry's publications
- ✓ **Blog Posts** to highlight new features and answer common questions
- ✓ **Events** including your annual meeting or chapter events to give hands on demos of the new site

Website Launch Timing

Here is a high level timeline for the promotion of your new site:

2 Months before launch. Announce the new site is coming with a high-level overview of new features and content.

Communications Channels: Publication, Newsletter

1 Month before launch. Announce launch day and start letting members know things are changing.

Communications Channels: Email Blast, Email Newsletter, Social Media, Publications, Current website

2 Weeks before launch. Confirm launch day. If you have plans for worst case scenarios, let members know what to do.

Communications Channels: Email Blast, Email Newsletter, Social Media, Current Website

1 Week before launch. Remind members of the launch. Give back-up information for how to get in touch with you.

Communications Channels: Email Blast, Email Newsletter, Staff Email Signatures, Current Website

Launch Day. *Don't send anything.* Use this time to test your site in its live environment.

1 Week Post Launch. Announce the new successful launch. Include links to the online tour and FAQs. Share any early positive feedback.

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