



MULTIPLY 417

Passion: The Bridge between People and Purpose



Weekly Tip November 13-17, 2022

Simple SEO Steps

Hey Rick,

Why recreate the wheel?

This week's tip is simply a re-print of a blog from Kristin Boe at Candid. If you don't know who Candid is, please check them out or ask me. They offer a seal of transparency or seal of approval that many donors and foundations look for on your giving pages

80% of nonprofit professionals agree that a strong digital presence is crucial. After all, the more people that find and interact with your cause online, the more potential awareness and even donations you can drive.

The same study cites budget constraints as a common barrier to making this happen. So, how can your nonprofit boost its online visibility—without breaking the bank?

Enter search engine optimization (SEO). SEO is a set of techniques for making your website more discoverable to people using search engines to find information. In this blog, we share the basics of nonprofit SEO, how it works, and an overview on how to get started.

How does nonprofit SEO work?

If you're new to SEO, it's helpful to first understand the basics of how search engines like Google, Bing, and Yahoo work. These platforms use complex algorithms to determine which websites to display in search results based on their relevancy to what people are looking for.

To see how this works in practice, let's use a hypothetical example of an online search for nonprofits that protect bears in the wild. When "endangered bear charity" is entered into the search bar, Google then uses these keywords to find relevant websites.

The websites that appear prominently on the results page use SEO best practices to signal to search engines that their content is highly relevant. As a result, these wildlife organizations benefit greatly from getting the most traffic from people looking to support endangered bears online.

Using nonprofit SEO to grow your online presence

Here is an overview of how you can begin putting the basics of SEO into practice at your nonprofit.

Identity keywords

In our example above, websites containing similar terms and phrases, or “keywords,” to those being searched for were at the top of the results page. Nonprofit SEO often begins with finding the right keywords.

Think about the words that people will likely search for related to your organization and cause. Next, narrow down the possibilities to the three to five keywords that your nonprofit will benefit most from increased visibility in online searches.

WordStream and Answer the Public offer free tools that can help you generate ideas for keywords relevant to your nonprofit. Another easy trick is to begin typing a keyword into a search bar to see what other terms or keywords it recommends.

Optimize webpage content

Another key to nonprofit SEO is incorporating keywords on your website. But this doesn't mean adding them all to every page and calling it a day. In fact, it's important to only use a single keyword per page on your website. Otherwise, they will compete with one another, which will hinder your success.

To begin optimizing a webpage for SEO, add your keyword into places that search engines prioritize when evaluating what to show on their search results, including:

- **Titles and headers.** Incorporate your keyword into your webpage's title and main headers or sections. As seen in the image below, your page title (e.g., How to write a winning grant proposal) will also be displayed in search results.
- **Meta description.** A webpage's description that includes your keyword is another easy way to boost your SEO. This is typically added using the settings of your website's content management system (CMS). If you aren't sure where to add it, try asking a colleague in IT or your CMS provider for help.

- URL. If possible, add your keyword to your webpage's URL using your website's CMS or by enlisting help from IT. This works to help further signal to search engines that your page is highly relevant to folks searching for this information.
- Text. Be sure to evenly distribute your keyword throughout the text or copy on the page. Look to include it only where it adds value and fits naturally with the page's content.

Lastly, don't go overboard. Instead, start by adding your keyword no more than a combined total of three to six times to the page across all the above categories.

Search engines penalize a webpage in their results if it appeases ranking algorithms at the expense of the quality of its content and visitor experience.

Prioritize quality content

The biggest driver of successful nonprofit SEO is high-quality content. Full stop. Regardless of how well you've optimized your site, search engines prioritize valuable and trustworthy content above all else.

Here are some key characteristics of high-quality content to keep top of mind.

It's human.

High-caliber content prioritizes the people behind the screen, not search engines. So, seek to tailor your website's content to resonate with your visitors by asking yourself questions like: What will folks need to know on this topic or issue? How can we best present content to make the page easy to read and navigate?

It's clear and engaging.

We've all visited a website only to find ourselves lost in a sea of overly complex and jargon-y content. Not to mention, people have short attention spans. This means your website content should convey information clearly and concisely. But clarity doesn't equate to boredom. For example, you can use storytelling to create an easy-to-follow and engaging visitor experience.

It's credible.

Search engines give extra credit to websites that consistently provide visitors with reliable and trustworthy content. The ultimate SEO goal is to make your website the go-to destination for finding expertise and information related to your cause. One way to build up credibility is by having other domains link to your site. For example, adding the link to your Candid nonprofit profile to content signals you know your stuff.

SEO is an easy and inexpensive way to increase your nonprofit's visibility online. But it does require some practice and patience. Nonprofit SEO is a long-term play. But by getting started now, you can reap its rewards by building upon and refining your efforts over time.

Blessings,

Rick

P.S. Next week we will take a quick look at two critical pieces you must utilize on many of your communication pieces, but especially on your giving page.

[Email me and just ask](#)

[Please make sure you check out the website](#) It will give you a better idea of the ways we are trying to serve faith based ministries like Youth for Christ chapters, and other Christian based ministries.

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