

nonprofit websites

Cutting Through the Emaze



by Todd Baker, Vice President Grizzard

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GRIZZARD

Since 1919, the Grizzard family has faithfully assisted nonprofits with marketing and fundraising strategies to help them become better communicators of their missions, to foster growth, and to increase the impact of their causes; thus making the world a better place.

I can tell you first hand that the Grizzards have a charitable heart, which is lived out in their professional and personal lives. As a result of the Grizzard's charitable spirit, this e-book was created.

As an outcome of hundreds of discussions with nonprofits, we have discovered there is widespread confusion about the Internet. Charities are asking how they can and should be harnessing the web's power and seeking to understand how to integrate it into their overall marketing mix. With literally millions of nonprofits throughout North America posing these questions, I wasn't surprised when Chip Grizzard said to me, "Let's make our strategies available to all nonprofits now."

The best way to spread this knowledge, of course, is the Internet. What better way to explain the impact of such a medium than by using the medium itself? Also, by using an e-book format, we are making a commitment to you and to other nonprofits that we will continue to enhance and expand this timely resource as the Internet grows, thus providing you with continual new case studies and proven strategies.

As you can see, the Grizzards are special people. Because of their example of charity to all of us, I am dedicating this e-book to the entire Grizzard family.

Todd Baker
Vice President
Grizzard

The French have a saying, *plus ça change, plus c'est la meme chose*...which means, the more things change, the more they stay the same. This is especially true of the Internet. Everything has changed...and nothing has changed. However, unfortunately, many nonprofits still regard the Internet as a kind of monster from outer space—so unfamiliar and fearful that they feel they must modify whatever they once knew about marketing and start over. We've had hundreds of meetings with nonprofits during the past twelve months, and this theme of "I guess we'd better change everything we've ever done in marketing" has entered virtually every conversation. This is incorrect thinking. The Internet gives you the opportunity to enhance your present marketing strategy, not change it...and this book will be a success if it helps you understand and harness the power and the potential of the Internet so your nonprofit will become more effective and better equipped for the future. That's why it's important for you to know that...

***The Internet
is our next
great frontier***

- The Internet is not a gigantic, electronic magazine rack on which to place your organization's e-brochure;
- Nor is it a phone book, where you have a guaranteed listing under a specific category.

The Internet is our next great frontier. This time, however, we aren't talking about a physical land rush; this one is digital. Unfortunately, most organizations are taking the same approach my ancestors took in the original land-rush, when they picked out their tiny plots of land located on 45° hillsides and settled in. Too many nonprofits, like many of the early pioneers, are thinking too small. That's why they are producing websites people refuse to visit, or, if people did stumble upon them, would probably never return. Nonprofits need to take the Ben Cartwright approach to this new digital land-rush: think big and "stake-a-claim" for their own digital Ponderosa.

As you read these pages, we want you to begin to make sense of the power of the Internet—to see it as big as it is, to know what it is, and to know what it is not. We also want to help you clear up the e-maze of clutter and misunderstanding that is so pervasive on the Web. The Internet is an exciting new vehicle to help you engage in unique conversations with your donors, all based on tested direct marketing principles. The Internet has become a direct marketer's dream.

As you read this book, keep wearing your marketing glasses. Think about the exciting dialogues you are about to enjoy with your site visitors and donors. Suddenly, with the advent of the Internet, you have the opportunity to enhance whatever you have learned about marketing your cause. Perhaps it's to help reduce poverty, promote biblical literacy, curtail child abuse, create programs for those addicted to drugs, fight cancer, or promote education and the arts. Forget the mystery and intrigue of the Internet. It's not mysterious. Begin to see it simply as a giant marketing tool to help you find new friends, engage them in meaningful conversation, communicate your cause, turn those friends into donors, and eventually into loyal donors.

***The Internet
has become
a direct
marketer's
dream***

You will not do this overnight. However, you can begin the process of using the Web to enhance your present marketing and fundraising efforts by a comprehensive Internet plan that is a reticulation of the following six strategies:

- 1. Involvement**
- 2. Branding**
- 3. Marketing**
- 4. Content**
- 5. Design**
- 6. Technology**

As the Internet continues to grow, it is causing organizations to redefine their approach around marketing and communications. With tens of millions of websites now in operation, the need to create marketing strategies that cut through the e-maze has never been greater. And there's a way to do it. The most effective organizations on the Web today are actively communicating with their visitors/users. They've created dynamic interactive programs that produce conversations, which creates involvement, strengthens loyalty, and builds trusted relationships for a lifetime. A healthy, balanced strategy blends traditional thinking with conversational/Internet marketing efforts to build brand recognition, drive website traffic/visitors, and, ultimately, convert those visitors into loyal donors. We at Grizzard, a direct marketing agency that has been helping nonprofits since 1919, wish this same Internet success for you and your nonprofit...and that is why I've written this book.

Todd Baker

Think about it. When do we become effective marketers? Is it when we pull dusty books off the shelf and review highlighted material from the past...jump on the Web and download scholarly articles on marketing...go to seminars and conventions to learn the latest, greatest marketing ploys? Or do we become better marketers after we've patiently listened to the thinking and concerns of our donors, friends and/or customers? I hope the answer is obvious. Research is research; but only when we learn to talk *with* our friends and donors, and not *to* them will we have any degree of success—either in our traditional marketing efforts, or in what we are calling conversational/Internet marketing. This is why every nonprofit needs to develop an involvement strategy that facilitates the lost art of meaningful conversation with those they hope will one day become loyal donors to their cause.

It's time to recapture the lost art of conversation.

Every nonprofit must learn to regard the Internet as its most powerful direct marketing medium. Why? Because the Internet allows an organization to engage in a kind of dialog marketing that creates opportunities to develop conversations with prospects and donors. This dialog is far superior to one-way communication of traditional marketing, such as television, radio, direct mail, and print ads. Engaging in conversations with people, over time, gives nonprofits the ability to make more and better friends, turn those friends into donors, and grow those donors into loyal donors.

To examine your nonprofit's Internet involvement strategies, I'm making several basic assumptions:

- You and your organization are driven by a specific mission—perhaps even a unique market niche—and you are committed to sharing that cause with more potential donors than ever. You want to use the Internet to help take you to the your next level of success.
- You have developed a website; however, it is not bringing you the increased traffic you need or feel you deserve.
- People are coming to your website, but you don't know what to do with them.
- You have produced large quantities of direct mail throughout the years—possibly even quality direct response television, radio and print. You have been encouraged to believe, however, that if you simply transfer what you've done in print, audio and video to the World Wide Web, you'll effectively be in the hunt for new donors. You are now beginning to wonder if scanning in your organization's brochures is the best approach for acquiring new names after all.
- You are maintaining a positive attitude about your website, but you are feeling increasingly aggravated, confused and stressed with your results.

Every nonprofit needs to develop an involvement strategy that facilitates the lost art of meaningful conversation.

How accurate have I been in my assumptions? Close? On target? If your organization is similar to those we've worked with in recent months, my sense is that I may not be too far a field. Recently, I've talked with many nonprofit executives who've told me, "Look, we've got hundreds of people coming to our site, but no one gives us any money." Another said, with a straight face, "We put a 'donate here' button on our homepage, but no one is giving. We even put our direct mail copy verbatim on our site but no one seems to read it—or respond to the appeal. They won't even call our 800 number—and we even put it in a huge font for easy reading!"

What's wrong with this picture? There is no strategy to encourage involvement or conversation with new friends and potential donors. It's not enough to place a well-meaning "donate now" button on your organization's site. If you do not initiate a conversation with visitors to your site, why should they take time to click deeper into your site and donate money to your cause? That's a lot like going to the door of a neighbor you've never taken the time to meet and say, "Hey, buddy, give me your lawn mower." It's not going to work! All you will breed is hostility. It's the same with how you present yourself on your website; not much will happen without a compelling reason for a visitor to connect with you and your organization. You must provide an array of options, making it easy and convenient for people to become involved...and you do this by resurrecting the fine art of conversation through intentional content and a proper website design.

You must create interest. Promise you'll keep your donors informed, and that you'll continue the conversation—on the Web. Remember...the burden is on you and your website to be interested in your subject and interesting to your user. The most compelled visitor may never return to your site if you do not convey your cause with passion, and engage in a conversation that he or she wants to talk about.

There's a story about a man who fell fast asleep during a church service. Not only did he fall asleep, but before long, he began to snore so loudly that those around him were unable to concentrate on the morning message. This prompted the head usher to grab a long, pointed stick. The somber gentleman walked briskly down the aisle, heading in the direction of the person snoring. In anticipation of what was about to happen, the congregants watched as the usher walked up to the man—and then as he walked right by him on the way to the platform, where the usher summarily poked...the preacher. After all, he was the one who put the poor fellow to sleep.

It's the same with your website. Don't blame the visitor for not liking what you've worked so hard to produce. You must do all you can to earn the permission to speak to your visitor, donor or friend. Your job is to keep your visitor focused, excited, and eager to get involved to learn more. Can involvement be risky? Not really. Which do you prefer? Would you rather be hit on the head with a marketing message, or drawn into a conversation that's non-threatening, compelling, and relevant to your needs?

Speaking of conversation, here is my Baker's Dozen of content ideas that will help you develop a comprehensive involvement strategy...

1. **Capture e-mail addresses** from your visitors and send a regular, relevant, motivational e-newsletter that describes the excitement of what is happening in your organization—one that invites involvement. Once you have captured a visitor/user's e-mail address, you're on your way to turning those visitors into friends of your organization.
2. **Ask your visitors/users to become offline and online volunteers.** We all know what offline volunteerism could mean, but online volunteerism is an innovative way to involve people. For example, an online volunteer could be asked to become an e-advisory board member, giving your e-advisory board the privilege of shaping your online strategic direction. The secret here is to develop meaningful connections that encourage regular involvement.
3. **Create online polling opportunities.** Use technology, such as Instant Messaging and Chat, for the facilitation of online focus groups and benefits testing. Use surveys to solicit both general and specific information from anyone who logs on to your site. Your friends want to give you feedback, however you must first politely ask for it.

4. **Tap the power of viral marketing.** This is where you click on a box that asks “Would you like to share this article with a friend?”—after which the person keys in his or her friend’s e-mail address. This promotes much-desired interactivity and exposes your site to someone who you, in all probability, never may have reached.

5. **Keep it personal.** When you solicit comments from visitors, make sure the user addresses a real person...not webmaster@, info@ or support@... Instead, it must be attn: Chris@...or Melissa@...etc. Your website is your ultimate direct marketing vehicle—and your unique opportunity to stay up close and personal. A general principle when implementing new technology is that it should enhance the facilitation of conversation with people, not put up “techno walls” that make it more difficult to converse.

6. **Develop communication strategies at all levels** within your website.
 - a. Visitors
 - b. Friends
 - c. Volunteers
 - d. Members
 - e. E-Newsletter and other E-Campaign recipients
 - f. Donors
 - g. Annual Donors
 - h. Mid Donors
 - i. Major Donors

Speak to your visitors/users at their “qualified” level. Let them determine how quickly—and at what stage—they choose to become involved with your organization.

- j. Corporations and Foundations
 - k. Planned Giving
 - l. Speak to your visitors/users at their “qualified” level. Let them determine how quickly—and at what stage—they choose to become involved with your organization.
7. **Develop a marketing strategy that will win over your website visitors**, making them friends, and turning those friends into donors, and grow those donors into loyal donors. This form of marketing is a process; it provides the kind of stability needed within an increasingly cluttered Internet.
 8. **Develop a fundraising and acknowledgement application** that encourages, affirms, and leverages recent and past online donations. Provide an integrated, personalized “story telling” system that describes saved and changed lives. By applying basic database marketing techniques learned in your direct mail program, tell your donors how their dollars are critical to your organization’s success; do the work necessary to grow them into loyal donors.
 9. **Update your homepage and the general content of your site daily**. Write regular columns on such subjects as donor feedback, e-advisory board decisions, how lives are being changed and saved, and your future organizational goals. A website can become a gravesite if you do not refresh its content regularly. Use technology that encourages your site users to make your site their Internet start page.
 10. **Consider an appropriate use of premiums** (books, booklets, contests, tapes, CDs, etc.) as gifts for a visitor/user’s response to a survey, donation, or participation in an online focus group. Tailor this strategy to the uniqueness of your mission.

11. **Invite interactivity by providing an online calendar** that highlights your nonprofit's events. This calendar could include the promotion of a speaker's bureau, Web casting, overseas trips, conventions, weekend briefings, internal strategic staff meetings, etc. Ask people for their email address, and use it to update them on changes or additions of new events and activities on your calendar.

12. **Create a "testimonial" opportunity** for your friends, donors and other advocates. This allows them to give you feedback on how your organization is relevant in their lives. Giving of time and resources to help others is important; it is equally important to ask for "stories" from those people who make your mission or cause possible.

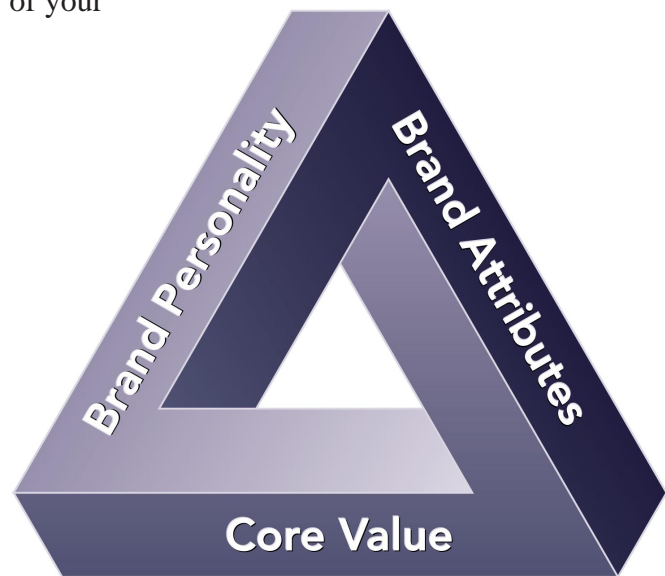
13. **Create a "wish-list" of gifts in-kind/items your organization needs** to further its mission, such as food, clothing, cars, school supplies, building supplies, etc.

Begin implementing this critical involvement content and you will be communicating with your donors more intelligently and effectively. You will also start seeing results because you have initiated meaningful connections where future donors suddenly give you permission to continue the conversation. However, you still may ask, how will these people remember the mission of our organization? How can we cut through the Internet clutter and be seen and remembered as unique? How can we make sure our new friends return again and again? Important questions...and that's what an effective brand strategy is all about...the subject of the next chapter.

To brand your nonprofit on the Internet effectively, you must first focus on communicating three primary attributes of your organization:

- Brand personality
- Brand attributes
- Core value

These three qualities make up what is called the Brand Triangle, and your organization must understand the importance of these interconnected components if you are to be successful in getting your message across in an increasingly cluttered world. Your organization's brand personality is made up of those qualities that express who you are and what you do.



Brand Triangle / Stuart Sanders Consulting Group
www.sandersconsulting.com

To develop a successful brand, you must attract people using messaging (marketing) that is in tune with the manner in which they already identify with you and your mission. Once you have been successful in attracting people to your site, your content must confirm your marketing or there will be a disconnect. When that happens, you will lose potential friends—perhaps forever. It then becomes self-evident that *branding = marketing + content*.

For example, the elements that might describe your brand “personality” could be: faith-based, educational in emphasis and global in scope. As you firm up your position on the Web—

and increase your level of conversation with your visitors—you will begin to integrate these personality traits into everything you say in your email campaigns, newsletters, year-end reports, and as you talk and share with your growing list of volunteers who are now beginning to support your cause online.

Your nonprofit's brand attributes are the values your nonprofit espouses, and the primary benefits/features your organization provides. For example, your "attributes" may be: saving and/or changing lives, providing a place for the expression of art and culture, bringing health to those in need, providing educational materials, etc. As you brand your nonprofit on the Internet, it is critical that you stay within these "attribute" categories. Not to do so will confuse people and dilute your message.

Which brings us to your core value—that one thing you promise to do beyond all else. Many organizations produce lengthy lists of core values. There is nothing wrong with this. However, to brand your organization successfully on the Internet, I would encourage you to think though the single thing you promise to deliver. Your core value is the basis of your positioning strategy that will permeate your marketing tactics and help you capture mind share of potential visitors.

Here are some examples to illustrate how organizations have distilled their core values to a single word or phrase: the Red Cross (www.redcross.org) provides disaster relief. Good News Jail & Prison Ministry (www.goodnewsjail.org) provides chaplains worldwide. The American Bible Society uses its www.ForMinistry.com website to equip the church online for ministry.

These organizations have worked diligently on their single core value in order to capture mind share of their potential donors. Therefore, if a disaster hits, we all know the Red Cross

will be there to help because the Red Cross has done an excellent job of securing that mind share in all of us. The Red Cross has done this mostly by doing good work, not marketing alone. Remember, effective branding equals content plus marketing.

As you can see, having an effective brand strategy, which ensures that positioning statements in your marketing are in harmony with the content found on your site, will help your organization build mind share and cut through the Internet clutter that promises only to get more massive.

Your goal should be to capture mind share and make your nonprofit a household name. How are you going to do this? What steps would you take to ensure a positive result?

An effective brand strategy is when marketing and content are synchronized

Imagine for a moment that you are running your organization for public office—say, President of the United States. How would you determine your message? What would your message look like? How would you go about achieving “mind share” from among the electorate? What would be your “talking points or platform”? How concerned would you be about maintaining a consistent message, i.e. positioning? What about the consistency of your personal brand? Would you keep throwing mud on the wall, hoping that some of it sticks? Or would you be focused, clear, to the point? What kinds of conversations would you initiate with people? If you are not sure of your answers, take the time to ask your donors and friends their opinion. It’s a cost-effective method of doing hands-on research. For example...

The Rewards of Benefits Testing

Benefits testing is a proven method for receiving vital information about people’s perception of your organization. A focus group is reactive (you don’t really know what is going

to happen). Benefits testing is proactive—a forum where you maintain control of the process.

Here's how it works:

Take a team of people from your organization, perhaps from your marketing or development departments, and have them list the thirty to forty benefits your organization provides. Then have your team highlight or add to this list the benefits you want the general public to associate with your organization. They may or may not already appear on your list. Once you've established this list, invite together several donors and/or potential donors, asking them to help you understand the answers to these fundamental questions about your organization:

1. Who are we? (What is the main thing you are known for in your donors' mind?)
2. What are the benefits we provide as a nonprofit? (Donors to list your organization's benefits from their perspective.)
3. Why do you give? (Understanding this most important benefit is vital to fundraising.)
4. Where do the two lists of benefits (team and donor) match and where is there more work to be done?

Additional Research to be conducted:

You could do an Internet branding campaign like Amazon or Yahoo that could make you a household name overnight. But you don't have millions to spend on Internet advertising, right? So what do you do? One of the most effective—and often forgotten—marketing research methods is the competitive analysis.

Imagine for a moment that you are running your organization for public office—say, President of the United States. How would you determine your message? What would your message look like?

Here's what you do. Start paying close attention to nonprofits that operate programs similar to yours. Do their names pop up in the most popular search engines? Where are they advertising on the Web? How are they differentiating their brand from others? How are they carving out their own niches? Do they run banner ads? If so, when and where are they placing them? What is their rate of response? Click through their online advertising and see where your mouse takes you. Are you impressed? Do they deliver what they promise? How strategic are they in the branding of their mission? Gathering these observations will help you prioritize your own branding efforts.

Branding your Complex Organization

If you are not careful, you could easily dilute your brand. In fact, many for-profit companies that have evolved into a huge “we do everything” organizations experience a disconnect in communicating who they are, which basically means they have a brand problem.

“But hey, our nonprofit does lots of great things all over the world,” you say. “We feed people, clothe them, provide clean water for families, educate their suffering children, provide seeds and tools for farmers in third world nations. You name it we do it. We need to communicate all these things to our donors in order to raise funds.”

I would simply ask you: Are you positioning your organization on the Internet by watering down your core value? If you are, then it's time to take action to change your approach. I've already mentioned the success of the American Bible Society's auxiliary site www.ForMinistry.com. This is the current success story of an organization that was wise enough to spin off one of its major initiatives to a linked website. ABS had a desire to help churches by

One thing you'll probably hear from your friends and donors is...keep the message simple so we don't get confused.

providing resources online that would better equip them to do ministry. If the content of ForMinistry.com had been included in ABS's main site, there would have been considerable ABS brand confusion, because ABS is known for providing scriptures, mostly offline. ABS had not been known for providing resources online for ministry. Instead, the creation of a new brand, ForMinistry.com—as a separate entity—allowing for conversations to take place around ministry—has become a successful adjunct to the organization because it is linked to the integrity and nearly 200-year ministry of ABS. ForMinistry.com has also become one of the most popular Christian sites on the Internet today.

A vast number of Internet users today are purpose-driven. Sure, there are still plenty of “web surfers” out there, but research shows that most people are “hunting” for specific information. They have a specific purpose for being online. This is why www.ForMinistry.com is such a success: ABS created a place for purpose-driven pastors, lay-people and others to go when they need help finding resources to conduct better ministry. So the question is, how can you as a nonprofit become more relevant in the eyes of purpose-driven Internet users?

One of the most powerful advantages of the Internet is its suitability for developing conversational websites on tangential topics that are compatible with your core value. Let me challenge you with the idea of creating either separate or sub-themed sites with a URL that drives visitors to them.

For example, when my mother, Ella Mae Riddle, was fighting for her life battling lung cancer, my wife and I searched the Internet hoping to learn all we could about lung cancer and what we might be able to do to help support her. My father had heard of a remedy that showed some success in fighting cancer, but it was not yet available in the United States. I will never forget the day my father came home from the doctor's office after being told by the physician

that he could not provide this treatment. My parents were overwhelmed with hopelessness. Immediately, I went online “hunting” for information about this treatment. Within 24 hours the remedy had been delivered to my parent’s home. Though my mother has passed on, to this day I find myself engaged in online and offline conversations, mostly in support to others, on understanding and dealing with lung cancer related issues.

This is one example of the power of the Internet, and hopefully will help us better understand how people are using this tremendous power to introduce themselves to issues that are relevant in their lives.

The model on page 21 indicates how conversational websites can be implemented into your website strategy. To illustrate, we have invented a nonprofit, The Generic Cancer Research Society (GCRS.). We at GCRS have created conversational websites around various kinds of cancers because we understand the behavior of the Internet user: people are “hunting” online for specific information. If your loved one has lung cancer, and you’re sitting down in front of a computer terminal logged on to a search engine, are you going to attempt to think of, and type in names of organizations involved in lung cancer research? Or are you going to type the words, “lung cancer” into the search engine and see what comes up? Probably the latter option. That’s why your complex nonprofit needs to break down its program focus into conversational websites to become more relevant, making it easier for people to discover and become involved with you.

**One of
the most
powerful
advantages
the Internet
provides is...
conversational
websites**

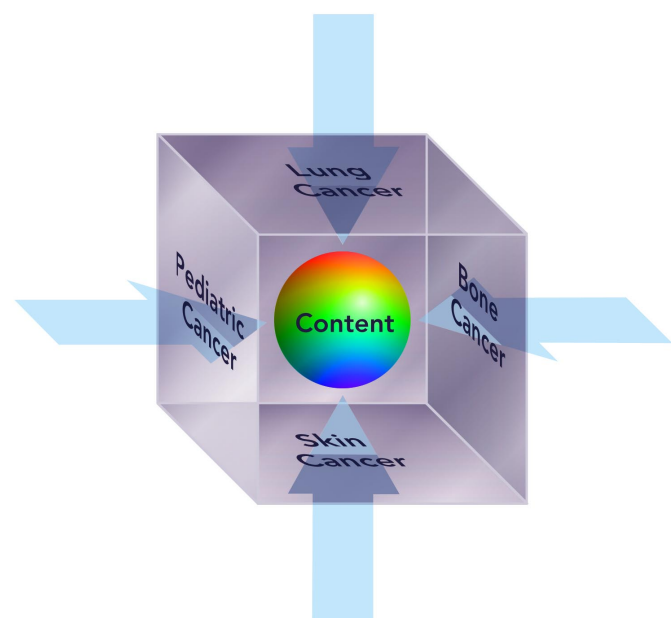
As the model indicates, all content is technically integrated into one information architecture to achieve efficiencies. The Internet allows nonprofits to explore the launching of new brands and initiatives in the most cost effective manner. Increasingly, people rally around

conversations...not necessarily corporate websites. You “broadcast” your nonprofit’s personality, attributes and core value with your corporate site; you “narrowcast” your passion and your compassion with additional conversational sites that link back to your corporate site.

Believe in your Brand Strategy

You have not been creative in your Web plan if it does not reinforce your branding. Keep going back to your strategy. Review it. Memorize it. Believe in it. Do not veer from it. Your tagline should help position and brand your nonprofit. Your conversational sites should support your branding. Your banner ads should support your branding. Your online appeals, newsletters, calendars, and e-mail—your e-everything—along with your offline exposure—must support your brand. When you understand how to brand and position your nonprofit strategically, your creative should be a slam-dunk. Yet, virtually every nonprofit I counsel at national conventions usually only wants to talk about tactics. During the past 12 months, I would guess that representatives from more than 100 nonprofits have come to the Grizzard booth, stating the ineffectiveness of their direct mail program, or a website that’s not delivering new donors. When I suggest, “Okay, but first, I’d like to know something about your brand strategy,” I usually get a blank stare. “But, we need to raise tons of money right now for our current programs—and we’ve got to pay the bills! We’ll get to a serious conversation about branding after the funds come in,” they tell me.

You can’t afford to be like the overzealous cowboy who jumped on his horse and rode off in all directions. Stake



your future on how you brand your organization...brand your core value on everything you do...start unique conversations with as many different kinds of unique donors on as many levels as possible. I'm confident that you can do it—and that you can do it more effectively now than at any time in your organization's history—all because of the Internet!

Your Brand is Everything

Your nonprofit's brand is all about the “feeling” your donors experience whenever they interact with anyone in your organization. Branding is about service, how quickly you respond to questions and complaints, how your staff answers the phone, and how well you deliver on your promises. Now that you have a website, it's important to remember that these same branding issues remain in play. Here is my Baker's Dozen of reminders to help you stay on track when it comes to branding your nonprofit on the World Wide Web.

1. **Your nonprofit's website plus marketing IS the brand.** It is the hub of your donor's Internet experience. If you do it right, your presence on the Web will be the most intimate and personal experience your donors will have—more effective than any other form of media used in your organization.
2. **Before long, your website may be the only place through which some of your donors stay in touch with your unique mission.** Your direct mail, radio, television and cause-related marketing will remain important; however, the Web is where the world is heading. Just as ranchers brand their cattle so there will be no mistaken identity, so you must brand your website to demonstrate your own uniqueness.
3. **Your website or sites can provide service to your donors that will be more effective than anything they have experienced** through your direct mail, radio,

banquets or television efforts. This is because you can now become more conversational, more intimate, and more interactive.

4. **Your website gives you the opportunity to provide personal letters,** background information, immediate response components, instant e-mail response, pictures, and regular updates on your cause or mission. How you brand these components into the overall experience will make or break you.
5. **With a few clicks, your donors can now enjoy the precise experience you want them to have on your website.** You no longer simply describe your mission; you give your donors creative ways to experience it. How are you branding your message on the consciousness of your donor or supporter?
6. **Part of good branding is your ability to make the process of getting involved a simple and pleasant experience.** You can do this with sounds, graphics and words. Remember, your donors sought out your site. What are you doing to create a lasting, enjoyable impression for them?
7. **Visitors to your website want information fast.** They are an impatient group that refuses to query an extensive database. Get to the point and the heart of your brand.
8. **The basic laws of marketing aren't broken on the Web.** Just as branding is important in your traditional media exposure, so is it on your website. You can do

Your donors sought out your site. What are you doing to create a lasting, enjoyable impression for them?

innovative, exciting things on your site, but do not lose sight of the core of good marketing: branding your mission.

9. **Use your website to talk with your donors.** Change your content often. Test and retest. Do surveys, focus groups and benefits testing forums. Do not be comfortable with the status quo. Create unique dialogs with your donors. Ask for opt-in e-mail. Do the hard work of communicating with your online friends. They will appreciate your efforts—and will reward you for them.

10. **Know your core value and brand it into everything on your website.** Let the message of who you are be seen in your words, color scheme, graphics, and in the spirit of your site.

11. **Never regard your website as a clever add-on to what you are already doing.** In the minds of many of your donors—especially new ones—your website is it! Your site plus marketing is your brand. Treat it as the most unique branding tool in your media arsenal.

12. **Just as you already do in your direct mail, radio or television appeals, keep making an emotional connection between your donor and the brand.** Your donors want to be touched by your mission; they want to be persuaded to respond. Treat them as friends, and they will offer you a friendly response.

Know your core value and brand it into everything on your website.

13. **As I suggested earlier, pay close attention to other websites.** How do other nonprofits “brand” their missions and causes? Where are they advertising? Figure out why. Learn from the best—and also from those that are still struggling to find their way.

Keep Branding in the Trenches

You now understand the importance of your brand. You remain focused on your one core value. You are beginning to receive mind share. You’re cutting through the clutter of the Internet because you are engaging in unique, “water cooler” conversations with your visitors, friends and donors. People are starting to notice you. So far, so good. But not good enough. It’s one thing to be noticed on occasion: enduring recognition is being noticed—and remembered—again, and again, and again.

Again, I’m assuming you don’t have a Verizon or a Buy.com budget for Internet branding. No problem. Head off into the trenches and engage in some guerrilla warfare where you build your brand through conversations in the chat rooms of the world. Begin talking about your cause, what you do best—and why. Speak convincingly of your mission and your passion. Get others excited. Encourage people to visit your site. Ask them to give you feedback on what they see, hear and feel about your organization. It’s all about having a fresh, new conversation on issues near and dear to the heart of your visitors. The Internet, used intelligently, makes it possible for you to return to the familiarity of the “village square.”

Here’s one more effective branding strategy that borders on guerrilla marketing. Simply begin directing other organizations to your site. Keep asking yourself, who out there could benefit from knowing about our work? For example, let’s say you work with pregnant teens. Rather than work alone and unnoticed, what would happen if you further branded your mission

by telling churches, synagogues and other houses of worship about your work? Perhaps they would like to help provide counseling, housing, or on-going education for the young women you're working with. Keep asking yourself: who would be interested in what we are doing? There is one large disaster relief charity that sends out thousands of e-mails regularly to Webmasters for posting on their various websites with a simple link that says Please Help Now! in times of a disaster. The response is beyond belief. Dollar for dollar, you can brand your nonprofit easier, faster and more efficiently on the Web than with any other form of traditional marketing. Your assignment is to build a brand for life. Your goal should be to dominate your field for years to come. To do this, the quality of your Internet marketing must lift itself above the crowd—the subject of the next chapter.

As the Internet continues to grow, it is forcing organizations to redefine their approaches to marketing and communications. With the emergence of tens of millions of websites, the need to develop marketing strategies that cut through the clutter has never been greater. We all are inundated with thousands of marketing messages daily, so the questions become how can your nonprofit be sure its marketing strategy gets through to the right target audience? How is this marketing approach different from anything your organization may have ever attempted in the past? Based on both academic and personal anecdotal research, we know that the most effective organizations on the Web today actively engage their website users in meaningful conversations which lead to or further develop lasting relationships. Therefore, an effective marketing strategy takes place when organizations create dynamic, interpersonal marketing programs, which promise and provide open dialogue and user involvement. This effort develops and strengthens loyalty, and builds trusted relationships.

You must understand that a marketing approach—one predicated on initiating conversations designed to build lasting relationships—takes time. Unlike implementing a traditional marketing campaign where financial returns on investment are suddenly realized, effective Internet marketing is a process. As previously outlined, we have broken down the marketing process into four phases:

1. Attracting Visitors
2. Turning Visitors into Friends
3. Converting Friends into Donors
4. Growing Donors into Loyal Donors

The marketing model shown on the next page indicates how people move through these phases over time. As you can see, not all your “friends” will convert to donors, and not all your donors will give faithfully. However, continue to move quality people into these four groups, market to them, and keep strengthening their involvement with your organization. This process approach to marketing will help your organization lay a self-sustaining foundation of contributors.

Now let’s look at these four phases more closely and demonstrate how each can be implemented for your organization.

If you don’t have time to market your organization right the first time, when will you find the time to do it again?

Phase One

Attracting Visitors Through Offline and Online Marketing Strategies

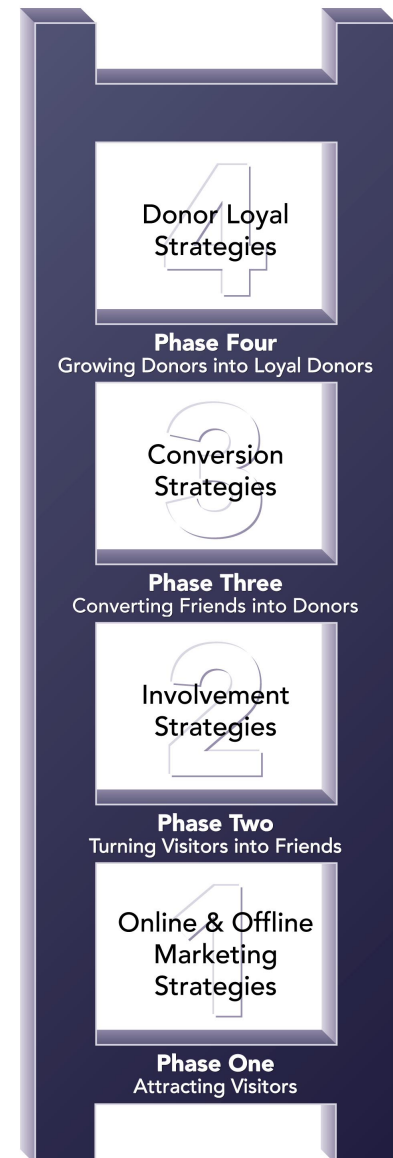
What drives you to a website—any website? Go through your growing list of “favorites” and write down the reasons you choose to continue to return to some sites, while you refuse to revisit others. What is good about the ones you like? Is it their Content? Design? Interactivity? Perhaps it is the immediate entrance it provides to previously inaccessible communities? You will have your own set of answers, but among them I’m sure you’ll find this one: I have a specific purpose in revisiting them because there is something on those sites that is relevant to my life and/or my work. We know the most effective websites provide users with an environment that speaks of an organization’s purpose, passion, value and involvement. Now, ask those same questions of your nonprofit’s website. Why does your website attract traffic—or does it? Why? Why not?

Your future—and the future of your organization—lies in your effective use of the Internet. Where else can you put your message in front of millions of prospects or potential donors? What other medium allows you to target specific groups with specific promotions in a matter of seconds for virtually nothing? If you need to publicize your organization's response to a major crisis, where else can you solicit the help of thousands of people of influence (Webmasters, for example) who will assist you in getting the word out immediately? Where else can you compete equally with organizations many times larger than your own—and be equally effective in your response? Now, let's get practical by suggesting a few simple strategies to help market your site and attract visitors.

Offline Marketing

Approaching Your Existing Constituents

You have probably been doing direct marketing for years, and your purpose has been for donors and prospects to read or listen to a direct marketing approach, such as direct mail, space, billboard or radio advertisement, respond with a coupon or call, and a generous donation. You will continue to do this, of course. However, now—somewhere in your letter's body copy, lift note, P.S., testimonials, stories, and reply card—begin making reference to your website. Talk about the conversations you are having online. Ask donors for their opinions on a wide range of issues related to your cause. Give your reader a compelling reason to log on to your site. Let your donors share in the mission of taking your cause online in order to become more effective and position your organization for the future.



Tell your donors how you are using technology to enhance your communication throughout your organization and with program partners, which helps you to become more effective in the services you provide. Also, let your donors know that if they give online it will save your organization money, which helps to give more of their donation to those whom you serve.

Furthermore, ask donors to help fund your online initiative. After your nonprofit implements the strategies mentioned in this book, you will have made a strong case to your constituents for how new technologies, such as the Internet, are enhancing your mission. Let your donors donate to this noble effort.

I know I've talked much about how the Internet is the most powerful direct marketing medium, which is true, but as with most things in life, you must find the balance between marketing and mission. I've seen how nonprofits throughout America are utilizing the Internet to become better, not just at fundraising but in the way they accomplish their goals and objectives. Ask yourself how your organization can utilize the Internet to enhance the way you achieve your mission, then begin to implement those ideas. You have a story that must be told through the content of your website and marketing alike; it's vital to your future success. You must relate these ideas to your constituents, such as donors, volunteers, friends, program partners, etc., giving them a compelling reason to get involved in your online initiative. If you can't build a strong case around your mission as to why you are online in the first place, then why would your constituents want to go to your website?

Before we move into offline strategies that will help you attract new visitors, I want to share one more thing about communicating to your existing constituents. Make sure your web address is integrated into your all of your communication materials. Many nonprofits are

The future of your organization lies in your effective use of the Internet.

forgetting to do this simple tactic. It may help to pretend you have changed your street address, an exercise that forces you to list all of the collateral and printed materials that need to be updated with your web address.

Attracting New Visitors

The following is a list of offline marketing and promotional strategies that we at Grizzard have found to be most effective for nonprofits in attracting new website visitors. As you begin to craft a targeted, integrated marketing and promotional strategy around these various media, remember all the work we did in the Brand Strategy Chapter and your messaging should be obvious.

- **Radio:** Done effectively, it can produce some of the highest visitor response rates on your website, primarily because of the tremendous reach of radio. Though it can be expensive to achieve the desired frequency, radio programs and ads help support an integrated program that launches and builds brands. Your messaging (brand) has to be clearly understood and must quickly establish relevance. Also, having an easy-to-remember domain name (web address) helps.
- **Direct Mail:** You have more time to make an impression, but there is no need to spend a lot of money on a “package.” Don’t send a traditional direct mail package with all of the essentials necessary to acquire a donor, if Internet traffic is your focus. It doesn’t make sense to spend the same amount of money to attract a website visitor as it does to acquire a donor that has greater value. Instead, send a postcard, make it clever and interesting, provide one compelling reason after another for the reader to visit your website, and to engage in a unique conversation with you and your cause.

- **Print Advertisement:** Make sure you are taking advantage of the synergies available with targeted magazine list rentals for direct mail and ad placements in those same magazines within the same timeframe. Integration helps people see your messaging (brand) in more than one place. If your budget allows, run your print ad for at least three continuous cycles within each publication. This helps achieve frequency and strengthens name recognition.
- **Public Relations:** Just as you approach your existing constituents with taking your cause online, also let the news media know how you are harnessing the power of the Internet to reach more people, save more whales, get more school supplies to kids in need, etc. Don't wait for a crisis, or for that moment when you must desperately communicate a critical need overnight. Plan your press releases (with important, news-you-can-use information) several months in advance—and then tweak them to reflect your immediate needs. Write about things that are noteworthy and newsworthy. Then inform the media. Develop friendships with journalists, check for your local paper online. But be sure what you offer is real news, not a faintly disguised attempt at PR. Journalists know the difference, and once burned, they may never return to your site.

The Big Dilemma

I know that many of you reading this book have limited marketing budgets, and that they are mostly being used for acquiring and cultivating donors. I meant what I said about being cautious when you weigh how you spend your dollars for acquiring a website visitor as opposed to a donor. That's why I believe you should be making a strong case to potential donors to help you underwrite your Internet efforts. Your organization must determine when it is right to redirect funds or raise new funds for your Internet strategy.

Of course, I believe the Internet holds tremendous opportunities for nonprofits to grow in ways they never thought possible. That is why the Grizzard family wanted me to write this book: not only to encourage you to expand your vision and mission for the future, but also to provide you with the information necessary that will help ensure your future success.

Sure, radio, direct mail, print ads and PR all cost money, and you may be saying, “If we are going to run radio programs or ads, then shouldn’t it be to acquire a donor?” Great question. I raised the same issue around direct mail, well kind of. I didn’t say don’t do direct mail. I did say, don’t spend the same amount of money to acquire a website visitor as you would a donor. The key is to make it as easy as possible for people to become involved with your organization. So, asking them to be financially committed to you immediately is a strategy that will attract only a few. This, in turn, drives up the cost of acquiring a new donor.

Relax, take your time. We want to help you to build lasting loyal relationships that will stick with you once the Internet gets crowded with real world-wide marketing. These relationships will stay with your organization because you have brought them along slowly and carefully--on their terms, not yours. They’ll appreciate that you allowed them to check you out, and that you offered them multiple ways to become involved with your mission and cause. They will stick with you because you provide relevance to their lives; they will have invested a great deal in you and they will want you to succeed.

Therefore, you may be spending the same amount of money for a 30 second radio spot, whether it’s to promote your website or for donor acquisition. However, you will gain more website visitors whom you can now convert into donors over time, than you will out-right donors. The end result is the same for the two strategies: it’s just that one strategy gets you more names up front that you can convert to donors; the other provides you with less names who will

be donors today. Only time will tell which strategy is best for your organization. However, I suspect that a healthy blend of the two is the way to go. (Hey, with a statement like that I should run for public office.)

Online Marketing

Your potential visitors have now logged on to the Internet. They have not yet discovered your site—but they’re getting close. In fact, they’re only a few keystrokes distant from your URL. You sit there in your office, and you can almost hear the sounds of their fingers racing up and down their collective keyboards. So close . . .and yet so far away. Unless . . .you have an online marketing strategy to drive visitors to your website. When starting out, it’s best to use all components of online marketing at your disposal, and then refine your strategy as often as results can be read and evaluated. Here are some ideas that I’m confident will work for you.

The Internet holds tremendous opportunities for nonprofits to grow in ways they never thought possible

E-mail Campaigns: will be as vital to your online marketing efforts as direct mail, print advertisement, radio and the telephone have been to your offline marketing programs. With e-mail you are able to increase your online awareness, engage in fundraising, and create those unique conversations we encourage you to have with people. E-mail is so convenient that you may be tempted to send dozens of messages to your donors and prospects. A good e-mail campaign strategy, however, suggests a more cautious approach. E-mail campaigns are a direct marketer’s dream. Let them play a significant role throughout each phase of your Internet marketing strategy.

Here is my Baker's Dozen of practical ideas that will help you conduct a successful e-mail campaign...

1. Always use the name of your organization in the subject line of your e-mail.

Organizations that have invested time, money and energy in building name recognition and brand loyalty invariably enjoy more success when they do identify who they are up front.

2. Use multiple hyper links in your e-campaigns. Place your own Website's hyperlink up front, ensuring that it is a one click link so your e-mail recipient does not need to search the Web for your Internet address. Visitors are impatient. Make it easy for them to communicate with you.

3. Make sure your "Campaign Page" can deliver. Once your e-mail donors or prospects link to your Website, they should go immediately to a page designed exclusively to reflect the message of the e-mail, not to your homepage, unless that is where the promise of your marketing is being fulfilled. For e-donation purposes, this is one of the most important pages on your site.

4. Consider using a different URL for each distinctive e-mail campaign.

This allows for each campaign to be tracked and measured in order to provide new insights that will help you to improve and polish your marketing each and every time.

E-mail campaigns—will be as vital to your online marketing efforts as direct mail, print ads, radio and the telephone have been to your offline marketing programs.

5. **Use HTML whenever possible.** We are often asked, “Which is more effective-- HTML or text-based promotions? Our research indicates that HTML is the hands-down winner. With HTML you are able to use more effective and better colors and animation. One caution: not all list managers are able to accommodate HTML at this time.
6. **Give your donors multiple ways to respond within the e-campaign itself,** such as e-mail, e-donations, e-feedback, and a toll-free number, with contact name, street address, hyper link, etc.
7. **Only use opt-in email lists**—where people give you permission to communicate with them. Today, it is more important than ever to respect people's privacy. Once your donors have given you permission to communicate with them by e-mail, you are free to do so. However, you should not regard this as a license to transmit endless e-messages. Be as sensitive to your e-donor as you are with those who support your direct mail efforts.
8. **The introduction line—who you are—should always be at the beginning of the message** to ensure that your donors know they are receiving a campaign communication from someone they know. Make it clear who you are, and why you are writing.
9. **Be sure your e-marketing partners are well known and respected.** Ask to see their privacy statements. Also, provide an opt-out opportunity at the close of your message. People will appreciate that you’ve given them the ability to modify their

relationship with you and your organization at any time. This kind of permission-based marketing remains one of the most effective methods of present-day e-communication, and is creating long-term donors for nonprofits.

10. **Be creative.** If your organization is responding to something in the news, send an e-mail campaign “website link image” to as many Web masters as possible immediately. We have had experience where a client’s “button ad” appeared on thousands of websites within minutes—with dramatic fundraising results.

11. **Before you launch your e-mail campaign, insist that your e-marketing partner perform a test run on a “seed” list** that you provide. Test a sample from each new list, and visit the list owner’s website for a clear understanding of how the list is compiled and organized.

12. **Be sure your website is 100% ready to receive a visit from your donors.**
If your site still needs work, make sure it is done to your full satisfaction before you begin your e-mail marketing campaign. You only get one shot at making a good first impression.

13. **Recognize that e-mail is the most popular activity on the Internet today.**
There were 78 million e-mail users in the US in 1999 (35% of the population) and the number is expected to increase to 135 million by 2002. In 1999, 393 Billion e-mail messages were delivered. It’s vital that your nonprofit reaps the rewards of this technology.

Search Engine Optimization

Like e-mail campaigns, search engine optimization is a key vehicle to attract your target audience. There are two kinds of targeted traffic from search engines: 1) click-throughs from search results, and 2) keyword banner buys. Keyword banner buys are when you purchase keywords on various search engines. Internet users search for those keywords where your organization's banner advertisement will be displayed. Furthermore, there are several pay-for-placement search engines on the Internet, yet another viable option to attract targeted visitors to your website.

Your organization must first define its keyword strategy. What are those key thoughts, words and/or phrases that describe your organization? For a moment, take out the Brand Triangle exercise we did in the Brand Strategy Chapter. Review it and take from it words and phrases from your Brand Personality, Attributes and Core Value. Keep your target audience in mind. What will they be hunting for online?

Now generate a list of keywords, expand it by adding synonyms, conduct a focus group, and begin paying closer attention to understanding the kinds of words your target audience associates with your organization. And don't forget about conversational websites. Work through this process thoroughly, and you'll begin to see some tremendous results. Once the keyword strategy is outlined, you're then ready to identify those kinds search engines that fit your budget and overall online marketing strategy.

One client's "button advertisement" appeared on thousands of websites within minutes —with dramatic fundraising results.

Banner Ads

The banner ad is the Web's version of the kind of display advertising we have become accustomed to in print or outdoor promotion. You and I see these ads virtually every time we log on, and, if you're like me, you probably regard them as general distractions. However, if you place your banner strategically, carefully targeted to the needs of people who visit that particular site or link, you will be surprised at the number of click-throughs you will generate. Your banner ad must stand out, be simple, clear and to the point. The rules of good print design apply here. Typically, you should not provide too much information about your cause or mission, because your banner ad's purpose is to tease the user into clicking on and "jumping" immediately to your Website. For effective marketing, you may want to pursue any one of three banner ad strategies:

1. Keyword buys on a major search engine as we have already mentioned
2. Placement of your ad on selective Internet portals (popular with discussion groups)
3. Positioning your banner ad on a website where you will find Internet users of like mind. Banner ads work. But you must develop a clear strategy before you can push the odds to your advantage.

Furthermore, if your organization has various target audiences, you will need to produce unique creative approaches to speak appropriately to each of the audience segments. In all cases, however, remain true to your Brand Strategy. Finally, remember to change creative every couple of weeks to prevent banner burnout.

Syndicated Content

Use your proprietary content, such as stories, research, articles, streaming video or audio, etc., to attract visitors. Many websites tend to move away from content excellence since it can be a substantial overhead cost. But consider what your organization can offer as important

and unique content that provides people with insightful and relevant information, ideas or answers.

Let's say your nonprofit's focus is to raise the national awareness of the need for quality education for children in our inner cities. One of the most effective ways to get your message across would be to publish provocative, well-researched articles and/or white papers about your subject, and then make them available to syndication companies or like-minded websites for distribution on the Web. Suddenly, your content is not solely located on your website, but now possibly on hundreds—even thousands—of other sites. People you may never have met will now view your content and have the opportunity to click on a hyperlink that connects them directly to your Website. Suddenly, they can learn more about your program, e-mail you for additional information, and begin a conversation with you about your mission. People in general do not view syndication of content as pure marketing. Therefore, they're more apt to be disarmed once they link for more information onto your website.

***Syndication
can attract
new visitors
and help to
build name
awareness***

In addition to attracting visitors, syndication will also help build name awareness, positioning your organization as expert in its respective field. For many years, the fields of education, medicine, and psychology have used this method of communication to their full advantage; nonprofits, in general, have yet to become aware of the ongoing benefits of communicating their cause or mission through this form of assertive syndication. In many cases, nonprofits have information on certain topics and/or issues that cannot be found anywhere else. That's why they—and you—need to begin to understand and leverage this powerful opportunity.

Phase Two

Turning visitors into friends, the first level of Involvement

You may be asking, “When will we know we’ve turned a visitor into friend?” That is a great question. The answer is, when a visitor has given you his or her permission to engage them in conversation. Permission is granted when a visitor furnishes you with his or her email address as a means to begin a dialogue.

In Chapter One, we presented a Baker’s Dozen of Involvement ideas that can be implemented to help you turn visitors into friends, convert friends into donors and grow donors into loyal donors. Please review these ideas at some point now that you have a greater understanding of the context in which those Involvement ideas can be integrated into your organization’s overall Internet Plan.

To clarify, there are three levels of classification of involvement:

1. Friends
2. Donors
3. Loyal Donors

As we stated earlier in this chapter, it is critical to qualify people in this manner in order to effectively move them to the next level of the marketing process.

If friendship online is determined by having a means to communicate, i.e. email, then capturing a user’s email address must become one of the most important things your organization can do. Therefore you must create a wide variety of ways for people to provide you with their email address. Again, we gave you a few ideas in chapter one, but those were merely to get your juices flowing: you should conduct a brainstorming session with staff, volunteers,

donors and friends and write down as many “level one” involvement ideas as you can, and then begin to implement them on your website.

Summarizing ideas to turn visitors into friends

1. Online Newsletters
2. Volunteerism
3. E-advisory board member
4. Surveys and polling
5. Ask for feedback on content
6. Viral marketing (share content with a friend)
7. Create a membership program with benefits
8. Premiums (books, booklets, contests, tapes, CDs, etc.)
9. Calendar of events and meetings
10. Testimonials

I remember when one of my staff and I had an in-depth conversation about something that was most troubling to her. At the end of our conversation she said, “Todd, you sure are easy to talk to.” I remember thinking, “I didn’t offer any solutions.” In fact, I mostly just asked questions and listened.

Making it easy and convenient for people to engage with you in Internet conversation is vital to your success; your response to those conversations will determine much of your organization’s future. Make sure you have implemented strong customer relationship management tools in order to see, listen and understand what is and what is not working on your website. Then, alter your strategies as necessary. Your website must maintain a balance between ease of access and the fine art of conversation. Your organization’s website design and content must be arranged so that it makes it easy for visitors to navigate and determine where they can go and what they can do. However, a smooth shopping experience should not be your

Making it easy and convenient for people to engage you in Internet conversation is vital to your success

main focus. Instead, the emphasis must be on a cause (yours!) that impacts lives. That's why you want people to stop, slow down and take in the special kind of experience your mission offers. You also will want people to register in some manner so that you both know the user has come on board with your organization. Therefore, you must make an especially strong case for their initial involvement.

Phase Three

Converting Friends into Donors

Your organization has been successful at attracting visitors to its website, and you have turned many of those visitors into friends by capturing their email addresses through various creative strategies. Now you are ready to begin implementing a conversion strategy to convert those friends into donors.

Your primary medium of communication will be, you guessed it, e-mail. Earlier in this chapter we gave you a Baker's Dozen of practical ideas for conducting a successful e-Mail Campaign to attract visitors. Most of those ideas apply in this phase, but the messaging should now be different. This is because these people now know you and gave you permission to communicate with them, which means you can have the confidence your message will be received.

Before you get started, however, remember not all of your friends will convert to donors. So don't be discouraged. You are asking people for a greater level of involvement, and not everyone is prepared to go that far—yet. However, I am convinced that if you have implemented the ideas and strategies we have mentioned to this point, that conversion success will soon be in your grasp. Here's how you will do it:

1. **Identify programs.** Feature those initiatives that not only need funding, but more importantly, will help to support your branding and marketing online. If your marketing and website content states that you help senior citizens, don't throw in an e-appeal for your new daycare center. Keeping your focus clear and unmistakable is key: it will ensure that you secure funding for a great cause, and that you take your donors exactly where you want them to go.
2. **Determine how much money you need to raise through online donations.** This will assist you in your campaign planning, and will help you strategize the number of campaigns you must deploy to meet your objectives.
3. **Conduct test donations.** Make sure you haven't forgotten anything. Engage several of your staff, friends, volunteers, and donors in experimenting with the functionality and design of your donation page. It should be clean and clear from clutter. The page also needs to confirm the original appeal: the donor must know he or she is donating to the right program. Finally, it needs to be easy and convenient for your donors to understand and use.
4. **Determine appropriate dollar handles for donors.** Help them understand what a gift of \$25 will do and how \$50 will make a greater impact. Be sure to specify what a gift of \$5,000 or more can do. (Yes, nonprofits are seeing this size gift online. You never know when a major donor will be visiting your site.) Undoubtedly, you have developed this approach for your offline fundraising. You must keep the same larger donation picture in mind on your website.

5. **Segment your online “friends” database and speak to people at their qualified level.** For example, people have signed up for various involvement opportunities such as newsletters, calendar of events, and volunteerism. Acknowledge that you know who they are by creating personalized versions for each campaign. When you do this, you set yourself apart from most nonprofit organizations.
6. **Tell your story.** Through online newsletters, appeals, press clippings, white papers and relief alerts, you must inform the potential donor of your cause and the impact it is making in people’s lives. You may want to tell three or four short stories in one e-mail campaign with appropriate hyperlinks for each story that drive people back to your website for more details, along with an opportunity to donate.

Be as clear as possible and people will follow your lead.
7. **Make the Ask.** Now is the time. You’ve been waiting thus far in your marketing strategy to make the appeal, and by now you have generated enough goodwill and credibility to do so. Tell people exactly what you want them to do. Include explicit instructions, such as “please click here to give now.” Be as clear as possible and people will follow your lead.
8. **Instant confirmation and affirmation.** Once a donation is given, make sure two things happen immediately: that a donor receives confirmation and affirmation of his or her donation on screen, as well as through a separate, personalized e-mail.
9. **Progress reports.** Provide donors with reports of their giving—and the more specific the better. It is difficult to do this offline because of costs, but online allows you to

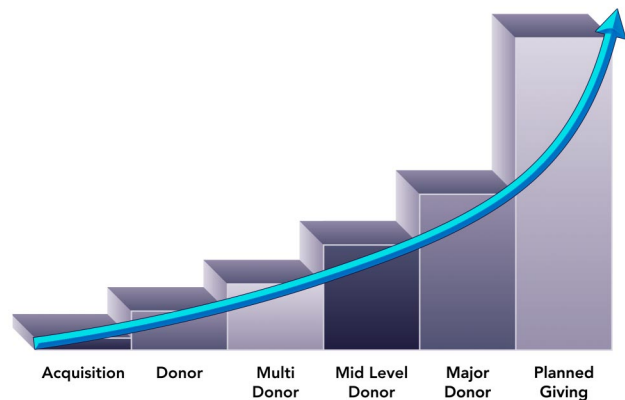
- be more attentive to details. Don't make every communication an appeal for money. I worked with one of the best fundraisers in the Pacific Northwest and his philosophy on fundraising is that you thank a donor seven times for every one donation. Do you express this attitude of gratitude for donations large and small? Begin doing this, and be ready for what may appear to be fundraising miracles.
10. **Security.** This is a huge issue online. Make sure you have the appropriate icons from watchdog groups displayed on your donation page. This is how people can know your organization has taken all necessary steps to ensure the security of their credit card information. Be sure to write a security statement and post it online. Let your users know your philosophy and the importance your organization places on tight security.
 11. **Privacy statement.** People want to know what you plan to do or not do with the information they give you. Many nonprofits rent or share their donor list with other nonprofits. This is not a well-received practice online. Organizations that engage in such practices may need to rethink their online acquisition strategies. A privacy statement is of critical importance, and needs to be posted on your site. It tells people that you respect their privacy.
 12. **E-profiling.** Start now to build demographic and psychographic information of your website friends and donors. Over time, you will enjoy a wealth of resource data from which to draw for future communication activity. Understanding the differences between friends and donors will help you craft your appeals and offers to both. In addition, having a proper understanding of your online donor profile will help you in your search for more.

13. **Donor Channel.** This is a specific section of your website dedicated for donors only.

This is a great way to be as affirming as you desire. You're not concerned about trying to use language that suits everyone. Donors will find his or her portfolio that details a specific giving history. Some nonprofits are now exploring how donation records can be technically integrated with other financial websites so donors can have their entire financial situation at their fingertips. Finally, allow each donor to have access to update his or her contact information whenever it changes.

Phase Four Growing Donors into Loyal Donors

Perhaps your organization has a successful offline donor loyalty program already in place. If so, you already understand the importance of such a program. At Grizzard, we help our clients develop strategies that qualify and grow donors throughout their lifetime of support through the donor growth model outlined above. This helps provide financial resources for the future; it also produces long lasting, trusted relationships, all of which ensure a greater impact for charity.



Many of us have some understanding of the power of loyalty. Why do people drive extra miles to shop at a supermarket while passing two or three other grocery stores on the way? Why do people pay 30 to 50 percent more for a product? Wouldn't it be great if donors were that loyal to your organization? Well, you most likely have them; almost every nonprofit does, and every nonprofit I know of would like to have more.

You must understand that loyalty is not about contests, premiums, or mileage awards programs. Those methods hold people captive to an organization, but once the giveaways stop, so does the involvement. That's because it's a false loyalty. People become loyal to the free stuff or a chance to win rather than to the organization and its mission. As I stated earlier in the Involvement Chapter, premiums may have a place initially when you are attempting to capture an email address, but they will not generate loyalty for the long haul.

Genuine loyalty to your organization and its mission will come about only when you have been available and responsive to your donors; when you work harder to understand their needs and passions.

Whether you know it or not, everything we have said thus far has gone a long way to help create donor loyalty. We have engaged people in conversations, and we are attempting to build lasting relationships. We are definitely in this for keeps. We're an established and well-communicated cause that understands online circumstances. We've been responsive to feedback. We are accessible. We've provided a wide variety of ways for people to be involved other than financial, and we've built a tremendous amount of goodwill. Way to go! So what are some additional practical ideas you can implement that help grow donor loyalty? Great question. The following is my Baker's Dozen of online as well as offline ideas to help you grow donor loyalty.

1. **You must do good program.** Be the best at what you do, be a good steward of the funds entrusted to you. Donors are looking for something to invest in, not give towards. There's a big difference between the two. Therefore, make sure you communicate that your cause will provide the donor with a substantial return on their investment—usually a return of joy, fulfillment and happiness in seeing lives changed.

2. **Develop an internal donor care team.** Make sure there is a healthy representation of key staff, volunteers, donors and board members on the team. This group will plan, set the agenda, and work on areas of measurement for your organization's online and offline donor loyalty strategies.
3. **Invite donors to see your organization in action.** Sometimes this is called field or vision trips. It's one thing to read about your organization; it's entirely different to experience changed lives up close and personal. You want donors to become personally involved with your organization.
4. **You must continually communicate the important role your donors play in helping your organization accomplish its mission.** This can be done through a variety of communication avenues, such as content, email campaigns, newsletters, etc. Don't focus only on the financial support your donors provide, but rather dwell on how they volunteer their time and talent, or how much you appreciated their participation on a vision or field trip. This helps donors know that they are respected and vital to your organization's success.
5. **Generate a donor talent database.** Ask donors to help you be a better steward of the funds entrusted to your organization by developing a database of people's talent from which you can draw if needed. Not only will this help save money in acquiring expertise outside your organization, but it also instills great confidence and trust with donors. It means you value them and trust them—far beyond their ability to give you money.

Donors are looking for something to invest in, not give towards.

6. **Develop a unique club or membership for donors.** Call it the President’s Circle or Executive Director’s Forum. Develop a collateral content or section for your site. Invite these donors to specialized web events and chats so they talk directly to the person in charge. The key here is to provide major donors access to your organization’s leader.

7. **Assign every donor to a specific staff member.** This may sound crazy and impossible to accomplish—and may only work for certain donors giving at specific levels. However, you should be doing this at some level. Donors need a personal contact often, or their involvement with your organization will decrease over time. Remember, there are many other nonprofits that are also actively soliciting money, time and talent from your donors. You have to pedal hard to keep up...and the Internet is about the best bicycle you could ever have to maintain your pace.

Donors need a personal contact often, or their involvement with your organization will decrease over time.

8. **Allow your donors to interact with the people you serve.** This may or may not be appropriate for your organization, but it is powerful when donors can hear first hand how their gifts have made a difference in the life of someone. Be creative. Don’t discount this idea immediately; I’m sure you can come up with a corresponding strategy that facilitates this sort of communication.

9. **Invite donors and their significant others to a “vision casting” day or weekend,** where you lay out your organization’s strategic plan for the next two to three years. Make sure donors understand your expectations up front. During the weekend you

may want to web cast a portion live on your site. After the weekend has concluded, make sure the strategic plan is posted on your site.

10. **Develop a donor dialog management strategy.** Help your donor care team and other key people to conduct a brainstorming session around every possible question a donor may ask of your organization. Then have them go through the entire list and write a response, not in corporate jargon but in “human speak.” When you do this hard work up front, you will set the stage for your organization to be consistent and responsive in its communication, which will prevent a great deal of heartache in the future.
11. **Utilize proven database marketing techniques,** which integrate giving history so that future campaigns can affirm and upgrade donors. For example, if a donor gave you a gift of \$25 to help a provide eye glasses for a child in your last campaign, then in your next campaign thank the donor for helping that one child. But now, tell your supporter a gift of \$50 can help as many as three children because of the way your organization is able to leverage its additional funds.
12. **Reply within 24 hours.** Internet users will expect a reply from your organization in no more than 24 hours. This may seem impossible, but you need to figure out a way either through automation or volunteers that responds to all e-mails quickly. If you do everything else in style, but fail to do this one simple thing, well, it will erode trust. You’ve worked too hard for that to happen.

Internet users will expect a reply in no less than 24 hours.

13. **Through technology, allow all users who visit your website to personalize their presence** in a manner that best suits their needs and passion. In addition, make sure the website acknowledges the person by name when they return.

Predictably, the world will always give you what you demand from it. If you approach your Web opportunities timidly, the response to your online campaigns will be less than enthusiastic. If you hope for the best, but actually expect less, you are sure to receive limited rewards. Do the hard work it takes to carry on relevant conversations with your friends and donors. Then, expect online marketing success, and success will be yours...especially if you wrap your carefully designed marketing strategy around equally great content—the subject of the content strategy chapter.

Linus Pauling says, “The best way to get a good idea is to get a lot of ideas.” Pauling is right. And getting a “lot of ideas” to get one “good one” is the essence of understanding that effective, accurate, saleable, reliable content is the combination of many ideas that ultimately produces the glue to hold your website strategy together.

Content is your message. It’s your story. Your passion. Content is also where your marketing and mission come together. This chapter will help you strike a balance with my earlier emphasis on marketing, as you begin to understand how the Internet can enhance your ability to raise funds to achieve your organization's mission. When you use a portion of your website to do outreach or promote programs, make sure you also harness the power of the Internet to enhance your organization's vision and passion to serve others. This will help you build a strong case for acquiring underwriting for your Internet presence. Here’s the balance I’m talking about: Good Internet marketing will help your organization achieve a return on investment (ROI); good content will help your nonprofit achieve a return on mission (ROM.).

“The best way to get a good idea is to get a lot of ideas.”

- Linus Pauling

Now that you’re on the Internet, you must remember you are suddenly intimately engaged with the most powerful direct marketing medium ever created. Yes, the Internet is relatively new, but its power as a communication vehicle is no longer in question. Beginning now, it must be your purpose to design a content strategy that motivates, persuades and encourages people to take some form of action. While most nonprofits will probably focus on Internet fundraising, it’s important to realize that you can—and probably should—use the Internet for much more than simply raising money. You will also want your website strategy to

help you inform, educate, and persuade others to consider other points of view. Yours!

Marketing is not only about raising money. Savvy marketing influences people to come alongside you and help you do things they may never do on their own. An intelligent website content strategy provides you with the foundation to attract visitors, keeps them interested in your mission or cause, and encourages them to keep coming back for more. And yes...you can and will raise funds in the process.

When people read an article or story on your website, for example, do you know precisely what you want them to do? Give you money, provide feedback, volunteer, be entertained, be informed, request more information? Whatever response you seek, you must first have settled on a clearly articulated content strategy. Here's what we know for sure: the more options you give your visitors to become involved with your organization, the more relevant your website will become in their lives. The next most important thing we know: if you begin and sustain the conversation on issues your visitors want to discuss, you will come closer to finding advocates for your mission than if you simply talked endlessly about what is important to you. What are we saying? Simply this: encourage your visitors to help you shape your content. That may seem like a risky endeavor. In the end, however, the facts prove it is not.

Savvy marketing influences people to come alongside you and help you do things they may never do on their own.

No Need to Reinvent Yourself

Question: What kinds of information, stories, testimonies, curriculum, questionnaires, polls and other forms of content already exist within your organization that can be “repurposed” for your Internet presence? The good news is that you do not have to reinvent yourself—

contrary to what you may be hearing in the media today. It's nonsense. Don't reinvent; instead build on your present strengths and re-frame what you can to set the stage for more effective dialogue with your donors and friends. The most successful nonprofit websites today are those in constant conversation with their visitors which in turn helps those organizations shape their content and work through a content strategy in concert with who they represent themselves to be.

What is your organization's category of knowledge? If you are a college or university, you will empower your visitors with an ongoing conversation on such content issues as academic excellence, course offerings, sports, alumni affairs, and the strength of the faculty. If your nonprofit is a jail ministry, you will discover—through conversation—what interests your friends, visitors and donors most. For some, it may be how your organization is helping to reduce the rate of recidivism among prisoners. Others may not be able to relate to your well-informed statistics, but instead will be avid readers of the stories you tell them of changed lives. Your ability to differentiate between what interests whom, and to what degree, will help you provide relevant content to the right people at the right time.

Another Baker's Dozen

Here is my Baker's Dozen of practical, proven ideas to help you think through the content that needs to appear on your website . . .

1. **Provide all essential corporate information on your site** so your visitor will know clearly who you are, and what you represent. This is the nuts and bolts part of your website—a good place to articulate your mission statement, to make reference to the

Your ability to differentiate what interests whom, and to what degree, will help you provide relevant content to the right people at the right time.

- strength of your advisory board and board of directors, and to produce your 990—essential for credibility purposes.
2. **Provide a brief overview of your organization**—from its inception to the mission you are carrying out today. Do this with graphics, captioned pictures, and easily downloadable graphs—if they help you to communicate your message. Consider including a succinct 3-5 year strategic plan that describes your organization’s objectives, why you are passionate about achieving them, and why you need the help of others who also believe in your mission.
 3. **Use hyperlinks for contact information**, requests for more background on your organization, e-mail addresses for key personnel, etc. Make these contact points easy to identify and to use. Your visitor is accustomed to ease of communication on the Internet—whether it’s buying a product, downloading software, or sending an electronic communication to a friend. To be effective in your communications, you must produce the same quality connections with your visitor.
 4. **Tell lots of stories about how your nonprofit is helping to change the lives of people**. These stories need not to be long or detailed. However, you must write them for maximum impact so that your visitors will want to know more and ultimately choose to become one of your loyal supporters. Your mission may be anything from support for the local ballet to soliciting funds for cancer research. Whatever your cause, tell lots and lots of stories that describe the life-changing benefits you offer to others.
 5. **Solicit third-party endorsements** from people who love you and who speak words

of encouragement on your behalf. These website testimonials can be from those men, women and children you've helped get back on their feet, quotes from city officials, selections from books which make favorable references to your organization, comments from other websites pertaining to your work, or positive articles written about your organization. Find out what people are saying about you and your nonprofit. Share the good news with the world by putting these endorsements on your site.

Find out what people are saying about you and your nonprofit.

6. **Produce an FAQ section** (Frequently Asked Questions.) When you provide answers to the questions most visitors want to ask about your organization, you save staff time, display your openness, and move the communication process further along. This proactive set of FAQs is one of the most important content areas of your website. If you don't know what FAQs to ask, review other nonprofit websites for ideas.
7. **Make good use of your existing audio and video.** The technology is continually improving, and this quality is now appearing on thousands of websites—although bandwidth issues still persist. Based on our experience, these forms of media are still not important enough to justify spending money you may not have to produce audio and video content for your website alone. Stay current with the advances in this technology; however, use streaming audio and video only when it makes sense for your organization to do so. At this stage, the technology is neither a make nor break situation.

8. **Your website has become the ideal location for you to display** online press kits, news releases, captioned photos, regular updates on your organization, and links to your other conversational websites. While most sites are capable of generating adequate images, now may be the time for you to focus on arranging specific, content-focused photo shoots, or you may wish to buy some of the excellent stock photography now available to give your media promotional efforts a boost. Check out your content and make it media-friendly. Then, spread the word to writers and journalists worldwide.

9. **Everything you offer offline, make available online now!**

This means newsletters, direct mail, brochures, corporate statements, downloadable booklets, books, research, sermons, pamphlets, etc. In the future, undoubtedly a

**Everything
you offer
offline, make
available
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certain type of visitor will come to your site who will only want to read your content online. Do not make this person “write in” for materials you can just as easily place on your website. Again, review all the communication pieces you have created offline, and if they are worthy of reproduction, repurpose them and include them for easy online reading.

10. As stated earlier, **provide a privacy/security statement** for your visitors that explains how you plan to use the personal information you receive. Will you share their names with others? How safe is your website for donations? In general, how secure is your site? We suggest you look for model “privacy statements” and other useful information that can help you craft the verbiage that will assure your visitor of the online safety of your website.

11. Create a section on your website where visitors and friends can share their own stories of how they have been touched by the mission of your organization. Perhaps they are volunteers who help feed the hungry at a local rescue mission, or they may teach English to refugees, or perhaps they help build schools or churches for the poor across the border. This could be one of the most important communication modules on your website, because it excites the faithful, encourages others to become involved, and gives you an opportunity to promote it as emotional feedback on how and what you are doing to help change lives. Include photos, thumbnail sketches and anything else you feel will give your visitors and donors the opportunity to help shape the content of your website.

12. Design an area on your site that is foundation and/or major donor specific.

When you make a future major dollar request, you will now be able to ask the foundation or major donor simply to click on this section for a quick tour, which will describe your major fundraising needs. In addition, this section will act as a status report to foundations and major donors, allowing them instant access to the most recent progress made in relation to their specific gift. This section will never take the place of your personal contact to foundations or major donors, but it will be an important add-on to your formal request because you can incorporate a Microsoft PowerPoint® presentation, project-specific graphics, and on-site photos and comments from the field that may not have been part of the written proposal. You may also want to create a “wish list” of future needs for easy reference, namely material items such as blankets, medicine, vans or automobiles, school supplies, paint, pharmaceuticals, building supplies, etc.

13. **Whatever content you provide, do it with excellence.** Keep the conversation with your visitors alive and strong. Deliver value at all times. Be a good conversationalist—just as you are with your friends and supporters when you are offline. If a task is once begun, never leave it until it's done. Be the labor great or small, do it well or not at all.

It's a Team Effort

This final note. When you are working through the content of your website—either at the outset or as you update your material—it's critical that you communicate clearly and often with everyone involved. If you send a regular email to your team, send it to everyone at the same time, every day, without exception. No surprises is the watchword here. Consistent communication fosters trust, reliability and stability. When you want to modify your content, let your colleagues know what you are thinking. When you receive feedback from your friends and donors—good, bad or indifferent—again, pass the word along. (But emphasize the good stuff!) Instill the pride of accomplishment in your staff. Encourage off-the-wall ideas that will help make your site unique. Keep improving your content with every modification. Continually search for new, strategic opportunities to stay ahead of the curve. It's your mission, and it's your mandate to make your site's content the best it can be.

Keep improving your content with every modification. Continually search for opportunities to stay ahead of the curve.

Respect your Deadlines

Of all the websites we've designed at Grizzard, one of the primary reasons for any delay in going live has been the lack of timely content from clients. Content deadlines for your website should be taken as seriously as any other communication deadline. Set realistic

benchmarks for having your content ready to go, and then help your colleagues meet those deadlines so the world will be able to know who you are, what you do, and why your cause is worthy of wider support.

As you press on with the creation of content excellence, there will be many reasons for your site to be noteworthy. These will depend on how well you have carried a unique conversation to the heart of your donors and friends, how carefully you've listened to their concerns, and how seriously you've taken their feedback—and acted upon it. The result of this interaction is the stuff that will invariably give you the necessary insights to create that special “look and feel” for your site—which is the underlying nature of good Internet design...and the subject of the next chapter.

Some say it's the beautiful, soft pastels, so pleasing to the eye. Others will tell you it's the bold, explosive layout, or the careful attention given to the size of the fonts, or the economy of words and predominance of pictures. Still others will applaud the creative use of ear-splitting sound or, conversely, a pastoral homepage that unfolds like the gentle opening of a rose.

To some degree, everyone is probably correct about any one or more of these subjective responses. The problem is that if you were to design your website based on every conceivably possible approach, you could end up having more of an edgy Salvador Dali or Andy Warhol appearance than the crispness of an engaging and inviting presentation that draws users to your cause, mission and message—and keeps them there. (By the way, I'm not opposed to the wild works of artists Dali or Warhol; I just don't think they should be your design models.)

Here's what I'm saying. Rather than try to appeal to all those users who faithfully labor on the world's 16 million computers, which are linked to some 50,000 worldwide networks, you will have more success in website design when you remain sensitive to the demo- and psychographics of your audience, use appropriate colors, stay with the kind of layout/branding and content that complements your vision and mission and attracts people to your cause. When we talk to people about the Internet, we've noticed they always seem to be most interested in design. That's because they tend to see design

***Perfection
(in design) is
achieved not
when there
is nothing
more to add,
but rather
when there
is nothing
more to take
away.***

***- Antoine de
Saint-Exupery***

as the one place where they can be most creative—and have the most enjoyment. Well, it’s in that spirit that I write this chapter. Be ready to have some fun.

Here’s what happens when you put forth a professional image on your website: your visitors will assume at least three things: 1) your organization knows what it’s doing; 2) you are worthy of being taken seriously; 3) you’ve taken the time to think through the needs of the user to ensure that a visit to your site is a pleasure.

However, if you simply throw some brochureware on your site, pay little or no attention to proper navigation, and seldom update your content or graphics, guess what? Opposite effect. Users will click on, click through and click out. That’s why excellence in site design is vital. Be mindful of your organization’s endeavors to communicate its message long-term to an increasingly impatient group of Internet users—those often nameless men, women and children who instinctively know good design because they surf the web often and know what appeals to them.

Excellence in site design is vital if your organization endeavors to communicate its message long-term.

Your Assignments

I have a couple of assignments for you. First, print out your entire website. That’s right...every page. Now review it critically. What do you see? Do you love it? Be honest. Could it be improved? If so, how? Would you feel comfortable sending it to a donor? Do you know enough about your users to understand if your color palette, graphics, length and nature of content, and the ease of navigation meet the “convenience” test for your visitors? Then, assignment #2: Print out several websites of those organizations or companies you have book marked or which you visit often. Ask yourself why you continue to return to their sites? What is

it about their colors, content, fonts, etc? Ask all the same questions of others that you ask of yourself.

Over the past few years, we have observed several multimillion-dollar organizations that have produced great videos, written impressive brochures, designed spectacular radio and television commercials, and have justifiably called attention to their fully “wired” home offices. Yet the same organizations’ websites look as if they were hastily thrown online on a Saturday morning by a well-meaning volunteer who’s always wanted to do Web work. Your nonprofit has a single fleeting moment to make a good first impression on your visitors...and that’s why I’ve written this chapter: to give you some practical guidelines for thinking through a successful design of your website so that you can look as good as you really are. So let’s get started.

Research your target audience online

The Bible reminds us to ask, and you shall receive. What a great verse...because it is such good counsel for all of life itself. The same admonition comes into play when you want to solicit critical information from your website users. So let’s start asking them some questions: ask your donors, friends and prospects online what they think of your site. Ask them if you’re on track, if the content is easy for them to use, and if it’s a friendly place to visit. If not, ask them why not? Create an easy-to-complete survey that asks them to rate the quality of your design. Ask them about your color palette (is it visually attractive?), the content (is there too much; too little?), the connection speed (do you have so many graphics that it takes them an average lifetime to download your homepage?), the screen resolution for the size of their screen (Are you using 800 x 600 pixels as your

Ask your donors, friends and prospects online what they think of your site. Ask them if you’re on track, if it’s easy for them to use, and if it’s a friendly place to visit.

standard?), the ease of navigation (do users feel like lost sheep once they land into the middle of your site, or do they move throughout your material with the greatest of ease, always knowing where “home” is?), the e-donation section (do they feel secure in giving you their credit card number?) Are you making it easy for them to donate online?

Keep asking yourself: for whom have we designed this site? Remain open to changing the look and the feel of your Internet presence at all times, and keep your focus laser sharp on your layout and branding.

Your Layout Reinforces your Brand

Again, take a look at your website. Does its layout enhance or confuse the branding of your organization? Where have you done well? Where could you use some improvement? Have you been clear enough to remind your user where they are so they will know where to return? We need to address several important principles with regard to layout/branding on the World Wide Web. The basics of branding, i.e. establishing a set of associations between your organization’s “look” and a positive image or emotion, applies to the Internet as much as it does to your offline marketing—radio, television, direct mail, space ads, etc. While it is impossible to show a quantitative return on investment for these attributes, layout/branding is of utmost importance for your nonprofit’s long-term success. Here’s why: how you come across to your user tells them whether or not you are establishing name awareness and trust.

Name awareness shortens the involvement cycle since your visitors no longer need to figure out who you are before arriving at your site or making a decision. Name awareness also

Your site must be emotionally and cognitively pleasing and identifiable among a growing e-mazing amount of information known as the Internet.

builds mind share—which means that you’ve given the user a piece of yours, and they’ve relinquished a piece of theirs, making you both suddenly of like mind. However, if users don’t know where they’ve been because of inadequate layout/branding, then the mind share your organization receives is zero. Zero is not your objective. Your site must be emotionally and cognitively pleasing and identifiable among a growing e-mazing amount of information known as the Internet.

Trust Me

What about trust? Trust is trust—in business, personal life—and on the World Wide Web. I like the comment that says old friends are best. King James used to call for his old shoes; they were easiest for his feet. That’s also a pretty good definition of trust—because trust means comfort, familiarity. Trust means you will always deliver what you promise. Everything about your design must say trust—your affiliations, your third party endorsements, your track record. Trust means you will never bait and switch. Trust on the Internet—and on your website—however, must be earned. For example, you must be ready to stand by your word if you guarantee the privacy of your visitor, when you declare that his or her name will never be rented or sold (if that is your promise.) The good news is that trust well earned will pay you rich rewards, because trust leads immediately to word-of-mouth advertising, your most powerful tool, which will quickly account for as much as 30% of your new website traffic.

Top-of-Mind Awareness

Here are some other key issues to consider as you use your website’s design to announce who you are and what you do...

- Offline brands are still generally considered more trustworthy than what is seen on the Web. For that reason, it is critical to continue to build your brand offline as well. A website is not enough. It is not the basket into which to place all your promotional

eggs. Creative, effective offline marketing drives people to an online experience with you. Just be sure your offline message is consistent and compatible with your presence on the Web.

- Remember that one of the desired outcomes of a successful Internet campaign is top-of-mind awareness of your brand by your market(s). See it as a two-step process:
 - 1) Build awareness by using offline and/or online media
 - 2) Increase visitor/donor loyalty through repeat usage by utilizing a brand-bonding Web feature and service.
- Unlike offline branding or marketing, the Web is a two-way interaction. This reality is what can make your website your direct marketing dream come true. Here's the key: your organization must develop innovative, honest, exciting ways to involve your visitors with your website content so that it makes them smile, feel good, appreciate you and your cause, and want to know even more about you. That's your assignment. Until you've accomplished this, you are not taking full advantage of what the Web can do for you and your organization. So check your site out now, and ask yourself if it's really all that exciting. Remember, the general layout/branding of your site must be directly related to the ultimate purpose of your Internet presence—but it also must be an enjoyable experience for your visitors, friends, donors and prospects. You want the user to have an association with you that says: this is where I will always go for access to quality, worthwhile online content.

The Importance of Color

Yes, color is important. From a branding point of view, obviously your colors must be consistent with your corporate color scheme; they must also be pleasing to the eye, and complement the unique tastes of your visitors. Here's something to remember: your website users will form their first impressions of your site within the first nine seconds. Scary, isn't it?

“But, what about download time? Sometimes it takes a lot longer than that for our homepage to load,” you may say. If it takes that long for people to see anything of value on their screens, you’ve got too much stuff on your Web page. One of the secrets to enticing your visitors to stay with you during that critical initial nine seconds is to provide a gripping headline or some provocative text.

Whether your visitor is aware of it or not, he or she responds positively or negatively to color and visual cues at a deep psychological level. That’s why your color palette must tease and please. Only then will you seize the opportunity to pour significant content into the minds of your users. Look again at some of your favorite websites. What’s the first thing you see? Color. What hits you when you do a page-up or page-down? Color. That’s why color must be the first thing your visitors see when they log on to your site. Don’t make them wait. Let them see color, color, and more color. But make sure the color you choose is an extension of your organization’s objectives and goals—as well as meeting the requirements of what your donors expect from your Web presentation (something you know because of your ongoing research, right?) You don’t yet know what that color should be? That’s okay. Keep studying. Keep reading. Keep looking at several other sites . . .and continue to poll your users to find out what they think. Ask, and you shall receive. It even works when it comes to color.

Whether your visitor is aware of it or not, he or she responds positively or negatively to color and visual cues at a deep psychological level.

Say It with Graphics

We don’t know who he or she was, but we know a Chinese person said it a few thousand years ago...that a picture is worth a thousand words. As much as you might want to believe

your visitors are eager to wade through long, weighty articles about your cause or mission, the truth is they want to see pictures. Sorry, but that's what they want. If you must write longer copy, punctuate it with graphs, pictures, line drawings, cartoons, and photographs that focus on people's lives being changed because of your good work. Graphics increase the presentation effect of your website because suddenly your site becomes more intimate. Show your organization in action—and do it with pictures. If your cause is a homeless shelter, use photos to take your user on a virtual tour of your multi-step program to help those with addictions. If you are a college or university, display an array of photos—with students in them—that show the principal areas of interest at your school. If you are promoting the arts, or health concerns, say it with pictures that are more than mug shots. Make them interactive, exciting, interesting, and heart-warming.

One of my friends is an excellent photographer, and every time just before he snaps the shutter for a group picture of his family, friends or colleagues, he shouts, “Okay, guys... relate!”—and then he takes the shot. His results are amazing. Instead of people staring blankly at the camera waiting glassy-eyed for the flash to go off, he captures them looking at each other, gesturing, laughing, tickling one another, and otherwise having a good old time. Put the normal static shots most of us take next to my friend's dynamic pictures and there is no comparison. The “relational” picture wins hands down. I urge you to do the same thing with graphics on your website. Your cause may not be a “laughing matter,” but you can still have your subjects “relate.” But do make it as much fun as possible. Unfortunately, not many Web designers think much about the “fun” aspect. All the better reason for you to do it so your website will stand out . . .and help you cut through the e-maze.

Load Times

Once you are fully acquainted with your demographics (remember, you continually

survey your users online to acquire the information you need in this regard), you must now be aware that if your load time exceeds nine seconds, you will lose 20 percent of your users immediately. Not even your best friends will hang around your site indefinitely, impatiently waiting for their collective computer screens to come to life. I know it's not fair, but that's the way it is. During this 1/6 of a minute or less, your visitors will size you up, check out your site map, and make an immediate decision whether your site is worth their attention. Here's a rule of thumb: no single page on your website should require the loading time of more than 100K of materials. Text files—unless excessively large—usually should come in at under 20K. There is, however, one piece of good news: if your users use a dial up connection at home—and are working with a 28k modem—they will probably be accustomed to waiting for a 10-30 second load. But don't count on their patience. The burden remains on you to make it as easy as possible for your site visitors to log on quickly.

If your load time exceeds nine seconds, you will lose 20 percent of your users immediately.

Actually, research tell us that the closer you are to a 6.9 second load the better, although most won't kick you off if you go as long as nine seconds. If you discover your site can't do this, go back to your Web designer and tell him Todd Baker said to design the site better or he'll be knocking on his door. Just kidding. But seriously, let your site come to life quickly with brilliant color, pictures, photographs, graphs, cartoons, and with as little copy as possible. Your users will love it, and they'll hang around your virtual water cooler much longer—just to see what you really have to offer. And that's exactly what you want!

Information Structuring

“Site architecture” helps you produce a well-defined site map—that clearly diagrammed plan that highlights those areas of interest where you want to direct your users. Your

“information steward” should be given the charge to lay out all your content according to this “map.” Once that is clear, you should create one defined unit of information about one subject only—also called a chunk. Here’s where some nonprofits become hopelessly verbose, putting everything they know on a single page. The copy just goes on, and on...as the users click off and off. I never saw the actual performances, but I do remember hearing about the old vaudeville cliché that says always leave ‘em wanting more. Good advice then; good advice now. That’s because less is more. Less is always more. Tease your users into wanting to read more, hear more, and see more about what you are doing to save or change lives.

There’s an Internet rule known as 7 plus or minus 2, which means that psychologically your reader will be able to handle up to nine “chunks” of information, or will accept as little as five at any given time. Any more than nine, and you’ve lost your visitor; any less than five, and they’ll wonder why you have so little information to offer, and you may not be seen as credible.

Your users should always be able to find the navigation of your site in the same place on every page.

Navigating the high seas of the Internet

Danger, high waves off starboard. Ship listing. Heavy fog reducing visibility to zero. Losing control of wheel. Lost our bearings. Can’t see a thing. Mayday. Mayday. No, this isn’t a reference to a sailor’s most frightening moment at sea, but the tone is similar to what we often hear from people who, try as they might, simply cannot navigate the complexity of some websites. They find themselves getting lost in an HTML fog, where the website designer seemed to be more interested in receiving an art award than in creating a site where the navigation is efficient and user-friendly. Here are a few key points to consider regarding your site’s navigation:

- Navigation must be universal across the site. Don't let people get lost.
- Use color in all your navigation bars.
- Use text based navigation for images.
- Your users should always be able to find the navigation of your site in the same place on every page. This will help create that important measure of comfort, which will help visitors move through your Web presentation quickly and access the information they want in a timely manner.

Web rating exercise

Whenever Grizzard assists clients with their online promotional concerns, we always provide them with the following sheet of information as a research tool to help them understand what they like or don't like about other websites. Invariably, this exercise provides our clients with large bodies of information that comes solely from their own instincts about what makes a good site. Many times we work with people who often can't tell us what they like, but who know what they don't like—after they've seen it. That's why we've created certain design exercises to help them think through these issues. If you find the following web rating exercise useful, just send me an e-mail and let me know (Todd.Baker@Grizzard.com). The following is a rating guide to help you maintain consistency throughout the exercise.

Rating	Color	Shape	Type	Navigation
3	Eye pleasing, colors follow together, matches the site's personality and goals	Eye pleasing, a unique flair but appropriate, fits into the overall site goals	Easy to read, fits with the site's goals, sub-headings are easy to find	Clear and easy to find, multiple options
2	Missing something	Pretty standard	It's okay	Missing something
1	Do not like color palette	The shape does not fit	Type does not work	Not clear

Website Rating Exercise

We have supplied these websites via Microsoft PowerPoint®. Please move through the exercise as quickly as possible. As you view each homepage, indicate your rating in the appropriate box as 1, 2 or 3, moving from left to right. Total each score after reviewing the entire PowerPoint® presentation. These websites have been chosen because they have similar design objectives as your website.

website	Color	Shape	Type	Navi- gation	Total Rating
1. Latimes.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Dailynews.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Democratandchronicle.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Sunspot.net	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Cincypost.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Washingtonpost.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Star-telegram.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Ctnow.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Sacbee.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Insidedenver.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Denverpost.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Seattletimes.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Washingontimes.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. Examiner.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. Kcstar.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. Chicagotribune.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. Nando.net	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Website Rating Exercise (continued)

website	Color	Shape	Type	Navi- gation	Total Rating
18. Azcentral.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
19. Signonsandiego.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
20. Nypost.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
21. Nydailynews.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
22. Cleveland.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
23. Sun-sentinel.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
24. Deseretnews.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
25. Oregonlive.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
26. Tampatrib.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
27. Sptimes.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
28. Helping.org	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
29. Crosswalk.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
30. Christianityonline.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
31. Csmonitor.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
32. Rescuemissions.net	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
33. MSNBC.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
34. Microsoft.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
35. Gateway.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
36. Att.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
37. Cnet.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
38. Wcom.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
39. ForMinistry.com	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Close your Eyes and Visualize

Here's a complementary exercise we use to help our clients "walk through" what they will perceive to be an ideal website. This is how it works. I ask members of the group to close their eyes and "see" a site that doesn't really exist—except in their mind's eye. This may be one of the most instructive Web exercises you will ever experience, because you will not only see what is good to you—which is what visualization is all about—but you also become the "visitor" to your own site as you explore the reality of good and bad site design.

Ask any professional golfer or tennis player about this, and he or she will tell you "When I visualize my drive, putt, serve or volley, I always do it right. I never miss. I never make a mistake. And when I play, I refer to my visualization experience. It makes all the difference in my game." It's the same with the visualization exercise I'm about to share with you. As you visualize your ideal website, you, too, will "see" the best, the most creative, and the best design, all of which will give you a template for the site that appeals most to you. Here are the questions I ask when conducting this exercise. Try it with your staff—with their eyes closed—and discover what insights they come up with as you ask them . . .

1. What primary colors do you see on the homepage?
2. What secondary colors do you see?
3. How much white space do you see?
 - a. 30%
 - b. 50%
 - c. 70%
4. What color is the font?

5. How is the text broken up?
 - a. Is the color headline different from the other colors?
 - b. Is the reverse type from a color background? If so what is the color of type or background?

6. What font do you see? Are there different kinds of fonts used?

7. If so, do you know the names or categories?
 - a. Times Roman
 - b. San-Serif
 - c. Rounded letter forms
 - d. Wide lettering
 - e. Decorative
 - f. Script

8. What kinds of shapes do you see (rectangles, circles, triangles, combinations)?

9. What kinds of images and pictures do you see?

10. Are there icons? If so, how are they being used?

11. What is at the top of the homepage?

12. What is on the left-hand side?

13. What is on the right-hand side?

14. What is in the middle of the page?

15. Where do you see the navigation for the website?
 - a. Right
 - b. Left
 - c. Middle
 - d. Bottom
 - e. Combination

As I step back and review what I've written in this chapter, I'm aware that we've obviously only scratched the surface of what it takes to create excellence in good Web design—but I hope we've given you a good start.

Now, it's time to shift gears from our emphasis on the right brain to the left, as we look at some important technological aspects of your website. Your website's overall performance relies on the technology infrastructure on which it is designed. So let's put the left side of our brains to work for a few pages, and talk about what you need to know about how to make website technology work for you—the subject of our final chapter.

Among the greatest challenges to face nonprofits in the coming years will be their ability to continually update their understanding of Internet technology so they'll be able to ready themselves for innovative developments already on the drawing boards of Internet engineers. If it's true—and it is true—that the only real certainty is change itself, then we can expect exponential change in the underlying technical architecture of the Internet in the years ahead. For nonprofits not to be aware of these coming changes in technology is to court disaster—and to abdicate leadership positions to those nonprofits wise enough to stay with—and get ahead of—the pack. If you thought the wild pace of today's Internet technology was occurring at breakneck speed, then fasten your seat belt, because the best—and most exciting developments ever—are yet to come. The question is: will you be ready for what's about to happen.

The Intelligent Use of Technology

Today, Grizzard is helping scores of nonprofits harness the enormous power of Internet technology as we guide these organizations in the way they raise friends, funds and achieve their mission. Based on both research and anecdotal client evidence, we are convinced that only the use of the right technology today can provide the kind of foundation on which all future successful websites will be built in the rest of the 21st century. It is critical that your organization sees the intelligent use of technology as the engine to help you meet your goals and objectives—such as the effective use of e-mail, content development and

Engineers tend to over-promise and under-deliver. As a nonprofit, realize that, as a marketer first and foremost, you must put reliability and stability on the top of your list.

database management, along with those even broader categories such as involvement and marketing, outlined earlier in the book.

We are confident that organizations which use appropriate technology to manage and track their online and offline donors will specifically have the advantage of generating those comparative analysis reports which will provide important reliable data. The advanced technology used to capture this information will set the stage for more intelligent marketing, ultimately saving you tens of thousands of dollars annually in the days ahead.

It Must be a Team Effort

The Internet is the ultimate bridge between marketing and information technology (IT), a combination of skills that provides a remarkable opportunity for marketing and IT people to collaborate and solve long-standing organizational technology issues. In fact, the more you involve your IT people in all your Internet efforts, the more effective you will be in guaranteeing technology integration and, at the same time, in helping relieve whatever internal tension that may exist between the two camps. A healthy scenario is when your marketing team brings a thorough inventory of what its want to be—and is able to do—to the table, and then lets the IT folks determine what brand name or Internet platform would be best suited to support that functionality.

The use of the right technology today can provide the kind of foundation on which all future successful websites will be built in the rest of the 21st century.

In prior direct marketing efforts, many organizations have made the mistake of allowing marketing and IT departments to develop their respective long-term plans independent of one another. In the end, this has always been less than desirable, because good marketing ideas and

solid, verifiable research that cannot be supported with existing technology makes it a no-win situation for everyone. Experience has shown us—and has possibly shown you—that working together as a complete team makes more sense. Without this spirit of cooperation, too many good ideas will surely die for lack of credible implementation.

IT is Your “Travel Agent”

Let’s relate this to something we all can identify with—traveling. I want you to consider your IT staff as your travel agent. You may know where you want to go, and what you want to see and do on your trip. However, if you have never been on that specific route before and, quite frankly, don’t know much about your itinerary, how can you be certain that your trip will be successful? You can’t, really. Of course, you can always hope for the best, live with partial success, or just chalk it up to an interesting journey. However, you have so much at stake in your nonprofit enterprise that such thinking quickly becomes absurd. Would you not rather plan for and anticipate success? Your travel agent—your IT folks—usually know the best way for you to get from here to there. They can advocate the appropriate technology and information support which is available at an affordable price. To push the analogy a step further, your IT people also know which “hotel and car rental” locations have the highest rate of customer satisfaction and additional attractions that you may want to consider. Both sides win when you partner in this manner, because you bring the best of both worlds together as you search for optimum solutions to the challenges you face both today and in the future. What am I saying? Take the trip together!

It has often been said that your IT department should not be in charge of your website. I would agree, primarily because the Internet is really a marketing medium. However, as the Internet will increasingly become central to your marketing and fundraising efforts, the need for information integration between online and offline databases will also increase. Therefore, your

IT department needs to be actively engaged to ensure that technology integration is realized. Furthermore, as stated earlier, your organization's Internet efforts may indeed be instrumental in providing a fresh start that helps to relieve any misunderstandings that may exist between your marketing and IT staff. This renewed relationship will undoubtedly spark new perspectives on other outstanding issues as well.

In this chapter, we are not going to address specific technology platforms that you will need to support Internet functionality. Listing the numerous technology scenarios that are found throughout the nonprofit community would not be useful. Having said that, however, both the leading website platforms, Unix and Microsoft NT, are fully capable of supporting the functionality found in this e-book. Whichever platform you ultimately choose should be determined by three things: the budget of your project(s), the expertise of those helping you implement your site, and the specific requirements that must be met.

Both the leading website platforms, Unix and Microsoft NT, are fully capable of supporting the functionality found in this e-book.

A Technological Baker's Dozen

I know you're waiting for them, so here they are: my Baker's Dozen of considerations for your organization's technology strategy. These are a combination of tips for developing a technology plan—along with what I call administrative functionality.

You do your organization a great service when you carefully think through not only the marketing functionality of your website, but the many administrative requirements as well. Your organization's technology strategy must also demonstrate how it will maintain an unusually high level of responsiveness and attention necessary to be successful online. Here we go with my Baker's Dozen...

1. **Develop an effective technology plan that focuses on functionality/applications,** not technology alone. Make sure your plan is outcome-based; specify what you want your marketing or development staff to do with technology. Once agreed upon, let those outcomes determine the kind of technology needed to support that functionality. This approach to technology planning not only applies to the Internet but for all your organization's current and future technology needs.
2. **One way to ensure that technology is understood and embraced throughout your organization**—not just in IT—is to tie it to individual staff development plans. Organizationally, it must be understood that technology is a tool that ultimately must help everyone to become more efficient, thus furthering the organization's mission. (Aren't you glad that technology has no ego?)
3. **Short-term plans are best.** Technology is rapidly changing, and it's impossible to plan for the kind of technology that will be available to nonprofits three to five years from now. Perhaps one-year plans may be as far ahead as your organization should chart, specifically when it comes to purchasing certain types of equipment, such as computers, servers and software. Review your plan annually, ideally during the budget cycle; make sure your plan has not locked you into purchasing outdated technology.
4. **As I have stated above, partner closely with your IT team.** Let them determine the brand of software or hardware you need to purchase to help you get to where you want to be. Allow them to help you work smarter, not harder. Selected technology performs certain applications better than others. You are best served when you allow

IT to make those determinations on your behalf, and to purchase the technology that serves you best and that provides a solid foundation for future development.

5. **Understanding your target audience's demographics and its Internet applications/capabilities plays a key role in determining the technology you will need** to ensure a smooth, quick-loading online experience. For example, I'd encourage you to conduct the research necessary to learn what technology your target audience uses, such as their web browsers and connection speeds. This will help you understand the kind of technology, graphics and motion you can and should use in your technological design. If you are an International organization, and your target audience is the world, then your technology specifications must be set with the bare minimum in mind. This will ensure that your website will be viewed optimally by all users. You may also want to consider the creation of multiple websites: one for North Americans who have access to more advanced technology; and the second for the rest of the world, where technology standards are less reliable.

6. **Your website should have content management tools built into the technology.** This will help accelerate the content development process as well as categorize content to leverage its effectiveness. In addition, these tools will enable anyone on your staff to update the website without bringing on costly designers for the day-to-day maintenance of content. Tools can be built to run from a web browser without needing other software to update content. Articles or stories can be changed, images uploaded, and content can be deleted or modified by your staff. This will keep your website in the hands of the marketers, not programmers, and ensure that your content is continually refreshed.

7. **Template design technology helps** you to maintain your brand integrity, ensure quality, and facilitate a constructive and empowering creative. Integrating templates that suggest specific placements for graphics, images, headlines and text help direct your staff through the content development process. You may also decide to use this template design technology when you ask for testimonials or feedback to stories on your website. This will guarantee uniformity in response no matter how little content is entered, thus giving your website a more professional look and feel.

8. **During the website development phase, I suggest that you create an administrative web gallery** of photos, images, graphics, charts, organizational phrases and quotes. This will ensure that a substantial amount of pre-approved content is ready and available to help expedite the process.

9. **Testing technology is a large part of building a successful website**, and is a necessary step throughout all the phases of your website's development. Make certain that your site developer has a testing policy. Grizzard's principles of testing involves three milestones, which we refer to as Alpha, Beta and Gold. To proceed from one milestone to the next, the development process must reach key, predetermined requirements. For example:
 - a. **Alpha:** The testing process starts as soon as the website construction begins, as developers test each of the various modules being built. As design and programming elements are completed, the two are integrated and tested to make sure they work in unison. At this point, the basics of the website should function as intended, and the site is considered "Alpha." Quality Assurance (QA) personnel then need to perform a full battery of tests for functionality, design structure, and browser compatibility. Programmers and designers will perform fixes and changes as necessary.

homework, and do not accept the first set of tools available. You want the best technology possible to help you say thank you, sell product, encourage further sales and/or donations, and give donors the opportunity to check on the status of their “account.” Also of great importance, be sure you acquire email management tools that give you the optimum opportunity for free flowing communication with your donors and friends. Again, this is more about friend raising than fundraising.

13. **Backend technology for online donations is vital** if you are to get ahead—and stay ahead—in the increasingly competitive environment in which you as a nonprofit will operate in the future. Avail yourself of the technology that provides for receiving credit cards, pledges, single or multiple gifts—and that ensures the donor he or she is properly and quickly receipted. Also be sure you purchase the best encryption technology available. Many of your clients may still be fearful of giving you some of the most important numbers in their purses or wallet. Make sure they know that giving to your organization is safe and secure.

“You may very well need to expand your language and protocol horizons beyond HTML and HTTP”

- Molly E. Holzschlag

Traveling at Warp Speed

In closing this chapter and this book, I want to leave you with some words of wisdom from Molly E. Holzschlag, honored as one of the 25 Most Influential Women on the Web.

Molly writes, “Web designers and developers are traveling at warp speed toward an unknown future. Unusual acronyms whiz past our heads, looking much like alien creatures with three- or four-letter bodies, speaking unfamiliar languages and negotiating obscure protocols.

“While working long hours creating websites, developers may be aware that there’s an alternative device revolution taking place. Steve Case, of American Online, recently made a public commitment to creating devices for the wireless Web. ‘This is the second Internet revolution,’ Case said in his keynote speech at Spring Internet World 2000. ‘You should have simple devices that make connecting to the Internet simple and easy.’

“What’s more, forecasters say that by 2002, most people will be accessing Web content using handheld devices instead of PCs. Disconcerting? You bet. Only a handful of developers are actually working to deliver content to alternative devices, and the rest of us are wondering how to negotiate these alien lands...

“You’re probably asking, ‘Do I really need to know this stuff?’ You may very well need to expand your language and protocol horizons beyond HTML and HTTP, depending upon your personal and professional goals. However, many designers work in teams and can leave the weighty technology to others. While those of you in this group may not need to know how to work with these technologies, you’ll need to know how to design for them. Moreover, being aware of what the technologies are, what they do, and how they influence the way you design will put you in better control of your work. . .

“The grand irony is that designers, especially those who once designed for a kinder, simpler Web, have little to fear. Aside from learning some new concepts that should not be as daunting as they might first appear, it looks as though our jobs will be very much like creating pages for the Web in 1993. But this time, we’ll be using different languages and protocols to achieve our designs.”

We agree with Molly and have always appreciated her insights. So what is she saying about technology? Stay current. Stay simple...and stay informed. That is also the message from your friends at Grizzard, and the message of this book—to help you do just that. In the Internet, you have a tiger by the tail, and as you hang on, it will continue to be one of the wildest rides of your life. But you never need to feel you're alone as you wander into the remotest areas of cyberspace, because we will always be there to help.

For several generations now the Grizzard family has committed itself to making our world a better place for everyone by helping those who are in the trenches making it happen—people like you and your organization. That's why we hope you will stay in touch with us, so we can help you do your job even better in the future than you are doing it now. We look forward to staying in touch, as you give us yet another opportunity to share more of our researched-knowledge with you and your Internet team.

All the best to you...and God bless.

Todd Baker
Vice President
Grizzard

The Internet is making the world a smaller place. However, most of that world does not yet have access to this international powerhouse. In fact, it's now estimated that only half of North America is online. Because of the possibility of exponential growth that lies ahead, now is the time for you to implement several effectively proven Internet strategies to help you position your organization for the future.

Have you ever thought what will happen when most of the world goes online? What will happen when European, Australian and other international nonprofits appear online and begin to appeal to the most generous people in the world? With that competitive future in mind, how can you secure your position, and grow the kind of donor loyalty today that will assure you of future stability?

For example, if your organization is an internationally focused nonprofit working in Africa, what will you do when an African nonprofit appeals directly to your donors online and states that through their world banking partner 100% of all donations goes directly to the people in need? Why would North Americans, who have a heart for Africa, continue to give through your nonprofit which takes 20% off the top for overhead?

Perhaps you're thinking that these international nonprofits will not have the capacity to build websites that appeal to North Americans. What if many of these international governments not only start new nonprofits, but also help others get online for the sole purpose of raising funds from North Americans? This has not yet happened because of the great expense involved to reach North Americans through other media, such as television, radio or direct

Now is the time for you to implement several effectively proven Internet strategies to help you position your organization for the future.

mail. However, one of the most powerful aspects of the Internet is the ability to reach people at virtually no cost. In the days ahead, it can only become cheaper.

As we move into the future, the Internet will continue to tear down the walls of tradition. That's why you must look ahead and see what clearly looms on the horizon. As you contemplate the expanded, more creative use of the Internet for your organization in the days ahead, you can take comfort in knowing that I, along with my many esteemed colleagues at Grizzard, will be here for you every step of the way...helping you to create Internet strategies and an overall Internet presence that will cut through the emaze.

This book could not have been written without the support and help from so many of my family and friends.

First of all, I would like to thank my beautiful wife, Priscilla, for all her support and understanding while the Grizzard team was working with me on this book. I would also like to thank my daughter, Emily, who had to put up with her Daddy working on his laptop instead of playing with her and the pots and pans.

A special appreciation goes to my boss, Senior Vice President Phil Stolberg, for having an understanding heart when my status reports came in a little late. Of course I used the book as my primary excuse; now I'll have to find some new ones.

My team at Grizzard picked up the slack while I was sneaking away during the day to write this book. Thanks Nancy Bathke, Claudette Phillips, Letty Baldaro and Lenny Esposito.

I would like to thank one of the finest graphic designers I've ever worked with, Carl Crooks, for the great work he's crafted on this book. I remember the afternoon when he looked at me in amazement as I told him I wanted the cover to show six colored laser beams forming one white beam that shoots through a wall of an internet maze. As you can see, he captured the concept nicely.

And to Jon Minnihan, one of the brightest guys around when it comes to truly understanding the Internet, thank you. Your insights and counsel throughout this project saved the day on more than one occasion. This book could not have been written without the support and help from so many of my family and friends.

Finally, to Robert C. Larson who has written over 65 books, thank you for your mentorship and most of all, your friendship.