

# Make your church an online superstar

A presentation by Jim Aderman ● Evangelism Day, April 21, 2018

## 10 Best Practices: Websites

- Useful content
  - Fresh and well-written, focused on the appropriate audience, tell stories, scannable or bulleted, graphics are attractive and “authentic”
- Simple, intuitive navigation
  - Function over form, one-tap from homepage, breadcrumbs, top and bottom navigation, search function
  - Capitalizes on About Us, emphasizes what you do and who you are, short descriptor (motto), easily accessible and redundant information on location and contact information.
- Attractive branded appearance
  - Design to represent your brand
  - Consistent, “no surprises” design and voice
  - Up-to-date content
  - Visually appealing
  - Graphics with real people rather than stock photos or illustrations
  - Open and clean (no clutter)
- Mobile-optimized
  - 60% of internet traffic comes from mobile devices (InMobi); improves SEO
  - Use a mobile-friendly website builder
  - Pay attention to image sizes, columns, “click” or “tap,” standard fonts
- Calls to action (CTA)
  - Remember the marketing funnel; you want visitors to take an action; invite them to act
  - Also use landing (action) pages
  - Gathering contact information is the most important CTA
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
  - Factors, Positive: content quality, mobile-friendly, helpful keywords, authority/trustworthiness, link quality. Negative: paid for links, spam, keyword stuffing
- Domain name
  - Easily recognizable and “rememberable”
  - Able to enhance your brand
- Testimonies
  - People don’t trust a church or business to describe themselves accurately
  - Testimonies from members, guests, “celebrities” are essential to credibility. This can be part of a church’s storytelling
- Analytics
  - Learn who is coming to your site, their location, their OS, the time of day, the pages they visit, the place they visit from.

- Adjust your website accordingly.
- Social sharing
  - Social media funnels visitors to the website.

### **Resources for best website practices**

Eight Characteristics of a Good Website

<http://www.successdesigns.net/articles/entry/characteristics-of-a-good-website/>

Key Elements of an Effective Website

<http://www.spritzweb.com/resources/good-website-characteristics.html>

8 Key Characteristics of a Quality Website for Business

<https://returnnonnow.com/2014/11/8-characteristics-quality-website-business/>

8 Qualities of a Good Website

<https://www.bigsplashwebdesign.com/8-qualities-of-a-good-website/>

Characteristics of a Good Website

<http://www.vandelaydesign.com/characteristics-of-a-good-website/>

Characteristics of an Effective Website

<https://www.walkersandsdigital.com/Characteristics-of-an-Effective-Website>

The 6 Essential Characteristics of a Business Website

<http://www.webs.com/blog/2011/03/18/the-6-essential-characteristics-of-a-business-website/>

10 Features Your Website Must Have to Be Effective

<http://www.susangreencopywriter.com/articles/10-features-effective-website.html>

Web Design Standards: 10 Best Practices on the Top 50

<https://www.orbitmedia.com/blog/web-design-standards/>

27 Research-Backed Web Design Tips: How to Design a Website That Works

<https://www.orbitmedia.com/blog/web-design-tips/>

Web Design Elements: Examples And Best Practices

<https://www.smashingmagazine.com/web-design-essentials-examples-and-best-practices/>

9 nonprofit web design best practices

<https://4agoodcause.com/9-nonprofit-web-design-best-practices/>

Striving for timeless yet trendy: Nonprofit web design best practices for 2018

<http://www.thenerdnonprofit.com/nonprofit-web-design-best-practices-for-2018/>

13 Essential Nonprofit Web Design Best Practices

<https://doublethedonation.com/nonprofit-web-design/>

11 INGREDIENTS to a good church website

<https://blog.nucleus.church/church-website-homepage-formula/>

The perfect church homepage

<https://blog.nucleus.church/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/The-Perfect-Church-Homepage-Infographic.pdf>

18 of the Best Church Websites for 2018

<https://churchjuice.reframemedia.com/blog/18-of-the-best-church-websites-for-2018>

5 Reasons your buyer personas aren't good enough

<https://marketinginsidergroup.com/strategy/5-reasons-buyer-personas-arent-good-enough/>

The 40-point SEO checklist for startups

<https://searchengineland.com/the-40-point-seo-checklist-for-startups-296197#.WtgaPRFC82U.twitter>

## 10 Best Practices: Social Media

- Choose the best social media platforms for your ministry's brand
  - Each platform has its own characteristics, audience, expectations
  - Use platforms that match who your ministry is
- Choose platforms your audience uses
  - Cast your line where your preferred fish are
- Engage with your social media audience
  - Listen to them (social listening)
  - Respond to their questions, concerns, comments
  - Produce suitable content
  - Be personal
  - Encourage conversation, interaction (ask questions)
- Publish appropriately
  - Publish when your audience is online
  - Live up to the publishing expectations of each platform
  - Design posts for each platform
    - image size, content size, graphics/video, optimize content for each channel
    - Pair posting schedule/design with social media platform
    - For scheduling consider using Buffer, HootSuite, etc.
- Use a consistent tone/voice
  - Your tone/voice should match your brand and relate to your audience
  - Consider the balance between serious/whimsy, informal/formal, male/female, old/young
  - Compose a style guide if more than one person is posting; but even for a "one person shop"
- Share content more than once
  - Social media posts are not seen by most followers
  - Republish "evergreen" content (holidays, topics)
  - Repackage content for other platforms
  - Link to content on your site
  - Repurpose content (e.g., publish part of blog post, a segment of a video)
- Use graphics and video
  - Do not post without a graphic or video
  - Videos are more popular than graphics
    - Live-stream events, commentary, slice-of-life reflections
    - Reports on church events
    - Others' videos (with their permission): illustrate, inform, entertain
- Strive for quality over quantity
  - Whatever a church publishes online reflects their brand
- Have a measurable goal
  - Schedule/plan your posts
  - Know how you want your audience to respond

- For example: website or page visits, response to an offer, the sharing of content, opt-in to your email list
  - Design your website to elicit that response
    - Include clear and regular calls to action (CTAs)
    - Rule of thumb: one request for support of your ministry for every four articles about your ministry or related topics
  - Measure whether your audience is responding as you want
  - Because each platform and the audience for each platform is different, you will set different goals for each platform
- Increase your audience
  - Organic growth: word of mouth, searches, shares
  - Paid advertising: inexpensive, targeted
  - Develop relationships with influencers
    - Influencers are individuals who have a larger than average following on social media
      - Some have huge followings; most have hundreds, perhaps thousands
    - Influencers can assist you in getting the word out about your ministry by mentioning your ministry or something your ministry is doing
      - Influencers need cultivation and assistance in promoting your ministry
    - Mutual influencing happens when your ministry mentions others and they, in turn, mention you

### **Resources for best social media practices**

5 Effective Social Media Best Practices for Your Business

<https://smallbiztrends.com/2016/09/social-media-best-practices.html>

Social Media Best Practices for Content Marketing

<https://blog.vwriter.com/social-media-best-practices-content-marketing/>

5 Social Media Best Practices for 2017

<https://www.salesforce.com/blog/2016/12/5-social-media-best-practices-for-2017.html>

5 Best Practices to Help You Win at Social Media MARKETING

<https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/win-at-social-media-in-2015/>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service -- Social Media Posting Guidelines

[https://www.fws.gov/home/socialmedia/documents/USFWS\\_Social\\_Media\\_Posting\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/home/socialmedia/documents/USFWS_Social_Media_Posting_Guidelines.pdf)

Beginners' guide to social media

<https://moz.com/beginners-guide-to-social-media/twitter>

Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices (Wentworth Institute of Technology)

<https://wit.edu/media/sm-best-practices>

Social Media Best Practices – INFOGRAPHIC

<https://www.onlinesalesguidetip.com/social-media-best-practices-infographic/>

How to Identify Social Media Influencers & Collaborate on Campaigns

<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-influencers/>

What is an Influencer?

<https://influencermarketinghub.com/what-is-an-influencer/>

Church Communications Team Job Description

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/church-media-communications>

9 Must-Know Best Practices for Distributing Your Nonprofit's Content on Social Networks

<http://www.nptechforgood.com/2014/09/14/9-must-know-best-practices-for-distributing-your-nonprofits-content-on-social-networks/>

Graphics sizing on SM

<https://churchjuice.reframemedia.com/blog/social-media-sizing-guide-2018>

5 Social Video Marketing Tips

<https://website-designs.com/social-media/5-social-video-marketing-tips/>

9 churches on Instagram

<http://churchcommunications.com/churches-you-should-follow-on-instagram-2018/>

## 10 Best Practices: Email

- Consistent, “no surprises” design and voice
- Reaching your core audience, not large numbers, is key to email distribution
- Make it easy to subscribe and unsubscribe
  - Every field you require to subscribe will cause the conversion rate to drop by 25%
    - Source: Emma Email Marketing
- Personalize your emails, but avoid being creepy.
- First, provide value to your readers.
  - Only then consider how you might receive value from them.
- Make it easy to read
  - Scannable
  - Concise, minimal copy
  - White space
  - Design attractive subject lines
- Appealing visuals
  - High emotional impact
  - Real people
  - Avoid large graphics that load slowly
  - Do not overuse graphics
    - Mobile-friendly
- Segment your mailing list
  - Appeal appropriately to each segment
- Brand your email content and design
- One clear call to action
  - Give your CTA prominence (top of page)
- Test and review
  - Test in a variety of browsers, especially mobile browsers
  - Check and recheck spelling, grammar, sentence length, etc.

### Resources for best email practices

Email Marketing Best Practices

<https://www.salesforce.com/products/marketing-cloud/resources/email-marketing-best-practices/>

40 Tips for Dramatically Better Emails

<https://www.getvero.com/resources/guides/email-marketing-best-practices/>

The Ultimate Guide to Email Design Best Practices for Marketers

<http://www.convinceandconvert.com/email/guide-to-email-design-best-practices/>

Email Marketing Best Practices in 2017: 5 Tips to Improve Your Emails

<https://blog.aweber.com/email-marketing/email-marketing-best-practices-in-2017.htm>

Best Practices for Email Subject Lines

<https://kb.mailchimp.com/campaigns/previews-and-tests/best-practices-for-email-subject-lines>

Best Practices for Email Marketing

<https://kb.mailchimp.com/campaigns/previews-and-tests/best-practices-for-email-marketing>

From the Inbox to the Landing Page: Email Marketing Best Practices In Action

<https://litmus.com/blog/email-marketing-best-practices-in-action-with-lots-of-examples>

Best Practices for Email Marketing

[https://www.icontact.com/content/resources/pdf/Email Marketing Best Practices iContact.pdf](https://www.icontact.com/content/resources/pdf/Email_Marketing_Best_Practices_iContact.pdf)

Design emails that go to work for you

<https://www.salesforce.com/products/marketing-cloud/resources/email-design-toolkit/>

Mindful Communication Tools: Email Best Practices

<https://blog.prialto.com/mindful-communication-tools-email-practices>

## 10 Best Practices: Branding

Your church's brand is the collective reputation of those familiar with you. Your brand is the general idea or impression people get when they see your logo, hear your name, or enter your building (ChurchJuice).

### Resources for best social media practices

Why Your Church Needs a Brand

<https://churchjuice.reframemedia.com/blog/why-your-church-needs-a-brand>

Brand-Building Best Practices

<https://www.inc.com/theupsstore/brand-building-best-practices.html>

LOGO Branding Best Practices: Logo

<https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/branding-best-practices-logo-1/>

Best Practices for Nonprofit Branding and Design [video and transcript]

<https://bloomerang.co/blog/video-best-practices-for-nonprofit-branding-and-design/>

Guide to Best Practices in Nonprofit Communications [includes articles on branding]

[http://www.prnewsonline.com/Assets/File/PRN\\_Guide\\_Best\\_Practices\\_Nonprofit\\_Communications.pdf](http://www.prnewsonline.com/Assets/File/PRN_Guide_Best_Practices_Nonprofit_Communications.pdf)

Creating a Nonprofit Branding Guide: Do's and Dont's

<https://www.neoncrm.com/nonprofit-branding-guide/>

Branding Best Practices: AmeriCorps Texas Branding Initiative

<https://onestarfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ACTX-Branding-Best-Practices-2014.pdf>

Divine Peace

## Strategy for online presence: Musing by JAA

October 14, 2016

### Goals for online presence

- Use the website to reach unchurched, especially 30-somethings, in DP's parish area.
- Use targeted email to reach prospects with compelling calls to action.
- Use social media primarily to reach members to nurture their faith and provide them with shareable content. Social media will seek to drive visitors to the website.

### Target audience

- 30-somethings who live in DP's parish area
- Assumptions about this audience
  - They are recently new home owners (first time owners).
  - They either have a small child or a child is in their family plan.
  - They have two cars.
  - They are white.
  - They have a high school education, perhaps some college.
  - They have a mortgage.
  - They were born in Wisconsin.
  - Their house is valued between \$120,000 and \$140,000.
  - They will move from the area when financially able.
  - Their commute to work takes about 20 minutes.
  - 10-15% have been divorced.
  - Their household income is between \$40,000 and \$50,000.
  - They have had limited exposure to a church, but it has been positive.
  - They are seeking a relationship with a church because
    - They are not satisfied with their lives.
    - They want to improve their marriage/their marriage has problems
    - There is some upheaval in their (extended) family (e.g., health, AODA, job loss) and are in need of counseling/problem solving
    - They want to have a church wedding.
    - They want baptism for their child.
    - They want help with parenting their preschool aged child

### Divine Peace

- Ministry themes are: Grow, Connect, Serve
- Brand
  - Describe DP to the target audience in one (or two) sentence
    - E.g., Divine Peace is a Lutheran faith community committed to helping each other grow in a meaningful relationship with the Triune God, to connecting with each other in Christ-like love, and to serving our community as representatives of our Savior.

- Note DP wants to promote itself as a church that is actively engaged (“doing something”).
- Describe how this brand will demonstrate itself
  - In graphics (drawings, photos, gifs, videos)
  - In text (key words, tone, layout, typeface)
  - In color palette

**Visitor’s journey** on website: Our visitors will progress from

- Seeking information about Divine Peace/Christianity/Lutheranism to
- Finding information that meets their needs to
- Returning for additional information to
- Sharing their contact information to
  - Congregation replies
  - Add to prospect email list, send email
- Attending worship to
- Beginning to receive personal contacts from congregation to
- Joining a BIC and become members to
- Participating in addition Bible studies and activities to
- Promoting DP to friends and family.
- QUESTION: what materials will guests need to have available on DP’s website to meet their needs and lead them, step by step, through this journey? What materials will appeal to the target demographic?