

Empowering Nonprofits in the Digital Age: A Strategic Playbook for Online Marketing

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Introduction

In a digitally centered world, effective and impactful marketing strategies have become a necessity for success for all varieties of organizations. While conversations surrounding marketing strategies typically center around large corporations, small nonprofits organizations must learn how to successfully navigate the online sphere with limited resources. Intrigued by the differences of how for-profits and nonprofits engage in digital marketing, my thesis aims to explore how nonprofits, specifically small community-based nonprofits, can best employ digital marketing strategies to share their mission, create community, and achieve their goals.

In order to understand what small nonprofit organizations' marketing and digital experience entails, I volunteered with Redwood Heights Association (RHA), an Oakland-based all-volunteer nonprofit organization focused on improving the livelihood of Oakland residents through community events and neighborhood improvements. As I lived in Oakland, California my whole life prior to college, the Redwood Heights Association's mission reflects values and initiatives that are meaningful to me. My thesis reflects both my academic passions as well as my connection to the community by helping to create a meaningful contribution toward RHA's mission.

Expanding upon what I have learned through my experience with RHA, I have developed a strategic digital marketing playbook for nonprofit organizations and their specific needs. The playbook focuses on four main areas: social media strategies, Google marketing tools, online accessibility, and practical management/planning resources. Combining my insights with my

experience, my thesis highlights key digital marketing strategies for nonprofits while offering practical tools for organizations working to make an impact in their community.

My Interest in The Redwood Heights Association

Throughout my time as a marketing student at Colorado State University, I have noticed and been intrigued by how different types of organizations utilize different approaches to their marketing. Oftentimes in class, we discuss larger companies and how they can grow and retain customers through their marketing. Reflecting upon the types of organizations typically studied in school made me think about how marketing changes for smaller companies or nonprofit organizations. With this in mind, I decided to work with Redwood Heights Association Inc. for my thesis project to explore how marketing looks for small nonprofits and how nonprofits can set up their organizations' digital marketing for success. Redwood Heights Association, also known as RHA, is a community-based organization out of Oakland, California, that focuses on building connections in the community and improving public spaces such as Redwood Heights Park. Their mission states, “We are a nonprofit organization promoting residential vitality, diversity and inclusivity, local economic development, educational excellence, social justice, and environmental responsibility for Redwood Heights and surrounding Oakland communities” (Redwood Heights Association). RHA’s mission and impact is especially important for me as they influence the community I grew up in.

Tasks Accomplished

1. Social Media Management

When beginning my work with RHA, I sat down with the President of the Association, Carla Gerardu-Low, and set a timeline for what work needed to be done and when. When creating content for RHA, the goal was to increase its online visibility and engagement through its social media channels. When developing content for Instagram and Facebook, I focused on creating engaging visuals and captions that are representative of RHA's brand. As a community-driven organization, Redwood Heights Association focuses on promoting a brand that values inclusivity, engagement, building neighborhood support, and creating a better Oakland. These posts highlighted upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, donations, and local initiatives to foster stronger connections within the Oakland community.

In order to organize the planning of social media content, we utilized Smartsheet, a management software to track and share project status. Within Smartsheet, we were able to include specific details for each objective, such as who was assigned the task, the due date, channel of distribution, link to Canva content, the content image, keywords, URL to be included in the post, hashtags, publish date, and post time. Once all necessary content was included, I used Meta Business Suite to schedule posts for Facebook and Instagram at optimal engagement times. Utilizing these tools helped me to stay organized and prepare for the future to ensure that all posts are completed in a timely manner.

- Tools Used: Meta Business Suite for scheduling, Smartsheet for content planning, Canva for content creation, Instagram as medium, and Facebook as medium.

2. Website Management

Looking to improve user experience on the website, I implemented changes on the site that worked to speed up load time and ease of use. To help improve the page speed, I worked to

optimize the images displayed on the site by reducing image size and the amount of data the site has to download. Additionally, I added social media icons to all pages to allow users to easily access the organization's social media accounts and promote more engagement on all platforms.

I conducted an accessibility audit to ensure that users with disabilities could navigate RHA's website. This audit was based on WCAG guidelines, checking aspects such as keyboard accessibility, readability, alternative text for images, and screen reader compatibility. In addition to doing my own manual audit, I installed a plugin for WordPress to flag any accessibility violations that need to be changed to meet compliance. I provided recommendations on areas needing improvement to meet accessibility standards, which would make RHA's website more inclusive and aligned with the organization's values.

- Tools Used: WordPress as content management system, Photopea for image size reduction, TinyPNG for image optimization, and Equalize Digital for WordPress plug-in.

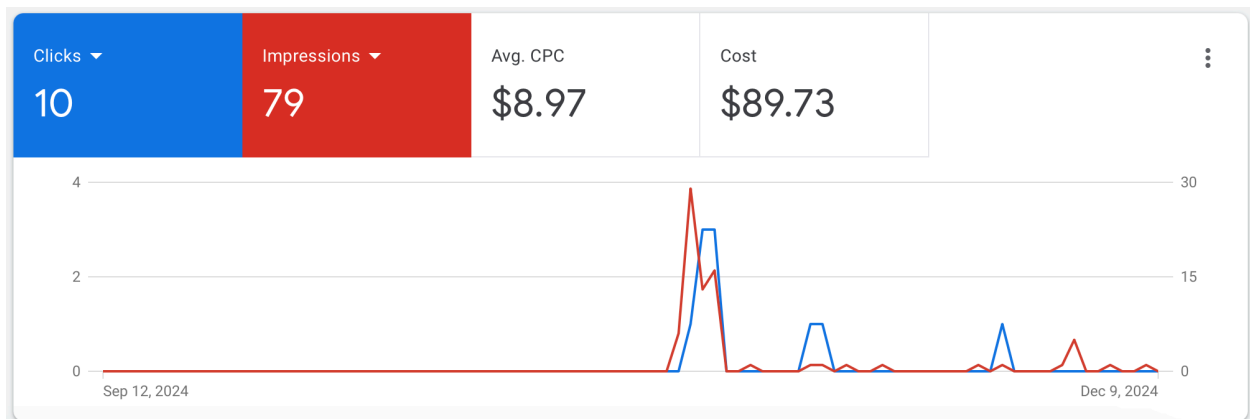
3. Google Ad Grants Campaign

Through my MKT 492 Google Ads Seminar, I was able to create and set up a Google Ads account for RHA through the Google Ad Grants program, which provides advertising resources for nonprofits. Through the help of my partner in this class, Ben Wolf, we designed four search campaigns with distinct objectives: brand awareness, volunteer recruitment, donations, and event promotion. To begin our work in Google Ads, we first met with the RHA President to discuss their goals for Google Ads and how we will organize our campaigns to align with these objectives. Once we decided on the campaign structure, we researched and selected keywords for each ad group within the campaigns to maximize reach and engagement with the target audience. Once we implemented the keywords into each ad, we developed headlines,

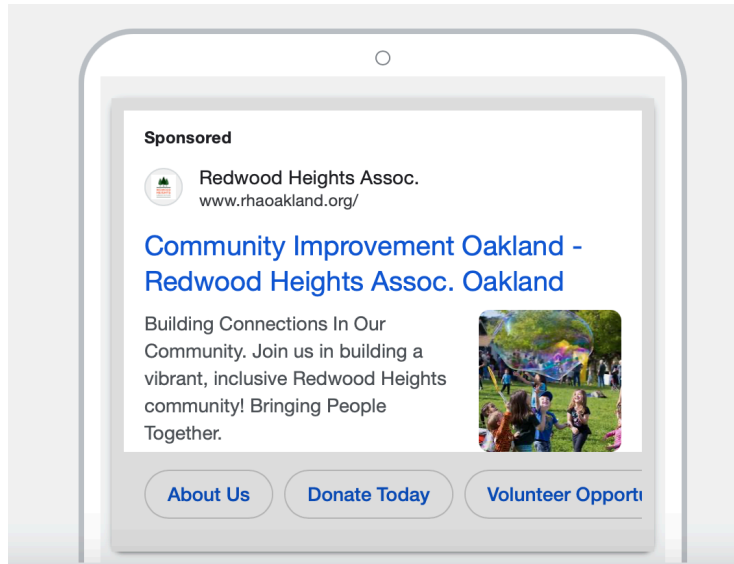
descriptions, sitelinks, images, and structured snippets that aligned with the objective of each ad group.

Through using the recommendations generated in Google Ads and the reports in Google Analytics, we monitored each campaign's engagement metrics to track performance, identifying trends in search terms and audience behavior. Keywords and ad copy were tailored to reflect RHA's mission, drawing attention to the organization's efforts to improve the community and attract volunteers. We refined the campaign strategies for greater relevance and impact by adjusting keywords and ad groups as needed.

Overview of Redwood Heights Association's Google Ads:



Example Brand Awareness Ad:



- Tools Used: Google Ad Grants for Nonprofits, Google Ads, Google Analytics, Tag Manager

4. Email Marketing

To support RHA's event promotion and fundraising efforts, I developed email campaigns targeting RHA's subscriber base. These emails included visually engaging designs, compelling calls to action, and clear information on upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and donation requests. Each email was tailored to encourage active participation, such as attending events or making donations, by emphasizing RHA's community impact and needs.

Lorente-Páramo discusses how hierarchy-of-effects models can be applied to analyze the effectiveness of email marketing according to the AIDA model. The model claims a potential buyer goes through the sequential phases of attention, interest, desire, and action when purchasing a product and reflecting on their purchase. Figure 1 below demonstrates the AIDA framework and the metrics and actions performed by consumers according to each stage. (Lorente-Páramo 21).

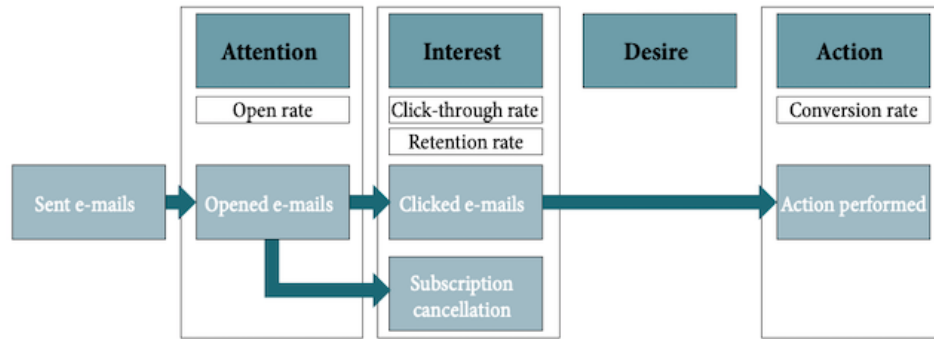


Figure 1

How the AIDA Model corresponds to email marketing

- Tools Used: Mailchimp for design and scheduling emails, Canva for banner creation

Segmentation Study of Nonprofits vs For-profits

When comparing for-profit and nonprofit organizations, it is important to examine how these organizations operate with different goals, therefore influencing their marketing strategies. For-profit organizations focus on generating profit for their shareholders, meaning they prioritize product and service sales, market expansion, and financial gain. Aligning with these goals, for-profits success is measured by their financial performance. On the other hand, nonprofit organizations focus on the goal of achieving their mission or addressing a social issue. Nonprofits' success is measured by the impact of their work on the community and would not be achievable without the help of donations and fundraising.

The difference in the objectives of for-profits versus nonprofits directly shapes how an organization engages with its audience. For-profit organizations target their customers using messaging to drive sales, promote product differentiation, leverage competitive pricing, and address how their products/services will help the consumer. In comparison, nonprofits utilize storytelling and emotional appeals to connect with their audience. Their messaging focuses on

creating a relationship with individuals who align with the values and mission of the nonprofit organization and are encouraged to help make a difference. When examining which marketing strategies to use, it is important to see whether their application aligns with their overall goals. For example, social media campaigns would be effective for both for-profits and nonprofits, such as urgent sales promotions for for-profits, compared to mission-focused fundraising appeals for nonprofits.

The impact of social media endorsement also varies by company structure, according to a study conducted by Tofighi. The study results showed that for nonprofits, an offline endorsement of a nonprofit by a friend is more effective than an endorsement over social media, specifically Facebook. On the other hand, regarding endorsements for for-profit organizations, there is no difference between the influence of a friend's endorsement via social media versus offline. These results are contingent on one's personal connection to a nonprofit organization, meaning if one has a high personal connection, they are likely to support regardless of friends' endorsements; however, if the personal connection is low, then friends' offline endorsements are more likely to drive support for the nonprofit (Tofighi 193). Understanding the differences between nonprofits and for-profits helps us better comprehend how important it is to customize your marketing strategies to the nature of your organization.

A Digital Marketing Playbook for Nonprofit Organizations

Social Media Strategies

Building a community through social media requires understanding the interests, wants, and needs of your audience to create a connection between your organization and the people who you want to help. Specifically for small local organizations, it is important to focus on matters

that directly correlate to the local community. Nonprofits' reasoning for using social media can be related to the resource dependency theory in the sense that nonprofits resources often lack in comparison to the vast needs of their targeted community and the intricacy of social issues (Olinski 20). Social media allows nonprofits to expand their audience and reach in order to gather more resources for their mission. Here are some methods and strategies nonprofit organizations can utilize to increase their engagement:

1. Community Interaction

Creating content that invites your community to engage with your account or post is an effective way to encourage more interaction between your organization and the community. Creating content that is a genuine attempt to make connections while spreading reliable and informative content can help to improve your audience's perception of your organization. It has been shown the trust and satisfaction of your audience positively influence consumer donation intention and electronic word-of-mouth about your organization (Yi Feng 1784). Some examples of prompts that motivate your audience to engage include polls, which encourage your audience to interact by providing them with an opportunity to share their opinion or feedback, and local event highlights, which bring attention to what your organization does and its events.

2. Content Forms On Various Platforms

As the popularity of social media grows among nonprofit organizations, it is crucial to understand why and how you will utilize these various social platforms. According to a recent Nonprofit Communications Trends report, even though many nonprofits have invested significant time in their social media, they overlook the importance of strategically using their platforms to achieve their organizations' goals (Zhang 551). Utilizing different forms of content

across an organization's social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, helps to drive engagement by providing an intriguing and diverse range of content. (Schmitz 77).

For Facebook:

- Visual Content: Implementing a mix of pictures, videos, and carousel posts helps to capture your audience's attention. Including content that has images of people, provides a call to action, or is an infographic can help to make a social media account more engaging and relatable.
- Facebook Tools: Utilizing tools such as VR videos, live streams, and instant articles offers an interactive and immersive experience for your audience.
- Motivational Quotes and Anecdotes: An organization can help uplift or encourage their community by sharing positive stories, quotes, or slogans that correlate to the nonprofits' mission.

For Instagram:

- Geolocation Tags: Utilizing location tags in your content can help reach individuals in your area and demonstrate how the nonprofit is making an impact in their local community.
- Instagram Stories: Posting stories with attention capturing features such as music, filters, and stickers, can help to create more fun and casual interactions with an audience.
- Instagram Tools: Using Instagram Reels for longer content, boomerangs, or Instagram Lives help to allow your audience to react in real time as well as encourage a diverse range of content forms.

- Human-Centric Content: Including images of staff, volunteers, or event-goers helps to promote authenticity and create a connection between your audience and the people behind your organization.

3. Building Community

Forming dedicated groups or channels for your nonprofit creates an outlet where your audience can discuss local issues, share resources, and promote the mission of your organization. Allowing these spaces for your audience to interact with one another helps to foster a sense of community and encourages people to participate in your organization's initiatives.

- Facebook Groups or Private Instagram Channels: By establishing dedicated spaces where followers can interact freely, nonprofits create platforms for ongoing support and information sharing.
- Resource Sharing and Volunteer Recruitment: Use groups or channels to post resources, volunteer needs, or mentorship opportunities, building a network of support within the organization's community.

4. Informative Posts

Regularly posting about your organization's projects, community needs, and initiatives helps to create awareness and support for your nonprofit's goals. Providing informative content allows your audience to better understand and resonate with the nonprofit's mission, which can help build community and engagement.

- Educational Posts and "How-To" Content: Content that educates your community about the nonprofit's work, such as infographics or carousel posts with tips or advice, can improve your audience's knowledge of your organization. Sharing how-to-guides on

subjects related to your nonprofit can help engage your audience as well as helping to promote the organization's mission through sharing its knowledge.

- Promote Events: Post announcements for events, volunteer opportunities, or calls to action, and tagging partners or other community organizations helps amplify reach to increase awareness of events.

Google Marketing Tools

Google's marketing tools offer powerful, cost-effective ways for nonprofits to increase visibility, engage their communities, and drive action. By strategically using Google Ad Grants, Google Ads, Google Analytics, and Google Tag Manager, nonprofits can amplify their reach, track their impact, and adjust their campaigns based on data.

1. Google Grants for Nonprofits

Google Ad Grants provide eligible nonprofits with up to \$10,000 per month in free advertising spend on Google Ads. This grant allows nonprofits to run ads that raise awareness of their organization, promote the organization's mission, recruit volunteers, increase donations, and more. To be eligible for the grant, the nonprofit must hold a 501(c)(3) status, meet Google's non-discrimination policy, and have a functional website. For the application process, once an organization is able to verify its eligibility, it should sign up with Google for Nonprofits and apply for the Ad Grant program. Once approved, the nonprofit can create a Google Ads account to begin its promotion campaigns.

When an organization creates its campaigns, it should align each campaign with the nonprofit's marketing goals. Within each campaign, one can further specify their goals through

Ad Groups, which focus on specific areas within the campaign's marketing goal. Some common campaign objectives include:

- **Brand Awareness:** Ads that highlight an organization's mission, vision, community impact, and initiatives. The goal of this campaign is to make people more aware of the organization as a whole and what it stands for.
- **Volunteer Recruitment:** Ads promoting volunteer opportunities for specific events or opportunities for people to join your organization such as board member positions or team member roles.
- **Donations:** Ads that invite donations to support your cause or to meet a fundraising goal. Language within this campaign focuses on rallying support and inciting people to help make a change through donations.
- **Event Promotion:** Ads promoting the organization's upcoming or repeating events to incentivize people to sign up for the event, mark the date on their calendar, and attend the event.

2. Implementing Google Ads

In order to make the most of the Google Ad Grant, it is important to make well-targeted, attention-grabbing Google Ads that reflect the organization's goals for each campaign. Follow these guidelines to set up an effective ad campaign:

Selecting Keywords: Keyword research is a crucial element in creating an effective campaign.

When researching keywords, look for words or terms that reflect your nonprofit's purpose, audience interest, and local community. For example, a nonprofit focused on community events might use keywords like "Oakland volunteer opportunities" or "local family events." Effective keyword research helps nonprofits reach their target audience, especially when focusing on

specific geographic areas or niche topics. Here's how to conduct keyword research tailored for nonprofits:

- **Use Keyword Research Tools:** Utilize tools such as Google Keyword Planner or Google Trends to identify high-traffic, relevant keywords and explore local terms to target community members directly. Tools like Google Keyword Planner, AnswerThePublic, and Ubersuggest help identify relevant keywords based on search volume and competition.
- **Targeting Local and Community-Oriented Keywords:** Nonprofits should focus on local keywords, which often have less competition and resonate with nearby users. For example, an Oakland-based nonprofit could use terms like “Oakland nonprofit volunteer” or “Redwood Heights community events.”
- **Crafting Keywords that Emphasize Community Values:** Identify terms that reflect community values, such as “support local,” “help Oakland families,” or “community engagement.” These keywords appeal directly to users who prioritize local involvement and are more likely to respond to calls for community support.

Creating Headlines and Ad Copy: Draw in your audience by creating headlines and descriptions that are clear, engaging, and action-oriented. When coming up with headlines, the nonprofit should integrate important keywords into their headlines to improve the success of their ad. To attract people to engage with the ad, it is important to develop headlines that put focus on how the viewer could interact with your organization rather than simply stating your goal. This could look like a headline that states, “Make A Change & Donate Today” rather than “Accepting Donations Today.”

- Examples: For a volunteer drive, an ad could say, “Make a Difference in Oakland! Volunteer with Us.” For a donation appeal, “Support Local Impact—Donate Today to Help Oakland Communities.”
 - Highlight Benefits and Urgency: Emphasize the value of involvement, such as “Help Create Safe Outdoor Spaces” or “Limited Opportunity to Join Our Volunteer Team.”
3. Google Analytics and Tag Manager

Using Google Analytics and Google Tag Manager enables nonprofits to gain insights into their audience behavior, track conversions, and measure ad effectiveness. To access these tools, an organization should create an account in Google Analytics and add the tracking code provided to their website. To measure the success of a campaign, define specific conversions such as newsletter sign-ups, event registration, or donation completions. Utilizing Tag Manager enables easy addition of tracking tags (e.g., event tracking) without editing website code. Nonprofits can use Tag Manager to track actions like button clicks or form submissions.

To get the most out of these Google tools, it is important to analyze and interpret the data provided by Google Ads, Analytics, and Tag Manager. To understand where your audience finds your content, an organization can monitor traffic sources to see if people are coming from organic searches, direct access, or paid ads. Utilizing key conversions helps organizations see which of their campaigns are generating the most success, which it can use to determine if it will allocate more of the budget to these campaigns. Additionally, seeing which campaigns are not performing as well helps an organization understand where it needs to make improvements. Organizations can also utilize Google Analytics to help increase their email list or contact sign-ups by examining which web pages are generating the most traffic, then it can add email list sign-up options on these pages with hopes of increasing sign-ups. Additionally, you could attach

a conversion to when someone signs up for the list to track how and where your sign-up is most effective. In turn, once you send out email campaigns, you can implement a URL builder to see which messages or campaigns are most influential in driving traffic back to the website. Through implementing Google marketing tools, nonprofits can utilize these resources to grow their digital presence, better connect with their audience, and spread the importance of their mission.

Accessibility

In order to make sure your websites are user-friendly for any individual who may visit your page it is important to make sure your page is accessible and complies with accessibility guidelines. Ensuring an organization's content and platforms adheres to accessibility standards is not only a critical requirement but helps to foster a culture of inclusivity within the organization's community.

1. Accessibility & Community Organizations

For community-based nonprofit organizations, prioritizing accessibility in their content helps affirm that all community members can engage with and benefit from the organization's resources. If an organization's content is not able to be accessed equally by all members of its community, it would be an injustice for it to then claim that they are looking out for all members. A study focused on the accessibility of retail websites found that "blind or low vision consumers are likely to blame the retailer for having an inaccessible website as demonstrated by the high levels of anger revealed toward the retailer following a service failure" (Cohen 876). To best serve your community it is important to keep accessibility at the front of your mind when designing your content. There are a multitude of benefits that stem from producing accessible content, such as:

- **Fostering Inclusivity:** Making your digital content accessible ensures that all individuals can equally engage with your organization, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities. Creating an inclusive environment is crucial for organizations serving diverse communities to ensure all individuals can participate in events, access resources/information, and get involved with the organization.
- **Strengthening Community Trust and Engagement:** A nonprofit organization prioritizing accessibility demonstrates its commitment to its entire community. Demonstrating your efforts to include all individuals helps build trust and engagement with your community members, as it helps them feel valued, seen, and included.
- **Supporting Long-Term Community Impact:** Accessible digital content ensures that information reaches as many people as possible, allowing nonprofits to maximize their impact. By making accessibility a core component of your digital strategy, nonprofits empower all community members to contribute to and benefit from your initiatives.

2. WCAG Standards Compliance

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium, provides a framework and requirements for creating websites that are equally accessible to all individuals. Adhering to these guidelines ensures that websites are user-friendly for those with disabilities. Some of the essential WCAG standards that organizations must adhere to include:

- **Color Contrast:** There must be sufficient contrast between the color of the text and the background to make sure content is readable for those with visual impairments.

According to WCAG, there should be a contrast ratio of 4.5:1 for normal text and 3:1 for larger text. Two problems that often arise for users relate to the color deficiency form

red-green, as this is the most common, and hyperlinks, which are the most consistent issue flagged for color contrast (Colston 18). Here are two good resources for checking your color contrast:

- <https://userway.org/contrast/000000/ffffff>
- <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>
- Text Alternatives for Images: All images or non-text content on a website should have alternative text that describes exactly what the image is depicting. Including alt text allows for a description of the image to be read aloud for those who are visually impaired.
- Keyboard Navigation: A website should be completely functional through the use of only the keyboard without the need of a mouse. Users should be able to scroll your site and interact with the content in the same manner as if they were using a mouse. Making a website keyboard functional is important for individuals with differing motor abilities who use the keyboard or other assistive technologies for website navigation.

3. Accessibility Audits on WordPress

For nonprofits to figure out what needs to be changed on their site to comply with WCAG, they can conduct an accessibility audit of their website. These audits can be conducted manually by scrolling through the website and checking factors. For organizations that use WordPress, you can implement various plugins that can conduct an accessibility audit or fix current accessibility issues.

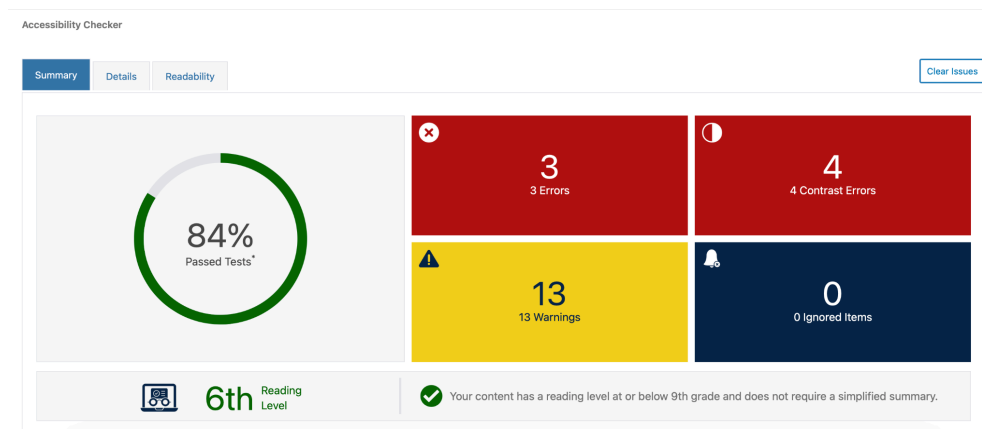
Potential Plugins:

- Equalize Digital
- WP Accessibility

Using Accessibility Plugins:

- Select the plugin that is best suited for your nonprofit website. Next, install and activate the plugin through the plugin menu on the WordPress dashboard.
- Once the plugin has been activated, it will scan the website and generate a report with identified issues, such as missing alt text, insufficient color contrast, or structural issues.
- The plugin will flag specific uses and will attach details about the error’s impact and how it can be remedied. For more complex issues, an organization can reach out to website developers to help make changes.

Here is a depiction of how the Equalizer Digital plug-in appears in WordPress when you edit the page:



Issue	Count
Insufficient Color Contrast	4
Empty Heading Tag	1
Ambiguous Anchor Text	1
Broken Skip or Anchor Link	1
Image Empty Alternative Text	1
Link Opens New Window or Tab	1
Possible Heading	1
iFrame Missing Title	0
Zooming and Scaling Disabled	0
Underlined Text	0
Text Too Small	0

Practical Resources

Forming effective tools and methods for content management/planning can help an organization plan for the future and ensure consistency across its platforms. Here are some of the practical resources that nonprofits can implement in your organization to help manage your content.

1. Content Calendar

A well-organized content calendar provides a structured approach to planning social media posts, making it easier to schedule regular updates and align content with organizational goals. It has been shown that nonprofits can help reduce employee risk concerns regarding the use of social media by providing a clear social media strategy, educating them about legal issues, and monitoring/designating access to specific social media tools (Khan 572). Use tools like Smartsheet, Google Sheets, Excel, or Trello to create a digital calendar that the whole team can access and update. Within these platforms, you can utilize color-coding, labeling systems, or other organizational tactics to help you identify the progress and urgency of posts.

Content Calendar Attributes:

- **Categories for Nonprofit Content:** Common categories include event promotions, community stories, volunteer highlights, educational content, and donation appeals. Designating groups for different content allows nonprofits to balance their content and ensure they cover key topics important to their organization.
- **Posting Frequency:** Creating guidelines for how frequently an organization wants to share content from each category helps to plan for the content that needs to be made.

- Content Responsibility Roles: Implementing who will be creating each post or type of content within your organization can help to designate roles and ensure content is finished on time.

Example of Redwood Heights Association’s content calendar in Smartsheet:

Task	Assigned	Status	Due Date	Event	Category	Channel	Details	Media	Canva Link	Image
Earth Day Continues FB 1	Alexa	Done	11/04/24	Earth Day	Social	Facebook		Single-Image Square	https://www.canva.com	
Earth Day Continues IG 1	Alexa	Done	11/04/24	Earth Day	Social	Instagram		Single-Image Square	https://www.canva.com	
Earth Day Continues FB 2	Alexa	Done	11/12/24	Earth Day	Social	Facebook		Single-Image Square	https://www.canva.com	
Earth Day Continues IG 2	Alexa	Done	11/12/24	Earth Day	Social	Instagram		Single-Image Square	https://www.canva.com	
Earth Day Continues FB 3	Alexa	Done	11/20/24	Earth Day	Social	Facebook		Single-Image Square	https://www.canva.com	
Earth Day Continues IG 3	Alexa	Done	11/20/24	Earth Day	Social	Instagram		Single-Image Square	https://www.canva.com	

Content Link	Keywords	Hook & Caption	URL	CTA	Hashtags	Publish Date	Post Time	Comple... Date	Done
		Ready to roll up your sleeves? Our Earth Day Continues event is happening on November 23rd at Redwood Heights Park! Join us in planting beautiful native grasses and creating a space we can all enjoy. Let's make it happen as a community! 🌱🌿 Volunteer with us and mark your calendars!	https://rhaokland.org/	👉 Sign up to volunteer!	#EarthDay #RHAOaklar #RedwoodH	11/05/24	6:00 PM	11/05/24	★
		🌱 Let's make everyday Earth Day! Join us on November 23rd to continue our work at Redwood Heights Park and help plant native grasses with Friends of Sausal Creek. Let's make a lasting impact together—bring your friends and family, enjoy nature, and create a greener Oakland. Save the date and lend a hand! 🌿		See link in bio.	#Community #EarthDay #Oakland #RHAOaklar #RedwoodH	11/05/24	6:00 PM	11/05/24	★
		🌱 Let's keep the Earth Day spirit alive! Join us on November 23rd at Redwood Heights Park and help liven up the park by planting native grasses. It's a chance to give back, meet neighbors, and make our park shine! 🌿 Head to our website to sign up and secure your spot. See you there?	https://rhaokland.org/	👉 Sign up to volunteer!	#EarthDay #RHAOaklar #RedwoodH	11/12/24	9 AM	11/05/24	★
		Nature needs a helping hand! 🌱🌿 Come out on November 23rd to Redwood Heights Park and help us plant native grasses. Together, we'll make this space a lasting gift to our community. 🌱 Visit our website to sign up and help make a change!		See link in bio.	#Community #EarthDay #Oakland #RHAOaklar #RedwoodH	11/12/24	9 AM	11/05/24	★
		🌱 Make a difference right in your own backyard! Join us this Saturday as we come together at Redwood Heights Park to plant native grasses and create a beautiful space for our community. Every hand helps, and we'd love to see you there! 🌿 Check out our website to sign up and be part of this special day. Let's grow together!	https://rhaokland.org/	👉 Sign up to volunteer!	#EarthDay #RHAOaklar #RedwoodH	11/20/24	8 AM	11/05/24	★
		Give back to our community and enjoy a day in the park 🌿 Our Earth Day Continues event is the perfect way to give back, meet friendly faces, and enjoy the beauty of nature! We're looking for volunteers of all ages to help us plant native grasses provided by the amazing Friends of Sausal Creek 🌱 Join us by signing up on our website!		See link in bio.	#Community #EarthDay #Oakland #RHAOaklar #RedwoodH	11/20/24	11 AM	11/05/24	★
						11/09/24	9 AM	11/08/24	★

2. Social Media Post Templates

For creating content, it is helpful for nonprofits to create reusable social media templates to help create a cohesive brand image and save time when creating content in the future.

Utilizing tools such as Canva, organizations can create customizable templates that adhere to the theme they want to demonstrate on their accounts. Additionally, nonprofit organizations can access Canva Pro without fees by applying to their program for nonprofits.

Template Types:

- **Event Announcements:** Templates that include spaces to input the event title, date, location, sign-up information, and a description of the event.
- **Volunteer Spotlights:** A story or grid post template that includes space for an image of the volunteer, their name, a description about them, a quote, and their impact on the community.
- **Fundraising and Donation Appeals:** A story or grid post template with a clear call to action like “Donate Now” or “Support Our Cause,” as well as a message about how the nonprofit will create an impact with these funds.

Branding Tips:

- Utilize the branding tool in Canva to save your brand colors, logos, fonts, and favorite elements to create a cohesive brand identity.
- For every template, aim to keep text concise and easy to read, using bold, legible fonts and ample white space to make sure the design is clean and digestible.

3. AI Prompts for Social Media

Looking at how far AI has grown should show us that it can and will be a tool in our lives. When examining the number of articles written per year about the subject of AI and Marketing, we have seen a large leap, with only 4 in 2017 and 68 in 2022 (Ziakis 5). Learning how to best utilize AI to help your nonprofit grow can help to improve your efficiency, time effectiveness, and organizational abilities. Creating a brand identity and persona prompts for inputting into AI generators can help streamline the process of creating captions and messages tied to your organization's visual content. Utilizing these prompts can help ensure your language is consistent and effective throughout your social media platforms.

Example Prompts:

- Event Promotion: “Create a warm and inviting Instagram post promoting an upcoming event. Emphasize the event details (date, time, location) and encourage families to join. Use an upbeat and inclusive tone, highlighting that everyone in the community is welcome. This caption should be based on this event description...”
- Volunteer Call: “Generate a Facebook post that calls for volunteers for our upcoming park cleanup day. Highlight the community impact of volunteering and include a call to action inviting people to sign up. Keep the tone friendly and motivating. Include the date, time, and location of the volunteer event.”
- Donation Appeal: “Write a heartfelt Instagram post asking for donations to support our latest community project. Include a brief mention of the project’s goals and how donations make a difference. Keep the language genuine and encouraging. Here is a description of the project...”

Ensuring Consistency:

- Define the Brand Persona: Create a template that you input before each specific category template that describes who your organization is. Provide a description of your organization's values, impact, and connection to the community. Include details about tone (e.g., friendly, inclusive, community-oriented) and style (e.g., optimistic, conversational) in each prompt.
- Specify Calls to Action: Specify whether the prompt should include phrases like “Sign Up Today,” “Join Us,” or “Donate Now,” which can help guide the intent of your post.

Conclusion

Working with the Redwood Heights Association for my thesis project has been an enlightening and rewarding experience in both professional and personal aspects. This project allowed me to explore how nonprofits' marketing strategies differ from for-profit companies and to look at digital marketing through a new lens. I learned that for nonprofit organizations, marketing goes beyond what tools they have at their disposal or the strategies they implement; rather their marketing focuses on creating and fostering connections within the community. Through this experience, I have learned to value the resourcefulness needed for smaller organizations and the creative thinking involved in creating engaging content for a diverse small community. If I were to go back and change how I went about the project, I would have made more of an effort to involve other community members in the creation and brainstorming of content. I believe having more involvement from community members could help to boost the relatability and personability of the content by reflecting those who RHA's mission impacts. This thesis project has been a meaningful contribution to my life by allowing me to gain hands-on experience and apply my marketing knowledge and skills to uplift an organization that helps to create positive change within their community. Moving forward, this project has shown me how

I can integrate my passions into my professional ambitions to create impactful opportunities for myself and greater communities.

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