MIA'S CREATEATHON TO-GO KIT

TOPICS COVERED

1. Welcome!
2. Marketing Plan Template
3. AP Stylebook Guidelines
4. Press Release Template
5. Media Outreach Tips
6. Stock Photo Sites and Tips
7. Printing Tips
8. Event Planning Tips
9. Blog Tips
10. SEO Glossary and Tips
11. Google Analytics Glossary
12. E-newsletter Tips
13. Social Media Resources and Tips
14. GivingTuesday Tips
15. Video Tips
16. Photography Tips
17. Crafting Your Elevator Pitch
18. Presentation Pointers
19. AI Best Practices
20. ADA Compliance
21. Trademark Tips

Hey there, friend!

MIA here, TRIO's Marketing Impact Assistant. I know running a nonprofit can be busy (but rewarding) work. And between serving clients, supporting your team and fostering relationships with your community partners, it may feel like there's no time left for marketing. But what if you had all the know-how you need in one space? This handy dandy resource guide is here to help!

Whether you're a local nonprofit or a national organization, marketing is essential to helping your mission stand out. That's why Team TRIO and I have put together a "to-go" kit of our best resources so you can maximize all of your marketing and communications efforts in the journey ahead!

Thank you for everything you do for our community and beyond. We are honored to have helped in this small way! We can't wait to see how your new marketing shines. And if you ever find that you need support along the way, TRIO and MIA are always here to help!

Love,
MIA & Team TRIO

Oh! And one more thing! Do yourself a favor and follow us. **@triosolutions** is on Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok and YouTube.

MARKETING PLAN TEMPLATE

Every nonprofit should have a marketing plan; however, before a marketing plan can be developed, you must ensure that strategic business plans exist for your organization. The overall strategic goals of your organization will drive what direction your marketing efforts will take. To ensure your efforts are effective, they must be tied back to the strategic objectives of your nonprofit. This will help ensure you are achieving your mission and reaping the benefits of your marketing investments.

Sections of a Plan:

1. Executive Summary
2. Positioning Statement
3. Target Markets
4. Competitive Analysis
5. Goals & Objectives
6. Budget
7. Timeline
8. Appendices

1. Executive Summary

- Typically completed after the plan is developed.
- This section will encapsulate the entire plan within a few paragraphs.
- This section will explain why the plan exists and summarize the plan's overall goal(s).

2. Positioning Statement

- Determine the key messages that you want to communicate through your marketing campaign.
- It could be your mission statement.
- Consider how you want to position your organization through your marketing efforts.

3. Target Market

- This is who you are trying to reach.
- Don't say "everyone" – no one can possibly reach everyone or the "general public" – narrow your focus so your efforts are targeted.
- Be as specific as possible (e.g., age group, demographics, where they live/work/play).
- Identify your primary and secondary target audiences.
- Determine what motivates them and their needs and wants.

4. Competitive Analysis

- Pick at least your top three competitors.
- Analyze them and understand what they are doing in your market.
- Form a comparison of what you need to do to set yourself apart.
- Focus on what you do differently.

5. Goals & Objectives

- Goals must contain a measurable element and be specific. (E.g., increase volunteer base by 25%, increase donations by 100%, expand our services to three counties, etc.)
- SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.
- Objectives are tactical ways you plan to achieve your goals. (E.g., develop a brochure, build a website, submit press releases, etc.)
- Consider your challenges and strengths for each goal. (E.g., What will be your roadblocks? How will you address them?)
- Assign someone to be accountable for each objective.
- Review the 4 Ps for each goal as they may be different depending on what you are trying to accomplish:
    - Product/Service (What are you providing?)
    - Price/Cost (How much will it cost?)
    - Physical Distribution (How will they access it?)
    - Promotion (How are you going to promote it?)

6. Budget

- Try to keep your budget to 12-18 months.
- Update monthly to track your financials.
- Review regularly (at least quarterly) and adjust as needed.

7. Timeline

- Set milestones and determine who will be responsible for each aspect of your plan.

8. Appendices

- May include media plans, advertising schedules and editorial content calendars.
- Other supporting documentation. (E.g., examples of competitor marketing efforts or examples of collateral material)

AP STYLEBOOK GUIDELINES

The Associated Press (AP) provides consistent grammar, spelling, punctuation and language use guidelines for publications and mass media. Having a consistent way to relate to the media, write effective press releases and increase message adoption is important to any organization.

1. ADDRESS *(only Rd., St., Blvd.)*

a) Abbreviate only with numbered addresses. (Ex. 3377 Blossom St.)

b) Spell them and capitalize when part of a formal street without a number. (Ex. East Bay Street)

c) Spell out “alley,” “drive,” “road,” “circle” and “terrace.”

2. DATES

a) Spell out months five letters or under.

b) Abbreviate longer months when used with a specific date. (Ex. Feb. 25, Oct. 10, etc.)

c) It’s Nov. 2 (not Nov. 2^{nd}). Drop the –th, -nd and –st. Never use ordinal numbers.

3. NUMBERS

a) Spell out numbers one through nine.

b) When sharing someone’s age, use the numerical number. (Ex. She is 2 years old. He is 45 years old.)

4. PHONE NUMBERS

a) Use hyphens. Not periods. (Ex. 888-888-8888)

5. PROFESSIONAL TITLES AND DEGREES

a) Always lowercase unless it comes before the name and you refer to that person by their title. (Ex. Chris is the president of our company. One of the most popular leaders in our history was President Reagan.)

b) Use an apostrophe with degrees but do not capitalize. (Ex. She has a bachelor’s degree in marketing.)

c) Do not use a comma before Jr. or Sr. (Ex. John Doe Jr.)

6. SEASONS

a) Always lowercase unless used as a proper noun. (Ex. We attended a fall festival. We attended the Winter Olympics.)

7. MONEY & TIME

a) If it’s top of the hour and/or you have no cents, do not include double zeros.
(Ex. We will see you at 5 p.m. (not 5:00 p.m.) The bike costs $4 at the store (not $4.00).
b) a.m. and p.m. are abbreviations; therefore, you should include the period after each letter.
c) Use noon or midnight vs. 12 p.m. or 12 a.m.

Other tips:

- “Lowcountry” is one word.
- Mt. is an abbreviation for Mountain; therefore, you must not use it when referring to Mount Pleasant, South Carolina.
- Toward not towards.
- GivingTuesday is the organization's name. Only use a hashtag in their name when it is a hashtag on social media. (Note: there is no space between “Giving” and “Tuesday.”)
- Lose the hyphen. It’s nonprofit, not non-profit.

PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

(ORGANIZATION LOGO)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE
NAME
843-555-5555
EMAIL

HEADLINE <Use sentence case. Not all caps. Punchy sentence with 8-10 words>

Subhead <Provide teaser to full release here>

City, State – Lead sentence that includes the who, what, when, where and why.

Paragraph one gives additional information about the announcement. The most important information (following the lead) goes into this paragraph.

Paragraph two goes more in-depth about the announcement. This paragraph can also include a relevant quote backing up the claims and statements above.

Paragraph three wraps up the press release with details about pricing, availability, etc. After this paragraph, include some standard boilerplate text for the company. The entire release is designed to be one page at most. Keep the length short and to the point. Short and simple is best.

For more information, please visit website.com or call 843-555-5555.

ABOUT <YOUR ORGANIZATION> - THIS IS YOUR BOILERPLATE

This briefly describes what your company does. Be sure to use appropriate keywords to help optimize SEO efforts. This should be consistent throughout all releases and include the organization's URL and important social media links.

<Signals the end of the release>

MEDIA OUTREACH TIPS

When pitching to the media, it's crucial to know your audience. Researching the publications and reporters ahead of time will increase your chances of coverage. Below are a few guidelines to keep in mind.

1. RESEARCH

a) Type of outlet (TV, digital, print, etc.)
b) Geographic reach (national, regional, local, etc.)
c) Publication circulation (daily, weekly, monthly, annually, etc.)

2. KNOW YOUR REPORTER

a) Field of interest (a topic they regularly report on)
b) Communication preference (email, phone, social media, etc.)
c) Creating and maintaining relationships is a must
d) How much/what information they like to receive (photos, contacts)

3. FORMAT EMAIL PROPERLY

a) Individualize the email (no bcc, address, first name, etc.)
b) Determine the subject line (keep it concise and interesting)
c) Begin email with a short overview of the press release
d) Paste release in the body of the email (don't attach)
e) Link logo and any other relevant images in a folder (Google Drive, Dropbox) and rename appropriately/provide photo captions when necessary
f) Be professional but keep it conversational

4. FOLLOW UP & SHARE

a) Wait two to five days after sending the release
b) Email or call reporter to check in
c) Be sure to thank for any coverage
d) Post any coverage you receive on social media outlets
e) Tag and thank publication for mention

STOCK PHOTO SITES AND TIPS

When it comes to promoting your business, who wants to settle for mediocre? Hopefully, no one. That's why at TRIO, we always make sure our clients are putting their best foot forward by using the best possible images and videos to support their brands and marketing goals. We realize, however, that there are times when clients don't have the time or budget to invest in their own high-quality images or video library. And purchasing stock images or videos may not be an option either. This is where we get thrifty and turn to some of our trusty resources, like our favorite free stock sites:

PIXABAY
https://pixabay.com/

With more than four million free stock public domain pictures, illustrations, vector graphics and film footage, this Switzerland-originated website is a worldwide go-to for just about any topic you can imagine. *TIP: The more general you can be in your search on this website, the better.*

PEXELS
https://www.pexels.com/

Pexels is continuously updated every day with new high-resolution images. All images are licensed under the Pexels license and are handpicked from photo uploads by Pexels users or are sourced from other free image websites. *TIP: In true creative-centric fashion, Pexels allows you to modify and edit the photos as you like.*

UNSPLASH
https://unsplash.com/

We love Unsplash because the majority of the images included on this website don't look like stock. That's because they really aren't. Unsplash has more than three million free high-resolution images from more than 300,000 contributing photographers, all of which look extra artsy and professional. *TIP: Unsplash claims to offer a level of quality higher than the others. See for yourself.*

PRINTING TIPS

Paper Types and Weights

Cover Paper - A heavy printing paper used to cover books, make presentation folders, etc. (i.e., 80# Cover Weight)

Text Paper - Grades of uncoated paper with textured surfaces (i.e., 80# Text Weight)

Offset Paper - Term for uncoated book paper

Bond Paper - Strong, durable paper grade used for letterheads and business forms

Paper Finish

- *Coated*: a clay-coated printing paper with a smooth finish (gloss, silk, matte)

- *Uncoated*: paper that does not have any kind of coating applied; it has a rougher finish and absorbs more ink (laid, smooth, linen, specialty)

How to Spec Your Job

Things that should be included in your quote request:

- Size – number/type of fold, trim size, etc.
- Paper finish and weight
- How the files are being supplied (i.e., FTP site, email)
- File format/program
- Ink options (4-color, 2-color, etc.)
- Whether or not the job has a bleed
- Type of binding
- Packing (shrink-wrapped, banded)
- Quantity
- Special instructions or delivery requirements

After your files are with the printer:

Match Print Proof - High-resolution color proof that is an exact representation of the final printed color

Blueline Proof - Low-resolution color proof that is used to demonstrate folds, page positioning and trim

Cost-Effective Printing Tips
Gang-run jobs - Get the most out of a printing press by using the maximum sheet size to print multiple jobs on the same sheet.

Compare quotes - Request pricing from two to three printers to determine the most affordable option.

Use existing die - Ask your printer if they already have a die made that you could reuse. (I.e., business card slot, standard pocket folder)

Keep your fold simple - The more folds a piece has, the more time it takes, which means increased costs.

Print larger quantities - The unit cost goes down as the quantity goes up; avoid printing less than 500; consider digital printing if you need small quantities.

Print without a bleed (depends on piece size) - Often, when there isn't a bleed, printers can utilize their smaller, less-costly presses.

Print in one or two colors - If the piece doesn't contain images, consider printing in fewer colors.

Print color space - (PMS, CMYK or RGB) Is this a full color, single color or black and white print?

Ask printer to quote with their house stock - Try to use house stock if possible; special order paper will increase the cost of the job.

EVENT PLANNING TIPS

When choosing a date for your event, always be sure to fully investigate the following areas and consider the impact they could have on your event:

- Major holidays
- Religious observations
- Other special events in the area
- School breaks
- Long weekends
- Sporting events

Always ask (and answer) these first-step questions:

- How much money can I set aside?
- What is the purpose?
- Who is my target audience and how is this relevant to them?
- What is the best way to promote it?
- Does it justify the financial outlay?

Get everything in writing! When negotiating a contract, do not rely on verbal promises. The person you are working with now may not be there later, and you do not want any confusion to occur.

If possible, wait approximately six months with any newly opened venue or restaurant before planning an event there. They will need time to work the kinks out of the system and streamline their processes.

Make sure your catering quotes include menu selection, quantity, price, taxes, delivery and the number of experienced staff they will be providing. Have them detail the number of hours they have been contracted for – including preparation, arrival time and clean up.

When doing a buffet, try to have a two-sided layout, each set with the same items so that you have two lines moving at once and can avoid long lines and frustrated (hungry!) guests.

Always include a certain percentage of vegetarian selections when determining the menu. Typically, you can account for approximately 5% of meals to be vegetarian. For events that have a registration process, be sure to include a vegetarian option and ask for other special dietary needs on your registration form.

At any stand-up reception or buffet, always try to utilize plates with a slight lip on them. It helps ensure that food stays on the plate and allows for a better grip by the person holding the plate.

EVENT PLANNING TIPS CONTINUED

When planning an all-day event or a conference that lasts for several days, always be sure to include the number of meals that staff and volunteers will need and give special instructions to the caterer or banquet manager as to when and where the meals should be taken. Hidden tables can usually be set up for you if need be.

Set up refreshments away from the registration area to avoid congestion and confusion and draw guests into the area where you want them. For events with many attendees, make sure you have an organized method for registration to avoid long lines and waiting.

Meet with the caterer before the event to double-check everything and to discuss any last-minute changes. For example, if you decide you really want to have a specific appetizer or dessert that was originally a bit too expensive, ask for it later and offer less. The caterer will more than likely accept a discounted price.

Keep approximately $10-$20 in dollar bills on you for tip money. You never know when you might need it, and it can be embarrassing if you don't have it! An experienced planner always tips when certain services have been provided. Plus, you never know when you might have to ask someone for extra help, and it's always nice to at least offer a tip.

Mail out invitations at least six weeks prior to the event to allow your guests enough time to include it in their schedules and to RSVP when applicable. Keep in mind that over the holiday seasons, school breaks and summer vacations, guests could be out of town and/or the mail could take longer, so schedule accordingly.

Never use third-class mail for corporate events. Third-class mail is generally associated with bulk or "junk" mail and is not appropriate for elegant and/or important events. Plus, the delivery of the third-class mail could be delayed as long as two weeks.

If media coverage is a part of your event, decide when and where they will be included. You may choose to hold a press conference beforehand or set up separate media interviews. Consider where these will be best held and if you will need a separate room to conduct interviews.

Continuously check the restrooms. You might even consider paying someone a little extra to monitor the restrooms throughout your event. Nobody likes to use a restroom that is dirty or not appropriately stocked. It's also nice to add a floral arrangement or some decorations to the restrooms, just as an added touch. Also, consider offering hand sanitizer, lotion and perhaps bug-repellent towelettes.

EVENT PLANNING TIPS CONTINUED

Make sure that the staff you have assigned specific duties to know the importance of being there on time and what their specific duties entail – especially volunteers. While volunteers can be valuable resources and assets to your project, some may need to be reminded that their timeliness is crucial.

Incorporate your social media before, during and after your event. Determine who will be responsible for live posting days off. Try creating a custom hashtag that you can share with your attendees and promote engagement.

Invest in a photographer. Photos have so many uses and you will be glad you have them. If you do not have a professional photographer, ensure that you are capturing photos throughout the event (both horizontal and vertical) for use in future materials, social posts, newsletters, etc.

Make sure you document the event and the steps leading up to it, what worked and what didn't, and keep records for future events.

When holding an event outside, always consider insects (especially in the Lowcountry). Be sure to have citronella candles or some sort of repellent when necessary.

Be on time, be prepared and expect the unexpected. Put together a day-of event kit with things like tape, sharpies, hooks, tissues, safety pins, etc…for last-minute needs. There will always be issues with an event. Rarely does an event happen without any hiccups.

Attitude is contagious! Keep a smile on your face. Remain calm. Deal with the issue away from your guests and move right along.

Virtual Events
Whether it's a full-day conference or a two-hour webinar, virtual events can be a great alternative to the traditional in-person event. A few tips to consider when planning a virtual event:

- Promote your event on all digital channels possible leading up to the event (social media, eblasts, digital ads, etc.)
- Make registration for your event (if applicable) easy and accessible for your target audience. Depending on access to event-planning software, a simple Google form can go a long way.
- Be clear in communication leading up to the event to provide meeting links, times, etc. so that guests can easily access meeting information.

- Consider which platform is best for your event. Maybe Zoom would be best for a more private experience, or maybe a Facebook Live would be best.
- Use a trusted video platform and ensure you’re familiar with the technology before the event arrives. Testing your technology and doing a mock presentation to work out any kinks is the key to success.
- Allow opportunity for participation, where appropriate. Opening the chat up for questions is a great way to engage your audience.
- Make content available after the event for easy access and reference. Be sure to recap your event experience throughout your digital platforms and build upon the momentum.

BLOG TIPS
Blogging is a fantastic way to boost your SEO and present yourself as an industry thought-leader and expert. While it can be viewed as a simple task, it is important to keep these tips in mind to ensure that your blog is top-notch and working in your favor.

- Map out a blog schedule and stick to it. Be sure to remain consistent with your blog posts, for example: once a month, once a week, once a quarter. Commit to a frequency that you know you can keep up with.

- Choose blog topics that are relevant to your audience and that they will find valuable and applicable. Any topic you like is fair game as long as it is tied to your industry and interests your readers.

- Determine relevant keywords to include in your content. Try using the free tool https://www.wordstream.com/ to create your own keyword list. (See our SEO Glossary and Tips on the next page.)

- Plan ahead! Even if you start with a rough outline, plan out your editorial calendar ahead of time so that you can stick with the schedule. This will come in handy when it's time to write.

- Make it easy to digest. Keep your audience in mind while writing. Limited attention span and limited time frames mean content needs to be easy to skim and comprehend in a short amount of time. List formats or bullet points are always a simple way to reach this goal.

- Details matter. Ensure that you include hyperlinks to any special mentions in your content, whether it be other brands, relevant quotes, websites, etc.

- Images are key. Have fun picking lively imagery that is eye-catching, but ensure that it's tied to your written content. Be sure to add alt text when uploading images to the image gallery on your website.

- Invite your friends to join in! Guest writers can bring more traffic to your website and offer a fresh opinion. This also helps take some of the load off when writing time comes around. Ask your industry partners, colleagues, etc., to help out in the process.

- Make the most of your blog content by publishing it across your various marketing channels. From newsletters and eblasts to social media and your Google My Business page, it's important to share your latest blog posts with your audience to ensure they benefit from your expertise. This helps with your SEO *and* offers value to your followers.

Want to learn how blogging can help your SEO? We wrote a blog on the topic. Read it here: https://trio-solutions.com/blog/blogging-the-way-to-go-for-seo/

SEO GLOSSARY AND TIPS

SEO is an abbreviation of Search Engine Optimization. This is a process in which a website is most effectively developed to be discoverable and categorized by search engines. SEO is important when attaining a higher website view count, gaining a larger following or appearing higher up on search engine results.

Terms to Remember

- Alt Tags - Alt tags is a term short for alternative text or descriptive words for images on a website. These are separate from the caption of an image.
- Keywords - Words or phrases that should directly relate to the main topic of a webpage. These are especially important, considering these are what search engine crawlers use to decide the category/purpose of a webpage.
- Meta Description Tag - This tag is filled with a sentence or very brief paragraph including all the keywords of the website's purpose. This "metadata" helps with SEO but does not actually appear on the site itself.
- SEO - Search Engine Optimization, aka SEO, is the process of boosting views of a website or a particular web page organically, meaning non-paid for boosts.
- Crawlers - Search engines function through what we call Crawlers. Crawlers are a type of robot software that "crawl" or sort through websites to retrieve information for search engines.

Where to place keywords and alt tags?

Keywords should be used throughout the content on the website. Optimizing your site's content means including these words and phrases within the main body of the text itself, as well as page and header titles.

Keywords are also important to use in alt tags. It is important to make sure every image on a website has an alt tag attached to it, whether or not the image requires a caption, especially since crawlers use alt tags when searching the website.

When referring to the back-end programming of a website, developers place keywords in meta description tags. It is good practice to refrain from using "meta keyword tags," which are tags that jam-pack descriptive words and are usually considered spam and filtered out by most search engines.

Other tips to remember:

- While keywords, content optimization and metadata will all help boost views, there is still more that can be done. Spreading the word through social media is a strong way to help drive traffic towards your website. Consider having the URL linked on your social networking pages.

- Linking is also important to keep in mind regarding SEO. Networking and linking other businesses on your page and retweeting and reposting their information can lead to having your page linked on their web pages and social platforms. Be sure to also link sub-pages within each other throughout the content of your site.

- For example:

    - If you have an "About" page that has the sentence, *"We love to provide quality service,"* you can then link the word “service” to a "Services Offered" page.

- Google My Business is a key component of a successful SEO strategy. Be sure to claim your Google My Business page, ensure all contact and schedule information is correct, and share important updates from your organization on the platform.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS (GA4) GLOSSARY

Bounce Rate:
Technical: The percentage of sessions that were not engaged. A session is considered a bounce if the user spends less than 10 seconds on the page, didn't trigger a conversion event or didn't move on to another page on the site or screen on the app.

Layman Terms: The bounce rate is how often someone leaves your site without going to any additional pages on the site than from where they entered.

Cookie:
Technical: A small amount of text data is given to a web browser by a web server. The data is stored on a user's hard drive and is returned to the specific web server each time the browser requests a page from that server. Cookies are used to remember information from page to page and visit to visit. They can contain information such as user preferences or shopping cart contents and note whether a user has logged in so that they do not need to authenticate again as they navigate through the site.

Layman Terms: Data stored on your computer that helps it remember information about web pages you visited, such as preferences, cart contents, passwords, etc.

Engagement Rate:
Technical: Measures the percentage of visitors who complete an event such as clicking on the link, filling out a form or spending a significant amount of time on the site. (Sessions lasting longer than 10 seconds and at least one conversion event OR two or more page views.)

Events:
Technical: A primary metric in GA4 that tracks user interactions with an app or website, such as button clicks, page views or form submissions.

Medium:
Technical: A category that describes how traffic arrives at a website. This category is more general than the Source.

- CPC/PPC – Paid traffic from search engines (Google Ads)
- Direct – A user types the website URL directly into their browser
- Email – Traffic from an email link, such as from a newsletter or email campaign
- Not Set – No information to display for that dimension. This could be due to a number of reasons, including Adblockers, privacy settings or incorrect UTM parameters
- Organic – Non-paid traffic from search engines (SEO)
- Referral – Traffic from a link on another website
- Social – Traffic from a social media site

Pageview:
Technical: A pageview is an instance of a page being loaded by a browser.

Layman Terms: When a page fully loads in your browser, it qualifies as a page view.

Search Engine:
Technical: A program that searches documents for specific keywords and returns a list of the documents in which those keywords were found, often ranked by relevance. Although search engines are a general class of programs, the term often specifically describes systems like Google that enable users to search for documents on the World Wide Web.

Layman Terms: Google, Yahoo and Bing are all search engines. They allow you to enter a keyword and show you results for those keywords by indexing and scanning the website's keyword information, indicating what the content is about.

Session:
Technical: A period of interaction between a user's browser and a particular website, ending when the browser is closed or shut down or when the user has been inactive on that site for a specified period of time.

Layman Terms: When a user spends time on a site, their time qualifies as a session. If they leave their computer and become inactive for 30 minutes or more before returning to engage, that qualifies as a new session.

Source:
Technical: The actual domain that sends traffic to the website. For example, if the medium is "Organic," the source could be Google, Bing or Yahoo.

Layman Terms: A web page becomes a referring source when it contains a link to your site that a visitor uses to get to you.

User:
Technical: A User is a construct designed to come as close as possible to defining the number of actual, distinct people who visited a website. Of course, websites have no way of knowing if a computer is shared, but a good tracking system can closely approximate the actual number. The most accurate trackers generally use cookies to keep tallies of distinct visitors.

Layman Terms: A user is anyone who comes to the site.
- Total Users – The total number of people (both active and disengaged) who have visited a site or app.
- Active Users – The number of people (both new and returning) who have had an engaged session with a site or app.

- New Users – The number of people who have never visited a site or app before.
- Returning Users – The number of people who have visited a site or app before.

EMAIL MARKETING TIPS

E-newsletters and eblasts can be an effective and convenient way to communicate with stakeholders. Here are some tips to help increase your open rate.

- Have an effective subject line. Create curiosity.
- Use emojis in your subject line.
- Share your e-newsletter across your social media channels.
- Regularly scrub your database for bad email addresses.
- Offer website visitors an option to sign up for your newsletter.
- Keep a routine with your communications (i.e., monthly, weekly, bi-monthly, etc.)
- Use images to balance out text.
- Upload web-friendly images vs. high-resolution images.
- For more useful tips on sending emails see TRIO's email marketing send checklist.

Most donation platforms provide some kind of email service. In the event that yours does not, here are some services that offer special rates for nonprofits:

- Mailchimp
- Constant Contact
- HubSpot (with paid subscription)
- Squarespace (additional charge to standard website hosting)

ORGANIC SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES AND TIPS

Facebook

- Staple outlet for nonprofit social media marketers
- If you want to reach the most people with a broad age range, this is your channel
- Hub for discovery, information and fan interaction
    - Tips:
        - Maintain an active presence by posting at least 3-4 times per week.
        - Whenever you are sharing content relevant to an organization, make sure to tag them. (i.e. "@Name")
        - Understand your demographic. By looking at the back end of your Facebook page, you can view the insights of posts, who your audience is, what posts are working, what time your fans are online, etc.
        - Use visuals. It has been found that posts with photos or branded graphics receive 39% more interaction than posts without.
        - Engage your audience. It has been found that posts that contain a question generate more comments.
        - Boost your discoverability by using location tags, relevant hashtags, and tagging volunteers and partner organizations you collaborate with.
        - Set aside money to boost posts. Facebook often changes its algorithm and you may have noticed that your post has only reached 120 people. By boosting it by $10, it can potentially reach close to 1,000 people.

Instagram

- Outlet to share visual stories of your brand through pictures and videos
    - Tips:
        - Post at least 2-4 times per week.
        - Use hashtags to help enhance brand discovery. They will also organize posts by a certain topic.
        - Relate to your followers while staying relevant to your brand.
        - Make sure to tag organizations in relevant posts. (i.e., "@Name")
        - Get inspiration from other brands in your industry.
        - Interact with others to grow your following: Search popular hashtags relevant to your brand and like them, write complimentary comments on people's posts and #regram images while giving credit to the original post.

Reels

- Instagram's own in-app short-form video - ALL videos posted on Instagram are considered Reels
    - Tips:
        - Be sure to capture video content with a vertical orientation.

        - Add a compelling thumbnail that grabs viewers' attention and encourages them to play the video.
        - If repurposing content from TikTok, ensure the watermark is removed before uploading to maintain a clean, platform-specific look.
        - Make on-screen captions concise for easy readability and to keep viewers engaged.
        - Just like TikTok's 'Duet,' use Instagram's 'Remix' feature to collaborate with other users and expand your reach.
        - Utilize the Instagram/Facebook's music library or upload your own copyright-free audio to enhance your content and make it more engaging and unique to you.

X (formerly Twitter)

- Social hub for news, entertainment and conversation
- Its success is largely due to mobile usage
    - Tips:
        - Regular posting is key to brand success.
        - Posts between 100 and 115 characters are more likely to be retweeted.
        - Visual content works. If you are linking your tweet to your website, make sure to always attach a photo with it.
        - Participate in trending discussions to gain exposure.
        - Posts with hashtags will drive more engagement than posts without them. Don't overuse the hashtags. This could result in followers unfollowing your brand.
        - Make sure to mention organizations in relevant posts. (i.e., "@Name")
        - With the new interface, it's worth it to review old content and remove anything that no longer serves your nonprofit.

LinkedIn

- The leading professional network on the web
- Used to connect with professionals, community leaders, potential board members, donors, etc.
    - Tips:
        - Post consistently (1-3 times per week) to maintain an active presence and increase your professional visibility.
        - Grow your network. Add connections, join industry groups and explore mutual connections to build relationships with professionals, community leaders, potential board members and donors.
        - Use sponsored updates to strategically place content in front of key influencers and decision-makers.
        - Ensure your company page has a professional banner and logo to strengthen your brand's visual presence.

        - Regularly post insightful, engaging content that highlights your expertise and provides value to your audience.
        - Use LinkedIn's company page analytics to track performance and refine your content strategy based on audience insights.
        - Utilize sponsored updates to ensure your content reaches your target audience, increasing your message's impact.

TikTok

- The short-form video platform that took Gen Z – and now the WORLD – by storm
- It's one of the most downloaded apps in the App Store and is considered by many to be one of the fastest-growing platforms
- Video length can be from 15 seconds to 10 minutes
    - Tips:
        - Ensure all video content is captured vertically to align with TikTok's format and user experience.
        - Aim to post at least once daily to increase visibility and engagement.
        - Hashtags are essential for reaching your target audience, as TikTok's algorithm shows users content based on their previous interactions on the 'For You' page.
        - Focus on creating genuine, timely content that reflects the constantly shifting trends on TikTok to stay relevant and relatable.
        - Maximize your reach by utilizing various content formats, such as live streams, duets and trending challenges.
        - Boost your presence by interacting with others in the community through comments and likes, fostering connections and expanding your visibility.

Using custom links on social media

A strategic way to streamline your social media user experience is to offer a quick and easy avenue for navigating important links. Whether you're offering links to various content on your website, a ticketing platform for an upcoming event, donations for a specific partner or to an outside resource, having all of these in one place is a way to intentionally plan for the content your users want to see.

Oftentimes, this is done by establishing a Linktree account and housing that link in your social platform and in other resources such as QR codes on print materials. However, utilizing a custom-built links page is our preferred method. These are custom-built to meet your needs and will allow you to house multiple links in place *and* all are branded to match your website seamlessly. These pages are added directly to your website so it also helps with SEO – unlike your typical Linktree.

Best practices for utilizing hashtags on social media

Lost you at 'hashtag?' Don't let it overwhelm you. Hashtags are simply keywords with a # in front to digitally group together conversations or content around a certain topic, making it easy for people to find content that interests them. Looking for pics of pups? #Puppies. Longing for life on the lake? #LakeLife. See? Not so bad!

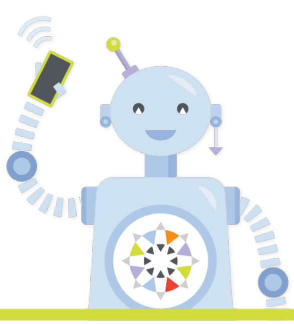
#TheBasics (courtesy of Hootsuite)

- Hashtags start with # but they won't work if you use spaces, punctuation or symbols.
- Make sure your accounts are public. Otherwise, hashtagged content you write won't be seen by any non-followers.
- The best hashtags tend to be relatively short and easy to remember. Don't include too many words in one hashtag.
- Use relevant and specific hashtags. If it is too obscure, it will be hard to find and it won't likely be used by other social media users.

Crafting Custom Graphics

Sometimes your social strategy will call for creativity that's a bit more flashy than a static photograph. This is where brands will turn to customized graphics that include text, icons, brand colors and more to better tell a visual story.

One accessible option for creating custom graphics used by nonprofits and businesses alike is Canva, an online design resource that makes customizing graphics to fit your brand easy and seamless. Outfitted with a wide range of predesigned templates and projects, you have the ability to create projects of all shapes, sizes and end uses to help fulfill your mission.



Check out MIA's Facebook Fundraising for Nonprofits and Business LinkedIn Best Practices located in the appendix!

GIVINGTUESDAY TIPS

GivingTuesday is a global generosity movement that empowers people and organizations to transform their communities! Each year, nonprofits, small businesses, brands, schools and religious organizations around the world celebrate this global day of giving.

Website: www.givingtuesday.org
Hashtag: #GivingTuesday
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok: @GivingTuesday

What You Need to Know About GivingTuesday

- Held annually on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving.
- Launched in 2012, it has grown into an international campaign that inspires millions of people to give, collaborate and celebrate generosity.
- Generosity is contagious! It inspires civic participation that helps people in need far beyond the actual day.
- Participation is free for all nonprofits and offers access to the GivingTuesday tools and resources.
- Donations are made through the individual organization's donation processing platform of choice.
- 2020 had the highest number of donations recorded since its inception.

Preparing for GivingTuesday - Start with a plan to ensure success and maximum involvement.

1. **JOIN** - Join the movement! When you sign up on the GivingTuesday website, they acknowledge your organization as a participant, send you their newsletter full of useful information and give you the opportunity to share your story with their audience (which is huge!).
2. **INQUIRE** - Find out if your city or state is planning a community-wide campaign and reach out to the local team to see how you can get involved.
3. **PLAN** - Get your social media channels GivingTuesday ready!
    - Plan your content and know what you want to say.
    - Be an ambassador for the movement. Download logos and graphics to use on all your platforms and collateral. www.givingtuesday.org/logos
    - Consider updating your cover and profile images, including a link in your bio or pinning a post at the top of your feed.
    - Build anticipation with your audience. Use the weeks leading up to GivingTuesday to gain momentum and get folks excited. Implement a countdown calendar on your website or Instagram stories, go live with a video sharing your story and your plan for the day or use images to paint a picture of what GivingTuesday means to you. (Don't forget to use the hashtag!)

4. **PROMOTE** - At least 2-3 weeks out, start promoting your involvement on all your other platforms. Email your supporters to let them know of your participation and share a calendar invite to remind them. Increase your communication frequency the week of the event with shared stories and daily reminders.
5. **DELEGATE** - Designate a team captain and enlist the help of all your supporters, donors and followers.
   - Show them how to spread the word by providing shareable content and graphics that are easy to use.
   - Consider any "influencers" in your network who would want to help your cause.
   - Utilize crowdfunding by asking social media followers to start their own Facebook Fundraiser on your behalf.

MIA's Tip: Amplify your voice and your values! This is the perfect opportunity to demonstrate your brand's WHY. Get creative! Develop content that shows your mission and educates donors and prospective donors about what you are doing to make our world a better place. Be honest and authentic about your current situation and what your needs are. And above all, ask. Don't be afraid to actually ask people to give.

Ideas for GivingTuesday

It's more than money - encourage supporters to give their voice, goods and time!

- Keep it positive and inspiring! Showcase all the good happening in your community.
- Host a holiday food drive or a virtual event for your community so they can learn about you.
- Show appreciation for supporters by hosting a thank-a-thon or creating a virtual donor wall.
- Post every hour on social media about things your organization is grateful for.
- Share the love and support of a partner organization. Designate space on your platform(s) to highlight their work and see if they will return the favor.
- Show the impact. Go live on social media and explain how your organization has positively impacted your community.
- Encourage folks to match or ask their employer to.

MIA's Tip: Work smarter, not harder! Consider trying a free digital or social fundraising tool. There are lots of options out there, so give yourself time to find the one that's right for you and to test it.

#WelcomeWednesday

You guessed it! The day after GivingTuesday is #WelcomeWednesday.

- Say thank you to your staff, donors, volunteers, partners, faculty and community.
   - Donors who are thanked within 48 hours are 4x more likely to give again.
   - Set up placeholder social posts/email templates ahead of time so you're prepared when the day comes.

- Share your success with everyone everywhere, including the GivingTuesday team.
- Keep the party going! Use momentum from GivingTuesday to boost your winter fundraising and rally support for your mission.
- Use the hashtag #WelcomeWednesday.

MIA's Tip: Capture their hearts and their email! Don't let an opportunity to grow your database pass you by. Make sure you require key information during the donation process, and make it easy for donors to follow and engage on all of your available platforms.

VIDEO TIPS

Leveraging video marketing is a powerful strategy to promote, brand and grow your business online. It's also one of the most engaging pieces of content you can create—either done professionally or on your smartphone. There are several ways to create custom content to enhance your digital presence.

1. Plan ahead. Determine the who, what, when and where of your video to effectively tell your story.

2. Depending on which platform you are posting your video on and the use within the platform, both the dimensions and the length can vary in order to be seen. For Facebook and Instagram feeds, videos cannot be longer than 1 minute, but for Instagram stories, the max is 15 seconds.

3. Use a tripod to keep the device steady when filming longer videos and going for a polished look.

4. Consider hiring a videographer and having your content professionally edited for professional content for use on your website or other media sources.

5. When filming yourself, do a practice run with your device before filming to check things like distance, audio and background. If using selfie mode, be sure to hold the camera at an upward angle for the most flattering look.

6. Be mindful of lighting when filming; your audience wants to be able to see you clearly. Note that it takes your device a second to adjust when moving from one scene to the next, so don't make rapid lighting changes. You can also use a ring light with an attached tripod for excellent "selfie" video lighting!

7. If you are at a location where there is a lot of background noise, consider using a microphone.

8. Don't zoom during your video. It looks blurry and amateur.

9. Consider using an easy editing tool for subtitles and on-screen text; it can elevate the finished look.

10. Keep it short and sweet. Remember that we have an attention span shorter than a goldfish (7 seconds), so get to the point and optimize your opportunity to capture your audience.

Have fun filming!

PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

Pictures are indeed worth a thousand words. And you want to make sure those one thousand words all look, feel and sound like your brand. When planning to take photos to promote your organization, it's important to keep in mind the end-user. What is the end goal you're looking to communicate? How can you get the most out of the photos you capture? Will they be dated at some point, or can you use them for years to come? What channels are you looking to use the photos on? Digital or print?

To ensure you and your team capture the best photography for your brand, consider these recommendations or reach out to TRIO to help you get started!

General Photography Tips

If you're working with a professional photographer, they will have the below covered. But if you and your team are looking for a more DIY approach, consider these tips:

- Plan your day to get the most out of natural lighting; artificial light can alter coloring and the overall end result of the image, which could be hard to correct later. If you have access to a studio space, make sure to go into your session with knowledge about artificial lighting and studio etiquette.
- Determine what medium the images will need to be used in. Digital? Print? Both? This will tell you the format (RAW, JPG, CR3) of the images required.
- Set a schedule for longer shoot days and communicate that with your team in advance. This will help keep things moving during the shoot and ensure that all shots are accounted for during the chaos of a photoshoot.
- Understand your subject matter and the location of where you are shooting them. Are you shooting food or still life? Pets playing? Portraits? Depending on what you're shooting, you will need to adapt your strategy for how you capture your end goal.
- Overall, darker images can be retouched to be lighter to better adjust for missing content. However, bright, overexposed images cannot be retouched to show missing content.

Professional Photographers

When budget allows, opt to work with a professional photographer who has worked in the industry or has experience with the subject matter you're looking to capture. Other options to work with professionals include:

- Look for opportunities where exchanging services can benefit both parties, fostering mutually advantageous partnerships.
- Collaborate with senior college students who are looking to build their portfolios, potentially offering a more cost-effective solution while supporting their growth.
- Some photographers offer discounts when working with nonprofit organizations, so be sure to inquire about special pricing.

- Collaborate with other nonprofits to pool your budgets for a shared photography session. Be sure to negotiate key details like the number of photos, whether they're edited, and ownership of all images.

Digital Cameras

Ensure the following before using a digital camera:

- Your camera is fully charged and there are spare, fully charged batteries to replace.
- You have a general knowledge of how to use the camera - whether you are shooting on auto or manual. Shoot on auto if necessary.
- You have multiple memory cards on hand for longer shoot days or capturing a lot of content.
- For inside shots, it's good to have:
  - Lighting (ring light, tripod, etc.).
  - A backdrop, if needed.
  - Props for photos, if required.
  - A box or kit for extra items, tools or setup (tape, string, scissors, safety pins, etc.).
- To be most effective during your photoshoot:
  - Create a detailed shot list of everything you want to capture to ensure nothing is missed.
  - Plan a schedule and share it with the team so everyone knows where to be and when, keeping the shoot organized.
  - Develop a mood board with images, poses, lighting and location ideas to guide the visual style and ensure everyone is aligned.
  - Have a clear understanding of the poses, locations and outfits needed for any subjects to keep the day running smoothly.
  - Capture both wide and close-up shots to allow for flexibility during editing by cropping in on digital photos.
  - On sunny days, skip the flash and position your subjects in natural light, avoiding backlighting that can create harsh shadows.

Mobile Devices

Whether you have an Android, Google or iPhone, all of these tips can be applied to shooting photos with your phone's camera! ****Note: Most images shot from your phone will not be good enough quality for large-scale print.*

- Ensure your battery is charged and have an external battery or charger on hand.
- Ensure your lenses are clean and clear.
- For best framing and composition, opt to use your photo grid found in Settings.
- Refrain from zooming in. Digital zoom will yield a grainy image, reduce the resolution of the overall photo and exacerbate any vibrations from your hands.

- Look for natural lighting first before making your own. The flash on your phone's camera doesn't allow setting changes, so you cannot control the end result.
- For well-lit pictures of an individual or small group, a ring light can be an effective and inexpensive investment to set up on your own mini "photo studio."
- Look to shoot on an even, sturdy mount to rest your hands or use a tripod—of which there is a range of inexpensive, small, compact options to choose from!
- For images of people, portrait mode works best when there is light. It does not always detect facial features when lighting is dim or dark.

#DYK The Creative Lab by TRIO is now open! The lab is your custom studio for videos, photography, podcast and more!

CRAFTING YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

Developing a clear and concise way for the average person to understand what your nonprofit does, who you serve and your efforts' impact is a crucial piece of any successful communications strategy. Clarity in your message is key. It serves as the foundation for a solid fundraising initiative and with a strong enough foundation, you'll be able to rally more troops to your cause.

Luckily for you, we know a thing or two about the importance of clear communication. We've compiled a list of important tips for reference that will ensure you can get the word out to the general public about who you are, what you do and why they should support you!

Think of the big picture! Before you start, consider the result you are looking for. What do you want from your audience? Are you seeking donations? Do you need volunteers? Do you want folks to share something on social media or sign up for peer-to-peer fundraisers? By taking some time to consider your end goal, you may decide to develop two or three pitches depending on your call to action. Some planning upfront can help you outline your goals and create a stronger, clearer outline to accomplish more in the end.

Grab their attention! What makes your organization unique? Who do you serve and why? Chances are you are not the only nonprofit operating in your sphere. And while concentrated efforts toward solving worthy causes are a good thing, that also means other nonprofits are saying the same thing you are, which can make it challenging to engage donors and raise funds for your specific organization.

You need to stand out and be memorable. Identify what it is about your work that makes it so impactful and, while it may be similar, figure out what makes YOUR mission so unique. Give folks a reason to care and be curious about learning more. When you can communicate this, it will make hooking your audience all the easier.

K.I.S.S. - Keep it simple & specific (we don't like to use that other word). No fluffy stuff or industry jargon. You and those within your organization are dedicating your lives to this cause, but remember, your communications may be the first time many of those you are trying to reach are learning about the issue at hand. Speak in terms that anyone can understand. If all goes well, they'll stick around for the long haul and learn your lingo and embrace your mission.

Emotional response - There is a common thought that your potential donors will likely share, "What's in it for me?" That may sound counterintuitive, seeing as you are seeking a donor's time, talent or treasure, but whether they realize it or not, people give for reasons other than to help the cause. As much as giving does good for solving your problem, it also makes those who donate feel good. There is a widely known sales and marketing acronym that sums up why people give. Each world represents the emotion or feeling that motivates people to connect with nonprofits. Maybe they are worried about climate change. Perhaps they are upset about losing a family member to a terminal disease. They might be concerned for the children in their community or frustrated with the lack of services. The list goes on and on.

F - Frustrated
U - Upset
D - Disappointed
W - Worried
A - Angry
C - Concerned
A - Anxious

How are you providing them an opportunity to be a part of a larger vision? Ask clarifying questions. Paint them a picture. If you can identify which one resonates with your audience the most, you're one step closer to converting them to your cause.

One size does not fit all - Your nonprofit is not a fit for everyone, and that's ok. Narrow down your audience, understand your demographics and hone in to create a plan of attack that will give you the most bang for your buck. For example, an animal shelter most likely would not receive many donations from a group of people who don't like dogs - though we're not sure how that is even possible. Focus your time and efforts on communicating with those you connect with and, in no time, they will be your best advocates!

Mirror, Mirror - Practice, practice, practice. In order to effectively communicate your message, it needs to feel natural and conversational. The delivery is just as important as the words themselves. People are able to tell when you mean the words you speak and, if you're not passionate about your cause, why should they be? Make sure the words you speak and the mission you're on not only have the support of your audience but that of yourself and your team.

It sounds easy enough, but the reality is crafting the perfect pitch takes time and intentional focus. By reviewing these steps and implementing them in your everyday practice, you will be on your way to growing your nonprofit!

PRESENTATION POINTERS

When you have the opportunity to present and share about your organization with a group of people, whether it be potential clients, partners or donors, it's important to keep the following tips in mind. We've pulled together some of our top tips to keep your audience engaged and to help ensure they walk away with the info you want them to know.

Stick to the basics.
Whether you're using visuals to outline your presentation or if you're speaking without slides, keeping your content straightforward and simple is extremely important if you want your audience to remember what you have to say. Consider their point of view when you're planning your presentation and be sure to stick to the main information that they need to know.

Speak their language.
Keep in mind that your audience may not be as well-versed on the topic at hand and that some vocabulary or jargon may be unfamiliar to them. Take the time to view your presentation through the lens of their understanding and try not to overwhelm them with information they won't be able to digest.

Bullets are best.
When it comes to creating slides, remember that a brief list is easiest to process visually. The slides are there to help guide you along in your talking points and serve as an engaging asset. It is never best practice to read directly from the slides. Consolidate information as best you can so that you're speaking *to* your slides and not *from* them. Less is more when it comes to curating your content.

Visualize the room.
Are you presenting in a large space with a crowd of 100 plus? Are you in a more intimate setting or classroom? Picturing the room that you're presenting to and keeping this in mind as you plan is important. Be sure that every audience member will be able to see and read your slides along with any other demonstrations or key elements of your presentation.

Practice makes perfect.
While some folks may believe they thrive when speaking off the cuff, it truly matters if you practice...and it helps! Practicing your presentation will help you work out any hiccups, become comfortable speaking to your slides, will help you engage better with your audience and will help you become a better public speaker all around. If you have someone willing to watch and provide feedback, always welcome advice on how you can improve.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

At TRIO, we embrace change as an opportunity for growth and impact. We know that success in the nonprofit sector hinges on anticipating the evolving landscape and proactively adapting to new trends. That's why we're committed to leveraging emerging technologies, including the supportive role of AI, to elevate your organization's mission and enhance your brand's reach. By staying ahead of industry shifts, we empower you to lead with confidence and maximize your impact in a rapidly changing world.

What is AI?

At its simplest, AI is the ability of machines to learn from data and perform tasks that would typically require human intelligence. In marketing, this could mean using AI-powered tools to analyze consumer behavior and preferences, generate content and even personalize your customer experience. In reality, AI is just a tool that we can use to enhance our existing processes and improve our output. Many tools we already use, such as social media analytics and email marketing platforms, rely on AI algorithms to operate effectively.

What are the benefits of using AI?

One of the biggest advantages of AI is its ability to process vast amounts of information quickly and accurately. For example, instead of manually analyzing data from a customer survey, an AI tool can identify patterns and insights in a matter of minutes that might have otherwise gone completely unnoticed. This not only saves us time but also helps us make more informed decisions about our marketing strategies.

We understand some clients might be wary of using AI tools, fearing they will replace human creativity and intuition. But rest assured, AI simply complements and enhances our existing skill sets. With more time for our creative team to focus on developing innovative ideas and campaigns, we'll be able to raise the bar even further on our creatively excellent outputs.

Still unsure? No problem. Let's take a look at some AI-powered tools that we believe can benefit marketers:

Donor Insights and Segmentation: AI-powered tools can analyze donor patterns and engagement history, helping your organization identify key donor segments and understand their giving behaviors. This insight allows you to develop targeted fundraising strategies and identify high-potential donors for major gifts, recurring donations, or planned giving opportunities. By better understanding your donors, you can cultivate more meaningful relationships and maximize long-term support.

Resource Optimization: AI can help nonprofits allocate resources more efficiently by analyzing program data, financial reports, and volunteer contributions. Tools like predictive analytics or AI-driven dashboards provide insights into which programs are most effective, allowing you to make informed decisions about where to focus your efforts and resources to achieve the greatest impact.

Chatbots for Enhanced Support: AI chatbots can offer 24/7 support on your website, answering common questions from donors, volunteers, or beneficiaries. This not only improves the user experience but also frees up your team to focus on higher-value interactions and relationship-building activities. Chatbots can also be used to streamline volunteer sign-ups or event registrations, making it easier for supporters to engage with your mission.

AI-Driven Grant Writing Assistance: Some AI tools are capable of assisting with the initial drafting of grant proposals based on data inputs and existing templates. While these drafts will always need refinement by your team to reflect the heart of your organization's mission, AI can help streamline the proposal-writing process and ensure consistency in language and presentation.

Program Impact Measurement: AI tools can analyze qualitative and quantitative data from your programs to measure outcomes and assess the effectiveness of initiatives. This can help your organization refine programs, communicate success to funders, and increase transparency in your reporting. With AI, nonprofits can more efficiently evaluate impact, leading to improved outcomes and increased trust from stakeholders.

Important notes for AI use:

- Always Proofread AI-Generated Content: Carefully review AI-generated content for spelling, grammar, and overall readability. Make necessary edits to enhance clarity, consistency, and alignment with your organization's voice and style.

- Fact-Check Data and Information: Ensure that all data, statistics, and claims included in AI-generated content are accurate and up-to-date. Although AI can pull information from its training data, remember that its knowledge base may not include recent developments or current statistics. Verify facts using trusted sources to maintain credibility and reliability in your communications.

- Incorporate Verified Links and Data: Provide specific links, up-to-date statistics, and verified data points when possible. This will help AI generate more accurate and relevant content. Always double-check the accuracy of the information and ensure the links are functional before sharing or publishing.

- Maintain Your Organization's Tone and Voice: AI-generated content can serve as a strong foundation, but it's essential to refine it so it remains aligned with your organization's unique messaging and mission. Tailor language to resonate with your audience, whether it’s donors, volunteers, or community members.

- Test All Links and Calls-to-Action: Before finalizing or sharing content, test all links and ensure that calls-to-action (CTAs) direct users to the correct pages. Broken links or incorrect CTAs can lead to missed engagement opportunities and donor confusion.

- Check for Context and Nuance: AI can generate coherent content but may miss subtle context or specific nuances important to your audience or cause. Review the content carefully to ensure it accurately reflects the values, priorities, and sensitivity required for your nonprofit’s communications.

- Confirm Compliance with Privacy and Accessibility Standards: Ensure that AI-generated content complies with relevant privacy regulations (such as GDPR) and accessibility standards (such as WCAG). This helps safeguard your audience’s data and ensures your content is accessible to all supporters.

ADA COMPLIANCE

Have you ever entered a site whose type was too small for you to stay? How about slow load times or confusing navigation that caused you to check out before you checked anything out? You're not alone. Like a lame ex might tell you, "It's not you. It's me," the same can be said about some websites. And in these cases, it's not you…it's poor, non-ADA-compliant web design.

What does it mean to be ADA-compliant?
In today's culture, audiences expect "forward-thinking" organizations to prioritize accessibility, and ADA compliance can help your brand win the public as well as digital market space. Aside from increased accessibility, ADA compliance improves your SEO ranking and user engagement.

Created in 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ensures that people with differing abilities are given equal opportunities in all aspects of society, including the world wide web.

Why is it Important?
If you ask us, creating an ADA complaint site is as much of a smart business move as it is a morally good thing to do. The following are only some of the benefits of creating an inclusive web experience:

- Expanded Audience
- Legal Protection
- Improved SEO
- Better User Experience
- Positive Brand Image

Tips to make your website more accessible

- **Add alternative text to images**: Providing alt text for images is an essential step to making your website accessible. This helps people with visual impairments understand what the image conveys.
- **Ensure proper color contrast**: Users with color blindness or other visual impairments may struggle to read text that doesn't contrast enough with the background. Ensuring adequate color contrast will improve the readability of your website.
- **Include transcripts and captions for multimedia content**: Adding transcripts and captions for videos and audio content is one way of designing user-friendly websites for deaf or hard-of-hearing visitors.
- **Provide keyboard navigation**: Some users with disabilities may rely on a keyboard to navigate your website. Therefore, ensuring that all interactive elements on your site, such as buttons and links, can be accessed via keyboards is crucial.
- **Use accessible design practices**: The design of your website can impact its accessibility. Avoid using flashing images or animations that can trigger seizures in

some users. Use clear and easy-to-read fonts, and keep the layout of your website clean and organized.

How can TRIO help?
From the experience of working with a wide range of organizations and industries, TRIO has identified affordable solutions for accessibility. Whether it be for your website or any project deliverables, such as PDFs, our team crafts projects with your end user in mind.

Through TRIO's website accessibility offerings, we tailor accessiBe, an easy-to-use website plugin, to your website so that individuals who have a wide variety of accessible needs can have a seamless user experience. Contact Team TRIO to learn more about how we can help make your website accessible for all.

TRADEMARK TIPS

Whether you've recently founded your nonprofit or are well-established, trademarks are critical to your brand's success. These fundamental laws increase donor and community recognition and discovery. They protect your intellectual property. They safeguard your identity. Trademarks ensure your work stands out as competitors cannot build from your hard-earned wins.

Some items to ensure you cover when navigating trademark solutions for your nonprofit:

- Conduct a comprehensive search of the USPTO federal trademark database
- Research all of the 50 state's trademark databases
- Do both a trademark common law and domain name search
- Partner with a trusted licensed trademark attorney to ensure you've covered your bases
- Work alongside your attorney to file a federal trademark application for your name and logo

If you're not sure where to begin when it comes to trademarking your nonprofit, TRIO offers solutions with our trusted trademark attorney partnership to ensure you're covered.