

Web WOW

4 Ways to Bring Your Brand to Life Online

INTRODUCTION

At Mission Minded, we're experts in bringing brands to life both off and online. That's why our clients choose us for developing their web presence.

If you're like most nonprofit professionals, your website probably contains some compelling data points, a detailed explanation of your mission and program areas on your homepage, and maybe even a collection of downloadable resources. But beware: all your information—even if it's well articulated and expertly researched—will be lost on your audiences if it doesn't fit into a **story**.

Your website is part of a larger narrative—the story of your brand—and the experience a user has on your site must fit into that narrative. Because of that challenge, a web solution that works for one organization likely won't work for another. Rather than adopt a one-size-fits-all approach to your website, you must think deeply and strategically about how your web presence should support your larger goals as an organization.

Mission Minded is expert in this challenge.

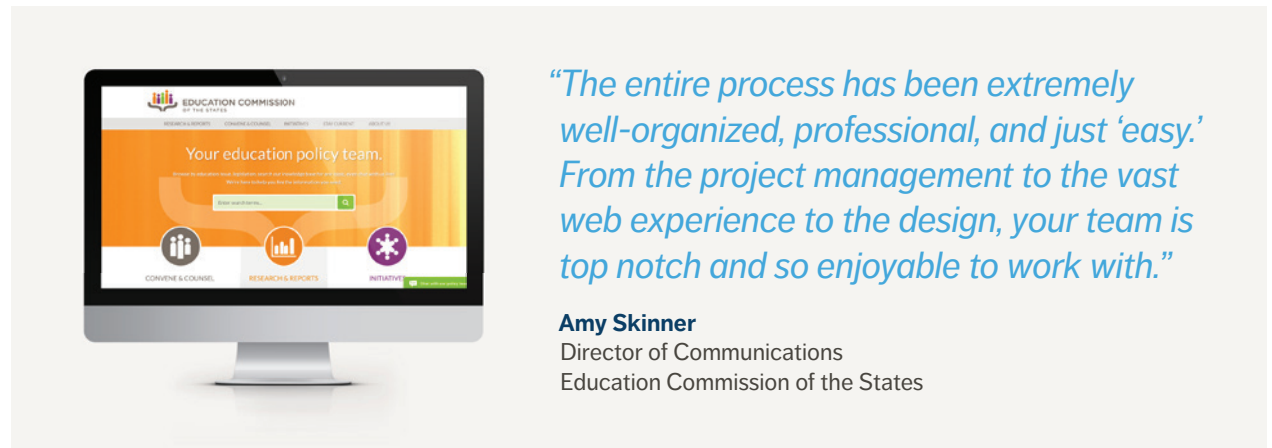
Before you write your story, you'll need to do some analytical thinking about your organization, audiences, and goals. This groundwork will guide both your copy and your design. When your visuals and writing both serve the same strategic goals, your website will tell an engrossing story about your organization and the problems you solve. Not only that, but the site will also inspire your audiences to get involved.

4 Important Questions Before You Get Started

1. What's your brand?

If your website doesn't powerfully reinforce the big promise you're making, the site is working against you—not for you. Your website sends powerful signals about your organization. That means your website should be in step with your organization's values and personality. And it should proudly convey the unique value and promise you offer to the world.

If your food bank wants to be seen as working on innovative solutions to hunger, you shouldn't have an outdated site that looks like every other food bank a Google search might uncover. For donors to believe you're innovative, you need to look innovative in every single thing you do—and that includes a fresh approach to your website that ensures visitors know you have a unique approach to solving hunger in your community.



2. What is your goal?

Your website shouldn't just make you visible online or inspire warm feelings about your organization. Challenge yourself and your colleagues to be specific about what your website will accomplish. Will it convince your visitors to donate? Sign a petition? Volunteer? The more specific you can be, the better.

3. Who is your audience?

Get into the heads of the people who will use your site. What are they looking for? What's important to them? Once you understand their priorities, speak to those priorities—not your own. This knowledge of your audience will help you set an appropriate tone for your story.

When you understand your audiences, you can speak right to them. And you should. Think like a visitor to your site. They probably don't care about your internal organization or details that affect only employees. They want to know why your organization matters and how they can get involved. Make it easy for them to find out in as few clicks as possible.

4. What action do you want your site visitors to take?

Simply having a good feeling about you isn't enough. Do you want them to call you? Make a donation? Tell their friends about you?

Getting very clear about what you want them to do will help you create a site that encourages them to do it. Sounds simple, right? Yet so many nonprofits think their website should be organized by program area or department.

Don't just list your programs and statistics about their success. Instead, clearly state the problem, the solution, and how the visitor can take action to be part of that solution. You're proud of your programs—and you should be. But program descriptions alone don't excite most people (except the people who run them).

They need to know why your organization matters and how they can get involved.

Our Process

Step 1: Website Research and Strategy

Project Kickoff

We begin website strategy by leading an in-person work session to determine your creative and strategic vision. We discuss your brand and how your brand can and should come to life online. We then lead a robust discussion about your website goals, navigation and information architecture preferences, and your diverse audiences—who you need to engage, why each potential user would come to your website, and what problems your website helps each audience solve. This discussion allows us to build enjoyable and effective user experiences for your key audiences that are tailored to reflect your unique program areas, events, and priorities. We do this all while developing an easy-to-navigate, interactive, on-brand website.

User Research

Mission Minded conducts interviews with potential users of your site. We delve into their psychographic profiles and ask important questions about likes and dislikes; how, when, and where they search for information; other sites they use; how they might enter your site (oftentimes it isn't through your homepage); and why they might use your site. Often the answers are surprising. A user's expectation for a retail site might shed light on how a policy organization's site should feel, or a donor working late at night from their bed on their iPhone might be more typical than the user sitting in front of a desk in an office.

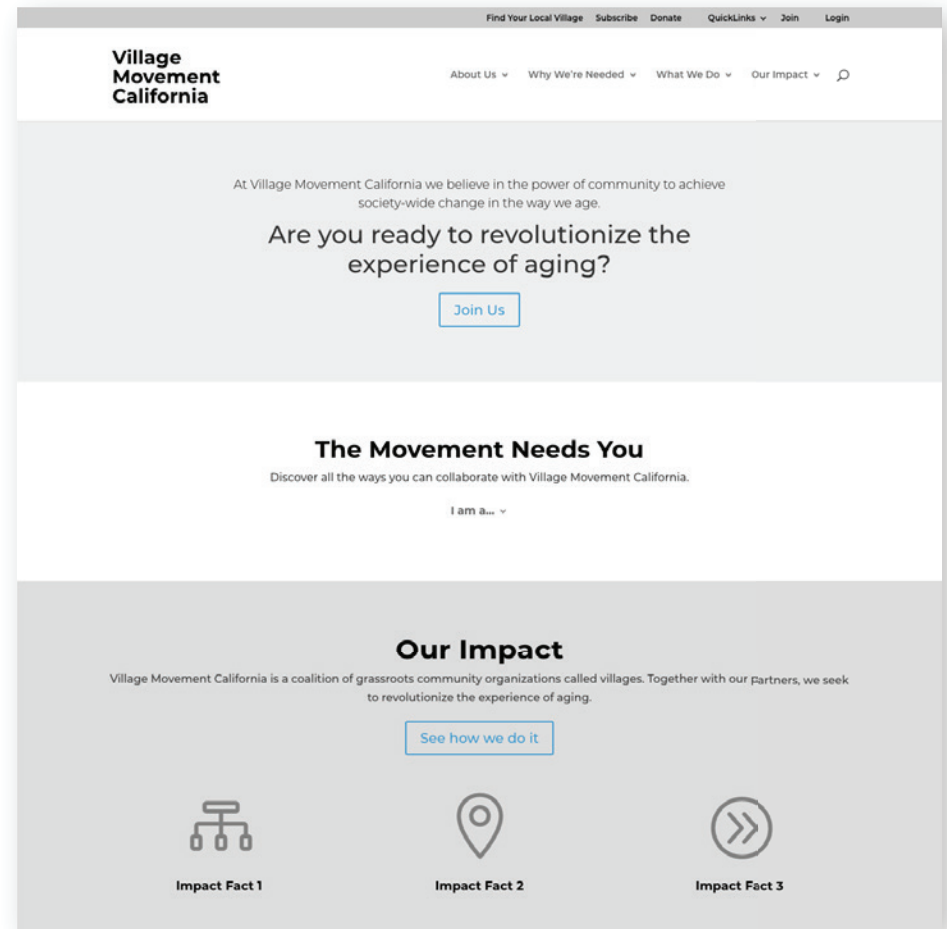
Recommendations

With user research, analytics, secondary research, and best practices in mind, we draft a recommendations document that explores the best options for making your site a powerful, on-brand, user-friendly tool. The recommendations will review your website's historical analytics and present an overarching content hierarchy that ensures all content is unified, compelling, easy to access, and relevant to your target audiences. Our recommendations will outline on-brand strategies and functional requirements to ensure your website is the best experience for your users. We'll also take your available resources into consideration to ensure your website is easy to maintain over time.

Architecture and Prototyping

Based on the approved recommendations, a new proposed website information architecture is shared and refined. Information architecture defines how information is organized, structured, and labeled on your site.

From your approved information architecture, we then create a prototype of your new site. A prototype demonstrates how the information architecture comes to life in a functional way—it shows where words, images, and graphics will live and how your users will navigate through your site. Each round of prototyping dives deeper into layouts, starting with top-level pages and concluding with specialty templates.



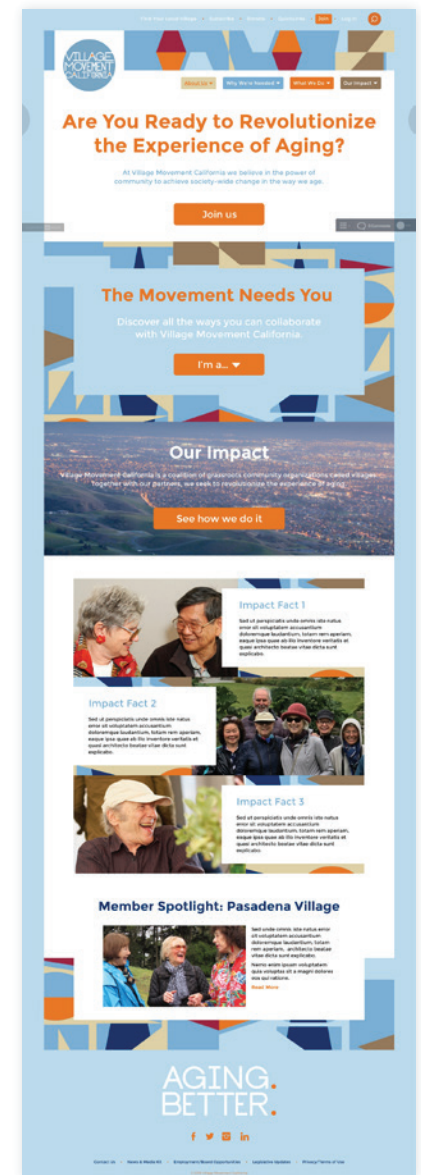
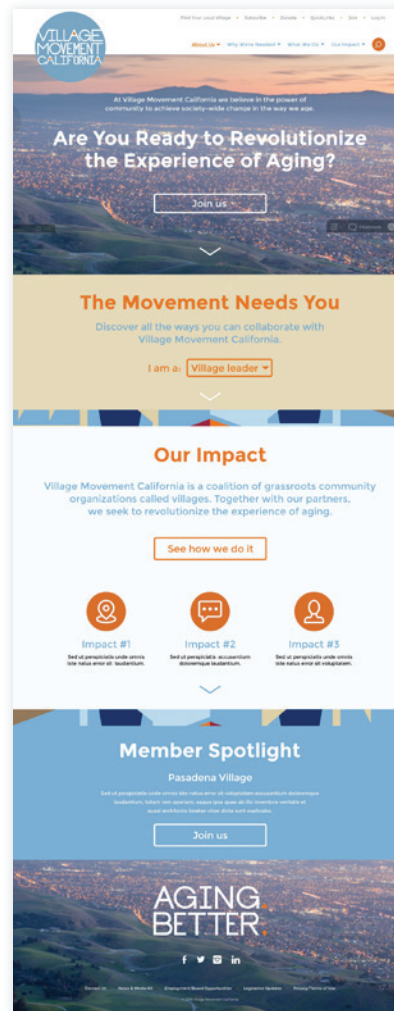
Village Movement California Prototype

Step 2: Website Design

Mission Minded strongly values usability and functionality. We create a design that allows users to intuitively find and connect with the information they seek.

Round 1: Homepage Design

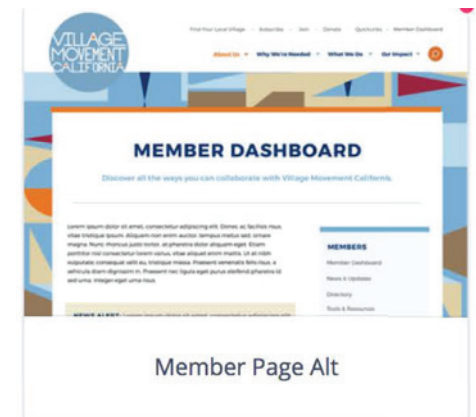
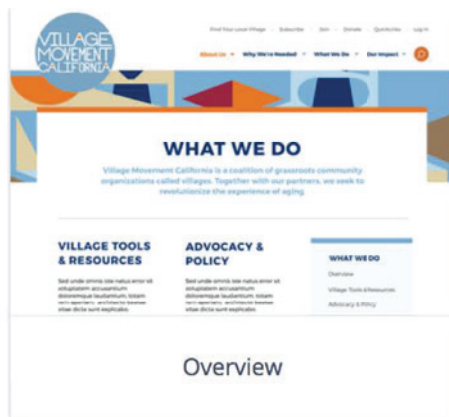
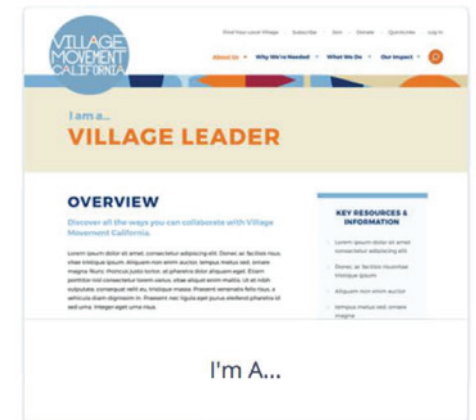
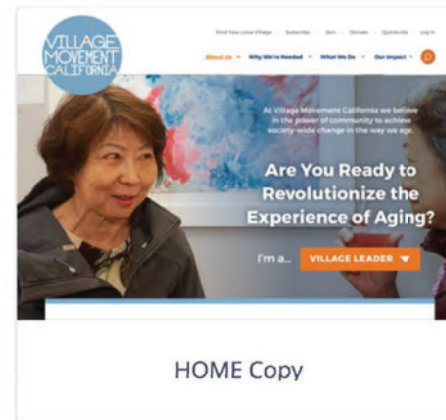
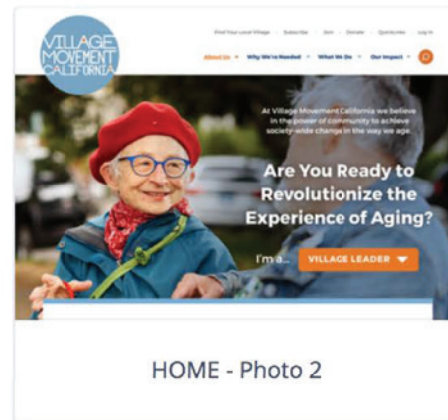
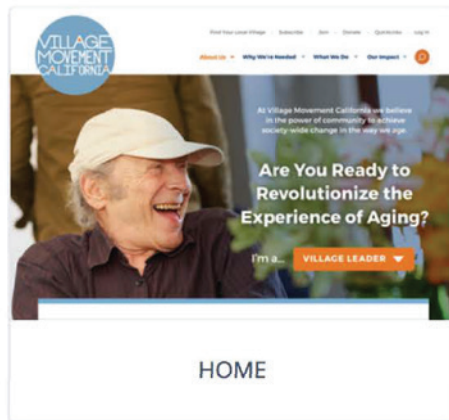
While design rounds can look differently based on your website's goals, typically, design Round 1 involves design of solely the homepage, with three design directions that bring the brand and user experience to life visually in different ways. You then select one design for further refinement and development.



Village Movement California Homepage Designs

Round 2: Secondary Page Design

Based on your selected homepage design, Mission Minded revises design of the homepage and shares design of 2-3 secondary pages. At this stage, we examine the other anticipated entry points of your site (besides your homepage) and review your action pages to ensure that they are expertly positioned in a way that will drive interaction with other pages of your site. Other main secondary pages explored during this round may include program or services pages, blogs, or volunteer pages.



Village Movement California Secondary Page Design

Round 3: Refinement and Responsive Design

The third round of design focuses on refining the selected web direction and integration of responsive design formats. At this point, the overall design direction is nearly final, and the changes tend to focus on nuances of specific elements. Upon your approval, we then move into site development.

Step 3: Content Development

Developing content for your website can be one of the most difficult challenges. Who's responsible for what? How do you ensure consistent tone and style throughout the site? How can your copy drive your users to take the actions you want them to take?

We'll work with you throughout this process to make content management as painless as possible. Whether we are writing content for you or simply helping you manage the process of getting everything together, Mission Minded serves as your partner throughout the process.

Step 4: Website Development

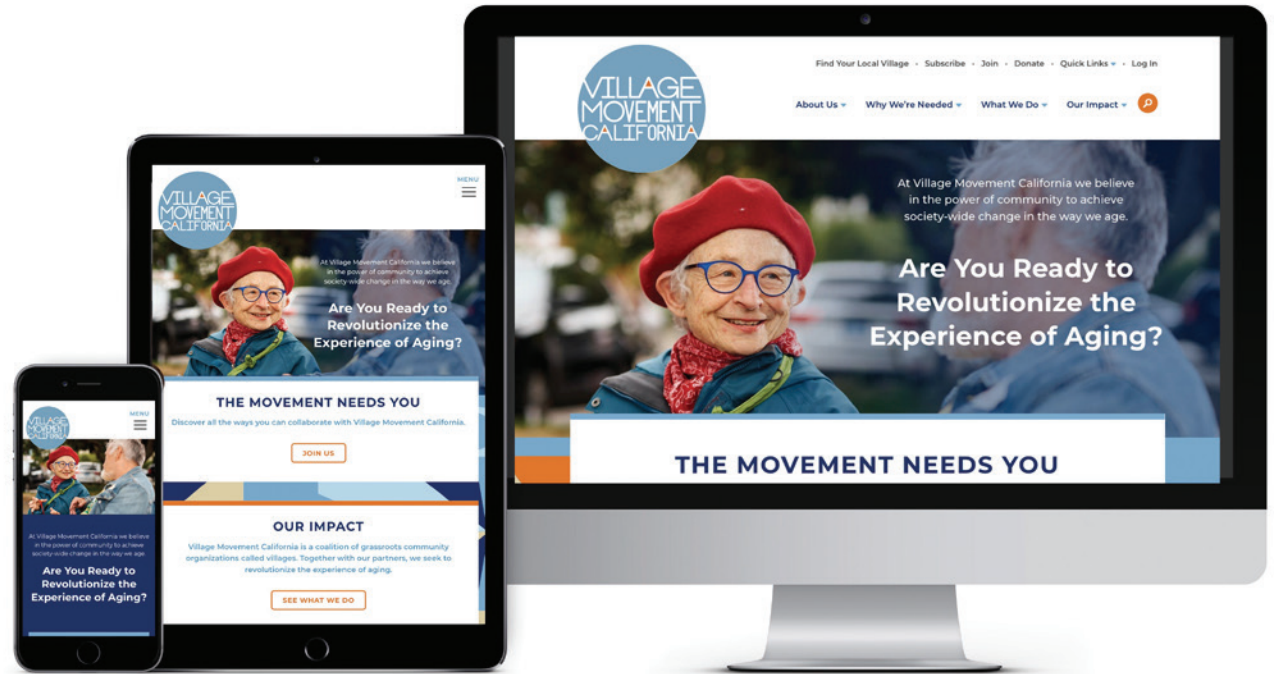
Mission Minded continuously seeks your collaboration to prioritize your most important web goals.

Web Development

This is where the magic happens—where we bring to life the design and technical requirements. Mission Minded will develop your website using a collaborative management approach, which will allow us to prioritize your needs as they evolve.

We are proud to implement free and proven open source content management systems. We work in a variety of open source content management systems, including WordPress, Drupal, and Joomla, as well as custom platforms built for specific needs, such as schools, membership organizations, and campaigns.

Our team also works with you to identify and implement integrations with other systems like Salesforce, Raiser's Edge, and video and social media tools. This makes it easier to present a personalized user experience while also being able to rely on tools you've already grown to trust. We provide the training needed to make sure that even your least tech savvy staff member can update content on the site.



Village Movement California Website

Quality Assurance

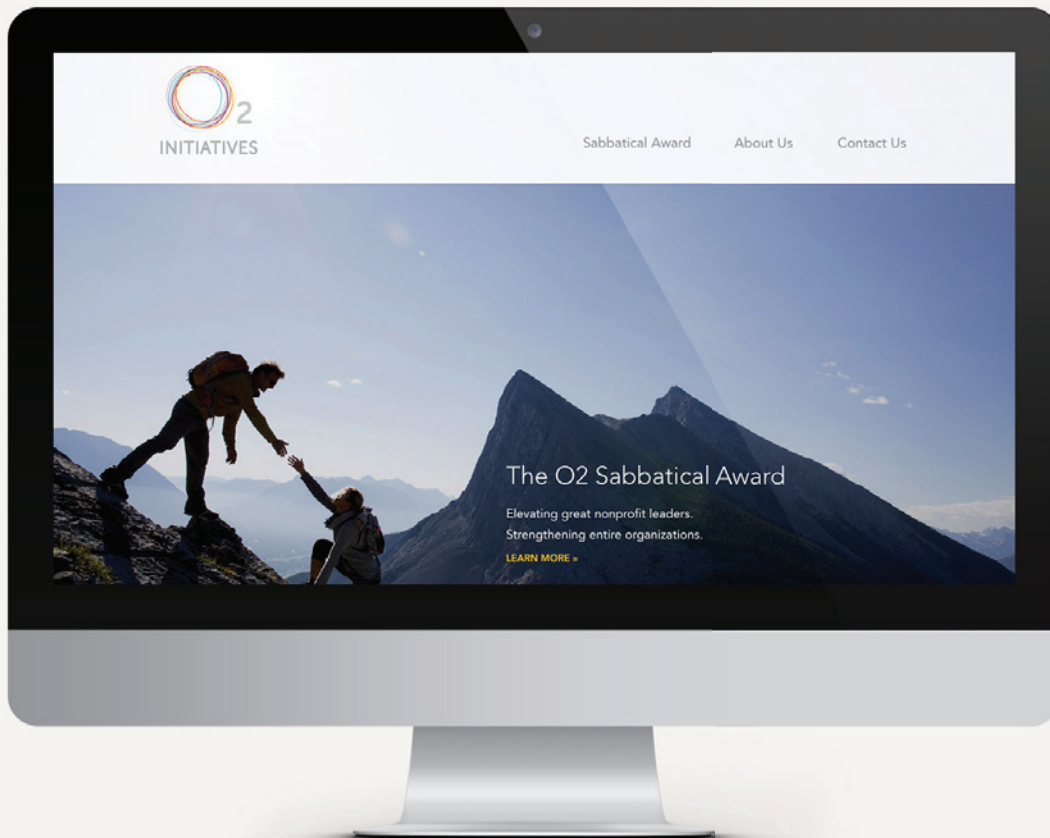
Mission Minded reviews all updated and redesigned pages before your website's launch. In tandem with your staff, we conduct quality assurance tests to ensure the site is ready for the public.

Website Launch

Mission Minded will work with you to develop a plan to create excitement and energy amongst supporters when launching your site.

Ongoing Maintenance and Post-Project Support

After the site has launched, Mission Minded remains available on an hourly basis for any required updates, support, or changes that are needed in the future. Maintenance and support is billed hourly; the majority of our clients require five hours or less per month.



“This is a beautiful website with a compelling and thoughtful message, and it powerfully reflects a tremendous amount of careful work on your part over several years to understand and serve the nonprofit community by supporting its leadership. You’ve clearly put into place many best practices in the field, while developing innovations as well.”

User, in response to the launch of the O2 Initiatives Site

What Will it Cost?

Every project is different, as are the fees associated with them. Here are some estimates to give you a sense of what you might invest:

- Website Research and Strategy Development: \$20,000–\$35,000
- Web Design: \$15,000–\$30,000
- Web Development: \$175/hour
- Content Development: \$175/hour

At the onset of any project, we provide a detailed proposal that outlines both flat fee expenditures and hourly estimates. As sticklers for project management, we keep you informed throughout the process about anticipated costs so that there are never any surprises.

Give Us a Call.

Want to know more? Give us a call, and we’ll help you get your project underway.

Learn More

Mission Minded is a branding firm that works exclusively with nonprofit organizations.

We believe that a brand that sets you apart is essential to a nonprofit’s success. Every day we guide nonprofits to uncover the big, bold idea that will attract more people to their work. Because in today’s world, a worthy mission is not enough. You’ve got to communicate what makes you unique at every opportunity.

Our clients successfully raise more money and attract the support they need to achieve their goals. To find out how Mission Minded can help your organization, call us today at 415-990-9360.