

MARKETING GUIDE

# Web WOW

## 4 Ways to Bring Your Brand to Life Online

## INTRODUCTION

At Mission Minded, we're experts in bringing brands to life both on- and offline. That's why our clients hire us to develop their websites: so that they can upgrade their digital presence with the distinctive power of their brands.

If you look at nonprofit websites, you'll find most contain some compelling data points. Each homepage probably presents a detailed explanation of that organization's mission and program areas. Maybe the site even offers downloadable resources. But all this information—even if it's well articulated, fully researched, and illustrated with nice photography—doesn't stick with site visitors.

Why? Because it doesn't fit into a **story**.

Your website is part of a grander narrative: the story of your brand. And what a user experiences when visiting your site needs to fit into that narrative. Because of this, a digital strategy that suits one organization perfectly likely won't work for another. You have to think strategically about how your web presence supports your larger organizational goals, because the other option, a one-size-fits-all approach, doesn't truly fit anyone.

At Mission Minded, we excel at telling organizations' stories online. We translate nonprofit brand into effective digital strategy, so that your website feels like and acts as an extension of your programming.

But there are steps you need to take before you write your story and get started with a digital strategy.

First, you'll need to do some analytical thinking about your organization, its audiences, and its goals. This groundwork will guide your copy and design efforts so that your website can tell an engrossing story about your organization and the problems it solves, the kind that will inspire your audiences and get them involved.

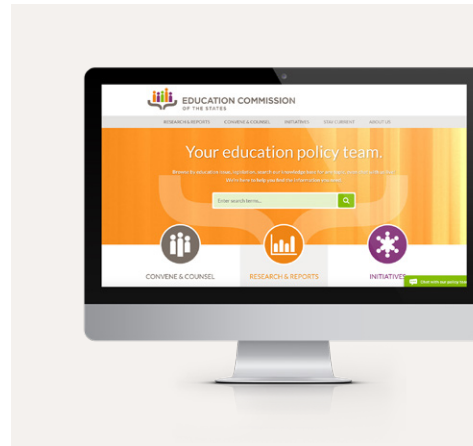
## To Know Before You Go

### 1. What's Your Brand?

If your website doesn't powerfully reinforce the overarching promise your organization makes, it's working against you. Your digital presence sends powerful signals about your organization and so it should align with your organization's values and personality, conveying the unique value and promise you offer.

All of this—your promise, your values, your personality, and more—comes together to form your brand, or reputation. And you need to know what your brand is now and what you want your brand to be before you can decide what you want your website to accomplish.

For example, if your food bank is working on innovative solutions to hunger, that should be a big part of your brand. You shouldn't have a dated site that resembles every other conventional food bank website out there. To convince donors that you're innovative, you need to look that way consistently—and that includes taking a fresh approach to your website.



*“The entire process has been extremely well-organized, professional, and just ‘easy.’ From the project management to the vast web experience to the design, your team is top notch and so enjoyable to work with.”*

**Amy Skinner**

Director of Communications  
Education Commission of the States

### 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 digital presence should accomplish. Will it convince your visitors to donate? Sign a petition? Volunteer? The more specific you can be, the better.

### 3. Who Are You Talking To?

Try to think the way the people you're trying to reach do. What are they looking for on your website? What's important to them? Once you figure out their priorities, make your website reflect them. If you really know your audience, you'll be able to give your story an appropriate tone and say what they need to hear. And you should. Your audience probably doesn'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 this information in as few clicks as possible.

### 4. What Do You Want?

Should your site visitors call you? Donate? Tell their friends about your work?

Once you're clear about what you want, you can work toward creating a site that encourages visitors to get involved. Sounds simple, right? Yet many nonprofits think their website should be organized by program area or department, not realizing that visitors first need to know why your organization matters and how they can get involved.

You're proud of your programs. You should be. But program descriptions and statistics about their success won't excite most people. Instead, if you clearly state the problem your organization addresses, present the unique solution you deliver, and explain how visitors can take part in that solution, imagine the difference in potential engagement.

# 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 it can and should come to life online. We then lead a robust discussion about your website goals and preferences for navigation and information architecture. We also discover whom you need to engage, why each potential type of user would come to your website, and what problems the site can help each audience segment solve. What we learn during this stage builds consensus around the end goal: an easy-to-navigate, engaging, on-brand website.

### User Research

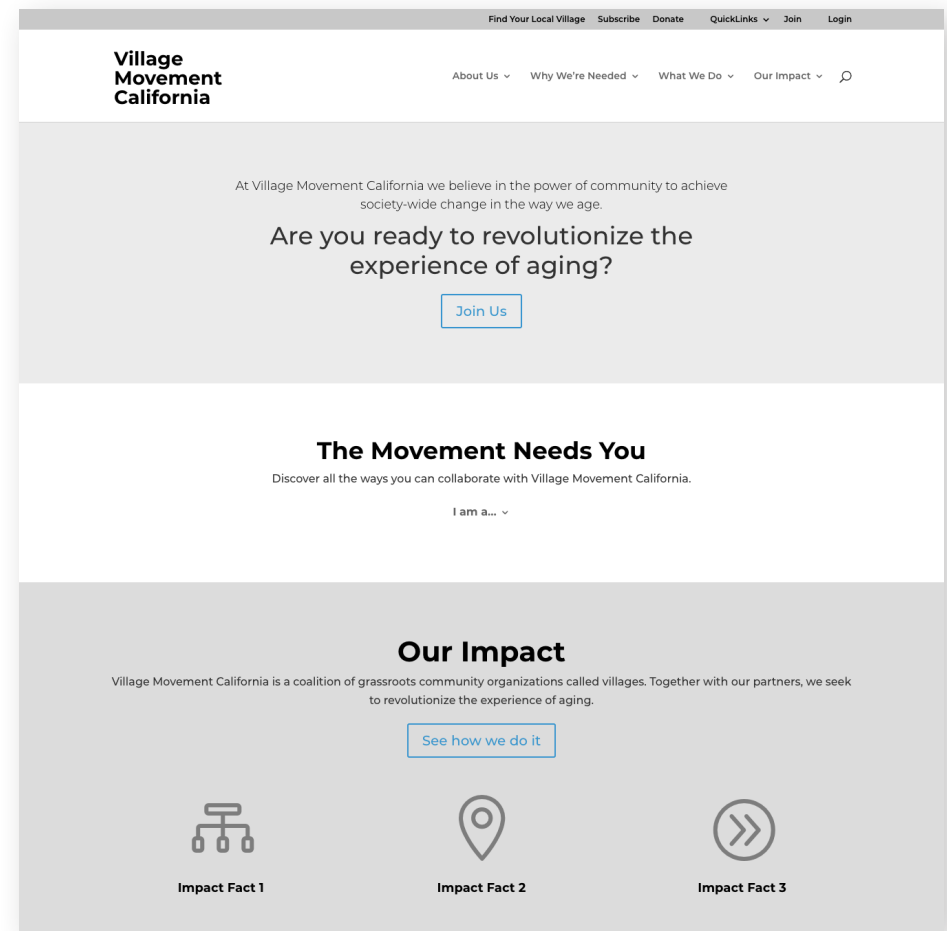
Mission Minded conducts interviews with potential users of your site, asking important questions about what they need: How, when, and where do they search for information? What other sites do they use? How do they find and enter your site? (It often isn't through your homepage.) What do they use your site to accomplish? The answers to these questions are frequently surprising—and helpful. For example, one user's expectations of retail websites could shed light on how your policy organization's site should feel. When you learn that your typical donors access your site late at night on their phones, you've also discovered something valuable about how your site should present information.

### Recommendations

Based on our user research, secondary research, analytics, and best practices, we draft a recommendations document that lays out the best options for transforming your site into a powerful, on-brand, user-friendly tool. These recommendations include a review of your website's historical analytics data and propose a content hierarchy that will ensure all site content is unified, compelling, easy to access, and relevant. We also outline our suggested brand strategies and detail the functional requirements to ensure your website provides the best possible experience for your users. Mission Minded takes your available resources into consideration, too, so that your website will be easy to maintain over time.

## Architecture and Prototyping

Information architecture—like a blueprint or sitemap for your website—lays out how information is organized, structured, and labeled. Based on the recommendations you approve, we propose and refine your site's architecture and then use that to create a prototype, which is a live, interactive version of the proposed site without any visual design elements. It shows where words, images, and graphics will be placed and how users will navigate through your site.



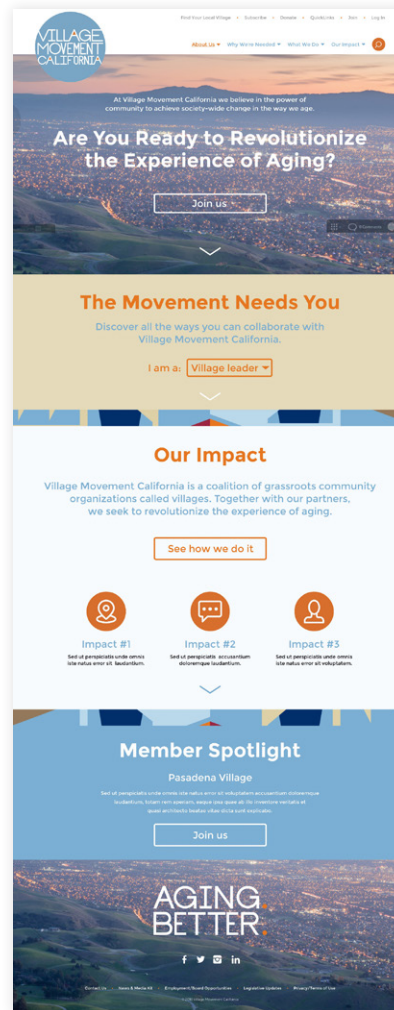
Village Movement California Prototype

## Step 2: Website Design

Mission Minded creates brand-focused designs that allow users to find the information they seek quickly and intuitively.

### Round 1: Homepage Design

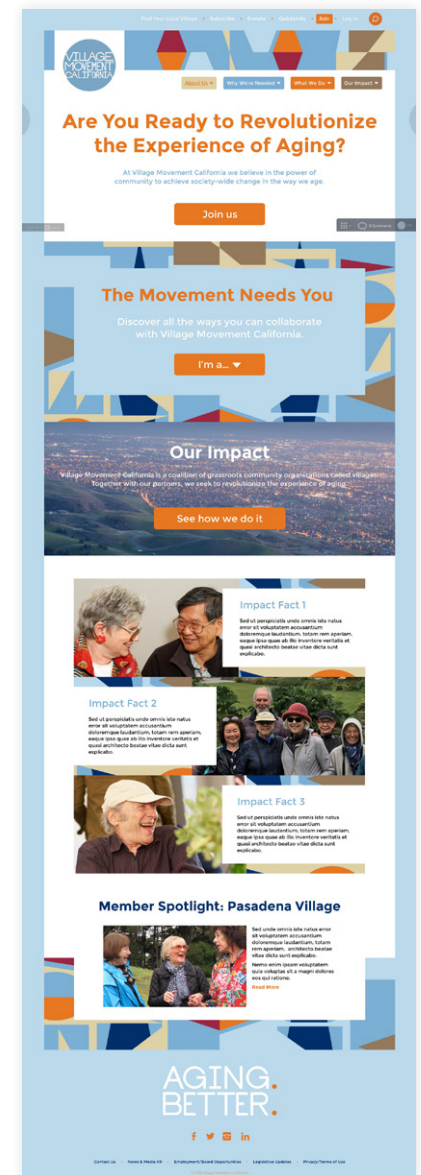
Depending on your website's goals, we typically present three design directions for the homepage in Round 1, each bringing the brand and user experience to life in different ways. You then select one design direction for further refinement and development.



Homepage Option A



Homepage Option B

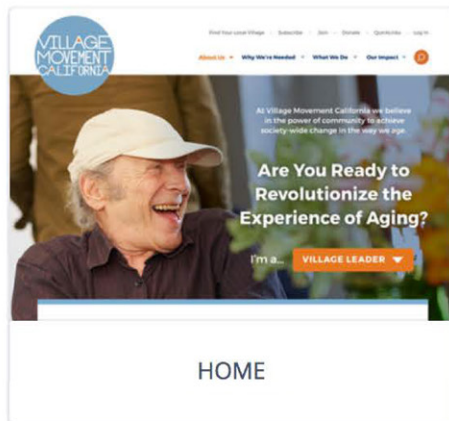


Homepage Option C

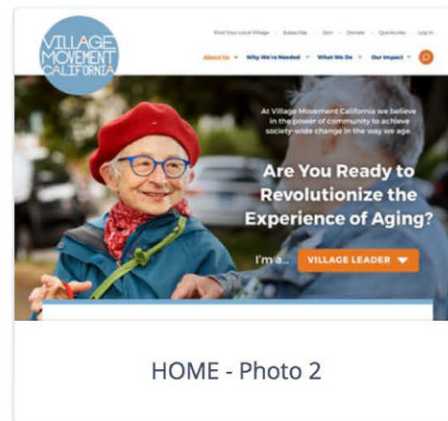


## Round 2: Secondary Page Design

Based on your selected design direction, Mission Minded refines homepage designs and expands that work to show how the design would come to life on 2–3 key secondary pages that will either be the anticipated alternative entry points to your site or support the actions you want your users to take—such as donating, enrolling, or otherwise engaging with your organization.



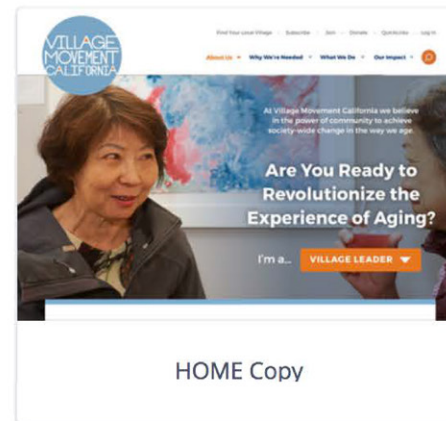
HOME



HOME - Photo 2

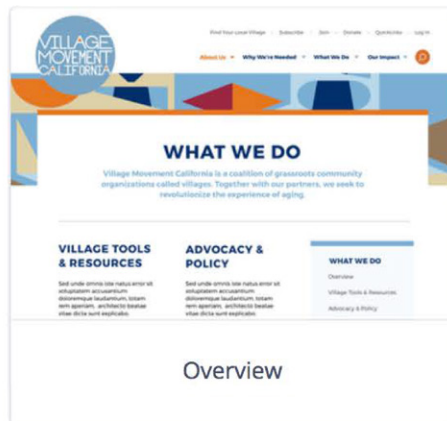
## Round 3: Refinement and Responsive Design

The third round of design focuses on finalizing your selected design direction and building out responsive design formats. At this point, design is nearly complete, and any changes tend to focus on nuances of specific elements. Upon your approval, we move on to content creation and site development.



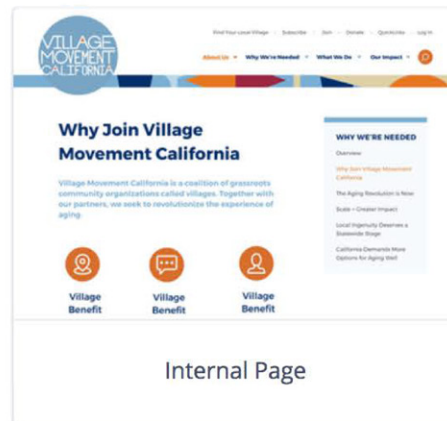
HOME Copy

Homepage Refinements



Overview

Internal Page A



Internal Page

Internal Page B



Responsive Design

### Step 3: Content Creation

Developing website content can be one of the most difficult challenges for an organization. Who's responsible for writing what? How do you ensure consistent tone and style throughout the site? How can your choice of words spur your users to act?

Mission Minded will be your partner throughout this process, helping to make content creation as easy as possible, whether we collaborate with you to write it or help you manage the process of creating it yourselves.

### Step 4: Website Development

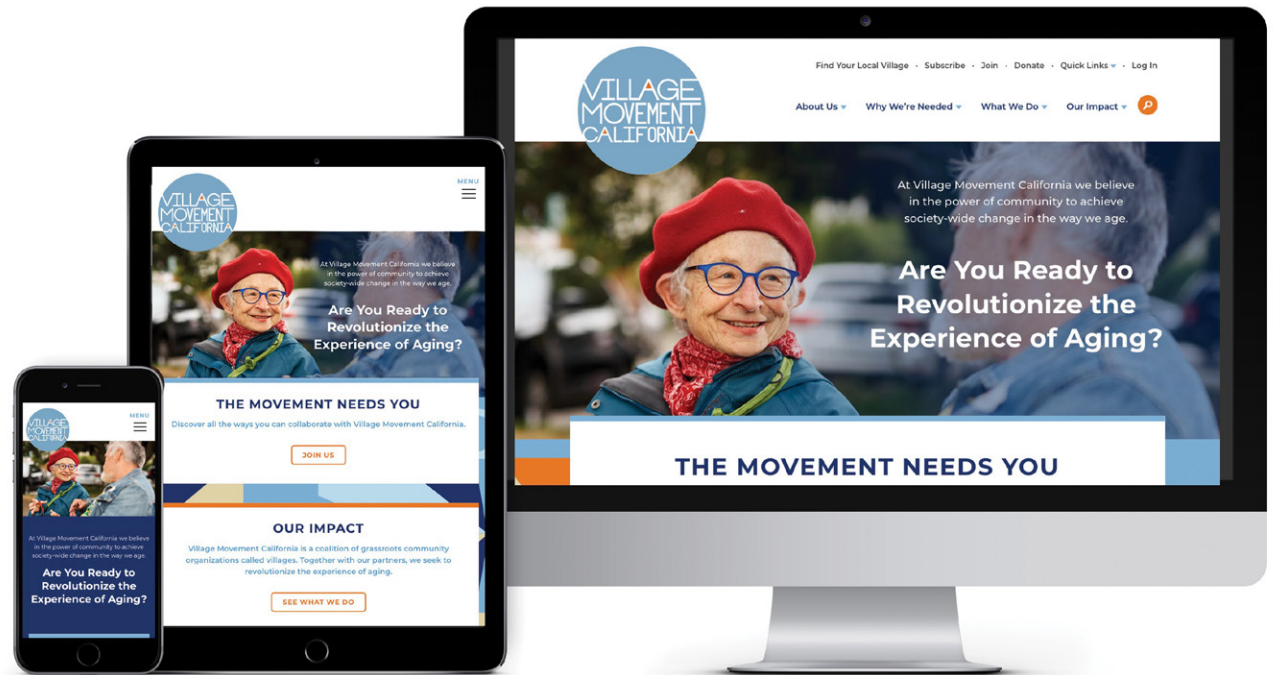
Mission Minded will work closely with you as we bring the site into being, so that you can succeed in your mission.

#### Web Development

Development is where we translate the design into code and begin the process of collecting and compiling digital resources. Mission Minded develops websites using a collaborative management approach, allowing us to adjust to shifting priorities and needs.

We use free, open-source content management systems, such as WordPress, as well as custom platforms built for specific needs, like those for schools, membership organizations, and campaigns. These tools are selected to minimize your costs and help you manage your site yourself.

During development, our team will also work with you to identify and integrate other proven and powerful pieces of software, such as Salesforce and Raiser's Edge, as well as video and social media tools that make it easier to create personalized user experiences. We provide any training you need, too, empowering even your least tech-savvy staff members to update site content.



#### Quality Assurance

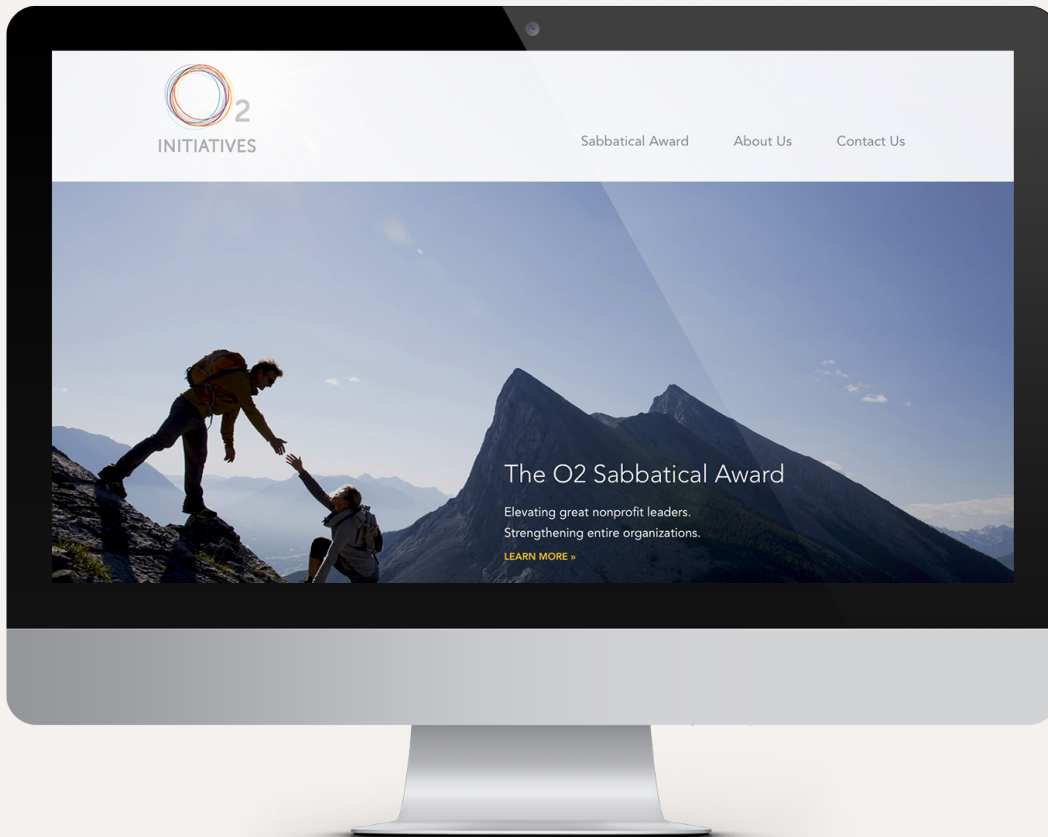
Once development is finished and content has been uploaded, Mission Minded reviews the entire site, testing every page, link, and responsive element before your website's launch. We also engage your staff in quality assurance testing and review to ensure the site is ready for the public.

#### Website Launch

Mission Minded will work with you to develop a launch plan designed to spark excitement among your supporters and make the most of your new digital property.

#### Ongoing Maintenance and Post-Project Support

After your site has launched, Mission Minded will be available on an hourly basis for maintenance and support, including any updates, technical help, or changes. Most of our clients require five hours or fewer 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

\*Please note that these fees reflect estimated pricing as of March 2019 and that this may have changed. Any formal proposal prepared for you will be highly customized, so please contact us to begin a conversation on your specific project.

At the start of any project, we provide a detailed proposal that outlines both flat-fee expenditures and hourly estimates. 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? Contact us, and we'll help you get your project under way.

## 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.