

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 website 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 an effective web 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 translate your story for the web.

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.

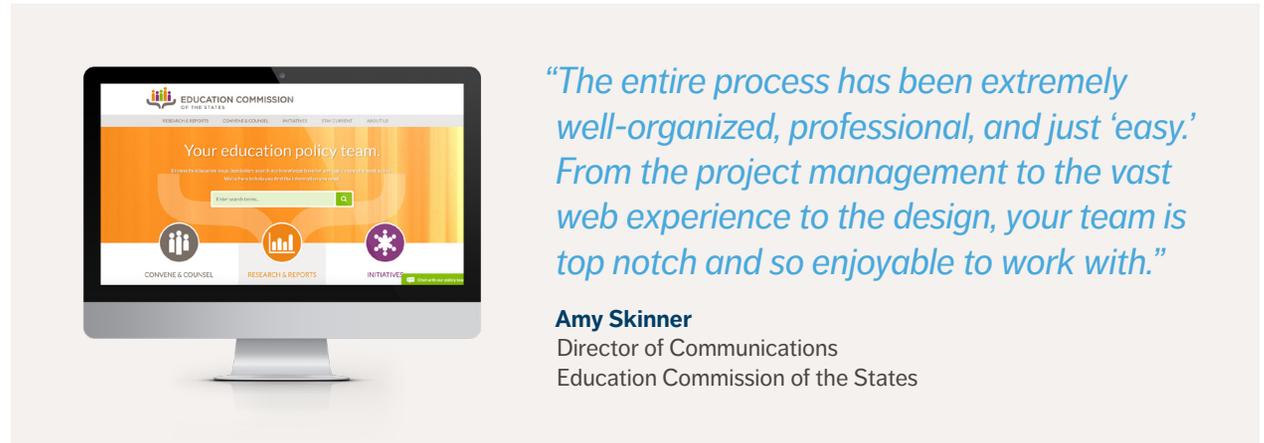
To Know Before You Go

1. What's Your Brand?

If your website doesn't powerfully reinforce the overarching promise your organization makes, it's working against you. Your web 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 web 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?

Think like your intended audience. What are they looking for on your website? What's important to them? Once you understand their priorities, make your website reflect them. If you really know your audience, you'll be able to give your story the appropriate tone and communicate what they need to know. Your audience probably doesn't care about your internal organization or details that affect only employees. They want to know why your organization matters to them and their community 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 the actions you want your audience to take, 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, you should expect to see increased audience engagement.

Our Process

Step 1: Website Research and Strategy

Project Kickoff

We begin website strategy by leading a 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. 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

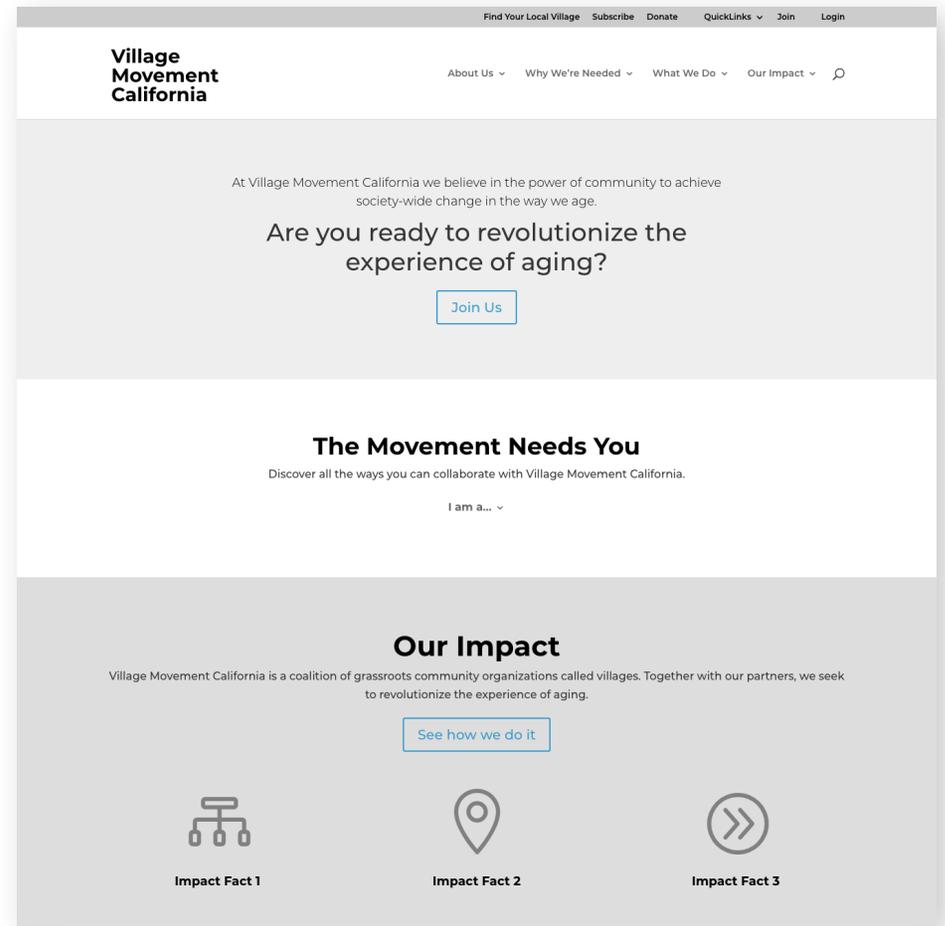
Mission Minded conducts interviews with potential users of your site, asking important questions about what they need: How, when, and where do they search for information? What other sites do they use? How do they find and enter your site? (It often isn't through your homepage.) What do they use your site to accomplish? The answers to these questions are frequently surprising—and helpful. 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, peer site review, analytics, and current best practices, we draft a recommendations document that lays out the opportunities we see 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 sitemap that will ensure site content is organized in a logical, user-friendly, and task-focused way. Mission Minded takes your available resources and required functionality into consideration, too, so that your website will be easy to maintain over time.

Site Architecture and Wireframing

Information architecture—like a blueprint or map for your website—lays out how content is organized, structured, and labeled. Based on the recommendations you approve in the previous phase, we refine your sitemap and build from that content organization to create wireframes. Wireframes define page templates, and show an outline of content types and content hierarchy on each page.



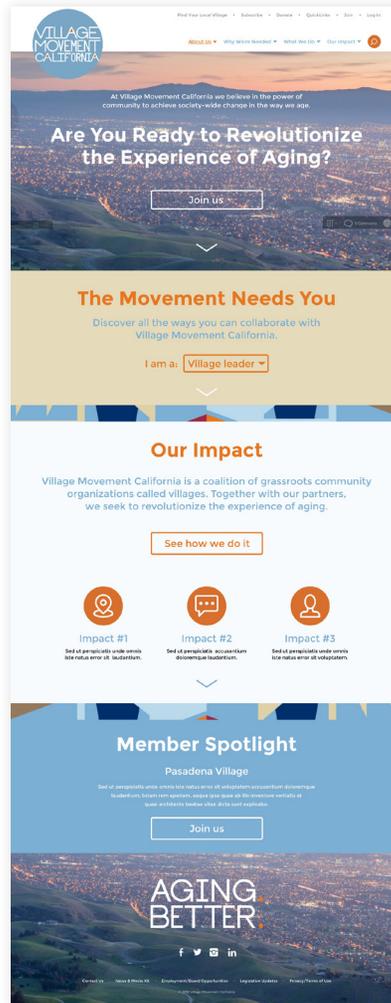
Village Movement California Prototype

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

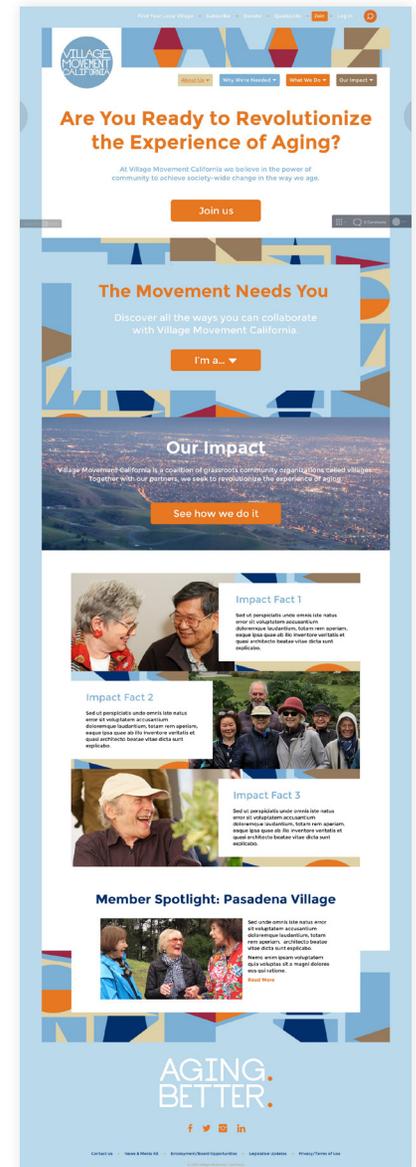
Depending on your website's goals, we typically present up to three design directions for the homepage in Round 1. Based on your feedback, we make refinements to one of these directions. You'll pick one design direction for refinement and we'll move into the next phase of design.



Homepage Option A



Homepage Option B



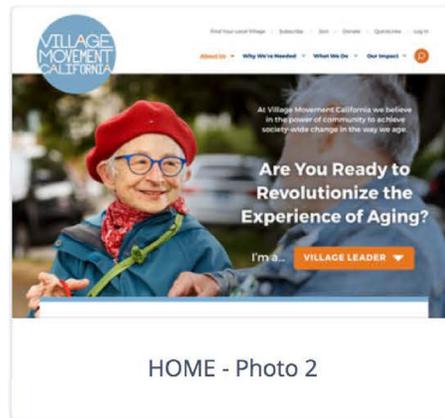
Homepage Option C

Round 2: Secondary Page Design

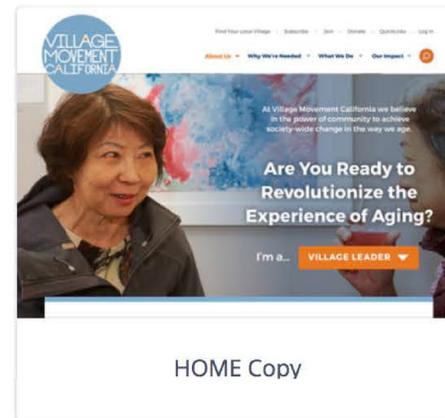
Based on your selected design direction, Mission Minded refines homepage designs and expands that work to show how the design would come to life on 2–3 key secondary pages that will either be the anticipated alternative entry points to your site or support the actions you want your users to take—such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



HOME

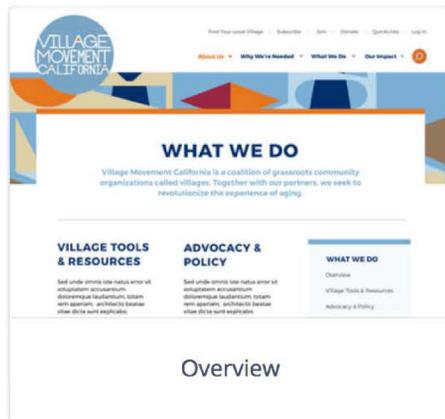


HOME - Photo 2



HOME Copy

Homepage Refinements



Overview

Internal Page A



Internal Page

Internal Page B

Round 3: Refinement and Responsive Design

The third round of design focuses on folding in any feedback from the previous round and providing guidance on adapting the design to smaller (mobile) screens. 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.



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

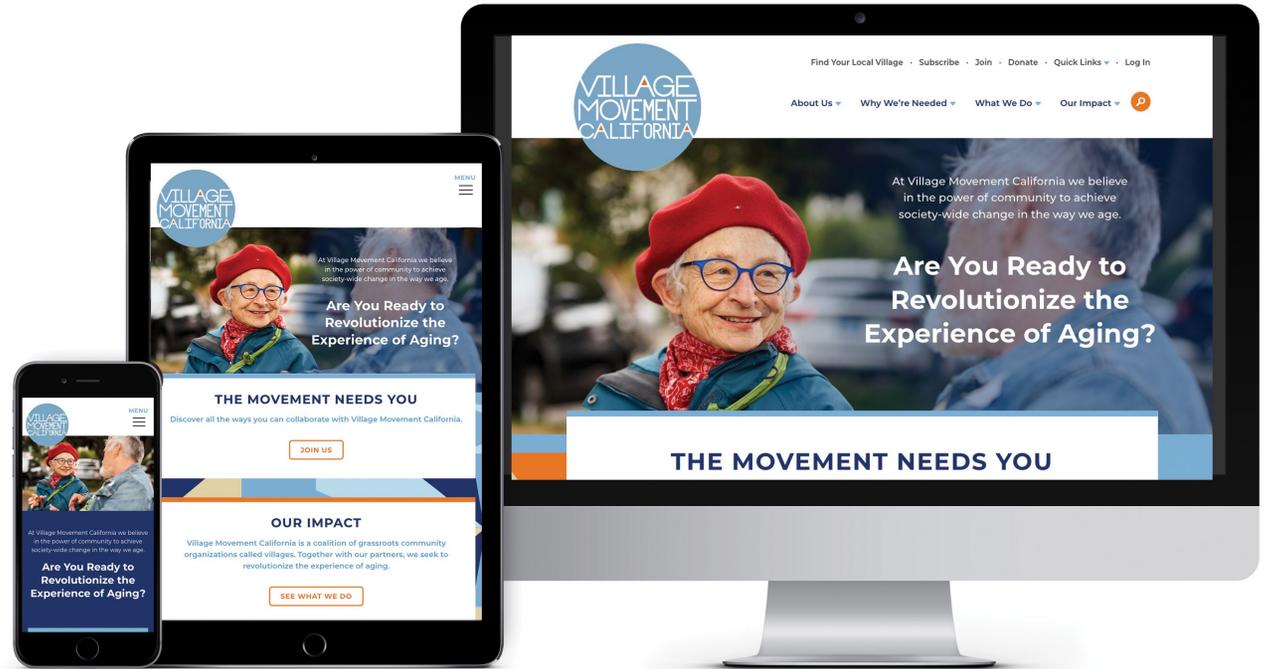
Development is where we translate the design into code. Mission Minded develops websites using a collaborative management approach, allowing us to adjust to shifting priorities and needs.

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.

Training and Content Migration

We provide training so each member of your team can feel confident migrating and updating your site's content.

Your team will upload your site content with the guidance of our developers who are poised to answer questions and provide support along the way.



Quality Assurance

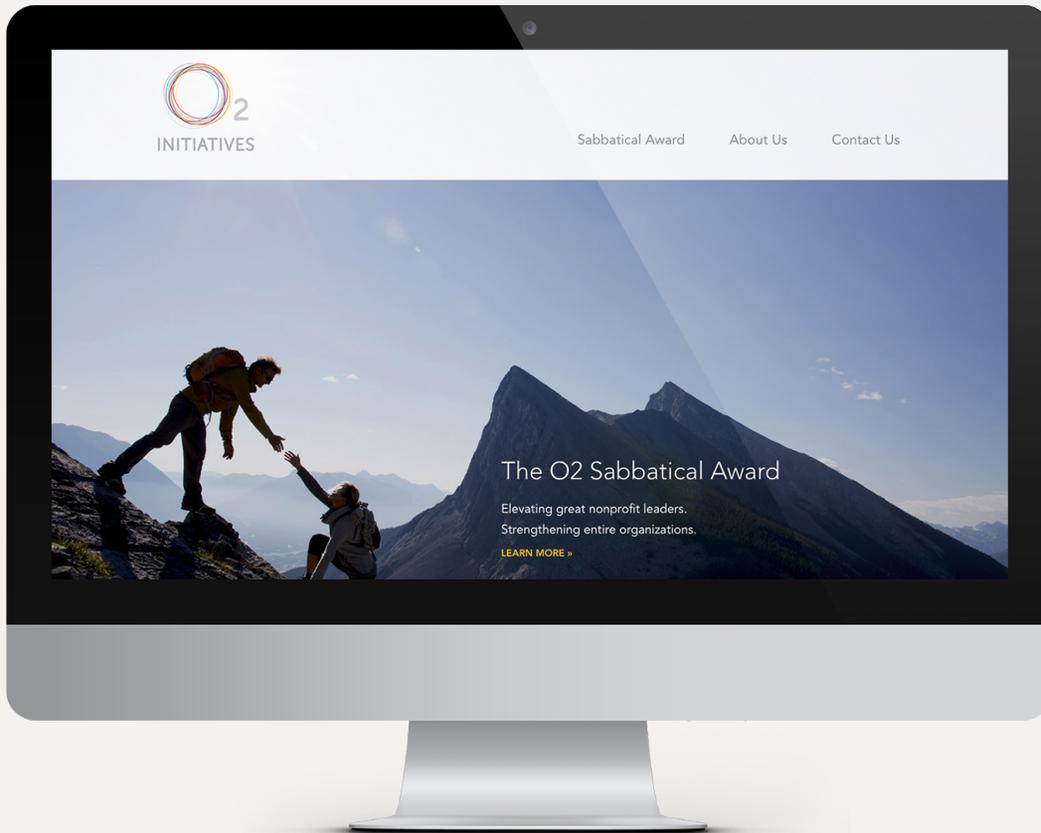
Once development is finished and content has been uploaded, Mission Minded reviews the entire site, testing every page, link, and responsive element before your website's launch. We also engage your staff in quality assurance testing and review to ensure the site is ready for the public.

Website Launch

Mission Minded will work with you to develop a launch plan designed to make the most of your new website.

Ongoing Maintenance and Post-Project Support

For site maintenance and support after your site has launched, you can choose between a [monthly maintenance retainer](#) which includes software updates or an hourly rate.



What Will it Cost?

Every project is different, as are the fees associated with them. Here are some estimates* for each phase of work:

Phase I: Website Research and Strategy Development

- \$20,000–\$35,000; 6–8 weeks

Phase II: Web Design:

- \$15,000–\$30,000; 8–12 weeks
- Content development will be billed at \$200/hour

Phase III: Web Development

- \$250/hour; 4–8 weeks

After Web Development

Monthly Maintenance Retainer at \$500/month

*Please note that these fees reflect estimated pricing as of June 2021 and that this may have changed. Any formal proposal prepared for you will be highly customized based on your needs, budget, and timeline, so please contact us to begin a conversation on your specific project.

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 510-435-5984.

"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