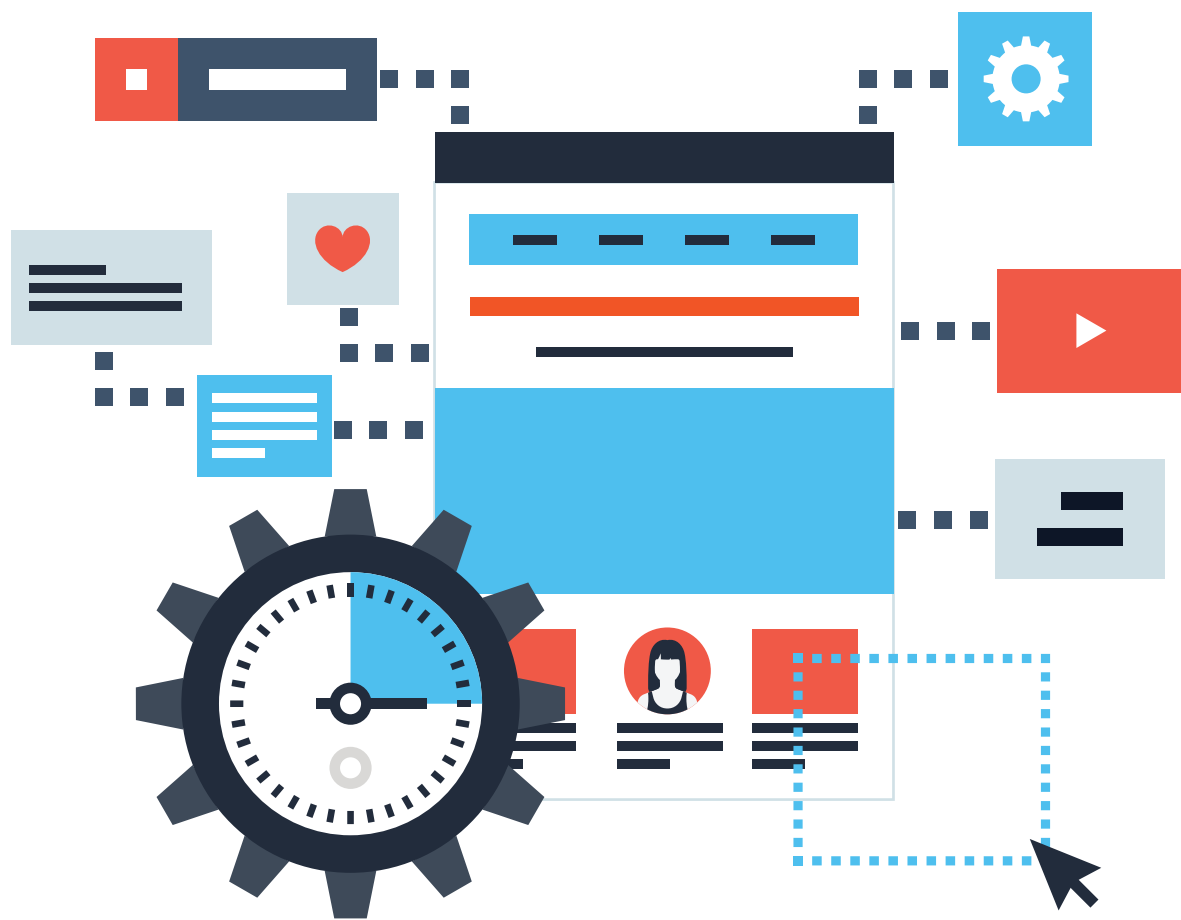




Planning an Association Website Redesign?

Consider These Four ROI-Driving Improvements First



You're ready for a new website. It might be the branding, content strategy or technology that's behind the decision - the reason doesn't matter, you KNOW it's time.

Not so fast.

We've worked with associations and other member organizations for over 13 years, and we've found that complete rebuilds aren't always (in fact, almost never are) the most direct path to website ROI.

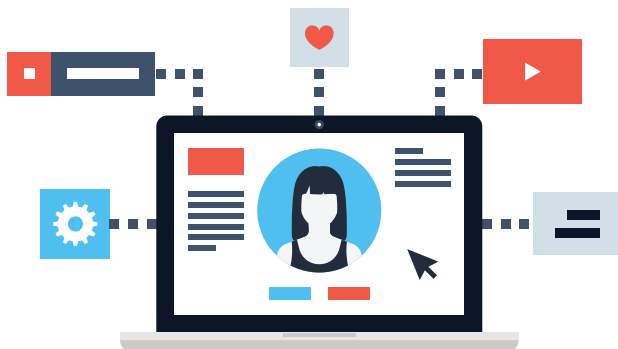
There are absolutely times when a new build is a must—e.g. your CMS is about to hit end of life. However, we've often found that strategic enhancements deliver 10 times the return in business impact—without the internal resource and budget strain of a new website build.

If you're thinking, "OK, I'm listening, I like saving time and money," then we have some advice for you. Below we share four areas to invest in now.

#1

Optimize Your ROI-Driving Member Experiences

Member engagement is key for your association's long-term viability.



Most associations are trying to drive key actions through their website, such as:

- Online membership purchases and renewals
- Registrations for attending an event or taking a class
- Driving online actions to support grassroots advocacy

These common experiences often haven't been optimized or improved since the website launched. 🤖

Think about what's changed in devices and online behaviors over the last five to seven years. **Two Words: MOBILE FIRST**

Nowadays most of our association clients see at least 40-50% of their traffic coming from mobile. This is especially true for those with strong email campaigns and social channels.

Small Mobile UX Changes Reap Big Rewards

On mobile, legacy conversion paths typically have too many screens, too much content, and too many fields and touches required. A member experience review and analytics analysis by an experienced UX architect can uncover a multitude of changes that reduce member drop-off and exits.



We recommend starting with an analysis of:

1. The visibility, placement, and proactive promotion of critical conversion actions
2. Where content displays within mobile and how much scrolling is required to find conversion next steps/buttons
3. The reduction of screens required to complete a conversion
4. Reduction of data entry and/or pre-fill options to reduce net time entering personal information
5. When and where to trigger simple marketing automation and follow-up emails when a member or non-member drops off (see [Don't Wait To Integrate](#) for more about this topic)

Optimization: The Benefits

The ROI from providing a better user experience is extremely high. Even if you only illicit 5-10% more conversions from your optimizations, the needle will still move significantly within months of implementation. It's worth considering before starting a 9-12 month rebuild.



Case Study: Discover How a Small Change AHLA Made When Promoting Their Events Returned a 400% Improvement.

[Read More](#)

#2

Don't Wait, Integrate!

For associations, integrations accelerate your digital transformation and improve member services beyond what your core CMS provides.

The fallacy stopping many marketers and IT departments from implementing these today is that integrations are too big, too complex, or too expensive to take on outside of a website redesign project.

But by waiting, you lose a critical opportunity.

Top Association Integrations For 2020

Marketing Automation



Personalization Solutions



Digital Advocacy



Capitalize Compliance for GDPR and ADA



Digital Payments



Why Integrate Now, Not Later



Deliver Interim Member Value

No matter how small, integrations can deliver increased member value and show members that your association is progressively moving forward.



Uncover Member Behaviors

Data, data, and more data. Actual member interactions will deliver real-life feedback to inform your next investments.



Create an Integration Roadmap

Initial integrations prove out technology interactions and uncover new requirements. This enables your vendor to create a more accurate roadmap for future integrations and enhancements.

Integration: The Benefits

In summary, you don't have to build a brand new offering every time you want to expand your website's functionality. By relying on integrations, you can quickly and (somewhat) easily provide a better experience without waiting for an entirely new website.

Ready to geekout even more about integrations?

Jason King, Accella's President, discusses the critical nature of integrations for your association's digital transformation. [Read More](#)



#3

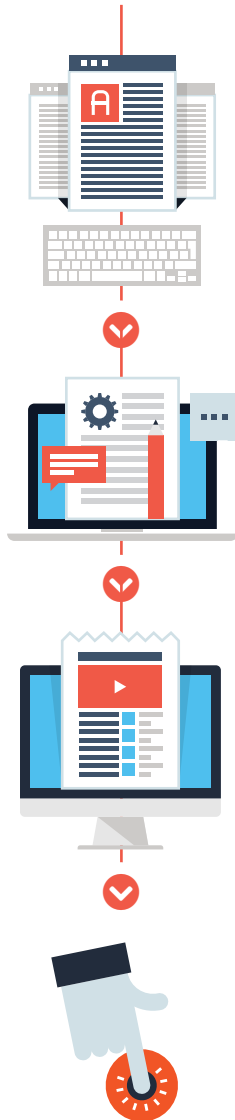
A Content Discovery Strategy to Improve Member Value

Your association creates and distributes extremely useful content for members.

In fact, it's probably one of the key drivers of membership—your members want to lean on your expertise to do their jobs more effectively and stay up-to-date on industry trends and data.

Introducing Association Journalism

Association Journalism is a strategy that brings together the following publishing approaches and reimagines the association website as a publishing engine.



Brand Journalism

Stories developed by the association with the intent of bringing news to the media and influencers. These stories aim to increase the frequency of news and stories about the industry and the association's members.

Licensed News Outlet Content

Bringing authenticity and the power of known news outlets to the content published on behalf of the association an industry.

Member Exclusives

Content to increase visibility, tease non-members about the benefits of membership, and provide direct access to exclusive member content by featuring it within the broader media experience.

Content Marketing & Blogging

Providing relevant content and opinions directly to the membership and influencers.

Advocacy & Action

Building direct action into the content to take a moment of information consumption and move the audience to one-click advocacy actions.

A media hub is no longer just a section of the homepage.

Your association content is innate to the fabric of the website and fundamental to the association's communications with the public and its members.

Discovery Strategy #2: Modern In-Site Search



Traditional



Trending



The rapid evolution of search behaviors, including voice and predictive techniques, have rendered the default “in-site search” experience ineffective and frustrating for members.

Increases in mobile site visits have compounded the search conundrum. Expandable, visual navigations aren’t accessible on mobile websites and apps, resulting in relevant content keywords being hidden from view.

As a result of these trends, in-site search searches are rapidly reaching and rising above 10% of all site pageviews on our association client websites.

However, in our experience, the #1 user experience not optimized when launching a website is the in-site search.

In-Site Search: Software As A Service (SaaS) Solutions

Today’s search solutions, such as **SOLR** and **Algolia**, deliver a modern user experience, search metrics for user insights, and drive results.



Images courtesy of Algolia - Search made Right from Algolia on Vimeo,
https://player.vimeo.com/video/220624469?app_id=122963

Key differentiators include:

- Forgiving of typing/language and syntax differences
- Predictive word/phrase completion, which means less typing for the user and more control for the association in guiding users to content
- Real-time suggested results
- Optimized results that are most relevant based on real user searches
- Conversion results! Getting users to content is only as successful as the call to action that is paired with the results
- Analytics and configurability that empowers your association to know what people are searching and continuously optimize your search algorithm to deliver that content

A Focus On Content Discovery: The Benefits

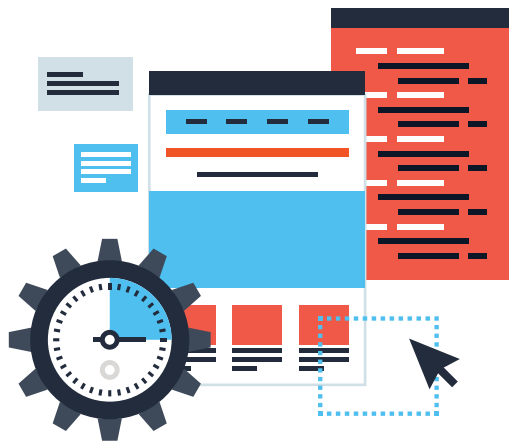
The benefits of redesigning your site experience to lead with content and optimizing your in-site search are clear.

- You'll have happier members who can find the content they want and need
- Your association can use the data from search analytics to inform marketing efforts
- You'll know how to convert search behaviors into revenue-driving results

#4

Give Your Website Regular Tune-Ups

Ongoing maintenance isn't a particularly "fun" concept—but it cannot be neglected.



The cost of ongoing maintenance is nothing in comparison to what an open security hole can cause to your brand and business.

A website is no different than your house or a car. You expect to do periodic maintenance on them so they don't break down later (and we've all made the mistake where we've let something go too long ... only to be standing in a flooded bathroom at 2 a.m.).

What's Valuable



Security

This is the core of why most organizations pay a firm to maintain their website. Preventative measures in maintaining the security of your website and any consumer data your website collects is critical to all businesses.

This may include:

- Maintaining SSL certificates
- Applying security updates to servers, content management software, third party plug-ins, etc.
- Updating SDKs and third party code to resolve security risks.



Software Updates and Upgrades

Software version updates typically include improvements for both you and your members, at the same time aligning with the latest best practices. While these are sometimes packaged with security updates, even when they are not, it's critical to keep them up-to-date along the way.

When you fall too far behind, the cost of the update increases and you begin to risk a bug/break in your website, due to deprecated code.



Monitoring Software

Investing in security and performance tracking software is an extra step that most marketers don't have the time or interest in doing. This is a clear win to outsource to your agency—they likely already have the software installed and running and most importantly, they have the knowledge to interpret the warnings and alerts produced.

Is monitoring worth it?

We think so. The benefits of proactive security alerts are clear.

Less clear is why performance monitoring matters. A key example: Google now lowers search engine rankings for websites with slow page load. So not monitoring your website's performance can have a real impact on consumers or businesses even finding you.



Conversion Optimization

Updating the UX of key conversion-driving interactions on your website will drive long-term dividends for your business. No conversion path is perfect at first or even for very long. Users perceptions, devices, and behaviors change too rapidly to leave this critical part of your website as-is for long.



Internal Operational Changes

No organization stays static and internal shifts often drive website content and operational changes. New areas of content need to be spun up, a modified approval workflow is needed to allow additional website editors—the list of possibilities is endless.

Small changes to your website can relieve resource pain points and ensure it keeps up with the evolution of your organization.

What's Not Valuable

There's no standard answer to this –it is always specific to your organization and property.

The key to determining what's not valuable is a strong prioritization framework that centers on achieving key business objectives. For example, if your business is not reliant on heavy SEO ranking to drive discovery and purchase, then on-going optimization of keywords is not valuable.

Maintenance: The Benefits

The cost of a hack is your customers' trust in your brand and the time, money, and effort to repair the literal and figurative damage. It's much more expensive than the cost of ensuring your systems are up-to-date and running effectively. For companies, the risk to your brand is too high not to do proactive, periodic maintenance.

The Bottom Line: Don't Invest In a New Website Without Considering The Enhancement Possibilities.

A new website project has high costs for associations - internally and monetarily - and is often unnecessary to achieving the desired outcomes.

By enhancing on top of a strong foundation, you can create measurable impact with less time and resources than a prolonged redesign.

We recommend focusing on these four key areas to extend the lifetime investment of your website and keep your members delighted for the long-term.

If you have questions about where to start, we're happy to provide some insight.

Email us at shoptalk@acella.net to get started.