

# Top Can't-Miss Resources for Nonprofits

## Are you taking advantage of the online tools available to you as a nonprofit?

By Jason Buys

**N**onprofits have the stigma of being bootstrapped, passionate, overly ambitious organizations for a reason: because they often are. When you're working for a cause, passion and ambition are easier to come by than funds.

There are a variety of online tools that make it easier. Below are resources you don't want to miss for your nonprofit:

### Crowdsourcing Resources

Crowdsourcing was made popular and accessible by platforms like Kickstarter and Indiegogo. Crowdsourcing doesn't always require a coordinated campaign with a time limit and intense promotion plan. Try these two ideas:

**AmazonSmile.** Do you shop on Amazon? Consider how many of your potential donors do the same. AmazonSmile gives them the chance to choose a charity to support every time they shop, with 0.5% of the purchase price on eligible items donated to your cause. It takes five easy steps to get started ([https://org.amazon.com/re=smi\\_se\\_saas\\_org\\_org](https://org.amazon.com/re=smi_se_saas_org_org)), and with even just a bit of promotion, the potential is unlimited.

**#GivingTuesday.** Surely you've heard of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, but have you spread the word about Giving Tuesday? While it's just one day, it's a fantastic opportunity to get your organization in the limelight, grow your social presence, and kick off potential long-term relationships. Visit the Giving Tuesday site ([givingtuesday.org](http://givingtuesday.org)) to learn more about how to maximize the day.

### Marketing Tools

Consistency is key in digital marketing. That's why the following tools are so helpful:

**E-mail service providers + analytics.** Building a list gives you a ticket into your potential donors' sacred space – their e-mail inbox. Consistent communication with messages that matter is the key. Choose an e-mail provider that makes this both possible and simple. We recommend Emma: simple,

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intuitive, and built with a nonprofit edition ([myemma/email-marketing-solutions/nonprofits](http://myemma/email-marketing-solutions/nonprofits)), including tailored features and 20% off your monthly bill. And because you can't improve what you're not measuring, we highly recommend an analytics platform like Pinpointe ([pinpointe.com](http://pinpointe.com)) that specifically measures success rates of e-mail campaigns to provide actionable reports.

**Social media dashboards.** A critical part of your marketing suite is your social media presence. While we could write a whole book on best practices, one thing we can sum up here is the importance of streamlining your social media efforts through the use of dashboards. We love Hootsuite ([hootsuite.com](http://hootsuite.com)) for its simplicity in following streams based on lists and hashtags while also being able to schedule tweets in advance (you can bulk schedule up to 350 at a time!). Scheduling evergreen content that can be repurposed regularly? Try out a tool like Edgar ([meettedgar.com](http://meettedgar.com)) that creates hands-off schedules and builds the queue for you.

### Advertising Resources

Advertising typically comes with a hefty price tag – especially proven power tools like Google AdWords. Before you give up on the possibility of making it work for your nonprofit, try this:

**Google Ad Grants.** This program ([google.com/grants/](http://google.com/grants/)) puts AdWords within reach for nonprofits. It provides \$10,000 per month in-kind AdWords advertising, so long as participants are promoting mission-based ads and keywords. Not every organization is eligible, and some may find that \$10,000/month is not enough, but for most, this is an opportunity you don't want to miss. Google has even made AdWords Express available for Ad Grants participants, to make campaign management simple.

### Website Resources

Last, but certainly not least, we turn to your website - your online home. Unfortunately, the digital space is most likely evolving much faster than your budget. So, how do you keep your site up to date?

Check out the list of questions in “Is It Time *ALREADY?*” (page 5) to see if you need a web redesign. Remember, it's not about doing this when you have the budget. It's about building in a budget for when you need to do it.

“You might never be ready, but you should start anyway.”

## And If That's Not Enough . . .

In addition to the above can't-miss tools for your nonprofit, we have a bonus that we'd be remiss not to mention: "text-to-donate" platforms that streamline giving, like MobileCause (mobilecause.com), Optimal Giving (optimalgiving.com), and DonationMatch (donationmatch.com), a San Diego-based online platform where you can request donations for your cause from participating companies. Like the other tools discussed here, they can help you stretch your impact and your budget while raising funds to support your mission. 

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## Make Your Life Easier with Online Tools

For more ways to use online resources to your advantage, see these articles at NonprofitWorld.org/members:

**The Purposeful Techie: Nonprofit IT with Intention** (Vol. 30, No. 5)

**Online Fundraising Success Factors** (Vol. 26, No. 2)

**Harnessing the Internet to Raise Funds** (Vol. 31, No. 2)

**Accelerating Fundraising through Social Media** (Vol. 28, No. 3)

**Planning for Digital Longevity** (Vol. 34, No. 1)

**Wow People with Your Digital Material** (Vol. 34, No. 2)

## Is It Time *ALREADY*?

Can it really be time to redesign your website, *again*? You just had it rebuilt two years ago. That's only 730 days. What could possibly happen in the web world in 730 days to make your website out of date? Well, a lot.

For one, technologies for websites are advancing all the time. Just in the last few years, responsive design went from being something brand new, to now being necessary for most websites. This makes sense because 60% of all web traffic comes from mobile now. If you have a responsive website, you have a better chance of being higher up on those search pages on mobile devices.

Ask yourself these questions (this list is not exclusive but it's a start) to determine if you're in need of another web redesign:

- **Has your brand** or brand attributes changed since your last redesign?
- **Has the mission** of your organization or the communications strategy for your organization changed?
- **Does your website support** your organization's goals this year – five years – 10 years?
- **Are you meeting** your goals right now? For example, are the amount of donations you receive increasing, decreasing, or staying the same every month?
- **Are you monitoring** your website's analytics? If so, has traffic gone up, down, or stayed the same?
- **Are you measuring** online engagement from your audiences? If not, how might you do this?
- **Have you talked** to your audience about how they are using your site?
- **Does it take you** more than five minutes to make an edit on your website?

There isn't an exact percentage of "yes" or "no" to these questions that are going to make your organization ready for a redesign. If you wait until you're ready, you'll be waiting forever. You might never be ready, but you should start anyway.



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