



Campaigning tips

This briefing provides ten top tips for effective newsletters and websites.

1. Keep your design and structure simple – people have expected ideas about where to find things on a web page or in a newsletter. Don't try and be different – stick to the conventions
2. Put yourself in the user's shoes – many of us make the mistake of using websites and newsletters to tell people about what we want to tell them – not what they want to hear
3. Make sure it's up to date – old news and events that have already passed will make your site or newsletter look out of date and irrelevant quickly. Plus having regular new content keeps it interesting, so people will come back
4. What's the most important thing you want to say? Whether it's your latest news, your membership joining page or your latest campaign, make sure the thing you most want people to read about is on the homepage or prominent in your newsletter
5. Clear navigation – don't over complicate things, pick a few simple rules for how you group and link information and then stick to them. Keep these rules simple and obvious, just because you know the intricate internal structure of your civic society doesn't mean a first time reader or visitor to your site will
6. Be concise – no-one wants, or has time, to read pages of copy. And if people want to find out more, make sure they can get in touch
7. Invite interaction – give people the opportunity to really get involved – by allowing comments and feedback, asking people to submit ideas, articles or pictures, as well as the opportunity to join your group or sign up for the newsletter online
8. Make links with social media – by starting a Facebook Group, making regular tweets on Twitter or sharing images through Flickr for example, you can engage more people and reach out to different audiences
9. Consult, consult, consult. A website or newsletter is never finished - there is always something you can improve, some way of making it work better for your users, so make sure you regularly ask for feedback and regularly test your site on willing volunteers and unfortunate family members
10. Don't be afraid. Online communications is an evolving animal and so there are always new ways to interact. You don't have to do them all at once, but by finding out more – and getting advice from experts – you can get your messages out to more and more people.

October 2010

We are grateful to communications agency Forster for developing this briefing

