The Clinic Website

A clinic website is a critical part of your branding and communication efforts. It is a quick and efficient way for patients to understand who you are and what services you offer as well as bringing technology into play in order to grow your clinic through donations and media coverage.

Your clinic website shares many of the same best practices as any corporate website.

This means:

- it should be user friendly
- easily navigable
- use appropriate fonts, colors, and other design elements
- integrate with your brand and other communication materials

But your clinic website needs to offer more than your typical corporate site.

This means including:

- an easy to find information about who you are and what you do
- how to donate money
- how to become more involved
- an easy way for media contacts to find the program information they need
- the contact information of key personnel

It needs to do all this in a way that's inviting to:

- the organization's targeted donors
- the organization's targeted patients
- the organization's targeted volunteers

Your clinic website can incorporate much of the content in your clinic brochure; however, the format is very different and there are many other technical issues to consider. Maintaining a consistent brand throughout your organization greatly increases your chances of being recognized in passing. Your website doesn't have

to (and probably shouldn't) match your print promotional materials exactly, but echoing the look and feel of those materials increases brand identity.

A list of best practices for designing, hosting and maintaining your clinic website:

1) Designing your clinic website

Goals behind your clinic website:

- inform
- provide valued content
- inspire action
- encouraged with accomplishments and potential

Design of the site must:

- integrate with your brand
- look professional
- maintain trust with your patients and supporters

Because of the technical aspects of website design, it is a best practice to have a professional design your clinic site.

Content you should consider having on your website:

- Name and Logo
  - Your site should use the same logo and colors as your promotional materials
- Mission Statement
  - A quick and easy way to let visitors know more about you
- WHO you are and WHAT you do
  - This should be prominent on the Home page and continue on the About Us page
- Services and Programs
  - It is important that this be prominent and easy to find for your visitors to understand quickly what services your clinic offers

- o Services that are not offered (if confusion is possible)
- Eligibility
  - o Who is and who is not eligible to use your clinic
- History
  - o If substantial enough to offer extra credibility
- FAQ
  - o Frequently asked questions and answers
- Staff
  - o Pictures and email links for quick contact
- Links to other resources
  - o Provide links to other valuable sites
- Donation section
  - o Make it easy for anyone to make monetary donations
- Media friendly
  - o Media attention can have a huge impact on your clinic
  - o Make it easy for the press to find out pertinent information
- Volunteer friendly
  - o Make it easy for visitors to your site to find information on how they can get involved
- Testimonials/Success Stories
  - o This allows for a real and transparent view of your clinic
- Calendar
  - o Provide a calendar of special events to keep visitors returning to your site
- E-mail Capture
  - o Allow visitors to register for future updates or e-newsletters
  - o This allows you to:
    - ▪ build a database of visitors with which you can continue to build relationships
- Office locations, hours, and directions
- Contact telephone and e-mail

- Blog Section
  - A blog can provide useful, timely information that will:
    - intrigue visitors to return more often
    - increases media visibility to your site
    - increases search engine results.
  - Be sure your blog is regularly checked for inappropriate or negative comments
- Images
  - Quality photography or stock images that best tell your story

2) Hosting your clinic website

You will need a host for your website. This is a company that will store the files for your site and make sure everything functions correctly. You want to find a hosting service that is reputable and has a strong customer service rating. The worst practice is a website that no one can access thus a reliable hosting service is key. There will generally be a fee for this service.

3) Maintaining your clinic website

It is recommended to use a professional service to design your site unless you are able to utilize a staff member or volunteer who is a seasoned web designer. One aspect to consider when building your site is adding content management functionality. Content management software integrated into your site will allow anyone on your staff to make changes to most of the content on the site and allow you to upload new images as well. This provides flexibility for you to make changes in a timely manner and also allows you to make changes without accruing additional cost.