

The Ultimate Nonprofit Guide to Digital Marketing



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People, especially nonprofits, think digital marketing is just one thing.

They believe it's all about sending an email, posting a blog or running paid ads. **But that's not the case.**

If you've approached nonprofit marketing this way in the past, most likely, the people you wanted to reach — those you sought donations from — would've lost trust in you due to a lack of consistency. This includes delays in refreshing their content and engaging with their audience.

Why does this happen?

Because they often lack the time, skilled personnel and budget to keep up with a comprehensive marketing strategy.

In this article, we'll show you:

1.

A step-by-step process to create a consistent digital marketing plan for nonprofits

2.

The digital marketing channels to keep your audience engaged

3.

Software to execute your digital marketing strategy for nonprofit

Read on to learn more!

What Is Digital Marketing for Nonprofits?

Digital marketing for nonprofits is all about using various marketing strategies to spread the word about your cause. The goal is to make your mission known to the public so you can attract volunteers and supporters.

There are two ways to do this:

Digital Marketing Strategy #1

Organic Reach:

This means improving your website's visibility through search engine optimization (SEO) and engaging with people on social media.

Digital Marketing Strategy #2

Paid Advertising:

This involves using platforms like Facebook (Meta) and Google Ads to target specific groups and reach potential supporters more effectively.



The Importance of Digital Marketing for Nonprofits

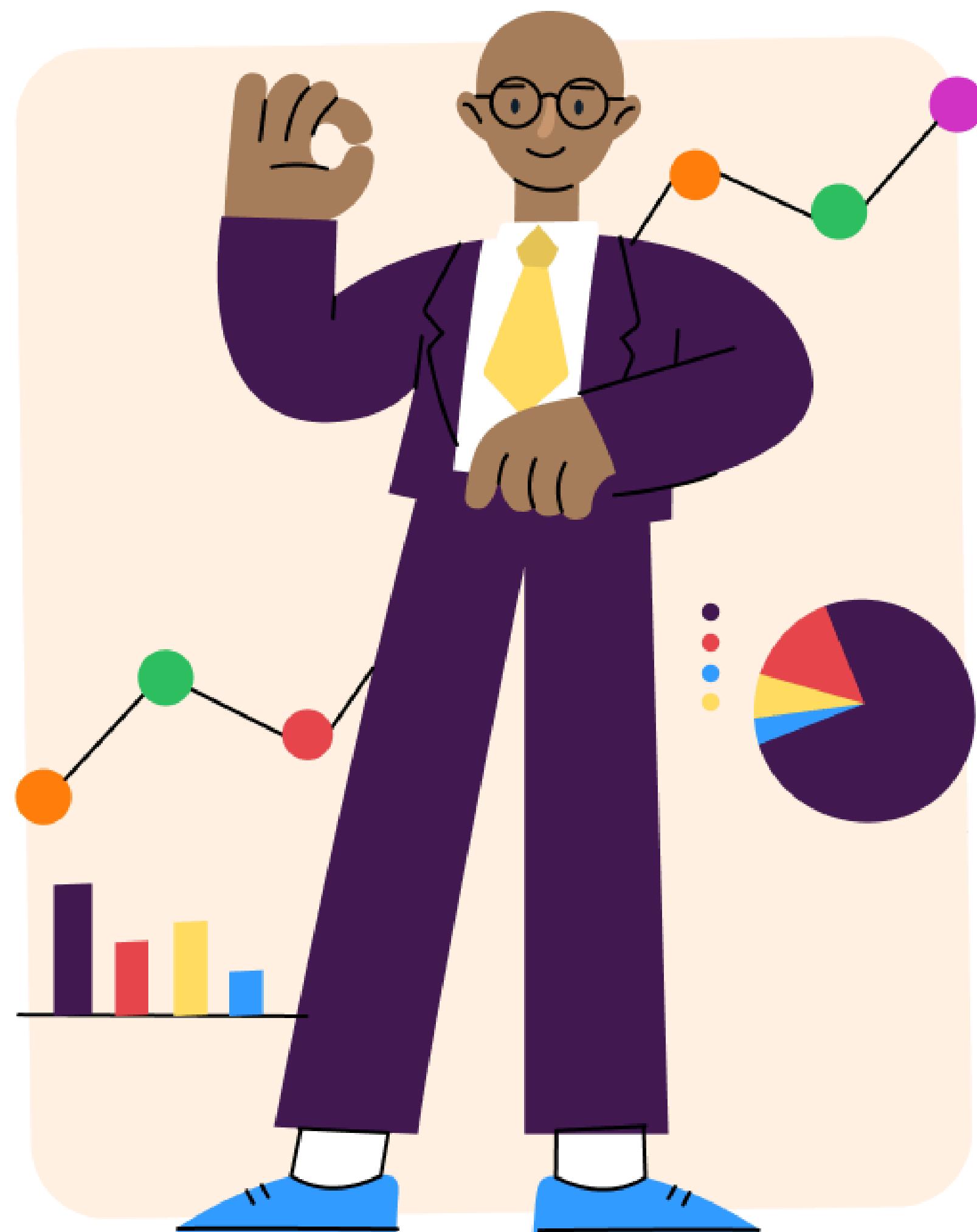
So why bother with digital marketing for nonprofits?

There are plenty of benefits, and here are a few big ones:

Digital Marketing Benefit #1

Reach More Donors:

With physical marketing, you're stuck to a location or region, sending out physical mail and hoping someone's interested. Digital marketing lets you find out who's actually interested and makes it easier for them to donate.



Digital Marketing Benefit #2

Convenience:

These days, people love being able to do things from the comfort of their homes. They want to quickly google organizations that support causes they care about. If your digital marketing is on point, your organization will pop up in their search results, making it easy for them to find and support you.

Digital Marketing Benefit #3

Cost Savings:

And let's not forget cost savings. If you have a good workflow, digital marketing can reduce expenses. You won't need to spend as much on physical outreach, which can be time-consuming and costly.

How To Build a Digital Marketing Strategy for Your Nonprofit

Coming up with an effective nonprofit marketing plan is not necessarily the most challenging thing. With enough time, effort and research, you can put together a strategy that will generate donations.

Here's how to do it:

1 Define Your Goals:

A definite goal precedes all effective marketing plans. So before you go right into planning, ask yourself, "What are we trying to achieve?"

This question will drown out the noise of meaningless and less specific goals. You will be more likely to identify your nonprofit's needs, which will make setting goals for your nonprofit easier.

For example, your organization is lacking a social media presence, and you want to change that.

Your goal should look like this:

By the sixth month, we should have 2,000 Instagram followers from the 500 we currently have.

As you can see, this looks like a clear goal compared to something like: "We want to grow our Instagram account."



Use the SMART technique when setting your goals.

By SMART, we mean:

- **Specific:** You should aim to grow your Instagram account by a specific number of followers.
- **Measurable:** You should ensure to measure your goal. Or at least find a way to. In this case, you should be able to track your progress toward achieving 2,000 followers.
- **Attainable:** When setting your goals, ask yourself, "Is it possible?" In this case, it is considering the time frame (six months).
- **Relevant:** How's this goal relevant to you receiving more donations? Growing your followers will get more people to trust your organization, raise awareness for the cause you champion, and increase your reach.
- **Timely:** The six-month timeframe seems sufficient for the goal. All your goals should be backed by a timeframe, which tells you how urgent or attainable the goals are.

That's how you should set your goals. You don't need something elaborate; just identify your most pressing needs and set them up this way.

2 Segment Your Audience:

Next, segment your audience. Audience segmentation comes from knowing your audience on a first-name basis and then grouping them based on criteria you find essential. By on a first-name basis, we mean you need to know even the smallest detail.

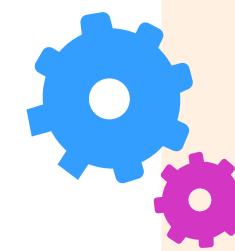
Grouping the audience you're trying to reach will make your strategy more effective. It helps you understand where they hang out online, their spending power, interests and education level. For example, you might segment your audience by age, location, interests or even behavior.

3 Choose Your Platforms:

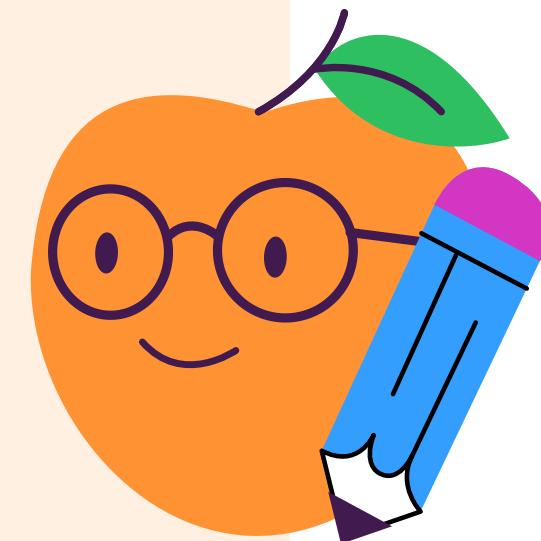
Now, identify the platforms you want to use to reach your audience. Not all channels will be suitable for every nonprofit, so focus on the ones where your audience is most active.

- **Email marketing:** Use WildApricot's built-in email system to manage your email campaigns. Email is great for regular updates and targeted messaging.
- **Social media:** Decide which platforms are best for your nonprofit. Facebook and Instagram are popular, but LinkedIn might be more appropriate for professional audiences.
- **SEO:** Tools like SEMrush or Ahrefs to improve your search engine visibility. This helps people find your nonprofit when they search for related topics online.
- **Paid ads:** Consider using Google Ads or social media ads to target specific demographics and increase your reach.

Here's how you can break down your audience:



- **Demographics:** Age, gender, income, education level.
- **Geographics:** City, state, country.
- **Psychographics:** Interests, values, lifestyle.
- **Behavior:** Online behavior, purchasing habits, engagement level.



4 Build Your Campaign Message and Assets



Once you have your audience segments and platforms ready, tailor your messages to speak directly to each group. This makes your communication more personal and relevant, increasing the likelihood of engagement.

Develop the message and materials for your campaigns:

- What does your audience want to hear?
- What will make them choose to support you over others?
- Keep it simple and clear. People are often in a hurry, especially on social media.

Your message should be easy to understand at a glance.

5 Track, Measure and Optimize Your Results

Finally, track and measure your results. Look at what's working and what's not. If your strategy isn't as effective as you'd hoped, optimize it. Keep tweaking until you find what works best.

Components of a Nonprofit Digital Marketing Strategy

Strategy Component #1

Email Marketing

Email marketing is a central piece of nonprofit digital marketing strategy. It's one of the most important tools because it allows you to communicate directly with donors and potential volunteers. How well you execute your email marketing can significantly impact your overall strategy.

Email marketing is one of the most personal and powerful tools for nonprofits.

Emails let you send personalized messages straight to your audience

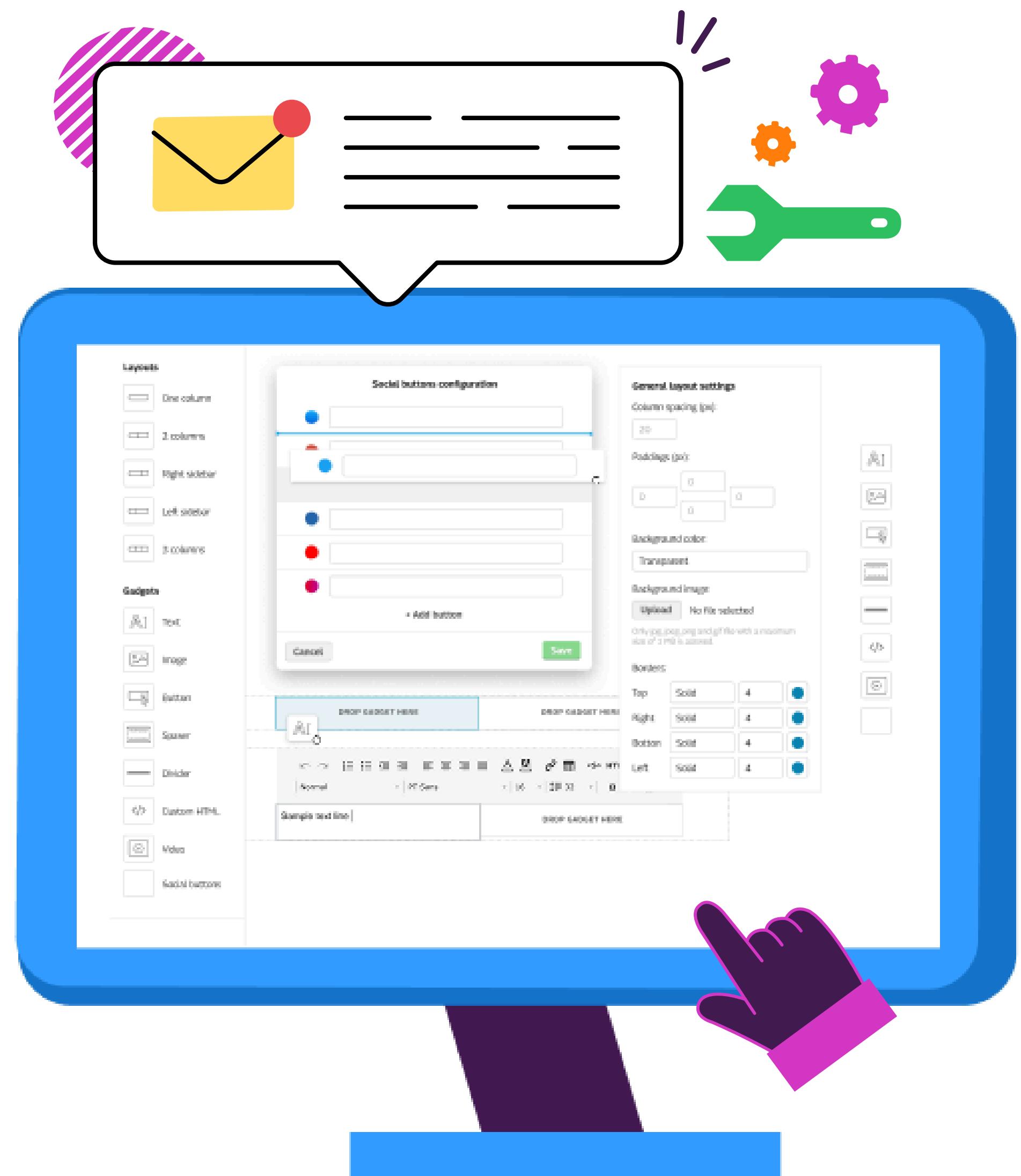
This personal touch helps build stronger relationships with your supporters.

Tailor your message to resonate with different groups

Since you've already segmented your audience, you can tailor your messages to resonate with different groups. This makes your communication more relevant and impactful.

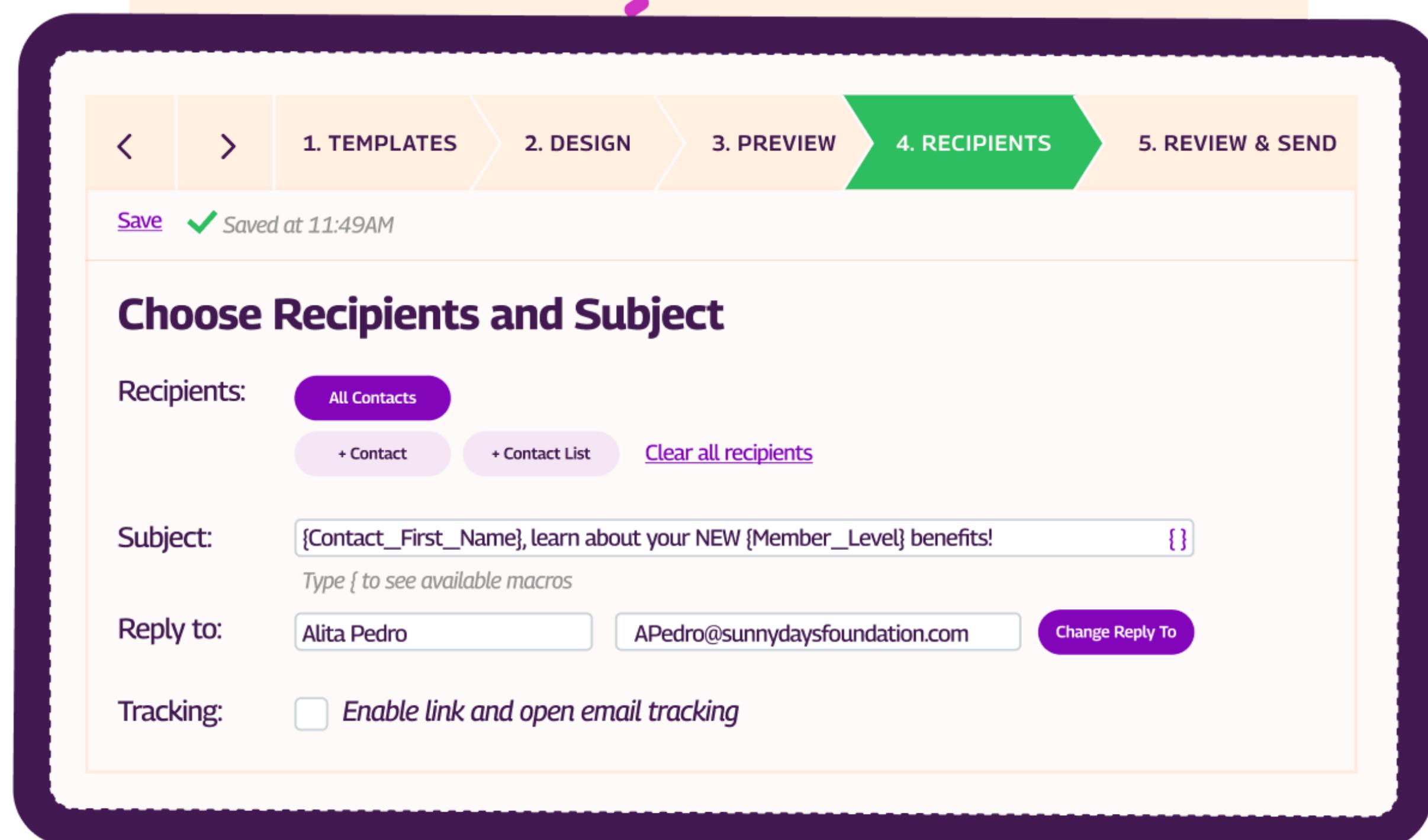
Strike an emotional chord with your audience

You can craft messages that strike an emotional chord with your audience, encouraging them to take action, whether it's donating, volunteering or sharing your message.



Strategy Component #2

How to Use Email Marketing Effectively



✉️ Regular newsletters

Send weekly or monthly newsletters to keep your audience updated on your activities. Include updates on recent events, volunteer needs, and success stories to keep them engaged.

⟳ Targeted campaigns

Create specific campaigns for different segments of your audience. For example, send a special appeal to previous donors, highlighting the impact of their contributions and encouraging them to donate again.

✓ Clear calls to action

Ensure each email has a clear call to action (CTA). Whether you want your audience to donate, volunteer or attend an event, make it easy for them to understand what you're asking. Use compelling language and design to make your CTAs stand out.

💬 Follow-up and thank-you emails

Always follow up after someone has taken action, like making a donation or signing up to volunteer. Send thank you emails to show appreciation and build loyalty among your supporters.

===== A/B Testing

Test different subject lines, email content, and CTAs to see what resonates best with your audience. Use the insights from these tests to refine and improve your email marketing strategy over time.

Further reading:

[The Complete Guide to Nonprofit Email Marketing](#)

Strategy Component #3

Social Media Marketing for Nonprofits

People spend a lot of time on social media, making it a prime place to share your message and interact with your audience more personally – especially those outside your geographical area. It helps you connect with people you might never meet through traditional marketing methods.



Where to start?

There's no one way to decide. In fact, you alone have the best answer to that. However, most nonprofits start with Facebook because it's one of the most popular platforms with a broad reach. Plus, Facebook Ads can also appear on Instagram and WhatsApp Business. Platforms like X (previously Twitter) and LinkedIn are also great channels to consider.



Instagram is great for sharing photos and videos that tell your story visually.



X (previously Twitter) is ideal for quick updates and interactions, though it needs a different approach than Facebook and Instagram.



LinkedIn is perfect for professional networking and reaching corporate donors and volunteers.

Tips for Effective Social Media Marketing

⚡ Understand your platforms

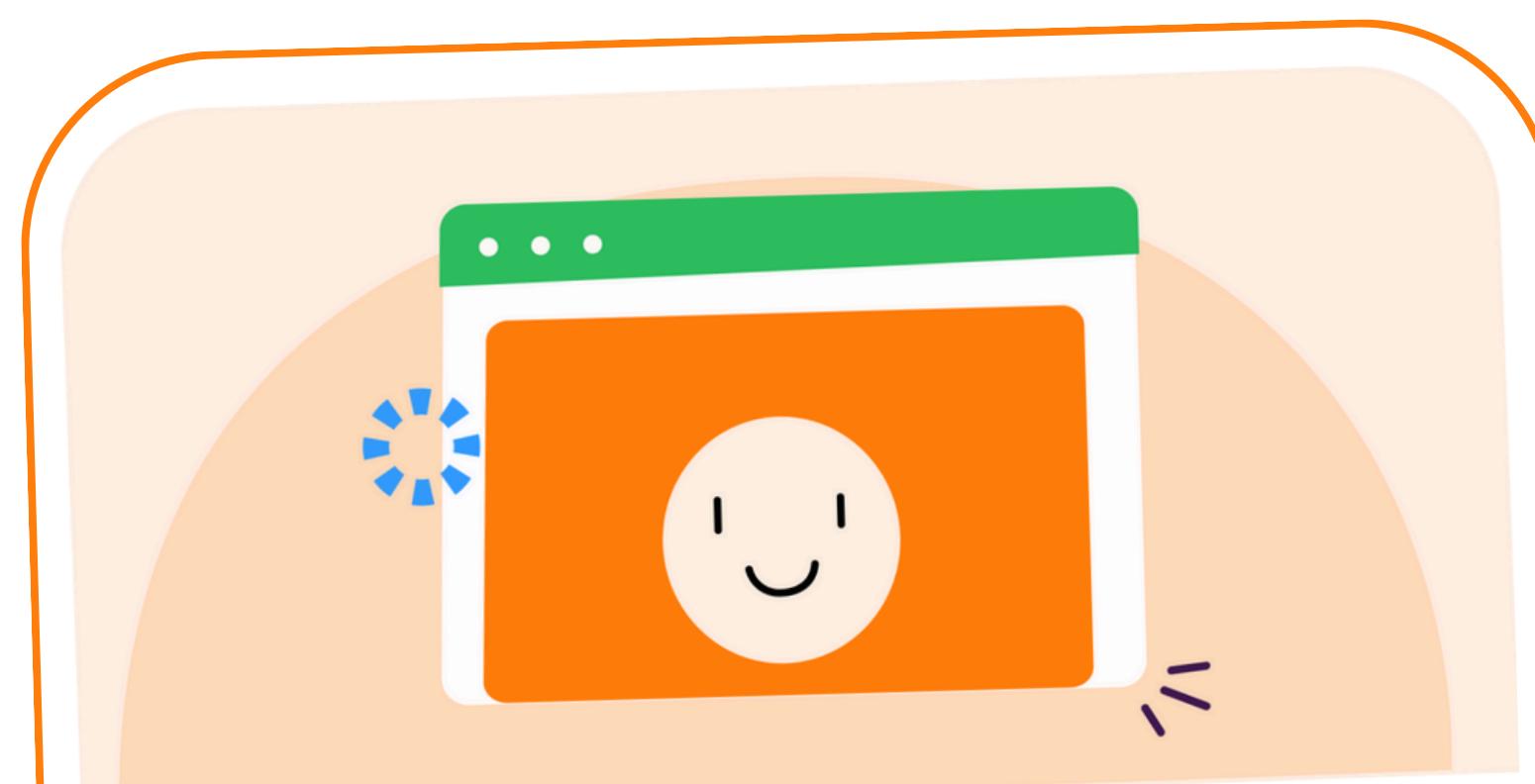
Each platform has its unique style and audience. Tailor your content accordingly. For example, Twitter is more text-focused, while Instagram is all about visuals

👁️ Engage your audience

Use user-generated content. Collaborate with volunteers and donors to create content that resonates with your audience. This not only involves them but also makes your content more relatable.

📋 Share relevant content

- Post updates about your organization and its cause.
- Share success stories and impact highlights to engage your audience.
- Recruit volunteers and showcase volunteering opportunities.



Further reading:

[The Ultimate Social Media Guide for Nonprofits](#)

Strategy Component #4

Text Messaging for Nonprofits

Text messaging is one of the most effective ways to promote your nonprofit. It has one of the highest open rates among all nonprofit digital marketing channels. Unlike emails or social media posts, people are much more likely to open and read text messages right away. **People tend to ignore emails or social media posts, but text messages get noticed quickly.**

Here's how you can use text messaging effectively:

- Send reminders for upcoming events to make sure your supporters don't miss out.
- Answer common questions or provide personalized info based on FAQs.
- Implement SMS chatbots to handle common inquiries and provide instant responses. This makes your communication more efficient and responsive.

Event "Sunny's Holiday Party"

Your event "Sunny's Holiday Party" has 154 registrants. Would you like to text them?

[Text Registrants](#)



Other creative uses of text messaging are:

- **Interactive campaigns:** Run campaigns where supporters can respond to your messages and participate in activities.
- **Surveys and feedback:** Collect feedback from your audience to understand their needs and improve your efforts.

Strategy Component #5

Virtual Events for Nonprofits

Picture this: You're all set for your big annual fundraiser, but a sudden storm hits, and you have to cancel. No venue, no attendees, no donations. What now? This is where virtual events come in. They're not just a backup plan; they open up a whole new world of possibilities for your nonprofit.

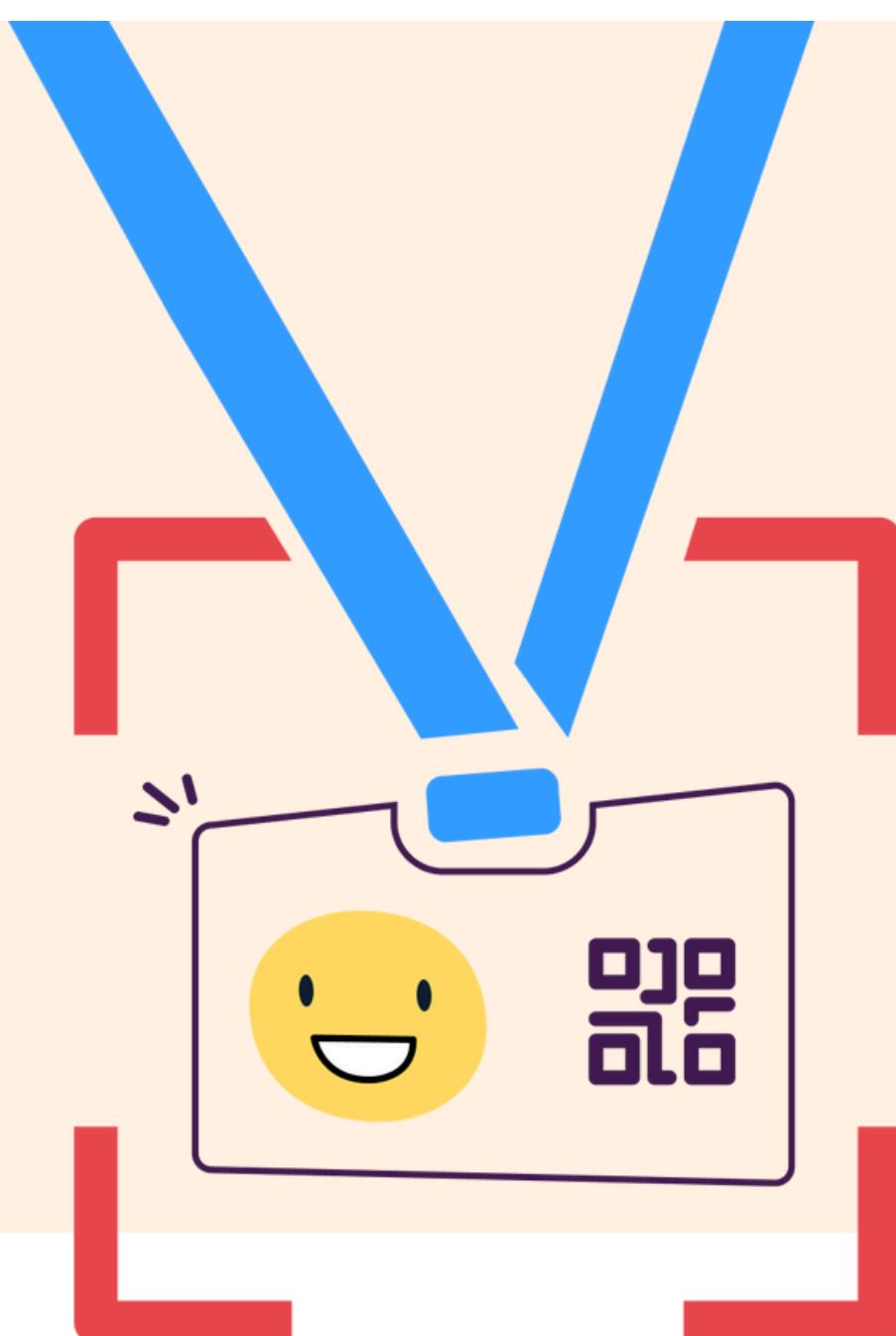


The pandemic taught us something important. When in-person events were canceled, live streaming stepped in. But here's the surprise: virtual events aren't just second best. They can actually help you reach far beyond your usual crowd.

Think about it. With virtual events, geography doesn't matter. You can connect with supporters from all over the world, increasing your reach and potential donor base significantly.

Live streaming is about engaging with them. Use tools like live chat and polls to make your event interactive. Ask questions, get instant feedback and make your viewers feel like they're part of something bigger.

Virtual events are also a great chance to team up with artists, influencers and other organizations. Working with well-known personalities can attract new audiences and add an exciting twist to your event. So next time you plan an event, think beyond the physical and embrace the virtual.



Best Practices for Virtual Events:

1 Plan ahead:

Just like an in-person event, planning is crucial. Set your goals, schedule and content well in advance.

2 Promote widely:

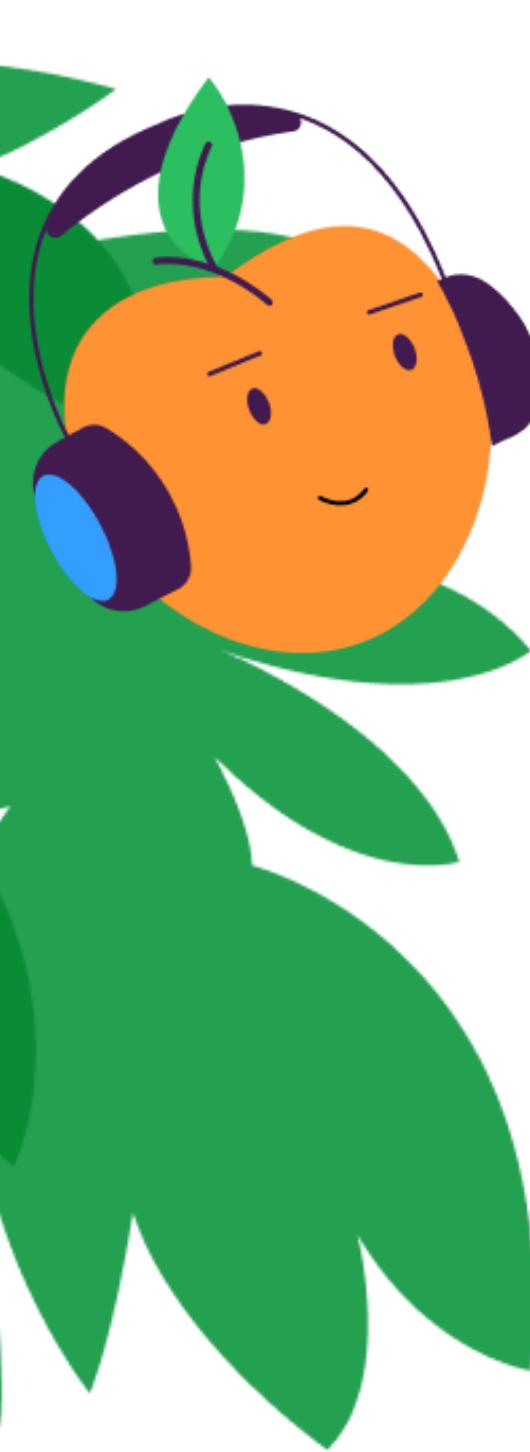
Use social media, email lists and your website to spread the word. The more people know about it, the better.

3 Engage your audience:

Use interactive features to keep your audience involved. Ask questions, run polls and encourage live chat participation.

4 Follow up:

After the event, follow up with attendees. Thank them for participating, share highlights and let them know how they can stay involved.

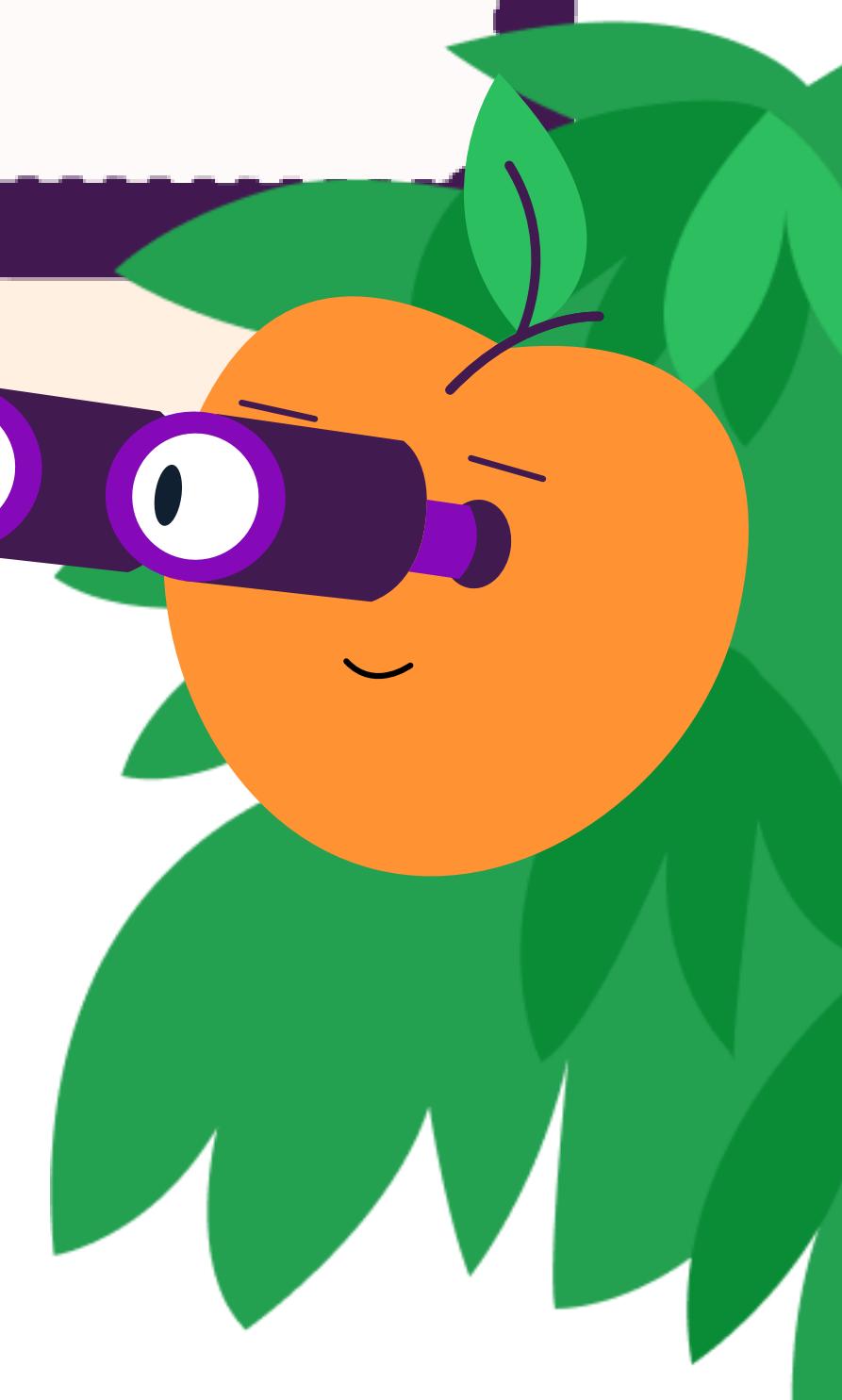
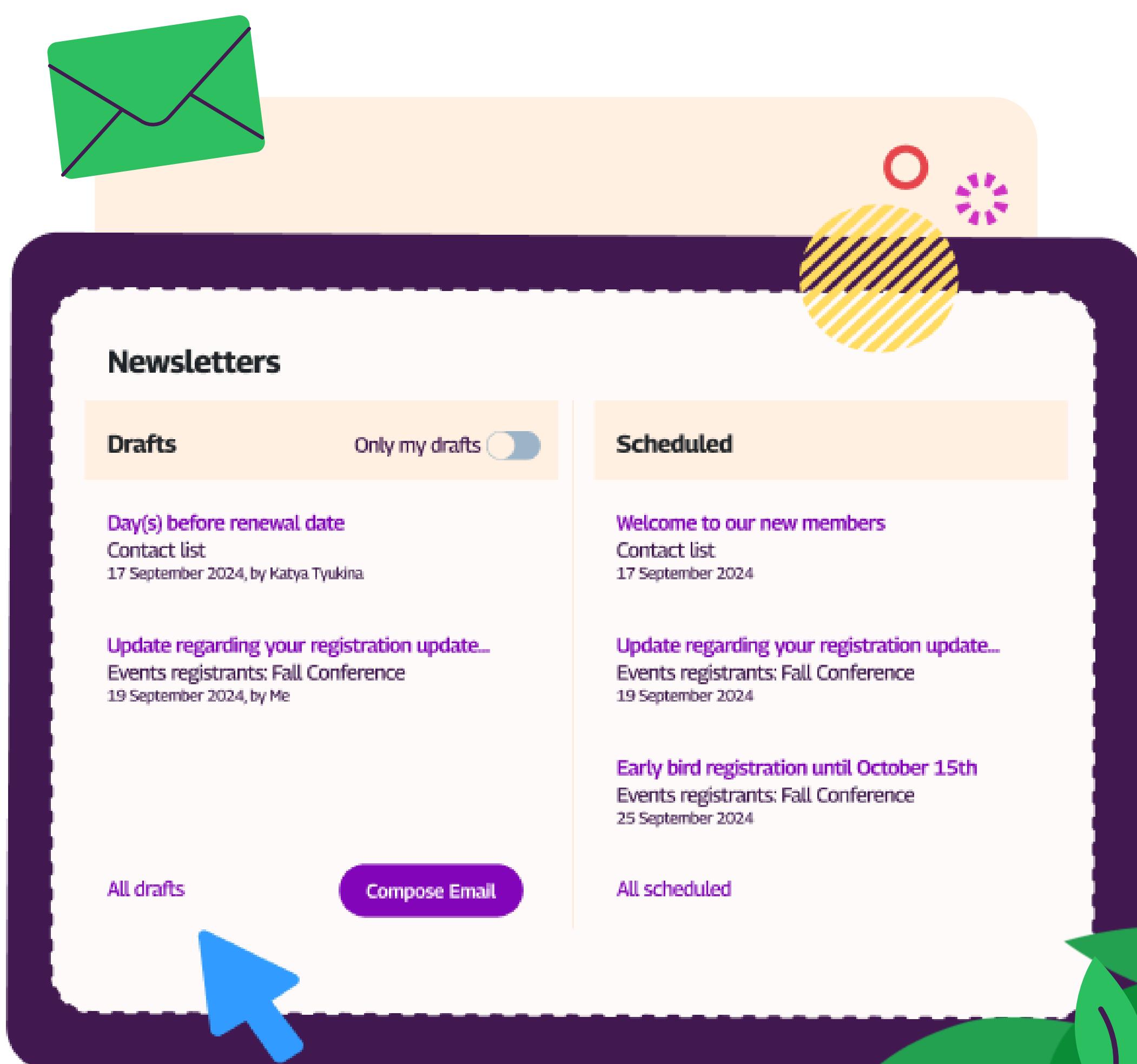


Strategy Component #6

Content Marketing for Nonprofits

Content marketing is a vital part of promoting your nonprofit. Sure, sharing photos and videos from past events is great, but writing about your values and mission shows you're truly intentional. People want to know why you care about your cause and what inspired you to start your organization.

Imagine someone searching online for organizations that support a cause similar to yours. If your content is well-optimized for search engines, your organization is likely to show up on the first page of Google. When donors see well-crafted content that answers their questions and reflects your commitment, it builds trust. Genuine and well-written content shows you are deeply invested in your cause.



Types of Content Marketing

Content marketing isn't just about blog posts. Here are some other formats you can use:

E-books:

Compile your achievements and insights into a downloadable e-book.

Infographics:

Create visual representations of your impact and statistics to make your cause clear and compelling.

Videos:

Repurpose blog posts into video content for your YouTube channel or social media.

Case studies:

Detail your successes with real examples, like how you reduced the number of street dogs in a specific area thanks to donor support.

By diversifying your content, you can reach a wider audience and engage them in different ways.

Effective content marketing can give donors the extra conviction they need to support your cause. It shows that you're not only committed but also knowledgeable and transparent about your efforts. So, take the time to craft your content carefully – it can make a huge difference!



Strategy Component #7

Nonprofit Websites

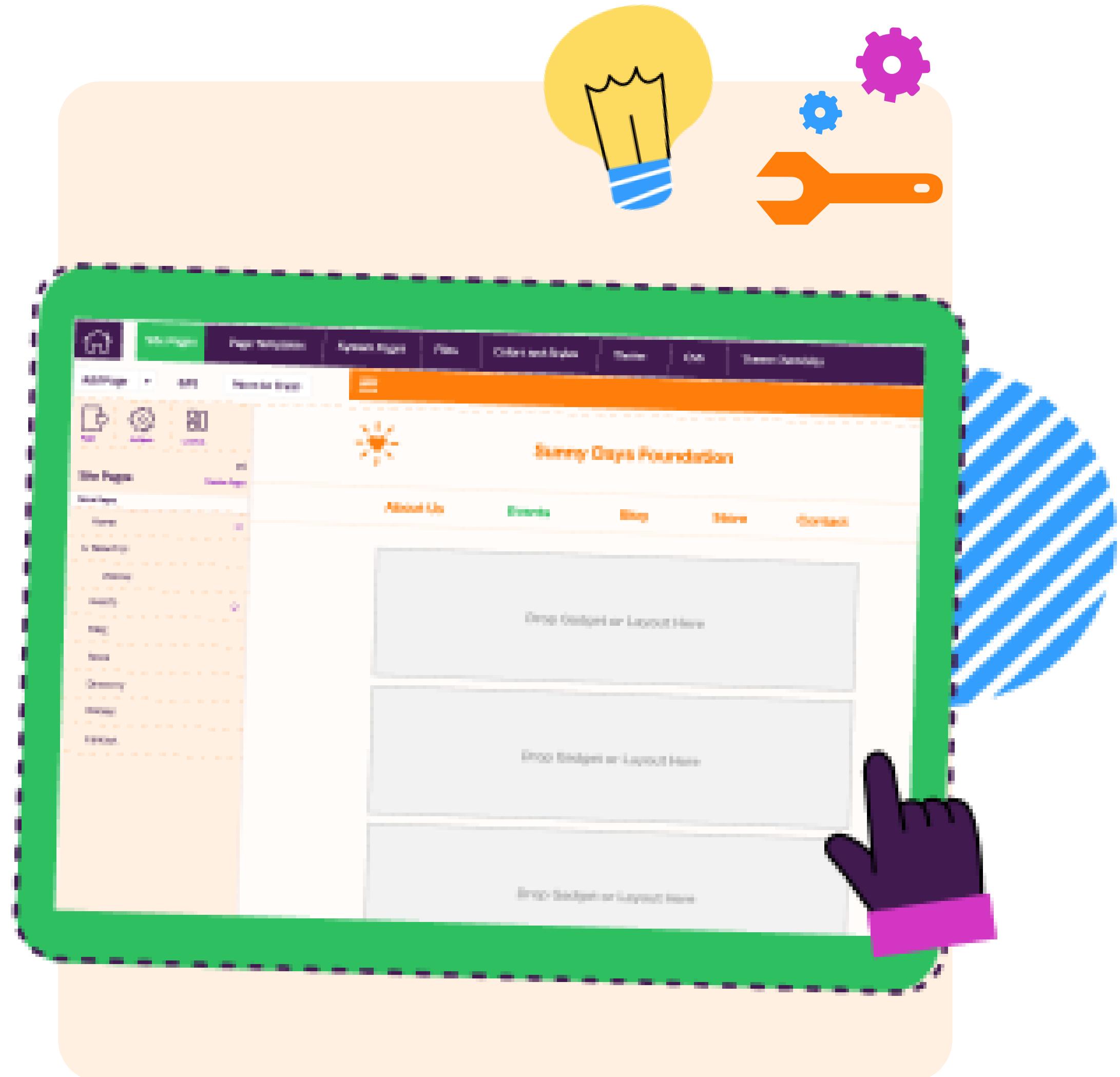
Having a website for your nonprofit organization might seem obvious, but not just any website will do. Here's how to get it right.

Think About Your Audience

First, consider what device your audience will use to access your content. Most likely, a lot of your visitors will be using their mobile phones or tablets. So, making sure your website is mobile-friendly is crucial. That means images and text should be clear and easy to navigate on smaller screens. If your website isn't mobile-friendly, you risk losing a big chunk of your audience right off the bat.

Ensure a Smooth User Experience

Next, focus on how user-friendly your site is. Ask yourself, "How easy is it for someone to find what they're looking for?" Make sure your navigation is simple. Users shouldn't have to click through a bunch of menus to get to important information. Neither should the branding for your nonprofit website hinder the overall experience of the website. It should be a seamless blend of your nonprofit branding and user experience.



Optimize for Search Engines

A well-designed, user-friendly website doesn't just make your visitors happy; it also helps with your search engine ranking. When people spend more time on your site and engage with your content, search engines like Google take notice and rank your site higher. This means more visibility and more potential supporters finding you online.

Strategy Component #8

Digital Advertising for Nonprofits

You already know about digital advertising, but let's discuss why it's so important for nonprofits. Sometimes, relying on organic reach just isn't enough. You need to get your message in front of more eyes – quickly. Whether you're trying to boost your social media following, get more readers for a specific article or meet any other goal, digital advertising can help.

Let's say you want your article to rank first on Google. With Google Ads, you can make that happen. When someone searches for keywords related to your cause – like "nonprofits for mental health" – your article will appear at the top of the search results. This ensures your content gets seen by the right people right away.

Another option is social media advertising. For example, you can turn a video of your last live event into an ad on Facebook. Thanks to Meta's integrated advertising platform, this ad also shows up on Instagram and sometimes WhatsApp Business, allowing your ad to reach a wider audience across multiple platforms.

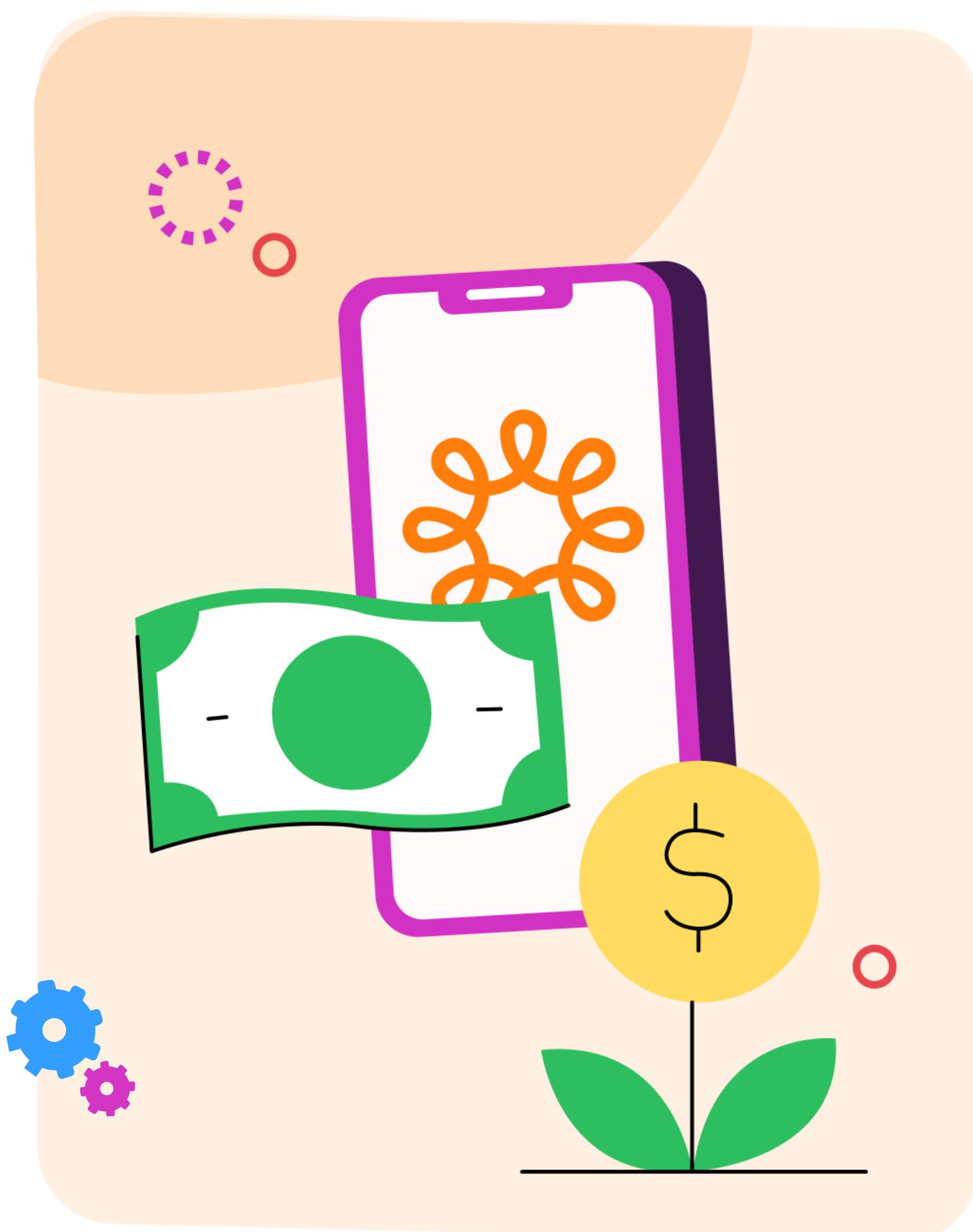




Strategy Component #9

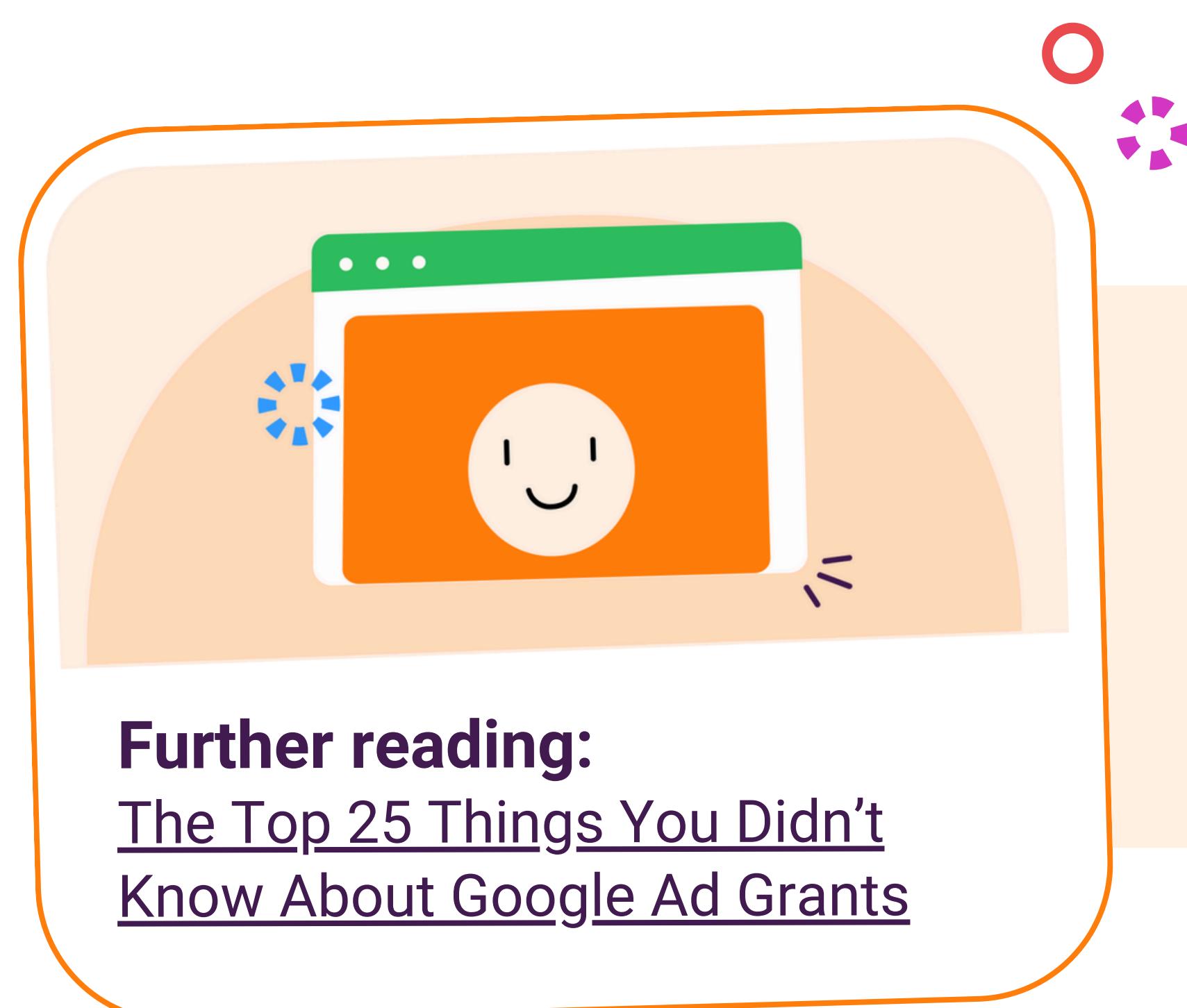
Bonus: Google Ad Grant Program for Nonprofits

Digital advertising can be expensive, but Google Ad Grants offers a solution for nonprofits by providing \$10,000 per month to run text-based ads on Google search results. This program helps you get your message out to a broader audience without straining your budget.



It's a three-step process from eligibility to ad creation:

- 1 First, your nonprofit must have a valid charity status and a functioning website. Additionally, it must be registered with TechSoup and Google for Nonprofits.
- 2 After meeting the eligibility criteria, apply through Google for Nonprofits. Once approved, you'll have access to \$10,000 per month in Google Ads credit.
- 3 Finally, use these credits to create ads targeting specific keywords related to your cause. This ensures that when people search for these keywords, your nonprofit's ads appear at the top of the search results.

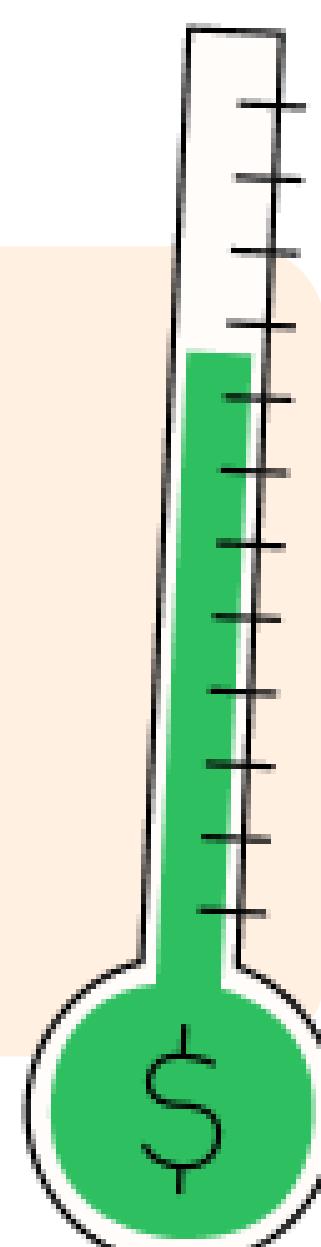


Further reading:

[The Top 25 Things You Didn't Know About Google Ad Grants](#)

Want to know more about the Google Ad Grant Program?

[This article](#) explores the topic in-depth and answers any questions you may have regarding the subject.



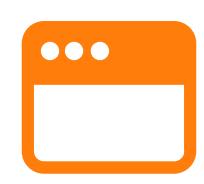
Software to Execute Your Nonprofit Digital Marketing Strategy

Managing a nonprofit's digital marketing strategy can be complex. You have many people reaching out to support your cause. This is where WildApricot comes in, offering a comprehensive solution to streamline your efforts.



With WildApricot, all your membership data is securely stored in the cloud.

Making it easy to access and update from anywhere. It helps you maintain accurate records and stay connected with your members no matter where you are.



Building or maintaining a website is a breeze with WildApricot's drag-and-drop feature.

Whether you need to create a new site or update an existing one, this tool makes it simple and ensures your site is mobile-friendly, which is crucial for reaching today's audience.



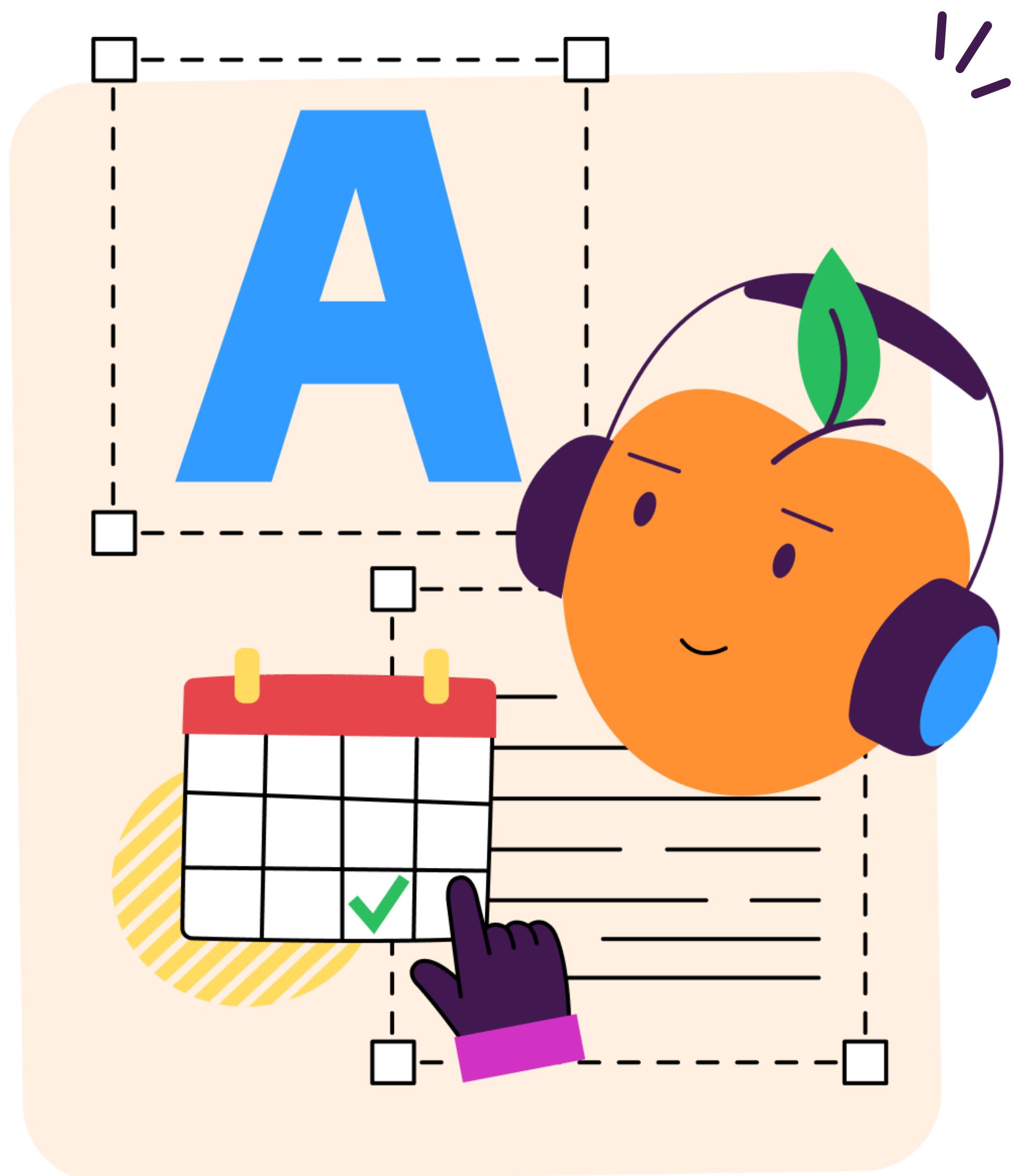
Payment processing is another area where WildApricot shines.

The platform integrates online payment tools, making donations smooth and efficient. Donors can contribute quickly without facing lengthy processes, enhancing their experience and increasing the likelihood of repeated support.



Event management becomes straightforward with WildApricot.

You can create online registration forms, manage attendee data effortlessly and ensure members can sign up for events without hassle. This helps you run successful events that engage your community and drive your mission forward.



Best Practices for Nonprofit Digital Marketing Strategies

Here are some of the best digital marketing tips to ensure your nonprofit marketing strategy is bulletproof.



Automate Your Processes

Each platform has its unique style and audience. Tailor your content accordingly. For example, Twitter is more text-focused, while Instagram is all about visuals



Segment and Personalize

Each platform has its unique style and audience. Tailor your content accordingly. For example, Twitter is more text-focused, while Instagram is all about visuals



Create a Strong Brand

Each platform has its unique style and audience. Tailor your content accordingly. For example, Twitter is more text-focused, while Instagram is all about visuals



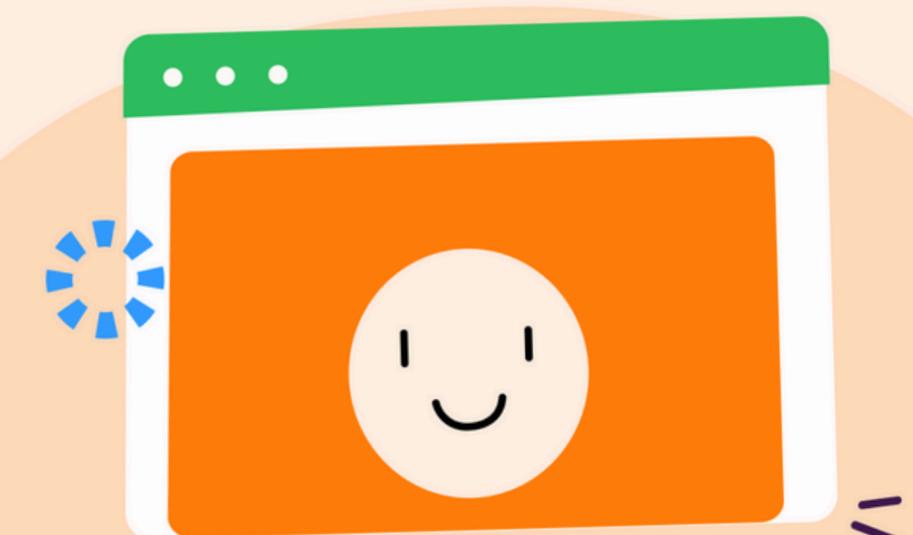
Embrace Partnerships

Partnerships can open doors you might not reach on your own. For example, if you're running a nonprofit for children with autism, partnering with local schools or therapy centers can expand your reach and credibility. LinkedIn is an excellent platform for finding and building these partnerships. Collaborating with other organizations shows you're well-connected and serious about your cause.



Focus on SEO

SEO might sound technical, but it's really about making sure people can find you online. Think about the words people might use to search for your services. If you run an animal rescue in Georgia, you want your website to show up when someone searches for "animal rescue in Georgia." Use these keywords in your blog posts, articles, and website content to improve your search rankings and visibility. You can follow these [SEO tips for nonprofit organizations](#) to get even better results.



Further reading:

[The Ultimate Guide to Non-Profit Branding](#)



Nonprofit marketing is about staying true to your core mission while balancing modern digital marketing trends.

Focus on the fundamentals, learn from leading organizations, and always infuse your unique cause into your strategy. Remember, it's not all about the latest trends but about what aligns with your values and goals.

Connect with us.



www.WildApricot.com



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WildApricot is a part of the Personify portfolio of brands. We are a partner to associations, nonprofits and chambers of commerce at every step of their journey. From member applications and renewals to event planning and more, WildApricot allows you to do more for your members.