

Non-Profit Web Sites: Enhancing Organizational Accountability



Even a modest web site provides a very useful and cost effective means to make voluntary and community organizations more transparent and accountable to members, donors, other stakeholders and the general public.

Some best practices to consider:

- Indicate clearly on your web site that your organization is a volunteer-led, non-profit organization. You may want to indicate too that it is legally incorporated in your jurisdiction state the relevant legislation (e.g. the Societies Act in Nova Scotia, the Companies Act in New Brunswick) and indicate your incorporation number.
- Include a button that allows visitors to go to your vision, mission statement, objectives and organizational values. There is no need to post you by-laws on your web site.
- If your organization is a registered charity under Federal income tax legislation (Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency) this should be indicated on your web site and the charitable tax number should be indicated.
- It is important to include a button that allows visitors to your site to learn more about how your organization is governed. This should take them to a list of the Board of Directors. You may want to list the occupation or basis of representation of each board member but do not include board member's mailing addresses, telephone numbers or personal e-mail addresses. If citizens want to contact the board directly they should do so by contacting the Chair of the Board through the your organization's office.
- The name of the Executive Director of your organization should appear somewhere, perhaps in the governance section, as an "ex-officio" or non-voting member of the board.
- Include in the governance section something on the role of the board, to whom it is accountable, how often it meets, and how and when the board is chosen. You may want to indicate that if one is interested, how a person could be considered for board membership. Be sure to underscore that fact that the board is made up of volunteers.
- Consider including under an "Our Funding" section a couple of simple graphs (pie charts are good) to indicate where your revenues come from and what are the main expenditure categories, perhaps by program area rather than by line item.

- Post a brief version of your annual report on your web site. The text should include a short review of the past year, a look ahead and a basic statement outlining the year's revenues and expenditures. You should consider too a statement to the effect that "those requiring more information may view the full annual report and/or the "audited statements" by appointment at the society's offices".
- If you have a strategic plan that you are following, a copy of it or the executive summary of it could also be posted on your web site.