Optimizing Your Web site 101.3:
Effective Homepage Strategy and Design

Lacey Kruger and Don Roach

About Us

Lacey Kruger

Interactive Architect

- 5 years experience in online marketing, user experience and web development

- B.S. in Advertising from U.T. Austin with a focus on Interactive

- Client list includes the Avon Foundation, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the John Wayne Cancer Foundation, US Fund for UNICEF and Latter Day Saints Philanthropies.

Don Roach

Senior Interactive Designer

- 8 years experience designing and developing web sites

- B.S. in Advertising from U.T. Austin

- Client list includes the March of Dimes, United Negro College Fund, The Jewish National Fund and the Canadian Wildlife Federation.

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Webinar 101 Two-Part Series

- *Optimizing Your Web site 101* is focused on design and techniques for your Web site – getting visitors in and getting them to stay

- *Effective Online Marketing 101* is focused on outbound marketing techniques and campaigns – drawing visitors in through targeted communications

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Relationship Building Framework: eCRM

eCRM is the practice of using the Internet to build life-long relationships with constituents
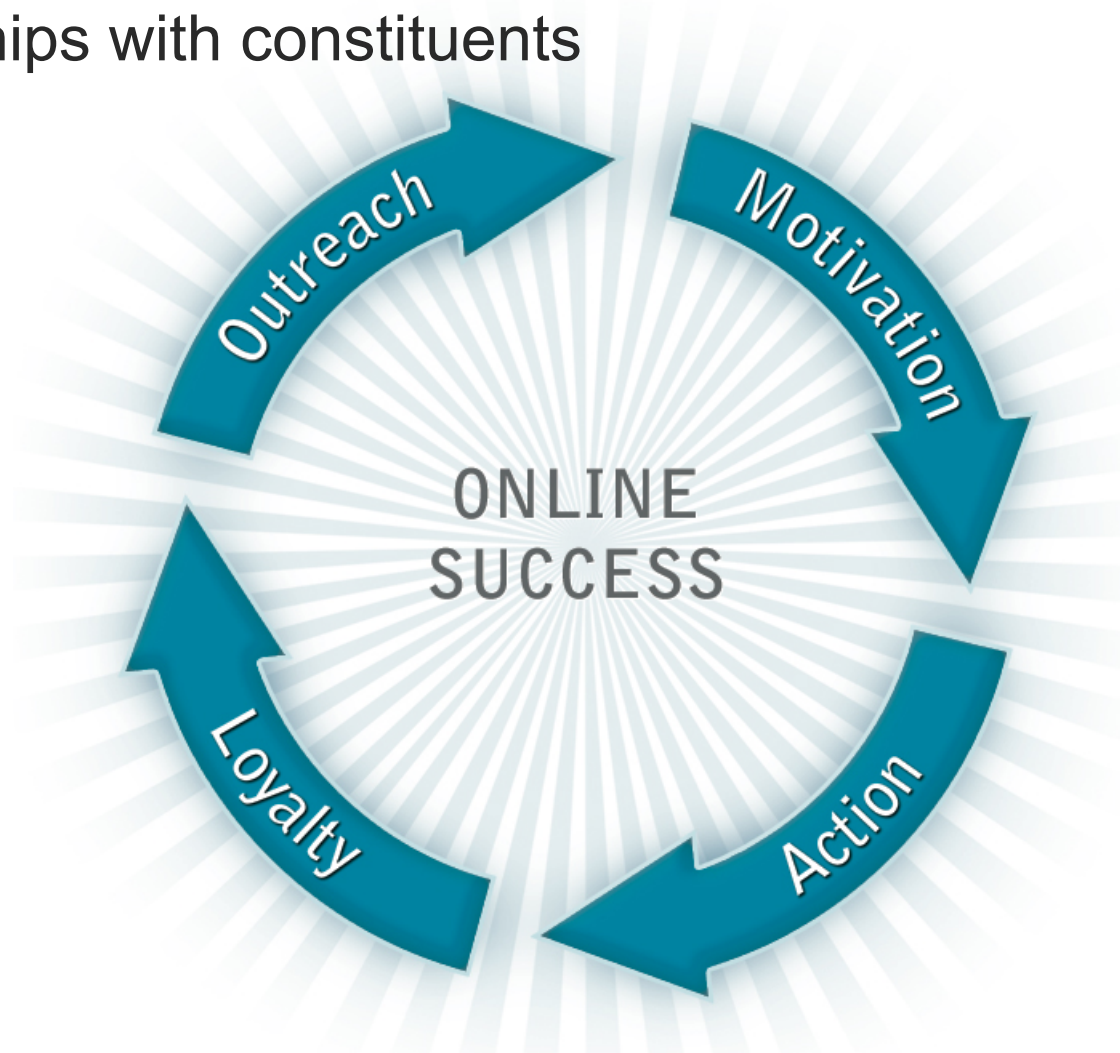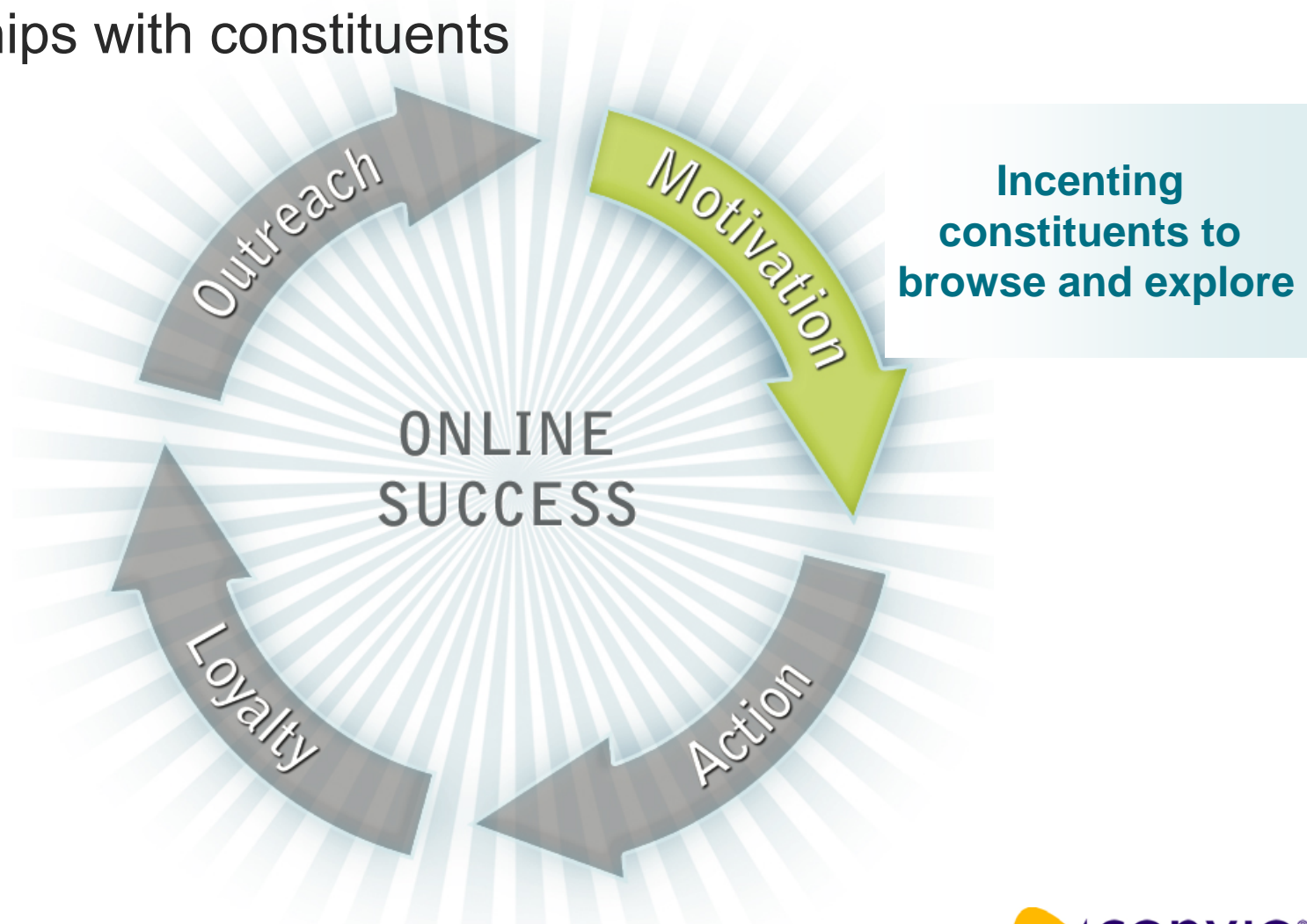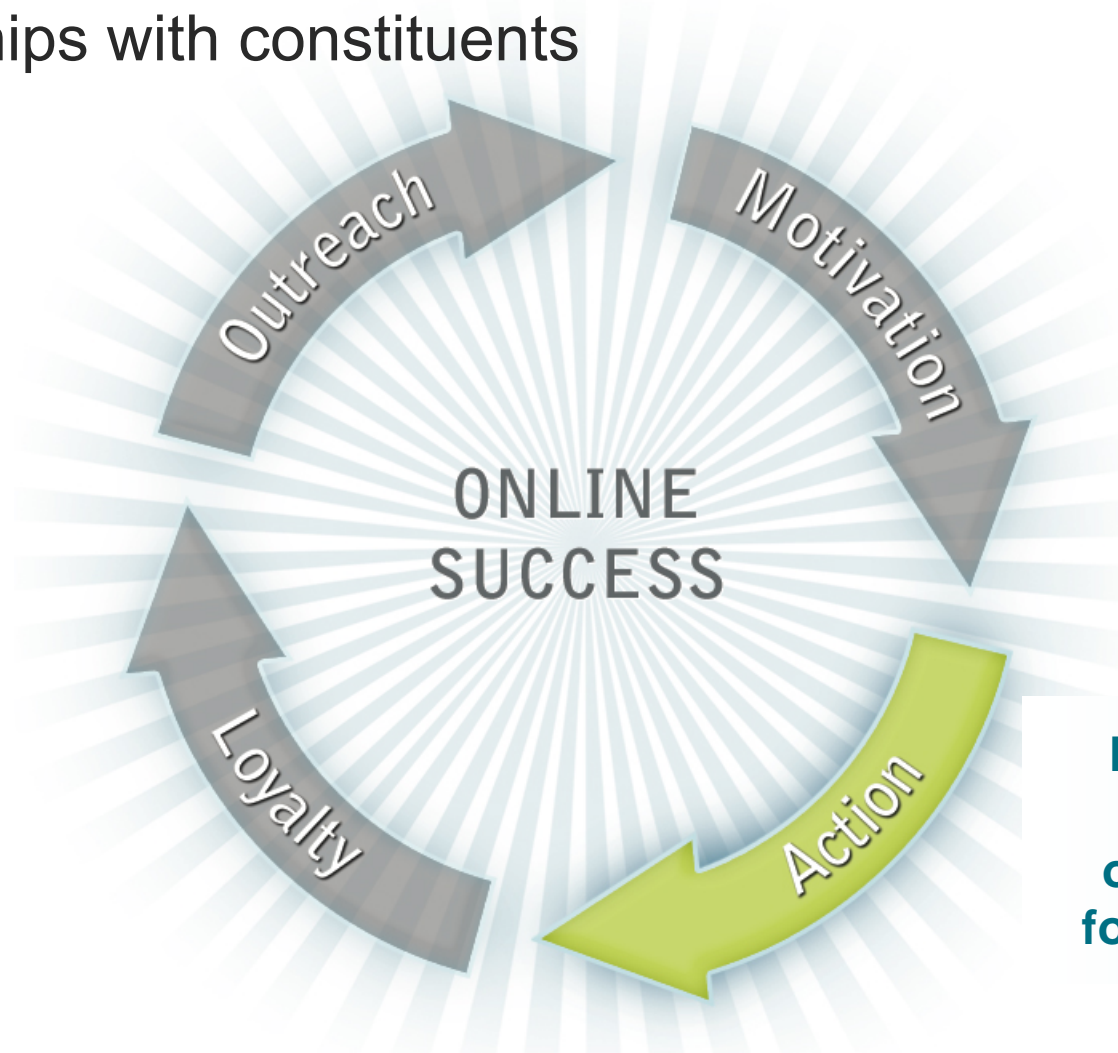
Relationship Building Framework: eCRM

eCRM is the practice of using the Internet to build life-long relationships with constituents

Strategically drawing traffic into your site

ONLINE SUCCESS

Outreach

Motivation

Action

Loyalty

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Outreach

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Incenting constituents to browse and explore

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Encouraging interactive opportunities for engagement

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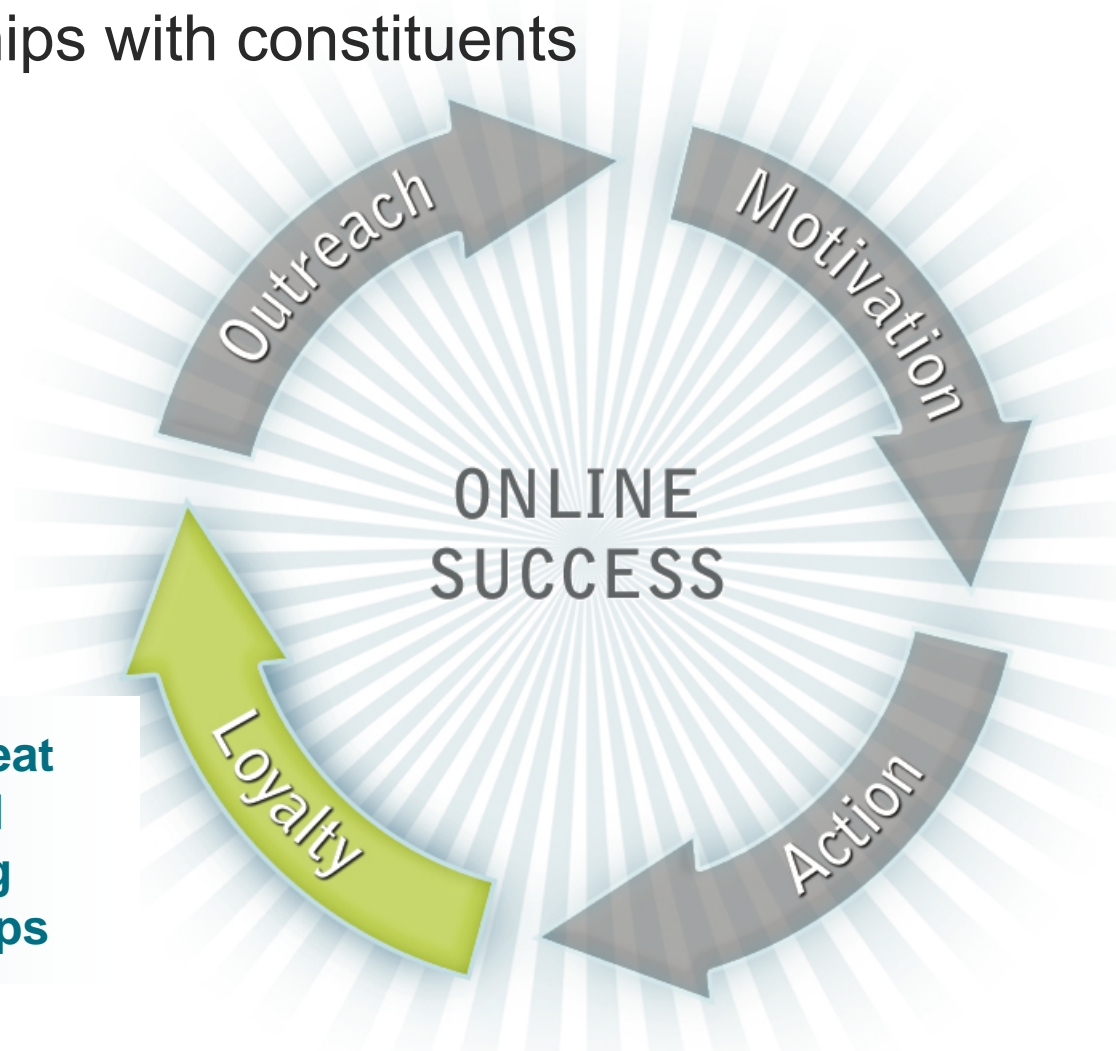

Driving repeat visits and advancing relationships

Today's Objectives: Motivation & Action

At the end of today's session, you will feel empowered to:

1. **Engage** visitors immediately when they land on your homepage by offering focused content

2. Provide opportunities for visitors to begin a **relationship** with your organization on your homepage

3. **Organize** your homepage layout so visitors can access your content as efficiently as possible

Your Homework…
► Watch this space for ideas on what you can start doing **now**…

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Presentation Structure = Design Process

1. Define your organizational goals

2. Identify and prioritize content assets

3. Determine the best layout

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Engaging visitors with your Homepage

- 50% of Web visitors go to a homepage and then immediately leave to visit another Web site

- Your homepage is typically the first page (and sometimes the only page) visitors will ever see on your site

- Many visitors bookmark homepages and visit them regularly

- Homepages are also used as points of origin for visitors when browsing a site

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Who are we and Why are we here?

- 93% of homepages don't provide a tagline that explicitly summarizes what the site or company does[1]

- Start by asking yourself "What are we trying to accomplish with our site?" and make sure your homepage provides an answer

Your Homework…
  - ► Make sure your homepage answers the questions "Who are we?" and "Why are we here?" Try a short, direct tagline or focused imagery

- Be sure you also answer the question "Who are we?" on your homepage for visitors coming to the site for the first time

1. Jakob Nielsen's 10 most violated homepage design guidelines: http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20031110.html

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Breadth vs. Depth

- Your homepage is your organization's "10 second elevator speech" so provide basic information efficiently
  - ► Featured promotion area
  - ► Latest news
  - ► 1-2 clear calls to action

- Include substance on your homepage but don't overwhelm visitors with content
  - ► 'Read More' links are a great way to do this

- Try to keep the content "above the fold"

Maintaining Content

- Your homepage should be updated at least once a month

- Opt for a modular design so that features can easily be swapped out

- Save graphics and featured content in reusable components after you pull them from the homepage for later use and easier maintenance
  - ▶ Build a "bank" of content to circulate through

- Consider providing a link to old homepage features so visitors can easily find them later

1. **Tells you who we are and why we're here**

2. **Offers prominent, action-oriented navigation plus a clear, concise left navigation**

3. **Encourages constituent log-in and personalization**

4. **Provides entry points for major audiences**

5. **Offers the most updated, current content**

6. **Presents all of the important content "above the fold"**

7. **Page has a modular design so components are easy to update**
8. **Visually reflects the culture, mission, and scope of the organization**

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Content for your Audiences

■ The most successful organizations have <u>no more than</u> 4 – 5 priority audience types

■ Each of your audiences should have at least one area on the homepage that they can identify with and would want to read

■ Consider researching and creating personas for each of your audiences so your team can "get to know" them and refer back to them often

Your Homework…
  ► Identify your 4-5 priority audiences and what their needs and motivations are as they visit your site

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What are Personas?

"**Personas** are fictitious characters that are created to represent the different user types within a targeted demographic that might use a site or product." -Wikipedia

- Require audience research inputs
  - ► The process of developing the personas is just as important as the outcomes

- Useful for organizations and design teams to build a common understanding of each audience group

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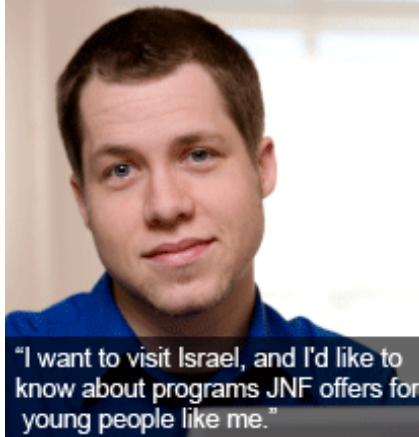
Michael

Young Professional

Demographic
- 24 year old male
- Single
- Lives in California metropolitan area
- Middle income

"I want to visit Israel, and I'd like to know about programs JNF offers for young people like me."

Description

- A recent college graduate, Michael is working at his first job out of college. While he does not have much money now, he comes from a middle income family.
- He's never been to Israel, but would like to go sometime before he's thirty.
- He has both bought and received trees in his lifetime and still does when the occasion is appropriate. He has never made a regular online donation to JNF.
- While he was involved with JNF in college, he's starting to lose touch with the organization, visiting the site to purchase trees but not much else.
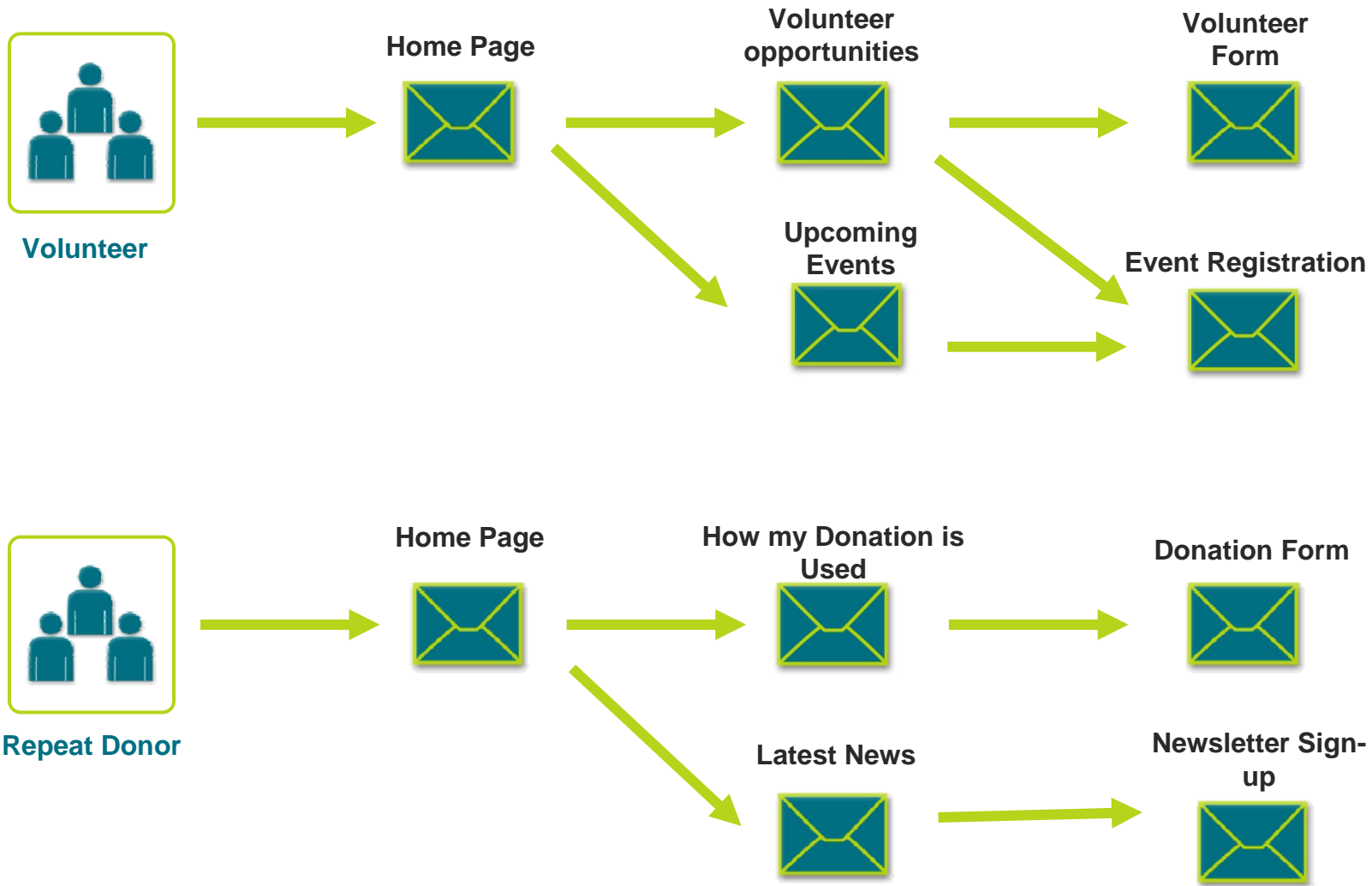
Technological

- Michael spends a lot of time online, using the internet as his primary method for staying in touch with old friends, making reservations, shopping, and finding information.
- He subscribes to RSS feeds, watches videos on YouTube, and has a Facebook profile.
- He has a laptop, but typically uses it at a desk or work station.

Needs

- He does not have a lot of money to donate, but is interested in getting involved in the Jewish community and local programs.
- Though he hasn't traveled to Israel yet, he would like to, and therefore wants information both on other people's trips and on how he can visit, too.
- Not only is Michael involved in the Jewish community, but he also is environmentally conscious, and tries to participate in programs to help the environment.

Relationship Pathways

Volunteer → Home Page → Volunteer opportunities → Volunteer Form

Home Page → Upcoming Events → Event Registration

Volunteer opportunities → Event Registration

Repeat Donor → Home Page → How my Donation is Used → Donation Form

Home Page → Latest News → Newsletter Sign-up

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Relationship Pathways

- Should all have a starting point on the homepage, though can also begin on other pages

- Visitors can jump from one pathway to another at any time through the navigation

- Should all involve conversion, or some way for the user to provide their contact information

Conversion Opportunities and Opt-ins
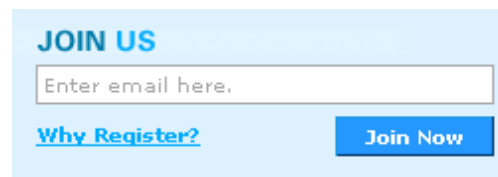
- Provide ways for visitors to opt-in right on your homepage

- Be sure your "prime real-estate" features all lead to areas where visitors can provide their contact information

Join Our Community of Strength
What does this mean? Click here to learn more ▶
Log In ▶ or Join: Enter Email Address GO

Your Homework…
- ► Make sure your site allows visitors to sign-up right on the homepage

Stay Connected
Sign up to receive our eNewsletter
Email Address go

JOIN US
Enter email here.
Why Register? Join Now

Beginning the Relationship

- Have a plan for what happens when a user does sign-up on your homepage (or anywhere, for that matter)
  - ► Message to visitors what they'll receive as a registered member (also do this BEFORE they sign up!)
  - ► Follow-up with a Welcome Message
  - ► Request more information from visitors slowly, as you build trust

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Elements of a Web page

1. Logo / Banner
2. Navigation
3. Content
4. Footer
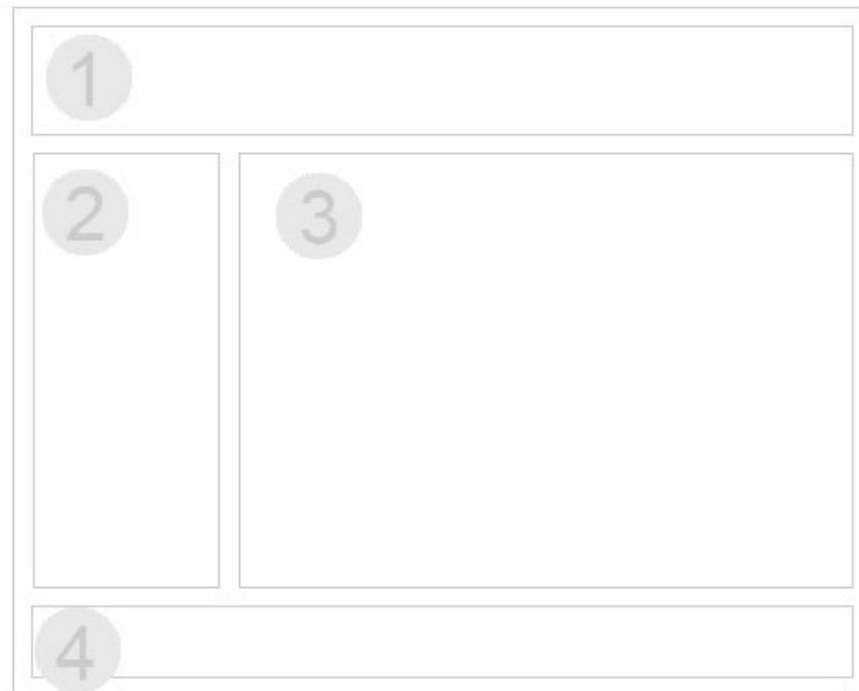
Design / layout should visually differentiate these elements and clearly define hierarchy of importance

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Tuning your Layout

■ **Research has shown that visitors tend to focus on pages in an "F" pattern**
(Red indicates areas where visitors looked the most, followed by yellow, then blue; gray indicates no fixations)

■ **Position your top-priority content in the upper left corner of your page and your lowest-priority item in the bottom right corner**

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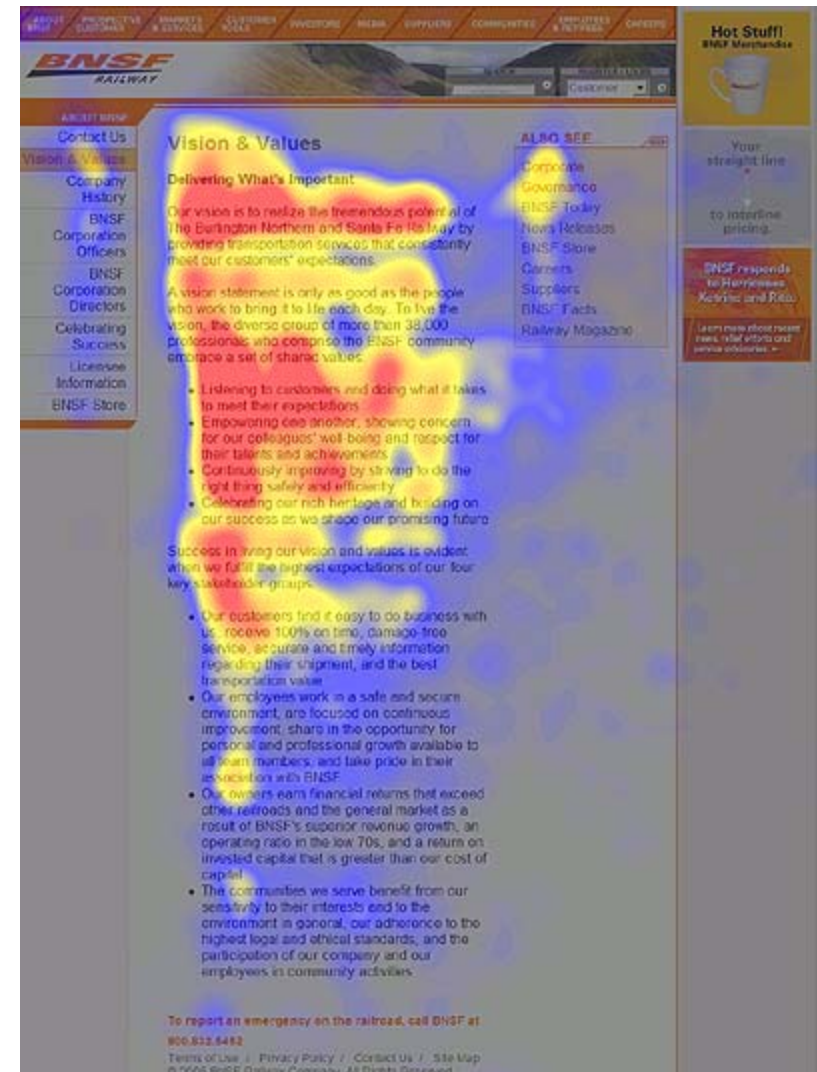
Graphics

Graphics considerations:

- Design should support online goals
- Continuity of tone/personality with existing branded collateral (print, direct mail, etc.)
- Consider color pallet
- Photo treatment / style

Content items that look like ads = IGNORED

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Navigation

Navigation should be:

- Intuitive
- Clean
- Consistent
- Visually separated from content
- Clearly define/support user pathways
- A tool to orient visitors within the site

Three types of navigation elements

- Topical / Informational
- Action-oriented
- Utility

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Navigation – How much is too much?

- 7 plus or minus 2 – give visitors fewer, more straightforward options so it's easier for them to make a decision
  - ► Try to limit the Global Navigation to 5 or 6 options
- Progressive Disclosure – allow visitors to make a decision and *then* provide them with another series of options based on their decision
  - ► This aligns with our mental models and makes navigating much easier

Your Homework…
  - ► Evaluate your navigation to see if it follows 7 plus or minus 2 and progressive disclosure

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Types of Nav

- Action-oriented

- Topical/ Informational

- Utility

- Footer

GET INVOLVED | DONATE | JOIN | SHOP

[____] [____] [Login] ☐ remember me   Search [____] [Search]

ABOUT AUTISM
- What are Autism Spectrum Disorders?
- Diagnosis
- What Causes Autism
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Helpful Resources
- Autism 101

LIFE WITH AUTISM

RESEARCH & PROGRAMS

AUTISM COMMUNITY

ABOUT ASA

★ Diagnosis and Consultation

Home > About Autism > Diagnosis

Why Early Identification is Critical   Screening and Screening Instruments

Who Makes a Diagnosis?/Diagnostic Tools   Working with Professionals

Getting Past the Diagnosis

There are no medical tests for diagnosing autism. An accurate diagnosis must be based on observation of the individual's communication, behavior and developmental levels. However, because many of the behaviors associated with autism are shared by other disorders, various medical tests may be ordered to rule out or identify other possible causes of the symptoms being exhibited. At first glance, some persons with autism may appear to have mental retardation, a behavior disorder, problems with hearing, or even odd and eccentric behavior. To complicate matters further, these conditions can co-occur with autism. However, it is important to distinguish autism from other conditions, since an accurate diagnosis and early identification can provide the basis for building an appropriate and effective educational and treatment program.

A brief observation in a single setting cannot present a true picture of an individual's abilities and behaviors. Parental (and other caregivers' and/or teachers') input and developmental history are important components of making an accurate diagnosis.

Page updated: 23 January 2008

FIND SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Autism source™
#1 in Autism Information

TIPS OF THE DAY

Food – Use the one-bite method to introduce new foods: After one bite of new food, your child gets a bite of a favorite food; alternate bites until the plate is empty. Read More >>

ORLANDO, FLORIDA
July 9-12, 2008
National Conference and Exposition on Autism Spectrum Disorders

I WANT TO HELP

FREE DOWNLOADS

Layout – other considerations

Monitor Size and Resolution:

1. **Monitors** now come in all different shapes and sizes. This can affect how your Web site displays on different computers

2. **Monitor (or screen) Resolution** refers to the number of pixels displayed on the monitor. This setting can also affect how your Web site displays on different computers

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Layout – other considerations

Fixed width vs. Liquid layout

	Pros	Cons
Fixed Width	■ Designer has more control over how content will render on screen ■ Narrower text columns improve readability	■ Can appear small on larger monitors
Liquid	■ Design adapts to fit most browser window sizes	■ Text spanning large distances, difficult to read. ■ Creates awkward spacing

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Layout – other considerations

Screen Resolution Examples

1680 x 1050 Screen Resolution
(26% users have settings higher than 1024x768)

1024 x 768 Screen Resolution
(54% of computers set to this)

800 x 600 Screen Resolution
(14% of computers set to this)

Source
http://www.w3schools.com/browsers/browsers_display.asp

Layout – other considerations

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Review of Homework

- Make sure your homepage answers the questions "Who are we?" and "Why are we here?"
  - ► Try a short, direct tagline or focused imagery

- Identify your 4-5 priority audiences and what their needs and motivations are as they visit your site

- Make sure your site allows visitors to sign-up right on the homepage

- Evaluate your navigation to see if it follows 7 plus or minus 2 and progressive disclosure

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Q & A

Submit questions by typing them into the question text box and then hitting the "Ask" button

Thank you!

You can access these slides and recording in our online Community at:
http://community.customer.convio.com/webinars

And register for our next session on Aug 26th:
Effective Online Marketing 101.3: Measuring and improving housefile health