

ASC Midlands District

Getting the most from your website

Least effort, most reward

I've said it many times that if you want to increase your membership you need a dedicated club website. In my opinion a club website requires the least effort for the most reward.

However... simply having a website is not enough, you can't just leave it to sit there and hope that the eager new members will turn up in droves. You still have to do something.

This note will give you a few pointers, which will allow you to get the most out of your website.

What is the purpose of your site?

Make sure that you understand why you have a website and direct all your efforts to that purpose. I'm going to assume that the purpose of your website is *to attract new members*.

You may have secondary purposes such as supplying news items to members, giving members meeting dates etc. But always bear in mind your main purpose.

An optimised site

Your site must be optimised for the keywords that people will type in to Google when they are looking for your services.

Think what words potential members will type in the search engines – those are your keywords.

Ideas to get the most out of your site

On the following pages I've set out 11 ideas to help you get the most out of your website.

They aren't in any particular order and you don't have to use them all, but the more you use, the better your website will perform.

Hope you find them useful.

Keith Davis

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ASC Midlands District

Getting the most from your Website - Ideas

1. Domain name

Before you start a website you will need a domain name (web address / URL) such as *mysite.co.uk*.

Things to bear in mind when choosing a domain name are:

- a. It should contain some of your keywords.
- b. It should be easy to remember.
- c. It should be easy to spell.
- d. It has to be available.

Current practice seems to be the use of a geographic locator followed by *speakers.co.uk*

For instance *leicesterspeakers.co.uk*

2. Treat your site as an advert

Treat your site as a 24 / 7 advert for your club.

The content should be lively and positive with a few touches of humour.

A few testimonials are also useful.

3. Up to date

Your site should be up to date with:

- a. Venue details.
- b. Meeting dates and times.
- c. Contact details – make sure that you have both email and telephone contact details.

4. Reply to all enquirers and build a contact list

Appoint a single person as your point of contact.

That person should send more information to every enquiry.

If people contact you by email, you have their email address. If they phone you, ask for their email address.

It's a good idea to keep a list of potential members and inform them by email of upcoming meetings.

5. Your site should not be centred on club members / members area

Don't forget that your website is primarily a marketing tool, not a tool for existing members.

Things such as member's area can seem like a good idea, but visitors may feel excluded.

6. Search engines

Your website should be at least on the first page of Google when using your keywords.
If it's not take advice on Search Engine Optimisation or Google SEO for help.

7. Look professional

People expect websites to look professional. We are competing with Toastmasters, who have great looking websites.

If you have a free website with advertising in the sidebar, what impression does that give?

8. Annoying movement or sound

No flashing images, audio clips or garish colours.

Can be a tad annoying.

9. Videos

If you do add videos to your site, they should look professional.

With the best will in the world, videos can look amateur and do more harm than good.

My advice is to leave videos to professional public speakers.

10. District and National

Inform the District and National webmasters that you have a website. This will allow them to give you a link.

The Midlands District site web address is <http://www.speakerblog.org.uk>

The National web address is <http://www.the-asc.org.uk>

11. Keep your site lean and fast

Google likes fast loading sites, and rewards them with higher rankings, so don't be tempted to upload newsletters, lists of members' details and other bits of rubbish, keep it lean.

Make sure that all your images are optimised for the web and load quickly.

12. Advertise your site

Put your site domain name (web address / URL) on all your club literature, press releases etc.