

# Association Website Quick Starter Guide



A step-by-step guide to effective website development  
for professional associations

# How to Use this Document

This guide covers all the foundational work required for a website project, specifically for professional associations. You can follow the steps outlined here to create a report for your Board members or to plan your website project. These guidelines are based on our successful experience working with professional associations in designing and developing their membership website on the Wild Apricot platform. We hope it will be a great help for your organization. Let us know what you think and how we can improve this guide. Email me at: [lamees@webbrightservices.com](mailto:lamees@webbrightservices.com).



Bright wishes,

Lamees Abourahma

President & Founder

Webbright Services, LLC

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# Chapter One.

General Website Planning

# 1.1 Identify current challenges



**Static.** The site content has hardly changed since it was first created. Your members and constituents are not coming back to visit your website.



**People can't find your website.** If your web pages are not optimized for Google (and other search engines), your members (and other constituents) might not be able to find your website online. You're missing essential traffic to your website.



**Multiple service providers.** Your website hosting and services are scattered over multiple providers, adding more challenge to your organization's management work.



**Outdated.** You outgrew your last webmaster. Your service provider has not been able to support you with changes to your organization or respond to your requests in a timely manner. You're frustrated by the lack of control over your own content.



# 1.1 Identify current challenges



**Making updates is cumbersome.** Your staff or volunteers don't have the advanced technical skills required to make changes to your site content. Even if they do have the expertise, they don't have the time needed. Updating your site content takes a lot of time or a lot of work.



**Does not accommodate future growth.** You're lacking the functionality to manage your association's various programs, events, and communication efforts. Your organization outgrew your current systems and you need to innovate to allow for future growth.



**Not user-friendly or content-rich.** Your site is hard to navigate. Your visitors can't easily find information on the site. You don't have valuable information on your site to keep your visitors informed and engaged.



**Draining your resources.** To accommodate for the organization's multiple functions, you're using multiple systems and databases which requires a lot of time and coordination.

## 1.2 Define Your Website Needs

**Functional.** Some of the functionality that you might need include forums, blogs, member-only sections, membership management, and event management.

**Scalable.** Your organization is a living organism; it grows and changes, and so should your website. You need a platform that would work for your young organization today as well as your more mature organization tomorrow.

**Branded.** Your website should incorporate your organization's branding, including color theme, logo, and other design elements. You need a website design that is professional, clean, and promote your association brand.

**Flexible.** Your organization is unique in its requirements and its membership structure. You need a website that is flexible enough to accommodate change and growth in your organization.

## 1.2 Define Your Website Needs

- Easy to use.** Your website should be easy to use both for visitors and administrators. You need a website software that makes it easy for administrators to accomplish their tasks quickly and effortlessly.
- Engaging.** Your website should encourage member engagement. You need to promote regular visitation and activity, creating a living community of active participants rather than a static repository.
- Visible by Google and other search engines.** You need to optimize your website pages to allow your members and other constituents to easily find you online.
- Other? Define your own website needs

## 1.2 Define Your Website Needs

**Integrated.** Your website should be easy to integrate with third party tools such as ecommerce services or social media.

**Accessible.** Your website should be accessible from any device (PC, Mac, iPads, etc), and from any location.

**Affordable.** Cost is a significant consideration for most not-for-profit organizations. You need a website with reasonable initial and ongoing fees.

**Robust.** You need a website that does not have downtime or issues.

## 1.3 Define Your Target Audience

- Demographics & Psychographics:
  - Age, gender, profession, geographic location, likes, dislikes, fears, desires, style, etc.
- Online presence:
  - Find out what social networks your members are likely to visit online
- Classification:
  - Members, non-members, prospects, sponsors, etc.

## 1.4 Compile Favorite Websites

- Search Google for websites from your industry and compile list of your favorites websites
- Record what you like and don't like about other industry websites

# 1.5 Define Website Objectives

- Resource:** Provide resources (white paper, articles, webinars) for your industry and site visitors.
- E-commerce:** Sell products and/or services to your site visitors.
- Social Network:** Connect your site visitor and community together.
- Differentiator:** Sets you a part from your competitors.
- Credibility:** Establish your organization and your members as thought-leaders in your field/industry.
- Lead generator:** Recruit members and attract sponsors to your website.
- Entertainment:** Provide entertainment to your site visitors.

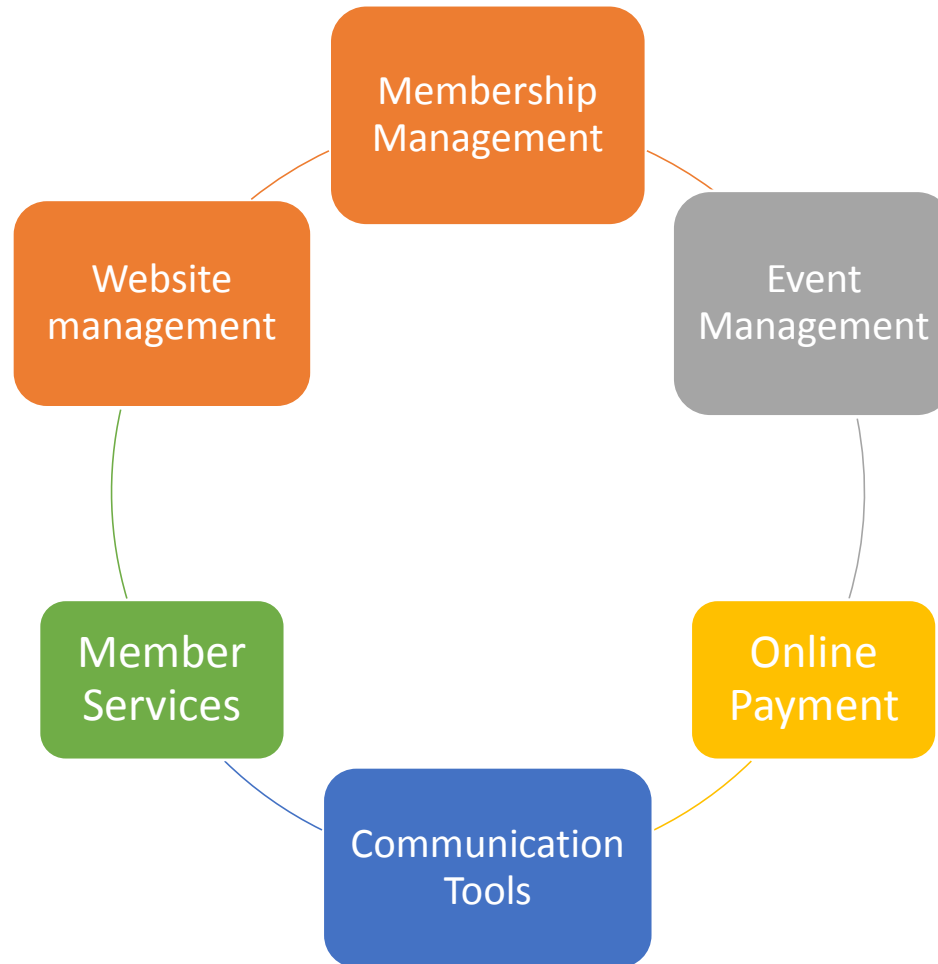


# Chapter Two.

Membership Management Software




## 2.1 What is Membership Management Software?



# 2.1 What is Membership Management Software?


- Membership application and renewal
- Member profile
- Member directory
- Member and contact database

Membership Management 


- Online calendar
- Upcoming events
- Event registration
- Registration reports

Event Management 


- New Memberships and renewals
- Event registration
- Sponsorship fees

Online payment 

- Built-in CMS
- Add new pages or edit existing ones
- Insert images, hyperlinks, and documents
- Hosting
- Member only web pages

Website management and hosting 

- Pay membership fees and renewal
- Update member profile
- Register for events
- Access member-only web pages

Member services 

- Blog
- Forum
- Email blasts and newsletters

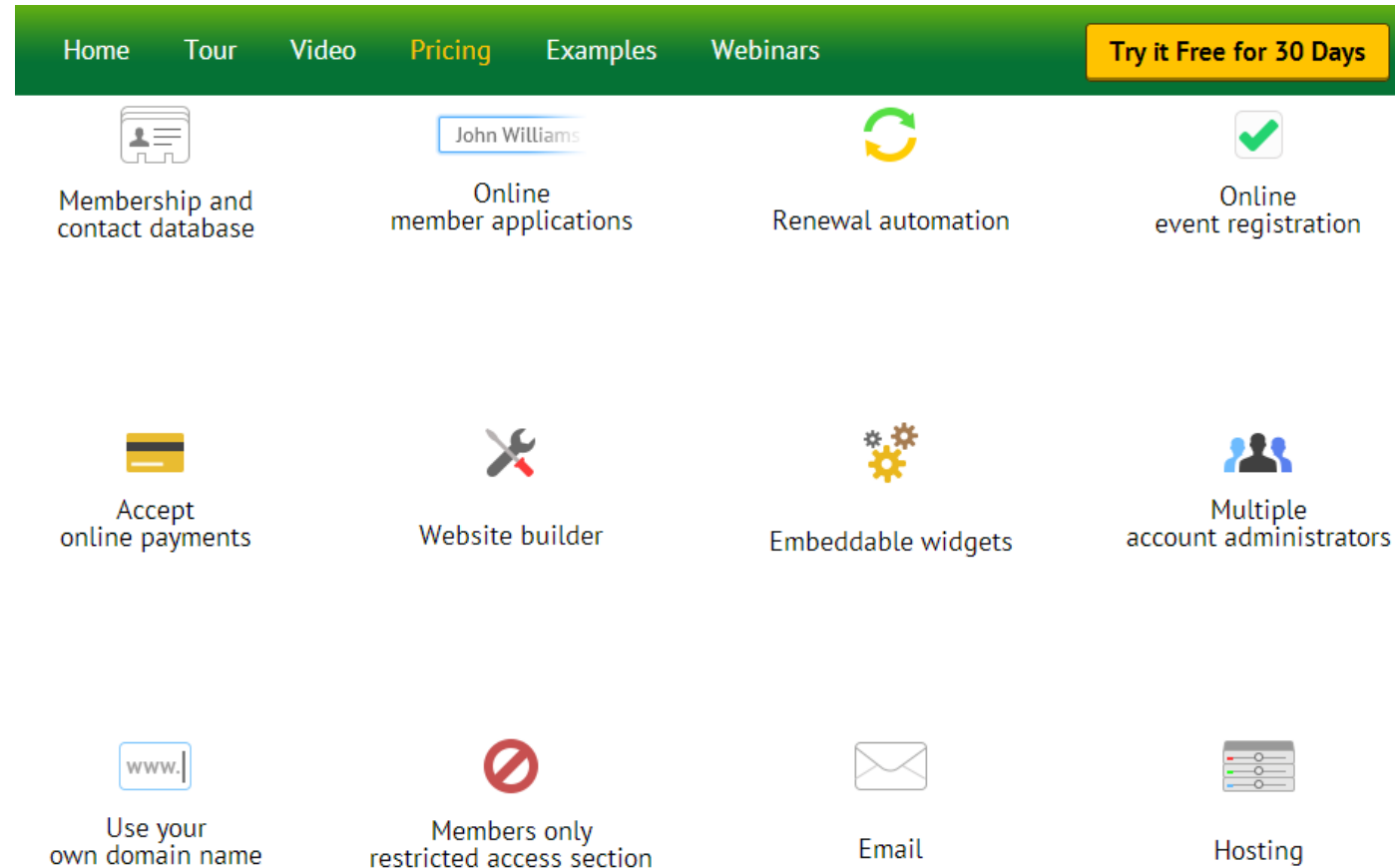
Communication tools 

## 2.2 What is Wild Apricot?

Wild Apricot is a cloud membership management software.

Basic Wild Apricot functionality (community plan @ \$25 per month) include hosting, email, custom domain name, online payment, website builder, online membership application, etc.

Enhanced functionality and larger database size and storage is available for bigger plans (\$50, \$100, and \$200 per month).



## 2.2 What is Wild Apricot?

- Easy, and affordable membership management software
- Ranked #1 in membership management by Capterra
- Subscription plans are \$25, \$50, \$100, and \$200 USD per month (10% discount for annual payment)
- Staff of 50 dedicated to software design, development, maintenance, testing and support
- **Total monthly R&D investment is over \$250,000**
- For more information on Wild Apricot, please visit [www.wildapricot.com](http://www.wildapricot.com).



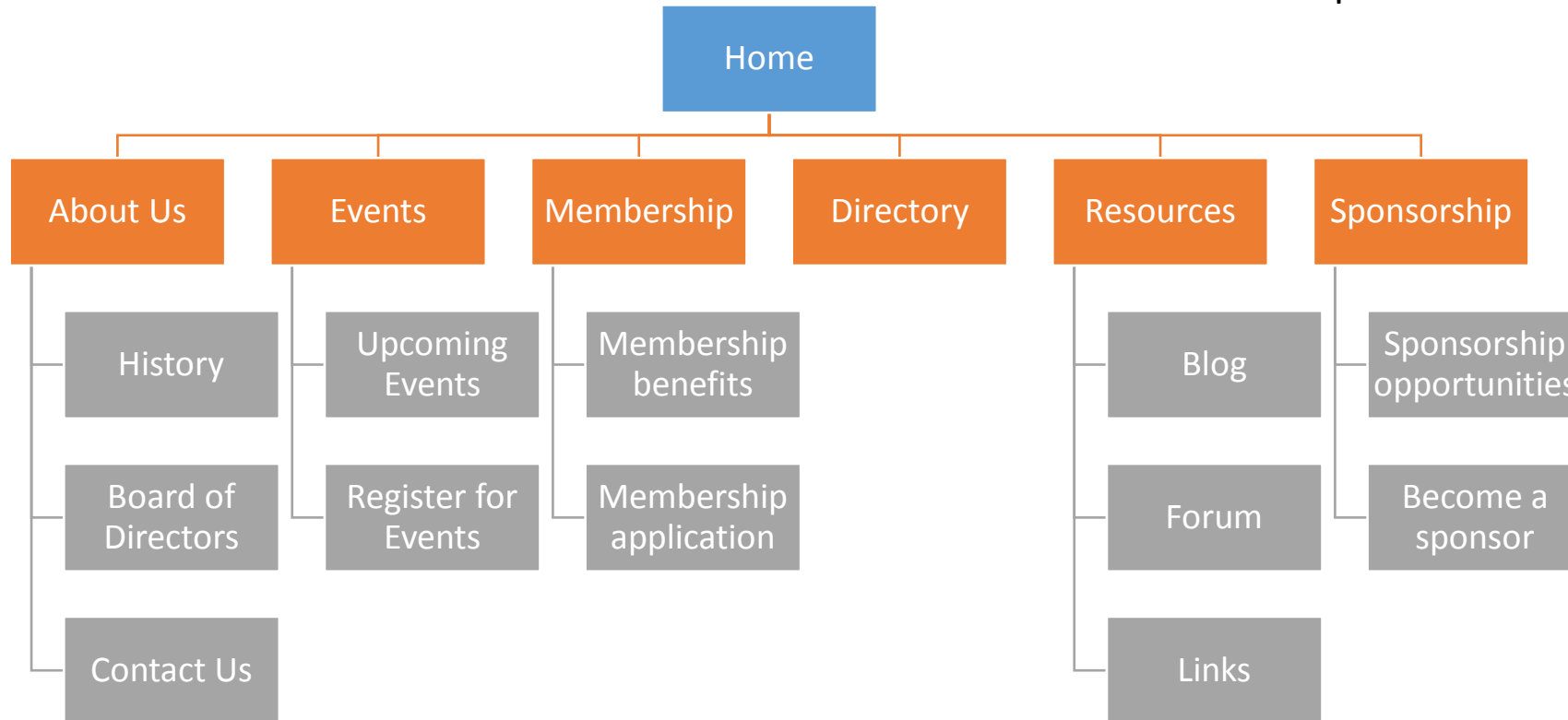
# Chapter 3.

Wild Apricot Design & Development

## 3.1 Preliminary Work

- Signup for Wild Apricot free trial
- Signup for a payment service provider (e.g., PayPal or Authorize.net)
- Register your domain name and email accounts with a domain registrar (e.g. GoDaddy)
- Export your contact database (and clean up as needed)
- Define your membership levels and renewal policy
- Define your membership application and member profile data
- Define your sitemap

Example sitemap for a professional association



## 3.2 Design

- Two options for a website theme:
  - Select a Wild Apricot existing theme (boxed, more generic look. Easy to implement.)
  - Design & customize a theme (professional, more branded look. Requires advanced skills.)



## 3.3 Development

- Setup website pages and upload content
- Customize membership and contact fields
- Import contact database
- Integrate online payment service

## 3.4 Beta Site

- Test website functionality and gather feedback on design and performance from selected group of site testers
- Make adjustments and changes as needed
- Train staff/volunteers on Wild Apricot

## 3.5 Launch

- Design approved. Functionality approved. Site ready for launch.
- Switch your custom domain to Wild Apricot server
- Announce your new website



# Chapter 4.

Next Steps: Outsource your website development to the expert

## 4.1 About Webbright

- Webbright is a trusted Wild Apricot partner and membership solution provider
- We specialize in website design and development on the Wild Apricot platform
- We walk you through the whole process from requirements, to design and development, to consultation and training
- [View our services](#)

## 4.2 Process & Timeline

- A typical website project takes 8-12 weeks \*
- Initial website design turnover is 2-3 weeks.
- Customized training for your organization and staff needs.
- Cloud project management software to keep you informed.

\*Depending on the project scope and collaboration level

## Contact Us Today

- Contact Webbright today to get started
- Call or Text: 804-638-4448
- Email: [info@webbrightservices.com](mailto:info@webbrightservices.com)
- You can have state-of-the-art website in less than 8 weeks!



[For information about our development capabilities, download this guide.](#)