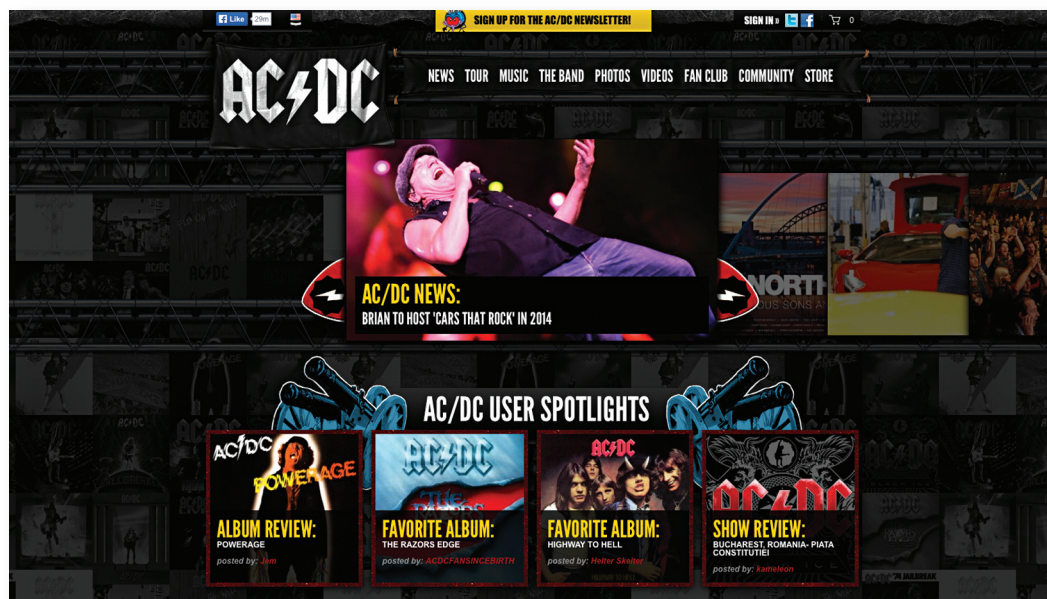


# PRINTED MATTERS

JOHNSON PRESS OF AMERICA • volume 8 • issue 3 • may 2014



## Does your website rock?

Raise your hand if you've ever seen a horrible website. Seems to be unanimous.

It goes without saying that your website is a reflection on your publication, and therefore it makes sense to offer a top notch site to your subscribers, members and other visitors.

"An effective website draws more traffic, resulting in more subscriptions or sales. Plus, people can share information from your site and do your marketing for you," said publishing consultant Rebecca Sterner of Lakeville, Minn. "In some cases, it can even lead to e-news subscriptions, which you can sell advertising for."

Creating and maintaining an effective site does require effort, but it is doable, said Rick Whittington, owner of Rick Whittington Consulting. His Richmond, Va.-based company helps businesses make the most of their Internet presence. "We've seen a website really spur tremendous sales growth if it's done right," Whittington said. "And doing it right means you know who your customers are and what their needs are."



Exceeding our customers' expectations for more than 60 years...

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## What people want

Whittington suggests shifting the focus of your web copy off your publication and placing it, instead, on the people visiting your site. "Instead of saying, 'We do this,' say 'We can help you do this,'" he said. You're implying that you will work with people to help them get what they need.

Sterner believes magazine websites should be driven by the content visitors want or need. "When you release articles to your website, see what pages are visited most." Get a feel for what readers like and give them more of it.

It also helps to research what your audience searches for online. Tools like Google Trends, Yahoo Buzz Log, Bing Trends and AOL Search Trends can help you identify key search words to work into your web copy.

"Search page optimization is so important. Know why people are coming to your site, and link them to the page or article they want, which is not necessarily always your home page," Sterner says.

Keep in mind, too, that your subscribers are not the only people who visit your site.

Social media can be an excellent tool for drawing people to your website, especially during lulls between magazine publication dates. "Say an article had five main points," Whittington said. "You can break it down with five different messages." Each message can be a social media post that includes an invitation and link to your website for those who'd like to read more. "It's really finding ways to re-purpose that content."

You can utilize e-mail to draw people to your site, too. One possibility is to send an e-mail blast to subscribers — and others you'd like to reach — touching on a timely issue related to your

area of interest.

For example, a trade publication could ask about the challenges involved in implementing a new form of technology.

Invite the recipients to share their own experiences, and then share them on your social media sites and your websites.

## Keep it easy

Try to avoid pages that require people to log in before they can access it. "That's a pet peeve of mine," Sterner says. "A lot of publishers did that to get people's e-mail addresses, but a lot of people don't like being asked to log in. If you have a page with personal information, possibly a mailing list for an organization's membership, restrict access. But most web copy should be easy to reach."

As for the appearance of your site, just keep it simple. "I'll be the first to tell you that it doesn't have to be a work of art," Whittington says. "It doesn't have to be overly designed. It just needs to be readable and straightforward."

Do use photos and videos, Sterner adds. People like them, and it gives you another way to draw people to your site via searches.

Don't forget about the people who will be accessing your site with a mobile device, Whittington said. You don't need a separate mobile website. A responsive design will be coded to collapse elegantly on to a small screen. "It's smart enough to know the size of the screen," Whittington explained. "The




*Creative Quarterly is a JPA customer.*

site changes the size of certain elements and adds or removes photos as needed."

If you use a professional for your website, you'll get a better product. "It's almost like taxes: If my taxes are very important to me, I'm going to invest in a CPA. Websites not done by a professional tend to take a long time, and they're not always effective," Whittington said.

Given publishers' busy schedules, websites sometimes are not high on the priority list. But keep in mind that digital tools can be the public's first introduction to your association or publication. They're more than a business card or a place to post digital versions of your magazine. Websites can open the door to an ongoing dialogue and relationship with the people you want to reach, Sterner said. "It all boils down to more engagement with your brand," she said.

So take a moment to assess your website and whether it's outstanding or...um...could use some improvement. If you're in the latter category, find a way to create some time for sprucing it up. You will definitely reap the benefits. 



# One on one

**JPA profile:** Ray Baker, sales representative

**Number of years with JPA:** One year (20 years of experience in the printing industry)

**Why he loves JPA:** "I've worked in printing quite a bit, but what stands out here is the atmosphere," Baker said. "What I love is the amount of pride that every JPA employee puts into his work. Everyone knows his role but goes above



Ray and Sherry




Carson, Ray, Dylan and Brady

and beyond to exceed the customers' expectations."

**Family life:** Baker met his wife of 17 years, Sherry Baker, while they were working together in the graphic arts industry. The couple has three sons: Brady, 15; Carson, 13; and Dylan, 7. Additional family members include the Bakers' mixed breed dogs, Hunter and Jack, both rescued from a shelter. "As a family, we're fans of our local teams: the Cubs, Bears and Blackhawks," Baker said. As far as going to games,

the family loves to watch their local minor league baseball team, the Kane County Cougars. "It's more affordable and geared toward family," Baker said.

**Hobbies:** When Baker is away from work, his priority is time with family. "I tell people, since marriage and kids, my hobbies are Little League and Legos," he said. Dylan recently discovered Baker's old backgammon set and asked to learn the game. They've been playing quite a bit, and Dylan is "learning how to beat me," Baker said.

**One cool fact:** "My first job in a pressroom was with a company that produced all of the Sears brand garment tags," Baker said. He found that he couldn't resist inspecting the company's work during Sears shopping trips. "I used to look at the merchandise and check the tags. I took pride in my work. It wasn't like my name was signed, but I was running the press, and it had long runs." It has been interesting over the years to describe his work during his sons' career days. "Some kids inevitably have a dad who's a fireman or pilot or something cool like that. Try going in and explaining the 4-color process to third graders." 



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## RECIPE

### Victory sliders

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 12-count package of Hawaiian rolls                     | ½ cup of butter, melted              |
| 1 pound of shaved Black Forest ham                       | 1 tablespoon of Worcestershire sauce |
| 12 slices of Gruyere cheese                              | ½ tablespoon of dried minced onion   |
| (can substitute with Gouda or Swiss)                     | ¼ cup of grated parmesan cheese      |
| 1 8-ounce tub of Philadelphia Chive & Onion cream cheese |                                      |

Slice the rolls in half and line a 9x13 inch pan with the bottoms. Divide the ham among the rolls and top each with a cheese slice. Generously spread the cream cheese on the roll tops and then place them on the sliders. Mix the melted butter, Worcestershire sauce and onion. Pour over the sliders and then sprinkle with parmesan cheese. Cover with foil and let them sit for at least 20 minutes. Leave the foil in place and bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes or until warmed through.

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