Website Launch Toolkit

VISION™

Introduction

Congratulations on your new website! Your website launch is the exciting moment when the results of your team's hard work come together. To make the big debut even more successful, we put together this handy Website Launch Tool Kit that includes tips and best practices for effectively promoting your website during and before its launch.

Table of Contents

Promote Your New Website

Your internal staff may know about the launch of the new website, but does your community? How will you communicate the brand new look of your site, improved navigation and new citizen tools to your residents?

Write a Sample Introduction Email
Send an email to residents, staff members, and elected officials about the recent launch of your website. Some key information to include in the email are:

- URL link to your site, especially if the link is new

- Brief outline of some of the new features and functions of the new site, especially if these were non-existent on the old site or have drastically improved

- Ways for visitors to offer feedback

Create a Social Media Campaign
Another way to effectively promote the launch of your new website is through a social media campaign. Notify your followers of your upcoming launch by posting screenshots and highlighting new and improved features and functionality to build excitement around the launch.

The City of San Angelo, Texas did just that during the week they launched their new site. Prior to the launch date, the City posted a screenshot of its new homepage on its Facebook page with the caption "Coming Soon!" to get followers excited about the new look and features of the site.

The City also informed followers of the website's new URL.
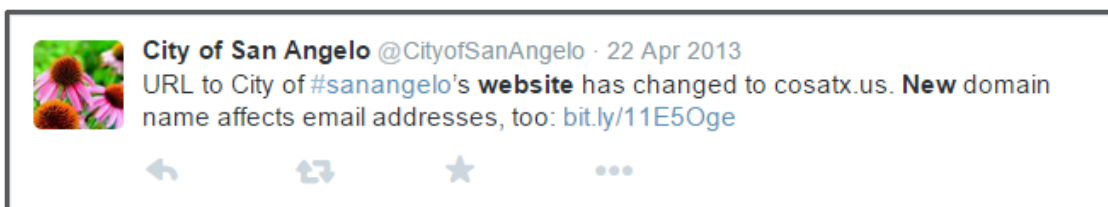
Remember that one Tweet or Facebook post is not enough to get the announcement noticed by the broadest possible spectrum of users. Tweets get buried as others are posted, so you may want to tweet about different facets of the new site on daily basis. San Angelo made sure to continue reminding followers of the new website and included links to their press release, new URL, and recorded videos of how to use the new site.
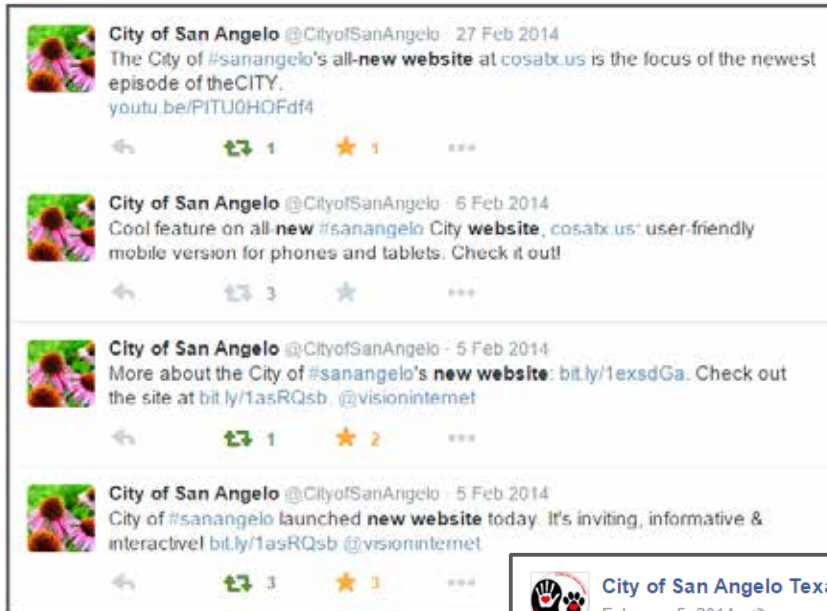
Use Videos

Feeling creative? Take a look at the videos produced by the cities of Yonkers, New York and San Angelo, Texas to introduce their new websites to their communities.

Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano announced the launch of the city's newly rebranded website in a video that was posted right on the homepage. In it, he gave an overview of new user-friendly and interactive features like responsive design, live video streaming, and the ability to sign up for e-notifications.

The City of San Angelo created a similar video to promote the many things residents can do on the new website, from adopting a pet and paying for utility bills to checking out local parks and recreation areas.

Using their homepage image rotation, the City of Santa Clara, California dedicated an entire page to educating residents and visitors to all the new features and functions of their new site. They also created a video tour, detailing changes in the navigation menus, homepage buttons, and more.
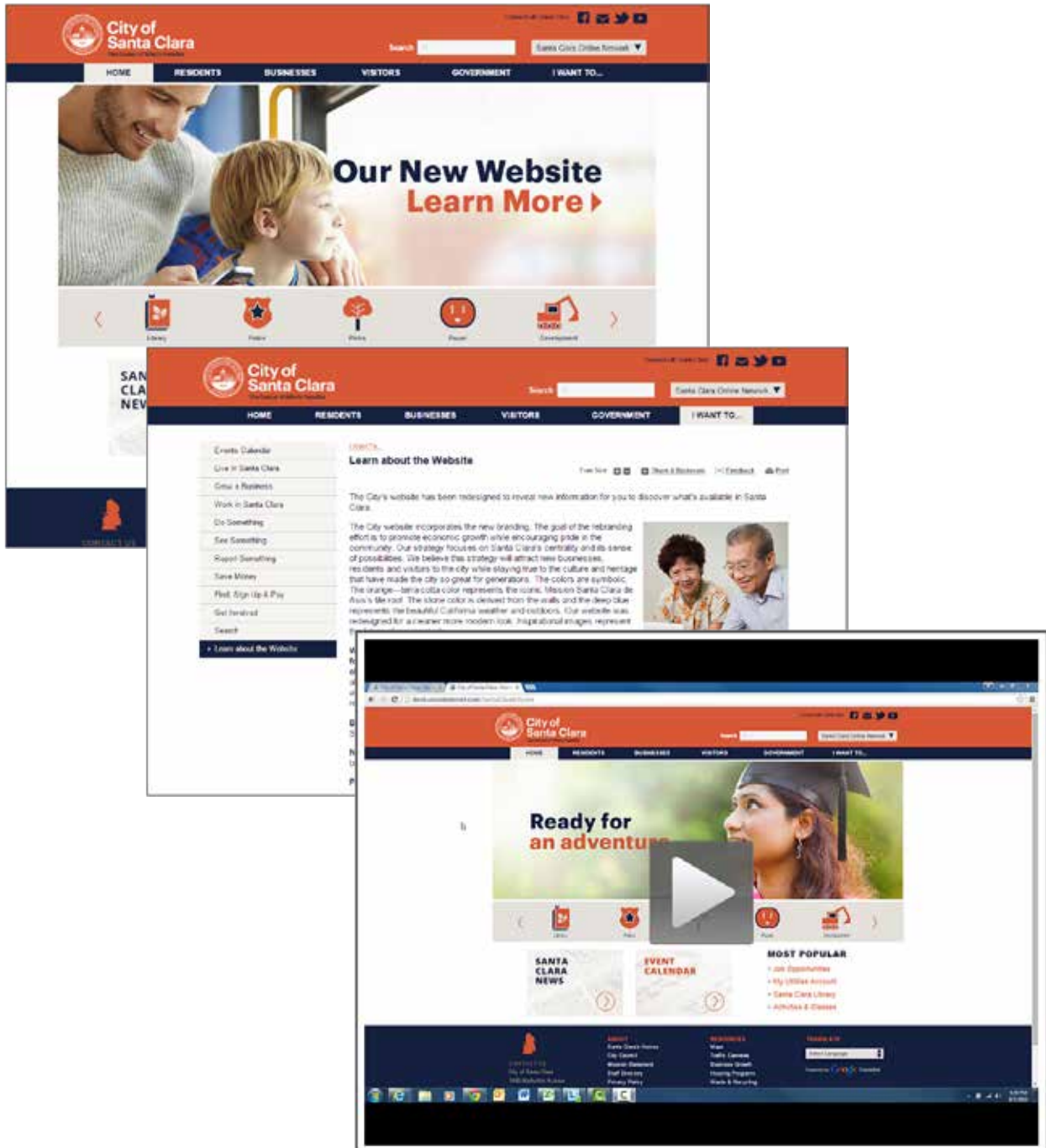
Distribute a Website Launch News Release

Writing and distributing a news release to local media also will help get the word out. Call your local reporters and invite them to interview members of the team involved in developing the new site and offer them a guided tour in person or online. Putting your release on a regional or national newswire will increase SEO, get the word out beyond your local area, and promote tourism.

Timeline for Promotion

Introducing your site to your community is an essential part of the entire website development process, so be sure to include this phase in your overall planning. Here is a recommended timeline for promoting your new website:

• Produce website announcement/introduction video(s)	2-4 weeks before
• Draft email to staff, Council and community	1-2 weeks before
• Review your list of local media contacts for news release distribution and make sure it's up-to-date	2 weeks before
• Prepare your website launch news release	1-2 weeks before
• Call local media and offer them a preview of the site prior to launch date	1 week before
• Distribute news release to media	Day of launch
• Post news release on website	Day of launch
• Post website launch announcements on social media	Day of launch
• Send email to staff, Council and community	Day of launch
• Continue to post on social media	Day of launch
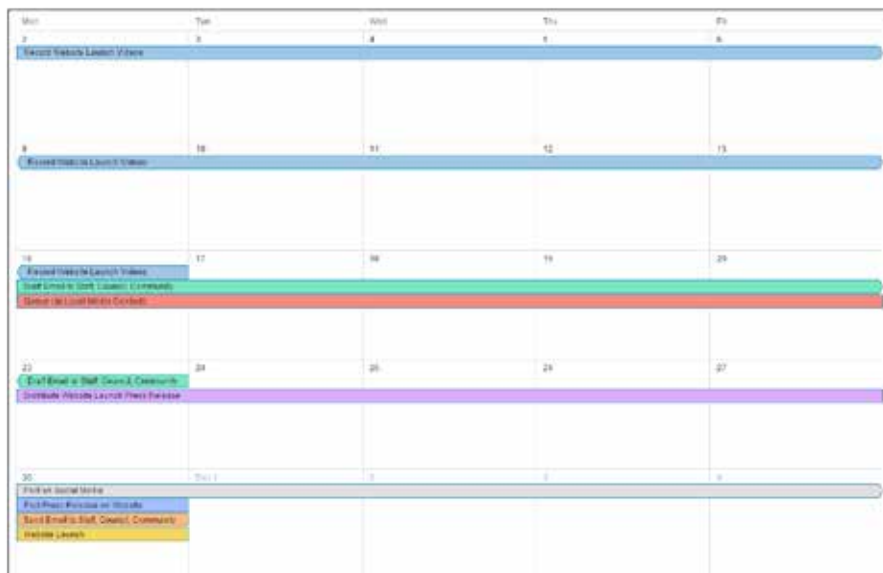
Gather Resident Feedback

What do your residents think about your new website? Gathering feedback on your website will provide you with peace of mind, and ultimately prove to your administration that the new website is well-received and valued by community members.

One way to gather useful feedback is to conduct a survey among constituents asking their opinion of the newly launched site. Ask residents to review key website features such as navigation, mobile experience, and overall aesthetics. If your site hasn't launched yet, consider conducting a survey on your current website to see what constituents like or dislike. With this, you'll have a point of comparison.

The City of Santa Clara, California hosted four community involvement sessions to help residents and visitors become familiar with the new site and allow them to provide feedback.

Website Redesign Phase II: Community Involvement

We are hosting four sessions to help residents orient themselves to the new website and to collect your feedback. Please drop-in and participate. For more information contact webmanager@santaclaraca.gov

Session	Date	Time	Location
1	9/16	10am-12 noon	Technology Center, 1st floor Central Park Library 2635 Homestead Road Santa Clara
2	9/17	6pm-8pm	Technology Center, 1st floor Central Park Library 2635 Homestead Road Santa Clara
3	9/29	1pm-2pm	Senior Center Computer Lab, Rm231 1303 Fremont Street Santa Clara
4	9/30	1pm-2pm	Senior Center Computer Lab, Rm231 1303 Fremont Street Santa Clara

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Alternatively, you can create a website survey and place the link right on your homepage. This way, visitors will see it as soon as they visit your site and offer feedback on their overall experience.

Monterey County, California created a "New Website Survey" button that makes it easy for visitors to access a 10-question survey covering the user experience with their new site. Capturing this data helps to determine what users like or don't like about your site, whether navigation is easy, and whether or not information is easy to find.

Additional Resources

Just because you've launched your website, doesn't mean there aren't more opportunities to improve. Continuing your education on what's next in the digital horizon will help you stay current on technology. Social media platforms come and go, mobile devices change constantly, and Internet browser updates come out regularly.

To help you stay up-to-date with what's next in the digital world, we provide a number of educational resources. Sign-up for email notifications from Vision to get more details at www.visioninternet.com/resources.

For Vision clients, your account manager can help customize your launch plan and provide additional resources to ensure that you're well prepared to introduce your website effectively to your community.