

Public Awareness

PRofile: SIA's New Website

Relatively speaking, the Internet is a new phenomenon. The general population only started using the World Wide Web in the early 1990s—not even 20 years ago! For many people, the Internet has made life easier and more convenient. It allows users to do things without even leaving their chair. From shopping for clothes, groceries and cars, to watching movies, reading the news or just surfing for information, the Internet has become an important part of every day life.

From a business standpoint, it has become a necessity and expectation that all organizations have a website—even little mom-and-pop stores have felt the pressure to have an online presence. The Internet is the first place people go when they want to learn more about a particular organization. In today's ever-changing technological world, websites are a source of information for the visitor, but they are also a powerful marketing tool.

Organizations now use their websites to engage visitors in two-way communication rather than simply pushing information out. They want people to have a vested interest in making regular repeat visits to their sites. One strategy for accomplishing this is to make the site as interesting, interactive and useful as possible. That's exactly what Soroptimist is aiming to do with its brand new site.

Soroptimist recently launched an exciting new organizational website to serve both members and the public at large. Internally, Soroptimist wants to help members run successful clubs so they can meet the mission of improving the lives of women and girls. The tools and resources members and clubs can access through the website is a primary benefit of membership. Externally, Soroptimist aims to increase awareness of the work done in support of the mission, as well as to create an online community with people who share an interest in the Soroptimist mission.

Soroptimist started by creating an engaging homepage. The homepage is the first page a visitor sees when she comes to a website, and gives an all-important first impression of the organization. It is the most important page of the site, and also gets the most hits. If an organization's homepage is strong, it will virtually guarantee that visitors will click through to other pages of the site.

Another goal of the site is to entice people to visit repeatedly. The visitor will be able to tell from the homepage—within seconds—whether the site offers useful information in an organized manner, and if the site is worth visiting more than once. Therefore, SIA designed the homepage to be inviting, visually pleasing and easy to navigate.

Soroptimist's site features fresh content and showcases several interactive components on its homepage that will entice visitors to return. It consists of frequently updated information that includes a "Check it out" section, where members and non-members alike can see what's happening in the organization.

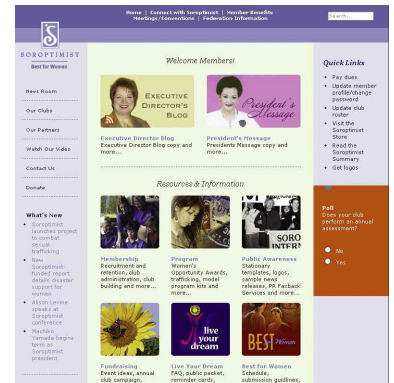
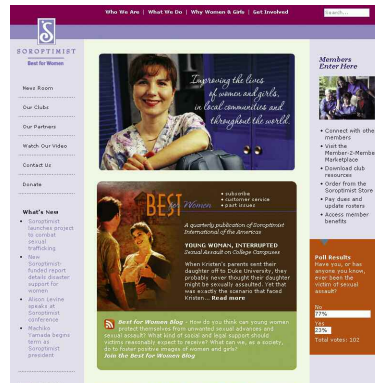
To leverage the publicity potential inherent in SIA's *Best for Women* magazine, the new site displays a feature article in a prominent position on the homepage. The magazine has won numerous awards for its content and design—including the recent APEX award—making it quite a potent marketing tool.

As can be discerned from this issue's article on sexual trafficking, *Best for Women's* feature articles cover topics of relevance and interest to women everywhere. SIA felt that showcasing the feature article of the magazine would be a great way to draw people, especially non-members, to the site.

Not only can visitors to the site read past feature articles from *Best for Women* magazine, but they can post their thoughts about the particular topic in the interactive magazine blog. A blog—short for web log—is a shared online journal where people can post entries. In this case, site visitors can post their thoughts, insights and experiences in reference to the feature article of the magazine. This will help to draw out additional dimensions to the complex subjects covered in the magazine.

Another interactive component is the online poll, which provides a sampling of opinions on a subject pertaining to women. It also provides results in real time so a visitor can see how her response compares to others. Visitors can also view Soroptimist's new video, "Helping Women and Girls to Live Their Dreams," from the homepage.

The new SIA website contains a section where both members and non-members can unite to take action on issues important to women. In addition, Soroptimist is focusing on trafficking and



SIA's vibrant new website will feature two different homepages—one for external audiences (left), and one for members to help them quickly and easily access information.

sexual slavery. Soroptimist is initiating a new project for clubs and members to raise awareness of sexual slavery, which will officially launch on December 2, 2007—the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. Soroptimist's new website provides a place where visitors can go to get more information about trafficking and ideas on what they can do to help stop this problem. There is also a new Act Now section, where visitors can participate in online advocacy around issues affecting women worldwide.

Soroptimist members are urged to use the “Email to a Friend” link on the website to share this important information with other women. Soroptimist is eager to build a social networking community for women (and men) who have an interest in improving the lives of women and girls.

In addition to a spectacular new public face, the new site also boasts an exciting new member area, which provides special features and information just for members. Sporting a savvy new look and feel, this section highlights member news and offers quick links to areas members access most.

One new component is a blog written by Executive Director Leigh Wintz, who will share highlights from headquarters as well as news of her travels throughout the federation. The members' area also hosts its own “What's New” section that provides information about new programs, tools, events and more.

One thing many members will be happy to know is that they only have to log in to perform secure activities, such as paying dues, updating member profiles or updating club rosters. Members no longer have to log in to get club resources for membership, program, public awareness, fundraising and the Live Your Dream campaign. This information is all just a click away—and reorganized in a more intuitive manner, making it easier for members to find what they need instantly.

Another great feature of Soroptimist's new website is the ability to translate all of its pages. A button for the Soroptimist languages is along the top of each page of the site. By clicking the language buttons, visitors can translate each page into Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish and Chinese. This includes many pages in the members area.

As a whole, Soroptimist's new website enables visitors to find what they're looking for more easily and efficiently. Appealing to both members and non-members, the site will serve as a great marketing tool that will help Soroptimist continue to build its dream brand. The hope is that clubs and regions will use the new site to enhance their local marketing efforts as well. Being able to tout a professional, interactive federation site is a powerful way to immediately engage new and prospective members. ☺

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Club and Region Websites

Does your club or region have a website? If so, then you are already creating publicity for your club and engaging the public. If you don't have a site, it is easy to construct one. Don't worry about the website being as elaborate as SIA's— it does not need to be fancy to be effective.

All club and region websites, however, must follow SIA's Club and Region Website Guidelines. Keep the following important points in mind:

- Is the Soroptimist logo and tagline visible from every page?
- Does the site include the Soroptimist mission statement?
- Does it encompass the Soroptimist brand with colors, look and feel?
- Are Soroptimist programs described?
- Does the site feature photographs of members in action?
- Does the navigation bar appear on all pages?
- Does it have a members-only section where personal and secure information is kept?
- Does the site link to the Soroptimist <www.soroptimist.org> and Live Your Dream campaign <www.liveyourdreamcampaign.org> sites?
- Does the club website link to the region website?
- Is the content interesting and up-to-date?
- Is the club or region contact information easy to locate?
- Has someone been appointed to regularly update the site?
- Is the site well-organized and easy to read?

To view or download a copy of Soroptimist's Club and Region Website Guidelines, go to <www.soroptimist.org>.