

## Saving the Sea With Content Solutions

### Summary

We have all been tear-struck by Sara McLachlan's [American Society of Prevention and Cruelty of Animals](#), or ASPCA, commercial. But have you ever noticed it is *still* unbearable without her angelic melody? Visuals. It is seen on every successful organization's advertisements and website. In fact, if you follow that ASPCA link, you will be greeted by the cutest suffering kitten ever and want to sell your car to donate and change the kitten's life. This is the impact of emotionally engaging content. Business-wise, it is also a great opportunity to show your audience where the donations go and the cause in which your organization supports. That is the problem I am here to solve today as the [Save the Sea Turtle Site Overhaul Project](#) has essentially become parallel to the [Save The Sea Turtle Organization In Its Entirety Project](#). Within the next few sections we will see together how visual changes to a website can save an organization and, in turn, *save the sea turtles*.

Oh, additionally, do *not* stay too long on that ASPCA site. The distressed kitten image will soon slide into a puffy-eyed puppy that is terribly in need and that is just absolutely unbearable. You have been warned.

## Backstory

I have worked on many projects with non-profit organizations and even more specifically for animals. Organizations, charities and nonprofits are some of my most-loved projects because an enhanced website dedicated to the user experience equates to an enhanced marketing strategy that engages the user into the awe-inspiring workings of nonprofits. I truly enjoy helping those with the hearts to wield all of their efforts and income for a group of animals or people that cannot better help themselves. What is knowledge if not used in the most impactful ways? Save the Sea Turtles is just that. They are continuously helping promote Sea Turtle research and fund Marine Biology students at Florida Atlantic University to participate in expeditions on oceanic endeavours and Sea Turtle projects.

I volunteer these skills as much as I can while I test all of my user experience and development knowledge into my day job in the Healthcare industry. That is, taking medical app concepts, strategizing workflows, refiguring information architecture, designing and testing highly technical interfaces and producing applications that are best suited for their user group. Dealing with such data-heavy architectures constantly will benefit me in redesigning the Save the Sea Turtles interface that contains research articles, academic news papers and dense information loads.

Digitally, Save the Sea Turtles is struggling. An outdated design leads to a lack of credibility with their users. Information overload swallows the site with practically any user flow a visitor can attempt. Nothing is consistent with multiple features, external links and inaccessible design; this creates an inefficient design *and* development

process. The potential of the site could not be set in a better time. With campaigns left and right to [save our oceans](#), Save the Sea Turtles has a golden opportunity to broaden the outreach out to those aching hearts, increase donors for research and make a wave in the industry of environmental movements.

## **Problem**

The main problem focus I'll be covering is content. You got the Sara McLachlan rundown on how impactful imagery can be, but what about the rest?

Let's go for a ride.

Don't you find yourself taking action when you feel empowered by language? “DONATE” buttons are a wonderful example as to how an action button can really induce a reaction. This is as opposed to Save the Sea Turtle’s current circumstance where there are multiple donate options in an immense button cluster and the donate buttons are nouns. “Cash Donation”, “Boat Donation”, “How You Can Help” etc...not ideal.

Another problematic content component is copywriting. There is a very academic feel to the way things are written throughout the site. In fact, in a particular user test we conducted, results found that the user *commented* on the academic wording and how “below” he had felt scouring the site for information about the organization. Making site visitors feel less-than is a great way to lose them.

## Solution

Fortunately, there are overlaps in different problems and their solutions in this site reconfiguration. For instance, the problem of having an outdated visual design with one solution being the implementation of additional visual graphics will also help enhance the site content. But we also want to take measures that *ensure* this problem receives attention.

Re-working all action link labels into actual verbs will improve their click rate and appear more convincing. The “How You Can Help” page features a long list on ‘-ing’ suffixed donation options. At least they move away from the “action” nouns. Something as simple as removing their suffixes will turn them into powerful actions. And, of course, modifying them so they’re not in a stacked list arrangement.

Allow me to confirm that your head is with me on this:

A little boy is standing in his yard with a sign that reads “Lemonade Stand”. That just establishes a fact and gives you, as the passerby, a mere option. It really does not give you any idea to actually administer action. On the other side of the road there is a boy with a sign that reads “Buy Lemonade!”. Now you think, “Huh, well it is hot out. And I can spend a buck to help this little kid out and cool off! *I can do that.*” See what just happened? You fell for the power of the verb! Give the user an option that they are capable of doing. As if the sign were to have said, “buy some lemonade, you are certainly capable of doing that”. Humans need to be reminded that they can do things. It

is in our nature to react that way and it is exactly [why buttons are designed the way they are](#). Never thought a button could be so complex before, huh?

But wait, there's more!

This one is a bit simpler to understand so we will let the little lemonade boy be for now. Academic literature is great when speaking to an academic, writing for an academic, defending a thesis - all things that this site is not reliant on. Some traffic is from professors, other biology experts and students, however that certainly does not cover the sum of it. Moreover, the organization cannot be dependent on donations solely from academics. With the right atmosphere, this site has potential to intrigue a massive spectrum of users. This means to provide a cushion in the way in which news articles and copywriting is established. Circling back to emotion, when text is *too* scientifically worded, it removes the empathy from it and really creates no reaction in the average user.

When incorporating imagery, Save the Sea Turtles has an amazing advantage. Not all animal charities can say that they have the opportunity to teleport the user into another world - the ocean. Take [Sea Legacy](#) for example. Out of all the market research we performed, Sea Legacy really propelled me straight into the depth and dark underworld of the ocean with all of its beauty, magic and darkness. This is thanks to the palette and interaction of the site. With the darker color schema, a visit to their site really does feel like a visit to another world. Up here, on land, we have Google and Facebook and

Twitter, all bright and white things. But down there? Down there they have Sea Legacy and all its dark preeminence.

Not convinced? Let us take another imaginative trip then, shall we?

Have you ever been to an aquarium? Envision walking through that aquarium tunnel. It's dark, mysterious, blue-tinted and mystical. You could stand there for hours just taking it all in. An aquarium designed like, say, IKEA would not fulfill the same effect. It would feel more like a museum or classroom rather than immersively broadcasting its audience to another atmosphere.

Save the Sea Turtles has the potential to reach that level of prowess when populated with an impactful ambience, action-inducing opportunities and understandable, yet emotional, copywriting.

## **Expected Outcome**

The greatest benefit of an online presence for non-profits is the ability to raise awareness and seek help and donations. While raising awareness and dispensing knowledge on specific topics is wonderful, the feedback has a more unseen effect than seeing an increase in donations.

Engaging the users with content that evokes emotion and action is an almost guaranteed way to increase the donor rate which gives back to the sea turtles and

research, increasing the outreach of the entire organization and the difference they would then be making would multiply.

Do not think it is all about the money. Ways to give back extends from cash donations to boat donations, volunteering, becoming an annual member and then some. All of these approaches can permit the organization to see exponential growth if executed in the right way. Essentially all I am here to say is, if (in this case) you are *for* the users, you are just as much *for* the sea turtles.