Content Strategy Report
Allen Neighborhood Center

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Background

The Allen Neighborhood Center (ANC) is a Lansing organization dedicated to improving capacity in the Eastside neighborhood. It offers classes and programs focused on housing, food and nutrition, and neighborhood revitalization and rebuilding. The ANC offices serve as a meeting space for smaller neighborhood groups. The organization also hosts the Allen Street Farmers Market, which provides the community with access to fresh, healthy produce.

The ANC website (http://allenneighborhoodcenter.org/) serves as a source of information about the various programs and resources offered by the organization. We have analyzed the current content of the website and created a strategy addressing issues of organization, redundancy, and content presentation. These recommendations will help the website better serve the mission of such an active and important Lansing organization.

Objectives

Based on the ANC's website, the mission of the organization is to "serve as a hub for neighborhood education and capacity building. We offer activities that promote the health, safety, and stability of families and neighborhoods on the Eastside of Lansing."

The organization provides:
- Support for organized neighborhood groups: technical assistance, meeting space, use of copy machine and fax.
- A neighborhood-based, comprehensive information and referral service, linking residents to housing, health, and human service providers throughout the area.
- A local 'learning space' for residents of all ages, featuring a variety of classes and programs.

The objectives of the website are:
- To provide information about programs.
- To enhance capacity building of the neighborhood and its residents.
- To present the Eastside as a vibrant, active community.

Audit:

Website Objectives of the ANC:

- To provide information about programs.
- To enhance capacity building of the neighborhood and its residents.
- To present the Eastside as a vibrant, active community.

Approach & Methods

We broke the website down into three parts and comprehensively analyzed each page of the website. This gave us an in-depth knowledge of the website and the objectives of the organization. We assessed the different types of content found on the website (text, images, internal and external links, etc.) and analyzed the relevancy of that content and its location to create a spreadsheet. When discussing our findings, we noticed that the website lacked a succinct organizational structure and that some content was redundant or misplaced. We tackled the issues of redundant information within the website first , then developed a new method of organizing the content in a way that would better communicate the mission of the ANC and its goals for the website.

Spreadsheet Walkthrough

Each item on the ANC website was given a number. The main navigational tabs were given a number 1-8. Subpages were indicated with decimal extensions. Extensions continued for other types of content within the subpage. For example:

3.0 = Main navigational tab, "Eastside"
3.1= Subpage, "Neighborhoods"
3.1.2= Internal link, "Contacts"

The page name, page description, and url of the page are provided. We also included the document type (HTML, PDF, JPG, etc.), and assessed the quality, redundancy and intended audience of the page, determining whether the content should be moved, deleted, or revised. We included notes on each item to account for broken links or other notable issues associated with the content.

Ineffective Content

Overview of Recommendations

We identified four main issues and developed recommendations that better use the current content to portray the objectives of the organization. These issues are:

- Redundant Information - This is information that occurs multiple times on the website without adding substance. This can led to confusion when trying to navigate the website. Where this occurs we suggest omitting the redundant information.
- Mislabeling / Misrepresentation of content – This is information on the page that does not relate to the title of the page. This may cause users to be misinformed about the the information on the website, and users may become frustrated when trying to find information. We suggest, when appropriate, either changing the page title or revising the data in the page to better reflect the page title.
- Organization of Pages - In some instances information that is important to the page is hard to locate or there is information include in a page that could fit better under a different page. This causes the information to be overlooked by users. We suggest moving important information to a more prominent location on the page and if necessary, moving it to a more suitable existing page.
- Organization of Website - The website contains a wealth information, but that information can be difficult to locate, resulting in users being unable to utilize it. We suggest regrouping information to better fit the program description and objectives set by ANC. This is our most extensive recommendation. We put it at the end of the audit because the first three areas of recommendations reference the current layout and can be made within this layout. The reorganization would then move the revised and current content in a way that better reflects the objectives of the website.

Future Maintenance

Because the content of ANC is created by many different people, certain steps should be taken before something is posted in order to ensure the content aligns with the mission of the website.

When a new page is created, it should first be approved by Joan, or a delegate. Two questions should be asked before approval: "Does this page align with the goals of the website?" And "does this page contain information that will stay relevant for a long period of time?" If it is approved, the new page should be place under a relevant tab. If the information is important, but will not remain relevant for long enough to warrant its own link in the main navigation, the information should be placed within a relevant page.

The newsfeed should be updated regularly to reflect the most current events. Before an updated is posted to the newsfeed, it should be edited and approved by Heather, or the designated poster, to ensure the voice and style remain consistent. There should be a weekly check that newsfeed posts are consistent in style and tone.

It is also important that the entire website stays up-to-date. A monthly check on the website should be conducted to confirm all the content is still relevant and usable. This includes checking internal and external links to ensure they remain active, and confirming pages created by someone who has since left ANC are still being updated with correct, and timely information.