

# National Communication Association Content Strategy Report

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## Introduction

This content strategy report is focused on three key areas: Structure and Navigation, Governance and Success, and Content and Editorial.

For each of the above themes, I'll point out observations and challenges and offer suggestions for improvement. Where possible, I'll include screenshots to provide examples of existing issues or to provide improvement inspiration.

## Structure and Navigation

This section discusses NCA's website navigation and overall structure of individual pages.

**Challenge: Your website lacks clear navigation guidance for different user groups.**

It's unclear how your various website visitors—students, teachers, and communication professionals—should be interacting with your website and exploring your website.

**Recommendation: Create clear calls-to-action for each primary user type.**

Your new website layout will support each user group with clear pathways to information. To better support your primary audience members, use language that's clear, actionable, and straightforward.

For example, a CTA that leads a professional to become a member could say "Join NCA" or "Become a Member".

## Challenge: Overly busy landing pages and few engaging images.

Many of your landing pages are text-heavy and are full of additional side bars, pulling attention away from the most important details. Additionally, the lack of subheadings and overuse of drop-down sections makes it hard to skim and scan.

There are also very few authentic images throughout your site.

### Example: Overly busy landing page ([Memberships and Interest Groups](#))

The screenshot shows the National Communication Association (NCA) website's membership page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the NCA logo and the text "NATIONAL COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION". To the right of the logo are two buttons: "JOIN / RENEW" and "FIND / POST JOB". Below the navigation bar is a horizontal menu with six categories: "About NCA", "Convention & Events", "Publications & Digital Resources", "Academic & Professional Resources", "Advocacy & Public Engagement", and "Student and Early Career".

The main content area is titled "MEMBERSHIP AND INTEREST GROUPS". It features a collage of six images: a woman and a child reading, a rolled-up diploma, a group of people in professional attire, a woman speaking at a podium, a man and a woman in conversation, and a woman speaking at a podium. To the right of the collage is a sidebar titled "IN THIS SECTION" with three links: "Frequently Asked Membership Questions", "Member Directory", and "NCA Interest Groups".

Below the collage is a section titled "Dues Increase Effective - January 26, 2024" with a sub-heading "Dues Increase Policy" and a note "Approved by the Legislative Assembly November 2016". The text explains that dues will be raised every three years to keep pace with inflation. Below this is a call to action: "If you wish to renew your membership, please log in. If you would like to join as a new member, please select the appropriate membership category below." This is followed by a dropdown menu titled "INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIPS" with two options: "> Regular Membership" and "> Student Membership".

On the right side of the page, there are three large, prominent buttons: "JOIN", "RENEW", and "PROFILE INFO". Below the "RENEW" button is a note: "Ensure your contact information is correct by clicking the button below." The overall layout is cluttered with many elements competing for attention.

In the example above, the membership page is overloaded with information. While there are clear CTAs to join and renew, the various drop-downs and side bars pull attention away from the most important action, which should be to learn about membership and join.

**Recommendations: Smaller paragraphs, more subheadings with context, fewer drop-downs, and more engaging infographics and images.**

Shorten your paragraphs to 2-3 sentences, include more contextual headings and subheadings, and increase white space on the page. These elements will improve your page structure and make it easier for users to scan and skim.

Remove your drop-down sections and instead list these on the page as headings and subheadings, employing the use of bullet points where possible. Think more white space across the entire website.

Reduce or remove the information contained in the sidebars to simplify each page.

## **Governance and Success**

This section reviews NCA's content governance, workflow, and systems.

**Challenge: The current CMS makes it difficult to update the site with new content.**

Your current CMS, Drupal 7, requires a roundabout way of uploading new information to the site, making it cumbersome and time-consuming to update.

**Recommendation: Streamline editorial tasks and processes with your team.**

Continue to lean on Asana to help streamline your editorial processes. While you'll eventually move away from Drupal, the more you can standardize the content workflow process, the better. Ideally you'll have an airtight system for content creation and publication outside of the CMS so when it comes time to publish, you'll have everything you need.

**Challenge: Several content creators and varying writing styles.**

You have content coming from several different team members, each with their own writing and editing style.

**Recommendation: Update your style guide and share with all content creators at NCA.**

Style guides should be living documents and updated at least yearly. This includes a glossary, as terms can change over time and it's important that the style guide reflects those changes.

Ensure every content creator on your team has access to the guide. This will improve consistent voice and tone and make it easier for you to copy edit when it comes time to publish.

## Content and Editorial

This section reviews NCA's content and editorial practices.

**Challenge: Your homepage content does very little to establish trust with new users.**

There's a lack of trust-building content on your homepage, making new users dubious or slow to ingest your content.

**Recommendation: Create a welcome message and include testimonials to inspire trust.**

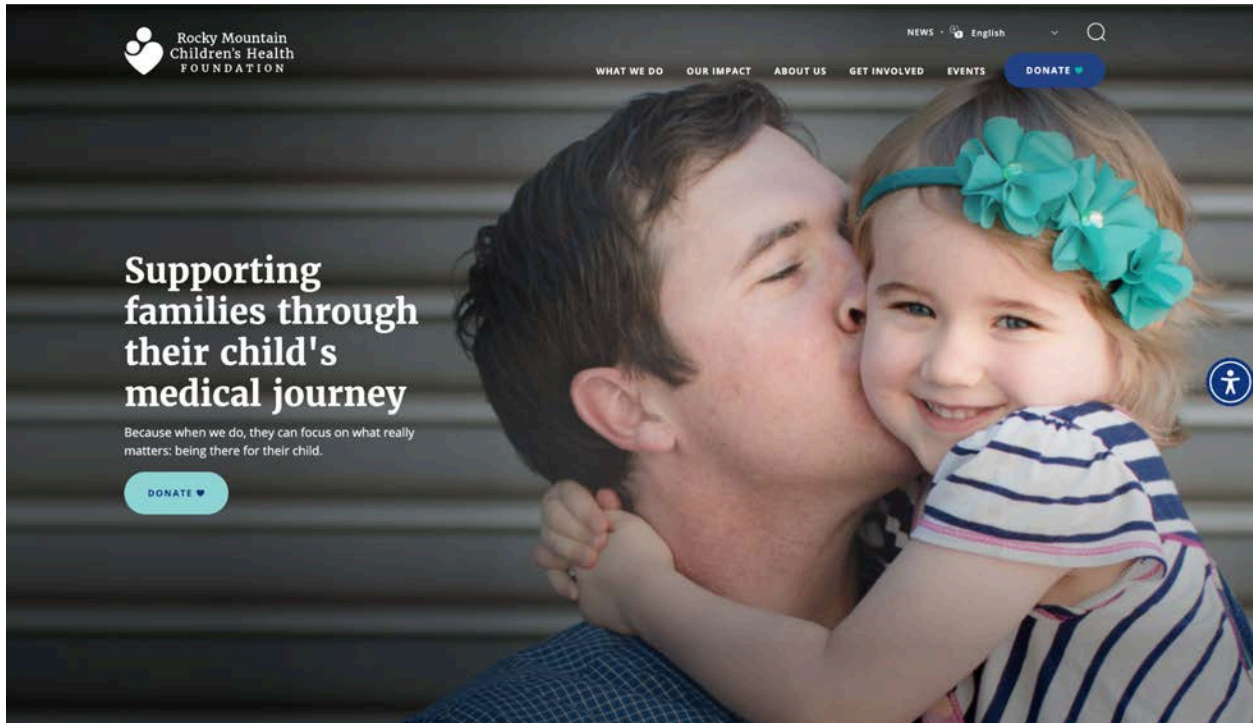
The website needs a welcome message of one or two sentences that makes users feel they are in the right place.

New users will appreciate reading about the impact of NCA through genuine testimonials. Compile the most powerful/relatable and include real names or images to go along with the quote or story to further instill trust.

Examples of welcome messages that I think are powerful (and former Elevation content strategy clients!):

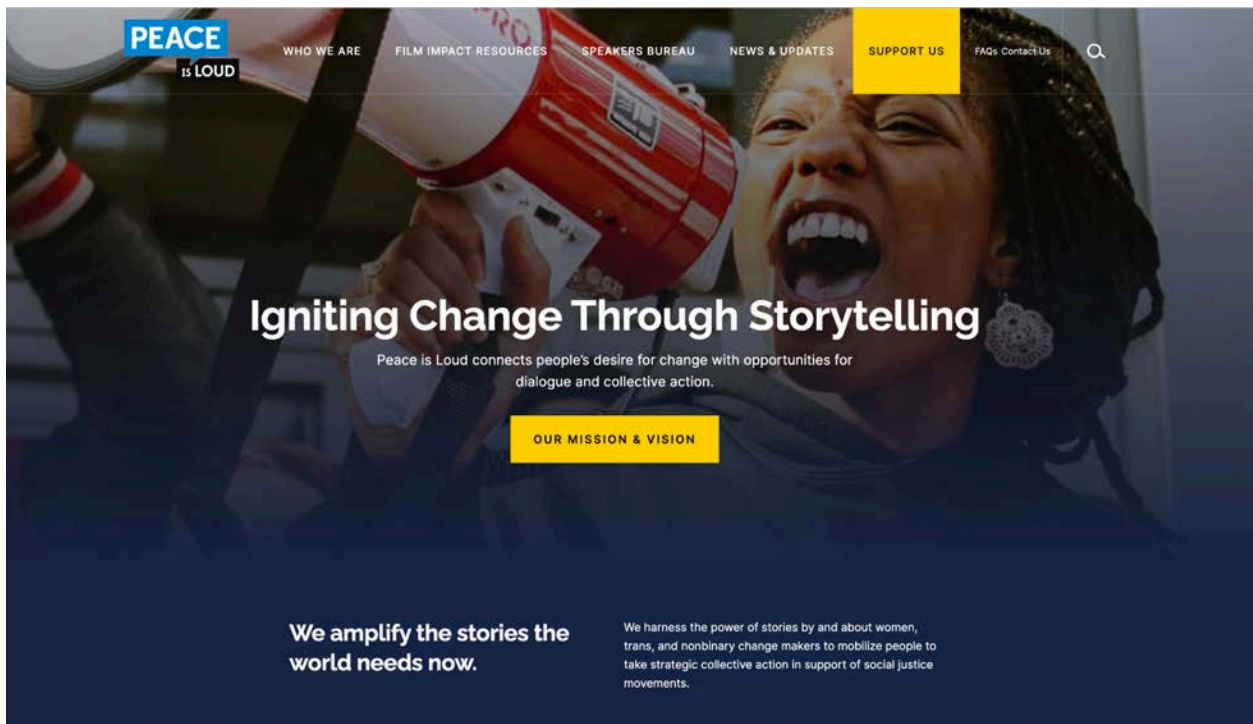
[Rocky Mountain Children's Health Foundation](#)

"Supporting families through their child's medical journey"



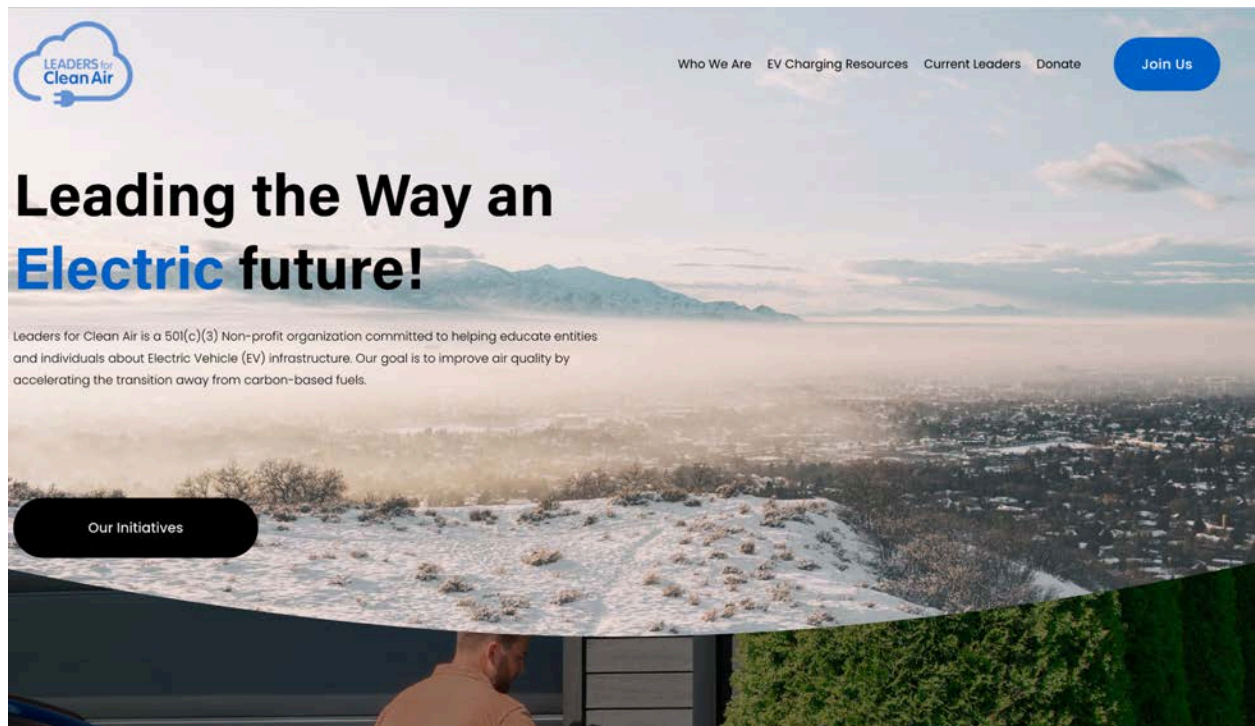
## [Peace is Loud](#)

"Igniting change through storytelling"



## [Leaders for Clean Air](#)

“Leading the way to an electric future”



**Challenge: Lack of imagery and infographics.**

There's a lack of engaging imagery and infographics throughout the site.

**Recommendation: Include high-quality images of real people and source high-quality infographics.**

Because NCA has such a depth of knowledge and insight into the communication industry, you have a real opportunity to create infographics that share powerful findings and information. Harness this information by turning it into engaging infographics.

Be sure to include high-quality images of your team and the people you work with. Stock imagery is not recommended and won't help build trust for your website visitors.

**Challenge: Content lacks context and doesn't properly communicate important details.**

While there's an abundance of information on the site, some key details are difficult to find.

For example, on the [NCA 110th Conference page](#), there's not much information describing what the conference is and how people can join. There are CTAs for submissions and reviewers, but what exactly are people submitting and reviewing? These aren't well described.

## NCA ANNUAL CONVENTION

Enable Social Sharing

### NCA 110th Annual Convention: Communication for Greater Regard



NOVEMBER 21 - 24, 2024  
New Orleans, LA

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

CALL FOR REVIEWERS

**New and Coming to NCA in 2024 Are Virtual Learning Opportunities (VLOs)** As we prepare for our 110<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention experience, VLOs are being created to encourage a vibrant, year-long conversation around the 2024 convention theme, "Communication for Greater Regard." VLOs are added-value opportunities for members to learn, interact, and connect. They are designed to showcase member expertise and to enhance member learning among focal groups and/or focal topics. VLO types include a masterclass (less than one hour), an intensive (two to three hours), and a consortium (four hours). Planning is underway to schedule several VLOs leading up to the 2024 convention with the opportunity for in-person meet ups in New Orleans at the convention. Want to learn more or get involved in the creation of VLOs? Do you have suggestions for a VLO focal topic, expertise you would like to share in a VLO, or a focal group you would like to convene for a VLO? Share your insights and ideas today with the VLOs Planning Team.



#### A Message From the First Vice President

AS WE CELEBRATE THE 110TH ANNIVERSARY OF NCA ANNUAL CONVENTIONS,

the 2024 Convention theme calls us to convene around "Communication for Greater Regard." Regard is a word of Old French origin and is connected historically to New Orleans by the city's fertile French roots—making this remarkable city an ideal location for learning, discussing, and contemplating communication for greater regard.

Greater regard is a process of cultivating care and concern; that which we regard is deemed important, granted value, and given consideration. To be a "regarder" is to be one who watches, takes notice, and is expressive, often by increasing with thoughtful intensity amid a climate where less use of regard is occurring.

Communication is both the conduit and manifestation for greater regard. For our 110th Annual Convention, we invite thought-provoking papers, panels, pre-conferences, posters, and programming that engage the three-fold nature of our collective, magnificent stewardship of communication for greater regard: (1) greater regard for what has been before us, (2) greater regard for what is presently around us, and (3) greater regard for what will be beyond us. A variety of questions and approaches, which are often both complementary and competing, exist for exploring this theme including: What does it seem the discipline has regarded for 100+ years? How does communication function in today's climate to enrich greater regard, how has this shifted over the years, or does it need to shift in the future? How is greater regard currently exhibited in communication research, teaching, service, and practice? How are priorities and power structures shaped in the discipline and/or in human communication endeavors through greater regard or to create greater regard? What intentional contributions should we be actively undertaking to foster greater regard?

Thank you for the honor of serving you and our Association. I look forward to seeing you next year in New Orleans, which will be 30 years since my first NCA convention that was held in the same city. As communication scholars, educators, and practitioners, we must continue to be "regarders" who hold space for conversations that probe what greater regard and disregard look like in 2024 and beyond.



Jeanetta D. Sims

## Recommendation: Ensure every action item has appropriate context.

As you review content to pull onto the new site, take an outsider's perspective: Look at every CTA and every page and ask yourself, "If I knew nothing about NCA, would this page make sense to me?" Sometimes we're almost too connected to our work and websites and can't see glaring omissions.

For example, on the conference page, rather than a large graphic that takes up most of the "above the fold" space, use a smaller graphic and instead describe what the conference is and who it's for. Describe what you want people to do, such as: register to attend, submit a paper or research study, or apply to be a reviewer.

When you provide context, you help users feel confident that they're in the right place and on the right path.