

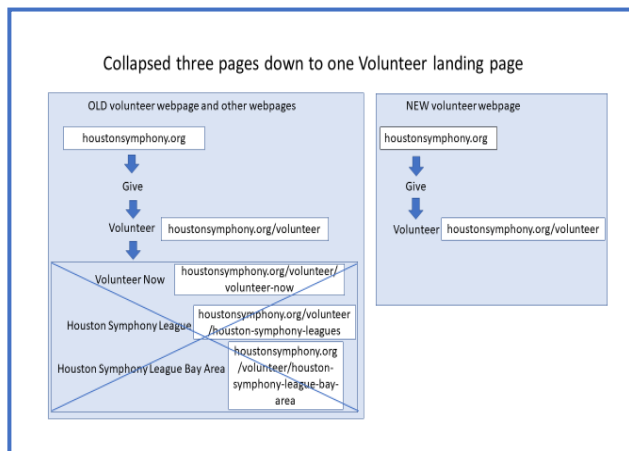
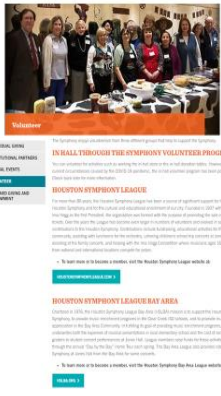
Communications/Technology

Interface Improvements Between Houston Symphony and League Websites

New Volunteer webpage!

<https://houstonSymphony.org/volunteer/>

- Clear concise descriptions
- Big buttons to find us and HSL Bay Area (and maybe in hall when it is available again)
- All three options are on one page so are easier to find (and compare)
- Consistent format with other Symphony pages
- Consistent format between the three volunteer option sections
- Payment page is now found only on our website
- Modern format
- Should increase our website traffic which could possibly mean we will get more questions and more members!



Houston Symphony League
615 Louisiana St., Ste. 102
Houston, Texas 77002

Orchestra Size: Group 1

Metro Houston: 6.4 million

Presenter: April Lykos
aprillykos@aol.com
(713) 516-2270



Purpose of the Project:

From their inception problems existed with the interface between the websites of the Houston Symphony and the Houston Symphony League. Specifically, it was very difficult to navigate between the two; to find how to volunteer with the League; to pay for League events; to discover general information about the League and its membership opportunities and mission. Further, a general internet search for the "Houston Symphony League" led to dead ends and incorrect links. The need for the Project was evident in the incessant complaints from all our stakeholders: patrons, volunteers, donors and general public looking for information.

The success of this project centered upon the collaboration between the two organizations, including meetings, strategy and execution by both organizations. Worth noting is the fact that this did not require any money because of the amazingly talented volunteers within the League who understood the problems, needs and fixes and could successfully communicate with all parties, including the Symphony staff professionals to resolve these issues.

Goals and Desired Outcomes:

1. To successfully ensure that an internet search for "Houston Symphony League" would lead to a valid landing paged.
2. To update and modernize the old formatted Symphony League page which resided within the newly updated Houston Symphony website.
3. To ensure that the updated League page on the Symphony site comported with the updated League website
4. To fix the pay portal on the League website and make it compatible with the symphony's pay portal.
5. To do all the above without money allocated for the upgrades: i.e., FREE.

How the Project was developed:

A savvy volunteer, Leslie, Nossaman, aware of the frustrations caused by inefficient websites brought the issues and a detailed plan to fix them to the League President. Leslie's detailed PowerPoint was subsequently presented to the League's Strategic Planning Committee which made it their mission for the year.

Next step – the PowerPoint presentation was presented to a former Chairman of the Board and current Houston Symphony Board member, who is also a major donor to ensure our communications were clear.

Then it was presented to management and the staff responsible for the website.

All parties understood and agreed the changes needed to be made. As a matter of fact, the staff was enthusiastic and quick to respond positively.

Financial Information:

Budget:	\$0.00
Expenses:	\$0.00
Income:	Incalculable

No expenses were incurred as the work was all done by volunteers and staff. The Symphony did not consider the work done by the staff on this project to be chargeable because it enhanced their site as well.

The newfound ease of paying for all events on line enhances the bottom-line of both organizations. Finances are also enhanced when an organization's brand is greatly improved through making webpages user friendly.

Timeline:

October 2020 – March 2021

In the summer of 2020 frustrations with the website peaked. We were in pandemic mode and more members were using our website than ever before and becoming frustrated. Additionally, because of Covid, the staff to help the League was diminished. In October 2020 a plan was hatched. Throughout the months we followed our plan. It began with the chain of command through the League. We then perfected our "pitch" by presenting our PowerPoint and reasoning to an influential board member who would give us candid advice. From there it went to management which dedicated the website administrator of the marketing team to the project. After following our plan to present via the chains of command towards the end, March 2021, it all happened quite quickly.

Volunteer Requirements:

Total Volunteer Hours – 140 (60 hours - League website; 80 hours – Symphony website)

4 volunteers understood the problems, the technology and the fixes needed. This was a grass-roots project vs a top down project and needed champions with the time, energy and knowledge of how web-editing works and how to communicate and market this to the organization.

The Marketing department's website group – 2 people – made the requested edits to the Volunteer Page and adjustments to the Payment Portal. They also streamlined unnecessary verbiage and simplified the search functionality. Together with our 4 volunteers they completely rewrote the Volunteer Webpage and URL.

Impact on the Community:

The sites now reach anyone who does an internet search for the Houston Symphony or the Houston Symphony League. Anyone can pay with greater ease for events. Those wishing information about the League and how to volunteer with the League can access that information with great ease.

Suggested Improvements:

Website upgrades are an ongoing project. Without user-friendly websites which are easy to locate – the brand is diminished and patrons lose confidence that they are dealing with a fully professional Symphony Orchestra.