Online Candidate Quickstart Guide

Start your campaign website easier!

Online Candidate®
Campaign websites and more.

Thank you for your interest in Online Candidate

This guide provides a quick overview of the ordering process, setup and optional services and products available from Online Candidate.

We look forward to working with you!

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Online Candidate® https://www.onlinecandidate.com

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STARTING YOUR CAMPAIGN WEBSITE

You have enough to do getting your campaign off the ground. Why let the creation and design of your political website become a headache?

We've streamlined our process down to a few simple steps:

> **Select your campaign website package and order.** You can select a new domain name or use an existing domain name that you have already registered.
>
> **Create your website admin account.** When the order is complete, you will be emailed a login link to create your website administrator account. From there you can configure your site settings and begin building out your website.
>
> **Additional setup requirements.** For *Regular and Enhanced Website Packages* or sites with a *Custom Design Add-on*, you will be provided an online questionnaire and instructions to send your candidate head shot and/or logo. Custom designs take 2-3 business days from the time we get your information.

Go live. Once you are ready to launch, you can *generate* your site and go live. Afterwards, you can update, edit and add additional content to your site whenever you want.

HOW TO ORDER

You can order your campaign website directly through our website for immediate setup. Besides credit cards, we also accept payment by *check and e-check*, but please contact us first to arrange payment.

Short on time? Choose our **Enhanced Website Package**, which includes our *Initial Site Content Setup.* This service is also available as an add-on option for any of our other website packages. We'll arrange your site text and images for a pleasing design. After that, it's all in your control. This site setup is performed ONCE with the materials provided.

Add-on Options: We provide several add-on options that can be purchased when you order or later. These are described below.

YOUR DOMAIN NAME

We include a free *.com* or *.net* domain name registration with each website. We also carry political-themed domains, such as *.republican, .democrat* and *.voting*. ID Protect is also available (and recommended) to keep your domain registration information private and unsearchable to spammers and potential scammers.

If your domain name is already registered: Online Candidate websites reside on our dedicated servers. You should change your domain's name servers before you order or else your site can be held up.

Your domain's name servers must be updated to:

ns1.daleyhost.net
ns2.daleyhost.net

For more information, see name server instructions on our Knowledge Base.

TIPS ON SELECTING A GOOD DOMAIN NAME

- Keep your domain name short and to the point. voteyourname.com or electyourname.com are usually solid choices.
- Don't include a year in your domain name. It will become outdated if you want to use it for your next election.
- We include a free .com domain name registration with our website packages. The domains are registered with the client as Registrant, so you have control over it.
- If your campaign organization wants to register a .org name, consider getting the .com extension as well. Many people type a .com extension automatically. We can redirect multiple domain names to your main website.
- Be sure you have registered your domain name BEFORE any print material or campaign signs are ordered. It can be very embarrassing to advertise a website that does not exist!
- Even though you have paid for a domain name, you don't actually own it. Instead, you are renting the name from the registrar company for as many years as you pay for it.
- If you stop paying your annual domain registration fee, anyone else can step in, register the name, and point it to another website. You can always keep your domain name for as long as you want, even if you decide to stop your website hosting.

Should Your Campaign Register A Dot Com, Dot Org Or Both?

4 Things To Know About Your Campaign's Domain Name

MATERIALS NEEDED TO START YOUR WEBSITE

After you order, you can get started on your website right away. However, if we are creating a custom design or setting up your initial website content, we will need additional information. Emails are sent with your order listing the information we need from you.

For Custom Designs:

For orders that include design customization, you will be provided with a design questionnaire and information for where to email your candidate head shot and logo, if you have one. View sample website designs from actual clients.

Content Setup Information:

For *Enhanced Website Packages* or orders that include the *Initial Site Content Setup* option, you will be emailed an information worksheet. *Site setups are performed ONCE with the materials provided.*

Tip: Write your content in the third person rather than the 'I' first person. This makes it easier for search engines to rank your website. *After all, Google doesn't know who 'I' is…*

Additional Articles

- Preparing Content For Your Campaign Website
- Online Writing Tips For Local Campaigns
- Creating an Online Political Press Kit

OnlineCandidateResources.com is our clients-only site. It includes exclusive articles, tools and resource. *It also includes sample web copy you can use for inspiration.* You can log into the site through your website dashboard.

CANDIDATE HEAD SHOT TIPS

Consider having your candidate photographs done professionally. One session with a photographer might be all you need. If this is not possible, use a good digital camera with proper lighting.

- A head-on or three-quarter view is typical.
- Make sure BOTH shoulders can be seen. Don't crop them off!
- The best shots for site headers are those where the candidate is standing before a solid contrasting background to what the candidate is wearing. This allows the background to be more easily cropped out.
- *A large, high resolution image is best.* Large-sized images can be scaled down, but small, low-res images cannot be improved much.
- Dress appropriately.
- Smile!

Additional Material

For custom designs, send along additional existing graphics or images that you want to incorporate into your custom design.

Again, high-resolution images work best.

Better quality images lead to better designs.

SETTING UP YOUR CAMPAIGN WEBSITE

Once your order is complete, you are sent an email with your login link and initial instructions. *Keep this email for future reference.*

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

The Online Candidate system is based on an edit and regenerate principle. Some edits do not become live until you 'push' the changes by regenerating your website. You can make multiple changes and then regenerate to push the updates live.

Note: Sometimes you may not see your edits in your live site. This is often due to *browser caching* which is designed to help your site load quickly. Try reloading the page several times (shift and reload) or clear your browser cache.

STARTING OUT

The first thing you will want to do with your new site is to edit your **Site Settings**. This is the configuration section for your website.

Some of your settings have already been added from the information you supplied when you ordered. Take your time and go through all the setting tabs. It's a big section, but virtually every major setting for the site is controlled from this central location.

- *Learn more about your Site Setup Options.*

EDITING YOUR CONTENT

Edit your website content in the **Page Management** section. Each page comes with a powerful online editor that allows you to edit text, add images, embed video and more.

GOING LIVE WITH YOUR SITE

Once you have configured your site and have set up your initial pages, you can go live with your site. This will replace the temporary 'Under Construction' home page.

- *Learn how to Make Your Site Live.*

MY SITE IS LIVE, NOW WHAT?

Below are recommended services to increase the functionality of your site.

ONLINE DONATION SERVICES

Online Candidate websites can integrate with any online fundraising service. One of our preferred vendors is **RaiseTheMoney.com**. Their system is very easy to use and integrate with your site. The platform includes automatic bank transfers and additional online tools. We've worked with them for a long time and highly recommend using them.

Some clients use **PayPal Donations**. Online Candidate donation forms integrate with the service. *However, donations through PayPal is a two-step process.* There is the website form submission and then a separate payment through PayPal. PayPal does NOT capture required donor information, so this is done through our built-in form. At some point, you will have to match donors to payments.

For other fundraising systems, you can embed donation forms or add widgets to your site pages. You can also link directly to outside pages from your website navigation by using the 'Alternate URL' field within the Page Editor.

WEBMASTER ACCOUNTS

We highly recommend that you create a campaign Google account. This will allow you to create a *campaign Gmail address* and give you access to *Webmaster Tools, Analytics* and *AdWords*.

Our **Site Launch Add-on** is designed to help your campaign get that initial promotional boost to rank well in the search engines. With it, we will configure your Google Analytics and Webmaster Tools. Details about this service can be found below.

EMAIL SERVICES

If you plan to do serious marketing via email, you need a dedicated email service. They provide tools and functionality, along with better email delivery rates via their relationships with the ISPs.

MailChimp is free for lists with up to 2,000 subscribers. However, it does include advertising within each message sent and no autoresponder capability. With our **MailChimp Integration Add-on**, we will set up and integrate MailChimp into your site.

AWeber.com is the mail service we use. It includes custom templates, autoresponders and tracking. One dollar, 30-Day Trial.

See the *Marketing Tab* in your website administration for additional links and service recommendations.

GETTING YOUR WEBSITE FOUND

Once you have a campaign website, the important thing is getting it to appear in the search engines. So, how can you get your site to show up and drive more traffic to your website? The work begins on two levels.

On Site Optimization

On site optimization is just a fancy way of saying, 'make your site about your race'. In other words, include enough text throughout your website about your candidate and the campaign.

Proper optimization includes using the candidate's full name and state/region/municipality in the text:

Off Site Optimization

Site optimization is one side of web promotion. The flip side is effective link building and advertising. Good links back to your website help it rise in relevance for searches related to your campaign.

Link sources include:

- Your social media accounts (Important!)
- Online press releases
- Newspaper websites –through articles and online voter guides
- Other local candidates
- Political party websites
- Other groups campaigning for similar causes

Try to get links from outside sources. Search engines will find your site through those links. Once the site is found, it will very likely become indexed quickly.

AFTER YOUR CAMPAIGN…

Consider the long-term benefits of keeping your website active until the next campaign vs. shutting the site down completely.

You may want to shut down certain pages or sections of the site but continue to post relevant news and event updates. In other words, keep the interest alive until the next campaign.

Feel free to contact us to discuss your options.

ONLINE CANDIDATE SERVICES

To help you get your online campaign up and running as quickly and easily as possible, we offer a number of add-on service options. ***These options can be ordered when you first order or later.***

WEBSITE CONTENT SETUP

Save time getting your site built out. We'll arrange your site text and images for a pleasing design. We incorporate best practices to your material for search engine optimization (SEO). After that, it's all in your control. We send you worksheets to help get you started. This site setup is performed ONCE with the materials provided.

CUSTOM DESIGN UPGRADE

Available for the Lite Package and Monthly Option. **Turn your template-based design into a custom look.** We'll create a website header with your campaign colors, logo, background, and candidate head shot. We also modify your site colors, font, background and more for a unique design. Need a campaign logo? We'll create one for you with our custom design – plus we'll give you a high-res version to use in your print materials for FREE. **View sample client website designs**.

SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS

We will rescale and modify your website header so it can be used as your Facebook cover image and Twitter account background.

SITE LAUNCH OPTION

Make sure your site is ready to go live the right way with our Site Launch Package. This service is designed to help your site get an initial promotional boost to rank well in the search engines. We handle all the details and turn the accounts over to you on completion.

- **Analytics and Webmaster Account Setup**: We will install *Google Analytics* so you can monitor your site traffic and see where your visitors are coming from.
- **Website review:** Your site can't rank well if it isn't optimized. We'll check your site for basic SEO to make sure the site is search engine friendly.
- **Site launch press release:** We'll draft a press release announcing your website. Once approved, we will post the release to a press release syndication site.

SITE LAUNCH OPTION + SOCIAL MEDIA SETUP

Includes the services of the **Site Launch Option** and **Social Media Graphics** above, plus **setup of your campaign Facebook Page and Twitter account**.

MAILCHIMP SETUP AND INTEGRATION

Email is still the gorilla of online marketing. The money really IS in the email list. Email is crucial to political fundraising, as most online donations come in through email. Save time and get your email campaign started the right way. Let us set up and configure your Mailchimp account so you can concentrate on your campaign.

POLITICAL PROMO VIDEO DESIGN

Get a high-resolution campaign introduction video to kick off your YouTube channel, post to Facebook and embed in your campaign website. It's a quick and affordable way to start another online promotional channel. Learn More About Video Design

*Learn more about our **Site Addons** and **Campaign Marketing Services**.*

DOWNLOAD STORE

Online Candidate carries a variety of products in our **Digital Download Store** that are designed to help local campaigns.

Downloadable Products:

- Political Campaign E-Books
- Canva Print Templates
- Word Brochure/Print Templates
- Combo Savings
- Free Downloads

Campaign Ebooks and Guides

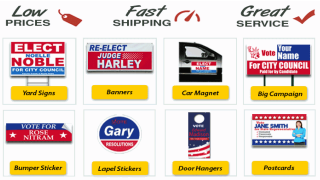
Canva Print Templates

Running for Office as an Online Candidate

Our softcover book, *Running for Office as an Online Candidate: Web Strategies for Local Campaigns*, is available on Amazon. This resource is packed with tips, tricks and useful strategies for political and issue-specific campaigns.

For more information, visit: https://onlinecandidate.com/amazon

Need Campaign Signs?



Super Cheap Signs currently ships over 10,000 yard signs, banners and other printing products every week.

As an Online Candidate client, we can provide your original hi-res website graphics to make your signs and site look seamless.

Get 10% off with checkout code: **ONLCAN10**

Visit: https://onlinecandidate.com/signs

Target Voters Digitally by Household

Reach voters online, where they live. By matching a physical address to a specific IP address, *IP Targeting* is a secret weapon for political campaigns.

Learn more: https://onlinecandidate.com/ads

Enhance Your Voter List

Add email addresses and other demographic data to your voter and supporter list.

Get a free quote: https://onlinecandidate.com/append