

# The Virtual Personal Touch: Practical Tips for Establishing a Close and Continuing Relationship with Constituencies

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Penny Crawley  
Director of Online Communications  
Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation and The Justice Project

<http://vvaf.org>  
<http://thejusticeproject.org>

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## Challenges for Building Close Relationships through the Internet

- ◆ **The amount of time even the most dedicated users are willing to spend on a web site is generally very brief.**
- ◆ **Internet users do not return to most web sites they visit.**
- ◆ **Internet users react negatively to too many emails and messages with no resonance.**

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The Time Users Are Willing to Spend on a Web Site Is Generally Very Brief

**Combatting a Short Web Attention Span**

- Make It Easy to Read/Navigate
- Crosslink Content
- Make It Possible to Sign Up in Multiple Places
- Make It Interactive

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Internet Users Tend to Not Return to Most Web Sites They Visit

**How to Bring 'Em Back**

- Keep It Fresh
- Make It Interactive
- Link back to Online Content from Email Communications

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## If They Still Won't Come to the Mountain, Send the Mountain to Them (by Email)

### Three components of using email successfully:

- **Timing**
- **Content**
- **Format**

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## Email: Timing is Everything

- ◆ **“How Often?” Rules of Thumb**
  - **Tell them upfront how often they'll hear from you**
  - **Never more often than twice a week**
  - **Never less often than once a month**
  - **Only deviate when absolutely necessary (urgent political action is needed, etc.)**
  - **Use feedback and statistics to adjust your tactics**

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## Email: Timing is Everything

- ◆ **“When to Mail?” Rules of Thumb**
  - **Business Users**
    - Send in the late afternoon for early morning delivery
    - Consider mailing Friday night for first thing Monday reading
  - **General Public**
    - Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays, if possible
    - Send in the late morning

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## Email: Content is King

- ◆ **Information should be:**
  - clear
  - timely
  - engaging
  - relevant
  - personalized
- ◆ **Calls to action:**
  - should create a sense of urgency/immediacy
  - should be followed with a mailing telling users what happened on the issue

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## Email: Content is King

### ◆ To Segment or Not to Segment?

#### ● Pros

- Increases relevancy
- resulting actions can have higher political impact
- decreases number of mailings received

#### ● Cons:

- May miss opportunity to cross-recruit
- Can take much more time/resources to manage segmented lists

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## Email: Format is Critical

### ◆ Make it Scannable

- Include engaging summary at the top that states what action is needed
- Multiple short paragraphs, not one long one

### ◆ Make It Clickable

- Always include <http://> with any URLs

### ◆ Make It Accessible

- User Friendly Language

### ◆ Make it Personal

- Send it from a specific individual in a consistent voice

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