



# DIFFERENCE VEHICLES OF COMMUNICATION WEBSITES

## **Series: Effective Communication is the most important issue for lot owners** **Part 7 of 12: Different Vehicles of communication—Websites**

A dedicated strata community website is a medium that is tending to be cheaper, faster, more accessible and more convenient than traditional means of communication such as printed newsletters.

A website can actually compliment the rest of your communications program by ensuring the prompt, interactive exchange of information.

The most important thing about any successful website is that it be fresh and full of information that really matters to the members. For this reason, it is best if the website is maintained by a member of the community rather than an outsider.

### **Ideas for Websites:**

**News and notes** - As a medium, the web is well suited for getting out information: newsletters, updates and upcoming events. Unlike a monthly publication or a special flyer, a website can do this as often as you want. It can also reach residents who are away for extended periods. It's doubtful that paper will ever be replaced completely – people like to read their daily newspaper – but compared to print publications, a website gives you more value for money spent or effort expended.

**Marketing** - You can use your website as a marketing tool. For example, you can post photos and specific information.

**Archives** - Put your old newsletters, meeting minutes, budgets, and annual reports online; add a search engine and you have an archive. It's a huge time saver for managers who sometimes are asked to track down documents from years before and it helps committee members and residents feel informed.

**Member surveys** - Online polls are a quick and inexpensive way to sample public opinion. How do your residents feel about putting in speed bumps? Is there any interest in installing water tanks? These aren't binding referendums but there is the potential for collecting input via the internet.



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## COMMITTEE MEMBER EDUCATION NETWORK

**Community interaction** - Get to know your neighbours. Message boards allow resident-to-resident communication.

**Forms** – You can use your website to cut down on management processes. Post your forms online and allow residents to submit them electronically. This will save people a trip or a phone call to the management office.

**Account balances** - A website can let owners check their account balances.

**Intranet** - An intranet site is similar to a website but with access restricted to subscribers. Some helpful facts about intranets:

Subscribers can post information on the intranet site.

Potential subscribers must first have log-on and password information.

Intranets allow committee members or management to post information in one place for everyone to access. If the committee needs to review the latest version of the architect's plans for a new building project before the next meeting, the drawings can be shared via email. However, they can be posted to the intranet site and committee members can record their comments for everyone to read prior to the meeting.

Facebook or Twitter is an alternative to a website. If the cost of having your own website is prohibitive, you may wish to start a Facebook profile for your development. You can store relevant information about the building and create social networking among owners who give permission to be contacted in this way.

**Next week: Different Communication Vehicles - Strata Community Handbook**