Purpose is the focus of the 2015 Outstanding REALTOR® Association Website Contest: What is the purpose of your association website? What need are you trying to fill?

For many associations, and especially our winners, redefining the purpose of their web presence led them to remove the clutter and focus on a singular objective.

It starts with the members. Through surveys, work groups, focus groups, retreats, and other dialogue, associations asked members what they wanted. Through usage analytics, they tracked members’ actions.

Members want a user-friendly public property search and somewhere to refer clients for area information, contest entrants said. They want a calendar of events, easy class registration, local market data, forms, and searchable member profiles—and all of it mobile-ready.

The strong request to provide property and consumer information (and, in many cases, combine the association site and the MLS site) was surprising, many entries noted, because their sites had been mainly association-focused. They were reluctant to push association products and services to the background. Yet the choice became: Attract members with what they want while still making association information available, or see site visits (along with your value proposition) continue to drop.

The three winning sites (in no particular order here) display purpose, but, coincidentally, three different purposes. They have a clear objective, and their sites meet that objective with effective architecture, design, and content.

Overall, judges were impressed by how much associations have uncluttered, streamlined, and simplified their web presences.

Visit these sites online to experience their winning qualities.
Knoxville Area Association of REALTORS®
kaarmls.com

Mission: To effectively communicate with our members, whether it is in regards to their day-to-day business or services that the association can provide, such as education, MLS, professional standards, and much more. While their business is our primary focus, we do not want to neglect the role the association and its members play in the community. Our secondary focus is to highlight community involvement, RPAC, and all other ongoing major news and events by incorporating these on the home page so that our REALTORS® can always be reminded to help serve our community.

From the judges: “The website offers an outstanding user experience. The wallpaper is consistent throughout the website and is aesthetically balanced and pleasing. Clean, simplistic, and focused. Interesting shift away from consumer-focused to more member-focused with more emphasis placed on community outreach from NAR while still delivering valuable consumer content, though. Valuable, accessible content overall. There seems to be something for all REALTORS® who might visit the website. The navigation menus are consistently placed and understandable. You get what you want with only one click.”

Oregon Association of REALTORS®
oregonrealtors.org

Mission: The purpose of the site is primarily to communicate information and resources to members with secondary audiences of local associations and consumers. We wanted to make an online repository of tools to enable members to help themselves at their own convenience, and we worked hard to think about the needs of our customers to align our site architecture with their most frequently requested information.

From the judges: “This is a members’ site first and foremost. Extremely well-organized and very user-friendly. I found the content right where I thought I would. Data is very fresh and the calendar at the top of the page is great, very timely. It really captured the broad state focus while sharing local information where needed and pulling it all together in a concise package. Good use of video enhancements.”

28 REALTOR® associations entered the 2015 Outstanding REALTOR® Association Website Contest. Judges included REALTOR® AE magazine’s editorial board and staff from the National Association of REALTORS®.