

iWN Admin Guide

Launching Your Exchange



An online exchange works by connecting people; it is obvious that it won't work if there are no people to connect. Promotion and outreach is crucial, especially in the early days, to make your website a success. This guide is provided as a start-point to help you in your promotional efforts. If you do nothing else, follow the Promotion Check-list. More in-depth information and suggestions are provided in the rest of this guide.

Promotion Checklist

Pre-Launch

You may be thinking of promoting your system once it's up and running, but there are some things you can do right away to get started and make the launch a success.

1. Create a welcome message item in the *News and Info* section.
2. 'Seed' your exchange with listings.
3. Start connecting with local organizations to get their help in getting the word out.
4. Begin preparing press releases, advertisements and any other promotional materials you may wish to use.

See the **Pre-launch section** in in the **Full Guide** (pages 5-6) for ideas to help you accomplish these goals.

Ready to Launch

The big day has come and you're going all out to get the word out. Start a few days early so that you're prepared.

1. Let the media know that your launch is upcoming. If possible, tie this to a 'real' event. For example, if you formally launch your new exchange at an Earth Day event, reporters are more likely to give you coverage as they have something 'real' to report on.
2. Send out press releases.
3. Tell your contacts that now is the time to start getting the word out.

See the **Ready to Launch section** in the **Full Guide** (pages 6-8) for more ideas.

Post-Launch

You've launched your exchange and things are rolling with new members and listings coming on the system. Don't stop now. Here are some tips for ongoing promotion:

1. **You can use the "Email Members" feature like a newsletter.**

Email your members about a month after your exchange is launched to keep the momentum rolling, and regularly thereafter. Ask your members for feedback, suggestions or success stories. Do you have any updates or upgrades to share with them? Be sure to take advantage of the reports and statistics section of your exchange, check often, and communicate your shared success.

For samples see Appendix - pages 14-15.

2. It's that time of year again...

There are certain times of year when sending another press release or email announcement may help keep your exchange top of mind as a useful service for activities like Holiday Shopping, Dorm Move-Out or Back to School, Spring Cleaning, etc.

3. Share and seek help

As always, your communication center is available to connect and share ideas with other materials exchange administrators. Click below to post in the 'Marketing and Promoting your Exchange' section:

For Residential, Industrial/Commercial exchange admins:

<http://www.iwastenotsystems.com/support/viewforum.php?f=53>

For Food, Agriculture and Biomass exchange admins:

<http://sharedharvest.net/forum/viewforum.php?f=9>

Track Your Efforts

There are few ways to tell if your marketing efforts are working:

1. Ensure you add your various methods to your referrals list in your admin panel. When new users join, they are asked how they heard about your exchange (if you have this enabled). You can view/analyze reports of which methods are most effective.
2. Check your webstats often. We've got a guide explaining your webstats which includes how to tell where your visitors are coming from. Click here to download: http://www.iwastenotsystems.com/admin_guides/exchange_web_stats.pdf

For more tips and ideas, visit the rest of this guide, as well as your Communication Center.

A few general recommendations:

1. Promoting an exchange is an on-going activity. Avoid thinking of the 'Launch Day Blitz' as the only promotion and outreach you will do. Your website will prosper more from many little nudges over time than from a single big marketing campaign.
2. It is much easier if you don't have to do it all yourself. Engage others to help you get the word out. Just ask—many times you'll receive. Ask those who agree to help you how you can best help them.
3. Your personal commitment will help a lot. Print off some cards with your website address and hand them to people who may use the system. This is an amazingly effective method.
4. Set goals. How many members do you want to see? How many new listings per week? Communicate those goals in your outreach to those who are helping you.

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An In-Depth Guide to Marketing & Outreach, Pre & Post Launch Pre-Launch

Once you have gone through your orientation and have taken some steps to configure your exchange (http://www.iwastenotsystems.com/new_exchange_guides/configuring_your_exchange_checklist_ind.pdf), there are some things you can do to start promoting your exchange early, while you wait for your design to be finalized.

Invite friends and colleagues

A small group of friends & colleagues can be a very useful supporting body in getting an exchange off the ground. You can send an email with a brief explanation of your mission, why you need their help, and how they can help you. Having this initial group seed the exchange by creating member accounts and posting listings will avoid the "empty-shelves" effect when you officially launch your exchange to the trade/general public.

Tips on who and how to ask—start with who you know:

1. Send an email to everyone on your personal contact list.
2. Send a message to everyone on your Facebook, Twitter, and/or LinkedIn account.
3. Send an email to everyone at work, as well as any other industry colleagues or vendors.

A sample email that James Ruttan used with much success when he was launching www.vancouver.reuses.com can be found on page 10.

Here are some specific tasks these volunteers can and probably will do for you:

1. Create an account on the exchange.
2. Post a wanted, available or event listing.
3. Offer additional ideas for directories and link listings.

Start creating a buzz

1. Post at least one news item on your exchange that gives a status update or information about the exchange.

See news item on Beaufort County:

http://www.2good2waste.org/beaufortcounty/?content=news.view;news_id=853

See news item on 2good2toss Snohomish County:

http://www.2good2toss.com/snohomish/?content=news.view;news_id=522

2. Set up a Twitter and Facebook account, start following relevant people and engaging with them.
3. As you add resources to your directories or links list on your exchange, notify those organizations and ask if they'd be willing to reciprocate by adding a link to your exchange on their site.

Ask for help

Treat your new members as volunteers. Once a few people have registered accounts, take advantage of the 'Email Members' feature to thank them for signing up and becoming early adopters. Set a goal of how many members/listings you'd like to achieve before officially launching and ask if they'd be willing to help you reach that goal.

You can ask them to:

1. Use the Tell-A-Friend feature to invite others.
2. Provide them with a poster and ask if they'd put it up in their office, grocery store, or school, etc.
*For sample posters see **Appendix** - page 13.*
3. Become a fan and/or follower of you and tweet/update with your link.
*For sample of a follow up email see **Appendix** - page 11.*

Offer Rewards

An admin once offered an incentive of a free composting bin and guidebook to the first five employees who joined and posted a listing. You don't have to give stuff away, though. Many people will find sufficient reward in the common goal, joining a community, being recognized for their achievements or being asked for advice.

Ready to Launch

In addition to sending your press release to traditional media outlets, here are some no-cost ways to announce the launch of your exchange:

1. Send a press release to relevant listservs, and to various relevant associations, councils, umbrella organizations for inclusion in their next member newsletter.

*For sample press releases see **Appendix** - page 12-13.*

You have likely already identified your audience, however here are some additional thoughts on who might be interested in using your exchange.

- **A Food exchange might benefit:**

- farmers' markets
- food rescue organizations
- local food movement groups

- **An Industrial exchange might benefit:**

- members of reuse and recycling associations
- local chambers of commerce, non-profit groups
- green builders, if the exchange has a C&D focus

- **A Residential exchange might benefit:**

- local government and their residents
- users of Freecycle & Craigslist
- reuse organizations and charities such as Goodwill, Habitat for Humanity
- apartment complexes, homeowners' associations

- **A Biomass exchange might benefit:**

- farmers
- landscapers
- food production companies
- food service/restaurants/hotels/grocery stores

2. Send the announcement to your existing exchange members using the *Email Members* feature and ask them to pass on the message that your site has officially launched—give them a link to your press release.
3. See if flyers or info can be included with utility/tax bills, trash/recycling collection schedules.
4. Include the exchange link and brief tag line in your email signature.
5. Tweet and update your Facebook fan page.
6. List your exchange in free directories like Idealist.org, WiserEarth.org, GuideStar or other recycling directories.
7. Print business cards to hand out or leave in local municipal offices or businesses.

8. Attend relevant trade shows or events, and ask if you can be given a few minutes on the agenda to announce the service. Here's a sample Powerpoint presentation: <http://nerc.org/documents/powerpoint/reducereuse7-03/index.html>

Is there another exchange in your region or state? Perhaps there's an opportunity to collaborate on marketing efforts and cross-promote each other.

You may also want to consider pursuing partnerships with your local Small Business Association/SBDC office, Environmental Finance Center or local college campus to help get the word out.

Post-Launch

Ask Nancy Crickman with Pennsylvania's www.materialtrader.org or Mary Ann Remolador with Vermont's www.vbmx.org and they'll tell you how important it is to stay in touch, gently reminding your members about your exchange, and jumping on any opportunity to talk about and promote the exchange.

Some Tips for Ongoing Promotion:

1. Email your Members

You can use the *Email Members* feature like a newsletter. Email your members about a month after your exchange is launched to keep the momentum rolling, and regularly thereafter. Ask your members for feedback, suggestions or success stories. Do you have any updates or upgrades to share with them?

The admins over at www.Giffordslist.org are really great at communicating on a regular basis with their members using the *Email Members* feature. They often share interesting listings or recent successful exchanges, as well as new site upgrades or special announcements. Be sure to take advantage of the reports and statistics section of your exchange, check often, and communicate your shared success.

*For a sample of one of Giffordslist's announcements see **Appendix** - page 13.*

2. Offer Incentives or Other Ways to Participate

Giffordslist admins also recently offered an incentive of a free lunch for up to 50 staff members to any organization or company that completed five successful exchanges on Giffordslist within a three month period. Other admins have run student poster contests to help continue raising awareness.

3. Cross-Promote

George Dreckmann with www.madisonstuffexchange.org suggests taking advantage of the sponsorship areas of your home page by cross-promoting your existing community services, as well as promoting your exchange on your other websites.

4. Post listings everywhere

Show your members how to access a link to all their listings so they can share them on other sites like Craigslist, Twitter, Facebook, etc.

Click here to download 'How to share your listings' tutorial:

http://www.iwastenotsystems.com/tutorials/share_your_listings.pdf

You can copy and paste this link into a news article on your exchange or send it to members directly.

5. It's that time of year again...

There are certain times of year when sending another press release or email announcement may help keep your exchange top of mind as a useful service for activities like Holiday Shopping, Dorm Move-Out or Back to School, Spring Cleaning, etc.

6. Share your link everywhere

Comment on relevant blogs and articles, leaving a link to your exchange. Post articles in your news section with a link to the original article so the publication can see your exchange linking back to them.

7. Share and seek help

As always, your communication center is available to connect and share ideas with other materials exchange administrators.

See **Appendix** - pages 12-13 for *2good2toss* marketing plan, *NERC* marketing plan, and *Press Releases*.

Tracking Your Efforts

There are few ways to tell if your marketing efforts are working:

1. Ensure you add your various methods to your referrals list in your admin panel. When new users join, they are asked how they heard about your exchange (if you have this enabled). You can view/analyze reports of which methods are most effective.
2. Check your webstats often. We have a webstats guide that shows you how to tell where your visitors are coming from and more. Click here to download: http://www.iwastenotsystems.com/admin_guides/exchange_web_stats.pdf
3. Set up a Google Alert for your exchange and be notified when your exchange appears in articles, blogs, and elsewhere on the internet.

Appendix

Sample emails

Sample Email to Friends, Family and/or Colleagues:

Dear Friends,

Some of you know that I am part of a team who recently launched the website <http://www.vancouver.reuses.com>. This site is intended to help folks in the lower mainland reuse items they don't need by giving, selling or trading them to others. That way, all this stuff doesn't end up in the landfill.

Just think, if everything that was manufactured was used at least twice, then we'd take 50% less out of the natural environment. The slogan goes "Reduce, reuse, recycle." Well, we've got a good start on recycling and it's time to move to the next level.

We launched the website in July, but we're suffering from the chicken and egg problem. Without listings on the site, folks don't trust it and won't put up listings. We've set a target of 100 listings for October 10, in an effort to solve this problem. That's why I'm writing.

How you can help:

1. Visit <http://www.vancouver.reuses.com>.
2. Post a listing for something you no longer want. Bonus points if you give it away free. Do it today, if you can. (Don't worry, you can always include the picture later.)
3. If you don't have something to give away or sell, then become a member.
4. Forward this email to someone who you think will be interested.
5. Look at the listings on the site...maybe you'll find something you need.

Thanks in advance for anything you can do.

Everyone on the planet appreciates it.

Cheers,
James

Administrator
Vancouver Reuses

Sample Thank you/Follow up Email:

Dear Vancouver Reuses Member,

My name is James Ruttan. I'm the administrator for Vancouver Reuses.

I am writing to thank you for joining us as we build an online reuse community to help us and our environment. I am especially thankful to you for being an early joiner and helping to get the ball rolling.

These are early days, but similar websites in Washington State now have 10,000 members and thousands of successful exchanges. We are still trying to attract attention to Vancouver Reuses and will be doing a number of things to build up traffic. The cool thing about a site like Vancouver Reuses is that the more we use it, the better it gets.

Some of you have asked if you can help out. There is one thing...I have included two posters. Please feel free to print them off and post them wherever you think they will be seen. We think the "is your house stuffed?" poster should go up first.

I will do my best to serve well as administrator. If you have questions, comments or concerns I can always be reached through the Feedback icon at the top of the page or at this email address.

Thank you again for your support.

I will not contact you often, but if you would prefer not to be contacted again, simply reply to this email and let me know.

Cheers,
James Ruttan

Administrator
Vancouver Reuses

Sample Press Release

*Online Exchange System in Puerto Rico to Keep Useable Materials Out of Landfills,
Boosts Bottom Lines for Businesses*

Release date: 04/03/2009

*Contact Information: Brenda Reyes (787) 977-5869, reyes.brenda@epa.gov
or John Senn (212) 637-3667, senn.john@epa.gov*

(San Juan, P.R.) The old saying “one man’s trash is another man’s treasure” has new meaning thanks to an online materials exchange system unveiled today by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Puerto Rico Solid Waste Management Authority (SWMA). The free, bilingual system, called the Puerto Rico Materials Exchange, allows organizations and individuals to advertise, request and exchange a host of materials that may no longer be needed or otherwise headed to a landfill, through a Web site, <http://www.prmatex.org/>.

“The Puerto Rico Materials Exchange provides a forum for businesses and individuals alike to find and get rid of all kinds of business, building and construction materials that they no longer need, but that do not belong in one of the Commonwealth’s already crowded landfills,” said Acting EPA Regional Administrator George Pavlou. “This system will also help businesses’ bottom lines through opportunities to obtain free and low-cost materials, and to reduce waste disposal costs.”

Items available on the Web site will include office furniture and equipment, building materials and tools, electronics, fixtures, textiles, appliances, batteries and paint. Users can search for a certain item or simply what materials are available in a particular area of Puerto Rico.

EPA will provide training and public outreach workshops for the Web site’s users, SWMA staff and municipal recycling coordinators. The Web site builds on printed materials produced by SWMA and is modeled after New York City’s Wa\$teMatch materials exchange Web site, <http://www.wastematch.org/>.

The disposal and management of waste in Puerto Rico has been one of Commonwealth’s major environmental challenges for years. Recycling rates in the Commonwealth are much lower than the national average and many of its landfills are nearing capacity or lack proper environmental controls. Since 2007, EPA has ordered landfills in Toa Baja, Vega Baja, Florida, Aguadilla and Santa Isabel to close. The materials exchange Web site builds on an EPA recycling conference held last year in Puerto Rico, and shows the agency’s commitment to improve recycling rates and prepare for pending landfill closures in the Commonwealth.

For more information on the management of solid waste in Puerto Rico, visit http://www.epa.gov/region02/cepd/solidwaste_in_puerto_rico.html

Sample Press Releases

Maryland Ag Trader Press Release:

http://www.iwastenotsystems.com/exchange_launch_guide/PressRelease_AgTrader.pdf

Mass Material Trader Press Release:

http://www.iwastenotsystems.com/exchange_launch_guide/PressRelease_50thMember_Material_Trader.doc

Sample Marketing Plans

2good2toss marketing plan:

http://www.iwastenotsystems.com/exchange_launch_guide/marketing_plan_2good2toss.doc

NERC marketing strategy:

http://nerc.org/documents/materials_exchanges_marketing_plan.html

Sample Posters

http://www.iwastenotsystems.com/exchange_launch_guide/poster_getstuffed.pdf

http://www.iwastenotsystems.com/exchange_launch_guide/poster_housestuffed.pdf

Sample Announcement

Gifford Foundation announces nonprofit resource sharing website

(Syracuse, NY) The Gifford Foundation has launched Giffordslist.org, a free resource sharing website for the Central New York community (www.giffordslist.org). Administered by the Foundation, the site will offer opportunities for Central New York nonprofits, businesses and individuals to exchange resources, information and services. Any organization that registers with Giffordslist may post items that are either available or needed, offered for free or for sale. In addition organizations may share information on events, trainings, grant opportunities, personnel needs, etc.

Recent offerings on Giffordslist ranged from foosball tables to computers to Christmas and Halloween decorations. Events and services include grant writing, fundraising events, workshops and trainings. "Often we are contacted by companies wanting our advice on where to donate equipment - and just as often we hear from organizations that they need items," notes Kathy Goldfarb-Findling, executive director. "This website enables these types of exchanges to happen more efficiently. In addition organizations also are learning to 'think outside the box' when it comes to assets to share - for example, nonprofits might have meeting space for rent, or are looking to split accounting services." By January a calendar module and searchable database of - more - programs will also be available.

Currently individuals may register through their companies or on a case by case basis by contacting the Foundation. Giffordslist is based on a template created by iWasteNot Systems, a family business that supplies web-based surplus materials exchanges in communities across North America. The system is designed to make creating and operating a materials exchange as simple, inexpensive and effective as possible. iWasteNot Systems has modified their template to accommodate the needs of the Central New York nonprofit community—this version was developed specifically for the Gifford Foundation and is the first use of the system for non profits in North America.

During a two-month beta testing period over 35 local non profits were invited to post items, services or events. An incentive grant of \$3,000 was offered to the organization that posted or exchanged the most items. The winner, Literacy Volunteers of Greater Syracuse, has been delighted with the utility of the site. "The exchange is fun in that you can negotiate interesting trades and many items are posted for free. LVGS obtained a laptop and other items at no cost. You never know if another organization has something extra that they are willing to trade," states Donna Valerino, LVGS executive director. "In this struggling economy, Giffordslist provides a venue to maximize the collective resources of the local nonprofit community."

Another incentive is being offered for the next three months, and is open to all users. Any organization that completes five successful exchanges on Giffordslist will be rewarded with lunch for their staff (up to 50 people), courtesy of the Foundation. "The website is accessible, interactive and searchable," states Goldfarb-Findling. "We are hopeful that its use will encourage collaboration and create stronger, more efficient organizations that are better able to serve their constituencies."

Sample Announcement

Good Morning Giffordslist users,

We are pleased at continued growth of our Giffordslist collaboration tool. More and more listings are being added every day. If you haven't already done so, read on to jump start your organization's Giffordslist experience.

Also, we want to let you know about our brand new events calendar. This is a long overdue space for organizations to list events that might of interest to the local Non-Profit community. Consider it another channel to market your organization's events as well as identify events which you may not have known about before. You can access it by clicking the "Events" tab when browsing listings. To post a calendar event, simply create a listing as you normally would and identify it as an "Event" when prompted at the beginning of the process.

To help streamline your organization's Giffordslist experience, we have compiled some of the new listings that our staff feels are particularly interesting:

Kickball Players Wanted

The Gifford Foundation is sponsoring a kickball team to play during the spring at Onondaga Lake Park. If you are interested in joining the team or would like more information please call 474-2489 ext. 16.

http://giffordslist.com/?site_id=34;content=ad.view.all;listing_id=291310

Available: Hewlett Packard FAX machine

Model010. Plain paper, nearly new.

http://giffordslist.com/index.php?site_id=34;content=ad.view.all;listing_id=289957

Wanted: Brochure/Pamphlet Rack

We are looking for a 6 pocket brochure/pamphlet display rack to hang on a wall.

http://giffordslist.com/?site_id=34;content=ad.view.all;listing_id=291208

Wanted: Digital Camera Needed

We are looking for a new or used digital camera. Nothing fancy, just a camera that we can use to take pictures of our events, etc.

http://giffordslist.com/?site_id=34;content=ad.view.all;listing_id=291084

We hope that our members will find these listings helpful. This is only a fraction of what is happening on Giffordslist, so make sure to keep checking in to see whats new.

Thank you,
The Giffordlist Team