**Website Platforms**

There are many website building platforms. Wix and Square Space are the most popular and I have used both platforms.

**Wix**

**Pricing:**  Wix has multiple pricing levels. Most campaigns can use the Light ($17 per month) or Core ($29 per month) plan. The primary difference between these plans with respect to a political campaign is that Core allows you to access website analytics and accept payments through the website.

**Features:**

* Accepts custom domains
* Includes email marketing plans (number of emails vary per plan)
* Includes pre-built website templates
* Allows multiple site collaborators (varies per plan)

**Useability:** Wix is a bit more user friendly than Square Space. The platform is an easy “drag-and-drop” platform and allows a user to customize text, colors, and graphic. There are multiple templates that allow users a base to create their website.

The mass email platform is also easy to us and features the Wix drag-and-drop platform as well. The only drawback to the Wix platform is there is no way to organize or categorize the email addresses collected as you can do in other platforms such as MailChimp.

**Square Space**

**Pricing:** Square Space has multiple pricing levels. Most campaigns can use the Basic ($16 per month) or Core ($23 per month) plan. Core offers business analytics features. Square Space also offers an email marketing platform for additional cost.

**Features:**

* Accepts custom domains
* Includes pre-built website templates
* Allows multiple site collaborators (varies per plan)

**Useability:** Square Space is does use a drag-and-drop platform, but it is less intuitive than Wix and can be a bit more difficult for those who are less familiar with website building. If a user has experience with adding custom CSS code to add further customization to a website beyond what a platform offers, Square Space is a better choice.

I have not used the Square Space email platform before.

**Texting Platforms**

There are many texting platforms a campaign can use. Scale2Win and Hustle seem to be the most common.

**Scale2Win**

**Pricing:**  1.5 cents per SMS message (no photos), 3.5 cents per MMS message (with photo)

Scale2Win also offers a dialer which is 4 cents per outbound dial.

**Features:**

* Dashboard for account managers
* Ability to add volunteers to send messages
* Ability to respond to texters
* Ability to schedule multiple campaigns

**Message Limits:**

* SMS limited to 153 characters
* MMS limited to 1600 characters

**Useability:** Scale2Win is very user friendly. It’s easy to create campaigns, connect with volunteers, or just send out text messages yourself. Scale2Win also allows you to respond to messages, however, I believe one pro for Hustle is the layout of text messages that are received are easier to respond to. Scale2Win offers fantastic tutorials to set up the platform and their help center is easy to use. Their support team also responds extremely quickly.

**Hustle**

**Pricing:** Hustle has two pricing options: 1) .09 cents per outgoing SMS messages or 2) .24 cents per contact upload. Depending on the length of the campaign and how many messages a campaign plants to send out, the per contact upload may be more cost effective than the per message rate.

**Features:**

* Dashboard for account managers
* Ability to add volunteers to send messages
* Ability to respond to texters
* Ability to schedule multiple campaigns

**Useability:** Hustle is also very user friendly with numerous tutorials on how to create campaigns, connect with volunteers, and send messages. The only issue I have ever had with Hustle is their support team is not responsive and can take several days to respond to any questions.

**Texting Set Up 101**

When a campaign is preparing to set up a text message platform, it is important to know that this can take a few weeks to set up. Below are the general steps to setting up your texting platform. These instructions may vary depending on what platform you use.

1. First, you will need to formerly register your campaign with the Illinois State Board of Elections. **Note: Not all municipal candidates register a formal campaign with the ISBE, so texting may not be an option for those campaigns**.
2. Create your account with whatever texting platform you choose to use. Most platforms require you to contact them directly to set up your account and sign a contract solidifying pricing and user requirements. This process can take up to a few business days depending on the platform you choose.
3. Once you have an account, you will need to fill out a form in order to receive a phone number that the platform uses to send out text messages. This form will require your campaign information, contact information, proof you have a proper privacy policy, and EIN number from the IRS. To complete this process, you will also need a token to verify your campaign. Most platforms use a website called Campaign Verify. The campaign token can take a few business days to receive as Campaign Verify contacts the ISBE to verify your campaign. Once you have this token, you can finish registering for your phone number. The platform you use will then have to verify all of the information you provided. **This can take up to two (2) weeks.**
4. After you have been approved by the platform, you can then begin setting up your text messages, goals, etc. and start testing.

**Texting Regulations**

The Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) sets all rules and regulations regarding political text messages. Below is a summary of their regulations, however, it is still valuable for each and every campaign to review the full FCC regulations which can be found on their website. The information below does not constitute legal advice and each campaign retains the responsibility to ensure their messaging is fully compliant with all related regulations.

1. You must have a privacy policy on your website publicly available. A sample privacy policy is attached hereto.
2. You are only allowed to send Robotexts if you have received prior express consent from the recipient.
3. If you do not have prior express consent from the recipient, text messages must be sent manually by yourself or a volunteer.
4. All text messages sent are required to include a message instructing a recipient how they can opt out of future text messages.
5. Best practices advise including the sender’s name in the text messages. Hustle and Scale2Win allow fillable form fields that will autofill the volunteer’s name who is sending the messages.

**Sample Privacy Policy**

**Privacy Policy**

This statement applies to the online collection of personal information via websites operated by and applications offered by **[ENTER CAMPAIGN NAME]**. Details of the Privacy Statement follow immediately below.

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**What personal information is collected and how is that information used?**

**​**

1. We collect information about our users in multiple ways: directly from the user (such as when ordering a product, registering an account or signing up for a newsletter), from our Web server logs, and through cookies, and when you fill in our opt-in forms.

2. We use the information primarily to provide you with a personalized Internet experience that delivers the information, resources, and services that are most relevant and helpful to you.

3. We do not share any of the information you provide with others, unless we say so in this Privacy Statement, or when we believe in good faith that the law requires it.

4. We will use this information as aggregate data to help us maintain this site, e.g., to determine the number of visitors to different sections of our site, to ensure the site is working properly, and to help us make our site more accessible and useful.

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**How is my personal information protected?**

**​**

1. We have implemented certain appropriate security measures to help protect your personal information from accidental loss and from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure.

2. However, please note that we cannot guarantee that unauthorized persons will always be unable to defeat our security measures.

3. Also, please note that we may store and process your personal information in systems located outside of your home country. Regardless of where these activities occur, we take appropriate steps to ensure that your information is protected consistent with the principles set forth under this Privacy Statement.

4. Please note that electronic communications, particularly e-mail, is not necessarily secure against interception. Please do not send sensitive data (e.g. Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers) by web forms.

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**Who has access to the personal information?**

**​**

1. We will not sell, rent, or lease mailing lists or other customer data to others, and we will not make your personal information available to any unaffiliated parties, except our approved agents and contractors, or as otherwise described in this Privacy Statement.

2. We rely on some of our affiliates for support of the products and services we offer, and we share some of our back-office functions with other companies. Our affiliates are all required to preserve the confidentiality of any personal information they may access.

3. We will not disclose any personal information or information about your usage of our websites to unaffiliated third parties, except as necessary to service the account, to enforce the terms of use, to meet our obligations to content and technology providers, or as required by law.

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**How may I correct, amend or delete my personal information, or update my preferences?**

**​**

1. You may cancel your registration or update your preferences at any time simply by contacting us.

2. If you do not want to receive information about our products or services, please contact us.

3. If you wish to unsubscribe from any of our campaigns, please select the unsubscribe button at the bottom of any email newsletters.

4. If you wish to unsubscribe to our text messages, please text “STOP” and you will be removed from our text list. If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to contact us.

If you have any additional questions or concerns related to this statement and/or our practices, please contact us at **[ENTER CAMPAIGN EMAIL ADDRESS]**

**Newsletter Platforms**

These are only a few options for newsletter platforms that I am familiar with.

**Wix**

Wix’s newsletter platform is as easy to use as their website building platform. It is a simple drag-and-drop platform. It’s easy to customize colors, font, and graphics as well as include hyperlinked content.

The main drawback with the Wix platform is that it does not allow a user to categorize emails. Depending on how a campaign wishes to use the emails they receive during the campaign, categorizing the emails can be very useful to target specific demographics.

**MailChimp**

**Pricing:** MailChimp has a variety off pricing plans which are predominately based on the number of contacts that a campaign has. Most campaigns can use the Essential version.

MailChimp is an easy drag-and-drop platform that is easy to learn regardless of a user’s familiarity with emailing platforms. MailChimp does allow a user to use custom tags to categorize contacts which allows a user to send specific emails to either their full audience or a single subsect of their audience. MailChimp is easy to customize colors, text, and photos as well as include hyperlinked text.

**Website Tips**

These are a few tips when you’re building a website regardless of the platform you decide to use.

**Website Pages**

Typically a campaign website will have the following pages: 1) Home Page, 2) About the Candidate, 3) Platform, 4) Endorsement (if applicable), 5) Contact

1. Home page: Your Home page is a summary. You can put an abridged biography which has a link to the about page, you can have voter information, you can have a contact form. Your Home Page should be an introduction to your candidate.
2. About: About is where you get into greater detail about yourself. Focus the first part of your biography on your qualifications for the positions (are you on any boards, do you have any relevant degrees or work experience, do you have any relevant community work, etc.). You can include personal information about your hobbies or family, but the bulk of your biography should be why you are the best fit for the position you are running for. Some people also like to include a short resume after their written biography.
3. Platform: Pick the issues you are running on and include a brief summary about each item
4. Endorsements: Not all races will have endorsements, but if you have them, you can list them here.
5. Contact page: You can typically add a form to your website page. I would suggest requiring name and email address, phone can be optional. You can add a message section where they can write messages or have a check list of volunteer opportunities for your campaign.

**Best Practices**:

1. Make sure your colors and messaging are consistent.
2. Use your campaign logo in your menu bar so it appears on every single page.
3. Add a donation button on your menu bar as well as in your footer so people always have easy access to donate.
4. Don’t forget to include the campaign committee that paid for the website along with the campaign donation disclosure. I tend to put this in the footer so it appears on every page.
   1. *Paid for by [ENTER CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE]*
   2. Campaign donation disclosure: *“A copy of our report filed with the State Board of Elections is (or will be) available on the Board's official website or for purchase from the State Board of Elections, Springfield, Illinois. Contributions or gifts to the organization are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.”*
5. Link your social media accounts.
6. If you have a phone number option for your contact form, include a message that says: *“By providing your phone number, you are consenting to receive calls and SMS/MMS messages, including autodialed and automated calls and texts, to that number from [CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE]. Msg & data rates may apply.”*