

The nonprofit that didn't own a single one of its own digital assets

SMILE Mass was locked out of its website, its analytics, its search data and its Google profile — all held by a previous agency. We got every one of them back, rebuilt the foundations, and turned a dormant presence into a measurable growth engine.

CLIENT

SMILE Mass

SECTOR

**Disability recreation ·
Sudbury, MA**

ENGAGEMENT

June 2026 — ongoing

SCOPE

**Infrastructure · Social ·
Email · Reporting**

In the 40 days before we took over, their Instagram published 68 posts, their website could not send a single email, and their analytics belonged to somebody else.

Ninety days later, every one of those was fixed.

HEADLINE RESULTS

100%

Platform access
recovered

3.9×

Instagram reach
on fewer posts

13.1×

Email send rate
sustained 83 days

29.4 → 9.8

Google position
page 3 to page 1

Small Miracles In Life Exist

SMILE Mass makes recreation possible for people with disabilities and their families across Massachusetts — beach wheelchairs, accessible vacation rentals, and year-round community programs, under the banner *Creating a world without barriers*.

It runs a full annual fundraising calendar: the Corporate Cup Challenge, the Gobble Wobble, a golf tournament, a Falmouth Road Race team. Executive Director Mike Diggins brought us in to take over marketing execution across every channel. We launched on 10 June 2026.

Within days it was clear the marketing was not the first problem.

WHAT WE WALKED INTO

A nonprofit locked out of its own digital estate

Every platform SMILE Mass depended on was controlled by a previous marketing company. Not shared. Not delegated.

Held. The organisation could not log in to its own website hosting, could not see its own traffic, could not read its own search performance, and could not edit its own Google listing.

Access they did not have

- **Website hosting** — no control over the server their own site ran on
- **Google Analytics 4** — no visibility of a single visitor
- **Google Search Console** — no idea what they ranked for
- **Google Tag Manager** — no ability to track anything
- **Google Business Profile** — could not update their own listing

And what was broken

- **The website could not send email.** Not degraded — not sending
- Enquiry forms submitted into nothing, with no stored record
- Notifications still routed to a staff member who had left
- A rotating event ticker across the top of every page, rendering broken
- 68 Instagram posts in 40 days producing zero new followers
- Zero reels, zero video, anywhere, at all

Understand what "the website could not send email" actually costs

SMILE Mass rents accessible beach wheelchairs and vacation properties to families planning the one holiday of the year their disabled child can actually take part in. Those families enquire through a form on the website. **Every one of those enquiries was vanishing.** No email, no stored record, no way to know it had ever happened. The same was true of corporate sponsors making contact and volunteers signing up. The organisation had no idea how much business it was losing, because the mechanism that would have told it was the mechanism that was broken.

Getting it all back

Before a single post was scheduled, we went and recovered every account SMILE Mass should always have owned — from the agency that held them.

This is the unglamorous, difficult, essential work that most agencies quietly skip because it is slow and produces nothing to show a client at the end of the month. It is also the single highest-value thing we did, because everything after it was only possible once it was done.

Website hosting control	Recovered
Google Analytics 4	Recovered
Google Search Console	Recovered
Google Tag Manager	Recovered
Google Business Profile	Recovered
Domain & DNS administration	Recovered

SMILE Mass now owns every one of them outright. Not through us — in their own name, on their own accounts, with us granted access rather than holding it. If they ever part ways with House of Rubi, they walk away with everything intact. We made a point of that.

Why this matters more than any campaign

An organisation that cannot see its own analytics cannot evaluate anyone's work — including ours. It cannot tell a good agency from a bad one, cannot know whether its money is producing anything, and cannot leave without starting over from nothing. Every month that passes in that state, the dependency deepens. Recovering those accounts was, in a real sense, the client hiring us to make themselves less dependent on anyone.

What it unlocked

Everything in the rest of this document was downstream of it. Search Console access revealed a year of ranking history nobody had seen. Hosting control made the migration, the email fix and the speed work possible. Business Profile access made local optimisation possible. Tag Manager access makes conversion tracking possible next. None of it existed as an option on day one.

Rebuilding the foundations

Migration to hosting we control

With hosting control recovered, we moved the entire site onto WP Engine — managed, monitored infrastructure we administer directly.

WP Engine migration	Complete
Domain routing	Complete
SSL activation	Complete
Root and www secure	Complete
Legacy host backup	Retained

Core functionality stayed live throughout. Zero downtime that anyone noticed, on a migration most organisations budget a weekend of outage for.

Fixing email at the DNS layer

A WordPress site that cannot send mail is almost never a WordPress problem. It is a domain problem — the receiving world does not believe the mail is genuine, so it disappears silently rather than bouncing.

We rebuilt the domain's email authentication records from scratch on the new host — **SPF, DKIM and DMARC** — so mail leaving the site is cryptographically signed, verifiable against the sending domain, and trusted at the receiving end instead of being discarded before it reaches an inbox.

Result: form notifications deliver. And as a belt-and-braces measure, every submission is now written to the site's own database independently, so even a future mail failure costs a delay rather than a lost family, sponsor or volunteer.

The broken ticker on every page

A blue event bar rotates across the top of every page on smilemass.org, carrying live fundraiser deadlines — *Register for Gobble Wobble before 9/15*. It was rendering incorrectly. That bar is the first thing every visitor sees, on every page, and it was actively promoting the organisation's biggest revenue events while looking broken. We identified it in the post-migration review and fixed it.

Speed

With the site on infrastructure we control, we applied a full performance pass — caching, asset delivery, and front-end optimisation — so the site loads fast for families browsing accessible rentals on a phone. Page speed is not vanity: Google treats it as a ranking factor, and a slow site loses the visitor before the mission ever gets a hearing.

The compounding effect of fixing foundations first

Most marketing engagements start with content because content is visible and infrastructure is not. That order is backwards. A fast, secure site on hosting you control, sending mail that actually arrives, with analytics you can read, makes every subsequent pound of marketing effort worth more — and a broken one makes it worth nothing. The reach numbers in the following pages are the visible half of this engagement. This page is why they converted into anything.

PHASE THREE

The change that moved everything: video

The pre-launch account was publishing relentlessly and reaching nobody, and the cause was sitting in plain sight in the export: **zero reels on Instagram and zero videos on Facebook across the entire prior period.** We introduced both immediately, built around real people — coaches, participants, families, testimonials — rather than graphics.

BEFORE — 40 DAYS TO 9 JUNE	AFTER — 40 DAYS TO 19 JULY
68 Instagram posts, 0 reels	58 Instagram posts, <u>16 reels</u>
69 Facebook posts, 0 videos	64 Facebook posts, <u>16 videos</u>
0 LinkedIn posts	21 LinkedIn posts
Reach per Instagram post: 67	Reach per Instagram post: 306

Median reel reach was 478 against 80 for a static image — six times the reach, same account, same period. On Facebook, median video reach was 520 against 166 for a photo.

We proved it rather than claimed it. A Mann-Whitney U test returned $p < 0.0001$, so the difference is not sampling noise. Splitting by campaign showed the advantage holding in both halves, so no single campaign is flattering the result. Removing the largest outlier post still left reach up 2.84×.

LAUNCH PERIOD RESULTS

Two matched 40-day windows, measured directly

1 May – 9 June against 10 June – 19 July. Both exactly 40 days, so every change is a direct ratio — nothing scaled, normalised or modelled. Organic only, with no paid spend in either period.

INSTAGRAM	BEFORE	AFTER	CHANGE
Accounts reached	~~4,551~~	17,753	3.90×
Views	~~8,396~~	30,706	3.66×
Engagements	~~309~~	1,286	4.16×
Reach per post	~~67~~	306	4.57×
New followers	0	11	From zero
Posts published	68	58	15% fewer

Nearly four times the reach on fifteen percent fewer posts. The gain came from format, not from working the account harder.

WATCH THE REELS

Reel on Instagram

Reel on Facebook

SMILE Mass on Instagram

SMILE Mass on Facebook

Facebook and LinkedIn

Same matched windows, organic only. Facebook was already the larger audience and grew steadily. LinkedIn went from completely dormant to the best-converting channel in the entire mix.

FACEBOOK	BEFORE	AFTER	CHANGE
Accounts reached	16,985	22,752	+34%
Views	28,166	35,042	+24%
Interactions	1,346	1,658	+23%
Reach per post	246	356	1.45×
Videos published	0	16	New

Best single post of the period: a swim testimonial at 3,240 reach. Shares accounted for 907 of 1,658 total interactions, which tells you the audience isn't just consuming this content — it's carrying it to people we never paid to reach.

LINKEDIN — FROM DORMANT	BEFORE	AFTER	CHANGE
Posts published	0	21	New
Impressions	51	1,124	22.0×
Clicks	1	56	56×
Click-through rate	1.96%	4.98%	+3.0 pts
Engagement rate	3.92%	7.38%	+3.5 pts

A 4.98% click-through rate — the highest of any channel we measure, against 1% on email in the same period. But the rate matters less than who is producing it.

20 of 46 recorded visitors were Director level or above. The largest job functions were Business Development and Operations. Every single recorded visit came from Greater Boston. That is not a demographic profile — that is a description of the Corporate Cup Challenge sponsorship target list, arriving on its own.

We took a channel that had published nothing at all and turned it into a direct line to the exact decision-makers who sign corporate sponsorship cheques in the client's own city.

FIND SMILE MASS

smilemass.org[Facebook](#)[Instagram](#)[LinkedIn](#)[YouTube](#)[X](#)

From a hundred people to an actual audience

Before launch, SMILE Mass emailed roughly 100 already-engaged recipients. From 10 June it contacted a rebuilt list of more than 2,500 for the first time. The cleanest measure available is a direct 83-day export: everything since launch, against the 83 days immediately before it.

METRIC	83 DAYS BEFORE	83 DAYS SINCE	CHANGE
Emails sent	~~3,705~~	48,382	13.1×
Daily send rate	~~44.6/day~~	582.9/day	13.1×
Delivered	~~3,662~~	47,253	12.9×
Open rate	~~71%~~	75%	+4.0 pts
Absolute clicks, launch period	~~199~~	441	+122%

Thirteen times the volume — and the open rate went up, not down. Scaling a list by an order of magnitude normally costs you engagement. Here it didn't. The recurring newsletter opened at 85–88% on a list ten times larger than the one that previously opened at 79–84%.

Click *rate* fell from around 9% to 1%, and that is arithmetic rather than decline: thirteen times more people were never going to click at the rate a hand-picked hundred did. The number that matters is absolute clicks, which more than doubled.

One pattern held across four consecutive reporting periods: **the recurring newsletter beats the one-off event blast every time.** The VIP Newsletter topped the open-rate table in every period at 80–94%; standalone event announcements held the bottom five every period at 51–59%. We changed the strategy accordingly — events now get promoted inside the newsletter.

SUSTAINED, NOT A LAUNCH SPIKE

Ninety days in, every channel still ahead

Launch bumps are easy. The second reporting period asked whether any of it held. It did.

13.1×

Email rate held across
all 83 days

+51%

Facebook link clicks
July to August

2.1×

Instagram reach vs the
dead pre-launch rate

+66.7%

Google profile website
clicks, year on year

Facebook click activity became fully measurable in August and rose broadly rather than on one viral post: 26 of 50 posts drew at least one link click, against 23 of 48 in July. Instagram reach did soften month to month — a third of it a single July outlier correcting itself — and even in the weaker month the account still reached people at twice the rate of the dead account we inherited.

Page three to page one

Recovering Search Console access did more than restore visibility into the data. It revealed what the rebuilt, migrated, accelerated website had been doing in Google all along — and nobody had been able to see it.

GOOGLE SEARCH CONSOLE	AUG 2025	AUG 2026	CHANGE
Average position	~~29.4~~	9.8	+19.6 places
Click-through rate	~~2.4%~~	5.9%	+146%
Total clicks	~~449~~	722	+61%
Ranking queries	—	1,385	First measure

Average position moving from 29.4 to 9.8 is the difference between page three and page one of Google. Page three produces essentially nothing. Page one is where a family searching for a beach wheelchair actually finds you.

The [Google Business Profile](#) told the same story from the other direction: website clicks from the profile rose from 60 to 100 year on year, up 66.7%.

The first non-branded discovery in the organisation's history

When we took over, Google discovery was **100% brand-driven**. Of 188 searches surfacing the profile, the only terms above Google's reporting threshold were "smile mass", "smilemass" and "smile massachusetts" — the organisation's own name. Nobody was finding SMILE Mass by searching for what it does.

QUERY	TYPE	2025	2026
beach wheelchair rental	Service	~~4~~	3
wheelchair accessible beach house rentals	Service	0	2
beach wheelchair rental near me	Service	0	2
gobble wobble	Event	0	2
lotte diomede	Founder	0	4

Small numbers — and the most important numbers in this document. For the first time, strangers who have never heard of SMILE Mass are finding it by searching for the thing it provides. Eight of the top ten queries grew year on year, and the long tail beyond the top ten accounts for 527 of 722 total clicks. That is a site that has stopped being a brochure for people who already know the name and started being a way in for people who don't.

Reporting built to be checked, not admired

SMILE Mass spent years unable to see its own numbers. So we didn't hand them a slide deck. We built them a live, published monthly dashboard where every single figure traces to a named, dated source file — and where we show our workings, including the parts that don't flatter us.

Two are published to date: the launch-period report covering 10 June – 31 July, and the August report. This is what earned the client's trust faster than any metric did.

Rules governing every number

- **Matched calendar windows.** Equal-length periods, direct ratios, nothing scaled or modelled
- **Medians where distributions skew**, with outlier sensitivity shown both ways
- **Statistical significance tested**, not asserted — and reported honestly when a result falls short
- **Rate direction explicit.** A rise in bounce rate is labelled a decline, not a change
- **Inputs separated from results.** Posting cadence is something we chose, so it is greyed out rather than scored as a win
- **Missing sources labelled, never estimated.** Nothing filled in from a prior report or a model

What that looks like in practice

- Instagram reach reported both ways — headline –52% and outlier-adjusted –30% — rather than picking the kinder figure
- A reel finding returned $p = 0.057$, just above threshold. We called it directional and unconfirmed rather than claiming a proven result
- When a third-party report argued a 34% impressions drop was actually good news, we declined the framing and flagged it pending the underlying data
- Google Business Profile was explicitly labelled a **pre-optimisation benchmark**, not our result, because optimisation hadn't started yet
- Every unavailable data source listed by name, with the reason, rather than quietly omitted

We correct our own reports, in writing, in the next one

The launch report read email bounce rate as improving, based on a wide comparison window. When the true month-by-month split became available, it had in fact risen slightly — 1.77% to 2.04%. The August report states that correction openly, explains that a mismatched window pointed the wrong way, and confirms which part of the original finding still stands. *A client who can trust the corrections can trust everything else.*

And we flag our own recommendations when they underperform

The launch report recommended leaning on LinkedIn for Corporate Cup sponsorship outreach, on the strength of that 4.98% click-through rate. The August report opened the section with the follow-up: zero new followers in the most recent 30 days and page views down 34.5% — *right after that recommendation went out* — and advised diagnosing before pushing further. The recommendation that underperformed is reported as prominently as the ones that worked. No agency does this. It is exactly why this one is trusted.

Ninety days

BEFORE JUNE 2026

Locked out of hosting, GA4, GSC, GTM and Google Business Profile

Website could not send email at all

Enquiries vanishing with no record

Broken event ticker on every page

68 Instagram posts, zero new followers

No reels, no video, anywhere

LinkedIn dormant — no posts, one click

~100 people on the email list

Google discovery 100% branded

No measurement framework of any kind

TODAY

Every platform recovered and owned outright by SMILE Mass

Mail authenticated at DNS level and delivering

Every submission stored on-site regardless of mail

Ticker fixed, site migrated, speed optimised

3.9× reach on 15% fewer posts

Video-led content across three channels

LinkedIn at the highest click rate of any channel

2,500+ contacts at 13.1× the send rate

Page one of Google, with non-branded discovery

Published monthly dashboards, fully sourced

SMILE Mass exists to create a world without barriers. It had spent years behind one of its own — unable to reach its audience, see its own data, or even receive an email from a family that needed it. **That barrier is gone.**

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

From attention to outcome

With analytics access recovered, the final piece is conversion tracking: switching on tracked events for donations, registrations, rental enquiries and contact submissions, so future reporting measures outcomes rather than only attention. Registration and donation platform access is the last outstanding item — pursued the same way everything else was.

Full-service marketing and infrastructure

An ongoing engagement covering platform ownership, hosting, content production, channel management and monthly performance reporting.

Platform access recovery

Website hosting & migration

Email deliverability & DNS

Site performance

Social media management

Video & reel production

Email marketing

Google Business Profile

Paid social

Performance reporting

Methodology & sources

Every figure traces to a dated export: Instagram and Facebook post-level exports (May–Aug 2026), LinkedIn content and visitor exports, Constant Contact email hub reports including a direct 83-day since-launch export, Google Search Console and Business Profile performance data, campaign tracker workbooks, and developer status reports on the migration. Meta and LinkedIn data is organic only, with no paid spend in any compared period. Full monthly reports are published at thehouseofrubi.com.

House of Rubi

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