

carahsoft.

BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

Microsite Design

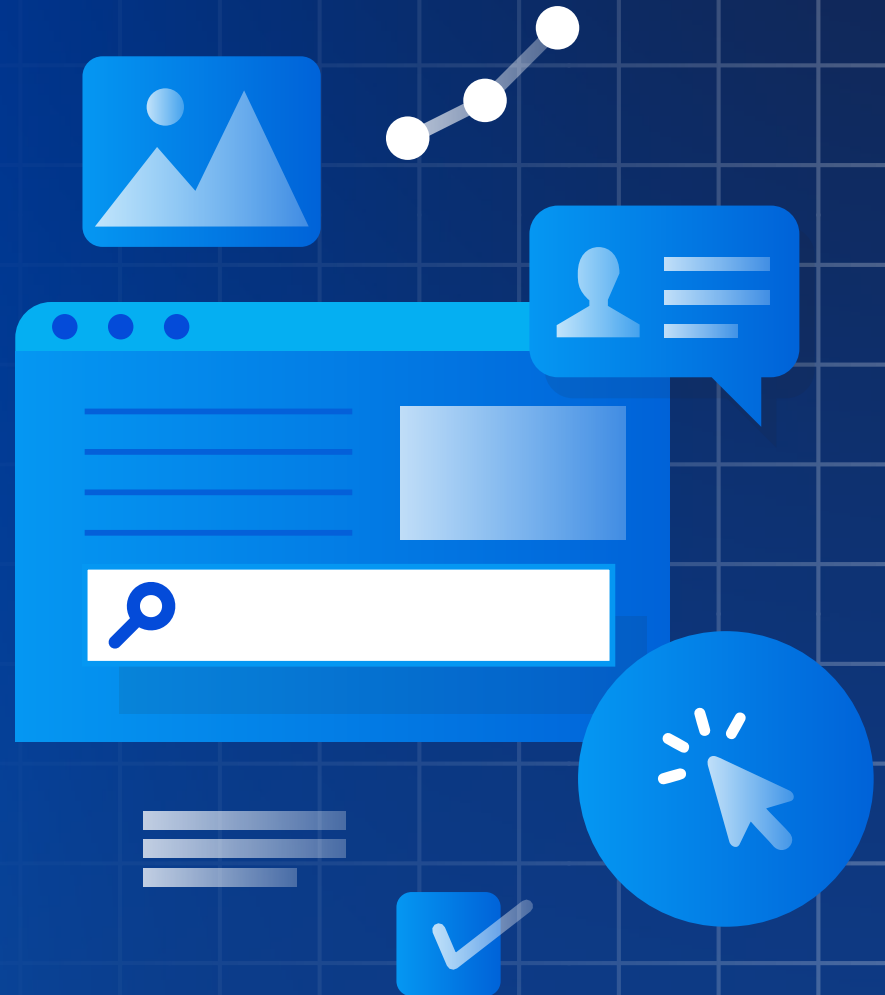


Table of Contents

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

- ✓ For vendor partners setting up their microsite
- ✓ Aligns design, messaging, and campaign goals
- ✓ Helps create consistent, high-performing microsites

Page 3

Why Microsites (and Their Graphics) Matter

Page 4

Microsite Graphics

Page 5

Starter Pack

Page 6

Graphic Ad Layout

Page 7

Graphic Do's and Don'ts

Page 8

From Slide Deck to Web Page

Page 9

Headline Writing Examples

Page 10

Before and After Examples

Page 11

Logo Guidelines

Page 12

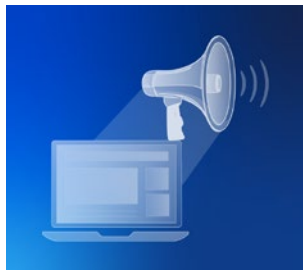
Co-Branding

Page 13

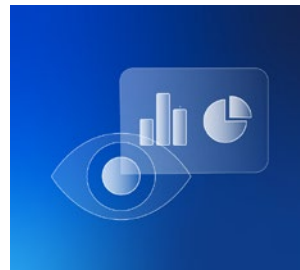
Checklist

Why Microsites (and Their Graphics) Matter

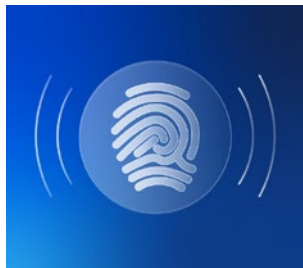
Microsites give your campaign a focused home where customers can quickly understand your offering and decide what to do next. They bring content, messaging, and calls-to-action together in one place, creating a clearer and more effective experience for visitors.



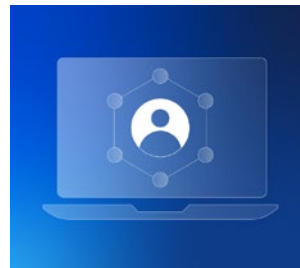
Provide a single destination for products, events, and resources



Make it easier to measure engagement, clicks, and conversions



Reinforce brand recognition across marketing efforts



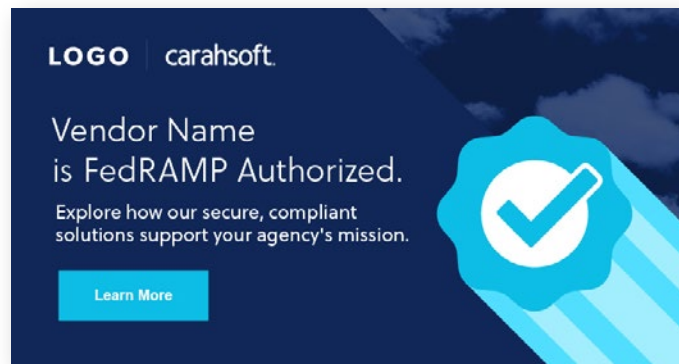
Support SEO and guide customers through the buying journey

Types of Microsite Images

Microsite graphics are designed to quickly capture attention and guide visitors to take action, whether that is exploring a solution, registering for an event, or downloading a resource. Because they are viewed briefly and across many screen sizes, simplicity, clarity, and legibility are essential. Content created for slide decks or PDFs is typically too detailed to work well in this space.

Rotating Ads

- Limit to three banners to avoid viewer fatigue and keep messages impactful.



Featured Top Ribbon Banner

- Reserve for timely or high-priority content since this is a featured placement.



Sidebar Ads

- Best for evergreen content such as “Schedule a Demo”.
- Limit to three ads at a time to keep the layout clean. Additional ads should rotate.



Overview Thumbnails (SEO-graphics)

- Use as supporting visuals that directly reflect the associated content.



Strong Heading

Call to Action

Strong Heading

Call to Action



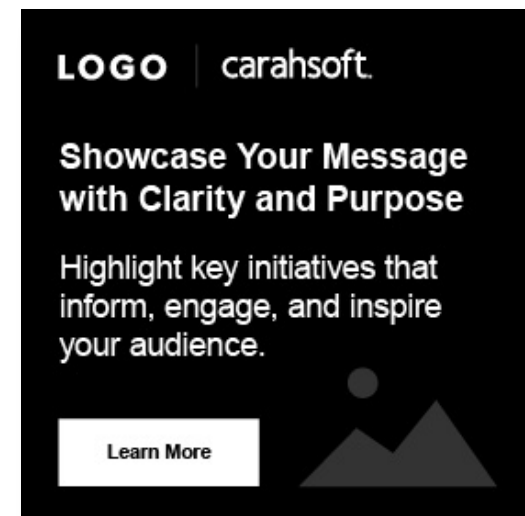
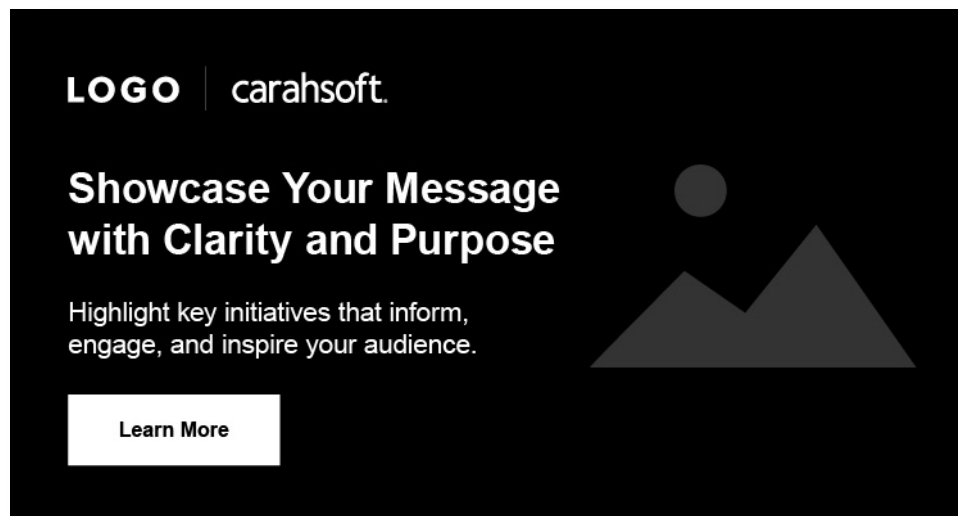
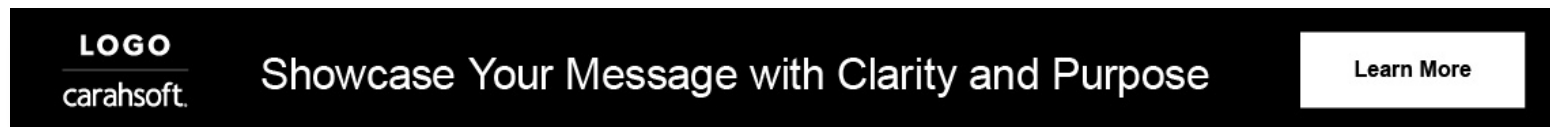
CREATING YOUR OWN GRAPHICS?

To make this process as easy as possible, Carahsoft offers a Microsite Graphics Starter Pack with prebuilt Adobe Illustrator templates.

[DOWNLOAD THE TEMPLATES HERE](#)

Starter Pack

These templates are designed to match Carahsoft's layout and accessibility standards and ensure proper sizing and visual hierarchy. Partners are welcome to use these templates to create their own graphics, or share content with their marketing team representative for our internal design team to build them on your behalf. Either approach works! We're here to support what's easiest for your team.

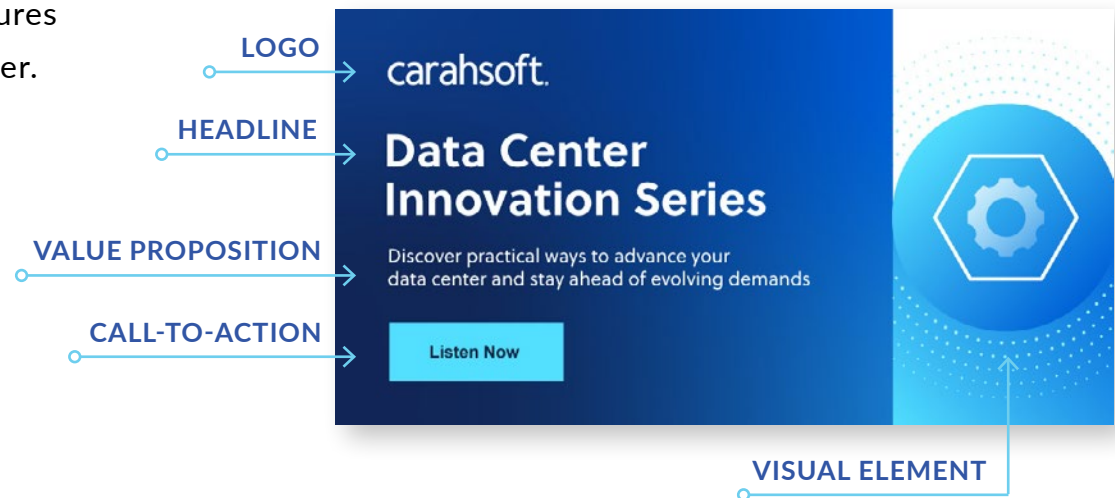


Graphic Ad Layout and Structure Matter

Audiences are bombarded with thousands of ads every day. A clean, well-structured design ensures your message is easy to see, read, and remember.

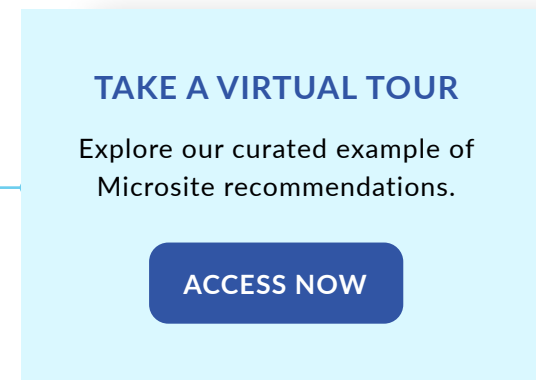
Banner Ad Guidelines

- Serve as a gateway to deeper campaign content
- Avoid cramming full slides or lengthy text into ad space
- Use strong, relevant visuals paired with concise messaging
- Always include a clear call-to-action



Recommended Content Hierarchy

- **Headline** – Clear, concise, and impactful
- **Value Proposition (optional)** – Briefly state the benefit or relevance
- **Call-to-Action (CTA)** – Direct and specific (e.g., Register Now, Download Guide, Learn More)
- **Visual Element** – A strong image or graphic that captures attention and reinforces your message



Graphic Do's and Don'ts

Designing for Microsites: What Works (and What Doesn't)

✔ What Works Well	✘ What to Avoid
• One clear message per graphic • Short headline (6–10 words) • One strong call-to-action • Simple, high-contrast visuals • Designed specifically to the microsite dimensions	• Full PowerPoint slides resized to fit • Paragraphs of text or bullet-heavy layouts • Small fonts or dense diagrams • Multiple competing messages • “Everything at once” graphics



Note: If it takes more than 3 seconds to understand the message, it's probably better suited for a landing page or downloadable resource. Ad graphic spaces are an invitation to learn more, not presentation.

From Slide Deck to Web Page

- PowerPoint slides are perfect for explaining technical details during presentations. But they don't work well as ads because they're often too detailed, text-heavy, and designed for a different kind of audience engagement.

Carahsoft Conference and Collaboration Center

- With the Carahsoft POC, we will coordinate event and meeting plans.
- Book conference rooms based on need, number of expected attendees and available date and time.
- Work with event teams: Facilities, IT, Zoom, Production and Graphic Design.
- Set up lobby TV welcome signage for all events and meetings.
- Manage catering based on type of event, requested food and number of guests.
- Provide coffee, beverage and snack service.

Reception desk check-in and notification system, over 100 drop-in desks, onsite meeting and event staff, catering services, catering kitchen, complimentary beverages and snacks, notary and e-notary, tech services, cleaning services, laundry facilities, free wi-fi, parking, copier and printer access, outdoor space, nursing/mother's room.

Meeting Room	Capacity	Boardroom
Lobby - 1st Floor	50	24
Carahsoft		

Carahsoft Team Meetings
Carahsoft & Customers
Order to Impress

vs.

carahsoft.

NORTHSTAR STELLA AWARDS NOMINATED

The Carahsoft Conference & Collaboration Center

See why the CCCC earned Northstar Meetings Group's Gold Medal for Best Conference Center.

[Learn More](#)

Problem: This design is not suitable for a rotating banner because it is missing a CTA, overload of content, incorrect dimensions, and does not follow the visual hierarchy layout.

Solution: This design is suitable for a rotating banner because it includes a CTA to more information, has correct dimensions, and follows the visual hierarchy. The graphic is also engaging and easy to digest.



Our recommendation: Share engaging banners with a clear-call to action and brief content that encourages users to learn more. Promote resources, events, etc. and make sure the banner matches the identity.

Headline Writing Examples

Which one would you click on?



✓ Good Example:

'How Private Cloud Drives Federal IT Modernization'

Why the Good Example Works:

- **Clear and specific** — exactly what the topic is about
- **Action-oriented** — “drives” shows impact and momentum
- **Audience-relevant** — speaks directly to federal IT professionals
- **Focused** — zeroes in on one clear idea
- **SEO-friendly** — includes strong, relevant keywords
- **Concise** — short and easy to understand at a glance

✗ Bad Example:

'Improving Government Technology Systems with Cloud-Related Solutions through IT Modernization'

Why the Bad Example Falls Short:

- **Not clear** — It's vague and clunky (“cloud-related solutions” is non-specific).
- **Not brief** — It's redundant and wordy (“through IT modernization” is implied by the rest).
- **SEO-unfriendly** — Search engines favor concise titles that clearly match user queries.
- **Lacking action** — It lacks a strong hook or clear value.

View banners before & after quality assurance



Problem: Missing logos, event information, lack of visuals, and an unclear call-to-action



Correction: Add logos, cta, event details, and visuals that are tailored to the promoted event



Problem: Missing logo, lack of visual engagement, and call-to-action



Correction: Add logo, cta, and visual brand identity

carahsoft®

LOGO GUIDELINES

There are 3 logo types to use within the Carahsoft brand. Each can be presented in several different color environments and backgrounds. Please see the instructions below on proper usage.

The blue Carahsoft logo should be used in all official 4-color documents and promotional items unless otherwise approved by management or in the instances listed in this document.

↓ DOWNLOAD BLUE LOGO

PRINT

.eps

.jpg

.png

WEB

.svg

.jpg

.png

The black Carahsoft logo should be used in black and white documents and/or on a white or light colored background when appropriate.

↓ DOWNLOAD BLACK LOGO

.eps

.jpg

.png

The white Carahsoft logo should be used on a blue, black, or dark colored background.

↓ DOWNLOAD WHITE LOGO

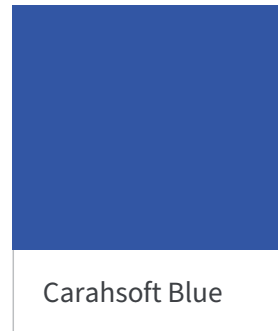
.eps

.png

Gray area indicates the breathing room around the logo.
The height of the Carahsoft “c” should be able to fit around all sides of the logo.



Give the Carahsoft logo some breathing room.



Pantone: 286 U **CMYK:**

91, 75, 1, 0 **RGB:** 49, 85,

164 **Hex#:** 3155A4



Co-Branding

Co-branding logos can be used on marketing materials that are developed with Carahsoft vendors. All logo standards and guidelines apply.

- ✓ Make sure logos are visually balanced, and that both brands are equally prominent.
- ✓ Maintain equal distance between all logos.
- ✓ Create a stroke divider between logos using black or reversed to white on dark backgrounds.
 - ✓ A vertical stroke should be at least the height of the tallest logo.
 - ✓ A horizontal line should be at least the length of the Carahsoft logo.
 - ✓ Dividers should be placed after the logo clear space.

CO-BRANDING: HORIZONTAL

This is the preferred co-branding logo configuration.



LOGO | carahsoft®

CO-BRANDING: VERTICAL

For vertical applications, co-branding can be configured vertically.



LOGO
carahsoft®

Microsite Ad Quick Quality Check

This checklist is here to help your graphics perform well on the Carahsoft site. Our team reviews every submission and can help flag anything that needs adjustment.

Branding Basics

- ☐ Include logo on all ad graphics
- ☐ Ensure overall design aligns with Carahsoft graphics standards

Clear Messaging

- ☐ Balance text with visuals and avoid text-heavy layouts
- ☐ Use short, clear headlines and concise titles
- ☐ Include one clear, direct call to action (e.g., “Download Now,” “Learn More”).
- ☐ Link to a downloadable resource for complex or detailed content

Layout and Design

- ☐ Maintain a clear visual hierarchy
- ☐ Use color and imagery to create visual interest
- ☐ Allow sufficient whitespace for readability

Accessibility

- ☐ Use sufficient color contrast to ensure text and visuals are easy to read
- ☐ Check color contrast [here](#)

Technical Requirements

- ☐ Use the correct dimensions for each ad placement
- ☐ Optimize files for fast loading
- ☐ Maximum file size 100KB
- ☐ Image Sizes at 72ppi

Rotating Ad	750px by 400px
Sidebar Ad	280px by 280px (height may extend as needed)
Overview Thumbnail	690px by 440px
Featured Ribbon Banner	1800px by 100px (height may extend as needed)

Our team is here to help at every step. Learn more about collaborating with us on the next page.

Collaborating with Carahsoft

carahsoft®

Working With Carahsoft on Your Microsite Graphics

Not creating your own graphics? Carahsoft is happy to help.

To get started, gather the information below and share it with your Carahsoft marketing representative. This helps our design team create graphics that are clear, effective, and aligned with your goals.

What to share

- ☐ Campaign overview and objectives
- ☐ Key messaging or value proposition
- ☐ Specific calls-to-action (CTAs)
- ☐ Any logos, brand assets, or style preferences

Your marketing representative will coordinate directly with Carahsoft's internal design team to create the appropriate microsite graphics for you. For specific questions or support, please have your Carahsoft point of contact reach out to connect you with our teams.

