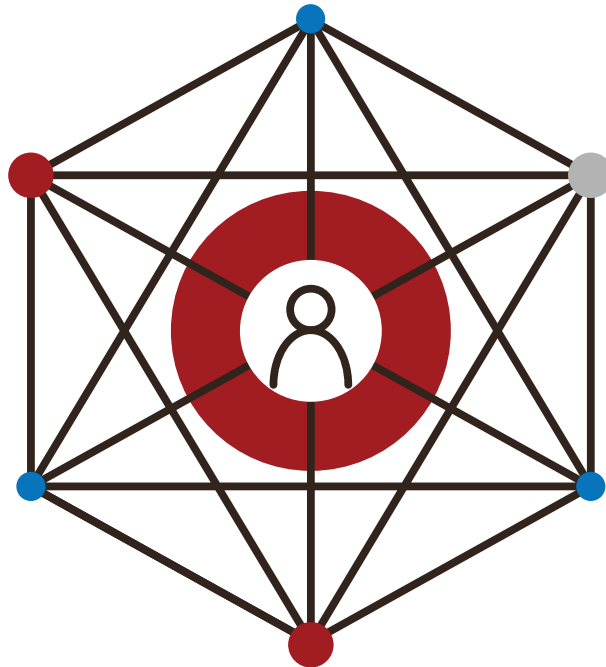


Landing Pages

How to Turn Traffic
into Money



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Successful marketers know that it's ridiculous to create a product or email newsletter, and then spoil the launch by promoting it through their home page.

They know that the home page is a hot mess of choices that will distract potential customers.

Thus, the popularity of the highly-focused landing page.

See, landing pages convert dramatically better than a home page, increasing your membership site sign-ups, ebook downloads, or product sales ...

But what makes landing pages so powerful?

The secret is their ability to segment your audience into subsets of consumers ... aligning the right message with the right audience at the right time ... using landing pages.

You can grow your email subscriber list faster, sell more digital products in less time, squeeze more students into your membership program ...

But what is a landing page? And how do you "segment your audience into subsets of consumers"? Those questions and more will be answered in this ebook.

As you read you'll discover:

- 3 essential metrics you need to know to improve successful landing pages
- How crappy landing pages kill email campaigns
- 7 steps to an email-opt in landing page that works
- What makes an effective landing page like a direct mail letter
- The best piece of advice for improving landing page conversions
- If you are killing your landing page conversion rates by breaking one of these 10 laws

Once you're finished with this ebook you'll know that the key to creating landing pages boils down to simplicity ... in fact, you'll learn that creating the ultimate landing page is not as hard as you think.

So whether you are a seasoned landing page creator with years of experience under your belt or a greenhorn who furrows your brow at the mention of landing pages ... this guide will teach and remind you of the essential steps to creating the ultimate landing page, and the critical mistakes to avoid.

5 Landing Page Mistakes that Crush Conversion Rates

A landing page is a place you send traffic when you really want some action.

And no, this has nothing to do with Craigslist personals.

It can be a sales page, an email opt-in page, a video landing page, or even a content landing page designed to rank well in search engines. As you might have guessed, there are a lot of ways to screw these up.

Here are five of the most common mistakes people make with their landing pages.

1. Blowing the headline

Landing pages live or die by the quality of the [headline](#). It's your two-second chance to overcome the swift and brutal attention filters we've developed due to information overload and poorly-matched promises.

Often, a better headline alone will boost the effectiveness of your landing page, and even overcome some of the other mistakes below. Split-testing different headlines is relatively painless, and can bring you much higher conversions compared with multiple other tweaks.

2. Using your regular site design

Most of us who use [content marketing](#) as an attraction strategy use a content management system, such as WordPress. That means we're using [design themes](#) for the visual presentation of our sites.

While your typical sidebar-and-header approach to a blog post is fine, when it comes down to traffic hitting a landing page with a singular focus on specific action, all of that extraneous stuff causes confusion, distraction, and reduced conversions. Lose the clutter and create the cleanest page possible when you want some action.

3. Asking for more than one thing

The idea that more choices make people happier has been proven to be a psychological fallacy time and again. This "paradox of choice" reveals that when given multiple options, the decision ends up being not to choose at all.

An effective landing page asks for one specific action, and that's it. And don't forget to actually clearly ask for that one specific thing, which is an even bigger conversion killer if you don't.

4. Ignoring basic aesthetics

Why is it when some people decide to ask for some action, they lose their minds on the appearance of the page? Bad fonts, garish colors, cheap highlighting, and silly clip art do not make for better conversions in most cases. What they do is crush your credibility.

While using your standard blog theme is distracting and confusing in the landing page context, there's no need to become the typographical equivalent of a carnival barker, either. Great landing pages use fonts, colors, and visuals that are tailored specifically to the audience and action you desire, thereby enhancing the experience and boosting conversions.

5. Being lazy

Did you know that web users spend 80% of their time [above the fold](#)? Does that mean people won't scroll down the page? No, it just means you can't take it for granted that they will (instead of leaving).

Don't be lazy about grabbing and holding attention. Don't assume everyone instantly "gets" the benefit of your offer the way you do. Don't overestimate your credibility. In short, don't drink your own Kool-Aid. Think about it from their perspective, and you'll realize you might not be all that (until you unequivocally prove you are with compelling copy).

Seal the Deal, Part One: 10 Tips for Writing the Ultimate Landing Page

by Roberta Rosenberg

I have a client with a deep-pocket online media budget. Google Adwords PPC, banner ads on major news sites. We're talking some sizable money to generate traffic and turn that traffic into customers.

I bet you're thinking a big part of their budget was earmarked for landing page development and testing. I would have thought so, too, before they became a client. But what I quickly discovered was this – there wasn't a series of landing pages. There wasn't even one landing page! All of the clicks, all of their costly PPC traffic was being directed to the home page.

Literally, their best prospects were being dumped off at the front door with little direction or guidance as to how to proceed.

Yikes.

Now just to be fair, literally any page of your site or blog is a landing page of sorts.

To my mind, every page should be optimized to move your visitor along whatever path you've set forth toward a sale, a newsletter or blog subscription, what have you.

But for the purposes of this chapter, I'll confine myself to those landing pages where your prospect initiated some sort of response to an ad. This could be a PPC (pay-per-click) ad like Google Adwords, a banner or text ad, or even an email.

In this scenario, your prospect has initiated some sort of relationship with you.

Your landing page acknowledges this and provides additional information – benefits/features – and a clear path to the next step.

So let's look at 10 key steps to writing and designing a landing page that will help get you the results you're looking for:

On Writing

1. Make sure your headline refers directly to the place from which your visitor came or the ad copy that drove the click.

Match your language as exactly as you can (close is good, exact is best). This way you keep your visitor oriented and engaged. This is by far the most important part of your landing page.

2. Provide a clear call to action.

Whether you use graphic buttons or hotlinked text (or both), tell your visitor what they need to do. I use a minimum of 2 calls to action in a short landing page, 3-5 in a long landing page. Copy tests here will give you the biggest bang next to testing headlines.

3. Write in the second person – You and Your.

No one gives a rat's patootie about you, your company, or even your product or service except as to how it benefits him or her. (The bigger the company the more time I spend rewriting their stuff from We to You.)

4. Write to deliver a clear, persuasive message, not to showcase your creativity or ability to turn a clever phrase.

This is business, not a personal expression of your art. (Every copy coaching student hears me say this at least once.)

5. You can write long copy as long as it's tight.

I always err on writing a little long on the first drafts because it's easier to edit down than to pad up skimpy copy. Your reader will read long copy as long as you keep building a strong, motivating case for him/her to act. However, not every product or service will require the same amount of copy investment.

Rule of thumb: Think longer copy when you're looking to close a sale. Think shorter copy for a subscription sign-up or something that doesn't necessarily require a cash commitment.

6. Be crystal clear in your goals.

Keep your body copy on point as a logical progression from your headline and offer. Don't add tangential thoughts, ancillary services, and generic hoo-hah.

Hoo-hah makes the client feel good but wastes the reader's time. Every digression is a conversion lost.

7. Keep your most important points at the beginning of paragraphs and bullets.

Most visitors are skimming and skipping through your copy. Make it easy for them to get the joke without having to slow down.

8. In line with #7, people read beginnings and ends before they read middles.

Make sure you keep your most critical, persuasive arguments in these positions.

9. Make your first paragraph short, no more than 1-2 lines (that's lines, not sentences).

Vary your paragraph line length from here. It helps create visual dissonance and makes it easier to read your copy. And no paragraph should be more than 4-5 lines long at any time.

10. Write to the screen.

Take a piece of paper and frame out where your text, buttons, and design elements will go.

Consider how much of your content will be seen “above the fold” or at the first screen.

You can still go long and have visitors scroll downward. If so, you’ll want to make sure you repeat essential calls to action, testimonials, and other components so no matter where your visitor is, an ACT NOW link or button remains visible.

3 Bonus Tips:

11. Remove all extraneous matter from your landing page.

This includes navigation bars, visual clutter, and links to other sections. You want the reader focused solely on your copy, your supportive visuals, and the offer you’re making without being tempted to wander around the room.

12. Don't ask for what you don't need.

Ask for only enough information to complete the sale or the desired action. This isn't the time to conduct a marketing survey. Every question you ask, every piece of information you require will chip away at your response. Be judicious.

13. Assume nothing. Test everything.

These tips and techniques will get you started, but they just scratch the proverbial surface. Design elements are critical, too — color, images, layout — as well as video, audio, and other interactivity elements whose purpose is to more deeply engage the reader and boost response. They all merit a deeper look and testing where it makes sense.

Seal the Deal, Part Two: 5 Tips for Designing the Ultimate Landing Page

In the last chapter I devoted most of my time to copywriting tips since, well, I'm a *copywriter*.

I craft the words.

Unlike direct mail, however, the web is a strongly visual medium. Good design helps support the content, leading the visitor's eye from here to there and directing them through your message layer by layer, step by step.

This is especially so in the formatting of an effective landing page. That's why I'll devote myself to the overall look, feel, and formatting of effective landing pages for this article.

Copywriters don't have to be designers. But copywriters who understand effective landing design fundamentals — what works and what doesn't — will be better able to work and share ideas with designers. That means you and your entire creative team will be on board and working toward the common goal of capturing more conversions.

A while ago Omniture published a white paper called [Best Practices for Conversion: The New Engagement Funnel in 7 Steps](#).

Their “Step #3: Organize and Optimize Site Structure” does a nice job of laying out some basic guidelines that will help you organize and format your copy for maximum results:

- **Scrutinize your competition’s design and organization flow of their landing pages:** Go through their conversation process and note the places where you feel a bit stumped or put off. Then go back to your own landing page and compare. Consider what you could revise or eliminate for better effect.
- **Put your most critical landing page elements in the upper 300 pixels of the page:** Usability research shows over half of your site visitors will NOT scroll “below the fold,” so forget the warm-up copy, get right to the point, and keep your value proposition at first screen view.
- **Think simple:** Use a one-column format with ample margins and white space to increase reading comprehension. Break up big paragraphs into smaller paragraphs -- and no more than 5 lines per. You want to encourage visitors to read and engage with your message. Dense-looking copy doesn’t get read, period.
- **Be obvious and use standard usage conventions:** Underline your links, be clear, descriptive, and specific when describing them. No visitor should have to work to use your page or understand your message.

- **Make sure your page loads quickly:** Depending on your marketing and your product/service mix, strive for a 3-second or less page load. Don't plump your page with unnecessary graphics. Optimize essential graphics to reduce file size and load time.

But wait, there's more! Here are 5 more tips you'll want to review and keep handy:

- **Format your page according to the F-Pattern Eye-Tracking Principle:** Web readers tend to track through content in a rough F-shaped pattern, so format important images flush left. For more on this, see [Jakob Nielsen's eye tracking research](#).
- **Use the same color palette/visual elements from your ads on your landing page:** There should be a smooth, consistent flow to help keep your prospect oriented and assured that they are indeed "landed" in the right place.
- **No clipart! Choose a single dominant photo image to be your hero shot:** Use a product photo or, in the case of a service, you could use your logo or even a photo of your location. Make it clickable and don't forget to add a benefit-rich caption.

- **Put your message, copy, or image close to the middle of your page.** Less critical elements can be placed in sidebars or perhaps even eliminated.
- **Make it easy to complete your input form:** For example, have the input cursor hop instantly from field to field upon completion. Let your user tab around fields. No drop-down menus ... require only a checkbox action. And my personal favorite — auto-populate any fields you can.

Remember, your landing page is your visitor's last stop to buy something outright or Step 2 if lead generation is your goal. Whether it's one step or one of many, your copy and design has to focus on firing up your visitor's self-interest as well as build confidence and trust in your product/service and in you/your company.

So be honest, forthright, and leave the "cheese" behind.

“Keep it Simple, Stupid” Applies to Your Landing Pages, Too!

There’s an old direct marketing axiom stating that too many choices paralyzes your prospect into complete non-action.

But does that behavior apply to landing pages? Marketing Experiments Journal did a recent study on the topic, [Landing Page Confusion: How Does Having More Than One Objective to a Page Affect its Performance?](#)

They tested their hypothesis using real-world companies to illustrate 5 fundamental principles of landing page design. They reviewed an online electronics retailer, large national newspaper, and a paid subscription site. Some pages started out better than others, but all had room for improvement.

So what did they learn?

In every case, landing page effectiveness and measured conversion increased significantly when choices and unnecessary distractions were eliminated — and the overall design and orientation of the page emphasized the call to action.

Here’s a list of the Journal’s specific recommendations:

- **Focus on one objective for each page.** Define your objective and drive everything on the page to it.
- **Sales pages should use a vertical flow through the center of the page.** For commercial offer pages, vertical single-column body copy through the center of the page consistently performs better than other layouts and should always be tested. Left or right columns should be used to support movement toward the objective such as testimonials (to reduce anxiety at clicking the Order button).
- One of the changes they made, for example, was to swap out the left-column navigation, replace it with testimonials, and move the navigation to the far-right column. You could try that, or move the navigation to the bottom of the page, or delete it.
- **Eliminate elements that may distract eye path from flow toward the objective.** If page elements such as photos and graphic images don't move your visitor briskly to taking the desired action, dump them. Every element on the page has to work in concert toward the same goal.
- **Use visual elements (size, motion, color, position, and shape) to draw attention toward the call to action.** Don't guess. Test it all to find what works best for you.

- **Avoid using off-page links.** Use passive pop-ups or launch new browser windows when needed to provide details or supplemental decision information. Once visitors have left the page, their forward momentum is interrupted and must be re-established even if they do return. By eliminating the number of clicks it takes to act, you keep a visitor longer and more engaged with your message.

No surprises here for me. As my Grandma Fanny used to say, “You can’t dance at two weddings with one tuchas.” (That’s Yiddish for backside.) Define your objective (singular, not plural) and stick with it. Make sure every word, graphic, icon keeps your prospect focused on the one single action that will satisfy the your single, most-important objective.

Not as easy as I make it sound, I know. Clients tend to want to “kitchen sink” every pixel of web page real estate.

So make sure you keep your evidence and test results like these close at hand. And if your client or boss balks, tell them to talk to me. I’ll be happy to set ‘em straight.

How is an Effective Landing Page Like a Direct Mail Letter?

Answer: They're both formatted for one column.

In his audio article, "*6 Ways to Increase Conversions on your Web Pages*," Nick Usborne, one of my favorite copywriter colleagues, talks about the multitude of testing he's done on landing pages and column formatting.

Long and short, the one-column format converts best every time.

This explains the stubborn effectiveness of everyone's favorite (or not) online long-form sales letters.

Garish? Sometimes.

Too long? Perhaps.

But they work, in part, because there are no other distractions for the reader. Even with all the insets, widgets and gadgets, each is firmly ensconced within the one column. Further, the one-column format lets readers know that there's more to look for below the fold of the first screen. The convention of the letter-like, one-column design tells them so.

Like the traditional sales letter, the one-column landing page offers a step-by-step selling sequence for your reader. The headline moves the reader to the subhead, etc. Add columns filled with links, even something as simple as navigational links, and you've given the reader a reason to look and click away from your message.

Nick says, and I concur, one-column may be the best way to go. Test it yourself and see if it makes a difference.

7 Steps to an Email Opt-in Page That Works

by Brian Clark

Email marketing works.

In fact, it's still the best online method for converting prospects into customers or clients.

A critical part of the process begins, however, before a single email is sent.

You've got to get people on your list in the first place.

This happens most effectively at a landing page specifically designed to convince the right people to sign up.

Some people call these opt-in landing pages "squeeze" pages, which, in addition to being a derogatory way to think about the process, is also technically incorrect.

Here's a quick Internet marketing history lesson: a squeeze page was originally a very specific type of opt-in page which required you to supply an

email address just for the privilege of reading a sales letter. If you didn't buy immediately, you got follow-up pitches.

Sounds crazy now, huh?

But things were easier back then, until hucksters and charlatans abused the privilege and people fought back.

I'm about to show you how to win the trust and interest of prospective subscribers despite any initial misgivings your audience may have.

Let's jump right in.

1. Who do you want?

The first step is crucial, and yet time and again I see people plow ahead without a clear understanding of exactly the type of person they want on their email list.

Without a clear and detailed understanding of who you want, you can't craft a message that resonates strongly enough to spark interest and gain trust.

Take a look at our [Internet Marketing for Smart People](#) opt-in page, for example.

The exact same course benefits could attract your typical “get rich quick” business opportunity type. But instead, the message is positioned squarely against that type of person, and aimed at people who are willing to put the effort in.

Take the time to figure out who you really want on your list in terms of your ultimate goal, which is likely to be moving enough of them to customer or client. Then - and only then - will you know how to “speak their language” with your opt-in copy.

2. What do you want them to do?

Your email opt-in page has one goal -- to get people to sign up to your email list. Every word and element of the page should support that single action. If it doesn't, lose it.

That means lose your typical sidebar.

That means lose those links in your copy.

In many cases, that means creating a page so focused on the opt-in that you take an approach that's different from your normal site design.

One page, one action. That's it.

3. What are the essential elements?

No exceptions, you absolutely must have:

- The headline: You've got to instantly catch attention with your headline.
- The benefits: You've got to tell by teasing, usually with fascinating bullet points.
- The call to action: You've got to expressly tell people to sign-up.
- The opt-in form: You've got to have a way for them to sign-up.

You might also need number 5 ...

- The Proof: In this case, proof should be of the [social kind](#). Number of subscribers, subscriber testimonials, reviews, and media mentions, etc.

Whether or not you need to add in proof depends on a number of criteria, including the strength of your brand and the traffic source.

For example, if you're driving existing blog subscribers to a focused email list, your good reputation (hopefully) precedes you. If you're using Google AdWords to drive traffic, you likely have no reputation on your side and you'll need everything you've got.

4. What incentive should you give?

It's always been a smart tactic to offer an up-front incentive, or "ethical bribe" to convince people to sign up for your list.

This could be a free report, webinar, audio seminar, or other instant-gratification freebie.

In many markets, this strategy still works just fine. In others, you'll face savvy subscribers who snag your incentive with an alternate "trash" email address, or simply unsubscribe immediately.

The better approach is to focus the incentive on staying subscribed.

Offer that report over time as a series of emails from your [autoresponder](#), break the video or audio into parts, and always entice subscribers with [what's coming next](#).

The key is for people to realize that you're giving more than you're taking (pitching), and they'll happily stay with you much longer.

5. How long should your copy be?

Same as it ever was: As long as necessary, and no longer.

In the case of an opt-in page, the essentials have to be there -- headline, benefits, and call to action. But going back to step one, a bit more copy will help you better target the exact type of person you want on your list.

Again, look at the [IMfSP page](#) ... we lead with three paragraphs of positioning before stating benefits, presenting the sign-up form, and then provide more copy for people who want more information.

You can follow this format, or use testimonials to round out the second call to action and opt-in form.

And don't forget to reassure people that you respect their privacy.

6. How much information should you ask for?

This one's easy.

The less form data you ask for, the more people sign up.

We tested asking for first name and email address against email address only, and the latter won. Now, we only ask for an email address (go figure).

If your business goals dictate getting more information, like a mailing address and phone number, so be it. Personally, I'd get the prospect on the list first, and then send valuable content that culminates with a call to action that asks for that information via a contact form.

The more trust you build, the more people open up to you. And you get to communicate with prospects regularly, which means it's no longer an all-or-nothing situation.

7. What works better?

Everything above represents tried-and-tested wisdom for email opt-in pages.

But when it comes down to what specifically works for you and your audience, only your own split-testing will tell the whole truth.

Changes to headlines, button colors, and other tiny tweaks can make a big difference when it comes to your opt-in rate. Just don't forget step one above.

In other words, tweaking your landing page to get the absolute best opt-in rate doesn't mean much if you're attracting the wrong people for your ultimate goal of selling something.

You need to make sure you test within the bounds of a well-targeted premise that resonates with your intended audience. Remember that first step at all times.

How Crappy Landing Pages Kill Email Campaigns

by Roberta Rosenberg

“Oh, the humanity ...”

The folks at [SilverPop](#) published a study, “[Eight Seconds to Capture Attention: Silverpop’s Landing Page Report](#),” where it reviewed the email campaigns of 150 top online companies.

What’s the tl;dr?

They discovered that email campaigns that opened with promise and decent click through ratios generally died on the vine with ill-conceived, poorly-designed or just plain lazy-ass landing pages.

Bored, confused prospects quickly took their conversion clicks — and wallets — elsewhere.

Even the “big boys” with the deep pockets still fail to think about their email/landing page campaign as a whole project.

So what happens is that all the care and craft is lavished on the email part, while the landing page — if used at all — gets “ugly sister” attention.

Silverpop examined 14 different elements in their study:

Use of readable URLs

KEY FINDING: Business to customer (B2C) companies were more likely to use readable URLs than business to business (B2B) firms. This is probably less important in a PPC campaign, but for email I can see where a readable, memorable URL makes good sense.

Repetition of email promotional copy

KEY FINDING: Nearly 50% of the landing pages studies failed to repeat the email’s call-to-action.

Primary conversion goals

KEY FINDING: 6 out of 10 companies use landing pages to sell products/ services, other goals include lead generation, branding, and education (educate target audiences, support product usage).

Location of the landing page

KEY FINDING: 17% of e-mail marketing campaigns -- mostly B2C -- dumped recipients at the company's website home page as opposed to a unique campaign landing page.

Whether the look of the page matches the email and/or website

KEY FINDING: 35% of landing pages failed to match the look, feel, and tone of the original email.

Landing page design

KEY FINDING: Only 36% of the landing pages used the recommended one-column format, 25% of the pages used 2-column formatting.

Placement of the primary call-to-action

KEY FINDING: 9 of out 10 landing pages had the main call-to-action above the fold. But of those pages that had copy continuing past the natural fold, only 11% had additional calls-to-action adjacent to the below-the-fold copy.

How Successful is Your Landing Page? The 3 Key Metrics You Need to Know

We've spent a lot of time exploring the copy and design techniques that drive successful landing pages. But do you know how to best measure your success?

That's the focus of a most excellent article I read in Practical Ecommerce, [Measuring Conversion Success: What are the key areas to watch when trying to keep visitors' attention?](#)

I've recapped the most essential points for your review.

1. Conversion Rate

We spend a lot of time talking about conversion rates. Let's consider some of the benchmark numbers:

So what exactly is a conversion rate? It's the percentage of visitors that turn into a lead, sale, or some other desired outcome. A retail site is frequently considered a success when its purchase

conversion is in the high single digits, but for lead generation sites, numbers in the high teens are considered good. An average retail site is converting about 1 to 2 percent of visitors and an average lead generation site is doing 5 to 6 percent.

Do the negative math. That's a whopping number of folks NOT responding, NOT clicking, and NOT buying.

How can you calculate a purchase conversion rate? It's simple. Using your site's analytics package (see recommendations below), locate the number of unique visitors during a given period and divide that by the number of sales transactions during the same period. If you are 2 percent or less, the good news is that you have plenty of room to grow your business.

Increase your transactions by even one percentage point and wow, you're making some real money. Consider this example:

Let's say you have 10,000 unique visitors per month and you're generating 100 sales transactions per month (1 percent) with an average sale of \$90. Boost your site's purchase conversion rate one percentage point and that translates to an extra \$108,000 annually. Pop your conversion rate to 5 percent and you'll realize a sales increase of \$432,000 annually.

See why we spend so much time on this topic?

2. Home Page Abandonment Rate

I'm including this part just for your reference, even if your particular interest is primarily landing pages attached to promotional email, site link and PPC campaigns. But let's consider your landing page in the same light as a homepage.

How many folks come to your landing page and bail? Like any transaction-page site or page, you have a short window of opportunity in which you can keep a visitor's attention.

Ten percent of visitors leave a site after the first click, but many of these visitors constitute either accidental traffic or are unqualified buyers. You probably wouldn't have converted them anyway. An astounding 55 percent however, have dropped off after the second click, and 80 percent of the visitors have left after the third click. A well-constructed site with strategically placed calls-to-action can help address site abandonment issues.

3. Cost Per Sale

Here's our last metric, cost per sale. Here you'll divide your advertising costs by the amount of sales to calculate the average cost per sale. What should your average number be? It probably doesn't matter as much as just setting one.

Ask yourself, "What is a customer worth to you, by single transaction as well his/her lifetime value (the number of sales, anticipated revenue) over time." Then start working the numbers. When you can successfully manage the upfront cost-per-sale, you could easily realize big returns on the back end.

Many business owners don't know their cost per action or cost per lead. When talking about a customer's lifetime value, you may take loss in front (to get the customer), but if you can keep him, he's worth a lot. A pay-per-click keyword costing \$8 may be expensive, but if you keep the customer it attracts, you get that back in spades.

Next Step: Start running your numbers with a basic analytics package.

Here are some recommendations to get you started.

- From Conversion Rater: [A Complete Guide To Web Analytics Solutions](#).
- [ClickTracks](#) – a favorite of small biz folks/ Good pricing, too.
- And from Google, a freebie: [Website Optimizer](#) (You'll need a [Google Adwords Account](#) to use this tool. Sign-up is free.)

The 10 Commandments of Landing Pages That Work

by Steven Lowe

In the dark and ancient days of digital yellow highlighters and outrageous claims, a cry rang out over the mountains -- a cry for sanity, integrity, and beauty.

There came forth from the mountain 10 commandments to guide a certain tribe of Internet publishers in all their conversion endeavors: the landing page would no longer be a desert of confusion and bad taste. Its goal would now shift to the ethical and neighborly persuasion of the prospect to take their desired action.

These are 10 Commandments of Landing Pages That Work.

Bind them to your mind, let them flow through your pen ...

1. Thy landing page shalt have but one goal

Thy landing page shalt have but one goal, and the number of the goals shall be one. Not two, not zero, but one.

If thy landing page hath zero goals, it is a “branding” page, and such vanities shall bear no fruit.

If thy landing page hath more than one goal, thou shalt confuse thy visitor, who shall leave thy site in disgust and anger.

Thy copy shalt not be divided amongst more than one goal, for such shall surely drive thy visitor to lamentation and thy copywriter to madness.

2. Thou shalt not litter thy landing page with false imagery

Thou shalt not litter thy landing pages with false images nor unnecessary imagery, but only that which is gainful and relevant.

Let not a cute kitten, playful puppy, happy child, nor LOLcats appear except as and when they shalt be -- in context -- perceived as deeply relevant and meaningful.

Neither shalt thy litter thy prose with false imagery nor “creative” allusions that might leadeth thy visitor from the path of righteous goal completion.

Neither shalt thee fail to disclose thine affiliations, lest the FTC rain down upon thee like a plague of locusts.

3. Thou shalt not take the name of an authority in vain

Thou shalt not take the name of an authority in vain, for such false endorsements shall land thee in the court of man forthwith.

Further, thou shalt honor thine own name by keeping thy promises, in headline, subhead, graphic, offer, delivery, and guarantee, that thy days on the Internet shall be boundless and fruitful, and thy reputation pure.

4. Honor thy whitespace

Remember thy whitespace, to keep thy landing page scannable and readable.

For thy visitor doth not read in earnest, nay, preferring to skim and skip and scan.

So break up thy text, and include ye in all things subheaders and bullet points and simple sentences anon, so thy visitor may find succor in thy text.

5. Honor thy host, bandwidth, and client

Honor thy web host, thy bandwidth, and thy client, that thy load times shalt not be excessive and the patience of thy visitor shalt not be exhausted.

For thy visitor is Busy and Impatient, and hath not time to waste waiting for thy site to load.

But yea, if thy page doth load quickly, thy visitor may tarry and thy bounce rate shalt surely dwindle.

6. Thou shalt not kill

Thou shalt not kill thy visitor's interest with boring copy. Thy copy shall flow like a river unto the sea, carrying thy visitor along in the gentle current of thy persuasions to the port of goal completion.

Thou shalt not kill thy visitor's trust with unbelievable claims. Thy claims shalt have proof, and trust marks, and yea, testimonials and demonstrations sufficient to support and prove thy remonstrations beyond faith and suspicion. By this ye shall overcome all objections and prosper.

Thou shalt not kill thine integrity with suspicious associates, nor thy reputation through excessive returns and unresolved support issues.

7. Thou shalt not adulterate thy premise

Thou shalt not adulterate thy premise nor offer by dabbling in external irrelevancies, but shall remain faithful to the visitor and goal throughout thy prose and yea, unto the end of thy landing page shall it serve thee.

Maketh thee no mark upon thy page that doth not contribute towards thy goal.

8. Thou shalt not steal

Thou shalt not steal thy visitor's attention, time, coin, and bandwidth, but shall inform, educate, and persuade only after receiving consent and permission.

Thy shalt deliver value in all things, and thou shalt not engage in any activity of scam nor spam, nor even the appearance thereof.

Collect ye no information unnecessarily, for each such imposition burdens thy visitor with doubt and fear.

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness

Thou shalt always speak the truth about thy product, thine offer, thy guarantee, and thy competitors.

Thou shalt not bear false witness in any event, for surely thine integrity is worth more than gold. And if it be not so, remove thyself from the Internet.

10. Thou shalt not covet

Thou shalt not covet thy visitor's cash, nor his credit card, nor his email address, nor his phone number, nor anything that is thy visitor's.

Thou shalt provide value in fair exchange, and in all things eschew deceitful schemes and trickery.

Love thy customer

Thou shalt love thy customer as thyself, and for all thy days shall ye serve him in gladness.

Go ye forth now and take heed of these Commandments.

Honor them on all pages. Disregard them at thy peril.

The Critical Importance of a Landing Page that Converts

Listen: you don't need double digit jumps in conversion to get more email subscribers or sell more products from your landing page ...

Just a few tweaks to your landing page can turn it into a high-converting machine. And when it comes down to creating high-converting landing pages it boils down to this: create a single, simple page that communicates one clear, concise, and compelling message.

One page.

One goal.

One outcome ...

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