

## **How to Create Web Site Pages that Convert**

A landing page is the first point of contact between a visitor and your website. In organic searches any page in your site could turn out to be a landing page, whereas in direct links or PPC campaigns your landing pages are pre-determined by you. Either way, the job of a landing page is to engage a customer and encourage him to explore the rest of the site, hopefully resulting in a conversion. To achieve that goal several factors come into play which involve content, navigation and page layout. By creating a well optimized landing page you should expect reduced bounce rates, increased pages per visit and most likely, improved conversion rates.

### **What should a great landing page do?**

First and foremost a landing page should answer the query typed into the search engine by the visitor. By doing so the visitor is more likely to further explore not only the landing page but the rest of the site as well. Second, a great landing page instantly engages the visitor, either with content, images or both. It does so with content above the fold, thereby requiring no initial scrolling to see the page's content. Lastly, a great landing page should be part of a well designed sales funnel, designed to slowly draw the visitor to an eventual conversion.

### **How to optimize your landing pages:**

Optimizing a landing page or creating one from scratch is easy if you follow a consistent formula. Below is a list of items you should implement on your landing pages. You may want to begin with pages that you know have been selected as landing pages by search engines or which are part of your PPC campaign. In the long run however, all pages on your site should be designed or optimized with the following guidelines in mind:

#### **Tight themes:**

The more general a page within your site is, the more difficult it is for a search engine to index it for specific keywords. By making sure that your pages address a particular service or product you make it easy for the search engines to match a user's search query to the correct landing page on your site. A well indexed page provides higher relevancy between a search query and a landing page, thereby

providing a better user experience on the landing page and a reduction in bounce rates.

### **Title and content match:**

Search engines index both page titles as well as content. The search engine results normally use the page title as well as an excerpt from the content. Make sure the content delivers on the promise implied by the page title and you'll be rewarded with more relevant visitors.

### **Fresh and unique content:**

Content is the new SEO. If your page has relevant and unique content it is more likely to be highly ranked by the various search engines. When a visitor lands on a page with relevant and unique content he is more likely to pause and start reading, which is what visitor engagement is all about. If the content is sufficiently useful to a visitor he will look for more similar content within your site. Great content creates trust as well as a following and your site will be slowly considered a source of expert information.

### **Multiple high quality images:**

Although content is king, a high quality image goes a long way towards creating interest in your product. Multiple high quality images virtually guarantee longer page view times; they also provide a boost to conversions. Your landing page is taking the place of a visit to a brick and mortar location. High quality images help the potential customer examine a product as though he were holding it in his hand. Of course, these images should be seen through a light box or a zoom effect for maximum impact.

### **Content above the fold:**

You should always assume that a visitor to your landing page will never scroll down. Design your landing pages in such a way that the most relevant or engaging content is viewable above the fold, which means a visitor will see it without having to scroll down. Obviously once a visitor is sufficiently engaged he will undoubtedly scroll down to continue reading. To give your landing pages a fighting chance place your most relevant content on top.

### **Enable bread crumbs:**

Your visitor should know where he is within your site at all times. Remember, he

may have been brought to your landing page by an ad or a search engine. You want to make it as easy as possible for the visitor to find other areas of interest within your site. A frustrated visitor will simply close the browser window and continue his search elsewhere.

### **Links within your content:**

To improve conversions you need to lead visitors further down your sales funnel. By placing links within your landing page content you are encouraging visits to specific pages within your site. Those pages should of course be optimized for conversions. By not including links a visitor may like your landing page and as a result may explore your site further utilizing the navigation menu, but you've lost control of where he will go. Using links correctly within content can have a definite positive impact on conversions.

### **Landing Page Optimization Benefits:**

There are an endless number of benefits to be gained from a well optimized landing page. At the very least you should see an improvement in several key performance indicators (KPIs). At best, you may see an increase in conversions along with better page rankings (for SEO) or lower CPC costs (for PPC campaigns). Below are some of the major metrics where you can expect to see changes as you optimize your landing pages:

### **Bounce rates:**

Bounce rate is a definite bellwether of landing page relevancy. High bounce rates imply that visitors either don't find the landing page content relevant or they may not find the content sufficiently engaging. By applying the guidelines listed above, both your relevancy and your engagement factor should improve, resulting in lower bounce rates. You should shoot for bounce rates of 35% or lower.

### **Pages viewed per visit:**

Pages per visit tells you more about your site overall as opposed to a specific landing page. However, a great landing page encourages deeper exploration of the website, resulting in more pages being viewed per visit.

### **Average visit times:**

This metric goes hand in hand with the metric above, "pages viewed per visit". If your landing pages are doing their job correctly you should see increases in both

metrics. A longer average visit time implies the content is engaging, which indicates you're on the right track to increased conversions.

**Conversions:**

An increase in conversions means your bottom line is improving. Great landing pages don't let customers bounce out and instead, lead them down the conversion path with great content. Be sure to trace conversions back to the initial landing page to determine the conversion rate of specific landing pages.

**Analytics:**

A quick word on measuring your results; use analytics software. Only with analytics data can you capture the granular data you need to truly measure the results of your optimizations. Be sure to begin capturing data before you start any optimization effort. Set a baseline and compare against it as you slowly make changes to your landing pages.

**Page quality is intricately connected to e-commerce conversion rates.** A great landing page will not only capture the attention of a visitor, it will also lead him by the hand to the next page within your sales funnel. Remember that just about any page on your site may be chosen by a search engine as a landing page. The best practice therefore calls for a consistent quality effort on every page of your e-commerce site. It sounds like a huge effort but the results will eventually prove themselves in a much improved ROI.