



An Introductory Guide to Building Landing Pages

Using Landing Pages to Increase Visitor-to-Lead Conversion Rates

RESOURCE

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Section 1: Introduction to Landing Pages

What is a Landing Page? A landing page is a web page that allows you to capture a visitor's information through a lead form. A good landing page will target a particular audience, such as traffic from an email campaign promoting a particular service, or product, or visitors who click on a pay-per-click ad promoting your promotion. Therefore, it's important to build a unique landing page for each of the offers you create.

You can build landing pages that allow visitors to download your content offers (eBooks, whitepapers, promotions, etc.), or sign up for offers like free giveaways or promotions of your product/services. Creating landing pages allows you to target your audience, offer them something of value, and convert a higher percentage of your visitors into leads.

Landing Pages Generate Leads If you could do one thing right now to drastically improve your marketing and increase your return on investment; it would be to use landing pages on your website. Too many companies send their email, social media, and search traffic to their homepages. This is the equivalent of throwing leads away. You could capture these leads at a much higher rate simply by sending them to targeted landing pages.

Think about it – let's say someone clicks on an ad for your latest eBook offer. Do you want to send them to your homepage? When they get to your homepage, what are they supposed to do? What do you want them to do? Once you figure out what you want your visitors to do, you need to make it as easy as possible for them to do just that. By sending your visitors to a targeted landing page instead of your homepage, you are directing them to the exact place that they need to be in order to sign up for or download your offer. This makes the process simpler for your visitors, since they don't have to navigate your website to find what they're looking for.

Landing pages eliminate any confusion about what to click on. They keep your website visitors from growing frustrated about not finding the form or deciding it's not worth their time to figure out what they must do to receive your offer. This means that directing your visitors to a landing page -- the exact page with the offer and the form they must complete to get it -- makes it more likely that they will complete your form and convert into leads.

'Contact Us' Pages Are Not the Best many companies put a "Contact Us" form on their website in order to capture leads. While this is indeed a way to collect information from your website visitors, it is not the best way. The reason is because "Contact Us" pages are not targeted to specific traffic, and they are more likely to attract spam and sales people.

Instead of using a "Contact Us" form, diversify and create more offers. At the very least, consider creating an offer for some sort of promotion or package of your product/services. If your visitors are actually signing up for an offer instead of just sending you a message, it is much more likely

that they will be interested in your product or service, or in other words, more likely to be qualified leads.

Section 2: How to Build an Effective Landing Page

There are several key components that make a landing page effective for converting a higher percentage of visitors into leads. The major areas of importance are: the headline, the content of the page, Meta descriptions and keywords, share links, hidden navigation, the form, and the thank-you page and email responder. We will discuss each of these in turn, explain why they're important, and discuss how to optimize them to build a successful landing page.

The Headline People's attention spans are short, especially online. This means you need to make sure your offer is as clear as possible. A good rule of thumb is to make sure your landing page passes the "blink test" – can the viewer understand the offer and what you're asking them to do in less than 5 seconds? In order to pass the "blink test," you have to keep things simple and clear.

This begins with the title of your page, which is often the first thing your visitors see. Make sure your title makes your offer immediately clear so that the viewer understands what the offer is right away. Take, for example, the title below. This headline does not just give the title of the eBook, but it actually begins by stating that the offer is for an eBook and gives additional information that the eBook is free. The page visitor knows exactly what the offer is upon reading this. If your title can accomplish that goal before your visitors have looked at the rest of your page, you're off to a great start.

Another important tip when choosing your page title is to make sure it matches your ad copy and call-to-action text for that offer. If your visitors click on an ad telling them to download your free guide, they are expecting to be directed to a page where they can do that. Make it clear that they're in the right place when they get to your landing page by keeping your ad copy and page title consistent. (Bonus tip: Besides increasing conversion rates, this could also decrease your cost-per-click, or CPC, for paid search ads, since Google's ranking algorithm takes into consideration the consistency of your ads and your landing pages.)

The Content of the Page The body of your landing page should provide further explanation about what your offer is and why your visitors should download or sign up for it. In order to incentivize conversion, you need to not only create and deliver value in the offer itself, but also convey that value on your landing page. Make clear the specific benefits of completing the form to receive your offer.

It is also important to format the body of your page in such a way that it is as easy as possible for viewers to understand the offer, the value, and the action they need to take. Use bullet points and numbering to simplify the visual layout of the text, and use bold or italicized text to highlight the main focus points. These formatting styles will draw your viewers' attention to the key

components of your page very quickly, allowing them to take in and process the information in a shorter amount of time.

Again, this is crucial because attention span is so short. Your goal should be to convey the top 3 or 4 most important pieces of information almost immediately. Another thing that catches a viewer's attention instantly is an image. Use images on your landing pages to reinforce the benefits of your offer. The images should be both captivating and relevant to your offer. (Bonus tip: You can also use videos that explain the offer or give additional information as another fun way to convince your visitors to fill out the form!)

Another quick but essential tip for your landing page text – make sure there are no spelling or grammatical errors. You want your page to look professional, but more importantly, you are asking your visitors for sensitive information, and spelling and grammar mistakes will reduce the perception of your site as a secure one. Bottom line: Make sure you proofread.

Meta Descriptions & Keywords the Meta description is a text snippet that describes what your specific web page is about. Meta descriptions are usually the first place a search engine will look to find text to put below your link when it lists your website on search results pages. If you do not have a Meta description, search engines will usually select a random piece of content from the page it's linking to. The Meta description is limited to 150 characters. Meta keywords allow you to list a few different keywords that relate to your web page.

As a best practice, it is recommended to have 5-7 Meta keywords that are highly relevant to your page content. It is important to optimize the Meta descriptions and keywords for your landing pages for a few reasons. One is that they are both factored into Google's ranking algorithm to help determine the relevance of your ad to your landing page, and higher relevance means that your ad is more likely to be displayed. Another reason is because the Meta description is the text that is shown when someone sees your page in search results or shares it in social media. You want this text to convince viewers to visit your landing page, so keep it short and simple, but use it to convey value.

Share Links just like on any other page, it's important to have social media sharing links on your landing pages. You have a huge crowd of awesome marketers at your fingertips – your audience! If your visitors decide to download your offer, why not enable them to easily share your content and encourage more people to download your offer? Once you've converted your visitors into leads, encourage them to share the landing page with their Facebook friends, Twitter followers, and LinkedIn connections! The more prospects you drive to your landing pages, the more leads you'll be able to generate.

Hidden Navigation So you put all that work into getting someone to click on your ad or call-to-action, and now they're actually viewing your landing page! Now you want to keep them there. The goal is to get them to fill out your form, and in order to make that more of a possibility, you need to reduce the likelihood that they will click away from the page. Eliminate distractions by removing all navigation and links to other parts of your site. Once the visitor reaches your landing page, the only action they should be able to take is filling out your form. After all, if you're linking

away from your landing page, you're not really convincing them that completing your form is what they should be doing, and you'll be wasting a lot of effort. Hiding navigation on your landing pages will help keep your conversion rates up. And don't worry -- you can bring back the navigation later.

The Form The form is, of course, the main focus of your landing page, since the ultimate goal is to get your visitors to complete it. The formatting and design of your form have a direct impact on conversion rates, and therefore, it is absolutely critical that you approach them wisely. First of all, you should make sure that your form appears above the fold, or in other words, that the viewer does not have to scroll down on the page in order to see it. Immediate visibility is important, since you want to draw the viewer's attention to the form.

The next and probably biggest question when designing your forms is, how long should they be? This is a tricky question, because the length of your form inevitably leads to a tradeoff between the quantity and quality of the leads you generate. A shorter form usually means more people will be willing to fill it out, so you'll generate more leads. But the quality of the leads will be higher when visitors are willing to fill out more form fields and provide you with more information about themselves and what they're looking for. Therefore, shorter forms usually result in more leads, but longer forms will result in fewer, but higher quality leads.

The other critical factor to consider is the effect of the length of the form on the prospect's willingness to fill it out. If the form is too long, prospects are going to stop and evaluate whether it is worth their time to complete all of those fields. So you need to find a good balance between collecting enough information and not asking for too much information that they're not willing to give it. Of course the next question is, what should those fields be? What information should I ask for? Oftentimes, companies have forms on their sites that ask for way too much information or the wrong kind of information.

Your goal should be to collect enough information through your form to enable you to both contact and qualify the lead. You can use fields such as name and email address to gather contact information about the lead. It is important to be able to follow up with your newly converted lead so you can then put them into your sales funnel to try to convert them into a customer. Before you do that, though, you'll want to be able to qualify the lead. To do this, include fields and questions in your form that will help you identify how strong that lead is – in other words, how likely they are to become a customer.

You can include fields such as company, website, role at company, and number of employees to learn some basic background information. Then add in a question that will allow you to gauge their need for your product, their likelihood to purchase your service, or their fit with your company. When you're deciding which fields and questions to include on your form, remember that you should only be asking for information that is essential to be able to contact and qualify them. You can always ask for more information later, and in fact, that is usually the better approach. Too often, companies request all kinds of contact information and ask tons of questions of their visitors, neglecting to realize that their 15-field forms are significantly lowering conversion rates.

This brings us to the next concern that prospects have with regard to filling out forms, and that is security. Most people experience some sort of anxiety when asked to provide sensitive information, especially online. You need to show your visitors that they can trust you with their information. Link to your privacy policy next to the field that asks for their email address. Have your logo and a client testimonial visible. Use some sort of authority endorsement, third-party security certification, or guarantee seal. Just make sure that your site looks credible, and that should help reduce friction for filling out your form.

The last major component of your form is the button that the visitor must press to complete the form and send you their information. **The default text for this button is usually "Submit," but studies show that landing pages with buttons labeled "Submit" actually have lower conversion rates than those that use other wording. The top-performing variations in this study were "Click Here" and "Go." Compared to "Submit,"** these buttons feel much less committal and imply a lower investment of time and effort.

However, you should also try to make your buttons engaging and relevant to your offer. Try something like "Reserve Your Webinar Seat Today!" or "Get Your Free PRODUCT Now!" Alternatively, you could use those as headlines above your form and use shorter button text, like "Download Now!" Just make sure you put some thought into your choice of text – it could have a significant effect on conversion.

Thank-You Page & Email Responder When someone has finished filling out the form on your landing page, what do they see next? Sending them to a "thank-you" page is a great opportunity to suggest next steps for your lead. This is where you bring back the navigation and direct them to other parts of your site or more offers in which they might be interested. Use calls-to-action to suggest such things as "Subscribe to Our Blog," "Read Our Newsletter," "Connect with Us on Facebook," or "Share This Offer with a Friend." Use thank-you pages and email responses to help your newly converted leads further connect with your company or brand, and keep them engaged. This will make them stronger leads that will be more likely to convert into customers.

One More Glance After you've put the finishing touches on your landing page, give it another look before you start linking to it. Ask a colleague to test the page and complete the form to ensure it's working correctly. Ask yourself, "Would I fill out this form? Is it too long? Would I be willing to provide that information? Do I find this page confusing? Is the value of the offer obvious? Would I share this information with others?" If your answers don't match up with the answers you want your visitors to have, go back and make some changes so they do.

Always Be Testing so now you know what factors are important to consider in creating an effective landing page. But you're not quite done yet. You should always be looking to increase your conversion rates, and in order to do that, you need to be constantly testing your landing pages.

Section 3: Importance of Landing Pages

Your email is the 'teaser' promotion that entices the consumer to click through to a landing page where more detailed 'sell' information is presented. The page will usually display content that is a logical extension of the email advertisement or click thru link. A landing page is also a great option for smaller clients who want to do email marketing but do not maintain a company website. There are two types of landing page, reference and transactional: A reference landing page presents information that is relevant to the email. These can display text, images, various links to company website, etc.

A transactional landing page persuades a user to complete a transaction (such as filling out an order form), with the end goal of closing or converting a prospect into a customer. If information is to be captured, the page will usually capture some minimal amount of information (i.e. an email address, name and telephone number) – and adds the prospect to a mailing list.

A landing page is a critical link in online communications and can go a long way to improve email campaign results and drive revenue. Revenue-conversion rates for free offers range from 5.67% to 11.31% and for ecommerce 5.67% to 7.63% (Marketing Sherpa). Some points to consider when developing an effective landing page:

- On average, 50% of responders who click through to a Landing Page leave the page. Make sure your page grabs attention quickly by restating the offer/call to action from the email.
- Do not direct responders to your home page. This approach does not carry through the offer/call to action from the email—losing credibility.
- Make sure your landing page has the same look and feel of the email HTML creative. This ensures there is no confusion and reinforces the brand.
- If your landing page is a form to be completed, do not ask too many questions. Five fields is recommended.
- Keep the copy on the landing page short and to the point.

For more information on Landing Pages, please contact:

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