



Six Best Practices for Optimizing Your Landing Pages

Book Now

A large, 3D-style blue button with rounded corners and a white border. The text "Book Now" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. A white mouse cursor arrow is pointing at the right side of the button, indicating it is clickable. The button is set against a light green background with a subtle grid pattern.

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The job of the modern web site is more important and more difficult than ever, especially when it comes to a multichannel sales strategy. Visitors arrive at your web site through a variety of online channels: pay-per-click (PPC) and organic search, e-mail offers and print ads. Once there, they need to fulfill the objective of acting upon a promotion, or buying a specific product.

If their entry leaves them cold because they don't see anything relevant to what drove them there, they're most likely to leave, having wasted their time and your marketing dollars. Landing pages serve as a bridge between the marketing message that brought visitors to the site and the site functionality that enables them to take action, such as making a purchase or submitting a lead.

Minimizing Bounces

A web site landing page is simply a page that keeps the momentum going from the referring channel's message. A common attribute might be the pay-per-click search terms that brought them to the site, or a specific e-mail offer that was clicked on.

In fact, targeted landing pages with keyword search terms appear more relevant to visitors who have come via a specific search engine query. As a result, fewer "bounces" occur. A bounce is a visitor who hits the landing page, stays for a few seconds, then hits the back button to return to the search engine page—effectively a totally wasted paid click. Customized landing pages reduce this risk.

For example, an e-mail offer for a discounted travel package would bring the visitor directly to a landing page that reassuringly describes the offer in more detail and provides links to check availability and book the trip. It sounds simple enough, but put yourself in the visitor's shoes and do a few web searches of your own. You'll be surprised at how many merchants still aren't using landing pages.

Best Practices

Creating a successful landing page isn't difficult, and you can easily experiment and learn as you go. First, decide on which page you'll use as the landing page for a specific campaign. You may very well have an existing web page that you can use (one that's more specific than your homepage), but if you don't, consider publishing a new landing page. If that's the case, keep in mind these 6 best practices:

- 1) Include an image along with the offer for visual appeal.
- 2) Reduce or eliminate navigation to keep visitors focused on the goal and reduce distraction.
- 3) Keep the look and feel of your primary web site so consumers will immediately recognize your brand.
- 4) Don't forget a compelling call to action that should tie in to the offer. For example, the copy for the travel offer above could have a call-to-action such as "Book Now" or "Save Money-Reserve Now."
- 5) Minimize data collection as much as possible to decrease abandonment. If you must collect additional information, try moving those fields to a form on a second page; the effect is that by the time visitors click through to this second page, they've already built some momentum in the conversion process and are less likely to bail out.
- 6) Whenever asking for personal information, include privacy and security statements to help establish trust.



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Landing pages for lead-generation sites typically should focus on a single, specific goal: getting the user to register or submit a lead. These types of landing pages should have a minimum of unrelated navigation or content, and should present only relevant, reassuring messages that encourage visitors to immediately and efficiently take the next step in the registration process. There are many similarities to direct mail. Every piece of literature, every page, every image and every word in a direct mail piece serves a very specific purpose—there's no waste. Everything is focused on getting the recipient to respond. The same goes with lead-generation landing pages.

Also, remember that you'll need to include the landing page's URL in the hyperlink of the message on the referring channel. For example, PPC search, e-mail, and print hyperlinks should all point to your specific landing page.

Taking It Up A Notch

Once you've adopted landing pages as part of your marketing toolbox, you should set your sights on optimizing them for greatest effectiveness. Direct marketers have used A/B split testing for decades to find out which competing ad or sales letter works best, and you can do the same with landing pages.

For example, does putting your product's price on the landing page drive more sales than if you required the visitor to click onto a subsequent page before showing price? Using A/B testing, or more sophisticated multivariate testing, you can determine exactly which combination of alternate offers, headlines, copy, images and calls-to-action are most persuasive to visitors.

Beyond A/B and multivariate testing, you can also use behavioral targeting techniques to present visitors with landing pages that are customized based on whether the visitor is new vs. returning, time of day or day of week, and so on. Using behavioral targeting along with testing, you can easily optimize offers and other factors that will drive higher conversions and increased loyalty. For example:

- Leverage and test multiple landing page strategies to learn which is most effective on a segment-by-segment basis.
- Dramatically increase leads and conversions generated by PPC traffic, without increasing your SEM budget.
- Identify search terms and keywords that will yield the best quality traffic, then target those segments with specific, highly optimized offers and correlating landing pages.

Landing pages are an important component that should be in every web marketer's toolbox. Try out the techniques outlined in this document to produce landing pages for your visitors. By optimizing landing pages through the steps of testing and targeting, you'll not only increase the effectiveness of your web marketing dollars, but you'll gain unique and valuable insights into what persuades your visitors to take action.

About SiteSpect

SiteSpect enables web marketers to optimize website effectiveness through multivariate testing and behavioral targeting. By testing variations of landing pages, product descriptions, search results, and buy-flows, SiteSpect allows marketers to fine-tune every aspect of their website on a segment-by-segment basis. As the first and only non-intrusive solution available, SiteSpect empowers marketers to optimize their sites without the need for ongoing IT involvement. SiteSpect's patent-pending technology is used by some of the world's largest and most successful online businesses, including Cabela's, iProspect, Overstock.com, ShopNBC, and VEGAS.com. For more information, visit www.SiteSpect.com or call 617-859-1900.

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