

Ten Web Landing Page Tips to Drive Action

I love marketing with Web landing pages. It's one of the easiest and most cost effective ways to get a message read by a target market and a terrific tool to move prospects through the sales cycle. Landing pages, done well, can generate high response rates and marketing programs using landing pages with effective calls to action will generate results: e-commerce sales and valuable sales leads.

A landing page is simply a place for a targeted message to a particular demographic and can either be linked from a homepage or as part of a marketing campaign. Landing pages work well to tell an organization's story to a particular target market, to promote a new product offering, as a way to capture leads from an email marketing program, or as part of an advertising campaign, PR program or tradeshow initiative. In the classic sales cycle definition, marketing programs such as advertising, PR, tradeshows and search engine optimization are designed to attract the prospect's attention (get them to your landing page). The landing page is where you generate interest and develop conviction. In an e-commerce sale you drive people to the "buy" button and in a B2B company the sales team gets a warm suspect ready to be worked to a closed sale.

Effective landing page copy is written from the buyer's perspective, not the company's. Too often, companies invest time and money creating Web pages that describe their wonderful products, but don't provide information from the prospective customer's point of view. Buyers don't care about your products, they care about themselves and their problems. Write for them, not for you. On your homepage, create a series of "personas" or "self-select paths" that people new to your company can click. Examples might be: "Learn about products for mid-sized companies" or "Services for Competitive Intelligence Professionals."

As your buyers self-select based on the path that is best for them, the landing page they reach is written with appropriate copy to generate the interest of that target market. Landing pages typically make use of multiple links to appropriate offers, additional information, and in the B2B world materials like white papers, Webinars and the like each with a short form to fill out so the buyer becomes a lead or a sale.

A mistake many companies make is investing tons of money in online advertising (say a search engine advertising program) and then sending all the traffic to the company homepage. Because the homepage needs to serve many audiences, there's never enough information for each demographic. And research shows that people give a homepage only a few seconds before the leave. Landing pages tied to campaigns are highly effective to solve these problems. A specific landing page should be set up for each and every campaign. If prospects find your company by clicking an email campaign or searching on a specific term in a Google AdWords program, your marketing should include landing pages to expand on the prospects interest with appropriate copy and links.

It's simple really: a campaign with a great landing page can generate double digit response rates while a generic campaign throws money away.

Here are ten tips on creating effective landing pages:

Tip #1 > Keep the landing page copy short and the graphics simple.

The landing page is a place to deliver a simple message and drive your buyer to respond to your offer. Don't try to do too much.

Tip #2 > Create the page in your company's look, feel and tone.

A landing page is an extension of your company's image. While different from the Web site, it still must adopt the same voice, tone and style as your main site.

Tip #3 > Write from the buyer's point of view.

Think carefully of who will be visiting the landing page and write copy for that demographic. You want visitors to feel the page speaks to their problems and concerns and that you have a solution just for them.

Tip #4 > A landing page is communications, not advertising.

Landing pages are where you communicate valuable information about your product and make sales or generate the names of interested potential customers. Advertising is great to get people to click to your landing page. But once a prospect is there, the landing page should focus on communicating the value of your offering to the potential customer, not more advertising.

Tip #5 > Provide a quote from a happy customer.

A simple testimonial on a landing page works brilliantly to show people that others are happy with your product. A sentence or two with the customer's name (and affiliation) is all you need.

Tip #6 > Make the landing page a self-contained unit.

The goal of a landing page is to get a prospect to respond to your offer so you can sell to them. If you lose traffic from your landing page, you may never get a person to respond to the offer so it is often better not to provide links to your main Web site.

Tip #7 > Make the call to action clear and easy to respond to.

Make certain you provide a clear response mechanism for those people who want to go further. Make it easy to sign up or express interest.

Tip #8 > Use multiple calls to action.

You never know what offer will appeal to a specific person, so consider using more than one. In the B2B world, you might offer a white paper, a free trial, and a price quote all on the same landing page. An e-commerce company might offer options such as color or size.

Tip #9 > Only ask for necessary information.

Don't use a signup form requiring lots of data to be entered. People will abandon the form and you won't get a lead or a sale. Ask for the basics -- name, email address, company and phone number. Any additional information you ask for will reduce response rates. Never ask for people's income level, budget or if they are planning on purchasing the product you offer.

Tip #10 > Don't forget to follow up!

OK, you've got a great landing page with an effective call to action and the sales or leads are coming in. Great! Don't drop the ball now. Make certain to follow up with each buyer as quickly as possible. Follow up the same day—or better yet, the same hour.