10 KEYS TO GREAT LANDING PAGES

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Helpful Tips for Planning and Creating
Stellar Landing Pages

iThemes.com

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Acknowledgements

This eBook is based on recent course material available at WebDesign.com. Members of WebDesign.com enjoy access to a library of 400+ hours of premium, on-demand web design and development training, plus 10-15 hours of new live webinar content each month.

Contents

What's a landing page, anyway?

Landing pages have a few key traits that set them apart from a home page or a sales page. Landing pages are defined by these two key characteristics:

Landing pages are directly related to ads, promotions or offers.

Visitors arrive or "land" on a landing page from an outside location, such as clicking on an ad. Routing visitors to this unique page offers a few advantages, which we'll discuss in the next section.

Landing pages have a single purpose or *call to action*.

What is your promotion or special offer? Are you trying to build a mailing list, take a survey, or offer a free resource? Landing pages help accomplish a specific objective with a *call to action*.

Why are landing pages important?

Landing pages offer the opportunity to provide specific content to target audiences.

By tailoring landing pages with content specific to ads, landing pages optimize the interaction of page hits by matching target audiences with specific content. Targeted content means a more meaningful interaction or conversation with your site's visitors, so identifying and developing a strategy for landing pages is important.

Landing pages help track the success of ads by measuring traffic.

Measuring site traffic is critical to evaluating the success of ads or evaluating the interest of target audiences. By partnering landing pages with specific ads, promotions or offers, landing pages provide important data on visitors, click-throughs and ultimately, sales.

Do some research.

Before you begin planning and creating your landing page, do some research by actually visiting a few landing pages. Start by clicking on ads in the sidebars of well-known blogs or reputable websites. Note where you "land." Use the following questions to make notes about the landing pages you visit.

Identify the key objective of each landing page. Is that objective clear?

How does the landing page differ from the home page of the same website? From individual sales pages?

Note the physical layout or design of the landing page. What key components help accomplish their objective?

As a visitor, what do you like about this page? What would you change?

Evaluate your experience.

Your experience as a landing page visitor is vital to building your own successful landing page. Using your notes from the previous section, consider ways you can translate certain elements from these landing pages to your own.

How did the content of the landing page match the ad or promotion? Was the content unique or engaging?

Think about things you disliked. At any time, did you feel "turned off" or suspicious?

How would you like your visitors to feel after leaving your landing page?

The 10 Keys

Now that you've done some research and evaluated your own experience with landing pages, consider these ten tips.

1. Build trust immediately.

One of the greatest obstacles for doing business online is building trust with visitors. It's not enough to have a great product or service if your site lacks the impression of reputability and security.

What makes you trust an online company? Make sure your landing page incorporates trustworthy items such as:

- Customer testimonials
- Press releases
- Guarantee seals
- Third party trust images
- Security certifications

For example: When an eyeglasses company placed a Verisign security seal on their landing page, they saw a 41% increase in conversions and 58% increase in revenue.

Name three "trust-building" components of your landing page:

1.
2.
3.

2. Match headlines to ad copy.

Your page headline wording should be similar (if not identical) to your ad copy, because mismatched phrases or sentences will disorient visitors. In addition, using the same words or phrases in both your headlines and ads will increase your Google AdWords score (see page 14 for more information). Make sure your ad copy and landing page headlines match.

Double-check your ad copy and page headlines by filling in the blanks:

Ad copy:

Page headline:

3. Make your
call to action clear.

Your landing page should have a singular *call to action* or objective. Your call to action is simply a phrase or sentence that accomplishes your invitation or offer. Just make sure you get to the point:

"Buy this now."
"Sign up."
"Eat this carrot."

This may seem simple enough, but make sure you know what you hope to accomplish so visitors will, too.

For example: Firefox once used "Try Firefox" as their call to action. When they changed that call to action to "Download Now - Free", they a 4% higher download rate, with a responded 99% confidence in the download.

Your call to action is simply a phrase or sentence that accomplishes your invitation or offer.

What is your call to action?

4. Keep it simple.

When it comes to your landing page, keep your design approach simple. Simplicity in design is praised for a reason. It takes some bravery to decide what to *exclude*—what to *include* is the easy part.

Consider Dieter Ram's *10 Principles for Good Design*. How can these principles be applied to a landing page?

"Good design is as little design as possible—less, but better—because it concentrates on the essential aspects, and [...] are not burdened with nonessentials. Back to purity, back to simplicity."

—Dieter Rams, 10 Principles for Good Design

Dieter Ram's
*10 Principles for
Good Design*:

Good Design:

1. Is innovative
2. Makes a product useful
3. Is aesthetic
4. Makes a product understandable
5. Is unobtrusive
6. Is honest
7. Is long-lasting
8. Is thorough down to the last detail
9. Is environmentally friendly
10. Is as little design as possible

5. Give yourself a "Google grade" (before they do).

The experience of visitors on your landing page is important to Google, so it should be important to you. Be aware of how Google AdWords will be evaluating your landing page quality or *landing page experience*.

Google AdWords offers this simple explanation:

> *"Landing page experience refers to how good we think someone's experience will be when they get to your landing page (the web page they end up on after clicking your ad)."*

Google suggests several key characteristics to keep in mind when creating your landing page, so pay attention:

- Relevant and original content
- Transparency
- Ease of navigation

Based on this criteria, how are you doing? What could you improve?

Google Adwords evaluates landing page quality based on these three things:

1. Relevant and original content
2. Transparency
3. Ease of navigation

Based on this criteria, what's your score? What could you improve?

6. Think "above the fold."

Newspapers have used the "above the fold" approach to place the most important headlines and stories on the top side of the newspaper—optimizing the interest and engagement of the reader.

Landing page elements (headlines, testimonials, action buttons, etc.) should all be "above the fold. Avoid making the user scroll for anything. You'll increase the quality of the interaction between your visitors and the landing page.

Avoid making the user scroll for anything. You'll increase the quality of the interaction between your visitors and the landing page.

7. Squint.

It's a trick from art school. Students are often told to step back from their work—and *squint*. Why? Squinting helps the eye honestly evaluate a composition's important elements such as contrast or "what stands out."

Use this technique when evaluate your landing page, too. What is the first thing your eye is drawn to when you look at the page? How does that element help visitors to act?

What is the first thing your eye is drawn to when you look at the page?

How does that element help visitors to act?

8. Be a grammar-stickler.

As mentioned earlier, one of the greatest challenges in the online marketplace is building trust.

Plain and simple: *spelling and grammar give you credibility*. Take this seriously.

Make sure your landing page copy is free of spelling errors and grammatical errors. Consider these tips for finding grammar and spelling errors:

- Use spell check.
- Read it out loud.
- Copy and paste your text into another program. Change the font or increase the size. Reread.
- Use the "three sets of eyes" rule. Find two other people to proof your landing page copy.

A few tips for finding grammar and spelling errors:

9. Utilize action buttons for keywords.

Identify the important action keywords of your landing page (like "download" or "buy now") and turn these words into clickable action buttons. These action buttons should be one of the top three "standout" elements of your landing page. Check out the Bonus Guide For Choosing Color for tips on selecting colors for action buttons.

Identify your landing page "call to action" keyword or phrase:

Now go turn this keyword or phrase into a button.

10. Don't distract with links.

The purpose of a landing page is to get visitors to perform a single, specific action. Too many links within your landing page will ultimately take visitors *away* from your landing page. So, if you must link away from the landing page, have a plan to get them back to the original landing page.

Remember: *Simplicity is key.*

Adding too many links to your landing page will ultimately take visitors *away* from your landing page.

Bonus Guide for Choosing Color

Be intentional about color choices. Colors carry strong connotations, so be aware of what colors suggest.

Blue

Creates the sensation of trust and security

Often used by banks and businesses

Pink

Romantic and Feminine

Used to market products and services for women and young

Yellow

Optimistic and Youthful

Often used to grab a viewer's attention

Purple

Soothing and Calm

Often relates to beauty or anti-aging products and services

Red

Energy; Increases heart rate and creates urgency

Often seen with clearance sales and references to food

Orange

Aggressive and bold

Used as a call-to-action and attention grabber

Green

Associated with wealth or nature; the easiest color for the eye to process.

Used with finances and entertainment sites

Additional Resources

iThemes.com

Your one-stop shop for WordPress themes, plugins and training.

iThemes Builder

Create WordPress sites quickly and easily by creating your own layouts.

BackupBuddy

Protect your content. Back up, restore and move WordPress.

WebDesign.com

Master leading-edge web design skills and techniques and increase your business bottom-line.

iThemes.tv

Your iThemes TV video headquarters with free "getting started" webinars each Tuesday @ 11am CDT.

BuildaWebsite.com

Your solution for fast, secure, easy-to-use WordPress hosting.

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