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## Inside Edge

### Landing Pages are Taking Off... Is Your Business on the Flight?

In this month's edition of Inside Edge, we turn our attention to the importance of landing pages. As Internet marketing continues to evolve and grow in the variety of tools, techniques and methodology available, **Landing pages are becoming an essential step in online marketing practices. Business owners are realizing that traffic to their home page is clearly, not leading to sufficient customer conversion.** If you are spending money through online advertising to bring in traffic, it is worth that extra effort to make sure it translates into conversions and revenue..

With the growing awareness about online marketing methods like Pay-per-Click and Search Engine Optimization, business owners are spending a good portion of their marketing budgets to attract greater volumes of qualified online traffic. Jim Novo, customer data guru and co-chair of the Web Analytics Association's Education Committee comments, "Not all traffic is created equal". One could use several media vehicles to bring in traffic – organic search listings, pay-per-click, direct mail advertising your website URL, a radio or TV commercial or even just your business card. If you are paying to bring in traffic via a particular medium, it is definitely worth spending a little more time and attention on those visitors. Bringing them to your home page won't necessarily get them to take the desired (buying) action. So what will? A focused, custom made Landing Page.

Landing pages are really taking off and it is time for your business to take flight with this simple, yet highly effective tool. Stefan Tornquist, Research Director at MarketingSherpa quotes statistics indicating that "an improved landing page can result in an average 40% increase in conversion". The fact is that the overall volume of users visiting website home pages is going down and will reduce further, significantly. If the point of entry is increasingly, a landing page, then that page must cater to different types of visitors. Depending on where they are coming from, these visitors will vary in the level of information they have about your company. For example, a link from a search ad brings in a relatively "uninformed" visitor as compared to a more engaged visitor who clicks on a link in your company newsletter. The landing page for these two kinds of visitors must, therefore, be dynamically designed to cater to each of their needs, yet, lead both to convert.

Web analytics research shows that visitors to a landing page can broadly be sectioned into four groups:

1. Those who come to the page and click away in less than 5 seconds.
2. Those who linger for up to a few minutes, then click away.
3. Those who abandon the page mid-way through conversion – start, but don't complete the desired action (filling a form, making a purchase, downloading a whitepaper or a free trial).
4. Those who finish the process and convert.

Which of the above must you focus on and why?

All of the above groups are important because they have at least taken the trouble to click a link and look at your landing page. Tornquist explains however, that it makes sense to focus on the first and third group. The second group clicks away after some time so you know that they did make an informed decision to leave. (We're not suggesting you ignore this group, but simply recommending that you focus your priorities). The fourth group is now a valuable customer and you must nurture it for continuing business and referrals. The first group clicks away very quickly, without even giving your page a chance. You can make modifications that will orient them in space, time and meaning of the page so that you could move them at least into the second group of people who stay longer. The third group signals a red alert – something is definitely amiss on your page if people chose to convert and were not compelled to complete their action. Is your online form too long? Is your shipping and delivery policy unclear? What about your terms of exchange or returns / refunds? It could be any one of these or more that drive your visitor in the third group to abandon the conversion process.

"Most e-commerce sites only convert 3 out of every 100 people who visit their sites."  
- Study by FutureNow

Some of the simplest but possibly the most important items to focus on while testing a landing page are:

- Bonus gifts
  - Coupons
  - P.S. messages
  - Guarantees
  - Opening sentence images
  - Closing sentence images
  - Calls to action
  - Headings
- Bryan Eisenberg, co-founder of marketing consulting firm FutureNow.

With the complexity of media vehicles and Web user trends, testing the effectiveness of a landing page is critical to ensure you maximize your ROI. WSI Consultants have been trained by industry leading firms like Google, Yahoo! and MarketingSherpa to design and test revenue generating landing pages for businesses like yours. To make sure your landing pages speak to your audience and leads them to conversion, contact WSI.