

“Facts are stubborn things...”

— John Adams (1735-1826)

MEDIA FACT SHEET

To view this information online and read additional media fact sheets, visit:
BloodHorse.com/MediaFactSheet

After the Click: Landing Pages 1.0.1

By Leslie Neilson
Blood-Horse Online Advertising Sales Manager

The landing page is the first introduction of your product or service to a prospect and your first opportunity to make a good impression. From that moment on, the success of that blossoming relationship depends on the success of the user experience.

A landing page is the platform for connecting the dots between intent and content. Through design, you must read the user's mind and work to deliver what he or she is looking for.

The question is sometimes asked: Why create a landing page? Why not send potential customers to my homepage? The answer is simple: If your visitor can't find relative information on the landing page, almost instantaneously, they will abandon your site faster than you can say "back button."

Bad landing pages are where good leads go to die.

Defining Landing Pages:

Wikipedia defines a landing page as, "A lead capture page that appears when a potential customer clicks on an advertisement of a search-engine result link. The page will usually display content that is a logical extension of the advertisement or link."

There are two basic types of landing pages, reference and transactional. A reference landing page presents relevant information in an engaging way. A transactional landing page seeks to persuade a visitor to complete a transaction.

A transaction may be to purchase a product, fill out a form, download a whitepaper, join an email list, print a coupon, or enter to win a contest.

A visitor who performs the desired action on a transactional landing page is referred to as a conversion. The efficiency or quality of the landing page can be measured by its conversion rate, the percentage of visitors who complete the desired action.

Best Practices for Landing Pages:

1 — Time is of the Essence: A landing page must instantly communicate the purpose of page, grab attention, and encourage viewers to stay. A scientific theory called Optimal Foraging Theory states that organisms forage in such a way as to maximize their energy intake per unit time. In other words, they behave in such a way as to find, capture and consume food containing the most calories while expending the least amount of time possible in doing so. In the world of internet marketing this has come to be known as, Web-induced Attention Deficit Disorder. Make sure your overall message and design get the point across quickly!

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Blood-Horse
SINCE 1916

CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS:

3101 Beaumont Centre Circle ■ Lexington, KY 40513 U.S.A.
Tel.: (800) 866-2361 ■ (859) 278-2361 ■ Fax: (859) 276-6706
BloodHorse.com ■ Email: advertise@BloodHorse.com

- 2 — **Deliver Relevance:** Human nature is to follow sameness and likeness as we search out new data. For prospects to respond to online marketing campaigns, think about the message as a process of laying out a trail of bread crumbs to draw in prospects. Visitors land on a website with a purpose or goal in mind based on the ad that brought them to this page. We must instantly show relevance to help visitors achieve that goal.
- 3 — **Visually Engage the User:** Make it easy to follow the message and data flow. Tell your story, describe your service or sell your product using bulleted text, crisp (not cluttered) design, clearly labeled radio buttons and short forms. Avoid lengthy copy. Depending on the message, the integration of audio, video and other rich media platforms is ideal.
- 4 — **Make Your Offer Compelling:** If you have designed an engaging, successful banner with a compelling call to action — carry this offer over to your landing page. Think of your landing page as your salesperson. Think of visitors to this page as customers who are “on the fence” — persuade them!
- 5 — **Use a Direct Headline:** A clear direct headline is the first thing that a visitor notices upon viewing the page. Restate the main theme of your campaign message or state the strongest benefit that your product or service offers in your main headline. Make sure the headline is a direct and simple statement relevant to what you want the page visitor to accomplish.
- 6 — **Deliver a Clear Value Proposition:** Answer any potential “whys?” with value propositions. Keep them limited to three or four bulleted points and don’t mince words. This is no time to get cute — if visitors can’t quickly and easily understand the information you are offering or the benefits of your product or service, they will leave.
- 7 — **Convey Trust and Security:** Strong branding and assurances, as well as testimonials, provide credibility and give confidence to the visitor that can have a positive impact on conversion. In ecommerce landing pages, trust and security icons should be prominently displayed. If you are collecting email addresses or other personal information in a form, provide an obvious link to your site’s privacy policy.
- 8 — **Soften the Call to Action:** Direct words like “Buy Now”, “Take Action” and “Join Today” indicate a commitment your page visitor may not be ready to make and can cause them to bail. Softer calls to action like, “Try it Now”, “Request More Information” and “Add to Cart” can drive customers deeper into the sales lead funnel and result in higher conversions. The best calls to action are written in no more than 7 — 12 words.
- 9 — **Reduce Clutter and Increase Whitespace:** Too much “stuff” on a page will confuse visitors and keep them from quickly finding the relevant details of your pitch and your calls-to-action. Take stock of all the elements on a landing page and leave only that which is truly important to the objective of converting visitors. You may choose to limit or remove alternate navigation links. This is a popular practice in transactional landing pages. Increased whitespace helps users more easily scan a page for key messages.
- 10 — **Test Your Ideas. Try It! Measure It! Tweak It!:** Online content effectiveness should be reviewed and improved continuously. By virtue of the medium it is easy to make even the smallest and most frequent changes at little cost. The slightest change in copy, font style, color, graphic or design, could increase conversion. If response is strong and starts to decline, remember that user behavior and competitor approach all change continuously. What works today may not work long term.

Bottom Line:

Creating and optimizing landing pages is an important step in the online sales cycle. A solid landing page that attends to best practices, offers visitors the next piece of information they seek and delivers a memorably smooth experience with your brand will effectively increase conversion. Isn’t that what it’s REALLY all about?