

E-BOOK Series



THE QUICK N EASY GUIDE FOR
CONVERTING WEB TRAFFIC
INTO LEADS & SALES

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THE QUICK N EASY GUIDE FOR CONVERTING WEB TRAFFIC INTO LEADS & SALES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHAT IS CONVERSION.....	4
HOW IS CONVERSION CALCULATED.....	4
WHY IS CONVERSION SO IMPORTANT?	4
WHAT TO MEASURE?	5
CONVERSION RATE OPTIMIZATION.....	6
MONITORING.....	6
WEB ANALYTICS TOOLS USED TO GATHER DATA.....	7
HOW TO USE THE RESULTS	8
TIME FOR TESTING.....	9
LEADING A/B TESTING TOOLS.....	9
TESTS AND TOOLS.....	15
OTHER HELPFUL TOOLS.....	15
IMPLEMENTATION.....	15
OPTIMIZE FOR REVENUE AND CONVERSION.....	16
DECLARE A WINNER OF YOUR TESTS.....	16
KEEP TESTING.....	16
RELY ON THE DATA	16
BE PATIENT DURING TESTING.....	16
DON'T TRUST WHAT WORKS FOR SOMEONE ELSE.....	16
CONCLUSION.....	17



THE QUICK N EASY GUIDE FOR CONVERTING WEB TRAFFIC INTO LEADS & SALES

There are two main ways to increase the money that you can earn from a website. Most people try to increase traffic, using many techniques from SEO, to Google AdWords, to social media promotion, in order to boost website traffic.

The alternative is to increase the conversion rate which should lead to an increase in the income your website generates, without needing to increase traffic at all. In essence, this is making the most of what you already get.

WHAT IS CONVERSION?

Conversion has been defined as being any measurable and trackable act that pushes a potential customer further through the sales process. These could include things like people submitting their email address to download an eBook you are offering them, or clicking on a link to look at a particular product in your online store, actually making an online purchase, and even copying a phone number off

your webpage and phoning up for more information. Basically, conversion is visitors doing something that is congruent with a major goal an owner has set for their website.

HOW IS CONVERSION CALCULATED

The conversion rate is calculated as being the number of visitors doing the conversion activity, divided by the total number of visitors to the site, multiplied by 100. So for a website set up for lead generation, the calculation would be the number of leads generated, divided by number of visitors, multiplied by 100.

WHY IS CONVERSION SO IMPORTANT?

The main reason that you should keep a close eye on your conversion rate is that the higher the conversion rate, the better you are at meeting your website's goals.

“The ALTERNATIVE is to increase the conversion rate which should LEAD to an increase in the income your website GENERATES, without needing to increase traffic at all.”

In particular, it means that you are able to improve your goal with your existing traffic and thus existing expense – simply because you manage to alter and improve your website in some way.

A side effect of an improved conversion rate, is that the ROI on your marketing spending increases (assuming your conversion goal is measurable in dollar terms). Your income has increased, but there has been no extra marketing expenditure to match it.

WHAT TO MEASURE?

There are a number of statistics that can be looked at to help improve your website's progress.

CONVERSION RATE

The first statistic to calculate is the conversion rate of your website. Even a relatively mild increase in your conversion rate could be very beneficial to you

SHOPPING CART ABANDONMENT

If you have an e-commerce website, it is likely that you have some form of shopping cart check-out process. It is

worth analyzing what percentage of your web visitors start the shopping cart process, but don't fully follow it through.

SIGNUP FORM COMPLETION RATE

Similarly take a look at statistics relating to other unfinished processes. What percentage of your visitors start filling in a sign-up form, but abandon it before it is finished?

PAGE VIEWS PER VISIT

If your main target is exposure, rather than sales, you will want to focus on the number of page views per visit. If your visitors arrive on a landing page and then bounce off straight away, you definitely want to investigate what the problem is.

HOME PAGE BOUNCE RATE

A very specific example of the above is the Home Page Bounce Rate, which shows the percentage of visitors who come to your home page, and then leave without ever going further into your site. Obviously this should not be a high statistic for a healthy website.



Visitors

1.245.445.875



CONVERSION RATE MONITORING OPTIMIZATION

Conversion rate optimization is the process of determining how you can improve the sales funnel of a website to encourage more of these conversion activities, particularly those that actually convert into real money. There are basically three steps to this optimization process

1. MONITORING

Use your web analytics tools to understand and monitor your conversion rates

2. TESTING

Use website testing tools to test different versions of your website to see which versions do the best job at converting your websites visitors.

3. IMPLEMENTING

Once you have determined the best performing website pages, ensure that pages like the ones tested are live, in use, and working for you.

UNDERSTAND THE SALES FUNNEL/ BUYING CYCLE AT PLAY

The sales funnel is the process a website user goes through as they develop from being simply a visitor, to becoming a paying customer (or whatever else the website's goal is). Every website has some form of sales funnel. Most sales funnels have a number of steps that the user will go through on the way to the final conversion. The more steps there are, the easier it will be to lose a website user before they actually get to the end. The goal is to understand where your potential customers are in the funnel, and move them through to the end.

Each stage in the funnel will provide more information on the website users' habits. Look at this information. Understand how the potential customer is behaving on your site. Determine what factors on your site are helping conversion, and which are hindering conversions.

You need to look at every page on your website, particularly those that are part of the sales funnel. Then ask yourself, what the purpose of any page is. Each page needs a clear goal and purpose.

In many situations phrase match gives the best results. It is neither too general, leading to your ads appearing on irrelevant searches, or too specific, meaning that your ad doesn't trigger for searches that are slightly different from how you anticipated them to be. Using keyword phrases, rather than single keywords, also seems to ensure you get the right traffic through to your ads.

You also have the ability to stop your ads appearing by selecting negative keywords - words that you specifically don't want to trigger your ads. If you sell woollen carpet and not synthetic carpet, you would have 'synthetic' as a negative keyword. That way, your ad would not appear if someone typed 'synthetic carpet'.

WEB ANALYTICS TOOLS USED TO GATHER DATA

GOOGLE ANALYTICS

Google Analytics provides numerical information about your website including data on how customers use your site, how far they get through your sales funnel and at what point they drop out of it.

You need to set up specific conversion goals and a conversion funnel.

You can use the information you gather to determine if there are any bottlenecks in the system. For instance, if 50% of your visitors move from the landing page to the pricing page, but only 2% then move onto the sales page, you can see that there clearly is a problem with the pricing page.

At regular intervals, use Google Analytics to take a close look at the stages in your sales funnel, particularly at any obvious drop-off points. What changes can you make to reduce the drop-offs?

Another reason you may lose potential customers is if your website takes too long to load. In Google Analytics, check

Behavior / Site Speed / Overview to see your site's average page load times. If you have a problem, work on speeding up the loading time. Less people are then likely to abandon your site, making them potential conversions.

Look for the funnel conversion rates for your site, by clicking on Conversions and then Funnel Visualization.

CUSTOMER SURVEYS

The next tool is the customer survey. You can gather a wealth of information by undertaking customer surveys. One common method is to create a relevant, easy-to-answer survey of your customers using Survey Monkey or an alternative. Keep the survey short and simple, otherwise your customers will refuse to answer it. Open ended questions will give you more valuable data than using predetermined closed question answers. It is always a good idea to offer some form of incentive for the customer to fill in the survey, for instance a prize they can win.

ON-SITE SURVEYS

An alternative is to have a survey on the site itself. This enables you to expand your survey sample to include those who have not yet gone all the way through your funnel, and indeed may never do so.

“The MAIN AIM of onsite SURVEYS is to learn more about the misunderstandings WEB USERS have HAD when they’ve been on your site.”

Qualaroo and Google Feedback Surveys for Website Owners make these types of surveys available.

Often the target of these survey is actually the non-converting web browser. Your aim is to find out, from them, why they haven't gone through your funnel. What are the weak points? Are there specific usability problems with the website? Is there an issue with your product itself? Is the pricing wrong for those who look at your website?

USABILITY TESTS

Usability tests are where you follow specific people as they navigate through your website. You can either set up this test yourself, where you recruit the participants, and use screen recording software to see what they actually do on your website. The alternative is to pay a specialist firm like www.usertesting.com to undertake the tests for you.

Set up a series of steps you want your testers to follow, and record them doing them, commenting as they go. From the videos, it should be easy to see what parts of your site the users found easy to navigate, and what parts they had trouble with.

HOW TO USE THE RESULTS

What do you do with the data you have collected? How can you use this information to help you improve your conversion rates?

CUSTOMER SURVEYS

Take a good look at the surveys collected from your existing customers. It is important to remember that these are people who have gone all the way through your sales funnel and converted.

Look for patterns and similarities in the answers they give. Is there an obvious key benefit that many customers feel they have received? Did they all find the sales funnel straight forward? Is there any particular part of the process they specifically liked?

Look at any negatives that have consistently been given. Is there any problem that the customers noticed, but persevered through?

These surveys will highlight what factors are most important to your customers; is it your price, your customer service, your product, or perhaps the user experience on your



website? A well designed customer survey should make this clear to you.

ONSITE SURVEYS

The main aim of onsite surveys is to learn more about the misunderstandings web users have had when they've been on your site. What prevented them from making a purchase? Look for any patterns that show up among those who didn't convert on your site. Have clear and obvious problems been identified? Is there key information missing from the website? Do they find your site confusing? What are their concerns about buying your product?

Note the language they use. How negative is it? What weaknesses in your website have they exposed?

USABILITY TESTS

You can get valid results from a small number of test users, as few as five.

The usability tests show up any glaring errors in the website. Even small errors discourage browsers and send them to the competition.

Take note of what your testers perceive as being good and bad points of your website. You may have made some assumptions that turned out to be incorrect in practice. Your testers may have

struggled over something you though intuitive. They may point out information they looked for but could not find.

TIME FOR TESTING

Once you have gathered data, you will have insight into how people perceive your website. It is better to run tests once you have established this insight, rather than blindly trying to run tests based on gut feeling.

The surveys and usability tests will have provided you with qualitative data. Thanks to Google Analytics, you will have found quantitative data.

LEADING A/B TESTING TOOLS

One of the major tools that you have to determine how different variations in your website perform is A/B Testing. This basically involves testing two different versions of one of your webpages and analyzing which performs best.

Before you start your A/B Testing, you first need to identify your existing conversion rate (for whatever statistic you have chosen to measure). You also

“As the NAME SUGGEST, a Call to Action button aims to ENCOURAGE the website user TO DO something”

need to know where you aim to shift your conversion rate to.

A common rule of thumb when doing A/B testing is that you should continue making modifications until you get to the point where a modified page is likely to have a 95% chance of outperforming the original page. To be statistically valid, you should test for seven days (eliminating the naturally-occurring changes that are simply due to behaviors on different days of the week).

There are a number of software solutions to help you with this task. Three popular ones are Visual Website Optimizer, Optimizely and Google Content Experiments.

VISUAL WEBSITE OPTIMIZER

Visual Website Optimizer uses a WYSIWIG interface to enable you to compare different versions of a particular webpage. This means that you can make changes to your page, without having to alter the underlying HTML or CSS, i.e. you can simply drag a red box to a particular part of your page if you want to test how one would go there.

OPTIMIZELY

Optimizely is very similar to Visual Website Optimizer in that you can test various versions of a page, and you can make

changes on the screen without altering the underlying code.

GOOGLE CONTENT EXPERIMENTS

Google Content Experiments requires more work on your behalf. Any changes you want to make to any of the five versions of a page you can test, must be coded first before you can use it, but it does have the advantage over its two rivals in being free. Every variation of a page that you design and code can be fed into Google Content Experiments and have its features and statistics analyzed in Google Analytics.

These tools automatically calculate the conversion rates and measure the statistical likelihood that one version of your page will perform better than another version.

IDENTIFY YOUR CONVERSION GOALS

When it comes down to deciding on the exact tests to run, you need to come back to the conversion goals you set. Your test needs to be carried out on your most important goal. If your goal is to convert more visits into paid sales, that is what you should be testing. Alternatively if your goal is to gain more site members, your testing focus should be on your membership statistics.



IDENTIFY THE TEST YOU CAN RUN

Having identified your goal, you need to determine what statistic actually measures it. In the first example above, the statistic would be the value of sales, in proportion to site visitors. In the second example, the statistic would be the number of site members as a percentage of unique visitors.

You are going to want to test the various parts of your webpage that could affect these statistics.

UTILIZE A TESTING TOOL TO RUN TESTS

Make certain you actually use the testing tool you chose earlier, otherwise you won't succeed in the long run with your conversion rate optimization efforts.

Regularly do follow up tests to improve your conversion rates even further. Don't just simply test and optimize one thing and then forget about it. This is a constant process.

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS—HIGH IMPACT WEBSITE ELEMENTS TO TEST

CALL TO ACTION BUTTONS

As the name suggest, a Call to Action button aims to encourage the website user to do something – hopefully something that matches your goal. These include things like Sign-Up and Checkout Buttons. The wording, color, size and style of the button will lead to different reactions by the website user. Some buttons will definitely encourage the browser to take action, while others may simply merge into the page, getting lost in a jumble of words and images.

Take a few minutes to think about the precise purpose and use of each button. Is it in a position where you can use a generic button, with typical wording, e.g. "Buy Now" or "Ring for a Free Quote", or is it a situation where you should be using a custom button, specific to your particular website. Also make certain that the wording suggests something of value to the person browsing your site. Something generic like "Call Us" does not encourage people to do anything that is to their benefit.

You want your Call to Action buttons to be a high contrast color compared to the rest of the page. They need to clearly stand out from anything else around them.

“One thing that is often **BENEFICIAL** to a website’s success, is the use of short **ANIMATED VIDEOS** to demonstrate the business, or product, **KEY FEATURES.**”

CALL TO ACTION POSITIONING

The positioning of your Call to Action on the page, appears to make a large difference to conversion success. You’re A/B testing will give you the best idea of what works on your particular site. Some general suggestions include:

- Place Call to Actions both above and below the fold. Your readers will go all over your site, so it makes sense to have buttons spread around your page.
- Have the correct Call to Action button for the correct part of the sales funnel. Buttons for things like free downloads should be on your landing or top-level pages, while things like offering free quote or pricing details should be placed further into the site.
- Add additional Call to Action buttons on your thank you pages (these could be heading towards further upsells)

LONG VS SHORT COPY

Different products need different lengths of copy to sell them. Test different lengths to see what works best for you. Some general suggestions are:

- Use longer copy for more complex products, as they will need more explanation to simplify them.

- More expensive products need longer copy, because the potential purchaser puts more effort into their buying decision, and wants to know more about what they could be spending their money on.

- If your testers uncovered any issues in relation to your product, your copy needs to be long enough to cover those issues.

BUY NOW VS. FREE TRIAL

Tests have shown that offering a free trial generally improves conversion rates. This makes sense, as once people have been using your product for a period of time, particularly if they have liked it, they are likely to want to keep on using it.

CREDIT CARD OR NOT

One test that is often made is whether you should ask for a credit card, particularly in a situation involving a free trial. Obviously, by demanding a credit card from a person advancing through the funnel, will cut off some potential customers. Some people simply don’t have credit cards. Others will be reluctant to give a credit card, because they are worried they will be charged if they don’t cancel the trial in time. Some firms have found huge improvements in their conversion rates where they haven’t insisted on credit card details before the actual purchase point.



LIVE CHATS

One plugin available for your web-site is Live Chat, where a web visitor has the opportunity to ask any questions while they are on site. This can be a reassurance to them, as they can find out the answers to their problems instantly. It also gives you instant feedback.

It is worth testing whether your site would benefit from having Live Chat (and that the benefits of any increased conversions would outweigh the costs of operating it).

EXPLAINER VIDEOS

One thing that is often beneficial to a website's success, is the use of short animated videos to demonstrate the business, or product, key features. These can be relatively easily created (one example is by using Powtoon) and they leave a visual image on your website users. Test to see just how big a difference such a video would make to your site.

FREE TRIAL LENGTH

If you have decided that a free trial could be a beneficial offering for your website, you should test to see what the optimal length is for you. Is there a different conversion rate if you give potential customers a 30 days free trial versus giving them 14 days?

TESTIMONIALS

Websites often show testimonials from satisfied customers. How much difference do the testimonials actually make to people making decisions? Your website testing can determine this. If you use testimonials, they have to look realistic to people – obviously fake testimonials will not help you in any way! They are also of little benefit if they are too general – they need to include specifics about your business. Having a photo or video helps make the testimonial seem more real.

Most firms find that testimonials have their best effect relatively late in the selling funnel – even on the check-out page.

HEADLINES

The headlines you choose to use on your page can have a huge impact on conversions. Simply changing a headline by one word can make a big impact. This is an easily testable area, so put the time into testing a number of variations.

One common headline method is to state the benefit to the consumer of using your product, e.g. "Lose 14 Pounds Weight in a Month". Another method is to use a loss-aversion headline, e.g. "Learn Why You are Not Losing Weight". A third method is use a question, e.g. "Are you feeling bloated

“CLICK MAPS are similar to heat maps in that they VISUALLY SHOW you exactly where people are CLICKING.”

and overweight?” Your testing will show you which type of headline works best for your site.

CAROUSEL VS STATIC IMAGES

It has become common practice to include some form of carousel or slider on a website to rotate through a series of images. A number of recent studies have shown that these have little benefit on website conversion, and a number of sites have discovered that using these moving images has actually reduced their conversions. It would definitely be worth testing this for your site if you are using a carousel now.

SHOPPING CART AND CHECKOUT FLOW PAGES

No matter how good the rest of your site is, if you have a complicated and difficult check-out process, you will not manage to get the conversions you want. Test your forms. Make certain that they are clear. If an item of information is not absolutely essential, don't make it compulsory for people to enter it. Work on having comprehensive error validation, so that you can trap any information entered erroneously.

SIGN-UP PAGES

An error on a sign-up page is another

critical error when it comes to your conversions. It is incredibly frustrating to get traffic all the way to your sign up-page, only to lose it because the prospective customer lost their way on that page. Test well, and then test again.

HOME PAGE

This page is the main face of your website. People regularly find their way to your site via the home page. Once they are on the site, it is likely that they will return to the Home Page a number of times. It needs to be focused, uncluttered and clear for your prospective customer.

KEY ENTRY PAGES

Although many people will arrive at your site via the Home Page, the reality is that if you have set up your site properly, and you use SEO and other techniques, such as Google AdWords to drive traffic to you, there are likely to be a number of other landing pages that people will arrive at. It is suggested that there should be a separate landing page for each key term you are focusing on. These pages all need to follow the same philosophy as the home page, and be clear, uncluttered and showing what someone who has searched for a particular term is expecting to find.



OTHER HELPFUL TOOLS

There are a few other tools that can be helpful to you as you try to optimize your site.

HEAT MAPS

Heat maps show which sections of your pages have been looked at most by your browsers, versus which sections have had little exposure. These can show you the more successful pages, as well as showing you such things as how far down a page people are actually reading.

CLICK MAPS

Click maps are similar to heat maps in that they visually show you exactly where people are clicking. It will soon become apparent if you do not have many clicks showing around your key Call to Action buttons.

TEST SIGNIFICANCE CALCULATOR

The Test Significance Calculator helps you determine how statistically significant your test is based on the results you receive. This calculation will be done for you in most of the A/B Tools referred here.

TEST DURATION CALCULATOR

The Test Duration Calculator tells you how

long you should run a test for so that it shows relevant results.

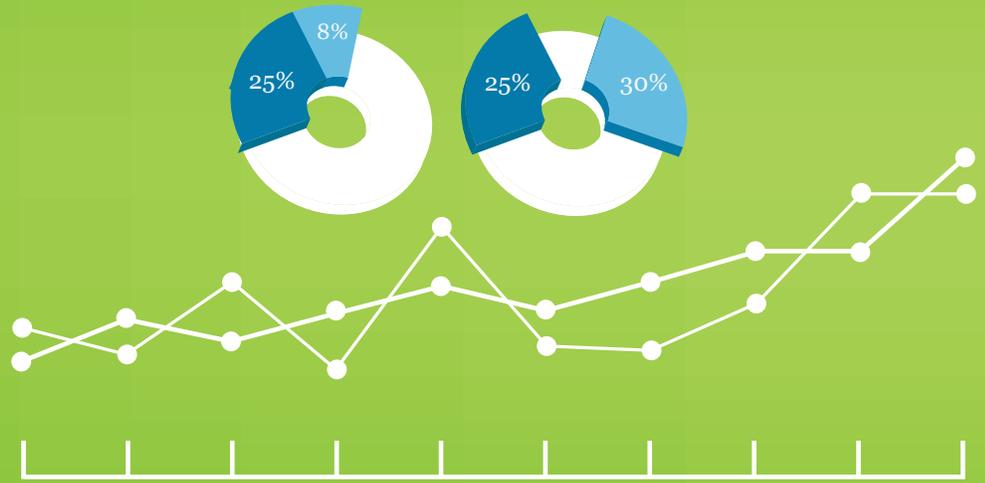
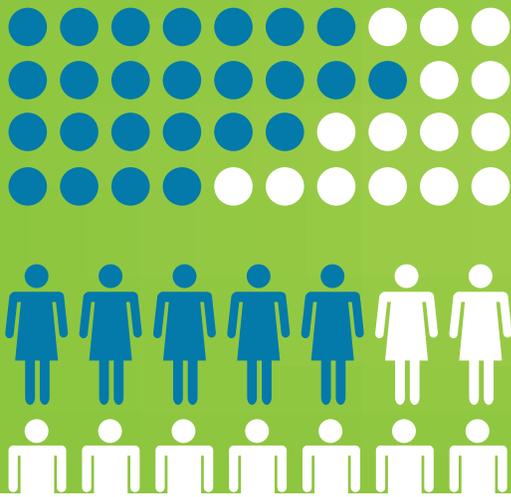
IMPLEMENTATION

There are two basic ways to implement your tests. The first way is as through A/B tests, i.e. Page A is your control (probably an existing webpage) and Page B is the potential improvement for that page. In that case you will be testing to see whether you should replace Page A with Page B.

Multivariate tests take Page A and then test a number of variations to that page, trying to find the combination that produces the optimal conversion rate. While multivariate tests give great information, you need quite a bit of traffic for these to have statistical validity. Smaller websites should initially concentrate simply on A/B tests.

OPTIMIZE FOR REVENUE AND CONVERSION

One thing to be aware of is that increased conversion does not necessarily lead to increased revenue and vice versa. One of the many factors that will affect a website's



conversion is changes to the price of the products being sold. If you increase the price of a product, there is likely to be a drop in demand for that item, thus the conversion rate will fall. Depending on the price elasticity of demand for the particular product, however, there is likely to be an increase in the overall revenue earned from the product.

Overall, you want your site to be optimized so that it will produce the best conversion possible for a particular price point.

DECLARE A WINNER OF YOUR TESTS

Once you have done any tests, make a decision. If the Page B version is better, make certain that you replace the original Page A. If it turns out that Page A was fine leave it be – or look at another alternative change to make. Advise your IT Department of the results and requested changes that are needed.

KEEP TESTING

The odds are that there are always improvements that can be made to your site. It is important that testing and the subsequent adjustment be a continuous process.

RELY ON THE DATA

The reason that you gathered data first was so that you had a base point to use when you undertook testing. Assume that the data you collected is in fact a fair sample of the views of your customers (and in some cases non-customers). Do not ignore these results just because you don't like them or they don't match your gut feeling.

BE PATIENT DURING TESTING

Remember that tests should always be run to at least a 95% likelihood of being a winning variation and last for at least 7 days. You should also run your test until there are at least 100 conversions. Even if you get a very high conversion rate in the first couple of days, do not curtail the testing. Let it run its course.

DON'T TRUST WHAT WORKS FOR SOMEONE ELSE

Remember that every site is different. You cannot make the assumption that something that works for one site, will be equally as successful on another site. You need to undertake the tests yourself.

“The **REASON** that you gathered data first was so that you had a **BASE POINT** to use when you **UNDERTOOK TESTING.**”

CONCLUSION

Too many website operators spend all of their time focusing on increasing traffic. They forget that it is possible to improve their results by working on things that will increase their conversion rate. It is well worth the effort, as many of the techniques looked at here are relatively affordable, if not free, and the results can be quite surprising.





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