Conversion Rate Optimization

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About the Tutorial

Conversion Rate Optimization, also commonly referred as CRO in short, is basically the exercise of increasing sales and prospective leads from any website. The added advantage is that it can be done without increasing the percentage of website visitors. By improving or by optimizing the website conversion rate, there is a scope to get more visitors for added activity on the website. CRO helps in attracting more clicks to your home page or website without extra expenditure.

This is an introductory tutorial that covers the fundamentals of Conversion Rate Optimization and how to deal with its various components and sub-components.

Audience

This tutorial is prepared for those professionals who aspire to learn the fundamentals as well as the refinements of CRO and implement it in practice. Conversion Rate Optimization is a system, which helps in increasing the percentage or the number of visitors on a website that further get converted into buyers/customers. In simpler terms, to make them take any desired action on that particular web page.

This tutorial is proposed to make you comfortable in getting started with the basics of Conversion Rate Optimization and its other functions.

Prerequisites

It is a foundational tutorial for the beginners and they can easily understand the concepts explained here with basic knowledge of how a company or website deals with its conversion rate and how to further optimize it. However, it will help the learners, if they have some prior exposure to website handling along with some knowledge on conducting surveys and any other marketing and strategy techniques.

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1. CRO — Definition

Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO) is a process of analyzing the data, statistics and website insights to improve the performance. Simply stating, it is increasing the percentage of converted visitors on your website.

You need to figure out the potential in your website. Search for what users are looking for and how you can fulfill their need to the fullest.

Importance of Conversion Rate Optimization

There are many reasons why CRO should be your top priority. Some of them are explained here:

- **Free customers** - It draws your customers free of cost. You don't need to spend so much on advertising like AdWords. Cost per click is rising with a steep rise in the cut-throat competition in every area. Marketing channels like AdWords sway away your budget quickly.

- **Winner take it all** - To compete with your customer, you don't need to strive hard. You only need to perform better than them. Conversion rate optimization lets you understand your brighter side.

- **Assist you financially** - An increase in conversion rate adds up to 10% increment in profit and that too without any extra spending.

- **No scope of loss** - Conversion rate optimization gives you no loss. You can try it without hassles.

- **Robust business** - With CRO you can spend more on other marketing channels. This makes your business stand out. It helps you get ahead in competition.

- **Customers' short attention span** - With rising social media, the number of page views increase, but simultaneously the consumers have a short attention span that did not prevail earlier. Now when you have listed yourself, you need to differentiate to stand out. For this, you need thorough conversion rate optimization to make customers place attention on your product.

- **Customer ease** - CRO helps you legitimize and streamline your business. It carves a clear path from the landing page to the buy button. A customer expects a purchase in a single click and easy access. It actually improves the layout of your marketing store or what-so-ever you are into. CRO reduces friction and customers' anxiety.

- **Immediate results** - It gives you immediate results unlike search engines. You can see a higher rate of conversion. It gets your ball rolling for a long term. The only thing required here is consistency.

When it comes to tracking conversions, several things need to be kept in mind. Let's elaborate it with an example. You operate a business of selling upholstery. A customer comes to you to check for the products. The shopkeeper behaves gently and he finds the product quality good as well as the price. Still the customer feels the urge to surf the market to avail more options. The customer visits you time and again without purchases.

In such cases, the shopkeeper or the quality or its price could not be said responsible for no conversion. We cannot predict customer behavior. However, we need to keep in mind to choose a unique customer when it comes to conversion optimization. Keep in mind, the primary aspect should be 'consistency'.

Conversion rate optimization is not a method of chances or luck. It is a process of Diagnosis, Hypothesis and Testing.

Put yourself into the customer's cloak and look at your website minutely. Point out those issues that hinders a conversion. This is where you need to work on.

Checklist:

- Call-to-action
- Graphics
- Usability
- Security of payment gateways, etc.
- SEO
- Customer's feedback, etc.

Components of CRO

There are basically four components of CRO.

- **Message**: What message your platform is trying to convey should be relevant in terms of context. Your content, style option, color schemes should be appealing, informative and meaningful.

- **Usability**: You need to make sure a customer converts without any hassle. Accomplishing goals should be easy and just have to be few clicks away. The layout, links and buttons should be tap-friendly and enabled.

- **Flow**: The path to accomplish goal should be easy to traverse. There should be flow in navigation and checkouts.

- **Context**: It is about providing your customer a tailored experience. Like their geography, languages, history of purchases, their device, operating systems, etc. You can offer promotions on the basis of it.

Best Practices

When it comes to conversion rate optimization, intuitions and gut feelings play a vital role, but they should be put to test regularly to see the effect of the changes applied.

Conversion optimization is not about optimizing web pages but optimizing decisions. You need to decide well what may help the customers to convert.

- **Reduce form fields** – Eliminate unnecessary fields. Customers usually get irritated on filling lengthy sign-up pages. Decide 2-3 things you want them to fill.

- **Shining Call-to-action button** – Make your CTA button visible and in-focus. Generally, people tend to look at the form page in the F-style. Firstly, the upper slot of the page, then smaller strip of 'F' (beneath the top slot in the right corner) then the left sidebar. Keep it in the first fold of the page. Test your Call-to-action buttons on different locations. Use contrasting colors, for example, a red CTA button on a white background.

- **Delete automatic sliders** – Automatic sliders tends to force the user to look at a particular section of the website which may not be appealing to all. This may reduce conversions at large.

- **Try adding videos** – Videos attract customers at large. Make sure to keep it short but informative and sweet.

- **Work on your headlines** – Titles should be specially worked upon. Attractive titles compel users to see what you have to offer.

- **Add urgency creating keywords** – Give your users a reason to buy. Add keywords like 'free for limited period' or 'last two items left'. They should feel the need to have it urgently.

- **Handy contacts** – Display contact details on the front page itself. This helps the customer to ask for help when they are unable to follow you on the landing page.

- **Add testimonials** – Add real testimonials with names and pictures of your customers. This builds trust.

- **Add your badges** - Adding awards make you honored and esteemed. They are mouth advertising for you.

- **Add security seals** – Security seals assure the customers of security of their payment details, etc. This assurance may increase your sales by 15%.

- **Speaking Images** – Add clear and relevant images possibly clicked on a white background. Images add meaning to content and make it catchy.

- **Add Live Chat** – Live chat is a beneficial feature. Chat support gives a high boost to conversion. It helps confused customers to convert hassle-free.

The abovementioned pointers increase the conversion rate to an extent by creating relevancy, clarity, distraction-free website, lessening customer's stress. When these factors are taken care of, conversion rate is likely to improve.

Data Gathering

Data Gathering is a process of collecting and measuring information on any specific variable based on interest in a strategic way. This enables us to draw some conclusions on the basis of relevancy, carry hypothesis testing and conclude any outcome.

Data is generally collected in various ways, some of which are −

- **Surveys** – A survey is a research method for gathering information from a selected group of people sharing similar attributes using standardized questionnaires or interviews or phone calls.

- **Interviews** – In interviews, data is gathered through inquiries and recordings carried by enumerators. It facilitates in-depth information about perceptions, insights, beliefs and experiences. They may be structured or unstructured.

- **Heatmaps** – A Heatmap breaks down or segregates Big Data to give you a segment that is important for you. A Heatmap highlights the underused areas to help you learn how to provide a tailored layout to your visitors.

- **User Testing** – It helps to record real users completing various tasks. We can get a clear idea about users' understanding and the ability to perform on your website.

- **Workshop** – A Workshop helps one to gain understanding of the user behavior and business understanding from each other's perspective. It can assist you in formulating USPs, learn the lagging factors and what you can offer to overcome them.

- **Analytics** – It helps you know how a customer is engaging with your website. You can learn what deters your customers by studying abandoning forms.

3. CRO – Understanding Your Customers

No matter what the quality of your product/service is, it won't capture the market unless buyers don't believe in it. To persuade them you need to know what they are into. You need to figure out what your customers need.

Draw Your Audience Circle

Communicators who understand their audience achieve the most! Yes, it is true. You need to identify your audience and analyze them. Audience are generally composed of people with different perceptions. Sometimes you are familiar with your audience, other times you may not. When your Audience is not familiar you should make a separate list of them. Put yourself in their shoes. This way you can gain insight of what they want. The best thing you can do to them is improve your communication.

Research Methods

Audience research is any communication research carried out on a specific segment of people to formulate any conclusion on the basis of their attribute, knowledge, interest, perception, etc. The point of doing this is to get better insights of the target audience.

There are several categories in which your audience fits into. This may be on the basis of income, profession, sex, age, etc.

There are various methods to know your customers:

- **Surveys/Questionnaires** – It is relatively an easy and accurate method that provides you quantitative results that are easy to measure and analyze. You can create them and distribute via newsletters, e-mails, social posts, etc., or advertise on online tools, like survey monkey, etc.

- **Interviews** – An interview is a face-to-face conversation. You can communicate with customers directly to gather data. It can be conducted in person, on phone, online, etc.

- **Focus Groups** – Here a researcher asks a group of relevant people questions. These questions are debated upon and a final conclusion is formulated.

- **Observation** – Here a researcher observes the customers and pin data about them on the basis of observation.

All the above-mentioned methods work for sure but be mindful of the ethical implications upon them.

Segmenting Data as Per Relevancy

Audience segmentation is dividing your customers into groups on the basis of certain characteristics. Website visitors have variable needs and perception. You need a website that serves all. For this, visitor segmentation is useful.

You can do this in various ways, some of which are –

- **New and Repeating Visitors:** You can offer a beginners guide to new visitors and different and detailed page to recurring ones.

    - **Source of origin:** You may segment them as per the source that landed on your page from. Like, through PPC, SERP, social sites, etc.

- **Geography:** You may target customers from a particular place. This comes useful for ecommerce sections or service based like cab booking service, etc.

- **Behavioral Targeting:** This is worth segmenting especially for ecommerce. For example, if a particular product was more searched by men in this time slot. You may offer discount on another similar time slot.

- **Conversion Basis:** You may track what channel gives you the maximum conversion. Like, do Facebook advertisements bring you more conversion or AdWords?

You need to determine what success is to you. In other words, you need to find out what are your goals. A goal is a metric to find out whether your website is helping your business in yielding profit. Goals can be also termed as –

- Leads
- Sign-ups
- Account creation
- Downloads
- Cart, etc.

Identifying Goals

Most of the business people don't know what is their ultimate goal. Often we see webpages cluttered with lot of unwanted information or with less information. If you are an ecommerce company your goals should be 'Cart', 'Purchase', 'Product Sale', 'Average Order Value', etc. If you are in B2B, then quotes, phone calls, enquiries must be your target.

When designing a website, really make it clear what business needs from this website - leads? or Cart? or something else? Once you are sure of your goals, you can create an ongoing series of experiments to reach those goals.

To identify your goals, follow a mantra. Find out your **'Marketing Goals'**, then make sure that your '**Business Goals'** must follow those marketing goals. Indirectly, you will be able to set your **'Conversion Optimization Goal'**. Your business goal is how to make money and so is your conversion goal. If social media shares or gives you direct sales, you must optimize them rather than applying efforts on reducing the bounce rates, which is not affecting your business that much.
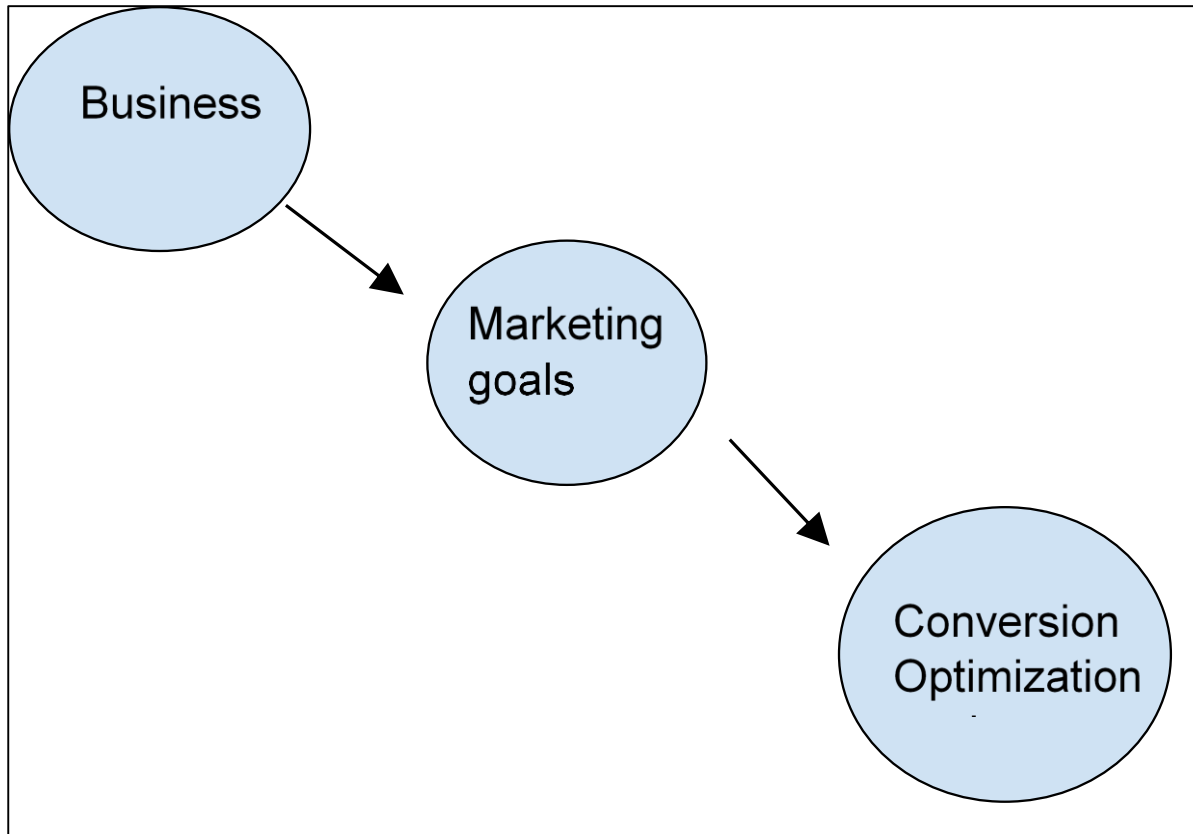
The Goal Waterfall Model

When optimizing your website design for goal capturing, your booking or purchasing a widget should be clear and in focus.

Macro Conversions v/s Micro Conversions

Macro conversions are those events that actually describe goal completion. Some of which are –

- Product sale
- Request a quote
- Call now
- Cart

Micro conversions are those events that are not actually lead generated but an assisting lead that has indicated a potential to goal completion. Like –

- Downloading a brochure
- Signing-up
- Reading more
- Liking and sharing a Facebook page
- Watching a promotional video
- Following on a social platform

They are not directly sale but are of great importance. They may help you generate leads in the future. They even serve the purpose of branding your business.

Measuring Goals

Goal measurement is used for understanding how successful our plans (different goals) are. In B2B, calls and quotes work well, in ecommerce the average order value is required. But side goals like read articles, sign-ups also assist in goal completion.

To measure goals, make an ordered list, listing goals priority-wise. Manage to complete your goals accordingly. Once you are done making this list, set relative goal values. This brings you closer towards the optimization process. Spend more time in refining these values. Use the Analytics tool. Google analytics is the best tool to measure the goal. Google analytics helps to measure the sale of the products. With the help of ecommerce goals, we can measure the sale according to each product. We can easily measure which is the bestselling product. Event tracking helps to measure the social media goals like how much goal completion via social icons.

Following are a few goals measures, which will be of great help in tracking.

- **Contact Us** – Track when the users contact you for more information or help.

- **Newsletter Subscriptions** – Keep track of how many people are signing up for your newsletter.

- **View/Request Product Demo** – Useful if your website sells a product.

- **Ecommerce Tracking** – To track and get useful Ecommerce Analytics reports, we recommend using the Ecommerce Analytics functionality.

Though a lot of people know the potential of Conversion Rate Optimization, still there exists hype and misconceptions about CRO.

Debunking Myths

- **CRO Uses Best Practices:** Conversion Rate Optimization is not just following best practices. It is also about implementing what is a boon for your business. It is a thorough analysis based on insights and testing. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a CTA (call-to-action) button in red color may not work for all.

- **Long Copies are not Attractive:** It is never a fact. Long copies may be attractive if they are clear, succinct and engaging. It is not always true that users don't scroll or read. Users are genuinely interested in information if you have authentic information for them. What is required is uncluttered and easy to navigate landing page.

- **The Replica of Successful Company Works:** NOT ALWAYS!! Conversion rate optimization simply declutters your website, making it cleaner. Lame keywords may bring down your conversion even if it is copied from a brand name. You need analysis, surveys and testing to get better results.

- **Conversion Should Only be the Targeted Metric:** Getting more and more visitors to your website is extremely important. Conversion should be your goal but visitors recurring data and how frequently they visit should also be analyzed along way. This shows how benefitting is your website for the users. Fostering engagement means quality and fulfilling website and business.

When optimizing for improving conversion, generally the following two techniques are followed.

- CRO Tactics
- CRO Plans

When implementing CRO tactics, you have a list of quick fixes like a call-to-action button color and suggestion. You rely on tips and tricks and wait for the result. It is as if you are applying flukes actually while implementing these tactics. The customer behavior takes a backseat over here. You have no action plan ready. You just keep going depending on guesses and intuitions.

Contrasting,

When making a CRO plan, you analyze the insights and the numbers. then you form a hypothesis on the results concluded. You follow an actionable plan and again a test is followed. It is a spontaneous and continuous process that takes place for the betterment of your website.

Let us compare both the techniques with an example:

You added Facebook marketing as your paid marketing channel. There are a number of conversions drop with this new implementation. Now if you are using tactics, you will bring up the fix list and try it out to get the things done. But when you are building a CRO plan you will certainly figure out the reason behind the drop in numbers. Are you fulfilling the need of this channel as you were doing with the previous channels? How? This will be the next question. In an attempt to get an answer to this question, this is then followed by a test.

We may thus conclude that a single tweak may not fix the problems of your website. Even if you lag somewhere in your tests, you are enlightened with knowledge that helps you develop further.

Structured Process

Now when you know the benefits of CRO plans over CRO strategies. Let us discuss how to structure the process of CRO plan building. We have further segmented this in phases for better understanding and to make transparent the cyclical nature of optimization. You will cross each phase many times during the optimization process.

- **Phase 1:**

  Setting Up the Preliminary Work – In this step, we decide what is to be measured and then optimize. Here we analyze the factors that drives the conversion.

For example,

You run a cosmetic beauty clinic, and you have a website that allows ten minutes of free consultation. This is what you will be counting on. You will go thinking what converted visitors, testimonials, images of happy customers, quality links, all of this or something not specified here.

You can measure all of these separately to find out what is working for you. Say for example, it is a testimonial of a satisfied customer. Now you may increase the number of testimonials.

- **Phase 2:**

    Fixing a Baseline – When you are done with deciding your potential metrics and user inputs. You will begin working, using that information. This beginning point is your baseline. You should know where and when to begin from.

    To conclude whether the optimization process is yielding results you need to know and measure numbers thoroughly. You will be requiring them to compare in future.

    In steps you will be analyzing hurdles and troubles. See whether your numbers change in positive manner? Do things get better or further worsen?

- **Phase 3:**

    Prepare Testable Hypotheses – This phase totally depends on the baseline we have laid. Spot your major hassles as well as the hurdles you come across. Once you have identified, investigate and test.

    Let's say, you got to know your bounce rate is increasing. You may carry an on-page survey that asks people to report what they were into? What made them quit? You can use tools to see where on your page they click most.

    You can then use this data to put up a hypothesis test on what makes the user quit. Come up with an answer and a solution to it. Like an improved version of the landing page.

    Phase 4:

    Plot Your Tests - This is where you need to be completely methodical. Keep records in written form and well-checked. Figure out your priorities and biggest issues. What is complicating and hindering the conversion. Why users are not clicking your call-to-action button even when it is in the first fold and highlighted in red.

    Here you can also carry out the A/B split testing. What percentage of improved bounce rate may get you to break-even?

For example,

You get to know that the website has immense traffic from the social media and external links. But traffic is swaying because you have not clearly mentioned your set of services and how to reach you. Here you may get to your home page with a changed design that clearly states what you have to offer. Also you can place your contact and location.

Add a page with a banner reading Planning to replenish your skin? It may help. Check out the free 10-minute consultation. Place this on your contact page.

Phase 5:

Run Your Test – Once you have implemented these changes. You will be running tests by calculating the fluctuation in the numbers when compared with your baseline. These numbers will tell you what you have achieved.

If you get more conversions – Get on to the next metric and re-test to make it something perfect.

If you get lesser conversions – Go back to Phase 4. Go through your figures again, implement new tests, and keep going…

Tools

You need tools to measure actionable metrics to make sure you are extracting the most out of traffic.

Analytics

This is a software that allows us to track and report the ongoing day-to-day activities on the website. Google Analytics, KISSMetrics have advanced analysis tools like knowing the bounce and exit rate, audience segmentation, conversion tracking, etc.

User Surveys

It is helpful even where analytics fail. For instance, it gives us direct insights from the users. The user's feedback is the most precious tool an optimizer can have.

User Testing

By using softwares like Optimizely and Heatmaps, you will get to know how the visitors are interacting with your landing page. You can test the potential areas of your page and can develop further to retain your customers.

A/B Testing

It is best applied when you are unsure among two or more results. A tool like A/Bingo is a Ruby-on-rails plugin that does A/B testing. You can measure test, events, or display differences.

WebPagetest

It helps you to perform a website speed test. Lesser loading time is crucial to keep customers on your website. A WebPagetest provides you a detailed and structured report of your website speed and suggestions to improve it.

The market is rapidly evolving and has evolved with so many conversion tracking tools that are helpful in measuring conversion in some or the other way.

7. CRO – User Experience and Funnel Optimization

User experience is a visitor's attitude towards your website. It shows the user involvement and attitude about using a particular product or page. To convert in maximum numbers, you need to set an exemplary user experience. This can be achieved simply by providing the users with their exact need without hassle and within 2-3 clicks. They should not have to navigate pages in search of an actionable button. It is compactly how your website looks, its loading time, is it easy to navigate and how less the hassle a visitor encounters while exploring it.

User experience is of far more importance to funnel optimization. When visitors keep visiting, they perform the task and keep moving through the funnel.

Funnels are basically the number of steps a consumer takes after landing on a website till reaching the optimum conversion level. You should decrease the number of steps to get good results.

For an ecommerce company funnels might be in any of the following sections –

- Website home page
- Product category page
- A product page
- A cart page
- Payment page

So from the above funnels, we can find the user experience data. Let us play with the numbers.

Following data are dummy numbers obtained from an Analytics tool –

- Home page –   80k sessions
- Category page –   60k sessions
- Product page –   10k sessions
- Cart page –   3k sessions
- Payment –   2.5k sessions

From the above data, we can conclude that from the Category Pages, users don't go to the product page. Exit rate from category pages is very high.

Why the exit rate is so high?

Now here comes the need to optimize our category pages. Is there any problem with the design? All the products are tagged with category pages or no? May be the category pages does not have the content that's why the people take an exit from the category pages.

In the same example, if we have the following data for a website.

- Home page – 80k sessions

- Category page – 60k sessions

- Product page – 50k sessions

- Cart page – 3k sessions

- Payment – 2.5k sessions

From the above example, we can see that the problem is with cart pages. So we have to check why people are not adding the product to cart? Is there any problem with the cart button? Or is there any problem with the design of the cart page? Is the cart button easily viewable? So figure out the issue with the data. This kind of a research is called the **funnel optimization technique**.

If we optimized our funnel, then we can improve the user experience on our website. When carrying out a funnel optimization we indirectly improve user experience. It is briefly explained in the following points:

- We keep a check on vague clicks, improper page navigation, breadcrumbs setting, page load time that compel the user to exit. Working on these factors means you are reducing friction.

- Funnel optimization reduces visitor's doubts and indecision.

8. CRO – Landing Page Optimization

In this chapter, we will discuss in detail what a landing page is, what are its uses and also how to create one.

What is a Landing Page?

A Landing page is any page where a visitor lands when guided through any channel. For instance, a person after clicking a paid advertisement lands on a page. That is a landing page. It is an entry point of any website, irrespective of the category it belongs to. When marketing a specific campaign, we need to create a well laid, dedicated landing page. It helps us in conversion and to engage your potential buyers before converting.

Most of the people mistake the Homepage as a landing page. The Homepage is designed to provide a general structure of your business. It is loaded with images and links endorsing your brand and guiding you to internal pages. It is basically meant to traverse. For a specific purpose, separate landing pages are created.

Landing pages are basically of the following two types:

- Lead generation Landing Pages.
- Click through Landing Pages.

Lead generation pages are designed with a lead generation form. When a user lands on this page then the first call to action for the user is to fill the lead form.

Click through landing pages are used in any of the ecommerce companies. A user lands on a product page but that page does not complete the goal. The user needs to go to the payment page for completing the goal.

Need for Landing Pages

We wish to convert the user once he arrives on our page. But it doesn't happen all the time, rather I would say maximum number of times. They don't purchase in one attempt and without exploring other websites of the same product. Landing pages are desired here. You need to access the visitor's contact details and adding them to your sale funnel pipe. Once you have the visitor's details you may send him e-letters, brochures, great deals, etc. to foster sale. Having more landing pages increases your sale by 50%.

Creating Landing Pages

While creating landing pages keep yourself in the customer's shoes. Know your business objectives, your audience and their needs. How they may respond to your page. Set the actionables accordingly. Lay it in a format which is hassle-free for a customer to navigate. Make it compelling, attractive, informative and easy to read. Use quality content targeted with main keywords.

Landing Page Tips:

- Use the first fold of the page. Visitors do not scroll down always in search of actionable buttons.

- Make use of images and videos.

- Include a focusable call-to-action button.

- Use titles related to your CTA.

- Keep it less messy.

- Include offers and value propositions.

- Include testimonials and other social proofs that validate your website.

- Highlight third-party endorsements. Trusted brand seal on your website confer trust.

Landing Page SEO

The Search Engine Optimization of the page should be done in a proper way. The title tag as well as the entire content should be optimized with keywords. There should also be back linking, internal linking of the page for better results. Another way is also to optimize the Heading tags.

Design of the Landing Page

The design plays an important role in the landing page. Proper competitor's research should be done. Call-to-action button should be placed in the first fold. If any landing page has a form, then the form should be placed in the first fold itself.

A/B Testing

When you are confused with two different designs for a landing page which one you have to choose. Try the A/B Testing as it will help in resolving your problem and open a new opportunity for improvement of the landing page.

Optimize Existing Field on the Landing Page

Optimize the existing fields of a landing page. If a form has a lot of fields then first optimize that form. Remove the unnecessary fields from the form. Make the form simple and easy to read, so that form completion rate may be higher.

Optimize Call-to-Action Button

Optimize call-to-action button by the button size, text on the button, color of the button or placement of the button. If we improve these things for the call to action button, then the conversion rate should be improved.

Avoid the following:

- Lying to customers.
- Putting up forms and buttons that are not required.
- Putting up frustrating pop-ups.
- Automatic music that starts on its own. It is a turn-off for a customer.

Keep analyzing the data. This will let you know if it is optimized or not. If your numbers improve, you are on the successful way to optimization. If they do not, then focus again. Re-review all the steps to find out the issue and try fixing them up.

Often encountered in spite of all efforts the visitors come and go without returning back? Yes, it happens a lot. Even after offering millions of pages to them they do not stay for long, it is needed to change this trend for better.

What is Bounce Rate?

It is a metric that represents the number of the visitors who visit your website and then quit instead of continuing to view other pages within your website. They just traversed a single page for a short span.

All of the following ways of leaving your site constitutes a bounce:

- Hitting the back button

- Opting to surf a different URL

- Exiting the tab

- Shutting down the window

- Clicking on an external link

- Session timeout

Reasons for a High Bounce Rate

It might happen owing to the following reasons:

- **Single Page Site** – Your website has no other page to visit.

- **Slow Page Load Time** – people tend to give up if the website does not load in 4 seconds.

- **Bombarding Visitors with Offers** – Lot of induced banners and intrusive advertisement force the users to leave the page. Such sites are even lesser trustworthy.

- **Irrelevant Content** – When a user does not see what he is looking for, he will quit in seconds. Also the content should use proper grammar and easy to understand literature.

- **Long Fill-up Forms** – It is a nasty thing to keep filling the forms. The longer is the form, the more the users sway. Asking for too much information is never entertained.

- **Design of the Page** – A messy page with lot of images and banners with unclear text do not hold the visitor for long.

Ways to Reduce Bounce Rate

Through continuous efforts, strategic approach and a few best practices might help you in reducing the bounce rate.

- **Set Realistic Expectation. Unrealistic goals will only demotivate you.**

  Checkout benchmark averages for bounce rates:

  o Content Websites: 40-70%

  o Lead Generation Pages: 30-40%

  o Blogs: 70-90%

  o Retail Websites: 30-40%

  o Service Providers: 20-30%

  o Dedicated Landing Pages: 80-90%

- **Attract Relevant Traffic** – Use targeted keywords that matches with your content. Swarming irrelevant traffic will only bounce. It will serve no purpose.

- **Create Multiple landing pages targeted with specific keywords**. Write attractive and useful meta description.

- **Improve Usability** – Make use of readable and grammatically correct text. Use white background, proper fonts. Make your headlines shine boldly. Use clear headings and subheadings.

- **Well-Organized Layout** – Create a website that is easy to navigate. Make it simple and easy to navigate the design of the webpage. Do not put too many call-to-action buttons in the first page itself. Too many call-to-action buttons is the reason for high bounce rate.

- **Page Load-Time** – Improve the page speed score of the website. Avoid using self-loading multimedia content. Set external links to open in new tab. This will help you to improve bounce rate and traffic as well.

- **Avoid distracting pop ups in the website** – All intrusive advertisements should also be gotten rid of. You may entertain static ads and place them onto the sides.

What is Exit Rate?

The exit rate is the percentage of people who were the last in the session i.e. who left your website from that page. It may or may not be one page in a session. If it is not the one page in the session, it means that the visitor may have landed from another page and exited from this page.

To analyze the exit rate you need to check your funnel. Track who are the customers leaving your page. Find out what type of customers may get you maximum conversion.

Work to optimize that segment. When you are done optimizing traffic, optimize pages of your website.

Ways to Reduce Exit Rate

Following are the ways to reduce the exit rate.

Create exit surveys: Exit surveys can save you more than 15 percent visitors. It is loaded with essential information about the visitors' satisfaction level at your website. You can retain your customers here and give them exclusive offers to lure them to convert.

Trigger exit pop-ups with a different persuasive message: Pop-Ups with messages can direct them to some similar products.

Optimize Call-to-action button: We have to check on the page if the call-to-action button is hard to find for the users. If call-to-action button is not visible to the users, then the exit rate can go high. Try to place call-to-action button in the first fold of the page itself.

Do A/B Testing: A/B Testing is almost a perfect solution for any dilemma. If we talk about exit rate, it works tremendously well. To make your test result clear, you need to include both testing measures, i.e. quantitative and the qualitative analysis of your website.

The second best practice is start testing from the bottom part of the funnel and keep testing towards the upper levels.

Undoubtedly, higher conversions or increase in sale means your testing was successful; decreasing leads means you've failed, though not miserably, because it was just a test.

In this chapter, we will discuss how to do CRO testing and optimization. We will also talk about the various funnel stages and how to create tables.

How to Do It?

For testing and optimization, we have to first decide where to test and how to prioritize our goals and then optimize them accordingly. Your testing should revolve around customer centric perspective. Fetch the data for a website to optimize it. Build a complete stack of information for the optimization process. Then redesign the website with a structured and systematic approach by keeping us well informed by data insights. Set objectives and KPIs.

Prioritize Testing Opportunities

Testing opportunities should be prioritized according to the values. We may not tackle all the values at once. Thus we need to set our priorities keeping in mind the gaps on Real Data and the time taken to achieve an outcome.

Funnel Stages

When talking about funnel stages, there are generally three falls to clear a funnel. The persuasive stage, informational and transactional stages with persuasion being the first one then followed by the other two.

Persuasion Stage – This is the entry point of your customer. It may be a Landing page or other pages. Here you have to make sure it makes the visitor feel he is on the right platform. It should scream you have almost everything he is looking for.

Informational Stage – It is here you have to provide a solution to visitors' queries. Once the visitor is satisfied, he jumps to actionable buttons.

Transactional Stage – Once the customers decide to convert, he moves to this stage. It is just a step back towards the GOAL. This stage usually includes a conversion form. Optimizing transaction stage means touching up the form, reducing or adding tabs, making interactions and anxiety free purchasing or converting.

Now which step should optimize first is totally up to you. It hardly makes a difference provided it is done keenly and with a customer-centric approach.

Potential Pages

Potential pages are the foremost prioritization pages. Although every page has a scope to improve, potential pages are pages of utmost importance to you. As you cannot test all the pages in one go, you need to prioritize your potential pages separately. Take help from web analytics, statistics and you can mix it with intuition.

Let us elaborate it a little more. For instance, if you are an ecommerce company, the cart abandonment is your major concern. Analytics reports cannot justify the exact reasons

like late shipping. To tackle this issue you need to go through product pages, category pages, headers footers, etc.

Tip – Look for problem indicators. In this case look for high exit rate. Gather the data, use it as an input and get a closer view of problem identifiers.

Importance Pages

Importance pages are the pages with most traffic. They need to optimize in order to relish the streaming traffic converting to GOAL. Here you can run experiments. An experiment here is rewarding as your test gets completed in a short span giving you a boost to work more. These pages are ideal to put your message, your **keypoints**. Make sure when you are analyzing traffic swarming pages, you are counting unique **pageviews** in order to avoid duplication.

Your top landing pages are definitely your important pages. Optimize them so that they look appealing, eye catching and engaging.

Ease Pages

Let us define it minutely. When you are able to get the same conversion rate from two events, the one consuming lesser time and implementation efforts are called as ease pages. If you apply the same kind of efforts only on these ease pages you are indirectly doubling your conversions.

Once you are done accumulating the information about potential, importance and ease pages, you may club them into a pie opportunity table.

Create Tables

Fetching the statistics from all three pages, you can create a table to list the priority. Let us assume that you are an ecommerce company. The home page, category page, product, cart, wish list, etc. are in your focus to be optimized. The following data is taken randomly to make you understand the priority.

Page Type	Potential	Importance	Ease	Priority
Home Page	10	10	8	9.3
Category page	8	10	9	9.0
Product page	8	10	9	9.0
Cart Page	10	9	7	8.7
Wishlist page	8	9	6	7.7
Blog temp Page	10	10	4	8
Product Payment page	8	10	5	7.7

From the above table you can easily find what is the priority. Keep in mind that there are no standard rules to prioritize. They are unique for every business.

Test Hypothesis

In this section, we will discuss the definition of what Test Hypothesis in CRO means. The dictionary meaning of hypothesis is "A tentative assumption made in order to draw out and test its logical or empirical consequences." It is an assumption on which your test variants are based on. Hypothesis is the question you ask your visitors while testing. It defines why the problem occurs.

Once you have collected enough data about what is hindering your conversions, you have your 'negatives' in hand. Now you have to flip these cons into pros. Question arises, How???? Start with isolating what to keep and what to discard.

Once you are done collecting the insights for low conversion rate, you aim to conclude attributes to be changed in order to improve conversions. To do this, first list the following three things –

- What you want to alter?
- What do you intend to change it into?
- What outcome you will get?

Say, changing **a** to **b** will get you **c.**

Creating a Powerful Hypothesis

Creating a testable and good hypothesis is crucial in conversion rate optimization. Else, you will be testing Random data without a focus, that will leave you trying in vain.

Once you have the hypothesis, you need to test it. This will let you know, whether it gives you the desired conversion or not.

To get great results, you should consider the following four crucial factors.

These are –

- Value Propositions
- Relevancy
- Clarity
- Urgency

Apart from the above factors, Hindrance, disturbance, distraction and anxiety reverses the rate of optimization.

Your value propositions ought to be very clear. Customers like and appreciate transparency and clarity. Relevance motivates them to take the desired action. Urgency forces them to convert in real time.

Is your Hypothesis test correct? To know it, please try and check the following pointers:

- Have you clearly identified the questions you would like to test?
- The hypothesis is a proposed statement, clear and testable.
- Your value propositions are clear to you.
- Do research on similar hypothesis starting to clear your doubts.

The test-hypothesis is centered around the following three things:

- Presumed problem
- Proposed solution
- Expected result

Once you are done writing hypothesis, test it and get answers for your questions. Derive a conclusion. This conclusion takes you to experiment designing. See the results, if it comes out positive, you have achieved what you were anticipating. Keep repeating for better results. If the result is negative research again.

Test Setting

In this section, we will discuss about the settings which are needed for testing in CRO.

Know your Testing Technology

Any website testing is not a complex process. It is simply creating different versions of your webpages. Show them to your visitors and track which one gives you better results. Presenting your audience with the desired page gives you massive gains. To get your test running, you need a testing tool that will drop cookies on your visitors machine. These cookies let you trace what percentage of visitors take action and on which variant of your webpage.

Test Types

There are different types of tests you can run. All are suited for a specific purpose. Though you can run multiple tests on one problem, duplication is more likely. Here we'll be discussing four major tests.

- **A/B Testing –** It is commonly used with two or more variants. We compare two variants to see which one is performing better. Here, two webpages are shown to same visitors and a trace is to be measured about which one gives more conversion. A/B Testing when done consistently can make a huge difference in conversion rates.

  All you need is to do controlled tests and gather empirical data. Almost anything can be tested using A/B Testing methods, headlines, testimonials, actionables, call-to-action buttons, images, links, etc. It needs patience and time, yet it yields fruitful results.

- **MVT Testing (Multivariate Testing) –** It is a technique to draw the best out of combinations of 'changeables' to determine which one performs better. Let us clarify it further in detail.

  When you are performing an MVT test, you test combinations of elements inside one webpage to see how they interact with one another and which combination is best suited for a better user experience. Whereas in A/B Testing you test them on different webpages.

- **Split Path Testing –** It splits the traffic into different linear paths containing multiple webpages. Instead of showing variations within or out of a single webpage, it shows different paths.

  For example, if you are an ecommerce company and you are optimizing conversions using this method you may follow a six step check-out process or four steps or just three.

  Using this split-path testing, you test which among the three gives a desired conversion result. It can be considered while testing checkout paths, multi-page forms, and product recommendation tab. Split-path testing may not be an easy job because you are testing paths consisting of multiple pages. The threat that occurs is people do not tend to surf in a linear way. The site navigation is not always linear. This may hamper your optimization results.

  Besides these flaws, it is an innovative test that raises an opportunity for higher lift in conversion numbers.

- **Site-wide Testing –** This is a special testing that proves to be useful while testing the design and the layout elements throughout the website. It is usually done to test the product description page. You may test by swapping columns left and right. You may change the placement of image, where the product description would stay, etc.

  You need to alter all the wizards to be changed throughout the website. Site-wide test is best when you want to try a different order of links in your navigation or new product detail page layout throughout the site. The results would definitely be immense if done systematically and you will be able to maintain the consistency of visitors on your website.

Testing Tools

The market is flooded with various testing tools. You need to pick the best ones which are suitable for your business. Keep in mind the technology and features of those tools. The cost is to be decided by you completely and of course it should be flexible enough to adapt to different testable variants.

The following tools and more if used with right strategy, will lead you far beyond conversion goals and maximize ROI (Return On Investment).

A/B Split Testing

A/B Testing lets you test different variants of your webpage. You can determine which is better when it comes to user experience. It sounds simple but it certainly drives you beyond conversion goals and maximizes the ROI.

Some of these A/B Testing tools are as follows:

- Unbounce
- VWO
- Five second test
- Google Analytics experiments
- Convert experiments
- Maxymiser
- KISSmetrics
- A/Bingo
- Adobe target
- AB Tasty

Analytics

It is a great tool to provide you Analytics track and reports on day-to-day happening details of your website. Analytics tools like Google Analytics, kissmetrics, Mixpanel, etc. inform you about traffic sources, user behavior, bounce and exit rates, cohort analysis, goal tracking, best performing keywords, segmentation, etc. It lets you track minute things, which were going unnoticed making things easier for you. You can decide what to keep and what to erase.

Though most people feel Google Analytics is sufficient. Yet there are plenty to save your business. Some of these are –

- Google Analytics
- Google website optimizer
- Openweb analytics
- Pwik
- Site meter
- Stat counter
- KISSMetrics
- Mixpanel
- Segment.io
- Chartbeat
- Clicky
- RJ Metrics
- Woopra

Surveys

Analytics masters giving insights but users can themselves help you with their requirements. Surveys are best tools to know a user's need and their experience. Feedback is immensely important to work for the betterment of your product.

Though open-ended questions are the basic means of carrying user surveys, you can also try your luck by A/B Split Testing that can be done by running page level survey on the main and test pages.

You can conduct surveys by using any one of the following tools –

- Qualaroo
- Survey Monkey
- SurveyGizmo
- PollDaddy
- Survey.io

User Testing

There are times when users cannot evaluate their problem. User testing softwares are the answer to this problem. They educate you how the user interacts with your website.

You need to figure-out what is appealing to users, where they click, what they look at?

For this **HeatMapping** and **trackClick Density** performs very well. They help you in articulating hypothesis for testing. Apart from these two, you can also use the following tools for testing:

- CrazyEgg
- Click Tale
- Cage
- Loop11

Concept Testing Tools

These tools allow you to wireframe your website. You can create diagrams, flowchart, sitemap, etc. for a clear picture of the website and to find out the trouble spots.

- Balsamiq
- Cacoo
- Browsershots

13. CRO - Measuring Results

In this chapter, we will be discussing on how to measure the results and simplify statistics of the testing done on the website.

Understanding Statistics

Researchers may or may not understand statistics. But, A/B Testing tool proves to be a savior by simplifying those statistics. So a lot of calculation can be avoided. Most of the testing tools are consistent in using a 95% criteria as a successful goal completion.

That means out of 10 you are a winner by 9. Let us take an example. Your testing tool report is as follows:

Variations	Conversion rate
Control page	1.91%
1	2.39%
2	2.16%
3	3.10%

This report predicts a more or less .20% conversion rate variance at the 95% interval. Statistically, the goal range is between 1.76 and 2.06.

Fetching Insights

While planning a test I keep two goals in mind. First, is boosting revenue and the other is fetching insights about what prompted a higher ROI.

For instance, in a case study we get diverting traffic to product page rather than category page or homepage improves conversion rates or not. We took three variations, in one we directed traffic on the homepage loaded with categories and subcategories directing further to the product page. In the second, we directed traffic to category page adding filters. In the third, we directed it directly on the product detail page with buy button.

To my surprise, the third variation won. This is just the information required by a buyer about the product. This lets us learn how conversion rate lift and continuous improvements can make us grow our leads.

Undoubtedly, adding many variations and insights over tests gave us the website redesign.

Understanding Results

Let me clear it out. NOT ALL TESTS WIN. Yes, it is painful yet true.

There are tests that gives you results in flying colors. There are others that after so many tries too would be without a result. But if you plan a test with an insight driving segmentation, you can have a new hypothesis to be tested on. Not all test helps you to improve revenue.

Take an example to understand. There are three campaigns with different conversion rates.

Campaign A	8.2%
Campaign B	19.1%
Campaign C	5.2%

Anyone will blindly say 'Campaign B' is a super performer. But let us dig some more.

	Visits	Transactions	Conversion Rate
Campaign A	1820	150	8.2%
Campaign B	20	4	19.1%
Campaign C	780	41	5.2%

See closely, 'Campaign B' is too small to be statistically significant. Campaign B with 1 transaction with one visit will give 100 percent conversion rate. 'Campaign A' performs over 'Campaign C'. While concluding results, there are several factors that need to be looked at and it may differ every time. It is you who need to look at all insights and decide the results.

Being a marketing champion, needs a well-laid strategy, planned tests, great gut feeling, calculations and lot of efforts put in the right direction.

Following are some pointers which will be helpful in becoming a successful optimizer.

- Learn from your mentors. See how they are incentivized. How they reached their goals.

- Hypothesize first and then test.

- Test on qualitative data.

- Learn from real customers. Record their feedback. What is frustrating about your product. Learn from case studies. Hire a professional, probably a consultant, who can help you make better decisions.

- Involve other departments of your company. Keep in mind, as many people as many brains. All others can help in your test.

- The main result should be revenue not just increase in numbers.

- Be a leader. Learn more. Grow your networks.

- Don't give up and don't get agitated over non-resulting tests as I already said not all tests win. Don't get disappointed. Try again with new data.

Optimization is strategic and cyclical, but there is always a room for improvement. You are never done testing. Intuition and gut feeling works but till a limit. Testing with zeal and plan will certainly yield good results. Conversion optimization sets the ball rolling by acquiring more customers in a shorter span of time without spending on marketing.

You are a conversion rate optimization expert now. You have tools to argue your case and knowledge to go right.