



Mixergy

Action Worksheet: How to Get Your First 927 Customers

Introduction

Josh Ledgard knew he would have to abandon his landing page business if he didn't get more clients, so he closed his first 927 clients, grew that number to 5,000, and helped them generate 250,000 leads for their own businesses. It was all done by finding the first 927 customers and growing from there, so we invited him to teach you how to do it.

"Most entrepreneurs aren't going to get on TechCrunch on day one," says Josh. "Forget about 10,000 customers, and focus on the first 100. Then focus on the first 1,000."

Josh is the co-founder of KickoffLabs, which helps businesses get customers through landing pages. This Action Worksheet is based on his Mixergy course.

Tactic 1. Bounce ideas off target customers to make sure they want your product

Josh thought he could build landing pages for small businesses on Craigslist, but most of them said they weren't interested or wanted full-scale websites instead. He realized that you can't sell a bicycle to a fish and that he was going after the wrong market.

He eventually found the right market to pursue using this three-step process:

1. Create a list of prospects to contact
2. Contact prospects to see if they want and are willing to pay for your product or service
3. Assess your data and either move forward or repeat with other types of prospects or another type of product

Let's get started!

Step 1: Create a List of Prospects to Contact

Josh started by looking for small business owners advertising their services on Craigslist. He then contacted them individually.

So, the first step is to find prospects to contact. To do this, find a site where your customers hang out. This might be Craigslist, or it may be a forum frequented by people in your industry.

Next, look through recent postings from people looking for help in your field, and make a list of prospects you can contact.

Action Worksheet: List of Prospects

Prospects	Phone Number or Email Address
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Step 2: Contact Prospects to See If They Want and Are Willing to Pay for Your Product or Service

Next, Josh contacted those prospects to see if they wanted him to build a landing page for their business, and whether they'd pay him to do that.

To do this step, contact your list of prospects and ask them whether they want your product or service, and verify that they are willing to pay for your product or service.

For each prospect, note whether they want your product and what they'd be willing to pay for it.

Action Worksheet: Record Feedback From Prospects

Prospects	Do They Want Your Product?	What Will They Pay For It?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Step 3: Assess Your Data and Either Move Forward or Repeat with Other Types of Prospects or Another Type of Product

After Josh talked to the small business prospects he found on Craigslist, he concluded that most of them wanted a full website, not just a landing page. He then repeated this prospect interview process until he found a set of prospects that wanted and valued the landing pages that his product would deliver.

If you have a market, great! You can proceed to build your product for those prospects.

If not, repeat this process either with the same product and other types of prospects, or a different product and the same type of prospects. Rinse and repeat until you find a set of prospects that want and value your product.

Tactic 2. Participate in Q&A sites to prove your authority to prospects

Josh started by answering user questions about landing pages on the Q&A site Quora, and when Quora users started to see him as an authority, they became customers. "I am still one of the top answerers in [Quora]," he says. "At this point about 15-20% of our upgrades come from these niche communities." Start small and establish yourself as an expert.

Josh became recognized as an expert by taking these three steps:

1. Figure out where your prospects go to get answers
2. Write your signature
3. Answer user questions

Step 1: Figure Out Where Your Prospects Go to Get Answers

Josh began by looking for sites where users discuss landing pages and have conversations, and one of the most active ones was Quora, so he opened a Quora account.

To do this step, figure out where your prospects are having discussions, whether it's business forums or niche communities, then set up accounts on those sites if you aren't already a member.

Use Google to search for discussions related to your product or service. Make a list of the top three sites with the most active users.

Action Worksheet: The Most Active Forums in Your Niche

1
2
3

Step 2: Write a Signature

Josh included this signature in his answers on Quora: "Josh, Founder of KickoffLabs.com, We Make Stunning Landing Pages".

To do this, write a signature with your name, URL, and a short description about what your company does.

For your signature, use a simple formula like Josh's.

Action Worksheet: Create Your Signature

Your Name: _____

URL: _____

What Your Company Does: _____

Then use this formula:

[Your Name], founder of [Company Name], [What Your Company Does]

Step 3: Answer User Questions

Next, Josh searched for open questions on Quora using the key phrase “landing pages” and started answering questions.

So, find keywords related to your product or service and search for open questions tagged with those keywords. Spend 1-2 hours a week answering questions posted by users.

Make a list of five keywords to track.

Action Worksheet: Identify Keywords

1
2
3
4
5

Tactic 3. Ask customers for quotes so you can show social proof

Josh asked his first few customers for quotes about what they liked about his product, and when he put their quotes on his homepage, his conversion rate jumped from 2% to 7%. “No one wants to feel like they're the guinea pig,” he says.

Josh provided social proof with this three-step process:

1. Ask customers for testimonials
2. Put the best quotes on your homepage
3. Start a running list of customer quotes

Let's do it!

Step 1: Ask customers for testimonials

To get testimonials, Josh contacted his early customers and said, “Hey, if you like our service, can you give me a quote?”

To do this, contact your first customers and say, “Hey, do you like the product? Would you be willing to say something about it to our potential customers?”

For each customer, write down positive statements they make about your product or service.

Action Worksheet: Collect Customer Testimonials

Customer Name	Business Name	Testimonial
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Step 2: Put the best quotes on your homepage

"The instant we [put five quotes] on the homepage," says Josh, "We went from...a 2-3% conversion rate to a 7-8% conversion rate."

Look at your list from step one and select the five best quotes to put on your homepage.

Write down the top five quotes as they'll appear on your homepage.

Action Worksheet: Top Five Quotes

Use the following formula to structure your testimonials:

“[Testimonial]” —[Customer Name], [Company]

Now write down your five best testimonials:

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Step 3: Start a running list of customer quotes

“We have a document with hundreds of customer quotes that we can use for whatever campaign we need,” says Josh.

“So if I have somebody who's making a landing page about musicians, I have a quote about that now.” Eventually you'll have a library of quotes, and if you get into other verticals, you'll already have social proof.

Create a spreadsheet where you can record every testimonial you collect.

Record testimonials and the vertical, or specific category, for each.

Action Worksheet: Start a Library of Testimonials

Customer Name	Business Name	Testimonial	Vertical
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Tactic 4. Comment where your customers read so you can reach more prospects

Josh learned that his customers read TechCrunch, so he commented on stories there, and he got five new customers as a result of one comment. When you're small and you don't have a huge audience yet, leverage someone else's audience to get more users, more customers, and reviews.

Josh used comments to get customers with this three-step process:

1. Ask your customers which blogs they read
2. Write comments on articles and blog posts
3. Track referrals

Now it's your turn!

Step 1: Ask Your Customers Which Blogs They Read

Josh talked to his customers and learned that a lot of them hung out on TechCrunch, so he started leaving comments on TechCrunch stories. "Just one or two," he says. "It's not a huge time investment."

So, talk to your first customers and ask them which blogs they're reading.

As you talk to your customers, make a list of the blogs they mention and how many of them read each blog.

Action Worksheet: The Blogs Your Customers Read

Blog	# of Customers Who Read It
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Step 2: Write Comments on Articles and Blog Posts

Next, Josh spent a couple of hours each week leaving comments on TechCrunch articles.

To do this, pick the most popular sites from step one — the ones the majority of your customers read — and spend 1-2 hours per week leaving comments.

Write down three blogs on which you'll post comments.

Action Worksheet: The Top Blogs Customers Read

1
2
3

Step 3: Track referrals

One of Josh's comments resulted in five or six paying customers. He says, "We're looking at referrals and measuring things constantly, which...I think is really important for people to do."

Do this by tracking your results with a tracking service like Google Analytics and creating a Goal you can match to conversions.

Check off each step as you complete it.

Action Worksheet: Track Your Results Checklist

	Add tracking to your site with an tracking service like Google Analytics.
	Define a Goal in your tracking service account (here's how for Google Analytics).
	Tag your post-purchase "thank you page" with that Goal (here's how for Google Analytics).
	Match referral traffic from that blog to conversions tagged with your Goal.

Tactic 5. Have experts tweet about you so you can reach interested Twitter users

Josh followed Twitter users who wrote about landing pages and startups and who had 10,000+ followers, and he asked them to review his product and tweet about it. In the early days, when you probably don't have any followers, use Twitter to figure out who's out there and who's already talking to your customers. Join the conversation and leverage other peoples' audiences to build your own.

Josh used Twitter to reach customers with this three-step process:

1. Start following topics on Twitter relevant to your product
2. Identify Twitter users in your field who have large followings
3. Ask influential people to review your product

Let's get started!

Step 1. Start Following Topics on Twitter Relevant to Your Product

For KickoffLabs, Josh followed tweets that included keywords like "landing pages", "startups", and "marketing".

To do this, use a third-party tool like TweetDeck to follow tweets that include keywords related to your product or service.

Make a list of five keywords or hashtags to follow.

Action Worksheet: Identify Keywords or Hashtags

1
2
3
4
5

Step 2. Identify Twitter Users in Your Field Who Have Large Followings

Next, Josh noted which people were mentioned most often in tweets about landing pages, startups, and marketing.

To do this, make list of the top people (those with 10,000-50,000 followers) mentioned in tweets that contain your keywords.

Write down the names of the most influential people in your niche.

Action Worksheet: Identifying the Top Influencers

Name	# of Followers
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Step 3. Ask Influential People To Review Your Product

After Josh identified the influential users, he sent them a short message that said, “Hey, would you try out our service and tweet about what you think?” Because he contacted people with a large audience, there were a lot of re-tweets when they posted their reviews.

Narrow down your list to the five most influential users, and send them a short note asking them to review your product or service and tweet their opinion.

Identify the top five people in your niche, find their contact information, and ask them to review your product or service.

Action Worksheet: Contact the Top Influencers

Name	Website	Email
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Tactic 6. Offer incentives so people will agree to sign up

Josh says that one website offered visitors a spot on the waiting list if they entered their email address, then additional rewards for every friend they could get to sign up. “They staged their rewards to kind of pull people through,” he says.

Josh used incentives to get sign-ups with this two-step process:

1. Find or create a reward to offer to people who sign up
2. Reward users who spread the word

Now it's your turn!

Step 1: Find or Create a Reward to Offer to People Who Sign Up

Josh says, “What do you have to offer? You may not have a product, some of our customers have products, some of them don't, but you could offer a newsletter or a cheat sheet. You can sell your information.”

To get started, brainstorm several rewards, bribes, and offerings that will provide incentive for customers to give you their email address. Examples include ebooks, newsletters, raffle tickets for a prize, priority on a waiting list for a new release, and invitations to exclusive events.

List five ideas for giveaways that you could use to bribe prospects.

Action Worksheet: Brainstorm Rewards

1
2
3
4
5

Step 2: Reward Users Who Spread the Word

In the example of the waiting list, once a user entered their email address, they were offered bonuses in the welcome email: enter three email addresses of people who might be interested and you'll be one of the first 2,000 people to get an invite, enter 10 addresses and get a t-shirt, and so on. Give people incentive to spread the word.

To do this, ask users to enter their email address in exchange for a reward. In the welcome email, offer additional rewards for every friend they refer or for each person they get to sign up.

Make a list of rewards you can offer for referrals.

Action Worksheet: Brainstorm Referral Rewards

1
2
3
4
5

Tactic 7. Show gratitude to your customers so they'll promote you to others

Josh called a customer and thanked him for his business, and the customer later promoted KickoffLabs to other startups, resulting in 30 new customers.

Josh showed his gratitude with this two-step process:

1. Contact customers to thank them and ask what they like about your product or service
2. Ask how you can help them

Step 1. Contact Customers to Thank Them and Get Feedback

"When you're just starting out and have those first couple hundred users, I recommend reaching out personally to them with an email or a phone call and seeing what they like about the product," says Josh.

To do this, call or email each customer to thank them and ask what they like about the product or service and how you can make it more useful.

Note any positive feedback from customers during your phone calls.

Action Worksheet: Positive Feedback

Name	What They Like about Your Product or Service

Step 2. Ask How You Can Help Them

Josh told customers, “If there's anything I can do to help, let us know.”

After thanking customers and asking what they like about your product or service, ask how you can help them or how you can make your product more useful for them.

Note suggestions for improvement from customers during each phone call.

Action Worksheet: Suggestions for Improvement

Name	Suggestions for Improvement

Tactic 8. Make it easy to contact support so customers will trust you

Josh displays a phone number and a feedback button on his support page and doesn't send any emails from do-not-reply addresses, and this strategy works so well that he convinced the company UserVoice to do the same thing. Be accessible, especially at first.

Josh made himself accessible with this two-step process:

1. Put support phone numbers and email addresses in a prominent place on your website
2. Allow customers to reply to all emails

Ready to get started?

Step 1: Put Support Phone Numbers and Email Addresses in a Prominent Place on your Website

"Making somebody feel like they'll be supported along the way is extremely important," says Josh. "So, that's why we have the phone number, that's why I have the big 'giant help and feedback' button, and it's worked out really well for us."

To do this, place your contact information prominently on your website and encourage people to email you.

List the contact information you'll put on your site.

Action Worksheet: Help and Feedback

Email Address(es)	
Phone Number(s)	
Twitter	

Step 2: Allow Customers to Reply to All Emails

"There's no tactical reason why anybody has to [use] a no-reply email address," says Josh. Allow people to hit "reply", and encourage them to do so.

So, instead of using a do-not-reply email, direct customer replies to a support address, and end your emails by telling recipients you'd love to hear from them.

Check off each step as you complete it.

Action Worksheet: Changing the Reply-To Field

	Do an audit and find all the emails that you regularly send to customers.
	Write down the Reply-To field for each existing email.
	Figure out the correct support email address each email should "reply to".
	Change each Reply-To to the appropriate email address.

Tactic 9. Exploit competitors' weaknesses to win over their customers

Josh learned people were dissatisfied that a competitor had trouble supporting its volume of customers, so he highlighted those differences when explaining how KickoffLabs differed from the competition. Figure out what makes your company different.

Josh set his company apart with this three-step process:

1. Set up Google Alerts on your competitors
2. Use Twitter searches to see what people are saying about competitors
3. Emphasize what makes you better than the competition

Let's do it!

Step 1: Set up Google Alerts on Your Competitors

Josh uses alerts to keep up with important blog posts or articles written about his competition.

So, go to [google.com/alerts](https://www.google.com/alerts), create search queries for each of your competitors, and use those articles, posts, and discussions to figure out what sets your product or service apart.

As you get alerts, note the ways you differ from the competition.

Action Worksheet: Follow Competitors with Google Alerts

Competitor	How You're Different

Step 2: Use Twitter Searches to See What People are Saying about Competitors

Next, Josh setups alerts for tweets that mentioned their competitors to see what their prospects and customers were saying. "I think people are just super friendly sometimes and don't want to go near the competition's customers, but I think it's prudent for anybody to set up alerts," says Josh.

To do this, use TweetDeck to follow tweets that include your competitors' names.

As you get alerts, make a note of tweets that highlight your competitors' shortcomings.

Action Worksheet: Twitter Alerts About Competitors

Competitor	Shortcomings

Step 3: Emphasize What Makes You Better Than the Competition

After setting up alerts Josh learned that one of his competitors, who offers a free solution, was having problems supporting their large volume of customers. Josh highlighted that his company offered support and customer help, even if that meant less customers.

As you start recording the points of difference in steps one and two, you'll be able to identify trends like, my competitors are good at "X" but not so good at "Y". Find a way to deliver Y and highlight it in your marketing materials.

Look at your Action Worksheets from steps one and two and write down the things your competitors aren't delivering and ways you can offer it.

Action Worksheet: Spotting Gaps in Your Market

Things Competitors Aren't Providing	Ways to Offer It
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Tactic 10. Build crazy things to win free publicity and get new customers

Josh made a mock Pets.com landing page as a joke and shared it with some journalists on Twitter, and the stunt led to one of them writing a story about KickoffLabs that drove website traffic and brought in new customers. A quick joke or crazy idea can help get your name out there.

Josh used a crazy idea to get publicity with this three-step process:

1. Follow conversations reporters are having on Twitter
2. Create a crazy idea around a hot topic or trend
3. Inject yourself in the conversation

Now it's your turn!

Step 1: Follow Conversations Reporters are Having on Twitter

Josh followed members of the media and saw two reporters going back and forth on Twitter. Josh says, "They were saying, 'Hey, helping startups is a sure sign that the bubble is coming, and before we know it Pets.com is going to come back as Pets.com Version 2.'"

So, pay attention to which reporters cover stories related to your niche, and start following them on Twitter. One way to do this is to look at who's writing the news articles that Google Alerts sends you (from Tactic 9, Step 1).

Start a list of reporters writing about topics related to your product or service and follow them on Twitter.

Action Worksheet: Reporters to Follow on Twitter

Reporter Name	Topics They're Writing About
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Step 2: Create a Crazy Idea Around a Hot Topic or Trend

Next, Josh took 10 minutes to build a mock landing page for Pets.com Version 2. "Most of that was just coming up with the copy and quickly finding the images that I wanted to put on the page," he says.

To do this, pay attention to what reporters are tweeting about and think about how you can riff off of those topics and conversations.

Note hot topics or trends in tweets by the media, then brainstorm a crazy idea for each. If you come up with a winning idea, create it!

Action Worksheet: Hot Topics and Crazy Ideas

Hot Topic/Trend/Conversation	Crazy Idea
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Step 3: Inject Yourself in the Conversation

Finally, Josh injected himself in the Twitter conversation between the two reporters and presented his mock landing page. He tweeted, "You mean like this?" They got a kick out of it, and he followed up by tweeting, "I'll sell this to you for a valuation, about \$1 million. If you're interested, you can own the domain and have the landing page for Pets.com 2."

Once you've created your crazy idea, tweet about it in conversations between members of the media.

Check off each step as you complete it.

Action Worksheet: Inject Yourself into the Conversation

	Look at your Twitter alerts to find the conversations relevant to your crazy idea.
	Tweet a short reply with a link to your crazy idea. (Don't tweet a sales pitch.)
	Acknowledge any tweets responding to yours to contribute to the conversation.

Tactic 11. Act like a movement so people will want to help you grow

Josh likes how Andrew opens Mixergy interviews by saying, "Hey, freedom fighters" because it helps subscribers identify themselves as the "freedom fighters" and feel like they're part of a movement of entrepreneurs. People like to be part of something bigger than themselves.

Frame your business as a movement that is improving your field or as a community of people who share a purpose.

Josh created a movement with this three-step process:

1. Base a movement on shared goals
2. Reward your fans
3. Share the progress

Now it's your turn!

Step 1: Base a Movement on Shared Goals

Josh says that when Andrew addresses the Mixergy audience as “freedom fighters” it makes them feel like they’re a group of people fighting for shared goals.

To do this, talk to your customers to learn about their goals, then base your movement on the most popular goal they share.

Make a list of the goals they mention and the number of customers who share it.

Action Worksheet: Shared Goals

Goals	# of Customers Who Share It
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

Step 2: Reward Your Fans

Next, Josh says to offer an incentive to get others to join the movement, like a month of free service for each person your customer refers.

So, offer something valuable to give your customers incentive to get others to join.

Brainstorm ideas for rewards, then select the most appropriate one.

Action Worksheet: Brainstorm Rewards

1	6
2	7
3	8
4	9
5	10

Step 3: Share the Progress

Josh puts a counter on his website to show people how close he is to reaching the goal, which gets customers even more involved in the movement.

To do this, use a counter or a progress bar on your website.

If you use WordPress, you can use the WordPress plugin Progress Bar (or have a similar progress bar programmed). Here’s a checklist for installing the Progress Bar plugin:

Action Worksheet: Install Progress Bar

	Download Progress Bar here .
	Activate and install the Progress Bar plugin from Plugins page.
	Configure the plugin so it shows your goal and your progress towards the goal
	Regularly update your progress towards that goal.