The Smart Guide
To Email Marketing
Conversion

What's in the ebook?

Email marketing evolved. That's what this guide is all about. It's how smart marketers are combining email campaigns with targeted landing pages to increase their conversions.

As we'll learn, the crux of effective email marketing is based on the principle of sharing, not selling. You do this by leveraging your expertise through content marketing.

- **Why Email Marketing Loves Landing Pages**
- **Growing Your Subscriber List The Smart Way**
- **Building Mindshare With Great Content**
- **Converting Your Subscribers Into Customers**

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The Smart Guide To Email Marketing Conversion

Ever Experienced Click Fear?

Email marketing is the most effective, yet terrifying marketing tool at your disposal. Why? Because once you hit that send button to push your message to hundreds or thousands of people, any mistakes you've made will live permanently in the inbox of your leads and customers.

Email Marketing, Evolved.

There's a better way to do email marketing; one that's designed to improve your conversion rates, and at the same time simplify your emails. Instead of exhaustive, long email content with too much detail and too many links, you can create a short, easy-to-read email with a single **action to perform**.

This action is to **send your reader to a targeted landing page**, where you have the space to really tell your campaign's story. As you'll learn, the real crux of effective email marketing is based on the principle of sharing, not selling. You do this by leveraging your expertise through content marketing.

Welcome to higher conversions.

Some Email Marketing Stats to Really Convince you.

There have been many reports that email Open Rates have increased in the last 4 years; However Click-Through-Rates are down considerably according to [this study of 80 billion emails](). This is especially true for promotionally driven email campaigns. Interestingly, when you compare promotional marketing emails to editorial driven emails (ebooks, whitepapers, case studies, blog posts), there's a clear winner.

Q3 '12 - Campaign Performance by Message Type			
Message Type	**Open Rate**	**Click Rate**	**CTOR**
Acquisition	14%	1.3%	9.5%
Editorial	**32.7%**	**8.3%**	**25.3**
Marketing	**21.8%**	**2.9%**	**13.3%**
Other	20.4%	2.8%	13.5%
Research	24.7%	3.8%	15.5%
Service	49.7%	7.6%	15.2%

*CTOR (Click to Open Rate) represents the CTR for those who opened the email.

Acquisition: Emails with little to no pre-existing relationship

Editorial: Emails which include content that provides value to the reader

Marketing: Promotional emails to drive a purchase or lead

Other: Emails which don't fit into the other categories

Research: Emails sent to gather opinions via surveys

Service: Transactional emails ie. sign-up, an order, or some other recent action

Why Email Marketing
Loves Landing Pages

Email and landing pages aren't a new concept, just an underutilized one. This relationship is getting better as marketers become smarter. Learning the importance of optimizing your campaigns for higher conversion rates is not only about improving open rates and click-through rates - it's about fine tuning what happens after people leave your email and thus impacts the overall success of your campaign.

The goal of your email marketing campaign should focus on getting your prospects out of their inbox and into your house. Your landing page acts like your house's welcome mat. It should establish a sense that a 'good click' has been made, and that they're in good hands with your business.

Your landing page should be designed to achieve the following:

1. **Concise Email Copy:** By moving content to the landing page, you allow your emails to be shorter, and tightly focused on a single, easily digestible objective.
2. **Message Match:** Reaffirming your email's call-to-action (CTA) by closely mirroring it with your landing page headline reduces confusion and will keep more people from leaving.
3. **Expand Your Message:** Your landing page lets you provide the detail required to warm and qualify relevance before you send them on to the next stage in your conversion process. Here you have the opportunity to include enhanced design, media (like video) and use trust factors (like testimonials).
4. **Test:** By performing landing page tests with your email subscribers, you can optimize their experience and more importantly, begin the process of better understanding your customers goals and needs.

In this guide, we'll cover the following topics to help you become a smarter marketer:

Part I - Growing Your Subscriber List the Smart Way

1. Create incentive with free quality content
2. Set up a list with your email service provider (ESP)
3. Build a high-converting landing page for your content
4. Drive traffic to your landing page
5. A/B test your landing page for better results

Part II - Building Mindshare With Great Content

1. Segment your subscribers
2. Style your email copy
3. Leverage evergreen content

Part III - Converting Your Subscribers to Customers

1. Add a CTA in the footer of your email suggesting they try a demo of your product/service

2. Add a trial or demo link in your ebook content
3. Use the welcome email after someone has download content to offer a demo
4. Co-author your content with a complimentary company to gain exposure to their list
5. Set up an autoresponder to be emailed out 2-3 weeks following a download
6. Follow up after webinar
7. Run a 15 minute demo at end of a webinar
8. Contact customers that don't complete your ideal set of activation steps
9. Email people throughout their trial with examples of what existing customers have done
10. Ask customers nearing the free-trial end date if there's anything you can personally do to help or if they'd like a trial extension

What does the process look like?

To get started, here's a diagram that explains the basic workflow that we're going to discuss through the ebook. As you can see it's a process that get repeated every time you do a new

Set Up List

REPEAT

Add To List + Groups 5

1 Create Content

Master List

Group 1   Group 2   Group 3

Gather Leads 4

2 Create Landing Page

3 Drive Traffic
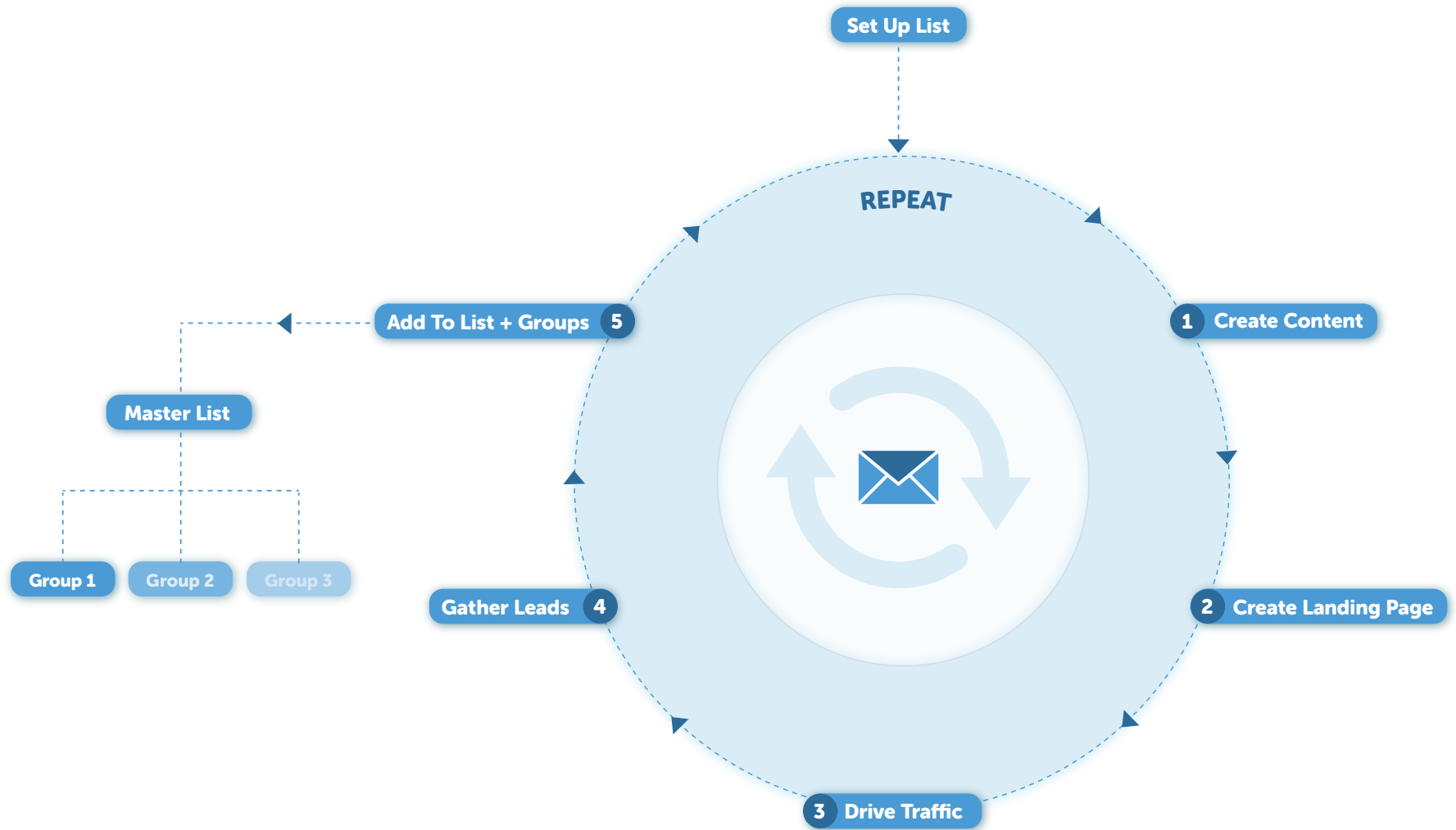
Part I - Growing Your Subscriber List the Smart Way

What value does email marketing have if you don't have anyone to market to? This section is all about how you can grow your subscriber list so that you have **highly qualified**, information seeking subscribers.

1. Create incentive with free quality content

Creating valuable and educational content about your area of expertise is a great way to engage your prospective customers, and is the cornerstone of Content Marketing.

Though we won't tell you which type of content to produce, here are some popular ways companies produce content to build their subscriber list:

- **Informative Content:** You may want to give away an ebook, distribute a whitepaper or case study to educate prospects about your area of expertise.
- **Informative & Continuous Content:** Some companies produce content for a blog, a useful or educational newsletter or an ongoing ecourse which teaches some of value.

- **Invitations to Live Events:** Live webinars, Conferences, Workshops and 'Meet & Greets' are all great ways to build your list using content.

For further detail on producing these types of content read "Creating Content" from the Content Marketing Institute.

2. Set up a list with your email service provider (ESP)

Now that you have the content you're going to use as an incentive, you'll need to set up an email list with your ESP where you'll manage the subscriber data you receive.

Your signup process will depend on the type of content you create, but here are some important considerations for your email list settings:

- **Will you require double opt-in?**
  Typically when you use a double opt-in mechanism (provided by most ESPs), you'll enjoy a higher engagement rate, but some argue that it deters subscriptions.
- **Will you be using a Welcome/Confirmation email?**
  Welcome emails can be used to ensure that the purpose of your list is clear to new subscribers. As with double opt-ins, this can help mitigate spam reports and ensure your subscribers really want to be subscribed.
- **Will you be adding subscribers to a "group" based on the content?**
  Many ESPs provide grouping or tagging features which allow you to segment your list based on a subscriber's activity or communication preferences. If you assign your new subscribers to a group based on the content they are requesting, later you can send relevant emails based on this group or tag.

- **Will you use an Autoresponder or "Drip" emails to send your content?**
  You may choose to provide your content immediately after registering by redirecting subscribers directly to your content, or you could send your content by email using an autoresponder. Moreover, you may choose to send your 'continuous content' this way over days, weeks or even months.

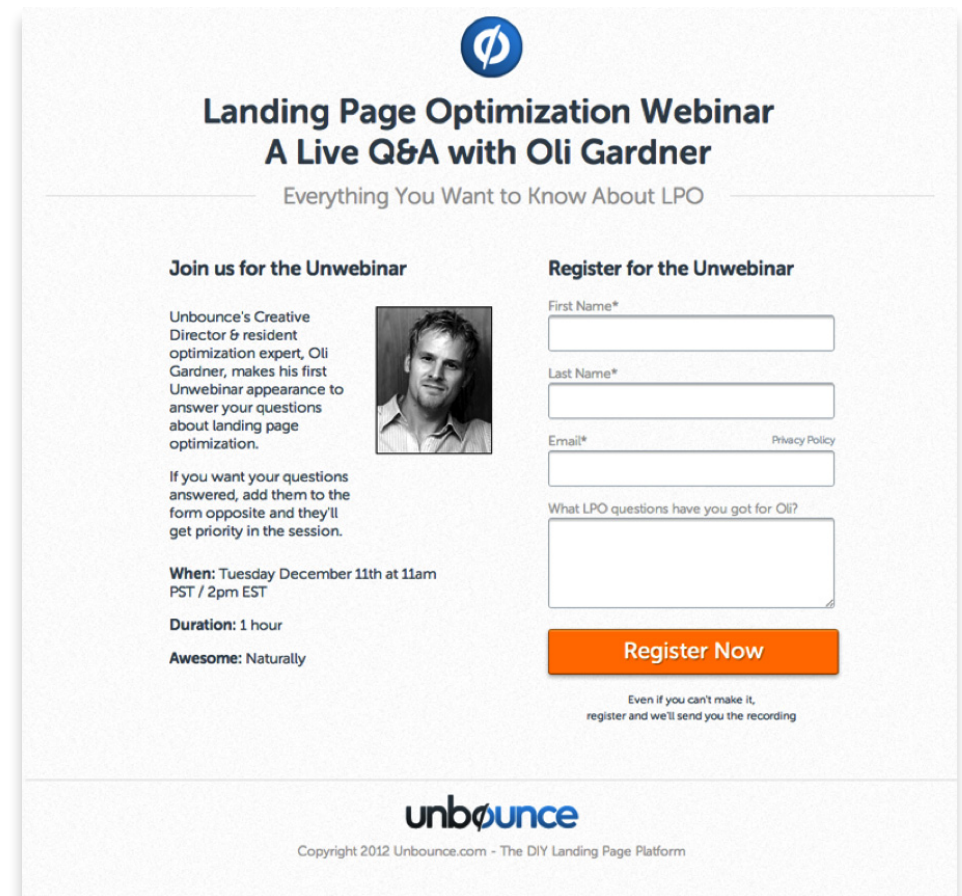## 3. Build a high-converting landing page for your content

Now that your email list is ready to receive subscribers, you're going to need to build a landing page to begin collecting email addresses in exchange for your content.

The goal of this landing page proves that your content is not only worth of an email address, but that your company is trustworthy and an expert in your field. Your landing page conversion goal will be a successful form submission.

Here are some important considerations for your landing page:

Landing page anatomy

Before designing your subscriber acquisition page, you need to understand the page elements to include to achieve your goal. We're going to take a look at two use-cases for landing pages that use different content types to acquire a new lead/subscriber.

An Example of a Webinar Page

To make this type of page successful, you need to add use-case specific elements, all designed to support the desired conversion goal (in this case, to get someone to register for a webinar).

Webinar registration page elements

A successful webinar landing page should have these 11 components:

1. **Descriptive title** that communicates exactly what will be covered in the webinar.
2. **Photo of the hosts/guests,** they should be looking straight ahead to establish a connection with potential registrants.
3. **Short bio** of the presenters that speak to their expertise. This is important for those who have not heard of the presenter before.
4. **Urgency generators** to encourage people to register right away. An example of this is to limit the number of virtual seats, e.g. "Register now as seats are limited to 500". To make this even better, have an updated count of how many seats remain.

5. **Registration count** stating how many people have already registered can create a sense of not wanting to miss out on a popular event. (You would want to wait until you had a fairly high number before using this tactic.)
6. **Ask questions** in advance on your form if you are doing a Q&A portion in the webinar. This can help you structure the session around what people really want to know.
7. **Date and time** of the live webinar, ideally listed in multiple time zones.
8. **How long the webinar will be**, so that people know how much time to set aside for it. Remember that people are busy and on average only about 30% of registrants will show up. Being as transparent as possible will help raise this number.
9. **Strong form header** and **call to action** that explicitly asks people to register for the webinar. Not "sign up" or "submit".

10. **Safety net** statement for those who miss it. It's standard practice to email the recording to all registrants after the event. By stating that they will get it even if they can't make it, you'll increase the number of registrants.

11. **Privacy policy** to enhance trust. This should be placed next to the email form field.

For more details on effective webinar landing pages read "10 Reasons Smart Companies Use Webinars For Lead Gen".

An example ebook download page

Ebook download page elements

A successful ebook download landing page should have these 10 components:

1. **Title** and optional subtitle of your ebook.
2. **Balanced and clear section titles** that state what's in the ebook, and how to get the ebook.
3. **Overview of the benefits** you'll derive from downloading the content.
4. **Breakdown of content** in your ebook - often a list of the main chapters.
5. **Professional imagery** that illustrate what the ebook will look like once downloaded.
6. **Preview** a short portion of the ebook (often chapter 1) - this lets people know the quality of what they are getting. (I know, I know, there's no preview in this example).
7. **Short form** to collect the email. As we'll discuss shortly, you need to ensure that you are asking for an appropriate amount of data (which differs depending on the content you are giving away).
8. **Privacy policy** to enhance trust.
9. **Descriptive call to action** such as "Get the ebook".
10. **Social proof** such as a testimonial from someone who has read and benefited from the book.

As you can see from this example, you can mix the conversion currency by allowing people to 'buy' your ebook in different ways. In this example we provide the option to get the ebook by tweeting about it. This creates a viral feedback loop, where people see your ebook on Twitter and are enticed to click, arriving on this page where you now have the opportunity to gain another lead.

As the primary purpose of your page is to gather emails, you have to weigh the use of a tactic like this. One of the key benefits of this approach is that your campaign can have an extended lifetime by virtue of its circular nature. You could also run an A/B test, so that 50% see just an email form, and the other 50% see both options, allowing you to ensure a steady flow of emails while also seeing a steady flow of social engagement.

For more detail on this concept read the "[pay with a tweet vs. pay with an email case study](#)".

Finalize your landing page

Now that you have architected your page using the components listed above, you need to consider the basic requirements of an optimized landing page to give it the best chance of being successful. The following rules should be applied to every landing page you create:

Message Match
A critical part of your landing page is to match the call-to-action from your inbound source (blog, social media etc.) with the main message (typically the headline) of your landing page. This lets your visitor know they've arrived in the right place and you've delivered on the promise you made when they clicked.

Continuing with the ebook example, an appropriate call-to-action to arrive at this page would be: "Download the Ultimate Guide to Landing Page Optimization ebook". Then upon arrival, they see a headline to match creating the mental connection needed to keep them on the page.
Use Forms to Collect Lead Data

Clearly these pages would be pointless without a form, but there are couple of things you need to know to set them up and make them successful.

1. Get a form set up on your page
To collect an email you need two things: somewhere to store the data (your ESP), and a way to collect the data (your form). You can either use the form code provided by your ESP and manually add it to your landing page, or better yet, connect your email list with your landing page using a remote integration (with Unbounce, you can send leads from any landing page to MailChimp, Campaign Monitor, Constant Contact or Aweber).

Now that your form is connected with your email list, it's time to make the data you're asking for, appropriate for the page's purpose.

2. Balance the "size of the prize"

This concept relates to a fair exchange. Your visitor is giving up their precious personal data, including their email address, so you need to give them something of equal value in return. **This is no time to be greedy.** For an ebook download, all you really need is an email. For a webinar registration you can ask for extra information such as the size of the company, or if you have the need for an extended sales cycle, a phone number may be required.

3. Data validation

It's important to **ensure quality data** for three reasons:

- You don't want your list to be full of bogus data (falsely boosting your numbers)
- To ensure that legitimate people are actually receiving what they are asking for. This is the reason companies often ask for your email twice, to prevent you accidentally typing in something wrong.
- You also want to make sure that an email is correctly formatted for the same reason of correct delivery.

Privacy Policies/Statements

This is an important trust factor. Not many people will click on your privacy policy link, but seeing it will **put them at ease.** There are a couple of ways to achieve this. You can link to a full legal page that explains how you will use their email, or you can add a statement that says that you won't ever spam them. Whichever tactic you choose (both is best) you need to place it right next to the email form field - not at the bottom of the page where people might miss it.

4. Drive people to your landing page

This is where your experience as a marketer gets to shine. Here are the usual suspects for driving traffic to your landing page:

- Social media
- Website placement (end of blog posts, popups)
- Outreach to partner or complementary companies & contacts
- Guest blogging
- Pay-per-click ads

Important note: If your traffic sources are different (your own contact list vs. social vs. paid search vs. guest post) it's a good idea to build a separate landing page for each. This lets you measure the effectiveness of each of your inbound channels.

5. A/B Test your landing page for better results

When you run an A/B test, you compare one page against one or more variations that contain **one major difference in an element** of the control page. After a set amount of time, or visits, you compare the results to how the change affected your results. A/B testing is actually a nickname for a variety of testing that involves single element changes across multiple variations, so it might actually be A/B/C/D testing, but it is still called A/B testing and if you see A/B/n or Split Test that is just a more accurate expression of one control with many variations.

Develop a hypothesis for your test

The first step in any A/B test is to create a hypothesis for what will make the page perform better. There are two very common approaches: one revolves around data, the other involves people.

- **The data approach** uses statistical data like bounce rate, exits, conversion stats, and funnel analysis. Data driven hypothesis use tools like Clicktale, Google Analytics, Omniture, and CrazyEgg.
- **The people approach** employs tools like Qualaroo (formerly KISSinsights) and SilverBack to gather user feedback. These are all about addressing the quality of the experience on your site or specific pages.

Your most effective hypotheses will come from combining both the data and people approach.

Again we'll use the webinar example from earlier to develop our hypothesis.

An example hypothesis

We think that by adding the statement "Even if you can't make it, register anyway and we'll send you the recording" below the form button will increase the number of registrants.

Having established your hypothesis, you're now ready to **build a new version of your page** (based on your hypothesis), which you'll test against your original page.

Build your test variant

Using your hypothesis as your guiding principle, you now need to duplicate your landing page and make the change you think will increase conversions. In this case adding the 'register anyway' statement below the form button.

Run an A/B test & measuring performance

In your test, every visitor will see one version of the page or another, and you'll measure conversions from each set of visitors. A/B tests allow you to test different versions of copy, images, forms etc. against another. Layout choices such as where you place the elements can also be tested, or functionality choices like when and how you show error messages.

The diagram shown demonstrates the workflow of an A/B test with variant B having a conversion rate of 75% vs. 25% for variant A. That's a 300% increase, bam!

VISITORS RANDOMLY DISTRIBUTED

VERSION **A**

VERSION **B**

VERSION **25**

VERSION **75**

VERSION B IS BETTER THAN VERSION A
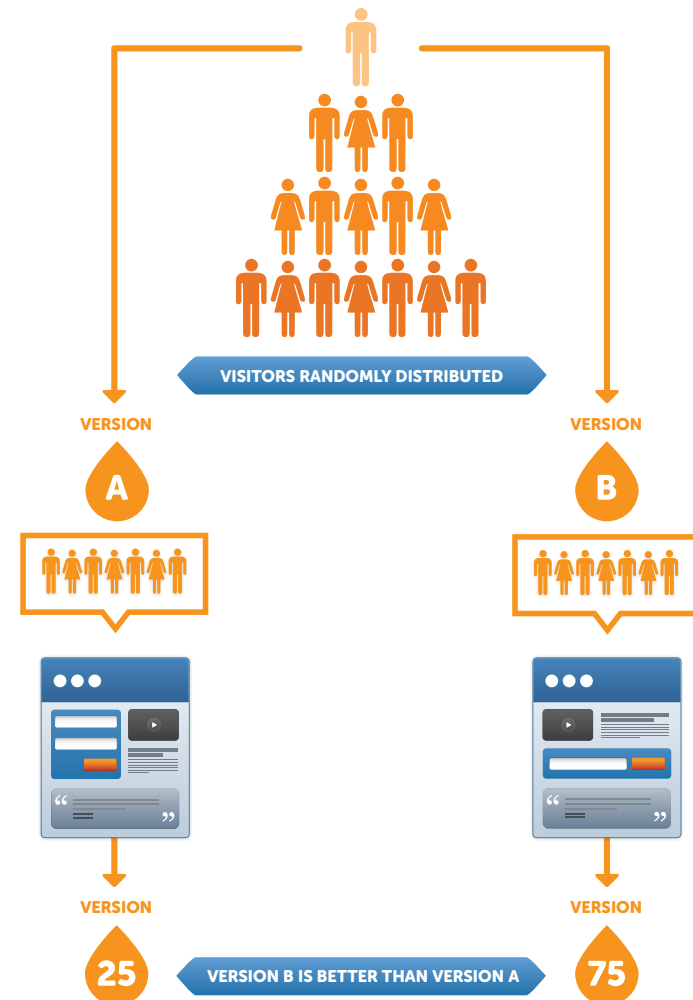
Start a new test

Add, rinse, repeat. It's now time to document your test results and begin work on a new hypothesis for your next test. Remember testing should be an ongoing series of experiments.

For further reading on A/B Testing get "[The Ultimate Guide to A/B Testing](#)".

Part II - Building Mindshare With Great Content

Your ultimate goal is to acquire new customers, but after only receiving one piece of content, your subscribers won't be ready for the hard sell, in fact, they may never be. **They may be purely interested in your content - but this is ok as it can lead to word of mouth recommendations and awareness** creating more potential subscribers and customers in the future.

Continuously producing great content is an effective way to build mindshare in your company. **The more quality content you produce, the more you will be the "go-to company"** for your area of expertise. When it comes time to make a buying decision, you will be front and center.

The point at this stage is to keep your subscribers warm (and in your sphere of influence) until they are ready to become a customer. If they become cold by a lack of attention from you, they are less likely to open your emails, and more likely to unsubscribe from your list.

With that in mind, here are some guidelines for creating your new content:

Segment your subscribers

Whenever someone downloads or registers for something and they are added to your master email list, also add them to a **segment or group relevant to the action they performed**. For example, if they downloaded your "How to Design a Logo" ebook, you would flag them in a "How to Design a Logo ebook" segment. This allows you to segment in the future, so that you can send them another relevant piece of content (and prevent sending them the same thing twice).

By emailing this group a suggestion to download a new ebook called "How to Choose the Right Colors for Your Website", you are helping to establish your reputation as a relevant source of great content. Subscribers who download the second ebook get placed in a second segment. **The more content they consume, the closer they likely are to becoming a customer**, and the more likely they'll be open to viewing a demo of your product or service.

Style your email copy

When writing your email, bear in mind you are building a relationship, **personalize as much possible.**

Using the example above: "Thanks for downloading our ebook 'How To Design a Logo' we thought you'd like our latest one, "'How to Choose The Right Colors for Your Website'".

When you send your email reader to a landing page with a form which asks for an email (which you can use to add them to additional segments of your list), be sure to pre-populate the form -- after all, you already have their email address, **it's just common sense to remove those barriers**.

Keep your email **short and simple with one action to perform**, people don't have time to read long emails when their inbox is stuffed. Make it easy to evaluate if your email is relevant to them.

Leverage evergreen content

Repurposing older or evergreen content to your new subscribers just makes sense. You've got it, and it might be quite relevant to them. Using an autoresponder or drip campaign based on what content of yours they've enjoyed before (which content they downloaded, which webinars they attended etc.) makes it easy to imagine how you can **really get your content working for you.**

Don't stop

The lesson learned here, **Don't stop creating great content...**

Part III - Converting Your Subscribers to Customers

Now that you're collecting new qualified subscribers every day, you may be thinking **"How do I turn them into paying customers?"** This is tough, as content marketing is based on a very soft approach, and you don't want to turn people off by suddenly switching gears in a way that comes across as salesy.

The 10 tactics below are designed to achieve your goal of converting your subscribers into active and happy customers. Take advantage of what you learned in Part II about groups and segmentation, to further segment your email marketing based on customer behaviour and their position in your product or service usage funnel.

1. **Add a Call-to-Action in the footer of your email suggesting they try a demo of your product/service**
    This should go to a landing page where they can either watch a video of your demo, or they could register for a live session webinar with Q&A.

2. **Add a trial or demo link in your ebook content**
    There are a couple of ways to do this. One is to include it in the footer of each page. A more effective way is to dedicate a page at the end of each chapter that suggests trying a demo or signing up for a trial.
    By having a dedicated page, you can include a few benefit statements to encourage people to click.

3. **Use a welcome email after someone has download content to offer a demo**
As soon as someone downloads your content, you should send them an email to thank them. Even if you provided a link to the requested content already, you can provide another one here. This is a good spot to add a demo link or trial offer (linked to a landing page, of course).

4. **Co-author your content with a complimentary company to gain exposure to their list**
By co-authoring an ebook, you are reaching a broader audience. Agree to co-marketing terms ahead of time. Some examples include:

   • Sending the content to each other's subscriber lists
   • Sharing the content on each other's social networks
   • Combining this with an offer to try the other company's product - perhaps with a discount coupon for extra incentive. Likewise they do the same for their customers to sign up for your product.

5. **Set up an autoresponder to be emailed out 1-3 weeks following a download**
For this, you will want to segment your list and make sure to remove existing customers. Trying to turn a customer into a customer is, as you can imagine, counterintuitive. If however, you are offering a demo instead of a signup, it should be educational in manner, so that it appeals to anyone.

6. **Follow up after webinar**
Make sure you email all of your webinar registrants after the session with a recording and potentially a link to some relevant content or an upcoming webinar, to perpetuate the cycle. Remember, that this is not just for attendees, but for everyone who registered. You might even want to segment based on whether or not they attended, making your email that much more personalized.

7. **Run a 15 minute demo at the end of a webinar**
   This can be a very effective way to establish interest in your product, but you need to be explicit and tell attendees that the demo will happen, so that they are aware of it in advance and have the option to leave. Many will stick around if your webinar is compelling enough. Stay away from mentioning or showing your product too much during the webinar itself, after all, you are getting to showcase it at the end.

8. **Contact customers that don't complete your ideal set of activation steps**
   Many companies who provide a trial period have a series of steps that they would like to see completed in order to consider a customer "activated". At Unbounce for example, during our 30-day free trial, we like to see 3 out of the 5 following actions, completed:

   a. Running 200 visitors to a page in the past 30 day
   b. Adding a new user to their account
   c. Creating a second page
   d. Creating a test variant page

e. Configuring a working integration with one of our partners (e.g. MailChimp) to gather their leads

At that point we consider them an onboarded customer. If they don't achieve your specific goals, email them with helpful instructional materials to guide them further towards being an active (onboarded) customer.

9. **Email people throughout their trial with examples of what existing customers have done**
   Firstly, always ask for permission if you are going to show off customer work. Once you have this, put together a landing page with examples of work created (in the case of Unbounce, that would be landing page examples built with the tool) and testimonials that demonstrate the business benefit of using your product or service - this could be time saved, or an increase in their Return On Investment (ROI).

10. **Ask customers nearing the free-trial end date if there's anything you can personally do to help them make their decision**
Sometimes people will sign up but won't be ready to start using your product or service. Giving them an extension is a friendly way of keeping them close by and at the same time a gentle nudge to remind them of what they signed up for in the first place.

In summary

Over the course of reading this ebook, we hope you've enjoyed learning about how email marketing can be done in a smarter way, by utilizing content creation and the use of targeted landing pages.

As a brief reminder, we covered:

- Why and how email and landing pages work together for smarter marketing
- Growing your subscriber list by creating incentive with free quality content
- List building tips
- Building a high-converting landing page for your content, including examples of how to build effective ebook and webinar pages - and the anatomy of each
- Ensuring your landing pages are highly relevant to your emails, and are built using best practices
- Driving people to your landing pages
- How to A/B test your landing pages
- Continuing to create content to expand your appearance as a subject matter expert and use groups and segmentation to target content to relevant list members
- 10 Ways to Convert Your Subscribers to Into Customers

Use these techniques and you'll find your email marketing more effective, measurable and durable.