



The ion Conversion Optimization Playbook



Content is king. It plays a critical role in consumer and business behavior. No longer is it a B-to-B strategy only. It's infused in most marketing tactics today to drive engagement and ultimately revenue.

Auto-piloted campaigns are not an option. A marketer has to continuously monitor and optimize marketing programs to drive increased performance. In addition, the need to relate instantly becomes hypercritical. No longer can you resonate and perform with a one-to-all marketing strategy. The identification of buyers' DNA, sales cycle, mode, and channel must all come together in one well-orchestrated program that drives toward your business objectives. But how do you do that? In a world where content may sit in one realm of marketing and the performance channels in another, how do you create cohesion that creates compelling campaigns turning click-throughs into breakthroughs?

It's time to transition your thinking from believing all are separate unto themselves and realizing that from campaign to click to nurture strategy – it all plays an instrumental role in the marketing win. Consider the next six plays an excerpt from our own marketing handbook that helps guide us as we think through how we approach our target market. We hope that it will also bring a great deal of value to your own lineup.

Play One: Content Should Innovate

Content is king. It plays a critical role in consumer and business behavior. No longer is it a B-to-B strategy only. It's infused in most marketing tactics today to drive engagement and ultimately revenue. From retailers adding video content showing product use to software companies infusing best practices, the need for content is ubiquitous. But sticking out in a sea of content can be challenging. That's why sometimes it isn't the amount of content you create, it's the way you innovate with content that will immediately draw visitors in. Here are some ideas to get you started:

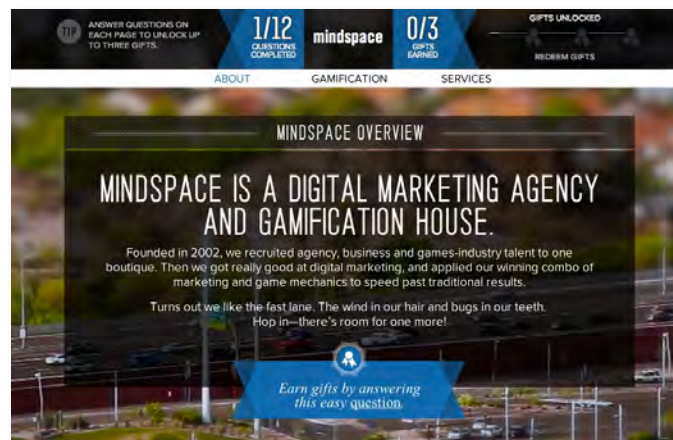
1. **Experiential content will continue to draw appeal.** The reward of entertainment and learning combined into one can be a key competitive differentiator. Do you have an interactive marketing or "gamification" strategy? If not, you should take a cue from these guys.

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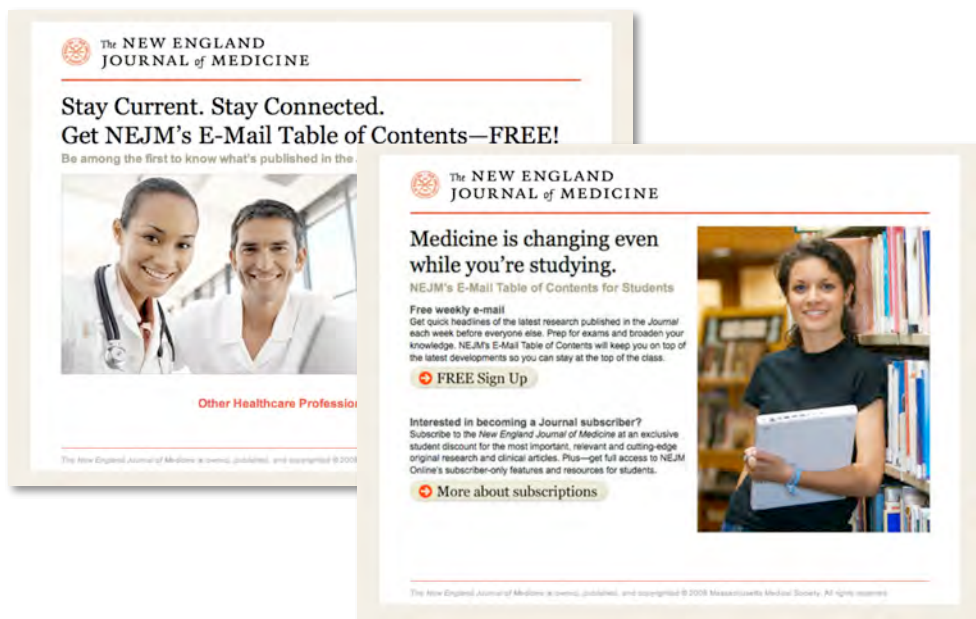


Yes, they are a gamification agency, but **Mindspace's** ability to take a corporate website and turn it into an interactive playing field is innovation at its best.



IBM'S INNOV8 – the name says it all. They took content and created a platform that is interactive, fun, and a little addictive.

2. **Hyper-targeted or tailored content.** The demand for content that is hyper-targeted and relevant in real time is a necessity. You collected the data, now use it. Create content that is focused on visitor behavior, demographic, or firmographic knowledge in real time. That's right, having the ability to have responsive content means your content never falls flat and resonates from click to conversion. If you are concerned about the amount of time it takes to invest in creating tailored content for everyone, don't be. Start out small and make it palatable for your team to take on.



The New England Journal of Medicine creates a compelling CTA and resonates with hyper-focused content post-click.

3. **Alignment of mobile and content.** It's not enough to have great content. It's also critical to have content that is meaningful based on how visitors are accessing it. If you want to innovate with content, it's also important to remember mobile. You will need to bridge the gap of social, local, and mobile in a way that is both meaningful and focused.

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You have content that rocks. Now what? The gap between creating content and delivering content is often significant.

Video plays an important role in **Williams-Sonoma's** content strategy. Video consumption is useful and relevant to visitors.



5. **Create once, publish everywhere.** Create adaptable and modular copy that can make your innovative creation efficient and effective across channels.

Play Two: Deliver Content in a Meaningful Way

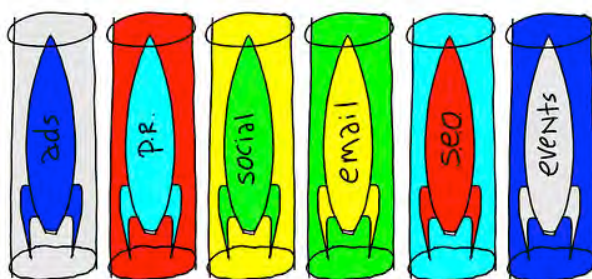
You have content that rocks. Now what? The gap between creating content and delivering content is often significant. Reducing silos in a marketing organization leads to greater clarity for creating and delivering meaningful and engaging content. Ultimately, it's the art of honest seduction. Making your content appealing to the masses means ensuring you have a content delivery strategy.

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Are your organization's silos preventing the delivery of content in a meaningful way?

death by silo.

'marketing in the Round' by gini detrich and geoff livingston marketingintheround.com

@gafingoid

Delivering content in a meaningful way also means using benchmarks for establishing valuable content use. Is your content...

- **Findable?** Can it be found?
- **Readable?** Is it digestible?
- **Understandable?** Is there context and do you articulate?
- **Actionable?** Is there a clear call-to-action?
- **Shareable?** Do you evoke an emotional response?

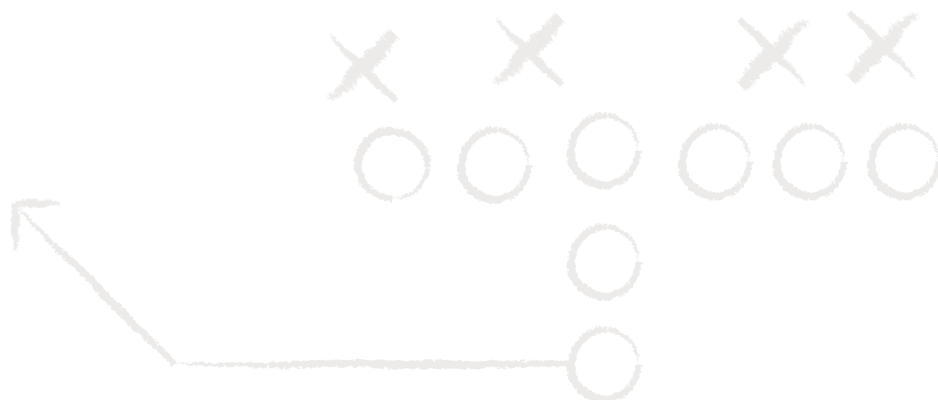
Lastly, are you taking into consideration what content delivery means to your organization?

- **What is your typical buyer's journey?** This can vary by industry, vertical, or price point, but understanding the typical buyer's journey is essential in determining how you take your amazing content and create a roadmap for revenue recognition.
- **What channels and formats resonate most with your customers and prospects?** You understand the buyer's journey, now what? Making that journey actionable includes having a firm understanding of the channels your target market is engaging with and the type of content format they appreciate. It's not enough to build it. The delivery mode is also critical for engagement, brand reinforcement, and creating trust.
- **Everyone learns a little differently.** Some may love whitepapers, others may enjoy an easily digestible infographic. Innovative content delivery also means creating options. It's also not a bad way to repurpose content and get broad appeal.

Play Three: Performance Channels Should Perform

It feels redundant to say performance channels should perform, but all too often channels such as paid search, banner advertising, and email marketing are left on autopilot. Complacency occurs because a campaign may perform well and there are competing priorities.

However, we should challenge ourselves to strive to go from good to great. That happens when we focus on optimizing performance from pre-click to post-conversion. Regardless of channel, here are five tips to ensure you are thoughtfully considering the revenue impact of a fully optimized revenue-generating marketing program.



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Marketing no longer plays in an “impression” and “click” world. Marketing accountability means leads or traffic that result in revenue. Quality, not just quantity, of traffic matters.

1. **Create consistent branding in your channel marketing.** Brand matters even across paid channels. It may matter more. That first inflection point can make or break you, and if it's inconsistent with all post-conversion experiences, it will not only fall flat but also create a serious trust issue.
2. **Sometimes new can surprise you.** Making an investment in emerging channels can have major payoff. Don't get stuck in a rut and only stick with what you know. Explore new channels and create strategies that will drive untapped markets and revenue.
3. **Be certain to have a unified approach.** We aren't talking brand here, we are talking a “one experience” approach. Capitalize on the insights you have and utilize them to resonate pre-click with your audience – regardless of channel.
4. **Measure, measure, measure.** Measuring performance is a key component of understanding what's working and what isn't. It allows you to identify how to influence your programs with optimization that matters.
5. **Always be testing.** The market is changing and with that comes the need to ensure you are staying on top of what drives more qualified clicks. Testing keyword strategy or banner targeted segments are just a couple of ways you can infuse new energy into your marketing channels.

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Consistent branding has its rewards. Regardless of channel or mode, the **Apple** brand is easy to recognize.

Play Four: Post-Click Strategy Matters

Marketing no longer plays in an “impression” and “click” world. Marketing accountability means leads or traffic that result in revenue. Quality, not just quantity, of traffic matters. Again, marketers have to address the silo challenge. If you manage paid search programs but have no influence on the digital experience

post-click, you are stunted in driving real results. Your post-click strategy is a key influencer on your overall optimization strategy. Here are a few things to consider:

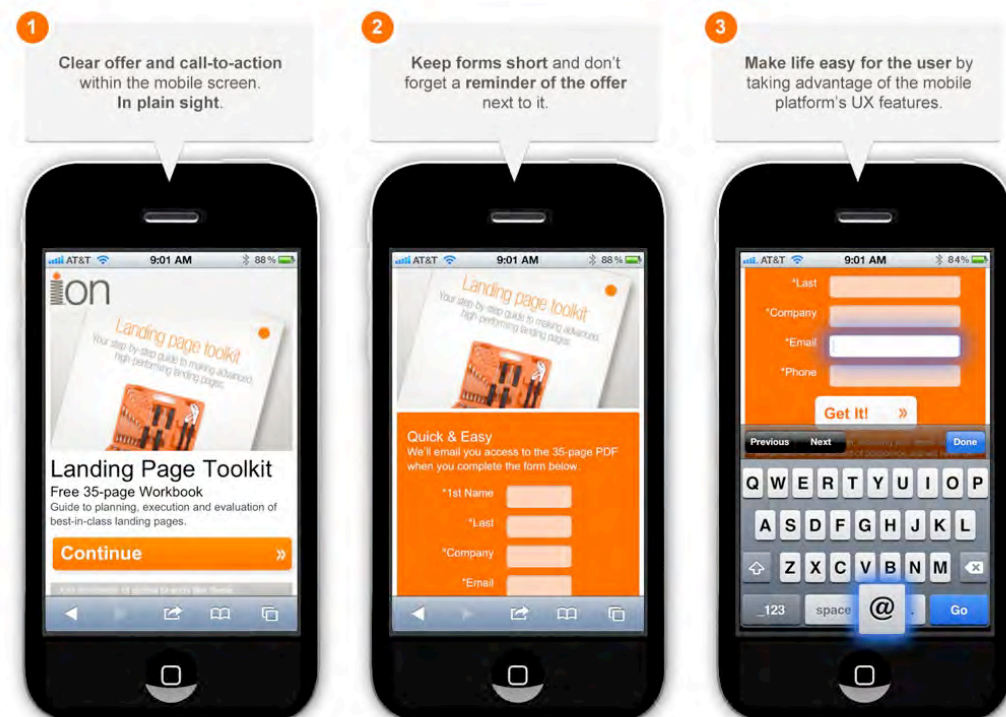
1. **Maintain message match.** The old adage of “deliver on what you promise” is certainly true with your post-click experience. If there is a disconnect between your ad campaign and the landing experience, it will impact your conversions and ultimately your sales. Ensure that you are challenging yourself to optimize not only pre-click but also post-click. Make the experience unified and effortless for your traffic.



Message mismatch can have immediate impact on conversion.

iBehavior captured my attention with their banner ad but then sent me to their corporate website post-click. It's a missed opportunity for driving a targeted, relevant experience that drives conversion.

2. **Be source-specific.** Depending on channel, traffic can respond very differently. That's why it's important to view each traffic source differently and optimize based on that segment. While landing-page creation may feel arduous and time consuming, with the right tools you can have immediate impact on your conversion program.
3. **Reach visitors with mobile.** If the mobile experience you create is the same as the desktop experience, there will be a disconnect. Relevancy means



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The most critical ingredient for optimization is testing. It's the difference between guessing what works and knowing what works.

understanding how visitors will digest your content as well as the type of content that will appeal and directionally move them forward. Always have a mobile-optimized experience for your traffic to ensure the experience is easy and engaging.

4. **Stay offer-specific.** That's right, no one-size-fits-all landing pages. If you offer a whitepaper, deliver on that whitepaper. If you are promoting a product, deliver that product. Keep the offer consistent from pre-click to post-conversion.

Play Five: Optimization Means Testing

The most critical ingredient for optimization is testing. It's the difference between guessing what works and knowing what works. If you don't have a testing strategy yet, or if you've been testing for awhile, here are a few ideas to keep in mind:

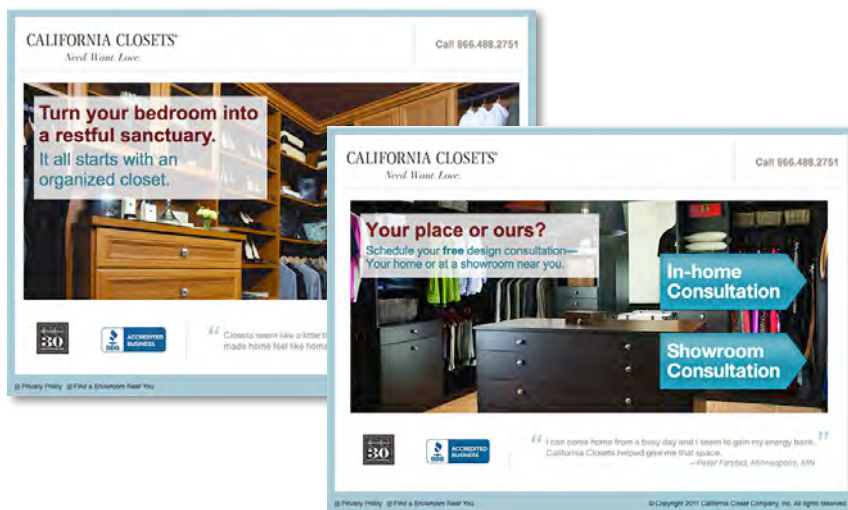
- **Testing happens in cycles.** Innovation through testing means addressing different components of your testing strategy in waves. Different templates, layouts, styles, interactive content, or image-to-text ratio can each influence your performance differently. Don't address all elements at once. Focus on a testing strategy that will allow you to define a winner. In addition, think through your iteration and test combinations such as button styles, text, colors, messaging, or form field.
- **Remember, there's more than one way to test pages.** A/B split testing is the most widely used landing-page testing strategy. It's an easy way to begin optimizing your pages while testing different versions of your landing-page experience. However, segmented testing and MVT testing can also give you a significant boost and are often underutilized by marketers. Segmentation testing affords you valuable knowledge about your visitors and allows you to discover new segments and target messaging more easily. MVT testing allows for testing of different page elements, copy, calls-to-action, offers, and interactive content while identifying how those elements influence conversion.

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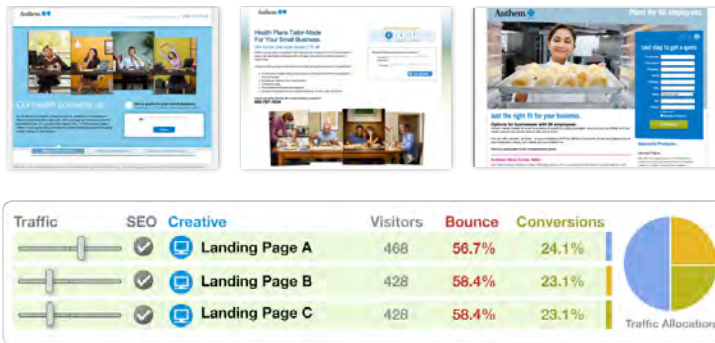
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California Closets does a great job of continuing to test their segments to drive more relevant and engaging experiences, leading to optimized conversion.

- **Be radically different.** Testing doesn't have to be subtle. Understanding the influence of radically different campaign experiences can give greater visibility into traffic behavior while driving improved performance.



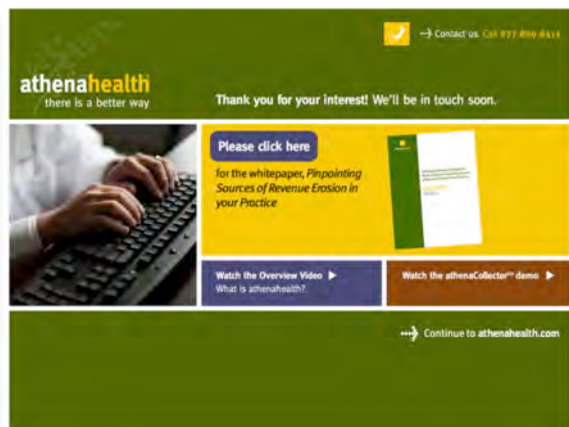
Anthem shows us that being radically different can be a strategic testing strategy.

- **Don't be married to pages.** Testing means having the ability to dispose of what isn't working. Be in a position to test frequently and throw away what isn't working.

Play Six: Post-Conversion Must Resonate

From the thank-you page to the sales and marketing post-conversion follow-up, having a message that resonates is mission critical.

- **Create next steps.** They converted, now what? Positioning relevant post-conversion content is important. Consider a "what to expect" or an arsenal of tools to keep them engaged with your brand once they've completed the call-to-action.
- **Drive sales engagement.** If you are B-to-B, the transfer of pre- and post-conversion data to your sales organization is important in ensuring the cohesive experience they had online stays intact offline. Make certain your sales organization knows the when, where, who, how, and why of the conversion so they can resonate immediately.
- **Guide the post-conversion experience.** Don't leave a new lead hanging, guide them. Far too often, we expect a lead to come to us, wait for them to bubble to the top, or compel themselves toward the sale. The reality is that if you can seduce them to engage, keep them engaged with a relevant and meaningful experience that takes them from visitor to deal.



Athena Health does a good job of driving the next click and engagement touchpoint toward the sale.

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The Best Landing Pages Start with You. And ion.

ion's web-based platform empowers marketers to launch and test advanced landing pages without code or IT. If you're looking to grow your landing page program, check out these resources and find out how ion can help.

Next steps for your landing pages:

If you want to stay up to-date on the latest online marketing trends and best practices, subscribe to the **ion landing page blog**.

Learn more about how you can improve your online marketing ROI by checking the free **webinars**, **white papers** and **presentations** in our library.

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Ready for more effective landing pages? **Let's talk ion!**



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