The Path to Conversion

Making Your Online Marketing More Effective:

10 Reasons to Use Landing Pages

ion

Landing pages can radically improve your online marketing performance. Yes, radically. That's the ultimate reason why your online marketing team should be using landing pages, and it's why you'll find that the best marketing programs, regardless of industry, are dedicated to improving their landing page experiences.

Any web page that you purposely send traffic to is a 'landing page'. It's the page where people end up after they click on a PPC ad, a tweet, an email, or after they scan a QR code – just to name a few. While you could simply direct this traffic to your homepage or a product page within your website, this is not always ideal. The page where someone lands after the click has enormous potential to influence whether or not that visitor eventually converts into a lead or sale. Too often, marketers focus most of their attention and budget on attracting and driving good traffic, but that's really only half of the equation.

Here's why the best online marketing programs use landing pages:

1. Better results start with better user experiences

Pretend for a moment that you need to get car insurance and start with a Google search. One of the results catches your eye by advertising a special discount for new California residents. Sounds appealing enough for a click, right?

Imagine that upon clicking on that ad, however, you end up at the insurance company's homepage—a bloated page full of information about everything except your offer. Worse yet, the page you've landed on isn't even specific to car insurance. You would most likely look around for the discount for a second or two, become frustrated, and click the 'back' button pretty quickly.

Now, envision a page that specifically referenced California, provided a redemption discount code, and had a strong benefit-driven headline that encouraged you to complete a short form in exchange for a car insurance quote. Certainly, this second page is much more likely to pique your curiosity and capture your registration.

While any part of your website can serve as a 'landing page', the act of directing paid traffic to your brand's main site–regardless of whether it's your homepage or a generic product page–is akin to leaving money on the table. Your website has to speak to anyone who might be interested in your products or services, and it has to explain who you are to people who

ion

might know nothing about you. In this way, your website pages are 'generalists' that need to speak to the 'lowest common denominator' web visitor–customers, prospects, investors, media and employees. In contrast, landing pages designed outside of the structure of your main site have the freedom to be campaign, message, and even source specific.

Campaign-specific landing pages are like an extension of the ad—providing relevant information in a digestible, persuasive manner. They continue the conversation from ad to page, while guiding that conversation towards the conversion action on your page (often a lead generation form or a transfer to a shopping cart).

If you're having trouble determining whether your landing page messaging flows properly from the ad to the conversion action, try framing it like you would good customer service: If someone walked into your store asking specifically about blue widgets, you wouldn't first take them through your whole company philosophy and give a long list of everything you provide. You would instead go directly over to the blue widgets and try a specific pitch. Just like good customer service, better online marketing ROI starts with good experiences.

2. Solid branding starts with good first impressions

In the fast-paced world of online marketing, you only have a few seconds to make a memorable, positive impression. While your ad may have earned someone's attention, it's what happens after the click that ultimately leads to a prospect's decision about your offer. Remember, the landing experience is your first chance to introduce your brand, and first impressions matter. If you advertised a specific offer but then take visitors to a page that says nothing about the offer, what does that say about the authenticity of your brand?
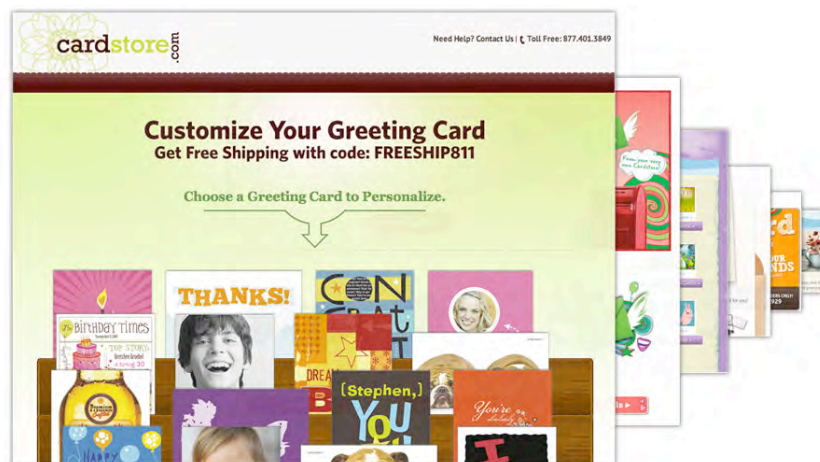
Giving good brand is more than just sleek and attractive design: it requires a good user experience. While the term brand can mean many things, ultimately the emotional connection between your customers and your products can win (or lose) the day. When you send your visitors to targeted, customized experiences, you communicate that you care and that you understand the needs of your prospective customers. Moreover, you're telling your visitors, "you're important to me." A homepage or product page just makes you a business. A campaign-specific landing page starts to build a memorable, emotional connection with your brand.

3. Conversion-focused hubs for marketing offers and content

Landing pages are places where your ad offers and marketing content can truly come alive. There are simply certain things that you don't want to advertise on your site, and often with good reason. Neither offers nor marketing content are particularly long-lived, and even within campaign time frames, these elements can change quickly. Since landing pages are separate from your website, you have the creative freedom to be as specific or as timely as you need. For example, you can break away from your site's branding guidelines, change the look and feel of the page to better suit the campaign, or even target your offer to a very specific segment or audience. More importantly, you can create pages that are all about getting your visitors to take action.

Since landing pages can be conversion or offer-centric, you can maximize your potential for desired results. If you are currently using your homepage or a product page, take a hard look at that page and all of the ways that visitor could click away without first converting. When you are paying for traffic, you don't want your visitors become distracted

Get your offer here!

by material that doesn't propel them closer to becoming a lead, or frustrated by the number of hoops they have to jump through in order to get to the advertised offer. Landing pages can have one specific pitch and guide visitors towards that one goal.

4. Specificity is the secret to better lead generation

At its core, lead generation is all about both the acquisition and maintenance of your prospect's interest. Even though your ad may have captured their attention and their click, it's what happens after the click that determines whether (and how quickly) they become a lead. It's often said that you can lead a horse to water, but that you can't make it drink. Likewise, your ad can bring visitors to your lead generation form, but it's your landing page that can convince your visitors to fill out the form.

You can lower your cost per lead by creating landing pages that do a better job convincing more of your visitors to convert. In order to convince someone to convert, you have to get

ion

into specifics and provide a strong sell. One of the most important ways that landing pages provide your potential leads with a better experience is by being specific. Landing pages can be as tailored and specific as they need to be. Your potential leads want and need those specifics about your offer in order to fill out your lead generation form.

Think back to our car insurance example from earlier where the ad promised a special discount, but then linked to a page that made no further mention of the offer. If you're not using campaign– specific landing pages, it's very likely that your conversion rate is suffering from some form of message mismatch. Message mismatch is when your ad says or promises something that's not clearly and directly reflected on your landing page, and it's one of the most notorious and prolific marketing campaign killers. Your potential leads and sales need specific details in order to complete your lead generation form. Even if you're not asking for a lot of information, your visitors need to feel some level of trust with your brand before they will fill out anything. Broken promises and message mismatch confusion isn't going to help, but using landing pages that are designed to match the ad and the offer will help.
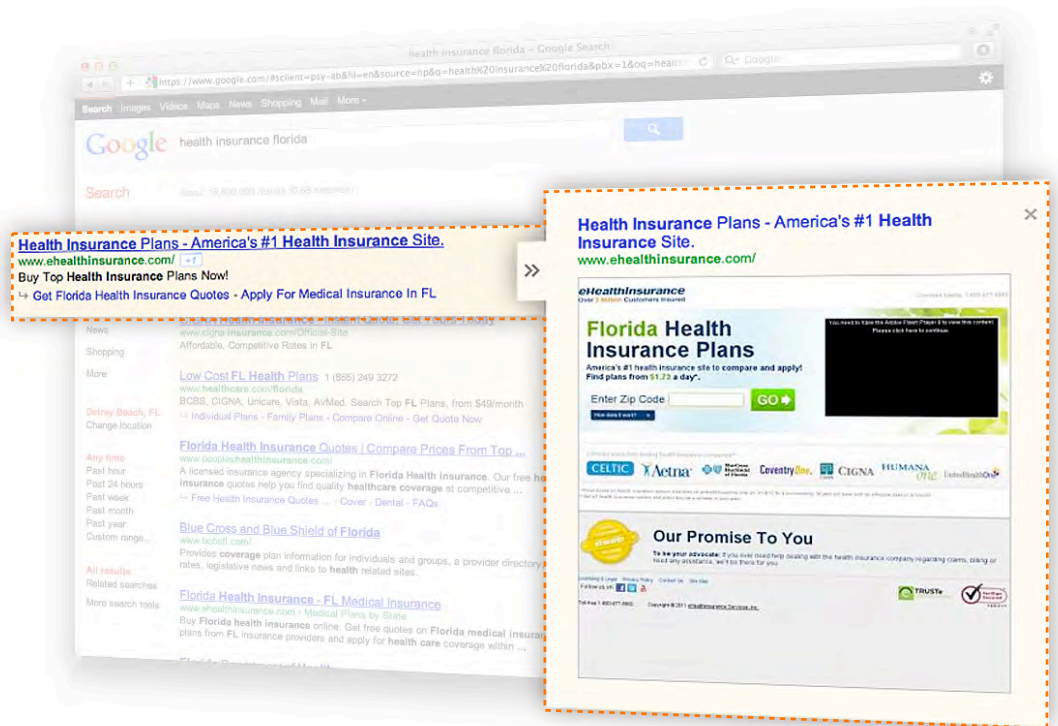
5. Experience customization raises lead quality

Using campaign-specific landing pages gives you the opportunity to simultaneously generate more leads (without raising spend) and attract a higher-quality lead. Targeted, specific landing pages let prospects know pretty quickly whether they are in the right place, and whether your offer or product is the solution they've been looking for. If you put too much of the burden on your visitors to figure this out by sending them to a homepage or a page that isn't very specific to the offer that initially got their attention, you risk spending time nurturing leads that were never really meant to be.

By using a landing page, you can employ techniques to even further customize your user experiences to better target your ideal customer. Segmentation paths are a type of user experience where visitors self-segment on the landing page into a more specific audience group. For instance, a visitor responding to a whitepaper might choose between a B2B or a B2C version, or a version aimed at hospitals or private medical practices. These landing experiences let visitors self-elect into groups that help both in messaging with and grading your prospects.

6. Agile, flexible pages quickly realize results

Online marketing lives in real time and it needs to be relevant, specific, and targeted to work. The best online marketers are those who can produce quickly and react instantly. How often does your website undergo significant changes? Probably not nearly as often as new marketing campaigns are launched. The beauty of landing pages is that they can be constantly changing. Unlike your website, landing pages are flexible.

Flexibility matters for results. We can make educated guesses about which layout, page elements, or copy will help improve our online marketing results, but the only way to really know what works is by trying it. To get the most of out testing, it has to be easy to launch new versions of a page, or to quickly roll out content changes as soon as we see that one combination is winning. Landing pages have both the ability and agility to quickly change to stay relevant and get better results.

7. Easiest part of the process to influence

No matter how great our media buys are, how irresistible our offers seem, or how intriguing our ads may be, there are a lot of factors that influence our online marketing results that are outside of our direct control. We can try our best to get our ad ranked first on a search engine results page, but there will always be outside factors that influence results. Landing pages, however, can have a tremendous influence on your online marketing campaign, and better yet, they are completely under your control.

Key landing page elements like appearance, messaging, and audience can be easily modified and optimized. Because of this, landing pages are where marketers have the best chance to directly influence online marketing results. Without increasing ad budgets to drive more traffic, a better landing page can increase

ion

conversions and lower acquisition costs. By testing forms, segmentation, content, headlines, layouts–truly, anything you think that could affect a visitor's decision–you can find the perfect combination for high conversion, and more, high-quality leads

8. Better nurture and drip campaigns

Marketing doesn't stop once someone fills out an initial lead generation form, or even once the first sale is made. Staying in touch with customers and leads is critical, and a large amount of customer retention activity begins with a solid e-mail strategy.

Landing pages can contribute in significant ways towards helping to turn your nurture and drip campaigns into powerful customer experiences. By leveraging the information you've already collected, you can launch progressive profiling campaigns, customize landing pages to automatically serve up different forms or content based on previous actions, or use segmentation to upsell a very specific group within your audience. These are things that would simply be impossible to do without the use of landing pages.
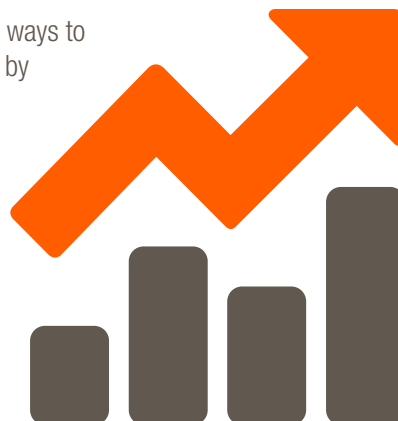
9. Critical for Quality Score

Anyone who has managed campaigns in Google AdWords will agree that Quality Score can make or break a campaign: it can mean the difference between paying $1 per click or $10. While the way that Google calculates Quality Score is a safely guarded secret, there is significant evidence to suggest that landing page elements play a key role in determining this score. If your brand is heavily invested in PPC campaigns, you can't afford to ignore the influence of highly targeted, relevant landing pages on your SEM Quality Scores.

10. A gold mine for actionable marketing analytics

Even unsuccessful landing pages contribute in significant ways to the success of future online marketing campaigns simply by virtue of the data that they can collect. These metrics represent the reactions and behaviors of your target audience, and can serve as valuable lessons for future marketing campaigns, product direction, and even research and development.

By analyzing our landing page data, we can form a concrete picture of not just who our visitors are, but also what they like and what drives them to convert. In this way, a low bounce rate isn't just a desired data point, it

ion

also helps confirm that your landing page messaging is connecting well with your visitors. Your visitors' actions (and inactions) hold the clues as to what they expect from you and where you can improve.

Through testing, you can learn which messages, traffic sources, and media spends work best, and where you should invest additional resources. Landing pages get better online marketing results because, through testing and evaluation, we learn more about what makes a great campaign for our specific product and our specific audience. This knowledge provides the foundation for smarter tests, better landing experiences and better results.

Real results

Perhaps the most compelling reason to use landing pages is the potential for increased results, greater revenue, and smarter spend. To-date, hundreds of top brands like Dell, DHL, and American Greetings all rely on LiveBall's IT-free landing page software to create, test, and optimize thousands of intuitive, high-performance landing pages. Best of all, they do so with tremendous success: together, these companies average conversion rates over 2.5 times greater than the industry standard.

See for yourself how landing pages can contribute to better results for your brand. Visit us online and read our case studies to see how LiveBall can help you achieve success with your online marketing engagements.

Buyer's Guide

The 10-Point
Landing Page Software
Buyer's Guide

ion

Everything you need
to choose the right
landing page platform.

Get the Guide

ion

The Best Landing Pages Start with You. And LiveBall.

LiveBall is ion's web-based platform that 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 LiveBall 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.

Join us for a **Live Demo** and see just how easy it is to use LiveBall to create conversion-focused landing pages.

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

ion

www.ioninteractive.com

i-on interactive, inc.
200 East Palmetto Park Road, Ste. 107
Boca Raton . Florida . 33432

One Broadway . 14th Floor
Cambridge . Massachusetts . 02142

1	888	466.4332	U.S. & Canada
01	561	394.9484	International
01	561	394.9773	Facsimile