



CONVERSION CONTENT MARKETING



by Scott Brinker, President & CTO
ion interactive

co-author Kristina Allen, Online Marketing Manager
ion interactive

Content marketing influences prospective customers with authority, liking and reciprocity.

Content marketing, in the words of Chris Brogan, can really “shake the tree.”

Thriving at the intersection of SEO and social media, content marketing has become central to digital marketing strategy. Its objective is simple: create genuinely useful or entertaining content for many specific niches of your target audience—not to overtly promote your business, but to build rapport and brand equity—and give it away for free.

Content marketing influences prospective customers with authority, liking and reciprocity (in the terms of Robert Cialdini). It educates them about new ideas and opportunities that will nudge them toward your funnel. But generally, it doesn't attempt to convert people immediately, instead sowing seeds to be harvested later.

In contrast, landing page optimization has traditionally focused on a much shorter time horizon, aiming to convert people right away on their visit to a particular page. Typically, a visitor must convert to receive the value promised by the landing page, such as a white paper or webinar. Different variations of the page are tried using A/B and multivariate testing to see which induces the highest conversion rate.

If content marketing is about romancing prospects, old-school landing page optimization is more like honing pick-up lines.

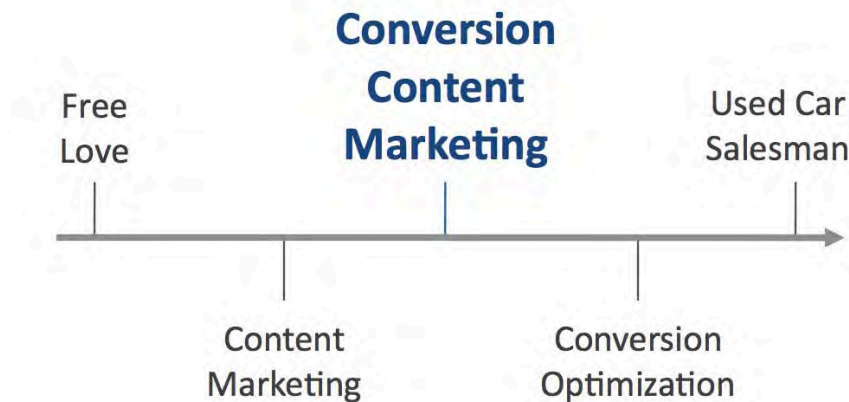
The new school: conversion content marketing

The problem with “pick-up line” landing pages is that when they're used indiscriminately, they're annoying. In most circumstances, prospects don't want to be picked up. They want to have a little conversation first, learn something about you, warm up to your charms.

On the other hand, a lot of content marketing—especially the ubiquitous blog post—is like the shy admirer who never musters the courage to ask for a date. The prospect might be interested in a closer connection, but when that seducible moment passes, their attention flits elsewhere and may never return.

In terms of the [READY Framework for Conversion Optimization](#), content marketing is often Relevant, Engaging and Authoritative, but has no Directional or Yield-optimal momentum. This is because it usually excels at the first three, yet fails to capitalize on the strength of the last two.

The happy medium is a hybrid: *conversion content marketing*.



Conversion content marketing extends a content strategy with savvy but appropriate conversion optimization tactics and techniques. The combination of these two world views lead to the following six principles.

Principle #1: Conversion is optional

Content marketing works best when visitors get value without having to give anything in return—other than their time and attention. That time and attention is what you want, because it's a great starting point for a relationship with your brand. So the first principle of conversion content marketing is that conversion is optional.

Optional conversion means that if your content is a white paper, visitors can download it without filling out a form. If it's a recorded webinar, they can watch it without registering. If it's a collection of best practices, a cool infographic, a slide presentation, etc., it's simply right there for them to consume. It's not dangled like a carrot, but shared like a free sample at the cookie stand.

The conversion is offered as a natural extension of the content. If a visitor likes your content, they have a logical next step to take. For instance, you might offer:

- An option to sign up for bonus/premium/extended content
- An option to subscribe to a relevant newsletter or alert service
- An option to have someone contact them on that specific topic
- An option to make a pertinent purchase ("don't shill, help fulfill")

The call-to-action is more subtle than in traditional landing page optimization. It's presented, genuinely, as a way to help the visitor move forward—but only if they want. You might ask for the conversion, but you don't demand it. If your conversion rate is 15%, you still want the other 85% to leave better off with [a terrific brand impression](#).

...as a rule of thumb, 60% of your effort should be creating new content and 40% should be testing and refining it.



Principle #2: Testing is mandatory

In content marketing, once something is published, it's usually etched in stone (or at least wet concrete). Rather than continue to tweak that piece, the marketer moves on to the next idea. This produces a continuous stream of new content, which is great, but little iterative improvement on any one piece of content. Blogs epitomize this firehose approach.

In contrast, the mantra of conversion optimization is test, test, test. Testing boosts your performance, and more broadly, boosts your learning about what works and why. But optimization marketers sometimes take this to an extreme, getting stuck on optimizing a single page ad infinitum.

Conversion content marketing is a 60/40 blend of the two. Testing is mandatory—if you're not testing, you're squandering your traffic. But as a rule of thumb, 60% of your effort should be creating new content and 40% should be testing and refining it.

Of course, testing requires measurement to define improvement. Conversion rate is still a key metric, even if the conversion is optional. It indicates how good an experience visitors had with your content and the appeal of your discretionary call-to-action. But conversion rate shouldn't be the sole metric, as you want to protect the brand value of your free content. You should also weigh visitors, SEO rank, social media sharing and "microconversions" such as number of pages viewed, downloads, video views, etc.

Good testing aims to boost conversion rates without negatively affecting content metrics.

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Principle #3: Format is flexible

Landing page optimization produces, well, landing pages. Content marketing, on the other hand, takes form in a variety of shapes and sizes (although blog posts are probably the most popular). Conversion content marketing embraces the idea that format is flexible and pushes it to the next level.

Conversion content should be published in the form that maximizes the value—and the holistic experience—delivered to visitors. Don't be constrained to boring, cookie-cutter landing page or blog templates. Great content experiences can take many different shapes:

- A stand-alone page that presents the content creatively
- A microsite with several interconnected pages
- A wizard that guides visitors through a series of steps
- A web application that has a custom flow of interaction

Multi-page experiences enable innovative content presentations and can make large content more consumable. They're a modern reincarnation of the microsite—not a fluffy, Flash showpiece from the past, but an SEO-primed cluster of focused, engaging HTM content.

Design and layout of individual pages complements the content, but also balances the secondary mission of incorporating conversion points in an elegant way. Calls-to-action should be attractive, but not distracting. You want to make it easy for people to take a relevant next step, but you don't want visitors to feel pushed. Perfecting this synergy is the sweet spot for testing.

...the more specific and targeted you are to a particular audience, the better you will perform.



Principle #4: Scale is vertical

Both content marketing and landing page optimization have converged on the same insight: the more specific and targeted you are to a particular audience, the better you will perform. It's not about creating "one page to rule them all." Instead, you achieve your best results by producing many different experiences, each crafted for a distinct idea and audience segment.

This is why conversion content marketing should follow the 60/40 rule described earlier and put the majority of its effort on producing new material. The only difference between this and general content marketing is that you want to design the optional conversions to match.

Scale is vertical means that you grow content conversion marketing by constantly addressing new niches, new issues, new applications, new verticals, etc., where your expertise can deliver value—and gently connect the dots to your products and services. (I actually believe a focus on ever more diversified audience segments, across multiple touchpoints and stages of the marketing funnel, is a strategy for scaling the new marketing organization as a whole.)

Agile marketing practices can really help your conversion content marketing scale efficiently.



Principle #5: Content is king

The essence of conversion content marketing is that content is king. The call-to-action, which is often glorified in conversion circles is certainly important. But frankly, it's not as important as the content for which that call-to-action is associated.

So what does a great, content-driven experience built for conversion need to include?

- Depth
- Quality
- Humanization
- Specificity
- Differentiation

The experience should provide enough depth that the user is compelled to take the next step. This means providing visuals of how your product or service works, including pricing information if appropriate, and detailing out any fine print.

Your content-driven experience must also demonstrate the quality of your offering. To this end, you should include elements of social proof like customer testimonials, press clippings, and the logos of widely recognizable customers.

In order to create an emotional connection between the user and your content, you should humanize it. You can do this by providing the bios and headshots of your

team or including video of your best customers talking about or demonstrating use of your offerings..

And remember, content is only king if it resonates with your audience. Conversion content marketers must take care to personalize copy and offers to different customer segments based on their wants or needs.

Finally, content becomes a beloved king if it's differentiated from all the other content out there. Don't be afraid to test big, bold ideas when it comes to form, function or layout to see what resonates best with users.



Principle #6: Produce Copiously

Your conversion content marketing efforts need a portfolio strategy. Each portfolio should contain specific messaging and offers for the various audience segments that you're targeting in a particular campaign. This means you need to create multiple versions of each piece of content with specific headlines, subheads, pictures, offers and so on. The core message will remain the same, but personalization is often the key to high-ROI results in conversion content marketing campaigns.

Content marketers and conversion optimization professionals: you have a glorious collaboration ahead.



www.ioninteractive.com

i-on interactive, inc.
124 East Boca Raton Road
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



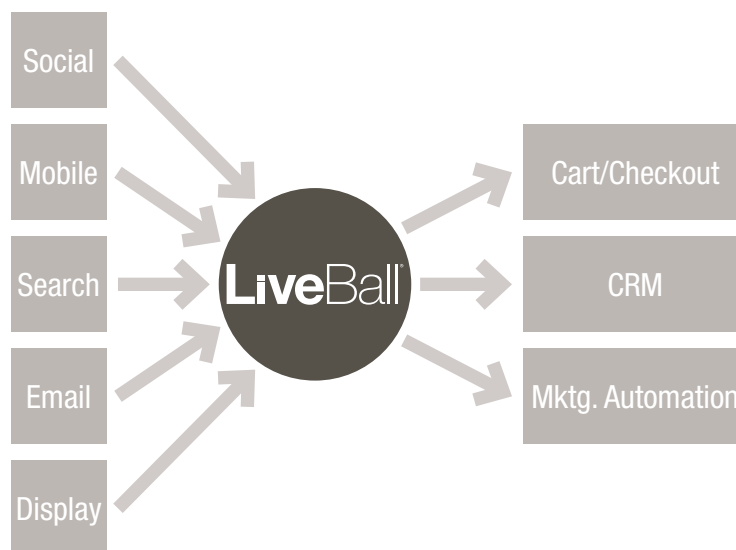
LiveBall optimizes the performance of online campaigns by delivering ideal user experiences. It significantly reduces the resources required to manage long-tail content and optimize conversions.

As a direct result of using LiveBall, customers see significant increases in revenue and profit.

- ▶ American Greetings reduced its cost-per-acquisition by 20% in three months.
- ▶ Bronto Software increased its lead-gen conversion rate from 2% to 18% in five months.
- ▶ Citrix Systems increased its search engine conversion rate from 0.5% to 12% in three weeks.

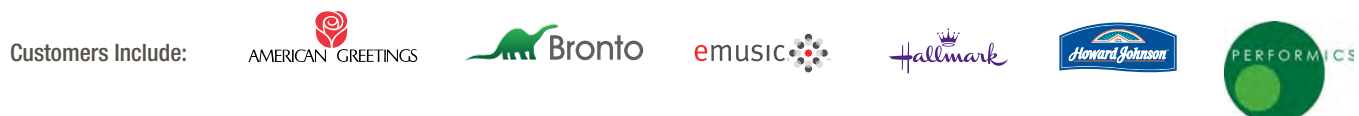
Optimizing the gap between ads and results

LiveBall optimizes the gap between online ads — search, email, mobile, social, display — and results. It creates the first impressions a brand makes on users. By determining a user's intent and then focusing on it, LiveBall significantly increases user satisfaction. That satisfaction translates into more engagement, more leads and more revenue.



Putting marketing in control

LiveBall is technology for marketers. It's a whole new class of easy-to-use software that saves resources, increases agility and improves results. It's IT independent — putting marketing in control of campaigns from beginning to end. LiveBall is cloud based — making it quick to launch and maintenance free. To use it, marketers log-in with a web browser. And for all the enterprise features of the platform, training takes less than two hours. It's low overhead and high impact.



Catch more fish.

Manage Enterprise-Scale
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LiveBall software...

LiveBall is software for a whole new breed of marketer.
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It's software for marketers and agencies that helps them catch more fish.

LiveBall optimizes the performance of online campaigns by delivering ideal user experiences.

With LiveBall, anyone can make & optimize conversion-focused, user experiences — without code, developers or help from the IT department. There's nothing to install, nothing to maintain, nothing to worry about.

LiveBall turns post-click friction into freedom by delivering enterprise-scale marketing agility. Subscribe to LiveBall and start making and optimizing post-click campaigns.



- **Produce & launch** brand-standard multi-page post-click experiences — microsites, conversion paths & landing pages — without code or developers
- **Target & track** content, offers and forms with codeless segmentation & conditional rules
- **Test & optimize in real time** using instant, integrated A/B and multivariate methods



“As soon as we get statistical significance on a test, we drive immediately to a champion in real time. On Mother's Day alone, the real-time change in traffic splits resulted in over \$45,000 in incremental revenue.”

Tessa Fraser
Interactive Marketing Manager, AG Interactive, Inc.

...and services to ensure your success.

You want to maximize your PPC, email, social, affiliate, direct and online advertising results. You're in the right place. Our services can help you get the most out of your LiveBall subscription by giving you all the expertise you need to be successful.

ion has been delivering technology-driven online marketing services since 1997. We're passionate about helping our customers achieve success. From implementation to optimization, our team will help you make LiveBall an integrated and productive piece of your digital marketing program.

When it comes to post-click marketing, we've got your back—and your ROI.

Some of our service packages are outlined below. When you subscribe to LiveBall, let us know which services make sense for you. Not sure? We can help you figure it out.

Service	LiveBall Support	Smart Launch	Post-Click Coaching	Full Service	Custom Engagements
Description	We train & support you	We do the initial work to get you off on the right foot	Strategic and tactical guidance to maximize results	We manage & execute your post-click programs	Personalized professional services based on your needs
Your Need	Using LiveBall	Expert help launching LiveBall	Expert guidance	Ongoing landing page management & testing	Let's talk
Timeline	Lifetime of your subscription	2-6 weeks	2+ months	4+ months	Based on needs
Price	Free!	\$5,900	From \$2,500 / month	From \$12,200 / month	Based on scope



"I love LiveBall. We use it to convert our paid search, email marketing and even online quizzes to leads. Our SEM conversion rate is up to over 15%, our leads are higher quality and we've reduced our spend by two-thirds."

*Sally Lowery
Internet Marketing Manager, Bronto Software*



LiveBall gives marketers the power & freedom to optimize.

For marketers. By marketers.

Point, click and change it. Change what? Everything — forms, text, images, Flash, links, brands, page layouts, SEO controls — you name it.

Testing without code or IT

Test it all. LiveBall delivers sophisticated testing without code or developers. Launch A/B or MVT in three clicks.

Industry-leading forms

LiveBall includes an agile, flexible, sophisticated no-code forms engine. Make flexible, world-class forms all by yourself.

Unparalleled SEO features

Nine ground-breaking features that make LiveBall the most search-friendly post-click platform.

Clear, actionable reporting

Effortlessly get meaningful, real-time reports as HTML, PDF or Excel XLS and automatically send them to colleagues.

Mobile optimization

Every user deserves an ideal experience. LiveBall keeps that promise by optimizing for the latest mobile devices.

Flexible, branded templates

'Template' is no longer a dirty word — not even in the most creative circles. LiveBall includes proven, flexible page templates — custom-branded for you.

Flexible conditional logic

Design your own if/then statements for advanced logic — trigger actions from 31 different conditions — code-free.

Asset management

LiveBall centralizes images, Flash, fulfillment, forms, email responders, tags and templates, so it's easy to reuse them.

Seamless data sharing

Export to Salesforce.com, post to a form, send email, a delimited or vCard file — LiveBall gets your data where you need it.

Flexible open integration

LiveBall customers mix and match components in their own loosely coupled architecture to attain best-of-breed status in each key sales & marketing area.

LiveBall usability

LiveBall gets out of your way — saving you time & resources at every step. Even the training is fast.

LiveBall is cloud-based, marketer-friendly and scalable.

Enterprise-class software-as-a-service (SaaS) is reliable, easy to buy and easy to live with. With LiveBall, you simply order your solution, we provision it and get you started, you just log in and use it. You pay based only on the number of unique visitors you send to your LiveBall pages — from 10,000 to millions per month — starting at \$1,295 per month.

- **Content management** — make all the pages you want
- **Testing** — powerful A/B and multivariate testing
- **Reporting** — real-time analytics at your fingertips
- **Hosting** — go live in minutes
- **Support** — high-touch service from nice people
- **Users** — everyone in your company can use it
- **Quick start** — everything you need to get started fast

- **Unlimited seats** — everyone can use LiveBall
- **Unlimited pages** — create and launch all the pages you want
- **Unlimited visits** — multiple visits from a unique count as one
- **Unlimited testing** — run all of the code-free tests you want
- **Unlimited support** — via phone & email — for one user



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