Marketer-managed landing pages for better results

A LiveBall case study featuring the Centre for Arts and Technology and American Greetings.

ion

Results on your schedule

You don't have to wait on your IT department or, agency or developer to build and test your landing pages. You can do it without code or additional outsourcing and expense.

Marketing lives in real time. Whether you're launching a couple of campaigns or hundreds that reach across the globe, you can create an agile, responsive process that gets more done with less resources. Every minute you wait on someone else to create a page or to tweak content for you is a lost opportunity for higher conversions. When you take control, youl get results.

Taking control of landing page management means finding the right solution to empower your marketing team with the ability to make advanced, targeted and optimized landing pages. It's more than just 'no code.' LiveBall is flexible enough to support your many ideas – no matter how advanced or complex – and agile enough so that you can easily manage, update and test hundreds of targeted landing pages.

Your landing page software shouldn't limit your creativity or speed to market. As the Centre for Arts and Technology and American Greetings have learned, the right tool should bring ideas to life.

> LiveBall gave the Centre a canvas to showcase their programs and to connect with future students, without needing developers or IT resources.

CENTRE FOR ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

Breaking free

The Centre for the Arts and Technology is a leading art and design college with three campuses located in Canada. The school offers thirteen post-secondary programs ranging from 3D animation and Fashion Design to Digital Filmmaking and Event and Promotions Management.

They were using program-specific landing pages for their PPC campaigns, but they felt limited by their one page landing experiences. The landing pages that they used were hand coded and built by a third party, so it wasn't easy to change content, make updates or create entirely new experiences. Since the landing experiences were basically just a single form page, they were restricted in the amount of content and images they could display. As an art school, potential students expected to see something visually appealing and creative, yet the process by which pages were created was limiting the marketing team's ability to meet user expectations.

No limitations

The Centre for Arts and Technology began using LiveBall in September 2010. With LiveBall, the Centre's marketing team created seven individual program-specific microsites. Each

microsite was paired with a targeted PPC campaign, and the ultimate goal of each microsite was to have potential students to fill out a contact form. No longer limited by one page, the Centre was able to showcase student work, testimonials, host videos, and outline program details. LiveBall gave the Centre a canvas to showcase their programs and to connect with future students, without needing developers or IT resources.

375% increase

The Centre's conversion rates increased from 4% to as much as 19% by moving from single hand-coded page experiences to content-rich microsites in LiveBall.

Not only did conversion rates soar, but they also saw their lead quality increase. Instead of going to the Centre's homepage, which has so much information it's hard to navigate or a landing page with just a snippet of information, potential students were being sent to targeted, specific landing experiences that were very visual and informational. Potential students knew very quickly whether or not it was the type of program they were hoping to find, so when they filled out a form they were definitely interested.
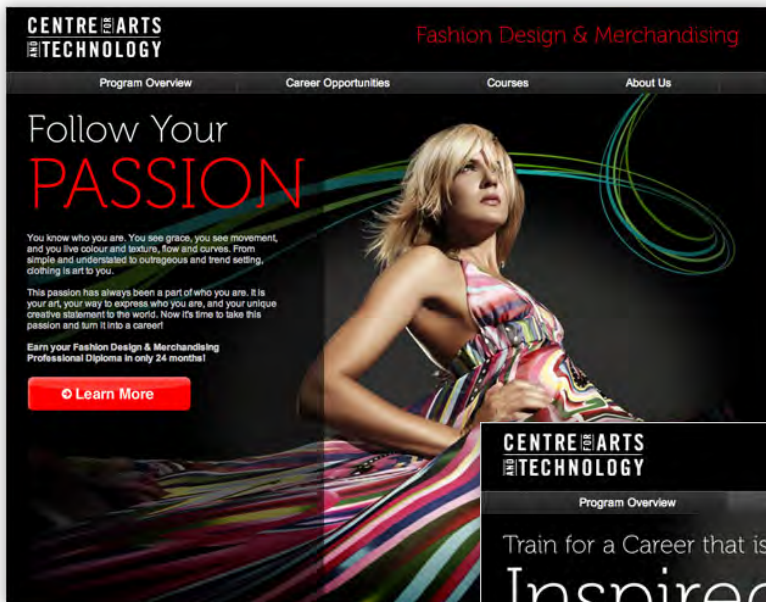
"LiveBall has given us another avenue to always have fresh content and fresh development, without having to worry about managing and updating a large website all of the time."

With LiveBall, Centre for Arts and Technology now has the flexibility and ability to test new campaign ideas as soon as they think of them. They recently launched a contest aimed at high school students where each contest category related directly to a post-secondary program at the Centre. Within four days the Centre's marketing team was able to build and launch the contest campaign microsite. Before LiveBall, this would have taken them two to three weeks.

As the Centre's Interactive Marketing Manager Teresa Doulos explains, *"LiveBall has given us another avenue to always have fresh content and fresh development, without having to worry about managing and updating a large website all of the time."*

Connecting to inspire

Next, the Centre will be creating highly visual "gallery-style" landing pages that will feature student work and testimonials. LiveBall's sophisticated and flexible templates give the Centre the ability to quickly create landing experiences that connect with their potential students and inspire them to think about what they too can create.
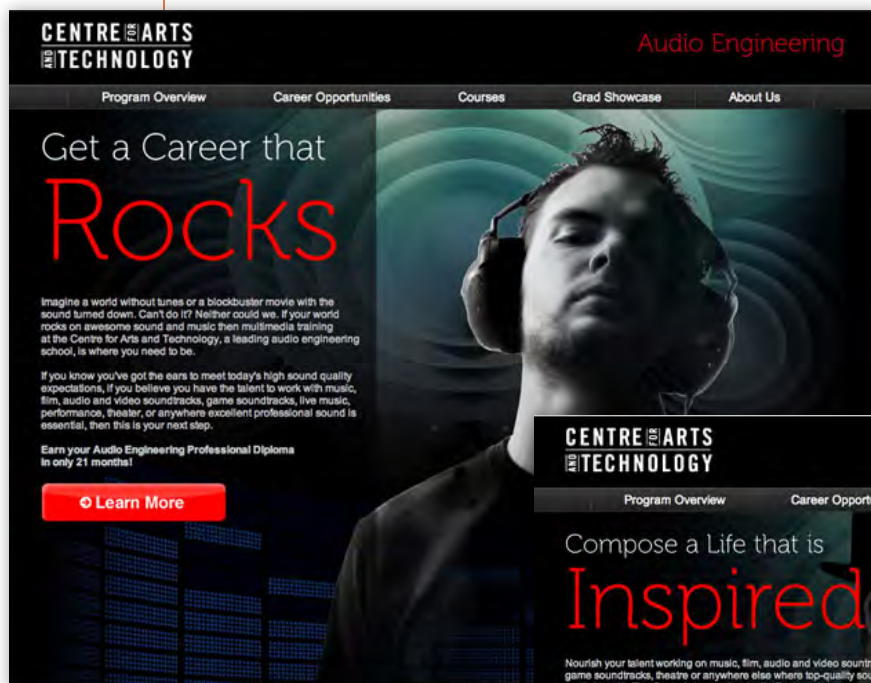
AMERICAN GREETINGS

Tearing down roadblocks

American Greetings has the largest collection of electronic greetings on the web, including cards available at AmericanGreetings.com through AG Interactive, Inc., the company's online division. AG Interactive drives millions of unique visitors from paid search and other online media sources. Their goal is to convert this traffic using online registration for a free trial subscription (which later converts to a paid subscription to AmericanGreetings.com). In the past, this online traffic funneled into the www.AmericanGreetings.com home page, or to a single, MVT-optimized landing page.

The marketing team knew they needed to launch aggressive landing page testing in order to lift conversion rates, but faced some executional roadblocks. Implementing testing though IT on the one landing page was slow and arduous, with a multi-month feedback loop to the marketing team. Experimentation with alternative design and content was slower still. When test results were extracted from this process it was months behind and often gave little reliable cause and effect determination.

In order to lift online conversions and reduce cost-per-acquisition, American Greetings needed to develop context-specific landing pages, experiment more broadly with content & layout and view test results & analyses in real-time. They turned to LiveBall, ion's enterprise landing page platform.
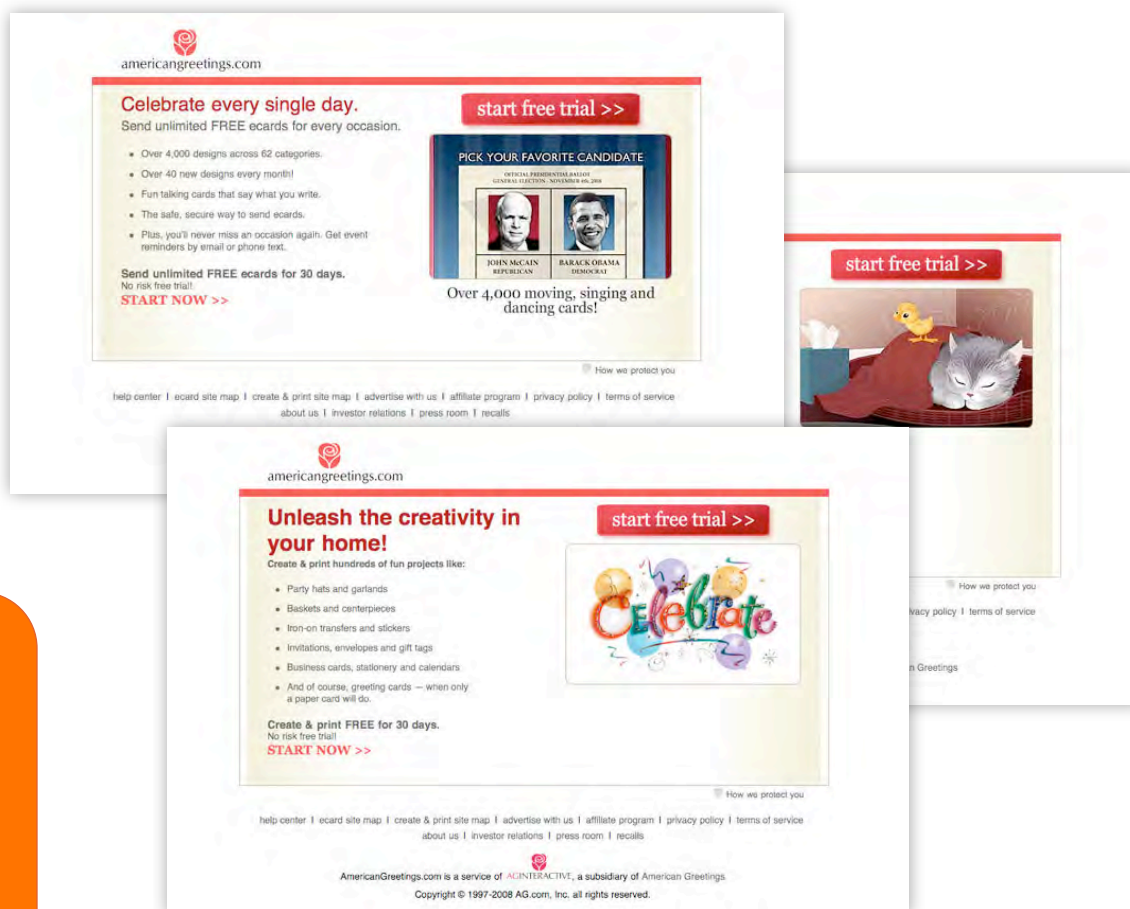
Taking the wheel

American Greetings adopted LiveBall in order to increase agility, speed-to-market, specificity and to ultimately improve conversion performance to lower cost-per-customer-acquisition. With LiveBall, AG Interactive's marketing team can easily create, test and optimize landing pages without IT resources. ion's team worked closely with AG Interactive marketing manager Tessa Fraser to launch and test alternative landing experiences that were specific to market segments and traffic sources.

Within the first 3 months of testing with LiveBall American Greetings moved from a single, optimized landing page to over 40 unique landing pages, each context-specific to its source of traffic. Three entirely different design formats were tested with 12 different price points across over 200 different audience segments. By speaking to each segment much more specifically, American Greetings was able to increase conversions despite economic fallout that actually reduced the flow of traffic.

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Each unique landing page format was quickly customized and messaged to closely match the PPC ads that were sending traffic. The testing resulted in an almost immediate 30% increase in conversion and a subsequent 20% decrease in cost-per-acquisition (which is a net benefit that includes the added expenses associated with ion's LiveBall platform and conversion services).

After a few months of ion's full-service landing page management to get them started, American Greetings now runs their landing page program on their own, using the LiveBall platform to easily create, test and optimize in real-time. Tessa says *"There's so much flexibility in the templates. We run 13 or 14 tests simultaneously at any one time and get quick, actionable learning. And we've easily extended LiveBall with additional brands like BlueMountain and PhotoWorks."* Over their first five months using LiveBall the American Greetings online marketing team created over 700 unique landing pages, being tested across hundreds of unique sources of traffic.

The real-time testing & analytics in LiveBall ensure traffic arrives at best performing landing page for each unique traffic source. Tessa says, *"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. That's revenue that would have been lost without LiveBall's actionable, real-time approach. We don't continue to lose on any test — we auto-optimize as soon as we have significance."*

Driving better results

New tests are always in the works at American Greetings. The conversion goal for 2010 was over 40% higher than 2009 and 2011 is targeting another 33% lift over 2010.

Perhaps the most substantial opportunity for conversion rate improvement lies in optimization of the pages that follow the initial landing page — the product romance pages. To this point, American Greetings' optimization efforts have focused solely on the initial landing pages of multi-page experiences. Initial tests of alternate romance pages suggest that even the smallest adjustments result in significant increases in conversion performance.

American Greetings uses ion's LiveBall platform to drive real business ROI at scale. Tessa says *"The little things make the biggest differences. LiveBall gives us incredibly fast speed to market and learning. It's a visual tool that lets us focus on what's working to improve our results."*

Making it happen

American Greeting's and the Centre for Arts and Technology's stories both start by citing frustration with a slow moving and limiting landing page creation process. Coordinating marketing's ideas with tech's hand-coded execution limited how much they could tweak content, launch a new page, or test variations. It's the classic 'too many chefs in the kitchen' scenario where instead of getting the best you end up with a hodgepodge of moving parts – the exact type of mess that causes slip-ups, and delays your speed-to-market.

What both the Centre and American Greetings learned is that they didn't need code or a complicated production process to create beautiful, sophisticated landing pages that convert. They increased their conversion rates by centralizing the management of their landing page programs completely within the marketing department. Instead of chasing moving parts, they organized their content within one tool. With all of their campaigns managed in one place, they could analyze the bigger picture and roll out program-wide changes and tests just as easily as making a tweak to one page.

For a truly marketer-managed landing page program you need a software solution that supports your needs in more ways than just eliminating code. Often when we think of managing landing pages, we focus too much on managing landing page production. Taking control means putting better, more specific, more personalized landing page experiences in front of prospects. This requires content and brand management, ROI attribution, audience segmentation, targeting and testing. Having a tool, like LiveBall, that recognizes and incorporates all of these components in the landing page creation process makes it easier for you to manage the details and the overall strategy

Take direct control and manage more campaigns with less resources! With LiveBall, you can make better pages that achieve better results.

"LiveBall gives us incredibly fast speed to market and learning. It's a visual tool that lets us focus on what's working to improve our results."

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!**

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