Landing Page Checklist

11 Most Important Keys to High Conversion Rates

by Peter Sandeen

Without good landing pages online marketing is a waste of your time and money

A landing page is technically any page where visitors "land." In other words, the first page visitors see on your site is a landing page.

But usually a *landing page* means a page that has a specific purpose beyond keeping visitors on the site.

Your goal for the page can invite the visitor to:

• Join your email list (opt-in landing page)

• Buy your product or service (sales page)

• Contact you (contact page)

• Learn more about you, your company, or your products (about page)

And sometimes the goal is to just strengthen your brand's image in the visitor's mind.

In most cases, the effectiveness of a landing page can be measured by the conversion rate.

For example, if you want visitors to join your email list, the conversion goal is the sign up.

The conversion rate is the percentage of visitors that reaches the conversion goal.

Typical conversion rates differ widely from lower than 1% to over 90% depending on the page's conversion goal, the industry, and the traffic source (where the visitors come from).

The items in this list aren't specific to one landing page type. They focus, however, on landing pages with a measurable conversion goal (e.g., sign up or sale).

And one more thing you should remember: This is a checklist, not a course on how to build effective landing pages. In other words, its purpose is to help you look at each key element of your landing page to find weak spots.

1. Does your headline start a conversation?

The headline is the key element of any landing page.

It's the first thing readers see, and if it fails to capture their interest, they won't read anything else.

There isn't one "right" way to write a headline, but it should always start a conversation.

Here's a simple test that tells you if your headline is good or not:

Let's look at this headline: "Your search is over! We offer the most reliable web hosting you can find." It's not going to work, and here's the test.

Imagine a guy approaching a girl in a bar and using that headline to start a conversation that results in "conversion."

"Your search is over! I am the most reliable bachelor you can find" is unlikely to earn him anything more than the equivalent of hitting the "back" button.

If your headline isn't something you can say without sounding dumb, change it.

2. Does your sub-headline support the main headline?

The sub-headline can *sometimes* be unrelated to the main headline.

Usually, its purpose is to support the main headline's focus or introduce a concept that builds on the main headline.

If your sub-headline isn't closely related to the main headline, consider whether they form a cohesive idea together.

You're better off with no sub-headline than with one that's unrelated to the main headline.

3. Does your copy talk in your readers' language?

The copy (text of the page) must speak your readers' language.

If your target market wouldn't ordinarily use a specific word or expression, you shouldn't use it either.

There are some exceptions to that, but you should simplify your copy if you're using words or expressions that are more complex than those your readers use. What level of experience do they likely have in your industry or area of expertise? Gauge accordingly.

4. Do your images and graphics support your value proposition?

If you use images and graphics, they need to support your value proposition.

They must support your message and help readers understand the offer or the value of the offer. Don't use them for decoration or just because you think you should.

5. Does your call to action promise value?

You have to—literally—ask visitors to do something they *want* to do.

For example, a button that submits a registration form should *not* say, "submit." No one wants to submit. They *do,* however, want to "get the video" or "download the ebook" you're offering on the page.

6. Do you focus on the reader?

People are interested in themselves and their goals and problems more than anything else.

Write about the benefits *they* will get. Write about *their* problems.

If you write about yourself, they're not as interested as they would be if you wrote about them.

Introducing yourself can work, but even that has to relate to their needs, problems, and goals.

7. Does the page *smell* wrong?

The message on a landing page should remain congruent with advertising and headlines.

For example, if your ad's headline says "Free yoga lesson," your landing page's headline should say that too (or it should otherwise be very prominent on the page).

This continuity of the message is called "scent." If the message changes, people "lose the scent" and turn back to find it again on the page where they were before—or they quit.

8. Does your page answer questions and handle objections?

Provide the information your visitor needs concerning features and benefits of your product or service.

You should also be sure to address objections—reasons for not taking action—that your visitors are likely to have.

Remember, you have to answer all the important questions and minimize the main objections on the landing page. Otherwise your conversion rate will be minimal.

9. Do you have unnecessary page elements?

Landing pages should have a simple design; everything should be focused only on the page's conversion goal.

For example, sidebars and navigation bars are typical design elements that don't help the visitors complete the conversion goal. And because of that, those unnecessary elements are hurting your conversion rate.

10. Do you have a PS?

The PS is often one of the most read parts of a long landing page.

So, if your page is even relatively long, you should have a PS at the end unless there's a specific reason for not having it there.

11. Do you communicate a strong value proposition?

NOTE: This is the most important point; everything else in this checklist is trivial by comparison.

If you don't have a strong value proposition, you've got a big challenge.

The value proposition is the reason your targeted visitors would prefer your offer over all competing offers. In other words, if you don't have a strong value proposition, your visitors don't have a good reason for doing what you want them to do.

And even if your value proposition is compelling, it doesn't matter unless you clearly communicate it to your readers.

Simply put, the page has to focus on making the readers understand and *feel* the value they'll receive if they take action.

Focusing on your product's benefits—not just features—is the start. But you also need to convince readers you're giving them something unique they can't find elsewhere.

And you must be able to do that without exaggerating, misleading, or lying.

Peter Sandeen

I work with people who are serious about getting better results—people who prefer hearing things straight so they can move forward quickly.

If you'd like clear, straightforward help with improving your conversion rates, creating and using your value proposition, or crafting an effective marketing strategy, check out how I usually work with people.

Feel free to contact me at peter@petersandeen.com if you have any questions. I reply to all emails within 24 hours.

Looking forward,

Peter Sandeen