



# Creating high-converting landing pages

## Seven Steps to Success Guide

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# Introduction

This guide explains all the steps you need to take to create effective landing pages.

We're often asked by members for succinct summaries, so the introduction to our Landing Page guide summarises all the main factors that affect effectiveness.

## The 10-minute guide to effective landing pages

You can simply think of a landing page as any "entrance page" where visitors enter a site. Typically landing pages are simplified pages designed to get the highest conversion when a visitor arrives from specific media like paid search, affiliate marketing or an offline campaign.

### What is it? Landing page

An entrance page to a site where a visitor arrives on a site when they click on an ad or other form of link from a *referring site* or an offline campaign. It can be a home page, but more typically and desirably a landing page is a page with the messaging focused on an offer featured in an ad or another site.

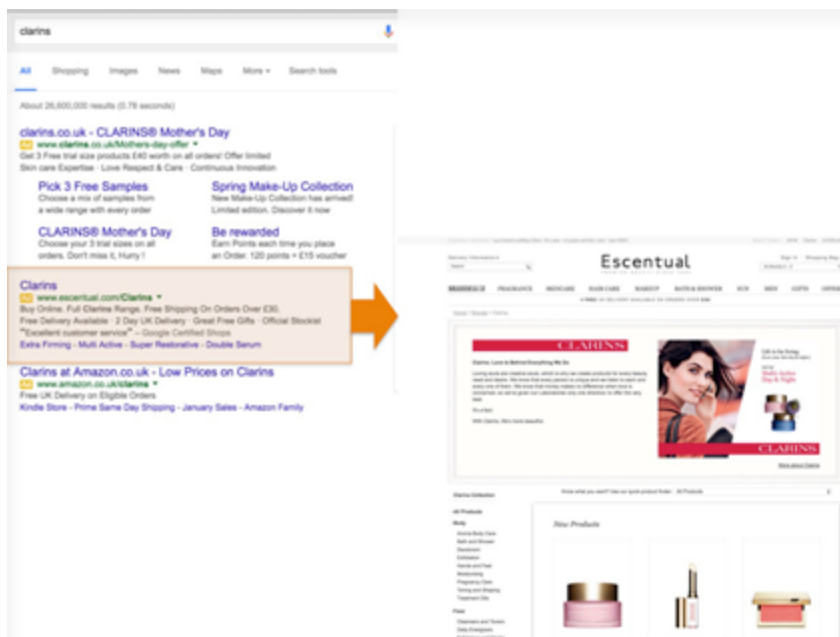
There are two main types of landing pages:

#### 1. Standard pages such as category, product and home pages

For some marketing campaigns you may already have good quality landing pages on your website that can be used to avoid having to spend time and money creating new pages. For example, an ecommerce retailer that sells well-known consumer brands might choose to use their brand landing pages for brand-centric paid search campaigns. With the number of different types of different products it's not practical to create specific landing pages.

Take a look at the example below of beauty retailer Escentual.

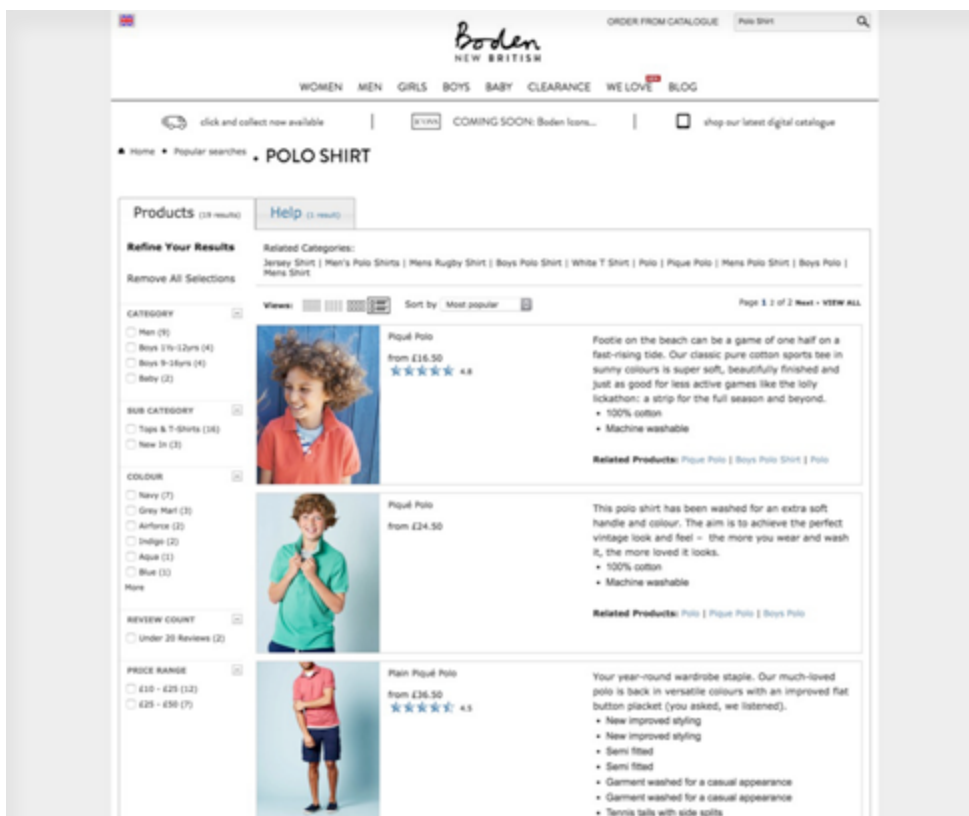
The marketing team is using the Clarins brand page from its brand directory as the paid search landing page for brand-related search queries (the top ad in this example is triggered by searches on 'clarins').



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Note that a landing page can be any existing URL that is accessible via the website so it's important to see how to boost conversion for visits through SEO as arriving on landing pages. Some web teams create custom URLs specifically for marketing campaigns, for example curated product list pages that cater for high priority paid search terms. This includes URLs that are generated by the use of search/attribute filters; many search tools allow you to create custom search lists and assign a unique search identifier that creates a unique URL for use in campaigns.

The example below shows Boden using a ppc landing page for the search term 'womens polo shirts' that is actually a search results page hosted on its search sub-domain (powered by SLi Systems), generated by using multiple search filters.



Let's have a look at our first tip

### Best Practice Tip 1 Show the specific value you offer straightaway

For a retailer typically this is the pricing, delivery and returns policy, often shown in a ribbon below the main navigation or in the right sidebar as a "Why choose Us?" box. In the Clarins example from Escentual, the focus is on telling the brand story and promoting the new products.

## 2. Creating a bespoke landing page for a specific traffic source

This type of campaign landing page is often what companies refer to when they discuss landing pages.

Often, digital marketers don't have an existing web page that satisfies the unique requirements of a marketing campaign. For example, they may be targeting an audience segment for which additional content and different calls to action are required. In this case, they will design and build a bespoke landing page to give them a better chance of converting visitors.

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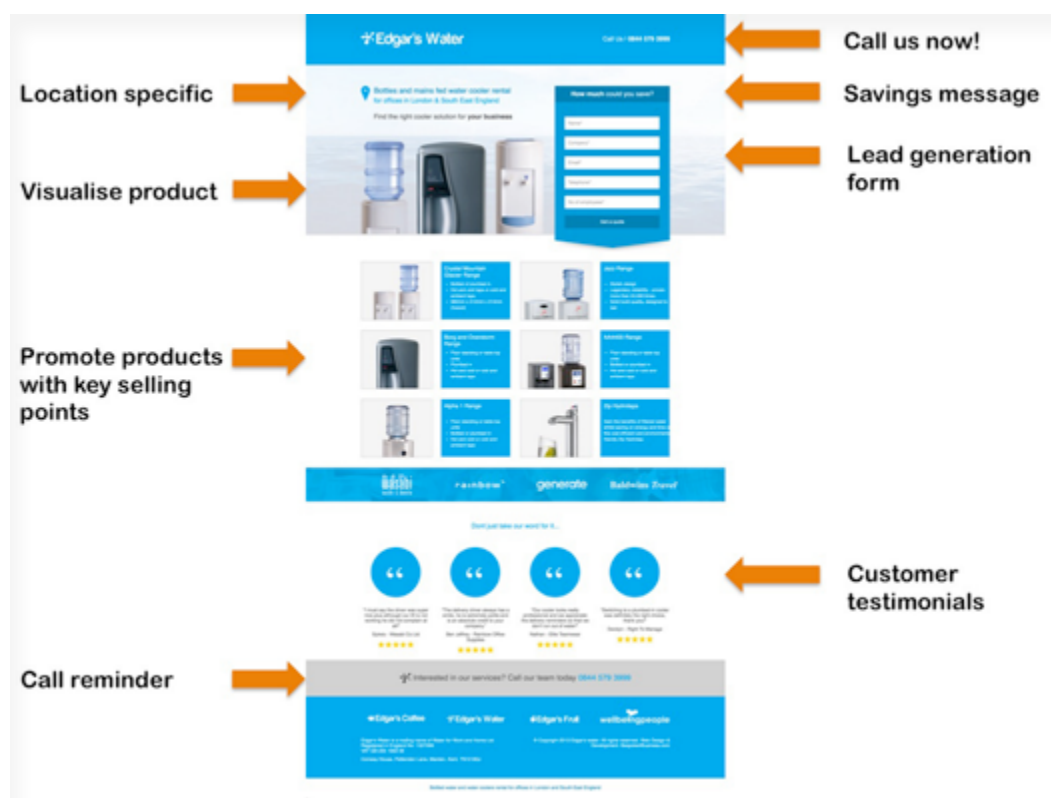
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Bespoke landing pages are really useful when existing web pages aren't performing as well as you would like (e.g. *high bounce rate, low conversion rate, low per visit value, etc.*) to justify sending lots of campaign traffic to them. Why spend time and money creating great marketing campaigns only to send people to a web page that won't convert their interest?

The goal of a landing page will vary depending on the business and market you operate within. Typically landing pages fall into one or more of the following types:

- ✓ **1. Sales conversion.** The goal is to generate revenue via an online purchase via the website. This is the most common form of landing page for ecommerce websites.
- ✓ **2. Lead generation.** The goal is to capture visitor interest in a product or service and get them to submit contact information for follow-up sales activity. This is most common in B2B marketing.

See the example below from Edgar's Water, a supplier of rental bottled water and water coolers for offices, where this is again a destination page for an AdWords campaign, for search queries including "office water cooler". You can see that a range of messages are used to encourage direct response via a lead generation form.



- ✓ **3. Data capture/sign up.** Here the goal is similar, it's to get information from the visitor that will enable the business to include them in future marketing campaigns or improve the relevancy of future marketing campaigns by supporting a customer relationship management (CRM) program.

An interesting application of this is in the insurance industry where users are asked to submit lots of personal information to get a free quote. The quote can be stored and retrieved later, or the user can commit to purchase immediately. Even though many users won't buy once the quote is complete, it generates a lot of data for future marketing and customer analysis.

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## Best Practice Tip 2 Capture email at the start of the process and follow-up

It's expected that many people won't actually complete their quote or make a direct purchase but this process gives the insurance company data that can be used to convert prospects into customers, as open quotes can be saved for future reference. Follow-up occurs via a triggered email.

Some B2B software websites use simple signup forms to get new users subscribed to a free service, creating a database of users that can be harvested to upsell paid services, such as an upgrade to a premium version. This is common amongst SaaS vendors. The example below is from Webceo.com, showing the ppc landing page from a Google search for "seo guide". The actual landing page is much longer, the screenshot only shows the signup form.



- ✓ 4. **Download.** The goal is to get visitors to download content, usually with the exchange of contact data in return for the content.

A good example is from email marketing where B2B companies regularly promote free content to harvest contacts. To access the content online or download, you need to provide basic contact information (name, company, job title, contact phone and email).

The screenshot below shows the user journey from a paid search ad from AdClarity to download a free B2B ebook on programmatic buying.

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**Key Strategy Recommendation 1 Define the primary marketing aim of your landing pages**

We find it helps to categorise your landing pages to help you focus on a primary goal for each page. This will ensure that your landing page strategy targets outcomes rather than being undirected.

**Why are landing pages important?**

Generally speaking, there are two challenges for digital marketers: first, they need to devise compelling content and marketing campaigns that will inspire customers to respond; second, they need to provide a destination where the customer can easily achieve their goals and find all the information they need to make a decision.

The second requirement is often the most overlooked – it’s far more exciting to launch a cool marketing campaign with stunning creative and unbeatable offers than to carefully plan out the onwards user journey and ensure all angles are covered to make the most of the response.

However, it’s this requirement that determines how successful a marketing campaign will be. For campaigns with an online response mechanism, your landing page plays a vital role in matching the needs of visitors with relevant calls to action and conversion paths. A well-designed landing page removes the barriers to conversion – the difference between failure and success. For example, a landing page that uses creative assets (e.g. banners) consistent with the marketing campaign reassures visitors that they are in the right place.

The example below from a holiday company is from a Google search for “holidays in Bordeaux”. When clicking on the paid search ad from Carisma Holidays, you’re dropped on a busy landing page with no mention of ‘Bordeaux’ anywhere. The page spends focuses on trying to persuade you the website is quality instead of thinking about the most relevant content based on the user journey. If you don’t know the region well, would you think that La

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Dune des Sables and St Hilaire are in Bordeaux? They're not, although they are relatively near by.



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## What you will learn from this guide

Our advice in this guide is about improving pages specifically created to increase conversion to lead where you either convert visitors to making a purchase online or collect visitors' details through a form for follow-up marketing activity to convert to sale. The latter is typical for B2B companies where often the online channel is used to generate leads and feed the sales funnel.

Examples of where landing pages work well include:

- ✔ Leads for business-to-business services like SaaS software
- ✔ High-value consumer services like holidays, mortgage applications or laser eye treatment
- ✔ Searches for complex products/services where lots of information needs to be presented, in an easy to understand format.

It's most common to create these types of landing pages when you're paying for site visitors by running a Google AdWords or banner campaign. Alternatively, if you're running a print ad, direct mail or TV campaign, you may want to have a call-to-action to visit an online landing page. It makes sense to do all you can to get the best returns when you invest to drive visitors to your site. You want to give visitors a focused experience to encourage conversion without all the clutter of a home page.

The page can be part of the site architecture which visitors reach by searching or browsing, or a page specifically designed for links from paid ad campaigns. The aim of the landing page is to maximise conversion rates plus help brand familiarity and favourability.

## Key Strategy Recommendation 2 Create bespoke landing pages for lead generation

Landing pages will maximise conversion since you can create a simpler page focused on your goals and making it easier for site visitors to engage.

Even if you don't have these types of pages on your site now, this guide will give you lots of ideas about how you can make different types of pages more effective. The recommendations we give in this guide apply to both types of landing pages. First, those integrated into the site's structure with standard page templates and navigation for the site. Second, landing pages specifically created for getting new leads and customers with a different look and feel. Remember also that the home page can effectively be a landing page, so similar approaches often work.

Here's an example of what we think is a good landing page from SLI Systems, promoting an industry event. It illustrates many good practices such as replicating the campaign creative to provide visual consistency. We've marked up what we see as good about this format. It's maybe not perfect, but better than most!

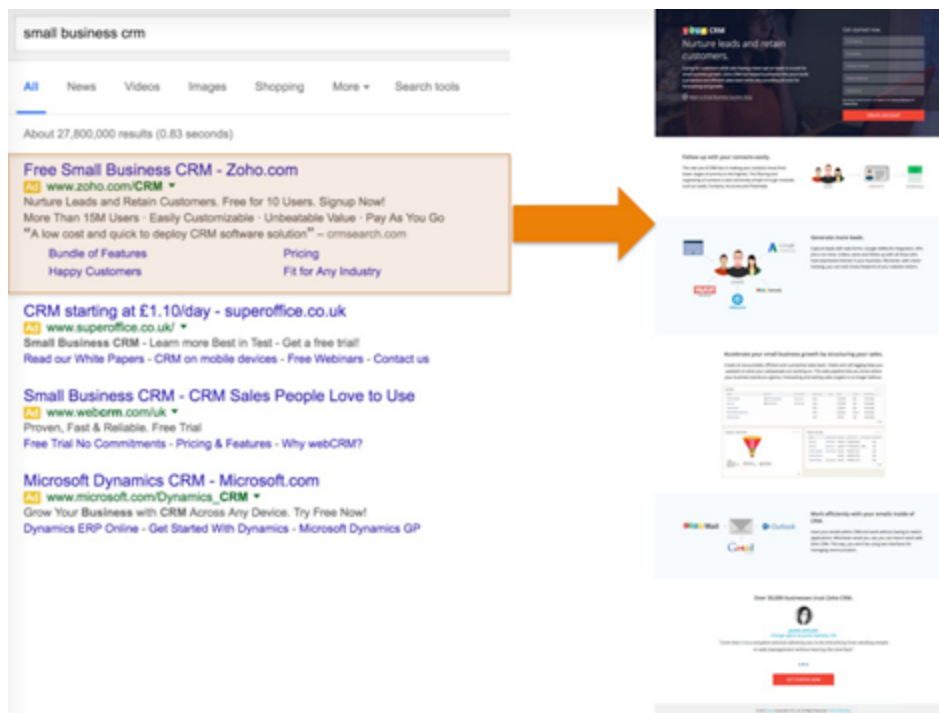
1. Consistent creative from email to landing page
2. Simple positioning copy promoting the event
3. Countdown timer with clear CTA
4. Latest social content
5. Links for people who want more information.



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Another example is the landing page from Zoho.com promoting a CRM software solution for small business. We can see the power of these pages in generating awareness and leads if we take a look at the Google AdWords ad that encouraged visitors to this landing page.

Zoho.com has the top sponsored position in Google AdWords which supports sitelinks: this will give it many more visitors than its natural listing which isn't even on the first page of SERPs in Google because terms related to 'CRM' are highly competitive.



In this guide we have curated lot's of examples of good (and sometimes poor) practice, but if you're looking for more examples of landing pages to inspire you, see these compilations from:

- ✓ [Hubspot<sup>1</sup>](#)
- ✓ [Unbounce<sup>2</sup>](#)
- ✓ [Creativebloq<sup>3</sup>](#)

There's also an interesting case study available on the Smart Insights website looking at how Salesforce.com used landing pages to promote its CRM solutions<sup>4</sup>. Please note that this landing page has subsequently changed but the good practice learning is still relevant.

## Common aims of landing pages

It's important to consider the aims for your landing pages, specifically what you want them to achieve. This ensures that you match content with the needs of visitors and business aims. We will go into this in more detail in Step 1 where we look at [Defining how landing pages will deliver against goals and objectives](#), but to give an indication of aims, we like to split our aims or purpose of landing pages into four streams as shown in the next table.

When thinking about aims, remember that only a percentage of your total audience will be ready to commit to a conversion. Many people respond to marketing campaigns to find out more information as part of the research phase of the decision making process. Therefore,

<sup>1</sup> <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/landing-page-examples-list>

<sup>2</sup> <http://unbounce.com/landing-page-examples-built-with-unbounce/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.creativebloq.com/web-design/landing-page-design-6133358>

<sup>4</sup> [Smart Insights: The Perfect Landing Page.](#)

don't obsess over the conversion rate at the expense of everything else, although it is an important key performance indicator (KPI) to measure and monitor.

Conversion	Information and onward journey	Lead generation	Brand awareness
<p>Where the visitor can complete an action on the landing page itself.</p> <p>Here the conversion occurs online.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Paid search ad links direct to a product page with "Buy now" as primary CTA</li> <li>✓ Email campaign directing people to a landing page for subscription to a service.</li> </ul>	<p>Where the landing page acts as a conduit to a more complex user journey, or to provide specific information to engage visitors.</p> <p>Here, conversion occurs on another web page or via a different channel.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ B2B purchase cycle for IT solutions with landing page to promote key benefits with links to specific products/ services.</li> </ul>	<p>Where the landing page is used to capture interest in a product or service using a contact form.</p> <p>Here the online channel is often used to generate leads for offline channels like telesales.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Digital Marketing company using an online form to enable visitors to request a free site audit.</li> </ul>	<p>Where you are providing information designed to raise awareness of what your brand represents, to encourage future visits.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Banner ad taking people to a landing page where they can download a White Paper written by the company.</li> </ul>

It's common for landing pages to have a primary conversion call to action (CTA) followed by several secondary calls to action, such as signing up to a newsletter and requesting a sales call. We discuss this in more detail in Step 7 – Improving results.

It's also important to think about the onward journey. Landing pages need to be clear and easy to use. If you have a complex message to communicate, consider using a landing page as the central hook to capture attention and then provide clear links to more detailed information on individual elements of your proposition.

## Factors influencing landing page creation and optimisation

There are many factors that influence the effectiveness of a landing page. In a moment we will recommend some practical steps you can take to change and improve landing pages.

But first, consider the broad factors that affect conversion rates; these are nicely summarised by this formula:

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$$C = 4m + 3v + 2(i-f) - 2a^6$$

Wherein:

- "C" = Probability of conversion.
- "m" = Motivation of user (when).
- "v" = Clarity of the value proposition (why).
- "i" = Incentive to take action.
- "f" = Friction elements of process.
- "a" = Anxiety about entering information.

This formula was developed by Flint McGloughlin and team at Marketing Experiments<sup>5</sup>. We really like the way it simplifies the whole interplay between what the landing page needs to achieve for the business and what the visitor is seeking.

It's worth thinking about how you can control these elements of the equation. As Flint says:

*"Optimization is not simply changing offer page elements, but doing so to better engage with your prospect's thought process".*

- ✅ **Conversion probability (C)**. What you want to increase, the conversion rate!
- ✅ **Motivation of visitor (4m)**. This is given a high weighting - it's the job of the landing page to increase motivation. The more motivation already available when the visitor arrives on the page, the easier your job will be...
- ✅ **Value proposition clarity (3v)**. Simply put *"Why should I hit that button - What's in it for me?"*. So, emphasising what this value is to different types of visitors is a key planning decision before you can build the landing page.
- ✅ **Incentive to take action (i)**. These are offers additional to the core value proposition such as a time-limited offer or bonus if the action is taken.
- ✅ **Friction elements of process (f)**. There are many friction elements centered around the effort needed from the user i.e. time or hassle. The number of fields, or if a multi-step process, pages required to sign-up are the obvious friction components. Notice how, in the equation a more powerful incentive (i) will overcome the friction elements.
- ✅ **Anxiety about entering information (a)**. Straightforward, this is the fear of privacy and security for personal data. It's important to reassure about these. For example, ensuring form pages using HTTPS.

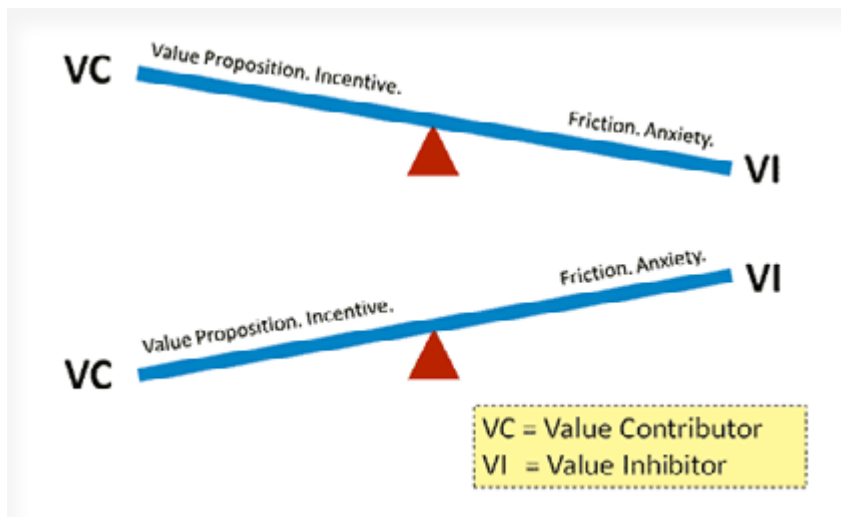
Of course the strength of each element will vary for different types of visitors and how well your page is already performing.

### Key Strategy Recommendation 3 Review the balance of value for your current pages

This formula is a great high-level tool to help you review the strengths of your current pages.

So, improving landing pages is fundamentally about getting the balance right and this is nicely shown in this diagram.

<sup>5</sup> [Marketing Experiments: Optimizing Offer Pages](#)



When you are working to improving landing pages the two main levers are:

- ✓ 1. **Improving and emphasising** your *Value proposition and Incentive*.
- ✓ 2. **Minimising and reducing** *Friction and Anxiety*.

Simple! But which tools do you have to achieve this? Many! They are all the different design elements including visuals, copy and how they are laid out. These are some of the decisions on what you can improve.

And don't forget that you can turn to independent voices to help tackle friction and anxiety, for example customer testimonials that demonstrate that you have happy customers.

## Factors you control to improve landing page performance

Here are some of the main characteristics of the page you control, that we will drill down into later in the guide:

- ✓ **1. Relevance of the page.** In the first few seconds of a visit this is affected by the relevance of the header of the page (images and copy) to the context of the user's visit - why and where have they arrived from?
- ✓ **2. Length of the landing page.** There is a popular myth that short-form landing pages are 'best practice', with key content and call to action above the fold. However, there is sufficient evidence to counter this view and demonstrate that the length of a landing page should be determined by a mix of factors, including the needs of the audience for detailed information.

We discuss this in more detail in Step 4 – Create the optimal page layout.

- ✓ **3. Placement of call to action.** All calls to action must be above the fold right? Wrong. Yep, surprising isn't it. In truth, there is no hard and fast rule. Whilst it's true that in most cases a strong call to action above the fold increases conversion, there are cases where this isn't true and actually putting the call to action in front of the customer before they are ready to take action can actually put them off.

We also discuss this in more detail in Step 4 – Create the optimal page layout.

- ✔ **4. Matching content to marketing creative.** This is marketing good practice 101 – make sure that your landing page is consistent with the source marketing campaigns that generated the visit. Often referred to as the ‘scent trail’, this ensures visitors know they have landed on the right page because they can recognise the creative treatment.

We discuss this in more detail in Step 5 – Compelling content and creative.

- ✔ **5. Consistency of messaging.** This is closely related to marketing creative. It’s important that you replicate the headline copy from your marketing campaigns on the landing pages. This is especially important for paid search where search engines like Google will look to see if the keywords used in ad copy match content on the destination page – failure to do this can adversely affect ad Quality Score.

We also discuss this in more detail in Step 5 – Compelling content and creative.

- ✔ **6. Form validation.** Forms are typically used by B2B marketers on landing pages, for a variety of reasons including capturing contact information from people downloading free content. The biggest barrier to goal completion is poor user experience, where the landing page makes it hard for the visitors to quickly and easily complete and submit the form.

We discuss this in more detail in Step 3 – Engaging your visitor.

- ✔ **7. Optimal blend of content.** Let’s be realistic – if you have a large audience, it’s almost impossible to design a landing page that is perfect for everyone (we’re yet to see that so please do share if you have one!).

This is where landing page optimisation comes in to play – testing different variations of the landing page to find out which one drives the best results (based on the KPIs you are measuring performance against). We discuss this in more detail in Step 7 – Improving results.

## Using your home page as a landing page

Landing page thinking is increasingly applied to home pages since a simpler experience and clearer messages can be offered to the site visitor. This is particularly the case where there is a simple proposition without a large choice of products.

Autoglass is a great example as shown in the next screenshot below and we reviewed a previous version in our article on Home Page as Landing Page<sup>6</sup>. In this version they are promoting the core service of repairing chipped or cracked windscreens with a simple CTA, using content to provide reassurance and quality validation e.g. “*What our customers are saying*”.

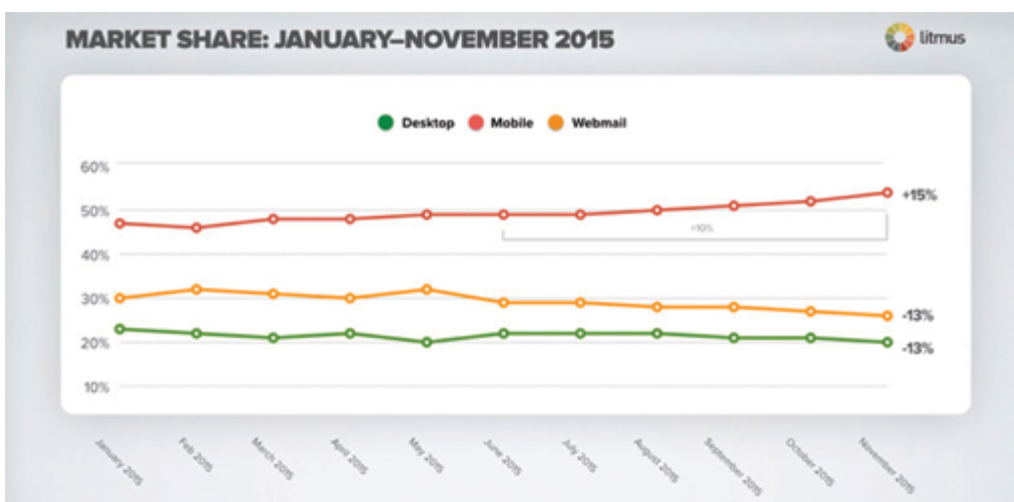
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<sup>6</sup> [Smart Insights: Home page as landing page](#)



## Tailoring landing pages to suit device capabilities

Hopefully you're aware that mobile traffic for many websites has now surpassed desktop traffic, although there are exceptions. What's interesting is how people are using mobile to access information and make purchases, from reading emails to clicking on social ads. Research from Litmus shows that mobile dominates for email opens:



And it may (or may not) surprise you to know that in B2B mobile is a popular device for decision makers to find information, including accessing emails. Google and Millward Brown surveyed the research and purchase habits of 3,000 B2B professionals and found that 42% use mobile devices during their B2B purchase process and purchase rates have increased.

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Image credit: Thinkwithgoogle.com<sup>7</sup>

With the importance of mobile increasing as a traffic source, web teams need to ensure that landing pages are optimised to suit the mobile audience. This requires core UX design skills to ensure the design is mobile friendly, such as using native gestures, but also an understanding of how user needs and journeys differ when browsing via a mobile device.

Q. *Do you have a long, detailed landing page?*

If yes, how do you make this usable on smaller devices? You shouldn't expect users to scroll endlessly to access key information, so what UI design techniques can you use to make the page user-friendly?

It also means you need to stay on top of the latest industry development that impact mobile browsing. A great example is Google's recent launch of Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP), designed for content landing pages to provide super fast loading on mobile due to lightweight code. We recommend watching Distilled's helpful video explaining what an AMP<sup>8</sup> is.

### Facebook landing pages

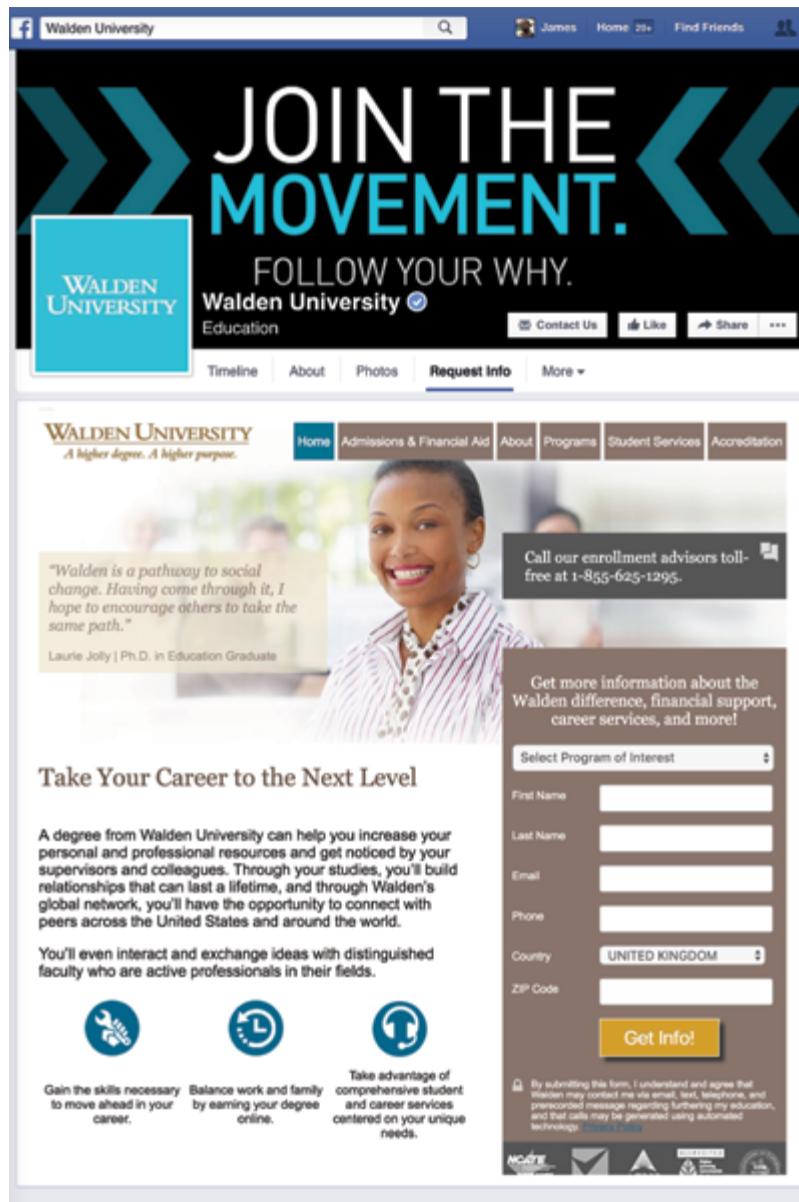
Company Facebook pages encouraging visitors to 'Like' a brand are similar in many ways to landing pages since they have clear, direct response goals – to get the 'Like' and to have to communicate benefits to achieve this.

So, many of the tips you find in this guide may also be useful for Facebook company pages. Educational organisations make good use of social media to promote key products and services via landing pages. An example of a US organisation using a landing page on its Facebook profile is Walden University. It includes links to provide useful information and has a lead generation form.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/articles/the-changing-face-b2b-marketing.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://moz.com/blog/accelerated-mobile-pages-whiteboard-friday>



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Some brands also use Facebook landing pages as a gateway to collect customer information in return for entry into prize draws and competitions. This is similar to using a data capture landing page on your main website.

You can read about a similar Facebook competition on our blog<sup>9</sup>.

So let's move on to Step 1 and look at setting goals for your landing pages.

<sup>9</sup> [Smart Insights: Facebook Sweepstake promotions](#)

# The Smart Insights Digital Experience Toolkit

This 7 Steps Mobile Marketing guide will teach you how to develop an overall mobile strategy. Smart Insights Expert members can consult the other resources in our [Digital Experience Toolkit](#) in our members area to drive the performance of both their mobile and desktop marketing efforts by specific recommendations on site design. We recommend:

- ✔ **Inbound Marketing Quick Wins template**, fully updated to cover the latest inbound marketing techniques across the full customer lifecycle structured around the Smart Insights RACE planning approach, this guide lets you apply a consultant's approach yourself by following the questions you need to ask.
- ✔ **Customer persona toolkit**, aimed at helping agencies and consultants improve their use of design personas and also to develop customer journey maps including mobile.
- ✔ **Landing Page Conversion and Improving website results guides**, detailed best practice tips for desktop and mobile sites with over 50 examples of best practice to inspire improvements to your landing pages covering a range of sectors from retail, financial services, travel, business-to-business and not-for-profit.

## Digital Experience Management

Learn how to make your mobile and desktop website designs more persuasive using our insight-driven approach. This toolkit explains how to use Google Analytics to identify improvements and recommends web design best practices.

1. Complete our Digital Experience Management Capability assessment

2. Start our Digital Experience Management e-learning course

3. Browse the Digital Experience Management resources

4. Unlock all resources with expert membership

**Free Basic Member resource**

- Digital Marketing Benchmarking Templates  
Last updated: 20th Apr 2016 | Last accessed: Not accessed yet

**Auditing your website**

- Inbound Marketing Quick Wins template  
Last updated: 20th Jan 2016 | Last accessed: Not accessed yet
- Competitor benchmarking guide  
Last updated: 02nd Mar 2014 | Last accessed: 16th Dec 2015

**Best practices for improving websites**

**4.0**  
Capability score  
★★★★★  
Last taken 15th Jan 2016  
Review capacity >

**0%**  
Elearning complete

We also recommend these closely-related guides to develop your Mobile strategy:

- ✔ [Ecommerce Design pattern Bible in our Ecommerce toolkit](#) features many mobile examples of mobile optimised page layout and design best practices
- ✔ [Online Marketing Benchmarks statistics compilation](#) to save you time in searching for the latest, most reliable online marketing benchmarks, this guide gives you a single source of the latest and most reliable sources.

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# Step 1

## Set your landing page goals, objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs)

- Q. *Have we defined a full range of landing page goals and objectives?*

Setting goals and objectives helps you and your external agency partners to focus planning around achieving tangible targets. Goals and objectives represent success criteria for your landing pages; if achieved, or exceeded, the campaign can be considered a success. For this reason they are essential because every penny invested must be analysed to determine whether it represents value for money and this can only be decided if there are clear success criteria that can be validated.

Key performance indicators add an essential level of detail, providing a set of metrics against which landing page performance can be measured. By analysing KPI data, you can determine the level of success of your digital marketing, using something concrete against which to benchmark outcomes over time.

Before we look at the difference between goals, objectives and KPIs, let's remind ourselves through an example that success in achieving our objectives will be based on creating a customer-centered landing page and that relies on understanding customer needs.

### Keeping your landing pages focused on customer needs

Although the marketing principles are the same for B2C and B2B (*i.e. give people what they need and make it easy for them to take actions*), the application of landing page strategy varies significantly in B2B marketing where the purchase cycle is often more complex, involving multiple decision makers and influencers.

Here are some of the things to think about when planning landing pages for B2B marketing campaigns:

#### **Primary audience**

Who is the main decision maker you want to influence? What calls to action or “scent trails” specific to them will grab their attention? What questions might they have that need answering? What business challenges do they need solving?

#### **Secondary audience(s)**

Who are the other decision makers and influencers in the project team who need to be catered for? How can you make it obvious there is content for them without disrupting the user experience for your primary audience?

For example, if the IT Director is an influencer, simple headlines like “*Robust and proven API for low-cost implementation*” can help get people onside.

#### **Stage of buying cycle**

What stage of the buying cycle is the audience at and what information do they need now to help them progress their decision? How can you help them make a good decision, for example through buying guides?

#### **Content surfacing**

What content is required to satisfy all audiences? What is the most important content that must be visible without visitors having to take any further action? What additional content do

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you want to provide and how do you signpost this (e.g. text links to additional information that display lightboxes).

The aim should be to keep the content light and focus people on taking further action, but no so light that it doesn't give people enough detail to make a decision.

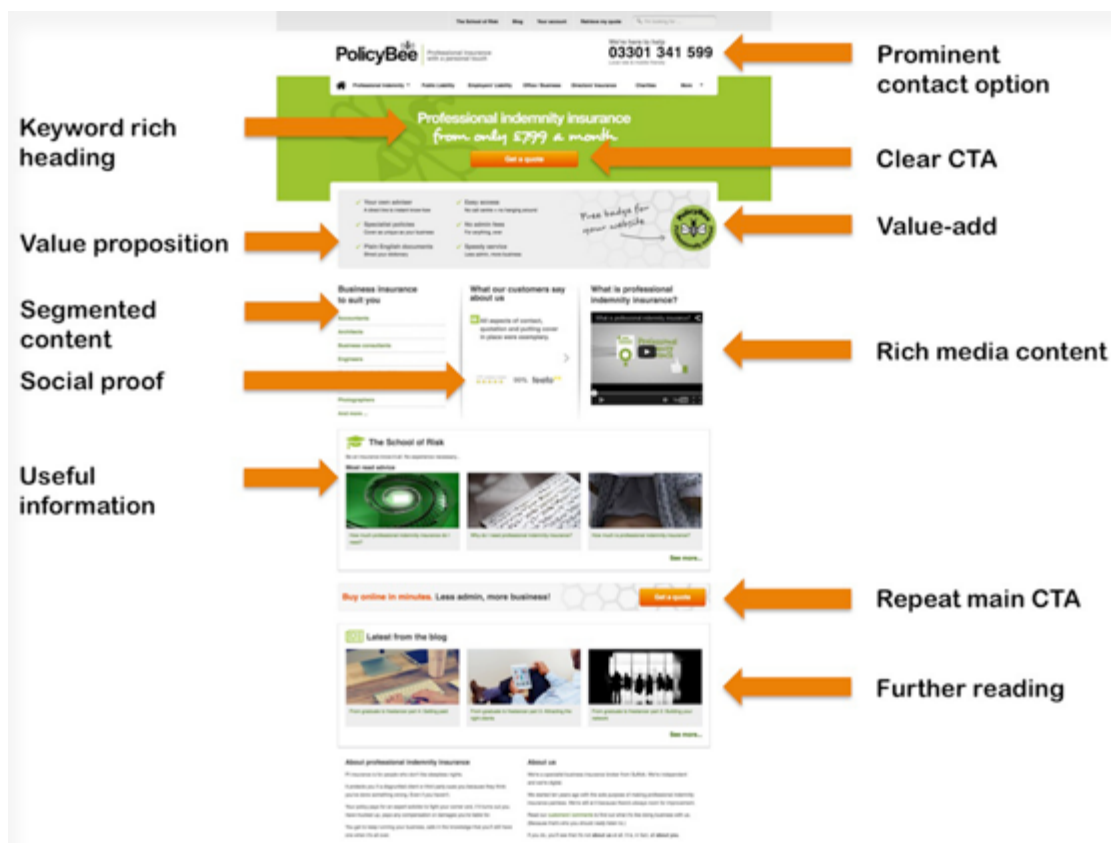
### Take away content

Do you have relevant content that you can provide for visitors to take away and either digest in detail later or share with colleagues and business partners? What is the best mechanism for distributing this content e.g. online video/downloadable white paper.

### Lead harvesting

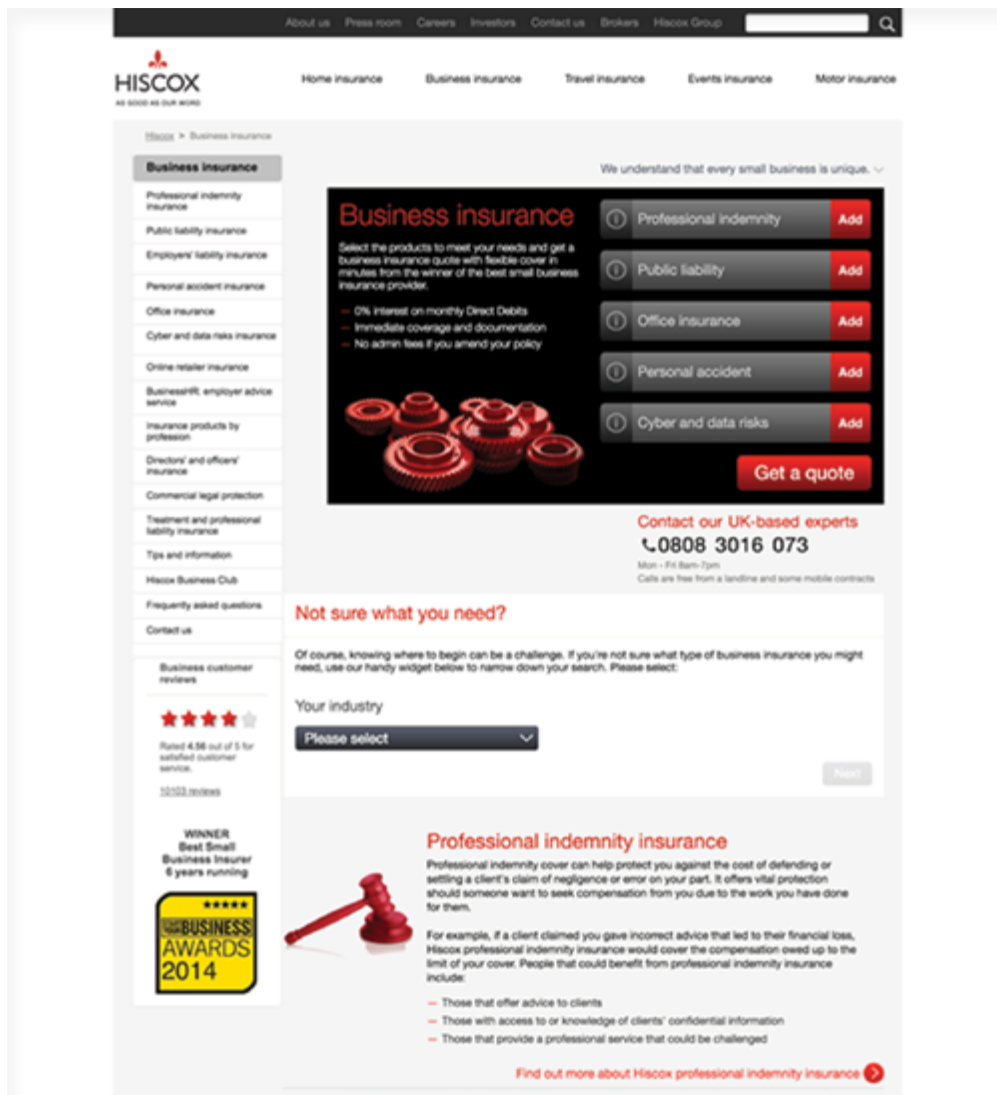
What techniques can you use to capture more information about your target audience(s)? Where can you integrate this into the landing page without disrupting the user experience? What are you going to do with this data when you capture it? Are the benefits of sharing data clear to the visitor?

The screenshot below provides an example B2B landing page by Policy Bee from a paid search ad for the keyphrase 'business indemnity insurance'. We have marked up the key landing page techniques being used.



You may think there is too much information on this page and it's true that testing a simplified version may increase conversion. However it provides a great checklist of the main features you should consider for a B2B landing page. Also compare this to one of it's key paid search competitors:

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Although there are some good landing page techniques here, including the display of the business award, the page isn't focused on the search query, it's a more generic business insurance landing page. Great for people not sure what insurance they want, unnecessary effort for someone specifically searching for indemnity insurance.

## The difference between goals, objectives and KPIs

Q. Is there a difference between a goal and an objective?

YES! Different people in different companies use these two terms differently, even interchangeably, so this can get confusing. What's important is that you agree a working measurement framework that suits your business and has specific **SMART** metrics<sup>10</sup>.

**Key Strategy Recommendation 4 Define a measurement framework linking goals, objectives and KPIs**

You need to create a dashboard to clearly show the value you are getting from landing pages and promotion of these that link broader goals with specific objectives and KPIs.

no footnote

## Recommended resource? 7 Steps Guide to Improving Digital Marketing Results

The [7 Steps Guide to Improving Digital Marketing](#) explains how to build measurement frameworks for a business in more detail.

We like to use a simple test to determine if something is a goal or objective: if there isn't a clear target it's a goal not an objective. Goals and objectives need to be aligned: goals set out top-level aims and objectives give specific targets. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are used to assess progress towards these targets.

### Goals

A goal is a broad target that defines general intentions. Goals are abstract and not easy to measure or validate.

NB. Although in management, broad goals inform specific objectives, Google Analytics uses the term "Goal" to refer to specific measures of outcomes.

For example, a goal for a landing page could be to increase brand awareness.

### Objectives

Objectives translate goals into realistic targets that can be measured. Objectives should be concrete and measurable. For example, an objective for a landing page with the goal of increased brand awareness would be to increase the number of social shares of the page by 100 per cent in two months.

### Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Key Performance or Success Indicators (KPIs) are specific measures that are used to check you're on course to hit your specific objectives. They are sometimes referred to as **performance drivers** since, if you can improve these metrics, you are more likely to hit or exceed your objectives. You can also set targets for improving these too, for example to reduce the bounce rate across your landing pages by 5%.

The next table takes a look at different goal for landing pages and provides examples of objectives that can be aligned with this goal and KPIs that help review progress and performance.

Goal	Objective	KPIs
Increase brand awareness	Increase social network followers by 10% within 90 days.	Examples: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conversion rates to social sharing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments and shares of content within social networks
Increase conversion rate to lead	Increase conversion rate by 5% within 6 months	Examples: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bounce rate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dwell time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Page value
Increase visitor quality	Increase revenue by 10% within 6 months	Examples: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revenue per visit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal value per visit

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Goal	Objective	KPIs
Reduce campaign costs	Reduce cost per acquisition by 10% within 6 months.	Examples: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revenue per visit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal value per visit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conversion rate

## Defining how landing pages will deliver against goals and objectives

### Q. Are we clear on how landing pages support our goals and objectives

In the Introduction we looked at [Common aims of landing pages](#), let's now look at this in more detail. The aims for a landing page are simpler than most types of page. Put simply, the aim is get a response! When a form on a landing page is filled in and the 'submit' or 'enter' button pressed, the contact details are added to a database and then added to a workflow within a customer relationship management system for a manual or automated follow-up. In the simplest case an email will be sent to a defined address giving the details entered on the form.

Depending on the type of business, this response could be:

- Get a named lead through an email address.
- Get a trial subscriber to a publication or a software service.
- Get interest in a high value product to follow-up by phone.

### Key Strategy Recommendation 5 Set broader goals for landing pages

Goals for landing pages often just include response, but if you think about the wider range of goals your pages will be more effective since the majority won't convert straightaway!

So far, so obvious, but there should be other communication goals too. Here's a checklist of what a good landing page should deliver.

- 1. *Achieve registration to generate a lead.* For example, a quote for insurance, which leads ultimately to sale.
- 2. *Profile and qualify the site visitor.* We need to design the landing page to identify higher quality prospects so we can deliver more relevant follow-up marketing communications by email or phone (essential for B2B).
- 3. *Value proposition.* Explain about your products and services, even if you're not immediately planning conversion. You need to carefully explain the value proposition offered by the company to differentiate from other sites the visitor may visit during the buying process.
- 4. *Branding.* Communicate the brand values of the organisation running the campaign. Generally speaking, you're looking to increase the brand audience's familiarity and favourability for the brand. If you take a look back at Policy Bee it differentiates through the Bee ident and strapline in the site header.
- 5. *Sharing.* Often, more than one person will be involved with deciding on purchase of a product or service, so it's worth thinking about making it easier for them to share this through email or sharing more widely through social media.



- ❑ 6. *Answer visitors' questions.* Make a list of the top questions or objections the visitor has about your product, offer or brand. More on this below.
- ❑ 7. *Give offline contacts.* If the visitor doesn't want to disclose their details right now, provide contact details for traditional sales channels such as a phone number, or give the visitor reasons to return to the site or engage them through other relevant content or offers.
- ❑ Q. *How do our existing landing pages compare to this checklist?*

You have to prioritise. It's not always possible to satisfy all these requirements on one landing page. We recommend listing the main goals or responses for your landing page to help you focus:

Goal 1.

---

Goal 2.

---

Goal 3.

---

See Step 7 on improving results to check you're able to track these goals.

It is important to run through these objectives since sometimes it's just the two primary objectives related to data capture that mainly determine landing page design and not the secondary objectives, which are equally important. The majority of the visitors to the landing page won't actually convert, so it is important to give them a favourable experience also. You want them to think of you when they're ready to convert – a great landing page will help bring them back when the time is right.

## Setting KPIs for landing pages

Key performance indicators are used to measure performance against objectives. Key performance indicators are essential because they provide the evidence that demonstrates whether your landing pages are achieving targets.

To measure KPIs properly you will need to turn to your web analytics tools, like Google Analytics. Please take a look at our guide on Google Analytics to check you are using these key techniques related to landing pages:

Recommended resource? [7 Steps Guide to Google Analytics](#)

The [7 Steps Guide to Google Analytics](#) explains goal set up and advanced segments.

### Best Practice Tip 3 Use customisation to make landing page analysis more effective

Recommended techniques for customization, which we explain relevance and setup for in our Google Analytics guide, are:

- ✓ 1. **Goals.** Where landing pages have forms with “thank you” confirmation pages goals should be setup for each.
- ✓ 2. **Funnels.** These help define the effectiveness of form conversion rates. The funnels are the previous steps in the funnel such as the URL of the form or previous pages.
- ✓ 3. **Event tracking.** Event tracking enables interactions to be recorded such as a video play on the landing page, button or promotion clicks or even clicks on specific fields of the form. You may also want to record PDF downloads. Event tracking can also be used for assessing attribute refinement filters on a Christmas landing page being used by an ecommerce retailer. The Event tracks which refinements are used the most to help the web team prioritise the order of the refinements on the landing page.
- ✓ 4. **Event Goals.** These enable you to relate events such as video plays to specific goals. This post on Smart Insights gives examples of [how to setup Event Goals](#).
- ✓ 5. **Custom variables.** Visitors who complete forms can be tracked when they return via cookies that can also store information about their profile information or lead quality based on information entered.
- ✓ 6. **Advanced segments.** These can be used to filter the behaviour of visits related to landing pages. For example, show related pages for people who visited or completed a landing page.
- ✓ 7. **Custom reports.** Enable a report on landing pages only, for example if they have common URL elements.

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We will look into more detail on how to use analytics to optimise your landing pages [Step 7 Improving results](#).

## Creating a management dashboard for landing pages

More generally, for reporting on Google Analytics at a management reporting level in a dashboard, we advise classifying the types of KPI data you need to review into three areas:

### 1. Volume

The traffic that is being driven to the landing page, monitoring visitor activity.

### 2. Quality

This involves measuring the level of engagement your visitors have with the website based on bounce rate, interaction with the page and conversion rates.

### 3. Value

This relates to the financial value that the traffic is driving in terms of ecommerce KPIs such as revenue, Goal Value per Visit, Revenue per Visit.

For each area, focus on the KPIs that help you interpret what impact your landing page is having on the goals and objectives. This table gives examples.

## Create conversion models to assess potential of landing pages

Q. Have we created conversion models to review the potential from landing pages?

To set expectations of what the landing pages can deliver, which will help set budget for their creation, you need to create conversion models. We have some examples available on Smart Insights for you to download here.<sup>11</sup>

### Key Strategy Recommendation 6 Create conversion models to assess landing page potential

Conversion models can help set expectations and set budgets. Use a worst and a best case scenario to see what you can afford to pay to drive visitors to your website – this is your affordable cost-per-lead.

Here's an example showing how you can model how many you will add to the top of the funnel and how this will translate to leads and sales.

Model	Scenario 1	Scenario 2
REACH of web site	1,000,000	250,000
Attraction efficiency	20.00%	5.00%
Web site VISITORS	200,000	12,500
Site conversion efficiency	10.00%	5.00%
LEADS generated	20,000	625
Lead conversion efficiency	60.00%	40.00%
Number of required OUTCOMES	12,000	250
Offline sales multiplier	1.0	1.0
Repeat customer multiplier	1.0	1.0
Average value per outcome	£50	£30

Conversion models are really useful in helping you determine the number of impressions and visits you need from a marketing campaign to your landing page to achieve the goals set.

Let's take paid search as the example. You want to create a new landing page for an ad on Google but you're not sure if you can justify the investment. You use a conversion model to plug in revenue and cost data from three key sources:

1. AdWords data (impressions, click-through rate, cost per click, etc.)
2. Google Analytics data (sessions, conversion rate, average order value, transactions, revenue etc.)
3. Product margins.

From this you calculate the forecast net margin for the campaign. You can then reflow the conversion model to include a projection for conversion increases as a result of having a bespoke landing page and deduct the cost of building the landing page to determine if the investment is justified. See below for an outline of this type of return on investment model that can be used to make the business case for landing page optimisation.

Please note that some marketers will invest in a landing page even if it doesn't add to the net margin of the campaign. Why? They may perceive the uplift in conversion (new customer acquisition) to be more important as they then have more customers to target via their retention programs. Again, this all depends on what goals you set for your landing page.

<sup>11</sup> [Smart Insights: Download conversion calculator models](#)

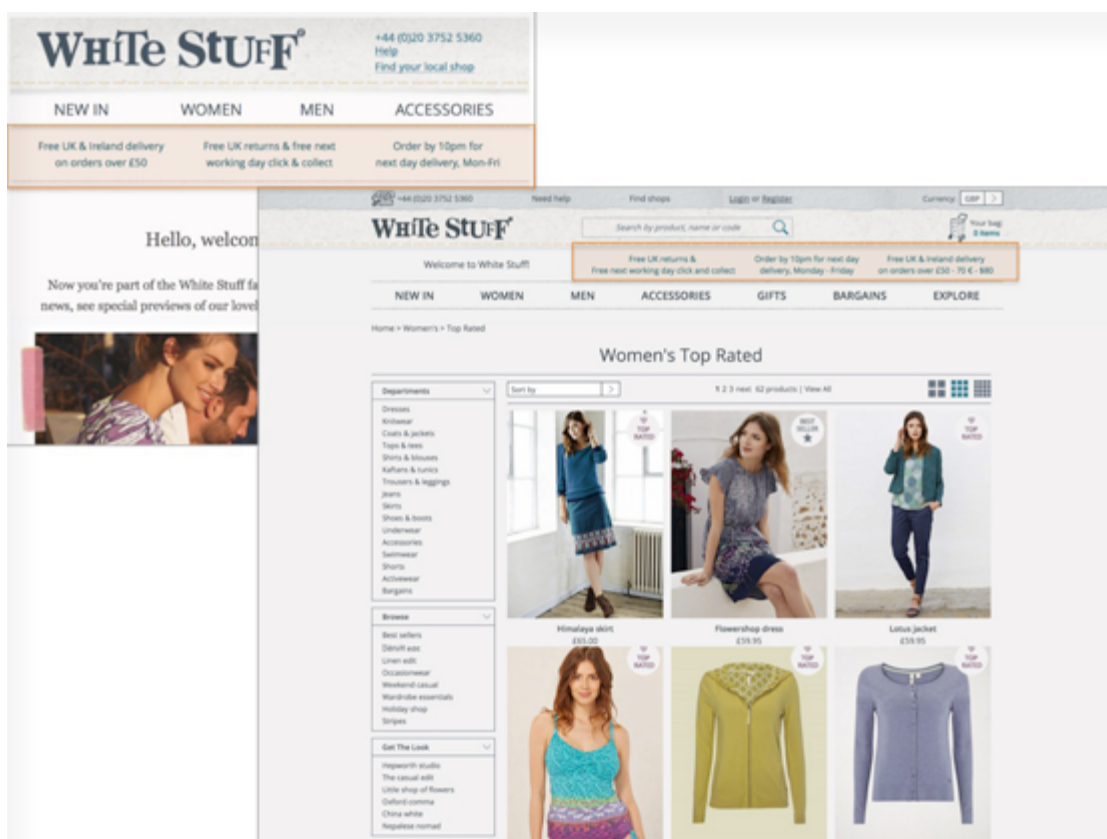
## Set branding objectives for landing page

❑ Q. Have we defined the branding goals for our landing page?

Be aware that many of the people visiting your landing page won't have heard of your brand before, or may not know much about who you are and what you offer. For this audience, there needs to be an element of reassurance to convince them that you are reputable and reliable.

For example, on retail e-commerce landing pages, it's common for the company to display its unique selling points (USPs), such as free delivery and returns, as well as security messages to emphasise that shopping online with them is safe and secure.

Take a look back at the example John Lewis example from the introduction from White Stuff. They display a prominent guarantee delivery and returns messaging to reassure visitors that they are in safe hands, and the creative is consistent from email to landing page.



Conversion doesn't usually occur in one step, so another goal is to get across the values of your brand – make it memorable! You should communicate:

- ✔ Your brand identity, what you stand for, what makes you different.
- ✔ Your customers – who values you? Testimonials and social followers work well here.
- ✔ Independent accreditation – who rates you? Display well known trust marks.

Ways to implement this include an 'About Us' tab or a sidebar explaining what makes you different, or testimonials. The Salesforce.com example illustrates this well.

Ways to implement this include an 'About Us' tab or a sidebar explaining what makes you different, or including customer testimonials and social proof. The Salesforce.com Dollar Shave Club example illustrates this with the number of Facebook likes shown beneath the video and a prominent link in the main menu for 'Reviews'.well.

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Landing pages often fail here since they are only thinking about the response.

Don't underestimate the power of quality testimonials or stories of how your product or service has helped. Social proof is really important online – you can provide this by adding testimonials or by using a ratings and reviews service to display actual customer feedback on products and services. There are many options for adding ratings to your website, including using your web platform's review module – the most popular third-party solutions are [Trustpilot](#), [Feefo](#) and [Bazaarvoice](#).

If you're considering adding ratings and reviews, we recommend using a solution that is compatible with paid search so that your seller ratings can display in paid search ads as well to help increase click-through rate. You can find a list of supported partners here<sup>12</sup>.

### Using remarketing to follow-up on Landing Page visits

#### Q. Remarketing considered?

It's possible to track each visitor to a landing page and to follow-up on them to remind them about your offer. This could be for all landing page visitors or just those that showed additional intent, for example through completing a form.

#### Best Practice Tip 4 Use remarketing to follow-up on landing page visits

Remarketing provides a way to encourage your customers about your offer as they browse other sites that offer advertising.

This example of Remarketing using Google AdWords is for the Policy Beefor the Boden example we looked at earlier. You can see the display ad in the right sidebar. Note that in this example the ad isn't targeted to a relevant sithoppers of kids clothing, one of the categories we visited on the website.to increase the reach of the ad.

<sup>12</sup> <https://support.google.com/adwords/answer/2375474?hl=en-GB>



## How strong is your brand personality?

Q. Have we reviewed how we communicate our brand personality online?

Rohit Bhargava, a Vice President at Ogilvy New York and author of *Personality Not Included* stresses the importance of developing a brand that is sufficiently distinctive and energetic to encourage interaction and discussion that will amplify brand messages through word-of-mouth. We recommend Rohit's book or site ([www.rohitbhargava.com](http://www.rohitbhargava.com)) to learn more. For us, this is one of the most important marketing books of the last few years, this millennium even!

### Key Strategy Recommendation 7 Review and refine brand personality

Is your brand personality distinct and energetic enough to encourage engagement and sharing? If not, you will find getting cut-through increasingly difficult.

Rohit nails it when he describes personality as:

*'the unique, authentic, and talkable soul of your brand that people can get passionate about'.*

He goes on to say:

*'Personality is not just about what you stand for, but how you choose to communicate it. It is also the way to reconnect your customers, partners, employees, and influencers to the soul of your brand in the new social media era.'*

A great example is the UK company Wish, which provides experience days. They have developed a unique tone of voice to their so that copy that conveys the personality of the brand brilliantly. So brilliant in fact that it attracts one of two negative reactions because you can't please everyone!

The screenshot below is the landing page for their Zombie Battle London experience days – as well as the distinct voice of the copy, you'll see other good practice landing page techniques to establish brand credibility, such as the USP bar at the top of the page and customer ratings..



Rohit and others, like Jay Baer of *'Convince and Convert'*, recommend that you combine your brand personality with your 'one big thing'. Online, this has become particularly important to communicate since interactions can be so fleeting.

### Best Practice Tip 5 Communicate your 'one big thing'

Particularly true for start-ups, but valuable for other companies, communicating your main point of difference is key.

Entrepreneur Jason Goldberg<sup>13</sup> recommends that online start-ups should answer these questions:

- 1. *What's the one thing your product will do?*  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. *What's the one thing that your start-up will do and do better than everyone else?*  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. *What's the one thing your brand will represent?*  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. *What's the one thing you will do day-in and day-out, to the exclusion of all other things?*  
\_\_\_\_\_

Goldberg says *'The answer to all 4 of those questions should be exactly the same. And that's your one thing.'* He gives these examples:

- Twitter*: Share short updates.
- Foursquare*: Check-in.

<sup>13</sup> [Jason Goldberg: What I learned creating 4 startup companies](#)

- ✓ *Instagram*: Share pretty photos.
- ✓ *Dropbox*: Easy cloud storage.
- ✓ *YouTube*: Upload a video.
- ✓ *Groupon*: One great local deal per day.
- ✓ *The original Google*: Algorithmic search.
- ✓ *LinkedIn*: Professional networking.

### Key Strategy Recommendation 8 Take away thought

Every page on your website can be a landing page – make sure you have clear goals for each page and think it through from the customer perspective to provide the best possible user experience.

## Define minimum contact information to maximise conversion

Your key challenge is to decide what information is required to follow up leads. This is usually determined by a combination of the marketing medium being used (e.g. paid search, offline advertising) and the action that you are trying to persuade visitors to take.

There is often a trade-off – your sales and marketing team may want to get as much data as possible to help profile leads but generally speaking, the more fields a visitor has to fill out to complete a form, the greater the chance they will abandon.

So, we recommend starting by defining the goals for your data capture, then design the form accordingly. And think carefully about form usability on mobile devices.

*Q. Have we defined our goals for collecting profiling information?*

Less is definitely more when collecting information, but you do need sufficient information to understand the characteristics, needs and values of the person who has filled in the form. In most cases you need more than an email address!

### Best Practice Tip 6 Collect the minimum profile information to qualify and personalise

If you try to collect too much information, then your conversion rates will fall, so cut out every field that isn't essential. What are your minimum profile fields that you will actually use to qualify leads for follow-up or personalised email? Ask which are essential not just 'nice-to-have'.

These are the main types of information to consider:

1. *Contact information*

---

2. *Profile information*

---

3. *Signals of buying readiness*

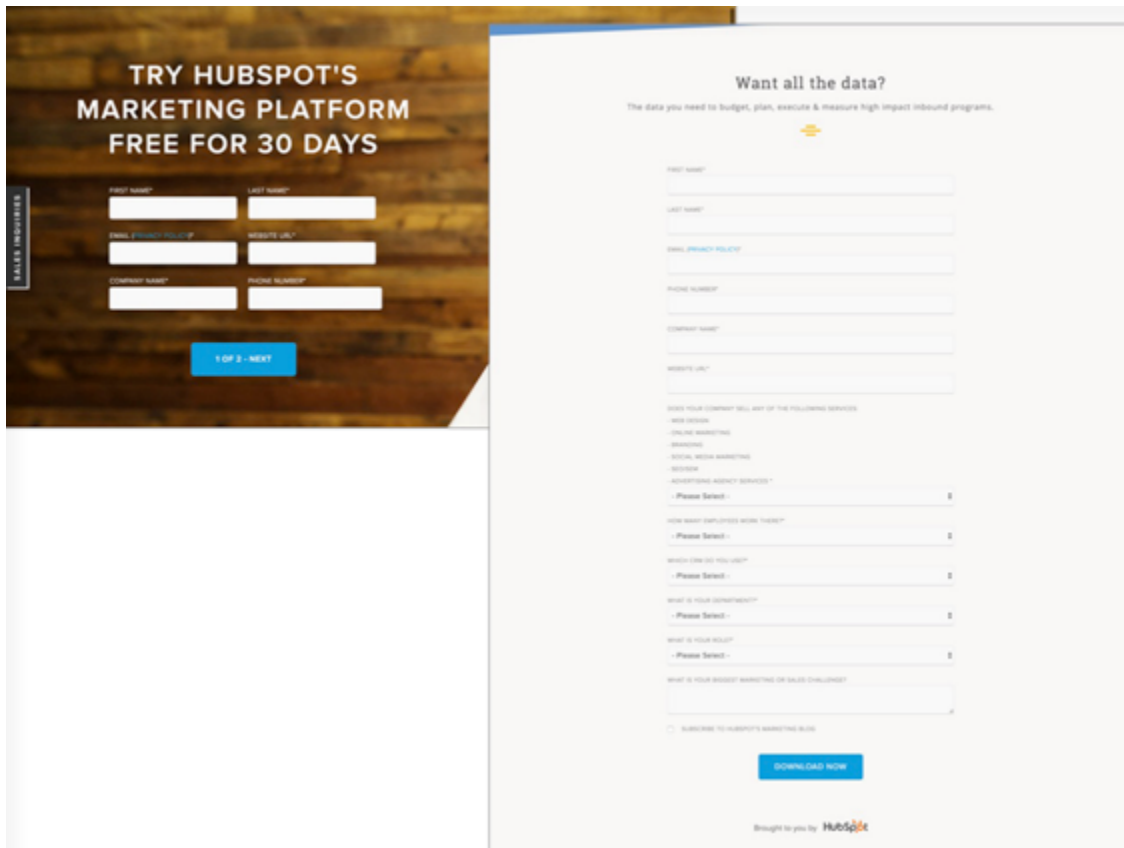
---

The example forms below are from Hubspot, an Inbound Marketing Software vendor based in the US. They have used different versions lengths of the form, to suit the different lead



generation needs and probably to also test the impact on conversion of form length. This is good practice at work. The shorter form is for the free software trial sign-up and the longer form for downloads of the State of Inbound 2015 market report.

Surprisingly, theThe forms isn't usingalso use intelligent validation, displaying error message in-line as the user progresses through the form. as it's possible to submit the form with an invalid phone number. We discuss form validation in more detail in Step 3 – Engaging your visitor.



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# Step 2

## Understand your visitor needs

Q. Have we reviewed our audience information needs?

It's not all about the incentive for the visitor. It's also about explaining the basics. You have to cater for online novices as well as web savvy customers. If you make your landing page content too complicated, you risk alienating some of the visitors. There's a great article from Unbounce explaining the need to build trust with landing pages, using a human and personable language<sup>14</sup>. We like this quote:

*Why Should I Do Business With You?*

*Right answer: 'Because we care about what you need and want to help you make the most out of what you have to succeed.'*

*Wrong answer: 'Our semantic targeting features yield the highest ROI in the entire industry.'*

We recommend reading the full article:

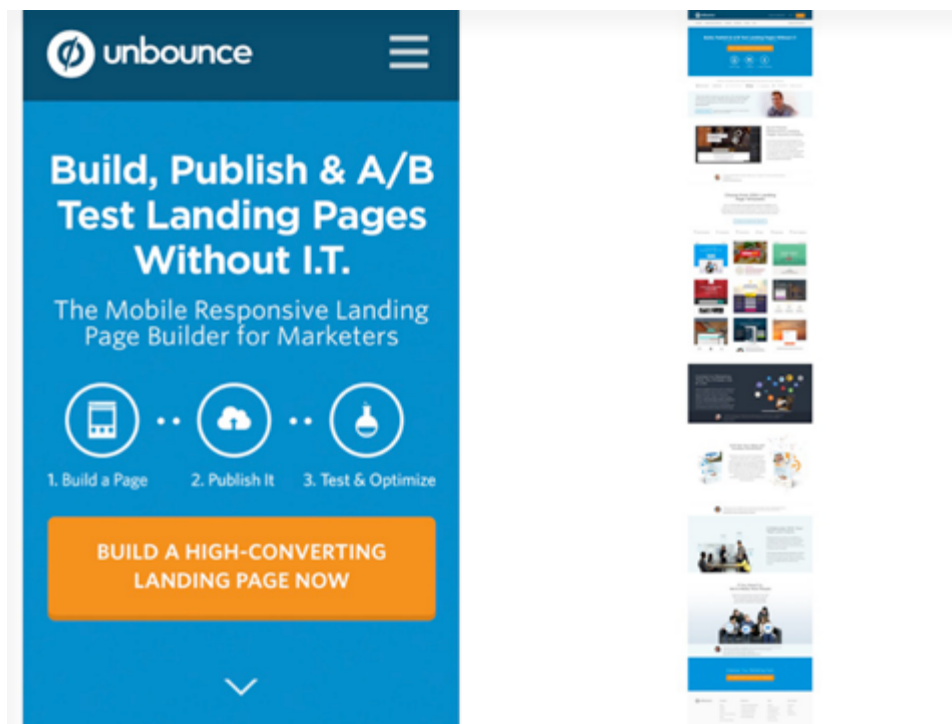
Remember the three familiarities – your brand, your services and your site. Obvious, but not all landing or home pages get these basic messages across.

It's really important to evaluate these in the context of the user journey – what are people expecting when they reach your landing page, and what type of content is most relevant and useful? Take the example below from a search for “business VAT”; the HMRC landing page is focused on answering the key questions business owners are likely to have about paying VAT.



<sup>14</sup> [Unbounce: Why Should I do business with you?](#)

We think Unbounce also achieves this well through its home page (which is usually the most visited landing page for a website). Note on mobile the menu switches to the hamburger icon, and there key value proposition and CTA display in the visible pane. The mobile landing page also makes use of native features like the swipe gesture to reduce vertical scrolling. We've included a screenshot of the full desktop page to show you how much content is on the landing page.



You may also need to explain the service or category; not everyone will get it as clearly as you do.

We'll talk more about this in Step 5 – Compelling content and creative.

## Outline your main audiences

Q. *Have we defined our main audiences?*

Every site or landing page will have a range of audiences, so think about who you prioritise content for. We recommend you use personas for clarity in defining the audience. Before you start the design, write down the audiences in order of priority. Identify audiences by buying needs, lifestyle or demographics (age, gender, company size or position in the buying chain).

### What is it? Web design personas

A thumbnail summary of the characteristics, needs, motivations and environment of typical site users.

### Key Strategy Recommendation 9 Be clear on your audience and create personas to help define them

Personas can help improve the page so it's based on the psychology and needs of the visitor. In short, it makes pages more customer-centric.

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4. CREATING THE BEST PAGE LAYOUT

5. COMPELLING CONTENT

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7. IMPROVING RESULTS

### Recommended resource? Personas toolkit

See our [Personas toolkit](#) showing key issues to consider when creating personas and with examples of different styles of personas.

List audiences in order of priority:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

You may find it worthwhile to consider scent trails for different audience members.

### What is it? Scent trails and audience-specific content

An interface element such as a link, heading or image which users assess as being relevant for their situation or need, so they “self-select” or “self-segment. Examples include type of person, size of business. The destination pages can then be tailored for the audience needs

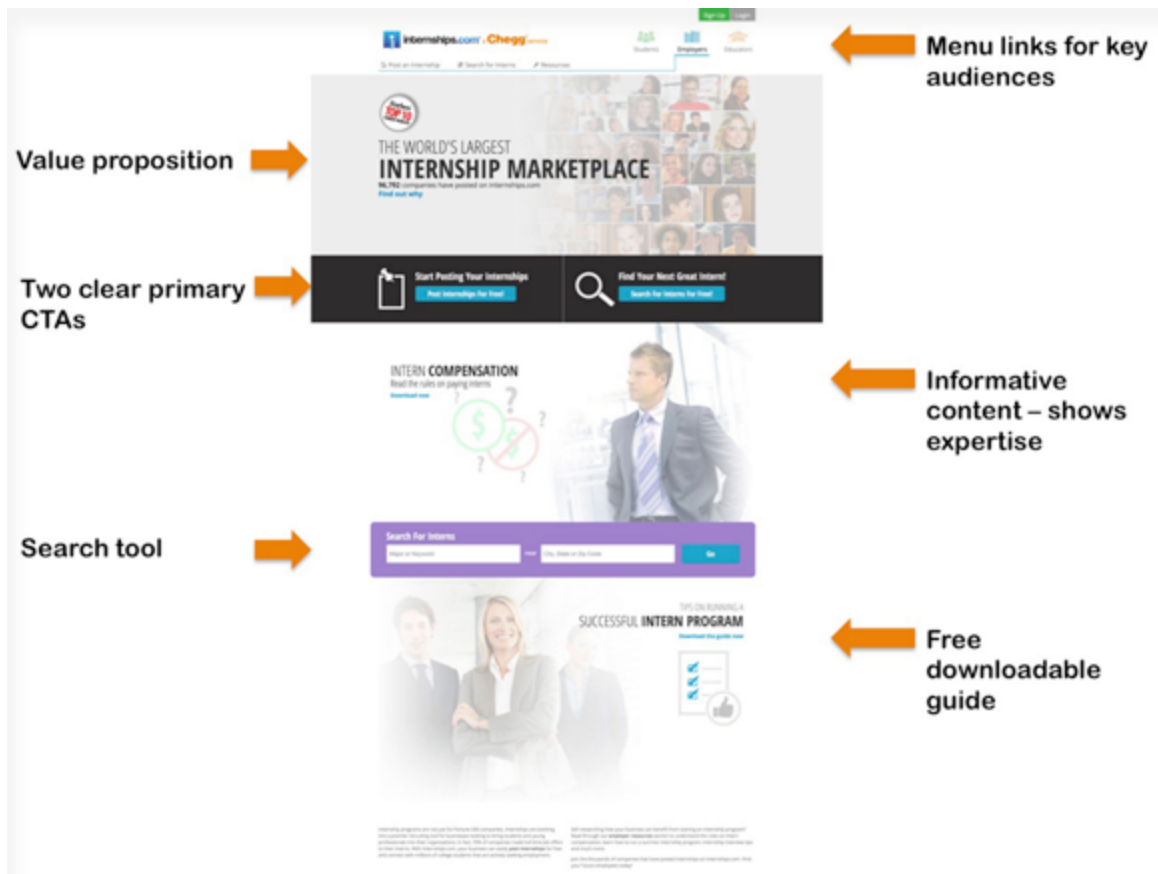
Take a look at the landing page from Livingston International below. For the scent trail, they use four tabs to provide tailored messaging for different audience types. Each content snippet links off to a dedicated landing page for that audience. This is a useful way of helping segment content and user journeys based on visitor type. There is no ‘right way’ to cater for different audience segments on your landing page but it’s important you provide clear links to enable people to access information that is most relevant to them.





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Another example is from the US, where Internships.com segments its homepage into three distinct service areas for students, employers and educators. In this case the Employers tab gives a landing page specific for the audience clearly explaining their proposition.



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## Define main user scenarios or tasks

Q. Have we defined the audience scenarios?

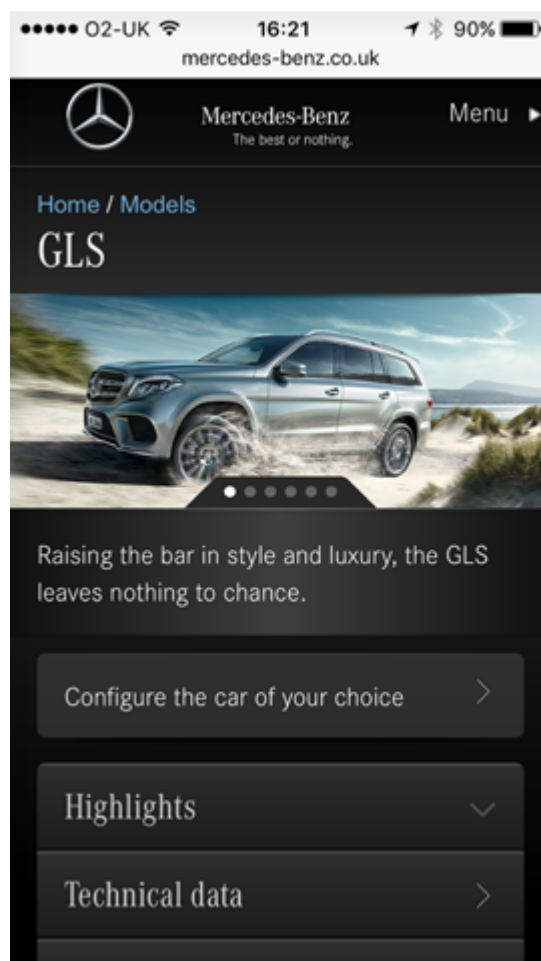
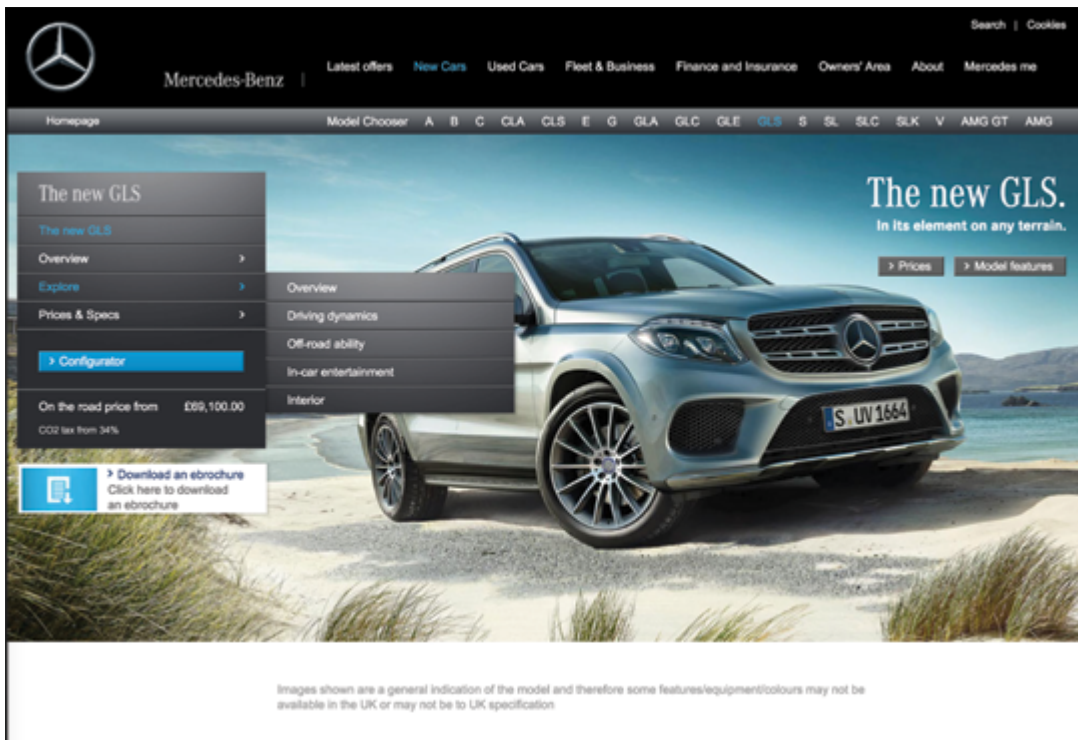
Personas are in different situations when they arrive on your site. Are they just browsing or do they have an immediate need? So you need to consider the scenario that has triggered the visit.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Another way to use content segmentation is to split the product offering into its constituent parts, enabling visitors to pick and choose which components to read about.

This is particularly important for landing pages where there will often only be a single choice, but paths should be available for visitors who don't want to respond right now. The automotive industry is a good example for translating a complex product and purchase path into a well-structured product landing page, using layered data to let users explore and learn, without bombarding them with too much information. The example below is for the Mercedes GLS, showing the landing page on an iPhone 5s and laptop. Note how for mobile users, the page is streamlined and the menu links adapted to suit mobile interaction. Unfortunately some essential data is missing from the mobile page, for example the 'On the road price' –

you can only find pricing info by clicking on Highlights > Prices, and then the UI design isn't intuitive.



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This approach is used well in B2B Software marketing where solutions often comprise multiple software tools and landing pages are used to promote capabilities in each area, or to appeal to unique audience segments whose needs are quite different.

**Best Practice Tip 7 Identify the primary paths of customer journeys**

Offering too much undifferentiated choice to website visitors without visual emphasis can be a mistake, so keep it focused on the primary paths.

So you need to decide on the main action(s) you want a visitor to take and then emphasise those through the design. Take the homepage example of SAP Ariba, an eprocurement specialist, where the content is segmented based on the three service needs: spend & supplier management, payables management and ecommerce & account management. Also note the inclusion of customer testimonials.



**Key Strategy Recommendation 10 Test different ways to provide segment specific content clear on your audience and create personas to help define them**

A/B and multivariate (MVT) testing can help you find the optimal way to signpost content for different audience segments.

**Techniques to surface deeper content**

**Q. Are we making it easy for visitors to access more information?**

It's a challenge to find the right blend of content depth to cater for the needs of visitors – some will pack light and want a clear call to action, others will want to read on and learn more before making a decision. How do you provide the right information for all of them?

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Our experience tells us that the focus of the landing page should be top down. By this we mean providing the key information that will encourage visitors to convert, then providing access to more detailed information if required. By adopting this approach, you'll ensure the most important call to action is prominent and there is sufficient information to tackle barriers to conversion.

Here's a list of methods to surface additional content:

- ❑ **HTML quick link.** This is where you provide a list of links as a navigation menu that can be clicked to deep link people to relevant content sections within the landing page.
- ❑ **Expandable (or accordion) link.** This is where a text link, when clicked, expands to reveal additional content. When doing this, make sure that the rest of the page re-aligns automatically and you don't break the page design. Accordion links are popular on mobile, where the content expands vertically for the user.

In the example below from Rainbow Tours, the landing page has a left hand menu of links that when clicked direct users to more content explaining the range of services available.



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- ❑ **Lightbox.** When the link is clicked, or moused-over, an overlay appears within which content is displayed. The overlay can be closed at any time. This is preferable to redirecting people away from the landing page as they can return to the landing page easily. We've seen some mobile sites use a slide-out navigation pane to achieve this, where the user is taken 'off page' to view content, then returned back to the page when finished. Brands like House of Fraser use this UX pattern for their main catalogue navigation on mobile devices.

We generally advise against redirecting visitors to another web page to access additional information, unless you have to redirect to take people to the conversion page. For example, a landing page from an email campaign to promote a new range of clothes will usually include links to individual product pages where the 'buy now' action takes place.

### Why?

Loading a new URL requires an additional server request, which adds time to the user journey. If the user is on a mobile connection with poor signal, this can be really frustrating. Wherever possible, load the content that the user requires when the landing page is requested, then let the front-end do the work in surfacing additional content.

We discuss the pros and cons of short and long landing pages in Step 4 – Create the optimal page layout.

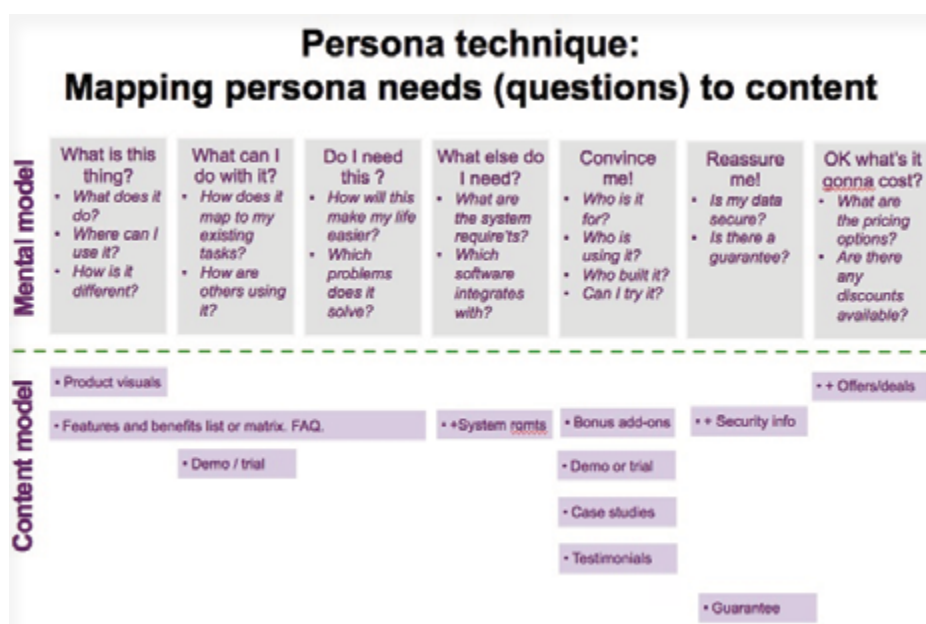
## Explain the service or category clearly

- ❑ **Q.** *Have we clearly explained the services or product category?*

Many visitors may not be as familiar with your range of products or services as you are, or even the type of 'thing' you're offering them! This is particularly true if you're offering a new or non-mainstream service, like indemnity insurance for example.

Here's a REALLY useful technique for answering visitors questions that involves mapping the questions that a site visitor finding out about the project will be asking (mental model) against different types of features and content on the site to help answer these questions (content model). We like the technique because it's a simple yet powerful way of brainstorming or reviewing content effectiveness.

Here is a generic service launch example we have created to show how the method can be used:



How will you explain the service or category you are providing. Check these ideas:

- 1. Block of text about the service.
- 2. Tab ('About choosing X').
- 3. Bulleted list of service features AND benefits.
- 4. 'Our services' link in footer.
- 5. 'Why choose us?' message.
- 6. 'How to choose "X" guide'.
- 7. Customer testimonial endorsement.

## Review relevance of offline contact options

- Q. *Are there any relevant options for offline contact?*

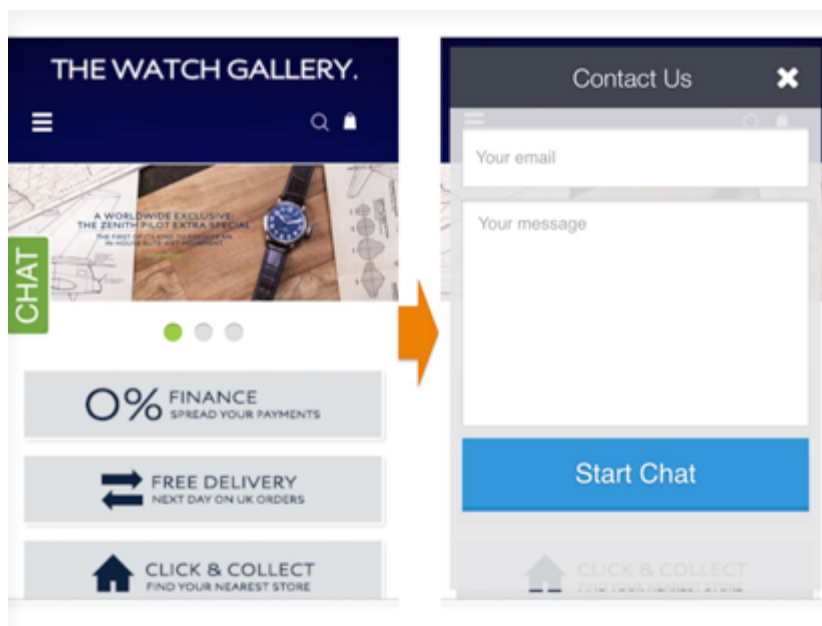
You'll definitely know this piece of advice. We all get annoyed when the phone number isn't prominent. That's easy to fix, but it helps if the phone number is also tracked through a unique number. It's also worth offering a callback and live chat. There are call tracking tools available, such as ResponseTap<sup>15</sup> and Mediahawk<sup>16</sup>.

*'Different strokes for different folks.'*

Have you included any of the following?

- 1. Prominent phone number.
- 2. Phone number tracked through unique number.
- 3. Callback option.
- 4. Live chat option.

Take a look at the live chat option available on Thewatchgallery.co.uk mobile site. Given the premium price point of the product, live chat is a useful tool to support landing pages as it enables the Customer Service team to respond to customer queries in real time.



<sup>15</sup> <https://www.responsetap.com/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.mediahawk.co.uk/>

## Review devices that visitors use

Q. Have we reviewed the technology platforms used by visitors?

Use your analytics system to check which platform your average users use

If you use Google Analytics these will be within the Visitors' section where you can record the browser capabilities and the proportion of visitors using mobile devices.

### Best Practice Tip 8 Check current screen resolutions before you start designing

Use your analytics system to set a realistic minimum target screen resolutions before you start designing.

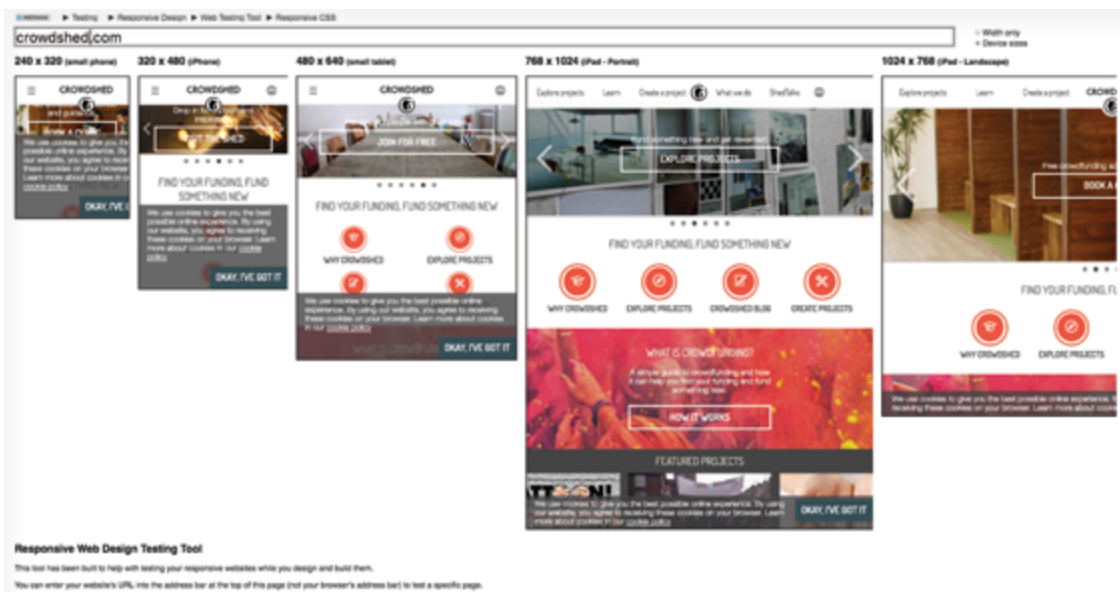
You need to know what type of device is going to be used to access your landing page, then you need to test how the landing page looks on each device. This is especially important with mobile optimisation – a landing page optimised for desktop resolutions may not render effectively on a smartphone, or be usable based on device specific capabilities and user behaviours. For example, are you supporting standard touch gestures on touch-enabled devices?

It's important to split tablet from mobile – tablet resolutions (at least the larger tablets – the advent of mini tablets adds a layer of complexity) are more similar to desktop than smartphone and we know some retailers who have seen better conversion by directing tablet users to their desktop landing pages.

We really like Matt Kersley's free online Responsive Web Design Testing Tool.<sup>17</sup> Use this to test your landing page to see how it renders on different screen resolutions.

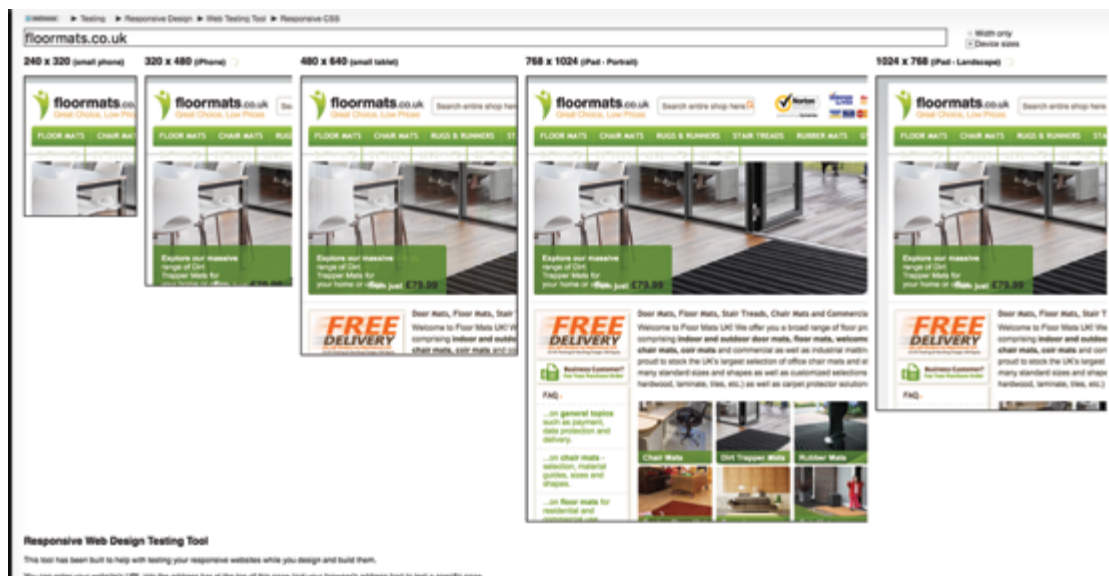
Below are examples of two different landing pages run through Matt's testing tool, showing how landing pages can be broken if they're not considered across device types.

The first is an example of a responsive website from CrowdShed, where the homepage layout changes depending on the device resolution.



<sup>17</sup> [Matt Kersley responsive design test](#)

The second is an example of a website from Floormats.co.uk that isn't optimised for mobile, where the homepage simply 'squashes' to fit a mobile browser:



## Reasons for creating unique landing pages for mobile

### Q. Is a unique mobile landing page appropriate?

Even if you are using responsive design to reflow the page content based on the device type, that doesn't guarantee a mobile-optimised experience.

The reality is that the browsing experience on a mobile is vastly different to that on a desktop. This means that not all features and functions of a desktop landing page are relevant to a mobile visitor. A good example in retail ecommerce is the product zoom feature – on a smartphone people are used to double tapping images to zoom, rather than pressing a 'zoom' button.

It's therefore common for people to create custom landing pages for mobile visitors, with a stripped down version of the content and features.

The top reasons for a mobile optimised landing page are:

- The desktop landing page has too much content for a mobile visitor to digest easily.
- Some of the features on the desktop site won't work effectively on a mobile device.
- The calls to action aren't easy to click and need to be re-positioned.
- You want to provide a different call to action to mobile visitors (e.g. *download the mobile app*).
- 

Checklist for landing page technology compatibility

### 1. Minimum screen resolution

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## 2. Web browsers to support

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## 3. Mobile devices to support

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### Learning from your visitors

#### Q. Do you use voice-of-customer techniques to get landing page feedback?

Voice-of-customer data (qualitative and quantitative) is really useful in helping you understand why a page is or is not performing well, helping you learn what customers really want. See the selection of feedback tools we recommend<sup>18</sup>.

Companies using these feedback tools often factor the data into their weekly reports. With tools like Foresee you can capture customer ratings of different aspects of the website and chart these over time. This is great for trend analysis, especially when making major changes to the website (major release, relaunch etc). You can analyse the trend line before, during and after the change to see what impact it is having on individual measures of success. For example, if you have just redesigned your landing page, how does this rating change over time? Does it affect the overall website satisfaction?

Persistent online surveys (Qualaroo, Kampyle, etc.) are great low cost tools to keep pumping customer feedback into the data pool. Qualaroo (previously KissInsights) supports page-level data capture. You can use a simple qualitative question to find out what people like and dislike about your landing pages. This is a great way to provide your marketing team with feedback direct from the customer, helping inform your landing page optimisation program.

#### Best Practice Tip 9 Gain audience feedback from landing pages

You can only learn so much from web analytics tools. Often it's best to ask about specific needs or offer support.

<sup>18</sup> [Smart Insights: Feedback tools](#)

# Step 3

## Engage your visitors

### Q. What does 'engagement' really mean?

Engaging visitors as they first arrive on a landing page is a challenge, they're in a mode of quickly scanning different alternatives. So it's really important to provide a relevant engaging page. To help you do this, in this section we will provide 9 key issues to consider as you review your landing page showing examples of good practice for each.

The word 'engagement' is much maligned, often because it is used without context. It's important to define what we mean by engagement in the context of landing pages. For the purpose of this guide, we'll be using the following definition:

*'Engagement is the process of gaining customer participation in your landing pages by providing relevant and useful information, or giving them a compelling reasons to take action e.g. an unbeatable offer.'*

Let's break that down into its key components.

#### 'gaining customer participation'

This means getting a reaction from the customer. This reaction could simply be clicking on an ad and visiting a web page. However, reactions become more meaningful when they lead to conversions such as making a purchase or submitting an enquiry form.

#### 'providing relevant and useful information'

This applies both to the marketing campaign and the landing page. Relevant and useful information is information that helps a visitor make a decision and/or achieve the goal for their visit. This can be simple information like a clear call to action, or more complex content that helps answer questions.

#### 'give them a compelling reason to take action'

Sometimes it's not about the content or the overall design, it's about the quality and uniqueness of offer. If you have a product that people need/want and an offer that beats all other retailers, and is time constrained to create urgency, then you're likely to persuade people to act.

## Measuring engagement for landing pages

### Q. Are we measuring engagement?

So we have defined what engagement means. Now let's look at how it can be measured. Remember Step 7 has more detailed information on measuring the performance of landing pages.

Below are a few metrics you can use to measure engagement.

- 1. Bounce rate.** How many people when they visit your landing page, leave immediately without taking any further action? If your landing page is a conversion page (e.g. *the primary goal is to secure a transaction or lead*), then a high bounce rate isn't a good sign, unless people are coming back in subsequent visits to convert. Please use this metric in context; a low price everyday purchase is unlikely to need multiple visits but for a high ticket complex purchase, such as a home cinema kit, it's more likely that users

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will want to do some more research and explore the product options before committing to purchase, so a higher bounce rate isn't necessarily a sign of a poor-performing page. Context is everything.

- ✔ **2. Time on page.** If you have a lot of information to digest, are people taking the time to read this? Or, if your landing page is basic with a simple call to action, if people are spending a long time on this page, is there something wrong with the landing page?
- ✔ **3. Scroll depth.** Do people scroll down the page and access content below the fold? Using Google Analytics you can get basic in-page analytics reports (showing click rate on each link) but it's advisable to invest in a dedicated tool like Inspectlet, CrazyEgg or Clicktale for more advanced scroll analysis.
- ✔ **4. Page depth.** Does the landing page contribute to the onward journey? Is the signposting clear enough that visitors are following visual signs to access other web pages? If your landing page is a gateway to a more complex online conversion path, then the page depth for visitors to the landing page should be greater than 1.
- ✔ **5. Use of social sharing buttons.** Are visitors finding the content valuable/useful enough to share socially with their networks? If not, is this because the social sharing buttons are in the wrong place, or because people don't think the content is worth sharing?
- ✔ **6. Feedback loops.** If you provide feedback options like Live chat or ask a question, usage is an indication that people are engaged with the landing page, even if that engagement results in a frustrated enquiry because they couldn't find what they needed.

## Audience recap

### ❑ Q. Which audience am I targeting with my landing page?

Before mapping out the engagement techniques you will use on your landing page, refresh your mind about the target audience.

The persuasion techniques you need to use must be considered in light of the people you want to influence. Audience type affects:

- ✔ Tone of voice.
- ✔ Choice of headline.
- ✔ Call to action.
- ✔ Depth of information.
- ✔ Use of creative.

For example, when targeting the 55+ audience it's unlikely you'll want to use lifestyle imagery that has been tailored for the 18-25 audience.

Let's use the example of ASOS to show this in action. See the subtle difference in tone of voice between the Men's version (top left) and Women's version (bottom right). The call to action for women plays on the emotional element of shopping far more than the men's, which is more matter-of-fact.

1. SET OBJECTIVES

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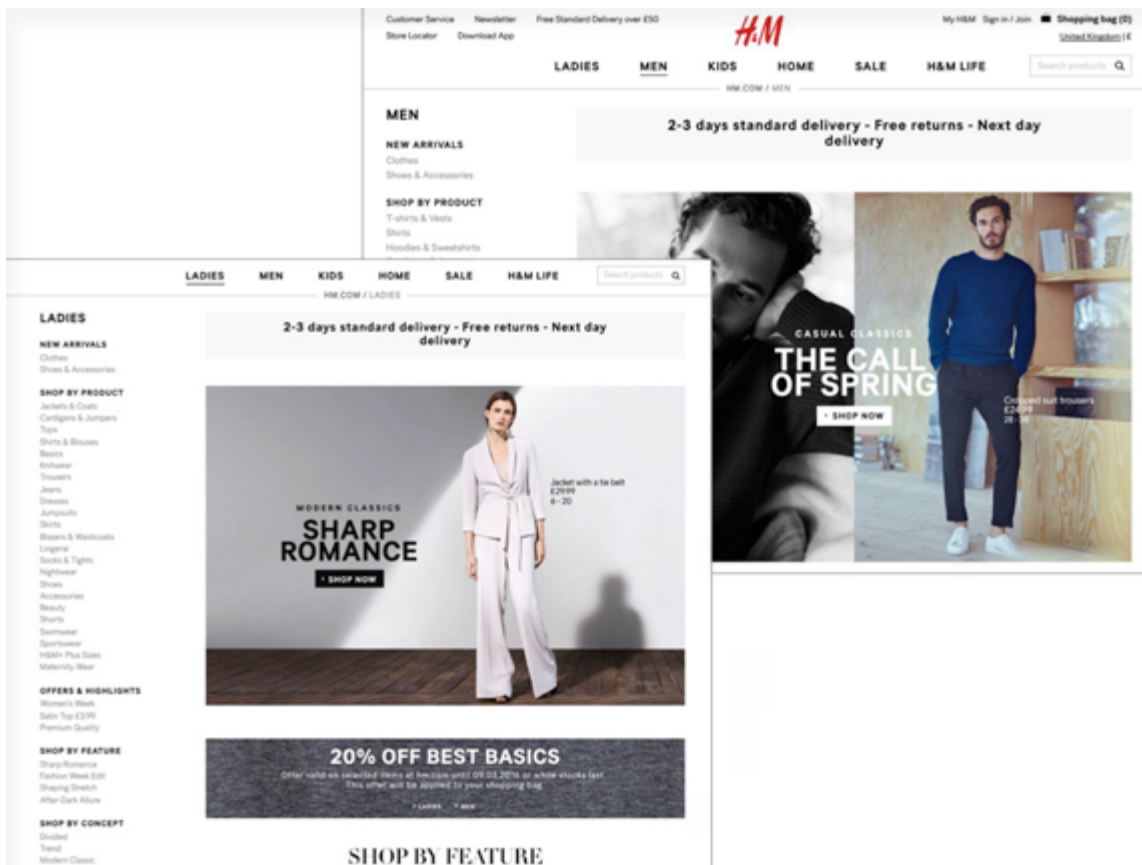
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## Engagement techniques

In this guide we will cover the core techniques that will help you create a high quality landing page. These techniques are:

- ✔ 1. Create a relevant headline (and sub-heading if relevant).
- ✔ 2. Provide a clear call to action.
- ✔ 3. Create engaging visuals.
- ✔ 4. Ensure colour schemes are consistent (and accessible e.g. *colour contrast*).
- ✔ 5. Make benefits and features clear.
- ✔ 6. Ensure content/copy work for different decision-making styles.
- ✔ 7. Provide a functional, concise form.
- ✔ 8. Provide relevant trust indicators.
- ✔ 9. Enable social sharing.
- ✔ 10. Use visual techniques to make copy easy to read e.g. *bullets, highlights, tabs etc.*

Please note that this is good practice guidance based on years of learning. However, good practice doesn't mean it applies in all situations – there are always exceptions. Therefore, we strongly advise testing your landing page design to learn what works best for your business and your customers.

[Whichtestwon.com](http://Whichtestwon.com) is a mine of useful information and practical examples where 'gut feeling' based on good practice doesn't always pick out the right solution.

## 1. Create a super-relevant, super-engaging headline

### Q. *Have we reviewed the suitability of our heading?*

The headline is often the first thing that visitors notice when they hit a landing page. So make sure it's clear and engaging. Headlines lose their impact if the visitor has to spend too long translating what it means to them. Therefore, headlines should be:

- Clear
- Concise
- Unambiguous
- Relevant
- Compelling

We like this quote from Michael Aargaard on Unbounce:

*'In my experience super creative or cryptic headlines are dangerous as they can backfire in a major way. I always recommend going the safe route with a clear relevant headline that gives your potential customers a really good reason to invest their time in reading on.'*

Some landing pages also use a sub-heading, where there is more than one key message, or multiple parts to the message, and designers don't want to use a long heading, as this can be harder for readers to digest. It's fine to use a sub-heading but make sure it compliments the main heading and provides additional information, don't simply use it because your main heading isn't concise enough.

If you're using paid search, then the headline should match the keywords used to trigger your ad and the key phrases or search terms typed in by users. In AdWords, if there is a better match this will give you a better Quality Score and so your cost per click will be lowered. It's also a key SEO ranking factor.

We recommend reading Michael Aagaard's post 'The Flexible Framework for Writing High-Converting Landing Page Copy' on the Unbounce blog.<sup>19</sup> It's not new but the thinking still applies.

Here he gives the example of a headline test on the DCFinder website that resulted in a 68 per cent increase in conversion on the landing page. The example illustrates how subtle differences in the tone and appeal of the headline can have dramatic effects on the conversion rate.

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<sup>19</sup> [Unbounce: High-converting landing pages copy](#)

**Control:**

Pinpoint and eliminate duplicate content on your website

**Pinpoint and Eliminate Duplicate Content**

The World's first software to pinpoint and eliminate duplicate content on your website or ecommerce platform – even before launch!

dcfinder is the first software in the world that successfully catches the way search engines crawl and index a website INCLUDING all duplicate content. dcfinder pinpoints duplicate content on your website so you can eliminate it and avoid losing rankings, traffic and money!

"I downloaded DCfinder and ran a test of an ecommerce site that was almost ready to go online. I found several errors generating duplicate content in less than 2 hours. I think it might have saved days of work. Thank you for the long-awaited SEO tool!"

Alison Taylor, Venice, Italy

**Treatment A:**

Pinpoint and eliminate duplicate content on your website

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Alison Taylor, Venice, Italy

**68% more conversions**  
Statistical confidence: 99%

## 2. Provide a clear call to action

### Q. Is there a clear primary call to action?

A well-designed landing page will use a clear single call to action as the primary response mechanism. So, you need think carefully about what you want visitors to do when they land. The more CTAs you provide, the harder it becomes for the visitor to decide what they most want to do next. If you confuse them, you risk losing them.

The example below is from a test run on the Medecin Sans Frontiers landing page designed to generate online donations.

*Which version do you think got 2688 per cent more visitors to click on the donate button?*

It was Version A with the higher contrast, more prominent call-to-action that drove the higher conversion rate. Did you guess right?

A slight variation is where your landing page caters for multiple audiences, so the call to action will be slightly different for each audience. This can be seen in the Internships.com example in Step 2 above, where there are two different buttons based on different user needs.

Of course, you can have other calls to action but the challenge is to ensure these don't detract from the primary call to action.

### Best Practice Tip 10 Consider secondary calls-to-action carefully

Secondary calls-to-action may decrease clicks on the primary call-to-action, but they may increase the overall success of the campaign by providing more information.

In Step 4 we will discuss the myth of the fold. You may have heard of the fold, the line beyond which content is no longer visible. Popular thinking is that the primary call to action has to be above the fold to ensure it gets maximum visibility. However, some research shows that in specific circumstances, a call to action above the fold can actually depress conversion because visitors don't yet have sufficient information to commit to a conversion.

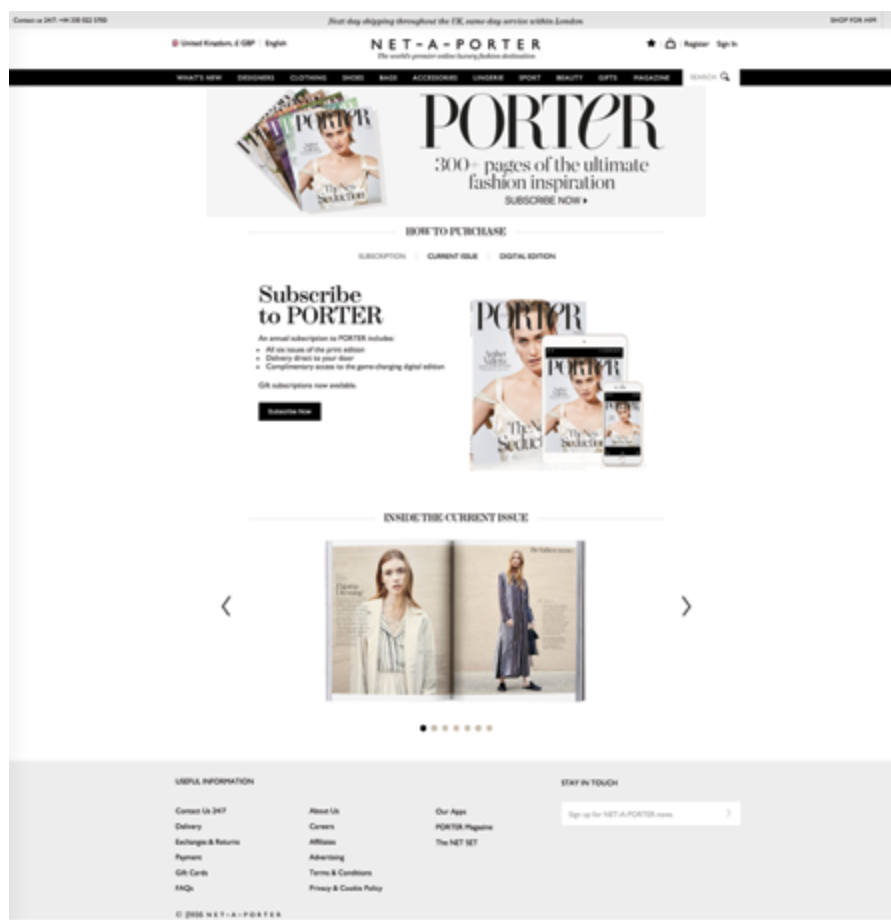
*Confused?* Don't be! In most cases, a prominent call to action above the fold will drive the highest conversion. However, you just need to be aware that this isn't a hard fact and that's why we advocate testing all the time to learn what works best for each landing page.

### 3. Create super-relevant, super-engaging visuals

Q. *Have we created suitable visuals?*

After, or even before scanning the headline, visitors to a landing page will often check out images. Again relevance is important, but quality is more important. You don't want to use boring stock photos, which are all too common on landing pages, instead a video testimonial or example of the products in action will be more effective.

Net-a-Porter has a visually engaging landing page for its magazine subscription. It uses images of the magazine in all its formats, from the print version to the digital version on tablet and smartphone, as well as providing a scrollable version of some of the current magazine to provide context. We think it's a great way to demonstrate the product.



The mobile site has a landing page for the content apps, of which the magazine is one. The landing page also showcases the native shopping app, Edit weekly magazine and Net Set social shopping network.

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For B2B situations, if you're offering a download, make sure there is a clear image of the document that will be received. This helps set expectation and provides clear context.

We recommend reading Oli Gardner's Eric Sloan's article<sup>20</sup> for some insightful commentary on how to use visual techniques to drive conversion. He doesn't give examples of actual pages, but instead discusses techniques to create emphasis and draw the eye down the page. He recommends these techniques for emphasis and to encourage flow:

Directional cues:

- ✓ 1. Whitespace.
- ✓ 2. Colour.
- ✓ 3. Contrast. Colour contrast
- ✓ 2. Using pictures of real people
- ✓ 3. Show visitors where to look
- ✓ 4. The suggestive power of the eye. Use visual clues.
- ✓ 5. Match designs. Interruptions.
- ✓ 6. Encapsulation Select colours carefully.
- ✓ 7. Use strong visuals.
- ✓ 8. Make key content larger.
- ✓ 9. Use whitespace.

#### 4. Ensure colour schemes are consistent/compatible

- Q. *Do our colour schemes make it easy to navigate the page?*

Colour coordination is often overlooked as an important element of landing page design. However, colour schemes can be used by visitors to identify different types of content e.g. *if the first heading a customer sees is in bold blue, then other content in bold blue should naturally be a heading.*

Colour contrast also has a significant impact on accessibility. For visitors with visual impairment (and there are as many as 2 million people in the UK), low contrasts between background and content can make it very hard for them to read the content. A classic example is black background with white text – colleagues of ours with less than perfect sight struggle to read this type of copy.

Here's a simple example of consistency from Travelocity. All headings User selections use the same bold blue colour for the type face to make the page scannable and to highlight the offers/selections made. Primary calls to action use a green colour.

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<sup>20</sup> [Unbounce: 8 Visual techniques to focus attention on your landing pages](#)



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We recommend viewing this video from Marketing Experiments that demonstrates how changes in colour design can have a positive impact on conversion.<sup>21</sup> Neil Patel has also written a useful blog giving examples of colour use on landing pages<sup>22</sup>.

## 5. Make the combination of features and benefits clear

Q. Are the features and benefits clear?

If visitors like what they see in the first two seconds, then they will move on to think about the value of what's on offer, how will it help them and what's in it for them?

Avoid long blocks of copy, instead use crisp, chunked paragraphs, each of no more than two sentences. Better still, use a bulleted list to explain the features and benefits.

- Feature 1 meaning that benefit 1.
- Feature 2 meaning that benefit 2.

<sup>21</sup> [Marketing Experiments video: changes in colour design](#)

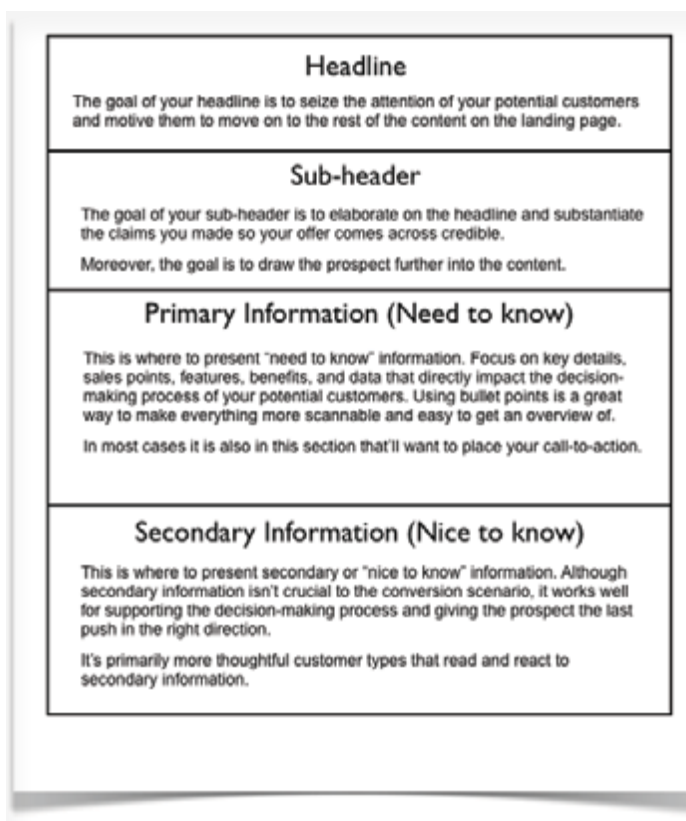
<sup>22</sup> <http://neilpatel.com/2015/05/14/the-psychology-of-color-how-to-use-colors-to-increase-conversion-rate/>

An alternative to bullets is the use of icons – this can work really well when the same content is repeated in other places on the website, so the icons can be used to provide consistent visual signposts.

#### Best Practice Tip 11 Combine features and benefits in copywriting

When you're thinking about writing copy for products, service or white papers, then the temptation is often just to write about those features. Instead, it's much better to combine features and benefits. Combine the two so that the feature is followed by the benefit.

Returning to Michael Aagaard's advice<sup>23</sup>, he recommends a really useful way of considering messaging hierarchy which layers on more detail down the page, with each piece of guidance flowing from, and adding to the headline.



#### Best Practice Tip 12 Create a clear message hierarchy on each landing page

The messaging hierarchy should add more depth down the landing page.

Here's an example of this principle in action from Freshbooks, cloud accounting business. You can see it works best for long-form landing pages, where a story can be told and the primary CTA is repeated at regular intervals, or is pinned so it follows the user down the page.

<sup>23</sup> [Unbounce: High-converting landing pages copy](#)

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Acorn Web Design  
123 Red Wood Ave.  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
United States

Your Design  
EST. 2014  
LOGO

Invoice # 00000000  
Invoice Date 06.10.14  
Amount Due \$600.00

Task	Description	Rate	Hours	Total
Website Redesign	Spiffy new website	\$60	10	\$600

---

## Features at a Glance

### Send Invoices

- Send Your Invoices
- Get Recurring Invoices
- Accept Online Payments
- Auto Payment Reminders

### Capture Expenses

- Import Customer Submissions
- Attach Receipts to Invoices
- Create Recurring Expenses
- Snap Photos of Receipts

### Track Time

- Track Time Anywhere
- Manage Your Resources
- Track Estimated Time
- Customer Project Pages

### Show Your Numbers

- Profit and Loss
- Tax Summary
- Expense Report
- And Much More...

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The example below is from the French market, for a payday loans (pret sur salaire) company called Credit Club. This landing page for ConfidisThe landing page uses a clear feature/benefit list on the right hand side.e (red shading is ours).



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6. Review copy and content work for different decision-making styles

Q. Has the suitability of the page for decision-making styles been reviewed?

US conversion optimisation specialist Brian Eisenberg has developed a useful framework<sup>24</sup> to help us think through the different decision-making styles of different folk. How well does your landing page support this range of styles?

<sup>24</sup> [Persona styles](#)



The **Methodical** focuses on HOW-type questions:

- ✓ What are the details?
- ✓ What's the fine print?
- ✓ How does this work?

The **Humanistic** focuses on WHO-type questions:

- ✓ How will your product or service make me feel?
- ✓ Who uses your products/service?
- ✓ Who are you? Tell me who is on your staff, and let me see bios.

The **Spontaneous** focuses on WHY- and sometimes WHEN-type questions:

- ✓ How can you get me to what I need quickly?
- ✓ Do you offer superior service?
- ✓ Can I customise your product or service?

The **Competitive** focuses on WHAT-type questions:

- ✓ What are your competitive advantages?
- ✓ What makes you the superior choice?
- ✓ What makes you a credible company?

#### Best Practice Tip 13 Make sure you cater for different browsing styles

Before you sign-off your landing page creative, make sure you have tried to navigate the page from the perspective of different types of online visitor. If you find barriers, address these.

### 7. Provide a functional, concise form

- Q. *Is our form easy to complete and submit?*

The ease of completion of a form goes a long way to determining how many people will click on the submit button.

The following are useful pointers:

- ✓ Less is more.
- ✓ Check boxes and picklists help visitors.
- ✓ Clearly mark required fields.

- ✔ Clearly label each field (labels above fields have been shown in studies to help users)
- ✔ Make the submit button clear.
- ✔ Ensure you use inline validation to flag errors as they occur
- ✔ Use tool tips to give people advice on how to complete key fields e.g. *password requirements*.
- ✔ Provide support options if customers have problems.

Provide support options if customers have problems.

Before you launch a landing page that incorporates a form, make sure you have tested the form validation in detail. Check every possible way the form can be filled out, including missing our data for both mandatory and non-mandatory fields. Do the correct error messages appear? Are these in-line (e.g. *they appear next to the field they refer to*).

In-line error messages are essential as they pinpoint where the visitor has to make a change. Ensure these messages are in a different font colour/style to the main form, making it easy for visitors to see them. Don't group errors and display in a large box as this can seem onerous.

Peter O'Neill of L3 Analytics has written a handy blog post on how to track form errors using Google Analytics<sup>25</sup>

The screenshot below shows a B2B landing page test for a lead generation form.

*Which version do you think increased leads by 368.5 per cent?*

It was Version A that drove the higher conversion rate. Did you guess right? This shows the value of testing forms and simplification of fields. Note that more background research on why and how to complete the form helped improve response in this case too.

<sup>25</sup> [Peter O'Neill: Tracking form errors](#)

## 8. Provide relevant trust indicators

### Q. Have we provided relevant trust indicators?

A trust indicator is a piece of content that validates your quality of service. Trust indicators have the greatest influence when they are independent, *i.e. not written by you or your company!*

Examples include:

- Customer testimonials.
- Product ratings and reviews.
- Industry accreditations *e.g. Google Certified Shops*.
- Industry awards.
- Expert reviews from independent commentators, *e.g. respected bloggers*.

For some industries, there will be an industry-specific standard that customers would expect to see (*e.g. ABTA if you are in the travel business*), or evidence that you offer protection and security and that shopping online with you is safe (*e.g. online payment security via Verified by Visa*).

### Best Practice Tip 14 Validate your credentials with trust indicators

Where relevant use independent trust markers such as customer reviews and industry accreditations to validate the quality of your company and reassure visitors that transacting with you is safe and secure.

The example from Crowdcube, a UK investment crowdfunding company, demonstrates the inclusion of multiple trust marks at the bottom of the home page. Each logo clicks through to a dedicated awards landing page.



## 9. Enable social sharing

### Q. Can visitors share our content socially?

Make sure you give yourself the greatest chance of reaching the largest possible audience, particularly where more than one person is involved in taking the decision. Social sharing isn't the main form of response, but it should be offered in a non-distracting way.

Social sharing is prevalent in both B2C and B2B, and provides the perfect way to allow your landing page content to have a wider reach than just the people you are attracting via your marketing campaigns. Since landing pages aren't shared so widely it's conventional just to offer generic sharing buttons, the options for sharing services are covered at the end of this post<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> [Smart Insights: Social sharing buttons](#)

Be sure to optimise the content that is shared, based on what each network supports. You can ensure that your organisation name as well as the URL is posted. The example below from Digital Marketing Depot, whilst not a beautiful design, uses social sharing options for networks relevant to the audience.



10. Use visual techniques to make copy easy to read e.g. bullets, highlights, tabs etc

Q. Do we break up copy to make it easy to read?

For landing pages with a lot of information to communicate, it's important that you don't simply throw long paragraphs of copy in front of visitors, as it can be hard for them to pick out the relevant parts, or to focus on the most important message.

Instead, use simple visual techniques to break-up the content and provide bite size chunks that are easy to digest. Techniques include:

- Bullet points
- Check/tick boxes to illustrate key selling points
- Highlighting important copy
- Using sections with sub-headings for each section
- Inserting visual content amongst the written content
- Using interactive page elements like carousels or accordions.

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# Step 4

## Design the optimal page layout

### Q. Have we reviewed optimal page layouts?

In our experience (and that of everyone else we know in e-commerce), there is no such thing as a perfect landing page. We've yet to come across a landing page with 100 per cent conversion – if you know of one, then please share the secret! Why is this?

Usually a landing page will attract a large number of visitors. Each visitor will have a unique profile – no matter how effective audience segmentation is, we're all individuals at the end of the day. This means that one 25-year-old male may respond differently to another, even if the call to action is geared towards them both. For example, one may be visually led, the other copy led. This is why blanket statement like “*We're targeting millennials*” always amuse us – that's a pretty large audience to treat homogeneously!

Therefore, a key challenge for web owners is to learn what the best combination of landing page content components is to elicit the highest possible response.

In this guide we use the term ‘optimal’ to refer to the landing page design that drives the best conversion for your business based upon which call to action is your primary conversion driver.

### Getting the right page layout

#### Q. Have we reviewed page layout options?

Getting the right visual balance for a page is crucial. So it's essential to discuss layout options before any design happens. Whilst existing page layouts should be considered, make sure you also think about whether a new layout is required to satisfy the goals of this landing page. And think touch and mobile first – how will mobile users interact with the page? What are the most important content elements for this type of visitor? You can then scale up to larger devices.

#### Key Strategy Recommendation 11 Use effective layouts

Effective layouts depend on the browser and screen resolution of the user. So, ensure that the main messages and call to action are ‘above the fold’ for most users and that the right balance of screen elements is used to encourage conversion.

Where content flows below the visible pane, consider a visual technique to show people they should scroll for more information.

Designers are likely talented at visual or web design, but they don't necessarily know the principles of persuasion and effective marketing communications that you do.

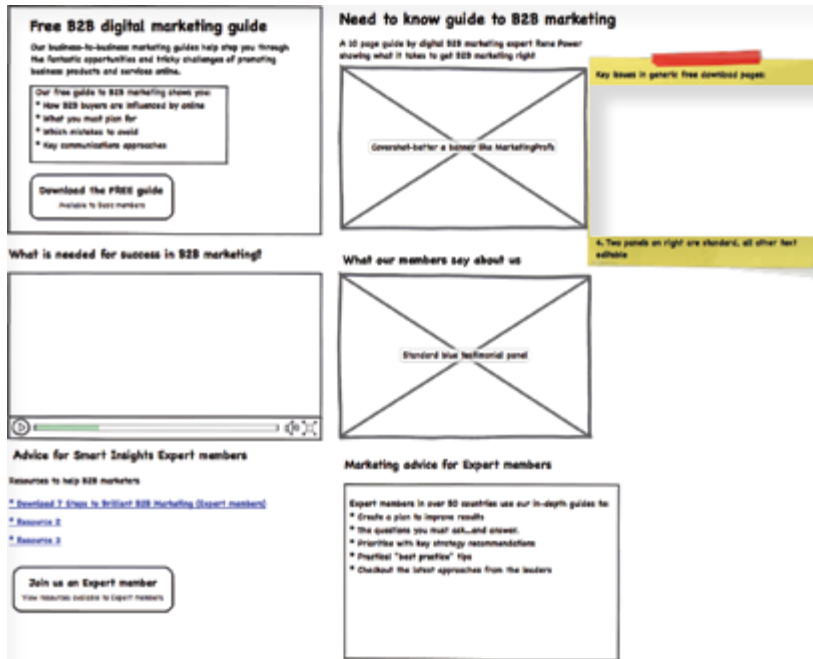
#### Best Practice Tip 15 Always create high-fidelity wireframes

Creating more detailed wireframes can help brief your designer or agency to get the outcomes you need.

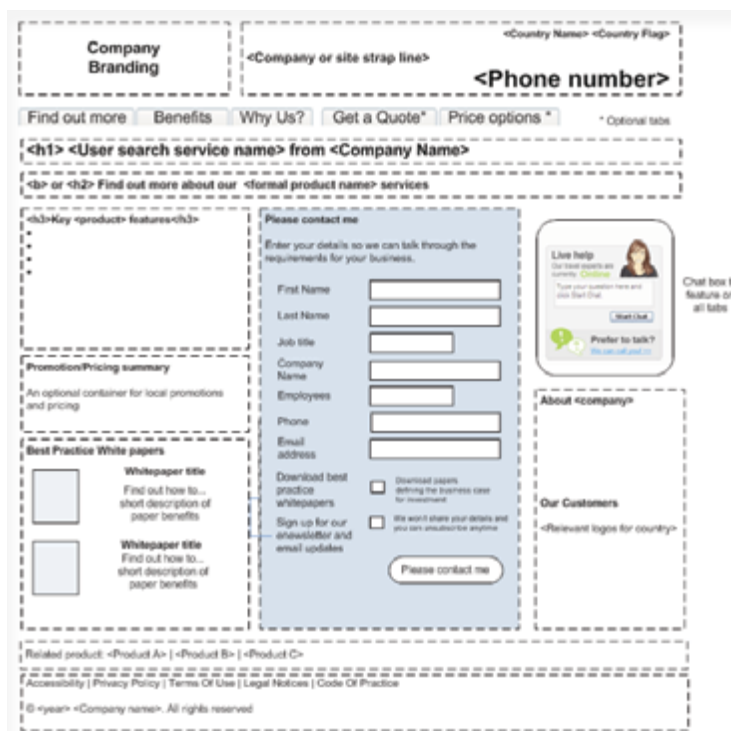
Create a wireframe like the one below with two or three options to design the most appropriate design.

If you don't have a tool for creating wireframes, we recommend Balsamiq as a simple, [simple, low cost tool](#).

Here is an example of output from Balsamiq for a Smart Insights landing page:



For clients on consulting projects we may use a higher fidelity version using the Mac Drawing tool Omnigraffle<sup>27</sup>. This example is a model layout for a tabbed B2B landing page.



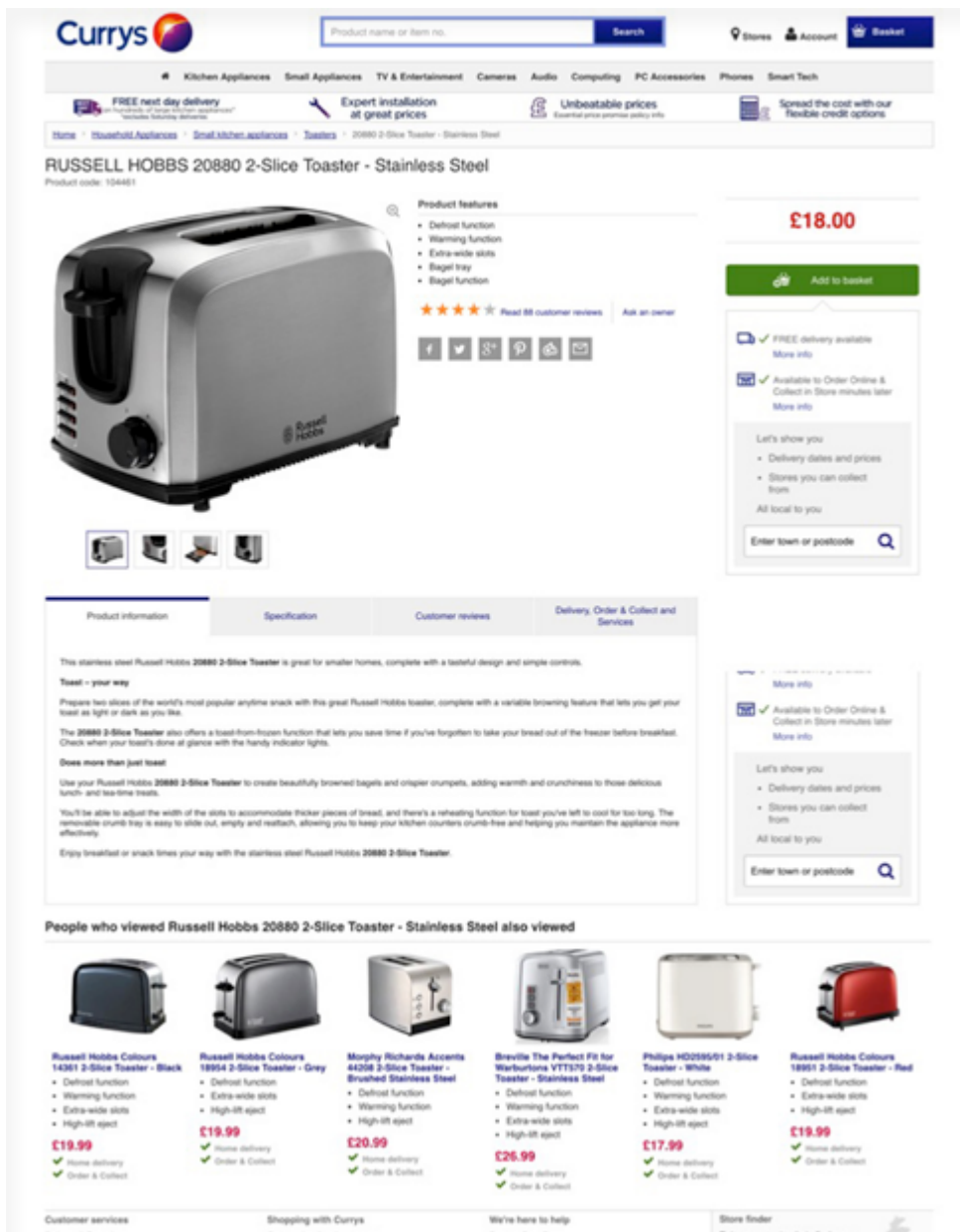
Retailers often use different page layouts based on product type. This is important because different products have different information sets and it's often hard for a large catalogue retailer to make a single page layout work for every product type. Why try and fit something into a page that doesn't provide the best customer experience?

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.omnigroup.com/omnigraffle>

Please note that this doesn't mean a different page template. Typically retailers will build a flexible template that can cater for different product scenarios, where additional content can be displayed as required, or components on the page can be prioritised differently.

The example below is from DIY.com (B&Q) whichCurrys, which shows different product page layouts for small, low cost items (taps) and high- ticket items (integrated washing machines). Note the change in emphasis on call to action and service.

### Landing page for high ticket item

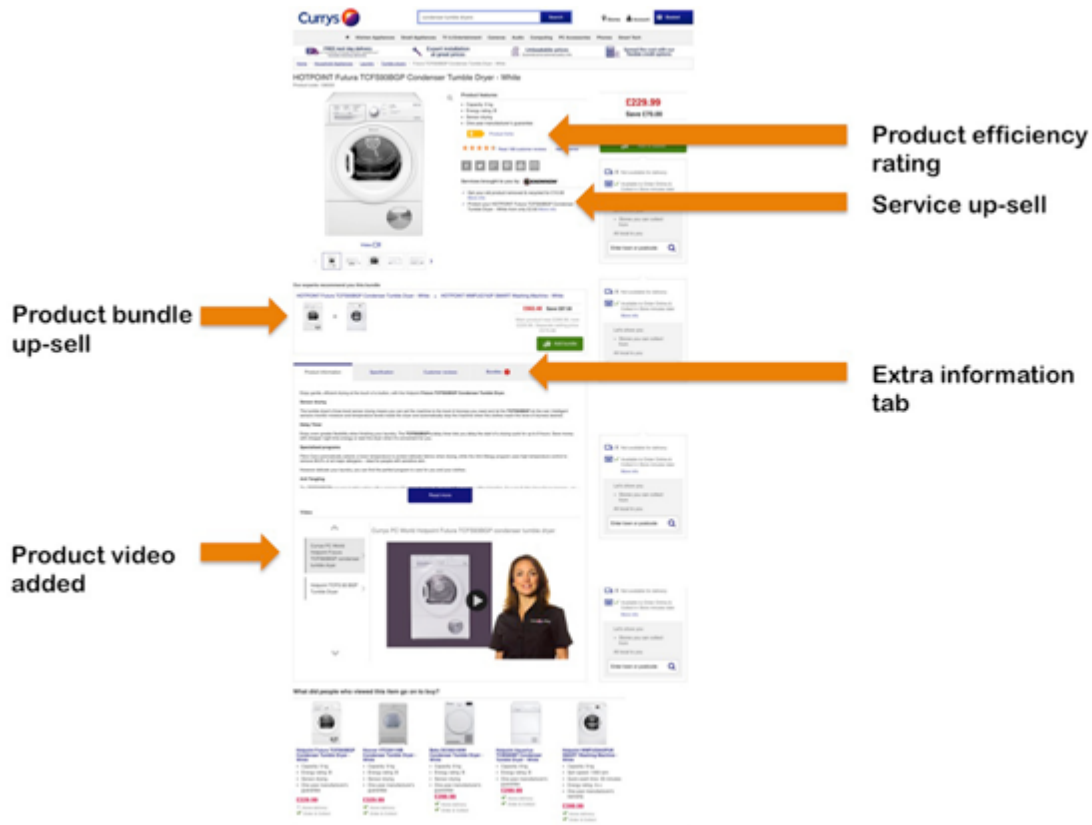


Also note the “Why buy from us?” message which is important for when visitors deep link into a product page.

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## Landing page for low-cost item



## Layering information

Q. Is it easy for visitors to access more information?

For some products and services, you may need to provide a lot of information to ensure you have covered the needs of all types of visitor. For example, a B2B sSoftware sSolutions company may need to provide different information depending on the decision maker, e.g. *business case content for the Finance Director, detailed technical specifications for the IT Director.*

To ensure you don't make the landing page overly complex, you should think about how to layer this information. By layering, we mean ensuring that the most important content and calls to action are clearly visible and there are links to enable visitors to expand this content and view more.

There are multiple ways of enabling visitors to access more information:

- Text/image links.
- Expanding content sections.
- Quick links.
- Lightboxes on mouse-over.

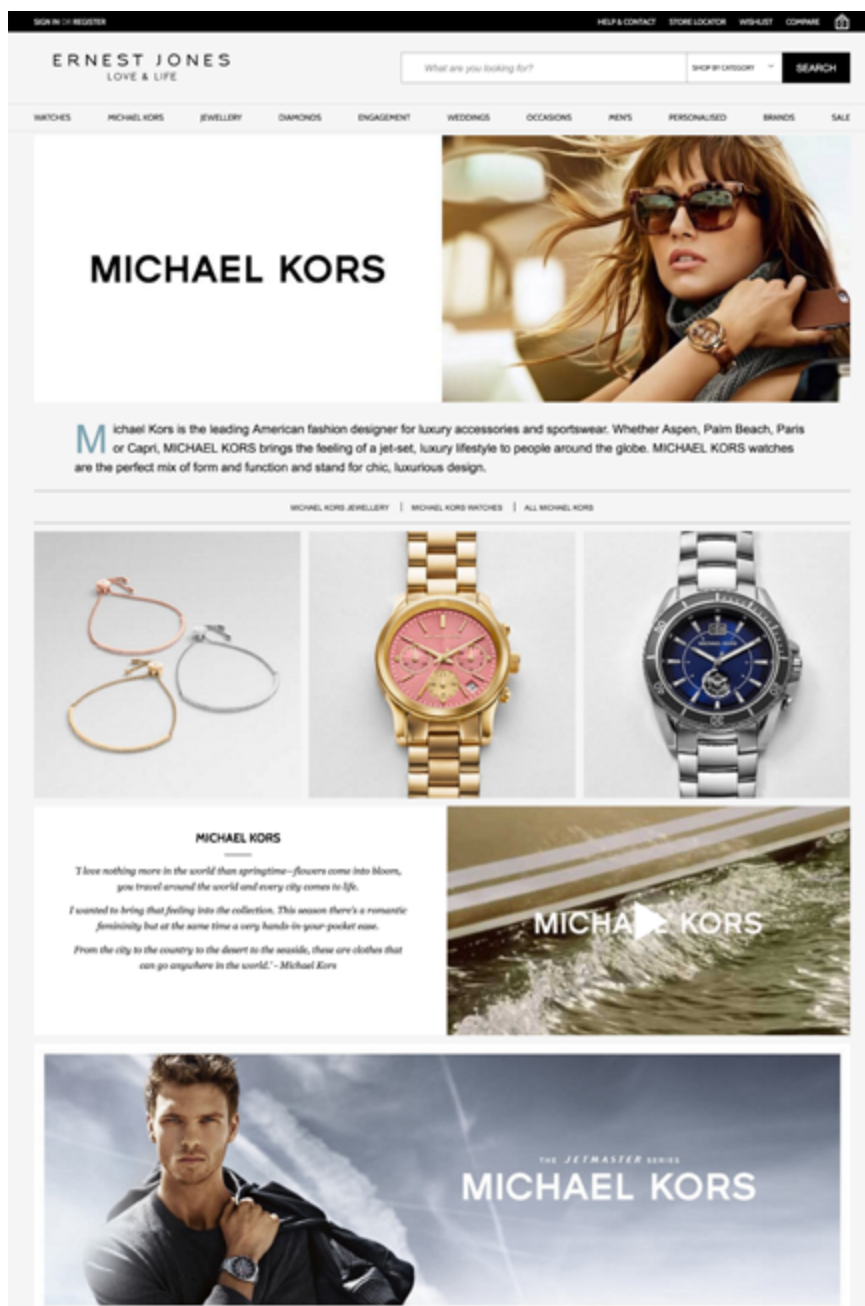
What to avoid:

- Content overkill – making it hard for people to know what to do.
- Too many links – forcing visitors to work hard to find the relevant ones.
- No visual differentiation – making it hard to know what to read, where to click, etc.
- Too many competing calls to action

The example below is from Ernest Jones. We think it's a poor average main brand landing page because there is no clear call to action and the deluge of content spots makes there is no context to the content spots, making it hard to know where to look and what to click on. The site does use mouse-over visual changes to add CTAs for the three product shots, and on mobile these CTAs are automatically displayed, which is good.

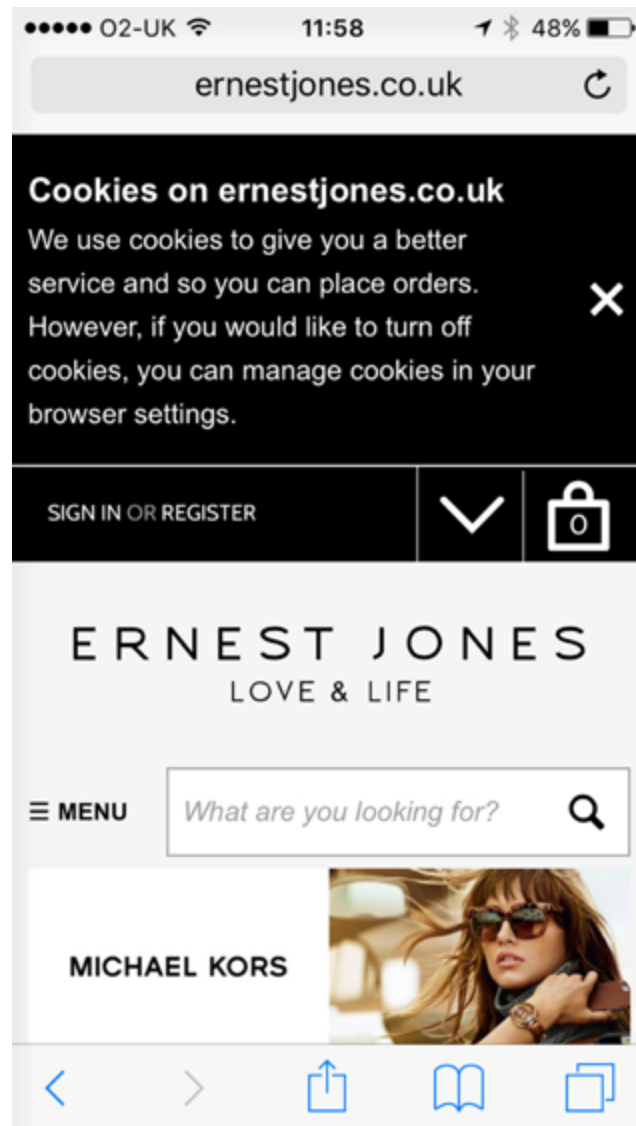
It's dangerous to assume people will know what content refers to without clear signposting. For example, the final content spot uses a lifestyle image and simply copy, "The Jetmaster series Michael Kors". But what is the Jetmaster Series? Is this a click to content or product (it's actually a product list page for watches)? Perhaps they're thinking the intrigue will encourage people to click but some users may well decide it's irrelevant as there is no incentive to act.

There are even more competing offers at higher resolutions...Of course, we don't have access to their data to know just how this page layout is affecting their clickthrough rate (although we'd love to know!).



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On mobile, the obtrusive cookie message pushes content down the page unnecessarily:



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## Consider offering distinct, segmented landing pages

### Q. Should we use segmented landing pages?

We have seen that pages will have different audiences that you should try to meet the needs of. We also know that landing pages need to be simple to be effective. The layout of the landing page will be important to achieve both goals.

In some cases, if you are unsure of your audience, you may need to develop tabs or a longer conversion pathway.

The example from Sage below is a landing page for its Sage 1000 ERP solution. Note the use of tabs to let visitors access more detailed information without forcing them to scroll to find it. We don't think that the technical implementation is great, as you need to request new URLs to load each tab, but we've included this to illustrate the use of tabs for layering information.



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## Make the page work above the fold

Q. Are the *key content, visuals and call to action* above the fold?

There is a myth about web design that persists which states that the whole of the home page or landing page should fit 'above the fold' for the average user. In fact visitors do scroll if the page is designed to scroll. There's a useful old case study from CXPartners<sup>28</sup> that dives into this in more detail. The screenshot below demonstrates how changing the type of content above the fold can have a significant impact on browsing below the fold:

<sup>28</sup> [CX Partners: Myth of the page fold](#)



### What is it? Above the fold/Below the fold

This term originates in direct mail from when copy was above or below the fold in a letter. On screen it refers to content in the window that can be viewed without scrolling. Of course, this will vary according to screen resolution, so you have to review this for the most common resolutions.

For a home page we would argue that a longer scrolling page which scrolls is more effective in communicating more messages to different audiences, as long as the scrolling positions are clearly visible. However in most cases landing pages will perform better if they are simpler and shorter. There are exceptions to this rule though – longer landing pages known as ‘squeeze pages’ are often used by *‘get rich quick scammers’* because they work...

Perfectly legitimate companies have also used them successfully as this example shows:<sup>29</sup>



<sup>29</sup> [How we made \\$1 million for SEOmoz - Conversion Rate Experts](#)

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Note that a shorter there is a much shorter design is currently in use, which may reflect the greater awareness of the brand as Moz is a well established company now.

Despite the ongoing popularity of squeeze pages, many tests show that what's 'above the fold' is critical, so ensure the right content is above the fold or test the length of pages as explained in Step 7.

## Understanding where to place the call to action

Q. Is the call to action in the best place to encourage visitors to act?

We have discussed the fact that the need to have everything above the fold is actually a myth but good practice is to ensure the landing page is effective above the fold, *i.e. it works to signpost important content and encourage visitors to scroll if there is more content.*

But how do you know where to put your primary call to action amongst all of this content?

*It must be above the fold, right?*

Well, not always. Here's the thing – a call to action is best placed at the point on the landing page where the visitor has enough information to make a decision.

If you place the call to action too soon, you can come across as too eager and actually put people off because they're not ready to commit.

Put it too late and people might have lost interest because they can't find where to click.

We recommend reading Bnonn Tennant's this excellent blog post on KISSmetrics, 'Why The Fold is a Myth'<sup>30</sup>. The screenshots below are taken from his blog post and refer to a Marketing Experiments test<sup>31</sup> that revealed that placing the call to action below the fold increased conversion in this particular case.

This version with the call-to-action at the top wasn't most effective...



<sup>30</sup> [Kissmetrics: Why the fold is a myth](#)

<sup>31</sup> [Marketing Experiments: Call-to-action tests](#)

Instead, this was...



We can speculate that the second variant raises anticipation by encouraging visits to engage more with the content.

However, we're not suggesting that this is definitive proof that moving the CTA to the bottom drives the greatest conversion.

### Why?

Because more extensive testing is required to determine whether a different visual design and copy for the CTA in the header could actually work better. We need to prove that the reason for the poor conversion is because the CTA is above the fold, not because the design isn't great.

*The key take away is this: Don't obsess over the fold. Make sure that the content that is visible when people arrive at your landing page makes it easy for them to navigate that page and take appropriate actions. And be rigorous in testing landing page design and content.*

### Best Practice Tip 16 Make sure your site is effective 'above the fold'

Start by assessing your minimum screen resolution you are targeting and then think what must be above the fold, for example, the main engagement offer. Use the 'In-page Analytics' feature in Google Analytics to assess the number of clicks that occur above/below the fold. You may be surprised how few people scroll and this will encourage you to think about what is above the fold. We're not advocating pages that don't scroll though.

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## Page layout questions to ask yourself

Here are the final, detailed questions to ask about your landing page:

Q. Should we remove navigation?

This is a common approach in landing pages.

### Best Practice Tip 17 Simplify navigation

Removing navigation is fundamental to most landing pages, so reduce navigation choice if possible through your pages.

Where tested, landing pages without navigation almost always work better.

Compare the two landing pages below, from a Google search for “CRM software for SME”. Both have different approaches, and there are good points in each but you’ll notice that Freshdesk has an enclosed landing page that removes the site wide navigation to focus on the core message.

The screenshot shows the Freshdesk landing page. At the top, there's a dark green header with the Freshdesk logo and a phone number: +1 (866) 832-3090. Below the header, the main headline reads "Wow Your Customers with exceptional customer service. Try Freshdesk!". A registration form is prominently displayed on the right side, enclosed in a white box with a green border. The form includes fields for First name, Last name, Email, Company name, Helpdesk name, and Phone no., along with a "GET STARTED FOR FREE" button. Below the headline, there are several testimonials and icons representing key features: Multi Channel, Self Service Portal, CRM Integrations, and First 3 Agents Free. At the bottom, it states "50,000 Customers" and lists logos for Honda, Sony Pictures, BOSS, Penn, and UNICEF.

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- Q. Main navigation removed? or...
- Q. Main navigation reduced?

Q. Does the main offer and response form have clear visual emphasis?

- Q. Form and offer have distinct visual emphasis?

To draw your visitors' attention to the landing page a border or background tint and clear heading can help encourage action.

Q. How many offers should we have?

- Q. Single offer used?

Common thinking and AB testing suggests you must strip the landing page right down. But longer formats can be more effective as the ongoing success of long landing pages shows.

Q. Are the main sign-up fields on the subscription page evident on the main landing page?

- Q. Main sign-up form on the landing page?

If the form is one or more click away, will this reduce response?

Q. Is the main call-to-action clear?

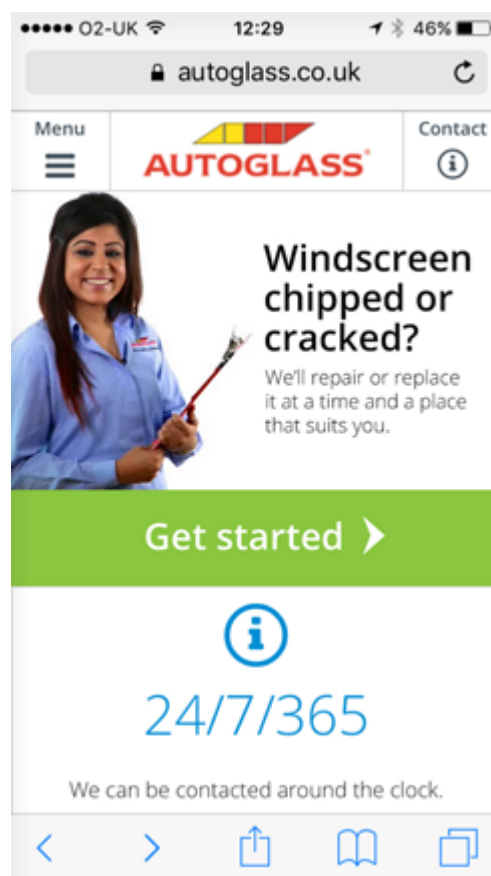
- Q. Main call-to-action clear?

- Q. Is it button-like (so it suits touch screens)?
- Q. Is the colour right? High contrast works well as does green = green for go!
- Q. Is it repeated? In a longer form or page it's good to repeat at the top and the bottom?

Q. Is the main call-to-action persuasive?

- Q. Persuasive call to action? Shows value to be obtained by clicking (not 'click here' but 'Download now' or 'Learn more')?
- Q. Point-of-action reassurance? i.e. further information is provided to support the decision

The Autoglass mobile site has a separate page to answer additional questions to reassure those who are uncertain about committing.uses simple copy to reassure visitors that it provides a high quality service. Users can also click through to find additional information for key messages like “Any glass, any vehicle” (not visible in this screenshot).



Autoglass brand-related messages accessed via the About page

Q. Should we use multiple tabs?

We have seen that tabs can enable us to offer a range of choice to a visitor but without clicking off to a separate page and with the emphasis remaining on conversion for the home page.

Tabs to consider include:

- About the category (What is X?).
- About the company (What makes us different?).

- ❑ Our other products/services.
- ❑ Additional resources (Help me decide).
- ❑ Customer testimonials (social proof).

## Creating mobiletouch and mobile -friendly landing pages

- ❑ Q. Are our landing pages user friendly for touch and mobile visitors?

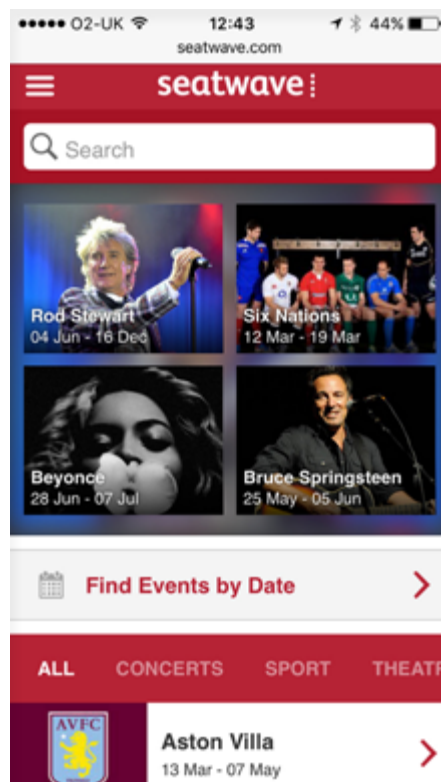
First, check that you get a significant percentage of your visits from touch and mobile devices. Whilst it's unlikely that you won't have mobile visitors, there is no point investing time and money creating mobile-optimised pages if the visitor numbers are so small you're unlikely to see a return. We find for most websites, traffic from touch screens dominates, and there is an increasing number of desktop/laptop computers using touch screen technology.

Usability on a mobile device is clearly different to a desktop. For example, long complex forms become a nightmare to complete unless they are well structured. Also, some features that work on a desktop site might not work well on mobile, so when (e.g. product zoom for retail e-commerce). So when planning a mobile landing page think carefully about how easy it is to interact with the content and follow the call to actions.

A few pointers:

- ✅ Click-to-call is a popular call to action for mobile landing pages.
- ✅ Mobile pages need to load fast, therefore need to be lightweight (less than 20Kb).
- ✅ Accessibility is key – things like Flash aren't usable natively supported on most mobile devices.
- ✅ Design needs to be optimised for smartphones – 1 column layout works best so there is only vertical scrolling, not horizontal scrolling.

The example below shows a two simple mobile landing pages with that use touch-friendly prominent click-to-call calls to action, one using the geo-location capabilities in the browser:



If you are building landing pages for mobile visitors, then we recommend reading this insightful blog post by Angie Schottmuller and Andrew Miliwauki<sup>32</sup>.

## The importance of testing

Q. Are we using testing techniques to improve landing page performance?

How do you know what the 'optimal' page layout is?

There is only one sensible approach to discover this – testing. By testing we mean using AB and Multivariate testing tools to compare different page layouts against each other in real-time and then reviewing the data to determine which version has driven the highest response rate. We cover this technique in Step 7.

Testing provides the following benefits:

**Removes subjectivity from decision-making.** Good practice learning can help us devise hypotheses for improving landing pages. However, what we might decide needs improving on your landing page could be different to your opinion. So, who is 'right'? Potentially we all are, to a certain degree, and a combination of our views is the best option.

With testing, you can remove the subjectivity and test multiple versions of a page against each other and then use the data to prove which one works best.

This can be really useful in large organisations where there are multiple people/teams involved in e-commerce and it's often hard to get a consensus of opinion (especially when internal politics obscure decision making).

**Provides like-for-like comparison.** How do you know that a change you make to your landing page is what causes a change in KPI performance? There are external factors that influence landing page performance that can bias results. For example, a competitor runs a killer discount at the same time you change your product landing page. Your conversion rate drops sharply and you attribute that to the landing page tweak. However, the real cause of the drop is the competitor's price position, which means you have interpreted the data incorrectly.

Testing enables you to run multiple versions of the page concurrently. This means that each version is subject to the same external influences, so any variations you get in KPIs can be attributed with greater confidence to the landing page variations.

**Can be continuous.** Rome wasn't built in a day. And neither is an optimal landing page. The reality is that the visitor mix changes over time, so customer demand will. What works today on your landing page might not work in X months' time.

Testing can and should be a continuous activity, seeking to gradually improve performance over time and then maintain that level of improved performance. In some cases you will get the 'big bang', where you skyrocket conversion having made changes to the landing page. However, often it's an iterative interactive process, making incremental improvements each time you test.

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<sup>32</sup> [Searchenginewatch.com: 'Mobile Landing Page Optimization: 10 Best Practices for Success.'](https://www.searchenginewatch.com/2016/05/10/mobile-landing-page-optimization-10-best-practices-for-success/)

- ✔ **Can show what doesn't work.** Not all tests provide positive results! But a negative result (i.e. conversion decreases) isn't necessarily a bad thing. It actually teaches you what doesn't work on the landing page, helping you to understand what to avoid in future.

**Key Strategy Recommendation 12 Don't be dispirited by negative test results**

Learn from the good and the bad. If a test decreases conversion, even if you thought it would work brilliantly, use that as a learning experience and improve the next test.

Perhaps you are guilty of what Conversion Rate Experts call “Meek Tweaking” where you're making minor changes to copy without trying entirely new designs.

For further reading on layout testing, you might like to read KISSmetrics's blog on 'The Blueprint for a Perfectly Testable Landing Page' that provides a walk-through of using a wireframe approach<sup>33</sup>.

We discuss testing techniques in more detail in Step 7 – Improving results, but for now let's take a look at an example which shows the value of testing layout.

The example relates to business-to-business service High Rise<sup>34</sup>.

First we have the original page, e which was compared to a longer form design; then a shorter person-based design was added which improved performance. Then a longer-form person-based design, which was a backward step. It shows the value in making major layout changes.

*1. Original page which compared to a longer form design.*



*2. Shorter person-based design.*



<sup>33</sup> [Kissmetrics: Landing Page Blueprint](#)

<sup>34</sup> [37 Signals: AB Testing example](#)

3. Then a longer-form person-based design.



# Step 5

## Create compelling content and creative

By now you know the goals for your landing page, who your visitors are and have worked out the optimal page layout. So, what content do you need to make the page fly?

To help you make this decision, you need to understand guidelines for writing online copy.

### Good practice techniques for copywriting

❑ *Q. Does our copy follow good practice recommendations?*

You will find a lot has been written about online copywriting. There is much hyperbole. And there is some confusion with search engine optimisation (SEO). So let's clarify our take on copywriting based on years of experience.

Copywriting is not SEO. Copywriting is about producing relevant content that provides clear and concise messages to visitors to help you achieve the goals for your landing page. Search engine optimisation can support good copywriting by ensuring the copy is optimised for relevant search queries. However, content should always be written for the end-user first to ensure it reads well. In fact, this is the approach that search engines like Google espouse.

Below are some useful guidelines:

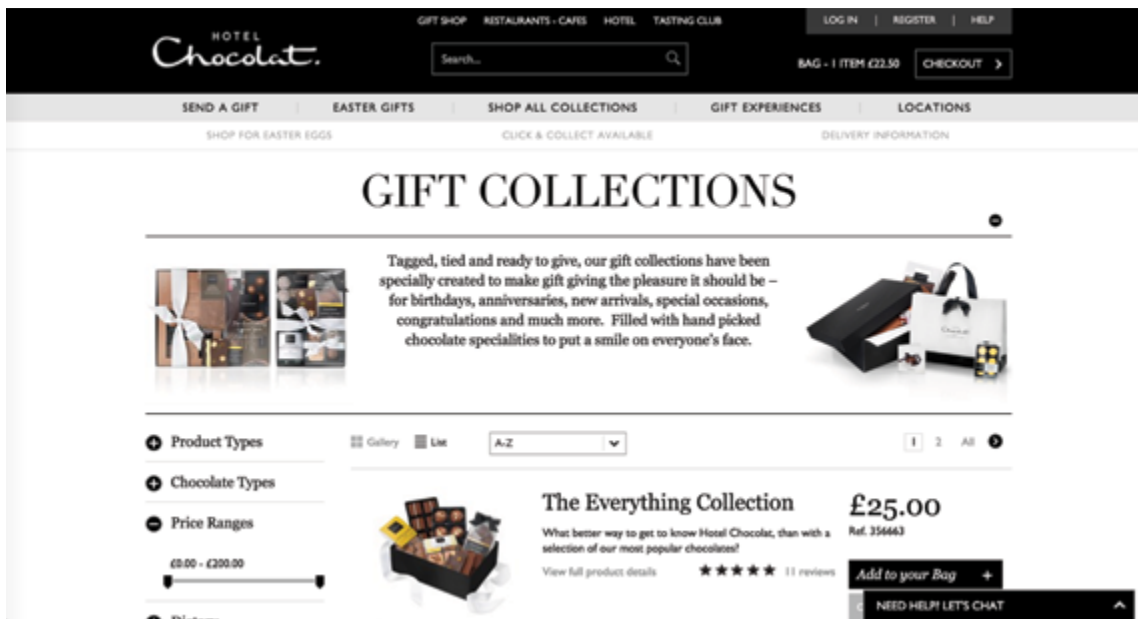
- ✅ **1. Write for people not search engines.** A paragraph of keywords does not persuasive copy make! Write copy that appeals to real people and speaks to them in a tone of voice that will appeal.
- ✅ **2. Make the headline impactful.** A good headline encourages people to read it – it provides relevance, reassuring them that this page is worth spending more time on. Good headlines are useful feature and/or benefit led.
- ✅ **3. Get the first sentence read.** So important! If people don't read the first sentence, they're unlikely to read the second and you want them to read on, right?
- ✅ **4. Tailor content based on audience type.** Make your copy speak to the customer. If you're talking to teenagers, write in a tone of voice that resonates with them, use their language, etc. It often pays to employ specialist copywriters when targeting specific audiences.
- ✅ **5. Be succinct.** Don't take three paragraphs to say what you could in one. Boil it down to the essentials but make sure you're not sacrificing quality. The copy still has to be legible and make sense! This is critical on mobile where attention spans are typically shorter (unless someone has come to read a detailed guide!).
- ✅ **6. Be persuasive.** Entice people. Encourage people. Even seduce people.

Look at the example of the Hotel Chocolat Caramel Chocolate Gift Collections landing page below. It uses sensual emotive language relating to the indulgence of luxury chocolate to entice people.

- ✅ **7. Know your personality.** It's important that you use a consistent voice across your website. This helps visitors get to know your brand personality and provides an important signal that this is your landing page. A good example of this is Wish.co.uk's Peterman whose tone of voice is consistent across their product pages.

We recommend reading Brian Clark's article series '10 Steps to Effective Copywriting' on Copyblogger<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> [10 Steps to Effective Copywriting' on Copyblogger](#)



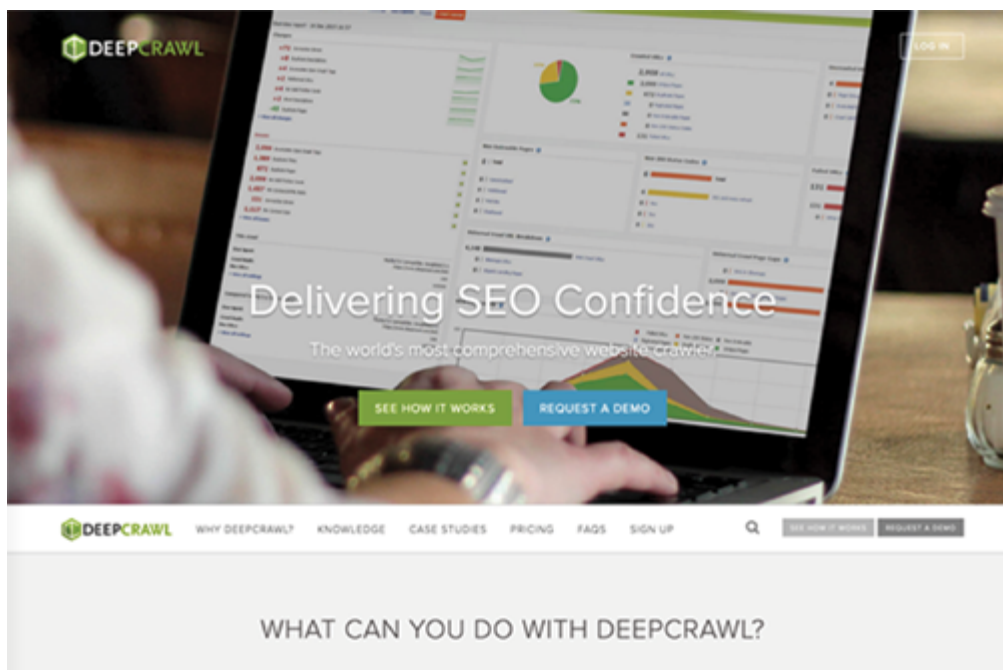
## Content to engage the visitor

We've said that you need a relevant headline, but what really grabs the attention? Often it's a video or a strong image, such as an image of a customer using the product that will help conversion.

### Key Strategy Recommendation 13 Invest in effective engagement devices

Although layout and design is important, ultimately it's your offer and engagement devices that will help conversion.

Here's a landing page example that proves the point we think. The offer is for Deep Crawl, an SEO software solution, but the big image of screenshot from the actual software makes it more appealing than text or generic images. The screenshot contextualises the product offer.



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Less is often more with landing pages, but this means selecting the right content and then using copywriting skills to make that content engaging, relevant and actionable.

- Q. What types of content do you have that can bring your copy to life?
- Quality, engaging images?
- Videos?
- Examples of product or download?
- Customer testimonials?

## Persuasive messaging hierarchy

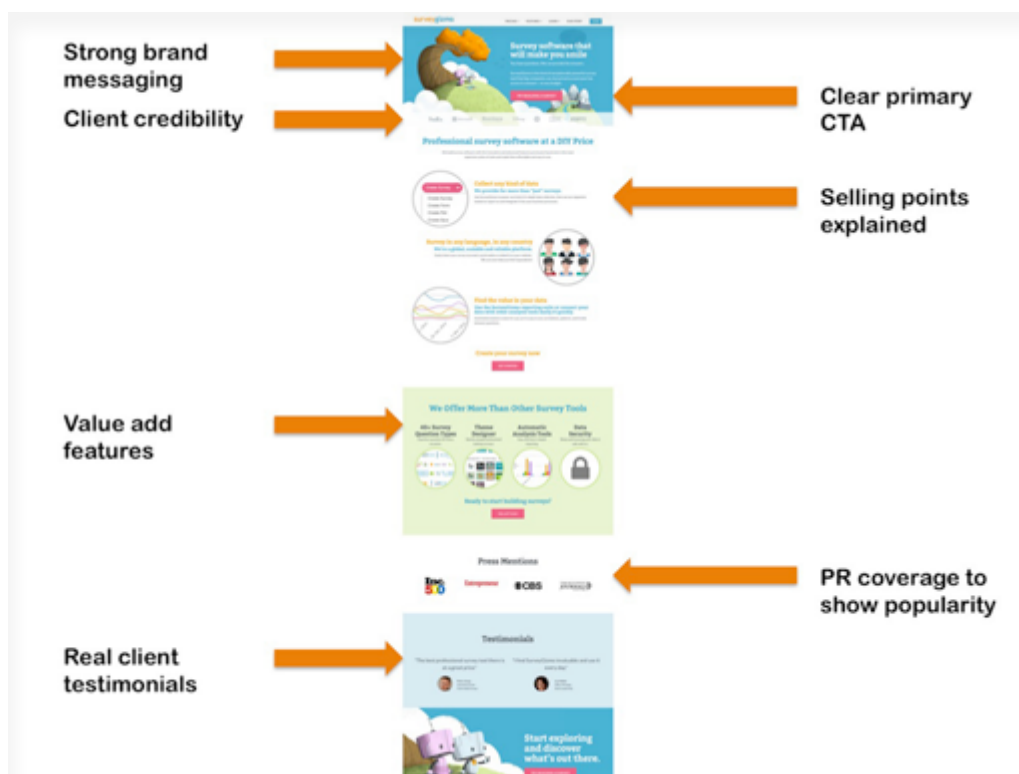
- Q. Do we have a clear persuasive messaging hierarchy?

You have a story to tell and few words to tell it. The messages in your headings are particularly important and they need to be prioritised. This is what we mean by hierarchy.

### Best Practice Tip 18 Effective messaging hierarchy defined

Position your brand carefully through the messaging on the landing page and ensure this positioning is consistent with other landing pages.

If you remember, we looked at a framework for explaining this in Step 3 in the section on [5. Make the combination of features and benefits clear](#). Let's take the example below of the main landing page for Survey Gizmo, an online survey software provider. It focuses the brand messaging on providing an easy to use tool that has brilliant support behind it, using the logos of well-known clients to reinforce its credentials.



Note how it uses a personal tone of voice to communicate the company's message, not writing in the third person. As illustrated by the example above, your headlines and the related copy should:

- ✓ 1. Engage with relevance but intrigue also  
*'You have questions. We can provide the answers...'*
- ✓ 2. Offer a benefit straight away  
*'Priced so everyone has access to answers – on any budget'*
- ✓ 3. Link the features with the benefits  
*'Collect any kind of data'*
- ✓ 4. Encourage action  
*'Try building a survey'*

Alternatively, you can try the tried and trusted AIDA framework, your landing page has to encourage Attention, Interest, Desire and Action.

## Brand and strapline

### □ Q. Is our brand and strapline reassuring?

It's important that what your brand represents is clear from the landing page. This is influenced by the strength of your brand reputation and how easily recognised brand symbols like the logo are.

This is straightforward for a relatively well-known brand like Argos, but for companies where many visitors will not know them well, a strapline explaining more about their services could help.

Brand identity on landing pages has a significant effect on new visitors, those who are likely to know very little about you or your website. If the brand is not well presented and what you represent unclear, it could put people off.

A strapline can help give context to the brand logo. Think of well-known straplines such as:

- ✓ John Lewis – 'Never knowingly undersold.'
- ✓ Stella Artois – 'Reassuringly expensive.'
- ✓ McDonalds – 'I'm lovin' it.'

Let's use the example of a pureplay ecommerce fashion retailer, [Boohoo.com](http://Boohoo.com). It features the strapline 'Twentyfour Seven Fashion' beneath the logo so that it appears on every web page. This gives the new visitor a clear visual signal as to the positioning/purpose of the brand.



Use this checklist to see if you have your bases covered:

- Do you have a quality brand identity in the top left navigation?
- Do you use a supporting strapline (if necessary)?
- Are the basic parts of your company or services highlighted?

## Effective copywriting

- Q. *Is our copy effective in conveying the key messages?*

A classic piece of [research](#) by Jakob Nielsen, one of the leading authorities on web usability, showed that:

- We read 25 per cent more slowly online.
- We scan (79 per cent) rather than read (16 per cent).

Dave Chaffey and PR Smith devised a checklist for online copywriting in their book *Emarketing Excellence*, with the salubrious mnemonic CRABS:

- Chunking**. Chunking means that paragraphs must be shorter than in paper copy. Think one or two sentences only. This helps scannability.
- Relevance**. With limited space, we have no room for fillers. Stick with what matters – the details of the offer and how to get it.
- Accuracy**. Don't get carried away with your copy; don't set expectations so high that you overpromise and can't deliver something you offer.
- Brevity**. Brevity goes with chunking and scannability. Write your copy, reduce the word count and then reduce it again. Give yourself targets and beat them without sacrificing good English and understanding. Where necessary you can hyperlink to more details proving what you say, although this will often break the flow.
- Scannability**. This is reading without reading every word, just picking up the sense of each paragraph from the keywords. The eye tends to pick out words in headers, at the start of paragraphs and those emphasised in bold.

The success factors in the CRABS copywriting mnemonic are functional, but it's also worth remembering the human dynamic as we'll see in the next section on trust and reassurance. Think carefully about tone of voice.

### Tone of voice

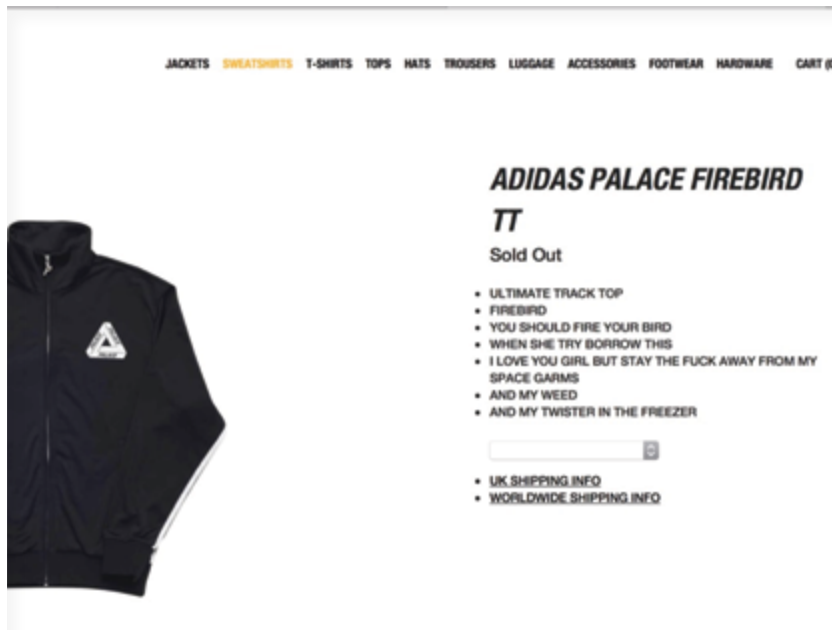
- Q. *Is our tone of voice appropriate?*

The tone of voice is a key element of the landing page. This is the mood or attitude of the writing, which needs to be appropriate to your target audience and your own brand values. Define who you are writing for, so that you can think about what might make them interested in the product.

#### Best Practice Tip 19 Get the tone of voice right

The tone of voice should fit your brand and audience, but if you can push the boundaries to make it more accessible, then this can work well on landing pages.

Palace Skateboards is a great example of a brand using distinct, and polarising, copy on its product landing pages. The copy is clearly tailored to appeal to a specific audience that will enjoy edgy, provocative content that's uses street slang. We'd imagine that quite a few people, who don't fit this demographic, would find it rude and crude!



Please note that at the time of writing, the web shop is closed and due to re-open but no date is provided.

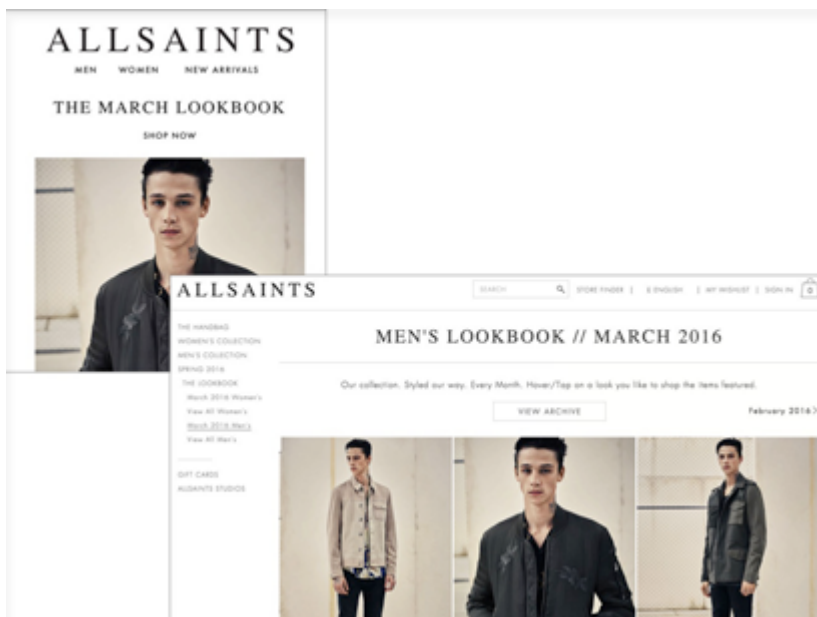
### Consistency with marketing campaign creative/content

❑ Q. *Is our copy consistent with marketing campaign content?*

As we have highlighted previously in this guide, it's important that you align your landing page copy with the content used in your marketing campaigns

**Why?** To provide a consistent scent trail for visitors. This is really important when you are promoting an offer or discount via the marketing campaign, either using a banner or via text. When the customer arrives at the landing page, they will be reassured if the same banner/text is repeated, confirming that the offer is available.

Take the two examples below from email marketing campaigns. You'll notice that All Saints uses a consistent creative treatment but WHSmith has no replication of the email offer anywhere visible, which is poor practice.



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Don't assume your content is right

**Q. Have we tested our landing page?**

Even if you follow our good practice guidelines, you still need to test your landing page to work out what the best combination of content and copy is. When you take a look around the web, you'll see such a wide variety of landing page designs. Whilst many of them are following good practice guidelines, they're finding their own way to implement these based on their audience.

No matter what industry you work in, the homepage design always struggles between presenting offers and explaining the 'who we are'.

And there are some surprising results. For every test that confirms your 'gut feel' there will be one that confounds it! Take the example below from Whichtestwon.com showing two landing page treatments for the homepage of Cleverstuff, an online retailer of educational supplies.

**Best Practice Tip 20 Test and test again**  
 Every component of a landing page can be tested, including the copy and brand elements like logo positioning and use of straplines.



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Our 'gut feel' would be that Version A with its strong brand positioning section would encourage better performance. However, it was actually Version B that increased paid orders by 13.7 per cent!



# Step 6

## Increase brand credibility and trust

Q. *How can we increase the credibility and trust of our page to boost conversion?*

Think about how you react to information when you land on a web page. If you don't know the brand, what do you look for? What signals help you feel reassured that this website is trustworthy?

For returning customers this isn't as important – they have already seen your website and trust it enough to come back. However, for a new visitor, this may be the first time they have ever come across your company.

Generally speaking, there are nine techniques for displaying brand signals to reassure visitors:

- 1. Logo
- 2. Strapline
- 3. History/About Us
- 4. Testimonials/Reviews
- 5. Independent accreditation (from well known sources)
- 6. Security messages
- 7. Customer Service support
- 8. Guarantees/Warranties
- 9. Awards.

We'll look at each of these in more detail below. First, start by asking yourself the following question:

Q. *Have we clearly communicated our brand credibility and trust?*

Although you'll likely want to keep the page short, review these different methods of increasing credibility and so increasing conversion.

### Key Strategy Recommendation 14 Understand your consumer trust factors

Think carefully about what the barriers to conversion are. How can you reassure customers that you can be trusted both to generate a response and in a longer-term relationship? Don't over play trust – if you seem too desperate to convince people, they might think you're trying to hide something.

## 1. Logo

Q. *Is our logo of sufficient quality for credibility?*

This doesn't need much explanation!

Your logo is the primary brand identity mechanism for your landing page. Online shoppers are used to finding this in the top left of the page, though some brands feature it in the centre, or to the right. This is happening more as responsive web design takes hold and designers base designs on smartphone screen resolutions, where headers often have the logo in the middle and icons either side.

When featuring logos on your website, make sure the imagery is optimised for web to reduce file size but is of the highest possible quality – a blurred or obscured logo doesn't reflect well

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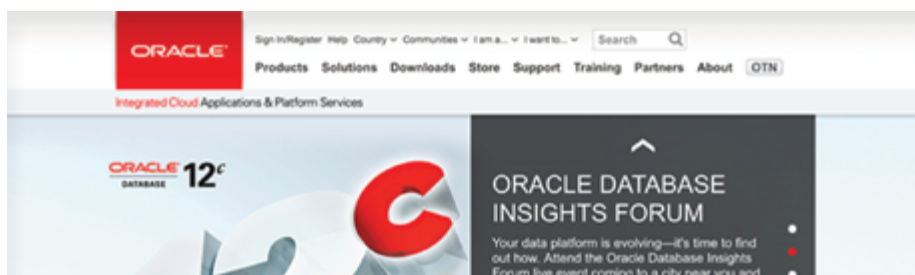
on your brand quality. Many designers recommend scalable vector graphics (SVG), so the quality of the image is based on device capability.

## 2. Strapline

Q. *Is our strapline effective?*

Not all websites used straplines. It's not essential but a strapline can help reinforce your core brand values or position your products and services.

Take a look at Oracle's strapline in the image below: 'Integrated Cloud Applications & Platform Services'. It is deliberately positioning the brand as a serious and practical business partner with a joined up product suite.

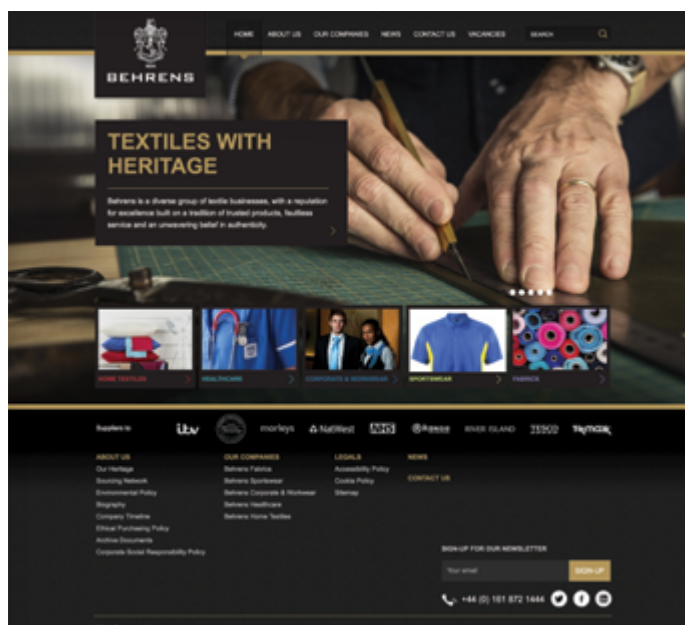


## 3. History/About Us

Q. *Is the about us page or content on page effective?*

For some brands, heritage is key. A good example is family run businesses where brand awareness can be high in local markets, but less so further afield which can hinder online expansion. However, the brand heritage and back story can help persuade people that it's a reputable company with a track record of delivering great quality service.

The example below is from the Behrens Groups, a business that started in 1834 and is still run by the family. There is a lot of rich content about the heritage available online, and the homepage plays on the theme with 'Textile with heritage'.



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About Us is usually a simple text link in the site-wide header. The destination page will contain useful information about the history of the company and what it represents. It's the perfect opportunity to reinforce brand values and persuade visitors that you are reputable and trustworthy.

[Watchfinder.co.uk](http://Watchfinder.co.uk) uses a novel approach with a landing page titled '10 years of Watchfinder'. This conveys credibility as it clearly shows the brand has a heritage. The page uses interactive techniques to encourage the visitors to learn more about the brand.

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## 4. Testimonials/Reviews

Q. Are our testimonials and reviews of sufficient quality?

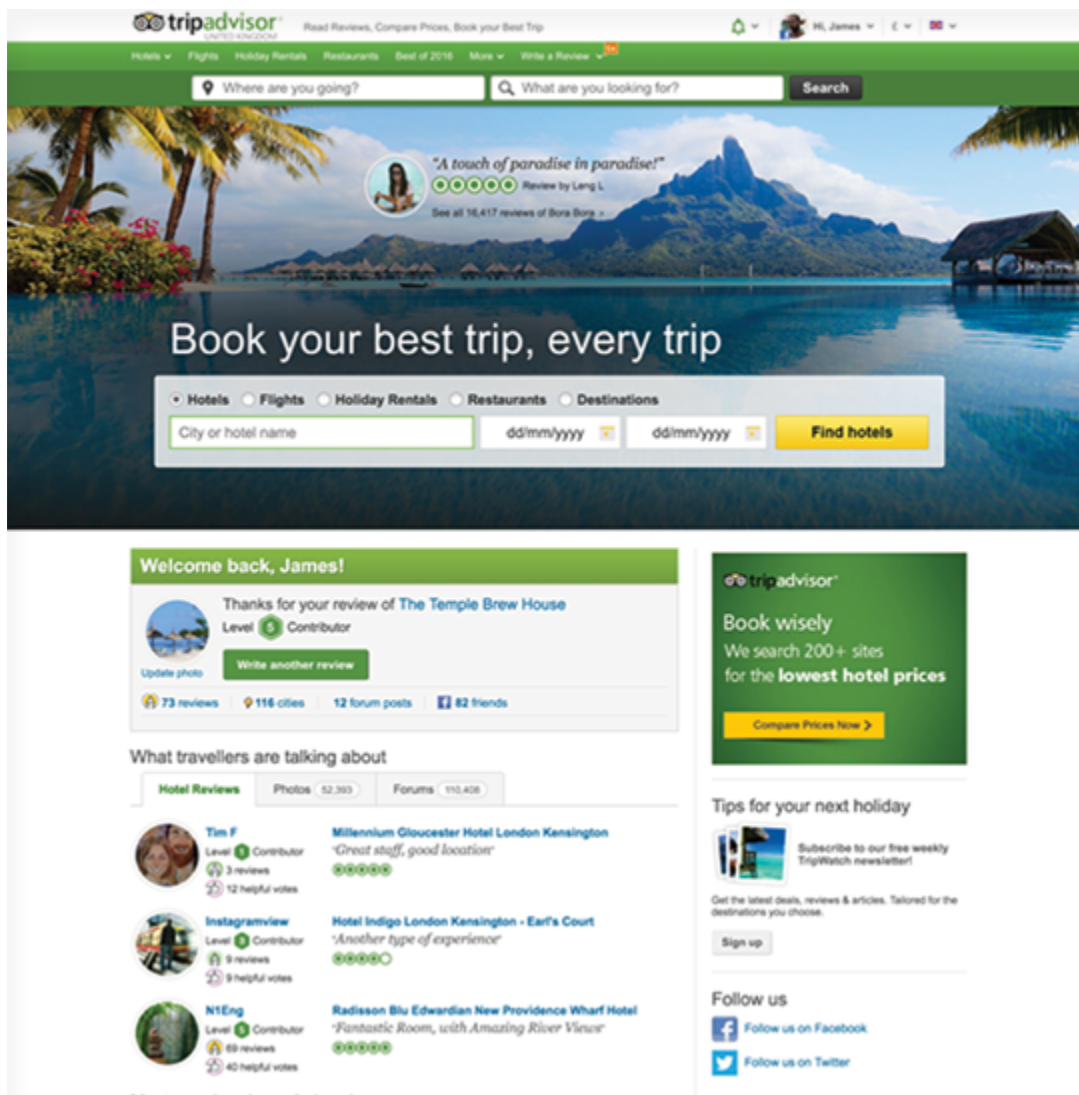
These fall into two categories:

- ✔ **Expert reviews.** Where an industry expert, publisher or well-known person provides an authoritative review of a product or service.
- ✔ **Customer reviews.** Where customer feedback is displayed on the landing page. For retail ecommerce this is usually done via an online ratings system such as Feefo, Trustpilot or Reevo. However, it's also common for quotes from happy customers to be displayed prominently, a tactic more readily associated with B2B.

Both can have a strong impact on a visitor's perception of quality but, in general, it's the customer ratings and reviews that influence trust the most.

Quotes or videos showing customers using the product or describing the benefits of using the services are also really helpful for visitors.

The landing page<sup>36</sup> below shows content from the main landing page for Tripadvisor, which uses customer quotes to validate popularity of the website and show that it's an active travel community – 'See all 16,417 reviews for Bora Bora'.



<sup>36</sup> [Smart Insights: An in-depth home page optimisation study](#)

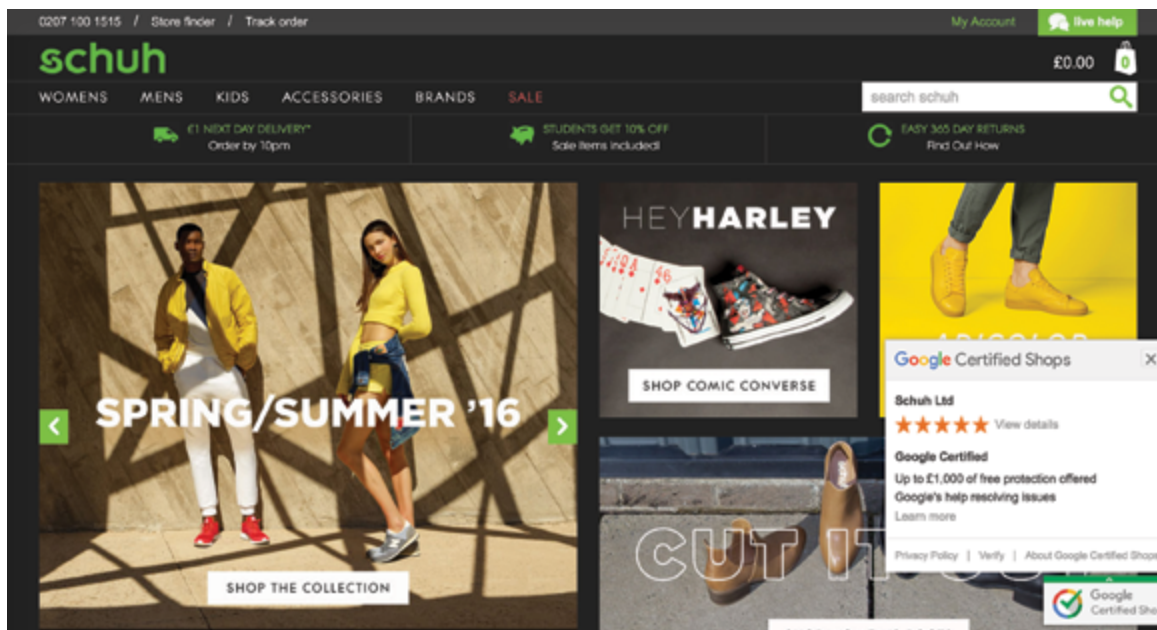
## 5. Accreditation

### Q. Relevant industry accreditation in place?

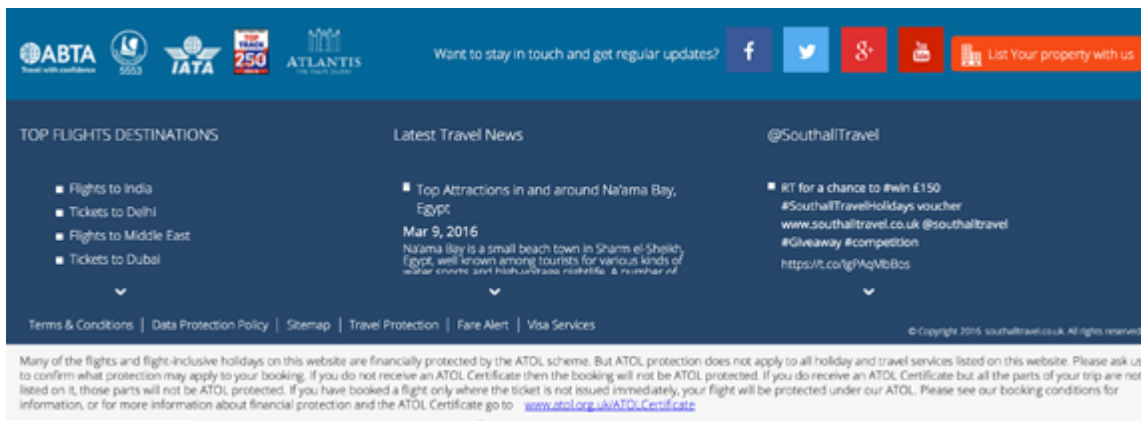
This relates to independent organisations and schemes that you are a member of and that are widely recognised by customers in your industry. The more well known the accreditation body, the greater the impact on your visitors.

When using accreditation signals, it's important to link logos/images through to the accreditation body's website or online proof of your membership.

The screenshot below is taken from the site-wide footer for Schuh, a specialist footwear retailer, which displays the Google Certified Shop accreditation logo, which opens up the brand's profile in the directory when clicked.



In some industries, accreditation is a legal requirement. For example, all travel companies selling air holiday packages and flights in the UK are required by law to hold an ATOL, which is granted after the company has met the CAA's licensing requirements. The example below shows the footer area for Southall Travel, which includes an ATOL logo (though the legibility could be improved).



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## 6. Security messages

### Q. Security messages and logos sufficient to reassure?

These are message that highlight how safe and secure it is to shop with you online. For ecommerce websites, these include SSL certificates (e.g. VeriSign logo) and 3D Secure (e.g. Verified by Visa).

This is particularly helpful for inexperienced Internet shoppers who may not fully trust handing over their card details to a website.

### Key Strategy Recommendation 15 Make it clear that shopping online is safe and secure

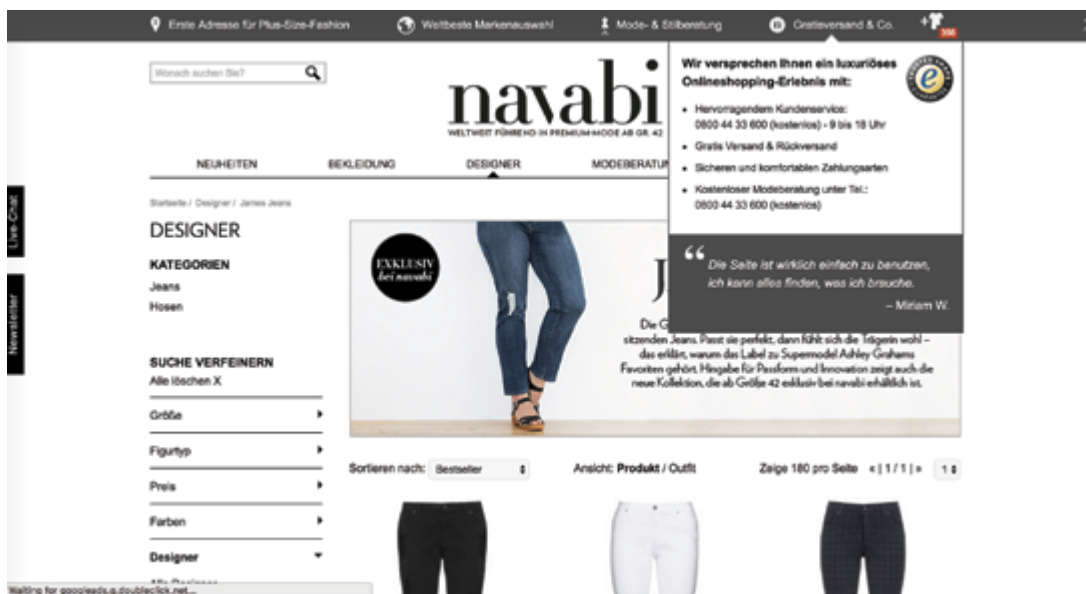
If your landing page is designed to generate transactions, ensure it has a clear message that shopping with you is safe and secure.

## 7. Customer service support

### Q. Customer service prompts in place to support?

It's nice to know there is a human presence behind the website. Even if people don't actually make contact, providing clear contact options provides reassurance. It says that help is there if needed.

The example below shows a brand landing page for Navabi, a German plus size clothing retailer, which provides a persistent Live Chat pull out and a text link for free shipping (Gratisversand), which on mouse over on the desktop site displays extended customer service information including a Freephone number and free fashion consulting phone line.



There are multiple ways to communicate support. The most common on landing pages are:

- Contact phone number
- Contact Us landing page
- Request callback form
- Live chat.

## 8. Guarantees/warranties

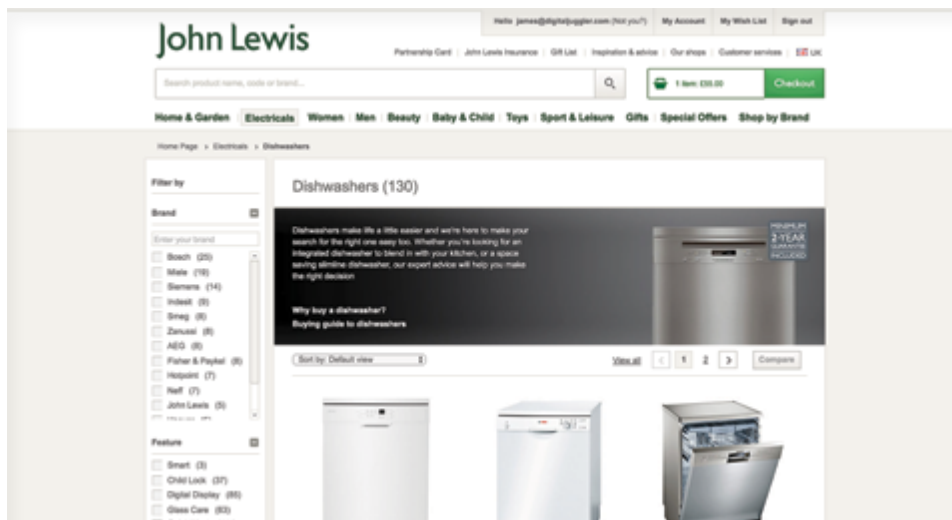
### Q. Effective guarantees and warranties in place?

What if the customer doesn't like the product or service? Can they return it within a period? Will they receive a refund?

If the manufacturer provides a standard warranty, make this clear and show how long the warranty lasts for.

If you provide an extended warranty (either for free or for an additional payment) also make this clear and promote the benefits, e.g. *peace of mind with full coverage of any repairs for an extra 12 months*.

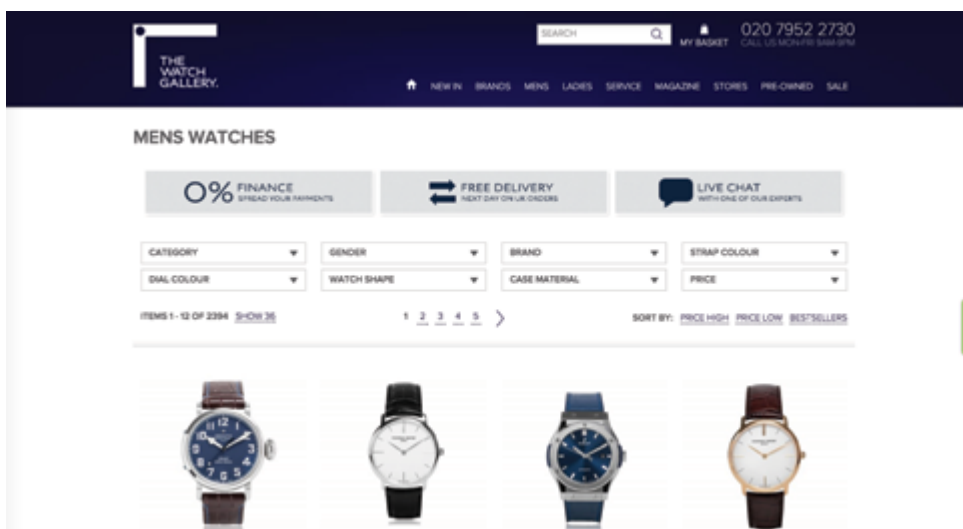
The screenshot below shows a guarantee message being displayed prominently on the dishwashers landing page of John Lewis.



### Best Practice Tip 21 Reassure across every page with a site-wide feature

Use a strip below the masthead or a feature in the right sidebar to reassure or offer guarantees.

The example below shows how Thewatchgallery.com does this for its 0% finance offer.

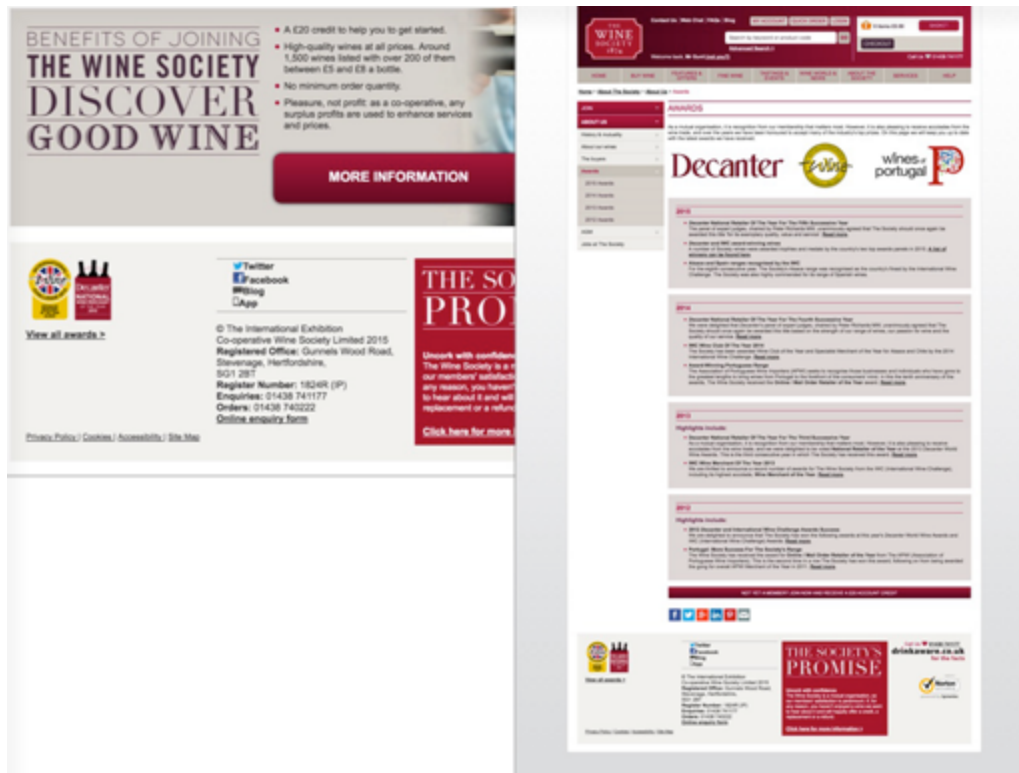


## 9. Awards

### Q. *Relevant awards in place?*

Independent awards achieved by a brand, its products or services are particularly effective in differentiating a company and encouraging action through reassurance.

The screenshot below shows the footer of the main landing page for The Wine Society, which features logos of key awards that link through to a dedicated awards page.



In summary, these are the questions to ask to persuade people to invest time in a form or money in a purchase:

### Q. *Have we proved the credibility of our brand?*

You have just one page to prove to the visitor that you're credible enough to respond and share their details with you. Do they trust you to form a relationship where they know you may be in touch? So you have to efficiently use trust devices and messages to achieve this.

### Q. *Do we have a point of action assurance next to our calls to action?*

A point of action assurance is text or imagery next to a button to increase trust from the visitor so they will more happily click the submit button. Examples are:

- Padlock or independent trust body logo showing the transaction will be secured.
- Text explaining the users' privacy will be maintained.

# Step 7

## Improve results

- ❑ Q. How can we further improve the results from our landing pages?

### Why do you need to improve results?

Rome wasn't built in a day!

There are many reasons why a one-off landing page design won't necessarily give you the best possible conversion. For example:

- ❑ Type of visitor changes over time.
- ❑ Needs of visitors change.
- ❑ External competition changes.

It's also very hard to know what blend of content and calls to action will deliver the best results. That's why we always advise that you use an optimisation program to test, learn and improve. In this section we discuss some of the key techniques that will help you achieve this.

However, some marketing campaigns are one-offs with a short life cycle. For example, a weekend special promotion delivered by email, affiliate and paid search. For this type of campaign, ongoing optimisation isn't feasible – by the time you have learned what works/ doesn't work, the campaign will have expired.

Therefore, when planning which campaigns and landing pages to include in an optimisation program think about which ones would have the greatest impact if performance improved. Short-term landing pages can be optimised but only if there's sufficient volume of visits to enable rapid iteration.

#### Key Strategy Recommendation 16 Focus improvement on key landing pages

With finite resource it's important to identify landing pages where improvements in performance can have a significant impact on your KPIs.

### Importance of clearly defined KPIs

Cast your mind back to Step 1 – we explained the importance of KPIs and looked at the four key types of KPI that we mention in our strategy and measurement guides. Let's remind ourselves in this table.

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Volume KPIs	Quality KPIs	Value KPIs	Cost KPIs
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> nVisits <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> nNewsletter signups <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> nContent shares <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n new and returning visitors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n mobile and desktop visitors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bounce rate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Time on site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Average page views <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> % visitors sharing content <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conversion rate (visits to order) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conversion rate (baskets to order) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conversion rate (bounces filtered) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conversion rate to offline sales	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Total revenue <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Average order value <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revenue per visits <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Value from non-ecommerce goals, e.g. <i>Newsletter signup, Leads</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Margin % for ecommerce site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cost per click, cost per sales, e.g. <i>from AdWords</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cost per send e.g. <i>email.</i>

When planning an optimisation program for your landing page, make sure you have agreed the KPIs from this list that you are measuring performance against. This ensures there is a consistent evaluation of performance, which will help you make decisions.

In the example below for a retailer, the top eight KPIs for a landing page were benchmarked prior to the start of the optimisation program. The data was based on weekly reports from Google Analytics.

KPI	Benchmark	Test1	Test2	Test3
Visits	3,425			
Transactions	123			
Conversion rate	3.59%			
Revenue	£5,880.00			
AOV	£47.80			
Per Visit Value	£1.72			
Bounce rate	45.20%			
Content shares	82			
% Sharing content	2.39%			

### Strategy recommendation 17 Benchmark KPIs before doing any optimisation

Once you have agreed your landing page KPIs, make sure you benchmark data. This means taking a snapshot of each KPI before you start making changes to the landing page. For example, Per Visit Value is now £0.45. This gives you a number against which to compare future performance.

## Making sure you're getting value from your landing pages

The starting point to getting the most from your landing pages is making sure you can assess you're getting the value from them through analytics.

Within analytics, landing pages completions need to be identified as a special class of goals. See how in our Guide to Analytics set-up: <http://bit.ly/smartgoogleanalytics>.

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If you can determine the amount of value from each page, this will allow you to compare the effectiveness of different landing pages in generating value and work back from these to see the effectiveness of different media or search terms in generating landing page value from landing pages.

Questions to ask whoever is responsible for your analytics are:

- 1. Is our confirmation page after the landing page set up as a goal page?
- 2. Have we attached a value to this goal?
- 3. Can we check goals and their value for other outcomes *e.g. live chat, callback or phone calls?*
- 4. Can we segment landing pages as an advanced segment? This will report only on landing page traffic to compare its effectiveness through time. To do this the landing pages should all be placed in a unique folder or contain a similar string which can be matched against *e.g. www.mysite.com/catalogue/articles/*.
- 5. Can we create a custom variable to track returning visitors and whether they buy or sign up to our service at a later point?
- 6. Can we track and measure the contribution of the landing page to assisted conversions *i.e. a user visits the page, then comes back and converts without revisiting the page?*

The latter is often forgotten. The value of a landing page, like the value of a marketing campaign, isn't just measured by direct clicks/conversion. There is usually a tail for conversion whereby initial non-converters come back and convert in a subsequent visit.

## Tracking landing page efficiency

Page efficiency shows how well your page is engaging visitors before they complete the action. They are useful for comparing pages and performance for different traffic sources like AdWords against affiliate traffic.

Here's what you should check.

- 1. *Bounce rate?* Should be significantly less than 50 per cent for an effective page.
- 2. *Average time on page?* Another measure allowing you to compare pages.
- 3. *Conversion rate?* The percentage of visitors who complete the form, or make a purchase from the product catalogue. Set up a conversion funnel to check this. This can be more than 10 per cent for an effective landing page. Even over 50 per cent if there is a great offer and reassurance about privacy.

On the next pages is a useful set of standard reports in Google Analytics that will help you measure this.

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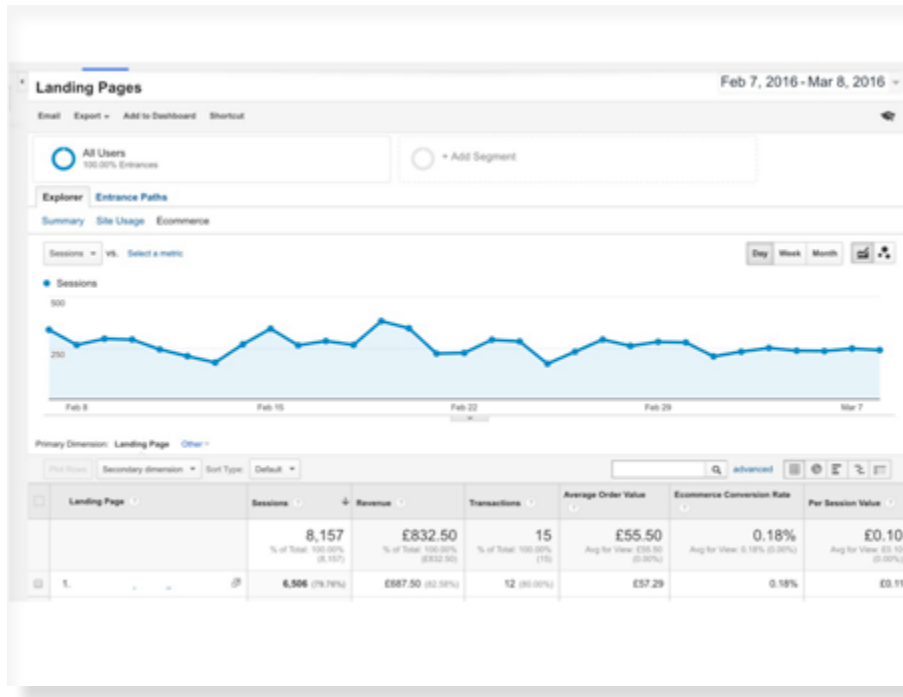
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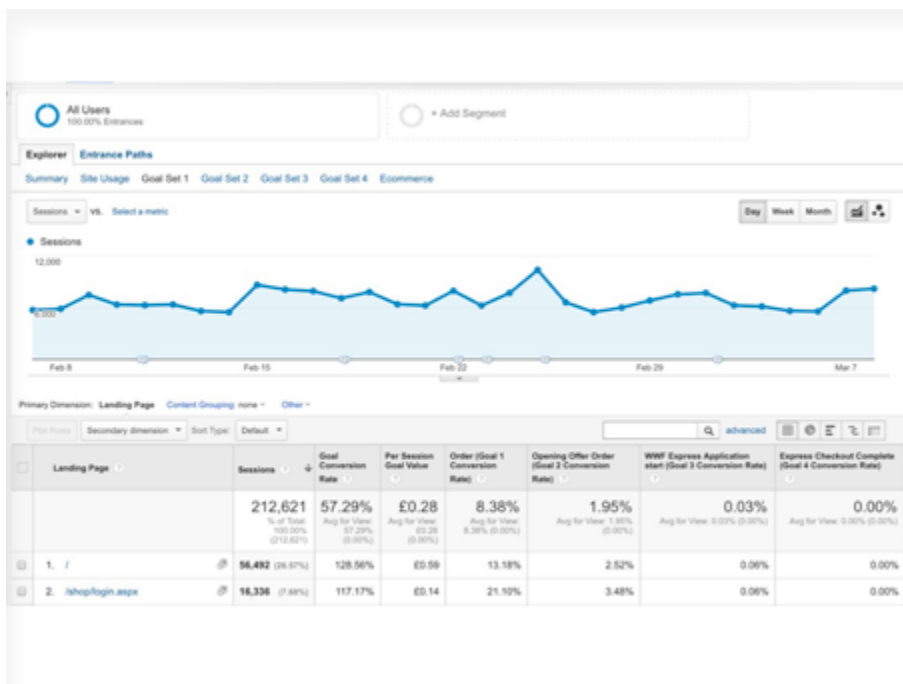
## Report 1. Landing page or entry pages (Behaviour > Site Content > Landing Pages)

This gives you a top-level view of visits where the landing page is the entrance point to the website.

If you are an ecommerce website, click on the 'Ecommerce' tab at the top to switch data views and show the transactions and revenue that have been generated by visits where this web page was the landing page.



If you have set up Goals, as outlined above, you can also click on the Goal tabs to show goal completion data for the landing page.



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## Report 2. Top pages (Content > Site Content > All Pages)

This is useful for showing the total number of page views that the landing page gets from visitors to the site and their effectiveness in engagement. There are 4 key measures to watch for:

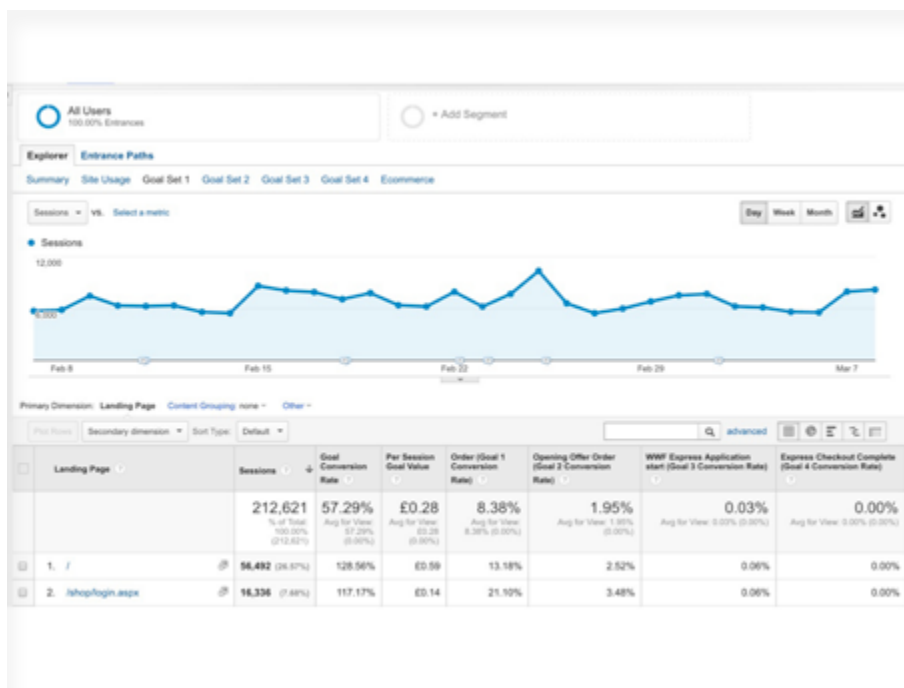
- ✓ 1. **Average time on page.** This is a measure of engagement, so if your landing page isn't effective this will be relatively *low*.
- ✓ 2. **Bounce rate.** Also a measure of engagement, so if your landing page isn't effective this will be relatively *high*.
- ✓ 3. **% Exit.** This figure includes those who visit the page having started their journey elsewhere on the site, so it's useful to compare against the number of entrance.
- ✓ 4. **Page value.** As we mentioned in the section on goal setting this is based on your goal value or ecommerce sales. For less effective pages this will be relatively low.

You will likely need to use filters to make the most of this page, for example, choose the most important pages above a certain threshold using the "Advanced" filter box to narrow your analysis to these pages. Or setup an Advanced segment to limit the analysis to visitors arriving on particular types of landing pages, or first time visitors.

### Best Practice Tip 22 Use Filters and Advanced segments to limit your analysis

Focus on higher volume pages or particular visitor types *e.g. Google AdWords visitors with these pages.*

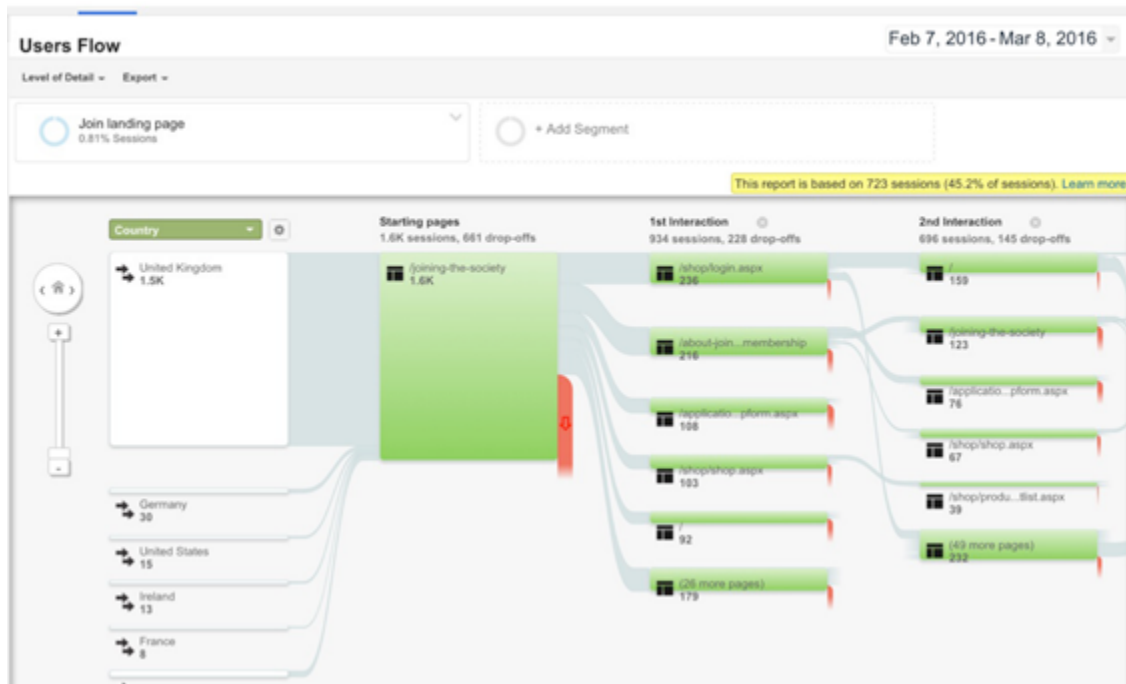
Remember that context is everything when interpreting data. If you have a landing page where the goal is to get the customer to access and read the information on that page but take no further action (*e.g. it is part of a lengthy sales cycle, acting as an interim stage to maintain prospect interest*), then a high bounce rate isn't anything to worry about.



### Report 3. Visitor Flow (Audience > Visitors Flow)

Before using this report, be sure to have set up an Advanced Segment for the landing page you wish to evaluate (do this by using the Conditions tab and specifying the landing page). This will ensure that when you open the report, the data is focused on this landing page.

The screenshot below shows data from the Users Flow report for a membership sign-up landing page. By following the data flows you can see how people navigate the site after visiting this landing page, as well as the number of exits direct from this page.



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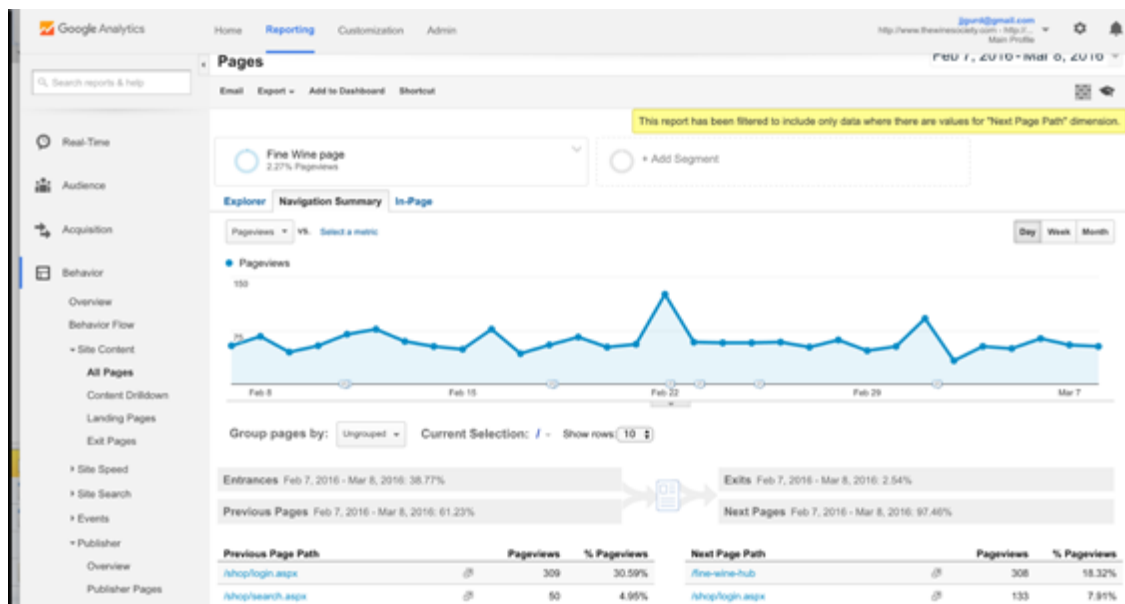
## Report 4. Navigation Summary (Top Pages > Select Page > Navigation summary)

This is a great report for reviewing the effectiveness of an individual page. In fact we prefer it to the fancy Users Flow page and the “In Page” click mapping feature that doesn’t work for many sites.

**Best Practice Tip 23** Use the Navigation Summary and In Page analytics to review the paths forward from and reverse from a page.

These two reports both show which of your calls-to-action are effective.

We find many people don’t know of it, likely because it’s hidden amongst the All Pages report. You have to click on an individual page and select “Navigation Summary” to access it. Then you can easily see the percentage of entrances, Previous Page Path and most importantly the Next Page Path.

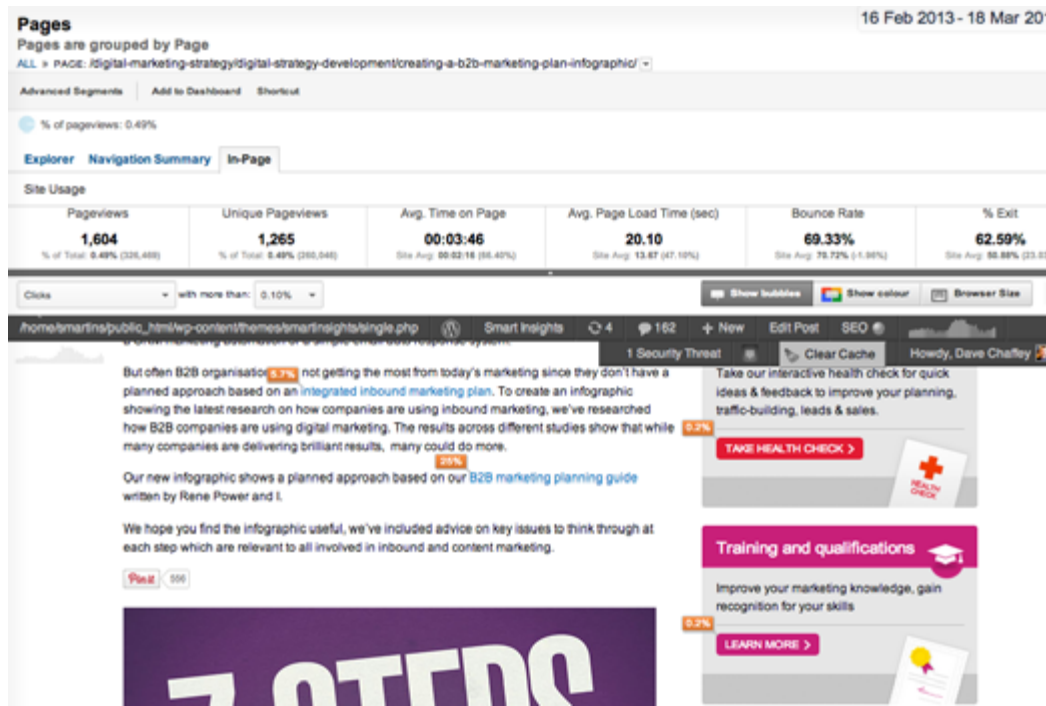


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## Report 5. In Page Analytics (Behaviour > All Pages > Select Page > In-Page)

This report is a companion to the Navigation summary. It enables the analyst to see which calls-to-action are effective, and is useful for showing to clients too. This example shows the effectiveness of inline links on a blog post.

Note that if one or more links has the same destination URL then Google Analytics can't distinguish between these unless you are using Advanced Link Attribution<sup>37</sup>.



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<sup>37</sup> [Google Analytics: Advanced Link Attribution setup](#)

## Report 6. Exit Pages (Behaviour > Site Content > Exit Pages)

This report is perhaps less useful than some of the others, but can be useful if you want to compare several exit pages. This report shows a list of all the web pages that visitors leave the site through. This report can help you pick out pages that aren't encouraging an onward journey, or might be blocking conversion paths.

Again, remember context. Just because a page has a high percentage share of total exits doesn't mean it's 'performing badly'. Take the example of a large catalogue retailer – we've seen high exits on top-level category pages (e.g. *Home and Kitchen department landing page*). However, this is to be expected because a lot of the traffic that comes here is from online shoppers who are in the research phase of the buying cycle – they're not yet ready to commit to a purchase, so it's unsurprising that many browse this page then leave to continue their research.

## Report 7. Reverse Goal Path (Conversions > Goals > Reverse Goal Path)

If you have goals set up this is really useful since it will show you which landing pages are generating the most leads. You can choose different types of goals for this. This example is showing which pages are encouraging people to visit the Smart Insights upgrade to Expert form.

**Best Practice Tip 24** Use the Reverse Goal Path and In Page analytics to review the content driving visits to a page.

You can see which landing pages are driving the most leads using these reports.

Goal Completion Location	Goal Previous Step - 1	Goal Previous Step - 2	Goal Previous Step - 3
1. /members/upgrade-to-expert-membership	/members	/	(entrance)
2. /members/upgrade-to-expert-membership	/members	/support/member-guide/	/membership/expert/
3. /members/upgrade-to-expert-membership/	(entrance)	(not set)	(not set)
4. /members/upgrade-to-expert-membership/	/guides/boosting-landing-pages-7-steps-guide/	/search?cx=00973906916888866226:yljmkzuy&cof=FORID:11&e=UTF-8&q=landing+pages&sa=Search	/support/free-basic-member-costs-
5. /members/upgrade-to-expert-membership/	/guides/business-case-template/	/guides/commerce-success-mapping/	/support/member-guide/

Note that you can use the Navigation summary (Step 4) to perform this type of analysis using a more interactive form.

## Tracking form errors

If you are using a form on your landing page, it really helps to know what errors visitors are experiencing when completing the form.

Why?

What if your form submit button is the primary call to action on the landing page and you only get a five per cent completion rate? Is that good or bad? What is preventing more people from completing the form?

An essential source of information is knowing which data fields return the most errors, as this indicates a usability issue with that field.

### What can you learn from this analysis?

If you know which data fields returns the most errors, you can look at options to improve this. Perhaps you're not providing enough guidance to help people complete the form, e.g. *password data field has no information to explain how many characters and what type of character is permitted.*

Knowing that there are errors will prompt you to review the landing page form and think about what might be putting visitors off.

We recommend reading Huge Gage's insightful post on the eMarketeers blog, [Tracking User Errors With Google Analytics Event Tracking](#)<sup>38</sup>.

## Analysing visitor flow for existing landing pages

Q. Do you know what happens to visitors when they arrive on your landing pages?

When setting goals and objectives for landing pages, it's really useful to take a peek behind the scenes and see how visitors are using your existing landing pages. This will help you determine what type of landing page is best suited to the goals being set, as well as helping you decide which goals to set.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What actions are people taking on the landing page?
- What is the next page flow?
- Is there a high bounce rate?
- Is this a good or bad thing (in the context of the page)?
- Where are the key exit pages?

The good news is that all of this data is readily available in web analytics tools. Let's use Google Analytics as an example. Below are some pointers on how to access this data.

## Actions on landing pages

You can use Events to track click activity on specific elements of the page, such as video views. If you're new to Event tracking, Google provides an online developer's guide.<sup>39</sup>

### Next page flow

How effective is your landing page at moving people to the next stage of the conversion funnel?

<sup>38</sup> [L3 Analytics: Visitors from existing landing pages](#)

<sup>39</sup> [Google Analytics: Event tracking.](#)



As outlined earlier, the Users Flow report (Audience > Users Flow) is a brilliant way to visualise how visitors move through your site from the landing page. First, you'll need to set an advanced segment for the landing page to ensure the data in the report is focused on that particular page.

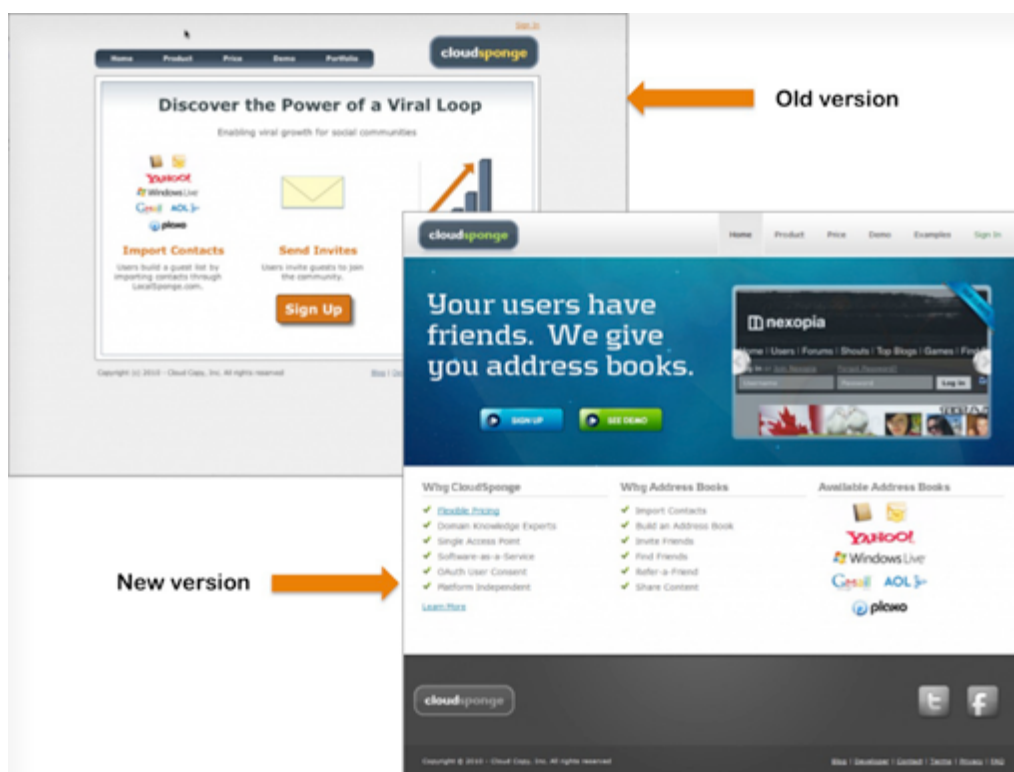
## Testing alternative page versions

Many tools are available to assist with AB Testing with Google Content Experiments (previously known as Google Website Optimiser (GWO) one of the best known. Although the tools are often free or low-cost compared with the benefits, they take time to set up and use, so this needs a management commitment to encourage their usage.

### Key Strategy Recommendation 18 Encourage usage of testing tools

It's often difficult to judge what works best for users as the tests on [www.whichtestwon.com](http://www.whichtestwon.com) show, so ensure resource is available for testing

Here is an example from Kissmetrics of the benefits of this form of testing where landing page conversion rate improved by 33 per cent as a result of updating the design.



### What is it? AB testing

AB testing refers to testing two (or more) different versions of a page that contain different page elements such as a heading, images or button against a control which is the original page.

The alternatives are served alternately with the visitors to the page randomly split between the two pages. Hence it is sometimes called 'live split testing'.

It may be best to select a landing page creation tool that includes landing page features.

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## Best Practice Tip 25 AB and multivariate testing tools

Tools like Content Experiments enable you to modify existing pages while others such as ION Interactive and Unbounce manage the creation of landing pages also. [www.whichmvt.com](http://www.whichmvt.com) provides a great summary.

### Testing different page elements?

Multivariate testing (MVT) is more sophisticated than AB testing since all the different pages can be assessed simultaneously. Individual contributions from different content assets to conversion increase can be assessed,

#### What is it? Multivariate testing

Multivariate testing enables simultaneous testing pages for all combinations and variations of page elements that are being tested. This enables selection of the most effective combination of design elements to achieve the desired goal.

It's interesting to note that there has been a shift in emphasis away from MVT towards A/B testing. That's not to say MVT testing is obsolete, far from it, but A/B testing simplifies the evaluation of test results because you're comparing different versions of the same thing. MVT adds complexity because you're testing multiple variations of multiple elements at the same time, so how do you know what has really led to the winning version being the best performer?

Let's take an example. You're testing the homepage against 4 different elements to determine which combination reduces bounce rate the most and leads to deeper page depth:

1. Brand value proposition bar – removing it vs. including it, showing 1 vs. 2 vs. 3 messages etc.
2. Main image – showing one hero image with a CTA vs. showing multiple images on a slider with more copy
3. Social proof – versions with and without ratings, as well as testing inclusion of a customer quote
4. Recommendations – different types of merchandising including bestsellers vs. top rated vs. new-in.

After lengthy testing you discover that the optimal blend to reduce bounce rate is 3 brand value messages, one hero image, no social proof and top rated product recommendations.

#### **But why?**

Was it all 4 of these elements working together? Or did the focus on one hero image have the biggest impact?

There are ways to answer these questions within a structured MVT framework but it's harder to piece together than when you're running continuous A/B tests. The best advice is to follow a structured process so that you know what you're doing, when and why. A/B tests are great for incremental improvements to a webpage or user journey.

Q. *How do I know when the investment in testing is justified?*

This is an important question. Before you plough into investing in testing tools and resources, make sure you understand the potential benefits of doing this.

We like to use basic models to project the expected uplift on KPIs that testing will provide.

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Cast your mind back to the section in Step 1 on creating conversion models. If you remember, we provided a simple spreadsheet format for evaluating the impact of investing in a bespoke landing page:

Metric group	KPI	Scenario 1 - no landing page	Scenario 2 - bespoke landing page
AdWords	Impressions	1,000,000	1,000,000
	CTR	1.50%	2.00%
	Estimated clicks	15,000	20,000
	Average CPC	£0.45	£0.40
	Click cost	£6,750.00	£8,000.00
Google Analytics	Visits	15,000	20,000
	Conversion rate	3.00%	3.25%
	Transactions	450	650
	Average order value	£75.00	£75.00
	Revenue	£33,750.00	£48,750.00
Product margin	Per visit value	£2.25	£2.44
	Average margin	30.00%	30.00%
Landing page	Net revenue	£10,125.00	£14,625.00
	Design	£0.00	£1,000.00
	Build	£0.00	£750.00
	<b>Net contribution</b>	<b>£3,375.00</b>	<b>£4,875.00</b>
			<b>£1,500.00</b>

You can adapt this framework to project the impact of doing different tests based on which KPIs the test is targeting. If you plug in the cost of testing (cost of the tool + internal resource + external resource), you can look at the net contribution to the business of running the test.

It really is a numbers game – as a rule of thumb, the lower the number of visits to a landing page, the harder it is to drive significant gains as any improvement in conversion will generate a small number of leads/transactions. That’s why we advocate picking and choosing which landing pages to include in your optimisation program.

There is always an exception to the rule though – for some brands, the average transaction value is very high, so even with a low number of visits, marginal improvements in conversion can drive a lot of value. So when making a decision, always add your business context to the numbers.

## Testing tools

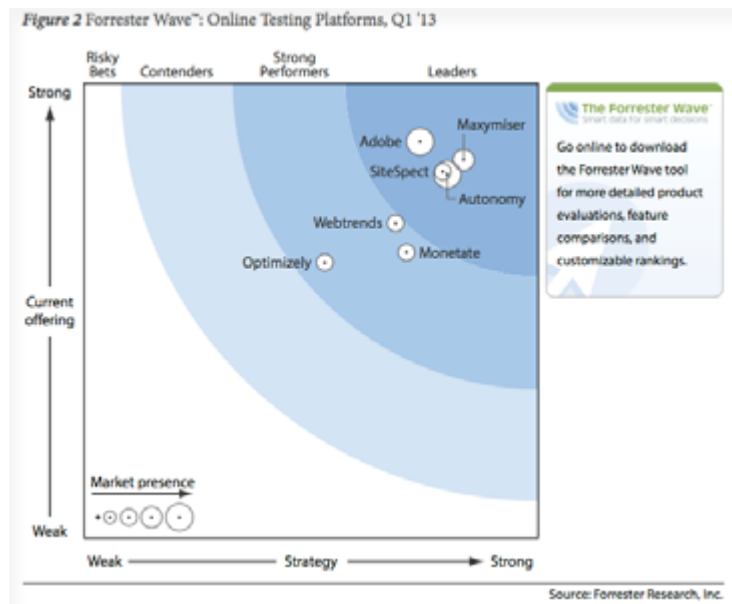
❑ Q. *Range of testing tools reviewed?*

It’s the thinking behind setting up the tests that is most important, but there are a range of enterprise and lower-cost online alternative to help.

Conversion Rate Experts has a really helpful conversion rate optimisation software comparison table<sup>40</sup> and there’s a Forrester report summarising the main enterprise class tools. The illustration below is from the 2013 report but there is a more recent version that can be purchased<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.conversion-rate-experts.com/split-testing-software/>

<sup>41</sup> [Forrester Wave for Online Testing](#)



For free and lower cost tools we recommend:

- ✓ [Google Content Experiments \(formerly Google Website Optimizer\)](#)
- ✓ [Unbounce](#)
- ✓ [Site Tuners](#)
- ✓ [Other tools listed on WhichMVT.com](#)

## Using Voice-of-Customer (VoC) data for insight

Web analytics data is great at telling you what is happening on your landing page. However, you also need the ‘why’ to help you make intelligent decisions.

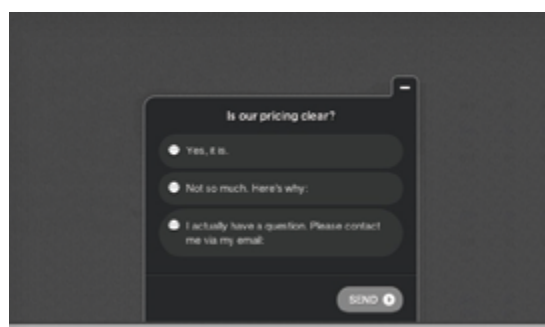
This is where VoC data comes in to play and is an invaluable source of information. Use your web analytics data to identify potential issues (*e.g. landing page X has a really high bounce rate*), then overlay VoC data to provide the context to why.

The following are proven techniques for using VoC data to help improve performance:

### On-site surveys

The most common form on data capture used by web managers. These can be delivered by a variety of means including pop-up, pop-under and persistent survey. It is recommended to keep these as short as possible – as a general rule of thumb, the more data you try to capture, the fewer visitors will stay around to complete the survey.

The screenshot below shows the use of a persistent on-page survey using Qualaroo (previously KissInsights). The benefit of using a solution like Qualaroo is that you can set up a Google Analytics Event to track on which landing pages the survey is interacted with.



One technique that isn't often used is to place persistent surveys in the My Account section of the website. This enables registered customers to access the survey at any time and can help increase overall response.

#### Off-site surveys

This involves inviting customers to complete an online survey that is not launched from your website. For example, you include a link to a survey set up using Survey Gizmo in your email newsletter.

The downside is that they are harder to tailor to specific landing pages and better suited to general feedback about the website and your products/services.

#### User testing

We absolutely love online user testing! It is perhaps the most insightful type of VoC data that we have worked with.

You can use online services to invite real people to test landing pages and give you video feedback of their experience. You can set the scenario you want the testers to follow and set the demographics of the responders (*e.g. age, location, income level*).

The two most popular services that we have used are UserTesting.com and WhatUsersDo.com.

#### Customer Service insight

An untapped goldmine, potentially. Every day your Customer Service team handles inbound enquiries, by phone, email and web. Amongst these enquiries are some useful nuggets of feedback on the quality and usability of the website.

A word of caution – learn to interpret the importance of customer feedback. It's likely you'll get a few extremes, those customers who are 100 per cent happy or 100 per cent enraged by your service!

This is the exception, not the norm. So learn to identify trends and react when there are several customers making the same point. For example, if you get lots of emails saying an online form isn't working, react quickly.

This also means working closely with your Customer Service team – encourage them to keep an eye out for issues and opportunities and alert you when something important happens. And make sure you regularly review customer feedback with them – at least every month.

We have a listing of all feedback tools we recommend here<sup>42</sup>. We hope you find these tools and the techniques we have described in this guide effective. Happy Testing!

1. SET OBJECTIVES  
2. UNDERSTAND VISITOR NEEDS  
3. ENGAGING YOUR VISITOR  
4. CREATING THE BEST PAGE LAYOUT  
5. COMPELLING CONTENT  
6. INCREASING BRAND TRUST  
7. IMPROVING RESULTS

7

<sup>42</sup> [Smart Insights: Customer Feedback Tools](#)