The Ultimate Guide to PPC Landing Pages

BY MATT HESSLER

UNBOUNCE
www.unbounce.com/resources

What's in the ebook?

Pretty much everything you need to know about landing pages for pay-per-click marketing.

Chapter 1
Intro to Landing Pages for PPC
Pay-per-click + landing pages = marketing success

Chapter 2
Context is King
Understanding where the user is coming from

Chapter 3
Decoding Quality Score
What's the deal with Google's mysterious algorithm?

Chapter 4
Building the Ultimate PPC Landing Page
Putting theory into action

What is Unbounce?

Unbounce is the landing page builder for PPC marketers. With Unbounce, you can build high-converting landing pages for your PPC campaigns in minutes, without I.T.

Serious PPC marketers will love Unbounce's newest feature, which lets you dynamically replace text on your landing page to match your PPC keywords. This will lead to:

- **Increased conversion rates**
- **Improved campaign ROI**
- **Landing pages with perfect message match in record time**

IMPROVE MY PPC WITH A 30 DAY FREE TRIAL OF UNBOUNCE

Foreword

"Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don't know which half."

John Wanamaker's quote is cited so often that it's become cliché. But it is useful in explaining how far marketing has come since the early days of Madison Avenue. And when it comes to measuring the ROI of your marketing spend, there really is no channel as accountable as pay-per-click.

At a time when everyone is buzzing about content marketing, inbound marketing, native advertising and SEO, we believe that PPC is more relevant than ever. And that's why we created this ebook.

If you run paid search campaigns on Google AdWords and know in your heart of hearts that you should and could be getting better results, this ebook is for you.

If you're just getting started with PPC and want to hit the ground running, this ebook is for you.

If you're already a PPC marketing hero but want to learn how to optimize your keywords, ads and landing pages to drive your conversions through the roof, this ebook is for you.

If you want to become a smarter and more successful marketer, this ebook is for you.

We hope you enjoy it!

Dan Levy
Editor and Content Strategist
Unbounce

> If you look at a good PPC account and it's not converting, in 99% of cases, **the landing page is the problem**. Spending money sending traffic to non-converting pages is just a waste of money. With PPC, **your first step is testing** keywords, ads and landing pages to receive quality traffic. The **second step is learning** from the tests and refining your approach to create profitable campaigns.

Brad Geddes, Certified Knowledge

🐦 **Tweet This Quote**

Chapter 1
Intro to Landing Pages for PPC

PPC campaigns are a marketer's Sisyphean task. **We strategize and optimize and optimize again**, always striving to drive more conversions. Whether you're shooting for **greater volume of conversions, lower CPA**, or **better ROI**, it feels like your work is never done.

It quickly becomes obvious that a well-optimized search campaign is only half of the puzzle. The other half is the landing page we are driving our visitors to. **That's where the conversion takes place and our money is made**.

We are going to look beyond landing page design at how we can integrate our PPC campaigns with our landing pages all the way **from goal planning and keyword research to testing and optimization**. The goal? To create better experiences for our customers and smarter, more successful campaigns.

This ebook revolves around landing pages and their indispensable role in PPC marketing. So we should probably start with a quick definition:

> "A landing page is a stand-alone, campaign-specific web page. It's intent is to get your visitors to complete a single action. It's not your website, and it's most certainly not your homepage."

You have to send your marketing traffic somewhere, and the difference between sending it to a landing page or your homepage is the difference between success and failure.

The 5 Elements of a Successful Landing Page

Before we get into PPC landing pages specifically, you should know that there are five must-have core elements on any landing page:

1. **Your Unique Selling Proposition (USP)**
   - The main headline
   - A supporting headline

2. **The hero shot**
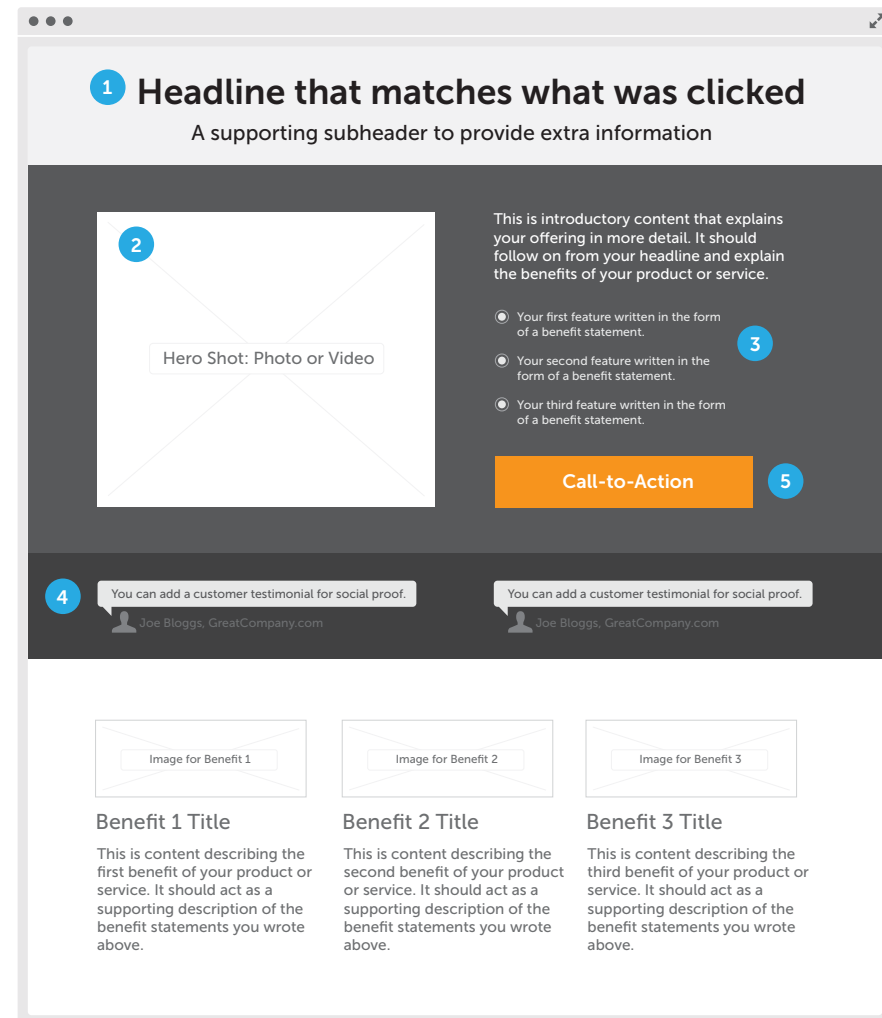   - Image or video showing context of use

3. **The benefits of your offering**
   - A bulleted list summary of benefits

4. **Social proof**
   - Testimonials or reviews

5. **A single conversion goal**

① **Headline that matches what was clicked**
A supporting subheader to provide extra information

② Hero Shot: Photo or Video

This is introductory content that explains your offering in more detail. It should follow on from your headline and explain the benefits of your product or service.

- Your first feature written in the form of a benefit statement.
- Your second feature written in the form of a benefit statement.
- Your third feature written in the form of a benefit statement. ③

⑤ **Call-to-Action**

④ You can add a customer testimonial for social proof.
Joe Bloggs, GreatCompany.com

You can add a customer testimonial for social proof.
Joe Bloggs, GreatCompany.com

Image for Benefit 1

Image for Benefit 2

Image for Benefit 3

Benefit 1 Title
This is content describing the first benefit of your product or service. It should act as a supporting description of the benefit statements you wrote above.

Benefit 2 Title
This is content describing the second benefit of your product or service. It should act as a supporting description of the benefit statements you wrote above.

Benefit 3 Title
This is content describing the third benefit of your product or service. It should act as a supporting description of the benefit statements you wrote above.

The 2 Pillars of Successful Landing Pages for PPC

To understand the crucial role that landing pages play in a successful PPC campaign, you should be aware of two **smart marketing pillars**:

Pillar 1: Message match

Message match is a measure of **how well your landing page headline matches the call to action** that was clicked to arrive on your landing page.

For paid ads, this is the headline of the ad.

How hard is that?!

It's not hard at all. Which is why it's crazy that so many people are missing the boat.

For example, let's say your ad looks like this:

> **Project Management Software Without Deadlines**
> try.getitdone.com/whenever
> Remove the fear of deadlines from your projects, and start delivering as late as you want to. Deadlines are dead.

If this is sent to a homepage, the target headline may look something like this:

> **Get More Projects Done With Less Management**

This is a good headline for expressing the brand value proposition, but it doesn't match the ad at all. Result? **Bad message match.**

The correct headline in this instance would be:

> **Project Management Software Without Deadlines**

Result: It matches the headline (CTA) of the ad perfectly, and thus it's great message match.

Pillar 2: Attention ratio

Attention ratio is the ratio of interactive elements (links) on the page, to the number of campaign conversion goals **(which is always one)**.

On a homepage this is typically around **40:1**, meaning that there are 39 distracting actions and 1 desired action.

A focused landing page on the other hand has an attention ratio of **1:1**.

One call to action, one link. Any additional link is actually a leak off your page and away from your conversion goal.

Take a look at the image to the right. It's based on the Virgin Mobile USA homepage and it has 57 links on the page.

If the campaign you're promoting with your PPC ads is "Promo 2" (highlighted in red) then not only will it be hard to find amidst all the clutter (the attention ratio is **57:1**), there are so many competing elements that your prospect will either hit the back button or click on another of your promos.

What's wrong with them clicking another promo? **Surely a sale is a sale? NO.** If they don't interact with the campaign you're promoting, your AdWords statistics will reflect a failure as "Promo 2" wasn't the one that converted.
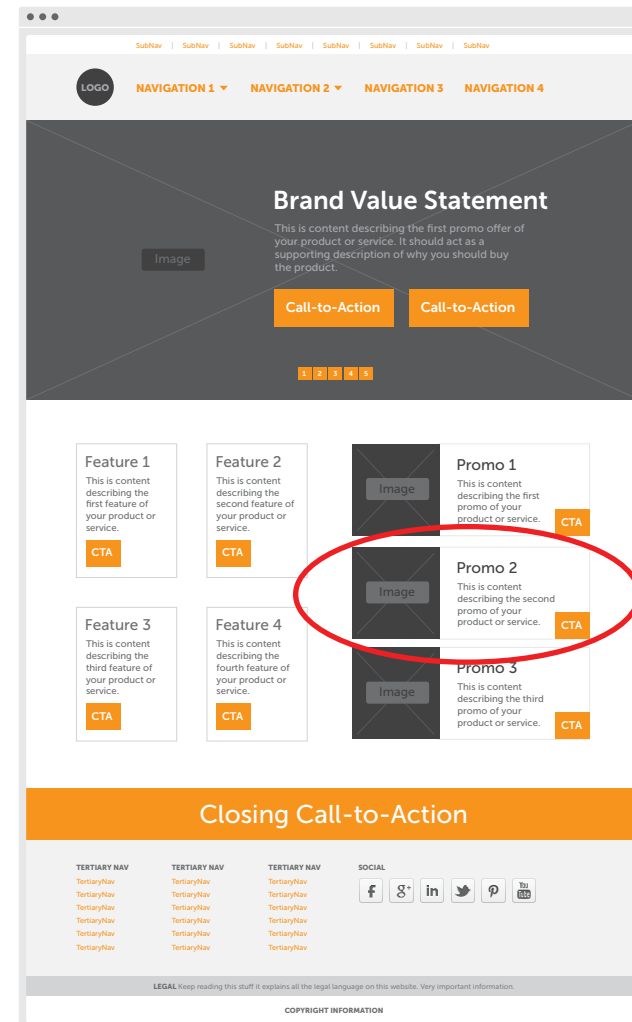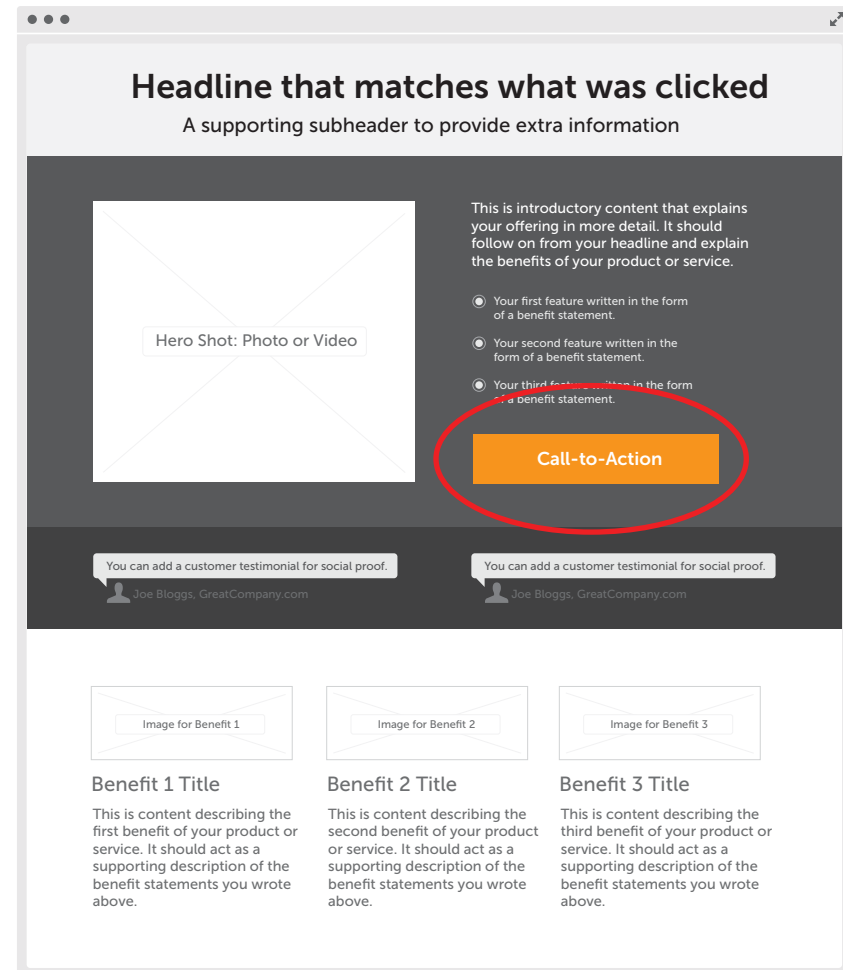
An example of good attention ratio

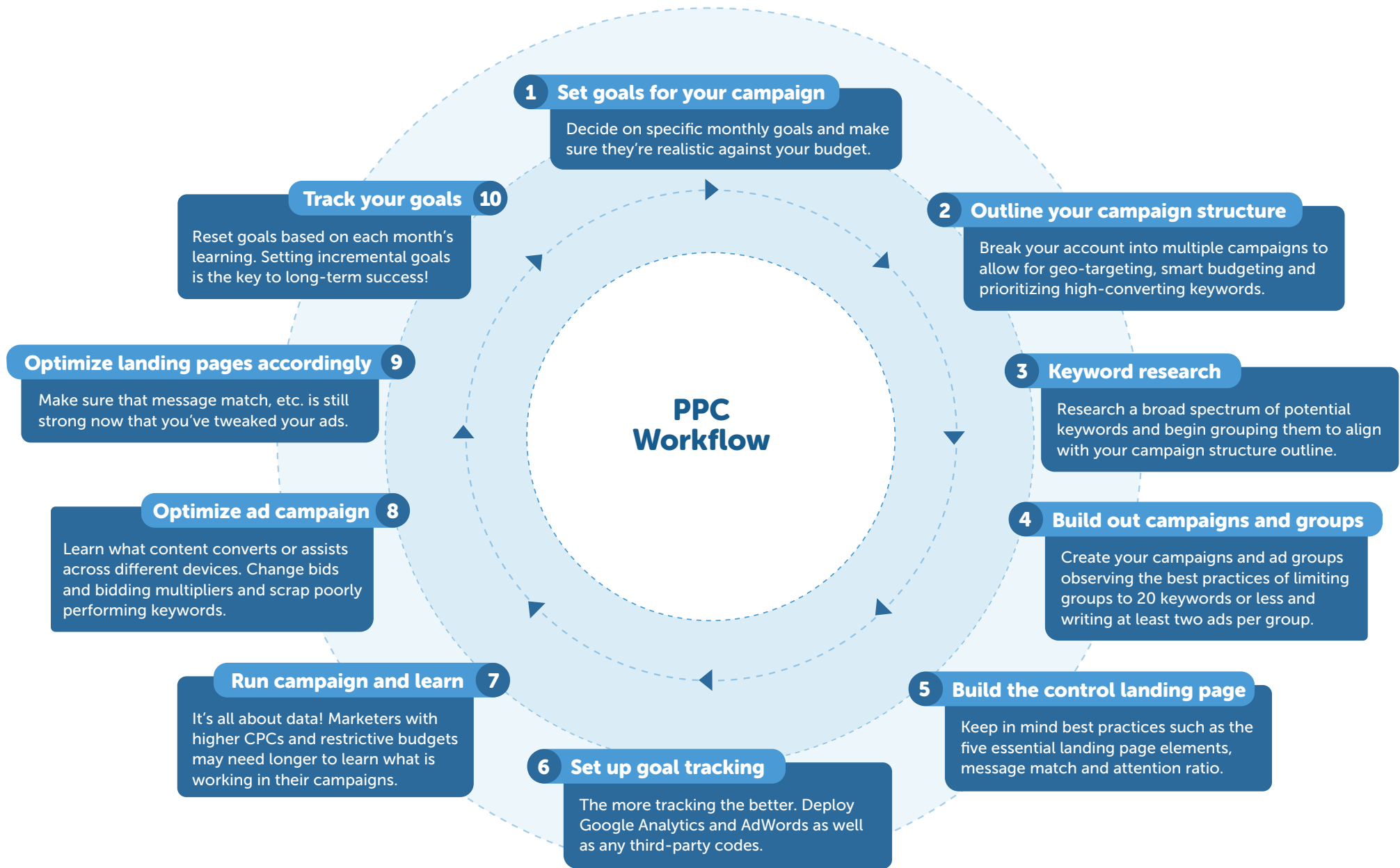Next, take a look at the landing page to the right.

It's very clear that there is only one thing to do here, so the **attention ratio is a perfect 1:1**.

These two pillars help explain why you should be sending your PPC traffic to dedicated landing pages, and not your homepage.

With landing pages, you can make sure the experience is **consistent and conversion-centered** at every step of the campaign.

Headline that matches what was clicked
A supporting subheader to provide extra information

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Call-to-Action

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Here's a bird's-eye view of what a PPC campaign built around dedicated landing pages looks like, which you can refer back to as you read on.

PPC Workflow

1 Set goals for your campaign
Decide on specific monthly goals and make sure they're realistic against your budget.

2 Outline your campaign structure
Break your account into multiple campaigns to allow for geo-targeting, smart budgeting and prioritizing high-converting keywords.

3 Keyword research
Research a broad spectrum of potential keywords and begin grouping them to align with your campaign structure outline.

4 Build out campaigns and groups
Create your campaigns and ad groups observing the best practices of limiting groups to 20 keywords or less and writing at least two ads per group.

5 Build the control landing page
Keep in mind best practices such as the five essential landing page elements, message match and attention ratio.

6 Set up goal tracking
The more tracking the better. Deploy Google Analytics and AdWords as well as any third-party codes.

7 Run campaign and learn
It's all about data! Marketers with higher CPCs and restrictive budgets may need longer to learn what is working in their campaigns.

8 Optimize ad campaign
Learn what content converts or assists across different devices. Change bids and bidding multipliers and scrap poorly performing keywords.

9 Optimize landing pages accordingly
Make sure that message match, etc. is still strong now that you've tweaked your ads.

10 Track your goals
Reset goals based on each month's learning. Setting incremental goals is the key to long-term success!

"The most important thing about PPC is that **it acts as market research as well as marketing**. You can find out what people are looking for in a niche you can afford and then try and sell to them. It helps you adjust your messaging and learn how to sell to 'cold leads.' Failure to do so is why so many businesses get to $1 million or $2 million in revenue but **find themselves unable to go any further.**"

Iain Dooley, Decal Marketing

🐦 **Tweet This Quote**

Chapter 2
Context Is King

A huge part of what makes PPC such a powerful marketing medium is that we get to learn bundles of information about our customers **in real time**.

We call these information bundles "context," and **understanding context can make all the difference between success and failure**. More specifically, we can learn about:

- the user's **intent** from the user's search phrases;
- what **device** they're using;
- behavior at **different times** of the day and week;
- **where** in the world our users are searching from.

While this is all useful information, for the purposes of this ebook, we're going to focus on how to take into account user intent and device type in creating the ultimate PPC landing pages.

User Intent

Many marketers jump directly to **landing page design** as the silver bullet when looking to improve their conversion rates.

While design is super important, I prefer to start with something more fundamental to PPC. As **search marketers**, we have critical pieces of information that we ignore far too often.

More than most marketers, we have firsthand **insights into the user's intent**. We often get lost in the hard data of the performance of a particular keyword without thinking about what the user is really seeking when he or she types in that search box.

For example, think about a user looking for a new pair of running shoes. If that user searches *best trail running shoes*, their intent is likely **information gathering**; they are probably in the research phase of their purchase decision.

Conversely, if that user searches *cheap Nike trail running shoes*, the query indicates that they know what brand and type of shoe they're looking for and that if the price is acceptable they are **inclined to purchase**.

Knowing the widely different intents of these keywords, we should manage them very differently in our campaigns and **drive them to very different landing pages**.

Connecting user intent to landing pages

It's important to organize your campaigns not just by your product or service types, but also by this perceived intent. With the right landing pages, you can connect with these visitors and **nurture them** through their decision-making process.

Keywords that display **conversion intent** are your most important, but they are typically lower volume and highly competitive.

Conversion intent is not always **semantically literal** in the search phrase. Looking only for queries with words like *buy* or *free trial* is too limited. Higher conversion intent can also be identified by queries about a specific item or service that show the user **knows what she wants**.

Other conversion intent phrases may include **decision-making criteria** like size, color, model specifics, or price qualifiers.

General High Volume

Google | sneakers | 🔍

Research Intent

Google | best trail running shoes | 🔍

Make Model Specific Intent

Google | nike zoom wild horse | 🔍

Price Specific Intent

Google | discount running shoes | 🔍

Literal Purchase Intent

Google | buy nike running shoes | 🔍

Conversion assists

Google provides some insights into what keywords assist with a conversion.

An assist is defined as a **keyword that drove the initial visit to the site**. The user may later search a different query and end up buying an item.

The second search phrase would be credited with the conversion but the first would get credit for the assist.

Using **assist reporting** you can start to understand that some keywords are important for bringing initial visits that will later result in conversions from a second or third query. We need to understand which keywords drive assists and which ones drive conversions so that we can **serve landing pages that address different points in the marketing funnel.**

For keywords likely to assist conversions later, you're better off going with **a lower commitment CTA** on your landing page. At this stage, offering an ebook or white paper helps establish you as an expert, creating a long-term relationship with the searcher and increasing the assist rate of these terms.

PPC PRO TIP

Conversion assist data is buried deep in the AdWords interface. Keep in mind that assist data can get murky. It is generally used more as a guide to understand user behavior.
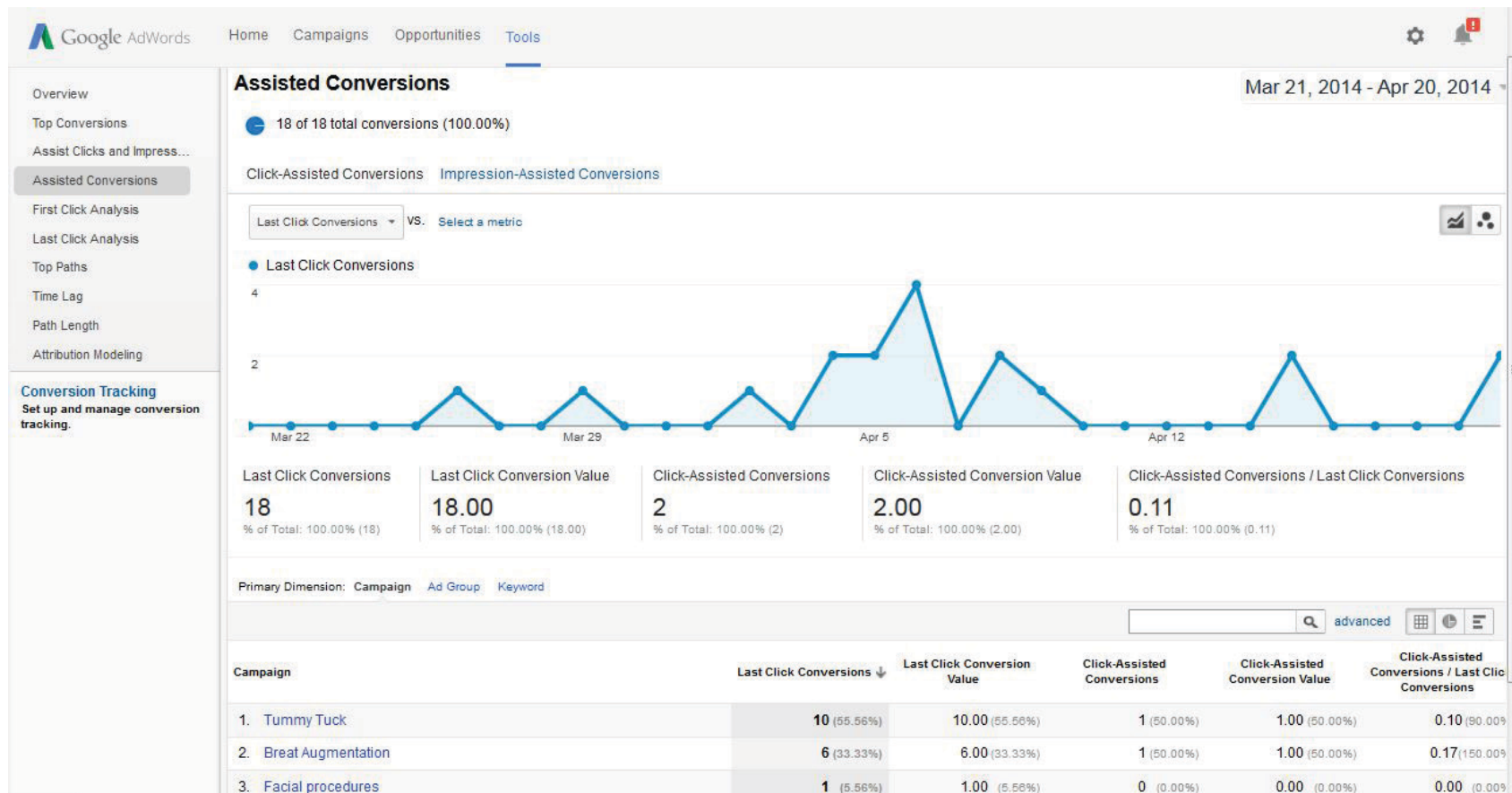
Getting the most out of user intent

Many search marketers fail to understand the value of user intent. Keywords that show high intent or that have **proven to drive consistent assists** should be given high priority.

To prioritize these terms, they should be **isolated in their own ad groups** or at times their own campaigns. This allows you to allocate specific budgets to these terms, place them in ad groups with hyperrelevant ad copy and **design tailored landing pages** to maximize results.

Think of the context of intent as helping you identify your **Most Valuable Players** and set them up for success. In many cases, these players will carry the entire campaign.

The quickest way to connect user intent with Unbounce

- Create a dynamic landing page for each stage of intent.

- Use Unbounce's Dynamic Text Replacement feature to pull the search keyword into landing page copy.

Research Intent Keywords

Best Running Shoes 🔍

Top Running Shoes 🔍

Most Popular Running Shoes 🔍

Research Intent Landing Page

⬤ logo

Find The **Best Running Shoes**

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> "The question is never Inbound vs PPC. They are not excluding each other. PPC is another channel to reach targeted audiences. **If you're not tapping it, you're making a conscious decision to not use all the channels at your disposal.** Sometimes PPC is the only way to scale fast."

Peep Laja, ConversionXL

Tweet This Quote

Device-Driven Context

Beyond user intent, AdWords also tells us the context of **what type of device** the user is searching from.

This can have a dramatic impact on **how they interact** with your page. Knowing that users are on a mobile device with a small screen can affect how we establish our brand **identity**, build **trust** and convey the **features and benefits** of our offer.

These are not easy objectives in four to five inches of screen real estate, but with **more than 20%** of all Google search traffic and **50% of all local queries** coming from mobile, it's time to tackle this problem head on.

Responsive design vs. dedicated mobile landing pages

To provide a cleaner user experience (without the pinch-to-zoom, scrolling-all-over, eye-squinting madness), many marketers have turned to a technique called **responsive design**.

Responsive design essentially allows you to have one page that accommodates **all device types and screen sizes**, from mobile to tablet to desktop and beyond.

Depending on the ways you intend to interact with your user, this can save you time and development resources and help you maintain a **cohesive design language and brand identity**.

While responsive design is all the rage in web design circles these days, **it's not always the best solution for campaign-specific landing pages**.

To illustrate this point, let's ask a question: Will users book European travel from their phones?

While we should **always test assumptions** like these, logic tells us this is not very likely. So if device context tells us the user is landing on the page from mobile, what should we do?

We may want to build unique mobile landing pages that feature **tailored content and conversion actions** that are more appropriate for mobile users.

So instead of asking users to book an expensive (and perhaps complicated) trip on their phone, provide them with some information and user testimonials to establish credibility. Maybe offer them **a free travel checklist** that they can download in exchange for entering their name and e-mail.

You have now traded the blue skies conversion goal of asking them to book a flight from their phone for a **lighter conversion goal** that has a much greater likelihood of conversion and that affords you the ability to remarket to them. Not bad, right?

PPC PRO TIP

Knowing what device your user is searching on gives you great context and with that a **responsibility to provide those users with the right experience** to suit their needs.

But if your landing page isn't yet optimized for mobile, you should adjust your **AdWords mobile bidding multiplier**.

This can be done under your campaign settings device tab. Select "mobile devices" and decrease the bid between 50-100% depending on how well you feel your current site renders on mobile
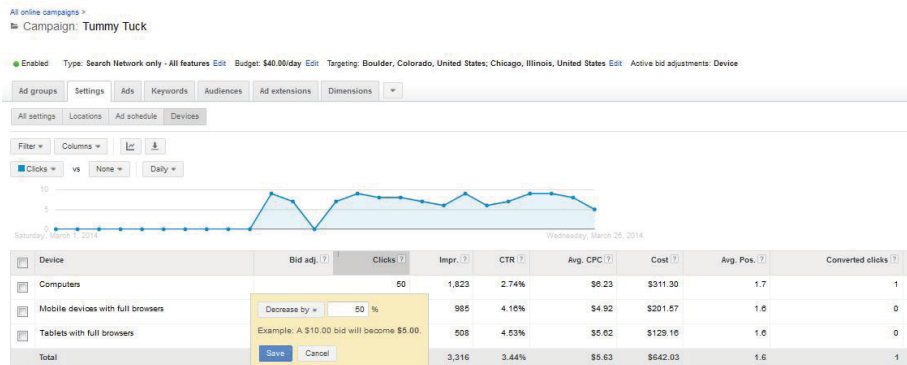
Mobile landing pages for PPC in sum

With 20-50% of all search traffic coming from mobile you should choose a tactic that gives your users the **best possible experience for their device**.

If your conversion actions are relatively simple or you want a single solution to scale content to all screen sizes, consider **responsive design**. If you're looking to target mobile users with tailored calls to action, create unique **mobile landing pages** with the following best practices:

- Reorganize content into **bulleted lists** for greater impact;
- Optimize **lead forms** to display prominently;
- Use the **bare minimum** number of fields in any form;
- **Properly size** product photos, pricing information and CTAs;
- Allow for **easy payment** options like PayPal and Google Checkout;
- Make the phone number obvious and **clickable**.

What We Learned in This Chapter

As smart marketers we look to search data to drive our optimization decisions, but we also need to view this data through the **lens of context**.

What is the user's query language telling us about **their needs** and how ready they are to transact?

Likewise, when we look at our aggregate data, we may be totally **missing the context** of how users behave on their phones, their tablets or their desktops.

Having insights into these bits of user context and organizing our campaigns around them gives us fertile soil from which our **tailored PPC landing pages** can bear fruit.

"The end goal is to get your landing page to do the selling but your **PPC ads must do the initial convincing**. In the same way it's important to match search terms with the content of the ad, it's equally important to make sure that the landing page is tied directly to **what the prospective customer is expecting to see and experience** when they arrive on the page."
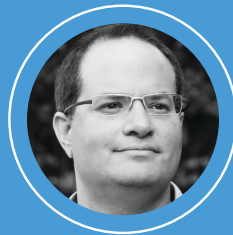
Brian Rotsztein, Uniseo

🐦 Tweet This Quote

Chapter 3
Decoding Quality Score

Now that we have our campaigns organized around context (user intent + device), we can look at the other major factor in building landing pages for PPC: **AdWords Quality Score**.

Here's how Google defines Quality Score:

> "A measurement of how relevant your ads, keywords, and landing page are to a person seeing your ad… Higher Quality Scores can lead to lower prices and better ad positions."

For most marketers, Quality Score is a component of AdWords that's shrouded in mystery. We're going to try to understand how **small changes to our landing pages** can help us maximize the QS of our campaigns.

A very short history lesson

Quality Score hasn't always been part of AdWords. Introduced in 2008, Quality Score was a stroke of genius meant to protect Google's dominant search market share by ensuring that searchers would see the most relevant results for their query in the paid results as well as their trusted organic results.

For advertisers, the introduction of Quality Score made search engine marketing more frustrating and more expensive. Instead of a flat dutch auction for keyword bidding, there was now a variable minimum bid based on Quality Score. Many marketers saw keywords that used to cost only 10-50 cents suddenly soar to a minimum of $1-$10 on the basis of a score that they were given very little insight about.

This may be the true genius of the Do No Evil search Goliath. Google was able to change the pricing model for millions of advertisers, in some cases substantially, without raising costs. Better yet, most marketers shouldered the blame, resigning themselves to the fact that their keywords, ads and landing pages must be of low quality.

5 Things You Need to Know About Quality Score

1. A Quality Score is calculated every time your keyword matches a customer's search. You can get a sense of your keywords' Quality Score on the **"Keyword Analysis"** tab in your account.

2. A high Quality Score means that your ads, keywords, and landing page seem to be very relevant to what a customer is searching for and also relevant to one another. **The more relevant your ads and landing pages are to the user, the higher your Quality Score.**

3. You can review the factors that affect your Quality Score – **expected click-through rate, ad relevance, and landing page experience** – by selecting the Keywords tab and clicking on the white speech bubble next to any keyword's status.

4. Your Quality Scores will affect your **ad position** on the page as well as your **prices**.

5. Quality Score is evaluated depending on where your ad appears, meaning that you have a different Quality Score on Search and Display Network sites, as well as a **slightly different score for mobile devices**.

What do they mean by "quality"?

Despite there being several factors that influence overall QS (including click-through rate and ad relevance), we're going to focus on the **landing page component of Quality Score** as we build our ultimate PPC landing pages.

Landing page quality or "experience," as Google terms it, falls into two basic classifications:

1. **Above Average or Average** - Google finds your pages adequate and your Quality Score will not be negatively impacted by the landing page experience.

2. **Below Average** - Google feels your landing page is in need of improvement and will negatively impact your Quality Score, driving up your minimum bid and/or reducing your results position.

The thing is, Google is characteristically vague about how it determines landing page quality.

Ad Relevancy

Ad Clickthrough Rate (CTR)

Overall Account Performance

Google
Quality Score

Keyword/Search Relevancy

Landing Page Quality

Targeted Ad Performance (Geographic Display Network, etc.

Google's Landing Page Guidelines

Google breaks up its **landing page best practices** into three "themes" that are easy to understand but that can be difficult to execute while adhering to the principles of **conversion-centered design**.

Google calls these criteria "themes" because it does not disclose the exact weighted factors in its QS algorithm. So while we do not know the exact formula for optimized landing pages, we will examine the general criteria that Google evaluates:

1. **Landing pages should be relevant, useful and original**

2. **Landing pages need to have high transparency and trustworthiness**

3. **Landing pages should be fast, clear and easy to use**

Learning how to build beautiful, conversion-centered landing pages that also meet Google's QS guidelines is an art form that can pay huge dividends in the ROI of your campaign. Let's unpack these landing page guidelines one by one.

1. Landing pages should be relevant, useful and original

These values are easily determined by Google's bots as they crawl each landing page when a new ad directing visitors to the page is submitted in AdWords.

Basically, they're indexing the **page title** and **metadata** as well as on-page content to understand how relevant the keywords on the page are to the search query and the ad that's sending visitors there.

So if the search term is *Nike trail running shoes*, this phrase or parts of this phrase should appear in several elements of the landing page as well as the ad (**message match FTW**).

Google understands what a page is about based on quantifiable information like which words are used in high priority areas like URLs, page titles, and H1 headers. It also looks at **keyword density** throughout the page; whatever search phrase the user queried should make up **roughly 2-5% of the content** on your landing page.

These are the primary factors of Google's legendary organic search ranking algorithm repurposed for PPC.

PPC PRO TIP

This first "theme" suggests that Google prefers landing pages that are "original" or unique. Of course, many marketers duplicate their landing pages, changing only small details or phrases on each page in an effort to save time.

This leads to what is called a **canonicalization issue**.

Canonicalization issues occur when Google sees multiple pages as the same and scores them all with lower QS as a result. **A good rule of thumb is to try for at least 20% unique content per landing page**.

Another way to avoid this issue altogether is to **dynamically replace the text on a single landing page** based on the user's search query. This can actually improve Quality Score by making the experience more relevant for visitors, without creating multiple versions of the same page.

2. Landing pages need to have high transparency and trustworthiness

This theme is harder for Google to evaluate in an automated way, but can still be important.

Best practices include providing **content that builds trust.** This can be done by including elements of **social proof** on your landing pages such as customer testimonials or logos of accredited endorsements (think Better Business Bureau) and links to online reviews (like Yelp).

At the most basic level, a link to your "About Us" page and your privacy policy can **raise QS on the merits of transparency**.

PPC PRO TIP

When using logos of endorsers, use the "Alt Img" tag to label who these companies are.

Conversion comes before Quality Score

The principle of **attention ratio** taught us that links are **leaks** off your page, leading visitors away from your conversion goal.

Marketers concerned about their Quality Score will have to **test** how much impact adding links that build trust and transparency has on their **click-through rates**, and do the math to assess whether their Quality Score is low enough (thus driving up CPC costs) to compromise their attention ratio.

One compromise is to abandon any third-party links, but still include links to some of your other pages **tucked away neatly in the page footer** where they do not distract from your principal call to action.

Either way, don't lose sight of the fact that Quality Score is only a means to an end. **Higher conversion rates — not QS — are your ultimate goal.**

3. Landing pages should be fast, clear and easy to use

This theme seems like an obvious nod to the visual design and user experience of your landing page but Google is actually looking for a few easily measurable items for these criteria that are **not as subjective as you might think**.

The two factors that are important here are **page load time** and the use of **pop-ups**. Slow page loading will have a direct effect on QS; pages that take longer than four seconds to load can actually cause ads to be disapproved for non-loading landing pages. While pop-up ads are less popular than they once were, some sites still use them to capture emails, offer special promotions or even to offer live chat support.

Google generally sees pop-ups as making a page **more confusing for users** and can give a lower QS accordingly. Pop-ups have lower weight than other factors but can still negatively affect your page's overall score.

PPC PRO TIP

Google Webmaster Tools indicates Google's standard for load times as 1.5 seconds being "acceptable" and under 1 second being "good."

The easiest way to ensure landing page relevance in Unbounce

Perfect Message Match!

trail running shoes

Trail Running Shoes! Ourstore.com
try.ourstore.com/trailrunningshoes
These are the trail running shoes you've been looking for.

ourstore.com

The **trail running shoes** you've been looking for!

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What We Learned in This Chapter

Quality Score can be frustrating because we are given little concrete information to improve our campaigns. That said, good Quality Scores (above 6) can **help us to get better results and positions without increasing our CPCs**.

Conversely, poor Quality Scores (below 4) can be very costly to the campaign, **forcing us to pay higher CPCs** or in some cases preventing our keywords from triggering ads at all!

By following these search and landing page best practices you can improve your current and future Quality Scores, giving your PPC campaigns the **best chance for success**.

> **PPC marketing has taught me to question best practices.** Time and time again in testing, the 'obvious' winner between two ads or landing pages ends up failing against an alternative that may be 'outside the box.' **PPC has humbled my marketing prowess** — for the better.

Ashleigh Bunn, Cardinal Path

🐦 Tweet This Quote

Chapter 4
Building the Ultimate PPC Landing Page

In this final chapter we're going to combine these theories about **context** and **Quality Score** with a fictional example to help us build the Ultimate PPC Landing Page.

Let's pretend we're architecting a PPC campaign for a local insurance company in Dallas called **Ted's All-Star Texas Insurance**.

Ted provides auto insurance coverage to Dallasites and he offers the lowest rates around. He has a **healthy budget** for search and a **hungry sales staff** so he wants to maximize his lead volume.

How could we create ultimate PPC landing pages for Ted?

Understanding Your Funnel

We're going to build **three different campaigns** – "general," "mid-funnel" and "bottom of the funnel" – so that we can isolate budgets and Quality Scores for each campaign. The separate campaigns will help us address **different user contexts** and align them with our conversion funnel.

As PPC marketers we're making **educated guesses based on search context** about how close a user is to our ultimate conversion goal (making the sale).

For example, someone who searches *insurance agent reviews* is displaying **research intent**, which means they're probably still a few steps away from committing.

A user in the research phase should be marketed to differently than someone who searches *buy cheap home insurance dallas*. That person is obviously ready to open their wallet.

> If you go to the hardware store looking for wood screws, you're damn likely to leave with some wood screws. Search is the same way. While inbound marketing and content marketing are incredible sources of leads for many businesses, **few things are more powerful than a (wo)man on a mission, searching for a specific thing**.

Igor Belogolovsky, Clever Zebo

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1. General Campaigns

The problem with generals

Many PPC marketers wrestle with the **"damned if you do, damned if you don't"** conundrum of general keywords.

In our insurance example these would be terms like *insurance, insurance agent* or *local insurance company.* These keywords are so broad that we don't know anything about the user's intent or where they might fall in the funnel.

Marketers with more restricted budgets may want to avoid these general campaigns altogether. At the very least, start with more targeted campaigns and add these keywords later in separate campaigns with limited budgets, more restrictive match types and lots of negative keywords (see below).

The upside is that these types of general queries represent a **huge search volume**. So as we look to extend the reach of our PPC efforts we need to understand some best practices for dealing with general terms.

> ### PPC PRO TIP
> If you decide to run a general campaign be sure to check your **search query reports** and add a robust list of negative keywords to avoid unwanted searches. In Ted's case, negatives could include words like *jobs* to avoid attracting searchers looking for employment in the insurance sector.

Setting up our general campaigns

For the general campaign we're building for Ted we're going to select a **few high volume keywords** that are too general for highly tailored landing pages. By creating a separate campaign we can insure that these terms don't eat up a large percentage of our budget or garner **poor Quality Scores that may negatively affect the rest of our content**.

Campaign Setting and Estimates

- Budget: $100/ day
- Average position: 3-5
- Number of ad groups: 1-5
- Estimated keywords: 3-12
- Estimated negative keywords: 10-100

Conversion Action

- Generate a **low commitment conversion** by offering an ebook or white paper.

- While we prefer a single conversion action for higher conversion rates you may want **to test a second conversion action** (i.e. "get a free quote") that would allow users to proceed down the funnel if they're ready.

Sample Keywords

insurance, insurance agent, insurance dallas, new insurance policy

Sample Ad

Local Insurance Agent
Work with a Local Insurance Pro
Let Us Help Save You Money!
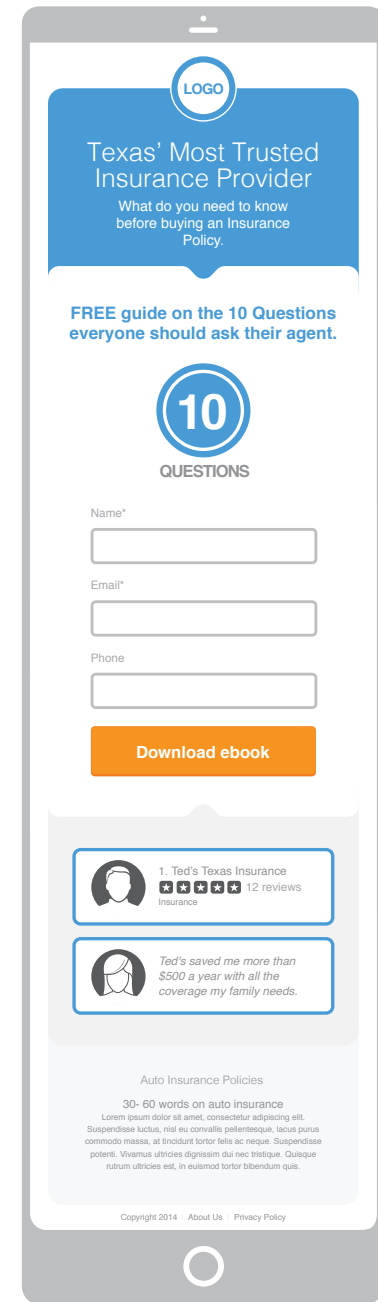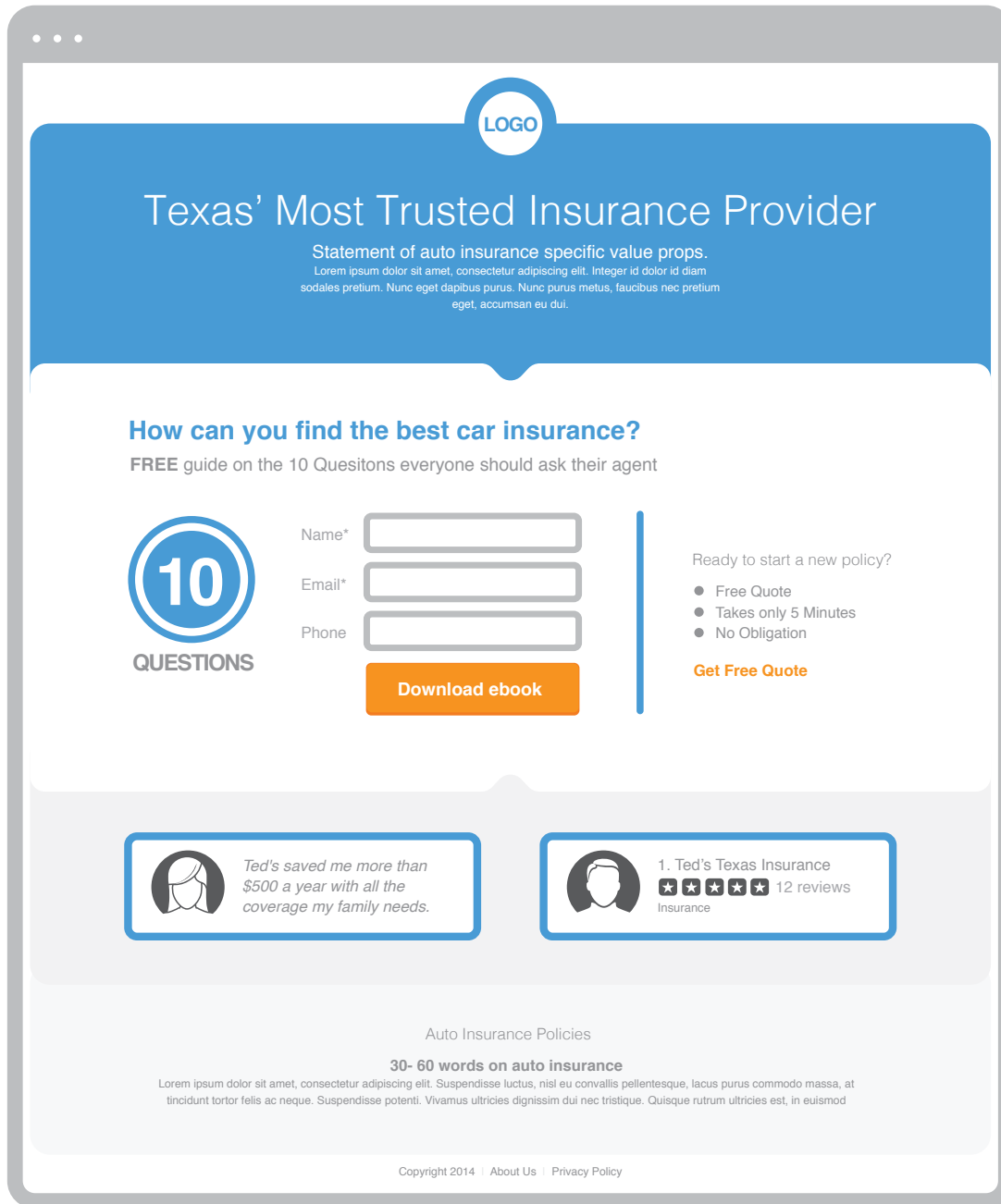www.TedsTexasInsurance.com/Dallas

About low commitment conversions

Marketers often fixate on sealing the deal. But at this stage in the funnel **lead generation is the goal of your landing page**. You paid to drive this user to the site, so connect with them whatever way you can!

In Ted's case, he could write a very simple ebook or checklist on the top 10 things to consider when picking an insurance provider.

A user who is still researching will find good value in this type of content, which means they are likely to give you an email address in exchange for it.

This content also establishes **subject matter expertise** and will increase the chances that the searcher will consider you as a provider.

LOGO

Texas' Most Trusted Insurance Provider

Statement of auto insurance specific value props.

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How can you find the best car insurance?

FREE guide on the 10 Quesitons everyone should ask their agent

10 QUESTIONS

Name*

Email*

Phone

Download ebook

Ready to start a new policy?

- Free Quote
- Takes only 5 Minutes
- No Obligation

Get Free Quote

Ted's saved me more than $500 a year with all the coverage my family needs.

1. Ted's Texas Insurance
★★★★★ 12 reviews
Insurance

Auto Insurance Policies

30- 60 words on auto insurance

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LOGO

Texas' Most Trusted Insurance Provider

What do you need to know before buying an Insurance Policy.

FREE guide on the 10 Questions everyone should ask their agent.

10 QUESTIONS

Name*

Email*

Phone

Download ebook

1. Ted's Texas Insurance
★★★★★ 12 reviews
Insurance

Ted's saved me more than $500 a year with all the coverage my family needs.

Auto Insurance Policies

30- 60 words on auto insurance
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Desktop | Mobile

Test everything. A lot. From headlines to images to layouts and more, you need to be changing things up after you've collected enough data so you can **optimize your ad dollars.**

Eric Siu, Single Grain

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2. Mid-Funnel Campaigns

The middle part of the funnel is filled with users whose query context tells us they are **good prospects but not necessarily ready to convert**. We need to be thoughtful about putting these keywords into **tightly themed ad groups** and offering the right level of engagement.

For example, if a user is looking for reviews, offering them the ability to purchase may yield **low conversion rates** as their query indicates they are not ready to buy. Better to offer them a freebie on a lead gen form instead.

For Ted's insurance marketing campaign, we're going to create **two separate mid-funnel campaigns** – one with a low commitment conversion action and one with a higher commitment conversion. We're going to organize each campaign into a few small ad groups with **1-10 keywords per group and tight themes**.

Separating *car insurance* from *auto insurance*, for example, will allow us to create more relevant ads and landing pages. This will help **increase our Quality Score and reduce our bid prices.** Our mid-funnel campaigns will likely drive the largest number of clicks and conversions albeit at a **higher CPA (cost per acquisition)** than our bottom of the funnel campaigns.

PPC PRO TIP
The **landing pages** for mid-funnel campaigns should have more content on them compared to bottom of the funnel pages in order to ensure **higher relevance and Quality Score**. This content should appear below the fold or at least below the call to action.

Setting up our mid-funnel campaigns

Campaign Setting and Estimates

- Budget: $300/day
- Average position: 2-4
- Number of ad groups: 5+
- Estimated keywords: 100+
- Estimated negative keywords: 10+

Conversion Action

- Depending on ad group context we could serve either a low commitment or higher commitment conversion action.
- **Always test both** to determine the best strategy.

CAMPAIGN 1 (low commitment conversion action)
Conversion action: Download a free guide

Sample Ad
Compare and Save!
Low rates & Local Service
Get a Free Quote & Compare!
www.TedsTexasInsurance.com/Compare

Sample Keywords (one of many ad groups)
Compare insurance, insurance rate comparison, compare auto insurance

CAMPAIGN 2 (higher commitment conversion action)
Conversion action: Get a free quote

Sample Ad
Texas car insurance
Download our Free Guide to
Getting the Best Car Insurance
www.TedsTexasInsurance.com/FreeGuide

Sample Keywords (one of many ad groups)
Best car insurance, best car insurance agency, best Dallas car insurance

LOGO

Texas' Most Trusted Insurance Provider

Statement of auto insurance specific value props.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Integer id dolor id diam sodales pretium. Nunc eget dapibus purus. Nunc purus metus, faucibus nec pretium eget, accumsan eu dui.

What Do You Need to Know Before Buying an Insurance Policy?

FREE guide on the 10 questions everyone should ask their agent

10 QUESTIONS

Name*

Email*

Phone

Download Free

Ted's saved me more than $500 a year with all the coverage my family needs.

1. Ted's Texas Insurance
★★★★★ 12 reviews
Insurance

Auto Insurance Policies

30- 60 words on auto insurance

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Full Coverage Auto Insurance

Statement of auto insurance specific value props.

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Compare by getting a Free Quote!

Name*

Email*

Phone

Driver's License*

VIN Number*

Coverage level*

Get Your Free Quote

Ted's saved me more than $500 a year with all the coverage my family needs.

1. Ted's Texas Insurance
★★★★★ 12 reviews
Insurance

Ted was referred to me from a friend and he was able to review my insurance coverage for my house and cars and was able to save over $1,000.

Auto Insurance Policies

30- 60 words on auto insurance

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LOGO

Full Coverage Auto Insurance

Statement of auto insurance specific value props.

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Get a Free Auto insurance Quote

Name*

Email*

Phone

Driver's License*

VIN Number*

Coverage level*

Get Your Free Quote

Ted's saved me more than $500 a year with all the coverage my family needs.

1. Ted's Texas Insurance
★★★★★ 12 reviews
Insurance

Auto Insurance Policies

30- 60 words on auto insurance

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📱 Mobile

"The very first time I wrote an ad I had clicks. **Then I added the word "free" in it and I got twice the click ratio**. I've learned since then that small tiny changes can have a huge impact on conversion."

Christian Nkurunziza, Tenscores

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3. Bottom of the Funnel Campaigns

Finally, we're going to look at the holy grail of our PPC campaign – **targeting users with high conversion intent**.

These would be users who search for terms such as *buy car insurance Dallas* or, in Ted's case, possibly *cheap car insurance Dallas*.

The fact that users are **shopping based** on price means that an advertiser with competitive pricing can quickly convert this type of customer.

These are our golden customers and we want to have a **laser focus on conversion-centered design and copy**. Our landing pages should employ less content, focusing mainly on **value propositions** and language that will guide the user toward our CTA.

Setting up our bottom-of-the-funnel campaign

Campaign Setting and Estimates

- Budget: $500/day (set it high but you probably won't spend it)
- Average position: 1-3
- Number of ad groups: 3-10
- Estimated keywords: 10 - 50
- Estimated negative keywords: 10-100

Conversion Action

- Make the sale!
- Use less content on page and emphasize the form as much as possible

Sample Ad

Buy Car Insurance Today
3 easy steps to get a Free Quote
Start your new policy Today & Save!
TedsTexasInsurance.com/CheapInsurance

Sample Keywords

buy car insurance, cheap car insurance, discount car insurance, get car insurance now

Share

LOGO

Buy Auto Insurance Today!

3 Easy Steps To a New Auto Insurance Policy

1 Fill out the simple free quote form.

2 Review your quote and policy options.

3 Submit your billing info and we will email your insurance paperwork!

Name*

Email*

Phone

Driver's License*

VIN Number*

Coverage level*

Get Your Free Quote

Reasons Customers Choose Auto Insurance from Ted's

- Complete coverage of your family and property.
- Cheap Car Insurance Prices - Compare and Save.
- Friendly Local Agents provide you expertise when you need it most.

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LOGO

Buy Auto Insurance Today!

3 Easy Steps To a New Auto Insurance Policy

1 Fill out the simple free quote form.

2 Review your quote and policy options.

3 Submit your billing info and we will email your insurance paperwork!

Name*

Email*

Phone

Driver's License*

VIN Number*

Coverage level*

Get Your Free Quote

Reasons Customers Choose Auto Insurance from Ted's

- Complete coverage of your family and property.
- Cheap Car Insurance Prices - Compare and Save.
- Friendly Local Agents provide you expertise when you need it most.

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"PPC advertising is **still the fastest way to test assumptions**, headlines, offers, keywords and landing pages. By finding out what does and doesn't work with PPC, businesses can discover **where to prioritize efforts** for other marketing endeavors. "

Theresa Baiocco, Conversion Max

Tweet This Quote

Game On

Like Ted and his insurance marketing all-stars, creating well-organized PPC campaigns with highly relevant landing pages can give you a **leg up on the competition**, whether you're competing against local rivals or national corporations with massive budgets. Your mission is to make your campaigns more efficient by understanding user context and then **leveraging that knowledge** as you build your ultimate PPC landing pages.

To measure the success of these changes look for **better Quality Scores**, **higher click-through rates** and the holy grail - **lower cost per acquisition**. Like in most of life good things don't come easily. Maximizing your search campaign output can take a major campaign reorganization and the **building and testing of many, many landing pages**.

But if you make the investment, you'll be rewarded with long-term increased campaign ROI that will more than cover your costs.

Time to put down this book and get to work!

-Matt Hessler

Matt Hessler is a men's fashion designer, rebuilder of vintage motorcycles, and bonafide search nerd. He has worked in search marketing since 2002, which is pretty much the stone ages. His search experience has ranged from building Google's first 1 million keyword campaign to managing multimillion dollar per month budgets for Condé Nast and Publishers Clearing House as well as speaking at SMX and AdTech. He currently serves as Director of Search for Trada, a Google-funded startup in Boulder, Colorado.

Version 1

Version 2

Mobile Version

Ready to get started building the Ultimate PPC Landing Page?

Don't start from scratch!

We've made it easy by designing a beautiful landing page template you can start from. It's designed with all the best practices from this ebook to save you time and improve your PPC campaign ROI!

DOWNLOAD THE ULTIMATE PPC LANDING PAGE TEMPLATE