

## **SiteProNews: November 22, 2006 Feature Article**

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### **Landing Page Quick Reference Guide** **By Michael Cordova (c) 2006**

A landing page is a website page that is created for one purpose - to persuade the site visitor to convert into a customer by making a sale, completing a form (thereby becoming a qualified lead), signing up for a newsletter, etc.

We provide this landing page quick reference so you can pull it out every time you are creating a persuasive landing page. It is divided into 4 sections and is intended to be an all-inclusive tip sheet.

Most importantly, consider that you have 8 seconds or less to convince your visitor to act. If you haven't convincingly made your case in this time then your visitor will move on and will be lost, as the Internet has created the most fickle customer in sales history.

#### Page Layout

- Place your logo at the top left. Visitors expect it there so display your branding where it counts.
- If the visitor came from a search engine keyword search or a PPC ad, then place the keyword terms in bold at the top of the page. This reinforces to the visitor that they came to the right place.
- Always keep the Golden Triangle in mind. It is the most important and scanned part of the page. It is the area of the page that starts at the top left of the page moves to the top right side of the page then down diagonally to the bottom left of the page just above the fold. The fold is the area of a web page that the visitor sees without scrolling vertically. You should never force a visitor to scroll horizontally. This means that your landing pages should be able to be seen completely on an 800 x 600 screen resolution. Place your UVP (Unique Value Proposition) in the middle of the Golden Triangle.
- Contrast your Calls to Action with respect to the rest of the page - use contrasting colors, round vs. rectangular, straight vs. slanted, warm color vs. cold color, big vs. little. Make sure you can spot the Call to Action from 6 feet away.
- Place assurances, testimonials and guarantees in the far-right column
- Place logos to appropriate associations or online companies at the bottom of the page to show credibility - Verisign, BBB

Online Reliability, certified by..., Alexa rank (if good), powerseller, live support, credit cards supported, open 24 hours a day, Hacker Safe, as seen in Entrepreneur Magazine, Chamber of Commerce, etc.

- Don't place external links on a landing page. Just allow them the option to proceed into completing the form and converting into a customer.
- Place privacy policies on the landing page. This instills confidence.
- Think of the Amazon.com website. Note their Call to Action is the hotspot at the top-right of all pages - add to cart, one click ordering, etc. This may also apply to you.

#### Writing Style and Content

- Spend time on your Unique Value Proposition (UVP) and place it into the center of the Golden Triangle. A UVP is the core differentiation of a company's product or service from those of competitors. A complete UVP will describe the market and a company's competitors and the key difference between competitors and your own company.
- Ensure that you don't have big paragraphs. Visitors tend to scan pages instead of reading all of the text on them.
- Write using headers above paragraphs that summarize the following text.
- Use bullets where possible as visitors can quickly scan them. Search engines also prioritize bullets instead of long paragraph text.
- If you want to add a picture ensure that it is going to reinforce your message. You can easily lose significant sales by having the wrong picture on the landing page.
- If the purpose of the landing page is to provide a white paper or article then create an image for the paper with enlarged text like the one below and place it on the page:

#### The Form

- Keep the number of fields on the form as small as possible. This is critical in getting them to complete the form.
- Add a Comments textbox asking for the visitor's input. It can be key to qualifying leads. Those that complete this form with the services they are looking for should be contacted immediately. Here are some requests you can use for this Comments box:
  - What is biggest problem that you need to solve now?
  - What is the purpose of your project?
  - Please list your goals for this project.

- How can we help you?
- In case the visitor doesn't complete the Comments textbox on the first page, add a 2nd page with only a Comments textbox on it requesting the visitors comments again. Tell them that if they complete the Comments box now then they will receive an extra free white paper that is relevant to the same visitor. These visitor comments are important.
- Have the visitor check a box that says something like "YES! Send me the free white paper that will change my life." It is the psychological method of coercing them into completing the rest of the form.
- Prominently list the benefits of completing the form. It is a major validation. Make sure to write the benefits in terms of the user's benefits instead of the features of your product or service.
- Ensure you save the form information into a database and send emails out as soon as the form is completed so you can immediately contact the visitor. The lead's effectiveness drops dramatically as time goes by. Contacting a lead within minutes is ideal.

#### Landing Page Mistakes to Avoid

- Graphics or text unrelated to the offer - limit copy to only the point of the landing page
- Long forms with unneeded fields - limit your form to what is absolutely essential
- Difficult to read fonts
- Navigation off of the landing page
- Placing important persuasive copy below the fold

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