

# Best Practices for Landing Pages Checklist

Your digital advertising efforts are only as good as the page where your visitors are arriving on your site. If you want to increase leads and sales from your landing pages, you need to learn how to make your pitch without overwhelming visitors with too much information.

In this guide, we'll teach you how to create smart and efficient landing pages that will convert visitors into leads! We begin with an overview of the top 14 page "elements" to consider. We then move into a scored checklist that you can copy and use to review how each of these elements are being utilized on your own pages. The second half of the checklist is a bonus that goes beyond the top page elements to cover 10 additional items you can review in an entire PPC keyword-search-to-ad-click-to-conversion-process.

## Quick Definitions

- "Conversion"** The process of turning a visitor into a lead or a sale. In the context of tracking via an analytics program, "conversions" are also referred to as "goal conversions". In the B2B and services world, conversions represent leads from an online form. In the B2C and retail world, conversions represent actual product sales.
- "Conversion Rate"** The percentage of visitors that turn into leads or sales. I.e., the percentage of visitors that "convert". Conversion rates vary greatly by industry and offer.
- "Convert"** To generate a "conversion".
- "Elements"** Items on a landing page that contribute to the page's success. Examples of page elements include the Value Proposition, the Call to Action (CTA), the benefits of your product or service, etc., as defined in the next section.
- "Landing Page"** The page on your website where a visitor arrives via a link created by your advertising or social media campaigns.

## Overview

The following provides a list of the top 14 elements that should be incorporated into an effective landing page for generating advertising conversions. It is neither useful nor necessary to use every single one of these elements on every landing page. Instead, you should pick those page elements that will work most effectively with your specific offer.

Remember to create efficient pages that can convert visitors as quickly as possible. Although the actual length of the page will vary depending on your industry, you should always seek to streamline the process a visitor will take from keyword search, to ad click, to landing page, to conversion.

The goal of a landing page is to have one major action that is most desirable for an incoming visitor to take. Everything on the page should be oriented toward:

- A) Convincing the visitor to take the desired action, and
- B) Making it easy for them to take that desired action.



## Top 14 Page Elements

### 1. Headline and Page Title

#### a. *Questions:*

- i. Does the page headline match the ad headline?
- ii. Does the page title match the expectations set by the ad?

#### b. *Best Practice:*

- i. Use the same (or similar) text in the link clicked to get to the page and the first element a visitor sees on the page.

#### c. *Example / Usage Tip:*

- i. If your ad headline says, "Free iPad", and your headline doesn't say anything about this offer, it is common that visitors won't read further down the page, even if your original offer was true and is outlined in the bullets.

### 2. Top Value Proposition

#### a. *Questions:*

- i. What is the #1 reason someone would want to sign-up for the service or buy your product?

#### b. *Best Practice:*

- i. It is vital to your advertising program that you know how to answer this basic question.

#### c. *Example / Usage Tip:*

- i. "Solve male pattern baldness." "Improve your landing page conversion rate."
- ii. This should be expressed in one sentence, or two at the absolute most.

### 3. Call-to-Action (CTA)

#### a. *Questions:*

- i. Why should a visitor take the action right now?
- ii. Is it a time sensitive offer? Where do they take the desired action? Where do they look for a link?

#### b. *Best Practice:*

- i. Your CTA should quickly sum up why and where the visitor should take the next action.

#### c. *Examples / Usage Tip:*

- i. "Order now for holiday savings." "Complete the form below and we'll contact you today".
- ii. CTAs are usually the last thing you see before the button or lead gen form.

### 4. A Big, Obvious Button to Take the Next Desired Action

#### a. *Question:*

- i. Is it clear at a glance where the next action lies on the page?

#### b. *Best Practice:*

- i. This button should be brightly colored, yet still tasteful in the context of your page's design scheme.
- ii. You can write a short CTA directly on the button.

*c. Usage Tip:*

- i. If it isn't a button, there should be some other extremely obvious link used to continue to the next step.

5. Benefits/Features

*a. Question:*

- i. Is it easy to distinguish the direct benefit a visitor will gain for taking my desired action?

*b. Best Practice:*

- i. Benefits are usually most effective when expressed as a series of bullet points.

*c. Usage Tip:*

- i. Sometimes offers are complicated and can't be expressed in one sentence. In these cases, try listing top features as bullet points that lead into a paragraph about the full offer.

6. Prominent Contact Method

*a. Question:*

- i. How can a visitor quickly contact you?

*b. Best Practice:*

- i. This may be a phone number at the top of the page, an instant chat feature, or a link to an email address or site contact page.

*c. Usage Tips:*

- i. If visitors have questions it is important that you give them a way to instantly connect with a representative from your company (or at least get them on the phone with a salesperson).
- ii. This is especially true if you're trying to get them to buy a product or take an action that might otherwise affect them financially.

7. All Important Page Content Introduced Above Page Fold

*a. Question:*

- i. Did you have to scroll down to locate the page content?

*b. Best Practice:*

- i. Try to keep all of your important page content above the page fold.
- ii. If the visitor has to scroll to find any information or the button to take the next action, you will get a much lower response rate.

*c. Usage Tips:*

- i. In most cases, it is okay if the content starts above the fold and ends below the fold, as long as the visitor can see that it is there from viewing the top of the page.

8. No Long Paragraphs or Big Text Blocks

*a. Question:*

- i. Are there long paragraphs of text on the page?

*b. Best Practice:*

- i. It has been proven in many studies that visitors do not want to read a paragraph of text before taking an action. This is why bullet points are most effective, as described in the benefits section above.

*c. Usage Tips:*

- i. If you find that you have lots of long paragraphs, try breaking them up into bullets based on the benefits or features, as described above.
- ii. Consider providing deeper links in pop-up windows or roll-overs to describe complicated ideas. That way, visitors can find the information they need to understand the content without leaving the page, or having the definition cluttering up the text.

## 9. Large, Clear, Colorful Pictures

*a. Question:*

- i. Are there graphics depicting the product or offer on the page?

*b. Best Practice:*

- i. The product or offer should be presented in the most appealing way possible.
- ii. The graphics should be consistent with the site wide design scheme.

*c. Usage Tips:*

- i. Try using some of the same pictures that are already on your site, screenshots from your software or white paper, a picture of your product, or an image of your sales team.
- ii. Try to avoid obvious stock photos.

## 10. Appealing and Consistent Site-wide Color Scheme

*a. Question:*

- i. Does the landing page match your site's design and color schemes?

*b. Best Practice:*

- i. The page should be pretty, and generally match the color scheme of the home page, otherwise it creates incongruity if they click around the rest of the site.

*c. Usage Tips:*

- i. Use the same fonts that you have on your main website. If you aren't sure search for a font identification service on Google and upload a screenshot of the font to find out what it is.

## 11. Page Looks Modern and Has Recent Copyright Date

*a. Question:*

- i. Is the page clearly out of date?

*b. Best Practice:*

- i. Have the current year's copyright on all your pages. Most modern websites use clear sans serif fonts and clean white backgrounds when they display text.
- ii. Visitors are far less likely to convert if your page isn't obviously up-to-date. No one wants to sign-up for something that won't get any response at all.

*c. Usage Tips:*

- i. If you're using a retro or "campy" design scheme, you should split test a version of the landing page with a more modern design to see if it improves your conversion rates.

## 12. Expectations Set for What Will Happen Next

### a. Questions:

- i. If a visitor signs up for your service, when will they receive a response?
- ii. Within an hour? 24 hours? 5 business days? How will you reach them?

### b. Best Practice:

- i. At the bottom of the form, include some text about the next step that you will take.
- ii. Repeat the information about your next step on the "thank you" or "confirmation" page for your sign-up or sales process.

### c. Usage Tips:

- i. If a visitor is going to receive a package in the mail, tell them how long it will take.
- ii. If you'll be sending them an email, set their expectations for when to check their inbox.
- iii. Once you set your visitor's expectations, make sure that you actually take the action described.

## 13. Security / Trust Certificate (i.e., Verisign or Better Business Bureau)

### a. Question:

- i. Are there links or symbols on the page for industry-related sites that review or confirm transactions?

### b. Best Practice:

- i. If you're collecting financial information, be sure to have a secure site confirmed by a major authentication service.
- ii. If you are providing a local service, show that you are linked in with local organizations such as your local newspaper or blog.

### c. Usage Tips:

- i. This is most important with sales or any other financial transactions. If someone is going to enter their credit card number, you should assure that their data will be safe.

## 14. Testimonials

### a. Question:

- i. Do you have reviews of your services on the page?

### b. Best Practice:

- i. First-person accounts of your product or service lend a lot of credence to your offer.
- ii. Putting a face on your service and showing that your customers are willing to vouch for you goes a long way toward proving that you have a good offer.

### c. Usage Tips:

- i. Try offering existing customers a deal if they will review your service and let you use the review on your site.

The next page provides a checklist of these items that you can use to score your own website. The first half of the checklist covers the items listed above. The second half expands upon your entire conversion process and can be used to further audit your pages for conversions.

## Top Page Elements Checklist

This checklist matches the page elements described above.

Website Elements / Components	Rating	Comments
<b>Top Marketing Elements</b>		
1. Page Headline Matches Expectations		
2. Value Proposition		
3. Call-to-Action		
4. Benefits/Features		
5. Clear Next Step on Page		
6. Prominent Contact Method		
7. All Important Page Content Above Page Fold		
8. No Long Paragraphs or Big Text Blocks		
9. Large, Clear, Colorful Pictures		
10. Page Looks Modern and Has Recent Copyright Date		
11. Appealing and Consistent Site-wide Color Scheme		
12. Expectations Set for What Will Happen Next		
13. Security / Trust Certificate		
14. Testimonials.		
<b>Top Elements Total (Out of 14):</b>		

## Sales/Lead Process Checklist

This bonus checklist includes tips for reviewing the entire Click Through Process from keyword search, through to ad click, and on to conversion. Contact us if you need help conducting this full audit.

Lead Gen Elements / Components	Rating	Comments
<b>Sales/Lead Process</b>		
1. Lead Generation Form (non-retail lead or email offer)		
2. Keyword Matches Ad Copy		
3. Ad Copy Headline Matches Landing Page Title		
4. Page Content Specifically Matches Keyword and Ad		
5. The Offer is Clear and Easy to Understand		
6. Page has a Unique URL for Destination URL links		
7. Simple and Obvious Path to Proceed with Transaction		
8. Minimal Pages Used to Click Through Process		
9. Explanation of When to Expect Product or Further Contact		
10. Special Offer, Rebate, Free Trial, or Sale Price		
<b>Sales Process Total (Out of 10):</b>		
<b>Total Score (Out of 24):</b>		
<b>Explanation of Scores:</b>		

## What Else Should I Be Considering? What If I Need Help?

As you can see from the bonus checklist, the top page elements discussed above are only a few of the things you should consider when it comes to improving your landing page conversion rates. We'll wrap up this guide with a list of some additional questions you should try to answer when reviewing your landing pages:

- Have you audited your entire click-to-conversion process using our bonus checklist?
- Have you considered taking your landing pages off-site using a tool such as unbounce or getresponse?
- Are you A/B split testing your landing pages via AdWords or another tool?
- Have you created goals for each different conversion type in your analytics tracking program?
- Do you have a comprehensive Analytics and Goal Conversion Tracking program?
- What kind of lead gen collateral should you be offering to entice leads to turn into customers?

Online marketing is complicated! If you're still lost or you're not sure what we're talking about with the above questions, or if you just need help, reach out to us today at <http://strongpages.com/contact/> for a free consultation on your digital marketing program.

In our next guide, we'll cover the best practices for PPC Advertising.

### About Strongpages

Strongpages is a leading digital marketing agency with a deep history of developing digital strategy and managing successful online marketing programs. Strongpages has generated significant results for our client's brands – ranging from startups to the world's largest retailers. We're dedicated to helping businesses of all kinds leverage this mission-critical channel to fuel their business in the digital age.

Our expert resources represent leaders in strategy, search technology and online marketing, combined with hands-on leadership expertise that helps translate program data into actionable business intelligence. This unique combination gives clients unparalleled results – improving targeted, qualified lead flow to your sales funnel and driving immediate deal opportunities and revenue growth.

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