

THE 5 ESSENTIALS FOR BUILDING

LANDING PAGES

THAT CONVERT

HEADLINES | THE HERO SHOT | BENEFITS | CREDIBILITY | CALL-TO-ACTION





INTRODUCTION

What are landing pages, why do we need them,
and what do I need to know to start building one?



Why Do I Need a Landing Page?

IMAGINE THAT YOU'RE going to party. It's being thrown by someone you know from work, so you figure that you'll make an appearance and then head back home. Unfortunately, you seem to have gotten the wrong information and when you knock on the door, you're about 30 minutes early.

Your co-worker says, "Oh! You're early. Well, I'm just finishing up something, so come on in and make yourself at home." She then runs off into a bedroom, leaving you just outside the doorway with chips and dip in hand. What are you going to do?

Probably not much. Do you take off your shoes? Where should you go? Even though she suggested that you make yourself comfortable, the most you might do is awkwardly poke your head around a couple corners until she returns.

Now, *rewind*.

You knock on the door. Your coworker answers, "Oh! You're early. That's okay." She takes you by the hand and leads you to the kitchen. "You can put your stuff down here. I just finished the last batch of cookies, so please try one and take a seat on the couch! I'll be back in just a minute."

Which situation feels more comfortable to you?

If you're anything like me, you'd rather be in the second situation. Why? Because you were given a direct path to follow.

This situation is very similar to how a visitor feels on your homepage versus a dedicated landing page.

Your Home Page

A website can be inviting and welcoming to visitors, but there are so many options. Imagine someone is searching for a brand new pair of noise cancelling headphones on Google. They click on an ad and are brought to the front page of Bose's website.

While they will probably have the perfect pair of headphones, the user is going to be disoriented and frustrated. They might even leave the site. This is not what you want!

Your Landing Page

Landing Pages are dedicated to solely one purpose. The same person clicks on a different ad for headphones and is brought to a page describing one pair. The page has product shots, specs, reviews and everything that they need to know on one page, with a button that says "Experience Sound in a New Way."

The person looking to buy headphones is a lot more likely to become a customer.



Where Do I Start?

THERE ARE THREE questions that we have to ask before we start building out our landing page:

What is the goal of your landing page?

Goals can be defined by any sort of metric. Do you need more emails to add to your marketing funnel? Are you looking to sell more of a certain product? Produce a lead for your sales team to call and pursue? Defining this goal is key to finding success with your landing page.

What is your competition doing?

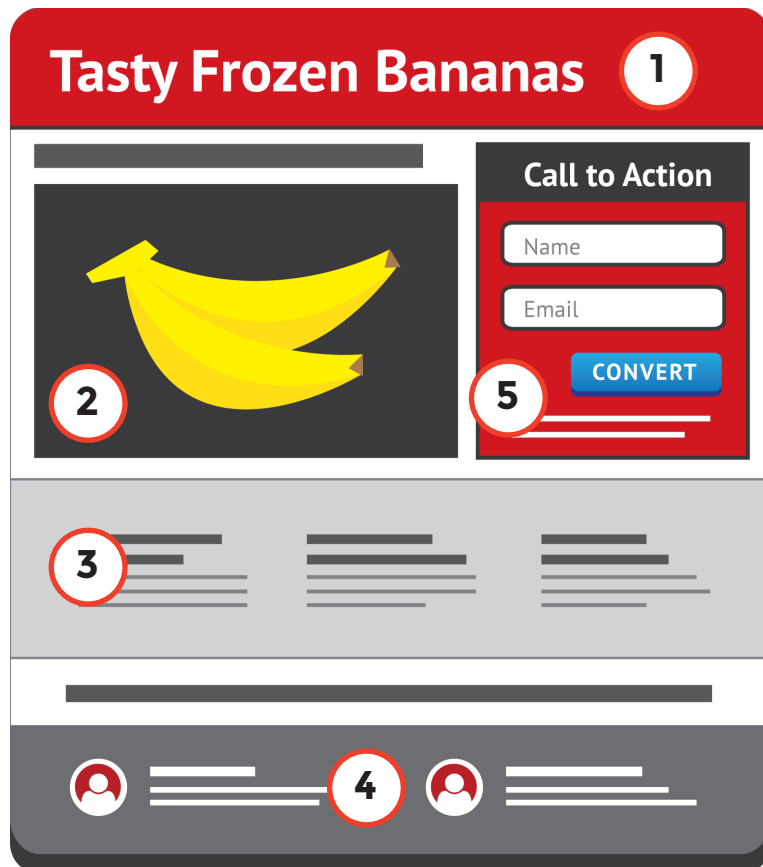
Our competitors don't always know what they're doing, but if they've been in online marketing longer than you, they might have picked up a couple things that have worked. Draw inspiration from their headlines and how their landing pages are built out, then build upon it with what you've learned.

Who is your target audience, and what do they want?

What is your target audience looking for? What problems are they seeking solutions for, and what will be most valuable to them? This step might be the most important, because it allows you to take your goals and align them with the goals of your potential customers. Do you see how that could lead to success?

What are the Pieces of a Landing Page?

LANDING PAGES CAN be divided into 5 essential pieces. Their use will depend on your audience and industry, but they are the following:



1. Headlines & Subheads

This is the first statement that a potential customer will read, and requires a lot of time and care in its crafting.

2. The Hero Shot

This is a visual way of explaining what the product/service is and what it will do for the user.

3. Benefit Driven Copy

Customers like to have information, and usually the easiest way to deliver that is through text.

4. Credibility

We never want to hire someone or buy something that isn't trustworthy. We can establish credibility through social proof, trusted logos, and testimonials from previous clients.

5. A Call-to-Action

This is what it's all about! Clearly ask your potential customer to complete an action, whether it's filling out a form or making a phone call. Just make sure to make it worth their while.



HEADLINES

How to write clear (rather than clever)
headlines and subheads that are benefit driven.





Quick Facts About Headlines

Pick One Thing That is Highly Desirable

While we'd probably like to include all the benefits as quickly as possible... don't. Headlines should tell your customers the number one reason why they should buy your product.

If Your Name Isn't Well Known, Include It

Brand recognition is a real and valuable thing. Some people run whole campaigns just to boost it, but that doesn't mean that you can't get leads AND get your name out there. Instead of saying "*You'll Run Faster With Our Cookies*" go for "*ChocoDream Cookies Make 96% of Our Customers Run Faster.*" You even fit in some social proof.

Let Your Customers Write Your Headlines

No one knows your product's benefits more than your target audience! Read through the testimonials and reviews that past customers have written. If people are happy about the same thing, use that in your headline.



Two Things That You MUST Remember About Headlines

Clear is Better Than Clever

I think we're all impressed with ourselves when we come up with something witty or profound. Often we think that it's how we'll draw our potential clients in.

Learn and remember now: *It is not so!*

Time is precious for all of us, and each landing page is viewed and judged so quickly. If you want people to stick, tell them as quickly as possible that YES this is the page they want, and YES you have a solution to their problem.

Bad.

Start a New Way of Living

Good!

Begin Your Trial Gym Membership Today

Don't Brag: Show That You Can Help!

Sorry to break it to you, but no one really comes to your website to read about how awesome you are.

People are on your landing page because they have a problem or need, and the ad they clicked on implied that you have a solution. Instead of writing that you're the leader in your industry, and that your customer service is number one, tell them why you're different.

Everyone should have a unique selling proposition. Don't keep yours a secret from your potential customers.

Bad.

#1 Personal Injury Lawyer in Colorado

Good!

We've Never Lost a Personal Injury Case



THE HERO SHOT

What makes up a great hero shot,
whether it's a picture or a video.



What is a Hero Shot?

THE HERO SHOT will dominate a large part of your landing page, and is often responsible for emotional triggers. It can consist of several things, and not every hero shot works for every company. Here are a couple categories of hero shots:



1. The Happy Person

The most common hero shot is the picture of a happy person enjoying whatever service or product they are promoting. This category can be effective (people like happy people), but is also riddled with obvious stock photography.



2. The Product Shot

This is a photograph, or sometimes even a digital mock up of the finished product. This works well for items that are being physically sold, because have you ever seen a box of granola bars that didn't show you what the actual bar looked like?



3. How It Works

If you're anything like me, you like to know what's going to happen next. This hero shot is usually a diagram of some sort that explains how a product works, or the steps of a service you offer.



4. Embedded Video

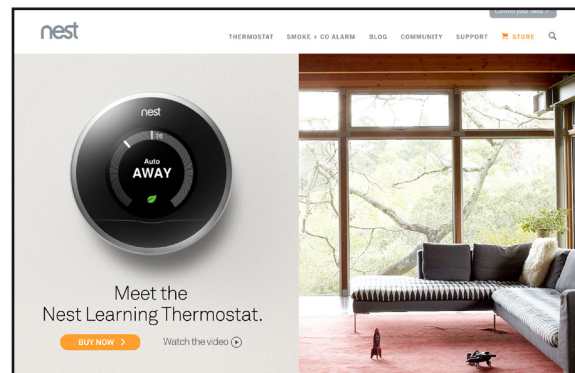
Video is sometimes considered the king of hero shots. You can make one for any of the categories listed above, though it should be short and interesting. Good landing page video can really lift your conversions rates.



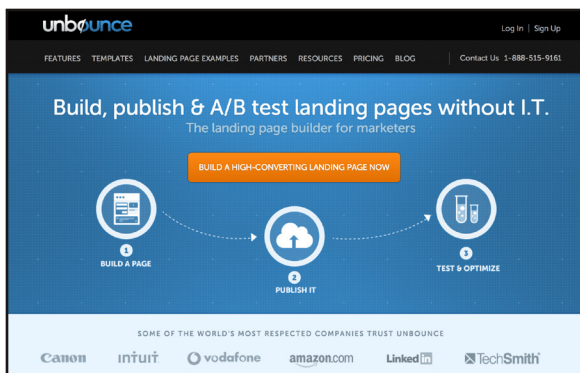
Some Home Page Hero Shot Examples



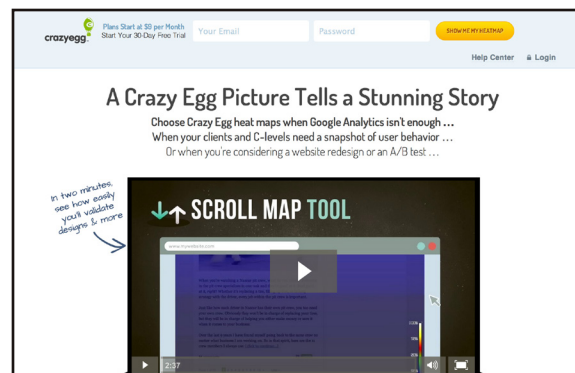
KinderCare uses oversized and *real* photos as the main part of their site. This gives you an idea of what their programs might be like.



Nest shows off their strong design sensibilities with a shot of their beautifully designed thermostat.



Unbounce explains how easy it is to use landing pages with their platform by breaking it down into only three steps.



Crazy Egg uses video to explain what heat mapping is. Not only that, but they tell you exactly how long it will take you to watch the video!



BENEFITS

What is the difference between features and benefits,
and how can we make them matter to people?



Benefits vs. Features: A Cartoon Case Study

ONE OF THE BIGGEST things that marketers will tell you to pay attention to is features vs benefits. We're told to always use benefits over features, but what is the actual difference? Instead of throwing out some definitions, we're going to explain this Popeye style.

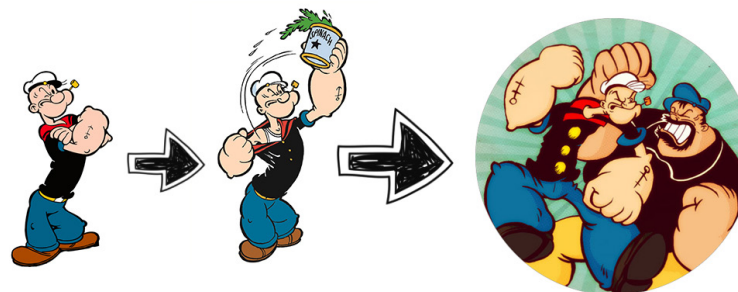
Spinach. Let's establish the "features": It's loaded with vitamins and minerals, it's an anti cancer food, it's good for your eyes and bones AND it contains more nutrients per calorie than any other food.

The problem is, NONE of that is going to matter to your five year old. All he wants is dinosaur shaped chicken nuggets. Customers are like that sometimes. Features are great to you, but features don't sell.

Introduce Popeye. He's a tough sailor with amazingly huge forearms and a permanent squinting eye. He's in love with the slender Olive Oyl, and both of them are constantly bullied by the giant Bluto. Popeye needs to beat Bluto. What is he supposed to do?

Eat spinach. When Popeye eats spinach he gains the strength and power to do anything. He is able to beat up Bluto, which makes him a hero and a champion. He's able to save his love interest, which might end with a smooch.

Want to look at this from a marketing standpoint? Popeye's popularity and fondness of leafy greens boosted spinach sales by 33% during the Great Depression. Children wanted vegetables because they saw the benefits that Popeye experienced. They wanted those benefits too.



Does that help you understand features vs benefits a bit better? Remember, you aren't saying why your product is good, but what it can do for your customer base.

Three Steps to Writing Benefits

- 1. Establish your clientele's problem.** Often we want to jump right into why our product or service is so great, but remember that it's really worth nothing unless it solves an existing problem. Think of every single issue or inconvenience that this possible customer might face in your product/service's industry.
- 2. Establish the features of your offer.** See, we're not throwing away your features entirely! Establishing specs and offering of your product is the basis of what your benefits are.
- 3. Establish the tailored benefits of your offer.** All you have to do now is take the problems that you established and explain exactly how the features of your product solve that problem.



3 Tips for Writing Compelling Copy

Lose the Jargon

We describe our new product or service with phrases like “world class,” “cutting edge,” and “innovative technology.” Do these words really mean anything, though? Do people expect any less? Instead, present why your product is the next best thing. If it really innovative, revolutionary or game changing, let them be the one that says it.

Back Up All Your Claims and Promises

Sure, your product might be the best in your industry, but can you prove it? Include statistics, awards and clear facts as to why yours is better than all the rest. Just remember that it isn't about why you're so awesome, but more about why they will love it so much. Benefits, benefits, benefits!

Keep Things Casual and Easy to Understand

It should never be difficult to read your landing pages, because any sort of friction is going to lead that customer straight to the back button. Pay attention to how they write and speak. Use the language that they would use, and make your brand personable. A little bit of personality will go a long way in making you interesting and memorable.



CREDIBILITY

How can you use social proof and known names
to help people trust in your company?



Can I Trust You? Prove It.

TRUST IS A hard thing to gain, and is an extremely precious thing to have. Luckily there are a couple different tried and true ways for you to establish credibility, even if the customer has never heard of you before.



1. Social Proof

You see social proof everywhere. Restaurants will put up photos of celebrities that have eaten there. Lines outside of an ice cream store tell you that it's popular and well liked. If someone has one-million plus followers on twitter, they probably have something worth reading. The same is true for your landing page.

To create social proof you can have a counter of how many customers you have, a widget that tells people how many times it has been posted on social media, or you can even give people something in exchange for a share or like. Be warned, though: low or weak social proof will only be damaging to your credibility.



2. Known and Trusted Logos

We're more likely to trust something we've seen before, so recognizable logos of partners, sponsors, clients and publications can bring a lot of trust to your landing page. You can have a section that says what news sources have mentioned you, or perhaps a section of companies that love your service. Don't lead people off your page, though. When people click off your page, they might not come back.



3. Testimonials

How much more likely are you to try a restaurant if your friend recommends it? Testimonials and reviews, whether they are from friends or strangers, can be very powerful tools in swaying a person to go with your product/service. They can especially be effective if there is a picture or video to go along with it. Please, don't make up your testimonials, though. People *can tell*.

Can I Trust You? Prove It. (continued)



4. Show That You're a Real Company

Unless you buy all of your stuff from alley trench coats, I'm sure you like to know a little something about the person you're buying from. Include a phone number, your physical address, a picture of your employees or even a mission statement. This will show people that you aren't a nasty spam robot, and build up your landing page trust.



5. Use Trust Seals and Privacy Locks

Many of us have seen seals from "Norton," "McAfee," "TRUSTe" and many other web security sites. These seals can greatly contribute to your credibility and build landing page trust. Subscriptions for these seals can be a bit pricey, though, and an unknown security company seal might actually cause even more concern (let's be real, your grandma doesn't know what McAfee is). In many cases, something as simple as a lock icon next to a privacy statement can provide a tremendous amount of credibility.



6. Maintain Professional Web Design

Good design, combined with the other elements we've discussed, can do wonders for your credibility! You have roughly five seconds to impress your potential customer, and good design can be that factor that keeps them on the site. Make sure your landing page is legible, clean and easy to navigate.



7. Be Honest

This seems like a no brainer, right? Please make sure that you are treating your customers how you would like to be treated. Don't use gimmicks or shady asterisk exceptions on deals or betray the trust that we've worked so hard to build up. Trust is easy to lose, and almost impossible to gain back.



CALL-TO-ACTION

What makes a button better, and how
can you write the most compelling call-to-action?



What Makes A Good CTA?

Don't Use "Submit" on Your Button

One of the biggest plagues of website buttons is how vague it is. Many of them say "Continue" or "Submit" which only tells you two things: that there is more that you have to do to finish, or you're giving away your information for seemingly nothing. Those don't seem like conversion boosters, do they?

Tell Them What Comes Next

While surprise parties are great, we don't necessarily love being caught off guard on the internet. That's why we don't blindly click on sketchy ads and links. For the best chance at high conversions, use action phrases that tell them what's going to happen, whether it's getting a free guide, an evaluation or a trial.

Make Your Button High Contrast

Some people will tell you that orange buttons always have the highest conversions, but it's not necessarily true if your entire page is orange. Instead of having one go-to color, use the color that contrasts the rest of your landing page. If your page is lighter, make a darker button and so on. Use the color wheel to the right to identify the highest contrasting color, which will always be directly across.





More CTA Tips and Tricks

Always Start With a Verb, and Use the Word “My”

Verbs begin actions, and actions are what we want our potential customers to do! When you pair it with a pronoun like “my” they have no problem picturing how it affects them, and benefiting the consumer is what landing pages are all about. Here are some great verbs you could try using on your CTA Buttons:

Get... My Free Guide, More Information, etc.

Start... My Free 30-Day Trial, My Free Evaluation, etc.

Download... My Free Ebook, My Report, etc.

Grab... My Seat, My Beta Spot, etc.

Special Tip!

Through a lot of tests here at our agency, we have found an easy to implement element that almost always boosts conversions. Add an arrow, or two greater-than signs, to the end of your CTA to suggest action!

[GET MORE CTA HELP >>](#)



THE ICING ON TOP

These are all the little things to make your page shine
(as well as pump up your Conversion Rate, too).





3 More Things That Will Set Your Landing Page Apart

1. Make Everything Digestable

With so much information, we want to be as efficient as possible in consuming and processing it, so when there's too much of it... we feel like we're drinking from the fire hose. Break everything on your landing page into easy to swallow chunks. Use these three methods to break up your copy:

 **Bullet Lists**

 **Infographics**

 **Short Videos**

2. Give Your Elements Breathing Room

We call it white-space, but it describes any emptiness on a landing page. White-space suggests high-class, allows for easy reading, and makes sure that every element is distinguishable from each other. This is easy to implement, because unlike other advertising mediums, you aren't charged by space. So, give all your elements a nice sized personal bubble.

3. Cut Out Anything That You Don't Need

Do you have stock photos that don't really have a purpose? What about statistics that consumers don't care about? Badly written testimonials? If they aren't helping your conversions, then they're probably hurting.



A/B TESTING

Nothing is for certain, and nothing is perfect,
so we've got to keep optimizing.



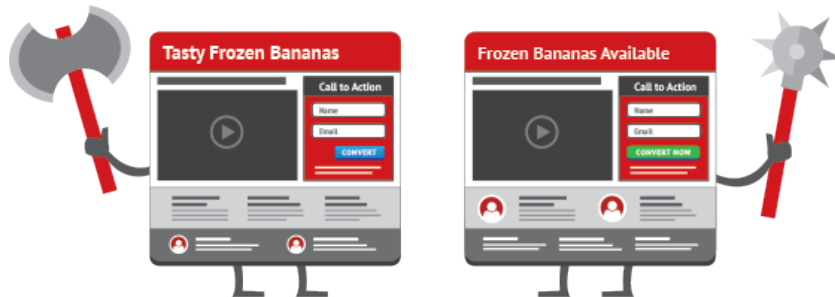
What is A/B Testing?

A/B TESTING IS exactly what it sounds like. You take item “A” and you test it against item “B.” You then gather the data, and you are able to tell who is the victor. In pay-per-click marketing we use A/B testing to optimize our campaigns and make sure that we have all the best performing elements running rather than a bunch of duds. So, what is A/B testing? It’s what makes PPC Marketing less of guesswork and more of a science.

How Does It Work In PPC?

Every A/B testing journey begins with a business goal. Every test after that goal is established is a step towards a better business model.

You have your keywords and ads, you’ve built out your landing page. It seems to be doing okay. Can you do better, though? This is when we start our A/B test! You need to make a second landing page with a small but significant change.



These guys now get to duke it out! You will send traffic to both of them, and once you have substantial data you can declare the winner. What data qualifies each landing page as a winner? Conversion rate! Conversion rate is the percentage of people that visit the page and carry out the action that you defined, which is usually a phone call or filling out a lead-gen form. You now have the means to contact and sell your product or offering to that person? Pretty cool huh?

You want to make sure that your landing page is conversion rate optimized, and while guides like this give you guidelines to do so, things change depending on your offer and your customer base. So, you need to make at least two landing page variants all the time and have them duke it out! Any time spent not testing, is time wasted.

Important to Remember:

Make sure that you don’t change too many things on a variant. If nothing is the same, you don’t know what’s helping or hindering the landing page. The best practice is to change one thing at a time whether that’s the headline, call-to-action, hero shot, etc. By changing one thing at a time, you’ll know exactly what’s causing any change in your conversion rate.

Also, give yourself enough time to test a new landing page. If you have a lot of traffic, then you’ll be able to see a winner fairly quickly, but you should generally wait until you have about 100 conversions to make a decision as to whether it’s working or not.

To Wrap It All Up...

Remember the 5 Necessary Elements of a Landing Page

A clear headline, a well chosen hero shot, benefit driven copy, proof of credibility and an action-packed CTA are all proven ingredients for a well performing landing page. Without them, your conversion rate will truly suffer. Not every solution will work for every business, so from here, you can test and discover exactly what works for your client base. Remember: always be testing something new!

WANT MORE DIRECTION?

For a limited time, we are offering FREE landing page evaluations.

Our Conversion-Rate-Optimization expert will personally critique your landing pages to tell you what you're doing well, how you can possibly improve, and what tools will help you be successful.

[GET MY FREE EVALUATION >>](#)