

Top 100 Website Conversion Tactics!

Presented By Ewen Chia And Brought To You By:



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Introduction

Welcome to 'Top 100 Website Conversion Tactics!'. This book is compiled out of notes and lessons I have collected over the past ten years.

I own and run several of my own companies. I am involved in a total of more than 10 when you take into account those that I am a shareholder or partner in as well as work as a consultant for. Now you might be thinking that all these businesses must bring in vast sums of money.

Nothing could be further from the truth – some bring in thousands of dollars a month, some only hundreds. Many of these businesses were started up for less than one hundred dollars and grown organically.

Why do I work like this – well several years ago a very successful company I owned went broke. We lost staff and ultimately everything – at this point I decided three things:

- Never to rely on just one company or revenue stream for my livelihood.
- Never to owe anyone anything ever again
- Most importantly to optimize the conversion rates of every business to the max – in other words extra profit for the minimum work possible.

What follows are the lessons I have learnt myself, lessons from financially successful people (multi-millionaires) I have been lucky enough to work with and experiences from my consulting work.

The Marketing Funnel

The marketing funnel is, for me at least, the most interesting concept in marketing theory. It is an analogy that compares the marketing process leading up to a sale to a funnel that you might use for baking or in a chemistry experiment. The wide end of the funnel is where you attract your visitors – these potential customers travel down the funnel towards the sales process. As more and more of them drop out, the funnel gets increasingly narrow as it reaches the exit – the point at which a sales transaction has taken place.

After sufficient number of visitors and sales it becomes possible to attribute statistics to various stages – these are called conversion ratios. For instance, the number of people that click on your sponsored search engine advert can be referred to as your click-through rating. A click-through rating is calculated by taking the total number of exposures the advert has and the percentage of those people that click on the advert to find out more.

Click-through rates are only one form of conversion. Another type of conversion metric could be the number of people on your landing page that provide an email and address. Or the number of people that go from the sales page through to the order process. Of course, many people who go through to the order page may drop out or abandon the process – providing yet another conversion metric. Right down the funnel you lose people – this greatly reduces the number of potential sales. By optimizing the funnel at key points you can reduce conversion leaks and greatly increase profits.

Conversion rates are a combination of market specific information, the quality of copy and advertising, the nature of the offer made to the potential purchaser and many smaller factors. The best way to increase these rates is to make the most the advice and experience you can find in sources such as this book – combined with your own judgement and testing you should be able to make significant gains in your profit.

Landing Pages

1. The Headline as Read ...

A lot of people tell you to use a red headline, and certainly there is some basis to that. Overall, red headlines do convert better. However, headline colors go in cycles and blue is picking up at the moment – bizarrely the poorest quality color in terms of human vision. So – why are blue headlines more successful at the moment?

The key thing to understand here is which market you are going after. In my mind, there are two groups – the internet-marketing savvy and the rest of the population. If it's the former then go with the latest color trend – be that blue or whatever. If it's the latter then stick with red – keep the font legible and make it stand out against the background.

2. The Curse Of Eye Candy.

Fancy graphics do two things – they provide eye-candy, and therefore distraction and slow down page loading. If you have ever worked in a design agency or for web developer you will know that one heck of a lot of clients' requests revolve around 'make the logo bigger'.

The key thing here is that customers don't care about your logo – branding only becomes important as you gain repeat custom. To be honest, branding is a really powerful tool for those with mass exposure – for those of us who operate in a niche it can be slow to develop and not cost effective.

With these facts in mind I hope you will drop the header graphics, drop the large logo's and focus on just selling without ego.

3. Use Authority Headlines to Increase Your Bottom Line

"It's a fact: Facts and Quotes Increase your credibility" If you put headlines and sub headings in quotation marks then people see added credibility. Increase your credibility enough and you will make more conversions – it's as simple as that. Even better: use numbers and percentages in your headline and you will greatly increase your impact.

4. Mark Up Your New Profits!

People love marker pens. They use them to highlight important information – its impossible not to find them eye-catching. Your job as a marketer is to herd as many of your audience to the checkout as possible – providing you mark the way clearly with things like highlighting you should lose less of them and increase conversions.

5. Quality Copy = Cash!

People argue about long copy versus short copy yet the most important thing is quality copy – punchy and interesting. It should suit the tone of your market. Many people find writing copy difficult but can't afford a professional. If this is the case then simple start by copying someone in a closely related market who seems to be doing well.

6. The Future of Internet Marketing is...

Its true. The more relevant you make (or make seem) your website and sales pages to your customer, the better they will feel. A customer's name is one important piece of information you should always get – then why not display it on the screen?

Try and tailor offers to your customers during the sales process. Why not flash up something like 'John: Act Now And Save 10%'. This might not work too well with the internet marketing crowd but with the general public you can see phenomenal results.

7. Hyper links – Destroying Sales.

If you had the choice between a map or satellite navigation on a journey – which would you prefer. Or, more appropriately – which would your customers prefer. The sad thing is that most websites don't even provide a map – just an array of confusing sign posts. The popularity of sat nav is largely due to the fact it reduces your choices – tells you what you do, for any given destination.

Once a use has decided to come to your site, you need to make it as easy as possible for them to get to the benefits of your products and then onto your sales. This path must be the shortest. Other hyperlinks will only distract and reduce conversions. If you must keep your extra links – ensure that they are not visible unless they return to special page or the home page.

Every hyperlink you have – be it in the body or the header or footer that doesn't progress traffic towards a completed sale is a potential leak in your sales funnel – cut them off now!

8. Objective #1 is The Only Objective

Going along with the theme of reducing the number of leaks once a visitor enters the marketing funnel – the importance of one message is paramount. No matter how much traffic you have nor how much you think you can afford to spend capturing a customer there is one rule that is the same for almost all business regardless of size or success: you have one chance to get a customers interest before they bounce.

To this end you should really consider how important conflicting or unnecessary content on your website such as 'about us' pages really are.

9. Short and Sweet Regardless.

Keep your paragraphs down to a few lines. Only say what is necessary. You not selling a novel – your audience are not reading for pleasure, they are making purchasing decision. Once you realise that they are only making a purchase decision then the role of your website becomes clear - to convince the potential purchaser that your product is the right product.

You need to focus on benefits – and you can only pick a few – so make sure they are the hardest hitting ones. Consider this: with each sentence you are either making them more confident about buying or less confident. Short copy which is poor may outperform long copy when the writing is so bad as to put people off – in other words – shorter copy might do less damage !

Therefore, you want each paragraph to aim at one goal – making the potential customer more confident. Anything that doesn't fulfil this aim should be ditched.

10. Size Matters – Why ?

Longer copy does seem to convert better than short copy – but it still needs to be quality copy – there are no two ways around that. Individually, each paragraph should focus on one benefit and you should maximise the use of white-space, headings, block quotes / pull quotes and bullet points.

11. The Hidden Danger in Testimonials

Testimonials are only useful IF your visitor wants to see them. For many people, particularly in the general public group, testimonials can make them nervous. Most likely they would never consider giving a testimonial let alone a photograph so the logic goes, why would anyone else ? If your landing page does feature photographs then it might be wise to test without them.

So, you have gotten rid of the photographs, but what about the testimonials themselves? I would recommend putting them near the bottom – testimonials are not going to convince the majority of markets to buy and putting them at the top is waste valuable of real estate. Prioritise your space – realise that many customers want to hear about how the product will help them, not how it helped someone else – unless it is a brief story.

I use a combination of pull quotes and testimonials during the e-commerce process to keep confidence high and reduce abandonment of shopping baskets – for me at least, landing pages are too precious for testimonials.

12. You Are NOT Your Audience

Many people design for themselves and write copy for themselves – but remember there are three basic types in marketing. Yourself, the marketer – someone who thinks he understands the market but probably doesn't. This is true of even the most seasoned

writer. The second group are internet marketers, they are used to dealing with internet marketers day in and out and such get approached with some very hard sell tactics. What doesn't work well on these people could be as addictive as crack / cocaine to the third group...

Joe public. He gets advertised to a lot in a very soft way. If you can make a reasonable effort to write decent copy for a product or service he has been looking for on the internet than you have quite a good chance of a sale.

13. *It's Blue!*

I'm referring to hyperlinks of course. They are blue for a reason – and the only thing you need to know is that people are used to them. Some of you may argue that your stylish slightly grayed are better but all I can say is instinctively people are better with blue even if they respond to other colors as well.

Let me put it this way – people may respond to your current sales copy but that doesn't mean it will perform as well as copy written by a professional. Hyperlinks are the same – other colors work – but some will always outperform. Do yourself a favour, keep it simple, stick to blue.

14. *Never Waste Your Time Again.*

Its all very well creating some super duper product – I have done that before without doing market research. The problem is, quite often your get low, or even worse, no sales from it. Here is my tip: increase conversion rates by only creating products people are interested in. You can test a product idea quite cheaply by running an Adwords advert for a couple of days using your potential new products keywords.

If you have the money, put a subscriber list on the page that the advert leads to – ask a few a questions of the visitor as well – using a form and pop that into a database, and offer them a free e-book for completing both steps. After a few days you should have enough responses to see if the idea is worth pursuing.

If you don't want to do stuff with questions and databases or autoresponders, then just put Google Analytics on. Combined with Adwords click through data you should still have quite a lot to go on.

15. *Profit in Loss Perspectives*

I always suggest marketing with a loss perspective in mind in all your copy, but focus on presenting opportunities as your message. In other words, something like :

'Bar owners are losing out to more interactive mediums such as the internet and pay per view television. They are losing customers left right and centre. YOU could be losing left right and centre. Yet there are lots of solutions for the modern, up-to-date bar owner – such as SM S text to screen systems, and what is even better is that with Text-Vibe you can get your first month free using the exclusive code on page 2'

Here I focused on general loss in the industry – then suggested that the reader may also be losing out. However, if they possess some of the sort of traits that many would aspire to then there is hope. After I have given hope I go into specifics and then deliver the opportunity – a discount code.

16. Give the Gift...

Offer your customers a gift, the gift of valuable content. So many sales letters are nothing but rubbish. Why not give your customers some relevant details and ideas relating to your product. Knowledge costs you very little – but to the customer there is huge added value.

Gain marketing information from potential signups by offering free resource guides related to your product as well as short reports and ebooks. This will gain trust and trust equals authority and as well all know increased authority and trust result in better conversion rates.

17. Get Down To The Bone

By this I mean, what are your customers really after. You, the reader, are a customer of mine. Presumably you after sales. More than likely you are after increased sales from the same traffic – so that should be my focus in marketing it to you – the power of more efficient selling – letting you make more money with almost the same effort as before.

18. Ask the Customer for More! MUCH more!

There is a simple phenomena, known in psychological circles that say that people are much more likely to agree to a request they would normally deny, if you ask for something much bigger initially. So, why not try and sell your customers a much bigger package first, an then introduce your normally priced product – it will seem like a much better deal and you will get more signups.

19. Benefits Mean You Benefit

Benefits come from features. Customers want what they will get from the benefits of your products, never forget that. Try and get the benefits of your product into the headline. In the opinion of some internet marketers, if you don't get at least three benefits into the first five lines you are more than likely going to lose the sale.

20. Contrast, Contrast, Contrast: Secrets Of Page Design

There is an interesting pattern in internet marketing that I have seen time and time again. Some ugly sites convert far better than their prettier competitors! Why is that? Well, it could be for a number of reasons – one might be that people trust ugly sites more because

they feel that the owner has put more focus into their product.

Whilst this might be true, I can't help but feel that much of the success of certain 'ugly' landing pages comes from a more basic property that they possess – one which some eye candy sites possess as well, although far fewer. The property is contrast – the human visual system is based on contrast far more than color – we are most sensitive to changes in brightness, not hue. As such, those sites that have strong, even ugly contrasts between elements tend to do the best.

As always, the golden rule in increasing conversions is – people don't usually know what they prefer but they do have instinctual biases. For instance, people may deride ugly long sales letter, yet they exist because they do convert better than the more immediately obvious preferred choice of a graphic designer type of website.

By all means try and get the best of both worlds – keep high contrast between elements but retain good style and composition.

E-Commerce Process

1. Is Paypal Harming Your Conversions?

The sad fact is, that for people who are not very internet savvy, Paypal can harm your transactions. I once had a rather extended telephone conversation with a woman who was trying to pay for one of my business services over the internet. At the time we only took Paypal. I had informed her by email that she needed a Paypal account. This person proceeded to enter their email into the sign in box of the Paypal website and presumed that created a Paypal account.

The above story is true and quite sad – if your customers are not involved with E-Commerce themselves, web savvy or at least E-Bay savvy then Paypal alone may cost you customer's . Don't get me wrong, I love Paypal but with some market segments more is needed to get the conversions you deserve.

1. If You Don't Have Paypal You are Losing Profit!

Considering what I have just said above you should also understand that Paypal is always a positive move – as long as you always consider getting other forms of payment as you business grows. Paypal can has a reassuring effect on people who's greatest experience of e-commerce is Ebay. For them, Paypal is sign of security and may in fact be the only form of payment they have ever used online!

Secondly, Paypal deserves an award for enabling almost anyone to be able to take payments, and as such start an online business.

2. The Profit Secrets Of The Restaurant Trade: Used Online

If there is one other Golden Rule to online business it is this: real world business have struggled for hundreds of years to learn the secrets of selling. Converting is the real point of any business, along with providing a valuable service or product. Any business that cannot convert a potential customers into one or more sales is ultimately doomed. There are many lessons that I can give you from real world business experience – but I feel the restaurant trade is fantastic place to begin.

Restaurants have menus. Consider a menu and the customer's table and chairs as a landing page. The restaurant's reputation and décor is the advertisement, and foot traffic outside is the potential market. So, in terms of our internet analogy, the menu must keep people sufficiently interested and sat at their table (your website) until a purchase is made.

What can we learn from a restaurant menu. A lot. The products is offers are rotated more often than not, rather than increasing the choice on the menu. A few favourites are kept on, but the rest are rotated – providing both split testing and reduced choice.

Once a customer has made a decision to enter (read your sales letter) your restaurant a commitment has been made – your job is to make purchasing decisions as easy as possible whilst make leaving the table as unappealing as possible.

So, to increase conversions, reduce choice on the menu or you will lose sales and give the potential customers free bread sticks to make them feel guilty about not purchasing your product.

3. Please: Get Secure

Get yourself an SSL certificate – a lot of internet users look for padlocks and other symbols displayed by browsers on HTTPS sites to reassure them about web security. Shared SSL certificates are cheap – you really have little reason not to get one.

Whilst you are at it, try and get a few security and validation seals. Consider Hacker Safe, Verisign or any number of other security seals. For a limited time only, you can get a Valid Seal, daily updated seal for free using this code which is exclusive to purchasers of this e-book:

PASSION

So, go to www.validseal.com, signup with the code PASSION , complete the process and get a free certificate. You won't even have to enter any payment details as other so called 'free-offers' do.

4. Take The Call: Get Hidden Profit.

Do you have any idea how many people do not make a purchase because contact details are not displayed ? I have no concrete figures but I suspect you could at least double your conversion rate if you are strongly lacking contact details.

First of all provide a named email address. Don't just give info@textvibe.co.uk, give james@textvibe.co.uk. Provide a telephone number with a name – such as call Chris in Text Vibe technical support. Give a mailing address and avoid post box addresses. 90% of people will never contact you – customers reluctance to phone you can be staggering – but they need to know that should they ever need to they can contact you.

Don't lose sales to anonymity for fear of being swamped with enquiries- it hardly ever happens.

5. Deadly Discounts Can Rob Your Pocket!

So, you provide a play to enter a discount code in your e-commerce process? Bad move. Remember the analogy of the restaurant I gave earlier ? What restaurant owner would say to his customer before they have paid – do you have a restaurant discount code ! Why ? The answer is simple – the customer would want to go searching for one of these codes on the street (the web) and what do you think the chances are that they come back ?

Definitely not as good if they has stayed sat down.

By the time someone gets to the payment section it is not a good idea to provide distractions outside your website – no real world business owner would do that – so why do you?

6. Coupon Codes – Increase Advertising & Conversions!

Real world business's try and avoid discount codes, instead they use a different model. If we consider the prevailing internet model of discount codes being business instigated (eg – we alert them to a possible discount which they must locate) then most business in the real world, and internet ones such as Amazon and iTunes provide vouchers and cards which contain discount codes.

Customer's realise that they need an Amazon code or an iTunes discount and the code is processed earlier in the e-commerce process to reduce conversion loss. People generally don't search for Amazon or iTunes codes, they know that when Amazon or Apple want to give out a discount they will promote it – as a source of extra advertising.

Coupon and Discount codes without clear sources, presented too late in the day are like too many options in purchasing – they introduce the element of distraction – causing conversion loss.

7. Data Mining Can Mean Throwing Money Away!

Any process which takes time and does not further illustrate the benefits of a consumer is increasing the chance of bouncing. Bouncers are potential customers that abandon the payment or purchasing process. Usually, this is due to a few key danger areas – distraction, lack of conviction and uncertainty. If you give customers the opportunity not to focus on the benefits of your product you are inviting them to let their attention, plus their money, move on.

Only datamine the basics, like name and email – the more you can pull out from non-invasive data mining the better. When you need some information for marketing purposes make it as easy for people to answer as possible: for instance, don't ask someone to enter the day month and year of their birth unless you have to, instead let them pick from a few different age groups.

8. Forewarning: How 75%+ Of You Make This Mistake!

One thing that continually frustrates me when buying things off the web is the amount of webshops who do not tell me how many steps there are in the payment process, what the next step is and where I am currently at. Do me and your customers a favour, give each page a clear title and mark it number x out of total steps. Otherwise, people like myself have been known to just abandon the process.

9. Do You Just Not Want Money?

Once you have made a sales, offer a substantial and unique discount on one of your products that they didn't buy . For instance if I sell widgets – once someone's payment has been confirmed for 4 blue widgets I offer them a 30% discount on 4 red widgets if they buy them there and then.

10. Affiliates – Spread Your Risk.

Try to gain as many alternative routes to market as you can. The more affiliates and other sales opportunities you have the better. A multi-millionaire I know that sells lightbulbs of all things has told me that the secret of his success has always been to establish three power affiliates – there are the real engine behind his sales, not his own sales effort!

11. The Untapped Profits In Bouncers

In the real world bouncers stop people entering an establishment. In online commerce, bouncers are people who eject themselves from your sales process. I prefer to call people who jump out of payment processes as abandoners but those who reject your copy are well and truly bouncers as they never got close to purchasing a drink from the bar.

These people are potentially your greatest resource – when they try and leave your sales page, ask them a few questions, using a form, about why they didn't make a purchase. Datamine any information you can get, but don't make the process too long and offer them a free ebook on your niche area plus a substantial discount on your products in return for them completing the questionnaire!

12. Ask Questions & Increase Conversions

Put your site up for review to a group of other internet marketers such as those on www.warriorforum.com. See what they have to say – and stay in touch. Then every few months, stay in touch with a few of them and ask them to review your site candidly, offer to do the same. The comments you get, particularly from detractors will be some of the best advice you ever get.

Try not to dismiss what they say, and understand that if more than two people say something it is gold dust and you should act on it straight away.

13. Why Looking at Your Watch Can Save You Serious Cash

Different types of product and service sell better at different times of the day. Don't waste your money in the early days of your business trying to compete 24/7, instead save your advertising budget up and use it all at key times of day and you will make far more significant gains.

14. Are You A Global Profit Maker ?

Did you know that you can often work out where someone is geographically by their IP address. Why not display a small Canadian flag for Canadian visitors, a Union Jack for British visitors etc. This really works!

15. The Power Of Second Chances.

If a customer's transaction fails, don't automatically assume they are a fraudster, offer them an alternative way to pay and be nice about the fact that the transaction didn't clear in your on-screen text.

16. Reference Codes Matter.

Always clearly display a reference code to customer's for both a shopping basket and a sales transaction. Letting customer's know that they always have a way to refer to their activities boosts confidence and therefore conversions. The anonymity of the internet is a big fear for a lot of potential purchasers – do all you can to reduce it.

17. Quick Accounts = Higher Conversions!

If there is one thing I hate it is being forced to create an account and answer several pages of questions before I can use a shopping basket or place an order. Don't ever force people to create a user I.D. To create a shopping basket unless you absolutely have to.

Take the minimum amount of detail at the time of purchase and then provide a username entry box during the process. Make it clear that this is their unique account user names that can be used to speed up processing for future orders and let them check the progress of current orders.

18. Fly Your Flag With Pride!

Make it abundantly clear you believe you are the best widget seller this side of the Mississippi. If you don't your competition will. Display any awards and seals you have on the side and bottom of your page.

19. Deliver It. Get More Sales.

One thing that really annoys me is when I pay for something and I am not informed if I will receive an email with an attachment or I will be sent a download link, if I will receive the product in a few minutes or a few hours. Yes, you may have got that purchase out of me but you are unlikely to get others.

20. *Check it Out.*

If you sell anything more than a few dollars then you really should accept checks. Apart from lazyness due to the fact you have to walk down to the bank there is no good reason to turn down money. Shout it out from the rooftops that you take checks – just make it clear that processing takes a week or so. Most people will still pay online but they will see you as more professional which is always a conversion winner!

Psychology

1. The Profit Potential Of Randomness

Do you know what the price point of your product is ? You might answer yes but in actual fact only your market knows – products are only ever worth as much as the customer is willing to pay. When you decide on a price point you potentially rob yourself of extra money every sale or reduce the number of sales you might have had.

For the first few days change the price of your product – yes a few people may complain and ask for refund but they will be few and far between and after a few days of random pricing you should be easily able to identify a key price point.

2. The Power Of Three

The human brain has difficulty in dealing with groups much larger than three. Once you go over three of something it will tend to categorise due to other criteria. For instance, you may see seven fishing boats on the sea, but your brain will break the group into three based upon other criteria such as motion or color.

The point is that the brain can obviously deal with more than three things at once, but it can only do this by assigning objects into groups. Once you focus on one particular group, it will break that group down again into smaller groups until you arrive at the individual elements.

With that in mind, always try to assist the mind with creating groups – the ultimate goal being that the brain sees three blocks – e.g. background image, sales blurb, testimonials. There are many ways to make the individual elements of the page – try and keep sales blurb close to together and headings of distinct and unique color.

The easier you can make it for your brain to create an eyeplot of your page the less friction will be created and the more likely the customer is to reach the purchasing process.

3. Why Prove Yourself?

Seem confident, display your awards but never seem desperate for a sale – never try and prove yourself 100% to a customer- instead give the customer enough to intrigue them and make the purchasing decision but no more than that. Psychology ensures that we are more likely to reject someone who displays unqualified desperation to get our custom. We should feel like they want it, are willing to go some way to get it, but do not need it. In other words, only ever just prove yourself to a customer and no more – otherwise they lose respect.

4. Alienation – Saving Time and Money!

Quickly alienate potential low-worth and no-worth customers along with negative

customer's and time wasters. I have often seen that low-price high value business's have a significantly higher ratio of low value time wasters who will quite happily mess you about and are unlikely to purchase. Those who do purchase prove more trouble than they are worth.

You must do all you can to ward off these kind of people quickly. Refund them fast and without an argument – remain professional and then refuse to enter into further correspondence.

5. Why You MUST be Prejudiced!

We are all acutely aware of the fact that we must not offend other people on the basis of difference from ourselves. Yet we should not abandon prejudice in the marketplace. Prejudice is what helps us to choose one product over another and you should never be frightened of highlighting one product's failings versus your own.

Unless you can create a justified prejudice in favour of your product then your market is at the mercy of any competitor who chooses to denigrate your product.

6. Questions – Lots of Questions.

When writing sales copy I feel that it is important to ask lots of rhetorical questions such as 'do you really want to keep working 9-5?', 'what kind of person would pass up on this opportunity?'. Try and get your reader to qualify themselves as fitting the high standards a purchaser of your product would possess, highlight the negative character failings of those that would pass up on the offer.

7. One-on-One: Happier Transactions.

Try and write copy as if you were writing to a friend. The more one on one you can make the copy, the higher your conversions will be – the secret to winning at internet marketing is to neutralise its biggest drawback, the sense of anonymity and impersonal touch that the web has.

8. The Wealth Power of Restriction.

Restrict your offer – only available today at this price, only x many copies available. Taken off the market in two weeks. The less urgent you make your invitation to purchase the more people like myself procrastinate.

There have been many times I have kicked myself for not taking up a time limited offer because I thought I had more time! Now I blame the marketers – help your potential customer to come to the right decision for both of you there and then, there will be plenty of other distractions to take their money and attention once they leave your page!

9. What Are They Really Worth ?

The goal of business is to make as much profit as possible with as little effort as possible. This is known as efficiency and it results in higher profit margins. Do you know how many times a customer will purchase from you a year. In other words, what is the true worth of a customer in the long term and considering the real worth of a customer, just how much further can you afford to go in gaining that all important first sale.

In some industries they make a loss initially on the first sale to have a reasonable chance of gaining your long term value. Computer game consoles such as the Playstation operate on this principle.

10. Your Back Yard Costs You.

Always consider your neighbourhood – if your business is surrounded by scam artists, you have both an opportunity and potential threat. You must differentiate yourselves from them and this will take extra effort to prove but potentially you can also gain a significant proportion of their dissatisfied customers.

11. Why Does The Buyer Need You?

If you can't answer this fast, then you are in trouble and need to get to know your market better. Hint – it isn't the product that you are selling.

12. One Message Is All You Can Afford!

No matter how rich the company and how much they can afford to spend winning a customer you generally only get one shot at them. If you miss they are unlikely to want to come around your place of business again. How many people take themselves back to be convinced by you when they rejected you the first time.

As such you must always choose just one message to shout loudly to your market place. As is the case in war time, a focussed smaller unit has a good chance of routing a bigger force who are trying to defend numerous positions. Your customer is unfocused, you are not – stay on message and use the power of that single point to win the sales. Try and fight the battle on two many points and you will lose the war.

13. Fact Based Marketing Versus Value Based.

What type of customers make up the majority of your market ? Fact based? Or value based? A fact based person may purchase your widget because it provides a three times speed increase over the competition. A value based person may be more impressed with you selling the possibilities of that speed increase rather than hard facts.

A value based person will be more aspirational whereas a fact based person will be more interested in direct comparisons. Use the wrong strategy with the wrong market segment and you will be up against a brick wall.

14. Walk Through The Plane.

When you board a plane and you are in economy seating you are forced to walk through the business class and premium class sections. You get to see how much more comfortable they are, the high tech entertainment gadgets and seats, the increased legroom and the improved service. Let's be honest, it makes you want to travel in first class next time you fly doesn't it?

So, offer your standard package with or without extras. Advertise the expensive package earlier in the copy, walk them through the benefits and only then advertise the cheaper package, If you have genuinely got their interest they will keep reading.

15. Do What Others Do.. Copy Writing.

If you are new to selling on-line and you can't afford a professional copywriter then take a leaf out of the concept of NLP – neuro-linguistic programming and model yourself on someone more successful. Or, to put it bluntly, make your copy very similar to the person who is already selling. Analyse the marketplace, see the general style and layout. It is better to start on an almost level footing than to go your own way initially and have no idea how your competitors copy performs.

16. A Place Called Same.

Lets consider two place. One is called The Same. Companies here offer a predictable product and price and there is little to differentiate them. Different is full of companies all doing their own thing, and whilst their products are exciting and prices unpredictable there is too much confusion to really get that may conversions.

What you should do is place your stall somewhere between The Same and Different. I would recommend being the same on price but different on features or vice versa. Make yourself similar enough to generate some familiarity but different enough to attract people to you.

17. Soft and Smiling.

Soft selling works much better than hard selling with most non-marketing savvy markets. The web equivalent of a friendly smile will go a long way – try at all times to appear friendly and personable - consumers are rarely drawn to a corporate image yet so many online business's aspire to such a perception!

18. Reciprocate And Grow Rich.

Give something to your potential customer's and social convention will give you a much better chance of making the sale as they feel compelled to return you generosity. Give them a simple e-book type gift for completing a questionnaire or reading to the bottom of your copy or entering the e-commerce process.

19. 'Credit Your Authority'

Quote yourself in copy, quote others – the more valuable the source the more important it is that you state where it is from. Even though there may be no relationship or connection between you and the person you quoted – the simple association of quoting your authority increases your credibility in customer's eyes.

20. 'Don't Push Your Brand'

Many experts will tell you that you should include your brand name in advertising copy – that is all well and good if your advertising is substantial but if it is short and text based then you simply don't have space! Even if you have plenty of advertising space I would suggest not making your brand a priority. People don't buy from small companies because of their great brand – they buy because they need a problem solving and a balance of value and service.

Large corporations need to push brands and brand recognition to give their huge advertising campaigns focus – I firmly believe that brands are far less important to small and medium sized businesses.

Advertising

1. Chewing the Scenery.

Are you shouting too loudly, are you bringing attention to a performance that you are putting on for customers. Keep your adverts focussed, the copy to the point, let them know the benefits – never write a word more than is necessary – it could cost you a sale!

1. Transferring Skills: Increasing Sales.

Adwords adverts are short, but they are enough to do the job. If people are looking for your product and service then your advert doesn't need to describe it in detail, only entice enough to get the quarry to proceed to the next phase of the sales process.

2. WWWho ?

Should you have the 'www' part of your address in your Adwords URL? For the most part I would say yes, unless you have a very savvy market or a very long URL. Most people are used to seeing 'www' and without it they may become unsure.

3. The .Com Con?

The fact is that .Com is a very popular top level domain extension but consider the impact you can have if you use local extensions in local markets. If I live in Canada and want a product fast, my instinct is to go for a .Ca displaying URL in the sponsored section of a Google page. The sad thing is that there are no hard and fast rules here – only split testing your click through ratings will give you the answer here. By split test, I mean try one advert variation with a '.com' url and one with a local TLD and see which performs best.

4. Get the Best Seat in the House!

The last time you went to see a film at the theatre, where did you sit ? I bet it wasn't right at the front was it. Yet many people pursue the top spot of Google sponsored links like their business depended on it when in actual fact the increased cost of such a spot can often wipe out any potential sales gains.

Remember, Adwords should be about making the most profit from your advertising budget, not pursuing the top spot at all costs.

5. Capitalise on it

When writing adverts but particularly Adwords ones you should always make sure to make the most of capitalization. For instance, instead of writing www.mywebpace.com why not put www.MyWebSpace.com – it is much more eye-catching. That is really the key – good words and an eye-catching advert that stands out from the competition.

6. Don't Be Too Correct If You Want To Stay In Business

This trick is one I love to role out – it doesn't work for ever and it easily burns out but it is a great way to get an early head start and provide a quick cash injection to boost your Adwords budget. The trick is quite simple – make simple mistakes such as transposition of letters and capitalization. So, instead of writing 'Great New Widget' try something like 'GreaT New Widget' or 'great New Widget'. Try and keep your keywords spelt correctly otherwise they won't appear in bold. With other words try transposition – 'Great New Widget – On Sela Now'.

Trust me it works, I've split test it and in most (not all obviously) markets it gives you a temporary boost in CTR (click through ratings).

7. Explain Away. Sell Today.

By this, I mean explain AWAY any customer concerns that may become obstacles to achieving sales. Your hardest task is going to be identifying the key obstacle Your aim is to reduce friction (anything that makes a sale more difficult).

In advertising copy you can't say everything so decide if refunds, cost, or performance are going is going to be the primary point of friction that you explain away.

8. Monitoring is Where Market Battles Are Won And Lost.

Monitor the performance of your adverts, create one variation of your advert and no more. More variations can greatly increase the time you need to get significant results. Monitor the advert variations click-through rates – give it 100 more clicks at least, if you can, if there is a clear difference delete the old advert and repeat the process. If there is not a significant difference, delete the new advert and repeat the process.

If you don't split-test your adverts and monitor and act upon the results we are losing vast amounts of traffic through an early stage of our tunnel. An improvement here will have a geometric effect by the end of the marketing funnel.

9. Competition Is Not Your Real Challenge !

Bad advertising and marketing is the real threat to your business, not the competition. If you focus on competing with them you will, at best, end up optimizing the final stages of your marketing funnel. By optimizing all points of the tunnel you can can get vastly higher conversions.

So, instead of focussing on what your competitor's latest offer is, why not try and improve your advertising results – until you get customer's here new products and special offers mean little.

10. Go Low.

If your budget is low or you are new to market try not to worry about your Adwords advert position, simply go for the bottom position. This will keep your costs low and allow you to do a significant amount of split testing optimizations. Use this as a low-cost testing ground to prepare you for the next step...

11. Bump It Up.

Once I have observed the market for a bit, and understand my competitor's marketing strategy's and I have optimized my ad copy as much as possible for the area I am in I bump up my budget and click through rate for a few days. This can often result in you radically increasing your conversions from the advert – then keep testing – the race is on to drastically improve your adverts relevance. If you can get to the stage where you have significantly increased your CTR then you should slowly start backing off on your cost-per-click amount -hopefully you will maintain your place in the sponsored adverts or at best lose only a few places.

12. Don't Delete – Pause For A While.

When you split-test an advert you will end up disposing of one of the variants. I recommend not deleting the advert initially but pausing it. This way it remains in your mind and hopefully you will not make the same mistakes again. I have deleted adverts before only to waste my time by split-testing these old ideas again and then having to delete the redundant idea again.

13. Keyword = Micro Niche = Wealth

If you are to really do well in advertising then you need a unique advert that targets each niche in your market. Yes, I said niche because I believe that different keywords are really slightly different micro sub-niches to your business category. If you want an easy way to increase conversions, break your keywords down into their own groups and then create variations of your core advert for each of these groups.

14. Two Accounts Of A Risky Strategy

Some people suggest having two accounts – this can be sticky as far as Google is concerned. The idea is that you use one group to test your keywords and advert variations and once you feel you can't optimise them any more you move them over to the other group. This has the result of boosting your CTR and therefore your relevancy is improved allowing you to spend less for the same position.

15. Analyse Your Visitor's Keywords

When people come through Google to your advert they arrive there by using particular search terms. Often they may use more terms than you advertise on. For instance you

may have adverts that are triggered by the following keywords 'dairy ice cream'. Yet, if you look at Google Analytics you may find that many of your potential customers are searching for 'dairy ice cream with chocolate bits'. In other words, by examining the actual keywords your customers use you can identify hidden needs and change your advertising copy and products to address these new needs. This is one of the best methods I have ever found for increasing conversions.

16. Tailor Tailor Tailor

If you don't tailor your adverts continually and identify hidden needs there is no doubt that some point someone will see this vulnerability and enter your market. You must accept that your market will change as new people enter the market and customer's needs change. To keep ahead in advertising, maintain conversions and improve the efficiency of your funnel you must be prepared to constantly tweak and change your adverts.

If your advert stays the same for a significant amount of time you are almost certain to see a slow but steady terminal decline in your conversion rates. I would suggest setting one hour per week aside to modify your adverts once you have reached a point where you can't make significant improvements.

17. Is All What It Seems ?

I have tried to enter some markets where it has become painfully obvious that I misjudged the competition and Adwords competition quite badly. I was spending hundreds of dollars a day and getting a 7% CTR – I assumed that I would soon be making conversions in purchasing and getting sales.

How wrong I was! I assumed that every other advertiser was playing on a level playing field and getting \$40 commission per sales. Nothing could be further from the truth – all of the Google Adwords adverts were in fact run by the maker of the product! I assumed I was working against other affiliates – but in fact I was working against the producer of the same product I was trying to sell.

Once I realise this I went back to my conversion predictions and realise the \$40 they offered was roughly what it would cost me to a customer for them – in other words they still profited but the best I could hope for was to break even !

18. If They Can....

Now, assuming that you keep my warning mentioned above in mind there is one rule you should remember above all else. If a niche already has Google advertising then it is pretty likely that it is possible to make a profit in the market. Considering this, if you only do what your competitors do then you are likely to make a profit. When entering a market you should first try and observe any trends and sudden trends.

Your next port of call should be to clone your most successful competitor and then improve upon their results NOT start from scratch and optimize your own early attempts.

19. Be Specific

It's a simple lesson but always try and include your keywords in Adwords in braces [] - this ensures a 100% match. If this isn't good enough then use the phrase option – quotation marks – this ensures a reasonable match. Keywords entered without one of these two options are going to be open to much more competition and significant proportion of the traffic you attract will be irrelevant.

20. Your War Chest

View your advertising budget as a war chest – it is finite and you should not keep funding a losing battle. Have a cutoff point where you look for certain criteria, such as the click through rating, number of sales or some other metric to measure your success by. If the campaign doesn't pass the test then end it.

I truly believe that you can be as good as any marketer out there with sufficient practise but there is little point in trying to defeat a giant when you don't have the experience. Simply leave the market and go somewhere a little less competitive – then when you have conquered that market make a return to your previous adventure.

Traffic & Miscellaneous Advice

1. Accept to Start Small...

If you want to get traffic, you need to accept that it will start of as a trickle. Try not to worry about this, instead identify how you are going to quickly scale this traffic. You need a plan and I would suggest that you consider concepts such as social bookmarking, networking and link exchanges to get increased traffic.

2. Buying Traffic.

There are many ways you can provide a quick boost of traffic to your site – Adwords is an easy way to get traffic but there are more cost effective ways – consider forum banners, forum signatures, Yahoo and Microsoft portals, competitions, blogs, free articles and viral marketing. These methods are too complex to describe indepth here but increasing your traffic is one of the quickest and bluntest way to increase conversions.

3. Randomise The Destination.

Have two versions of your front page and switch between them at random – you can do this by having two identical Google Adverts that are randomly rotated but have different destination URLs. This means that you can split-test the whole funnel and see if traffic from different places and at different times is more suited to one type of copy versus another.

4. Location, Location, Location.

Going back to my analogy of a restaurant – footfall is dependant on location. Some markets have high traffic, some low traffic, however, if you can improve your virtual neighbourhood by associating yourself with related business and advertise to customers looking for similar and related products you can punch way above your weight in terms of expected traffic.

5. Dark Alleys – Why They Lose You Business !

One of the most disheartening aspects of getting traffic it to be surrounded by con-artists and unsuitable subjects. If people are bombarded with porn adverts and sleazy site when they are looking for your websites they will leave the area just as people would leave an unsavoury street when looking for a restaurant.

6. Social Bookmarking – the Long Game.

If you don't mind putting in the effort, then in the long term, social bookmarking and networking, using site such as StumbleUpon, FaceBook, Technorati and even Facebook

you can get traffic at far lower costs than using Adwords. What you must realise is that it could takes months to build up to a significant level.

7. Adwords – the Short Game.

Adwords is a great way to play a short game and get a quick traffic boost. What is really helpful is if you can use this initial traffic to promote your website rather than continue with Adwords.

8. Are You A Google Chump?

You should fully consider Yahoo Search Marketing and Microsoft AdCenter . They provide less traffic but the competition is so much lower you may actually end up with much better conversion rates!

9. The Secret Of Specialist Stores.

Specialist retail stores survive because people are prepare to go further – the more specialised your website is the more likley it is that customers will seek you out. The more generic you are the more you expose yourself to far more competition and the more you have to fight for traffic.

10. Opportunity – ‘Traffic Congestion’ & The Internet

You probably think that I’m talking about sluggish websites and that sort of thing. Too many big graphics and heavy Flash usage. I’m actually talking about another concept – the fact that when people get stuck in a traffic jam – they are often outside somewhere that they don’t want to be.

This applies on the internet too, and it can be both a blessing and a curse. For instance, if you have a gardening website, you may get traffic from people who are actually looking to buy a gardening fork. These people are essentially congestion – they are looking for something else but have to travel through your website searching in vain for what you don’t have The key to making revenue from them is this: unlike like the real world, they don’t have to get out of their cars to come into your shop.

You should do everything you can to cater to the non- obvious needs of passing-by visitors. Figuring out what they want will be a large hurdle – but if you can do this then you will gain access to a significant proportion of extra revenue outside your current conversion area. Realistically, you may struggle to double your current conversion rate at point of purchase, but growth in selling other products to non-converters can provide you with a great way to grow fast!

11. SEO Can Blind You To The Real Riches.

If you think optimizing traffic for a set of search terms is the most effective way to get customers then you are making a big mistake. When a famous soft drinks company sells their flagship product do you think that they market to only those people who are looking to buy a soft drink at that time ? No ! Of course not, they know they have to do very little to get the business of people looking to buy their product.

The real challenge and opportunity for growth and extra revenue comes from those that can be persuaded. I can't give you any quick and easy answers about how this can be done – all I can say is that you need to focus on what your visitors are after, not just what your paying customers want. Whenever you have a conversion rate, consider just why the vast majority of people didn't convert to paying customers: some of them simply must have been after something that is a little different from what you offer.

12. The Underhand Way To Get Backlinks.

This is quite wrong, morally speaking, but if you have the time start your website as a site that is community focuses. Offer free information to your visitors, maybe even free services, and then start exchanging backlinks with other people in similar fields to yourself.

Then, once your Page Rank has got high enough, and you have a substantial amount of backlinks, you can begin changing the site towards your original business idea. It isn't a nice way to get links and natural search advantage but I have seen many companies do this.

13. Back links need a .directory!

Many people worry about their site bleeding Page Rank when they exchange links with others. One particularly nasty business I had the dubious pleasure of knowing had come up with a rather surprising solution to this so called worry.

I don't worry about this issue myself and would advise you do the same but for the sake of completeness I would like to present it to you. Basically, when you swap links you tell the other person they will have a link on www.mywebsite.com – and you do this. The key is to only do this for a while and then switch their link to a subdomain – eg. directory.mywebsite.com.

Due to the way that Google treats sub-directories you will lose a lot less of your Google kudos whilst still benefitting from the back-links you generated from your exchange program. The people who link to you are not too likely to figure out what is going on.

14. Poor Hosts

Sometimes when I do consulting work I manage peoples Adwords and Analytics accounts and it always shocks me that a significant number of page visits are to the error pages. The amount of customers lost on 404 pages is terrible and I have seen figures varying

between 3 % - 15% of traffic being lost this way.

Firstly, get a good host if your traffic is at all high – this will reduce the likelihood of the server being overwhelmed. Secondly, customize your error page to include some sales blurb and links to the rest of your website. There really is no excuse for losing traffic due to error pages.

15. Do you Have a Back-Door ? Stores Don't !!

Remember the last time you went to a big store or hypermarket. Did you leave by one of the main entrances or a back door? And if you left by the back door did an alarm go off ? My point is, unless you leave a store by the designated entrance you will trigger some sort of alarm or be prevented from leaving. The reason is obvious – to prevent theft. There is also another reason - stores are designed to take customers on a journey and to ensure customers follow the path laid out by marketers there has to be control of entrances and exits.

Now, there is a little we can do to stop someone closing their browser or simply entering a new URL if they have already made up their mind. It is sensible to assume that some of these people will go no matter what you do but there is also a significant percentage who can be influenced.

How can you influence them to stay? Provide genuine content that is of worth to your readers is an obvious first port of call. After that you must consider your exits and entrances – on a website these are called hypertext links. The more menu links and other things you have on your site, such as an about me page – the more chance there is that someone will not follow your chosen path – the path that leads down the marketing funnel.

So, just like a shop you need to strictly control all entrances and exits on your website and ruthlessly trim back any links that do not have some relation to making conversions!

16. Windows Shopper Markets – Prune Profit Drains.

The sad fact is that some markets have a high percentage of time-wasters and window shoppers. I had assumed, quite logically I thought, that these would be markets selling high value aspirational goods and services. What I found out shocked me – the lower the price of the product or service, the more likely you are to get timewasters.

Shockingly, my initial research reveals that goods priced over \$100 see a 15-20% increase in the type of contact I would consider time wasting. Over \$400 that figure rises to 28%. Window shopper and time waster traffic is the sort of traffic you do not want to attract and most certainly do not want to be paying for.

Please avoid integrating live messaging systems onto high margin selling sites – if you insist on using such systems make them available only to existing customers.

Another tip is make sure your website looks very upmarket and professional, this may deter the timewaster. Finally, consider forcing all communication to come through verified

(a legitimate return email) mail forms or deal with clients on the telephone. I have found most timewasters can be deterred by requesting them to call the company telephone number to discuss their questions in more depth.

17. Declining Interest Is The Golden Ticket!

Many people who want to start a business look in industries that they perceive as growing or know are growing. I say perceive because a lot of people believe a new market with a lot of hype about it must be growing and this often isn't the case.

People often want to enter a growing market because they think the competition will be less and opportunities greater. What people forget is that the dash for a new market ensures that many people will think the same way and it is not incomparable to people crowding and fighting to buy a product on offer at a department store. People see what they consider a good offer and then have to fight with far higher than normal competition to get it.

Going for a declining market, be that in terms of general interest sales or traffic is always my preferred option.

18. Adverts, Complacency and People Watching Revenue Dwindle Away...

Advert blindness is both a worrying phenomena and a very expected one. People get used to seeing things and after a while they just blend into the background. Whilst I think it would be a mistake to assume that adverts blighted by ad-blindness lose all influence (I think they still affect the sub conscious) such adverts obviously attract far less traffic and result in far less conversions.

The louder music and voices on adverts (a result of a process known as compression) is no doubt an attempt to blast through the complacency that develops with repeated exposure to an advert. We should also consider the fact that the amount of exposure any person receives to advertising in general must dull the individual to the power of advertising.

This is an issue that everybody in advertising and marketing have to deal with – there isn't a quick fix. The best thing I can advise is to keep a very close eye on your conversion rates and revenue stream. Once you start seeing a steady but consistent decline then you can be sure that advert fatigue is setting in – act fast – revamp your site, graphics and adverts!

19. 6 Months Early...

All businesses have cycles – points when they make more or less money. The Christmas holiday season is a traditional high point, as is July for music sales and movie audiences. The key is to figure out what the cycles for your market are – do they match the cycles of your business. It's quite likely that your business isn't intune with your market cycles and

you need to do some work optimizing your advertising and marketing to make the most of the traffic boosts at the peak of your market.

With that in mind you may need to accelerate your pace of work, so you are preparing new products, marketing and advertising to be released in six months time. Once you can get into this mindset of working now to sell in the future you will find you get a lot more business - a large part of this comes from understanding that some times traffic just won't convert and at other times it will convert like crazy.

20. *There is Always New Blood.*

To finish off I'd like to address something I see constantly whenever people who want to start a business online or offline get together. What I am referring to is centered around the phrase 'the death of...' – basically it comes down to people believing that whatever market they are interested in is oversubscribed, the competition is too great and you can no longer make money out of it.

Put simply, this is almost always rubbish – it comes partly from new people's hesitance to commit to leaving full time employment and is fuelled by the silence of those who have already made it who don't want a slice take out of their pie. Whilst a market may be shrinking there are always new people entering your industry, people who are changing jobs, starting a new business or have just left full time education. These people are fresh customers – someone will sell to them – why not you.

Another advantage of a new blood in a shrinking market is that some of your competition go broke through complacency – this means that there are suddenly a load of available customers – your market maybe shrinking but you have a great opportunity to increase your market share!

Until a market dies there is always the potential for someone with a better product or service or more effective marketing to make profit. There is little point in concerning yourself with the growth or decline of a market that you are considering entering. The primary concern of any potential startup business should be – am I adding value for the customer and can I communicate that effectively?

Answer that question and you know if it is worth proceeding – if it is then look through this book time and time again to make sure that you are optimizing every stage in the marketing funnel and geometrically increasing your conversions without significantly extra work.

Conclusion

I have always felt that the marketing funnel was a critically important piece of marketing theory. To be fair it is more than a theory – it is concept that has easily provable benefit and provides a highly useful model of the marketing and sales process.

Increasing conversions, be they from passing visitors to potential purchasers or from browser to purchaser, is the best way in my opinion to drastically increase sales and profit without the need to expand your company or develop new products and services.

By following some of the steps I have mentioned above I feel sure that you will see positive results. So many of your competitors don't work on increasing conversions at any stage of the funnel and I really want you to understand the opportunity that their complacency and your knowledge provide.

You won't absorb all the information in this book immediately and I really recommend you reread it a few times in its entirety. After that, use it as a reference guide and dip in and out of it as time permits. Also, I strongly recommend printing this book out and even having it bound – it really could make you money!

To Your Website Success!

Ewen Chia

CEO, MyFreeWebsiteBuilder™