

# Are you making these Landing Page Mistakes?

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## **What's a landing page?**

The landing page is the page where the visitor enters your website. Typically you specify a landing page in your pay-per-click campaigns and someone who clicks on your ad is sent to this page.

If you are making one or more of these mistakes in your landing pages, you are leaving money on the table. Correcting these will improve your ROI on the PPC campaigns by a huge margin and you will be making more sales with the same or lower investment.

### **Mistake #1: Landing on the home page.**

This is a pretty common mistake. People design nice ads, invest a decent chunk of money and then, specify their home page as the landing page URL.

Do you want to be taken to the Sony home page when you click on the ad for 'a 10 megapixel camera with dual flash and 10x optical zoom'?

You must always set your landing page as the most relevant and focussed page – design a new page if required – for the search term you are targeting.

### **Mistake #2: Mismatched URL and/or title for the landing page.**

When the visitor lands on a page after clicking on your ad, he is a little unsure whether he came to the right place. If the title of the page, URL of the page and headline on the page bear similarity to the ad message and displayed URL, he feels comfortable and stays back to read more. Otherwise, he will simply click the back button and go back to try the other ads.

### **Mistake #3: Not repeating the ad message on the landing page.**

I recently clicked on an ad saying "Air tickets starting from \$29". However the landing page showed me a form where I could indicate my source and destination city names and search for the flights. There was no mention of the \$29 tickets on this page.

What do you think I did? I simply bailed out.

You have to put the promise made in the ad, again on the landing page so that the visitor can relate the two and be assured that he landed on the right site and page. Or else, be prepared to lose the visitor and see your money go down the drain.

### **Mistake #4: Bait and switch.**

Similar to the above mistake, some people would put an ad offering a free ebook or report and then try to sell something on the landing page. May be they will mention the

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freebie somewhere down the page also, but the main message of the page will be to lure the visitor into signing up for another offer.

This technique suffers from a very high abandonment rate and is best avoided.

A much more effective technique is to offer the freebie prominently on the landing page and once the visitor signs up to get the freebie, put the message for the other product just below the download link. While the free report is downloading, the person gets a chance to see your message and may be stays back to read that message.

You get to sell him this new product from your follow up messages also.

### **Mistake #5: Too much distraction.**

Don't put distracting elements like the full navigation bar at top, other products or services that you offer and flashing graphics. Every element on the landing page must be contributing to the sales process.

You should put a product photo if it is relevant. Do add a caption to enhance the impact. Put 3-5 hard-hitting benefits (turn features into benefits please) also.

You should put a text navigation bar with links to some key pages at the bottom to improve the quality score though (more on this in a later tip).

### **Mistake #6: Invisible call to action.**

If you are putting your call to action too low (below the area visible when I land up) or worse still, completely missing it, you are losing big time. Some people think that once the visitor has read about the offer, they will know what to do next and will search for the sign-up process themselves.

The fact is, an Internet visitor is in a great hurry and he needs to be clearly and explicitly told to sign-up with a prominent call-to-action button after the benefit list.

### **Mistake #7: Too many fields in the opt-in form.**

You are capturing the visitor information through an opt-in form for future follow-ups, right? Now make sure that you ask for the minimum amount of information that will allow you to follow up later. Why ask for 'State' when you have asked for the zip code? Do you really need the full postal address or only the phone number will do?

Every extra field to be filled up causes agony in the visitor's mind and reduces the response rate. In fact, people have reported phenomenal response rate improvement by just asking for the email address and dropping the 'first name' field.

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Note: If you are getting too many junk submissions and want to qualify your leads better, you should add some fields to increase friction. In this case, only the more serious people will bother to fill up so much detail and you will have less junk to troll through.

You must also display a short privacy policy like “We respect your privacy” and link this to a detailed privacy policy. Your visitors are afraid that you will spam them to death once they have downloaded your free report and that stops them from responding until you can assure them that you will only contact them for their requirement or with on-topic material.

### **Mistake #8: Why should I bother about you? The credibility factor.**

In most cases, your visitor does not know you. So you have got to establish credibility.

Display at least one (or more) powerful, specific testimonials. You should also put some popular logos at the bottom, like those of Better Business Bureau, credit card companies (if you are accepting payment), ‘As seen on TV’, ‘As seen in this magazine’ etc. The sub-conscious mind associates your web site with those famous companies and increases your credibility.

### **Mistake #9: Asking for the click too early.**

You have to make a compelling case with high-power benefits and a good offer before they will buy or sign-up. Remember that the ad convinced them enough to see this offer page. Now this page should increase that desire to make them drool and buy your product or sign up for more information.

The call to action should come after that and should not be the first line of your landing page.

### **Mistake #10: Slow loading landing pages.**

Your visitors are in a big hurry and quickly make up their mind about staying back to read more or bailing out – typically in about 8 seconds. Therefore slow loading pages have a big handicap – they have lost before they get a chance to convince the prospect.

Some PPC search engines have also started to penalise the slow loading pages with high cost-per-click, citing low quality scores. Therefore a fast loading page that puts your main headline before the prospect almost immediately is very vital.

### **Mistake #11: Having only one action option.**

While I have talked about having no distractions that take away the visitor’s attention, you might consider having a salvage option much below the main call-to-action or on a pop-up window that will try to capture a lead if the visitor is not accepting the main offer.

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Remember that pop-up windows are not allowed by most PPC engines, so these only work with landing pages on banner-ad campaigns etc. However DHTML based pop-ups do work with most PPC engines also.

Double check your landing pages on these parameters and make sure that your conversion rates are the best they can be. You can enjoy vastly better conversion rates from your traffic by avoiding these mistakes and get more sales for your products, more sign-ups for your report or more leads for your business.

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