

DIY Conversion Optimization Audit

*Building a new website or needing to increase conversions on an existing site?
Lay a conversion-focused foundation for profitability.*

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Audience

The first cornerstone to a website that converts is knowing your audience. You need to know the five Ws of your site visitors. Without a deep understanding of your audience, there's no way to accomplish the conversion rates you require for profit. Ongoing site testing should teach you more and more about your audience over time, but getting to know your current customers/clients and doing extensive market research in your industry is a cornerstone.

1. Who They Are
2. What They Need
3. When They Need
4. Where They Are
5. Why They Are Here

Hint: You can use Google Analytics Audience data to uncover customer qualities, such as gender, age, location, language, and interest.

Page Layout

Design

Establishing Priority

- Who you are and what you do should be immediately apparent, both visually and verbally.
- Your main call to action should be above the fold when possible.
- Use the header space to convey critical information so that every page can act as a landing page.

Structure

- Establish **goals** for every page. Once you can articulate the exact purpose(s) of a webpage, it's much easier to effectively structure a webpage.
 - Example: Let's say you are designing a product page. Of course, the primary goal on this page is for the user to add the product to the cart. However, you might also put a high priority on cross-selling products if your product lines generate lower revenue. In this case, a prominent element displaying "your recently viewed products" or "customers also bought" might add a boost to your average order value and make your website more profitable.

Skim Test

- Every page should be skimmable, which means image and text formatting should always be done in such a way that all important information can be absorbed quickly. Key phrases and key pieces of information should be bolded and/or formatted as lists rather than camouflaged in a block of text. Images should represent the essential message of the text and should provide comfortable HTML margins for the text to make it more readable on desktop and tablet devices.

Language

Tone

- Tone should match your relationship to your audience. The more serious the service or product you offer, the more serious your tone can be. If there is a big hurdle of trust to overcome with the audience, you want to speak as authoritatively as possible. Usually this means you really should take the time to do the research on everything you present as fact on your website. Don't write conjecture -- your audience is smart enough to pick out half-truths or questionable content.

Style

- Similar to tone, your style should match your relationship to your audience. With most B2C stores, there is room to be a little more creative in your style. Depending on the nature of your products or service, you can gauge how silly or witty or generic you need to be.
 - Example: If you sell primarily to a younger audience, it may be appropriate to make younger cultural references or use the younger generations' colloquialisms and slang.

Diction

- The main focus when it comes to diction should be readability. Be sure to use a readability tool on your site content to ensure that the reading level is appropriate for your audience. If you use Wordpress, the Yoast plugin provides a readability assessment on every page or post you write. Even with more technical concepts, appealing to the lowest readability level while still effectively conveying technical information is essential to quality content that the largest possible majority of your audience can find useful. If you find that your content does not score well with a readability tool, consider revisiting your chosen writing style and word choices.

Calls to Action

Establishing Priority

- Usually each page on a business website exists in order to guide the user toward an action. For a homepage, it's to guide them toward categories on the website. For categories, it's to guide them toward a product or service. On a product page, it's to guide the user to add to cart. We call this "the conversion funnel." Each step toward the end goal is part of the funnel, and each step is usually represented by a singular page.
- The primary CTA on each page should be very clear both to you and to the user. Sometimes a page can have tertiary CTAs. The goal is to present these as options but not allow them to detract from the main funnel.

Style, Color & Size

- Your primary tools in presenting a CTA either as primary or tertiary is using style, color, and size.
- A style of a CTA can come in the form of a button, a text link, or an image. Primary CTAs are usually buttons, while tertiary CTAs can be simple hyperlinked text or images displayed as optional paths to click.
- Color for CTAs should remain consistent throughout the website for clarity. If you choose orange to be your primary conversion funnel color, that means each button leading to the final goal should be orange. This provides a visual cue to the user as they step through the funnel.

- If your primary CTA color is muted due to design decisions, you could also use the size of your CTA to emphasize its importance. A larger button rather than a color-popping button can give equal clarity to the user about where to go next.

Trust

Trust Language

- Trust language gives a user some scope of your expertise. Oftentimes it involves using numbers either to rank your business qualification or show the scope of your business.
- You'll want to use trust language on the homepage and at various stages of the conversion funnel in order to compel the user to follow down the path.
- Examples include
 - "30 years of trusted service"
 - "Over 100,000 satisfied customers"
 - "Get the lowest price or get your money back"
 - "Ranked #3 New Business in 2016 by Forbes"

Trust Elements

- Trust elements are images that help garner trust from your audience.
- Examples include
 - Credit cards accepted
 - Secure checkout badges
 - Secure site seal badges (McAfee, Authorize.net. etc.)
 - Associations your company affiliates with
 - List of publication brands where you've been featured (e.g. Forbes, Business Insider, etc.)
 - Certifications or awards

