# How to Convert More Website Visitors into Leads

A good website is a website that converts visitors into leads.

Yes, site design is important.  But well-designed websites that don't produce leads are all around us.  This assessment does not look at design, colors or anything esthetic.

This assessment has one goal: to increase conversion.  Conversion is the rate at which you convert visitors into leads.

Improving your conversion rate is the cheapest way to increase sales.  Which is the less expensive way to double sales from your website: take your conversion rate from .75% to 1.5% or double your traffic?  The answer is to double your conversion rate.  Every time!

The steps I use to improve a website's conversion rate:

A.  Decide what actions you want visitors to take.
B.  Simplify content and navigation around these actions.
C.  Help people quickly understand where you fall in the grand scheme of what you do.
D.  Build comfort and trust so they'll stick around long enough to get your message.

## A.  What actions do you want visitors to take?

You want visitors to buy what you're selling, of course.  But in almost every case, there are several actions that precede the act of buying.

In some cases, the action is simple to figure out.  What does Twitter want you to do?  Do a search or sign up now.

How about this website?  They want you to create your own free conference calling account by giving them three pieces of information and then clicking on a nice, big yellow button sporting three glorious words, "Sign up free."

It's more complex for you because you aren't giving away free conference calling or promoting a free social media tool.  What actions should you focus on?

Think about three things as you answer this:

**1) Actions must be appropriate, non-threatening and low-risk**. You probably don't ask for a kiss in the first 10 minutes of a first date. Are you making this mistake on your website -- asking for too much too soon? Request more information or a white paper, subscribe, leave a comment, download the free version, watch a video are all reasonable actions someone can take toward buying something from you. Talk to a salesperson or pick up the phone or buy from us now probably represent too much risk to a person in the first two minutes on your website.

**2) Actions must have some value, must move people along the decision path**. People want to be educated, not sold. Especially early in the sales cycle. A brochure sells. A video about your product sells. Both are okay, but both speak to people later in the sales cycle. Make sure you include actions that educate. Like a whitepaper, subscription to your blog (assuming you post regularly) or a video that educates.

**3) The actions you want people to take must be easy to see and understand**. They need to be visually obvious. Here's my landing page. What do I want you to do? Watch the video (biggest visual element), click on either of the black buttons (people LOVE buttons) or learn more about hiring me as your Virtual Director of Marketing (the cartoon).



## B. Simplify content and navigation around these actions.

The average visitor session only lasts three minutes and encompasses just three pages. The average bounce rate for websites is fifty percent. That is, 50% of the people leave from the page they come in on; they don't get past that one page. They bounce.

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*Three minutes, three pages and you lose half the people you paid to get to your site on the first click. Yeah, I know, it sucks. This is why it is so important you simplify. How to simplify:*

**Present fewer link choices on your link column or link bar**. Used to be, the more pages the better. Put 'em all out there! Not today; remember your average visitor session. You want them going to the pages you want them going to.



**Too many links**



**Good Example**

**Think of your site in levels**. The first level is where you want to point people. Look at your Google Analytics report. What are your top three pages? Normally, they will be, in this order:



> Home
>
> Services or Products (what you sell)
>
> About

People come into your site (home or landing page), they want to know what you sell (services or products page) and then they want to know a little about you (about page). This is the norm.

I recommend no more than five or six links on your main link bar or column:

> Home    Products    About Us    Pricing    Contact

You may now have additional pages that you consider sub-topics of your "about us" topic, for example. Do your best to summarize your entire about us story on the about us page. Go ahead and link to other pages from your about us page, but do not leave an important part of your story off your about us page. In other words, **don't ask people to click twice to digest your message.**

**More content on pages**.  This is a natural extension of the "fewer choices" recommendation.  The design model used to be "Don't ask people to scroll down the page."  Now we know that's wrong.  Don't ask people to click for more information.

**Tell your story three different ways**.   Your three most visited pages (home, products or services and about) need to be three different versions of your story.  Your home page should be roughly equal parts what you sell and why you're different, who you are and building comfort.  Your about page needs to be mostly about who you are; why you are unique/different, background, experience, expertise, number of years, etc.  And then maybe 25% about what you sell and 25% building comfort.  Your products page needs to be mostly about what you sell.  And then maybe 25% about you and 25% building comfort.

**Remember why**.  Half your visitors never make it past the page they come in on.  If you're counting on people going to a second page to digest your basic story, only half will get there.

No, this isn't being redundant.  It's communicating effectively.

## C.  Help people understand where you fit.

I'm looking for a vet; what kind of vet are you?  Horse, small animal, 24-hour care, emergency, and what, generally, makes you different?  I'm looking for a marketing consultant; what kind of marketing consultant are you?  Do you specialize in an industry or type of marketing, what size company do you work with, are you expensive?

**My point:** you don't have to tell your entire story, quickly, but you better help people sort where in the area of vets or marketing consultants or printers or CRM software you fall.

## D.  Build comfort and trust so they'll stick around.

This is the toughest thing to explain.  It's not a matter of "the color blue builds comfort, red does not."  It's something you have to feel.  There are some basics, though:

Don't manipulate or trick visitors.  A good example is the sign up window for a white paper that asks for your name and email.  Click the button that says "Download" and you're taken to a page that asks for more information instead of downloading the white paper.  Opps, you just tricked me. . .and lost me.

Don't push or ask for something too soon.  Do you ever get those small windows that pop up and gray out the rest of the page, 3 seconds after you land on a page?  "Subscribe to my whatever!!"  Really?  Three seconds into your site and you want me to subscribe to something?  How about this, how about you go f**k yourself?

Reveal yourself.  Create a video.  Talk to people, let them see you and hear your voice.  Reveal yourself on a different level:

> I don't know it all.  In fact, I use a marketing consultant (I'd be a fool not to).  His name is Ian Lurie at www.conversationmarketing.com.

> Doesn't this type of transparency start to make you a little more comfortable?

Be honest.  Enough said.

This is a free version of the type of web assessment we charge $1,250 for.  And it can transform a business.  But you have to do the work and make the changes.   The changes it suggests can typically be made by someone in-house.  Or if you have to hire your web firm, at a minimal cost.

Remember, simplify.  You only have three minutes and three pages.  And with every click you ask people to make, you lose a big chunk of your audience.

I founded Wallace Resources in 1980 as a marketing consulting firm dedicated to helping small business owners increase sales.  Our focus has always been direct response marketing because of the size company we serve.  As the world became more digital, I renamed the firm smallbusinessmarketingconsultant.com; now the #1 organic search result for small business marketing consultant and marketing consultant.

**What makes us different:**

> We think more broadly–more ideas, smaller tests.

> When you hire us you get me.  My job isn't to manage a consulting firm, it's to grow your sales.

> I'll talk to your customers to inform our ideas.  Sounds obvious, but it's not.  Shop around.

> Message trumps everything.  It's the message, stupid.  It really is!

> We're also big on implementation.

**Hamilton, briefly:**

Second generation Arizona native  /  Jock  /  BA, Reasoning, Logic & Persuasion, Drake University  /  IBM  /  Realized I don't like big companies  /  MBA, Arizona State University  /  VP Sales & Marketing for two small companies  /  Tried to buy one, the board laughed at a 27-year-old with his checkbook in hand  /  Declared myself a consultant, prayed someone would hire me / Almost three decades of working with small companies / And now here we are, you and I. . .

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