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Please Just Let Me Buy! The #1 best way to boost response

There are a lot of reasons not to buy whatever it is you're selling – I don't use the thing you're selling, I already have a thing just like the thing you're selling, I can't afford the thing, you failed to convince me in your ad that I need this thing – the list goes on and on. In the end, most direct marketing offers give a reason not to buy to 97% - 99% of their prospects. Such is the life of a direct marketer. All too often, though, we may reach the right person with the right product and the right offer at the right time – and we just won't let them buy, because we made the buying process too difficult.

Real life example: I was born in Washington, DC. As such, I was born a Washington Redskins fan – I just can't help it, it's a genetic thing. After I boarded a flight one day, I checked my email on my iPhone – I had an email from the Redskins. It was Dallas week, and they were selling a "Beat Dallas" t-shirt (it may have actually said something cruder, but we'll just leave it as "Beat Dallas"). They had reached the correct audience with the correct product and the right offer at the right moment – I wanted that t-shirt. Getting it was another issue. I clicked on the email, just like it said, and was taken to the Redskins' merchandise home page. The page was not optimized for mobile, and not specific to the offer. Instead, I had a screen full of tiny little jerseys for a variety of players, along with autographed footballs, and a variety of t-shirts. I pinched and un-pinched trying to find that t-shirt. Even if I found it I would have needed to type in my whole address and credit card info with my thumbs. Alas, the door to the plane was closed long before I could respond. The sale was lost. The Redskins lost that week, too.

The lesson is pretty simple – let people buy what you're selling. Make it easy. This is what landing pages are all about – they take the prospects right to the offer and let them act on it as easily as possible. This is where services like SnailWorks are so important – we work with you to make sure your marketing leads directly to a landing page that will render correctly on the appropriate device. Where we can, we'll try to get it pre-populated so it's easy to respond to. A simple experience for your customer is not simple to plan and execute – that's where we come in.

Some principles of a good landing page:

- Present the offer, and only the offer. Do not distract your prospects with other information – they came to respond to your offer – let them!
- Make the landing page look like the offer. Be consistent with your branding – let them know they have come to the right place.
- Prepopulate if you can. If you use a PURL or QR code on your printed piece, or a personalized link in your email, you can help your customers complete their order by getting them to a personalized landing page.
- Make responding direct and easy. Either include the order form right on the landing page, or have a well-marked "Click here to order" button on the landing page – and if they click on it they should go directly to the order form.
- Don't put up road blocks to them responding. DO NOT make your prospects log in to respond to your offer.
- Worry about CRM after you get the order. Too often we see prospects driven to difficult order pages just for the sake of capturing the activity in CRM systems. In many cases these prospects become too frustrated to continue the buying process.
- Pick a great GURL. Not every prospect will want to use their PURL. Pick a domain specifically for your offer, and make it easy to remember and type. For the example I gave, if the domain "BeatDallasTshirt.com" was available, it is easy to remember. I might just have bought the shirt after the plane landed.

You still need the right list and the right offer, but if you follow these rules for your landing page – and let landing page pros help you craft your offer and landing page – your chances of winning are much, much better.

Should Your Landing Page Be Invisible? Just because it can be doesn't mean it should be

While we're on the topic of landing pages, a few words on the "invisible" landing page. Some marketers prefer to manage their own registration or reply pages so they can tie them into their CRM system, their in-house registration or giving pages, or most often just so they can be in control. We can accommodate this by creating an invisible landing page: when your prospect goes to the PURL or clicks on the link they are sent to a landing page that automatically redirects them to a page on the client web site. We get to count them, and in some cases even pass along some prepopulating.

We are NOT fans of invisible landing pages. Of course it is much harder for us to measure response once the prospect has left our domain, so your reporting becomes less meaningful. More importantly, we have consistently seen response rates drop significantly anytime the prospect is handed off. Too often the registration page they go to requires a login or has other distractions that impede response. We have just seen this too many times – this is almost a certain response killer.

We're good at creating landing pages that work. Let us create them for you. Just because we can create an invisible landing page, please don't make us do one!

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