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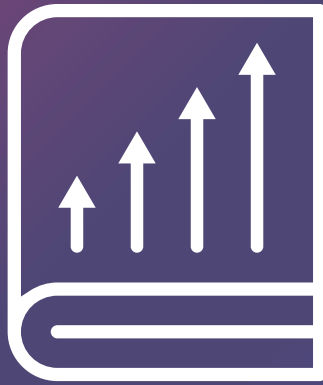
The Lead Generation Website Playbook

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Introduction

Before we get into the "hows" of creating a Lead Generation Website, let's identify "The Four Characteristics of a Successful Lead Generation Website."

Differentiate

You know that the marketplace has never been more crowded and more quickly evolving, but you may not be as sure how to respond, adapt and differentiate. As a hurried, harried marketer, you might be tempted to make assumptions about your markets and audiences and soft pedal the Brand Messaging process, but it's risky. Without differentiated brand messaging that you can own and support, your website will not stand apart and your lead generation activities may drive the wrong kind of traffic, if they drive traffic at all.

Experience

With clear brand messaging and the use of audience personas (profiles of your ideal customers), you will be in a perfect position to create compelling, search engine optimized content for your website. Coupled with memorable visual design, clear pathways for users to navigate and accessible content offers, your visitors are likely to engage with your website.

Optimize

Inbound marketing is the art and science of driving leads to your website and nurturing them to engage, interact and return. By optimizing your website's content and syndicating it across marketing channels — and by using web analytics to regularly test and measure effectiveness — you will be driving qualified leads down the sales funnel.
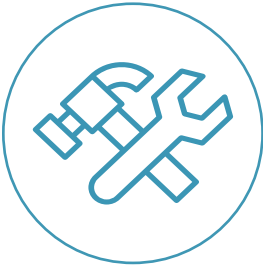
Learn

Creating a Lead Generation Website has aspects of both a sprint and a marathon. Because Lead Generation Websites are driven by user data, in cases where a complete web overhaul may not be required, it may make sense to begin by gathering data from —and then redesigning — a limited number of the most highly trafficked pages first. This is the sprint aspect. Then, in an ongoing fashion, build the site out and make steady incremental improvements, continually measuring and making refinements to the website, based on your goals and your users' behavior, hence the marathon.

"The **Lead Generation Website Playbook**" is based upon adopting these four pillars as your pathway to marketing success.

1

The Power of Intention

Every business preparing to invest in a new website seeks a measurable return on investment.

With this in mind, the most critical first step in creating a new website is to **define your intention**. Many business people seeking a new website identify their *situation*, but fail to define their *intention* in an actionable way.
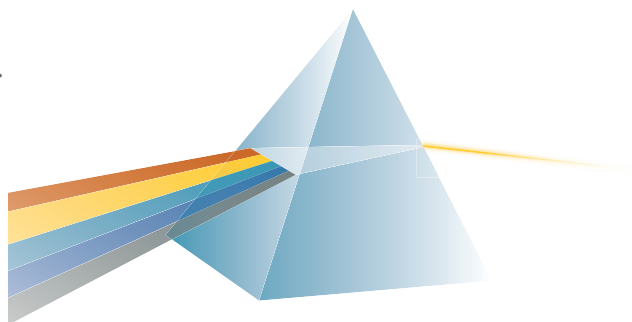
Here are a few situations we often encounter with clients seeking a new website:

- *"Our competitor just put up a new site and it's really good."*
- *"We have a new CEO or CMO who's taking the company in a new direction."*
- *"We have a new product strategy and need the website to make our vision clear."*
- *"Our site looks really old:, too much text, not enough pictures and it looks bad on mobile devices."*
- *"We have multiple audiences and we're worried that our 'one-size-fits all' content will alienate some customers."*

Every one of these scenarios is legitimate and needs to be addressed, but none tap into the single most important value a modern website can provide: **converting web traffic to leads**.

The commercial website was born as an online brochure and despite the passage of time, the growth of Search Engine Optimization, Social Media and today's mobile landscape, many

business professionals still think of the website as an electronic brochure. We've created this eBook to dispel that dated notion and show how the website has matured into a far deeper, richer, customer engagement experience.

So what do we mean by "intention?"

We mean, precisely what are the criteria you will use to measure success?

- X % increase in quantity of leads?
- Less leads but higher quality?
- Greater amount of time spent on specific pages?
- Greater quantity of pages visited?
- Steady rise in repeat visits?
- X % reduced bounce rate on specific pages
- Increase use of website for sales team?
- Bring new brand image to viewers on the web

See how a top firm, whose intent was to update their brand perception, did so with a website redesign.

When you define your intention, you are then ready to address designing and building a user experience to achieve your goals.

In the following sections we will breakdown the components of a Lead Generation Website so that when you approach your site with the clear intention to generate leads, you will have the playbook to make it happen.

2

The Team You'll Need

Creating a Lead Generation Website is neither entirely the agency's responsibility, nor that of the Client. It's a collaborative engagement comprised of people with complimentary skills, team chemistry and shared intention. The following roles are necessary for a successful experience:

Project Manager – Having a dedicated point person on both the client and agency side is the surest way to deliver a great website for the budget and on the date agreed.
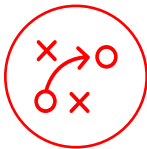
Content Strategist – Lead Generation has become a soft, generic term but in a real Lead Generation Website, every page on the site has a distinct purpose. No longer do you simply determine the top navigation categories and what pages fall underneath — for every page, you must ask, "What are we trying to achieve with this content?" This will result in defining a collection of content "offers" and "related links," which change on each page, relative to that page's copy. Based on your intention, a Content Strategist will define what content appears on what page and where that content will lead visitors on the website.
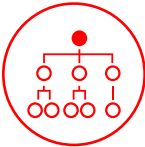
Copywriter – The Content Strategist can also be the Copywriter. The skills are complimentary, but not every copywriter has the strategic marketing knowledge or inclination to also be a Content Strategist. A good copywriter can also work out high level messaging, if necessary.

Search Expert – In order to have a successful Lead Generation Website, your site must be easily found when prospects and others conduct web searches. Google changes the rules for the digital world on a regular basis.; having a Search Expert who understands how to optimize your website — on an ongoing basis — is a "must have" on your team.

Web Designer – A Web Designer should be challenged to work closely with the copywriter to find the unique vision that will break through the online clutter to which we've grown accustomed.

Information Architect – The Information Architect's role is to work with the Content Strategist to define the navigational structure of the website and the desired user experience for each page. The Content Strategist can also be the Information Architect on a typical B2B website, but they are usually two different people.

Web Developer – If you are like most businesses, you will want the ability to maintain your site for basic updates, page additions, blog posts, etc. Look to your developer or development team to use a commercial content management system (CMS) that with easy training, you can use.

Corporate Leadership – The difference between an ordinary website and a Lead Generation Website is that the former is tactical and the latter, strategic. The participation of your corporate leadership at key points during the process will enable realization of the leader's intention and will result in engaging the right prospects.

3

Before Creating Content, Define Your Content Strategy

Three content attributes that differentiate a Lead Generation Website from any other site are:

- The high quality of the content
- The way content is packaged in the form of Calls-to-Action (CTAs), offers and landing pages
- The strategic way content is shared across marketing channels

Practically every B2B site consists of a scrolling Home Page, About Us, Products or Services and Contact page. A Lead Generation site adds an array of thought leadership and educational content, some of which is free and some that is gated, depending on where the visitor goes on the site.

But before becoming a content creation action hero, you need a strategy for what content you need to create —based on your audience's needs and preferences — and where and when to syndicate that content across media channels.

For example, a Lead Generation Website will promote pithy, search optimized blog posts written to draw people in on a regular basis.

The site will also have long-form content such as White Papers or eBooks, created specifically to generate leads, by requiring the user to provide contact information before downloading. Because you've built credibility by generating regular blog posts, visitors will be more likely to register for the other offers.

Blogpost from BrightTalk - great content, regularly published and easy-to-access CTAs for "deeper dive" content.

The types of content visitors like to consume include:

| Blog posts and articles | eBooks | Newsletters | White Papers | Webinars Video | Animated (Explainer) Videos |

By updating content weekly or even daily — having it picked up by the Search Engines — and repurposing it on social media, many more prospects will engage with you to seek your insight and perspective. This repurposing of content across channels is as important to your content strategy as the actual creation of the different levels of content. Be sure to share your blog posts and offer your content via social media.

Over time, as your content is recognized, coveted and shared, your reputation will grow and more visitors will come to your site seeking content, becoming prospects and potentially, converting into customers.

4

How to Be Found Through Search Engine Optimization

Search is an interesting term: a noun, a proper noun and a verb, all wrapped up in one. That is because it has become such a critical part of everyone's digital life.

The success of a Lead Generation Website is predicated on the site being easily found. And "Search Engine Optimization (SEO)" describes the set of techniques for making your website easier to find by ranking high with Google and other search engines.

In order to do this you must strike a balance between writing copy for your target audiences and utilizing specific keywords and keyword phrases, which the search engines will reward, based on algorithms they employ reflecting user behaviors and preferences.

Rewarding Relevance

The essence of the Google algorithm is the idea of rewarding relevance, specifically the most relevant content based on a particular keyword or keyword phrase. The more detailed, useful and consistent the content you provide is on a specific topic, the better over time your ranking will be.

Functionally, you should strive to use keywords and phrases in a natural way within the body of your copy. Additionally they need to appear in the page title, H1 header, meta descriptions and associated images on the page. Following these best practices, while producing relevant content on a regular basis, gives you the best chance to attain and maintain a high ranking.

H1

NDSSI uses the keywords "surgical" and "visualization" to match our search. Their page title and H1 header are consistent. Together and over time, these things combine to lift their Google rank.

The Power of Linking

Relevance, and therefore ranking, also has an external component. The quantity of relevant websites that link to your site is an indicator that your content is valuable; the more "quality" links you have, the higher you rank. **Working with an SEO expert, you can establish a "Link Building Strategy" to enhance and accelerate the quality and quantity of sites linking to yours.**

Building a strong SEO foundation is a cumulative effort with benefits that accrue over time. Adding and modifying keywords and measuring the results should be a consistent process. Avoid working with anyone that promises you the quick fix.

5

CTA's and Converting Visitors to Leads

In creating a Lead Generation Website, the shift you need to make is to think less about it as "your website" and more that it is "your customer's website." It's not so much, "What do I want to say about my services, products and expertise?" Instead, it is, "What content offers will be most likely to engage my prospects?"

In Part 3 we discussed the two genres of content, the short, regularly scheduled, free content such as blog posts and the longer, more detailed content, like White Papers and eBooks, which may require a prospect to provide their contact information.

Any content requiring someone to register contact information is known as "an offer." An offer is usually presented on a Lead Generation Website as a "Call-to-Action (CTA), which is generally a contained, visually arresting image with a small amount of copy, concluding with a "Read More or Download Here or Learn More or Buy Now," button in a bold color, inviting you to click. Once a visitor does click, s/he is taken to a form, which to fill out and submit and then becomes a "lead."
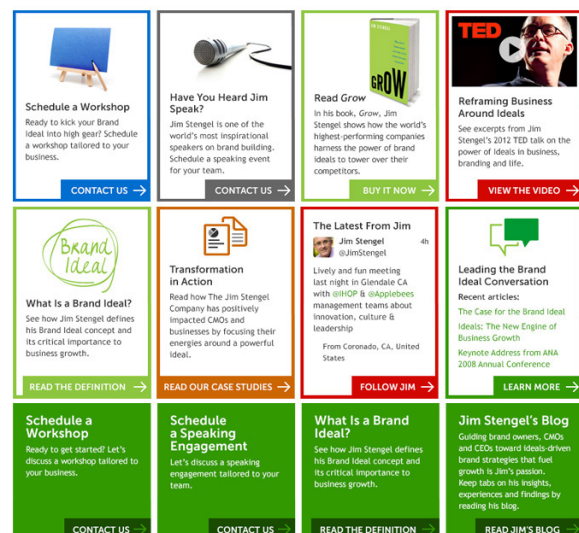

A "modular library" of CTAs — which can be used and reused on whatever page is appropriate — from jimstengel.com.

Whether you are using Google Analytics, HubSpot or other website analytics tools, you can track conversions (a submitted form is considered a conversion from a visitor to a lead). You will quickly learn which offers converted, how visitors got there and what keywords are aiding conversion.

Testing Offers

Aside from the content, there are other factors governing the success of an offer on your site: specific words used, placement on the page, design of the CTA such as size, shape and color of the offer button and size and color of the type within the button itself. If you find an offer is not converting as expected, you can do some A/B Testing to see if changing any of these variables increases conversions.

CONTROL   **VARIATION**
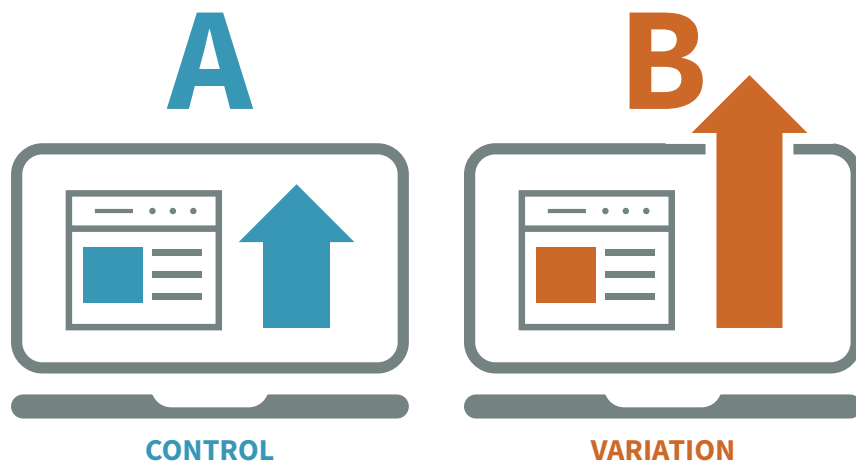
Optimizely defines A/B Testing (also known as split testing or bucket testing) as "a method of comparing two versions of a webpage or app against each other to determine which one performs better. AB testing uses data & statistics to validate new design changes and improve your conversion rates."

Types of Offers

As a lead generation resource, the website must accommodate visitors at different levels of the buying cycle. While some might be ready to sign up for a Strategic Consultation, others may not be ready and need to be "nurtured" along with successive content offers until they are ready.

In addition to free content like blog posts, a lead nurturing campaign on your website may consist of a Call-to-action (CTA) button with an offer, a personalized email suggesting useful content, based on previous user behavior, a landing page with a form to register for the offer and a thank you note.

After perusing your website and perhaps reading your blog, a visitor may want to learn more but might not be ready to do business. Providing an eBook, White Paper or other high quality offer provides value and keeps them engaged. You can set these offers up as "trigger events" and schedule emails of successive educational content such as videos, articles, assessments, etc., over time, to build further trust. The goal is to stay top-of-mind such that when the prospect is ready, you are on their consideration list.

By putting yourself in your prospect's shoes and envisioning what successive content offers will most resonate, you can set up your "lead nurturing" workflow, test, measure and recalibrate until you attain the results you're seeking.

6

Responsive Design is the Standard

Have you noticed how practically every website looks the same? They all have big images, big type, fewer words and often seem to scroll forever. The reason for the homogenization of the web is — mobility. Smartphones have taught users how to scroll and swipe, which has reinvented the way webpages are designed.

6

Responsive
Design is the
Standard

This has lead to "Responsive Design," the current standard upon which all websites should be built. "Responsive design" describes websites that reconfigure automatically for optimal viewing on desktops, tablets and smart phones.

It has always been true that you never know when prospects and customers will visit your website. Today, you also don't know on what devices they will be viewing. Thus, in order to keep them engaged and you relevant, you need to make your site "responsive" to their viewing devices.

Make sure Your Contact information is Accessible

Mobile users need to be able to accomplish tasks in the minimal number of steps when accessing your website on their phones. This means:

- Your telephone number must work when clicked.

- Your CTA buttons must reveal shortened and tightened, easy-to-fill-out forms.

- Your social share buttons must be easy-to-find and click.

- You should have a clickable Google Maps link.
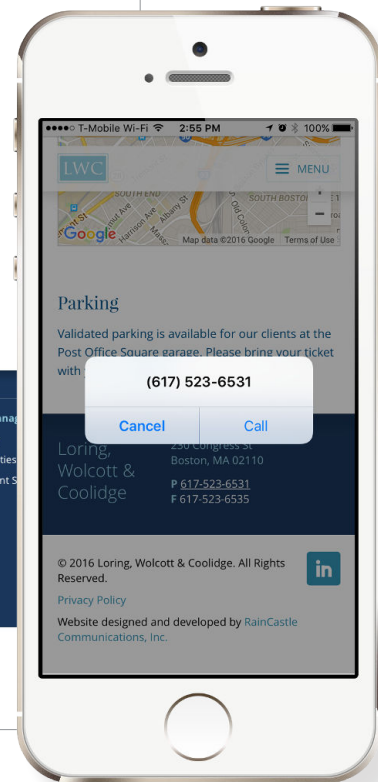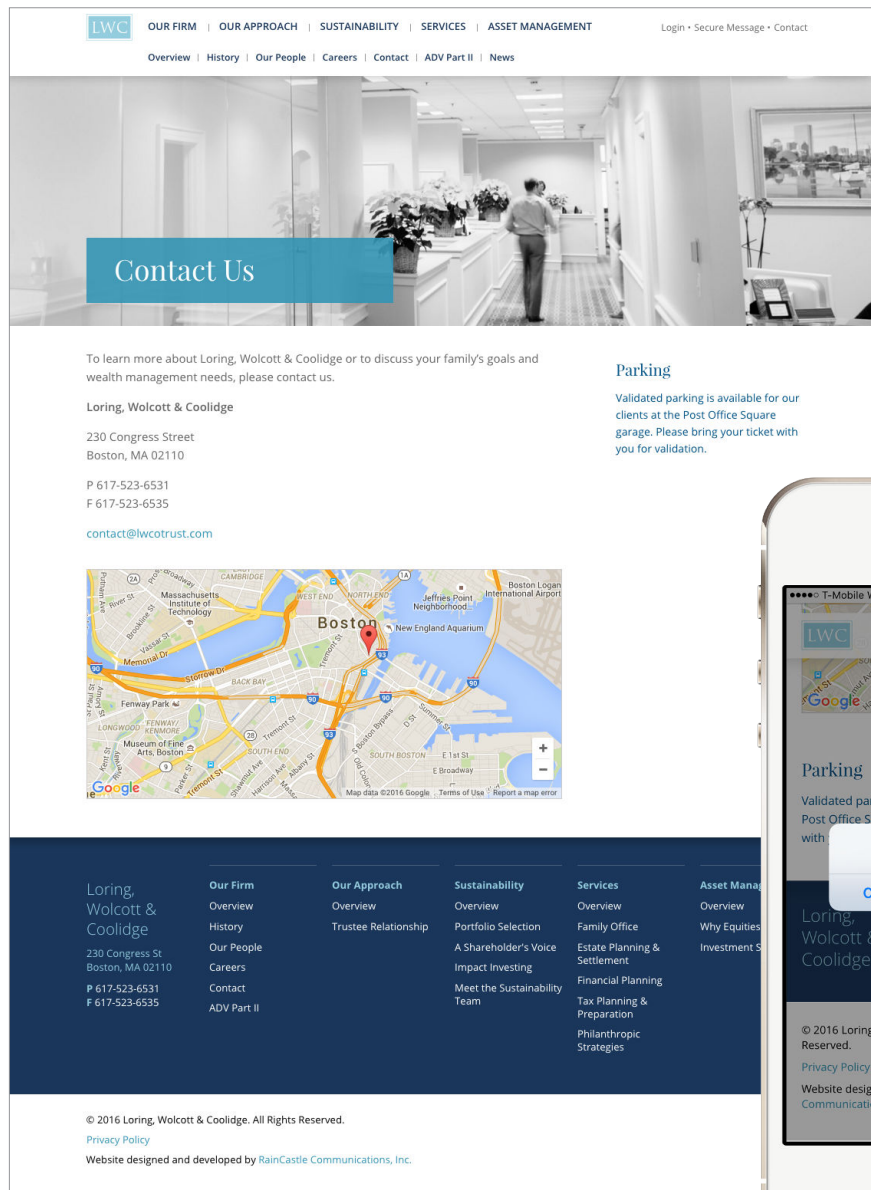
7

Design and User Experience

Design and User Experience are often used interchangeably when referring to how a website looks and feels. While there is overlap, design is the broader term and refers to the overall visual impression, which can be broken down to choices of color palette, fonts, creative concepts or themes, and style of photography, illustration, icons and diagrams.

User experience refers to the human to computer interface the website provides: where navigation buttons sit; how many navigation buttons there are; the relative size, contrast and color of buttons; the color of links; location and boldness of CTAs relative to other page content; use of typography and images to make it easiest for the visitor to find things and otherwise interact with the site's content.

COLOR PALETTE

STYLE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

CREATIVE CONCEPTS

FONTS
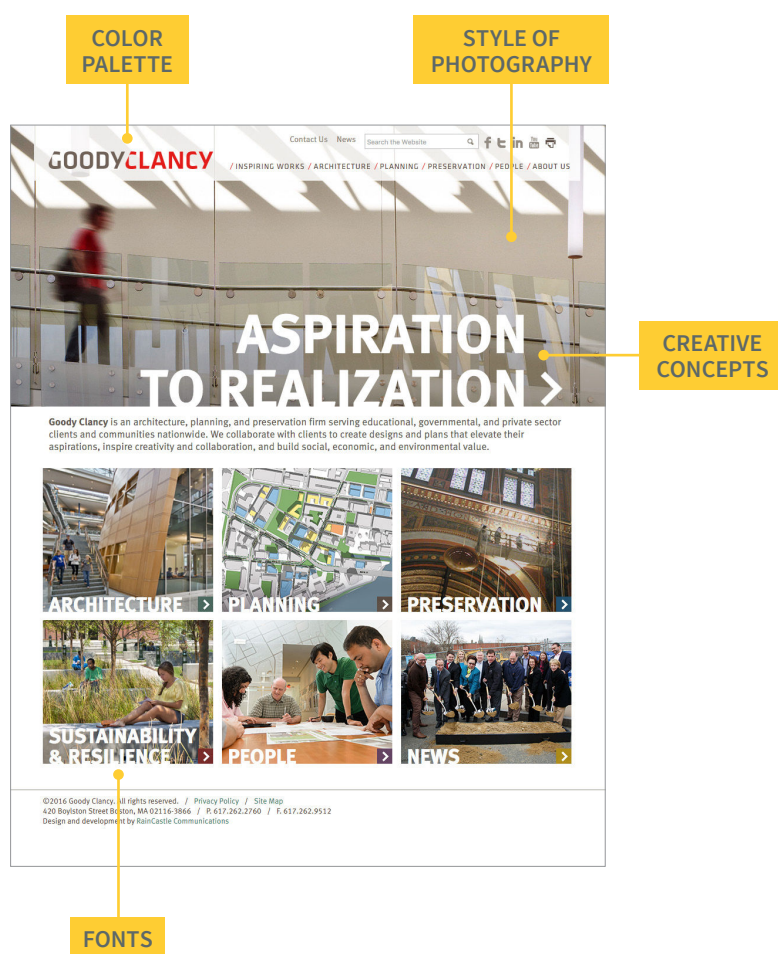
In Part 5, we discussed the mind shift necessary to create a Lead Generation Website, which is to think less about the website as "your website" and more that it is "your customer's website." You can broaden that to encompass all website "users." What is the experience you want your users to have when they land on your website?

While your website will attract a variety of users seeking different things, there are a few universal best practices you can immediately put into play:

Present your main ideas "above-the-fold," which refers to the website view one has on a laptop before needing to scroll. Establish your value proposition / key audience messaging and then design in such a way as visitors want to scroll down the page. But, be aware of the relative importance of that top panel. A study by Clicktale shows that if a page has a scroll bar it will be used by 76% of users "to at least some extent." 22% will scroll to the bottom of the page.

As summarized by Usability Expert Jakob Nielsen, space above the fold still grabs the majority of attention and people do scroll —although less, the further down they go. Make sure that you're designing to make that scrolling worth the effort.

Main ideas are presented "Above the Fold," which sets the tone for the lower panels to "tell the story." As seen on connance.com.

Make Navigation as Simple and Intuitive as Possible

There is no "one size fits all" theory of website navigation. A cluttered user experience can happen with six navigation items as well as 12. The operating principle is to determine the number of navigation items by what makes it easiest for web users to find and access information.
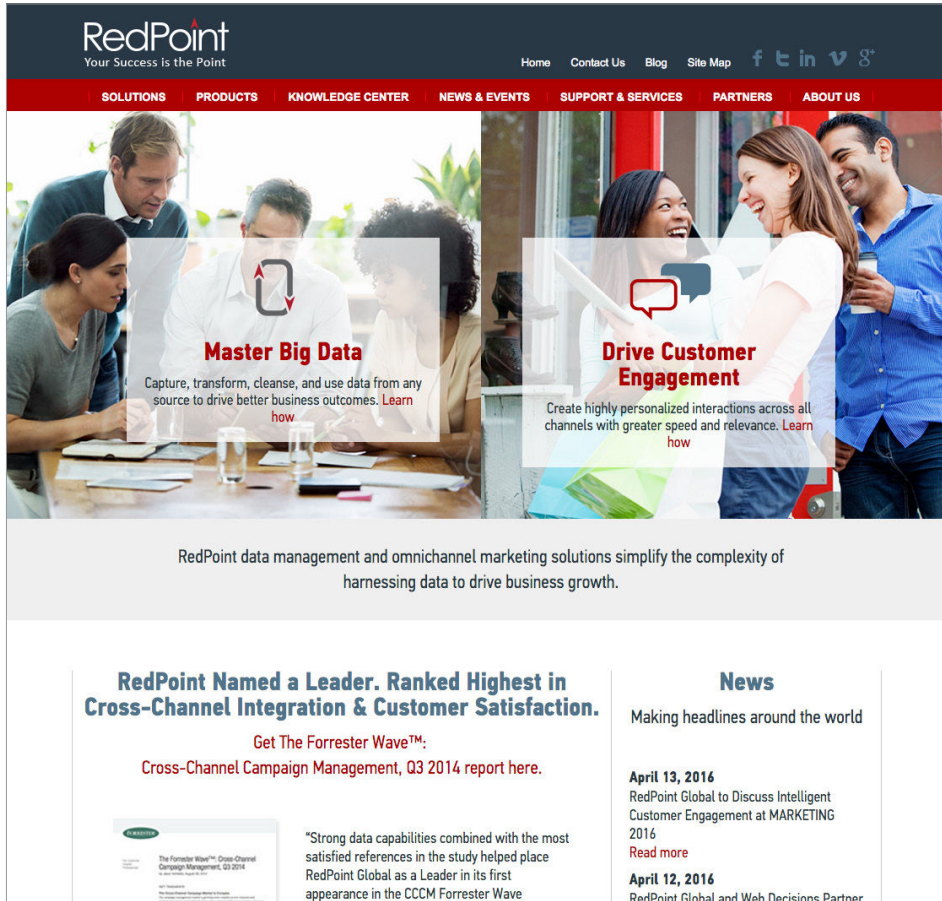
When visitors go to the RedPoint Global home page, it is very clear that RedPoint wants them to self-select by choosing one of two pathways.

Think Like your Website's Users

Make it clear what you want users to do. If you have different user types with different needs, make their unique pathways evident.

Make sure it is immediately evident how to contact you. This is usually best as part of the top navigation or the toolbar area just above the top navigation.

The above-the-fold real estate is your prime real estate so plan out where your "Read more, Learn More, Download, etc. links get placed and where they lead.

Constant Analytics

Perhaps the biggest mind shift from traditional websites is that a Lead Generation Website is best viewed as a "process" and not as a "project."

If you buy into the idea that the success of your website is ultimately defined by the users of the website rather than by you, then as long as the website remains live, its job is never complete because it only maintains relevance to the degree it accommodates the ever-changing needs of the people it serves.

Back in Part 1 we discussed the importance of "defining your intention" in order to clarify how you will measure success. It is through the repeated process of designing, user testing, learning and re-implementing, that over time, you build an optimal user experience.

For example, let's say that during the "Intention phase," you identified that the product price list was a key destination to which you wanted to drive more traffic. At that time, you identified that website users were following certain pathways, which were not leading to your product price list and as a result, online orders were down. Thus, one of your intentions would be to drive traffic to the product-pricing page.
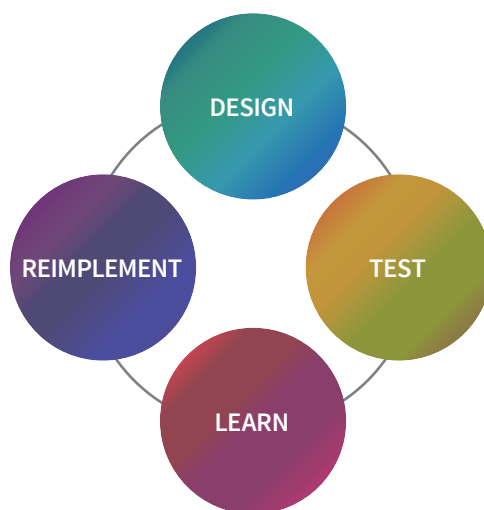
By placing a CTA button right on the home page and other related pages that says "Pricing" and by optimizing that page for Search, you will begin to drive users to your intended destination. Having benchmarked your site's traffic prior to launch, you would then measure traffic getting to the pricing page and identify which CTA drove the most traffic. Maybe traffic improved, but not enough, so you'd try something new, until results meet goals.

Analytics help you to be more altruistic and capitalistic at the same time; by helping prospects and customers access content they will find valuable, you are of course helping yourself. **These are some of the typical analytics most businesses want to measure on a regular basis:**

Overall site traffic: Is traffic increasing over time?

Traffic should steadily increase. If not, try adding more Calls-to-Action (CTAs), representing offers, throughout the site. These offers, such as a eBooks, Case Studies and White Papers, should be relevant to the content on the web page on which they appear. Also, a weekly blog that includes downloadable offers, will help generate more return visits and increase traffic, especially when you share the blog across social media.

CTAs are one of our favorite web marketing tools. By asking readers to complete a form with their contact information in exchange for the downloadable offer they will value, it will lead to more conversions. It's important to measure and track these CTA interactions, make successive offers and remove the ones that don't generate interest. See how we utilized a CTA library as part of a successful B2B messaging project.

Traffic Sources: Where is traffic coming from?

How effective is your search engine optimization? Is website traffic coming mostly from organic search, such as visitors using keywords in Google to find you? How much is from referral sources, such as links from other sites? Are many viewers coming to you through direct search, such as by entering your URL directly into their browser?

While all of these metrics are important, growing your organic traffic is what companies strive for most. Organic search relates directly to your search engine optimization, the better your site is keyword optimized, the more organic traffic you will get. Writing relevant and regular blog posts using these keywords is one of the best ways to help generate more organic traffic.

Keyword Ranking:
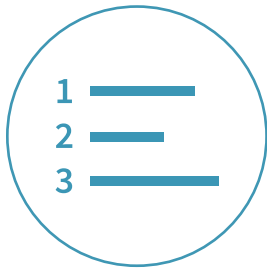
If your organic (keyword) search results are not increasing, revisit your keywords and make sure every page is optimized for search and that the copy on the page contains some of those keywords, making sure that those keywords fit naturally into the flow of the text. Your site may be ranking poorly for the keywords that coveted visitors use to search.

## Bounce Rate: Where and why are people leaving the site?

The Bounce Rate of your website refers to the rate of people exiting the site from a page, other than from pages like the "Contact page," where it is understood that visitors are going for one specific reason, i.e., to get your phone number, address or email.

If your analytics indicate that visitors are exiting the site frequently from key content pages on which you are trying to engage them, there may be one or more of these problems:

- They are not finding that your content has value.
- The navigation or page design is confusing.
- There is no way for them to contact you or otherwise engage on the page.
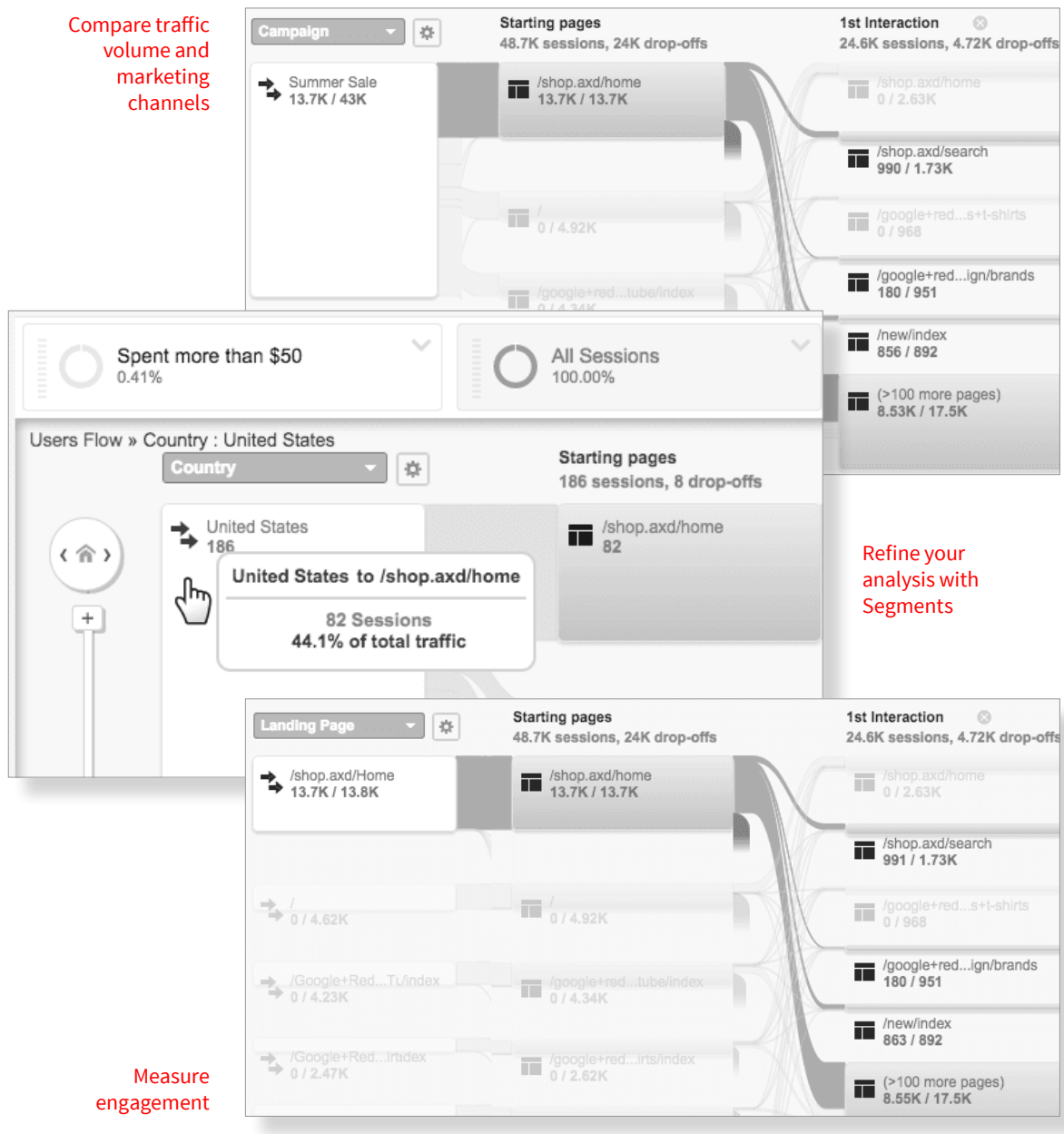
Time on Page: How much time are visitors spending on each page?
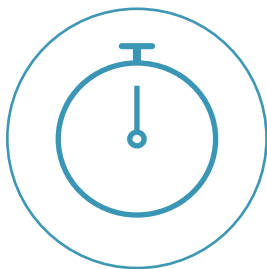
- This analytic is a key indicator of how engaged your visitors are with your content. You want to see a spike here for your most important pages and if you don't, here are the things you need to do:
- Examine your page content, potentially editing, rewriting or adding additional content.

- Make sure people know what to do next, i.e., click a link, download an eBook, visit the blog, try that free demo, etc.

- Determine whether the navigation is confusing or whether the most important content is hard to find. Perhaps it's a scrolling page and the good stuff is "below-the-fold?" (Below the fold refers to the portions of a web page that are only visible by scrolling.)

Click path: Where are the pathways web visitors are using to navigate your website? Are they the pathway you intended?

Compare traffic volume and marketing channels

Refine your analysis with Segments

Measure engagement

Source: Google Analytics

Google Analytics provides a click map, which shows you the common paths your visitors are taking to access the content they are seeking. This real, behavioral data is highly instructive about what people are looking for and where they may be getting hung up.

Ultimately, in order to measure the effectiveness of your website in a sustainable, trackable way, you'll want to set up a web analytics "Dashboard," from which you can easily view the highlights of the different metrics that are most important to fulfilling your intention. Below is an example of the Dashboard we use in HubSpot.


Sample web analytics dashboard

Conclusion

Remember that with a clearly defined set of intentions and an easy-to-use analytics tool, you will be set up for constant measurement, which is the core of what makes a Lead Generation Website … well … generate leads! Through the repeated process of designing, learning, measuring and re-implementing over time, you build an optimal user experience that becomes a lead generation powerhouse.

Author Note: Subscribe to our blog to get access to more specific information like this, as well as company updates, announcements, etc. and of course, if you have questions, give us a call!
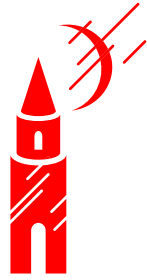
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