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**Landing Page Optimization: Multi-product page increases revenue 70%**

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Dear Marketer,

Welcome to the MECLABS Quarterly Research Digest – a snapshot of the research and content across MECLABS.

To help you discover the most useful content published by the MECLABS’ brands, we’ve put together a collection of our most popular work from MarketingSherpa, MarketingExperiments, and B2B Lead Roundtable.

We look at our readers’ social shares to learn what pieces of content they have found most helpful over the quarter. We include MECLABS’ three content-producing sites:

- **MarketingExperiments** – The most popular post of each month, as featured in the MarketingExperiments Best of the Month Newsletter

- **MarketingSherpa** – The most-shared Chart of the Week, case study or how-to article of each week, as featured in the MarketingSherpa Best of the Week Newsletter

- **B2B Lead Roundtable Blog** – The most-tweeted post of each month

Additionally, we included an article for each MarketingExperiments Web clinic published during the quarter. You’ll gain access to the latest research findings, along with actionable optimization advice, in these Web clinic reports.

In the appendix of this Digest, you will find two additional resources:

- **Marketing Research Charts of the Week** – A section dedicated to MarketingSherpa’s Benchmark Studies, where we include all of the research featured in the weekly MarketingSherpa Chart of the Week Newsletter

- **MECLABS Content Directory** – This comprehensive directory allows you to scan through the titles and summaries of every piece of MECLABS content produced this quarter to find additional works to help your marketing efforts, including:
  - 28 MarketingSherpa case studies
  - 21 MarketingSherpa how-to articles
HOW TO USE THIS DIGEST

- 13 Charts of the Week, from three Benchmark Reports
- 3 MarketingSherpa webinar video replays
- 25 MarketingExperiments articles
- 6 Web clinic video replays
- 12 B2B Lead Roundtable articles
- 8 video presentations

While this is a collection of our most popular work, not every piece may be relevant to your unique situation. That’s why we developed a two-part table of contents to help you effortlessly find information important to your specific needs.

- **Topic of Content** – Easily filter through the table of contents by looking up the most relevant areas for your marketing campaigns
- **Content Type** – Search our content by type, from how-to articles and research charts to case studies and Web clinics

We trust this collection will be beneficial to you in your marketing efforts and help you discover new insights as you implement and test the tactics and strategies you find in this *Digest*.

Happy reading,

Selena Blue
Partnership Content Manager, MECLABS
Selena.Blue@MECLABS.com

P.S. If you conduct an interesting experiment, we would love to learn about your work. Feel free to send us the details at editor@meclabs.com. We will carefully reflect on the implications of your findings and potentially publish them (with your permission) in a future edition of the *MECLABS Quarterly Research Digest*. 
Site Optimization
Product Pages Tested
How carefully pinpointing customer anxiety led to a 78% increase in conversion

Product pages are a staple in nearly every business website in existence. Oftentimes, they represent the final hurdle before a prospect clicks “add to cart” or fills out your form. Therefore, if we can improve the performance of these key pages, we can see substantial increases in conversion and sales.

Look at the three pages in Figure 1.1. What do they have in common?

Granted, there could be multiple correct answers to this question. However, one similarity in particular may have escaped your notice: anxiety. In every page, especially product pages, certain elements raise the anxiety level of the prospect. This should concern you for two very good reasons:

1. In our experience, when we correct for anxiety, we see gains (Figure 1.2).
2. The needed corrections often involve only simple and small changes.
In the *MarketingSherpa Ecommerce Benchmark Study*, we found ecommerce marketers are employing a variety of page elements that can be used to reduce anxiety (Figure 1.3).

In a recent experiment, we tested four of those minor elements to correct specific points of anxiety on the same page to help us understand the interplay of anxiety and the corrections we make.
**Experiment: Which anxiety correction had the biggest impact?**

The experiment, Test Protocol (TP) 1713 in the MECLABS Research Library, sought to improve the sales of e-books from a well-known retailer in the market. Our approach was to test four different variations of the product page against the control, with each treatment correcting for a different form of hypothesized anxiety:

- **Version A:** Adjusting for anxiety regarding site security (Figure 2.1)
- **Version B:** Adjusting for anxiety that the e-book would not be compatible with their reading device (Figure 2.2)
- **Version C:** Adjusting for anxiety that the e-book would not be of interest or value to them (Figure 2.3)
- **Version D:** Adjusting for anxiety regarding the shipping timeframe of the e-book (Figure 2.4)

What does your instinct tell you? Which, if any, of the corrections would most improve conversion?
The result: Version C was the winner, increasing conversion by 78%. (Full results in Figure 2.5).

78% Relative increase in conversion
Moving the product description up on the page increased conversion by 78%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Conversion Rate</th>
<th>% Relative Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1.92%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version A: Site Security</td>
<td>2.56%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version B: [Product] Specification</td>
<td>2.29%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Version C: Description</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.42%</strong></td>
<td><strong>78.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version D: Shipping [Access] Time</td>
<td>2.35%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After our complete analysis, we discovered three key principles as to why Version C was victorious, as well as what we can learn from the success of the other treatments.

**How to Correct for Anxiety on Product Pages**

**Key Principle #1.** Every element we tested on the page overcorrected some type of customer anxiety, with various elements performing more effectively than others.

It is crucial to note that while Version C produced the largest increase, each treatment page outperformed the control. In other words, in every case where we took steps to alleviate customer anxiety, conversion went up. These results underscore the importance of this effort, as well as the relative ease with which gains can be achieved.

It is important to note the use of the term “overcorrect” here because anxiety is not always rational. You may know that flying in a plane is statistically safer than riding in your car, but, for many of us, our anxiety level is much higher in an airplane. Is it rational? No. Is it still very real? Yes. You may see no reason for concern about a given aspect of your page, but that does not mean anxiety is absent for customers.

**Key Principle #2.** The effectiveness of each corrective is directly related to how it matched the specific concern in the mind of the customer.

While all cases of anxiety correction produced lifts, one change impacted conversion significantly more than the others. Version C overcorrected for a concern that was most immediate to the prospect at the time. Therefore, it is crucial to discover the specific anxieties your customers are experiencing on your product pages. Among a plethora of options, we have found some standard minor corrections you can make for specific anxieties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Source</th>
<th>Specific Correction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product Quality Anxiety</td>
<td>Satisfaction Guarantee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Reliability Anxiety</td>
<td>Customer Testimonials†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Third-party Security Seals or Certificates‡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price Anxiety</td>
<td>Low-price Guarantee</td>
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</table>

Additionally, customer testimonials can be used to alleviate a number of different concerns. You want to choose testimonials that specifically deal with the point of anxiety the customer is experiencing (Figure 3.1).
Key Principle #3. Location plays an important role. You can more effectively correct anxiety by moving a corrective element in closer proximity to where the concern is experienced.

As in real estate, location is of utmost importance when correcting for anxiety on product pages. If you are correcting for form security concerns, you want the correction element right where the customer must click to submit the form. In Version C, we simply added a plot synopsis above the fold rather than farther down the page, and it led to the biggest jump in conversion. It’s not always about creating new elements, but instead, placing existing ones in a location that better serves the thought sequence of customers.

Overcorrecting for product page anxiety

Anxiety is lethal to product page conversion. It is always present, and it is not always rational. By overcorrecting for predictable, or discovered, customer anxiety, you will empower more prospects to complete the sale.

Figure 3.1 – Examples of testimonials addressing specific points of customer anxiety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ease of use</th>
<th>Product quality</th>
<th>Customer satisfaction</th>
<th>Cost justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “Dear Sir, I am impressed at how sophisticated your software is and yet it is easy enough for my 12 year old son to use. And boy is it accurate!! Thanks for creating such a great product.”
- Stephen - Madison, Wisconsin
| “I was pleasantly surprised to find that your program was not like the typical cheap shareware software so prevalent on the internet. Instead it is extremely well crafted and its obvious a mountain of research and effort was put into its design. The step by step instructions are meticulous and easy to follow.”
- Ken - Tampa, Florida
| “Dear Sir... Thank you so much for developing this program. I got so involved in technical analysis and chart reading that I could no longer “see the forest for the trees”. I started losing confidence in my trading ability because I began to lose trust in my own complex trading signals. The result is that I started losing a lot of money. Your program in an excellent direct approach that has really clarified everything for me and helped give me back my confidence. Again, thank you for developing this software.”
- Dennis - San Jose, California
| “I just wanted to drop you a couple of lines and tell you how much I appreciate the level of professionalism you have displayed so far with your product and your support of it. I have paper-traded with your program for the past month and am very excited about my future in the stock market. There is really nothing like Stock-Signal-Pro out there available at any price (I have tried many programs). Your approach to guiding the user through each trade is a unique approach and a great confidence builder. Thank you.”
- Cheryl - Fort Collins, Colorado
The effectiveness of an anxiety corrective is dependent on two essential factors:

**Specificity** – How specific is the corrective to the source of anxiety?

**Proximity** – How close is the corrective to the moment of concern?

If you can identify the main cause of anxiety on the page and implement an overcorrection element in close proximity, you are on your way to higher conversion and more sales.

---

i. Learn more about addressing customer anxiety in this MarketingExperiments Blog post:
   
   http://www.marketingexperiments.com/blog/research-topics/landing-page-optimization-research-topics/addressing-customer-anxiety.html

ii. Download the *Ecommerce Benchmark Study*, made possible by a research grant from Magento, to learn more about the current state of ecommerce marketing:
   
   www.MarketingSherpa.com/Ecommerce

iii. Download the MECLABS Research Catalog to learn about other experiments performed in the MECLABS Laboratory:
   
   http://www.meclabs.com/catalog

iv. Learn about MECLABS methodology:
   
   http://www.meclabs.com/methodology

v. Read how anxiety plays a role in building the “Ultimate Yes” to conversion:
   
   http://www.marketingexperiments.com/blog/marketing-insights/the-ultimate-yes-conversio.html

vi. Explore six test ideas to optimize the value of testimonials on your site:
   
   http://www.marketingexperiments.com/blog/analytics-testing/online-testing-testimonial-ideas.html

vii. Discover two types of security seals that can reduce customer anxiety:
   
   http://www.marketingexperiments.com/blog/research-topics/landing-page-optimization-research-topics/security-seals-reduce-customer-anxiety.html

viii. To learn more about anxiety and the factors that affect it, enroll in the MECLABS Landing Page Optimization Online Course:
    
    http://www.meclabs.com/training/online-course/landing-page-optimization/overview
WEB OPTIMIZATION: TRAFFIC WITHOUT CONVERSION DOESN’T MATTER
- Daniel Burstein, Director of Editorial Content

At Web Optimization Summit 2014 in New York City, Michael Aagaard, Founder, ContentVerve.com, presented, “How, When and Why Minor Changes Have a Major Impact on Conversions,” based on four years of research and dozens of case studies.

To provide you with a few quick test ideas, we reached across the miles to Copenhagen, Denmark, and interviewed Michael from our studios here in Jacksonville, Fla.

In this video interview, Michael discussed:

- Why he’s so passionate about conversion optimization (and why you should be, too)
- A pop-up test that generated 142% more newsletter signups
- The one-word change on call-to-action button copy that consistently produces results (in several languages)

You can watch the video here: http://mecla.bs/MichaelAagaard
The following is a full transcript of our interview if you would prefer to read instead of watch or listen.

**Daniel Burstein:**

Thanks for joining us today. We want to give you, leading up to Web Optimization Summit, a few quick tips, small changes you can make on your websites, landing pages, digital marketing, right now, over the next week, over the next month to make significant changes. I’m talking about small changes that make big results.

I’m thinking about a guy we call the “button man” because he’s done so much testing on call-to-action buttons. That’s Michael Aagaard. He is a conversion copywriter from Copenhagen, Denmark. He is the founder of ContentVerve.com. He’ll be speaking at Web Optimization Summit. He’s joining us today to share a few tips.

So, Michael, the first thing I want to ask you is: Why does conversion optimization matter so much? I remember the first time I met you. It was at Optimization Summit 2011 in Atlanta. You were just so fired up about A/B testing and conversion optimization. Why? Why should marketers care about conversion optimization?

**Michael Aagaard:**

Well, I think kind of, my story anyways – I started my career in online marketing at an agency, and I was an SEO copywriter. So, we spent all this time generating traffic to websites, but in many cases, all the clients got was more traffic. They didn’t really get more sales or more conversions.

At some point, it kind of just dawned upon me, like, “Maybe we can do something on the website that will actually get people to do what we want them to do.”

Because traffic without conversions is pretty much a waste of time and money.

So, that led me to start reading all these books about marketing and stuff, and most of them give you rules.

Always do this. Always do that. Never have more than eight words in your headline. Always write 700 words and use as many verbs as possible, or use no verbs at all. I thought, “Cool. I got the 10 rules. Now, I can sell anything to anyone online.”

The only problem was that it didn’t work. So, I kind of initially went through this, “Yeah.” You know, kind of, “I understand everything.”
So, I understood nothing. Then, I started watching the MarketingExperiments videos. They really got me inspired to start ... also, these guys who weren’t like preaching, “These are the rules. We know everything,” they’re saying, “We don’t know everything, but we can help you find out what’s right in your conversion scenario,” as I like to call it.

So, that kind of got me going. Then, initially, I got the opportunity at the office to do a few landing page tests.

The funny thing was that the most successful test we did that I was involved with was just a simple button test, where we changed the copy of the button, and got a huge lift. That was a bigger lift combined than all the creative versions we’d done on landing pages before.

That was where I was like, “Wow. There’s got to be something here.” Then, I went, obviously, I went to Optimization Summit in Atlanta and it blew my mind.

**The main thing here is that traffic without conversions doesn’t matter.**

So, that’s one of the main reasons why you want to focus on getting people to do what you want them to do on the website.

**Daniel:**

Yeah. You make a great point. I was reading – Webtrends put out some data yesterday. Marketers spend $92 on driving traffic for every dollar they spent on conversion.

We don’t want traffic. We want conversion. We want final results. So, Michael, you’re a guy who’s attended many MarketingSherpa Summits before. You’ve spoken at them. You’re now going to come to Web Optimization Summit in New York. You’re going to be a featured speaker.

I know you were testing out some of this yesterday. You were a keynote in Copenhagen at a conversion optimization event. Tell me, what was one of the tests that you shared that had the biggest response with that audience that people listening today can learn from?

**Michael:**

Well, I mean, I always use tons of case studies in my presentations. Even for a 30-minute session, I have about 17 or 20 case studies in there. Because every time I make a point, I want to have a real example that I’ve been involved with to kind of underline how this would work in the real world.
So, a recent test that just kind of concluded that really got a huge reaction, I opened with it yesterday, was a simple, simple test that I performed for a client on a pop-up. What we were testing was a 30-second delay versus at exit. You know at exit is when the software can kind of see that you’re displaying behavior that kind of shows the software that you’re going to leave the website. That’s what triggers the pop-up.

So, I showed the pop-up, and I told them two different variations. I asked the crowd, “So, how many of you think that the 30-second delay did best?” Nobody raised their hand. Then, I said, “How about at exit?” The whole crowd raised their hand. Then, I showed the results, and actually, it was the other way around.

The one with the 30-second delay actually got 142% more conversion sign-ups for the newsletter. So, if we’re talking about small investment, all we had to do for that one was just go to the tool and go. So, that’s a huge lift.

Then, I asked the crowd, “How many of you would like 142% increase in email sign-ups?” Everybody raises their hand.

I said, “OK. So, how many of you want to spend six months to get that lift? How many of you want to spend two weeks to get that?”

So, I think, for me anyway, one of the things I’ve spent a lot of time optimizing or looking for is the small opportunities where a small investment that we can do without too much research, without too much investment. We can do this quickly, and we can get a huge lift. OK? Now, I know that there are a lot of fluke tests out there with bad data and stuff, where people conclude the test way too soon and small changes, big lifts and stuff. So, that’s not what I’m talking about. I’m talking about serious research here and trying to identify when, why and how do small changes impact conversion. That’s pretty much what I’m going to be talking about, yeah, at the Summit here.

Daniel:

Yeah. Another place where small changes can really impact conversion is on those call-to-action buttons. Like, I joke, you’re the button man.

But, when we were planning this session, I’m so amazed. I’m here in Jacksonville, Fla. Michael’s there in Copenhagen. We’re planning this session. He showed me all these cool tests on the computer. It’s just so cool he can share it over the miles. But, one of the best ones was just one change to one word, you made in the button, really made a big difference. Right?
Michael:

Yeah. So, one of the things I think that’s important to understand with going for small changes and big lifts is that it’s wrong to assume that any little thing you’re going to change is going to have an impact.

So, you move the logo one pixel to the left. That will have a huge impact. No, no. I mean, you have to have a solid hypothesis backing it up. So, what I’ve been able to identify is that when you’re dealing with mission-critical elements, elements the user has to go through in order to get from one end of the funnel to another, those elements, small tweaks have huge impacts because those are some of the few elements that people are actually going to pay attention to.

They’re actually going to read the copy. They’re actually going to have an opinion about what’s in front of them.

Buttons, like you say, great example. There’s a tendency that buttons are just kind of just part of the design. But actually, they play a crucial role in conversion because they tie every single step of the funnel together. Every time you ask anyone to do anything online, they have to go through a call-to-action to be able to do it.

So, small changes, especially to the copy, have huge impact. So, for example, the color and the position of the call-to-action is very important.

It’s going to tell you kind of like where is the action. How am I going to get to the next step? But, after you’ve located the button, I’ve performed so many tests where I can prove that people actually read the copy in there, and to get them to just that last nudge to make them make the right decision. Copy has huge impact.

The test you were talking about now, I performed this on several different websites and in multiple languages, and it works every time.

So, just changing, for example, if you have a button that says “Order now,” for example, or “Order whatever.” If you change that to “Get,” I’ve seen significant lifts over and over again.

You say, “That’s just one word. Why does that have such an impact?”

Again, kind of one of Flint’s optimization principles – it’s not the magnitude of the change on the page that impacts conversion. It’s how it impacts the mind. It’s the magnitude of the change on the mind. OK?
So, what would you rather do? Would you rather go online and order something? Or would you rather get something? You know? It’s a big difference, what happens after. If I’m about to click a button that says “Order,” how many steps are there? What are these guys going to make me do?

Another thing is that “Order” is very business-centric.

What do we want people to do on this page? We want them to order.

What should we write in the button? Oh. We’ll write “Order.”

So, you have to kind of think. Change the perspective and say, “Is that really the best thing to tell our potential customers? That we want them to order? Or should we focus on what we’re giving them, what they can get?”

So, yeah. I could go on. I find stuff like that fascinating.

Daniel:

Yeah. So, don’t focus what we, as a company, what our objectives are. Focus on what customers want. Stop ordering them around. No matter what language you’re using, tell them what they can get. Well, Michael, thanks for your time. I look forward to seeing you in New York City.

Michael:

I look forward to seeing you guys as well.

Daniel:

And thank you guys for watching.
Landing Page Optimization: Multi-product page increases revenue 70%
- John Tackett, Manager of Editorial Content

Finding the right balance of product and presentation on a landing page that markets multiple products can be a tricky endeavor as products compete for customer attention.

In this MarketingExperiments Blog post, let’s look at a recent test that not only increased revenue, but also increased our understanding about customer behavior.

Before we dive in, let’s get a little background research information on the test.

Background: An independent vitamin manufacturer and distributor.
Goal: To increase the total revenue from the page.
Primary Research Question: Which page will generate the highest total revenue?
Approach: A/B multifactorial split test

Side by Side

In the experiment, Treatment A used a radio button format for each of the offers featured. In Treatment B, the design was a horizontal layout that let users compare offers.
**Results**

70% Relative increase in revenue

*Treatment A produced 70% more revenue than Treatment B.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page Design</th>
<th>Conversion Rate</th>
<th>Relative Difference</th>
<th>Revenue Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treatment A</td>
<td>2.88%</td>
<td>74.56%</td>
<td>69.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment B</td>
<td>2.31%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistical Validation: 99%

**What you need to know**

The radio button layout in Treatment A outperformed the horizontal layout by 70%. The results led to a larger question: Why did a vertical layout outperform a horizontal layout?

One explanation is that page layout for multi-product marketing is key to helping you guide customers to the right product for their needs. It does this by giving you the opportunity to help customers compare and contrast among a given set of choices to determine which one is right for them.

Or as Austin McCraw, Senior Director of Content Production, MECLABS, eloquently put it, “The art of marketing is not conversion; it is conversation.”

To learn more about how page layout impacts multi-product marketing, check out the free on-demand Web clinic replay of “Marketing Multiple Products” ([http://mecla.bs/digest0714](http://mecla.bs/digest0714)). You’ll also gain testing insights from the MECLABS research team you can use to aid your own conversion rate optimization efforts.
Optimizing Web Forms
How one company generated 226% more leads from a complex web form (without significantly reducing fields)

It has long been an axiom of mine that the little things are infinitely the most important.

— Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in A Case of Identity

It is highly unlikely that Sir Arthur was contemplating website forms when making the above statement. However, the sentiment certainly translates to our digital world, and is spot on in the case of Web forms. Web forms might not elevate your heart rate, but these mundane little segments of your website actually contain some of your best opportunities to increase conversion.

In marketing, “friction” is anything that slows down the mental momentum that is driving the customer toward a buying decision. Web forms are essentially the definition of friction. By nature, people are wary of sharing their personal information. Asking them to enter that information requires two commitments from them:

1. To decide if your offer is valuable enough to give out their contact information
2. To then take the time and effort to fill out the form

So to some extent, Web forms cause mental and physical friction.

This is widely accepted. Most optimization strategies focus on reducing friction to increase conversion. This is worthy, but could there be a different approach? A strategy that is ultimately more effective? We ran a test to find out.
**Experiment: Can form friction be negated?**

The experiment, Test Protocol 1636, was conducted in partnership with a large news syndication company. The goal was to increase the number of leads the company received from a “Request More Information” Web form. The form itself was not a core cog in its lead generation process, but the form received enough traffic to run a valid experiment.iii

The control form, as seen in Figure 1.1, contains 11 form fields, with 10 being required. It also features sidebar navigation and three equally weighted calls-to-action at the bottom of the page. We ran two treatments against this page.

![Figure 1.1](image)
Treatment A (Figure 1.2) eliminates the navigation and calls-to-action, but it also increases the number of total form fields to 15 – nine required ones. In Figure 1.3, Treatment B is similarly designed, but reduces the total number of form fields from 11 to 10, all of which are required.
Did either treatment improve the lead rate? If so, which treatment?

Both treatments outperformed the control. **Treatment A produced a 109% lift, while Treatment B generated 87% more leads.** Clearly, removing the side navigation and distracting calls-to-action were major contributors to the treatments’ successes, but when we further examined the test metrics, we discovered two puzzling and fascinating anomalies.

**Web Form Anomalies that Impact Conversion**

Anomaly #1. **While Treatment A contained six optional form fields, every prospect who landed on the page filled in every field – without exception.**

Marketing intuition, and prior testing to some extent, trains us to assume that every additional form field decreases the probability of a prospect completing the form. Conversion rate decreases for every extra field you add. We know this, but now the data from this experiment stares us in the face and causes us to ask a simple question: **Why did everyone who saw this form fill out every field, even the optional ones?**

Anomaly #2. **Even though both treatments outperformed the control, there was no statistically significant difference when we compared Treatment A to Treatment B.**

The results conclusively showed the treatments both performed significantly better than the control. However, when compared to each other, the treatments performed in a statistical dead-heat – we could not declare a winner. This raised another simple question: **Why did the higher number of fields (more friction) not affect conversion rate?**

**Getting Higher-quality Leads without Sacrificing Conversion Rate**

When we first began to analyze the control, we considered the objective of the form, which was to set up a phone call between the prospect and the business. Our analysts hypothesized that by helping the customer through the form, we could set an expectation for a productive in-person conversation. This led to the design choices you see in Treatment A (Figure 2.1). The tone of the copy is conversational, and at each step of the process, we ask a question that both personalizes the form and explains why the information is being sought from the prospect.
The result of this tone change is that the questions actually helped to reinforce the value proposition of the phone call the prospect was being asked to set up.

**With whom will we be speaking?**
(We collect your general information so we know with whom we will be speaking and how best to reach you.)

**Where are you located?**
(We collect information about your location in order to route you to the appropriate [company] representative.)

**What information are you interested in discussing?**
(In order to make our conversation as productive as possible, we would like to know a couple of pieces of relevant information.)
The last question in particular was a key factor in building value. By explaining what they wished to discuss, prospects began to visualize the conversation and see themselves receiving the information they needed. This section consisted of the new optional fields added to the control’s form fields.

Fascinatingly, we increased the cost, in the minds of prospects, of filling out the form in Treatment A by adding form fields, while we decreased the cost in Treatment B by eliminating the optional field, as you can see represented in Figure 2.2. Yet, we generated the same lead rate on both pages because the value offered in Treatment A outweighed the value in Treatment B, as seen in Figure 2.3.
By guiding the visitor through the form and increasing the process-level value proposition, we were able to counterbalance the additional friction in the form—capturing higher-quality leads without sacrificing quantity.

**How to Increase Conversion on Your Own Forms**

In a bubble, this is an interesting case to study. But what does it mean for your own Web forms? We uncovered three key principles to help you in your efforts.

**Key Principle #1.** Every action a customer is asked to take—even completing a form field—creates a psychological question in the mind of the customer: Is this really worth it?

It’s a weighing question - that’s what the fulcrum represents in the Value Proposition Heuristic (Figure 3.1). Is the cost greater than the value? Is the value outweighing the cost? Those are the questions the customer is asking.

If you can start seeing and breaking down your pages by cost and value, then you have a lot of control as a marketer.

**Key Principle #2.** Thus, optimizing Web forms transcends simply reducing the number of fields. We must ensure that we build the right amount of value to offset the cost. Sometimes, the right “ask” at the right time can actually imply value.
The way we present and communicate the “ask” can greatly impact how prospects interpret the amount of value. By communicating the benefits prospects will experience by answering the questions, we can offset the cost of giving up that information.

This resulted in two positives for this experiment. We could ask more questions without hurting conversion, and this, in turn, led to higher-quality leads.

**Key Principle #3.** Finally, we must see through our customers’ eyes. Our prospects personify our forms. They give them a tone, a voice, a personality. *It is more than a transaction; it is a conversation* – a conversation that you must guide.

How do we see through our customers’ eyes? We can’t think about our products and services in a company-centric manner. We should go through our checkout processes and fill out our forms as if we are the customers. Experience the experience of the customer. Only then can we engage them in meaningful conversation that will guide them in a way that makes sense.

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**When you begin to see your Web forms through the lens of a conversation, rather than a transaction, you will immediately be better equipped to communicate value to the prospect.**

When you begin to see your Web forms through the lens of a conversation, rather than a transaction, you will immediately be better equipped to communicate value to the prospect. When you communicate value, you might actually increase cost and friction in the mind of the customer by asking for more information, and still keep your conversion rate the same.

If you are ready to tackle your forms and gain more leads from the traffic you already have, we have provided a seven-question checklist to get you started:

- Does my form gather the information my company needs?
- Can I reduce the number of required fields?
- Should I increase the number of required fields for a higher-quality lead?
- Can I group similar form fields and reduce the perceived length of my form?
- Is there a justification (direct or implied) for why each field is presented?
- How can I increase the perceived value of every field in my form?
- Does the form logically guide the visitor through the process of filling it out?

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[i] Learn more about friction in the MarketingExperiments Web clinic replay, *Hidden Friction: The 6 silent killers of conversion:*
ii Review the methodology MECLABS uses when running tests for Research Partners:
www.meclabs.com/methodology

iii Learn about online testing and how to run a valid experiment in the MECLABS Online Testing Course:
http://www.meclabs.com/training/online-course/online-testing/overview

iv See how testing form field length reduced cost-per-lead by $10.66:

v Learn how optional form fields can affect form completions in the MarketingExperiments Web clinic replay, Do Optional Form Fields Help (or Hurt) Conversion? How one required form field was hindering a 275% lift in conversion:

vi Read this MarketingExperiments Blog post to learn more about process-level value propositions, as well the three other essential levels of value propositions:
http://www.marketingexperiments.com/blog/marketing-insights/levels-of-value-propositions.html

vii Discover seven ways to reduce the perceived cost of lead generation offers:
\[c = 4m + 3v + 2(i-f) - 2a\]

\[eme = rv(of + i) - (f + a)\]
Email Marketing
Almost half of all emails are opened on mobile devices, according to Litmus research. That’s definitely big – especially since it was just three years ago that Litmus found only 10% of emails were opened on mobile.

So what can we do to capitalize on this drastic shift?

Justine said we need to re-examine the subscriber experience from the mobile user’s perspective. While she covered the whole path, we’ll hit on four of the steps subscribers experience.
**Step #1. Don’t Ignore Pre-header Text**

Many inboxes are formatted so that users can see not only the subject line, but also a line of additional text in the email. This text is pulled from the first bit of text at the top of your email. However, you can hide this text and still have it show in the pre-header area if you wish.

The default text for most templates is not very valuable messaging. She showed these examples of dos and don’ts to the Summit audience:
“My challenge to you is: Is this a positive brand experience? Is this really what you want people to associate with your ‘From’ name and subject line? Go back and re-evaluate your pre-header text – it’s showing up in mobile inboxes everywhere,” Justine advised.

She suggested making your pre-header “tie into the subject line, bringing [readers] in and encouraging the click.”

The pre-header is another opportunity to infuse value into your email – don’t let it go to waste. iPhones cut your subject lines off at about 35 characters.

**Step #2. Embrace scrolling in an opened email**

This is the same email but it looks completely different. Why?
“It’s because not every smartphone or mobile device is going to support HTML and CSS or even display the email in similar way,” Justine said.

Plus, Android devices vary in what they do and don’t support, so they can be challenging to work with. Some scale the email, some cut off the right side of an email and some support responsive design. Justine said iPhones are a little friendlier, scaling to a 320-pixel width.

But with scaling comes other issues to keep in mind: text and images resize as well.

Justine hit on another key aspect of the user’s experience after opening an email on your mobile device: scrolling.

“Scrolling is a really natural behavior on any mobile device,” she said. “Clicking, or tapping, represents a decision. It’s a point of friction that people are going to either have to embrace or move past.”

In an email like the one below to the right, you don’t know where you’ll be tapping. Where will your finger land with so many small choices? You need to make the user experience more friendly in emails. You don’t need to compact as many options as possible “above the fold.” There is no fold on your iPhone.

“Embrace the scroll; people are inherently going to scroll on mobile devices,” Justine said.

**STEP #3. RECOGNIZE A FINGER IS THE NEW MOUSE**

On mobile devices, people are not clicking. Instead, they’re tapping, rendering your “Click Here” call-to-action illogical. There is no mouse to click on a smartphone – only a finger, or stylus, to tap.

“‘Click Here’ is a really crappy call-to-action anyway. You need to add a lot value, make sure the buttons are topical, and tell people what they’re going to get when they click or tap on your emails,” Justine said.

The “tap” experience is more than the text of your buttons and calls-to-action. It’s also about the area or location you want to physically tap.

Justine said, “You no longer have a one by one [pixel] target area. It’s more like a 40 by 40 target area.”

A finger requires more tapping space than a mouse needs clicking space. Make sure they can actually tap on that valuable CTA you crafted.
**Step #4. Don’t stop at the email – optimize the entire path to purchase**

“You can spend all day long optimizing your mobile emails to make sure they look really beautiful on all these devices, and the whole thing could fall apart once they get past the email and hit your webpage,” Justine said. “I know that’s a challenge for a lot of us. In my team, we’re really small, but still someone else controls the landing pages.”

Do your best to sync those two worlds together.

That means your landing page should allow people to convert – literally. On this Victoria’s Secret page, Justine could not buy the item in her cart.

She could not get the pop-up to disappear no matter how many times she tapped the “X” or zoomed in on the box. With the pop-up fixed on the page, she could not finish her purchase.

For B2B companies, make sure people can read and fill out your forms.

“Make it easy. Don’t create more friction than you have to,” Justine advised.

After all, you successfully moved subscribers past the first five steps to conversion – you don’t want to fail here in the final step.
Since the Stone Age and beyond, storytelling has been paramount for mankind. Sure, the modes and means have changed, but its prevalence certainly hasn’t.

But storytelling is getting better. Our ancestors may have only been armed with their voices (or grunts) and a rock on a wall to tell their tales. Now, our modern world is overflowing with ways to convey our stories.

Of course, we still have the old favorites like our voices and the written word, but with multimedia capabilities like GIFs, videos and PowerPoints, there’s no stopping our stories. In the email marketer’s world, the email is your canvas for a story, so why not approach it that way? Dell did.

David Sierk, Consumer & Small Business Email Strategy, Dell, joined us in Las Vegas as a speaker at MarketingSherpa Email Summit 2014 back in February to talk about it. Dell needed to find a way to communicate the capabilities of its new product, the Dell XP 12 Convertible Ultrabook, which is a hybrid of a laptop and a tablet. A photo in an email wasn’t going to work. A bunch of text? Not happening.

“How do we visually tell a story of what this product does?” David asked me when we chatted in the Email Summit Media Center.

You can watch the video here: http://mecla.bs/VisualStorytelling
The Dell team decided that utilizing a GIF in the email marketing campaign would be the best way to effectively tell the Ultrabook’s story, ultimately lifting revenue 109%. If you weren’t at Summit this year (or just want to see it again), you can view David’s full session from Email Summit, “Old Dog, New Tricks: How Dell designed an email with old technology to launch a new product” here: http://mecla.bs/EmailSummit2014

Or you can watch a brief excerpt of this presentation here: http://mecla.bs/DellEmail

“I think now more than ever with the deluge of emails in a customer’s inbox, trying to get them to click on something is so important,” David said. “People are very visual, so it’s tremendously beneficial to give them something to look at instead of forcing them to read through a ton of text.”

Visual storytelling isn’t easy. It’s a delicate craft that requires a certain eye. But when it’s done right, it’s invaluable.
Because it was our first year running the Media Center at MarketingSherpa Email Summit, we didn’t know what to expect. The plan was to plant a fancy set on the exhibition floor, let me play Erin Andrews and invite marketing guests to join me for some impromptu interviews.

The beauty of doing things freestyle is that unexpectedness – you don’t know what’s going to happen. Let’s not forget the real Erin Andrews’ infamous interview with Richard Sherman (http://mecla.bs/ErinAndrews).

While none of our guests claimed they were the best marketer in the game, there were some surprises. Silverpop’s Loren McDonald did his “Gmail tabs” dance, Dan Ariely discussed dating, and things got deep when Eventful’s Vice President of Operations Paul Ramirez quoted ancient Greek philosopher Plato.

“Necessity is the mother of invention.”

Translated from Plato’s The Republic, it means that when you must do something, you’ll discover a way to do it. It’s not as scholarly when you say it like that, though. This fit Eventful’s situation perfectly.

You can watch the video here: http://mecla.bs/EventfullInterview
Eventful, our Ecommerce Best in Show winner for this year’s MarketingSherpa Email Awards, had historically flourished in the realm of revenue, page views and user acquisition, but one day, everything went south.

“When Google released Panda and our traffic attributable to search tanked, that was like the necessity, and we started talking about necessity being the mother of invention,” Paul said. “It was an external force that caused us to do something.”

The Google algorithm update had punished the Eventful site because it viewed the ecommerce company as a content aggregator. While Eventful once enjoyed a super successful search strategy, it was now as if the website was completely offline.

Paul was joined by Ryan Blomberg, Director of Engineering, also of Eventful, and discussed this onstage during their Email Summit session, “How an ecommerce site transformed its email program to increase purchases by 66%.”

Watch Eventful’s full session from MarketingSherpa Email Summit 2014: http://mecla.bs/EmailSummit2014

Or you can watch a brief preview of this presentation here: http://mecla.bs/EventfulEmail

While page views overall were plummeting, the portion of Eventful emails contributing to page views was actually growing. Google’s Panda update wasn’t affecting email performance, and Eventful’s email program was still highly engaging with solid metrics, with open rates from 20% to 60%.
Eventful had success running “Performer Alert” emails, notifying customers when their favorite artist was coming to town. But the Eventful team thought they could be pushing more Performer Alerts – not for the one artist they’ve already told Eventful they like, but for additional artists they’re fond of.

“Nobody has just one artist in their iPod,” Paul said. “Everybody has hundreds of artists in their iPod. So how do we get that data so that we can speak to our users with more personalization, with more relevance and with greater frequency to increase page views?”

Cue the invention.

Eventful developed recommendation and personalization technology to better predict other performers its customers may like to then craft new Performer Alerts around these findings. Eventful’s email campaign resulted in a 400% lift in the reactivation of inactive subscribers and a 12% increase in site visits.

If it weren’t for the necessity to increase page views, Eventful may not have developed the recommendation technology to reap those impressive results in the first place. The in-depth personalization piece has now become fundamental for Eventful.

“When you uncover that piece that you’ve never actually accessed, that you’ve never actually done anything with, and you see the improvement you can get from that, you wonder why it took you so long,” Ryan explained.

Rather than viewing your next pain point as a source of stress, try to look at it as your next opportunity for success instead – you may be on the verge of your company’s next great invention.
At MarketingSherpa Email Summit 2014, Allison Banko, Reporter, MECLABS, captured an interview with speaker Jeff Rohrs, Vice President of Marketing Insights, ExactTarget, who shared a concept that should appeal to your inner entrepreneur.

If something doesn’t make money, then it doesn’t make sense.

I say this because, according to Jeff, email marketers are often underappreciated (and underpaid) because they don’t effectively connect the dots for executives on the true ROI of their marketing efforts.

“I think email marketers tend to be underappreciated in their organizations,” Jeff explained, “and I think part of that is the language we choose to communicate the value we bring to executives.”

You can watch the video here: http://mecla.bs/DeliverValue

Jeff’s proposed solution is to change the conversation by adjusting the way marketers view what they contribute.
In sum, stop telling people you build email lists and start telling them you’re building proprietary assets that are exclusive to your company. One additional point Jeff shared was how social media is experiencing growing pains due to increasing pressure from executives to see clear ROI from social media.

“The executives are beginning to demand more from those channels, and email marketers understand that because they’ve fought those battles,” Jeff explained.

Ultimately, Jeff delivered the bigger idea that your organizational marketing goals should supersede the channels you use to deliver them. As a result, hopefully marketers will be able to tear down the silos that emerge from those channels in the process.
Many companies – large or small, B2C or B2B, ecommerce or subscription – have more than one product. If you fall into this category, you face a common challenge: finding the best way to market multiple products. You could take a couple of approaches:

- Pack your pages with as many products as possible, hoping that the sheer numbers will pump up conversions
- Slim down to the bare minimum, hoping to focus your prospects’ attention on just one product

Certainly, we can make experienced guesses based on intuition at the effectiveness of these approaches. But at the end of the day, that is not what MECLABS is about – nor you, we expect. We want hard numbers to guide our thinking, not intuition. This led us to an extremely interesting experiment and three key principles to observe when marketing multiple products.

**Experiment: Which Product Presentation Would Increase Revenue?**

This experiment, Test Protocol 1903 in the MECLABS Research Library, was conducted on behalf of our Research Partner, an independent manufacturer and distributor of vitamin supplements. Prospects only reached the page we tested after filling out a form and clicking a “Get My [Product] Now!” button. When reaching the page, the question prospects had to answer was not, “Do I want to buy this product?” It was more of, “Which version of this product do I want to purchase?”

The control page (Figure 1.1) features a standard list format with radio buttons. The “Best Value” option, which is also the most expensive, is pre-checked. The treatment page (Figure 1.2) uses a horizontal matrix
Figure 1.1

Figure 1.2
that generated lifts in other tests (see Figures 1.3-1.5). The extensive form beneath the matrix auto-populates, so only the payment information also required on the control page needs to be entered.

Figure 1.3

Figure 1.4
Did we see a similar lift in this case? **No, the control page outperformed the treatment by 70% in terms of revenue, while conversion changes were insignificant.**

Now the ultimate question: Why? A little digging on our part revealed three key principles.

**Keys to Marketing Multiple Products**

**Key Principle #1.** People do not buy from product pages; people buy from people. The art of marketing is not conversion; it is conversation.

We’ve covered this idea in many MECLABS Web clinics. The focus of our efforts as marketers cannot be on creating better pages; it must be on creating clearer, more guided conversations.

You want to have a conversation with the customer that allows them to understand the value that is built into the page. The page should be rooted in that value, but presented in a thought sequence prospects will understand. By doing so, we’re able to guide them to the action we wish them to take.
Key Principle #2. The goal of a product page is not simply to give prospects more options or products, but to lead them to the “one” option that is most relevant, important and urgent to them.

More options on a single page does not equate to more conversions. We create more conversions by guiding prospects to the best option for them. We do that through the conversations we build on our pages.

Presenting a dozen variations of the same product can be confusing for prospects, especially if there is no product-level value proposition. They may have questions like: Do I want any version of this product? If so, what’s the difference between them all? Which one is right for me?

All this confusion could lead the prospect to leave the page and, ultimately, your website.

We can decrease this confusion and friction by guiding them to the product that best suits them. We’ll learn how to effectively do that through the objectives provided in the next key principle.

Key Principle #3. Therefore, the marketer must use three key objectives when selling multiple products: eliminate, emphasize and express.

Eliminate means to minimize the number of competing choices on your pages as much as possible. Emphasize involves using visual weight to sequence the presentation of products. Lastly, express entails ensuring the product-level value proposition is clearly communicated.

If you can achieve these three objectives, you will have created a conversation that guides a prospect’s thinking and leads them to the best product for them, rather than simply a webpage that presents them with options. In the balance of this article, we will look at how to do this.

Objective #1. Eliminate competing choices

Many times, we unintentionally create too many equally weighted options on a product page. What does this mean? Look at the page depicted in Figure 2.1. On this page, three options make up the sidebar. The marketers hypothesized that they could achieve a lift in conversion by removing the equally weighted choices and simply placing those options in a dropdown box for the user to choose from, as shown in Figure 2.2.

Did it work? Yes, to the tune of a 24% increase in revenue.
Figure 2.1

Control

Figure 2.2

Treatment 1
Indeed, by eliminating unnecessary choices, you can increase conversion. However, there is a caveat. It is possible to eliminate too much. In Figure 2.3, you see a page with three size options for a product. We hypothesized that we could increase conversion by simplifying things and just focusing on the most popular size of the product (while eliminating the extra options). That is not how it worked out. Instead, the new page (Figure 2.4) delivered a 35% decrease in conversion.

![Figure 2.3](image1.png)

![Figure 2.4](image2.png)
Testing new designs is the only way to find out whether you can produce a lift by eliminating competing options, but the research shows in most cases, you can.

To discover whether your pages are good candidates for elimination, ask yourself the following five questions:

- Are the products on my page the ones my customers want?
- Can I visually group my products so they appear as one?
- Can I eliminate one or more competing products?
- Can I segment my traffic in the channel so products are more personalized?
- Is there a gap in my product mix that indicates I have eliminated too much?

**Objective #2. Emphasize desired choices**

When multiple products or options are necessary, you want to be careful not to make them equally weighted. That can lead to “unsupervised thinking” on the part of the prospect. Rather, you want to guide them to the option that best suits them. In Figure 3.1, the webpage has five options that are equally weighted. There is no guidance. The treatment in Figure 3.2 trims the options down to three, but, more importantly, it also adds emphasis to the option on the right, steering prospects in that direction. The change resulted in a 66% increase in conversions.
If you are not handling emphasis well on your pages, consider the five elements below to get back on track. Of course, test the results.

- **Size:** How large is the product on the page?
- **Shape:** Does the shape of the product distinguish it from others?
- **Motion:** Is there a tasteful way to emphasize the product with motion?
- **Color:** Does the color of the product distinguish it from others?
- **Position:** Is the product being emphasized in the main eye-path?

**Objective #3. Express product values**

Three levels form a value proposition: process level, product level and prospect level (Figure 4.1). When working with a page consisting of multiple products, it is absolutely critical that the product-level value proposition is crystal clear. That’s the one that explains why a specific product is the best choice in a specific situation. If the product-level value is unclear, prospects will not understand the difference between products or which product best meets their current needs.

**When working with a page consisting of multiple products, it is absolutely critical that the product-level value proposition is crystal clear.**

![Figure 3.2](image)

![Figure 4.1 - The Proposition Spectrum](image)
In Figures 4.2 and 4.3, you see the control and treatment pages of a couple recent experiments. The control pages fail to clearly demonstrate the product-level value propositions of the products. The treatments take a more copy-heavy approach, allowing us to really flesh out the specific value propositions for each product. The result was a 61% increase in purchases for the first page and a 93% conversion lift for the second.
Experiment: How did our treatment meet the three objectives?

Let’s come full circle, back to the experiment that started it all. We wanted to understand why the control page (shown again in Figure 5.1) outperformed the treatment (Figure 5.2) that was based on other successful experimentation. Let’s look at how it meets the three objectives outlined previously.

**Eliminate**

We did not eliminate any products from the control to the treatment, so that did not factor into this specific situation.

**Emphasize**

The control page visually emphasizes the most expensive – “best value” – version of the product by automatically checking the radio button of that choice. Our treatment, however, visually emphasizes the second – “most popular” – choice, as noted by the red boxes. This change guided more prospects toward choosing the less expensive option, which explains why conversion was roughly equivalent while revenue significantly decreased.

**Express**

Finally, in the treatment, we added a small “cost per serving” feature to the products (Figure 5.3). This showed that the “most popular” option produced a $0.66 savings per serving over the cheapest option. However, the “best value” option only produced a $0.12 savings over the middle option. This fact may have undermined the perceived value of that option and pushed even more prospects toward the middle option.
InCREASING CONVERSION ON MULTIPLE PRODUCT PAGES

If you find yourself in the same boat as the majority of marketers (i.e., having to market multiple products), remember these key principles:

First, people do not buy from product pages; people buy from people. **The art of marketing is not conversion; it is conversation.**

Second, we must understand that our goal is to guide prospects through the multiple products to the “one” option that is most relevant, important and urgent to them.

Third, the marketer must use three key objectives when selling multiple products: **eliminate, emphasize and express.**
See more experiments in the MECLABS Research Catalog:
www.meclabs.com/catalog

See how another Research Partner tested radio buttons and drop downs against one another:
http://www.marketingexperiments.com/site-optimization/radio-vs-dropdown.html

Explore the MarketingExperiments Research Directory to see all of the past Web clinics:
http://www.marketingexperiments.com/research-topics/research_archive.html

Learn more about product-level value propositions:
http://www.marketingexperiments.com/blog/marketing-insights/levels-of-value-propositions.html

Download a special report by MarketingExperiments on unsupervised thinking, “No Unsupervised Thinking: How to increase conversion by guiding your audience”:
http://www.marketingexperiments.com/whitepapers/MEx-No-Unsupervised-Thinking.pdf
\[ c = 4m + 3v + 2(i-f) - 2a \]

\[ eme = rv(of + i) - (f + a) \]
Marketing Optimization
At MarketingSherpa’s headquarters in Jacksonville, Fla., we’re lucky to have the One Spark festival right in our backyard.

If you’re not familiar with the event, One Spark is a large crowdfunding festival that draws entrepreneurs, artists, inventors and amazing food trucks together for five days of elevator pitching to the masses. The festival lasts for five days and is held in the heart of downtown Jacksonville.

According to the One Spark website, this year’s event drew more than 260,000 attendees and generated $3.25 million in capital investments for project creators.

Not too shabby for a festival only in its second year.

The event also had a great speaker series that I had the privilege to attend where thought leaders in the crowdfunding space shared their ideas on marketing and design.

In today’s post, I wanted to share a few snippets of those presentations to give you an idea of how some experts are approaching marketing concepts in an emerging industry.

**Value propositions need consistency amid flexibility for growth and evolution**

Technology has changed the way that marketers engage with their customers, and as a result, how you deliver your value proposition has to adjust, too.

Ross Unger, Experience Design Director, GE Capital Americas, explained how ideas and their value evolves, using Jim Henson, creator of the Muppets, as an example.

Ideas, according to Ross, are constantly changing and evolving. Henson’s idea for loveable creatures made of foam started from a high school project and moved to commercials before eventually evolving further into movies, toys and attractions at Disney theme parks.
The Muppets had flexibility to grow as their audiences changed, but the idea of Kermit remained the consistent.

**STAYING CREATIVE MEANS STAYING INTERESTED**

If marketing is the “pen” in communications with customers, then design is the “paintbrush.” The trick, according to Jeff Barlow, Creative Manager, Starbucks Global Creative, to painting amazing pictures for your customers is to keep your work interesting.

“You don’t do anything really amazing unless some people love it and some people hate it,” Jeff said.

“If you have to make great ideas,” Jeff explained, “it’s a good idea to be continuously curious.”

Jeff used a project based on blues music as an example. He had his team create a design campaign based on the music genre.

To do it, Jeff had them dig deep.

Instead of just creating designs based on what came to mind when they envisioned the phrase “blues music,” they instead took time first to research the history of the blues.

The team covered the lifestyles of famous artists and popular venues, then putting it all together into one piece, pouring heart and soul into a single design they felt encompassed the full weight of the subject.

Jeff also touched on the importance of drawing inspiration from everywhere – not just for the clock.

“It was really, really hot one day,” he explained, “so I made a logo for the sun.”

Jeff admitted it was nothing that he could sell, but it was something he imagined and it kept the creative juices flowing.

He even had his team make a visual design around a fortune in a fortune cookie.

It was a challenge that broke up a work day for his team and exercised their creative minds. Having assignments outside of deadlines and having the courage to “always explore” keeps things fresh and interesting.
INFUSE INSPIRATION INTO EVERY MARKETING PIECE YOU CREATE

Although marketers tend to get caught up in the numbers, the testing and the next big thing, One Spark was a gentle reminder that fun and passion are not separate from what marketers do every day. Keep that wild spark alive and think outside your day-to-day marketing world to really develop something unique and valuable to your audience.

Incorporating inspiration to create a great experience for the people you serve will be evident in the marketing content and campaigns you produce.
Media mix is a frequent topic of questions we receive from MarketingSherpa readers.

It makes sense marketers would be curious. After all, this is a decision that requires getting and spending money, such as setting a media budget or purchasing a software tool.

In the just-released *MarketingSherpa Ecommerce Benchmark Study*, we asked ecommerce companies which channels they invested their marketing budget in.

![Ecommerce Research Chart: Which channels are companies investing in?](image-url)

- Daniel Burstein, Director of Editorial Content

N>329 Copyright: MarketingSherpa Ecommerce Benchmark Study 2014
Email marketing is almost universally used by ecommerce companies

“We mainly focus on email and our website. We also use direct mail. Social media is utilized but hasn’t been a huge factor in driving sales. We are currently exploring PPC, GAP and remarketing,” stated Jessica Deverson, Marketing Manager, Enrichment Journeys, in the Benchmark Study survey.

Email marketing is one of the only channels (direct mail comes to mind as well) that forces a decision. To paraphrase a famous Apple ad, customers can glorify (clickthrough) or vilify (delete or unsubscribe) emails. About the only thing they can’t do is ignore emails. As long as your email earns its way into the inbox, customers have to make a decision on what to do with it.

Emails also have among the shortest lead times of any channel, so marketers can use it to quickly respond to events (including real-time marketing), and it provides feedback on customer performance, whether through A/B testing or simple analytics reviews. Companies can use this information to change campaigns on the fly, as this marketer alluded to in his Benchmark Study survey response:

“Using analytics, I focus day-to-day marketing on hottest response levels on social media or email activity. Seasonal demands influence email campaigns and sales drives.”

Why is the number not 100%, then? Well, to use emails for marketing, you have to first build that list, so it can be a difficult for very new companies to pull off (aside from buying lists). As one marketer noted in the Benchmark Study “Once we acquired some registered customers, we also focused on targeted and value proposition driven email marketing.”

The top three channels most frequently invested in—email marketing, social media marketing and SEO—often require content

“Marketing budget and effectiveness of media channels were the main considerations for determining the mix. We found that social media (especially Facebook) and SEO met our objectives,” stated one marketer’s response in the Benchmark Study.

While “content marketing” is the seventh most-used tactic, according to the ecommerce marketers, there is an interesting similarity among the three most frequently used channels — they all tend to be heavily used channels for content marketing. For example, one marketer described her SEO tactics as, “We tend to focus most of our efforts toward unique content and shifts toward search trends.”

True, the marketers who said they invested in one of these channels, but not in content marketing, could focus all of their email efforts on promos, all social media marketing on ads and all SEO on search engine friendly development.
Or, one might surmise, that even when they are engaged in content marketing, they don’t consider themselves to be engaged in content marketing because they are writing a check to an SEO agency or an email service provider. For this reason, there is technically no line item for “content marketing,” and investment in this channel can be overlooked.

Nevertheless, content marketing does require an investment to be successful, as this marketer pointed out: “This year, we are focusing on storytelling, online community development and adding value via H2H (human-to-human) marketing techniques ... We have invested heavily in quality content marketing through blogs and are anticipating that the current changes we are implementing will support the marketing mix we commenced with at the end of 2012.”

**Print Is the Top Offline Channel**

While print has been a much beleaguered marketing medium of late, it is a natural fit for ecommerce.

Unlike TV or radio, which often offer fleeting mentions of URLs, print advertising puts your website in customers’ hands. Beyond simply a printed URL, ecommerce advertisers also use QR codes, apps and other technology to make the connection between offline and online even easier for customers.

Beyond direct response, print helps reinforce the brand as well, as mentioned by a marketer who replied, “I sell to a niche market that is very serious about the product. It is important to keep brand awareness in a variety of locations both in print and online.”

Print marketing can involve more than just traditional paid media, as content can play a role here as well. One marketer replied to the Benchmark Study stating, “Some of our work has been featured in magazines, but those haven’t been paid (they use our content in exchange for credit).”

**Radio and TV Ads Are the Channels Least Used by Ecommerce Companies**

While broadcast tends to be the medium most associated with marketing and advertising, it is only used by a minority of ecommerce companies. Not only do radio and TV ads tend to be more expensive than other surveyed channels, they can also be more difficult to connect to traffic, sales and ROI than other channels.
DOES GREEN MARKETING REALLY WORK?
WHAT A RECENT EXPERIMENT UNCOVERED ABOUT THE TRUE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF AN ECO-CONSCIOUS MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Almost every industry has seen a shift toward “green technology” or “eco-friendly materials.” While this is certainly a positive step for the earth, it can rightly be questioned whether the marketing that touts this particular aspect of the business is really effective.

Marketing offices across the globe face some very real questions:

- Does highlighting your green practices actually cause more people to buy from you?
- Does it have any impact at all?
- Does it, much to our shock and dismay, temper conversion?

When we find an issue like this, we are inclined to run a test, rather than trust our marketing intuition.

EXPERIMENT: DOES GREEN MARKETING IMPACT CONVERSION?

The Research Partneri for Test Protocol (TP) 11009 is a furniture company wanting to increase sales of its eco-friendly mattresses. Our key tracking metric was simple: purchases. Our research questionii was this: Which landing page would create more mattress sales, A or B?

As you can see in Figure 1.1, the pages were identical save for one key aspect: Version B included an extra section that Version A left out. In this section, we went into more detail about the green aspects of the mattress. It should be noted, however, that both pages included the “GreenGuard Gold Certification Seal,” so it is not as if Version A is devoid of the green marketing angle. Version B simply spelled it out more clearly.
Did the change make a difference? Yes, **Version B outperformed Version A by 46%**. Remember, this lift is in purchases, not simply clickthrough.

![Figure 1.1 – Side-by-side comparison](image)

46% Relative increase in conversion

*Version B with the GreenGuard copy increased conversion by 45.69%.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Conversion Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Version A</td>
<td>0.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version B</td>
<td>0.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Relative Change:</td>
<td>45.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We have now established that green marketing can be effective. But in what cases? How can we put that knowledge to good use and navigate the waters of green marketing with a repeatable methodology?

**FOUR WAYS TO CREATE EFFECTIVE GREEN MARKETING CAMPAIGNS**

In the test above, green marketing made a clear and significant difference. We will now investigate four observations we made as to why this particular green marketing strategy succeeded. You can use them as guides toward your own green marketing success.

**Key Observation #1. The value was tangible. The value created by the copy was directly connected to the customer experience.**

In the case of the GreenGuard Certified mattress, the value of being green was not solely based on its being eco-friendly. It also was customer-friendly. The green nature of the manufacturing process directly affected and increased the quality of the product. The copy stated that the mattress “meets the world’s most rigorous, third-party chemical emissions standards with strict low emission levels for over 360 volatile organic compounds.” Not only is it good for the earth, but it is also good for your toddler and your grandmother.

This tangible benefit to the customer experience is not always present in green marketing. In Figure 2.1, you see three examples of green marketing that fail to leverage a tangible benefit to the customer:

![Figure 2.1 – Examples of green marketing with no tangible benefits to the customer experience](image-url)
1. When a hotel encourages you to reuse your towels to “save water,” it does nothing to improve the value of your experience with them. If anything, it may come off as an attempt to guilt the guest into reducing the hotel’s water bill.

2. GE’s “Ecomagination” campaign is devoid of a tangible benefit to the customer. How does GE being green make my microwave better for me? The campaign doesn’t offer an answer.

3. Conversely, “100% recycled toilet tissue” not only does not offer a tangible benefit to the customer, it also implies that the customer might not receive the same quality experience they would have with a non-green option.

For green marketing to optimally operate, you must be able to point out a tangible benefit to the customer, in addition to the earth-friendly nature of the product.

**Key Observation #2. The issue was relevant. The issue addressed by the copy dealt with a key concern already present in the mind of the prospect.**

For people in the market for a new mattress, especially those with young children, sensitive skin or allergies, there are well-founded concerns regarding the chemicals and other materials that go into the production of the mattress. This concern already exists in the mind of the customer. It does not need to be raised or hyped by the marketer. Again, not all green marketing campaigns address relevant concerns (Figure 3.1):
1. People are more concerned with safety, comfort and affordability when traveling. Whether the airline is green or not is not generally a concern.

2. When choosing a sunscreen, most people don’t go in with aspirations of choosing a green option. Their top concern is sun protection, and biodegradable sunscreen doesn’t appear to meet that need as well as another option can.

3. Again, “biodegradable” is not a common concern brought to the table by people buying pens.

All of these, while potentially noble causes, do not directly connect to a relevant problem the customer experiences. On the other hand, the GreenGuard Certified mattress immediately addressed a pressing concern held by the customer. It is “perfect for those with skin sensitivity or allergies.”

**Key Observation #3.** The claim was unique. The claim of exclusivity in the copy intensified the “only” factor of the product itself.

Just like any other benefit, green marketing benefits gain or lose value based on how many others can make the claim. If a Web hosting platform touts itself as green or eco-friendly, the claim doesn’t hold as much force because the industry is saturated with green options (Figure 4.1). The same is true of BPA-free water bottles (Figure 4.2).

![Figure 4.1 – Being green is not an exclusive claim to Web hosting](Image)
However, in the case of our Research Partner, not many of its competitors could make the “GreenGuard Gold Certification” claim. This added exclusivity – not to mention that Gold status implied they achieved the highest level of certification. Uniqueness drives value up, as long as the benefit in question is actually in demand.
Key Observation #4. The evidence was believable. The evidence provided in the copy lent instant credibility to any of the claims.

After the initial wave of green marketing techniques and practices took the industry by storm, there was a very justified backlash against those simply trying to cash in on the trend. Lawsuits were filed against marketers exaggerating their green-ness, including the likes of SC Johnson, Fiji Water, Hyundai and others. As a result, consumers became wary of green claims and must be persuaded otherwise by believable data.\textsuperscript{vi}

In the winning design above, we did this in three ways:

1. Verification: “100% Certified by GreenGuard Gold”
2. Specification: “Our mattresses get reviewed quarterly to maintain this seal of approval. Last certification: January 4th, 2014.”
3. Quantification: “Low emission levels for over 360 volatile organic compounds.”

The ability to prove that your green practices or eco-friendly products are truly as earth-friendly – and tangibly beneficial – as you claim is a crucial component in creating a green marketing angle that produces a significant increase in conversion.

How To Approach Your Green Marketing Challenges

We have seen that green marketing can work. Still, this is not a recommendation to throw green marketing language into everything you put out. Green marketing is not a cure-all.

However, given the right circumstances, the right green positioning can certainly achieve lifts, and we want you to be able to capitalize on that. Therefore, we have created this checklist to help you analyze and improve your green marketing tactics.

☐ Is your green marketing tangible?
   Does the nature of the green claims actually make the end product more appealing?

☐ Is your green marketing relevant?
   Does the fact that your offer is green solve an important problem in the mind of the customer?

☐ Is your green marketing unique?
   Can anyone else in your vertical make similar claims? If so, how do your claims stand apart?

☐ Is your green marketing believable?
   Are your claims actually true? If so, how can you quantify, verify or specify your particular claims?
Of course, this checklist is only a starting point. Testing your results is the only true way to discover if your new green techniques are truly improving conversion.

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i Learn how Research Partnerships work, and how you can join MECLABS in discovering what really works in marketing: http://www.meclabs.com/partnerships

ii Read this MarketingExperiments Blog post to learn how to craft the right research question: http://www.marketingexperiments.com/blog/general/marketing-optimization-testing-question.html

iii Sometimes we only have intangible benefits to market. In this interview, Tim Kachuriak, Founder and Chief Innovation & Optimization Officer, Next After, explains how to get your customers to say, “heck yes”: http://www.marketingexperiments.com/blog/analytics-testing/get-customers-say-heck-yes.html

iv One way to be relevant is better understand your customers is through data-driven marketing: http://sherpablog.marketingsherpa.com/online-marketing/precision-data-based-marketing

v Discover three techniques for standing out a competitive marketing, including focusing on your “only” factor: http://sherpablog.marketingsherpa.com/marketing/3-techniques-to-stand-out/

vi Read on for nine elements that help make your marketing claims more believable: http://www.marketingexperiments.com/blog/research-topics/credibility-indicators/nine-credibility-elements.html
c = 4m + 3v + 2(i-f) - 2a

eme = rv(of + i) – (f + a)
When it comes to selling, marketers and salespeople seem to have the subtle, yet overwhelming, desire to put the proverbial cart before the horse. It’s easy enough to see why: The sale is the goal. It is the macro-yes we are all searching for. If a lead is generated but fails to close, it’s good for nothing but taking up space in the email database.

Yet, as any married person can tell you, a fruitful relationship rarely starts by seeking the macro-yes first. “Will you marry me?” may be the ultimate “ask” you want to make, but the first “ask” is likely something tamer, such as, “Would you like to go out sometime?”

It is the same with marketing. Some “match made in heaven” leads are ready to close right away, but most leads require some nurturing before coming to a buying decision. What is the most effective way to nurture leads? Are there concrete principles we can rely on to improve our nurturing processes? These are questions that need answers.

Some “match made in heaven” leads are ready to close right away, but most leads require some nurturing before coming to a buying decision.

**EXPERIMENT: WHICH VOICEMAIL SCRIPT WILL GENERATE THE MOST RESPONSES?**

Our Research Partner for this experiment is a well-known insurance provider. One aspect of its sales process is connecting with businesses over the phone to see if it can become the provider of the business’ employee coverage. When a phone call is not answered, the phone representatives use a voicemail script to ensure the company consistently puts itself in a position to have the call returned.
The company wanted us to test its voicemail script against a different script to see if we could produce a lift in callbacks. Those making the calls clearly favored the control, because they believed it produced the best response.

Here is the control (original) script:

Hello, ____, my name is Lisa and I am calling with [insurance company]. We are currently the fifth-largest life insurance carrier in the nation offering competitive rates and solutions to help ease administration burdens. When we last spoke, you told me that you work with a broker for your price quotes for the group life benefits. I would like to get your broker contact information in order to be in consideration when they next do their evaluations for you.

Here is the treatment script:

Hello, ____, my name is Lisa and I am calling with [insurance company]. When we last spoke, you told me that you work with a broker for your price quotes for the group life benefits. Since we do not nationally advertise and may not have had the opportunity to work with your consultant, we would like to share our information with them. I would like to get your broker contact information in order to be in consideration when they next do their evaluations for you.

As you can see, the changes in the script are not massive. In most cases, we simply juggled the order of the sentences. Did these changes have an impact? Yes, the treatment script produced a 31% increase in callbacks.

What was it about the treatment script that nurtured the lead more effectively than the control script? We have arrived at two lead nurturing key principles that should help clarify the situation.

Key Principle #1. Lead nurturing is a process, not an event. The necessary timing allows for the necessary forming – the forming of the final conclusion.

Only 36% of marketers nurture leads, according to a 2012 MarketingSherpa survey (Figure 1.1). That means when 64% of companies acquire a lead, they send it straight to Sales. If that’s what you are doing, you are treating lead nurturing as an event that, once completed, qualifies the lead for closing. This is not how lead nurturing works. It is a process that builds upon itself, always moving the lead toward fostering a conclusion about your product: I need to buy this product.

![Figure 1.1](chart.png)
Why does lead nurturing matter? Is it really a big deal if we do not nurture leads? Figure 1.2 explains that, yes, it is a big deal. You may be sacrificing a potential 45% lift in overall return on investment if you fail to nurture leads.

![Figure 1.2](image)

Key Principle #2. The “final conclusion” is different from the macro-yes, for the conclusion must precede a macro-yes. In the nurturing process, the marketing team fosters a conclusion, and the sales team converts it to a “yes.”

When we talk about a “macro-yes,” we are dealing with the ultimate goal of the sales process: the sale. This is when actual money is exchanged for your product or service. This is not the same event as the final conclusion. The final conclusion is “I want/need this product.” A great deal of distance still separates the conclusion and the actual sale. That is the job of the sales team.

A marketer’s job is not done when a prospect hears about a product. Our job is not done when a prospect shows interest in a product. It is not even done when they actively seek out more information about it. A marketer’s job is only done when prospects decide to buy the product. Marketers foster conclusions. Salespeople turn those conclusions into sales.
If you follow MECLABS, you may be familiar with the imagery of the inverted funnel (Figure 1.3). The idea is that the “funnel” is a misleading symbol for the sales process. Gravity is not your friend. If people “fall” anywhere, it is out of your funnel, not into it. Reaching the macro-yes is more like climbing a mountain than slipping through a funnel. Figure 1.3 gives you an approximation of where the final conclusion in the process is and illustrates that many micro-yes(s) must be achieved to reach that goal.iii

In the lead nurturing voicemail experiment, we pulled three specific levers to help the lead foster a conclusion.

Lever #1. We anchored the message to the context

We use context to navigate the world. Context is how we know whether a joke is appropriate or if a friend needs our condolences. Without context, we cannot make sense of the world, and it is the same with marketing. The first script from the experimentiv begins selling right away without any context for the call, which may have caused listeners to tune out or delete the message before ever reaching the context buried toward the end of the script. We moved the context (“Last time we spoke …”) to the beginning of the treatment script, which helped produce the 31% lift.
In Test Protocol 2083 in MECLABS Research Library, we helped an event management software company optimize an email that went to leads who had abandoned the shopping cart. The original nurture email provides little to no context for the message – it moves directly to selling:

**You’re just one step away** from getting FREE access to [company], our award-winning Event Registration and Management Software. Quickly make an event website, try our event marketing tools, build a registration form template or even generate custom name badges.

Our control introduced context to the mix before moving into selling:

*I noticed that you started the process of getting free access to [company] but weren’t able to finish. Are you concerned about giving out your phone number? Are you worried about high pressure sales tactics or mandatory contracts?*

*We believe our product sells itself, so we’re just here to provide you with whatever assistance you need in getting your event up and running – in whatever way works best for you. We promise NEVER to sell or misuse your information.*

By providing the context for the email and adapting the tone to match that context, we produced a 349% increase in conversion.

**Lever #2. We connected the value proposition to the prospect**

Your primary value proposition is how you answer this question: If I am your ideal prospect, why should I buy from you rather than any of your competitors? However, based on context, your value proposition should have different variations (Figure 2.1), and finding the correct one is essential to maximizing your conversion rate. Keep in mind the three main variations:

- **Prospect-level:** If I am [PROSPECT A], why should I buy from you rather than any of your competitors?
- **Product-level:** If I am [PROSPECT A], why should I buy this product rather than any other product?
- **Process-level:** If I am [PROSPECT A], why should I choose this PPC ad over any other PPC ad?

**In lead nurturing, it is crucial to connect your value proposition to the specific prospect.** In the case of the voicemail experiment, that was the person answering the phone. Our research revealed these people had high anxiety when they felt they were being “sold,” and they also had no interest in learning about an insurance company. They simply wanted to pass us on to their insurance broker. When we made that action the main component of the voicemail, callbacks increased 31%.

In Test Protocol 1483 located in the MECLABS Research Library, we worked with a physician-only social network to improve one of its landing pages. The control page (Figure 2.2) focused on the product-level value proposition of a single report.
The Value Proposition Spectrum

Question: If I am your ideal prospect, why should I buy from you rather than any of your competitors?

Question: If I am [PROSPECT A], why should I buy from you rather than any of your competitors?

Question: If I am [PROSPECT A], why should I buy this product rather than any other product?

Question: If I am [PROSPECT A], why should I click this PPC ad rather than any other PPC ad?

To learn more about derivative value propositions, see the MECLABS course: MECLABS.com/ValueProp

Conversion steps associated with a specific product

Figure 2.1

LEVER #1   LEVER #2   LEVER #3

Is Belyasta a viable treatment for Lupus?

Physicians were asked to share their point of view on...
+ Reactions for slow adoption
+ Safety, efficacy, and cost
+ Comparison to currently available treatments
+ Late-stage clinical alternatives

More About this Survey
+ Post Title: How has Belyasta (belimumab) worked for your lupus patients?
+ Launch Date: September 23, 2011
+ Results: September 29, 2011

Post Statistics:
+ Views: 321
+ Votes: 76
+ Comments: 26

Full Respondents:
+ Specialties: 76

Figure 2.2 - Control
When we redesigned the page to focus on the specific needs of the prospect (Figure 2.3), we added in many other reports the prospect might be interested in reading. The result was a 197% increase in lead generation.

**LEVER #3. We aligned the argument to the “ask”**

People’s minds arrange arguments into the form of a story (Figure 3.1). If you present an argument that deviates from traditional story form, you will likely confuse or bore your prospect.
The four components of the control voicemail looked like this:

- Greeting
- Build company value
- Give reason for call
- Make the “ask”

This is out of order. Logically, we expect an argument to follow this pattern:

- Greeting
- Reason for call
- Build company value
- Make the “ask”

This is exactly the pattern we followed with the treatment message (Figure 3.2), which led to a 31% increase in callbacks.
Similarly, in an email experiment for the same physician-only social media site mentioned previously, we noticed the control email seemed to be out of step with where it was actually positioned in the sales story. The email (Figure 3.3) attempts to build value and get the prospect to click on a “Get Started” button. However, it conflates its objective with the objective of the landing page. The objective of the email is simply to get a click.

In our treatment (Figure 3.4), we dialed back the ambition of the email by simply providing value and a soft call-to-action to “See How [Product] Works.” The result of matching the email’s argument to the appropriate “ask” was a 104% increase in lead generation.
IMPROVE YOUR LEAD NURTURING WITH THIS CHECKLIST

We have established that 64% of companies do not engage in any lead nurturing to speak of. We also determined that those who do engage often rely on unsound principles that can be remedied with simple tweaks.

To create lead nurturing materials that form a process, and are also optimized to foster a final conclusion, there are three levers you must pull. We have created this simple checklist to ensure your lead nurturing is on track.

**Lever #1. Anchor the message to the context**
- □ Is the message clear to your prospects?
- □ Have you justified the reason of the message?

**Lever #2. Connect the value proposition to the prospect**
- □ Is the message relevant to the prospect?
- □ Does the message appeal to your prospect?

**Lever #3. Align the argument to the “ask”**
- □ Is there a clear and logical argument in your material?
- □ Does the “ask” logically flow from your argument?

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i Learn how to join MECLABS in its search for finding what works in marketing by applying for a Research Partnership:
www.meclabs.com/partnerships

ii Download a free excerpt of the 2012 Lead Generation Benchmark Report:

iii Learn more about building up to the ultimate yes on the MarketingExperiments Blog using the inverted funnel:
http://www.marketingexperiments.com/blog/marketing-insights/the-ultimate-yes-conversio.html

iv Discover the methodology MECLABS uses to conduct its experiments:
http://www.meclabs.com/methodology

v Find more experiments from the MECLABS Laboratory in the MECLABS Research Catalog:
http://www.meclabs.com/catalog

vi Learn how a social business strategy can you help prospects instead of selling them:
One of my greatest inspirations in copywriting has always been Rudyard Kipling because he understood the true power words possess.

This little gem, “Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind,” is one of his better-known quotes on the subject, and you can see why.

It’s also no surprise to me that marketers continue to discover new opportunities to increase conversion through their testing of copy.

In today’s B2B Lead Roundtable Blog post, we’ll take a look at how a one small tweak to the copy on a lead generation page increased conversion and what we can learn from the results.

But, before we dive in, here are the research notes to add a little context around the testing.

**Background:** Sophos, a provider of IT security solutions for businesses.

**Goal:** To increase leads from quote requests.

**Primary Research Question:** Which form messaging will result in the most leads?

**Approach:** A/B split test

### Side-by-Side of Control and Treatment

In the treatment, the team at Sophos changed “request a quote” to “for a no obligation quote” to the sub-headline.
The result was a 44% increase in quote form submissions.

One explanation for the increase was the prospects’ fear of commitment. By adding language into the sub-headline that emphasized no obligation, some of the anxiety prospects were experiencing was mitigated.

**WHEN’S THE LAST TIME YOU REQUESTED AN OBLIGATION FROM SALES?**

I like the results of this test because they speak clearly about lead capture from a prospect’s perspective.

They want information.

They want value.

They want this with as little commitment as possible.

Consequently, every word you choose to deliver that value is vital in moving the dial from conversation to conversion.

To learn more about some of the other small changes the team at Sophos shared at MarketingSherpa MarketingExperiments Optimization Summit 2013, checkout the free on-demand replay of “How a Long-term Optimization Strategy Led to a 6,031% Increase in Leads” (http://www.marketingsherpa.com/video/long-term-optimization-strategy) to aid your lead generation efforts.
LEAD GENERATION: HOW TO SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF YOUR PROSPECTS

-Jessica Lorenz, Event Content Specialist

At Lead Gen Summit 2013, Keith Lincoln, Vice President, SmartBear Software, discussed the importance of speaking the language of your customers, and, more importantly, when to say nothing at all.

“If you’re ever tired of hearing from us,” the email read, “you can opt out.”

Curious eyes met the screen at those words.

This text was not in light gray, hidden in small font at the very bottom of the email. Instead, it was in plain sight, in the body of the email – against best practices. Although the team did test an email following best practices that resulted in a slightly lower opt-out rate (under 1%), they ultimately decided they wanted to ensure that the recipients actually wanted to hear from SmartBear by using the more up-front version, resulting in a 2.5% opt-out rate.

How did Keith make the decision to abandon best practices with his campaign?

“Having sat at that lunch table for so long,” Keith said, “[and] knowing how testers and developers thought, I just said ‘Hey, let’s try this.’”

You can watch the video here: http://mecla.bs/SmartBearEmail
He interacted with his ideal audience every day and learned how to speak the language of his customers. He took what he knew about his audience and tested it against best practices.

Ultimately, Keith knew that by offering a quality free trial product, users would become loyal customers and tell their friends about it – all of the emails and encouragement from the marketing department wasn’t necessary to convert free trial users to customers.

Keith explained that they already captured the lead, and the lead was using a free trial version of the software. The team could track and monitor the customer’s use there. They did not want to annoy free trial users and decided that good will outweighed a large list and that a strong product would convert more users to a paid version.

You can watch the entire presentation, “Lead Nurturing: How solving the marketing automation and autonomy paradox increased lead volume 200%,” (http://mecla.bs/digest0735) in the MarketingSherpa video archive to learn more about Keith’s lead gen efforts.
Teachers have long been keen to what marketers are now starting to realize themselves: Getting people to raise their hands isn’t easy. In the classroom, you’re aiming for the hands of students, but in the marketing world, you’re looking for customers’ hands.

This B2B case study illustrates how Bomgar got its customers to raise their hands by building not only a customer advocacy program, but also a truly engaged community of fans. Read on to learn the steps this enterprise remote solutions company took to boost customer referrals by 700%.

**Challenge**

You know your company has some die-hard fans when they dress up as your brand for Halloween. Despite having customers willing to don a big orange Bomgar box, this remote solutions company needed an efficient way to tap these fans for items including:

- Webinars
- Case studies
- Testimonials
- Feedback
- Referrals

At the time, the Bomgar team was relying on Sales to keep up with its customers to source for such projects.

“We had our mental list of 10 to 20 people that we know could go to — our go-to customers and fans,” said Liz Richardson, Social and Advocate Marketing Manager, Bomgar. “We had our top percentage, but we didn’t know who else we could reach out to.”

Richardson added that this was a very “manual and mental” process.

Individually, she handled social media and customer-generated content.

Keeping an ear to conversations going on about Bomgar on social media, she would chime in with brand-neutral commentary when appropriate.
However, she said this was not only a very manual practice, but an ineffective and time-consuming one, too. The team knew that messaging and emailing individuals and twiddling their thumbs while waiting for a response wasn’t the best way to find brand advocates.

The team needed a way to see who was using the solution in an interesting way, who was pleased with Bomgar, and the team needed an easy way to identify these people.

“Surely there’s a better way where I can reach out to many instead of just one at a time through email,” she explained. “Then, I can have them just tell me if they’re interested, instead of being unsure whether they want these opportunities or not.”

The team also did not want those customers who perhaps weren’t big on social media to slip through the cracks, either.

“We knew we had some big fans,” Richardson added. “We wanted to find out, ‘Who else? Who are we missing?’”

**CAMPAIGN**

Bomgar had heard of a customer advocate program that its partner, Dell KACE, was using, involving a gamification effort with challenges and rewards.

“We actually called up our partners at Dell KACE and got a glowing recommendation from them,” Richardson said. “They have the exact same kind of target audience [of IT professionals], so we thought, ‘Well if it’s working for Dell KACE, then maybe it would work for us.’”

**How it works**

Hosted through an online portal, customers can participate in challenges to earn points that can be redeemed for rewards. Every challenge comes with a point and spans into different segments including:

- Reference generators
- Testimonials
- Case studies
- Being a reference
- Speaking opportunities
- Media engagements
- Lead generation (give Bomgar a referral)
- Webinar volunteers
These challenges are key to creating customer content, asking customers for feedback on things such as new products, features or upgrades.

When customers complete a challenge, they earn points they can redeem for rewards and perks such as:

- Third-party gifts (gift cards, tech products)
- Bomgar online education classes
- Industry certification courses and trade shows
- Free lunches
- T-shirts

Richardson decided to take a demo of the program at Dell KACE to see if it had the potential to work for Bomgar — and she was impressed.

“We really, really thought that would be a great way to identify other users and to generate customer content, which, of course, is a much better reference than anything we could say.”

The program was dubbed the Bomgar Insider.
**Step #1. Gain Leadership Approval**

Bomgar’s head of Sales is also the company’s head of Marketing — something that was a conscious decision on the part of Bomgar, Richardson explained.

“Like every company, there tends to be some disconnect sometimes between Sales and Marketing,” she said.

Richardson added that the EVP of Sales and Marketing has worked hard to bridge the two departments. While Marketing is a smaller team, responsible for PR, social media and content generation, she said he’s been extremely open to their efforts.

Marketing presented the idea for the customer advocacy program to him, and he wanted to see the program in action. Richardson’s team got the software provider of the program to hop on a call and walk through it.

“If you can get the concept, it’s like, ‘Why not?’” Richardson asked. “It’s more like, ‘What does it take?’”

The platform isn’t expensive, but it does take a lot of resources to work well. These resources encompass people within the company to run and support the program. However, the EVP of Sales and Marketing’s biggest concern for launching this program rested in the minds of Bomgar’s customers.

He wondered what would happen if Bomgar opened a program like this to its customers and decided to shut it down in a couple months. If Bomgar was to take this program away, would customers participating in the program turn into unhappy customers?

“To address that, we said would start small and test first to make sure that we knew what we were doing and that the customers are actually interested,” Richardson explained.

**Step #2. Educate Internally**

With the EVP of Sales and Marketing’s approval, Richardson and her team next needed to present the customer advocate program to the marketing and sales teams.

When they went to Marketing, they gathered input on how they could successfully use the program, asking, “What do you all need that we can glean from our customers in this way?”

For Sales, the team held a “lunch and learn” — something Bomgar holds regularly.

“Pretty much anytime someone wants to present something to Sales, they feed them,” Richardson joked.
Richardson’s team noticed something unusual during their presentation: Everyone on the sales team was engaged and paying attention.

“There was a little buzz afterward and I think that they were really excited about it,” Richardson recalled.

However, there were some concerns before diving into the program. One salesperson argued that they didn’t want this program to burn out their customers by asking them for a lot of things through these challenges.

“That’s actually kind of the beauty of the program,” Richardson explained. “They don’t feel pressured to do anything. We just send the challenges out there and then they can raise their hand about what they want to do. So they control the level of engagement and they don’t feel burnt out.”

She also added that through the Bomgar Insider, the company would be creating a mutual relationship with Bomgar customers. Though the company is asking them to complete challenges, customers are receiving something in return.

“Whether you give rewards or you just do points, you’re also giving them the ability to feel like they’re getting some sort of value out of it,” Richardson said. “Hopefully we’re sharing some valuable content with them. We’re making them feel heard.”

**Step #3. Test the Program on Known Brand Advocates**

The team tested the Bomgar Insider by reaching out to an initial list of about 75 people. These were individuals who had previously interacted with Bomgar or were enthusiastic about the brand on social media.

“It was people we knew who already loved us, so they weren’t going to be too nitpicky if something wasn’t quite ironed out,” Richardson said.

The team presented the Bomgar Insider to this set in such a way that made them feel special. Participating would give these people first dibs on the program. About 40 of those 75 came onboard to participate.

“In the beginning, we were actually very, very encouraged,” Richardson shared. “We were really surprised by how much they liked it and the feedback [we received].”

She said that the team learned quickly that no matter what the challenge they asked of Bomgar customers, there were fans that would complete every single challenge.
Gamification works

Bomgar’s customer base is comprised of IT and technology professionals — individuals typically fond of gaming. The fact the Bomgar Insider embraces gamification has certainly helped with its positive response among its participants.

Richardson said that some customers tell Bomgar they are competing against coworkers, trying to beat one another on the leaderboard.

“For them, it’s about internal status — it’s not even about ours,” Richardson explained. “But what’s interesting is at first, for them, it was really purely a game. They really like our product — but they were really competing against each other.”

Richardson recalled a particular member who was competing against one of his employees. Though he was driven by competition, he turned into a valuable resource for Bomgar, volunteering for case studies and webinars.

“That company wasn’t even on our radar, so we were able to identify that and to pull them in with the gaming aspect,” she said.
**Step #4. Extend the Program**

After testing out the Bomgar Insider among that first test group, the team then invited Bomgar community members to join in by highlighting the program in the community digest.

For the official launch, Bomgar sent out a dedicated email invitation to the Bomgar Insider.

“With that dedicated email, especially, it just exploded,” Richardson said.

“I would say that when we launched December 5, for the rest of the month, it’s almost all that I had time to do — I could barely keep up.”

**Step #5. Develop Resources to Support the Program**

The biggest “price tag” of the customer advocacy program, according to Richardson, was company resources. In Bomgar’s case, this meant Richardson dedicating her job to running the Bomgar Insider.

These types of programs are dependent on the interactions of your company’s fans. Richardson admitted that the team realized they had more fans than they were expecting, so naturally, it ended up taking a lot more time than Bomgar had initially planned.

“You kind of control the level of interaction there,” she said. “If you want it to be a part-time position where you spend a couple of hours a day in a program, it can be. It just depends on what kind of level of interaction you want with your advocates or how many advocates you actually want to be engaging.”

For Bomgar, justifying the time to invest in the program went back into the Bomgar Insider’s initial selling point of saving time sourcing in the long run. While before it may have taken two weeks to find someone to feature for a webinar, thanks to the Insider, the team can complete this in a day or two and clearly identify who is interested.

The most time is spent on approving and setting up challenges. For example, if a challenge is to comment on a blog post, Richardson will check and confirm these comments in order to award points. She’ll also comment on what the Insiders are doing — providing them with feedback on their comment.

“If someone gives you a really great testimonial or if someone has a really insightful thought about your product, that’s the harder thing,” she explained. “It’s keeping up with all the content and taking the time to make everyone feel really heard and special, to keep that engagement going. That’s what has built a lot of relationships.”
Build and foster relationships

Though the Bomgar Insider strives to garner customer advocacy, the team works to make the program a mutually beneficial relationship.

“I really try to focus on, how do we promote them at that same time that they’re promoting us?” Richardson explained. “So I have some rewards in there like lunch for you and 10 of your colleagues, because that makes them the office hero.”

In addition to the rewards, the program has helped Bomgar build valuable relationships with its customers outside of the realm of the Insider. For example, Richardson has started following some customers on Twitter, and they’ve started following her, too.

“It becomes more, ‘This is a relationship between Liz and Charlie’ instead of just, ‘This is a relationship between Bomgar and a customer at X company,’” she explained. “It goes beyond that now — especially with the ones who are really active.”

However, not every Insider has to be completely active for the program to flourish. There are some participants that simply just pop in every once in a while to do challenges. Thus, you must ensure that there are always a lot of diverse challenges suitable for different Insiders.

The overriding goal is simply to keep people engaged, and some challenges are simply out there just with this goal in mind.

“You have to take the time to make it about a relationship,” Richardson said. “It’s not enough to just throw challenges at them and ask them to do things.”

For example, on Valentine’s Day, the team had Insiders answer a fun question: What’s the best way that an end-user has ever thanked you or shown appreciation for you? (i.e., shown you some love).

With these results, the team made a pie chart titled “Poll: Best Way to Show Appreciation for Your Support Pro” to share on Facebook that fans could then “like” to boost social reach.
“You can give your social networks a little boost, so it just comes around full circle,” Richardson said.

RESULTS

The first four months of the Bomgar Insider reaped:

- 700% increase in customer referrals
- 50% increase in case studies
- 45% increase in the number of Twitter users talking about Bomgar
- 66% increase in mentions
- 12% increase in social media followers
- 138 customers volunteering to be a reference
- 179 customer testimonials
- 35 video submissions

Looking toward the future of the program, Richardson said Bomgar hopes to do much more. She mentioned that the team would like to provide a challenge where customers can be a part of the Bomgar booth at trade shows.

“Where I really hope to take it is, ‘Hey, be part of our booth team,’ and when customers or prospects come to visit our booth, I don’t want them to just talk to Bomgar people. I want them to talk to a customer instead,” she explained.

To further add value for the Insiders, she hopes to elevate the program to offer special opportunities for Bomgar’s top advocates, such as networking in person, receiving rewards and recognition.

But again, with this type of program, customers differ in their levels of engagement. While some people are very active because they value the opportunity, others are simply just interested in the prizes.

You have to keep both ends of the spectrum in mind to make a customer advocacy program successful, Richardson explained.

“It’s finding a happy medium, and it’s different for every industry,” she said.

However, everything boils down to building that relationship with customers. That relationship is what really gives you your most loyal fans, the ones who will fight for your brand, the ones who defend your solution and who really are invested in it.
Build that personal relationship, and then make it about giving your customer something valuable, Richardson said.

“If you can focus on what really speaks to them and how they really feel rewarded in a positive way — especially through recognition and helping them build their own personal brand,” Richardson said, “I believe that is the best possible way you can build a long-lasting, lifetime advocate.”
\[ c = 4m + 3v + 2(i-f) - 2a \]

\[ \text{eme} = rv(\alpha f + i) - (f + \beta) \]
Social media is almost certainly a part of your marketing mix by this point. Facebook and Twitter are the two overall leaders, and B2B marketers are probably at least looking into how to leverage LinkedIn. Then, there are a host of additional social media platforms such as StumbleUpon, SlideShare, Pinterest, Vine, Quora and many others.

One platform that probably isn’t on most marketers’ radars is Reddit. Marketing tactics on Reddit are not readily obvious, and the platform’s users are not there to be marketed to and don’t welcome any interaction that feels like marketing.

Should you consider Reddit in your social media strategy? If so, how should you approach the platform?

To answer these questions, we reached out to two experts in marketing on Reddit: Brent Csutoras, Social Media Strategist, Kairay Media; and Greg Finn, Internet Marketer, Cypress North.

Here is the result of that discussion.

MarketingSherpa: It sounds like a key challenge to marketing on Reddit is the platform’s policies toward that activity. Briefly cover what marketers should know and understand about these policies.

Brent Csutoras: It is very important to first understand that Reddit is not a single community, but rather a platform to either join existing communities or to create your own communities. Each community is made by a Redditor who then can add moderators and who makes the rules for which everyone in the community must follow. It is super important before trying to submit any content to Reddit to understand the moderators and the rules for each Subreddit you intend to submit your content to.

For instance, some Subreddits will not allow certain domains to be submitted to their community, some like “TodayI Learned” require content to be at least two months old, and some like “/worldnews” do not allow news about the U.S.

As to the challenge of marketing to an audience who is by nature against the concept of marketing, it definitely takes someone with a long-term goal and general interest in Reddit to balance the line between being a valuable member of the community, while at the same time, trying to submit your own content.
**Greg Finn:** The biggest question to ask when participating in Reddit is: Are you contributing? That’s essentially what you should be asking yourself before beginning any type of “marketing.” One of the lines in Reddit’s User Agreement is:

“Cluttering Reddit with junk or spam reduces the quality of the Reddit experience.”

Make sure that you are going into the site with the mindset of increasing the quality of content shared. Also, while not blatantly obvious in the user agreement, you should not be too promotional with your content. Reddit moderators will swiftly ban users that only submitting their own content or commenting with their own links. Treat it like a forum and build credibility in a specific Subreddit, add to the community, then start marketing.

**MS:** Beyond the key challenge addressed above, what are some of the unique marketing challenges (and potential advantages) faced when marketing on Reddit over other social media platforms and other digital marketing channels such as email and paid search?

**BC:** I mentioned earlier, how individuals really need to make sure they understand the rules of each Subreddit they are submitting to in order to have any real chance at long-term success.

Another challenge that people might now understand is that Reddit has a lot of anti-spam elements at play on the site. New users to a Subreddit, and in some cases, new domains, can find themselves being auto-filtered or even silent-filtered, where their submissions might show as submitted to them, but are actually hidden from all other users until it becomes approved by a moderator.

Lastly, it is really important to understand Reddit’s voting algorithm, which, to put it simply, values the combination of the first 10 votes the same as the following combination of the next 100 votes, and then 1,000 votes, and so on. This means that what happens during the first 10 votes of your submission are super important. Choosing the right Subreddit, knowing what type of content the moderators support, and selecting the best title when submitting are key to making sure your first couple votes are positive.

**GF:** The biggest challenge is undoubtedly the volatility of the community. There are dozens of unwritten rules that exist and can kill your promotion on arrival if you don’t follow along. If using images, submit with Imgur. Videos? Use YouTube. Follow along with the community, learn the inner workings before giving it a try.

One of the biggest challenges is the sheer competitiveness of Reddit these days. You need quality content, a killer title and a dash of luck to strike it big.
**MS:** What are some actionable tactics or tips for marketers looking to add Reddit to their digital marketing mix?

**BC:** Start by identifying the Subreddits you really want to participate and submit to, followed by learning what works in the Subreddit, both from the community’s acceptance and support, and from what the moderators are going to approve and support. Make sure to fully understand the rules of the Subreddit prior to submitting any content.

Never submit something that doesn’t fit into a Subreddit. It will almost always get removed, which can result in you having filters applied to your submissions and possible having your account silent banned.

You simply do not win on Reddit with brute force.

Lastly, you have to be a Reddit user first and foremost, to really understand how to be an effective marketer within Reddit.

**GF:** Far and away, the most valuable tactic is to go niche. Every marketer is looking for the homerun, but you can easily hit .400 while driving the right mix of targeted traffic to your site. Reddit has individual sections called Subreddits that are niche communities around a specific topic. These Subreddits have the most potential as you can get your content in front of a (smaller) group of highly targeted users.

Local business? Look for a local Subreddit near you and scope the scene.


There is a Subreddit for everything. Seriously, take a look. Jump into a community that fits your niche and start participating. The numbers won’t be overwhelming, but the quality will.

**MS:** Do you have any actual case study examples to share? What did the brand-side marketer do? What were the KPIs tracked and eventual results?

**BC:** We have worked on Reddit for almost eight years and during that time, we have had probably thousands of front pages submissions.
Here are three case studies we published a while back that should help to give some insight into what Reddit has the potential to provide:


- **Case Study: Content is King but Timing is Everything** - [http://www.kairaymedia.com/blog/case-study-content-king-timing/](http://www.kairaymedia.com/blog/case-study-content-king-timing/)


Note that in all of these case studies, not only did the submissions reach the front page of Reddit in very popular Subreddits, but they also got a lot of continued social exposure from people sharing on Facebook, Twitter, Google, etc.

Also note that getting to the front page of Reddit in a popular Subreddit has the potential to send anywhere from 25,000 to 500,000 visits in a short period of time.

**MS:** How does Reddit fit into an overall social media marketing strategy? Does it “work and play well with other” platforms, or is it more a standalone piece?

**BC:** Reddit fits well into any overall marketing strategy, so long as the content and conversations you are sharing fits the Subreddit and the community you are sharing with. The strategy should really start with the content, which is then submitted to a social media [platform] based on where it would be performing and be well received by the audience you’re sharing to.

There are opportunities for people to focus content efforts around topics that would perform well in Reddit, and in doing so, the content would still fit well into all your other social media channels as well.

So in combination or as a standalone strategy, you can have success with Reddit.

**GF:** The nice thing with Reddit is that it can be a social spark for many other social networks. You’ll find many folks use Reddit for news, and you’ll see popular content get in front of more users and be socially shared due to the added exposure. Other social networks like StumbleUpon, Google+ communities and Pinterest will also be picked up, some more than others depending on the specific niche.
**MS:** How about integrating Reddit as a social media element into a larger marketing strategy – where does the platform fit in an overall digital strategy, email marketing campaigns and even more traditional channels, such as event marketing?

**BC:** Reddit definitely has some unique opportunities that companies can take advantage of for their larger marketing strategies. There is the /iama/ Subreddit, where individuals or companies can present themselves to the Reddit community, offering their time to answer any questions the audience may ask.

Obama used the r/iama/ Subreddit when he was running for president to help win more supporters and get his message out.

Arnold Schwarzenegger has used Reddit on numerous occasions to promote his movies and also to get support for charities he supports, such as the After-School All-Stars program.

Note that Arnold has taken the time to be an active member of the Reddit community, which has made this avenue very successful for him. However, not taking the time to understand and interact with Reddit properly can also be harmful to a marketing campaign, such as when Woody Harrelson (or his PR person) held an AMA for his movie “Rampart.”

There are also opportunities to text submissions, which do not contain a link and allow you to write longer entries. These are often used by companies to talk with a specific Subreddit, to possibly give something unique to them or ask for feedback on a project or offering they are considering.

**GF:** The beauty of Reddit is that there are plenty of great, free byproducts that are created from success. The visibility that popular content on Reddit can bring may result in social shares, buzz, links and better search rankings for specific terms. Think about it; the more visibility you have, the more people will talk and the more signals you’ll gain.

Additionally, there are paid ads that can be effective. Newcastle promoted their non-Super Bowl ad that took off socially. So even if you don’t get the hang of it naturally, you can always fall back on the ever-powerful dollar.
Branded social media accounts are for the bold.

While they allow you to interact with a global audience in real time, the damage caused by the wrong post gone viral can be permanent. But then again, he who risks nothing gains nothing. I mention this in context of the potential public relations risks associated with allowing employees to take over a branded social media account.

The idea of an employee-driven Twitter account might make your PR team cringe, but would you be willing to take the leap if it meant a 46% increase in followers? In this MarketingSherpa Blog post, I wanted to share a recent interview I had with Deloitte’s Senior Manager of Employer Brand, Lisa Monarski.

We touched on some of the things she has learned from managing a branded employee Twitter account.

**A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO DELIVER VALUE**

In 2010, Deloitte identified an opportunity to increase the force of its value proposition through Twitter, an emerging medium for B2B marketers at the time.

While the company’s Twitter strategy in the U.S. had previously centered on a B2B audience, the team realized they could launch a separate Twitter handle to answer a common question their talent recruiters often hear:

“What’s it really like to work at Deloitte?”

Translate this into: “If I am your ideal prospect, why should I choose you rather than any of your competitors?”

Sound familiar?
The key thing to remember here is that in order to answer the question, you have to get inside the mind of the customer and see your offer through their eyes.

If your prospects are recruits, there is no better way to do this than to let your employees answer the question for you because, as one-time recruits themselves, your employees identify with your recruiting prospects.

And so, the @LifeAtDeloitte handle was born.

By using this handle, Deloitte was able to convert the attention of recruits into legitimate interest. The account was an opportunity to increase appeal, credibility and clarity of the company’s value proposition.

Let’s also keep in mind that the exclusivity factor was already there: “Only those who sign with us get to experience this.”
**MarketingSherpa:** What prompted you to start an employee-run Twitter account?

**Lisa Monarski:** In the U.S., Deloitte’s Twitter strategy had centered on the B2B audience with specific business- and industry-related handles. In 2010, we realized this could be a great channel to help answer the question that our recruiters hear many times from candidates: “What’s it really like to work at Deloitte?”

**MS:** Who is your target audience?

**LM:** Our target audience is anyone who wants to know what it’s like to work at Deloitte. We think that anyone from a college freshman up through a seasoned professional looking for new challenges can gain insights into our culture and people by following @LifeAtDeloitte.

**MS:** Who (or what) was your inspiration to start an employee-run Twitter account?

**LM:** Our people were the inspiration for this strategy. Whenever you ask someone questions like, “What brought you to Deloitte?” or “Why have you stayed here for so long?” etc., the answer is consistently the same: It’s the people.

We have a very engaging and collegial environment here. Creating a channel where we could feature our people and give them the microphone, so to speak, seemed like an authentic approach to highlighting those who work here.

**MS:** How do you select the employee who gets the handle?

**LM:** We help our followers – more than 15,300 now – experience a good cross-section of Deloitte. Guest tweeters range from new hires and first year auditors or consultants up through some of the more senior leaders of the organization. We make sure to represent our various functions – audit, consulting, tax, enterprise risk and financial advisory.

We also use the account to promote the programs that demonstrate our values such as Warrior Games, Olympics, IMPACT Day, Alternative Spring Break or our presence at national and global events such as Davos or SXSW.
**MS:** Do you brief them before they receive access to the account?

**LM:** Deloitte has social media guidelines and training programs in place as well as policies to protect our clients’ confidentiality. Our guidelines help our people develop strong networks and their personal brand both inside and outside of work.

Every professional who takes a turn as guest tweeter is given a written guide of leading practices. They also participate in what we call a “primer” to discuss the tactical side of managing the handle. It’s truly the professional’s authentic voice that you see in the tweets.

**MS:** How is this affecting your brand?

**LM:** We think it has had a very positive effect on our brand. The @LifeAtDeloitte handle reflects the different opportunities, programs and the quality of people who work here. It’s a very active account also – a lot of retweeting, replies and mentions. What better way to reflect our brand than by being able to hear from and interact with our professionals every day?

**MS:** What effect has this had (if any) on employees?

**LM:** In the last two years, @LifeAtDeloitte has become a destination for our people – not only as followers, but as guest tweeters. Our schedule for guests is often booked six weeks in advance. Our professionals are excited to share their stories and perspectives.

**MS:** How are you measuring the success of the @LifeAtDeloitte handle?

**LM:** We are interested in the growth of the number of followers – we saw a 46% increase this past year alone. Measuring impressions gives us an indication of our alignment with current topics like #SXSW and influential followers, and we regularly check our engagement to know what topics resonate with our followers.

**Brand advocates are brand assets**

Since the 2010 handle launch, Deloitte has seen a growth in followers from colleges, universities and career centers.
A big factor that increased the success of the handle was the team’s ability to effectively express their value proposition in a fresh new way that resonated with their target audiences.

If you would like to start your own “value prop” handle, Lisa suggested involving legal and branding teams. It also doesn’t hurt to have a set of social media guidelines and a crisis management plan in place.
What is personal branding?

A personal brand is an expression of a value proposition.

It is a powerful message that clearly articulates who you are, what you do and how you create value.

When applied to social media, a personal brand creates a memorable first impression that entices visitors to connect with you. When using LinkedIn, a brand message should be the professional version of your value proposition. This brand messaging should be consistent throughout your profile and capture the attention of your visitors.

Here are some tips to establishing a personal brand on LinkedIn.

**Step #1. Personalize your URL**

In LinkedIn, you have the ability to personalize your public profile URL. A personalized URL is essential to establishing your personal brand as it is not only friendlier from an SEO perspective, but it also allows for people to find you more easily.

Here are the steps to personalize your LinkedIn URL:

1. Log in to LinkedIn.

2. Move your cursor over Profile at the top of the page and select Edit Profile.
3. Find your current URL under your profile picture and click Edit.

4. In the Your public profile URL box in the bottom right, click Customize your public profile URL.

5. Enter your new custom URL in the text box.
   - Your custom URL can have between five and 30 letters or numbers.
   - Do not use spaces, symbols or special characters.
   - You cannot change your URL more than three times in six months.
   - If the URL you want isn’t available, don’t give up. Try adding numbers to the end of the URL or slightly changing the text.

6. Click Set Custom URL.
**Step #2. Create a Distinctive Main Headline**

The one thing I’ve learned since my first version of my LinkedIn profile is headlines matter. Headlines create the first impression for visitors and can help distinguish you from the crowd.

I started out by always having my current job title as my headline. However, it wasn’t memorable and didn’t start conversations. So I started looking at my personal brand and learned that the headline is how I can make the best impression. It’s a personal value proposition in less than 150 characters.

Here are some examples of professional headlines. The good headlines convert attention into interest by telling you with minimal characters what a person does and why you should contact them.
Here’s how to change your headline:

1. Move your cursor over Profile at the top of your homepage and select Edit Profile.

2. Click the Edit icon to the left of your current headline, below your name at the top of the profile.

3. Enter your new headline.

4. Click Save.

5. Click Done Editing.

**STEP #3. OPTIMIZE YOUR SUMMARY**

The summary is also part of your value proposition. This is your opportunity to establish who you are, what you are passionate about and what you have accomplished to your visitors in 2,000 characters or less.

The fundamental value proposition question is: If I’m your ideal prospect, why should I buy from you rather than any of your competitors?

In this section, you want to seamlessly connect the dots for your visitors. For these purposes, let’s turn it around and make it fit this experience.
What if you ask: “If I’m your ideal visitor to your LinkedIn page, why should I connect with (or contact) you?” I like to break it down further into a second question – “If I am visiting your page, why should I care who you are, and what value do you bring to the table?”

The biggest key here is you want to talk to visitors using a conversational tone that connects with them.

Talk about yourself in the same way you would if I’m standing next to you. Allow the conversation to be easy to understand and interpret. I want to read your summary and not have to put on my detective cap.

Here’s an example of a summary a with clear value propositions that answers the fundamental value prop question and allows the visitor to know exactly why to contact this individual.

Here’s how to change your summary:

1. Move your cursor over Profile at the top of your homepage and select Edit Profile.

2. Click the Edit icon to the right of your current summary.
3. Enter your new summary.

4. Click Save.

5. Click Done Editing.

**STEP #4. FINALIZE YOUR PROFILE WITH A PROFESSIONAL PICTURE**

A great LinkedIn profile is only complete with a professional looking photo. As Flint McGlaughlin, Managing Director, MECLABS, frequently says, “People buy from people.” If we take this at the purest form, a good picture not only helps to establish your brand, but it helps to personalize your story.

You could have the best LinkedIn profile, but without the picture, your profile will feel incomplete and impersonal.

Having the best picture possible helps establish your professional credibility in alignment with your brand. If you are artsy, you can have an artsy picture of yourself. If you are a photographer, you could have an image with a camera up to one eye. If you are a dog walker, you could have a picture that includes a dog.

If you have trouble finding a good picture of yourself, don’t worry. There are resources that can help you capture the perfect photo (http://digital-photography-school.com/how-to-take-a-great-social-media-profile-picture-in-4-easy-steps/).

One last caveat – please do not include a selfie where a viewer can see your phone.

The goal for your LinkedIn photo should be professional and polished. Save the selfies for Instagram.
Content Marketing
Two previous MarketingSherpa Blog posts, “Content Marketing: Interviewing internal resources,” (http://mecla.bs/digest0544) and “Content Marketing: Making use of internal resources,” (http://mecla.bs/digest0550) covered meeting the challenge of infusing the knowledge of your internal experts into your content marketing strategy.

Marketers, particularly in the B2B sphere, are regularly told that there is a wealth of great insight and knowledge to be mined for content within the enterprise walls. The challenge is turning that knowledge into content that can be shared.

The first post in this series looked at the popular tactic of interviewing those internal experts and turning the interview material into blog posts, e-books, podcasts and more. The second post in the series offered lists of tips and ideas from three content marketing sources.

Today’s post provides three interesting approaches to take in meeting this content marketing goal:

- Thinking like a publisher and developing an editorial process
- Gaining buy-in at the highest levels to improve the process
- Implementing an interesting tactic dubbed the “blog closet” can provide a wealth of internal expertise for sharing

Kari Rippetoe, Content Marketing Manager, Marketing Mojo, explained how her team takes a publishing approach to content marketing with an editorial process:

“We rely heavily on internal resources to create our content!

I’m the content marketing manager for a digital marketing agency, and we create a variety of content including blog posts, webinars, infographics and guides.

Our staff has expertise in a lot of different areas of digital marketing, and we want to showcase that expertise through our content. In fact, content creation is a big part of our culture here. So, almost the entire staff contributes regular blog posts and periodically present webinars.
When I first joined the company, there was an “editorial” calendar of sorts in place for the blog. In fact, the only real purpose it served was to assign blog post deadlines to each writer. This was done without any real interaction with or input from the writers. In addition, writers would run up against their deadlines with no idea about what they were going to write – resulting in last-minute scrambling to get something written.

So, I implemented the following:

- Regular editorial meetings with the writers to determine topics in advance, so they have more time to think about what they want to write.
- True editorial calendar tracking not only due dates, but topics, keywords and special holidays and events to keep in mind.
- Editorial review process to ensure quality of content.

We’ve seen dramatic improvements in the efficiency of content creation on our blog because of these process changes. There is a lot less stress on the writer and me, as the editor of the blog, to get the content written, reviewed, published and distributed.

Brandon Gerson, President of Business Development, Mak & Ger, provided an agency perspective on the importance of making internal content a process that begins from the top down:

This is a challenge that our agency faces on a regular basis while trying to create content for our clients.

Interviews work well, but it is best when they can create their own content.

The challenge is that we are trying to do our job, which requires their help, but they have their own job to do, and thus, by working with us, they are not getting their work done.

Here is the best way we have been able to remedy this …

Take a top-down approach and work with the CMO to make an organizational commitment to generating content.
This helps each department allocate a certain amount of time and employees toward generating content. Ideally, this can be a team effort that can occur on a Friday, when productivity levels are low anyway. A few members of a department can get together and share ideas and turn it into bullet points. We then have a dedicated person email these bullet points to our agency partner, who then works to turn their bullet points into blog posts.

We position this as not only a way to help us create content for their marketing, but also as a camaraderie, brainstorming, team building time where new ideas can formulate.

It can be a hard sell initially, but when it works well, it adds a lot of value to all involved.

We have been able to get one client to commit to this approach with their sales team, and it has produced some great content that has helped all of their closing rates. In addition to blog posts, we have been able to create white papers, numbered lists, e-books and other assets that they now use to nurture their prospects further down the funnel, and it has worked well for the entire organization.

Matt Ceniceros, Director, PulsePoint Group, described the difficulty in getting content from internal specialists – engineers in this case. He offered an interesting tactic dubbed the “blog closet”:

“While I was at Applied Materials, we had the challenge of getting engineers to contribute blog posts to support our social efforts.

When an engineer with a Ph.D. would write a post, it was highly technical and long. It was much like the academic style they are used to. So, it was time-consuming for them and required an extensive rewrite process.

We solved this by asking [them] to do a recorded, informal talk about a pre-approved topic inside our voiceover sound studio. We called this our ‘blog closet’ and the motto was, ‘Come in with an idea, leave with a blog post.’ In fact, we found that in a 20-minute conversation, we got three to four really good posts.”
We took the recorded session and transcribed it. So, even better than a written post, it was in their own words and more like a conversation.

The experience was easy, better and simpler. It was a great way to generate content quickly, and I still use the ‘blog closet’ strategy with clients.

This three-part MarketingSherpa Blog series on utilizing internal content in your content marketing strategy has offered a wide range of ideas to help you integrate your subject-matter experts into a sharable content process.
\[ c = 4m + 3v + 2(i-f) - 2a \]

\[ e_{me} = rv(of + i) - (f + a) \]
Appendix A: Marketing Research
Charts of the Week
Do conversion rates predict success?

*Discovery: Conversion rates for ecommerce sales do not necessarily correlate to success*

Week of May 20, 2014
From the 2014 Ecommerce Benchmark Study

Comparing conversion and success for conversion rates under 10%
Comparing conversion and success for conversion rates under 1%
**Barriers to Growth**

Q: Please rate the following issues from most to least challenging for your company’s ecommerce operation.

Week of May 27, 2014
From the *2014 Ecommerce Benchmark Study*

![Chart showing barriers to growth by ecommerce revenue](image-url)

- **N=1,981**
- **Copyright: MarketingSherpa Ecommerce Benchmark Study 2014**
Which channels are companies investing in?

Q: Which channels does your organization invest its marketing budget in? (select all that apply)

Week of June 3, 2014

From the 2014 Ecommerce Benchmark Study
CHANNELS THAT DRIVE SIGNIFICANT TRAFFIC

Q: What are your significant drivers of traffic? (select all that apply)

Week of June 10, 2014
From the 2014 Ecommerce Benchmark Study

1.19 Channels that Drive Significant Traffic (by Revenue)

N=967

Copyright: MarketingSherpa Ecommerce Benchmark Study 2014
How Can Companies Increase Conversion Rates?

[VIDEO]

Watch this clip from the webinar to learn how ecommerce companies can increase conversion rates.

Week of June 17, 2014
From the 2014 Ecommerce Benchmark Study

You can watch the video here: http://mecla.bs/EcommerceConversion
**Does customer responsiveness correlate with success?**

*Q: How often do you evaluate the following aspects of your webpages or templates?*

Week of June 24, 2014
From the 2014 Ecommerce Benchmark Study

**3.32 How does Customer Responsiveness Correlate with Success?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Quarterly</th>
<th>Annually</th>
<th>Do not Evaluate</th>
<th>When There is a Problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Use</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=2,161

Copyright: MarketingSherpa Ecommerce Benchmark Study 2014
How marketers are using emails to help the sales force

Q: Which of the following types of email campaigns does your organization use to manage your customer’s lifecycle? Please select all that apply.

Week of April 8, 2014
From the 2013 Email Marketing Benchmark Report

- Nurturing: 64%
- Prospecting and qualifying leads: 53%
- Activation: 42%
- Retention: 41%
- Post-sale: 39%

Source: ©2013 MarketingSherpa Email Marketing Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded December 2012, N=581
HOW ARE MARKETING DEPARTMENTS ALLOCATING BUDGETS?

Q: How do you foresee the percentage of your total marketing budget allocated to the following marketing tactics changing over the next year?

Week of April 15, 2014
From the 2013 Email Marketing Benchmark Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing Tactics</th>
<th>Percentage will decrease</th>
<th>Percentage will not change</th>
<th>Percentage will increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email marketing</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media marketing</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEO/paid search/Google</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online display ads</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live events/tradeshows</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile marketing</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct mail</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print ads</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teleprospecting</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place-based advertising</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television/Radio ads</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product placement</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ©2013 MarketingSherpa Email Marketing Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded December 2012, N=821
Are email lists growing or shrinking?

Q: Which statement best describes your organization’s email list growth trend for the past 12 months?

Week of April 22, 2014
From the 2013 Email Marketing Benchmark Report

- Very positive, our list is rapidly growing: 17%
- Somewhat positive, our list is slowly growing: 50%
- Neutral, the gains balance out the losses: 26%
- Somewhat negative, our list is slowly shrinking: 6%
- Very negative, our list is rapidly shrinking: 1%

Source: © 2013 MarketingSherpa Email Marketing Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded December 2012, N=602
Average Clickthrough Rates by Industry

Q: Please write in your organization’s average clickthrough rate.

Week of April 1, 2014
From the 2012 Website Optimization Benchmark Report

- Media or Publishing: 20%
- Software/SaaS: 19%
- Technology Equipment or Hardware: 14%
- Other: 9%
- Manufacturing or Packaged Goods: 9%
- Travel or Hospitality: 9%
- Professional or Financial Services: 9%
- Retail or Ecommerce: 8%
- Education or Health Care: 7%
- Nonprofit: 7%

Source: ©2012 MarketingSherpa Website Optimization Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded April 2012, N=123
DETERMINING WHICH TESTS SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED

Q: What are the contributing factors for your organization when determining what to test?

Week of April 29, 2014
From the 2012 Website Optimization Benchmark Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Web analytics results</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intuition and estimated impact on page</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New tests build on previous test(s)</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems immediately evident on the page</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What our traffic will support</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least estimated IT impact/development implications</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A clear optimization and testing strategy</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ©2012 MarketingSherpa Website Optimization Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded April 2012, N=1,548
How frequently do marketers run A/B tests?

Q: How frequently does your organization complete an optimization test?

Week of May 6, 2014
From the 2012 Website Optimization Benchmark Report

Source: ©2012 MarketingSherpa Website Optimization Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded April 2012, N=592
### Where Do Marketers Focus Their Optimization Efforts?

**Q:** Which of the following website optimization tactics does your organization currently use?

Week of May 13, 2014

From the 2012 Website Optimization Benchmark Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optimization Tactics</th>
<th>Large (Lg)</th>
<th>Medium (Med)</th>
<th>Small (Sm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementing unique landing pages for various marketing campaigns or brands</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing social media on site, such as company blog, forum, etc.</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly optimizing site for SEO purposes</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimizing design and content for conversions</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing other functionality such as a video or a live chat feature</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookie-based personalization of website content</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ©2012 MarketingSherpa Website Optimization Benchmark Survey

Methodology: Fielded April 2012, N=574
\[ c = 4m + 3v + 2(i-f) - 2a \]
\[ eme = rv(cf + i) - (f + a) \]
CONTENT DIRECTORY

The directory includes all of the latest, most useful content published by MECLABS through its brands, MarketingSherpa, MarketingExperiments and B2B Lead Roundtable. You can browse the titles and summaries of this content, and see the full case study, article, video or publication by visiting a content piece’s URL.

You can also view more content by visiting one of MECLABS’ websites:
MarketingSherpa.com – View additional case studies and how-to articles
MarketingExperiments.com – See the latest discoveries found in the MarketingExperiments laboratory
B2B Lead Roundtable Blog – Learn more about lead generation, lead nurturing, lead management and more

To read through the content your peers found most valuable over the last year, download a complimentary copy of our past MECLABS Research Quarterly Digests. In total, the four 2013 editions of the Digest give you access to:

- 100 Case Studies
- 120 How-to Articles
- 49 Marketing Research Charts
- 117 MarketingExperiments Articles
- 22 Web Clinic Articles

URL: http://www.meclabs.com/digests

For a reference of selected content produced by MECLABS from 2008 through 2012, download the MECLABS Research Catalog. The catalog represents more than 80,000 hours of our MECLABS analysts’ and scientists’ thoughtful labor. For the serious practitioner or the interested scholar, it is a window into the work of our institution and may prove helpful as a starting point for new work.

URL: http://www.meclabs.com/catalog

MARKETINGSHERPA CASE STUDIES

B2B Email Marketing: Daring subject line gains 72 product launch email replies, 25% open rate

Date: Tuesday, April 1, 2014
Summary: A new product launch email had the objective of showing how Influitive helps companies garner attention and testimonials from consumers, so the marketing team decided to infuse the copy with that spirit. In this case study, see how Influitive used humor in its copy and subject line to make a lasting impression on its email list.

URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0622
Ecommerce: B2B grows online traffic 25% through use of marketing cloud
Date: Wednesday, April 2, 2014
Summary: Learn how Life Technologies’ migration to a marketing cloud localized and optimized content for its nine regional websites to grow its online traffic 25% and increase its ecommerce orders by 6%.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0623

App Gamification: 4 million barcodes scanned in 85 days for LuckyLabs’ Scantopia
Date: Thursday, April 10, 2014
Summary: In launching its new app, Scantopia, LuckyLabs needed to not only catch the attention of users in a crowded sphere, but keep it. By building social media and gamification into its utility app, LuckyLabs’ Scantopia was able to grow to more than 6,000 social media shares a day. In this MarketingSherpa Inbound Marketing case study, learn how to put a viral “app mentality” into your marketing strategy.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0624

Social Media: How to turn customers into brand advocates
Date: Friday, April 11, 2014
Summary: For many marketers, user-generated content is the upcycling opportunity of a lifetime. It’s free content created by brand advocates with a margin of credibility money can’t buy. Read this MarketingSherpa Blog post to learn about how Evin Catlett, Digital Marketing Manager, Amer Sports, found creative ways to repurpose user-generated content effectively.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0625

Email Marketing: Big ROI for simple B2B alerts
Date: Tuesday, April 15, 2014
Summary: This B2B supplier of used goods sends a targeted alert message to customers when a product they want is in stock. The simple emails often generate more than $10,000 in a single send.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0626

Email Marketing: Retailer repurposes existing content to increase CTR 904%
Date: Thursday, April 17, 2014
Summary: Evo, an outdoor lifestyle retailer, discovered how to leverage some of its already-crafted content to build an email campaign that increased clickthrough 904% and open rate 160%. To learn more about how evo successfully seized this opportunity, keep reading.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0627

Email Marketing: A canvas for visual storytelling
Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2014
Summary: In this MarketingSherpa Blog post, watch an Email Summit 2014 Media Center interview with David Sierk, Consumer & Small Business Email Strategy, Dell. In this video, he reveals how emails can be a canvas for storytelling and how to go beyond a wall of text to convey a more valuable message to consumers.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0628

For permissions: research@meclabs.com
Content Marketing: IBM creates dynamic website, lifts social referral traffic 291% in one year
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2014
Summary: IBM successfully bridged the gap between its social networks and its company site by developing a dynamic content destination, the Big Data & Analytics Hub. Rich in multimedia content and optimized for social sharing, the website fosters deeper engagement with its consumers.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0629

Email Marketing: 300% conversion rate increase for Sony Rewards using consumer data
Date: Tuesday, April 29, 2014
Summary: Sony Electronics wanted to drive acquisitions for the Sony Rewards loyalty program for Sony’s credit card and leveraged internal data to accomplish this. To reach influencers and those most likely to be influenced, Sony also added customer interaction data to drive a 300% increase in overall conversion for the Sony Rewards loyalty program.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0630

Web Optimization: VacationRoost implements 2 testing methodologies to boost total conversion rates by 12%
Date: Thursday, May 1, 2014
Summary: In his featured case study presentation at Web Optimization Summit 2014, May 21-23, Ryan Hutchings, Director of Marketing, VacationRoost, discusses how VacationRoost evolved its testing from random projects to an ongoing effort that eternally benefits the company. This B2C Marketing case study dives into the two testing methodologies the team implemented to lift total conversion rates by 12%.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0631

Customer Advocacy: 700% gain in customer referrals for remote support solutions company
Date: Wednesday, May 7, 2014
Summary: This B2B case study illustrates how Bomgar got its customers to raise their hands by building not only a customer advocacy program, but a truly engaged community of fans. Read on to learn the steps this enterprise remote solutions company took to boost customer referrals by 700%.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0632

Social Media Marketing: Fashion Week ‘trend jacking’ achieves 21 million entries for clothing brand’s social media contest
Date: Thursday, May 8, 2014
Summary: Clothing brand maurices had a passionate audience on social media, but during Fashion Week 2014, it saw an opportunity to expand its digital exposure. Using an incentivized social media campaign, the marketers engaged customers on Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter and Facebook. In this case study, see how maurices’ marketers were able to achieve 21 million entries into their contest, converting social media entrants by 62%.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0633
Customer-centric Marketing: Hotel increases revenue 52% with value proposition-centered email and social campaign
Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2014
Summary: Using email and integrating social media and a new website allowed hotel Jamaica Inn to infuse a cohesive value proposition throughout its marketing messaging. With the new effort, Jamaica Inn was able to achieve a 52% increase in its revenue index since starting this campaign.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0634

Email Marketing: Necessity is the mother of invention
Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2014
Summary: Google’s updates to products and services have created an arms race as marketers struggle to keep up, stay relevant and remain in customers’ inboxes. Read on to learn more about how Paul Ramirez, Vice President of Operations, and Ryan Blomberg, Director of Engineering, both of Eventful, have refined their email strategy to keep pace with Google updates.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0635

Web Optimization: Ancestry.com improves conversion 20% by reducing choice barriers
Date: Thursday, May 15, 2014
Summary: In “Offer Page Transformation: From one-size-fits-all to customized experience,” Ancestry.com’s Emily Titcomb and Julia Babiarz will peel back the layers of an in-house transformation that helped improve conversion 20%. Read on to get a taste of their story before the team unveils it in the Big Apple.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0636

Content Marketing: Optimizing the newsletter offering for CNET
Date: Friday, May 16, 2014
Summary: For Diana Primeau, Director of Member Services at CNET, creating a strong portfolio of email newsletters that resonated with and engaged CNET’s audience was her goal. In this brief video excerpt from Diana’s MarketingSherpa MarketingExperiments Optimization Summit 2013 presentation, see how she began the process of increasing engagement with CNET’s audience through valuable, relevant content.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0637

Email Marketing: Educating new subscribers drives 33% of total email revenue in welcome campaign
Date: Tuesday, May 20, 2014
Summary: Gaming accessories company KontrolFreek designed an automated welcome campaign to sell products and inform consumers with a series of three emails focused on managing expectations, addressing common pain points and joining the online community. Read on to learn how the company drove 33% of total email revenue using this welcome series alone.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0638
Mobile Marketing: Ecommerce site uses responsive design to achieve an 8% lift in cart abandonment campaign

Date: Tuesday, May 27, 2014
Summary: The ecommerce website for Warehouse Shoe Sale, ShopWSS.com, realized that almost 70% of its audience read emails from their mobile devices. However, the design for the ShopWSS.com emails was not responsive to the device. See how the marketers took their active cart abandonment email and optimized it for mobile, and how through A/B split testing, they achieved an 8% lift in conversions from responsive emails.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0639

Content Marketing: How Freightliner Trucks’ community site engages more than 18,000 members

Date: Wednesday, May 28, 2014
Summary: Freightliner created a community website, stocked with hot content, and served it up just the way its audience wanted. Keep your foot on the gas to see the steps that were essential to driving more than 18,000 members to join the Team Run Smart community.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0640

Marketing Automation: Moving past a batch-and-blast email strategy

Date: Friday, May 30, 2014
Summary: Moving past a batch-and-blast email strategy can offer a few challenges along the way. Watch this video for a brief interview with Byron O’Dell, Senior Director, Demand Management, IHS, as he shares how IHS transformed to achieve persona-driven email marketing.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0641

Email Marketing: Persona-based email campaign drives 7% conversion rate with targeted content

Date: Tuesday, June 3, 2014
Summary: By identifying the main persona pathways, the Collegis Education team was able to create a strategy around providing highly targeted content to help prospects overcome their pain points. The results of this effort drove a 7% conversion rate.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0642

PPC Marketing: Testing value proposition messaging increases clickthrough 88%

Date: Wednesday, June 4, 2014
Summary: MECLABS provides marketers of all types with information on what works in marketing. The team wanted to know if they were communicating the value proposition of MECLABS’ brands in the most effective manner for their audiences. This case study reveals how the team used PPC ad testing to increase clickthrough to the company’s websites by 88%.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0643
Community Marketing: 1 million Instagram impressions via creative design contest
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2014
Summary: When rebuilding a long-standing design contest for customers, Design Within Reach incorporated social media like never before. Hosting the contest on Instagram, the marketing team also wanted to engage consumers visually on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Pinterest. The community-driven campaign saw 1 million impressions on the brand’s Instagram profile and increased followers by 32%.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0644

Email Marketing: Zumba Fitness uses personalized video to drive a 50% click-to-open rate
Date: Tuesday, June 10, 2014
Summary: With Zumba Fitness’ annual Instructor’s Convention approaching, the marketing team decided it was the perfect opportunity to grab their email audience’s attention. Inserting a personalized video into a launch email emerged as a way to accomplish this, and by gathering footage from previous years and building subscribers’ names into the creative element, Zumba was able to drive its highest click-to-open rate ever.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0645

Multichannel Marketing: How a B2B’s Road Trip campaign produced a 45% response rate
Date: Wednesday, June 11, 2014
Summary: As a company specializing in commercial printing, Prisma was eager to unveil its new printing capability to existing clients. But the team needed a creative way to do it in order to really make a splash. Discover how this team’s 100% in-house Road Trip campaign fueled a 45% response rate.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0646

Email Marketing: Browse abandonment campaign drives more than $300,000 in additional sales for menswear site
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2014
Summary: Noticing a large portion of customers browsing the website, but not adding a product to their cart, menswear website Paul Fredrick decided to reach out and guide consumers to that next step. By reaching out to customers at this critical point in the funnel, Paul Fredrick was able to experience more than $300,000 in additional sales since launching the campaign in May 2013.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0647

Search Marketing: LexisNexis develops high-touch versus high-tech approach to PPC management for a 798% overall increase in ROI
Date: Thursday, June 19, 2014
Summary: In 2012, LexisNexis Bookstore’s revenue performance was down almost 50% compared to 2011. By focusing on relevance and individual book title searches, the company was able to better target and serve its audience. See how the marketing team studied the most relevant search terms and made each product its own “mini campaign” to drive a 798% overall increase in ROI.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0648
Email Marketing: Database hygiene improves membership communications and reduces record duplication rate to 0.2% for WGBH Boston

Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2014

Summary: Nonprofit public radio broadcaster and television program producer WGBH had marketing programs running across multiple channels, but none of them were coordinated. In this week’s MarketingSherpa Email Marketing case study, see how the marketing team aligned all of their marketing touchpoints so they could better engage, increase funding and help reinvigorate public media.

URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0649

MarketingSherpa How-To Articles

Content Marketing: Come in with an idea, leave with a blog post

Date: Tuesday, April 1, 2014

Summary: B2B marketers are regularly told that there is a wealth of great insight and knowledge to be mined for content within the enterprise walls. The challenge is turning that knowledge into content that can be shared. Learn how you can effectively cultivate internal resources for content in this MarketingSherpa Blog post.

URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0650

Ecommerce: 3 test ideas to optimize the customer shopping experience

Date: Friday, April 4, 2014

Summary: Clearly, there are some important distinctions to be drawn between brick-and-mortar shopping experiences versus shopping online from the comfort of your couch. Continue reading to learn about three test ideas you can use to aid your ecommerce optimization efforts.

URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0651

Social Media Marketing: Adding Reddit to the mix

Date: Tuesday, April 8, 2014

Summary: One platform that probably isn’t on most marketers’ radars is Reddit. Marketing tactics on Reddit are not readily obvious, and the platform’s users are not there to be marketed to and don’t welcome any interaction that feels like marketing. Should you consider Reddit in your social media strategy? If so, how should you approach the platform?

URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0652
Email Marketing: 4 steps to optimize a mobile experience for better conversion
Date: Tuesday, April 15, 2014
Summary: Almost half of all emails are opened on mobile devices, according to Litmus research. That’s definitely big – especially since it was just three years ago that Litmus found only 10% of emails were opened on mobile. So what can you do to capitalize on this drastic shift? Read on to learn more from Justine Jordan, Marketing Director, Litmus, who shared tips you can use to optimize subscribers’ experience through mobile email for better conversion at MarketingSherpa Email Summit 2014.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0653

Marketing Management: Can you use story in your hiring process?
Date: Friday, April 25, 2014
Summary: Content marketing comes down to a great story. Can you use story, and essentially content, for recruiting and HR as well? Read on to learn how you can use principles of content marketing to aid your talent search.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0654

Email Templates: Don’t let routine cramp your style
Date: Tuesday, April 29, 2014
Summary: Routine is often a mix of comfort, habit and autopilot. Watch this video to learn from Jessica Andreasen, Digital Marketing Manager, ZAGG, on why routine is slowly killing your email marketing.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0655

One Spark 2014: Marketing as an art
Date: Friday, May 2, 2014
Summary: One Spark, a crowdsourced funding festival, was held in Jacksonville, Fla., where MarketingSherpa headquarters is located. Read this MarketingSherpa Blog post to learn some top takeaways from the event on emerging marketing concepts and tactics you can apply to your own efforts.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0656

Event Marketing: 3 tips to set your speakers up for success
Date: Tuesday, May 6, 2014
Summary: Planning content for your events can seem a little daunting given all the factors involved. However, the show must go on. Read this MarketingSherpa Blog post to learn three tips to help you set up speakers for success at live events.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0657
Email Marketing: The evolution of value in messaging
Date: Friday, May 9, 2014
Summary: According to Brian Clark, Founder and CEO, Copyblogger Media, email is evolving and becoming more of a challenge for marketers to use effectively. Watch this brief interview from the MarketingSherpa Email Summit 2014 Media Center to learn more about how email is changing, particularly in mobile marketing, and how you can adapt your strategy to provide value in messaging.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0658

Web Optimization: Can you repeat your test results?
Date: Wednesday, May 21, 2014
Summary: Being able to repeat successful test results can help get your testing and optimization back on the right track. Read on to learn more about how Michael Zane, Senior Director Online Marketing, Publishers Clearing House, tested his way in, out and back in to discovering what works with his ideal customers.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0659

Customer-centric Marketing: How transparency translates into trust
Date: Friday, May 23, 2014
Summary: This MarketingSherpa Blog post from the Web Optimization Summit 2014 Wednesday keynote presentation features Harvard Associate Professor Michael Norton speaking on the value of “showing your work” and how that can create a sense that your prospects owe you a purchase. Michael provided several examples of how the perception of hard work can lead to the reality of encouraging a purchase.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0660

Social Media: How employees can help you deliver value on Twitter
Date: Tuesday, May 27, 2014
Summary: Branded social media accounts allow you to interact with a global audience in real time, but one mishap gone viral can be permanent damage. Read on to learn from Lisa Monarski, Senior Manager of Employer Brand, Deloitte, to see how employees can help you deliver value using Twitter.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0661

Web Optimization Summit 2014 Wrap-up: Top 5 takeaways to improve your testing and optimization
Date: Thursday, May 29, 2014
Summary: Web Optimization Summit 2014 was filled with inspiring sessions, stocked with everything from ecommerce and subscription case studies to featured speakers hailing from Harvard Business School and Denmark. We’ve compiled our top five takeaways from Summit for you in this wrap-up article, so you can capitalize on valuable testing insights.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0662
Email Marketing: One good reason to segment your list
Date: Tuesday, June 3, 2014
Summary: With all of the hard work you do to launch campaigns, why not leverage the information customers already have told you about themselves? Read this MarketingSherpa Blog post for more about why customer segmentation practices can aid your marketing.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0663

Multichannel Marketing: 3 tips to help take your ecommerce global
Date: Friday, June 6, 2014
Summary: Achieving ecommerce growth in a global marketplace is tough for any organization. Read this MarketingSherpa Blog post to learn three tips based on how Tom Davis, Global Head of Ecommerce, Puma, used a multichannel marketing approach to successfully position Puma’s ecommerce initiative worldwide.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0664

Social Media: Marketing to millennials
Date: Tuesday, June 10, 2014
Summary: MarketingSherpa is hosting the official IRCE Media Center this week, and we’re on deck interviewing key IRCE speakers to get the pulse on ecommerce marketing in 2014. In this post, watch a video from the Media Center featuring Carlos Gil, Senior Manager, Digital Marketing, Save-A-Lot, as he discussed engaging millennials through social media.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0665

Social Media: 4 steps to build your personal brand using LinkedIn
Date: Friday, June 13, 2014
Summary: LinkedIn is an opportunity to establish your own personal brand. Read this MarketingSherpa Blog post for four steps to take your profile to the next level.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0666

Email Marketing: Stop building lists and start building assets
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2014
Summary: According to Jeff Rohrs, Vice President of Marketing Insights, ExactTarget, email marketers don’t communicate their value to organizations effectively. Watch this video from the MarketingSherpa Email Summit Media Center to learn more from Jeff on how email marketers can move toward greater appreciation by changing the conversation.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0667
Why Savvy Marketers Establish Affiliate Relationships with Bloggers

**Date:** Friday, June 20, 2014

**Summary:** Having bloggers on your marketing team can keep your content flowing, but there are limits to their reach in terms of audience perception. Watch this interview from the MarketingSherpa Media Center at the Internet Retailer Conference and Exhibition with Carolyn Kmet, Chief Marketing Officer, All Inclusive Marketing, to learn more about how recruiting bloggers as affiliates can expose your brand to fresh new audiences.

**URL:** http://mecla.bs/digest0668

2 Tough Questions to Ask About Your Content Marketing Strategy

**Date:** Tuesday, June 24, 2014

**Summary:** How effective is your content marketing strategy? Are you delivering value to your audience? Read this MarketingSherpa Blog post to learn how to create a content mission statement to drive your efforts from Joe Pulizzi, Founder, Content Marketing Institute.

**URL:** http://mecla.bs/digest0669

Ecommerce: 2 tips to help small businesses navigate multichannel marketing

**Date:** Friday, June 27, 2014

**Summary:** We interviewed marketers and industry experts from large businesses at the MarketingSherpa Media Center at IRCE, but we heard from small businesses, too. In this MarketingSherpa Blog post, watch an interview with one of those small business owners on how to navigate the complex world of multichannel marketing.

**URL:** http://mecla.bs/digest0670

**MarketingSherpa Marketing Research Charts of the Week**

Marketing Research Chart: Average clickthrough rates by industry

**Date:** Tuesday, April 1, 2014

**Summary:** What should my company’s clickthrough rate be? Is that rate good or bad? What is the average clickthrough rate for peers in my industry? What can we learn from it? Those first two questions are nearly impossible to answer, but we dive into the third and fourth questions in this MarketingSherpa Chart of the Week.

**URL:** http://mecla.bs/digest0671

Marketing Research Chart: How marketers are using emails to help the sales force

**Date:** Tuesday, April 8, 2014

**Summary:** From the MarketingSherpa Email Marketing Benchmark Report survey, this Chart of the Week shows where in the sales funnel marketers are most, and least, likely to use email marketing.

**URL:** http://mecla.bs/digest0672
Marketing Research Chart: How are marketing departments allocating budgets?
Date: Tuesday, April 15, 2014
Summary: Perhaps more leads are moving to mobile devices – but are marketing department budgets following? For this MarketingSherpa Research Chart, we look at budget data from the Email Marketing Benchmark Report survey.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0673

Marketing Research Chart: Are email lists growing or shrinking?
Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2014
Summary: Numbers are a default way to measure success. A key number for email marketers is list size. While it is an imperfect measurement at best – it certainly doesn’t account for quality – who wouldn’t prefer and work toward a growing list? In this edition of the MarketingSherpa Research Chart of the Week, we look at email list growth trends.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0674

Marketing Research Chart: Determining which tests should be prioritized
Date: Tuesday, April 29, 2014
Summary: Once some marketers start engaging in A/B testing and see the results they can achieve from learning what messaging works best with their customers, they want to test everything. In this MarketingSherpa Research Chart of the Week, we look at the factors that drive marketers’ testing decisions.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0675

Marketing Research Chart: How frequently do marketers run A/B tests?
Date: Tuesday, May 6, 2014
Summary: To gain a better sense of how marketers react to ever-changing customers, we explore split testing frequency in this MarketingSherpa Research Chart of the Week.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0676

Marketing Research Chart: Where do marketers focus their optimization efforts?
Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2014
Summary: At its core, optimization is simply about making things better. There is no shortage of steps in the funnel or marketing tactics you can address when looking to improve your marketing results. So which elements of the marketing ecosystem does a marketer prioritize? In this MarketingSherpa Research Chart, we’ll take a look at the tactics marketers are most (and least) likely to utilize.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0677
Marketing Research Chart: Do conversion rates predict success?
Date: Tuesday, May 20, 2014
Summary: Conversion is at the heart of marketing. Our goal as marketers is to show prospects why they should buy. But are marketers too focused on conversion rates? Do they really predict success? This week’s MarketingSherpa Research Chart of the Week provides a counterintuitive discovery on this topic.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0678

Ecommerce Research Chart: Barriers to growth
Date: Tuesday, May 27, 2014
Summary: Ecommerce spending in the United States was set to grow 13.4% in 2013, according to Forrester Research. That’s a torrid pace when you consider the overall economy grew at a respectable 2.6% last year. Of course, that doesn’t mean that ecommerce growth for the individual company is a given. In the just-released MarketingSherpa Ecommerce Benchmark Study, we asked marketers about their barriers to growth.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0679

Ecommerce Research Chart: Which channels are companies investing in?
Date: Tuesday, June 3, 2014
Summary: Media mix is a frequent topic of questions we receive from MarketingSherpa readers. So in this week’s chart, we’ll take a MarketingSherpa look at which channels ecommerce companies are investing in.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0680

Ecommerce Research Chart: Channels that drive significant traffic
Date: Tuesday, June 10, 2014
Summary: To help with your channel selection, in this MarketingSherpa Research Chart of the Week, we’ll take a look at which channels drive significant traffic for the 967 marketers we surveyed for this specific question – ranging from companies with less than $10,000 in ecommerce revenue to more than $100 million.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0681

Ecommerce Research Chart: How can companies increase conversion rates? [Video]
Date: Tuesday, June 17, 2014
Summary: In this special MarketingSherpa Research Chart of the Week, we’re sharing a brief excerpt from a recent webinar broadcasted live from the Internet Retailer Conference and Exhibition. MarketingSherpa hosted the official Media Center of the event, interviewing speakers and attendees on what works in ecommerce marketing. This webinar highlighted key research and data from the just released MarketingSherpa Ecommerce Benchmark Study, made possible by a research grant from Magento.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0682
Ecommerce Research Chart: Does customer responsiveness correlate with success?

**Date:** Tuesday, June 24, 2014

**Summary:** Focusing on the customer should correlate with success, while alienating the customer should have the opposite effect. But does it? In this MarketingSherpa Chart of the Week, we’ll arm you with the data you need to make investment decisions (or gain budget approval) to serve your customers better than the competition.

**URL:** [http://mecla.bs/digest0683](http://mecla.bs/digest0683)

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**MARKETING SHERPA WEBINARS**

**How to Use a Multichannel Campaign Strategy to Reach Key Decision-Makers**

**Date:** Wednesday, April 9, 2014

**Summary:** In this MarketingSherpa webinar replay, learn how Bob Birge, Director of Marketing, Blue Pillar, increased his company’s briefing call response rate 50% by using a mix of creative direct mail, emails and calls as strategic touch points. This case study, which was presented at MarketingSherpa Email Summit 2014, walks through the challenges Birge and his team faced in attempting to access the elusive C-suite though cold calling and emailing. The team realized they needed a new plan of action after a failed business trip with zero booked meetings.

**URL:** [http://mecla.bs/digest0684](http://mecla.bs/digest0684)

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**Email Marketing: Why one test triggered a 180-degree turn in how Whirlpool markets to consumers**

**Date:** Tuesday, April 22, 2014

**Summary:** When Tom Mender, Senior Database Marketing Manager, Whirlpool, left MarketingSherpa Email Summit 2013 and went back to the office, he took what he learned and immediately applied it to his efforts. In this webinar, Mender explained the results of that post-Summit test and how it led to a 180-degree turn in how Whirlpool markets to its customers. By using testing and optimization, this new strategy has created a test-and-learn culture at the world’s leading global home appliance manufacturer.

**URL:** [http://mecla.bs/digest0685](http://mecla.bs/digest0685)

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**Marketing Mashup: Top takeaways from Web Optimization Summit 2014**

**Date:** Tuesday, June 26, 2014

**Summary:** At MarketingSherpa MarketingExperiments Web Optimization Summit 2014, marketers gathered from around the world to discover what works in conversion rate optimization. In this webinar, Daniel Burstein, Director of Editorial Content, and Allison Banko, Reporter, both of MECLABS, distilled two days of Summit sessions and featured speakers into 30 minutes. Watch this webinar for the best of Web Optimization Summit 2014 with ideas to improve your marketing efforts.

**URL:** [http://mecla.bs/digest0686](http://mecla.bs/digest0686)
MARKETING EXPERIMENTS

Web Optimization: Traffic without conversion doesn’t matter
Date: Thursday, April 3, 2014
Summary: You can drive all the traffic you want to a website, but traffic without conversion is useless. So read on to learn more about why testing and optimization are vital to your conversion efforts from an interview Michael Aagaard, Founder, ContentVerve.com.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0687

Web Optimization: How to get your customers to say heck yes!
Date: Monday, April 7, 2014
Summary: For ecommerce marketers, and many marketers with a subscription-based business, delivering an effective value proposition for the products they sell online is vital. Read on to learn more from Tim Kachuriak, Founder and Chief Innovation & Optimization Officer, Next After, on how Web optimization can transform your value proposition.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0688

Online Testing: 5 steps to launching tests and being your own teacher
Date: Thursday, April 10, 2014
Summary: Testing is the marketer’s ultimate tool to discover more about customers. Read on to learn about testing and optimization guidelines that can aid your efforts to discover what appeals to your ideal customer.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0689

Lead Generation: Great results don’t always have to be complicated
Date: Monday, April 14, 2014
Summary: To discover what works best for generating leads in your organization, you have to wade through enough trial and error until success is the only destination left. Watch this brief video excerpt from Optimization Summit 2013 to hear how Shawn Burns, Global Vice President of Digital Marketing, SAP, used testing and optimization to achieve impressive results.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0690

Lead Generation: Customers are looking for a solution to their problems
Date: Thursday, April 17, 2014
Summary: At Lead Gen Summit 2013, Jon Ciampi, Vice President of Marketing, Corporate Development, Business and Strategic Accounts, CRC Health, recounted his challenges with PPC ads. Watch this brief video excerpt from his presentation to learn more about how A/B split testing can aid your efforts to learn more about what appeals to your ideal customer.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0691
Email Marketing: Using A/B tests to challenge your assumptions  
**Date:** Monday, April 21, 2014  
**Summary:** Watch this MarketingSherpa Email Summit 2014 Media Center interview with Dan Ariely, Psychology and Behavioral Economics Professor, Duke University, to hear him speak on testing assumptions.  
**URL:** [http://mecla.bs/digest0692](http://mecla.bs/digest0692)

Hidden Value: What buried treasure are you ignoring in your marketing?  
**Date:** Thursday, April 24, 2014  
**Summary:** Read this MarketingExperiments Blog post to learn how to better reveal the hidden value your product or service has to improve your marketing efforts.  
**URL:** [http://mecla.bs/digest0693](http://mecla.bs/digest0693)

Online Testing: 3 ways to boost conversions  
**Date:** Monday, April 28, 2014  
**Summary:** Often when we begin working with a new Research Partner, the first question is, “Where do we start?” One suggestion is to use a framework to help your marketing team better understand where opportunities exist to improve conversion. Read on to learn three simple ways you can begin to explore increasing conversion.  
**URL:** [http://mecla.bs/digest0694](http://mecla.bs/digest0694)

Ecommerce Marketing: 5 takeaways from ROI Revolution Retail Traffic Summit  
**Date:** Thursday, May 1, 2014  
**Summary:** Over two days, ROI Revolution’s first annual Retail Traffic Summit presented sessions on ecommerce marketing in today’s online shopping marketplace. Read this MarketingExperiments Blog post for top takeaways of the event to inspire your ecommerce marketing efforts.  
**URL:** [http://mecla.bs/digest0695](http://mecla.bs/digest0695)

Landing Page Optimization: Multi-product page increases revenue 70%  
**Date:** Monday, May 5, 2014  
**Summary:** Finding the right balance of product and presentation on a landing page that markets multiple products can be a tricky endeavor as products compete for customer attention. In this MarketingExperiments Blog post, let’s look at a recent test that increased revenue 70% that you can use to aid your multi-product marketing efforts.  
**URL:** [http://mecla.bs/digest0696](http://mecla.bs/digest0696)

Ecommerce: 5-question checklist for eliminating products  
**Date:** Thursday, May 8, 2014  
**Summary:** In this MarketingExperiments Blog post, we’ll look at two tests recently featured in one of our Web clinics on marketing multiple products, plus a valuable checklist you can use to aid your own efforts.  
**URL:** [http://mecla.bs/digest0697](http://mecla.bs/digest0697)
Testing to Find Your Aha Moment for Value Proposition

Date: Monday, May 12, 2014
Summary: It can be so easy to assume you know what your customer wants. The key to discovering your value proposition is to ask the right questions, not just the ones that affirm what you already know. Watch this video excerpt to learn more from Jon Ciampi, Vice President of Marketing, Business Development & Corporate Development, CRC Health, on testing to find your “aha moment” for your value proposition.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0698

A/B Testing: The value of choice in decision-making

Date: Thursday, May 15, 2014
Summary: Reducing confusion and mitigating friction are things that come to mind when thinking about presenting the optimal amount of choices for customers. However, as we discovered from a recent experiment, perspective on optimizing choice can have a big impact. Learn why value of choice is a powerful tool in decision-making.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0699

Value Proposition: Which of your value claims is most appealing to new customers?

Date: Monday, May 19, 2014
Summary: At Web Optimization Summit 2014, the audience helped to create a real-time test. Read this MarketingExperiments Blog post to learn about behind-the-scenes creation of the Live Test that launched at Summit.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0700

Web Optimization: Simple CTA test yields 956% increase in clickthrough

Date: Thursday, May 22, 2014
Summary: A principle marketers at Web Optimization Summit 2014 have overwhelmingly voiced is to start simple and dig deeper when testing to discover more insights about your customers. Learn how Cindy Lu, Senior Marketing Manager, Digital Marketing Strategy, VMware, did just that.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0701

CTA Optimization: Button copy test increases click rate 95%

Date: Thursday, May 29, 2014
Summary: Button copy testing can help you set the tone for conversation with your customers and even possibly deliver a quick lift in the process. Read on to learn about the button experiment Jacob Baldwin, Digital Marketing Manager, One Call Now, shared at Web Optimization Summit 2014.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0702
Lead Generation: Is your registration form part of the customer journey?
Date: Monday, June 2, 2014
Summary: When it comes to lead gen optimization, some marketers will opt to cut the number of required fields. But how can you optimize a lead gen form without making big cuts? Read on to learn from Austin McCraw, Ben Huppertz and Ben Filip, all of MECLABS, about a recent experiment in which one company increased its lead rate without significantly changing the form.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0703

Landing Page Optimization: Testing green marketing increases conversion 46%
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2014
Summary: Green marketing is a tactic mostly built on the premise that environmental preference will hopefully equal customer preference. But does green marketing truly impact customer purchase behavior? Read on to learn about a recent experiment in which a mattress company put a green marketing initiative to the test.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0704

Online Testing: 3 steps for finding a testable hypothesis
Date: Monday, June 9, 2014
Summary: While having a suboptimal webpage can often be thought of as “losing money as we speak,” it is important to take the time to complete what we call the “discovery phase.” Read this MarketingExperiments Blog post to learn three steps you can use to find a testable hypothesis.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0705

Ecommerce Marketing: Top takeaways from the MarketingSherpa Media Center at IRCE
Date: Thursday, June 12, 2014
Summary: This week, MarketingSherpa, sister company to MarketingExperiments, has been hosting the official IRCE Media Center. The team has been interviewing IRCE speakers and attendees on the hottest trends in ecommerce. Read on MarketingExperiments Blog post to learn more about some of the top takeaways from the event.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0706

Web Optimization: 5 steps to create a small testing program
Date: Monday, June 16, 2014
Summary: At Web Optimization Summit 2014, Ryan Hutchings, Director of Marketing, VacationRoost, shared the “nuts and bolts” behind putting together a foundational testing process. Read this MarketingExperiments Blog post for five steps you can use to build a small testing program in your organization.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0707
PPC Marketing: 3 steps to improve performance
Date: Thursday, June 19, 2014
Summary: Paid search marketing campaigns can be used as a proving ground for optimization. It can also be a method for discovering more about your customer base. Watch this video to as Jon Powell, Senior Manager of Research and Strategy, MECLABS, explains three steps you can use to help increase the performance of your PPC ads.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0708

Online Optimization: Testing value prop to grow your tribe
Date: Monday, June 23, 2014
Summary: When it comes to nonprofit marketing, having an effective value proposition is vital. Delivering strong appeal and exclusivity to donors, in some circumstances, can potentially make or break your solvency. Read on to learn about how testing your value proposition can aid your efforts to build a tribe of donors who want you to succeed.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0709

A/B Testing: Product page testing increases conversion 78%
Date: Friday, June 26, 2014
Summary: In this MarketingExperiments Blog post, review a recent experiment where an e-book retailer tested its product pages and achieved an increase in conversion of 78%. You’ll learn why mitigating anxiety is so important to ecommerce marketing and how to test the customer experience.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0710

Online Testing: How to use A/A testing to break through the noise
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014
Summary: Getting a lift from your testing efforts can be satisfying and rewarding. But is a lift truly a lift, or is it simply a false positive resulting from natural variation? Read on to learn how Emily Emmer Senior, Interactive Marketing Manager, Extra Storage Space, used variance testing to break through the noise.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0711

MarketingExperiments Web Clinics

Lead Nurturing Tested - New research reveals how slight script tweaks increased response by 31%
Date: Thursday, April 3, 2014
Summary: Watch this Web clinic replay to learn more about a recent experiment that revealed how some minor changes to call scripts can increase response from your prospects.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0712
How to Achieve a 232% Lift - The repeatable methodology one company used to generate a significant lift
Date: Thursday, April 17, 2014
Summary: Watch this Web clinic replay to learn about a recent experiment that revealed how changes in strategy can garner significant, repeatable results – a 232% lift for one company alone.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0713

Marketing Multiple Products - How radical thinking about a multi-product offer led to a 70% increase in conversion
Date: Thursday, May 1, 2014
Summary: Watch this Web clinic replay to learn about a recent experiment with an independent vitamin manufacturer that revealed how changing your approach to multi-product marketing can increase user engagement – and more importantly, conversion.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0714

Optimizing Web Forms - How one company generated 226% more leads from a complex Web form (without significantly reducing fields)
Date: Thursday, May 22, 2014
Summary: Lead generation is a delicate balance between generating a high quantity of leads, but also high-quality leads. So how can we capture more leads across our Web forms without significantly reducing the quality of those leads? Watch this Web clinic replay to learn about a recent experiment that revealed how some minor changes to form fields can increase response from your prospects.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0715

Does Green Marketing Really Work? What a recent experiment uncovered about the true psychological impact of an eco-conscious marketing campaign
Date: Thursday, June 5, 2014
Summary: “Going green” has become a prevalent part of marketing strategies as marketers work to reach a new eco-conscious customer base with their products and services. However, do green marketing tactics really have an impact on customer purchases? Watch this Web clinic replay to learn more about the measurable impact of green marketing on customer behavior.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0716

Product Pages Tested - How carefully pinpointing customer anxiety led to a 78% increase in conversion
Date: Thursday, June 26, 2014
Summary: Product pages are often the heart and soul of an ecommerce website. It’s where you showcase products and initiate a conversation with customers that guides them to convert. However, there are elements on your product pages that can potentially have a deep impact on customer behavior by quickly turning conversation into concern. Watch this Web clinic replay to learn about three key principles you can use to identify and reduce customer anxiety.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0717
B2B Lead Roundtable

Lead Generation: The power of copy
Date: Monday, April 7, 2014
Summary: Copy is powerful. Marketers continue to discover new opportunities to increase conversion through their testing of copy. Read on to learn how one small tweak to the copy on a lead generation page increased conversion and what we can learn from the results.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0718

Lead Qualification: Webinar marketing strategy boosts conversion 500%
Date: Monday, April 14, 2014
Summary: Watch this video excerpt from Lead Gen Summit 2013 to discover how Adobe revamped its webinar marketing strategy to increase sales conversion 500%.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0719

Lead Generation: How to establish a connection offline
Date: Monday, April 21, 2014
Summary: Read this B2B Lead Roundtable Blog post to learn how a tech company increased its number of executive briefing calls by making a connection with the C-suite through a unique direct mailing.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0720

Content Marketing: 4 stages to mapping your content strategy
Date: Monday, April 28, 2014
Summary: Part of effective content marketing is matching your content to where your customers are in the buying process. Read on to learn more from Ninan Chacko, CEO, PR Newswire, about how mapping content can aid your lead nurturing efforts.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0721

Customer-centric Marketing: Using metaphors in your B2B strategy
Date: Monday, May 5, 2014
Summary: Watch this video excerpt featuring Jacob Baldwin, Digital Marketing Manager, One Call Now, at Lead Gen Summit 2013 presenting how he and his team utilized personas to optimize the company’s website.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0722

Lead Generation: How to speak the language of your prospects
Date: Monday, May 12, 2014
Summary: At Lead Gen Summit 2013, Keith Lincoln, Vice President, SmartBear Software, discussed the importance of speaking the language of your customers and, more importantly, when to say nothing at all.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0723
Multichannel Marketing: How zombies invaded a B2B campaign
Date: Monday, May 19, 2014
Summary: Utilizing pop culture in your B2B marketing efforts can pay off big if you deliver the right message at the right time to an audience that can connect your service to your play on the reference. Watch the video segment with Christine Nurnberger, Vice President Marketing, SunGard Availability Services, speaking on how the B2B IT disaster recovery company was able to take advantage of the pop culture zombie trend to create an effective multichannel marketing effort.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0724

B2B Content Marketing: Find the bigger story
Date: Monday, June 2, 2014
Summary: Watch this video excerpt from a Lead Gen Summit 2013 keynote presentation on B2B content marketing for lead nurturing. See how Maersk Group achieved 1.8 million Facebook likes by providing sharable, interesting content to its audience.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0725

Lead Generation: 2 tips to transform your content marketing
Date: Monday, June 9, 2014
Summary: Content marketing can be an effective tactic for lead generation as customers look to your brand as an authority in the marketplace. Read this B2B Lead Roundtable Blog post for two tips on how to transform your content marketing.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0726

Lead Generation: 2 simple tactics to determine cost per lead
Date: Monday, June 16, 2014
Summary: Getting to the heart of lead costs is not easy given the multitude of factors to consider when calculating cost per lead. Read on for two simple tips you can use to help you figure out lead costs.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0727

Email Marketing: 3 lead nurture paths you should automate
Date: Monday, June 23, 2014
Summary: Marketing automation can help you manage lead nurturing in a complex marketplace. Read on for three lead nurture paths you can automate to aid your B2B marketing efforts.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0728

Lead Generation: Streamlining the process for quality over quantity
Date: Monday, June 30, 2014
Summary: Watch this Lead Gen Summit 2013 presentation from Debbie Pryer, Siemens Healthcare, to learn how you can streamline your lead generation process to achieve quality over quantity.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0729
VIDEO PRESENTATIONS

Lead Capture: How a health care company increased demand for services 300%
Date: Thursday, April 3, 2014
Summary: At MarketingSherpa Lead Gen Summit 2013, Jon Ciampi, Vice President of Marketing, CRC Health, expressed the importance of testing every element in your sales funnel to optimize the process for your customers and save money, time and resources for your marketing team.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0730

Lead Qualification: How demographics, email content and behavior helped Adobe boost conversions 500%
Date: Tuesday, April 8, 2014
Summary: At Lead Gen Summit 2013, Shelby Britton, Senior Product Marketing Manager, Adobe, sat down with Daniel Burstein, Director of Editorial Content, MECLABS, and discussed how Adobe used webinars to put the company on the path to the evolution of lead qualification. Watch this Lead Gen Summit session replay to hear more about Britton’s top three takeaways to transform the way your organization looks at lead qualification.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0731

Social Media: 3 steps to help you develop a social business strategy
Date: Wednesday, April 16, 2014
Summary: Social media has grown into a marketing strategy staple for a vast majority of organizations. But the underlying driver of innovation within social media is in how it can be utilized as a business strategy, according to Todd Wilms, Head of Social Strategy, and Adriel Sanchez, Vice President, Demand Generation, both of SAP. In this presentation, they discussed why SAP adopted of a business model called “social business” to help teams around the globe use social media to effectively engage local audiences.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0732

Content Marketing: 5 steps for using content to influence decisions and convert customers
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2014
Summary: In his keynote session, “Content Marketing: How a 60-year-old media company is pioneering the future of advertising,” Ninan Chacko, CEO, PR Newswire, talked to the audience about how content can be used to build their businesses. In his session, Chacko presented a five-step process to executing effective content marketing.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0733
Lead Capture: How a B2B site redesign appealed to diversifying markets and increased conversion 81%
Date: Wednesday, April 30, 2014
Summary: This session from MarketingSherpa Lead Gen Summit 2013 features Jacob Baldwin, Digital Marketing Manager, One Call Now, discussing how the company used customer personas and keyword research to increase conversions 81%. One Call Now is a message notification service that delivers mass automated phone calls, text messages and emails. Needing to establish its business in the professional sphere, One Call Now redesigned its website, leaning heavily on SEO tactics and testing.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0734

Lead Nurturing: How solving the marketing automation and autonomy paradox increased lead volume 200%
Date: Tuesday, May 6, 2014
Summary: “Sometimes, it’s the best marketing that wins, but in this, no marketing wins — how do you market without being perceived as doing marketing?” Keith Lincoln, Vice President of Marketing, SmartBear Software, asked during his session at MarketingSherpa Lead Gen Summit 2013. During this session, Lincoln underscored the importance of knowing your audience.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0735

How Much Should Leads Cost? Tips for different channels, industries and deal sizes
Date: Wednesday, May 14, 2014
Summary: This full hour-long session from MarketingSherpa Lead Gen Summit 2013 involved four industry experts discussing a number of specific issues around the topic of cost per lead and was moderated by Daniel Burstein, Director of Editorial Content, MECLABS. The panel discussion featured both moderated topics and direct questions from Summit attendees.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0736

Content Marketing: 6 forgotten strategies to execute now
Date: Thursday, May 22, 2014
Summary: According to a Content Marketing Institute study, 93% of B2B marketers use content marketing, but only 42% believe they are effective at the channel. Furthermore, only 44% of B2B marketers have a documented strategy. Joe Pulizzi, Founder, Content Marketing Institute, took the stage at Lead Gen Summit 2013 to share the importance of content marketing and discussed six forgotten strategies that will help marketers improve their efforts in nurturing leads with content.
URL: http://mecla.bs/digest0737
ABOUT MARKETERSHERPA LLC

MarketingSherpa is a firm, wholly owned by MECLABS, specializing in reporting on what works in all aspects of marketing.

Praised by *The Economist*, Harvard Business School’s Working Knowledge forum and Entrepreneur.com, MarketingSherpa is recognized throughout the marketing industry for offering practical, results-based marketing information researched and written by a staff of in-house reporters.

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ABOUT MECLABS

MECLABS is a science lab that uses real-world research and training to help business leaders get better use out of sales and marketing technology and resources, including Internet marketing, website optimization and lead management. We have been involved in direct Research Partnerships with companies throughout Europe and North America since 2001.

MECLABS deploys a rigorous methodology to conduct research. This research is compiled from:

- More than 10 years of Research Partnership with our clients
- 1,300 experiments
- Over 1 billion emails
- 10,000 landing pages
- 5 million telephone calls
- 500,000 decision-maker conversations

MECLABS has consulted with companies like Cisco Systems, Johnson & Johnson, The New York Times, 1-800-FLOWERS and NetSuite to optimize sales and marketing processes and achieve triple-digit ROI gains.

Learn more about Research Partnerships at MECLABS.com
Or call 1-877-895-1717 (outside the U.S. call 904-813-7000)
The MECLABS Quarterly Research Digest features a selection of our most useful discoveries from MECLABS’ family of brands. The goal of the Research Digest is to provide a simple reference to our latest experiments and case studies from marketers like you.

**People’s minds arrange arguments into the form of a story.** If you present an argument that deviates from traditional story form, you will likely confuse or bore your prospect.

See more on page 73

We must understand that our goal is to guide prospects through the multiple products to the ‘one’ option that is most relevant, important and urgent to them.

See more on page 41

**Optimizing Web forms transcends simply reducing the number of fields.**

See more on page 18

Control | Treatment
---|---
![Image](image1.png) | ![Image](image2.png)

↑ 61% increase in purchases

↑ 104% increase in lead generation

↑ 87% more leads

↑ 109% lift

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