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THE **SECRET** TO **NATURAL** WEBSITE CONVERSIONS

HOW TO INCREASE CONVERSIONS BY COMBINING USABILITY
DESIGN AND ORGANIC SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

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Introduction

The Magical Secret to Natural Site Conversions for Usability and SEO

The techniques I'm about to share with you are the result of over seventeen years working in the search engine optimization and user experience web design fields. I use them because they work and I'm lazy.

Beginning around 2001, I referred to my combination of Usability and SEO web site design as "holistic" It makes sense because to view things holistically means to view them from every angle. The goal is to consider every possibility and use this information to make better choices.

Those in the holistic health fields say their approach is to **treat the cause, not the symptoms**. The same is true for a natural approach to web design and search engine optimization. Hundreds of thousands of investment dollars are poured into fixing search engine rank and making an impression on search engines so that certain pages accurately meet search queries. Alongside this are web site redesigns and adjustments for better brand awareness, user experience and social buzz.

To my way of thinking, it makes far more sense to invest in building web sites properly from the start. This requires understanding about how search engines "see" web sites. It also requires having a deeper knowledge of your site visitors' habits and needs. Search engines want this same information, so why not tackle both at the same time?

Most of the information you'll find here doesn't require any extra HTML code. Where it might, I will give you the example code. You don't need any advanced expertise to follow the suggestions in this ebook. All you need is the ability to write.

Meet the Mighty Homepage

Make a good impression for search engines and site visitors.

The easiest way to increase web site conversions is by writing text content that can answer these questions – Who, Where, What, When, Why and How. This simple approach works for search engines and people. You won't need to do anything with your Meta information or web page source code. The techniques you'll learn here are always done with text, which search engines rely on to understand the theme of your web site. Text is easy for screen reader software and requires no extra plug-in for visitors to read it.



Why Text?

Visuals alone won't tell the whole story or identify who the products are for. Text is important. "Content is King", but text content pleases the entire kingdom. Text is appreciated by your first time visitors because your web page appeared in search engine results in response to their search query. You have 3 – 5 seconds to prove they arrived at the right place, that you have what they came for, and that you have other cool stuff that will convince them to stay. Text that increases the types

of conversions you seek will motivate, inspire, gain trust, create confidence and show off your gems. It also loads faster and is easy to optimize for organic SEO.

What Text Do I Apply for Conversion Enhancements?

By text I'm referring to your homepage content that search engines can read and humans can read or listen to from screen readers. This includes:

- Introductory content
- Headings
- Sub-headings
- Taglines or slogans
- Navigation links
- Embedded text link anchor text
- Picture captions
- Product descriptions
- Quick link
- Footer text
- Bullet points

Be Original

Here is another important rule to apply in your web design and marketing strategies.

Don't copy what your competitors do.

Of course you have been doing competitive analysis into their top keywords and borrowing some of their nifty looking design ideas, but how would you know if what they're doing is wrong?

Not all marketing advice is sound advice and sometimes it's even damaging to a brand or your chances at search engine acceptance. More importantly, their business and site requirements will be different than your own. Be unique and follow your own requirements.

Who

The most neglected design element.

Some of the most remarkable discoveries I've made during usability testing are homepages that forget to tell search engines and visitors WHO they are. Their logo with the company or web site name is in an image that search engines won't see (nor will special needs visitors using screen reading devices.) Sometimes a company name is tucked all the way down in the footer in a tiny font with low contrast color.



FLASH pages don't offer text opportunities for search engines or customer confidence.

The second, more powerful detail is addressing WHO your intended visitors are in ways that show you expect them and are ready to guide them to what they seek. Who can use your web site? Who can buy from you? Who recommends your site? Who are your leading customers or clients?

Fashion clothing web sites are wildly popular for frustrating customers because they ignore organic search marketing and usability standards in favor of creative visuals. Their designers like FLASH and rely on visuals to tell their story, using the least amount of words as possible or non-descript labels such as "men" and "women". If I'm a tall man, do they have something for me? If I'm a budget-driven "fashionista," do they have sales?

Images alone don't answer all the questions your customers have.

Here's how to increase conversions for the WHO requirement. Remember, these suggestions are for your text only.

- Identify your company, brand or web site name three times on the homepage, preferably with two of the occurrences above the page fold. The footer can count for one but try to make it easy to see.
- Describe who your targeted users are by identifying them. "American girls, age 10 – 16", "Medical students", "job opportunities for [insert who]," etc. When you have different sales funnels based on separate user types, it's important to identify them and signal where they should go on your site.
- If someone is searching for a "whom," who is it? A "Who" can be a brand name, dealer, store near you, famous person, clients you represent, and more.
- Who can use your web site if there are age restrictions or other limiting factors? The idea here is to not waste anyone's time. Search engines are used to hunt for a huge variety of items, sites, information, clubs, etc. Avoid high bounce rates and pre-qualify search queries by describing who may be prevented from accessing your information. Search engines look for signals. Conversions don't occur on pages with high bounce rates.
- Searchers look for themselves on your web site. The more ways you can describe who your web site is designed for, the more likely they will feel welcome and stay. This is especially handy in situations where products are luxury items, or for a specific niche or need, such as healthcare, local interests, pet owners, students, etc.
- Who are your clients? Who uses your software? A pile of image logos is not helpful here. Highlight certain choices, write something persuasive or inspiring, throw in a picture and add a caption.
- Use category labels to identify WHO opportunities.
- User instructions and warnings are places to try. Who can't register? Separate user instructions by user type.
- Who can your visitors follow in social networking sites? Might it be your brand name or the CEO?

- Direct your visitors by identifying who can purchase from your site, sign up to be an affiliate, who you can't provide shipping or specific products to and who the sales are targeted to such as particular sizes, brands and ages.

As you can see, there are plenty of opportunities to enhance your conversions by being sure to identify who you are and who you wish to target. People like to be identified, welcomed, guided, rewarded, motivated and inspired during their visit to your web site. Your biggest chances at increasing conversion rates will be in the small details, in subtle but powerful areas of text on the homepage. Start experimenting. Test your results. Fine tune your keywords and terminology.

Where

Your web site visitors and search engines are not mind readers.

Remember when I mentioned how often web site homepages don't put their company name anywhere in their text? They also seem to believe we all know where they are geographically. The next disappearing act on homepages is where the company is located. There are special instances where this information is best hidden, but for most of you, where your business is located is important to both search engines and your web site's guests.

The "secret" to what I'm showing you is nothing more than answering questions in your text content that search engines and humans can see. Today's search queries are advanced enough so that a search engine not only understands a question you ask of it, but will take you to the page that contains the question with the answer that is most favored.

Your goal is to be that highly ranked page with the answers.

Why Does Where Matter To Conversions?

Sadly, where you claim to be located does hold weight for some people in certain industries. Take medical advice for example. To Western users, a pharmaceutical, medical, or health-related site will appear more legitimate if it claims to be based in a Western country. Of course, a website can *claim* to be from anywhere, so one of the less common (but still practiced) “black hat” SEO techniques is to claim to be based in a country in which they are not actually located. To be considered a reputable web site for online Western medical advice or doctor recommendations, searchers are more likely to trust a USA or UK based web site.

The closer the company is to the type of product or service of which it claims to be an expert, the more credible it is perceived to be. Knowing this, sometimes an address is faked and the business is nowhere near where the site says it is.



- If you own a business that you wish to promote locally, then place your business address, along with your zip or postal code, into your footer in text format.
- If you have a map or directions to your business or store, create a link inside introductory content, your footer, or anyplace where this would be a natural fit that says “Get directions” or “View our map and find directions”. (There is no need to add the word “here”.)
- To optimize even more, add your business name or specific services and products, such as “Get directions on how to assemble the [keyword]” and “View [company name] map and get directions.”

Identifying where something is located, whether it’s a link, physical destination, or new task, goes a long way toward increasing conversions in ways you likely have not thought of. It’s closely tied to trust, credibility, authenticity, understandability, and momentum. The following suggestions can be applied to any type of web site, with some of them being more valuable to ecommerce than others.

Where to Add the Where

Using the bullet list on page three for the various places in your content that can be optimized for conversions, here are ideas to try:

1. State in your header, near the logo, or in the upper right area (where you may have login and customer support links), where you do business. Do you ship globally? Do you sell nationally? Does your company focus on local community needs only?
2. Where are your sales, hot items, clearance, promo codes, coupons, special deals, etc.? In addition to making these links stand out in global navigation, if the topic comes up inside content, link to where your customer may need to go next in the sales funnel.

Example: “Find more sale items in “Holiday Clearance”, and take them there. You’ve just identified the benefit (sales items), what sets it apart from other sales (seasonal) and where to go to see them. Bonus: Add the word “your”, never “our”, to these statements.

Example: “Santa’s elves placed your favorite stocking stuffers in Holiday Clearance”, or “Log into your account to get your weekly coupon.” These calls to action are persuasive, offer a value, recognize your site’s guests and offer directions.

3. Where can visitors contact you? It helps to spell this out, since not all contact pages invite contact or user feedback. User generated content, ratings and testimonials are conversion injection devices. Try reaching out directly with calls to action and take them to the place that completes the task.

Example: Somewhere in the product page, about page, services descriptions, and even blog posts, add a sentence or sub-heading in a header tag (like H2 or H3) such as, “Where is your [keyword brand] store located?” and answer the question on the page and/or start the answer and then link to a page where searches are performed.

Example: In an image caption (humor, smiling person), add an invitation and link to a feed back form. This can be used for testimonials or any type of user feedback. In the invitational text, put the page title in the link, such as “contact”, “feedback form,” etc.

4. Where do you stand in relation to your competitors? More often this information will be part of the “Why” content, but you can be creative here too. Does your car dealership outperform the one up the road from you? Are you the only hand crafted fringed leather bootmaker who ships free to Alaska?

5. Where are your products, information, and services the most desired? Not only do you want to target these people and areas, but you want to specifically identify them in your content.

Example: “College students in the Mid-west voted [keyword] the best of 2012.” Conversions increase when you fulfill desire. Have fun with this one! Research your target customers and show them where they rock, or are the same as, or are better at, or where they compare to others. Where do they rock and at what?

6. “Sense of place” is another gigantic area of optimization possibilities because you have navigation labels, breadcrumb link labels, embedded text link labels, video transcripts, image captions, footer links, blog consistency and ways to enhance text with CSS to attract attention. Since both search engines and human visitors can all read the text in these areas, you have a multitude of options to play with while addressing “Where”. The key is to be very descriptive, which may mean going beyond one word labels like “About,” “Contact,” “Services,” etc.

All web sites have different needs and are different sizes. It’s entirely possible that a Contact hub is needed for big name brands that have stores and headquarters around the world. So the top link in this hub would be “Contact” or “Contact [brand name]”, with sub-pages to a contact page for each store location, that includes their name, country, address, contact, and even a bit of something interesting about them.

7. User funnels are another “Where” optimization opportunity. Where should your affiliates sign up or log in? Where is the section for members only? If the retailers start here, where do the wholesalers start on your site? Where would grandparents, as opposed to first-time parents, go to find gifts on your children’s clothing website? Where are the free cards for each season?

Everyone who lands on your web site wants to be identified quickly and shown where to go. Often the most popular section is a Customer Service page that holds all their answers. Be sure you make it clear where you put this and call it out in text such as “We want your experience with us to be rewarding. Please visit [brand name] Customer Service with any concerns.”

When working on naturally optimizing your web pages, and especially your homepage or top landing pages, remember “Location, location, location!” Write your answers in ways that will help searchers looking for specific information on or about your web site. Even in cases where you may be a start-up or new information site, when you meet an exact need, goal, or desire, and this information comes up in search engines, you may find better matched traffic and be rewarded with happy referrals.



Tip for Local Web Sites

Look for towns that have a Facebook Page. Members use these to ask questions such as “Where can we pick local strawberries?”, “Where is the [local historical site]?”
“Where is the new [store, eatery, etc.] opening up?”
Optimize pages based on how the locals are searching.



What

What do you have that your competition doesn't?

Whenever someone lands on your web site they want to know right away, “*What do you have for me?*” **Do you have their answers?**

Holidays like Black Friday and Cyber Monday shopping days are an especially competitive time for ecommerce web sites. They are in a neck and neck horse race to get online shopping business, however it is not just ecommerce in this race. Your blog posts, industry-specific articles, Facebook business pages, user generated feedback such as product reviews, video transcripts for products, how-to demonstrations, email newsletters, page title attributes, and Pinterest “pin” descriptions can all be optimized for meeting the “What” requirement for natural optimization.

Your first opportunities are “Who” and “Where”. Let’s look at “What”. Our goal is getting our information across to our potential web site guests in ways that are understandable by search engines, special needs users, and target users. This means we’re focusing on details within text content rather than visuals. The text you provide about what you offer, what your topic is, what makes your company unique, or what deals you offer, is necessary in inspiring user confidence and fortifying calls to action prompts.

What Do You Have For Me?

Of all the Who/Where/What/Why/When/How optimization areas, answering the “What” is my favorite. This one word provides countless opportunities for persuasive content on your homepage, landing pages, category hub pages, blog, articles, and even forum posts that are permitted to be crawled by search engines.

Everybody wants to know what to do on your web site. They want to know what you’ll do to help them improve something that is important to them, such as their health or financial situation. They hope to find that special gem that they weren’t even looking for but are thrilled you have.

Ecommerce is a battlefield with marketers, content writers, and designers trying to create that perfect online shopping experience. So much time and effort is devoted to marketing that the tiniest practical conversion enhancements are ignored. Yes, your customers want to know who has the best prices and shipping deals. A search on products often brings back a pile of web pages with identical products, product images, prices, and free shipping deals. Why do these web sites stick together like kids playing soccer, where the entire group moves around the field in a pack that doesn’t dare split apart?

Your prospects, no matter what your web site is about, are searching for specifics, using exact terms and entering entire sentences into search engines such as “What kinds of telephoto lenses work best with my [brand name] camera?” You want to stand out from the pack and once guests land on your web page, provide your calls to action to purchase and view related products.

Always, always, always add text only content that not only asks common questions, but also provides the answer. Ask the question in a forum or blog post heading, for example. Or, when teaching online, repeat the entire question within the text and follow up by providing the answer (and then add a call to action prompt right then and there to conduct a task.)



Organic “What” Ideas

The most difficult part of this process is remembering to do it. Product page abandonment can be traced to the lack of content provided for each product. Shopping cart abandonment points to the lack of instructions on what to do or what happens next. Newsletter conversions tank when there is no information about what your subscriber will receive (and when, how, and why they will receive it.) PPC landing pages that don't follow through with what the ad promised are a waste of money. Calls to action fizzle whenever it's unclear what to do or what will happen if a button is clicked.

The following are some ideas for answering the “What” question within the text of your web site:

- Put a “What” question in a blog, article, or forum thread headline. Ask this question in a variety of ways because people ask questions in different ways. (**Bonus:** Set these up as funnels in Google Analytics and track the results.)
- Above the page fold, describe what sets your company, yourself, web site or blog apart from your competition. Bullet point answers are great.
- Create confidence by answering every possible “What” question your visitors may have. For example, what is the best time to call your office? What is your style of clothing? What are your store hours? What payment methods do you accept? What services do you offer?
- Rather than brief quips like “We speak at conferences,” what do you speak about? What conferences? What topics are you considered an expert in?
- What goes with what? This one always gets ignored. For example, furniture shopping is not just about the sale items. Some of your visitors need help putting together pieces for specific situations or just to help them visualize. What do they need to know when they have pets and kids? What are the better types of springs for a couch?

- What do your readers get when they visit your blog?
- What do your prospective clients get if they hire you?
- What are your methodologies or procedures?
- What does the inside of a suede boot look like? This is one example of helping your guests make accurate choices so that returns are lower. The inside of a boot may be a factor in choosing sizes or whether wearing socks is necessary. While product images are key, so is the product description text.
- Navigation labels are missed “what” opportunities. For example, your About page. About what? What types of services? What solutions? What is the difference between clearance and sale? What type of gifts?
- User instructions are important for guidance. What do you want your customers to do in a given situation? Every form, cart, and online application needs to assist by answering the “What do I do next?” question.
- What is your story? Popular authority elements that web sites use on their homepage are the logos of their clients . The other technique is a slew of icons or images for awards, organizations, and other types of kudos. These images don’t tell the whole story, whereas text does. What made these companies choose you? What did you do to win your awards? What is the advantage of belonging to industry organizations (and why would your visitors care?).
- What’s in it for me? Keep answering this question. Your content should avoid “We”, “I”, “Us” and “Our” as much as possible. Remove your ego by writing content that identifies and acknowledges your visitors.

We're Curious

The secret to increasing conversions in natural ways is understanding human nature. Watch them use your web site. They will tell you through their behavior that what frustrates them is not feeling confident and not having enough information to make good choices. Get to know what they need and want.

When

Sense of time is a powerful conversion message.

We never have enough time.

Conversions depend on information. The better you are at providing the exact criteria your site in order to make decisions and conduct tasks, the higher your record for customer satisfaction is. Since customer satisfaction translates into referrals, user-generated content, brand loyalty and repeat visits, every bit of text that enhances user experience is vital.

The text for “When” is interesting because it touches on human emotions. Impulse buys, for examples, work because the purchase has to be made now while the opportunity is perfect. We have time constraints in certain circumstances like sneaking an Amazon purchase during lunch at work or registering for classes online by a deadline.



How to Work with When

When we were working with the “what” element, the easiest rule of thumb to remember was asking yourself, “*What do my visitors need and when?*” By answering that question, there were countless opportunities to work in conversion-oriented material.

The same rule of thumb can be applied now to the “When” element. Remember that your goal is to approach your optimization in natural, unforced ways. There is no keyword stuffing here. We simply want to answer search query questions by providing the correct landing page response. We also want to optimize for our guests once they have arrived by offering guidance, answers, suggestions, inspiration, and motivation to stay on your web site and perform tasks.

The following are page optimization suggestions for usability and search engine optimization using the “When” part of our secret code.

- When do you ship your products? There are several pages that may offer this content, including each individual product page, customer service page, shipping page, or FAQ. In the rush of the holiday season, an entire blog post is feasible in cases where hot items must be shipped by specific dates to be delivered on time.
- When can visitors call you? This is an easy one and is so often ignored. Next to your business or contact phone number add a statement such as “Call [brand/company/site name] between 8am and 5pm EST.” When in text, this is found easily by a search engine query asking “When can I call [brand/company/site name]?” By adding call hours, your visitors will feel more confident about when to call, thus increasing the chances they will.
- When does your newsletter arrive? One of the reasons for newsletter or email subscription abandonment is not supplying enough information for your visitors to make a confident decision. Your call to action prompt for signups should include a way to learn more about what you will be sending out, and more importantly, when it will be coming.

- To meet credibility and authenticity standards, the “When” element offers many opportunities to increase conversions here. In your About page, and especially in text written to present what makes your company unique and competitive, include these suggestions:
 - When was your company established?
 - When have you been recognized for your achievements? (Awards, certificates, degrees, etc.)
 - When is the next issue due?
 - When was the last official inspection?
 - When was the last [software application/brand] updated?

Ecommerce web sites must show how responsive they are and communicate steps for the purchase process. The same is true for travel, car rental, equipment rental, hotel and airline reservations, camping, and movie ticket ordering web sites. Each of these types of web sites must provide text that describes when something has or is going to happen on the web site.

Opportunities for working in product, company, brand, and other logical keywords are available by user instructions that explain:

- When do I get billed?
- When can I print my receipt?
- When can I get my schedule?
- When does my hotel confirmation arrive?
- When can I pick up my rental?
- When will my [keyword] be delivered?
- When will the out of stock [keyword] item be re-filled?
- When can I order your new book (which is a keyword phrase)?
- When is the latest I can check into your campground?
- When do you start taking reservations?

It is a strange thing to find so many web sites that are designed as though their guests can read the minds of the entire company and especially understand what the designers expect them to do when they land on the site. We all know this is simply not true. The power of conversions is always in the small details. Answer questions when the question comes into the mind of your site visitor. Someday soon you will wonder why you waited so long to do so.

Why

Why Choose Your Web Site?

Back in the year 2002 I learned a lesson about persuasive design before it was called that. At that time it was referred to as having a unique selling proposition (USP). I had launched a new web site that missed a vital part. Why choose my services?

Over a decade has passed and web site designs still miss this vital element in their text. Why should their visitors choose them, trust them, and/or and why are they are better than their competition?

Why is a Powerful Call to Action Trigger

User research shows sliders do not convert.

Is your marketing content compelling? If you describe all the top reasons why visitors should use your products or services, where is this located and is it in text?

Today's design fads present usability problems for ecommerce and services web sites because they lead off the entire top of the page with a gigantic set of rotating images with no HTML text. The header contains a logo, global navigation that may or may not be in text format, a promotional image, and customer service links in the upper right. None of that information addresses in plain language why visitors should stay on the page. For that information, they must scroll down and face all the other obstacles thrown in their path.

Why is your company the best?

Some images in industries like fashion, food, and hotels can communicate what sets them apart or makes them special. Even they need text for search engines and meeting accessibility guidelines. Web designers like to throw in gobs of JavaScript and CSS directions, images and forms, but none of these communicate why anyone should stay on the page.

Not only are search engines trying to understand the value you offer their searchers, anyone using assistive technology relies on the structure of your content so that it is read back to them in an understandable way. Sadly, many web sites ignore potential sales because of how they code their pages. With search engines getting better at judging a site's reputation based on usage, it makes sense to do everything you can to make every type of guest feel as though you want them there.

How to Add the Why Element

The "Why" heuristic in usability is your conversions work horse. Here are some suggestions for enhancing your web page content organically to showcase why your company is the best choice.



- Marketing content often consists of words like “Great”, “Best”, “Expert”, etc. Why is your company the best? Where did your expertise come from? Devote some space to tell your story in text format and link to pages that backup your claims.

- A commonly used design fad is providing space to list the company logos of clients and customers. This is a big “so what”. **Provide their reasons for choosing you by adding a text introduction.**

Example: “The following companies chose our project management software because it is easy to use.”

- Add a text only tagline near your logo that states a top benefit along with your company or product name. Example: “Handmade Only [insert product], Lifetime Treasure”.
- Provide a sentence or two in text describing why visitors should choose your company above a slider, carousel and animated images.
- Preferably above the page fold, place a sentence introduction to your company and list several bullet point benefits underneath. **Be sure they are unique benefits and not what your competitors offer.**
- Take advantage of the moment you have the attention of your guests by providing a strong call to action to a specific task. This is when “Why” text really helps with conversions. When you have just introduced a service or product, absolutely **do not invite them to “learn more.”** Instead, provide a reason to go to the page you wish to direct them to. What happens there? Will that page benefit them in some way? Why should they stop reading and go there now?
- It’s easy to sound egotistical when adding content written to persuade your visitors to take action. Avoid going overboard with “we”, “I”, “Us”, “our” words. The proper way to present your message is to address your visitors as “you” and “your” and by identifiers such as “doctors prefer”, “young people ask for.” In addition, address them by acknowledging why what you do or offer is helpful to them specifically. Example: “Top interior designers recommend using [insert product or solution] because [insert value.]”

SECRET TECHNIQUES

When you have just introduced a service or product, absolutely do not invite them to “learn more.” Instead, provide a reason to go to the page you wish to direct them to.

Offer reasons why anyone should engage with your company via social networking. Icons alone are not persuasive calls to action.

- Why should you, your company, or your specific brand of products be trusted? Answering questions on trust provides more opportunities for fortifying content for better conversions.
- User generated content such as recommendations and reviews provided near product images and descriptions are additional ways to add text. Testimonials are another.
- Another overused and confusing design element is the implementation of social networking icons. They appear in places where they don't provide a practical purpose, or their appearance is somewhere illogical on pages where an important task is located. Remove the mystery and provide reasons why visitors should "like" your company Facebook page, or "follow" your Twitter account.

Remember that a search engine may present the first text it finds in search results. Searchers seek a reason to visit your web page and motivation to stay. Address this immediately.

How

People search by asking questions.

To increase web site conversions, your web site can be designed as a guide on how to do something. This presents many options for text. Guidance also comes in the form of navigation, general question and answers, clearly descriptive tasks and well written user instructions.

We're organically increasing web site conversions by taking advantage of the opportunities to answer these questions – Who, Where, What, Why, When, and How. Since your content is interesting to both search engines and humans, you have many chances to persuade your guests to take action, starting from their search query results.

How do you make your products? Those of you who create funnels in Google Analytics know that there are many ways to get pages to rank by simply asking a question and answering it on the same page. This is why natural blends of usability and SEO are fun to experiment with.

SECRET TECHNIQUES

Take advantage of optional ways to get text on your web pages. Add video transcripts and follow it up with a call to action prompt.

Add text captions to illustrative infographics, images, and charts.

Remember To Use Text

Not all types of content can be optimized naturally, but simple text opportunities are everywhere. These are the places we typically find opportunities to modify and revise for persuasive marketing:



- Introductory content
- Headings
- Sub-headings
- Taglines or slogans
- Navigation links
- Embedded text link anchor text
- Picture captions
- Product descriptions
- Side bar content
- Quick link navigation boxes
- Footer text
- Bullet points
- Step by step articles
- Text that describes infographics
- Contact page – describe how to find you

How to Increase Conversions Using the “How” Element

Every part of the WWWWH organic optimization approach has its perks depending on the type of web site being designed. For ecommerce, “What” is more important, whereas a web site that relies heavily on a web-based application may require more from the “How”. No matter what kind of web site you must market, they all will address key questions that start off with “How”. Here are some brainstorming ideas to get you going.

- How long does it take? Filling out forms with many steps is daunting enough but worse when there are no user instructions. Just by adding some quick help text, you can insert your brand, product name, or benefit. Example: “You’re only 3 steps away from owning your very own [insert product name here.]”, “How long did you wait in line for your new [product]?”, or “With [your company name] you can own it by tomorrow, free!”
- How can I contact you? This question is on many minds and yet so easily forgotten in web site text. Try simple statements like “Contact [brand/company] by calling”, “[Company name] is open”, “How would you like [company name] to follow up with you?”
- A huge conversion boost comes by offering video demonstrations. Accompany your demonstration videos and pictures with text that explains how something is done. If there is a reason to link to a page for more information, the call to action should include a “how” incentive such as “To learn how to [build the product name] or contact [the company name] or register or sign up or etc.”
- How many times have you wanted to learn how to do something and you decided to ask a search engine? What you may get back in the way of answers varies from forum threads to outdated blog posts and if you’re lucky, an actual page with a current answer.

So here’s how you can help searchers. Research the questions they have regarding your reputation, products, company, services, and anything you may do such as teaching, or being a travel guide, etc. Ask the question your visitor may ask in a blog post, article, product page, video (transcript), PDF, document, rules page, healthcare instructions – you get the idea. The question is put into a header tag or boldfaced and the answer is provided close by. This approach is designed to attract your targeted guest by knowing exactly what they need and want. You will not only provide their solution but you may have other interesting content to share with them as well. Reach out. Help. Be the site with the current, accurate, helpful answer, and inspire your guest to stick around as well.

- Help your visitors visualize how your products look. I saw a site the other day that used models to show how the brand's clothing might look but **they took a brilliant extra step by letting users mouse over the model to see her measurements.** Wow. This is an incredible way to show how a piece will look and it helps customers make better choices. The downer was that it was a JavaScript pop-up display. A way to do this using text might even be making the content accessible and indexable. For example, "How does [brand name, product] look on a [describe the specs]?" and describe the answer in text.
- Help your visitors imagine how your products will make them feel about themselves or with others. Perfume sites are one type that must create a story to sell scents.
- In your homepage introductory content, answer important how-to questions that you know your visitors want answers for. Don't forget to address ALL your user types (mental models) when phrasing your questions and answers, and picking out your terminology. Remember that the best conversion triggers are those that are a direct soul-to -soul-like connection that happen instantly. Not everyone asks questions the same way.
- **This one is my favorite because I'm sorely lacking in the ability to picture anything.** For users like us, we will reward brands like furniture stores that show us HOW your couch will look in a tiny living room. A well-known designer fabrics company not only fusses over their product images, **but they have entire sections devoted to how to use their products to perform every possible miracle from bringing a chair back to life to creating the bedroom of your dreams.**

Another luxury site I like has the most exquisite bathroom décor and accessories that are totally out of my price range, but I "Pin" them anyway because a girl can dream, right? The only issue I have with them is in picturing how their products would look in my luxurious bathroom (in my other life in the Hamptons of course.) The lesson here is to create a mood and help your visitors imagine your products in use by combining content and pictures. Tell us a story. Describe how easy it is to do what you do.

- Closely related are sites like jewelry and crafts, and even unique niche sites for collectors, bargain hunters, moms to be, car parts, any type of teaching topic and hobby sites. When you can explain how to do what you do in your content, chances are good your pages will not only rank but if you have social sharing options, you can increase your social signal to search engines.

Great idea from an artistic jewelry site. *Videos are taken of the artist displaying and talking about their work. Not only are transcripts great text, but so is text on the page surrounding the lead-in to the video. Perfect for call to action!*

How Do You Want Your Coffee?

There are all kinds of ideas to try and angles to stretch and pull. Take your cell phone's GPS navigation application for example. When you ask for directions, it may ask you several questions such as "How would you like your route?" and it offers options like no tolls, no traffic, fast or slow, etc. The developer knows their users want choices for how to get the information. A waiter may ask you, "How would like your steak done?" and you will provide the answer. **Take a cue from your world to get fresh ideas on how to help your site's guests make good choices.**

Wrap Up

Use your words.

Now that you've learned that the secret to persuasive design conversions is text, where do you put it to appeal to both search engines and humans?

- **Start with your homepage** and put your company or web site name in text above the page fold. It amazes me how many web sites do not put their name on the homepage so that it is readable by everyone, humans and search engines alike. They may have it in their logo, or image-based navigation, or in an image heading. They may even have their company name in a low contrast gray colored tiny font text in the footer and believe we not only will find it there, but will remember it forever. We won't.
- **Add your company, web site name, or top search phrase used to find you, in a text tagline or slogan underneath your logo.** A friend whose site I work on decided to muck around with it and removed the text tagline I had put in. To his amazement, the site no longer came up in searches for his best search phrase and this was because he took it out! Every page needs your web site name, company or brand in text above the page fold. This is not only needed for search engines, but it's important for people.
- **Answer "What," "Why," and "How," questions on your category and product pages.** The opportunities are endless. Root levels that are easy for search engines to find and index (and hence, more likely to be displayed in tiered search results), are perfect for text optimization.
- **Don't ignore the value of your Contact and About pages.** These pages are great choices for adding text about why you're competitive and who you, the staff, and the company are. These sections are call to action prompt goldmines.



The Human Behavior Element

Everyone who visits your web site has a different way of taking in information. Our brains are different. Our reactions and decisions are based on an enormous variety of impulses and signals. Our ability to get to your web site can be just as varied and mysterious. **Some of your guests require assistive technology. Many searchers look up sites on mobile devices.** Both rely on descriptive text for usage. You must have page text that is visible, readable, memorable and motivating enough to keep search engines crawling and people reading and performing tasks. If you haven't held their attention, you haven't helped them remember your company.

They can't refer you if they don't recall who you are.

Engage and Inspire

- **Tell a story.** The reason for site abandonment is simple. There is not enough information to successfully complete a task or make good choices. The fact is, most designers are graphically oriented and adding text for people and search engines is cruel punishment. Your products may be the type that need a story or added details for making choices. Approach your site designer with ideas on how to tell your story. They can make the impressive pictures and choose perfect colors. You can write the details.
- **Minimalism doesn't convert.** Are you an artist selling your paintings online? Chances are your site has a gigantic image or rotating show taking up the entire top half of the page, and that's it. Who are you? What inspires you? Where is your work presented? Do you have any events?

Your preference is likely to have one piece on a page with minimal text other than the name of the piece being displayed. This is not enough to sell it or even get people talking about it, and this strategy is certainly not begging for the attention of search engines. **Add a link to an additional page that contains a smaller version of the piece and tell its story.** Place a small contact form, along with some social sharing icons (especially Pinterest) so that visitors can share it. You will optimize that page for search and visitors rather than the one with the solo image.

- Another approach for conversions text is **helping your site visitors visualize your products in use**. The ideas for this are endless. Your text topics come by understanding your target market in depth. What do they need to know about your products that images alone don't explain? How heavy is it? What are the ingredients? How many ounces in the bottle? Who made it? What country was it made in? How will your bathroom accessories look with white cabinets or marble counter tops?
- **Show off**. Expertise and credibility are commonly overlooked on all types of web sites. Here again you can inspire by telling a story about a recent award. What happened at the awards ceremony? Who was awarded from your staff and why? Do you have experts who like and use your products and services? Let them write about you. Invite them to share tips with your readers. If you sell products in the health field or natural healing genre, share your research. An entire page can be devoted to answering just one question on the safety of an ingredient or process.

Be There in the Engine

Offer searchers a reason to go to your site by placing incentives to visit within the first text available on every page. Address specific target visitors by using phrases by which they refer to themselves or by adding the name of their profession. Optimize text by solving a problem for specific product names and serial numbers. Remove barriers to your text. The juicy part that your visitors need should never be at the bottom of the page after all the ads, images, sliders and distracting side bars. Every page chosen to convert must have motivational keyword descriptive text, navigation link labels, title tag, page description, and tagline. These are your search results hooks. When your visitors arrive, follow that up with more page text written precisely for each user type you are targeting.

In other words, you have placed the invitation in your source code, search engines found it and presented it in their search results. When your visitors arrive it's your turn to take over.

What Next?

Try these ideas.

I hope I've inspired you to try out some new ideas. Some are easier to do than others. Many of them will be blocked by site owners who are afraid of change, or by brands that rely heavily on images and like it that way. They can also buy their rank positions but this doesn't mean their sites convert well, especially with today's mobile devices.

Try out some of the techniques. Create new funnels and goals in Google Analytics. Perform split A/B testing. What works for one web site may not work for your web site and this is so important to remember. We can't all be Amazon.

At Internet Marketing Ninjas we offer tremendous expertise in **organic SEO, usability, user experience, and persuasive design**. This is why many corporations hire us for new web sites and re-designs. We also test the web sites we work on and help clients do their own follow up tracking. You may discover that your techniques for improving conversions are off the mark and wonder why. To learn more about how Internet Marketing Ninjas services can benefit your website, please refer to: <http://www.internetmarketingninjas.com>

Don't struggle with this. Reach out for help.

The contact form at Internet Marketing Ninjas puts you in contact with a skilled salesperson who will round up your own personal team of Ninjas who are devoted to, and invested in, making your web site the success you want it to be.

Feel free to contact me: Kim Krause Berg, kim@imninjas.com

Hire your dedicated team: <http://www.internetmarketingninjas.com/internet-consultant/>

HIRE YOURSELF A NINJA

Bio

Who is Kim and What Does She Know?

Read Full Bio <http://www.internetmarketingninjas.com/blog/author/kimberly-krause-berg/>

If you got down this far you either found the information helpful or you wonder if I know what I'm talking about. Here is a quick overview.

Who – Kim Krause Berg. I started my career as Kim Krause and when I re-married in 2004, kept my kids' last name. Krause is my legal middle name. And yes, I'm asked about my name all the time!

What – I am a Usability and User Interface Analyst for Internet Marketing Ninjas. I am also the Founder and Administrator for Cre8asiteforums, which was sold to Jim Boykin, CEO, Internet Marketing Ninjas in September 2012.

Where – I live in a rural area northwest of Philadelphia, PA, USA in a sweet small town. I have a home office here. I also make the 4 hour commute to Ninja Headquarters in upstate New York a few times each month.

Why – I began making web sites and learning HTML in 1995 and in early 1996 was hired at the only web design job I applied to. While working on their web sites I learned how to get them into search engines. For a few years I worked by day as a User Interface Engineer and at night freelancing as a SEO. I also began teaching SEO in 1998. I was trained in Human Factors and self-taught in usability while on the job as first in User Interface Design and then as an Internet Software Application Usability QA Engineer. I fell in love with usability. From 2002 to October 2012 I privately consulted in web site usability and user interface testing and organic SEO.

When – I can be reached via email anytime or by contacting Internet Marketing Ninjas and leaving a message.

How – I write for several blogs including IMN (<http://www.internetmarketingninjas.com/blog/>) and there are years of columns and articles of mine in print magazines. Find me at:
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