

The Instant Website Sales Letter Tune-Up Kit



7

Simple Steps
To Boosting
Your Sales
Conversion Rate
Overnight!

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There are numerous ways to tweak your sales copy, in the pursuit of higher conversions. Sometimes one minor change can make a significant impact. At other times, multiple changes have little – if any – bearing on the result.

But the fact is, you'll never know until you test – and test with accuracy. Before you try various changes on a smaller scale, it's best to carefully review each of these 7 steps, and apply these lessons to your site.

Step Number One: Make Sure Your Site Is Technically Sound.

By this I mean... simply make sure your site is “web-ready”. For one thing, you need a site that loads fast – not just on your hot new PC loaded with RAM and processor speed and with a super-fast cable connection. You need a site that loads to your visitor's “pre-Pentium” PC, served only by a simple dial-up connection.

Keep your file sizes to a minimum. Get rid of extra graphics and fancy design enhancements such as elaborate backgrounds. They may look good to you, but they have little impact in persuading your prospects to buy for you. Use graphic images sparingly. Avoid animation and flashy banners as a general rule.

Let your copy do the selling for you. But in order for your words to work their magic, they need to be seen. Don't let any images, borders, backgrounds or boxes get in the way. Think in terms of “lean and mean” as far as design goes.

Load your page using both Explorer and Netscape. It's a good idea to also check older versions of these and other browsers. Many people get used to a particular version and rarely upgrade. You want to make sure these folks see your message as you intended.

Look for obvious things -- such as the placement of components and spaces between lines of text. Is everything where it should be? Once you're satisfied with the overall layout and appearance of your site, then review your site for errors in the text.

Look for obvious things such as typos, extra spaces, and dead links. But also keep a sharp eye out for the not so obvious errors like using words that sound the same but have a totally different meaning.

Step Number Two: Make Your Site Easy On The Eyes

Is your site visually pleasing? You don't need a degree in graphic design to put together a site that sells. Design should always work with your copy in a supportive role. After all, it's your words that convince prospects to buy. To draw attention to the design of your site is self-defeating.

Keep it simple. Nothing is simpler than black text on a white page... yet this is usually the most effective way to present a lot of copy. The reason for this is elementary: black and white represents the extreme opposite ends of the scale. The contrast is as strong and dramatic as it can be. Any variation away from bright white or solid black reduces the degree of contrast.

Have you ever tried reading pink type on a purple background? Or... how about white type on a lime green background? Some people actually use such colors. But it makes reading the words frustrating and annoying. And if you frustrate and annoy your visitors, what are the chances of them buying anything from you? Reading anything requires some effort. Your job as a marketer is to make your copy as easy and hassle-free to read as humanly possible.

Color can certainly help make a more visually appealing site. But a little color goes a long way and primary colors are a better, more clearly defined choice. Avoid the temptation to use unusual colors, combinations and flashy graphics simply because they're available.

Keep your page widths to a minimum. Make your page width clear to visitors. Avoid at all costs, the need for horizontal scanning. It's enough of a challenge to get readers to scroll vertically through your sales message. To ask them to scroll horizontally too is absolutely ludicrous. Keep your text to a maximum width of 65 characters. That way your page should be easily readable from any monitor.

It's always a good idea to set your main page inside the width of the typical window. What this does is it displays an obvious page border, so the reader knows instantly that he's not missing out on anything. What he's reading is the text in its entirety. Without such a border... it's not as clear. Better to facilitate easy, problem-free reading than to arouse any questions in the reader's mind.

Part of making your message easy on the eyes is to make it exceptionally easy to read. You want readers to breeze through your copy effortlessly. The best way to do that is to break up paragraphs into instantly scannable segments and provide plenty of white space. Short segments are easiest to scan and understand on the fly. As your material is absorbed, prospects are then compelled to read further.

The more you can break up your text into short sentences and paragraphs, the easier it is for prospects to read. If it looks like an easy read, chances of your prospect actually reading your letter improve significantly.

Simplify the process. Clarify your message so that it cannot be misconstrued. Provide a single direction for your prospect to proceed. Funnel them through your copy to the order page.

Step Number Three: Make Your Copy More Enticing

Give your prospects more of what they want -- benefits or helpful advantages. Pile on the benefits, one after another. The more benefits you offer, the higher your response. So, if your copy isn't pulling, simply add more benefits.

You may have to dig a little deeper to unearth additional advantages, but the more benefits you discover, the easier it is to spot them in the future. Look for ways to extract more functionality, versatility, or flexibility from your product.

Benefits need to be "on target". They need to be compatible with the consciousness and culture of your target audience. Get it right and you hit your prospect's hot buttons.

Rearrange your benefit presentation. Propel the most appealing benefits to the beginning of your letter. Get your ultimate benefit into the main headline. Reveal your benefits in priority – beginning with the most attractive and alluring.

Paint vivid pictures. Help your prospects visualize reaping the rewards themselves. Allow them to feel it emotionally. Put it into a context they'll understand immediately. I recently heard a radio commercial for Sleep Country Canada where they were offering sale prices on a warehouse full of products. To put the quantity being offered into impressive and understandable terms, they mentioned that if these mattresses were stacked in a single pile, that stack would be three-times taller than the CN Tower. Now that's something their audience could easily relate to.

Feed your prospect juicy bits of information to fill them with enthusiasm. Let them know early on what they'll get from reading your important message. Always focus on the payoff for the reader. Strive to make it worth their while.

Step Number Four: Add Appealing "Grabbers" Throughout Your Sales Letter

Strong headlines pull visitors in. Headlines are the most effective way to attract eyeballs to your message. They have a tendency to convert passive visitors into active readers and interested prospects. Main headlines are the primary factor in deciding where online users spend their time. Give them what they want and they're sure to stick around a while. But give them anything less and their interest turns as fast as they can click away.

The more enticing the headline, the greater the chances are your target audience will read on. But, what about those who only scan pages at hyper speed? Fact is... most online

users skim through text this way. They breeze through messages looking for clues. If their interest is continually piqued, they stay. If at any point they're turned off or lose interest – they're gone instantly.

That's why multiple headlines are so important. The more headlines you have scattered throughout your sales letter, the more opportunities you have to pull prospects inside.

Use sub-headings often. Treat your bullet point as mini headlines. Add compelling captions to any graphics you use. Use segments of testimonials as brief introductory headlines for each. Consider using small headlines as leads for any text box copy. And always create alternate html tags for images, so when they don't load, viewers get a headline instead.

Try to get at least one headline element on each page. Determine page length by printing your letter on paper. Headlines are like billboards on a highway. They're short messages designed to plant idea seeds in the prospect's mind.

Your site visitors are traveling at a high speed. There's so much to see, heard, do, and explore. They don't want to slow down... but they will, if your message compels them to do so. You only have a second or two to make an impact. Each headline element presents another opportunity to grab attention, intensify interest, create intrigue, and arouse curiosity. Use them generously.

Step Number Five: Give Your Offer A Boost

“If you want to dramatically increase your results, dramatically improve your offer.”
This is sound advice from direct marketing expert, Axel Andersson.

Few things can have a more direct effect on the outcome of your website sales letter than the offer you propose. In terms of actual copy changes, the offer should be among the first things you modify to boost response.

The offer is the “deal” you're putting on the table. It's everything you offer in exchange for the stated price. In direct response copy, the offer is complex. It's made up of several different components including the main product, bonus items, gifts, premiums, guarantees, payment and financing options, etc.

Essentially, you want to present an offer that represents terrific value for your target audience. Always add value, rather than drop your price. Create such overwhelming value that any comparison-shopping puts you miles ahead of the competition. When you deliver great value at a fair price, your offer stands out. The more they get for a reasonable price, the higher the perceived value of your package.

How can you improve your offer?

Create additional bonus items. Change the package of bonuses you offer. Make them “new and improved”. Update bonus reports and guides. Make your bonus items more specific to the individual you’re communicating with. Create exclusive premiums that simply are not available anywhere else at any price. Make them more alluring with strong, benefit-oriented titles. Create additional tools and resources to aid in your product’s use.

Make your offer worth far more than the asking price. That’s what creating an offer can do for you. Without an appealing package or offer, all you have is your product. But dress it up with plenty of interesting product enhancements and you can turn a plain-Jane product into something buyers really want.

Step Number Six: Refine Your Sales Copy To Make It More Powerful, Persuasive and Readable

Review your copy for readability. Make it easier to read in less time. Modify lengthy passages by breaking them up into smaller segments. Deliver your interesting information one thought at a time.

Take a closer look at your sentence length. You want to avoid excessively long sentences, while creating enough variation to keep it interesting. Reduce any longer sentences down to a maximum of 12 or 13 words. Any more than that and you may be asking your reader to concentrate too much. Simply break your sentences up to make them remarkably quick and easy to read. You’re not writing a book – you’re writing a letter to persuade prospects to spend their money.

Vary the lengths of your paragraphs. Chop any paragraph that’s more than 5 lines. Break them up into smaller paragraphs. To make it pleasing to the eye and easy to read, mix it up a little. In other words... don’t use page after page of paragraphs that are all 4 lines in length. Use single line paragraphs – even the occasional single word. Used sparingly, single-word paragraphs are intriguing and compelling. And what could be easier to read than a single word?

Tighten your copy by eliminating excessive words. Say what needs to be said in order to get the intended response. Be direct and hard-hitting. Get rid of the fluff. Make your benefit-oriented message come alive with plenty of action words.

Do the unexpected. Forget proper grammar. Focus instead on getting your point across and leaving your mark. Start sentences with conjunctions like “And” or “But”. Begin with nouns, adverbs, adjectives, and verbs. It won’t win you points in English class... but it will help you communicate in a conversational tone – an essential requirement for selling more products from your site.

Step Number Seven: Put Yourself In Your Prospect's Shoes

View your site as any target prospect would. Does it feed a pre-existing desire, almost instantly? If not... reconsider your strategy. It's always easier to serve an existing hungry consumer base than it is to try and create a market by "educating" visitors.

As your sale page loads, examine it from the first-time visitor's perspective.

- Where do your eyes go first? What grabs you? Is there a clear starting point... or are there numerous "grabbers" pulling the eye in different directions?
- Is the main message clearly targeted to a specific, identifiable group? Would the prospect know immediately that this site is important, specifically targeted and relevant? Does it breakthrough their built-in defenses?
- Is the message interest arousing? Does it promise a significant and unique benefit? Does it compel you to go further inside the copy?

Your message needs to get through to the heart and mind of your prospects straight away. If there's any internal deliberation, chances are prospects will leave your site rather than investigate it further. Any hesitation on the part of first time visitors indicates confusion. If your message isn't crystal clear and the direction evident, you'll lose prospects before you ever have the chance to sell them.

Get a friend to view your website sales copy online. Carefully observe their focus. Is the intended direction followed... or are they unsure of what to do next? Watch and listen. Then, fix any problems to make your proposition as easy as A-B-C.

Online prospects are simply overloaded with information. It's easy to become dazed, confused, and completely overwhelmed by it all. These potential customers have filtering devices on full alert throughout their time online. The purpose is to delete all but the relevant, important and juicy bits of information. That's exactly what you need to deliver in order to maximize your results.

Introduce every benefit. Let your prospect know that in order to get every benefit, they need to take action now. That's the only way. But in order to convert them from prospect to customer, you need to lead them by the hand every step of the way. Compel them to read on... and then inspire them to order.

Entice prospects. Inform them about all your benefits. Deliver the "right" offer. Claude Hopkins described it this way... *"The right offer should be so attractive that only a lunatic would say no."* Your purpose is to win action, therefore every element of your site and your copy should be geared towards the attainment of this purpose.