

Does your website pass the 8 second test?

Fact: 71% of website visitors will leave a website if they can't see what they are looking for within 8 seconds!

Furthermore they'll want to gain that information from the correct "landing page" and see it "above the fold".

Landing Page

So what exactly does all that mean? Well, the landing page is what many of us may think is the home page of a website. In other words, it's where the prospect lands after typing in your web address. But what if he or she, for example, wants information on properties to let without going through several pages on your website to get there? This can be done by creating an extension to the web address. Imagine you are an estate agent, who we'll call Anytown Estates with a franchise selling and letting homes based in Anytown. Now your primary web address may be www.anytownestates.co.uk. Now if a prospect types in to a search engine "Homes to let in Anytown" they may very well get your website at the top of the search engines listing. But if they click on the link it will take them to your home page. But this isn't the page the prospect wants as it may just have pictures of houses and a potted history of the company. He/she is looking for details on your letting department.

If you are the letting manager at Anytown Estates you want them to go straight to the page on your website that deals with letting. So you may call that page 'letting' and create a secondary web address www.anytownestates-letting.co.uk which when selected sends the prospect directly to the letting page on your main website. This is what is meant as the 'landing page'. It is the page that you want certain prospects to go straight to, based upon their search criteria. The prospect who wants property letting, and ends up on the main website home page, may well look elsewhere if they can't see what they want within 8 seconds.

Tip 1 – Develop multiple landing pages to provide the correct information quickly. Remember the internet is primarily used as an information gathering tool. If you can't provide the prospect with the information they want quickly, whether it is details of offers or opening hours etc., they'll look elsewhere.

Above the Fold

Now that we have discussed 'landing pages', let's move on to discussing what 'above the fold' means. Imagine you have a copy of the Evening News in front of you and it's folded in half. What can you see? Well apart from the name of the paper and the date it will also have an attention grabbing headline. Headlines sell papers and the same principle works with websites. How many papers would be sold if the main headline was on page two or three? Your website needs to have an attention grabbing headline immediately the page pops up on the screen. A prospect isn't going to scroll down the page looking for it, in the same way as they won't pick up a paper and turn the pages. So above the fold is everything a prospect sees on your website before they scroll down.

A very good example of a website that 'sells' above the fold is that of GoToMyPC.

The screenshot shows the GoToMyPC website landing page. At the top left is the GoToMyPC logo. In the top right corner, there is a link: [Send a Friend a Free Trial](#). On the left side, there is a navigation menu with the following items: Home, How It Works, Product Overview, Press & Awards, Support & FAQs, Free Trial, Buy Now, and Log In. Below the navigation menu is a login form with fields for Email and Password, a Log In button, and a link for [Forgot your password?](#). The main content area features a large image of a smiling woman in front of a computer monitor. To the right of the image is the headline "Access Your PC from Anywhere®" and two buttons: "TRY IT FREE" (with a "Click Here" link) and "BUY NOW" (with a "Click Here" link). Below the image and headline is a section titled "Get Secure Remote Access with GoToMyPC". This section states: "GoToMyPC is the fast, easy and secure way to access your PC from any Web browser in real time. [Watch a 45-second demo.](#)" It includes a bulleted list of benefits: "Access files, programs, email, and network", "Increase your flexibility and productivity", "Work on your office PC from home", and "Travel and use your PC remotely". Below this list is the text "Take your office with you wherever you go." and a link: [Start a Free Trial of GoToMyPC](#). On the right side of the main content area is a section titled "Choose Your Solution". It has two sub-sections: "FOR YOU" with the text "Unlimited remote desktop access for individuals. [Free Trial](#)" and "FOR YOUR COMPANY" with the text "All the features of GoToMyPC PLUS a central administration center to manage your team's access. [More information and free trial](#)". At the bottom of the page, there are two testimonials: one from Personal Computer World stating "...the market leader in remote access software." and another from Laptop Magazine stating "...as feature rich and reliable as they come." The footer includes the text "United Kingdom" with a dropdown arrow.

As you can see they've even trade marked their attention grabbing headline – "Access Your PC from Anywhere". The company have other aspects to their webpage that keep the reader engaged. They offer a free trail which is mentioned no less than **five** times and the reader is also told the set up time is just two minutes. The benefits of the product are re-enforced with four simple bullet points, two testimonials and a link to a video which explains the product. If the reader now wants to learn more there is a clear link to extra information.

Tip 2 – Make sure that all the key information about your product/service can be viewed 'above the fold'. This should include an attention grabbing headline, features and benefits and a hook – like the 30 day free trail.

Generating a Database

Apart from providing customers and prospects information your website should be designed in such a way to help you generate information about them. However, in today's society of identity theft and poor database security people are becoming more and more reluctant to release personal information. They will always be weighing up in their minds 'what's in it for me?' In other words you need to give them something of perceived value before they will give you anything. This could be downloadable money-off vouchers, a free house buyers guide, top tips for making your house more saleable. An excellent example from another industry is Nationwide Autocentre. They offer vouchers in three separate steps:

1. The customer chooses a voucher from the selection available
2. They then have to sign up (giving their email address) for a monthly newsletter which also provides money saving opportunities
3. Once they have completed step two they can then print off the relevant vouchers to use at a Nationwide Autocentre

Using this mechanism, Nationwide Autocentre can then start to build a database of customers and prospects with whom they keep in contact with on a monthly basis.

Tip 3 – Capture customer/prospect email addresses by offering something of perceived value. This can be money-off vouchers, fact sheets with top tips, loyalty cards or anything else that has perceived value to your website visitor.

With so much business being generated from websites these days developing an effective website must be a top priority for any marketing department.

One product that you may find useful in keeping your customers' attention for longer on your site is a tool called instant pop overs. These are not pop ups in the normal sense and they can be used in a variety of ways. Further details can be found at Online Business Tools.

This article, like many similar articles, was made available free of charge at:

www.online-business-tools.com

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