

A gift box wrapped in brown paper with a large white mesh bow. The background is a dark red, textured surface.

Sample

Make More Sales

How to convert your
Web site visitors into
paying customers

by Gihan Perera

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Introduction

Welcome to this program, which is all about making more sales from your Web site. This is about what happens *after* you get somebody to visit your site. You've got them there. They are now looking at your site. How do you convert them into a customer?

Many people focus a lot on getting more people to their Web site but they don't put enough effort into converting them into customers. So that's what I'm going to cover in this program.

Overview

First we look at some of the reasons *why* it's important to focus on this part in the Internet marketing process.

Then we look at *who* are the three types of visitors that you're going to get to your Web site and why it's important for you to know who those three types are, because you're going to be marketing to each one of them very differently.

Once we know who they are, let's look at *what* questions they are asking. Every visitor to your Web site is asking three important questions, and if you don't answer all three of them, chances are that they won't become a customer. They'll just leave your Web site without taking any action.

Finally – but this is the bulk of this program – we'll look at *how* to use very specific techniques on your Web site to help answer those questions and take people along the path from being just a browser into becoming a customer.

Why is this important?

Let's start and look at why is it important to look at getting more sales from the people who visit your site.

Stop chasing traffic

When I publish my email newsletter, I regularly ask people "What's the biggest challenge you have about making more money from your Web site?" By far the biggest question that comes up is, "How do I get more traffic?"

It's absolutely true that if you get more traffic, chances are you'll make more sales. But it's also true that if you were able to improve the conversion rate of the people you're *already* getting, then you'll also make more sales.

It's often much easier to improve the conversion rate than it is to get more visitors to the site, and it's also much more cost effective.

You see most of the things that we're going to talk about in this program have nothing to do with *technology*. They're mostly to do with *psychology*. It doesn't mean that you have to invest lots of money in having a much more slick, expensive, high tech Web site. That's not the case. It usually means that you have to change the wording on the pages of your site, which is usually a much cheaper option.

So if you've been obsessing about getting more traffic to your Web site, stop! I'm not saying that you should stop completely, but also look at ways of converting the people that you've already got.

Know their mind set

The other thing to consider is that when people go searching the Internet they've got a very different mindset than when they go shopping in the real world. For example, if you walk into a bookstore, chances are that you're looking to *buy* a book. On the Internet, when people go searching in somewhere like Google, what they're doing is generally looking for *information* and they may not have the mindset of buying something. This means you have to work much harder to convince them to buy your product.

This is a very important distinction, and most Web sites don't go far enough to convince people to buy. They just assume that somebody visiting a product page on their site is going to read about the product, take out their credit card and make a purchase.

That simply isn't the case most of the time. Occasionally you'll find someone who *is* just looking to buy, and in that case they might stumble on your Web site and buy directly from you. But that's the exception that's not the rule.

So one of the things we're going to talk about in this program is how you convert people from that mindset of *searching* for information to *paying* for that information.

Small changes can make a big difference

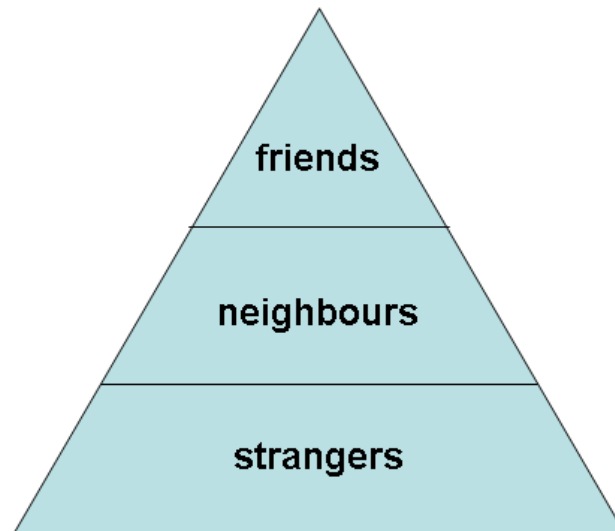
The third thing about converting people on your Web site is that conversion rates are pretty low in general. The Internet marketing experts consider themselves very good if they get a 1% conversion rate. That means of every 100 people that come to the site if one person buys, they think they've done a really good job. If they get 2% then they're extremely good, and if they get 5% they're pretty much at the top of the Internet marketing field.

So don't be disheartened if you're not getting many sales at the moment, when you consider that even the experts are getting about one in every 100 to convert.

The really good thing about this is, of course, it means you've got 99 people out of 100 who are not buying every time they visit your site. If you can reduce that to just 98, you just doubled your whole conversion rate, which means that you've doubled your profits, you've doubled your sales, you've doubled everything. So if at the moment you're not getting a lot of sales that's not necessarily a bad thing. It could be the perfect opportunity!

Who are your visitors?

Broadly, there are three types of people who are visiting your site:



The top group, which I call "friends", are your customers - that is, people who have paid you in the past for your products and services.

At the bottom are “strangers” - those who have never heard of you before. They may have found you through an advertisement, by a referral from somebody else, from the Internet, or by some other means.

The “neighbours” are those who have heard about you but are yet to become customers. They might be, for example, the people on your e-mail newsletter mailing list.

Market differently to each group

Of these three groups, which is the largest? Well it's most likely to be strangers, of course. And that's why many businesses spend all their efforts marketing to them.

However, the catch is that they are also the most difficult market to convert into customers. They don't know you, like you or trust you - yet. So it takes a much more concerted sales effort to convince them to buy from you.

On the other hand, the easiest to convince are your existing customers - your “friends”. People who have bought from you in the past are much more likely to buy from you again. Even if it's the smallest of the three groups, it might be far more responsive.

To get the greatest leverage from your marketing efforts, make sure you know whether you're directing it at friends, neighbours or strangers.

So when we talk about specific techniques in this program, keep in mind whether you're marketing to friends, neighbors or strangers.

In my experience most Web site owners try to do too much of their marketing to strangers and they forget about marketing to their past customers – that is, their “friends”. They've got this untapped goldmine of profit by just going back to their past customers. If you do nothing else from this program, focus more of your marketing on people who have bought from you before. It might be a very small group but they're probably the people who are going to buy from you again.

Now that doesn't mean that you *shouldn't* market to strangers. I know people who are making a lot of money by selling products to people who have never heard from them before. But if you haven't got a lot of time to invest in your Web site, invest it in marketing to the friends, the people who have already bought from you before.

Shift them up the pyramid

What's your job in marketing? Well part of it is to get the strangers in, bring them up into neighbors and then convince them to buy from you so they become friends and then market to them. If you can go through that process, chances are you'll make more sales from your Web site.

Some people market directly to strangers, somebody who visits their Web site for the first time, they read a very good sales letter, they're convinced to buy and they buy straight

away. That can be done and it does happen but it's quite hard to do. It requires quite a bit of effort in marketing your Web site to get people to buy that way.

My suggestion is when you get people to your site for the first time, have something that puts them on a mailing list, so that they then become neighbors and eventually buy from you and become friends.

Try to get people moving in that progression, from strangers to neighbors and friends.

The Three Key Questions

The way to make your Web site work is to put yourself in your customer's shoes or put yourself in your customer's head. When somebody visits your site what are they asking?

Now I believe whether you're marketing to friends, strangers or neighbours, the three key questions that they're asking are:

⇒ "Why this?"

⇒ "Why you?"

⇒ "Why now?"

"Why this?" means, "Why should I buy this product or this service? Is it what I'm looking for? Does it solve my problem? Does it have the benefits that I'm looking for?" You have to answer those questions.

The second question "Why you," is, "Why should I buy this from you, especially if I've never heard of you before and there are a whole bunch of other people who are also selling similar products and services. Why should I make this purchase from you specifically?"

The third question, "Why now," is one that I find is often ignored by people on their Web sites. The person visiting the site is asking themselves, "Why should I buy this right now? Why don't I just bookmark this site to come back to it later?"

Your job as a Web site owner is to answer all three questions. As we go through this program, we'll look at specific techniques for answering each one of those three questions on your Web site.

Why this?

- ⇒ Because
- ⇒ Contrast
- ⇒ Social proof
- ⇒ Authority
- ⇒ Simplicity

Why you?

- ⇒ Liking
- ⇒ Reciprocity
- ⇒ Commitment and consistency
- ⇒ Framing
- ⇒ Authority

Why now?

- ⇒ Scarcity
- ⇒ Risk reversal

We're now coming up to the bulk of this program. I'm going to talk about some very specific things that you can do on your Web site that help people go from becoming just a visitor into a buying customer.

Many of the examples are taken from Robert Cialdini's excellent book *Influence*¹, which I recommend highly if you're interested in converting more prospects into clients.

¹ Cialdini, Robert, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, The Business Library, 1984.

Why This: Benefits, not just features

What are the benefits of your product and service, not just the features?

Let's take an example. Suppose you're running a martial arts training school and you know that one of the most important topics now, especially for women, is self-defense for women.

You might run these classes in your school and you might have taped some of these and created a video or DVD product which is "Self-defense for Women: A Home Study Course." Now what the basic Web site would do, and this is not enough, what a basic Web site would do would just be have a page about that product, about the fact that it's available on video or DVD. It might talk about some of the lessons you're going to learn. It might talk about how long the program is. It might talk about how quickly they can learn the information. It might say that there's phone support available for anybody who buys the product. It then links to an order form.

That's good but it's not enough. The reason it's not enough is because it only talks about the features of the product, not the benefits. The difference is the features are what's in the product; the benefits are what the product can do for the customer.

For example, instead of just saying that they're going to learn a martial arts move that can immobilize an attacker in two minutes, that's a feature. The benefit of that is that

women can feel safer walking home in the evenings from work. Make sure that you take each of the features of your product and convert them into a benefit. An easy way to do that is to list the feature and then put the words "so that" and then go on to the benefits.

Let's take that example again, "Learn to immobilize an attacker in two minutes so that you can feel safer walking home in the evenings."

Instead of using "so that" you might use the words "which means that." It's the same thing so, "Immobilize an attacker in two minutes which means that you can now feel safer when you're walking home in the evening."

Go through your product, look at all of the features that you've got and convert them into benefits. That's the first thing to do. It doesn't mean that you shouldn't put all of the features on your site. Some people are looking for the features. They're looking for is it available on DVD, how long is the program, can I buy an audio version of it that I can listen to in the car or in the gym. So all of those things are very important but make sure that you put the benefits in there as well.

You might say something like, "Available on DVD and audio so that you can listen to it at your convenience."

Make sure you have the features and the benefits. Most Web sites only have the features.

Why This: Give them a reason

The next technique is simple – almost simplistic – but has a big effect: **Tell them the reasons to buy.**

There's a sound psychological reason for this. There was a study done some time ago about giving people reasons and it's really interesting in what Ellen Langer, who is a psychologist, found. She was testing how people would respond to being asked to do a favor. The university had a photocopier and there was a big line of people waiting to use the photocopier and had somebody come in, cut into the line and say, "Excuse me, could I please use the copier?" Now of course there was this big long line of people there waiting and most people said, "No you can't. Go to the end of the line."

So what she did in the next version of the experiment is she had the person coming up and saying, "Excuse me, could I please use the copier because I'm in a rush?" The only difference was that this person said "because" and gave a reason. This time almost everybody said yes and allowed them to cut into the line.

Then she went a little bit further and the final version of the experiment she had the person coming in and saying, "Excuse me, could I please use the copier because I have to make some copies?" When you think about that, that makes no sense at all. I mean of course you going to use the copier because you have to make some copies and yet what she found was that the result of this was exactly the same as giving a valid reason. So

people were still happy to allow the person to break into the line just because she gave the reason even though the reason didn't really make much sense.

How do you use this on your Web site?

Obviously I'm not suggesting that you provide spurious and irrational reasons for people to buy your product! But I do recommend that you do provide **some** reasons. Don't just assume that people will figure out for themselves why they should buy it.

This is where it's so important to list the benefits of your product or service. Make sure that the words you use on your Web site are benefit-oriented rather than feature-oriented. Instead of telling your potential clients what your product can do (features), tell them what it can do for them (benefits). In other words, describe the product in terms of the result it offers rather than the product itself.

For example:

- ⇒ If a breakfast cereal has "90% less sugar", that's a feature; if it "keeps you active longer", that's a benefit.
- ⇒ If your vacuum cleaner "picks up twice as much dirt" as others, that's a feature; if it "saves you time because you will use it less frequently", that's a benefit.
- ⇒ If your accounting practice "employs only fully qualified CPAs to do your tax return", that's a feature; if that means "we save a typical taxpayer \$2000 a year", that's a benefit.

It's very common for business owners to talk about features rather than benefits on their Web site, because products have features, and business owners are often very close to their products. But that's not the way that your client thinks. It requires an extra step - a very important extra step - to translate each feature into a benefit for your client.

For instance, here's an example of how we use this when promoting our password-protection software:

What's in our system?

- ◆ The software runs on our Web server, so there's nothing to install at your end except to add a password box to selected pages of your Web site
- ◆ You can have more than one password for the private area, so that you can increase perceived value to clients by giving them their own password.
- ◆ Different passwords can go to different pages, so that you can create client-specific material or different levels of access (e.g. Silver, Gold, Platinum)

Notice how each feature (runs on our own server, more than one password, different pages) has a corresponding **reason why** that's important.

Conclusion

Let's go back to the numbers I spoke about earlier. The really good Internet marketers get a one to two percent conversion on their Web sites. So of every 100 people who visited the site, one person buys or two people buy.

Let's say it's one person. That means that 99% of the people don't buy. If you can improve the conversion rate on your Web site from one to two percent, it doesn't sound like much – but you've just doubled your sales.

If you can apply just a few of the things that we've talked about, and instead of having 99 people out of 100 not buying, if you can just make *one* more sale so it's now only 98 people who don't buy, you've basically doubled your profits. In most cases, that's easier than trying to get more people to your Web site.

By all means look at getting more traffic, but also look at getting more sales from the people who do arrive there. The great thing is when you do get somebody buying, they go into the "friends" part of your list which means that it's much easier to sell to them in the future. Your job then is to take somebody who's a friend to become a long term customer and you sell more and more and make more money by giving value to them.

If there's one thing that I can leave you with, it's the idea that I mentioned at the start. People who are searching the Net are not usually looking to buy directly; instead, they're

looking for information. It's your job to convince them that the information that they require is in your products and services, If you can do that, you can then make more sales.

Now it's up to you!

I hope you've learned something from this special report. But more importantly, I'd like it to spur you into action – because, of course, what matters is not knowledge itself, but **applied knowledge**.

If you read this and do nothing, that's just as bad as not reading it at all. In fact, it's **worse**, because you've wasted your time!

So please **take action**, and start **now**.

I hope you've enjoyed this program and I wish you luck in making more sales from your Web site.

If you'd like more information about the products and services that we offer, you can visit my Web site, www.gihanperera.com. Thank you and good luck.



About Gihan Perera

Gihan Perera is a business consultant, speaker, author and entrepreneur – with clients throughout Australia, and in New Zealand, South Africa, Singapore, the U.K. and Canada. He works with professional speakers and trainers, consultants, business owners, CEOs and strategic leadership teams to improve their marketing, sales and persuasion skills in one-on-one meetings, group presentations and on the Internet.

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