Minor Changes, Major Lifts:

How headline and call-to-action optimization increased conversion 45%

ABSTRACT

In this Web clinic transcript, Dr. Flint McGlaughlin and presenters focus on recognizing and optimizing the most common errors in headlines and calls-to-action.

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Minor Changes, Major Lifts

How headline and call-to-action optimization increased conversion 45%

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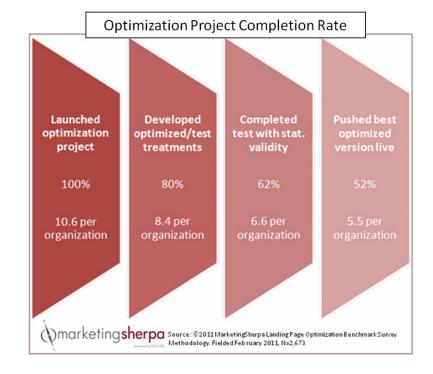Austin McCraw
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[Note: This document is a transcript of our original Web clinic on "Minor Changes Major Lifts: How headline and call-to-action optimization increased conversion 45%" that aired on February 22, 2012. A full video replay is also available.]

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: All right, well good afternoon or good morning depending on where you are calling me from, from around the world. We are going to drill deeply into the content immediately. As you can see on the screen, we are showing the results of a major study, we just did around the world with marketing organizations and it was shocking for us to learn that more than 52%, only 52% actually finished an optimization project.
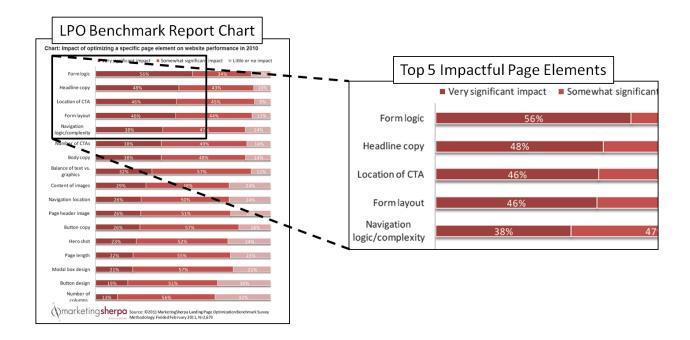
Only 52% of organizations finish an optimization project …

Optimization Project Completion Rate

Launched optimization project	Developed optimized/test treatments	Completed test with stat. validity	Pushed best optimized version live
100%	80%	62%	52%
10.6 per organization	8.4 per organization	6.6 per organization	5.5 per organization

marketingsherpa Source: ©2011 MarketingSherpa Landing Page Optimization Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded February 2011, N=2,673

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How can I get the largest possible lift with the least number of changes to my page?

LPO Benchmark Report Chart

Chart: Impact of optimizing a specific page element on website performance in 2010

	Very significant impact	Somewhat significant impact	Little or no impact
Form logic	56%	34%	
Headline copy	48%	43%	10%
Location of CTA	46%	45%	9%
Form layout	46%	44%	11%
Navigation logic/complexity	38%	47%	14%
Number of CTAs	38%	49%	14%
Body copy	38%	48%	14%
Balance of text vs. graphics	32%	57%	11%
Content of images	29%	48%	24%
Navigation location	26%	50%	24%
Page header image	26%	51%	
Button copy	26%	57%	18%
Hero shot	23%	52%	24%
Page length	22%	55%	23%
Modal box design	21%	57%	21%
Button design	19%	51%	30%
Number of columns	13%	56%	32%

marketingsherpa Source: ©2011 MarketingSherpa Landing Page Optimization Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded February 2011, N=2,673

Top 5 Impactful Page Elements

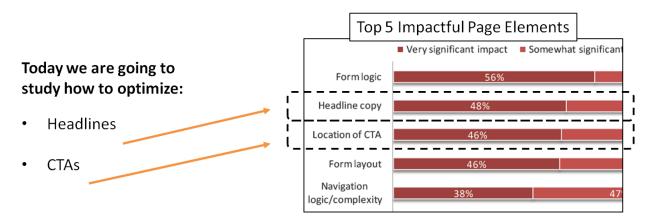|	Very significant impact	Somewhat significant
Form logic	56%	
Headline copy	48%	
Location of CTA	46%	
Form layout	46%	
Navigation logic/complexity	38%	47

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Moreover, as we drill down deeper, we began to look and we saw that there were two critical areas that we might drill down on in this particular clinic that can help you, that have just logged in for this event. These are the changes, the most impactful elements and by the way you can see this in the Landing Page Optimization Benchmark Report published by MarketingSherpa, one of our research companies and what is fascinating to me is that so much of the, you might say the results or the improvements originated from changes in the headline copy and the location of the call-to-action.

Now, we have less than an hour together. You may be wondering what can we do in this short period of time that can make a significant difference when I start back in the daily grind and in fact marketers everywhere are frustrated by the inability they have to get good tests up or to make the significant changes deep into their processes that they know would produce a high yield. Today it's different, we are going to focus on something that we think will be highly actionable, something you can take back, something you can use, something that will present you with pragmatic ways to get significant results and so we are going to drill down really thinking about the first two inches of your landing page and the last two inches of your landing page.

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Now, coming up next in the very next research clinic, we will show specific experiments about what happens in the middle, but you know it doesn't matter what happens in the

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middle. It doesn't matter if you don't get those first two inches right because no one is going to read what occurs in the middle and a lot of marketers focus on the call-to-action without thinking about those first two inches, but they don't want to show you how the first two inches and the last two inches come together and make such a significant difference for us.

Today we are going to study how to optimize:

- Headlines

- CTAs

Top 5 Impactful Page Elements

■ Very significant impact   ■ Somewhat significant

Element	
Form logic	56%
Headline copy	48%
Location of CTA	46%
Form layout	46%
Navigation logic/complexity	38% ... 47

NOTE: In our next clinic, we will be discussing how to overcome friction in form logic and layout…

MarketingExperiments.com/FormFriction

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: So we are going to drill right into a case study and drill down again on the headline and the call-to-action and move into the study itself.

Experiment: Background and design

Experiment ID: *(protected)*
Location: MarketingExperiments Research Library
Test Protocol Number: TP1111

Research Notes:

Background: A survey company offering to pay its members to take surveys

Goal: To increase qualified survey panelist registrations

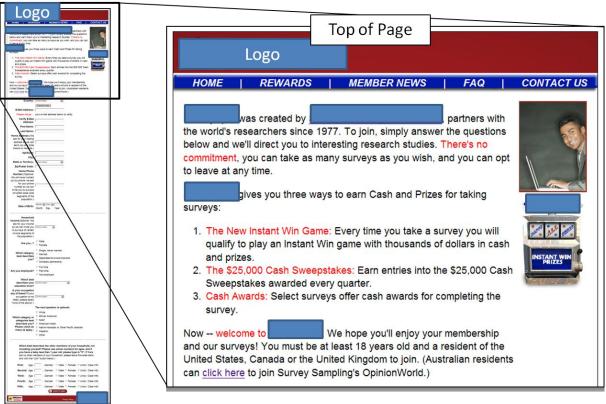**Primary Research Question:** Which panelist registration page will have a higher conversion rate?

Approach: A/B multifactor split test

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: We are at test protocol 1111 and the goal is to increase qualified survey panelists. Some of you may have seen this before because we drilled down on it in a different approach for a different reason. We needed today to learn about those first two inches, in fact, I am going to give you
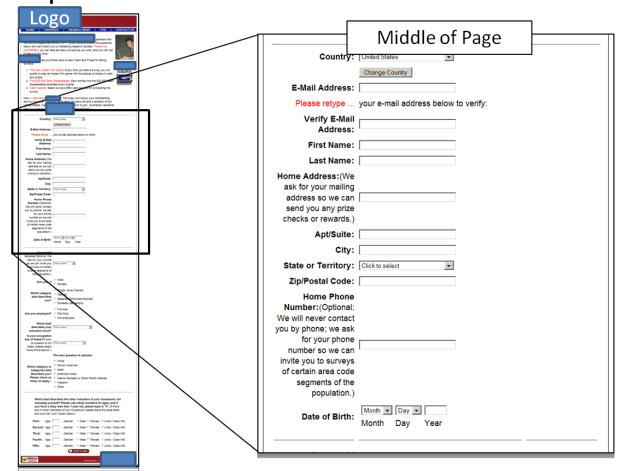
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a key principle and then I am going to show you the five most common errors in those two inches and then we are going to look at five common errors in the last two inches, but let's look at the study now.
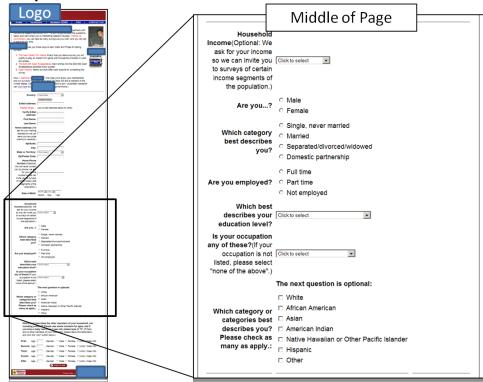
Experiment: Control

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: So you can see behind me essentially this is the blowout of the top of the control. You will see some text and it is broken down into some reasonable clusters, it is numbered. The blue boxes are just us anonymizing the brand, but you can also see by looking at this particular slide that it is a very long page and it is hard to get people to complete this page. In fact, we only hope for a small, maybe even a single digit improvement, which had and would have an enormous impact on this organization.

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Experiment: Control

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Experiment: Control
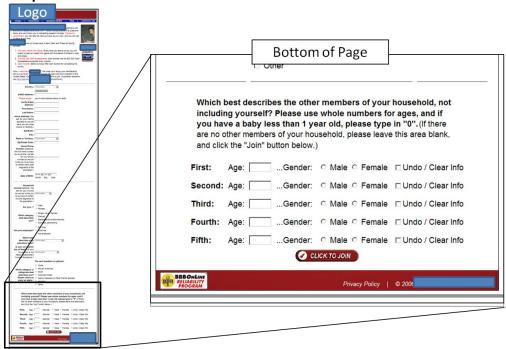
Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: and here is the middle of the page

Experiment: Control

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Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: and you can see the bottom of the page coming up here and now let us look at some thoughts about that.

Experiment: Control

Conversion Heuristic:

$$C = 4m + 3v + 2(i-f) - 2a$$

- Using our conversion methodologies, we identified the following potential areas for improving conversion:

  1. Reduce **Friction (f)** by shortening the length of the registration form.

  2. Clarify the expression of the **Value Proposition (v)** by adding a clear headline.

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Before I go any further, you can see when we start talking about some of the errors, but use your twitter account or your Q&A feature right now on the go-to-meeting control panel to tell us some things you would do to make this better. Reduce friction we have, but what are some other ways you can make this page better? Where is the value and the headline, thank you Pam, good point. Shorten some of the copy someone says. Add a headline says Karen, Karen you are absolutely right. Form labels are too complex says Graham. Add a headline says Jeff. I need to know the why at the beginning says Devin, I mean that's correct. Add subheads, Karen you must have been on last week's event, good call. Let me look at some others here, video says Malinka and Janet says create different page for the form, listen there are hundreds of responses coming in.

We read every one of these. It helps us understand what your learning as an audience, how to calibrate what we teach for you next time, but at present lets go back to this and look for just a moment. We did want to reduce the friction, but we also wanted to clarify the expression of the Value Proposition and somehow encapsulate that in the headline. How do we do it?

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Experiment: Treatment

- New headline added to clarify the value proposition

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Now here is the optimized version, now please don't think of this as the final optimized version, remember we are doing a series of iterations. We are isolating key variables, sometimes we do a radical cluster, sometimes not, but whatever in the end we are trying to improve performance and we are doing more than simply trying to achieve a lift. We are trying to achieve learning, and in doing that we have focused just on this headline and we learned some fascinating insights. So here is the headline "Set Up Your FREE Account Today and Start Earning Money", is that a great headline? On a scale of 1 to 10, I would give it a 7, but we tested 10, and I am going to show you more in just a moment.

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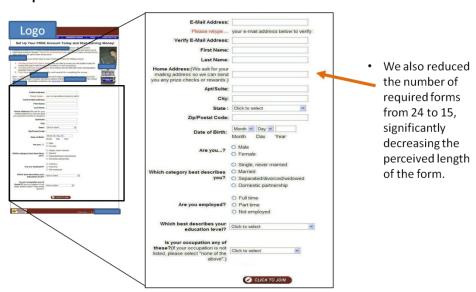
Experiment: Treatment

ID	Headline
HL1	Set Up Your FREE Account Today and Start Earning Money!
HL2	Get Paid to Take FREE Surveys
HL3	Take Online Surveys From Home and Win Cash & Prizes
HL4	Get Paid to Fill Out Online Surveys
HL5	Surveys – Quick, Easy and FREE
HL6	Join the [Company Name] Community and Have Your Opinions Count
HL7	Win Cash & Prizes for Online Surveys
HL8	Get Rewarded for Your Opinion
HL9	You're Invited to Join the [Company Name] Community and to Earn Rewards For Your Opinions
HL10	Here's Your First Survey, and an Invitation to Join Our Research Community

- The level of traffic this page received allowed us to test 10 different possible headlines for this offer.

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: So here is the series, you can see all of the headlines. There was enough traffic coming to this page that we could drill down deeply, we could test it well and we had all of these versions. Let's unpack that a little bit more.
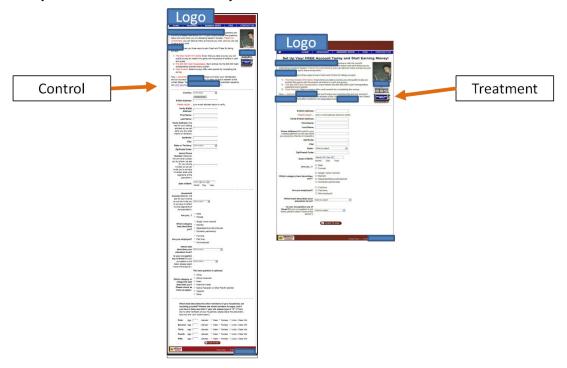
Experiment: Treatment

- We also reduced the number of required forms from 24 to 15, significantly decreasing the perceived length of the form.

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: We also made a change to the fiction on the page. We reduced the number of form fields from 24 to 15.

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Experiment: Side-by-side

Control

Treatment

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: So, let's look again. You should see the control and the treatment. You can see that the treatment is shorter and you can see that we have added value at the top of the page because we drilled down on the headline in particular. We have no sub-header Karen, it is better with a sub-header, but that comes in later kinds of experiments. Right now, we just want to think about the impact of that and I do want to point out something else. For reasons that I would explain if I were to break the data down and I have in other clinics, so I will not now.

We know that the primary factor that influenced the outcome was the headline. It is something we can validate with science, but I can't teach it just yet, and so let me move on and by the way, I am joined today in the studio, I don't know if Dan introduced, just he introduced Adam and our other guest, John Cockburn and so John, this is John's first time as he is an analyst in the lab. I don't think he has ever been here and he is sitting on the chair and his leg is shaking. I don't know if that's good or that's bad. I can't assume that he is nervous because he would be if he was a big giant brain, but he is going to be helping us as we do some live optimization. By the way, I am going to do something different today. We are going to do a live-opt at the end, but we are also going to do optimization as I teach, in fact in just a moment I am going to pull up on the first pages. I am going to look at it in relation to some of the principles that we want to learn together. So keeping that in mind, let's look over here at the results.

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Experiment: Results

10% increase in registrations
The new page design improved the conversion rate by 10.44%

	CR	Rel. Diff.	Stat. Conf.
Control	26.04%	-	
Treatment (Highest Performing)	**28.76%**	**10.44%**	95%

✓ **What You Need to Understand**: By focusing on reducing the length of the form, and strengthening the value through a clear headline, we were able to generate 10.44% more registrations.

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Control 26.04% and the treatment 28.76%, but we need to understand by focusing on the distance and length of the form and by strengthening the value through a clear headline, we got 10.44% more registrations, that was a very significant improvement, perhaps more than we hoped, but there is more to be learned and remember the whole point of today. It is not to show you case studies and impress you with the cleverness of the MECLABS scientists. Instead we want to learn something from this case study. We want to use it to motivate a series of leanings that may help you get the first two inches of your page right.

Experiment: Results

Looking deeper at the results, we were surprised to see some of the treatments performed significantly better than others. This revealed that the difference in conversion did not primarily come from form field reduction, but from the headline.

ID	Headline Tested	CR	Rel. Diff.	
XX	Control (No Headline)	26.04%	-	Lift attributed to reducing form friction.
XX	[Headline Hidden]	26.81%	2.95%	
XX	[Headline Hidden]	26.92%	3.36%	
XX	[Headline Hidden]	27.14%	4.24%	
XX	[Headline Hidden]	27.35%	5.03%	
XX	[Headline Hidden]	27.37%	5.12%	Lift attributed to the headline.
XX	[Headline Hidden]	27.52%	5.67%	
XX	[Headline Hidden]	27.92%	7.23%	
XX	[Headline Hidden]	27.98%	7.46%	
XX	[Headline Hidden]	27.98%	7.46%	
XX	[Headline Hidden]	28.76%	10.44%	

Results: Sorted by relative difference in conversion

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Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: So, let's think a little bit more deeply. As you look at these results, we are surprised to see that some of the treatments perform significantly better than others and look at the actual relative difference in conversion, all the way down that right column, you can see here. And as you are thinking about that, let us drill down on a few key pieces. Number 1, when we just worked without, with a reduced friction, you can see this point I made earlier, without the headline, we didn't see a dramatic lift. The lift came as we connected the headline in this particular piece of research and there are some things we can learn.

Best-performing Headline

ID#	Headline Tested	CR	Rel. Diff.
HL1	Set Up Your FREE Account Today and Start Earning Money!	27.35%	5.03%
HL2	**Get Paid to Take FREE Surveys**	**28.76%**	**10.44%**
HL3	Take Online Surveys From Home and Win Cash & Prizes	26.81%	2.95%
HL4	Get Paid to Fill Out Online Surveys	27.98%	7.46%
HL5	Surveys – Quick, Easy and FREE	27.52%	5.67%
HL6	Join the [Company Name] Community and Have Your Opinions Count	26.92%	3.36%
HL7	Win Cash & Prizes for Online Surveys	27.37%	5.12%
HL8	Get Rewarded for Your Opinion	27.92%	7.23%
HL9	You're Invited to Join the [Company Name] Community and to Earn Rewards For Your Opinions	27.14%	4.24%
HL10	Here's Your First Survey, and an Invitation to Join Our Research Community	28.35%	8.87%

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Look at the winning headline, "Get Paid to Take FREE Surveys". Now, I can talk more about this in just a moment and I don't know if we go deeper into this or not, probably show the other headlines. Let me just, there is another clinic, I don't know what it is, I don't know its name, I would like to know it. Headline optimization, you can find that in our archives, you can find it using the search field at marketingexperiments.com. We break this down because you are going to find that all five of the top headlines had one factor in common and that is they emphasize what you receive, they emphasize the get factor, and they did so right at the front of the headline, and that study is really worth taking some time when we taught and it has been almost entire clinic breaking down this particular study, but there is more I want you to learn today and it is different than that particular piece.

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Page Element #1: Optimizing Headlines

Crafting an Effective Headline

☞ *Key Principles*

> **PRINCIPLE #1**: All marketing messages must be centered primarily on the interests of the customer. Therefore, when it comes to crafting effective headlines, emphasize what the visitor **GETS**, rather than what they must **DO**.

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: So let's move on and layout the first key principle. All marketing messages should be centered around the interest of the customer. So when it comes to crafting effective headlines, you need to emphasize what the visitor gets rather than what they must do. I don't think that's especially profound except when you see it in the context of the detailed case study, but it leads to another key piece and that is the first in a series of errors, I want to help you help you to try and recognize.

☞ *Key Principles*

> **PRINCIPLE #1**: All marketing messages must be centered primarily on the interests of the customer. Therefore, when it comes to crafting headlines, emphasize what the visitor gets rather than what they must do.
>
> **PRINCIPLE #2**: To help us create effective headlines, we can learn to avoid these five common headline errors:
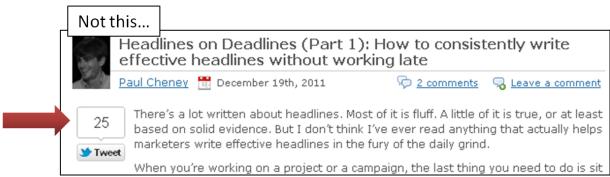>> **ERROR #1:** A headline that is too clever

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Now, think about your own headlines, and in fact, if you are in front of the Internet and if you have multiple monitors or the ability to do this, I would say pull up two or three of your main learning pages and start assessing the first two inches with the things we are talking about right now. So here is the first, a headline, the first error, a headline that is too clever. I see this problem all of the time.

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Error #1: Clever headlines
Example

Not this…

> ### Headlines on Deadlines (Part 1): How to consistently write effective headlines without working late
>
> Paul Cheney 📅 December 19th, 2011   💬 2 comments   Leave a comment
>
> **25**
> 🐦 Tweet
>
> There's a lot written about headlines. Most of it is fluff. A little of it is true, or at least based on solid evidence. But I don't think I've ever read anything that actually helps marketers write effective headlines in the fury of the daily grind.
>
> When you're working on a project or a campaign, the last thing you need to do is sit

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Here is an example, from my own library. Now you will notice the top is Paul Cheney and if you were in the clinic last week you will discover that Paul in some sort of a humble version of arrogance pointed out, and he is right in front of me here, that his headline beat my headline in a test and it really wasn't his headline against my headline, it was two versions, two approaches, we are both trying to learn. Now I don't take away from Paul's significant victory, but he had a 92% improvement and I think he was feeling guilty in getting this 92% improvement because you know he is a junior analyst and I am supposed to be the senior, or whatever here, and I think he rubbed my nose in it so long that he did this, he even put his picture here, he says not this, and he shows a headline he developed, "Headlines on Deadlines", it sounds like a drug. Part One: How to consistently write effective headlines without working late.

…but this

> ### This Just Tested: Stock images or real people?
>
> Austin McCraw 📅 April 8th, 2011   💬 17 comments   Leave a comment
>
> **1,030**
> 🐦 Tweet
>
> In our most recent Web clinic on optimizing leads, we quickly reviewed a recent case study in which two banner images were tested – a generic stock image vs. an image of a real person. This experiment led to more insights than we had time to cover last week; so, I thought I'd give it a little more room to breathe here on the blog.

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Now, look at this next headline. "This Just Tested: Stock Images or Real People." The second headline is a little less clever and look at the tweet difference. 25 on the top and 10,030, sorry, I mean 1,030 on the bottom. A small rounding error. 1,030, not this, but this, and by the way, the guy he is pointing to who developed that headline and actually was in our blog is Austin McCraw and as you know Austin works regularly in our content and is an expert in this area. Both these guys are too young to be that smart. It's a threat to me. I'm very old. All right. Not this, but this.

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Error #1: Clever headlines
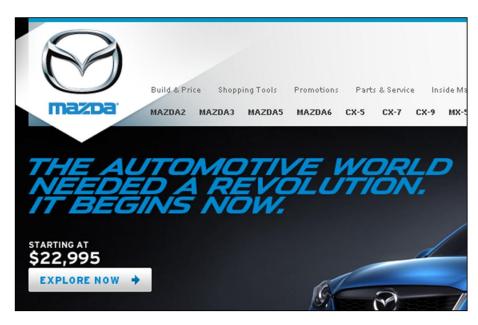*Live Optimization*

Primary Channel:
Google organic searches (Mazda and Mazda Canada)

Target Audience:
General public

Page Objective:
Click to another page with more detail/next steps.

www.Mazda.ca

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Now let's look at something else. You submitted this headline. This is something the audience submitted for today's event. We are going to look at a lot of these and we are going to look at more of these as the day unfolds and I have got more profound errors coming up, but just look at this headline. There are a lot of things wrong with it. #1, it is hard to read, it's all caps. John, come on up, John. Okay, all right, so now I am telling you this because Philip or Philippe it looks like submitted this page. Philip in our audience today, or Philippe is in the audience today and we want to make the whole page better.

We are not going to drill down on the entire page, we are going to just look at the headline because that is the part we are teaching. We may come back to it later, but you can see the background and John this is your first time on a clinic, this is your first time in the studio, and you look lovely in burgundy. All right, go ahead and I like your haircut especially. All right, so talk to me. Tell me what you see here.

John Cockburn: Okay, just to quickly provide some background on the page that we are seeing here. This is a page that Mazda is using to present their SkyActiv technology, which is basically enhancing the engine performance while maintaining the fuel efficiency that we expect from hybrid vehicles. So, what we see on the headline to communicate this revolution in technology, we see "The automotive world needed a revolution, it begins now." Clearly, there is no explicit communication of the benefit that this revolution and technology delivers to the user.

This kind of ambiguity leaves user questioning. Why should I continue searching through this page? Why should I explore now? Why should I spend time to conduct that research? So clearly here a more

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effective headline that drives home the benefits of the improved engine performance with the increase in the fuel efficiency would motivate the user through the funnel.

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Thank you John. John is being polite. A third of my audience are agencies, so agencies I am on your side. But can I just talk about this, because this is a great way to learn something. We are going to move on fast and we've got a lot of content to cover today. A lot of content and some of these things I don't think you've ever heard anywhere else. They just come out of the research. But this you may think you have heard, but I am not sure we get it. You know I have children, I have three and I often say things to them and they nod their heads and they say they know that and I believe they know that, but they don't get it.

If I might be so bold as to give you an example, I said to my 17-year-old son that because of a conflict in my schedule I have got to jump on a plane and fly to Denver. So I came in today to the office in a pair of jeans and a shirt, and I thought to myself, If I am going to do this lecture then I need to get into my suit so I sent him home. I said, "Son be here at 3:30." and he said, "Yes dad, I will be here at 3:30." He didn't get here, and at 3:45 he was still at home. At 4 o'clock, he walked through the door. Guess what time I am supposed to start? 4 o'clock. And that's why I found myself, standing in my library in my underwear waiting for a suit. He said it. He acknowledged it. But he didn't get it. I am hoping that you will think about what John just said in a more profound way. Not that I am going to say it more profoundly than John, but that we hear it in a profound way.

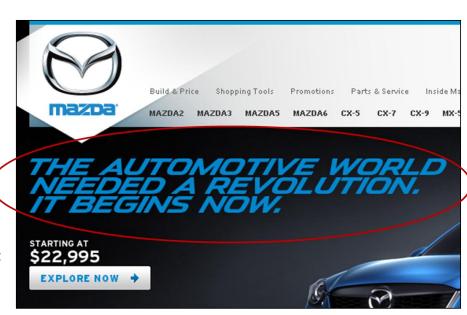# Error #1: Clever headlines
Live Optimization

Primary Channel:
Google organic searches (Mazda and Mazda Canada)

Target Audience:
General public

Page Objective:
Click to another page with more detail/next steps.

www.Mazda.ca

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Listen, clarity trumps persuasion. This headline is hard to read #1. It's blue on black, which makes it hard to read. It is blue on some sort of faded color pattern. It is all caps, which it

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makes it difficult to read. It is all caps and it is violating almost every key principle of clarity, but then when it comes down to reading it, "The automotive world needed revolution. It begins now." What does that mean? Is that government aid? Is that what we just went through for the last three years? Is that a change in financing? Is that the abolishment of unions? No offense to those of you in unions. My point is I have no idea what this is about. And it should be that simple. You have got something really profound to say there and it needs to be said at least enough to get me to engage with the rest of the copy.

Please remember clarity trumps persuasion. And I want to suggest to you that when you are writing a headline, it should be in the same style and tone that you would use if you had something important to say to a person you are meeting or a friend. Avoid "Agency-Speak." I am putting that in quotes. This is "agency-speak" and it gets in the way of meaning.

Crafting an Effective Headline

☞ *Key Principles*

PRINCIPLE #1: All marketing messages must be centered primarily on the interests of the customer. Therefore, when it comes to crafting headlines, emphasize what the visitor gets rather than what they must do.

PRINCIPLE #2: To help us create effective headlines, we can learn to avoid these five common headline errors:

ERROR #1: A headline that is too clever
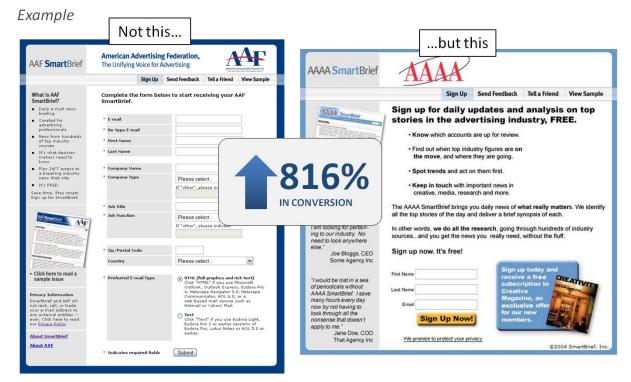
ERROR #2: A headline that sounds like a title

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Let's think about that and continue as we look at the next error. A headline that sounds like a title. I see these all over the Internet. In fact, for those of you on the agency side who heard me talk about the weakness of that headline, you might enjoy the next point because it is sort of the other side of equation. This is when we fail to communicate in a sentence and say something of import that drives someone deeper into the copy. Remember the goal of the headline is to get people into the conversation. The goal of the headline might present value as you saw earlier, but that's not the goal. It is just to present the value so we can get them into the conversation, so we can really interact with them.

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Error #2: Title headlines

Example

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: And with that in mind we have to be careful with headlines, like the one you see here. Compared to what you might see here. Not this, what you are looking on the left side, but this. There is a significant difference. And by the way there is a significant difference in performance. An 816% difference in performance.

Error #2: Title headlines

Live Optimization

Primary Channel:
Web search

Target Audience:
Small, growing businesses that haven't committed to hiring a full-time assistant, entrepreneurs and start-ups, other VAs.

Page Objective:
Click to another page with more detail/next steps.

http://www.boostdefined.com/

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Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Now, let's look at another submission and Adam Lapp is going to come up and join me. Here is the page that was submitted. I want to look at the headline and Adam, go ahead and talk. Many of you guys have heard Adam over the phone. He is a star in lab and we have assigned him to John. John is tutoring him, mentoring him, and trying to maximize his full potential. Tell us what you would do Adam.

Adam Lapp: I would probably make three recommendations right off the bat here. "Qualified virtual assistant service." Number one, it's not action orientated. It does not tell me what I can do on this page or what I can do with you as a company. Tell me to sign up to get a virtual assistant service.

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Or" Improve your X with virtual assistant service."

Adam Lapp: Something that is action oriented that gets me to the paragraph to read the actual values that you are trying to communicate to the visitor. The second thing is page location. As we can see, the headline is about 3 to 400 pixels below the top of the page. And so you are relying on the visitor to hunt and search for this headline instead of just giving it to them right away as they enter the page. This is the first impression that you are making on a visitor and you will not want to leave that first impression to an ambiguous vague photo that might or might not imply a "virtual assistant".

The third recommendation I would make would be to provide value. Some kind of value or benefit that you are trying to offer to the user. What do you mean by "qualify"? What can a virtual assistant do for me? I would recommend a headline such as, "Get virtual assistance with over five years of administrative experience." or say, "45%", or "Get 45% more efficiency with a virtual assistant service."

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: That kind of headline. Very good and thank you Adam. Now let me talk to you for just a moment. I want to help Mallory. Mallory, you submitted this page and I don't want to be offensive, sometimes we try to be quite direct. Remember what we really want to do is help you. But, can I just say the entire page is missing it. We are not optimizing the whole page, but if I look at this page and ask the audience, "Do we even know what they are talking about?" It has got "boostdefined" and I don't know what "boostdefined" is. It is like two words joined to make one word. So it is a word that has no meaning with me to start with.

Above it, is whatever navigation there might be, which is in the wrong location. Above it is a mistake. And it says home, about, feedback, and contact, but it is in gray on white, which means that it is not even seen. Then there is a giant image and I literally have to stare at the image to understand what it is of. It is an odd image. It never shows a complete angle on anything, and so you have to work through the image, which is too much work. Underneath it is a headline, that doesn't actually serve as a headline. It serves as a title. And underneath it is a gray text on white with no eye-path, no bold font, and no reason whatsoever for me to engage. And if you turn to the right, it has a form that simply says your e-mail address, subject, and message with no incentive whatsoever for me to actually give you this information.

And so I want to suggest to you Mallory, in all kindness, this is not a page to optimize. This is a page to just tear up and start over and get way clearer about and less trendy or artful to get down to the

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meaning. Give me more perceived value than what I see or sense in terms of perceived cost. This is all cost and no value. Okay. And I hope that helps you Mallory without making you upset with me. Marketers stay with me we have eight more points. We have a series of errors on the two inches and you may have just join us and not know this, but we are talking about the first two inches on your landing page and the last two inches of your landing page. And we are going to go through a series of errors that you need to avoid in order to get the maximum yield, so let's keep going.

Crafting an Effective Headline

Key Principles

PRINCIPLE #1: All marketing messages must be centered primarily on the interests of the customer. Therefore, when it comes to crafting headlines, emphasize what the visitor gets rather than what they must do.

PRINCIPLE #2: To help us create effective headlines, we can learn to avoid these five common headline errors:

ERROR #1: A headline that is too clever

ERROR #2: A headline that sounds like a title
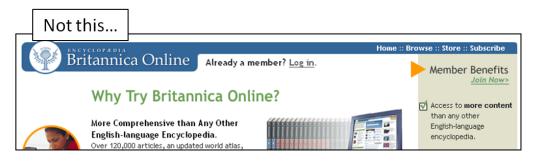
ERROR #3: A headline in the form of an empty question

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: I am looking at the third error. A headline in the form of an empty question. I see this all the time. Now, we have talked about a headline that's too clever. Lots of cute sounding headlines that actually are devoid of meaning. We have talked about a headline that really isn't a headline, just a title. It sounds like a title. It just tells me where I'm at. Now, we are talking about a headline in the form of an empty question. See these. It is as if the marketer doesn't really know what to put, so they run a question across the top of the page and hope that will engage you. And we all know that problems and questions can be used in a dynamic way, but the way I see them used as a headline typically, it just makes me want to click away.
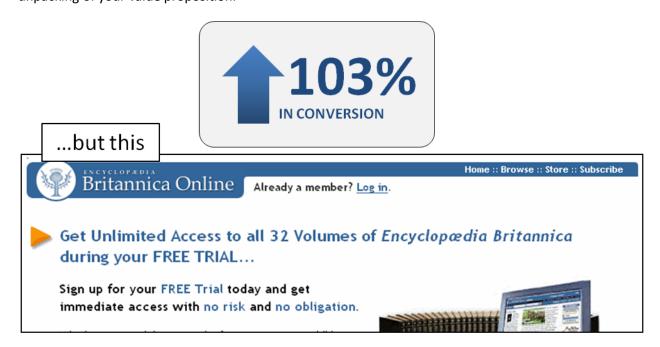
Error #3: Empty question headlines
Example

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: So let's drill down on that. Here is a real headline from a real experiment that we conducted and it is "Why Try Britannica Online?" And my answer is, exactly. Hit the little green arrow and leave. I didn't come for you to ask me that question, I came for you to answer that question and I need you to answer it for me right away. You have 7 seconds to get my attention and to answer three questions. Where am I at? Which should be something I don't have to read or look for, I should sense it immediately. It is not something I hunt for in terms of getting an answer. It is something that I immediately see and sense because of the design of the page, where the logo is at and where the banner is at. I absorb it. What can I do here? This is where the headline comes in. Drive me into the text, why should I do it, and the first paragraph should start to answer the why. It is what begins the unpacking of your value proposition.

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Let's look at the improved version. But this, so not this. What you see here, but this. Get Unlimited Access to all 32 Volumes of Encyclopedia Britannica during your free trial. I

remember this study. I remember the whole piece and I would love to break it down. This is one change in a remarkable study. But look. 103% increase in conversion. Now that wasn't just from the headline. I just say that because of the study, but it was, the headline was a huge part of this and you need to think about this next key and that is. Is there anywhere on my site where I am using some sort of empty question for headline?

Error #3: Empty question headlines
Live Optimization

Primary Channel:
Google Adwords and Direct traffic

Target Audience:
Retail stores, parks and recreation, cities, government, event producers

Page Objective:
Click to another page with more detail/next steps.

http://www.openaircinema.us/

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: You will want to optimize right now and I think I am just going to wade through this one. I want to keep going because we have so many ahead, we will come back to some more guys in just a minute. This is, "Planning your spring 2012 event?" That's really almost a title disguised as a question mark. But it's a poor headline. At least it has a sub-header, but the sub-header is undone by the fact that the headline is stacked on top of what might be another headline. "Already have your events worked out?" Yet another question.

I am hit with questions instead of answers and this was submitted by Devon. And Devon, without getting into too much depth because we can look at it earlier, this text on the left side of your page is doing far more to make me work than it is to work for me. I have to make meaning of the page, because I am trying to sort through a kind of empty set of questions. Those aren't intriguing questions. Those don't drive me into the content. They are just kind of a question mark thrown at the end of the title and it doesn't produce the throughput energy that's necessary.

Crafting an Effective Headline

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ERROR #2: A headline that sounds like a title

ERROR #3: A headline in the form of an empty question

ERROR #4: A headline without a sub-headline

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: I'm going to keep going to another example for you because we have so much content here. Here is the fourth error. A headline without a sub-headline. Look, there is a time when we have those on our site, but in most cases you are going to get a performance increase if you ease people into that first paragraph with an interesting sub-header. It won't be as large as the headline, otherwise it is just another headline. But it will be dominant over the rest of the text beneath it and it will, you might say translate someone or transition them from the headline into the core text.

As we look at an example of what not to do and what to do, let me just pause for a moment. If you are logging in, I am going to be showing you the next treatment before someone comes up to help us review that. I want you to give me your thinking about the best headline but even prior to that can I get feedback? Use your Q&A. Are we going at the right speed? Are you finding this helpful? Give me feedback right now, so I can optimize my presentation live. I ask the audience this a lot or at least one or twice when I am teaching, but it really helps me calibrate because we want this to be as effective for you as we can possibly make it. Good, I am looking at a lot of wonderful encouraging comments coming in. Let me just keep looking, all right, it looks like they are all positive, excellent, and we are going to keep right on going.

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Error #4: No sub-headlines
Example

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Here is the fourth, the fourth mistake, a headline without a sub-headline and here is an example, not this, but this. So look on the left, look on the right. You see how there is a bit of a sub-headline underneath the main headline and you say, "Well does it make that big a difference?" Yeah, it makes an 88% difference in the conversion rate. Everything we do here is grounded in data. We ran 10,000 plus page in path test. We have run test across the span of more than one billion e-mail. We have recorded 5 million telephone conversations. We have interviewed 500,000 key executives, constantly trying to learn, that is what MECLABS is. Marketing experiments in case you aren't familiar with how they work together is one of the research companies and so the MECLABS family.

MECLABS is the world's largest independent research institute in this field and we are constantly trying to discover and so when we make these insights available to you, they are not coming because we have some people sit around the table and think about from their experience what they might recommend, but rather they are born in all this data and it is very comforting for me to be able to say to you don't do that and then show you the exact result when we make the change. And that is what happens in each of these as you can see by tightening up these headlines we see a significant impact.

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Error #4: No sub-headlines
Live Optimization

Primary Channel:
Google PPC and organic search for "conference call" services.

Target Audience:
Businesses where the executive assistant chooses the service for the boss.

Page Objective:
Click to another page with more detail/next steps.

http://www.onconference.com/

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Now, audience this is where you come in. We are going to help the next person. This was submitted by Jerry. And in a minute I am going to have staff come up and help me with this and then we are going to move on and John you will be up next, I think right after Adam on this. I am just kind of, I may skip around a little bit guys and how I use you based on our time, but just take a look at this and audience help me fix this. Help me fix this. Too busy, someone says. This tiny page makes me scream, says Darko. Tell me how you really feel Darko. Hard to read that font size, yes, no eye flow, says Paul. Yes. Karen says wow. Karen. That's, Karen McCray. I see you on here several times commenting. Is that a good wow or a bad wow? Let me know please. Font size, says someone else, it looks like Eric. Too many bolds, says Graham. Why would you vary the size and weight of the font? says someone else. Ah. Davis Baker says, "Awesome landing page". Davis, I assume that you are not close friends with Jerry and that's a third party opinion. It actually is an above average running page.

I think it has a weak headline, but I like the clarity underneath it. I like the way the button is. I have some questions about nav on the left, two buttons on the left are probably hurting you, they are evenly weighted, but there is a lot about the page that is above average. Can't read the blue on blue text. Thank you that is a problem. Which one is the headline? Very important question Ali. Good. Paul Travis says, I would rather see half the wording and more flow. Good. Good. And it is non-logical. I don't know if that is real word Paolo, but I would go with it and Too many action items, says Ty. The art of the top is overwhelming to the eye, says Jordy. My eyes are all over the place., says Stephanie. Too many distractions., says Glenn. All right. This is good, I like these thoughts and Paolo says, Sorry. I am Portuguese. I thought so with that last name Paolo. We got your point and I am sure your English is

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better than my Portuguese, so take a look at the page and I am going to ask Adam. Come on up Adam and talk to us about this one.

Adam Lapp: Sure. So most of the audience already hit on a lot of great points. And the solution to this page is actually quite simple. And I mean the headline is just too wordy, too much going on, you are firing multiple errors at multiple targets without even aiming. You are asking the visitor to make sense out of something instead of delivering it to them in a way that makes sense. You know that's your job to make the headline make sense, not the visitors.

So it's easy to solve this problem. I would just you know, keep a lot of the same words, the same benefits that you have and simply say you know, "Get toll free conference call service in over 90 countries." And then have a sub-line that takes some of those side benefits, those secondary benefits and communicates them to the visitors, so you know "Get conference calls in over 90 countries." And then sub-headline, you know "24 x 7 operator support with 100% guarantee." and that's really all you have to do. And like Dr. McGlaughlin said, it is already a very good learning page, just needs a better clear headline that makes sense to visitor without them having to make all kinds of interpretations.

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Very good, very good Adam. Let me just say something else to you Jerry and everybody pay attention closely. I think one of the most insightful comments from the audience was "Where is the headline?" Because you have got this text, it looks like maybe it is an on "C" at the top. That might be on conference, you can't tell what it is. It's big, large, slanted and then you have something else that you can't read on conference. The blue is lost in the blue and then you have conference calls with confidence underneath that and if you stop and think about it, you divide the page right in half and almost at the top have the headlines. And they all look, I mean if I were to count them, the way they have done on this page, by the way that whole centered, the way they are centered is wrong too. It looks like 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, I am looking across 8 or 9 lines here that are supposed to form a headline.

So Adam's point is dead on. The problem is that I don't think people think your headline is your headline. I don't think they know which headline is the headline. And so I want to give you a good thing, though. I like the blue underline on your button. You guys think that is crazy, but it is really clear that's a link and frankly you are actually trying to express the Value Proposition up there. There is really good text in that headline, but I would make a classic headline with a sub-header, and then I would probably have a paragraph or text before I went to no reservation free access in 19 cents. Something that engages them in conversation and I would really look at the left nav, but you have got some good things happening here. Thank you for submitting this Jerry. Let me know if that helps you and I see some really good advice from the audience that we may make available for you as well.

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Crafting an Effective Headline

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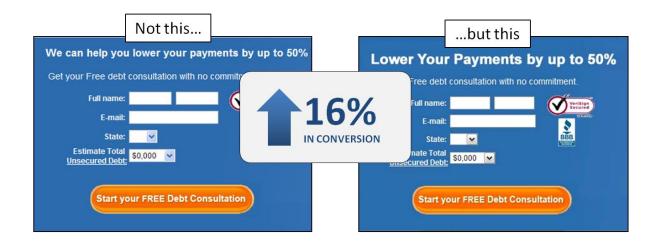
ERROR #4: A headline without a sub-headline

ERROR #5: A headline that is point-middle

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: So we have covered four errors. We said beware of a headline that is too clever, a headline that sounds like a title, a headline in the form of an empty question, a headline without a sub-headline, but also beware of a headline that is point middle. Now what is point middle? We have talked about this in a couple of our copywriting clinics, but most people aren't familiar with the concept.

Error #5: Point-middle headlines
Example

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Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: So we have covered four errors. We said beware of a headline that is too clever, a headline that sounds like a title, a headline in the form of an empty question, a headline without a sub-headline, but also beware of a headline that is point middle. Now what is point middle? We have talked about this in a couple of our copywriting clinics, but most people aren't familiar with the concept. In this headline, help you lower is the main point. Now buy 50% is great, but it only means anything if it is about lowering the payments. Here lowering the payments becomes much clear, what's the difference, 16% in conversion is the difference.

So think about something, where is the main thrust of your message? I like that the 50% is at the beginning or the end, in fact I would love the test save 50% and then you know dash, low your payments with in the name of the company or do that say 50% and a sub-header lower your payment, you know there are some other ways to do this, but we see a 16% increase with that particular change and that is an example of getting the most important part of the sentence either in the front or the back and generally at front.

Error #5: Point-middle headlines
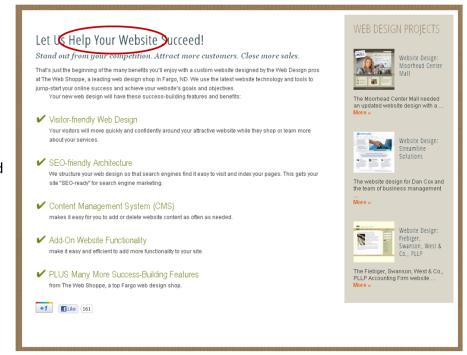
Live Optimization

Primary Channel:
Organic search

Target Audience:
Small- to medium-sized business owners

Page Objective:
Fill out the lead form on the page.

http://thewebshoppe.net/

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Now, here is a page and I think John is going to help us with this in a moment but I need the audience to help me first. It also has done something, you know we have been picking on a lot of pages and a lot of pages that you give us need a lot of work, this is an above average page too. There are some significant weaknesses for you, but you have done some things right with the copy. Let's have the audience help us optimize the headline. Here we are. I am watching to see what they say and then I will pull you up John. So, lawyers won't let you say 50%, yes I understand that Jordy. We see that

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problem a lot, particularly with the banks. What about get 50% lower payments, John says, we're back on the other one, but you got a good point, tell me about this one nonspecific headline, yes should start they say with close more sales, interesting. The headline is vague, yes it is, what's the value for me says Philippe, make your website a success says Scott, helps succeed says Marlyn, make your website pop says Jenna, what you are actually writing headlines here, what is the company name says Vanita, good point. Help your website succeed, Andrea said, she is moving towards a different point, good, you know what, and Andrea you make a very good point, we could rewrite, I don't know, help your website succeed, lacks a lot of credibility, but it is way better than let us, why because the help is in the middle and the last thing I would, let you do something, I want you to do something for me, I want to get something from you, but it is the wrong way you start out a headline, keeping all that in mind John come up here and talk to us.

John Cockburn: Once again certainly some great points brought out by the audience, but like we said we are touching on the point middle issue here, clearly your website succeed this is the tangible benefit that the user is looking for, this is why they are contacting you to look for this service, so obviously an optimized headline could be increase your website performance, something to that effect, whatever that goal is for the user. Another testing idea that might be valuable for the site if you notice, the sub-headline in a smaller font stand out from your competition, attract more customers and close more sales, this kind of communication if it was more prominent could kind of drive home those tangible benefits to the user in dollars and cents of what they could accomplish by going through with this service.

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Good point, excellent thank you John. All right, so those are some things. Now just about the page in general, look you got a sub-headline good for you, but the problem is you have got text that is difficult to read. It is like italics, it is the wrong color on that background, you have a paragraph that is very difficult to read, it's like a gray on the white. Then you have a bad color for your bullets, visit a free friendly web design, none of that stands out and worst of all I can't figure out the call-to-action. I don't know where it's at. If it is at the bottom, where do I click, and if it's not at the bottom, it should be. Yeah, we don't want the call-to-action in the flash banner, we want the call-to-action right there at the conclusion of the conversation when you are ready to ask. We have taught about that before, you need to sequence it properly, hopefully you can think about that and Shana submit us you know more and we will look at more of this and see if there is anything we can do to help you.

Page Element #2: The Call-to-action

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Now listen to me I have less than a 17 minutes left and in those 17 minutes I am going to pack the second critical point. We have talked about five errors in the first two inches, I want to talk about five and I think it is five errors in the last two inches, and I have got to do it in 17 minutes. So if you are ready, I am going to load the gun and I am going to shoot and we are going to shoot fast. I would like to talk fast, but I do want to make this hour with you as rich as possible with insights and practical advice, so let's move on. Oh, by the way while I am doing that, there is a sticky note that is right up here on the monitors that I am looking at as I am teaching and I have been told and I think it's a valid point, so I will do it. You know we are going to be in Denver in June for an optimization summit,

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the last, is that correct no, no is it June, it's in June, see Paul you are wrong, I feel better, I feel stronger, you are building up my confidence, I got the date right, thank you, I need it.

June is the optimization summit. We did one last year in Atlanta, where we had double the attendance that we projected. All we did was reveal to you our latest research on optimization and then we have marketers, no vendors from the platform. We had marketers on the stage talking to you about their own experience as they tried to optimize learning pages, the good and the bad, the mistakes they made, what they learned, it was better than I had hoped. We are doing it again. We are doing it in Denver and we are doing it in June. May be you already know about it.

Please come and meet us if you can in June and by the way this is I don't know if you can close up this on the camera, try to hold it up like that, I am looking through the camera and maybe you can drill down later, this is MECLABS internal marketing capabilities right here. This is our best. On the yellow sticky pad, it says VIP special offer ends next Wednesday, you can save 700 dollars on your ticket. So next time we might have, we are going to try the digital age. This is blue ink on a yellow sticky pad for those of you who can't see it, but they put here for me to remind you and I have done so gentlemen, all right, let's keep going.

Experiment: Background and design

Experiment ID: *(protected)*
Location: MarketingExperiments Research Library
Test Protocol Number: TP1444

Research Notes:

> **Background:** A large online artist community seeking to sell premium membership to its existing free subscriber base
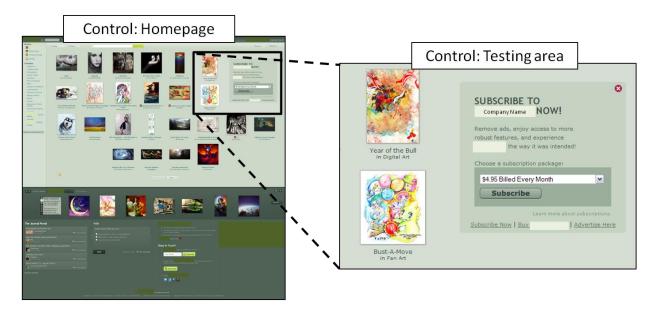>
> **Goal:** To increase the number of paid subscribers
>
> **Primary Research Question:** Which treatment will generate the highest clickthrough rate?
>
> **Approach:** A/B multifactor split test

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Page 2, the call-to-action, here we go. Test protocol 1444, here is the case study. The goal is to increase the number of paid subscribers. Which treatment will generate the highest clickthrough rate? We are now looking at the last two inches of the page.
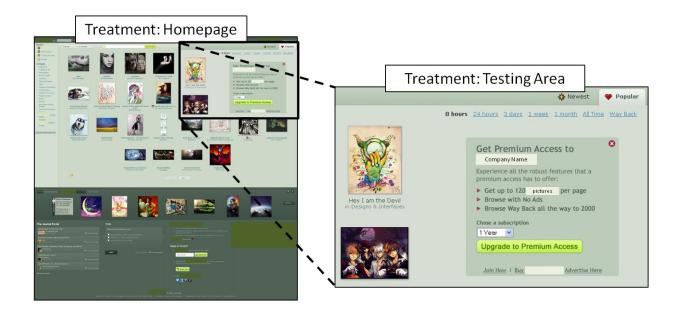
Experiment: Control

Control: Homepage

Control: Testing area

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Let's look at the home page. You will notice that the testing area is in this right hand corner. And there is an ability to subscribe and this is the control that you are looking at and on the control you will see that button and above it the font field and some text.

Experiment: Treatment

Treatment: Homepage

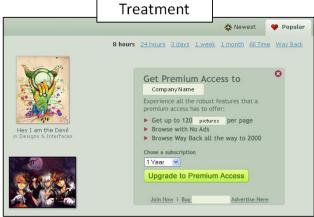**Treatment: Testing Area**

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Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Now, let's keep going because here is the treatment testing area and I want you to know if there is a difference. Upgrade to premium access and look at all the value packed in there, get up to 120 pictures per page, browse with no ads, browse you know, the reason you see the white box is of course we are anonymizing the company, but you should be able to see that this right hand part, this call-to-action, even though it is on this right hand side, has been modified and it has been modified by bringing a lot more value.

Experiment: Side-by-side

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Let's look at them side by side. On the left and on the right. Look at the difference in those two presentations. It's not that dramatic other than the color, but there is a big difference in the thought sequence.

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Experiment: Results

45% increase in clickthrough
The new CTA design improved clickthrough rate by 45%

	CR	Relative Difference	Statistical Confidence
Control	0.02%	-	-
Treatment	**0.03%**	**45%**	**99%**

What You Need to Understand: By adding value near the call-to-action, the treatment was able to generate a 45% higher clickthrough rate (a **major lift**, considering the amount of traffic to the homepage).

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: What does it produce? A 45% increase in clickthrough. What do you understand? By adding that value near the call-to-action, the treatment was able to generate this significant increase.

Crafting an Effective CTA

👉 *Key Principles*

PRINCIPLE #1: Behind every call-to-action there is a perceived cost for taking that action. By either reducing the perceived cost or increasing the perceived value in the button copy, we can generally observe an improved response.

PRINCIPLE #2: To help us create effective calls-to-action, we can learn to avoid these five common CTA errors:

ERROR #1: A CTA without implied value

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: What else can we learn from that? Well, here we go. Key principle #1. Behind every call-to-action, there is a perceived cost for taking. There is no such thing as free on the internet, you want my click, you want my e-mail address, you want my attention, you want my acceptance, you want something. And I have to trade that for whatever you are offering and because of that, we need to be careful that we have fully assessed what the customer perceives the cost is and we need to be careful that we have done something to make certain that what they receive in terms of value exceeds the cost.

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I wish I had a white board. I was writing for a book coming out, it is called The Marketer as Philosopher. There is a lot of Aristotle and Plato, but lots of pragmatic also. This is how it applies to the marketer coming out of that book. It is not like our benchmark guides, our reports or our handbooks. This is made for the marketer who wants to spend some time thinking about who they are and what they do in their profession. When that book comes out, we will share more with you. But I was writing today, one of the things that I wrote in a diagram was you know why should I say yes to your offer?

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: And the answer is because of "p". You should think of this in your mind. A capital "V" ,a greater than sign ">", and then small "p", capital "C" (V > pC). What does that mean? It means because perceived value is greater than perceived cost. In the end, all of marketing comes down to communicating that, it always does. I am offering you something. It costs you something if I want you to say yes, I have to show you. In fact it is not enough that the value does exceed the cost, you have to perceive so and all of that plays in as we think about the call-to-actions. So let's look at these five mistakes and we are at 11 minutes. We are going to go fast in 11 minutes. Here is the first one, a call-to-action without implied value, what does that mean.

Error #1: A CTA without implied value
Example

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Well, let's look at an example. This is actually from one of our research experiments. I know as soon as I see it. Let's read it. To receive your 500 free leads asterisk, which means hey, there is a catch. And by the way we are going to put in red so that you are scared because you should be scared, because there is something wrong here. That's the wrong color and that's the

wrong way. Fill out and submit the form below, once received you will be contacted by one of our business consultants, that is what we say as a marketer but that is not what the prospect hears. What the prospect hears is fill this out and we are going to spam you for the rest of your life and we are going to pester you with phone calls and by the way you don't even get these leads unless you buy some from us. That's what it sounds like. And then they have a button, is there any value in that button.

I will give it some credit. There is hardly a negative. It doesn't say submit, fall on your knees before the lords of marketing and admit we defeated you with our superior values, persuasion, and logic and Paul you don't even laugh anymore at that, but it doesn't, it doesn't say register, it doesn't say sign over your power of attorney or promise us your next of kin or your first born child, but it doesn't offer anything either. It just says click. Now look at the new one and look at the difference. I am moving fast. The second version produces a 200% increase, think about that, but look at the difference, it's all about value and the value is packed all the way round.

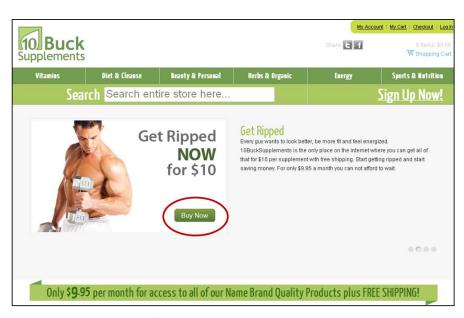# Error #1: A CTA without implied value
Live Optimization

Target Audience:
M/F 20-50 looking to lose weight, get fit or maintain an overall healthy lifestyle

Page Objective:
Enter credit card info and click to purchase product.

http://www.10bucksupplements.com

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: We can talk more about that but let's keep learning errors and let's look at somebody's page. Adam. I almost feel like I am going to have to just zip, guys are you okay with that because of our time, I think we are going to run out. I would rather get through all the points. So I am sorry because Adam is better looking than me, John is smarter than me and you are stuck with me for the next 7 minutes.

In fact that's actually Adam with his shirt off in that picture. Get ripped now for 10 dollars. Now you know the image is doing something it is supposed to do, although that's not a good version of ripped. I

mean you know you are covering up abs, and when I think ripped, I think abs, but that's a different issue. We can talk about how to improve the image and test the image, but here is the real issue because this is all we are talking about, we are not talking about the ads, we are not talking about the headline, we are not talking about the layout of the page, by the way the layout of page is wrong, two evenly weighted columns. The headline is the beginning of a good headline, but we don't cash it in, the banner at the bottom is wrong and I would be really concerned about all that nav at the top unless I had to have it, but everything right now is about that button. Buy now.

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Now ask yourself a serious question, they may come up with a television ad or there may be a reason why you think they are ready to buy, but in almost every case you are asking for too much too soon without explaining, without helping me understand the value and there maybe again something I don't know, we could really help this page. You could see a dramatic increase. I am not ready by now, but I might be ready to learn more.

This is the equivalent of walking up to the girl in the bar and you heard me say it before right after work today and presenting the ring and saying will you marry me, she doesn't even know you, she is not ready, you are lucky if she will even turn her body and open up and body language and let you have a conversation, but I will guarantee if you don't get a conversation, you are not going to get a yes, unless you are waiting really long for her to be there for a really long drunk time, then I don't think that accounts right against the rules, Adam I hope for you if that works out, but for most of us we can't do it. Buy now is the wrong thing.

Crafting an Effective CTA

☞ *Key Principles*

> **PRINCIPLE #1**: Behind every call-to-action there is a perceived cost for taking that action. By either reducing the perceived cost or increasing the perceived value in the button copy, we can generally observe an improved response.
>
> **PRINCIPLE #2**: To help us create effective calls-to-action, we can learn to avoid these five common CTA errors:
>> **ERROR #1:** A CTA without implied value
>>
>> **ERROR #2:** A CTA among several other CTAs

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: so let's look at another error. We have 7 minutes, we got five errors. So let's go fast. A call-to-action that's among several others, I see this all the time.

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Error #2: A CTA among several others

Example

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Look at this, not this, there is call-to-action all over that page, every place you see a link, every place you see a button, what part do I listen to? What voice do I listen to? Remember people don't buy from websites, people buy from people. This is a conversation in their mind unfolding. They need to hear a single voice, they don't need to hear a whole bunch of people shouting at the same time and asking for action and that's what is going on here, but this, here is the optimized version. Can that page be improved, yes, but look guys look this is an experiment. This isn't just a bit of advice. The page on the right makes 357% more than the page on the left, that's a good enough reason to consider some of the things we are talking about I hope.

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Error #2: A CTA among several others
Live Optimization

Target Audience:
Expectant and new mothers.

Page Objective:
Click to another page with more detail/next steps.

http://www.namelynewborns.com/store/

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: We are still learning by the way, we don't have all the answers. These were insight from looking at thousands of experiments. I am embarrassed what we don't know, but as we learn we are trying to share with you. Here is a page submitted, it was submitted by Denise and Denise, we are looking at the calls-to-action, look how many, look how many, with on text, no meaning, no communication, not even a headline and I hope Denise you don't see this as a negative, to me it's a positive. If you are making any money whatsoever through this page, think about what you could be making if you plug these leaks, mostly at MECLABS, we're plumbers, coming in and fixing the leaks. I am trying to give you some tools today so you can go back and plug some of your own.

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Crafting an Effective CTA

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PRINCIPLE #2: To help us create effective calls-to-actions, we can learn to avoid these five common CTA errors:

ERROR #1: A CTA without implied value
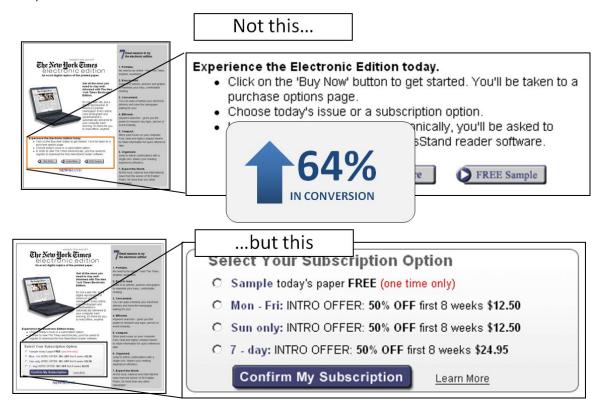
ERROR #2: A CTA among several other CTAs

ERROR #3: A CTA among evenly weighted CTAs

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: All right, let's keep going, all right, good, by the way audience I see your advice, you are in the habit now, even when I don't ask for, you start optimizing, I love it, two blue nothing stands says Igor, feel free on any of these treatments to keep giving me your thoughts. All right, here is next error and I have 5 minutes. A call-too-action among evenly weighted CTAs, look Paul, I have 5 minutes, I can do 12 more of these, give me some more points ready. Error 3, a call-to-action that's evenly weighted. It's a big error that we see all the time.

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Error #3: Evenly weighted CTAs
Example

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: This is an old experiment we did with the New York Times. We are still running with the New York Times all kinds of experiments and tests, but this is a very old one. See the buttons? Three of them evenly weighted. Here is the new call-to-action, one of those was a pre-checked regular box and so by the way, I don't like the text. We later improved the text and saw another increase, but just look at these two top to bottom and look at this. The bottom produces a 64% increase and by the way the next test produced a 541% increase. And that's by getting the text clear, but for now look at those evenly weighted calls-to-action. They are hurting your conversion rates and I see it all over the internet.
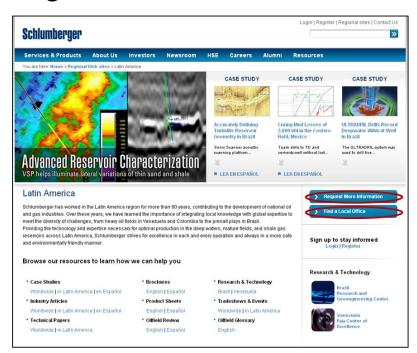
Error #3: Evenly weighted CTAs

Live Optimization

Target Audience:
Latin American customers

Page Objective:
Click to another page with more detail/next steps.

http://www.slb.com/latinamerica.aspx

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: And there is one right now submitted by Adam and no, by Simone. And Simone there is a lot of things about the page that I like, but those two buttons on the right are evenly weighted, which means I have to stop. There is a kind of cognitive momentum when I move through a page. And what you want is an increasing velocity, you don't want a decreasing velocity and on this page you have to stop and make sense of which one. One should be dominant over the other. The other could be a blue text under link underneath it. The other could be slightly smaller. But there are a lot of ways to make it not even but at the present it is mitigating your conversion rate. So there is an example of evenly weighted options. Lets keeps going and by the way I would like to talk more about this page. It's a very interesting page. There are some things you could do to actually get the page producing more, but again I have how many minutes do I have Paul? I have 4 minutes. Wow.

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Crafting an Effective CTA

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ERROR #1: A CTA without implied value

ERROR #2: A CTA among several other CTAs

ERROR #3: A CTA among evenly weighted CTAs

ERROR #4: A CTA "above the fold"

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: All right, I am on four. Here is the fourth point. A call-to-action that is above the fold. I like pointing this out, you have heard me say it before. I like pointing it out because it is not really about this problem with your CTA above the fold. It's about thinking in the old way. Thinking and doing something just because somebody else did it. In the newspaper days we always learned to call-to-action above the fold. The website is not a newspaper. And I have seen so many companies rush to place call-to-action above the fold because that's what they heard they have got to do. That can hurt your conversion and here is why. If you walk into car dealership tonight and the car guy introduces himself, says hi, points out three cars and says if you can make a decision in the next two minutes, I can sell you one of those cars. What you are going to do? I am just going to get my car and leave, find somebody that gives me time to make a decision. I am not ready yet, I don't know enough, you force me to choose yes or no, answer is no. I am gone.

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: If your new to this, you haven't heard all this before, and I am just touching on illustrations we've used in the past because they help you learn, but if you have been on a call with me before, you may have heard this and I will just touch it for a moment and you have my deepest sympathy for having to hear it again. But if you go back to the bar at night and you walk up to the girl and you grab her by the shoulders and kiss her on the lips, you don't even know this girl, you want to meet her, she is beautiful, she might be your next wife, so you kiss her on the lips, you are probably in trouble. You are probably out of the bar. The problem is you got the call-to-action above the fold. You

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forced her to choose and she has chosen and that's when she calls for the bouncer. You push too hard too fast and marketers we do this all the time.

Error #4: A CTA "above the fold"

Example

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Look not this, you see here. Look at the top of the page. We are going to look away through it and but this, look at the difference, let's go back, I am sorry, I am trying to go backwards, but I am not really good at this, so they have to have an idiot proof clicker, thank you, thank you, I have, you can't see this, I am in the studio, I have lots of monitors and Paul just showed me that I am looking at the wrong monitor, yours is moving, but then when I am clicking, it is not moving, all right, they do this to confuse me. The call-to-action is above the fold here, way up above the fold.

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Error #4: A CTA "above the fold"
Example

…but this

*Make a booking on FloridaTix and automatically receive 1 FREE $10 Planet Hollywood Voucher. Not valid with any other offers or discounts. One voucher per party/booking. Valid at Planet Hollywood Orlando. Expires December 2010

About the Ticket

- UNLIMITED admission to **Universal Studios ® Florida** and **Universal's Islands of Adventure®** theme parks for up to 14 consecutive days.

- Plus UNLIMITED admission to Universal CityWalk® for the length of the ticket!

1 guest admission to Universal theme parks for a total of up to fourteen (14) days during a fourteen (14) consecutive calendar day period which includes the first day any theme park or CityWalk portion of the ticket is used.

Both the 2 and 3-Park Bonus tickets are not valid for separately ticketed events, concerts or venues such as AMC Universal Cineplex 20 or the Blue Man Group show in any of the theme parks or CityWalk. Some venues require ages 21 or older for admission. Valid photo ID required. Additional restrictions apply and benefits are subject to change without notice.

20% IN CONVERSION

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: And look now it's down below where it belongs and what's the difference? A 20% increase in conversion.

Error #4: A CTA "above the fold"
Live Optimization

Primary Channel:
Affiliates and Google Adwords

Target Audience:
General

Page Objective:
Download a piece of content.

http://www.babylon.com/welcome

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Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: Now somebody submitted this and by the way it might be that somebody when they land on the page and this came from Rand, Rand when you landed on the page, maybe you totally sold them on television. They don't need anything else, just getting to download. But if not, you have got these people making the choice before they even know enough to make the choice. I am not going to download now. Even though you have got a headline, the most downloaded translation software in the world.

Let me share what Paul does in these clinics and look I want you make sure this on the final edit so that people have some empathy for me, give me that board, or we just erase it. Oh, Paul sits there, okay, he is very smug at the control panel in his flip flops and bony long toes and he has a board and he holds it up like this. He holds it up like this, the whole time I am trying to teach, some of the things he writes are rude, some of them are insulting, this is one that says you got 1 minute left. But you never know. What you never know what Paul is going to write on the board and here at MECLABS we are hi-tech. The most important monitor in the room is by Paul. Paul I will give you back your analog monitor. In the meantime, back to this and here is the point, don't get the call-to-action above the fold instead, put it when they are ready for it.

Crafting an Effective CTA

☞ *Key Principles*

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PRINCIPLE #2: To help us create effective calls-to-action, we can learn to avoid these five common CTA errors:

ERROR #1: A CTA without implied value

ERROR #2: A CTA among several other CTAs

ERROR #3: A CTA among evenly weighted CTAs

ERROR #4: A CTA "above the fold"

ERROR #5: A CTA that asks for too much

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: And the final point in my last 45 seconds a call-to-action that asks for too much. So a bit like the kiss in the bar, not only is it too soon, but it is too much. It is too soon because she is not ready to talk about marriage and she is not ready to give you kiss, but it is also too much because you are asking for before. She might be ready later, but she is not now. That's the whole point.

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Error #5: A CTA that asks for too much

Example

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: So not this, become a member, become a member, become a member, become a member, become a member, but this continue and continue a lot safer, I will continue but I am not ready to become a member yet, I want to learn some more. An 81% increase.

Error #5: A CTA that asks for too much
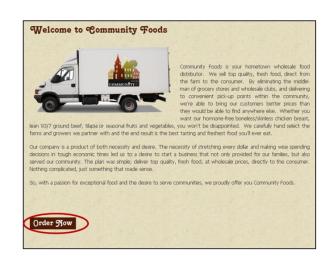
Live Optimization

Primary Channel:
Search engine traffic, word-of-mouth, social networking

Target Audience:
Consumer homes with children, age 30-50

Page Objective:
Enter credit card info and click to purchase product.

http://www.mycommunityfoods.com/

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Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: And look Steve, submitted by Steve, you didn't think we would get to this, but mycommunityfoods.com, welcome to community foods, order now, you see the button. It's just too much too soon, there might be way to ask for less and get more. Now we could talk about the page because Steve, you have figured out from this that you need a headline and a sub-headline and your paragraph is too long and these bold font and that great big truck is in the wrong place on the page, there is a lot we can do to help you with this, but we focus at this point on the order now.

Summary: Putting it all together

☞ *Key Principles*

PRINCIPLE #1: To help us create effective headlines, we can learn to avoid these five common headline errors:

ERROR #1: A headline that is too clever

ERROR #2: A headline that sounds like a title

ERROR #3: A headline in the form of an empty question

ERROR #4: A headline without a sub-header

ERROR #5: A headline that is point-middle

PRINCIPLE #2: To help us create effective calls-to-action, we can learn to avoid these five common CTA errors:

ERROR #1: A CTA without implied value

ERROR #2: A CTA among several other CTAs

ERROR #3: A CTA among evenly weighted CTAs

ERROR #4: A CTA "above the fold"

ERROR #5: A CTA that asks for too much

Dr. Flint McGlaughlin: All of that leads to this slide, this is my last slide and I have, there is no way I can teach the next thing, Daniel is showing me because in the next of it, and you can sign up for this now and you know, I am not selling, we don't charge for these, but we have only have 1000 seats and we often will have 1500 to 2000 people register for one of these events to try to get online. In the next one, I am going to see, you can see on the slide behind me here the 5 errors under each point, what's missing, we got the top 2 inches and we got the bottom 2 inches, I am going to teach you in the next clinic is what to do in the middle, how to get that part right, that is too complex to do in this particular clinic. We are going to talk about friction lot of things related to the middle in your presentation.

For now, I hope that you found today helpful, if so the only thing we ask you to do is to tell a friend because we want to build the world's largest community of marketers, running experiments, testing, and learning together. I also want to thank John, John you got your wings today and Adam you have done this many times and guys I apologize that I didn't go through everything with you, but it was just
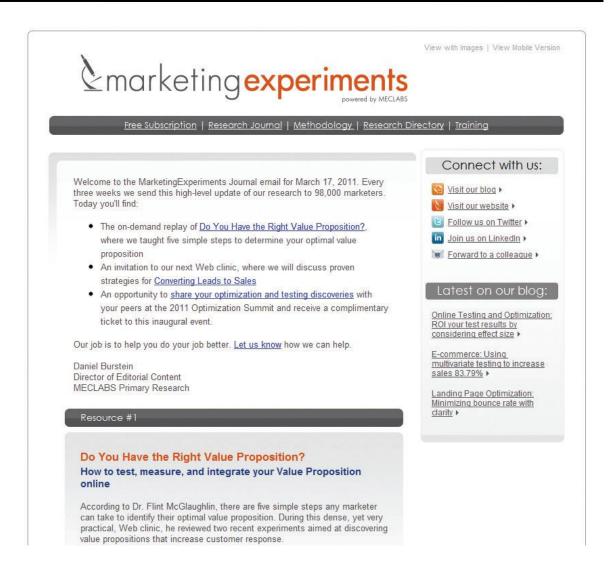
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that the speaker was so long winded, we had a problem. Thank you all, I appreciate your trust and we will be back with more.

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