

# Sure they're clicking. But are they converting?

Four B2B digital marketing conversion essentials

*A conversion rate optimization  
and content marketing eBook by*

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## Introduction

In the world of digital marketing, everything can be monitored, measured, and reported. And you rely on these numbers to evaluate the success of your programs – after all, the numbers don't lie.

### But are they telling you the whole truth?

KPIs and analytics are obviously necessary for assessing performance and effectiveness. And it's always satisfying to see an increase in time spent on a page, or to break new records on the number of people who "like" and share blog posts.

Yet one of the most crucial metrics is often overlooked or misunderstood. We're talking about conversions.

A conversion indicates that a person took a meaningful action on a website. A conversion can be any action or interaction that supports business objectives, such as requesting a quote, downloading a white paper, signing up for a free trial, making a purchase, watching a video or making a phone call. Whatever the action, conversion rates are the true measure of the effectiveness of your **B2B marketing** efforts.

That is the purpose of this content marketing eBook: how to improve conversions through conversion rate optimization, ensuring your B2B website performs and is effective. But where do we start?

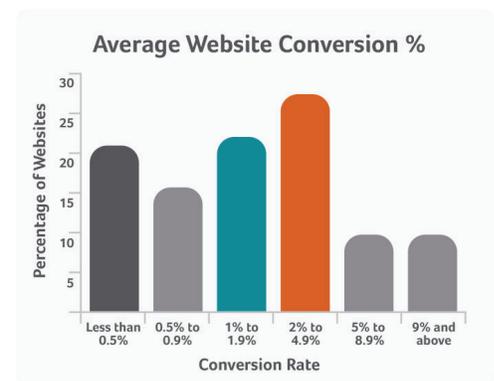
### Invest in conversions, not just traffic.

### Your conversion rates are key to your sales and profits.

If you do not already know your conversion rates, you can find out by identifying the most important actions on your website and start tracking them today. You can track conversions using **Google Analytics** or other digital analytics tools that connect to social media, CRM and marketing automation systems for a consolidated look.

*Is your reporting in place? Good. Now it's time to start ramping up those conversion rates.*

If you are inclined to be satisfied with your current rate, consider this: an increase in your conversion rate means visitors are having a better experience, they are happier, and they are more engaged.



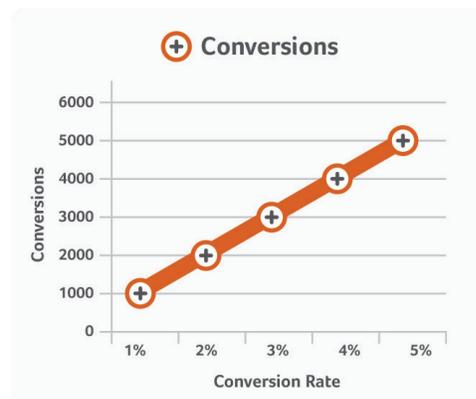
Adobe Digital Marketing Optimization Survey, 2013

***Yikes! Only 18% of websites convert more than 5% of visitors to actual leads. What's your conversion rate?***

Also consider that spending more on **pay-per-click** or remarketing campaigns will increase traffic and probably conversion volume, but not conversion rate. You may have more visitors, but your ROI will likely remain flat. However, an investment in **conversion rate optimization** can increase your ROI, and over time will pay far greater dividends than increasing paid media alone.

## How an increase in conversion rate can directly impact your leads and revenue

Investing in driving more traffic to your website is smart. Investing in improving your conversion rate is even smarter. Assume your website gets 100,000 visits per month. If 1% of visitors fill out your lead form, that's 1000 conversions per month. Increase that conversion rate to 2% and now you've got 2000 conversions per month. A conversion rate of 3% would drive 3000 conversions, and so on. Now, a conversion does not necessarily equal a lead – not everyone who fills out a form is qualified or ready to buy. But typically more conversions do result in more leads and more revenue.



## Four Steps to Better Conversion Rates

So, what can you do to optimize your web content for better conversion rates? Here are four ways you can help ensure that your prospects are converting, not just clicking.

### 1. Persuade with content, not keywords.

Regardless of how you incorporate your keywords into your content, ask yourself: Is the content I'm providing relevant to the search and engaging to the prospect? Will the person searching be satisfied with what I'm providing?

This is particularly important because while keywords are fine for capturing initial intent, they don't persuade prospects or change behavior once they have found you. You need great content for that.

Marketers consistently cite producing the kind of content that engages as one of the top B2B marketing challenges, according to the **Content Marketing Institute**. To overcome this challenge, start with a culture of content generosity: giving away good ideas is not something to be feared, but encouraged. Your content has to be something that is meaningful to your audiences and serves a purpose based on their needs.

## Set a goal of creating 10 great pieces of content.

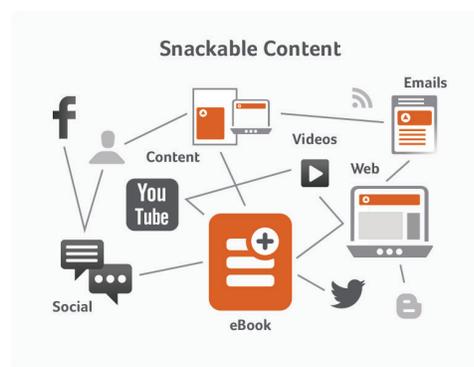
Rather than sweat over nurture streams and lead forms, spend your time considering ten pieces of content to create that will engage your audience. Make sure to align your **content marketing** ideas with your prospects; focusing on their pain points, using the right voice, and delivering the right content at the right buying stage.

Ten pieces of content doesn't seem like enough? It is when you repurpose it, frequently. A white paper can become a blog series, an infographic, a Slideshare presentation and even an eBook. Or change the headline of your white paper and make small tweaks to adjust for different audiences. Create a video using your case studies. Turn your webcast content into an FAQ or online interview. You can go from ten to dozens of pieces of content without recreating the wheel every time.

## Make your content snackable.

For content to be persuasive, it has to be digestible. As screens are getting smaller, so are attention spans. Studies show the average adult attention span has decreased from 13 seconds in 2000 to 8 seconds in 2014 – a 40% decrease!

The answer is to create “snackable” content. Think infographics, videos, memes, cartoons – anything that is image-oriented and graphical. When you start serving up more of this appealing, bite size content, your audience will want to come back for more, rather than leave feeling too full and a little bit sleepy. Plus, with more time spent on smaller screens, this type of content is easier to grasp and consume on mobile devices than longer forms of content.



## Deliver on your promise. Don't use keywords as “bait.”

Your first interaction with a prospect is probably in their search for information using your keywords. To build a trustworthy and engaging digital relationship, don't bait them with content that is vacuous or unrelated to their search. That's an instant red flag to go elsewhere with their business.

Instead, offer up content that is REAL (Relevant, Engaging, Actionable, Likeable) and conveys value. If you are a manufacturer selling motors, it could be a guide on motor maintenance. If you are an accountant, why not publish tips that can make it easier for your clients during an audit? These are the content “gifts” that will engage your prospects and keep them coming back or entice them to take action.

Which brings us to the next step in conversion rate optimization:

## 2. Create a healthy content ecosystem on your site.

Even the best content will go to waste if your prospects don't ever engage with your site. To drive conversions, you must also steer prospects to content that speaks to them before you can get them to act.

## Focus your content on persona-based solutions that map to audience needs.

It's time to face the truth – your visitors don't care about how your company is organized or which division is responsible for what product. What they are interested in is how you can help. Map your navigation to their needs, not your org chart! Make sure you have content front and center that addresses pain points and speaks directly about how your company can take away the pain.

In addition, especially for B2B sales, there are typically many people involved in the buying decision, often with different agendas. Do you have a handle on the needs of the financial buyer versus the technical buyer? You should have content that speaks to different roles and different agendas.

One more thing to consider for your site is dynamic content. Research has repeatedly shown that the more relevant content is, the better the results. With dynamic content, you can create an experience that is customized specifically for your prospect, such as exposing them to different offers and content if they have already been to your site. Or, if you know they are interested in a specific industry or category, you can customize images as well as content to reflect their perspective.

## Make sure the important conversion pages are easy to access.

While you may think some pages on your site are more important than others, in reality, the most important pages are the ones that contribute most to the conversion rate. Since you know which conversion types are most important, make sure these are easy to access and highly visible to site visitors. For example, if you know 80% of people who get a free trial will ultimately buy your software, then this is a pivotal conversion type. Put a link on your home page so prospects can get there with one click rather than sorting through a hierarchy of product categories and listings.

## Forgetting about mobile is a conversion rate optimization pitfall.

Nearly 50% of traffic today comes from smartphones and tablets, yet conversion rates for mobile are significantly lower than for desktops. Using responsive design will make your website adjust to the user's device for a better experience and **website usability**, and this will lead to higher conversion rates on phones, tablets, and phablets. However, designing a responsive site takes a special set of skills and knowledge, so this might not be the time to use your cousin's friend to design your site.

## Let your customers do the talking. It's more powerful and will convert better.

Seventy percent of online shoppers look at testimonials, product ratings and reviews before making a purchase because this allows them to get beyond the marketing hype and hear about the product from real customers. Even if your site is not an ecommerce site, providing testimonials, user-supplied content such as blogs, and other ratings and reviews gives prospects a sense of getting the "inside scoop." It is human nature to want confirmation that you are doing the right thing, and you can increase conversions when prospects are convinced that they are making the right choice.

## 3. Make it easy for them to convert.

If you have created content that is relevant to your target audience--something that answers their question, elicits emotion, or tells a story--they will be more willing to take an action. Whether it's signing up for a newsletter, downloading a **content marketing** eBook, or starting a trial, it's up to you to engage them and then specifically request what you want them to do.

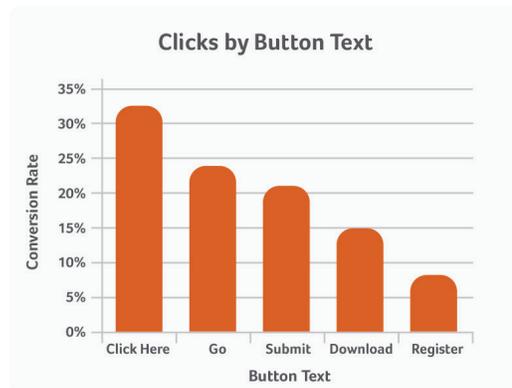
For each piece of content you create, determine the call to action (CTA) and make it clear and easy to understand.

**Use buttons that are prominent, give specific instructions and emphasize the benefit to the prospect, such as "Get Your Free Trial"** - There is no magic color, size and placement of buttons. Test to see what works best for your audience. The bottom line is to ensure that the button conveys what you want them to do and emphasizes what's in it for them. In addition, don't clutter your content with multiple calls to action. Given too many choices, visitors are apt to do nothing at all.

**Reduce the steps and ask only for information that's essential** - Reducing the number of steps can significantly improve conversions. Also explain that their information is safe and that you won't be calling or spamming. Keep in mind that not all actions require prospects to fill out a form. Why would you spend time and money creating great content, only to put up obstacles? Studies show that a white paper or eBook will be downloaded up to **50 times more** without a gate in front of it, resulting in many more potential customers reading your content and taking the next step. At that point, you can capture their information, and they will often willingly give it.

**Offer incentives, not discounts** - If you are tempted to offer up discounts and reduced pricing on your product at first contact, your prospects and customers will come to expect the discount and the value of your product diminishes. Instead offer consultations with a product or industry expert, a sneak peak at a new product, or a free training session. Get creative and test multiple incentives to find the one that resonates best with your audience.

**Track what's going on** - Are your visitors doing what you want them to do? Make sure you are tracking where they are clicking (or not) and what they are doing next using Google Analytics and other tools. Proper **website analytics monitoring** should not be ignored.



<http://blog.hubspot.com>, 2010

## 4. To Convert, Convert, Convert - Test, Test, Test.

# Your content is optimized. You're tracking everything. It's all running smoothly. Now what?

It's time to shake things up a bit with testing. Remember that just a small increase in conversion can increase your ROI, and with testing, you can find out how to improve on what's already working.

Using A/B or multivariate testing is a quick way to find better performing content, which will increase conversions and improve ROI. Create multiple versions of a page or an element on a page (such as a call to action button) and carefully measure to learn which is more effective at getting visitors to convert. You can test your original page against variant pages. Or, even smaller changes can affect visitor behavior and provide lift. Here are some elements that are easy to test:

- Headlines
- CTA text or buttons
- Links
- Images
- Text
- Promotions, trials, downloads, free stuff
- Bonus content

### Plan your tests for better results

1. Get a baseline for what is happening on the current page.
2. Form a hypothesis. For example, you might think that changing the headline will lead to more time on the page; or changing the text on the CTA button will result in more clicks.
3. Determine how long you will run the test and how many visitors will make the test valid.
4. Analyze the results and draw conclusions.
5. Update your site or landing page with the winning design/results.
6. Keep testing: replicate the above steps multiple times and perform testing on an ongoing basis.

### 4 Free Tools you should use (in addition to Google Analytics)

**Google Trends** - Provides insight into the search trends for keywords and search phrases. Also creates a list of related hot searches, rising terms, and the regional interest for your keywords. Use this tool for keyword research, insights and opportunities.

**Google Webmaster Tools** - This robust tool provides detailed reports on how the Google-bot is crawling and indexing a website and is essential for any webmaster looking to improve website performance and visibility in Google's organic search results. You also have the ability to customize your settings to tell Google how you want to be indexed.

**Structured Data Markup Helper** - This innovative tool will allow you to quickly markup content and provide the microdata to add to your website's pages. Proper page markup is becoming a key element in helping search engines understand the content on a webpage and can change the way information is presented in Google's results pages.

**YouTube Analytics** - Provides video marketers with actionable insights to help them uncover trends, metrics, traffic sources, and viewer demographics. With the increasing popularity of video, understanding its performance is critical.

# Case Study: Alfresco Uses A/B Testing to Nearly Double Conversions

Alfresco, a document management and content collaboration provider, wanted to increase website visitor interaction with its “contact us” form, because when someone did fill out the form, the lead was highly qualified. The company retained **Big Drum** to create a conversion rate optimization program that would ultimately increase engagement with the contact us form.

Before



Talk to our experts to find out how we can help your organization do great work.

After



To set a baseline, Big Drum initially conducted a user test of the existing website design and information architecture. Then, they created new designs for the Free Trial page and the Contact page based on the results for use in the A/B testing. The results of the A/B test were definitive. **The alternate design of the contact page resulted in an overall 99% lift in conversion over the original page, and a 457% increase among new visitors.**

In addition to the A/B testing on the Free Trial page and the Contact page, Big Drum collaborated with Alfresco to conduct a digital card sort in order to improve the site's information architecture (IA). They solicited input from people already in the Alfresco community of users. Users were presented with a list of all items in the site menu and asked to arrange them in the most logical way. The results of the card sort led to IA improvements.

## Conclusion

Conversion rate optimization does not stand alone. It must work in concert with your PPC, [SEO](#), and [content marketing strategies](#), because if no one is coming to your site, you've got nobody to convert to a lead. The four steps outlined in this content marketing eBook will help you capitalize on traffic you already have and maximize all of your investments for a better ROI on your digital marketing spend.

As you embark on your conversion rate optimization journey, remember that it is an iterative process – there is always room for improvement! And, as you improve, you create momentum that will increase the satisfaction and engagement of your visitors, leading to better qualified leads, and ultimately to more sales.

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### About The Content Factor

In an increasingly digital world, relevant and engaging content is a hallmark of solid business relationships. Great content drives trust and respect, which ultimately drives sales. The Content Factor has been helping companies find their content voice since 2004, working with clients to brainstorm and envision the type of content assets they will need, and then producing it. The Content Factor delivers valuable information that educates prospects and customers and positions clients as subject-matter experts. These assets include eBooks, videos, infographics, case studies, white papers, web site content, and more. For more information, visit [contentfactor.com](http://contentfactor.com).

### About Big Drum

Big Drum is the B2B conversion agency that grows sales pipelines. Applying intelligent digital marketing strategies driven by vigorous analysis and delivered with high touch client service, we increase online brand awareness and qualified leads to drive revenue. A pioneer in conversion rate optimization (CRO), search engine optimization (SEO) and pay-per-click (PPC), we consistently have delivered robust, measurable ROI since 2001. Our customized, analytics driven process empowers B2B technology companies to make informed decisions and focus on what they do best. For more information, visit [bigdrum.io](http://bigdrum.io).