



Your Best Next Step: Conversion Killers

Your website traffic is high, you have plenty of “LIKES” on Facebook, and you know you have a great product or service. So why aren’t people buying? Your Best Next Step knows that there are five killers out there working hard to stop your leads from converting to customers.

Killer #1: No conversion plan.

Reaching prospects with the right information and offers at the right time converts them into customers. Unfortunately, many businesses barrel forward creating loads of content, ads, emails, offers and more, without a plan for how to reach the right prospects at the right time.

Even without a plan, it is easy to produce content that may be interesting, educational and relevant to the prospect’s situation. That is not enough to move a prospect along the path to becoming a customer. We see this lot in social media. It is easy to spend a lot of time engaging followers and amassing “LIKES” while not moving anyone anywhere.



No plan can mean the end for your lead conversion efforts.

Without a conversion plan you will be tempted to just relentlessly publish—this is a mistake for several reasons.

- It is easy to mistake activity for results
- Poor content trains prospects to ignore you

Another common problem caused by the lack of a plan is continually educating prospects without giving them a reason why they should actually buy from you. True, you can oversell and irritate prospects. But when a prospect has a need for your service, they welcome your offer to solve their problem.

Above all else, demand one thing from your marketing efforts: It must encourage prospects to move through their buying process with you.

What Do I Do Now? You need a content plan that will actually get results. It should contain the following things:

1. Knowledge of a prospects **buying process**.
2. Sources of great content, **tailored** for each step in the process.
3. Formulas for how to craft **great offers**.
4. The ability to spot problems and **measure success**.
5. A **structured process** that can be tested and grown.

Killer #2: Not enough content.

Hit the target of conversion with content. If you do not have content, you are not prepared to have the conversations prospects require of you. Blog posts, articles, video, web copy and white papers are all content. So is every email, Facebook post, Tweet or photo pinned on Pinterest.

All of marketing is a conversation. Whether it is on your web site, email, over the phone or in a video it is still fundamentally a conversation. Prospects ask questions and you provide answers; prospects express concerns and you address them; prospects share goals and you make promises to help them reach those goals.

The big difference between content and a normal conversation is that you get to prepare your part of the conversation ahead of time.

With your experience, you can **anticipate the questions and concerns** prospects will have. At every stage in the buying process prospects have questions around a limited number of issues. However, answering them is not as simple as posting FAQs on your web site. You want to answer the questions using the language of the prospect (see segmenting below), using the media the prospect wants to consume, published in the location that is convenient for the prospect (e.g. social media, email, etc.).

It can be daunting to consider the **sheer number of content pieces your company needs**. In reality, many of these pieces are just waiting for something to bring them to life. For example, your customer service representatives and sales people have stories just waiting to be told about how your product improved a customer's life. Your product development team might have great suggestions for unique ways to utilize your product. You have your personal opinions or feelings about your industry and professional niche.

Even with rich content sources within your company **content creation is hard work**. It requires planning, production time, and implementation. The payoff can be incredible, as well, but first the right framework must be set in place.

What Do I Do Now? Content is hard work, but the benefits are enormous.

1. Realize the **need for content** at every point in the customer's buying process.
2. Identify the **stories that already exist** in your company.
3. Produce content that **moves prospects** toward becoming customers.



Hit the target of conversion with content.



Killer #3: Offers aren't optimized, measured or evaluated correctly.

Content might encourage, entertain, or inform potential customers, but it's the correctly timed and executed offer that really moves the prospect forward. Unfortunately, many companies don't see the real value from their content offers because...

The offer is not sufficiently valuable to the audience.

Offers are essentially an exchange between you and your audience. You offer a discount, give-away, or piece of content in exchange for information about the prospect. Naturally, the exchange must be perceived as valuable for the potential customer to offer up their side. Asking for an email address or phone number requires an offer of appropriate value, and asking for them to give you a call requires an even more impressive offer. This is a delicate balancing act. Done incorrectly, offers can make your company look cheap, or untrustworthy.

The offer is wrong for the audience, or was given at the wrong time.

The timing of offers can sometimes be the most important factor in their success. Do you know when your prospect is ready to buy, and just needs the right incentive to move to becoming a customer? Do you know when they're looking for more information and would be willing to sign up to hear more? If you don't know the answer to these questions, you aren't ready to present them with offers they want.

The success, or failure, of the offer is not evaluated correctly.

Evaluating how effective an offer was, and analyzing what may or may not have gone wrong, requires experience and a structured approach. It takes an understanding of the essential components of a good offer and a willingness to test the results. It can be a devastating error to draw incorrect conclusions around the success and failure of offers. It can prevent you from growing your marketing in the right direction and may assign the blame in the exact wrong place.

"It can be a devastating error to draw incorrect conclusions around the success and failure of offers."

One example: a client of Your Best Next Step ran a campaign with terrible results, and drew the conclusion that this audience was not interested in their company or future offers. With our knowledge and guidance we helped them realize their conclusion was wrong. We redesigned their campaign with immediate success.

What do I do now?

1. Develop the **valuable offers, present them at the right time**, and integrate them with your conversion plan.
2. Make use of **resources and expertise** in determining the effectiveness of your offers.

Killer #4: Your content and offers are not tailored to your prospect segments.

It is hard to be helpful if you don't understand who you are talking to. Your content plan should help segment prospects in ways that allow you to identify who they are and tailor your content to each segment. This allows you to mirror the language they use and address their specific interest and concerns are around your product.

For example, an IT company may have a download on their web site with 10 tips for buying IT services designed for the IT manager and have another download of 4 tips for a Marketing VP interested in technology. In this case, 6 of the tips are left out for the Marketing VP because they are not interesting to her. The four tips common between the two are revised to **use language relevant to each.**



When you know specifically whom you are writing to and what they need from you, it is much easier to produce content that accomplishes your goals. Each customer segment will use different vocabulary, value different benefits and have different priorities. For complex sales different segments (influencers) may enter the buying process at different points. A company president may enter toward the end of the buying process for example.

Each customer segment speaks its own language. Learn what it is, or you won't get the message across.

What do I do now?

1. Develop meaningful **profiles or personas** for each of your customer segments.
2. Create content for your segments at **each stage of their buying process.**
3. Use a **tracking method** so you know where prospects are on their buying path.



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Killer #5: Ignoring the buyers' stage and sequencing content and offers incorrectly.

Every piece of content you publish is an offer to the prospect. Each piece is a proposal for an exchange with your prospect. You are proposing to provide something of value (informative, entertaining) to the prospect in exchange for something of value to you. For example, a webinar is an exchange of information for contact information *and* their time.

As a result, your content should get **progressively more valuable** and require more from your prospect.

An ill-timed offer can backfire and push prospects away. It's like a pushy sales person trying to sell you something when you are just looking—it's annoying. On the other

hand, when you have a question you want to talk with someone who knows the answer.

At the earliest stages of the buying process prospects may need help in realizing they have a problem. Later in the process, they will learn that your company provides a service they require. Towards the end to the process, they want to understand if you can best provide the service they need.

Once you have an understanding of the stages each prospect segment moves through developing content will be much easier.

Another way to look at it is to match the level of commitment required from the prospect to consume the content to their stage in the buying process. If a prospect is merely curious, make them and offer that is easy for them to take. Obviously a prospect ready to buy now will respond to different offers than a prospect thinking about maybe buying sometime next year.

In conclusion: Converting prospects to customers requires great content produced with their needs in mind, and given to them in the correct sequence. This is a difficult process, but one that can produce great results. Rather than focusing on an ad hoc creation process, commit to a plan.

Need some more advice? Call us today, and we'll give you 45 minutes of time to start removing these killers from your business and moving towards the best, next step.

About Your Best Next Step

Your Best Next Step is a system designed to help you identify, and actually implement, the best, next step that is right for you and your company. Call us at **952-896-0062 to schedule a 45-minute marketing meeting with Your Best Next Step.**

Whether you just need a little help, or you want a done-for-you solution, we help you focus on your highest priority. We help remove roadblocks so you can **market, grow and run your business.**



Ignoring the buyers' stage will leave them confused and you out of a sale. (via flickr.com by mikecogh)