



Turn your website into a
Lead Generation Machine



Your Website Is Your Greatest Marketing Asset

Your leads are only as good as the website that produces them.

– KISSMETRICS

Today's buyer has virtually unlimited access to information. They have the power to find and discover products at their own pace, and direct their own paths to purchase.

They do this mostly online. This means that your website has become your single most important marketing asset.

People perform more than 100 billion Internet searches each month. **Over 82% of all product research begins with a web search.** It's a fine opportunity for you to understand what customers are looking for online through search, and tune your website to gather the buyer intelligence that lays the groundwork for engagement.

The better you know your buyer, the better you can shape your site to serve up targeted messages and tailored offers that will invite

anonymous website visitors to become known prospects: In other words, you can leverage your website to generate leads.

In the past, the average corporate website functioned rather like a cross between a billboard and a catalog. It informed customers about a brand, showcased products or services, and met corporate objectives. These initiatives are now tied to a larger picture: an overall brand experience that has to fulfill the needs of different types of buyers at varying stages in the buying journey.

Regardless of how you reach out to potential buyers, the truly interested will come to your website to identify themselves and interact with you and your content. This engagement delivers essential actionable intelligence that you can use to tailor how you market to different segments of prospects. You don't want to miss out because your website isn't set up to capture and respond to that information.

This eBook will teach you what you need to know to use your website to attract potential buyers – and to stop missing out.

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1 Market With Powerful Content

“Content marketing” isn’t a trend. The term is new, but the practice is old. The classic example is John Deere’s *Furrow Magazine*, established in 1895 and still published today, which helped farmers educate themselves about agricultural problems and solutions. It established John Deere as a trustworthy, helpful resource. It also indirectly sold (and still sells) plenty of equipment. The basic premise of using content to win and keep customers has not changed.

What does your potential customer want?

Content marketing is all about offering people something that they value, that they connect with your brand. In the best case, it also encourages their engagement and interaction with you. What that “something” is depends on your audience, your company, and your product. You can use traditional products such as magazines, white papers, eBooks, or webinars; you can use newer tactics such as interactive games; you can hold events or use billboards or write messages in the sky – whatever works for your audience. In whichever channels they prefer.

Content marketing makes your website more powerful.

Whether people find you by searching specifically for your brand or searching more generally for a solution to a problem, the content on your website determines much of how they perceive your company and your product or service. Content that educates, informs, or entertains helps visitors to get to know you and encourages them to begin a relationship with your company. It can also nurture existing customer relationships.

Experiment with different structures for your web content: Longer or shorter copy; more or fewer images; more or less white space. Also try different formats for complementary media: podcasts, video, white papers, eBooks, infographics, and so on. Use internal links to help people find more of what they’re looking for on your site. (This is helpful for SEO as well.)



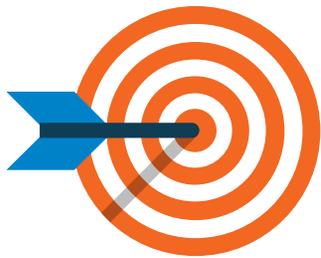
“...in a real lead generation website, every page has a distinct purpose.”

– JIM STENGEL,
Former Global Marketing Officer, Procter & Gamble

TIP:

Add testimonials to your web pages when and where you can. They offer powerful evidence in support of your offers, and third-party validation for your company.

2 SEO: Get Found And Get Known



When a potential buyer looking for your product or service does a search, you hope one of your web pages will show up on the search engine results page (SERP). It's very good to be on the first page (only 5% of searchers go on to the second page) and it would be especially nice to be the first listing on the first page (which will draw about 33% of the total clicks on the page, says Forbes).

To get those kinds of results, you have to:

- Have great content that fulfills the searcher's intent and expectations
- Optimize your website for search. Search engine optimization (SEO) is complicated, and it's good to have a professional on staff or a consultant you trust to help in certain areas, such as link profiles and schema. That said, there's a lot that the average marketer can do to enhance SEO.

The "fine art of being found" has many factors.

The number-one most important thing is to have content that meets the reader's expectations. In addition, well-chosen keywords used in natural language patterns, bolstered by synonyms and rich semantic context, are important. So are crisp headings that help guide the reader through the text, and images with alt-text tags. Your metadata (page title, description, and so on) needs to be the right length and say the right things. All these factors (and many more), used well, can help you compete in the SERP rankings.

For in-depth guidance on SEO essentials, see Act-On's eBook:

[**SEO 101: The Basics \[and Beyond\].**](#)

Act-On's on-page SEO analysis tool can be used for web pages and landing pages.

A screenshot of a web browser window titled "SEO Audit Report". The main heading is "On-Page SEO Analysis" with sub-headers for "Page Title", "URL Page Name", "Page Description", and "H1 Headings". Each section lists specific SEO checks with green checkmarks for passes, red X's for failures, and yellow triangles for warnings. The "Page Title" section shows 3 passes, 0 failures, and 1 warning. The "URL Page Name" section shows 1 pass, 1 failure, and 0 warnings. The "Page Description" section shows 3 passes, 0 failures, and 0 warnings. The "H1 Headings" section shows 0 passes, 2 failures, and 1 warning. The interface includes a "Collapse all" and "Show all details" link in the top right of the report area.

SEO Audit Report

On-Page SEO Analysis Collapse all | Show all details

Page Title *Become a Content Marketing Superstar | Act-On Act-On Marketing Aut...* 3 ✓ 0 ✗ 1 ⚠

- ⚠ The title is longer than 55 characters
- ✓ The keyword starts within the first 10 characters
- ✓ The keyword is used in the exact order
- ✓ The keyword is used just once in the title

URL Page Name *http://mktg.actonsoftware.com/acton/messages/landingPagePreview.js* 1 ✓ 1 ✗ 0 ⚠

- ✓ The URL is shorter than 115 characters
- ✗ The keyword isn't being used in the page URL

Page Description *Learn how to become a Content Marketing Superstar with these 3 gr...* 3 ✓ 0 ✗ 0 ⚠

- ✓ The description is shorter than 150 characters
- ✓ The keyword is used in the exact order
- ✓ The keyword is used just once in the description

H1 Headings 0 ✓ 2 ✗ 1 ⚠

- ✗ The H1 heading is empty
- ✗ The H1 heading does not use the keyword

3 Optimize Landing Pages

According to MarketingSherpa, **44% of clicks for B2B companies are directed to a home page rather than a specific landing page.** That's the result of marketers setting their links up this way, and it's a huge missed opportunity. The people who click in are probably not interested in your company per se; they're much more likely to be looking for ways to accomplish a goal or solve a problem. Help them discover how this can be solved (with your products or services).

Think of your home page as a store entrance. It's a visual menu of content, which highlights key areas that might interest people most. It's an entrance point. In the context of search, online ads, or email, the last thing you want to do if someone raises their hand to indicate interest is direct them to the front door. You want to take them inside, as quickly as possible, and show them the exact shelf and product they need. Use landing pages to direct them to the specific piece of content that will solve their problem, meet their need, or answer their question.

But how can you ensure that the landing pages to which you're directing traffic are optimized for converting leads? You'll want to test these pages to ensure the best possible results.

A/B testing is the preferred method for marketers to test best-performing elements for landing pages and emails, including layout, headlines, calls to action, buttons, forms, and more. Isolate each variable and test one thing at a time. A/B testing will incrementally improve your results so that you get the maximum conversion rate on your page.

To see a testing scenario, turn to page 12:

Appendix: Testing Landing Page Conversion



TIP:

Make contacting your company easy and obvious. Include a phone number; it indicates accessibility and builds trust.

4 Direct Attention With Calls To Action



A “call to action” (**CTA**) is the offer made via a button, image, or phrase that lets the reader take that critical next step with you – whatever that step may be. The CTA’s purpose often is to offer something of value (e.g., a white paper, video, survey, webinar, etc.) in trade for the reader providing their contact information. That makes CTAs a critical component of lead generation and list-building.

You can use CTAs in email, social media, ads, and on your website.

In order to create the perfect call to action, you need to know exactly what you want your audience to do. It doesn’t have to be a hard sell like “buy now” but it does have to clearly state exactly what your audience should do next.

CTAs most often take the form of buttons, banners, images, and text. Then, test various placements and colors. Testing is the only way to know for sure what your audience will respond to.

Use just one focused CTA per page. You can put it in different forms (text, buttons, images, etc.) and in different locations (top of page, bottom of page), but make sure they are consistent with each other and make the same offer.

FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU WANT THEM TO...	YOU MIGHT SAY SOMETHING LIKE...	
 Buy something	Buy Shop Find Order	See more like this Purchase Add to cart
 Sign up for something	Sign up Join now Subscribe	Become a member Discover the benefits of joining Take part
 Visit a landing page, view a video, or download something	Check out Check it out Discover Get Find Download Uncover	Explore Learn Read all about it Take a tour See it in action Watch now Want more?
 Meet with someone	Talk to us Ready to meet?	Request a meeting Get more information
 Visit your store	Come and see us Find a location near you Try it yourself	Visit us today Shop in person

5 Capture People's Data With Forms

Your online forms are the one place on your website where you can capture contact data that a prospect willingly provides. You can get permission to interact with a potential customer, and gain insightful information on that prospect. Form-related actions you can take include:

- Collect prospect data during event registration or survey sign-up.
- Add a form to a landing page and drive traffic there using links in emails, social media, and ads.
- Set customer-facing automated trigger responses to form fills, such as confirmations, thank-yous, and download links; set internal responses such as alerts to the sales team.

Proper form creation can have a huge impact on conversion rates. Here are a few best practices:

- Make the value proposition clear. Let the reader know what's in it for them, and use a heading and sub-heading to help describe the benefits of filling it out.
- Make sure that your form fields are clear about what they are asking. If someone is confused at any point they likely won't complete the form, or may enter bogus information.
- Put your form above the fold so it can be seen and filled out without scrolling.
- Shorter forms are usually better, but it's good to experiment with form lengths. The more fields, the fewer people who will sign up – but they may be better qualified.

As with every other aspect of lead generation: test, test, test.

3 Tips For Becoming a
CONTENT MARKETING SUPERSTAR

- 1 Plan, Manage, & Measure
Follow these six steps to create your content marketing plan
- 2 Create Content Like a Publisher
Learn how to implement a structured publishing program
- 3 Develop Content Your Audience Will Love
Discover seven ways to develop killer marketing content

You're almost there! Just one more step to become a Content Marketing Superstar.

First Name* Last Name*
E-mail address* Phone*
Company*
Country*
SUBMIT

Which form would you rather fill out?

First Name
Last Name
Email
Company Name
Website
Job Title
City
State
Country
Comments
Submit

6 Identify Website Visitors



Anonymous	Known	Customers	ISPs	USA Visits Map	World Visits Map	Twitter Prospects
Visitor					Page Visits	Last Visit
Cisco Systems San Jose, CA	Clickthrough From: www.actonsoftware.com , www.google.com , www.in.cisco.com				23	now
Nucleus Information Service Calgary, Alberta <i>Canada</i>	Clickthrough From: www.google.com				1	now
Guadalupe Valley Telephone Cooperative Boerne, TX					6	15 minutes ago

Most website analytics programs, such as Google Analytics, look at aggregate data, website performance, and trends over time – all valuable information about your website, pages, and traffic patterns. Website visitor tracking is very different; it reports on individuals – giving you actionable intelligence about unique potential buyers.

Website visitor tracking shows you:

- Who is visiting your website
- Why they're on your site (inferred from their trackable behaviors)
- Indications of what their issues, interests, and/or pain points are
- Where they may be in the buying process

If the visitor is in your database, their tracked behaviors are recorded in their activity history. You can set alerts so that you (or a sales rep) know when a specific person or company visits your site – and even

when they visit a specific page. This can help you gauge where a prospect is in the sales cycle, and also when an existing customer is becoming ready for an upsell.

Identify the anonymous visitor.

If the visitor is anonymous (i.e., not in your database), the tracked behaviors are still noted. If the visitor later provides contact data, that previously tracked history will attach to the new contact, showing behavioral history and giving that lead immediate context.

If someone behaves like a very hot prospect but hasn't provided contact information, you still have options. Act On integrates with data systems that do reverse IP look-up. That means you may be able to see which company an IP address is linked to, and research a list of staff to find the likely prospect.

7 Generate More New Leads

Once your website is optimized so that prospects are finding you, and your well-crafted content is pulling in the people who genuinely have need or desire for your product or service, it's time to turn those visitors into leads.

Give people on your website a way to identify themselves and indicate their level of interest.

The people who fill out a “contact me” form on your site want to talk to a sales rep – right now. That’s an obvious hot opportunity, and you should have a mechanism in place that gets them onto sales’ priority list immediately. Of the rest of your visitors, many are just tire-kickers. But others are interested ... just not ready to talk to sales yet. This group is doing research. They may move into the consideration phase eventually and should do well in some kind of nurturing program – but first you have to get their contact information. This where your landing pages and forms come into play – this is where you generate leads.

Offer people content with value, such as a webinar, white paper, eBook, quiz, survey, podcast, video, infographic, or anything else that’s interesting, educational, or entertaining. If they care enough about the topic, they’ll

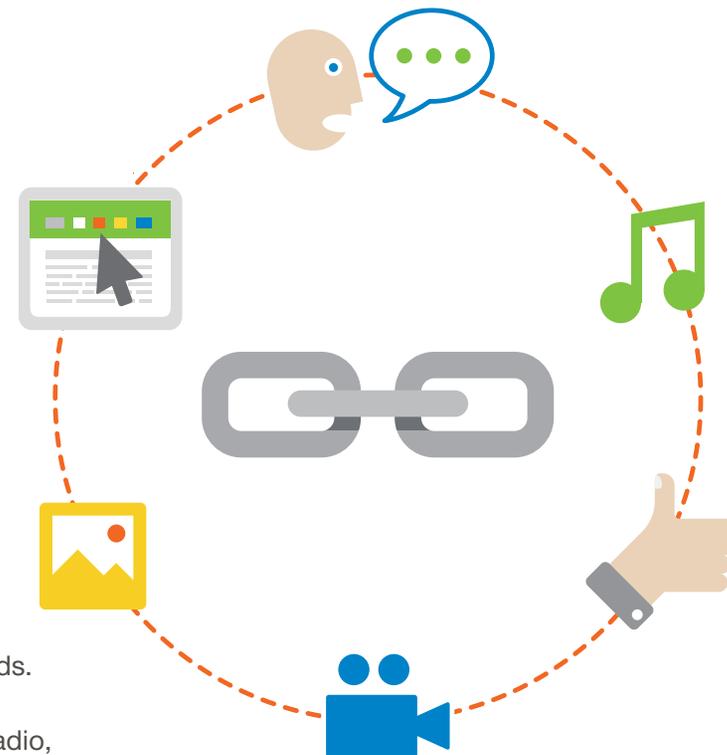
fill out a form to trade their contact information for it. And if they care that much, they are likely to be better prospects than any list you can buy.

Use multiple channels to drive traffic to your website.

Launch a coordinated social campaign across every channel you have a presence in. Send an email campaign through a third party. Run pay-per-click ads. Hold a contest on your website and use traditional media (billboards, television, radio, direct mail, newspapers, magazines, etc.) to let the world know. The point is to be proactive, and help people discover your website.

When people raise those hands, segment them.

Based on which offer someone responded to, you may already know what they’re interested in, and how you might segment them. If you don’t yet know enough about them to do that, keep track of what they do on your website so you can, at some point, zero in on their specific interests. This will make your communications more personal, and more productive.



TIP:

Take visitors to a “Thank you” page immediately after they provide their contact information. Back that up with a “Thank you” email that lets them confirm they’ve opted in. This confirms that their email address is valid.

8 Use Act-On to Generate Leads

Landing page creation and testing:

Act-On's intuitive tools let you create a landing page quickly, with no knowledge of HTML. You can turn an email into a landing page quickly and easily, helping assure consistency across channels. And you can test landing page elements and calls to action, with the ability to push a page live as soon as it's a clear winner.

Website visitor tracking:

Website visitor tracking captures buyer behaviors and actions, and records them in individual contact and lead activity histories. These activities can be scored, to help identify prospects with a higher probability of moving to the next stage of the buying process. Salespeople can set alerts to get real-time notifications when prospects or customers visit your site (or even a key page), making it possible to engage when prospects are actively concerned with your products or services.

Campaign results and conversions:

Marketing automation reports on campaign results and conversions help marketing become accountable for a portion of sales revenue.

Form creation and database integration:

Forms can be created quickly and easily. When they're filled out, the data is automatically entered into the marketing database, and automatically synched with a CRM database if specified criteria are met. Trigger emails can automatically respond to form submittals, letting a lead know they're acknowledged and offering further relevant information.

Marketing database access: Form data can be delivered to the marketing database, and attributes and actions can be scored. Salespeople can access entries in the marketing database (right from their CRM dashboard) to see demographic and behavioral data. This provides intelligence the sales rep uses to take the next step – including knowing what topics will foster a warm conversation and when the customer is ready to buy.

Inbound marketing: Use SEO Audit to improve your website's findability. Act-On can track AdWords conversions, providing intelligence and guidance for media buys, budget establishment, and keyword optimization for organic search.

TRY A DEMO

Want more information about how Act-On can help you generate more leads? We'd be delighted to show you what Act-On's marketing automation solution can do for your website and your business



CONTACT US TODAY

Contact us today for a personalized, one-to-one demo that addresses your unique marketing goals.

9 In Conclusion

According to MarketingSherpa's most recent Lead Generation Benchmark Report (2012), **generating high-quality leads remains the top challenge — 71% for most organizations**, followed by lead volume (44%), and generating public relations “buzz” (36%). Those numbers have remained steady.



Until this decade, lead generation was a two-part function. B2B marketers used advertising, direct mail, and other means to create awareness of the brand. Salespeople, typically inside people working with telephone and one-to-one emails, would prospect for leads. Websites were often static.

As buyers increasingly turned to the web, rather than vendors, to educate themselves, the company website has become the company's way to catch attention and generate interest — and generate leads.
Act-On can help.

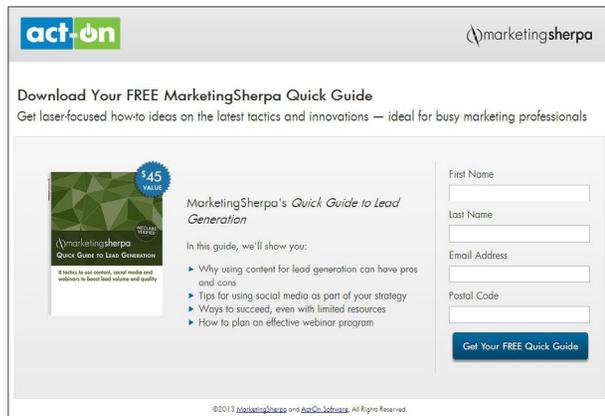
The lead generation process now begins earlier, with a prospect's initial interest, and the sales funnel has become the buyer's journey. Your website is the key to facilitating that journey — from the first step to the closed deal.

“We found that firms that have implemented marketing automation contribute 44% of the sales pipeline via marketing programs versus the 34% contribution from firms that had not implemented marketing automation.”

— LORI WIZDO, Forrester Research, in *The Forrester Wave™: Lead-To-Revenue Management Platform Vendors, Q1 2014*

Appendix: Testing Landing Page Conversion

Control



act-on marketingsherpa

Download Your FREE MarketingSherpa Quick Guide
Get laser-focused how-to ideas on the latest tactics and innovations — ideal for busy marketing professionals

\$45 VALUE

MarketingSherpa's *Quick Guide to Lead Generation*

In this guide, we'll show you:

- ▶ Why using content for lead generation can have pros and cons
- ▶ Tips for using social media as part of your strategy
- ▶ Ways to succeed, even with limited resources
- ▶ How to plan an effective webinar program

First Name

Last Name

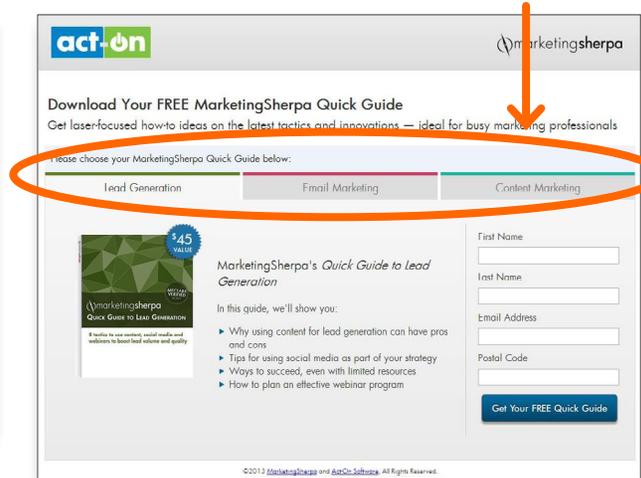
Email Address

Postal Code

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Treatment 1: Hypothesis A



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Get laser-focused how-to ideas on the latest tactics and innovations — ideal for busy marketing professionals

Please choose your MarketingSherpa Quick Guide below:

Lead Generation | Email Marketing | Content Marketing

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First Name

Last Name

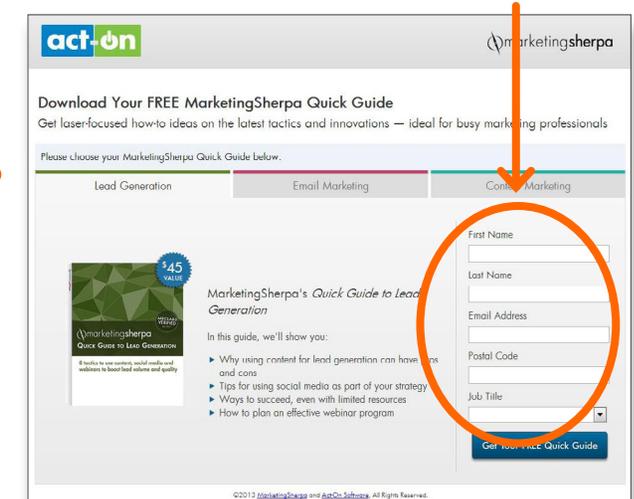
Email Address

Postal Code

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Treatment 2: Hypothesis B



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- ▶ Tips for using social media as part of your strategy
- ▶ Ways to succeed, even with limited resources
- ▶ How to plan an effective webinar program

First Name

Last Name

Email Address

Postal Code

Job Title

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Marketers sometimes go with a “gut feeling” that something will perform better, but running a test can surprise you. At a lead generation summit in 2013, Act-On partnered with MarketingSherpa to test a landing page conversion. This was a very interactive test, with conference attendees voting on some of the elements being tested in real time.

Testing starts with a control. The control for our test – seen at left – featured a single white paper. The reader needed to fill out four data fields to get the paper. We tested two other treatments: One made multiple offers; the other increased the number of fields in the form by one. These treatments stemmed from two hypotheses:

Hypothesis A: By offering prospects a choice between three incentive options, we will add to the perceived value of the offer and increase the Lead Gen rate.

Hypothesis B: By increasing the perceived value with the additional incentive options, we can collect more information without negatively impacting the overall Lead Gen rate.

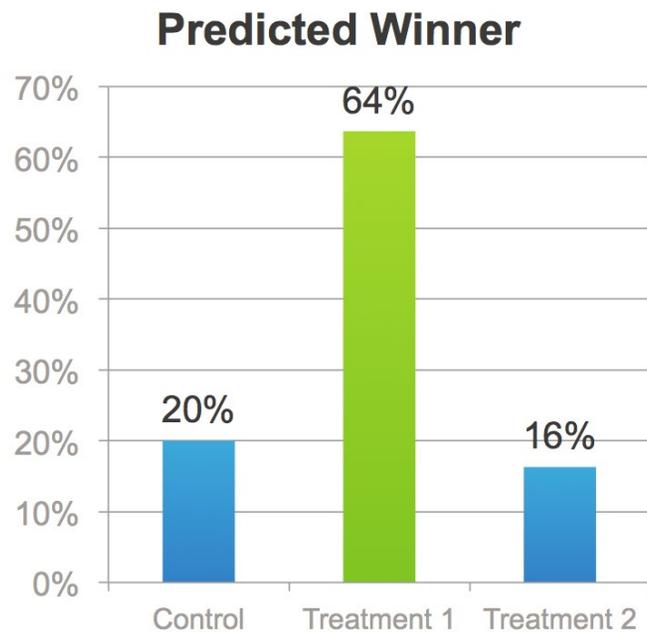
The question we wanted to answer was:

Which incentive approach is more effective for generating leads?

We asked the audience to predict which treatment would win. As you can see on this chart, the audience overwhelmingly believed Treatment 1 would be the winner.

What do you think?

Landing Page Treatment 1



The screenshot shows a landing page for MarketingSherpa. At the top left is the 'act-on' logo, and at the top right is the 'marketingsherpa' logo. The main heading is 'Download Your FREE MarketingSherpa Quick Guide' with the subtext 'Get laser-focused how-to ideas on the latest tactics and innovations — ideal for busy marketing professionals'. Below this is a selection area with three tabs: 'Lead Generation' (selected), 'Email Marketing', and 'Content Marketing'. Under the 'Lead Generation' tab, there is a graphic for 'MarketingSherpa's Quick Guide to Lead Generation' with a '\$45 VALUE' badge. The text below the graphic says 'In this guide, we'll show you:' followed by a list of three bullet points: 'Why using content for lead generation can have pros and cons', 'Tips for using social media as part of your strategy', and 'Ways to succeed, even with limited resources'. To the right of the graphic is a form with fields for 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Email Address', and 'Postal Code', and a 'Get Your FREE Quick Guide' button. At the bottom of the page, there is a small copyright notice: '©2013 MarketingSherpa and ActOn Software. All Rights Reserved.'

In actuality, the control won out!

Control



Treatment 1

Treatment 2

Landing Page Versions	Conversion Rate	Rel. Difference	Stat. Confidence
Control – Single Offer, Short Form	58%	–	–
Treatment 1 – Choice of Offer, Short Form	57%	-1.3%	31%
Treatment 2 – Choice of Offer, Long Form	51%	-11.9%	99%

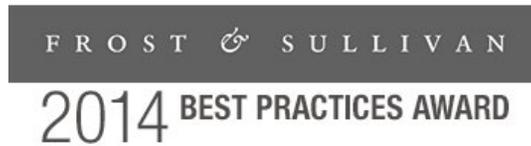
For this specific test, with our target audience, we had three key learnings:

1. A choice of incentive does not increase perceived value
2. The perceived value does not outweigh the perceived cost
3. The additional Job Title field reduced the lead gen rate by 11%

Before you change your landing pages based on a hunch – test it out!

Acclaim for

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About Act-On software

Act-On Software delivers cloud-based integrated marketing automation software. Marketers can manage all their online marketing efforts from a single dashboard that can be seamlessly integrated with CRM, giving sales access into various marketing functions. Act-On's fresh approach to marketing automation gives its users full functionality without the complexity other systems impose, and makes campaign creation and program execution easier and faster.

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