

Conversion: The Basics

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Remember back in the late 90's when the new thing was to get a website? Then in the early 2000's there was "SEO" as a buzzword and clients had to be 'educated' on how important it was? Well now there is Conversion Optimization, and people are just waking up to how it is the 3rd leg of the tripod and without it, it all falls down.

You've designed this great looking site, you've done your SEO and now traffic is raining down on you. But you're not getting many sales. Why not? Because your site, for any number of reasons, is not 'converting' visitors into acquisitions. The acquisition could be a purchase, a newsletter sign-up, a 'like' on Facebook.

This is where Conversion Optimization comes into play. The sorts of things that can effect your site's ability to convert traffic include (we'll use an e-commerce site as an example):

- Slow download speed of site pages
- "Buy Now" or "Shopping Cart" button not prominent enough
- Shipping price not displayed until after registration
- Internal product search engine not functioning well
- Site errors
- Poor content
- Product pricing too high
- Lack of customer confidence in your website

Any one of these things can be a real nightmare on your sales, and in combination they're total business killers.

Conversion Optimization can also include the A/B testing of two different pages (whether drastically different or only subtly changed) to see which performs best. You then take that better-performing page and create a new "B" page to compare it to. This continues until you reach the highest-possible level of page performance.

Conversion is the 3rd leg of the tripod, but only a very small percentage of web budgets are ever dedicated to it until traffic is pouring in and sales are not - and then suddenly it becomes clear that your site won't stand on two feet!

As for those who have yet to build their websites, Conversion, search engine optimization, design and functionality must all be leveraged together in the *planning stages* of your site. We can't stress enough how important it is to consider SEO and Conversion when planning out your site and not wait until after the site is built. That's asking for trouble later, as you will either have to work within the site's functional and design-related limitations, or you'll be trying to fix those issues to implement proper SEO and Conversion techniques.

