

Converting Visitors Into Sales



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A Successful Business is a Trusted Business

If you're a little overwhelmed by the myriad of business opportunities, products and "secret formulas" being touted online these days, then this ebook should help you regain your focus on what's really important in any business venture, on- or off-line: building trust in your visitors.

You see, **few people will buy anything from someone they don't trust.** Those few who will buy from someone they don't particularly trust will be quick to demand refunds or scream "fraud" over the smallest problems.

So how do you build trust in an online environment that lends itself to being so anonymous? The best way is to examine trust from the visitor's perspective.

Trust : A Five-Pointed Star

You need to work at building trust in your visitor along each step of his or her journey toward your product offer. Doing this will maximize the number of people who are willing to buy from you at the end of that journey.

There are five basic steps taken by any visitor along that path. They are:

1. They learn about your web site.
2. They visit your web site.
3. They join your mailing list.
4. They receive your product offer.
5. They receive follow-ups.

Along each step of that path you need to be building trust with your visitor. We're going to examine each of those five steps and how you can build trust along each one.



Step 1. The visitor learns about your site.

You won't sell a thing if nobody ever visits your site, so it's important that you work to get traffic. But it's also important that the traffic coming to your web site **already has a measure of trust in you.**

You can pre-build this trust by writing articles and distributing them via free article sites and submissions to online publications.

A quality article demonstrates your expertise in your subject area, and that "best foot forward" builds a measure of trust in whoever is reading the article. Also, if the visitor trusts the site where your article is found, some of that trust is passed on to you, since your article is appearing on a source that the visitor considers trustworthy.

A warning note: *Don't recommend any products in the articles you distribute, that makes you look like a salesperson instead of an expert. Use your articles to build trust.*

Try and get your articles spread out to as wide an audience as possible. Having your articles in as many places as possible gives you the best chance of getting visitors who have already seen your expertise, so when they click the link in the article to visit your site they have a good feeling about what they are going to find there.

I personally submit almost all of my articles to the free article sites after they've been indexed by the search engines. Once an article is indexed, then the search engines know that your site holds the original, and you won't get penalized for duplicate content.

An added benefit of distributing your articles is that it gets you in-bound links so that you can rank better in the search engines for your keywords.

After reading your article, if you've built up even a small amount of trust in the reader, it is likely he or she will click the link in your About the Author section and go to your web site. That brings us to the second step on the journey toward a sale.

A note: *Another way trust is pre-built in visitors is if they read positive comments about you or your site in online forums and bulletin boards. Having top-notch content and good customer service will get people speaking well of you and can generate substantial amounts of quality traffic that already has a measure of trust in you.*



Step 2. The visitor sees your web site.

In the previous step I talked about the importance of pre-building trust in your visitors by writing articles and distributing them to as many sites as possible. This displays your expertise to the reader and entices them to take the second step in the five-step journey to your making a sale: visiting your web site.

Obviously you can't do business online without an online presence, but **you will do very little business online if the site you have is of poor quality.**

Look at it from your visitor's perspective. If they found your site through an article you've written, then the article must have impacted them enough to make them want to visit your web site. But if they land on your site only to find a home-grown, unprofessional web presence, the little bit of trust you've already built up in them is destroyed.

Think of your web site the same way you think about how to dress for a job interview. When you're interviewing for a job, you're selling yourself. You might be the most qualified person for the job *hands down*, but if you show up for a corporate job interview in jeans and a T-shirt, with unbrushed hair and smelling a little funny, do you really think anyone is going to hire you?

The same is true of your web site. Your visitor is essentially interviewing you, to see whether or not they want to “hire” you as a consultant for them and their needs.

If you want people to listen to you, to trust you, and to buy from you, you have to give quality information in a format that is attractive and reinforces in the visitor's mind that you are a professional who can be trusted. If that means you need to invest a little money in a nice template, do it! It will pay you back one hundred fold.

If your visitor found your site through an article you wrote, then you want the quality of your web site to reflect the quality of the article that brought the visitor there. It should be professional, polished, no misspelled words or improper grammar. It should have a clean, smooth look with graphics that add punch without being overwhelming. The navigation should be simple and obvious.

A note: *If the visitor read something negative about you or your web site, and visited your site out of curiosity (which happens a lot—like people who slow down on the highway to stare at an accident), then having a quality web site with top-notch content can dispel any preconceived negative notions about you.*

So make sure to give your web site design a lot of thought and a professional appearance.



Step 3. The visitor joins your mailing list.

If you've played your cards right, the visitor we've been talking about in the last two parts of this series has been given a small amount of trust by reading the article that led to your web site, and then your web site's professional appearance boosted his or her trust in you and the information you provide.

Now it's time to continue the reinforcement of that trust by getting the visitor on your mailing list. That is the third step in the journey toward a sale.

I've repeatedly encouraged people to build up a mailing list. **Your mailing list is what's going to bring you the most customers. It does this because it gives you the most opportunities to build trust in your audience.**

To that end, **you should have an opt-in box on every single one of the pages of your web site.** Be sure to give people an incentive to get on your mailing list. Don't just tell them that they will be notified of new articles if they join the list, give them a free gift for signing up.

An ebook or a 5 day mini-course is great because it doesn't cost you anything but has a lot of value in the eyes of the visitor. Another great thing about informational gifts is that they further reinforce trust by demonstrating your expertise even more.

Once you have the visitor on the list, **notify them each time you post new articles** to your site (as long as you don't send them a notice more than once every other day or so). They will visit, read the article, and perhaps click on an ad or buy a product. But most importantly the trust they have in you will grow. Your advice will become more and more important to them as long as it remains of high quality.

Now that you have reinforced the list member's trust in you, it's time to have the visitor take the fourth step in the journey toward a sale.



Step 4. The visitor reads your product offer.

You sparked the visitor's trust when they read the article that led to your web site. Then you fanned the spark into a flame with your web site's professional appearance and quality content. That flame became a bonfire when the gifts you offered convinced the visitor to join your mailing list, throwing logs on the fire of their trust as they read more and more of the advice and helpful information you provided.

Now, and only now, do you directly offer products to your visitors. Sure you'll catch a few ad clicks and affiliate sales from links around your site, but the real money is in the product offer.

The end goal of any commercial web site is to sell something. Almost all of your visitors recognize that it costs money to run a web site, and that a web site is a business out to earn money for its owner.

So **don't be afraid to send your list a product offer from time to time**. Few list members will be put off by that, and those few who are can always unsubscribe and never hear from you again. The rest of your list members trust you, and they want to read about the products you find valuable.

That's why it's so important to pick top quality products to promote. Your list members expect anything you recommend to them to be of the same quality as the information that you have been giving them. Their trust in the products you promote is an extension of their trust in you.

Any reactions (positive or negative) to the products you recommend impacts your visitor's trust in you. If they love the product that you recommended, they'll be more likely to listen to you again the next time. If they hated it, at best their trust in you will be dented and they will think twice before acting on another of your recommendations. At worst you'll lose them forever.

So be very careful when selecting the products you will recommend. Don't recommend a product just because it seems related to your subject and will earn you a great commission. Buy the product yourself (or see if you can get one for free so you can review it). Examine the product and make sure it's something your visitors will find useful. If you can't honestly praise it yourself, don't try and sell it to your customers!

But if you can praise it, and you do praise it, the list members who have grown to trust you and are in need of a product of the sort you are promoting will buy from you.

Sometimes, however, a list member just isn't ready to buy. They like what they're hearing from you, and they have some trust in you because of it, but they need a little something to push them over the line from undecided list member to paying customer.

That's where free bonuses come in. If you can promise something extra to the user if they buy the product through you, then the list member will often be tempted to take that leap of faith in you and buy the product you're recommending. If you're recommending only top quality products, they will be happy that they decided to purchase, and their trust in you will grow.

Giving free bonuses with products you're promoting that you did not create also helps ensure that your list members buy through your link instead of somebody else's.

But even with the addition of free bonuses, not everyone will be ready to buy. That's why following up after a promotion is needed.



Step 5. The visitor receives follow ups.

The visitor read your expert article and decided to visit your site. Your professional site and offer of free gifts imbued them with enough trust to join your mailing list. After being on your mailing list for a while, you sent out an incredible offer for a wonderful product and free bonuses to boot. Many of your list members purchased, but others did not.

Why not?

There are four reasons why some people do not purchase the products you promote to your list.

1. *They didn't need the product.*

Yes, not everybody needs what you're offering to them. They may already have it, or have something similar, or just simply aren't convinced that they need it.

2. *They couldn't afford it.*

When you're broke, you're broke! It doesn't matter how good a product offer is.

3. *They're on your list for a free ride.*

You get some stragglers who love the free information but have absolutely no intention of ever buying anything.

4. *They don't trust you enough yet.*

Everyone is different. Some people's trust is readily won, and for others it's a long, slow process.

There's not much you can do about the people who fall under the first category. If they don't need it, they just don't need it! There's hope, though. In time you'll probably send an offer for something they do need and don't have, and then they'll buy.

In time the people in category two might have a more money and be able to buy your promoted products, so there's some hope there, but it's nothing you can do anything about.

There's even hope for the people in category three. I've been one of those people before myself, and ended up buying something that was simply too good to let pass.

For category four, however, there is something you can actively do to convert them from list members to paying customers: **keep sending them your top-notch articles. Keep building trust with them by giving them great information and help for free.**

Be patient with them. Don't try to rush them into a purchase. They haven't bought yet because they're not the kind who can be rushed into anything.

I've been on some mailing lists where I'll receive six or seven emails about the same product launch from the same person. It's very annoying. If I wanted to buy, by the third email I would have purchased.

I try to limit my email promotions for the same product to three: one pre-launch email, one email on launch day, and one follow up email to let the list know about the great reactions to the product. That's it! Stop there or you will lose a lot of subscribers.

In time, one of two things is going to happen with pretty much every list member you have.

1. *They will grow tired and unsubscribe (or just ignore your emails).*
2. *They will become a loyal customer.*

The goal is to get as many people to become loyal customers as possible. You do this by not bombarding them with too many product offers with no valuable free information in between.

I always try to follow up promotions with a series of great articles. This lets my list members know that I'm not only interested in sending them product offers, but also in educating them and helping them succeed.



Summing It All Up

The five step journey that converts a visitor into a sale is not complex or difficult, but it will only be successful if you build trust in your visitor each step of the way.

When making decisions about how to write an article, or how to design your web site, or what products to promote to your mailing list, always ask yourself this question first: Will this build trust in my audience? If the answer is yes, go for it. If no, pass on it.

The old axiom states, "do one thing, do it well." The "one thing" that you must do well with your business is build trust in your audience. The level of trust your audience has in you will be reflected by the number of digits in your bottom line.

Supplemental:

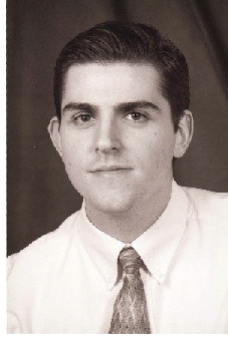
Handling Negative Feedback



As much as you'd love to please everybody in business, it's just not possible. Inevitably you are going to make some people unhappy, either by what you say or what you sell. The best way to handle negative feedback from these list members is to thank them for their honesty and tell them that you are always open to the comments of your readers.

Most of the time the negative feedback comes from list members who aren't angry, but in the heat of the moment write their comments in less than pleasant ways. I've gotten more than one unsolicited apology by just thanking them for their honesty and letting them know that I want to hear what they have to say.

An added benefit of just thanking them and moving on is that you often win the reader's respect. They know that you aren't going to try and tear them down if they disagree with you, and that they are important enough to you for you to respond to the negative comment rather than just delete it.



About the Author

Jonathan Leger has been online since before the World Wide Web was born. He has been writing commercial software since he was 14, and spent 8 years in the corporate world as a software developer before striking out on his own.

He's the creator of a number of well known and respected AdSense software products such as AdSense Gold and Translation Gold.

Jonathan is a serious Bible student. He is married to a wonderful woman, Natalie, and has a teenager daughter, Janelle, both of whom he loves very much.

You can get great tips on AdSense, Internet Marketing and Search Engine Optimization from Jonathan's blog at:

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