

How to enter a new market with landing pages used as a minimum viable product (MVPs): Checklist for market entry

From the point of view of entering a completely new market and using a landing page as a minimum viable product, this is the order in which it's worth testing...based on how much influence each element has on sales:

- channels (segmentation and finding actual early adopters who feel the most pain)
- ad message
- emotional hook
- landing page headlines
- product description (visuals/text)
- price
- email follow up sequence

In short, don't monkey around with peanuts... one word changes in headline, button color, etc. In the earliest part of a product's life, test for massive, big differences. You should be able to identify them even at small sample sizes.

A true minimum viable product is not a crappy beta product. It is an experiment. This is true as well for landing page MVPs. In order to structure your landing page MVP as an experiment, you need to define & write down exactly what you are testing—before you run the test. Not only that, you need to write down success criteria for the test before you run it.

When you complete the test, you will have learned something either way. If your success criteria are hit, you've proven your hypothesis is true. If not, then you know something is amiss, and that you need to adjust your course before proceeding

- The emotional hook
 - Don't worry about making the page pretty as much as you concern yourself with getting layer 3,4, 5 deep with the psychology of your copywriting
 - You should know them so well, that you know the headline that will grab them by the jugular.
 - Does the landing page really "connect" with the pain/needs of your target client (not just web page visitor BUT target client)?
 - Think about '*why*' they'd be looking for <this product> in the first place
 - Mirror the user's emotional state before leading them to where you want to take them
 - e.g. **"Schedule Your Dog's Walks!" doesn't warrant an exclamation mark. That sounds about as exciting as filing taxes.**
 - Get rid of your curse of knowledge
 - Explain in basic detail and simple language (addressing the "lizard brain") why the client needs what you offer at a gut/emotional level
 - Assume they know nothing
 - If possible, avoid products where you need to educate before you sell.
 - Is your lead magnet/product description attractive to your target?

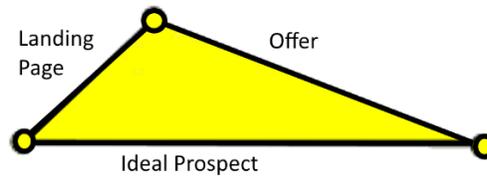
- Landing page headlines
 - Do the headline and the subhead make sense? Ask friends who aren't in the market to read the landing page and tell you what they think you are selling ([comprehension test](#))
 - Does the headline match the visitor's expectations, after clicking the ad (scent)?
 - E.g. "I came here to enter a giveaway - but now you're talking to me about a database? lolwut?"
 - If the headline is a generic feature statement, turn it into an end benefit statement to the client. **"If silver is selling for \$1 an ounce, give us \$1 and we'll send you \$4 of silver"**.
 - Is the promise in your headline focussed and unique? If not, you're creating a very thick wall of scepticism you need to penetrate.
 - Are you saying it in a way that comes across differently than every other marketer in your niche? (use "Adwords Checkmate" template by referenced in Launch Tomorrow for landing page headlines)
 - Spend 80% of your time crafting the perfect headline and angle, especially at first. Know what your market will respond to with more customer development if you are unsure.
 - If need proven headline templates, refer to John Caples' classic Test Advertising Methods for examples. Here are twenty-nine formulas for writing high converting headlines (this is an actual chapter title, and it's a pretty good attention-getter).
 - Begin with the word 'Announcing'
 - Use words that have an announcement quality
 - Begin with the word 'New'
 - Begin with the word 'Now'
 - Begin with the words 'At last'
 - Put a date into your headline
 - Write your headline in a news style
 - Feature the price in your headline
 - Feature reduced price
 - Feature a special merchandising offer
 - Feature an easy payment plan
 - Feature a free offer
 - Offer information of value
 - Tell a story
 - Begin with the words 'How to'
 - Begin with the word 'How'
 - Begin with the word 'Why'
 - Begin with the word 'Which'
 - Begin with the words 'Who else'
 - Begin with the word 'Wanted'
 - Begin with the word 'This'
 - Begin with the word 'Advice'
 - Use a testimonial-style headline
 - Offer the reader a test
 - Use a one-word headline
 - Use a two-word headline
 - Warn the reader to delay buying
 - Let the advertiser speak directly to the reader
 - Address your headline to a specific person or group

- Product description (visuals/text)
 - Why should I (the prospect) buy from you?
 - What makes you different? If you black out your name and logo, does it look like every other page in the industry?
 - Who are you and can I trust you?
 - Faces of real (non-stock photos) help with conversion
 - Show something about the owners/employees of the business, including short bios and pics--tell your origin story
 - Check Launch Tomorrow for over 20 other ways to show credibility without testimonials
 - Are you asking for the conversion before you have established your client's credibility to the visitor?
 - How do I immediately know if I'm in the right place and/or the right person for your offer?
 - What exactly am I being offered?
 - Before the website prospect gives you their credit card details or email address, what will they expect to know from you? That should be on your landing page.
 - e.g. are you insured?
 - will my payment be safe?
 - what happens if something goes wrong?
 - This comes from speaking with customers and knowing their typical objections (customer development)
 - A picture of what they are getting would help a lot, especially people enjoying the product or getting benefit from it.
 - A product picture can also turn prospects off if it looks cheap or like any other icon available online...use the picture to show why it's unique and special or not at all.
 - Remove a top nav menu if you have one. Don't allow your traffic to get distracted.
 - Use "you", not "I" or "we"
 - No greater than grade level 8
 - <http://read-able.com>
 - <http://readability-score.com>
 - More importantly... write the copy about THEIR RESULT. Talk about the *results* they want.
 - Use the "so you can" pattern:
 - [Action you want them to take] like 'Let's get on the phone' + 'so you can' operator + [End benefit/result] like 'see how much you might lower cost of capital'
 - In the early stages of a business, make sure that there is the ability to convert over the phone as well as online
 - often overlooked conversion boost
 - the ability to do customer development and/or in person phone sales
 - Use a standard persuasion structure (google for more information):
 - Attention Interest Desire Action AIDA
 - problem-agitate-solution
 - Make it as easy as possible to convert (short form, easy checkout)
 - e.g. a form with 18 fields for a \$20 dog walking service!?
 - If you have good testimonials, put the testimonials right under the headline and/or above the fold.
 - Add some kind of visual cue (like a red arrow or a person looking in its direction) pointing to the call-to-action.

- Add as much information about testimonial givers as possible: full name, picture, audio/video recording...so that they look real and believable
- Have at least one call to action (CTA) above the fold
- Does requiring the reader to click a button to reveal an opt-in form drive conversions down or up?
 - micro-commitments
 - split test against a straight form
- Do you really need the last name? Try testing with email address only. Add first name if you need it for follow up (in emails)
- "Empathise with me and prove to me you understand me and my problem, before pitching your solution."
- lead the reader into the story in a way where it becomes harder to NOT read on than it is to ignore it
- Do a video where you're showing how you use the product to solve the audience's problem.
 - Make it about the solution to their problem, NOT the product itself.
 - Once they see how you solve the problem, they'll want to get the product
- Rags to riches stories: prove it's not hype
 - overcome "yes, but my situation is different" objections
 - make the causal connection between the problem and the solution very clear
- Check the landing page eye line
 - When you scan the page, are you torn between the image and the text?
 - To convert, you typically need people to read the text, headline first.
 - Check what you notice first visually--is it the main benefit you want to communicate?
 - look at the landing page 5m away from screen
 - use tool like <http://feng-gui.com>.
- Put the image of the product with a clear, instructional call to action on the right-hand side of your text.
- Only use one call to action, ideally only one button on a shorter page. Repeating the same call to action is ok.
- Is your color scheme and font appropriate for the type of product you want to sell?
 - e.g. hedge fund video site that looks like a skateboarding forum--not a good idea
- Don't use a logo for a landing page MVP
- Imagine user internal dialogue as they scroll through a page. Examples:
 - "What am I being asked to do?...[scroll]...oh, "submit"...wait..."
 - "...what am I getting when I click this button?"
 - "Is this a reputable company? Is it a smart decision to choose this company? I don't know. Can't tell. I'll think I'll check out someone else..."
 - "I see pictures of buildings. So wait, what am I getting?"
 - "Wait...this says 'real estate lender.' I clicked on 'Commercial Refinancing. Is this the right place?"
 - "Man that's a lot of information to fill out. I don't want to do that now." [Back click...]
- Putting a little more beef on those bullets:
 - the "1-2 punch" (2 benefits +1 feature per bullet) and bold the main point.

- example: **No Upfront Fees:** Keep your money in play with our... feature
- Are the features you cite really unique in the industry?
- How can you convince the prospect you will deliver on them?

Remember, off landing page factors like channel and ad text have a much larger effect on the sales process than the landing page:



Check launch tomorrow for more details on how to crawl into your audience's psychology and enter your market effectively.