

This is a free article. You can give it out to your friends and website visitors, publish it in your newsletter etc. Distribute it anyway you want as long as you retain the author's byline, leave all links active and you do not make any change to the article.

How To Improve Conversion Rates.

By Salihu Ibrahim

<http://www.ebizstartups.com>

Do you know your conversion rates? Conversion rate is the number of visitors to your site that take the desired action against the total number of visitors in a particular period or time. Research has shown that 60% of websites do not know their conversion rates. Then how do you improve your site's performance if you do not know your conversion rates? What do you take into consideration when making changes to your site's design? What do you do when you have plenty of visitors yet very few of them take the desired action? What do you want your visitors to do? How are they going to do it? What is the next step for your visitor after taking the desired action?

These and other questions can easily be answered if some efforts are made towards tracking and calculating websites' conversion rates.

Converting your visitor is the ultimate aim of any website. Making the visitor to take the desired action is the fulfillment of a process that started from wherever the visitor clicked to come to your site. The desired action could be;

1. Sales
2. Subscribing to your newsletter or book-marking a page.
3. Taking a survey.
4. Downloading a software or ebook
5. Clicking on a link.
6. Going through the process (that is, clicking from page to page) before clicking on the order button.
7. Etc

Most of the time we think conversion starts when the visitor lands on our Site. But conversion actually starts from wherever the visitor first locates our site. How the site was located. What description the visitor sees before clicking to your site or what recommendation or word of mouth brought the visitor to your site. This pre-conversion state is what to a large extent, can determine whether conversion actually takes place or not. This is what I call the keyword-title-description-landing page formula. This formula is explained in my free ebook "Google Adwords Made Easy". You can download this free ebook at [home base business ideas](http://homebasebusinessideas.com) site.

What enables conversion to take place.

A visitor landing at your site should immediately feel comfortable with your site. First impression as they say matters a lot. For conversion to take place you must hold the visitor's attention once he lands on your site. Some of the points to note that make for easy conversion are:

1. Your website should load fast. The next site is a click away. If your site loads slowly your visitor clicks away and you have lost a potential customer. Usually, graphics, animations, are the cause of slow loading pages. You can use some software, available free on the internet, to reduce the size of your graphics so that they load fast.

2. Your site should have a professional look about it. It should at first glance portray a quality site. This adds a little bit of credibility to the site. The site is then seen as a serious site.
3. State your case quickly. Let your visitor know what your site is about in a few words. Don't go rambling about your achievements. That can come later. Give the visitor what he is looking for.
4. Arrange your content in an easy to understand way. Whether you are using Tables or CSS for site design, make sure your content is arranged in such a way that the visitor moves from one section of the site to another without confusion or frustration. If you are catering to different kinds of visitors, demarcate your site or page clearly showing these different sections for visitors.
5. Include your Privacy Policy, Phone Numbers, About Us information on every page of your site. This builds some element of trust. Visitors may not click to these pages but the fact that they are there builds some credibility.
6. Do not irritate your visitors with bad grammar or typos. Check and crosscheck your content. Ask somebody to read through your content and point out grammatical errors and typos. These kinds of errors portray a site as unserious and therefore suspect.
7. If you must use banners use them sparingly. Do not allow your banners to distract your visitors from the desired action to be taken. Banners are been clicked on less and less these days.

Having taken care of all of the above, your site is set to present your visitors with your carefully packaged offer. You begin by getting to know your present conversion rates. It is only logical that before any action is taken to improve conversion rates, the present conversion rates are known.

What is your website's conversion rates.

There are many actions a site may desire a visitor to take once he lands at the site. It is the conversion rates of these desired actions that you want to calculate.

Lets look at some the typical conversion rates that need to be calculated and what can be done to improve them.

1. The SALES CONVERSION RATE. This gives you an idea of how many visitors are buying your product out of the total number of visitors that visit you site.

The sales conversion rate = number who bought / total number of visitors x 100

So if you have about 10000 visitors in the month and out of that , 350 bought your product, your conversion rate is

$$350 / 10000 \times 100 = 3.5\%$$

This means that for every 200 visitor that land at your site 7 will buy your product.

How to improve the sales conversion rate.

- (a) Make navigation through your site to your order page so simple a ten year old can find it.
- (b) Make bold call to action. Example, BUY NOW, or ORDER HERE. Put it near the top, at the middle and near the bottom of you sales page.

(c) If you offer free shipping indicate this at your home page and prominently on your sales page. Research has shown that free shipping is the second most important consideration for buyers apart from price.

(d) Your web page should load fast. Imagine a potential customer clicking to your order page with the intention to buy only to be frustrated by a slow loading page. The importance of fast loading pages cannot be over-emphasized. Some of the ways to reduce loading time are:

- i. Reduce the number of graphics on your page. Apart from the number, you can also reduce the size of the graphics. There are a number of software you can use to reduce the size of your graphics.
- ii. Always specify the dimensions of your graphics in your html coding. In your IMG tag be sure to specify the width and height of your graphics. This makes it easy for the web browser to load the page because it doesn't have to figure out the dimensions of the graphics.

(e) Experiment with different colors on your pages. Measure and track the result of any little change you make. It has been reported that change in the color of a page layout increased conversion rate.

(f) Do not use Pop-ups for displaying your vital information. For example, your shipping rates. Though Pop-ups can be effective in drawing attention to vital information, it is not worth taking the chance. With all the free Popup blockers offered by most toolbars and software companies it will be counter productive to display your vital information in a Popup only to have it blocked. Displaying information in Pop-ups could seriously reduce your conversion rate. Instead use banners that will display a strong call to action.

(g) Include a progress indicator on each page to your order page so that your customer knows at what stage he is. You can number the pages or steps and clearly describe each step so that the customer can easily move back and forth through your pages.

(h) Make it automatic so that when the shipping info is same as the billing info, the customer doesn't have to fill the same information twice.

(i) Because of credit card concerns, not all customers will want to order using credit cards. Offer other forms of payment, check, fax, phone etc

(j) Display critical information at the check out page. Information like warranties, guarantees, shipping costs, testimonials, return policies, after sales service, support service etc

(k) Develop a system whereby if a visitor abandons the checkout process for whatever reason after providing an email address, your system immediately emails the visitor offering an incentive to tell why the process was not completed. This happened to me. I abandoned purchase when the order page could not load due to my unsteady internet connection. I promptly received an email from the company. I later went back to the site to purchase the item.

(l) If you are selling tangible product use high quality pictures. Since the visitor cannot touch or smell the product, it is essential to provide a top quality picture that will look like the physical product.

(j) Include the number of days the customer will have to wait for the order. If possible provide tracking of the order. All these help to make the customer comfortable and close the sale.

2. THE SUBSCRIPTION CONVERSION RATE. This is simply calculated by dividing the number of subscriptions (subscribers) by the total number of visitors for that period and multiplying by 100. This gives the percentage of visitors that subscribed.

Example, if the total number of visitors in the month is 9000 and 300 visitors subscribed. Your conversion rate would be

$$300 / 9000 \times 100 = 3.3 \%$$

Getting visitors to subscribe to your newsletter or ezine depends on where the visitor had seen the offer to subscribe. If you are promoting a subscription page, then your description must be enticing enough to lure surfers to visit your page. That is, if they are coming from search engines, ads etc. Most times people will only give their email address when they are sure they will get some quality stuff from your newsletter. If they are already at your site and it is a quality site then you may require little persuasion to get them to subscribe.

How to improve the subscription conversion rate.

- (a) Make sure your privacy policy is clearly stated.
- (b) Highlight the benefits of your newsletter to the subscriber. State plainly the high points of your newsletter. Direct your visitor to a good issue in your archives.
- (c) Provide a valuable free gift. Example a free ebook or report.
- (d) If you are providing a free ebook or report, tell the visitor what is special about your own because there are a thousand and one free ebooks and reports on the internet so why should yours be different. For me I usually get a high conversion rate from surfers seeing the articles I post at various article sites on the internet. They become interested when they see the quality of the articles.
- (e) Change the position of your subscription form. From upper left to upper right. Then recalculate the conversion rate. Compare the result of the two positions. Try other positions until you get the position where conversion is highest.

3. DOWNLOAD CONVERSION RATE. This rate shows you how many of your visitors (in percentage) are downloading your software or ebook or whatever you have presented for download. It is obtained by dividing the number of downloads by the number of visitors to your download page. Example , you had 4000 visitors to your download page for the month and 300 downloaded your software your conversion rate is

$$300 / 4000 \times 100 = 7.5\%$$

you will need to install a script at your site to monitor the download. You can get a free download monitor script at <http://www.Focalmedia.net>

How to improve your download conversion rate

1. Write a compelling copy emphasizing the benefits to your visitors of whatever you are offering for download. Then make a bold call to action .example, **Download Now** or **Start Download**.
2. Download should start with the first or second click. That is do not make the download page more than two clicks away from the introductory page.

3. Make it clear to the visitor that it is a free, trial or demo download. You could list the features and benefits of the download in a Popup window. That is the popup is activated when a link is clicked and not by itself.
4. Put your download button at the top of your page with the main menu. Alternatively, you can put it at the left hand side navigation links
5. If it is a free report in PDF make the download start when the download link is clicked. It is some times frustrating when PDF download opens up in the browser.

4. CONVERSION RATE FOR CLICKING ON A LINK. Sometimes a web page is written where the main aim is for visitors to click on a particular link. The link could be an affiliate link., or a link to another page or even an email link. You have to install a script to monitor these clicks. There are many click trackers on the internet . You can get a free click tracker script at <http://www.focalmedia.net> . The conversion rate is the number of clicks on the link divided by the number of visitors to the page. Example, if the total number of visitors are 6000 and the number of clicks 1500. Then the conversion rate will be

$$1500 / 6000 \times 100 = 25\%$$

How to improve this conversion rate.

1. One effective way to improve conversion rate for clicking on a link is to put the link in the content. This is called in content link. The text link flows with your write up. Visitors are more likely to click on such a link than one that is not in content.
2. The text link should clearly indicate to the visitor what to do or what to expect after clicking on the link. You are sure to get a more favorable response this way.
3. If the link is an affiliate link do not use the long affiliate links provided by affiliate merchants. They are often long and too obvious get clicked less times. Get a script that will shorten the affiliate link you can download a script at [home business ideas](#). Make your links bold.

CONVERSION RATE FOR AFFILIATE SITES.

Affiliate sites need two conversion rates to succeed. One on the affiliate's site, the other on the merchant's site. The first is within the affiliate's control while the second is not. So to succeed in affiliate marketing the affiliate has to choose a merchant with good conversion rates. The merchant should show proof of conversion rates. Or you can calculate how many visitors you sent to the merchant's site and how many converted (that is, resulted into sales).

Conversion on affiliate sites largely depends on traffic. As a matter of fact, you need a lot of traffic to succeed as an affiliate. With little traffic your conversion will be almost nonexistent and there will not be enough data to show a consistent conversion rate. For example you might make a sale after 10 visitors to your site and make the next sale after 2000 visitors. This is not consistent. The first sale after 10 visitors might have been a motivated buyer. Which means you were lucky. You need more than luck to succeed in affiliate business.

How to improve conversion rates on affiliate sites.

1. Build traffic to your site.
2. Effective pre-selling. An affiliate tries to persuade a visitor to click on an affiliate link. He has to pre-sell the product properly. Emphasizing the benefits of the product to the visitor.

Building on the emotions of the visitor and leading him to click. Research has shown that most buying decisions are influenced by emotions.

3. Get your visitor to subscribe to your newsletter. With the traffic you are generating you do not want to miss out on the other visitors who do not buy. Provide an opportunity for them to subscribe so that you can still pre-sell again and again through your ezine or newsletter.
4. Provide very few choices for your visitor. Do not clutter your page with all kinds of offers. This makes the visitor to be undecided and may lead to frustration. Promote one or two products per page. Write your best review of the product.
5. Own the product you promote. This way you are able to give real life experiences about the product or service. It is more believable when writing reviews from experience and this increases conversion rates.

CONCLUSION: Calculating your conversion rates would be meaningless if you cannot determine whether you are improving or not. Stick to a period of test and be consistent. Example, one month, two weeks etc. Whichever is suitable for you. Calculate for that period. Compare with the previous period or the next period. Make changes to your pages and test again. By testing you will know what works.

Also if there is any industry standard conversion rate (especially for the sales conversion rate), compare your rate to the industry standard. By comparing you will know whether you are doing well or not. Or you can set objectives for yourself. Set a reasonable conversion rate that you want to attain within a certain period and go for it.

This free article is by Salihu Ibrahim.

The author has worked online since 2000. The article is based on the author's years of intensive testing and calculation of conversion rates. For more incisive articles on [home base business ideas](http://www.ebizstartups.com), check out his website at <http://www.ebizstartups.com> OR You can subscribe to his bimonthly newsletter **BIZWISE** by sending a blank email to bizwise@ebizstartups.com with subscribe as the subject.