

*Presented by
AvidSurfer*

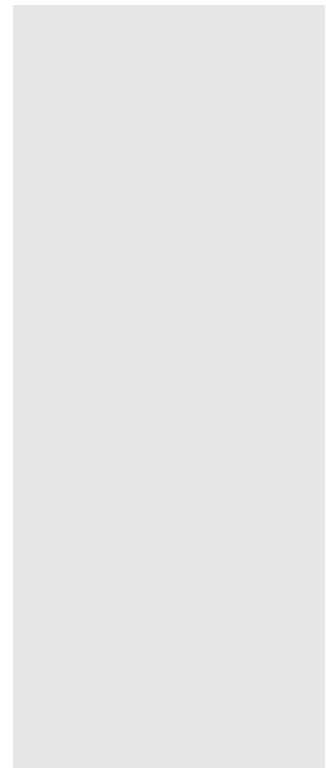


Table Of Contents

"Learn The Secrets Behind Successful Internet Businesses"

-- Page 3 --

“How Do I Increase Sales Through My Site”

-- Page 5 --

“How Does One Improve Upon Fantastic”

-- Page 12 --

“Roll Up The Sleeves And Get Under The Hood”

-- Page 18 --

“Would You Work Six Hours For \$5 Million Dollars”

-- Page 22 --

"How To Extract Maximum Business
From Traffic You Already Have"

-- Page 26 --

Additional Information ----- Page 31

Copyright Notice ----- Page 32

"Learn The Secrets Behind Successful Internet Businesses"

*Get behind the scenes and peer over the
shoulders of those who are building the most
successful Web businesses.*

Hello, I'm Kim Wingate, the founder and publisher of AvidSurfer. Spending the last decade with some of the top technology and Internet companies in the Northwest, I've had the privilege of developing friendships with a number of the unsung heroes in successful Web businesses around the globe.

Though they have contributed greatly to their companies' successes, you rarely hear about these people. You're not likely to find them speaking at seminars. Seldom are they interviewed in the trade magazines. No, these people are too focused on perfecting what they do to get into all that.

You will find these folks in the trenches on a daily basis. They are focused on acquiring customers, selling products, leveraging efficiencies, developing solutions, and in general, dominating their market space. They are actively developing and testing new tactics

and techniques. They are working with revolutionary new business models. They are creating multi-million dollar success stories.

When I decided to try and create a Web success story of my own, it seemed only natural to tap the collective expertise of these people whose knowledge and creativity I had come to admire so much.

Then it hit me!

There are individuals and businesses all over the Web who could benefit greatly from the knowledge and experience locked inside these peoples' heads. Why not bring it to them?

So that's what AvidSurfer does.

We extract the collective knowledge of this network of professionals, wrap it up in neat little packages, and make it available to you.

Through AvidSurfer, these individuals can offer up their insights, knowledge, successes, and failures - unfiltered and free of hype. We extract the knowledge and creativity of this network of professionals and make it available to you. Our convenient and affordable digital products and services are like hiring an army of hands-on experts at a fraction of a single consultant's hourly rate.

“How Do I Increase Sales Through My Site”

The most popular answer to this question may not be the best answer.

This is the question most online entrepreneurs and e-commerce Web site managers ask themselves every day. Given today’s business climate, answering this question correctly may spell the difference between layoffs and expansion; between closing the doors and surviving another quarter. In the past, it was acceptable to focus on other things - “sales” and “profits” were old economy measures - but it’s a different world today.

Most of us now have to face a harsh reality - in order to survive, we must drive more sales and profits through our Web sites without a corresponding increase in costs. Gone are the days where top-line revenue is all that matters. It’s not good enough anymore to simply report an increase of \$100 million in sales even though it cost us an additional \$200 million to get those sales.

So, the question of how to increase sales through our sites has become much more important. This question is a multiple choice question

with a myriad of right answers. However, some answers have proven to be *more* right than others.

Of course, the most popular answer to this question is usually “drive more traffic”.

Everywhere we turn, “drive more traffic” is promoted as *the* answer. In fact, most online business and marketing “how-to” literature available today is focused on tactics and techniques for driving more traffic. Hundreds, if not thousands, of these techniques have been developed and promoted to allow sites to drive more traffic. Huge amounts of money are spent every quarter on advertising, promotion, and publicity - all to drive more traffic. How many times do we think to ourselves, “if only our ads got more click-thrus, we’d get more sales?” Or “if only we had the killer tactic for getting a million visitors to our site, we’d get the sales we need?”

It’s only natural that “drive more traffic” would be the most popular answer to the question of how to generate more sales. It’s not a difficult answer to arrive at, which likely explains why it’s so popular - the right answer is usually not so easy to uncover. Let’s say you have a site that gets 1,000 targeted visitors per day and generates 10 orders per day. It would only stand to reason that in order to double sales, one would simply double the number of targeted visitors to the site - theoretically 2,000 visitors per day would generate 20 orders per day. Pretty simple equation - double targeted traffic and double sales.

Ten sales per 1000 visitors is not unusual. It's reported in the industry press that a typical e-commerce site has a 1-2% conversion ratio. A conversion ratio is the percentage of visitors who buy. This ratio is calculated by dividing the number of sales by the number of visitors:

1000 visitors x 1-2% conversion = 10-20 sales

Just plug more visitors into the equation and you get more sales:

2000 visitors x 1-2% conversion = 20-40 sales

“Drive more traffic” is certainly *a* right answer to the big question, but not *the* right answer to the big question.

Doubling targeted traffic will indeed likely double sales. But at what cost? Doubling targeted traffic will likely require more money over and above what is already being spent to promote the site. Sure, there are a lot of ways to drive targeted traffic with little or no cash, but these methods usually require a lot of time. And, like it or not, for most businesses, time is just as expensive and hard to part with as cash.

While not a popular answer, the best, most cost-effective answer to the question of how to generate more sales is - drumroll please - “increase the percentage of visitors who purchase.” That is, of the visitors who are currently coming to the site, get more of them to buy. Seems obvious doesn't it? It's the “other” piece of the equation that is

often ignored.

If a site were to double its conversion ratios, it would also double sales. A site with a 1,000 visitors a day can generate 10-20 orders per day with typical 1-2% conversion ratios. With 2-4% conversion ratios, this same site, with the same 1,000 visitors per day, could generate 20-40 orders per day. With 6-8% conversion ratios, 1,000 visitors per day to this site could generate 60-80 orders per day. Now we're talking!

1000 visitors x 1% conversion = 10 sales

1000 visitors x 2% conversion = 20 sales

1000 visitors x 3% conversion = 30 sales

1000 visitors x 4% conversion = 40 sales

1000 visitors x 5% conversion = 50 sales

1000 visitors x 6% conversion = 60 sales

1000 visitors x 7% conversion = 70 sales

1000 visitors x 8% conversion = 80 sales

What impact would this conversion ratio improvement have on the bottom line? Of course it would vary by site, depending on the average dollar amount per order, profit per order, etc. But let's use some specific numbers to demonstrate. Let's say this site has an average order size of \$200:

1000 visitors x 1% conversion = 10 sales x \$200 = \$2,000

1000 visitors x 2% conversion = 20 sales x \$200 = \$4,000

1000 visitors x 3% conversion = 30 sales x \$200 = \$6,000

1000 visitors x 4% conversion = 40 sales x \$200 = \$8,000
1000 visitors x 5% conversion = 50 sales x \$200 = \$10,000
1000 visitors x 6% conversion = 60 sales x \$200 = \$12,000
1000 visitors x 7% conversion = 70 sales x \$200 = \$14,000
1000 visitors x 8% conversion = 80 sales x \$200 = \$16,000

From these calculations, it's easy to see that by increasing the conversion ratio from 1% to 8%, we've increased the daily sales on this site from \$2,000 per day to a whopping \$14,000 per day. And the daily traffic level has stayed at 1,000.

The calculations really get interesting when we begin to talk about larger sites with a higher level of daily traffic. It's not unusual for one of the high-profile e-commerce sites to get 40,000 visitors per day. Of course, most of these sites don't have high-ticket items, but the calculations are pretty astounding just using a \$50 average sale:

40,000 visitors x 1% conversion = 400 sales x \$50 = \$20,000
40,000 visitors x 2% conversion = 800 sales x \$50 = \$40,000
40,000 visitors x 3% conversion = 1200 sales x \$50 = \$60,000
40,000 visitors x 4% conversion = 1600 sales x \$50 = \$80,000
40,000 visitors x 5% conversion = 2000 sales x \$50 = \$100,000
40,000 visitors x 6% conversion = 2400 sales x \$50 = \$120,000
40,000 visitors x 7% conversion = 2800 sales x \$50 = \$140,000
40,000 visitors x 8% conversion = 3200 sales x \$50 = \$160,000

By increasing the conversion ratio from 1% to 8%, we've increased

the daily sales on this site from \$20,000 per day to a whopping \$160,000 per day. And the daily traffic level has stayed at 40,000. Even if each sale at this site were only throwing off 1% net profit, increasing conversion ratio from 1% to 8% would generate an additional \$1400 in profits per day. Over the course of a year, we're looking at about \$500,000 in additional profits. All from existing traffic levels. How many layoffs might that avoid?

Now, increasing conversion ratios will still require time and money, but not nearly as much as most traffic generation techniques. And, 6-8% conversion ratios are not as far-fetched as you might think. There are many sites in operation today who have this level of conversion. There are even sites whose conversion ratios push 10%. How much more business would your site be doing if 1 out of every 10 visitors purchased something? Would your site be doing twice the business? Five times the business? Do you know?

This level of sales conversion does not occur by accident. It comes as a result of focused attention and effort. Sites with high conversion ratios have those ratios because they work at it. They make improving their conversion ratios a priority in their business. Sales conversion ratios are a key metric in their businesses, just like revenues and profits. They know that "doing better with what they have" is far more profitable than the constant drive for "more."

The following is a detailed account of one site's efforts to improve their conversion ratios. This real-world case study demonstrates the

power of these improvements and their impact on the bottom line. It also provides insights into the methodologies and techniques used by one of the most successful commerce sites on the Web.

While the site managers, and the site itself, maintain their anonymity through participation in the AvidSurfer network of professionals, the numbers, statistics, tactics, and impacts provided in this case study are as accurate as possible. Be sure to check out AvidSurfer's report, "Turning Visits Into Action", for even more examples and case studies, as well as hundreds of tactics and techniques used to improve conversion ratios.

“How Does One Improve Upon Fantastic”

The basis for this case study is a commerce site selling computer hardware. This site is not a typical dot-com in that they are currently profitable and have actually been profitable for years. With annual online sales of over \$120 million and growing substantially, this is no longer a small business by any means. They do, however, act like a small business in many respects. They are very frugal in their spending on advertising and promotion, and they are continually making small improvements to their business rather than looking for the “next big thing.”

This site has focused on conversion ratios as a business metric for nearly three years. As you will see, they already have a very high conversion ratio. However, they didn't always have this level of conversion. At one time, they too, focused only on driving traffic to increase sales. But they have since seen the light and achieved this level of conversion through a focus on making many small improvements over time. Of course, they focus on targeted traffic generation as well, but they do so comfortable in the knowledge that they have first made their site a powerful sales machine.

The sales process on this site is a multiple step process. That is, in order to purchase a product, the site visitor must go through three configuration steps to determine the appropriate product that is compatible with their existing hardware. After going through these steps, the prospect is shown a small range of products that are compatible and the prices for these various products. It is at this point where the prospect will first see a “buy” button. It’s amazing that this site has been able to achieve their high level of conversion, given the fact that their product requires these configuration steps - for this site, it’s not simply a matter of “show the product, a price, and a buy button.”

To improve their conversion rates beyond their current high level, the site managers decided that the best, most methodical way to approach the effort was by trying to improve each step in their site’s rather complex sales process. They would look to improve the conversion ratio from one step to the next in an effort to improve the overall sales ratio.

Explained another way, they would try to get a greater percentage of people to take the first step in the sales process. Then, they would try to get a greater percentage of those who had taken the first step to take the second step, and so on, all the way down to the final step - the order. Just as you can’t reach any destination without taking the first step, the site managers reasoned that getting a greater percentage of visitors to take each step in the process would result in greater sales.

For the sake of brevity, this case study focuses on improvements made to this first step in this sales process - the results are dramatic and clearly demonstrate the power of conversion ratio improvement.

The first step in this sales process begins on the home page. On the home page, visitors are encouraged to take the first step of the sales process by selecting what brand of existing computer hardware they own. Upon completing this selection, they are taken to the next page where they are asked to select their specific model of hardware. In this improvement process, the site managers were seeking to improve the percentage of people who actually took this first step from the homepage to arrive at the second page. Sound simple, right?

Going into the improvement process, the number of visitors entering the site at the home page averaged about 10,000 per day. The number of orders generated for the same period averaged about 720 orders per day. This works out to an average conversion ratio of 7.2%. Great numbers already, but there was some room for improvement.

$10,000 \text{ visitors} \times 7.2\% \text{ conversion} = 720 \text{ orders per day}$

Of the 10,000 visitors entering the home page per day, roughly 46% of them made that first selection to arrive at the second page of the sales process. By focusing on improvements to the home page to get a greater percentage of people to make that first selection, the site managers would be getting more visitors further down the sales path and closer to the closing the sale. With all else remaining constant, an

improvement in conversion from the first page to the next should yield greater sales regardless of improvements yet to be made to further steps.

10,000 visitors x 46% first step conversion = 4600 arrive at the second step

Because they had already done so much to improve their conversion ratios, there weren't many obvious opportunities for improvement. But in looking at their homepage, the site managers were able to identify two areas for possible improvement. They knew from past experience that response speed was critical to improve conversion. Their homepage was already very streamlined and loaded very fast - but with some tweaks it could be much faster.

They also knew from past experience that distraction was an inhibitor of conversion. If visitors' attention is drawn away, they can hardly be expected to do what you really want them to do. The home page was in pretty good shape in this respect as well, but again, with some tweaks it could be better.

The home page was already constructed to a fairly rigorous specification. Under this specification, total page weight of the home page - graphics and code - could not exceed 30K. This requirement yielded a pretty fast-loading page - about 10 seconds on 56K modem. However, the site managers wanted to see if they could take this even further without drastic changes to the site's look and feel. (The site

was already fairly sparse visually and the site managers felt that any further reduction in the visual elements of the site would negatively affect the branding aspects of site interaction.)

A number of those reading this report are saying, “A 30K home page? That’s unreal! How can a site function with a page that small?” As stated earlier, these site managers had been improving their conversion ratios for quite some time. Many of those improvements have come from paying very close attention to the speed and responsiveness of their site.

In fact, these site managers feel that many in the Web design community are doing e-commerce sites a tremendous disservice when putting forth page weight recommendations. Most literature available today on effective site design recommends that a home page be no more than 60K, with all other pages being no more than 40K. However, through their extensive tests, these site managers believe that these recommendations are not only much too high, they are reversed.

These managers believe that they have proven time and time again, that the entry page to an e-commerce Web site should be one of the smallest pages on the site in terms of page weight and load time. They believe that if a potential customer cannot get “through the front door” of the store quickly and easily, there is little hope of selling product to that prospect - hence, the lower page weight specification for the entry page.

Once inside the store, prospects are more engaged and willing to tolerate a little extra wait - allowing for larger interior pages. These managers believe the page weight recommendations for an e-commerce site should be more along the lines of 35K or less for entry pages, 45K or less for all other pages. Given their success in achieving high conversion rates, they might be on to something.

We recognize that many people reading this case study may work in a business management capacity and may not be that familiar with HTML and actual site construction. However, business managers have the power and responsibility to set guidelines and specifications for how their site will be constructed in order to meet business objectives. Even if you don't know what it all entails, you can put forth these page weight specifications as a guideline for how your site should be constructed. This simple change in philosophy with respect to how your site is constructed could be worth millions in sales that would have otherwise been missed.

“Roll Up The Sleeves And Get Under The Hood”

Total page weight was the first thing these site managers attacked. They reduced their page weight target from 30K to 25K. To achieve this reduction without radically changing the look and feel of the site, they were required to focus primarily on the underlying code used to build the page. You see, there are two ways to reduce the weight, or total file size, of a Web page. You can reduce the size and number of graphics presented on the page; and you can reduce the amount of code used to construct the page itself. Because the site was already pretty trim on the graphics side of things, these site managers would have to reduce page weight by trying to remove unnecessary code.

Remember, if all this seems a bit too technical for you personally, pass the information along to those who are constructing your site. Don't assume that they know all of this and are doing these things already. It's extremely easy for even the most seasoned IT professional to overlook these aspects of user interaction. If industry average conversion rates are currently pegged at 1-2%, clearly not everyone is on board with these tactics and techniques.

Redundant code was the first to be eliminated. In constructing an

HTML page, there are a lot of ways to build up redundant code. Table rows and cells, for example, are a tremendous generator of redundant code. In order to be rendered properly in a number of different browsers, font styles and sizes must be called out within each row or cell. These redundant font call-outs add a lot of code to a page.

These site managers were able to eliminate nearly 4K of weight by modifying the HTML table structure in such way as to eliminate much of this redundant code. They had already optimized the table structure of the page, using multiple, aligned tables rather than complex nested tables. But within these aligned tables, they had used multiple table rows and table cells to achieve some layout effects. These layout effects came at a cost of redundant font callouts. By removing these multiple rows and cells, and instead using line breaks and paragraph tags within single tables, they were able to call-out the font styles and sizes only once within each aligned table. This modification had only a minor effect on the look and feel of the site, while removing nearly 15% of the page weight.

Next, the site managers looked to the “server side” elements that would improve the responsiveness of this page. This first page had a number of dynamic elements that didn’t necessarily need to be dynamic. For example, the list of hardware brands that a prospect was to pick from in taking the first step of the sales process was dynamically generated by a call to the database as the page was rendered.

Compared to a static, hard-coded list, this dynamic list, generated by a “database hit”, took more time - not much more, but more nonetheless. These dynamic elements were changed to static content - hard-coded into the page. It would take a little extra manual effort to maintain these elements as they would not automatically update as the database content changed, but these managers felt the trade off for speed might prove worthwhile.

The site managers then turned their attentions to reducing distractions. There weren't many, but again, there were some. They removed links to content that didn't specifically aid the sales process. They trimmed down the copy used on the page - making it shorter and more direct. They even pushed their legal department to create a less-wordy copyright, terms of use, and legal disclaimer for use at the bottom of the page! These reductions in copy and distractions would yield a savings of another 1K in page weight while making for a more focused page.

The managers also paid close attention to the relative visual “weight” of everything on the page. Through layout, use of white space, and appropriate use of font sizes, they made it very clear to the visitor that taking that first step - making that first selection - was the most important thing they could do on this page. This is an important point.

Many sites don't make it clear what action they want visitors to take. Do they want visitors to begin shopping? Do they want visitors to sign up for the free contest? Do they want visitors to read about the CEO's

latest adventure in raising venture capital? Do they want readers to focus all their attention on the animated dog graphic doing backflips in the corner of the page? If you are not giving visitors a clear indication of what you want them to do, how can they be expected to do it?

“Would You Work Six Hours For \$5 Million Dollars”

This effort - identification of possible improvements and implementation of modifications - required a total of six hours. Three individuals spent one hour as a group, identifying the possible improvements to be made. One individual then spent three hours actually making the modifications to the page. Of course, some additional time was spent tracking the results of the effort after the fact, but the actual effort itself took a total of only six hours.

As stated earlier, the effort began with a home page of approximately 30K in weight that loaded in roughly 10 seconds. Of the 10,000 people visiting the home page daily, 46% - or 4,600 visitors - took the initial step in the sales process as presented on the home page. The site generated 720 orders per day from these 10,000 visitors - a 7.2% conversion ratio.

Upon rollout of the modifications to the home page, the statistics changed immediately. This new home page weighed in at 25K and loaded in less than 8 seconds - a 20% improvement in speed. Of the 10,000 people visiting the page daily, 51% - or 5,100 visitors - were

now taking the initial step in the sales process. The number of daily orders generated on the site increased to an average of 780 - a 7.8% conversion ratio.

An increase in conversion ratio from 7.2% to 7.8% doesn't seem like much, does it? But, when we're talking about thousands of daily visitors, a small percentage improvement is extremely powerful. On the same level of daily traffic to the home page, this site was now getting 500 more visitors per day to take the first step of the sales process. Previously, these visitors would have "bounced" - having never taken that first step. On the same level of daily traffic, this site was now generating, on average, 60 more orders per day.

Before improvements...

10,000 visitors x 46% first step conversion = 4600 arrive at the second step

After improvements...

10,000 visitors x 51% first step conversion = 5100 arrive at the second step

Before improvements...

10,000 visitors x 7.2% conversion = 720 orders per day

After improvements...

10,000 visitors x 7.8% conversion = 780 orders per day

Now, the average order on this site generates roughly \$225 in revenue. This increase in conversion, yielding 60 more orders per day, yields \$13,500 in additional revenue per day. The data provided for this study extended 4 weeks after the initial rollout of the modifications and remained largely unchanged over that period of time. If we assumed these modifications would continue to have the effect they demonstrated during the reported period, this increase in conversion ratio would yield nearly \$5 million dollars in additional revenue to this site over the course of a year.

60 additional orders per day x \$225 = \$13,500 x 365 = \$4,927,500

6 hours of work yielding nearly \$5 million dollars in additional sales - time well-spent by any measure!

And it won't stop there. As noted previously, this study only deals with this site's efforts to improve conversion from the first step in their online sales process to the next. These site managers will continue this improvement process through every step - quite probably yielding similar results at every point. It's not hard to imagine that, all by themselves, these improvements to the site could increase annual sales by 25%.

All from existing traffic levels.

This is an important point that should be emphasized. These increases in sales revenues were not generated by increasing the advertising budget to drive more traffic. Nor were they generated by running some type of giveaway or slashing prices and giving up profits. These gains were had by simply focusing on small details that affect the users' experience. By making the site more accessible and more usable, more prospects were able to more easily become customers. Instead of focusing on getting ever-larger crowds to frequent their store, these managers recognized the untapped and unrealized potential within the crowd already present.

It's a well-know business rule that the most cost-effective sale is the sale made to an existing customer. Why is it then, that this rule goes out the window as we begin to do business on the Web? Assuming our traffic generation is targeted, aren't the visitors who are currently hitting our sites just customers who haven't been effectively sold to yet?

We hope you've enjoyed this case study and found it valuable. We hope it has inspired you to work on improving your site's conversion ratios. The Web would be a better place to conduct commerce if everyone focused on these aspects of the user experience. For more case studies and real-world examples, as well as hundreds of tactics and techniques used to improve conversion ratios, be sure to check out AvidSurfer's report, "Turning Visits Into Action."

"How To Extract Maximum Business From Traffic You Already Have"

Simple "tweaks" to improve sales conversion ratios produce millions in additional sales from existing traffic.

Are visitors to your site bouncing instead of buying? Are you spending a significant amount of time and money to drive more and more traffic to your site, only to see a small percentage of these visitors actually become customers? If your site is like most e-commerce sites, only 1-2% of your traffic actually buys something - the other 98-99% simply clicks away to parts unknown.

Do you see the tremendous opportunity here? Even a tiny improvement in the percentage of buyers - the conversion ratio - could have explosive results on the bottom line. For example, increasing a Web site's conversion ratio from 1% to 2% on the same level of traffic, would effectively double that site's sales. An improvement from 1% to 3% would triple sales. See the opportunity?

And, these improvements are often just simple little "tweaks" that can be implemented in a matter of hours, if not minutes. In "Turning Visits Into Action," we share the experience and knowledge within some of the most successful businesses online today. Tapping the expertise of the AvidSurfer Network, we bring you hundreds of tips, tactics, and techniques for increasing Web sales conversion ratios.

Here's an overview of what you'll learn in this report:

- Learn how much more cost effective it is to make the most of your site's current traffic by improving your conversion ratios. One site found that a small amount of effort improving conversion ratios could earn more in sales than over \$100,000 in advertising.
- Learn how explosive results can be had with incredibly simple improvements. One site found one word worth \$250,000! The addition of a graphic and few lines of text was worth nearly \$100,000 to another site. Learn how one e-mail message proved to be worth over \$94,000! Find out how mirroring the offline shopping experience gained \$65,700 for one site. What "F" word is worth \$374,400?
- Learn how you can turn your site into your most effective salesperson. Give your best pitch to every prospect, every time. Free yourself to focus on other high-value activities in growing your business.

- Learn why customers want to be converted. Turning browsers into buyers not only satisfies your goals. Your visitors are seeking what you have to offer - they want to be convinced that yours is the right product or service to satisfy their goals.
- Learn how to find out about your customers by learning about your site. Develop a sense of what is happening on your site at all times. Learn where your visitors are coming from. Learn what they are interested in. Measure the success of your improvement efforts over time by establishing key ratios.
- Learn how to mine your traffic reports for hidden gold. One site turned their FAQ page into a marketing machine after seeing how frequently the page was visited. Learn how another site used their server logs to determine how to get more visitors in a position to buy. Find "side door" entry points and turn them into sales drivers. Use your server logs to discover your site's hot spots where you can place your most effective messages.
- Learn how friends, family members, and co-workers can provide the necessary feedback to make your site more profitable. One site manager found millions of dollars worth of improvements just watching his father-in-law shop! Learn how to ask for your customers' help in ways they can't refuse. Turn your best customers into your best consultants.
- Learn to create a compelling "package" your prospects can't resist.

Your visitors don't just look at price. And, they don't just look at service. They look at a whole package. Learn to evaluate your entire offering as perceived by your site's visitors. Learn how a few lines of copy and HTML can create an irresistible value and significant competitive advantage. Learn to justify your prices - high and low - for increased sales. Learn how one company earned over \$200,000 in additional profit by being less competitive in one often overlooked area within their package.

- Learn to truly structure your site according your customers needs for increased sales. Use the power of the hyperlink to put content wherever your users may look for it. The speed of your site has tremendous effect on conversion rates, but perceived speed is even more important than technical speed. One site received 20 additional orders per day through a simple change in the HTML code of their home page to increase perceived speed. Learn how intuitive navigation has a positive effect on perceived speed and conversion rates.
- Learn to remove roadblocks that prevent your users from doing what you want them to. Do you need a shopping cart? Maybe not. Shopping carts can actually hinder the purchase process. Do you ask that your customers select a username and password? If so, you could be losing a lot of sales. Learn to provide shortcuts for those who are already "sold" and eliminate distractions from within the sales process.

- Learn to use content and copy to drive sales. Your site design is used by your visitors as a measure - make sure your design is communicating what you want it to. Learn how color, white space, and consistency all work together to communicate to prospects. Are you providing the basic content all visitors look for? Most sites don't. Learn to turn even the most mundane content into compelling marketing messages, and learn how to "turn a phrase" for even greater returns.
- Learn to test various pricing strategies to determine the best balance between customer acquisition and profits. Learn how some product categories actually achieve higher conversion rates with a higher price, while others can lower their perceived price by bettering their "package".
- Learn to improve conversion rates on promotional efforts like banner and e-mail campaigns. One site doubled the effectiveness of their advertising efforts by testing one-word changes in banner headlines. Learn to use banners as a way to get prospects one or two steps further in the sales process before even coming to your site. Fine-tune e-mail messages to drive sales. Use personalization techniques to get more prospects to read your messages and take action.

For more information, visit www.avidsurfer.com today!

Additional Information

For articles, excerpts, and more information about complete reports available from AvidSurfer, please visit

www.avidsurfer.com

If you haven't done so already, remember to sign up for "The Surfer", our free e-mail newsletter offering Web business information, real world tactics and techniques, and industry trends. Subscribe by visiting

www.avidsurfer.com/newsletter.asp

Do you have an example of a tactic or technique that is effective for improving conversion ratios? We'd love to hear it! Send your example to comments@avidsurfer.com

Would you like to be notified as new titles become available? Simply visit the page below and indicate which titles you are interested in.

www.avidsurfer.com/notify.asp

Copyright Notice

The authors and publisher, AvidSurfer, have made best efforts to produce a high-quality and informative publication. However, no representation or warranties of any kind are made with regard to the completeness or accuracy of the contents of this publication.

AvidSurfer accepts no liability of any kind for any losses or damages caused or alleged to be caused, directly or indirectly, from using the information contained in this publication.

Copyright © 2001 AvidSurfer. All rights reserved worldwide.

This publication is fully protected by the copyright law of the United States of America contained in Title 17 of the United States Code. No part of this publication, in part or in full, may be reproduced by any means, including but not limited to digital copying and printing, without the express written consent of the publisher.

AvidSurfer

<http://www.avidsurfer.com>

11884 W. Mesquite Dr.

Boise, ID 83713