



Offers That Convert Website Visitors into Qualified Leads



By Jon Baer

Getting qualified visitors to your website is only half the battle. The other half of the equation is converting those visitors into qualified leads. To earn a positive return on your website investment and to support your sales team, you need to have a strategy that gets those visitors to take an action on your website—to “raise their hand” and let you know where they stand in the sales cycle.

This article discusses the different types of offers you may consider placing on your website for conversion purposes.

Generally speaking, there are five types of visitors who will visit your website:

1. Visitors who are educating themselves on industry trends:

These folks haven't yet identified a business need, but they're curious to “see what's out there.” They're trying to answer the questions “What are some of the technologies that are out there that can help my business?” and “What am I missing out on?” They know they need to do something, but they're not quite sure what that is yet. Maybe they know, for example, that they need to do a better job optimizing their website organically for the search engines. Maybe they know they need to invest in a CRM system, but they aren't sure how to narrow down the list of all the possible options.

For these people, offer them access to your electronic newsletter. Have a short (just email address) form with a privacy statement to encourage them to educate themselves via your content. When they're ready to take the next step in the sales cycle, hopefully the valuable content and education you provide will encourage them to seek you out.

Generate Leads from Your Website

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2. Visitors who are early in the sales cycle:

Maybe these people have heard of your company or perhaps they arrived at your site via a keyword search. These folks have a business issue they need to solve, but they aren't ready to “pull the trigger.” They're still trying to identify the right solution and the right firm to provide that solution. An offer to subscribe to your newsletter will appeal to these visitors, as will case studies that demonstrate how your solution helped other businesses. How much research they've done and how close they are to being ready to buy will determine which offer they choose. The bottom line is that the content provided by the offer is what drives these folks.

3. Visitors who know their business issue and have narrowed down the solution to a variety of vendors:

These folks need validation. They need to know that your solution works. They want to see that others like them have used your solution to successfully address a business issue. In terms of offers, the best content to provide these visitors is case studies. Place some teaser text next to the offer, such as “Learn how ABC Company, a global manufacturing company, saved \$XX via our service.” Or you could provide a short summary of the case study.

Require the visitor to complete a short form to access the entire case study. For these visitors, you should feel comfortable asking for more information than what you asked of the visitors described in category one above because the content you're providing is valuable and specific to their needs.

4. Visitors who have done the research, know what they need, but aren't quite ready to talk to a salesperson:

These visitors are looking for more information about your service or product. If you sell services, provide details about your services. What value do you provide? How do your services—and you—differ from other providers?

If you sell products, an online demo will appeal to this type of visitor. They have probably narrowed down their list of vendors to a few and before talking with a salesperson wants to see how your solution works. They want to see the user interface or get an idea of how easy the product is to install or use.

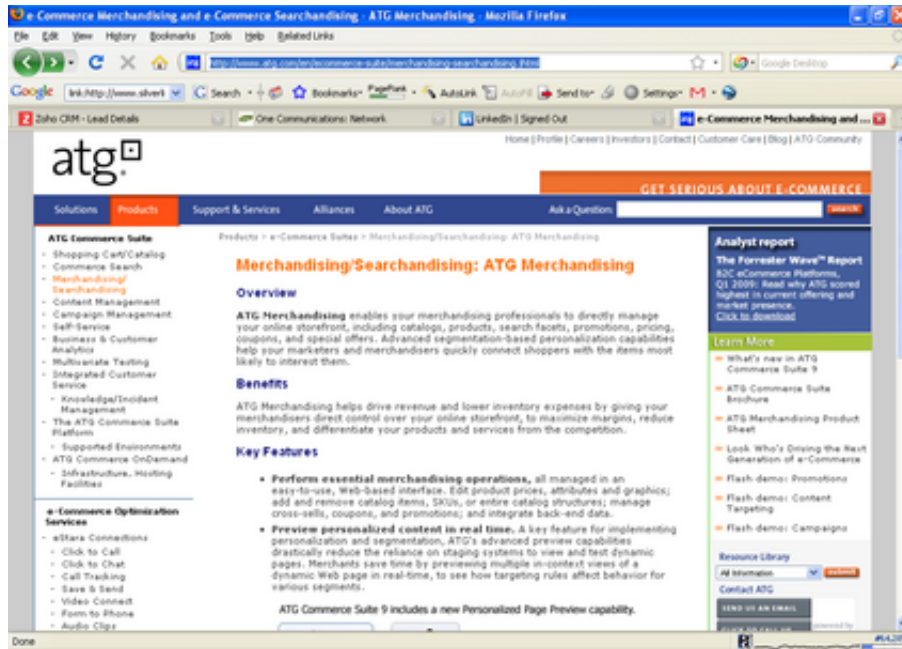
These visitors don't want to speak with a salesperson yet because although the service or product has earned a spot on their short list, they're still not convinced it's the right solution for them. In their minds, they don't want to be "bothered" by a sales rep. These folks are transactional in nature rather than educational like visitors in categories one, two, and three.

5. Visitors who are ready to speak with a salesperson:

Offer these folks a short form that says something like "Got a question?" or "Please contact me." Don't make the mistake of trying to have this form do too much. Many people make the mistake of having long forms, thinking that the form rather than the salesperson should do the qualifying. Remember: web browsers are impatient, so don't ask too many questions. Let the salesperson do the qualifying. If the form is too long, resulting in a high exit rate, then you've lost out on the opportunity to speak with a qualified lead.

The vast majority of visitors to your website are composed of visitors one, two, and three. Many people make the mistake of providing offers that cast a very narrow net. If the only offer on your sub-pages is "fill out this form for a demo," think of all the visitors who are not ready to respond to this offer. You must, therefore, have offers that appeal to all visitor types on all your sub-pages.

This page does a good job of providing offers that cast both a wide and a narrow net.



1. The White Paper and Analyst Report bar in blue at the top of the right hand column are perfect for those visitors who fit into categories one and two. They're early in the sales cycle, but if they see that Gartner, a well-known analyst, favorably mentions ATG's solution, these visitors will then be pushed along the sales cycle and be more likely to read the documents listed in the "Learn More" box.
2. The offers contained in the "Learn More" box just below the blue box in the right hand column, are perfect for visitors who fit into categories three and four because these visitors have already decided that they have a need that may be solved by ATG's solution, otherwise they wouldn't have arrived on this page. These documents further educate the visitor on ATG's product and hopefully answer the visitor's question, "How does ATG specifically address my business issue?"
3. The Contact ATG offers at the bottom of the right hand column are perfect for those visitors in category five. Both make it extremely easy for the visitor to raise his hand. ATG has embraced another good practice, which is to give the visitor choices in terms how he wants to be contacted.

Remember that visitors to your website are in different stages of the buying cycle. You cannot treat all of them the same. To prevent leads from falling through the cracks, make sure you have offers that appeal to all of them.

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