Google “Leaked” Lead Generation Playbook by @martinibuster

Another Google User Experience Playbook has been leaked. This one is about Lead Generation. The playbook has been indexed by Google and is publicly available via Google’s search index. This playbook discusses what a publisher can do to generate more sales or form submissions.

Don’t Be Sketchy. Solve Problems.

The document states that a lead generation site needs to appear trustworthy. That means to look appealing, legitimate and not sketchy.

The document also states that the lead gen site needs to offer a “*clear value proposition*.”

Honestly, I dislike the phrase, “clear value proposition.” It’s too vague. What they really want to say is that the page is offering to solve a problem. That’s what a value proposition is.

It’s about serving the potential customer, promising to make them attractive, sleep better, and in general to improve their life.

Once you swiftly convince the site visitor that your site sells the the keys to their happiness, they will fill out the forms. Here’s how Google’s UX Playbook states it:

“The key to successful lead gen today is to find the balance, providing just enough information to convince users of the value prop so they go they choose to invest time filling out your form and giving you their personal information.”

Lead Generation Conversion Optimization

Google’s user experience playbook for lead generation suggests ten areas to optimize. Of these ten home page optimization tips, I believe they can be characterized into four areas.

1. Conversion optimization
2. Solution messaging
3. Trust building
4. Usability

Conversion Optimization

Conversion optimization is creating a page that leads a user to the action you want them to take. This means doing things like putting your call to action front and center (click here to buy), make it easy for them to contact you, build trust (trust seals, testimonials, professional design), and even the element of time running out to create a sense of urgency.

Solution Messaging

People don’t like to read. This is especially true with mobile devices. So it’s important to clearly communicate how your product or service benefits the user. Answering questions a potential buyer has is important.

Trust Building for Lead Generation

Buying things online is a scary thing. Adding testimonials, trust seals, certificates and awards helps to remove anxieties.

Usability and Lead Generation

Making the site easy to use is important. Among the tips Google’s playbook suggests are:

- *“Don’t use full page interstitials*
- *Remove automatic carousels*
- *Use legible font sizes”*

Form Optimization for Generating Leads

These are tips for things you can do to keep users filling out your forms.

Google advises to review these areas for optimizing lead generation forms:

- *Mark required fields with an asterisk*
- *Use inline validation*
- *Use autofill*
- *Reduce number of fields (remove optional fields, use full name instead of first/last, hide company and address line 2 by default, hide billing by default)*
- *Use correct keypads*
- *Don’t use dropdowns for inputs with < 4 options, instead opt for buttons*
- *Use steppers, sliders, or open field input for numerical entry rather than large dropdowns*

- *Use pagination or a progress bar if more than 2 steps in conversion flow*

Make Lead Gen Calls to Action Descriptive

Google recommends against using generic call to actions like, “Get Started” or “Learn More.” Google states that these calls to actions (CTAs) are too generic and do not communicate what the benefit is. Google recommends stating exactly what the user should expect.

This returns to what I described about communicating the benefit users should expect. This can be as simple as rewording your CTA to read, “Click here to get _____” or “Click here to be a better _____”

Here’s what Google’s Lead Gen UX Playbook says:

> *“Test making “Get Started” & “Learn More” Call to Actions more specific… by stating precisely what users should expect.”*

Social Proof for Increasing Lead Gen

While it’s called Social Proof, this is not about social media. This is about social as in society, the friends, peers and people we trust. There is an extensive section about the different kinds of trust signals that can be provided that will nudge a site visitor into a sale.

Here’s how Google’s playbook describes the power of social proof:

> *"According to a Nielsen report 70% of consumers trust consumer opinions online. 63% of consumers say they are more likely to buy from a website that displays reviews."*

Mobile Optimization for Lead Gen

Interestingly, all the examples of high quality web pages were demonstrated in the setting of a mobile phone. This is an important detail. Optimizing a web page for mobile is harder than optimizing it for a desktop.

As designers and publishers we're looking at things in a desktop environment. Who codes on a phone, right? Yet it's important to get into the habit of visualizing in mobile.

How to Generate More Leads

Most sites are in the business of some kind of conversion. Google's Lead Generation UX Playbook is a useful document for improving your sales. Google's Lead Generation UX Playbook is 44 pages long. It has citations and links to more research and articles.

This is a useful document and a must read for anyone who wants a site visitor to perform a desired action, whether it's filling out a form or clicking a buy button and riding that buy button all the way to a positive review.

Download the playbook here: UX Playbook for Lead Gen – Collection of Best Practices to Win Over Potential Customers

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