



(Needs, Outcomes, Solution, Evidence), where the goal is to “motivate someone to do something or to change her attitude about something” (126).

The language of success is a book that business professionals should read to gain an understanding of how to write successful communications.

Jackie Damrau

Landing Page Optimization: The Definitive Guide to Testing and Tuning for Conversions

Tim Ash. 2008. Indianapolis, IN: Wiley Publishing. [ISBN 978-0-470-17462-3. 360 pages, including index. \$29.99 USD (softcover).]

You’ve built your Web site, but are you still waiting for them to come? In *Landing page optimization: The definitive guide to testing and tuning for conversions*, Tim Ash dispels the “If you build it, they will come” myth and provides guidelines for creating well-optimized landing pages. However, buyer beware: this is not a “quick fix” compendium, but rather a discourse on the fundamentals of what the author describes as “this challenging and rewarding field” (xix).

Tapping into an area for which you’ll find few but increasingly numerous titles, Ash provides a valu-

able perspective that more than lives up to the promise that this step-by-step book will teach you the following skills to realize greater profit from your landing pages:

- ◆ *Identify mission critical parts of your Web site and their true economic value*
- ◆ *Define important visitor classes and key conversion tasks*
- ◆ *Gain insight on customer decision-making and make your page friction-free*
- ◆ *Uncover problems with your page and decide which elements to test*
- ◆ *Understand the power and limitations of common optimization approaches*
- ◆ *Develop an action plan and get buy-in from all key players*
- ◆ *Avoid common real-world pitfalls that can sabotage your test (back cover).*

After helping you realize that the site that you and others in our organization have worked so hard to create is ugly, Ash encourages you to go a step further in your design. He shows, through a discussion of personality styles and excellent examples, how users judge your landing pages, as well as how your users reach their decisions. While maintaining that your site should adhere to usability standards, he suggests testing discrete factors and tuning pages to include what compels your users to make purchasing decisions.

Very beneficial is Ash’s specific roadmap through analyzing the results of your multivariate testing. In this very meaty chapter, he gives you a foundation for performing a statistical analysis of your test results. Those of you who “don’t do math” will likely need to read this chapter several times so that you can interpret your tests accurately and ultimately use the results to get

buy-in from your development team.

Using the sound principles Ash presents, medium and large businesses with designated departments may be able to move forward with his suggestions right away. The biggest criticism for this work is that small and other businesses with limited financial resources, personnel, and time may find it difficult to do the extensive multivariate testing he recommends. Ash’s discussion, in an appendix, of Google Web site Optimizer provides hope that anyone can delve into landing page optimization. Encouraging his readers to go forth and test no matter the method, he writes, “A little bit of something is better [than] a whole lot of nothing” (310).

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Beyond the Desktop Metaphor: Designing Integrated Digital Work Environments

Victor Kaptelinin and Mary Czerwinski, eds. 2007. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. [ISBN 978-0-262-11304-5. 360 pages, including index. \$35.00 USD.]

The desktop metaphor with its file folders, windows, and trash cans has dominated computer system design since the 1980s. Although popular, the metaphor is problematic: it is not cross-culturally understood and is limited in its ability to support both information access and information display. Furthermore, the desktop metaphor has outgrown its origi-