

## Topic | E-Marketing

### Tutorial 24A

# Converting A Prospect Into A Guest

*This tutorial addresses key aspects of your website to increase your chances of converting visitors into guests. This tutorial will not discuss optimising your content for search engines.*

*Reading time: 10 minutes*

*Prerequisite: None*



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### 1. Functional and modern design

A well designed website maximises a user's experience and significantly increases the chances people will continue reading and take action instead of bouncing away.

Some of the common features of quality tourism websites are:

- Large image headers with support calls to action (links to bookings, more info, etc)
- Good use of images combined with offers
- Use of video and testimonials
- Multiple ways of navigating
- Good balance and use of white space, not too cramped
- Distinct accent colours

ENSURE YOU BRIEF YOUR WEB GRAPHIC DESIGNER ABOUT THE TASTES AND AGE OF YOUR TARGET MARKET SO THAT THE DESIGN APPEALS TO THEM.

### 2. Content

Your content should entice your prospects to become guests. It needs to be interactive (include images that pop up and videos) and portray the experience your target market could expect if they book with you.

It is a bad idea to use your print content for the web as brochures generally only list your product's attributes. The web is an interactive platform and allows you to create a story and guide your readers from one page to another using hyperlinks.

#### a) Writing for the web

When writing for the web you need to keep in mind that your readers would like to find answers to their questions straight away. It is therefore important to include the most important information in the first paragraph of each page of your website. This will also help search engines better understand the topic of the page.




For instance, if you are an accommodation provider, ensure you list the number and types of accommodation options first as well as other elements your target market is likely to want to find out straight away. Avoid listing trivial information (such as when the business was

*The Island Coastal Cottages are five fully self-contained units set amid shady trees and only metres from the sheltered waters of Eastern Cove. The cottages accommodate two to five guests and each has a patio that overlooks the ocean. All cabins have decks with outdoor settings and barbecues to help you enjoy the peaceful setting. It's just a two minute walk to the wharf and boat ramp, making it an ideal location for those who enjoy fishing.*

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### b) *When describing your facilities*



- Avoid the long list of bullet points. See the example below.

<b>What not to do</b> 	<b>This is much better</b> 
<p><b>Our apartments each have:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2 big bedrooms</li> <li>▪ Microwave</li> <li>▪ Colour TV</li> <li>▪ Kettle</li> <li>▪ Clean sheets</li> </ul>	<p><b>Modern and roomy apartments</b></p> <div style="background-color: #ffffcc; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="width: 50%;">✓ 2 big bedrooms</li> <li style="width: 50%;">✓ Colour TV</li> <li style="width: 50%;">✓ Microwave</li> <li style="width: 50%;">✓ Kettle</li> </ul> </div> <p>Each of our family-sized apartments has two double bedrooms and as well as aerial views over Surfers Paradise beach. Our <u>customers</u> are always pleasantly <u>surprised</u> by how large our units are.</p>  <p>The main bedroom has an ensuite with a full-size bath. The second bedroom has twin beds that can be configured into a double bed. The second bathroom has a large shower.</p> <p>We can easily accommodate you with a third bed if you require.</p> <p>All our apartments have the latest mod cons, including brand new dishwashers so you don't spend your holiday in the kitchen!</p> <p>Prices: starting at <u>\$150 per night</u></p> <p><b><u>To enquire or book contact us now</u></b></p> <p>(underlined words represent links)</p>

### c) *Call to action*

A **call to action** is a message that directs visitors to act in some specific manner such as making a booking or enquiry. It is important you have calls to action strategically located within each page of your website so that the reader is not left wondering what step to take next.

A call to action needs to:

<p><b>Stand out:</b></p>	<p>Inform your web designer that you would like a different heading or font for your call to action. It needs to be evidenced and blend in the design.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <p><a href="#">To enquire or book contact us now</a></p> <p><a href="#">→ View our March specials now</a></p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed red;"/> <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">Call now for 10% discount on +61 (0)7 3103 6566</p>
<p><b>Feature at different locations:</b></p>	<p>For instance, if you list your prices and have an online booking system, ensure you have a “book now” call to action next to each package you offer.</p>

It is also important to ensure prospects never find themselves at the bottom of the page without guidance on what to do next. Readers should not have to rely on the navigation menu but should be guided by meaningful hyperlinks (e.g. [view our specials page](#)) throughout the text.

### 3. Smooth check out process

Always ensure that your online booking system’s content reflects what your website says. Also, if the person is interested in booking your 3-day tour, the book now button on that page should take them to the 3-day tour booking page and not to the page that lists all your tours.

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ENSURE THAT YOUR ONLINE BOOKING SYSTEM IS SECURE AND INFORM YOUR CLIENTS THAT IT IS AS MANY PEOPLE STILL WONDER IF PAYING OVER THE INTERNET IS SAFE.

### 4. Interactivity

To allow the user to imagine the experience they will have if they book, make sure you use:

- Recent images (either thumbnails which expand when clicked on or medium-sized images)
- Short videos showing people having fun whilst experiencing your product
- Interactive maps such a Google Maps allowing the client to create their itinerary
- Integrate a direct link to your business' Facebook Page (or even a Facebook widget or badge)
- Third-party testimonials such as TripAdvisor, Hostelworld testimonials embedded in your website

### 5. Contact details

ENSURE THAT YOUR PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL ADDRESS ARE PROMINENT ON EVERY PAGE.

For local search purposes (to help your Google Places listing) you should also have your physical address on every page.

It is also a good idea to add your phone number in the meta description which will be displayed on search engine listings. To do this yourself you will need to have a content management system or be proficient in HTML.

### 6. Testing the user friendliness of your site

You should always test how conversion-friendly your website is. To do so you could ask a few people to form a focus group and give them a goal to achieve on your website (e.g. book a 2 bedroom cottage during the week). There are two highly recommended systems you could also use:

- Usertesting.com: For less than \$50 you will receive a video of a visitor speaking their thoughts as they use your website and a written summary describing the problems they encountered.
- Clicktale.com: this very powerful program shows you video recordings of mouse gestures of people who visit your website so you can assess how they really interact with your website.

### 7. Key learning outcomes

- First impressions count online and are often made based on your website design and usability

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- Your content should be written in a manner that entices prospects to become guests. It needs to anticipate the questions your visitors may have and include a clear call to action
- Ensure that your contact details are clearly visible on each page of your website.

## 8. Related material

### a) *Related tutorials*

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- Website 101: visual design and content
- Website 101: usability and technology
- What is a content management system
- Images 101
- Security and backups
- Critical components of optimising a website
- Keywords
- Google tools