

How to Execute a Call to Action

Here are some steps integrators can take to convert visitors to their websites into actual clients. *by Don Kreski*



A GREAT WEB PAGE is like a great sales call. It may not end with the client making a purchase, but it should end with them agreeing to take one more step on the road to a purchase.

To help the reader take that next step, every page should contain a call to action.

Basic Calls

Before you can design an effective call to action, it's important to realize that some people will visit your website because they're actively looking for an AV system supplier, but others merely want to learn more about some related topic.

Ideally you'll have something to offer to each, realizing that many of the people doing technology research today will become buyers tomorrow.

Whether your visitors intend to buy now or not, there's a value proposition stated or implied on every web page. You attract people to your site by promising them, in one way or another, that they're going to learn about something important to them. Once they arrive, you must deliver on that promise. If you do, they will stay on your site long enough to learn something about you and hopefully they will want to contact you.

To keep readers engaged with your website, a simple call to action — "learn more about..." — belongs on every page. The more interesting and enticing you can make this basic call, the more likely the reader will be to take one more step toward a purchase.

Can you pique the reader's curiosity? Promise them "three tips" or "the inside story on" some interesting topic and you'll improve the chance that they will click through to the next page.

Don't forget to mention your company name frequently, so they will remember who is giving them this information, and constantly offer them the option to learn more about your company and to see

examples of your work. There's a logical connection between the chance to "learn more about echo cancellation" and to "see how ABC Corporation is using audio conferencing."

'Contact Us' Forms

One way to ask someone to contact you is to put a "contact us" button on every page and link that button to a form where readers can provide their names, phone numbers and email addresses. Of course, you can ask for even more than that, but people are more likely to fill out a short form than a long one. It's usually better to leave it up to your salespeople to collect the missing details via phone or email.

To improve your response rate, consider sweetening the deal. Is there a reasonable incentive you can offer if readers will fill out a "contact us" form right now?

Possibilities include some percentage

off their eventual order, entry into a contest or a free gift. "Call us by the 15th for an on-site consultation, and we'll send you a free T-shirt."

Of course, the better the incentive, the more calls you're likely to receive. Potential customers may enjoy a free gift. If they're serious, however, what they really want is information.

White Papers, E-Books, Videos & Webinars

Very often potential customers will be willing to trade their phone or email for information relevant to what they are trying to accomplish. Consider offering a free white paper if someone will fill out a contact form. The white paper should provide specific, detailed information that will help readers solve the problem or answer the question that brought them to your website. For example, offer them details on

It's hard to miss the calls to action on Novatoo.com, a rental and staging company, whose site was designed by the author.

connecting mobile phones and tablets into their video conferencing network.

Some companies have had good luck offering this type of information in a webinar or a video. Another possibility is to create an e-book, which of course would offer greater detail than a white paper, and it should have greater perceived value as well.

Note that an effective call of this type will promise useful information — not a sales pitch — and the material you provide will impress readers only if it meets the expectations you create.

It's important, too, to make sure the material you deliver is professionally done. If you're not a video producer, hire one to help you with your video — and hire a professional writer and graphic

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designer to polish up your white paper or e-book. It's true that an amateur-looking production can prove popular if the information it includes is truly compelling. On the other hand, will someone trust you with a \$500,000 video conferencing project if you can't light your webinar properly?

If you publish a newsletter or blog, give browsers the opportunity to view the current issue; then ask them to subscribe. New subscribers can be very valuable to you, but of course the sample issue must have value in return if you expect someone to give you their email address to see more. **CI**

Here's a great example of a call to action that you should follow right now: Contact DON KRESKI, president of Kreski Marketing consultants at 847-749-2424 or www.kreski.com/contact.html. You'll learn how your website can much more effective at bringing in sales leads.

Where Should a Call to Action Go?

THERE ARE DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT on what the call to action should look like and where it should be located. Consumer sites tend to put calls in the form of large, brightly-colored buttons, often near the top center of the page. “Take a tour,” “Sign up now” or “Add to cart” jump out at you from these sites. Yet what's important is that the call to action is easy to find, and that it logically follows the flow and intent of the page.

I like to put calls to action to the right of the body copy, but there's a danger that they may not be visible from a smartphone or tablet. Because mobile readers may zoom in on your copy and ignore the rest of your page, be sure to include at least one call in the body copy as well — perhaps at the end of an article where the reader will naturally reach a point of decision about what to do next.

It's a good idea to include more than one call to action on each web page. Ask your readers to move on to additional pages and always ask them to contact you.

A website we created for Novatoo AV, a rental and staging company in the Chicago area, includes a large graphic on every page, “Call us 24 hours a day, 7 days a week” together with their phone number. Each page has additional calls as well inviting people to explore the website. “Click for rental price list” is an example.

Don't get too hung up on the “contact us” form. As we did for Novatoo, be sure to include your phone number and a simple email link on every page in a consistent, obvious place, so that people can reach you easily whenever they're ready.