

LESSON 3: TOP TOOLS FOR CREATING LANDING PAGES

EMAIL LIST SECRETS



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Are you planning on building a mailing list and then using it to increase the engagement of your audience and maybe drive some sales?

Then you're going to need a landing page!

A landing page is a single page on a website that has one purpose. This might be to help you sell a product (in which case it might also be referred to as a sales page) or it might be to help you get new subscribers for your mailing list (in which case we can also sometimes call it a squeeze page). In this case, we're talking about the latter type of landing page – a single page that is dedicated to getting new emails.

This is a powerful tool when it comes to growing a list because it allows you to focus all of your attention – and all of your visitors' attention – that opt-in form. That means that all the copy can be there to revolve around how amazing your mailing list is and that all the design features can point your audience toward the 'Sign Up Now' button that you need them to click.

The good news is that a landing page is not that difficult to build and this is especially true for squeeze pages. These are often short passages of text with an opt-in form down the bottom designed to collect your messages.

But while you can probably whip together a landing page using nothing but a bit of HTML, you will likely find that you get a lot better results if you try using a tool designed to help you build better lists.

Let's take a look at some of the best tools out there and how they can help you to make a more effective and highly converting page for your email list.

OptimizePress

OptimizePress (www.optimizepress.com) is a simple tool that works with WordPress and that can help you to make very professional looking pages in no time at all. As the name might suggest, these pages have been 'optimized', meaning that the creators behind the tool have tested them over and over and refined them in order to ensure that they are highly effective at converting. In theory at least, simply installing OptimizePress on your site and using it to handle your opt-in page could help you to drastically increase your conversion rate and thereby drive up your sales and get more returns for any advertising or other marketing that you're doing.

The great thing about OptimizePress is how clean, simple and professional everything looks. This is very important when creating a landing page because ultimately what you're doing here is asking the new visitor to your page to *trust* you. You are

asking them to share their personal details with you so that you can email them whenever you see fit – and that is a big ask for most people.

Now, if your website looks like it was designed by a ten year old, if the images are all low resolution or if the site appears to be somewhat broken, then you're going to have a hard time getting that trust. And unless you're a professional web designer yourself, you might find that your pages occasionally *do* look like this. That's why using something like OptimizePress can be such a good idea.

OptimizePress is also a good choice because it is very versatile. You can use this to create sales pages as well as landing pages, which is something that a lot of people might find themselves needing later on when they have a big enough list.

The downside is that OptimizePress is not cheap for most people. It costs \$97 for the most basic package – which is limited in several ways – and that's a big ask if you're just starting out with your squeeze page for the first time.

LeadPages

LeadPages (LeadPages.net) is a tool that is designed specifically for mailing lists unlike OptimizePress that is more aimed at sales pages with additional capabilities.

This means that LeadPages is going to give you an even more comprehensive set of tools for that specific purpose. You'll get the option to create welcome gates for instance, to integrate with Facebook, to sort landing pages based on their conversion rate and more. You can build multiple landing pages and serve them up at different times too and generally, you get a lot of capability here.

The pages themselves are also *incredibly* well designed. Whereas OptimizePress is more focused on sales and therefore provides the more typical 'pillar box' design; LeadPages gives you a lot more flexibility and creativity to work with. You'll also get access to landing pages that are designed to build leads in more creative ways. These include timers on the main page, countdowns and promotional pages for free ebooks and courses. There are landing pages with videos embedded in prominent positions and more and all of them look highly professional.

One big difference with LeadPages is that it is a *hosted* solution. That means that you aren't going to be downloading the plug in and using it on your site, but rather redirecting your visitors to a

different page where they can sign up. This will be a downside for some as it can mean that your audience is somewhat *less* engaged with your brand (seeing as they're now on a different page entirely!). On the other hand though, others will like the fact that they can now manage an effective mailing list with no need to have built a website in the first place. Not all email marketing strategies are wed to websites or blogs, meaning that you can use this tool to create something without the headaches of hosting and web design.

The pricing structures are also more appealing here than OptimizePress. The most basic membership is \$25 per month but this goes all the way up to \$199 for the most advanced package – which is a *large* recurring fee.

Thrive Themes

Thrive (www.thrivethemes.com) is a product that provides a large range of different tools all in one package. You receive an entire 'Thrive Tool Suite' which will include things like landing pages, the ability to manage leads, tools for creating more engaging email content, a headline optimizer and more.

In other words, Thrive will combine the ability to create attractive landing pages along with better tools for building great emails. This is a powerful combination and more importantly, the landing pages themselves look great. You get 162 templates in total,

which again revolve around a range of different features from promoting free ebooks to showing countdown timers and other time-based incentives.

Unlike LeadPages, Thrive is a hosted solution meaning that you'll keep it right on your own page. At the same time, it is a WordPress plugin, which means that it will be quick and easy to set up if you're already familiar with the CMS.

It is worth noting that both OptimizePress and Thrive rely on a WordPress installation. So if you have a site that you built yourself or with another tool, then you might need to consider LeadPages or a lesser known alternative!

All of Thrive's themes are mobile responsive and built to load quickly. They look very professional with high quality, crisp images and are generally a great choice.

And better yet, is that this is also the most affordable package. Basic membership will only cost you \$19 per month, whereas the top tier 'Agency Membership' only costs \$49.

Do You Really Need a Landing Page Tool?

Perhaps the question that you're now asking is whether you really need a landing page tool...

And the answer to that is *no*... but with caveats.

If you head over to the Four Hour Blog – Tim Ferriss’ blog – you’ll see that his landing page is *incredibly* simple (<http://tim.blog/7-reasons-to-subscribe/>). The page is simply called ‘7 Reasons to Subscribe’ and it is designed like any other page on a WordPress site with 7 points, each giving you a reason that you should subscribe.

This was not built with any kind of tool, in fact it is nothing other than a simple WordPress page. And you could do the exact same thing and rely on the strength of your copy and the weight behind your name to drive those conversions.

But let’s face it, most of us are *not* Tim Ferriss and most of us don’t have the ability to persuade people to sign up for our mailing list on the basis of a little text.

If you use Thrive or LeadPages, then you’ll benefit from large crisp images, background animations and smart layouts that feel like they belong on a top website. This instantly impresses your audience and makes them much more inclined to want to sign up.

This can really help you to convert if you didn’t before and as such, all you have to do is to replace your current landing page with one of these and you might conceivably expect to see your conversion rate go up by several percent.

It's an investment, yes, but for most people it will be one that offers good ROI. Just know that you *can* get by without this feature and that you can always wait until you're making some profit before you decide to *reinvest* in a landing page tool.

It's also worth considering the time aspect. Using a tool like this can save you a lot of time and that way help you to start making profit immediately – rather than wasting weeks or even months tweaking everything to get it just right.

Of course, this is also a feature that becomes more useful as you start managing multiple businesses, multiple websites and multiple mailing lists.

That said, seeing as Thrive will only set you back \$19.99 for the first month, you can always try it to see if it makes a difference and then just unsubscribe if it does not!

More Useful Tools

There are a number of other useful tools that will also help you to grow your mailing list more quickly.

One excellent one to consider is Optimizely (www.optimizely.com). This is a split tester, meaning that it can help you to take your landing page and split it into two slightly different versions. Imagine one landing page with a red opt-in

form and one with a green opt-in form. You can then monitor these two versions of your landing page with half of your traffic going to each. Over time, you might notice that one of them is getting better results than the other and at that point, you can choose to accept the change to green. Then you can test another change!

The great thing about this is that it allows you to gradually improve your site over time until it eventually evolves into the perfectly optimized funnel to grab as many new subscribers as possible.

Another thing to consider is a lightbox. This is a 'pop-over' that appears over the top of your page and makes everything else go dark. You can use this in conjunction with a landing page or you can use it elsewhere on your site.

Either way, these tools are fantastically effective at driving conversions and numbers often get thrown around like '400% improvement'. It can be a little annoying for visitors though, which is why you need to be careful with how you go about it. Make sure that your lightbox is easy to dismiss and that it only appears once someone has been on your page a certain amount of time.

Get this right though and it will simply ensure that nobody can *miss* your mailing list or all the good reasons they should consider

signing up to it. One good hope is 'Huge-It' for WordPress but there are many other similar plugins that will do the same job.

A bad workman may blame his tools, but the right tools will make you a *better* workman!

