

Fewer fields in a contact form sharply increases conversions

By Brian Moloney

Synopsis

The fewer questions you ask in a form, the more people will actually complete it, but to what degree?

In the fall of 2007 and again in the spring of 2008, Imaginary Landscape performed a comparison of two types of contact forms on its Web site at www.imagescape.com. The test compared an 11-field Contact Us form with a 4-field Contact Us form. The more abbreviated form resulted in a 160% increase in submitted forms.

Company Background

Imaginary Landscape is a Web development firm headquartered in Chicago. The primary goal of its own Web site is to provide basic information about the firm and its capabilities as a preliminary prequalification for prospective clients. Interested prospects are encouraged to complete a contact form so they can be engaged in offline dialogue. Each site page contains a link to the contact form.

Methodology

A visitor views two Web pages when submitting a contact form - the contact form itself and a “thank you” page that is displayed upon the successful submission of a form (aka conversion).

The study compared the number of page views for the two different contact forms against the number of page views of the related thank you pages, as reported by Google Analytics.

These numbers were verified against the number of actual forms received by the form databases, as well as a series of Google Analytics Goals configured to measure form submission conversions.

The “before” form is Imaginary Landscape’s 11-question general contact form which was in place on the Web site throughout 2007. The “after” form is the 4-question general contact form that replaced the “before” form in April 2008. The test comprised a two-month period for each form.

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testimonial

 "The Imaginary Landscape team was able to implement quickly under a tight budget."
Angie LeBoida
 Director of Strategic Information
[Don Johnston Inc.](#)

Contact Center
 Welcome to the Imaginary Landscape Contact Center. Please fill out the form for additional information. If you want to give us a call, our phone number is **773-275-9144**.
 An asterisk (**) denotes a required field.

Name: *

Company:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone:

Fax:

E-mail: *

What is your preferred method of contact?:
 Phone Fax E-mail Regular mail

Comments: *

How did you hear about us?: *
 Radio Our link on a client site Signage
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"Before" Form

This is the 11-question form in place during 2007 and used as the initial benchmark for the study during October and November 2007.



“After” Form
This is the 4-question form used as the comparison form during April and May 2008.

The screenshot shows the Imaginary Landscape website with a 'Quick Contact' form. The form has the following fields: Name: *, Phone: *, E-mail: *, and Comments: *. A 'Submit' button is located below the comments field. The website header includes the company name and navigation links. A testimonial and a 'Food/Beverage' announcement are also visible.

Findings

A comparison of the data reveals similar general site traffic for each test period. Contact form views were slightly higher. However, the number of forms submitted (thank you page views) rose sharply.

	Before	After	Change
Date Range	Oct. 1 – Nov. 30, 2007	Apr. 1 – May 31, 2008	
Site Visits	2,827	3,071	8.6%
Site Page Views	7,104	6,960	(2.0%)
Contact Form Page Views	184	219	19.0%
Thank You Page Views	10	26	160.0%
Conversion Rate	5.4%	11.9%	120.4%

The number of forms submitted increased 160% and the conversion rate increased 120%.



As a general rule, a certain percentage of conversions are considered unqualified based upon the type of information submitted (for example, forms submitted from someone other than prospective clients). A detailed review of the information submitted in both tests revealed a consistent quality of conversions.

Discussion of Findings

Analysis revealed that the number and type of questions asked in the “Before” form were mostly extraneous. For example, there is no need to ask a street address or a fax number if you are communicating via the Web. Removing all but the most essential fields increased conversions without compromising the quality of those conversions.

The “Before” form required 4 of the 11 fields to be completed (Name, Email, Comments and “How did you hear about us?”). The “After” form required 3 of the 4 fields to be completed (Name, Email and Comments). Even though the number of required fields remained largely the same, the conversions increased sharply with the use of the more abbreviated form. This led to the conclusion that the number of fields and not the number of *required* fields is the primary differentiator.

Summary

Less is more. Contact form conversions increased 120% when the number of fields was reduced from 11 to 4 (a 64% decrease). Furthermore, the fields removed had no impact on the quality of the conversions.

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