

A CASE STUDY FOR A SITE REGISTRATION FORM

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A While ago, we looked at the click through rates for a site registration process on the Direct Marketing Association Web site. ([A Case Study In Site Registration Click-through](#)). In that study we found that is was the first page of the registration process that had the greatest potential for improvement.

Subsequently, we did some A/B testing for benefit copy to improve the click-through rate of that page. The article [A Case Study In Site Registration Copy](#) is a report on the results of that test. Changing the copy made no difference to the page's click through rate, however. It was decided to see if changing the form would create a useful improvement in click through.

Test Conditions

The existing form contained three options to provide identifying information: Name, e-mail address and customer number. The original form was the "control" copy, version A. We tested three variations against the control:

1. For version B, only the e-mail option was provided.
2. Version C, the name and customer number options were provided.
3. The third (D) variation (not show below) contained only the name option.

The control form, version A:

Choose One of the Following Options:

Option 1

Enter Your Name:

Last Name (Required) First Letter of First Name (Required) Zip Code (Required)

Option 2

E-mail Address:

(Required)

Option 3

Enter Your Customer Number and Last Name:

Customer number (Required)

Last name (Required)

Continue

[Get your customer number.](#) Your customer number is not your company number and only prior DMA customers will have a customer number. To get a customer number you can call us at 212.768.7277 x1500.

The B form:

E-mail Address:

(Required)

Continue

The C form:

Choose One of the Following Options:

Enter Your Name:

Last Name (Required)

First Letter of First Name (Required)

Zip Code (Required)

Continue

Option 2 – if you know your customer number:

Enter Your Customer Number and Last Name:

Customer number (Required)

Last name (Required)

Continue

[Get your customer number.](#) Your customer number is not your company number and only prior DMA customers will have a customer number. To get a customer number you can call us at 212.768.7277 x1500.

Results

Page	% Visitor Click Through
Get A Web Account – Begin A	37.1%
Get A Web Account - Begin B	44.3%

Page	% Visitor Click Through
Get A Web Account – Begin A	45.4%
Get A Web Account - Begin C	49.1%

Version B, where only one identification option was provided, was statistically more productive than the control, version A. The B click through rate was 7.2% greater.

The total conversion rate for the B test month was 29.58%. This was the conversion rate for the entire Get a Web Account process. In the month prior, the conversion rate was 26.95%.

Version C, offering two options, was also statistically more productive than the control, version A. The C click through rate was 3.7% greater.

We also tested a D version of the form. (not shown). In this version, only the name option was provided. The D click through rate was 7.0% greater than the control version A.

Analysis

This result is consistent with industry research that correlates an inverse relationship between the complexity of a form or page and the conversion rate for that page.

The click through rate in this case was directly proportional to the number of options offered; the fewer the options, the greater the click through rate. It did not seem to matter which of the options was offered in this case, only the number of options.

In conducting the test, we realized that a significant portion of our existing customers do not have e-mail addresses on file. For these customers, the e-mail search will not find a match. If the customer continued, it is likely a duplicate record would have been created. This condition over time would have degraded the data quality of the database.

We also found that our Customer Service Department and Membership Department often identify the Customer Number option in correspondence when dealing with members or new customers. For customers, they believe this option has proved the easiest and most reliable option. The customer number is the one unique identifier in the system and the most likely to provide a successful member match.

Lessons Learned

Reducing the number of options on this page will increase conversions. The test reinforces the concept of keeping things simple for the customer, not too many choices or fields to fill out.

There are trade-offs however between conversion rates and data needs. We also needed to be aware of how changes like this can affect operations in other departments, in this case the help functions of Customer Service and Membership.

Recommendations

As a result of the test, we wanted to reduce the number of identification options on the page. All three options have issues and advantages. The name option seems most likely to find a customer in the database where the customer number is not known. The customer number is the most precise match and therefore the most useful in a “customer help” condition. However, many customers do not know their customer number. The e-mail option may be the least useful because of the missing data issue. In the end, we elected to provide the name and customer number options.

Conclusion

In looking at the test cycle overall, we began by looking at the step-by-step conversion rates of our Web account creation process. We found fairly high conversion rates for most pages, the notable exception being the 51% conversion rate for the first page of the process. Next we tested variations of benefit copy to boost that page’s conversion rate. The tested copy had virtually no effect on the conversion rate. Finally, we tested variations of the form itself. This produced increased conversions between 3 ½ % to 7%.

By such incremental testing we able to see the effectiveness of the process, target pieces that would most likely yield improvement, and test the effectiveness of those improvements. Over time, this approach will yield much more effective results, and much more cost effectively, than the “Hail Mary” approach of repeated total redesigns.

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