




WiderFunnel Marketing Case Study:

A Landing Page Redesign that Generated Conversion Lift of 32.5% – within Strict Branding Guidelines

Learn how Business Objects/SAP, a B-to-B software company with strict branding guidelines, handled internal restrictions by knowing what to test and when to push the envelope and used a Conversion Rate Optimization strategy to redesign their key landing pages and generate a much improves lead generation conversion rate.



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<http://www.marketingsherpa.com/article.php?ident=30820>



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THE CLIENT: BUSINESS OBJECTS/SAP

SAP is world's largest business software company. Business Objects (<http://businessobjects.com>) is an SAP company with more than 43,000 customers, including over 80% of the Fortune 500 companies, and a network of network of over 3000 partners.

Business Objects/SAP is the world's leading Business Intelligence (BI) software company, helping organizations gain better insight into their business, improving decision-making and enterprise performance.

THE BUSINESS NEED

Pay-per-Click (PPC) advertising is one of Business Objects' primary lead generation tactics driving traffic to the site.

Within this tactic, Christine Mykota, Manager, IT and Americas Marketing, at Business Objects, had a software trial download landing page that was underperforming relative to her other pages and was depressing the targeted lead-generation rate. An analysis of the site revealed that best practices for landing page optimization were not being applied.

With a limited PPC budget, the option to buy more traffic was not available, so Business Objects management decided to test a strategy of Conversion Rate Optimization. Mykota knew that optimizing the conversion rate is one of the fastest and highest ROI ways for marketers to increase leads and sales.

THE CHALLENGES

Mykota had to clear four major hurdles before proceeding with the deployment of the strategy:

1. She needed to convince senior management of the potential return on investment when asking for a budget increase to perform the test. Conversion Rate Optimization is a relatively new strategy, so senior management was rightfully skeptical – and had high expectations for a conversion improvement to be considered a success.
2. Business Objects has a well-known brand and works to continually strengthen it through brand standards. The website and landing pages have stringent design guidelines, severely limiting layout and creative changes that may be valuable to test. As a result, Christine knew that corporate website design standards placed tough restrictions on layout and design, which limited testing flexibility. Examples of branding limitations included:
 - o Pages had to include a standard, corporate banner at the top, which took up valuable real-estate
 - o Pages could only employ a two- or three-column design, with standard widths for each column
 - o Only certain fonts and font sizes could be used
 - o Design elements had to stay within an approved brand color palette

- Images could only come from an approved list
 - Buttons must use approved colors and sizes
3. New product launches called for tight timelines if testing and experimentation were to deliver improved conversion rates.
 4. Mykota lacked internal resources to develop and execute Conversion Rate Optimization experiments. With neither the tools nor the experienced person-power in place, Christine needed to scope a solution that would deliver conversion rate lift on time and on budget.

THE SOLUTION

Business Objects hired WiderFunnel Marketing (www.widerfunnel.com) to run experiments on the Crystal Reports 2008 trial download page. That desktop report-generating software is a relatively low-cost, high volume product, so they targeted a 20%-25% increase in conversions to justify the investment in the test.

WiderFunnel, using its proprietary **Kaizen Method™** planning process, first took a macro view of all of the Crystal Reports 2008 conversion funnel steps and delivered a plan identifying prioritized Funnel Experiment™ (**FunEx™**) opportunities outlining several hypotheses for how landing page changes might influence trial software download conversion rates.

Below are the four steps WiderFunnel took to put the hypotheses to the test and collect statistically valid data on conversion rates:

Step #1. Carefully study brand design guidelines to determine valid testing options

WiderFunnel examined the company's design guidelines to discover which page elements they could change, and which aspects were off limits.

Step #2. Develop hypotheses for changes that could influence conversions

Those restrictions forced the team to think creatively about new designs that could improve conversion rates. WiderFunnel evaluated page elements according to their proprietary **LIFT Model™**, which evaluates the original page based on criteria known to influence a prospect's actions, including:

- Value proposition
- Relevance to the traffic source
- Clarity of the presentation
- Anxiety
- Distraction
- Urgency

See Fig. 1 for the original landing page that was used as the FunEx Control.

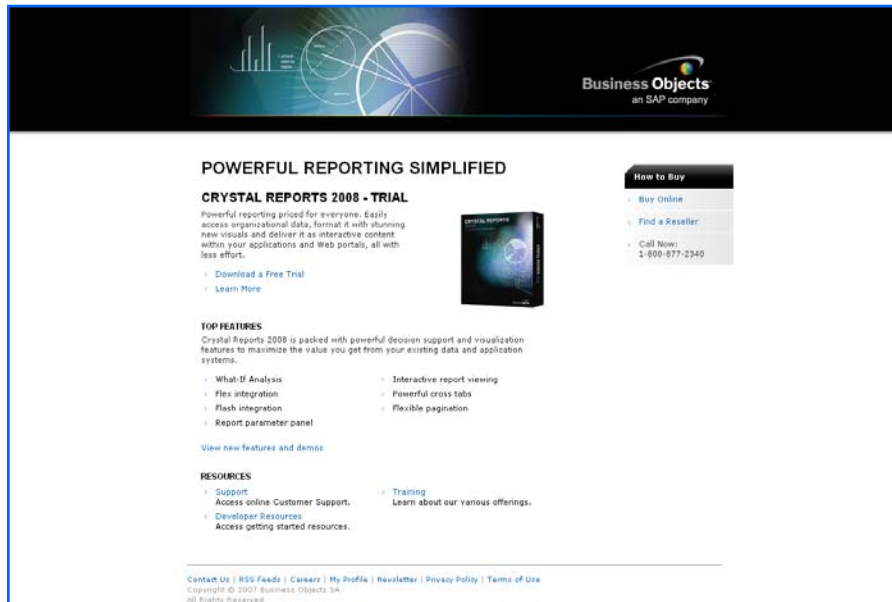


Fig. 1: The 'Control' landing page

Step #3. Create page variations with alternative copy and layout

Variation A: Stronger call-to-action

The WiderFunnel team's first landing page variation employed changes intended to reduce distractions and emphasize the call-to-action. See Fig. 2. In certain instances, they had to receive special approval from the corporate branding team for ideas that pushed the envelope of company's design standards.

Significant changes included:

- Improving the prospect's eye flow on the page
- Sticking with the corporate design standards, the team employed a two-column design, but changed the position of the narrower column from right to left. This move allowed them to place the product hero shot on the left, where it would attract the eye and lead prospects directly to the headline in the center of the page.
- Although they wanted to try an alternative image, the team decided that change would violate brand design standards. Instead, they received approval to make the existing image slightly larger.
- Added a caption link just below the image that took visitors to the trial download registration page
- More relevant headline. WiderFunnel wrote a new headline that reinforced the message used on the search ad that brought visitors to the landing page – "Free Crystal Reports 2008 Trial Download."
- Consolidating information links. WiderFunnel reorganized additional links that were present on the control page to reduce distraction from the trial download call-to-action. Links for customer support, developer resources, training, and additional information about the product were moved to the bottom of the page, below the primary call-to-action

- WiderFunnel also moved a box containing links to facilitate immediate product purchases, either online, through the telephone or through a reseller. That box was moved from the upper right of the page to the left side, just below the product hero shot.
 - WiderFunnel added a large, orange download button (affectionately known as “BOB”: big-orange-button). The existing page’s call to action was a text link inviting visitors to download a trial. WiderFunnel believed that design was too small to attract visitors’ attention, and wanted to use a large, orange “Download Now” button
 - The proposed button was larger than allowed in the design standards, however, with a color that pushed the limits of the approved palette. So, Mykota had to push for the change with the brand marketing team.
 - To accomplish this, Mykota presented examples of landing pages the company had used in the past that featured orange buttons. She also reached out to new colleagues at SAP, which had recently acquired Business Objects, for past testing data that showed the effectiveness of large, colored buttons. “They do more rigorous testing, and I was able to get evidence to pull out and forward to our brand people.”
- The brand marketing team approved the orange button.

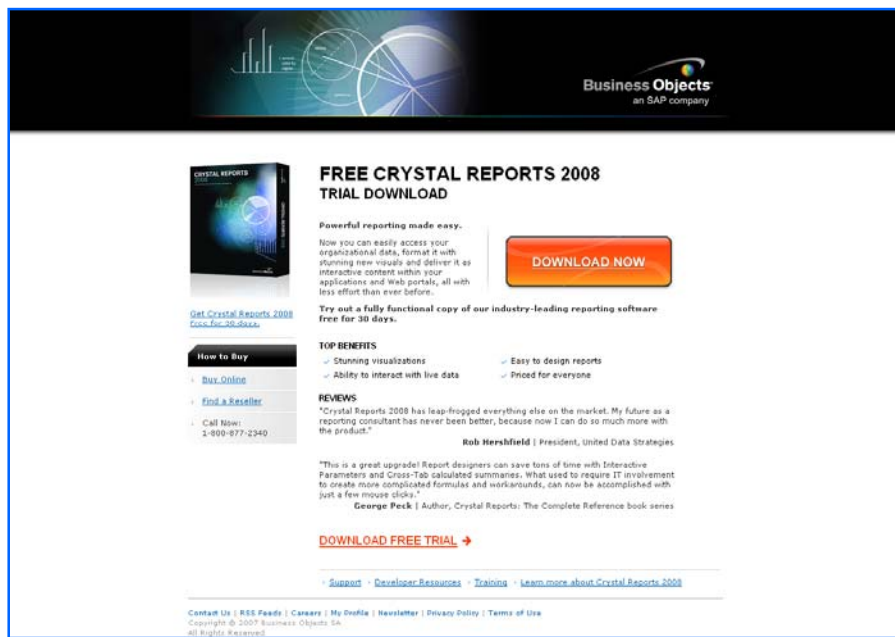


Fig. 2: Variation A

Variation B: Registration form on landing page.

Both the control landing page and Variation A required prospects to click through to a registration form to receive a software trial. WiderFunnel hypothesized that removing that extra step would improve conversions. They built a page that featured the registration form embedded on the landing page.

The headline, graphics and layout of Variation B remained the same as in Variation A. But instead of a large orange button on the top of the page, the team added the registration form just below the headline and a brief product description.

The company's standard registration form had more than a dozen fields for prospects to fill out – along with several qualifying questions they had to answer so Mykota's team created a design with a shorter registration form – to no avail.

The brand marketing team denied their request to swap the existing form for a new one. "So many folks use that form, there was no way we could change that."

Business Objects
an SAP company

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What is your organization's relationship with Business Objects?

Your reason for contacting Business Objects is to:

Who is accountable for solving this business problem?

Where is your company in the process of finding a solution to your business problem?

What is your timeframe for solving this problem?

Please have a Sales Rep Contact Me:

No Yes

What versions of Crystal Reports are you currently using? (check all that apply)

I am not using Crystal Reports

Version 4 or earlier

Version 7

Version 8

Version 8.5

Version 9

Version 10

Version 11

A custom version bundled in:

Microsoft Visual Studio .NET

Borland C# Builder

Borland Builder

Borland Delphi

BEA WebLogic Workshop

IBM mainframe Studio Application Developer

What are you planning on using Crystal Reports 2008 for?

Designing reports

Design and integrating reports into applications

Distributing reports over the web

Other

When do you expect to use or deploy Crystal Reports?

In less than three months

In the next 3 to 6 months

In the next year

Not sure

How many individuals will likely use the reports you create with this evaluation copy?

1 to 49

50 to 99

100+

Not Applicable

In addition to communications that may result from this enquiry, would you like to receive news and event notifications from SAP and Business Objects, an SAP company? * Yes No

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Fig. 3: Variation B

Step #4. Run Online Test with the new page Variations against the Control with live PPC search traffic

Using Google Website Optimizer (<http://services.google.com/webstieoptimizer/>) as the testing platform, WiderFunnel ran the experiment with traffic from Google search always comparing Variations' results against the Control (i.e., the current page).

- Traffic was randomly and evenly divided between the three versions of the landing page
- WiderFunnel tracked conversion rates (software trial downloads) on each page Variation and the Control
- The test ran for 17 days until the testing tool, Google Website Optimizer, determined the results were statistically reliable

THE RESULTS

"I was very, very surprised," says Mykota. "I knew that we would have improvement, but I also knew that our branding restrictions and long form presented challenges."

The test produced a clear winner, and helped achieve an even bigger lift than Mykota had targeted:

- Variation A, with the large, orange button, boosted conversions 32.5% over the control page.
- Variation B, despite using the long form, also delivered a 17% conversion lift over the control page.

Even better, the test achieved a 154% return on investment, convincing Mykota's previously skeptical boss. "Now she's a champion within the organization to look at landing page testing and to do more of it."

Based on the test results, Mykota's team implemented similar design changes to other landing pages. In six weeks, they were able to achieve a 26% lift in conversion rates across the board.

Now she's confident she can work with the brand marketing team on further tests that allow for flexibility within design standards – as long as the data can demonstrate an improvement.

"I'm very confident that we can effect change from the grass roots – we're seeing it already," says Mykota. "I'm sure the branding team is very appreciative of any information they can garner to help tweak and improve the brand."

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