

WIDERFUNNEL MARKETING OPTIMIZATION CASE STUDY

The Sims 3 Doubles Game Registrations By Identifying The Most Compelling Offer

Discover how EA's *The Sims™ 3*, a life-simulation computer game, used conversion rate optimization testing to identify the most compelling offer and boost game registrations by 128%!

"We hired WiderFunnel to increase our game registration conversion rate and they delivered more than we expected! Game registrations are critical to our business model as it enables us to re-engage The Sims 3 players.

WiderFunnel designed awesome test variations that doubled our game registrations, adding real value to our franchise. All of their new page designs outperformed our old pages while also reinforcing the brand - they look great!"

Mark Woodrow

Senior Director, *The Sims*

	
Business	Entertainment
Sector	Life-simulation computer games
Optimized Conversion	Game registrations
Test	A/B/n test on game launcher
Website	www.thesims3.com

THE CLIENT: THE SIMS 3

The Sims is one of the best-selling computer game franchises in history. Since its initial release in 2000, these strategic life-simulation games have sold more than 125 million copies worldwide, won countless awards and has redefined the 'open-ended' gameplay style.

The Sims™ 3, the next generation of the global cultural phenomenon and best-selling PC franchise of all time, launched in June 2009 to 60 countries in over 22 languages. . In *The Sims 3* players create lifelike Sims with a unique personality and take them anywhere in the neighborhood. The powerful Create a Sim tool allows players to create Sims that are more realistic than ever. Players select from dozens of personality traits such as brave, artistic, kleptomaniac, clumsy, paranoid and romantic. With Create a Sim, players can create a limitless number of truly unique Sims. *The Sims 3* allows for infinite possibilities to design the interior and exterior of the Sims' surroundings using the Create a Style feature. An extension of the game, *The Sims™ 3 Store*, lets players customize their Sims'

worlds even more by offering a wide selection of exclusive in-game content, or virtual goods (such as hairstyles, furniture and room accessories, and clothing). Game content purchases are made by redeeming SimPoints, which are sold in bundles of \$5, \$10, \$20 or \$40.

The Sims 3 is played by a broad audience, with 55% of players being female. The majority of players are between 16 and 34 years of age.

THE BUSINESS NEED

Sales of in-game content play a major part in the business success of The Sims 3 Store. The marketing team has crafted a conversion funnel made up of a series of micro-conversions: from anonymous player to registered player to first-time purchaser to repeat purchaser. Until a player registers their game, they are much more difficult, and costly, to convert to a purchaser.

The 'game launcher' is a key tool used by *The Sims 3* team to pull players to TheSims3.com website and encourage game registrations. After the game is installed on a player's computer, the player clicks *The Sims 3* desktop icon and the game launcher loads every time a player wants to start the game. This launcher is a multi-purpose portal for managing new game content from the Community exchange or from The Sims 3 Store, managing game software updates, starting the game, and also contains promos and links to The Sims 3 Store and Community site.

Game registration conversions from the launcher were unsatisfactory and *The Sims 3* team knew that even a small conversion rate improvement could have a big impact on revenue.

THE CHALLENGES

The multi-functional nature of the 'game launcher' portal was both a strength and a weakness. While providing a flexible platform for alternating offers, competing messages made finding and understanding the benefits of registration and joining the community difficult for players.

Further, *The Sims 3* has shipped millions of copies, yet a sizeable percentage of players only used the game launcher to manage their game content and start the game. Players only revisited the launcher when they were about to play the game, and rarely clicking on the various offers.

Lastly, customers interested in registering their game were unsure of benefits received or if additional fees were required.

As with all websites that require users to share personal information, *The Sims 3* team wanted all their customers to receive the free benefits they offered in a convenient manner.

THE SOLUTION

The Sims 3 team hired WiderFunnel Marketing Optimization to help them improve the effectiveness of their conversion funnels and chose the game launcher as a primary target for improvement. As a full-service conversion optimization and analytics company, WiderFunnel handled the conversion optimization project in its entirety, developing a complete test plan – including hypotheses, wireframes, graphic design, copy – and executing the test using Google Website Optimizer.

WiderFunnel developed and tested 6 Variations of the game launcher:

Variations A1 & A2: 'Simple'

These two test Variations emphasized the overall benefits of game registration and online play. Much of the control page's content was removed in order to improve eyeflow, a new headline with a *game tips & content* offer was added, a credibility indicator was included and the call-to-action was made clear and prominent. Both A1 and A2 Variations were identical except for background color which was white on one Variation and blue on the other.

Variation B: 'Shop'

This Variation was similar to Variations A1 and A2 in that it was focused on the overall benefits of registering and emphasized free content in its offer. In addition, this Variation included links to *The Sims 3* Store where players can buy game content and to the Exchange where players can download free content.

Variation C: 'Free Stuff'

In this Variation, the headline was changed to emphasize a *free content offer* and the subhead highlighted a more specific offer to receive free points and a free town upon registering. Links to *The Sims 3* Store and the Exchange were also included in this variation but benefit-oriented bullet points were removed to keep copy to a minimum.

Variation D: 'Free Town'

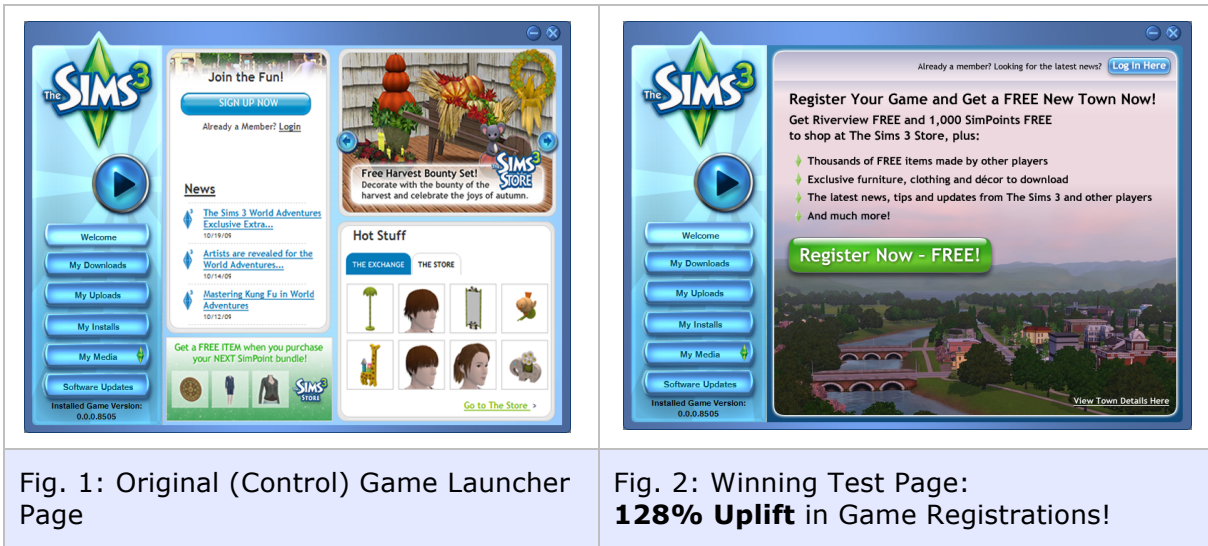
This test Variation was focused on a specific offer to receive a *free Sims town* upon registering. The offer was prominent in the headline and echoed in the background image. General benefits of game registration were listed in the form of bullet points.

Variation E: 'Free Points'

As with Variation D, this Variation put the emphasis on a specific offer for *1,000 free SimPoints* and the imagery depicted content that could be downloaded by redeeming points.

THE RESULTS: 128% INCREASE IN GAME REGISTRATIONS!

All Variations created by WiderFunnel improved game registrations by at least 43%. The top-performing Variation, Variation D 'Free Town', delivered a 128% conversion rate lift over the original game launcher page! The second runner up, Variation E 'Free Points' delivered a fantastic 79% uplift, indicating that players respond better to *specific offers*.



This test not only resulted in an improved conversion rate but it provided valuable insights into the type of offers *The Sims 3* players find the most compelling. By using a scientifically valid method to test various offers, *The Sims 3* marketing team now knows with *certainty* that Variation D outperforms all other Variations.

The Sims 3 team is continuing to work with WiderFunnel for more testing throughout the conversion funnels on their website.

LEARN MORE

Would you like to improve your website conversion rate too? Find out how WiderFunnel can help you get more leads, registrations and sales. Call +1 604-569-0897 or email [Hello@WiderFunnel.com](mailto>Hello@WiderFunnel.com)

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