

Designing an Effective Landing Page

The Good, The Bad & The Ugly

A fundraising eGuide
from your friends at
[Network for Good](#)

Network  for Good™

About Us



Network for Good was founded in 2001 by Cisco, Yahoo! and AOL in response to September 11th. When tech giants like that get together, you know they're going to create something great. We're a mission-minded organization, just like you, so we understand the challenges you face. We're here to help.

Network for Good powers more digital giving than any other platform. In our ten-year history, we've processed nearly \$800 million for over 80,000 nonprofits. We are Level 1 Audited PCI Complaint and accredited by the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance, meeting all 20 of its standards for charity accountability. Plus, we're registered in every state for online fundraising.

We offer a suite of services that helps you raise money and engage supporters online – plus the training that will make you a fundraising superstar.

1. Easy, affordable fundraising solutions: Get donations on your website with **DonateNow**
2. Email campaign and newsletter tools: **EmailNow** powered by Emma for sending and tracking mass emails and telling you which messages work best
3. **Fundraising Fundamentals Premium Training**: Let us help you hit your fundraising goals. Our ultimate survival package offers you access to Network for Good's expert advice.
4. Online event management: **EventsNow** powered by givezooks! for accepting donations, registrations and ticket purchases online
5. Free weekly fundraising and marketing tips: **Sign up here** for great advice delivered to your inbox each week
6. **Fundraising123.org**: Our free online learning center is filled with ideas and best practices on what it takes to be an online fundraising superhero
7. **Nonprofit911.org**: Participate in our free webinar training series on nonprofit marketing and online fundraising, supported by Network for Good and our guest speakers.

We're biased, but we think there are many good reasons to work with us:

- ☑ **Kinship.** We understand you because we're a nonprofit, too
- ☑ **Value.** We handle the tough parts of online fundraising for you
- ☑ **ROI.** Our customers raise \$29 for every dollar they spend
- ☑ **Support.** We provide lots of training and support via phone, email or in our online community

What Is a Landing Page and Why Should You Care?

A landing page is a single web page that appears in response to clicking an advertisement, email link, or a promotional URL that appears somewhere online.

The sole purpose of a landing page is to get the user to complete the one call to action on that page. That purpose could be buying merchandise, signing a petition or, yes, giving money to a cause.

Designing and optimizing landing pages is important for marketers for a number of reasons:


1. A user is far more likely to NOT respond to your call to action if something about your landing page is confusing or if the page looks unprofessional.
2. A great landing page experience builds trust with your constituents.
3. Getting potential customers to your landing page takes time and money. Don't lose them at the last second because of a poorly designed page.
4. Tracking and testing landing pages using products like DonateNow is easy to do.
5. Making small changes to a landing page can yield major results.

Landing Pages: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

In general, landing pages should be:


- Clean and uncluttered
- Focused on one call to action only
- User-tested
- Trustworthy
- Easy to complete
- Free from extraneous pathways off of the form

Here we review two landing pages and explain the good, the bad and the ugly about each.



2x Match: Act Now and Double Your Impact

As wars rage and disasters strike, as millions face unimaginable suffering, more than ever those in crisis need compassionate people like you. With your gift, IRC staff members across the globe can bring help and hope to one more child, one more family, and one more community at their time of greatest need.



2X Match: \$50 becomes \$100

Please select your tax-deductible gift amount below: *

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1000 Other \$

Minimum payment \$10.00.

Your Information

First Name: *

Last Name: *

Email: *

How did you hear about us?:

Credit Card Billing Information

Address: *

Address Line 2:

City: *

State: *

Country: *

ZIP Code: *

Credit Card Information


Expiration Date:

Card Number: *

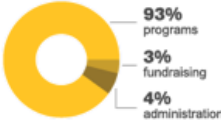
(no spaces)

Security Code: *

SUBMIT DONATION >


 By clicking SUBMIT DONATION your credit card will be securely processed.


The IRC's Efficiency



93%	programs
3%	fundraising
4%	administration

The IRC has earned the highest ratings from:





Of every \$1 the IRC spends, more than 90 cents goes to programs and services that directly benefit refugees and war affected populations.

Landing Page One

The Good (These items will help increase completion rates.)

- There is no global navigation. The only pathway off of the form is to click the IRC logo.
- The two-column form is short and doesn't require much scrolling.
- The IRC builds trust by including visual "badges of honor" like Charity Navigator and the Better Business Bureau. They also include their efficiency chart.
- The match offer is front and center.
- The page includes the minimum amount of fields needed for the transaction.

The Bad (These items should be tested.)

- Seven gift string options seems like a lot. Five to six is more manageable.
- There is no address or phone number on the form. Focus group participants say they look for a phone number as reassurance that there is someone to call if a problem arises with a transaction

The Ugly (This item should be changed immediately.)

- The IRC has many amazing photos of people who they are helping around the world. Adding an emotional photo to the header would probably raise completion rates.

Audubon You Count | x2



Every Member Counts. Thank you for giving!

Your donation will be matched dollar-for-dollar until December 31st. Your gift will go twice as far to support Audubon's cutting-edge science, habitat preservation, education and advocacy to protect birds and ensure a better environment.

Every gift over \$20 entitles you to **membership benefits** including a full year of Audubon Magazine.

Please Choose a Contribution Level For Your Tax-deductible Donation:

Your gift will be matched!

- *Contribution level:
- \$25.00
 - \$50.00
 - \$100.00
 - \$250.00
 - \$500.00
 -

Billing Information:

- *First Name:
- *Last Name:
- *Street 1:
- Street 2:
- *City:
- *State/Province:
- *ZIP/Postal Code:
- Country:
- *Email Address:
- Yes, I would like to receive periodic communication from Audubon.

Payment Information:

- Credit Card Type: VISA DISCOVER AMERICAN EXPRESS MASTERCARD
- *Credit Card Number:
- *CVV Number: [What is this?](#)
- *Expiration Date:

By clicking "DONATE NOW" your credit card will be processed.

DONATE NOW ▶



powered by VeriSign

[ABOUT SSL CERTIFICATES](#)

If you prefer to write a check you may mail your donation to:
National Audubon Society
ATTN: You Count x2
225 Varick Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10014

Landing Page Two

The Good (These items will help increase completion rates.)

- There is no global navigation. The only pathway off of the form is through the Audubon logo.
- Cardinals are charismatic birds and their images on the form are compelling.
- Audubon builds trust by including the Verisign graphic right next to the donate button.
- The donate button cannot be missed. It is big and red.
- There is a mailing address on the form.
- They include the minimum amount of fields needed for the transaction.

The Bad (These items should be tested.)

- One-column form is long and requires scrolling.
- There is no phone number on the form.

The Ugly (This item should be changed immediately.)

- The intro copy is not formatting across the top of the form. Forms that don't look professionally laid out can raise concern about security and trust.

Creating Your Page

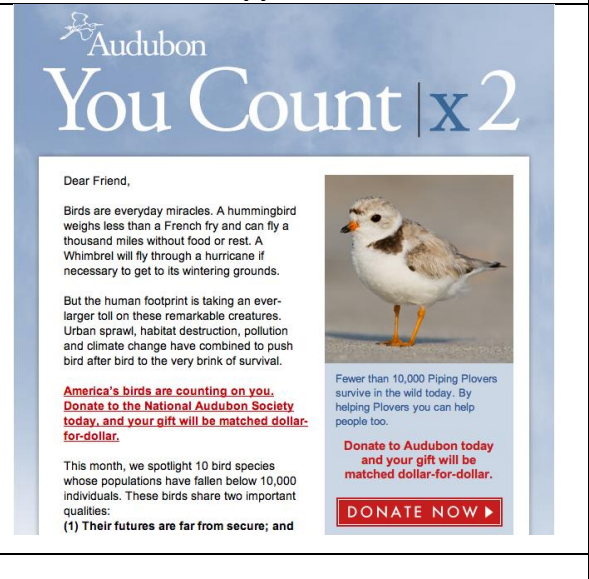
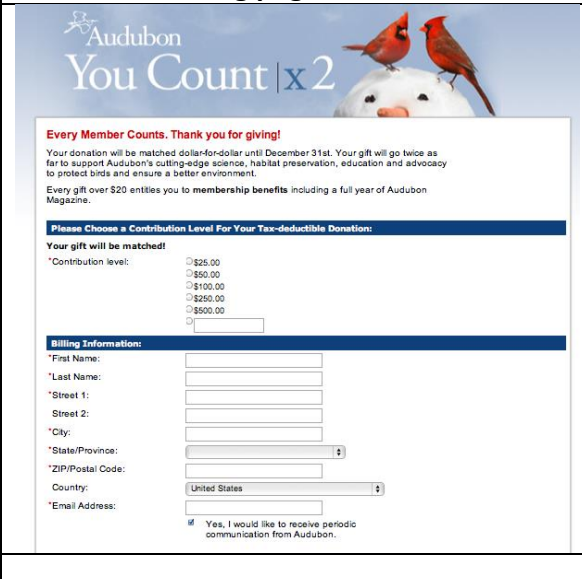
Step One: Choose a color scheme

Your landing page should match both:

1. the look and feel of your organization’s design branding
2. the look and feel of the promotional material that brought them to the form

This will provide a cohesive experience for your user and will reinforce your organization’s branding elements.

Example

Audubon Email Appeal	Audubon Landing page
 <p>The email appeal features the Audubon logo and the headline "You Count x2". It includes a salutation "Dear Friend," and text about bird conservation. A photo of a piping plover is shown. A red call-to-action button says "DONATE NOW".</p>	 <p>The landing page features the Audubon logo and the headline "You Count x2" with a photo of two red cardinals. It includes a "Thank you for giving!" message and a matching pledge. Below is a "Please Choose a Contribution Level" section with radio buttons for \$25.00, \$50.00, \$100.00, \$250.00, and \$500.00. A "Billing Information" section includes fields for First Name, Last Name, Street 1, Street 2, City, State/Province, ZIP/Postal Code, Country (set to United States), and Email Address. A checkbox is checked for "Yes, I would like to receive periodic communication from Audubon."</p>

If your organization hasn't yet committed to branding colors, [here is some food for thought about the science of colors in marketing and web design.](#)

Step Two: Choose Your Image

A well-chosen picture says a thousand words and can add just the right amount of inspiration to seal the donation deal.

A poorly chosen image on the other hand can make people click away faster than you can say lickety-split.

Avoid:

- Generic-looking images
- Negative imagery like starving children or clear-cut forests
- Images of buildings
- Images of crowds

Find:

- Close up images of faces (animal or human)
- Photos that focus on one or two individuals
- Images that illustrate the positive impact of your work
- Images that are in focus

Example: [Side by Side Kids](#)



Step Three: Choose Your Layout

DonateNow offers two options for landing page layout, a vertical option and a two-column option.

Both layouts can be effective. We recommend A/B testing two layouts to find out which is most effective for your audience.

Step Four: Make Your Copy Sing

When writing your copy, make your call to action clear and concise. Remember, you already got the user to the page. Now, you only need to finalize the transaction. There is no need for a thesis on your landing page. Just a simple, “what’s the offer?”

Also, consider the titles you use and how they relate to generating organic search traffic. Use words that people would use to search for your organization throughout the page. In Audubon’s case, they should include more references to birds and conservation.

Step Five: Test. Test. Test.

The only way to improve your landing page is to test it.

Why Test?

Here are five simple reasons why you should test your donation forms:

Your audience is unique.

Even though you’ve followed best practices by setting up your form through DonateNow, your donors are still unique individuals. They might respond to images, layouts, gift strings and colors in different ways. Find out which ones resonate best for your particular audience so you can raise more money.

Small changes can make a big difference.

According to the 2012 M&R and NTEN e-benchmarks study, the nonprofit email-driven donation form had a median completion rate of 17%. Clients who test their landing pages often see that completion rate climb to 25-30% - which results in more money raised for your cause.

You don't want to lose them at the finish line.

Nonprofit marketers and fundraisers spend tons of effort (and often money) getting donors and prospects to the donation form (think email pushes, social media promotion, search engine marketing, etc.). Don't lose them at the finish line. Convert as much traffic as possible with an optimized form.

You will learn over time.

By testing your forms, you will establish benchmarks and you will learn what works for your audience and what doesn't over time.

Two Types of Testing

There are two main types of donation form testing we recommend: A/B testing and usability testing. (An advanced form of testing is multivariate testing, which is outside the scope of this primer.)

A/B Testing

A/B testing compares the effectiveness of two versions of a donation page. Through A/B testing, a randomly chosen 50% of your audience will get served one form (the control) and the other half will get another form (the test). The test version will have one variable changed.

That variable could be layout, image, copy, or headings.

Over time, you will monitor which form has the higher completion rate calculated as follows: # of gifts/# of people who landed on the form.



Usability Testing

Usability testing is a technique where you watch test users complete the donation and take note of any barriers they encounter to making the transaction.

Three good usability tests will surface 80% of major usability speed bumps.

The Ins and Outs of A/B Testing

How to Test

Here's a simple step-by-step guide.

1. Set up a control donation form through DonateNow.
2. Decide what variable you want to test (see ideas below).
3. Set up a test donation form with that variable changed.
4. Make both forms live.
5. Track completion rates across both forms calculated by the # of gifts/# of people who landed on the form.
6. Monitor results over time.
7. Run your results through a statistical significance calculator [like this one](#).*
8. Once you determine a winner of this test, it becomes your control.
9. Start again. Test another variable against your new control.

*Statistically significant results ensure that your results did not occur purely by chance.

When to Test

The best time to test is when you anticipate a significant amount of traffic to your form. For example:

- During a specific email campaign
- During December, the month when a majority of online giving occurs
- During high profile media moments

Higher volumes of traffic will mean a higher chance that you will get statistically significant results. If you have low traffic volume, you must test for a longer period of time to get significant results.

What to Test

Here are a few of the most high-yield donation form tests:

- Imagery – does a polar bear beat a penguin? Test it.
- Layout – does a one-column form beat a two-column form? Test it.
- Testimonials – does a testimonial increase completion rates? Test it.
- Gift strings – does a lower gift string increase completion rates? Test it.
- Copy – Does shorter intro copy beat longer intro copy? Test it.
- Premiums – Does including a premium offer increase completions? Test it.

What *Not* to Test

- More than one variable at a time.
- Colors that are outside your organization's branding.
- Images that are too similar.
- Copy that is too similar in tone and length.

Interpreting Results

1. After a period of time, run your results through the significance calculator. If you have statistically significant results, you can call the winner the winner and move on to another test.
2. If you don't have a statistically significant winner, keep the test live for another few weeks to collect more data.
3. If you still don't have a statistically significant winner (and this sometimes happens), try testing a different variable.

Conclusion

Landing pages – especially donation pages -- can make or break fundraising campaigns. But too often they are last-minute afterthoughts.

Network for Good’s DonateNow makes it easy to create clean and simple landing pages that get results. We urge you to make the most of your DonateNow page to maximize your donations and create happy donors who give again.

