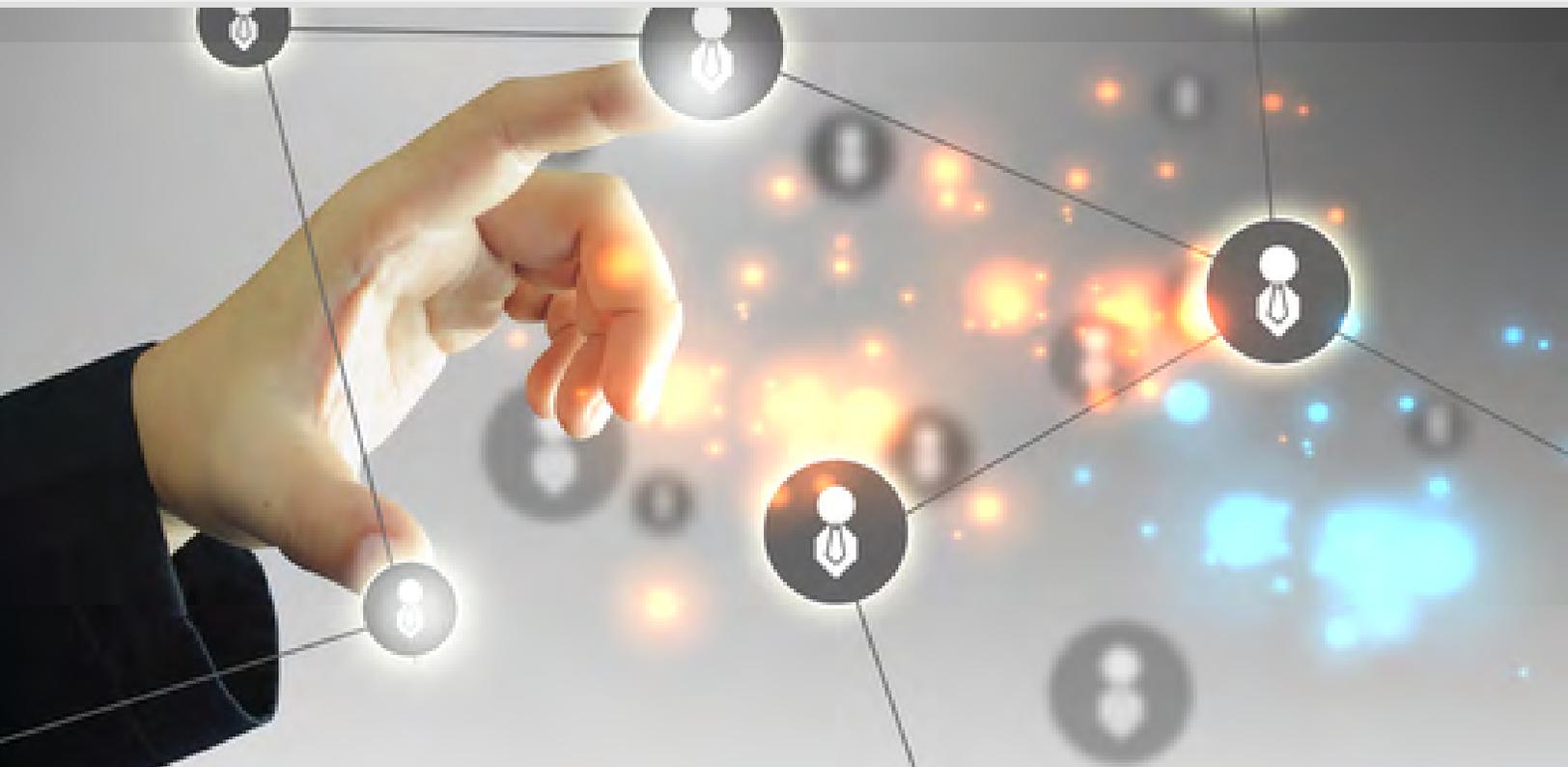# LEAD GENERATION: WEBSITE BEST PRACTICES

Andy Crestodina

It happens every day. It's common, but it's not simple. There are dozens of little factors involved in lead generation. Some do it well, but most don't. The difference is in the site. A lead generation website has a specific set of pages, each with specific elements.

A visitor takes action, a contact form is submitted, a lead is born!

It happens every day. It's common, but it's not simple. There are dozens of little factors involved in lead generation. Some do it well, but most don't. The difference is in the site. A lead generation website has a specific set of pages, each with specific elements.

Let's break it down.

The typical flow looks something like this.
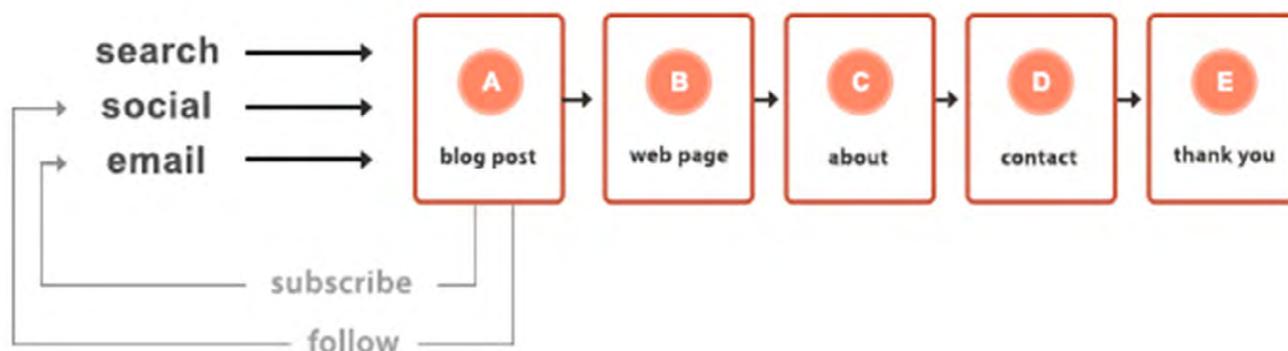
The website is gently leading the person through a series of steps: awareness, interest, trust, then action. That's a classic "conversion funnel." Notice how the pages align with steps in the funnel:

A. **BLOG POST:** attracts visitors with useful information (awareness)

B. **WEB PAGE:** explains what you do (interest)

C. **ABOUT PAGE:** explains why you do what you do (trust)

D. **CONTACT PAGE:** simple way to get in touch (action)

E. **THANK YOU PAGE:** they've completed the funnel and are now a lead (conversion)

This only works if each page in the process is built for the purpose. Each page needs a set of elements that keeps the process moving. Here is a breakdown of the pages on lead generation websites.

A. Blog Post: How Can I Help You?

It all starts before the visitor arrives at the website. They may come from email marketing or social media, but often, it starts with a search.

Your audience is constantly looking for information relevant to your field, so the key is to write many helpful blog posts and align the articles with keyphrases. The articles should be so useful that the readers will be glad to have found you.

While they're there, they will find easy ways to get more of your helpful advice through email marketing (a prominent sign-up form), social media (icons let them follow you), or more content (internal links to related content).

A great blog post is the first step in the lead generation process. It should include all of the following elements.
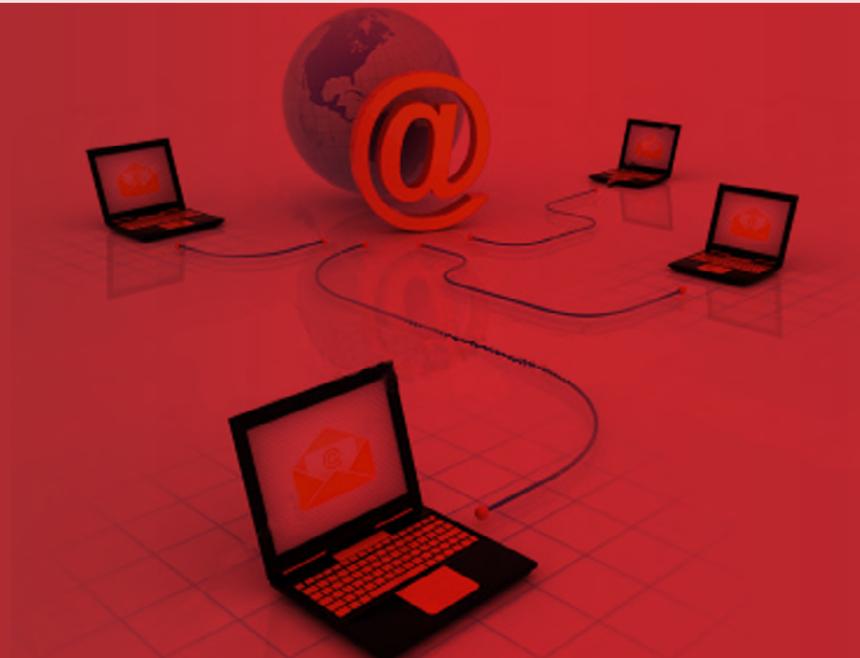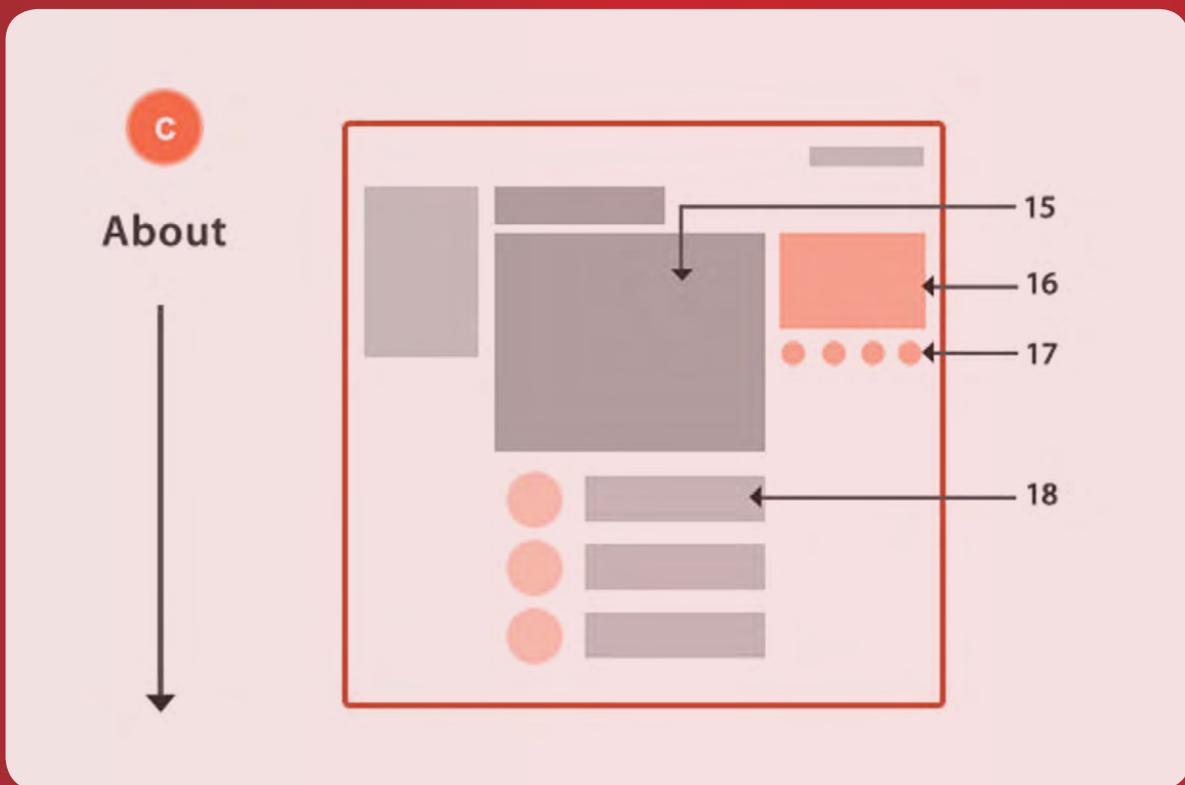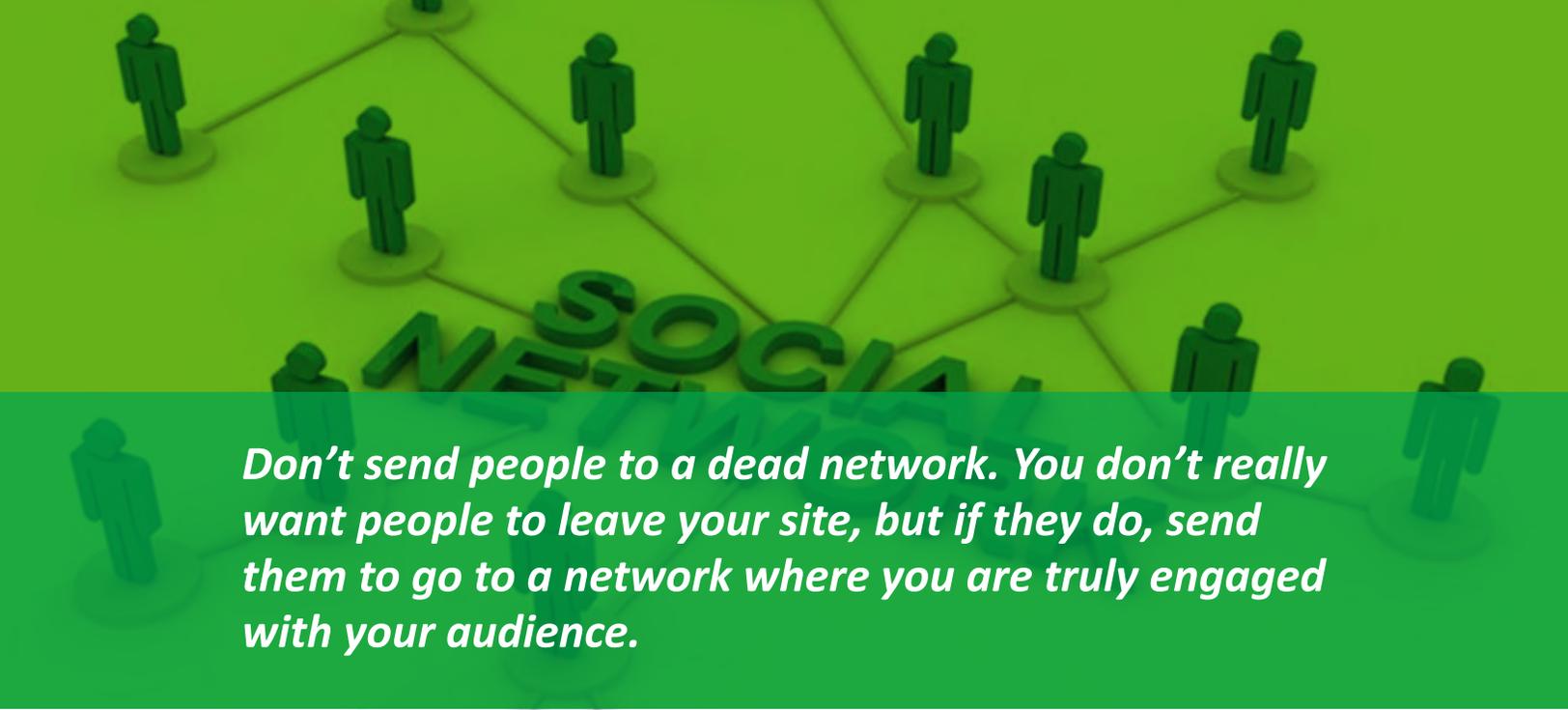
Don't send people to a dead network. You don't really want people to leave your site, but if they do, send them to go to a network where you are truly engaged with your audience.

1. Keyword-focused header
Use the target keyphrase once in the <h1> header. Along with the <title>, this is one of the most important places to use the phrase.

2. Prominent email signup box with descriptive call to action
A great email sign-up form tells people what they're going to get and gives some evidence that it's good.

3. Social media networks, but only those where you are truly active
Don't send people to a dead network. You don't really want people to leave your site, but if they do, send them to go to a network where you are truly engaged with your audience.

4. Compelling image or chart
Every great post has a great image. This makes the post more attractive, both on your site and in the social streams when it gets shared. This is your chance to explain concepts visually with informative charts or diagrams. It's also your chance to use cat pictures.

5. Helpful, detailed article
It's the deep, how-to content that positions you as the expert. These posts are also more likely to rank in search engines and get shared by readers. So go big. The more useful, the better.

Tip: Don't limit yourself to a certain length. Use as many words as necessary to share the advice and no more.

6. Links to services pages and your about page
It's nice of you to give away your best advice, but it's hard work, and it doesn't necessarily generate leads. The pathway from posts to pages should be clear in the navigation.

7. Internal links to other blog posts and service pages
Beyond the navigation, use internal links within your posts to guide visitors deeper into the site, both to other blog posts and to service pages.

8. Call-to-action for comments, more information
Many visitors may get what they wanted from your super friendly post and then leave. To improve the chances that they'll stick around, end each post with an invitation to get in touch for more information (link to your contact form) or with a question that invites a comment (see example below!).

What's not here: Clutter.

Don't show links to old archives, big buttons for various downloads, or special offers. Don't put banner ads for your own business on your website. They're ugly and distracting.
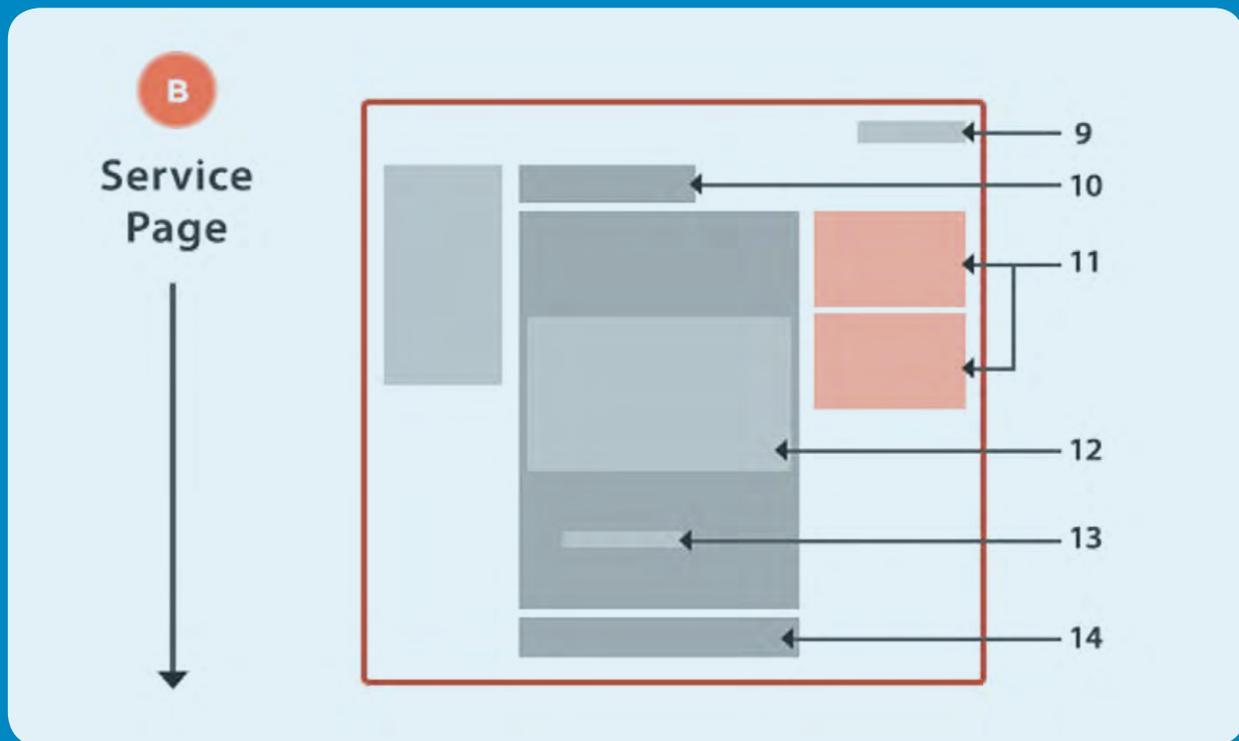
Service Page

B. Service Page: Simply What You Do

Here's where you begin selling. Like the blog post, information here is helpful, but now it describes how you do the work for the prospect. The goal is to state the value you provide in simple terms, and provide evidence that you are legitimate.

These pages must build confidence by giving proof. That may be through examples and data. Testimonials are an excellent way to provide social proof by using the voice of current customers. Service pages need this kind of evidence.

9. Contact link or phone number
The top right corner is the standard place for contact information. Visitors will look for it here. Use either a button to your contact page, your phone number, or both.

10. Clear, simple description of services
It's best to call your services what your visitors would call them. Keep the language simple in your headers and in the body. Make sure to answer the questions that potential customers commonly ask. If you don't, they may look for answers on other websites.

11. Evidence, examples, data and social proof
Anyone can claim to do something, but not everyone can prove it. Add evidence of the benefits and return on investment for your services. This may include examples, statistics and research. Better yet, add social proof in the form of testimonials, using the voice of your happy customers.

12. Videos, demos and diagrams
If you offer a service that requires a high-degree of trust, videos are an excellent way to improve lead generation.

They let the visitor see your face and hear your voice. If you offer a service that is difficult to explain, use diagrams and demos to explain those complex ideas.

13. Internal links to related services and case studies
As with blog posts, add links within the body to other services or case studies. Unless you have an extremely relevant blog post, you probably shouldn't send them back into the blog.

14. Calls-to-action
Services pages can either be a dead end, or they can have a quick, friendly call to action, such as "Contact us for more information about (service)."

What's not here: Secondary conversions

Email signup and social media networks have been removed, or at least they aren't as prominent, since you don't want these actions to compete with the more valuable call to action.

C. About Page: Building Trust

Visitors want to know who they might be working with. That's why the "About" page is one of the most popular pages on every lead generation website. Here is where you put a face to the name, tell your story, and explain your mission. In the words of Teddy Roosevelt,

"Nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care."

Connecting the service to the people is critical, even if the organization is large and only the executives are listed here. Visitors who are interested in the service are always interested in the service provider.
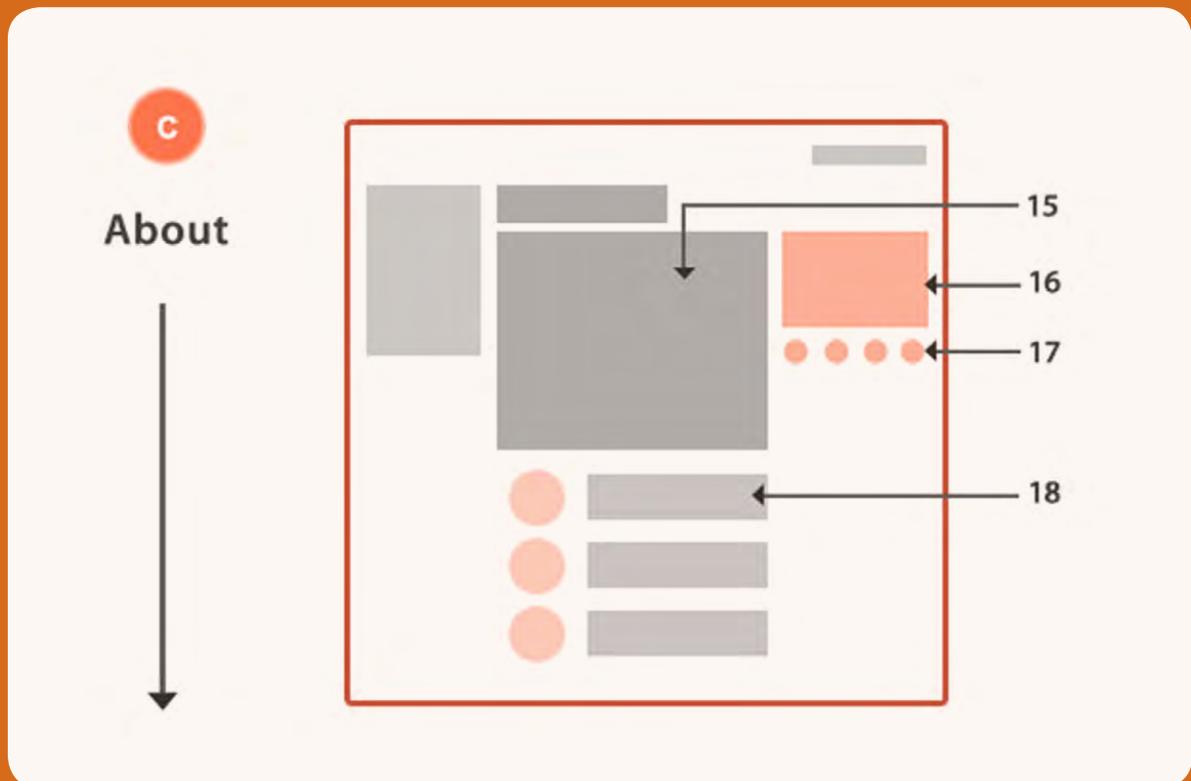
15. Personality, values and your story
Here you'll answer the big questions: why are you in this business? How long have you been doing this. What motivates your team? Why does this service matter?

You are the only one with your story, so make this a page that sets you apart. You are the only company with your people, so feature them prominently.

16. Testimonials, quotes and awards
Just like the service pages, this is a good place to add evidence of legitimacy. Anything that applies to the entire business and not just one service will work. That includes awards, certifications, ratings, and association memberships, as well as quotes from customers.

17. Social media networks or email signup form
This page builds trust, so it's also a good place to let people act. Give them a chance to follow and subscribe.

18. Pictures of key team members with links to detailed profile pages
Don't be a faceless corporation. Be a person. Show the faces of your entire team if you're small and your key leadership if you're big.

What's not here: Everyone's full profile

Link to a separate page for each team member. These pages will show more personality. They may also rank for each person's name.
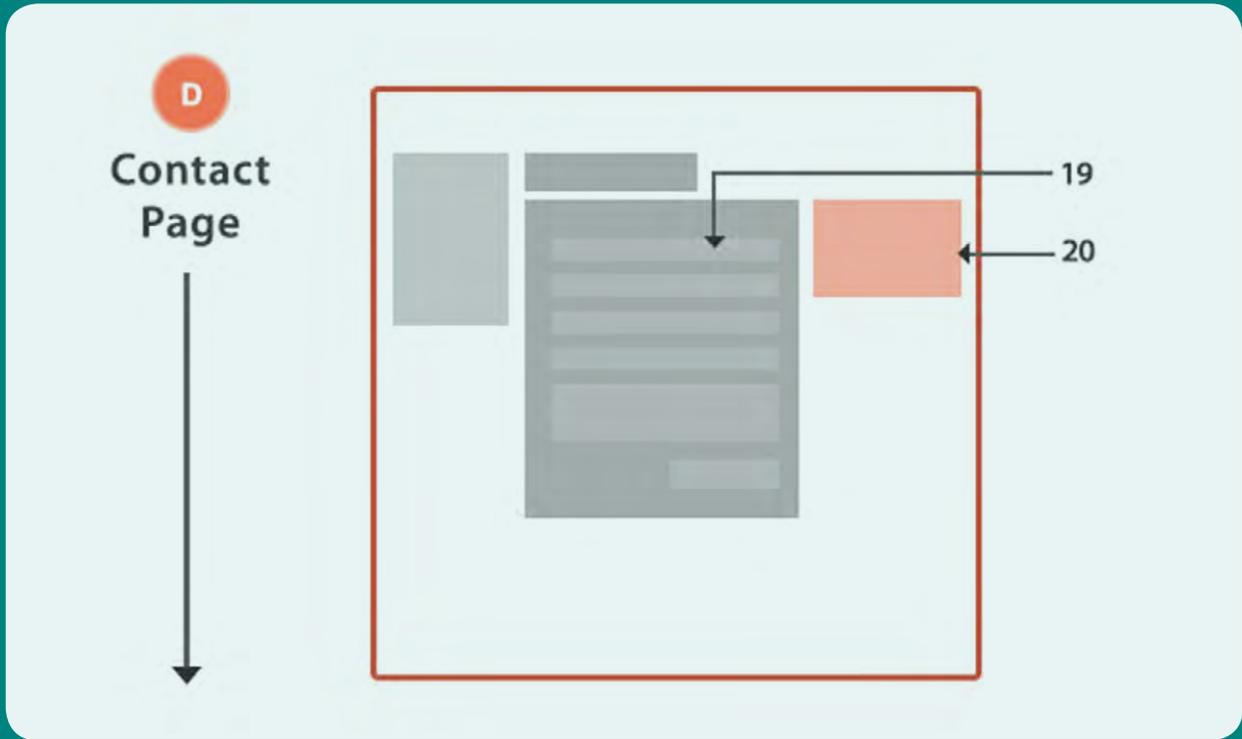
D. Contact Page: Where the Magic Happens

The trick here is to get out of the way. It should be as effortless as possible with no distraction. Just a simple form. The idea is to start a conversation, not interrogate your visitors.

19. **Simple contact form**
This is one of the best tips for optimizing a website to convert visitors into leads: use a contact form with the minimum number of fields. Of course, you'll need a lot of information to qualify them, but get it during the sales process. Don't use a greedy form.

**20.** **Phone number, address, and directions**
Not all visitors want to become a web lead. Some want to call. Great. Put all of your contact information on this page, including a link to a map with directions. And If you have an attractive location, show a photo of it here. It helps build legitimacy.

What's not here: Content, navigation, distractions

They're close to the goal, so to keep them moving, remove everything but the form. This page doesn't need any more content! Even the navigation should be kept to a minimum.
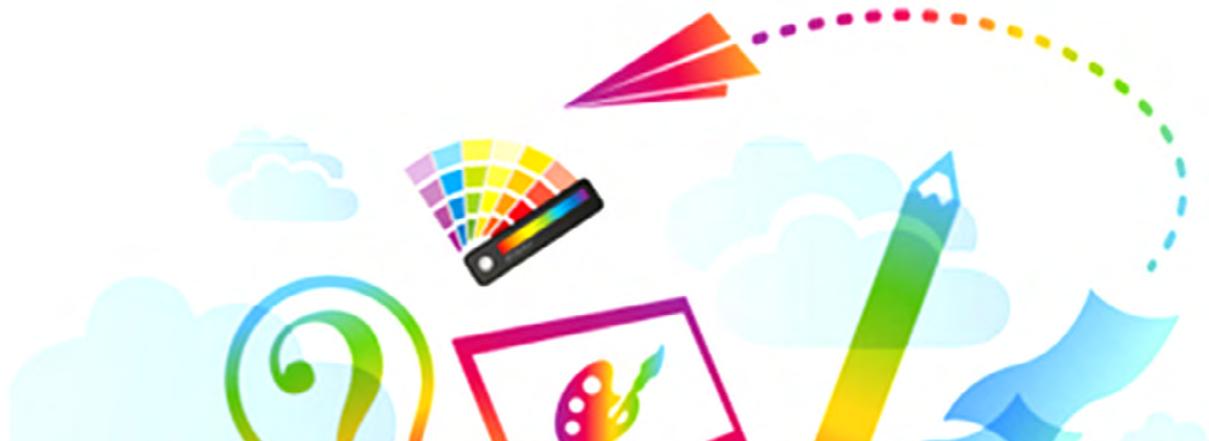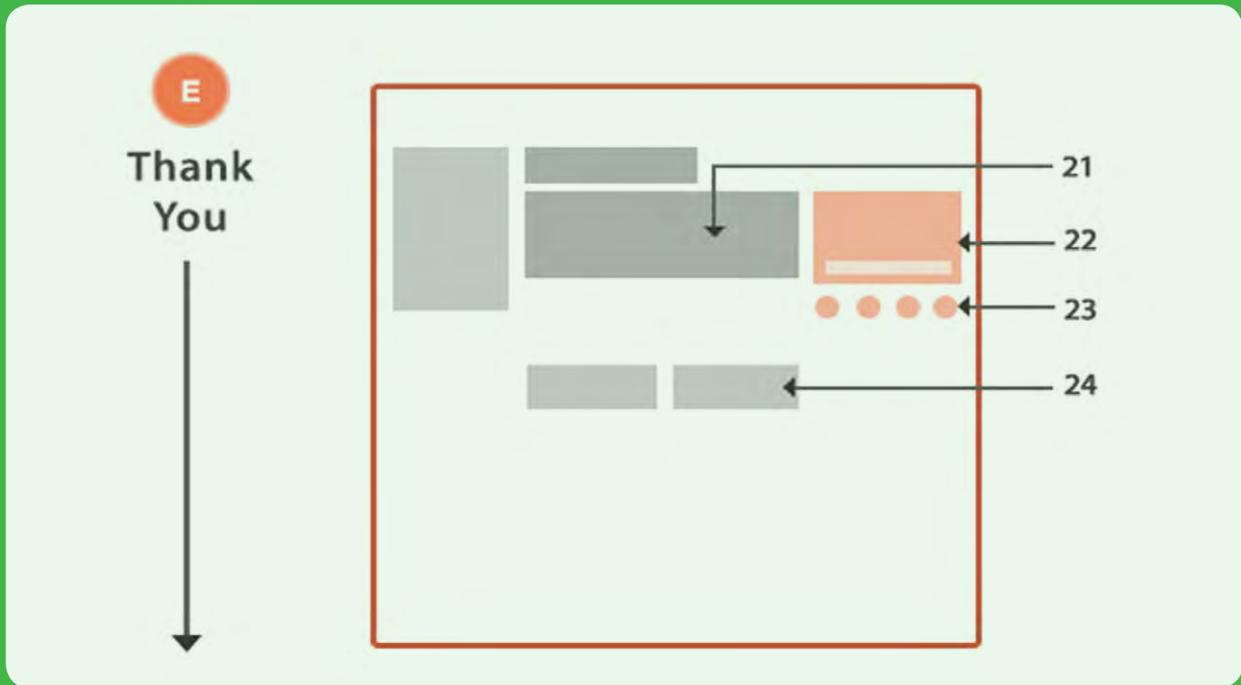
E. Thank You Page: Mission Accomplished

On many lead gen sites, this page is nothing more than two tiny words. That's a missed opportunity. The thank you page is your first interaction with your new lead. Make it a good one by setting expectations. You've also got an opportunity here to create an even stronger connection.

21. A genuine thank you
Be sincere and use a personal tone. You should also explain what happens next. How soon will you be in touch? Who will make contact?

22. Email sign-up box
If they were ready to reach out, they may already really like you and your brand. Give them the option to subscribe for more of the content that impressed them the first time.

23. Social media networks
Even if they don't follow you, there's still a chance to show them your latest thinking, to show them a bit of your personality. Just make sure they'll find helpful, relevant posts and positive interactions in your social streams.

24. Links to recommended articles and additional content
If you don't offer other options on this page, you might as well tell people to leave the site. Why not invite them back into your site for a bit more helpful advice?

What's not here: Two lonely little words – thank you.

It's the little things...

Yes, lead generation is a bit more complicated than this. Visitors don't necessarily follow that flow. It may take many visits and pageviews over a long timeframe.

Leads happen. But put these tips in place on your site, and you may feel the difference. Get your website to do this well, and the leads will flow in.

How's your website? Are you using all 24 best practices? Did we miss anything? We'd be grateful for any feedback or comments!

About the Author

Andy Crestodina is the Strategic Director of Orbit Media. He's also the author of Content Chemistry: An Illustrated Guide to Content Marketing. You can find Andy on Google+ and Twitter.