



Extreme Email

Finding the Right
Email Frequency for Your
B2B List

Brian Massey

The Conversion Scientist™



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www.ConversionScientist.com

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Experiment Design

The goal of this experiment was to examine the following hypotheses:

1. Sending email would outperform social media marketing.
2. Sending frequent email would significantly increase my conversion rate.
3. Sending frequently would cause an unacceptable number of my subscribers to unsubscribe.
4. Sending frequent email would reduce my ability to deliver email due to spam reports.

List

The list was a random selection of 2000 names consisting of direct contacts in a business-to-business relationship.

This list had been mailed to in the first quarter and second quarter of 2010. The experiment began September 7, 2010.

Email Content

The Appendix contains the full text, From: line and Subject: line of each email sent.

You will see that each email has the following components:

- A non-promotional subject line
- Relevant copy
- Link to relevant content online or registration for a live event
- Offers varied, including an invitation to subscribe to my mailing list, registration for a live workshop and an invitation to a Webinar on writing for landing pages.

Additionally, the email addresses the recipient by name in the salutation, has a graphical image for a signature, and makes one or more offers in postscripts.

Frequency and Duration

In an effort to test the upper limit of email frequency, the emails were sent daily in four-day chunks. This was repeated for two consecutive weeks, totaling eight distinct email drops.

Email bounces and opt-outs were removed immediately, and not included in subsequent mailings.



Results

Effect on Site Traffic

The email clearly increased site traffic over all other marketing activities looking back to the beginning of the year.

Both overall traffic, new visitors and search engine traffic benefitted from the email campaign.

Traffic Sources Overview

Jan 2, 2010 - Oct 15, 2010



Figure 1: Email effect on Traffic

Hypothesis: “Sending email would outperform social media marketing.” True

Effect on Conversions

The primary conversion goal of The Conversion Scientist blog is to grow the email subscriber list. While the recipients of these emails were on my personal list, they did not receive posts and notifications from The Conversion Scientist by email.

As would be expected from a targeted list, both conversions and conversion rates for new subscribers increased.

For the year, The Conversion Scientist saw an email subscription rate of 3.09%. For the period of this email, conversion rates were 7.6%.

This represents a 145% increase in the overall conversion rate for the site as compared to other advertising methods, primarily social media marketing and search engine optimization.



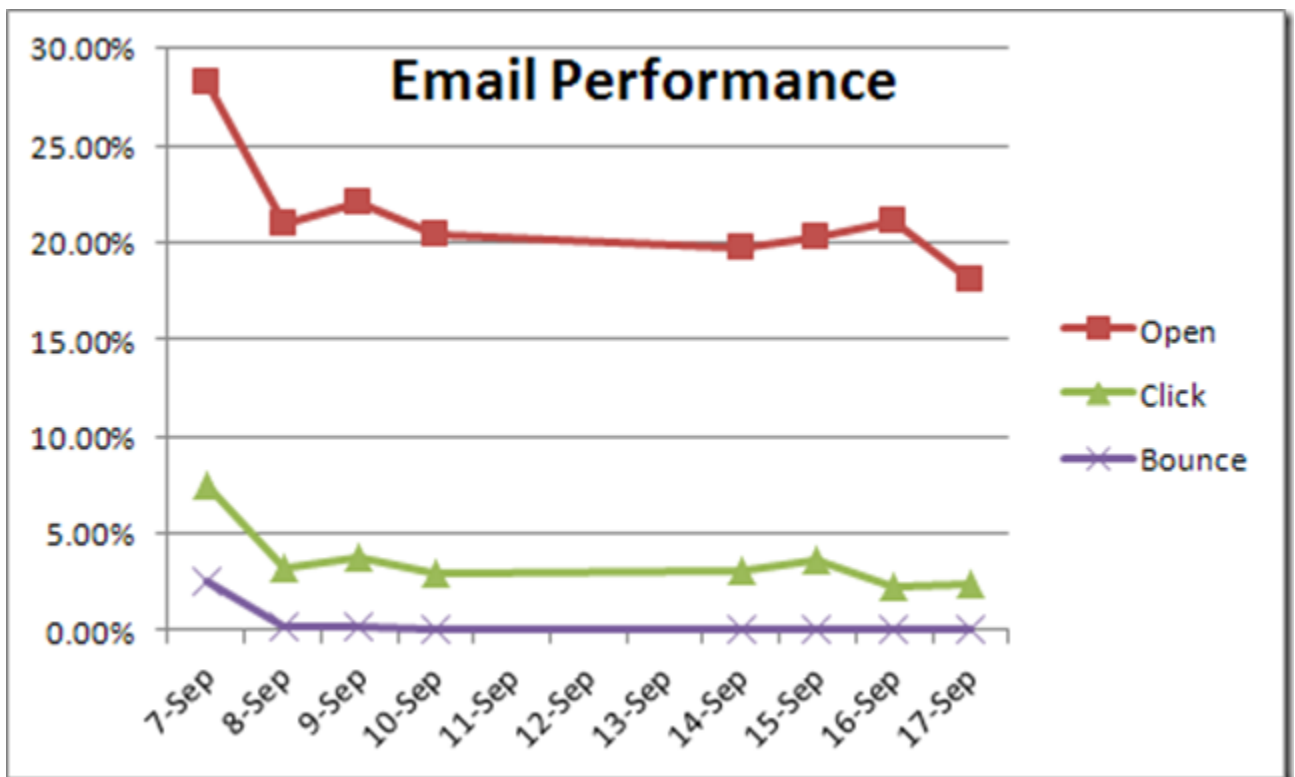
Unsubscribe rates rose to 3.2%, and were above 1% for the duration of the experiment. Overall, 15% of the list unsubscribed.

The Effect on Deliverability

The other negative effect that frequent emails can have is an increase in spam reports.

For most service providers, deliverability is the inverse of the bounce rate. If my emails are reported as spam, we would see an increase in bounces. Intuitively, when shaping a list, you expect bounce rates to drop quickly as bouncing addresses are removed from the list.

For our experiment, the bounce rate began at 2.5% but quickly dropped, leveling at an imperceptible 0.06%.



Another measure of reader interest is **open rates**.

Email service providers count the number of times a special image is downloaded to establish open rates.

Since many people have images turned off in their email client, that image is never downloaded. Thus, the open rate is not an accurate measure of actual opens.



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One could interpret a drop in open rates as a sign that the list is becoming fatigued by the frequency of communications, or that the content is not relevant to a large part of the list.

For our test, pen rates were relatively flat, hovering around 20%.

Hypothesis: “Sending frequent email would reduce my ability to deliver email due to spam reports.” **False**

Conclusions

Even with the extreme frequency of emails that we tested for this study, we found that the benefits of sending email at a high frequency outweighed the loss of subscribers. Traffic, conversions and conversion rates were all significantly higher with the frequent email than with social media or search engine optimization.

No significant negative impact on deliverability was detected.

As the owner of a B2B list, you can reduce the risk of significant abandonment by asking permission to send frequent email specifically.

In general, B2B marketers can enjoy the benefits of a high-frequency program if avoid sending purely promotional email, if they always provide a way to opt-out, and if the content of the emails is informative or entertaining.



Appendix: Email Contents

Email 1 of 8 “I've let you down and I'm trying to make up for it”

From: Brian Massey, The Conversion Scientist

Subject: I've let you down and I'm trying to make up for it

HTML Version

{FIRST_NAME|Dear Friend of The Conversion Scientist},

This summer I've generated some of the best content ever on the things that make business websites generate more leads and sales... it's just been a great summer.

Through writing, audio and video, I've laid out some of my most useful and actionable work, all of it online and all of it open to everyone.

The problem is, I didn't tell you about it. I haven't sent out an email all summer.

You may have seen this content on LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter, but social media is so fleeting. If you're on this list, you are someone I have spoken with in person or online; someone I want to provide value to.

So, this is my catchup plan: I'm going send you the content in a logical series of emails, like I should have been doing all summer.

Of course, you can unsubscribe at any time, and be immediately removed from the list.

But, before you do, let me give you a preview of some of the things you will learn.

> Right now, there is a series on online copywriting, and today is my installment on **writing for landing pages**. If I was to pick one thing that would turn your conversion rates higher, it is better copy. I can get you [Silver access for no charge](#) and you can enjoy the entire **ten-part series**.



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- > Find out **how we measure our social media investment** at The Conversion Scientist. It's eye opening.
- > I'll show you how to implement a **blog-to-newsletter strategy**, that keeps your prospects warm during long sales cycles.
- > Evil forces are at work **making your emails invisible**. Find out how to thwart them.
- > **For advanced marketers**, I've got a special link-tagging spreadsheet that you can download. I'll explain more later.
- > **Find out what happens to your analytics** when you move to a faster host for your blog. Even I was surprised.

Please stay tuned and see if you can't make your business website a source of growth and profit.

Best regards,

Brian Massey, The Conversion Scientist
brian@conversionscientist.com
512.961.6604

P. S. I strongly recommend that you jump into the [Online Copywriting 101](#) series now. It has the power to boost your conversion rates very quickly.

P. P. S. I'm spilling everything I know about conversion in a one-day seminar on September 24. A limited number of discount tickets are available. [Check it out.](#)

[Click to view this email in a browser](#)

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)



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You may have seen this content on LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter, but social media is so fleeting. If you're on this list, you are someone I have spoken with in person or online; someone I want to provide value to.

So, this is my catchup email.

Don't worry, I'm not going to dump a lot of links into this email. Instead, I'm going to send you a series, in a logical order like I should have been doing all summer.

Of course, you can unsubscribe at any time, and be immediately removed from the list.

But, before you do, let me give you a preview of some of the things you will learn.

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<http://onlinecopywriting101.com/dap/a/?a=66>

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> I'll show you how to implement a blog-to-newsletter strategy, that keeps your prospects warm during long sales cycles.

> Evil forces are at work making your emails invisible. Find out how to thwart them.

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Email 2 of 8: When good marketers go bad

From: Brian Massey, The Conversion Scientist

Subject: When good marketers go bad

HTML Version

{FIRST_NAME | Dear Friend of The Conversion Scientist},

What is it about "bad boys" that both revolts and attracts us? Why are so many of our daughters drawn to the guy on the motorcycle and poor hygiene?

I don't know. Maybe we perceive that they are more free to be who they are. Maybe we see them as brave.

I think it's because they do things that we only imagine ourselves doing. The same applies to marketing.

I have to admit that I've been studying the bad boys of marketing over the past year or so. I want to know how these marketers -- infopreneurs, affiliate marketers, direct-response skills -- make so much money selling such questionable products.

I wanted to know why we fall for them.

As it turns out, those that sell questionable content don't do well. I highlight one such marketer who was banned from the Internet and forced to give up all of his worldly possessions in my webinar "[What can we learn from the Bad Boys of Conversion.](#)"

You can watch the entire Webinar, or download the audio.



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One of the most important things that comes from this presentation is the importance of copy in your landing pages. There are three more days left of the Online Copywriting 101 Telesummit and I can get you Silver membership for no charge.

[Register now](#), and listen to ten of us tell you what we know about writing for the Web.

Best regards,

Brian
The Conversion Scientist

P. S. You can get weekly tips from [The Conversion Scientist by email](#). <http://bit.ly/9lzerA>

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Email 3 of 8: A cure for the marketer's glaze

From: Brian Massey, The Conversion Scientist

Subject: A cure for the marketer's glaze

HTML Version

{FIRST_NAME|Dear Friend of The Conversion Scientist},

I'll be the first to admit it: I talk about some stuff that can really bend the old noodle.

The tell-tale sign that I've opened the firehose a little too wide is when I see a marketer's eyes glaze over.

Some things cause this glaze more readily than others, but none is more sure to put that distant look into a marketer's face than these words:

"You should start sending an email newsletter..."

followed by:

"...several times a month."

The eNewsletter brings horrible visions of hours of writing and design; it draws images of committees of people bleeding over newsletter articles; it means talking to the engineers (gasp) to develop new content.

The good news is, I have a cure, and I wrote about it this summer in "[How to Create an Email Newsletter from your Blog](#)" at the excellent Conversion Marketing Institute, a whole site dedicated to content marketing.

The piece gives you the details on how to create an email newsletter from your blog... automatically. Perhaps I should have called it a "bNewsletter" instead of an eNewsletter.



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Blogs are updated frequently (if they're any good at all) and don't have the imagined burden of "newsletter" prose, which is often boorish anyway.

You've heard me say it before: "Email is the biggest and oldest social network on the planet."

If you have a long sales cycle or want repeat buyers, you need to be on email.

Check out [the article](#) and add me to your list. You can check out my blog-driven newsletter by subscribing [here](#).

Best regards,

Brian Massey
The Conversion Scientist
www.ConversionScientist.com

P. S. I'm dishing everything I can on conversion -- personas, analytics, landing pages, social media conversion -- at an all-day [seminar on September 24](#) in Austin. This was very well received last year, and it's been completely updated. Rose Holston of Aviso Communications will also be talking about how you configure a marketing department to turn a Web site into a lead- and sales-generating machine. Will you be [there](#)?

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blog-driven newsletter by subscribing here.

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Best regards,

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www.ConversionScientist.com - <http://bit.ly/ddAPDM>

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<http://bit.ly/9rlOEm>

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Email 4 of 8: Are you the victim of the Email Invisibility Ray?

From: Brian Massey, The Conversion Scientist

Subject: Are you the victim of the Email Invisibility Ray?

HTML Version

{FIRST_NAME|Dear Friend of The Conversion Scientist},

You've probably seen these strange emails sent by small businesses and big brands alike. Many of them have enticing subject lines that prime you for an interesting read.

But, when you open them **THEY'RE GONE**. We're talking about a Houdini-like disappearing act.

Others are ghost-like, ethereal boxes with the occasional floating word. Spooky.

If you're not too creeped out, you might click "Display Images" or you "Click here to download pictures" and **POOF** the email appears in all of its glory.

The scientists at Conversion Sciences have studied the phenomenon, and have isolated a cause.

You've probably already figured it out.

It's an **EMAIL INVISIBILITY RAY** developed by our archnemesis, Customer Chaos Labs!

That was going to be your guess, wasn't it?

Needless to say, invisible emails don't get read, and certainly don't get clicks and conversions.

Fear not! Our scientists have come up with a solution to your disappearing emails, and you can read about it in my [Conversion Alert](#) at The Conversion Scientist™ blog.

All kidding aside, this was one of my most popular posts this summer. I'm glad, too,



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because it gives me permission to add a little of the absurd to my writing.

In fact, I know we'll be seeing more from the evil Macious DuRange and the secretive [Customer Chaos Labs](#).

You will also find the absurd mixed with great conversion science at "[Optimizing Your Web Site for Conversion and Business Success](#)" on September 24.

For example, we'll be killing Brad Pitt (not literally) while we learn how to best serve our Web visitors.

I'm not going to explain it to you here. There is still a [discount ticket](#) available for you.

Best regards,



Brian Massey
The Conversion Scientist™
brian@conversionscientist.com

P. S. My Free Consultation Fridays have been booked the past several weeks, but I have openings on September 17. You can [jump on one of the slots](#) if you want to talk about your site.

[Click to view this email in a browser](#)

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<http://bit.ly/94HARo>

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Email 5 of 8: Social Media: Marketing from my La-Z-Boy

From: Brian Massey, The Conversion Scientist

Subject: Social Media: Marketing from my La-Z-Boy

HTML Version

{FIRST_NAME | Dear Friend of The Conversion Scientist},

I am no social media guru. In fact, I believe I am bit "social media awkward."

I'm never sure how to reply to comments on my social network posts.

I'm never sure when I should publicly thank someone.

I wonder if I'm building "social capital" or just clogging my social streams with self-serving dreck?

I often don't recognize the humor in other peoples' replies. I take some things too personally.

I don't know when one person's opinion represents a larger audience. I worry when someone complains.

I second-guess myself every time I post. But one thing is clear: by posting my content out on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, it is easy to look busy.

And isn't busy the same as successful?

It's relatively easy to whip out a short status update in support of a column or blog post, and I've found some tools that make it even easier to send and monitor my social marketing. I write about them in my Search Engine Land column ["The Perfect](#)



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[Social Media Measurement Plan.](#)"

By comparison, it is much harder to produce emails.

Social media is important. It gets my name out. **Email is more intimate**, and therefore, requires me to communicate with more purpose.

Relying on social media posts is sometimes like marketing from my easy chair; it is the minimum effort required.

I recommend that you look more closely at email, webinars and presentations.

My experiments are showing that I can't rely on social media as my sole communication channel. To better understand this, I'm collecting data on what happens when I share my content via email and social media.

Are you interested in seeing the results?

This email is a part of a series, **which will end this week**. If you're interested in the results of this and other experiments, you have to subscribe to my ongoing [daily emails](#).

As a subscriber, you'll get a short daily dose of new discoveries that will increase your traffic and conversions. I'll also talk about my email vs. social media experiments.

If you only want to hear from me every few months, you need do nothing. **After this week, I'll stop sending daily and return you to your regularly scheduled program.**

However, if you want a daily dose of conversion tips backed up by data, join "[Daily Notes From The Lab](#)" now.

Best regards,



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Extreme B2B Email

Brian Massey, The Conversion Scientist
bmassey@ConversionScientist.com

P. S. For an in-depth look at the state-of-the-art in conversion marketing, join us on September 24 for "[Optimizing Your Web Site for Conversion and Business Success](#)". This is a must for anyone who owns a business Web site.

P. P. S. I've got a promo code for [PubCon in Las Vegas](#) this November. Enter the code **rc-4795015** for 20% off of registration.

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But one thing is clear: by posting my content out on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, it is easy to look busy.

And isn't busy the same as successful?

It's relatively easy to whip out a short status update in support of a column or blog post, and I've found some tools that make it even easier to send and monitor my social marketing. I write about them in my Search Engine Land column "The Perfect Social Media Measurement Plan."

<http://searchengineland.com/the-perfect-social-media-measurement-plan-48999>

By comparison, it is much harder to produce emails.

Social media is important. It gets my name out. Email is more intimate, and therefore, requires me to communicate with more purpose.

Relying on social media posts is sometimes like marketing from my easy chair; it is the minimum effort required.

I recommend that you look more closely at email, webinars and presentations.

My experiments are showing that I can't rely on this as my sole



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communication channel. To better understand this, I'm collecting data on what happens when I share my content via email and social media.

Are you interested in seeing the results?

This email is a part of a series, which will end this week. If you're interested in the results of this and other experiments, you have to subscribe to my ongoing daily emails.

<http://eepurl.com/4cZw>

As a subscriber, you'll get a short daily dose of new discoveries that will increase your traffic and conversions. I'll also talk about my email vs. social media experiments.

If you only want to hear from me every few months, you need do nothing. After this week, I'll stop sending daily and return you to the regularly scheduled program.

However, if you want a daily dose of conversion tips backed up by data, join "Daily Notes From The Lab."

<http://eepurl.com/4cZw>

Best regards,
Brian

Brian Massey, The Conversion Scientist
bmassey@ConversionScientist.com

P. S. For an in-depth look at the state-of-the-art in conversion marketing, join us on September 24 for "Optimizing Your Web Site for Conversion and Business Success - <http://scientist2010-bmassey.eventbrite.com>".

This is a must for anyone who owns a business Web site.

P. P. S. I've got a promo code for PubCon in Las Vegas - <http://pubcon.com> this November. Enter the code rc-4795015 for 20% off of registration.

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Email 6 of 8: When smart people ask dumb questions

From: Brian Massey, The Conversion Scientist

Subject: When smart people ask dumb questions

Control: HTML + Text

{FIRST_NAME | Dear Friend of The Conversion Scientist},

One of the reasons I wear a lab coat is that it makes me look smart. I need to look smart, because I tend to ask dumb-sounding questions.

For example, when a businesses are redesigning their Web site, I often ask, "Why?" or, "What makes you think your current Web site isn't working?"

Most business people assume that the problem is obvious; that their current site is "old" or too "unprofessional."

Their approach is to throw out the old and install something "fresh."

Do you want fresh or effective?

The truth is, that your Web site could be working for you. The owner of HeliskiingReview.com almost learned this the hard way.

HeliskiingReview.com redesigned their "dated, awkward, wordy" site, but instead of replacing the old site, the put the "newer, better" site on a different domain, and left the old one up through their peak season.

The results were chilling.

I did an analysis of the two sites in my Search Engine Land column "[Copy Vs. Design:](#)



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[Which Is Most Important To Conversion?"](#)

The bottom line is that, if Heliskiing Review had overwritten their old site, they would have cratered their business.

You can avoid such a mistake by knowing how your current site is doing.

Attach some analytics software to your current site and start collecting information. There are so many free or inexpensive services out there that there is no reason not to begin collecting the data.

Then, choose a design firm that can interpret the data for you before they start changing everything.

Better yet, come to my seminar "[Optimizing Your Web Site for Conversion and Business Success](#)" on September 24 in Austin. We'll show you how to make the right decisions when redesigning a business Web site.

There are four discount tickets still available as of this writing, but even at full price, the knowledge could keep you from making some big mistakes.

[Join us](#) and learn more dumb questions that smart marketers ask.

Best regards,

Brian Massey, The Conversion Scientist
bmassey@ConversionScientist.com
www.ConversionScientist.com

P. S. I'm going to stop sending these daily emails go my personal list this week. If



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you'd like to continue to get a daily dose of conversion science subscribe to [Notes from the Lab](#), and learn how to put the "business" into your business Web site. If you do nothing, you'll only hear from me occasionally.

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Treatment: Text Only

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Email 7 of 8: Let's bounce

From: Brian Massey, The Conversion Scientist

Subject: Let's bounce

Control: HTML Version

{FIRST_NAME | Dear Friend of The Conversion Scientist},

There is much to learn from the language of teenagers, especially when they are traveling in packs.

For example, when a teenager says "Let's bounce" it means more than "Let's go."

The word "bounce" is dripping with extra meaning.

It means that the place is wanting, uninteresting, unworthy. It implies that the current location deserves only the briefest of stays.

Web visitors bounce, too.

When someone comes to your site and views only one page, or they stay for a very short time, we say they "bounce." In analytics parlance, the percentage of visitors who bounce is defined as the "**Bounce Rate.**"

Like teenagers, when a visitor bounces, they're saying more than just "Let's go." Most often they are saying, "Disconnect!"

Here are the top reasons for this disconnect:

- * Your home page talks more about you than it talks about visitors' problems



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- * The ad they saw brought them to a page that didn't look the same, or didn't make the same offer
- * The link in your email didn't take them directly to the information they were looking for
- * They found your site using search, but the page they found didn't match the search words they used
- * Your site is [just plain slow](#).

These are all disconnects, rifts in a visitor's time-space continuum.

While you may see a Web page as a destination, it is actually one step in a process for those coming to your site. Understand their previous step and your Web visitors won't be all dissin' you and stuff.

On September 24, we will be discussing exactly how to create "conversion scenarios," those multi-step buffets of information that keep your visitors stepping closer and closer to buying from you.

And I've got a discount code.

I'm not supposed to share it, but, hey, you are a personal acquaintance. Use this link: [Optimizing Your Web Site for Conversion and Business Success](#) for \$50 off of the price of a seat, and we'll see you there.

Best regards,

Brian Massey, The Conversion Scientist



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Extreme B2B Email

bmassey@ConversionScientist.com

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Text Version

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- * The link in your email didn't take them directly to the information they were looking for
- * They found your site using search, but the page they found didn't match the search words they used
- * Your site is just plain slow (<http://bit.ly/apWERS>).

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<http://scientist2010.eventbrite.com/?discount=AENdiscount-bam>

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Extreme B2B Email

Email 8 of 8: Why eight-year-olds beat me at Chess

From: Brian Massey

Subject: Why eight-year-olds beat me at Chess

HTML Version

{FIRST_NAME | Dear Friend of The Conversion Scientist},

Did you know that a game of chess has three distinct phases?

I didn't.

Were you aware that chess is a process of managing multiple angles of attack on the King?

The children at my son's elementary school know this.

I know that a queen can move in almost any direction. I know that a Knight does a little L-shaped dance. I know that a pawn attacks diagonally.

I know the moves, but the eight-year-olds know the strategies.

They can't make a sandwich, but they can beat me at chess.

I spend a lot of time on the "moves" of Web site optimization, but I believe that you can get away with making some bad moves as long as you choose the right **strategies**.

Pick the right conversion strategies, and the moves gets easier.

To end this email series, I'd like to invite you to explore your Core Conversion



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Strategies. I present the three strategies that I believe will help your business win in the conversion tournament.

Of course, every Web site is different and I've boiled things down to five basic patterns, one of which your Web site fits.

Brochure Pattern: Read this if you just need to look professional and support your sales team's efforts.

Portal Pattern: Your business provides a online content to generate advertising revenue or subscriptions

eCommerce Pattern: Your business is selling a variety of products catalog style

Considered Purchase Pattern: You have a long sales cycle or an offering that requires a consultative sell

Site-as-a-service Pattern: Your Web site is the service.

I've written an article for each pattern, and have [collected the links here](#). Use them to discover the strategies you should be using online for your unique business.

This is the last time I will send you a daily email. However, I intend to continue sharing new discoveries from the lab, and [you can tune in](#).

One of the first things I'll talk about in [Notes From the Lab](#) is what happens when you send daily email to business people.

* How many people unsubscribed, and is this a bad thing?

* How many people took advantage of my offers?



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Extreme B2B Email

* Did it increase or decrease traffic to my Web site?

Thank you very much for participating in this experiment. I now return you to your regularly scheduled program.

Best regards,

Brian Massey, The Conversion Scientist
brian@conversionscientist.com
512.961.6604

P. S. We'll talk about how you choose the conversion strategies that will work in your business in a one-day seminar in one week here in Austin. [Register here](#).

[Click to view this email in a browser](#)

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Text Version

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