neon NOISE
PODCAST

Episode 21: WHY YOUR LANDING PAGES SUCK

00:00 Announcer: Welcome to the Neon Noise Podcast. Your home for learning ways to attract more traffic to your website, generate more leads, convert more leads into customers, and build stronger relationships with your customers. And now, your hosts, Justin Johnson and Ken Franzen.

00:16 Justin Johnson: Hey everybody. Welcome to the Neon Noise Podcast where we discuss marketing and sales topics that will help you attract more visitors, generate more leads, and close more customers. Today is episode number 21. It feels like just yesterday Ken and I were talking about how we were going to get started with episode number one, so it's pretty crazy. Things are going good. Ken, how are you today?

00:42 Ken Franzen: I'm doing great. Funny you bring that up, because I do remember when we first started this podcast and the round and round we went with figuring all this stuff out, and how we were gonna do this, and getting our... I don't know. We're better today than I think we were in episode one. We're far from as good as so many others out there.

[laughter]

01:03 Ken Franzen: But, I mean I think we're pretty...

01:04 Justin Johnson: That's alright. We're getting better.

01:04 Ken Franzen: I mean, I think we're improving. Let us know if we are or aren't, and maybe some suggestions of what we could do better.

01:10 Justin Johnson: Fire away, guys. Let us know.

01:12 Ken Franzen: Yeah, episode 21's awesome and looking forward to getting into this today.

01:18 Justin Johnson: Awesome, good deal. Today, we got a really cool topic I'm excited about. We are going to chat about landing pages, why majority of them stink and don't convert, or they're currently just converting very little. We're gonna provide some suggestions on how to fix that problem that so many of you currently have. A lot of landing page mistakes end up killing their conversions. If this sounds familiar to you guys, it's time to pay attention and learn what you can do to improve your landing pages. Let's jump in and start to discuss what you need to do to get started. Number one, your landing page is not mobile ready. Ken, we talked about this a little bit last... I don't know if it was the last episode, or if it was an episode within the last couple weeks. But mobile ready landing pages... Extremely, extremely important.

02:17 Ken Franzen: Absolutely. No, it was I think episode 20 that we just had out last week and, yeah, it's super important that we look and make sure that the landing pages are mobile ready. Just like how important it is for the site to be mobile ready... Equally important. You're going to be promoting, you're going to be driving traffic. Your site, your landing page is gonna be visited by site visitors using mobile devices. Looking at analytics reports, what would you say is roughly the number of visitors we're seeing coming to websites via mobile devices?

02:55 Justin Johnson: I would say that we review quite a few analytics reports. And I would say on average, probably seven out of 10 websites that we're looking at are receiving anywhere from 50% to 60%, 70% of their traffic is mobile. No question.

03:16 Ken Franzen: Yeah, I'd agree with that. I might even say it's more than that, but, no, it's a great... And all that's basically stating...

03:22 Justin Johnson: That's gonna vary but at least half of your traffic nowadays is probably mobile. If you're tracking.

03:32 Ken Franzen: Sure. Nope, I completely agree. So if you're avoiding this and you're saying that...

03:38 Justin Johnson: Half of your traffic... [chuckle]

03:40 Ken Franzen: Yeah, half your traffic is being lost or you're not providing the optimal view to... Chances are, most of the people visiting your landing page, right?

03:50 Justin Johnson: Exactly. No question.

03:54 Ken Franzen: Awesome. So, you put this as the number one item. Is this the number one most important thing that you would say should be addressed? A top concern that should be addressed of this list that we're gonna cover?

04:07 Justin Johnson: Yeah. No question that if you're doing all this to attract these visitors, right? And you're doing everything, if you're promoting these, if you have these set up as ads that you've got, and you're paying for these folks to get to this page. If when they get there, that 50% of your traffic, 60%, 70% of your traffic, whatever that number is... You don't have a mobile version, or a mobile ready landing page enabled that's going to eventually convert that visitor, they're gonna run. They're gonna leave. They're gonna go find some place, they're gonna go find another page that they can hop on their phone, they can look it up. Whatever the offer is that they're typing in. However they got to your particular landing page in the first place, they're just gonna do another search. And they're gonna find another page that they can easily fill out the form, and eventually convert into a lead for someone else.

05:08 Justin Johnson: So, yes, I think that number one, your landing page not being mobile ready is without question the first place that you need to look. Some suggestions... Just test your landing pages on different devices. Make sure that you're looking at it on your iPhone, you're looking at it on your Android, whatever devices that you have. You're checking it on tablets, you're checking it on anything that... Where your page needs to be able to respond to whatever that device is. Take a look at it and see what areas that you can change. See how well all of the elements are organized on your page. If you've got... Your form is all the way at the bottom of your page. Maybe if you're directing people over for a quote or something along those lines, maybe you wanna have that positioned at the top. Just make sure that you're going in, you're reviewing the different areas, the different devices and whatnot. Make sure all of your information is displayed and flows well.

06:19 Justin Johnson: There's nothing worse than getting to a page and not having the information presented well. People are just gonna run pretty quickly. We talked about your forms, making those extremely easy to find, extremely easy to fill out. If I'm on a mobile phone, I don't wanna have to fill out 10 different fields of

information. Just make sure that the forms on your site are extremely simple. The last thing that we wanna do is just turn visitors away 'cause your landing page is difficult to use, or just difficult to be able to submit the form off of that page.

07:00 Justin Johnson: Number two on our list is, your call to action is not clear or is getting lost on your page. This is extremely important, Ken, don't you think?

07:11 Ken Franzen: Yeah, if you don't provide the direction, especially if you got this traffic coming in, you're gaining this attention, someone's coming to your landing page, you want to clearly identify what it is you want the visitor to do once they get to the landing page. You've all heard of us talk about this before, the CTA needs to be clear, concise. And if there's any confusion when they come to your page, you're likely gonna get a bounce. The CTA, the contents of the page, the flow of your message, it all really needs to match the campaign that brought them in. We don't want this clickbait-type setup where they think they're getting one thing and then they're gonna...

07:57 Justin Johnson: Be sold something different.

07:58 Ken Franzen: Correct. No, we want it to be in line, but it needs to be clear and powerful. I don't know, some possible reasons that the landing page CTA is not clear or getting lost is, maybe you've completely skipped the CTA altogether.

[laughter]

08:20 Justin Johnson: Whoops.

08:21 Ken Franzen: You're just gonna have a landing page that's sitting there, and you're relying on your campaign being the directional, the navigational beacon that's gonna send them through. I'm sure you might have a form there or something else of that nature, but once they get to that page there's no confirmation. There's no reminder of what exactly they need to do there, so complete void of a CTA. Maybe you have a CTA that's front and center, however maybe it's not noticeable. Maybe there's not enough contrast to the

background. Maybe the size of the font is too similar to the paragraph font. Maybe it's just not identifiable, or really easy to identify that this is the focal point here. Or maybe there's too much going on on the page. Maybe that you have so much information on your page, and you're so just eager to share so much with them that the CTA is not steaming out enough. The call to action is not...

09:23 Justin Johnson: Just being meshed on the bottom of the page or some place else.

09:27 Ken Franzen: Well, yeah, that's the other thing. Maybe it's displayed visible, but maybe it's below the fold and you don't even know that. Think about when we go back to your previous version with the mobile readiness of your landing page. If you haven't tested what your landing page looks like on mobile devices, maybe your CTA is showing up below the fold and you don't even know it.

09:46 Justin Johnson: Yeah, maybe it's the last thing on the list, and you don't even know it.

09:47 Ken Franzen: Yeah, it could be. Or you're getting your form shown up first and foremost and they're just presented with some fields to fill out and they're confused in what they need to do. Call to action, it really needs to stand out, it needs to get attention right out of the gates. Try changing colors, testing some things out, do some split testing and see which CTAs convert best.

10:08 Justin Johnson: Yeah. You made a good point about the background, about having your CTA displayed front and center. There's quite a few of the different landing pages that we look at, that they've got this great image that they've taken time to get ready and everything. Then you've got your text overlayed over top of that, and it's really hard to read the text because it's blending in with the background. [10:32] _____ quite about.

10:36 Justin Johnson: Alright, number three. Your landing page is too long. This is a landing page, and it's not a chapter of a book, right? I can't tell you how many times that we've seen this, time and time again where the pages are just overloaded with way too much information. The visitor opens us up and they look at it and they're like, "Crap. What the hell am I supposed to do next?" Just keep it simple. Keep it short and simple. Think a few paragraphs of text, your information just doesn't need to be large blocks of content. 'Cause, people, that's the first sure fire away that somebody's gonna hit that back button and go away. Just make sure that you're breaking up your text and have bullet points. These are all things that we've talked about. I

think we talked a little bit about this again in one of the recent episodes, is just your page formatting and whatnot. We suggest on landing pages to have around two to three paragraphs, stay within 150, 250 words. Our end goal is to convert these visitors, not scare them away with this overwhelming amount of copy that they're seeing right when they hit their page.

12:03 Ken Franzen: Yeah, I agree. This point here reminds of... This is a little bit of a dated tactic, but used to get those little squeeze pages where you'd have somebody who makes millions of dollars from the comfort of their own home, and usually at the top there's guy standing there in front of a Lamborghini and he's got four models in bikinis on each side of him. And then this page is gigantic, and it's a repetitive over and over, repeats...

12:33 Justin Johnson: Over, over, over, over, over.

12:35 Ken Franzen: How successful, and how many airplanes, and gold...

12:40 Justin Johnson: The one positive thing on those pages is there's at least 28 CTAs.

12:44 Ken Franzen: No, the ratio's there but you look through this and it's just like, you gotta be kidding me here. Now, mind you, I bet you that guy us gonna call us up and say that thing converted awesome. And there's no doubt in my mind that he didn't get conversions out of it. Just take into context to what it is that was being sold, and how you want to be perceived by the people buying in. Keep it short and sweet. You wanna cover the essentials; you wanna make sure that you're driving home your point. You wanna... Go back to number two, present that CTA, the copy on your page is going to be supporting text for your CTA to drive home that point of why they should be completing... Let's say you want the form completed as your conversion opportunity. I always look and say, "If the page is that long and you need that much convincing for me to fill out this form, I'm kind of leary."

13:39 Ken Franzen: So I don't know. Different things, but I'm with you on this one. I think that the text needs to be... The page needs to be short, not overly long. Get to the point, complete your thought, be thorough in what you're trying to say, but get to the point. You don't need to drag it out; you don't need to keep flipping back and forth to testimonials, and happy customers, and what your third house in Aspen looks like. Drive home that point and get it through and I think you'll build trust credibility and get that conversion.

14:14 Justin Johnson: Exactly. Alright, number four. The image or images that you've decided to use just downright suck.

[chuckle]

14:25 Justin Johnson: This happens, it happens a lot. I mean, more often than not. Selecting the perfect image for your landing page is going to get you the attention... Is gonna get you attention of your visitor and just ultimately help tell your story. When you choose the wrong image for your landing page, basically again, you are going to drive your visitors away and ultimately decrease those conversions. Some of the common mistakes that we often see... Not using a photo that is relevant with your offer on your landing page. This is probably... I don't know, this is probably one of the top mistakes.

15:08 Justin Johnson: You get to a page and maybe you're looking for aluminum fences or something along those lines, and you get over to a page and it's all about chain link, or wood fences, or something along those lines. If that was in your ad, those people are going to just go away and try to find something that's more relevant to whatever they were looking for originally. Displaying images that are poor quality, this is another big one. Just make sure that the images that you're using are high quality. If you can't produce a high-quality image, use some stock photos or hire a photographer. Using photos that stink, using your own photos...

[laughter]

16:01 Ken Franzen: Oh yeah, this is interesting and we're not trying... Not everyone takes great photos, and that's okay. But when you're trying to convert site visitors, it does make sense to... You made mention of stock photos... You'll agree with me on this that the use of your own photos is going to be better than using stock photography so long as they don't stink. And what Justin and I think you're meaning here is using proper light, setting up the photo, framing it in a way that is professional and is going to help drive your point through, not...

16:39 Justin Johnson: Correct. Not the pixelated version of the image that you just pulled off of Susie's phone.

16:46 Ken Franzen: Sure, sure, exactly, exactly.

16:52 Justin Johnson: Basically, those are the items. And if you've got a product that you're selling, use images with people that are actually using your products, something that people can relate to better than a stock photo. Just choosing the correct photo is really a make or break for your landing page, it could be the difference between somebody converting, or leaving and never coming back.

17:13 Justin Johnson: Number five is... This is big. I would almost say that number five should be probably up there close to the top. Maybe the second item instead of number five is, run ads that are relevant to your landing page. Number five is something that I would actually probably put higher up on the list, maybe second. Extremely important. If you are running ads and they are not relevant with your landing page, that is huge. People are going to run. There's nothing more annoying than doing a search for something, clicking on an ad and being displayed with information that is not relevant to why I clicked in the first place. I am going to absolutely click off of that page in no time. See this quite a bit where ads are still either... They're either being directed to a home page of a site, or they're being sent to a different page that's got... Maybe it has the information. Maybe I did click on the ad and it got me to the page where that information was at, but it's littered with a bunch of different services or products or whatever.

18:31 Justin Johnson: Just make sure that whatever the ad is, make sure it's consistent with your landing page. If I'm a person that's looking for... I'm gonna use fencing again. I don't know why, that's on my mind. But if I'm looking for a new fence, and you've got an ad running for aluminum fences. I get to your landing page, it had wood fences and I'm immediately heading to another site because obviously it's not relevant to your ad simply due to just not having consistency between your ad and your landing page. Some different tips that I would say for staying consistent... Use the same keyword phrases that you're running in your ads and your landing page, or your subheadlines.

19:26 Justin Johnson: Have a clear headline for what the visitor should expect. If I'm doing a search for aluminum fence quotes, your message should be clear. You need to have an example, "Need an aluminum fence quote? Fill out the form below and save 15% off of your fence purchase." Just make sure that your messages are all uniform. Don't have something that... On your ad, where your aluminum fence quotes, "Save 15%, free estimates," and then I get over to your landing page and it has something for... Yes, it does have something for aluminum fence quotes, however it's... Maybe it's only you're saving 5% and there's a fee for your consultation. Just be as consistent as possible, and it's obviously going to increase leads on your page

just having the same message for your ads and landing pages is gonna go a long way towards improving your overall results.

20:27 Justin Johnson: Number six on our list is your landing page takes forever to load. This is big, Ken.

20:38 Ken Franzen: Oh yeah, if your page is not loading, yes, you're gonna get bounced. Again, page load speed is something we've touched on in the past. You want to make sure that you can slim down that page so it loads quickly, especially on mobile devices. A couple things to get your page to load quicker... Make sure your images are optimized. A majority of load issues are related to images that are super big, unnecessarily big. We wanna keep that quality image. We wanna have that high resolution, especially with some of these screens that deliver amazing views, but we wanna make sure those photos are optimized properly so they load fast as well. Because if they're big and beautiful, but our page takes too long to load, no one is gonna stick around to see those big and beautiful images.

21:31 Justin Johnson: Yeah, so they're never gonna see it in the first place.

21:34 Ken Franzen: Yeah, other things... Unnecessary scripts running in the background of your page, and then check the plug-ins. There's lots of things that you can do to make your page load faster. Less is more in this instance. It's a landing page, folks. It doesn't require a lot of the bells and whistles that you might have in your full-fledged site. I'm gonna say that doesn't mean run your site...

21:56 Justin Johnson: Slim it down. Slim it down as much as you can.

22:00 Ken Franzen: As with the excess, but especially with your landing pages. Trim the stuff down. Make sure that it's fast, loads quick. Don't let your page load speed be the problem you're having with getting conversions from your landing pages.

22:17 Justin Johnson: Right, right, right. Alright, number seven. You are losing visitors to other pages. Remember, we created this landing page with one goal in mind, and ultimately that is to get that visitor to convert. This is another one that we see quite a bit, where people create their landing pages and they've got

navigation set up on those pages. They've got links to external sites. These are just huge mistakes. This is something that is super, super, super, simple to correct. Just the fact that... Don't send those precious visitors to other pages of your website that aren't relevant to the reason that they're on that landing page. And even worse, don't ever send your visitors to a different website entirely. Both of these items obviously are going to decrease any ability to convert that visitor.

23:21 Justin Johnson: Some different tips for preventing you from losing visitors to other sites, obviously, just go through your copy and look at it, and if you've got any links in there that are going to other sites, pull those off. Keep 'em on that page. And I would absolutely... This is a toss-up with some other individual, but I would suggest removing your navigation completely from your landing page. All of the information that you have presented there should be more than enough to convert that visitor over into a contact or a lead. Pull your navigation off, and removing both of these items is gonna help keep your visitors on your page that you intended them to land on without any sort of distraction, and obviously, it's going to help boost your conversion rates.

24:15 Ken Franzen: You know what this point reminds me a lot of is, have you seen the movie, Up, from Pixar?

24:22 Justin Johnson: No.

24:22 Ken Franzen: No, okay. Alright. This is one of my kids favorite movies and it's a pretty popular movie. But in the movie there's a character, it's a dog. It's a dog that has a collar which allows him to talk. You see the movie and lots of people are gonna giggle, his name is Doug. And these dogs are easily distracted. They'd be in the middle of a conversation and then they just look over and they think they see a squirrel, and they say, "Squirrel!" It's hilarious, and anyone that's seen the movie will know exactly what I'm talking about. But this is very fitting; consumers are easily distracted, and basically the point that you're making here is let's avoid any possibility that we could provide a distraction that's gonna veer them away from our CTA in converting that lead. And so, yeah, I would go so far as to say, don't link to anything.

25:12 Justin Johnson: Nothing. Everything should be presented right there for them.

25:15 Ken Franzen: And so, once you...

[overlapping conversation]

25:16 Ken Franzen: Yeah. Once they fill out the form, you'll redirect them to a thank you page. And from that thank you page, you can have a full navigation and you could even say, "Thanks for filling out this form. A member of our team will be in contact with you in the next 24 hours. Here's a link to our blog, our latest blog post." Maybe put a feed to your latest blog post or direct them back to your homepage or whatever it might be. But in that thank you, you can provide all the links and the direction, everything else of that, but think of it as that maze that you're trying to get them through, and the cheese is that form. Once they bite on that cheese, then we can present them with some different options on where they can go, but not until we can get them the cheese.

25:58 Justin Johnson: Get the cheese. Alright. Number eight. Your landing page formatting is terrible. If the formatting of your landing page looks off and looks like crap, the visitors are going to leave in a heartbeat. Some of the tips for getting your message across and giving the visitor the information that they're looking for, just make sure that you're selecting a font that visitors can read easily. Again, this is something that we recently talked about. Don't give them a cursive font. Don't give them anything that's difficult. Present everything with a font that is going to be easily read. Use your headlines, use your sub-headlines. Pay attention to all of your spacing and your copy. Make sure that you don't have your blocks of text all jammed together and everything. You wanna make it easy and concise for those individuals to be able to read that information and not make it difficult.

26:58 Justin Johnson: Make sure there is contrast between your font and any background images, just like we talked about before with your header image and your CTA. More often than not, you'll pull up a page and you've got black text over top of this image, really difficult to read, so just make sure that you're paying attention to that and you've got contrast between your font and your images. And just break up your text. Nobody wants to read all those blocks of text all put together. Make sure that you're using bullets and lists and you're breaking up your text on your page. This is super simple formatting. Formatting problems are very, very easy to fix and they will help improve your visitor experience and increase conversions.

27:46 Ken Franzen: I couldn't agree more, Justin. Page formatting is crucial, and like you made mention, it's things that are super simple. This is one of the easiest I think to fix. Let's not serve up warm piece for them to read, let's give them some real, small, easy digestible chunks, nuggets, that they can skim, scan, understand very quickly that the headline that they clicked on from the ad campaign, the display ad, the page search text

ad, whatever it is, the link in your email, whatever it is that brought them to your landing page, let's present them the supporting documentation, the supporting text that reconfirms that CTA and just says, "Yup, this is why I'm here, and this is what I'm gonna do," and get them on with themselves. If you hide all those awesome reasons why they should continue, package that up in a bunch of other words that you think is sophisticated, professional and is all necessary, then you're likely wrong. Just skim it down, make it easy to find, use bold, use bullet points, use colors, use all that fun stuff that you just described and it'll help out tremendously.

29:00 Justin Johnson: All that fun stuff, couldn't agree more. Alright. That is a wrap for today. I hope that you guys enjoyed our conversation on ways to improve your landing pages. With all the tips that we shared, there is really no reason to let your landing pages suffer any longer. Go out and take action and improve your landing pages today. If you don't feel comfortable doing this on your own, reach out, we can help. The show notes for today's episode will be available at www.neongoldfish.com/podcast. We are outta here for today, we will see you guys again next week.

29:38 Announcer: Thank you for listening to this episode of the Neon Noise Podcast. Did you enjoy the podcast? If so, please subscribe. Share with a friend, or write a review. We wanna cover the topics you wanna hear. If you have an idea for a topic you'd like Justin and Ken to cover, connect with us on Twitter at Neon Goldfish, or through our website at neongoldfish.com.