

# Online Advertising Forensics

We investigate how and why a text-based PPC ad produced 47% more conversions

## ABSTRACT

Compared to other areas in your funnel, PPC ads are relatively easy to test and optimize. Many times, we can change a few words in a PPC ad and see a significant increase in leads and/or e-commerce buys. This document transcribes a Web clinic, where our team of researchers dissected the messaging of a PPC ad that generated a 47% higher lead rate so that you can apply what we learned to your own campaigns.



MarketingExperiments.com



# Online Advertising Forensics

## We investigate how and why a text-based PPC ad produced 47% more conversions

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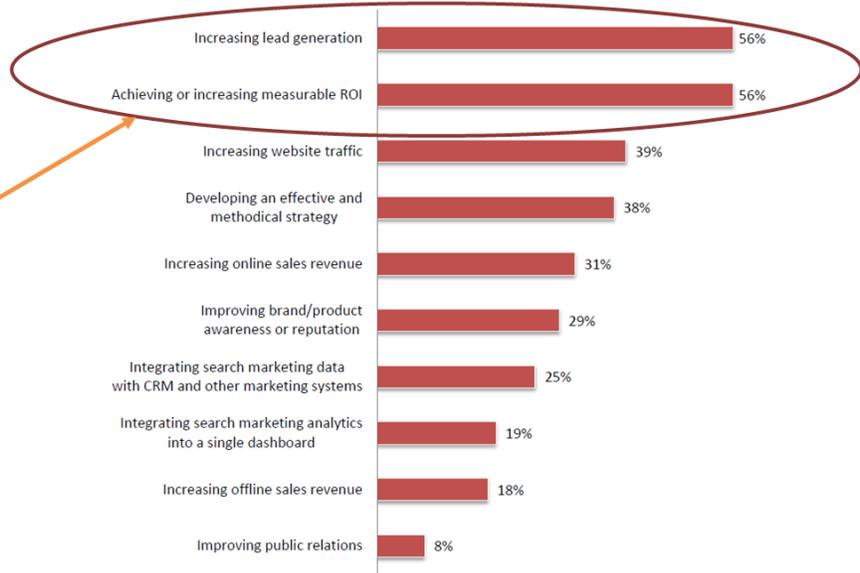


*[Note: This document is a transcript of our original Webclinic on [PPC optimization](#) that aired February 1, 2012. A [full video replay](#) is also available.]*

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** All right good afternoon we are here yet again with another [Marketing Experiment's Web Clinic](#). Years and years of research; I was just reviewing our catalog. I think the new research catalog that more or less provides an overview of the experiments is probably going to be somewhere more than 600 pages and that's just with a one-line description of the research that's gone into the clinics like you're seeing right now. In this particular clinic we're addressing [Online Advertising Forensics](#). How and why a text-based PPC ad produced 47% more conversions, and you can comment using [#webclinic](#) as we go forward. In the meantime I'll be joined today by Erin Fagin, she is a research manager in our group. She oversaw the particular case study and experiment that we're going to be talking about and we'll hear more from Erin later. She will also help us as we begin live optimization. Partway through this session, we're going to be looking at the submissions from the audience and reviewing them, optimizing them on the fly to give you key transferable principles that will help you go back and get improvements in your own campaigns.

And so as we move forward I want to draw your attention to a chart.

Q. Which were the MOST FRUSTRATING CHALLENGES with respect to Paid Search (PPC) effectiveness for your organization in the last 12 months?



Most frustrating challenges for PPC marketers are:

- Increasing Leads
- Increasing ROI

marketingsherpa Source: ©2011 MarketingSherpa Search Marketing Benchmark Survey Methodology: Fielded April 2011, N=1,530

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** We probably produced, I don't know, 200 different charts for this particular study analyzing paid search and in particular benchmarking performance. You'll notice on these charts that marketers identified their most frustrating challenges and in particular the top 2 were increasing leads and increasing ROI and as you'll notice that I like to bear down on that particular piece increasing ROI, we're going to be focusing deeply on that one issue, that one particular challenge with today's session. And as we do so I think I should raise a simple question, how can we achieve dramatic returns on simple changes?

### How can we achieve dramatic returns on simple changes?

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** What can we do that doesn't require too much energy, too much effort but could likely produce for us a significant increase in the results of our paid search campaigns?

As we think about that, I want to talk to you about a particular experiment, in fact I am going to invite Erin to walk up here for just a moment. She's coming nearby where she is sitting in the studio and this is Erin Fagin. Erin you oversaw this project with North American Spine, I see that its test protocol 4061. Tell us what the main objective of the experiment was?



**Experiment ID:** *North American Spine PPC Copy Test*

**Location:** MarketingExperiments Research Library

**Test Protocol Number:** TP4061

### Research Notes:

**Background:** North American Spine is the sole provider of the Accurascope procedure which is an innovative, minimally invasive spine surgery for back pain relief

**Goal:** To increase number of leads on home page.

**Primary research question:** Which benefit approach of the three treatments will increase the conversion rate?

**Approach:** A/B multifactor split test

**Erin Fagin:** Well really what we wanted to do was tap into what it was that visitors were motivated by?

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Yes.

**Erin Fagin:** Just click on the ad and go through to the landing page. We wanted to figure out what specific benefit approach was going to be most appealing to them?

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Excellent, excellent. We may have questions for you as this unfolds. The audience may have questions for you, so I may invite you to come back up and help us as we answer those questions and either way we'll talk soon again on the live optimization.

**Erin Fagin:** Sounds great.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** All right. So we're going to start to drill down this and as we do let me just point out that this particular research partner was brought to us by a paid search group [ROI revolution](#). They are very instrumental in helping us design this experiment and they were managing the paid search activities for this particular provider. They are very good at what they do and they've been excellent partners, in fact we have certified and trained most of their people so that even as they're thinking about paid search, the ads and the associated landing pages, they can do so around the vigorous methodology that we provide at MECLABS, and we may hear more about this as this unfolds but let me just point out the control.



*What are some problems with this control?*

Control

### Relief From Back Pain

Reclaim your life with a 30-minute groundbreaking back pain procedure.

[NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back\\_Pain](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back_Pain)

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** There it is relief from back pain. Now if you've never been in MECLABS clinic it's different. We need lots of input from you and you'll see the wording in the very strict limitations of Google's procedure, Reclaim Your Life With a 30-minute Groundbreaking Back Pain Procedure.

Now bear in mind, MECLABS does a lot of research on its own in our clinical environment, but you know the field tests, it's the field tests themselves that help us go in deeper and more profound understandings. In fact this particular study really intrigued this and I'll tell you more about that in just a bit, but instead what I like to do is invite you in the audience to help us optimize this ad. So you can use Twitter, or you can use the Q&A feature inside of this program that you're working with right now to kind of communicate to us what you would do to make this ad better, and I am just going to step over to the screens and look at some of your feedback. And so as you are watching that, typing in the number one change you would make, use this Q&A feature, the number one change you would make to get improved results for this particular paid search ad?

Look at the question. Someone said to me about the keywords, that's Nicole, and someone said use the keyword tool to optimize the words that was Daniel. Christian gave us a different headline, Get Relief From Back Pain. J P said, include a call to action. Someone said suffering from back pain. Someone else said capitalize the words. Someone else said, this was Max, why this product? Jeff said make more credible with specifics. Pose a question, someone else said change the phrase reclaim. Sally says reword the URL to be more meaningful and I am looking here carefully. Another, Rishab said change the URL. Kelly said add a specific offer. All of those are good pieces of advice and if you're here and you're running paid search campaigns you probably have to make decisions like this every day.

Now we only have 60minutes and in 60minutes we want to do something that will help you achieve a dramatic difference when you go back to work in approximately an hour. Something that would be tangible and actionable so let's look carefully at the treatments developed for this particular experiment and then let's think about what we can learn together from the way it all unfolded. So here is the first treatment, "Same Day Back Pain Relief."

## Treatment #1

Same-day Back Pain Relief

Try AccuraScope back pain treatment  
Innovative, single 30-min procedure

[NorthAmericanSpine.com/AccuraScope](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/AccuraScope)

**Dr. Flint McLaughlin:** And you'll notice the wording try Accurascope Back Pain Treatment, Innovative, Single 30-Minute Procedure. That's an interesting ad, it's an ad that is worth testing, but we didn't stop there. We prepared another treatment and let's look at this one, Avoid Open Back Surgery, Try Accurascope Back Pain Treatment, One Micro-incision For Pain Relief.

## Treatment #2

Avoid open back surgery

Try AccuraScope back pain treatment  
One micro incision for pain relief.

[NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back\\_Pain](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back_Pain)

**Dr. Flint McLaughlin:** So here is the control, then you see two treatments and you seen the landing page.

**Control**  
[Relief From Back Pain](#)  
 Reclaim your life with a 30-minute groundbreaking back pain procedure.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back\\_Pain](#)

**Treatment #1**  
[Same-day Back Pain Relief](#)  
 Try AccuraScope back pain treatment  
 Innovative, single 30-min procedure  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/AccuraScope](#)

**Treatment #2**  
[Avoid open back surgery](#)  
 Try AccuraScope back pain treatment  
 One micro incision for pain relief.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back\\_Pain](#)

**Landing Page**  
 North American Spine  
 The Leader in Minimally Invasive Spine Care  
 Ask An Expert  
 Complete the following form for a prompt response to your question!  
 First Name:   
 Last Name:   
 Phone:   
 Email Address:   
 How did you hear about us? - Select -  
 Your Question:   
 [Submit] [Ad]  
 Back to...the greens!  
 Are You In Pain? [You have options...]  
 Treatment Options [Click for AccuraScope™ info...]  
 MRI Review! [Click here to get answer!]  
 Are You In Pain? You Have Options About AccuraScope Who We Are Seminars Testimonials Spine Blog  
 See The Difference  
 As seen on KHOU-TV Houston The Accurascope for back pain  
 Back Surgery for Back Pain Relief  
 How can we help you? North American Spine can help you transform your life with back pain relief.  
 Have back pain? Patient Info Presentation Treatment Options Demonstration Video

**Dr. Flint McLaughlin:** Audience, which one of these do you think will produce the highest yield? Is that the control treatment one or treatment two. Let me let you vote. Use the Q&A feature or use Twitter and talk to us. Which one do you think is the best performing paid search ad, and when I say best performing I am talking about the one that will produce the most revenue, the most ultimate conversions. So let's see how you're voting.

Nicole says number one, Ryan Fox says number one, Dave says number one, Bob says two, Charles says number one, Vanessa says number one, it looks like Kim says number two, Laura says number two then I see Michael for one and Tommy for one and Ted for one and Neil for one and Sarah for one. So as your comments are coming in know that we're not just looking so that we can talk to you now but we're looking at your comments so we can measure the efficacy of this clinic. We try to optimize it with every single pass. I believe in self-optimizing systems. Optimizations shouldn't be an event; it should be a process. And so we look at that three ads even as you did and then we look at your feedback and we have a large focus group and this focus group is consisted or consist of expert marketers and you are going to give us your thoughts. And we're going to go back and analyze those thoughts even after this event is over but for now let's look at results.

 **46.6% Increase in Conversion**  
*The Treatment generated 46.6% more leads*

Versions	Conversion Rate	Relative Difference	Statistical Confidence
Control	1.8%	-	-
Treatment #1	1.6%	-7.9%	 95%
<b>Treatment #2</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>46.6%</b>	 95%

 **What you need to understand:** With simple but nuanced adjustments, treatment #2 was able to achieve a 46.6% lift over the control.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** So here is how the three pieces performed. The first had a control, this is the control the conversion rate was 1.8%. Treatment one performed 1.6%, treatment two 2.6%. What's the lot of difference? Well the winner was treatment two. If you chose treatment two over here well, congratulations you got it right. And Google the Grand Casino on the Internet was able to help us, help this merchant in the sense that they provided the forum but it took the merchant to outsmart the competitors in this space to achieve 46.6% increase. And so look at this with a simple but more set of adjustments treatment two performed the key raise, which raises this question what is the adjustment? What did we learn from this?

And this is where it gets fascinating to me because yes we're going to take some principles, yes we're going to teach you, in fact we're going to teach you three adjustments that you may be able to make three ways to think about the ad we are developing now, but as you think about that lets look at what we can learn in terms of discoveries from this experiment. What you're going to see is a list prepared by our own team as they thought about the action, as they thought about the results. It's not enough in testing to discover which treatment, or which single you know, A, B or C, which of these pieces of collateral won. It's much more important to ask why did that particular expression win and then connect that to a "what" question, what does that tell me about my customer, or my prospective customer?

So you have to think more deeply. Marketers are so busy asking how they don't take enough time to ask why? And its asking why that leads to the breakthroughs. Marketers have enough information they need more wisdom, customer wisdom. Look at this first discovery, and it's not so much a discovery as it is a curiosity, something that provoked us to think. We noticed that prospects could be more motivated by the negative than the positive.

**DISCOVERY #1:** Prospects can be more motivated by the negative than the positive

**Control**  
[Relief From Back Pain](#)  
 Reclaim your life with a 30-minute groundbreaking back pain procedure.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back\\_Pain](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back_Pain)

**Treatment #1**  
[Same-day Back Pain Relief](#)  
 Try AccuraScope back pain treatment  
 Innovative, single 30-min procedure  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/AccuraScope](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/AccuraScope)

**Treatment #2**  
[Avoid open back surgery](#)  
 Try AccuraScope back pain treatment  
 One micro incision for pain relief.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back\\_Pain](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back_Pain)

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Look at the difference. Relief from Back Pain, that's a positive. Avoid Open Back Surgery, that's a negative. We go to something else; a few words can dramatically influence a prospect's perception.

**DISCOVERY #1:** Prospects can be more motivated by the negative than the positive

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[Relief From Back Pain](#)  
 Reclaim your life with a 30-minute groundbreaking back pain procedure.  
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[Avoid open back surgery](#)  
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 One micro incision for pain relief.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back\\_Pain](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back_Pain)

**DISCOVERY #2:** A few words can dramatically influence a prospect's perception.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** These ads had minor changes. If you think about them, the difference is important but it's just a change of a few words and yet the result was I think dramatic.

There's another curiosity. A paid search ad though limited in length can actually say too much.

**DISCOVERY #1:** Prospects can be more motivated by the negative than the positive

**DISCOVERY #2:** A few words can dramatically influence a prospect's perception.

**DISCOVERY #3:** A PPC ad, though limited in length, can actually say too much

**Control**

[Relief From Back Pain](#)  
 Reclaim your life with a 30-minute groundbreaking back pain procedure.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back\\_Pain](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back_Pain)

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[NorthAmericanSpine.com/AccuraScope](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/AccuraScope)

**Treatment #2**

[Avoid open back surgery](#)  
 Try AccuraScope back pain treatment  
 One micro incision for pain relief.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back\\_Pain](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back_Pain)

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** You say "what do you mean say too much?" that's going to unfold more as this whole clinic continues so standby. Here's number four the best paid PC ad or the best paid search ad doesn't always get the most clicks.

**DISCOVERY #1:** Prospects can be more motivated by the negative than the positive

**DISCOVERY #2:** A few words can dramatically influence a prospect's perception.

**DISCOVERY #3:** A PPC ad, though limited in length, can actually say too much

**DISCOVERY #4:** The best PPC ad doesn't always get the most clicks

Control

[Relief From Back Pain](#)  
 Reclaim your life with a 30-minute groundbreaking back pain procedure.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back\\_Pain](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back_Pain)

Treatment #1

[Same-day Back Pain Relief](#)  
 Try AccuraScope back pain treatment  
 Innovative, single 30-min procedure  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/AccuraScope](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/AccuraScope)

Treatment #2

[Avoid open back surgery](#)  
 Try AccuraScope back pain treatment  
 One micro incision for pain relief.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back\\_Pain](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back_Pain)

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Now to understand that we'd almost have to backwards and if you'd go backwards, let's just walk back and rewind, there's a relative difference in what we see as a conversion rate but there's a greater difference and we think about the difference between the associated clicks and the absolute conversion. You'll see more of this as this clinic unfolds. So we're going to discuss three paid search ad calibrations you can make to help you extract more ROI from your campaigns.

*Today, we are going to discuss three PPC ad calibrations you can make help you extract more ROI from your campaigns.*

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** They keyway is to translate those discoveries into something actionable. It's not enough for us to share with you the latest findings, the real key is how can I take those findings and apply them now in my own context and to do that we've tried to simplify the research and offer you these three points. And so let's look at the first one, a paid search ad is promise in exchange for a click.

 **Key Principles**

A paid search ad is a promise in exchange for a click that leads to a \_\_\_\_\_ (sale, lead, yield, etc.).

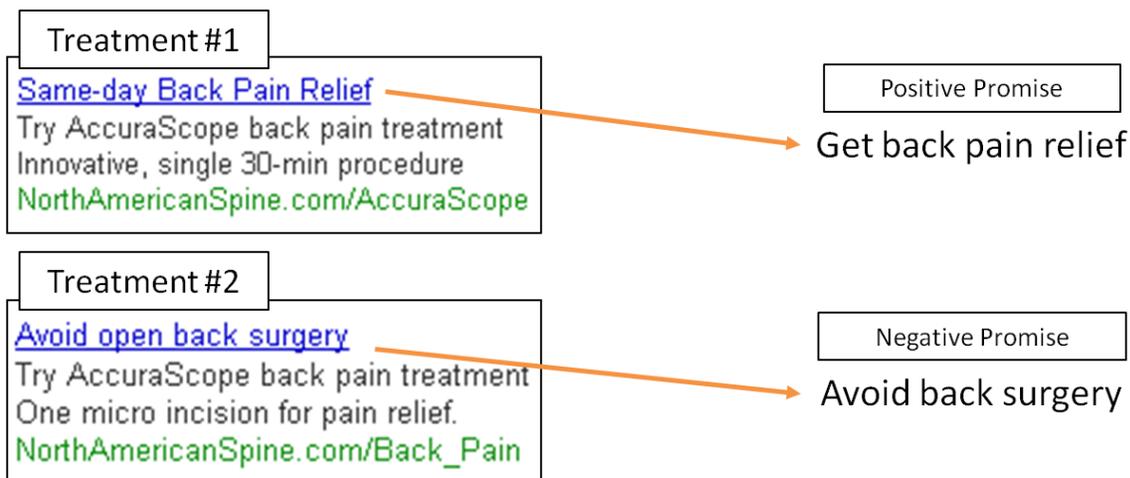
**CALIBRATION #1:** The core of the promise

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Now that’s a single sentence and we’re going to use this sentence as more or less an organizing thought. You need to think of your paid search ad as a promise. If you don’t think of it that way you can’t really see the adjustments that you need to make. Look at the ads as they unfold and you’ll see that in a sense we’re asking you to click in exchange for something. It’s not so much because our company is better, it’s not so much that we’re trying to sell in the ad, but we’re really selling a click and in exchange we’re giving you something, we’re promising you something. As you think about paid search in that way it helps to start to unpack these three calibrations and here’s the first.

**CALIBRATION #1: The core of the promise**

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Think about calibrating the core of the promise in your ad, and so let’s unpack that. By testing variations on the core of the promise we were able to discover that customers are more likely to desire avoiding back pain surgery than getting back pain relief.

By testing variations on the **core of the promise**, we were able to discover that customers were more likely to desire avoiding back surgery than getting back pain relief.



**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** One is essentially a positive promise and one is essentially a negative promise and by moving from a positive to a negative promise we are attempting to change the core of the promise itself. Now that’s only one-way to change the core. What are some of the other ways that you can make a difference? What are some of the other ways that you change the core of the promise? Let’s look, changing the promise in terms of its key benefit.

**Example core promises:**

Promising a key benefit

Not this

[Get Textbooks for Less](#)  
[www.directtextbook.com](http://www.directtextbook.com)  
 directtextbook.com is rated ★★  
 New, Used, Rental and Ebooks  
 Compare prices before you buy

But this

[iBooks Textbooks](#)  
[www.apple.com/education](http://www.apple.com/education)  
Available with a tap From the  
 iBookstore on any iPad. Learn more.

*Ease of Use*

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** So not this, here is an ad that offers a description of what you receive but more like this, here is an ad that emphasizes a key benefit and that benefit is ease of use available with tap. Now that's the example of promising a key benefit, let's look at it another way that you can calibrate the core of your promise and that way is by promising an intangible.

**Example core promises:**

Promising a key benefit

Promising an intangible

- Security
- Quality
- Reliability

Not this

[Bianchi Road Bikes](#) ★  
[www.bikeattack.com](http://www.bikeattack.com)  
 Italian **bikes** on sale!  
 310-5818014

But this

[High End Carbon Bikes](#) ★  
[www.francobicycles.com/bikes](http://www.francobicycles.com/bikes)  
Lifetime Warranty, Light Weight,  
Long-Term Durability, Trusted Brand

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** An intangible might be the security, it might be the quality, it might be the reliability, and you might achieve that in a number of different ways. I'll show you an ad that doesn't do it very well and I'll show you an ad that does it better. Look at this lifetime warranty lightweight long-term durability and trusted brand. Now those are intangibles, but they're important intangibles. Sometimes you can achieve this same with specifics instead of lifetime warranty or after that you might

say you know, 76 years in business or you know the kinds of specific facts that lead the person to make a conclusion. Nobody cares that you have seven thousand customers worldwide unless that's translated into the fact that you know what, this must be a reliable company; a lot of people use their service. That's the kind of intangible that you can sometime promise with your paid search ad and get result but that may be helpful or it may be hurtful and that's all we have to test.

In particular it maybe hurtful because you're promising an intangible before that matters. I am going to show you what I mean as you look at the next key and that is, consider a new way to calibrate promising an interim decision aid.

**Example core promises:**

Promising a key benefit

Promising an intangible

Promising an interim decision aide

- Free Trial
- Comparison Chart
- Whitepaper

Not this

[#1 Business Software](#)  
 6459+ Clients. On-Demand Access.  
 One System for the Entire Company.  
[www.NetSuite.com/BusinessSoftware](http://www.NetSuite.com/BusinessSoftware)

But this

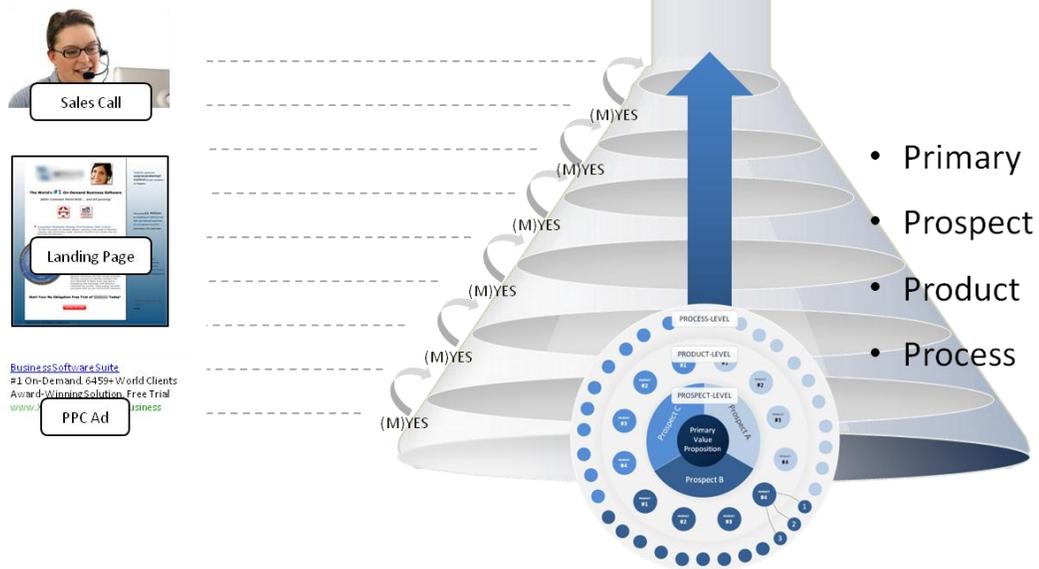
[Business Software Suite](#)  
 #1 On-Demand. 6459+ World Clients  
 Award-Winning Solution. **Free Trial**  
[www.NetSuite.com/BusinessSoftware](http://www.NetSuite.com/BusinessSoftware)

**Dr. Flint McLaughlin:** Now that's someway that you can help the prospects make the right decision, people don't decide which instruments provider they're going to select on the basis of a paid search ad. There simply isn't enough content for that to happen. So what can we use to help them decide your ad should be clicked on rather than another? In essence your ad has its own value proposition, just like your product has a value proposition and your company has a value proposition. The paid search ad has a derivative value proposition and it's about why I would click on this ad, in fact the precise question you should ask about every single paid search ad is this, if I am the ideal customer why should I click on this ad instead of all those others?

Now all those others, that's an important concept because as their promises change so then must your ad, because unless you remain the best answer to that question you won't maintain your place in the search engines. That's why they're so difficult. Thinking about that helps us go back and say "okay I am making a promise and that promise is very important but why would someone choose this particular promise and at this particular time?" I'll explain just a little bit more, so here's an example of an ad that's talking about intangible, 6459 plus clients. That is talking about securities, to build your liability, its promising something it's implying an intangible, but look at this ad, same company and this time it's

talking about an award winning solution and a free trial. Now what that ad is doing is enabling you to make the decision easier by giving you a chance to take an interim step in the process.

If I am the ideal customer, why should I purchase from you rather than any of your competitors?



**Dr. Flint McLaughlin:** Let's see how that works by going back to something I've talked to you before, first of all you notice others in the funnel is inverted. People aren't falling into your funnel, people are falling out. Gravity isn't working for you, gravity is working against you. You can't even start to think properly about marketing unless you invert the funnel. We've earned 10000 page tests, path tests. We've tested across more than a billion emails. We've recorded 5 million phone calls, we have the largest library of case studies experiments and after all that we search over all of the years. We start to understand that much of what we learned about marketing doesn't really apply in the real world context that we have been eking out this research within. Part of our problem is we are just not understanding the funnel.

We think that the traditional funnel is a good model for what's happening, actually it deceives us, it confuses us, it obscures the reality, way less people get through the funnel and enter it. They're being dragged out and it is the force of the value proposition, which counters that and drives them up the funnel. In fact, again this is the key point, even when they get to the ultimate yes that should purchase it's not because they came in your funnel and decided to buy.

It's because they decided to say yes to a whole series of other micro steps, micro decisions, to click on an ad, to read the headline on the landing page, to engage with the first paragraph, to transfer their attention further down the page and glean more data about how to respond into their e-mail address etc., culminating perhaps in a click of the button, but in this whole process they have had to say yes, yes, yes, yes, yes and it takes an unbroken sequence of yes's to achieve an ultimate yes, but it only takes one no to stop, to arrest the entire process.

Now that's important because sometimes, in fact one of the most important ways we mess-up our paid search ad is we ask for too much too soon. Now I've often used when I am teaching like a 6 or 7-hour course on value proposition, well I will often use the example of what happens when you leave work and you go to the bar, and a young man sees a beautiful girl and he decides he wants to see if he can explore a relationship. You know he can't just walk up to her, grab her by the shoulders and kiss her on the lips. That's likely going to get him slapped across the face and probably thrown out of the bar. Before she's ready for that particular call to action she has to say yes to several other things, in fact he has to add a headline we call the pickup line.

He has to engage her into conversation; she has to respond to the headline and if she does respond she'll do just what your customer will do or your prospective customer should open up. And then she will consider what you have to say. Now probably every woman on this call has heard a lousy pickup line and every marketer on this call has read a lousy headline, but in the end the headline is designed to open up a conversation and I have found in my 25 years of marriage that it took a lot of micro yeses to get her ready for the ultimate question and to achieve an ultimate yes.

That's not just an attractive analogy, that's the way marketing works. It is more like reality is and sometimes this approach, this walking up to the girl and kissing her well, it seems ridiculous to us on the call, we do it all the daylong in our marketing materials. It is called keeping the call to action above the fold. Keeping the call to action above the fold may satisfy some truism that you've heard from long ago, but often it needs asking them before they're ready and if they are not ready then guess what, they can terminate your existence with a click of the remote, right down to the green arrow.

Ladies on the phone, don't you wish you had a remote, a mouse and every time a guy pestered you with a bad pickup line you could just click the button and he'll disappear! You unfortunately don't have that power in the bar but you certainly have that power on the Internet and that makes the job of marketers even more difficult. I point all of that out to point out that when you're designing a paid search ad sometimes you need to recognize that if they're not ready to buy they're trying to make a decision so promise them something that will help them get closer to the ultimate decision.



## Which promise do you choose?

### Ads by Google

#### Avoid open back surgery

Try AccuraScope back pain treatment One micro incision for pain relief.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/AccuraScope](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/AccuraScope)

#### Get \$75 of Advertising

Promote Your Business On Google. Claim Your \$75 Coupon Now!  
[www.Google.com/AdWords](http://www.Google.com/AdWords)

#### Low Back Disc Pain?

Safe Outpatient Procedure. Relief From Disc Pain In Less Than 1 Week!  
[www.LaserSpineInstitute.com/Disc](http://www.LaserSpineInstitute.com/Disc)

Choose the promise which gives you the most appealing only-factor

**Dr. Flint McLaughlin:** An example might be seen here, in fact if I back up, let me think, I am thinking about the easiest way to explain that to you, I'll just mention this, it might be that you promised a free trial, it might be that you promised a download, it might be that you promised a comparison chart but all of those are ways to get closer to the decision process, which finally leads us and we are still on point one calibrating the core of your promise but we're almost done. And it leads to what I think is the essential question and that is this "alright, I am in the paid search engine, all these ads are promises, some don't even know their promise, so they are poor promise but they must be suggesting something in exchange for a click even if they don't know what they're suggesting or how they do it", but some of these ads are well designed and some of them have really important offers, so how do I, lets suppose that I am their prospective customer, how do I know which ad to choose? How do I make that selection? Well, candidly it comes back to value proposition. I am going to select the ad that promises me the most perceived value in exchange for the least amount of perceived cost.

So you're going to choose the promise, which has the most for the least, and in fact if it has most then by definition it has that only factor. If your ad looks like the other ad, if your ad doesn't promise anymore than the other ad promises, you're not likely going to see a significant click through rate. So what you must do when you think about your ad is ask "how can I have an only factor in this ad?" and every time your competitors change their messaging, you have changed yours. That's why a group like our revolution can be instrumental for a group like North American Spine, because they will have people, and they all day long looking at the search results, looking at the various ads, checking the messaging and applying some of their fears I am talking about right now to make certain that you're ad has the strongest value proposition. And in this case it paid off heavily for North American Spine.

Let me take you to the second, there's only three and if you haven't been to one of these clinics before we often get through this kind of dense, tight, explanation and then get right in the live optimization applying what we're talking about. We're going to do that with you soon so let's just learn a little bit

more and then we'll switch and look at examples submitted by the audience. Before I do, give me feedback, is this helping you? In fact there's great questions coming in, and some of these we may answer on our blog, but are you finding that we're going at the right pace and is this something that's helping you that you think about? I have seen good feedback, good I am watching, keep that feedback coming because I calibrate I am trying to optimize on the fly and make this the best presentation that we can possibly give you.

So let's look at number two, the quality of the click.

 **Key Principles**

A paid search ad is a promise in exchange for a click that leads to a \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e. sale, lead, yield, etc.).

**CALIBRATION #1:** The core of the promise

 **CALIBRATION #2:** The quality of the click

**Dr. Flint McLaughlin:** Now, that's something we've heard before but let's break it down and understand it because it's something fascinating here about this particular case study that I think bears for closer examination.

Even though treatment #2 received significantly less clicks, it still achieved 46% more leads on the landing page.

Experiment Results: A Closer Look

Versions	Clickthrough Rate	Relative CTR Difference
Control	0.138%	-
Treatment #1	0.069%	-49.8%
<b>Treatment #2</b>	<b>0.056%</b>	<b>-59.0%</b>

**Dr. Flint McLaughlin:** Look at the click through rate for each of these treatments, 0.138, .069 and 056 or .056. Wait a second, think about that again, wasn't the winning treatment, treatment one? Look at it carefully, treatment two is only 056, treatment one is 069. Treatment one outperformed treatment two and by the way you marketers that were smug when you realized you picked number two, you had a reason to be proud, but you marketers who picked number one might argue or see you were right.

Treatment one got more click through, it did, but as you can see if you pay attention up here and the relative difference that there's more to it, because in fact though treatment one got more clicks, treatment two achieved 46% more leads.

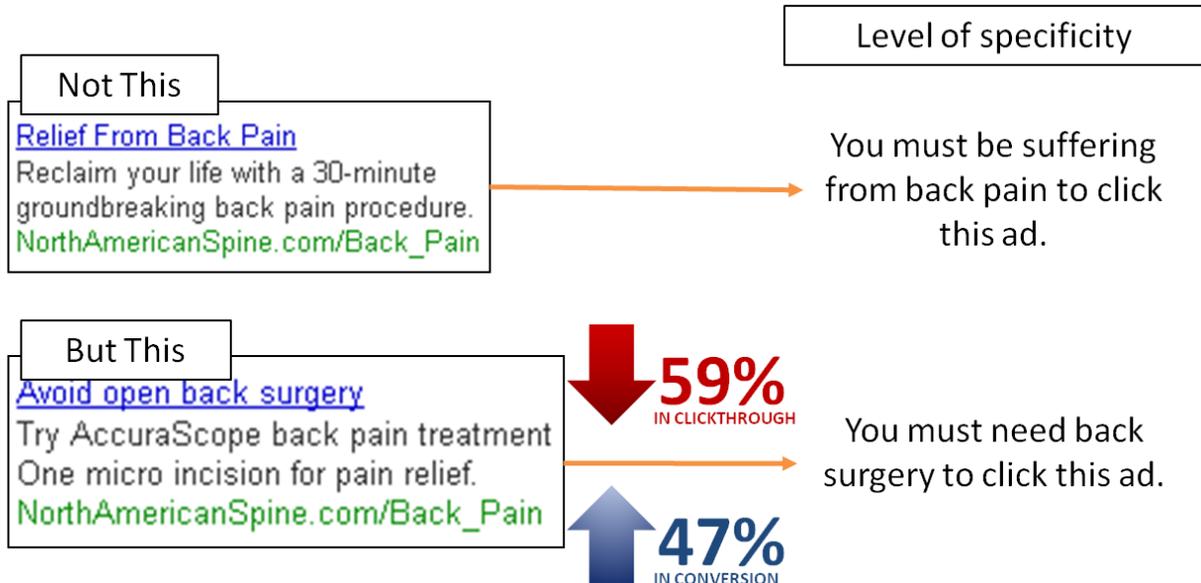
Now listen that's a lot more money in the bank. Let's assume the leads are of good quality, let's assume that at least identical quality and they likely are very close. Maybe some degradation because whenever you get more leads you'll see some degradation but it's a lot more quality leads and if sales is working in the marketing we all know right that sales works every good lead you give them and that they appreciate and value all that you do and that there's never tension at any time between sales and marketing.

And I am speaking tongue-in-cheek for those of you that are in suffering and pain as I say those words, the reality is this should be more money for this company, and it should be more money because they got a lot more leads and not only they got more leads but they lowered their CPA. Remember this isn't just about volume, it is about profit, cost per acquisition is going down. I know I had but this higher clickthrough, the whole thing starts to make a big difference in terms of overall results.

All right so lets think about that for just a moment, by the way if you wonder what's going on? I'll show you, Austin just walked in. They don't want to interrupt me while I am teaching, he holds up this little sign to me that says try not to look at Erin, the camera is the audience. I need a Ph.D. to do this job and I'll read that to you but the thing is the cameras are right here and Erin is right there on a stool, and Erin is a lot prettier than those cameras in that screen. And so I am talking to Erin part of the time, on the left is Paul Cheney, and you will notice that I never look at him because he right over there and he's ugly. I am going to get his back but I'll try and look at the camera, in the meantime "Erin, quit distracting me."

All right so, let's think more about the quality of the clicks. All right so, by modulating and this is an answer to an important question, how do I improve click quality? How do I get the right people to click in my ad? Well, you can modulate two components, specificity and friction.

By modulating **specificity** and **friction** in the messaging of our PPC ad, we were able pay for less clicks while increasing overall conversion.



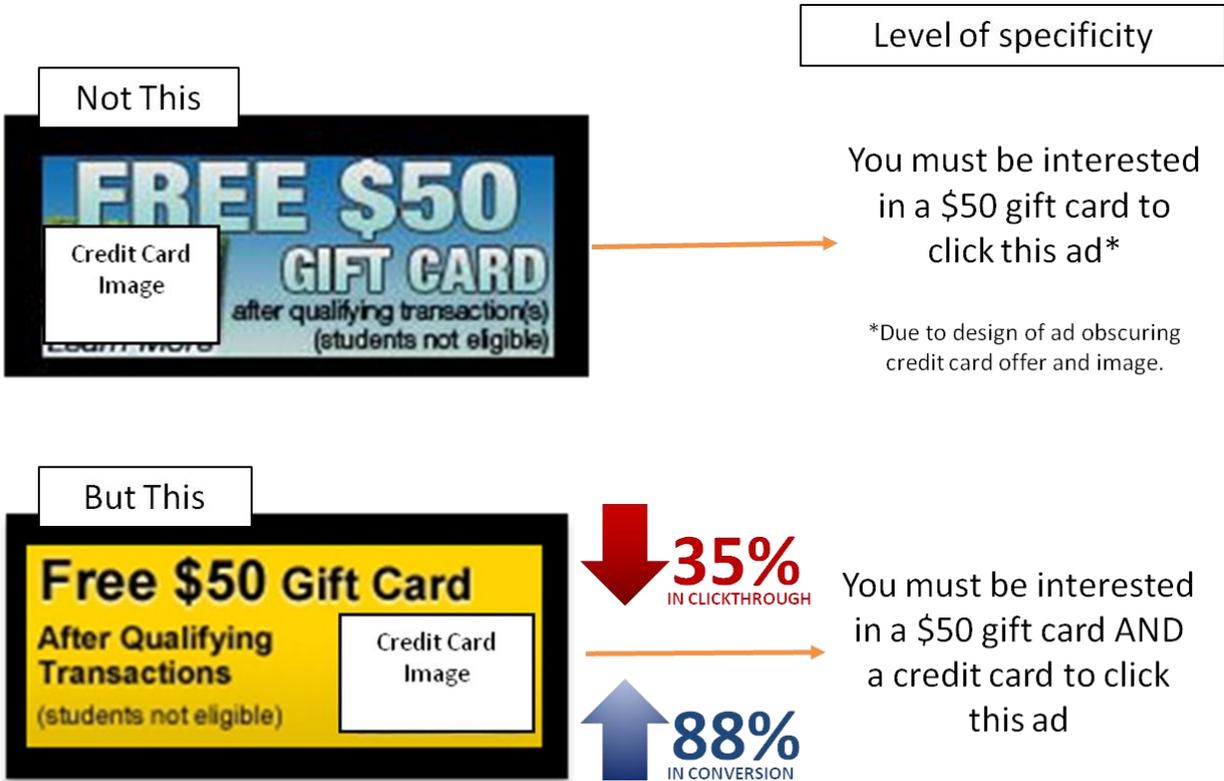
**Dr. Flint McLaughlin:** By modulating specificity and by modulating friction in the messaging of your PPC ad you're able to pay for less clicks while increase in overall conversion. You'll see a significant increase not only in the revenue piece but you should see significant decrease in your CPA or Cost Per Acquisition, so not this but this.

Think about the two ads, think how they're different? That second ad is focused on people who are about to have, or who are in danger you might say of back surgery. Now we all know that back surgery is painful, its difficult, and it produces dubious results. And I'll tell you something, I know a little bit of this group and I know that they don't even want to help you if there's something better you can do on your own. If physical therapy will help you, if stretching will help you, if some other solution will help you there's no sense in even using that procedure, or as they say here micro incision.

They're all good about that, they're very honest about that so they have a very targeted audience. They want that patient that is likely going to need back surgery but whose is willing to do anything to avoid it. And they can offer a solution that produces a remarkable result and is of course the foundation of their business and its what informs their value proposition.

What we've done here is changed this ad so it's getting a select group of prospective customers, but it's also giving the sales group better low qualified leads, and then it just has a downstream impact on the entire business. So, think about it, it decreases click through by 59% but it increases conversion by 47%.

Let's look at another example, here is a credit card offer now this is also from our source, it's a recent research report.



**Dr. Flint McLaughlin:** And we've obscured the credit card image to give some anonymity to the partner, but look at this first, free 50-dollar gift card. Now there's specificity there, they're talking about the value of those numbers, but look at the improved ad, free 50-dollar gift card after qualifying transactions, now it's really clear there's a credit card image here and you got it interested in a 50-dollar gift card and a credit card to click on this ad. That's the difference in the language and that difference translates into a change in results.

So the second ad gets 35% decrease in click through but the increase in conversion is 88%. So what we're doing is we're modeling two components, specificity and friction, and by doing that we can ramp up the qualifying effort that goes on with the lead campaign itself. So let's think about ways to increase the quality of click and we'll do this rapidly, I am watching my time, I think we're right on schedule.

I am just going to walk over here and look at some of your questions and there's a lot coming in and they're good questions. We may pick a few of these that we can try to answer. I am just going to watch my time and if we don't answer for you now, we'll try to answer them for you later and some of these we may answer in a good blog entry poll.

So looking here at the screen again, let's look up. Adding new brand product is one way to increase the quality click; I think we all know that one.

**Ways to increase the quality of the click:**

Adding your brand/product name

Not This

[CRM Software](#)    
[www.frontrange.com/GoldMine](http://www.frontrange.com/GoldMine)   
1 (888) 896 2372  
Optimize Sales Performance And  
Create Lifetime Customers.

But This

[SugarCRM Free Trial](#)   
[www.sugarcrm.com/Free\\_Trial](http://www.sugarcrm.com/Free_Trial)  
Boost Sales & Retain Customers with  
Powerful **CRM Software**. Try It Now!

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Adding cost points, but bear in mind, cost is not just price, cost could begin out of time, cost could be any effort or energy that's required by you in order to avail yourself of a solution, price is just one way.

**Ways to increase the quality of the click:**

Adding your brand/product name

Adding Cost Points

Not This

[Cybersonic Toothbrush](#)   
[www.sonictoothbrush.com](http://www.sonictoothbrush.com)  
World's Fastest Electric Brush  
Lifetime Warranty & Free Brushes

But This

[Toothbrush Super Sale](#)   
[www.just4teeth.com](http://www.just4teeth.com)  
From a Dentist Owned Site! Top  
Brands for Less. **From \$1.29**

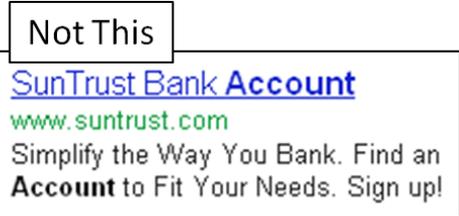
**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** And well look at this, let's go back, not this but this, not this, look at the difference from a \$1.29 you've added a cost point.

**Ways to increase the quality of the click:**

Adding your brand name

Adding price

Adding a customer qualifiers



**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Not this who was adding customer qualifiers, simplify the way you bet, find an account to fit your needs but this, I think this you're back up here. There you go adding customer qualifiers that's hybrid funds by the way in case you wonder just what happened? I have a screen here and I have a screen here and the screen here, and the screen here is moving and this one wasn't and I don't know why but I assume that's over in post production and I see that Luke has a gun now that he's waving at me.

All right so anyway look at the screen and what you can see is that the addition of the word hybrid funds gives us a customer qualifier. So that brings us to the third way to calibrate this paid search ad, and we talked about calibration one which was the core of the promise, calibration two which was the quality of the click but let's look at one more and you'll notice that we've been looking at this sentence at the top.

 **Key Principles**

A paid search ad is a promise in exchange for a click that leads to a \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e. sale, lead, yield, etc.).

**CALIBRATION #1:** The core of the promise

**CALIBRATION #2:** The quality of the click

 **CALIBRATION #3:** The clarity of the offer

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** First we talked about the promise then we talked about the click and then we're going to talk about, do you see that blank? that break can be filled into a lot of things. It might be a cell, it might be a lead but whatever that object is there; we need clarity. Now listen to me carefully, we have very limited time and I've tried to give you helpful information but I think this third point is the most important one. I am not telling you that testing the core of the promise its category is it good? I am not

saying it will want quality click, I am just saying that sometimes its hard to get a quality click, sometimes its really hard to discern how to get the core of the promise right? I mean you can look at two and say I don't know which one will have to produce the highest until you test you'll never know. But this third item clarity, this is the one that we fail out most often and yet it's the easiest one to correct.

**By adjusting the clarity of the offer, potential customers were able to see precisely what they were going to get when they clicked.**

**Not This**

Relief From Back Pain  
 Reclaim your life with a 30-minute groundbreaking back pain procedure.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back\\_Pain](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back_Pain)

Short is not always simple

What is this? Surgery? An Adjustment? And Exercise?

**But This**

Avoid open back surgery  
 Try AccuraScope back pain treatment  
 One micro incision for pain relief.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back\\_Pain](http://NorthAmericanSpine.com/Back_Pain)

Conveys the simplicity of the solution

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** So, I only have perhaps five minutes to teach this but if you invest these next five minutes, I am going to kind of take you kind of deeply into three ways you can improve the clarity of what you're saying in a paid search ad. So here is the first, take a look at this ad, not this, short is not always simple. What is this by the way? Ground breaking back pain procedure. Is this surgery? Is it an adjustment, like a chiropractic adjustment? Is it an exercise? What are you getting here? And then look at the difference in the winning ad.

One micro incision. Now I think that one micro incision is specific, it's clear, it conveys simplicity of the whole approach and it helps. When you have a value proposition you don't need the resort to hype, you don't need to worry about some of the magical words that copywriters slave over because clarity triumphs persuasion.

Let's look at how to achieve that clarity. Now I am going to talk to you about three ways to achieve clarity and you've probably not heard these from us before and if you'll follow with these we'll take that general principle and we'll give you something very specific. Now you probably don't have time to do this but if you have your own paid search ad, think about your own paid search ad right now and ask yourself what you can do with that paid search ad in order to improve it. If you can pull one up in your computer screen and still follow with us do it. But as you think about it that way, I think it will help you see the construction of your sentences. So let me work on the first principle and that is use commonly understood nouns.

**Ways to increase the clarity of the offer:**

Use commonly understood nouns

Not This

[Lead Success CRM](#)

Cloud Lead Response—Immediate

Results **PowerDialer**—Try it Free

[Insidesales.com/Lead\\_Response\\_CRM](http://insidesales.com/Lead_Response_CRM)

But This

[Easy to Use CRM Software](#)

#1 CRM Software in Outlook.

Grow **Sales** & Manage Your **Contacts!**

[www.avidian.com/CRM-Software](http://www.avidian.com/CRM-Software)

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Now look at the negative example, Power Dialer how many of you know what a Power Dialer is? Unless that's an important brand that everyone else is familiar with it's a vague noun that doesn't immediately connect with understanding. Look at the difference in the example. Look at the words sales, contacts, how clear those nouns are.

We know what you're talking about here but we're not certain what you're talking about right there, yes so are the target audience might be more so but the point is not to argue with the technicalities of the two ads the point is to think about every noun in your ad and ask you do I need to explain this noun or does this noun explain itself?

I am going to say that again, do I need to explain this noun with modifiers or does this noun explain itself? Anybody here that's got writing experience in terms of a literature background knows that some of your great writers despised adjectives and adverbs. They said "If we can get the right noun, we don't need them." Hemmingway was that way. In fact Hemmingway said "make every word tell." Now I am stressing that not because I just like modifiers in writing copy of sales, modifiers are powerful and they're good but you shouldn't have to use your modifier to clarify a noun. You should use your modifier to intensify the appeal, intensify the appeal are the only factor associated with a noun.

So let's look at something else. Use precise modifiers.

**Ways to increase the clarity of the offer:**

Use commonly understood nouns

Use precise modifiers

Not This

[Child Sponsorship](#)

\$25 month to Educate a **Needy** Child  
Become a Child Sponsor Today!

[www.islandimpact.com](http://www.islandimpact.com)

But This

[Sponsor a child in India](#)

Pathway's orphanage provides  
quality care to **homeless** children.

[www.pathway.org.in](http://www.pathway.org.in)

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** What do you mean? Well, educate a needy child. Needy is not so precise. Let's look at a different example. Let's look at a different example, and quality care to homeless children. Okay homeless is clearer than needy you could be needy because you don't have an education, you can be needy because you're homeless, you can be needy because you don't have food, you can be needy in a lot of ways but the word homeless is more specific.

Now is there a better example? Many. We just pulled these from the net to try and teach you critical points but as you think about them don't get lost on the main point. Don't tell me you are the leading, that's vague. Tell me you're number one if you're number one and if you're not number one tell me something else that makes a big difference. Think about that and let me continue with lots of examples of precise modifiers, we'll see them as we go to the screen in live optimization in just a moment. Let me give you another one, use point sensitive sentences.

**Ways to increase the clarity of the offer:**

Use commonly understood nouns

Use precise modifiers

Use point-sensitive sentences

Not This

[GEICO Insurance](#)  
 You Could Save \$500+ on FL Car Insurance. Free, Instant Quote.  
[www.geico.com](http://www.geico.com)

But This

[State Farm® Car Insurance](#)  
 40 Million Drivers Trust Us.  
 Quote Now & Get To A Better State.  
[www.statefarm.com](http://www.statefarm.com)

**Dr. Flint McLaughlin:** Now that's a strange combination of words, in fact I am using a very precise modifier with that sentence but its only precise if you're familiar with Strunk & White, if you're familiar with certain grammar guides and style guides. So let me unpack it for you.

A point sensitive sentence is a sentence where you have thought about where you're going to make your main point, on the front or in the end? In most cases you make the power of the sentence, the main point of the sentence either in the front or in the end but almost never in the middle. Let me give you an example, it says here you could save \$500 on float a car insurance free instant quote.

The word free is in the middle of the sentence and the save \$500 is in the middle of this sentence but notice how in this particular ad, it's a different ad, how they use \$40 million the power of this ad is around that \$40 million, they're using intangible and applied promise like we learned about earlier, but they're packing that into the front aspect, the front part of the phrase.

Even the end of that sentence has the word trust and if you think about it, quote now and get a better state that whole like could be improved. But in general the touch is at the front, think about your sentence, ask yourself, should it be at the front, should it be at the back but make certain it's not lost in the middle and be very clear and think again where, in fact when asking that question ask, if I put my main point at the front of this sentence will it be clear what I am saying afterwards.

Or ask is the other part of this sentence building up toward something and so I want to hit them in the end with the main point because it makes sense, it's like a climax for the building and development of the thought. So these three principles, use commonly understood nouns, use precise modifiers, and use point sensitive sentences. All of that brings us to this point, let's just look at what we've learned thus far.

 **Key Principles**

A paid search ad is **a promise** in exchange for **a click** that leads to a \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e. sale, lead, yield, etc.).

**CALIBRATION #1:** The core of the promise

**CALIBRATION #2:** The quality of the clicks

**CALIBRATION #3:** The clarity of the offer

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Live optimization is coming and before that I want to tell you about something interesting we're doing. In fact I'll just hit right now, we have an experiment you see looking at where Daniel is standing here, he's going to lock up in just a moment and tell you about something.

We're going to do another round of experiments with North American Spine based on your input and then we're going to report to you all about it, you'll hear more in just a second but for now let me just remind you of what we've been focused on for the last few minutes. We said that you can make small changes and you can get significant results from those changes. We said that if you take the five main discoveries that we had in the lab based on this last pervasive case study, you can almost translate those discoveries in the principles. Number one you want to try to calibrate the core of the promise, number two you want to calibrate the quality of the clicks and number three you want to calibrate the clarity of the offer. In doing that you should be able to see significant results in your own paid search campaigns.

I want to thank you for being with us so far and just know that in the next 17 minutes we're going to pack every single moment, with first an understanding of this experiment that's going to unfold that we hope you'll participate in and then with live optimization. So Daniel come on up and explain to us what's going to happen next?

**Daniel Burstein:** Right thank you very much Flint. So let me tell you a little bit about this live test that we're running. What we wanted to do was get some input from the audience because frankly as much as we've learned we don't know everything or is he looking for outside ideas or is he's looking at test, and so North American Spine, they wanted to do this PPC ad test not just to learn about how to improve PPC but also to help them develop their content approach, okay because that's why I was talking about there's different incremental decisions that the audience is going to make.



**Experiment ID:** *North American Spine Content Approach Test*

**Location:** MarketingExperiments Research Library

**Test Protocol Number:** TP4067

## Research Notes:

**Background:** North American Spine plans to develop content for people searching for specific back conditions.

**Goal:** To develop content approaches that will resonate with the highest number of searchers.

**Primary research question:** Which content approach of the four treatments will achieve the highest clickthrough rate?

**Approach:** A/B single factor split test

**Daniel Burstein:** Not everyone just wants to jump on and buy a pizza right? So if you have spine surgery, some of the tests we've looked at those people will follow along the incremental decision making process.

For this test what we want to take a look at is, what content is going to resonate with those people who, for lack of a better word let us call them tier kicker right. They're just starting to look for some information about spine surgery so let's take a look at what we did.

### Condition Keywords:

- Lumbar bulging disc →
- Sciatic nerve →
- Degenerative disc disease →
- Herniated disc →
- Pinched nerve in lower back →
- Lumbar back pain →

### Abbreviated Ad Conditions:

- Bulging disc
- Sciatic nerve
- Degen. disc
- Herniated disc
- Pinched nerve
- Lumbar pain

**Daniel Burstein:** Here are the keywords on the left you'll see the condition keywords that we're targeting. And on the right you'll see the way we abbreviated those keywords and then we went to the marketing experiments blog audience and we said to you how will you, give us some ideas for some PPC ads tested to target some of these keywords okay.

And so we set up four hypothesized searcher profiles. Let me show you those profiles.

**Hypothesized Searcher Profile:**

Searcher has come across this condition and now wants more information on it

\*Control

[\[Condition\] Sufferer?](#)  
 Learn about the causes & solutions, from the experts in spine health.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/\[condition\]](#)

\*Submitted on the MarketingExperiments Blog by Amy Harold of [GDNash.com](#)

**Daniel Burstein:** Right, this first one is the searcher that's just come across this condition and wants more information about it. So when you look at the treatment for that PPC ad, I want you to focus on the line right under the headline, that's the only like that's going to change.

We only want one variable in this test okay. And for this one its going to learn about the causes and solutions so you can see how that clearly ties into the hypothesis we have for this searcher, by the way at this point I do want to thank Amy Harold of [GDNash.com](#), she was the one that submitted this template on the marketing experiments blog so that's the first hypothesis. Pay close attention because in a few minutes we're going to have a poll and we want to ask your opinion on which ad do you think will win. We're going to run the test and they will let you know we learned.

So take a look at this second hypothesize searcher profile.

**Hypothesized Searcher Profile:**

Searcher may be experiencing back pain symptoms and is simply searching online or asking around

Treatment #1

[\[Condition\] Sufferer?](#)  
 How to recognize the symptoms, from the experts in spine health.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/\[condition\]](#)

**Daniel Burstein:** This searcher has experienced some back pain symptoms and is simply looking online, they're asking around for answer and you can see how we targeted them, how to recognize the symptoms that was the focus of this next PPC ad. For the next treatment as a searcher that wants more information right, and so we filled some free access to back pain resources.

**Hypothesized Searcher Profile:**

Searcher may have already seen a doctor and been diagnosed with this condition and now wants **more information** and possible treatments

Treatment #2

[\[Condition\] Sufferer?](#)  
 Free access to back pain resources from the experts in spine health.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/\[condition\]](#)

**Daniel Burstein:** If you want information we have that information. And again this will tie into the overall content strategy that North American Spine is developing. Once they learn from their customers what they're customers are looking for. And the last hypothesized searcher profile, looking for possible treatments and obviously compare available treatments ties in very nicely.

**Hypothesized Searcher Profile:**

Searcher may have already seen a doctor and been diagnosed with this condition and now wants more information and **possible treatments**

Treatment #3

[\[Condition\] Sufferer?](#)  
 Compare available treatments, from the experts in spine health.  
[NorthAmericanSpine.com/\[condition\]](#)

**Daniel Burstein:** So I want you now, you can see all these side by side.

<p style="text-align: center;">*Control</p> <p><a href="#">[Condition] Sufferer?</a>                  Learn about the causes &amp; solutions, from the experts in spine health.  <a href="#">NorthAmericanSpine.com/[condition]</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Treatment #1</p> <p><a href="#">[Condition] Sufferer?</a>                  How to recognize the symptoms, from the experts in spine health.  <a href="#">NorthAmericanSpine.com/[condition]</a></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Treatment #3</p> <p><a href="#">[Condition] Sufferer?</a>                  Compare available treatments, from the experts in spine health.  <a href="#">NorthAmericanSpine.com/[condition]</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Treatment #2</p> <p><a href="#">[Condition] Sufferer?</a>                  Free access to back pain resources from the experts in spine health.  <a href="#">NorthAmericanSpine.com/[condition]</a></p>

\*Submitted on the MarketingExperiments Blog by Amy Harold of [GDNash.com](#)

We're going to launch the poll, if you can launch that please Luke. We're going to ask you which treatment will achieve the highest click through rates while we're waiting for this poll I also want to talk about some very important why we have presented this to the marketing experiments audience okay.

So when you see us here in MECLABS, we produced some impressive tests results of Flint showing you now. You might not know this but Flint didn't come up with it all by himself. Just by what he says and we will take a very collaborative approach here, so from my past experience in marketing and advertising I am sure many on the click have seen this as well, you know there's usually there is that lone star performer right? There's that copywriter, that account executive, that art director, that just blows everything out of the water. Everyone turns to him and all that knowledge is inside his head. We work a little differently here and that's the benefit of testing and optimization.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Absolutely.

**Daniel Burstein:** For example we have the peer review session here, where everyone from the most junior analyst to the most senior analyst has input on all of our tests, I think Flint you might suggest a test or two from there.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Most of the time they don't let me into these peer review sessions.

**Daniel Burstein:** But I mean that's how we come with these tests and so that's why we turn to the marketing experiments audience who want to cast as wide a net as possible to collaborate and to find the best solution for this customer and what that means for you is don't just look to that lone copywriter, look to sales, look to these people in sales they might know something. Look to customer service.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Technology. Technology has ideas people never realize that the technology team sometime they're living it every day and when you start making them part of the optimization process instead of being an obstacle they'll start becoming enabler of the whole thing.

**Daniel Burstein:** And they might actually push you're treatments live. If you ask them an opinion they have some skin in the games. All right so let's close that poll and take a look at some of the results. Let's see oh treatment two is the clear winner. Treatment two will call this the Mitt Romney of the campaign here so this is what the audience is telling us that free access means free, we know that's a very powerful word right I mean.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Yeah absolutely.

**Daniel Burstein:** What do you think of the treatments do what to take a guess on it?

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Treatment, Well no I need to read them carefully and then if I commit in public and make a mistake my reputation will be horrible. Now listen let me say something about that, one of the things we say here is if you're right all the time you're not testing. You're not really testing. A real test involves trying to seek for information you don't understand. The goal is not to get a lift; it's to get learning. It's not a gunfight between marketers to see which one is the fastest straw. It's more about

designing something that will help you all learn. When I look at the first one control, learn about the causes and solutions from the experts in spine and health, it fills a clinical academic and of some value. When I look at the second one how to recognize, no I need to see them, you're moving the screen on me before I have access, how to recognize the symptoms for the experts in spine health, compare the available treatments from the experts in spine health and free access to back pain resources. Well...

**Paul Cheney:** By the way the only thing that's changing is the second line under that one.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** The second line under the headline? Interesting, which is, when you say the second line there's bigger differences in that line, Paul.

**Paul Cheney:** Yeah.

**Flint McGlaughlin:** But it's in that section? Okay. I'll tell you what? One of the things we say in these ad treatments and this is critical, don't design a treatment that you can see immediately what the winner is, but design a treatment where you get two or three treatments in a zone where anyone of the three can win and then you'll know we are getting a real test design. I would say that people who are early in the process would more likely choose treatment one but I would say people who are looking to make some sort of decision might prefer treatment three. Treatment two is for those who are interested in back pain resources and yes it has the word free access and it might be somebody early in the process just gathering data but I think you're going to see the treatment two and treatment three are probably neck-and-neck and we might be surprised about the winner. And I don't know, honestly I don't know what you had tested.

**Daniel Burstein:** Well, thanks for letting me put you on the spot there so based on the audience.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** I didn't know they'll put me on the spot. I don't believe in what they say....

**Daniel Burstein:** Definitely, I like the look on his face. Most of the audience got to reply anonymously but you what to also in the audience you know, get out there and claim a winner.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Yeah.

**Daniel Burstein:** You know go on [#webclinic](#) on Twitter, you can tell the world I think this one is going to win and we'll let you know in the blog, we'll let you know in the future web clinics what we've learned about this test. Thanks a lot Flint.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Excellent, we're going to shift fast in the live optimization because we want to get you as many of these principles and transferable we can.

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**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** I want to point out again that our partner in this has been [ROI Revolution](#) along with [North American Spine](#) and I am grateful for all their doing. They'll be helping us as we run these tests and they'll be working with us as we try to help you learn all that we can about how to get better results. Keep that in mind, let's go forward, I am looking at live optimization and here is the first one, audience I am going to need you I need you all nine minutes left. Speak to me.

### Keywords

- Treadmills
- Buy Treadmills
- Treadmills Online

[Treadmills Superstore](#)  
 Huge selection of Treadmills.  
 Free Delivery & 90 Day Free Returns  
[Connection-Fitness.co.uk/treadmills](http://Connection-Fitness.co.uk/treadmills)

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Treadmill superstore, here's your keywords treadmill buy treadmills and treadmills online. How would you make this ad better and Erin I am probably going to call you up if you have some thoughts on this ad in just a moment, just come on up beside of me. As Erin is coming up I am looking at your input. Interesting Michael you're comment, I am reading Michael Grubbs' comment about back pain problems, resources aren't much help. That's an interesting point that's why the comparison ad is interesting to me. Someone says call to action title, someone says it's a bad headline,

someone says fix the URL, someone says include brand names, all right. Erin what are you're quick thoughts on this one?

**Erin Fagin:** I think overall this ad lacks little bit of specificity.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Yes.

**Erin Fagin:** Especially with a huge selection of treadmills what is exactly the huge selection are we talking?

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** yes.

**Erin Fagin:** Are we hundreds of treadmills, thousand, how many different brands?

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Yes.

**Erin Fagin:** I think we can definitely have an improvement there.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Okay. Well that makes sense to me. I think when you look at this treadmill superstores, superstore is the keyword. We found that store often will produce a yield, I don't know if the headline could be better but the word superstore sometimes it helps you think you have got quite a selection, huge back to specificity was just a precise modifier and I wouldn't start with hey how can we say what we're saying better?

I will start with a different question; I will say the right thing at all. I don't care about free delivery yet and I don't care about 90-day free returns yet and in the purchase sequence I don't worry about that until I start to think that this might be where I want to buy or what I want buy, its premature in the thought process. Back to Erin, back to my conversation earlier about the headline, the pickup line and the bar, maybe I see Erin in the bar and I don't walk up to her and kiss her on the lips because I have a little more sense in that but its also not the right time to walk up to her, show her a picture of my house with three bedrooms in it and say listen I am planning in having two children and what about you?

It doesn't matter how many children I am planning to have right now. She doesn't even know that she wants to have a minute's conversation with me and you're already talking about something too soon in the sequence of micro yeses. I think it's going on here. Now the only way I would know if this is the right or the wrong ad is to compare to all the ads around it but I would first of all ask is this the right message at all? Back to the core of your promise, and then I will start optimizing a specificity and key components. So this about that, let's move on.

<http://bit.ly/treadmillsite>



**Dr. Flint McLaughlin:** I am going to the landing page for this ad and I'd love to get, I am looking at my time, audience tell me we'll look at the landing page or you want to go to my ad? Tell me fast I am looking at you're feedback under the QA or Twitter. Landing page or new ad? I am watching, ad, ad, ad, ad, ad, landing page, landing page, somebody says it's a horrible landing page. All right lets go to the ad, by the way we'll hold the landing page but you will get a 30 seconds optimization on the landing page. First row has no key headline, it doesn't engage you in conversation, it doesn't express the value proposition, has no eye path, uses videos at the top instead of text to draw you in to a conversation, it is not the kind of page you optimize it's the kind of page that you destroy and start over. We can help you with that if you decide to make changes and you submitted you're ad, send them to us and we'll give some feedback on it.

Let's move on and I am going to go to the next submission called the city symphony.

**Keywords**

- culver city symphony
- symphony calendar
- tickets to the symphony
- symphonic performance

[Culver City Symphony](#)

We are committed to the music  
of our times. Since 1963

[CulverCitySymphony.org](http://CulverCitySymphony.org)

**Target Audience:**

- People that enjoy the arts and especially the symphony

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** This was submitted by John. Audience how would you make this ad better? Quickly, quickly, quickly. I am pasted the lining page, I am watching for your feedback more specific, more specific. Wow that's harsh Pete. Pete says worst ad ever, and then underneath it Steven says blow it up. Now, John if you're hearing this harsh comments please forgive our audience. They're frustrated marketers who've probably been hurried all day with deadlines, they're missing their budgets, they're underperforming, their KPIs are off and they're just mad at the world in general. But they're right it's a really bad ad.

I like the since 1963, let me turn above to Erin, Erin tell me what you're thoughts are?

**Erin Fagin:** There's really no promise in this ad whatsoever, you're saying we are committed to music but what does that mean to the visitor.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** It's like an institutional paid search ad and I don't put a lot of stock in institutional page search ads. I think you're right Erin. I think the first question is, are we trying to get a click and if we're trying to get a click where are they at? Listen to me where they are at in the thought sequence at the point. When they get to this ad what are they already thinking about? What's in their mind and then how can I move into the next micro yes with a single sort of promise that's clear and concise and I don't know if that is the fact that I can't know that until you tell me what you what you want to do in the landing page. So here's the landing page and it looks to me like you want them to attend concerts.

**Erin Fagin:** That's what I would guess too?

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** And if this brand is a well known brand and people are looking to find concerts then use the ad to tell me that there is a list of all available concerts and easy access you know, say that in a way, get them here where they can register. If this is something beyond that, it's a symphony so you may not be price sensitive, if it's a price sensitive audience then you may say that you know you can buy seasons pass or, and get us major discount on tickets if they order now. I don't know what's their motivator is yet telling that what you want to do but I can tell you and I say this graciously John, we can help you a lot on this. We design these ads, send it to us and we'll give you feedback.

The audience said a lot of good points; we'll review their feedback and if possible share some of the best of it with you. Let's go on because we have four minutes left. That's time enough to, well I don't know we can't change the world but we can change one paid search ad. So here as an ad.

### Keywords

- Worker's compensation
- Hawaii worker's compensation
- Workman's comp
- Hawaii workman's comp

[Need Workers Comp Advice?](#)

Do You Have a Work Related Injury?  
Get the Legal Help You Need Now.

[HawaiiInjuryLawyers.net](http://HawaiiInjuryLawyers.net)

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Need workers comp advice, be careful about questions in headlines. Audience I want your input because it's been pretty good. Tell me what you think about this ad. While you are talking because of our time I am going to turn to Erin, Erin, tell us what you see?

**Erin Fagin:** I think you make a great point with the question and not only do they have a question in the headline; they follow up with the question in the first description.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Yes.

**Erin Fagin:** I think they're asking a lot and not giving enough to their visitors again not making any promises.

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** Would you like to a job as an analyst? That's good feedback, that's exactly why it's all questions and no information. And get the legal help you need now is very weak. So this was submitted by Will. Will and John from the last, don't think of this as discouraging, think of what it means if you get these ads right? They should reduce your CPA, increase your response, and this is just money waiting to fall into your bank account. Let me just make some quick comments, the audience said over here, this is Venita, is the advice free? Good question, Different keyword says Olin. The call to action says Dave. Work related injury help someone says, is this about work related injury, people are giving me questions, they are not even clear with what the ad's promising. Offer free consultation said John and by the way it's John Eastwood. And with a last name like that you should take this advice really seriously.

Take a look; we have about two minutes left. Let me tell you what I can do to this ad and then we'll just go to landing page. The landing page should be talked about because it connects closely to the ad.

[HawaiiInjuryLawyers.net](http://HawaiiInjuryLawyers.net)

The screenshot shows a landing page for David S. Brustein, Attorney at Law. At the top, there is a large image of the attorney and a navigation menu with links for HOME, HAWAII INJURY LAWYER FAQ'S, CLIENT TESTIMONIALS, and ABOUT US. A prominent call to action reads "CALL 808.526.1000 NOW". Below this, there is a "Click to Call" button and a section titled "Download Your FREE Report Below 'Tips to Hire a Personal Injury Lawyer' Hawaii Personal Injury Lawyer". A video player is embedded, showing a man in a white shirt sitting at a desk with a gavel. Below the video, there is a contact form with a "Name:" field and a "PLACE YOUR QUESTIONS HERE" section. The page also features the Hawaiian flag and text indicating the attorney's experience: "HAWAII STATE BAR ASSOCIATION LICENSED, 1988 OVER 25 YEARS OF HAWAII LEGAL EXPERIENCE".

**Dr. Flint McGlaughlin:** When you look at the landing page we want to see them it looks like click to call, or somehow get in touch with us so that we can generate a lead. That's what it feels like to me. The page is as bad as the ad though. The click to call will probably get some clicks because people are going to try to get clarity and they can't get it on the page. We're relying on the video to do the talking and that's not good. There is no headline, we're not clear, you have four inches, seven seconds to answer three questions, where am I at? What can I do here and why should I do it? And the top of your page is wasting four inches just with a big picture. That same amount of information could be conveyed with much less space. You could get them into a headline, get them into information, tie the headline back to the ad, tell me why and I think about this well, why would I click on this ad? Why would I come to this attorney? Why would I come here, click here rather than any other opportunity or ad that I see in the search engines.

That's the answer and to answer that question you'll need to look at the surrounding pieces, you need to think about the other ads and you need to say to yourself all right so what can I promise that the other ads are not promising. If they're not emphasizing the qualities or the qualifications of the attorney, the use of experience maybe that will work for us. If they emphasizing that but they're assuming that you're going to go right to hiring attorney maybe I can give them an interim offer. Or maybe I need something as a negative as oppose to a positive component to motivate them with fear. While that attorney can cost you money and push that piece but think about all of those key elements as you redesign this ad and we will look at it with you and do our very best to help.

All right so if you have been on these clinics before, you'll know that most of the time we do them in this audio format but we don't have video. If you're watching or you saw the last clinic you'll be able to see this slides clinic from our studio on video teaching. You'll notice, you know who I am? I am the guy with

thick, luxurious, Fabio hair and, not but anyway, you'll get a chance to see us in action trying to deliver all these clinics in the way that will help you and we're grateful for your trust. We're going to keep doing this, keep sharing our results with you and all we ask that you to do is tell a friend. Thank you again.

Before you go, you're going to get a survey that's great and if you're interested in help, interested to research partnership that's good, you can do that but use this Q&A and tell me if you found this helpful. I want this instant feedback. Tell me if this whole approach was good for you, if you learned a lot today, if you want more like this. I value all of you insights we read every one of them. Thank you and we'll be back soon with more research. Thank you very much Erin.

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Welcome to the MarketingExperiments Journal email for March 17, 2011. Every three weeks we send this high-level update of our research to 98,000 marketers. Today you'll find:

- The on-demand replay of [Do You Have the Right Value Proposition?](#), where we taught five simple steps to determine your optimal value proposition
- An invitation to our next Web clinic, where we will discuss proven strategies for [Converting Leads to Sales](#)
- An opportunity to [share your optimization and testing discoveries](#) with your peers at the 2011 Optimization Summit and receive a complimentary ticket to this inaugural event.

Our job is to help you do your job better. [Let us know](#) how we can help.

Daniel Burstein  
Director of Editorial Content  
MECLABS Primary Research

Resource #1

**Do You Have the Right Value Proposition?**  
**How to test, measure, and integrate your Value Proposition online**

According to Dr. Flint McGlaughlin, there are five simple steps any marketer can take to identify their optimal value proposition. During this dense, yet very practical, Web clinic, he reviewed two recent experiments aimed at discovering value propositions that increase customer response.

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