

A Three-Step Guide to Good Pop-Ups

Create Pop-ups that convert your users to loyal customers, without losing them in the process.

Ask anyone what immediately comes to mind when they hear the word “pop-ups,” and you’ll hear words like “intrusive,” “annoying,” and “a scam.” Many people still associate pop-ups with the flashing, untrustworthy third-party ads from the early 2000s, ads that suddenly promised lottery wins or trips to Hawaii to users browsing online. These ads almost always caused users to exit the website, for fear of opening a virus or having their information stolen, even if the original site was perfectly reliable and relevant to their purposes.

After a nearly decade-long hiatus, however, this marketing tool has returned, helping businesses and blogs grow their email lists and subscribers numbers at an almost 9% conversion rate for the highest performing pop-ups. When executed well, pop-ups can provide users with well-timed, helpful information that increases their loyalty to the brand. However, poorly-timed or unrelated pop-up boxes have drastic consequences, including penalization by Google for what they call “intrusive interstitials,” or pop-ups that make it impossible to navigate through a site. [1]

To ensure that your pop-up will produce conversions, take a look at a few of these guidelines below.

Use friendly, personal copy.

Pop-ups should be small and un-intrusive, so you really only have a few words of copy in the headline to catch the user’s attention. Use vocabulary that is both engaging and personal, while also demonstrating that the information you’re promising is “about the user, not the brand.”

Also try to avoid using standard, mechanic language like “Submit” or “Register.” Users respond more amicably to calls-to-action like “Sign me up!” and “Add me to the list!,” as it is seen as friendlier and more trustworthy. Too many information fields can also be a turn off, so keep the pop-up as simple as possible while requiring the user to give the information necessary to convert them to your company register.

Provide your audience with exactly what they’re looking for.

Pop-ups are a great tool for giving your users information that they may not have known they wanted, such as links to other products or blog posts that pertain to the search they are already performing. For instance, if they are looking at information on visiting the Grand Canyon on your travel site, a well-timed, personalized pop-up that offers them tips for other activities to do in the area, or guided hiking tours through the canyon itself may increase their likelihood of subscribing to your email list or of becoming a return customer.

You can also offer free downloads, trial subscriptions, or follow-up emails with more deals, and emphasize that there is a deadline for the “bargain” to create scarcity. Users will be more inclined to take action when the opportunity is available to them for a finite window of time.

Time your pop-ups wisely.

Timing is everything when it comes to pop-ups, as you want to catch your users right when they realize that they like your brand, before they’ve scrolled through too much information or are prepared to leave the site. Pop-ups that appear 60-seconds into a user’s browsing time are often effective, as well as pop-ups that slide in once a customer has reached a certain mark on the page.

Do not offer users the choice to sign up for a newsletter or subscribe to your site if they *have already done so*. You should program your subscription pop-ups so they only appear on the screens of newcomers, while other, informational pop-ups are triggered for repeat customers, depending on their purpose.

Test different pop-ups and test them more than once.

Finally, if you want to see results from your pop-ups, your designers must employ very specific timing, triggers, copy, and visual features that are each catered to different channels. All of these design features must be tested repeatedly for optimum success. It’s nearly impossible to guess how your users will perceive a center screen pop-up versus a top banner ad, or whether a slide-in pop-up is better than a small box that appears after the user has been on the page for 60 full seconds. The only way to know is running iterations and asking sample users for their opinions on multiple versions of your pop-up, and these tests must be performed at many stages throughout the design process.

Sources: [1] <https://webmasters.googleblog.com/2016/08/helping-users-easily-access-content-on.html>

[2] <https://wpmayor.com/5-ways-to-use-email-pop-ups-that-dont-suck/>
<https://www.evergage.com/blog/secret-pleasant-pop-ups/>
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