



## Why the “Squeeze” Page is a Sales Limiting and Profit Killing Strategy



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How many times have you visited a web site that as soon as you landed on the home page a big box popped onto the screen asking you to sign up for a newsletter or offering you some type of free report if you filled out the form? If so, you have been officially “squeezed!” This technique is the squeeze page because it squeezes prospects onto a list for the site’s owner so they can market to you in the future.

In the old days we referred to these annoying items as pop ups. It eventually got so bad that browsers and other software companies started integrating pop up blockers. Industry experts howled about how horrible pop ups were. Eventually the use of pop ups faded, not because people thought they hurt their web site, but because pop up blockers made them all but obsolete.

## **The Next Generation of the Pop Up**

Along comes the new technology of the squeeze page. The technology behind these super pop ups can be boring to discuss, but suffice it to say that most pop up blockers and browsers don’t or can’t stop these boxes from appearing...yet. One of the companies that sells technology to implement these super pop ups even brags at how a pop up blocker can’t stop it!

What genius thought that taking an extremely annoying old technology such as pop ups and making a new and more unstoppable version was a good idea? Hello! There was a reason pop up blockers were created in the first place! This is the Internet version of creating a super virus that cannot be stopped by ordinary antibiotics...sheer brilliance.

## **Trust Building**

On today’s Internet, there are marketers that are battling to acquire new customers and build trust with both existing and prospective customers to grow business. These marketers are not only battling against a person’s innate mistrust of marketing and sales people, but also against the bulk of thieves and con artists so prevalent on the Internet.

These cons brought us great innovations like phishing (fake emails and web sites designed to trick you into giving up sensitive information) that offers to help some poor Nigerian that lost his father in a tragic accident and needs your help transferring 10 million dollars to the United States. Incidentally, this con is one of Nigeria’s largest exports.

The momentum of building trust is already working against you. To counteract this you need to take steps to get the momentum working with you not against. A well-designed web site with easy navigation, well-written copy, and plenty of resources both free and otherwise can go a long way to building an environment of trust and value on a web site.

You need to establish the value proposition in the visitors mind. If visitors find your site and the resources you offer on your site valuable and worthy of their time then you will establish trust with them on a much faster basis. Here are some additional methods that have been proven effective in building trust...

- **Testimonials:** Post testimonial letters and work in strong quotes from letters into the body of your pages. Always cite the full name and company of the person giving the testimonial. It isn’t effective to use John D. or D. Smith; such “testimonials” really lack credibility.

- **Contact Information:** There are web sites that hide the contact information so well that they should offer a reward to the people that can actually find it! On other web sites, it doesn't exist at all! Giving a phone number, physical address, and email is critical to making people comfortable with you. How many sites have you been on where the only communication method is a web form? This does two things, first it frustrates the user that needs immediate help and two it creates a feeling that this is a small company possibly located overseas and probably not in a position to support their product or service.
- **Resources:** Offer substantive resources such as white papers, articles, software trials, FAQs, online demos or tutorials, audio files, videos, e-Books, forums, and other helpful resources. People search the web for information and you want to be a source for that information. If people find your free information valuable and helpful, they are much more likely to trust you enough to buy your products, services, or memberships.
- **Guarantee:** Offer a strong guarantee, the stronger the guarantee the less risk people feel they take by trying your product or service. Low risk to the visitor translates into a higher trust factor.
- **Digital Certificate:** Get a digital certificate and keep it up to date. This will tell both browsers and users that your site is verified by a third party and is the owned and operated by the person that owns the certificate. With identity theft running rampant these days, people are unwilling to risk buying products or services from companies that don't have a digital certificate.

### **Fool Tested – Guru Approved**

There is some guru or person reading this that claims that this view of the squeeze page is wrong because they received good results. Another view is the guru that claims he grew his list by 500% in two months by using this technique.

Ok, so you generated X number of new sign ups or "leads"...what is the quality of those sign ups or leads? Err... what do you mean quality? How many of them have been converted into a sale or client? Just because you forced them, or rather "squeezed" them onto your list doesn't mean you generated a true lead or quality sign up. Remember the person did not really "choose" to sign up or fill out the form rather they were pushed into it by this box being shoved into their face upon landing on your site.

One can argue that the person had a choice and didn't have to complete the form and could have simply ignored it. Have you ever tried to ignore one of these things? They are designed to be obnoxious, annoying, and in your face for a reason. Most people will not ignore them and if the offer is a good one will surrender a name and an email address, which brings me to my next point about quality...

Many people that want to interact with web sites, but don't want to get dirty keep some creative names and junk email addresses around for just such a purpose. The email address is often one they give if they *must* give a valid email, but don't want to give you their "real" email account, i.e. the one they actually check and read on a regular basis.

So while you have a name and contact information a couple of things you want to know is do you have real information or garbage? Second, what is the time from the sign up or lead generation to a closed sale? Remember a lead good or bad is just a lead and not an actual sale. Sales generate income and profits; leads generate additional work and expenses. While leads are a good first step and necessary, they are not the same as a sale that puts money in the bank.

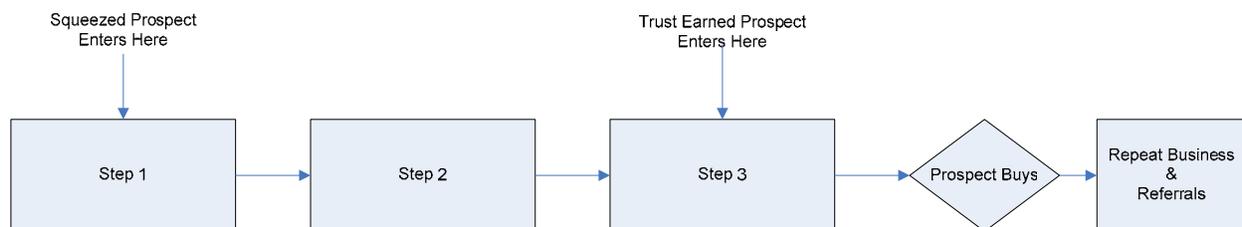
I believe that the quality of the sign ups and leads generated with these squeeze pages is lower than a lead that was generated by letting the user truly choose to buy from you or sign up because they have convinced themselves by looking around your site of your authenticity or a certain level of trust they have in you. In addition, providing valuable resources gets users to want your emails because they hope to get the same value from those as they do from the stuff on your site.

Not using the squeeze page may produce a smaller amount of sign ups or leads, but the ones you do get will be a higher quality lead and farther along in the sales cycle because they convinced themselves that you are worth giving information or money to. In addition, the information you do send them will be much more likely to be read since they really want to get your information.

## Sales Cycle

As any marketing or sales professional will tell you the sales cycle is the amount of time it takes for a person to move from prospect to customer and actually make the buy decision. On larger, more expensive products, this is often a multi-step process stretched over some period of time. On low dollar, low risk, products or services the sale can often be closed on the first attempt.

Marketers and management are always looking for ways to shorten the sales cycle and get people to buy faster and/or more often. One thing that typically makes this process easier is having a certain level of trust with your prospects. Notice that word trust again. When a prospect enters your sales cycle, the question you want to know is where they entered. Consider this...



## Quality vs. Quantity

Following up on leads can be an expensive and time-consuming proposition. Wouldn't you rather have a lead that was ready to buy the first time you contact them rather than the 5<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> time? Most of you would reply with a resounding yes.

People take information in all day long. They use their experiences, senses, knowledge, and a host of other factors to sort out the useful and believable information from the other garbage we are hit with every day. The time it takes people to do this may vary, but what doesn't is the fact people all go through some type of process in their mind before acting on information they receive.

A squeeze page simply short circuits this process by pushing people into acting before they have gone through this process. Therefore, while they are physically on the list they are far from being a good lead or more importantly a sale. You want to create velocity on your sales leads. Leads that close more frequently and faster with less marketing and sales efforts from you.

## Multiple Hits Argument

Once I get them on my list I can market to them repeatedly until they develop the trust or interest it takes to buy. While true, this is only half the story. It takes money, time, and skill to market to people. It takes even more of these things to close the sale. Therefore, the farther from a buy decision the person is when you get them on the list the longer it will take to close them, hence the more energy, time, and money you spend trying to do so.

Also, remember that simply marketing to them repeatedly will most likely get you booted from the permission list. They will unsubscribe and leave you faster than an Arizona frost. What you have to give them each time you touch them is value, something that makes their life easier and more productive. If you do this, enough times you may eventually gain their trust and finally close them.

While list building is not a completely wasted argument it still begs the question how long must you market to them before you get results and was there a faster way to do accomplish the same thing?

## Get Trust the Old Fashioned Way – Earn It

If someone visits your web site and upon landing you don't assault them with a squeeze page, but rather show them immediately that you have provided a series of resources for them that they will find helpful and valuable you are already ahead in the trust game.

The user will start looking around the site and reading your articles, testimonials, and other "free" stuff. They may download a few things and yes, if you are lucky, they may sign up for your list, but if they don't and you still provided value, they will return. Eventually the person will return to your site and start the process over, only this time they trust a little more. Repeat said formula enough times and you have a customer or at the very least a prospect that is very interested and already has a certain level of trust with you. They may have so much trust that they will actually give you their real email address and name. Upon receiving this information, don't abuse it or you will go directly to jail and not pass go or collect \$200 dollars.

Show them with your actions that your continued marketing is going to be as valuable as the free stuff they found on your site. They will be more inclined to take time to read material you send them, forward the information to a friend, refer others to the site, etc. This is the type of prospect and/or customer you want – not one that you mugged when they entered your site and doesn't trust you.

Now some person that just invested their life savings in an Internet business or is way behind in sales is going to be saying that this is too slow and they need results now and can't wait for all this trust to build up. Well the bad news is you are still going to wait even if you resort to the squeeze page, but you will also spend time and effort marketing to them and attempting to get them to buy from you. Just because you have captured a name doesn't mean you have a sale. Your time could be better spent than marketing to cool prospects. How? Generating better content on your site and offering value to your visitors. The time spent developing this content and value will create several advantages to your site:

1. **Better ROI on Marketing:** The marketing dollars and effort you do spend to bring new visitors gets better results because visitors are immediately enticed to spend time on the site reading and exploring and not just clicking away.

2. **Higher Search Engine Rankings:** With good content, search engines find your site more relevant and will score you higher in search engines. This has the added benefit of not only bringing more visitors, but getting them to stay, something we like to call “stickiness”.
3. **Higher Quality Prospects:** As discussed earlier people finally buying and/or getting on your list are simply better prospects and customers. They have what marketers refer to as a higher life-time value. They are more likely to buy from you again and buy larger each time because they have already learned to trust you.
4. **More Referrals:** People that trust you and get value from your site are more likely to refer you to friends and colleagues. Any sales person will tell you the a prospect that has been referred to them is a much warmer lead than someone they cold called out of phone book.
5. **Shorter Sales Cycle:** As discussed earlier prospects that trust you first are going to enter your sales cycle farther along than a person that doesn't trust you and was bribed or squeezed onto your list or into your sales cycle.

This method is not the fastest, but it is one of the most sound methods of marketing to sophisticated people and carries a lot of great benefits to the company that chooses to follow this path rather than the squeeze page school of thought.

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