

## CLICKS STICK THE LANDING PAGE

TIPS FOR DRAWING BROWSERS TO  
YOUR HOMEPAGE BY GWEN MORAN

Trying to lure traffic to your homepage? Landing pages are where the conversions are, says Stephanie Diamond, president of Digital Media Works Inc., a digital marketing agency. These customized pages are where visitors land when they click on a sponsored link, ad or other online call to action.

They've worked for Joy Gendusa. The founder and CEO of \$18.8 million postcard marketing company PostcardMania (postcardmania.com) in Clearwater, Florida, started using landing pages in 2006. Two years later, she can attribute nearly half a million dollars in orders directly to her customized landing pages, which plug everything from industry-specific postcard campaigns to free report downloads.

Want to put the power of a perfect landing to work for you? Diamond and Gendusa share some tips:

■ **USE A LOT.** Gendusa's company spends about half of its advertising budget on Google-sponsored links, all of which link to landing pages. She's not the only one: According to a 2007 report by MarketingSherpa, 71 percent of landing pages are destinations from e-mail links, while 68 percent are destinations from paid search ads. Landing pages should be created for text ads, news releases, e-mail blasts, banner ads and any other online communication.

■ **MAINTAIN THE THEME.** The landing page should have the same marketing copy or look as the link that led to it; otherwise, you risk losing the customer, says Gendusa, 44. "If someone clicks on your link about surge protectors, your landing page had better say, 'So you want to know about surge protectors?'" she advises. This lets you focus on the key interest of the customer and link to exactly the right place on your website to give more information.

■ **TEST YOUR MESSAGE.** Gendusa gets clues about why people come to her website by examining her web stats to find out the phrases they use to get there.

■ **MAKE IT WORTHWHILE.** Gendusa gives something away on her landing pages: an edu-



Joy Gendusa's landing pages have brought in nearly half a million dollars in sales.

cational white paper, free samples and so on. This gives her the chance to collect e-mail addresses through the site and ask questions that gauge interest in her products.

■ **KEEP IT SIMPLE.** "Figure out what your one customer goal is, and that should be the centerpiece [of each landing page]," says Diamond. Each page should include links that go deeper into your site to relevant content, but they shouldn't just be replications of your homepage. Stick to the offer and have one definite call to action.

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## WORK FORCE HIRED HELP

THE PROS AND CONS OF HIRING  
INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

BY MARK HENRICKS

Entrepreneur Bruce Law's former life at a corporation, his unit's regular work virtually came to a stop at the same time every year when a certain big annual project was due. Today, Law, 46, keeps his company's wheels turning during both fast and slow times by using a corps of independent contractors to provide flexible, skilled help just when he needs it.

"We use [independent contractors] for two reasons: flexibility and variety," says the

founder and president of Salt Lake City-based Sprout Marketing, which has 15 employees and 30 to 40 people on contract at any time. "You don't have issues of hiring and firing and morale. You can scale up and then scale back if something doesn't pan out. And you've got fresh ideas. You get experience from different areas, and you can bring that experience when you need it without trying to hire a full-timer."

The number of entrepreneurs who subscribe to Law's way of thinking is growing steadily. Of every 100 workers engaged by entrepreneurs in June, 3.54 were contractors as opposed to regular W-2 employees, according to the SurePayroll Contractor Index. The payroll service reports that June marked the fifth straight month in which entrepreneurs increased their contractor use.

Financial flexibility and added expertise are key contractor benefits, agrees Rebecca Mazin, an HR consultant and co-author of *The HR Answer Book*. In addition, she says, entrepreneurs seem to use contractors more intelligently than they do regular employees. "When you hire a contractor, you tend to be more specific about what you need done than if you're hiring an employee," she explains.

Contractors can also present significant hurdles. Improperly classifying employees as subcontractors is a common way to run afoul of wage and hour laws and risk fines and other penalties, Mazin says. Because they aren't usually vetted as