

USE A/B TESTING TO MARKET LIKE HUBSPOT

for HubSpot Customers



Use A/B testing
to take your
marketing to
the next
stratosphere

A Publication of

HubSpot



IS THIS EBOOK RIGHT FOR ME?

Not quite sure if this ebook is right for you? See the below description to determine if your level matches the content you are about to read.



INTRODUCTORY

Introductory content is for customers who are relatively new to the HubSpot software. This content typically includes step-by-step instructions on how to get started with this aspect of inbound marketing and learn its fundamentals. After reading it, you will be able to execute basic marketing tactics related to the topic.



INTERMEDIATE

←.....● *This ebook!*

Intermediate content is for customers who are familiar with the software and have attended the initial training classes. You should have basic experience in executing strategies and tactics on the topic. This content typically covers the fundamentals and moves on to reveal more complex functions and examples. After reading it, you will feel comfortable leading projects with this aspect of inbound marketing.



ADVANCED

Advanced content is for marketers who are, or want to be, experts on the subject. In it, we walk you through advanced features of this aspect of inbound marketing and help you develop complete mastery of the subject. After reading it, you will feel ready not only to execute strategies and tactics, but also to teach others how to be successful.



USE WITH THE COMPANION WORKBOOK

Get the most out of this ebook by using it alongside the companion workbook.

USE A/B TESTING TO
MARKET LIKE
HUBSPOT
WORKBOOK for HubSpot Customers



Guide to using
A/B testing to
take your
marketing to
the next
stratosphere.

A Publication of
HubSpot

Get the workbook.



HOW TO USE THIS EBOOK

Use this ebook with the companion workbook. The ebook will help guide you through the real life examples in the workbook.

- ✓ **Know the basics:** You should be familiar with the HubSpot tools listed to the right.
- ✓ **Variation:** Don't run A/B tests in conjunction with each other. Avoid A/B testing a call to action that leads to a landing page in an active A/B test.





A/B TESTING

By Sarah Bedrick and Erin McCarthy

**FOLLOW ME ON TWITTER
@ERINMCCARTH**



**FOLLOW ME ON TWITTER
@SBEDRICK**





CONTENTS

Introduction	/7
What is A/B Testing?	/8
Why A/B Test	/10
Examples	/12
A/B Testing in HubSpot	/20
Steps to a perfect A/B test	/22
A/B Testing Calls-To-Action	/32
A/B Testing Landing Pages	/37
A/B Testing Email	/42
Conclusion	/47



“Some of the most dramatic A/B test results come from quick and simple changes.”

When was the last time you tested some part of your marketing? If it takes a bit of thought, you're probably not doing it enough .

As marketers, we're pretty confident that we know what works. Testing allows you to know with certainty which elements of your emails, landing pages, and calls-to-action get results.

If you're not A/B testing, you're not using one of the most important tools available. Some of the most dramatic results come from quick and simple changes that take minimal time and effort to implement.

This ebook will walk you through each step of a good A/B test. Use the companion workbook alongside it to determine what you should test in your own HubSpot to generate more clicks, conversions, and customers.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS A/B TESTING?




A/B testing explained.

A/B testing, also known as split testing, is a method of testing through which marketing variables are compared to each other to identify the one that brings a better response rate.

Essentially, an A/B test offers two different versions of a marketing asset to visitors. The performance of each version is captured, allowing you to measure whether or not a changed had an effect on a specific metric.

For example, in a landing page A/B test, different visitors would see different versions of an image. The results would help you understand which image results in more submissions.

Get a Free Beverage



Download Your Free Copy!

First Name *

Last Name *

Email (primary contact) *

Phone *

Company *


Website *

Free Beverage of your choice!

- Fast
- Tasty
- Thirst-quenching

Fill out the form to get your free drink now!

Get a Free Beverage



Download Your Free Copy!

First Name *

Last Name *

Email (primary contact) *

Phone *

Company *

Website *

Free Beverage of your choice!

- Fast
- Tasty
- Thirst-quenching

Fill out the form to get your free drink now!

The whole point of A/B testing is to put your feelings aside, and let data tell you if the marketing asset is optimized to meet your goals.

CHAPTER 3

WHY A/B TEST?



A winning test can show a drastic improvement in conversion rates, opens, and clicks. In fact, A/B testing of landing pages can generate up to 30-40% more leads for B2B sites and 20-25% more leads for ecommerce sites. In the next section, we'll look at some A/B test results from HubSpot and HubSpot customers.

Even better news? Some of the most dramatic results come from changes that are quick and simple to make. If you're not A/B testing, you're missing out on serious opportunity for improvement. Just a minor test can go a long way, improving traffic, leads, and even sales if done right.



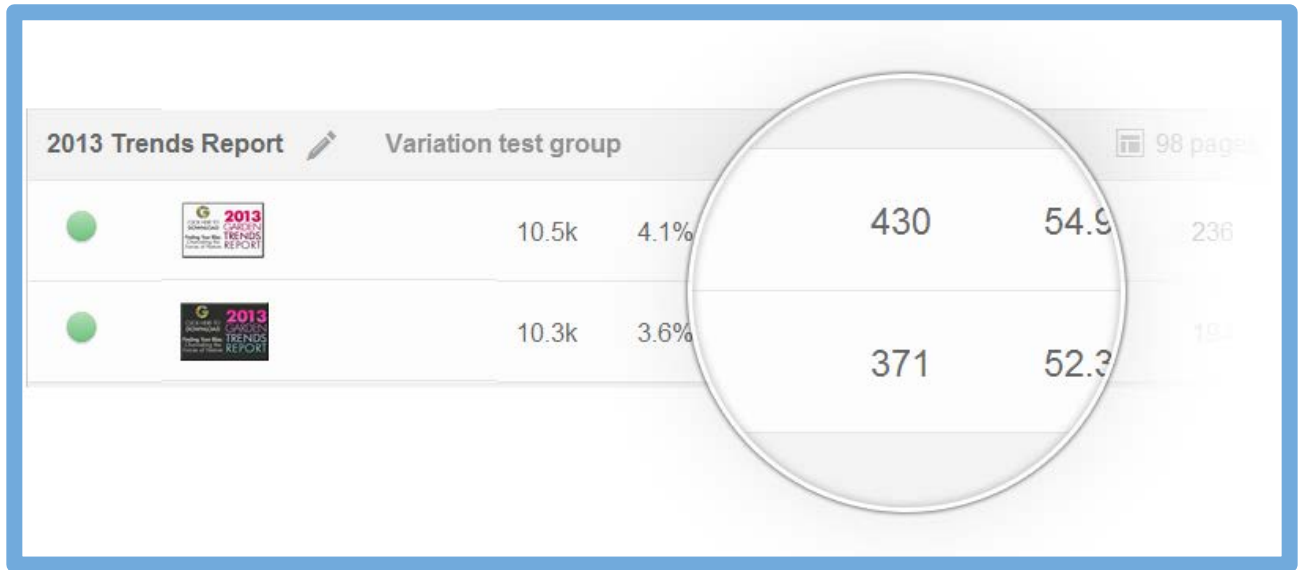
The amount of time it takes to implement an A/B test is minimal. In fact, it will probably take more time to decide whether the new variation of your call-to-action should be blue or green. Combined with the potential to get a 20-40% lift, the ROI on your time spent increases dramatically.



A better question than "Why A/B test" might be "Why NOT A/B test"?

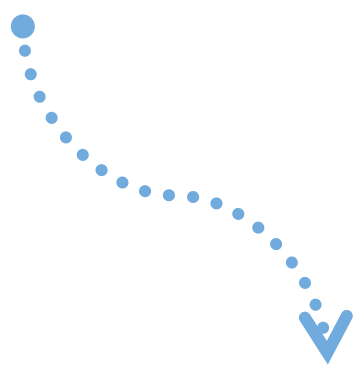
CHAPTER 4

EXAMPLES

Garden Media Group call-to-action A/B test.

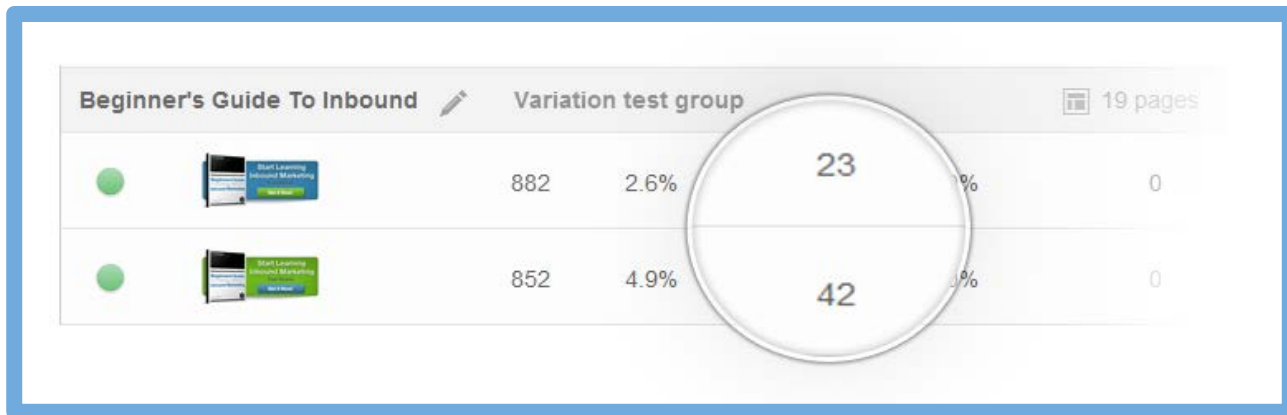


2013 Trends Report		Variation test group		98 pages		
●		10.5k	4.1%	430	54.9%	236
●		10.3k	3.6%	371	52.3%	181









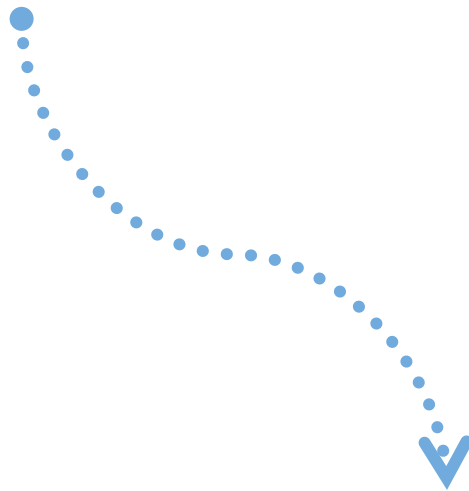
The more lightly colored version of this call to action resulted in 59 more clicks, performing 13% better than it's counterpart.

Great Island Tech call-to-action A/B test.



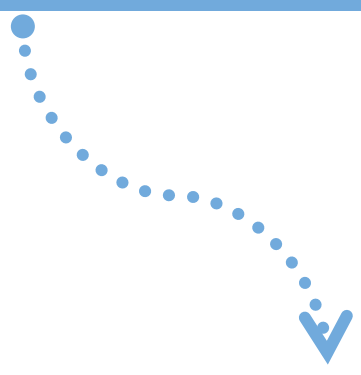
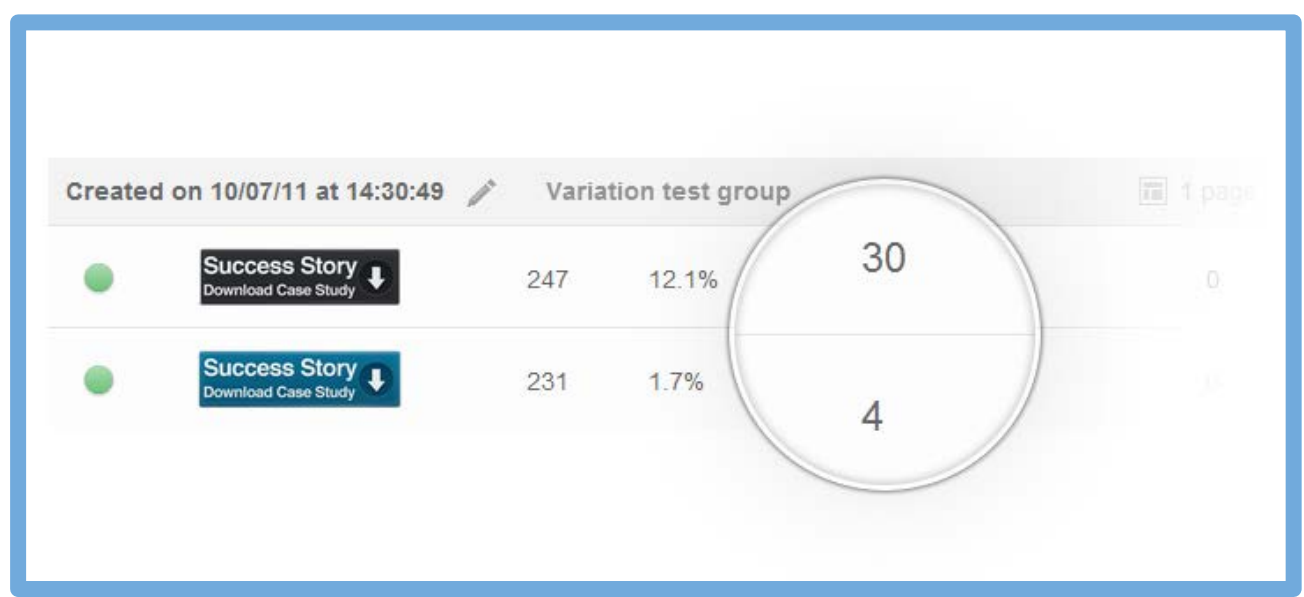
The screenshot shows an A/B test interface for a document titled "Beginner's Guide To Inbound" (19 pages). It compares two variations of a call-to-action button. The first variation (top row) has a blue button and resulted in 23 clicks (2.6% conversion rate). The second variation (bottom row) has a green button and resulted in 42 clicks (4.9% conversion rate). A white circle highlights the click counts (23 and 42) in the original image.

Beginner's Guide To Inbound 		Variation test group		 19 pages	
		882	2.6%	23	0
		852	4.9%	42	0



The blue version of this call to action resulted in 19 more clicks, performing 88% better than its counterpart.

Pawntique call-to-action A/B test.

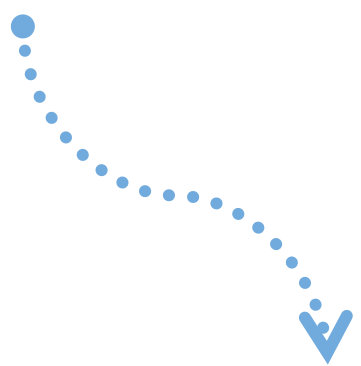


The darker version of this call to action resulted in 30 more clicks, performing 611% better than its counterpart.



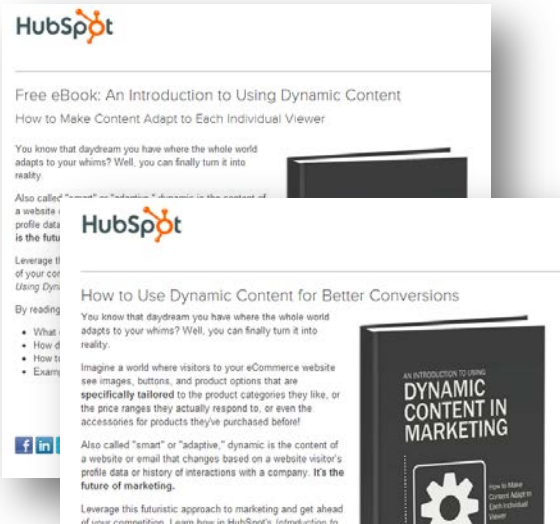
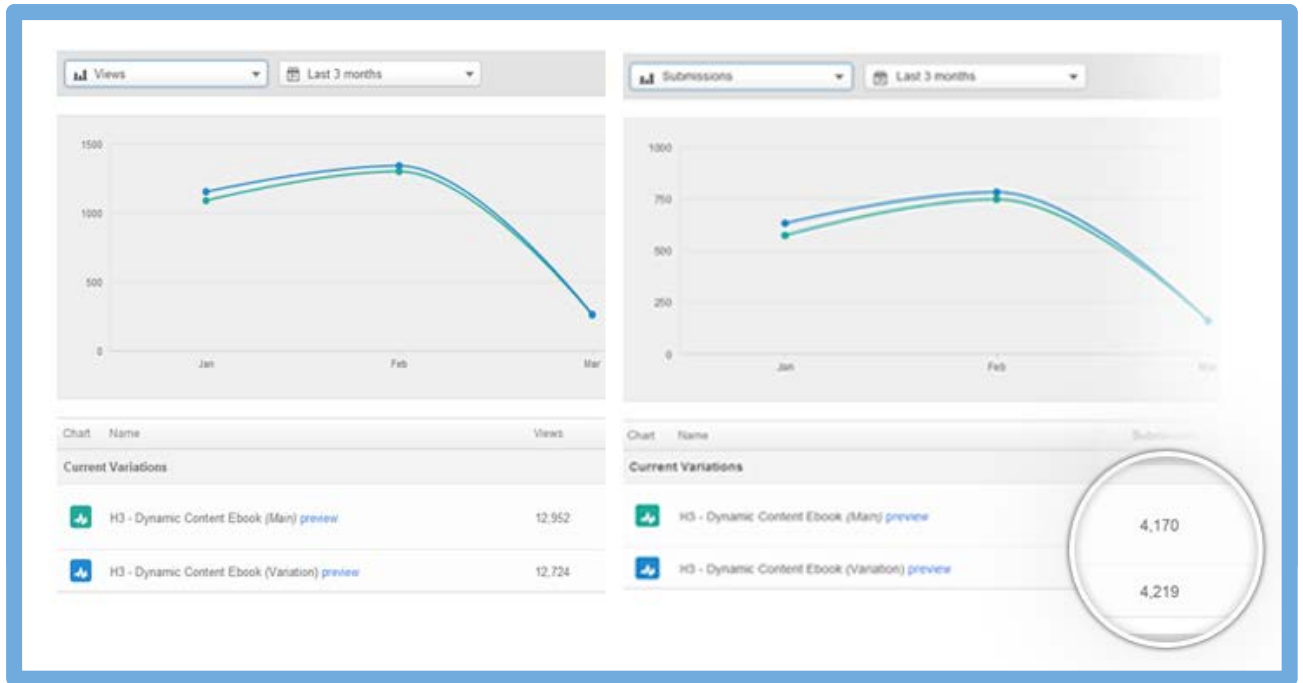
HubSpot call-to-action A/B test.

Created on 04/03/12 at 23:23:56		Variation test group		9 landing pages	9 pages	
●		51.1k	1.3%	687	27.1%	186
●		51.2k	1%	501	28.7%	144



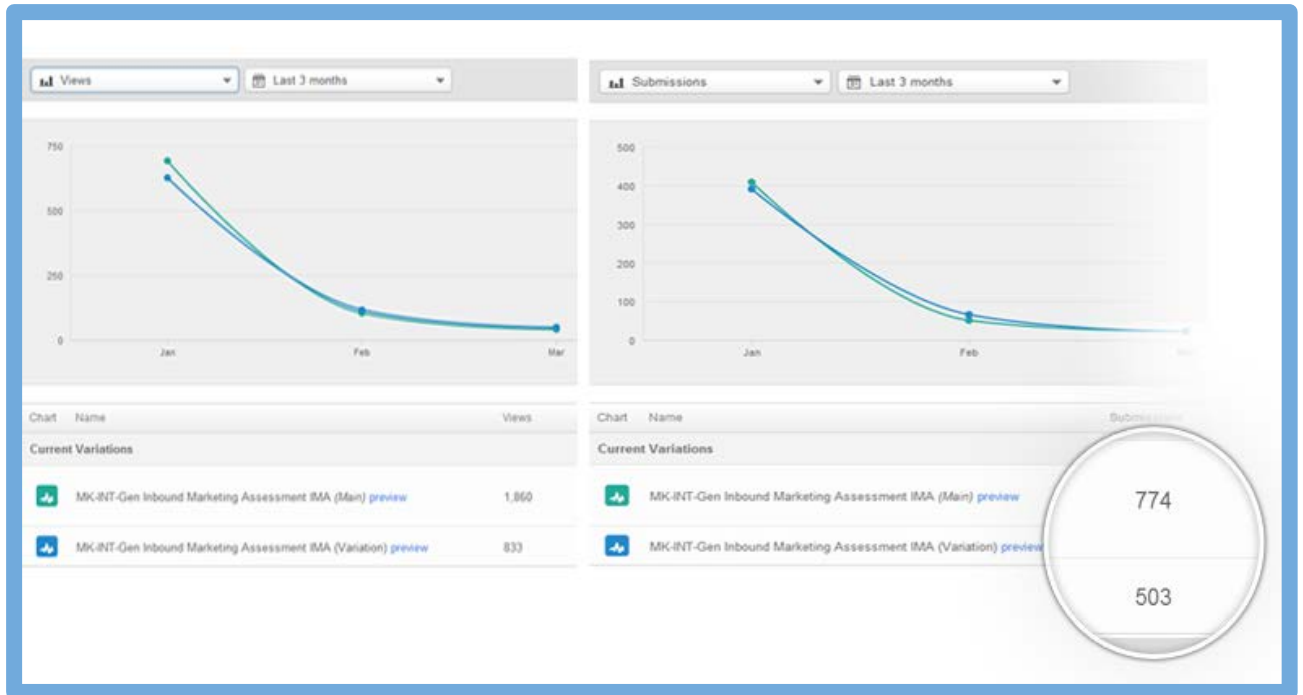
The less wordy version of this call to action resulted in 186 more clicks, performing 29% better than it's counterpart.

HubSpot landing page A/B test.



The longer headline on the first landing page version resulted in 49 more submissions, performing 3% better than it's counterpart.

HubSpot landing page A/B test.



The orange headline on the second landing page version resulted in 271 more submissions, performing 45% better than it's counterpart.

HubSpot

Request a FREE Inbound Marketing Assessment Today

Want to know how to optimize your website to get found by more prospects and convert more of them into leads and paying customers?

HubSpot

Request a FREE Inbound Marketing Assessment Today

Want to know how to optimise your website to get found by more prospects and convert more of them into leads and paying customers?

During this assessment, your specialist will review your:

- On-page search engine optimisation
- Business blog
- Lead generation strategy
- Landing pages
- Social media presence
- Competitor analysis

There's no risk, no obligation, and no credit card required.

SUBMIT AN EXAMPLE

We're always looking for customer examples, and we would love to feature yours . Submit your example below.



The screenshot shows the HubSpot Academy website. At the top, the HubSpot logo and 'Academy' are displayed. Below the logo, there are navigation links: 'Webinars', 'Customer Examples', 'Templates', 'User Groups', and 'Academy Blog'. The main heading is 'HubSpot Customer Examples', followed by the subtext 'Browse the top examples of customers using HubSpot for their inbound marketing campaigns.' Below this, there are five example thumbnails arranged in two rows. The first row contains three thumbnails: 'Blog Examples' (showing a 'bigideasblog' page), 'Landing Page Examples' (showing a 'New Steps to Physical Planning' page), and 'Call to Action (CTA) Examples' (showing a 'Have you completed all your post-wedding details?' page). The second row contains two thumbnails: 'Thank you!' (showing a 'Diggett' thank you page) and 'Special Offer for New Business Customers' (showing a blue banner with a special offer).

Submit an example

CHAPTER 5

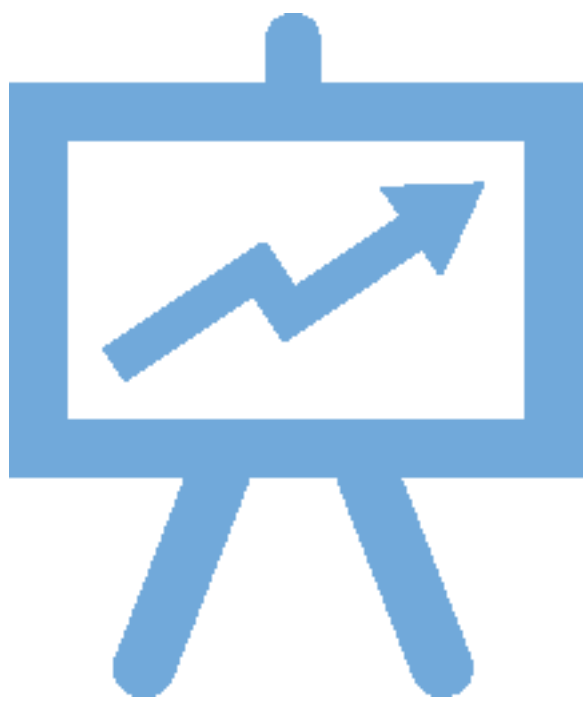
A/B TESTING IN HUBSPOT

HubSpot makes A/B testing easy.

Timing plays a significant role in your marketing campaign's results. If you were to show one version of a landing page one month and another version of it the following month, you wouldn't know if it performed better due to the month or the change on the landing page.

To get the best results, two variations should be rotated at the same time so you're not left second guessing your results.

Executing an A/B test in HubSpot is quite easy, and the software will automatically rotate the versions for you.



CHAPTER 6

STEPS TO A PERFECT A/B TEST



How to conduct an A/B test.

In this section, we'll walk through an overview of the steps required for a good A/B test. These steps will be the same regardless of what it is you're testing. Let's take a look at what they are.

- 1 Select a marketing asset to test
- 2 Select a metric to improve
- 3 Decide what to change in a new variation
- 4 Choose an end date
- 5 Check back for statistical significance
- 6 Declare a winner

In the following chapter, we'll apply these steps to each of the specific tools in HubSpot that you can A/B test. You'll use your workbook and apply this process to your email, landing page, and call-to-action A/B tests. For now, let's look at the general best practices for each step.



1 Select a marketing asset to test.

First, choose the marketing asset you want to test.

Email

Landing Page

Call-to-action

You can A/B test any email, landing page, or call-to-action. However, you shouldn't select something that links to another element in an active A/B test. For example, you don't want to A/B test an email linking to a landing page that's also currently in an active A/B test. This adds too many variables to measure properly.

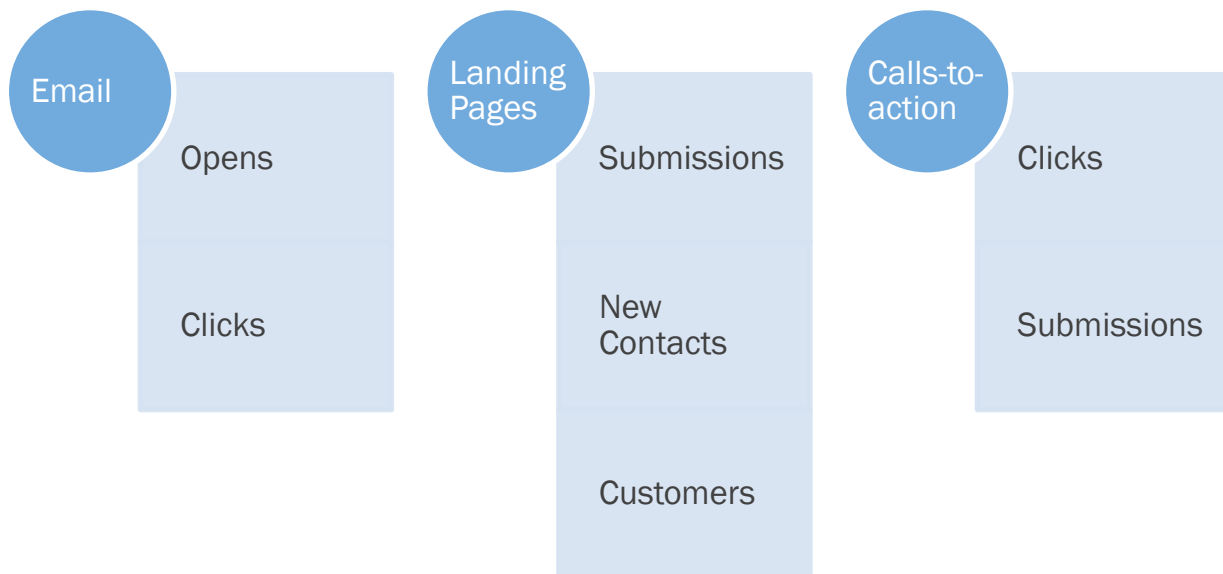




2 Select a metric to improve.

Once you decide which email, call-to-action, or landing page you want to test, you'll decide which metric you want to influence. Knowing that makes it easier to select a variable to test.

For example, if you know you want to improve the open rates of your next email, you'd likely test the subject line. If you wanted to improve the click-through-rate, you might choose to test the offer within the body of the email.



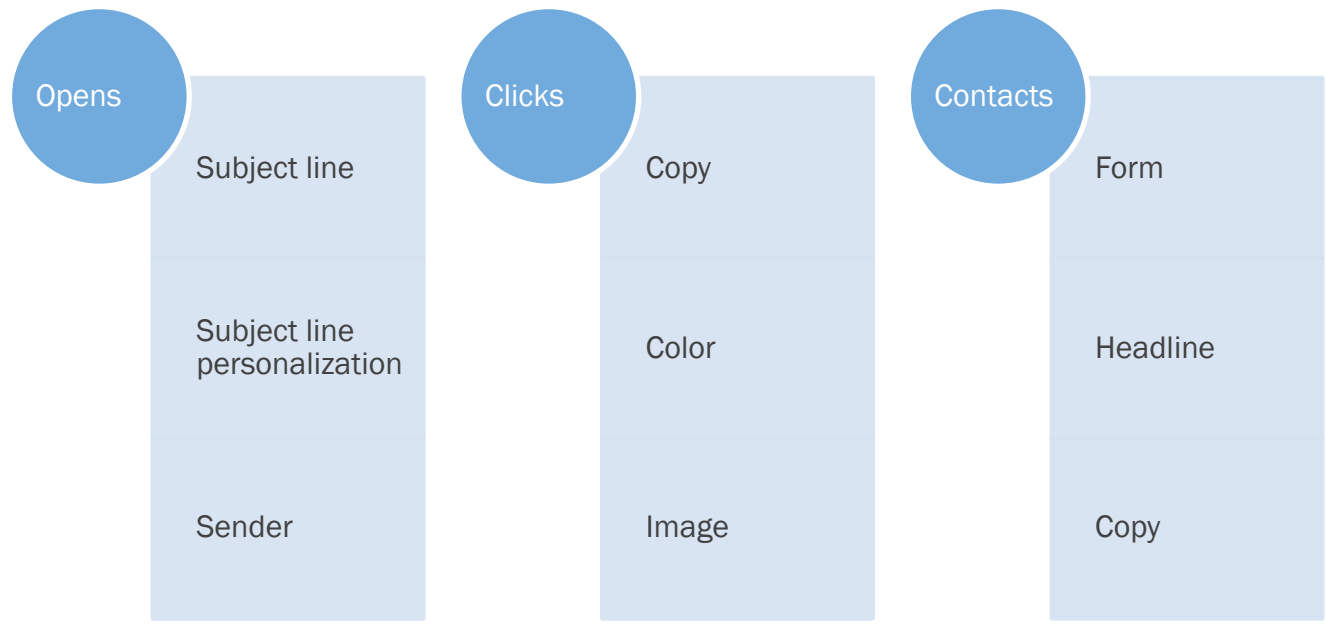


3 Decide what to change in a new variation.

It's time to determine what change to make to your B variation. Only one thing should be changed so that you can understand if your change had an impact.

The variable you choose to test should be based on the metric you selected in the previous step. For example, if you want to improve open rates, you would likely test another variation of the subject line or the sender name.

Each tool has it's own set of variables to test against common metrics, but here are some general ideas.



What will variation B look like?

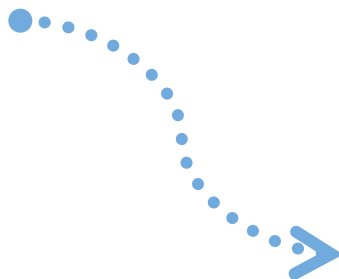
Once you have a variable to test, decide on what the second variation will look like. If you chose to test the color of a call-to-action, what color is it now and what color will the variation be?

What's your hypothesis?

Take a moment to record which test you think will win, and why.

Sometimes the changes cause improvement can almost be counterintuitive. To make it fun, poll your team to see what they think.

When whichtestwon.com asked marketers which landing page variation got 110% more submissions, 49% of marketers guessed incorrectly.



VERSION A

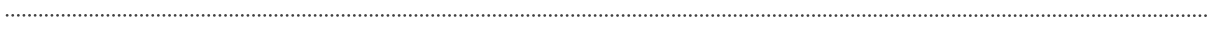
Finally, Affordable Network Storage
Get a FREE Network Storage Guide

Simple, cost-effective ways to secure your data

Get a FREE Network Storage Guide

How site visitors voted:

VERSION A (51%)
VERSION B (49%)



4 Choose an end date.

While determining a start and end date seems obvious, many marketers tend to overlook this step. In fact, this is one of the most common mistakes we see. It's important to declare a winner – after all, the winning variation is resulting in better performance.





5 Check back for statistical significance

On the end date, check back in on your test. Before deciding on the winner, you'll need to make sure that your test is statistically significant.

Essentially, if a test is statistically significant, the results are meaningful. If variation A of your landing page received 20% more submissions, but each variation received less than 20 clicks, then that test likely isn't complete.

MarketingSherpa wrote:
“In our ROI-driven world of digital marketing, testing without calculating statistical significance of the data is not much different than not testing at all.”

The screenshot shows the HubSpot A/B Testing Calculator interface. It features a table for inputting data for two variations, A and B. The table has columns for 'Visits' and 'Conversions'. Variation A has 10500 visits and 430 conversions. Variation B has 10300 visits and 371 conversions. Below the table is a red 'Calculate' button and a green result box indicating that the result is statistically significant (95% probability) and that Variation A is the best choice, converted at 4.1% (13% better than Variation B).

	Visits	Conversions
A	10500	430
B	10300	371

Calculate [Add Row](#)

This result is statistically significant. (95% probability)
The best choice is Variation A: it converted at 4.1% (13% better than Variation B).

To determine if a test is statistically significant, use the [A/B test calculator](#). If it is, you're ready to declare a winner. If not, choose a new end date and check back then.



6 Declare a winner



You've run your test, checked back on your end date, and the results are statistically significant.

It's time to declare a winner!

A few decisions and a little work, and you now have a better performing marketing asset.

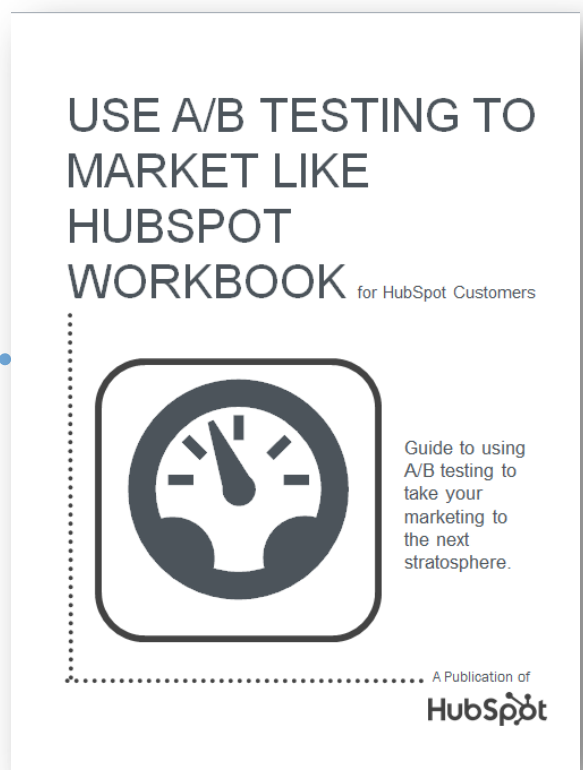
It's important to remember to take down the losing result. You can always run another test against the winner.

Take a moment and write down your takeaways from the test. Was it surprising that the dull brown call to action performed better than that attractive looking blue one? Decide how you'll use the information. Will you conduct similar tests, or report on the results?



TIME TO OPEN YOUR COMPANION WORKBOOK

Get the most out of this ebook by using it alongside the companion workbook.



Get the workbook.

CHAPTER 8

A/B TESTING CALLS-TO- ACTION



1 Select a marketing asset to test.

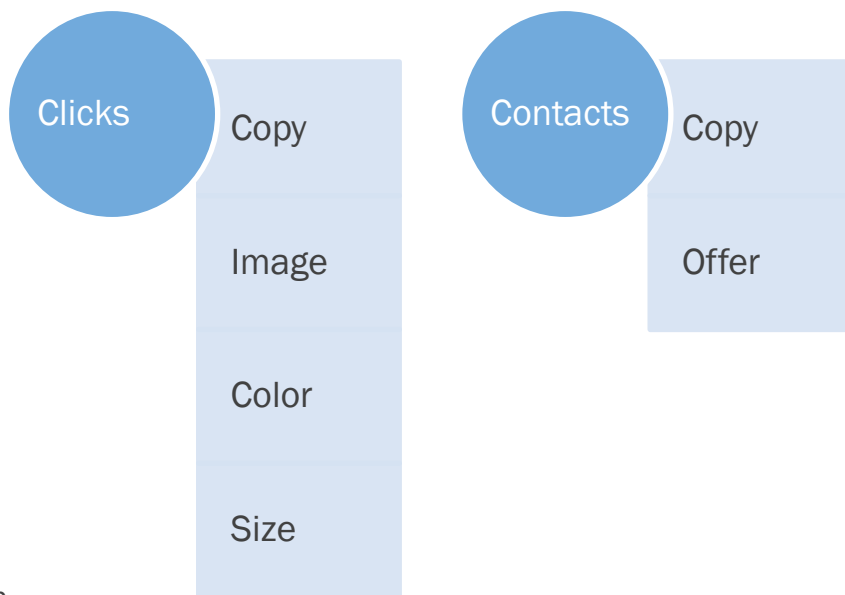
Call-to-action tests run on an ongoing basis, so you can test a brand new call-to-action or an existing one. If you decide to test an existing one, find a candidate that needs improvement for the metric you select in the next step.

2 Select a metric to improve.

When testing calls-to-action, you'll be testing for either clicks or submissions.

3 Decide what to change in a new variation.

Now that you know which metric you're trying to improve, select a corresponding variable to test from the list below.





Elements you can optimize in a call-to-action

COPY

Test completely different wording, or just change one word, like “price” vs. “quote”. If you’re optimizing for submissions, test alignment with the landing page headline..

What are visitors getting when they click on the call-to-action? Can you make it clearer or more compelling? Test how you are positioning the offer. Instead of “contact us”, try “talk to sales”.

OFFER

IMAGE

Try adding an image to your new test, or using a different image. Test images of the offer – an ebook cover for example – vs. an image of a person. You can also try changing the position or the size of the image.

Elements you can optimize in an email



COLOR

Color is a very popular variable to test because it can actually have a big impact. Try testing a color that blends with the design of the site vs. a contrasting color. You can also test colors based on their [emotional impact](#).

Test a larger or smaller version of the call-to-action. If your existing call to action is in a column, make sure the new version fits..



SIZE



[Attend the call-to-action class](#)

Want to learn call-to-action best practices? Register for the call-to-action class with Professor Sarah Bedrick.



4 Choose an end date.

When will your test start, and when will it end? Record the end date.

5 Check back for statistical significance.

Before declaring a winner, make sure your test results are [statistically significant](#). If they aren't, record a new end date and check back then.

6 Declare a winner.

Be sure to make the losing version inactive by disabling the variation.



CHAPTER 9

A/B TESTING LANDING PAGES

1 Select a marketing asset to test.

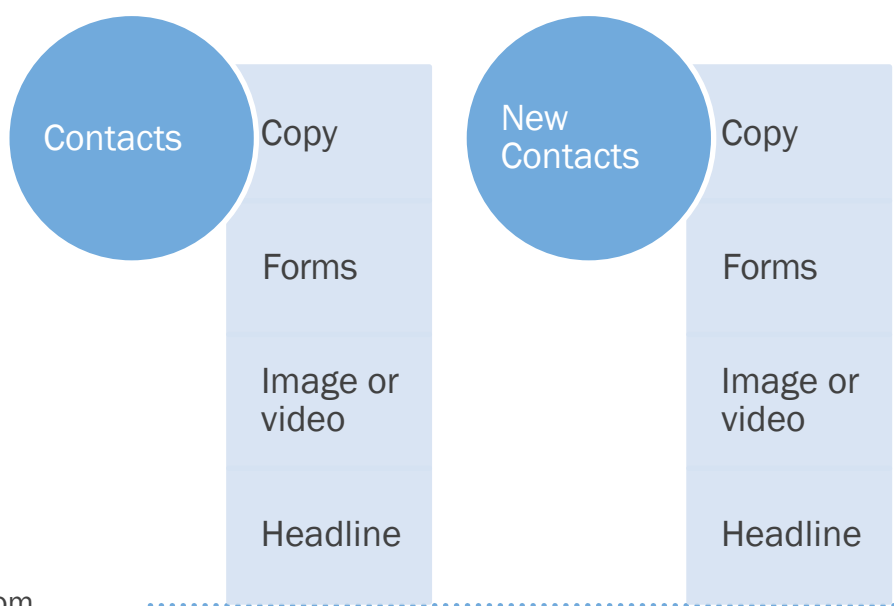
Landing page tests run on an ongoing basis, so you can test a brand new landing page or an existing one. For an existing one, find a candidate that needs improvement for the metric you select in the next step.

2 Select a metric to improve.

When testing landing pages, you'll be testing for contacts, or new contacts.

3 Decide what to change in a new variation.

Now that you know which metric you're trying to improve, select a corresponding variable to test from the list below.





Elements you can optimize in a landing page



COPY

Test things like length of copy or use of bullets vs. paragraph style text. Try writing copy that's feature rich vs. benefit rich.

Test the number of form fields or the location of the form on the page. Do you get a better response with three fields vs. six? Also try asking for information that may be perceived as less personal.



FORMS



IMAGE

Test different images. Use an image of the offer (an ebook cover for example) vs. an image of a person. You can also try changing the position or the size of the image. If you have one available, test the impact of a video instead of a picture.

HEADLINE

Test headline length, how you phrase the offer, or change specific words in the headline. You can also try testing a different color or size.

Want to learn landing page best practices? Register for the landing page class with Professor Chris LoDolce.



[Attend the landing page class](#)



4 Choose an end date.

When will your test start, and when will it end? Record the end date.

5 Check back for statistical significance.

Before declaring a winner, make sure your test results are [statistically significant](#). If they aren't, record a new end date and check back then.

6 Declare a winner.

Be sure to make the losing version inactive by declaring a winner.



CHAPTER 7

A/B TESTING EMAIL



1 Select a marketing asset to test.

Decide which upcoming email you're planning to test. The larger the list you're sending it to, the better chance the results will be statistically significant.

2 Select a metric to improve.

When testing email, you'll be testing for either opens or clicks.

3 Decide what to change in a new variation.

Now that you know which metric you're trying to improve, select a corresponding variable to test from the list below.

Opens

Subject line

Subject line personalization

Sender name

Clicks

Copy

Personalization

Link placement, text, or appearance



Elements you can optimize in an email

SUBJECT LINES

Test variations that use different copy, length of the subject line, mention of a discount, different formats (like brackets or a colon), or personalizing the subject line..

Test the name of the sender. If you're sending it from your company today, try sending it from a person, or vice versa. You can also try sending from their salesperson or account manager, assuming they're able to handle replies.

SENDER

COPY

People scan emails, so changing up the copy can make a big difference. Try using personalization in the greeting, or throughout the email. You can also test length of copy, use of bullets, or use of different formatting such as bolded text or different colored text.



Elements you can optimize in an email

LINKS

Test link placement, location, or appearance.

Try placing it at the beginning or end of the email, or placing it in both locations.

Test the copy of the link. You can use totally different phrases, or just change a single word. You might try one variation where the copy states what it is they're linking to, and another variation that tells them the benefits they'll get by clicking on the link. For example, "Download the free A/B testing ebook" vs. "Learn how to A/B test like HubSpot with our free ebook" .

You can also test the appearance of the link. Try a text based link vs. a call to action button or linked image.

Want to learn email best practices? Register for the email class with Professor Alan Perlman.



[Attend the email class](#)



4 Choose an end date.

The good news is, the HubSpot software does this for you. You choose the percentage of your list that will receive different variations and how long you want to wait. HubSpot will automatically send the winner to the remainder of the list.

5 Check back for statistical significance.

Because this happens automatically with email, you'll see a message telling you which email was the winner, or that the tests were inconclusive.

6 Declare a winner.

You'll already see the winner when you look at your email performance. Why do you think the winning variation did better?



CONCLUSION



“*You’re well on your way to being an A/B testing whiz.*”

You’re well on your way to being an A/B testing whiz. Instead of making decisions on gut feelings, you’re backing your decisions up with facts and numbers, making you an even better marketer.

You now know which elements of your marketing are working and which ones can be improved upon.

Remember, A/B tests are a great way for your business to generate more clicks, contacts, and customers. Take what you think works well, verify it, and make your results even better.

What will you A/B test next?



ASK THE PROFESSOR

Questions? Ask HubSpot Professor Sarah Bedrick via email or by attending the live class.

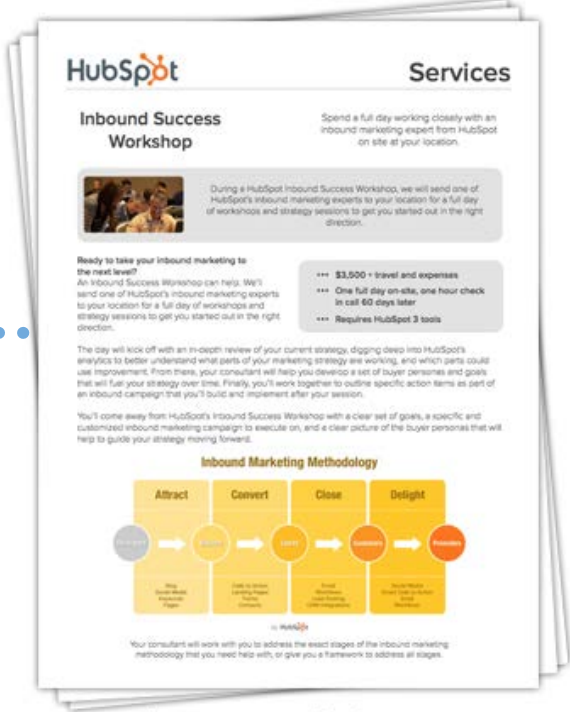


Ask the Professor

Attend the live class

GET ON-SITE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Work with an expert consultant to take your inbound marketing to the next level.



HubSpot Services

Inbound Success Workshop

Spend a full day working closely with an inbound marketing expert from HubSpot on site at your location.

During a HubSpot Inbound Success Workshop, we will send one of HubSpot's inbound marketing experts to your location for a full day of workshops and strategy sessions to get you started out in the right direction.

Ready to take your inbound marketing to the next level?
An Inbound Success Workshop can help. We'll send one of HubSpot's inbound marketing experts to your location for a full day of workshops and strategy sessions to get you started out in the right direction.

- *** \$3,500 + travel and expenses
- *** One full day on-site, one hour check in call 60 days later
- *** Requires HubSpot 3 tools

The day will kick off with an in-depth review of your current strategy, digging deep into HubSpot's analytics to better understand what parts of your marketing strategy are working, and which parts could use improvement. From there, your consultant will help you develop a set of buyer personas and goals that will fuel your strategy over time. Finally, you'll work together to outline specific action items as part of an inbound campaign that you'll build and implement after your session.

You'll come away from HubSpot's Inbound Success Workshop with a clear set of goals, a specific and customized inbound marketing campaign to execute on, and a clear picture of the buyer personas that will help to guide your strategy moving forward.

Inbound Marketing Methodology

Attract	Convert	Close	Delight
Attract	Convert	Close	Delight
Use the Right Content	Use to Attract the Right People	Build the Right Relationships	Build the Right Relationships

HubSpot

Your consultant will work with you to address the exact stages of the inbound marketing methodology that you need help with, or give you a framework to address all stages.

Learn more about on-site services