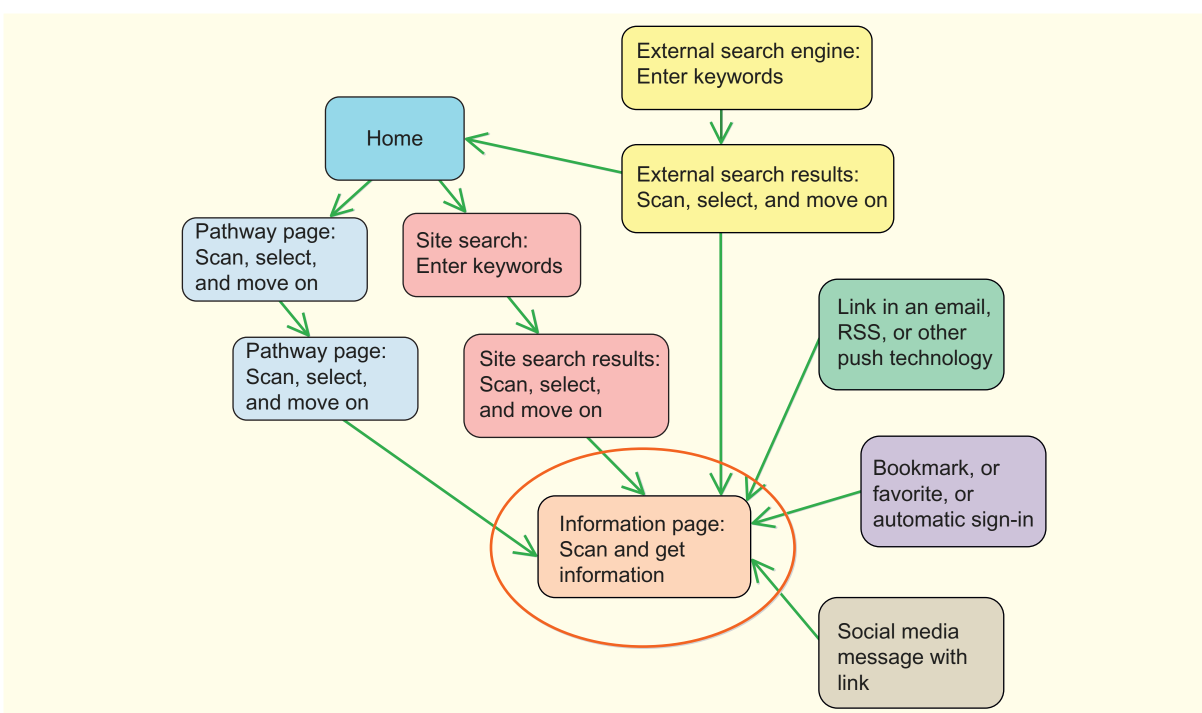
7 Focusing on Conversations and Key Messages

In Chapters 4 and 5, we looked at home pages and pathway pages – at responding well to the conversations your site visitors start by getting them quickly to where they need to go. In Chapter 6, we began to focus on not hogging the conversation – breaking up and organizing information to match your site visitors' needs. In this chapter, we continue to focus on not hogging the conversation within a single web topic.



What do you do when you get to an information page – to the page that you think holds what you came to the site to find? Do you immediately start to read it all or do you first skim and scan?

Most people don't jump right in and read. They first scan to decide:

- Did I get where I thought I was going?
- Is what I'm looking for here?

They look at the headline (the level 1 heading). They look for keywords and key messages. From the information design – the visual layout, how short the sections are, how clear the other headings are – they very quickly decide what to do. Most of all, they are focused on *their* goal and *their* conversation. You need to focus on that, too.

Seven guidelines for focusing on conversations and key messages

These seven guidelines will help you converse successfully with your site visitors while getting across your most essential messages:

1. Give people only what *they* need.
2. Cut! Cut! Cut! And cut again!
3. Think "bite, snack, meal."
4. Start with your key message.
5. Layer information.
6. Break down walls of words.
7. Plan to share and engage through social media.

Guidelines like these should be part of your content strategy.

SEO |

Following these guidelines will also help optimize your site for search engines. Keywords in headlines and in the first few lines of content on the page will help your SEO – *as long as those keywords match what site visitors put into their searches.*

1. Give people only what *they* need

A good mantra for web sites and social media is **less is more**.

What do your site visitors want to know? Need to know?

- Do they really care about the entire history of your project? Probably not.
- Do they want to hear how much you welcome them before you show them what you have to offer at what price? Probably not.

That content may be important to *you*, but if it isn't important to your site visitors, drop it entirely, put it at the bottom of the page, or layer it through a link to a deeper page.

Revising content you already have

Try this process to improve the way your site converses on a specific topic:

Checklist 7-1
Process for Selecting Web Content

1. **Put the content you now have on the topic aside.**
   I know this is difficult, but you should rethink your topic without being constrained by what the site now says.
2. **Check strategy and architecture.**
   Find out how this topic fits (or not) into your organization's content strategy, marketing strategy, social media strategy, and information architecture. Should you drop it entirely? Should you include it? If it doesn't fit, stop here.
3. **Adopt your persona's perspective.**
   Think about the topic from your site visitors' point of view. Which persona(s) is this for? Put yourself in those personas' place.
4. **List questions.**
   What would those personas ask about the topic? (Use all the sources in Chapter 2 to find out what your site visitors want to know about this specific topic.)
5. **Put the questions in logical order.**
   Which question would the personas ask first? Which next? Go through your list until you have all the questions in an order that is logical to your site visitors.

6. **Cut, paste, rewrite, edit.**

   Now, go back to the content you set aside in Step 1. Use it as source material to answer the questions you have written down. (It's okay to cut and paste as long as you edit what you paste so that it's a good, clear answer to the question.)

7. **See what's left.**

   Look over what is left in your original. Do your site visitors care about any of what is left? Is any of it critical for your site visitors to know? If they care or if it is critical, write a question that your site visitors might ask so that you can give them the answer.

8. **Get more answers.**

   If you have questions in your list for which you do not have an answer, find the right person and get the information. If it's a question people will ask, taking this step will save phone calls later.

9. **Read your new draft.**

   Does it flow logically? Are the questions in your site visitors' words? Are the answers short, straightforward, and clear?

10. **Discard what you have not used.**

    If your site visitors neither need nor care about the information, why include it? This may be the most difficult step of all, but remember that the web is about what people want and need to know, not about saying all there is to say on a topic.

Writing new content

The process for new content is very much the same. You can just leave out the heart-wrenching first step. Start with Step 2.

For Step 6, you won't have old copy as source material. You may have other source material. You may have subject matter experts to work with (or you may be the subject matter expert).

For Step 7, instead of looking over your original, look over all your source material or talk again with your subject matter expert.

Case study 7-1 shows how we might apply this persona-based, conversation-and-key-message-based process to write the content inviting people to participate in a contest.

Case Study 7-1 Using personas and their conversations to plan your content

What if you had to create the content for this web topic?

> International Aviation Art Contest
> "Create an Air Show Poster" is the theme of this year's contest for children ages 6 to 17.

Following our process, you would ask yourself:

- What do I want to achieve?
  - Have lots of young people enter the contest.
  - Get great entries that we'll want to show.
  - Only get acceptable entries (right people, right theme, right materials, follow the rules) – I don't want people to be unhappy because they couldn't find or understand the information they needed.
- Who are my primary personas for this content? (With whom am I conversing?)
  - Parents
  - Teachers
  - Children old enough to participate (I don't expect the 6-year-olds to read this. They'll hear about it from a parent or teacher, so this persona is most likely a teenager.)
- What will they want to know?

Thinking of people's questions is a great way to analyze web content even if you do not end up using question-and-answer format in your writing.

Continuing to think about these personas and their conversations, you might end up with these questions in this order:

- Who can enter?
- Deadline: When is the entry due?
- Prizes: What can I win?
- Theme: What must the poster show?
- Media: What types of art are acceptable?
- Judging: What will the judges look for?
- Where do I send my entry?

In addition to these questions from your personas, you may have information that people need but that they may not have thought about and so wouldn't ask about. For example, in this case, you know that an adult must certify that the child did the work. So you add another question to the list:

- Who must certify that the child made the poster?

Because people have to do that before they send it in, you might put that question next to last in your ordered list.

You now have an outline for your content, and that might lead you to create a page like this:

International Aviation Art Contest

This year's theme: A poster for an air show

Who can enter?

All children from age 6 to age 17 may participate. The child's age on December 31, 2012 is what counts.

Deadline: When is the entry due?

Entries must be postmarked by **January 11, 2013**.

Prizes: What can I win?

Entries will be divided into three age groups:
6 to 9 years; 10 to 13 years; 14 to 17 years.

The contest starts on the state level.

State prizes

Winners and runners-up in each state get a certificate and recognition from their state. The top three entries in each age group from each state go on to the national competition.

National prizes

Judges will pick a national winner and two runners-up in each age group. They all get certificates, ribbons, and a framed photograph of their artwork – and their work will be sent on to the international competition. The first place national winners also get a professional work of art from the American Society of Aviation Artists.

International prizes

Winners in the international competition get certificates and gold, silver, or bronze medals.

Media: What types of art are acceptable?

- Size should be 11 inches by 17 inches.
- **8½ by 11 is not acceptable because of international rules.**
- All artwork must be handmade by the child.

Acceptable media	NOT acceptable media
watercolor	pencil
acrylic or oil paints	charcoal
indelible markers	other nonpermanent media
colored pencils	computer generated work
felt-tip pens	collage work involving the use of photocopies
soft ball-point pens	
indelible ink	
crayon or similar indelible media	

What will the judges look for?

The judges will look for creative use of the theme in relation to aviation.

Who must certify that the child made the poster?

A parent, guardian, or art teacher must certify that the entire artwork is the original work of the child.

Make sure the certificate is fastened to the poster with tape or glue. Also, **please print the name of the artist on the back of the poster and please print legibly**.

Where do we send the poster?

Get the Entry Form for the 2012 International Aviation Art Contest.

When it is ready, send the poster with the appropriate paperwork to your state's sponsor office.

My version, adapted from facts about the actual contest

2. Cut! Cut! Cut! And cut again!

People read on the web and in social media when they need the information or it engages them. But they don't want to read long, meandering paragraphs. They want to grab information quickly.

Checklist 7-2
Process for Cutting Down to Essential Messages

1. **Start with your new draft.**
   Go through the steps in Checklist 7-1.
2. **Focus on the facts. Cut the flab.**
3. **Focus on your site visitors and what they want to know.**
   Cut out words that talk about you or the organization – unless your site visitors want or need that information.
4. **Put your new draft away for a day or two.**
   Then, take it out and see if you can cut some more without losing your essential messages.
5. **Read it out loud.**
   Ask a colleague to read it out loud. Ask a few representative site visitors to read it out loud.
6. **Listen carefully and revise.**

Don't ask people for their opinion of the content. Ask them to tell you what the content said. What's important is whether they "got" their answers and your key messages.

As an example for the first two guidelines in this chapter, look at Figure 7-1. It's from the web site of a university's medical center.

What would you say are the writer's goals, the personas, and the personas' goals and conversations for this content?

My analysis:

- Writer's goals:
  - People will make appointments efficiently.
  - They will call the right number for their situation.
  - They will be happy with the process of making an appointment.

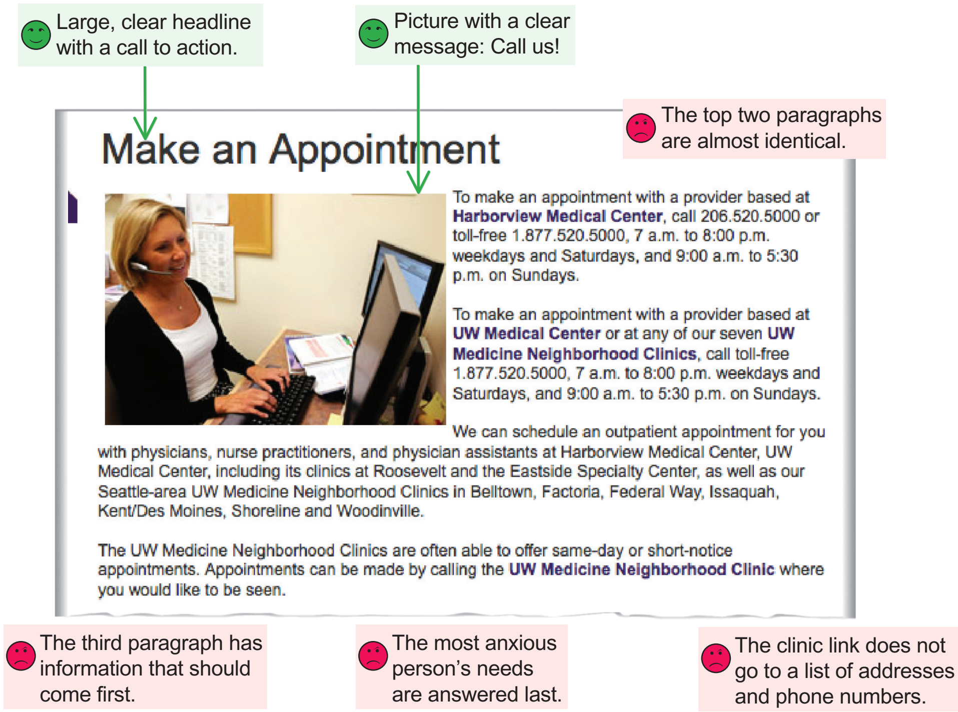


Figure 7-1 Paragraphs are not the best way to convey this information quickly.
http://uwmedicine.washington.edu

- Personas for this web content:
  - Someone who is ill or hurt (anxious, in pain)
  - A family member of someone who is ill or hurt (also anxious)
  - A person needing a routine check-up (may be anxious about having to deal with medical situations)
- Personas' goals:
  - Get an appointment at the right place at a good time
  - Spend as little time as possible on the phone
- Personas' conversations (questions):
  - How do I make an appointment?
  - What if I need an appointment right away?
  - What's the phone number?
  - When will you answer the phone?

Given that analysis, we might revise the content into Figure 7-2.

My revision has 40% fewer words (157 to 93). We could cut it even more by not having the first sentence under the first question (157 to 81; 48%

fewer words). I included that sentence as reassurance to the personas and to explain why they had to go to a neighborhood clinic and not the main medical center. Writing always requires judgments like this.

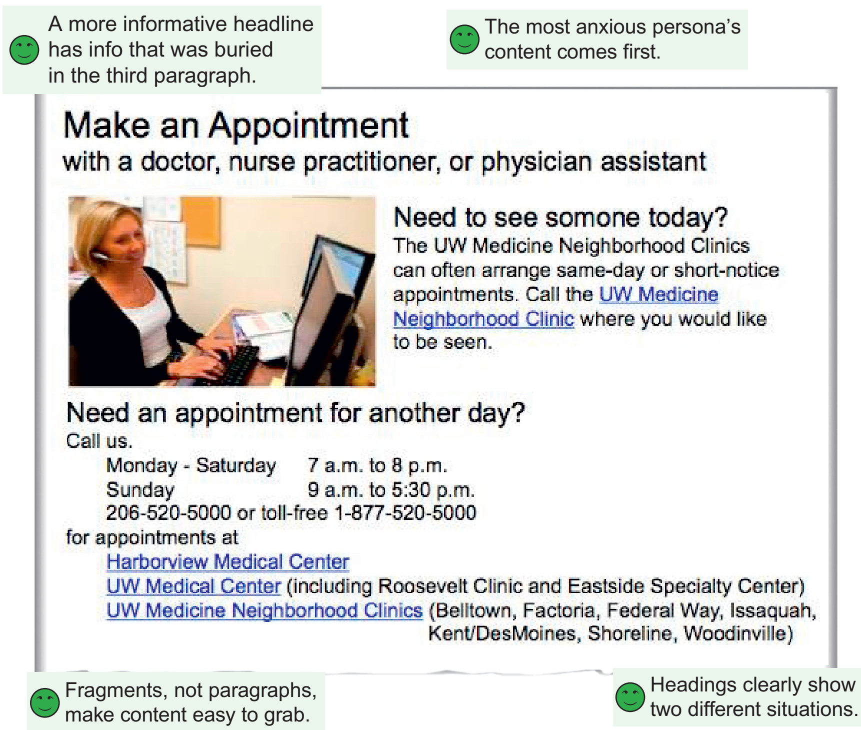


Figure 7-2 My suggested revision

3. Think "bite, snack, meal"

What if you have a lot of information on a topic, but some people just want the "soundbite," others want a little more, and a few want all the details? You can satisfy all those conversations by thinking "bite, snack, meal."

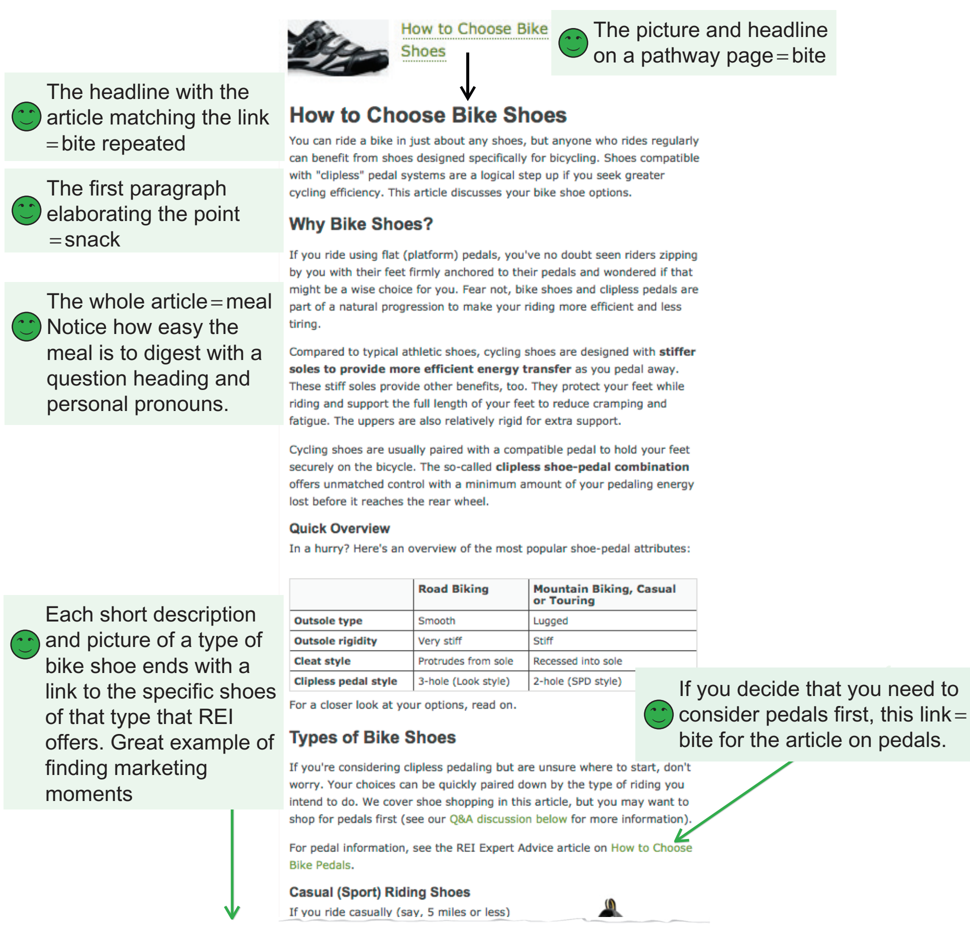
I learned this wonderful concept from Leslie O'Flahavan and use it with her permission.
www.ewriteonline.com

Bite = headline, link, or both plus a very brief description.

Snack = key message or brief summary. The snack can be a bit on the home page, a separate bold or italic line at the top of an article, the first bit of information in a blog post, or the summary to a very large report.

Meal = the details. The meal can be the rest of an article or blog post, a deeper web page linked from the snack, or the full report.

Figure 7-3 from REI, a major seller of outdoor clothes and gear, shows how you can apply "bite, snack, meal" to an article.



How to Choose Bike Shoes

You can ride a bike in just about any shoes, but anyone who rides regularly can benefit from shoes designed specifically for bicycling. Shoes compatible with "clipless" pedal systems are a logical step up if you seek greater cycling efficiency. This article discusses your bike shoe options.

Why Bike Shoes?

If you ride using flat (platform) pedals, you've no doubt seen riders zipping by you with their feet firmly anchored to their pedals and wondered if that might be a wise choice for you. Fear not, bike shoes and clipless pedals are part of a natural progression to make your riding more efficient and less tiring.

Compared to typical athletic shoes, cycling shoes are designed with **stiffer soles to provide more efficient energy transfer** as you pedal away. These stiff soles provide other benefits, too. They protect your feet while riding and support the full length of your feet to reduce cramping and fatigue. The uppers are also relatively rigid for extra support.

Cycling shoes are usually paired with a compatible pedal to hold your feet securely on the bicycle. The so-called **clipless shoe-pedal combination** offers unmatched control with a minimum amount of your pedaling energy lost before it reaches the rear wheel.

Quick Overview

In a hurry? Here's an overview of the most popular shoe-pedal attributes:

	Road Biking	Mountain Biking, Casual or Touring
Outsole type	Smooth	Lugged
Outsole rigidity	Very stiff	Stiff
Cleat style	Protrudes from sole	Recessed into sole
Clipless pedal style	3-hole (Look style)	2-hole (SPD style)

For a closer look at your options, read on.

Types of Bike Shoes

If you're considering clipless pedaling but are unsure where to start, don't worry. Your choices can be quickly paired down by the type of riding you intend to do. We cover shoe shopping in this article, but you may want to shop for pedals first (see our Q&A discussion below for more information).

For pedal information, see the REI Expert Advice article on How to Choose Bike Pedals.

Casual (Sport) Riding Shoes

If you ride casually (say, 5 miles or less)

Figure 7-3 The bite (on a pathway page) leads to the snack (top of the article) and then to the meal (rest of the article).
www.rei.com

Bite, snack, meal brings together two very important guidelines for successful web writing:

- Start with your key message.
- Layer information.

Let's explore those concepts in the next two sections.

4. Start with your key message

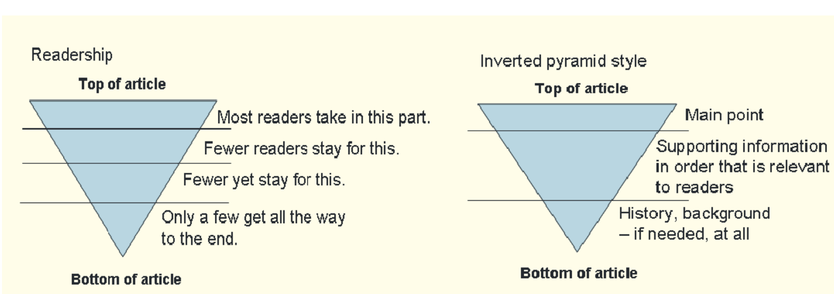
Whatever your key message is, put it first. Put it in the headline (the bite) and elaborate it quickly in the beginning of the text (the snack).

For some people, that will be enough. They get the point. They don't need more. For others, a good bite and snack will entice them further into the content. If you don't capture readers' attention with a good bite and snack, they are likely to leave.

Many site visitors read only a few words of a page – or a paragraph – before deciding if it is going to be relevant and easy for them to get through.

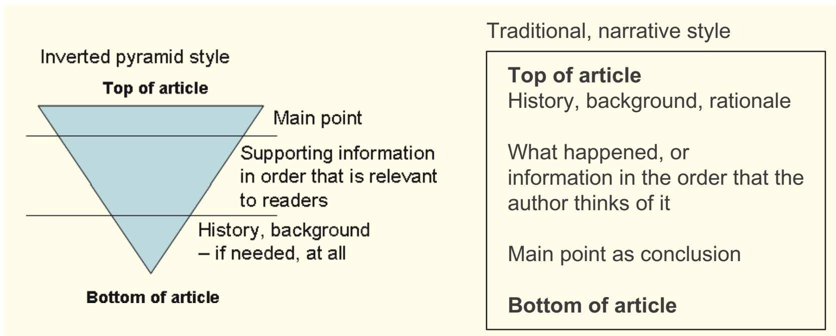
Key message first = inverted pyramid style

Journalists and technical writers know that many readers skim headlines and the first paragraphs of articles. That's why they write in inverted pyramid style – with the main point first.



For many web content writers, however, inverted pyramid style requires a major shift in thinking and writing. For school essays and reports, you were probably taught to write in narrative style, telling a whole story in chronological order and building to the main point at the end – the conclusion. That's not a good style for the workplace or the web.

Busy site visitors want the conclusion first.



Although it may be difficult at first to start with the conclusion, it's a very useful skill. As Chip Scanlan says:

> [Inverted pyramid style] is also an extremely useful tool for thinking and organizing because it forces the reporter to sum up the point of the story in a single paragraph. Journalism students who master it and then go on to other fields say it comes in handy for writing everything from legal briefs to grant applications.

Scanlan's blog on inverted pyramid is at http://www.poynter.org/how-tos/newsgathering-storytelling/chip-on-your-shoulder/12754/writing-from-the-top-down-pros-and-cons-of-the-inverted-pyramid/, updated March 2, 2011.

And, I'll add, for writing successful web content.

Figures 7-4 and 7-5 show the difference between narrative style and inverted pyramid style, respectively, through two articles on the same topic.

Greenland Ice Is Melting – Faster and Faster!

A new paper by scientists of Utrecht University, Institute for Marine and Atmospheric Research, in collaboration with colleagues from the Netherlands Royal Meteorological Institute, Delft University of Technology, Bristol University (UK), and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (USA) was published in *Science* recently. The work used the Regional Atmospheric Climate Model to calculate surface processes over Greenland, statellite radar measurements to determine iceberg production, and ice sheet mass loss from the Gravity Recovery and Climate Mission (GRACE) satellites.

Figure 7-4 The headline and first 75 words – narrative style – no key message
www.enn.com

Greenland Ice Melting Faster Than Expected

The Greenland ice sheet is melting faster than expected, according to a new study led by a University of Alaska Fairbanks researcher and published in the journal *Hydrological Processes*.

Study results indicate that the ice sheet may be responsible for nearly 25 percent of global sea rise in the past 13 years. The study also shows that seas now are rising by more than 3 millimeters a year – more than 50 percent faster than the average for the 20th century.

Figure 7-5 The headline and first 80 words – inverted pyramid – key message and data
www.sciencedaily.com

Did the second version do a better job of engaging you? With the first version, did you stop reading part way through the first paragraph?

Eye-tracking shows the need for key message first

Like many other usability specialists, I've seen a lot of this behavior: Site visitors read a bit at the top and then skim until something catches their attention. That could be a bold heading, a bulleted list, or a word that they are searching for. Eye-tracking data often confirms this observation.

Figure 7-6 shows accumulated eye-tracking data (a heat map) for a web information page. Notice how people looked in an F pattern – across the lines at the top of the information and then at the beginning of the bulleted list. Notice how, after the first few lines, they looked more at the beginning of lines than all the way across. Notice how reading trails off down the page.

Blind web users act similarly. They scan with their ears. They listen to only a few words before deciding whether to keep going. With their screen-readers, blind web users can jump to the next link or the next heading or to the next paragraph – and they do so at an amazingly rapid pace.

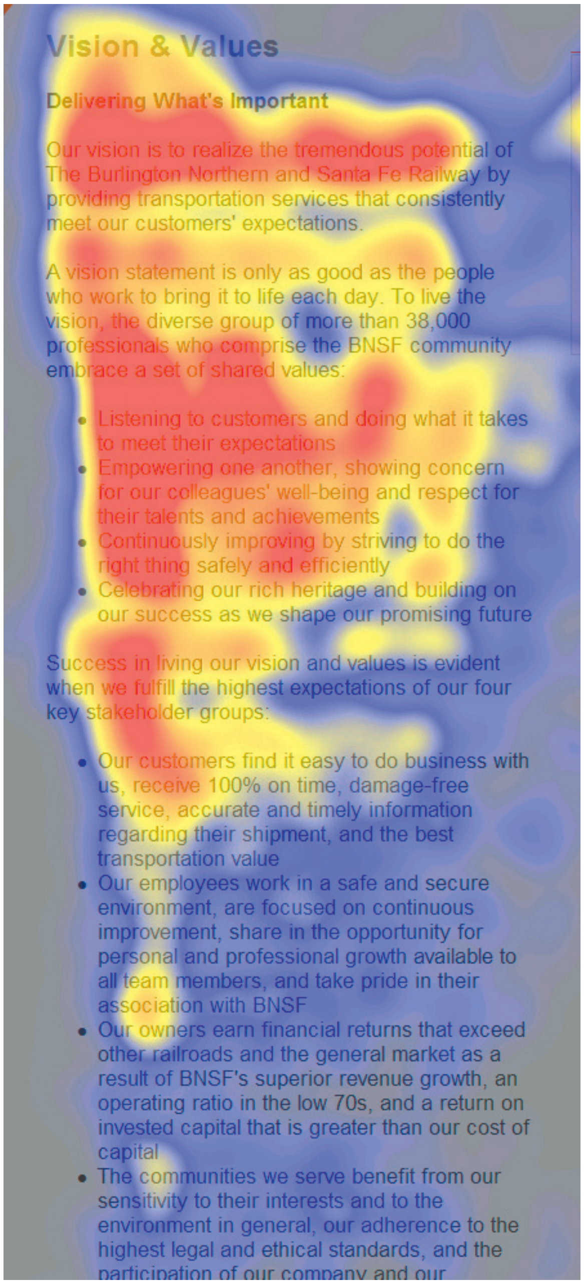


Figure 7-6 This heat map from eye-tracking shows the typical F pattern of web reading on information pages. Readers looked most at the first paragraph and then at the beginning of bulleted lists. The colors show the concentration of eye fixations, with red indicating the heaviest concentrations and blue the least.

Eye-tracking by Jakob Nielsen and Kara Pernice, Nielsen Norman Group. Used with permission. For more about the study this picture came from, see www.useit.com/eyetracking and *Eyetracking Web Usability*, 2010.

5. Layer information

Layering is a way of dividing web information. When done well, layering

- keeps site visitors from being overwhelmed
- helps site visitors who want different levels of information

Bite, snack, meal is one way to layer. In the next two sections, I show you examples of layering by:

- opening extra information on top of what site visitors or app users are doing
- progressively disclosing information within the content, letting people open and close pieces as needed

Layering with an overlay

You can take advantage of layering to provide definitions, technical details, or other "extra" information. When you provide rollovers or open a small secondary window on top of the main page, your site visitors don't lose the context.

Figure 7-7 shows how Traffic.com gives details of traffic problems.

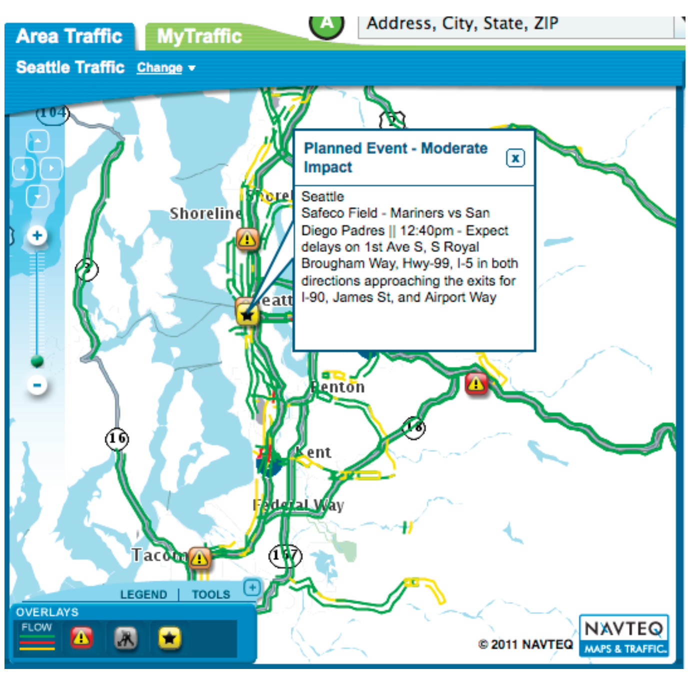


Figure 7-7 Clicking on any warning symbol on this traffic map brings up a small overlay with details of the problem – a good use of layering without losing context.
www.traffic.com

Even on tablets and mobiles, I see some interesting uses of overlays. For example, Figure 7-8 shows the details for an airline flight over the map showing the flight's route. Other overlays allow you to add flights to track and choose which of the flights you are tracking to look at. The app tracks flights in real time.

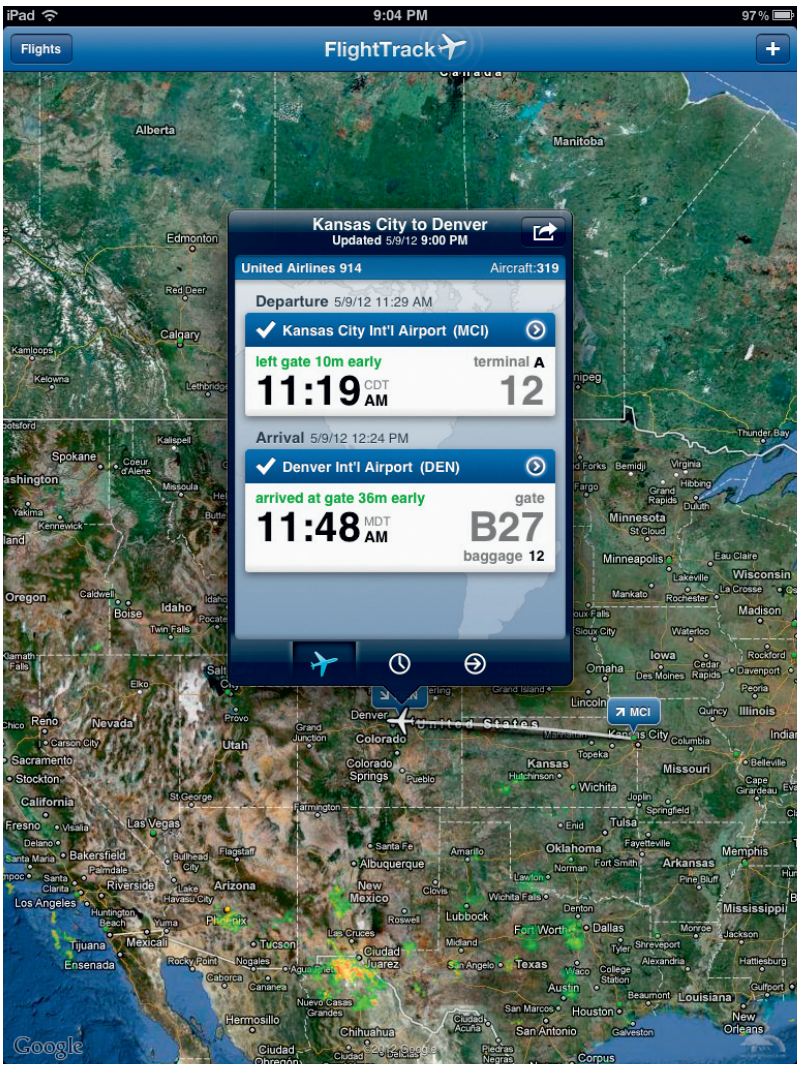


Figure 7-8 An overlay on a tablet app.

Layering with progressive disclosure

You can layer within the context in even more innovative ways. Case Study 7-2 shows how a team in Washington state helps injured workers file and follow their claims.

Case Study 7-2 Opening layers on the same web page

You can use progressive disclosure – opening and closing overlays – to give site visitors what they need without leaving the main content. Let me show you how the web team at the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) approached and solved the problem of helping injured workers understand the process for claiming benefits.

Purposes, personas, conversations

They started with our three planning questions.

What does the agency want to achieve?

- Fewer phone calls
- Complete, correct claims
- Satisfied clients

Who is the agency conversing with?

The site is for people like Joe.

Joe

- 26 years old
- construction worker
- high school graduate; no college
- married, no children yet
- likes to be outdoors
- has an old home computer his brother gave him
- doesn't use the computer much
- is in pain from his injuries
- is skeptical about whether the government agency is going to be helpful if he tries to get information about what to do

Joe fell off a scaffold on a construction job last week. He knows he's lucky that he's going to be okay. But he sprained an ankle, injured his back, and broke his arm. He won't be able to work for a while.

Joe is worried about money. His wife, Lily, works in retail, but they won't be able to get through the month with just her salary. They're going to be relying on the checks he should get from the government agency that handles benefits for injured workers.

His employer and the doctor both told him he has to file a claim to get paid while he is out of work because he is injured. He wants to be sure that he files the claim correctly so he starts getting paid quickly.

What does Joe want from the site?

- File the claim correctly so he starts getting paid quickly.
- Understand what happens next.

Constraints

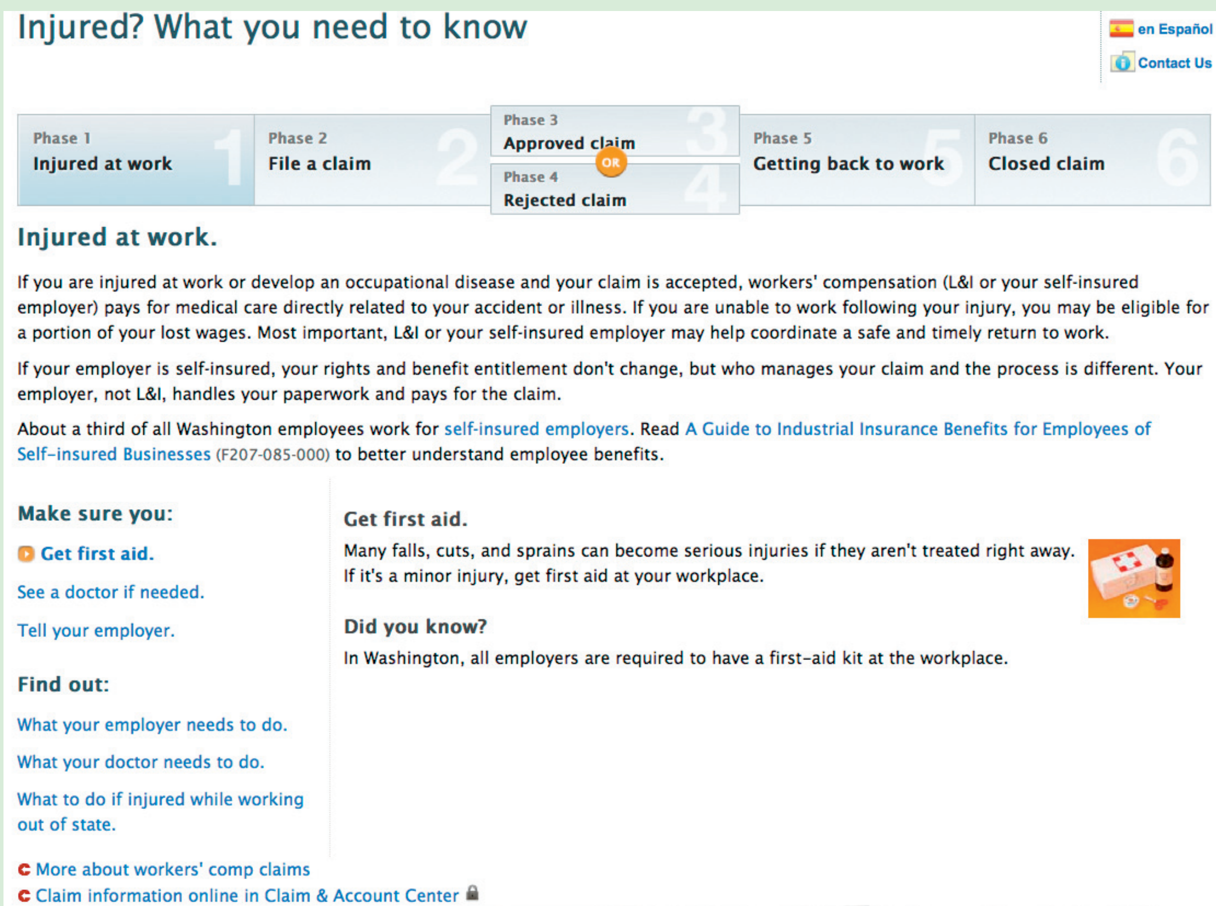
The writers have to explain a complicated process that they cannot change.

Solution

Thinking about their goals; Joe, the injured worker, and his questions; and the content they needed to provide, the L&I team created a mini web site with

- each phase in the process as a tab
- one page for each phase
- layering within the page where links open to more information without changing the underlying page

The three screens that follow show you how this works.



The screen for phase 1 of the process
www.lni.wa.gov

Injured? What you need to know

en Español

Contact Us

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3 / Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 6
Injured at work	File a claim	Approved claim OR Rejected claim	Getting back to work	Closed claim

Injured at work.

If you are injured at work or develop an occupational disease and your claim is accepted, workers' compensation (L&I or your self-insured employer) pays for medical care directly related to your accident or illness. If you are unable to work following your injury, you may be eligible for a portion of your lost wages. Most important, L&I or your self-insured employer may help coordinate a safe and timely return to work.

If your employer is self-insured, your rights and benefit entitlement don't change, but who manages your claim and the process is different. Your employer, not L&I, handles your paperwork and pays for the claim.

About a third of all Washington employees work for self-insured employers. Read A Guide to Industrial Insurance Benefits for Employees of Self-insured Businesses (F207-085-000) to better understand employee benefits.

Make sure you:

Get first aid.

See a doctor if needed.

Tell your employer.

Find out:

What your employer needs to do.

What your doctor needs to do.

What to do if injured while working out of state.

Tell your employer

If you are injured on the job or diagnosed with an occupational disease, let your employer know right away. Employers need to know about injuries and be familiar with the situation when the L&I paperwork arrives so that they can help you plan your return to work.

Questions workers have

What if I can't do my job?

How will my injury affect my employer's costs?

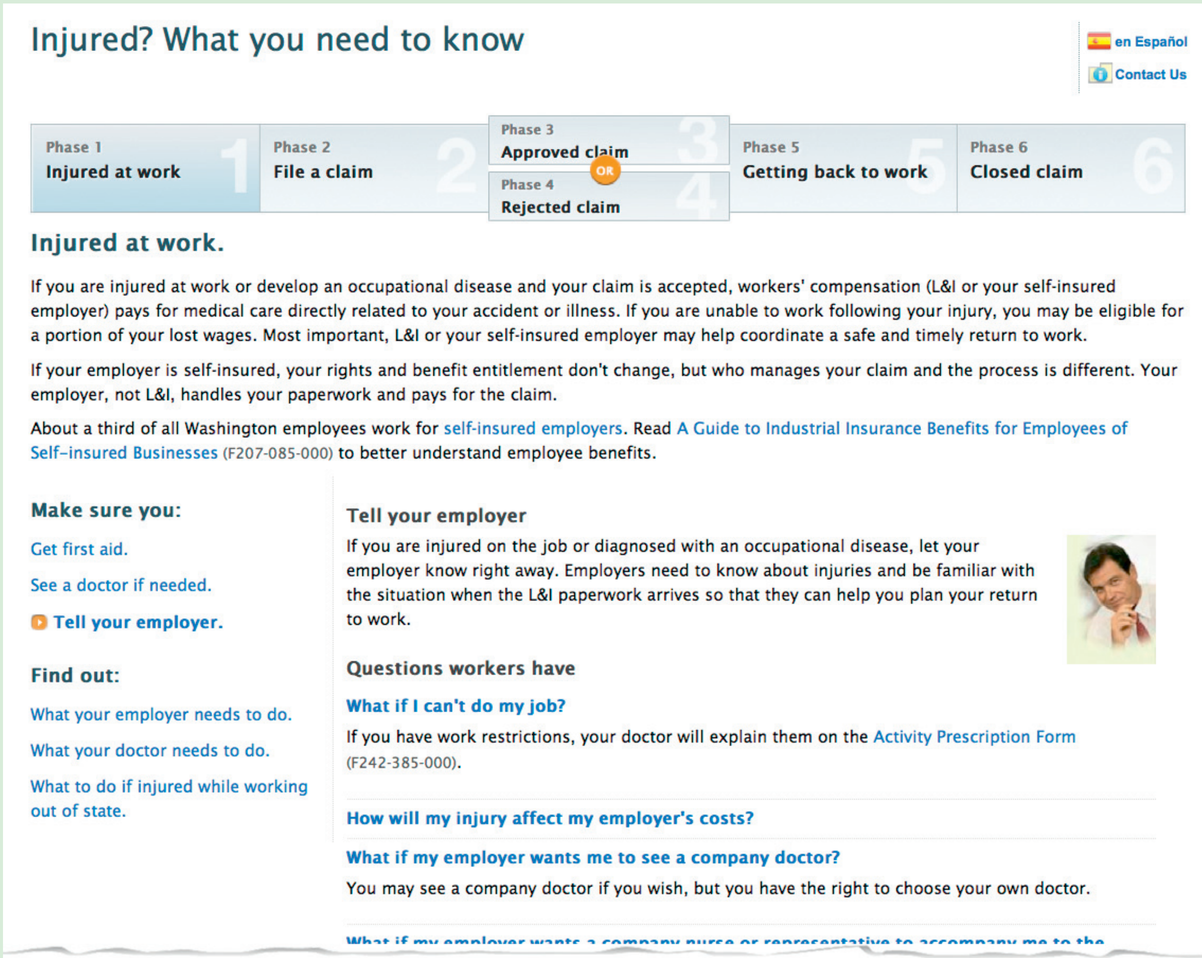
What if my employer wants me to see a company doctor?

What if my employer wants a company nurse or representative to accompany me to the doctor?

What if my employer says my company is self-insured?

I'm afraid to report my injury because I don't want to get fired. What do I do?

The same screen after you have clicked "Tell your employer."



Injured? What you need to know

en Español
Contact Us

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Injured at work	File a claim	Approved claim OR Phase 4 Rejected claim	Getting back to work	Closed claim

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Questions workers have

What if I can't do my job?

If you have work restrictions, your doctor will explain them on the Activity Prescription Form (F242-385-000).

How will my injury affect my employer's costs?

What if my employer wants me to see a company doctor?

You may see a company doctor if you wish, but you have the right to choose your own doctor.

What if my employer wants a company nurse or representative to accompany me to the

The same screen after you have clicked on two of the questions

AAA ACCESS

When I show this example, people ask me how it's done and whether it's accessible for people who listen with screen-readers. The answer is yes. It's done with Show/Hide in Javascript.

Show/Hide does not reload the page. Reloading a page is a problem for people with screen-readers because the screen-reader assumes it is a new page and starts reading again from the top of the page. With progressive disclosure (Show/Hide), when a screen-reader user clicks on a link that opens text just below or next to the link, the screen-reader continues reading whatever is open – thus, reading the newly shown information as intended.

6. Break down walls of words

As you put together all the guidelines in this chapter about giving people only what they need; cutting your content down to essentials; thinking in terms of "bite, snack, meal"; putting the key message first; and layering information, also remember the message of Chapter 3: design matters. Information design matters. If your content looks too dense, people won't even discover that it has what they need.

Walls are barriers. Large blocks of text that look like wall-to-wall words are barriers. Whether your site visitors are on large screens, tablets, or mobiles, very short paragraphs or bullet points work best.

Lots later on how to break down walls of words:

Headings – Chapter 9

Short sentences – Chapter 10

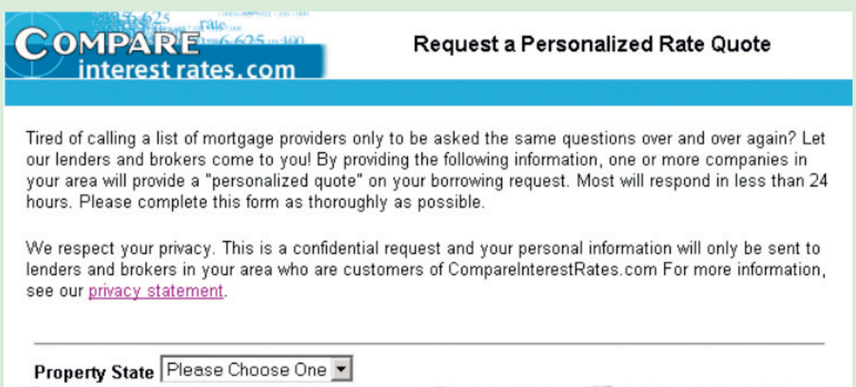
Lists and tables – Chapter 11

On the web, each small section needs its own heading. Each question and answer needs the question as a heading and the answer in short sentences or as a bulleted list.

Case Study 7-3 shows how changing from a paragraph to a bulleted list increased business for an e-commerce company.

Case Study 7-3 Breaking down walls of words made the difference!

When CompareInterestRates.com tried a variety of changes to their online form, the only one that made a significant difference was revising the introduction at the top of the form from paragraphs of text to a bulleted list. Here's how the original started:


COMPARE interest rates.com

Request a Personalized Rate Quote

Tired of calling a list of mortgage providers only to be asked the same questions over and over again? Let our lenders and brokers come to you! By providing the following information, one or more companies in your area will provide a "personalized quote" on your borrowing request. Most will respond in less than 24 hours. Please complete this form as thoroughly as possible.

We respect your privacy. This is a confidential request and your personal information will only be sent to lenders and brokers in your area who are customers of CompareInterestRates.com For more information, see our privacy statement.

Property State Please Choose One

The top of the old form

What they tried

Working with Caroline Jarrett, a usability consultant, the client tried several variations of the form, with combinations of these changes:

- including a photo or not (and variations of the photo by size and content)
- placement in the window (centered or left-justified)
- color in the fields or no color
- colored background behind the form (blue or yellow) or no color
- reworking the text at the top

What they measured

This was a typical A/B test measuring conversion rates. People got to the form by clicking on a web page ad or through a sponsored link on a search engine page. Each person saw only one version – but it might be any one of the several versions: A, B, C, D, and so on. What mattered was what percentage of the people who saw each version actually completed and submitted the form, requesting a personalized quote for mortgage rates.

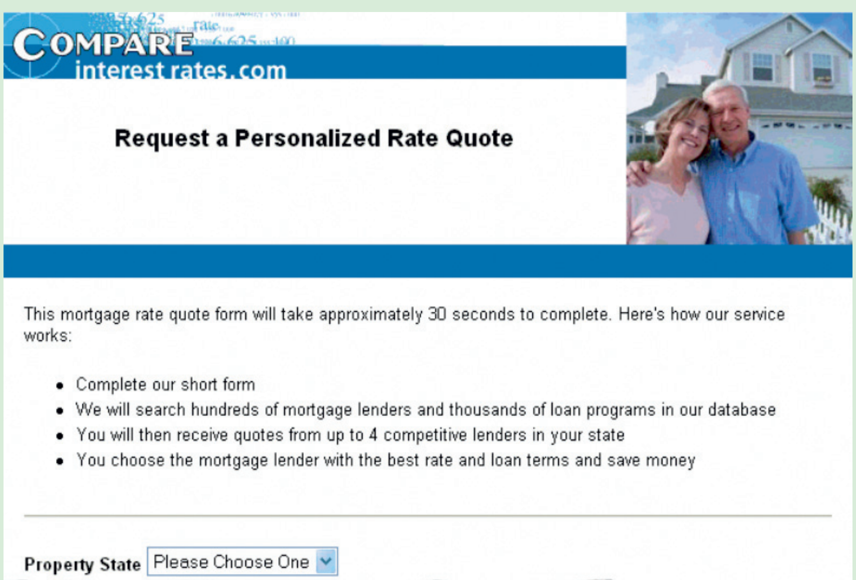
A great site where you can see many tests like this, pitting versions against each other: www.whichtestwon.com

You get to see if you can pick the winner and then you find out if you were right. Lots of fun – and lots of great examples.

What they found

The new forms increased conversion rates from 5% to 7.3% in one stream of traffic and from 10% to 12.5% in another stream of traffic. In the world of conversion rates, that is excellent improvement.

At first, however, it was not clear which change was contributing most to the success. With detailed statistical analysis, it became clear that **only reworking the text at the top had a significant impact.** Here's one of the variations showing the bulleted list at the top instead of a wall of words.



Usability testing with eye-tracking supported the conclusion from the conversion rate study. All the participants in the usability test preferred the bullet points.

See Jarrett and Minott, 2004, for the complete story of this study.

7. Plan to share and engage through social media

The need to be succinct in social media reinforces all the guidelines in this chapter. Whether you are working within the 140 characters of Twitter, putting a message on your Facebook wall, posting to Google+, describing a video or slide deck you are sharing through YouTube or SlideShare, or using another social media program, you only have room for your key message.

Think "bite, snack, meal." Put the bite into your social media message. Make it engage people so they click on the link to a specific snack in your web site. If you have more for them, let the snack lead to a fuller meal. But remember to make even the meal easy to digest – no walls of words, please.

Summarizing Chapter 7

Key messages from Chapter 7:

- Give people only what they need.
- Cut! Cut! Cut! And cut again!
- Think "bite, snack, meal."
- Start with your key message. Write in inverted pyramid style.
- Layer information.
- Break down walls of words.
- Plan to share and engage through social media.