

A clickthrough isn't conversion until it's converted

By [Travis Bussiahn](#)

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When you buy advertising from an online vendor like the Big 'G' you get two main options:

1. You can place advertising on their Search Network (your advert will show up on search engines when people are looking for products similar to yours).
2. You can place advertising on their Display Network (a gargantuan arrangement of intersecting horizontal and vertical lines connecting unrelated niche websites across the world wide web).

As a business owner you want to know that your spend on one of these networks will bring about results. In other words you are placing the advert in either space (or both) in order to get people to do something and that thing is to 'click'. Well initially at least. You see, the 'click' is like getting people to walk through the doors of your shop in this virtual and global online mall that is the internet. But, it is called browsing for a reason.

"May I help you sir? Have you seen our new, on-promotion, range of pots?"

"No thanks I'm just browsing. I think I'll go to your competitor now."



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Ka-ching, money paid for click, money lost for click.

At this point the Big "G" will tell you that they are quite good at generating clicks and you could get anywhere up to a 6% clickthrough rate (maybe more) if your campaign is targeted and thought out really well.

What the Big "G" cannot do is guarantee you any form of conversion rate relating to a sale or lead-generation. That is up to your side of the partnership and at this point you're on your own. Can a radio advert guarantee you sales? Does a TV advert promise you success? If your script is bad, your staff weak of speech and your shop is a mess then no matter how many feet those media drive to your store, the sales just won't materialise.

What do I mean?

Let's say you get that clickthrough rate of 6% on a campaign. That means that out of the 100,000 people that saw your advert, 6000 will click through to your site. But once they are there, there is no magic potion to guarantee your visitors will buy something or leave you their contact details (lead-generation). This story will be told in your bounce rate on the specific campaign landing page and here is where you can start to lose money - your quality is key in this space.

At this point you may be feeling that you're reading another one of those typical "duh this is obvious" articles. "This guy thinks he's so clever but he's only highlighting a problem and it makes me anxious. Where is the solution that brings peace?"

Well, I've seen the future and it's bright and algorithmy. Ecommerce is about to grow up. The ecommerce brains that exist in this world have looked at the learnings of social media and its algorithms and started to apply that sort of crowd-mentality flavour to their online shopping efforts and it seems to be finding traction.

Power of choice

Without giving away their secrets they are using the power of choice, coupled with the gamification of curiosity to move genuine conversion rates into the 12%-40% bandwidth. They have already used this technology to reduce financial sector bounce rates by 43% in their test cases.

When I show this platform to most local and logically-minded digital experts their eyes literally pop out of their heads and they question the validity of the claim while commenting on how 'sexy and innovative' a piece of tech it is. I too felt this conflict (like Luke Skywalker standing before his pops and the emperor in Return of the Jedi), until I saw one of Europe's largest banks achieve a 16% success rate on 10,000 landing-page visitors over 15 days in December last year. And this wasn't just a bounce-rate reduction, it was 16% of all visitors completed a full, multi-step lead-generation form.

I'm excited to see platforms like this infiltrate our market because that market will mature from building [superficial and traditional](#) online brochures disguised as websites to a new breed of intelligent digital that learns about its customers and gives them more of what they really need. In other words, in the right hands, this technology has the power to serve instead of just coerce which is all we seem to really do these days.

At this point people will happily convert themselves into leads or sales because they got exactly what the advert said they would on the box when they clicked through, or God forbid, maybe even more - they will know that they chose the series of events that lead them to their conversion. Then conversion will become conversion.

Tailor made propositions

In the end, as always, when the leaders of the digital platforms of South Africa stop treating the traffic like cattle and begin to honour the individual human being (not end-user) with tailor made propositions that are more about giving them what they truly need to live happy and purposeful lives versus shoving stuff they don't need down their throats, then conversion rates will grow.

As [Marshall McLuhan](#) said, "All media exist to invest our lives with artificial perceptions and arbitrary values." If we reverse this sentiment through our actions as media people we may find that a little bit of authenticity is just the tonic our industry and ultimately our country needs. Lord knows, South Africa could do with a little [conversion](#) on the whole.

ABOUT TRAVIS BUSSIAHN

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