

“ This book is astonishing and you should read it. It’s astonishing because it will tell you very obvious things that you don’t know, didn’t realize and weren’t taking action on. As the person who invented the term Landing Page in 1995 (right after Al Gore invented the internet) I can tell you that we’ve waited a long long time for this sort of common sense, hands on, verified info. The bad news is that you are now out of excuses. ”

Seth Godin, Author
www.SethGodin.com

Second Edition - New & Completely Revised

Landing Page

Handbook

How to Raise Conversions —
Data & Design Guidelines

Note: This is an authorized excerpt from the full 273-page Landing Page Handbook.
To download the entire Guide, go to: <http://www.SherpaStore.com> or call 877-895-1717

Introduction to Revised Second Edition

What a huge change the past few years have seen! When we began researching the first edition of MarketingSherpa's Landing Page Handbook in the fall of 2004, we found next to nothing out there. In fact, if you plugged the term "Landing Page" into a search engine, a tiny handful of mentions appeared. Now type "Landing Page" into a search engine and you'll get more than 36 million references.

Agencies and consultants have sprung up specializing in landing page design and testing; Web content management systems have been developed to enable easier landing page creation and testing, and a landing page speaker is present at every industry convention. This growth has been exacerbated by Google's announcement late last year that landing page relevance would affect pay-per-click ad rankings.

Yet, after reviewing the enormous amount of information out there on landing pages, I was disappointed by how little of it expanded in any way on the first edition of this Guidebook. Everyone seems to repeat the same factoids and best practices.

That's great on one hand – as you'll see from the results of our new research study included in this Guide, a startlingly low number of marketers are actually applying best practices to their landing pages. So, the more everyone in the landing page universe can get the word out to improve things, the better.

However, it's time for renewed research into improving landing page results. So, in this greatly revised and expanded edition you'll find a wealth of NEW information on landing pages for:

- Blogs
- Organic search traffic (especially for business-to-business Web sites)
- Ecommerce sites
- Email campaign landing pages (including mobile phone clicks)
- Copy, graphics and layout

We've also updated our practical chapter on Testing Landing Pages (including multivariable, A/B and eyetracking testing tips), as well as added an all-new

section on how to conduct a “Black Ops” landing page campaign ... quickly and cheaply making landing pages on the fly when your own Web or IT department can’t build or test them for you.

Naturally, we’ve also added and updated the numbers (great for comparing your landing page conversion results to those of your peers) – as well as published never-before-seen data on “Bail Patterns” where you’ll see precisely when typical consumers leave a landing page instead of converting. Turns out, the oft-mentioned “seven-second” rule is misleading.

Last but not least, we have included loads of fresh creative samples from real-life landing pages that you can use as inspiration when creating your own landing pages. Nothing’s worse than staring at a blank computer screen while trying to come up with something new ... or explaining your ideas to a designer who can’t “see” what you’re talking about. These real-life samples should help.

Enjoy, and may your landing page results continuously improve until our next edition!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Holland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and larger than the others.

Anne Holland
Founder, MarketingSherpa

New Research Highlights:

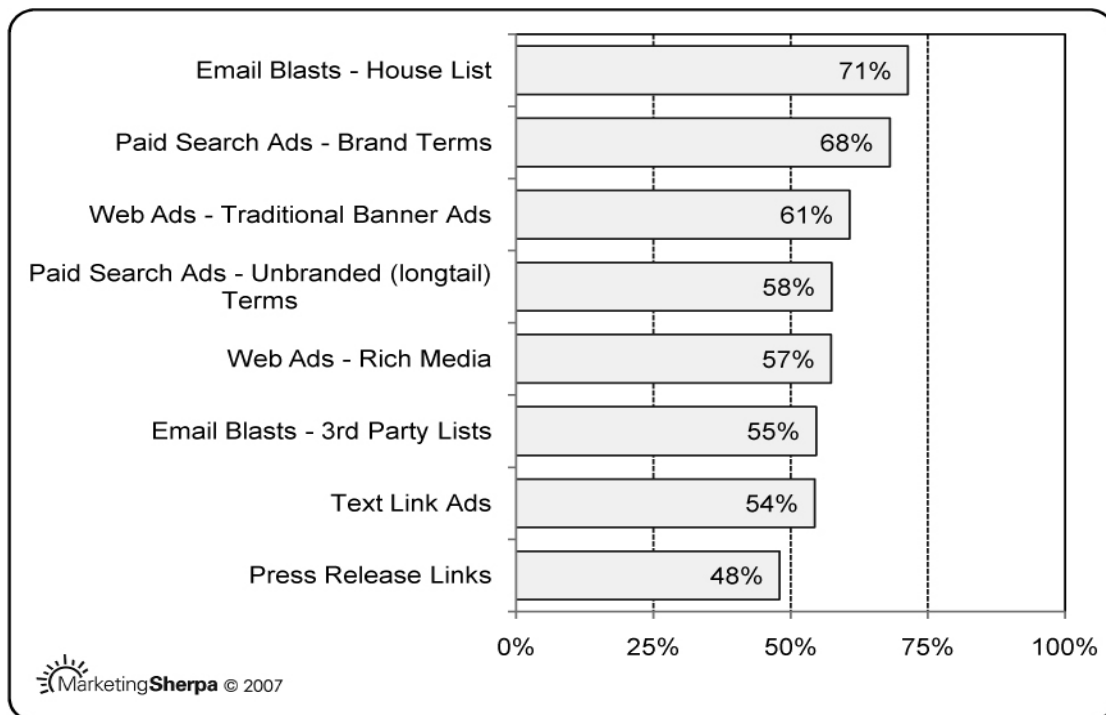
What's a Landing Page and Why Does It Matter?

A landing page is where people “land” when they click on an ad banner, search engine result or email link, or when they visit a special promotional URL that they heard about on TV, radio, or other offline media.

Very few perfect landing pages exist. Most of the samples in this report aren't perfect, although they represent the current cream of the crop.

The perfect few are usually the result of extensive testing. And when we talk to the marketers behind them, invariably they say: “But I have a few more tests I'd like to run to see if I can improve conversions a bit more. . .”

Chart #1: % of Marketers Implementing Landing Pages by Tactic



Base: Total n=3204

Source: MarketingSherpa, Landing Page Survey, September 2007

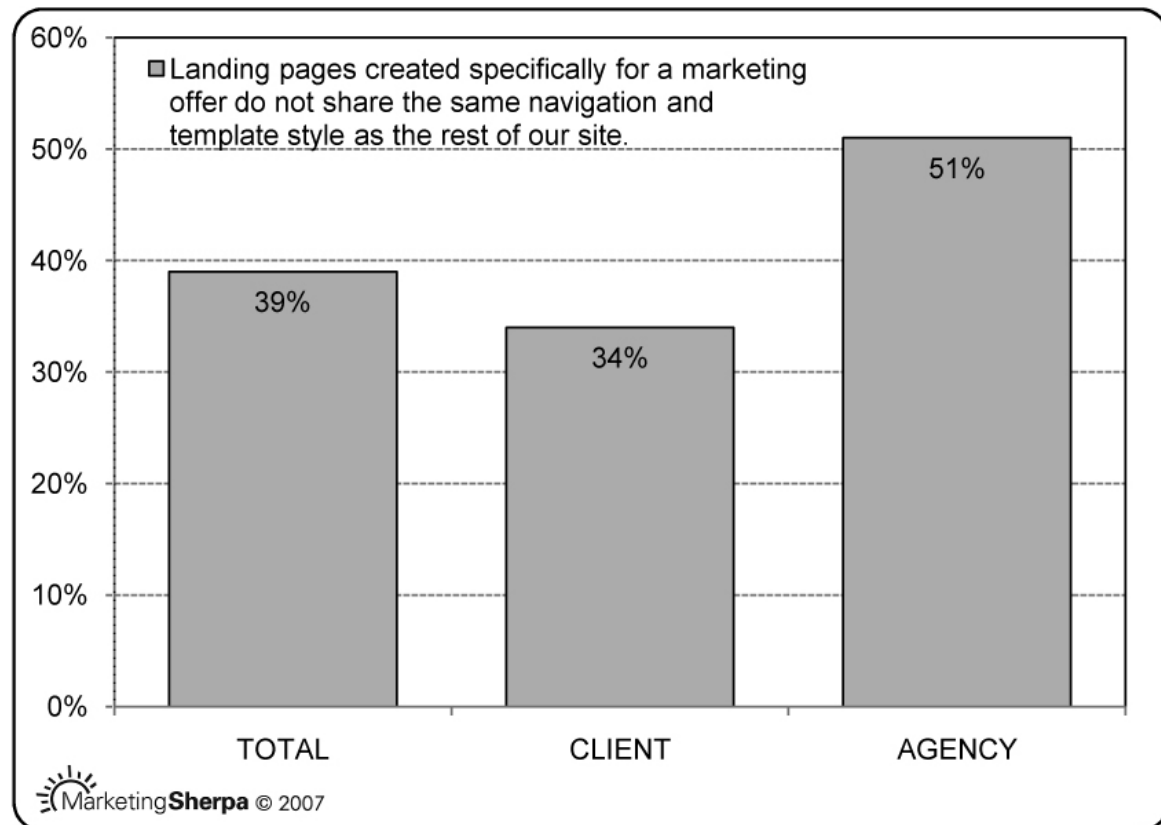
Methodology: 4,213 surveys were collected from in house marketers (n=3,120) and agency marketers (n=1,093) who are actively involved with landing pages in some capacity. They were recruited from MarketingSherpa and MarketingExperiments reader lists between September 6 and September 18, 2007.

Unfortunately, most marketers don't have the time or budget for extensive landing page testing. They have a campaign launching soon, and a landing page is needed pronto! Often, the landing page is the least considered element of the campaign. Marketers who will fuss over ad creative and fret for hours about media buys will ask the design department to fling something up there to land on.

We suspect some marketers truly believe that if their outbound campaign is good enough, the creative will pre-sell prospects on the offer no matter how lame the landing page is. In other words, many marketers think the outbound campaign is doing the heavy lifting, and the landing page exists simply as a passive collection cup for all the sales or leads generated by the campaign.

The exact opposite is generally true.

Chart #2: % of Marketers Who Customize Landing Page Templates



Base: Total n=3204

Source: MarketingSherpa, Landing Page Survey, September 2007

Methodology: 4,213 surveys were collected from in house marketers (n=3,120) and agency marketers (n=1,093) who are actively involved with landing pages in some capacity. They were recruited from MarketingSherpa and MarketingExperiments reader lists between September 6 and September 18, 2007.

The only thing the outbound campaign did was get prospects to click or type a URL into their browser.

That's a microscopically unimportant decision compared to whatever the landing page asks them to do.

Your ad convinced them to click. It's a split-second, what-the-heck decision.

Your landing page has to convince them to stick around for at least a minute or two and possibly do a bunch of fairly unpleasant stuff:

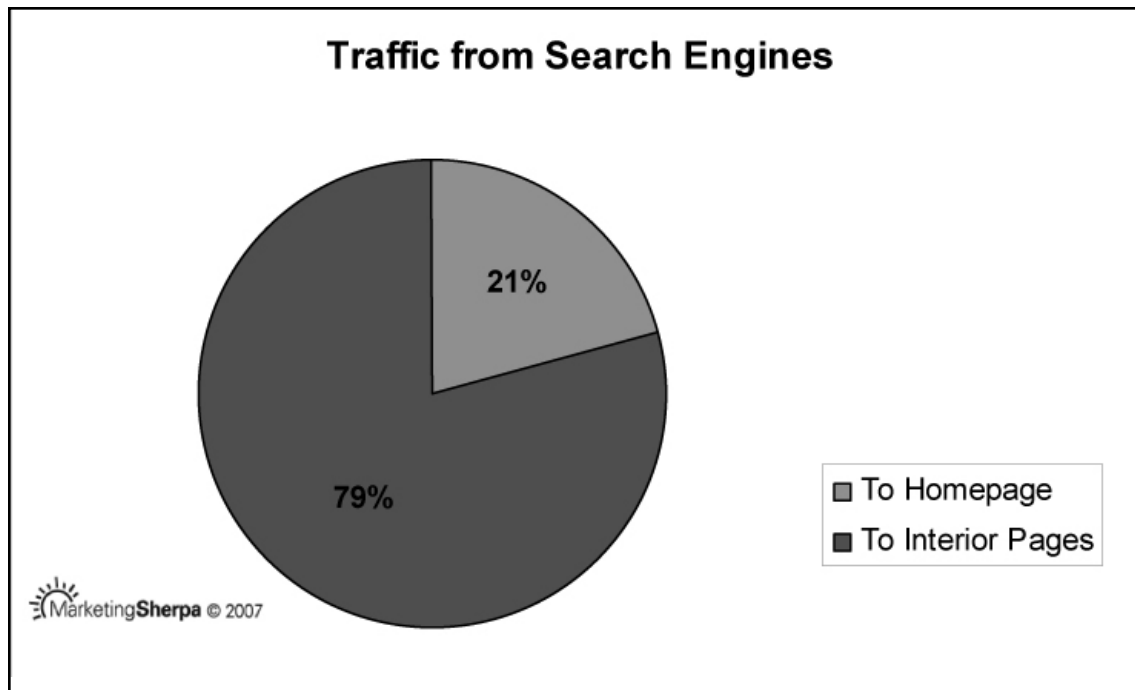
- Do a bunch of reading (90% of the population doesn't much like reading).
- Laboriously type their name and address (only geeks use auto form fill).
- Hand over a phone number so a telemarketer will pester them.
- Give an email and take the risk of being spammed.
- Dig out a credit card and maybe have it stolen by a phisher or fraudster.
- Pay for something.

No wonder average landing page conversions are in the single digits — even for free offers! How do you get visitors over those nasty humps? Well, that's the purpose of this report.

Landing Pages for Organic Search Campaigns

If your site is properly optimized, every page is now a landing page. Check your stats. What percent of your incoming traffic from organic (aka natural) search engines listings goes to your homepage? Chances are the vast majority went to an internal page instead.

continued on next page..

Chart #3: Organic Search Traffic to MarketingSherpa.com 2007

Before we delve into how to turn your secondary pages into better landing pages for conversion purposes, we must note that this doesn't mean your homepage isn't still important. Two types of search-related traffic are still hitting your homepage, and it has to perform to please all of them:

Type #1. Our mothers (and probably yours, too)

When they want to go to a Web site, our mothers type the URL into a major search engine instead of into their browser window. (We suspect they may not know how to use the browser at all.) According to search-engine stats, millions of searches every week are conducted this way. The consumer could have gone direct but didn't. Instead, they click on the first organic listing. Hopefully, it's your homepage.

To help this crowd who certainly already know who you are — they were looking for you, after all, the best homepage is one that serves as a site map with all the most useful links and/or response tools conveniently above the fold. For this reason, homepage design that gives a huge portion of the top and middle screen over to static promotional content (which roughly 80% of B-to-B Web sites from larger companies do) doesn't work well. These users want to find what they are looking for, not admire your latest space ad or tagline.

Type #2. Landing page visitors who want to know more about you

These people are most often brand new to your site and/or who stumbled in via search. The landing page either doesn't answer their key questions completely or it doesn't instill enough trust. Either way, instead of converting there and then, the visitors click on your logo (or other nav device) to surface up to your homepage quickly to check out who you really are.

Web usability expert Steve Krug calls this activity the “up periscope,” like when a submarine underwater pops up a periscope to get its bearings.

To please this crowd, your homepage should have clear trust-building and “what we do/ who we are” elevator pitch content well above the fold. This basic factual information is more important than your latest promotion or a pretty graphic image. It should be concise, buzzword-free, and without acronyms. It should include information such as geography and types of clients served, and specializations.

In addition, consider adding wording and/or hotlinks to your main navigation bar that match the keywords that drive the majority of visitors to your site. Probably a very few keywords are responsible for big lumps of your organic traffic. Once they get to your homepage, you want to give them a hotlink trail to find their way back to the reason they came to your site in the first place. (Some people don't use the back button.)

How do you know if your homepage design is working? Easy. Use Web analytics to do path analysis for these two particular types of visitors. Is your homepage their site exit page? If so, you've got a problem.

Three Ways to Turn Deep Pages Into Landing Pages

Tip #1. Sprinkle on plenty of offers

Example: Software marketers at Mysis EMR added a clickable list of response options to the far right column of every page of the product's search engine optimized microsite site. No matter where people entered the site, a variety of conversion offers were right in front of them. Here's the static right column that appeared on more than 100 optimized pages that received traffic:

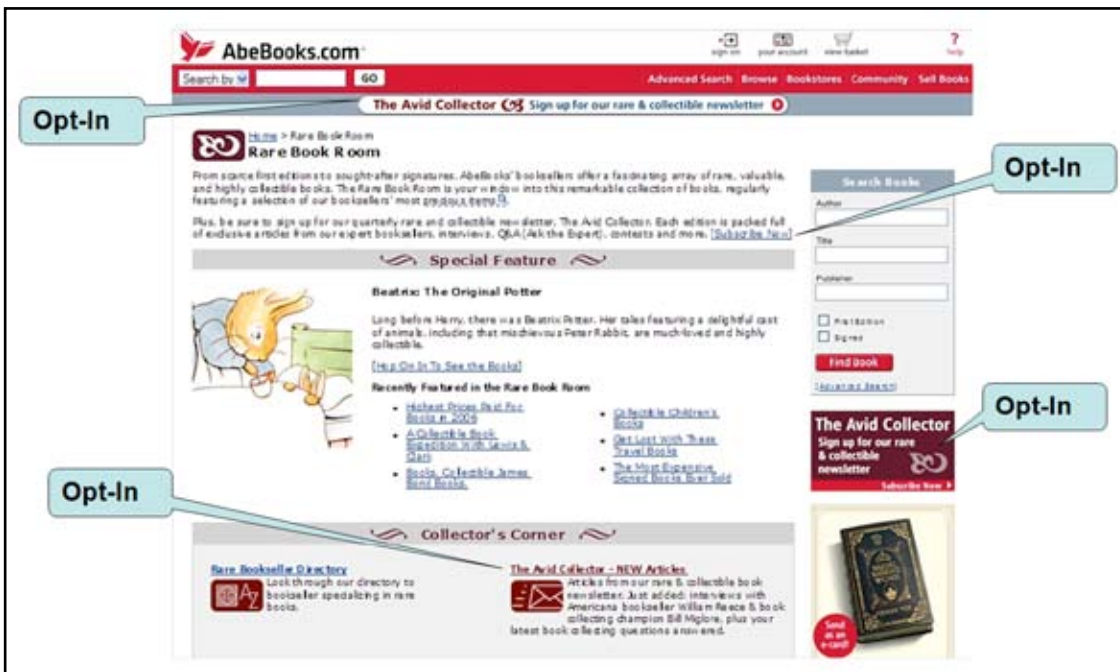
continued on next page...

Sample #1: Mysis EMR SEO Microsite Options Page



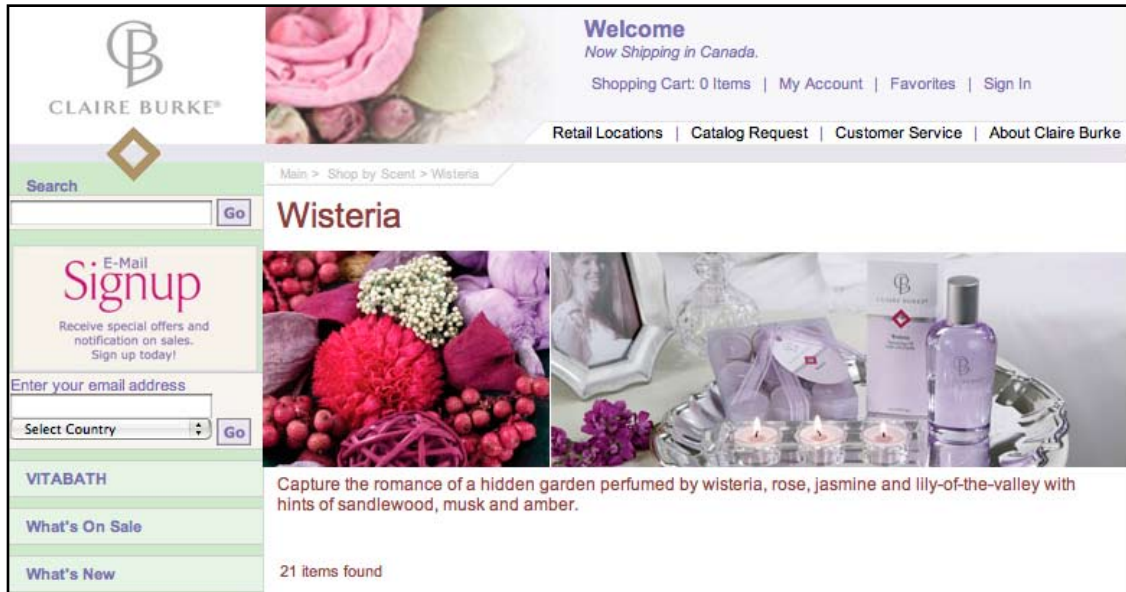
Another example: AbeBooks.com knew that visitors who land on non-product-specific pages are less likely to purchase immediately. So they turned the main conversion activity of these pages into an email opt-in gathering exercise. They sprinkled opt-in offers in every possible nook and cranny.

Sample #2: AbeBooks Landing Page With Opt-in Offers



One more example: Every single page of the Claire Burke Web site has an email request form; hotlinks for catalog request, retail locations, and customer service, and a search box all well above the fold.

Sample #3: Claire Burke SEM Landing Page With Request Form



Tip #2. Include hotlinks to plenty more directly relevant pages on your site

Chances are good these visitors are in prime “information-seeking mode.” The more highly relevant information you can provide to their search, the more likely they are to stay on your site until they either convert or remember your URL well enough to visit again.

Example: Clickability’s imWARE ran a 90-day test with an online publisher to see if they could get more page views from search visitors who arrived deep into the site. Their tactic: Adding a “Most Popular List” of related articles at the end of every article caused average page views to improve by 30%.

Tip #3. Test

It’s funny to think, but probably 1,000 PPC search landing page tests are conducted for every organic search landing page test. Understandably, marketers feel that if they have to pay per click they may as well make the most of their investment. However, MarketingSherpa data show organic

traffic can convert as well or better than PPC traffic for many sites. If you're not optimizing organic landing pages, you're leaving money on the table. Just because the traffic is "free" doesn't mean you should turn your nose up at it.

Optimizing for Search Engine News-Driven Traffic

Of U.S. Internet users, 39% go to search engine news areas, such as Yahoo! News and Google News. If users are under 36, search news sites may be their primary news source — before all other news media. And if your press release is submitted through traditional wire services such as PR Newswire or BusinessWire, your release will be mingled in with headlines for people who search news for specific topics as though it were "regular" news.

Since word got out about Southwest Airline's 2004 test of hotlinked press releases, which drove millions in tickets sales, more and more marketers have been running optimized press release campaigns in addition to more routine search marketing. What sort of landing page should you use for the hotlinks in a press release?

Key: Even if the purpose of your release is to get your marketing information into the hands of Yahoo! News and Google News, readers who happen to be your end prospects don't know that and think it's a real release. You'll defeat the purpose if you send clicks to a landing page that is overtly marketing or sales-oriented. On the other hand, you'll defeat the purpose if the page you send clicks to is your online PR center for the actual press.

Here's an example of a marketer who invented a way out of this conundrum. Assisted by optimized press release specialists SEO PR, the Marketing Director for Symmetricom created an information-rich landing page that continued the story that the press release had begun with plenty of factual detail.

However, she added a contact form on the left column of the landing page just in case any qualified prospects were among the clickthroughs. They were. This optimized press generated 8 leads — one of which was for an estimated \$200 million order. It also wasn't from one of the "usual suspects" that the sales force was already talking to. It was for a new application that no one knew was being developed. And it was a new lead from an unknown prospect. You can't do better than that.

Sample #4: Symmetricom Press Release and Matching Landing Page



Symmetricom Wins \$3.4 Million in Funding for Chip Scale Atomic Clock

Microsystems Technology Office (MTO) of Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) awards funding to develop ultra-miniature atomic clock.


San Jose, CA (PRWeb/Direct) August 23, 2005 -- [Symmetricom, Inc. \(NASDAQ: SYMM\)](#), a worldwide leader in precise [time and frequency products](#) and services, today announced that it has been awarded funding for Phase-III of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Chip Scale [Atomic Clock](#) (CSAC) program. The CSAC development will produce miniature, low power atomic clocks for precision timing applications in hand-held battery-powered instrumentation for use by military personnel.

Under the award, valued at \$3.4 million, [Symmetricom](#) will develop miniature low power [atomic clocks](#) based on its proprietary coherent population trapping (CPT) atomic interrogation technology and microelectromechanical systems (MEMS) fabrication techniques. Symmetricom is teamed with The Charles Stark Draper Laboratory in Cambridge Massachusetts and Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico in the CSAC development. The CSAC work leverages Symmetricom's extensive expertise as the world's largest and most diverse producer of [atomic clocks](#).

Tom Steipp, CEO of Symmetricom commented, "I am delighted to acknowledge the accomplishments of our technical team at Symmetricom. They have successfully met the DARPA milestones in Phase I and II and have now been selected to carry the CSAC development to completion. The size and power reductions will be critical elements to moving portable precision timing into the hands of US soldiers."

[Atomic clocks](#) provide enhanced accuracy, stability, and timing precision compared to [quartz-based](#) technologies. However, the size and power consumption of existing [atomic clock](#) technologies exceeds that of [quartz-based](#) clocks by several hundred-fold, which has heretofore prevented the deployment of atomic timing in portable applications. Existing miniature [atomic clocks](#), for example, occupy a volume similar to a deck of playing cards and consume power comparable to a notebook computer. In Phase-II of the DARPA CSAC program, Symmetricom demonstrated a miniature atomic clock, ten times smaller and lower in power than any existing technology. In Phase-III, Symmetricom will further reduce the size and power by an additional tenfold. This work will reduce the size and power of the CSAC to a level comparable to low power quartz clocks while improving accuracy and stability by a factor of 10 to 100. The objectives are to reduce the CSAC to a size comparable to a sugar cube while operating on the power of a AA battery.

Press Release



Symmetricom Timing, Test and Measurement Division

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Contact Us
To obtain further information on Symmetricom CSAC technology please fill out the form below.
* Indicates required field.

First Name: *

Last Name: *

E-mail: *

Company: *

Address: *

City: *

State/Province: *

Zip: *

Country: *

Work Phone:

Fax:

Comments:

The Chip-Scale Atomic Clock

Our armed forces depend on precise time for reliable and secure communications, positioning, and navigation. For over 30 years, Symmetricom has been supplying modular and ruggedized atomic clock solutions that have met our military's mobile needs. However, with the increased power of information and communication, there is an emerging need for more portable, battery-powered instruments. Since 2002, in collaboration with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Symmetricom has been developing a Chip-Scale Atomic Clock (CSAC) one-hundred times smaller and lower power than any existing atomic clock technology. Symmetricom is proud to support the extension of precise timing through what is regarded as the "last mile" of the military communications network. These advances in atomic clock technology will increase the safety, security, and capability of each and every foot soldier.

In the commercial marketplace, the low cost and high performance timing signals provided by CSAC will enable a new generation of high-bandwidth devices for accurate and secure communications, positioning, and timing. Applications include secure portable communications, personal navigation, robotics, online gaming, and more.

For further technical information about Symmetricom CSAC technology, please [click here](#).

For information regarding the pricing and availability of Symmetricom CSAC technology, prototype evaluation, or to join our mailing list, please contact: info@symm.com

The DARPA CSAC Program

The DARPA Chip-Scale Atomic Clock (CSAC) program began with a workshop at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in March 2001. Following the workshop, DARPA initiated a competitive call for proposals to demonstrate the feasibility of a CSAC. Symmetricom, leading a development team which includes The Charles Stark Draper Laboratory and Sandia National Laboratories, was awarded a Phase I contract, in May 2002, to investigate, theoretically and experimentally, the feasibility of very small ("chip scale") atomic clocks.

In 2002 and 2003, the Symmetricom-led team published a series of papers and filed several patent applications on the fundamental physics and technology of chip-scale atomic clocks. In late 2003, the team completed the Phase-I DARPA milestones and demonstrated a laboratory-scale atomic clock, based on CSAC components, which exceeded DARPA's ultimate performance objectives by nearly an order of magnitude.

In January 2004, Symmetricom advanced to Phase-II of the DARPA contract, to develop prototype chip-scale physics packages and low-power clock electronics. The principal goal of the Phase II program was to develop an operational laboratory prototype with compliant short-term frequency stability. In April 2005, Symmetricom demonstrated a 10 cc, 200 mW Miniature Atomic Clock (MAC) which surpassed DARPA's stability objectives (see, [The World's Smallest Atomic Clock](#), below).

Landing Page

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