

## Comprehension Testing

Always test comprehension before conversion. This means that before we use messaging (like our value proposition) to get potential customers to sign up for/use/buy our product, we need to make sure they *understand* that message. A comprehension test does exactly this: it evaluates whether or not your customer understands the value proposition of your product/service. Comprehension tests help eliminate the false negatives you might get from a customer not understanding what your product/service does before they even have a chance to make a decision about whether or not they want it.



### Helps Answer

- Does the customer understand the value proposition? - QUANT
- How could we explain the value proposition better? - QUAL

### Time Commitment & Resources

For B2C, it can take 1-2 hours offline or 24 hours online. For B2B, participant recruitment times can vary widely. 10-20 participants.

### How To

- Write out the value proposition in 1-3 sentences.
- Show the written value proposition to a participant for a few moments and have them read through it, then remove it.
- Ask them to explain the value proposition in their own words from memory.

### Interpreting Results

If the participant's explanation is roughly comparable to our own, we count that as a positive result. If not, then it's a negative. For this sort of test, we generally want a sample size of about 20 people who have the same language as your target customer (doesn't have to necessarily be your target customer) and a positive conversion of about 80% to call a value proposition "comprehensible."

The conversion has to be very high because regardless of what our value proposition is, people should understand it.

Take note: if many of the participants use identical language to explain the value proposition back, and that language differs from the language you would use, it should be considered as possible alternative marketing messages.

## Potential Biases

- **Confirmation Bias:** Experimenters sometimes ask questions or create the use cases in such a way that the user's response/action confirms his/her preconceptions, hypothesis or beliefs.
- **Invalid Target Audience:** Participants do not need to be the target customers, but they must have the same level of language & vocabulary as the target customer.
  - e.g. A junior marketing manager can be used instead of a Chief Marketing Officer
- **False Negative:** When using online surveys such as FiveSecondTest, the distractions of an online interface can often result in a higher than normal failure rate.

## Online Tools

- **Five Second Test** - <http://fivesecondtest.com>

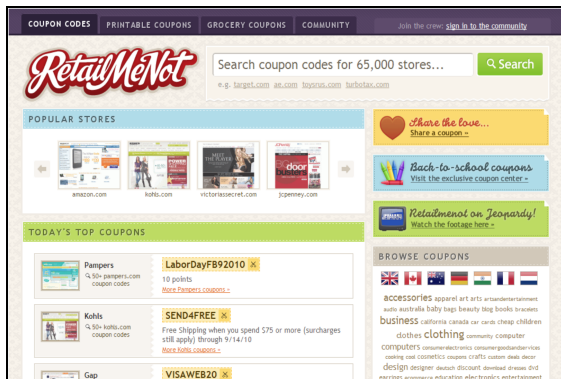
*Credits can be purchased - eg 100 for \$237 (as of 11/2016) and are less expensive as you buy more. They will recruit people based on specific demographics or a link to selected people.*

### Preparation:

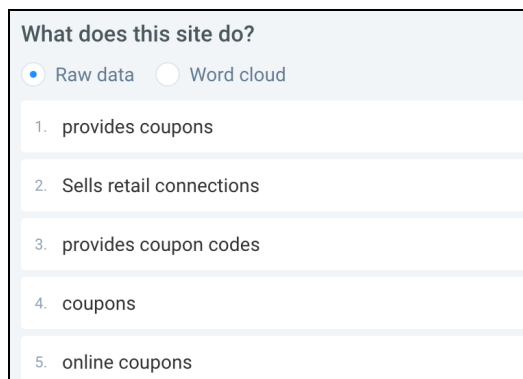
- Demographic information about who you want to test
- Landing page images or value prop text
- A question to ask (eg what does this site do?)
- Set up an account with fivesecondtest.com and buy credits

### Results:

- Result in less than 1 hour



*Example page*



*Example results*

## Learn More

### Field Tips

- [“Run a comprehension test before a landing page test or you won't understand why it doesn't work.” @TriKro](#)

### References

- Tristan Kromer - [Comprehension vs. Commitment](#)
- Pearson - [Technical Report: Cognitive Labs](#)

## In-Field Exercise

Comprehension tests are very easy to conduct, and below is a template for running your own comprehension tests. The template is broken into three sections:

- Value Proposition Checklist
  - *When crafting your value proposition, make sure you have thought through each of these questions. You don't necessarily need to have each of these answered in the statement you are going to test, but answering these questions ahead of time will help you craft the value proposition in a clear and concise way.*
- Value Proposition Statement
  - *In this section, you write out the value proposition you are testing. There is room for several versions because during the comprehension test, you might want to tweak the value proposition based on feedback.*
  - *There are many ways to structure your value proposition. One popular rubric is Steve Blank's: "We help X do Y by doing Z."*
- Responses
  - *In this section, write down what your participants say when they repeat back the value proposition in their own words. While you don't have to quote them directly, you should be on the lookout for specific language that they use that might be different from your own. Keep an eye out for patterns as well (i.e. 6 people using the same phrase to describe your product/service).*

### Value Proposition Comprehension Test

PROJECT NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**Value Proposition Checklist**

- Benefits/gains explicit, specific, clearly stated?
- Pain relievers explicit, specific, clearly stated?
- Target customer segment clearly identified?
- Any social proof or evidence to prove benefits?

**Value Proposition Statement**

**Responses**

	Correct?
1 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Download instructions and more at [kromatic.com/comprehension](https://kromatic.com/comprehension)