CONVERSION RATE OPTIMISATION WORKBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

As we are sure many of you will know, here at Click Consult we are constantly striving to provide you with the best resources to ensure that you get the most from your search and digital marketing strategy.

We use a variety of formats to get this information to you and one of our most popular types of asset seems to be the 'workbook' series.

We also know that it can be overwhelming for businesses and brands which are new to the digital and search marketing space, especially in terms of content. It is for that reason we create these workbooks.

This workbook will look at some of the basic concepts surrounding conversion rate optimisation (CRO) and will give you a definitive list of considerations and steps to take to perfect your performance in this area.

WHAT IS CRO?

CRO is a search marketing practice which engineers the consumer journey, emphasising positive user experience (UX) and learning from user interaction, to maximise the percentage of visitors to a website that complete a chosen action.

It is also the practice of optimising your website in order to move your visitors further along the buyer's cycle and to nurture them until they convert. This practice all helps to increase the number of actions taken by the user.

CRO essentially helps you to increase the proportion of those visitors that convert into leads, sales, subscribers, or whatever the goals of your website may be.

Using a structured approach of testing and analysis, CRO allows you to evaluate your ideas for making improvements before you commit to making them permanent, rather than wasting time and resources simply relying on guesswork.

The results give you valuable insights into what influences your customers' online behaviour that will have long term benefits for your business.

The process takes on and helps develop ideas and principles established in the practice of direct marketing – a subset of marketing which also uses continual trial and improvement methods – such as A/B testing, audience testing and A/B split testing to optimise marketing campaigns.

We know how important it is to analyse the way users interact with your website, and develop ideas on how to increase engagement and conversion rate through various tests and changes.

We also know that a higher conversion rate results in a better ROI from every traffic source and campaign you run.

In short, CRO benefits every aspect of search marketing by increasing the value of every visitor to your site. The improvements are permanent and help to form a knowledge bank for your team, meaning that the value of each change continues long after the testing is complete.

WHY IS CONVERSION RATE SO IMPORTANT?

Improving your conversion rate increases the ROI of your online marketing activity and reduces your cost per acquisition (CPA).

Rather than focusing on increasing the number of visitors to your website, CRO helps you to maximise the value of the traffic you're already getting.

Conversion rate optimisation is vital not only to smaller brands, but to brands of any size, allowing them to ensure that the most is being made of existing site traffic before budget is allocated to growing the traffic. We have put together the below table to highlight some of the reasons CRO is so important.

Reason	Explanation
Reliant on data, not guesswork	CRO depends heavily on data and analytics, meaning that a conversion rate optimisation project can be as close to 100% data-driven as any marketing activity can achieve.
Uses split (A/B) testing	A/B testing means that you can divert real traffic to variations of web pages meaning that there is no consumer modelling required, real consumer behaviour will help you choose a winner.
Fantastic low-cost or free tools	Tools such as VWO and Optimizely make the maths required to decide statistical significance easy with built in calculators. Simple drag and drop features also make rearranging content easy.
Allows for incremental improvement	With conversion rate optimisation, you need not rest on your laurels, each successful optimisation can be built upon, meaning that CRO can be a continually beneficial optimisation process.
Makes the most of your audience	Building your audience is an ongoing, and sometimes expensive, endeavour. With CRO, you can look to ensure that rather than building your audience, you are achieving the best results with the audience you have.

HOW CAN YOU USE DATA TO IMPROVE CRO?

There are a number of ways which you can use data to perfect your CRO strategy and much of it starts with an understanding of your audience. The importance of having a clear idea of who you are marketing to is a given, but how can you improve your conversion rate even further? Well one of the first thing to do is to marry up the people with the products. Look at exactly who is buying your products and separate them into clear demographics. Are they male or female? Which age bracket do they fit into? Do they have children? All of these demographics can be paired with behaviours (psychographics) to build a more complex understanding of customers and potential customers.

Rob Brennan from Opentext put together this handy chart, highlighting some of the areas that you can focus on to form your CRO hypotheses, and we can use this to look in more detail at how important data can be.

Data Resource	Typical Data Points
Web Analytics	Top Entry & Exit Pages Paths to Conversion Visitors Likely to Convert (eg, new vs. repeat OR mobile vs. desktop, geography) Actions Leading to Conversion (eg, calculator interaction, product comparison)
Previous Test Data	Types of Elements that Increased Conversion (eg, headline, CTA, content) Audiences that Responded Positively Actions Leading to Conversion
CRM Data	Attribute Analysis of Past Purchasers
3rd Party Data	Visitor Profile Data (eg, psychographic, demographic)
Voice of Customer Data (VOC)	Qualitative Data (eg, common pain points)
Session Replays	Causes for Abandonment (eg, form field errors, form submission issues, data entry hesitation such as SSN)

WHAT DO I NEED TO GET STARTED?

Your website should be generating enough traffic to measure, and you need to have accurate tracking set up (for example, using Google Analytics).

While some technical know-how is an advantage, it's not a necessity as there are free and low-cost tools available that take the hard work out of setting up your tests and calculating the results.

Time is really the only significant investment you'll need to make, as the keys to CRO success lie in preparation and patience: to see real results and make informed decisions it's vital to follow a controlled process of testing and analysis.

**Before you start conversion rate testing…**
You need:

- To be generating enough traffic to measure.

- To have correct and accurate tracking set up.

- A CRO testing tool, such as VWO or Optimizely.

SUCCESSFUL CRO PLANNING – WHAT TO TEST?

What you decide to test will be specific to your website and its objectives. However, common tests include changes to copy, layout and/or design. For example, you could try different headlines or calls to action, change how you display pricing, vary the size or position of buttons, or test different layouts and colours.

- Get a small group together representing various teams within your business and brainstorm ideas for improvement from a range of perspectives, including a fresh pair of eyes where possible.

- Keep a running wish list of suggestions for changes and enhancements to your site.

- Use Google Analytics data – look at popular landing pages that have a high bounce rate and examine the common paths to conversion, reviewing any pages with a high exit rate.

- Usability testing – spend a small amount of money on getting some user feedback (typically $1 per question). You can show certain pages on your site and set users tasks to complete and then ask for their feedback.

- Put yourself in the shoes of your customers or users: how can you show them what they want to see when they want to see it?

- Look to improve high traffic pages, even if they're already performing well.

- CRO image AB testing
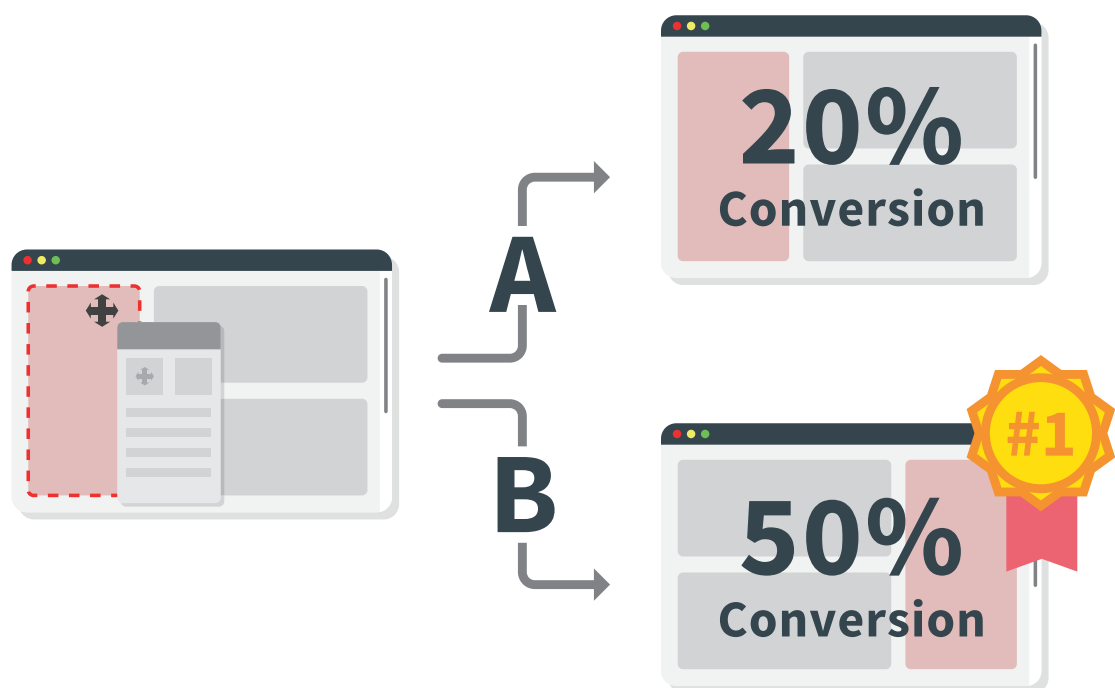
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Setting KPIs for CRO
How will you measure success for each test: in CRO terms, what will the 'conversion' be for each test? The more conversions you get, the faster you will get a statistically valid result.

This might be when people take the next step in the customer journey and won't necessarily be your conversion page. For example, if you're testing a landing page, getting a customer to the basket page might be a sufficient KPI.

The 'PIE' framework
Ensure that you're making changes to pages that can have a significant effect on your conversion rate and average order value (AOV); there's no point wasting time testing a page that gets no traffic, or a change so minor it won't make a difference.

The PIE analysis framework sets a score for the potential, importance and ease of each test and ranks them to create your test plan.

Potential: What impact do you think the change will have on conversion rate and AOV (average order value)? Major changes will typically have a greater effect on conversion rate than smaller changes. Replicating something that works on another part of your site, or another site, often has a greater chance for success than completely new ideas. Look at previous test data to help estimate improvement.

Importance: How important is the page or feature? What is the size and value of current traffic to the page? Remember to speak to other departments for their plans and priority areas and to check that the tests you're planning won't cause issues for other teams and/or your agency.

Ease: How difficult is it going to be to set up the test and permanently change your site if it is a success? There is little value in the short term of finding an improvement that you can't make to your current site.

Score each factor out of 10; sum the three scores and rank to create your test roadmap. Here's an example:

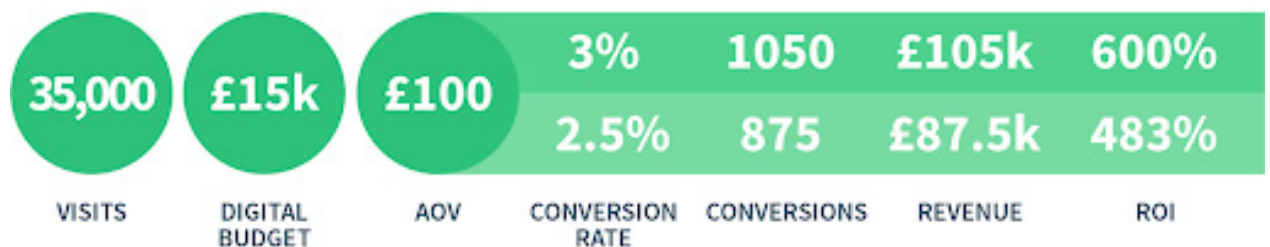|	Potential	Importance	Ease	Score	Test order
Basket page - highlight checkout text	5	6	9	6.7	3
All pages - Increase phone number size	8	8	10	8.7	1
All pages - Include free delivery	8	9	5	7.3	2

WHAT CRO COULD MEAN FOR YOUR BUSINESS

In light of its ability to permanently increase your ratio of visitors to customers, CRO is rapidly becoming a primary focus within many search marketing strategies; if it isn't yet integrated into your strategy, it's likely that you're leaving money on the table.

Below is an example of how our CRO service can make a difference to your business. As you can see from the example, a 0.5% increase in conversion rate could make the difference of £17.5k in sales for a typical monthly budget.

Simply put, conversion rate optimisation is both a money saver and a revenue generator. By ensuring that your brand is making every consumer count, you can free up funds by lowering cost per acquisition (CPA) while increasing revenue and return on investment (ROI).

VISITS	DIGITAL BUDGET	AOV	CONVERSION RATE	CONVERSIONS	REVENUE	ROI
35,000	£15k	£100	3%	1050	£105k	600%
			2.5%	875	£87.5k	483%

As can be seen above, an increase of only half a percent could potentially lead to a increase in 117% ROI and a 20% increase in revenue. This is money that can be fed back in to the business, whether that is to fund expansion of products and services, expand into new markets or to improve the brand's overall visibility – regardless of how it is spent, however, it is money that required no additional budget to earn (beyond the time invested in the optimisation process).

THINGS TO REMEMBER – A CHECKLIST

There are a couple of metrics that are often overlooked by those looking to improve their conversion rates. This is dangerous because it shows that they are not realising the potential of their website. Here are a few things that you shouldn't neglect:

Actual order value (AOV)
The AOV is a key metric as many businesses draw the line under a customer once they are an actual buyer. The goal in terms of gaining a conversion has been achieved. But what if the customer was going to spend more? And what if they were struggling to find a product and settled for a cheaper option. At the conversion or payment stage you could add in a carousel or banner featuring other products that they may like or products that accompany the item they are close to converting on.

Entry/Exit Pages
By collecting data through web analytics you are able to highlight the entry and exit pages of your website. Analysing entry pages and understanding how each customer finds you this is important as it gives you a model to build your marketing strategy. If there is one page that is converting at a higher rate than others, ask why this is and build similar pages to this and use similar hooks in terms of you links and content.

The exit pages allow you to see you potential converted audience. You can see where they are leaving your site and why. Look on these pages to make sure that the content is up to scratch and that links or payment options aren't broken. You can also check that the correct products and services are available in accordance with the site navigation that the customer has taken.
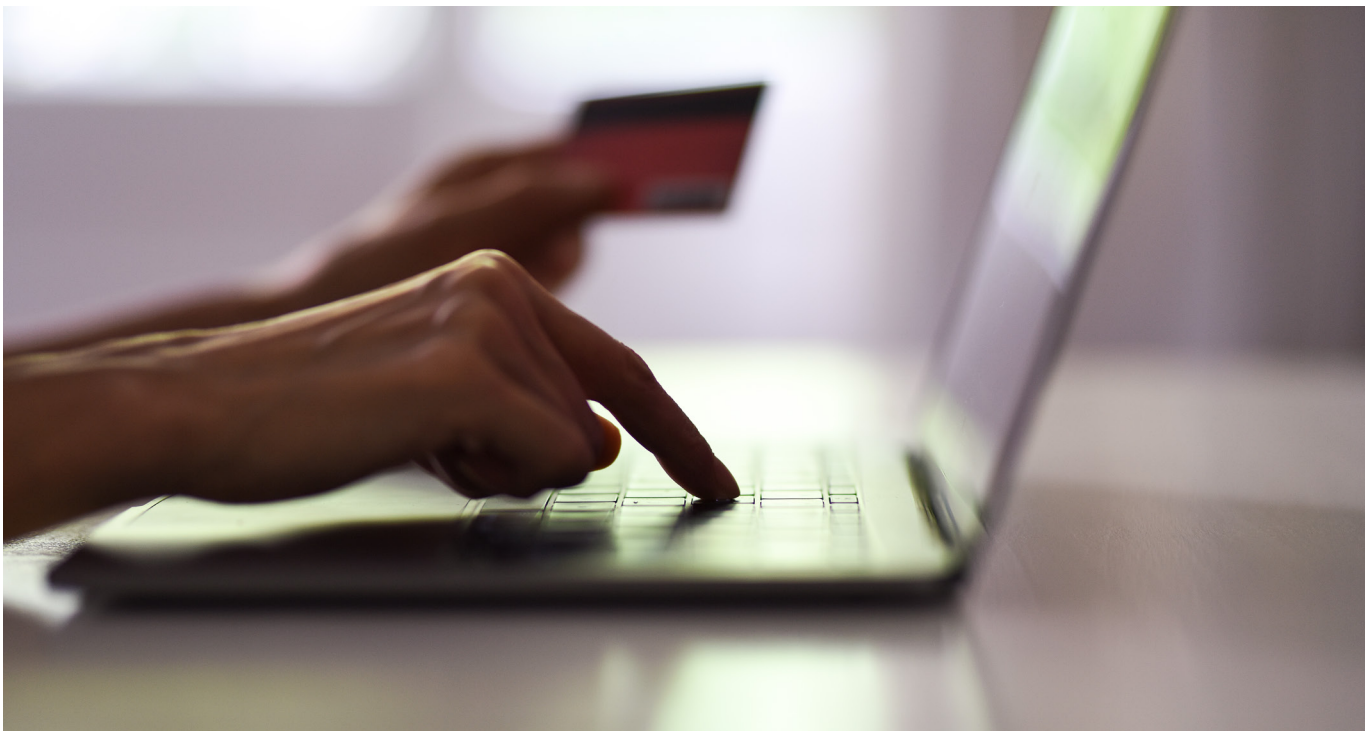
Visitors

You can understand a lot about CRO and potential conversions by looking at your returning vs new customer breakdown and whether the new audience is growing. CRO is all about potential and this metric shows you that if you get your offering, navigation, pricing and user experience (UX) right your conversion rate should improve.

You can also look at metrics such as geography. Are all or most of your customers from a certain area? If this is the case then maybe you can target your content and marketing activity to further strengthen this. If you are looking to expand to another territory then you can use what you have learned in these metrics to determine a plan moving forward.

One topic that is very popular at the moment is last click attribution, and the fact that users might be becoming savvier. They may visit your site as a means to conducting further research before converting from a different device later on. Looking at mobile vs desktop use is important here, as is the time the user visited and the navigation they took.

Product comparison

Looking at the actions that lead to a conversion can give you further evidence for how well your strategy is performing. Are your users comparing products on the site and what is it that makes them choose one over the other. Is it price? Is it the link that got them to the product? Or is it the on page content or images?

Previous test data

Test, test and test again. That's the message here. Look at your calls to action (CTA), your previous sale items or offers that worked well. The language and style of your content and how the audiences responded. Also look at things such as your social media and mentions, are customers looking to buy a certain product or are they holding out for a new offering? Just think of the hype that brands like Apple create surrounding new product launches.

FINAL THOUGHTS

It makes sense that all businesses optimise their website in order to increase their chance of improving conversions but it makes more sense to do it in an analytical manner. If you are able to identify your audience and use real time statistics and analytics, you will be best placed to improve performance further.

If you are able to identify exactly who your customers are and how they are finding your website you have cracked half of the problem. If you can then see exactly where they are going on your site and how they move around it, what they look at, how much they spend and how many visits it takes to convert you can compile this to streamline your strategy. You can shake off all the things that aren't working and concentrate on the ones that are, you can also learn as you add new products and services.

CRO is a case of trial and error and of constant learning. As your audience grows and the number of conversions that your audience make grows you collect more data and therefore have more evidence as to how and why you should change your strategy.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY

ABOUT US

Click Consult is a multi award-winning digital and search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC). Part of global consumer brand business Ceuta Group, we have a team of 70-plus specialists and a portfolio of more than 60 clients worldwide.

Our complementary services include content marketing, outreach, social media, conversion rate optimisation (CRO) and international/multilingual search marketing. We can also offer training and consultation to support your teams or existing strategy.

Click was named SEO Agency of the Year 2019, adding to our long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, a Bing Select Partner and feature in The Drum Recommends.

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OUR ACCREDITATIONS

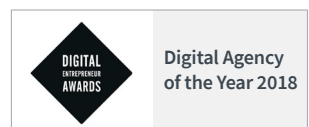The Drum Recommended   Bing Select Partner   Google Partner (Specialized in: Search ads, Mobile ads, Video ads, Display ads, Shopping ads)   VWO Certified Partner

OUR AWARDS

UK Digital Growth Awards 2019 — SEO Agency of the Year 2019	Northern Digital Awards Winner 2018 — Search Agency of the Year 2018	Performance Marketing Awards — Most Effective Agency 2018	Digital Entrepreneur Awards — Digital Agency of the Year 2018

OUR TECHNOLOGIES

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