CATEGORY AND PRODUCT PAGES THAT CONVERT

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

If you want to attract and convert more customers, you need to ensure that your category and product pages are as user-friendly and persuasive as possible.

Each category and product page on your site should have a very particular focus: to showcase relevant products in a way that produces the most ROI - whether this is convincing more visitors to click-through to make a purchase, or enticing them to spend more money on your site.

Think of each category and product page as a landing page - the first page a visitor might see after clicking on an ad, or filtering a search.

By tweaking and testing features of these pages, you can find ways to increase engagement and conversion, persuading visitors to become customers.

To do this effectively, you can't rely on haphazard changes based on gut feeling alone. You need a methodical testing plan, driven by insights from website analytics.

CONVERSION RATE OPTIMISATION (CRO)

CRO is a methodical way to plan and test alterations to your pages compared to the current design and determine which produces the most positive result. It is a method to validate that any new design or alteration to an element on your webpage is improving your conversion rate before you make permanent changes to your site.

CRO tests help you to identify significant and statistically valid ways to reduce distractions, improve relevance (to both users and search engines) and increase the likelihood of visitors taking action and ultimately converting.

How to do CRO properly

The most cost effective way to improve your site's conversion rate is through testing two or more variations of the same page at the same time, known as A/B testing (new variation versus original), where 50% of traffic is directed to each page and performance monitored.

To find out how to start planning and testing, read our step-by-step companion guide: A Simple Guide to CRO.

To get you started…

In this cheat sheet, we show you some suggestions and inspiration about what to test, which includes examples of our own tests and what has worked (or what hasn't) for our own clients…

We've split it into three sections:

1. Category pages
2. Product pages
3. Category & product pages

CRO FOR YOUR CATEGORY PAGES

Copy

Yes, Google loves to see copy. But swathes of text that add little or no value to the customer will detract from the look of the page, and push actual products further down the page. Plus, copy for the sake of it looks spammy and suffers in search rankings as a result. Copy variations are one of the most straightforward elements to test.
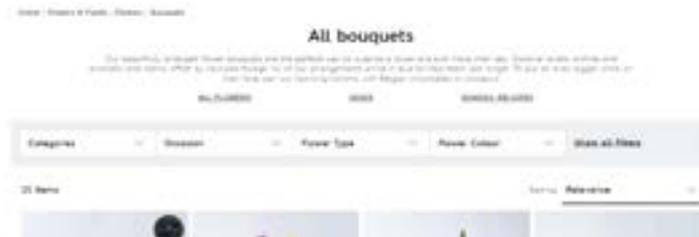
Tests to try:

• Varying the placement of your copy: perhaps a short intro before the product images, then further detail underneath.

• Displaying the first line of copy, with an option to 'read more' (this hidden copy is devalued by search engines but, the main consideration is UX here, as we're testing what makes an impact on actual conversions).

• Experimenting with the copy under product images.

Our test with product copy on category pages
We wanted to find out whether improving the clarity of where users would be taken to when selecting a category would drive up click through rate.

Control   *Variation*

The variation proved our theory, and we saw an uplift in both click through rate and conversions.

Product display

If you have a lot of products in your category pages, you need to think carefully about how you can make it easier for users to find what they want. Too much choice can lead to 'decision anxiety' - where people have too much choice, so end up taking no action at all). Showing them a selection of the most popular categories and products can limit choice, highlight the products that are most profitable to you (not necessarily those selling for the highest prices).

Tests to try:

•   Varying the number and/or size of products displayed

•   Drawing attention to your most popular/ best selling products.

Our best seller test
One of our eCommerce clients had a category page ('Clearance') featuring blocks leading to sub category pages ('Menswear Clearance', 'Ladieswear Clearance', etc). Analysis showed us that these were getting very few clicks.

Therefore, we decided to test whether a variation of this page showing images of actual best sellers that link directly to that product page, rather than to a sub category page, would lift engagement and conversion.

The results: The variation showing images did lead to an uplift in conversions but, surprisingly, not because users were clicking on the images, but were more likely to click on the left-hand menu when the images were shown.
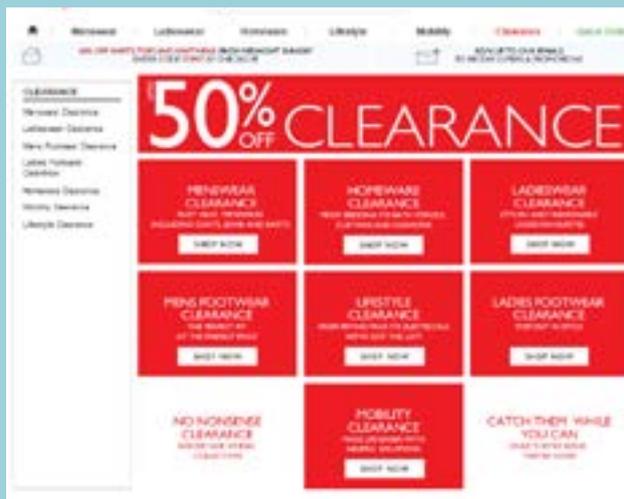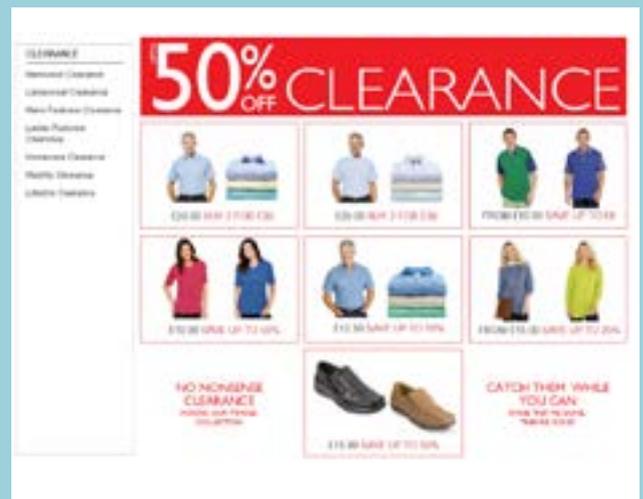
Control   *Variation*

We therefore recommended keeping this variation live and testing out different products and ranges.

Price display

Of course, price is an all-important factor when it comes to online purchase decisions. But while there might not be much wiggle room to change your price points, you can still find out whether the way you present the amounts could give you an uplift in conversions.

A test to try:

- Allowing users to view variations of price options on the category page (for example, with delivery fee/without delivery fee; total/per item, etc) to give greater transparency.

Our test for price display
We ran a test adding a toggle feature at the top of the page that meant users could view their options by total price or per person.
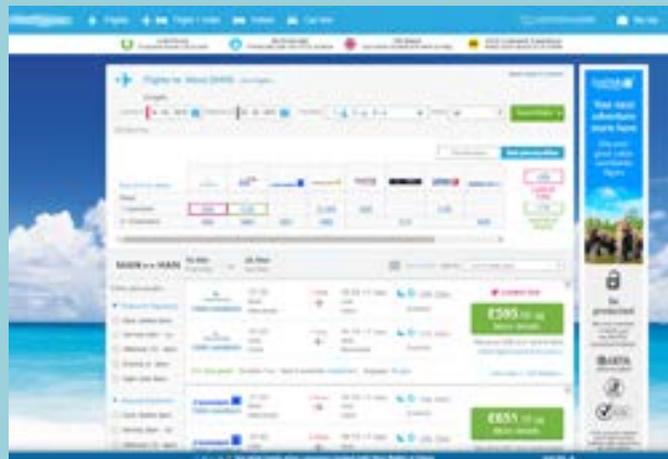
Control
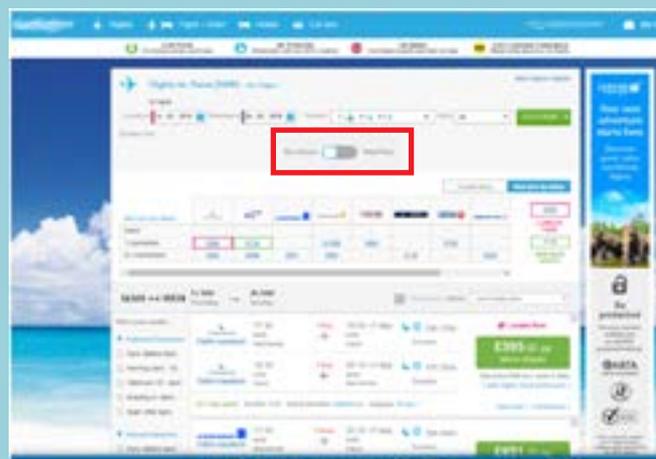
Variation

We consistently saw a positive uplift in ecommerce conversion rate with this feature.

Use of colour

When viewing category page search results, guiding users to the best choice not only narrows down choice, but can also make them more confident to take the next step and click through to the product page. It may seem like a trivial detail, but the colours associated with this messaging can have a powerful impact on the action that users take.

Our test of colour highlighting

For a travel company client, we had established that by highlighting the best value flight, users spent less time comparing options and converted better. We carried out a multivariate test using a range of colours, against the control (existing) blue, to highlight the lowest fare:

Control

Variation 1

Variation 2

Variation 3

Result: Blue highlighting came out as the winner, generating more conversions than the other three tested.

Navigation

Navigation is one of the most important elements of design for UX; if visitors can't find what they need easily, they will quickly look elsewhere. and small tweaks to the design of your navigation layout may dramatically increase your conversion rate.

Tests to try:

•   Including additional filtering options

Asos' category pages off an extensive list of choices for users to filter by, making it quick and easy to narrow down possible options.

Displaying a 'breadcrumb trail' (as highlighted in the Marks & Spencer example below) to show the main categories leading to the page and back to the home page. Visitors who get 'lost' on your site are likely to become frustrated and abandon their visit altogether. They encourage people to visit more pages of a website before they exit and thus they reduce bounce rate (these are also good practice for SEO as they help search engine bots during the crawling and indexing phase).
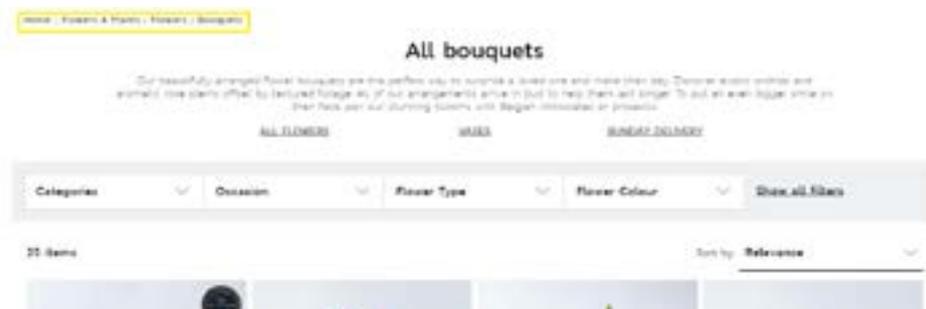
Trust indicators

When users are starting to narrow down their options within a category, highlighting one that is good value can help to make a choice and move to the product page.

Test to try:

•   Adding 'Positive persuasion messaging'.

Our test
We aimed to find out whether adding another layer of reassurance that they were making a good choice - via a prominent banner - would move users onto the next step.

Control

Variation

The messaging improved conversions significantly.

CRO FOR YOUR PRODUCT PAGES

Imagery

Visuals become even more important at product page level as the visitor is showing high intent by choosing to view a particular item. according to studies, around 67% of consumers consider the product image to be "very important" and 50% of them believe a clear, high-quality photo is more significant than the description, reviews, or rating.

Tests to try:

- Size: high-resolution images have been shown to increase sales by 9%, so make sure not to scrimp on image quality.

- Quantity: in order to make a smoother experience, include three to four images for each product, each in a similar style, quality, and lighting, but at a different angle.

- Ability to enlarge or see a product from different angles.

- Videos on product pages can be highly effective for engaging your audience and attracting new visitors. By including short, 30-seconds content you can increase revenue between 25% to 100% (according to research by Search Engine Land).

- Displaying 'people also bought' products alongside the main item to encourage cross-sells.

- Displaying 'similar products'/'you may also like' alongside the main item.

Our 'similar products' test

Could we persuade product page visitors to consider a higher-profit item than the one they're viewing - or prevent them from leaving without a purchase at all?

At the time, our client had a bar on the right hand side of each product page displaying items from other categories that other users had purchased after viewing that page. We decided to test whether showing 'bestsellers' from within the same category worked better.

Control

Variation

The test showed not only an uplift in conversions, but spent longer on the site and visited more pages too.

Copy

Users expect product descriptions to be as detailed as possible, but they still need to be user friendly and uncluttered.

Test to try:

• Including specific information in a collapsable format (as in the example below), rather than either overwhelming visitors with large blocks of text, or failing to provide enough information.

Trust indicators

These elements are important on your category pages, but especially on product pages as they offer reassurance when customers are at the final phase before proceeding to checkout.

Test to try:

- Including star ratings, testimonials and reviews. People are more likely to trust online reviews by people who have previously purchased, with roughly 90% of internet users consult online reviews before buying.

- Displaying industry trade association membership more prominently.

*Our test of trade body compliance prominency*

We wanted to find out whether displaying Atol (a financial protection scheme), and ABTA (a travel trade association) along with endorsement by consumer review platform Feefo, higher up on the page increased the rate at which people converted:
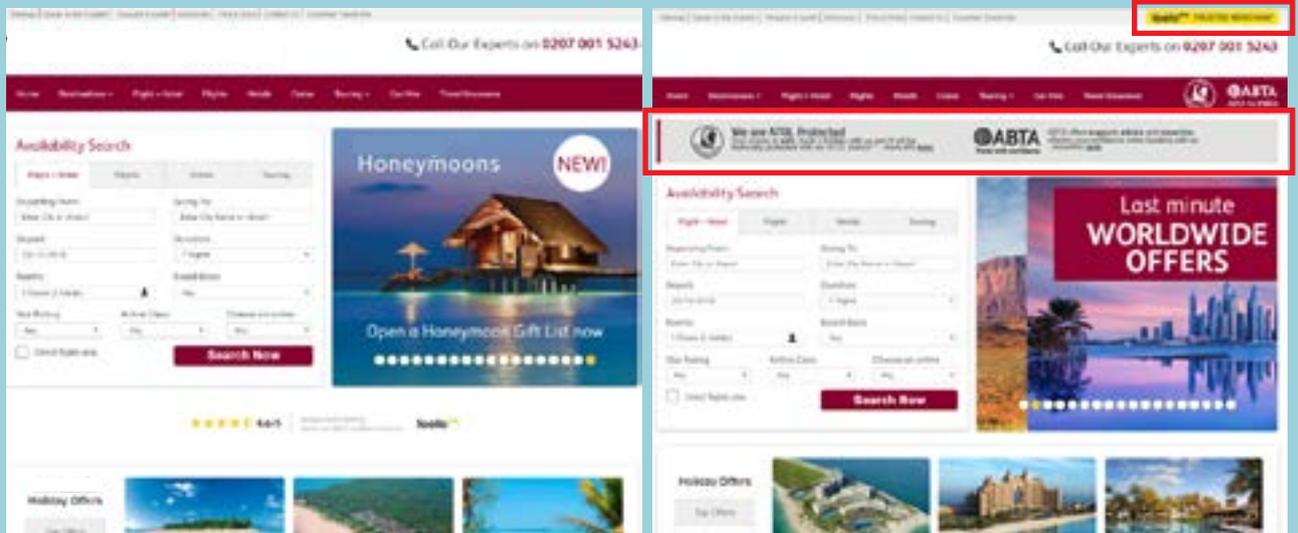
Test to try:

- Including returns information.

Our returns copy test
Would emphasising our client's 30 days returns policy encourage conversions?
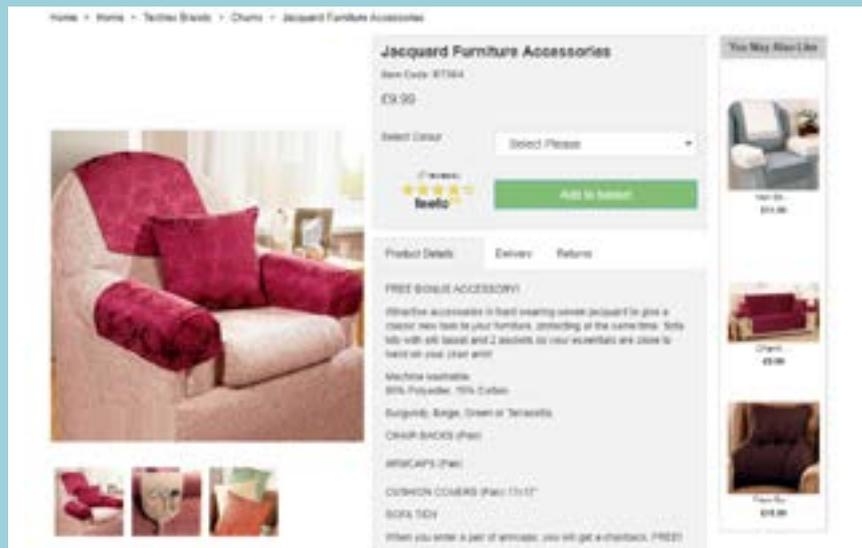
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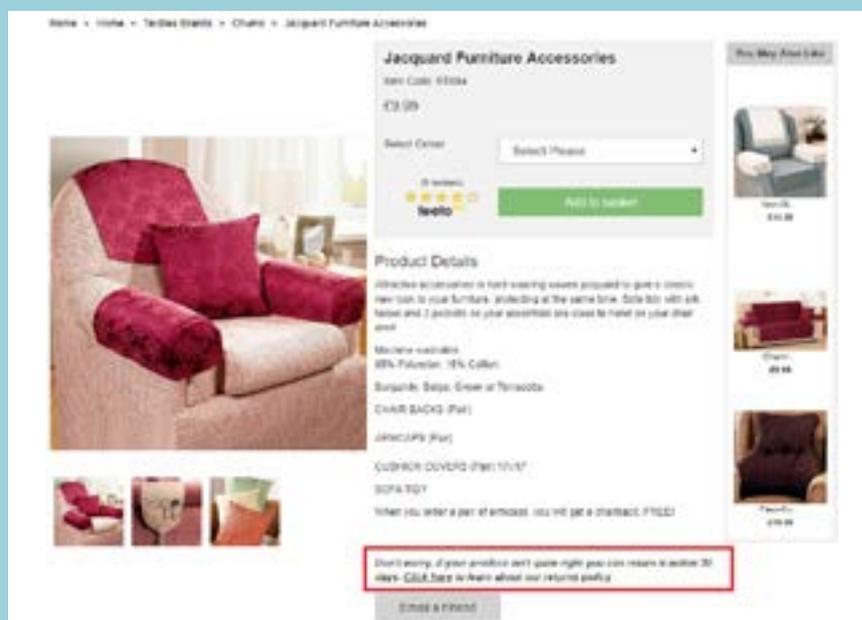
Variation

Result: we implemented the variation as it was found to have a significant impact.

Call to action buttons (CTAs)

Customers need encouragement to take the action you want them to - especially when they are at the crucial point of turning from browsers into buyers. CTA buttons are a key area for you to test - both on category and product pages - because, as the name suggests, they instruct people what you want them to do next and guide users towards conversion.

Tests to try:

• Varying size

• Varying colour

• Varying shape

• Varying placement on the page

• Varying copy (or adding additional copy)

Our CTA test
Below is an example of an A/B test we ran for one of our client's category pages, to find whether using tailored persuasive text on our call to action buttons would increase leads.

Control   *Variation*

We found that rewording the CTAs to direct customers to take a specific action, led to higher conversion rates, so this changed was implemented.

Basket page

Test to try:

- Adding a 'wishlist' option - even if this doesn't encourage immediate conversion (and even delay it, which is seemingly counterintuitive), it increases the chance that they will return at a later date - and also allow you to capture these details for remarketing.

- Including security information at the checkout to build trust and secure progression through the funnel.

Our payment security test
Would adding a banner to highlight financial safety more prominent encourage people to proceed to payment?
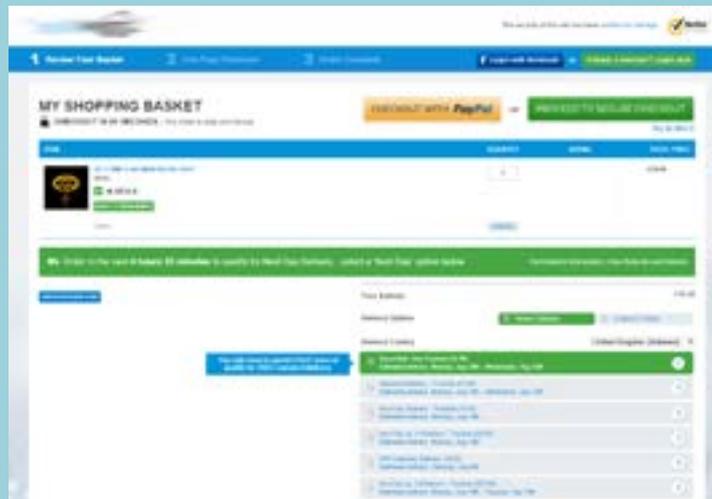
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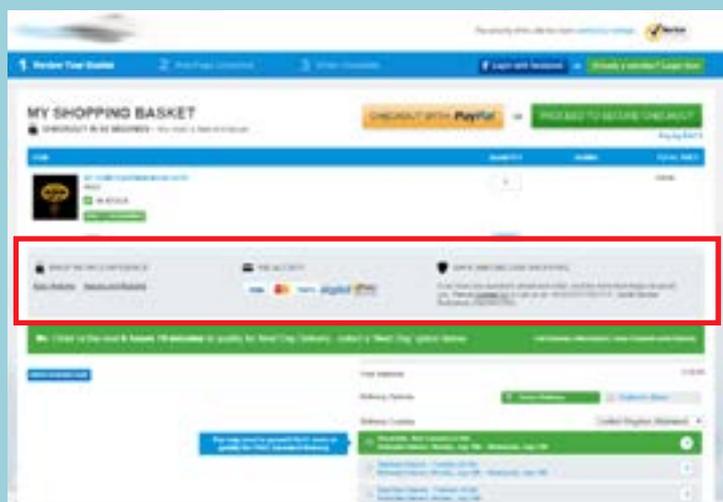
Variation

Highlighting that they could shop safely and securely persuaded slightly more people to convert.

Checkout page

Even if you offer the best quality and value on the market, and the rest of your site is a dream to navigate, you'll fall at the final hurdle unless your checkout process is secure, and quick and simple to use. This is the point at which you could experience the dreaded 'abandoned shopping carts'.

Tests to try:

•   Shortening the Checkout Form by only displaying one section a time.

•   Including a progress bar or step indicator.

•   Allowing users to check out as guests, without creating an account.

•   Including a pop-up box that creates a sense of urgency that they will lose the product if they hesitate to purchase.

FINAL THOUGHTS

We hope our ideas - and real-life examples - got you thinking about ways you might be able to grow conversions across your own product and category pages. We're not suggesting you copy these ideas; they're just thought starters as you begin on your own CRO journey.

Remember that, with CRO, you rely on hard data, rather than guesswork, personal opinion, or even best practice. CRO is about testing and evaluating qualitative and quantitative data to:

• Better understand what your visitors want to see and when they want to see it.

• Identify which changes to your website have the biggest impact on conversion.

• Increase the ROI for every digital channel, whatever your budget.

• Make permanent improvements to your site

• Create a knowledge bank of best practices to inform future strategies

To find out how to start planning and testing, read our step-by-step companion guide: A Simple Guide to CRO.
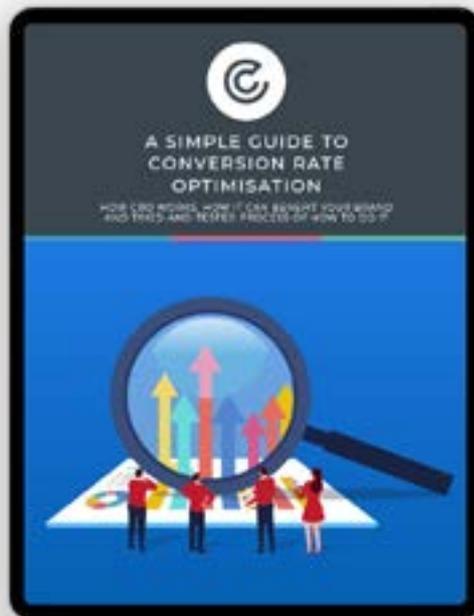
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Click Consult is a multi award-winning search and digital marketing agency with two decades of experience. Part of global consumer brand business Ceuta Group, we have a team of 70-plus specialists and a portfolio of more than 60 clients worldwide.

Click was named Organic Search (SEO) Team of the Year 2020, 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.

We're here to help - whether you're looking to hire an agency to undertake technical and creative work behind the scenes until the present situation is clear, or you just need some free advice. You can get in touch using hello@click.co.uk.

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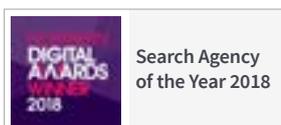
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OUR TECHNOLOGIES

monitorTRAX   rankTRAX   feedTRAX   linkTRAX   proTRAX   pageTRAX