

TEN SECRETS TO RUNNING A WINNING A/B TEST

1

Root your A/B test in a data insight.

Everything should stem from a data insight. This is because we are trying to eliminate 'gut feel' and hunches, and use empirical evidence. We want to be able to give ourselves the best chance of success, so solving the problems that real people are having on our websites is the best place to start.

2

Pay attention to statistical significance.

As a rule of thumb, the result of your A/B test should always have a statistical significance of at least 95%. Below this you can't be sure that it wasn't just the result of chance. However, don't use statistical significance *alone* as a rule to stop a test - it needs to run for long enough to be valid.

3

Always have a problem statement.

A problem statement is a description of an issue that needs to be addressed and resolved. It serves as a link between your business objectives and your A/B test's hypothesis by clearly articulating an area of concern. It's a great way of ensuring your experiments are relevant to what your company is trying to achieve.

4

Always have a water-tight hypothesis.

No A/B test should ever be pushed live if it isn't backed by a hypothesis. It's a statement that predicts the outcome, and it ultimately holds the A/B test accountable to a successful result. A hypothesis is invaluable, as it provides a focus to everyone involved in the test on the expected result.

5

Run experiments in series.

A/B tests shouldn't be carried out in isolation – they should be part of a series of tests. Doing this will allow you to maintain a focused optimisation program that minimises wasted time and resources. It helps the prioritisation process too, as A/B tests logically follow on from each other, with each building on the success of the previous one.



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6

Know your success metrics.

It's critical to know your A/B test's success metrics – that is, the criteria by which it can be considered successful. Without these it's almost impossible to tell whether your A/B test is giving you what you need, or which changes are making a difference.

7

Pick your low-hanging fruit first.

You should always pick the experiments that are the easiest to set up and run, but which you believe will have the highest impact, before any others. Some quick wins will help to give your A/B testing roadmap some impetus, and build some interest amongst your co-workers.

8

Track your results.

Managing any project effectively requires documentation - to help you plan it, track it, and communicate progress. Your A/B tests are no different. Always create a test plan, and track and document the results.

9

Don't make your variants too similar.

Make sure your control and challenger versions are different enough for your visitors to notice. If you make what are known as 'meek tweaks', then it's likely your A/B test results will be inconclusive. Be bold, and you will usually be rewarded.

10

Don't stop it too early.

Run each A/B test for 2 to 3 weeks, so it spans a sales cycle but doesn't impact your ability to launch other tests. There are a number of good calculators online that can help you gauge when to stop a test, such as <http://abtestguide.com/calc>.

