



**EXCLUSIVE.**<sup>SM</sup>

**REPLATFORMING HELL**

**12 SITE MIGRATION BLUNDERS TO AVOID**



# Agenda

Replatform vs. Redesign vs. Restructure

How SEO & CRO Overlap

The Blunders

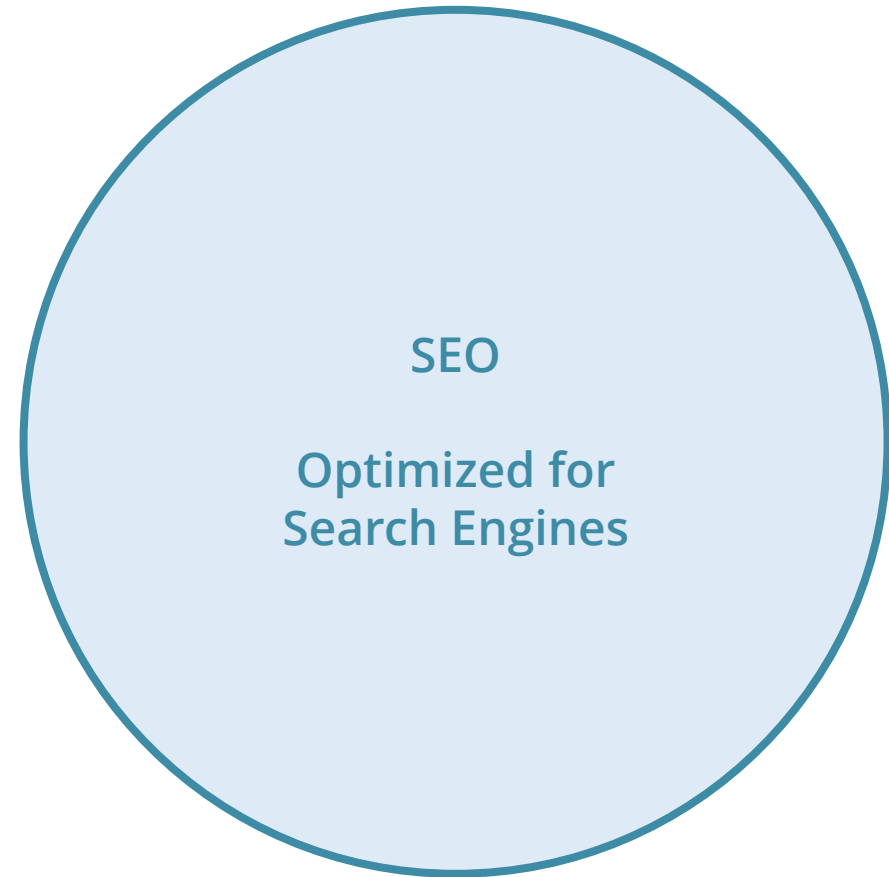
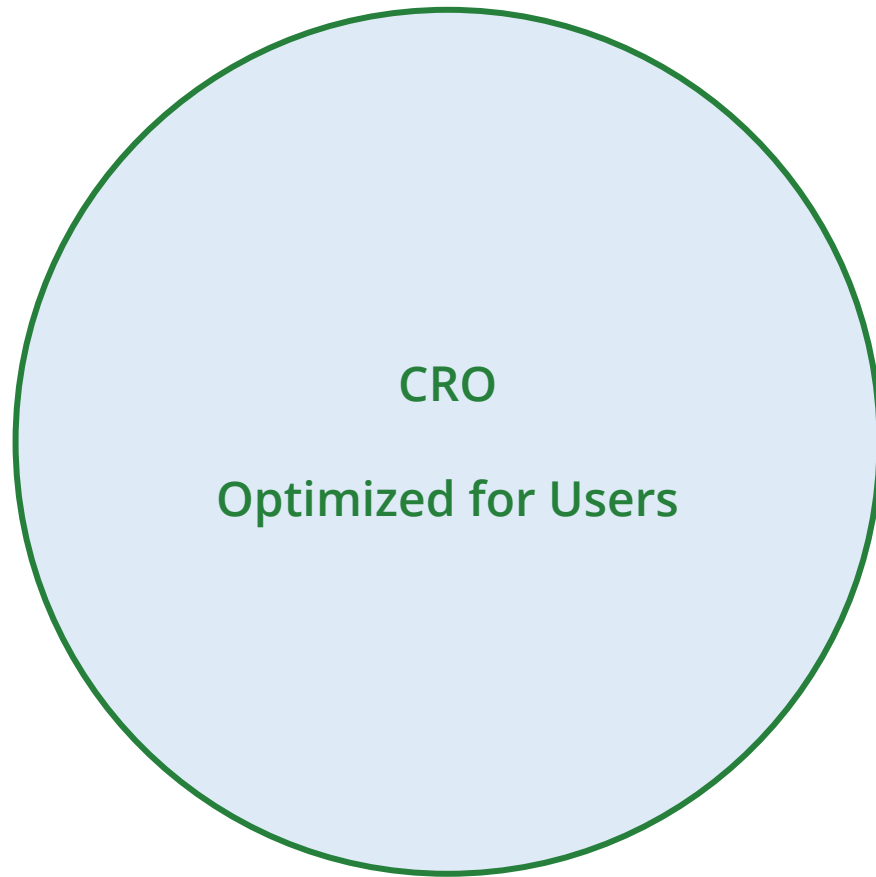
How EXCLUSIVE Can Help

Q&A

# Replatform vs. Redesign vs. Restructure

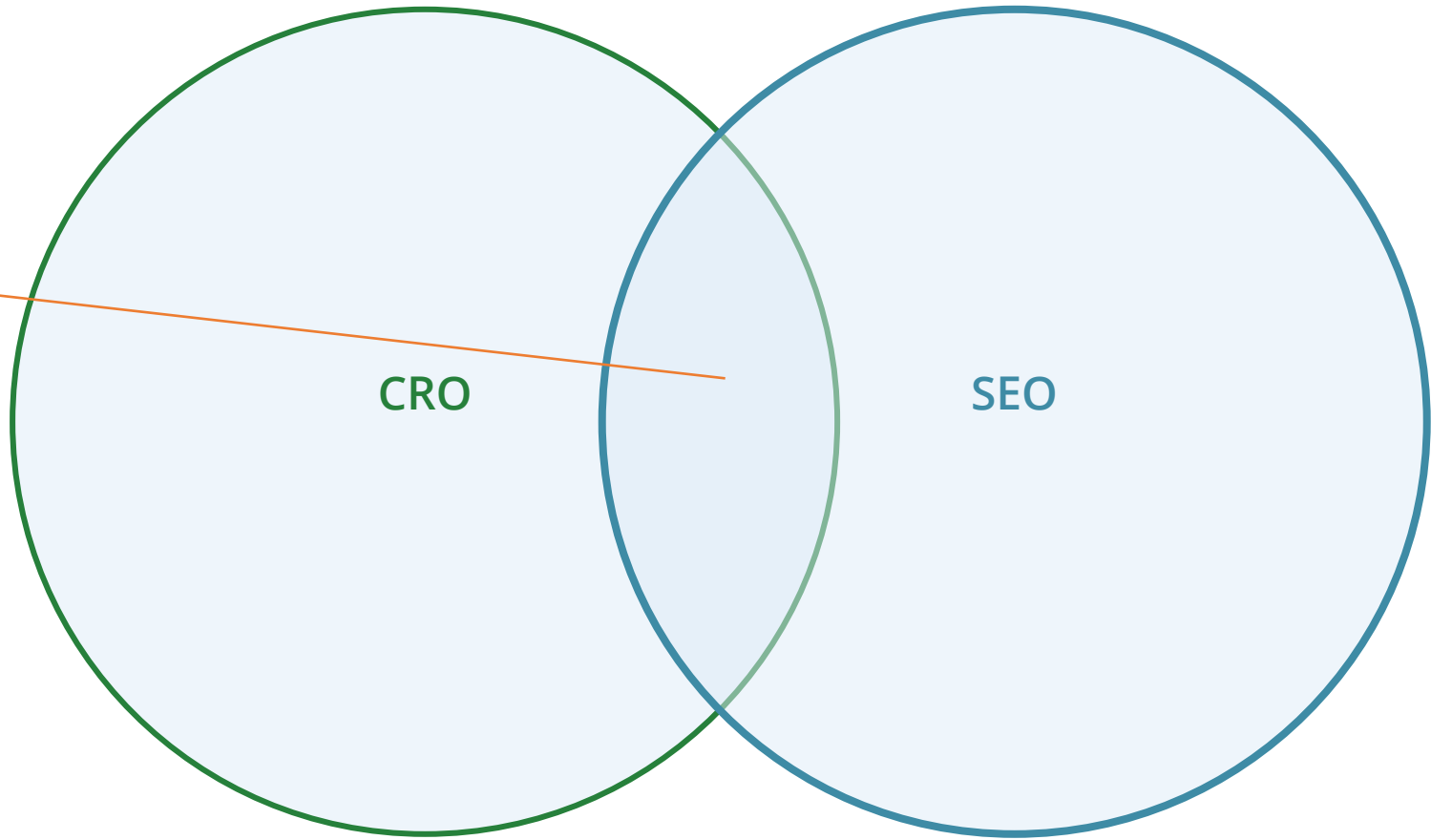
	Replatform	Redesign	Restructure
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• URL structure change</li> <li>• SKU changes</li> <li>• Breadcrumb changes</li> <li>• Parent/child product pages</li> <li>• Feed provider compatibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower CR% and/or AOV</li> <li>• Identifying design winners/losers</li> <li>• Moving or eliminating critical elements</li> <li>• Site speed implications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing URLs</li> <li>• Removing critical pages</li> <li>• Splitting critical pages</li> <li>• Adding/changing faceted navigation</li> </ul>
Who it's Good For	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outgrown current platform</li> <li>• Budget-Conscious</li> <li>• Big ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any site not updated in the last 15+ years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sites that have static pages for granular pages better served by filters</li> </ul>
Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Custom coding</li> <li>• Plugins for current CMS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing "safe" changes</li> <li>• Testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Testing</li> </ul>

# How SEO & CRO Overlap



# How SEO & CRO Overlap

More Traffic (SEO)  
+  
Higher Conversion Rates  
(CRO)  
=  
More Transactions (both)





**POLL:**

Have you recently – or are you planning to – replatform, redesign, or restructure your site?



# The Blunders





# Blunder #1: **Not Anticipating Down Performance**



## ***Most Common With:***

- *Replatform*
- *Redesign*
- *Restructure*



# Anticipating Down Performance

## Even if everything goes right:

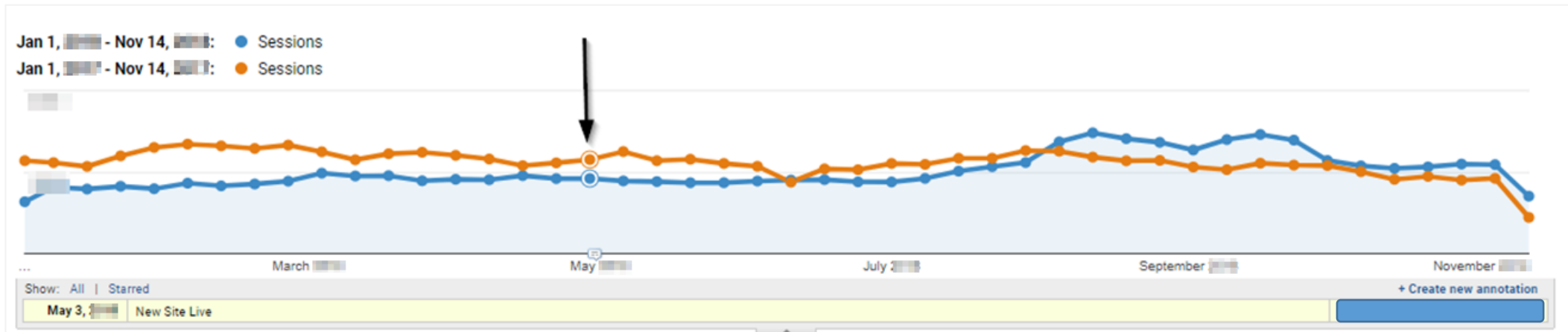
- Any site experience changes can impact conversion rate of returning customers
- Any changes may result in organic traffic drops as search engines reevaluate
  - Up to 10% drop for 4-6 weeks (longer for larger sites)
  - Anything >20% drop is bad

## From our data:

- For 60% of ecommerce merchants, replatforming leads to lower website traffic, lower conversion rates, **and** less site-wide revenue.
- Only 53% of sites see positive YOY revenue growth 6 months post-migration
- Sites that see a drop in revenue are down an average of 29% YOY for revenue post-migration
- 67% of sites see a decrease in conversion rate

# Anticipating Down Performance

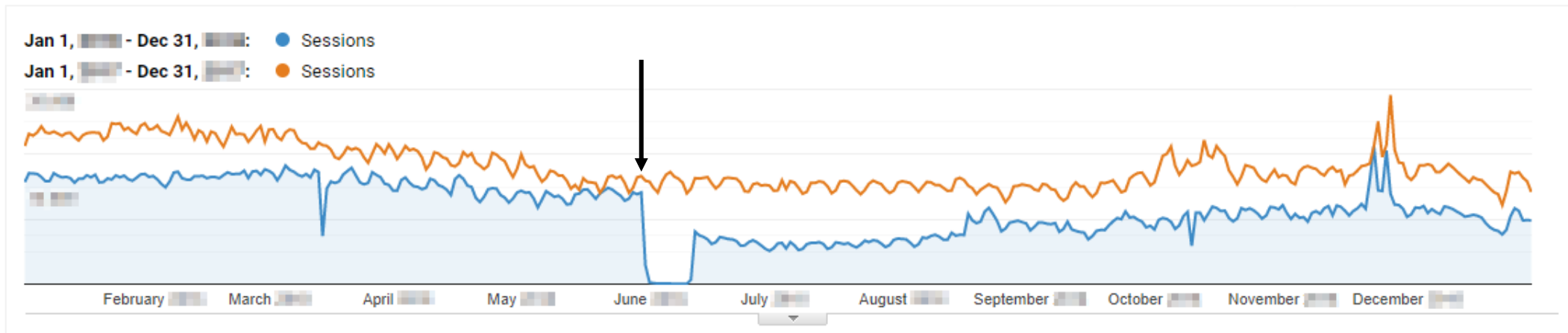
## Example of Successful Site Migration – Organic Sessions




- Down slightly for 4 weeks post-migration; never lost more than 5% of organic traffic
- Positive performance achieved 14 weeks post-migration

# Anticipating Down Performance

## Example of Unsuccessful Site Migration – Organic Sessions



- Tracking was down for several days without noticing
- SEO went from -25% YOY in sessions pre-launch to -47% YOY



# Blunder #2: **Not Accounting for SKU Changes**



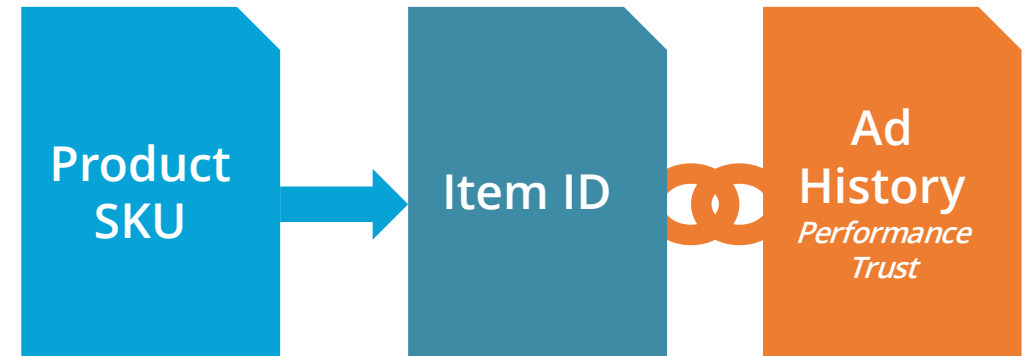
***Most Common With:***

- *Replatform*

# Accounting for SKU Changes

SKUs are usually your “Item ID” in your Google Shopping feed

Each Item ID has Ad History associated with it



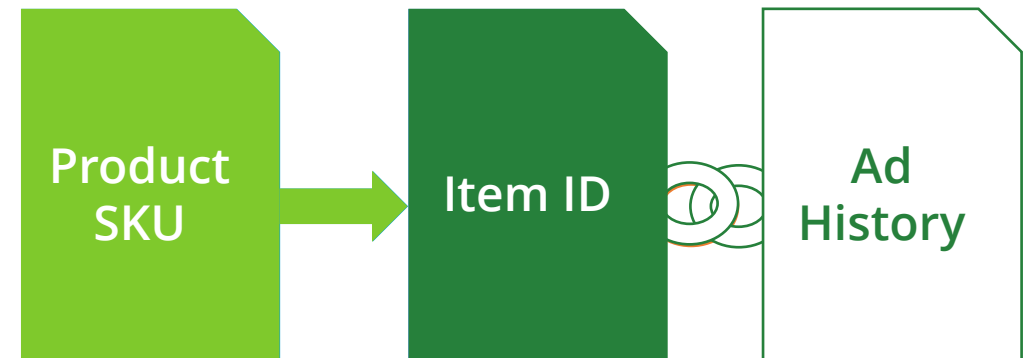
# Accounting for SKU Changes


If you change SKUs (and therefore Item IDs), you lose Ad History for that Item ID.

## Alert your Shopping Team of SKU Changes!

*They can overwrite new SKUs in the feed with the old SKUs. Make sure you:*

- Alert them **before** changes go live
- Have the new SKUs





# Blunder #3: Not Writing 301- Redirects



## ***Most Common With:***

- *Replatform*
- *Restructure*

# The Importance of 301 Redirects & SEO

- The 301 status code means that a page has permanently moved to a new location
- Ensures users (and search engines!) get to your new pages
- Passes between 90-99% of link equity (ranking power) to the redirected page

## Don't Forget

- ✓ Product and Category URLs
- ✓ m-dot subdomain
- ✓ To map one-to-one

## *Help! I Launched without 301s*

Prioritize pages by:

- Top traffic-driving pages
- Top revenue-driving pages
- Top linked pages



# The Importance of 301 Redirects & PPC

- Ads pointing to inactive URLs will start to disapprove within 1-5 days of a site change
- Page URLs for ads with a 301 redirect will pass traffic to site the effectively in the short term—but will cause other problems:
  - Lack of tracking
  - Lowered Quality Score

## To prepare text ads:

1. Make sure there are 301 redirects for all Ad URLs in the account
2. Identify and map Top 10% of ad URLs for change within a day of site migration
3. Remaining URLs should be switched to new formats over a 5-day period, in staggered groups

***Don't forget about extensions!***



# Blunder #4: **Not Considering Breadcrumbs**



***Most Common With:***

- *Replatform*
- *Redesign*
- *Restructure*



# The Importance of Breadcrumbs

- For SEO
  - Helps Google understand hierarchy of the site
  - Helps with crawl authority
  - Used in Mobile SERPs rather than full URLs

# The Importance of Breadcrumbs

- **For Google Shopping**
  - Breadcrumb trails on a website are usually mapped to the “product\_type” field in a shopping feed
  - **Product\_type:**
    - Helps organize Google Shopping campaigns into groups
    - Acts as an address so products know which campaigns they’re assigned to
  - If product\_type ever changes and campaigns aren’t changed to reflect that, then that “address” is broken and products get lost, potentially preventing ads from serving



# Blunder #5: Forgetting About Feeds



***Most Common With:***

- *Replatform*

# Forgetting About Feeds

- Sometimes a feed provider simply isn't compatible with a new ecommerce platform
  - All feed providers have lists of which platforms they are compatible with available upon request
  - Begin researching compatible feed providers as soon as a platform is selected
- Test mapping the new feed to product data exported from the new site about a **month** in advance of a migration.
  - Feed mapping can take up to 2-3 weeks to complete to ensure high quality



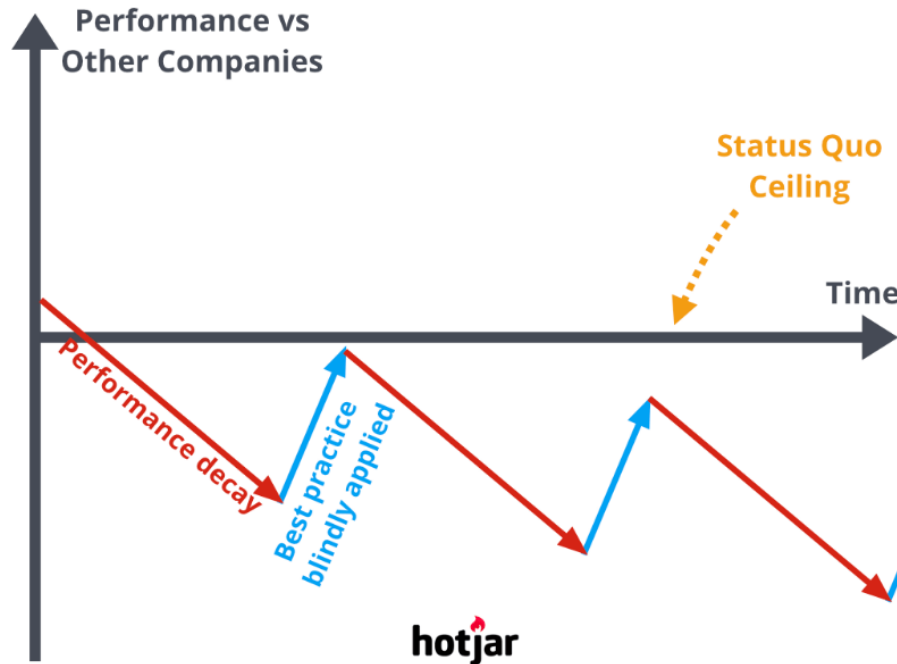
# Blunder #6: Designing On “Best Practices”



***Most Common With:***

- *Redesign*

# “Best Practices” – Why We Test



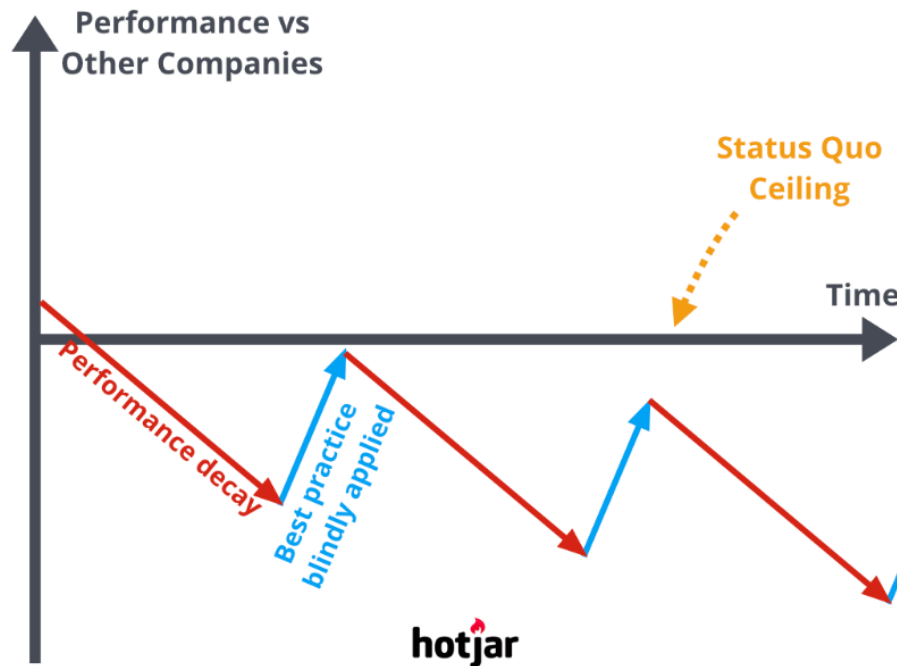
THE PERFORMANCE DECAY (IN RED) OF A COMPANY BLINDLY FOLLOWING AND APPLYING BEST PRACTICES (IN BLUE).

## Cost of “Best Practices”

- 51% success rate can make an idea a “best practice”
- Best practices are unreliable in results as the factors that affect another business probably aren’t the same as yours.
- You will always be behind if you rely on best practices.
- This graph assumes that each best practice you apply works. We find that around 3/10 work.
- This graph is a “kind” illustration of keeping up with stores that are testing. We find that the gap between the two lines is much greater.



# "Best Practices" – Why We Test



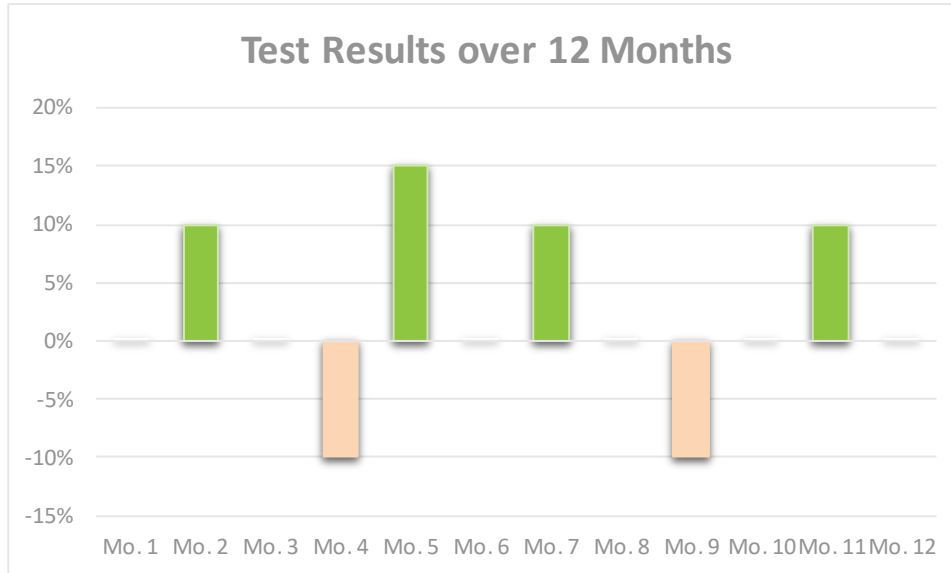
THE PERFORMANCE DECAY (IN RED) OF A COMPANY BLINDLY FOLLOWING AND APPLYING BEST PRACTICES (IN BLUE).

## Benefits of Testing

- ✓ You learn/understand which changes worked or didn't.
- ✓ You only implement winners (saves effort, time, and money).
- ✓ Ideas that negatively impact revenue are stopped faster and only shown to a percentage of site-wide traffic (saves you money).
- ✓ Understand why an idea did or didn't work to find new opportunities.
- ✓ Your changes (tests) are tailored to your business, your site, and your customers.

# "Best Practices" – Why We Test

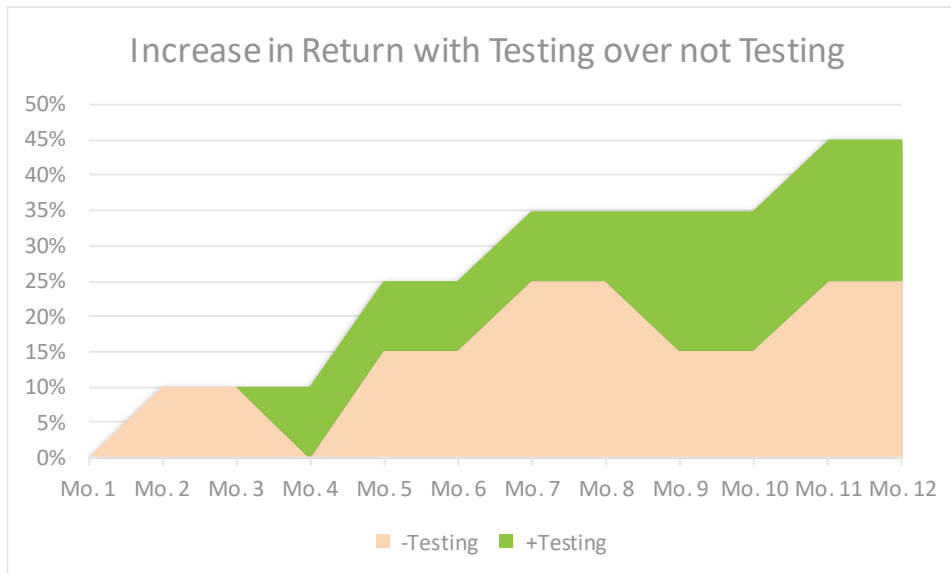
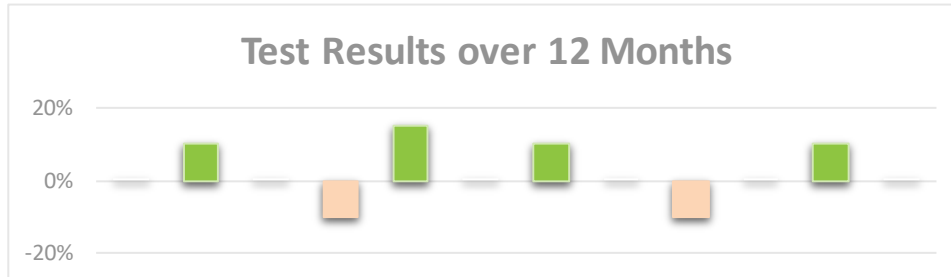
Here's a 12 month testing example (1 test/month)



- 4 winners
- 6 zero-impact
- 2 negative impact

- ✓ Our test success rate is ~30% (industry average is around 10%-12%)
- ✓ We are ecommerce focused = we have tailored our process to optimize SMB ecommerce sites.

# "Best Practices" – Why We Test



## -Testing:

Based on our typical results model, without testing, all the design and development work will yield a +25% improvement.

## +Testing:

This return jumps to 45% with the same results by only implementing the winning experiences on the site.

- ✓ You get 80% more for your effort and time by testing and waiting for results instead of potentially implementing non-impact or negative-impact experiences.
- ✓ You save time, effort, and money by not coding changes to the site that won't drive your revenue growth.
- ✓ You prevent negative experiences from staying live on your site for ALL traffic.



**Type "Contact Me!"  
into the Questions  
Box**



# Blunder #7: Not Designing for SEO



## ***Most Common With:***

- *Redesign*

# Design Elements Checklist

## Visual Elements

- Page headers (H1)
- Crawlable content blocks
- Breadcrumbs
- Product counter on category pages
- Mobile-friendly
- ADA-compliant

## Coded Elements

- Alt text
- Structured data markup (Schema)
- Canonicals
- hreflang



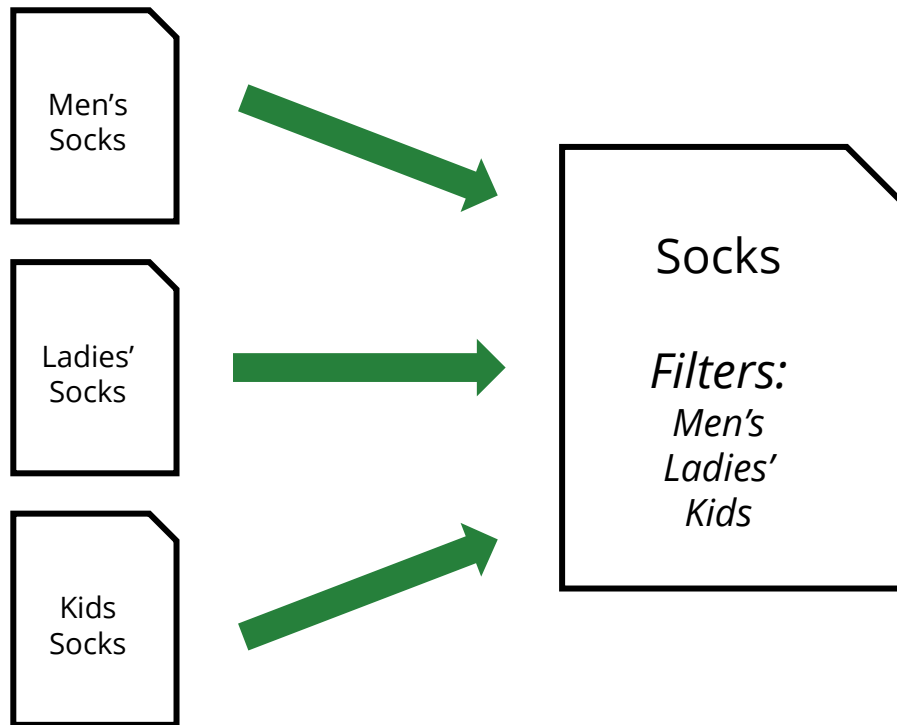
# Blunder #8: Removing Critical Pages



## ***Most Common With:***

- *Replatform*
- *Redesign*
- *Restructure*

# Removing Critical Pages



## What Happens?

- There aren't indexable pages for high-volume keywords
- Too many competitive terms are targeted on a single page

## Before Consolidating:

- ✓ Make sure **search volume** warrants it
- ✓ Make sure your **selection** warrants it
- ✓ Make sure **performance** warrants it
  - ✓ Are you **ranking** well?
  - ✓ Does that page **convert**?





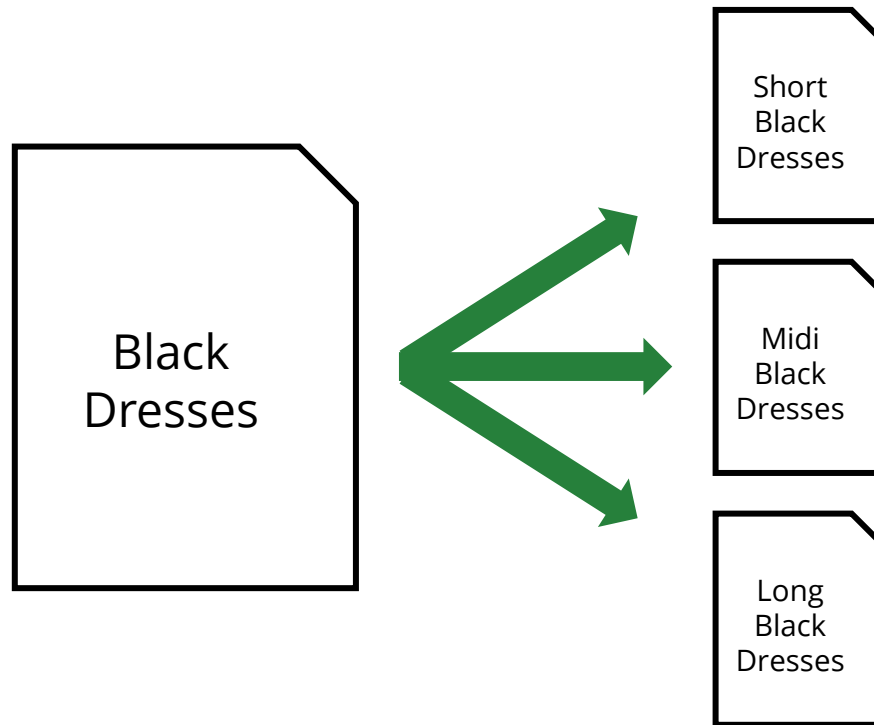
# Blunder #9: Splitting Critical Pages



## ***Most Common With:***

- *Replatform*
- *Redesign*
- *Restructure*

# Splitting Critical Pages



## What Happens?

- Link authority is now split between three \*new\* pages
- There's no clear page to rank for the main target keyword
- There's less product selection on each page

## Before Splitting:

- ✓ Make sure **search volume** warrants it
- ✓ Make sure your **selection** warrants it
- ✓ Make sure you're not already **ranking** well
- ✓ Consider what **Google** is showing



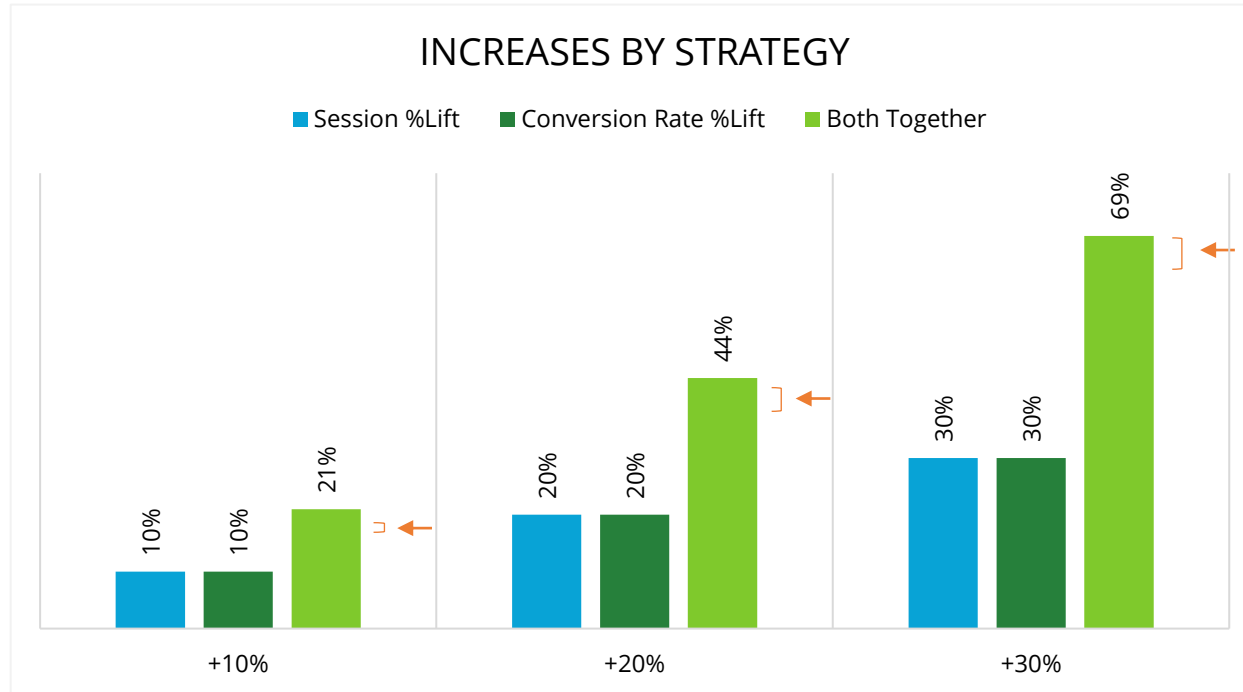
# Blunder #10: Changing Everything



***Most Common With:***

- *Replatform*

# Why On-Site Optimization is Important



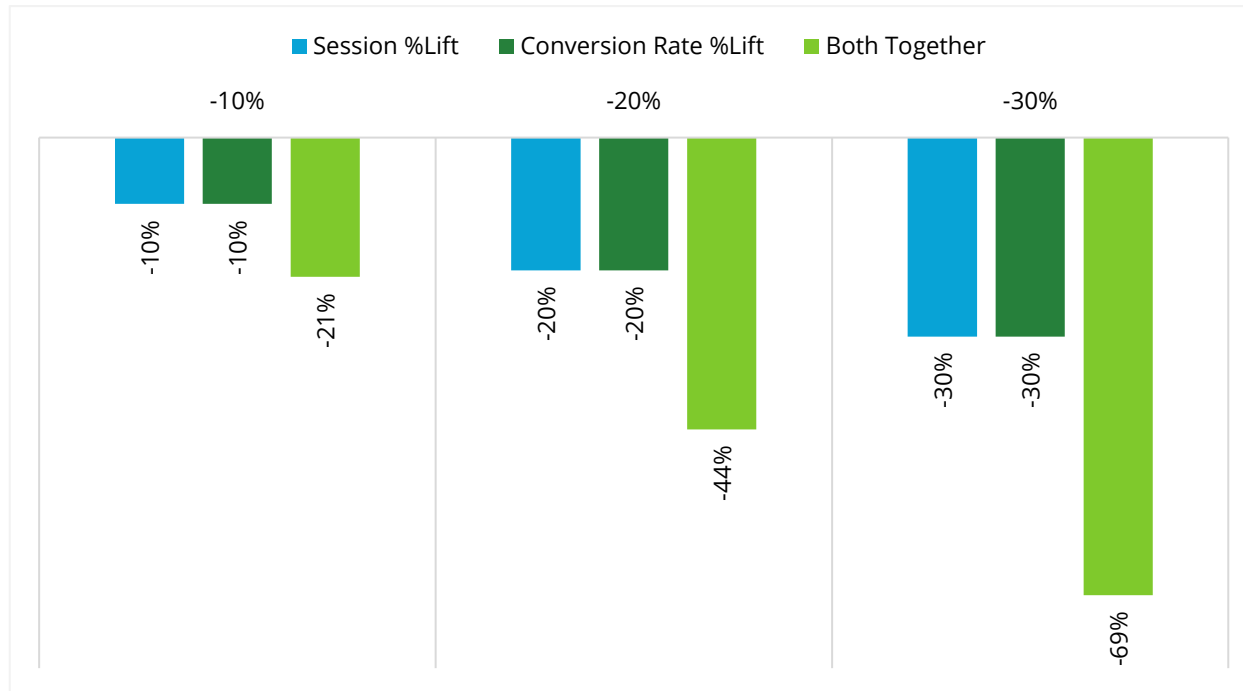
This is compound interest

Here's a breakdown of the potential revenue impact of each strategy by itself vs in combination with each other.

Notice that a 10% lift in sessions AND a 10% lift in conversion rates doesn't equal 20%. It equals 21%.

This is extra 5% happens when both are positive together.

# Changing Everything: Worst-Case

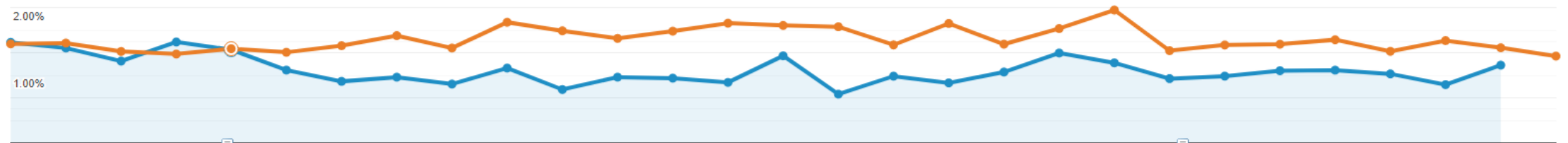


Unfortunately, this also works in the opposite direction too!

If you are down in both traffic (organic traffic losses) and in conversion rate (negative changes to site experience), you will see these compounded losses in transactions!

# Changing Everything: Costs

The cost of a redesign is the only cost if there are no traffic or conversion rate issues. But if you are seeing conversion rates drop after the redesign like the graph below...

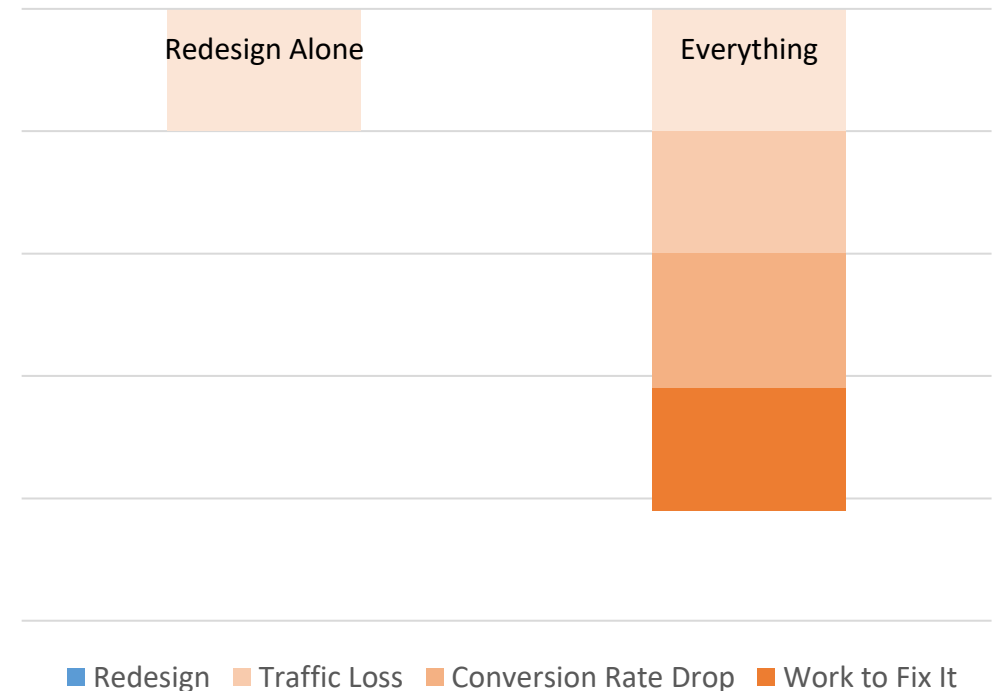


# Changing Everything: Costs

Your costs start to add up:

- Redesign costs
- Traffic Loss (-\$\$/month)
- Conversion Rate Declines (-\$\$/month)
- Work needed to fix it:
  - Analysis
  - Content
  - Development
  - Research
  - Technology

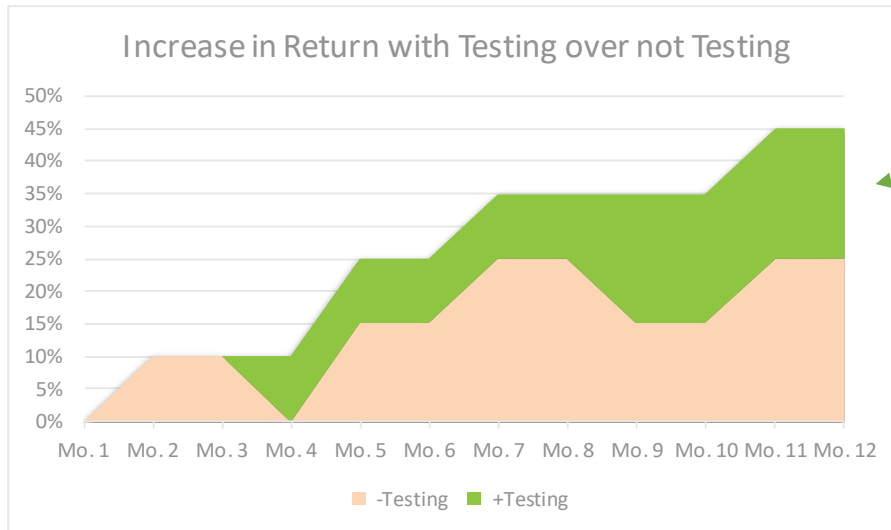
Costs of Poor Redesigns



# Changing Everything: Alternative

## We recommend

- a) >\$3MM/year: Run A/B split tests on your live website to gradually redesign the site over time
- b) <\$3MM/year: Make gradual changes over time so you can minimize potential poor changes on the live site.



Remember:  
This way, you are only keeping the positive impacts to your website!



# What It Looks Like NOT Changing Everything

**Example numbers from a store we've been testing on for years:**

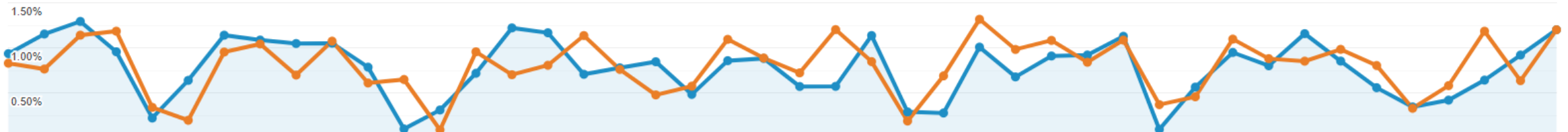
Year	Revenue YOY lift	Revenue Lift from start!	Conversion Rate Site-wide	Conversion Rate YOY lift	Conversion Rate Lift from start!
2015			0.58%		
2016	7%	7%	0.62%	7%	7%
2017	26%	34%	0.73%	18%	26%
2018	14%	52%	0.85%	16%	47%
2019	11%	69%	0.87%	2%	50%

- 5+ years of A/B testing
- Told development company to add functionality and NOT touch the website design/experience

# What It Looks Like NOT Changing Everything

Can you tell where they had their redesign?

Oct 1, 2019 - Nov 13, 2019: ● Ecommerce Conversion Rate  
Oct 2, 2018 - Nov 14, 2018: ● Ecommerce Conversion Rate






# What It Looks Like NOT Changing Everything

## Gradual Optimization:

- ✓ Saves you the redesign costs
- ✓ Saves you the sudden loss in revenue from conversion rate declines
- ✓ Helps prevent sudden traffic losses
- ✓ Saves you the need to hire more help (already there doing the optimization work)
- ✓ Improves revenue by only implementing winners



# Blunder #11: **Not Updating Tracking Codes**



***Most Common With:***

- *Replatform*

# Tracking Code Checklist

- Google Tag Manager
- Google Analytics
- Google Search Console / Google Verification Tag
- Google Ads Remarketing Tag
- Facebook and/or Pinterest Pixel
- Google Ads and Bing UET tags – update subtotal variables
- Email signup form code



# Blunder #12: “My Developer Knows SEO”



## ***Most Common With:***

- *Replatform*
- *Redesign*
- *Restructure*



# How EXCLUSIVE Can Help

# How EXCLUSIVE Can Help

- ✓ Conversion Testing Program
- ✓ Full SEO management
- ✓ Pre-migration support project
- ✓ Post-migration diagnosis and recommendations

