Setting Up And Running A/B Tests – The 7 Step Method

1. Identify Your Conversion Goal

First, you need to define the goal that you're trying to accomplish. Without a clearly stated goal up front, you will never have a clear understanding of whether or not your test was successful.

Your conversion goal will give you the framework to design your A/B test and craft your hypothesis.

For example, if you want to improve your donation page, your conversion goal might be the "total number of donations through this page."

2. Make Sure You Can Measure Your Conversion Goal

If you can't track it, you can't A/B test it. And if you can't A/B test it, you can't optimise it. And if you can't optimise it, well…then you could potentially miss out on conversions and donations.

Google Analytics is an essential tool for measuring your goals. Google Analytics provides statistics, historical data and user behaviour information which in turn can be used to measure the conversion goals you have set.

If you do not have Analytics set up for your website. Get it set up so you can track your conversion goals through historical data and user behaviour.

3. Craft Your A/B Testing Hypothesis

Once you know exactly what you want to improve, and you know that you can measure your goal, you need to define your hypothesis. A good hypothesis will address the specific idea that you can think can make an impact on your clients conversion goal.

The format of the hypothesis follows this structure:

Hypothesis: Changing (element) into (something else) for (audience) results in an increase/decrease for (KPI), because (reason)

It can feel like a lot of work. However a test hypothesis can help:
-   Focus testing
-   Know you are doing the right thing
-   Help draw conclusions

Example hypothesis: "Removing friction from the donation process by eliminating unnecessary form fields will increase donations."

This hypothesis tells you the specific variables that the A/B test will look at. It makes it clear that your treatment or challenger page will have fewer form fields than your control (original page).

4. Calculate Your Estimated Sample Size

Before you run your A/B test, you need to make sure that it's possible to get a valid result. To do so, you have to calculate your estimated sample size. All this means is that you need to figure out how many people need to see your A/B test in order to get a reliable result.

For instance, if your test increases donations by 50%, but only 20 people

actually visited the donation page, it's possible that this increase in donations was just the result of random chance.

Here is a tool for calculating the sample size: https://www.optimizely.com/sample-size-calculator/

5. Design Your Treatment

Your test design is made up of at least 2 variants – your control and your treatment. The control is your original page, email, registration form, etc. The treatment is your challenger or the new design you want to test.

To design the treatment for your A/B test, you'll want to keep your hypothesis in mind. If your hypothesis is as simple as "Adding images to the dollar handles will increase donation clicks," then your design will be really easy.

Depending on the hypothesis and treatment, your design will vary in difficulty.

6. Set Up Your Experiment

For this step you are going to set up your A/B testing experiment. This may involve different tasks/people depending on what test you are carrying out.

For example, if testing out different appeal pages, you will need a designer to help with the new designs, a developer to implement the 50/50 split of the users to either the new/old page and an implementation specialist to create the page.

Speak to your team to figure out how you will set up the different parts of the

experiment in terms of the design and functionality if needed.

To carry out the actual test we can use free online software like Google Optimise. This software allows for you to carry out A/B testing on sites and allows for further integration with Google Analytics to see more detailed results.

Check out the following support article for an in depth guide on how to use it. https://support.google.com/optimize/answer/6211930?hl=en

7. Validate Your Results and Document Your Learnings

If you don't document your results, you'll never remember what you learned. And one day you'll be sitting in a meeting where someone asks, "Why don't we have a video on our donation page anymore?"

It is vital to collect your results and findings and apply them to your hypothesis. This can then be fed back to the team and an informed decision can be made on how this will benefit the site and objectives decided at the start.