

The Basics of Split Testing

You've put countless hours into designing a professional looking website to promote your top of the line product or service, but your website visitation seems to be sporadic at best. And are all those hours spent working on your website really translating into more sales? It can be hard to tell, but don't worry, there are some pretty simple tools you can employ to find out.

If you're an online marketer or sell some type of product or service through your website, there's a good chance you've heard of something called A/B or "Split" testing. If you haven't heard of it, or if you're a little shaky on the details, what follows is a brief overview of the tool, its benefits and its applications.

What is Split Testing?

Simply put, split testing is nothing more than a tool used by marketers to put you as in touch with your target market as you can possibly be. As a business owner or web manager you may love the way a certain page looks or how a how a product description reads, but the cold, hard truth is that it doesn't matter what you think--it's all about how your choices influence your potential customer. Split testing (sometimes called A/B testing) is used to test multiple versions of website components to see which ones lead to more conversions (or hits, visits, etc.). Its purpose is to improve marketing efforts, and the reason it's often referred to as A/B testing is because you're showing potential customers two versions of a page, email, etc. You review metrics to see which page yielded the best results--A, or B.

What are the benefits of Split Testing?

Split testing is a relatively simple tool to use, but can provide some substantial benefits to your business. First and foremost, split testing eliminates guesswork. You'll have hard data and metrics that you can use to steer your website in the appropriate direction, ensuring that you're maximizing your return on investment (ROI).

Split testing will give you and your company cold, hard and measurable results. You can set up any number of parameters, but rest assured that a good split test can show you site visits, audience engagement, revenue and even something as simple as the number of clicks on a given webpage.

It's very easy to get started with split testing. For little or no cost, and just a bit of technical know-how, you can acquire software that will pull all of the necessary data for you to use in your test. After that, it's just a matter of making the necessary tweaks on the administration side of your website.

How and What to Split Test?

As mentioned above, getting started in split testing is as simple as installing testing software, which will normally use tracking codes to show results. Interpreting the codes are easy, and then it's as simple as going with whichever test item will get you the most bang for the buck.

Sales page headlines are among the most common components that are split tested. This is important because these headlines are often what will draw a potential customer to your website in the first place. Page headlines will show up in search engine results, and the law of the land is that the customer will go with whichever headline is the most attractive. Split testing different options will let you know which option gets the highest number of hits.

You can also test images in various areas of your website. If you have multiple logos or hyperlinked photos, it's easy to test and see which ones entice visitors to click the most. This is extremely useful, as customers generally respond to visual components like photos and video more than written long-form copy.

Don't believe me? Test it!

You can easily set up a test to see if written copy generates more conversions than a video. And speaking of conversions, one other component that often gets tested is the call to action prompt. Do you get more sales by placing an "Add to Cart" tab on the page, or do customers respond better to "Order Now"? Split testing can make it crystal clear.

Split testing is a simple tool, and it's one of the many tools used by Sanctuary Marketing to help its customers design websites that are stylish, informative and most importantly, convert visitors into clients. Split testing, combined with dozens of other consultative services provided by Sanctuary Marketing will ensure your online marketing efforts are successful.