

Columbus®



Accelerating
health and beauty
e-commerce growth
through superior
customer experience

Foreword

The health and beauty e-commerce industry is undergoing an extraordinary transformation. Rapid technological advancements, shifting consumer behaviours, and an increasingly competitive marketplace demand that these businesses adapt and innovate if they want to thrive. This book serves as a comprehensive guide to growth for health and beauty e-commerce businesses, offering insights and actionable strategies to optimise your online presence and deliver exceptional customer experiences.

Built on years of expertise in customer experience (CX) and conversion rate optimisation (CRO), this book provides practical tools, industry-specific examples, and case studies tailored to the unique challenges of the health and beauty sector. Whether you're looking to enhance your product details pages, simplify navigation, or leverage behavioural psychology to improve engagement, the techniques outlined here will empower you to create lasting customer relationships and achieve sustainable growth.

Success in e-commerce is not just about driving revenue—it's about building trust, loyalty, and memorable customer experiences. By placing the customer at the centre of your strategy, you can forge stronger connections, outpace competitors, and future-proof your business.

Let this book guide you on your journey to excellence in the ever-evolving world of e-commerce.

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CHAPTER 1

The online health and beauty industry landscape

Overview of the health and beauty e-commerce industry

The global health and beauty e-commerce market is experiencing rapid growth, which is being driven by changing consumer priorities toward self-care, sustainability, and the convenience of online shopping.

The industry is projected to grow at an annual rate of 8–10% and surpass \$1 trillion in revenue by 2025. Factors contributing to this expansion include increasing disposable income, heightened awareness of self-care and wellness, and the influence of social media and beauty influencers.

The sector benefits from technological advancements such as virtual try-ons, AI-driven personalisation, and subscription models. These make it easier for consumers to discover and purchase skincare, cosmetics, and supplements online.

Key players in the health and beauty market

The health and beauty e-commerce sector is shaped by several key players that excel in customer experience, product innovation, and digital engagement. Major companies in the industry include global giants like Amazon, which offers a vast product selection with fast shipping, and L'Oréal, known for AI-driven personalisation and product innovation. Traditional retailers such as Boots and Superdrug leverage their strong in-store and online presence to attract broad demographics, while high-end and niche brands like Cult Beauty and ever-eden focus on curated selections. Ever-Eden, in particular, stands out for its dermatologist-developed, science-backed skincare, specifically designed for families and those with sensitive skin, using natural ingredients.

Direct-to-consumer brands like Glossier and the ordinary disrupt the market with minimalist, community-driven approaches and transparent pricing. Sephora enhances customer loyalty through personalised recommendations and digital engagement. Medik8 differentiates itself with a strong focus on science-backed skincare solutions, particularly its CSA (Vitamin C + sunscreen by day, Vitamin A by night) philosophy, which promotes long-term skin health and anti-ageing benefits. Retail chains like Ulta Beauty and The Body Shop cater to diverse audiences with a mix of affordability, brand variety, and eco-conscious packaging.

These players collectively drive innovation in the industry, balancing accessibility, premium offerings, and sustainability to meet evolving consumer demands.

Online vs brick-and-mortar

While a majority of health and beauty sales still take place in brick-and-mortar stores, online revenue is rapidly increasing. Approximately 30–35% of total revenue in this sector comes from online sales, and this figure is expected to continue rising as consumers become more comfortable purchasing personal care products digitally. This shift is especially prominent in established markets like North America, Europe, and parts of Asia. E-commerce infrastructure is well-developed in these markets and consumers are accustomed to exploring a variety of online beauty options.



One of the key drivers of online growth in health and beauty is the enhanced shopping experience offered by AI-powered personalised recommendations, virtual try-on tools (e.g., Perfect Corp, Modiface, Revive), and subscription services.

Online challenges for health and beauty retailers

Unique challenges also impact profitability and customer satisfaction in the online health and beauty sector. Here are some of the primary issues faced by retailers:

- **High costs for paid advertising and influencer marketing**

The health and beauty industry is highly competitive online, leading to increased spending on paid advertising and influencer collaborations to build visibility and credibility. This can substantially reduce profit margins, especially for smaller brands. With rising customer acquisition costs, maintaining a healthy return on ad spend (ROAS) is challenging, especially when paired with high return rates or low customer loyalty in certain product categories.

- **Customer hesitation with online purchases**

Many consumers hesitate to buy personal care items online due to the inability to test fragrances, shades, or textures. This uncertainty can increase cart abandonment rates. Research shows that nearly 60% of beauty consumers would abandon a purchase if they feel uncertain about matching a shade or fragrance.

- **Shipping costs and speed expectations**

Health and beauty consumers increasingly expect low-cost or free shipping with fast delivery, creating pressure for brands to offer these services despite rising logistics costs.

- **High return rates**

While return rates in the health and beauty sector are lower than in larger-item categories, they are still significant due to issues like unmet expectations for product effectiveness, allergies, or personal preferences. Studies show online return rates in beauty and personal care can reach 12%—with cosmetics and skincare products seeing the highest return rates. This can lead to challenges with product disposal since some returned products are difficult to resell due to hygiene regulations, which impacts profitability.

- **Complex attribution tracking**

Tracking sales and attributing them accurately is a significant hurdle for health and beauty brands, where multi-touch journeys and brand loyalty play strong roles. Consumers often research across several channels and may consult multiple sources (social media, reviews, Google shopping, brand websites) before purchasing. As a result, brands may struggle to allocate marketing budgets effectively and potentially overspend on certain channels.

- **Direct to consumer (D2C)**

D2C health and beauty brands face tough competition from multi-brand retailers that offer extensive product ranges, loyalty programmes, and the convenience of comparison shopping. These retailers often dominate visibility with larger advertising budgets and established customer bases, making it harder for D2C brands to stand out.

These challenges underscore the importance of balancing marketing strategies, customer experience, and logistics to succeed in the online health and beauty sector.

Improving conversions and the customer experience

According to the marketing director of a growing D2C health and beauty brand, the competitive landscape presents significant challenges in maintaining profit margins and driving customer engagement. “Paid media costs are a constant hurdle, with the market becoming more competitive and costs rising steadily,” she explains. “We’re continually working harder to demonstrate the value of our products because, unlike in-store shopping, online consumers can’t touch, feel, or smell what they’re buying.”

The marketing director also points out the complexities of competing with multi-brand retailers who stock their products. “As a direct-to-consumer brand, we’re in a constant battle to convince customers to buy directly from us instead of through multi-brand retailers,” she says. “These retailers often have enticing loyalty schemes, making it even harder for us to show the unique benefits of shopping with us.”

She highlights the importance of both acquiring new customers and nurturing them post-purchase: “this is where we see the real opportunity for growth—starting with getting that all-important first sale, and then making it easier for customers to repeat buy and explore complementary products in our range. However, achieving this requires ongoing expertise and resources to execute effectively.”

The director acknowledges that while these efforts are essential for growth and customer satisfaction, the business faces resource constraints.

“We simply don’t have the internal bandwidth to tackle these challenges as thoroughly as we’d like. Running daily operations and managing campaigns often takes precedence over longer-term strategies, and that’s something we know needs to change.”

Marketing Director of a growing D2C health and beauty brand



Why delivering a great customer experience is critical in the health and beauty sector

The highly personal nature of the products, wide range of choices available, and potential for consumer hesitation with online purchases make delivering an exceptional customer experience essential in the health and beauty sector. Here's why this is so crucial:

- **Building trust and reducing return rates**

Health and beauty products often carry a level of personal and emotional investment since they relate to self-care and personal appearance. Detailed product information, customer reviews, and easy access to customer support can help alleviate concerns around effectiveness, shade matching, or skin compatibility. Reducing return rates, which are often due to unmet expectations, helps minimise costs and strengthens customer trust.

- **Increasing brand loyalty and advocacy**

With a crowded market of new and established brands, providing a standout experience can drive repeat purchases and build customer loyalty. Once they're satisfied with a product, health and beauty consumers often repurchase it and recommend it to others. By consistently delivering quality products and personalised service, brands can create loyal customers who serve as advocates, which enhances brand perception and reach.

- **Supporting personalised decision-making**

Customers often spend time researching health and beauty products where individual needs vary greatly, especially skincare, cosmetics, and supplements. Offering features like virtual try-ons, personalised recommendations, and chat support can simplify the decision-making process, reduce friction, and help customers feel more confident in their purchases, ultimately boosting conversions.

- **Addressing online shopping limitations**

The inability to test products in-person—especially for fragrance, skincare, or shade-based items—poses a challenge for online beauty sales. High-quality visuals, honest customer reviews, communities, and tools like virtual makeup try-ons can help bridge this gap. By making customers feel informed and supported, brands can reduce hesitation and increase the likelihood of purchases.

- **Encouraging customer retention to offset acquisition costs**

The cost of acquiring new health and beauty customers is high due to competition and the dominance of major players. A focus on customer experience can drive repeat purchases and reduce the need for constant re-investment in acquisition efforts. Loyal customers, especially those in beauty, also have high lifetime value, making retention a key profitability driver.

For health and beauty brands, investing in a superior customer experience not only enhances immediate sales, but it also supports long-term customer relationships, brand loyalty, and sustainable growth.

CHAPTER 2

Delivering a great customer experience through conversion rate optimisation (CRO)

Understanding conversion rate optimisation

Conversion rate optimisation is a critical strategy for increasing the efficiency of an e-commerce website. CRO involves making systematic, data-driven changes to increase the percentage of visitors who complete desired actions, such as making a purchase or signing up for a newsletter. By identifying barriers to conversion and eliminating friction in the shopping journey, CRO directly improves the customer experience and drives revenue growth.

Benefits of CRO for health and beauty retailers

For health and beauty retailers, CRO is an essential strategy that addresses the unique challenges in this highly competitive sector, such as customer hesitation over product compatibility, high return rates due to unmet expectations, and high customer acquisition costs in a crowded marketplace. In this sector, CRO focuses on enhancing the online shopping experience, encouraging customers to make confident purchasing decisions, and maximising engagement.

In an industry where customers often want to test products before purchasing, CRO plays a crucial role in making the digital shopping journey as seamless and informative as possible. A well-implemented CRO approach meets customer needs by minimising friction points, building trust, and addressing concerns, ultimately leading to higher conversions and stronger brand loyalty. By continuously refining user experience elements, CRO not only drives immediate sales—it also promotes customer satisfaction, repeat purchases, and brand loyalty.

Additionally, as retailers introduce new products or features to their websites, CRO ensures that these updates meet customer expectations and business goals, which optimises every touchpoint. This continuous process makes CRO an indispensable tool for achieving sustained growth in the health and beauty e-commerce space.

In summary, CRO for health and beauty retailers:

- **Boosts conversion rates:** CRO addresses common pain points and anxieties, especially around product effectiveness and shade matching. This increases the percentage of visitors who complete their purchases.
- **Reduces customer acquisition costs:** By optimising for higher conversions, retailers can generate more sales from existing traffic and rely less on costly paid channels.
- **Increases average order value (AOV):** CRO strategies such as targeted upselling and product recommendations encourage customers to explore complementary items, which increases their order size.
- **Enhances the customer experience:** A streamlined, intuitive website with well-organised product pages, clear calls-to-action, virtual try-on tools, and easy navigation creates a superior shopping experience. This fosters loyalty and encourages repeat purchases.

Through CRO, health and beauty retailers create a more efficient, engaging, and profitable shopping environment. This makes CRO a critical component of health and beauty e-commerce success.

Key considerations for consumers when buying health and beauty products online

Consumers consider several essential factors that reflect their fundamental needs when purchasing health and beauty products online. Addressing these needs effectively on your website is crucial for guiding customers through the buying journey and ensuring a positive shopping experience:

1

Brand reliability

Consumers seek trustworthy brands with solid reputations when shopping online. Prominently displaying certifications, authoritative scientific and consumer endorsements, and strategic partnerships helps establish credibility, reassure customers, and foster confidence in purchasing decisions.

2

Comprehensive product information and high-quality details

Detailed information about ingredients, usage instructions, and care tips—combined with high-resolution images, videos, and ingredient breakdowns—helps consumers make informed decisions. This is especially crucial for skincare and haircare products, where factors like texture, colour, and specific maintenance significantly impact satisfaction. Clear visuals and descriptions reduce customer hesitation and instil confidence in the product's quality and suitability.

3

Efficient delivery services

Timely and reliable delivery options, including express and same-day delivery, are essential, especially for beauty products that customers may need urgently or on a recurring basis.

4

Flexible payment methods

Providing multiple payment options—such as credit cards, digital wallets, and buy-now-pay-later services—accommodates diverse customer preferences and can increase purchase likelihood.

5

Fragrance details

Fragrance is a key factor in many beauty products, so including a scent profile or notes description can help customers gauge if the product suits their preferences. For instance, describing a fragrance as “a fresh, fruity aroma loved by customers” provides clarity and appeal.

6

Health & allergy information

Clear health and allergy information is vital as consumers are increasingly conscious of allergens and sensitivities. Highlighting attributes like “hypoallergenic” or “dermatologist-tested” builds trust and confidence in the product.





7

Simple and reliable return processes

A straightforward, customer-friendly return policy gives consumers peace of mind, especially for products where satisfaction may vary. Simplifying the return process reduces hesitation and encourages purchases.

8

Skin type suitability

Indicating suitability for different skin types (e.g., oily, dry, sensitive) helps customers identify products that align with their needs, enhancing satisfaction and reducing return rates.

9

Sustainable and eco-friendly options

Offering products with sustainable ingredients, eco-friendly packaging, or cruelty-free certifications appeals to eco-conscious consumers, fostering loyalty and trust with them.

10

Trustworthy customer reviews

Verified customer reviews build credibility and provide potential buyers with valuable insights into the product. This helps them make more confident decisions.

By addressing these considerations on their websites, health and beauty retailers can enhance the customer experience, increase conversions, and build customer loyalty.

CHAPTER 3

How our brain makes decisions when buying health and beauty products

Understanding how consumers make decisions when purchasing health and beauty products involves examining the brain's dual processing System: System 1 (fast, intuitive) and System 2 (slow, analytical). This System, which was developed over millions of years, plays a vital role in shaping purchasing behaviour, especially in the nuanced and highly personal health and beauty sector.



The dynamic interaction between System 1 and System 2 in health and beauty purchases. In the context of health and beauty products, the interplay between System 1 and System 2 is intricate and multi-faceted:

- **Initial emotional appeal (System 1) followed by rational analysis (System 2):**
When consumers first encounter an appealing product—such as a beautifully packaged skincare item or a trending makeup shade—System 1 activates, creating a quick, positive reaction based on appearance, branding, or social proof. Once this initial attraction is established, System 2 engages to assess the product's compatibility with their skin type, ethical considerations, ingredient quality, and price. This supports a more rational, informed decision.

- **Influence of social proof and anchoring (System 1) on in-depth evaluation (System 2):**
Tactics like highlighting “top-rated” or “bestselling” products trigger System 1, creating a positive initial perception that frames the product as desirable. This anchoring effect can lead System 2 to scrutinise the product's attributes more favourably, reinforcing the decision to buy through the influence of social validation and positive reviews.

- **Scarcity and urgency stimulate quick decisions (System 1) with rational evaluation (System 2):**
Limited-time discounts or prompts like “only 3 left!” Activate System 1, instilling a sense of urgency. This quick, emotional reaction can drive immediate purchase intent, although System 2 may intervene to evaluate whether the urgency is necessary or if waiting might be more beneficial. Balancing System 1's impulse with System 2's rational assessment can help consumers make confident decisions.
- **Balancing both Systems for high-value items:**
For high-value items such as advanced skincare treatments or premium hair tools, consumers rely on both Systems. System 1 may help them filter options based on brand familiarity or visual appeal, while System 2 enables deeper evaluation of efficacy, long-term value, and ingredient quality, ensuring a thoughtful, confident decision.

However, for complementary product purchases, System 2 remains essential. Health and beauty consumers often want to ensure that a new item, such as a serum or foundation, will complement their existing products. Here, personalisation supports System 2 by offering tailored product suggestions aligned with the customer's preferences and past purchases. For instance, suggesting a serum that complements their moisturiser or a foundation shade compatible with their skin tone allows System 2 to evaluate the choice carefully. This fosters an empowered and informed decision.

The decision-making process for health and beauty products involves a dynamic interplay between System 1 and System 2. For initial purchases, System 1 attracts customers, while System 2 ensures compatibility and value. For repeat purchases, System 1 takes over, reinforced by personalised reminders that support a quick, intuitive experience.

For complementary purchases, System 2 remains central, with personalisation guiding consumers toward choices that align with their established routines. By understanding and leveraging this balance, health and beauty brands can create more effective marketing strategies that appeal to both emotional and rational aspects of consumer decision-making. This ultimately fosters satisfaction, loyalty, and long-term engagement.

The role of System 1 and System 2 in repeat and complementary purchases

For repeat purchases, System 1 often drives the decision-making process. After a customer has experienced a product and developed trust in its quality and effectiveness, their brain forms a positive association, making reorders quick and intuitive. This reliance on System 1 streamlines the buying journey, allowing for a seamless, loyalty-driven decision. Personalisation plays a key role here: by offering reminders of previously purchased items or personalised replenishment options, brands can further engage System 1, enhancing convenience and satisfaction for loyal customers.



CHAPTER 4

Key areas to optimise on a health and beauty website

Maximising e-commerce success: Optimising the Product Details Page (PDP)

The Product Details Page is the cornerstone of any successful health and beauty e-commerce site, playing a crucial role in influencing purchasing decisions. The Product Listing Page (PLP) has a growing influence in helping users discover relevant items and enabling returning customers to quickly add products to their basket. Meanwhile, the Homepage can help condition-seeking customers—for example, those looking for a “foundation for oily skin”—find the most suitable solutions. However, the PDP is where customers access the in-depth information they need to feel confident in their purchase.

The PDP is especially important on mobile, where ease of navigation and accessibility are critical. A high percentage of traffic to mobile PDPs comes from paid channels such as social media ads and Google Shopping, which makes it essential to engage users and reduce bounce rates. In the health and beauty sector, the PDP is especially critical due to the personal nature of the products and the need by consumers for detailed information about ingredients, usage instructions, and suitability for their skin or hair type.

Research shows that many mobile users bounce from PDPs, especially those arriving from paid traffic sources, which results in wasted ad spend and missed sales opportunities. Given that health and beauty products often involve recurring purchases and hold high customer loyalty potential, optimising the PDP to deliver a seamless and informative experience is key to converting visitors into long-term, loyal customers.

Key objectives for PDP optimisation in health and beauty

Encourage users to stay and explore

Capturing visitors' attention from the outset is essential to keep them engaged. Using high-quality visuals, interactive features, and a clean, intuitive layout can draw users in and encourage them to explore the page further. Elements like videos, close-up images, virtual try-on tools, and personalised recommendations make the shopping experience visually appealing and engaging, which increases the likelihood that users will stick around to learn more about the product.

Provide the information needed for informed decisions

Health and beauty products often require a high level of detail to reassure customers before they buy. Including comprehensive information such as ingredient lists, usage instructions, skin or hair type suitability, and certifications (like cruelty-free or hypoallergenic) can help customers make informed choices. Organising this information in a clear, accessible way allows users to quickly find the details they need, minimising uncertainty and encouraging confident purchase decisions. By focusing on these objectives—engaging users and providing clear, essential information—health and beauty retailers can create a PDP that enhances the shopping experience, reduces bounce rates, and improves conversion rates. This approach fosters trust, encourages repeat purchases, and strengthens customer loyalty, ultimately driving sustained growth in a competitive market.



CHAPTER 5

Winning experiments we see across e-commerce health and beauty websites

We're often asked, 'What are your go-to tests for health and beauty websites?' The honest answer is that there are no universal go-to tests; the tests we run are tailored to the specific challenges and opportunities we uncover during our research.

However, there are certain tests we conduct more frequently than others (when the data supports) because they consistently demonstrate strong results in improving the customer experience, increasing conversions, and driving sales. These key tests include the following:

- **PDP and basket: Triggers**

Triggers such as emphasising unique selling points like easy returns and free delivery on the PDP and Basket pages—and positioning them near the Call-to-Action (CTA) buttons—can significantly enhance customer confidence. These triggers reassure shoppers that the purchase process is low-risk, encouraging them to complete their transactions. When strategically placed, they serve as gentle reminders of convenience and value, which makes the decision to buy feel easier and more secure.

- **PLP and PDP: Customer reviews**

Displaying customer reviews on both the PLP and PDP has been highly effective in building trust and driving purchasing decisions. While the total number of satisfied customers demonstrates popularity, highlighting reviews that detail specific conditions the product successfully addressed adds greater relevance and reassurance. This not only enhances credibility, but it also reinforces

the product's ability to solve a customer's unique problem, which ultimately increases confidence and conversion rates.

- **PDP: Product recommendations**

Tests focused on the placement of product recommendations on the PDP have shown positive results—especially in the health and beauty sector, where a significant proportion of traffic often comes from paid media, such as social ads and Google Shopping. These recommendations not only encourage users to stay on the page longer, but they also provide alternatives if the product they initially viewed doesn't meet their needs. This approach increases the likelihood of further engagement and potential purchases. Experimenting with the optimal number of recommended products to display has also proven beneficial, boosting user interaction without overwhelming shoppers and ensuring a balanced, seamless browsing experience.

- **Navigation**

Optimising navigation for health and beauty websites is crucial to ensure users can quickly and easily find what they need. Beyond conventional methods, such as searching by product, navigation should allow users to search by the problem they wish to solve (e.g., "dry skin" or "oily hair") and by the intended recipient (e.g., "gifts for her" or "teen skincare"). Integrating these options into the navigation in a way that also educates users—such as through helpful guides or related content—enhances the shopping experience. This approach not only streamlines the journey, but it also fosters higher conversions by addressing customer needs more effectively than traditional search methods.



- **Clarity**

For health and beauty businesses, securing that first sale from a customer is crucial since it often leads to repeat purchases and long-term loyalty. To achieve this, it's essential to recognise that health and beauty purchases typically involve research and are driven by a thoughtful decision-making process, especially for new customers simplifying the website's key pages and removing or repositioning elements that might distract or hinder the research process has consistently proven effective in boosting conversions. This is because simplicity helps the brain process new information more easily, allowing users to make educated and confident buying decisions. By presenting information clearly and avoiding unnecessary clutter, retailers enable customers to focus on understanding the product's benefits. This fosters both trust and a sense of self-efficacy, which is key to making an emotive and informed purchase.



- **PDP: Product information**

Research underscores that users' concerns when purchasing health and beauty products online often centre around key considerations like understanding ingredients, usage instructions, and care tips. Addressing these concerns is crucial for meeting the fundamental needs of consumers on the PDP.

A well-designed PDP that is both visually appealing and provides detailed, accessible information plays a vital role in educating users and building their confidence. By directly addressing customer concerns with creative yet informative content, online retailers can foster trust and significantly enhance their chances of securing a sale. A thoughtfully crafted PDP not only reassures customers, but it also drives conversions by making the buying process seamless and informed.

CHAPTER 6

Case studies: Enhancing the e-commerce health and beauty customer experience

Enhancing product details to boost engagement and conversions

Challenge

Research on a global beauty brand's PDPs revealed several user experience challenges that hindered customers from adding products to their baskets and completing purchases. Despite the pages being rich in information, key details such as ingredient benefits, product descriptions, and reviews were often overlooked due to their placement or format. Many users did not scroll far enough or interact with product carousels where important information was stored. Additionally, while users appreciated the images, issues like small fonts, poor contrast, or non-intuitive design made this information difficult to access. These challenges resulted in missed opportunities to persuade users to take action and ultimately purchase products.

Hypothesis and psychological technique applied

We hypothesised that by strategically highlighting key product information and reducing distractions on the PDP, we could motivate users to add products to their baskets and proceed through the checkout process. Drawing on the principle of cognitive ease, we aimed to simplify the decision-making process by placing valuable information in prominent, easy-to-access areas of the PDP.

Solution

To address these issues, we made the following changes:

- Extracted important ingredient benefits and product details from the image carousels and placed them prominently on the PDP.
- Increased the visibility of reviews to provide social proof and reassure customers.
- Removed unnecessary distractions and directed users' attention to key features that influence purchasing decisions.
- Highlighted unique reasons to buy directly from the brand by differentiating the experience from third-party retailers.

Results

The changes resulted in:

- A 31% increase in the "add to bag" rate on desktop and a 28% increase in purchases.
- On mobile, the "add to bag" rate increased by 10.7% while the purchase rate saw a 14.7% increase.

Learnings

This case study underscores the importance of understanding and addressing usability issues on the PDP. By prioritising ease of access to critical information and reducing distractions, we were able to guide users toward confident purchasing decisions.

The results demonstrate how targeted changes to the PDP can drive significant improvements in customer engagement and conversions, especially when applied to high-priority products.

Simplifying navigation to boost gifting conversions

Challenge

Analysis of the gifting section for a global beauty retailer revealed significant discrepancies in performance between mobile and desktop users. While the gifting section converted at 9.5%, or 4.6% higher than the site average, desktop users showed an 11.75% drop in conversion rate after interacting with the gifting section.

Research indicated that the decline was due to the overwhelming gifting mega menu on desktop, which hindered users' ability to quickly find relevant options. This was in contrast to the simplified and effective mobile experience.

Hypothesis and psychological technique applied

We hypothesised that simplifying the desktop gifting navigation menu would replicate the mobile experience, making the user journey more intuitive and reducing decision fatigue. By reducing the number of options presented and creating a more streamlined menu, we aimed to encourage users to engage more effectively with the gifting section and increase conversion rates.

Solution

To address these challenges, we redesigned the gifting navigation for desktop users:

- Reduced the complexity of the gifting mega menu, offering fewer links and a more focused navigation structure.
- Provided a simplified and intuitive journey that mirrored the success of the mobile gifting experience.

Results

The simplified navigation drove significant improvements:

- A 63% increase in users clicking on an option within the gifting mega menu.
- Of those who clicked, there was a 13.86% increase in the add-to-bag rate and a 15.4% increase in conversion rate.

Learnings

This case study demonstrates the impact of reducing complexity in navigation, especially for sections designed to guide users through decision-heavy processes like gifting. By simplifying the desktop experience to align with the intuitive mobile journey, we were able to boost user engagement, conversions, and overall revenue.

The learnings highlight the importance of tailoring navigation to meet user needs and eliminating barriers that can hinder their path to purchase.



Expanding the ingredients section to boost conversions

Challenge

Research revealed that visitors to the PDP frequently interacted with the ingredients section, expanding it more often than any other content on the page. However, the default collapsed state of this section limited its visibility, potentially hindering customer trust and engagement with the product.

Hypothesis and psychological technique applied

We hypothesised that opening the ingredients section by default and drawing attention to it would help visitors easily access critical information about the safe and natural ingredients used. This would build trust in the product and positively influence purchasing decisions. Success would be measured by an increase in conversion rates (CVR).

Solution

To address this challenge, we:

- Set the ingredients section to open by default on the PDP.
- Enhanced the section's design to draw attention to the safe and natural ingredients used, making this a focal point for users.
- Ensured the information was presented clearly and concisely to foster trust and support decision-making.

Results

The changes resulted in a 4.52% increase in CVR, demonstrating the positive impact of making the ingredients section more accessible and engaging.

Learnings

This case study highlights the importance of understanding user interaction with PDP content and optimising key sections to align with customer needs.

By prioritising transparency and trust-building through visible and accessible ingredients information, online retailers can significantly improve customer confidence and drive higher conversions.



Highlighting discounts to boost conversions

Challenge

Visitors to the PLP and PDP of this international B2C health and beauty brand often overlooked the value of the savings available when purchasing directly from the brand, especially when compared to buying from multi-channel retailers. This lack of visibility for discounts and savings potentially hindered transactions and conversion rates.

Hypothesis and psychological technique applied

We hypothesised that by prominently displaying the percentage discount and enhancing the visibility of the price and savings in the user interface, we could better communicate the value proposition to customers. This would encourage them to make a purchase by reinforcing the financial benefits of buying directly from the brand. Success would be measured through increased conversions.

Solution

To address these challenges, we:

- Displayed the percentage discount prominently on both the PLP and PDP.
- Enhanced the price and savings section in the user interface to ensure it stood out, making it easier for users to notice and understand the value they were receiving.



Results

This adjustment led to an 11% increase in conversions, demonstrating the effectiveness of showcasing discounts and savings more prominently in boosting transactions.

Learnings

This case study highlights the importance of clearly communicating value propositions to customers. By ensuring that discounts and savings are prominently visible, brands can effectively guide purchasing decisions, especially when competing with multi-channel retailers. Simple UI changes can have a significant impact on driving engagement and conversions.



Enhancing visibility of authoritative content to boost engagement

Challenge

Analysis revealed that the authoritative promotional content on the website was frequently overlooked or not engaged with by visitors. This lack of interaction limited the opportunity to build trust and influence purchasing decisions through this key piece of trust-building content.

Hypothesis and psychological technique applied

We hypothesised that increasing the prominence of the authoritative content would encourage more users to engage with it, fostering trust in the brand and its products. This would subsequently lead to higher clicks, improved add-to-bag (ATB) rates, and increased conversions. Success would be measured by uplift in engagement metrics and purchasing behaviour.

Solution

To address this challenge, we tested different design options to increase the visibility and prominence of the authoritative content:

- Redesigned the content to stand out more on the page, incorporating eye-catching visuals and better placement.
- Made the section more interactive and aligned with other key trust-building elements on the site.

Results

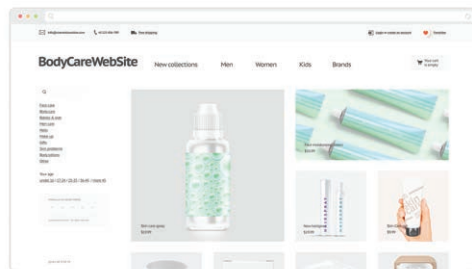
The redesign resulted in:

- A 14.86% Increase in clicks on the authoritative content section.
- Observable increases in ATB rates and conversions, showing the positive downstream impact of enhanced engagement with trust-building content.

Learnings

This case study underscores the importance of effectively showcasing trust-building content on key pages.

By making critical sections more visually prominent and engaging, brands can foster greater trust and drive stronger user engagement, ultimately influencing purchasing behaviour. Simple design changes can significantly impact both engagement and sales performance.



Adding a skincare quiz banner to drive engagement

Challenge

Analysis for this global skincare brand showed that new users landing on the homepage were often unsure where to begin their shopping journey and were seeking guidance through tools like a skincare quiz to find the right products. Without a clear starting point, many users left the site without exploring or narrowing down their options.

Hypothesis and psychological technique applied

We hypothesised that adding a prominent banner linking to a skincare quiz would provide new users with a guided starting point, improving their engagement and helping them discover products tailored to their needs. We believed this personalised approach would make the shopping experience more relevant and user-friendly. Success would be measured by increased interactions with the quiz, completions, and subsequent purchases.

Solution

To address this, we:

- Introduced a banner on the homepage that appeared only for new users.
- Linked the banner to a skincare quiz designed to help users quickly identify the most suitable products.
- Ensured the banner was prominently positioned at the top of the landing page to capture attention immediately.



Results

- **Desktop Results:** Conversion rate increased by 10.63%.
- **Mobile Results:** Conversion rate increased by 2.48%.

Learnings

This case study highlights the importance of providing clear and helpful guidance to new users. By offering a personalised starting point, such as a skincare quiz, brands can engage users more effectively, reduce decision fatigue, and drive conversions. Facilitators (such as a banner) tailored to user needs and strategically placed on the homepage can significantly improve the shopping experience and overall sales performance.



CHAPTER 7

Who we are – Global Optimisation

Who we are

Global Optimisation, a service solution within Columbus Global, is a team of experts in customer experience (CX) and conversion rate optimisation (CRO). We are driven by a passion for data-driven decision making and committed to enhancing user experiences and delivering measurable results that drive business growth. By combining deep industry knowledge and consumer psychology with cutting-edge techniques, we help clients achieve their goals. Our focus is on transforming customer insights into impactful financial outcomes for businesses.

What we do

We meticulously analyse user behaviour to uncover opportunities for improvement. Our tailored optimization strategies are designed to boost conversions and enhance the customer buying experience. We implement solutions that are continuously tested and refined, ensuring ongoing success. This iterative approach keeps us ahead of industry trends and allows us to deliver optimal outcomes for our clients.

Our industry experience

With a robust background in health and beauty e-commerce, we bring extensive experience to our clients. We have tested over 14,000 UX designs to enhance the digital buying experience for customers. Our expertise in advanced analytics and user research allows us to derive profound insights and apply them effectively. Our unique approach integrates psychological techniques into customer experience designs, augmented by cutting-edge methodologies and proprietary AI tools. This powerful combination distinguishes us as leaders in the field.



The value we create

Our value is evident in the significant increases in conversion rates and improved customer satisfaction and retention our clients experience. We enable efficient growth by helping clients achieve more with the same or even reduced investment. Our work drives higher revenue and profitability, ensuring clients see a substantial and tangible return on their investment. By fostering sustainable growth through continuous optimisation, we empower businesses to thrive in a competitive landscape.



CHAPTER 8

Let's work together

Let's work together

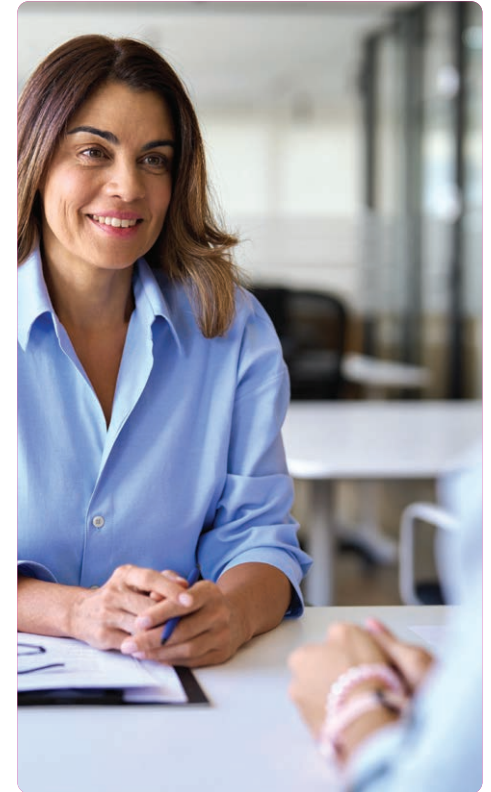
Thank you for exploring the strategies and insights presented in this book: accelerating health & beauty e-commerce growth through superior customer experience.

If you're ready to transform your customer experience and drive measurable results, we invite you to get in touch with us. Our team of experts is here to help you achieve your goals and take your business to the next level.

Get in touch today:

cro@columbusglobal.com

Wishing you every success.



Columbus®



Making shopping
better