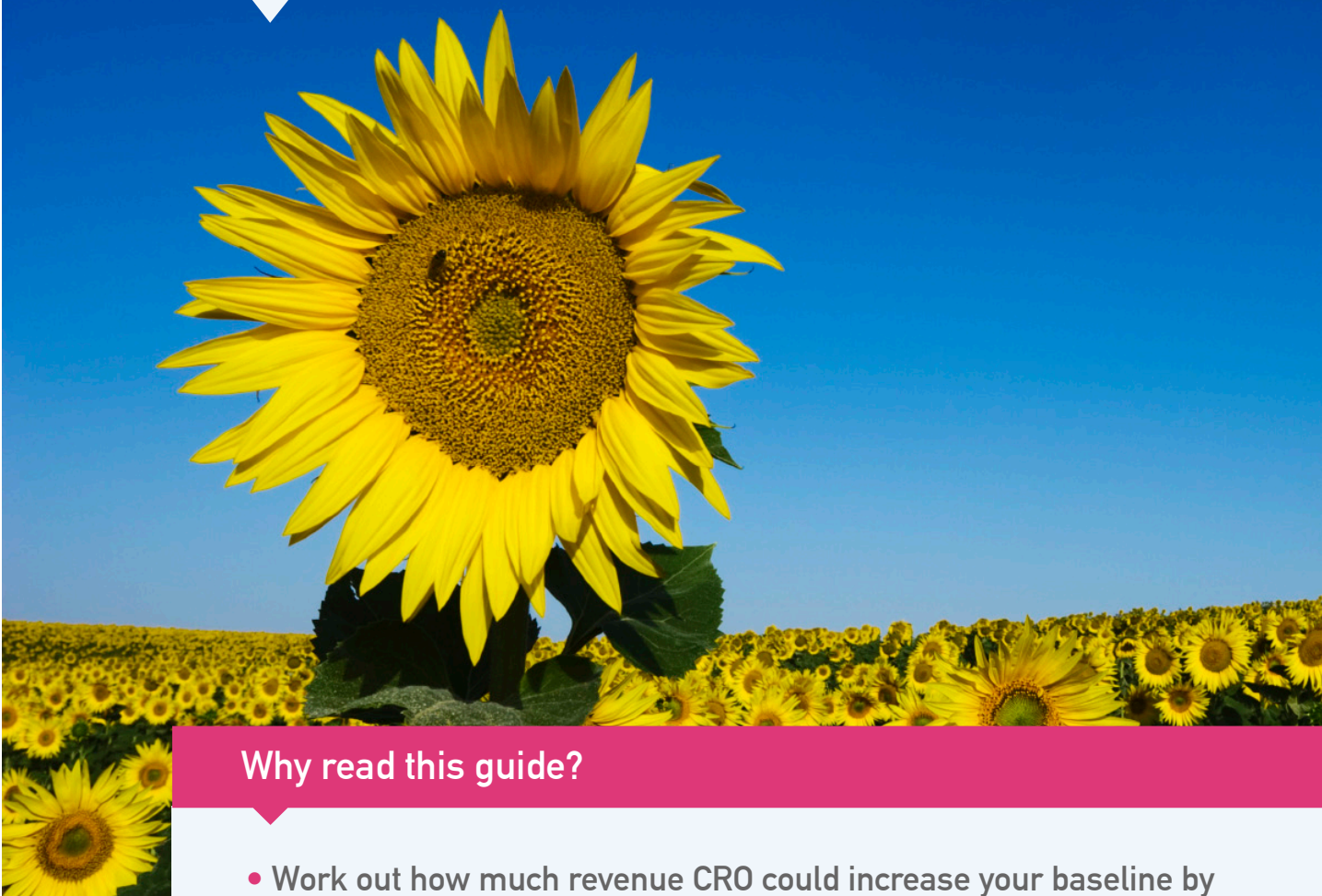# coast DIGITAL

Conversion Rate Optimisation Guide

Improve the lead generation performance of your website -
See an increase in revenue without driving additional visitors to your site

Why read this guide?

- Work out how much revenue CRO could increase your baseline by
- Learn the methodologies behind a comprehensive CRO strategy
- Learn how CRO can be applied successfully in the B2B environment

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Introduction from James Fairweather

Welcome to Coast Digital's guide on conversion rate optimisation (CRO); this guide will help you to understand the principles and methodology of CRO and how you can apply it to your business to maximise the results from your online marketing activity.

The profile of CRO is rapidly rising within the digital marketing industry and is being increasingly seen as equally, if not more, applicable to the B2B sector than it is in the B2C environment.

I've commissioned this guide to demonstrate how the techniques and concepts of a comprehensive CRO strategy will positively affect your business.

By implementing CRO methodology it is possible to extract the most potential from your website traffic, improve your lead generation, increase your revenue and understand how visitors to your site interact with your business online.

I hope you find this guide useful and relevant to your business. If you'd like Coast Digital to carry out a CRO strategy for you, please give one of our team a call, we'd be happy to help.

James Fairweather
Online Marketing Consultant

What will you learn from this guide?

This guide will explore how it is possible to extract the most potential from website traffic and also demonstrate why your business needs the added value that conversion rate optimisation can deliver.

It will explore some of the techniques put to use to decrease bounce rates, increase conversion rates and ultimately increase revenues from online.

Instead of simply creating a need for greater investment in traditional online strategies, CRO helps to increase the efficiency of any current and future online marketing activity and spend.

Every £1 a leading data centre operator invested in CRO has resulted in £7 return

What is conversion rate optimisation?

We should begin this guide by explaining that conversion rate optimisation (CRO) isn't entirely a brand new discipline. As we investigate the subject in more detail, it will become clear that some of the techniques and practises are included in more traditional search engine optimisation (SEO), design and usability channels, which may be familiar to you already.

CRO simply combines a set of these techniques which have a positive impact on the number of sales or enquiries that the traffic to your website results in. These techniques collectively form a process of testing and refining elements of the conversion funnel on site – hypothesising, making changes, testing those changes and making refinements to the site as a result.

CRO should not be seen as a supplementary tactic, rather as an integral piece of the online marketing mix that assists in generating the greatest return on investment.

Consider CRO as the on-page 'tune-up' to make sure that your site visitors are more likely to become enquiries, leads or customers.

Improve journey and experience for users

- Simplicity
- Clarity
- Intuitivity

Increase sales and enquiries from new and returning users

Increase revenue

How does CRO differ from SEO?

The ultimate goal for CRO and often SEO as well, is to increase on-site revenue or conversions. They do differ however, as they target users at different points in the conversion path.

Whereas SEO traditionally involves increasing the click-through rate from searches for a specific term or terms, CRO focuses on increasing the rate of sales or enquiries which are obtained from those clicks.

Similarly to SEO, CRO is a data-driven discipline, however it represents a shift in target, seeking to reduce the website bounce rate and improve the customer journey, whether it is through a purchase cycle or contact conversion process. It is worth noting that CRO extends beyond a single page. It's not just about tweaking the landing page, rather considering the journey throughout a site that will end with a sale or lead.

> CRO is about the journey your prospects take through your site that will end with a sale or lead.

What CRO isn't

Conversion rate optimisation isn't a one off "quick fix" solution. It's a strategic commitment to testing, refining and fine tuning each critical element of a site's conversion process and continually reviewing and improving on its baseline conversion rates.
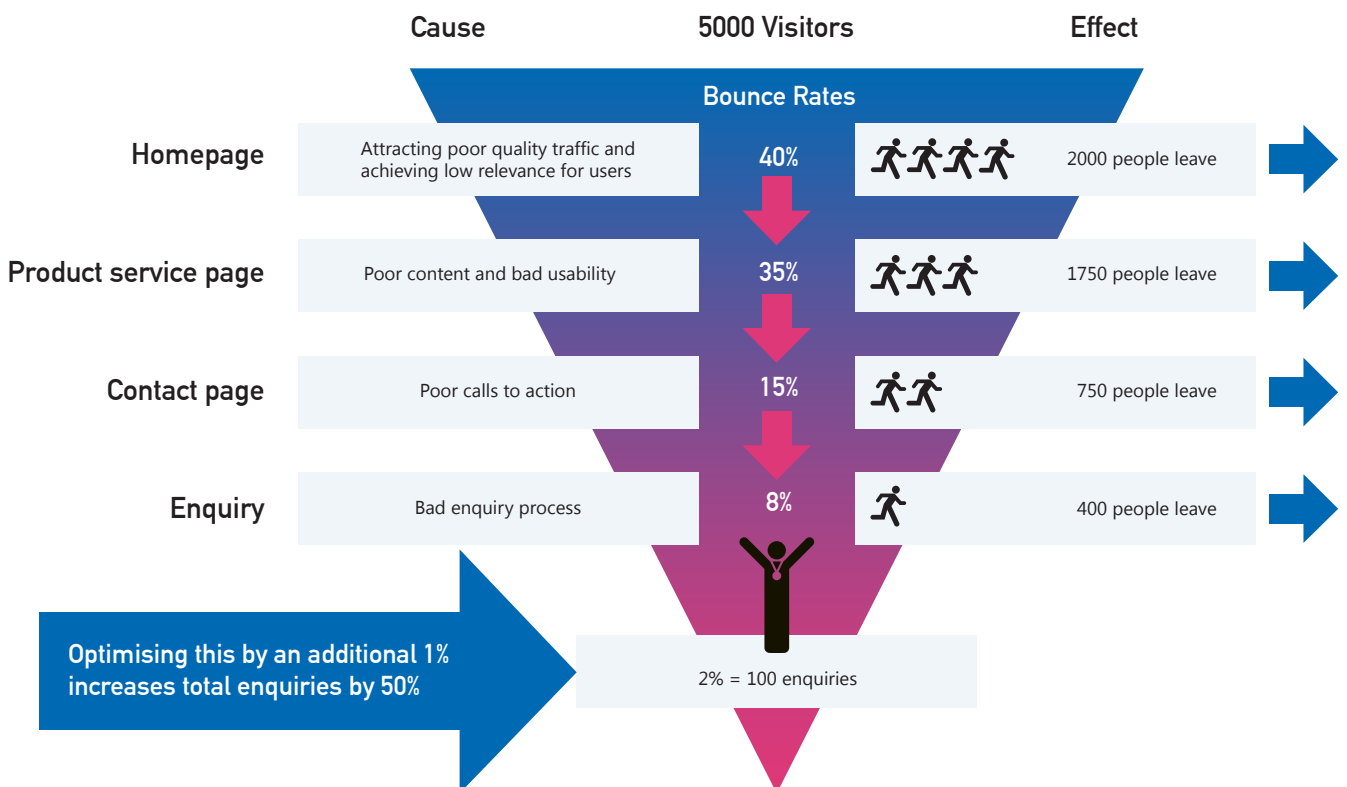
CRO works harmoniously alongside an existing online marketing strategy, resulting in traffic converting at a higher rate from the familiar channels; SEO, PPC, social, affiliate, email and display (oh, and we can help you with any of those too, if needs be!)

Why your business needs CRO

Through a comprehensive CRO strategy, it is entirely realistic to see an increase in revenue from a website of 50% without driving any additional visitors to the site. Combined with other strategies to drive increased traffic, this increased conversion rate can have a remarkable effect on profits. Leveraging the traffic already hitting your website is the most efficient way of increasing online revenue.

For many websites, conversion rates frequently fall between 2% and 5%, meaning, 95%-98% of visitors do not convert into a lead. This represents a considerable missed opportunity for businesses.
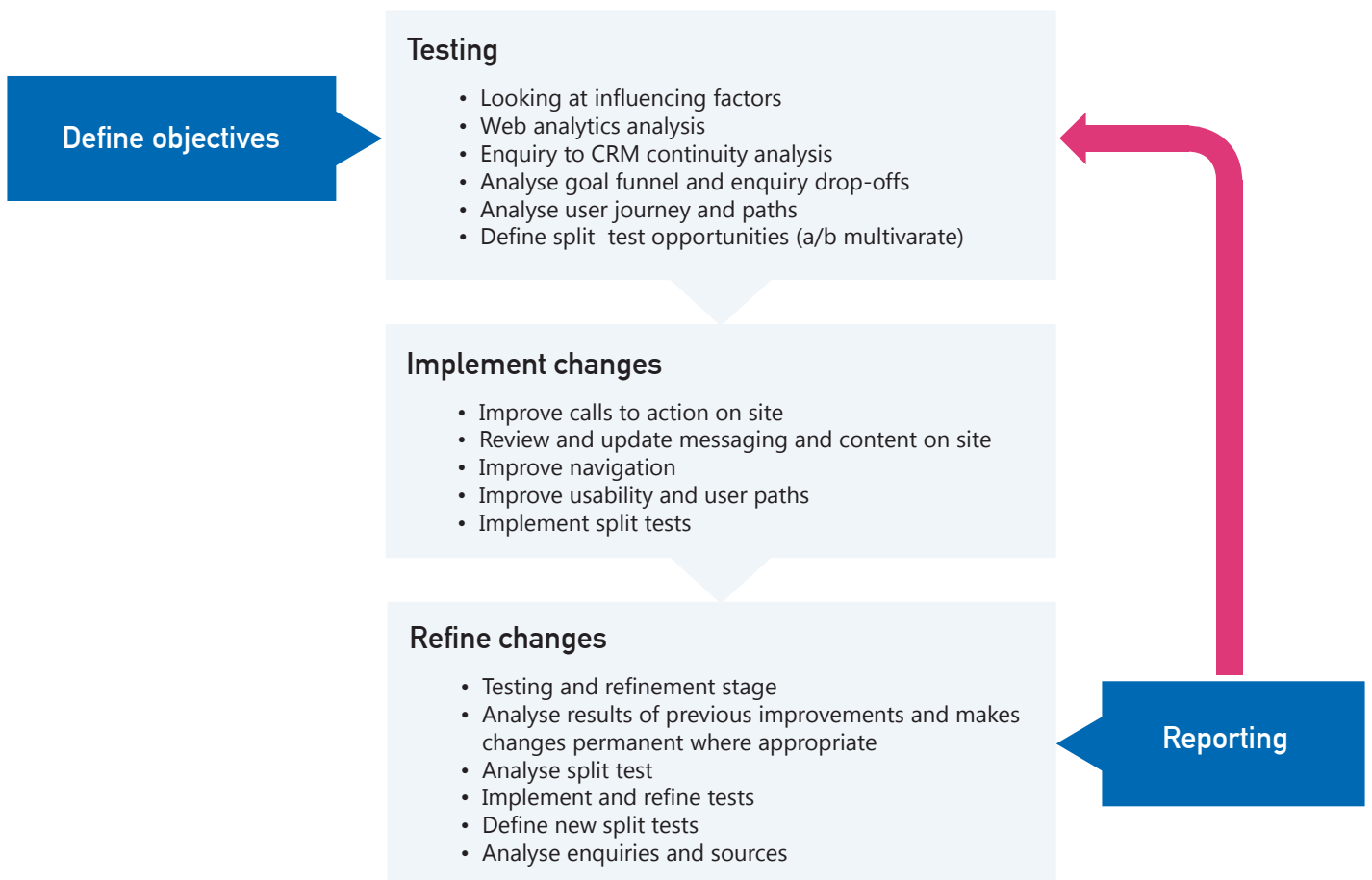
Looking at the example, an increase in on-site conversion rate of just a single percent, from 2% to 3%, signifies a 50% increase in resulting online leads. It is only once these multiplying factors are considered that the true potential of a CRO strategy can be established.

	Cause	5000 Visitors	Effect
		Bounce Rates	
Homepage	Attracting poor quality traffic and achieving low relevance for users	40%	2000 people leave
Product service page	Poor content and bad usability	35%	1750 people leave
Contact page	Poor calls to action	15%	750 people leave
Enquiry	Bad enquiry process	8%	400 people leave
Optimising this by an additional 1% increases total enquiries by 50%		2% = 100 enquiries	

The Conversion Rate Optimisation Process

Vitally, the conversion process should not be seen as a one-off fix; it is a continuous process that improves website conversions over time. This can be expanded into three primary activities:

1. Identifying campaign objectives and initial testing
2. Implementation of tactics in response to research findings
3. Testing and refinement of optimisation tactics

Define objectives

Testing

- Looking at influencing factors
- Web analytics analysis
- Enquiry to CRM continuity analysis
- Analyse goal funnel and enquiry drop-offs
- Analyse user journey and paths
- Define split test opportunities (a/b multivarate)

Implement changes

- Improve calls to action on site
- Review and update messaging and content on site
- Improve navigation
- Improve usability and user paths
- Implement split tests

Refine changes

- Testing and refinement stage
- Analyse results of previous improvements and makes changes permanent where appropriate
- Analyse split test
- Implement and refine tests
- Define new split tests
- Analyse enquiries and sources

Reporting

How does CRO differ in the B2B environment?

Conversion rate optimisation has been more widely applied to B2C and ecommerce websites historically, due to the large amount of data available and a statistically relevant sample from those ecommerce and lead generation sites within the sector.

It is only more recently that the benefits of conversion activities are being realised and explored within the B2B environment. In many of these cases, conversion rate optimisation can be more challenging for a few reasons; the bespoke nature of the products and services as well as potentially lengthy enquiry and sales cycles. The B2C industry is even beginning to learn from some of these applications.

Leading B2B sites typically will receive comparatively smaller volume of traffic than their B2C ecommerce counterparts, meaning that both the resulting numbers of visitors and leads are smaller, as is the resulting dataset. The effect of this is that in order to understand the lead generation landscape for a B2B client a more in depth analytical standpoint is required. Moreover, this standpoint should have a greater emphasis upon analysing a qualitative data set instead of a predominantly quantitative approach.

Tracking challenges in the B2B environment

Within the B2B environment, tracking the origin of enquiries presents some unique challenges, particularly when the products or services on offer are high value. As leads are typically generated in a variety of ways (through websites, via email or over the phone), tying down the original tracking source can be extremely difficult. Failure to track effectively can result in a poor understanding of lead quality, which could result in misdirected optimisation, generating enquiries of a lower quality.

> Within the B2B environment it's important to consider that, whilst increasing the number of leads or enquiries is crucial, it is in knowing how to improve and maintain the quality of these leads that is paramount to increased web site revenues.

The importance of conversion history

The importance of tracking should also not be underestimated. It is by understanding how visitors behave and use your website that it is possible to make the most of the data collected from each visit.

To ensure you effectively measure and track these touch-points and interactions, be sure to clearly define what activity will count as a conversion from the outset.

Subsequently, when carrying out conversion rate optimisation activities for a B2B website, it is essential to study conversion history as well as multiple touch-points within the conversion path. Being able to attribute leads and enquiries to a chain of interactions with a site provides a greater level of insight into visitor behaviour which would have otherwise been overlooked.

CRM

A more comprehensive understanding of the lead process and utilising a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system and strategies together is vitally important. This is to enable essential insight around leads and enquiries to be preserved and analysed as a part of the sales pipeline review cycle.

CRM software and solutions play an important part in any tracking strategy, as it allows businesses to track a potential sale from the initial enquiry right through to the signoff stage. With some companies experiencing lengthy sales cycles, tracking the entry point for the enquiry is vital for the successes of conversion rate optimisation to be identified.

Tracking solutions

There are various tracking options available on the market today at many different price and entry points, including analytics packages and CRM software solutions. Google Analytics remains one of the most popular options for most, as a free and extremely useful tracking tool. Google Analytics (GA) provides users with an understandable and navigable tracking solution, making it possible to track leads and other enquiries simply and effectively. GA can be rapidly implemented and starts tracking immediately, providing valuable feedback on visitor behaviour and offering further insight into drop off points and successful elements of web pages.

Phone tracking

Phone tracking is another method of identifying original enquiry entry points. This can range from its most basic level, having operators querying leads as to where they retrieved the contact number, to more advanced specialist solutions that utilise multiple numbers assigned to individual web pages, traffic sources or even specific keywords used in search engines and paid campaigns.

Segmentation

Web analytics may already provide essential visitor insight, but to obtain the seed data for a successful CRO campaign, it is essential to dig much further into users behaviour. Segmentation allows different sections of your visitor profile to be grouped by intent, profile and examined, allowing them to be targeted in more specific and effective ways.

83% of companies feel web analytics packages help to improve conversion rates.

(Econsultancy Conversion Report 2010)

What is the methodology behind CRO – how do you do it?

There isn't an 'ideal site' checklist for conversion rate optimisation, every situation calls for different hypotheses, testing and resulting actions. That's what the heart of CRO is – making assumptions and predictions, then using data to prove them.

The methodology is key; rather than repeating the same optimisation techniques and practises on every site in a cookie-cutter fashion such as using the same button placement, colour choice, text size, content and so on. There may well be commonality and trends in user behaviour across sites, but for the greatest chance of success, the conversion rate challenge has to be assessed and considered from a holistic perspective.

The result of the initial testing and research phase is to identify areas of the site and purchasing journey where visitors are leaving the website or abandoning the enquiry process. In response to this research potential website improvements are then identified.

Changes are then formulated by asking the following questions:

- Is the website user friendly?
- Does the navigation and on-page design feel intuitive and easy to use?
- Are there major obstructions within the sales pathway?

These three questions help to kick-start the process around which elements of the website can be improved to increase the number and quality of leads or conversions. Using the answers to these, alongside the findings from a selection of CRO methodologies (outlined in the next section), site changes can be made using knowledge and data driven fact, rather than assumption.

What does the CRO process look like and how do we undertake it?

Research and behaviour studies

This aspect of the process involves a comprehensive look at both existing Analytics data and more qualitative research, using individuals to undertake a specific set of tasks on site and observing their interactions, issues, frustrations and stumbling points, to determine which aspects of the process to improve.

Goal / sales funnel analysis

Using funnel analysis, the process of utilising a web analytics package to identify weak areas of the conversion funnel e.g. bounces, exit pages, drop off points and underperforming calls to action can begin.

It is after these weak points are understood that it is possible to change the website to improve its performance. These changes can be made using existing design and development knowledge combined with multivariate testing techniques.

User experience testing

Carrying out a qualitative website review performed by an in-house 'expert', where they will use their experience to evaluate and review your website, identifying strengths, weaknesses and possible areas of improvements. Observations and recommendations will be used to seed the test element of the process.

Accessibility

The Accessibility audit will test a client's website for accessibility. Areas that do not meet accessibility criteria will be identified, recorded and improved. This includes compatibility testing with various browsers, screen resolutions and mark-up validation tools to ensure that the highest proportion of visitors are experiencing the site as it is intended.

A/B split and multivariate testing

A/B testing and multivariate testing is the term used to describe the technique of showing two or more variations of a web page to site visitors. The major benefit of this is that it provides accurate measurement of which page configurations are converting most effectively, making it possible to refine the changes to achieve the greatest rate of conversion.

As highlighted within the methodology section, it is then possible to analyse the changes to assess where successes have been achieved; it is then a simple equation of discarding any changes that had a neutral or negative impact and cementing the elements that generated the most conversions and revenue. Google's Website Optimiser provides a comprehensive solution to on-site multivariate testing, with Analytics integration.

CRM integration

As previously mentioned, CRM plays an important role within the B2B optimisation process, providing valuable insight into how visitors respond to your website design and layout. It is also valuable in obtaining a wider image of the conversion process, offering tangible evidence of how an initial web enquiry travels through the conversion pipeline until a sale is eventually made.

Ensuring that full referral data and multiple touch point information is recorded alongside comprehensive enquiry information allows thorough visibility of leads and sources through the sales pipeline.

Simple changes can be effective at increasing conversion rate

Conversion rate optimisation has considerable potential for improving your website performance and subsequently online revenues. With effective implementation it is possible to not only achieve greater return on investment through conversion optimisation activities, but also impact marketing spend and performance across all channels.

Even making minor changes to your website, such as improving your contact form or strengthening calls to action, can result in a significant increase in lead generation as the diagram overleaf demonstrates.

Example 1: strong calls to action
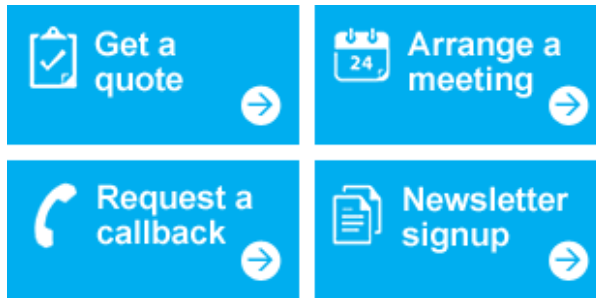
Example 2: optimised form

Just a 25% increase in conversion rate resulted in an additional £300,000 being generated in year 1

What can we deliver?

At Coast Digital we have put time into testing, researching and ascertaining where conversion rate optimisation has specific implications within the B2B environment.

We have developed a package of services that combine to create a complete conversion rate optimisation solution. This package operates in conjunction with our existing online marketing activities, complementing enhanced website traffic with improved conversion rates.

1. Prove the concept

Starting from as little as £2,500, Coast Digital can:
- zero in on a specific issue such as landing page abandonment
- devise corrective action
- analyse the impact on conversion rates
- prove that a successful strategy can increase CRO by 25% or more

2. Strategy workshop

Starting from £5000, these workshops will:
- review your current metrics, processes and data
- identify the top 5 areas to target
- document an appropriate CRO strategy to target these 5 areas
- create the assets and tools required to effect improvements
- report back on the % increase in CRO that results

3. Annual managed service

Let our experts watch the analytics on your behalf, make proactive recommendations, action agreed changes and report back regularly on results. This service offers peace of mind for Marketing leaders that want to be assured that they're consistently driving the highest possible return from their online activity.

A little bit about us

We've been around since 2002, and we've grown into one of the most influential digital agencies in the UK. Our growing team of creative, technical and innovative marketing experts are passionate about all things digital; it's our integrated strategic approach and commitment to clients that really sets us apart. Coast Digital provides an extensive range of services from initial strategy, website design and build, to fully managed online marketing campaigns.

Our portfolio covers a wide range of sectors, and we specialise in solutions for the B2B environment.

Like all agencies, we can give you plenty of new ideas. But if you want effective strategies and profitable results, then we're the people to talk to.

Call us on
020 7061 6426
today

The services we offer you

Digital Strategy

Strategy and planning
User experience
Conversion and Traffic analysis
Information architecture
Functional specification
Competitor analysis
Client Relationship Management

Design and Build

Creative
User-centred design
Development
Accessibility
Content management
E-commerce
E-learning
Hosting
Mobile development
Flash production
Viral games
Video production
Facebook applications
iPhone applications

Online Marketing

Conversion Rate Optimisation
Search Engine Optimisation
Pay Per Click
Affiliate marketing
Email marketing
Social media and PR
Media planning and Buying
Tracking and analytics
Video and viral seeding
Mobile marketing