

# 7 Keys to E-Commerce Tests That Matter



If you're wondering, "How am I going to increase my online sales and profits in 2010?" here's an easy answer: TEST! An e-commerce site should run at least one test a month with the potential to increase sales by 10 percent. These are seven keys to a successful online testing program:

## 1. Test Items That Matter

Create tests in areas on your site where you have a lot of shoppers and sales. You can't test everything, but here are a few areas that matter:

- checkout process;
- search engine marketing and search engine optimization landing pages;
- email sign-ups;
- homepage navigation; and
- cart page.

## 2. Test Randomly

Split test on your site. Don't run one side of a test for two weeks, then the other side for the following two weeks. Too many things in the environment can change and alter the outcome.

## 3. Test Significant Quantities

There are two components to statistical significance: the number of respondents on each side of the test and the number of people in the test. The lower the response rate, the larger quantity needed for a statistically significant result. Many marketers, however, reach conclusions and end tests before they're statistically significant. The problem is that random chance may be responsible for what looks like a winner.

## 4. Test Significant Metrics

Only test response metrics that can produce a sta-

tistically significant result. If you have 50,000 email addresses and a typical email campaign produces 50 orders, you don't have enough quantity for an email creative test that uses the number of orders as the "response" metric. You won't get enough respondents on either side of the test.

## 5. Have a Plan

Tests should be a critical part of your annual marketing plan. They can produce "easy money" opportunities for online merchants. Create a full year of tests, complete with who's responsible for executing them by when. Review results quarterly.

## 6. Track Past Results

Create a test binder that includes write-ups on the

### Statistical Significance

The graphic below shows two test results, one statistically significant at the 90 percent confidence level, the other not.

Response Control	105	Response Control	210
Response Test	125	Response Test	250
Clicks Control	3,000	Clicks Control	6,000
Clicks Test	3,000	Clicks Test	6,000
Control Response %	3.50%	Control Response %	3.50%
Test Response %	4.17%	Test Response %	4.17%
Total Result	Not Significant	Total Result	Significant

purposes of tests, their creative, results and analysis of what they mean.

## 7. Invest in Time and Tools

The economic rewards of testing are large. Testing, however, isn't free. It takes time to conceive and create tests, and time, knowledge and tools to execute them. You can use a free tool like Google's Website Optimizer or more sophisticated pay options like Omniture Test and Target or Optimost — your website provider may even have testing tools built into your platform. The most critical success factor, though, is your commitment to the testing program. **ROI**

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### More on the Web

To download a spreadsheet calculator for determining the statistical validity of your testing, go to [AllAboutROI.com](http://AllAboutROI.com) and click the calculator link in this story.