

NEWMIND RESEARCH · BENCHMARK REPORT 07

E-COMMERCE CONVERSION BENCHMARK 2026

What is published on conversion, cart abandonment, site speed and AI in discovery and support, what a lift is worth, and the playbooks and tools to get one.

Edition 1

Desk-research edition

October 2026

Published

Licence

Single company use

CONTENTS

What's inside

PART A • THE BENCHMARK

01	About this edition	4
02	Executive summary	6
03	The market in 2026	8
04	A second market: Great Britain	10
05	Who buys online: EU buyers	11
06	Who sells online: EU enterprises	12
07	Definitions: what is being measured	13
08	Conversion rate: what is published	14
09	Devices: mobile sells, desktop converts	15
10	Platforms: what stores are built on	16
11	Listed firms: what the filings show	17

PART B • CART ABANDONMENT AND CHECKOUT

12	Cart abandonment: the published average	18
13	Why buyers leave: the stated reasons	19
14	Checkout design: the published benchmark	20
15	What goes wrong after the order: EU survey	21

PART C • SITE SPEED

16	Site speed: the three measures that count	22
17	Site speed: the state of the web in 2024	23
18	Site speed: where the time goes	24
19	Site speed: what published cases claim	25

PART D • AI IN DISCOVERY AND SUPPORT

20	AI adoption: what EU enterprises report	26
21	AI in product discovery: what can be claimed	27
22	AI in customer support: assistants and the AI Act	28

PART E • THE NEWMIND MODEL

23	The NEWMIND model: what a conversion lift is worth	29
24	The NEWMIND model: support time, speed work and test size	30

PLAYBOOKS

25	Playbooks: from evidence to action	32
26	Playbook: a shorter checkout	33
27	Playbook: costs and price display	35

28	Playbook: faster pages	37
29	Playbook: phones first	39
30	Playbook: search and product data	41
31	Playbook: an AI support assistant	43
32	Playbook: payments that go through	45
33	Playbook: delivery and returns	47
34	Playbook: tests you can trust	49
35	Playbook: an accessible store	51
REGULATION AND ROADMAPS		
36	Regulation: the EU rules that shape checkout	53
37	Regulation: US federal rules for online stores	55
38	Roadmap: the first 90 days	56
39	Roadmap: the next 12 months	57
PART F • SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT		
40	Self-assessment: KPI sheet	58
41	Self-assessment: scoring worksheet	59
42	Scenario tables: revenue from a lift	60
43	Reference grid: labour cost by role	62
44	Worksheet: checkout audit	63
45	Worksheet: abandonment by step	64
46	Worksheet: speed baseline	65
47	Worksheet: search and assistant bake-off	66
48	Worksheet: questions for vendors	67
49	Worksheet: business case	68
50	Worksheet: test plan	69
51	Worksheet: regulation checklist	70
52	Worksheet: roles and ownership	71
53	Worksheet: twelve-month tracker	72
54	Worksheet: action plan	73
55	Sources by type	74
56	Method and limits	79
REFERENCE		
57	Glossary	81
58	Sources	82

Figures from third-party research carry a numbered source (full list in the Sources chapter). Everything else is labelled as NEWMIND analysis or model.

Page numbers refer to the full report.

About this edition

This is Edition 1 of the NEWMIND E-commerce Conversion Benchmark. It is a desk-research edition: it contains no survey data. It is built on official statistics, public company filings, official legal texts, open web measurement and vendors' own published research, each fetched, saved and checked for this edition.

What this edition contains

- **The market:** US e-commerce from the Census Bureau¹, Great Britain from the Office for National Statistics², EU buyers and sellers from Eurostat^{3,4}, platforms and listed firms.
- **Conversion and devices:** definitions, what is published on conversion rate and device mix, and how to measure your own.
- **Cart abandonment and checkout:** the published average, stated reasons and checkout design research (tagged 'vendor claim'), and what EU buyers report going wrong.
- **Site speed:** the three Core Web Vitals, the state of the web, where the time goes and what published cases claim.
- **AI in discovery and support:** adoption by EU retailers⁵, what can and cannot be claimed, and the AI Act duties for assistants.
- **A transparent model:** the revenue from a conversion lift, recovered carts, support time and test size, labelled 'Market research model · based on published benchmarks'.
- **10 playbooks:** a shorter checkout, costs and price display, faster pages, phones first, search and product data, an AI support assistant, payments that go through, delivery and returns, tests you can trust, an accessible store.
- **Regulation and roadmaps:** the EU rules that shape checkout, US federal rules for online stores, and a 90-day and 12-month plan.
- **Self-assessment toolkit:** a KPI sheet, a scoring worksheet, scenario tables, a labour cost grid and 11 blank worksheets (checkout audit, abandonment by step, speed baseline, search and assistant bake-off, questions for vendors, business case, test plan, regulation checklist, roles and ownership, twelve-month tracker, action plan).

What it does not contain yet

No original survey data. Edition 1 is desk research. Edition 2 is planned to add a survey of online stores, with conversion, abandonment by step and the measured effect of AI tools that firms do not publish.

Who it is for

Heads of e-commerce, digital and growth; CMO and CTO teams running an online store.

You will recognise these signals

- Traffic grows but orders do not
- Most carts are left before payment and no one knows at which step

- Phone visitors outnumber desktop visitors but buy less often
- A chat or search tool was bought without a test to prove it pays

What to measure

- Conversion rate by device and traffic source
- Cart abandonment by checkout step
- Core Web Vitals field data on key templates
- Payment failures by method
- Support contacts per 100 orders, by reason

How to read the numbers

- **Market figures** carry a numbered source. Where sources disagree, each is shown and named, never averaged.
- **Vendor figures** are tagged 'vendor claim'. They are not independently verified and are never used as model inputs.
- **Models** are transparent: every formula and input is printed so you can replace it with your own data.
- **Currency:** US dollars throughout. Figures published in other currencies are labelled with their code.

From benchmark to your numbers

A NEWMIND feasibility audit measures your own store in 2–4 weeks and delivers:

- Your conversion and abandonment against the published figures
- Where in checkout your buyers leave, step by step
- Speed fixes ranked by template and traffic
- A sized test plan and the revenue each change is worth

Licence: single company use. Please cite as: NEWMIND Research, E-commerce Conversion Benchmark 2026, Edition 1. NEWMIND PARTNERS has no affiliation with any vendor or firm named in this report.

Executive summary

Online sales keep growing faster than retail as a whole, yet most visits still end without an order and most carts are left before payment. The published evidence points to the same few levers: the full price shown early, a short checkout, fast pages on phones, and tools that are tested before they are trusted.

17.1%

E-commerce share of US retail sales, 2026 Q2 ⁶

70.22%

Average cart abandonment rate across 50 studies, list updated September 2025 ⁷

VENDOR CLAIM

43%

Websites with good Core Web Vitals on mobile, measured with INP, 2024 ⁸

Ten findings

01 Online grows faster than retail

US e-commerce was \$340.2 billion in 2026 Q2, 17.1% of all retail ⁶. It increased 12.2% on a year earlier, against 6.7% for total retail ⁶.

02 The only dated conversion figure is a vendor panel

No official body publishes a conversion rate. One monthly panel of UK and Irish merchants puts it at 2.23% in August 2026, a figure that rose from 1.85% a year earlier ⁹ **VENDOR CLAIM**. Measure your own rate before you compare.

03 Phones sell most and load slowest

Phones took 63.7% of sales in that panel, against 34.7% for desktop ⁹ **VENDOR CLAIM**. Across the web, 59% of sites load well on phones against 72% on desktop, and 14% load poorly on phones ⁸.

04 Seven in ten carts are left

Baymard Institute averages 50 studies to a cart abandonment rate of 70.22% ⁷ **VENDOR CLAIM**. A share of that is browsing, not lost sales: 42% of US online shoppers have left a cart because they were just browsing ⁷.

05 Extra costs are the top stated reason

Of US online shoppers who left a cart for a reason other than browsing, 40% name extra costs too high, the most common answer ⁷ **VENDOR CLAIM**. Showing delivery, tax and fees before checkout is the first fix.

06 Checkouts are longer than they need to be

The average US checkout shows 23.48 form elements by default, against 12 to 14 for an ideal flow ⁷

VENDOR CLAIM . Of the sites benchmarked, 65% have a checkout rated mediocre or worse ¹⁰ .

07 Fewer than half of websites pass on speed on phones

In 2024, 43% of websites had good Core Web Vitals on mobile devices, measured with INP ⁸ . Published cases link faster pages to sales, such as a 31% improvement in LCP linked to 8% more sales at one firm ¹¹

VENDOR CLAIM ; test it on your own store.

08 AI is still a minority in retail

Use of any AI technology by EU retail enterprises rose from 11.3% in 2024 to 15.5% in 2025, against 20.0% for all enterprises ⁵ . No independent benchmark of the conversion lift from AI search or assistants was found.

09 Small lifts are worth real money, and need large tests

A store with 200,000 sessions a month and a \$100 order that lifts conversion by 0.25 points takes about \$600,000 more revenue a year. Proving that lift from 2% needs about 52,200 visitors per variant (NEWMIND model).

10 Rules now reach accessibility and AI

The European Accessibility Act has applied since 28 June 2025 for e-commerce services ¹² . Under its general date of application, the AI Act has applied since 2 August 2026, including the duty to tell people they are dealing with an AI system ¹³ .

What to do on Monday

1. Fill in the KPI sheet for your store, by device (full report, chapter 40).
2. Map abandonment step by step through checkout (full report, chapter 45).
3. Record Core Web Vitals field data for your busiest templates (full report, chapter 46).
4. Price a lift with your own sessions and order value (full report, chapter 23).
5. Start with total cost shown early and a shorter checkout (full report, chapter 26).

The market in 2026

US online retail sales were \$340.2 billion in the second quarter of 2026, 17.1% of all retail. Online sales grew 12.2% on a year earlier, while all retail grew 6.7%. The online share keeps climbing, but slowly.

\$340.2 billion

US e-commerce sales, 2026 Q2,
seasonally adjusted, preliminary ⁶

17.1%

Share of total US retail sales ⁶

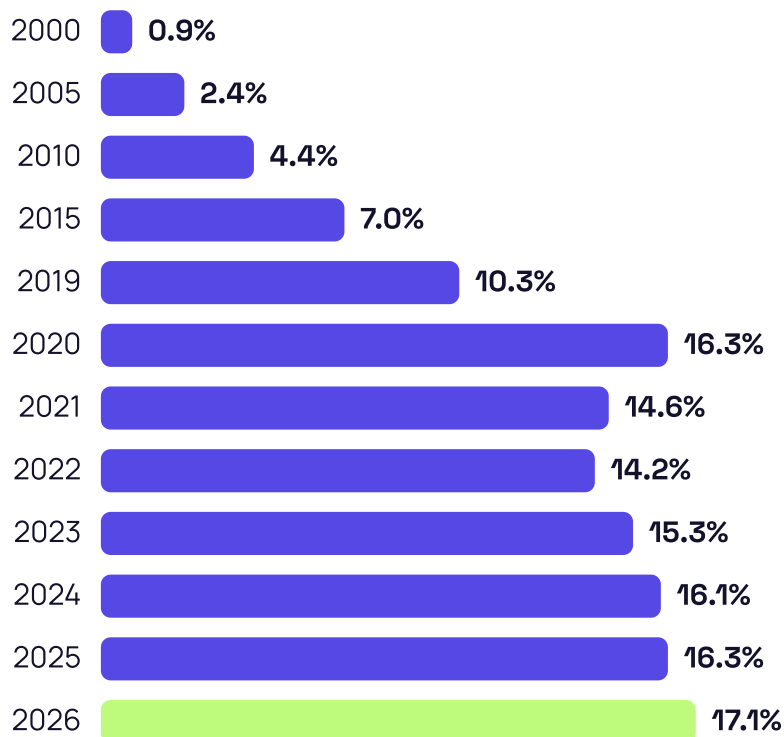
12.2%

Growth on the same quarter a year
earlier; all retail 6.7% ⁶

Twenty-five years of slow, steady gain

The Census Bureau has published the quarterly series since late 1999. The chart takes the second quarter of each year, so the seasons match. The jump in 2020 was the pandemic; the share then fell for two years before it climbed past its 2020 level ¹.

US e-commerce share of retail, second quarter, %



This quarter against a year earlier

MEASURE	2025 Q2	2026 Q2
Total retail sales, \$ million	1,861,603	1,986,488
E-commerce sales, \$ million	303,284	340,244
E-commerce share of total	16.3%	17.1%
Change on prior quarter, e-commerce	1.9%	3.8%

Seasonally adjusted, millions of dollars in the source ¹. 2026 Q2 is preliminary; revised estimates come with the next release on 19 November 2026 ⁶.

A forecast, for context only

Shopify's blog, citing an EMARKETER forecast, puts worldwide online retail at \$6.88 trillion in 2026, a 7.2% increase, and 21.1% of all retail, expected to reach 22.5% by 2028 ¹⁴ **VENDOR CLAIM**. It is a forecast quoted by a platform vendor, not a measurement, and this report does not use it in any calculation.

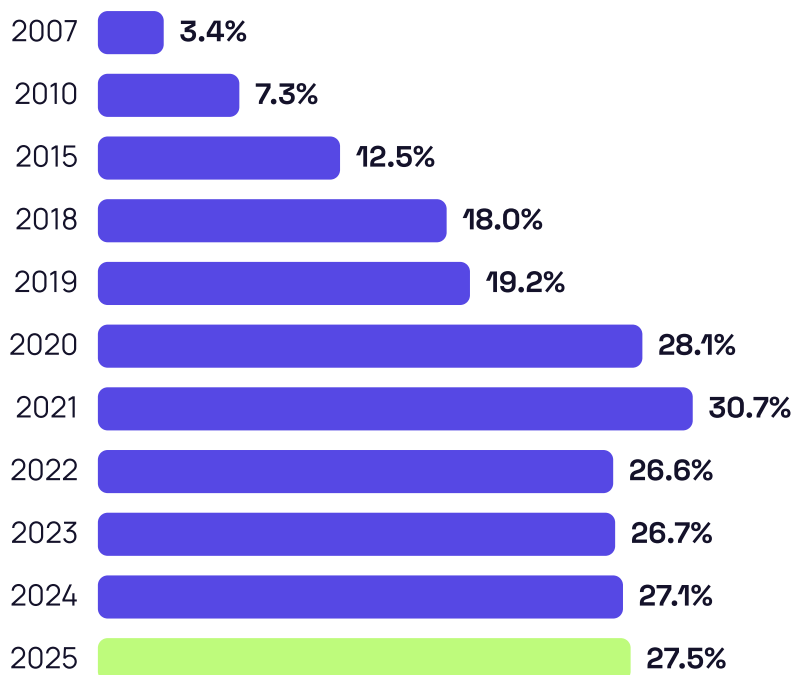
What this means for a store

- Online demand is still growing faster than retail as a whole, so a flat online revenue line usually means lost share, not a flat market.
- Growth is now a few points a year, not the step change of 2020. Most new revenue has to come from converting the traffic a store already has.
- That is the subject of this report: conversion, the carts that are left, the speed of the pages and the AI tools now sold to fix both.

A second market: Great Britain

Great Britain shows where a mature online market settles. Internet sales were 28.0% of all retail in Great Britain in 2026 Q2, against 26.3% a year earlier. The US share is 17.1%. The two series use different definitions, so the gap is a direction, not a precise comparison.

Great Britain internet sales, share of all retail, %



The British share peaked at 37.8% in January 2021 during lockdown, then fell back and has since crept up again: 27.3% in August 2026, against 26.1% a year before ².

Why a second market is included

- The British series is official and monthly, so it shows the seasonal pattern a US store also sees: the share rises in November and falls back in the new year.
- The British share in November 2025 was 32.4%, against 27.5% for 2025 as a whole ².
- It shows that a market can pass a quarter of retail online and keep growing, which sets the scale for long-term planning.

ONS series J4MC: internet sales as a percentage of total retail sales, Great Britain, seasonally adjusted, ratio in percent; no currency figures are taken from it.

Definitions: what is being measured

Conversion figures disagree mostly because they measure different things. Before comparing any number in this report with your own, check that the definitions match.

TERM	DEFINITION USED IN THIS REPORT
E-commerce sales (official)	Sales where the order, or the price and terms, are agreed over the internet, a mobile device, an extranet or EDI, whether or not payment is made online ¹⁵ .
Conversion rate	Orders divided by sessions (visits) in the same period. Some tools divide by users or by product views instead; those rates are not comparable.
Cart abandonment rate	Share of shopping carts created that do not end in an order. It includes people who were only browsing.
Checkout abandonment rate	Share of checkouts started that do not end in an order. It is narrower than cart abandonment.
Average order value (AOV)	Revenue divided by orders, before or after returns: say which.
Revenue per session	Conversion rate × AOV. The single number that combines both.
Core Web Vitals	Three Google measures of page experience: loading (LCP), responsiveness (INP) and visual stability (CLS), read at the 75th percentile of real visits.
Vendor claim	A figure published by a firm that sells a product or service related to it. Printed with a tag and never used in the model.

Coverage of the official series

- The Census series counts only businesses with paid employees ¹⁵: very small sellers are left out.
- It counts retail sales by the seller's business, not by the buyer's channel, so a marketplace sale is counted once, under the firm that made it.
- Each quarter is revised; the 2026 Q2 figure is preliminary ⁶.

No original survey data

This edition is desk research. NEWMIND PARTNERS ran no survey and used no client data. Every figure comes from a public source that was fetched, saved and checked against its text. Where a figure is a NEWMIND calculation, it says so.

Before you compare

- Check the denominator: sessions, users or product views.
- Check the period: a single month, a quarter or a year.
- Check the scope: one country, one sector, one platform.
- Check who published it, and whether they sell the fix.

Conversion rate: what is published

No official body publishes a conversion rate. The nearest public, dated figure is a monthly panel of UK and Irish online merchants: 2.23% in August 2026, against 1.85% a year earlier ⁹ **VENDOR CLAIM**.

2.23%

Average conversion rate, August 2026,
UK and Irish merchants ⁹

1.85%

Same panel, August 2025

+0.38 pts

Change in percentage points ⁹

How to read the panel

- Scope: the panel gives a quantitative view of UK and Irish e-commerce ⁹. It is not a US or EU figure.
- The text says conversion increased by 20.14%; the table beside it shows 20.49%. The source does not explain the gap, so both are printed ⁹.
- The panel is run by a commerce analytics firm, from its own merchants. Sample size and mix are not published.
- A relative change of about a fifth on a base near 2% is under half a percentage point. Always ask which kind of change a headline uses.

Why this report does not publish a benchmark rate

Conversion depends on the sector, the price, the traffic mix and the definition. A furniture store and a grocery store can both be healthy at very different rates. A single average hides more than it shows.

So the model chapters do not start from any published rate. They start from your own rate, and show what a given lift is worth at your traffic and order value. Industry figures are context only.

What to measure instead

- Your conversion rate by device, by traffic source and by landing page type, every week.
- The same rate for new and returning visitors.
- The step where people leave: product page, cart, checkout start, payment.
- Revenue per session, so a change in order value is not missed.

Industry panel figures are tagged 'vendor claim' and are not model inputs.

Sources

Each entry gives the date that applies to it: when a law was adopted or came into force, when a document was published, or, for live web pages and datasets, when it was accessed (7 October 2026). Figures quoted are short, attributed and linked; no paywalled tables and no third-party charts are reproduced.

1. U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Retail E-Commerce Sales, estimated quarterly U.S. retail sales (adjusted): total and e-commerce, published 18 August 2026 <https://www.census.gov/retail/ecommerce.html>
2. Office for National Statistics, Internet sales as a percentage of total retail sales (ratio) (%) (series J4MC, dataset DRSl), published 18 September 2026 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/retailindustry/timeseries/j4mc/drsi>
3. Eurostat, Internet purchases by individuals (2020 onwards) (dataset isoc_ec_ib20), published 17 April 2026 https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/api/dissemination/statistics/1.0/data/isoc_ec_ib20?geo=EU27_2020&ind_type=IND_TOTAL&ind_type=Y16_24&ind_type=Y25_54&ind_type=Y55_74&unit=PC_IND&indic_is=I_BUY3&indic_is=I_BLT12&lang=EN
4. Eurostat, E-commerce sales of enterprises by NACE Rev. 2 activity (dataset isoc_ec_eseln2), published 15 June 2026 https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/api/dissemination/statistics/1.0/data/isoc_ec_eseln2?geo=EU27_2020&size_emp=GE10&unit=PC_ENT&nace_r2=C10-S951_X_K&nace_r2=G47&indic_is=E_AESELL&indic_is=E_AWSELL&indic_is=E_AWS_B2C&indic_is=E_AWS_COWN&indic_is=E_AWS_CMP&indic_is=E_AWS_CBOTH&lang=EN
5. Eurostat, Artificial intelligence by NACE Rev. 2 activity (dataset isoc_eb_ain2), published 15 June 2026 https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/api/dissemination/statistics/1.0/data/isoc_eb_ain2?geo=EU27_2020&size_emp=GE10&unit=PC_ENT&nace_r2=C10-S951_X_K&nace_r2=G47&indic_is=E_AI_TANY&indic_is=E_AI_PMS&indic_is=E_AI_TNLG&indic_is=E_AI_TTM&indic_is=E_AI_TSR&lang=EN
6. U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Retail E-Commerce Sales, 2nd Quarter 2026 (release CB26-133), published 18 August 2026 <https://www.census.gov/retail/ecommerce.html>
7. Baymard Institute, Cart Abandonment Rate Statistics (list of 50 studies), published 22 September 2025 <https://baymard.com/lists/cart-abandonment-rate>
8. HTTP Archive, Web Almanac 2024, Performance chapter, published 11 November 2024 <https://almanac.httparchive.org/en/2024/performance>
9. IRP Commerce, Ecommerce Market Data and Ecommerce Benchmarks, August 2026 (UK and Irish merchants), accessed 7 October 2026 <https://www.irpcommerce.com/ecommercemarketdata.aspx>
10. Baymard Institute, Checkout Usability research overview, accessed 7 October 2026 <https://baymard.com/research/checkout-usability>
11. web.dev case study, Vodafone: a 31% improvement in LCP increased sales by 8%, published 17 March 2021 <https://web.dev/case-studies/vodafone>
12. Directive (EU) 2019/882 (European Accessibility Act), Official Journal of the European Union, adopted 17 April 2019 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32019L0882>
13. Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 (Artificial Intelligence Act), Official Journal of the European Union, adopted 13 June 2024 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32024R1689>
14. Shopify, Global ecommerce sales (blog article citing an EMARKETER forecast of February 2025), published 29 September 2025 <https://www.shopify.com/blog/global-ecommerce-sales>
15. U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Retail E-Commerce Sales report and tables, 2nd Quarter 2026 (PDF), published 18 August 2026 https://www.census.gov/retail/mrts/www/data/pdf/ec_current.pdf

© 2026 NEWMIND PARTNERS. Licensed for use within one company. NEWMIND PARTNERS AG, Luzern, Switzerland · NEWMIND PARTNERS Inc., Sheridan, Wyoming, USA · hi@newmindpartners.com

Get the full report

This sample includes the cover, contents, about page, executive summary, the US and British markets, definitions, the published conversion rate and the sources cited in them. The full report continues with EU buyers and sellers, devices, platforms and listed firms, cart abandonment and checkout, site speed, AI in discovery and support, the NEWMIND model, ten playbooks, EU and US regulation, a 90-day and 12-month roadmap and the self-assessment toolkit.

Full report

newmindpartners.com/benchmark-ecommerce-conversion.html#report

NEXT STEP

TURN THIS BENCHMARK INTO MORE ORDERS FROM THE SAME TRAFFIC.

You now know what is published on conversion and what a lift is worth. NEWMIND PARTNERS measures where your buyers leave, then designs, builds and tests the changes that close the gap: checkout, speed, search and support, built around the platform you already use.

01

Feasibility audit

In 2–4 weeks we measure your store on your data (read-only): conversion by device and source, abandonment by checkout step, speed on your key templates and support contacts by reason. Then we compare every option on the market, off-the-shelf or custom.

02

Design

We rank the fixes by revenue at stake, write the test plan for each one and design any search or support assistant around your catalogue and policies, with a human hand-over where it matters.

03

Build and run

Our senior engineers build the changes, connect them to the platform and tools you already use, and can run them in production with monitoring.

04

Prove it

Baseline on day one, then the measured change in conversion, abandonment, speed and support cost against a control, reported every month.

Start with a feasibility audit

Find out where your store loses orders, which fixes pay first, and the business case to back them. No commitment.

[Start a feasibility audit →](#)