Blue Nile is a diamond and engagement ring business focused on making it possible for consumers to shop for high-quality diamonds at great value. Blue Nile specializes in providing consumers with diamond buying tips and education guides, including The 4Cs of Diamonds, which is an educational guide to understanding the unique characteristics of stones as they relate to their Cut, Color, Clarity, and Carat Weight, to help consumers choose the perfect wedding band.

Blue Nile asserts multiple claims on their website and provides an analysis of diamond characteristics (Cut, Clarity, Color, and Carat Weight) in comparison to price in an effort to educate its consumers and assist them with selecting the best wedding band. Our goal was to test the accuracy of each of Blue Nile’s claims and provide supporting evidence using Blue Nile’s inventory of diamonds and their recorded characteristics.

In researching the claims for the Cut characteristic of diamonds, Blue Nile asserts that a diamond’s cut is the most crucial factor to consider compared to Color, Clarity, and Carat. Therefore, consumers should spend most of their money on selecting the best cut grade, the Astor Ideal and Ideal cut. Our analysis supports Blue Nile’s claim that Ideal cuts, in general, dominate the upper price range of their inventory of diamonds and confirms that cut is a significant factor in price influence, as illustrated in Figure 1: Cut vs. Price.

According to the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) color scale, the industry standard for diamond color grades ranges from D (i.e.: the most colorless diamond) to Z (i.e.: a light yellow or brown diamond). While Blue Nile does not offer the L-Z color grades, they assert that diamond prices will decrease or increase alphabetically. Our analysis supports Blue Nile’s claim, as colors D, E, F, G, H, I, and J are listed on the website and dataset as the most to least expensive in alphabetical order, as illustrated in Figure 3: Color versus Price.

A diamond’s clarity is the assessment of non-visible and visible (i.e.: “eye-clean”) imperfections on the surface and within a diamond. Blue Nile claims that Clarity is the least important characteristic since imperfections are not usually seen with the naked eye. However, Blue Nile acknowledges that fewer and more minor scratches on a diamond will receive the highest clarity grades, such as VS, VVS, IF, and FL, and are more expensive. Blue Nile recommends that a consumer should select a clarity grade that is not too expensive, such as the FL and IF diamond clarities, and should select a diamond with inclusions that cannot be seen with the naked eye, such as the VS (Very Slightly Included) and SI (Slightly Included) diamonds. In our analysis of Clarity versus Price, Blue Nile’s claim that diamond imperfections are the least important is supported in Figure 5: Frequency of Diamond Clarity Grade because consumers prefer the VS and SI clarity grades over the more expensive imperfection-free clarity grades IF and FL. Additionally, Figure 2: Clarity versus Price supports the idea that the higher clarity grades are generally more expensive.

According to Blue Nile, consumers should buy below half and whole-carat values to save significant money, as other people will never notice the slight difference in weight in a diamond. Our analysis of Blue Nile’s claim is supported because there is a higher frequency of diamond rings sold for the Ideal cut, suggesting its popularity among consumers and that the cut of a diamond versus its weight is more important, as illustrated in Figure 4: Cut added for more context.