

How To Optimise Forms



What's Inside



Intro

Why optimise your forms?



The Optimisation Process

The mechanics



Predicting Return On Investment

Calculating the expected return from changes



Ideal Optimisation Toolkit & Stack

What you need in your marketing stack



Kick-start in Four Weeks

Get your process in shape in four weeks

What you will learn in this guide:

- Why optimising your forms is important and what you could achieve.
- How a form optimisation process works and the continual cycle of optimising forms.
- How to calculate the Return On Investment (ROI) of each form change and how this will help you demonstrate success in an optimisation project.
- What tools you need in your analytics stack and how they play a role in your form optimisation process.
- A four-week guide to kickstarting your form optimisation program.

Intro

“Forms are an untapped optimisation opportunity. From registration forms to checkouts, quotations to booking forms, these critical end-of-funnel processes are ripe for improvement”



Al Mackin,
Formisimo CEO

When it comes to optimising a website - and increasing revenue - the focus is often on everything except your forms. The part of the process that asks the user for information is left for months, or even years, without improvement or even consideration.

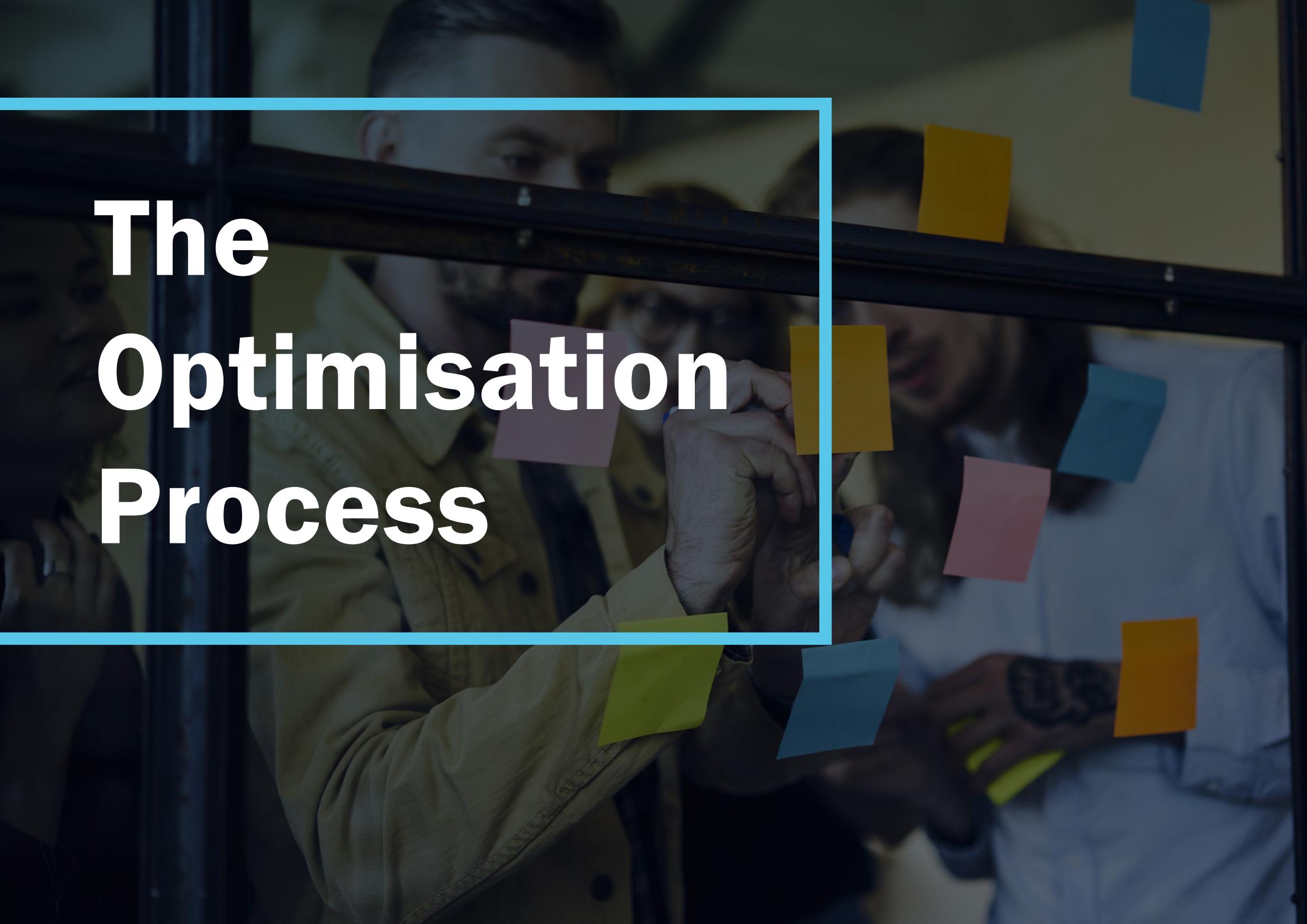
The lack of data on form performance means there can be a belief that they are close to the local maximum conversion rate and that resource is better deployed elsewhere.

Why Form Optimisation Should be a Priority

What percentage of website visitors have to complete a form or checkout to become of value to you? If the answer is “almost all”, then your forms should be part of your analysis and optimisation process.

From the form behavioural data that we capture at Formisimo (we've captured 20 billion pieces of data on how users engage with forms) and the clients that we consult with, we see a wealth of opportunities to increase conversion rates. Uncovering issues, testing new ideas, and understanding how users *really* engage with your forms will lead you to some outstanding results. [A great example is Capital One who increased their credit card applications by 10%](#)

The Optimisation Process



The Optimisation Process

“The fundamentals of optimising a form are simple: build a team and make sure you have the right data. Analyse and understand what website visitors do, look for opportunities and then grade the changes and fixes. Test the changes with your user-base, analyse the results and repeat the process”

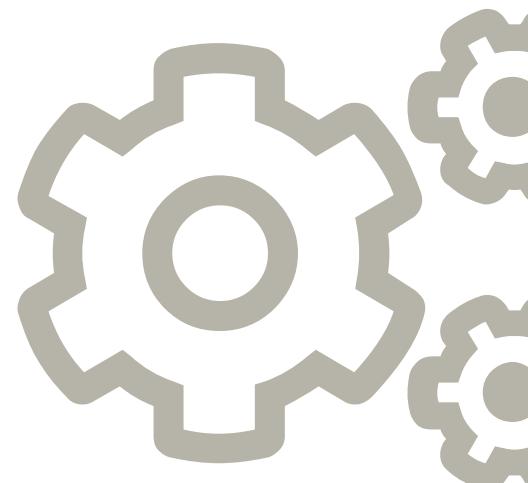
Any long-term process has two components that are not a core part of it but are critical to its success. Optimisation and improvement projects with these two items have a greater chance of a positive outcome.

The Project Patron

Every project has a formal leader - that's the individual who is managing it on a daily or weekly basis. The patron of the project sits above this. They're likely to be CXO level and as their success is partly tied to the success of the project they want the project to secure a win. That desire for victory, along with their seniority, means that the project has a hero who will drive it forwards.

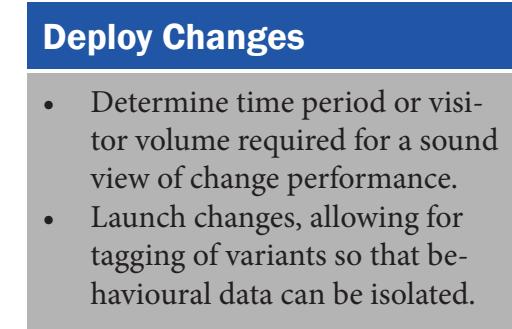
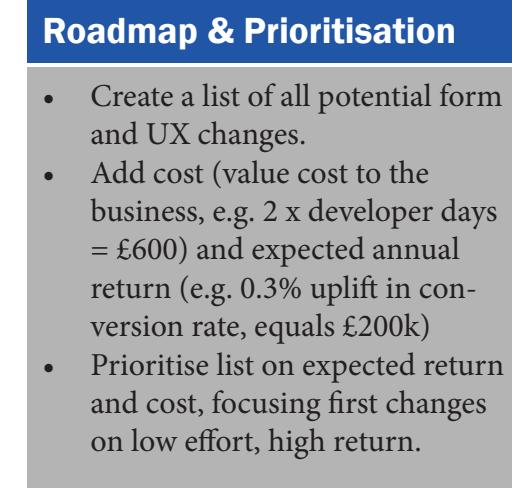
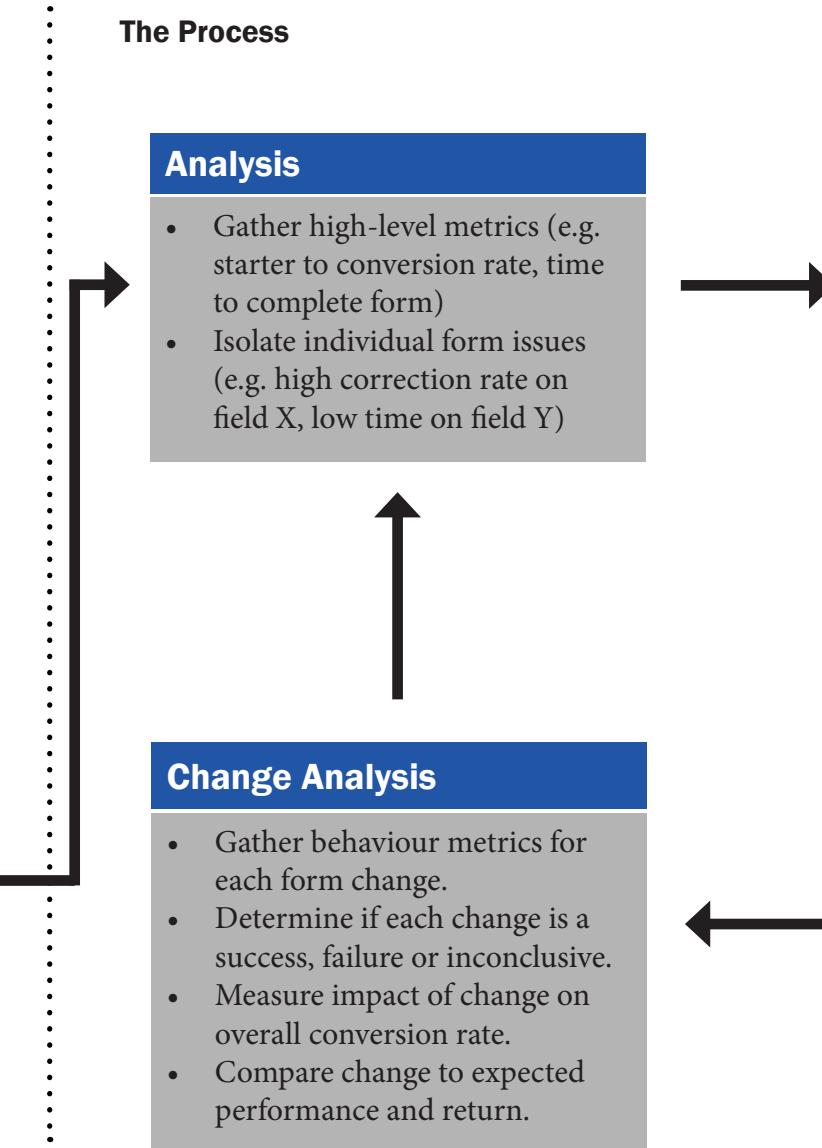
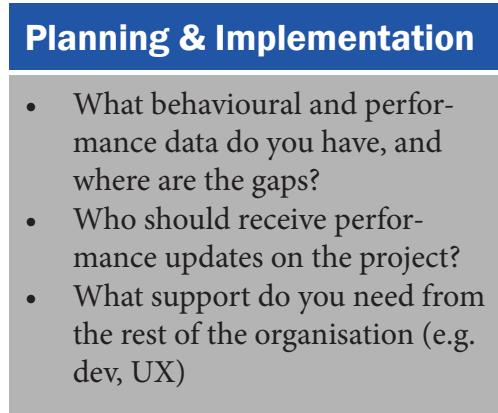
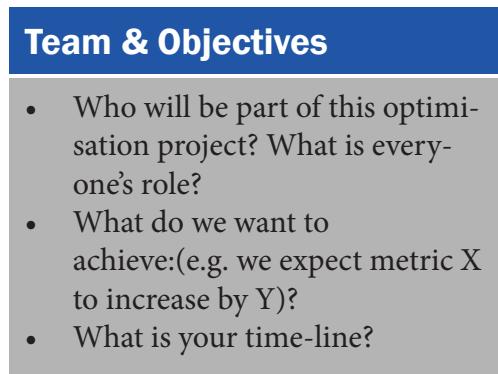
Company-Wide Project Knowledge

Optimisation programmes touch many departments, from finance and procurement to legal and development. By spreading the word on your project, and sharing what success looks like, you'll have a level of buy-in from everyone. The company will have a basic understanding of what you're doing, why you're doing it and how important it is to the business. There will be less push-back and fewer questions and obstacles.



The Optimisation Process

Preparation



Predicting ROI



Predicting ROI

“Predicting a return from an optimisation process allows you to manage the investment required - for both internal and external costs. Too often the budget set aside for optimisation isn’t in-line with the expected return. Under-budgeting will lead to under-performance.”

The challenge with predicting the Return On Investment for an ongoing conversion rate optimisation project is that there are many step changes: each one delivers a different ROI and in some cases a negative return.

To support a global, “project” ROI calculation, each change to your form should have its own ROI. Every adjustment that you want to make, for example “Launching in-line validation” or “Improving error messages” should be considered in terms of expected uplift, cost and expected return (uplift in revenue minus the expected cost).

A key part of predicting ROI is gaining access to deep knowledge on form optimisation, and using that to predict the expected uplift from a change. Your analytics partners should support you on this. For example, if you’re considering changing a field from a drop-down to a radio button, you should be able to rely on your partners to tell you, “in similar cases, this gave an uplift of X%”.

Important Metrics to Calculate ROI

- Average order margin: the average amount of profit on each order.
- Current form / step conversion rates: the percentage of individuals who see the form or step, and then complete it successfully.
- Form visits per month: the number of sessions that visit the form or checkout step on a monthly basis.

Predicting ROI

Example ROI Calculations

This example is for the launch of a single change to a form: Improving the in-line validation. The change involves adjusting the in-line error messages so that they're more user friendly (from "Please enter your mobile number" to "Please share your mobile number, we use it to keep you updated on your order"). In addition in-line validation on success will be rolled out, which will notify users when a field has been successfully completed by showing a small green tick in the field.

The example costs are based on the resource requires, which in this case is two development days, two UX days and a half day of testing.

The expected uplift is based on the advice of your analytics partner and the data that they have that's relevant to your market. A good provider will be able to support you with valid, sound data that is a sensible average rather than the peak of what could be expected.

Every site and every demographic will have a different response to a form change. Over time you can monitor the difference between what happens in your industry and your site, and you can upgrade or downgrade the expected uplift based on previous variations.

Feature ROI: In-line Validation Improvement	
Average Order Margin	£7
Form Conversion Rate	21%
Form Visits /month	2,000,000
Current Form Margin (Form Visits X Conversion Rate X Average margin)	£2,940,000 /month
Expected Conversion Rate Uplift	0.2%
Expected Conversion Rate	21.2%
Expected Form Value (Form Visits X Expected Conversion Rate X Average Margin)	£2,968,000 /month
Revenue Uplift	£28,000 /month
Annual Revenue Uplift	£336,000 /year
Costs (2 x dev days, 2 x UX days, 0.5 testing days)	£2,500 (one-off)
ROI in Year One (Annualised Uplift - Cost)	£333,500
Revenue Uplift	10.58%
Payback Period (Months before costs are re-couped)	0.1 months

Form Optimisation Toolkit



Form Optimisation Toolkit

“Optimising a form requires a deep understanding of what users do beyond what a standard analytics or UX platform delivers. Forms are complex, with hundreds of interactions, and they require a new method of analysis.”

The platforms that exist within your marketing stack at the start of an optimisation project will dictate how successful that project is. The days of relying on a standard analytics platform (e.g. Adobe Analytics or Google Analytics) are gone and, as the impact of optimisation on a business increases, so does the requirement of the stack.

Users will have more interaction with forms (clicks, key-presses etc.) than across all of the previous and future steps in their journey. This volume of interaction gives you a detailed picture of where the user is becoming frustrated, where they are spending too much time, and which fields are causing them to abandon your forms.

The significant number of events is both a challenge and an opportunity: how can you gather all this data and get value from it? How do you turn hundreds of thousands of data points into insight?

The optimal way to ingest and gain an understanding of user's form behaviour is to employ a specialist form analytics platform that delivers data and insight. Gathering a significant volume of behavioural information is only useful if it can easily be turned in to insight, and the information delivered becomes a key part of your form optimisation programme.



Form Optimisation Toolkit

Critical

Form Analytics Insight



Business Intelligence



Business Level Metrics

- Key metrics to help predict ROI.
- May come via business intelligence platform or general analytics platform.

Form Behaviour Metrics

- Deep metrics, reporting and insight on field-specific issues.
- Covers all site visitors giving a global view.
- Will reveal users pain points and optimisation opportunities.

Customer Feedback



Business Level Metrics

- Feedback from customers on what they found frustrating.

Session Recordings



Page Level Analytics



Page Level Metrics

- May provide some key metrics, e.g. conversion rate of a step or form or revenue and margin reporting.

Session Replays

- Watch individual user sessions.
- No aggregation across all users, so useful for viewing a small batch of users' behaviour.

Useful

Four Week Kick-off



Four Week Kick-off

“The process of improving your forms is continual, but the early planning steps have a big impact on the success of your optimisations. Gaps in your insight, or a lack of confidence in your data, will cause your project to grind to a halt.”

The four week kick off on the next page is based on how hundreds of companies optimise their forms, and I've seen great examples of what works, and what doesn't. A project that runs slower than expected isn't necessarily a failure, but the impact it has will be realised over a much longer period of time.

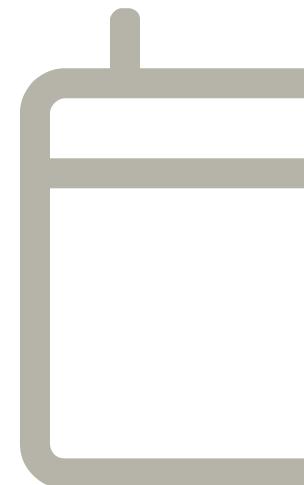
What Can Go Wrong When You're Optimising Your Forms?

- **Decision making based on poor-quality data or with a data blind-side.**

It's easy to get over-excited about a project and to overlook how you'll make decisions. The quality of your data is critical, as you may end up with prioritisation and ROI calculations that are significantly out. And if your numbers don't match reality you may lose credibility. If you have a gap in your analytics stack then you'll have unanswered questions like "if people drop out after clicking submit, what were they doing just before that?"

- **You know what you need to do but aren't able to do it.**

Lack of resource will cause a significant slow down, and may kill a project. Getting all your resource locked in at the start helps both you, and your providers. Development resource is critical and teams are often stretched and will have to re-prioritise.



Four Week Kick-off

Week 1

- Create the brief: why are we doing this and what do we want to achieve?
- Identify the specialisms needed to make the project a success (e.g. UX, dev, analytics support)
- Identify any holes in your marketing stack and source any missing solutions.

Week 2

- Assemble the team and outline the project.
- Enhance the brief with feedback from the team and harden it with the KPIs that you want to improve (and what your aims are).
- Set the first timelines for each specialism: when will you need development support versus analytics support?

Week 3

- Start gathering data from your marketing stack. Check the quality of each data source and isolate issues (and deploy fixes or changes early).
- Create any required documentation: e.g. granular reporting and analysis, stakeholder and team-member reporting.

Week 4

- Share the project with your organisation - build excitement and help everyone understand what you're working on.
- Review your timelines and double check against the resource you need to make sure there are no delays.
- Begin the optimisation process.

About Formisimo

Formisimo are the creators and leaders in the form analytics space.

We're a venture-capital-backed technology provider that's focused on improving the world's online forms and checkouts through our market-leading analytics platform and our expert consultancy.

We've helped thousands of companies worldwide uncover optimisation opportunities, increasing revenues for organisations across almost every sector.

[Get a personalised demo of Formisimo](#)

See how our form analytics will fast-track your form and checkout improvements.



Users of Formisimo include:



UBER

Sainsbury's Bank

SONY