



Case Study

Putting A/B testing to the test

Doubling revenue through an integrated optimization program



Putting A/B Testing to the Test

Going to your state's Department of Motor Vehicles can be confusing, complicated and downright frustrating. That's where DMV.org helps, by providing useful information to simplify the DMV experience: More than 200 million visitors a year look up information on how to register a car, get a driver's license, learn more about speeding tickets and so on.

"We empower people in their DMV experience by putting them in control," says Shane Hale, director of site optimization and conversion at DMV.org. This non-government content-driven site provides information about motor vehicle tasks in all 50 states and provides a simplified experience with the DMV across the country.

The thousands of pages of content customized for drivers in each state were fertile ground for a rapid testing optimization program.

With WiderFunnel's support, the company has built a world-class optimization program that has consistently lifted their revenue. In fact, for three years running, the program has doubled their revenue on their highest revenue products compounded each year. At the same time, we've been able to build a framework of customer insights that continue to deliver top results.

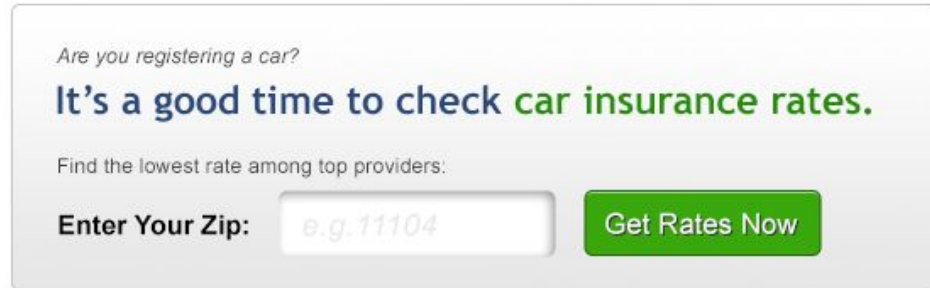
Here's how we did it.

The business need:
Increased revenue per visitor

The business need: Increased revenue per visitor

The DMV.org website earns revenue through performance-based advertising on their content pages. When visitors purchase products like car insurance through DMV.org's partners, they partner pays DMV.org a referral fee.

For example, on one of the license renewal information pages, a banner within the content offers visitors an opportunity to check car insurance rates. See below.



A promotional banner for checking car insurance rates. It features a light gray background with rounded corners. At the top, it asks 'Are you registering a car?'. Below this, the main headline reads 'It's a good time to check car insurance rates.', with 'car insurance rates' in green. Underneath, it says 'Find the lowest rate among top providers:'. At the bottom, there is a label 'Enter Your Zip:' followed by a text input field containing the placeholder 'e.g. 11104' and a green button labeled 'Get Rates Now'.

Are you registering a car?

It's a good time to check car insurance rates.

Find the lowest rate among top providers:

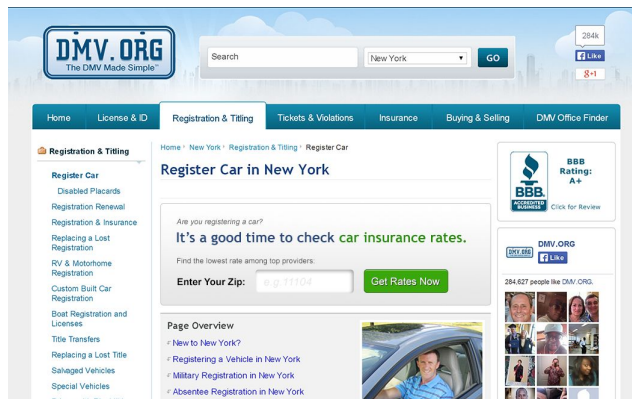
Enter Your Zip:

[Get Rates Now](#)

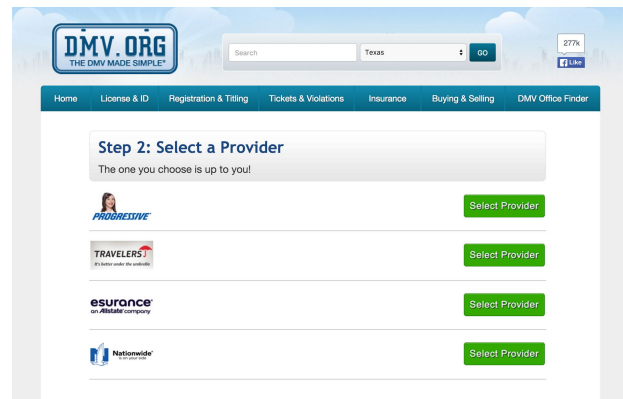
The business need: Increased revenue per visitor

Because DMV.org is only paid when there's a transaction, they have an opportunity to use conversion optimization to directly lift their revenue per visitor - and greatly impact the business.

The company's wide breadth of information and high monthly visitor volume meant there was lots of potential for optimization. But, the company also knew there were risks if their conversion optimization program wasn't built the right way.



Step 1 - Banner placement on the page.



Step 2 - Choosing a provider.

Challenges faced:
**Limited staff, unreliable
experiment results**

Challenges faced: Limited staff, unreliable experiment results

DMV.org faced several challenges when they reached out to WiderFunnel. They only had a one-person optimization team.

Their A/B testing relied on a cobbled-together technology stack using Optimizely combined with an advertising server and Adobe SiteCatalyst for revenue reporting, leading to mismatched data and unreliable results.

Most challenging of all, however, was a lack of conversion strategy. The team used what Hale described as a “hunt and peck system” that didn’t create momentum, useful insights, or sustained revenue lift from their efforts.

“We knew there were inefficiencies, but didn’t know how far off we were or what to do about it. We didn’t know if we had good findings or how to make decisions. Too many times we made decisions based on emotion.”

DMV.org needed a better program design and more expertise added to the team to drive consistent optimization results.

The solution:

A best-in-class optimization program

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WiderFunnel did more than just run a few A/B tests for DMV.org: The teams worked together to develop an integrated long-term optimization program that consistently delivers both revenue lift and customer insights.

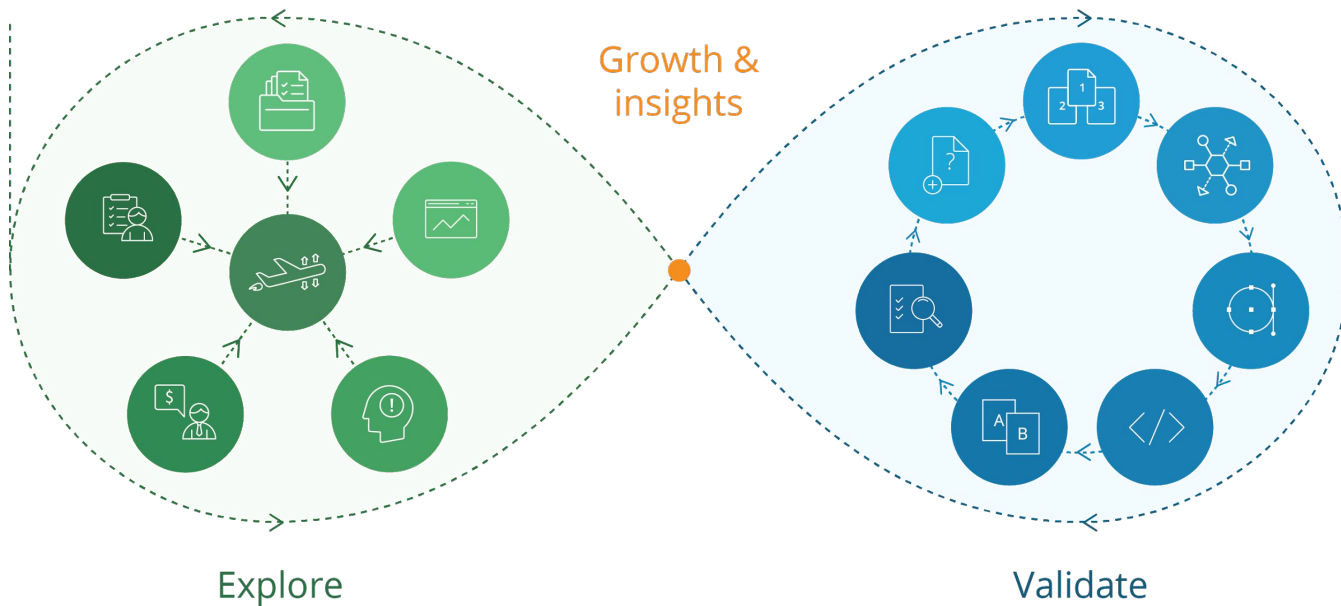
The most advanced organizations view optimization as an ongoing strategy. It's not a one-time project and it doesn't have an end point where the company's experiences are "optimized." WiderFunnel's Infinity Optimization Process shows how this works for companies like DMV.org.

The Infinity Optimization Process

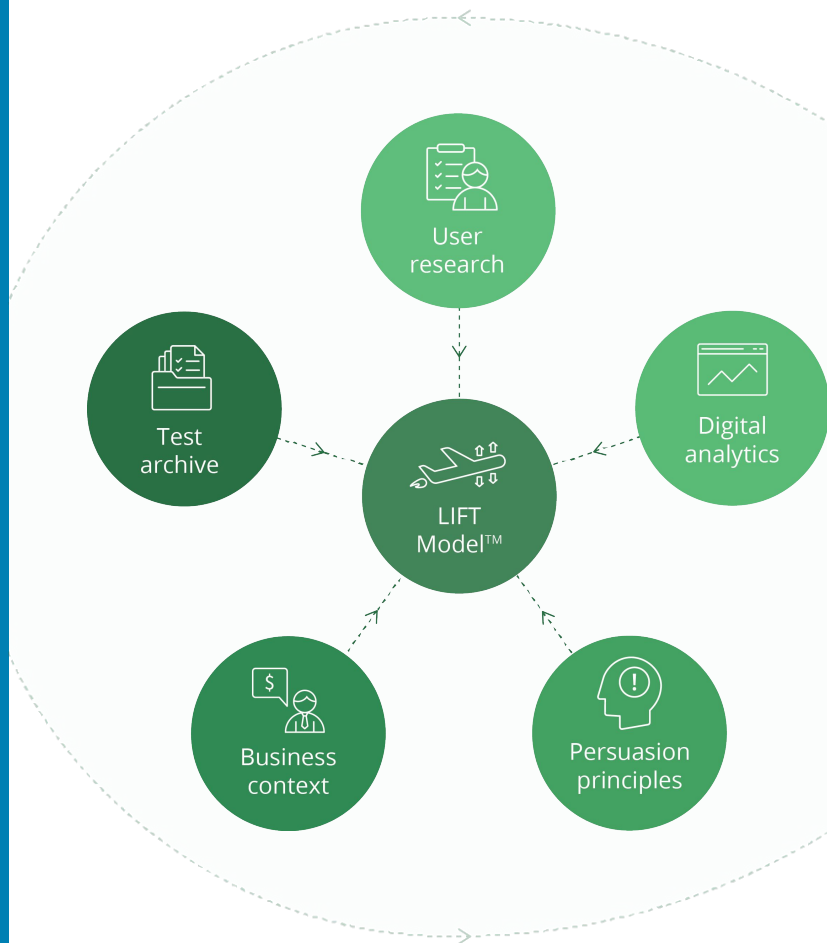
The process cycles between two distinct phases: **Explore** and **Validate**. The two phases support each other, and need each other to succeed. See the next page for an illustration of the process.

Explore is expansive, where the source of new ideas is explored. Validate is reductive, with the ideas being A/B tested to prove their value. The nucleus in the middle, where the two phases meet, is where Growth and Insights are revealed.

Infinity Optimization Process



WiderFunnel's Infinity Optimization Process shows how the Explore and Validate phases work together to produce both growth and insights.

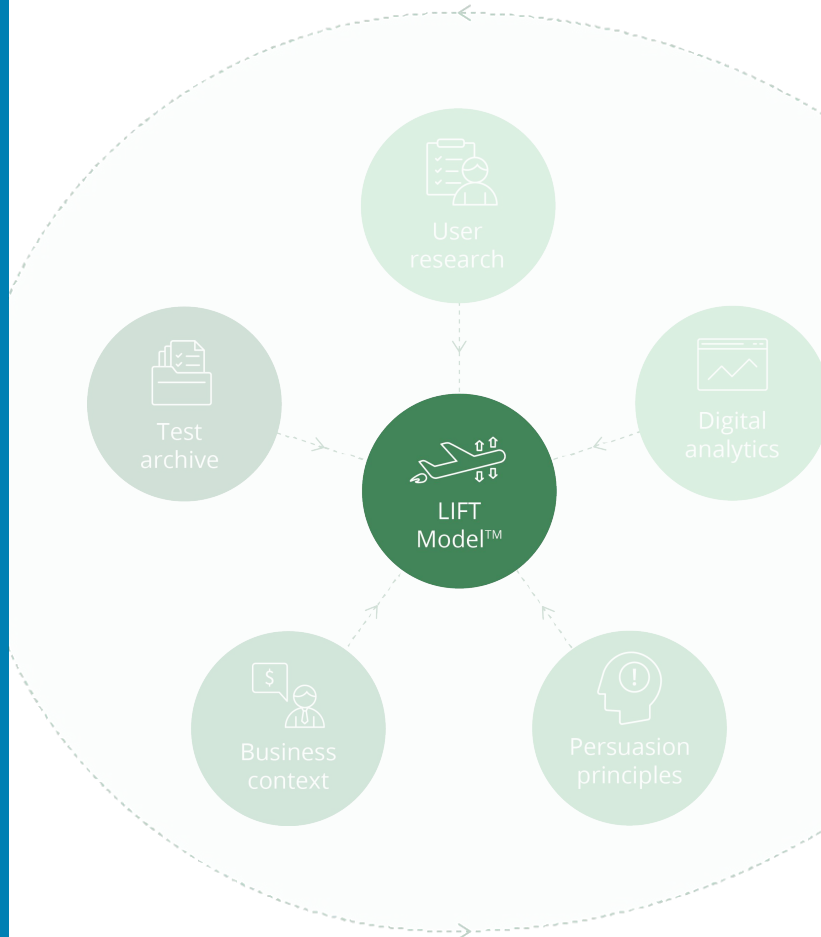


Explore

In the Explore phase, the team gathers insights about the business and customers through many different sources: stakeholder interviews, user testing, web analytics and other voice-of-customer analyses.

In this phase, the team also considers publicly-known persuasion principles and their internal patterns within their test archive. This is an expansive phase, where all options are considered, whether they are minor usability tweaks or dramatic concepts that challenge the business.

The solution: A best-in-class optimization program



All that data-gathering is centered around WiderFunnel's framework for understanding the customers' conversion barriers and persuasion opportunities - the LIFT Model™.

The LIFT Model shows the six conversion factors that are impacting every organization's conversion rates. It encourages optimization experts to see their marketing experiences through the eyes of their prospects.

Value proposition

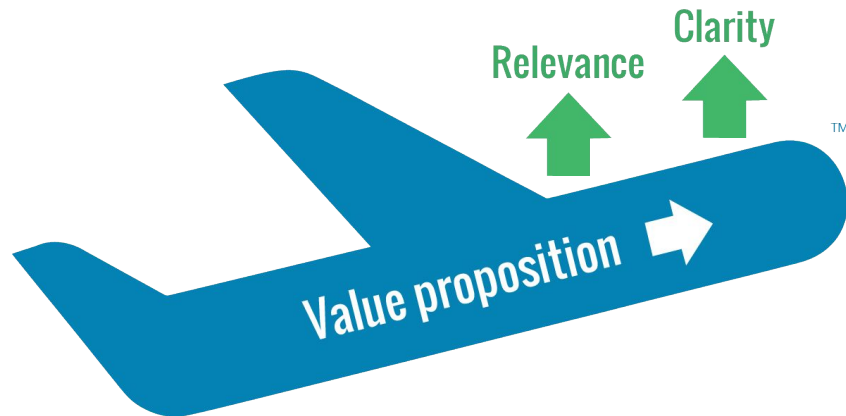
This is the vehicle that provides the potential for your conversion rate, it is the most important of the six factors.

Relevance

Does your web page deliver on what your prospects expect?
Does it match their needs and feelings?

Clarity

How easily is your value proposition communicated?
This includes eyeflow, imagery, copywriting and calls-to-action.



The solution: A best-in-class optimization program

Urgency

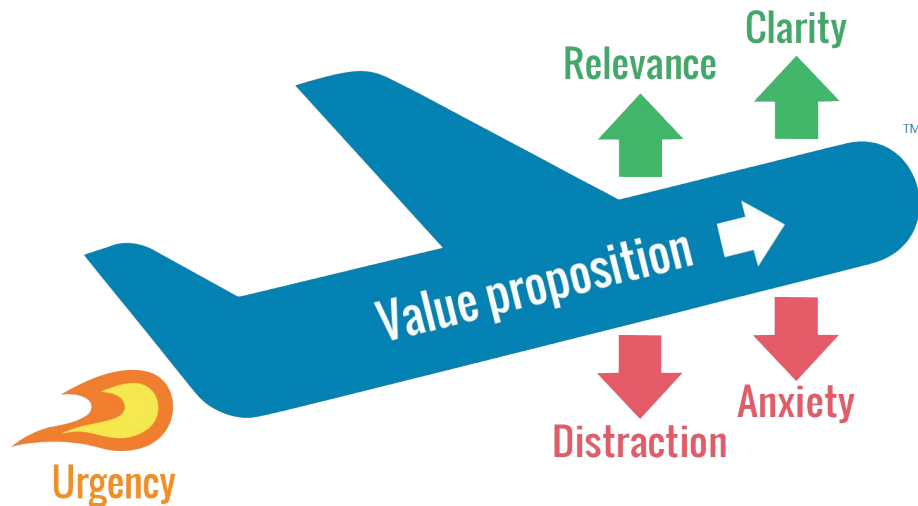
How are you matching the visitors' internal urgency and creating external incentives?

Distraction

Is your website content diverting visitors away from your primary goal?

Anxiety

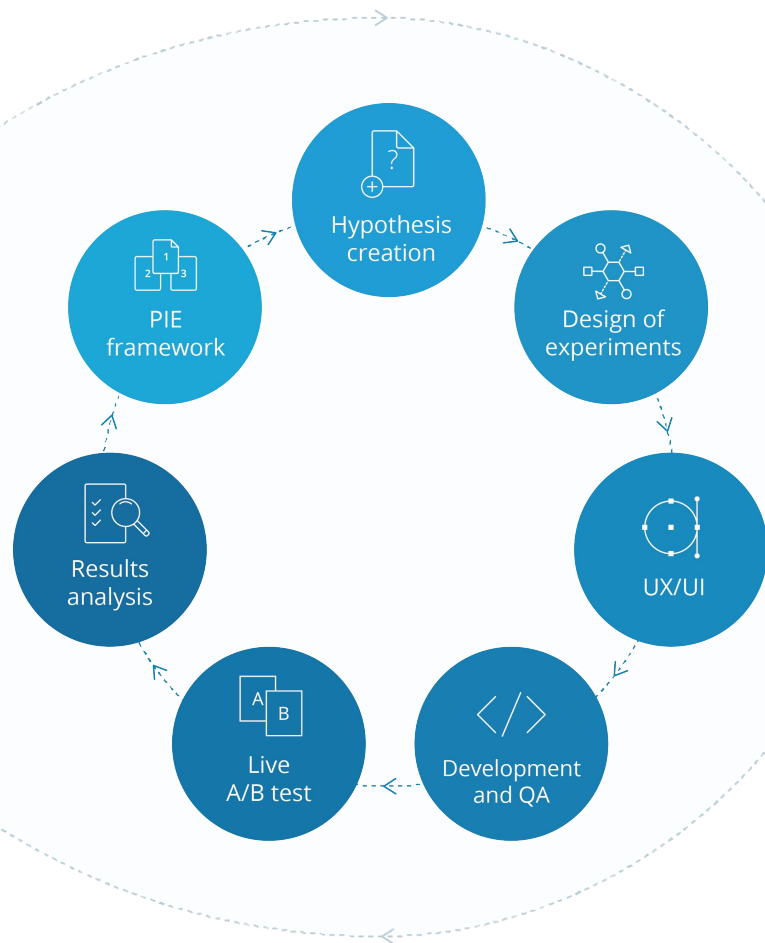
What elements on the page could be creating uncertainty for your prospects about taking action?



Validate

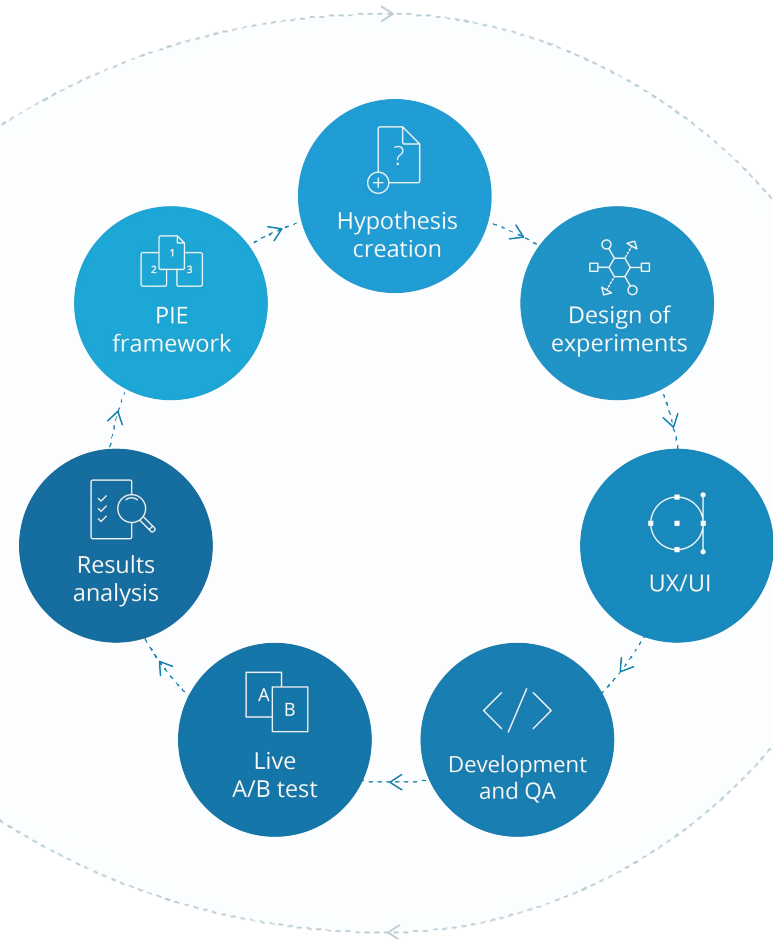
Once the team has a good basis for understanding the context and customer, the process moves into the Validate phase. Here, the optimization team designs experiment plans to find out which of the insights apply to the company's business context.

The team prioritizes experiments using the PIE framework, develops powerful hypotheses, creates the experimental design to maximize insight-validation, and runs full-service A/B tests.



The Validate phase is a rapid A/B testing cycle where new inputs from Explore are fed into the experiment plans.

The most important final step in the cycle, the results analysis, is where the live experiment data shows how the team's predictions played out in real life. New insights from these experiments are fed into following experiment sprints and back into the Explore phase.



The solution: A best-in-class optimization program

For DMV.org, the Explore and Validate cycles have produced an ongoing series of profitable and interesting insights. Those insights are what WiderFunnel calls 'A-ha!' Moments.

The following pages show just a few of the many A/B tests that have delivered 'A-ha!' Moments for DMV.org.

The result:

**Two years of doubled revenue
- and heading for a third**

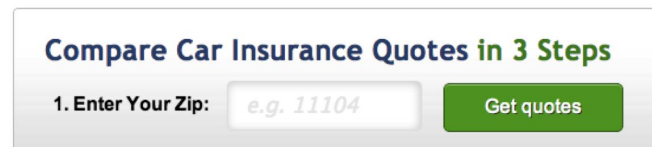
The result: Two years of doubled revenue — and heading for a third

The work DMV.org and WiderFunnel have done together has had amazing results. By supplementing the internal team with WiderFunnel's full service partnership, DMV.org is now running 500 controlled web and mobile experiments per year, spread across the internal and WiderFunnel teams.

A/B Test: How persuasive is relevance?

Most insurance companies assume their rates are the most important thing to customers. It should be no surprise, then, that most ads reference rates. Who can forget the famous Geico ad tagline? You know, the one about saving 15%.

One of the benefits of DMV.org's service that offers multiple insurance providers is comparing quotes to find the best deal. The insurance banner with this message looked like this:

A screenshot of a web banner for DMV.org. The banner has a light gray background with rounded corners. At the top, the text "Compare Car Insurance Quotes in 3 Steps" is displayed, with "Compare Car Insurance Quotes" in dark blue and "in 3 Steps" in green. Below this, on the left, is the text "1. Enter Your Zip:" followed by a white input field containing the placeholder text "e.g. 11104". To the right of the input field is a green button with the white text "Get quotes".

Compare Car Insurance Quotes in 3 Steps

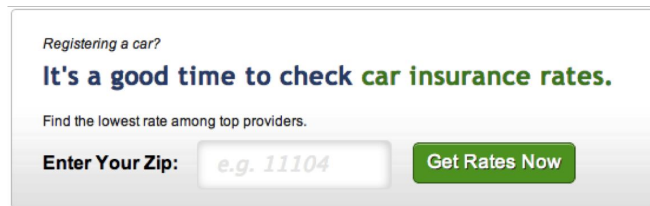
1. Enter Your Zip: [Get quotes](#)

Original banner with compare quotes message.

The result: Two years of doubled revenue — and heading for a third

In testing many different iterations, we discovered that the rates are important, but rate isn't the only important factor. The relevance of the message is also important.

We constructed an A/B test where one of the variations referenced the visitor's intent on the page. On an informational page about car registration, we added a lead-in message saying *"Registering a car?"*, then followed with *"It's a good time to check car insurance rates."*

A banner for car insurance rates. It has a light gray background with a thin border. At the top, it says "Registering a car?" in a small, italicized font. Below that, the main message "It's a good time to check car insurance rates." is displayed, with "It's a good time to check" in blue and "car insurance rates." in green. Underneath, it says "Find the lowest rate among top providers." in a small font. At the bottom, there is a form with the label "Enter Your Zip:" followed by a text input field containing "e.g. 11104" and a green button labeled "Get Rates Now".

Registering a car?

It's a good time to check car insurance rates.

Find the lowest rate among top providers.

Enter Your Zip: [Get Rates Now](#)

Winning banner with relevance message and 14% revenue lift.

That change improved the relevance of the message and produced a 14% revenue lift across all content pages with this banner.

Insight: Boosting relevance can produce large revenue lift.

The result: Two years of doubled revenue — and heading for a third

A/B Test: Does regional personalization increase relevance?

If referencing the visitor's page intent creates a more relevant experience and higher revenue, then what if we pushed relevance even further? WiderFunnel has tested personalized experiences in many different scenarios and found the results to be variable. We were curious to see whether geographic personalization would work in this situation.

In one experiment, we discovered that adding a line under the zip code field saying *"Get quotes from the top providers in [State]"* **lifted revenue** by 3.9%.

Compare Car Insurance Quotes in 3 Steps

1. Enter Your Zip:

e.g. 11104

GO >

The Control didn't have a caption under the field.

Compare Car Insurance Quotes in 3 Steps

1. Enter Your Zip:

e.g. 11104

GO >

Get quotes from top providers in New York.

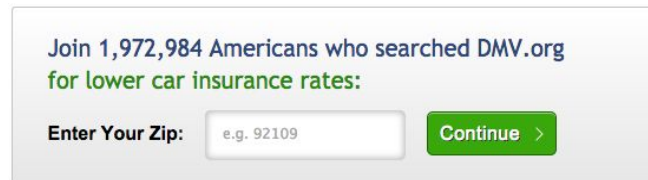
Adding a geographic relevance caption lifted revenue by 3.9%.

The result: Two years of doubled revenue — and heading for a third

If this simple change can lead to that much of a revenue lift, what would happen if we added geographic relevance even more dramatically?

In a follow-up test, we changed the headline, comparing one saying that “1,972,984 Americans” had used the site to research auto insurance rates and another saying that “372,751 Californians” (for visitors from California) had researched rates.

In this case, the result showed the state-specific (e.g. “Californians”) headline **decreased revenue** by 5.4%!

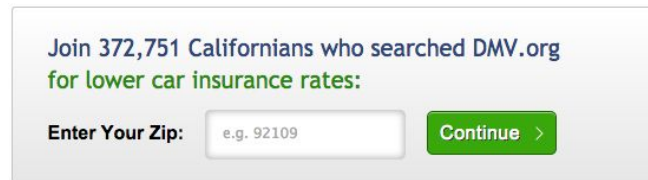
A screenshot of a banner for DMV.org. The headline reads "Join 1,972,984 Americans who searched DMV.org for lower car insurance rates:". Below the headline is a form with the label "Enter Your Zip:" and a text input field containing "e.g. 92109". To the right of the input field is a green button with the text "Continue >".

Join 1,972,984 Americans who searched DMV.org
for lower car insurance rates:

Enter Your Zip:

Continue >

The non-personalized version worked better in this case.

A screenshot of a banner for DMV.org, similar to the one above but with a state-specific headline. The headline reads "Join 372,751 Californians who searched DMV.org for lower car insurance rates:". Below the headline is a form with the label "Enter Your Zip:" and a text input field containing "e.g. 92109". To the right of the input field is a green button with the text "Continue >".

Join 372,751 Californians who searched DMV.org
for lower car insurance rates:

Enter Your Zip:

Continue >

Adding a state-specific headline reduced revenue by 5.4%.

Insight: Sometimes personalization is not the right tactic.

The result: Two years of doubled revenue — and heading for a third

But, there's more to this story. After digging into the results at a state-specific level, we discovered significant variance in which states responded better to state-specific messaging. Washington state, at the high end, showed a 67.3% revenue lift when their state was mentioned, yet Oregon (right next door!), showed a 56.2% decrease! See the chart to the right.

These comparisons between states are not statistically significant yet, but this results analysis raises some interesting new questions that can lead to further experiment hypotheses.

State	No-state specific	State Specific	Change
Washington	\$	\$	67.3%
Kansas	\$	\$	63.5%
Maryland	\$	\$	53.2%
Connecticut	\$	\$	34.4%
Indiana	\$	\$	22.6%
New Jersey	\$	\$	16.5%
Nevada	\$	\$	9.8%
Pennsylvania	\$	\$	6.1%
California	\$	\$	4.5%
Louisiana	\$	\$	2.5%
Arizona	\$	\$	0.4%
Missouri	\$	\$	-0.5%
South Carolina	\$	\$	-0.6%
Georgia	\$	\$	-4.7%
Alabama	\$	\$	-5.4%
Ohio	\$	\$	-6.1%
Tennessee	\$	\$	-6.8%
North Carolina	\$	\$	-7.9%
Florida	\$	\$	-9.8%
Michigan	\$	\$	-10.9%
Colorado	\$	\$	-12.7%
Texas	\$	\$	-13.6%
New York	\$	\$	-14.8%
Illinois	\$	\$	-15.9%
Minnesota	\$	\$	-19.0%
Virginia	\$	\$	-19.7%
Massachusetts	\$	\$	-20.2%
Wisconsin	\$	\$	-28.7%
Utah	\$	\$	-30.3%
Oregon	\$	\$	-56.2%

The result: Two years of doubled revenue — and heading for a third

The geographic personalization provided other insights as well. We ran another test including the word “please” in the field label and found that there was a geographic association with response: Some states responded better to the label saying "Please Enter Your Zip" than others.

Insight: Geography influences people's message perception. (Also, are some states more polite than others?)

A/B Test: Things your designer would never recommend

We also tested the impact of changing images, focusing on a mini-banner asking visitors to enter their ZIP codes to get insurance rate estimates.

WiderFunnel and DMV.org ran tests on various images on the banner, including an animated GIF of a fender-bender, a photo of a dog driving a car, a photo of a sad-looking driver, and a banner that had no image but was shaped like a car.

The result: Two years of doubled revenue — and heading for a third



The Control.



A new image lifted conversions by 5.33%.



An animated gif led to a 4.17% increase.



The frustrated driver led to a 0.57% drop.



The driving dog lifted conversions by 7.10%.



But this banner swept the competition...

The result: Two years of doubled revenue — and heading for a third

The testing team, including the designer responsible for creating the variations, weren't sure about that last variation, the car-shaped one. The design was out of left field and some thought it was a waste of traffic to test it.

They were wrong. The car-shaped banner increased the product click through rate by an amazing 89.6%, compared with less than 10% ranges for the other options. This uplift led to a revenue per visitor increase of 74.92%.

Insight: Reserve a portion of your variations for "left field" variations — you might be surprised.

The result: Two years of doubled revenue — and heading for a third

A/B Test: Does a Flashy Page Get Results?




On the insurance results pages, we made an effort to reduce noise. Traditional insurance results pages have logos on the left with bullet points differentiating their services. Through our testing, we learned that eliminating the noise worked.

People understand the brands and don't need to be oversold. We tested a noisy version against an optimized, less noisy page. The optimized page won by 40%.

Insight: Reducing content in a highly branded category can increase conversion rates.

Compare Insurance Rates in 3 EASY STEPS




Step 2: Select Providers to Compare

	<input type="text" value="Enter Zip Code"/> <input type="button" value="Go"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">You could save 15% or more24 hour claims serviceGet a FREE quote, today!
 <small>an Allstate company</small>	<input type="text" value="Enter Zip Code"/> <input type="button" value="Go"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Get fast, free quotes in minutesBuy your policy instantly onlinePrint your ID cards right away
	<input type="text" value="Enter Zip Code"/> <input type="button" value="Go"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">You could save hundreds!Get a FREE quote24/7 live support

Control - insurance results page.

Step 2: Select a Provider

The one you choose is up to you!

	<input type="text" value="90210"/>	<input type="button" value="Select Provider"/>
 <small>an Allstate company</small>	<input type="text" value="90210"/>	<input type="button" value="Select Provider"/>
	<input type="text" value="90210"/>	<input type="button" value="Select Provider"/>

Testing a less noisy results page.

The result: Two years of doubled revenue — and heading for a third

As a result of these tests and others, the company has doubled revenue two years in a row, and a single A/B test — the car-shaped mini-banner — will likely make it three years in a row. But, for many people, there's an outstanding question about conversion optimization that we wanted to answer.

Do the results stick?

Our long-term working relationship has made it possible to determine whether these results are sustainable. At the six-month mark, DMV.org and WiderFunnel calculated a cumulative multiplied 32.8% lift in revenue. This impressive lift total raised the question: Are these results sticky?

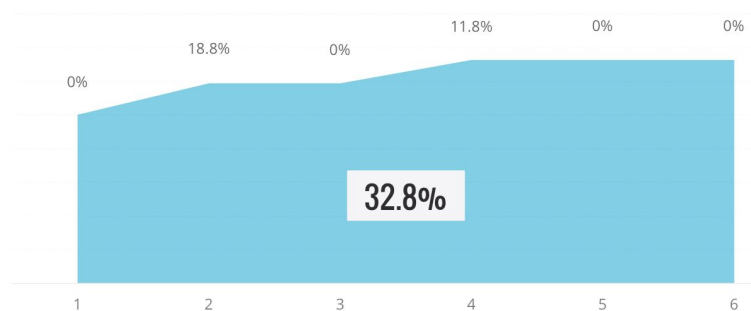
To test this question, the WiderFunnel team used DMV.org's original control page from before the first test and A/B tested it against the latest winning variation.

The result: Two years of doubled revenue — and heading for a third

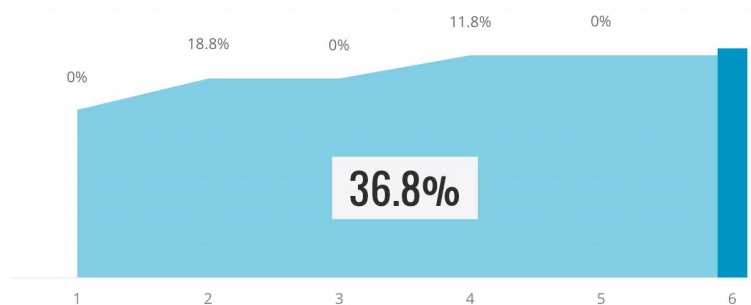
The A/B test of the original Control page against the 6-month winner showed a 36.8% lift. This result was within the same statistical range as the calculated lift.

In other words, the numbers held, proving that these improvements were sustainable.

We didn't stop there. We also verified the results at the end of 12 months, and again at 24 months. This rigorous verification proves that the revenue lift from our A/B testing is not temporary. In fact, the results are, so far, permanent.

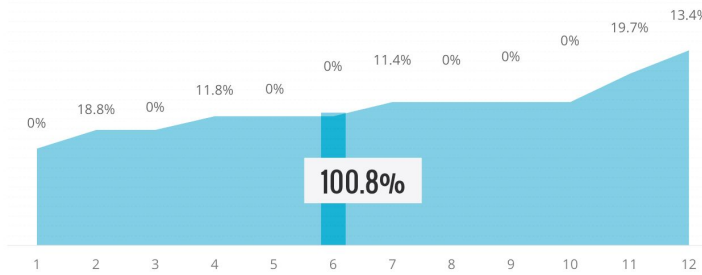


6 months of optimization - calculated lift.

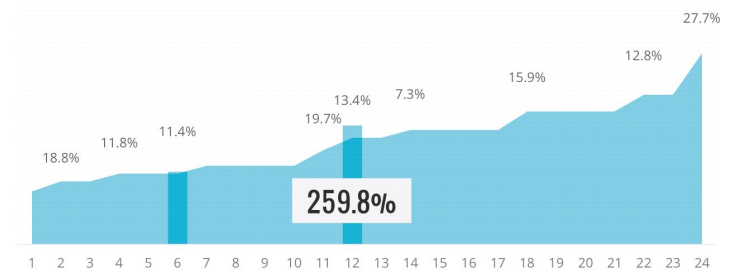


6 months of optimization - verified.

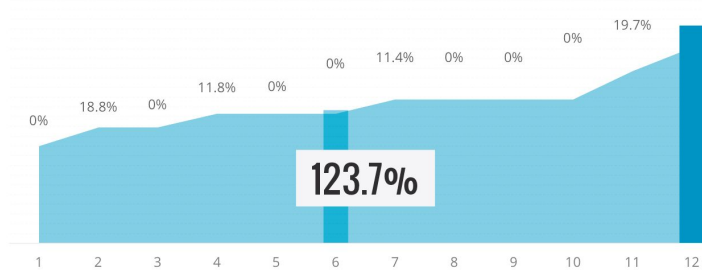
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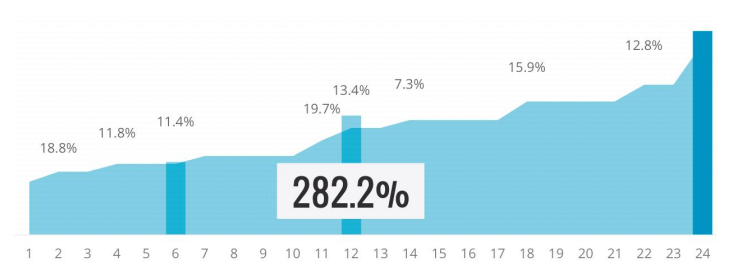
12 months of optimization - calculated lift.



24 months of optimization - calculated lift.



12 months of optimization - verified.



24 months of optimization - verified.

The result: Two years of doubled revenue — and heading for a third

Not only is DMV.org getting insights into what works, it's building a long-term conversion strategy that it will continue to refine and develop in the coming years.

It isn't just the tests themselves that have made this partnership a success. DMV.org wanted WiderFunnel to be an extension of its own company, and that's what happened — we're an integrated team that shares its knowledge so DMV.org can build its own expertise and improve its internal processes for future testing.

About WiderFunnel

WiderFunnel creates profitable 'A-ha!' moments for our clients every day.

Our team of experts works together with a singular focus on the one thing we are best in the world at: optimizing our client's customer touchpoints through insightful A/B testing. We don't just consult and give advice. We test every recommendation in the real world to prove its value and gain proven insights.

Since WiderFunnel began in 2007, we've partnered with high traffic clients like Google, SAP, 1-800 Flowers and Ebay to continuously evolve our Infinity Optimization Process, making it the most tested conversion optimization process on the planet.

Our clients can feel confident that they have the best enterprise-level optimization process, experts and results. Most importantly, they see the result continuously – **profitable 'A-ha!' moments that impact their businesses.**

[Learn more about WiderFunnel's services.](#)

Would you like to lift your conversion rate and profit?

Find out how WiderFunnel can help you get more leads, more registrations and more sales—fast!

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www.widerfunnel.com

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