MeasureFest

A brightonSEO. fringe event

The Ultimate Guide to Test & Learns

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Hi Brighton! I'm Giulia

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🧠 Freelance Consultant

✨ Figure skater, aerialist and fire breather

I've also done a lot of

test and learns

So I usually get some

questions

‘How do I select

test & control

groups?’

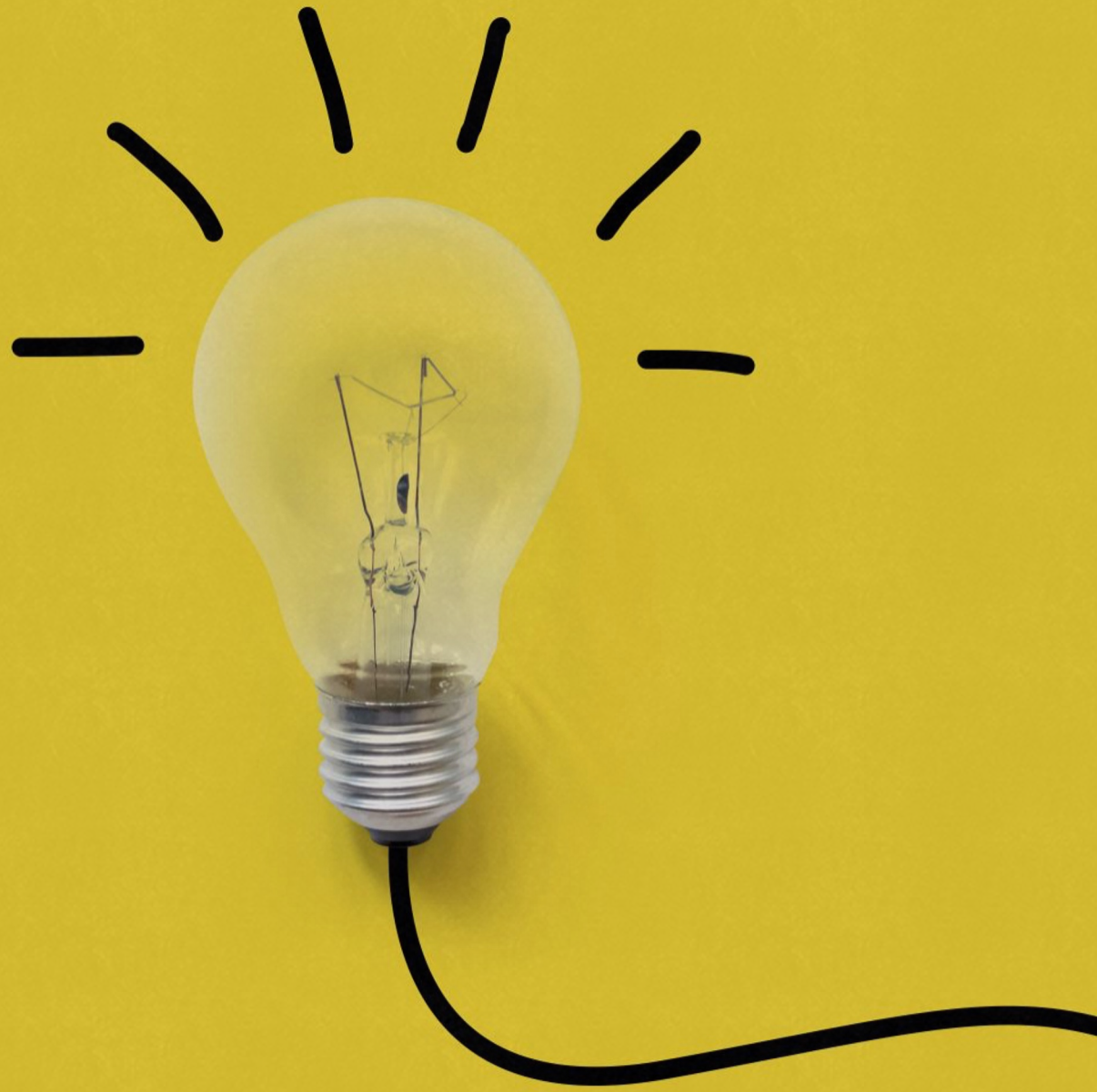
‘What metrics should I track?’

‘What *timeframe* & *test design* should I use?’

‘How should I analyse & report data?’

Let’s dive into it

Hypothesis



What questions are you trying to answer?

"Updating my titles to include a recency signal will significantly improve CTRs"

Example.com

https://www.example.com › london › best-restaurants-i...

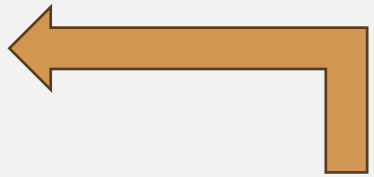
The best restaurants in London

Example.com

https://www.example.com › london › best-restaurants-i...

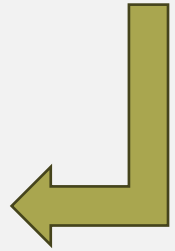
The best restaurants in London | Summer 2023

Independent variable



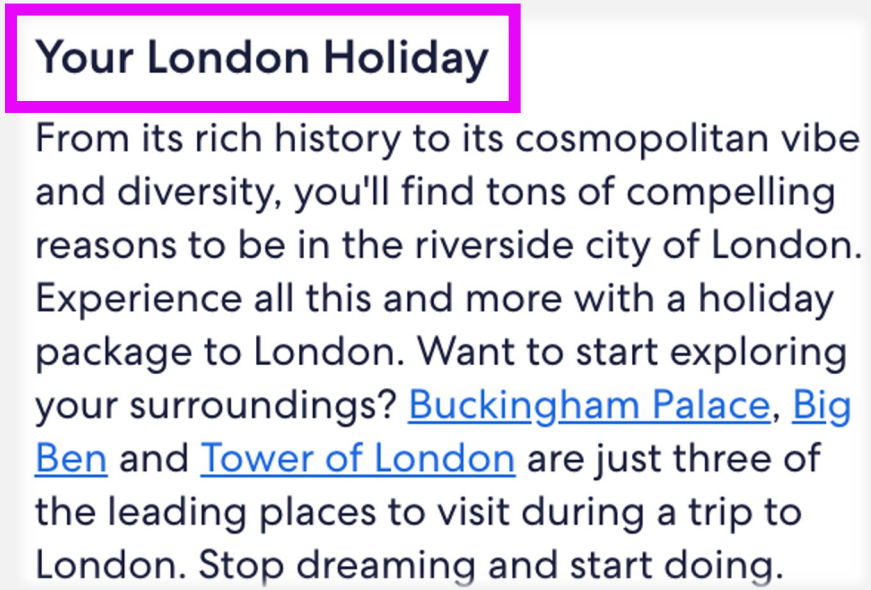
"Updating my titles to include a recency signal will significantly improve CTRs"

Dependent variable

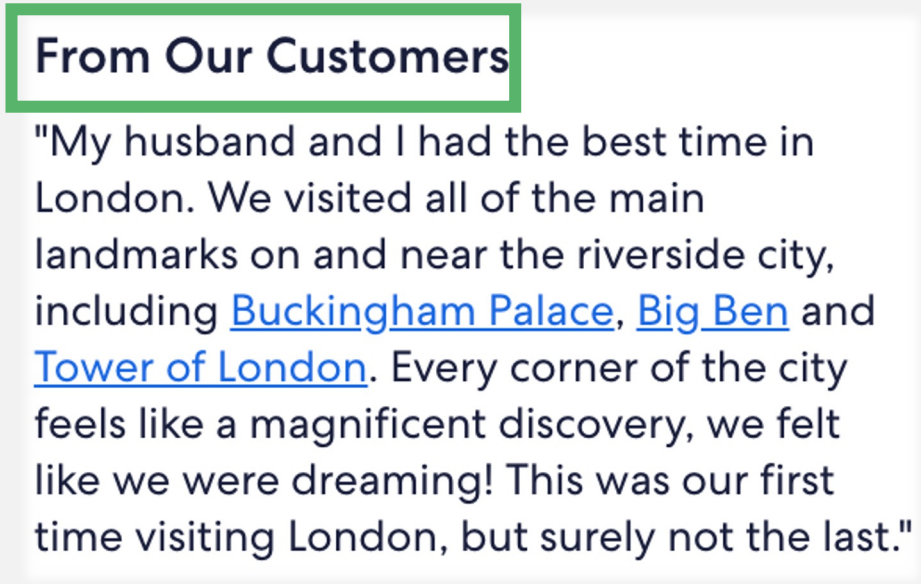


Some other example questions that might drive your testing strategy

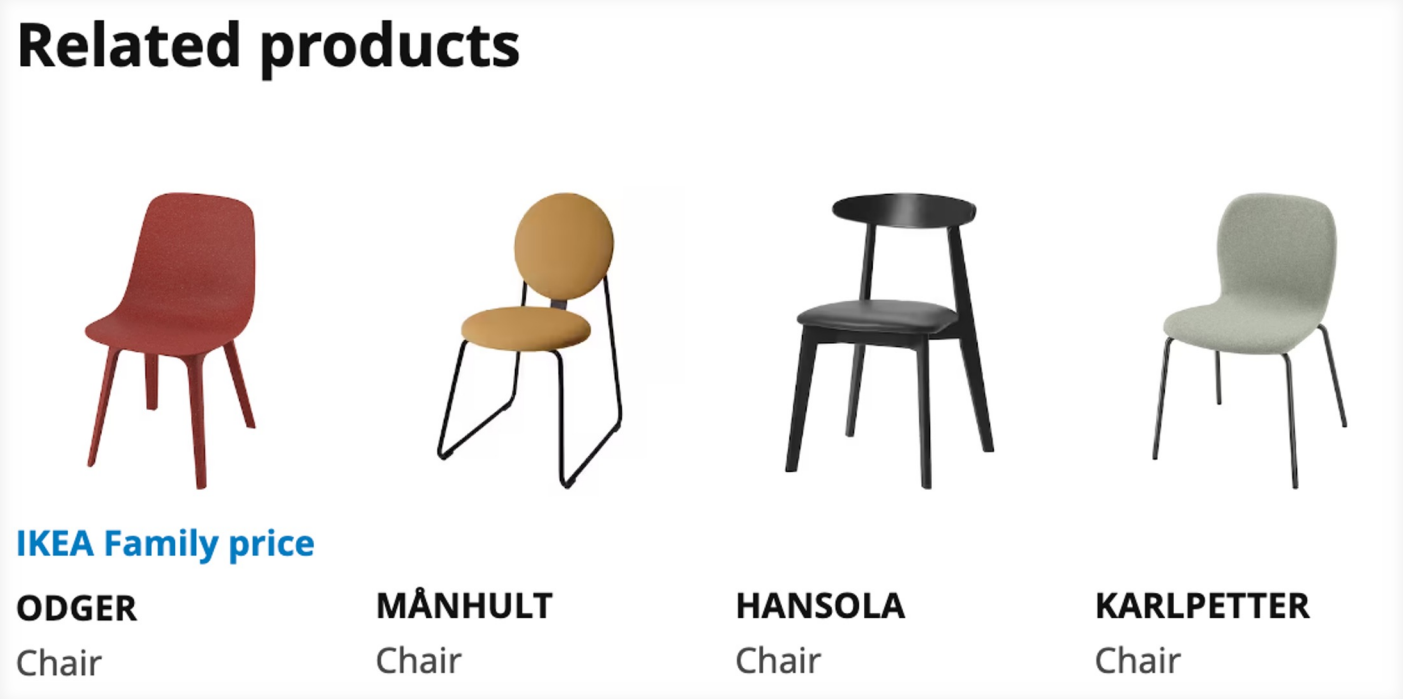
'How can we improve our content strategy to increase traffic?'



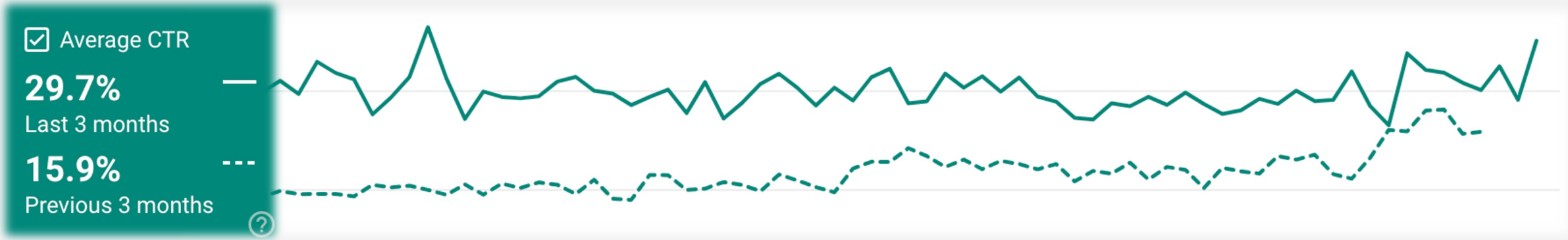
VS



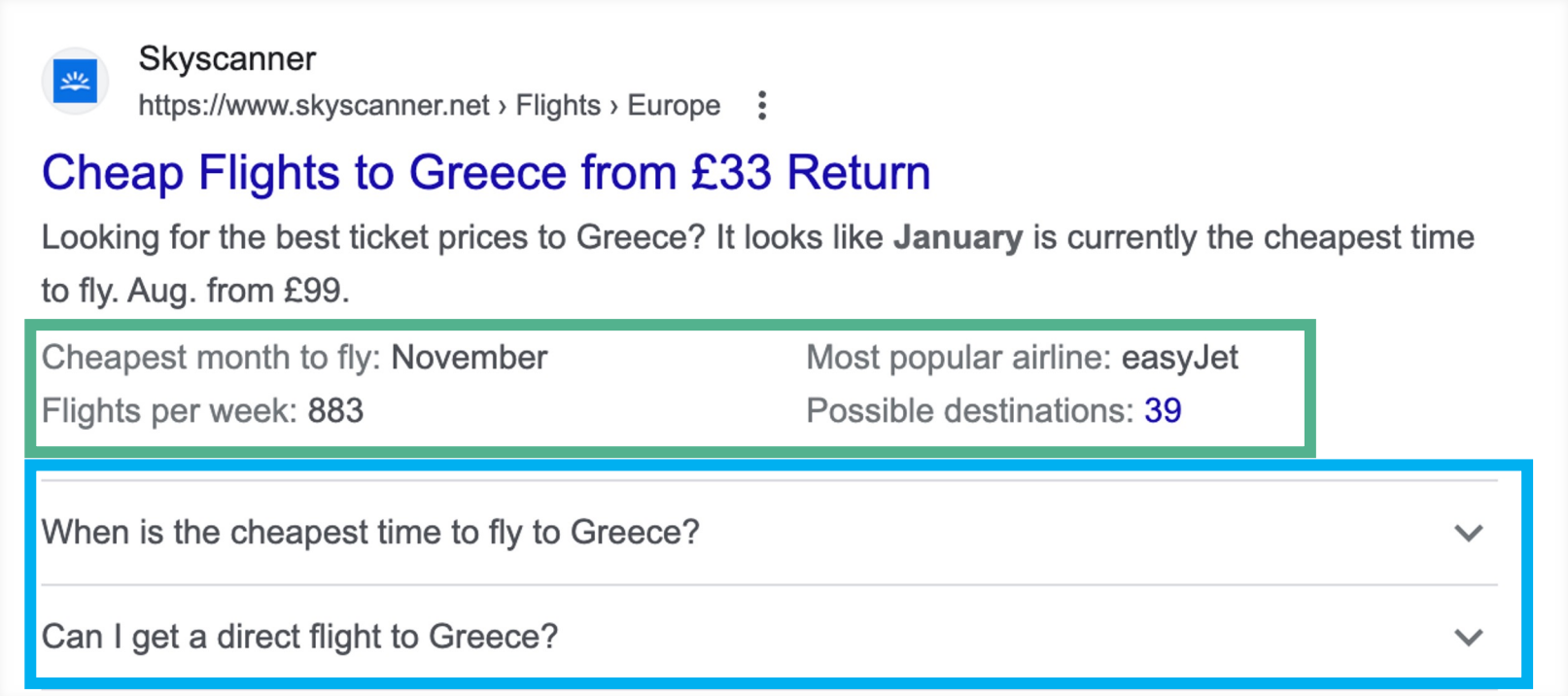
'How do we leverage internal linking to improve rankings?'



'What on-page elements do we need to focus on to improve CTRs?'



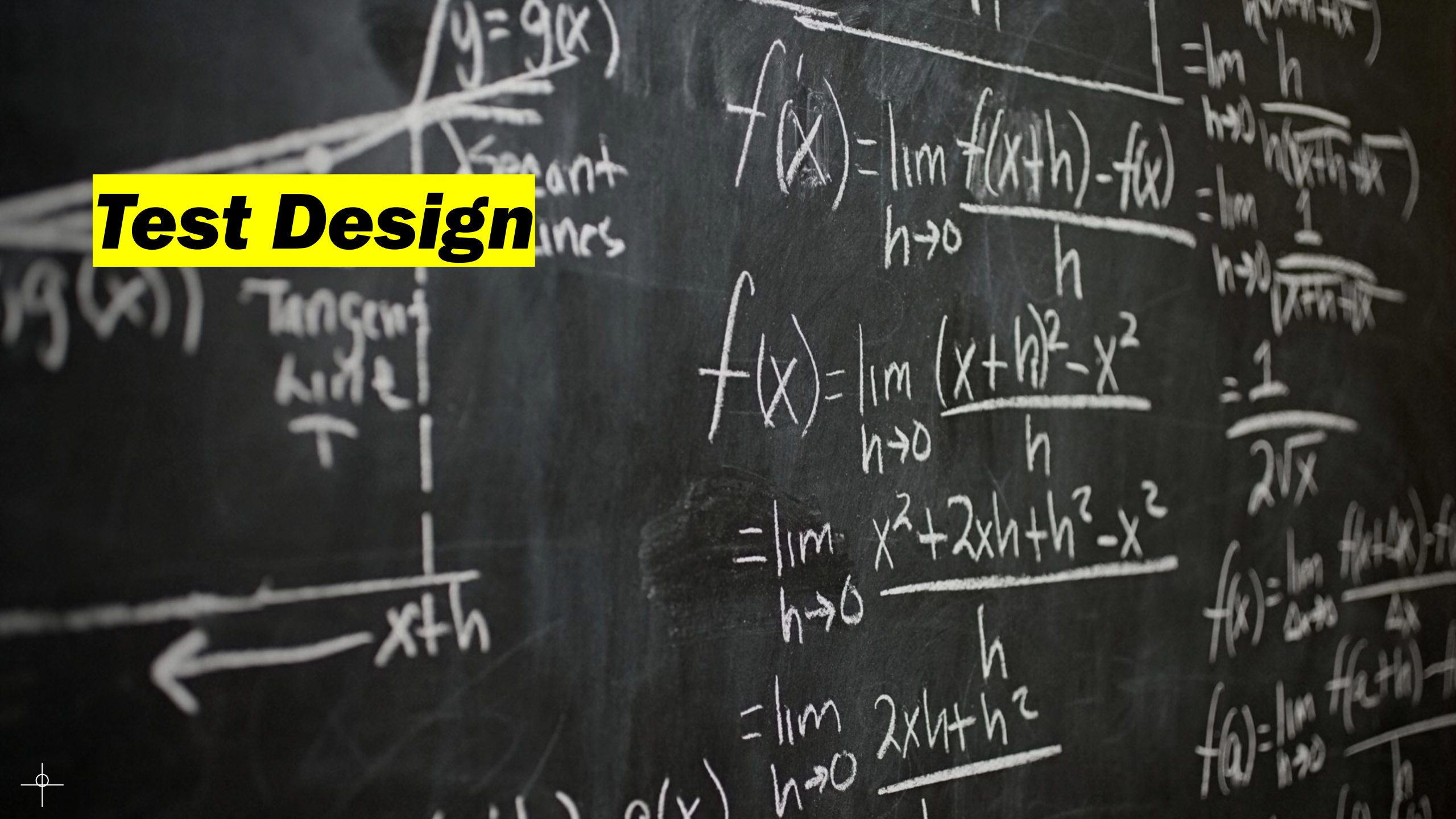
'What kind of schema mark-up ensures us the most SERP real estate?'



Need inspiration?

SEOClarity Split Testing Ideas | SearchPilot Newsletter *(free)*

SEO Case Study Database by Adam Gent *(paid)*


Test Design

To decide, ask yourself

What are the variables I am testing?

To decide, ask yourself

What kind of changes do I intend to make?

To decide, ask yourself

What tools do I have to implement my changes?

A/B Testing

A/B Testing

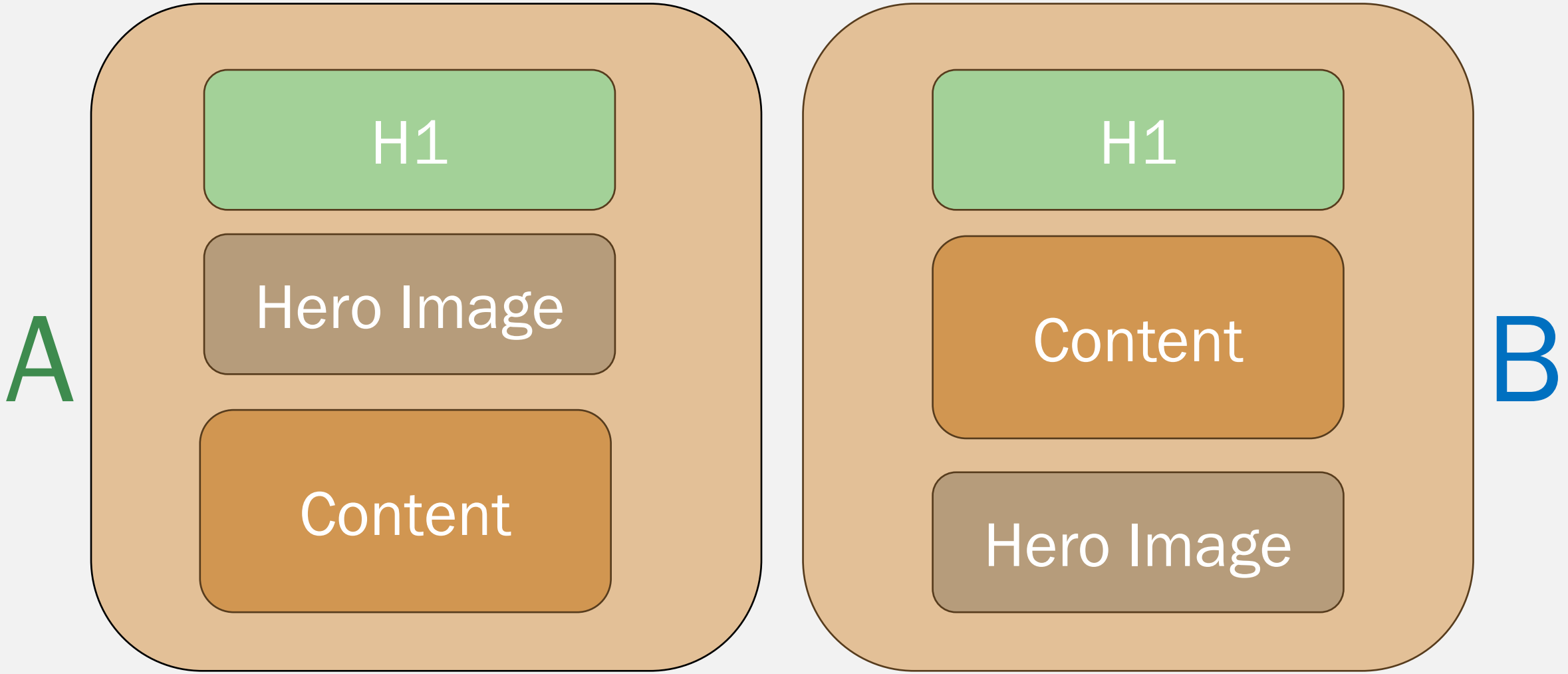
Multivariate

A/B Testing

Multivariate

Pre-post

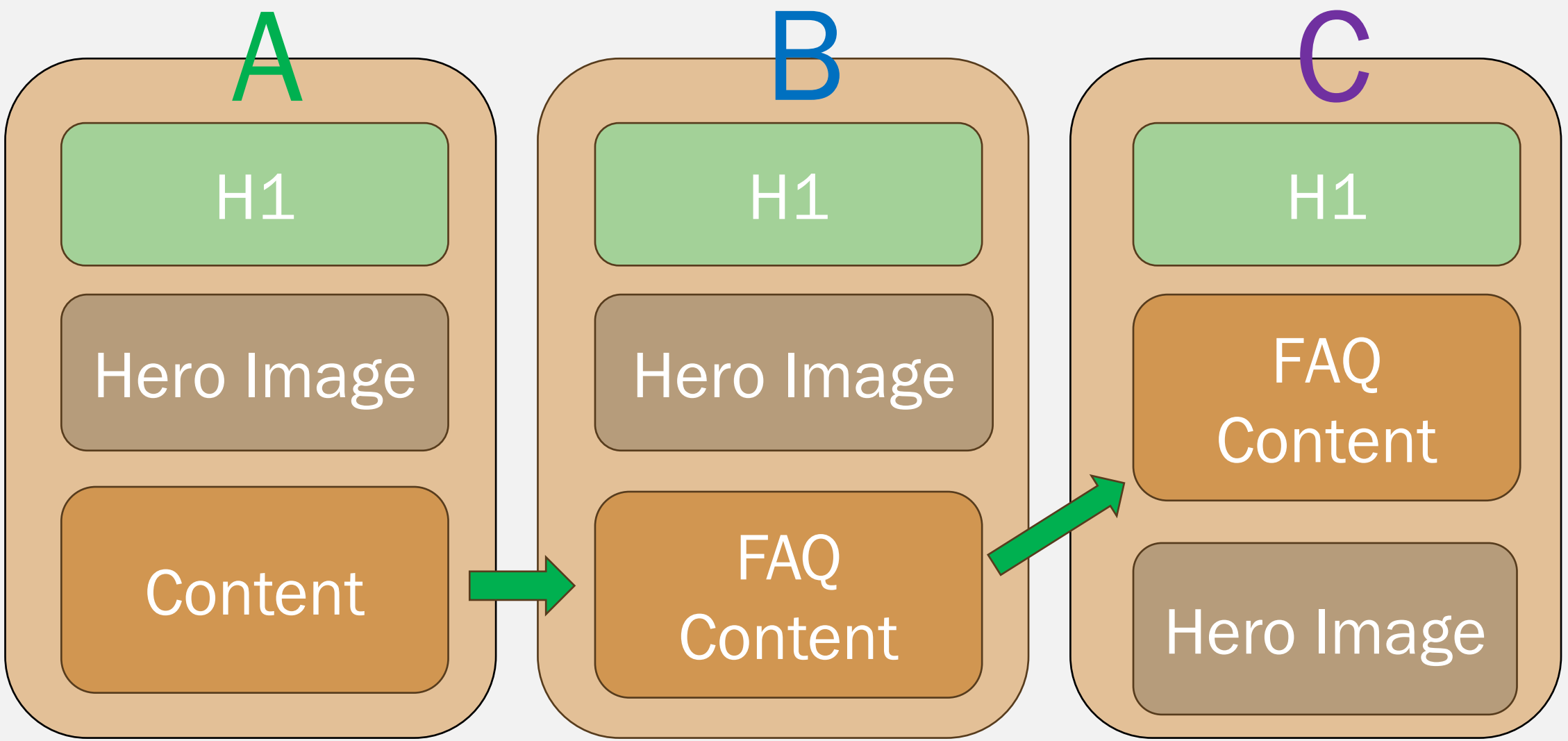
A/B Testing



A/B Testing

Both variants (A & B) are tested during the same timeframe

Multivariate



A/B & Multivariate Testing

Type of test	Testing Timeframe	Traffic required
A/B	Same	Low/Medium
Multivariate	Same	High

A/B & Multivariate Testing

Better suited for

CRM

A/B & Multivariate Testing

UX & CRO

A/B & Multivariate Testing

Marketing landing pages

A/B & Multivariate Testing

Paid campaigns

A/B & Multivariate Testing

Some kinds of on page SEO

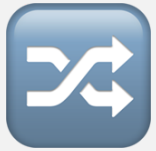
(if running at the edge)

Some Technical Directions for SEO

No cloaking

Source: Google Search Central Testing Guidelines

Some Technical Directions for SEO



302 redirects VS 301

(or JS-based redirects)

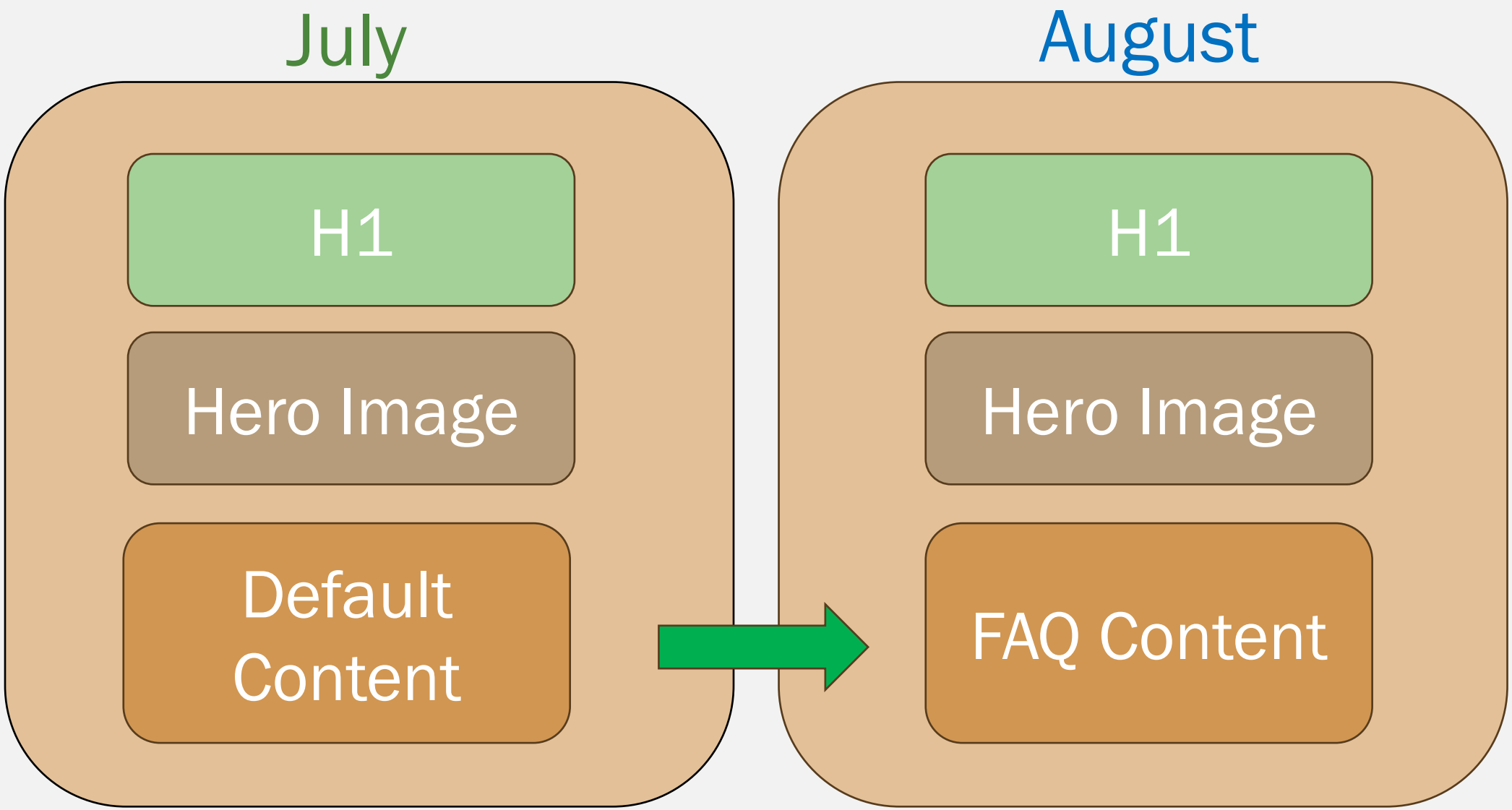
Source: Google Search Central Testing Guidelines

Some Technical Directions for SEO

🏆 Use rel= "canonical" attributes

Source: Google Search Central Testing Guidelines

Pre-post


July
August
H1
Hero Image
Default Content
H1
Hero Image
FAQ Content

Pre-post

Control and Variant are tested in

2 subsequent periods

Pre-post

Better suited for

Single on-page changes

Pre-post

⁉ Groups that cannot be matched for other conditions

Pre-post

Off page campaigns

Test & Control Groups

How do I select my test group?

- 🚦 Pages with enough traffic

How do I select my test group?

- 🚥 Pages with enough traffic
- 🤪 Not your outliers

How do I select my test group?

🚦 Pages with enough traffic

🤪 Not your outliers

👯 Pages of the same type (e.g. PLPs)

All to help reach

statistical significance

How do I select my control group(s)?

Tldr: keep everything
as close as possible
to the test group

A few options
(non mutually exclusive)

Same page types as the test group with similar 6-12 months traffic

Ideal for small scale websites & tests

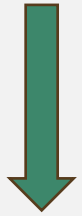
Top pages	Clicks	Group
https://example.com/categorypage12	720572	Test
https://example.com/categorypage7	710574	Control
https://example.com/categorypage17	678566	Test
https://example.com/categorypage6	652376	Control
https://example.com/categorypage16	275832	Test
https://example.com/categorypage14	275716	Control
https://example.com/categorypage15	263687	Test
https://example.com/categorypage9	254678	Control
https://example.com/categorypage13	235511	Control
https://example.com/categorypage5	205651	Test
https://example.com/categorypage3	142783	Control
https://example.com/categorypage4	130077	Test
https://example.com/categorypage8	128904	Control
https://example.com/categorypage2	128691	Test
https://example.com/categorypage11	117108	Control
https://example.com/categorypage1	114754	Test

Same pages as test group, but in a different, untreated market

Ideal for international websites & tests

Test Group (FR)	Control Group (UK)
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog1	https://example.com/en-gb/blog1
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog2	https://example.com/en-gb/blog2
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog3	https://example.com/en-gb/blog3
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog4	https://example.com/en-gb/blog4
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog5	https://example.com/en-gb/blog5
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog6	https://example.com/en-gb/blog6
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog7	https://example.com/en-gb/blog7
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog8	https://example.com/en-gb/blog8
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog9	https://example.com/en-gb/blog9
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog10	https://example.com/en-gb/blog10
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog11	https://example.com/en-gb/blog11
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog12	https://example.com/en-gb/blog12
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog13	https://example.com/en-gb/blog13
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog14	https://example.com/en-gb/blog14
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog15	https://example.com/en-gb/blog15
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog16	https://example.com/en-gb/blog16
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog17	https://example.com/en-gb/blog17
https://example.com/fr-fr/blog18	https://example.com/en-gb/blog18

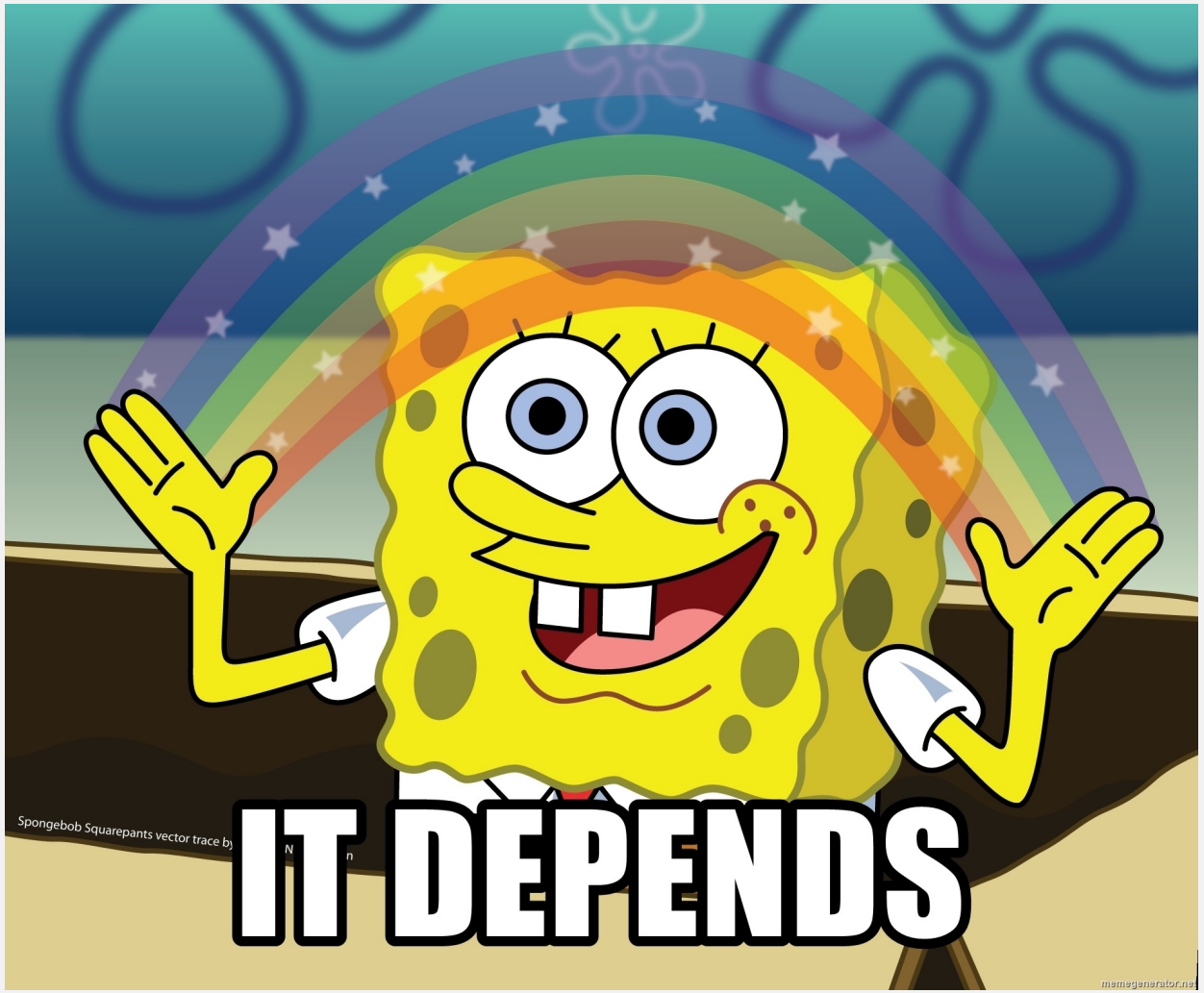
Overall website trend across same dates



Ideal for ecom and large scale websites & tests

Date	Clicks
2023-05-01	528,768
2023-05-02	547,195
2023-05-03	505,769
2023-05-04	512,974
2023-05-05	478,663
2023-05-06	466,258
2023-05-07	479,757
2023-05-08	505,087
2023-05-09	493,479
2023-05-10	526,750
2023-05-11	501,293
2023-05-12	468,099
2023-05-13	486,410
2023-05-14	485,428
2023-05-15	496,398

Timeframe


IT DEPENDS

How long should I let my test run?

For SEO tests:

2-4 weeks

(with intermediate check-ins)

14 days	Position Test	Position Control 1	Position Control 2
Pre	5.45	5.28	6.17
Post	5.41	5.88	6.42
Change	-0.61%	11.36%	4.00%

28 days	Position Test	Position Control 1	Position Control 2
Pre	5.42	4.85	6.41
Post	5.34	4.74	6.69
Change	-1.42%	-2.20%	4.42%

When are my ‘pre’ and ‘post’ periods?

Date	Position	
11/02/2022	5.4	T7 pre
12/02/2022	5.4	
13/02/2022	5.5	
14/02/2022	5.4	
15/02/2022	5.2	
16/02/2022	5.2	
17/02/2022	5.6	
18/02/2022	5.5	Launch
19/02/2022	5.6	
20/02/2022	5.5	
21/02/2022	5.4	
22/02/2022	5.8	
23/02/2022	5.4	
24/02/2022	5.3	
25/02/2022	5.4	T7 post

Launch date

For SEO tests, check when changes have been crawled rather than implemented

Analysis
1,000
Q1
Q2
Q3
Q2
Q3
Q4

This is tricky because it depends on the **test design** and the **resources** you have

Flying solo? 🧗

1 Good old delta formulas

(Post – Pre)/Pre

OR

(Post/Pre) -1

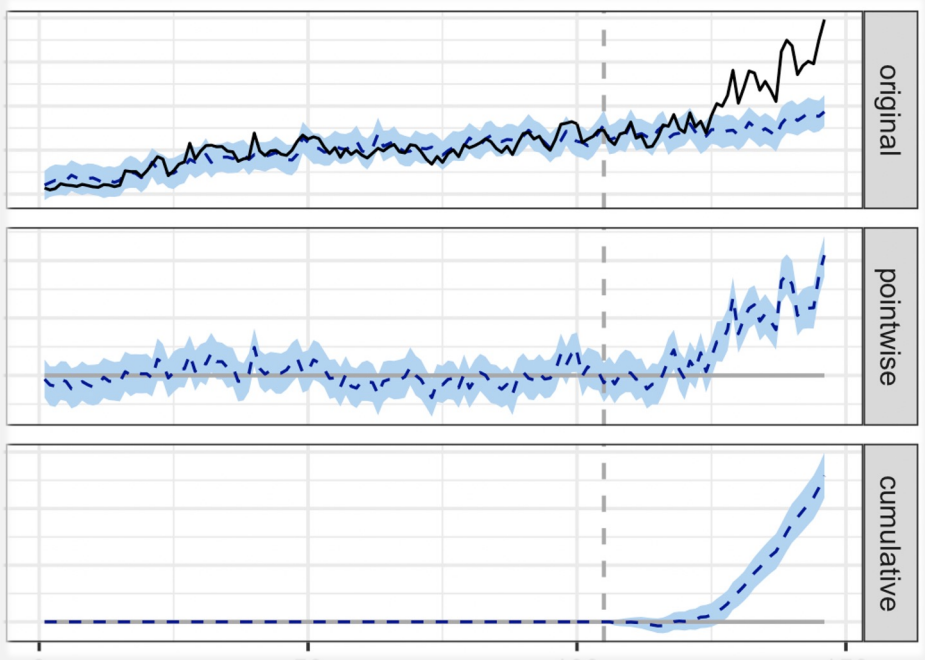
⬇

%

	Test Group - US Website	
	Average Rank	Weighted Average Rank
Pre	5.09	5.00
Post	5.08	5.38
Delta	-0,32%	12,67%

Flying solo? 🧗

2️⃣ Causal Impact Analysis



Got budget?

Then invest in tools that can make this

easier and faster

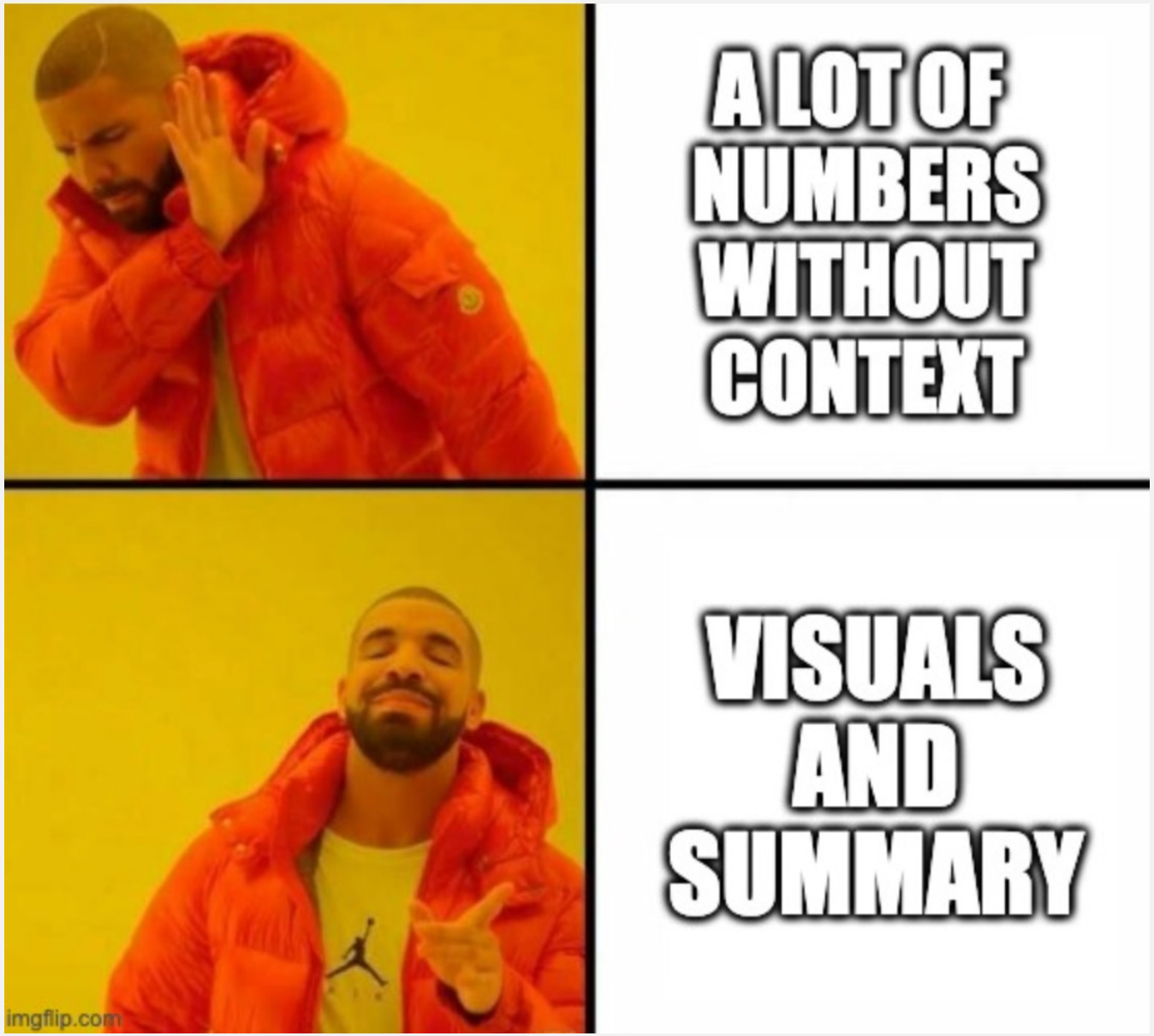
seoClarity™

SearchPilot

seotesting.com

And more...

Report


A LOT OF NUMBERS WITHOUT CONTEXT
VISUALS AND SUMMARY
imgflip.com

Provide a top-level summary

Hypothesis

Groups & Treatment

Launch & Check-In Dates

Results & Classification

Provide a top-level summary

Hypothesis

Groups & Treatment

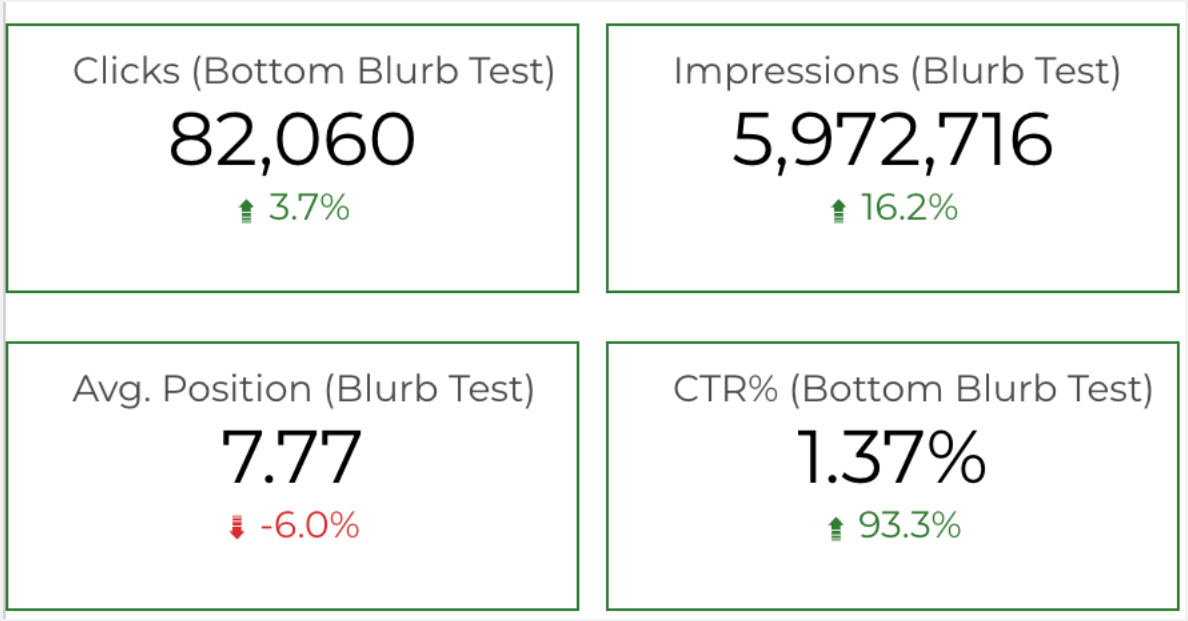
Launch & Check-In Dates

Results & Classification

Next Steps

Tell a story with the help of data visualisation

Build live dashboards when you can, in order to easily spot trends



Make a note of anything that could have impacted your test in the same timeframe

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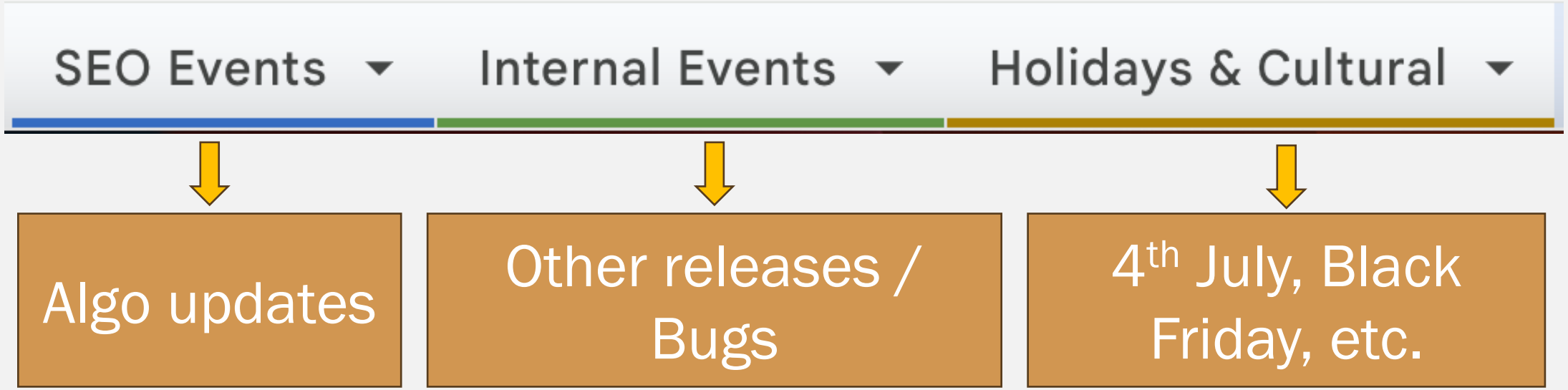


Summing it up

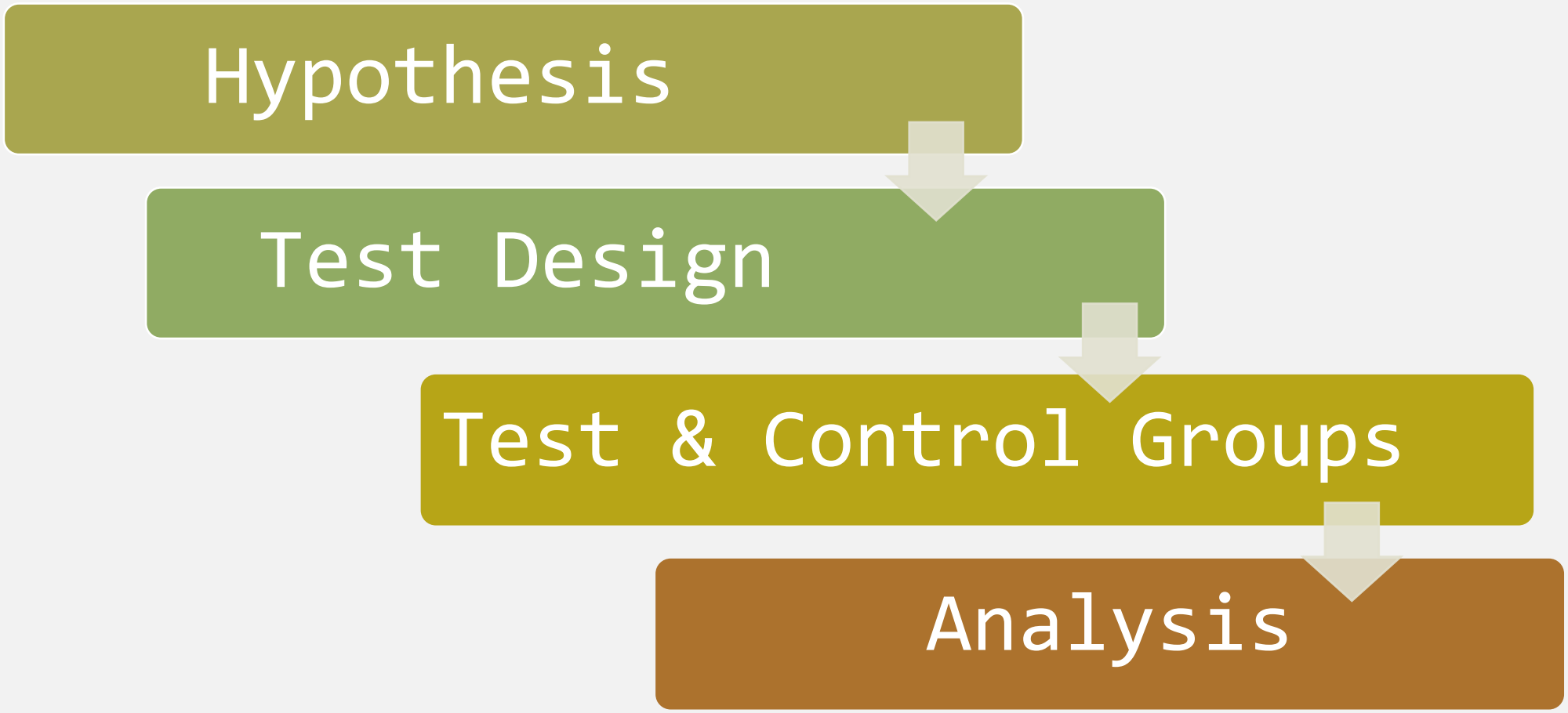
Hypothesis

Test Design

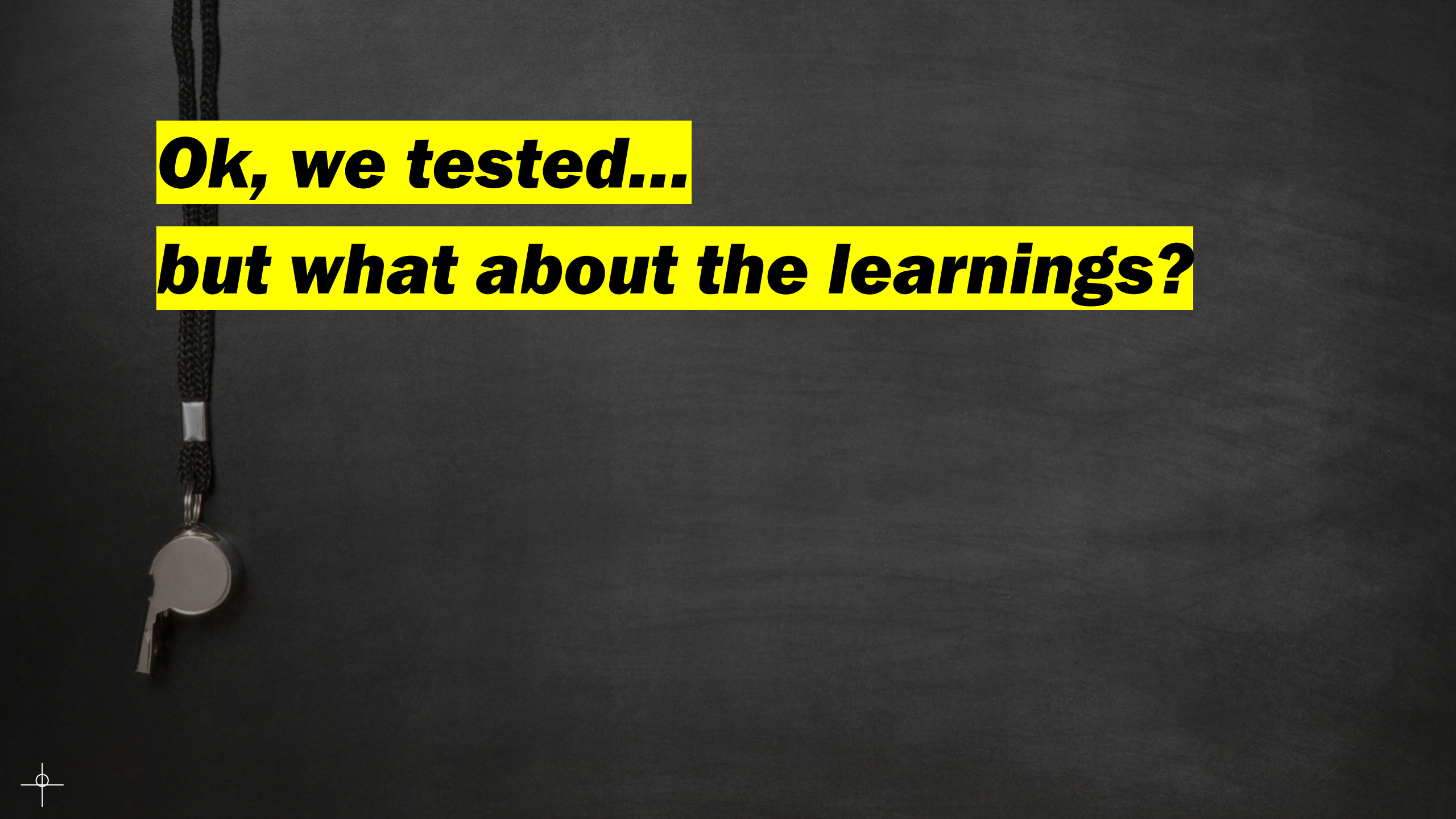
Hypothesis

Test Design

Test & Control Groups


Hypothesis
Test Design
Test & Control Groups
Analysis

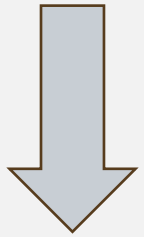
Hypothesis
Test Design
Test & Control Groups
Analysis
Reporting


Ok, we tested...
but what about the learnings?

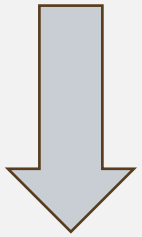
Create your own repository

Date	Test name	Dependent Variable	Hypothesis	Duration	Result	Label
05/06 - 26/06	Price point in titles	Clic	Adding a price point to the titles of category pages will incrase clicks by 10%.	4 weeks	12% uplift in clicks as compared to previous period for treated pages VS control.	Winner
27/06 - 11/07	Localised product names	CT	Replacing EN product names with localised IT names will improve CTRs to product pages by 15% VS control.	2 weeks	- 9% CTRs as compared to previous period.	Loser
12/07 - 23/08	Copy at the top of the page	Averag	Placing the introductory copy at the top of PLPs will improve average ranks by 10% VS previous period.	4 + 2 weeks	1% improvement average position - spurious result due to other technical initiatives running at the same time.	Inconclusive

More Learnings



More Strategic Testing



Better Customer Insights

Get my template here

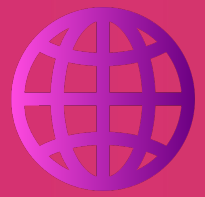
MeasureFest

A brightonSEO. fringe event

Thank you!

@SequinsNsearch

/giulia-panozzo/



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