

## 5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT



# TESTING YOUR MARKETING

Now that a marketing plan has been created (see [5 Small Business Website Must-Haves. Executing the Marketing Plan](#), and [What's My Value Proposition?](#) for ways to get started), what's next? Testing. If you've never tried testing your marketing efforts on your audience to see what really works, now's the time. Find out which marketing initiatives are hitting the mark, which ones are falling short, and which ones can be improved (and how).

**Here's 5 things to keep in mind as you get started.**

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## 1. START WITH MARKETING & SALES ENABLEMENT BEST PRACTICES

To test your marketing, first your website and all marketing must be set up to allow you to see and interpret data. Your website should be **SEO-optimized**, your **social media should be linked and kept up to date** and your email and SMS **customer service communications** should be operating.

Both in-person and virtual customer service employees should also have training or materials to help them explain the company's value proposition to customers that matches the content and tone of your website. Starting with a consistent message across your website, sales scripts, social media, and other channels will give you a good baseline of data to compare against tests you conduct.

### Types of data can include:

- 1 Click-through rate and **time-on-page data** on your website.
- 2 Drop-off rates on pages to indicate where shoppers abandon carts.
- 3 Conversion rates from phone calls or in-store shoppers.
- 4 Whether online users are coming from desktop or mobile.
- 5 How many steps it takes for a customer to make a purchase or how many times they return.
- 6 Audience demographics from social media followers.
- 7 Successfully completed contact forms.
- 8 Open and click-through rates from emails or SMS messages.



49%

of major purchase shoppers said the pandemic made them more likely to use financing options to make their purchase.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. KNOW YOUR TESTING GOALS

It's easier to test the effectiveness of each element of your marketing plan if you know your goals and can easily show whether you're making progress in targeting the right customers in the right way.

**Examples of goals include: increasing online sales with existing customers, nurturing your top 50-100 customers with relevant thought leadership, or reducing abandoned shopping carts.**

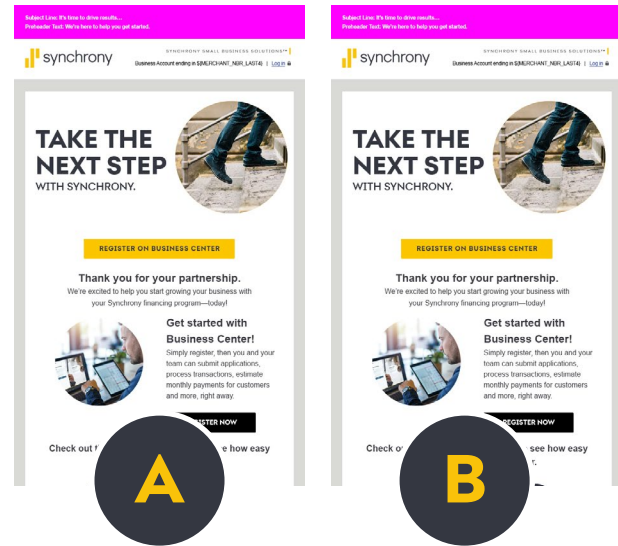
Your goals should be simple, worked into your marketing plan, and focused for a set amount of time to allow for you to confirm your tests properly.

### 3. BEGIN WITH A/B TESTING

As one of several **types of testing**, A/B testing simply looks at **one element directly against another**.<sup>2</sup> If you were concerned about a low open rate for an offer email, you could write two subject lines, sending half to each audience. As long as you keep every other element exactly the same (send time, email content, images, links, etc.), you should be looking for a difference in open rate and know it was likely due to the email’s subject line. If the subject line containing “20% off” performed better, you can consider it your new “champion.”

**Once you have a new “champion,” continue to test it against new “challengers,” in addition to running similar or identical tests several times to confirm your data.**

Testing doesn’t have to be only constrained to your marketing communications; it can also include testing out new features on your website, like a streamlined checkout process only rolled out to



a segment of users. Or, it can be a way to test whether one social media platform is driving more ready-to-buy traffic than another. Place identical offers on two platforms, and track whether more website or foot traffic comes from one or the other.

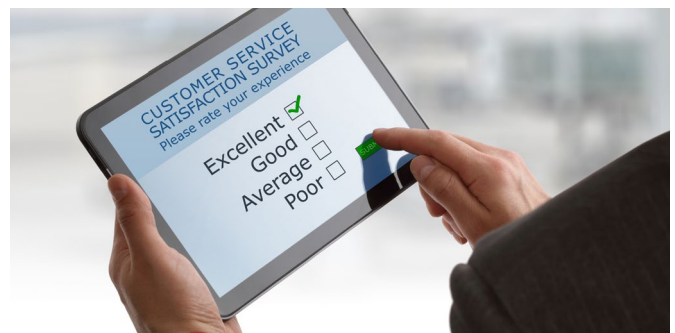
Be sure to test content: not just the actual words, but the images, colors, and overall design. Every aspect of your marketing can be tested, including your brand identity and your value proposition.

### 4. TEST TO LEARN ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMERS

You know your existing customers, but you might be able to learn more about them, and determine what makes an ideal customer for your business. Testing can help you dig into your known customers and unknown prospects, both demographic (age, location) and **behavioral (preferences, values, pain points)**.

**Once you establish audience profiles, you can identify unique behaviors to help you test and understand behavior from the start of the purchase process to the end.** Behaviors include where people are clicking, what questions they’re asking, where they abandon your website, all trackable and testable if you change one element at a time.

**Multivariate testing and content testing**<sup>3</sup> can be used to split off more complex tests if you have distinct audiences or a large following you want to segment.



Fill in the blanks with surveys you send out periodically to your most loyal customers (with a reward) to help facilitate a line of direct communication and answer questions that come up when you’re testing elements of your website or marketing.



## 5. TRY TESTING NEW “CHAMPIONS” ALL THE TIME

Don't just test to test. Implement a test, learn, and implement a change. But don't stop there. An effective testing strategy is one that's always a part of your marketing plan. Make it part of your annual or quarterly goals and adjust on a set schedule based on your progress toward those goals.

In addition to conducting tests along the entire purchase path, consider custom content for each audience or investing in a CMS or CRM to help automate testing and deploy more complex strategy over time.

Make testing new “champions” part of your annual or quarterly goals and adjust on a set schedule based on your progress toward those goals.

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For more information or to connect with an expert, contact us at [synchronyconnect@synchrony.com](mailto:synchronyconnect@synchrony.com).

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<sup>1</sup> 8th Major Purchase Journey Study, Synchrony Bank, August 2021

<sup>2</sup> Thompson, Nathan. (2020, October 2). **11 Delightfully Simple A/B Testing Best Practices You Can Use Now!** OptinMonster.

<sup>3</sup> Malone, Ryan. (2020, February 11). **6 Inbound Marketing Testing Methods You Should Be Utilizing.** SmartBug.