



Convert.com's Optimization Maturity Report for SMEs



INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT

Reaching maturity of optimization testing and experimentation remains a significant challenge for many SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises).

Convert.com recognizes that A/B testing is expensive and time-consuming to run at scale, and SMEs often don't have access to the funds necessary to reach optimization maturity - unlike many of their larger enterprise counterparts.

Convert.com works with thousands of CRO professionals, agencies and some of the biggest names in the business, all of whom use the European GDPR (and Californian and Nevada privacy) compliant Convert Experiences tool to implement A/B testing.

To gain insights into how our customer base runs experiments, we analyzed 28,304 Experiences (experiments) picked at random from our Convert Experiences customers.

Our objective was to identify trends and patterns in how thousands of businesses ran experiences, with the aim of helping SMEs mature their own testing more quickly, avoiding as many costly mistakes along the way as possible.

The insights we share in **Convert.com's optimization maturity report for SMEs** derive from thousands of man hours invested in experimentation by some of the world's leading agencies and optimizers.

The importance of optimization is reflected in CXL's "The 2018 State of Conversion Optimization Report" with 57.9% of companies specifically mentioning CRO in the budget in 2018 compared to 53% in 2017. Only 7.8% of companies made CRO optimization less of a priority in 2018.

According to the report "Lead Gen has taken the lead, followed closely by Ecommerce and Agencies. SaaS still lags a bit behind, but not by far."

(Source: <https://conversionxl.com/blog/2018-conversion-optimization-report>)

We encourage SMEs to incorporate our findings into their own testing in order to reach optimization maturity more quickly, while minimizing application costs and moving more budget to people (front end developers and analysts).

Here are some highlights from **Convert.com's optimization maturity report for SMEs**

Highlights from the report:

- The lift gained on experiences with significant results was 61% on average.
- 80% of our customers' experiences were stopped without reaching statistical significance.
- The most used experience was the A/B test which was run 97.5% of the time and our customers ran an average 8 A/B tests a month (excluding outliers). Northern America (Canada + USA) ran 13.60 A/B experiments a month, while those from Western Europe only ran 7.69 experiments/month, on an average.
- Personalization was offered in the customer plans in most cases but used in less than 1% of experiences.
- The US and Canada set almost 10% more goals for their experiences than Western Europe

Let's look at the data and our observations in more detail now, starting with the scope of our research.

Sincerely,
Dennis van der Heijden,
CEO, Convert.com

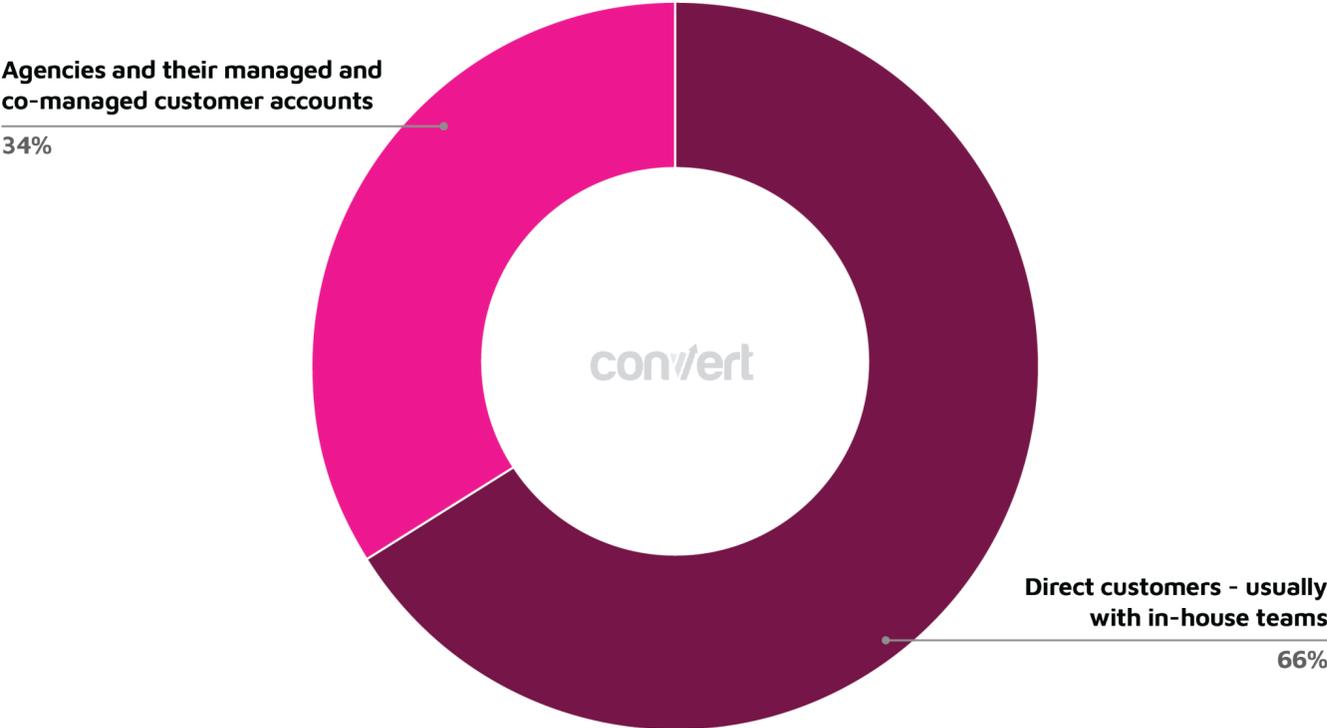
SCOPE OF OUR RESEARCH

Our research was based on 28,304 experiences taken from a random sample of our paying customers in 2018 and 2019.

We used a 10% outlier margin on both ends since some customers ran over 1,000 experiences a year, while others sign-up and pay for a year but hardly used the software after a couple of months.

34% of our dataset was comprised of agencies and their managed and co-managed customer accounts, and 66% direct customers - usually with in-house teams. This was a reasonable representation of our customer base.

Convert's Customer Base



CUSTOMERS IN THE USA AND CANADA TOOK A MORE INQUISITIVE APPROACH TO TESTING

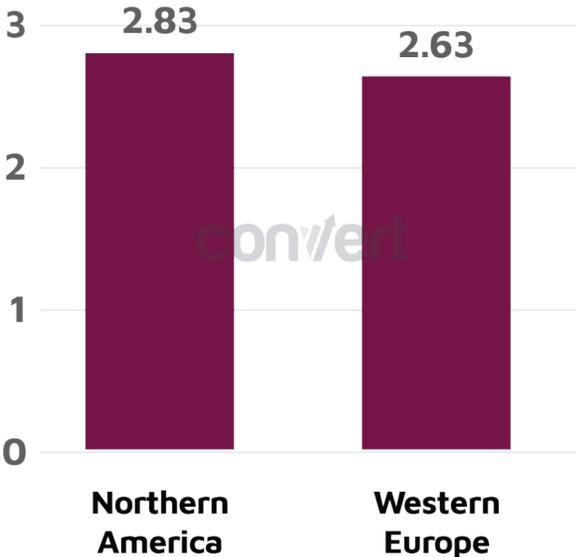
Western Europe ran an average 2.65 variations per experience that were at least 95% significant.

USA & Canada ran an average of 2.83 variations per experience on significant experiences.

Customers in USA & Canada thus seemed to possess a more inquisitive approach to testing and were interested in seeing how different ideas for lifts played out against each other. We hypothesised that having more traffic available in the same language probably helped with adding more variations.

Whatever the reason, this is a positive attitude on the way to reaching optimization maturity.

Average variations per experience for winning test (ONLY 95% significance or more)

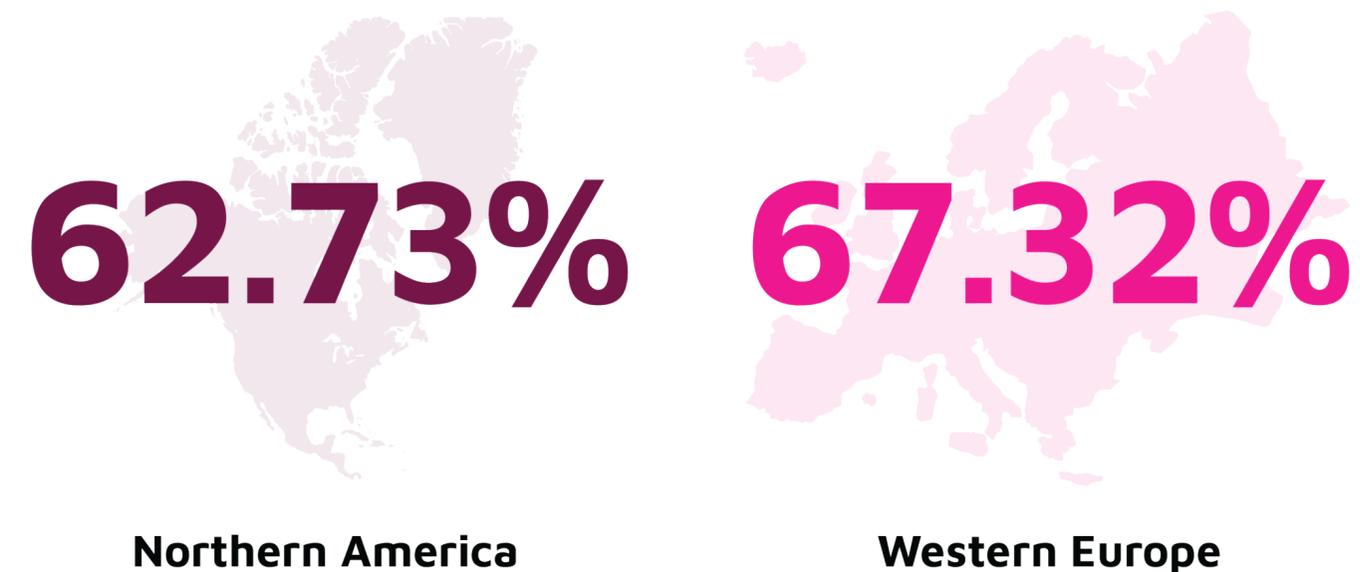


WESTERN EUROPE ACHIEVED MORE POSITIVE RESULTS

Western Europe got slightly more positive results from their experiences with an average of 67.32% positive results vs. 62.73% USA & Canada (approx. a 7% difference in positive results).

We didn't have specific data available on why this was the case. But our observations in interacting with our customers and qualitative analysis through group interviews and polls indicate that conversion rate optimization programs had reached a little more maturity in Western Europe, compared to Northern American customers.

**Percentage of winners (at 95% or more significance)
with more than 10% lift in conversion rates**



61% LIFT GAINED ON EXPERIENCES WITH SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

The lift gained on experiences with significant results was 61% conversion rate average over all winning experiences.

In experiences where there was no lift but only learnings there was an average negative impact of 26% on the conversion rate.

1 out of 7.5 experiences brought a lift with significant results.

80% of our customers' experiences were stopped without reaching statistical maturity - only 1 in 5 reached 95% significance.

Note: Significant results means 95% significance on wins and learners.

A/B TESTS STILL THE MOST POPULAR

Our Convert Experiences analytics showed us that only 1.15% of our customers setup an A/A experience at the time they set up their account.

The most used experience was the A/B test which was used 97.5% of the time.

CXL's "The 2018 State of Conversion Optimization Report" matches our findings almost exactly with "some 97.6% of participants report running A/B/n tests, and 65.4% run exclusively A/B/n tests."

(Source: <https://conversionxl.com/blog/2018-conversion-optimization-report/>)

This corroboration serves to confirm that A/B testing in and of itself is a very important optimization trend.

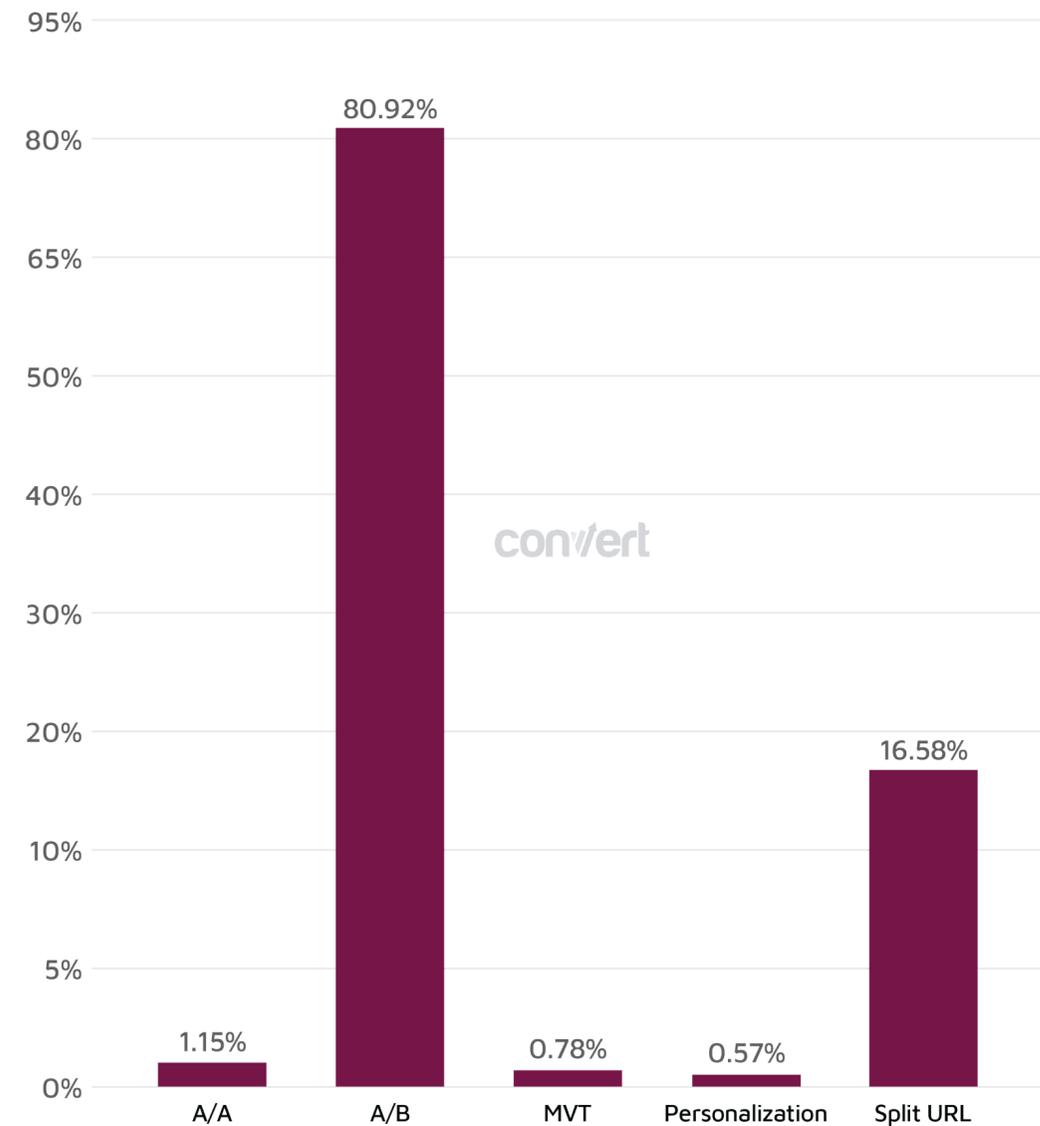
Our 97.5% figure was made up of the Visual Editor being used 80.92% of the time with the Code Editor using DOM-manipulation, and the split URL option being used 16.58% of the time (where the pages were hosted on the customers' site).

Personalization was offered in most plans but only used in 0.57% of the experiences.

[We've made changes to the onboarding of new users since this research was conducted. The reason behind this has been in promoting A/A tests as the starting point for new customer accounts since they're essential in discovering if the code is installed correctly and on all relevant pages).

A/A tests are also a great way to double check (revenue) goals and are crucial in avoiding future problems].

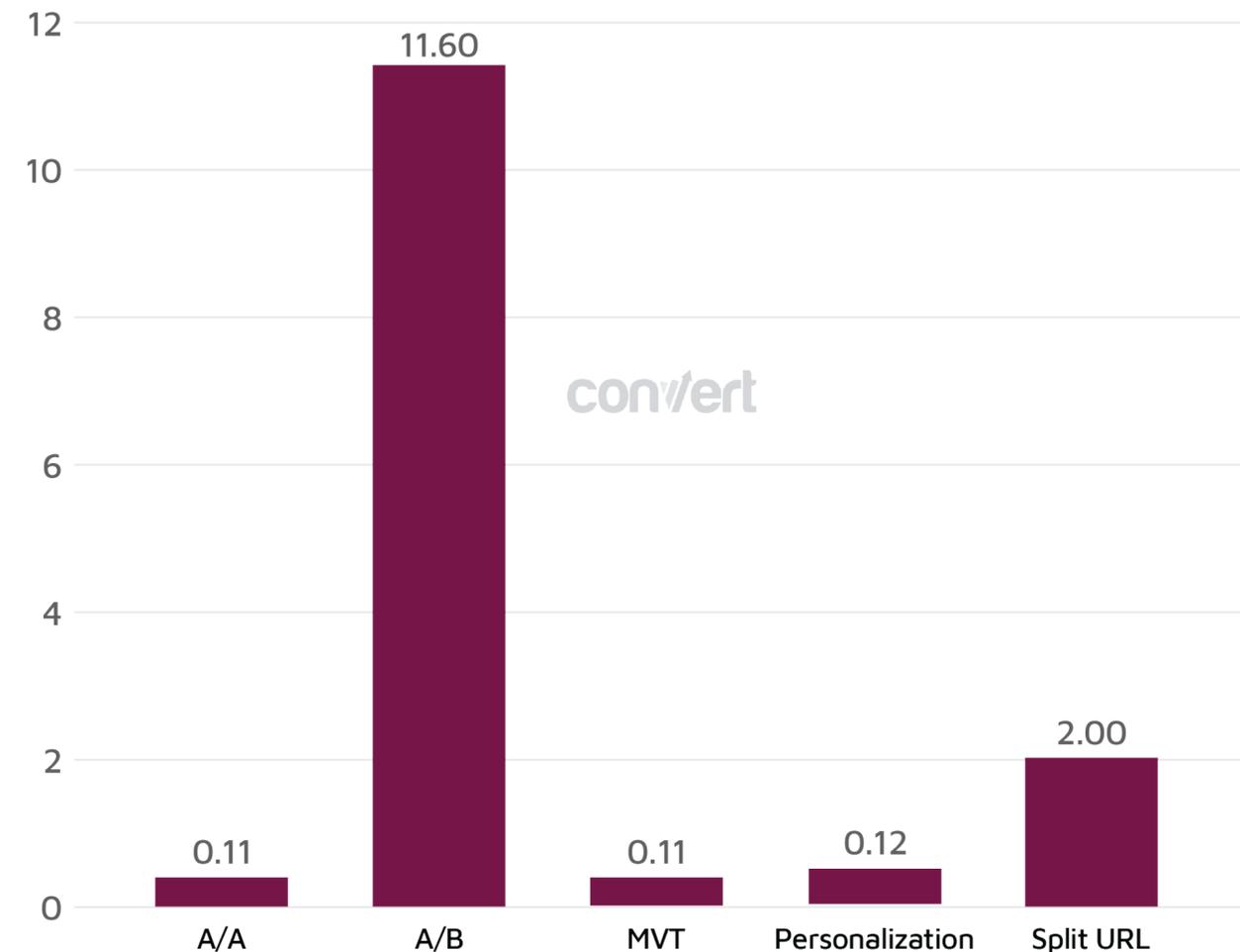
Experience Types Set Up by Customers



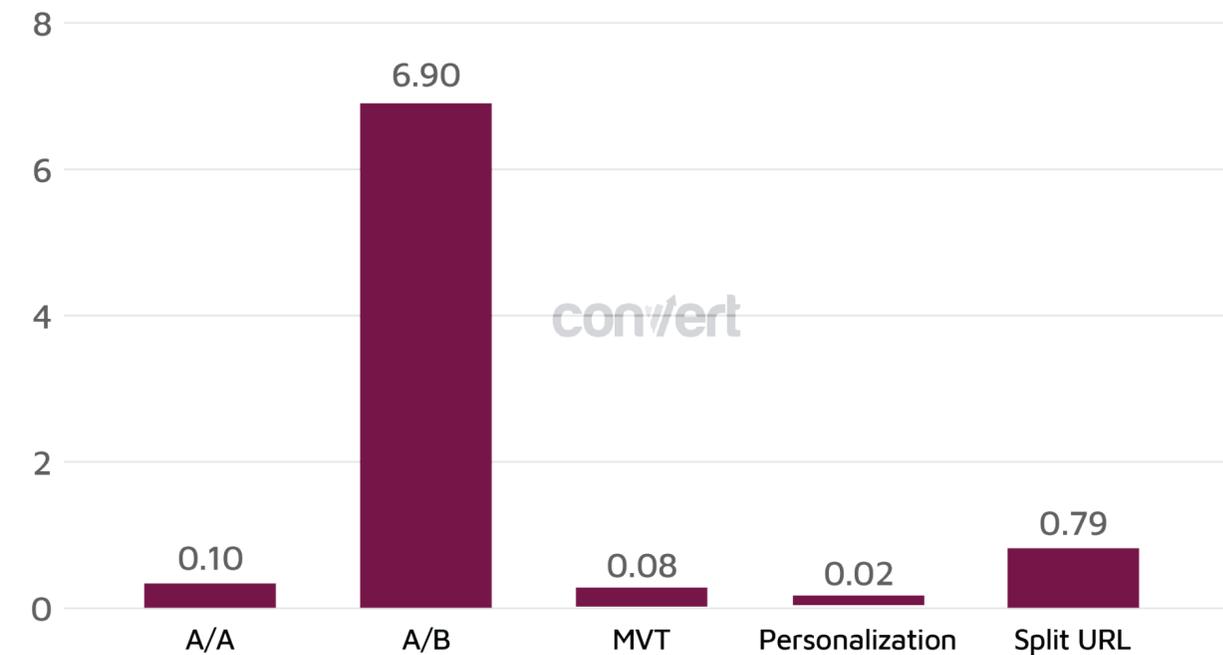
CONVERT.COM'S CUSTOMERS WERE HIGH PERFORMING WITH BETTER THAN AVERAGE RESULTS

Northern America and Western Europe were the two areas where most of our customers were located and we had enough experiences for analysis.

Experience Types Set Up by Customers



Average Experiences (Western Europe)



Northern America ran 13.60 A/B experiences a month (11.60 using the visual editor and 2 as split test) while our Western European customers only ran 7.69 a month on average.

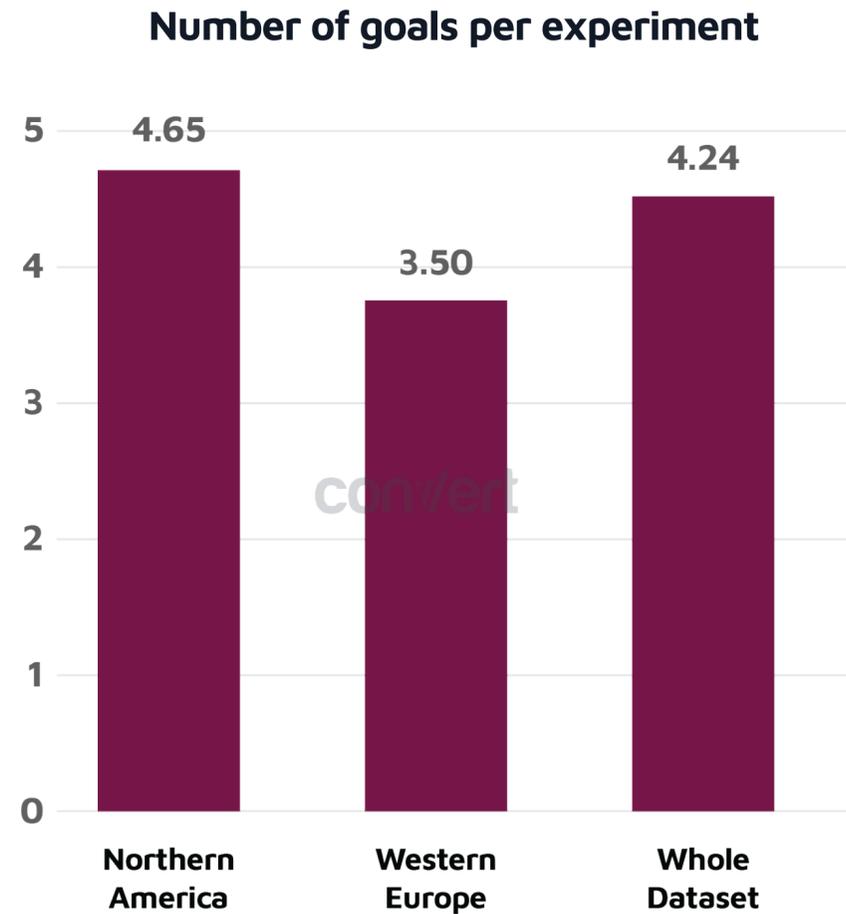
If we took all customers in this dataset, we saw an average of 8 A/B experiences a month on our platform (after removing 10% outliers since we also had customers performing more than 100 experiences a month).

The Western European spread in the above table was similar to the way the rest of the continents were spread.

We discovered that most of Convert.com's customers were high performing customers that got better than average results in test velocity as well as lift in conversions when compared to the data shared in other reputed optimization reports popular in the industry.

AGENCY CUSTOMERS ACHIEVED 21% MORE WINS

We saw that the average number of metrics connected to experiences is 4.24 over the whole dataset. US and Canada set almost 10% more goals for their experiences than Western Europe.



When comparing agency customers to direct customers with in-house teams, we didn't find any higher lifts per experience.

We did, however, observe that 21% more winners were obtained by agencies even though the testing velocity was lower compared to direct customers.

Customer Type	Average Goals	Winner 1 in	Average Experiences per month	Number of variations per experience
Direct Customer	4.25	7.63	10.42	2.44
Agency Customer	4.08	6.31	6.98	2.46

While compiling data for CXL's "The 2018 State of Conversion Optimization Report" participants were asked what their biggest CRO/Optimization challenges were.

Interestingly, it appears 50% of pain is caused by just six struggles:

- Establishing a process
- Learning/training
- Educating clients
- Proving ROI
- Time and budget constraints
- Integrating CRO into the business

(Source: <https://conversionxl.com/blog/2018-conversion-optimization-report/>)

It was worth noting that agencies tended to experience fewer of these issues.

CONCLUSION & TAKEAWAYS

While there's no such thing as failure in the CRO space and failures are considered an opportunity to learn, SMEs are often not well positioned to absorb the costs involved.

Therefore, any opportunity to learn from tests conducted by experts (28,304 experiences in the case of our report) provides a valuable resource to mitigate risk and help reduce cost.

To recap some major takeaways in **Convert.com's optimization maturity report for SMEs**

Overall, the USA and Canada took a more positive approach to testing with more variations than Western Europe who, conversely, achieved more positive results. A possible explanation for this was that conversion rate optimization programs had reached a little more maturity in Western Europe, but we had no hard data to support this assumption.

Convert.com's optimization maturity report for SMEs suggests a 61% increase in conversions is achievable whereas, on average, negative variations drop the conversion rate by 26%.

Only 1 in 5 experiments is allowed to reach 95% statistical significance which is an important convention in testing (although not some magical number in itself).

Overwhelmingly, A/B tests remained the most popular experience, however personalization (offered to most customers) was used in a very small percentage of sampled experiences, less than 1%. SMEs may be wise to invest more in personalization-based approaches to grab a competitive advantage.

Our sample ran an average of 8 tests per month, excluding outliers, some of whom ran significantly more. Running more tests is an essential part of the learning curve on the way to mature optimization.



Convert Experiences Can Help You Test More, and With Better Results.

Click the button below to explore the option of booking a personalized demo with our team of experts. You're one step away from optimization maturity.

[EXPLORE DEMO](#)