

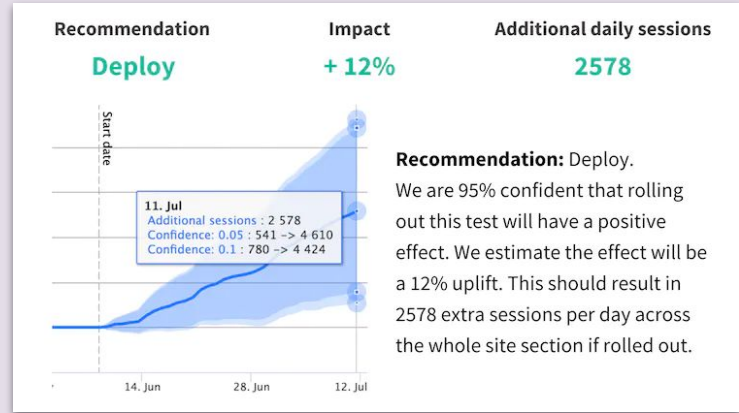


9 SEO A/B Test Case Studies to Boost Your Travel Site's SEO Performance



Changes to **apply**
Changes to **avoid**
Changes to **retest**

And **when to default to deploy**



1 - Does shortening title tags enable Google to rewrite them better?

Control Example

https://www.travel-brand.com > ... > England

Cheap Flights to London Heathrow Airport (LHR) | Travel Brand

Find cheap flights from London to London Heathrow Airport. Search hundreds of travel sites at once for deals on flights to London Heathrow ...

Variant Example

https://www.travel-brand.com > ... > England

Cheap Flights to London Heathrow (LHR) | Travel Brand

Find cheap flights from London to London Heathrow Airport. Search hundreds of travel sites at once for deals on flights to London Heathrow ...

With Google's increased propensity to rewrite title tags*, a travel customer wanted to test if removing the word 'Airport' and shortening the page titles on their US domain improved their SEO in the US market.

The result was an unexpected rewrite to the title tags from Google, but there was no detectable impact to organic traffic. The customer ran a follow up test to see if it was definitely the SEO change that caused the rewrites. However, this time, Google respected the change more often and the result of this test was a **5% uplift** which could have been influenced by Google updates during that time.

This test demonstrates the high likelihood of Google's algorithm changing regularly and the need to test any change before deploying.

[Read more](#)

*[Title tags and Google rewrites article by Will Critchlow](#)

2 - Revisiting "Book Now": does it help local page SEO?

Control

<https://www.flightsite.co.uk> › United Kingdom › London

Cheap Flights from London to Dublin - FlightSite

Compare cheap flights and find tickets from London (LON) to Dublin (DUB). Book directly with no added fees.

Variant

<https://www.autocaresite.com> › ... › Albuquerque › New Mexico

Car Repair Services - Book Now - 123 Main Street, ...

Find car repair services at 123 Main Street. Save on auto repairs, oil change, state inspections, other services at ...

A customer wanted to test if it improved SEO performance to replace the current title tag related to savings with a new one that had the CTA text: 'Book Now.'

The result was a **18% uplift** to their organic traffic. This was a surprise for the team because a similar test to add 'Book Now' in title tags for a different customer site gave a negative result*. This positive SEO change might be because the new template was more compelling than the control template and got more clicks. The shortened title tag also made the location information more visible which provided more helpful information for users.

This case study shows that a different outcome can happen for the same type of SEO change, so it is good practice to test before you deploy.

[*SEO test on the same change: adding 'Book Now' to title tags showed a different result.](#)

Read more

3 - Can you target featured snippets by adding content?

Control

www.fakecompany.com › Car Hire › United States
[Cheap Car Hire in San Diego | Fake Company](#)
Browse all of our car hire deals from over 20 leading rental companies. alamo logo argus-car-hire logo avis logo enterprise logo ...

Variant

https://www.fakecompany.com › ... › United States
[Cheap Car Hire in San Diego | Fake Company](#)
Car hire companies include: Goldcar (Tel: +34 902 119 701) Avis/Budget (Tel: +34 902 109 808) Europcar (Tel: +34 902 105 030 / 902 503 010) Sixt (Tel: +34 902 491 616) Hertz (Tel: +34 902 402 405) Recordg Go (Tel: +34 902 123 002) Centauro (Tel: +34 966 360 360)

A travel customer wanted to update their on-page content for their car rental pages. The goals for the new content were to provide useful information for their users and to win featured snippets.*

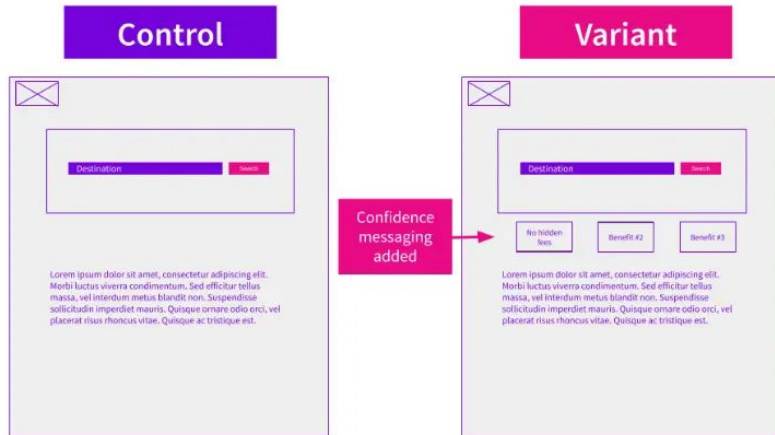
The result was a huge **25% uplift** to their organic traffic. The test also showed our customer winning rich results. This demonstrates the high value of providing user-centric content, especially on light content pages. Furthermore, this change was implemented on transactional pages which fed the top of the funnel.

*Note: This test was done before Google made the decision to stop allowing pages to “double dip” which is when a page owned both a featured snippet and a first page ranking position. The SearchPilot team ran a test with Moz** to see what the impact will be on organic traffic if a page didn’t appear in featured snippets.

**[12% loss on organic traffic by applying ‘data-nosnippets’](#)

[Read more](#)

4 - Can confidence messaging make any difference for SEO?



A customer wanted to add confidence banners like: ‘No hidden fees’, ‘benefit #2’, ‘benefit #3’ below their search bar. They wanted to test the impact on SEO by providing these ‘trust signals’.

This test resulted in a **7% uplift for their market in Spain and a 13% uplift for Russia**. It also demonstrates the importance of user signals, and that updating your content to improve E-E-A-T signals can lead to good results. Note: This test was done pre-Covid.

This was also a low effort, high yield SEO change that can easily be prioritized in the dev queue, especially when presented with the proven impact numbers.

[Read more](#)

5 - Can adding third-party ratings to meta descriptions improve SEO performance?

Control

https://www.travelcompany.co.uk › Flights

[Cheap Flights to Jamaica | Travel Company](#)

Use Travel Company to find the cheapest flights to Jamaica. Compare different flight prices on Travel Company for free.

Variant

https://www.travelcompany.co.uk › Flights

[Cheap Flights to Jamaica | Travel Company](#)

Use Travel Company to find the cheapest flights to Jamaica. Awarded 5 stars on price and price transparency by the Third Party Review Company.

Our customer wanted to test if adding third-party rankings to the meta description encouraged E-E-A-T signals and improved click through rates.

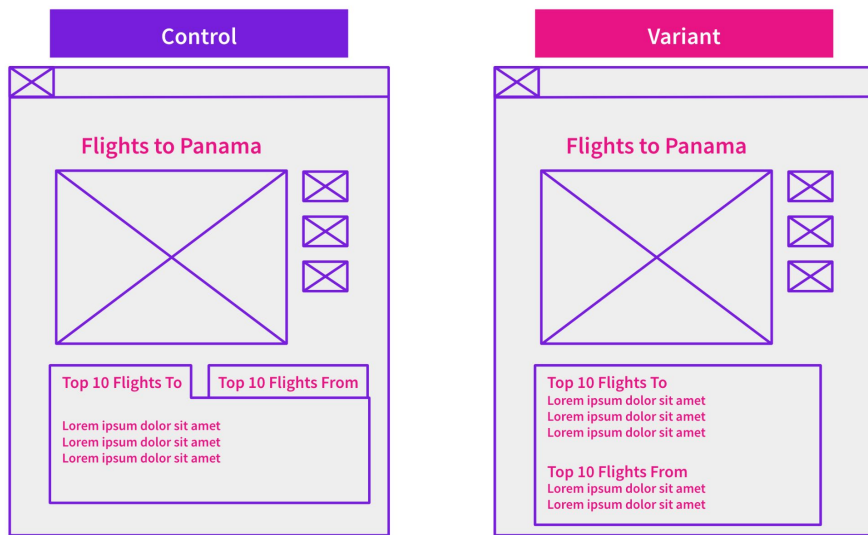
The *inconclusive* impact to organic traffic at the 95% confidence level makes it a case to test other changes related to third-party reviews.

The recommended action though was for the customer to default to deploy* considering the strong hypothesis, low effort change, and the main purpose which is to improve site visibility.

*SearchPilot's methodology of [default to deploy](#)

[Read more](#)

6 - Server-side rendering internal links: SEO A/B test results



Our customer wanted to test if changing their 'Popular flights' links from JavaScript-rendered links to static links (server side rendering) improved SEO performance.

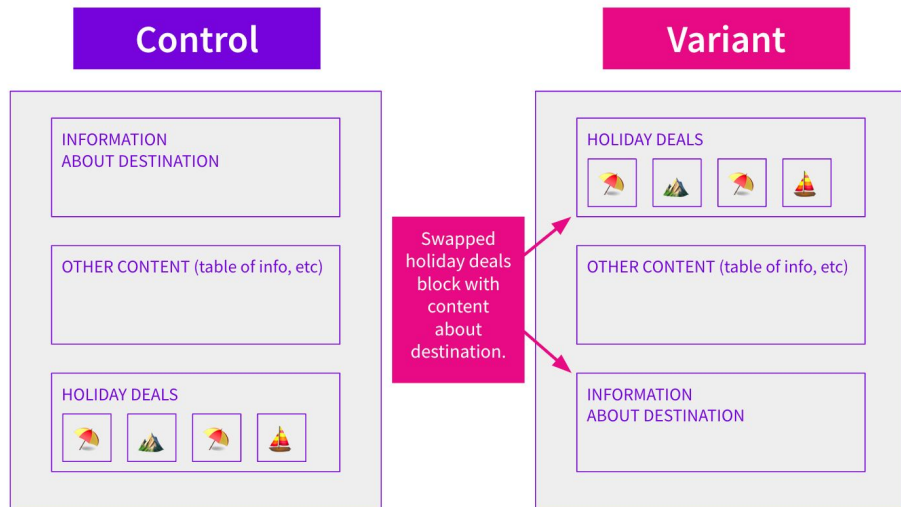
The result was an *inconclusive* impact to organic traffic performance at the 95% confidence level, even though we believed this will have a positive impact with the crawlers being able to access the links without rendering JavaScript.

We've seen mixed results for JavaScript rendered pages in previous tests*. With more websites migrating to the JS framework, it's always worthwhile to test before you deploy.

*Previous tests have shown positive results for both [implementing](#) and [reducing](#) JavaScript.

[Read more](#)

7 - Can rearranging the layout on a page impact SEO?



Our customer rolled out a new page template that wasn't performing as expected and wanted to test which type of changes might improve organic traffic. The new template consisted of many components and they decided to test swapping the 'deals' component with the 'about destination' component.

The result was a **10% loss** to organic traffic performance at a lower confidence level. This could be because of Google decreasing the importance of the page once the informational content was lower down, impacting the page rankings.

When implementing new templates or page layouts, it's advisable to test the SEO impact (and if possible both SEO and CRO) to avoid any negative surprises.

[Read more](#)

8 - Does seasonal messaging help or hurt SEO performance?

Germany Domain - meta description test	Spain Domain - title tag test
Control	Control
<p>https://www.flightco.de › tyoa › f... Günstige Flüge von Frankfurt am Main nach Tokio - Flightco Flüge von Frankfurt nach Tokio mit Flightco vergleichen und günstige Flugtickets finden. Jetzt Billigflüge, Reisen und Last Minute Angebote buchen!</p>	<p>https://www.flightco.es › madrid Vuelos baratos a Madrid desde 15 € - Flightco Encuentra los vuelos baratos a Madrid con Flightco. Compara entre cientos de aerolíneas y agencias de viajes y encuentra tu vuelo perfecto totalmente ...</p>
Variant	Variant
<p>https://www.flightco.de › tyoa › f... Günstige Flüge von Frankfurt am Main nach Tokio - Flightco Flüge von Frankfurt nach Tokio mit Flightco vergleichen und günstige Flugtickets über die Ostertage finden. Jetzt Billigflüge, Reisen und Last Minute Angebote buchen!</p>	<p>https://www.flightco.es › madrid Vuelos baratos a Madrid en Semana Santa desde 15 € - Flightco Encuentra los vuelos baratos a Madrid con Flightco. Compara entre cientos de aerolíneas y agencias de viajes y encuentra tu vuelo perfecto totalmente ...</p>

Our customer wanted to test if adding an occasion-based holiday term to title tags led to more organic traffic. The test was ran by adding 'at Easter' to the meta description of their German site and to the title tag of their Spanish site.

The result was a significant **14% loss for Germany and 11.5% loss for Spain** to organic traffic. Most of our Twitter followers voted a positive impact to occur with this change. The conclusion from both of these results was that the Easter messaging wasn't a significant enough factor to outweigh the negative impact it had on other keywords, and may have distracted from them. It may also have put off users who were looking to book flights for other times of the year.

[Read more](#)

9 - Does adding "Book Now" to the start of titles help for SEO?

Control

<https://www.flightsite.co.uk> › United Kingdom › London ›

Cheap Flights from London to Dublin - FlightSite

Compare cheap flights and find tickets from London (LON) to Dublin (DUB). Book directly with no added fees.

Variant

<https://www.flightsite.co.uk> › United Kingdom › London ›

Book Now: Flights from London to Dublin - FlightSite

Compare cheap flights and find tickets from London (LON) to Dublin (DUB). Book directly with no added fees.

Our customer wanted to test the impact on SEO if they added a compelling CTA texts to the title tag of their airline route pages where users can also book their flights. So they decided to test adding 'Book Now' to six of their international domains.

The result was a **6% loss** to organic traffic compounded across the six domains. This type of change is a common recommendation if you want to encourage click throughs but it can also deter other users who are only searching for information. For this specific case study, our customer did not see the improvement in organic traffic which could be because users were put off clicking the link by the CTA, or because the other keywords that previously held value were no longer prominent in the title.

A different customer decided to run a similar test that showed a different result to SEO*. This is why you should test before you deploy your SEO changes.

*A similar test adding 'Book Now' but [for a different customer showed a different result.](#)

Read more

There are more examples of real SEO A/B test cases (winning, losing, or inconclusive results) for you to learn from.



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