E-book

FEATURE EXPERIMENTATION TRENDS 2026:

WHERE DIGITAL BRANDS ARE INVESTING

INTRODUCTION

We've just finished digging through our data to find out where people test with Feature Experimentation, and the results show incredible momentum building across every industry.

Experimentation has reached record numbers, and we're sharing this benchmark report to reveal exactly where teams are testing, where they're seeing the most success, and what they're concentrating on to drive growth. It's more than just a list of stats – it's a guide to help your team dare to go further by seeing what's working for the world's most active digital leaders.

When we look at where that energy is going, it's clear that teams are doubling down on what works while branching out into new territory. Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO) remains the heavyweight champion at 45% of all experiments, but we're seeing exciting shifts in how specific industries win:

Travel & Tourism is seeing massive success by owning 37% of test volume, proving that mastering complex booking flows is the key to their momentum.

Catalog-heavy brands like Home & Garden are concentrating on discovery: accounting for up to 32% of their tests focus on search, making it their biggest engine for growth.

Subscription leaders in Media and Finance are finding wins at the start of the funnel, testing acquisition and monetization logic 3 to 5 times more than traditional retail.

While these immediate wins are impressive, this report also points to the next big shifts in digital growth – like the untapped potential in retention (6%) and feature adoption (5%). We built this benchmark so your team can see where you stand and discover the bold next steps that will move you forward. Because at the end of the day, every insight is a chance to iterate, and we're here to help you find your better, one test at a time.

Feature experimentation is all about testing your biggest ideas where they matter most while staying inside the actual logic of your product. Instead of just tweaking the look of a page, you're testing the "how" behind the experience, like a new search algorithm, a pricing model, or a completely new feature, before you roll it out to everyone. It's a way for your team to be bold and move fast without the "launch and pray" stress, because you're validating what works with real customers in real-time. It's how we help you turn every release into a chance to learn, iterate, and keep moving forward together.

WHY FEATURE EXPERIMENTATION TRENDS MATTER IN 2026

Feature experimentation trends aren't just cold hard numbers, but valuable information that can help brands to boost both the attractiveness and effectiveness of their digital platforms.

Think of feature experimentation trends as a fitness tracker for your digital experience. They reveal what's working, what's underperforming, and where you can make adjustments to improve overall performance.

Without that tracker, it can prove exponentially difficult to make the beneficial changes to take your digital optimization game to the next level. In turn, it can be challenging for brands to understand which trends, tools, and ideas can be most effective for their specific business goals.

That's why we've compiled this report as a market benchmark to show how experimentation can serve as a way to help businesses determine their priorities.

Web experimentation will only continue to become more diverse, which means it will require a growing number of brave ideas to ensure progress in the right direction.

Remember, experimentation remains as a strong proxy for what brands care about most – as it helps them to develop specific tactics garnered toward what their individual customers are looking for. Furthermore, experimentation can also reveal not only a brand's strengths, but blind spots to be improved – many of which would often be overlooked if it weren't for the data provided with web experimentation and optimization. Being brave enough to discover both your strongest assets and weakest points can help your company to expand its horizons and ensure long-term iteration, adaptation, and success.

Evaluating industry-wide testing maturity is more critical than ever. Brands must transition from superficial user-interface (UI) adjustments to unified backend logic experiments. By digging into these testing behaviors, we reveal a raw reflection of actual business priorities versus stated corporate goals.

Feature experimentation is all about testing your biggest ideas where they matter most – inside the actual logic of your product. Instead of just tweaking the look of a page, you're testing the "how" behind the experience, like a new search algorithm, a pricing model, or a completely new feature, before you roll it out to everyone.

You might be wondering why people would opt for feature experimentation over traditional web experimentation.

Here are just a few of the benefits of choosing feature experimentation:

RISK-FREE INNOVATION:
Feature flags allow you to turn new features on or off instantly without redeploying code. If a new checkout flow underperforms or causes an error, you can roll it back in seconds. **This helps to ensure that your brand's baseline revenue is never at risk.**

PROGRESSIVE DELIVERY:
Instead of a big, high-risk "balloons and confetti" launch, you can "test" features by releasing them gradually. This could include testing new ideas to internal users first, then to a small percentage of traffic (i.e., 5%), **before scaling up to 100% once performance has been proven successful.**

VALIDATING BACKEND LOGIC:
Unlike standard A/B testing, feature experimentation allows you to test the "brains" of your site – such as pricing algorithms, search logic, and third-party integrations. **This can help your brand to ensure that every technical change drives measurable business value.**

The Mobile-First Advantage

In 2026, optimizing for mobile is no longer optional. In fact, it's often the primary battleground for customer loyalty. From our Mobile Airline Booking Friction report, **our research shows that 80% of monthly airline traffic is now on mobile,** yet mobile booking friction remains a critical issue for many brands.

Feature experimentation offers a distinct advantage for mobile optimization:

> **Performance at Scale:** Mobile users have zero tolerance for lag. Feature experimentation allows for server-side delivery that eliminates the "flicker" effect sometimes seen in traditional web testing, providing a seamless, lightning-fast experience.

> **Native App Optimization:** For brands with mobile apps, feature experimentation is the only way to safely test and roll out native features. It allows you to update the app experience and run tests without requiring a new App Store submission for every iteration.

> **Closing the Conversion Gap:** By testing mobile-specific friction points, like trip summaries, autofill support, and trust signals – brands can close the 24% conversion gap between mobile and desktop, capturing a significant portion of the mobile-first market.

This all shows how feature experimentation is a way for your team to be bold and move fast without the "launch and pray" stress, because you're validating what works with real customers in real-time. It's how we help you turn every release into a chance to learn, iterate, and keep moving forward together.

Setting the Theme: Consolidation as a Growth Catalyst

To understand the current state of digital maturity, we can take a look at how leading organizations are evolving their operations.

Many global brands remain dependent on fragmented workflows – which remain as roadblocks that create the divide between marketing from engineering and client-side from server-side. This fragmentation, where marketing teams do not have full reign to easily implement new ideas or run tests, often slows down the pace of innovation.

This was the exact challenge faced by a Global Sportswear Brand. To accelerate their innovation cycles, they consolidated their entire experimentation ecosystem, both client-side and server-side, onto the single AB Tasty platform.

By streamlining global workflows across their US and EMEA divisions, this strategic integration allowed them to:

> **Unify Cross-Functional Teams:** Bringing digital, development, and marketing together on a single tool.

> **Accelerate Testing Cycles:** Removing the friction of jumping between disconnected platforms.

> **Scale with Low Risk:** Using feature management to roll out updates globally with confidence.

Their journey sets the stage for this benchmark report: unified tooling is no longer a luxury, but the essential foundation required to turn fragmented processes into scalable, high-velocity digital growth.

> **"Many global brands remain dependent on fragmented workflows – which remain as roadblocks that create the divide between marketing from engineering and client-side from server-side. This fragmentation, where marketing teams do not have full reign to easily implement new ideas or run tests, often slows down the pace of innovation.**

METHODOLOGY AND DATASET OVERVIEW

To ground this report in the reality of the 2026 digital landscape and guide leaders in experimentation accordingly, we analyzed an extensive dataset that represents modern experimentation across diverse, high-growth enterprise environments.

This research provides a definitive look at how the world's most successful brands are currently scaling their digital operations through high-impact testing strategies.

The activity level across our dataset is a testament to the power of creating a mature testing culture. We found that the top tier of digital leaders are operating at an incredible velocity, with over half of the total test volume (54%) being driven by the most active digital innovators. These brands aren't just running big tests, but building a continuous stream of insights that fuel their entire business strategy.

With an impressive 22% of all tests in our dataset actively targeting Average Order Value (AOV) and transactional revenue optimization, we've discovered a powerful desire from brands to move beyond simple surface-level metrics. They know that future success means redirecting their focus to gears that directly drive sustainable, profitable growth.

To better understand how we operationalize these trends, we can take a look at how we successfully navigated this issue **with Thomson Reuters.**

Thomson Reuters, needed to launch their first digital subscription product. For example, they used AB Tasty to price test dynamic offers (i.e., $/week vs. $/month). This allowed them to run registration flow experiments to determine which offering registered users deeper discounts, which offer would drive higher monetization, and the winning choice to convert anonymous traffic without dev debt or performance lag.

This real-life example shows how brands experiment for price testing, registration flow optimization, messaging, feature flags, and progressive rollouts for a new subscription product can discover new levels of success with revenue-per-user and even average order value (AOV).

Travel/Tourism: The Dominant Powerhouse

Travel and Tourism remain as the clear, unquestionable leaders in feature experimentation, accounting for over a third of our testing activity – **owning a massive 37% of total test volume according to our data.**

What sets Travel and Tourism apart from their industry peers is their unique focus on Booking and Reservation Flow testing, which continues to be a highly complex category that other verticals have yet to adopt at scale. As booking travel is an inherently emotional process, the stakes are incredibly high – especially as the state of travel booking continues to evolve with the rising usage of mobile devices.

According to our Airline Mobile Booking Benchmark Report, **80% of monthly airline traffic is now on mobile.** However, a large amount of mobile booking friction remains, as no major airline scores above 80 out of 100 on the friction scale, and the gap between the best and worst experiences stands at a staggering 22 points.

Common friction points **like complex trip summaries (scoring an average of just 5.7/10) and a lack of immediate price transparency often create significant drop-offs.** These roadblocks represent a substantial loss of potential revenue, especially given that **average order values for airline mobile bookings are 3x higher than in other retail sectors.**

Airlines use AB Tasty to bridge this gap. Instead of taking flight with missed revenue opportunities, forward-thinking carriers run various experiments to optimize checkout steps, provide real-time trust signals, and seamlessly integrate auto-fill parameters.

CASE STUDY

Air Europa - Travel

We discovered how travel brands can soar to new heights with Air Europa.

The Challenge:
Navigate high mobile checkout friction and complex multi-step passenger forms causing booking abandonment.

The Solution:
Air Europa ran continuous mobile-first experimentation campaigns using AB Tasty, focusing on optimizing the reservation and flight summary flow.

The Results :
Achieved a +9% conversion rate increase from the flight summary step to passenger details, a +5% increase in passenger form completion, and raised their overall Customer Satisfaction Score from 81% to 87%.

Conversion rate

+9%

INDUSTRY BENCHMARKS: PATTERNS OF SUCCESS

While Travel & Tourism leads in sheer volume, other high-performing sectors are defining new standards for digital maturity through targeted, goal-oriented testing. In these verticals, success is not just about the number of tests. It's about aligning experimentation with the specific commercial drivers of the industry.

Home/Garden: The Frontline of CRO

Digital leaders in the Home/ Garden sector are the most aggressive optimizers in our dataset, maintaining a market-leading **52% focus on Conversion Rate Optimization** (CRO). Because these platforms often feature complex, script-heavy configurations for high-ticket items, successful brands are those that relentlessly refine the "config-to-checkout" journey. By dedicating over half of their testing power to immediate funnel performance, these brands have worked to make sure that technical complications don't block the pathway to successful purchases.

Apparel & Fashion: Reducing Friction, Increasing Basket Size

The Apparel is the runner up, with **48% of all tests focused on CRO.** For these digital innovators, success is defined by reducing "size anxiety" and friction in product discovery – specifically through high-impact tests on size filters and product image zooms . Beyond the initial click, these brands are highly effective at maximizing the value of every visit: **20% of their testing energy is focused on Revenue Optimization,** utilizing "Complete the Look" cross-sells and bundle offers to significantly increase average basket sizes .

Food & Grocery: The Subscription Advantage

In the Food and Grocery vertical, the narrative shifts toward long-term recurring value. **While 44% of tests target CRO, an impressive 25% of testing is dedicated to Revenue Optimization,** driven by sophisticated subscription upsells and add-on suggestions. Because the recurring model is central to this industry, the most successful brands invest **12% of their experiments in Monetization**, focusing on delivery frequency options and plan selection to maximize subscriber lifetime value.

News & Media: Balancing the Subscription Funnel

Media and Publication brands exhibit the most balanced testing distribution across the entire dataset. To support their subscription models, these brands invest much more in the early and middle funnel than other industries: with **18% of tests focusing on Monetization** (paywall and checkout optimization) and **15% on Acquisition Efficiency.** This balanced approach, where content layouts are tested as rigorously as trial offers, ensures a steady flow of high-quality leads into a highly optimized, high-converting subscription engine.

Finance & Banking: High-Stakes Acquisition

The Finance sector is tied with Media for the highest industry focus on **Acquisition Efficiency at 15%.** As they reflect high Customer Acquisition Costs (CAC), these organizations prioritize optimizing quote requests and calculator landing pages to qualify leads as early as possible. **Furthermore, 15% of their testing focuses on** Monetization, specifically through premium account promotions and rate calculators, while **40% remains dedicated to the crucial element of simplifying complex application forms.**

Even as the world of digital optimization continues to expand, Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO) remains the undefeated champion.

Our benchmark data reveals that a staggering **45% of all feature experiments** are focused entirely on CRO. While teams often shoot for the stars and aim for advanced personalization and long-term engagement, the reality is that up to half of digital testing is still designed to answer a single, immediate question: how can companies get users to click “buy” or “sign-up” as fast as possible?

There's a reason why CRO remains integral to modern testing: it has a direct influence on revenue, which is the central metric most brands are usually evaluated on. While subscriptions, loyalty programs, and other retention initiatives are important – it's important for them to first focus on their core transaction funnel to ensure effective conversion. Otherwise, both acquisition and retention investments will produce lower returns.

Businesses, especially in their earlier stages of growth, like to see immediate progress – which is why CRO continues to provide the most immediate, measurable, and easily understood business impacts.

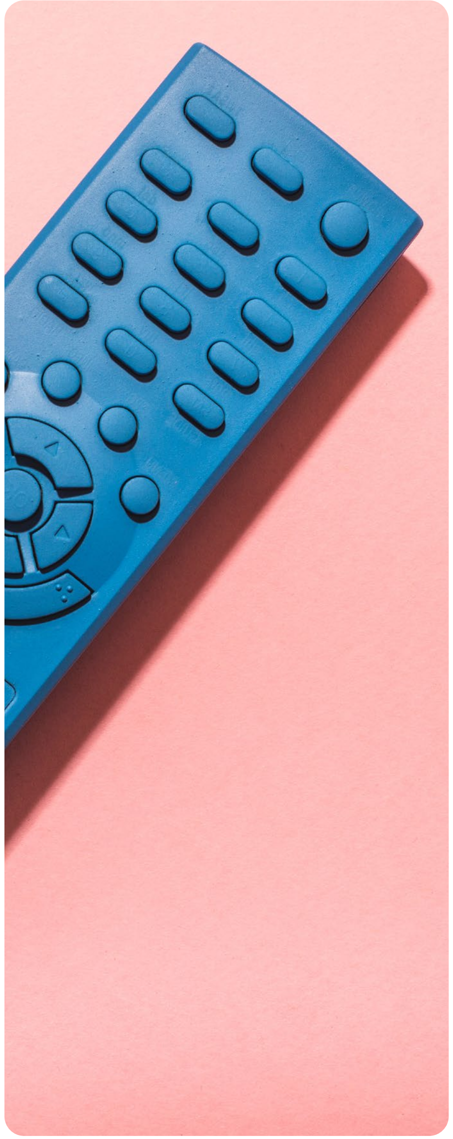
Typical high-impact testing areas in CRO include:

> Simplifying Checkout Funnels: Reducing form fields, introducing progress indicators, and removing distracting header/footer links during high-intent steps can help move a user along to the check-out page.

> Call-to-Action (CTA) Placements: Experimenting with sticky "Add to Cart" buttons on mobile screens, micro-copy tweaks, and visual hierarchy can help ensure that users make it to the checkout stage.

> Search and Navigation Tweaks: Refining main menus, category structures, and filter visibility to reduce the physical and cognitive effort required to reach a product – making it more likely for a user to make it through the check-out process.

However, while CRO is highly effective, viewing it as the only useful experimentation strategy can be limiting. In reality, mature programs use CRO as a stepping stone to gradually grow their experimentation framework into deeper backend logic, release safety, and progressive feature management.



CASE STUDY

Student Beans - Loyalty

Student Beans, global student loyalty platform, serves as a primary example as to how CRO can evolve when paired with modern feature experimentation.

Increase in conversion rates across key digital touchpoints

+10%

The Challenge:

Student Beans needed to run highly reliable experiments on key user conversion pathways without causing performance delays or relying on rigid client-side changes.

The Solution:

Instead of treating feature flags and experimentation as separate workflows, Student Beans made use of server-side feature flags with AB Tasty. In turn, Student Beans was able to dynamically toggle and test complex backend conversion paths under strict, data-driven experimental conditions.

The Results :

By using feature management to progressively roll out and validate optimized user journeys, Student Beans achieved a highly statistically significant 10% increase in conversion rates across their key digital touchpoints.

SEARCH AND DISCOVERY: THE PRIORITY FOR CATALOG-HEAVY INDUSTRIES

One of the things we believe in most at AB Tasty is being bold to dive deep into specific experimentations, such as search. Business models can greatly benefit from focusing their experimentation efforts on single elements, especially depending on their industry. Some businesses and their conversion rates, like Home/Garden, Apparel, and Food/Grocery are contingent on what a user searches for – meaning valuable insights can make a world of difference.

This is especially true for catalog-heavy brands, like when you're shopping on Instacart to delivery your groeries or comparing paint samples on Home Depot – as this is where traditional navigation becomes less useful to the user. This is why innovating with search can aid users to find the right product quickly and eliminate aggravating friction points. When thousands of items are scattered across a messy store catalog, failure to surface the exact product a user wants within seconds inevitably drives conversion rates down.

Our benchmarks highlight that search and filtering tests represent a vital priority for specific, catalog-heavy industries:

Home/Garden

32% of all tests

Apparel

25% of all tests

Food/Grocery

21% of all tests

These numbers prove that these industries face unique conversion hurdles, as helping users discover the right products amidst vast choices is exponentially more challenging.

CASE STUDY

La Fée Maraboutée - Fashion

To better understand how catalog discoverability can be transformed from a roadblock to a radical engine of growth, we can look at the work we've done with French fashion brand La Fée Maraboutée.

The Challenge:

Running on Shopify, the brand's native search function lacked typo tolerance and semantic understanding, frequently leading to empty results or frustrating "no products found" screens.

The Solution:

They used AB Tasty to design and run a conversion campaign that perfectly mirrored their native site design, but upgraded the backend search tech using advanced semantic matching and typo tolerance.

The Results :

Over a two-week period, the optimized search experience drove an outstanding +11.7% increase in Revenue per User and a +9.4% increase in Add-to-Cart rates.

Increase in Revenue per User

+11.7%

Increase in Add-to-Cart

+9.4%

REVENUE OPTIMIZATION: THE SECOND MAJOR BATTLEGROUND

While driving initial conversions is the baseline of digital growth, optimizing the commercial value of each transaction is where brands can find their long-term profitability strategy. Our benchmarks reveal that **revenue optimization is the second major battleground, accounting for 22% of all digital tests.**

Revenue optimization refers to focusing on maximizing metrics like Average Order Value (AOV), average cart size, dynamic pricing models, and checkout upsells. However, it's important to remember that revenue optimization is not a one-size-fits-all strategy. Depending on the industry, there are unique ways to match a brand's unique business models and customer purchasing behavior:

TRAVEL (26% OF TESTS)
Making up 26% of all tests, travel focuses heavily on high-margin ancillary add-ons, seat upgrades, flexible booking insurance, and dynamic travel bundles.

FOOD/GROCERY (25% OF TESTS)
Accommodating for 25% of all tests, food and groceries concentrate on delivery pass upgrades, repeat subscription plans, and high-frequency bulk-purchasing incentives – essentially acting as ancillary offers. By understanding these dynamics, brands can transition from simply asking users to buy, to strategically encouraging them to buy more.

APPAREL/FASHION (20% OF TESTS)
Highlights the focus on "complete the look" cross-sells, bundle offers, and urgency tactics to increase basket size.

HOME/GARDEN (17% OF TESTS):
Combines Pricing & Promotions (12%) and Cross-sell & Upsell (5%) strategies, like promo code visibility and related product carousels, to drive higher transaction values.

CASE STUDY

JD Williams - Retail

The Challenge:

Fashion and homeware retailer JD Williams wanted to drive cross-category product discovery and encourage users to build multi-item carts without disrupting their natural browsing flows.

The Solution:

They implemented a seamless "add to post" tag campaign, which allowed shoppers to easily explore and add coordinating accessories or matching items directly from their current view or even entirely bypassing the need to navigate back to a category or product page.

The Results :

This frictionless UX enhancement drove stronger purchase intent and higher overall engagement, netting an absolute 2.4% increase in Average Order Value (AOV).

Increase in Average Order Value

2.4%

SUBSCRIPTION BUSINESSES TEST DIFFERENTLY: MONETIZATION, ACQUISITION, AND ONBOARDING

For subscription-based businesses, the customer journey isn't as simple as sign-up and stay loyal after a single purchase. It's closer to a continuous cycle of proving value to maintain a long-term relationship.

Our 2026 benchmarks reveal that Media and Finance companies operate an opposite experimentation frequency in comparison to more traditional e-commerce. This is because retail brands tend to focus on product discovery and cart optimization, whereas subscription leaders have to shift their priorities to focus on three strategic pillars: monetization logic, acquisition efficiency, and creating a seamless onboarding experience.

The Monetization Engine: Paywalls and Plan Tiers

In the subscription world, the "plan" is the product. In other words, the subscription plan that someone chooses because of the product itself, like whether someone chooses a monthly or annual subscription for streaming or an automatic delivery service on their favorite beauty products.

Our data shows that monetization experiments are extremely important for these sectors, **as they make up 18% of all tests in Media and 15% in Finance.** These organizations are relentlessly testing the "value exchange" moment – as it's the exact point where a user is asked to pay for access.

Key testing areas include:

- Dynamic Paywall Gating: Testing which content types (such as "breaking news" or more deep-dive analysis) are most effective at triggering a subscription prompt.
- Plan Selection Layouts: Experimenting with the visual hierarchy of "Annual vs. Monthly" options to boost the chances of high-commitment sign-ups.
- Pricing Elasticity: Running server-side tests on price points and promotional tiers to find the optimal balance between volume and revenue per user.

CASE STUDY

Whitepages - Information Services

Whitepages, a leader in identity and contact information services, serves as the perfect example to see these subscription-specific patterns in action.

The Challenge:

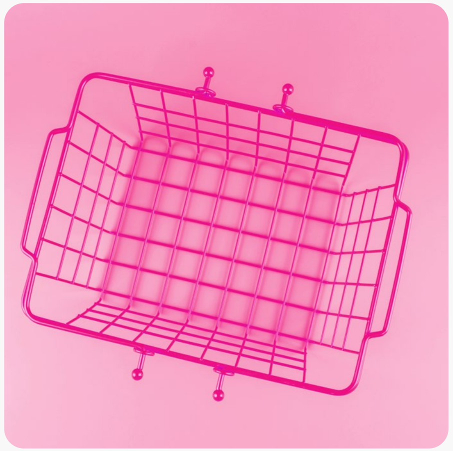
Whitepages needed to optimize a complex, multi-step subscription journey that spanned from initial search results to high-intent payment pages.

The Solution:

They benefitted from AB Tasty's feature experimentation to move beyond basic UI changes. By testing backend monetization logic and registration triggers, they could validate which subscription paths drove the highest lifetime value.

The Results :

By treating their feature flags as rigorous experiments, Whitepages successfully increased their total subscription count. This reveals that "behind the scenes" logic is just as important as the front-end design for high-volume subscription platforms.



Customer Acquisition as a Competitive Advantage

Perhaps the most striking revelation in our dataset is in acquisition strategy. Media and Finance companies invest 3 to 5 times more in acquisition efficiency **(accounting for around 15% of all tests)** compared to e-commerce verticals, which hover between 4–7%.

The main thing to remember is that subscription brands aren't just looking for traffic, but rather seeking to secure high-quality, high-intent leads that will survive the first billing cycle. This requires subscription-based bands to experiment heavily on things like landing page value propositions, lead-capture form fields, and the initial "hook" that converts an anonymous visitor into a registered prospect.

For these industries, optimizing Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) through experimentation is a foundational competitive barrier.

The Frictionless Gateway: Onboarding and Account Flows

The most challenging part of a subscription journey is the transition from "interested" to "active" subscription status – **which explains why onboarding and account flows represent 13% of all tests for both Media and Finance.**

In Finance: This involves navigating complex KYC (Know Your Customer) flows, legal disclosures, and identity verification without provoking abandonment.

In Media: This focuses on the registration wall, which helps to ensure that the sign-up process is fast enough to keep the user engaged while remaining thorough enough to capture the data needed for personalization.

> **Retail brands tend to focus on product discovery and cart optimization, whereas subscription leaders have to shift their priorities to focus on three strategic pillars: monetization logic, acquisition efficiency, and creating a seamless onboarding experience.**

WHAT THESE TRENDS SAY ABOUT EXPERIMENTATION MATURITY

The point of this e-book isn't to spit out random facts and figures, but shed light on the areas of experimentation that have proven to be most effective – and which ones are still hiding in the dark waiting for their time to shine.

When we step back and interpret the data, a clear picture of varied maturity emerges. On one hand, we see high-frequency catalog brands, often led in sectors like Apparel and Travel, who have built robust engines to test complex search algorithms and booking flows. On the other, we see conversion-focused niche players who, while effective at driving immediate sales, often remain stuck in a "one-and-done" testing cycle.

The most critical gap in the industry today is the tunnel-vision focus on the immediate checkout despite the importance of optimizing the entire shopper's buying journey from PDP onwards.

When 45% of tests target the final click and only 6% target retention, brands are essentially leaving a big chunk of Customer Lifetime Value (LTV) on the table. This is because the "checkout-only" mentality is a hallmark sign of early-stage maturity. Optimizing for the next transaction and nothing else has little to no benefit for brands seeking to build long-term relationships with their clientele. Truly mature programs understand that every part of the journey – from the first search, second purchase, to the third subscription renewal – is a chance to confirm your brand's testing hypothesis and further develop a user's trust.

CASE STUDY

MONY Group -Finance

MONY Group, a financial services leader that successfully bridged the gap between marketing-led visual changes and deep product experimentation, demonstrates how a unified approach can unlock complex backend logic.

The Challenge:

After two years of relying solely on client-side A/B testing, MONY Group reached a ceiling. They needed to experiment with deep backend functionality – such as complex car insurance quote calculations – that simply couldn't be done cleanly with client-side tools alone. Furthermore, managing feature flags and server-side tests in disconnected interfaces was creating operational friction and slowing down team adoption.

The Solution:

MONY Group consolidated their entire experimentation ecosystem, bringing both client-side A/B testing and FE&R (Feature Experimentation & Rollout) into a single, intuitive platform. This allowed them to move beyond surface-level changes to test backend logic, such as finding the optimal policy start dates for cheaper insurance quotes. They also simplified their "Super Save Club" membership proposition by using a single integration for feature flagging and automated scheduling for partner promotions.

The Results:

By unifying their toolset, MONY Group removed the need for dual logins and fragmented workflows, making experimentation much more intuitive for their teams. This consolidation accelerated the adoption of server-side testing and transformed their complex backend calculations into a powerful engine for customer value, proving that the most impactful growth often happens beneath the surface.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
HOW BRANDS CAN EVOLVE THEIR EXPERIMENTATION STRATEGY

Based on the benchmarks and industry-leading behaviors identified in this report, we recommend the following practical roadmap for brands looking to mature their strategy in 2026:

Benchmark your experimentation mix:
Compare your current testing distribution against your industry peers. Are you over-compensating for CRO while leaving retention on the back burner? Identifying these gaps in your experimentation strategy can help support your brand's long-term growth.

Balance your portfolio:
Digital teams should work to ensure that your roadmap includes a healthy mix of conversion-focused "quick wins" and long-term strategic initiatives like subscription upgrades or feature validation.

Expand beyond the checkout:
Remember that true growth happens throughout the entire lifecycle. Diversify your targets to include product discovery, monetization logic, and post-purchase onboarding.

Unify your teams: It's important to break down the barriers between digital, development, and marketing. A shared experimentation platform allows everyone to work toward the same business goals.

CASE STUDY

AXA - Insurance

We partnered with AXA (UK) to push the limits of what's possible and see what happens when brands diversify their experimentation strategy.

The Challenge:

AXA (UK) faced fragmented testing efforts across different teams, which made it difficult to effectively scale their experimentation efforts.

The Solution:

By working to harmonize their digital, development, and marketing teams on the AB Tasty platform – AXA (UK) was able to take their new centralized approach to scale both client-side and server-side experiments simultaneously.

The Results:

Using progressive rollouts and feature flags helped AXA (UK) to optimize high-stakes areas like lead forms and landing pages while simultaneously avoiding various technical and business risks of new deployments.

THE BIGGEST AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT: RETENTION AND ENGAGEMENT

If there is one massive, overlooked opportunity in our 2026 dataset, it's the underinvestment in creating long-lasting customer relationships.

Traffic is the short-term win, but building exceptional relationships is the real revenue-generator in terms of building a successful and reputable brand. However, brands often invest their time and money elsewhere – as millions are spent to acquire traffic, **but only 6% of all tests focus on retention and engagement.**

In a digital economy where customer acquisition costs (CAC) are continuously climbing, ignoring the "leaky bucket" of user churn is a dangerous strategic blind spot. It's like planting seeds in poor soil: the environment for your customers has to be conducive to long-term growth and success, otherwise – they'll never get to enjoy the fruits of their labor, and churn only becomes more evitable.

The most successful brands in 2026 are shifting their focus from "how do we get them in the door?" to "how do we keep them here?". This requires a radical prioritization of logged-in experiences, personalized engagement features, and post-purchase onboarding journeys.

While this is a radical shift from more traditional approaches, it's often the very strategy that helps brands move from being a "viral moment" to "a holy grail" for customers around the world.

> **The most successful brands in 2026 are shifting their focus from "how do we get them in the door?" to "how do we keep them here?". This requires a radical prioritization of logged-in experiences, personalized engagement features, and post-purchase onboarding journeys.**

CASE STUDY

Showroom Privé - Fashion

Our collaboration with Showroomprivé reveals how adopting an all-in-one, server-side-first approach can improve personalization tactics and audience retention rates.

The Challenge:

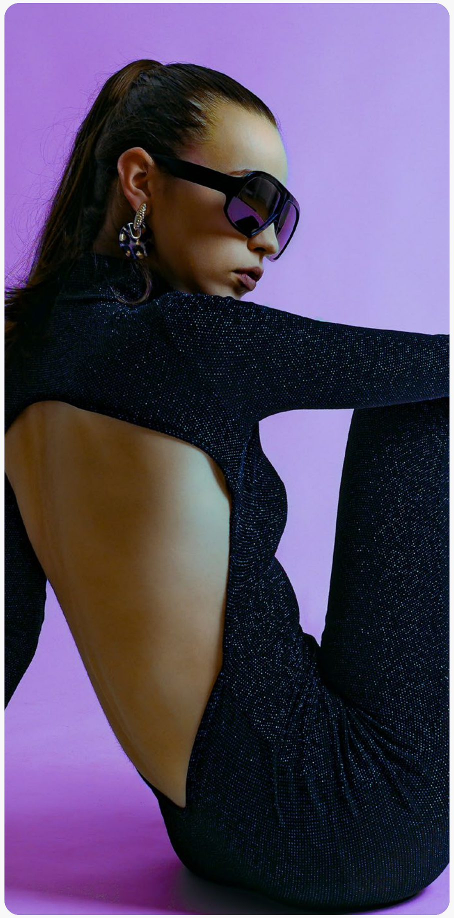
As a mobile-first fashion leader, Showroomprivé needed to ensure that their high volume of app users remained engaged and loyal over time.

The Solution:

They adopted an all-in-one, server-side-first approach focused on mobile app experimentation. By using AB Tasty for feature management and personalization, Showroomprivé was able to test in-app features that were specifically designed to drive repeat visits and boost engagement.

The Results:

This unified ecosystem allowed them to better personalize the mobile experience at scale for each individual user, successfully transforming their app from a simple storefront into desired destination for repeat user engagement.



ANOTHER UNTAPPED AREA: FEATURE ADOPTION

The final strategic weakness we discovered in our benchmark data is feature adoption.

Despite the high cost of engineering resources, **only 5% of all tests focus on whether users actually adopt and use new capabilities.** Most companies still treat A/B testing as a tool for funnel optimization rather than as a pillar method to elicit product-led growth. This results in a less developed "launch and pray" mentality, where new features are built and shipped without any data on how users engaged with those features.

By connecting product management with product-led experimentation, brands can work to build the features their customers actually want – **which can help to improve engagement and brand loyalty over the long run.**

CASE STUDY

Carrefour - Retail

The Challenge:

A French grocery store chain, Carrefour, wanted to gauge customer interest in a potential new service before committing to significant engineering resources to build them.

The Solution:

They executed a "fake door" test using AB Tasty by placing a call-to-action for the new feature on the site to measure how many users would actually click it.

The Results:

Carrefour's test with AB Tasty was inconclusive, meaning there was not enough significant user interest to justify building the specific feature. While this wasn't a "winning" experiment in the traditional sense, it was still a major strategic victory – as it prevented them from spending months of time, energy, and resources on a feature that would have ultimately failed.

CONCLUSION

The digital landscape is continuing to skyrocket towards the future. Between demanding more real-time personalization, maintaining engagement in the age of short attention spans, and better individualized tools to accommodate for every visitor – curating the perfect digital experience will continue to be an evolving challenge for brands of all kinds.

Ultimately, these industry benchmarks reveal that while the digital landscape remains highly active in short-term conversion and revenue optimization, the organizations poised to win in 2026 are those closing the maturity gap by expanding their experimentation programs to actively validate long-term retention and feature adoption.

Being bold doesn't have to stay in a black box. Big ideas are possible when brands are willing to try new ideas, make mistakes, and learn from their discoveries.

Your brand doesn't have to take small steps towards progress alone. The unique technology found on our platform, from AI-powered personalization to robust feature experimentation, can help even the most intimidated teams to find their winning streak to become a converting gold-mine.

Every test brings new insights. Let's dare to go further – together.

Ready to Stop Guessing and Start Adapting?

The future of optimization doesn't have to be a mystery with AB Tasty. Our unique technology, especially when used together – can create the exact, cookie-free personalization strategy you've been looking for.

About AB Tasty & VWO

AB Tasty and VWO brings together two pioneers in experimentation and digital experience optimization to create a global category leader. Serving more than 4,000 customers worldwide and generating over $100 million in annual revenue, their platform enables organizations to optimize digital journeys through experimentation, feature management, AI-driven personalization, and behavioral insights.

Trusted by leading global brands—including Samsonite, USA Today, Sephora, Forbes, Amway, Hilton, and Air Europa—the combined company supports organizations across retail, travel, financial services, SaaS, and media. With teams across North America, Europe, LATAM, and APAC, the platform helps brands experiment faster, deliver better digital experiences, and drive measurable business growth at scale.

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