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brightonSEO.
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From Rankings to Ranges: How to Forecast SEO in 2026



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A CONFESSION

I USED TO GIVE
PEOPLE
ONE NUMBER

WHY DID I DO IT?



**I WANTED TO
GIVE A CLEAR
ANSWER**

SEO FORECASTING

IT HAPPENS IN STRANGE PLACES



THE QUESTION

**WHAT ARE WE
GOING TO GET?**

ONE SERVICE STATION

**PAGE ONE.
WHY NOT?**



WHAT WE MISSED

**AMBITION IS NOT
EVIDENCE**

THEN IT HAPPENED AGAIN

ABOUT 20%

ORGANIC GROWTH

THE WORK REQUIRED

**BETTER
PAGES**

**MORE
COURSES**

**ENOUGH
TIME**

THEN THE NUMBER ESCAPED

20%

WHAT PEOPLE REMEMBERED

**THE WARNINGS
DISAPPEARED**

WHAT I LEARNED

**IF THE WORK
DOESN'T HAPPEN,
THE RESULT CHANGES**

WHAT I REALISED

**I NEEDED A BETTER WAY
TO DEAL WITH
UNCERTAINTY**

I DIDN'T WANT TO REPEAT IT

**ANOTHER NUMBER
COULD ESCAPE**

I CHANGED THE QUESTION

WHAT'S
THE
NUMBER?



WHAT
COULD
HAPPEN?

SO I CHANGED THE RULES

RANGE

GROUPS

**REVIEW
DATE**

DIFFERENT THINGS

**PRODUCT
PAGES**

**BLOG /
TOPIC
CONTENT**

TOOLS

DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS

WE AGREED TO COME BACK

8 WEEKS

THEN WE WOULD REVIEW IT

THE REAL WORLD ARRIVED

**THE DEV RESOURCE
DIDN'T**

CHANGING IT WAS THE POINT

**THE FORECAST CHANGED
BECAUSE THE
EVIDENCE CHANGED**

THE RANGE MODEL



01

BASELINE

02

GROUP

03

EVIDENCE

04

SCENARIOS

05

DELIVERY

06

REVIEW

SIX QUESTIONS

**WHAT
HAPPENS
ANYWAY?**

**WHAT
BEHAVES
DIFFERENTLY?**

**WHAT DO
WE KNOW?**

**WHAT COULD
HAPPEN?**

**WHAT NEEDS
TO HAPPEN?**

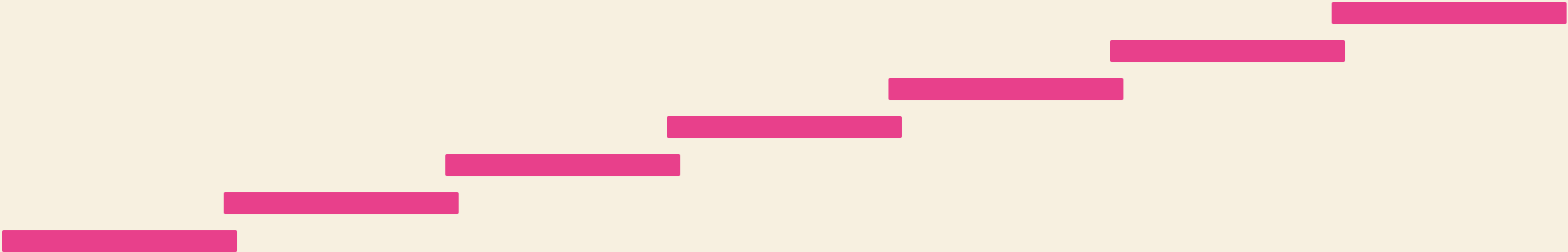
**WHAT
ACTUALLY
HAPPENED?**

WHAT HAPPENS WITHOUT THE WORK?

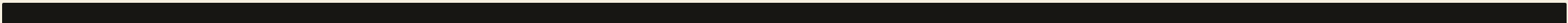
WITHOUT THE NEW WORK



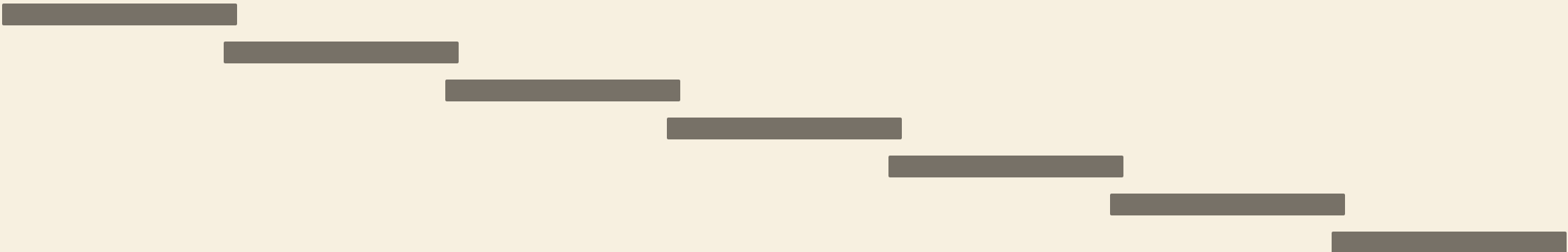
UP



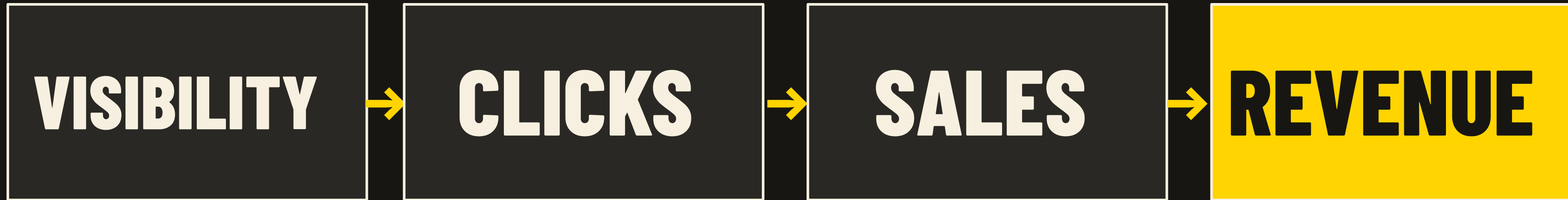
FLAT



DOWN



FICTIONAL SHOE SHOP



**12 MONTHS WITHOUT
THE NEW SEO WORK**

TEST IT BACKWARDS

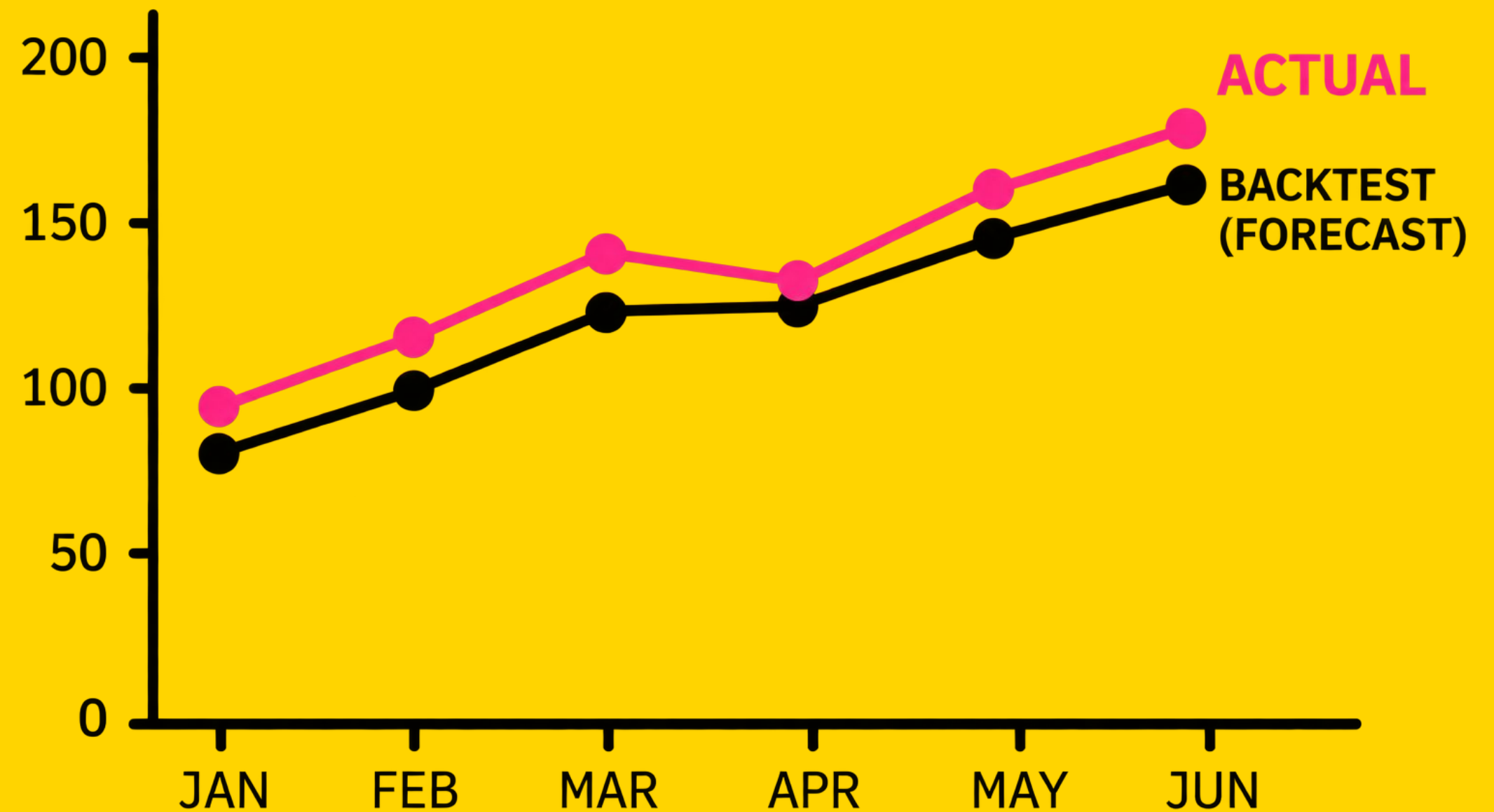
USE ONLY

WHAT

YOU KNEW

THEN

ILLUSTRATIVE



**DON'T PUT
EVERYTHING
IN ONE SEO BUCKET**

DIFFERENT THINGS BEHAVE DIFFERENTLY

COMMERCIAL

ROAD
RUNNING
SHOES

INFORMATIONAL

HOW LONG
DO SHOES
LAST?

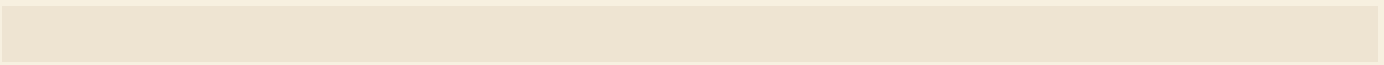
TOOL

SHOE SIZE
CALCULATOR

SAME SITE. DIFFERENT SERPS.

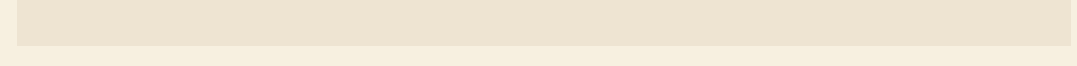
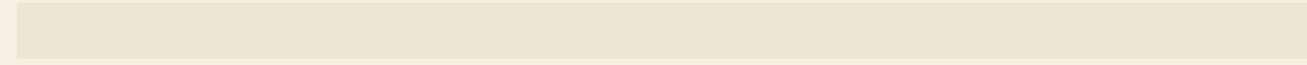
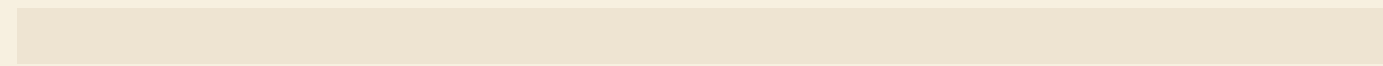


**EXAMPLE A
CLEANER RESULT
ENVIRONMENT**



**MORE CLICK
OPPORTUNITY**

**EXAMPLE B
AI + FEATURES HEAVY**



**LESS CLICK
OPPORTUNITY**

EXAMPLES, NOT RULES

START WITH YOUR OWN DATA

IMPRESSIONS

CLICKS

CTR

CONVERSION

SALES

WHAT IS THIS ASSUMPTION BASED ON?

STRONGER EVIDENCE



**TIGHTER
RANGE**



WEAKER

EVIDENCE



WIDER RANGE

CTR

CLICKS

IMPRESSIONS

**HOW MUCH
VISIBILITY
BECOMES
TRAFFIC?**

VISIBILITY $\neq$ CLICKS



SAME RANKING

**MORE CLICK
OPPORTUNITY**

**LESS CLICK
OPPORTUNITY**

VISIBILITY WON $\neq$ TRAFFIC WON

IF THE CLICK DISAPPEARS

DON'T INVENT THE VALUE.



**FORECAST THE VISIBILITY.
MEASURE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.**

**WHAT COULD
ACTUALLY HAPPEN?**

DON'T PICK THREE NUMBERS

**BUILD THREE SETS
OF ASSUMPTIONS**

THE SHOE SHOP SCENARIOS

LOW

+100
SALES

BEST-SUPPORTED

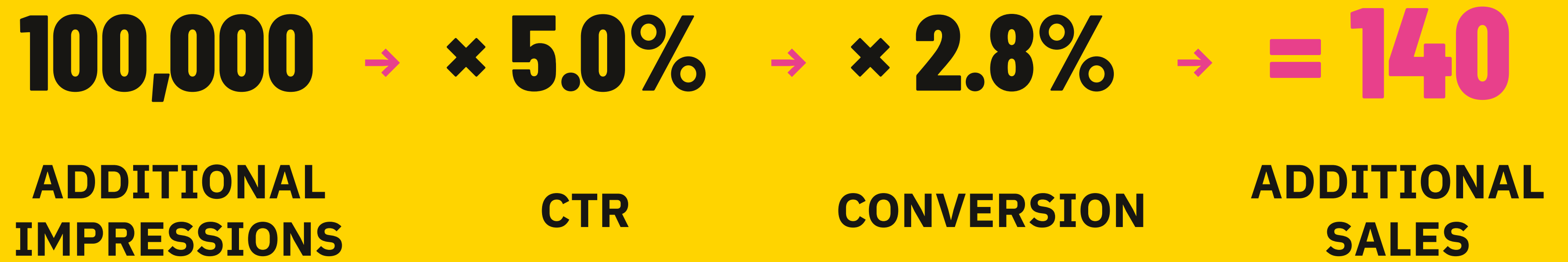
+140
SALES

UPSIDE

+180
SALES

ADDITIONAL SALES / 12 MONTHS

ONE NUMERICAL BRIDGE



BEST-SUPPORTED • ILLUSTRATIVE 12-MONTH BRIDGE

ONE DIAL MOVES



VISIBILITY



CTR



CONVERSION



DELIVERY

ILLUSTRATIVE
SENSITIVITY TEST

WHICH DIAL MATTERS?

**WHICH ONE
MOVES
THE RESULT
MOST?**

CTR



DELIVERY



VISIBILITY



CONVERSION



ILLUSTRATIVE

**IF IT HAS TO HAPPEN
IT BELONGS IN THE
FORECAST**

THAT ISN'T A CAVEAT

**"THIS ASSUMES
DEV
RESOURCE IS
AVAILABLE."**



**THAT ISN'T
SMALL
PRINT.**

THREE MONTHS LATE

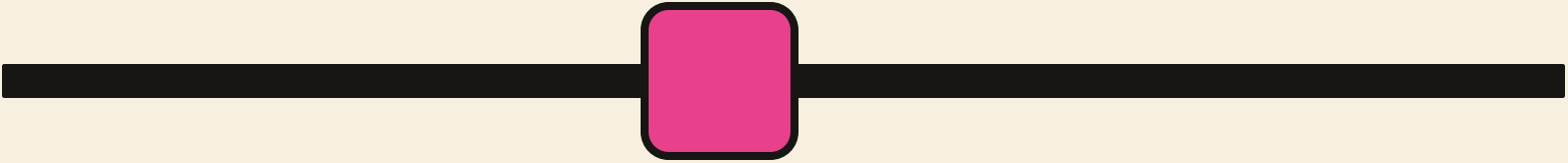


LIVE
MAR



+140
SALES

LIVE
JUN



+110
SALES

SAME 12-MONTH PERIOD

**WHAT DID WE
EXPECT?**

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED?

RANKINGS?

VISIBILITY?

CTR?

DELIVERY?

SALES?

WHAT CHANGES NOW?



**KEEP THE ORIGINAL
FORECAST AS THE RECORD.**

THE SHOE SHOP

+250

TARGET SALES

WHAT DOES THE FORECAST SUPPORT?

+140

BEST-SUPPORTED SALES

TARGET $\neq$ FORECAST

250

WANTED

140

SUPPORTED

A TARGET ISN'T A FORECAST.

THERE 'S A GAP

250

TARGET

- 140

SUPPORTED

= 110

SALES GAP

NOW WE CAN HAVE A USEFUL CONVERSATION

**MORE
RESOURCE?**

**MORE
TIME?**

**DIFFERENT
PLAN?**

**ANOTHER
CHANNEL?**

WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT THE GAP?

ONE STEP FURTHER



**IS THE WORK
WORTH THE COST?**

THE COST

£8,000

SEO WORK

£60

CONTRIBUTION PER SALE
AFTER VARIABLE
FULFILMENT COSTS

BREAK-EVEN

≈ 134

SALES · £8,000 ÷ £60

140 DOESN'T LOOK SO BIG NOW

140

BEST-SUPPORTED

134

BREAK-EVEN

6 SALES ABOVE ROUNDED BREAK-EVEN

ONE ASSUMPTION MOVES

CTR

5.0%



4.57%

ILLUSTRATIVE

140 → 128



140

SALES



128

SALES

SAME SIMPLIFIED
MODEL

BELOW BREAK-EVEN

128

SALES

134

BREAK-EVEN

SMALL ASSUMPTION. BIG DECISION.

SO WHAT DO WE DO?



SPEND EVERYTHING?
OR LEARN FIRST?

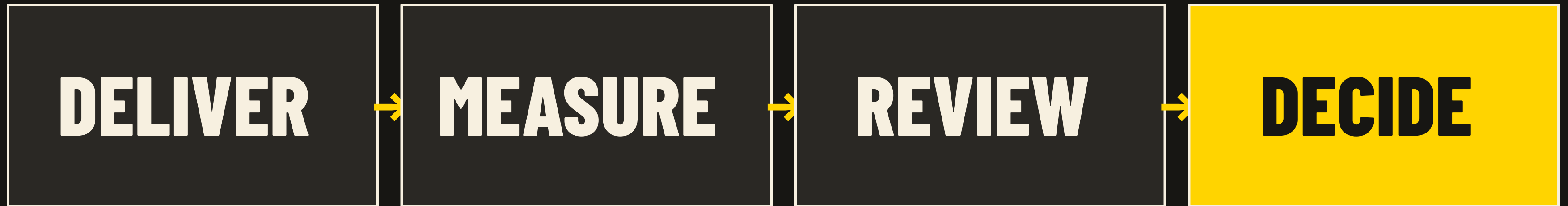
FUND THE NEXT STEP

**DON'T
FUND
THE
PROMISE**



**FUND
THE NEXT
STEP**

DELIVER → MEASURE → REVIEW → DECIDE



**THE FORECAST SHOULD HELP YOU
DECIDE WHAT TO DO NEXT.**

STOP FORECASTING?



NO.

BUSINESSES STILL NEED AN ANSWER

**IS IT
WORTH
DOING?**

**WHAT
MIGHT
WE GET?**

**WHAT
RESOURCE
DO WE
NEED?**

WHAT I'D DO DIFFERENTLY

I'D STILL FORECAST.

I JUST WOULDN'T

MAKE THE PROMISE.

REALITY WILL INTERFERE

**SEARCH CHANGES.
PEOPLE CHANGE.
PLANS CHANGE.**



THE RANGE MODEL

BASELINE

GROUP

EVIDENCE

SCENARIOS

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HAPPEN?**

**WHAT NEEDS
TO HAPPEN?**

**WHAT
ACTUALLY
HAPPENED?**

NEXT TIME SOMEONE ASKS:

**WHAT ARE WE
GOING TO GET?**

MY ANSWER NOW

**HERE'S THE
RANGE**

**HERE'S
WHAT HAS
TO BE TRUE**

**HERE'S
WHEN
WE'LL
REVIEW IT**

THE FINAL THOUGHT

**A FORECAST DOESN'T NEED TO
PREDICT THE FUTURE PERFECTLY.**

**IT NEEDS TO HELP US
MAKE A BETTER DECISION.**

THANK YOU

FROM RANKINGS TO RANGES

JAMES YORKE

SLIDES + RESOURCES ARE
ON MY LINKEDIN →

