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Winner – Shop Direct

Innovation lab opens the door to opportunity

Creating a technology environment that fosters innovation has helped Shop Direct make fast improvements to its sites that have helped drive valuable sales. The retailer, which operates sites such as Very.co.uk and Littlewoods.com, has implemented an experimentation programme that involves running about 50 experiments per month.

One judge said: "It's incredible what Shop Direct is doing with its lab. It's able to run an experiment and implement the change in a day.

"It's doing more experiments than anyone and leading the world in the way it's using this kind of technology."

Another said: "I'm not sure I see another business doing what Shop Direct does with analytics and it's shifted the entire culture of the business. The culture is directed at the consumer interaction, and it can deliver an immediate effect."

The online retailer has worked hard to improve what it learns through A/B tests, removing assumptions and improving key

In the lab, at the heart of Shop Direct's head office, experiments are undertaken and changes rapidly implemented

metrics. It has the ability and culture to ensure that it learns and fails fast when ideas do not work out.

Such changes have brought measurable improvements in conversion rates.

The journey began when Shop Direct created a user experience lab in its head office, which has been fundamental in driving not just an increase in ecommerce experimentation, but engendering culture change through the wider business.

and has delivery centres in India (Pune, Hyderabad and Bangalore), China, UK, Amsterdam and US (Westborough).

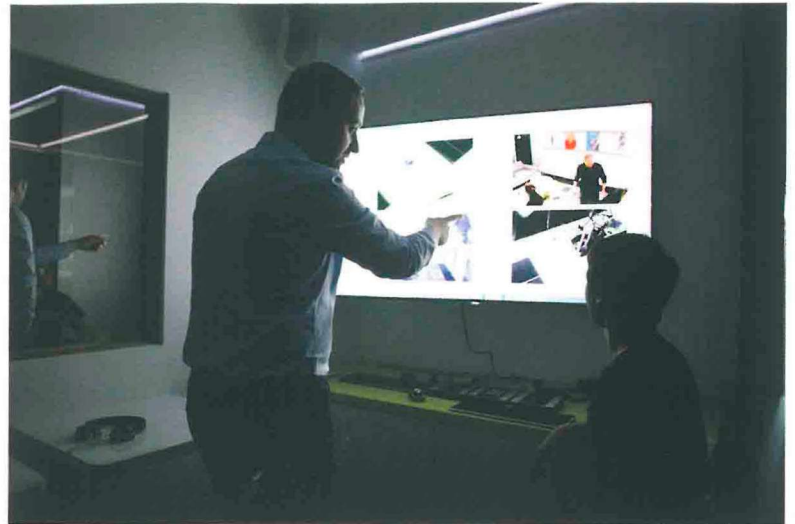
The company has a services portfolio that ranges from the traditional to the transformational – across service lines of management consulting, business application services, enterprise solutions, enterprise collaboration services, testing and assurance services, BPM and infrastructure management services. Zensar's experience of retail translates into a differentiated value proposition and faster time-to-market for retailers.

Zensar Technologies

Zensar Technologies is a technology partner of choice for global organisations looking to strategically transform, grow and lead in today's challenging retail environment.

Backed by a strong track record of innovation, more than 8,000 associates and footprint in more than 22 global locations, Zensar's comprehensive range of software services and solutions enable its 400-plus forward-looking customers to cross new thresholds of business performance.

Zensar operates in the UK, US, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Singapore and Australia regions



The lab comes up with hypotheses for experiments, as well as enabling understanding of why business experiments succeed or fail, through initiatives such as user studies, eye tracking and workshops.

As it learns what works and takes ideas further through iteration, the retailer has discovered new information and themes that it would not have had it taken a more traditional approach.

The strategy has also meant it has avoided the redesign problem some competitors have faced if they have made large-scale changes without fully understanding their potential impact.

At the moment Shop Direct is testing technologies, including augmented reality that shows how pieces of furniture would fit into the rooms of customers' homes, and a tool that allows shoppers to compare products with items they already own.

Shop Direct has invested in developing the lab but it has paid for itself through the results of tests.

Shop Direct said that putting the lab at the heart of its head office has driven a more customer-focused, innovative and ambitious fail fast culture. **PETAH MARIAN**