RevLifter®

The eCommerce Offer Copy Report

The words that turn offers into actions

Introduction

If you're an eCommerce retailer, you'll appreciate the power of words in persuading customers to perform a certain action, like buying a product or staying on a site.

Why, then, do we see brands running the same offer copy time and time again, overlay after overlay? That was the inspiration behind the resource you're about to read.

Words effectively spell out what you're offering and how to redeem it. 'Buy one get one free'; '50% off'; they provide the same thing. So which one do you use?

In the US alone, eCommerce is now a trillion-dollar market. Offers remain one of the biggest drivers of this spend. And if you want more of it, then every word matters.

We at **RevLifter** saw the appetite for a summary of 'keywords' for offer copy. You'll see which words drive the most engagement and results across a number of categories. And if you want more advice on running intelligent incentivization efforts, get in touch.

Happy learning!

From Team **RevLifter**

Research proves that offers drive feelings of...

- **Excitement**
- **Pleasure**
- **Happiness**

80% of customers would try a new brand if they had an offer.

56% of eCommerce shoppers expect personalized offers.

48% of people will steer clear of a brand that doesn't provide offers.

Sources: RetailMeNot, 2018 | Salesforce, 2023

Methodology

The data you're about to examine is taken directly from **RevLifter**'s network of retail brands.

Factoring in our running of personalized offer campaigns for leaders in fashion, apparel, beauty, consumer electronics, telco, vitamins, and many more verticals, it provides a solid sample for each keyword.

Rather than treat each outcome as definitive, our idea is to present these findings as a starting point for retailers to test and see whether they produce similar readings.

What we've included

Our report is split into sections. These are what we'd consider the most important areas of study from our years of experience in serving personalized offers.

They also reflect some of the most commonly asked questions from retailers, like 'Should I say deal or offer when running a promotion', or 'Do I use $ off or % off for my discount?'

What we've skipped

In some sections, we've excluded certain words and numbers. This is typically where a below-average sample group (often a bi-product of a highly specific campaign) has influenced a result that requires great explanation and is not an accurate reflection of performance.

A big thanks to...

These insights come courtesy of two very important members of Team **RevLifter**:

Karl Waugh,
Head of Data Science

Katie Hardy,
Data Analyst

Karl and Katie are integral to RevLifter's Data Science team. Their time is spent analyzing data, trends, and exploring how machine learning can drive real benefits to our eCommerce brands. This index simply wouldn't have been possible without their guidance and wisdom.

Go Karl and Katie!

This data is brought to you by over **500 million impressions** from these retail sectors...

- Fashion & Apparel
- Consumer Electronics
- Telco
- Vitamins & Supplements
- Sporting Goods
- DIY & Homewares
- Beauty
- Food & Drink
- Multi-Category

Definition of Terms

We've measured the performance of each word on a level playing field.

By sticking to aggregate metrics like click-through rates, average order values, and conversion rates, we've quantified each word's effectiveness in a fair way.

Terms used in this report:

Click-through rate (CTR)

The number of clicks that an offer containing the word receives, divided by the number of times it is shown. We've compared these with an in-house benchmark to give a score out of 10.

Low score: 1-3 → **Mid score: 4-6** → **High score: 6+**

Conversion rate (CVR)

The number of conversions driven by offers containing the word, divided by the number of interactions with it. We also match these up with a benchmark to give a score out of 10.

Low score: 1-2 → **Mid score: 3-4** → **High score: 5+**

Average order value (AOV)

The average order value (in USD) of customers who used an offer containing a word and purchased an item.

Low score: $0-100 → **Mid score: $100-150** → **High score: $150+**

Words That Give Customers More

Every shopper likes to get more for less. Consumers rate '**value for money**' as their top consideration when shopping, even above fast-rising concerns like sustainability.

There are many ways of issuing a money-off incentive and, as you can imagine, an ever longer list of ways to phrase it.

We've focused on three of the most popular terms - '**extra**' (e.g. '**50% extra free**'), '**discount**' ('**exclusive discount**') and '**save**' ('**buy now and save 10%**') - to provide a solid sample to work off.

Key learning:

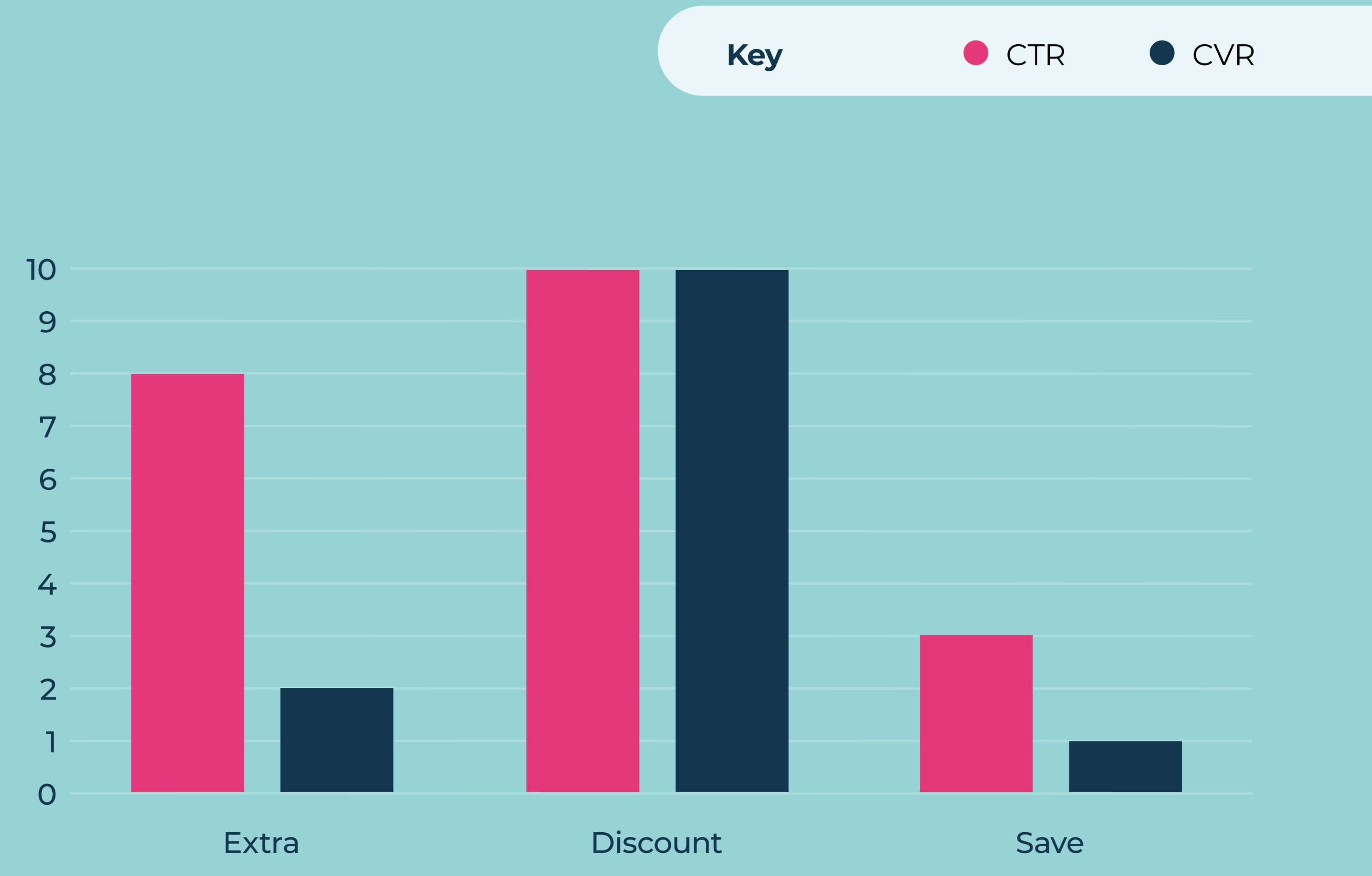
Discounts are a conversion driver for low-value sales

'**Discount**' has one of the highest CTRs and CVRs from the study. It's incredible to see so many site visitors converting from offers that include the word.

There's a big caveat, though. The AOV of $95 is low, which shows the impact of a guaranteed reduction in price and the type of customer attracted by such a deal.

For high-value orders, '**save**' (AOV: $214) looks to be the preferred option. Why? Our two cents is that retailers try to demonstrate the saving gained by going for a higher-value purchase.

It's a similar story for '**extra**' (AOV: $135), which works well as part of a '**Spend and Save**' deal (e.g. '**Take an extra 10% off when you spend $100**').



Our two cents

Upselling is much easier when you highlight the saving made by a customer. Show the difference in value between what they have in their cart vs an upgrade. You'd be surprised how many customers are open to making a bigger order.

AOV

Extra	Discount	Save
$134	$95	$214

Fast or Free - Which Delivers?

The words '**delivery**' or '**shipping**' tend to be used for the lowest tier of offer. Our analysis confirms that these won't drive huge amounts of spend, but they can influence small increases in order values.

Let's say I'm a customer with a $22 cart. A progress bar showing that I need to spend just $3 more to gain free shipping could encourage me to increase my order size.

The retailer gives away nothing aside from information on their shipping policy and persuades the shopper to go deeper into the purchase consideration phase.

Key finding:

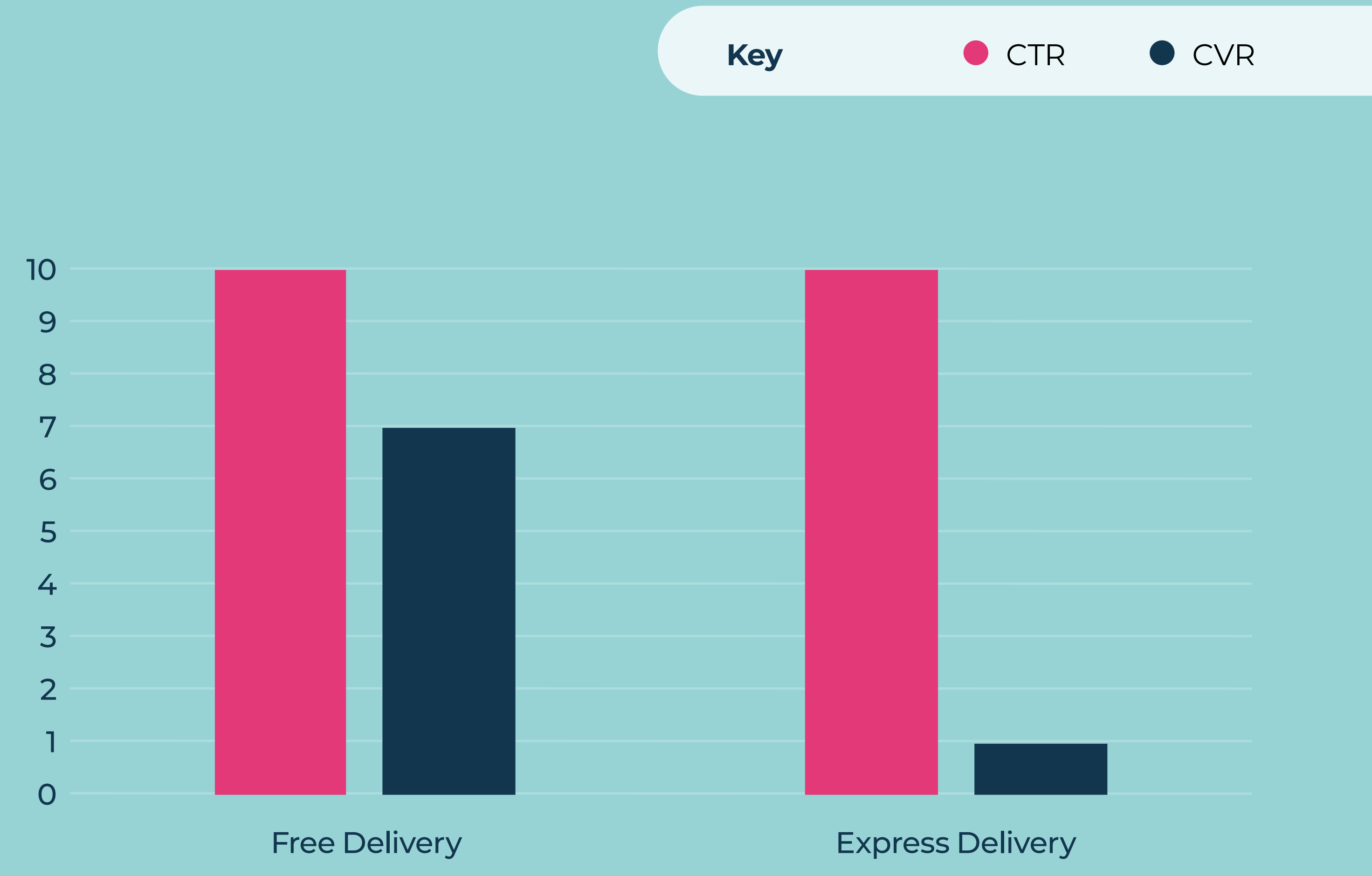
Free beats fast (sorta...)

Splitting out the uses of '**express**' in correlation to fast shipping, we can see a strong AOV. Put this down to users spending a high amount to receive the premium option.

It's explained by free shipping having a much lower order value. However, studying the difference across conversion rates, '**free**' puts in a much better performance.

Key learning:

- Use '**free delivery**' as an incentive for low-value carts
- Use '**express shipping**' to raise AOV
- '**Free shipping**' drives more conversions than '**express shipping**'



AOV

Free Delivery	Express Delivery
$82	$183

Percentage Off vs Discount

The battle of the '**% off**' vs '**$ off**' was one we were really interested in. (Hey, we're intelligent offer experts – this is like our Lewis vs Tyson.)

Generally speaking, a '**$ off**" discount is more profitable than running the same level of incentive at '**% off**'.

Sale value	
$120	
Value of sale at 15% of	Value of sale at $15 off
$102	**$105**

The question is, what do consumers react best to?

Key finding:

'$ off' provides value for retailers

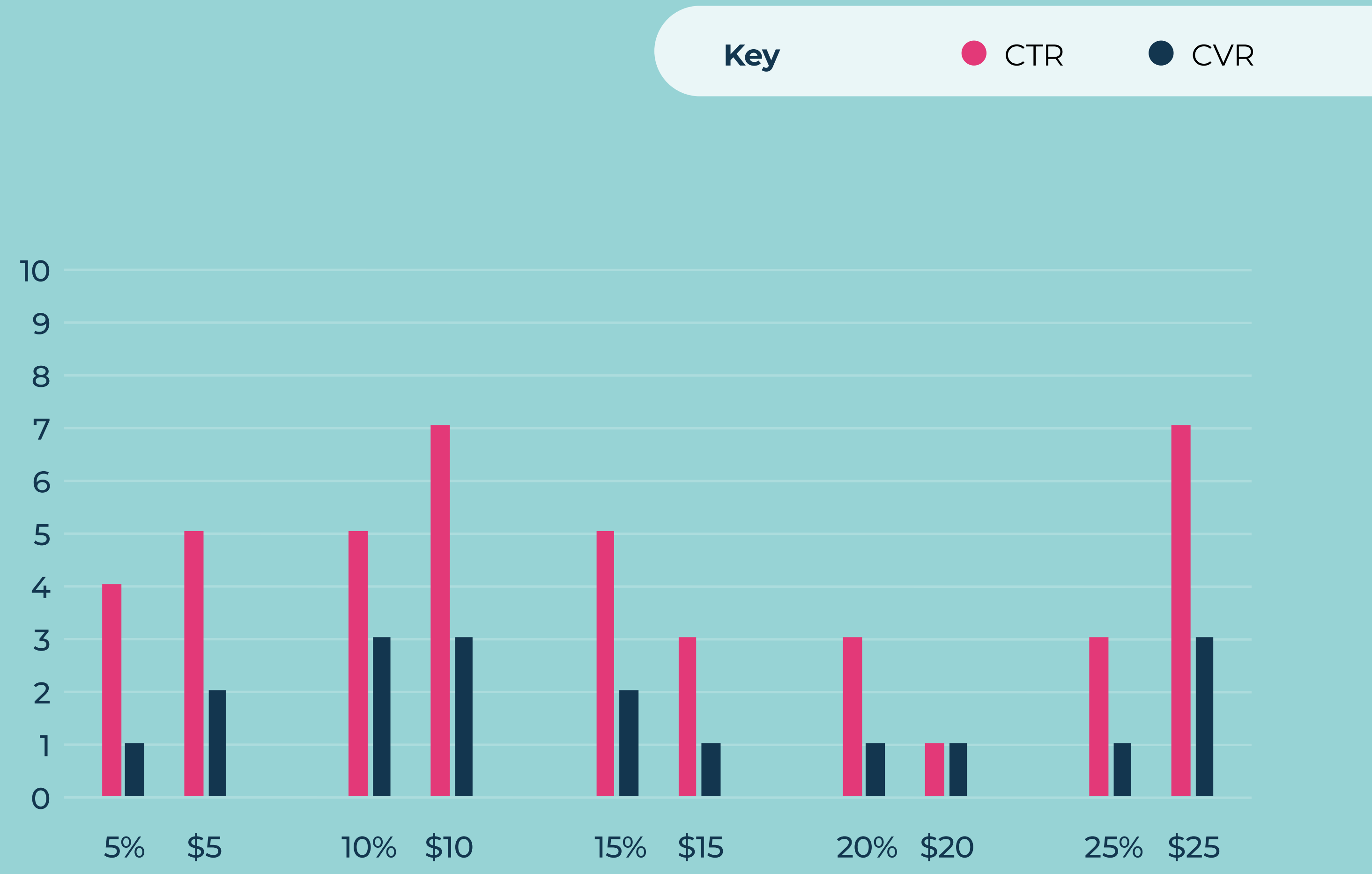
Between 5-15, '**$ off**' outperforms '**% off**' in every single area. This creates opportunities to protect your margin with a dollar-off incentive.

If growing AOV is the goal, it's best to stick with '**$ off**' incentives up until 25%, which beats '**$25 off**' by a distance.

Profitability is important, though. And if we wanted to safeguard our margins, '**$ off**' promotions are a smart move.

Key learning:

- '**$ off**' promotions generate better AOV (up to '**25% off**')
- For promotions between 5-15, go with '**$ off**' to protect margin
- '**25% off**' is a powerful incentive for growing spend



AOV

$191	$145	$218	$232	$116
$5	$10	$15	$20	$25
$113	**$138**	**$181**	**$234**	**$226**
5%	10%	15%	20%	25%

Black Friday vs Cyber Week

Peak Season is a crucial time for retailers. One of the most important periods is Cyber Week, which sees retailers delivering their best offers across seven hectic days, including the globally recognized phenomenon: Black Friday.

Would offers attached to these events bring a high AOV? Should retailers concentrate their efforts on Black Friday, or is it best to issue different offers throughout the week? We simply had to find out.

Key finding:

Black Friday remains undefeated

Customers really cannot get enough of Black Friday and, judging by the results, retailers are probably saving their best promotions for this behemoth of an event.

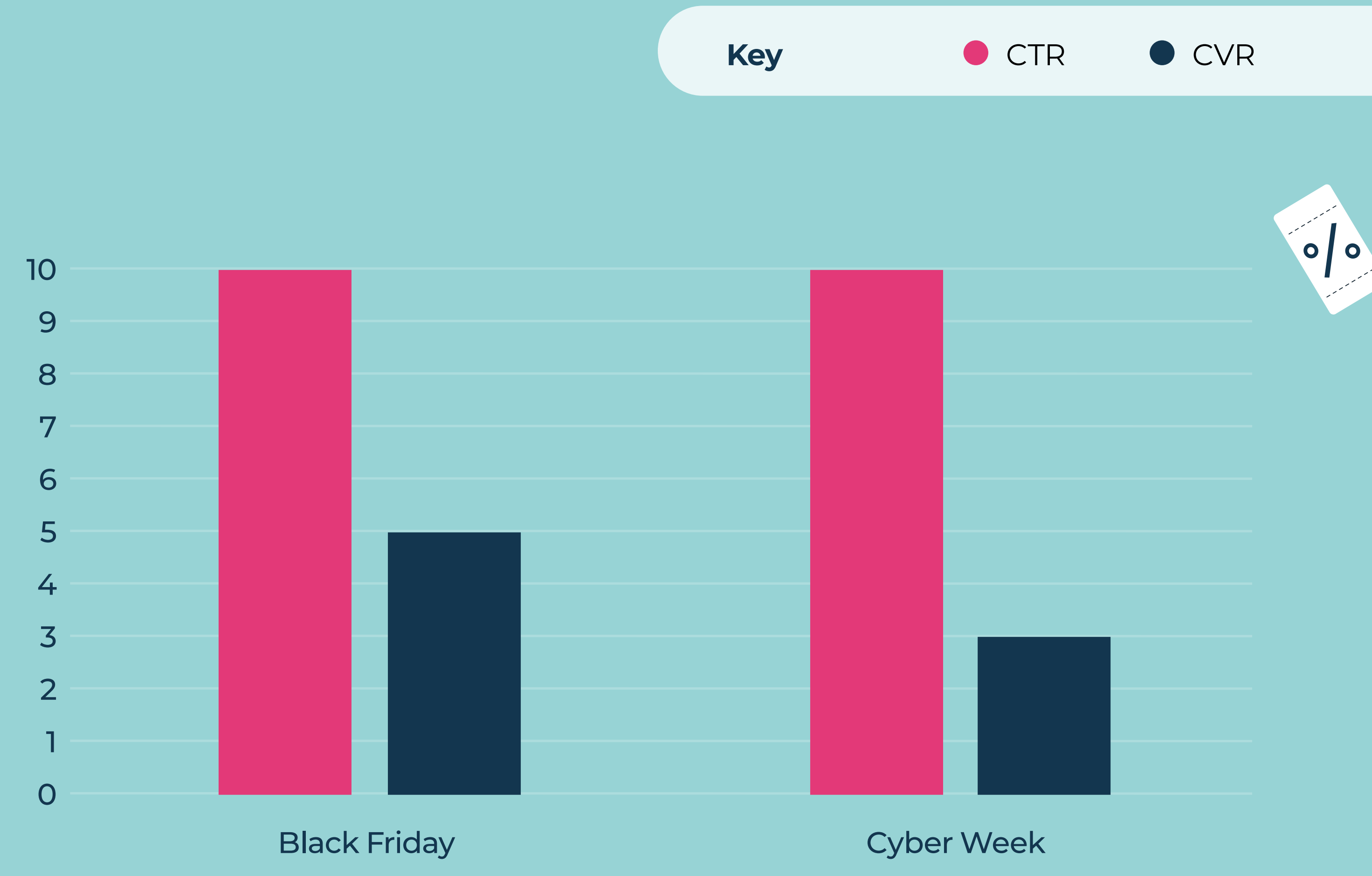
'**Black Friday**' has shoppers spending more, converting at a better rate, and clicking away at more offers.

We should raise that '**Cyber Week**' is by no means a dud. A reasonable CTR and CVR provide more than enough justification to roll out deals from Monday to Thursday.

However, when it comes to overall performance, it's clear to see what shoppers are interested in.

Key learning:

- '**Black Friday**' is still effective at driving spend and conversions
- It's worth running '**Cyber Week**' deals in addition to Black Friday specials



AOV

Black Friday	Cyber Week
$98	$75

The Pillars of Urgency

'**Today!**', '**now!**', '**save!**', '**flash!**'. Now we have your attention, let's explore the effectiveness of these words to drive engagement and conversions.

We've stripped AOV out of this examination due to these words often coming with a heavy discount. Flash, for instance, often comes attached to a '**flash sale**' focused on selling certain inventory at low cost. It's a similar story with '**today'**, which is frequently used for a daily deal – again, centering on a discount for a single item.

Key finding:

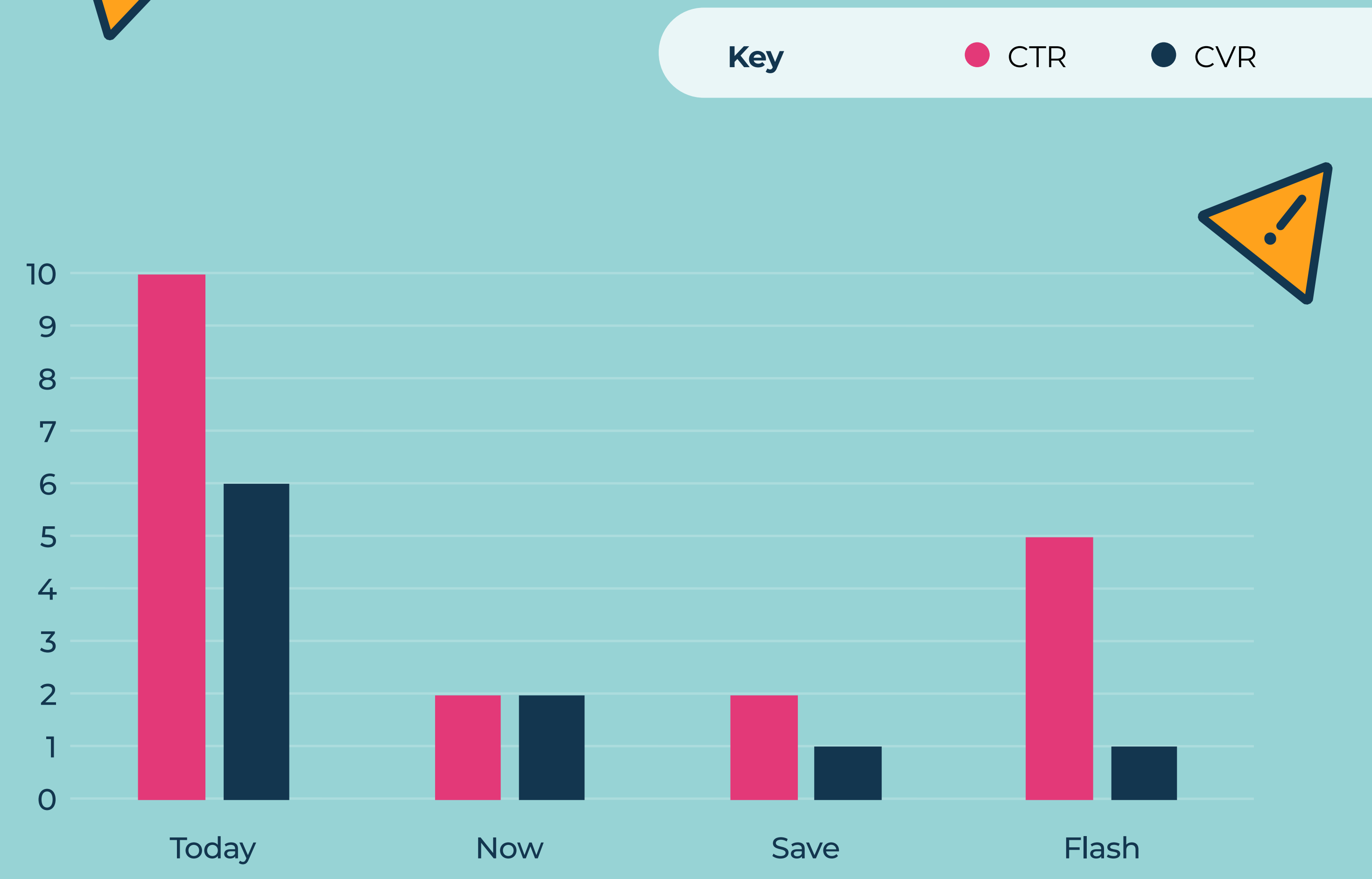
Daily Deals grab attention more than flash sales

Perhaps it's the extra urgency of only having a day to grab a deal. Perhaps it's a psychological reason we'd be ill-equipped to advise on. Whatever the reason, in looking at the results for '**today**', the Daily Deal really drives actions like no other.

'**Now**' puts in a good showing for CVR. '**Buy now**', '**save now**' – there are a few different variations to roll out here.

A '**flash**' sale can also refer to a host of promotions. And with a low CTR, it's possible that many brands are directing shoppers to a page of deals on multiple items.

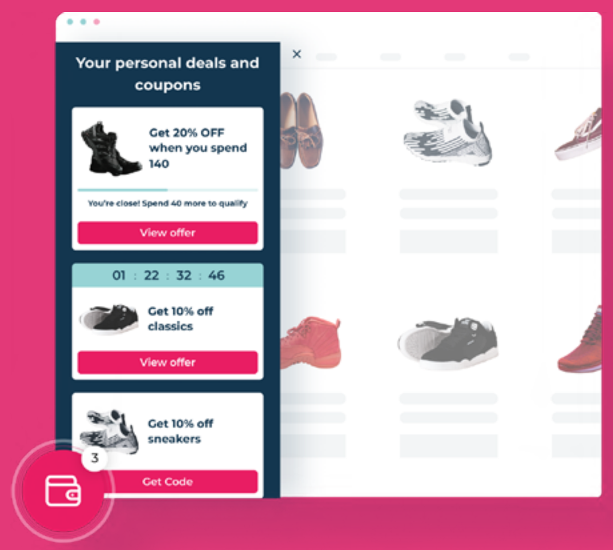
Still, the CVR and CTR of '**today**' show the effectiveness of running time-limited offers.



Our two cents

Lots of brands run Daily Deals on their homepage. If you want our two cents, it's much easier to incorporate these types of promotions as part of an on-site tool.

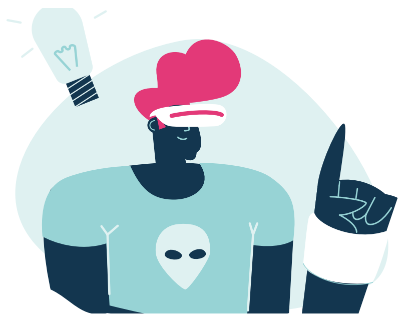
For a start, you don't have to continually update your homepage. The deals will also stay with each customer and won't vanish when they navigate to a product page.



Deal vs **Offer**

Offer vs deal - what's the difference?

There are many definitions out there. Here's one you might be aware of:



"A deal generally comes with terms & conditions. The difference between a deal and an offer is that a deal is conditional while an offer is a plain sale with a discount."

Using that example, an offer would be '**10% off**' whereas a deal is '**10% off when you buy two or more items**'.

These days, there isn't much difference between the two. '**Special offers**' and '**Great deals**' can deliver the exact same incentives without a single eyebrow being raised.

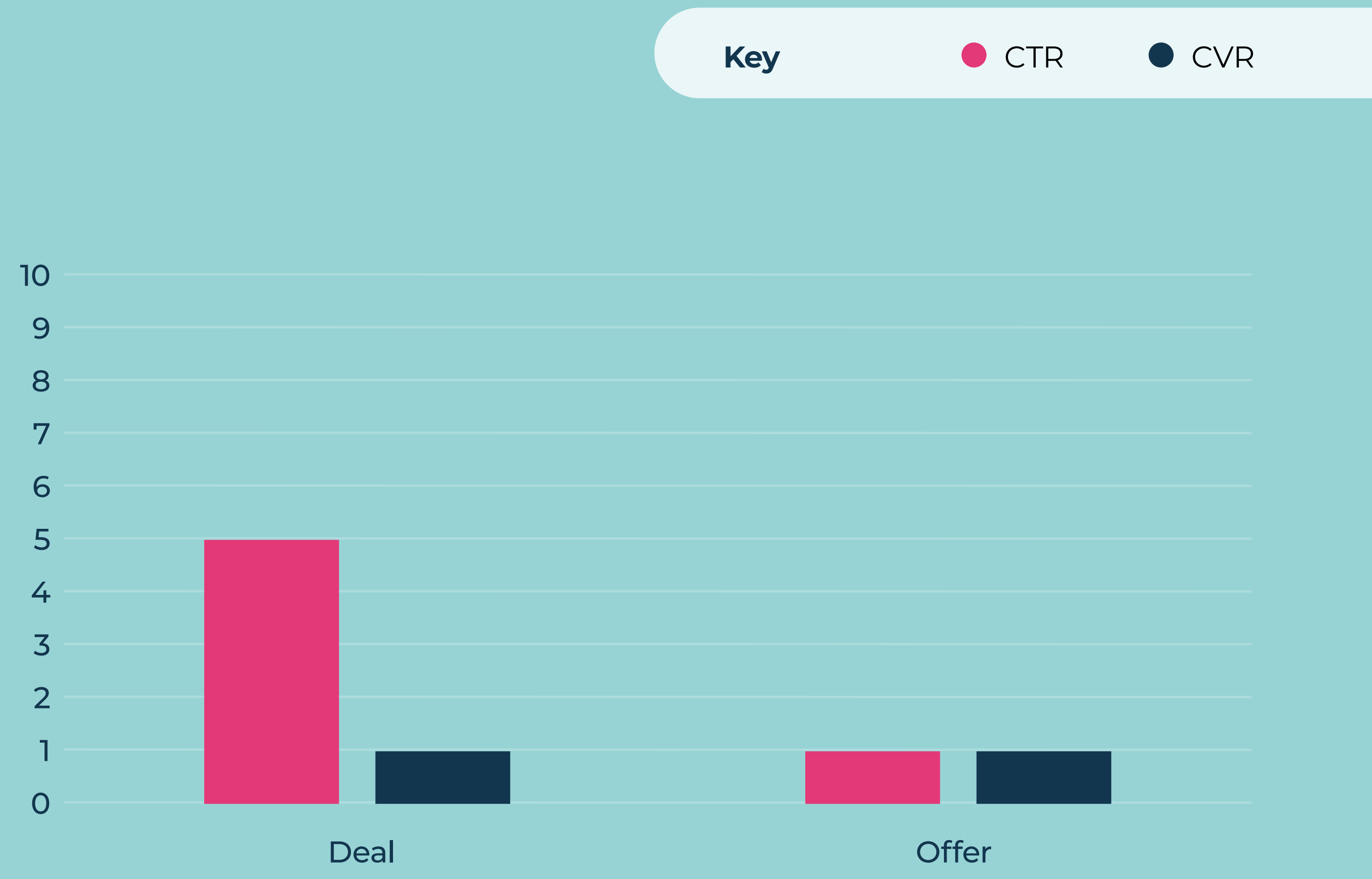
Retailers pick their preference on which word to use based on little data. Until now!

Key finding:

Offers drive more spend

There is very little difference when comparing deals to offers in the conversion stakes. Yet, we see much higher spend from the latter. That's arguably enough to consider your choice of phrasing when you next run a promotion.

Even if '**deals**' drive a much higher CTR, unless you're using the term to direct customers to a host of different incentives (e.g. to your very own coupon page), '**offers**' seem to be the most attractive option to shoppers.



AOV

Deal	Offer
$79	$147

Oops, Invalid
Discount Code

Many of our brands run seasonal promotions to charge up their revenue either during a key period (a summer sale during summer) or to move excess stock (an end-of-line summer sale during autumn).

We typically use the phrase ‘**didn’t work**’ as part of a longer piece of offer copy apologizing for an invalid discount and offering a light incentive (usually ‘**5% off**’) to rescue the sale.

Key finding:

Use Error-Code Offers to convert more customers

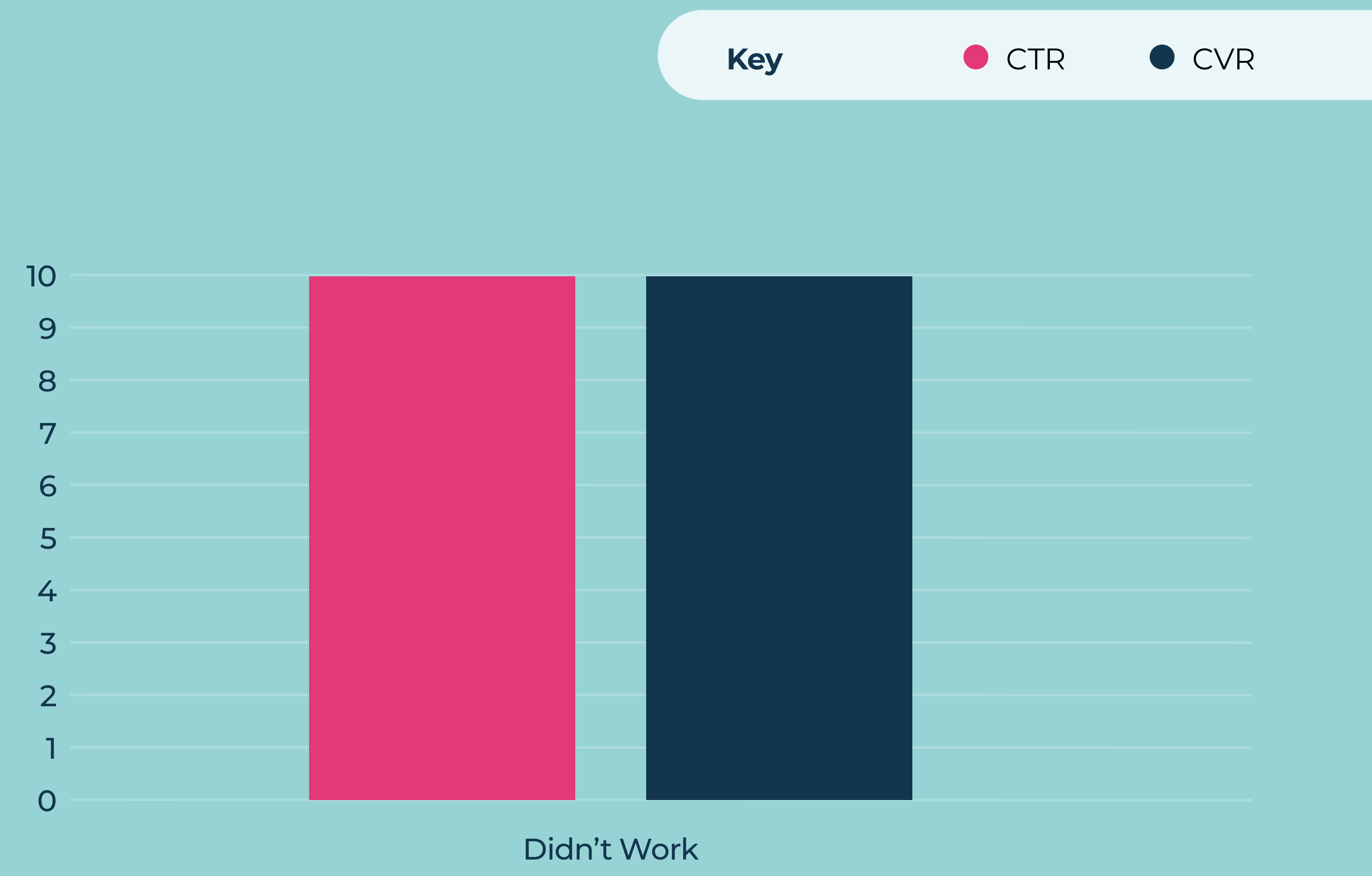
We expected the invalid code offer to have a high click-through rate, and it did. Its average is sky high, potentially due to customers wanting to see how much a ‘% off’ discount impacts their order value.

This high level of performance carries right through to the conversion. The CVR of an Error-Code Offer is one of the highest recorded in our benchmark report.

Error-Code Offers also have an incredibly high AOV. However, we’re putting this down to retailers requiring customers to have a high cart value in order to gain an incentive.

Key learning:

- Error-Code Offers are super effective conversion drivers
- Tackling the issue of invalid codes might be key to your abandonment strategy



AOV

$659

Didn’t Work

Sitewide Sales – Do They Actually Work?

If you know a bit about **RevLifter**, you'll know about our attitude to broad, one-size-fits-all promotions.

Sitewide sales work on the basis of giving every customer the same thing. You can drive a lot of conversions by discounting everything on your site. However, it's much harder to guarantee that each one of those sales is actually profitable.

For that reason, sitewide sales are not exactly commonplace in our world, but some brands will run the occasional big discount to drum up sales around a key period.

The question is, does it actually work?

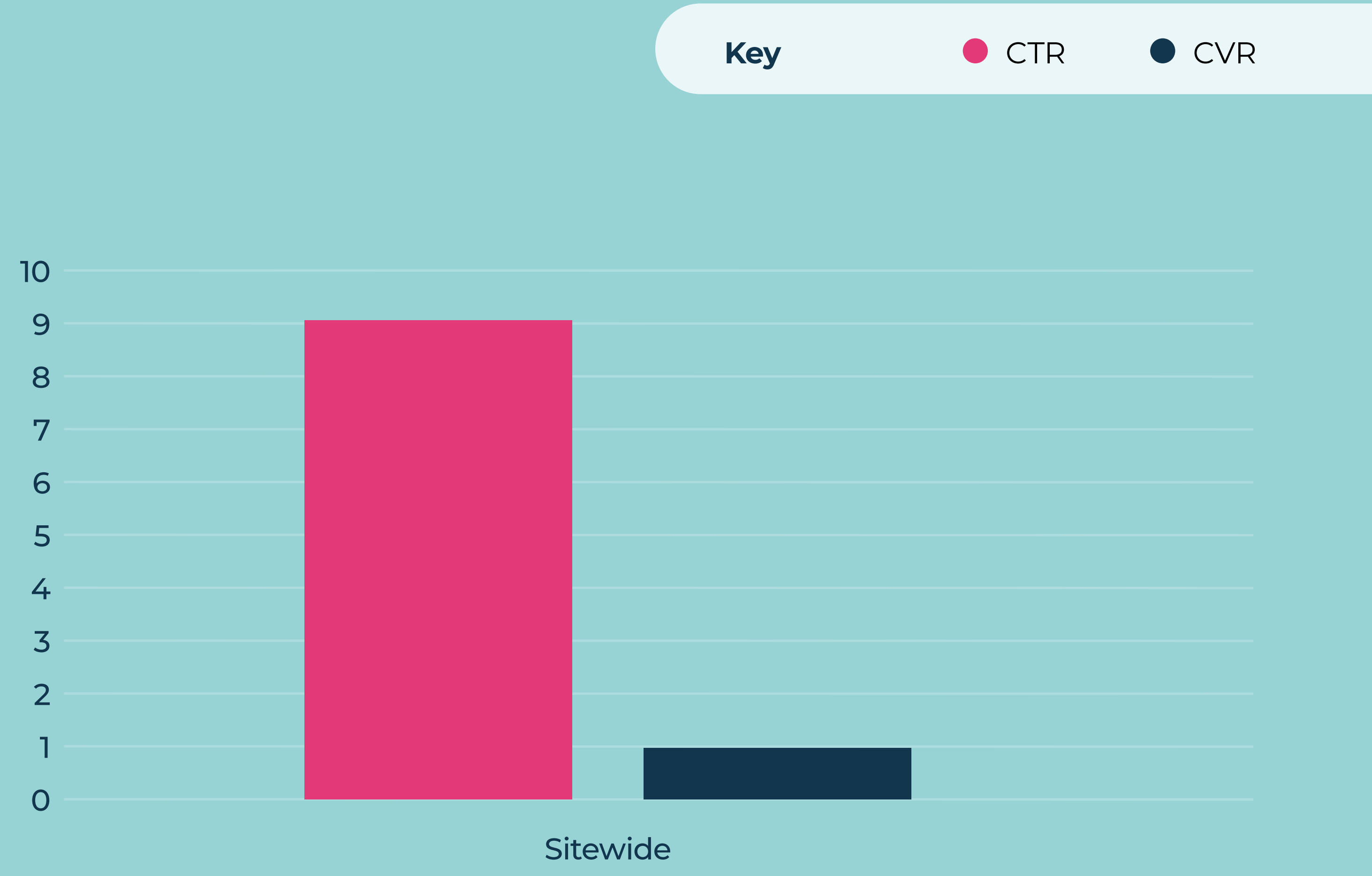
Key finding:

The jury is out...

'**Sitewide**' offers perform relatively well. We have a high click-through rate, but the conversion rate is seriously underwhelming.

It's important to highlight that sitewide sales usually go out to every customer. It's not a targeted promotion appealing to a specific person – there could be lots of low-intent visitors in our sample. Plus, they might be called different things (e.g. 'Big Sale'), so we haven't captured every example.

There's little in these signals to demonstrate whether sitewide is or isn't a good idea. But if we consider the impact on profitability, there might be some nasty after-effects underlying these figures.



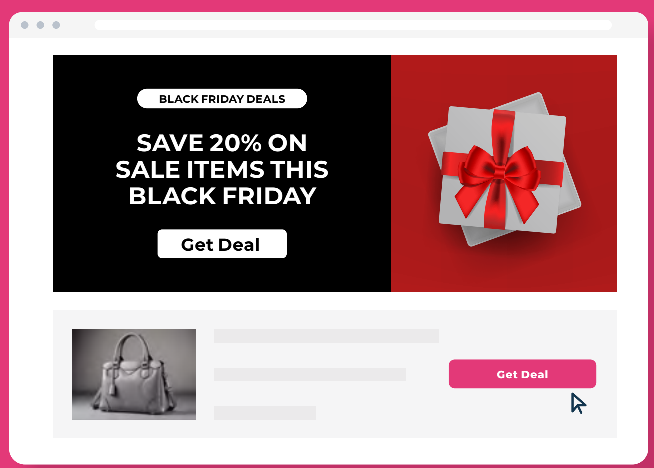
AOV

$215

Sitewide

Our two cents

A good alternative to a sitewide sale is a promotion on excess stock. By creating a special promotion for these items (a separate sale page is an idea) you avoid selling your more popular items at a discounted rate.



Everything Must Go

Intrigued by our findings on ‘**sitewide**’ offers, we decided to look into the performance of a similar word to see if it represented a better option.

‘**Everything**’ is used in the same types of campaigns as sitewide - e.g. ‘**10% off everything**’, ‘**10% off everything in our sale**’.

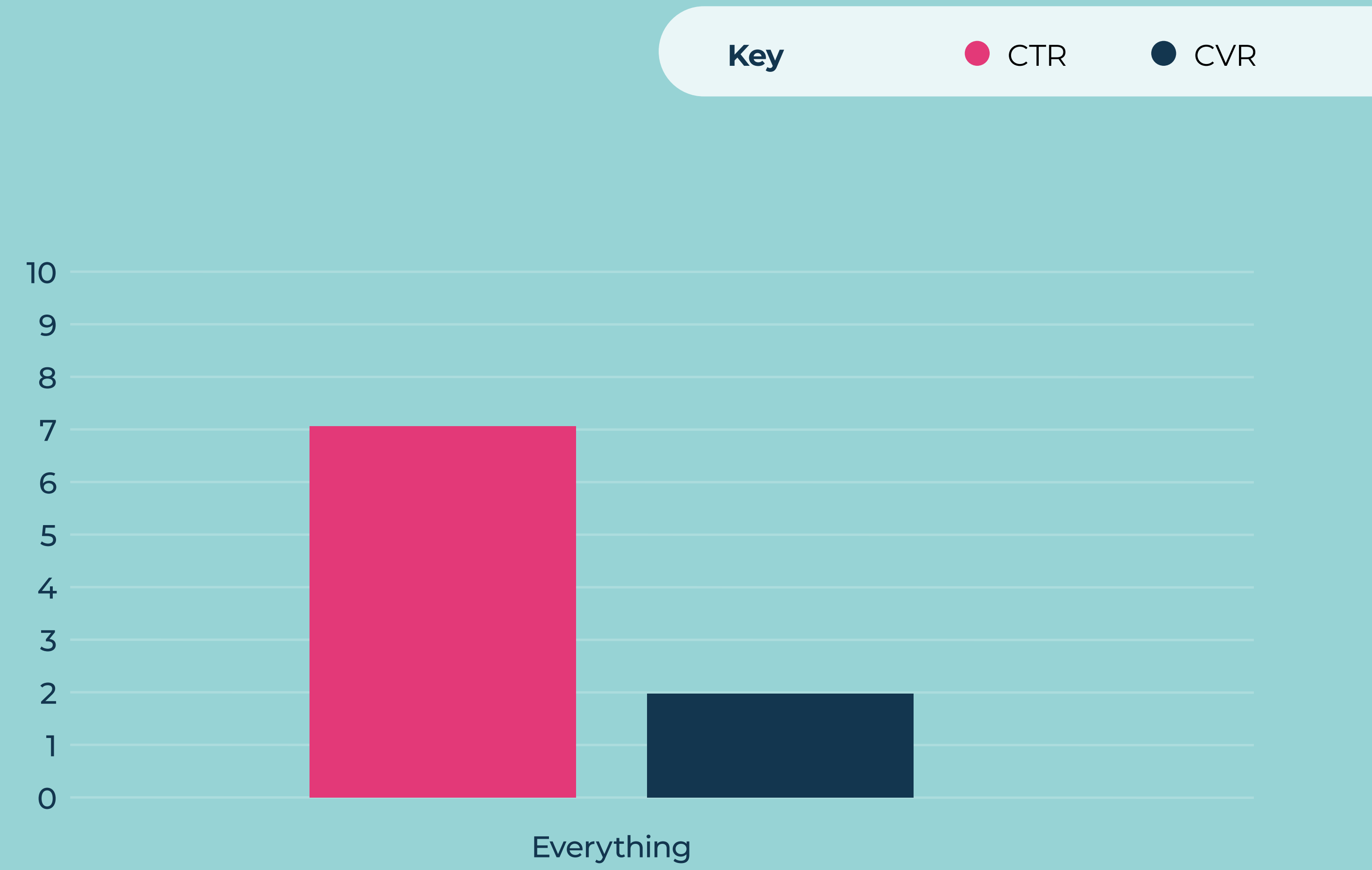
We were particularly interested in the conversion rate given the broad targeting net. Often available to both low and high-intent customers, would these deals have a good success rate?

Key finding:

Everything outperforms sitewide in CVR terms

We’re not talking about a huge margin - it’s 1/10 vs 2/10 - but we do see an improvement in one of the most important areas. According to our analysis, ‘**everything**’ is a better word to use when it comes to converting shoppers.

AOV actually drops to $170 (vs $215 for ‘**sitewide**’). However, it’s important to note that these are occasionally used in sale campaigns, where items are discounted.



AOV

Everything	Sitewide
$170	**$215**

Deal of the Day vs Deal of the Week

Time-sensitive promotions performed particularly well in our study. One area of focus was around the difference between running a deal throughout the week vs keeping it to 24 hours.

A weekly approach gives more customers the chance to redeem the promotion, whereas a daily deal carries extra urgency.

Key learning:

Daily promotions get the edge

The time-limited approach seems to pay off, with ‘**daily**’ deals narrowly beating ‘**weekly**’ promotions in terms of CVR.

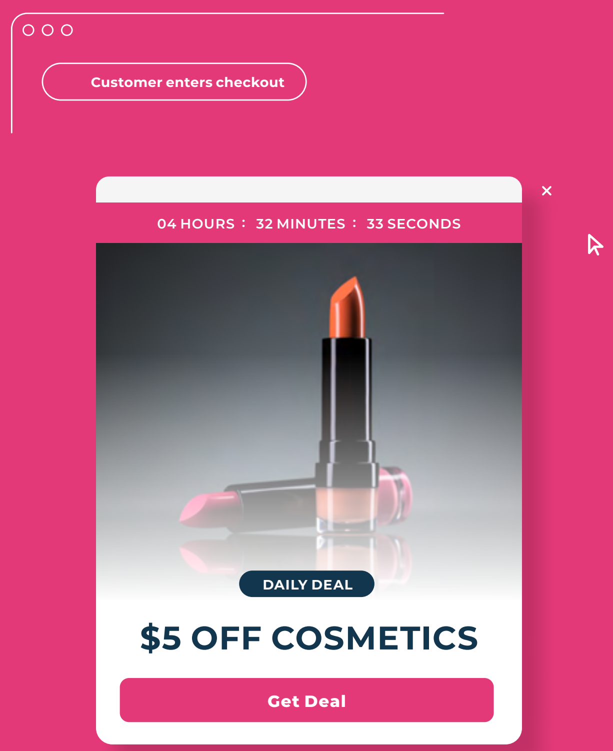
AOV tells a similar story at $117 vs $114. But ‘**weekly**’ promotions have a much stronger CTR at 10 vs 7. We’d pin this to visitors seeing weekly deals advertised but not necessarily a single product. When they click through and don’t find something of interest, they swiftly abandon the page.

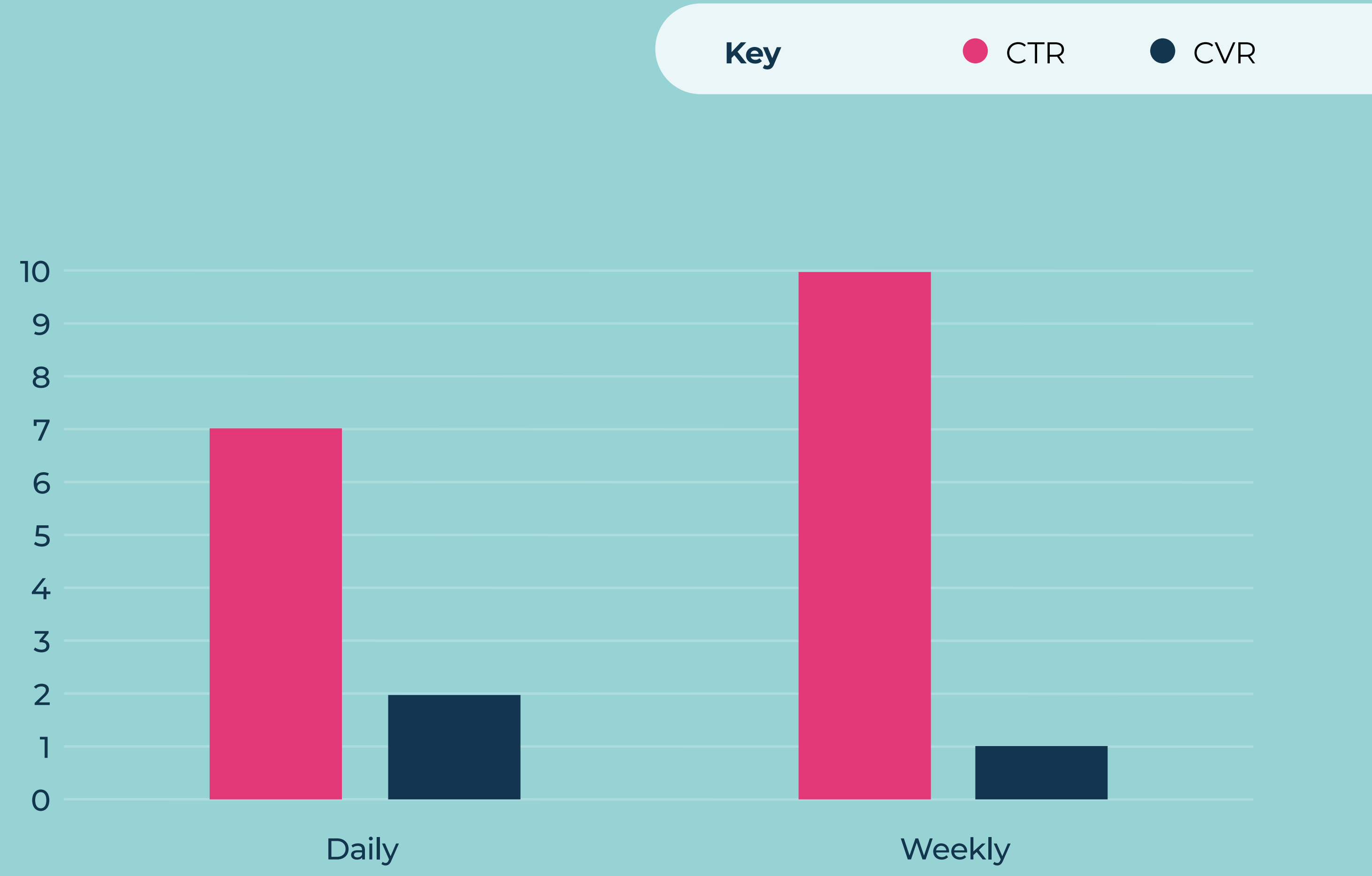
Our two cents

‘**Daily**’ deals tend to come with sizeable discounts. The idea is to drum up sales for a specific product, and you won’t make a big enough impression without some kind of incentive.

If you’re worried about discounting a full-price product and eroding your margin, we’d recommend focusing these types of campaigns on slow-moving stock. That way, you generate more sales in the right area.

Fashion brands are huge fans of this strategy as they can use it to clear space in their warehouse before collections from a new season arrive.





AOV

Daily	Weekly
$117	$114

Qualify or Claim?

Here's a straight shootout between two interchangeable words.

When retailers launch a conditional offer (e.g. '**Spend $100 and Get a Free Gift**') there is usually an invitation to do '**X**' in order to '**qualify for**' or '**claim Y**'.

It's the type of offer that generates a strong, goal-orientated outcome, as the retailer always gets something more than a conversion.

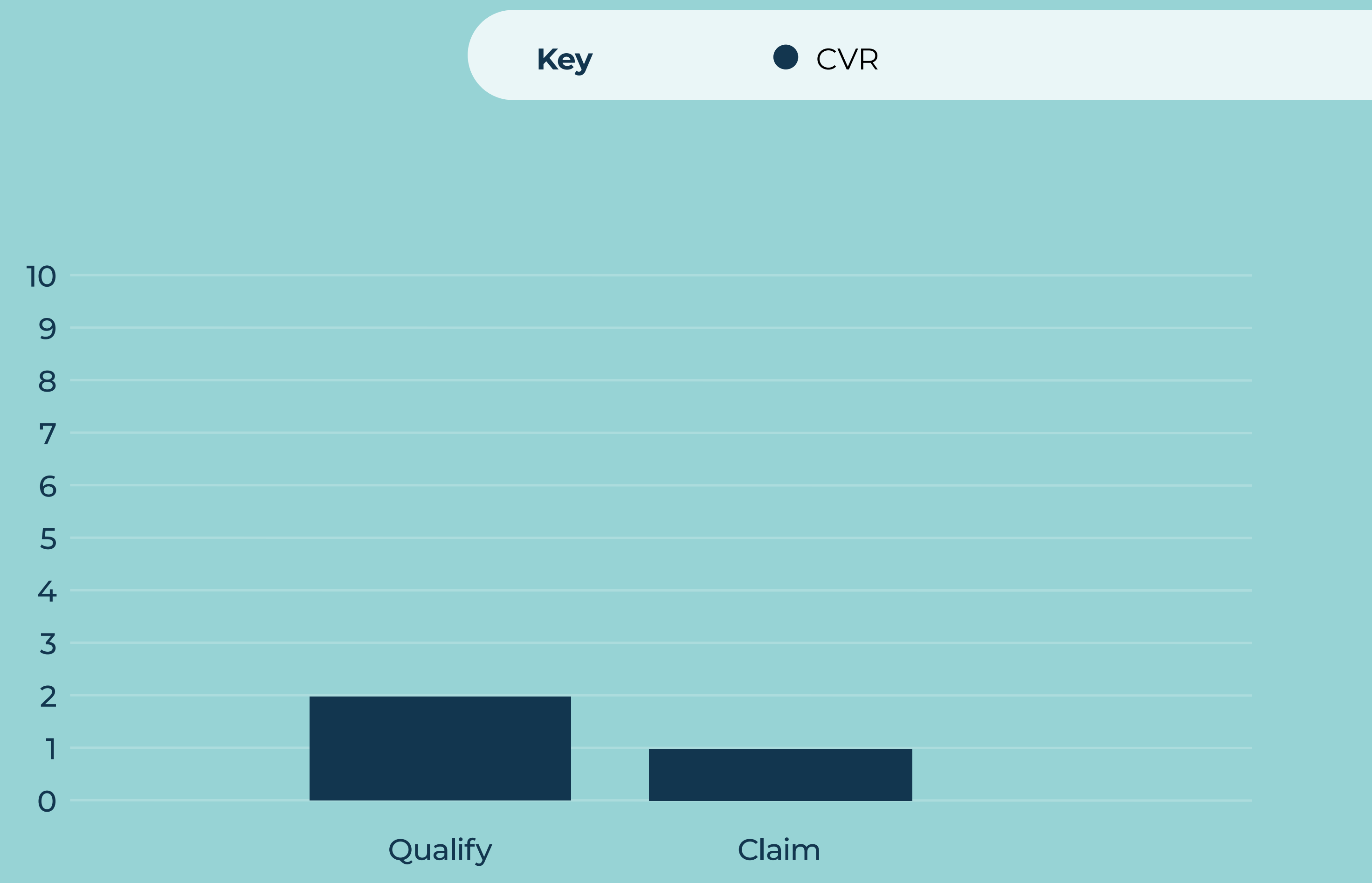
'**Qualify**' and '**claim**' are by far the most common words in our conditional offers, so we wanted to see how they performed.

Key learning:

Qualify outpoints claim

Urging customers to '**qualify**' for a deal rather than '**claim**' will see you driving more conversions, according to our analysis.

There isn't much difference between the two. A gap of 1/10 is on the edge of what we'd consider significant. But for the sake of swapping out a word for something that implies exactly the same thing, it's the type of marginal gain that smart retailers will look into.



Conditional Offers Are No.1

The biggest sample size for our study might say a lot about the changing tide in the incentivization game.

Millions of offer impressions contained one word - ‘**spend**’ - which is invariably used in a conditional promotion. ‘**Get 10% off when you spend $100**’ and incentives of this ilk are highly effective at boosting AOV. When customers spend more, they see a bigger discount.

Key learning:

The numbers don’t lie

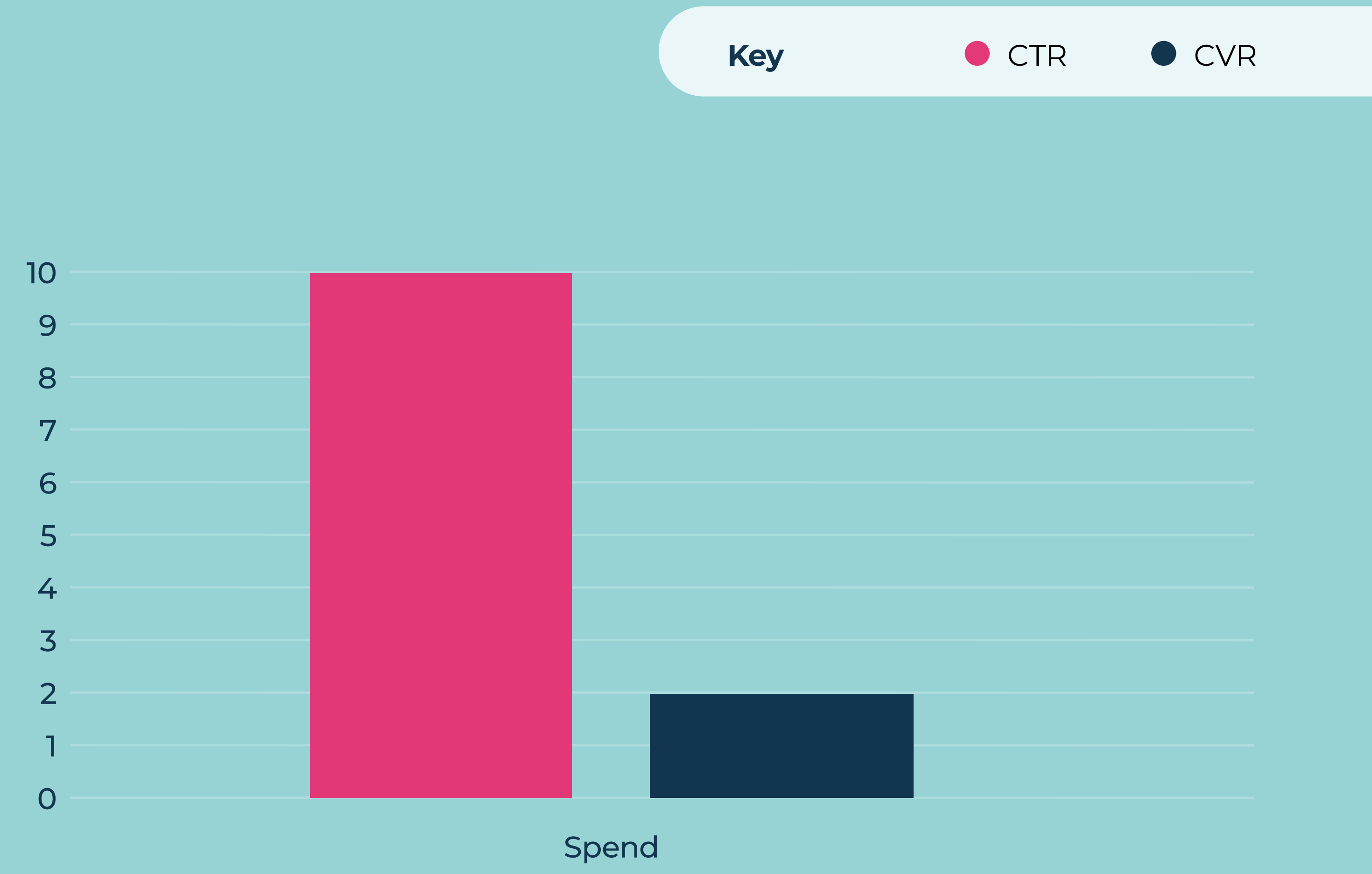
Our main learning is the popularity of conditional offers, indicating that retailers are being more selective when it comes to their biggest discounts.

‘**Spend**’ is used in promotions that have a strong CTR. There is a slight drop-off in conversions, as 2/10 is below what we’d expect considering the clicks. But as these offers are usually shown to every shopper, which the high impression count seems to confirm, they are still generating a good performance.

The AOV of $118 is also relatively well-positioned, given that some brands have tiers as low as ‘**Spend $20 and get free shipping**’.

Our two cents

Try using a progress bar to show customers how much extra they need to spend to get a deal. This will gamify the incentive and make it easier for shoppers to see how close they are to getting more value for their money.



AOV

$118

Spend

New Arrivals

The modern definition of offers is incredibly fluid. These days, an offer is more like an intervention than a straight-up discount. They include:

- Free shipping 'offers'
- Product recommendations, with or without a deal attached
- Messages showcasing how much can be saved by going for a premium item

To gauge the effectiveness of a light offer, we placed the spotlight on those containing the word '**new**'. These are mostly used to direct customers to 'new' products and very few have a discount attached to them.

Key learning:

New items get customers looking

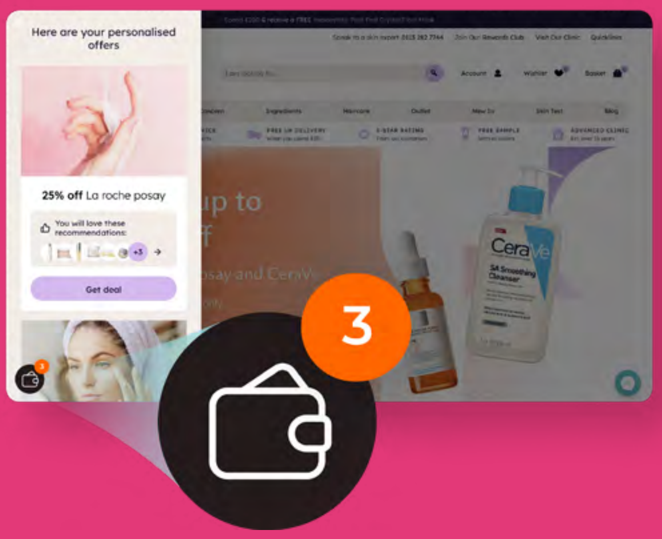
Conversions on offers directing customers to '**new**' items aren't huge. Yet, we can't gloss over a 4/10 CTR, which proves how effective these very simple prompts are at getting people to start browsing a site.

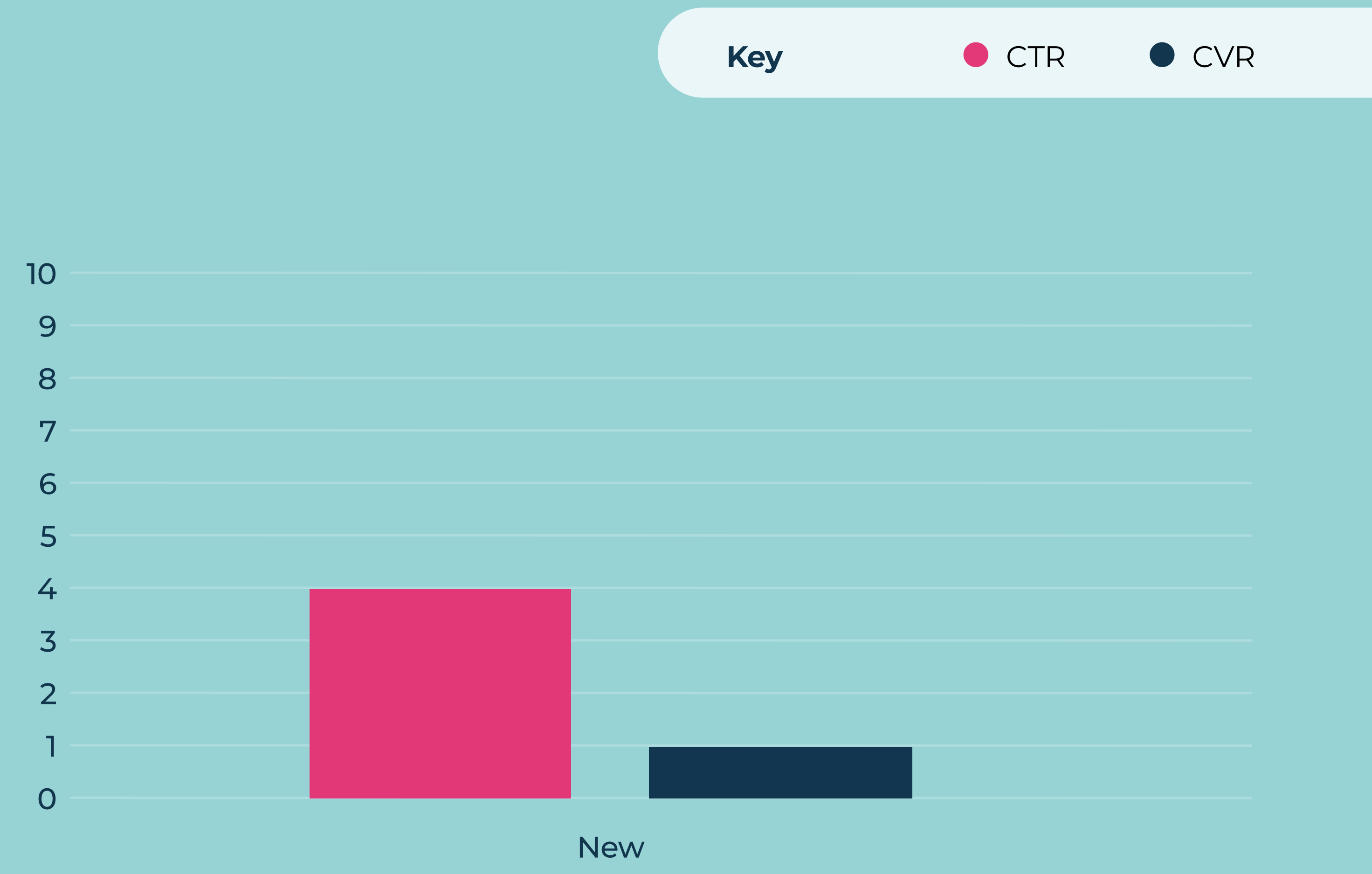
There's also a chance that customers divert to other areas after browsing a new collection. It might not have the same pop as something more specific. Nevertheless, if a customer stays on-site and keeps clicking, it could have the desired effect.

Our two cents

Highlighting 'new' collections can be done on a homepage and through an Offer Wallet, which stays with the customer throughout their journey and provides recommendations based on their real-time behavior.

As a starting point, while the Wallet gathers data for more personalized suggestions, a 'new collection' promotion is ideal.





AOV

$81

New

Seasonal Event Spotlight

Seasons mean different things to different retailers.

A confectionary brand will look forward to Q4 and Christmas with plenty of optimism. Meanwhile, a fashion retailer specializing in festival wear will be feeling the same around spring and summer.

We're not here to clarify that summer is better than winter for sales. Our goal was to see the potential of a seasonal event that some retailers overlook.

Key learning:

Easter is as big as you make it

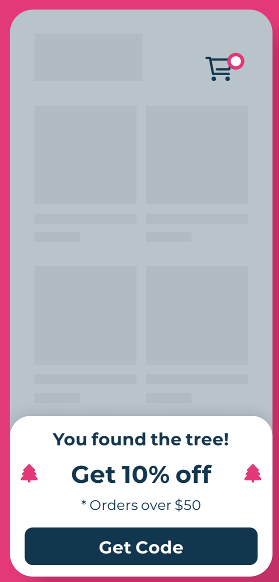
'**Easter**' has a super impressive click-through rate and CVR. By comparison, **Christmas** - which is arguably a more recognized sales event - has lower readings for both.

These terms are often used in copy that directs customers to specific sale events (e.g. **Christmas offers**). While the fact that one of these actually happens during peak season in Q4 would suggest an imbalance in performance, the data says otherwise.

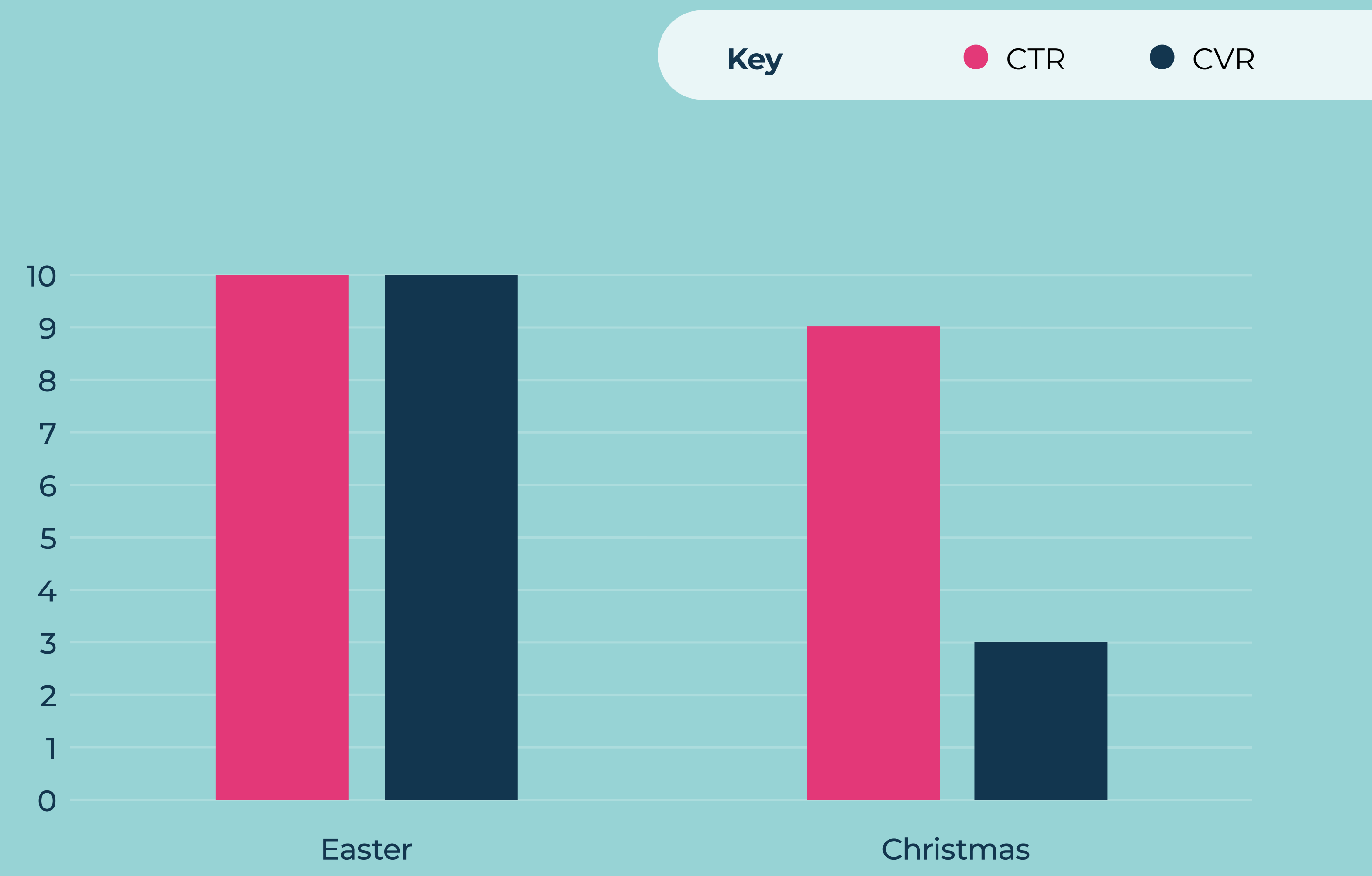
Our two cents

We had a look at some of the examples of Easter campaigns and found seasonal 'hunts' to be spearheading conversions and on-site engagement. Essentially, a retailer will hide deals around their site and get customers to find them, much like an Easter egg hunt. Here's how it works from the customer's side:

- Once they add a product to cart (targeted action #1), overlay encourages them to find an exclusive offer
- Customer visits another product page and secret overlay appears, telling them to add second product to cart (targeted action #2) to unlock a saving
- Customer copies code to get money off purchase



The campaigns have been hugely effective at getting customers to browse more pages and convert at a higher rate.



AOV

$46

Easter

$89

Christmas

Hail to the Code

Vouchers and coupons have been a retail cornerstone for nearly 150 years. (Seriously, look it up...)

These days, we're not mailing out paper tokens like Coca-Cola back in 1887 - we're sharing digital codes that automatically subtract amounts from our online purchases.

All our uses of the word '**code**' have the same connotation - '**redeem code**', '**copy code**', '**get code**', and '**reveal code**' being the most popular choices.

Naturally, we thought the sharing of a discount would be of interest to shoppers, but to what extent?

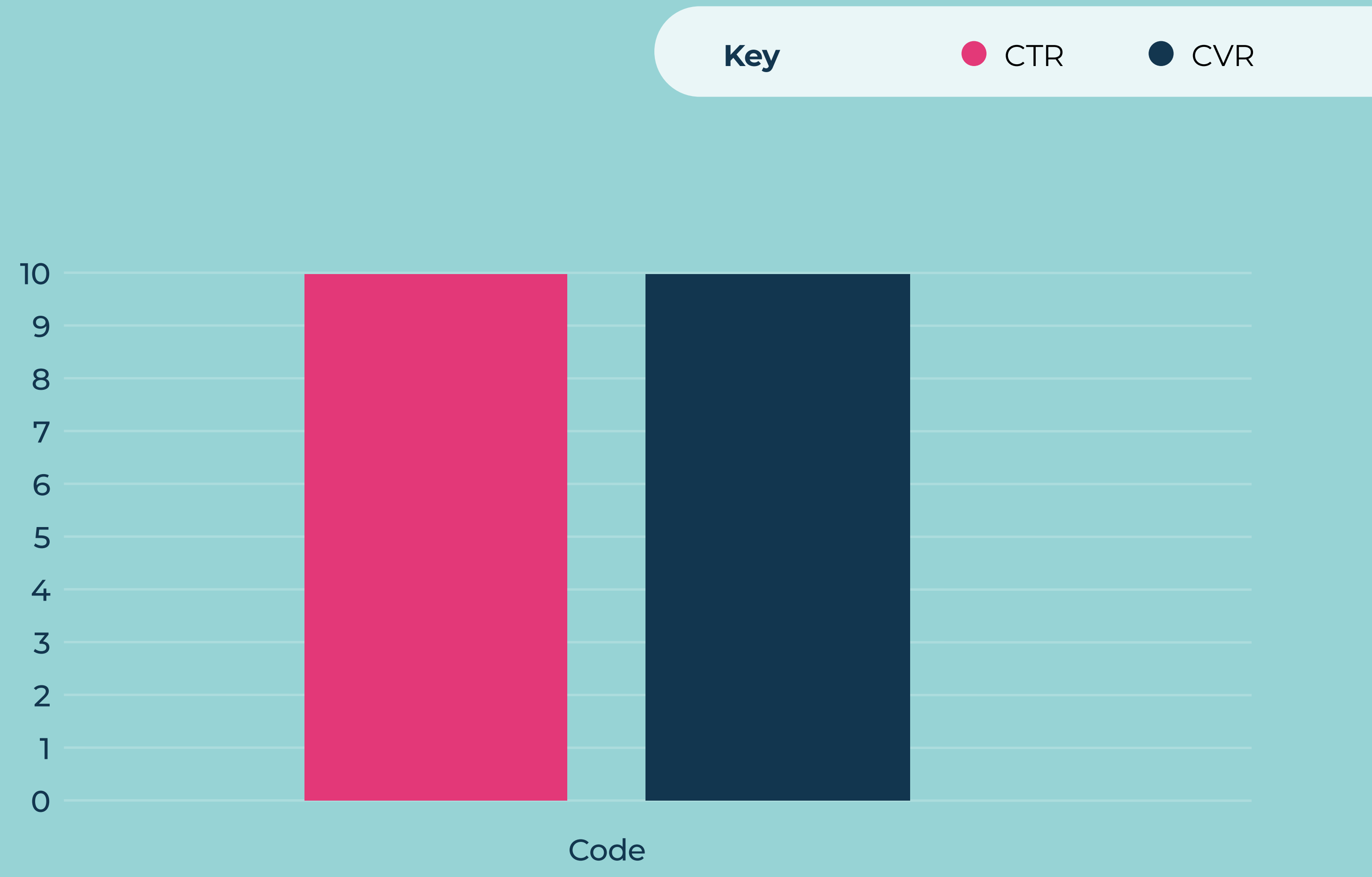
Key learning:

Drop a code, get a CVR boost

There's a high CTR here, but what customer doesn't copy a code just in case they need it?

We're most interested in the CVR, which shows a super strong rate of conversion whenever a retailer drops a voucher code.

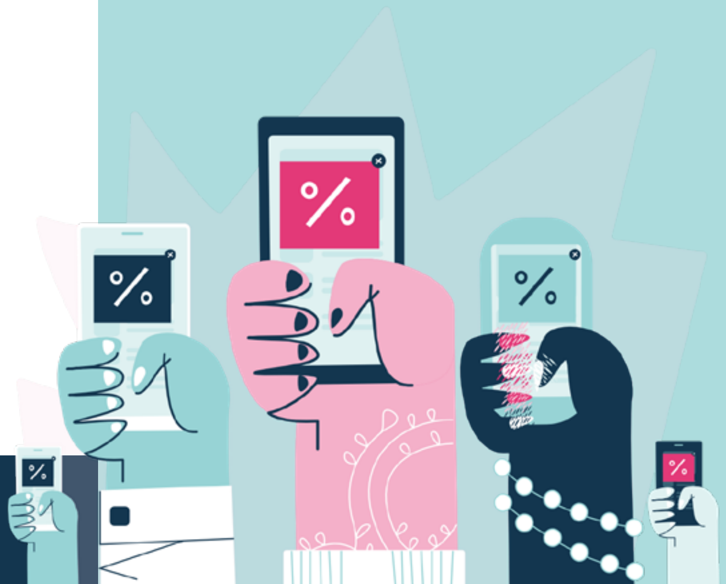
We're also interested in the AOV of $112. It's relatively low for the study and runs in line with our examination into 'discount'-based offers. Yes, money-off incentives will give you conversions, but you must structure these to deliver profitable outcomes.



AOV

$112

Code



What to Do Next

Thanks for taking the time to go through our report.

We hope it's given you some points to mull over when you're next running an offer.

At **RevLifter**, we treat offers as interventions. As well as discounts, they encompass recommendations and messages, which gives them extra power as profitable growth drivers.

All too often, offers are used for a short-term boost. But when structured correctly, and saved only for the instances where they're actually needed, they can be so much more.

If you're interested in raising AOV, boosting CVR, and solving your biggest eCommerce challenges, **RevLifter** has the answer.

Our Intelligent Offer Platform gives you all the tools you need to create, launch, and test different offers, right down to the design and copy. Get in touch to book a free demo.

Book a Demo