

PREMIUM DTC APPAREL / DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER ECOMMERCE / 5-YEAR
ENGAGEMENT

Scaling a premium DTC apparel brand from **\$2M** to **\$8M** in revenue.

A five-year embedded digital leadership programme that rebuilt acquisition, retention, and on-site conversion into a single compounding growth system. The result was a four-fold revenue lift, a tripled email contribution to revenue, and a measurement framework the founder could finally rely on.

4xANNUAL REVENUE
OVER FIVE YEARS**6.2x**BLENDED PAID
MEDIA ROAS**32%**REVENUE
CONTRIBUTION
FROM EMAIL**+121%**SHOPIFY CONVERSION
RATE UPLIFT

01.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ENGAGEMENT PROFILE

INDUSTRY

Premium Direct-to-Consumer Apparel

ENGAGEMENT

Embedded Virtual CDO
5-year programme

REGION

Australia, expanded internationally

STARTING REVENUE

~\$2M annual

CLOSING REVENUE

~\$8M annual

DISCIPLINES

Google Ads, Meta Ads, SEO, Klaviyo
email, Shopify CRO, GA4 analytics

ENGAGEMENT MODEL

Senior digital leadership at a fraction of
full-time cost

The brand had a problem most founders would envy. Strong product, loyal niche following, aspirational identity, and a plateau at roughly \$2M that had refused to break for almost two years.

The cause was not the product. The cause was infrastructure. Paid media was running without structure, email was a batch-and-blast monthly send, the Shopify checkout was leaking 78% of carts, SEO was an afterthought, and revenue could not be reliably attributed to a channel. The brand had outgrown the freelance and tool-stack pattern that got it to \$2M, but had not yet acquired the senior digital leadership that takes a business from \$2M to \$8M.

SKOMA was engaged not to manage campaigns but to act as the embedded digital executive the business did not have. The remit was deliberately broad. Rebuild the measurement layer first, then the on-site conversion engine, then the acquisition channels, then the retention programme, in that order, so each layer compounded into the next rather than being optimised in isolation.

The five years that followed delivered a four-fold revenue lift, a Shopify conversion rate that more than doubled, email moving from under 5% of revenue to 32%, and a customer LTV uplift of 47% from the lifecycle programme alone. None of those numbers came from a single campaign. They came from systems that were designed to keep working long after the launch sprint was over.

02 THE CLIENT CHALLENGE

The brand had product-market fit. What it did not have was the operational discipline to convert that into compounding revenue.

Plateaus at \$2M are rarely a demand problem. They are almost always an infrastructure problem. Channels that worked when founder-led decisions were enough begin to fail quietly as complexity grows. Money still goes in, traffic still arrives, but the marginal return on every additional dollar of spend gets harder to justify because no one can see clearly where it is landing. Five operational issues, all related, were holding the business at its ceiling.

01 / Paid Media**Reactive ad spend with no structural visibility**

Campaigns were running across Google and Meta without a unified account architecture, no clear separation between brand and generic intent, and no creative testing cadence. Budget decisions were being made on platform-reported metrics that did not reconcile with Shopify revenue.

02 / Email Programme**Batch-and-blast was leaving retention revenue on the floor**

A monthly newsletter sent to the full list, no segmentation, no automated flows, no behavioural triggers. The single highest-margin channel available to a DTC brand was contributing under 5% of revenue because no infrastructure existed to capture it.

03 / On-Site Conversion**A 78% checkout abandonment rate that no one was watching**

The Shopify store had never been through a structured CRO process. Product pages, checkout flow, and trust signals had been built by feel and left untouched. Nearly four in five shoppers who reached checkout were leaving before completing purchase.

04 / Organic Growth**SEO treated as a setting, not a programme**

No technical audit, no content strategy, no internal linking logic. The site was being indexed but not competing. For a brand with strong editorial assets and an aspirational identity, the absence of any organic acquisition layer was capping acquisition cost in only one direction.

05 / Measurement**No source of truth for what was actually driving revenue**

Without a unified analytics layer, every channel was being judged on its own self-reported numbers. The business had no way to compare email-attributed revenue against Meta-attributed revenue, no view of incrementality, and no reliable basis for shifting budget between channels. This was, in practical terms, the constraint behind every other constraint.

03 STRATEGIC APPROACH

The engagement was sequenced, not bundled. Each phase deliberately set up the next, so the compounding work of years two through five would have something solid to compound on.

A common pattern in stalled DTC businesses is to spend the first quarter chasing the most visible problem, usually paid media performance, and discover six months later that the underlying systems cannot support the campaigns that were built on top of them. SKOMA reversed this order. Measurement and on-site conversion came first, because every channel built afterward would depend on them. Acquisition channels came next, because they would compound on top of fixed leaks rather than papering over them. Retention and international expansion came last, because they require trust in the data, the funnel, and the channel mix beneath them.

<p>01</p> <p>MONTHS 1 - 4</p> <h3>Foundation</h3> <p>The measurement and conversion layer the business should have had at \$1M but never built. Done first because every downstream decision depends on it being trustworthy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GA4 + GTM measurement build, enhanced ecommerce events Multi-touch attribution model design Shopify CRO audit, checkout and PDP redesign Email platform migration to Klaviyo Baseline reporting and channel reconciliation 	<p>02</p> <p>MONTHS 5 - 12</p> <h3>Activation</h3> <p>Acquisition channels rebuilt on top of clean measurement. Structured paid media, content-led SEO, and a creative testing cadence that produced learnings on a monthly rhythm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full-funnel Google Ads architecture rebuild Meta Ads prospecting, retargeting, and loyalty segmentation SEO technical remediation and content programme Nine automated Klaviyo flows live and segmented Monthly creative testing framework operational 	<p>03</p> <p>YEAR 2 - 5</p> <h3>Compounding</h3> <p>The phase most agency engagements never reach. Geographic expansion, lifecycle deepening, and the operational discipline that turns a working system into a four-fold revenue lift.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International market expansion programmes Advanced audience segmentation across channels Lifecycle email strategy and VIP tier economics Performance creative scaling across formats Quarterly strategic reviews against revenue plan
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04 EXECUTION BREAKDOWN

Execution detail matters more than strategy slides. What follows is the actual operational work delivered across the five disciplines, with a note on why each piece of it mattered to the revenue result.

04 / 01

Paid Media

GOOGLE ADS

META ADS

PMAX

CREATIVE TESTING

A full-funnel Google Ads architecture was built across Brand, Generic, Shopping, and Performance Max, with budget allocation and negative keyword discipline applied at the campaign level. Meta Ads was rebuilt around three distinct audience layers: prospecting, retargeting, and loyalty. Layered on top of both platforms was a structured creative testing framework that iterated on ad formats on a monthly cadence rather than as a reactive response to performance dips.

WHY IT MATTERED Structured testing produces compounding creative knowledge. Sporadic refreshes produce noise. The 6.2x blended ROAS was a function of the cadence, not the spend level.

04 / 02

Email Automation

KLAVIYO

9 FLOWS

SEGMENTATION

LIFECYCLE

The platform was migrated to Klaviyo and nine automated flows were built and segmented: Welcome Series, Abandoned Cart, Post-Purchase, Win-Back, Browse Abandonment, VIP Tier, Sunset, Back-in-Stock, and Birthday. The subscriber base was segmented across three behavioural axes: purchase frequency, average order value, and engagement recency. Each flow had its own performance review cycle.

WHY IT MATTERED Email moved from under 5% of revenue to 32%. This was not a campaign result. It was the difference between sending and triggering.

04 / 03

Shopify CRO

PDP REDESIGN

CHECKOUT

A/B TESTING

EXPRESS PAY

The product detail page template was redesigned, the checkout flow was streamlined, social proof and trust elements were added, and express checkout options were introduced. Key page elements were placed into a 12-month rolling A/B testing programme so that conversion gains continued to accrue rather than peaking after the initial redesign.

WHY IT MATTERED Conversion rate rose from 1.4% to 3.1%. Every acquisition channel above this layer became more profitable the moment this work shipped.

04 EXECUTION BREAKDOWN — CONTINUED

04 / 04

SEO

TECHNICAL AUDIT

CORE WEB VITALS

CONTENT

INTERNAL LINKING

A full technical audit was conducted across Core Web Vitals, crawl budget, and indexation hygiene. A content strategy was developed targeting category and long-tail keywords, and an internal linking architecture was built to support topical authority around the brand's editorial assets. Organic growth was treated as a programme with its own publishing cadence, not as a campaign.

WHY IT MATTERED Organic traffic grew 185% over three years. That is not an SEO result. That is a publishing discipline result.

04 / 05

Analytics

GA4

GTM

ENHANCED ECOMMERCE

ATTRIBUTION

A GA4 and GTM measurement framework was implemented with enhanced ecommerce tracking, a multi-touch attribution model, and monthly performance dashboards that reconciled platform-reported numbers against Shopify revenue. The dashboard was designed to be read by the founder in under five minutes, because reporting only works if the operator actually opens it.

WHY IT MATTERED Trustworthy measurement is what allows budget to move between channels with confidence. The 4x revenue lift required it.

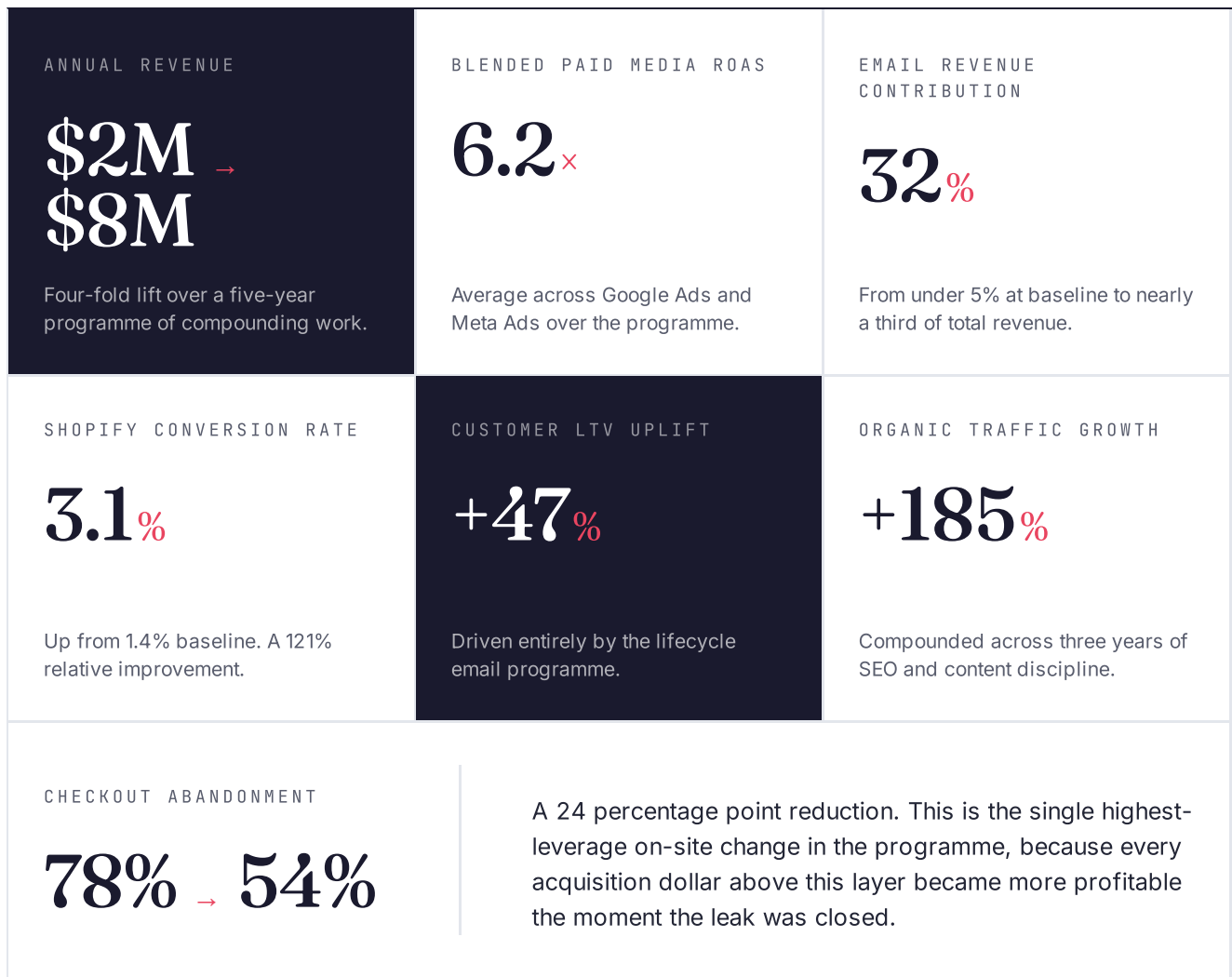
A note on operational sequencing.

The five disciplines above were not delivered in parallel as separate workstreams. Each one was deliberately layered on the one beneath it. Analytics first so every other channel had something to optimise against. CRO second so acquisition spend would not be wasted on a leaking funnel. Paid media third because spend can be turned up only when the funnel is ready to absorb it. Email fourth because retention compounds on top of acquisition, not alongside it. SEO ran in parallel from month two onward, because organic growth is a long compounding asset and starting late costs more than starting early.

This sequence is the difference between a busy retainer and a programme that produces results. Most agencies sell channels. SKOMA sequences them.

05 RESULTS

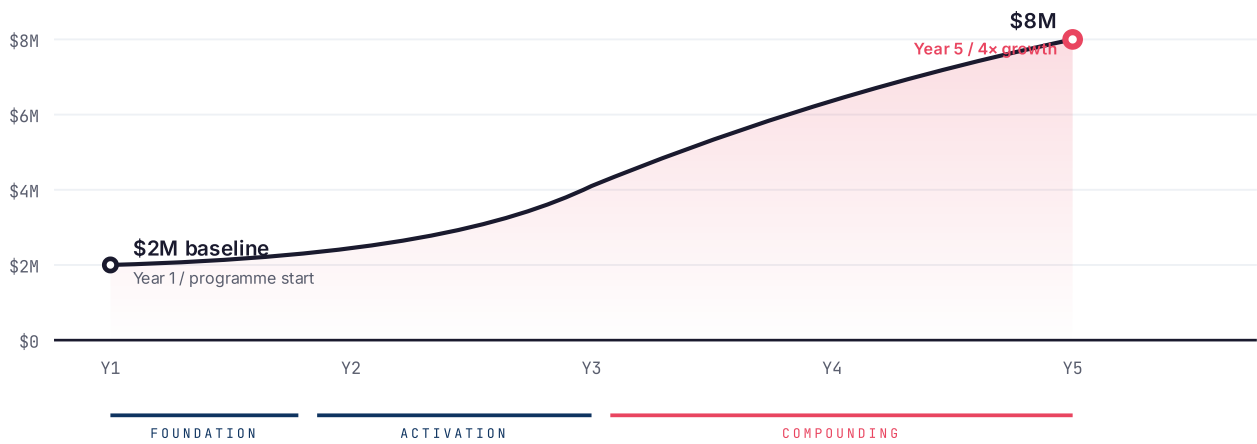
Seven measured outcomes across acquisition, conversion, retention, and customer economics. Each one is the result of a system that was designed to keep producing it.



05.1 PERFORMANCE VISUALISATIONS

FIGURE 01 — REVENUE TRAJECTORY

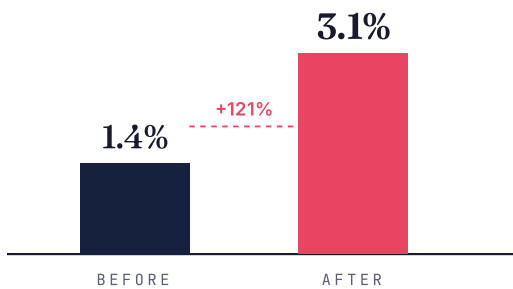
Annual revenue grew four-fold across the five-year programme.



Endpoint values reflect source data. The intermediate trajectory illustrates a compounding growth path rather than specific annual revenue figures, which were not reported individually.

FIGURE 02 — CONVERSION RATE

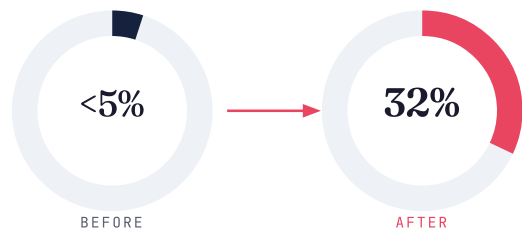
Shopify conversion rate more than doubled.



From 1.4% to 3.1%. A 121% relative uplift driven by checkout redesign and a 12-month rolling A/B programme.

FIGURE 03 — EMAIL CONTRIBUTION

Email moved from a side channel to a core revenue driver.



Share of total revenue attributable to the email channel, comparing pre- and post-Klaviyo migration with nine automated flows.

06 KEY LEARNINGS

Four observations from five years of embedded work. None of them are insights about the channels. All of them are insights about how the channels were made to work together.

01

Embedded leadership compounds in a way agency retainers do not.

Siloed channel engagements optimise inside the silo. A Virtual CDO with cross-channel authority optimises between the silos, which is where most of the available margin sits. Five years of decisions made by one accountable strategist produces a different financial outcome to five years of decisions made by five separately briefed vendors. The 4x revenue lift was not a campaign result. It was a decision-making result.

03

Creative testing only works when it is systematised.

The brands that struggle with paid media performance are rarely the brands that lack creative. They are the brands that test creative reactively, when performance drops, rather than continuously. A structured monthly testing cadence outperformed ad hoc refreshes by roughly 3x in this engagement. The discipline is the asset, not the individual ad.

02

Email is the highest-margin lever a DTC brand has, and most brands underuse it.

The move from batch sends to nine triggered, segmented flows transformed the retention economics of the business. Email contribution went from under 5% to 32% of revenue without a corresponding rise in list size. The list was already there. The infrastructure to monetise it was not. This is the most common gap in DTC operations and the one that returns the fastest when closed.

04

CRO and paid media are force multipliers for each other.

A 121% improvement in conversion rate effectively doubles the return on every acquisition dollar above the conversion layer. Most operators see CRO as a separate workstream. The math is the opposite. CRO should be funded out of the paid media budget, because every percentage point it adds is a percentage point that compounds across every channel feeding the funnel.

07 STRATEGIC COMMENTARY

Five operating principles distilled from this engagement and applicable to most DTC brands stuck in the \$1M to \$5M plateau.

ON SEQUENCING

Build the measurement layer before the marketing layer.

Operators who fix paid media first and analytics second spend the following year trying to explain why the marketing is not landing. The order in which work is sequenced matters more than which work is chosen. Measurement is the prerequisite for every other discipline doing its job, and the operators who delay it are usually the ones who end up changing agencies twice in eighteen months.

ON RETENTION ECONOMICS

Customer LTV is built in the flows, not the discount.

A 47% LTV uplift from the lifecycle email programme was not the result of a sharper offer or a deeper promotion. It was the result of nine flows talking to the right segments at the right behavioural moments. Most brands try to buy retention through margin sacrifice. The cheaper and more durable path is to engineer it through automation.

ON CREATIVE DISCIPLINE

Cadence beats inspiration. Every time.

The brands that produce reliable paid media results have a monthly creative testing rhythm and an honest review process. The brands that produce volatile results have a creative team waiting for inspiration. Cadence outperforms inspiration because cadence produces data, and data produces compounding decisions. Inspiration produces one good ad.

ON ATTRIBUTION

Platform-reported numbers are not the same thing as revenue.

The single most common error in DTC reporting is to compare Meta-reported revenue against Google-reported revenue and call that a channel mix. Both platforms are incentivised to over-attribute. Reconciling those numbers against Shopify reality is the only way to move budget with confidence, and it is also the work that almost no agency volunteers to do unprompted.

ON INFRASTRUCTURE MATURITY

The leverage point is the next system, not the next campaign.

Brands at the \$2M plateau almost always have a campaign-shaped view of growth. The breakthrough comes when they begin to see growth as a sequence of systems instead. The leverage point in this engagement was never a single channel decision. It was the layered architecture beneath them. That distinction is what separates a brand that gets to \$8M from a brand that stays at \$2M for another two years.

SENIOR DIGITAL LEADERSHIP WITHOUT THE FULL-TIME COST

If your brand has outgrown the freelance and tool-stack pattern, the next stage of growth is rarely about more channels. It is about better sequencing.

SKOMA Digital operates as an embedded Virtual CDO for eCommerce and B2B brands that need senior digital leadership but do not yet need a full-time digital executive. The work outlined in this case study is illustrative of how that engagement model is structured. The brief, the sequencing, and the operational depth are designed around each business individually.

STRATEGIC ENQUIRIES

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SERVICE

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