

How Customer Research Drove an 11% Increase in Close Rate

A recurring measurement error was quietly driving returns. I found the root cause, won a company-wide Shark Tank competition with the fix, and scaled it to 16,000+ sample packs a month.

THE CHALLENGE

100%

no-questions-asked return policy removed purchase risk, but exposed the business to the cost of every wrong measurement.

When a company-wide Shark Tank innovation competition was announced, I took it as the opening to fix a root cause of returns and won.

- **Root cause:** customers routinely forgot to measure window depth — the single leading contributor to failed installs. Product research confirmed our deepest product required 4 inches of depth.
- **Downstream cost:** incorrect orders drove preventable returns, customer frustration, and rework.
- **Team drag:** Design Consultants and Service teams spent time correcting measurements instead of closing sales.

THE SOLUTION — CARD DESIGN

A double-sided 7×5 card, built around how customers actually measure

Won the company-wide Shark Tank innovation competition with product research that drove every design decision on this low-cost insert.

- **Every order element on one card** — a complete checklist of every selection required to successfully place an order, reducing missed fields at checkout.
- **Illustrated measuring instructions** — width, height, and depth diagrams with inside vs. outside mount guidance in plain language.
- **Functional ruler on the card edge** — marked to 5 inches with an arrow showing customers how to place the card inside the window to measure depth. Product research revealed our deepest product required 4 inches (the card covered it).
- **Designed to slot into existing sample packs** — no new technology, no capital investment, no changes to existing fulfillment workflows.

Reached 16,000 customers a month through existing sample packs — at a nominal print cost

- **Inserted into existing sample packs** — research with the samples team revealed we were already sending 16,000 packs each month, so the card reached a massive audience with zero new distribution cost.
- **Nominal print cost, no process disruption** — I priced out the finished card design with a print shop and confirmed it would be a minimal monthly cost to the company, with no changes to existing fulfillment or distribution workflows.
- **Dedicated call-in line** — the card directed customers to a unique phone number that alerted Design Consultants when a caller had received samples and was actively using the cheat sheet. That signal meant the customer was likely ready to buy, which turned an inbound call into a high-probability close.

My own close rate rose ~11%, and the fix scaled far past my desk

+11%

Increase in close rate within my own book of business

16,000+ / mo

Sample packs carrying the cheat sheet, distributed monthly after company-wide rollout

#1

Won the Shark Tank innovation competition and secured leadership support for implementation

\$0

No new technology or process changes required. It was a low-cost print insert that slotted into existing fulfillment with no disruption.

Source: Blinds.com internal initiative; close-rate figure reflects my own book of business.

Research first, then design. I found the cause before I built the fix

01

Diagnose

Interviewed the Service team manager to pinpoint the leading cause of returns (measurement errors, especially forgotten window depth).

02

Research

Ran post-sale customer research to see how people were actually recording their measurements at home.

03

Design

Built a 7×5 cheat sheet around that real behavior, with a tracking number wired in to measure impact.

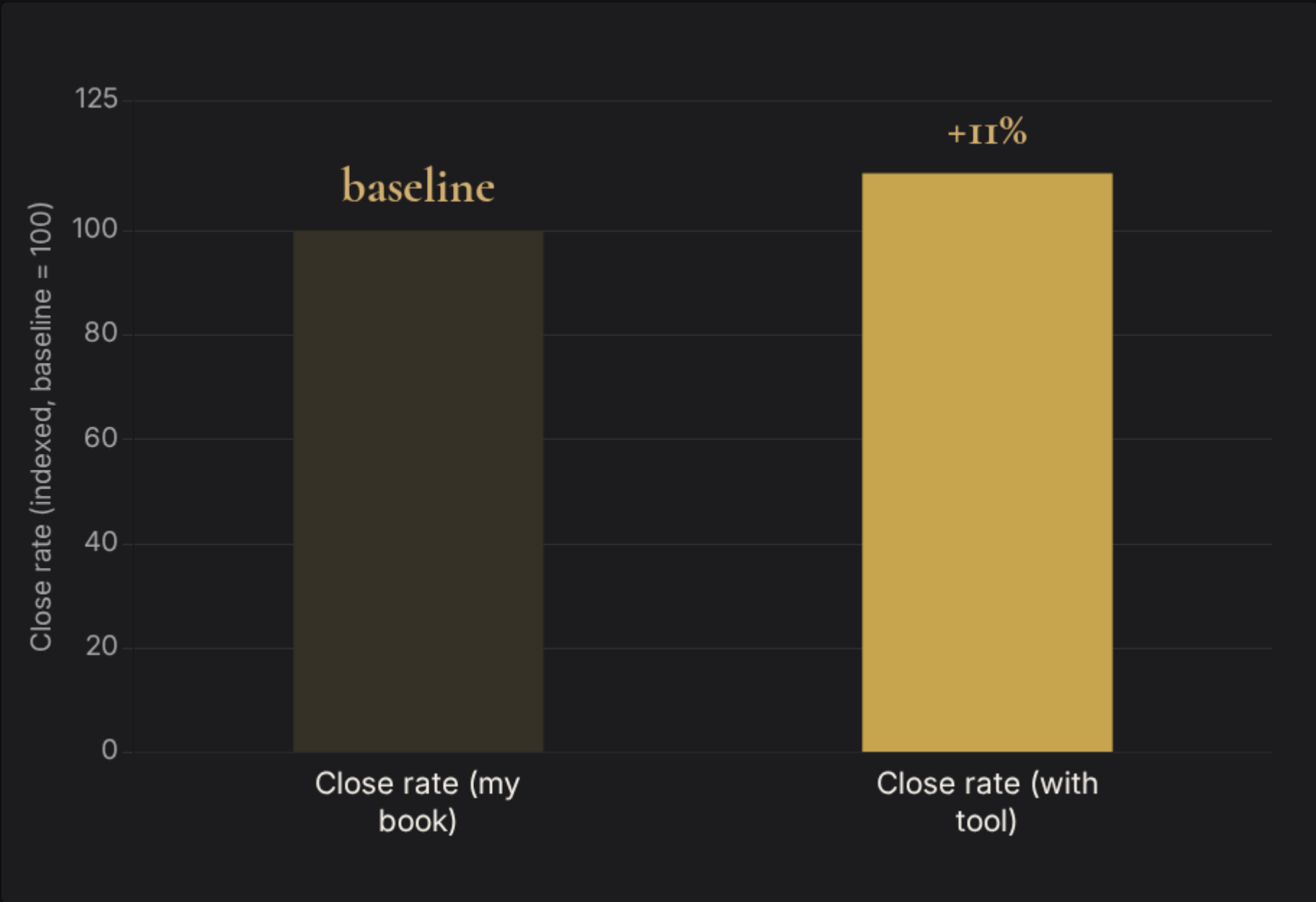
04

Sell & Scale

Pitched leadership at the Shark Tank competition, won support, and rolled the tool out company-wide.



The cheat sheet paid off on three fronts at once



One card removed friction at the moment customers were most likely to make a costly mistake.

- **Fewer errors before checkout** — visual prompts and a checklist improved ordering accuracy.
- **Sharper sales conversations** — the dedicated line pre-qualified callers as sample recipients actively measuring, so Consultants spent less time correcting errors and more time closing ready buyers.
- **A high-intent sales signal at scale** — the dedicated call-in line alerted Design Consultants that a caller had received samples and was using the cheat sheet, flagging them as likely ready to buy. Reaching 16,000+ sample packs a month, the card turned passive sample recipients into warm, closeable leads.

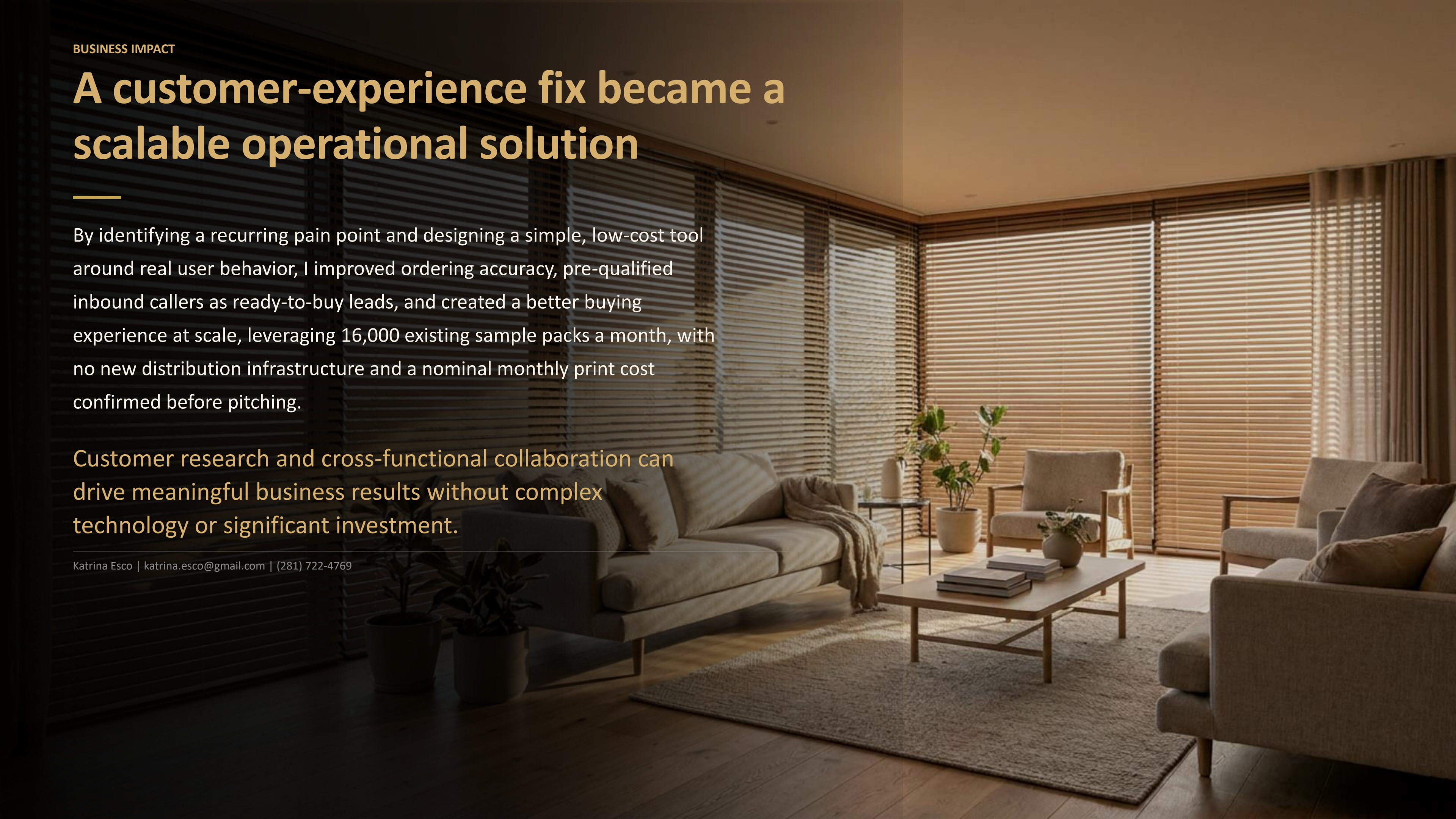
Source: Blinds.com internal initiative. Ordering-accuracy and consultant-time gains reported qualitatively; close-rate gain ~11% within my book of business.

A customer-experience fix became a scalable operational solution

By identifying a recurring pain point and designing a simple, low-cost tool around real user behavior, I improved ordering accuracy, pre-qualified inbound callers as ready-to-buy leads, and created a better buying experience at scale, leveraging 16,000 existing sample packs a month, with no new distribution infrastructure and a nominal monthly print cost confirmed before pitching.

Customer research and cross-functional collaboration can drive meaningful business results without complex technology or significant investment.

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WHAT THIS SAYS ABOUT HOW I LEAD MARKETING

I turn customer insight into revenue quietly, at scale, and without a big budget.

Root-cause diligence

Talk to the front line, find the real driver instead of the symptom.

Design for behavior

Create tools based on how people really behave, and measure their effects to show what works.

Sell & scale

Win executive buy-in, then deliver at 16,000+ touchpoints a month.

I'd welcome the conversation about applying this same research-to-revenue playbook to your marketing organization.

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