

THE COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCE INDEX · EDITION TWO

Premier League Club Shops

All twenty Premier League club online stores, scored out of 100 on the experience each club chose to publish. One league table, read from the shopfront, not the balance sheet.

The table that is already knowable.

The predictions are in. A supercomputer has run ten thousand simulations, a features desk has walked all twenty clubs in order, and neither can agree on where most of the league will finish. That is the annual ritual, and it is good fun. It is also, by definition, a guess about a season nobody has played yet.

There is another table that does not need a simulation. It can be read today, before a ball is kicked, from the front of each club's online shop. It measures something already true: whether the experience a club has built helps a supporter buy, and whether the machine now standing between the club and that supporter can read the store at all.

This is that table. The Commercial Experience Index scores all twenty Premier League club stores out of 100, across eight observable measures, read entirely from the live shopfront. It does not see the profit and loss, the traffic, the conversion rate, or the margin. It sees what a customer meets, and increasingly what a machine meets, and it scores that.

THE HEADLINE

A promoted-era coastal club sits at the top, and a spread of famous names is strung out behind it. Bournemouth score 73. The next nineteen sit between 57 and 72, and fourteen of them fall within a six-point band from 60 to 66. That compression is itself the finding. On the measures a customer actually feels, most of these stores are competent and unremarkable, and the separation, where it exists, does not follow the size of the club.

The order at the top: Bournemouth 73, Chelsea 72, Leeds 70, Arsenal and Liverpool tied on 69, then Aston Villa, Nottingham Forest and Sunderland level on 68. The order at the foot: Brentford 57, Coventry 58, and Newcastle and Hull tied on 60. The full ranked table, with every lens score, is overleaf.

The Commercial Experience Index 2026/27

All twenty clubs, ranked out of 100. Each club is scored across eight lenses of commercial execution: Proposition, Experience, Persuasion, Checkout, Copy, Performance, SEO and AI Readiness, each read from the live shopfront and scored 1 to 10. The total out of 100 is the headline.

#	CLUB	PLATFORM	PROP	EXP	PERS	CHK	COPY	PERF	SEO	AI	TOTAL
1	Bournemouth	Shopify	6	8	6	8	6	7.9	8.6	9.0	73
2	Chelsea	Fanatics	7	8	7	7	8	6.7	7.5	4.5	72
3	Leeds	Fanatics	7	7	6	7	8	8.2	7.1	4.5	70
4	Arsenal	SAP Hybris	7	8	7	6	8	5.4	8.1	3.5	69
5	Liverpool	SFCC/Centra	7	8	6	6	7	6.3	8.0	6.0	69
6	Aston Villa	Fanatics	6	7	6	7	7	8.1	7.1	7.0	68
7	Nott'm Forest	Shopify	7	7	6	7	7	5.7	7.2	8.0	68
8	Sunderland	Fanatics	6	7	6	7	9	8.0	7.1	4.5	68
9	Everton	Fanatics	6	7	6	7	7	7.2	7.1	7.0	67
10	Brighton	Jonas	6	7	6	7	6	7.2	7.8	5.0	66
11	Fulham	Jonas	6	7	6	7	6	7.2	8.0	5.0	66
12	Man City	SFCC	7	7	6	7	6	4.1	7.6	6.0	65
13	Man Utd	SCAYLE	7	7	6	6	6	5.4	8.1	6.0	65
14	Ipswich	Shopify	6	6	6	7	6	6.0	8.1	7.8	64
15	Crystal Palace	Jonas	6	7	6	7	6	5.4	8.0	2.5	63
16	Spurs	SFCC	6	7	6	8	5	5.8	5.7	4.2	62
17	Hull	Jonas	5	6	6	7	5	6.5	7.5	5.0	60
18	Newcastle	Shopify	5	6	6	7	5	6.0	7.2	6.8	60
19	Coventry	Jonas	6	6	4	5	6	7.3	7.6	5.0	58
20	Brentford	Jonas	6	6	5	5	6	6.0	7.2	2.5	57

Lens scores are out of 10. The total out of 100 is the club's overall commercial-experience score. Scores reflect the live shopfront in August 2026 and will move as clubs update their stores.

PART ONE

The Eight Measures

What each measure tests, where the field clustered, and where it separated. Five measures read what a customer meets. Three read what a machine meets.

1. Proposition and Brand Clarity

The measure that taxes every visit above it, and the one where the field separated least on the first two questions and most on the third. The test is a cold one: with the sound off, in three seconds, can a stranger tell what this brand is, who it is for, and why it over the alternative. Every one of the twenty passes the first two. The crest is present, the store is unmistakably official. The separation is entirely in the third question, and specifically in whether the club authors a genuine identity concept into the store, or simply drops the season's kit into a competent template.

The scoring held two ruling principles. First, supplier co-branding is not club identity work. A Nike, adidas, Puma, hummel or Macron lockup in the hero tells the stranger who makes the shirt, not who the club is, so it cannot lift a score from average to above average. Second, an identity concept has to be sustained beyond a single banner to reach the upper band. One striking hero is a touch. A concept carried through the hero, the copy and the store structure is craft.

Seven clubs reached above average: Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester City, Manchester United, Leeds and Nottingham Forest. Each authors a concept rather than a kit drop. Arsenal run Arsenal State of Mind with a Champions framing off the back of the 2025/26 title. Chelsea build the whole store around 75 Years of the Rampant Lion. Leeds carry 400 Years of Leeds, tied to the 400th anniversary of the city's town charter. Forest is the quiet standout, because it is the smallest name in the group: the tree crest, the FOREST wordmark and a hero that is an actual forest earn its place on craft, not reputation.

The floor was Newcastle and Hull. Newcastle's hero names the kit and leans on the adidas partnership, which under the ruling principle counts for nothing on identity. Hull carry a problem the others do not: the store trades as TigerLeisure.com rather than Hull City, so a stranger has to read the crest to confirm whose shop they are in.

The finding that matters: proposition does not track fame. The weak propositions are not the famous clubs and not the promoted ones. They are simply the clubs that shipped the template without authoring anything on top of it.

2. Experience, Clarity and Merchandising

The measure where the platform a club runs on shows most clearly. The test is whether a customer can move without being made to think, and whether product is presented and sequenced with commercial logic. Merchandising is scored as a named component: category logic, sort and filter, product surfacing, range navigability.

The governing rule did the heavy lifting. Platform-default furniture, the standard filters, the quick-view, the basic mega-menu that every Shopify, Jonas, Fanatics and Salesforce store ships out of the box, is competent and counts toward the average band and no further. Only an operator-authored discovery idea, something the platform does not give for free, reaches above average. This rule matters because the raw furniture is deceptive: the Fanatics stores carry the richest faceted filtering in the study, and it would be easy to reward that as craft. It is not. It is Fanatics, shared identically across five clubs. The credit goes to what a club adds on top.

Four clubs reached the top of the measure: Bournemouth, Chelsea, Arsenal and Liverpool. Each layers more than one operator-authored discovery route onto a clean build. Bournemouth run a

branded Premium Cherries lifestyle collection and a YETI collaboration. Chelsea layer story-led collections (Summer of 64, inspired by the club's Caribbean tour) on top of Shop By Player. Arsenal stack an adidas Collections carousel, a Shop By Category block and audience quick-filters. Liverpool run a genuinely bespoke store with tabbed kit navigation and the LFC Label own-brand line.

The badge-versus-operator pattern is at its clearest here. On the same Jonas platform, Brighton, Palace and Fulham reach above average while Brentford, Hull and Coventry sit at competent. The platform is identical. The difference is entirely what the operator chose to build.

3. Persuasion and Buyer Journey

The flattest of the judgement measures, and deliberately so. The test is whether influence triggers are present where a customer hesitates, and whether the journey serves the different ways people buy. Most clubs deploy the same competent, light-touch persuasion: a free-shipping progress bar, transparent personalisation, a clean call to action. That is a genuine trigger or two, and it earns the competent band. It does not build a deliberate persuasion architecture, so it does not reach above average.

Two clubs cleared the average band: Arsenal and Chelsea. Arsenal is the strongest, and the only club in the study to surface genuine customer-reviews social proof on the homepage, rated 4.9 out of 5 by 8,000-plus reviews, alongside a members-save-10% incentive. Chelsea pair a real urgency deadline on printing with story-led collections that serve the methodical and humanistic buyer.

The interesting movement was at the bottom, where two clubs dropped into the below-average band for clumsiness at the point of hesitation. Coventry was the lowest: an interstitial fires over the homepage, and the checkout buries guest checkout beneath an expanded sign-in form. Brentford sat just above it: it also fires an interstitial, but that one carries a genuine reciprocity incentive, a prize draw for a signed shirt. The gap between them is the difference between an interruption that offers the customer nothing and one that offers something real.

No club reached the exceptional band. Not one of the twenty builds a persuasion journey deliberate enough, across enough buyer modalities, to be called a competitive weapon. That is the honest state of persuasion in Premier League retail: competent triggers, almost universally, and architecture almost nowhere.

4. Checkout and Friction

Scored on the commercial logic that friction at the commit moment destroys revenue at its most valuable point. The read is honest about its limit. It goes as far as the front end allows, the guest-versus-account gate, the express-pay options, the step signposting and the trust at payment, and stops at the point of personal-data entry. No transaction was completed. All twenty were walked independently, with no inference from a shared platform.

The single most useful finding is that guest checkout exists at all twenty clubs. Not one forces account creation to buy. So this measure does not separate on availability. It separates on how prominently guest checkout is offered, and on the breadth of express payment.

Two clubs reached the top. Spurs run the best-signposted guest gate in the study: guest checkout is the headline option, listed first, above login, with the fullest express-pay array seen anywhere, Apple Pay, PayPal, Google Pay, Amazon Pay and Onepay. Bournemouth run the cleanest Shopify flow, no account wall, Shop Pay and Google Pay, United Kingdom preset, tax shown transparently, and marketing consent switched off by default.

The floor is Coventry and Brentford, the same two Jonas clubs that anchored the Persuasion measure. Both bury the guest option beneath an account default, and both restrict express pay to PayPal only. This is the badge-versus-operator pattern again, and it is damning for these two specifically, because Brighton and Palace, on the identical Jonas platform, both clear the bar

comfortably. The weaker checkout is an operator choice the same platform's better users have declined to make.

5. Performance

The first of the measures read from objective site behaviour rather than judged. It reads how quickly and cleanly the store loads and runs on a mobile device, on the reasoning that raw speed and clean engineering both belong to how well the store is built. Mobile is the right form factor: Google indexes mobile-first, and most football retail traffic is mobile.

This measure discriminates hard, and it delivers the edition's most striking inversion. The promoted and smaller clubs run the fastest, best-built stores, and the giants run the slowest. Leeds top the measure. Aston Villa, Sunderland and Bournemouth follow close behind. At the other end sit Manchester City, then Arsenal and Manchester United, whose stores are heavier and slower to load than clubs a fraction of their size.

Clean engineering is what reshuffles the order from a pure-speed read. It rewards lean, well-built stores and exposes the big clubs' heavier, third-party-laden builds. Manchester City is the clearest example: the store is not catastrophically slow, but its build hygiene is the weakest in the study, and the measure catches it.

Two clubs deserve a specific watch-out the headline softens. Crystal Palace and Brighton both post fast paint times but fail badly on layout stability, Palace on a Cumulative Layout Shift of 0.44 and Brighton on a brutal 0.78, both deep in the poor band. The lived experience of a page jumping under the customer's thumb as it loads is a real conversion risk a fast paint time hides.

6. SEO Readiness

A measure of readiness rather than performance. It asks whether a club has built the structural conditions to be found, read from the front end only: title and meta structure, heading hierarchy, schema presence, crawlable navigation, clean URLs, canonical hygiene. It does not measure rankings or traffic, which need tools beyond the shopfront and belong to the full audit.

This is the least dramatic measure in the study, because front-end SEO structure is largely a platform inheritance and every current platform does the basics well. The band is tight and high. Bournemouth top it. A cluster of clubs, Manchester United, Ipswich, Arsenal, Fulham and Crystal Palace, sit just behind. Most of the rest land in the competent-to-strong band.

One club breaks the pattern downward, and it is a name that should not. Spurs are the only club below the pack, on a shopfront whose structural SEO is measurably weaker than a field where everyone else is clean. For a club of Tottenham's scale and resource, a poor structural SEO read on the shopfront is a genuine and fixable underperformance, and the most notable single result on this measure.

7. AI Readiness

Scored lower than organic search today, because AI-assisted discovery is a real but still smaller commercial channel, and the measure is built to matter more in later editions as the channel takes share. It is fully objective and read from the front end: can an AI system find, read, quote and route to the store. It is readiness, not output-presence: whether a machine can reach and parse the store, not whether assistants currently recommend it.

This is the measure that sorts the field most decisively by operator, and where the real story of the big clubs sits. Bournemouth top it: the owner-run Shopify store exposes a complete, clean-rendering product schema and serves a full agent-commerce llms.txt file, verified live. Nottingham Forest and Ipswich follow on the same Shopify strength.

The floor is stark. Crystal Palace and Brentford sit at the bottom, both returning nothing an agent can transact against and no owned structured data. And the famous names sit far lower than their customer experience would suggest: Arsenal, Chelsea, Sunderland and Spurs all score well below the clubs above them on this measure. These are clubs that build good stores for humans and expose almost nothing an AI agent can transact against from data the club controls.

Two findings carry weight beyond the scores. First, llms.txt, the agent-instruction file, was found on exactly four clubs, and all four are the Shopify stores: Bournemouth, Ipswich, Newcastle and Forest. It is a byte-for-byte identical, platform-generated file. Every one of the sixteen clubs on any other platform, including all five enterprise stacks belonging to the biggest clubs, returned a 404. The newest agent-readiness standard has reached Premier League retail through exactly one platform. Second, Liverpool carry a confirmed defect: the store's structured data serves a price of 150 US dollars to the crawler while the shopper sees 120 pounds sterling. A machine comparing Liverpool against a rival reads the wrong price in the wrong currency.

8. Copy and Voice

The judgement measure that finishes rather than founds. It separates a strong store from an excellent one; it rarely separates a weak one from a good one. The test is whether the words do a job, and whether the brand sounds like someone or like a theme's placeholder. It reads homepage copy, product-page copy, call-to-action quality and voice consistency.

This measure produced the widest genuine range of any judgement lens, because copy is the one thing entirely within a club's control regardless of platform. A club on the strictest shared backend can still write like itself, or fail to.

Sunderland top the measure, and it is the single best judgement-lens result in the study, earned on object-level storytelling most clubs do not attempt. The 2026/27 home shirt copy tells the story of the club's 1937 FA Cup win: the jacquard S woven in the shape of the cup handles, the crest reproduced from the 1937 design, and the names of that year's first eleven printed inside the neck.

Three clubs follow close behind, each with a sustained, distinctive voice: Chelsea (the 75 Years of the Rampant Lion narrative), Leeds (the 400 Years of Leeds town-charter story) and Arsenal (the consistent Arsenal State of Mind voice). Everton, Aston Villa, Liverpool and Forest each sound recognisably like themselves. The floor is Spurs, Newcastle and Hull, competent and flat, functional and correct but carrying no distinct club voice.

PART TWO

The Twenty Clubs

Every club, in rank order. What the store does well, where it leaks, and the single thing worth watching. The scoreline under each name is the club's own eight-lens read.

1. AFC Bournemouth 73

SHOPIFY (OWNER-RUN)

Prop 6 · Exp 8 · Pers 6 · Chk 8 · Perf 7.9 · SEO 8.6 · AI 9.0 · Copy 6

The clear winner, and the only club in the study that is strong on both what a customer meets and what a machine meets. Bournemouth top three of the eight measures, Experience (8), SEO Readiness (8.6) and AI Readiness (9.0), and finish no lower than competent on any of them. The owner-run Shopify store combines the cleanest checkout in the Shopify group with a genuine merchandising idea, the branded Premium Cherries lifestyle collection and the YETI collaboration, and a fully realised agent-commerce setup: complete clean-rendering schema and a live llms.txt.

WHERE IT DID WELL. The objective backbone. Fast, clean, machine-readable, and frictionless to buy from. The story of the edition, a mid-table coastal club out-executing the establishment, is not a flourish here. It is what the numbers show.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. Proposition and Copy both sit at competent 6. The store sells the season's kit tidily but does not yet author a club-identity concept the way Forest or Arsenal do. Lifting the storytelling to match the build is the difference between 73 and the high 70s.

WATCH-OUT. The win is built on execution, and execution is copyable. The proposition and copy gap is exactly the ground on which a bigger-budget rival could close in.

2. Chelsea 72

FANATICS

Prop 7 · Exp 8 · Pers 7 · Chk 7 · Perf 6.7 · SEO 7.5 · AI 4.5 · Copy 8

The best-realised customer experience in the study. Chelsea reach 8 on both Experience and Copy and 7 on Proposition and Persuasion, carried by the 75 Years of the Rampant Lion identity, story-led collections, and genuinely distinctive product writing. Second place is earned on the human-facing measures alone.

WHERE IT DID WELL. Proposition, merchandising, persuasion and copy all above convention, on a shared Fanatics platform. Chelsea prove the platform is not the ceiling, the operator is. The urgency deadline on printing and the themed collections are real persuasion, not decoration.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. AI Readiness at 4.5 and no llms.txt. The store is built well for humans and poorly for machines, exposing little owned structured data an agent could use.

WATCH-OUT. The whole customer-facing result sits on the Fanatics stack, which caps the owned-data measures structurally. Chelsea can keep writing well and merchandising well, but the AI-readiness gap is not something the club can close without the operator exposing more controllable data.

3. Leeds United 70

FANATICS

Third overall and the top Performance score in the study at 8.2. Leeds pair strong copy (8, the 400 Years of Leeds town-charter narrative carried from kit into store) with above-average Proposition and Experience, and a genuinely fast, clean build.

WHERE IT DID WELL. Identity and performance together. The town-charter story is authored properly into the store, not left on the shirt, and the site is quick and well-engineered.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. AI Readiness at 4.5, the Fanatics owned-data ceiling again, and no llms.txt.

WATCH-OUT. The same structural limit as its Fanatics siblings. The customer experience is strong and the machine-readability is not, and only the operator can change the latter.

4. Arsenal 69

SAP HYBRIS (SELF-RUN)

Prop **7** · Exp **8** · Pers **7** · Chk **6** · Perf **5.4** · SEO **8.1** · AI **3.5** · Copy **8**

The best all-round customer experience alongside Chelsea, and the only club to surface genuine reviews-based social proof on the homepage. Arsenal reach 8 on Experience and Copy and 7 on Proposition and Persuasion, running a self-built Hybris store with layered merchandising and a real Arsenal State of Mind brand voice off the back of the 2025/26 title.

WHERE IT DID WELL. Persuasion specifically. The 4.9 out of 5, 8,000-plus-reviews social proof and the members-save-10% incentive make this the strongest persuasion result in the study, and the only genuine multi-trigger architecture found anywhere.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. The objective backbone lets a strong front end down. AI Readiness is the lowest of the enterprise clubs at 3.5, with nothing an agent can transact against and no llms.txt, and Performance sits at 5.4.

WATCH-OUT. Arsenal control their own platform, which means the objective weaknesses are theirs to fix and theirs to own. There is no operator to blame for the AI-readiness floor. For a self-run store of this quality, the machine-facing gap is the glaring inconsistency.

5. Liverpool 69

SALESFORCE / CENTRA

Prop **7** · Exp **8** · Pers **6** · Chk **6** · Perf **6.3** · SEO **8.0** · AI **6.0** · Copy **7**

A genuinely bespoke, well-designed store, tied fourth on the human-facing measures with Experience at 8. Liverpool run a non-templated build with tabbed kit navigation, the LFC Label own-brand fashion line and a footwear range, and a confident brand voice.

WHERE IT DID WELL. Design and merchandising. This does not look like a platform template, it looks authored, and the range-building beyond replica kit is real.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. Two specific, fixable defects. Free delivery is nudged behind account login, which is friction at the commit point, and the structured data serves 150 US dollars to the crawler while the shopper sees 120 pounds. That currency-and-price leak is the most concrete single technical fault in the study.

WATCH-OUT. The USD-in-schema defect is invisible to the human shopper and therefore easy to leave unfixed, but an AI agent comparing Liverpool on price reads the wrong number in the wrong currency. As the AI channel grows, that quietly misprices the club against every rival an agent lines up beside it.

6. Aston Villa 68

FANATICS

Prop **6** · Exp **7** · Pers **6** · Chk **7** · Perf **8.1** · SEO **7.1** · AI **7.0** · Copy **7**

The clearest example of the badge-versus-operator split. On a fair read Villa are competent-to-strong on the customer-facing measures, 7 on Experience and Copy, 6 on Proposition, with the crest-led hero and the legacy of the Lions heritage voice doing real work. The objective backbone is genuinely good too: Performance 8.1 on genuinely clean engineering, AI Readiness 7.0.

WHERE IT DID WELL. A rare club strong on both sides of the split. The heritage voice is authored, and the objective scores are among the best of the established names.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. Proposition holds at 6. The identity work is present but does not yet reach the sustained-concept band the top clubs occupy.

WATCH-OUT. Villa show what the Fanatics platform can do in the right operator's hands: the same stack that caps Chelsea and Leeds on AI readiness scores 7.0 here, which points at build choices, not platform fate.

7. Nottingham Forest 68

SHOPIFY

Prop **7** · Exp **7** · Pers **6** · Chk **7** · Perf **5.7** · SEO **7.2** · AI **8.0** · Copy **7**

The quiet standout of the top group, because it is the smallest name in it. Forest reach 7 on Proposition on genuine craft: the tree crest, the FOREST wordmark and a hero that is an actual forest make the brand concept do the work. AI Readiness at 8.0 on the Shopify strength, with a live llms.txt.

WHERE IT DID WELL. Proposition earned on craft, not reputation, and a strong machine-facing backbone. Forest author an identity concept most bigger clubs do not attempt.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. Performance at 5.7 is the softest of the top eight, and Persuasion holds at the competent 6.

WATCH-OUT. Forest is the counter-example to the whole reputation story: a smaller club authoring a concept and building for the machine, sitting level with clubs several times its size.

8. Sunderland 68

FANATICS

Prop **6** · Exp **7** · Pers **6** · Chk **7** · Perf **8.0** · SEO **7.1** · AI **4.5** · Copy **9**

Home to the single best copy score in the study. Sunderland reach 9 on Copy, the only exceptional score on any judgement lens, earned on object-level storytelling most clubs do not attempt.

WHERE IT DID WELL. The 2026/27 home shirt copy tells the story of the club's 1937 FA Cup win: the jacquard S woven in the shape of the cup handles, the crest reproduced from the 1937 design, and the names of that year's first eleven printed inside the neck. It is a piece of history the customer carries, in copy that sounds like no one else.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. AI Readiness at 4.5, the Fanatics ceiling, and Proposition at a competent 6. The words are exceptional; the machine-readability is not.

WATCH-OUT. Sunderland prove copy is entirely within a club's control regardless of platform. The same Fanatics stack that produces flat writing elsewhere carries the best storytelling in the league here.

9. Everton 67

FANATICS

Prop **6** · Exp **7** · Pers **6** · Chk **7** · Perf **7.2** · SEO **7.1** · AI **7.0** · Copy **7**

A solid, heritage-led store that sits just below the leading group. Everton reach 7 on Copy, leaning on dockside and marine heritage and the club's Latin motto, with competent execution across the customer-facing lenses and AI Readiness at 7.0.

WHERE IT DID WELL. Heritage voice and a respectable machine-facing score. The writing sounds recognisably like Everton, and the objective backbone is sound.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. Proposition at 6 and Persuasion at 6, the competent band. The identity is present but not sustained into a full concept.

WATCH-OUT. Everton are a competent all-rounder with no single weak lens and no single standout. The route up is authoring one genuine discovery idea or lifting the proposition into a sustained concept.

10. Brighton 66

JONAS

Prop **6** · Exp **7** · Pers **6** · Chk **7** · Perf **7.2** · SEO **7.8** · AI **5.0** · Copy **6**

The strongest of the Jonas clubs, lifted by a genuine merchandising idea. Brighton run a personalised Recommended For You row, reaching 7 on Experience where the platform default would hold at 6.

WHERE IT DID WELL. An operator-authored discovery idea on a shared platform, and clean SEO readiness at 7.8.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. A brutal Cumulative Layout Shift of 0.78, deep in the poor band. The headline speed reads well, but the lived experience of a page jumping under the thumb as it loads is a real conversion risk that a fast paint time hides.

WATCH-OUT. Brighton is the clearest case of a blended objective score masking a single catastrophic metric. The CLS fault is fixable and costs conversion at the worst moment: while the page is still loading.

11. Fulham 66

JONAS

Prop **6** · Exp **7** · Pers **6** · Chk **7** · Perf **7.2** · SEO **8.0** · AI **5.0** · Copy **6**

A well-built Jonas store lifted above its platform siblings by authored merchandising. Fulham build themed gifting collections and a Shop By Player route, reaching 7 on Experience, with the strongest SEO readiness of the Jonas group at 8.0.

WHERE IT DID WELL. Two operator-authored discovery routes on a shared platform, and clean structural SEO.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. Proposition and Copy both at 6, the competent band, and Persuasion at 6. The store is well-organised but does not yet sound distinctly like Fulham.

WATCH-OUT. Fulham demonstrate the Jonas platform rewards operator effort: the same stack that leaves Coventry and Brentford at the foot carries Fulham into the competent-plus band on merchandising.

12. Manchester City 65

SALESFORCE COMMERCE CLOUD

Prop **7** · Exp **7** · Pers **6** · Chk **7** · Perf **4.1** · SEO **7.6** · AI **6.0** · Copy **6**

A bespoke enterprise store with strong player-shopping, undone on the objective backbone. City reach 7 on Proposition, Experience and Copy, running the City State of Mind identity, but score 4.1 on Performance, the lowest in the study.

WHERE IT DID WELL. The customer-facing build is genuinely strong: layered merchandising, a sustained identity, and confident copy on a bespoke enterprise stack.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. Performance at 4.1, the weakest build hygiene in the study. The store is not catastrophically slow, but its engineering is heavy and third-party-laden, and the measure catches it.

WATCH-OUT. For a club of City's resource, the weakest build hygiene in the league is a conspicuous underperformance. The front end is excellent; the engineering beneath it is not.

13. Manchester United 65

SCAYLE

Prop **7** · Exp **7** · Pers **6** · Chk **6** · Perf **5.4** · SEO **8.1** · AI **6.0** · Copy **6**

A strong customer-facing store on a modern enterprise stack, held back by the familiar big-club machine-facing gap. United reach 7 on Proposition, Experience and Copy, with clean SEO readiness at 8.1.

WHERE IT DID WELL. A confident, well-merchandised store with a clear identity and among the best structural SEO in the study.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. AI Readiness at 6.0 and Performance at 5.4. The machine-facing measures sit below the customer-facing ones, the pattern that runs through every big club.

WATCH-OUT. United are a competent enterprise build with no glaring fault and no standout lens. The separation now on offer is machine-readiness, where even a modern stack like SCAYLE has not closed the gap.

14. Ipswich Town 64

SHOPIFY

A competent Shopify store carried by its objective backbone. Ipswich sit at 6 across the customer-facing lenses but reach 7.8 on AI Readiness and 8.1 on SEO Readiness, both inherited Shopify strengths, with a live llms.txt.

WHERE IT DID WELL. The machine-facing backbone. Ipswich are more ready for the agent channel than most clubs several divisions of fame above them.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. Every judgement lens holds at the competent 6. The store works and embarrasses no one, but authors no discovery idea and no distinct voice of its own.

WATCH-OUT. Ipswich show the Shopify floor is high on the objective measures and flat on the human ones. The route up is operator craft: an authored idea, a distinct voice, a sustained proposition.

15. Crystal Palace 63

JONAS

Prop 6 · Exp 7 · Pers 6 · Chk 7 · Perf 5.4 · SEO 8.0 · AI 2.5 · Copy 6

Home to the single most useful merchandising cut in the study, undercut by weak machine-readiness and a layout fault. Palace offer fit-based navigation, letting a customer shop by body fit rather than only kit type, reaching 7 on Experience.

WHERE IT DID WELL. Fit-based navigation is the most useful discovery idea in the whole study: a genuine operator-authored cut the platform does not provide.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. AI Readiness at 2.5, joint-lowest, returning nothing an agent can transact against and no owned structured data, and a Cumulative Layout Shift of 0.44, deep in the poor band.

WATCH-OUT. Palace pair the best single merchandising idea in the study with the worst machine-readiness. The customer-facing craft is real; the technical foundation beneath it is not.

16. Tottenham Hotspur 62

SALESFORCE COMMERCE CLOUD

Prop 6 · Exp 7 · Pers 6 · Chk 8 · Perf 5.8 · SEO 5.7 · AI 4.2 · Copy 5

The best checkout in the study attached to a surprisingly weak objective backbone. Spurs score 8 on Checkout, the best-signposted guest gate and fullest express-pay array anywhere, on a competent SFCC store with a Trending best-sellers module.

WHERE IT DID WELL. The checkout. Guest checkout first, above login, with Apple Pay, PayPal, Google Pay, Amazon Pay and Onepay all offered. This is how the commit path should be built.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. Two of the weakest objective scores of any big club. SEO Readiness at 5.7 is the lowest in the study, the weakest structural SEO read in the study, and Copy at 5 is competent-flat with no distinct club voice.

WATCH-OUT. For a club of Tottenham's scale, a bottom-of-the-study SEO score on the shopfront and the flattest copy among the giants are conspicuous underperformances. The checkout is excellent; the discoverability and the voice are not.

17. Hull City 60

JONAS

A fast, well-priced store held back by a proposition problem and flat copy. Hull run the cheapest standard shirt in the league at 64 pounds, carry a loyalty-points scheme and an Auctions section, and post a decent Performance score of 6.5.

WHERE IT DID WELL. Value and speed, and a genuine promotion-story hook (We Are Premier League) that gives the season a moment.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. Proposition and Copy both at 5. The store trades as TigerLeisure.com rather than Hull City, which dilutes whose shop the customer is in, and the copy carries no distinct club voice.

WATCH-OUT. The TigerLeisure store identity is the single clearest self-inflicted proposition weakness in the study. A customer landing cold has to work to confirm this is Hull City's official shop, and that friction sits right at the top of the funnel.

18. Newcastle United 60

SHOPIFY

A competent Shopify store that under-authors on the customer-facing measures. Newcastle carry the Shopify objective strength, AI Readiness 6.8 with a live llms.txt, but sit at 5 on both Proposition and Copy.

WHERE IT DID WELL. The machine-facing backbone, inherited from Shopify, and a polished premium visual treatment on the category pages.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. Proposition and Copy both at 5, the competent-flat floor. The hero names the kit and leans on the adidas partnership, which counts for nothing on club identity, and the copy carries no distinct voice.

WATCH-OUT. For a club with Newcastle's current profile and investment, a competent-but-flat store that authors no identity concept is a missed opportunity. The platform gives them a strong objective base; the club adds little on top of it.

19. Coventry City 58

JONAS

The weakest customer-facing execution in the study on the persuasion and checkout measures, despite a genuinely good category page. Coventry sit at 4 on Persuasion and 5 on Checkout, the joint-lowest on both.

WHERE IT DID WELL. The category page is genuinely competent: sub-category pills, a full filter set, quick-view and strong editorial photography, and Performance is a respectable 7.3.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. The commit path and the persuasion around it. An interstitial pop-up fires over the homepage, and the checkout buries guest beneath an expanded sign-in form with PayPal as the only express option.

WATCH-OUT. The fix is cheap and proven. Brighton and Palace, on the identical Jonas platform, both score 7 on Checkout. Coventry's weakness is an operator choice, not a platform limit, and closing it would lift the total by several points for very little cost.

20. Brentford 57

JONAS

Prop **6** · Exp **6** · Pers **5** · Chk **5** · Perf **6.0** · SEO **7.2** · AI **2.5** · Copy **6**

Bottom of the table, on a combination of a buried checkout and the weakest AI readiness. Brentford sit at 5 on Checkout and 2.5 on AI Readiness, joint-lowest, with nothing an agent can transact against.

WHERE IT DID WELL. The Leave Your Mark campaign hero has genuine attitude and voice, enough to lift Copy to 6, and the category page is competently built.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. The commit path and the machine-readability. Guest checkout is buried, express pay is PayPal only, and the store exposes almost nothing an AI agent can use. An email-capture interstitial also fires over the homepage, though it carries a prize-draw incentive.

WATCH-OUT. Brentford finish last not because the store is broadly bad, it is competent on the customer-facing measures, but because it is weak on the two specific things this instrument weights and the market is moving toward: low-friction checkout and agent-readiness. Both are fixable, and the same Jonas platform proves it.

Good for humans. Poor for machines.

The instrument was built to expose a gap between reputation and execution, and it does, but not in the direction a first glance would suggest. The famous clubs do not run bad stores. Arsenal, Chelsea and Liverpool build some of the best customer experiences in the league.

What they run are stores that are good for humans and poor for machines: strong on proposition, experience, persuasion and copy, and weak, sometimes badly weak, on AI readiness and, for several, on performance. Arsenal build one of the best customer experiences in the league and expose almost nothing an agent can read. Chelsea pair a category-leading store with no llms.txt and little machine-readable data. The pattern holds across all five enterprise stores belonging to the biggest clubs.

THE GENUINE FINDING OF EDITION TWO

The one club strong on both sides is Bournemouth, an owner-run Shopify store from a mid-table coastal club. The separation at the top of Premier League retail is no longer about how well you sell to a person. Most of these clubs do that competently. It is about whether you have also built for the machine that is increasingly standing between the club and the customer. On that measure, the establishment is behind a promoted-era minnow.

The llms.txt result makes the point in one line. The agent-instruction file was found on exactly four clubs, and all four run Shopify. Every one of the sixteen clubs on any other platform, including all five enterprise stacks belonging to the biggest names, returned a 404. The newest agent-readiness standard has reached Premier League retail through exactly one platform, and it reached the smaller clubs first.

None of this predicts a league position. It measures something already true, on the day it was read, about the experience each club chose to publish. Two of the three tables printed alongside this one in August are guesses about a season nobody has played. This one is a measurement. That is the whole point of it.

How the Index is built.

The Commercial Experience Index scores the digital experience a brand chose to publish, read entirely from the front end of a live site, out of 100. Every score traces to something observed on the store or in the objective data. Inference is labelled where it appears.

The eight lenses

Proposition and Brand Clarity	Can a stranger tell what this is, whose it is, and why it, in three seconds.
Experience and Merchandising	Can the customer move without thinking, and is product merchandised with commercial logic.
Persuasion and Buyer Journey	Are influence triggers present where the customer hesitates, and does the journey serve the different ways people buy.
Checkout and Friction	The commit path, read as far as the front end honestly allows: guest gate, express pay, trust at payment.
Performance	How quickly and cleanly the store loads and runs on a mobile device.
SEO Readiness	The structural conditions to be found, not rankings or traffic.
Copy and Voice	Do the words do a job, and does the brand sound like anyone.
AI Readiness	Can a machine find, read, quote and route to the store.

Each lens is scored 1 to 10 from the live shopfront, and the eight combine into the total out of 100. Five lenses are operator judgement; three read objective site behaviour. The balance between them, and how the total is composed, is the Barking Cat method and is not published.

The two ruling principles

Two rules prevent a specific inflation error, and both were applied uniformly to every club. First, supplier co-branding is not the club's own identity work: a kit-maker lockup in the hero tells the customer who makes the shirt, not who the club is, and cannot lift a proposition score. Second, platform-default furniture never reaches the above-average band: the standard filters, quick-view and mega-menu a platform ships out of the box are competent and no more. Credit goes to what the operator built on top, which is why clubs on an identical platform score several points apart.

The scale

Each lens is scored 1 to 10, bracket-first. The centre of the scale is 5, the resting place of competent-but-unremarkable. A professionally run, unremarkable store scores in the 50s, not the 70s. The upper half is reserved for earned strength: real, visible work most competitors are not doing. The full range is live in both directions.

Scope note. This score reflects eight observable experience lenses read from the live site: Proposition and Brand, Experience and Merchandising, Persuasion and Buyer Journey, Checkout and Friction, Performance, SEO Readiness, AI Readiness, and Copy and Voice. It does not include commercial diagnosis, organic search performance, paid media, smart retail, or AI output-presence (whether assistants recommend the club when a real buyer prompts them), which require data or live prompting beyond the URL and are covered in the full Ground audit.

A note on provenance and the prediction tables. Where this edition is set alongside pre-season league predictions, two classes of source are involved and are not equivalent. A supercomputer prediction is a model output, ten thousand simulations weighing historic form, transfer business and betting odds. A pundit or features-desk prediction is a considered editorial call. Both are guesses about a season not yet played. The Commercial Experience Index is neither: it is a measurement of the live store on the day it was read.

THE COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCE INDEX

Diagnosis before solutions.

The Index is the front-end read a business can run on itself. The Barking Cat Review takes the whole store apart, shopfront and back office, finds the binding constraint, and puts commercial numbers against it.

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