

BOXT: DISRUPTING THE BRITISH HEATING INDUSTRY THROUGH DIGITAL



Executive summary: The disruptive model of digital disintermediation is being applied to the delivery of products and services in many industries, and start-up BOXT wanted to use its potential to revolutionise home heating. The digital platform we built distils the laborious two-week process of arranging a new boiler into a 20-minute interaction on a mobile phone – from landing on the site to booking an installation. We backed up the tech with clean and

And more than 30% of customers leave a Trustpilot review (significantly higher than the industry average) – 99% of which are ‘excellent’.



The context:

The power of digital gives innovative companies the chance to provide a transformative experience for customers. Any industry can be massively disrupted by disintermediation – Airbnb and Uber have revolutionised the travel and taxi sectors by dealing directly with the public – and our client BOXT saw huge potential in bringing that model to domestic heating.

Big industry players have always used salespeople to sell boilers. They visit customers’ homes to prescribe a boiler, flue, fixtures and fittings, ‘upselling’ and pocketing commission. In this model, buying a new boiler takes two weeks – allowing for a phone call, home visit, salesperson’s recommendation, agreement, contract, boiler delivery and, finally, installation.

Our clients at BOXT saw that the industry was ripe for disruption. Thanks to a prior bricks-and-mortar business, they had the industry contacts and market expertise, and wanted to use digital to leverage that expertise. By combining it with the lean agility of a start-up, BOXT could offer customers a quick, efficient and economical way of buying a new boiler.

The new digital model would empower customers, by letting them take control of the process; and empower heating professionals, by linking them directly with their clients. And it would cut out the middlemen who had traditionally held sway over the industry.

Being first to market was critical to our client’s plan. Not only did they need to launch in time for winter, when the vast majority of boilers are sold, but they were aware that the dominant players in the industry, such as EDF and British Gas, were working on their own digital solutions.



The strategy:

Our role was twofold: create a platform that gave customers a seamless digital experience, and build a back-end system that would arm the fitters with the supplies and information needed to complete a full boiler installation within 24 hours.

We mapped out the boiler service journey from the point of view of the customer, installer, back office and supplier, discovering the key pain points and greatest opportunities to deliver digital efficiencies. What, for example, were the key factors for deciding which selection of boilers to offer the customer? What information do the fitters need to complete an installation without a pre-site visit?

This phase would be critical to the success of the project – our challenge was to enable users to select a boiler online, while mitigating risk for the installer (usually the purpose of the on-site survey) and avoid losing money on installations. The end result was the detailed, yet easy-to-follow questionnaire that sits at the heart of the BOXT proposition, allowing customers to select exactly the right boiler for their property while giv [redacted] revise [redacted]

At the same time as this mapping work, we were engaged in creating and developing the digital brand and tone of voice that would give BOXT its distinctive personality, while our front- and back-end developers were also engaged from day one.

With the project only beginning in late November 2016, these two processes would then come together to allow our multi-disciplinary team to deliver – by March – a unique digital platform that would offer householders an entirely new way to upgrade their existing heating solution.

Timing was critical, so for launch we focused on the customer-facing ecommerce website and back-end installer/head office web portal. In the months after the soft launch, we built an installer app and supplier portal that allowed BOXT to shift from a contracted fitter basis to a retained freelance basis (the Uber model) in time for the traditional winter uplift in demand.

Broken boiler today.
New one on the wall tomorrow.

No callbacks, no 'quotes' – just a fixed price that saves you £1,000+.

Get your fixed price now

★★★★★ 10 out of 10. See all 686 reviews on TRUSTPILOT

zone
A Cognizant Digital Business



The work:

The process of arranging a new boiler now takes about as long as it does to drink a cup of coffee (in fact, given that the majority of BOXT's sales take place on mobile it can happen at the same time!)

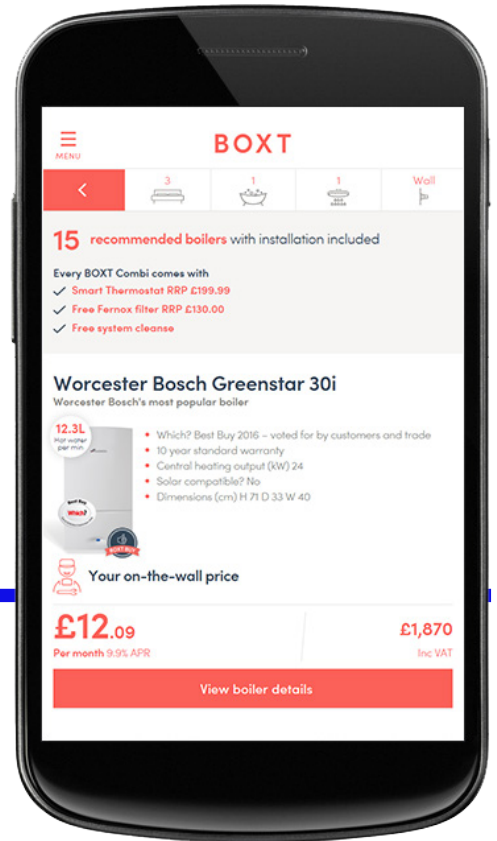
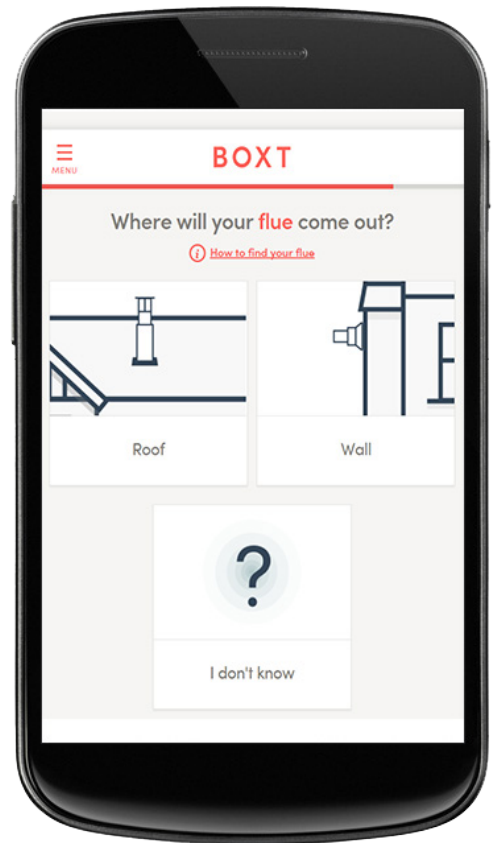
From landing to checkout, the average customer takes less than 20 minutes to choose their own boiler based on power, quality and price, book their installation and pay through the Dividoo ecommerce platform (including arranging credit through a separately integrated finance system).

Strengthening it all is a compelling proposition that infuses the BOXT brand values throughout the customer experience – easy, quick, fuss-free. Clean iconography injected with warm, playful elements creates a visual language in sync with an uncluttered and welcoming tone of voice. And carefully translating complicated technical boiler-speak into simple, accurate information gives customers the confidence to convert.

The customer-facing build includes features such as an airline-style booking engine that adjusts installation prices algorithmically to incentivise selection based on fitter availability and stock held. Users are also able to interact with BOXT through a 24-7 live-chat functionality that connects them to a full-time member of the support team.

Any Gas Safe-accredited installer, meanwhile, is now able to download the installer app (on Android or iOS) and sign up to join the BOXT programme. A BOXT engineer is able, through the app, to set and manage availability for work, complete post-installation forms, submit post-installation photos and manage their payments.

The back-end administration system automatically assigns jobs based on location and availability, manages installers' diaries and informs them of job specifications and materials requirements. The back end also handles the integrations with product suppliers and the customer-facing financing/payment platform.



The Launch:

Thanks to our work, BOXT was able to bring a viable product to the market in early spring – traditionally the slowest time of sales cycle.

We decided on a soft launch, backed up by a minimal spend on PPC and Google Adwords, to give our teams time to optimise the platform and build up word-of-mouth.

[REDACTED] and the top rating on Trustpilot in the Gas Installation and Heating categories.

The full launch was in September, in the run-up to the colder months, with an ATL campaign featuring a TV spot and national newspaper ads, backed up by digital components. Responsibility for that campaign was initially given to a traditional ad agency, but when their efforts fell short of what was required, BOXT asked us to step in at the last minute and create new assets from scratch. Within two weeks we were able to complete a full TV advert and print news campaign, which ran in targeted TV slots over three months and in the Metro newspaper, along with supporting content for Facebook and Twitter. Our analysis has shown a strong correlation between the TV ad and branded/direct traffic to the BOXT website.



The results:

The results have been nothing less than spectacular, demonstrating how the disruptive power of digital – aligned with creative and strategic thinking – can cause a paradigm shift.

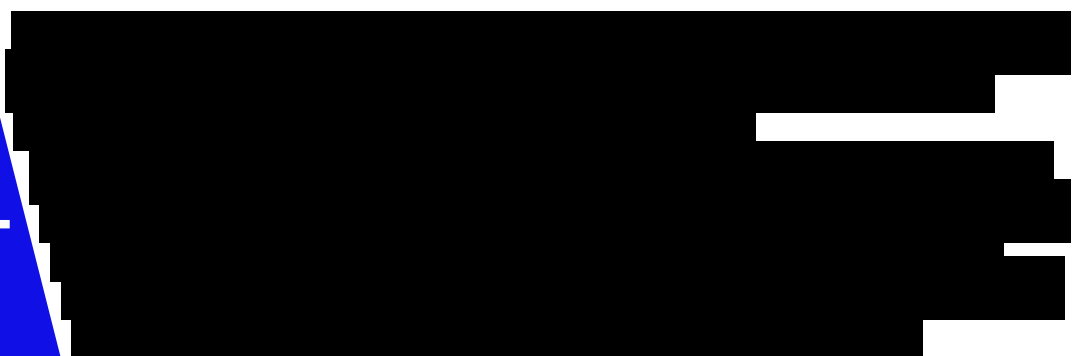
£18m+
Revenue generated

4,000+
Boilers installed

125
Independent fitters
signed up

170k
Unique website users

No2
In UK boiler installations
(Behind British Gas)



But of potentially more significance than the early financial figures is the fact that over 30% of customers leave a Trustpilot review (significantly higher than the industry average) – 99% of which are ‘excellent’. So BOXT has not only got to the market first but, thanks to such a positive response, has been able to maintain their growth despite, at last count, five new competitors launching since Autumn 2017 with a similar offering.

Word count: 1,479