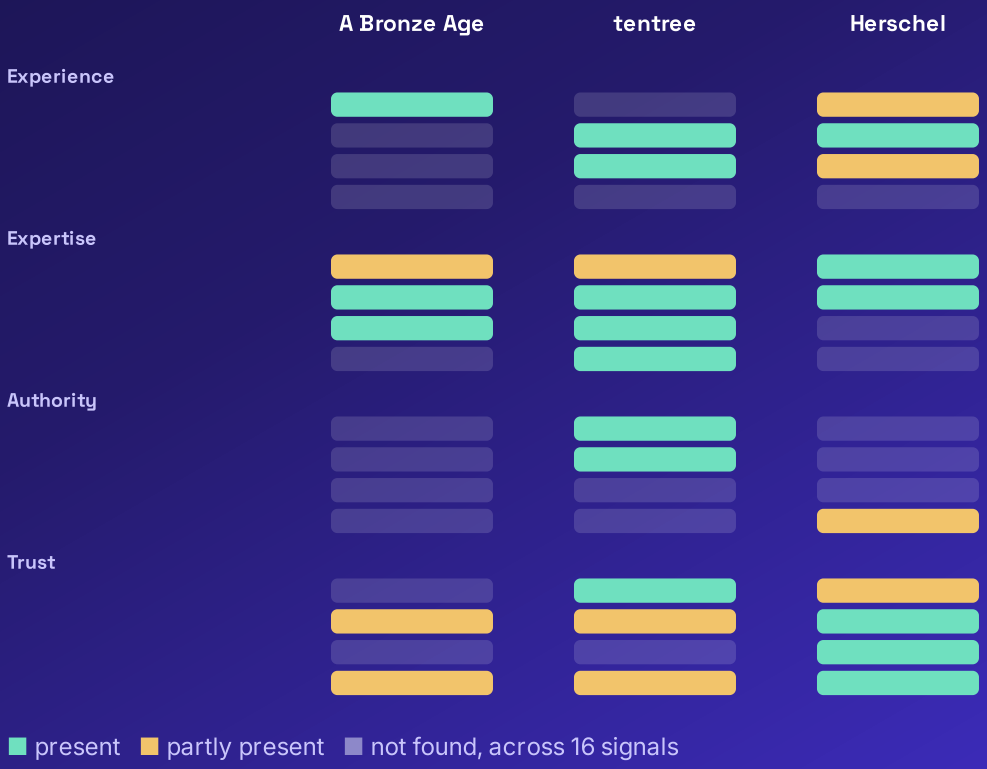
SEO Girl

Independent research, October 2026 · Study 3

Does Size Buy Trust?

E-E-A-T signals on the websites of three Vancouver apparel brands: small, mid-size and large.



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3 brands, 5 pages each, 16 signals
Collected October 24, 2026

The short version

Google's quality guidelines judge content by experience, expertise, authoritativeness and trust: E-E-A-T. I checked how three Vancouver apparel brands of very different sizes show those signals on their own websites: A Bronze Age, tentree and Herschel Supply Co.

3.5 of 4

Size buys trust infrastructure. Herschel, the largest, scored highest on trust: a lifetime warranty, a returns portal and complete structured data, including its return policy.

1 of 3

The human story shrinks as brands grow. Only the smallest brand names its founder. Neither larger brand names a single person on its About page.

100M+

Proof lives in the wrong place. tentree's strongest evidence, B Corp certification and 100M+ trees planted, sits on its About page, not on the product pages where people decide.

0 of 3

Nobody shows outside recognition. None of the pages checked showed press or awards, and none linked the brand to profiles beyond social media.

Scores: tentree 9.5, Herschel 8, A Bronze Age 4.5, out of 16. No brand covers all four pillars, and each is missing something the others do well.

Why E-E-A-T matters for e-commerce

Shoppers and AI assistants both need reasons to trust a store before recommending it. E-E-A-T is a useful way to name those reasons.

Experience

Real people, real use

Founders with a story, reviews from people who wore it, photos of real customers.

Expertise

Knowing the product

Materials, fit, dimensions, care and guidance that helps people choose well.

Authority

Others vouch for you

Certifications, measurable impact, press, awards and links to trusted profiles.

Trust

Safe to buy from

Clear contact, returns and warranty, and structured data that states it plainly.

Not a score Google gives you

E-E-A-T is a framework from Google's quality rater guidelines, not a single ranking number. But the signals behind it are the same things AI assistants quote when they recommend a brand, as the first study in this series showed with certifications and reviews.

Why compare by size

Big brands have budgets for structured data, warranties and help centres. Small brands have founders who answer the email. The question is which signals each size naturally has, and which each is missing.

How the study worked

Three Vancouver apparel brands, five pages each, checked against the same 16 signals.

1

Pick three sizes

A Bronze Age (small, made to order), tentree (mid-size, B Corp) and Herschel Supply Co. (large, global).

2

Open five pages

Home, About, one product, returns or warranty, and contact.

3

Check 16 signals

Four per pillar, read from visible text and structured data.

4

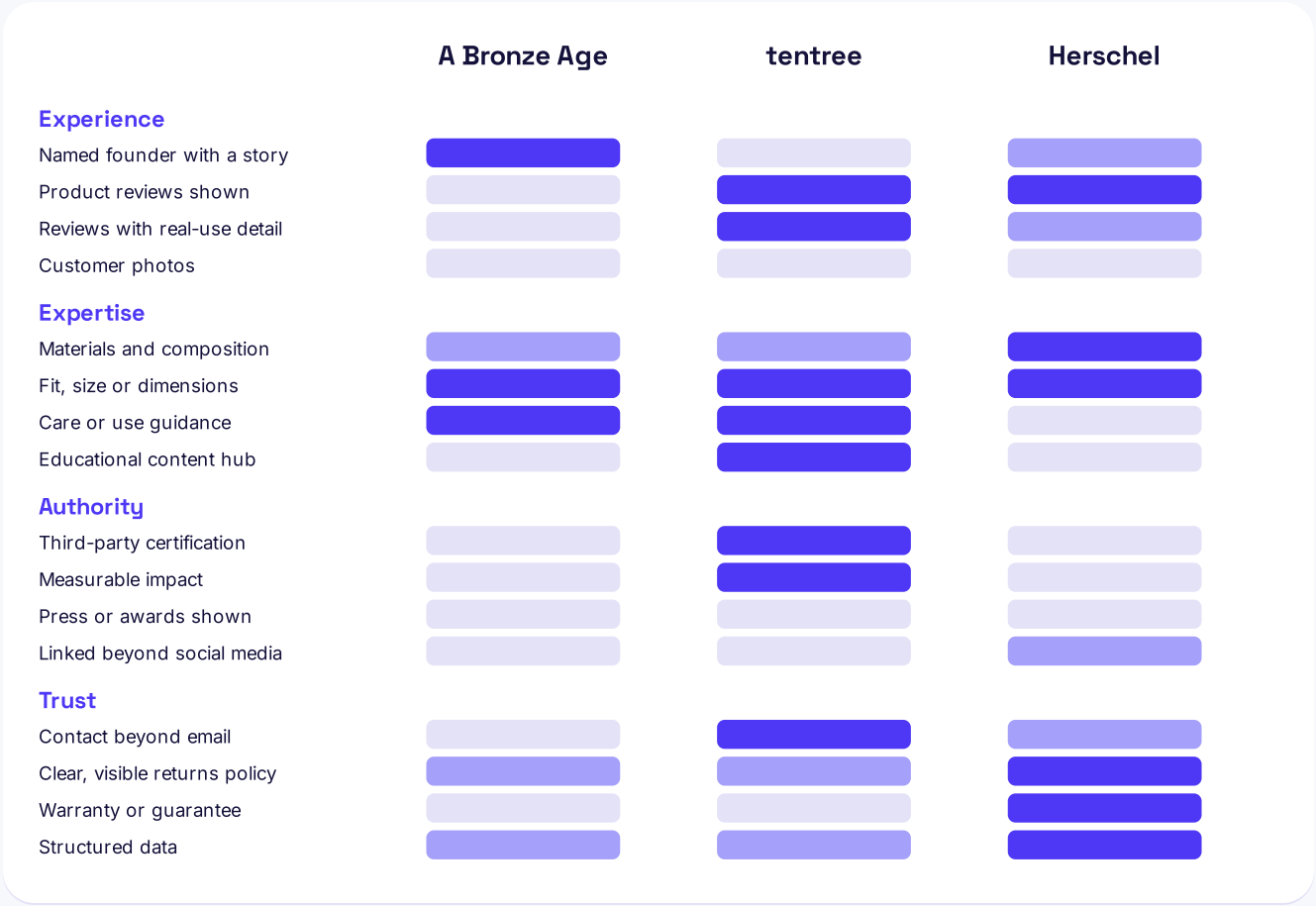
Score

Present scores 1, partly present 0.5, not found 0.

Collected on October 24, 2026, on each brand's Canadian website. Signals were checked with automated reads of visible page text and structured data, then reviewed. A signal marked "not found" may exist elsewhere on the site, but it wasn't on the pages a shopper is most likely to see. Content inside collapsed tabs was noted as partly present.

The scorecard

Sixteen signals, three brands. Dark means present, light means partly present, empty means not found on the pages checked.



4.5/16

A Bronze Age

Strong story and product detail; little outside proof.

9.5/16

tentree

Strongest authority and content; no people named.

8/16

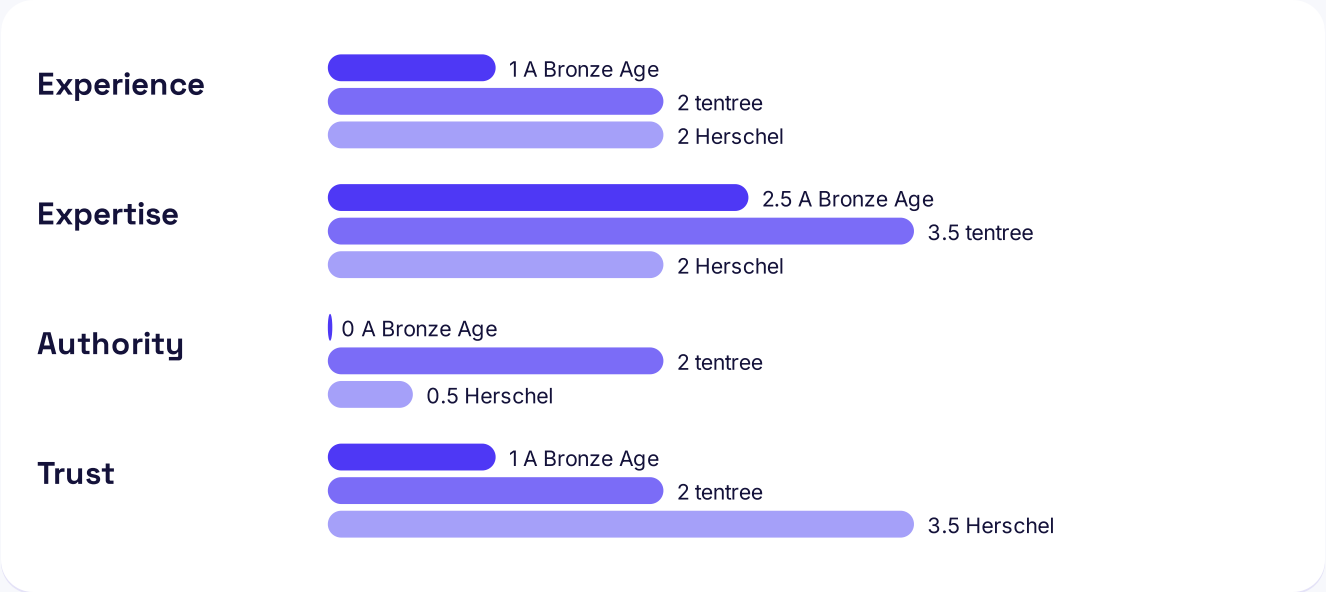
Herschel

Strongest trust infrastructure; thin story and authority.

Finding 1

Size buys trust, not experience

Each brand's score on the four pillars, out of 4.



The largest brand has the safety net

Herschel scored 3.5 of 4 on trust: a **limited lifetime warranty**, a returns portal, shipping and returns on every product page, and structured data that even describes its return policy. That's the kind of infrastructure that takes a team to build.

But not the voice

On experience, Herschel and tentree each scored 2, almost entirely from product reviews. The smallest brand scored 1, with no reviews at all: its only experience point came from its founder's story. Each size earns experience a different way, and none earns it fully.

Finding 2

The human story shrinks as brands grow

The About page is where a brand shows who is behind it. Only one of the three named anyone.

A Bronze Age

Names its founder and year in the first line: **founded in 2016 by Renée Power**. Explains that pieces are made to order in Vancouver by three generations of women in her family.

Founder named

Specific story

tentree

A clear mission, certified B Corp status and impact numbers, but no founders, team or people named on the page.

Mission and proof

No people

Herschel

A short origin story about a Saskatchewan town and three generations of family, in about 560 characters, with no names and no founding year.

Origin story

No names or year

Why it matters

Named people are entities. A founder with a name, a year and a place gives search engines and AI assistants something concrete to connect the brand to, and gives shoppers someone to believe.

The connection to Study 2

In the brand consistency study, founders and founding years were exactly where AI answers disagreed most. Brands that state them clearly, on their own site, make that easier to get right.

Finding 3

Proof lives in the wrong place

The strongest evidence often sits far from the moment a shopper decides.

tentree's About page

Certified B Corp | 100M+ trees planted | 75M+ hours of planting work

Its strongest authority signals, under a section headed "Goodbye, Greenwashing".

tentree's product page

5.0 from 5 reviews | Plants 10 trees | No certification shown

The B Corp proof doesn't follow the shopper to the product.

Reviews are the experience signal that scales

tentree (5.0 from 5) and Herschel (4.7 from 28) both show reviews and mark them up for search, including fit feedback such as "true to size". A Bronze Age's product pages show **no reviews**, so its strong founder story never reaches the product.

Missing structure on the homepage

tentree's homepage had no structured data I could detect, while Herschel's described the store, its contact point and its return policy. A Bronze Age had an organization record linked only to Instagram.

Finding 4

Hidden details and missing recognition

Behind collapsed tabs

A Bronze Age's return terms sit under "Canada, USA, International" tabs, and fabric details under "Fit and Measurements". The information exists, but it isn't visible text until someone clicks.

Thin where it counts

Herschel's About page is about 560 characters. Its product pages are detailed, but its company story barely is.

Signal	A Bronze Age	tentree	Herschel
Press or awards shown	Not found	Not found	Not found
Customer photos	Not found	Not found	Not found
Profiles linked in structured data	Instagram only	None found	TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube
Contact	Email	Email, chat, hours, address	Email, help centre

The gap all three share: no outside recognition on the pages shoppers see, and no links to the open knowledge sources, such as Wikipedia, Wikidata or LinkedIn, that help search engines and AI confirm who a brand is.

What e-commerce brands can do

Small brands can borrow structure from big ones; big brands can borrow voice from small ones.

Name your people

Founder, year, place and a specific story on the About page, with Person and Organization schema.

The evidence: Only one of three brands named anyone.

Bring proof to the product

Show certifications, impact numbers and warranty on every product page, not just the About page.

The evidence: tentree's B Corp proof never reaches its product pages.

Collect reviews that describe use

Ask about fit, wear and real situations, and mark reviews up for search.

The evidence: Reviews carried most experience points for the two larger brands.

Make key details visible text

Put returns, materials and fit in plain text on the page, with tabs as a convenience, not a hiding place.

The evidence: A Bronze Age's returns and fabric were behind tabs.

Show who vouches for you

Press mentions, awards and certifications, linked to their sources.

The evidence: None of the three showed press or awards.

Connect to the knowledge graph

Organization schema with sameAs links to Wikipedia, Wikidata, LinkedIn and Crunchbase, not only social media.

The evidence: No brand linked beyond social profiles.

Limits, and what's next

Read this as a snapshot

- Three brands and five pages each. Signals marked "not found" may exist elsewhere on the site.
- Scores come from my 16-signal checklist, not from Google. E-E-A-T isn't a number Google publishes.
- One product per brand was checked; review counts vary by product.
- Checked on October 24, 2026, on Canadian sites; pages change often.

The series so far

Study 1, The AI Shelf: which sustainable apparel brands AI recommends. **Study 2, Who Are You, Really?:** brand consistency and the knowledge graph. **Study 3, this report:** E-E-A-T by brand size. Next: **information gain and AI retrieval** in buying guides.

Independent research

This is an independent analysis based on publicly available web pages. I have not worked with, or been endorsed by, any brand mentioned. Findings describe what was visible on the pages checked.

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Where AI meets search, I make brands visible.

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