

Google Analytics Metrics that Matter

It is easy to become overwhelmed with the data that is available from your website tracking using Google Analytics. There are a host of reports and areas to review and understand.

Here's the top 3 metrics that everyone should follow using Google Analytics on your website.

1. Site Sessions and Users

These are top-level metrics that tell you the volume of traffic your website is receiving. It is important to understand the nuances of sessions and users. Sessions are the combined activities of a user within a 30-minute period. Users can have multiple sessions a day. For example, if one user goes to your site, then leaves for longer than a 30-minute period and comes back within that same day, analytics would count two sessions and one user. Users are the people completing the sessions. Users are set by cookies. Several things can impact these counts including:

- The time period for the report
- Browser used
- If your users clear their cookies

TIP: Track these over time to measure the overall impact of your marketing activities, seasonality and demand in the marketplace.

2. Conversion Goals

Conversion goals help you understand if users on your site are doing what you want. Conversions are measured differently and setup by the user. They can include things such as visits to specific pages, time on site, reaching a specific destination or an event. Which conversions you setup is a function of your strategy and goals for your website. For example, if you are interested in content engagement, then you would setup time on site duration goals. If you are more interested in funnel conversions, you may setup event or destination goals that indicate an action such as completing a form or playing a video.

Setup conversion goals into groupings by type to allow for cleaner analysis. For example, you would want a set for duration goals versus form completion goals.

TIP: Be sure to include your web URL on all your emails, marketing and sales materials and any communications vehicles and setup conversion tracking.

3. Channels and Sources/Mediums

We've all heard the phrase "build it and they will come." In the web world, that is not necessarily true. Most often people come to your site because of the things your or some else does and how they reach you is a function of that. The acquisition area of Google Analytics provides a rich portrayal of this with the channels and sources/mediums reports being especially helpful.

Channel reports provide insights on how people reach you: directly typing in your URL, organic or paid search, referrals, social media and more. This rich content will help you understand the level of brand awareness you have and how effective your marketing efforts are.

Sometimes you need more specific information of how people reach your site. The source/medium report provides even deeper insights into how people reach you. For example, for paid search, this level of detail will show which search engine delivered the user (Google versus Bing for example).

TIP: Tying these metrics to your front-end marketing spend and tactics and understanding the full funnel conversions will allow you to measure the Return on Investment (ROI) of your marketing and sales investments.

Google Analytics is a powerful tool to help you grow your business and drive profitability. Set goals, dive deep and gain insights that help you make data driven decisions for your business.

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