

Why Website Analytics Is Important

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Shouldn't I be spending more time doing than measuring what I'm doing?

Maybe, but analytics can be a great way to help you identify those tactics that you should be doing. Consider the following four main benefits of measuring your Internet Marketing:

1. Identifying what's working.
2. Identifying what's not working.
3. Identifying ways to improve.
4. Implementing more of the tactics that work to improve website performance.

The beauty of regularly measuring and analyzing your marketing is that it takes the guesswork out of what to do next. Rather than making blind decisions about whether to continue with a particular program or focus on one channel more than another, your analytics can give you the insight you need to make that decision intelligently.

One of the advantages of internet marketing is that the web makes it very easy to measure just about every tactic. There are tons of tools – both free and paid – at your disposal, and there is absolutely no excuse not to measure every part of your internet marketing from activities like SEO, blogging, and social media, to ones like email marketing and lead nurturing.

In this ebook, we'll cover the following marketing channels:

- Social Media
- Email Marketing
- Lead Nurturing & Marketing

Analytics can help you justify the time and effort that you are putting into various marketing channels because they are delivering results.

So what exactly should you be measuring in your marketing?

- Your Website & Landing Pages
- Search Engine Optimisation
- Paid Search
- Business Blogging

Your website is the hub of your internet marketing efforts. Every piece of content you create or campaign you run should be designed to drive traffic to your website and landing pages, giving you the chance to convert visitors into leads and customers.

In this section we will review the metrics you should be tracking on your website and its landing pages and how to use these metrics to optimise and improve your website's performance.

It makes sense to start by looking at information from your web analytics program, such as Google Analytics, or at the back end of your website, if you have a measurement system like Zeald provides.

That unique visitor data shows whether your content and campaigns are successfully driving visitors to your site. Look for a good upward trend over time, or in conjunction with specific marketing campaigns. If your unique visitor count isn't rising, you may need to reassess your marketing tactics.

The more repeat visitors you have to your site, the more “sticky” it is (i.e. prospects are finding valuable content that keeps them coming back for more). If your repeat visitor rate is only in the single digits, your site might not offer enough valuable information to capitalise on the link or campaign that attracted a new visitor in the first place. Conversely, if your repeat visitor rate is higher than 30%, you’re probably not growing your audience enough to generate new business.

A healthy rate of repeat visitors is about 15%.

Direct traffic comes from people who have typed your website’s URL directly into their browser, visited your web pages via a bookmark, or clicked on an untagged link from an email or document you have produced. A breakdown of the specific sources of traffic to your website, such as direct, organic, or referral traffic is critical to know so you know which promotional efforts are the most successful.

You also need to track changes in your referring URL list monthly to see if your link-building efforts are paying off. You want to see the list of referring URLs growing steadily over time as you produce more content that other site owners and bloggers deem worthy of sharing with their audience.

You also can study your referring URLs to determine which types of sites or bloggers are linking to your site and what type of content they tend to like. All of this information can be fed back into your SEO strategy, helping you to produce more content that is likely to generate more incoming links. These are the websites that send traffic directly to your site. They represent the inbound links that are crucial for boosting your site’s search engine rankings

Search Engine Saturation

This metric tells you how many of your pages are being indexed by search engines and are getting found by users. If you know this, and then you can drill down to see which landing pages receive the highest percentage of visits.

It reflects the number of pages on your site that have received at least one visit from organic search Engines.

Conversion Rates

By monitoring your conversion rates, you’ll know how well you’ve been capitalising on the traffic coming to your site. You can monitor several different types of conversion rates including:

- Visitor-to-Lead Conversion Rate: the percentage of visitors who become Leads
- Lead-to-Customer Conversion Rate: the percentage of leads who become customers
- Visitor-to-Customer Conversion Rate: the percentage of visitors who become customers

The percentage of visitors to your site who take a desired action, such as purchasing a product or filling out a lead generation form, are your conversion rates. Tracking each of these conversion rates is like giving your marketing funnel a checkup. You’ll see where you’re doing well (such as converting visitors into leads) and where your funnel may be leaky (such as failing to convert those leads into customers).

Bounce Rate: the percentage of new visitors who leave your site almost immediately after arriving, with no other interactions, is your Bounce Rate

A high bounce rate means your pages aren't compelling or useful to visitors. This could be a reflection of problems with your marketing strategy, such as having inbound links from irrelevant sources or not optimising landing pages for specific campaigns. A high bounce rate could also indicate problems with your site itself, such as confusing architecture, weak content, or no clear calls-to-action.

Bounce rates can vary dramatically by industry and from website to website. So rather than benchmarking yourself against external bounce rate metrics, monitor your bounce rate over time to make sure it's falling or at least remaining steady.

If your internet marketing strategy includes search engine optimisation as well as paid search advertising, you need to examine a different set of metrics to track the effectiveness of each tactic. You can analyze the effectiveness of your SEO efforts by digging deeper into the reports generated by your web analytics package. In this section we will cover the most important SEO metrics to track.

Keywords

You should always be measuring the performance of your keywords. Conduct keyword research using the Google AdWords Keyword Tool identify the best keywords to use in website optimisation, and optimise your website for those keywords. You need to know how well your website and web pages rank in search engines for your desired keywords and search terms keyword performance & rankings. Then you need to track and measure their performance in search engines - how well is your website ranking for those key terms? Are they generating a significant amount of traffic to your website? If not, you may need to refine your keyword choices so you can improve your search engine rankings.

Content

The most effective internet marketing strategy, involves having high quality content that incorporates specific keywords, which should help you attract a high percentage of your total traffic from organic search. If your percentage of traffic from organic search is lower, look for opportunities to target new keywords or create more content - such as videos, ebooks, and blog posts (that can be indexed by search engines).

Conduct keyword research to come up with a list of non-branded keywords that are appropriate for your business, and start optimising your website and content for those search terms.

A longer list of unique terms driving search traffic to your website means you're doing an admirable job creating content around the keywords and terms that prospects are using to research a particular business or personal need related to your products and services.

Look closely at the top phrases that drive a significant percentage of search visits. If these are phrases you're specifically targeting through your SEO efforts, then you're doing a good job creating content that gets found and attracts visitors.

If you're not drawing significant traffic from your targeted keywords, then you need to do a better job creating relevant, valuable content around those phrases. Studying your list of unique search terms can also uncover longer-tail search phrases that you're not currently targeting.

You need to study the complete list of search phrases that visitors are using to find your site and monitor not just the total number of phrases that generate traffic, but also the total number of visits

and then the percentage of overall organic traffic that each phrase represents.

Incoming Links

Because incoming links are such a major factor in how search engines rank your website and web pages, your goal should be to gradually increase the number of inbound links from high-quality sites. Such quality links indicate that your content is not only getting found online, but is deemed valuable enough for other sites or bloggers to share with their audience.

In general, more inbound links from more domains is better. The higher the authority is of the site linking to you, the more valuable that inbound link will be considered by search engines, resulting in a higher search ranking for you.

You also can study your inbound links to determine the types of sites or bloggers who tend to link to your content, helping you develop more content specifically for those audiences. Also, studying the anchor text that other sites use to create their links to your site can help you uncover new terms for your SEO efforts.

Conversion rates from organic search

This is the percentage of visitors who arrived at your site through organic search and completed a desired conversion action, such as becoming a lead or purchasing a product.

At the highest level, you want to know your overall conversion rate from organic search. But you also should drill down into your web analytics to track conversion rates by:

- Specific keyword or search phrases
- Unique landing pages
- Referring URLs

Tracking those metrics helps you fine tune your SEO strategy. For example, you may discover long-tail search phrases that don't deliver tons of unique visitors but that have a higher than average conversion rate. Or, you may find that high traffic from a common search term isn't translating into a good conversion rate, which means you've probably got some work to do in optimising your landing pages to improve conversion.

Pay Per Click Analysis

You need to know how much you're "spending to acquire each visitor."

You need to track a different set of metrics to analyze the effectiveness of your pay-per-click (PPC) search advertising campaigns.

The biggest difference between SEO metrics and PPC metrics is that you're spending money on each click you generate from paid search advertising, so you need to know how much you're spending to acquire each visitor as well as how much of a profit you're making on that ad spend.

Paid search analytics can usually be tracked through the particular search engine advertising platform you're using, such as Google AdWords. In this section we will review five critical metrics to track for your PPC campaigns.

Click-through Rates

Click-through rates will vary widely by industry and by keyword, but monitoring your CTRs over time will help you determine the quality and effectiveness of your ad. If you want to improve CTRs for specific keywords, you can test different ad headlines, copy treatments, and landing page URLs to see which combination boosts your CTR for a given term.

Cost-per-acquisition (cpa)

A measurement of how much you are spending on PPC advertising for each conversion

Monitoring your cost-per-click alone won't tell you much. To determine a 'good' CPC, you must factor in the eventual conversion rate and revenues from those clicks. Studying your average CPC can help you optimize your PPC bidding strategy or target specific ads for future testing and optimisation. Calculate your overall paid search CPA by dividing total ad spend by your total PPC conversion rate. Or, calculate it on a per campaign basis by dividing your average cost-per-click by your conversion rate for a specific ad/keyword combination. Tracking your CPA can help you optimize your PPC bidding strategy. For example, Google AdWords now offers a conversion-based bidding option that lets advertisers set their maximum ad bids according to a target CPA. If you know your historical CPAs from previously successful PPC campaigns, you can use that figure to help bid more efficiently on new keywords.

Return on ad spend (roas)

ROAS measures the return on your PPC advertising investment, calculated by dividing your total ad spend by the total revenue generated from those PPC conversions

ROAS measures the return on your PPC advertising investment, calculated by dividing your total ad spend by the total revenue generated from those PPC conversions

ROAS is the best way to determine whether your PPC strategy is paying off. After all, a good click-through rate is only valuable if those clicks result in conversions, right? But those conversions are only valuable if the amount of revenue you generate from the action offsets the amount you spent on PPC ads to generate new sales or leads.

Identify the key factors that make your blog successful.

Knowing where your blog traffic is coming from and how much traffic can be attributed to individual sources can reveal valuable insights.

Measuring your business blog can be a great way to identify ways to improve its performance. If the primary goal of your business blog is to generate leads, for example, you'll want to gauge how well it's generating leads today and discover which articles and specific tactics are particularly working toward achieving that goal. Once you can identify the key factors that make your blog successful, you can incorporate more of those tactics into future blog posts to improve your blog's overall performance. Here's what you should be measuring...how effective you are at promoting

your blog content in certain channels. Is most of your traffic coming from organic search? If so, you're likely doing a great job of optimising your content with the right keywords for search engines. Are you lacking in social media traffic? Then you might want to put more effort into promoting your content in social media or increasing your social reach so more people can find and share your content in those channels. Consider from which sources you're lacking in traffic, and concentrate on generating more exposure for your blog there. Use this data to identify trends in which articles are more popular than others. Over time, try to notice commonalities and patterns in the data. Perhaps you'll find that using actionable blog titles that contain numbers generate more views than others. Or maybe blog posts on a particular topic resonate better with your blog's target audience than other topics. Make a list of some of the top lessons you've learned from your blog analytics, and incorporate those tactics into more of your future blog articles.

Call -to -action performance

How effective your blog's individual calls-to-action (CTAs) are at converting blog visitors into leads

Each and every one of your blog posts (as well as the sidebar of your blog itself) should include a CTA or an offer available behind a lead generation form. This is the main way a blog generates leads for your business. That said, the best websites have more than one offer, and some offers likely perform better than others.

Consider this on your blog as well, and measure the performance of individual calls to action on your blog. If you find that some are better than others at converting visitors into leads, you might want to consider using them more frequently on your blog.

Am I grabbing people's attention?

This is one of the most important metrics to use in measuring your blog's performance. While your conversion rates can be a good indicator of leads, at the end of the day, you will likely just be looking at your leads number. Creating a monthly leads goal and committing yourself to reaching that goal can be a great way to keep your blog on the right path. If you're not hitting your goals, consider how you can use your analytics to guide you back in the right direction. Perhaps you need to do more blog promotion to increase the traffic you generate. Or maybe you just need to get better at optimizing your blog content with more appropriate keywords to get better found in search. Maybe it's a conversion problem. Use your blog analytics in tandem to diagnose your leads problem, and you'll find it easier to identify problems and come up with solutions.

Social Media

The total number of people engaging with your brand in social media channels, such as Facebook "Likes," Twitter followers, LinkedIn Group members, blog subscribers, YouTube channel subscribers, etc

Social media marketing is still a relatively new tactic for many marketers, so it's understandable if you're confused about measuring the impact of social media participation. But many of the core analytics principals also apply to social media: you need to understand how large your social media audience is, how fast it's growing, how much traffic social media drives, and how many leads or customers you are generating from that traffic. In this chapter we discuss five critical metrics to analyze your social media marketing effectiveness.

The more people who are connected with your brand via social media channels, the more reach you have for your content. Measure your social audience growth over time to ensure you're increasing your audience in these channels.

However, a large social media following shouldn't be a goal in and of itself. Rather, it should be treated as a means to an end. Your job is to attract that audience to take other actions, such as sharing your content, visiting your website, signing up for your email newsletter, or completing lead generation forms.

Listening to your audience is an essential component of social media marketing. You want to know who's talking about your brand, where they're congregating, and what they're saying. That way, you can spot opportunities to engage prospects and customers in conversation, share relevant content, or handle customer service issues.

All the mentions of your brand in social media channels along with qualitative analysis of whether those mentions are positive, negative, or neutral visibility & brand perception.

You can track this metric by monitoring the referring sources in your web analytics platform. Ultimately, you want to see traffic from social media sources rising over time, especially as your social media reach grows. After all, a major goal of social media outreach is to attract visitors to your website where they can convert into leads or customers. If your traffic from social media isn't growing, then you should examine your social media strategy. Do your tweets or Facebook posts include relevant links back to your website, where readers can get more information on a particular topic or take advantage of a special offer on a landing page?

Email Marketing

To assess your email marketing performance, you must conduct ongoing trend analysis of several key metrics. That way, you can compare each campaign's performance against your own averages to know whether a specific campaign outperformed or underperformed your internal email benchmarks. Your email service provider (ESP) should provide a wealth of reporting on each campaign and on your ongoing email performance. In this chapter we will cover the most important email metrics to measure and how you can use them to improve the performance of your email marketing program.

Email Bounce Rate

The percentage of emails that were actually delivered to recipients' inboxes, calculated by subtracting hard and soft bounces from the gross number of emails sent, then dividing that number by gross emails sent delivery rate

You should immediately remove hard bounce addresses from your email list, because internet service providers (ISPs) use bounce rates as one of the key factors to determine an email sender's reputation. Having too many hard bounces can make your organization look like a spammer in the eyes of an ISP.

Use this metric to uncover potential problems with your email list. There are two kinds of bounces to track: "hard" bounces and "soft" bounces.

Soft bounces are the result of a temporary problem with a valid email address, such as a full inbox or a problem with the recipient's server. The recipient's server may hold these emails for delivery once the problem clears up, or you may try re-sending your email message to soft bounces.

Hard bounces are the result of an invalid, closed, or non-existent email address, and these emails will never be successfully delivered.

Your delivery rate sets the stage for email success or failure. To have any chance of engaging a customer or prospect with an email campaign, that message has to get delivered to their inbox. Look for a delivery rate of 95% or higher. If your delivery rate is slipping over time, you may have problems with your list (e.g. too many invalid addresses). If one particular campaign has a lower than average delivery rate, examine the subject line and content of that message. Perhaps there was some element that may have been flagged as spam by corporate firewalls or major ISPs, causing many more message than usual to be blocked.

Click-through rate (ctr)

The proportion of the audience who clicked on one more links contained in an email message.

Organizations can calculate CTR either by dividing unique clicks by the number of emails delivered, or by dividing total clicks – including multiple clicks by the same recipient – by the number of emails delivered. Either method works, as long as you use the same approach consistently.

Monitoring email CTR is a cornerstone of email marketing analytics, because the CTR indicates whether the message was relevant and the offer compelling enough to encourage recipients to action. But CTR can vary widely by the type of message sent. For example, email newsletters often have higher CTRs than promotional messages, and transactional messages – such as emailed purchase receipts – often have the highest CTR of all the messages your business sends. For that reason, it's best to benchmark your CTRs according to the different types of emails you send.

Email sharing/forwarding rate

The percentage of recipients who clicked on a "share this" button to post email content to a social network and/or who clicked on the "forward to a friend" button.

Sharing rates are another indicator of the value and relevance of your email messages. For example, if your subscribers find your email newsletter articles compelling enough to share with their peers, you've likely hit on a hot topic for your audience. Likewise, email offers that get shared or forwarded outside of your own house list can end up being your best performing campaigns, because you've drastically increased the reach of that message by tapping into the viral nature of your subscribers' social networks.

Watch your sharing rates carefully to discover which types of articles and offers tend to get shared the most, and use that knowledge when planning future campaigns.

Conversion rate

The percentage of recipients who clicked on a link within an email and completed a desired action, such as filling out a lead generation form or purchasing a product.

Conversion rate is the ultimate measure of an email campaign's effectiveness. The higher your conversion rate, the more relevant and compelling the offer was for your audience. However, conversion rates are dependent on factors beyond the original email message, such as the quality

of your landing page.

For example, if a campaign underperforms based on your targeted conversion rate, take a close look at the landing page you linked to for reasons why recipients who clicked on a link might not have completed the process. You may find the landing page's headline or copy needs improvement, or that a registration form or checkout process was too confusing or clunky, causing many visitors to abandon the process.

Measuring conversion rate requires integration between your email platform and your web analytics. You can perform this integration by creating unique tracking URLs for your email links that identify the source of the click as coming from a specific email campaign.

Revenue per email sent

A measure of the ROI of a particular email campaign, calculated by dividing the total revenue generated from the campaign by the number of emails sent

This metric is ideal for ecommerce marketers who generate a lot of direct sales from email campaigns. Again, it requires integration between your ESP and your ecommerce or web analytics platform. If you are already tracking conversion rates, you also can collect the order value for each conversion to perform this calculation.

Unsubscribe Rate

The unsubscribe rate isn't a reliable picture of the health of your email list. Many subscribers who are tired of receiving email messages from your brand won't bother to go through the formal unsubscribe process. They'll just stop opening, reading, and clicking on your email messages.

Open Rate

Open rate is a metric that many marketers use to measure the success of their campaigns, but it's an unreliable gauge for several reasons. Most importantly, an email is only counted as 'opened' if the recipient also receives the images embedded in that message, and a large percentage of your email users likely have image-blocking enabled on their email client. This means that even if they open the email, they won't be included in your open rate, making it an inaccurate and unreliable metric for marketers, as it underreports on your true numbers.

The flipside of under-reporting is the fact that open rates can be manipulated by writing catchy, even sensational subject lines that get recipients to open a message but then leave them feeling misled by the message's content. For that reason, it's better to focus on click-through rate as a better measurement of a successful email send.

Again, tracking your click-through rates and conversion rates is a better way to monitor subscriber engagement and interest. But checking your monthly unsubscribe rate is helpful for calculating your overall list growth rate, and to watch for sudden spikes after a particular email campaign.

Marketing Automation

Done right, marketing automation can simplify your inbound marketing workflow and help you market smarter to a more engaged audience. The term 'marketing automation' is most commonly

used to describe the suite of tools marketers use to manage leads from their point of conversion to their point of purchase. For example, marketing automation tools can be used to trigger a series of introductory emails to educate leads about what you offer. They can also help you segment your leads and deliver intelligence about leads to your sales team.

So, if you're using marketing automation for tactics like lead nurturing, here are the main factors and metrics you should be taking into consideration to analyze and optimize your efforts and improve your marketing automation performance.

Marketing automation helps you to be a smarter marketer by enabling you to identify and differentiate between segments of leads. Marketing automation tools can help you to identify these points of differentiation, such as various pages your leads visit, the specific topics they're interested in, their previous activity on your site, their demographic information, how they're engaging with you, etc. Use this intelligence to segment your leads into different lead nurturing campaigns. For instance, if a lead has downloaded or shown interest in a certain topic, nurture them with more content and information on that specific topic.

If leads are spending time on your product pages, you might consider entering them into a campaign that nurtures them with more product-focused content like a free trial.

Click-through

The proportion of the audience who clicked on one more links contained in a lead nurturing email message.

Organisations can calculate CTR either by dividing unique clicks by the number of emails delivered, or by dividing total clicks – including multiple clicks by the same recipient – by the number of emails delivered. Either method works, as long as you use the same approach consistently.

Like click-through rates, conversion rates can also be an indication of the effectiveness of the offer you're sending compared to a lead's point in the sales process. If conversion rates are soaring, you're likely offering content that is in line with your leads' needs at the time. If not, you might need to adjust the types of offers you're sending at different points in the nurturing process.

Time to customer conversion

The length of time it takes for a lead to become a customer; the length of your sales cycle

Because every target audience – and industry – is different, there is no set rules for how many total emails should be included in a nurturing campaign and how much to space out each individual email send. The best way to determine your optimal timing and frequency is to test it. Perhaps one segment of your audience prefers more content over a longer period of time.

Or maybe you notice that people interested in a particular topic tend to have a shorter sales cycle and require fewer messages but more product-focused offers.

Take a look at your existing sales funnel. How long does it typically take a lead to become a customer after his or her first inquiry? Does the sales cycle vary for different types of purchases?

As an inbound marketing tactic, lead nurturing is all about understanding the nuances of your leads' timing and needs. Watch your analytics, and talk to your sales team. If it typically takes your leads a

month to make a purchasing decision, then make sure you're spreading out your communications to keep them engaged throughout the month.

Marketing automation campaigns won't thrive if you have a "set it and forget it" mentality. Successful marketers must constantly monitor what's working, test different methods, and analyze and optimize their campaigns based on what works for them individually.

Compare results from each channel against the others.

Once you are comfortable tracking the most important metrics for your major marketing channels, it's time to widen your focus and look at your marketing results holistically. Compare results from each channel against the others to get a better picture of which marketing tactics and channels have the biggest impact on your bottom line.

For example, you can use key metrics for website visits, search, blogging, social media, and email to measure your marketing effectiveness by channel. Start by examining website visitors per channel over the previous six months to see which channels typically generate the most traffic as well as which channels' contributions are growing, shrinking, or affecting your marketing strategy most significantly.

Next, examine leads and customers per channel to determine how valuable that traffic is to your company. The number of customers you generate from each channel should be your ultimate measure of marketing success. Identifying the channels that generate the most leads and sales can help you decide where to spend more of the marketing dollars in your budget in the future.