



Website Analytics Made Easy

When it comes to our business dollars in today's economy, every penny must be accounted for, and then counted again. Belts are tightening, but that doesn't mean we can stop spending. We just need to watch those dollars closely and make sure we are managing our funds as effectively as possible. One way to keep an eye on your dollar, literally, is through website analytics. Good analytics will not only give you insight on your website traffic, it can really help you track every marketing dollar you're spending.

This is the truly awesome thing about analytics—they can help you stop listening to the “experts” and what has worked for everyone else and really help you understand what works for *your* specific company. Finally, a tracking tool that takes very little effort and gives you a huge amount of insight.

Plant the Seed

Your website is a living, breathing entity. Think of it like a house plant, you constantly have to nurture it to see it grow. Your current environment (the season, temperature, and climate) will greatly determine the health of your website and you'll need to make adjustments accordingly. Maybe a bit more water is necessary, maybe a trim here and there. You get the idea—you need to constantly pay attention to your website by making changes and updates. Those analytics will help you determine its health and the success.

There are lots of numbers to nurture through your analytics tool in order to see them grow. Pay attention to how many people visit your website, who these visitors are, where they are coming from, and what pages they visit once they're there. You'll probably have to try a few different tweaks to see the best growth, but once you have a solid understanding of the best methods, you'll be able to make significant improvements to your website (and your business) just by paying attention to the numbers.

Numbers, Numbers, Numbers

When analytics first came out, they felt a bit like a

spreadsheet gone wild. But current, more user friendly analytics make it easy to break down those numbers and get to the root of not only understanding your website, but more effectively managing those precious marketing dollars. Let's start with the most visited website pages. The pages that receive the highest number of hits or visitors should be given the most attention. Make sure those pages are chock full of the very best your printshop has to offer. And don't be afraid to cross promote, if one of your most viewed pages is your staff bios (a common favorite) add a banner promoting your newsletter printing or a special offer on business card orders across the top of that page.

Are you an expert in something your competitors aren't? Do you offer a service your clients don't know about? Your most visited website pages are the place to advertise. Are you the king of variable and digital printing? Make sure your home page and order page visitors are well aware of this. Do you have your finger on the pulse of promotional items? Include an image at the top of your estimate page explaining your expertise. Think of these “most visited” pages as your personal online billboards touting your star products and services.

Let's move on to the route your visitors took to get to you. Analytics are sure to tell you how a visitor entered and exited your site. Did they come to your website from a search page or another website or do they have your website bookmarked? Did your visitor actually type your website address directly into the address bar? Again, understanding this information and, better yet, nurturing its outcome will help you decide how to spend those marketing dollars.

If most of your visitors are “dialing direct” to get to you (typing in your web address or coming from a bookmark), you've likely done a good job displaying your web address on every piece of material your customers and prospects see (business cards, brochures, order boxes etc.). If you'd like to see this type of visitor's analytics number grow, do a quick scour of all of your customer-facing materials and make sure your “.com” is

present. If most of your visitors are coming from searches, pay attention to what they are searching for to find you (digital printers or your city name, for example) and make sure your website is full of those key words both in your content and in the html code that only search engine spiders can see.

How many visitors found you through a link on another website? Where did they come from? This will help you keep tabs on every site that has a link to your website (there may be links out there that you aren't aware of). It also helps you understand which ones are working the best. If you're paying for any of these links, analytics can help you determine if your investment is worth the dollars and cents. If a certain type of link proves popular, you can seek out other similar links. For example, if your link on the Better Business Bureau brings in a big number of visitors, what other sites might provide similar results? Are there other local business websites willing to post your link; a Chamber of Commerce site, perhaps?

Now take a look at where your visitors are coming from. Understand where they are from and then go get more of them! Are most of your visitors local, regional, or national? Is there a certain pocket of the country (or the world) where you get more attention? Now consider where your marketing dollars are being spent. If you're spending significant cash advertising your variable printing in a region where you have very few website visitors you may want to refocus the money. Mail postcards to a region where you have lots of website hits, run a radio campaign in that same area, maybe even make a few phone calls to follow up.

Bring It Full Circle

You have already seen how helpful analytics can be, not only in understanding and leveraging your website, but in gauging the effectiveness of your other marketing tactics. Once you have a good grasp of that information, take it full circle by using your other marketing material to drive traffic to a certain page or promotion on your website. Then guess what those analytics can reveal? You can determine how well your other marketing materials are performing without ever having to ask a customer, "How'd you hear about us?" How great is that?

Here's an example: On the next postcard you send out to your prospects and customers, encourage them

to visit your website's business package ordering page to design and order a free personalized notepad. Track that page's hits or visits for the week prior to sending out the postcard. Once you mail the postcard, continue to monitor those numbers for the next week. Then do the math. Did you see a spike in visits to that page after you sent the mailing? Next, try a little follow up marketing to that postcard—an email, phone call, or even another mailing. Did that up your page visits?

You can test all types of marketing and promotions using this same trick. You can determine not only what works, you can understand how much marketing is required before your recipients will act on an offer. My hunch is you may find it takes more than one postcard to get a response, but we'll leave that final say to your analytics.

You may have heard a popular website/marketing buzz word called "landing pages," and those work in a similar way to what I have just described. The only difference is landing pages are set up specifically for one promotion or product push. Let's say you want to sell some business package printing. You send out an email with a link to a landing page telling the prospect all about the service and giving them a chance to order or contact you to learn more. How effective was this email? Simply count the number of landing page visitors to find out. Then count how many actually purchased the business package because of your efforts.

That's it. That's all it takes to understand analytics and gauge the effectiveness of your website, your marketing, your offers and promotions. Simply watch the numbers, and the decision on where to spend your precious dollars will become easier to decide by the day. So tighten your belt where you can by using analytics. Continue to feed and nurture your site with these results, and you may just see a stronger, more efficient money making tree in no time. ▶▶

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