

## Google™ Analytic Secrets can Map Out a Killer Search Marketing Plan

*By Debbie Hill, Search Marketing Expert*

There is no better feeling for a savvy search marketer than to check web analytic data and see a steady increase in trends over time of search engine referral traffic, especially from organic rankings and free referral links, because they yield such a great return-on-investment (ROI) compared to other online tactics.

The excitement of sharing these beautiful analytic reports that display trend increases in website visits, pageviews, unique visitors, time on site and referral percentages is nothing short of fabulous, especially when you are the online marketing manager in charge of search. Our clients are always happy and intrigued during monthly search review meetings that show a steady upward incline of key metric trends.

If you aren't sure how to get your search marketing moving in the right direction, then this article will give you some basic guidelines on how to get started and secrets to unlocking valuable information from your Google™ Analytics (GA) reporting tool. If you don't use GA, add it to your arsenal today, create an account for free or find an experienced consultant to assist with set-up and training. Keep in mind all analytic programs have pros and cons but GA's pros wins out overall. Start comparing “data trends” between analytic programs to double check accuracy and take full advantage of GA user friendly reporting tools. So let's get your search marketing plans rolling!

1. **Establish a baseline of key metrics** from your web analytics. Key metrics that are important to most search marketers include Visits, Pageviews, Unique Visitors, Referral Percentages, Time on Site and Bounce Rates. Specific key metrics, typically referred to as key performance indicators (KPI) should identified and are defined based on:
  - **Website Type:** Lead Generation, E-commerce, Brand Awareness, Subscription
  - **Overall Website Goals:** Information Requests, Downloads, Online Purchases
  - **Metrics that Measure Goals:** Form Submission Requests, Downloads, Transactions.
2. - **Install Data Tracking Tools:** Google™ Analytics, WebTrends®  
**Secret:** Filter out your business IP address to get a better snapshot of true customer/potential customer traffic metrics.
3. **Create a solid dashboard** to analyze and share KPI snapshots with different levels of management in your business. Typically the CEO will want a high level snapshot of traffic, conversion and referral trends over time, while managers and technical staff want more detail about website performance. Once your dashboard is ready, you can schedule monthly reports to send automatically to share performance trends.  
**Secret:** Customized reporting can be set-up by creating accounts for key staff, allowing for a custom dashboard that highlights select data reports.  
**Bonus Secret:** Data and trends can be further customized by exporting specific KPI data into Excel where additional manipulation can be configured to provide more insights.
4. **Set-up conversion goals.** This is overlooked many times on content/advertising sites because of uncertainty of assigning values but the trends it shows over time can be very

valuable such as seasonality, best days for conversions which can maximize online ad schedules, etc. **These trends allow you to determine the best times to run special offers, promotions and new product or service introductions on the site.** For a non-e-commerce site, if you know your sales team has an average close rate of 10% when contacting inquiries and your average transaction is \$500, you could assign \$50 (10% of \$500) to your “contact us” form submission goal and then track conversions over time. **Secret:** A great interactive GA feature is the **content > site overlay** function, you can see traffic and conversion information for every link as you browse the site.

5. **Analyze the KPI trends** to determine when peak activity and conversion occur and then start making website enhancement and search marketing plans. Tactics for ramping up can include; call-to-action elements, online promotions, time schedules for maximizing online presence (beef up SEO in advance of peaks, offering interactive content uploads – Video/Audio, email campaigns, etc.) and implement surveys to gather quality response rates on how to improve.

**Secret:** Drill down into top landing pages and review individual page bounce rates. Pages that have bounce rates over 40-50% need to be reviewed for improvement.

6. **Test conversions** on key landing pages prior to launching full search marketing campaigns. Testing responses using different headlines, images and call to action elements takes the guesswork out of what will work best.

**Secret:** Try Google's Website Optimizer, test responses to different landing page versions and go with the highest conversion pages upon launching full search marketing campaigns then look forward to higher conversion rate trends as you drive more traffic.

These secrets can position your next search marketing plan for success, eliminating guesswork and management disagreements on campaign direction. Don't be afraid to seek help, getting coaching from a seasoned search marketer can save time, increase your learning curve and jump-start your search results. One-on-one coaching beats out a search marketing conference any day of the week for best results and overall value for your business. Get your search marketing trends moving in the right direction and start enjoying more online success than you could ever imagine!

**Debbie Hill** is Managing Partner of Rev Up Now, LLC and owner of Creative Website Marketing, LLC. Ms. Hill has provided search training for GE Consumer & Industrial, assisted high growth companies like RentalHouses.com® achieve a top Google™ organic search presence and increased monthly website visits for clients from 200% - 22,000%.

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