Measuring Your Website's Success

Analyzing your website's performance can be overwhelming in the beginning. But, its important because tracking and measuring your audience's online behavior will help you to determine what about your site is working well—and what isn't working at all. Once you have this information, you can make informed decisions on where to invest your time or money and where there are opportunities for improvement.

Before digging into any specific metrics, first start with these things in mind:

- Know the objectives of your website.
- Just because something can be counted, doesn't mean it should.
- Focus on one metric (for example, visits or visitors) to ensure you are comparing apples to apples.
- Be ready to respond!

Once you are ready to begin the metrics work, here are some recommendations on key metrics to focus on to better understand how your site is performing.

CONVERSION RATE

Your website's conversion rate (CR) is the ratio of visitors who successfully complete a target action to total visitors to your site. This target action can be anything you determine as a measure of success for your site. Examples include downloading a report, completing a Web form, or making a purchase.

Here's a simple example on how to calculate CR:

1 sale ÷ 20 visitors × 100% = 5% CR
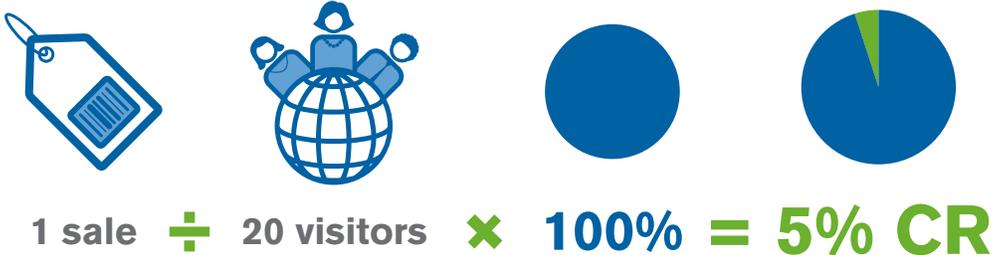
A good conversion rate tends to hover around 1-3%. If your conversion rate is less than 1%, you should reevaluate your site content, as there is room for improvement.

KEYWORDS

Keywords are specific words and phrases that bring users to your website through search engines. Identifying these words and phrases is critical and should be monitored regularly. Why?

According to Keyword Discovery, over 80 percent of all online transactions begin as a keyword search on a search engine.

Knowing what your target audience is searching for is essential to optimizing your site's content, and will also help uncover any missing gaps in content that users may be looking for that's not available on your site. You can also incorporate important keywords into a web address to help with SEO (search engine optimization).

TOP VISITED PAGES

The Top Visited Pages are a compiled list of the most viewed Web pages on your site, in descending order.

Knowing your top visited pages will provide you with a starting point of where you should focus your efforts, in terms of optimizing site content—and increasing your conversion rate!

PAGES PER VISIT

Pages per Visit (PPV) measures how many Web pages a particular user (or group of users) views on your site in one visit.

This metric is an excellent indicator in determining the quality of your site's content and structure, and tells you how inclined visitors are to navigate to various pages once they land on your site.

How to calculate PPV:

Page Views ÷ Visits = Average Page Views per Visit

ENTRY PAGES

The Entry Page is the first impression a visitor sees when landing on your site.

Most people assume that the only entry page is your homepage, but this is not true. Viewers can initially land on any of your site's pages, and in a number of ways— from a search engine link, banner ad, link from another website, or even from typing a secondary page address directly into the browser field.

Identifying which of your pages are common entry pages can help you optimize your content around the various entry points.

EXIT PAGE

**The Exit Page is the last page your visitor was on before leaving your site.**

When you initially designed your site, you should have identified one or more paths you wanted your visitor to follow. Knowing the most common exit pages will help you determine if visitors are reaching the pages you intended. For example, are customers reaching the confirmation page after attempting to make a purchase?

Any pages that are not directing visitors to complete your intended path should probably be redeveloped.

TOP SOURCES OF TRAFFIC & THEIR CONVERSION RATES

This information will provide you with an overview of the types of traffic that are coming to your site. Visitors generally fall under these categories:

- Direct Traffic: visitors who directly navigate to your site, whether from typing the site address into a navigation bar or by way of a bookmark they have set up for your site address
- Referring URLs: other websites sending traffic to you, online marketing links that you have set up around the Web (in banner ads, etc.), or affiliate sites that link to yours.
- Search Engines: Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc. (includes both organic and paid traffic)
- Other: links from any additional marketing campaigns you launch, like email
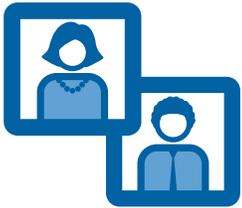
Carefully analyzing how these different groups convert will help you make sound decisions on where to spend your next marketing dollar.

NEW VS. RETURNING VISITORS

Reviewing the percentage of new verses returning visitors helps establish if you are retaining customers.

Reviewing the number of new vs. returning visitors also helps you gain an understanding of how many times a customer interacts with your business before purchasing.

When reviewing this metric though, it is important to bear in mind the ultimate goals of your site. Are you trying to sell something or just provide information? If you have an ecommerce site, you want people to keep coming back to your site, to purchase again and again. But if you own a restaurant and the goal of your site is to simply provide information like menu, address, and operating hours, you may not be interested in this particular metric.

ABOUT VERISIGN

As the global leader in domain names, Verisign powers the invisible navigation that takes people to where they want to go on the Internet. For more than 15 years, Verisign has operated the infrastructure for a portfolio of top-level domains that today includes .com, .net, .tv, .cc, .name, .jobs, .edu and .gov, as well as two of the world's 13 Internet root servers. Verisign's product suite also includes Managed DNS Services, Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) Protection Services and iDefense Security Intelligence Services. To learn more about what it means to be Powered by Verisign, please visit VerisignInc.com.