Metrics for Maximizing SEO and ROI with Google Analytics

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Executive Summary

Any thriving brand today relies on having a digital platform with high visibility. This marketing landscape forces public relations professionals and marketing professionals to rely on data to measure how successful the campaigns they run are. This data helps pinpoint what exactly attracts viewers or drives sales and from there on, these insights help identify trends that can expand audience reach, enhance search engine optimization (SEO), and overall increase return on investment (ROI). Google Analytics offers many tools that help analysts understand the behavior of their brand's audience and see how impactful their campaigns are. This whitepaper touches on a few best practices to keep in mind when using Google Analytics to improve SEO and ROI to help a brand's overall growth.

WHICH IS MORE LIKELY TO SUCCEED?

analytics or assumptions?

The Problem

As touched on before, business growth is almost impossible to achieve without reliable data, especially data on how customers and potential customers behave while viewing a brand's website or digital platform. The issue is that many businesses struggle to gauge how well their campaigns are received by their customers or the general public, and they further struggle with how those reactions translate into meaningful engagement or sales. Without the right tools to analyze audience behavior, businesses and PR teams risk investing in campaigns or content that will not resonate with their target audience or do not produce their desired results. This is why it is crucial for PR professionals to have access to deeper metrics such as lead generation, user retention, and conversion rates especially in today's highly competitive digital business world.

Shaheen (2023) in Maximizing Website Performance with Google Analytics states that, "Businesses and individuals can use Google Analytics to monitor performance and gather insights to improve their online presence, yet many still underuse its analytical potential." This implies that professional teams that don't utilize analytical tools such as Google Analytics are choosing to make important decisions based mainly on assumptions instead of evidence. This route is extremely risky because which is more likely to succeed? A brand that makes informed decisions based on analytics on consumer behaviors, or a brand that blindly makes assumptions about what may be successful?

The Solution: Strategic Uses/Metrics of Google Analytics

Strategically using Google Analytics can fix any gaps in information about digital consumer activity. Identifying Google Analytics' key metrics is essential for a strong analysis. According to SEMrush's 12 Important Metrics in Google Analytics 4 (2025), the most valuable indicators for communication performance include Users, New Users, Sessions, Average Engagement Time, Engagement Rate, Bounce Rate, Session Conversion Rate, and Returning Users. Tracking Users (the number of people who visited the website) and New Users (the number of users visiting the website for the first time) highlights audience growth and reach. Average Engagement Time (how long users are active on the website) and Engagement Rate (the percentage of sessions with strong engagement out of the total number of sessions) demonstrate how effectively content captures attention. A Bounce Rate is the percentage of sessions without any engagement so if the Bounce Rate is low, it usually reflects that the website is engaging and relevant content to users, whereas a high one can signal content that does not easily resonate with users. Session Conversion Rate (total conversions divided by number of sessions) quantifies the number of visitors who complete meaningful actions, such as signing up for newsletters, making accounts, or even sales which are measurable indicators of successful digital communication with users. Lastly, Returning Users (the number of users who visited the website more than once during a certain time frame) show brand loyalty. Plaza (2011) found that those "return visits navigate deeper into the website and stay longer" (p. 480), revealing that repeat visitors are more likely to engage meaningfully with content. This demonstrates successful long-term relationship building between the consumer and the brand.

Google Analytics can also be helpful for interpreting conversion data and predicting future audience behavior through trend evaluation and metrics that help with predicting such as purchase probability and churn likelihood. Purchase probability is a metric that estimates how likely a user will make a purchase within the next week, while churn likelihood estimates which or how many customers will stop doing business with a brand. These are important metrics for professionals who are trying to anticipate which campaigns or what type of content is most ideal for audience engagement and which need to be revised before losing business. Plaza (2011) explains that, "Google Analytics tells the web owner how visitors found the site and how they interact with it" (p. 478). This shows how it can link user journeys to campaign outcomes. Additionally, Shaheen (2023) emphasizes that "real-time data allows organizations to see how users are interacting with the website as it happens," which is particularly valuable during press events or product launches because then PR teams can use this feature to see campaign responses immediately after publication, and if engagement is lower than they thought it would be they can quickly make adjustments. One way to utilize conversion tracking is to set clear objectives that are measurable, then set up conversion tracking to link website activity and business outcomes so there is tangible evidence that the campaign is effective. Also, using Google Analytics alongside Google Ads is a good way to gain visibility as keywords lead to conversions, and the integration allows teams to identify which ad campaigns and keywords attract the most desired visitors.

Value and Impact

Google Analytics grows SEO by pinpointing the types of content that perform best and tracks how users are able to find it. This allows PR teams to take that feedback and refine messaging and keyword strategies to get better reach. This results in better use of the PR budget as it allows teams to focus all their money and effort towards only the high-engaging channels. This also improves ROI because these insights show what elements of a website or campaign are leading to users wanting to sign up for mailing lists or make purchases, or any other activity that is meaningful to the brand. Google Analytics lets PR professionals set up dashboards specifically useful for SEO objectives so that they can track things like referral traffic from earned media and how well organic keywords are performing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Google Analytics is a revolutionary tool for PR and marketing professionals who strive to make their digital communication more effective and memorable to their website visitors. It gives them a whole new (and way more accurate) perspective on their websites and overall brand growth.
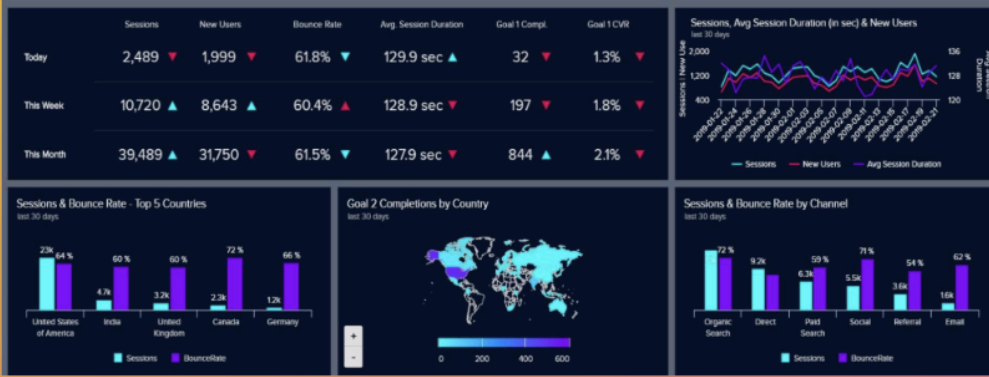
Google Analytics

Resources:

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Shaheen, A. (2023). Maximizing Website Performance with Google Analytics. Türk Bilgisayar ve Matematik Eğitimi Dergisi, 14(03), 1273–1277. https://doi.org/10.61841/turcomat.v14i03.14229

Walker-Ford, M. (2024). 12 Important Metrics in Google Analytics 4 [Infographic]. Social Media Today, N.PAG.

12 Important Metrics in Google Analytics 4

1. Users

WHAT IS IT:
The number of people who visited your website during a selected time frame.

WHY IT'S HELPFUL:
You can understand the size of your audience and tracking growth over time.
More users = a larger reach.

2. Sessions

WHAT IS IT:
The number of individual browsing sessions that occurred on your site during the selected time period.

WHY IT'S HELPFUL:
Tracking the "Sessions" metric helps you understand engagement beyond just visitors. High sessions mean people are interested in your content, products, or services.

3. New Users

WHAT IS IT:
The number of first-time users who visited your site during the selected time period.

WHY IT'S HELPFUL:
It tells you how effective your marketing efforts are at reaching new audiences.
More new users = your marketing and content are attracting a fresh audience.

4. Average Engagement Time

WHAT IS IT:
How long, on average, users actively engage with your site.

WHY IT'S HELPFUL:
It helps you understand the quality of user engagement.

5. Bounce Rate

WHAT IS IT:
The percentage of non-engaged sessions.

WHY IT'S HELPFUL:
A high bounce rate often indicates that the webpage is not effectively capturing the interest of visitors.

6. Session Conversion Rate

WHAT IS IT:
The percentage of sessions that resulted in a conversion.
Session conversion rate = (Number of conversions / Number of sessions) * 100

WHY IT'S HELPFUL:
This metric helps in assessing the effectiveness of your marketing campaigns in driving conversions.

7. Entrances

WHAT IS IT:
The number of sessions that began on a particular page.

WHY IT'S HELPFUL:
It's important for understanding how users begin their journey on your site.

8. Exits

WHAT IS IT:
How many sessions ended on a particular page.

WHY IT'S HELPFUL:
It helps identifying which pages are most commonly the last interaction point before users leave your site.

9. Views Per User

WHAT IS IT:
The average number of pages users see during a specified time frame.

WHY IT'S HELPFUL:
A higher "Views per user" signals you're creating sticky content that keeps users engaged. Prompting them to further explore your website.

10. Engaged Sessions

WHAT IS IT:
The number of time a session lasts longer than 10 seconds, has at least two page views, or triggers a conversion event.

WHY IT'S HELPFUL:
A high number of engaged sessions suggests your site is meeting the needs and expectations of your users.

11. Engagement Rate

WHAT IS IT:
The percentage of engaged sessions. Compared to the total number of sessions.

WHY IT'S HELPFUL:
It provides a clear indicator of how effectively your site captures and holds the attention of users.

12. Returning Users

WHAT IS IT:
The number of users who visited your site more than once during the selected time frame.

WHY IT'S HELPFUL:
Tracking returning users is key for understanding:
- User retention and loyalty (i.e., whether users keep coming back)
- How well you convert new users into repeat visitors
- What part of your audience comes back often

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