

Introduction To Web Analytics Tools And Workflow

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Websites have been considered an essential part of any company's communications arsenal for years now, yet it's surprising how few businesses are really taking advantage of the sophisticated analytics capabilities of websites. Web analytics tools are proving invaluable to companies that know how to use them. Peter Mayer Advertising can help you join the growing number of businesses that are reaping the benefits of optimizing their online marketing activities through analytics.

Listening To Your Customers...All Of Them

Right now, you probably listen to the visitors to your website in a variety of ways. You may collect feedback by conducting surveys. You may have comment submission areas to gather customer insights for your online and offline efforts. Or you may solicit comments from the people in your organization who have direct contact with your customers. These are all valid and worthwhile methods, as far as they go, but what about your customers who aren't vocal and don't participate in the discussion opportunities you create?

By using Web analytics, you can begin to unlock key customer insights. You will be able to respond to your customers' needs and desires. With the help of Peter Mayer, you'll be able to build a relationship with your customers and a website that works to enhance the user experience as well as level of satisfaction, and to ultimately drive purchase behavior. You will be able to reach or exceed your online and offline goals of attendance, sign-up, information distribution and more.

Web analytics can help results-driven organizations answer the following:

- What pages on my website are most utilized?
- Where do my visitors come from?
- What offers, pages or creative executions drive the most sales?
- How many individuals visiting the website followed the process (or path) we intended and performed the onsite actions we desired?

- What aspects of my website are "broken"?
- Where are the weak points on my website?

Leveraging some direct response marketing best practices in an online arena can provide clear actionable data points and answer all of your questions, including the most pressing:

- Where am I losing money?
- How do I stop the bleeding?
- How can I improve the things I already do well?

What About Following Your Gut Instincts?

Instinct is a valuable skill in business; using past knowledge and general gut instinct is a good place to start. In today's marketing climate, however, sophisticated businesses have new, more demanding requirements that call for an advanced approach. This is especially true when you need to broaden your reach through segmentation and targeting, launch new products, or enter new markets.

Using real customer data supersedes assumptions, best guesses, personal opinions and insights from colleagues. Trying to reach your new demographic by polling your neighbors or your teenage daughter and her best friend just won't match the broad range of customers or visitors you'll encounter in an online landscape. Using your website data, you can mine information and conduct tests to find out what makes your actual customers respond.

Comparing Analytics Tools

If you are new to analytics, you may not be familiar with all of the analytics solution providers. Selecting the correct analytics solution provider depends completely on your business needs. Below are just a few of the analytics tools available to you:

- Google Analytics
- Omniture
- Coremetrics
- WebTrends
- Lyris ClickTracks

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These analytics tools have different strengths and can even pull data differently, so it's important to consider your business needs and which of these providers can help you best meet your goals.

Google Analytics is a free tool and is therefore a great solution for sites with limited analytics needs. For sites with complex e-commerce engines, a proper evaluation of your needs and budget should be undertaken prior to committing to any solution provider. After all, they will be providing data your organization will depend upon for years to come. Switching providers isn't cost effective, so making a good decision up-front will save you time and money.

Reporting And Analysis Best Practices

Set Clear Goals – Proper implementation will help ensure that your analytics program will answer the most pressing questions for your business, month after month and quarter after quarter.

Analyze the Data – An analyst will be able to take dashboard reports and masses of data and distill them into meaningful insights that translate into actionable recommendations.

Establish a Baseline – Begin capturing your average metrics to establish a baseline so you can set objectives that are measurable. Use this as a guide, and if you see performance begin to slip below your baseline you can quickly assess for causes and make adjustments to try to counterbalance any negative trending.

Focus Your Efforts – Don't get lost in a sea of data. Instead, set clear priorities within your organization. Begin your efforts by using the data and reports that best help you achieve your objectives. Don't get overwhelmed by measurements that may have little meaning or impact, or can't correlate to a priority within your organization.

Test and Learn – Setting up A/B split testing or multivariate testing plans will allow you to compare in a clean,

unadulterated state the performance of offers, creative executions or site messaging. This will allow you to remove all the outside market factors that can degrade results. If you implement projects without testing, you'll have results that are not readable. It's impossible to tell if the change in results is due to factors outside of your control, like the current economic climate or activities of your competitors.

Segment Messaging – After collecting data and performing analyses on broad initiatives you can begin to segment messaging to distinct audiences, becoming more sophisticated in your efforts to speak directly to specific customer groups.

Insist Upon Support from Senior Management – Analytics requires that key members of your organization are behind the initiative. Without clear backing from senior management, your efforts might not get the necessary IT and staffing support. Analytics results in recommendations to improve your website and overall performance. In order to succeed, you will need buy-in from decision-makers who can authorize the projects initiated through analysis.

How Peter Mayer Advertising Can Help

Peter Mayer can work with you to select the correct analytics solution provider for your business needs. What's more, we can help your team understand what types of reporting will be needed and how to set up the analytics tool you choose for meeting your objectives. With decades of combined experience in the field, our analysis and user experience team can turn metrics into actionable business reports, assign meaning to data and provide clear next steps. Web analytics and web testing are increasingly getting more attention, and Peter Mayer can show you how to use these tools to help your business stay ahead of the curve.

To discuss building a web analytics program for your company, contact Butler Burdine at 504-581-7191 today.