ANALYTICS + BRAIN = $

Understanding and interpreting data to measure ROI and optimize your marketing.

Closing the loop in
your marketing programs

PRESENTED BY

INTRODUCTION

Everyone has the ability to access data analytics. Everyone has a brain. That means everyone has the tools required to measure the value of a digital marketing campaign. What's often missing is a strategy that allows you to make sense of readily available data and apply it to your marketing.

Without a strategy, marketing often creates more questions than it answers. For example, your marketing consultant might tell you that your most recent campaign drove 300 paid visits to your website last month, traffic is up 10 percent, and the search ranking for your most important keyword improved by three positions.

Cue the fist pumps and high fives. 10 seconds later, cue the puzzled facial expressions when someone wonders aloud, "So, how much revenue did this bring in?"

What do all those clicks and rankings mean in terms of revenue? How do you know if your money is being spent wisely? Can you make a direct correlation between dollars spent, leads generated and sales closed?

> **"How much revenue did this bring in?"**

Typically, those questions go unanswered.

The goal of marketing is to generate leads, drive sales and increase revenue. Basic, high-level metrics like clicks and search rankings are helpful, but they don't tell you how well your marketing is really working.

This white paper will show you:

- The basics of Google Analytics.
- Key metrics for monitoring the progress and measuring the results of your digital marketing campaigns.
- Why the integration of Google Analytics and customer relationship management (CRM) data is critical to determining the true value of each campaign.
- A hypothetical example that illustrates the importance of digging deeper into this data so you can make intelligent marketing decisions.

THE ABC'S OF ANALYTICS

In this section, we'll introduce you to basic terms and definitions used by Google Analytics.

For the purposes of this white paper, we'll focus on the terminology, capabilities and data available through Google Analytics. There are other platforms available for tracking, measuring and reporting data, but Google Analytics is the most widely used analytics service on the internet. It's free and easy to install, and it offers robust data for marketing analysis.

To get started, you sign up for Google Analytics with basic information about the site you'd like to monitor. You'll get a tracking code to paste onto your website pages. That tracking code sends data to Google so it knows when your site has been visited. Within hours, you'll begin to see data about your website traffic and visitors.

To the right are some basic terms to understand when using Google Analytics.

Session: A single person's single visit to your website. This can include multiple interactions and pageviews. If someone leaves your website and returns later, that begins a second session.

Pageviews: The number of times a specific web page is seen.

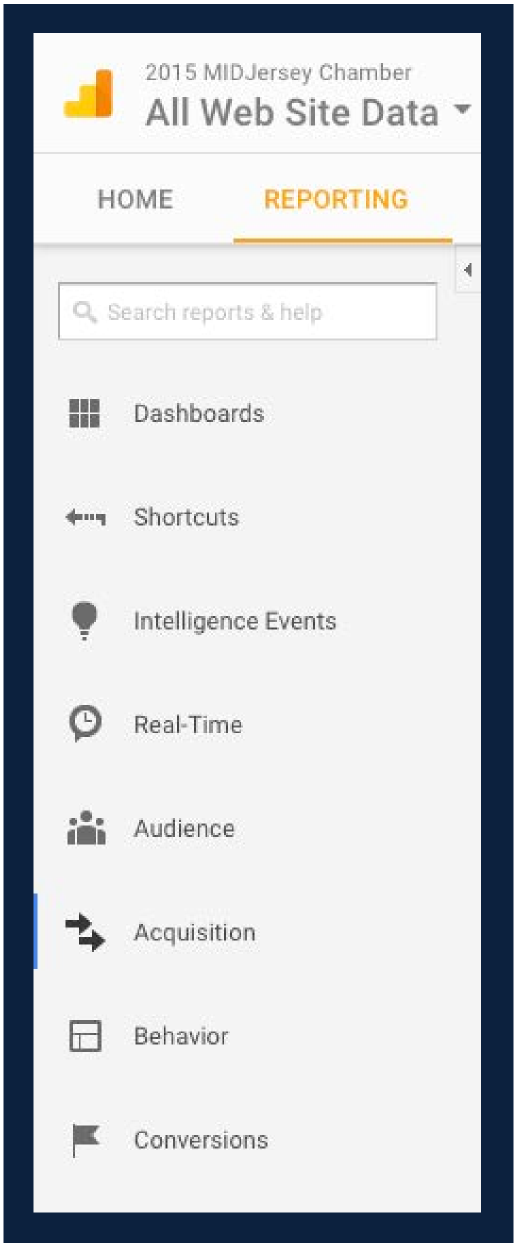
Bounce: This occurs when someone leaves your website without interacting with the landing page. In other words, they land on a page and don't click or type anything before "bouncing" away.
Direct Traffic: Traffic that comes to a web page after someone types your URL in the browser.

Referral Traffic: Traffic that comes to a web page after someone clicks a link on a browser interface, which then loads the URL in the browser. Referral traffic comes from a variety of sources, such as search engines, social media and advertisements.

Keep in mind that traffic classification can be a little dicey with email. For example, if someone clicks a link in an email application such as Microsoft Outlook, a browser will automatically open with your URL in it. This will be interpreted as **direct traffic** by Google Analytics. If someone clicks a link in a browser-based email platform such as Gmail, this will be interpreted as referral traffic. This is why the proper use of tracking links is so important. We'll discuss this later in greater detail.

THE ABC'S OF ANALYTICS

Below is a screenshot of the Google Analytics interface. The first four headings in the navigation on the left side of the page are valuable tools but rather advanced. The next four are most important for measuring the effectiveness of your marketing – Audience, Acquisition, Behavior and Conversions.



Audience: This section tells you a ton of information about the people who visit your website. It includes everything from demographic data (gender, age, etc.), to interests (based on browsing history), to the types of mobile device being used to interact with your content.

Acquisition: This section focuses on where people who visit your website are coming from, such as search, social media and referral websites. You can also drill down to specific referral sources. For example, if you run an AdWords campaign, you can see what someone searched for before arriving at your website. Within Acquisition, Search Console provides insights into your organic search ranking on Google, while Campaigns specifically tracks the traffic that you're paying to acquire.

Behavior: Now that we know who your visitors are and how they got to your website, we use Behaviors to find out what they did while visiting your website. The most useful report is **Top Content**, which tells you what pages and content on your site generate the most interest and traffic. Top Content shows you the most popular pages, click-thru paths, top landing pages (if not the home page), top exit pages (the last page someone visited before leaving your site), and other metrics.

Conversions: This focuses on specific actions you want people to take on your website. Conversions can be defined differently by different companies. On an e-commerce site, a conversion could be a sale. On another site, a conversion could occur when someone fills out a form to download a white paper. To measure this activity, you need to set up Goals, which tell Google Analytics that a particular event is important and you need to know about it (more on Goals later). It's critical to look at conversion data to guide decisions about targeting your marketing campaigns.

THE ABC'S OF ANALYTICS

In this section, we'll discuss developing a strategy for tracking your marketing, tracking campaigns in Google Analytics, and integrating analytics data with your CRM.

There are three questions that should guide your tracking strategy.

Based on your business and marketing goals, what information do you need to collect?

Different types of data, such as email addresses, phone numbers, geographic location, and the age of the user, will be more important to different types of companies and organizations. For example, customer behavior, referral sources, keywords, and social media engagement are commonly tracked.

How do you collect data from people you reach with your marketing?

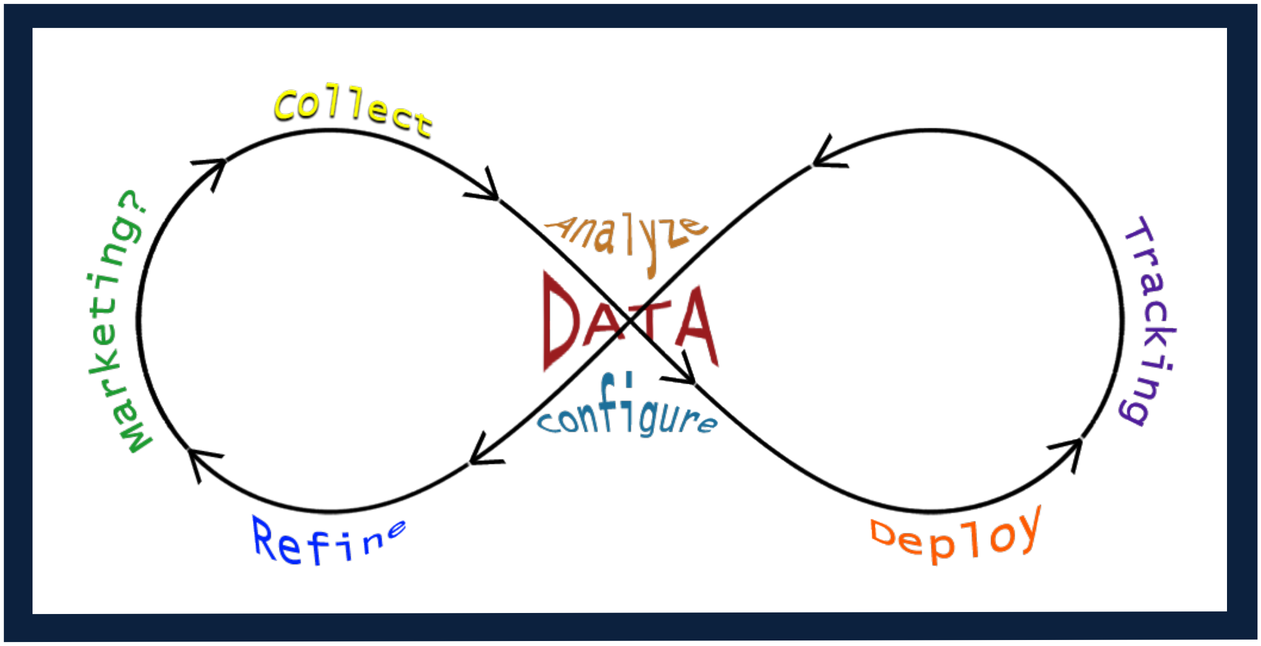
Depending on your business operations and target audience, data could be collected from registration forms, downloads, point-of-sale/e-commerce, social media, coupons, referral sources, industry trends, surveys/ research studies, and networking.

What specific metrics will you track to measure success?

This will often be determined by whether you place greater emphasis on volume or value. For example, are you more interested in generating a high volume of sales, or would you rather see higher value per sale?

The Intelligent Loop

The graphic below shows the repeatable, intelligent loop that is followed when you take a strategic, analytics-driven approach to marketing.



Marketing: Determine who you wish to reach and what you want to do with your marketing (Call to Action).

Collect: Identify the type of data you need to collect and how you'll collect it.

Configure: Store the right data in a database within your CRM so you can use it to configure your marketing campaigns.

Deploy: Deploy the campaigns

Tracking: Be sure to carefully track their progress by linking them to the neccesary related information (lead source, sales, etc.).

Analyze: As your campaigns unfold, analyze the data and start to assess each campaign's effectiveness.

Refine: Use this data analysis to refine your marketing efforts and restart the loop.

BUILDING A COMPLETE TRACKING SYSTEM

Setting Up Tracking Codes

Google Analytics will help you determine how effectively you're generating leads by delivering the right message to the right audience. This is the job of marketing. Unfortunately, this is where most marketing agencies stop. They tell you who is coming to your website and where they came from, and leave it to you to figure out the rest.
But you also must determine how effectively you're converting those leads into dollars. This is the job of sales. What are people doing when they get to your website? What are the most important actions to track? This will tell you what an effective marketing campaign should look like.

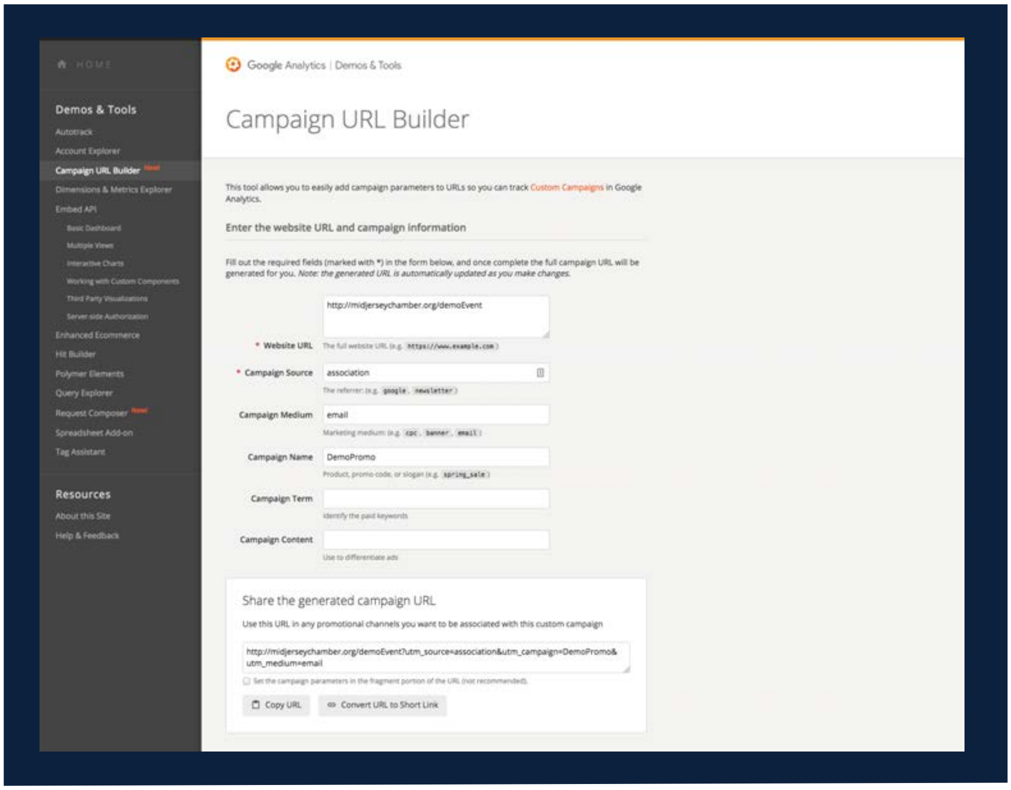
When you track and analyze data from both the marketing activity and sales activity, you'll have the insights required to make data-driven decisions at the end of the each cycle in the Intelligent Loop discussed previously.

To accomplish this goal, you need to specify which outlet, effort, spend and channel are driving each visit so you can compare the results. This requires you to build a campaign tracking tool, which is nothing more than a fancy link to your website. The campaign tracking tool embeds very specific information about where that link came from and sends details about the origin of the traffic to Google Analytics.

Google has a very simple tool for doing this, called the "Google Analytics Campaign Builder" -

https://goo.gl/d52Nse.

You enter the destination where you want to send people and the parameters you want to track. We recommend using at least three parameters – the source, the vehicle, and the campaign to which the traffic is connected.

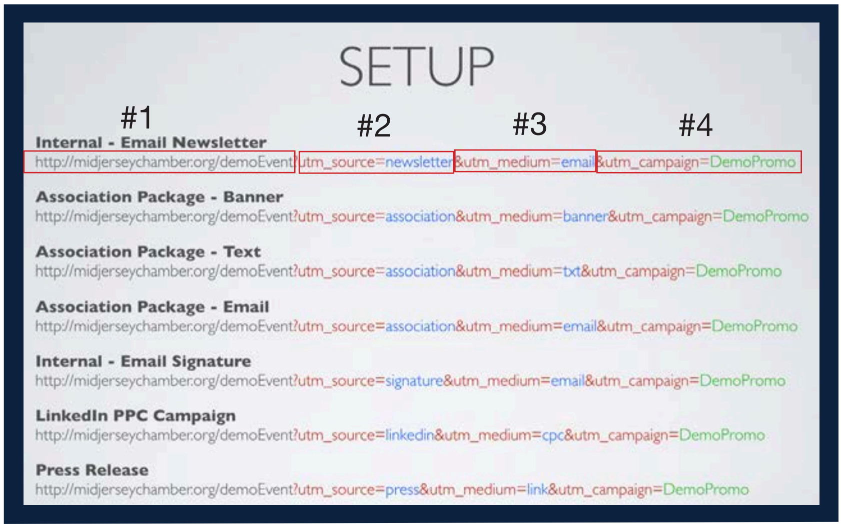


BUILDING A COMPLETE TRACKING SYSTEM

Let's walk through the setup using Google's tool. We've created a fictitious campaign to show you what tracking links look like. They may seem a bit long and scary at first, but they make more sense once you break them down and understand what each part means.
For every marketing campaign, you typically have individual components that require their own custom tracking URLs. It's helpful to **set up a spreadsheet** with all components and tracking URLs so you can see everything together when comparing data.

This organization's hypothetical campaign includes multiple components:

- An internal email newsletter
- A package purchased from a local association, which includes a website banner, a text messaging program, and a link in monthly email blasts to their clients
- Employee email signatures, which will promote the campaign
- A pay-per-click campaign on LinkedIn that targets a specific business audience
- A press release



The first part of the tracking URL in (#1) is the link to your website, landing page, or wherever you're sending people.

The second part of the tracking URL in (#2) specifies the source – newsletter, association, signature, LinkedIn, and press. This identifies the company you're paying for the advertising. If the source is in-house, it identifies the internal vehicle used to generate traffic.

The next part in (#3) beginning with "&" identifies the medium, or how the message is being delivered. This is especially important for the association package, which is delivering the message in three ways – banner, text and email. This way, we'll know which part of the association package is responsible for the traffic we're receiving. In this campaign, we have a lot of distribution through email, but each custom tracking URL has a different source so we can sort the data later.

The final part in (#4) beginning with the second "&" simply identifies the name of the overall campaign. Each tracking URL is part of the same campaign, which is why they all have the same campaign name in our above example. Keep in mind that you can run multiple campaigns simultaneously, each promoting a different offer or initiative. In this case, you would assign each campaign a different name.

BUILDING A COMPLETE TRACKING SYSTEM

So what do you do with these big fancy links? Use them in the appropriate component of your marketing campaign. For example, if you direct people to click a certain link in your internal email newsletter, you would use the first custom URL as the link. As intimidating as these links may appear, all you have to do is build them correctly, put them in the right places, and let Google Analytics do the rest. This is where **the spreadsheet** (see images below) becomes a useful reference.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Month	**Delivery Date**		**Topic**	**Primary Objective**	**Secondary Objective**	**Call to Action**	**Deliverable**	**Form Redirect Page (Unique and not public)**	**Trackable Goals**	**Campaign Notes**
11_November	11/17/2016		Holiday Card Request	Get more complete information from Leads and Contacts	Reconnect with individuals in system and clean out database	Click to Get Your Card	Personalized holiday card from us	http://mycompany.com/HolidayThankYou	Form submission	May need to ask question about "how we met" to personalize the message further or spur memory for us.

L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
Resources	**Target Group(s)**	**Target Role(s)**		**Delivery Method**	**Media Account**	**Google Campaign URL**
Need to set up mail merge fields for information we do have, then ask them to click web form for missing information. Make sure form pushes information into CRM and alerts us when received.	Clients, Leads (ranking B or A)	Owners, Executive Directors, C-Suite, V-Suite		Email	MailChimp	http://mycompany.com/demoEvent?utm_source=signature&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=DemoPromo

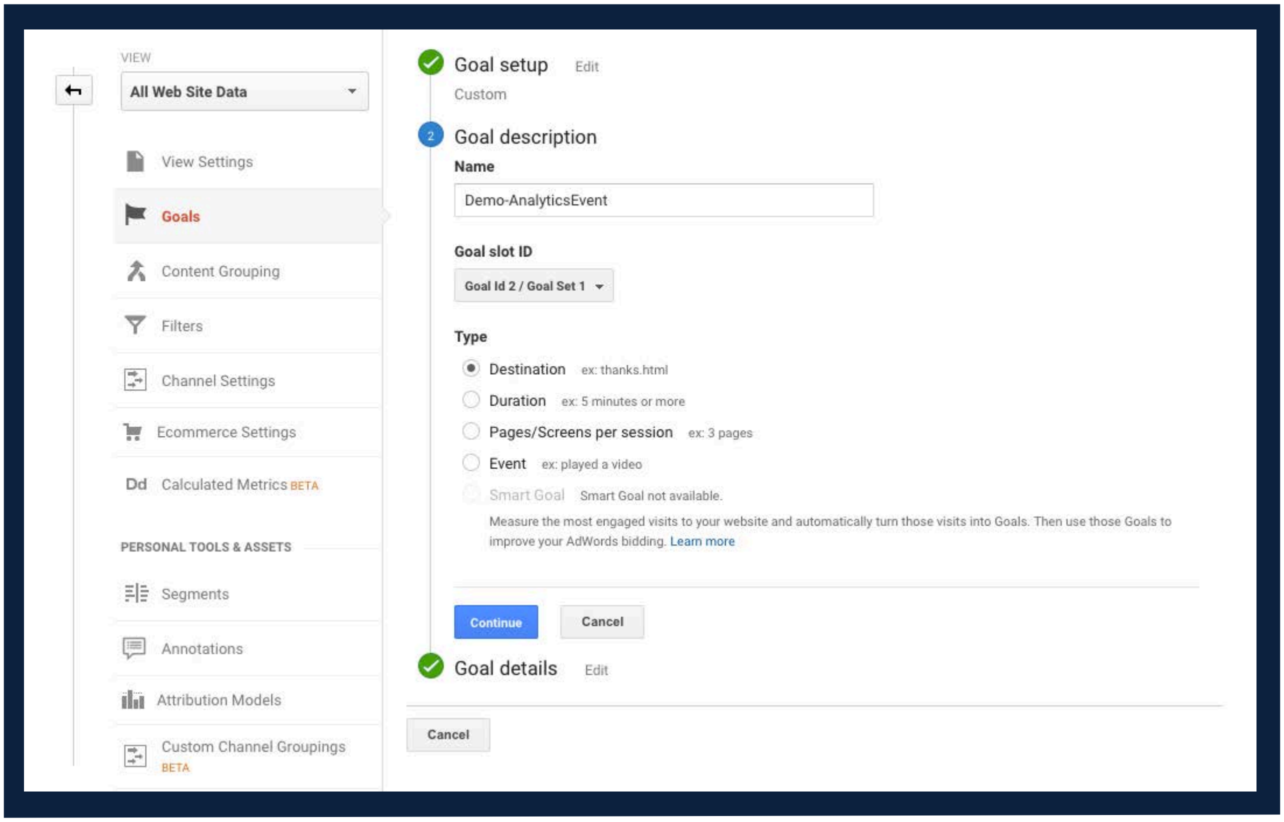
R	S
Google Campaign URL	**Responsible Person (Who's sending)**
http://mycompany.com/demoEvent?utm_source=signature&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=DemoPromo	Opal Orgaschweizer

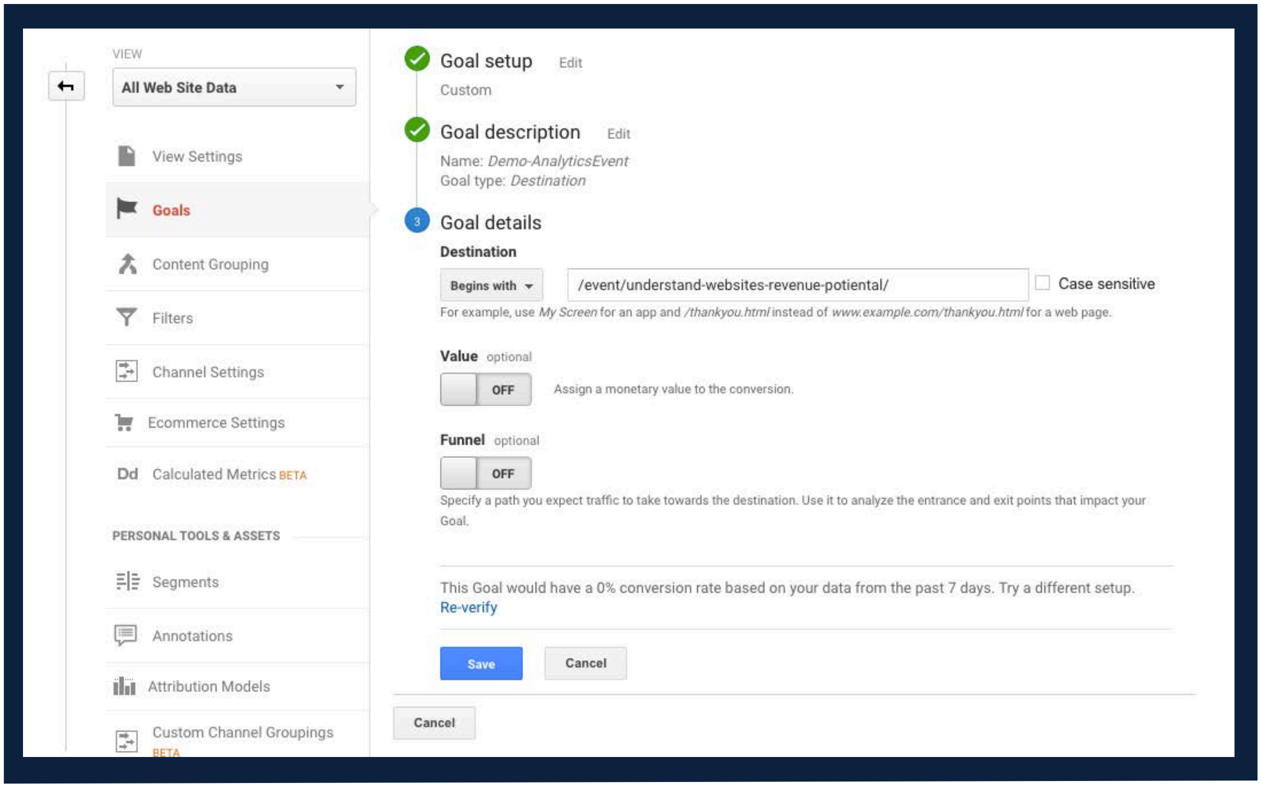
Setting Up Goals in Google Analytics

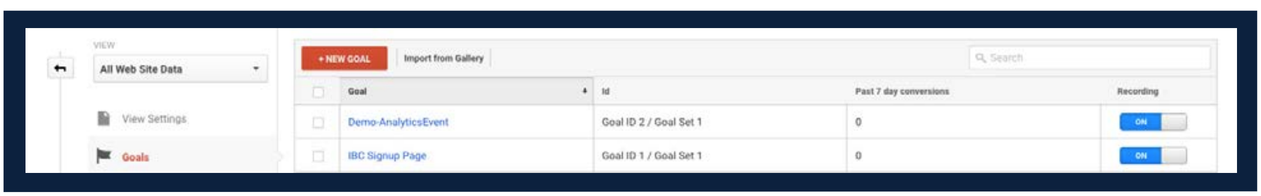
Before you set up goals, you must decide what actions you want people to take after they arrive on your website. Goals can be triggered in a number of ways and require you to add code that allows you to track goal completion.

You can use a page load as a trigger. For example, if a certain page loads, such as a "thank you" page, that would indicate a goal has been completed. You can choose a duration. If someone spends a certain amount of time on your website or a specific page, that would indicate a goal has been completed. You can choose a number of pages. If someone visits a certain number of pages, that would indicate a goal has been completed. Each of these triggers represents a desired level of engagement.

The most versatile trigger is an event – a specific action taken by a user. This could involve a user clicking a button, watching a video, filling out a form, downloading an e-book, or even expanding text to read more content on a page. A simple click will trigger it, but it takes some code on the website to implement. You can have multiple goals with different values based on what you want people to do. Once you add code and enter details for each goal, you can turn goal tracking on and off as needed.





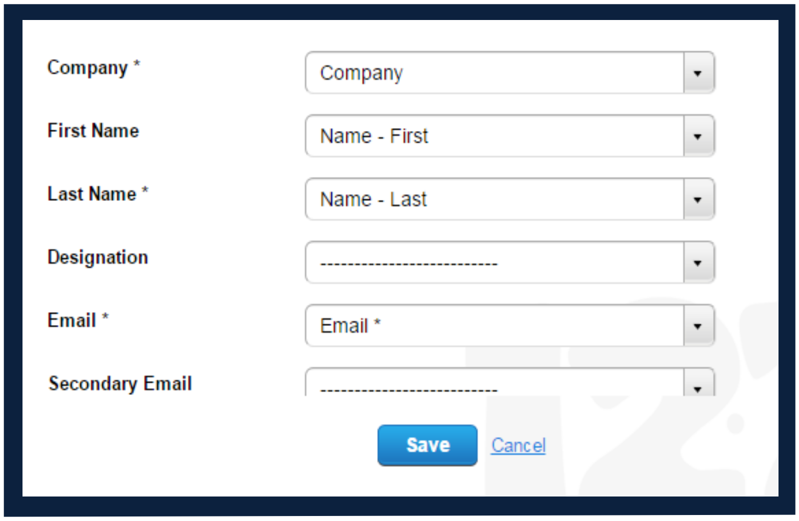


Goals involve the activity that you really care about on your website. When the Goals column starts populating, you get beyond high-level metrics to get a true sense of what's working and what's not. In other words, goals correlate directly with "conversions", however you've described them.

BUILDING A COMPLETE TRACKING SYSTEM

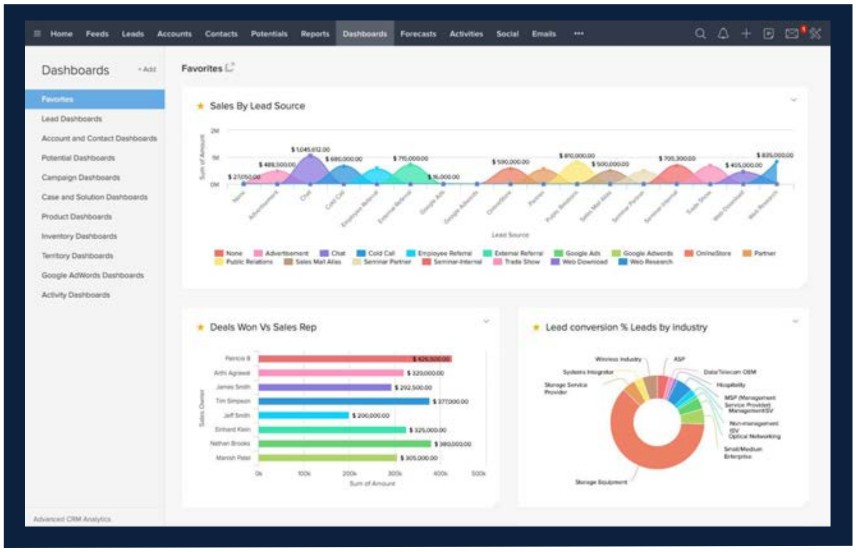
Capturing Data in Your CRM

Now we move from Google Analytics to your Contact Relationship Management (CRM), where we collect data that informs future marketing and business decisions. When entering data, use quantitative data fields that allow you to choose from multiple options. This makes it easier to track, analyze and report data. Text fields are the enemy here and should be avoided whenever possible in favor of dropdown lists and checkboxes. When you allow users to type data, you lose consistency and uniformity and introduce unnecessary complexity and interpretation into your data.



Just like various marketing campaigns and components of each campaign can be tracked separately, data is captured in your CRM in a way that allows you to tie dollar amounts to specific campaigns, accounts and contacts. Every deal that is either in the pipeline or closed should be traced to the campaign source so you can measure ROI.

This becomes evident when you start pulling reports on various metrics, such as different types of marketing efforts (conferences, webinars, blog posts, online ads, etc.), campaigns, new business versus referral business, dollar amounts, and periods of time. Now we can pinpoint what's working and what's not.



ACME EVENT MANAGEMENT

In this section, we'll show you how combining Google Analytics and your brain allows you to make smarter marketing decisions.

We created a fake event management company, Acme Event Management, that caters to B2B, B2C and nonprofits. B2B events are typically conferences, workshops, seminars, etc. B2C focuses on tradeshows and product launches. Nonprofits are geared towards galas, fundraisers and events of that nature. These are three very different markets that require different types of marketing.

We created three fictitious marketing campaigns for our fake company to show how they would be tracked in Google Analytics and the types of conclusions one might reach, depending on what data is analyzed and how that data is interpreted. These campaigns are for the B2C sector, so a B2B or nonprofit campaign would likely require a different approach.

Campaign 1 is an email campaign to existing clients. The goal is to book one large event per year for the fall event season. The offer encourages recipients to book this year for next year's event and receive this year's rate.

Campaign 2 is an email campaign to existing clients that have larger pools of resources. This campaign is about referrals only. The offer is a discount on an upcoming event for every new client that the recipient refers to Acme Event Management.

Campaign 3 is a pay-per-click search campaign in which "Conference & Event Planner" is the search term.

We set the codes, build the creative and deploy the marketing. Then we say what every responsible business owner should say to their marketing agency:

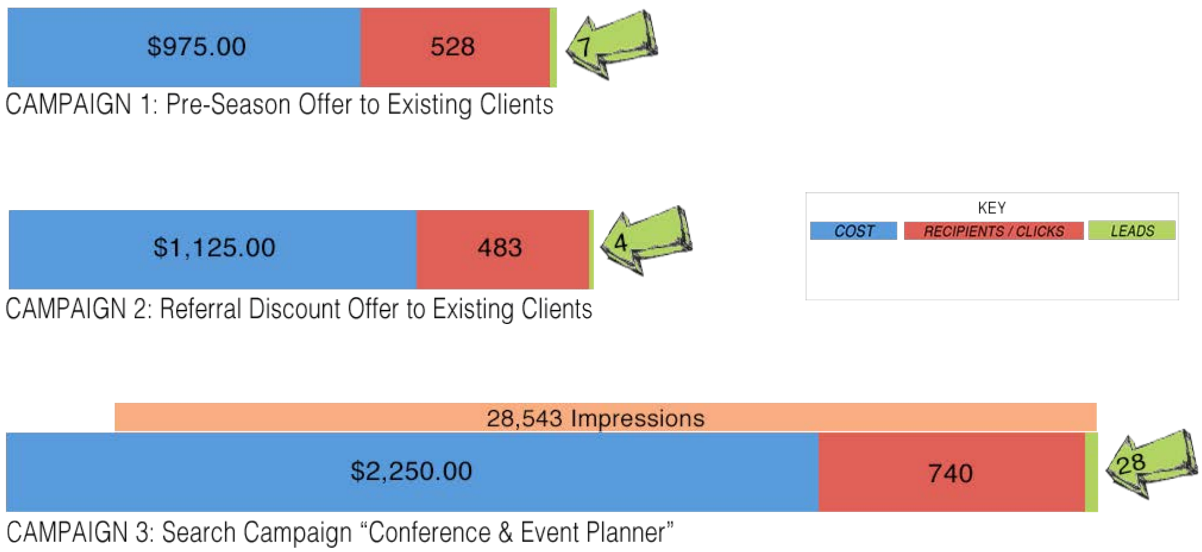
Show me the money!

Image Credit: "Jerry Maguire" (1996)

A CME EVENT MANAGEMENT

The Results: Part 1

For the purpose of this exercise, we've labeled the green section as "Leads." In Google Analytics, this section would be called "Conversions." We know that they're actually leads, which is why we've labeled the section as such. This will become clearer when we begin to interpret the data.



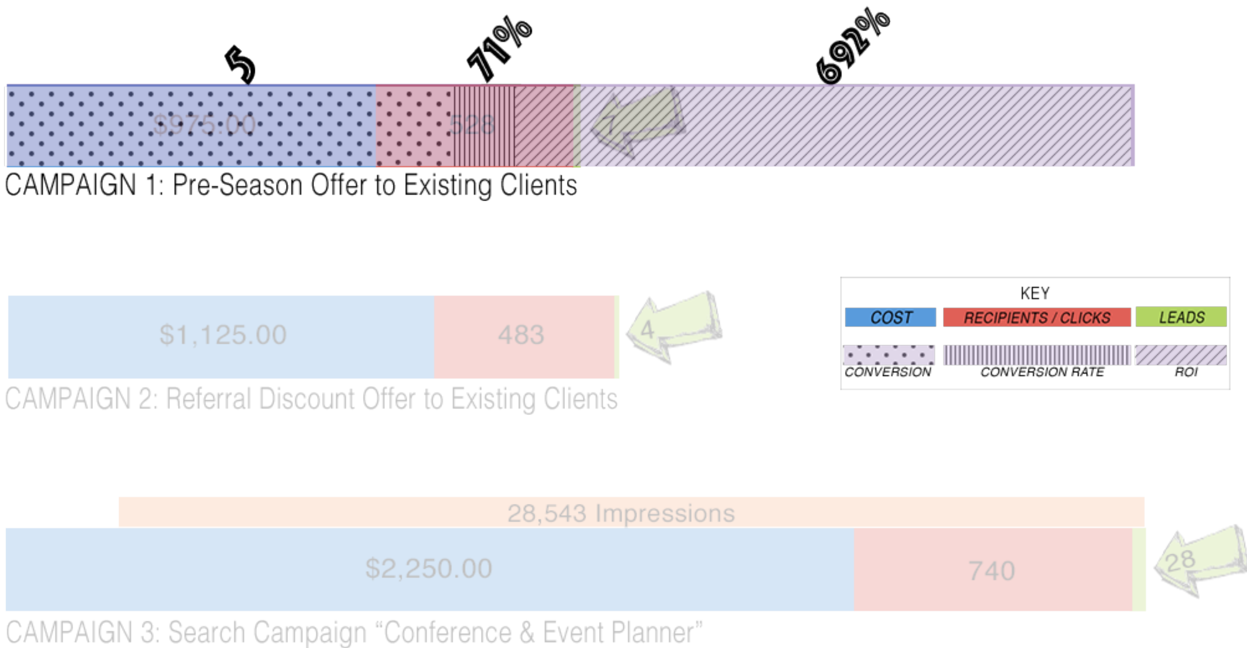
Based on this data, it looks like Acme generated a lot of leads from the search campaign, and the cost per lead is probably better than the two email campaigns. But this is when the conversation with your marketing consultant typically stops. You're left wondering what was good, what was bad, and what you should do next. That's because no direct connection has been made between any of these marketing efforts and actual revenue. A business decision at this point could be a costly mistake. And that's why we need to go deeper into the data by looking at the CRM.

ACME EVENT MANAGEMENT

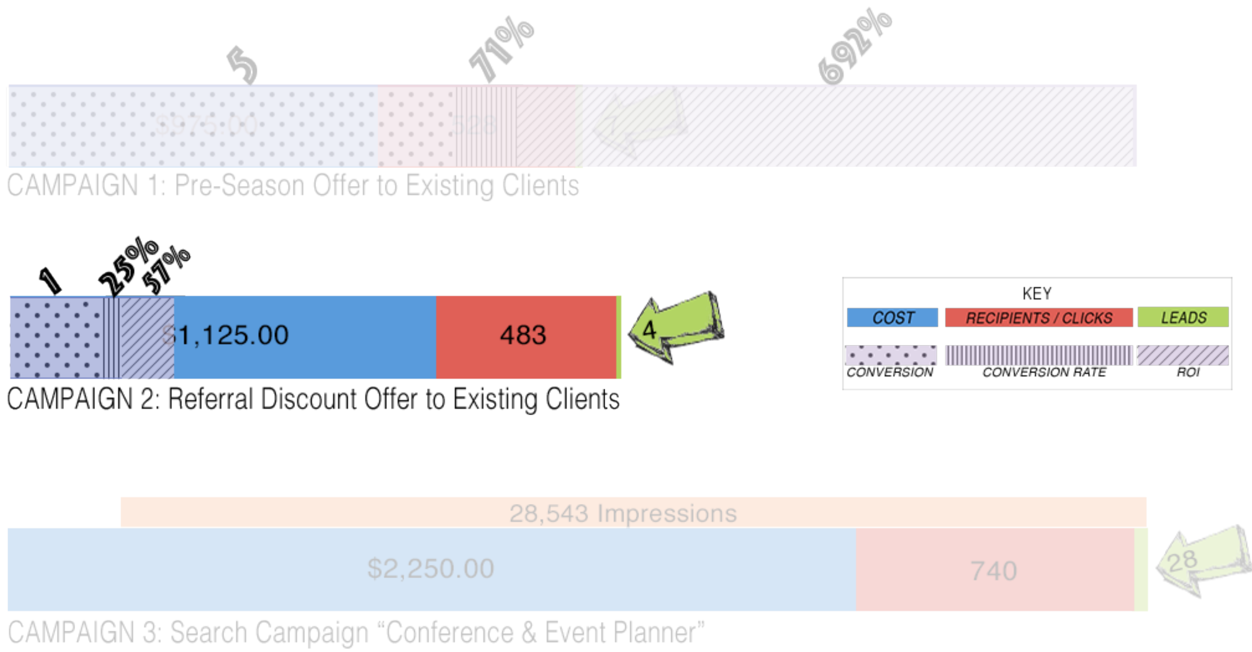
The Results: Part 2

These are the results that really matter. This is where we separate the lookers from the buyers. This where we get beyond superficial click-thru rates and hone in on closed business and ROI.

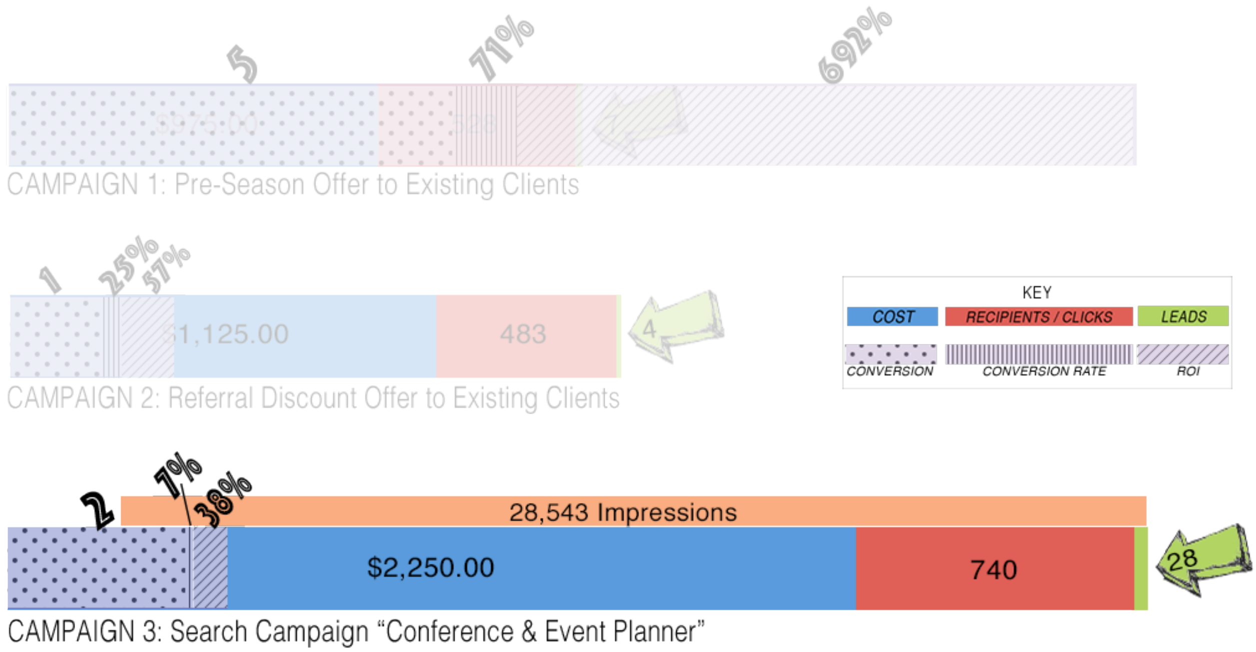
Campaign 1:
Although we “only” gained seven leads from our $975 investment, five of those leads converted into actual sales and booked events. That’s a 71 percent conversion rate with an ROI of 692 percent.



Campaign 2:
We converted one of four leads into a sale, which involved three small workshops in a year. This gave us a 25 percent conversion rate and 57 percent ROI.



Campaign 3:
The results of this campaign look impressive on the surface, but only two of 28 leads were converted to sales. That translates to a conversion rate of 7 percent and 38 percent ROI.



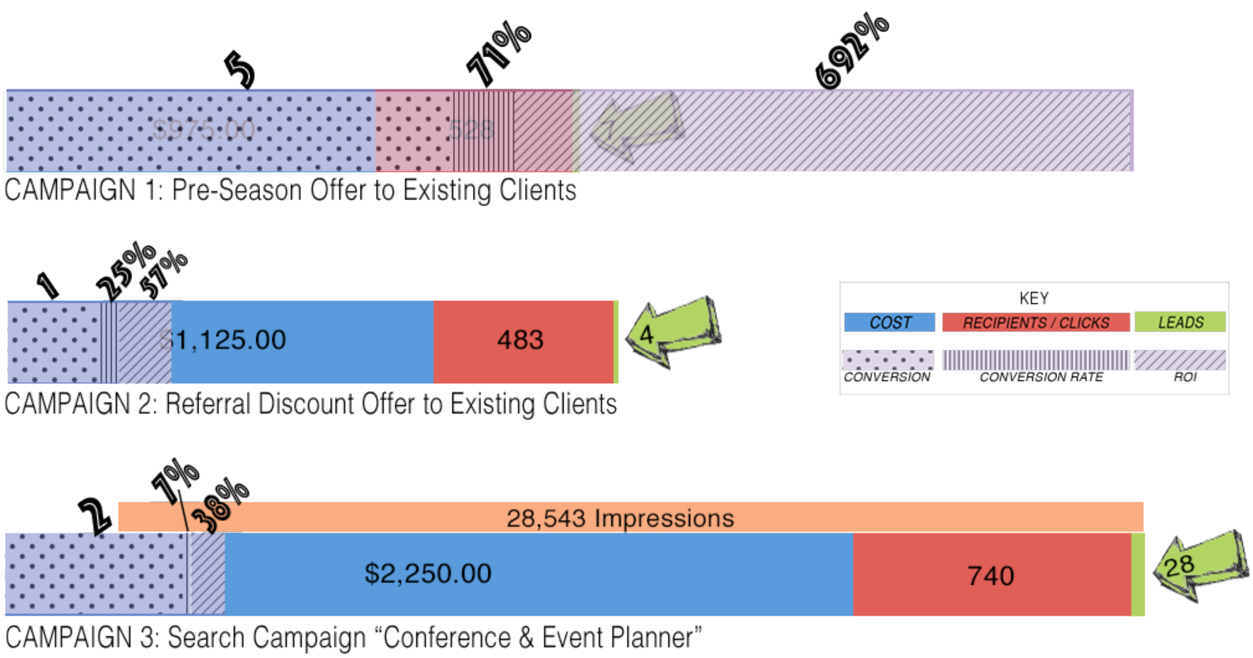
Adding the Brain to Analytics to Make Good Decisions

The gut reaction might be to bail on Campaign 3 because it produced the lowest conversion and ROI rates. However, it also produced a lot of traffic, so instead of bailing, try another conversion strategy. Perhaps try search terms that are more specific than “Conference & Event Planner,” which is very broad, and change the offer. This could eliminate many of the 26 tire kickers but produce a much higher conversion rate for a smaller investment.

Campaign 2 has lower ROI than Campaign 1 but still has value because it’s a referral. This could be what we sometimes call a slow burner. 57 percent ROI may seem a bit low now, but it could lead to more revenue over a longer period of time as referrals turn into clients and start producing other referrals.

The larger point here is that you’re not even having this conversation if you A) make decisions based on superficial metrics that don’t tie marketing to revenue and B) fail to use your brain to determine the future value of a campaign or how to improve a campaign’s performance.

> **Don’t make decisions based on superficial metrics.**



CONCLUSION

Good marketing is made before you start marketing

Too many business owners jump into marketing without developing a strategic plan. You can have a phenomenal product or service. You can have brilliant messaging, breathtaking imagery, a perfectly functioning and user-friendly website, and a substantial budget. But if you don't have a plan, you can expect to waste marketing dollars and lose opportunities to your competition.

Before you start marketing, you need to:

- Identify specific goals
- Identify a specific target audience
- Determine what you want that audience to do
- Determine what data you need to collect
- Determine how you should collect that data
- Identify key metrics to measure the effectiveness of your campaigns
- Learn how to interpret meaningful data

This will allow you to connect the dots between marketing and revenue. When you devote time and resources to strategic planning, marketing becomes less about guesswork and more about testing educated hypotheses. Based on the results, you can then use your brain to adapt your strategy and restart the cycle.

If you still feel a little overwhelmed by Google Analytics, CRM, and how to make sense of all the data housed in these platforms, that's okay. At this point, it's more important to understand the overall concepts and the importance of a strategic marketing plan than the specific steps involved in setting up and executing your campaigns.

Remember, the analytics tools are there. The data is there. Your brain is there.

Everything you need to be a successful marketer is either at your fingertips or sitting on your shoulders. If you take the time to plan at the beginning of the process, you can make smart decisions that drive revenue and maximize every marketing dollar.

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Strategic Marketing Communications

Measurable Difference™

Coming up through the ranks of Direct Mail, Publishing and Traditional Advertising Agencies, Brian got a feel for process, the good and bad and took it all in for about 10 years. He noticed a distinct lack of solid defensible rationale in the creative being developed and rolled out. Brian sought to find a place where his passion for logic and data could enhance his creative pursuits.

Everything began to gel when the digital market took off around the millennium. Brian started down the path of all things digital, without leaving his past behind. Brian started his own agency in 2002 and has steadily grown with the technology. He leverages his creative training with his understanding of digital tracking tools to deploy his own matrix for analyzing the effectiveness of digital campaigns.

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Sheri Kurdakul is President of Holistic Business Solutions, a CRM consulting firm that specializes in small organizations looking to better manage their business processes in order to increase efficiencies and profits. They are based in Trenton, NJ. A leader in data and business process management, Sheri provides her clients with the tools and knowledge to effectively manage marketing, sales and customer care through information and technology. With expertise in knowledge management, process automation, case management, business intelligence, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) applications, and sales and order management, Sheri and her team develop and implement affordable enterprise cloud solutions to generate more effective and efficient customer and client experiences.

ANALYTICS + BRAIN = $

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Measurable Difference™

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