

Using Web Metrics To Improve Your Site

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"...Web analytics is becoming one of the hot sectors in Internet marketing and e-commerce technology. Increasingly, brand and e-commerce managers -- under pressure to deliver a return on investment -- are looking to the technology to help shape and optimize their Web sites." Internet.com, October 28, 2002

The goal of any web presence should be to improve the business as a whole and complement its offline marketing and sales efforts. In other words, to help it achieve maximum profitability.

In order to do this, your online strategy must:

Drive targeted traffic to your site, persuade site visitors to take the desired actions you want them to take, and use Web metrics to analyze and measure user behavior.

Performing these objectives correctly will ensure that you have an effective marketing campaign and increased sales for your business.

Let's look at each of these objectives further:

Objective 1:

Drive Targeted Traffic to Your Site

Driving targeted traffic begins with a search engine marketing (SEM) campaign including pay-per-click advertising (PPC) and a search engine optimization (SEO) strategy.

It's important to determine which keywords are worth pursuing in your PPC and SEO efforts. Tools like Wordtracker (<http://www.wordtracker.com/>) should be used to generate a list of possible keyword phrases. Determine how frequently each phrase is searched for, and evaluate which are feasible enough to put efforts into by checking how steep the competition is. Make your selections and test them out in your PPC and SEO campaigns.

Researching and selecting effective keywords is extremely important. Be sure to select keywords that your target market would use to find you. With web metrics and analysis in place, you will be able to tell where people are coming from, what keywords they used to find you, and whether they are taking the desired actions on your site. If the wrong keywords are chosen, you may find that you have high rankings, but the wrong audience is visiting.

Objective 2:

Persuade Your Web Site Visitors To Take the Desired Action

Whether you are selling a product or service, obtaining newsletter subscribers, or enticing people to download a software demo, your ultimate goal is getting your site visitors to take a desired action. In order to do this you must have a compelling site that draws the visitor in, and then guides them to the goal.

Design and site architecture factors such as usability, navigation, content, and ad copy all come into play here. The key is to monitor how well these factors work at persuading your visitors into taking action. With web metrics you can monitor everything and see what's working and what's not. Armed with this knowledge, you can make the appropriate changes to your site; continue your monitoring, and repeat the process until you get an increase in the desired outcome.

Objective 3:

Use Web Metrics To Analyze Visitor Behavior

The area of web metrics and analysis is new and evolving. Compared to traditional offline marketing, the Internet provides an unparalleled opportunity to specifically measure how a customer interacts with a business. Web metrics and analysis will help you to monitor and improve objectives 1 and 2. This is done by paying close attention to where visitors are coming from, learning what keywords were used to find your site, seeing how they navigated through it, and what actions they took along the way. This information becomes a powerful tool in growing your business.

The first web metrics were commonly known as traffic logs or site

statistics. These measured things like server hits, unique visitors, repeat visitors, entry pages, exit pages, first page visited, second page visited, and average time spent on a page or the site.

Today's newer log analysis software can show us more business-specific web metrics. These include conversion ratios, browse-to-buy rates and customer-acquisition costs. As research and development in this area continues, we will see new metrics appear, along with improved tools to measure them.

Currently, with the right tools it is possible to monitor web visitors' behavior such as how and where they found your site, what pages they landed on, and whether they took the desired actions you wanted them to take. For this information to be worthwhile, however, you need to use it to adjust your SEM strategies, keyword selection, site architecture and design as necessary. Basically, you should test and improve what is working, eliminate what isn't and figure out new approaches that will work even better. This process will constantly raise your return on investment (ROI).

For further details on this subject, including software and vendors, I recommend reading "Web Measurement and Analytics" by Ashley Friedlein. This report goes into great detail on 12 leading web analytics vendors. It is available at:
<http://www.aj2000.com/downloads/econsultancy.htm>

About The Author:

Eric Bonnici is the Director of Internet Marketing and Development at Alexander Joseph and Associates and has been doing business on the Internet since 1998 to read more of his articles visit:

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