

# How To Measure and Improve Site Success, Part 2: Evaluate Site

## Activity With Web Metrics

By Bobette Kyle

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Measuring and understanding your Web site's performance is a process that is sometimes placed permanently on the "back burner". Knowing how and why your site performs the way it does, however, can lead to greater success.

In Part 1, <http://websitemarketingplan.com/Arts/SiteSuccess.htm> , I looked at how to improving site success through marketing planning and project evaluation. Here in Part 2 I'll look at several Web metrics, ways to measure and improve your site by understanding the data.

What specific data to collect and analyze depends upon your site goals and resources available to you. Here are just a few of the measures to consider:

### Shopping Cart Abandonment

According to Jupiter Research (footnote), approximately two-thirds of online retail shopping carts are abandoned before a sale closes. The reason is not always negative. Sometimes people are simply browsing or using the shopping cart to help research a future purchase. Many times, there is something wrong. The shopper is confused by navigation or frustrated by the number or complexity of steps required to check out. She may have discovered information (such as shipping charges) that changed her mind or have concerns about security.

Understanding why and where your visitors abandon their orders can lead you directly to site improvements. Also, comparing profiles and order content of "abandoners" versus "completers" may lead to additional insights.

### Conversion Rates

Conversion rates tell what percent of people respond to your call to action (Place an order, sign up for your newsletter, etc.). There are numerous factors - both site related and visitor related - that affect your conversions.

The checkout process, navigation, and site content (sales copy, link text, graphics, etc.) all play a part. Visitor involvement such as interest level and step in the buying process also affect conversion.

Metrics to uncover conversion issues include page views, time spent on the site, number of previous visits, and click rate on links leading into critical pages.

### Order Value

Average order size can serve as a benchmark for measuring results of your efforts to increase transaction value. By looking at customer demographics and order content, you can uncover opportunities for increasing order size.

You can increase average order size with upsell techniques (Want fries with that?). Use order content information to suggest complementary items - ink refills for a pen, for example. Another way to upsell an order at checkout is to offer products or services that have general appeal to demographically similar customers.

Another approach is to offer a related add-on, such as a free newsletter or product/service sample, at checkout. This further opens the door for future business.

### Search Engine Results

Search engines and directories can be a large source of site traffic. By measuring results from this traffic and identifying ways to improve site elements, you can better benefit from search engines.

You can measure results by search engine and by keyword. The former can lead to improving your site structure for a more effective listing on specific search engines. The latter can help you adjust the site to emphasize more effective keywords and phrases.

Potential measurements are numerous. A few additional that can lead to improving site success are inbound traffic analysis, clickpath analysis, and visitor satisfaction levels.

### Web Metrics / Analysis Resources

Condensing Web metrics into a single article is kind of like writing "Rocket Science in Three Easy Steps" - impossible. You can get a better understanding of Web metrics by reading books written by the experts.

To learn more about the technical issues surrounding Web analysis, read *Web Site Analysis and Reporting*, by Robin Nobles and Kerri-Leigh Grady, <http://WebSiteMarketingPlan.com/ap/NoblesAnalysis.htm>

*Web Metrics: Proven Methods for Measuring Web Site Success*, by Jim Sterne includes wonderful case studies and discussions explaining precisely how to use Web metrics to improve your site. <http://WebSiteMarketingPlan.com/ap/SterneMetrics.htm>

### About the Author

Bobette Kyle has more than a decade of experience in Corporate Marketing; Brand and Product Marketing; Field Marketing and Sales; and Management. She is author of the *Marketing Plan Guide "How Much For Just the Spider? Strategic Web Site Marketing for Small Budget Businesses"*. Learn more here: <http://www.websitemarketingplan.com>

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Footnote: Online Shopping Carts: Optimizing to Increase Conversion Rates,  
[http://www.jupiterdirect.com/reports/ecommerce/item/0,4061,2348709\\_1,00.html](http://www.jupiterdirect.com/reports/ecommerce/item/0,4061,2348709_1,00.html)

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