

PROVE YOUR WORTHINESS

CONTENT MARKETING KPIs

Contributors:

Brian Harnish
Rob Garner
James Brockbank
Anna Crowe
Mark Traphagen
Maddy Osman
Benj Arriola
Ashley Ward

Your Guide To
Picking The
Right KPIs For
Content

Table of contents



Chapter 1:

What Are Content KPIs & Why Do They Matter?



Chapter 2:

Things to Consider Before Choosing Your Content KPIs



Chapter 3:

13 Important SEO KPIs You Need to Know
15 Critical Business/Conversion KPIs to Track
12 Social Engagement KPIs That Matter
Top 10 User Engagement KPIs to Measure



Chapter 4:

Your Guide to Picking the Right KPIs for Content



Chapter 5:

How to Build a Content Marketing Workflow with SEMrush to Achieve Your KPIs

Chapter 1:

What Are Content KPIs & Why Do They Matter?



by **Brian Harnish**

SEO Consultant
Siteobjective

Content key performance indicators (KPIs): they will make or break your content marketing efforts.

Why?

Because when you do not consider the content KPIs that will go into your ongoing reporting – and ultimately your overall content strategy – you can make errors in judgment that ultimately will doom your content marketing (and SEO) efforts.

When you consider or communicate incorrect key performance indicators, you also run into making decisions based on a result that may or may not be true. When these results are reported, uncertainties can creep into your content strategy, and can ultimately derail your success.

Let's take a look at the most common content KPIs and what they can do to help you become a more successful online marketer.

Key performance indicators for online marketing can fall into four categories:

- **SEO Metrics**
- **Business and Conversion Metrics**
- **Social Engagement Metrics**
- **User Engagement Metrics**

KPI Bucket 1: SEO Metrics

SEO Metrics are all the metrics that fall into the SEO bucket:

- Links
- Rankings/SERP position
- Organic clicks
- Organic click-through rate (CTR)
- Impressions
- Page speed
- Crawl errors
- And many others

An SEO typically uses these metrics to report on increases in performance in the search results, usually reporting these to their client, shareholders of their company, or their boss.

These KPIs are valuable because they can track things like how a site is performing in the search results, its organic reach (or how much of a market share it is gaining in terms of keyword phrases), how many people are viewing the site, how much time people are spending on the site, and other useful metrics.

When these metrics are reported incorrectly, the result can be bad judgment calls and lousy strategic decisions. This is not good for the SEO implementation as a whole.

Say that you found a user spent so much time on the site because they were looking at certain content one month, but then the next month, they were not. While many things can cause this issue, it is important to rule out technical errors and related specific issues that can cause it.

This is because a situation like this can also be seasonal, depending on the type of website we're dealing with. If you make a change based on one month's worth of metrics without considering the entire 12 months (or even a few years' worth of data) you could make a judgment call that does not consider the seasonal aspect, and this can be bad for the future.

You have now wasted a perfectly good execution based on false assumptions about certain metrics at play.

KPI Bucket 2: Business & Conversion Metrics

These types of metrics are extremely useful for calculating the business side of things. They help ensure that website metrics are translating to the most important business metric that determines whether a company keeps running: ROI, or return on investment.

Let's not kid ourselves. SEO, content marketing, or social media marketing, while creative endeavors, are also business endeavors.

These efforts need to be reported on accurately, succinctly, and in such a way that communicates the proper ROI to those in the know and in charge. This will allow a business to keep its doors open, so that it can continue running for the foreseeable future.



Here's an **example** of how a content marketer could track ROI through content marketing:

Say you want to tailor content marketing toward keyword phrases with particular content execution strategies in mind. How do you track ROI?

One example would be to use keyword phrases and always make sure they have some performance in the form of search volume. And ALWAYS make sure to use the exact keyword phrases somewhere on the page that you're optimizing.

A few months later, as you nail down the reporting of said content metrics and ROI, you can report on whether the content itself was executed in an effective manner. The end result occurs after translating the keywords gained into conversions, and ultimately calculating the final ROI results using the formula for ROI, which is:

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{\text{Net Profit}}{\text{Total Investment}} * 100$$

The key is to always make sure that you can track the performance of these keyword phrases in some way.

If there is no search volume, but there are other metrics associated with positive increases in performance (such as CPC – Cost Per Click on the PPC side – or market competition), this could be an indicator that the keyword phrase is competitive enough that it has some viability as an SEO keyword.

 But, as an **example**: just using a keyword because it has better user intent without any search volume is a mistake, and a wise SEO would do better to choose the keyword with less of an intent, but also has search volume to help in easier tracking and reporting on results.

Another business conversion metric to keep an eye on includes conversion rates.

Conversion rates tell you the other side of how your content is really performing for you. If you have content on your site that has low conversion rates, and people barely sign up for your services, it may be time to consider A/B testing to identify where improvements can be made to ensure that the content improves in a positive direction.

Yet one more important metric to keep reporting tabs on includes **reviews**.

This is an important reputation management tactic that can make or break your website's performance.

Reviews form a perception of your business to potential clients. This perception can make clients want to do business with you, or drive you away.



Here's an **example** of a business that cannot survive when reputation management principles are not applied:

Katie has had a business for a year, and has nothing but stellar reviews for her product and service. A major headhunter from a Fortune 500 company comes across her service, and is impressed with all of her positive reviews. This leads to a contract with one of the top companies in the world, and a major win for Katie.

This one contract catapulted her income to more than hundreds of thousands of dollars per year, all because she was careful about her reviews.

Take Taryn. She has had a floundering business for over four years, with not very much happening for her positively. Her attitude toward customers is awful, so much so, that they have complained about her for a year. After many complaints, the board of directors of the administration for her license finds out and suspends her after verifying the complaints are, in fact, true.

This is one example where a negative reputation, without any reputation management involved to mitigate the risk, can come into play for a very negative outcome for the business proprietor.

Many of these metrics that we discuss in this book fall into similar veins, and they really can make or break an online marketing strategy's success when they are not properly considered.

KPI Bucket 3: Social Engagement Metrics

When we think of social engagement metrics, we usually think about metrics involved with social media like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. And the former are correct in terms of how to think about these metrics.

But did you know that social engagement metrics can also make or break an online marketing strategy?

Think about it: social engagement is a major method of increasing a brand's reach towards real consumers online for a reason: because this is where real people go online to hang out, chat, and get involved with their favorite brands, celebrities, friends, and discussions.

It's more than just a social platform – it's a conversational social outreach explosion.

Making sure that you tally the right social engagement metrics is an important part in the reporting of the effectiveness of your content KPI wins.

 Say for **example:** you wanted to report on the most popular content that your market segment consumes. Your market segment read your most recent piece of content – a 7,000-word piece – over 5,000 times, shared your most recent piece of content 2,500 times on Facebook, 2,700 times on Twitter, and 1,700 times on LinkedIn.

What can this tell us?

Looking at the content, we see that for our market, a 7,000-word piece of content ended up doing extremely well with our growing audience. This

lets us know that our audience prefers meaty content with substance about our topic, and that they will share it when it reaches the right people.

This is one example of effective KPI reporting, while it considers several metrics, helps us form our content strategy for next time, and tells us specifically how to tailor our content for our audience.

Also, to continue our theme on errors in judgment that can occur when you don't consider other contributing metrics: say our content was a particularly effective piece of content on Christmas holiday wrapping that was shared during the month of December.

Not looking up this piece of information could mislead you to believe that all content for your blog should be written in a similar fashion. While this is an egregious example, it is something that happens quite often.

Again, considering all the information, especially when making decisions based on content KPI reporting data will help you make better, more informed choices on what to do next in your content strategy.

KPI Bucket 4: User Engagement Metrics

These metrics are important to a website's performance KPIs because they tell us how effective content is and how effectively it is gathering traffic and drawing people to your website.

Things like conversion rates, time on page, bounce rate, and page views can all be skewed or otherwise erroneously reported on, leading to errors in judgment about where to go next in the overall website content strategy.



Here's an **example**:

Let's take our content example above that was shared over 5,000 times. Taking a look into the conversion rate shows a pretty high conversion rate of over 50 percent, which means that it is likely that we obtained 2,500 sales of the service as a result.

But, if you dig deeper into user engagement metrics on the order placement side after the order was placed, we found that the sale was one sale for 2,500 instances of the service to one person, not 2,500 sales. This means that one person out of 5,000 shares bought 2,500 instances of the service. Not very impressive anymore now, is it?

This is where errors in judgment and furthering your content strategy can be tricky, because if you don't take into account that additional dimension, you could potentially see that 2,500 sales of a service were completed, but not that they were completed by one person.

This is where things like goals in Google Analytics or UTM parameters can come into play.

By tying social conversion metrics into the goal completions in Google Analytics, you can drill down more effectively into how someone ultimately completed the sale of those services through user engagement metrics.

User engagement metrics are also useful for finding out what people are physically doing on your site.

 **For example,** if you find that most traffic from Google is being seen on 10,000 valuable pages, but you have 25,000 pages on the site, then you know that you need to cut 15,000 pages that are not being seen as anything valuable whatsoever.

But, if you have a site with 25,000 pages, all 25,000 pages are receiving traffic, but people are spending more time on certain pages than others, then you know that you need to conduct A/B testing. The goal of this A/B testing would be to figure out how to make your remaining pages interesting enough for this traffic to engage and ultimately convert on your site.

Why Content KPIs Are Important & Why They Matter to Your Overall Content Strategy

Many content KPIs are available for reporting on how your content is performing online. These KPIs can further be used to identify and shape your overall content strategy.

By choosing the right KPIs, putting together the right data, and reaching the correct conclusions based on what the key performance indicators tell you, it is possible to adjust your SEO strategy to match what your audience expects, and what they will ultimately successfully consume.

When you do this effectively, it is possible to zero in on good judgment calls that will ultimately make you successful in the long run.

You will also be able to eventually nail down what it will take to make your content strategy succeed and destroy your competition in the space.

No one ever succeeded in a vacuum without the proper data to back up their conclusions. Proper KPIs are so important in today's reporting and can make or break your success.

This is why we wrote this ebook, and why we are proud to provide this information to help you nail down the right ways to help you adjust your strategy and make sure that you are also ultimately successful in your online marketing endeavors.

Enjoy!

Chapter 2:

15 Things to Consider Before Choosing Your Content KPIs



by Rob Garner

Director
Rob Garner Consulting

With more brands and enterprises making the transition to full-blown digital publishers and media entities, demand is greater than ever in two crucial areas:

- Accountability in spending.
- Better understanding of how content drives business objectives at different levels.

As a result, marketers are pushing harder to measure content – not just at the transactional level but also at touchpoints throughout the customer journey.

Establishing a basis for measuring performance is key. It's a critical cornerstone of any content marketing program, strategy, and/or tactic. When considering the big picture, it can sometimes be tricky to speak to the efficacy of your content marketing program.

Whether your next baseline analytics strategy is happening right now, next month, or next year, the following 15 considerations should be top of mind when you and your organization think about content marketing KPIs and metrics.

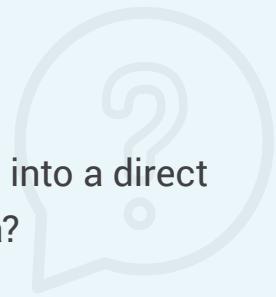
Consider each point and ask yourself (and your organization) to address the questions as well.

1. Map Specific Business Goals To Content KPIs & Metrics

The goal of this exercise is to get a clear picture of your content marketing goals. What are your business objectives at a tactical, strategic, and even logistical level.

Ask yourself

- How does a particular metric or KPI tie into a direct business goal (or goals) and vice versa?
- How much should the business goal weigh toward the KPI in terms of time spent on analysis and insight?
- How many business goals are you mapping to content efforts, and is it reasonable given the scope and budget for your program?



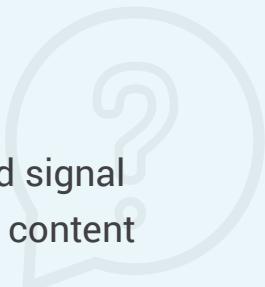
2. Be Fluid In Establishing Content KPIs & Metrics

Establishing KPIs and metrics shouldn't be a static, one-time event. In order to run an effective program, you should assess data, seek and find insights, discover new parts of the ongoing project, and find new stories within your data to match business goals.

KPIs and metrics should be evaluated for relevancy to the program. Being fluid in how you measure results may open up substantial opportunities to expand business goals and performance.

Ask yourself

- Are there any recent findings that would signal new areas, growth, or emphasis in your content marketing program?
- Have you been using the same KPIs and metrics for three to five years or more? If so, why or why not?
- Is it time to add new KPIs and metrics based on changes in your content approach or content marketing spend?



3. Connect On-Site & Off-Site Metrics

When measuring the effects of your publishing efforts, it's important to distinguish between your on-site assets (such as your website or blog) and off-site assets (areas where you interact but don't control at the domain level). Remember to tag your off-site assets when appropriate.

Measure the overlapping areas as well, such as traffic from social spaces and reciprocation between social and search returns.

Ask yourself

- Are we reasonably connecting on-site and off-site content actions in a way that shows a cause and effect, and an interplay between the two?
- Are on-site and off-site content efforts independent (are they unique, or repurposed, or rewritten for different mediums)?
- Are we noticing any trends or changes between the two in a way that might inform future content efforts for positive business growth?

4. Be Creative

There is just as much art to analytics as there is science. You and your teams need to be creative in translating your data into actionable insights for your business.

Don't get stuck in a rut of churning the same old data over and over again. Challenge yourself and your team to think differently about your data and how you can apply your data insights in different ways.

Ask yourself

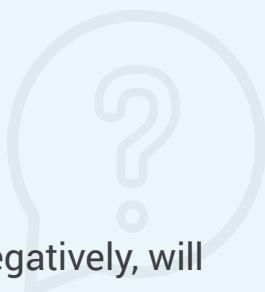
- Are you planning to regurgitate numbers in each report/update, or is there a new story that can be told?
- Could one seemingly random finding or data point inform a totally different content area or strategy? For example, which pages are spiking in traffic referrals the most and why? Should you focus your content calendar on those specific pages? Are there insights on those pages that might trigger a new way of thinking, or represent something that truly resonates with your audience? How will you get creative and turn your ideas and findings into content marketing gold?

5. Take Action

Remember that data, KPIs, and metrics are useful only when you apply insight and take action. Your insights show you where a problem or opportunity might exist, and only when you take action will you solve that problem or seize the opportunity.

Ask yourself

- Are your goals and metrics actionable?
- When the data changes positively or negatively, will you be able to make changes in a timely manner?
- Do the actions for this metric take a day, a week, a month, or even as long as a year to address?
- How will this impact your expectations for increasing success?
- Who controls the action? Is it you, your IT team, your legal department, or another entity that will have a significant or final say in taking the proper action or implementation?

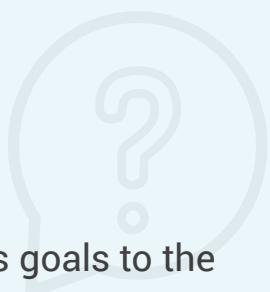


6. Use Common Sense

Plain, old-fashioned common sense will help guide you to the most viable or feasible solution. With any type of data, you will most often find short-term, medium-term, and long-term issues. And those require an appropriate solution as it relates to your own business situation and resources.

Ask yourself

- Are your KPIs actionable?
- Have you mapped appropriate business goals to the desired actions?
- Do you have performance expectations for brand KPIs?
- Do you have the right tools in place to track your desired measurements?
- Are you chasing the wrong metrics & KPIs?



7. Examine Macro Trends & Small Data

It's important to see the big picture for your website and overall content performance. But measure the details, too! After all, looking closely at the "weeds" can tell you how much traffic/interest a particular page or keyword idea is generating and whether it's a good idea worth pursuing further.

Detailed data can also serve as a radar for identifying emerging trends as they happen. Analyzing your data down to the URL level can indicate how well your content efforts are resonating, especially when those page-level efforts are reasonably extrapolated to wider sections and themes of your digital assets.

Ask yourself

- What do the “small” data points tell us about the big picture? One example might involve identifying new pages making gains, and what that means for overall resonance of your main content pillars.
- What do the small things mean? They might be nothing at all, but they also might lead to a bigger idea in the way of a new content pillar or messaging that resonates with the audience.

8. Create Content Marketing 'Events'

To focus on the signals that matter most, consider your major interactions and content pushes as “events.” This may be something that exists on your site (a page, a section of your website, a keyword phrase, an entire keyword theme) or a content or technical implementation.

Once your event is marked, you can hone in and measure all the data in the form of search traffic and social engagement. As you create successful events that produce a positive return on investment (ROI), reinvest and replicate those events that align with your business goals.

Ask yourself

- What new content event did we create?
- Is this an isolated content event (pushing out 50 new pages), or is it connected to other marketing endeavors (three pages pushed out to support a Super Bowl commercial or another traditional marketing effort)?
- Are all of the new content events a result of your work, user-generated work, or content from another area of your business?

9. View People As People, Not Data

One of the worst sins of modern marketing is thinking of people as data points. This might involve cornering a person into a spreadsheet as a unique visitor, a keyword referral, or other traffic stat.

It's important to remember that those data points are actually people. In many cases, they have a search intent or a problem they are trying to solve.

This is often a problem in the way analytics providers are set up. But the good news is that some providers are trying to tell you more about who your audience really is.

Try to look for the person, the user experience, or the thinking behind the data.

Ask yourself

- Who is the person creating the data you are viewing?
- How does your data map back to personas, market research, or other audience insights? Does it reinforce or challenge your findings in your audience assessments?
- What does your audience ask for in your data? Does your content satisfy those questions with a proper answer? If not, should you revise or add more content?

10. Use The Best Analytics Tool: Your Brain

For all the talk about analytics and measurement in the digital world, there is no greater tool than your brain. Your brain contains the key link to interpreting data into actionable insights and is the connective element between your business intelligence, goals, execution, and data.

Ask yourself

- Is your brain up for the challenge to constantly seek new insights to inform and optimize your content marketing strategy?
- How many brains do you need to really address the scale of your data set in a meaningful way?
- Are the brains doing the analysis equipped with the proper experience and insight into the areas they are tasked with measuring?
- How creative are your marketing minds? How analytical are your marketing minds?
- How well do your marketing minds balance between the creative and analytical sides of their brain?
- Are you really thinking about the data and applying insights?
- Are you constantly asking “why” about your data, KPIs, and metrics?
- What story is your data telling you?

11. Use Avinash Kaushik's 10/90 Rule

Avinash Kaushik, an analytics evangelist for Google, is considered one of the world's leading authorities for proper analytics strategy and management. Just as your brain is the most important tool of all, Kaushik recommends spending **10 percent of your analytics budget on tools and 90 percent on the brains** you will need to make sense of it.

Even if you believe your expensive and shiny new analytics widget is the best thing ever, you won't be able to use and interpret it properly without the right amount of brain power to translate it into business intelligence.

Ask yourself

- Are you over-invested in tools and analytics packages when compared to the number of smart minds needed to tell the deeper story about your content marketing program?
- Are you under-invested in putting good brains on the data in order to solve your most challenging content problems and discover new opportunities?

12. Share Your Content Insights With Your Organization

Be sure to spread your findings to other parts of your organization. In some cases, you might not have the direct knowledge to properly interpret the data, so forwarding it to someone with more specific knowledge can help turn the data into an actionable insight.

Consider forwarding relevant data to product managers, sales associates, customer service representatives, hiring organizations within your company, and your IT and creative teams, among many others.

Ask yourself

- Are the right people getting the data in order to take the appropriate action?
- How frequently should you review data with various parts of your organization (not every stakeholder needs all the data and insights, all the time)?

13. Don't Chase The Wrong Metrics & KPIs

Two of the most forgotten or unspoken metrics in all of analytics are:

- The amount of stress put on your organization.
- How much time might be lost if you go chasing the wrong metric.

As you prioritize your metrics, make sure you strike a realistic balance between the juice you're going to get versus how hard you have to squeeze to get it. This is the difference between focusing on the right areas and going off on a tangent that yields no positive results.

Ask yourself:

- What is the purpose of the KPI or metric?
- Is the effort of obtaining and acting upon a specific content metric disproportional to the desired outcome? (In other words, is the juice worth the squeeze?)

14. Avoid Obsessing About a Single Data Point

Content marketing measurement can be complex. It takes a lot of time and patience to build the big picture view for your business, as well as a real-time view.

Because you will be dealing with data points from varying sources, it's important to approach analytics with the right balance of effort and insight.

A problem often occurs when marketers or business owners get overly obsessed with a single data point, to the extent that all resources are focused on a problem or solution that is not proportionally important to your overall goals.

Bottom line: if you're generating a positive ROI for your spend using either direct response or branding metrics, then you're generally in a good place, especially when compared to many other forms of advertising and marketing.

Don't take away from resources in content production, social media management, or search optimization in order to go chasing ghosts. Focus on what is real and on generating positive ROI, and keep reinvesting in those areas.

Ask yourself:

- Is your team getting worn out from chasing a metric that is unattainable based on lack of tools or lack of knowledge from a key stakeholder (example, trying too hard to tie website traffic to in-store foot traffic, if the proper tools are not in place)?
- Are a disproportionate number of resources being expended to chase a metric that has little or no impact on the big picture or bottom line business goals?
- Is the obsession taking away from more important and more “doable” efforts that will tie-in more directly to business goals?

15. Don't Hold Branding & Direct-Response Goals To The Same Standards

One of the biggest pitfalls of analyzing the benefits of search, social, and content is when business owners and marketers try to apply direct-response metrics to branding.

If you are trying to measure branding goals by the same standards as direct monetary return, then you are doing it wrong (that is, unless you have strict monetary values applied to each branding goal and action).

Not all branding goals should have a monetary value assigned. These goals are more qualitative.

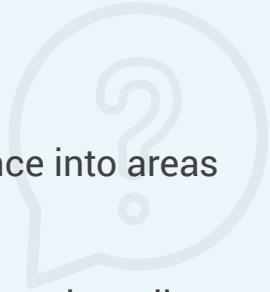
Branding is one of the largest untapped areas in all of content marketing. Marketers are obsessed with the online channel as a direct-response medium, while largely saving their brand budget for more traditional areas like the aforementioned TV, radio, and print. By doing so, they have ignored the massive exposure that can be obtained in online channels, beyond banner ads and rich ad placements.

“Traditional” branding ad platforms of the future – even in TV, radio, and print – will be run by a robust technology company like Google, Microsoft, Facebook, or even Apple. But before we get there, marketers will need to change their perceptions about direct response and digital branding.

As you begin to establish metrics, be careful of the goals you assign to different directives. If you aren’t fair in your comparisons or expectations, then you will essentially be holding back your content marketing strategy from ever performing as well as it could.

Ask yourself:

- What is the purpose of tying performance into areas like traffic or impressions?
- If you are seeking performance metrics on branding goals, do you know the lifetime value of your customer?
- What is a lead worth to you, in actual dollars?
- Do you have specific and proven numbers in place for paid display or branding media, in terms of how much you want to pay for a particular action?
- How would that spending (which is a bona fide statement on how much your company is willing to pay) translate to your brand goals for earned media, and more specifically, interactions and consumption of content?



Summary

Whether you're setting your metrics and KPIs for brand business goals, transactional goals, or something more complex and in-between, it's important to think carefully and critically before making them a firm part of your measurement strategy.

Take one – or take all – of these considerations, and you will find yourself getting much more from your content marketing program than you are now.

Use these tips and revisit them periodically to ensure you are getting the most out of your content marketing program efforts.

Chapter 3.1:

13 Important SEO KPIs You Need to Know



by **James Brockbank**

Managing Director
Digitaloaf

We're now marketing in an era where SEO and content marketing go hand in hand.

If you want to drive success from the search engines, you need to be creating great content.

Whether it is a link building tactic, a way to earn rankings, or to educate and convert users; understanding the link between SEO and content marketing is important but success doesn't just come in one metric.

To truly analyze and understand the impact of your content marketing efforts, you need to know the key metrics to consider, how to track these and which ones are applicable to your own campaigns and business.

Here's a look at some of the most common SEO metrics which you need to know.

1. Links

For many SEO professionals, links are one of the primary goals of content marketing efforts and as an indication as to why, let's take a quick look at a snippet from Google's Webmaster Guidelines:

“The best way to get other sites to create high-quality, relevant links to yours is to create unique, relevant content that can naturally gain popularity in the Internet community. Creating good content pays off: Links are usually editorial votes given by choice, and the more useful content you have, the greater the chances someone else will find that content valuable to their readers and link to it.”

It's there in black and white.

Links are one of Google's [top 3 ranking factors](#), and high-quality, relevant links are those which are earned as a result of creating unique content which gains popularity.

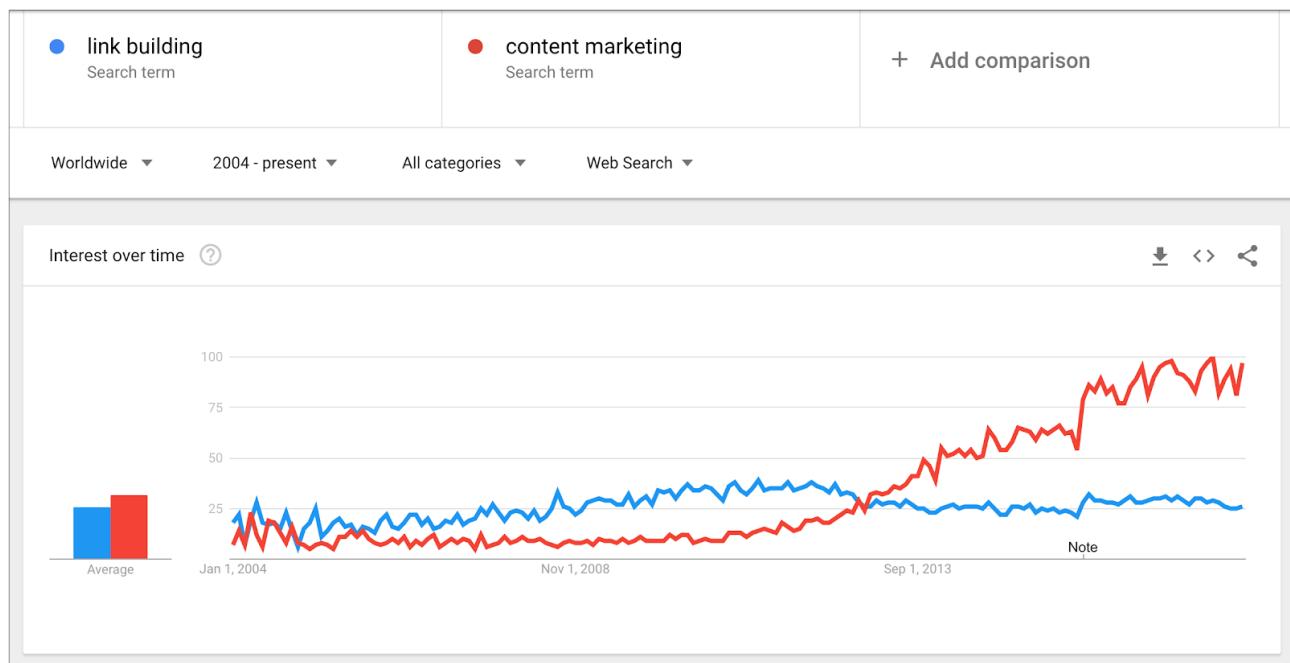
But links aren't just links.

Participating in [link schemes](#) is a violation of these guidelines and this includes the likes of:

- Paid links
- Excessive link exchanges
- The use of keyword-rich anchor texts
- Links created using automated services

To put it simply: links must be earned – and the best way to earn links is through great content.

You only have to look at Google Trends data, comparing searches for “link building” and “content marketing”, to see this:



Just months after Google first rolled out their Penguin algorithm, “content marketing” began to receive greater traction as a search term while “link building” quickly saw a decline.

With this in mind, it’s no surprise that links are one of the key SEO metrics for content marketing. They matter, and that’s not going away.

You need to know how to track links as a metric, however, it’s important to understand that it’s not about volume rather about quality.

So, just how do you go about tracking links?

You’ll need to use one or more tools to do so, ideally a mix of a number of different ones.

Some of the most popular ones include:

- Google Search Console
- [SEMrush Backlink Audit / SEMrush Backlink Analytics](#)
- Majestic
- Moz's Link Explorer

The main justification for using a selection of link index tools is to ensure you're picking up as comprehensive a link profile as possible. It's common knowledge that not every tool will index every single link, so it's best practice to use at least a couple. However, some tools are offering a more holistic approach, for instance, SEMrush Backlink Audit tool has integrated with Majestic and, thus, provides a wider backlink profile analysis..

While Google Search Console is a free tool, it doesn't offer the same metrics as the paid tools do. You're probably already using it, however, and it's a great way to determine an overview as to links pointing to a page.

You can do this via: ***Search Console > Search Traffic > Links to your Site > Your most linked content > URL***

You'll then see an overview as to the links which Google has indexed which point to that URL.

Really, however, this tells you very little; given that relevancy and authority matter far more than the volume of links.

For that reason, it's worth investing in at least one pro tool set to help you understand your link profile a little better and identify key SEO metrics.

Regardless of which index you're using, each has its own quality score metric which will allow you to begin to understand the quality of links. In short, the better the score, the better the link.

Don't discount relevancy, however, **as it's important to earn links which pass relevancy as well as those which pass authority**; with the sweet spot being highly relevant, authoritative links from top-tier sources.

As a simple rule, links are always going to be a key SEO metric for content marketing campaigns and it's worth taking the time to understand what constitutes a quality link in more depth.

Link building is one of the most commonly discussed SEO concepts, not surprising, given the ranking power which they have. What, though, can you do to earn links to a site or a piece of content?

This is something which we could write a whole book on in itself, however as a general rule, and abiding by Google's webmaster guidelines, you need to create a great piece of content which other people want to link to. Something unique and something useful.

It's then a case of getting this content in front of those who have the potential to link; be this through email outreach, promotion on social media or even the classic approach of picking up the phone. Think journalists, bloggers, influencers – anyone who is creating content stands the potential to link through to relevant content...so long as it's good enough!

2. Rankings / Position

If you want to earn organic search traffic to a piece of content, it goes to say that it's going to need to rank in prominent positions on Google, Bing, and other search engines in order for this to happen.

This in itself makes rankings an important SEO metric, however perhaps not one quite as important as it once was.

In fact, **it's a fairly amateur mistake to place a strong emphasis on rankings alone. Why?**

Because of a multitude of factors including personalized search, position zero, ad space, local pack listings and a range of others.

In short, it's become increasingly difficult to accurately track the ranking position of a search term.

The bigger question, however, is: how important are rankings?

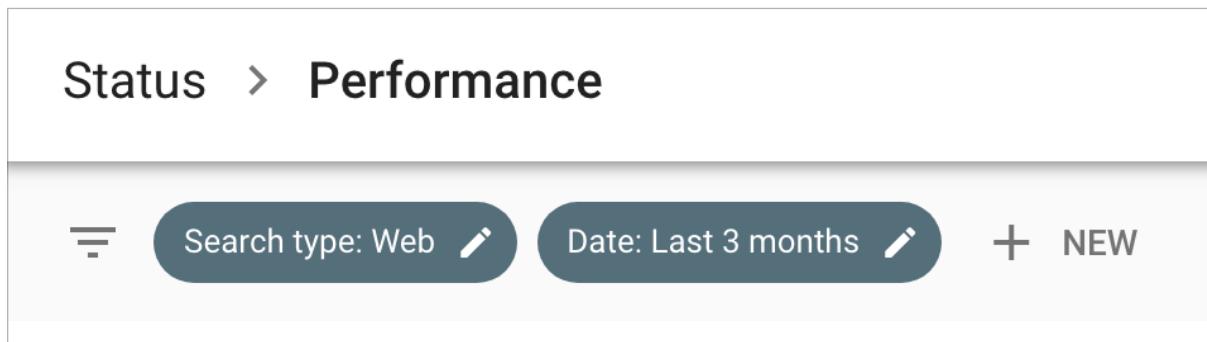
On their own, not very.

In fact, rankings are pretty meaningless unless combined with other metrics, such as organic traffic, impressions, and click-through rate (CTR). It's for this reason that you need to understand how to determine both search queries and the associated ranking positions.

You can, of course, go out and invest in rank tracking tools (SEMrush Position Tracking tool, Searchmetrics, Moz offer great solutions) if you so wish, however for the most part, you can obtain the metrics you need from Google Search Console.

In order to do this (looking specifically at the stats for a single piece of content, as an example), simply use the 'new Search Console' and navigate through: **Status > Performance**.

You'll then be given an option to filter with '+NEW'



Choose '**Page**' and this will then allow you to filter via a specific URL.

Enter the URL and you'll be served with the queries which it has received impressions under.

Click into a query and you'll see the average position over the selected timeframe.

You can then also filter by position if necessary.

Positions alone may not be a main metric for many, however don't underestimate the power of search query data when used with others.

3. Organic Search Traffic (Including Google vs. Bing Traffic)

Perhaps more important than ranking position is the organic search traffic content receives. Eyeballs on pages is what has the potential to convert into business.

For most, this should be one of the key metrics not only to be tracking (and comparing to previous periods) but also to continually consider how this can be improved upon going forward.

Combine this with search query data and you've got some very powerful data upon which you can make solid decisions to inform strategies.

Luckily, identifying organic search traffic is fairly straightforward and you'll need access only to Google Analytics and Google Search Console (and Bing Webmaster Tools) to do this.

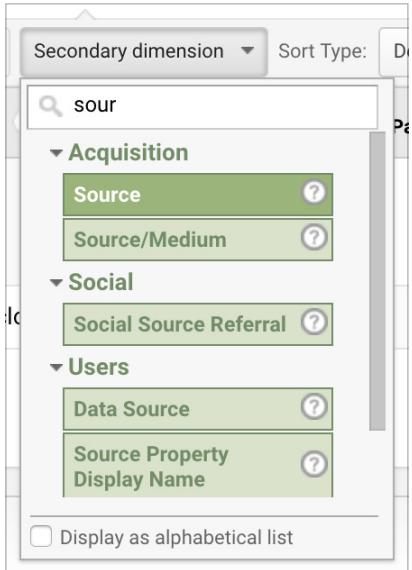
First things first, you'll want to understand how organic search traffic to a piece of content stacks up against other channels including paid search, social and referral, amongst others.

Jump into Google Analytics and navigate to: ***Behaviour > Site Content > All Pages.***

From here, you can view across the site as a whole, view the top performing pages or run an advanced search for a specific URL:



Select your chosen page and pick a secondary dimension of '**Source**':



This will then allow you to view traffic by source over the selected timeframe.

Importantly here, you can see how organic search is performing against other channels.

Select, instead, a secondary dimension of '**Source/Medium**' and you'll be able to also compare organic search traffic against different search engines (e.g., Google vs. Bing vs. Yahoo).

4. Organic Clicks / Impressions / CTR

On its own, organic search traffic data tells you only how much traffic your site or a page received through organic search, not the search queries this came from, the potential search traffic, and your organic CTR.

Once you've gathered data relating to specific queries, you're in a position to make informed decisions on how to see growth moving forward, especially when combined with ranking position data.

As a general overview, you may use data for the following metrics to establish opportunities such as:

- High impressions but low clicks as a result of a poor CTR.
A focus upon improving CTR is needed.

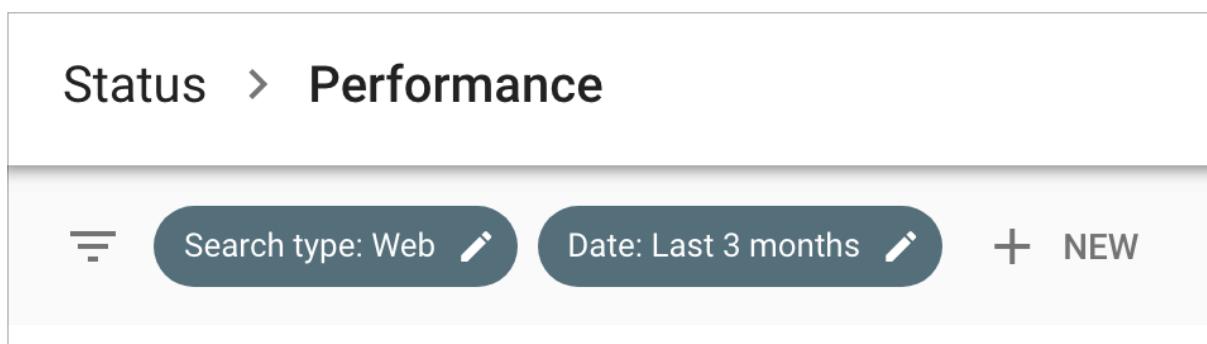
- **Low impressions but high CTR.** Perhaps consider researching other keywords to optimize the content for to increase impressions.

You're collecting data which allows you to make important decisions and take action based upon that which is needed; not simply upon traffic alone. You can see the opportunities, how searchers are engaging with your ranking results and the clicks currently being driven.

To collect this data, it's back to Search Console and a return to the filter applied to see ranking position metrics.

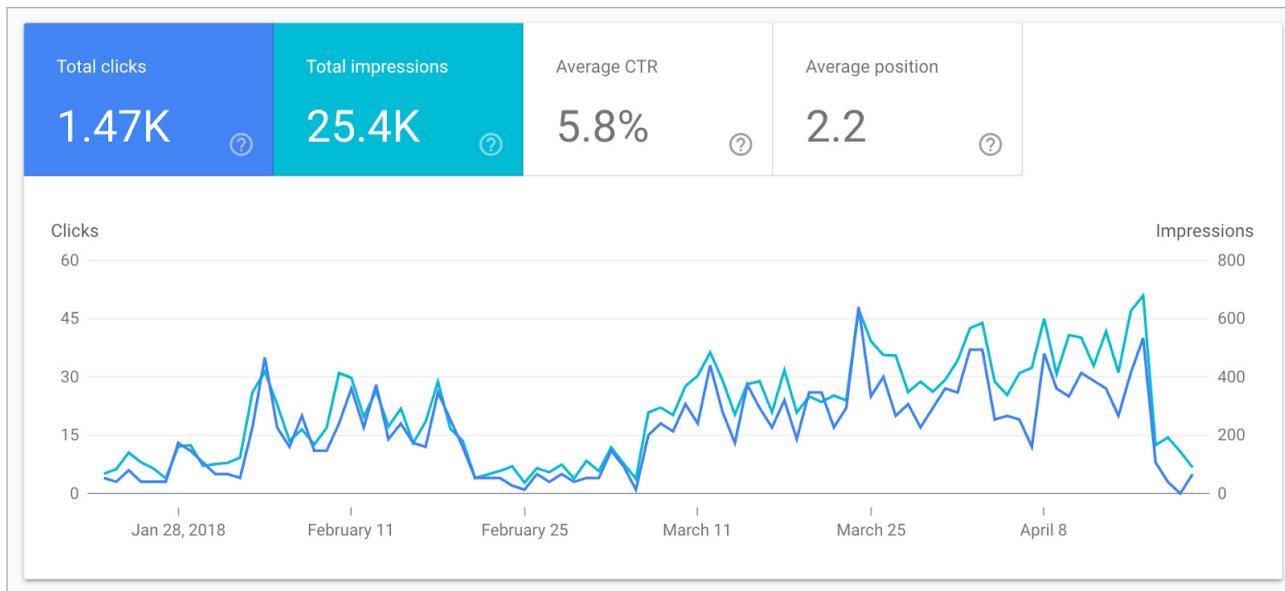
Go to **Status > Performance**.

You'll then be given an option to filter with '+NEW'



Choose '**Page**' and this will then allow you to filter via a specific URL.

Enter the URL and you'll be served with the queries combined with data for impressions, clicks and organic CTR.



On the other hand, in Bing Webmaster Tools you can run a Search Keywords Report to see which search terms are driving impressions and, more importantly here, clicks from Bing and Yahoo.

You'll find this within the Reports & Data tab.

5. Organic Conversion Rate

The objective of the majority of SEO campaigns is to drive some sort of conversion from visitors, be that hard conversions such as a purchase from an e-commerce store, soft conversions such as email signups from a blog, or something in-between.

With this in mind, it's important that you're tracking organic conversion rate, which is the percentage of visitors taking a predefined action against a goal.

This metric will give you specific insight into how this stacks up against both the site as a whole and other content, as well as highlighting

instances when this is low and there may be opportunities to make improvements to drive increased conversions.

First things first, you need to know what you're tracking as a conversion. Fingers crossed, you'll already be tracking goals in Google Analytics, however when it comes to content marketing specific goals, this likely goes deeper than, say, the overall conversion goals of a site.

Whether you're tracking sales, leads, email signups or even time on page (triggering, let's say, the addition to a remarketing list if an engaged user consumes content for more than a set time period), so long as these are set up in Analytics you can easily identify the organic conversion rate of a page.

To note: If you've not already set up goals, you can read how to do so [here](#).

Assuming you've got goals set up, head straight into viewing the page you're wanting to track the conversion rate for: **Acquisition > All Traffic > Channels > Organic Search.**

From here you can view by Landing Page:

The screenshot shows the Google Analytics interface with the following settings in the top navigation bar:

- Primary Dimension: Keyword
- Source: Landing Page
- Other: Other

Below the navigation bar are buttons for Plot Rows, Secondary dimension, Sort Type, and Default.

From here you can choose the goal which you want to view the data for, or view all goals combined.

The screenshot shows the Google Analytics interface with the following settings in the top navigation bar:

- Conversions
- Goal 1: Lead Conversion

Below the navigation bar is a dropdown menu with the following options:

- All Goals
- Goal 1: Lead Conversion

On the right side of the interface, there are two columns:

(Goal 1)	Lead Conversion (Goal 1 Value)
----------	--------------------------------

6. Mobile Rankings

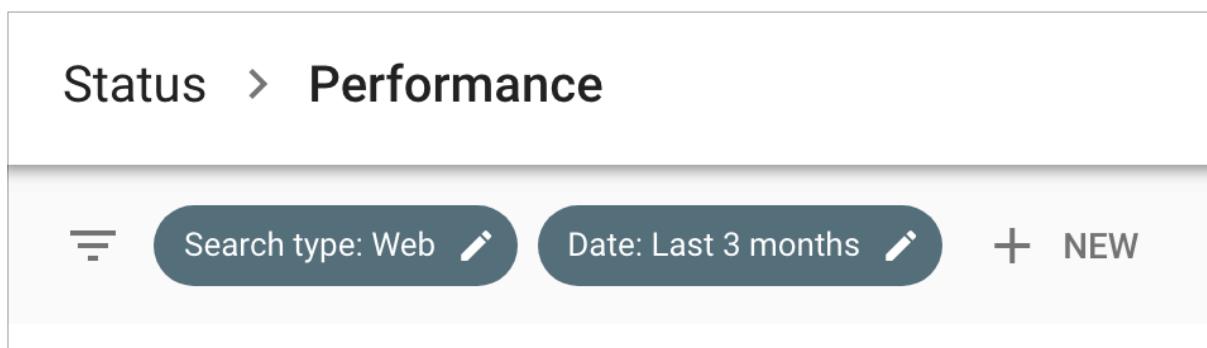
With Google moving to their mobile-first index, it's become more important than ever to understand how your site and content is optimized for **mobile search** and with this in mind, the metrics you track across the site as a whole will likely need to be broken down by device type.

When it comes to mobile rankings, it's important to understand how content performs across both mobile and desktop devices, allowing you to make improvements as necessary to see gains in visibility.

Again, you can certainly consider paid tools to track and monitor your mobile rankings, however this can also be achieved through Google Search Console.

Go to **Status > Performance**.

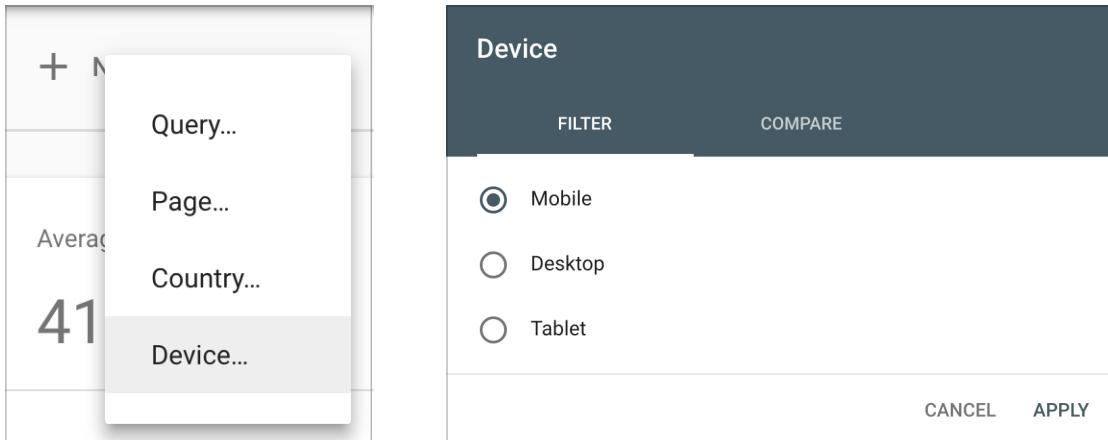
You'll then be given an option to filter with '+ NEW'



Choose '**Page**' and this will then allow you to filter via a specific URL.

To here, it's the same as it would be when you're looking at overall data.

From here, however, select '+ NEW' a second time and click '**device**'



You can then select mobile, tablet, or desktop data (or compare two of these).

Once you've filtered, you'll be able to view device-specific average ranking position at search query level as well as stats including total clicks, total impressions, and average CTR.

7. Mobile Search Traffic

In a mobile-first world, it's important to understand just where your organic search traffic is coming from. Is it desktop or mobile devices?

To understand this, you simply need to know how to filter Google Analytics by device; thankfully, it's fairly straightforward: ***Behavior > Site Content > All Pages > Secondary Dimension: Device Category.***

Select a specific URL and you'll then be served with a breakdown of traffic stats by mobile, desktop, and tablet devices.

Alternatively, to see device statistics for the site as a whole, simply navigate to: ***Audience > Mobile > Overview.***

8. Accelerated Mobile Pages

This is where things get a little more complex!

Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMP) make it possible for your content to load almost instantly on mobile devices. That means a better user experience and hopefully better engagement.

More than two years ago now, Google introduced AMP into its mobile search results and, with that in mind, there's a need for marketers to understand how such pages are performing for them.

There's every chance you'll want to track many of the metrics listed above, as well as a whole host of others, but by default, you won't be able to do so in Google Analytics.

You need to be using the AMP Analytics tag on your mobile pages in order to do so. You'll also need to 'disclose how Analytics collects and uses data, and offer users the opportunity to opt-out of Analytics'.

Even then, AMP Analytics will allow you to collect only the following data:

- **Page data:** Domain, path, page title
- **User data:** client ID, timezone
- **Browsing data:** referrer, unique page view ID
- **Browser data:** screen height, screen width, user agent
- **Interaction data:** page height and page width
- **Event data**

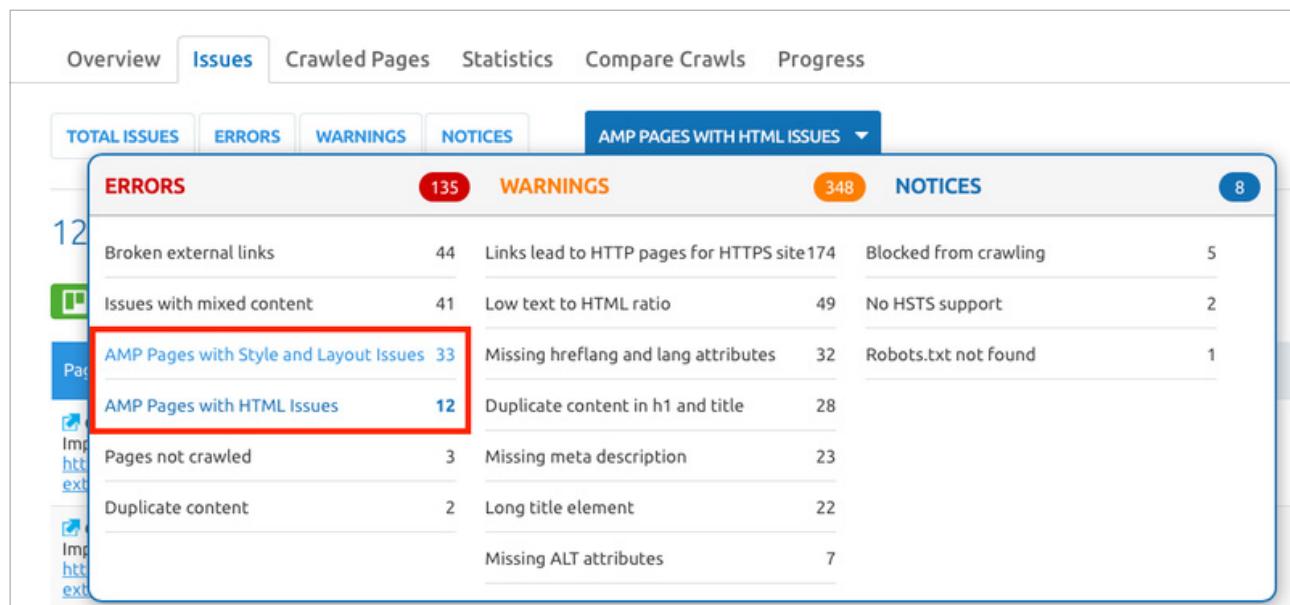
Thankfully, for most content marketers, that's sufficient.

You can read documentation on the AMP Analytics tag [here](#).

Once implemented, you'll be able to start breaking down traffic data by AMP vs. non-AMP sessions.

As standard, Google Analytics sends the value "AMP" within the data source dimension, and this can be used to filter and analyze AMP vs. non-AMP sessions within a single view.

To make your AMP pages perform well, make sure that they are built without any technical errors. Check your AMP pages one by one using official AMP project validator, or use [SEMrush Site Audit](#) for bulk checking.



The screenshot shows the SEMrush Site Audit interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Overview', 'Issues' (which is selected), 'Crawled Pages', 'Statistics', 'Compare Crawls', and 'Progress'. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with tabs for 'TOTAL ISSUES', 'ERRORS', 'WARNINGS', and 'NOTICES', with 'AMP PAGES WITH HTML ISSUES' selected. A summary table shows the count of each issue type: 135 Errors, 348 Notices, and 33 Warnings. The main content area displays a detailed list of issues under the 'AMP Pages with HTML Issues' category, which is highlighted with a red box. The list includes:

Issue Type	Count	Description	Count	Action	Count
Errors	135	Broken external links	44	Links lead to HTTP pages for HTTPS site	174
Errors	12	Issues with mixed content	41	Blocked from crawling	5
Errors	33	AMP Pages with Style and Layout Issues	41	No HSTS support	2
Errors	12	AMP Pages with HTML Issues	33	Missing hreflang and lang attributes	32
Errors	3	Pages not crawled	3	Duplicate content in h1 and title	28
Errors	2	Duplicate content	2	Missing meta description	23
				Long title element	22
				Missing ALT attributes	7

9. Page Speed

Google has now been using page speed as a ranking factor for some time, however it's a metric which is commonly confused with site speed.

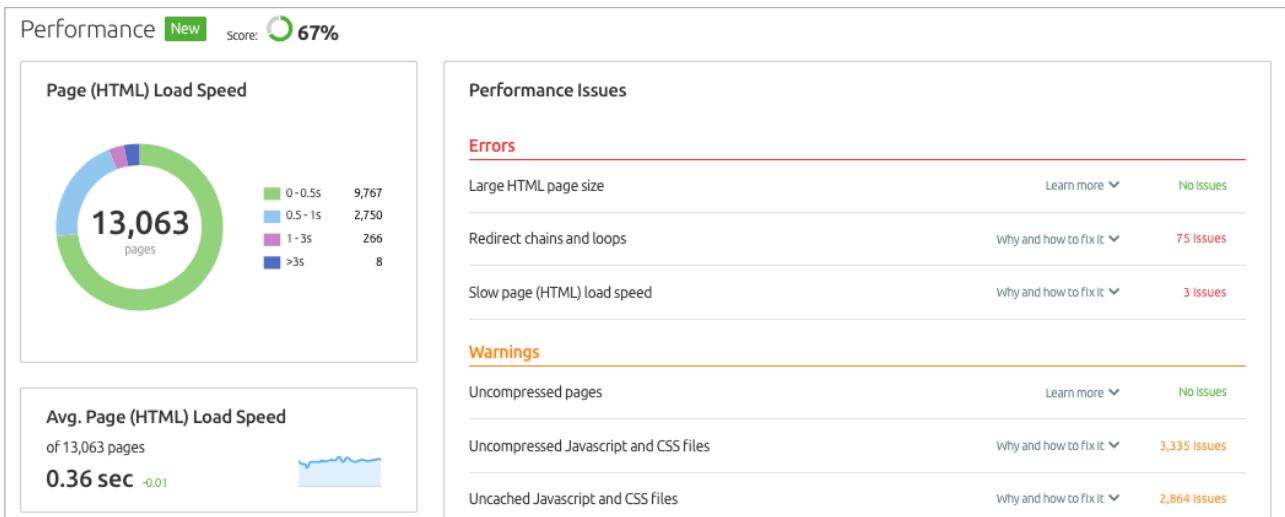
To get it straight: site speed is the page speed for a sample of pages on a site, whereas page speed is either the page load speed or time to first byte of a specific page.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, a better page speed results in a better user experience and Google are rewarding for this as a ranking factor.

It also shouldn't be ignored that a slower page speed means that fewer pages can be crawled from an allocated crawl budget.

Thankfully, Google make it nice and easy to understand page speed with their own PageSpeed Insights Tool.

Run a URL through the tool and you'll be served with stats across both mobile and desktop as well as suggestions on ways to optimize performance and improve page speed. As of recently, these stats now include speed data from the Chrome User Experience report. To perform bulk checks, you can set up SEMrush Site Audit.



10. Crawl Errors

Crawl errors occur when a search engine bot attempts to crawl a URL but is unable to do so. As a general rule, crawl errors mean a bot has experienced a dead end; it was unable to crawl something which it was led to through a link, and these need resolving.

Google typically categorizes crawl errors either into site errors or URL errors; with the former applying to the entirety of a site (meaning it cannot be crawled) and the latter relating to specific URLs.

Site errors are commonly either DNS or server errors while URL errors most often relate to 404 (Not Found) errors.

Bottom line: crawl errors of any sort need fixing, which means they need to be monitored regularly.

Thankfully, both Google Search Console and Bing Webmaster Tools report on crawl errors quite openly and you can also determine such issues using desktop tools Screaming Frog SEO Spider and Sitebulb. However, it's not always convenient to use desktop tools, so there are a lot of different cloud based solutions like [SEMrush Site Audit](#) or RYTE.

In Google Search Console you can view crawl errors via: [**Crawl > Crawl Errors**](#)

In Bing Webmaster Tools you can view crawl errors within the crawl information report in the 'Reports & Data' section.

11. Pages Indexed / Index Status

Perhaps, one of the most commonly overlooked SEO metrics is the index status of a site, data which allows you to understand the URLs which the search engines have tried to (and do) index.

It's data which can assist you in determining indexation issues which result either from pages being incorrectly blocked from the search engines or even the indexation of duplicate URLs from filters, query strings, and the like.

Ideally, you want to see a gradually increasing graph which showcases that your site is being indexed properly as it grows in size. Any sudden drops or unexpected sharp increases need exploring further to determine the cause.

To view an index status report for your site, head to Google Search Console and navigate to: [Google Index > Index Status](#).

You can then view either a basic or advanced report, with the advanced returning data also for URLs blocked by robots.txt and removed.

12. Duplicate Titles / Descriptions

Perhaps, one of the most basic SEO elements is ensuring each page has a unique title tag and meta description. However, it's something which can be easily overlooked when working on large sites.

Even when a site has entirely unique titles and descriptions across every page, **over time duplicates can occur**. It's important that you keep a check on these to allow you to put in place changes to ensure these errors don't become a problem which impacts upon the ranking potential of content.

Thankfully, you don't need anything more than Google Search Console to allow you to understand any duplicate titles and descriptions and resolving these issues is simply a case of implementing rewrites with unique content.

To see a list of duplicate titles and descriptions which Google has picked up on, navigate within Search Console to: **Search Appearance > HTML Improvements**.

You'll then see something akin to the following if any duplicates have been detected:

Meta description	Pages
Duplicate meta descriptions	50
Long meta descriptions	0
Short meta descriptions	0
Title tag	Pages
Missing title tags	0
Duplicate title tags	36
Long title tags	0
Short title tags	0
Non-informative title tags	0
Non-indexable content	Pages
We didn't detect any issues with non-indexable content on your site.	

In an ideal world, all of these will show 0 pages in the right column, meaning no issues have been detected.

13. Dwell Time

One of the most hotly talked about topics within SEO in recent years is that of dwell time, a user-based metric which search engines use to measure how long searchers stay on a page before returning to the SERPs.

It's a metric which is commonly confused either as being solely bounce rate or time on page, but in reality it's a complex one utilizing the two.

It's also, somewhat frustratingly, not a metric which is publicly available. You can't see it (or improve it) using Analytics or Search Console.

The bottom line here is that **if a user is spending longer times on a site, engaging with it and not bouncing, that's a great signal that the site is high quality.**

Compare that to a site where session time is far shorter, bounce rate is high, and content isn't being engaged with or fully consumed. Sounds like a low quality site, yeah? Correct!

The main thing to understand here is that user-metrics do matter for SEO, even more so now than ever before. As such, it's important to take the time to analyze and improve these where possible.

Better dwell time typically means better SEO performance. While you may not be able to pull this down as a metric, don't forget you can easily see both the time on page and bounce rate for both your site as a whole and for specific pages.

Simply navigate to: **Behavior > Site Content > All Pages > URL.**

While it isn't dwell time, keep an eye out for a lower than average bounce rate and a higher than average time on page. It's the best we've got (for now) but at least goes someway to helping us to understand the potential dwell time.

Conclusion

It's important to understand that **SEO metrics are vital to the success of any content marketing campaign**. Without attention being paid to SEO, content is unlikely to deliver its full potential, which means you're missing out on valuable traffic and potential conversions.

But, that aside, it's equally as important to remember that SEO metrics are just one group of KPIs to consider when running content campaigns and that you also need to pay close attention to the likes of social metrics, conversion metrics, and user engagement metrics.

SEO is just one, very important, part of a successful content marketing campaign but, for many, forms the foundations.

Chapter 3.2:

15 Critical Business/ Conversion KPIs to Track



by **Anna Crowe**

Product Marketing Manager
Search Engine Journal

There's no lack of data to track. Marketers don't struggle with not having enough data. They struggle to pull the insights from the data already provided.

To help guide you, let's dive into the big-picture of business conversion metrics to help you determine the best KPIs to track.

1. Revenue

Revenue is the lifeblood of all businesses. It's the total amount of money your business brings in. Your gross revenue is everything before expenses.

Revenue is the common thread that holds sales and marketing teams together. Raise your hand if you've heard the good ole' saying, "Marketing doesn't drive revenue. Sales does." When the marketing and sales teams align, it only benefits the bottom line.



How to Track:

To track revenue, you can [set-up ecommerce tracking in Google Analytics](#).

2. Conversion Rate

Conversion rate is the amount of visitors who have completed a goal on your website. The higher the conversion rate, the more successful your marketing campaigns.

WordStream did a study on the average conversion rate per industry stating that the average conversion rate across all industries is 2.70 percent on search networks.

Conversion rate is often tied to conversion rate optimization (CRO) which is marketing tactics like A/B testing to optimize a web page.



How to Track:

To measure your conversion rate, use this formula:

$$\text{Conversion rate} = (\text{conversions} / \text{total visitors}) * 100\%$$

For example, if your website had 100,000 visitors and 5,000 conversions last month, your conversion rate is 5 percent.

3. Leads Generated

Lead generation is when you attract and convert potential users interested in your company. A lead starts at the beginning of the buyer's journey.

Lead generation is vital to success. But, to get leads you need to get traffic.

For example, ClearPivot increased monthly website traffic by 330 percent which resulted in a 57 percent increase in lead generation.

And, CSI Accounting & Payroll, increased traffic by 300 percent and saw new contacts spike to 625 percent.



How to Track:

To track lead generation, I recommend setting up goals in Google Analytics. Treva Marshall goes into details about [how to set up these goals](#).

4. Cost Per Acquisition

Cost per acquisition (CPA) is the price you pay to acquire a new customer. It's similar to conversion rates, but with CPA, you can directly measure the impact of marketing on revenue.

If you're using CPA for your AdWords, generally your CPA will be higher than your cost per click.

Many companies use CPA as a determining factor for their campaign direction.

Take OSN, [for example](#). They reduced their cost per acquisition by [82 percent](#) using AdWords Call-Only campaigns.

And, Ebates reduced their cost per app registration by [56 percent](#).



How to Track:

To calculate cost per acquisition, follow this formula:

$$\text{Total marketing costs (MCC)} / \text{Total customers acquired (CA)} = \text{CPA}$$

5. Order Value

Average order value (AOV) is the average dollar amount spent each time a customer orders. It is the sales per order, not per customer.

Increasing your AOV is much easier than attempting to increase your conversion rate. Why?

It's much easier to convince a current customer to buy from you than it is to gain a new customer.

Just look at Boxed. Boxed, an online wholesaler of bulk product, used Facebook Ads to see a [14 percent](#) increase in AOV.



How to Track:

To track average order value, follow this formula:

Revenue / Number of Orders = Average Order Value (AOV)

For example, if I order three dogs bandanas that cost \$10 each, my AOV is \$10.

6. Customer Loyalty/Retention

Customer retention rate is how long a business keeps its paying customers over time.

Harvard Business Review found that costs companies [about 5-25x more](#) to gain a new customer than it does to sell to an existing one.

Peter Drucker once said:

"Because the purpose of business is to create a customer, the business enterprise has two – and only two – basic functions: marketing and innovation."

The point is, revenue doesn't care where it comes from. Loyal customers spend more money and convert.

That's why we're seeing loyalty programs take center stage.

Virgin Atlantic's Flying Club members earn [50 percent](#) more points on flights. Plus, they have access to expedited check-in.

Amazon Prime members spend an average of [\\$1,500](#) per year on Amazon.com. That's compared with \$625 per year spent by Amazon customers that are not Prime members.



How to Track:

Customer churn rate is the best way to measure customer retention and loyalty. It gives you hard data to understand if your customers are happy or not. If you have a high churn rate, most likely your product or service doesn't meet the needs of your customers.

Intercom uses churn rate to predict future problems in their funnel.

The email marketing folks at ConvertKit calculate churn rate like this:

Lost quantity / Number of “x” at the beginning of time = Churn

7. Lifetime Value (LTV)

Lifetime value is the revenue your business makes from a customer.

Venture capitalist, David Skok, says “the biggest reasons startups die is because their Customer Acquisition costs vs their Customer Lifetime Value costs often look like this.”

Netflix is a perfect example lifetime value. The average Netflix subscriber stays with them for 25 months. That’s a lifetime value of \$291.25



How to Track:

To calculate LTV, use this formula:

LTV = Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) x 1/Churn

Essentially, this formula will predict how much money you’ll make in a specific period. So, if it costs you \$200 to acquire a new custom, you should create a plan to make \$200 back from that customer.

8. ROI

ROI stands for Return on Investment. It's a way for marketers to prove that marketing does impact the bottom line of the company. It's also a good way to determine what to spend your marketing budgets on.

However, there are challenges to calculating ROI in marketing. Why? Because what you spend \$5 on today may not bring a return for 5 years.

According to the [The CMO Survey](#) from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, only 37 percent of CMOs feel they can prove the short-term impact of marketing spend.



How to Track:

To track ROI, use this formula:

(Gross Profit – Marketing Investment) / Marketing Investment

For example, if you buy \$100 worth of Facebook ads, then end up getting \$200 back in sales, your return on investment is 100 percent.

9. ROAS

ROAS means Return on Ad Spend. Essentially, it gives marketers an idea if they spend X on this advertising campaign then you'll receive X back in increased revenue.

As a general rule of thumb, think about a positive ROAS like this: for every \$1 you spend, you should get \$3 back.

However, depending on your industry, you may have different numbers.

Nielsen analyzed more than 1,400 ad campaigns from 450 CPG brands over 10 years. They discovered different ROAS across categories with baby products generating the biggest return on spend at **\$3.71**.



How to Track:

To calculate ROAS, use this formula:

$$\text{(Revenue} - \text{Cost}) / \text{Cost}$$

For example, if you spend \$5,000 on Google AdWords and earned \$10,000 from those who clicked on your ads, then your ROAS is (\$5,000 - \$10,000) / \$5,000 equals 1, meaning 100 percent.

10. Media Mentions

Whether it's a positive review or something not-so-sweet, tracking your mentions is part of maintaining your brand reputation. It gives you valuable feedback to your brand, product, or company.

If you're a big company, you're probably mentioned in the press naturally quite often. If you're smaller, a mention could lead to a potential partnership or opportunity.

If you're getting started, [Brittany Berger](#), previously Head of Content and PR at Mention, suggests "monitoring your social media handles, your company name, and your website."



How to Track:

I would recommend you track your mentions monthly. You can automate a report with a tool like Moz, BuzzSumo or [SEMrush Brand Monitoring](#).

You can also use tools like HootSuite (paid & free versions available) and Tweetdeck (free) to monitor your social mentions. These tools are good to use to track competitors also.

If you're smaller and on a tight budget, I'd opt [Google Alerts](#). You can set up recipes on IFTTT for free. Some of my favorite recipes include [tracking mentions on Twitter](#) and [Reddit](#).

11. Total Traffic

Total traffic gives you a bird's eye view of the health of your website. It's the big picture.

You can begin to track patterns to see if there's a drop off during a specific day of the week or spike throughout the year.



How to Track:

To measure total traffic, login to ***Google Analytics > Acquisition > All Traffic > Channels.***

12. Email Subscribers

Your email subscribers are your bread and butter for any company. They are often the most engaged users.

Email had a median ROI of [122 percent](#) — that's more than 4x higher than social media, direct mail and paid search.

Just look at [The Kewl Shop's](#). They grew their ecommerce revenues by [22 percent](#) in 12 months with email marketing.

Or, learn how Milk It Academy saw [187 percent](#) increase in revenue from new email subscribers.

As you can see, increasing your email subscribers can lead to higher sales.

There are many email tools you can use to track your email list growth. At SEJ, we use MailChimp. But, there are many others like Aweber and Drip.



How to Track:

If you want to track where your email subscribers are coming from, you can create form submissions in Google Analytics.

Just head over to [Behavior > Events > Overview](#). Under the Event Category column, click on Form. Here, you can view the number of impressions and conversions. Then, click the Event Action.

13. Branded Searches

Branded searches are keywords that include your brand name or a variation of your brand name. For example, In-N-Out, In-N-Out Burgers, In-N-Out fast food, etc.

Branded searches are known for their high conversion rates.

Tom Demers, Co-Founder & Managing Partner at Measured SEM and Cornerstone Content, analyzed 50 companies to find that branded searches were worth [**\\$171 million**](#) per month.

And, Tom Capper, Senior Consultant at Distilled, published a case study on Moz to show that [**branded search volume is correlated to organic search ranking in Google**](#).

I would say that's worth the effort.



How to Track:

To track branded searches, you can measure branded search impressions through Google Search Console.

If you're getting impressions, that means people are searching for your branded terms and may help you understand what's working and what's not with your marketing efforts.

Also, I would recommend tracking direct traffic in Google Analytics. If people are typing your domain name into the search bar, it means people are looking for you.

Lastly, you can [**run a PPC campaign for your branded keyword terms**](#) to gain more accurate impression data.

14. Reviews

Reviews are your businesses social proof.

There's proof that consumers trust each other more than they trust brands. [BrightLocal found](#) that 85 percent of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations.

This is why we're seeing an emergence of Yelp, Google+, Facebook, and Angie's List type of marketing strategies.

Bazaarvoice proved that 50 or more reviews per product can mean a [4.6 percent](#) increase in conversion rates.

To monitor reviews, you can use tools like YOTPO, TrustPilot, BrightLocal, BirdEye, or ReviewTrackers, to name a few.



How to Track:

With a negative review on the first page of Google, there is going to be a loss of revenue.

Harvard Business Review discovered that a one-star increase in Yelp rating leads to a [5-9 percent](#) increase in revenue.

Ryan Erskine, Senior Brand Strategist at BrandYourself, [shares his formula for calculating a bad Yelp review](#).

$$\% \text{ Lost Revenue} = (5 - \text{Star Rating}) * .07$$

So, if you have a 3 star rating, you're 2 stars away from 5.

$$3 * .07 = 0.21$$

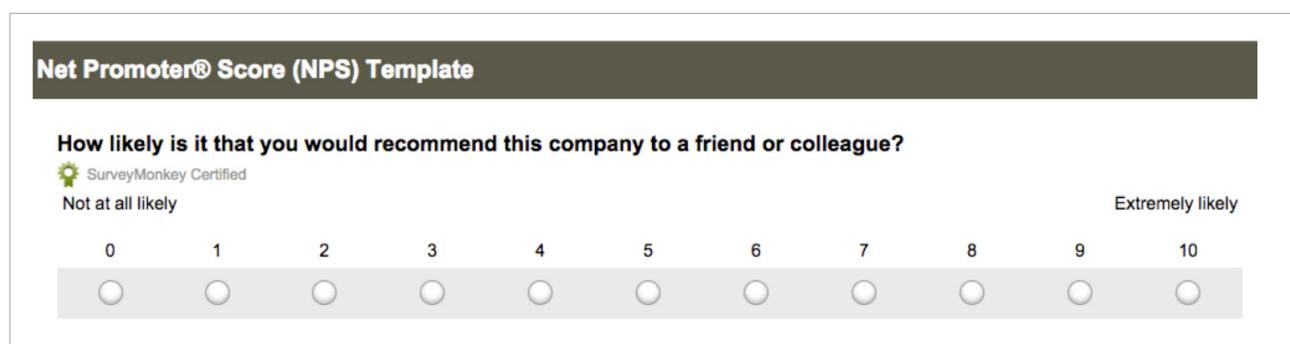
That's 21 percent of lost revenue.

15. Net Promoter Score

Net Promoter Score (NPS) measures customer loyalty with a single question.

On a scale of 0-10, how likely is it that you would recommend our company?

It looks something like this.



Based on the score they give you, they are bucketed into three categories:

1. Promoters: 9-10.
2. Passives: 7-8.
3. Detractors: 6 or below.

Many companies use NPS to learn from their customers. **For example, Mention cut their churn rate in half in two months with NPS surveys.**

And, Airbnb found that customers who an NPS score of 10 were [13 percent](#) more likely to rebook another stay.

Now, the million dollar question: What is a good NPS score?

In a perfect world, your NPS score would be 100. But, that's not reality. A good NPS score depends entirely on your industry. To gauge your NPS score for your industry, [head over to NPS Benchmarks](#).

Here is a look at some of the top companies and their NPS:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Tesla: 97■ Southwest Airlines: 62■ Amazon: 61 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Google: 50■ Microsoft: 34■ United Airlines: 10 |
|---|--|

There are many tools to use to begin gathering your NPS score. Groove uses [Delighted](#). HootSuite uses [Wootric](#). And, Zapier uses [Promoter](#).



How to Track:

To calculate your NPS, subtract the percentage of Detractors from the percentage of Promoters.

$$(\% \text{ of Promoters}) - (\% \text{ of Detractors}) = \text{Net Promoter Score}$$

So, if 60 percent of respondents were Promoters and 30 percent were Detractors, your NPS is a score of 30.

Chapter 3.3:

12 Social Engagement KPIs That Matter



by Mark Traphagen
Senior Director of Brand Evangelism
Stone Temple Consulting

If I say “social media engagement” metrics, what comes to your mind first?

Most likely it will be likes, comments, and shares.

While these certainly are high-level indicators of content engagement, and (presumably) the effectiveness of your social media efforts, they are far from the only metrics you should consider.

This section will help you understand the full spectrum of metrics available to you for evaluating your content and social media marketing, the meaning and importance of each, and how to use and improve them. Few will need to keep track of all these metrics, so choose the mix that gives you the most valuable information.

1. Reach

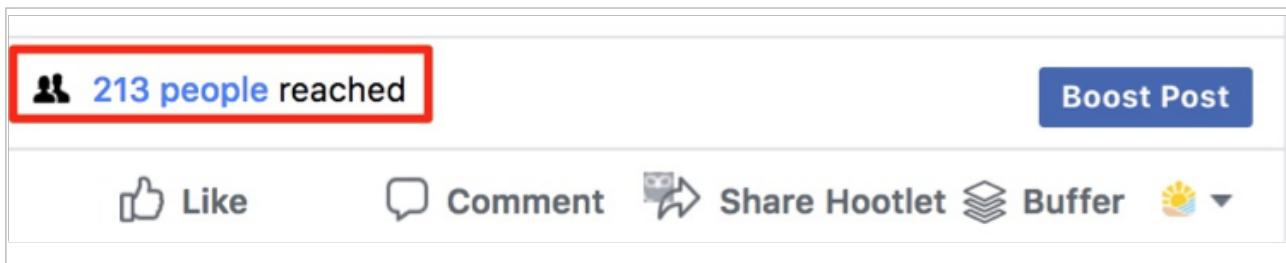
Reach is the total number of unique accounts that were exposed to a social media post. It could also measure the number of unique users exposed to a page/profile, a campaign, a type of post (e.g., video vs. image), or any other segment.



How to Track Reach

How reach is tracked varies by platform, and not all platforms (or types of accounts in a platform), will display this metric. Here's how to find reach for some of the most popular social networks.

Facebook: At the post level, Facebook displays a reach metric at the bottom of each post on your page's home page. This is visible only to those logged in to an account associated with the page.



Clicking on the “people reached” number will open up “Post Insights” with many more metrics for that post.

You can also view the number of people reached for each post on the page’s Insights tab by selecting “Posts” from the left menu on desktop. On the Facebook Pages smartphone app, Insights only shows aggregate metrics for entire page. The desktop Insights “Posts” section lists each published post in reverse chronological order, with reach displayed for both organic and paid versions of the post (if the post has been given a paid boost).

At the Page level, you can see the total reach of all posts from the page for the selected time period on the Insights tab (in the Overview section on desktop). On desktop, clicking on the Reach card takes you to a graph showing the page’s reach over time, segmented by organic and paid.

Twitter: Twitter does not give a reach metric for organic tweets.

LinkedIn: Click your profile avatar at upper right, and select your company’s page from the dropdown menu. (You must be listed as an administrator for the page.)

From the Analytics tab at top, select “Visitors.” The default view shows the total page views for your company page for the last 15 days. Use the dropdown menu to change the view to “Unique visitors,” which is the equivalent of reach for your page.

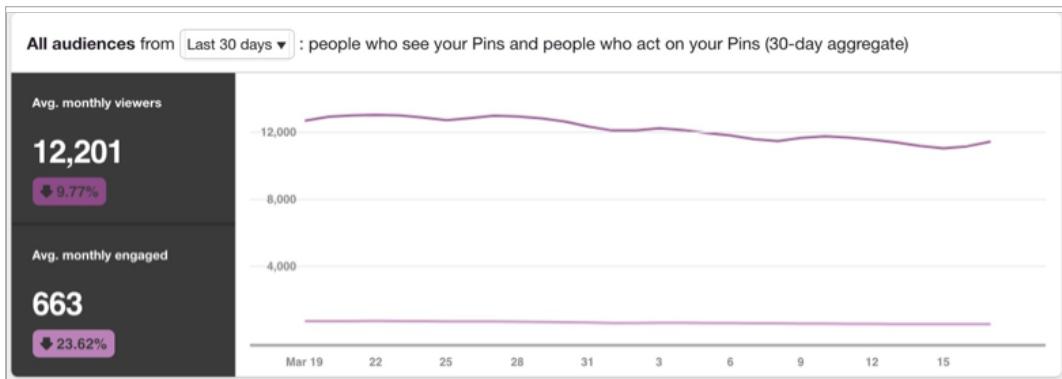
Instagram: On the smartphone app, go to the profile page, and tap the graph icon on the top bar to the right of your account name.

The screenshot shows a Pinterest profile for 'stonetempleconsulting'. At the top, there's a red box highlighting the analytics icon (a bar chart with a clock) in the top right corner of the header. Below the header, it says '4 profile visits in the last 7 days'. Underneath, there are stats: 201 posts, 1,164 followers, and 228 following. Buttons for 'Promote', 'Edit Profile', and a gear icon are also visible. The profile name 'Stone Temple Consulting' is at the bottom.

The Activity tab shows you aggregate metrics for all activity around your account. Scroll down to the “Discovery” section to see reach for the last seven days. You cannot change the time range for this report.

To see reach for an individual post, tap the Content tab, scroll to the post you want to measure, and tap “View Insights.”

Pinterest: Hover over Analytics at upper left, and select “People You Reach” from the dropdown menu. The graph shows the number of viewers of pins from your profile day-by-day for the selected time period. This is your reach. Your reach is also broken down by four different demographic categories.



Pinterest does not display a reach metric for individual pinned posts.



How to Improve Reach

The first thing to decide is whether increasing your reach is a worthwhile goal for your purposes. Reaching more people is not always the most important objective.

Increasing reach typically becomes valuable in two cases:

- Top of funnel or brand awareness campaigns.
- Campaigns where you don't think you've tapped out the potential market.

For paid social campaigns, the fastest ways to increase reach are usually:

- Increase budget.
- Broaden the targeting.

Increasing reach in organic social is harder, but certainly attainable:

- Leverage your audience. Ask your current audience to share your posts with their followers.
- Develop post creative and shared content that your audience will want to share with others.
- Incentivize subscribing to your page, channel, or content.
- Create posts that encourage engagement, a key metric that causes social networks to show your posts to more people. On Facebook, creating conversations around your posts is the most important engagement.

2. Impressions

An impression occurs any time a post appears in a user's feed. Depending on the network, the viewer may or may not be required to actually view the post for an impression to be recorded.



How to Track Reach

How impressions are tracked depends on the platform you are using. Here's how to find impressions for some of the most popular social networks.

Facebook: Only impressions for paid promoted posts are provided. There is no impression metric for organic posts.

Twitter: Click on your profile avatar at upper right and select Analytics from the dropdown menu.

The default view shows your account's total impressions for the past 28 days. To see impressions for individual tweets, click on the "Tweets" tab at the top.

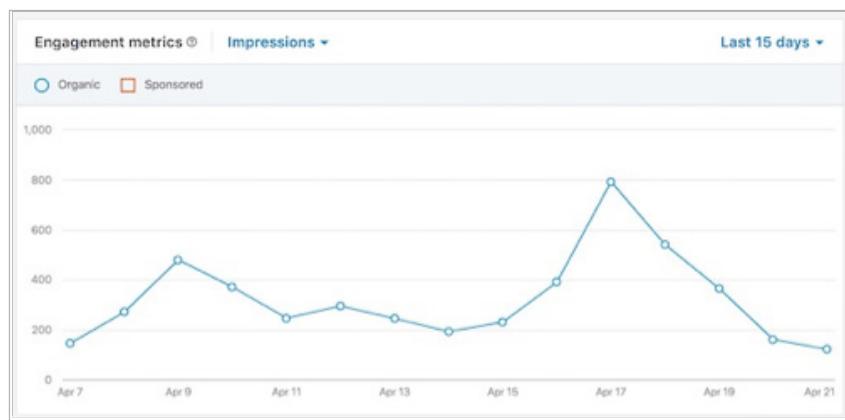
Your tweets are displayed in reverse-chronological order. You can sort by top tweets, tweets and replies (includes any comment tweets you made on one of your original tweets), and promoted (tweets with a paid boost).

On the Tweets tab, you can change the date range and also export the data.

LinkedIn: Click your profile avatar at upper right and select your company's page from the dropdown menu. (You must be listed as an administrator for the page.)

From the Analytics tab at top, select “Visitors.” The default view shows the total page views for your company page for the last 15 days. This is the equivalent of impressions for your page. You can change the date range.

To see impressions for your company page’s individual posts, from the Analytics tab at top select “Updates.” The default view displays a graph of the total impressions for your page’s posts, day-by-day for the past 15 days.



Below that are metrics, including impressions, for each of your page’s posts (called “updates” on LinkedIn).

Instagram: Go to the profile page and tap the graph icon on the top bar to the right of your account name.

The Activity tab shows you aggregate metrics for all activity around your account. Scroll down to the “Discovery” section to see impressions for the last seven days. You cannot change the time range for this report.

Impressions are not displayed for individual posts.

Snapchat: Analytics are only available to select Snapchat Creators with large followings.

Pinterest: Hover over Analytics at upper left, and select “Overview” from the dropdown menu.

The leftmost of the three graphs displays the average daily impressions and actual impressions day-by-day for your profile for the past 30 days.

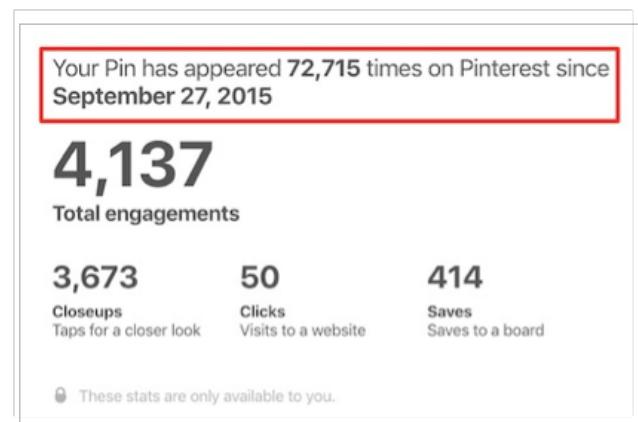
To get more detail on pins from your profile or your profile's associated website, hover over the Analytics tab at top, and select either "Profile" or "Website" from the dropdown menu.

To see impressions for any individual pin on your profile, hover over your profile avatar at upper right and select "My Profile" from the dropdown menu. On the pin you want to evaluate, click the graph icon under the thumbnail image. The number after "Your Pin has appeared..." is the number of impressions for that pin.



How to Improve Impressions

Want more impressions. This KPI is difficult to improve because you have little control over the things that affect it. Generally, the things you do to increase reach should also increase impressions (see the previous section).



3. Shares/Retweets

A share on social media occurs any time a user intentionally shares one of your posts with his or her own audience. A Retweet is what a share is called on Twitter.



How to Track Shares and Retweets

How shares are tracked depends on the platform you are using. Here's how to find shares or retweets for some of the most popular social networks.

Facebook: You can see the total number of shares at the bottom of any post.

A screenshot of a Facebook post for "Sign the Petition: Pass Laws to Prevent School Shootings". The post has 286 comments, 454 shares, and 1.4M views. The "Shares" count is highlighted with a red box.

To view all your share metrics, navigate to the Page's profile, and click the Insights tab. Then click "Posts" in the left navigation menu.

To see the number of shares for each post by itself, you have to click on the down arrow after "Reactions, Comments & Shares" (which are lumped together in the default view), and select "Reactions / Comments / Shares" from the dropdown menu.

A screenshot of the Facebook Insights interface. A dropdown menu is open under "Reactions, Comments & Shares" with the option "Reactions / Comments / Shares" selected. Other options like "Post Clicks / Reactions, Comments & Shares" and "Engagement Rate" are also visible.

Now engagement metrics will be broken out into those three types for each post. The graph bar and number in lavender is the number of shares for each post.

A screenshot of a Twitter post from "9:10 AM - 9 Apr 2018". It shows 10 retweets and 16 likes. The retweet count is highlighted with a red box.

Twitter: You can see the number of retweets on any of your tweets In your profile at the bottom of each tweet.

To view all your retweet metrics, click on your profile avatar at upper right, and select Analytics from the dropdown menu. Then click on "Tweets" from the top navigation.

In Twitter analytics, retweets are lumped in with all other engagements in the overview. To see the number of shares for an individual tweet, click on "View Tweet Activity" in that tweets listing.

There all the engagement types, including retweets, are listed separately with their metrics for that tweet.

LinkedIn: Click your profile avatar at upper right, and select your company's page from the dropdown menu. (You must be listed as an administrator for the page.)

From the Analytics tab at top, select "Updates." Now above the graph, click on "Impressions" and select "Shares" from the dropdown menu.

The graph displays total shares for any of your page's updates (posts), day-by-day for the time period selected (the past 15 days by default). The table below that displays metrics for each update, but shares is lumped into "engagements."

Instagram: Instagram does not provide any share metrics.

Pinterest: Hover over Analytics at upper left, and select "Overview" from the dropdown menu. On Pinterest, shares are known as either "pins" or "saves."

You can see the number of pins by either boards or your individual pins, using the top navigation menu on your analytics page. Under the "boards" tab, each board shows the total number of pins made from that board, while on the "pins" tab you must click the graph icon to see the number of "saves" for each pin.



How to Improve Shares/Retweets

The best way to improve your number of shares or retweets is to create posts and/or share content that is highly shareable. In other words, posts that your audience will make your audience feel highly motivated to share.

According to a [study](#) by social metrics company Buzzsumo, posts gaining high numbers of shares tend to have **at least one of these characteristics:**

- Long form rather than short form
- Have at least one image
- Invoke awe, laughter or amusement
- List or infographic
- Trustworthy in appearance (including trusted source)
- Shared by at least one influencer

The New York Times commissioned a study that revealed the following **psychological reasons behind sharing on social media:**

- Bring valuable and entertaining content to friends
- Define themselves to others
- Grow and nourish relationships
- Self-fulfillment (to feel more involved in the world)
- Promote causes they care about

To be worthwhile, your posts and content still have to be associated with your business goals. The trick is to do that in ways your audience will want to share.

4. Likes/Reactions/Favorites

Likes, reactions, and favorites are names given (depending on the network) to the simplest, one-click engagements users can have with a social media post. Generally, they are a simple way of indicating approval or interest in what was posted.



How to Track Likes/Reaction/Favorites

Here is how to track likes, reactions, or favorites on several of the most popular social networks:

Facebook: A few years ago Facebook changed from offering only “likes” of a post to a range of “reactions” – “like,” “love,” “haha,” “wow,” “sad,” and “angry.”

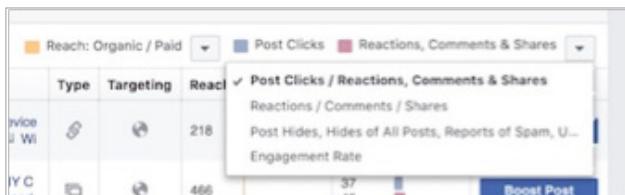
You must be logged into an account that is connected with a business page in order to see most of the metrics for that account. However, any user can see the number of reactions for any Page post in their news feed on both desktop and the smartphone app.



To get more detailed metrics on reactions, log into an account associated with a business page, and navigate to that page.

Select Insights from the top navigation menu, then “Posts” from the left navigation menu.

To see the number of reactions for each post by itself, you have to click on the down arrow after “Reactions, Comments & Shares” (which are lumped together in the default view), and select “Reactions / Comments / Shares” from the dropdown menu.



Now engagement metrics will be broken out into those three types for each post.

The graph bar and number in dark purple is the number of reactions for each post.

If you click on the title of a post in that list, the “Post Details” popover will show you a breakdown of the number of reactions by each reaction type.

Twitter: You can see the number of favorites on any of your tweets in your profile at the bottom of each tweet.



To view all your favorites metrics, click on your profile avatar at upper right, and select Analytics from the dropdown menu.

Then click on “Tweets” from the top navigation.

In Twitter analytics, favorites are lumped in with all other engagements in the overview. To see the number of shares for an individual tweet, click on “View Tweet Activity” in that tweet’s listing. There all the engagement types, including favorites, are listed separately with their metrics for that tweet.

NOTE: Twitter analytics still uses the older designation of “likes” for favorites.

LinkedIn: Click your profile avatar at upper right, and select your company’s page from the dropdown menu. (You must be listed as an administrator for the page.)

From the Analytics tab at top, select “Updates.” Above the graph, click on “Impressions” and select “Likes.” The graph now displays the number of likes on your page’s posts (updates) day-by-day for the selected time period (default view is the past 15 days).

Below the graph is a listing of all recent updates. If you click the title of a post in that list, the post opens and you can see the number of likes at the bottom of the post.

Instagram: Instagram does not provide any share metrics.

Pinterest: Pinterest has no equivalent of a like or favorite.



How to Improve Likes/Reactions/Favorites

Likes, reactions, and favorites have the lowest barrier of all social engagements. That is, it takes little effort to bestow them, and therefore they are often given without much thought.

So the primary way to increase such engagements is to pay attention to what types of content from both you and your competitors (or others in your vertical) get the most likes and try to create more posts of a similar fashion.

5. Comments/Replies

Comments and replies are responses to an original post from other users, usually appearing with and under that post.



How to Track Comments/Replies

Here is how to track comments or replies on several of the most popular social networks:

Facebook: Any user can see the number of comments for any Page post in their news feed on both desktop and the smartphone app. It appears at the bottom of any Page post.

Sign the Petition: Pass Laws to Prevent School Shootings
Extreme risk protection orders might have prevented the mass shooting in Parkland. Sign the petition now to demand states take action!
[Sign Up](#)

3.5K 286 Comments 454 Shares 1.4M Views

To view all comment metrics for a page you administer, navigate to the Page's profile, and click the Insights tab. Then click "Posts" in the left navigation menu.

Type	Targeting	Reach
218		218
466		466

To see the number of comments for each post by itself, you have to click on the down arrow after "Reactions, Comments & Shares" (which are lumped together in the default view), and select "Reactions / Comments / Shares" from the dropdown menu.

Now engagement metrics will be broken out into those three types for each post. The graph bar and number in pink is the number of shares for each post.

Twitter: You can see the number of comments on any of your tweets In your profile at the bottom of each tweet.



To view all your replies metrics, click on your profile avatar at upper right, and select Analytics from the dropdown menu. Then click on “Tweets” from the top navigation.

In Twitter analytics, replies are lumped in with all other engagements in the overview. To see the number of replies for an individual tweet, click on “View Tweet Activity” in that tweet’s listing. There all the engagement types, including replies, are listed separately with their metrics for that tweet.

LinkedIn: Click your profile avatar at upper right, and select your company’s page from the dropdown menu. (You must be listed as an administrator for the page.)

From the Analytics tab at top, select “Updates.” From the Analytics tab at top, select “Updates.” Above the graph, click on “Impressions” and select “Comments.” The graph now displays the number of comments on your page’s posts (updates) day-by-day for the selected time period (default view is the past 15 days).

Below the graph you’ll find a listing of your page’s posts (“updates” on LinkedIn). The “Social Actions” metric includes comments on each post, but unfortunately comments cannot be separated out from other social actions, such as commenting or sharing.

However, if you click the title of a post in that list, the post opens, and you can see the number of comments at the bottom of the post.

Instagram: Instagram does not provide any aggregated comments metrics for accounts. If you click on an individual post, you can see the number of comments for that post.

Pinterest: Pinterest provides no profile-level metrics on comments. Click on any individual pin, and then click the “comments” tab on the pin to see how many comments were left.

Tracking all of your shares, reactions/comments across different social media manually is very time-consuming. You can get a bird's-eye view of your social media performance by using third party tools for analytics like [SEMrush Social Media Tracker](#) and Hootsuite. On top of that, these tools can give you an opportunity to compare your performance against your competitors.



How to Improve Comments/Replies

Comments and replies happen most often on posts that:

- Express a strong opinion
- Engage users' emotions
- Get people thinking

If you're mostly posting links to external content, it's likely you're getting few to no comments. Even when posting a link, try asking a good question or expressing an opinion about the shared content.

6. Link Clicks

A link click occurs when someone clicks on an external link in a social media post.



How to Track Link Clicks

Link clicks is the first of our social media metrics that can be tracked from your sites own analytics. In Google Analytics, go to **Acquisition > All Traffic > Channels** and click on '**Social**' in the Default Channel Grouping. Here '**Sessions**' is roughly equivalent to click-through traffic from each social network.

Under Acquisition, there is also a Social section where you can get even more detail on your social media traffic.

Here is how to track link clicks on several of the most popular social networks:

Facebook: To view all click metrics for a page you administer, navigate to the Page's profile, and click the Insights tab. Then click "Posts" in the left navigation menu.

Facebook provides no aggregate link click metrics for organic posts from a page. In the list of recent posts on the Posts Insight tab, you can see the number of link clicks for each post. Clicks show as a blue bar graph above the engagement bar, with the associated number of clicks for that post.



Twitter: To view all your click metrics, click on your profile avatar at upper right, and select Analytics from the dropdown menu. Then click on “Tweets” from the top navigation.

Twitter analytics provides no aggregated click data for an account. To see the number of link clicks for an individual tweet, click on “View Tweet Activity” in that tweet’s listing. There all the engagement types, including link clicks, are listed separately with their metrics for that tweet.

LinkedIn: Click your profile avatar at upper right, and select your company’s page from the dropdown menu. (You must be listed as an administrator for the page.)

From the Analytics tab at top, select “Updates.” Above the graph, click on “Impressions” and select “Clicks.” The graph now displays clicks on your page’s posts (updates) day-by-day for the selected time period (default view is the past 15 days).

Below the graph is a listing of all recent updates, which includes a click metric for each.

Instagram: Instagram does not provide any click metrics since external links are not allowed in Instagram posts. You can have one clickable link in your account profile. If you want to track traffic from that if it links to a page on your own site, I recommend creating a link with a custom UTM tag and then running it through a link shortening service (such as bit.ly) before posting.

Pinterest: Hover over Analytics at top left and select “Profile.” In the top navigation on the profile analytics page, click on “Clicks.”

The graph shows the total number of clicks resulting in traffic to the website associated with the profile, day-by-day for the selected date range.

Below the graph you can see click metrics for the most-clicked pins and most-clicked boards in the past 30 days.

To see all pins and sort by clicks to find the clickthrough ranking of your pins, select a timeframe and then click the “Export Data” button.



How to Improve Link Clicks

First, include clickable links in your posts (where appropriate)! Even if your post is not sharing a specific piece of content, you might be able to include a link to some related content on your site that would be helpful to your followers.

Also, don't be afraid to share your linked content repeatedly; just be careful about how you space out your shares. On a network like Twitter, where posts have a very brief life and (unless they go viral) are probably not seen by the majority of your followers, you can repost a little more often. On Facebook, where the algorithm can bring up almost any of your recent posts any time, and where posts get recycled in news feeds if they continue to get engagement, you need to be a little more conservative.

Call attention to the link in your posts by putting it into a call to action statement, and perhaps pointing to it with emoji or special text (>>>).

Use open graph (OG) tags on your site's content pages so that the linked image in social shares is attractive and enticing. Use Twitter Cards so when people share a link to your comment on Twitter, your post's featured image and title are prominently displayed.

7. Most Popular Content

Popular content is the content from a network profile that has the most user engagement. Typically, it is calculated using a score from several engagement metrics combined. In some cases, a network may provide a listing of “top” or “most popular” posts without disclosing how that is scored.



How to Track Popular Content

Here is how to track your most popular content on several of the most popular social networks:

Facebook: Facebook provides no “most popular posts” list in its online Insights feature, nor does it allow you sort posts by engagement metrics there. You can, however, download your post metrics into a spreadsheet and then sort by one of the engagement columns.

To view download post metrics for a page you administer, log into the associated account, navigate to the Page’s profile, and click the Insights tab. On the Overview tab, click the “Export Data” button. Select “Post Data” as the data type, and “Post Engagement” as the Layout. Click the Export Data button.

Twitter: Click on your profile avatar at upper right, and select Analytics from the dropdown menu. Then click on “Tweets” from the top navigation.

Clicking on “Top Tweets” below the graph will display your most-engaged tweets for the selected time period. Click the Export Data button to download the metrics to a spreadsheet, where you can sort by total engagement, engagement rate, or individual engagements such as likes or retweets.

LinkedIn: Click your profile avatar at upper right and select your company's page from the dropdown menu. (You must be listed as an administrator for the page.)

From the Analytics tab at top, select "Updates." Above the graph, click on "Impressions" and select "Social Engagement %."

Below the graph is a listing of all recent updates with "social actions" and "engagement rate" among the metrics. To sort the updates by one of those metrics to find your most popular updates, click the "Export report" button and download to a spreadsheet.

Instagram: Instagram does not provide any most popular lists for business profiles.

Pinterest: To view the most-saved pins from your business profile, log into a Pinterest business profile. Hover over Analytics at top left and select "Profile." In the top navigation on the profile analytics page, click on "Saves."

Below the graph you can see the most-saved pins and boards that had the most-saved pins in the past 30 days.

To see all pins and sort by "saves" to find the most popular, select a timeframe, then click the Export Data button.



How to Improve Most Popular Content

Since most popular content is really more of a ranking than a metric, you cannot "improve" it. But you should monitor your most popular posts to learn what kind of posts and content best engage your audience.

8. Social Referral Traffic

Social referral traffic is any traffic to your site that originates from a social media site.



How to Track Social Referral Traffic

Social referral traffic differs from all the metrics we've discussed so far in that you can only track it from analytics on your own site. Why? Because traffic isn't a "referral" until it reaches your site.

In this section I will give instructions for viewing social referral traffic using Google Analytics. If you use some other analytics platform, you may be able to find equivalent metrics to what I discuss.

To see which networks refer the most traffic: In Google Analytics, go to **Acquisition > Social > Network Referrals**. This report will show you the number of sessions (unique visits) that came from each of Google Analytics' recognized social network sources. For each, you can see the number of page views, average session duration, and pages per session.

To break out the top pages that receiving traffic from each network, click the network you want to view.

To see which pages on your site drew the most social traffic: In Google Analytics, go to **Acquisition > Social > Landing Pages**. This report is sorted by the pages on your site that received the most traffic from social networks recognized by Google Analytics.

To break out the top networks that referred traffic to each landing page, click the landing page URL.

Viewing social referrals by the social channel: You can also view social media referral metrics in the Channels report under **Acquisition > All Traffic**. The Social channel will display in the Default Channel Grouping. Click on Social to see the metrics broken out by social network.



How to Improve Social Referral Traffic

Social referral traffic should improve as you improve all of the metrics discussed above, as it is a function of all of those. **The better your overall social performance is, the more traffic you should get from social sites.**

You must be linking to content on your site in many of your social posts if you expect to see traffic from social.

Other ways to increase social referral traffic:

- Place social share buttons on your content to encourage others to share it to social media.
- Use “click-to-tweet” links in your site content with tweetable quotes that people can share to Twitter with one click.
- Build relationships with relevant influencers who will share your posts and content with their social audiences.

9. Conversions/Leads/Purchases

A social conversion is any action from a user of a social network that results in a desired action related to a defined goal. A social lead is contact information from a qualified prospect for your business that was gained via a social post. A purchase is completion of a transaction to buy a product or service that originated from a social network.

For simplicity's sake, I will refer to "conversions" throughout the rest of this section, as leads and purchases are both types of conversions. Of course, a conversion could be other things as well, such as a download of an asset, completing a contact form, registering for a course or event, etc.



How to Track Social Media Conversions

A full guide to tracking and improving conversions would be a book in itself, so I will provide just the basics here.

Conversions are generally tracked via your site's analytics, although with paid campaigns on some social networks, it is possible to track certain conversions via the social network's analytics, if the network enables you to plant a tracking pixel on your site.

The Conversions section of Google Analytics is quite complex and non-intuitive, so for this guide I'll stick to more basic tracking using other parts of GA.

The most basic step for tracking conversions via Google Analytics is setting up Goals. A Goal is a specified action you want a site visitor to accomplish. A Goal Conversion occurs whenever a visitor completes a Goal.

Goals are created in the Admin section of Google Analytics, under the Views column. Click on Goals, then the New Goal button. The Goal Setup wizard will guide you through setting up your goal. It is very important to give the Goal a name that clearly identifies it, as you will implement and track it by that name throughout Google Analytics.

Conversion Type	Count	Value
Contact Requests (Goal 1 Conversion Rate)	319	\$1,595.
1.54% Avg for View: 1.54% (0.00%)	% of Total: 100.00% (319)	% of Total: 100.00% (\$1,595)
1.58% 155 (48.59%)	\$775.00 (48)	
2.00% 80 (25.08%)	\$400.00 (25)	
1.38% 42 (13.17%)	\$210.00 (13)	

Once your goal is created, you can see it in many different reports throughout Google Analytics. For example, here is the Conversions section of the Channels report in the Acquisition section.

Notice the dropdown box at the top. Use that to select the particular goal you want to view.

By properly setting up goals, you can track the source of conversions on your site for not only social media referrals, but any other kind of traffic as well.



How to Improve Conversions

As with conversion tracking, conversion optimization is a whole science to itself and beyond the scope of this guide. There are many excellent books, blog posts, and courses that can teach you how to increase the rate of conversions on your site.

10. Optimal Days/Times for Engagement

When it comes to engagement on social media, not all days or times are equal. In most cases, you will get the most reach and engagement for your social posts on days of the week and times of day when more of your audience is online and on social networks.

Warning: I am highly suspect of the value of studies that purport to show the best days or times to post on social networks. While such studies can be useful for getting a general feel for the most active times on various networks, ultimately you need to gather your own stats for your own unique audience.

Automated post timing. Some posting services attempt to automatically determine the best times to post to your social accounts. Some examples are [SEMrush's Social Media Poster](#) and Hootsuite's auto scheduling.

Finding YOUR best posting times. Use the analytics of each of your social networks to analyze when your audience is most active. Here is how to do that on the networks that provide this insight:

Facebook: On the Insights tab of your business page, go to Posts in the left navigation menu. The chart and graph at the top show the days and times when most of your page's fans are on the network.

Twitter: Twitter Analytics does not provide handy day of the week and time of day charts as Facebook does, but from the Tweets tab you can see over time when there were peaks and lulls in your tweet engagement. Look for patterns of days that seem to get higher engagement.

For a better analysis, try Followerwonk. On the Analysis tab, enter your Twitter handle and select “analyze their followers.” Once the report generates, you can find a graph of the hours your followers are most active.

Instagram: Tap the chart icon at upper right to go to analytics. Tap Audience and scroll down to the Followers section. Here you'll see simple charts of when your followers are active, by day of the week and hour of day.

Using Google Analytics: Go to ***Acquisitions > Social > Network Referrals***.

Set the time span to a long enough time to get sufficient results. (I recommend three months.) Set the graph to “Day.” Mouse over the graph to see on what days the peaks and valleys typically occur. You can click on any of the social networks listed that have sufficient sessions and do the same to get a day-of-the-week analysis for those networks.

11. Followers

Followers on social media are social accounts that subscribe in some fashion to your page/profile and its posts. They are generally the users most likely to receive your content organically.



How to Track Followers

Here is how to track followers on some of the most popular social networks:

Facebook: On Facebook the primary followers of a page are traditionally known as “fans.” These are users who have at some point clicked a Like button for your page. Users can also “follow” a page, which is a way of subscribing to a page without registering as a fan. However, in Facebook Insights, fans and followers are lumped together as just “followers.”

Navigate to the page and click the Insights tab, then “Followers” from the left navigation. There you will see a series of charts displaying your follower activity over time:

- Total page followers
- Net followers (displays number of followers gained and lost over time)
- Where your page followers happened (shows what users were doing when they became followers)

Twitter: To see the growth of your Twitter following over time, click on the account avatar at upper right, and select “Analytics” from the dropdown menu. Now click on the Audiences tab.

The default view on the Audiences tab is “your followers.” At the top you’ll see a graph of your follower count day-by-day over the past 30 days. For a more detailed and lengthier view of your following, try a third-party tool such as twittercounter.com.

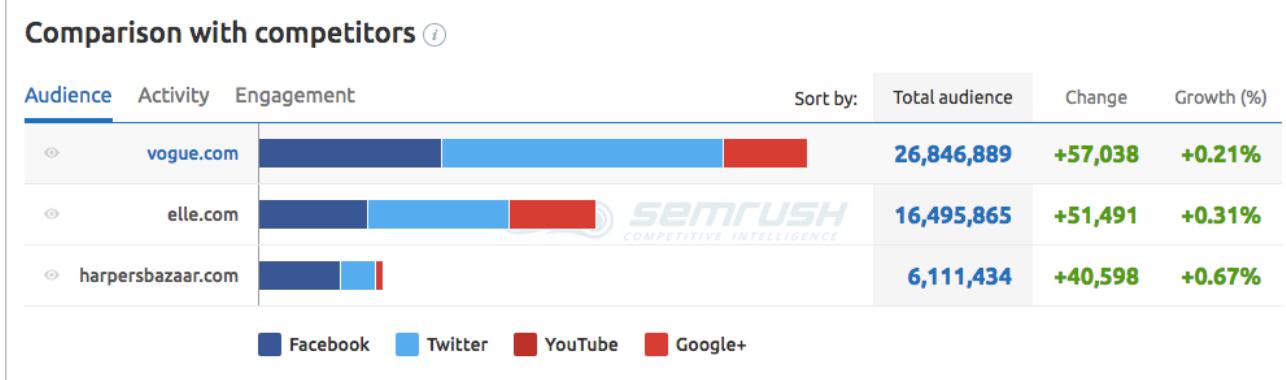
LinkedIn: Navigate to the page from your profile avatar. Click on Analytics and select “Followers” from the dropdown menu.

Above the graph you’ll find the total follower count for your page, the number of organic followers gained over the past 30 days, and the number of acquired followers (gained through paid promotions). The graph shows a day-by-day number of followers gained over the specified time period. You can export the report to a spreadsheet for deeper analysis.

Instagram: On the profile for your business account, tap the chart icon at upper right to go to analytics. Select Audience. This tab displays your total follower count to date, and how many followers you gained this 7-day period vs. the previous 7 days.

Pinterest: Log into your Pinterest business profile. Hover over Analytics at top left and select “People you reach.” Change the “All audiences” button to “Your followers.” The graph shows how many of your followers viewed and engaged with your pins day-by-day over the selected time span. Pinterest does not display metrics for follower growth.

Utilizing third-party analytics tools like Hootsuite or [SEMrush Social Media Tracker](#) is a convenient way of tracking your social fans' growth across different social media networks at once.



How to Improve Followers

The best way to grow your follower count is to be awesome! Create content that people want to share with others. Engage regularly with your current followers, seeking to turn them into evangelists for your brand and page.

12. Audience Demographics

Audience demographics are a set of metrics describing various characteristics of your audience – things like location, age, gender, income, lifestyle, and more. These insights can help you to create better targeted content and social posts.



How to Track Audience Demographics

Here is how to track followers on some of the most popular social networks:

Facebook: Navigate to your page and click the Insights tab, then “People” from the left navigation.

At the top of the People tab are four tabs describing different segments of your audience:

1. Your fans (people who Liked your page)
2. Your followers (people who follow your page's content)
3. People reached (people who saw any of your content, whether or not they are followers or fans)
4. People engaged (anyone who engaged in any way with your content)

For each segment, the tab displays **the following metrics**:

- The percent of people in that segment in each age group, by male and female
- The top countries in which those people live
- The top cities in which those people live
- The top languages spoken by those people

For much more in-depth demographics, create a Facebook Ad account (if you don't already have one) and add a Facebook pixel to your site. The pixel will begin accumulating data from Facebook users who visit your site. The audience reports in the Facebook Ad Manager provide an astounding amount of information about your site visitors. You do not have to purchase any Facebook ads to use this feature.

Twitter: Click on the account avatar at upper right and select “Analytics” from the dropdown menu. Now click on the Audiences tab.

You can view data for three different audiences:

- Your followers (the default view)
- All Twitter users
- Your organic audience (people who have engaged with your tweets, whether or not they follow you)

For each audience, you can see their most popular interests, the gender mix, household income, consumer buying styles, marital status, home ownership vs renters, and their most popular wireless carriers. The Your Followers segment offers even more demographic categories.

LinkedIn: Navigate to the page from your profile avatar. Click on Analytics and select “Followers” from the dropdown menu.

Below the graph you’ll see some rudimentary demographics for your page’s followers. Click on “Geography” to change to five other categories: Job Function, Seniority, Industry, Company Size and Employment Status.

Instagram: On the profile for your business account, tap the chart icon at upper right to go to analytics. Select Audience. This tab displays a few basic demographics about your followers, including gender mix, age range, top locations, and time of day and days of week most active.

Pinterest: Hover over Analytics at top left and select “People you reach.” Below the graph you can see the top countries, metro locations, languages and gender for your audience.



How to Use Audience Demographics

Audience demographics based on data can be the most effective way to build personas to inform your content and social media marketing strategies. They can also help you know if you're actually reaching your target audience.

If your demographics isn't matching up with what you perceive of the most likely prospects for your business, then it's time to work on new creative and content strategies that will appeal more to the audience you're missing. The data may also awaken you to new opportunities.

Chapter 3.4:

Top 10 User Engagement KPIs to Measure



by **Maddy Osman**

Founder & SEO Copywriter
The Blogsmith

In today's low-attention economy, site engagement can be considered an indicator of your website's success.

Content engagement metrics are important because they show how your content strategy aligns with user interest. Furthermore, customer engagement is related with overall profitability, as engaged users are more likely to buy, become repeat customers, and share the product/service with other people.

Before you decide on the specific user engagement metrics you want to track, you have to determine which ones make the most sense for your business.

Here are some of the most common (and most important) user engagement metrics.

1. Pageviews

Pageviews, sessions, and users are the most common metrics used to indicate traffic on your website. Pageviews are the most basic of all user engagement metrics, measuring an instance of a user visiting a particular page on your website.

Measuring pageviews can help you to understand how often people visit your website. A higher number can be assumed to be an indicator of interest and/or good SEO practices, since search engines are often the biggest drivers of traffic to websites.

Conversely, pageviews can also indicate that people are poking around your website because they can't find anything. Pageviews show traffic but without tying in the context of other related metrics, they can't help you to fully understand the meaning behind these numbers.



How to Track Pageviews

You can use Google Analytics to track most user engagement metrics. It is perhaps the most comprehensive free analytics software tool available.

You can find pageview metrics under **Audience > Overview**, and selecting a relevant time period.

Aside from pageviews showing how many people visited your website over a given period of time, pageview analysis can also be used to show whether website changes (i.e. a new layout, an online ad campaign, etc) are performing as expected.

As a simple rule of thumb, **when your pageviews increase, it means that the changes you implemented must be working – at least in terms of driving traffic.**



How to Optimize/Improve Pageviews

An increase in pageviews can be an indicator of good SEO practices.

Some things you can do to increase pageviews:

- **Provide a good user experience:** Ensure your website loads fast. Users tend to abandon websites that do not load in 2-3 seconds. To improve site load speed, consider the implications of your design on usability, categorize content so it is easily found, and make sure that your website/content is mobile-optimized – since more than half of the world accesses the internet from their mobile phones.

- **Give your visitors interesting content to click on:** Create viral content, but back it up by making it worth people's time (not clickbait). Use SEO best practices, like keyword research and internal linking of related content, to make sure that content is found and read. Break long posts into series and feature popular posts prominently.
- **Promote your website:** Get the word out on social media, guest blogging, and related forums.

2. Time on Page

With so many websites churning out content on a regular basis, gaining an understanding of how much time people actually spend on your content has become an important user engagement metric.

There are two ways to look at time spent:

- **Micro view:** time spent on page
- **Macro view:** the average session duration or average time spent on site

It's fairly straightforward: the time spent on page user engagement metric measures the time a user spends on a page on your website.

This metric provides an indication of interest.

For example, the average person reads at a rate of about 200-250 words per minute. If you have articles that are 2,100 words long (the optimal blog post length, as found by [Medium](#)) and a visitor only spent 10 seconds on that page, you can be sure that they weren't very interested in the content.

Average Session Duration (formerly known as Average Time Spent on Site) measures the length of an average session (Session Duration), over a specific time period, divided by the total number of sessions over a specific time period.

Session refers to a group of user interactions with your website. The average session duration refers to the total time spent on your website. This is different from time spent on page because it tracks all the activity a visitor has completed on your website versus tracking just the time spent on a certain page.



How to Track Time Spent

You can use Google Analytics to track how much time people spend on your website. You can find both average session duration metrics under the 'Acquisition' tab.

Google Analytics tracks page activities using timestamps every time a page loads or when an activity triggers more events. This is measured by looking at the difference between when the first event occurred compared to the next.

For example: if a page was viewed at 9:23 am and the next one was viewed at 9:26 am, the time spent on page for the first page is 3 minutes.

The problem with using timestamps to track activity is that it cannot track the time spent on the exit page. The exit page is the last page the visitor sees before they exit the website completely.

This means that if a visitor spends 5 minutes on your website but does not visit another page, Google Analytics has no way of knowing or recording this. So if someone only visited one page and exited it, Google Analytics records the session duration as 0 – regardless of how much time they actually spent on your website.

Thus, the values of average session duration and time spent on page reported are usually lower than what they actually are and should not be taken at face value. Instead, look at the distribution of session duration data to have a better idea of the typical session – and remove outliers.

What Counts Toward Time Spent?

Many people wonder about what exactly counts toward the time spent on site user engagement metric. Website parking occurs when you open a tab and leave it open to read later on.

The answer is that it depends on how the Google Analytics code is triggered and how fast it is sent to Google Analytics. Additionally, Google [answers](#), “By default, a session lasts until there's 30 minutes of inactivity, but you can adjust this limit so a session lasts from a few seconds to several hours”.

A similar question you may have: does watching video count toward time on site? The answer? Yes! Google Analytics tracks interaction events, or events where a user interacted with the website.



How to Optimize/Improve Time Spent on Page

Because every website is different (in terms of industry, size, optimization), you should focus on comparing your current website statistics to your own past data.

Choose a specific time frame (a year is recommended) and use Google Analytics advanced filtering options to determine which pages receive the most traffic, consistently.

Make your way to **Behavior > Content Drilldown**.

On the Primary Dimension field, choose Page. Then, make your way to the Advanced filtering option. Choose to filter by **Unique Pageviews**, then choose a number to match up against.

The screenshot shows the Google Analytics Advanced Filter interface. The primary dimension is set to 'Page'. The secondary dimension is set to 'Unique Pageviews'. The filter condition is 'Greater than' with the value '50'. There is also an 'and' button and a '+ Add a dimension or metric' button.

You'll see the average time spent on page change.

If you know that your average blog post is about 500 words, and your readers spend between 1-2 minutes reading them, then you're in a good range. But if they spend less time on the page, then analyze what could be making them exit prematurely: is it your writing style? Does your page take a long time to load?



How to Optimize/Improve Average Session Duration

Session durations are a little harder to optimize. Because it measures more of a macro view, there are different considerations than that of time spent on page.

For one, you need to consider the overall user experience on your site. This includes:

- The variety and value of content on your site
- Ease of navigation on your site and user site experience
- Clear calls-to-action (CTAs)

If you're able to optimize these three things, you may see average session duration rise.

3. Bounce Rate

Closely related to time spent is the bounce rate. A common trend observed is that the bounce rate is inversely proportional to the average session duration: as the bounce rate increases, the average session duration decreases.

The bounce rate is the percentage of visitors to a website that exit after only viewing one page. The bounce rate gives an indication of how good your content is, because if people are leaving without taking action, then your content isn't doing its job.

People may bounce for several reasons:

- Your CTA/offer isn't clear.
- Your content/offer isn't what they expected.
- They got bored.
- You're not offering something different.

While it is important to measure how engaged your visitors are, **it's also important to measure how unengaged your visitors are.** You might have high traffic numbers but if you also have high bounce rates, this means your content isn't engaging enough to make website visitors stick around.



How to Track Bounce Rate

In Google Analytics, go to **Behavior > Site Content > All Pages.** You will see a column for Bounce Rate.



How to Improve Bounce Rate

Look at your pages with high engagement and low bounce rates. Try to determine what you did right on the page that could be applied to other pages.

Similar to Average Session Duration, some specific ways you can lower bounce rates:

- **Produce great content and use internal linking** to get people interested in clicking through to other related pages on your website.
- **Deliver on your content.** Be reliable, helpful, and memorable.

- Use clear CTAs.
- Provide a great user experience: no pop-up ads, audio, or automatic video playback.

4. Top Exit Pages

Exit pages are the last pages accessed before leaving a website. The exit rate measures the percentage of people that leave your website from the exit page.

The exit pages (and subsequently, the exit rates) are related to bounce rates in that they both consider the last pages a visitor goes to on a website. The main difference between these user engagement metrics? The bounce rate takes into consideration the number of visitors that exit your website after visiting a single page.

Calculating the exit rate can be helpful, especially when your website encourages customers to follow a certain path (the buyer's journey). Knowing your top exit pages can help you make sense of why your exit rate is the way it is.

Some pages are designed to have high exit rates, like your contact page, or a "Thank You" page. When a page is designated as an exit page, a high exit rate indicates that customers completed the desired action.

A high exit rate on a non-exit page can be caused by:

- Poorly organized information on your website (hierarchical issues).
- Missing CTA (so the person just exits the website).
- Overwhelming amount of information.
- Lacking/Missing information.



How to Track Exit Pages

Exit pages can be determined by going to **Behavior > Site Content > Exit Pages** on Google Analytics.

There, you'll see the number of exits, the number of pageviews, and the exit rate (% Exit). To calculate the exit rate, divide the number of times a visitor exits a particular page by the total number of page views.

It's worth noting that a high exit rate is correlated to time on page values that vary a lot, and can in fact, contribute to bloated data.



How to Optimize/Improve Top Exit Pages

Carefully plan your user flow/journey so that you can plan for which pages should have high exit rates.

Since top exit pages and exit rates are related to bounce rates, to optimize them, you have to:

- Improve your content
- Improve site usability/information organization
- Have clear CTAs

5. Pages per Session

Another way of measuring interest in your content is pages per session, or the number of unique page visits per session.

From a business perspective, the higher the pages per session metric, the better. This is because a high pages per session count shows that your website visitors looked around and visited more than one page – truly engaging with your website.

Bounce rates are similar to pages per session, but while bounce rates look at the next step (or page), pages per session looks at the **whole path** the visitor follows.



How to Track Exit Pages

Go to **Acquisition > All Traffic > Channels** on Google Analytics. You'll see a column for **Pages/Session**.

To calculate the number of pages per session, take the sum of the number of pages each user visited and divide it by the total number of sessions.

A high value of pages per session does not necessarily mean that people are interested in your content – that's why it is important to look at pages per session in conjunction with average session duration and bounce rate.

A page with high pages per session – but low session duration and bounce rate – can indicate page flipping behavior due to disinterest, irrelevant content, or difficulty in navigating your website.



How to Optimize/Improve Pages per Session

Provide 'next steps', or content that aligns with visitor interest. Align your content hierarchy/flow with the buyer's journey.

6. Page/Scroll Depth

Page (or scroll) depth measures how thoroughly your audience consumes your content by tracking where on the page they stop reading.

This can indicate two things:

- **Readability:** If your content is easy to read, people will go further down the page.
- **Interest:** It is assumed that the further people scroll down your page, the more they want to consume your content.



How to Track Page/Scroll Depth

Google Analytics does not have a built-in option to measure scroll depth, which is why you have to install the Scroll Depth Google Analytics plugin to enable tracking.

The plugin tracks the percentage of your page where visitors stop: 25%, 50%, 75%, or 100% depth, as well as which elements they scroll to, and pixel depth.

Pixel depth provides an absolute measure of **where** the audience stops, comparing this across devices where screen heights vary. The plugin sends the data to Google Analytics via Events.

Another option is to use Google Tag Manager. Just like the Scroll Depth plugin, it allows you to track pixel and percentage depth.



How to Improve Page/Scroll Depth

Consider the elements that correlate to the various scroll depths where people drop off:

- What's happening?
- Is there something about the page that's negatively impacting user experience?
- Is content starting to fall flat as visitors make their way deeper into an article?

Armed with the data and understanding you now have behind the most popular user engagement metrics, you'll have multiple options to approach fixing this problem.

7. Unique Visitors

Unique visitor is a term used to refer to a person that visits a website at least once during the reporting period. Google puts more emphasis on tracking page views (or visits) but the unique visitors metric shows how many individuals your website actually reaches.



How to Track Unique Visitors

Whenever you visit a website, Google Analytics assigns you a client ID that is stored in a cookie in your browser. This client ID is unique to every browser and not IP address, so if you visit a website using another browser, Google Analytics will recognize you as another unique user.

This can pose a problem or report inaccurate results because of situations such as:

- **Multiple people in a household sharing one computer.** There may be multiple visitors but only one is registered.
- **A single user can visit your website from different computers or different browsers.** This will be counted as multiple visits, when they actually came from one person.
- **Someone manually clears their cookies** and will be counted as two users in reporting.

In Google Analytics, go to ***Audience > Overview*** and look at the Users metric. This will tell you the number of unique visitors to your site.

Tracking and comparing your stats for unique visitors over a specific time period can tell you whether any new visitors are discovering your website (useful when you launch new campaigns or ads), or if your traffic comes from returning users.



How to Optimize/Improve Unique Visitors

- **Know your audience.** If you have a good grasp of who your existing audience is, you can use these metrics to take steps to find a new/related audience segment.
- **Promote your website,** taking care to look toward the impact on different audience segments.

8. New vs. Returning Visitors

New users are users who are accessing your website for the first time **on a specific device**.

As mentioned, Google uses client IDs to track users. If you're using a mobile phone to access a website – then using your desktop to visit the same website again (but the first time on the desktop) – Google counts this activity as two new visitors.

To their credit, Google is becoming smarter about this. When you're signed in on Google Chrome using two different devices, it will only record the first device as a new visitor and the second device as a returning visitor.

Returning visitors are those that have previously visited your website. Google defines new users within a two-year time frame. If you revisit a website within the two-year time frame, you are considered a returning visitor, and if you visit a website again after more than two years, you will be counted as a new visitor again.

This metric is presented as a pie graph, comparing the ratio between the two.



How to Track New Visitors vs Returning Visitors

Find this data under **Audience > Behavior > New vs Returning**.

You'll see a table comparing the behavior of new and returning visitors with some of the metrics previously discussed, such as bounce rate, pages/session, and average session duration.

You can check new users under **Acquisition > Overview**. Under the Acquisition tab, you'll also be able to see the Source/Medium of the traffic, as well as Referral Source.

If your returning visitors metric is higher than new users, this might be a sign that you have a loyal band of followers. The opposite situation demonstrates that you have some work to do to get people to come back again.



How to Optimize/Improve New vs. Returning Visitors

Your New vs Returning Visitors graph can reflect the results of campaigns you used to promote your website.

A few examples:

- **Display advertising** aims to target new (relevant) users, so if the campaign was successful, expect an increase in new users (slightly larger than from social, depending on the advertising budget).
- **Organic search** tends to result in even distribution.
- **Email marketing** from your CRM should lead to more returning visitors. If it's a new list of prospects, expect more new visitors.
- **Direct traffic** is counted when people type your website's URL in their browser or retrieve it from their bookmarked sites – this will show mostly returning users.

You can segment your channels according to these traffic sources.

It's important to stack these dimensions against other metrics, like goal completion. If your returning visitors convert more than new visitors, think of strategies to appeal to this group. Or, if there's a higher bounce rate with returning visitors, there may be something wrong with your content or user experience.

9. Conversion Rate

Customer engagement is linked to overall profitability and can lead to conversions.

The conversion rate is the percentage of website visitors that complete desired actions, such as:

- Purchasing any of your products or services.
- Downloading your app, ebook, etc.
- Contacting your business/submitting a form.
- Engaging with your website in some way.

A high conversion rate tells you that your marketing tactics are effective because they resulted in your website visitors completing your end goal.



How to Track Conversion Rate

The great thing about conversion rates is that you can tailor them to be broad or specific in terms of things like:

- Overall conversion rate
- Marketing channel conversion rate
- Keyword conversion rate

Most social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest have their own built-in analytics tools that can be used to track conversion rates. For websites, you can use tools such as Google Analytics or Google AdWords to track certain conversion rates.

There is a dedicated tab on Google Analytics for conversions, which allows you to analyze data based on goals, attribution, or multi-channel funnels. There's also an option specific to e-commerce.



How to Optimize Conversion Rate

Because conversions are the end goal, marketing is often tasked with conversion rate optimization (CRO), which aims to maximize the number of conversions.

The basic principle of CRO? To make everything seamless and easy for the website visitors to convert.

What makes CRO unique is that it aims to increase revenue with the traffic you're currently getting—so you can do CRO even if you don't have that much traffic to begin with.

CRO starts with measuring analytics to know your baseline, analyzing this data and implementing changes (usually called split or A/B testing). OptinMonster has several A/B testing tools and Google Optimize offers a free alternative.

There are several ways to increase conversion rates (here are [53 ways you can do so](#)), depending on what you're trying to optimize — as well as some [uncommon CRO tactics](#) to consider.

10. Abandonment Rate

Cart Abandonment Rate (also referred to as abandonment rate) is the percentage of carts abandoned to the number of initiated (or completed) transactions. This is especially pertinent for [e-commerce businesses](#).

Based on the Baymard Institute's research compilation, about 69.23 percent of online shopping carts are abandoned, meaning that for every 10 transactions, only 3 were successful. If you're an e-commerce business owner, the goal is to keep abandonment rates low, and for customers to convert or purchase from their abandoned carts.



How to Track Abandonment Rate

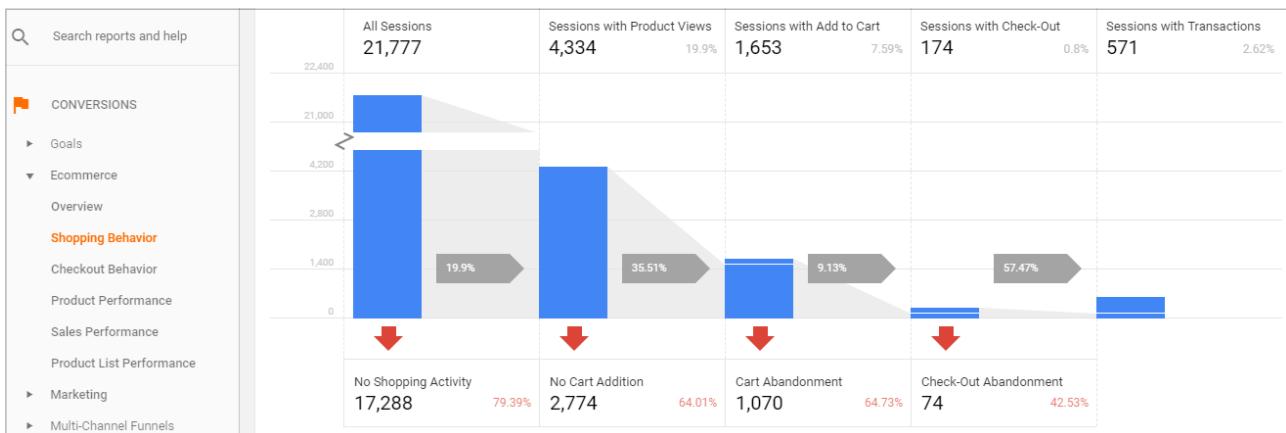
Google Analytics now has a Conversions tab specifically for e-commerce.

Once you've set it up, go to **Conversions > Ecommerce > Shopping Behavior**. There, you'll see information about the different stages of the customer journey for the time period you selected.

This includes **customers that**:

- Didn't add anything to the cart
- Added something to the cart
- Abandoned it
- Those who abandoned at checkout

Tracking cart abandonment at different stages allows you to monitor any unusual changes. For example, if one stage's abandonment rate is higher than usual, then this may be a sign of usability issues.



When you click on the red arrow under each of these dimensions, Google will prompt you to create a segment. This can be applied to other reports and factors, such as device used, browser used, demographics, and traffic sources.

This is useful so that you can infer what influenced the cart to be abandoned. For example, if visitors are abandoning their carts at checkout, it could be that your checkout process is too long, payment options are too limited, or your shipping fee is too expensive.



How to Optimize/Improve Abandonment Rate

To improve abandonment rates, AcquireConvert suggests a **BEFORE** and **AFTER** strategy, specifically:

- Improve the buying process BEFORE people check out AND
- Implement a follow-up strategy AFTER they abandon their carts

BEFORE

Always ensure that your website is secure and functioning well, with clear CTAs.

Additionally, have a quick checkout process. E-commerce giant Amazon earns so much because of their quick checkout process that includes one-click ordering, dash buttons, and more. Also, consider offering guest checkout so that people don't have to create an account to make a purchase.

Finally, avoid surprises—like shipping costs. Shipping cost is the [**number 1 reason for abandoned carts**](#). Also, to help avoid surprises, show the customers progress indicators until checkout is complete.

AFTER

Most importantly, send abandoned cart emails. Depending on your email marketing software, this is fairly easy to set up.

Send at least three emails: the first one within an hour. If they are a first-time customer, you might want to send them a discount code to encourage them to shop. Create urgency with a time-sensitive offer.

Final Thoughts: User Engagement Metrics

User engagement metrics are important to track because increased engagement is linked to increased profitability.

The good news is that a free Google Analytics account can track most of these metrics, and all of these metrics are interrelated. This means that optimizing for one metric can help improve another.

For best results, focus on creating content that your target audience wants to read, with clear CTAs. From there, focus on optimizing your website and user site experience.

Chapter 4:

Your Guide to Picking the Right KPIs for Content



by **Benj Arriola**

SEO Director
Myers Media Group

Every digital marketing campaign has key performance indicators (KPIs). Most of the time, profitability is a main factor in the KPIs.

In every digital marketing campaign, you have multiple channels and every channel requires different strategies and tactics. Many of these channels deal with content.

In the SEO world, you may have heard the phrase “content is king.” While content is not the only tool you should utilize, it still plays an essential role in your overall digital marketing strategy. However, measuring your content’s success is not always simple.

This guide will serve as a reference on how to select the right KPIs for an accurate measure of success.

As different businesses use content in different ways, the KPIs may vary accordingly. The same is true for the different role players within the digital marketing process, who may want to monitor different KPIs.

Who Wants to Know Your Content's KPIs

It's important to determine who needs to know more about your KPIs before actually narrowing down which KPIs you will use. Knowing who needs to use these KPIs will give you valuable insight as to which types will be most beneficial to your campaign.

We will be looking at four different types of organizations:

- A Business-to-Consumer (B2C) company.
- A Business-to-Business (B2B) company.
- A marketing agency.
- A content publisher.

For every metric that these companies may analyze, there is a set of supporting metrics.

 **For example,** in a large B2B company, the main executives may want to track metrics that show the profits of their content marketing campaign. However, the marketing manager will want to drill down and see what kind of online website traffic they are getting and where it comes from.

KPIs may reach a deeper level for some organizations depending on the level of knowledge they have to comprehend the metrics. Some are only interested in the main metrics and disregard the supporting metrics. Others will pay close attention to all levels of metrics.

Any company can track all metrics, but their main goals can help organize certain KPIs by their level of importance.

This chapter will examine four different organizational categories and the main KPIs needed to track their success. We will also cover supporting KPIs that provide additional insights.

By now, you should be more familiar with these individual KPIs. This article will not cover definitions or methods for measuring KPIs; and will focus more on the level of importance of certain KPIs for different types of businesses.

B2C Content KPIs

For B2C companies, the main goal is often to sell more products or services to customers. Thus, the most important metrics measure sales and revenue; these KPIs measure how much money they are making.

The metrics that are directly proportional to the profits of the business are the main KPIs. These are labeled with the 5-star KPIs below.

Sales / Business	Social Engagement
Revenue	Purchases generated from social
Sales	
ROI	

Sales / Business	SEO
Conversion rate	Organic conversion rate
Cost per acquisition	
Lifetime Value (LTV)	Social Engagement
ROAS	Social conversions
Order value	
Customer loyalty/retention	User Engagement
	Conversion rate

Secondary KPIs may not be directly indicative of the profits of the company, but when you see major improvement in these KPIs, they are usually one step behind a sale. An improvement in these secondary KPIs usually implies improvement in the main KPIs.

Depending on the size of the company, these can differ. A large organization will have multiple stakeholders and the main executives are likely only interested in the main KPIs.

For smaller organizations, where employees hold multiple roles, many people in the company may be interested in the secondary KPIs because they can see the effectiveness of their own marketing efforts.

B2B Content KPIs

Since B2B companies operate more like partnerships, the business cycle takes much longer and a single sale may take months to close. There are more meetings between the companies, product demonstrations, signing of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs), and negotiating on terms.

For companies like this, aside from being concerned with metrics related to sales and revenue, the goals are typically measured through lead generation. Leads can still be called conversions although they are not necessarily selling a product or service in the conversion, they still gather valuable contact information of a target client.

	
Sales / Business	
Revenue	Social Engagement
Sales	Purchases generated from social
ROI	Social conversions
Conversion rate	Leads generated from social
Leads generated	SEO
	Organic conversion rate
	User Engagement
	Conversion rate

	
Sales / Business	
Cost per acquisition	Customer loyalty/retention
Lifetime Value (LTV)	Media mentions
ROAS	Branded searches
Order value	

Not all B2B companies are large, however, this is often the case. Larger companies usually have a marketing budget that is spent in part on online advertising, social sponsored post, or on any digital marketing channel. B2B companies are often interested in measuring how effective these campaigns are.

Marketing Agency Content KPIs

Marketing agencies use content in different ways including anything from social media or blog posts to white papers. These combined efforts all contribute to a sale, but what they want to see is how effective the individual campaigns are.

Sometimes, these strategies work in the early stages of the marketing funnel when a client's product or service is introduced to a new audience in an effort to increase brand awareness.

Sales / Business	Social Engagement
Revenue	Social conversions
Sales	Leads generated from social
ROI	Social referral traffic
Conversion rate	Purchases generated from social
Leads generated	Most popular content
Cost per acquisition	Shares/Retweets
Lifetime Value (LTV)	
ROAS	
Total traffic	Organic conversion rate
Media mentions	Organic search traffic
User Engagement	Mobile search traffic
Conversion rate	Links

Sales / Business	Social Engagement
Order value	Reviews
Customer loyalty/retention	Net promoter score
Branded searches	Email subscribers
Reviews	
Net promoter score	
Email subscribers	User Engagement
	Page views

Many of the KPIs mentioned for B2B and B2C companies are the same as the top KPIs for agencies, but many of the secondary KPIs differ.

Also note that the content a digital marketing agency creates may not always intend to lead to a conversion. Sometimes the content created by agencies is geared towards increasing brand awareness.

In SEO, the goal of content marketing is to create content that people want to share and link to in order to get more inbound links. This content can also be shared on social media or tied to press release distributions and email campaigns.

Even if these content pieces start to become viral and are trending on social media, they don't always lead to conversions. However, they build valuable brand awareness that can lead to higher SERP rankings.

From a KPI standpoint, companies should also measure the popularity of their content marketing campaigns in addition to metrics related to sales and revenue.

Publisher Content KPIs

News companies, online entertainment magazines, and blog owners mainly earn profits from advertising income. To sell more advertising, their site has to be more attractive to advertisers.

Sales / Business	
Total traffic	
SEO	Social Engagement
Organic search traffic	Social referral traffic
Mobile search traffic	Most popular content
User Engagement	Reach
Page views	Engagement Rate
Unique visitors	Video engagement/completion/viewers (live)
	Likes/Reactions/Favorites/Saves/Pins
	Impressions
	Followers

Social Engagement	
Shares/Retweets	SEO
Comments/Replies	Links
Mentions	Rankings/position
Profile views	Organic clicks
User Engagement	Organic CTR
Pages per session	Organic impressions
Time on page	Mobile rankings
Page/interaction depth	Accelerated Mobile Pages
	Pages indexed/index status
	Duplicate titles/descriptions

Some publishers also have paid subscriptions and will track income from online conversions.

The most important KPIs for publishers are the ones that prove that their site has a lot of visitors. Sometimes publishers refer to this as “eyeballs” when talking to prospective advertisers on their site.

Traffic is the main metric that will show how many visitors you have on your site. Social shares are also important because they can increase this visibility.

You Do Not Need to Stop at the Common KPIs

The main KPIs enumerated for each type of business are probably the most common KPIs used by these entities because they are easily tied to their goals and objectives. These KPIs indicate success at a glance.

However, anyone can always take a deeper dive and look further into other KPIs. It all depends on your own knowledge of how your content works for you, and if you are in a position to create change to make things better based on the insights gained from the other KPIs.

For a complete list of all KPIs discussed here and also in the previous chapters of this book, you can refer to the table below. The table includes a 5-star rating where 5 is the highest priority KPI; however, if you wear multiple hats in your company and work with the digital marketers, you can also pay attention to the lower stars in this table.

KPI	Marketing Channel	B2C	B2B	Agency	Publisher
Revenue	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Sales	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
ROI	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Conversion rate	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Leads generated	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Cost per acquisition	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Lifetime Value (LTV)	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
ROAS	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Media mentions	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Total traffic	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Customer loyalty/retention	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Order value	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Branded searches	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Reviews	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Net promoter score	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Email subscribers	Sales / Business	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Organic conversion rate	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Organic search traffic (including Google vs. Bing traffic)	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Mobile search traffic	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Links	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Rankings/position	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Organic clicks	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Organic CTR	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Organic impressions	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Mobile rankings	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Local visibility	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Accelerated Mobile Pages	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Pages indexed/index status	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Duplicate titles/descriptions	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Dwell time	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Page speed	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Crawl errors/stats	SEO	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Purchases generated from social	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Social conversions	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Leads generated from social	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Social referral traffic	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Most popular content	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Shares/Retweets	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Reach	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Engagement Rate	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Video engagement/completion/viewers (live)	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Likes/Reactions/Favorites/Saves/Pins	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Click-through rate	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Audience demographics	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Brand sentiment	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Link clicks	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Impressions	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Followers	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Comments/Replies	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Mentions	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Profile views	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Optimal Days/Times for Engagement	Social Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Conversion rate	User Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Page views	User Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Pages per session	User Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Time on page	User Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Page/interaction depth	User Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Top exit pages	User Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Bounce rate	User Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
New vs. Return Visitors	User Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Abandonment rate	User Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Unique visitors	User Engagement	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★

Additionally, every company markets their services in a unique way. This table is not a definitive guide to the importance of all KPIs; KPIs with one or two stars on this list could be incredibly important for your company, but not to others.

The only wrong way to use a KPI is when you select your measures based on what is trending in a positive direction, not what actually measures your company's success. Although uptrending presentable colored graphs of specific KPIs may impress stakeholders, they would not be good KPIs if they are not indicative of a company's true success in line with its goal and objectives.

Chapter 5:

How to Build a Content Marketing Workflow with SEMrush to Achieve Your KPIs



by **Ashley Ward**

Digital Marketing Strategist
SEMrush

Now that you've selected all of the relevant KPIs for your content, the next task is to create a content marketing workflow, one that will build efficiencies into the process. This means taking more of a data-driven approach that actually charts and streamlines the content marketing process and is the core of the SEMrush Content Toolkit.

The following are the four steps to help you streamline your content and also how you can leverage the SEMrush Content Toolkit to create a more efficient content marketing strategy.

Step 1: Content Ideation

The first step in creating a content marketing workflow that will help you meet your KPIs is brainstorming. **Content ideation is arguably the most difficult of the four steps, as it presents an ongoing challenge for content marketers to not only develop a compelling subject, but one that will position and perform well.**

This is where the Topic Research tool can assist you. Putting this powerful tool to work, you can access an analysis of your competitors' top-performing content and discover new topic ideas that your users actually want to see.

After reviewing the competitive topic data and zoning in on a topic that you'd like to cover with your related seed keyword, you'll receive a dashboard showing a variety of information about the topic.

This extra data makes up the:

- Trending subtopics and headlines centered around your seed keyword
- A list of questions associated with the topic that people search for online
- Competitive intel on the most popular sources addressing them

The results are then color-coded to show how well the headlines perform in terms of backlinks.

Below is an example of this using the topic targeting the keyword “dog clothes”:

Designer Dog Clothes			
Subtopic Volume 1900	Difficulty 63.44%	Topic Efficiency High	X
Headlines (10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designer Dog Clothing ↗ The Best Dog Clothing Brands for Stylish Pet Clothes ↗ Dog Clothes, Designer Dog Clothes And Accessories ↗ Doggie Design ↗ Puppy Kisses: Dog Clothing & Accessories ↗ Designer Dog Clothes Dog Clothes Dog Hoodie ↗ Designer Dog Apparel : Dog Clothes ↗ Dog Apparel Dog Clothes Dog T-Shirts ↗ Dog Sweaters Designer Dog Clothes Dog Gear ↗ Designer Dog Clothes: Amazon.com ↗ 		Questions (61) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All What Where How Why Do Is Which What is the best website for buying dog clothes? What are the best designer Clothes for Dog? What are the best online shopping for pet accessories? What are the new trends of dog clothes in the USA? What are some free knitting patterns for dogs clothes? What types of dog accessories should I buy for my pet? What clothing lines have a dog as part of their logo? Why? What is the best software for designing clothes? What are some good gift options for a pet dog? What is your favorite 'designer' dog breed? What if clothes were not a necessity? 	
Related searches (8) <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;"> designer dog clothes gucci designer dog clothes wholesale chanel dog clothes designer dog clothes burberry gucci dog clothes </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;"> burberry dog clothes luxury pet boutique dog boutique online </div>			

You have the option to organize results by volume of the top sources first or by keyword difficulty to view those keywords with the highest difficulty first. You also have the option of adding other parameters to further pare down the results and narrow in on the best topic for your audience, keyword, and domain.

The screenshot shows the SEMrush Content Ideas interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Content Ideas' and 'Favorite Ideas'. Below that is a search bar with 'dog clothes' and dropdowns for 'United States (Desktop)' and 'Search content on domain'. A green button says 'Get content ideas'. To the right is a 'Favorite Ideas' section. Below the search bar are three buttons: 'Cards' (selected), 'Overview', and 'Mind Map'. On the right, a dropdown menu titled 'Prioritize topics by:' is open, showing 'Volume' as the selected option. Other options include 'Difficulty' and 'Topic Efficiency'. A note on the right says: 'We'd like to add even more parameters you can use to prioritize your results by. Let us know what parameters you'd like us to add!' and a button 'Specify prioritization parameters'. The main area displays six search results cards:

- Free Shipping** (Volume: 27.1k)
 - \$1.99 Wholesale Dog Clothes, Shoes, Dog ...
 - Amazon.com: Apparel & Accessories
 - Dog Clothes[Show more ▾](#)
- Designer Dog Clothes** (Volume: 1.9k)
 - Designer Dog Clothing
 - The Best Dog Clothing Brands for Stylish ...
 - Dog Clothes, Designer Dog Clothes And A...[Show more ▾](#)
- Dog Cl** (Volume: 1.5k)
 - Dog Clo
 - Free Do
 - Mimi &
- Boy Dog Clothes** (Volume: 1.6k)
 - Dog Clothes, Dog Coats & Dog Fashion at ...
 - Amazon.com: Apparel & Accessories
 - Dog Clothes, Shoes, & Apparel[Show more ▾](#)
- Girl Dog Clothes** (Volume: 1.6k)
 - Amazon.com: Apparel & Accessories
 - Dog Clothes, Shoes, & Apparel
 - Dog Clothes | Pet Apparel[Show more ▾](#)
- Large D** (Volume: 1.6k)
 - Hefty Hounds: Large Dog Clothing & Acce...
 - Amazon.com: Apparel & Accessories
 - Dog Clothes: Puppy & Dog Outfits & Appa...[Show more ▾](#)

At this point in the ideation stage, keyword research enters the process. You can then use the [Keyword Magic tool](#) to discover additional keywords to incorporate into your content.

The Keyword Magic tool automatically sorts all the keyword suggestions by related search topics and their respective search volumes. This will help give you a more realistic chance of being visible in the search engine results pages (SERPs).

Using the tool, you can filter the keywords that best suit the needs of your content, such as those that are in the form of a question or that trigger SERP features like featured snippets.

This will help you further refine your content idea by selecting high-volume, low-competition keywords that will increase the chances of your article surfacing in the top search results. These are known as “long tail” keywords and they elaborate on the overarching seed keyword (the “head” of the tail) that is likely to encounter stiff competition from Wikipedia and other authoritative sources.

Focusing on long tail keywords (also known as key phrases) is an especially smart strategy for smaller businesses struggling to compete with the big players in their industry.

Coupled with the Keyword Magic tool, the Topic Research tool will help you come up with a competitive content topic and headline that will catch the attention of both your target audience and the search engines.

To keep the content marketing workflow running smoothly, you’ll want to repeat the research to keep current with the latest trends around your topic. This way you’ll be able to keep your content relevant and fresh, and your headline competitive.

Now you’re ready to move on to Step 2 of the content marketing workflow: Creating the Content.

Step 2: Content Creation

By zoning in on a winning headline using the Topic Research and Keyword Magic tools, you've already accomplished 80% of the work for creating an attention-grabbing post. An important step to take given that 8 out of 10 people only read the headlines.

With that accomplished, Step 2 of building your content marketing workflow becomes much easier. Your informed and undoubtedly well-written headline already defines what the topic is and what question, problem, or pain point your content will address.

But what about ensuring that you hold the attention of your target audience AND the search engines? Your headline can only carry the content so far, and this conundrum is particularly problematic for evergreen type of posts.

To achieve the competitive edge, the body of your content also needs to be optimized for search engines so it continues to rank well beyond the content flavor of the week, and thereby continues to attract unique visitors to your site.

This is the primary task of Step 2, and where the [SEO Content Template](#) (SCT) and [SEO Writing Assistant](#) tools can help you create a body of content that is optimized for both readers and search engines.

Like the Topic Research and Keyword Magic tools, the SEO Content Template and SEO Writing Assistant tools are designed for ease and expediency.

You've already identified the keywords to incorporate into your content, so now by simply entering your selected keywords into the SEO Content Template tool, you'll receive a set of recommendations.

These tips will tell you how to build your content for the keywords you're targeting based on an analysis of content from your top 10 competitors on Google. Then, the SEO writing assistant will analyze how your text complies with those recommendations.

The SEO Content Template goes beyond keyword-specific recommendations, as search optimization is a much broader subject. Beyond structuring the article so that the volume of keywords in your title, headings and paragraphs descends accordingly, content optimization means considering variables that speak to content quality and off-page SEO factors. These include the inclusion of semantically related words and backlinks, as well as text length and readability.

Using the example of the seed keyword "dog clothes," the key recommendations section of the SEO Content Template would return something like this:

Key recommendations (based on your Google top 10 rivals)	
Semantically related words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enrich your text with the following semantically related words: gift cards bow ties free shipping
Backlinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Try to acquire backlinks from the following domains: 100searchengines.com cbwm.com acculturated.com mypetsmart.com petsmart.com target.com articlecatalog.com searchalot.com askawayblog.com
Readability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Average readability score of top 10 URLs: 50
Text length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommended text length: 1973 words

So by understanding the features that make up the top performing content of your online rivals, you now have the competitive advantage of outdoing them with your own optimized content that both readers and search engines will love. After your copy is complete, run it through the SEO writing assistant tool to be sure you've met all the suggested optimization requirements.

Step 3: Distribution of Content

You've now created a fantastic and well-optimized content piece. The next step in your content marketing workflow is distributing this great piece of content. This step is critical to achieving your content KPIs.

What goes into the distribution you ask? In order to distribute the content, you need to promote it on social networks, acquiring backlinks, and posting it on external resources.

However well-optimized and link-worthy your content is, it takes time to gain traction relying strictly on SEO. It can take up to a year before you start to see higher organic rankings for your content. The solution to not having to wait so long is a smart distribution strategy that increases the chances of visibility for your content.

For this step in your content marketing workflow, there are three invaluable tools in the SEMrush content arsenal: Brand Monitoring, Social Media Tracker and Social Media Poster.

For the most visible brand mentions and quality links to your content, reach out directly to the most authoritative sources in your industry or niche to let them know about your newly created content. If they like your content well enough, they might even share it on their own site, especially if your industry niches and brand service complement each other.

If you don't immediately know who the thought leaders are in your industry, you can use the [Social Media Tracker tool](#) to identify the most authoritative influencers in your industry with the 'Mentioners' report.

The screenshot shows the SEMrush Twitter Mentions report interface. At the top, there are filters for 'Company' (set to '4-semrush') and 'Dates' (set to 'May 02–31, 2018 (last 30 days)'). A 'Send feedback' button is also present. Below the filters, a navigation bar includes 'Tweets', 'Audience', 'Activity', 'Engagement', 'Hashtags', 'Mentioners' (which is underlined in blue), and 'Mentions'. On the left, a sidebar titled 'Mentioned companies' lists 'All profiles' (11,700) and '4-semrush' (5,823, highlighted with a blue border). The main content area is titled 'Mentioners of 4-semrush' and shows a list of 2,222 found mentioners. The results are sorted by 'Followers' (in descending order). The first few entries are:

Mentioner Profile	Followers	Mentions	Total engagement
Larry Kim (@larrykim)	796,251	21	222
Mari Smith Top Facebook Marketing Expert (@MariSmith)	598,208	2	39
Moz (@Moz)	535,424	3	12
Ann Handley (@MarketingProfs)	435,975	1	34
Search Engine Land (@sengineland)	428,749	1	3
Rand Fishkin (@randfish)	411,457	4	25

If influencers are too small in number or too big to approach, you can use the [Brand Monitoring tool](#) to find external resources that your competitors use to publish their content, and then sort them by authority for guest blogging outreach. If you happen to find domains that mention your brand but hold no interest to you, you can block them from further research.

Campaign: semrush

Web Twitter May 2 - 31, 2018 (last 30 days)

Actions Mentions Search by mention Advanced filters

Source: All Tags: All mentions BM score: 60 To Traffic: All Tracked domains (0)

Favorite (0) Trashed (0)

Applied filters: Clear all BM score: from 60 X

Mentions 145

Black Hat SEO vs White Hat SEO by Juan Yelle May 31, 2018 15:29 Blog: www.apsense.com no backlink

Articles Black Hat SEO vs White Hat SEO by Juan Yelle digital marketing, seo executive What Is Black Hat SEO? We should begin with the more despicable of ...

Black Hat SEO vs White Hat SEO – Juan Yelle – Medium May 31, 2018 12:52 Web: medium.com no backlink

Black Hat SEO vs White Hat SEO What Is Black Hat SEO? We should begin with the more despicable of the two. Advertisers who exercise Black Hat SEO are the ...

Domain www.apsense.com BM Score: 65/100 Traffic: High Track domain Block domain

Domain medium.com BM Score: 85/100 Traffic: High Track domain Block domain

However, if you find your brand mentioned by an industry influencer on their authoritative site, it paves the way for you to contact them to inquire about back-link opportunities. This also may take the form of a guest post on their site.

Of course, nothing betters developing a good relationship with an influencer in your industry. This process takes time, a deft approach, and give and take, but such a relationship can prove highly worthwhile in getting your content visibility and generating business for your company.

For promoting your content on social media, the [Social Media Poster](#) streamlines what can be a tedious daily process of customizing postings to suit the requirements and audience expectations of the different social media networks.

You can schedule your Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram posts for weeks ahead, and let the tool do the rest.

The screenshot shows the SEMrush Social Media Poster interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Calendar', 'Queue', 'Published', 'Drafts', 'Analytics', and 'Content ideas'. Below the tabs, there's a dropdown for 'All profiles' and buttons for 'New post' and 'New draft'. The main area is a grid-based calendar for the week of June 1-4, 2018. Each cell in the grid contains a scheduled post. For example, on Saturday, June 2, at 00:00, there is a post titled '#SEMrushchat' with a description: 'Join us next week For #SEMrushchat'. On Monday, June 4, at 04:00, there is a post titled 'Did you know that' with a description: 'Did you know that % of featured'. The bottom left of the grid has a small 'New' icon.

The Poster also allows for customization, so you can create a personalized posting schedule at preset times every day. If you need to create draft posts for later publishing, you can save it and set a reminder for when you'd like to come back to it.

While social media presents a great platform for promoting your content, it's best to mix promotional posts with news and events in your niche from other sources that your target readers would appreciate. The Content Ideas feature allows you to connect RSS feeds from your favorite blogs and other sources, and you share them with one click.

The screenshot shows the SEMrush Content Ideas interface. At the top, there are tabs for Calendar, Queue, Published, Drafts, Analytics, and Content ideas (which is selected). Below the tabs are buttons for New post and New draft. The main area displays three news items from Social Media Today - Latest News, each with a 'Schedule' button. A red box highlights the 'Schedule' button for the first item. To the right, a sidebar titled 'All feeds' lists SEMrush blog, Search Engine Journal, and Social Media Today - Latest ..., with a '+ Add & remove feeds' button at the bottom. A red box highlights the entire sidebar area.

Now that you have a strategy for your content distribution, it's time to move on to the fourth and final step of your content marketing workflow.

Step 4: Content Performance

As many content marketing KPIs that are available to consider and that have been addressed in previous chapters, content performance may be the most significant of your metrics, and of your content marketing workflow.

For this last step, the **Content Audit** and Post Tracking tools are going to help you define your content's performance. These tools are designed to help you gauge the performance using social media engagement and user behavior metrics, as well as SEO outcomes in terms of backlinks and organic positions.

The Content Analyzer dashboard looks like this:

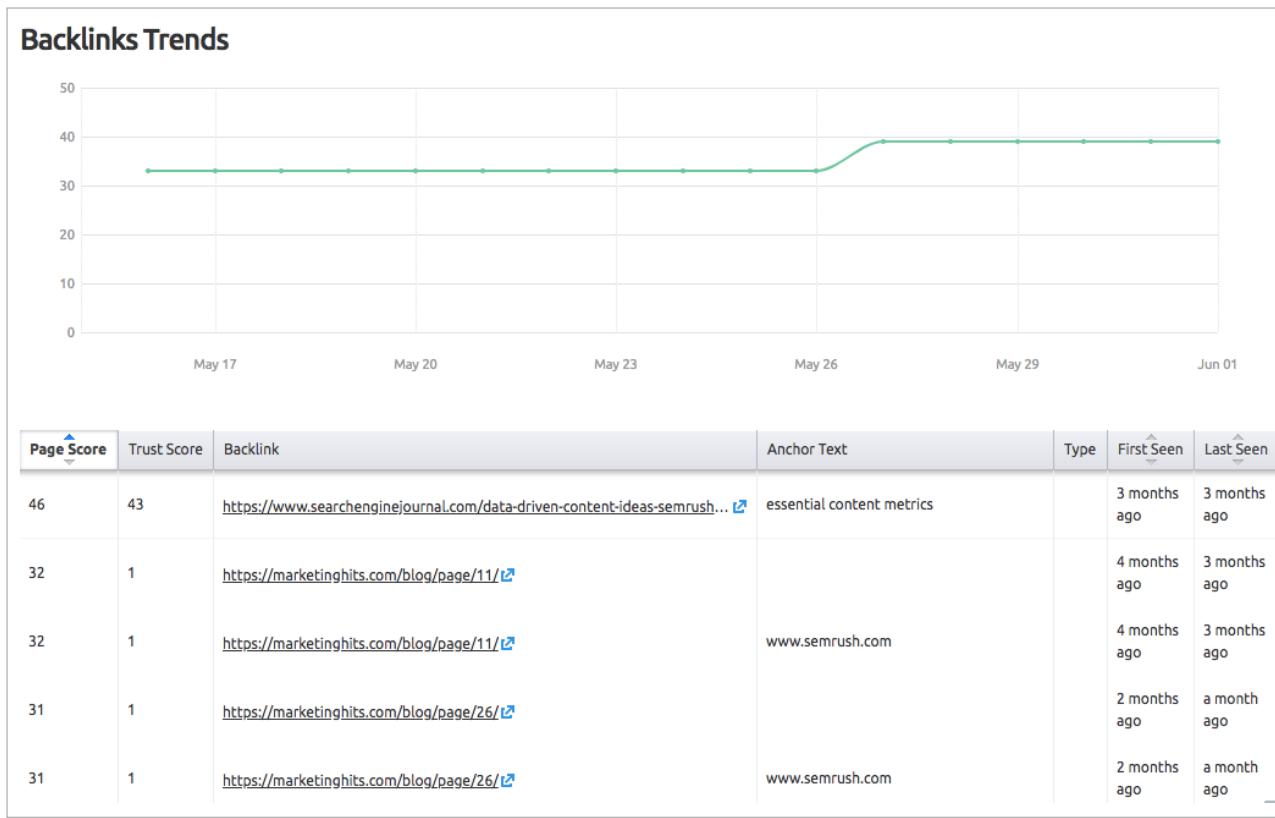
Content Analyzer								
Content Audit		Post Tracking		Compare				
Data for domain: semrush.com								
Pages	Shares	Backlinks	Sessions	Avg. Session Duration	Bounce Rate	Google Search Console 		
3K	650.8K +301	19K	107.7K -4%	0:15:50 -14%	4.9% +32%	41.9K +97%		
Manage columns	+ Add column	All	In progress	Done	Not set	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Show N/A results at bottom	<input type="text" value="Search"/>	
Section/URL	Workflow Status	Words	Shares			Backlinks	Google Analytics	
			Total Shares	f	t	in	Sessions	Avg. Session
/blog/native-advertising-vs-content-marketing-what-s-the-difference/ 	 Done	918	5.2K 0	2.6K	854	1.8K	910 0	279 ↓ 0:1
+ add tag								
/blog/learning-technical-seo/ 	 Not Set	3.2K	1.1K +19	163	632	256	811 0	413 ↑ 0:2
+ add tag								
/blog/viral-marketing-campaign-inspiration/ 	 Not Set	2K	492 +2	80	412	0	551 0	790 ↑ 0:0
+ add tag								

Organic search traffic is generally top of mind when one thinks of content performance: how visible is the content in the search engine results pages (SERPs)? Organic traffic is also an indication of the content's relevance.

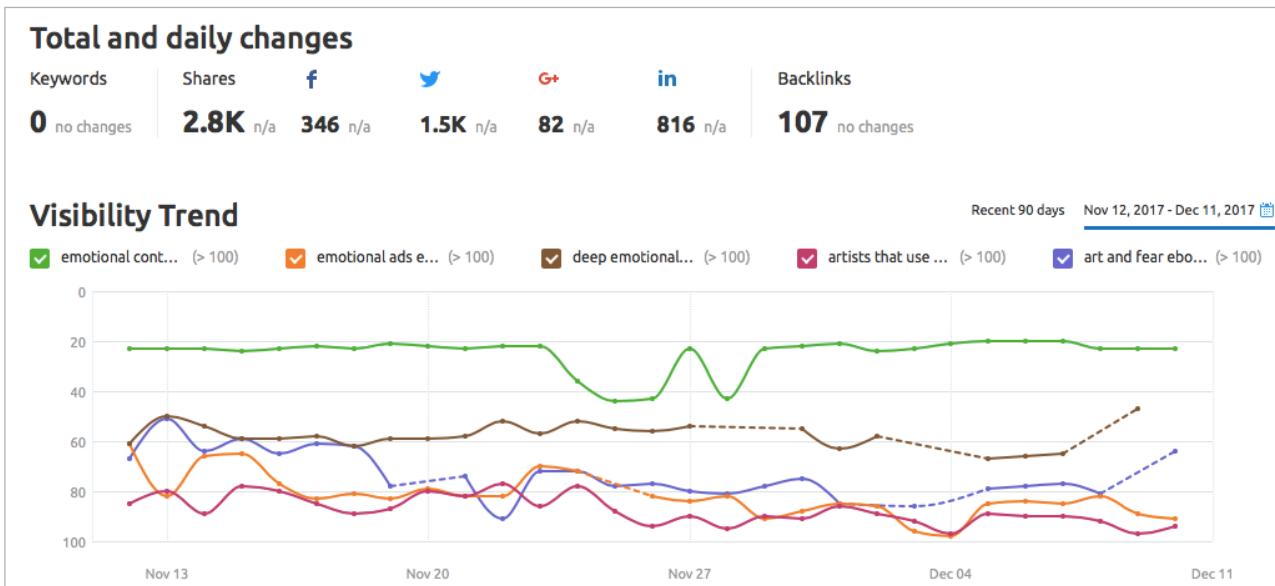
Using the Post Tracking tool, you can simply add the URL of the content you want to analyze and measure its organic performance in terms of its backlinks and keyword rankings, as well as its social media engagement in terms of shares on Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn.

As backlinks are such an important ranking factor, they are crucial to defining a content's performance. The Post Tracking tool allows you to monitor the changes in your backlink profile to see if your content is generating any new backlinks.

You have the option of switching to the Daily progress report to delve deeper into backlink trends, as well. This is especially useful if you're tracking content that you've updated and optimized.



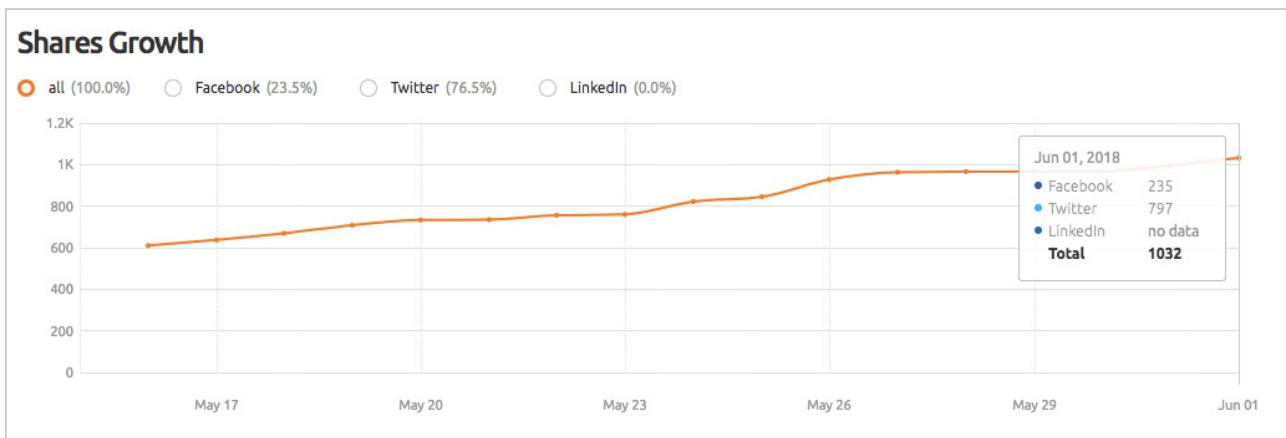
The Post tracking tool also allows you to monitor your content's visibility in terms of its keyword rankings:



Finally, the Post tracking feature of the Content Analyzer shows shares of your content on the four major social media networks.

The screenshot shows the SEMrush interface with the 'Shares' tab selected. At the top, there are dropdown menus for 'Keywords' (set to 2), 'Shares' (set to 2.1K), and 'Backlinks' (set to 39). Below this, a summary box displays 'SHARES 2118' with a 'View changes' button. It lists three platforms: Facebook (449 shares, no changes), Twitter (1669 shares, 29 new), and LinkedIn (Gathering, no removed). On the left, there are additional dropdowns for 'Keywords' (2) and 'Backlinks' (0).

Using the Daily changes tab, you can further determine how each post's shares grew over time as a whole or by the individual social media networks.



For the Twitter platform, you can gauge the value of each like and share by clicking the 'Top Contributors' option. This will return information about

TOP contributors on Twitter			
Show result based on the number of: Tweets <u>Followers</u>			
Contributors	Tweets	Followers	X
Search Engine Watch @sewatch 'Mar 27, 2018 17:00' 1 The best tools for automating your #SEO http://bit.ly/2ENQtFDpic.twitter.com/t7Ea1TsLr5	38.6K	195.4K	
MarTechExec @MarTechExec 'Mar 18, 2018 23:02' #SEO is a tough nut, and there's no magic way to automate all of it. But consider these tools your virtual nutcrackers to make the job easier. And faster. @lifewofwade @sewatch http://bit.ly/2BfVXKB #martech #search #automation http://marketingpic.twitter.com/UV8bOhX1i3	14.4K	57.5K	

how influential the people who shared your content are. Sorting them by the number of followers will show you the coverage your content gained on Twitter.

If you connect your Google Analytics account to the SEMrush Content Analyzer, the [Content Audit tool](#) can show you user behavior metrics for your website content, such as Number of Sessions, Average Session Duration, and Bounce Rate. In turn, this helps you to identify which of your site pages are underperforming and in need of optimization, which may be your content.

One of the most useful features of the Content Audit tool is the ability to set a workflow for a URL. Simply selecting a page, mark it as 'In progress,' then create some tasks such as an update with X data, or optimization with Y keywords. Afterward, amend your content as planned and track how your metrics change. If you're satisfied with the improvements, you mark the tasks as 'Done.' And you're done!

At least, you're done for the moment. **The content marketing workflow steps described are meant to be continuously repeated.** With each content audit, you'll undoubtedly find need for improvements as well as opportunities for optimization and updates to older content.

As you cycle through the steps, you'll also build your own efficiencies into the process that are unique to your organization. Hopefully, the workflow steps and tools described will help you in achieving your content marketing KPIs.

