Measuring SEO Efforts

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DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY

Session 4: Measuring SEO Efforts

Introduction to SEO Measurement

Rank Tracking and Ahref

Google Analytics

Why Measure?

Why Measure SEO Results?

They say if you can measure something, you can improve it.

In SEO, it's no different. Professional SEOs track everything from rankings and conversions to lost links and more to help prove the value of SEO. Measuring the impact of your work and ongoing refinement is critical to your SEO success, client retention, and perceived value.

It also helps you pivot your priorities when something isn't working.
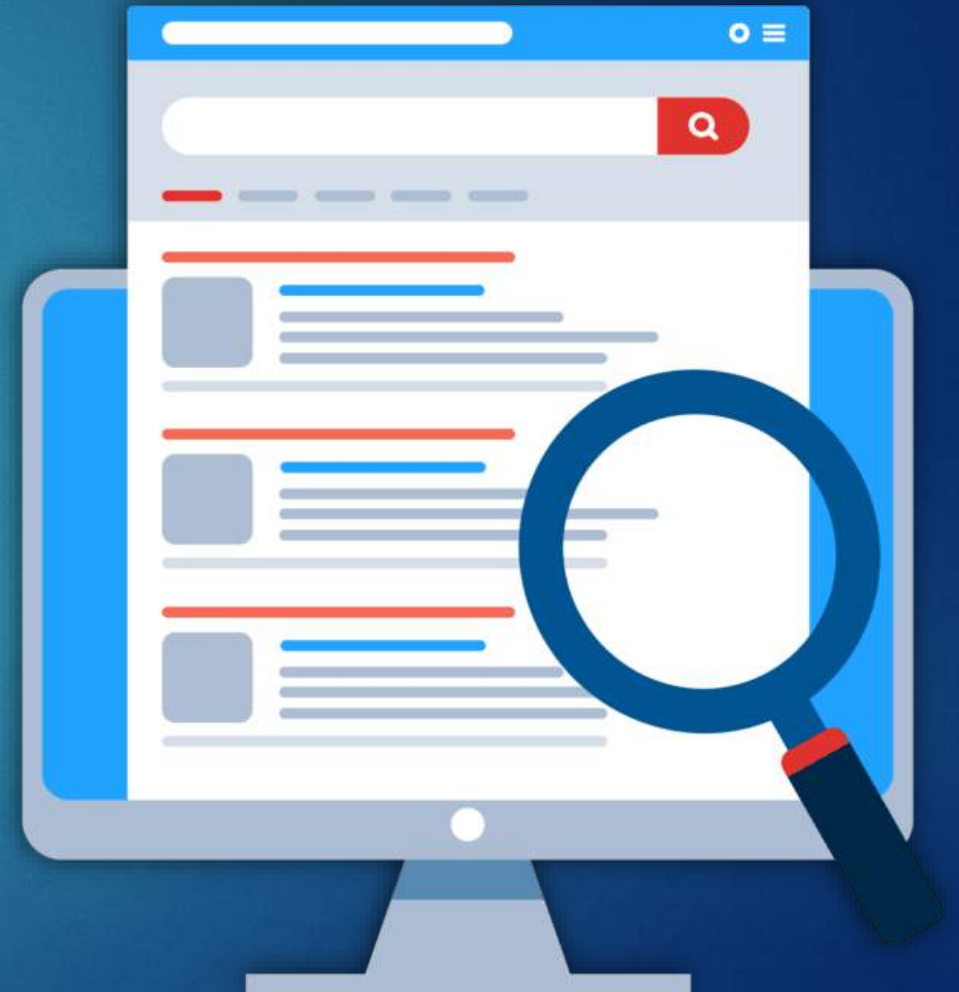
Start with an End in Mind

While it's common to have multiple goals (both macro and micro), establishing one specific primary end goal is essential.

The only way to know what a website's primary end goal should be is to have a strong understanding of the website's goals and/or client needs. Good client questions are not only helpful in strategically directing your efforts, but they also show that you care.

Client question examples:

- Can you give us a brief history of your company?
- What is the monetary value of a newly qualified lead?
- What are your most profitable services/products (in order)?

Goal Setting Tips

Keep the following tips in mind while establishing a website's primary goal, additional goals, and benchmarks:

- **Measurable:** If you can't track it, you can't improve it.
- **Be specific:** Don't let vague industry marketing jargon water down your goals.
- **Share your goals:** Studies have shown that writing down and sharing your goals with others boosts your chances of achieving them.

Measuring Results - Engagement Metrics

How are people behaving once they reach your site? That's the question that engagement metrics seek to answer. Some of the most popular metrics for measuring how people engage with your content include:

- Conversion Rate
- Time on Page
- Pages Per Visit
- Bounce Rate
- Scroll Depth

Measuring Results - Search Traffic

Ranking is a valuable SEO metric, but measuring your site's organic performance can't stop there. The goal of showing up in search is to be chosen by searchers as the answer to their query. If you're ranking but not getting any traffic, you have a problem.

But how do you even determine how much traffic your site is getting from search? One of the most precise ways to do this is with Google Analytics.

Using Google Analytics to uncover traffic insights

Google Analytics (GA) is bursting at the seams with data — so much so that it can be overwhelming if you don't know where to look. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather a general guide to some of the traffic data you can glean from this free tool.

Google Analytics to Track Search Traffic

Isolate organic traffic

GA allows you to view traffic to your site by channel. This will mitigate any scares caused by changes to another channel (ex: total traffic dropped because a paid campaign was halted, but organic traffic remained steady).

Traffic to your site over time

GA allows you to view total sessions/users/pageviews to your site over a specified date range, as well as compare two separate ranges.

Google Analytics to Track Search Traffic

How many visits a particular page has received

Site Content reports in GA are great for evaluating the performance of a particular page — for example, how many unique visitors it received within a given date range.

Traffic from a specified campaign

You can use UTM (urchin tracking module) codes for better attribution. Designate the source, medium, and campaign, then append the codes to the end of your URLs. When people start clicking on your UTM-code links, that data will start to populate in GA's "campaigns" report.

Google Analytics to Track Search Traffic

Click-through rate (CTR)

Your CTR from search results to a particular page (meaning the percent of people that clicked your page from search results) can provide insights on how well you've optimized your page title and meta description. You can find this data in Google Search Console, a free Google tool.

In addition, Google Tag Manager is a free tool that allows you to manage and deploy tracking pixels to your website without having to modify the code. This makes it much easier to track specific triggers or activity on a website.

Additional SEO Metrics - Domain Authority

Domain Authority & Page Authority (DA/PA)

Moz's proprietary authority metrics provide powerful insights at a glance and are best used as benchmarks relative to your competitors' Domain Authority and Page Authority.

Additional SEO Metrics - Ranking

Keyword rankings

A website's ranking position for desired keywords. This should also include SERP feature data, like featured snippets and People Also Ask boxes that you're ranking for. Try to avoid vanity metrics, such as rankings for competitive keywords that are desirable but often too vague and don't convert as well as longer-tail keywords.

Additional SEO Metrics - Backlinks

Number of backlinks

Total number of links pointing to your website or the number of unique linking root domains (meaning one per unique website, as websites often link out to other websites multiple times). While these are both common link metrics, we encourage you to look more closely at the quality of backlinks and linking root domains your site has.

How to Track SEO Metrics?

There are lots of different tools available for keeping track of your site's position in SERPs, site crawl health, SERP features, and link metrics, such as Moz Pro, SEM Rush, SE Ranking, etc.

Most of these tools let you export data that can also be pulled into Google Sheets or other customizable dashboard platforms for clients and quick at-a-glance SEO check-ins. This also allows you to provide more refined views of only the metrics you care about.

Dashboard tools like Data Studio, Tableau, and PowerBI can also help to create interactive data visualizations.