



## **SEARCH DISCOVERY**

### 10 Search Analytics Tune-Ups You Can Use Today

## 10 SEARCH AND ANALYTICS TUNE-UPS YOU CAN USE TODAY

### RESEARCH

1. Use free tools including Google Keyword Suggest, Google AdPlanner, Google Insights for Search, Yahoo Site Explorer, Hubspot Website Grader, and Compete.com to get a feel for your competition, your target market, understand how people search for your services, and see how your web site performs in several important SEO categories. Believe it or not, using all of these tools will probably only take you 2-3 hours each quarter, and the wisdom gained will surprise you.
2. Have a look around other sites in the industry. How is information organized on their sites vs. yours? Users and search engines alike will appreciate a consistent experience and architecture across sites in your industry, making information easy to find without having to learn a new vocabulary or site design. The best way to send traffic back to your competitor is asking a visitor to learn a new way of doing the same thing.

### PPC CAMPAIGNS

1. Download a keyword-level report and sort by conversion rate or ROI (be mindful of keywords with low volume, though - it's best to only include keywords with more than 50-100 clicks in this process). Invest from the top to the bottom until you run out of money. If there are keywords that you can't buy, don't worry about it. They just aren't worth it to you right now. This process is a great, quick way to make sure that you're investing in keywords that provide you the maximum return, but it's no substitute for sophisticated PPC optimization, particularly if you're managing a large budget and/or a complex search campaign.
2. Use techniques like geotargeting and dayparting to make sure that your budget is being spent in the right places and at the right times for maximum conversion. If you're merchandising winter travel to Miami, maybe you want to only serve those ads to people suffering through the winter in Wisconsin, and only during business hours when sales reps are standing by (we all know that people are booking vacations during the workday). Targeting your ads this way ensures that your budget is used on a more precise market.

### SEO CAMPAIGNS

1. Search for terms that are key to your industry (use the Google Keyword Suggest tool if you don't know what these are), especially the ones that are expensive in PPC. Who shows up in the natural results? Click on those links and have a look around your competitors' sites. What are they doing right? You should be doing it, too, but better!
2. Download the free Google SEO starter guide and look through their webmaster tips for SEO. The biggest barrier to great performance in search might surprise you: the engines

might not even be able to *see* your site at all, especially if you're heavy-handed with Flash and javascript. Following Google's recommendations on how to write your web site will ensure that you're "Search Engine Friendly". A good rule of thumb is that if Google has documented a recommendation, it's very important. Make sure you do *everything* they suggest. You might just surprise yourself by designing a better user experience at the same time.

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## ANALYTICS

1. What is the #1 finding in web analytics? That the tool isn't implemented properly. Often *horribly*. The right decisions based on the wrong information are wrong decisions. The most important part of your web analytics practice is a tailored implementation that successfully answers the questions you are asking about your web site. Some hallmarks of a bad implementation are extremely low referring traffic, referrals from your own domain, missing pages, or severe drop-offs in funnel reports.
2. Usually, the best opportunity to improve your site is not in getting your best visitors to do more, it's in getting your non-performing visitors to do *something*. What percentage of your traffic "bounces" (sees one page and leaves)? What landing pages account for the most bounces? What search phrases account for the most bounces? Make changes on your pages that will resonate with what your visitors are looking for and watch your conversion rate go up. People aren't just stumbling upon your site for no reason at all - they came there for something they were not able to find. If you help them find it, they will buy it.

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## BONUS TIPS

1. If you have physical locations, be sure to claim your listings on Google Maps. The increasing presence of universal search results (maps, images, video, and news mixed in with text results) means that you have even more premium shelf space to present your brand to consumers. Similarly, if you have video assets or a cache of images users might be interested in, make sure that you're taking advantage of YouTube and tagging your images with descriptive ALT text.
2. **Focus on search and analytics first, then social media.** This is a fast-paced industry where there is always something new to divert your attention from doing the basics well. If words like twitter, flickr, dopplr, facebook, brightkite, vimeo and YouTube are floating around your office and you can't name your top-10 performing paid and natural search keywords or the top-5 "bounciest" pages on your web site off the top of your head, there is something seriously wrong with your approach to web marketing. Everyone from your CEO to your visual designer should be intimately familiar with these basic, actionable metrics. Get the basics right first. And when you do venture in to social territory, remember that doing one or two things right is infinitely more valuable than doing 10 things poorly.

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