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IN COLLABORATION WITH
GETSMARTCONTENT

SO, YOU HAVE **TRAFFIC** ... BUT ARE YOU **CONNECTING?**

MARCH 2013

Preface

Most marketing advice and strategy in the online space over the past five years has been focused on driving traffic to websites. Very few businesses know what to do with an audience once they've got them on the site. Much as you would do in a physical store, you need to guide visitors through the experience of shopping, looking for information, or connecting with your brand or programs — even if you have a great website.

Success comes from knowing your audience types and talking to them with the right language, guiding them to the right section of the site and the next action much as a good clerk helps you find the best shoes without making you feel “sold to.”

Engaging with visitors on your website is really the same for almost any organization – it's about being a steward of the visitor as well as creating advocacy for your organization.

This paper provides examples of how to segment and connect with your audience once they get to your website, and how to create an advocacy environment online for your organization.

We're going to delve into some common misconceptions about the online space and demystify them. All of these may not apply to you; feel free to jump around to find the ones that apply most to your organization.

MISCONCEPTION 1:

Audience segmentation is expensive

It's common to assume that an advanced level of audience segmentation can be expensive and technically challenging. However, your online audience is a subset of your overall target audience.

TRUTH: Start with what you already know about your customers or constituents. This doesn't have to be scientific. If money allows, a survey is a great thing to do to validate your assumptions. However, you should already know your audience and what they care about. Start by writing down the details of what you know.

TIP: Once you written personas, you can use them as a guide for decisions you make in the future. Give them names. You can even find a photo to match if that helps.

PERSONA OUTLINE EXAMPLE

Women's Hair Product

AGE: 32
GENDER: Female
LOCATION: Boston, MA
WHY IS SHE HERE?: To purchase hair accessories
TOP PAGE: Purchase page

MISCONCEPTION 2:

Out with the old, in with the new!

If you're considering a website redesign, you may have an "out with the old, in with the new" mentality. It's only natural; you're probably really tired of looking at the old one. However, this mentality can result in many missed opportunities to learn from your existing visitor behavior.

TRUTH: Listening to the right pulse points on your current site can help you get more ROI in your redesign. This can mean looking at things like top content, bounce rate, and other key statistics that will tell you the best areas for improvement.

TIP: Use Smart Content's missed opportunity report to see other opportunities you're missing.



Sample smart content missed opportunity report

MISCONCEPTION 3:

Traffic = Performance

Many organizations judge the performance of their websites purely on traffic volume. In fact, as an example, three out of four nonprofits prioritize the measurement of site visitor volume, which is also the most popular metric for evaluating the success of social networks. (Alliance for Nonprofit Excellence)

TRUTH: Traffic means nothing if you aren't looking at goals you have for your visitors. What content do you want them to read, what action do you want them to take? Are enough visitors taking that action? If not, then it doesn't matter how high your volume is.

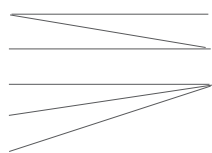
TIP: Combine the most popular content with your most important audience segments to see if you are getting the results you want.

MAPPING CONTENT TO AUDIENCES

Women's Hair Product Example

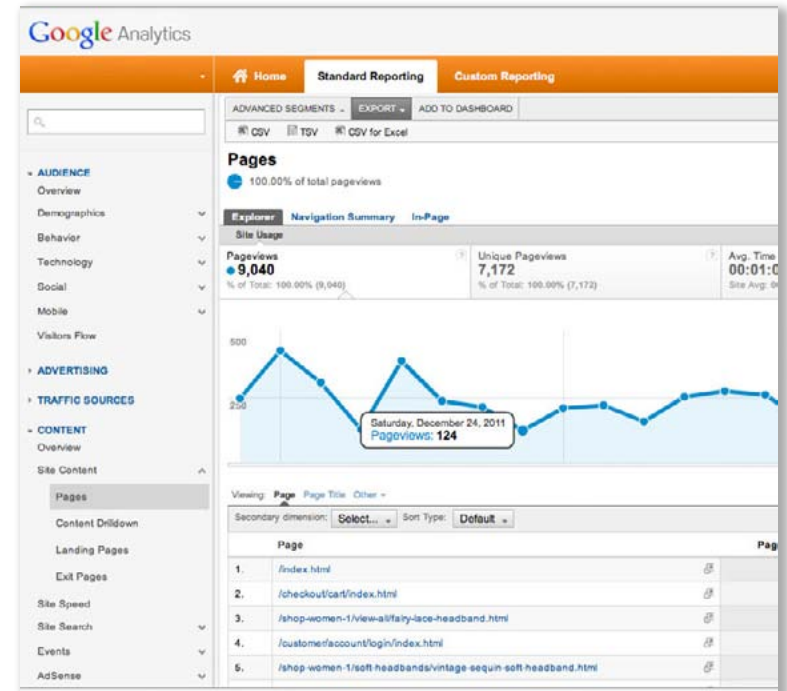
TOP CONTENT

- PRODUCT PAGE
- PURCHASE PAGE
- CONFIRMATION
- SIGN UP PAGE
- SHARE WIDGET



KEY AUDIENCES

- ONLINE MOMS
- TEENS
- COLLEGE GIRLS



Sample google analytics dashboard

Take the top audience segments and the tasks you want them to perform; let's see if they are doing them. Start by looking at the top five pages in this list. Do these match the top five tasks you identified for your audience earlier? If the top content doesn't match what you want people to read, then you need to adjust the site itself, or the way you're driving traffic to it.

MISCONCEPTION 4:

The home page is “the site”

Many organizations still have the mistaken notion that all their visitors come in through their home page. This is also why many put instructions on their home page, and then assume that they have successfully engaged with their audience.

TRUTH: Visitors come in from all sorts of referring links to various pages on your site.

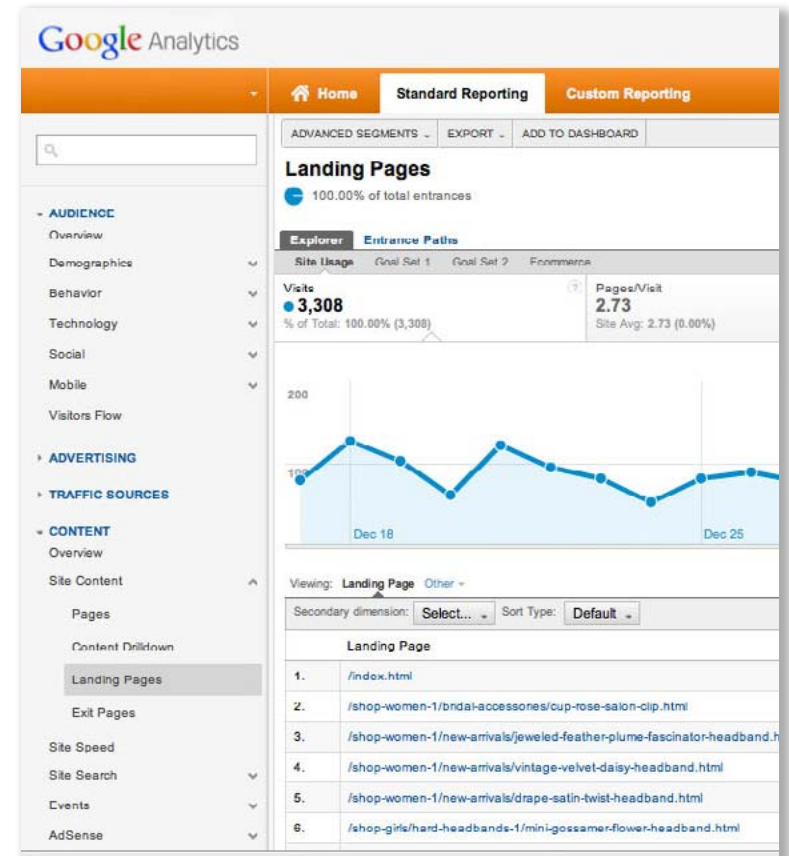
TIP: Look at your top landing pages

This page will tell you what your top landing pages are, or the top pages through which visitors are entering your site. Most sites see their home page as the first, but there are usually two or three other key pages that serve as “entrance” portals.

QUICK TIP

Finding Top Landing Pages

- Log into your Google Analytics Account
- Select Content
- Under Content, select Site Content
- Under this select Landing Pages
- Scroll down to view the top landing pages



Sample google analytics dashboard

MISCONCEPTION 5:

The conversation isn't here

Many organizations assume that their site is for static content, and their social presence should be reserved for conversations. In some cases that's true. However, that does not mean that your website visitors don't want to be spoken to intelligently. Most organizations also assume that there should be one "best" message that they use to communicate with all of their customers or constituents.

Unlike flyers for a tradeshow or advertising spots on a network, a website does not benefit from repeating the same content over and over on multiple pages. It will only serve to irritate your visitors who are looking to get what they need and get on with their day.

People don't enjoy being hit with the same message over and over inside your site. Different demographics are driven by different needs and motivations, so the more intelligently you speak to these motivations the more successful you will be.

TRUTH: Visitors want to have the experience of an intelligent conversation with your organization on your website. That starts with you talking to them in the right tone, and getting them to their destination as simply as you can.

TIP: For starters, write or rewrite content on the key pages. In addition, you can employ Smart Content to serve smart messages on key pages, based on certain rules. For example, let's say you run a visitors bureau and you want to serve different banners on your home page for visitors who live in your state and those from farther away. Smart Content allows you to target messaging based on IP address, previous browser history, and other key behavioral patterns.



Sample smart content use case

Conclusion

Being a steward to your visitors is the best way to engage them and create an advocacy environment on your site. You don't need a large budget to provide them with the content or functionality they're looking for. It just takes a small monthly investment in the quality of their experience, using tools like Smart Content and the discipline to stick to your own knowledge of who your target audience is as you make decisions online.

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ABOUT AFFINITY IG

Affinity Interactive Group (<http://www.affinityig.com>) is a boutique interactive marketing agency based out of Austin, Texas, that specializes in online advocacy, content strategy and cause-related marketing. Managing partners Mark Courtney and Liz Deering bring deep expertise in enterprise technology consulting, interactive development, design and strategy to their practice. Beyond the UX, Design and Development work, standard for any interactive agency, Affinity IG differentiates itself through designing targeted strategies and deploying specialized technologies that increase social engagement and on-site conversion.

ABOUT GET SMART CONTENT

Get Smart Content is an innovative content targeting solution. Based in Austin, Texas, the Smart Content team has proven success in the Travel and Tourism, Consumer Goods and Issue Advocacy spaces. Their solution enables brands and agencies to serve targeted content to the right audience, at the right point in their experience on site. Learn more at www.getsmartcontent.com.

