SEO Reporting

Video: How to Report on Your SEO Efforts

If you can't measure it, you can't improve it.

A common saying goes, "What gets measured gets managed." But we can take that one step further: what gets measured gets improved. If you can't measure something, you can't improve it. This is where reporting comes in.

What is reporting?

Reporting tells the story of what happened on your website to influence what you're going to do next.

This all depends on your goals.

Before you dive into analyzing data, ask yourself: What results do you want to achieve from your SEO efforts? Be specific. Just saying, "I want to get more traffic" isn't precise enough. Where do you want that traffic to go? Where is it going to come from? And, most importantly, how are you going to get it?

Start by setting SMART goals and establishing KPIs for your website.

Once you've determined your goals, work backwards.

How are you going to get there? What strategies are you going to put in place to achieve your goals?

It's important to know where you stand in relation to your goals.

Where are your pages currently ranking? How much traffic is your site getting? This data will help you determine whether your goals are realistic, and what you need to do to reach them. This is an integral part of setting SMART goals and establishing good KPIs, which you can learn more about in the resources section.

SEO is an iterative process.

You can't go after everything all at once.

You have to make a change and then wait to see if it made a difference.

Reporting helps you figure out what's working and what isn't, and pivot your strategy accordingly.

Once you've outlined your goals and set benchmarks, it's time to take steps towards those goals.

Say that you have a lot of traffic to a particular page on your website. When you review the analytics for this page, you notice the bounce rate is high, and people are leaving your website very quickly after arriving. You might decide to include more information on this page that might be helpful to visitors, such as more recent data if the page has become outdated but is still driving traffic. You could also include more links to other helpful content on your site. Take another example. Say you notice a lot of people are finding your site through a certain search query, but you don't have much content about this keyword or topic. This could indicate an opportunity to create more pages, blog posts, or other content around this topic area.

No matter what your goals are, make sure you have a plan for how you're going to achieve them. If you don't have a plan, you may end up making haphazard changes without an impact. This is where having a solid SEO strategy is critical to success. To learn more about how to create the right SEO strategy for your business, check out the resources section.

After you've made some changes, it's time to wait.

Google and other search engines will crawl your newly optimized pages or your newly created content on their own schedules. It could take a few weeks or even months to see results.

Don't get carried away and over-optimize.

If you change too many things on your site at once, it could adversely affect your search engine rank.

Why is over-optimizing bad?

If you're constantly changing a page, you can't collect any impactful data and you may end up on the wrong path. So it's important to be patient and monitor your results.

How do you monitor your results?

This depends on your goals. You can use Google Search Console to check your search performance and rank for a keyword or page. You can use Google Analytics to track organic traffic to a page. You can also track how people interact with your site: how long they stay on your website, how they engage with your pages, and so on. From there, it's a matter of conversion optimization, which is different than search engine optimization. You used SEO to get people from a Google search onto *your* website instead of thousands of others. Once they're on your site, conversion optimization helps you make a sale or convince visitors to fill out a form.

To learn more about conversion optimization, check out the resources section.

There are different SEO tools on the market which provide different levels of reporting and analytics.

If you want to invest more in SEO, you can go with a tool such as Moz, Ahrefs, or SEMrush. But if you're just getting started, you should work with free tools at first. Google Search Console and Google Analytics are two excellent free tools that provide you with all the data you need when you're beginning. As you scale your SEO strategy, you can look into paid tools that provide additional or more granular data.

If you use HubSpot's CMS Hub, you also have access to valuable analytics right inside HubSpot.

Connect your website to Google Search Console.

This gives you great insights into organic traffic, as well as metrics relating to your site, indexation of pages, errors, and other resources.

If you're a HubSpot user, you can also integrate Google Search Console with your HubSpot account.

The metrics from the integration include the number of views and clicks your website gets for specific search terms. You can also see the average position of where your website shows up on a Google search results page.

Organic traffic is indispensable for your business because it will drive the most visitors to your pages. So if you track nothing else, make sure you track organic traffic.

It's important to note that SEO metrics can sometimes be wrong.

In fact, if you look in more than one SEO tool to track a common metric, they may contradict one another. This happens frequently with respect to search volume. Search traffic can be measured in clicks, sessions, page views, or even unique views. It all depends on how your chosen tool is "counting" a visitor once they arrive on your site, and what they do once they're there. If you report on search traffic consistently, make sure you know the differences and which one you'll use as your primary performance metric.

What about domain authority?

A quick note on domain authority, which you may have heard of in your SEO journey so far. Domain authority is the software company Moz's proprietary metric. It doesn't have an impact on ranking in Google's algorithms, but it gives you a good idea of how authoritative your website is. You shouldn't fixate on it, but it may help benchmark your SEO efforts, particularly your link building campaigns.

Track everything you do and tie it to a goal.

Every page you optimize and blog post you create needs to be connected to a goal and a metric you're tracking.

Otherwise, it's not going to help you achieve your goals. It's easy to get overwhelmed with SEO and start doing things haphazardly. To stay on course, focus on actions that will help you get closer to your goals and stay vigilant about tracking the right metrics.

What does this look like in practice?

Let's take an example of a fictional company, The Pet Box, which sells a subscription box service for pet owners. This company's business goal is to increase sales of its monthly pet food subscription box. They started by setting a more specific goal of increasing sales of this product by 20% over the next six months. In order to reach this goal, the marketing team members decided on a few steps. First, they optimized the product page using on-page SEO best practices. Next, they wrote a series of blog posts teaching their audience about different types of pet food. Finally, they made a pillar page about how to find the right pet food. The metrics they'll track to determine if they're on the path to reaching their goals are: organic traffic to the product page, pillar page, and related blog posts, conversions, bounce rate, and sales made from these pages. Over time, reporting on these metrics will help The Pet Box team identify if their SEO efforts are contributing to the overall goal of increasing sales.

Here's a different example: let's say that The Pet Box's goal is actually to increase the traffic to its pet food subscription box page. Currently, this page is receiving about 500 visits per month and is ranking in the tenth position in Google search results pages for the search term "pet food subscription box." The Pet Box has set a goal to increase monthly visits to this page by 50% and boost their position above number five. Now, the marketing team's strategy to reach this goal is to optimize the product page for search intent and boost the authority of this page by getting backlinks from reputable pet care blogs and pet food companies. The metrics they will track to see if they're meeting their goal are: organic traffic to the product page, its position in SERPs, number of search impressions, and backlinks acquired.

These are just a few examples of different ways that your reporting can change based on your specific needs and goals for your website.

Video: Create Your SEO Reports

In this video, you'll learn how to report on your SEO efforts using a few different tools.

Let's start by walking through Google Search Console. Google Search Console is a great resource to learn about your website's performance in Google's search results pages.

Start by connecting your site to Google Search Console. You can find instructions for how to do this in the resources section below.

Inside Google Search Console, the primary data you'll need is in the Performance tab. Here, you can see how many impressions your site received in SERPs, how many clicks you've gotten, your average position in the SERPs, and your average click-through rate. You can filter this data by search type and date.

Under Queries, you can see how many clicks and impressions your site received for certain search terms. This is useful data to have when figuring out which pages you should optimize and which keywords you should create content for. By clicking on a query, you can filter the graph to see your performance over time for a particular search query.

You can also see how each of your web pages are performing, which countries you're receiving traffic from, and whether people are visiting your site on desktop, tablet, or mobile devices.

You can also submit your sitemap on Google Search Console. You can learn more about why sitemaps are important in the resources section below.

Let's take a brief tour of Google Analytics. Google Analytics is a powerful tool that you can use to analyze the traffic coming to your site. Before getting started with Google Analytics, make sure you've installed its tracking code on your site. This lets you track traffic coming to your site and find out what visitors do once they land on your site.

At a high level, you can see how many people are coming to your site, how long they're spending there, where they're located, and much more.

You can drill down further and analyze the traffic to each individual page, and see metrics on engagement time, conversions, and more.

There are many different data points you can analyze and reports you can run, so if you'll be using Google Analytics frequently, you may want to read some of Google's documentation to learn how to use its tools more in-depth.

Let's walk through how to analyze your website traffic in HubSpot. In the main menu, select Reports and choose Analytics from the dropdown menu. Here, you'll see a variety of analytics options – which ones depend on which HubSpot products you use.

Select Traffic Analytics. The first report in the Traffic Analytics tool is the Sources report. This shows you where your website traffic is coming from: organic and paid search, organic and paid social, direct traffic, email marketing, referrals, and campaigns. You can see how many sessions your pages received from each source. Change the filter to check other data points such as conversion rate, bounce rate, average session length, and more.

Below the graph, you'll see a chart which breaks down each source in more detail. Click on a source to drill down further.

Inside the Traffic Analytics tool, you can also check the performance of your topic clusters if you're using the Topics tool in HubSpot to map out your content strategy.

Under Pages, you can see the performance of each individual page and blog post you've published.

By combining this data about the traffic coming to your site with the data you're collecting about your leads and customers in the HubSpot CRM, you can close the loop and effectively track the ROI of your content marketing.

Video: (Optional) Adding Your Website to Google Search Console

Google Search Console is a free tool that allows you to monitor how Google views your website in order to optimize it for better performance. To get started using Google search console, you first need to add your website.

Start by signing into your Google account. Make sure that you're using your business account, not your personal

one, if it's a business website.

Next, head to Google Search Console.

If you've already connected a website to Google search console in the past, this will show up in the upper left corner. Click that menu, and select **Add property** from the dropdown.

Next, select the property type. In this case, you're adding an entire website, so select **Domain**. Make sure you're using the exact URL that appears in the browser bar.

Click **Continue**.

Pick a way to verify that you're the owner of this website. This can be done in a few different ways: signing into your domain name provider, uploading an HTML file, or adding an HTML tag to your site are the simplest ways.

Finally, if your site supports both "http" and "https," add both as separate sites.

Now, you're ready to start gathering data and optimizing your website. To learn more about how to use Google search console, check out the resources section.