

# CATALYST

the **MARXGROUP**

Business Strategy | Marketing Communications

September 2008

## Put your analytics to work: Part 2

In our last issue of Catalyst we discussed how visitors interact with your website. This month's question is: How did they get there? Google Analytics has various ways of showing you the path that readers take from one site to the next. We will examine a few ways to interpret Google Analytics reports and then provide suggestions of what to do with your findings.

### They came from where?

Have you ever wondered how your website visitors found you? Do you wonder if your online web banners are actually bringing in visitors? You can easily determine this by viewing the "Referring Sites" report. This report lists the sites your visitors left before arriving at your site. Take the time to examine each referring site and look for the following:

- What type of site is this? Is it a directory, someone's blog, an online forum, etc?
- Did it come from a site where you have an online banner displayed?
- Is this site in your industry?
- If it was from a blog or forum, is the context in which your site is linked and mentioned good or bad?
- Are you surprised?

With the popularity of blogging and participation in online forum discussions, examining what's being said can help you determine your company's or product's reputation in the online world. This will either show you that you have managed to create a great brand, or that possibly there needs to be some damage control. Are your current online banner placements or ads bringing in visitors? If they are not, consider a redesign, remessaging or repositioning. It might even be time to either cancel the placement or place additional ads on some of those sites that DO generate visitors.

Because your best referral sources are your customers, consider sending a quick message to the blogger or the organization that linked your site to their webpage or blog entry. Did they absolutely love your product? If they did, consider giving them free product in exchange of posting another blog entry or providing you with a testimonial or additional feedback.

### Actions speak louder than words.

After reading article after article about doing basic SEO to your website and spending hours choosing the perfect keywords, there is still the question - is it working? Well there is good news - whether or not your efforts are working is actually traceable.

The "Keywords Report" in Google Analytics will show that picking the "perfect keywords" doesn't always help unless they actually bring in visitors. Review the report. It might lead to a reconsideration of your initial keywords or it might just show you that the time spent deliberating over which keywords to pick was well worth it.

The report will help you determine trends. Are there certain products or services that are specifically being searched? How did they phrase the keyword search terms? Test their search yourself and see how far down the first or second page your site appears when searching that exact keyword or phrase. Are your visitors willing to search through four (or more) pages of results? Who was listed as well in this search? How can you get your site higher on the results list?

Now that you have read your reports, do some brainstorming with your team. Be bold and do some tests. You can't get results without testing. As you get better at determining where your visitors are coming from and why, your ads and banner placements will become more and more effective. You'll also bring much more power to your SEO process. Adopt Google Analytics as one of your sales and marketing tools today.