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Making Sense of Analytics

How to train for an online analytics marathon



Mention the words “online analytics” and some people immediately think of complex data and algorithms. It’s enough to make you want to run for the hills, or at the very least, hide under your desk. But keep reading, because this Blue Paper® is going to take online analytics to a different level, one that you can understand and implement. You’ve probably heard of Facebook® Insights, Hootsuite®, Google Analytics®, and LinkedIn® Analytics, but do you know what they do and how to use them? Do you know the difference between a bounce rate and a pageview? This paper is going to teach you how to walk before you run, and by the end, you’ll be ready for an analytics marathon.

But first, we must start at the beginning. As defined by Wikipedia, business analytics (BA) refers to the skills, technologies, applications and practices for continuous iterative exploration and investigation of past business performance to gain insight and drive business planning.¹ While that sounds complex, it really isn’t. In brief, analytics help you figure out how you are performing on- or offline and what can be done to improve. Business analytics focuses on developing new insights and understanding of business performance using data and statistical methods. For example, if you have an online presence, tracking user traffic and experience is a critical business objective. But do you know how to evaluate and measure Web traffic, unique visitors and bounce rates? More importantly, can you use the data to make improvements that matter? After reading this paper, you’ll be one step closer to answering these questions with confidence.

This paper takes a deep dive specifically into online analytics and why you need them. It also discusses the analytic continuum, and how you can progress to more complex analytics, one step at a time. The paper teaches you how to walk by reviewing some of the metrics you should be tracking online and what they mean. Once you’ve mastered the basics, you’ll be ready for a slow jog that involves implementing a process to apply analytics. The final section of the paper is devoted to identifying online tools and methods that you might consider implementing to prepare you for an analytics marathon. Tools like Google Analytics® and Hootsuite® are wildly popular, and for good reason. We’ll summarize some of the most popular analytic tools so you’ll be better positioned to pick one that fits your needs. And hopefully, after reading this Blue Paper, the

¹ “Business Analytics.” Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, 30 Nov. 2013. Web. 06 Jan. 2014.

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next time someone mentions online analytics, you won't be the one hiding under the desk.

Why do I need analytics?

If you have an online presence, you need analytics, regardless of the purpose for your online presence. Whether you are selling items online or using social media to attract customers, analytics is the only way to measure success or failure. It's a way to progressively track the progress and objectives of your site, and determine whether you are fulfilling business objectives as intended. The other value to analytics is it identifies when and how you need to take necessary actions to improve online performance or sales.

Remember, the goal of BA is to record and track user behavior, and then use this data to determine how and why a pattern is occurring and to make process improvements that affect your bottom line. Most companies know they need to track the number of visitors and pageviews, but analytics is really much more than collecting data. It's about measuring the progress of your objectives and effectively using the data to implement change. In reality, simply tracking pageviews doesn't tell you much about your website. Effective analytics gets to the *how* and *why* of user behavior.

Bain & Company® recently released a survey from executives at more than 400 companies around the world, most with revenues exceeding \$1 billion. The survey asked them about their data analytics capabilities and the resulting decision-making speed and effectiveness. Shockingly, only four percent of companies claim to be really good at analytics.² The top companies reported that they are able to put data into the hands of the right people, stay focused, and that they use the right tools and data. Research shows that companies that are good at analytics are:

- Twice as likely to be in the top quartile of financial performance within their industries;
- Three times more likely to execute decisions as intended; and
- Five times more likely to make decisions faster.³

These are compelling reasons to get on the analytic bandwagon. But why do companies find it so hard to be successful with analytics? The Bain survey found that 56 percent of the companies didn't have the right systems to capture the



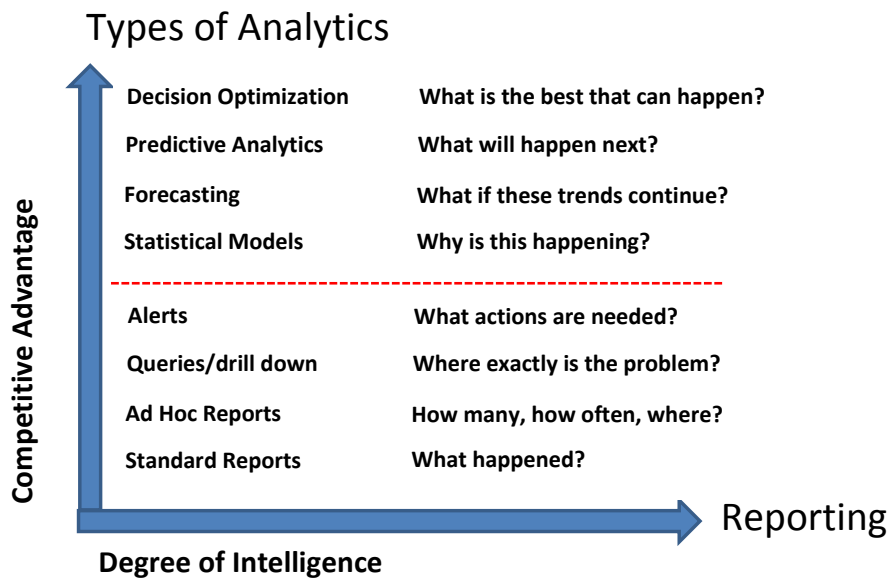
² Wegener, Rasmus. "The Value of Big Data: How Analytics Differentiates Winners." Bain & Company. N.p., 17 Sept. 2013. Web. 20 Jan. 2014. <<http://www.bain.com/publications/articles/the-value-of-big-data.aspx>>.
³ Ibid.

data they need or weren't collecting useful data. Another 66 percent lacked the right technology to store and access data, and 56 percent of executives said their companies lacked the capabilities to develop deep, data-driven insights. Finally, 38 percent said they weren't even using the free tools that are available for analysis.

What does an analytical marathon look like?

As you've already gathered, there are many different levels of analytics. You might start with collecting data, but as you progress in the business analytics continuum, you'll start to use more complex tools to uncover patterns and predict the future. As show in **Figure 1**. the analytics continuum begins with standard reporting to show companies what happened. As you progress on the continuum, you eventually use analytics to predict future behavior and identify patterns.

Figure 1. The business analytic continuum



Specifically, Figure 1. shows the kinds of analytics you can explore and what they might tell you. And, as analytics move up the continuum it provides more value and competitive advantage. When you are just beginning analytics, you might issue standard reports that tell you what occurred in the past. As you improve, you'll uncover how often it happened and where. Further on, a query might identify the problem, while more sophisticated alerts will tell you what actions are needed. All of these actions are derived from analytical analysis.

But conducting business analytics above the "red line" in Figure 1. is really where you'll find the most value and gain a competitive edge. Statistical models,

forecasting and predictive analytics give you a better idea of the future and help to identify trends. While these are often the more valuable analytics, they are also the most difficult to implement for an organization. For this reason, many companies begin at the bottom of the spectrum and work their way up—slowly. The greater the sophistication in analysis, the more complex the resources needed to conduct that analysis, including stronger business intelligence, better tools and expert analysts.

According to research, pulling the information you need from Web analytics software should be less than 10 percent of the project, and 90 percent of time should be dedicated to deriving insights your organization can use to drive change.⁴ Experts believe that successful companies engage in the following tasks once they've captured analytic data:

1. Compare trends, not just differences;
2. Analyze data significance before drawing conclusions;
3. Segment data to dig deeper;
4. Correlate reported trends with business impact;
5. Make actionable insights.⁵

Again, this is the true value of analytics, and probably the main reason companies avoid it. It's complicated and requires significant thought and analysis, not to mention the drain it can have on resources and budgets. But, remember, you have to learn to walk before you run, so if you're new to analytics, remember that the end goal is not the starting point. There are a number of data points that you can (and should) collect in the early phases of your analytics exploration, so let's get started and review some of the more common online analytic data points.

Learning to walk: Key analytics

So what, exactly, are some of the analytics that can be captured by Google and other tools? There are literally hundreds of analytics that can be measured, but generally, analytics fall into four main categories. The common analytic categories include:

- Audience (e.g. who is visiting your site?)
- Traffic Sources (e.g. how do visitors come to your site?)



⁴ Przyklenk, Garry. "5 Ways to Make Web Analytics Data More Insightful." *Search Engine Watch*. N.p., 17 Oct. 2012. Web. 14 Jan. 2014. <<http://searchenginewatch.com/article/2217270/5-Ways-to-Make-Web-Analytics-Data-More-Insightful>>.

⁵ Przyklenk, Garry. "5 Ways to Make Web Analytics Data More Insightful." *Search Engine Watch*. N.p., 17 Oct. 2012. Web. 14 Jan. 2014. <<http://searchenginewatch.com/article/2217270/5-Ways-to-Make-Web-Analytics-Data-More-Insightful>>.

- Content (e.g. what content gets more attention?)
- Conversions (e.g. how many people actually make a purchase or referral from your site?)

Sample **audience** analytics include things like new versus returning visitors, frequency, how long users stay on your site, demographic location, and whether or not your site is accessed using a mobile device, to name a few. **Traffic** sources track things like search terms that are used to identify your site whether or not your users are direct or referrals from other sites. You can also identify if traffic to your site is coming from other social sites. **Content** looks at the actual sites that are visited. Metrics in this area might track downloads, outbound links, media views and more. You can even look at how users drill down into site content. Finally, **conversion** metrics track things like how many users make purchases on your site and whether they were assisted or unassisted. It also looks at top conversion paths and whether or not a customer is more likely to make a purchase if he or she came to your site from different venues.

Some of the more popular analytic metrics include: pageviews, visits, unique page views, unique visitors, new versus returning visitors, segments, landing page, bounce rates, traffic sources and search traffic.⁶ You can find a full definition of these and other analytic metrics in the Appendix at the end of this Blue Paper. You can also view the complete Google Analytics [glossary of terms](#) compiled by ePower® Marketing. If you are more of a visual learner, check out the following YouTube® presentation on how to [make sense of Web analytics](#). The video was captured during the 2012 New Media Workshop during a session titled Making Sense of Web Analytics. It was also made into a handy Prezi® available online as well. Both of these resources are good starting points for anyone that needs to know more about analytic metrics and what they can tell you. You might consider sharing this within your department or training activity so employees and key decision makers understand the basics of analytics as well.



You're ready to walk, now what?

Did you know, according to IBM®, that leaders say they make the wrong decisions about 25 percent of the time?⁷ Many of these decisions are made on instinct, but analytics can help you rely on facts and trends rather than your gut to foster innovation, find opportunities and identify patterns.

⁶ Willis, Emma. "Understanding Google Analytics: Definitions of Key Terms." Box UK. N.p., 2013. Web. 14 Jan. 2014. <<http://www.boxuk.com/blog/understanding-google-analytics-definitions-of-key-terms/>>.

⁷ "Analytics Overview." IBM. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 Jan. 2014. <<http://www.ibm.com/analytics/us/en/?CPG=0001>>.

Security First Insurance®, for example, used analytics to improve response rates to policyholders in the aftermath of natural disasters. The company serves 180,000 customers in Florida, which has the highest rate of hurricane claims in the country. During a typical month, the company processes more than 700 claims for damaged property, but in the aftermath of a hurricane this number can jump to thousands within days. Traditionally, customers used email or phone to file claims, but the company noticed that social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter® were quickly becoming the preferred method of communication.

Accordingly, the company partnered with IBM and used analytics to determine how many claims were filed on social media platforms, then developed a method to channel communications into actionable forums by using text mining, text analytics and natural language processing. The IBM solution logs all social networking interaction, captures content, monitors incoming and outgoing messages and archives all communication for compliance review. Analytics also help Security First Insurance link to specific content to expedite the loss recovery process for policyholders. The software automatically captures incoming social media, email content and attachments, and stores it in a central repository to maintain, control and integrate into the appropriate business process for the customer. Werner Kruck, the chief operation officer at Security First says analytics help respond to customer claims more efficiently. Specifically, Kruck said that “IBM’s big data analytics software allows us to automatically prioritize and route incoming messages saving us a tremendous amount of time and effort.”⁸ Thanks to analytics, not only was the company able to respond to claims faster, but it also improved customer engagement and made social media a relevant forum for consumer communication.⁹

The lesson learned is that collecting data is just one piece of the analytics puzzle. In truth, you need a process to understand how to interpret the data and to use it to make change. Generally, experts agree that implementing BA requires a four-step process.¹⁰ According to John Lucker from the analytics firm Baseline®: “Many analytics projects fail because too much time is spent doing *what* can be done with analytics versus focusing on what, specifically, the business *should* do with analytics. By focusing on the analytics process—from strategy to results—organizations can replace activity with achievement.”¹¹

⁸ “IBM Helps Security First Insurance Mine Big Data To Analyze, Prioritize And Route Social Media Requests After A Disaster.” IBM News Room. N.p., 7 May 2013. Web. 23 Jan. 2014. <<http://www-03.ibm.com/press/us/en/pressrelease/41003.wss>>.

⁹ “Analytics Overview.” IBM. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 Jan. 2014. <<http://www.ibm.com/analytics/us/en/?CPG=0001>>.

¹⁰ Lucker, John. “Business Analytics: Six Steps to Getting Results.” *Business Analytics: Six Steps to Getting Results*. N.p., 6 Sept. 2012. Web. 20 Jan. 2014. <<http://www.baselinemag.com/analytics-big-data/business-analytics-six-steps-to-getting-results/>>.

¹¹ Lucker, John. “Business Analytics: Six Steps to Getting Results.” *Business Analytics: Six Steps to Getting Results*. N.p., 6 Sept. 2012. Web. 20 Jan. 2014. <<http://www.baselinemag.com/analytics-big-data/business-analytics-six-steps-to-getting-results/>>.



Lucker and others suggest companies create an analytics process that moves analytics through strategy and planning to ongoing change management. A four-step process helps organizations use analytics to make ongoing and positive changes that matter.

Step 1: Define an analytics strategy

If you're running a race, you need to follow a course route so you'll know when you reach the finish line. The same concept applies to online analytics. It's wise to spend time not only asking key questions about how and why you want analytical data, but to outline the course to reach it and how you will define the finish line. Is the end result to increase traffic and sales? Or do you want find out why online sales are dwindling and how you can improve them?

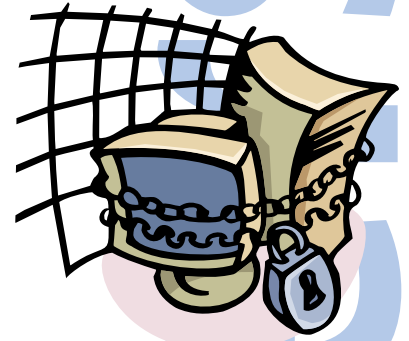
You've probably heard the saying if it can be measured, it can be managed. The same concept applies to analytics. You need to embed analytics into strategy and planning so that your business has an ability to anticipate rather than to react to customer behaviors. Real change will only begin when the organization recognizes the value of data and moving to a metrics-centered culture.

So how do you do this? First and foremost, you'll need the support of key leaders. Leaders should talk the talk and walk the walk by communicating the value of an analytical approach with a consistent voice. Business leaders must lead by example and showcase how analytics-derived decisions will have a positive impact. Second, you need to clearly outline your goals. What you want to accomplish will drive the metrics that you capture. For example, you might want to look at unique visitors if your goal is to increase site traffic. Do you want conversion rates? If so, you should track things like abandonment rates so you'll have a baseline to know if you're improving.

Consider designing an end-to-end strategic road map that has short-, medium- and long-term analytical goals. You should also outline the expected value it will have or the associated behaviors you hope to change with a resulting return on investment (ROI), if possible. Associating a potential ROI for analytics will show how the investment can provide bottom-line value to the enterprise. It will also help tie in the effort to core business functions, so that it truly impacts decision-making.

Step 2: Perform focused analytics activities

In this phase, the real work begins and your strategy is transformed into tangible analytic analysis. This is where you produce reports, queries and alerts based



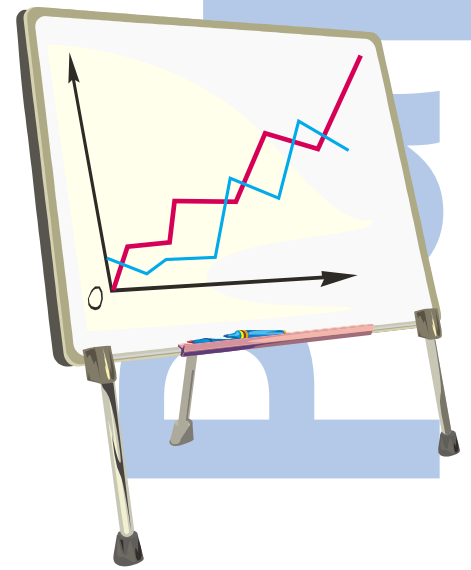
on the data you collect. This is where you look at what happened, how often it happened, and where problems seem to occur. As you move to more sophisticated analytics, you'll use the data to determine why something is happening and what will happen if the trends continue. Again, referring back to Figure 1., you issue reports using strategies below the red line, and as you progress, you'll use the data for predictive analytics and forecasting.

If you're starting from ground zero, you'll need to select a basic analytics tool that can pull the data you need. Google Analytics and Hootsuite are two of the tools most widely recommended. The appendix at the end of this paper provides a list of some of the other analytic tools that are available, whether you're a beginner or a more seasoned company looking for predictive analytics tools, like the SAS® Predictive Analytics Suite.

During analysis, remain focused on the needs of the business and the requirements of the analytics strategy from Step 1. In this phase, strategy is transformed into tangible analytic results. Keep in mind your business objectives and focus on the end goal you are trying to achieve. Most tools have analytical models built into the program to help you make sense of the data. Reports will tell you how you are performing and draw basic conclusions on trends, but it will not necessarily tell you how to use the data to impact decision making. This occurs in the following step, where you translate analytics into action.

Step 3: Tie analytics into business processes and operations

This is the phase where you use analytical results to improve business processes and operations. This is where the rubber hits the road, so to speak, and you translate data into action. Rather than accepting business as usual, companies need to take a step back and reevaluate the way a business operates. Analytics can be used as a catalyst for process changes that can be far-reaching. Although it takes a significant effort to assess and guide change, the result is often increased operational and fiscal efficiency. As analytics expert John Lucker notes, "Modernization of operational processes has been shown to be very valuable in the strategic analytics journey."¹².



¹² Lucker, John. "Business Analytics: Six Steps to Getting Results." *Business Analytics: Six Steps to Getting Results*. N.p., 6 Sept. 2012. Web. 20 Jan. 2014. <<http://www.baselinemag.com/analytics-big-data/business-analytics-six-steps-to-getting-results/>>.

As you progress through the analytical continuum, the tools become more powerful. Analytics are gathered faster and can enable business changes that lead to significant savings. According to the publication CIO®, 65 percent of 335 IT leaders surveyed said that business intelligence and analytics spurred business-process change in 2010.¹³ In fact, companies that successfully make changes using analytics tools and techniques are better at financial forecasting, retaining customers and improving operating profit. A study from the Aberdeen Group® looked at 159 organizations and found that companies that used analytics retained 93 percent of their customers.¹⁴

You could say this is the longest part of the race—and that's figuring out what changes need to be implemented in your company that impact change. Once you've captured the data, you need to compare trends, segment data if needed and try and correlate trends with a potential business impact. Successful companies use the data to determine how to improve sales or marketing efforts, for instance, through complex analysis and evaluation. You can also use the data to improve website traffic. In truth, there's really no limit to how the data can be used and interpreted, the key is to implement changes that make a difference.

How do you tie analytics into process changes and operations? According to IBM, analytics can be used to:

- Streamline operational processes to meet customer demands;
- Optimize production and distribution channels;
- Overcome short-term stresses or unexpected marketplace changes; and
- More effectively allocate capital and human resources.¹⁵

While this list is non-exhaustive, it gives you an idea of how you can use analytics to improve. For example, a large manufacturer of sanitary and hygiene products needs to streamline sales processes while handling a high volume of retail outlets, including pharmacies. The company used business analytics to identify loyal or high value pharmacies, and then tailored sales processes for each location. As a result, the company was able to improve sales with loyal pharmacies by over 37 percent.¹⁶

The difficulty is translating analytic insights into action that improves processes or sales. If you are monitoring online campaigns, perhaps you will use analytics



¹³ Nash, Kim. "Business Intelligence Meets BPM: Using Data to Change Business Processes on the Fly." CIO. N.p., 17 June 2010. Web. 27 Jan. 2014.

¹⁴ Nash, Kim. "Business Intelligence Meets BPM: Using Data to Change Business Processes on the Fly." CIO. N.p., 17 June 2010. Web. 27 Jan. 2014.

¹⁵ "Predictive Operational Analytics." IBM. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 Jan. 2014.

<http://www-01.ibm.com/software/analytics/solutions/operational-analytics/index.html>.

¹⁶ Taylor, James. Business Analytics: Decision Management Solutions - Driving Operational Excellence with Business Analytics. IBM Software Business Analytics. N.p., 2013. Web. 27 Jan. 2014.

to improve traffic or display more of the content users appear to like. Or perhaps you will increase customer loyalty programs because the analytic data tells you they are wildly popular and effective. The possibilities are endless; the key is to stay focused on your goals and objectives from Step 1.

Step 4: Embrace change

Finally, anytime you make significant changes in a business, you need an effective change management strategy, and analytics is no exception. Change must be managed properly in order to be successful. Training, communication, and executive sponsorship are essential to implement change. There should also be a defined link between the analytical initiative and the business strategy.

People are important to a change management strategy, but implementing the right technology and processes are equally important. The end-goal is to align systems, technology and data to the people and processes they enable. This approach brings analytics into the forefront of the business, so everyone views it, uses it and realizes its value.

Overall, the processes outlined above are ongoing and repeated on a regular basis. Analytics is not just a one-time thing, it's evolutionary and requires constant re-evaluation. You wouldn't begin training for a marathon by running 20 miles immediately; you'd start small and work your way up. It's the same thing with analytics. By repeating steps 1 to 5, you will be able to fine tune your data and processes. You'll get in better shape the more you practice and implement, and soon you'll be running like a fine-tuned machine. Ultimately, it's the consistent feedback and loopback mechanisms that create continuous improvement.

Thinking of a slow jog? Tools to consider

Google Analytics is not the only tool that you can use to analyze performance, but it is one of the leading resources currently on the market. What makes it so popular? For starters, it's free. Plus, it allows companies to measure a full spectrum of analytics, starting with the basics and moving to advanced with a high level of accuracy and precision. Google Analytics is often recommended by Web developers and analytic experts because it's easy to use, highly accurate, and maintenance and development is fully supported by Google, so you don't have to worry about upgrades and setups. There's also support for mobile platforms, and did we mention it's free? Although it's not the only tool, it is a good starting point for many companies that are new to analytics.



But in reality there are a plethora of tools that can help you extract user behaviors and habits online and produce solid analytics. Some are free, some require minimal cost and some are offered by third party consultants. The type of tool you want to use depends on what you want to track. For example, if you're tracking social media analytics, you might use something entirely different than if you were trying to engage in predictive analytics.

There are a lot of lists that summarize the top analytic tools for social media. Yahoo!® Voices published a list of the [Top 5 \[Social Media Tools\] to Monitor Your Brand](#) and [TweakYourBiz.com](#) has a handy list of the [Top 10 Social Media Monitoring and Analytics Tools](#). Meanwhile, the Business Bee™ published a list of the top analytical tools if you want to engage in more predictive analytic analysis. Check out the article [How to Use Predictive Analytics Tools to Increase Your Sales](#) if you are interested in using more sophisticated analytical tools online.

Analytic champions

But when you use analytics as intended, the payoff can be huge. If you're a sports team, for example, it can help you win the World Series or Super Bowl. That's right, the New England Patriots® and Boston Red Sox® attributed some of their success to the power of analytics.” By using data and analytical models extensively, both on and off the field, these teams were able to improve performance that helped them become champions. Of course, this example is one of using predictive analytics, which is the most sophisticated type of analytics on the analytic continuum. But it's a good reminder that as you progress on the analytics continuum, you have the power to make your organization a champion.

Retailers and consumer-packaged-goods (CPG) companies are two industries that benefit from analytics as well. If you think about it, CPG and retailers in particular have the ability to capture information about every item sold to every customer at every store. Imagine the power you'd have if you could harness that data to figure out how much customers are willing to pay or which items will sell better in a given market? Analytics can help you determine market preferences and highlight items that sell most frequently.

A European CPG company, for example, was able to increase sales by 10 percent in a low growth category by applying advanced analytics to consumer data. The company tracked products across different stores and used the data to determine what was selling well in certain retail formats. In response, they restructured inventory and marketing efforts to reflect consumer purchasing habits and



17 "The Right Way to Use Business Analytics." CIO. N.p., 01 Oct. 2005. Web. 06 Jan. 2014.

preferences. And the benefits of analytics don't stop there—research by McKinsey & Company® and Massachusetts Institute of Technology® shows that companies that implement big data and analytics into their operations outperform industry peers by five percent in productivity and six percent in profitability.™

Off and running ... keep going!

You have the data, you have the process ... so what are some other ways to improve analytic data? There's a helpful article online on [how to use analytics to drive more traffic to your website](#) that you might want to review. If you are struggling, there are several things you can do to improve analytic data. First, you should analyze website and other online data frequently if possible. Things to consistently review: referring sites (websites that send quality traffic), visitors overview (new versus unique), top pages (which ones do customers like best), shares (how often someone shares your posts) and frequency of visits (is there a day or time when users visit more frequently)?

Once you uncover some trends and habits, it's time to take action. Maybe you want to spend more time on sites that refer the most traffic? Or, maybe you want to focus on producing more of the content that visitors seem to like the most? Once you know what days are high traffic days, you can coordinate to publish new content, contests, and general site updates on these days. If you have a lot of new visitors, perhaps you should run contests or promotions for new visitors. Another idea is to say thank you to returning customers on your site by making special offers.

As you've surmised, data analytics can be a complex endeavor, but it doesn't have to be. By learning the basics and making sure you walk before you run, it becomes a much more attainable activity. The goal is to start small, and work your way up the continuum. Above all though, it's critical to use the data to implement real change and influence business decisions. Otherwise, you're just running on a treadmill and going nowhere fast. So lace up and hit the track, every journey begins with a single step.

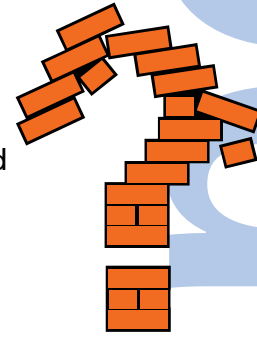
Appendix: Glossary of terms and tools

The short definitions below might give you a better idea of the types of analytics that you should capture:

18 Breuer, Peter. "Applying Advanced Analytics in Consumer Companies." McKinsey & Company. N.p., May 2013. Web. 20 Jan. 2014. <http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/consumer_and_retail/applying_advanced_analytics_in_consumer_companies>.



- **Pageviews.** This is the number of times users view a page, including if they refresh or navigate away from the page and return.
- **Visits.** Visits are the individual periods of time users spend on your site. A visit is ended after 30 minutes of inactivity
- **Unique pageviews.** The unique pageview number counts all the times the page was viewed in an individual session as a single event. Whether a visitor viewed the page once in their visit or five times, the number of unique pageviews will be recorded as just one.
- **Unique visitors.** These are users that visit your site for the first time. If the same user returns to your site after an initial visit, it is not calculated within this metric.
- **New vs. returning visitors.** New visitors are those that have not visited your page before while returning visitors will have made at least one visit to your site previously.
- **Segments.** Segments enable you to analyze data in detail, by filtering the results to show only information for certain kinds of traffic. Segments can compare results between groups of visitors. (Google also allows you to set up custom segments to for even more granular analysis.)
- **Landing page.** This is the page users begin their visit to your site; or, how they "land" on your site.
- **Bounce rate.** A bounce rate refers to the number of users that leave your site after visiting only one page.
- **Visitor flow.** This is a metric that shows how visitors move through your site, from landing to exit page. Visitor flow reports can be customized to show additional detail, like geographic location of users or how many people exited at each stage of interaction.
- **Traffic sources:** Traffic sources tell you how users arrived at your site. Traffic can be either direct or by referral. Direct traffic is made up of visitors that type your URL directly into their address bars, select an auto-complete option when typing the URL, or click on a bookmark to get to your site. Referral traffic is when a user has landed on your site by clicking on a link from somewhere else; this could be another site, a social media profile or a search engine.
- **Search traffic:** Search traffic is either organic or paid. Google Analytics lets you see what percentage of traffic came from search engines, and this is further broken down into organic and paid search. Organic search shows the users who came to your site by clicking on the organic links on the search engine results pages (SERP). The paid search results show users who clicked on one of your paid search engine advertisements; these typically appear at the top and side of the SERPs and are managed via an advertising account such as Google AdWords® or Bing® Ads.
- **Shares:** The number of times your content is shared with others on



Facebook.

- **Retweets:** The number of times your content is retweeted on Twitter.
- **Likes:** The number of “likes” received on a given piece of content on Facebook.
- **Fans/Followers:** The number of users that follow your content or are listed as “fans” of your page.
- **Click-through rate (CTR)** is a way of measuring the success of an online advertising campaign for a particular website as well as the effectiveness of an email campaign by the number of users that clicked on a specific link.
- **Abandonment rate:** The number of users that leave items unpurchased in a virtual shopping carts.
- **Viewthrough rate (VTR):** Measures the number of post-impression response or viewthrough from display media impressions viewed during and following an online advertising campaign.
- **Pay per click (PPC)** (also called cost per click) is a model used to direct traffic to websites, in which advertisers pay the publisher (typically a website owner) when the ad is clicked. Also defined as the amount spent to get an advertisement clicked.

Tools for joggers and runners:

Below you'll find a list of some of the more popular tools for easy reference. You can click on the links to go directly to the website to learn more. The first part of the list summarizes the basic tools for analytics that you might use when you are getting started. The latter part of the list reviews some of the more complicated tools that you might use for complex analytics like predictive or modelling. Remember, different applications do different things, so it's best to review all options before diving in. Here is a summary of some of the most popular analytic tools and what they can do.



Tools for the jogger—i.e. beginners under the red line

- [Hootsuite®](#) has become one of the most popular social media analytic tools because it streamlines everything into a single dashboard. Users do not need to manage multiple dashboards or pages for each of their social media accounts. You can schedule out all your social media activity weeks in advance with Hootsuite.
- [SproutSocial®](#) is quickly growing in popularity because it is remarkably similar to Hootsuite and caters to small businesses. It allows companies to manage multiple accounts at the same time, and offers a wider variety of reports that will allow you to examine every aspect of your social media networks.
- [Topsy®](#) lets you know what topics are being covered on social networks at

any time throughout the day. Topsy is partnered with Twitter® and allows users to see what topics are most popular.

- [Buffer®](#) is another free tool that provides detailed analytics on multiple social media platforms. It analyzes data so that a company knows what is working and what isn't.
- [Quantcast®](#) is a free tool that tracks information on demographics and traffic. It's helpful for companies that want to learn more about audience demographics and traffic patterns.
- [YouTube®](#) offers viewer analytics for videos published on YouTube. The demographics are beneficial to help tailor marketing efforts related to video content.
- [Social Mention](#) allows you to track and measure who is talking about you, your company, your product, or any topic related to your industry. Social Mention pulls data over a hundred social media platforms.
- [Twilert](#) is a Twitter monitoring application that monitors all mentions of a chosen keyword across the Twitter-sphere. It's an easy platform to use for social analytics.
- [Brand Monitor](#) is an easy-to-use social media monitoring and engagement platform. A dashboard is available for you to view weekly trends, reaction meter, posts volume, reaction graph and top referrals. A graph with positive and negative response trends for the past month can also be viewed.
- [Moz Analytics](#) originally started as an SEO company that would help companies find out more about its online presence. Their search tools help companies find conversations and analytics in regards to your personal history, as well as what others are saying about you.

Tools for the running enthusiast—i.e. Intermediate analytical tools above the red line

- [Google® Analytics](#) offers free tools for small and large business, which give site owners the chance to track organic search keywords, as well as paid traffic. This tool is excellent for drilling down into segments of data.
- [TIBCO Spotfire®](#) helps you learn from your company's collective experience. It provides companies with tools to anticipate emerging customer trends and information about which preemptive actions could help minimize risk. Spotfire is available for a free trial with variable pricing.
- [Toovio](#) uses predictive modeling to facilitate customer offers in real-time. It relies on a self-learning prediction algorithm to turn its clients' data into custom reports to show what is and isn't working from each campaign. It also leverages predictive modeling and analytics to help



merchants predict customer shopping patterns and improve conversion rates on digital promotions. Pricing is based on the number of profiles needed to be created and the average decisions per day, but can cost up to thousands per month.

- [ElementOne®](#) helps identify customer audiences. It leverages tools like predictive segmentation, strategic market planning, geographic market analysis, and messaging to help business clients identify and reach their target audiences. Pricing depends on the level of services provided and how customized the services are based on the client's needs.
- [MyCityWay®](#) delivers personalized mobile experiences and relevant targeting. It provides global and local brands with an “intelligent local search and discovery platform” that can be used to build and launch their own branded mobile apps to generate referrals and loyalty promote. As with other tools, pricing varies based on the type of small business and the level of customization.
- [Lattice®](#) uses data to find sales-ready leads. It also provides insight to help companies sell and market more intelligently. It claims to identify which leads are most likely to convert by utilizing predictive analytics tools. Pricing is based on the number of sales users, number of modeling users, use-cases, and data volumes.
- [SAS® Predictive Analytics Suite](#) provides a number of predictive analytic tools that help reveal patterns and anomalies, identify variables and relationships and predict future events. The data can be used to develop new insights and make decisions based on the facts that are discovered.



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