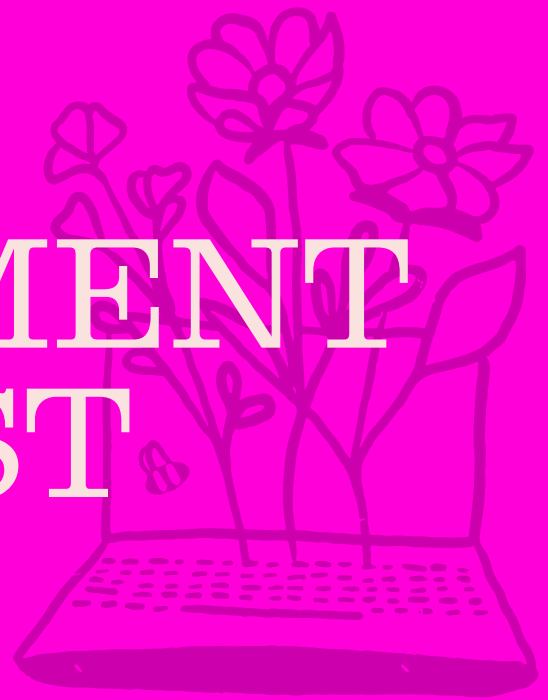# ONLINE ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST

HOW TO REACH WEB VISITORS—AND KEEP THEM

What's the key to an online presence that works? It's not cutting-edge design, it's not gripping copy, and it's not speedy and intuitive functionality——despite the importance of all three. It's engagement. Meaningful engagement, however, might look different depending on your specific website's goals. For example, if a local lawn care business might look for lead generation, while an international nonprofit might aim to raise awareness for a cause. Regardless of the goal of your website, there are lots of analytics to measure how you're doing.

But, all the information in the world means nothing if you're not sure what to do with it. Great data can even feel overwhelming or confusing if you're new to tracking web engagement. With that in mind, this checklist breaks down each of our favorite metrics (the top ones that we track and discuss with our own clients), gives you a cheat sheet to finding them in Google Analytics, and offers a few ideas to make the right changes.

Note: While these may go by different names in different analytics tools, we've used terms and examples from Google Analytics for this guide since it is free, easy to set up, and widely used.

OUR FAVORITE METRICS

USERS

REPORTS ⟶ AUDIENCE ⟶ OVERVIEW

Simply put, this metric tells you how many people visit your site. The "normal" number depends on a lot of factors, but if you're seeing this metric change dramatically from month to month, it might be worth exploring what's going well (or not-so-well). But remember—a few relevant site visitors are more helpful than thousands who aren't the right fit.

- ☐ *SEO optimize your site to reach the right people*
- ☐ *Try guest blogging for another site and build partnerships with related brands*
- ☐ *Use your social media profiles to drive traffic to your website*
- ☐ *Use Google Ads to reach new audiences*

PAGES/SESSION

REPORTS ⟶ AUDIENCE ⟶ OVERVIEW

This metric tells you how many distinct pages on your site a user visits before leaving. A high number in and of itself doesn't necessarily have an overall impact, but it does mean your users are exploring—they either enjoy engaging with your content or are interested in learning more about you.

- ☐ *Create a customer journey map to understand your site from a viewer's perspective*
- ☐ *Create content*
- ☐ *If you have a blog, list related pages in a sidebar or at the end of each post*
- ☐ *Check your site's speed—a slow-loading page might be a reason to look elsewhere*

BOUNCE RATE

REPORTS ⟶ AUDIENCE ⟶ OVERVIEW

Your bounce rate is the percent of people who visit one page of your site before "bouncing" off your site—the lower the better! While a "good" number will vary based on your type of site or page, a rate of 30-50% is ideal. If it's higher than usual, here are a few ideas to encourage your visitors to explore more of your site.

- ☐ *Create and link relevant blog content to bring the right information to your viewers*
- ☐ *Use free tools like Google's Keyword Planner or AnswerThePublic to learn what types of content web browsers are looking for to guide you as you create content*
- ☐ *Introduce interactive content like quizzes, polls, interactive maps, and infographics since these tend to be more engaging*
- ☐ *Audit the placement, anchor text, and selection of your internal links*

AVERAGE SESSION DURATION

REPORTS ⟶ AUDIENCE ⟶ OVERVIEW

This metric lets you know how long the average visitor sticks around on your website. Similar to a bounce rate, it's a great way to gauge whether your viewers like spending time on your site. While the time spent on your site might not be the ultimate goal, knowing when and where visitors are lingering gives an outside perspective on what you're doing well.

- ☐ *Make sure your website uses responsive design*
- ☐ *Reduce your site's loading time by minimizing complex graphics*
- ☐ *Focus on interesting and useful, niche blog or video content*
- ☐ *Prioritize pages that already have high engagement when picking which pages to SEO optimize or link internally*

TOP PAGES

This qualitative "metric" lists specific pages of your website from most to least popular. For most websites, the homepage is a clear winner. Depending on the results, your list of top pages can help you analyze everything from which content your visitors like most to whether they're more interested in reading about your organization or signing up for a specific event. It gives you valuable insight into what your viewers think is most important.

☐ *Use Google Ads to drive more traffic for pages that you know perform well*

☐ *Brainstorm new content ideas related to your post popular pages*

☐ *Compare the formats, design, and concepts between popular and unpopular pages*

TOP QUERIES

This list shows the top search terms that people are using to find your site. Unlike a keyword you might optimize for, you can think of a query as a "real life" keyword——it includes extra words tagged on, question phrases, and misspellings, for example. By understanding how people are finding your website through Google, you'll better understand your users and what they are searching for. Here are a few ideas for using your top queries list.

☐ *Check your SEO keywords against your top search queries—do they line up?*

☐ *Using your top queries as a guide, develop Google Ads to reach new audiences through search results*

☐ *Develop and create more content around your top queries*

SO, WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Hopefully this guide gave you a glimpse into the top engagement metrics to help your website reach and keep your viewers. While these metrics are a great starting point, your type of organization and personal website goals ultimately determine the best steps to improve your website. Just remember—online engagement isn't an end, but a means toward your specific goals. Finding out what people do or don't like about spending time on your website is the foundation. While we've listed our best ideas to improve and use each metric you're tracking, we don't want you to lose sight of two overarching practices that make a difference in engagement—traffic and content.

GOOD TRAFFIC

The best website in the world isn't worth much without great viewers to use it! The first way to bring more people to your site is to share it with everyone—your friends, family, professional network, in-laws' neighbors' second cousins, and the cashier at the grocery store are a great start. Once you've done that, it's time to search the internet far and wide for the most relevant viewers, readers, donors, or customers. Who would want to find you but hasn't yet?

SEO optimization and Google Ads are the perfect matchmakers to help your website be found by the right people. If we're speaking a foreign language or you don't have the resources or time to learn how to use these tools for yourself, there's good news—the team at Anna Montgomery & Co would love to partner with you.

If you're a nonprofit looking for even more great news, Google Ads offers up to $10,000 per month in search ads for eligible nonprofits.

GOOD CONTENT

A lot of web visitors aren't worth much if you can't keep them around. While there are a lot of ways to engage an online audience, it all starts with great content. Don't get us wrong—this doesn't only refer to an informative blog. It means everything you write, design, and create should be something that the right people want to explore, learn about, or engage with. If you're curious about bettering your content, the team at Anna Montgomery & Co would love to partner with you to give creative direction, create content for your website, or give content coaching to guide your team.

We're here to partner with your brand, cheer you on, and provide useful resources for your church, nonprofit, or small business as you reach—and keep—new web visitors.

Have a question? Looking for another resource? Need an idea? **Let's talk.**

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