Google Analytics

Cancer.org Donations Rise 5.4% With Help From Google Analytics

The company

The American Cancer Society has been working for more than 100 years to find a cure for cancer and to help patients fight back, get well and stay well. Today, the Society uses a number of websites and mobile apps to provide information on cancer detection and treatment, offer volunteer opportunities, and accept donations.

The challenge

In early 2012, the members of the Society realized they needed help in understanding how users interacted with their sites and apps. They knew they were being visited by users with different needs and goals, but it was a challenge for their digital marketing team to isolate these customer segments and to help them achieve their goals.

The Society also wanted to address concerns with the Google Analytics implementation on its sites, monitor how its users changed behavior over time, and remarket to all segments once they were identified.

The Society turned to the digital analytics and marketing company Search Discovery for help.

The process

The Society and Search Discovery began by using Google Analytics to capture data that would help them identify user segments. They quickly learned that the Society's website visitors fell into three main personas:

1. **Info seekers:** People seeking cancer signs and symptoms or needing help with understanding a cancer diagnosis

2. **Event participants:** People who want to take part in walks, races, and other events to raise funds to fight cancer

3. **Donors:** People who want to give money to help the fight against cancer

About American Cancer Society

-   For over 100 years, the American Cancer Society has worked relentlessly to save lives and create a world with less cancer. With millions of supporters worldwide, it helps people stay well and get well, find cures, and fight back against cancer.
-   Headquarters: Atlanta, Georgia
-   www.cancer.org

About Search Discovery

-   Search Discovery is a digital marketing and analytics agency that helps organizations transform their marketing through the effective collection and use of data. Search Discovery is a Google Analytics Premium Authorized Reseller and a Google Analytics Certified Partner.
-   Headquarters: Atlanta, Georgia
-   www.searchdiscovery.com

Goals

-   Understand how various segments of users interact with their sites and apps
-   Monitor how users change their behavior over time
-   Remarket to each segment of users more effectively

Approach

-   Understand the website user segments and create personas to represent them
-   Scored each group based on how it is behaving on the website

Results

-   5.4% jump in Cancer.org revenue year over year
-   Successfully implemented a scoring method that helps monitor the overall health of the site for each user segment

Their next step was to understand whether each group was reaching its goals. Using Custom Dimensions in Google Analytics, they captured the vital signs of conversion success for each segment:

1. **Info seekers:** Appropriate web pages viewed and information gathered

2. **Event participants:** Registration completed for one or more events

3. **Donors:** A donation made

Search Discovery began mapping events that showed when each user was successful or unsuccessful at meeting a goal. Custom metrics were used to record a score for each event:

- **Recency score** = One point awarded if the user's previous session was within the past week

- **Engagement score** = One point awarded for every three pages the user viewed

- **Conversion score** = One point awarded for each conversion: a donation, event registration, or view of an entire cancer information article

- **Revenue score** = One point awarded for gifts larger than the average gift size, which was $70

This scoring method helped the Society marketing team monitor the **overall health of the site for each user segment** and follow trends over time. It also let the team dig deeper into the data when abnormalities arose.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS: CANCER.ORG MEASURES USER VALUE
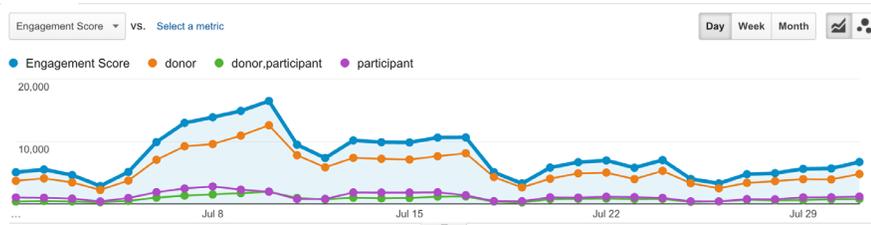
Learn More

This case study discusses the following features:

- User Segmentation

- Custom Dimensions & Metrics

- Remarketing

More importantly, the Society could now use the Google Display Network to **remarket to its users based on any combination of those segments and scores**. It began to do the following:

- Invite information seekers to donate to cancer research efforts

- Share fundraising ideas with event participants

- Encourage event participants to make their own personal donations and raise funds from others

- Invite previous participants to register for new local events

The results

The new user-scoring metrics allowed the Society's analysts to identify behavior changes in each segment that would have gone unnoticed otherwise.

"The insights we've gained from Google Analytics and working with Search Discovery continue to influence the Society business decisions for the positive. Not only are our marketing decisions well informed, but our digital content is driven by user experience and engagement. We're looking forward with enthusiasm and optimism."

—Ashleigh Bunn, director of digital analytics

For example, Cancer.org is the primary site used by the Society to distribute cancer research and information, but a separate site called Making Strides Against Breast Cancer is used to raise money specifically for breast cancer research.

Google Analytics

In October 2014, the site performance score on Cancer.org began to increase unexpectedly. Analysis showed this was due in large part to October being Breast Cancer Awareness Month. However, the Society had expected breast cancer donors to go to the Making Strides site; Cancer.org wasn't optimized for this traffic.

In response, the Society marketing team created new promotions on www.cancer.org to drive traffic to the Making Strides site. It worked: Those links were followed by more than 39,000 people throughout the month. The team also created a new donation form on Cancer.org that sent funds only to breast cancer research. The result was a 5.4% jump in Cancer.org revenue year over year.

The Society analysts now use the user-scoring metrics introduced by Search Discovery to measure the performance of other website changes and redesign projects. When site search was redesigned, for example, the analysts set a target for better engagement scores among information seekers.

As the Society moves into its second century, Search Discovery and Google Analytics are helping it reach a new generation of supporters, patients, and donors in the fight against cancer.

About Google Analytics

Google Analytics is the enterprise-class analytics solution that gives companies rich insights into their digital audiences and marketing effectiveness. With features that are powerful, flexible, and easy-to-use, companies large and small can measure engagement to create more effective marketing initiatives, improve user experience, and optimize digital strategies. Sophisticated conversion attribution and experimentation tools help savvy marketers determine the best allocation of media and resources to drive results. For more information, visit google.com/analytics.