

■ by Dan Steele

Take Aim With Social Media Analytics

We can all agree that archery instructors would never encourage shooters to fire an arrow blindfolded. The arrow would most likely miss the target. Only when one aims carefully does the likelihood of hitting the bullseye increase. Marketing is no different.

Analytics can help you identify your audience so you can shape your message accordingly.

Peter Drucker said, “You cannot manage what you do not measure.” Too often marketers release a social media post or ad campaign without implementing the “aim” of analytics, and therefore, never hit the target.

We must use analytics to measure results and optimize our reach. When employed correctly, analytics can improve ad performance, analyze our audience and verify ROI.

Each social platform has a dashboard to view analytics; however, some marketers choose to use Google Analytics (GA4) to see how much traffic is being filtered from social media to their website. Using a tool like Sprout Social or Hootsuite allows you to see your social analytics from multiple platforms in one place. Whichever tool you choose, reviewing analytics can help you spot trends and tweak ads accordingly, bolstering your marketing efforts.

To optimize ad performance, try these steps:

1. Run two different ads simultaneously.
2. Use analytics to measure which ad received the most interaction.
3. Turn the nonperforming ad off and continue using the effective ad.
4. Ensure future ads contain similar elements.

This is possibly the simplest example of analytics improving ad performance; but without the data, our ad performance is guesswork.

Your content must resonate with your audience. Analytics can help you identify your audience so you can shape your message accordingly. You can analyze your audience's age, gender, location and device. If analytics show you that your ads are reaching people who are not in your target audience, you'll need to alter the ad.

How do you know if the campaign investment is justified? If your goal is conversions — more beds filled — don't trust your gut, check the data to confirm your ROI. It'll take some work to set this up, but when done, you'll be able to track your audience across social platforms all the way to their registration confirmation page. Using conversion measurement tools can verify you're not just throwing away ad campaign dollars. ■

■ If you're not sure where to start, Sprout Social offers a helpful guide to understanding analytics that you can access at www.ccca.org/go/analytics.



Dan Steele has served in camp ministry for over 20 years as a programmer, marketing director, staff hiring director and currently serves on the management team at River Valley Ranch in Maryland. He is in his groove when he's inspiring, teaching, serving, making music with, encouraging, networking with and loving people.

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