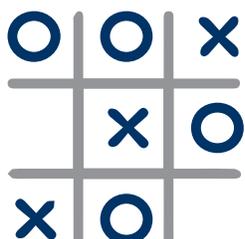# LISTENING TO AUDIENCES
THROUGH ANALYTICS

Identifying and Tracking Metrics for Online Outreach. A smart strategy starts and ends with listening to your audiences through analytics.

Strategize

Why guess what your target audiences want when you can know for sure by listening to them? Each action that they take on your website, email or social media can be tracked, analyzed and incorporated into a new or existing digital strategy. As with any strategy, first you should establish your objectives and research your target audiences to determine what they care about, the language that they use, where they are and how to reach them. The Spitfire Smart Chart® helps you think through these questions and incorporate analytics into your overarching communication strategy.

Website

A website strategy should always reflect the values of your target audiences. Use Google Analytics to gain insight into overall website performance, behavior of audiences, sources of traffic and evaluation of content. Adjust your strategy when needed.

+Dashboard
Your main Google Analytics dashboard should contain the following metrics for your overall website performance. These should be included in every analytics report.

Unique Visitors by Traffic Type: This metric allows for a quick summary of your visitor type (i.e., organic, direct, referral, email). How did this change from last month?

Unique Visitors: Use this metric, rather than unique pageviews, because it provides an accurate count of your audience for a specific time period.

Average Session Duration: Tracking the time that visitors stay on your site is a good metric for monthly analytics reports.

Bounce Rate: This shows the percentage of people that leave from the same page they landed on. Bounce rates vary widely, so it's best to check your sources to see where bouncing visitors came from and what your goals are for that page.

Goal Completions: Set up goals to track online actions, such as email sign-ups, donations or downloads. You also may track the most popular paths that led people to take action.

+Audience
The audience section shows how you are targeting new and existing audiences. It also allows you to learn more about your visitors' demographics (e.g., location, gender and age) as well as how many of them are using a phone or their desktop to access your website.

New Visitors: If you published an op-ed in an outlet with a new audience, did you receive new visitors? How long did they stay on the page compared to return visitors? Did the new visitors go deeper into your website?

Returning Visitors: This metric is helpful to determine if your website is reaching your primary audience. Pages/Session: How many layers of your site are visitors exploring beyond the entry page?

+Acquisition
Direct: This type of traffic is from visitors who come to your website without a traceable referral source, such as typing your URL into their address bar, clicking on a link in a PDF or using a bookmark on their browser.

Referrals: What other websites are directing visitors to your site? Which outreach activities are the most or least effective? Are your social media efforts paying off?

Search: What search terms are people entering to find your website? To increase the rank of your site in a Google search, you may want to mention the words listed in your website's content.

+Behavior
Determine what content is engaging users by tracking behavior on pages.

Overview: This lists the 10 most-viewed pages, showing the main content people are coming to see. Are these the pages on which you want heavy traffic? These pages also present an opportunity to drive people deeper into your site with links to other relevant or popular pages.

Behavior Flow: This diagram can help you visualize how visitors are navigating through your site.

Email

Email is a vital communication channel for many organizations and their supporters. The following metrics should be tracked to determine what drives high open rates and encourages action.

Open Rate: Track this metric over time to determine your norm. Studies vary widely on the average open rate for nonprofits. In 2019, one study found an average open rate of 15 percent, while MailChimp found a nonprofit open rate of 21 percent.

Click-through Rate: This metric shows what content in your email is getting the greatest response. Often this number is the top story in a newsletter or the action link. In 2019, nonprofits are experiencing an average click-through rate of 2.4 percent for advocacy emails and 0.44 percent for fundraising emails.

A/B Testing: Split your list in half and test different versions to determine the most effective subject lines, timing and content selection. Alternately, test different approaches in different emails and compare the open and click-through rates.

Forwarding Rate: Your metrics should show who has been forwarding your emails, which is a good indicator of your most engaged users, who could be segmented. Studies confirm that when it comes to spending, people listen to people they know.

Social

The Google Analytics social section can determine the amount of referral traffic to your website from Facebook and Twitter. To evaluate these pages individually, you could use the following tools and metrics and experiment with the time and content that you are posting to learn what works best for your audience.

+Facebook

The Insights section on Facebook shows performance metrics for your page and posts.

Reach and Engagements: Under the "Insights" tab, go to "Posts," go to the "All Posts Published" section, then click on the drop-down to the right of "Reactions, Comments and Shares" and click "Reactions, Comments and Shares." Since Facebook no longer allows you to organize posts by column, you will have to sort through posts manually to see which one has the most reach and engagement.

When Your Fans Are Online: In the "Posts" section, use this graph to pinpoint the best time to reach your target audiences.

Your Fans: In the "People" section, you will find basic demographic data about your fans, including age, gender and location. Are these your target audiences? If not, increasing your use of promoted posts and ads on Facebook may be necessary.

Top Sources: Under "Page Views," scroll down to find the "Top Sources" chart to determine where people are coming from who view your page.

+Twitter

Twitter offers analytics about an individual or organizational Twitter account. Be sure to check the overall dashboard section for your monthly top tweet and new followers. For more detailed and ready-to-use reports, use TweetReach for viewing the reach, top contributors and impressions that your organization's handle or hashtag has recently received.

New Followers: This measures the number of new followers you've gained on a specific social platform over a given period of time.

Mentions and Retweets: This number indicates if your content is sparking conversation with your fans and encouraging them to share your tweets with their followers.

Demographics: What age and gender make up your Twitter following?

Impressions: This metric is the combined number of potential users who saw any content associated with your Twitter page. How did this number compare with last month? What were your top three tweets this month?

Engagement Rate: This metric measures the total number of times a user interacted with your tweet. This measurement includes link clicks, likes, retweets, detail expands, hashtag clicks and much more.

Implement

How often you track these metrics depends on the nature of your campaign and how much insight you need. For a short and fast-moving call-to-action drive on your website or social media, you may want to check your metrics daily or weekly. For weekly check-ins to senior staff, short reports with only the dashboard metrics and a few email and social metrics could suffice.

Start by assigning staff to collect the metrics, analyze the data and develop actionable goals. Ideally, the person creating the content does his/her own analytics, whether email, social or web. Lastly, ensure that decision makers for your overall communications receive analytics reports.