How Is Your Website Performing?

A SCORE mentor was meeting with her business client recently and asked this question: How is your website doing for you? The response she got from this small business owner was that “deer in the headlights” look and these words came out “how can I understand all those data about it and what should I know to get started”.

That is a great place to begin! Analyzing your website’s performance can be overwhelming in the beginning. But, its important because tracking and measuring your audience’s online behavior will help you to determine what about your site is working well and what isn’t working at all. Once you have this information, you can make informed decisions on where to invest your time or money and where there are opportunities for improvement. I will break this topic down into two columns. This week, I will start with the basics of looking at your website and getting some metrics to help you.

I suggest that before digging into any specific metrics, first start with these things in mind:

✔ Know the objectives of your website.

✔ Just because something can be counted, doesn’t mean it should.

✔ Focus on one metric at a time as you begin (for example, visits or visitors) to ensure you are comparing apples to apples.

✔ Be ready to respond!

Once you are ready to begin the metrics work, here are some recommendations on key metrics to focus on to better understand how your site is performing.

**Conversion Rate:** Your website’s conversion rate (CR) is the ratio of visitors who successfully complete a target action to total visitors to your site. This target action can be anything you determine as a measure of success for your site. Examples include downloading a report, completing a Web form, or making a purchase.

Here’s a simple example on how to calculate CR: If you are counting the visitor’s action to “make a purchase” and your metric showed that you had 1 purchase and 20 visitors, then your calculation is: 1 sale divided by 20 visitors times 100 (to get a percent). Here
is the math: \((1 / 20) \times 100 = 3\%\) CR  A good conversion rate tends to hover around 1-3%. If your conversion rate is less than 1%, you should reevaluate your site content, as there is room for improvement.

**Keywords** are specific words and phrases that bring users to your website through search engines. Identifying these words and phrases is critical and should be monitored regularly. Why? According to Keyword Discovery, over 80 percent of all online transactions begin as a keyword search on a search engine. Knowing what your target audience is searching for is essential to optimizing your site’s content, and will also help uncover any missing gaps in content that users may be looking for that’s not available on your site. You can also incorporate important keywords into a web address to help with SEO (search engine optimization).

In my next column, I will deal with some specific “metrics” that you will be able to get about your website performance. In the meantime, if you need immediate help, don’t forget to get some free mentoring from your local SCORE chapter.

____________________
Dean L. Swanson  
Southeast Minnesota SCORE  
c/o Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce  
220 South Broadway, Suite 100  
Rochester, MN 55904  
www.seminnesota.score.org/  
*Dean is a volunteer SCORE Mentor and Regional Vice President for the North West Region*