

Slant Article: Actionable Analytics

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It's hard to believe, but every year, marketing and Web site executives stake their reputations on digital advertising programs and web sites that deliver no results to the enterprise and little value to consumers. And yet many of the same executives have the web analytics tools at their disposal to help them create valuable online campaigns and Web sites. Why is there a disconnect between Web analytics tools and business results?

To close the gap between analysis and performance, Avenue A | Razorfish has published *Actionable Analytics*, available for download at <http://www.avenuea-razorfish.com/points.htm>. This report answers 14 questions every marketer and Web site owner should ask in order to get better results from Web analytics.

We believe the report contains many insights that will help you. For instance, *Actionable Analytics* contends that if you apply analytics the right way, branding and direct response advertising need not be an either/or decision. The report also urges marketers to develop robust tracking solutions to maximize the value of rich internet applications.

We also try to address some practical but challenging questions. Let's take a look at one of them. One of the questions many of our clients ask is, "Now that I've selected a Web analytics package for my Web site, how do I create a successful Web analytics program?"

At Avenue A | Razorfish, we believe that your Web analytics package is only part of your solution. A successful application of Web analytics requires a smart analyst who can glean insight from data – in short, someone who understands the art and science of analytics.

Think of your Web site as a retail outlet. You track the purchase of every SKU, every basket of goods, profitability of the sale, and the customer's purchase profile. Imagine if you could track every single action that occurs in your retail outlet – not just the volume of traffic in a store, but how many people stood in the toothpaste aisle and felt overwhelmed by the dozens of different brands offered, examined three products, put two down in under 10 seconds, and purchased the most expensive shiny box they handled because it promised 10 times brighter teeth in a week.

Web analytics make this level of analysis possible but **only** if you know how and where to look for it. Are your analysts digging into your Web site data this deeply? Are they producing insights that are merely interesting or those that clearly indicate action? An analyst has to understand both how to get the system to produce the data and how to present the data to executive, marketing, and technology executives so it is clear and can be acted on. If they don't, you're leaving revenue on the table.

Many different roles in an organization can benefit from reviewing and understanding Web analytics data when it is presented at the appropriate level of detail required by each role. Typically, business managers or leaders will not have the expertise or time to extract the necessary insight from Web



analytics tools. A dedicated team of analysts is best suited to understand a given business need and pull the information that can support a business decision.

Not only do you need strong analysts to analyze and present the data, you also need to make sure that your package is configured and customized to your own company's specific needs. If you've not had your analytics package vetted for accuracy, you're probably looking at the wrong data to begin with. And if you don't maintain your package, your performance will suffer.

Our successful clients make sure that they employ highly skilled Web analytics analysts to understand the system and the intricacies of the site. Many organizations require a deep statistical background for someone in this role. But if the analyst does not understand how a Web site works and the basics of Internet networking, he or she will miss key subtleties that make or break a site's performance.

So what does it take to implement a successful Web analytics program? The right software system configured and refreshed and a great analyst who understands that Web analytics is both an art and a science.

Frankly, a successful web analytics package is not the same as a well run program. Want to get more insight on how you can improve your use of analytics? Please contact rocco.abano@avenuea-razorfish.com or lee.sherman@avenuea-razorfish.com, and download a copy! (<http://www.avenuea-razorfish.com/points.htm>)