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Rainmaker Webinars

How to Leverage Your Traffic Into Better Decisions and More Conversions

Jerod Morris, Chris Garrett, and Loryn Thompson



TRANSCRIPT



How to Leverage Your Traffic Into Better Decisions and More Conversions

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How to Leverage Your Traffic Into Better Decisions and More Conversions

Jerod Morris, Chris Garrett, and Loryn Thompson

Jerod: Hello everybody and welcome to the latest session of the Rainmaker Site Building Roadmap. This is part of our Maximize Your Traffic with Rainmaker series. And today's session is titled, "How to Leverage your Traffic into Better Decisions and More Conversions." I am Jerod Morris, I will be your host on today's journey. And I'm very excited, as I typically am on these sessions, to be joined by Mr. Chris Garrett. Chris, how are you?

Chris: I'm doing great and I'm particularly looking forward to this one because we've got Loryn here who's going to be our expert because ... I was just saying, anything with a number in it, anything with digits and you've lost me. I don't do math so it's good that we've got a math nerd. Sorry, Loryn.

Jerod: That's right. And just like we were very excited to have Sean Jackson join us in our last couple of sessions, because he's an expert on SEO, Loryn is joining us today and hopefully on our Q&A next week as well. She is our data analyst at Rainmaker Digital so there is no one better to add some insight on leveraging your traffic into better decisions and more conversions. Loryn, welcome to the Rainmaker Site Building Roadmap.



Loryn: Hey, guys. Glad to be here.

Jerod: Absolutely. Chris and Loryn, if you all are ready, I think we can begin.

Chris: Yeah, let's do it.

Jerod: All right. Let's do it.

Loryn: Go for it.

Maximizing Your Traffic with Rainmaker (00:01:19)

Jerod: Let's do it. As I said, this is part of our Maximizing Your Traffic with Rainmaker series that we're doing this month. The first webinar we did was [How to Use Rainmaker's Powerful Suite of Traffic and SEO Tools](#). Sean Jackson joined us for that session and for the corresponding [Q&A](#). So we highly recommend those two sessions if you have not seen those yet.

Then beginning today, we're going to do a two-part series on How to Leverage Your Traffic Into Better Decisions and More Conversions. We're going to be walking through that today and then answering any follow-up questions that you have next week. So that's what we'll be doing here over the next two weeks.



Content Marketing Strategy (00:01:58)

Jerod: Chris, to begin, on some of these recent sessions, you've been walking us through the content marketing strategy. This Attraction, Retention, Conversion graphic that we have here. Do you want to walk us through now what we're going to talk about today? How it fits in to the content marketing strategy?

Chris: We've been talking about this Attraction, Retention, Conversion, but how do you know what is working? How do you know what you should be doing? And, it's not always easy to tell because, especially people who get lots of offline referrals ... Unless people say, "Oh, I was referred by Jim or Bob or Kate," you don't really know. Online, we can track everything, and the NSA is particularly keen on that but we can track stuff as well. If you go about it the right way.

So we need to work out our tactics for being able to tell where our best sources of traffic are coming from, why that's working, how we can make it work better, how to fix the things that aren't working so well.

When we have an attraction strategy, we need to be able to optimize that attraction strategy. We need to know where our best referrals are coming from in terms of product purchases and email conversions. And we need to do more of what works; we need to optimize the things that work. We need to fix



the things that are broken. And, most importantly, which we're going to talk about today, we need to know which is which. We need to be able to tell what we're doing.

It seems like an obvious and easy thing, but it isn't always. Especially when Google actually holds some information back from us so we need to be able to work through all of the parameters ... Make sure that we know. So it can keep building it because, as we've said in previous webinars, we're trying to create a positive cycle here, where we don't just attract the right people but they bring friends.

Jerod: You know, Loryn, it can be pretty easy when you start getting into this stuff, especially when it comes to data and tracking to just get lost in all the information and to get a little bit confused.

Just to kick us off here, this is something that you've really dug deep on. Do you have any initial tips or thoughts for folks as they look to get better at looking at their data and understanding their numbers that can maybe help simplify it or kind of be the most important thing that they should focus on to get the most out of the time that they put into it?

Loryn: Yeah, definitely. One of the things I always tell people is that analytics platforms, ads platforms, whatever, it's their job to get you the data but they want to make sure you feel like you're getting your money's worth and so they



often flood the platforms. Google Analytics does this, any sort of ads platform does this, with metrics that are really, really easy to get you off-track.

A lot of these more behavior-focused metrics, like time on site or pages per session, they can be useful for diagnosing problems individually but the main thing you always need to keep in mind is your goal. Whatever goal you're trying to look at, you need to look at basically, how many people were possibly exposed to this goal and how many people actually completed this goal?

Really, that is the most basic formula for trying to figure out which areas of your site are performing. The rest is all just expansion. The rest is all just detail. If you can figure out how many people had the potential to convert on this goal and how many people actually did and then you can dive deeper and do a lot more with that. But, yeah, always start with your goal.

Jerod: Excellent.

Agenda (00:05:48)

Jerod: All right. Here's where we are going to go today. And you might notice that the agenda's a little sparser that it usually is for these sessions. We're going to talk about making the most of Rainmaker and Google Analytics. And then we're going to walk you through how to perform simple, but valuable,



A/B tests. If we have time at the end, we will get to some Q&A. Kind of a little preview to the Q&A we'll do next Friday.

As I was going through these slides, I originally had three or four more bullet points on here but we really got into some detail on what we're going to talk about with Google Analytics and A/B tests, and we had the opportunity to bring Loryn on and add extra insight. So we figured that we wanted to tackle fewer items but really go into them with more depth. So, again, we'll have a whole other session coming up on Friday where we can answer questions about this or additional topics if you like but this is where we're going to go today.

Making the most of Rainmaker and Google Analytics (00:06:38)

Jerod: Let's begin and let's talk about making the most of Rainmaker and Google Analytics. And, if you remember, from, I think it was the very first session in the Rainmaker Site Building Roadmap, where we went over your basic setup. You know, the first few things that you should do when you get going with Rainmaker. We talked about setting up Google Analytics and linking your Rainmaker site to your Google Analytics account.



Review: Set up Google Analytics (00:07:04)

Jerod: Just as a quick review, you go to the Results settings and you will find the button to setup your Google account to connect with Google. So click that. You will link Rainmaker to your Google account and then choose the proper web properties. You'll have to setup your site in Google Analytics first then choose, obviously, the corresponding site, click 'Save' and then your site will be setup inside of Rainmaker, with Google Analytics, so you have quick, convenient access to your Analytics reports ... To certain analytics reports within Rainmaker.

Now, one of the best reports that you have and one of the most convenient features about having your Analytics account linked up inside of Rainmaker is that, when you log in, on your dashboard you get a Google Analytics Summary, which kind of shows you, at a glance, some of your basic statistics. For example, you can see your general traffic trend and what you really want to do here ... What I always do, at least, when I log in and look at this is, I just ask myself, "Does anything look odd or unexpected?" Right?

And, obviously, when you look at this graph, it doesn't look all that consistent because you've got that big jump early on and then you've got kind of ... It goes up and down after that. But I kind of know based on the traffic trends of that site that that actually does make sense because there was one day that had a big spike, otherwise it kind of follows the normal pattern where when



we do post content, we get a jump. On days we don't, we don't get a jump. And that's kind of what you want to look for, as Loryn mentioned. This can help you diagnose an issue that you may want to dig into further.

To give you another example, Copyblogger.com follows a very predictable traffic pattern. So, when your site does do that, it's really easy to spot an unusual change. And that's one of the best parts about the Dashboard widget, is it gives you that at a glance so every time you log in, you can just look, okay, everything looks ... That looks basically okay. Nothing jumps out at me as a red flag. I can move on. But having that at a glance is really, really convenient.

At a glance, with this Dashboard widget, you will also be able to see a snapshot of your basic stats over the past month, like visits and page views and pages per visit. And again, you just want to watch those, track them, and if anything starts to seem out of the ordinary, that's when you probably want to dig in and look a little bit further. And then the extended stats will show you top posts and top refers as you go down so you can get just a little more insight right there from the dashboard.

Now, I want to make this note clear when it comes to Rainmaker and Google Analytics. The Google Analytics results that you see in Rainmaker are simply what you can see when visiting your actual Google Analytics account. So, Rainmaker includes Google Analytics to make it easy for you to access right



from your website, but it is not controlled by the platform. So what you see will depend on the settings that you have created inside of Google Analytics.

Okay. So let's go through ... Chris, anything to add there before we start going through these reports one by one and just showing what is available inside of Rainmaker?

Chris: The main thing to look at with these reports is that they're meant for a quick overview. Don't obsess over them. It's more important that you can understand the health of your site rather than really digging in on a daily basis. Because, if you obsess over it, you're not paying attention to building a business.

Loryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Rainmaker Analytics Reports(00:10:32)

Jerod: Absolutely. Okay. So to get to the Analytics Reports, you want to go to Results and then click on 'Analytics Reports,' and that will take you there. The first report that you will see is the Summary report. Again, it's going to show you this graph and it will show you some of these top line metrics like sessions and average time on site and page views, which, as Loryn mentioned, are good to know, they're good to track, but, context is important. And, really



understanding what the numbers mean is important and not overreacting to them, like Chris said.

So the Summary report graph is going to show individual sessions. That's the red line. And then page views, which is the blue line. So a single session can have multiple page views. If I visit your website, I can go to three different pages and that would be one session but three page views. And so, at a glance, you can see what your traffic is like and you get a sense for what your pages per session is going to be like just at a glance here from the Summary graph, as well as some of these other numbers.

The red numbers mean that the metric is worse month over month. The green numbers mean that the metric has improved. It's important to note that a red number isn't necessarily bad because, for example, the screenshot that this is taken from is The Assembly Call, which is a site about college basketball. And so, obviously in early March, when March Madness is going on, our traffic is at it's highest. So this site gets it's most and engagement in early March so you would expect traffic to taper off in April as it has.

Another way for me to really know what I'm looking at here is really to go into Analytics and maybe look at year over year data and see ... Okay, in April of 2017, how much different is it than 2016? But just looking at the difference between last month and this month isn't going to necessarily tell me if an improvement or if numbers lessening is good. So context is really important.



It's essential for understanding data and I'm sure that's something that will come up a few times as we go through today's presentation.

The next report is the Engagement report and that graph shows page views in blue. It shows sessions in red. And then it also adds bounces in yellow. And so, ideally, you want this yellow line to be as close to the X-axis as possible because that means fewer bounces. A bounce is someone just coming to one page on your site and then leaving. You also want as much distance, then, between the blue and the red line as possible because that will mean more pages per session. So that's your Engagement report.

The Referrer report is going to tell you where your traffic is coming from. So you look over here on Referral Sources. Obviously this site generates a lot of its traffic from Twitter and from social. It also gets some direct and some from search. And, you may be wondering, what is that direct traffic? Well, direct traffic is most likely going to be traffic from, say, a link in an email or a browser bookmark, typing in your URL, something like that. It's people going directly to your site as opposed to being referred there by someone else. So that's the Referrer Report.

The Search Engine report simply tells you what search engines are bringing you the most traffic. Obviously, this site is getting the majority of its traffic from Google. Not a whole lot of action there from Bing or from Yahoo or from some of the other search engines.



What countries bring you the most traffic? So, Chris, you will be excited to know that Canada delivers the second most traffic to The Assembly Call. Obviously it's dominated by the United States but Canada comes in there at a solid, what is that? 2.6%? Or, .26%. So, you know, not a lot, but it's something. How many of those were you, I wonder?

Chris: Probably me a lot. Yeah. Different browsers.

Jerod: Yes. So that's the Geo report. And then the Social report is going to show you what social media sites, then, are bringing you the most traffic. So, again, it'll show all the different sites. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Google+, Other. Those will all be linked here.

And, once again, the context is going to be important here. So if you aren't really promoting your stuff in LinkedIn, then you wouldn't expect LinkedIn to have a very big piece of this pie. So that would not be something to be alarmed by. Your context is going to be very, very important.

Now you may be wondering, why was there no love here for the keyword report? I will actually tell you why there was no love for the keyword report in just a second and it's going to lead us into the next part of this discussion.

Before I get there though, Loryn, did you want to ... Are any of those reports that we just went over ... Is there anything that you want to point out that will



help people based on what they can see inside of Rainmaker when they're looking at them?

Loryn: Yes. Definitely. There's a couple of things.

One, I really like that this report is available in Rainmaker because a lot of this stuff is the kind of thing that you just want to keep a pulse on. And I particularly like how, in these reports, it has the percent change because that's really what I look for when I'm looking at the overall. You really don't care individually what percentage of new sessions came to your site when we're looking at the whole website. What we want to know when we're looking at the whole website is how does this compare to the past 30 days or the past year if you go into Analytics to actually look into that.

When you see something like that, when you see something change, like the bounce rate increases or the percent new sessions increase, then you want to go into Google Analytics and start diving into ... Okay, did that come from a different source? Did that come from ... Is it on a certain landing page? What changed?

But this is really useful for getting an overview and trying to figure out ... Keeping a pulse on the overall trends so you don't miss anything because it would make you go insane if you tried to monitor every single little bit of every single channel, every single landing page all the time.



In fact, just today, I actually had a ... On my motorcycle blog, I had a post that started going little tiny little bit of viral on Facebook, which I hadn't noticed when I was actually in Facebook. So that was kind of cool. I saw that on my Rainmaker dashboard first. And then I was able to go into Analytics and find the post and find the landing page and, sure enough ... That was kind of cool.

Jerod: Very nice.

Loryn: Relatable.

Jerod: Very nice.

Loryn: Yeah, and I think I had one more thing that I wanted to say, just really quick. If you see ... If you saw, like, on the Copyblogger dashboard snapshot, that was a little while back, that the dip in the very last day ... Or even Jerod simply called it dip in the very last day is because it is a not a complete day's worth of data, because in Rainmaker you'll see the ... Up to the current day of data and so if you see that dip on the end, that's because it's still in the middle of the day.

Jerod: Yup.

Loryn: Yeah. Just to clarify.



The Keyword report and Google Search Console (00:17:27)

Jerod: Excellent. Okay. Let's get back to talking about keywords real quick. Again, why did I skip over the Keyword report here, in terms of showing it to you inside of Rainmaker? Well, frankly because you're better off using Google's Search Console. And Google Search Console was previously known as Webmaster Tools. That is what is going to give you the most useful keyword data. So we wanted to walk through that real quick.

We're not going to go through the entire process of how you get set up with Google Search Console but if you simply Google "[Google Search Console](#)" it'll bring it up. You want to get your site setup there. There are a few steps that you go through to verify that you have ownership of your site and then you get a wealth of knowledge about how the search engines view your site and it's really, really helpful.

If you're interested in keywords, and that's an important element to be interested in so that you can see the actual terms that are bringing people to your site, over here in the sidebar, under Search Traffic, if you click on 'Search Analytics,' that will show you the Keyword report.

You can obviously put in a bunch of different parameters here that you want to do. But that will show you what different keywords ... And it obviously goes



well, well down from here and shows you all the different keywords. But that's where you can actually see that. And, the data that you're going to get in here is actually more accurate than what you'll see, again, in Google Analytics. And because of that, that makes it more accurate than what you'll see inside of Rainmaker because Rainmaker's just pulling straight from Analytics.

So, Google Search Console. Loryn, is there anything else that folks should know about Google Search Console and the benefits of being in there?

Loryn: Well, it is just very, very cool. The date range is limited to 90 days so keep that in mind if something really cool happens and you want to make sure you save it. Like, take a screenshot or something because it will go away eventually. It's only three months.

You can look at the different impressions and click through rate and positions of your keywords if you click all of those checkboxes at the top. So you can find out which keywords you get the most impressions on the search page and which key ... And if people are converting on those ... Clicking through on those keywords or not, and that's really useful because you might have certain keywords where it's like ... That you show up quite a bit for but people aren't necessarily clicking through so you might be able to make adjustments.

Then you can look to your pages and that's really interesting because you can make specific adjustments on how your page search shows up in search



engine rankings by ... You can monitor the changes by looking at the Pages report inside of the Search Console and seeing if the click through rate changes.

So, yeah, a lot of good stuff here. They updated this report, I think, about a year and half ago and since then it's been very helpful. Very useful.

Jerod: Yeah. Very nice. You can pair the information that you get there ... Say that you don't have a very high click through rate on a search result that's getting a lot of impressions, maybe you want to go in and change your SEO title. Maybe you want to go in and change your meta description and improve the copy, make it more enticing to click on. You can use some of the techniques that we showed you in [the last edition](#) of the Rainmaker Site Building Roadmap. Some of those tools inside of Rainmaker and that will help you do that.

Loryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Tagging and goals (00:20:36)

Jerod: All right. So, let's talk about tagging and goals. Loryn, this part of the conversation right here is one of the main reasons why we wanted you to come join us because you have done so much of this for us at Rainmaker



Digital and so we really want to get some of your insight here. I want to begin with a quote, and this is from an article, Loryn, that you referred me to.

This quote begins, “I can say without hyperbole that no functionality in Google Analytics is misunderstood as much as campaign tagging. I’m a huge proponent of it because it enables marketers to track the effectiveness of all of their marketing efforts.” It goes on. And this quote is from Annie Cushing. “I’m writing this guide because if marketers understood the power of campaign tagging and the level of granularity they could achieve when done well, there would be fewer spaghetti stains on their walls. In my experience, most companies either under-utilize, mangle, or overlook campaign tagging all together.”

This quote is from [a post at Annie’s blog](#), Annielytics.com. We’re going to post that inside of the chat so that you can read the entire post because it’ll go into much more depth than we can go into on this session. But, Loryn, do you want to give us an overview ... Maybe reinforce here what Annie’s saying about the importance of tagging in goals and why this is important to be thinking about?

Loryn: Yes. Yes. Campaign tagging is ... It’s irritating. But it is so, so useful once you actually get the hang of it. The main reason we need campaign tagging is because some of ... Whenever you share a link ... Here, let’s start with the basics.



Whenever you share a link online and it's from one webpage to another, there's referral information that's passed when you go from one page to another. The page you land on can see ... Oh, this person came from another site. And so, Google Analytics is able ... And most analytics platforms are able to grab that information and pull it into the report so you can see that Assembly Call got certain referrers from different pages on other people's sites. That's built in. You don't have to do anything to get that.

Where campaign tagging is useful is when you share a link that's offline. Maybe you have a PDF. PDFs don't have referral information. They're not webpages. So even if someone is viewing it in a browser, if you have a link in a PDF and someone clicks on that link, Google Analytics is not going to be able to know where that person came from. So you might want to use campaign tagging to tell people ... To tell Google Analytics that, "Hey, this person came from a certain PDF."

If you have spoken links, maybe in a podcast, you might want to make a short link that has a campaign redirect because nobody ... Or, Google Analytics is not going to be able to see ... It's a link that someone would have to type in.

And email, especially. Email does not have any sort of referral information so it's important to use Google Analytics for that or to use campaign tagging for Google Analytics tracking for that as well.



There's a lot of referral information already available and I think that's where people get stumped most because they look in their reports and they say, "Oh, but I can already see that someone came from Facebook and I can already see someone came from another website." But there's a lot of information ... A lot of referrals that go into direct and there's a lot that you can do to split up that information and get better channel data. And that's going to help you in the long run because it'll help you know how the different channels that you create are performing.

Jerod: Yep.

Loryn: Kind of long-winded.

Jerod: No, no, that was great. Let's walk through, again, just some of the basics here. We're going to put the link to Annie's article in there. For more, you can go there.

Here's the list, the full list of popular UTM parameters that can be used. Okay. And this may look like gobbledygook right now if you haven't seen this before but we'll show you how this actually looks in a link.

You've got UTM and then an underscore. And then you've got medium, source, campaign, content, and term. Chris, you've actually got a link that you go to often that Google provides that actually helps you do all this ... There's



a little form and you put in what the medium and the source is and it helps you create the link.

Chris: Yeah, I'm sharing that right now.

Jerod: Perfect. So what do you do with these tags? You add them to your call to action links, like Loryn just said. And that will help you create a link that looks like this.

Okay, so you've got `yoursite.com/?` and then you've got the relevant parameters that come after it. All right. Again, this link looks really jumbled up but if you just look at it color coded right here, you can see the three different UTM parameters that are there. This one has `utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_content=weekly-04`.

Now, what do those mean? This first one, `utm_medium`, that's the general content type. Like Loryn was explaining, an email, a PDF, paid media. Something that's not a link right there on your website that someone can click on.

Then, as Annie said, if you're running email campaigns, campaign tagging rises from really good idea to critical, and this is because traffic from email will be grossly under-reported if you don't tag all links pointing back to your site.



Loryn, is there anything else that you want to say to underscore the importance of doing this? Because obviously, we teach email as a huge, huge piece of what you're doing to connect with your audience and eventually to convert people. Anything you can say to underscore the importance of adding campaign tagging to that?

Loryn: Yes, definitely. With RainMail data, you're able to see how many people the email was sent to, how many people opened the email, and how many people clicked on the email. But then when you add campaign tagging, and if you add unique campaign tagging if you use the content parameter to tie different email subject lines together, you can extend that even further and see all the way to the end of the funnel, which would be how many people converted from that email you sent.

So adding campaign tagging with email helps you go from how many people received this email to how many people actually converted on this email? And as you know, I mentioned earlier, my entire philosophy with data is that you should ... The whole thing you're looking for is how many people were exposed to this offer or the potential to convert on this goal and how many people converted? So it really ties the end of the email funnel together, which should be your goal for all of your data collection.

Also, I do want to note, with UTM parameters ... It might seem a little confusing at first but really the main thing is to be consistent and figure out something that makes sense to you. Except for, if you run PPC, which Google will do



your campaign parameters automatically for you. You can create how your own campaign tagging structure in Google Analytics whatever ... Don't worry if certain people say, "You have to use 'term' for this and you have to use 'campaign' for that." If it makes sense to you and it makes sense when you're looking in your own reports, that's all that matters. Just keep it consistent. Do your own thing.

Jerod: That's right.

Chris: Yeah, and you have to remember that, as well as the email looking like it's direct traffic, apps look like direct traffic as well.

Loryn: Yes. Good point. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris: And, the problem is, lots of people now use their mobile or their tablet instead of a desktop computer, instead of a laptop. Which means that this is going to be an increasing issue.

Loryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris: The other thing as well is if you start to use these tags a lot, you start to realize other places you can use them. Say you've got three banner ads on a page. Well, which was the one that converted? If they all just go to the same URL, you don't know.



If you've got several partners and joint venture partners, or if you've got lots of people who refer to you, give them a unique link and then you can see which are performing the best.

I've said this before a couple of times on different webinars, back when I was working for myself and I had my own business, there was the ProBlogger traffic I was getting and there was the Copyblogger traffic I was getting. ProBlogger sent me more traffic. Copyblogger sent me higher converting traffic.

If I only looked at the overall amount of people rather than the people that are more likely to spend money, I'd have put more of my effort into ProBlogger. But, instead, even though Brian sent me fewer people, they were more likely to convert. So you really do need to know who the source of your best people is.

Loryn: Yeah. Definitely.

Jerod: A couple quick questions here, Loryn. Let me just hit these real quick.

Loryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerod: Christine wants to know, is there a way to see how many people have landed on a specific page of the website, regardless of where they are referred from? And that's where you would just go into your Google Analytics ...



Loryn: Yes.

Jerod: And you can look at your overall traffic and see how many people have hit a specific page. That would be right there in Google Analytics.

Loryn: Yeah. There's an overall landing page report. Sometimes it's a little tricky because in Google Analytics there are different ... A page view is different from a session, obviously. And so, different reports are page view focused and certain reports are session focused. And so, if you wanted to look at how many people have landed on a specific page of a site and then converted, that is super easy. If you wanted to see how many people had viewed a page at any specific time, that's a little more ... And then converted, that's a little more complicated.

But, yes. Landing page report is easily available. You can see the top landing pages very quickly in Google Analytics.

Jerod: And Mike asks, "Should you use tagging in goals on a landing page or just on your main site?"

Loryn: Well, one thing that I would say is, I would never put tagged links inside your own site. Never ever do that. Annie has a whole long rant that she does about these large companies that have just totally screwed up their analytics by adding UTM tracking inside their site. So, if it's a domain you own going to another domain you own, you really don't need to tag it.



Goals, yes. You should always use goals with a landing page. Rainmaker comes with e-commerce. So if you make any sales, that's going to track in Google Analytics right off the bat. But if you have an email list opt-in or a PDF download, those are things you all need to do manually, and we're going to cover that in just a second, I believe. I have to set that up.

Jerod: Yes, we are. We are. Great answers. Just to finish this up here with the actual UTM tagged link that we have here. This middle part, the UTM source where it says "newsletter," you can use this for the specific content type. Maybe a newsletter or a promo or an autoresponder. Something of that nature.

Then the final one here in our example is `utm_content`, which is 'weekly-04.' And that would simply be the specific piece of content so that you can track any type of conversion or success there to the specific piece of content that drove it.

When should we not use UTMs? (00:31:55)

Jerod: So, when should we not use UTMs? And, Loryn, we put this slide on here so that you'd have a chance to say this but I feel like you've pretty much already covered this. Is there any ...

Loryn: [crosstalk 00:32:03] for me not to.



Jerod: Is there anything else that we need to know about when we should not use these UTMs?

Loryn: If there is already referral information, if it's coming from another webpage, even if it's someone else's webpage, even if it's someone else's site, I would recommend sticking with the referral tracking that Google Analytics already has and not using any UTMs.

On social media, however, it gets a little tricky because you want to be able to separate ... If you run ads, you want to be able to separate that from the people that just come from random ... Your average Facebook posts. And you might want to get campaign data on those.

The general rule of thumb is, if it's "offline," as in not on a webpage, then use UTM tags. If it's already on a webpage, don't unless it is an ad campaign you want to specifically track.

So it's a little complicated still but, yeah, if in doubt, if it's already in your browser, don't use the links.

Chris: Yeah. Well what I would usually do is, as Loryn said, if you're not getting the data you need, then use UTM.

Loryn: Yeah.



Chris: Because it's also from an overwhelm point of view. You don't want to add more work to your workload.

Loryn: Totally. And this stuff gets so exhausting to keep track of, believe me. The best thing to do is come up with a consistent structure that you can internalize and then just use that. Don't worry about adding any more work on for yourself.

Chris: Like in many things with business, where are your constraints and if the data is constraining you then you can add granularity using this but don't overwhelm your plate.

Loryn: Totally.

Jerod: Okay. Let's talk real quick about goals. Again, we can't get into tons and tons of detail going over the Google Analytics element of this but we do want to just run over goals real quick, Loryn. Do you want to walk us through this screenshot that we're looking at right here and what this means?

Loryn: Yeah, definitely. This is a dummy goal that I set up just to show you guys the different pieces that you need. This is inside Google Analytics, and all your goal reports are going to be inside Google Analytics itself. But it's fairly easy to get to. The information is readily available once you have these goals set up and it can be very, very useful.



The very first step where it says “Goal setup,” you can choose these, like, Preset goals types or you can choose Custom. I never found any ... I don’t see any difference between the Preset ones. They just give you a name with the Preset ones.

So you give it a name. This is an email opt-in. Basically all you need to do is put in the URL of the page that someone would visit at the completion of this goal. So, whatever thank you page you have for a PDF download or an email opt-in, that would go here. And this is just a way for Google Analytics to be able to say, this many people completed this goal, and it becomes a unique count as opposed to comparing different page views for your thank you page. It makes it much, much easier to take a look at.

There are also two bonus things you can do if it is ... Some people really, really like ... You’ll hear some Google Analytics gurus go on and on about how awesome it is to put value on everything and put a value on every single thing on your site. I don’t do that because that screws up your page reports. I don’t think you should mix real money with pretend money, but that’s just me.

Jerod: Nice.

Loryn: I know. I’m sorry. If you want to put a value on there to ... Say like you know that there’s an X percent conversion rate when there’s an actual sale when someone signs up or downloads your e-book and maybe you can say, “Okay, this is worth 10 cents to me.” But I tend to not do that.



Then you can also turn on the funnel tracking, which allows you to get the goal funnel visualization, which can be pretty useful. So, yeah, it's pretty straightforward to set up a goal if you have specific thank you pages for those goals. E-commerce is already there. This is the extra mile and it is really useful, especially when you're looking at performance of smaller funnel-based things.

Chris: Yeah. I think the goal value is better leaving to e-commerce, right? Get the actual figure rather than Monopoly money.

Loryn: Yeah.

Jerod: By the way, real quick, Christine asked a great question, "Is this in Rainmaker? Is this in Google?" So this screenshot right here, it's not specified so thanks for asking, Christine.

Loryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerod: This is in Google Analytics. This is not something that you set up in Rainmaker but this obviously something ... It's outside of Rainmaker but it's inside of Google Analytics that will help you make the most of your Rainmaker site by giving you a little but more of Analytics information than what you can get from the analytics reports inside of ...

Loryn: Yeah.



Chris: And the important thing about the goals is, you want to work back from the goals, right?

Loryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. You want to be able to see what people did to get to that goal or to be able to measure how many people viewed this landing page and then completed that goal. And once you've added this goal information, it makes it really easy. You can find the goal information right along the e-commerce information in the Google Analytics reports. So, yeah.

Jerod: Loryn, I'm getting you a t-shirt that says, "Don't mix real money with pretend money."

Loryn: The very first Google Analytics certification course I took, I actually argued with the instructor about this. But, uh, yeah.

How to perform simple, valuable A/B tests (00:37:47)

Jerod: Okay. So that is Google Analytics. Let's move on now to the next section of today's presentation. And that is, how to perform simple valuable A/B tests. And you can do this with Rainmaker because A/B testing is built right into the platform. So, when would you use this?

Well, let's say that you have an idea for new copy or a new way to display content on your website. You've got this new idea. Now the question is, is it



a good idea? Right? You just got this hypothesis. But you don't know if it's a good one, if it'll work or if it's a bad one that won't work.

Well, there's only one way to find out for sure. And, Loryn, that one way is what?

Loryn: A/B testing.

Jerod: To test it. You've got to actually test. We've got these hypotheses but we actually want to test and test it with some live traffic to see if our hypothesis is correct. So we're going to use Rainmaker's built-in A/B Testing tool to do this.

Using Rainmaker's built-in A/B Testing tool (00:38:49)

Jerod: Let me walk you through an example and this is a real test that I did on The Assembly Call. And this was our old subscribe page. I actually don't use this page anymore. But this was a page that was really successful for us when we were initially building our email list. And you will notice on the original page, we had a testimonial right here.

So, I was wondering if removing the testimonial would help people to actually get to the form quicker and then increase conversions. Because anything that keeps people from getting to that call to action, which can lessen the chance that they actually get there and take you up on it. And so I was wondering



if removing it would have an impact, either positively or negatively. But my hypothesis was that, hey, it might actually help us convert more people.

I created this variation page and I basically just duplicated a landing page. Quite simple. And then removed the testimonial. So everything else on the page is exactly the same and I underscore that and we're going to walk through why that's important later. But you only want to make one change so that you test that change. Okay?

So here we go. We've got two pages: the original and the variation. Two pages enter, only one can remain, and we're going to use Rainmaker's built-in A/B Testing tool to find out.

The way that we do that is we're going to go to Conversion>A/B Tests, and if you go right here then you can actually just click 'Add New' and jump right to adding a new A/B Test. You're just going to go down and fill in the information that it asks for.

You want to start out by giving your test a descriptive name. So, subscribe page test, that's easy enough. And then you want to choose the original page. And so, when you click here, you'll get a dropdown of all the pages on your site, including landing pages. Here you want to include that original page.

Now, I do want to note, to perform an A/B test on your homepage, because a lot of people will ask, you must be using a page as your homepage. So a page



or a landing page. You must be using that as your homepage if you want to do a test on your homepage. And you can set that in Design>Appearance, which we've gone over in a previous session.

But here for the original, you set the original page and then you're going to choose the first Variation page. I just named that page Subscribe 2. Very easy to find. And so, again, you find that from the drop down of all of the pages and then you can also add up to two more variations. You can have a second variation and a third variation, essentially creating an A/B/C/D test, where you could choose from a bunch of these different variations to see which one works best. Again, you only want to make one change per page.

So, next you want to choose the page that your users are going to be redirected to upon successful conversion. A lot of times, if it's like the one that I'm doing here ... A landing page with a subscription opt-in, then that'll be the thank you page. But what is the page that all of these different pages are sending people to at the end? It should be the same for all of them.

Then you want to choose how you want the page distribution to occur. It can occur evenly or it can occur randomly. You get to make that choice.

And then finally, you get to choose how long you want the test to run. You can run it until you decide to stop it manually. Or, you can set a predetermined number of page views. So where the total traffic reaches a certain number or



to where each page receives a certain number of traffic, you set that so that it'll end the experiment when you're ready for it to end.

Once you have everything, then you create your test and you get your popcorn ready because now it's time to sit back and watch the traffic and allow Rainmaker's A/B Testing tool to gather some data and get a report ready so that you can actually see. It's important to sit there and be patient. That's why you're getting your popcorn ready and relaxing a little bit instead of just going right to the report and trying to see what happens when the first 10 people visit your site.

Again, we have four really important tips about A/B testing that we'll go over here in a minute. But you have to make sure that you give the test enough time to get enough traffic to give you a significant result that you can actually trust and make a decision on.

Once you do that and once enough time has passed, you want to check your results. And the nice thing is, you can check your results at a glance using the A/B Testing dashboard widget. So right there on your dashboard, same thing with analytics, you can get a nice snapshot for how the test is going. Right there from the dashboard.

Or, if you want to dig into the results and maybe even make some changes to the test, then you can dig in by going to Conversion and A/B Tests. That



will bring up all the tests that you have done. And again you can get another snapshot of their results plus you can see their current status all right here from this screen.

Let's go in and let's check the results of our completed test because this example that I showed you, this is a test that I ran previously. When you actually click into it, you'll see a recap of all the settings. So, again, you can see what your original page was, what the variation page was, when this was created so you can remember the timing in case you've forgotten. And then, further down on that page you will see the results. And so they're presented graphically and then you also get the data right here.

So what can we glean from these numbers? Well, after 2,000 evenly distributed visits to the two pages — so you can see variation one had one more visit than the original — the original actually outperformed the variation by 8.7%.

Out of 1,006 visitors, 208 converted for a conversion rate of 20.7%, which is a really good conversion rate. Thank you, Rainmaker Landing Pages. And then you've got, on Variation 1, 1,007 visitors, 190 conversion. Still a really good conversion rate of 18.9% but not as good. That's an 8.7% decrease, which, hey, as the numbers get bigger, that's a lot more people and obviously fewer subscribers than we would have otherwise.



So my hypothesis, in this case, was actually incorrect because it appears that the testimonial actually does have a positive impact on conversion and that whatever trust is built by having that testimonial is there, letting people know why subscribing is a good thing, that outweighs whatever extra distance they have to go to get to the call to action. And now, instead of wondering, I actually have some data here that will give me something that I can actually base a decision on.

Now, once we are ready to stop a live test, we can go back to our main A/B Testing page and we want to click the 'Edit' button. Then, up here at the top, you'll see another Edit button, so you want to click that again, and then you'll see this little light box come up. This modal window here. And so you want to choose then to pause the test, you can mark it complete, or you can keep it running. You just make whatever change you need to do there to Status, and as you're going here, you can also change the other settings while the A/B test is live.

Now, you've got to be careful about doing that, and Loryn may have something to say about making changes to a test that is live and then being able to trust the data probably depends on how far into you are. But you can make these changes here if you need to. Those are all available for you right there.



Loryn, Chris, before we get into these four important A/B testing tips, what comments do you guys have about the actual tool and how to use it? Chris, why don't you lead off?

Chris: Yeah. The main reason you're going to use the A/B Testing tool is everything else is equal. So you're not making decisions because you suddenly got a really good referral. You're not making decisions because it's a Wednesday. Right? You're testing A versus B. You're not guessing at why the changes are happening. Everything else is equal and that's really important because if you're going to change something like the headline or your use of proof or if your going to use any objection-busting copy, you need to know if it's going to move the needle.

Loryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris: But at the same time, you can't be mislead if the variations are only slight. So, we're going to come through with some tips here but, just keep in mind that that not everything is going to make a big, dramatic, 10%, 100% change. Some things are going to be very subtle and they're going to be subjective.

Loryn: Yeah.



Chris: It's great for the things that really move the needle. Not so great for the subjective stuff, and not so great if you're testing against when you've got a campaign running and you haven't gotten a campaign running.

Loryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Definitely, yeah. It is important to make sure that you plan a time for the test when there's not going to be anything crazy going on. You want it to be as quiet and normal and even as possible.

One thing I would also say is, I know Jerod said to only change one thing per test, and that is a good thing to do when you're only testing a page that's already really well optimized. So you might want to swap out different headlines. But, sometimes it can be really beneficial to do an entire redesign and to just do a really dramatic A/B test to see if there are certain things that might be present in your old design that are ... You never know, is the point. And so, you might ... Yeah. Thanks. Yeah. Sorry, Jerod.

Four important A/B testing tips (00:48:19)

Jerod: No, no. Hey, I'm glad we got to this. I'm glad you're bringing this up because that's true. I was thinking more in terms of when you're using the tool and you're doing it where changing one variable will give you good information but you're right, sometimes you do want to make drastic changes. So that's a good ...



Loryn: So going back to some things we talked about in the last section. Let's say you go into Google Analytics and you find out that one of your landing pages gets a lot of search traffic, and then you go in the search console and you find out that there's a certain keywords that's really driving that search traffic and you look at your landing page and you're like, "You know what? I think I could do a better job making this landing page fit that keyword that's driving a lot of this traffic."

And so then you might do one big dramatic change and do a test on that to see if that makes a difference in overall conversions. So that would be a good reason that you'd want to test because you'd want to see, is the benefits of catering to this keyword going to outweigh whatever the regular people coming from another place are doing on this site, on this page? So that would be a good example of a time you'd want to do a swing for the fences test.

Chris: Yeah. A time when we've done that as a company is when a page has just completely underperformed versus what we expected.

Loryn: Definitely.

Chris: And that's when you tear it down, build something new, and just see is it the page or is it something else? And in Jerod's example of The Assembly Call, one of the reasons he might get a really good conversion rate, where he's having 18% or 20%, is the referrer. We have had campaigns before, we've had



launches before, where all we needed on the landing page was a buy it now button. Because all the build up to it was good enough that when people go to that page, they didn't really read it, they just went straight down and converted. So you can be misleading yourself as well.

Loryn: Yeah, definitely.

Jerod: Okay. That was the first tip. We've got these four important A/B testing tips and I'm glad Loryn brought that up. There are going to be times when you do want to only change one variable per variation to get data that you can trust. But, as Loryn just explained and as Chris just explained, there are other times when you might want to do a more drastic one. So, again, you've just got to make sure that you understand the goal, that you understand the context so that you can judge the numbers accurately. So that's important.

The second tip is to make sure that you have a large enough sample size. You can't just throw 20 visitors at something, see what happens, and make a judgment based on that. And so, earlier this morning, I asked Loryn to kind of give me some kind of rule of thumb for how much traffic you have to send to something to get some data that you can actually trust and believe in. And what she told me, and I'll let her explain this here in just a second, is 2,000 sessions or observations for each variation and at least 5% or greater baseline conversion rate.



Loryn, if we look back at the example that I used in this, for the original and for the variation, I had just over 1,000 sessions, but my conversion rate was obviously much higher than the 5%. Do you think that that was a large enough sample size or did I need to maybe see more visitors to each page to truly make an accurate decision there?

Loryn: I would say that with your 20% conversion rate, it was probably just fine. The main thing that you need to understand about this is that the lower your conversion rate, the more people you're going to need to be able to reach some sort of statistical significance. I'm using these terms very, very loosely because there's a lot of great statistics minds that know a lot more about this than I do, and there's a lot more complicated stuff there if you try to get into it. But, for our purposes, I would say about 5% conversion rate, you need to have around 2,000 sessions, statistics people call them observations, for each variation.

Jerod: Okay. Good. That's a good rule of thumb to follow.

Loryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerod: Again, yeah, did I have enough here? And, Loryn, as you said probably. Probably.

Loryn: More or less.



Chris: And that's where patience comes in.

Loryn: Yes. A lot of people say, "Don't look at the tests. Don't look at tests." You can look at the tests but, for the love of God, don't stop it. Don't stop it.

Chris: Get you popcorn.

Jerod: Get your popcorn. Remember it's a movie, not a TV show.

Chris: And don't be tempted to accelerate it artificially.

Loryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah.

Chris: By throwing advertising at it halfway through or doing an email campaign halfway through.

Jerod: Yep.

Loryn: Yep. That'll change everything.

Jerod: Okay, so the third tip is don't call the results until the whole thing has finished.

Loryn: Yep.



Jerod: Which kind of gets at what we were just saying. Make sure that you actually, again, allow the original and variations to get enough sessions and observations. Loryn, are there any examples of this? Because, I suppose at some point, you could get ... When the sample size is small enough, you might get some noisy data where's it's like, "Man, this one has a 20% conversion rate. This one's only at five." But you do truly have to give it enough time to play out.

Loryn: Yes, definitely. There's a guy named Evan Williams that has a good ... I'll pull up the link and drop that in the box here in a second. But he has a really good ... It's a little statistics heavy but he knows what he's talking about ... blog post about how this can happen and if you have a significant observation with different levels of observations and how that might change. He has a good explanation of it and that's where I drew a lot of my conclusions from about A/B testing.

Personally, I've never seen this happen to anyone thankfully. But, I do know that it does happen to people. They just get very excited. Especially with the tools that start showing you the data very quickly and that are very easy to stop and start tests and make new ones.

Chris: We do have an internal example.

Loryn: Oh, you do?



Chris: I'm not going to embarrass anybody by naming them but somebody was ready to call it on day one. And the thing is, you do sometimes get a horse race where ...

Loryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris: You get a clear leader but, very often, on day one, you get very different results to day 17. And part of it is that novelty. If you're used to seeing a certain thing and then it changes, the novelty can make you pay more attention. So, you do have to let it run. Don't call it at day one, minute one. And this person was glad they left it to run because the end results were very different.

So Loryn's going to share that link. Make sure you share it with all, Loryn.

Loryn: Gotcha. Dropdown.

Chris: And it's very ... You learn most by doing.

Loryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris: So ...

Loryn: Definitely.



Chris: It's worth doing some tests yourself and seeing what actually happens.

Jerod: Yep. And our fourth tip is don't let your test run longer than a month because cookies will start to expire. So this is a great one. And this is one I had kind of forgotten about until you reminded me of this today, Loryn. You might say, "Well let me run a test for three months. I'll get all kinds of data and I'll make this great decision." But that has its own problems.

Loryn: Yeah, definitely. A/B testing is tricky and you have to, in the end, be willing to overlook your feelings, potentially, about how you might want things to run and just say, "Okay, this is what the data says," and leave it at that. Because we've had instances where we've had, like a homepage that we wanted to look at and we wanted to test but it's just like, the conversion rate through the homepage is so, so low that we weren't going to be able to get enough observations to gain statistical significance in the time period before the cookies would expire. This goes for just about any A/B testing tool in the market. This is not just a Rainmaker thing. That's what standard user tracking cookies ... They expire after 30 days.

The reason this is important is because when someone first comes to the site, they're assigned the A or the B or the C or the D variation and then every time they come back to the site they'll be given that same variation. And if your user cookie expires, they'll be counted as a new observation, as a new member in that test and they might even get a different variation than the one they started with.



Chris: Which is another reason that you have to go for the higher amount of sessions. Because the people who lose the cookies ... Use a different browser, use a different machine even. Who ...

Loryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris: Prematurely expire they're cookies because they're paranoid or whatever and they're going to skew your results. You know when you have 10 visitors and one person makes an action, well that's a huge percentage versus if you've got 20,000.

Jerod: Yep.

Loryn: Yeah, and if you can't run an A/B test, if you don't have enough traffic to get enough people inside a month then what I would recommend doing is just make the change. Just make the change, see what happens. If it sucks then revert back to what you were doing before. I do that all the time with ads because with ads it's a lot easier to just deploy and turn off things based on performance. But, yeah, if you can't test, then just watch the data. Just watch the data and make sure you're informed about the context and the things that might've changed and the things that might skew the performance one way or another.

Chris: You have to start somewhere.



Loryn: Yeah, definitely.

Chris: So if you're not getting the results that you want, then you need to do a lot of big changes.

Loryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris: You need to look at, are you not converting or are you not attracting the right people? Is it a conflict between your traffic and your content? One thing Tony talks about a lot is the scent trail. Do they feel like they're getting on the page what you promised them previously? So ...

Loryn: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris: You know, if you go from a green ad to a red page, that could be something to look at.

Coming up ... (00:58:33)

Jerod: All righty. Well excellent. Coming up on Friday of next week, Friday, April 28, I know we've typically been doing these on Thursdays but we're going to do this one of Friday. We're going to have a Q&A about how to leverage your traffic into better decisions and more conversions. We're going to actually drop the link to the page with the form where you can submit questions. We want to give those of you who were here, obviously, a bonus



and a heads up on submitting your question because we do typically tend to put those questions in the order that they were submitted and give priority to those questions. If you have a question, submit it.

Loryn, are you going to be able to join us for that session next Friday?

Loryn: Way to put me on the spot. I think so.

Jerod: I am putting you on the spot.

Loryn: I think so.

Chris: You better.

Loryn: I know I better. Yeah.

Jerod: Even if you can't, Loryn, I will be pinging you this week with these questions ...

Loryn: Yes.

Jerod: To get your insight. We will certainly have Loryn's perspective there, even if she can't be there in person.

Loryn: It looks like I will so I'll go ahead and pencil you in.



Jerod: Good. Excellent.

Chris: Thank you.

Jerod: Perfect. We've run a little bit past an hour so we don't have time for any additional questions now but definitely get your questions in. Add them there to the Q&A and then we will answer as many of them as we have time for next Friday.

Loryn, any final thoughts here before we wrap up?

Loryn: No, I think we pretty much covered a lot of ground.

Jerod: We did.

Loryn: Yeah.

Jerod: We did. All right. Chris, any final thoughts?

Chris: Trust your data, and if you don't get the data that you want then you need to look at why.

Jerod: Excellent. All right, everybody. Thank you for joining us on this edition of the Rainmaker Site Building Roadmap. We will talk to you next week for the Q&A.