

How to measure website success

Every site owner wants to see the results of his or her work. However, people who are new to internet marketing and search engine optimization often pay attention to the things that do not really indicate a website's success.

Think, for instance, of **Google PR**. Google employees say themselves that [Google PR is just one of 200 factors that influence a page's ranking](#). So Google PR may be important when you seek link partners, but this factor alone doesn't show the website's success and is not the thing to be concerned about.

A rapid **traffic rise** is another metric that may confuse website owners and inspire vain hopes. A successful post in a social medium may attract thousands of unique visitors one day (such as a [highly popular Digg story](#)), but unless this happens regularly, you're not a winner of the traffic race. Besides, aiming at hordes of visitors is wrong. Your goal is targeted visitors, people who are honestly interested in your services and products.

By analyzing **Time Spent** and **Bounce Rate**, you will know how targeted your visitors are. Though the **time** that your visitors **spent** on your website is not the best witness to its success, knowing about this will help you see better whether your visitors stop to read your content or just scan it. It is especially important for news sites and blogs. **Bounce Rate** is a percentage of visitors who leave your website right after they entered it. If your bounce rate is high, start with checking your high-ranked keywords – a high bounce rate may be explained by the fact that people find your site in search engine results when they look for different information.

The **number and quality of backlinks** is the next important indicator of your website's popularity, value and authority in the eyes of visitors. Pay attention to both the number and quality of links. And remember that a link from an authoritative and relevant website will attract more targeted visitors than 100 links from poor and irrelevant pages.

Also check the number of **bookmarks on social sites**. In the era of social media one cannot rely just on search traffic; many visitors have a chance to find your website through social bookmarking sites and other sites with user-generated content. A large number of bookmarks to your site not only delivers traffic to you, but also may show that you have a loyal audience. By the way, test if "mass appeal" is characteristic of your site on StumbleUpon, and not on Digg.

Search engine optimizers tend to think that top **keyword rankings** are the most important measure of a website's success. But now people often use personalized search, so site rankings may differ from one computer to another. Of course, you should know the keywords that bring your site to the top on SERPs (you may use [Google Webmaster Tools](#) to find out how Google has defined you). Unless that traffic converts into buyers, think of it as an idle crowd.

High keyword rankings are not the aim of successful internet marketing, they are just a means. The most logical goal is to sell more through your site, i.e. to increase your visitor-to-customer conversion rate, or to raise brand recognition if your clients buy offline. And now we're approaching the most important and dramatic measure of a website's success – **ROI** (Return on Investment, i.e. how much revenue you have per dollar of your costs) and **conversion rate** (the ratio of visitors who have performed a targeted action to the total number of visitors). Your website should bring you revenue – this is the Alpha and Omega of Web marketing. **Pay most of your attention to the website metrics that show your website efficiency – in cash and targeted actions. And good luck in your endeavors!**