How to Setup Goals in Google Analytics

Without goals in Google Analytics, it's almost impossible to determine which marketing activities benefit your business the most.

Google Analytics goals are the actions you want people to take while on your website. Some examples include: make a purchase, complete a lead form, subscribe to your email list, etc.

Setting up goals in Google Analytics

1. Start by identifying your goals — the things you want people to do on your website.

   When you're starting out, make a list of four things you want your website visitors to do:

   - One should be directly attached to revenue, like making a purchase (donation for not for profit), or completing a website lead form. This will be your event or destination goal in the table below.
   - One should require a lower level of commitment, like subscribing to a newsletter, following you on social media, downloading a whitepaper, etc. This will also be an event or destination goal in the table below.
   - Two should measure engagement with your website. You'll want to know things like how long visitors spend on the site (duration goal in the table below), and how many pages people view while on the site (pages per session goal in the table below).

2. Next, assign a type to each goal:

| Goal type	What it measures	Definition	Example
Duration	Engagement	Length of a visit with your website	Greater than 2 minutes
Pages / Screens per session	Engagement	Number of pages looked at while on your website	Greater than 3 pages
Destination	Action(s) you want users to take	Specific page visited on your website	Order confirmation, thank you page.
Event	Engagement or actions you want users to take	Similar to destination goal, but applied where the URL page does not change.	Download PDF collateral, click a link, and watch a video.

3. Log into your Google Analytics account, and click the **Admin** tab.
4. In the VIEW column, click **Goals**.
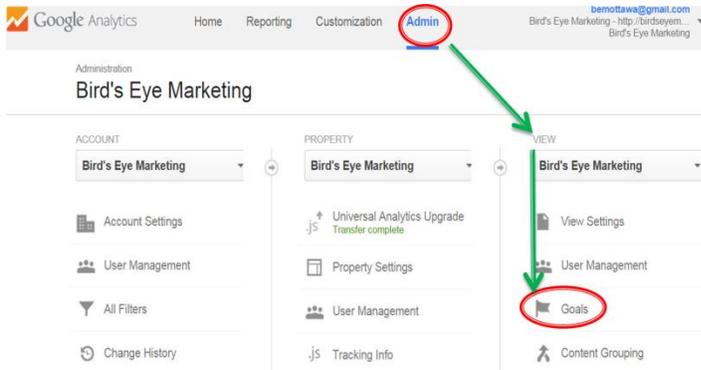
Google Analytics will display your current goals.
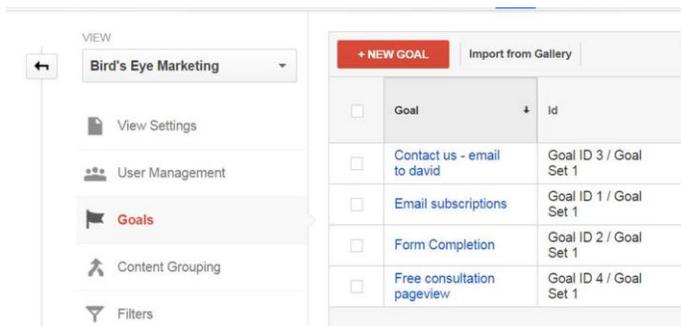
5. To create a new goal, click the red +NEW GOAL button. The Goal Set-up page will open.
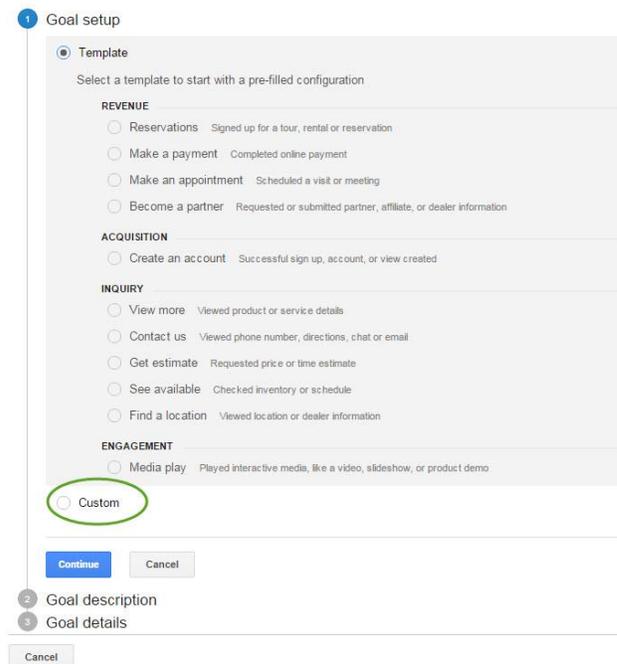
Don't be intimidated by all the choices on this page. Google is trying to make goal selection easier for you by providing templates. If you see a template goal that fits what you want, click on it and follow the instructions.

6. To create your own custom goal, click the **Custom** radio button. The Custom goal setup options opens up.

7. Give your goal a name. Use a name that's descriptive and relevant to the goal's function, like "Make a purchase", "Completed lead form", or "More than 2 minutes on site". Just remember nobody should have to guess what the goal means.
8. Choose the type of goal you want this to be. Use the table provided earlier as a guide.

   Based on the goal type you select a different menu will appear. Let's look at each goal type individually.

Destination

a) Type the URL of the specific page on your website you want to track visits for in the Destination field, for example your order confirmation page or a thank you page.

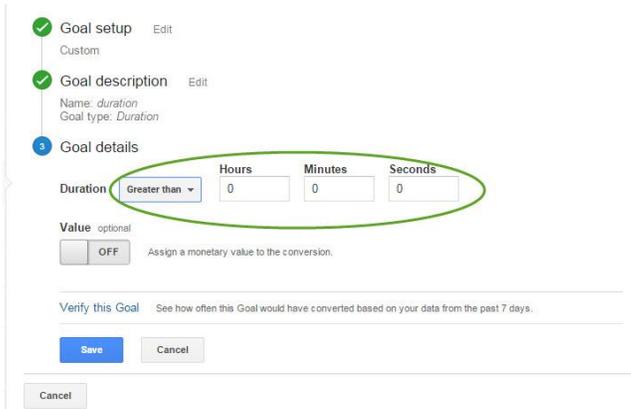### Duration

a) Set the amount of time, in hours, minutes and seconds, that a visitor should be on your website before you consider them "engaged", or the average time it should take a person to complete a goal.

When you're starting out with goals, you don't have a benchmark to judge this against, so I usually recommend setting this goal at 2 minutes. You can adjust it later; once you have a better understanding of long it typically takes users to complete your destination and event goals.
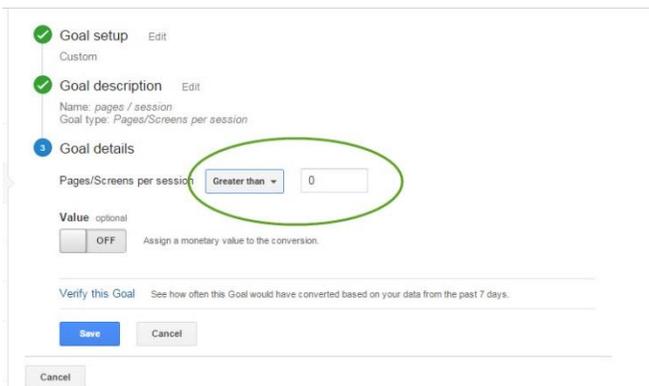

Pages / Screens per session

a) Identify the number of pages you think a visitor should view before you consider them "engaged", or the average number of pages they should view before completing a goal.

When you're starting out with goals, you don't have a benchmark to judge this against, so I usually recommend setting this goal at two or three pages. You can adjust it later, once you have a better understanding of how many pages visitors browse before they complete your destination and event goals.

Event

Google Analytics counts when pages/urls change. But sometimes, a visitor will click something that doesn't result in a page/URL change. Some examples could be downloading a PDF (or other) file, watching a video, clicking a link to another website such as a payment processor, etc. Google Analytics calls these "Events".

Events have four available conditions:

Event component	Definition	Example
Category (required)	Broad grouping of what happened	Social Media, downloaded a PDF, watch video, etc.
Action (required)	what happened / or where it happened	File type, video title, (social media) follow or share.
Label (optional)	More detail about the event	File name, social media name.
Value (optional	Dollar value you may assign to the event	

1. Provide a least one of the event conditions for each event goal. If you want to be more specific—like identify specific file you want people to download— provide details for more than one of the conditions.

Setting a goal value

This Google Analytics feature helps you compare traffic source and web page performance. The goal value calculates the contribution each webpage and traffic source makes toward goal completion.

The calculation is based on the number of goal completions relative to the pages visitors passed through on the way to completing the goal. For example, if a goal has a $1.00 value, we know that a page with a $0.45 value is more likely to trigger a conversion than a page with a $0.15.

Don't get hung up on the dollar amount: A lot of people get stuck on this. When you're starting out with goals, just use $1.00 as the value. It will make your life simpler. It's not the actual value that matters, it's how it helps you evaluate pages and traffic sources that matters. Once you're more experienced in applying goal values to your decisions, you can adjust your values.

Verify your goal before you save it

This handy feature helps you verify your goals are setup correctly. It lets you see how your goal would have performed in the last seven days, using the data Google Analytics collected.

1. Click the **Verify the Goal** link to test if your goal will work.

If you expect that the goal you're setting would likely have had some conversions in the last seven days, you should see a percentage of conversions. That means your goal is correctly setup.

If you see 0%, you may not have set the goal up correctly. Go back and review your goal, and make any necessary adjustments.

This Goal would have a 1.83% conversion rate based on your data from the past 7 days.
Re-verify

2. Finally save the goal.

You're done!