

Implementing Web Analytics the Nokia Way: a Customer's Methodology

By Vincent Kermorgant and Ilkka Manninen

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since quite a lot has been already published on Web Analytics during these past two years, we feel we should state the focus of this document.

First, this white paper is not about explaining you the benefits and implications of Web Analytics, we assume that you already have a pretty good idea on these.

This white paper is also not about how to sell Web Analytics to your management, nor about how to sell Web Analytics to your prospect customers if you are working for a consulting company (needless to say that you need management backing anyways). Once again, you probably did that already or know how to do it.

In case you are not familiar with these two subjects are, we recommend that you take a look at the suggested readings at the end of the document.

1.1 What Is This Document All About Then?

This document aims at presenting a formal Web Analytics implementation methodology, from nothing to actionable KPIs, following a step by step approach, using a methodology we have developed internally. We then discuss some points related to the practice of web analytics in large organizations and what this method has to offer in the cases described.

Is this methodology the best out there, we do not know. But we do know that this methodology, being site and tool agnostic, scalable, repeatable and validated in practice, brings us consistent results.

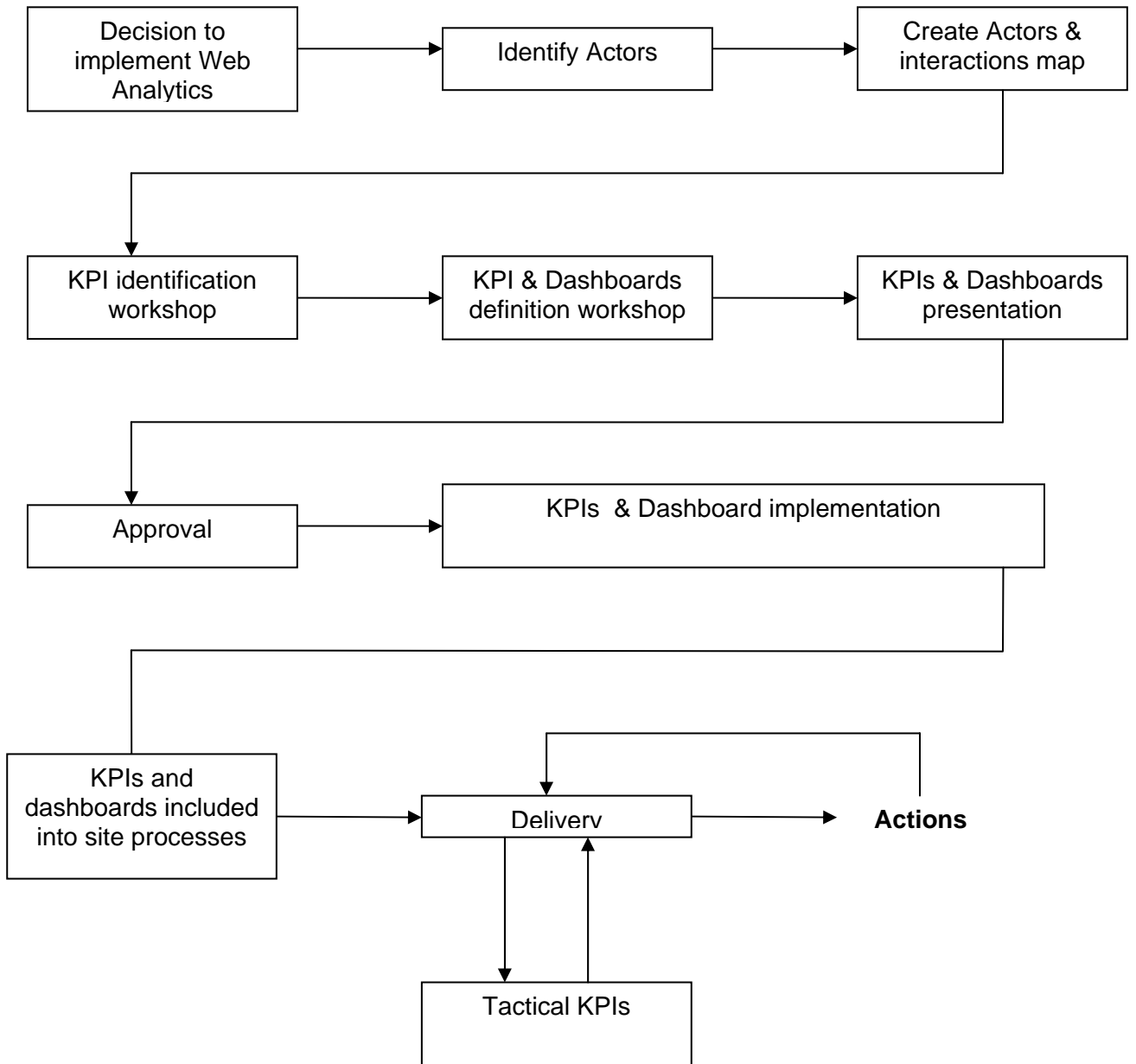
Finally, while this methodology won't magically "define" the KPIs for you, it will provide you all the needed elements to easily define them.

Let us start with a brief overview of the process. The methodology revolves around 3 cornerstone concepts:

- **Actors** (identifying and engaging them)
- **Key Performance Indicators** (how to define KPI's)
- **Dashboard** (implementing KPI's in dashboards)

The end result of the process is that you should have enough information/data about a site and relevant other factor affecting it so that you can derive a comprehensive set of **Key Performance Indicators**, and present those to various **Actors** inside specific **Dashboards**.

Figure 1. Brief Overview of the Process



2. THE ACTORS AND HOW TO IDENTIFY THEM

First, what is our definition of an actor in this context?

An actor is a physical person whose job responsibilities have an influence on the website.

Because this definition usually includes large number of individuals, let us introduce our first categorization. Actors can be divided into 2 categories:

Decisional actors - who have a possibility to drive changes on the site

Non-decisional actors - who do not have a possibility to drive changes on the site

In this respect, a person uploading content on the site is a non-decisional actor while the person creating that content is a decisional actor.

The second categorization concerns the decisional actors. Decisional actors can also be divided into 2 sub-categories:

Direct actor

The direct actor is usually the most evident one. He/she makes choices which affect directly the website (design, content, advertising...).

Depending on the company size and mode of operation, direct actors are internals, externals (design agency, advertising agency...) or, quite often, both.

For direct actors, the company's web site is usually their only available channel.

Indirect actor

The indirect actors are often among the most important ones. He/she makes decisions that affect indirectly the web site (budget split, overall strategy)

For an indirect actor, the company's website is just one of many available channels.

Logically, the first part of the methodology will concentrate on how to identify these 2 sub-categories of decisional actors. Non decisional actors will be left out of this process since they tasks should not directly influence the web site's performance.

2.1 Identifying the Actors – the Practical Approach

The usual temptation would of course be to rely on the company's reporting structure and derive the actor list from this but we think this approach has several shortcomings: websites have become incredibly complex channel for businesses with complex internal cross relations. This complexity is rarely visible in organigrams.

This is why we recommend the following method: Use the organigrams to identify a middle nucleus (people not too high, not too low) and organize interviews. If you can get them to sit together, it's better. Otherwise run face to face interviews.

During the interviews, make sure to collect precisely everyone's responsibilities in respect to the web site. If they have delegated some of these responsibilities, get the names and interview them later. Collect the names of people they are reporting to and/or getting the budgets from.

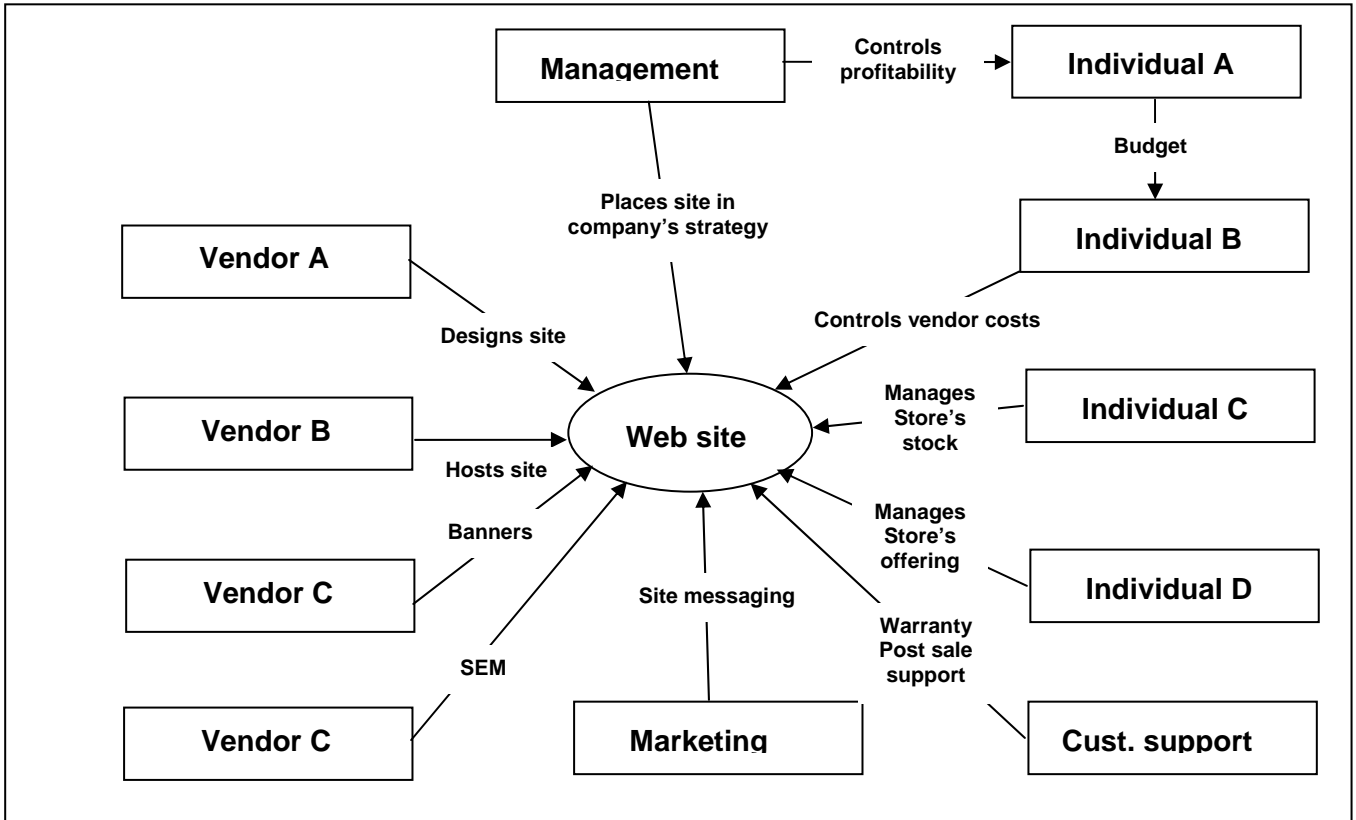
Present the concept of Web Analytics during these interviews and evangelize to convince them of the benefits and make them wanting to be part of the process.

We found it very effective to collect the actor list by creating a graphical map: place the website(s) at the center of the drawing and add the actors around it with arrows (see below) and a one-sentence role description. In addition, keep a formal text based list of the actors with a description of their role. This approach works extremely well with multilevel actors and indirect actors (James, who approves the online marketing budget, Roger, who defines the company's customer support strategy...).

Ideally, at the end of this phase, you'll have mapped the entire site ownership to the various direct actors. Do not forget the externals, meet and map them as well (unless their impact on the site is very limited).

The result of this first part of the process will amaze you (and the actors): you'll have the living picture of the website ownership. See figure 2 for an example.

Figure 2. A Typical E-Commerce Actor Map



3. THE KPIS (KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS) – WHAT ARE THEY?

The key to the second step of this process is to create the Key Performance Indicators. The variety and the quality of these KPIS is often what differentiate a good implementation from a poor one.

The term KPI, while often mentioned in the Web Analytics literature, is still today not well understood or well defined.

Allow us to develop a bit on the KPI concept before moving on the creation process.

Leaving the e-world for a while, we'd like to move to the real world and more specifically to what we call the car journey example.

Any car journey always includes the following parameters:

- You have a target to reach: a destination

- You have a starting point and a starting time
- You usually have more than one way to reach a destination
- You have resources that you manage (gas, time)
- You have incentives (e.g. arrive in time, do not get a speeding ticket, drive safely, be fuel efficient)

What do you usually do to arrive in time at destination?

You evaluate the allowed speed on the road and the distance to destination, you calculate when to start the journey. While driving, you keep an eye on the speedometer to make sure your speed is within authorized limits (not too fast, not too slow). You also monitor the fuel gauge to know if/when a stop at the gas station is wise.

In other words, your success depends on strategical decisions (correctly planning the departure time, choosing the right roads) and good execution. And how do you yet achieve good execution? By monitoring Key Performance Indicators (Speed & Gas).

As you see, in this real life example, a good KPI is an indicator that helps you to understand how your plan is executing and which should give you indications where and how to react if things go off track (for example, if you are on a highway limited to 120 km/h (60 mph) and your speedometer KPI shows that you are going 140 km/h (70 mph), you react by releasing a bit the gas pedal and the KPI comes nicely down to 120 km/h (60 mph)- confirming that the action had the desired effect).

4. THE KPIs (KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS) – HOW TO IDENTIFY THEM?

Now that we've clarified the conceptual side of the KPIs, let's look at how we proceed to create them.

We find that the most effective way (the only way in fact) is to gather all the direct actors in a day long workshop (in case the amount of actors is really large, you can also extend the workshop to a couple of sessions or run internal/external workshops).

The key to success is to get ALL the actors present. We wrote earlier that this document is not about convincing the management to the benefits of WA. However, it is essential that you have management backing, i.e. that they are convinced; usually most actors will gladly join the workshop but in case attendance becomes problematic, you will need the management to carry the message.

Before the workshop: get yourself familiar with the web site that will be worked on. Try to run a draft of the workshop alone and create your own list of Macro Objectives (see below).

We usually start the workshop with a quick introduction on what the workshop is all about.

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Then we give the participants a virtual bone to chew on: the web site they are maintaining is going to close down – imagine the consequence. We find this little trick helpful since it forces people visualize what the web site is supposed to achieve.

A practical but important thing to remember: you are in charge of this process. It means you run and lead the workshop(s) and you are responsible for writing down all the information gathered during the session(s). You also need to keep the workshop on track.

Small audience (2 to 10 actors)

We ask from each actor in turn what major goals the site is expected to achieve. Goals are faithfully collected on a document that I create.

Large audience (over10 actors)

We ask each actor to write on a little Post-It paper what major goals the site is expected to achieve (one goal per Post-It). We then collect the papers and, together with the actors, group similar goals on a wall board. Then goals are faithfully collected on a document we create.

At this first stage of the workshop, you have what one of our fellow web Analyst, Steve Jackson, calls the Macro Goal for the site. Make sure you have them all and do not hesitate to suggest some new if you feel that they are missing.

Example 1. Macro Goal: Convince the site visitors to engage with our company

The next step of the workshop is to drill down into details. As such, the macro goals are usually too broad to be converted into KPIs. We need to break them into smaller goals.

Small Audience (2 to 10 actors)

For each of the macro goals, we ask from each actor in turn the available mean(s) to achieve it. These are also faithfully collected in a document, under the main goals.

Large Audience (over10 actors)

Taking one macro goal at the time, we ask each actor to write the available mean(s) to achieve that goal on a little Post-It paper (one mean per Post-It). We then collect the papers and, together with the actors, group similar means on a wall board under each macro goal. These are also faithfully collected in a document, under the main goals.

At this second stage of the workshop, you have what we call the site's Micro Goals. It is now turn, using the previous process, to list all the "tools" the site offers to achieve these micro goals. The list of these tools is what we call the Action Sets.

An action set is basically a very precise and limited set of interactions the site visitor can do (read a page, log-in, register, write in a discussion board...) to perform the micro goal.

Make sure you have them all and do not hesitate to suggest some new if you feel that they are missing.

Example 2. Macro Goals to Action Sets (e-Commerce Site):

Macro goal:	Create revenue
Micro goal:	Get visitors to buy products
Action set:	Provide product information Get visitors to add the product in the product cart Get visitors to register to create an account Get visitors to update their shopping cart Get visitors to check-out

This translates as:

"The site aims at creating revenue for the company. Revenue is created by selling products through the website. To sell products, the site presents product information with a "buy" button. To buy the product the user must create an account, validate their cart and check out..."

Example 3. Macro Goals to Action Sets (Content Site):

Macro goal:	Convince that we are the leading company in our field
Micro goal:	Present numerous case studies to visitors
Action set:	Present any case study page Case studies promotions on main page Present links to our other case studies from the current case study Offer to download the current case study as PDF file

This translates as:

"The site aims at convincing visitors that the company is the leader in its field. Convincing is achieved by presenting several case studies through the website. We assume that the more the visitor is exposed to our case studies, the more convinced he/she becomes. To present the case studies, we promote them on the main page, use paths within Case study pages and offer printable version of the studies."

Then moving to the last stage of the workshop, we return to each of the micro objectives of the site and ask which actor(s) is/are directly responsible for the goal success and how often do they theoretically monitor the success. Names & frequency are recorded into the document and then it is time to wrap up the workshop.

5. KPI & DASHBOARD CREATION PROCESS

5.1 Creating KPIs

At this part of the process, a lot has been already achieved: you have the list of micro objectives with their corresponding actors and the desired reporting frequency. You also have the Action sets available to meet these Macro/Micro objectives.

You now have to associate one or several KPIs to each of the micro objectives. How to create these precise KPIs? There is no magical recipe and it is the stage where Web Analyst experience is the most valuable.

Remember however that the KPIs are nothing else but a way to tell how successful these actions sets are. Usually, we try to create the KPIs by converting the Action sets to calculations. This approach has several advantages:

- Actors relate extremely well to these KPIs
- Their contribution to the Macro goal is clearly defined and easily measured
- You can weight them and create aggregated KPIs

In our previous content site example, we had the following action set:

- Present any case study page
- Case studies promotions on main page
- Present links to our other case studies from the current case study
- Offer to download the current case study as PDF file

Some KPIs:

- % of total visits which included at least one case study page and where the visit on the case study page lasted more than 60s

- % of total visits where the main page link were followed (Campaign)
- % of all case study visits where the user followed a link to another case study page (Campaign)
- % of all case study visits with a PDF file download

You can then report these 4 KPIs together as a measurement of “Case study impact”, and also create a global “Case study impact KPI” by combining these KPIs into a weighted calculation.

We also recommend reading a very interesting document, found on the Semphonic web site (http://www.semphonic.com/resources/wpaper_005.pdf).

This paper offer a different insight to the KPI definition process through a methodology called “Functionalism”. Well worth reading and pretty much in line with our approach.

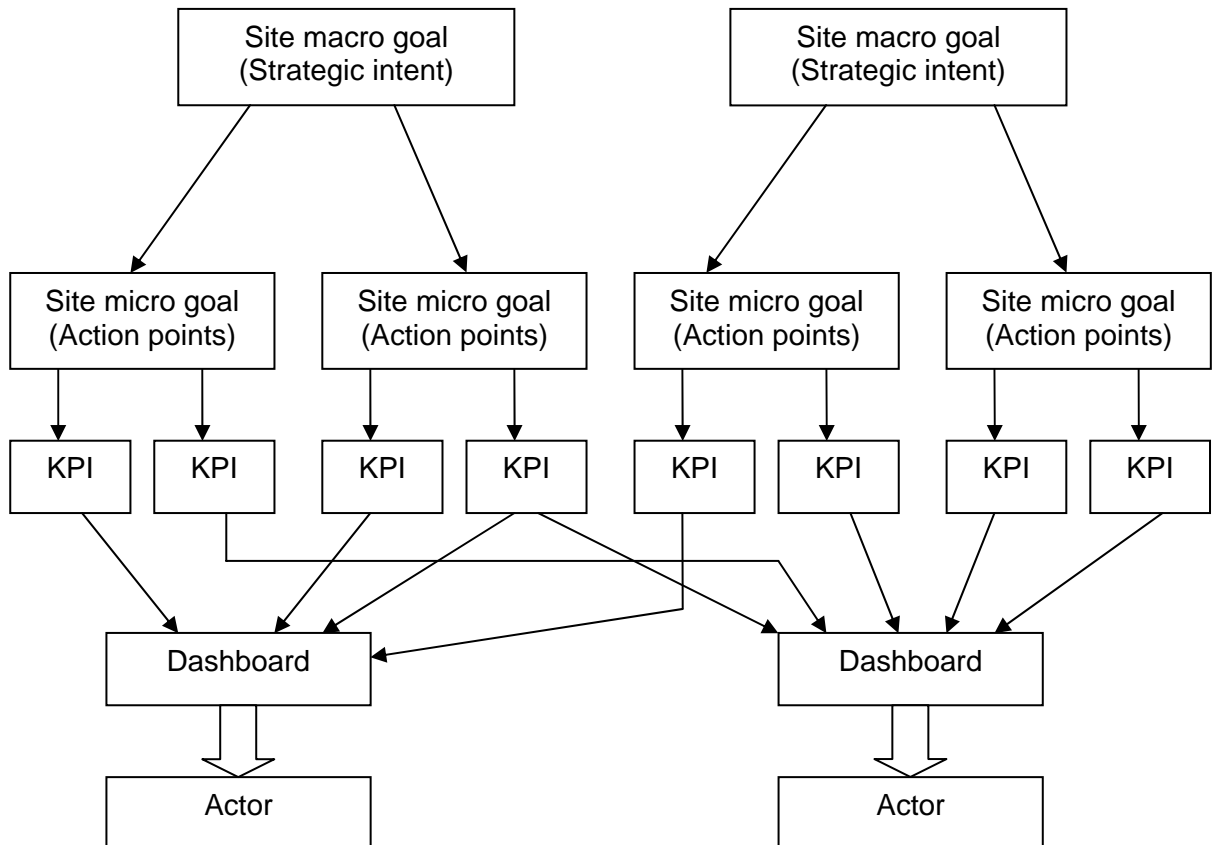
Be creative, evaluate the possible interactions associated to the goals and derive measurement. Most important: for each tentative KPI, list action points. If you can't find actions that can change the KPIs score, then chances are that it is NOT a KPI.

5.2 Creating Dashboards

Now that you have the actors and the KPIs, it's time to incorporate them into various dashboards.

What is a dashboard? A dashboard is a convenient way to present targeted KPIs to one or more actors.

Figure 3. Key Elements Overall Relationship Model



There are 3 main families of dashboards (and they all can be used together):

- **Actor based**, where each of the direct actor gets a dedicated dashboard with his/her KPIs
- **Macro Goal based**, where all the KPIs relevant to a given macro goal are presented
- **Role based**, where Dashboards are created with job definitions in mind (Direct marketing dashboard, financial dashboard...)

Which one is better? As usual, the answer is “It depends”. We think that Actor based dashboard(s) are the minimum since every actor must be aware of the result of his/her work on the company’s website performance. The two others can also be extremely useful, especially for indirect actors.

5.3 Reporting Results to Indirect Actors

In our experience, indirect actors do not react well to dashboards per se. A dashboard requires understanding of the KPIs within and how these are calculated. Indirect actors usually have responsibilities extending beyond the site’s day to day operations and need data presented into a more report like format. We recommend creating such reports on a regular basis by turning the KPIs’ results into written language.

For example, if the latest SEM campaign saw the conversion to download rate jump from 20% to 35%, do not write “thanks to our latest Google SEM campaign, our conversion rate increased by 15%” but instead write “thanks to our latest purchase of Google keywords, we have increased by 15% the number of search visitor downloading our application. We currently get 35% of them to download it”.

The beauty of this approach is that, should the indirect actor want to dig deeper into the data, the KPIs are ready to deliver precise numerical insights (in our example above, the actor may ask how is this % calculated and since you have the KPI definition at hand, it is a very straightforward exercise...).

You may also want to team up with other people in order to get your data incorporated into executive reports.

6. PRESENTING THE KPIs AND THE DASHBOARDS

You have the KPIs proposal and you have the dashboard proposal. It is now time to present them to the actors.

Remember that you left the actors after the workshop with high expectations. Call one or several meetings with them and present your proposal. For each of the KPI, explain:

- What is this KPI for?
- How is it calculated?
- Why this calculation makes sense and what exactly does it tell?
- What can be done to act (i.e. change the value) on the KPI?
- Who will get it and why (i.e. who will be responsible for it)?

Then present the Dashboards as you have defined them (Remember that one KPI can be reported monthly inside one dashboard and weekly inside another one). For each decisional actor based dashboard, explain:

- What is the Dashboard telling?
- Why are these KPIs in it?
- How often this dashboard will be reported?
- Who will get this dashboard?

Gather feedback: are the actors satisfied with the KPIs and the dashboards? Do you need to create more?

7. KPI IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Technical Implementation

Basically, technical implementation means converting the KPIs into calculated figures. We do not know of any WA tool that will allow you to get instant KPIs. Most tools will require you to adapt your implementation to meet the goals.

For example, if you need to evaluate a portion of the website's visibility, you'll probably need to associate its pages into a Content group.

A common question or problem is: should you limit the KPIs to what the tool can offer? To this we answer with a big NO, no way. While it is true that some great KPIs can be hard to implement, experience shows that an acceptable compromise is usually available. The other reason why not to limit your KPIs scope is what we call

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“technology monitoring”. Basically, if you find yourself having more and more challenges to implement your KPIs, chances are that your current WA tool is no longer matching your needs and that you should re-evaluate your tool choice. It also usually tells that your level of expertise in Web Analytics has sharply increased.

7.2 Process Implementation

Now that you have the KPIs implemented and reported inside dashboards, you need to consider processes.

Any given web site is a living entity with evolving content and evolving goals. This in turn means that your WA implementation will probably cease to match the site fairly quickly unless you incorporate it into the site maintenance processes.

Usually 3 main categories of changes affect WA implementations:

Physical actor change

This happens usually when someone changes job and his/her job definition changes. New actor can appear who does not understand/knows about his KPIs responsibility. To solve this challenge, you'll need to get the WA incorporated inside the job definition (your job includes monitoring and managing the following KPIs...)

Content change/update

KPIs usually depend a lot on content. If content is added, removed or modified, it is important to evaluate the impact on KPIs. For instance a KPI using pages inside a Content group will be affected if the new content is not affected inside the correct Content group. To solve this challenge, you'll need to incorporate the KPIs into the content lifecycle processes (we change this content – we check the impact on current KPIs and act accordingly; we create this content – Does it fit into existing KPIs and if yes, which one?)

Goals & target changes

The existing KPIs panel reflects the site goals. When goals are revised, added or deleted, the KPIs must be updated accordingly. For a new goal, new KPIs will be most likely needed. To create them, use the process developed in this paper: Goal – Actors – Microactions – KPIs – Dashboard.

For a deleted goal, delete KPIs accordingly and make sure the deletion is properly communicated to all actors involved. For a revised goal, start by listing the affected KPIs and use the methodology to propose the revised KPIs

In short, make sure that the Web Analytics are part of the site processes because it is the only way you will be able to keep the implementation up-to-date.

8. TACTICAL KPIs: WHEN KPIs GO WRONG

In a perfect world, now that your actors are receiving their dashboards and monitoring their KPIs, nothing can go wrong. Should one KPI go “funny”, they know how to react, don’t they?

Well, in reality things are a bit more complex and the usual suspects may fail. What to do if none of the actions you take will not affect (stop) a KPI decline?

Our recommendation is to go for what we call Tactical KPIs. The KPIs we defined earlier are, in some respect, **Strategical KPIs**, which help your company evaluate its overall success. Tactical KPIs are used to explain why a Strategical KPIs is going off-track and identify solutions to remedy the problems.

Let us explain with an example. Say, for instance, that your company offers 2 free application downloads and you are monitoring one of the KPIs called download index (total number of downloads/total number of visits). For the past 2 months this index went from green to red and nothing your marketing did (banner ads, SEM...) affected the decline.

After creating tactical KPIs around the available data, you find out that the number of visits to the download pages did not decrease. In fact, thanks to the marketing efforts and the SEM, it actually increased. Actual downloads, on the other hand, did decrease sharply. Looking at another tactical KPI around browser version, you find that Firefox downloads went down the sink... Bingo! The change in the download process which happened unnoticed 2 month ago made the download in Firefox fail...

Will you keep monitoring forever this browser KPI? Probably not once the download index turns to green again.

Keeping with the car analogy introduced earlier, if your car speedometer keeps showing 25km/h (15 mph) regardless of the amount of throttle you apply, your mechanic will use tactical KPIs to find where is the problem (is the ABS sensor working, is the calculator receiving the right information....) and then correct it.

9. DISCUSSION: LARGE ORGANIZATIONS AND THE METHODOLOGY

So, then, what does this methodology have to do with large organizations? Please read on and we'll explain why we think this is particularly useful for large organizations.

In large organization's environment, e.g. in corporations, the probability (read risk) of performing web analytics in a silo mode, i.e. individual units/people do web analytics without much or any contacts with others doing the same job, increases. The following bullets name a few reasons why this risk is to be avoided (bullets are not in order of importance):

- Tendency to yield uneven (sometimes overlapping) results.
- Level & quality of web analytics may vary greatly from business group/unit to another; quality not guaranteed, making it challenging to compare results across the company.
- Little knowledge sharing or none at all.
- Lack of leveraging the economies of scale (user administration, organizing user support etc.).
- Defined (clear) service offering to internal customers usually missing: This is further complicated by the scale and complexity of online operations in a large organization, irrespective of the field of business of the organization. The units with bigger budgets get, on average, better results out of the exercises than the ones with less money.

In a silo mode, the "classic" risk of not leveraging the scale of economies is usually realized. For example, duplicate efforts to support web analytics users (technical questions, user account management, site account creation etc.) are common. Also, web analytics vendors have an advantage over you, e.g. in negotiations. If your web analytic operations are scattered and a company representative can only speak on behalf of certain part or unit of the company, probability is that you will not make as sweet deal as you would if the representative could speak on behalf of the whole company.

In our opinion, one of the most devious risks is the lack of knowledge sharing. The units or individuals with acumen to web analytics are fine, but those without them in the rest of company may keep on doing the same "mistakes" over and over again. This can lead to costly mistakes, for example, poor Search Engine Marketing (SEM) decisions because of lack of knowledge that could have been derived with/from web analytics.

Furthermore, when a defined service offer for web analytics is missing, it means harder (and in a way unnecessary) work to convince stakeholders or "actors" about the necessity of web analytics. In the worst case, the shiny shield of web analytics is tarnished. Somebody may have attempted a web analytics exercise before, perhaps

failed, and now you're trying again. How will you convince you are any better at it? Additional, negative weight from history can be surprisingly heavy.

These barriers should be overcome to the extent possible. How that is best achieved may be a subject to another white paper. There are no "silver bullets" to overcoming barriers; as we have said few times before, "it depends" on your specific circumstances.

In the following chapter, we will elaborate on why structured and centralized approach is necessary. The method has a central role in the approach.

9.1 Structured and Centralized Approach to Web Analytics Is Necessary

Assuming that a corporation is able to break the silo barriers and adopts a more centralized approach to web analytics (and even if it does not), the next question is what "tools" does a team have at its disposal to deliver quality web analytics? Where does the analytics competence come, is it purchased from a consultant or is it so to say "home brewed"? How is the analytics activity organized?

Whether the competence is purchased or home grown, a company must have an internal competence capable of validating the web analytics results produced. To help the internal person validate the analytics work, the validation work must be based on something all those involved will understand. We think this method will help a great deal, as it provides a common basis to the analytics work. It is one way to avoid uneven results.

In addition, a consultant selling web analytics services can show to potential client how he/she intends to do the work. While companies often (in our opinion too often) don't actually care how it is done as long as it is done (you've heard of buying "deliverables"), therein lies a risk. How can you know you're getting the best value for your money?

The advantage for both the organization buying and consultant selling the service is that both can clearly see what they are buying and selling, respectively. It is mutually beneficial to know the service purchased/sold is based on proven process, not on some other credit, often hard to verify by the buyer (such reference customers). Setting the expectations is far easier when you have something both sides can relate to to achieve common understanding.

The above applies to engaging the actors (stakeholders) in your organization. You need a clear service offering for the customers and you want to make sure they understand what you're going to do with them. In fact, all stakeholders, be they your customers, your bosses etc., want evidence that you can deliver an analytics offering. The more advanced ones will even ask you how you will do it. This method is a vital part of your answer.

One constant challenge in knowledge sharing is to assure all involved “speak the language”. If you mumble something about page view, uniques, visits, Download Index KPI, dashboards and the like without ever opening it to the others, they will miss the beauty. Worse yet, they misunderstand and make wrong conclusion based on the misunderstanding. Combine that with haphazard order of executing the steps in web analytics implementation and a mess is virtually guaranteed.

We think the described method is a valuable tool for organizations, particularly for large organizations where “silo-mode” lurks behind corners. This method has built-in the necessary structured approach to web analytics, which is essential to anyone – consultant, employee - providing or buying web analytics services.

9.2 Why Does the Implementation Matter?

We already discussed the implementation in more detailed in the KPI implementation chapter. This chapter explains some more why you need to pay attention to the implementation.

When we talk about implementation, we mean the required technical and non-technical steps to make the system collect the required data. For example, tag configuration (or what ever the technology your tool uses requires) is technical; content categorization is non-technical, but it may have an impact on how the technical part should be carried out. Both are necessary to collect the data needed, so that you get relevant information to support your analysis work.

An implementation is probably one the most underrated part of a web analytics process. We have seen it done in many ways; most often it is done sequentially in wrong order with respect to the other parts - dashboards, KPI definition - of the process. Probably the worst assumption is that once you have finished the implementation, you don't need to think about it after. On the contrary, your site evolves and so does your implementation.

Furthermore, an implementation is often started before there has been any discussion on the overall goals the site is to achieve and before any KPIs have been defined. The value derived from such implementation can only be guessed (which isn't the favourite sport in the analytics business because you can KNOW).

Another catch is that a “basic” implementation, with no connection to KPIs or the metrics followed being something which you can't take relevant action on, is not valuable, regardless of how easy the technical part is. Furthermore, users of these data are likely to make wrong conclusions based on it, not because the data are false or erroneous, but because it might not be the data they should be looking at.

This is also the part where the propability of missing golden opportunies is at its highest. The temptation is great to just start measuring, without much consideration on what to measure and why. Resist this temptation. The reason is rather simple; your tool will gather only the data you tell it to gather. It won't magically know what you *need*, you must specifically tell it what you want it to gather, as we explained in the KPI implementation chapter. That is why you need to think carefully what you

want to measure and why. We believe it is at this precise point when the above described method becomes handy.

Last, a few of words about the deployment of the implementation. Many large organizations have global or regional web presence, meaning sites localized by, for example, language, content, and available through various country domains (.fi, .se, .no, .it). What effect does this have on the implementation? If your sites are exact carbon copies of each other aside from the language, one implementation will do it for all of them. However, if you're localizing more than the language, you should localize the implementation as well. This is not to say you could not have e.g. a global component in it. If you have heavy localization, but the implementation is global, think of the effects it may have if the global implementation is missing essentials regarding *your* country/region/specific case, or worse, has a mistake, e.g. a logical flaw somewhere.

9.3 What about the Tools and the Organizational Environment?

We stated earlier that the method described is tool agnostic. This is true still. The tools, nevertheless, have an impact on the effort you need to take to implement the method's results. Some tools are easier to configure and implement than others, and this fact will work to your advantage/disadvantage. Indeed, some tools simply can't do what you need, and, as we mentioned in KPI implementation chapter, you seriously need to re-evaluate your tool choice. In the next paragraphs, we present two points, which you might take into consideration when evaluating/re-evaluating your tool.

If changes in your site mean also an adjustment to a page tag's code, this usually means some more effort to maintain the code. Now open the "effort" and see what it contains. For example, if the effort means a change request to the IT department with certain lead-time, you will think twice the ease of implementation (from the tool point of view) and as a result, the technology the analytics tools use, suddenly play a role. What if you didn't have to touch any tags or the like, but you could do all modifications in the user interface...

The previous paragraph hinted another important factor: your operating environment. An organization with centralized online operations, straight forward processes and connections to the IT department to make changes at wish and no delay, is a dream attainable by only a few. But that is the aim nevertheless.

10. CONCLUSIONS

We hope that this short essay will assist you in your Web Analytics journey. We would like to emphasize that the Web Analytics being a fairly new discipline, our methodology is not the only one out there.

The concepts we have developed in it are not revolutionary and have been covered before but we feel that this is the first time that they are all together integrated into a practical step by step approach. We have given you a practical tool to start work with, and tried to give you also view points to the web analytics issues from the large organization perspective. All too often, Web Analytics material stays at conceptual level with very little field application.

But this approach worked and still works very well for us and, given what we hear around events; it might be helpful to others as well.

We stated that this methodology is not centered on tools or technologies and there is a very good reason for that: tools are just tools and when you select one tool over another, it has to be based on what you try to achieve, but it is good to keep in mind that some tools help you to achieve your objectives easier than others.

Finally, we'd like to share with you few thoughts (some shamelessly inspired by other WA authors):

- KPIs can not come from the bottom up - Management should always participate to the KPI process and support it
- KPIs are usually a ratio of some sort - It is the combination that make them meaningful regardless of the absolute figures
- It is easier to manage a few KPIs than be flooded by them – No one can effectively manage a dashboard of 100 KPIs or more
- As Einstein once said "Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts" - Do not get stressed if you do not measure every single bit of a given web site

11. ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ilkka and Vincent are currently working for Nokia where they provide Web Analytics services to the company. With nearly one hundred individual web sites across the globe in over 40 languages, Nokia realized early on the need to provide Web Analytics at a company level. Ilkka concentrates on the web analytics service delivery, i.e. what is the overall offering to customers and how it is provided, while Vincent walks the businesses through the web analytics process, i.e. the content of the service, helping them to derive business intelligence from the dashboards.

12. RECOMMENDED READINGS

On placing the Web Analytics into the big picture

Web Metrics, Proven Methods for Mesuring web site success, Jim Sterne – Wiley Publishing Inc, 2002

Web Site Measurement Hacks, Eric T Peterson – O'Reilly, 2005

On using the site architecture to drive success

Call to Action, Brian and Jeffrey Einsenberg – Wizard Academy Press, 2005

Waiting for Your Cat to Bark?, Brian and Jeffrey Einsenberg – Wilson Business, 2006

On KPIs

The Big Book of Key Performance Indicators, Eric T. Peterson – 2006