

USING GOOGLE ANALYTICS TO EXAMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BLOGS CREATED BY MARKETING RESEARCH STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

In this study, we demonstrate how marketing research students were able to use free tools available on the internet to create blogs and to analyze the effectiveness of blogging and promotion activities using Google's Web Analytics tools. Students reported high levels of interest in both of these activities as they were able to take part in what they viewed as leading edge tools.

The primary objective of the Web Analytics Assignment was to familiarize marketing research students with some of the analytics tools used on the internet. By creating a blog and using Google Analytics, the students learned some of the terms used in web analytics such as visits, page views, bounce rate, proportion of new visits, average time on the site, referring sites, and other similar terms.

In addition, this assignment had a significant impact on students' understanding of principles of marketing. Creating a website should take into consideration all the concepts they have learned in other marketing courses. Just as producing a product does not mean that consumers would want to buy it, building a website does not mean that people would want to visit. The high bounce rate that was reported for almost all students' blogs is an indication that even if one personally invites relatives, friends, and coworkers to a blog, they are not going to spend much time at a website unless they can find something of value. Thus, the broader questions that students had to address were: How

can I create something that others will value? What would motivate them to come to my website? How can I promote my site without a promotion budget?

The most successful blogs created by students were those that included information that specific segments of consumers searched for on the web such as:

www.soccersbestplayer.blogspot.com,
<http://ufc-fightnight.blogspot.com/>, and
<http://seattlehappyhourhound.blogspot.com>.

These three sites were targeted to specific market segments that were motivated to look for information on the internet.

Future revisions of the assignment will place greater emphasis in the marketing planning dimension of creating a blog. Conducting marketing research activities on a website (or for any product) that does not draw much consumer attention in the marketplace is not nearly as interesting as conducting the same activities on a successful website. Understanding the process of value creation is essential to the creation of effective products and services. The creation of a marketing blog and the application of Google Analytics allows students to evaluate their attempt at value creation through traffic patterns to their website.

References Available on Request