Transcript of:

030 Marketing Foundations: Analytics. Getting the data you need to Keep Optimising with Luke Carthy

[00:00:10.320] - Chloe Thomas
Hello and welcome. If you're looking to improve the performance and return on investment of your marketing, then you've come to the right place. I’m Chloe Thomas, the host of this marketing-focused podcast, and it's very, very cool to have you tuning in. So thank you for joining me. In today's episode, I’m talking to Luke Carthy about analytics because this month we are all about eCommerce marketing foundations. Yes, this month, rather than digging deep into a marketing traffic source, we're getting deep into those things you need working well in order to build your marketing on top of them.

[00:01:31.020] - Chloe Thomas
We've already covered getting your tech stack right. We've also looked into how to get your teams operating really well, even when they're doing so remotely. And I think you'll all agree that without the right tech and a team that's performing, marketing just doesn't work. To do great marketing, you also need to know what impact your marketing is having on your business so that you can then Keep Optimising it. That, of course, means having the right tracking set up and making sure it's all working correctly, and giving you the data you need to be able to make great decisions because if the data isn't right, you're making flawed decisions without even knowing it to help us guide us really through the crazy world of analytics and what's possible.

[00:01:31.020] - Chloe Thomas
And yeah, just getting the basics right as well. I've invited Luke Carthy back on the show. He's our first guest to be on Keep Optimising twice. That's how good he is. And he is particularly good at explaining complex stuff like we're going to be going through today. So, get ready to find out how to

[00:00:01.590] You’re listening to the Keep Optimising podcast to increase your traffic, improve your conversion rates, and grow your profits.
make sure your Analytics and Tracking is giving you the data you need to make the right optimization decisions. We're going to do that in a second.

[00:01:54.600] - Chloe Thomas
But before we do, please do check out the sponsors.

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Today, I'm chatting with eCommerce expert Luke Carthy. Luke started his eCommerce career client-side. And then after being invited to speak at Moscone 2019. Oh yes, Moscone 2019, he decided to do it alone. And he now spends his days helping his clients to deliver sustainable eCommerce growth with SEO and CRO

Now, in order to do that, he's often getting into the details of analytics set-ups. To make sure that what we're seeing in our reports is both useful and an accurate representation of what actually happened on the website. Hello, Luke.

Hello. That was a pretty succinct intro. I like that, thank you.

That's right. And it covers kind of the too big pain points that many people didn't even realize they've got when it comes to their analytics. Yeah, yeah. It's a good start. But before we get into those pain points, how did you get into being an analytics set up geek?

Do you know what? I think it came about when I realized everything that I do comes down to it. Like you can't be affected, doesn't matter how good you are or how much of an influence you've had.
[00:03:42.280] - Luke Carthy
If you can’t prove it, then it’s worthless. And I think that is pivotal because you brought in whether you are an employee, whether you’re a contractor or a consultant, whatever it is, you have to know, you have to have a benchmark. You have to be able to understand where performance is, whether that’s positive or negative. So goes without saying, you know, and I had to be able to do it myself. I didn’t want to have to be in a situation where I’m working on teams, working on resources, and I could just go away from an impatient book or at the best of time.

[00:04:11.950] - Luke Carthy
So I’ve been able to just go and jump in and get what I need without disturbing anybody is a must for me.

[00:04:18.340] - Chloe Thomas
Cool, well like, so you touched on a little bit there, and which I think has to be a jumping-off point because I suspect this is what a couple of people are thinking right now, is that I find a lot of people assume, especially when they’re using a platform where you click a button and Google Analytics is installed, they think that Google Analytics is just accurate. It’s just accurate, it’s honest. It’s telling them exactly what really happened. But that’s not exactly true, is it?

[00:04:47.620] - Luke Carthy
No, no, it’s not. And yes, you know don’t get me wrong, I’m not going to say that those One-Click installs don’t work. They do what they’re supposed to do, which is get you to the barebones analytics platform, whatever that platform is. But it’s never going to be able to paint a picture. There’s going to be able to turn that data into information. It’s never going to be able to answer those stakeholder board-level questions that are going to be asked whether you like it or not.

And that’s the challenge. I think sometimes those One-click installs, those plug-ins that promise the world almost oversell themselves because there’s a very big difference between a basic barebones GA installation where it’s counting your page views and your users in that time on site and bounce rate. And then actually getting into the nitty-gritty and identifying precisely what people love, what they don’t like, what they hate, what’s costing you sales. And it’s that difference that, of course, makes the difference when you’re you’re putting your information in data.

[00:05:44.170] - Chloe Thomas
So for anyone out there listening who likes to have analytics, tell them how many people went on the website last month, how many bought and what the conversion rate was? There fine. Well, they’re fine in terms of analytics is giving them the data they want, but they’re not fine, and then, guys, you should be doing a lot more with it, which is the whole point of this episode is what we should be doing. And like you, you said about questions and asking questions.
[00:06:09.940] - Chloe Thomas
And I think another problem with analytics, what I see, to be fair, any data is people often will just go in. I spent three hours looking at the data yesterday. It was really interesting. Did you learn anything? No, because we start kind of data first. We don't start problem first or question first. So is yours a question first approach?

Yeah, I always think when I'm approaching analytics because it's so easy. As you said, you can get sucked into a wormhole of looking at pretty graphs and playing around with date ranges. And let me compare year on year and week on week, and month on month. That it's all great to see percentages and green and red and all that kind of stuff. But what does it mean? What information can you pull from that data? It's not, you know, your stakeholders, your line managers, and whatever don't want data.

[00:06:54.950] - Luke Carthy
They want you to pull the information. So, yeah, you have to start with what is it you're looking to find before you start digging around, finding it? But equally, I'll be honest, sometimes I really don't know. Sometimes you just realize that you have to spend some time. You've got to be in, say, three months since you last opened analytics and you just want to get a feel and start identifying where there's hiccups and where there's problems.

That is okay, too. But you ultimately must kind of come out with something. You have to have a destination or endpoint.

Rather than flicking through graphs and charts.

[00:07:26.500] - Chloe Thomas
So we can use it to help us identify what questions we should be asking. But the benefits are going to come from actually asking those questions, and it's when we start asking those questions, we start seeing the limitations of the initial set up.

[00:07:40.420] - Luke Carthy
Yeah, yeah. And I'll tell you, I'll give you a perfect example. So page KPI. So, as we said. That's right, page views, time on page, that sort of stuff. That's great. If you want to set the scene and give someone a very loose top-level performance review of how things are going, as soon as they ask
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how, why, when, how that sort of thing, that’s when those data points fall apart because you need to paint a picture and then when you kind of need to go beyond those basic statistics to then answer those questions well enough.

[00:08:11.890] - Luke Carthy
So if your bounce rate, for example, is 85 percent, the first question that any decent manager is going to ask you is why is it so high? But equally, it’s the opposite side. I think you’ve got a conversion rate, six percent. That’s brilliant. Why is it so good? Like as soon as you start asking those questions, that’s where you start scratching your head and go, you know what? The eCommerce report on its own isn’t going to be able to give me that information.

[00:08:33.640] - Chloe Thomas
So I, when I get to that point, I’m going, why? I will almost always go. I will every time there’s no we’re almost about it. I will always go and start segmenting by traffic and going, is it the Google ads? Because it usually is the Google ads.

[00:08:48.100] - Chloe Thomas
If it’s outright a problem, it’s usually a Google ads because you’re optimizing your Google ads to bring you a profitable sale or a sale within your target. You’re not optimizing its balance. Right so often that’s the problem as a top tip for all of you. But I look at it by channel because obviously where the traffic is coming from for a bounce rate is important, but I rarely go beyond that. So how do we go to the next level?

[00:09:11.620] - Chloe Thomas
And actually, should we even bother by traffic source? I suppose I should ask you too.

[00:09:15.670] - Luke Carthy
Yeah. So I think this is kind of where tools have their limits and their purposes. So stay with your particular topic. If you’re high balance right from paid. Well actually that’s GA in some ways is kind of doing its job in that capacity. But what you then need to go and take a look at is maybe your heat maps, maybe your session recording software to see precisely why things aren’t working, because that will then give you the almost real raw footage and see what’s going from a user perspective, because analytics will only take you so far.

[00:09:45.610] - Luke Carthy
It will only give you things on a page level or device level or country level. You won’t be able to see what’s going on. And it could be say a 404. It could be things that just taken an age to load. As we know, that’s a common issue. And you coming from front page paid medium. So yeah. But I think GA
kind of sets you up, gives you the kind of inklings and what you want to call it, Catalyst if you like, and then you'll jump into the real nitty-gritty tools of why.

[00:10:16.960] - Chloe Thomas
Will move or get into the nitty-gritty in a moment. But there are some people listening who are getting heat maps and session recording. Can I do that? And Google Analytics. So could you let them know where, what it means and where they could do it, please?

Okay. Yes, of course. So to answer that first question, no, not yet, but never say never. You can't look at heat map or there is a kind of like a really crappy version of a heat map in google analytics. But it's not heat map. It's just kind of a way of picturing what links have been clicked in GA. But that is not a heat map, although it may look like one. But basically using something like, say, Lucky Orange or a lot of people go CrazyEgg or HotJar, my personal favorite is MouseFlow because it's actually quite cheap and has a lot of a lot more capacity than, say, CrazyEgg.

[00:10:59.140] - Luke Carthy
Would have a lower price point, but that would be the software that I recommend. So to kind of bring this full circle, you'd go into GA, you either maybe sort your pages that have saved more than a hundred page views just to try and get rid of all those random fragmented parameter URLs. And then let's say you've identified ten of your pages that have a bounce rate of above 90 percent. You're going to be thinking why, you know, they've got a couple hundred page views, maybe a couple of hundred unique visits, what's going on?

And it's at that point where you move across to another dataset, one another tool to really get into another and analyse via heat maps or watching sessions, which is basically, it sounds really weird when you explain it. It sounds like really stalker-ish, but it's basically watching your users footage and how they browse around the site. And that will then give you an idea and allow it to connect the, I guess, the in-depth detail, along with the kind of top-level statistics you pull from Google Analytics.

[00:11:59.350] - Chloe Thomas
And those videos are the kind of ones where we watch them when it's our website, and we go. Why aren't you clicking on the button? It's obvious that there are buttons there, why aren't you clicking on it. Why did you scroll to the bottom, why on earth did you scroll to the bottom and so forth.
So fixing it becomes quite cathartic. But watching them can often be highly frustrating. Very well, so right. I say we get into the nitty gritty. So we've talked about bounce rates and using additional tools to Google Analytics because all the answers aren't going to be in there. But within Google Analytics, what's the most common, not necessary problems you're fixing, but things you're adding in to the Google analytics data set to help you understand an eCommerce business?

Is there something which doesn't matter on the eCommerce business, you're always going to add it into the mix?

Yes. Hundred percent. So to be crystal clear, even if you have enhanced eCommerce up and running in your Google Analytics instance, it's very clear what that is. That's basically just tracking your sales, whether that's your checkout behavior, your abandonments, your purchases, all that kind of stuff, your products, impressions, product views. That is what Google Analytics identifies as enhanced analytics or enhanced eCommerce. But even that, for many, is kind of like the creme de la creme of GA.

And it really isn't. Like you need to be looking into custom dimensions and custom metrics. And that sounds like crazy complicated. And people are kind of thinking, no, I promise you, it's sounds a lot more complicated than what it is, but it allows you to enrich the data that you have in GA with your own custom data. So to give you a perfect example and one that I always go to, it's adding error messages into Google Analytics because it can be an absolute godsend.

One thing GA won't give out-the-box is capture error messages. So if you can kind of collect every error message that a customer would say and you could get a bird's eye view of all the error messages I've ever been seing in a certain date range, you then have one data put to an actual case to make some noise and say, hey, look, product teams, look that teams, look marketing teams. We have a huge issue here which says, I don't know, Stripe is unavailable at the moment and that's directly impacting your sales and performance.

So you've not just identified a specific error message. You're able to identify how many times that's been fired by how many people and how big or small of an issue that is to them just basically fast track tickets and get everything else out of the way. You can prioritize, basically.
[00:14:33.930] - Chloe Thomas
So we could know that one of our payment systems, i.e. Stripe, isn’t doing what it should be doing. It’s not up 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and then go and fix it, whereas otherwise we’re probably be waiting for someone in customer service to A. Understand what the customer’s problem was. And B. Tell us about it.

[00:14:54.750] - Luke Carthy
Yes. Yeah, and that’s I mean, you know, we already know the rule of customers would just rather leave and go somewhere else than spend the time to fill in a contact form or to contact someone on Live Chat and then, if you’ve already heard about it. So if you’ve had from customer services that Hey! Customer X has a problem, there’s probably another 50, maybe even a couple of hundred customers prior to them that have had the exact same issue. And if you hear it more than once, then, you know, you probably have a pretty big, big situation going on there.

So it kind of allows you to try and be one step ahead and fix it before it becomes a problem for too many of your customers.

[00:15:30.240] - Chloe Thomas
Because basically you could have that report if you pull the data into Google Analytics using a custom dimension. Yes. Yeah. And then you can turn that into a custom reporting Google Analytics and then have that emailed to you every every morning. And then you can see the error before it gets too big. I suppose you say becomes a problem solving thing, not even a how to analyze your marketing thing.

[00:15:56.640] - Luke Carthy
Yes. And I actually had a client who leveraged the data that I put in to Google Analytics where custom dimension’s and we built a data studio dashboard. And, you know, like in a lot of customer services departments where you've got big screens up and you've got your amber, your traffic light system in terms of calls and tickets and that sort of thing. We had a screen dedicated to real time errors so they could see if there's a spike and all of a sudden you've then got a, hey, we need to fix this.

This has gone down, which actually came into which we didn’t expect it to have such a big impact. But during the peak of Black Friday last year, it was brilliant.
[00:16:33.690] - Chloe Thomas
By this we’re talking 2019 aren’t we, for everyone who is listening because we’re recording in 2020, you’re hearing it in 2021. So last year was 2019. Yeah, at this point 2019.

[00:16:42.750] - Luke Carthy
Yeah, just to clear that up. It was brilliant because we got to see for a false, we’ve got to see the server fall over technical issues where people are just kind of rage clicking buttons because they want to stock or things are going really slow and that helps customer service teams to try and better prepare and put resources where they need it. So, this is kind of where you go above and beyond the basic implementation of Google Analytics. But equally, I guess a question that’s probably just a minute into my head is how do I know what data so we can send to GA?

[00:17:15.180] - Luke Carthy
How do I even, you know, Custom dimension’s great. But what data do I pass to those dimensions? It all comes down to your vertical, what you’re in. Your product you’re working with. So if you’re a lead gen business, for example, you might want to pass a message that passes, or the message that the customer sees every time they fill out a contact form, and if you have a spike when, let’s say you have a spike, when it fails, then you know you have a problem.

[00:17:44.480] - Luke Carthy
We’ve all seen it before. Where we moved to a new domain name. You haven’t reauthorised, you recapture when you’ve got to click all the images with a bloody crosswalk or whatever. And if you don’t reauthorise that, your entire legion system fails. So you’ve basically got to put into GA what you know is going to be crazy and what you know is going to cost you when it goes wrong. And that’s how I can, almost like reverse engineering a problem.

[00:18:10.040] - Chloe Thomas
So it’s quite a good way to kind of slightly risk mitigate and future proof your business if you set it up. Right, because it will give you an early warning when you’ve forgotten something or when something’s broken.

Yeah, but normally in these kind of cases and we’re only human, right. You normally put this into place once you’ve been burned already. So the site’s gone bad then it’s like how do we prevent it next time? Because nobody ever wants to spend the whole spring or two springs or a whole quarter for building things up. That might happen. But, you know, if you have that capacity, if you’re in that dream world where you’ve got like a couple of weeks to play around with and you can build a completely holistic all singing or dancing platform, then, yes, go in and throw in those fire alarms and those signals and screw that analytics.
[00:18:53.540] - Chloe Thomas
Cool, I want to get a bit more into how we set up these custom dimensions in a second. But before I do, you mentioned another very cool tool, which we should probably explain a bit, because I find a surprisingly large number of people haven't heard about this. And it's game changing, which is Data Studio.

Yes. So Google Data Studio is basically Google Analytics right-hand person, if you like. They are made for each of them. They integrate very, very tightly. It's kind of like Power BI. So if anyone kind of plays with data and dashboards and stuff and uses Power BI then, it's Google's answer to that. And it's completely free of charge for in most cases. Plus, the beautiful thing about it is you can also add an additional data sources.

So if you have again going back to customer services, if you wanted to import call logs, if you wanted to add in tickets that are outstanding, that sort of thing, you can absolutely bring that data into a dashboard if it makes sense to do so. O yeah, it's absolutely something you should get stuck into.

[00:19:54.410] - Chloe Thomas
One of the things I love the most about data studio is that you can kind of set up your weekly report template or your monthly report template and rather than spending the whole of the first day of the month or the second day of the month creating the report and formatting it, send it to your bosses. It happens automatically once you set it up once it's like a couple of clicks. Oh, look, Match is set up. Yeah, I can just send it to everyone, you know.

[00:20:19.250] - Chloe Thomas
And for that annoying person, you send the report to who goes. Can I have it on weeks, not on calendar days. You can send them a version where they can change the date range themselves.

Yeah, yeah.

[00:20:31.400] - Chloe Thomas
Yeah, it’s a huge timesaver when it comes to reporting, which, of course, the more time you can save creating the reports, the more time you can spend analyzing them and the more time you can spend creating the reports you should be creating but don’t have time to create.
[00:20:44.960] - Luke Carthy
Exactly.

[00:20:46.360] - Chloe Thomas
I said, we get deeper into creating these things called Custom Dimensions.

[00:20:53.180] - Chloe Thomas
So you said custom dimensions and custom metrics. Can you explain kind of what they are and how we use them, how we set them up actually, rather than how we use them? Yes.

So, so to make it even more confusing, you've kind of got custom definitions, which is the parent for both custom metrics and custom dimensions. But to very quickly explain them, because, again, it sounds complicated, but it's actually very, really simple. Custom metrics is anything you provide, you do mathematical things. I'm trying to think of a more sexy words than things. What things?

[00:21:28.610] - Chloe Thomas
Can I help you out with that? I always think that because in analytics, anything you get across the top of a table is a metric. And everything, anything you get down the left is a dimension.

Yes, yeah, yeah.

[00:21:37.760] - Chloe Thomas
In Google analytics speak. So, so hence I'm guessing a custom metric would be an alternative to bounce rate.

Yes. Yeah. So anything you add together, remove you create averages for anything that's got calculus against it is a custom metric. Anything that's basically a string or is text, is custom, is a dimension. So to give you a very specific example, if you wanted to store, let me try and think LTV from another system somewhere that you pull in, then that's going to be a metric, of course.

But if you wanted to pull through like a name or all those error messages, we were talking about the dimension.
Yeah. One last thing to kind of mention on that which is really, really important is metrics. Custom metrics are only based on the heat. So, I don’t want to jump into this too much, but it is also really important could take a lot of time. So metrics are based on the heat, which means they only exist for that specific page, while a dimension can exist on a heat, it can also exist on a session and it can exist on the entire user.

So what I mean by that is if you send an error message, you could have the error message sticking in google analytics for that entire user if you wanted to. So this user has seen these error message, but a custom metric of, say, 10 pounds would only happen on that specific page. And it’s tricky to get your head around, but when you start building and messing around with data, you start to understand the small distinctions between the two bits of taxonomy.

[00:23:15.350] - Chloe Thomas
It’s often the case with Google stuff that at this point where you hear us talking about it when you listen to a podcast, oh, god, that sounds crazy. And then after half an hour of playing, you’re like, oh, it all makes total sense.

[00:23:25.070] - Chloe Thomas
So don’t let the fright you might be feeling a little bit disrupted, I suppose, by it. But right now a bit scared of it let you hold you back because it’s really not as scary as this. And now, these custom dimensions and the custom metrics. Do we set those up in Google Analytics or are they something that we send to Google Analytics and then it kind of automatically creates?

[00:23:44.900] - Luke Carthy
Both. Oh, no, no, no. Don’t tell a lie. Yeah, you set them up in GA and you pass data to it as well. But, the easiest way to absolutely get data from where you need to go into Google Analytics with a custom metrics or dimensions is tag manager like 110 percent. There’s no easier way to do it. And there's so many cool resources.

Simo Ahava, who basically is my GTM crush, he is an absolute legend in this space. He’s the godfather of everything, google analytics to do with tag manager. Loads of walk throughs.
That even allows you to pass custom dimensions from your website or whatever system you’re playing with to Google Analytics without even having to interrupt developers. So you can create your sexy dashboards and build what you need without development assistance, which is great because that means you’re not waiting for weeks, months or even quarters to try and get your data off the ground.

[00:24:36.590] - Chloe Thomas
And we’ll put a link to the godfather of GTM in the thing, because I think trying to explain Google Tag Manager on a podcast is a leap beyond. You guys aren’t going to listen to it and we’re going to tie ourselves in knots.

[00:24:50.390] - Chloe Thomas
So we’ll put a link to that guy so you can go and have a good time. But you really should have in place on your website because it frees up the marketing team in so many ways from the mire of the developer workflow list.

[00:25:04.430] - Chloe Thomas
It’s an amazing but again, also slightly scary until you get into it. Till you know, one thing I really wanted to talk to you about as well, Luke, is Events. So personally, I steer clear of the crazy stuff in Google Analytics because I find it slightly crazy and I make other people do it for me. But one thing which I am capable of doing is playing around a little bit with events in order in my case to track email sign-ups. Which are surprisingly hard to track in the world of Google Analytics.

[00:25:35.570] - Chloe Thomas
So can you quickly tell us a bit about events as well?

Yeah, so that is a perfect example. The email sign ups, form completions, engaging live chat, and all kinds of things. So events are basically actions, if you like, to things that you can play and you can have an event as a single event. So you can have it as a funnel. So there’s three or four steps before that event is complete. They’re really, really easy ways to kind of set flags, if you like, will checkpoint in Google Analytics.

[00:26:06.530] - Luke Carthy
But what I will say not to break open the whole Google Analytics 4 thing, but events in Google Analytics and the brand new super, super shiny Google Analytics for are not quite the same. And I don’t want to break it open right now, but it’s just like a note that I want to give to people. If you’re
looking into events. But yeah, they're really, really cool. They're adding check points or allowing you to understand how many people did or didn't do something in Google Analytics.

[00:26:33.560] - Chloe Thomas
And what I particularly like about them, is that you can set them up as a goal, which then means you can track. So I can track because I said this way I can track email, sign ups and where they came from. And in the same way as you could track a conversion, which is quite cool about events. And you mentioned GA4. We're not getting into that today, but maybe one day it goes if you're listening and you're like, oh, I need to know more about GA4 then, drop us a line and maybe we'll do an episode on it later this year.

[00:27:03.440] - Chloe Thomas
But I think did it come out Q4 2020.

[00:27:08.750] - Luke Carthy
Yeah. So it's out of data now. But in my succinct opinion it's not really ready for eCommerce yet. But to very quickly summarize what GA4 is. It's supposed to be the replacement for UA, which is the previous iteration of Google Analytics? But don't panic because it's not going to be, you know, kind of light switch moment. They're going to be running parallel for quite some time. But it makes sense to go play around, build yourself a demo property and have a poke around, but there's some pros which we won't get into now, but it's supposed to be the replacement for UA.

[00:27:41.150] - Chloe Thomas
Google are good in that, they let us play with things early, but it's often wiser to wait 12 months before actually bothering.

[00:27:48.440] - Chloe Thomas
So I suspect there'll be an eCommerce rush to GA4 in January 2022 because I doubt any of us will want to switch over before in Q4.

[00:28:00.200] - Chloe Thomas
Getting well off track there. So I'm guessing so far everybody out there listening, we have, we've given you a lot of things to think about in Google Analytics. Don't worry in the show notes, we're going to give you a whole load of resources to take you a little bit further. But right now, we're going to pause for a reminder of our sponsors and then we're going to talk about kind of the wider world of eCommerce as we put Luke through our insider tips.
[00:28:26.460] - Chloe Thomas
Success in 2021 means building stronger relationships with your customers last year saw a lot of consumers switching to buy online, leading to surges in new customer acquisition. So how are you planning on turning your new first time buyers into profitable repeat customers? Well, that's what Klaviyo is for. Klaviyo helps businesses create memorable marketing moments through email, SMS and personalized website experiences, and that is what creates repeat purchases. That's why Klaviyo, the ultimate eCommerce marketing platform, is used by over 50,000 eCommerce brands around the world.

[00:29:01.440] - Chloe Thomas
Get started with your free account today. Visit Klaviyo.com/masterplan. That's KLAVIYO.com/masterplan.

[00:29:12.270] - Chloe Thomas
Okay, Luke, so far, we've gone deep into taking our analytics to the next level. Now you get to wow us with your insider knowledge about the whole of kind of eCommerce analytics. And almost to be honest. Anything you want to talk about Luke, really. So, for the following questions, your answer can be anything to do with eCommerce, which of course, does include the analytics we've been talking about.

[00:29:34.080] - Chloe Thomas
So, Luke, you ready for these?

I'm ready.

[00:29:36.840] - Chloe Thomas
Okay, let's start with newbie advice. If we've inspired someone to take their first step with eCommerce and analytics today, what do they need to know to give themselves the best chance of success?

How to get the basics right. And I know that's like oh cliche as heck. But I cannot tell you how painful it is to walk into a company or a client and then find some really basic fundamental stuff that's just gone wrong. To give you some examples. Double track in pages where you think you've got ten thousand you know sessions this month, but actually you've got half of that, or even maybe you've got a website with multiple domains. So you might have forums.domain.com and a shop.domains.com.
[00:30:22.530] - Luke Carthy
Yeah, that can cause a lot of problems if you have experience crossing domains. So just getting things right and making sure things measure properly before you go make things all sexy and shiny is so, so important because yeah. As we know, if you can't trust your data then what's the point?

[00:30:43.020] - Chloe Thomas
In doing it early. Just to add to that is crucial because the majority of what we've talked about today only starts tracking from the moment you put it live. You can't retrofit these things. So, you know, if you want to be able to compare to this year, next year, does that makes sense? You need it right now. Okay. Once you've started, of course, you've got to Keep Optimising. So what's your favorite way to improve eCommerce performance,

[00:31:06.880] - Luke Carthy
This is good. Okay. I personally like asking people who have very little technical experience to go and have a poke a new feature or to try and buy something or to give them a challenge and then watching them swear a lot and get frustrated and then take notes and make it better. The reason why is because even myself who lives and breathes CRO and SEO and analytics and wants good stuff. You do get desensitised to it. And having someone who doesn't use equipment every day who does someone isn't on my laptop every single day is brilliant.

[00:31:10.680] - Chloe Thomas
Yeah, I love that. So, so few people do it and it's really necessary in a normal non covid world.

[00:31:45.150] - Chloe Thomas
I'd be saying you can if you can't think of anyone, just take your laptop to a cafe and buy someone a coffee to work at. But don't do that at the moment, that would be bad.

[00:32:00.600] - Chloe Thomas
If someone listening wants to learn more about this analytics and improving their reporting and asking those questions, is there one cheap or free resource you recommend?
Yeah, so there's a couple of really cool blogs, one called Analytics Mania, and they go through everything from one on one, all the way into really kind of special customized big query nonsense, which is super powerful, but, you know, but super techie. But what I would say, and I know this sounds like really weird, but stay away from people's documentation because it's normally terrible and just creates more confusion for you than it will do solutions. And I've been there so many times.

[00:32:48.120] - Luke Carthy
So just take a look, because there's always someone who's done what Google has done and made it actually so much better. But, yeah, build yourself. I mean, the thing about analytics that's really important to mention is that you can't break anything on the site. The caveat of throwing in tag manager. So if you break your analytics platform, if you're building yourself a playground, you just messing around with settings and stuff, do that obviously create yourself a playground.

Don't mess with the life of the living. But my point is that if you're tweaking things in analytics, you're not going to break things on the website. I've said that and I think it actually nervous as an educator here, but in most cases it's not going to break anything on the website.

[00:33:26.520] - Chloe Thomas
I give it till Friday before I guess it we're going I did what Luke said.

[00:33:31.710] - Chloe Thomas
and I have broken it. So, I'll send them in your direction when that happens.

Yeah please, only my address, don't contact me please.

[00:33:42.510] - Chloe Thomas
I think you said there, there's two blogs you'd mentioned and you mentioned analytics media. I think there was a was there a second one you were going to say?

Analytics Mania. Just a bit, the second one.
I was going to mention Simo Ahava again, but I've already given them enough love already. I probably will think of one, if I do, will let you know, and I'm sure it can go in the show notes, but they're my kind of two go tos.

Brilliant. And then finally, it's crystal ball time, which we may have already covered the answer to this one. But what's coming up in the next 6 to 12 months that we should be getting ready for with our analytics?

OK, well, this is going to be interesting, I think. Do you know what? Prepare for the unknown. I think this year, I mean last year, because this goes out January. So last year, 2020 has taught us that constantly going for the usual.

Oh its payday, let's put out a campaign. Oh, it's Easter. Let's do a campaign or it's summer. Let's start selling holidays. It's like it doesn't work because covid came threw a spanner in everything we knew about the calendar. So I would just say be in a situation where you prepare and you look at every single month as a yeah, as an opportunity, you don't have any pre connotations because we don't know what 2021 is going to be like.

You hope it's going to be pretty and things will start to get back to normal. And no one has any idea. And I think taking that kind of, I donk know, 'fear of the unknown' and taking that and putting it into analytics and how you planning campaigns. It's so much better than saying, oh, it's the twenty fifth of the month, let's start putting out our pay day email, that sort of thing.

Last but not least, when all that's about is, is the stuff you're doing now actually working? Because there's so many teams that just do stuff because it's always been done that way.

Be the person or be the team who says we've sent this email for the last 12 months. Is it still working? Is it, could we do better? Because if you don't, there will be a competitor that will do it for you.
Keep Optimising Podcast: https://keepoptimising.com

[00:35:38.160] - Chloe Thomas
Yeah, as we named this podcast Keep Optimising everybody, you have to keep looking and asking those questions. Could this be better? What haven’t I looked at in a while and keep it, keep it moving. Because it’s going to be those who focus on the biggest opportunity today and on getting their foundations right who are going to have the success this year, I think.

[00:35:56.220] - Luke Carthy
Yes, absolutely.

[00:35:58.140] - Chloe Thomas
Quite some margin. Okay, Luke, we are very nearly at the end of the show, so could you please let the listeners know where they can find you and your business on the Web and social media, please?

I can indeed. So, yes, you can find me LukeCarthly.com, Mr. Luke Carthy on Twitter. Basically, just Google my name. You will probably find me if you need to find me. And equally, my DMs are open. If you’ve got any questions, if you want any pointers in the world of GA analytics or tools or whatever, please reach out. I’ll be happy to help recap.

[00:36:28.760] - Chloe Thomas
Yeah, it’s definitely one of those areas which a couple of pointers in the right direction can save you days.

[00:36:33.510] - Luke Carthy
Yes. Yeah, yeah. Can I be a really big pain because I know what you’re about do, you’re about to wrap up things. And I’ve just one thing that’s hit my head that I think is really important. If there was one thing that listeners decided to take away from this, it’s to go and look at your site search and think about the custom dimensions and custom metrics you can take from that.

[00:36:56.010] - Luke Carthy
And I’ll give you a perfect example. Let’s look at Holland and Barrat. So, March 2020, coronavirus came up and if you search for coronavirus on Holland and Barrat, you’ve got no results. My point here is if they had something built in their Google analytics platform that let them know about queries that have been searched for that had no results, that’s brilliant because that’s money on the table. People are searching for stuff that they want to buy from you, but they cannot not, there’s no bigger quick win than taking money from people who want to give it to you.
And that would be the thing that I'd say people need to do from twenty twenty.

[00:37:32.610] - Chloe Thomas
Love it. I'm really glad you interrupted my doing that wrapping up thing to give us that, because that's a top tip site search. So much potential in site search. Well then Luke, you are quite right. I was about to do that wrapping up, and now I'm going to do that wrapping up thing.

[00:37:47.130] - Chloe Thomas
Luke, thanks so much for coming on the show again. You always provide so much value and enlightened complicated subjects in a really good way. So thanks for taking the time to come on and record this with you, with us even.

[00:37:59.250] - Chloe Thomas
We really appreciate it.

[00:38:00.720] - Luke Carthy
No, thank you very much. Has been awesome to be here again.

[00:38:04.950] - Chloe Thomas
So there you have it, so much we've covered there from the basics right through to some quite clever, advanced cool stuff there to help you get your your data ever better to help you make ever better decisions and to help you to Keep Optimising your marketing. Trust me, it is worth getting a head around this stuff, even though it might seem a little bit complicated. And it's very worth getting those analytics set up right. Because once you've done it, it's just going to keep paying off for you

[00:38:33.330] - Chloe Thomas
We've put the links to all those key resources that Luke mentioned in the show notes. There you can also get the full transcript of the episode. So, yes, you can go and grab yourself a PDF of everything Luke said if you want to make it a little bit easier to follow along. And you can also get other notes we've put together about the episode too. You'll find all of that at KeepOptimising.com.

[00:38:56.190] - Chloe Thomas
There you'll see a link to our full episodes list and a link to this episode itself. If like us, you can't get enough of Luke, then be ready to learn about his new eCommerce business that he's just set up in late 2020, because in 2021 he is our start up story on our sister podcast, eCommerce MasterPlan.
That's happening from February. So he'll be on multiple times during the year telling us how it's going, launching his own eCommerce business and growing it through 2021.

[00:39:28.320] - Chloe Thomas
This month, we're adding a lot of things to your to do list across the two podcasts here on Keep Optimising. We're covering the four foundational areas you need to get right. And over on eCommerce MasterPlan, we've got eight whole episodes going live this month as part of our eCommerce growth series sponsored by Klaviyo. So there's a lot of great ideas coming your way this month. And as we all know, the key to success is picking the right things to do because there's always stuff we could be doing. The question is, what should we be doing?

[00:39:57.420] - Chloe Thomas
To help you with that, in the first week of February, we're going to be hosting a very special 2021 planning webinar. So we've done it in only fair because it means you get the chance to get your January sales out the way you get a chance to listen to all these episodes we're putting live in January. And then what we're going to do in the webinar is to help you work out the plan that's actually going to enable you to hit your goals in 2021.

[00:40:20.590] - Chloe Thomas
I'm going to be covering a little bit on setting your goals for the year. I'm going to be taking you through a couple of systems that you can follow up to help you work out what you actually should do to hit those goals. And we're going to have a couple of tips as well around getting organized. So it all actually happens because a plan is great. But if it doesn't get put into practice, what was the point? Quite frankly. So right now, to make sure you don't miss out on that, go and save your space for free at KeepOptimising.com/webinar.

[00:40:48.840] - Chloe Thomas
Thank you so much for tuning into this episode of the Keep Optimising podcast. It is very cool. Every Monday I look at the stats and they keep going up. We keep getting listened to in more countries and we're ranking well in loads of countries. So it’s very cool and it’s all because you keep tuning in. So thank you.

[00:41:04.650] - Chloe Thomas
If you've enjoyed this episode, I'm going to give you a recommendation for a completely different type of episode, because I figure out after a heavy session on analytics, you want something a bit more strategic to listen to next.
Keep Optimising Podcast: https://keepoptimising.com

[00:41:16.350] - Chloe Thomas
So have a listen to Episode 27, we got live recently with Joanna Steele, where we're talking all about user-generated content, how to get it and how you can use it to supercharge all your marketing activity. So, again, have a listen to that next for a bit of a brain caressing, I suppose, after this heavy duty analytics episode. Please also do tell your fellow marketers about the Keep Optimising podcast, because I'm creating it to help as many marketers as possible to improve the performance of their marketing.

[00:41:46.020] - Chloe Thomas
So the more people you tell about it, the more people I can help. Have a great week and make sure you listen to the next episode so I can help you to Keep Optimising your marketing.

[00:41:57.360]
Access everything Keep Optimising at KeepOptimising.com, that's with an S, not a Z.