

Kate Farms GA4 Implementation Case Study

Overview

Kate Farms, a U.S.-based provider of nutritional products for patients suffering from severe, chronic diseases, initially engaged Evolytics to audit the company's existing Universal Analytics implementation and provide a roadmap for improving e-commerce performance. The overall intent of the project was to enhance data collection and provide analytic, strategic, and marketing stakeholders with more valuable data.

As work progressed, the team recognized that adding a full Google Analytics 4 implementation to the project scope would provide a clear competitive advantage down the road. Fortunately, the team made this decision several months before Google announced its plan to sunset UA between July and October 2023—after which GA4 will be the de facto Google Analytics solution.

“When Google announced the UA sunset, it was a relief to know that we already had GA4 up and running. We’ll have more than a year of data available in GA4 before the deadline.”

— Sara Andrews, Kate Farms

Challenge

Following stakeholder meetings and the development of a measurement plan designed to gain consensus on Kate Farms' specific marketing analytics and tracking needs, Evolytics conducted a thorough audit of the existing analytics initiative. Findings uncovered serious issues with data quality and collection in the UA property, and Shopify integration (the e-commerce platform used by Kate Farms). Specifically, we found problems in the data layer and Google Tag Manager configuration, requiring highly technical development work to resolve.

Without in-house development resources, Kate Farms attempted, and was ultimately unsuccessful at, completing this work with third-party support (Evolytics rarely provides development services). It was during the audit that Kate Farms executive leadership asked Evolytics to go ahead with a full GA4 implementation, in addition to the original scope of work. However, to achieve the best end results, they first needed to address the existing UA technical issues and optimize that property before getting started with GA4. We just had to figure out the dev part...

Solution

At the core of Kate Farms' dev challenge was the difficulty of finding a developer with experience in Liquid, a template language created by Shopify to load dynamic content in the pages of online stores. Evolytics does not typically provide this service, but to move the project forward a member of our team learned Liquid, which resolved the issue, making it possible to successfully implement the necessary on-site Google Analytics tracking with Enhanced Ecommerce via Google Tag Manager's data layer functionality. Another improvement involved setting up internal version control to reduce instances of lost work. Previously, updates to the site were consistently rolled back.

With their existing UA property optimized and buy-in from the leadership team at Kate Farms, it was time to proceed with GA4 implementation. Evolytics chose a dual approach to deploying GA4—setting up UA and GA4 side-by-side for greater visibility into what exists in both properties and where there might be gaps. It also allows for the establishment of more accurate tracking of measurement events and improves how tags are set up to fire via the same triggers, ensuring consistent implementation.

“After the audit, we all discussed GA4, and decided to fix our current GA with the mindset of getting ready to set up GA4 in the process.”

— Sara Andrews, Kate Farms

Results

Evolytics completed enhancements to Kate Farms’ existing UA and GA4 implementation in February 2022, one month before Google announced the sunset deadline for versions of Google Analytics that preceded GA4. This means Kate Farms will run UA and GA4 in tandem to amass nearly 20 months of historical analytics data before UA stops processing data in Q3 of 2023.

Kate Farms’ proactive decision to go ahead with GA4 implementation should provide a significant competitive advantage over others in their e-commerce space. While many Kate Farms competitors might not enjoy such a long GA4 head start, Kate Farms’ marketing activities shouldn’t experience disruptions, including the ability to continue running the year-over-year channel and campaign reports their team relies on to make key business decisions. Additionally, Kate Farms benefits from extra time to get the company’s analytics users trained up to proficiency for a seamless transition—the many differences in GA4’s functionality and UI means a steep learning curve for many users.

From a technical standpoint, our team’s optimization work prioritized using the latest best practices to ensure the collection of clean and accurate data in both UA and GA4, customized to Kate Farms’ specific marketing and IT needs. The enhanced data layer pushes are now baked into their e-commerce page templates, and while most implementations use one push for all properties, Kate Farms will get individual data pushes for UA and GA4, which improves data integrity.

Remember...

There’s still plenty of time to implement Google Analytics 4 before Universal Analytics stops processing data. But, if you want access the most historical data available for year-over-year analysis and reporting after the sun sets on UA, you should get started now. Contact us for more information about the best way to deploy a comprehensive GA4 implementation. Most likely, we can help.