

3 COMMON DATA MISTAKES COSTING YOU TIME AND SALES

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Common mistakes holding
your business back. Plus,
what do to instead.

BY CAITLIN LEMON

Turn numbers into actionable strategy

Jay Baer once said, “We’re surrounded by data, but starved for insights.” Data isn’t just a sea of numbers. It helps you understand the story of your business. What happened? Why? And what should you do next?



Here’s the truth

Without data, your business is flying by the seat of your J.Crew jeans. But the key isn’t just to collect data, but to use it to move your business forward.

And this is where a lot of business leaders get stuck. You either:

- Track too many metrics – leaving them feeling overwhelmed
- Focus on the wrong metrics – keeping their business strategy in second gear.

But it’s not your fault. We’re not taught data literacy in school, so we end up getting a baptism-by-fire when we start a business.

You don’t need to be an analyst to start getting more out of your data. We’ll cover some of the most common mistakes and some quick fixes you can make right away.



Common data mistakes business owners make

1. Focusing on vanity metrics, such as traffic.
2. Not looking at numbers in context.
3. Not conducting an audit on their GA4 data.

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Data has been compared to oil rush of Rockefeller's day. Understanding which numbers matter and mapping them into next steps for your business is key to securing your financial oxygen mask and standing out from competitors. Yes, it's that important.



Important tip

Make sure that you have clear business goals. Use a S.M.A.R.T goal framework. That'll make it easier to map out which metrics to focus on during your analysis.

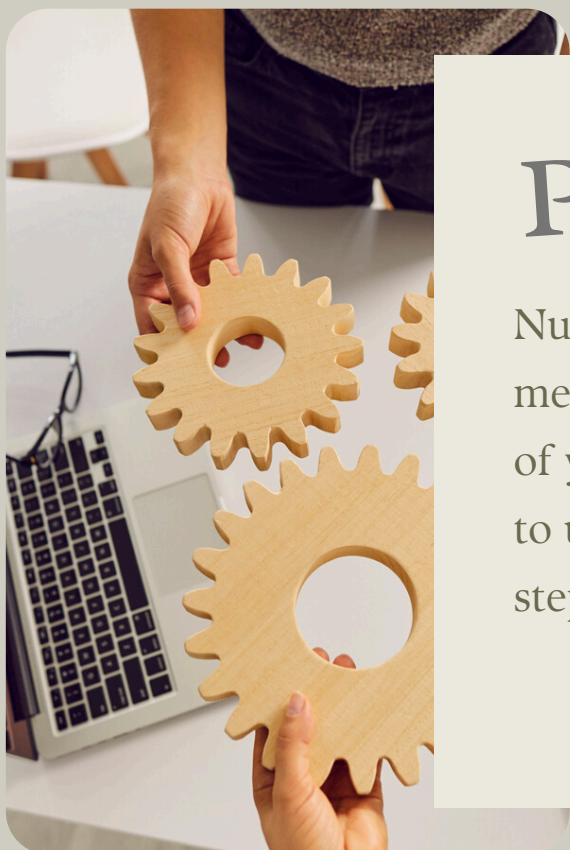
Hint: it's almost never traffic

Mistake 1: Focusing on vanity metrics

A lot of business leaders get distracted by vanity metrics, such as traffic. Traffic makes us feel good – hey, people are looking at us! But unfortunately, it's not really useful for understanding how you're doing. Instead, focus on metrics that move the needle, such as conversion rates.

Otherwise, you'll spend a lot of valuable time chasing the wrong things. Here's an example: when I worked at a marketing agency, one of our clients was upset that their overall website traffic was down.

But here's the thing: sales were up, both month over month and year over year. Yes, they were getting less traffic, but they were getting more sales, which is far more valuable. Unfortunately for them, they couldn't get beyond the decrease in traffic. This is why you need to focus on the metrics that matter, not just what's easiest to measure.



Pro tip:

Numbers in isolation are pretty meaningless. Look at them in the context of your business goals and historical data to uncover patterns and decide on next steps.

Mistake 2: Not looking at numbers in context

Imagine a doctor told you that your leukocyte coagulant index was 133....and then just walked away. You might be wondering, "Is that good? Is that bad? Do I need to be concerned?" And possibly, "Are they coming back?"

Don't worry, there's no such thing as a leukocyte coagulant index but the point is, you don't want to look at a data point in isolation. It needs context. For example, if you're looking at sales, compare them to the previous month or quarter. Or the previous year if applicable.

Additionally, keep context in mind when you're making strategic decisions. For example, when it comes to content, marketers tend to focus on keywords with the most volume. But that may not make sense if it's a generic keyword with low intent, or if it's misaligned with search intent of internet users (for example: a B2B company using a keyword for D2C searches).

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In data there's a saying "Garbage in = Garbage out." Your strategy is only as strong as your data. Poor quality data leads to poor decision making. That's why you want to ensure your data is clean. It'll help you avoid wasting valuable time and money on strategies that don't work.

Mistake 3: Not auditing your GA4 data

Data quality is your businesses's reputation. Dirty data can cause major headaches for a business.

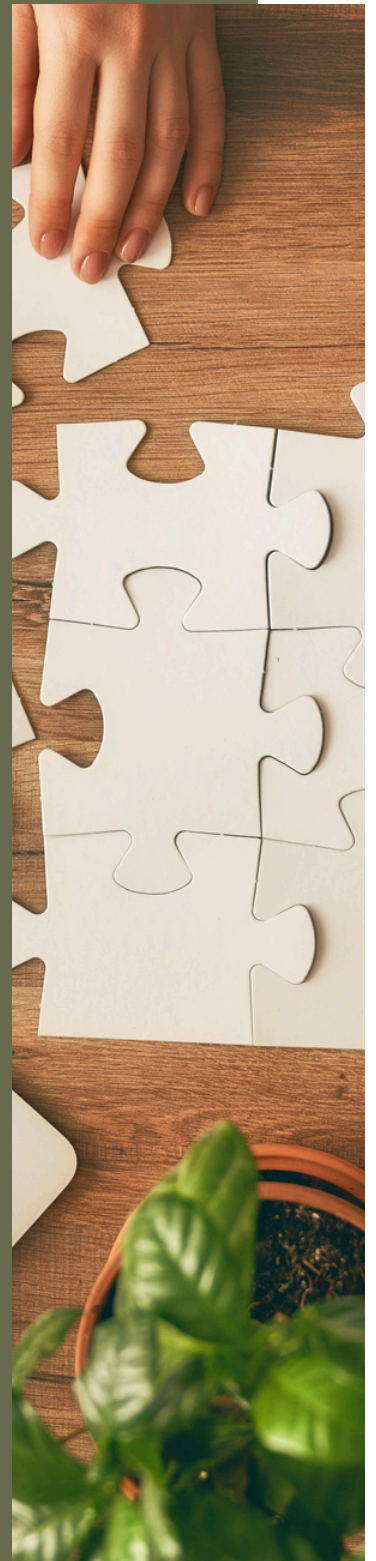
Consequences can range from wasted time to potential regulatory fines.

That's why you want to periodically audit your data and identify any issues that need to be addressed. Is there duplicate data or test sales in your database? Is PII accidentally being collected (hopefully not)?



To recap, here's what to do instead:

1. Focus on the metrics that actually matter to your business goals.
2. Look at numbers in context when planning out your strategy.
3. Audit your data so you can use it to make better business decisions.



Need more help?

Need more help than a PDF guide can provide? As a digital analytics consultant, I help teams go from “huh?” to “here’s what we’re doing next.”

Together, we’ll uncover the story behind the numbers. And write the next chapter with a data-backed strategy tailored to your goals.

Want to learn more? Check out my website below.

Beau, Chief Snack Officer and Head of
Trail Exploration



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