FREE DIY PLAYBOOK

# The SEO Tracking & Reporting Playbook

Use Google Search Console and Analytics to see what is working, in 30 minutes a month.

- Search Console walkthrough
- Monthly report template
- What to do when numbers drop

**SmallBiz Marketing**
Written by the SmallBiz Marketing team · smallbizmarketing.net
2026 edition

# Measure what matters

You do not need complicated dashboards. A small business needs to know four things each month: are we showing up more, are people clicking, which pages and searches are working, and is it bringing in business.

This playbook shows you where to find each answer for free and gives you a one-page report to fill in every month.

# Chapter 1: The free tools

| Tool | Answers |
| --- | --- |
| Google Search Console | What searches show us, clicks, rankings, indexing |
| Google Analytics 4 | Visitors, where they came from, what they did |
| Google Business Profile performance | Map views, calls, direction requests, website clicks |
| Your inbox or CRM | How many real leads came in, and from where |

Google Search Console

Google Analytics

# Chapter 2: Search Console, step by step

## The Performance report

Open Performance > Search results. Turn on all four metrics: clicks, impressions, CTR and average position.

- Impressions: how often your pages appeared in results.
- Clicks: how often someone clicked through.
- CTR: clicks divided by impressions.
- Average position: your average ranking (lower is better).

## Useful views

1. Queries tab: the searches that show your site.
2. Pages tab: which pages get the most visibility.
3. Compare dates: last 28 days vs previous 28 days.
4. Filter by country if you only serve the US.

> READ IT RIGHT
> Search Console data runs a couple of days behind and rounds small numbers. Look at trends over weeks and months, not single days.

## The Pages report

Indexing > Pages tells you whether Google has your pages. New pages often show as "Discovered - currently not indexed" for a while. Use URL Inspection to check a single page's live status.

# Chapter 3: Google Analytics 4 basics

- Reports > Acquisition > Traffic acquisition: filter for Organic Search.
- Reports > Engagement > Pages and screens: which pages people view.
- Set up key events (conversions) for form submissions, calls and bookings.

> PRO TIP
> The single most useful thing to track is leads. Add a "How did you hear about us?" field to your contact form and ask on every call. Pair it with Analytics data.

# Chapter 4: Your monthly SEO report

Fill this in on the first working day of each month. It takes about 30 minutes.

| Metric | This month | Last month | Change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Search clicks | | | |
| Search impressions | | | |
| Average position | | | |
| Organic visitors (GA4) | | | |
| Leads from search | | | |
| Profile calls | | | |
| Profile website clicks | | | |
| New reviews | | | |

Top 3 searches this month:

Pages that improved:

Pages that dropped:

What we will do next month:

# Chapter 5: Turn data into actions

| You see | It usually means | Do this |
|---|---|---|
| High impressions, low clicks | Title and description are not compelling, or you rank low on page one | Rewrite title and meta description; improve the page |
| Position 11 to 20 | Google sees you as relevant but not the best | Expand the page, add internal links and examples |
| Traffic but no leads | The page does not convert | Clearer call to action, reviews, simpler form |
| Page not indexed | Google has not prioritized it | Link to it from key pages; request indexing |
| Searches you did not expect | New opportunities | Create or adjust pages to match |

# Chapter 6: When numbers drop

1. Check the date range and compare like with like (seasonality).
2. Look at the Pages report for new indexing errors.
3. Check Security & Manual Actions in Search Console.
4. Find which pages and searches dropped using Compare.
5. Ask: did we change the site, URLs or titles recently?
6. Check for known Google updates around the date of the drop.
7. Fix any problems, then give it a few weeks before judging.

# Chapter 7: Rank tracking

Average position in Search Console is enough for most small businesses. If you want daily rank tracking for specific searches and cities, paid tools such as Semrush offer it. Remember that results differ by location and device, so checking manually from your office is not reliable.

# FAQ

### How often should I check SEO numbers?

Monthly for the report, plus a quick look after publishing important changes. Daily checking leads to overreacting to normal swings.

### Why does Search Console show different numbers than Analytics?

They measure different things: Search Console counts clicks in Google results; Analytics counts visits it can track on your site. Use each for its own purpose.

### What is a good click-through rate?

It depends heavily on position and on what else is in the results. Compare your own pages against each other and over time.

# Keep going

More free DIY playbooks from the SmallBiz Marketing team:

The Small Business SEO Playbook (start here)

The Keyword Research Playbook

The On-Page SEO Playbook

The Technical SEO Checklist Playbook

The Content & Blogging Playbook

The Links & Citations Playbook

The SEO Budget & Hiring Playbook

All free DIY playbooks

## Want it done for you?

The SmallBiz Marketing team builds fast, search-ready websites and sets up Google for small businesses. Get in touch through our contact page and tell us what you need.

Get in touch