How to Setup Google Analytics 4

White Paper

How to Setup Google Analytics 4

Step-by-step guide to implementing Google Analytics 4

Google's new analytics solution, GA4, enables analysts and marketers to gain a deeper understanding of the increasingly complex, multi-platform, multi-device journeys of their customers, whilst still meeting user privacy compliance regulations. The following is a definitive step-by-step guide to setting up Google Analytics 4, in order to get the most out of the enhanced data it offers to help you achieve your business objectives.

Considering the upgrade to GA4?

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We are Google Certified Partners

GA4 is still a new technology to many digital marketers and agencies – but not us. Being a Certified Google Marketing Platform Partner, we are one of just 20 companies in Australia that have been certified by Google to implement your new GA4 solution.
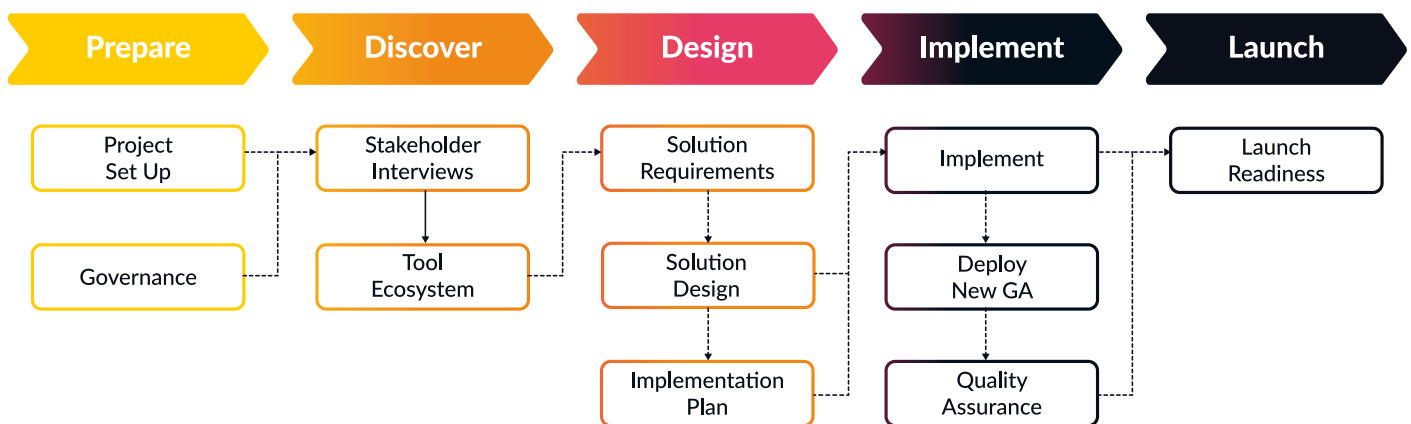
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We have already migrated dozens of companies from Universal Analytics to GA4.

Five stages to implement GA4

In this in-depth guide you'll see how to implement GA4 in five distinct, important stages: Prepare, Discover, Design, Implement, Launch.

Each stage is important - anyone can setup GA4 – but not many can do it right. This guide shows you how to work through each step of the process effectively and logically.

Prepare	Discover	Design	Implement	Launch
Project Set Up	Stakeholder Interviews	Solution Requirements	Implement	Launch Readiness
Governance	Tool Ecosystem	Solution Design	Deploy New GA	
		Implementation Plan	Quality Assurance	

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Setting up GA4 now could save your business

Google Universal Analytics – which many companies are unwisely still using - will stop processing new analytics data permanently from 1st July 2023. From then you will not be able to analyse or report on customer behaviour or make informed marketing decisions using the old analytics solution.

You will be required to use GA4 and doing that sooner rather than later is the smart move. Getting setup proficiently in Google Analytics 4 means you are future-proofing your business to prepare for the new landscape beyond the use of third-party cookies, whilst being GDPR and CCPA compliant.

The end of June 2022 is the date from which well-managed online companies are working fully in GA4, giving them 12 months of data for analysis when UA stops working next year. Having those 12 months of data gives a complete view on seasonality and having more data improves the machine learning models within GA4.

If your company is still using Universal Analytics, you are required to take immediate action to ensure you have at least 12 months of data for analysis within your new GA4 account. You should migrate your account to GA4 as soon as possible.

This change from Google to GA4 is designed to enable businesses to understand the complex, multi-platform journeys of their customers, whilst prioritising user privacy.
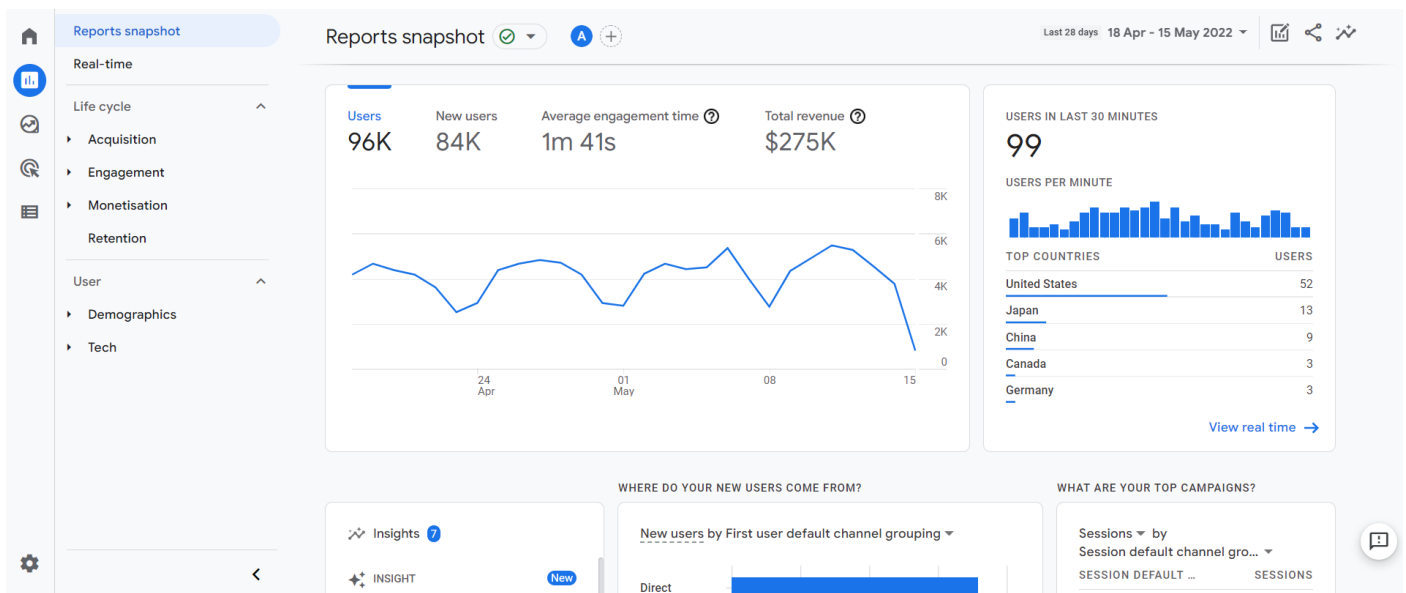

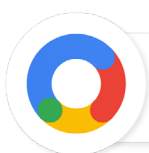Google Marketing Platform
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GA4 helps you to:

- Understand your customer across touch points (web + app)

- Improve ROI with data-driven attribution

- Measure engagement and conversion with compliance in mind

- Get greater value and utilisation from your data (AI)

- Turn insights into actions

- Improve structure alignment with enterprise companies

## Want to plan your GA4 implementation?

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What's new with GA4?

GA4 has a brand new user interface, providing
a completely new reporting experience:

- LESS standard reporting options

- NO views in the free version of GA4
  (In GA4 360 solution views are 'subproperties')

- Increased reporting capabilities

- In-platform AI capability

- Enhanced AI & ML via GCP

- Advanced in-platform analysis via new 'Explorations' feature

- Requires more configuration
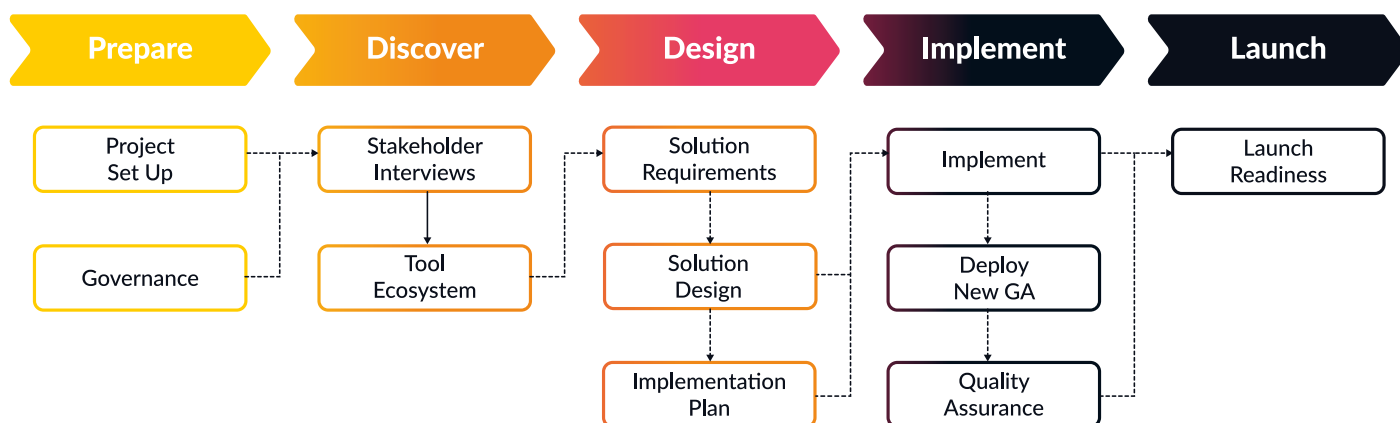
- Requires more knowledge to use
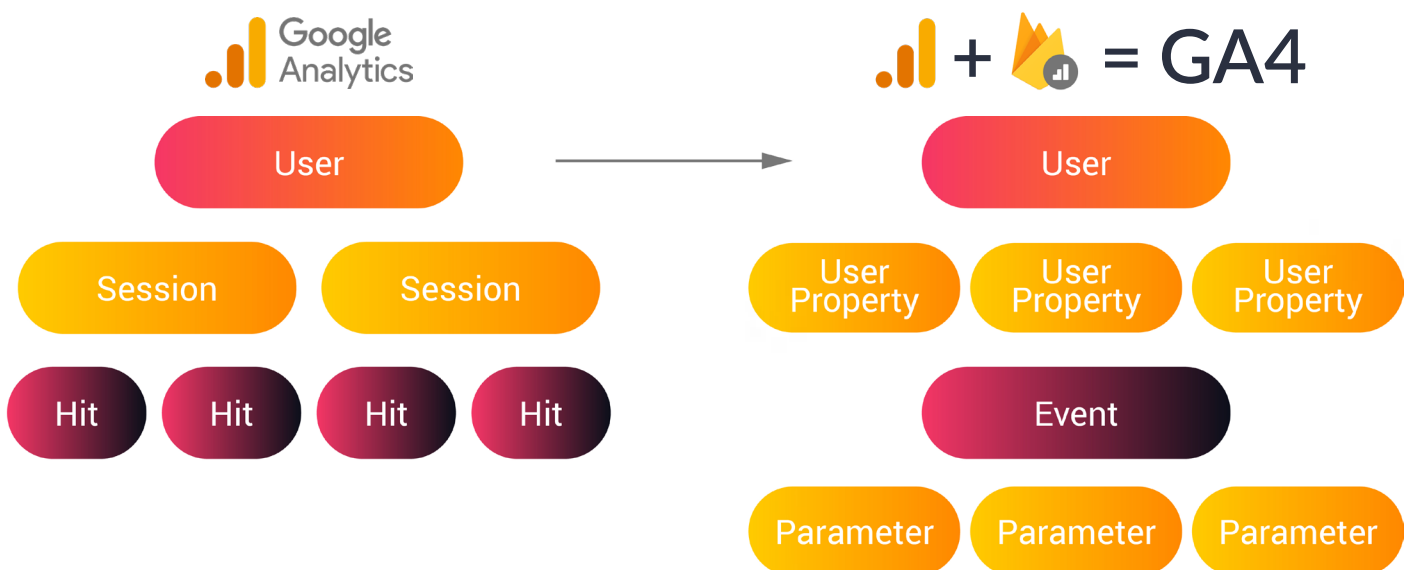
While the structure and syntax of GA4 differs from UA in many ways - and this
requires some initial investment and implementation - this is an excellent oppor-
tunity to review and improve your business objectives, redefining your KPIs and
targets. Your new, enhanced GA4 data will help you to fully understand customer
behaviour on your website and/or app and increase marketing performance.

How to setup Google Analytics 4

Unfortunately, over 90% of the analytics setups we see are broken. Tracking the wrong metrics can damage both your user experience and company growth. When moving to GA4 you can take ownership of your analytics data back and make better data-driven decisions that will impact your business.

Now we'll take a look into the five stages of GA4 configuration individually, with a definitive checklist of what's required at each stage.

Prepare	Discover	Design	Implement	Launch
Project Set Up	Stakeholder Interviews	Solution Requirements	Implement	Launch Readiness
Governance	Tool Ecosystem	Solution Design	Deploy New GA	
		Implementation Plan	Quality Assurance	

Prepare

Successful GA4 implementation planning requires aligning on key project components, including setting out the project roadmap, defining team operations, granting access to existing tools and defining governance processes.

Use the steps below to effectively plan for your implementation.

Step 1: Plan

A robust project roadmap and a well defined project charter form the basis of the plan for successful GA4 implementation.

The Project Roadmap lists the tasks to be undertaken in chronological order and defines the timeline of tasks within each relevant phase of implementation.

We also recommend setting out a Project Charter which serves as an executive summary of key objectives for implementation. The charter can be shared throughout your organisation to communicate the purpose of the implementation and also helps with onboarding incoming team members during the setup of GA4.
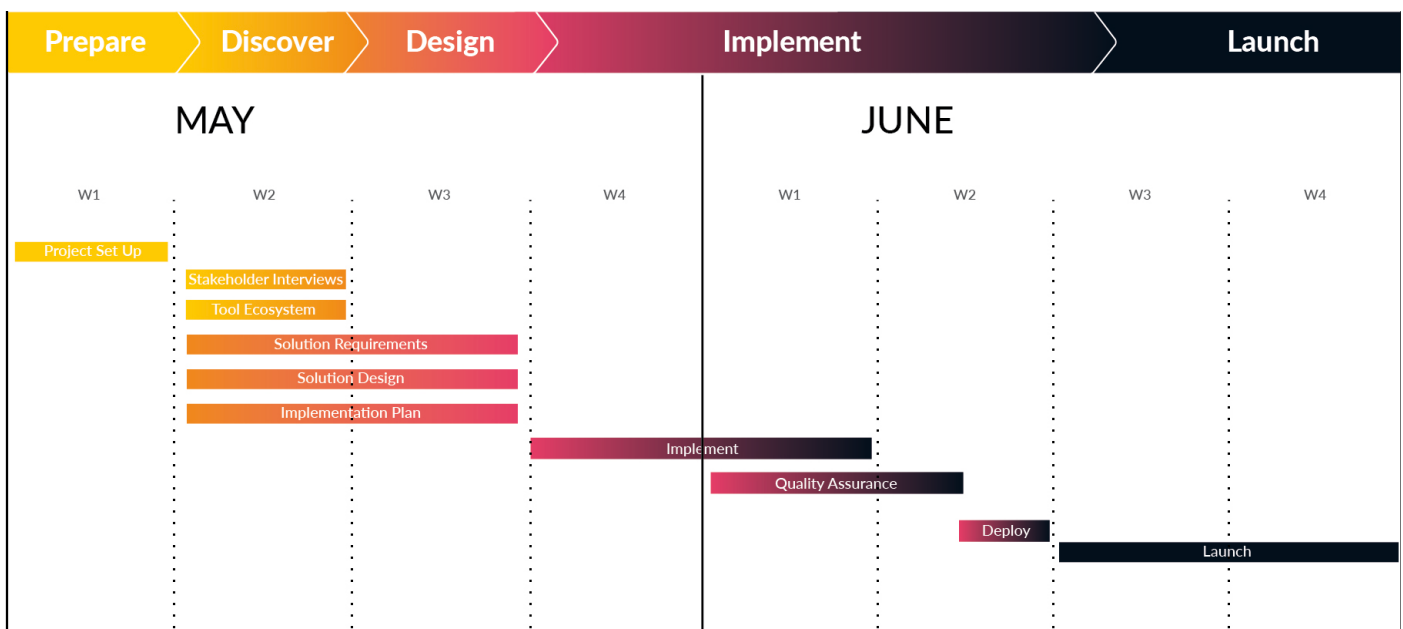
Step 2: Define Project Operations

The Implementation Team Structure defines the typical roles and responsibilities required to carry out implementations proficiently and assigns relevant tasks to team members & contributors.

Step 3: Initial Project Setup & Meetings

Providing access to existing technology platforms and collating existing documentation on the project broadens the implementation team's knowledge of the state of play before things get started.

Team members and key stakeholders from all parties involved in the implementation should convene at kickoff meetings to familiarise themselves with the project vision, structure, timelines and proposed operations.

Step 4: Governance

Governance is a crucial element of all successful GA4 implementation projects and must be a focus right from the start of your project. The logical first step is to define your current operational and sourcing models to inform key stakeholders on options and the ideal setup for optimal performance, taking into account the structure of your business.

Once your Operating and Sourcing models are defined you can make the plan for GA4 training for your team.

As a Certified Google Marketing Platform Partner, In Marketing We Trust are one of just 20 companies in Australia certified by Google to implement GA4. We have therefore been through all the relevant implementation training and process training. A customised GA4 training plan takes into account the structure, resources and business objectives of your company.
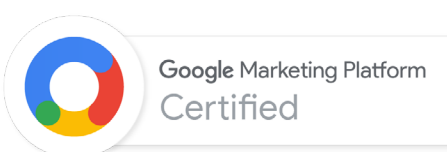
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Prepare checklist

√ Plan - Create Project Roadmap

√ Plan - Create Project Charter

√ Project Operations – Define Team Structure

√ Project Operations – Keep Best Practice in mind

√ Setup - Access Requests & Documentation Review

√ Kickoff Meeting

√ Governance - Define Operating and Sourcing Models

√ Governance – A Customised Training Plan

The big questions

Being able to answer questions such as these will help you define your GA4 business needs and to configure and use the tool to meet your objectives:

- Are we getting good data from Google Analytics already?

- Does my team know how to use Google Analytics well?

- Are our GA reports easy to digest and informative towards decision making?

- Do we know what additional data we could get from GA4 to enhance our marketing performance?

- Do we have the development and marketing resources to implement and optimise our GA4 usage?

- Are we working with agencies and providers that need to be involved in our GA4 implementation?

- What kind of training do we need on implementing and using GA4 in order to hit our business goals?

Discover

After the initial preparations for GA4 implementation we move on to the Discover stage.

This commences with an initial review of the existing tools being used and the current digital operations of your business, in order to analyse digital performance and set out recommendations moving forward. Stakeholder Interviews are undertaken in order to establish the pain points, objectives and goals of the business. Then a list of the relevant digital tools is created, mapping out the existing tools in use and defining the proper architecture for the future.

Step 1: Assessment of current state

A thorough assessment of the current state of digital operations involves a review of all the relevant online properties of your business, including all the features and functionality of your website and apps. This should take into account all current traffic sources, such as search, paid media, social, newsletters, direct traffic and third-party referrals.

This step evaluates the existing technology your business is using and identifies any potential gaps, errors or potential opportunities in setup and configuration, in order to enhance future capabilities.

Step 2: Interviews with stakeholders

This is the most important step in the Discover stage. Stakeholder interviews provide the critical information to envisage the desired solution design and to understand what implementation success will look like for the business.

The interviews should lead to clear definitions of business objectives, whilst also identifying your current pain points and the levels of expertise throughout your organisation, in order to determine training needs and solution requirements.

Collating input from senior and executive level Digital, Marketing and Technology stakeholders creates alignment and fosters support for successful GA4 implementation and usage.

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Typical questions for key stakeholders in these interviews would be:

- What is the single largest objective you are seeking to achieve with the implementation of GA4?

- Will you be implementing GA4 in multiple countries?

- What is your company's breakdown of sales online vs. offline?

- What are the key distribution channels for the business' products today? (eCommerce Direct/Offline Direct/Other Retailer/Online Affiliate)

- How should these channels be impacted by GA4 implementation?

- Can you summarise the levels of investment (cost for implementation services, people available, internal resources) being made available for GA4 implementation?

- How prepared do you believe your organisation is to effectively operate GA4 after implementation?

- What areas of expertise do you believe your organisation is most lacking in order to properly implement and integrate GA4?

Step 3: Make List of Marketing Tools relevant to GA4 implementation

This helps define the digital analytics architecture for successful GA4 implementation.

This is simply a list of the relevant tools in your marketing technology stack, in addition to the data flows and capabilities to be enabled by integrating these tools.

Discover checklist

√ Audit of current state of digital operations

√ Interviews with key stakeholders

√ List relevant Marketing Tools

Design

In the Design stage of a GA4 implementation project you create a Solution requirements document to define the necessary configuration, implementation and development work, before creating Solution Design workbooks of all the relevant elements to be put in place. Then an Implementation Plan is created to guide the execution of development, configuration and QA work.

Step 1: Solution Requirements document

By creating a Solution Requirements document you will define the specific configurations to be put in place to meet your defined GA4 business requirements.

Google provides a set of Solution Requirements questions in their GA4 Implementation Toolkit, which In Marketing We Trust has access to as a Certified Google Marketing Platform Partner.

Step 2: Solution Design Workbooks

At this stage of the project Solution Design Workbooks for media and analytics platforms are created, giving configuration instructions. The workbooks contain templates and best practices to guide configuration and implementation of platforms.

As the project proceeds, the workbooks will be filled in by the different teams. At the end of the project, the completed Solution Design Workbooks will serve as official documentation for the entire GA4 setup.

The Media Solution Design Workbook will contain all the relevant information on the following platforms:

- Campaign Manager
- Display & Video 360
- Search Ads 360
- Google Data Studio

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The Analytics Solution Design Workbook will contain all the relevant information on the following platforms:

- Google Analytics

- Google Tag Manager

- Optimize

- BigQuery

- Ads Data Hub

Step 3: Implementation Plan

This is the ultimate reference document to be used in executing the design, configuration, development and QA tasks. The implementation plan helps you to communicate and synchronise with your internal or third-party team members, including marketers, developers and analysts.

You should undertake a comprehensive final review of these documents at the end of the Design stage to ensure everything has been completed correctly before moving on to the Implementation stage.

Design checklist

√ Solution Requirements document

√ Solution Design Workbooks for media and analytics platforms

√ Implementation Plan

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Implement

With the Prepare, Discover and Design stages completed you move on to the Implement stage. At the beginning of this phase of the project a meeting should be scheduled with your developers to review the technical specifications, answer any outstanding questions and ensure that the datalayer will be available on time to validate and test the GA4 setup.

Then the key steps in the Implement stage are:

Step 1: Create A New Google Analytics 4 Property

You can create a new Google Analytics 4 property from scratch with the GA4 setup assistant.

You should enable data collection by setting up a web stream in the new GA4 property. This measurement ID will be used in Google Tag Manager (GTM) to send data to the property.

You can also activate enhanced measurement to automatically collect event interactions such as page views, scrolls, outbound links, site search, video engagement or file downloads.

Step 2: Create Event Tags For Google Analytics 4

Before you add new tags for GA4 cleansing your current GTM set up will be necessary if you have old tags in place there. So at this point you should delete all obsolete or non used tags and update active tags.

Based in the Implementation Plan you will need to implement the tags, triggers and variables to collect the required data. This includes page view and event tags. Alongside this, the development team will need to implement the datalayers. When working with In Marketing We Trust, we will provide support to your Development team during the implementation.

The synchronisation between your Analytics team and Development teams are of the utmost importance.

Once the implementation is complete on both ends (GTM and datalayers), you will need to test and validate the components using the preview mode in Google Tag Manager and the DebugView features of GA4 in a testing environment.

Step 3: Configure Conversions

Once the GTM implementation is in place and events are being collected in Google Analytics 4 it's time to configure conversions within the tool.

This means simply enabling conversions in Google Analytics 4 based on data for the relevant events as seen here:

Existing events

Event name ↑	Count		% change	Users		% change	Mark as conversion ?
add_payment_info	5,445	↑	3.7%	2,537	↑	0.3%	
add_shipping_info	7,152	↓	1.2%	3,292	↓	3.1%	
add_to_cart	23,569	↓	5.3%	7,162	↓	13.5%	
android_lovers	1,474	↓	7.4%	1,352	↓	14.6%	
begin_checkout	6,112	↓	6.1%	2,946	↓	6.7%	
campus_collection_user	1,254	↑	3.6%	1,112	↑	7.7%	
click	3,624	↑	529.2%	1,920	↑	377.6%	
data_import_success	54		-	51		-	
discount_value	1,933	↑	81.8%	1,655	↑	71.9%	
errors	4,811	↓	26.7%	1,754	↓	4.6%	
experiment_impression	152,919	↑	47.2%	30,578	↑	0.1%	
first_visit	84,736	↑	3.2%	84,987	↑	3.5%	

Step 4: Customise GA4 Interface for reporting

A key benefit of Google Analytics 4 is the customisation of the reports shown on the interface.

Standard reports include:

- Acquisition
- Engagement
- Monetization
- Retention
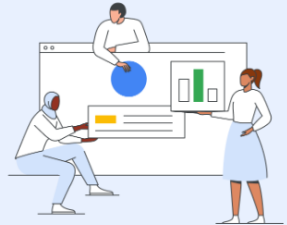- Demographics
- Technology

Ad-hoc reports include:

- Free form
- Cohort exploration
- Funnel exploration
- Segment overlap
- Path exploration
- User explorer
- User lifetime

You can create and apply a custom collections in the GA4 Library, in order to organise your standard reports and to create ad-hoc reports to suit your requirements.

Library

All of your collections and reports organised in one place where you can customise them and create more. Collections allow administrators to customise the presentation of reports in the left navigation.

Learn more

Collections ⑦

Create new collection

Life cycle ⓘ ⋮
✓ Published · ⌗ Life cycle
📁 Acquisition
📁 Engagement
📁 Retention
Edit collection

Life cycle ⓘ ⋮
Unpublished · ⌗ Life cycle
📁 Acquisition
📁 Engagement
📁 Retention
Edit collection

Search Console
Unpublished · ⌗ Search
📁 Search Console
Edit collection

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Step 5: Create Custom Audiences

You can use GA4 to build custom and predictive audience segments, in order to get deeper insights on users.

Audiences could include converted users, users who abandoned conversions, users who completed multiple conversions, users who viewed important pages and those who completed important actions.

If you need input on how to set up custom audiences feel free to ask for advice from the GA4 experts at In Marketing We Trust.

Step 6: Link Google Ads & Search Console

To enable an overview of your Google Ads campaigns and organic search performance within GA4 link your Google Ads account and Google Search Console to your new GA4 account.

Step 7: Validate Data Being Collected

Once your new GTM configuration is published and the essential GA set-up is done you should check the quality of the data being collected in your new GA4 property. To validate this use GTM preview mode and the DebugView mode of GA4 to review the data being collected in the reports.

Implement checklist

√ Create A New GA4 Property

√ Create Event Tags For GA4

√ Configure Conversions

√ Create Custom Audiences

√ Link Google Ads And Search Console

√ Validate Data Being Collected

Launch

Now you are almost ready to launch your new GA4 solution. The final phase involves carrying out a final run through of the initial plan and updated timelines, the deliverables, the documentation, the tags and the new configuration of GA4.

A launch readiness assessment will ensure that all tasks have been completed and that any remaining issues are documented, with a plan to quickly fix anything outstanding. Then an organisational readiness assessment can take place to ensure successful adoption and effective management of the new analytics technology.

Next, a solid operational readiness assessment will enable proper utilisation of the new technologies within your business. Certain key operational readiness activities take place in parallel to implementation of the technical solution design, to efficiently wrap up all the required training and onboarding of relevant resources.

Finally, you can run a thorough check over of the new analytics dashboard to:

- Ensure that all relevant data is adequately captured
- Identify outstanding reporting requirements
- Monitor initial audience behaviour
- Share dashboards and gather feedback from stakeholders
- Finalise and deliver all necessary reports to key stakeholders

Your new GA4 solution is now successfully up and running!

Launch checklist

√ **Launch Readiness Assessment**

√ **Organisational Readiness**

√ **Operational Readiness**

√ **Reporting review**

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Full GA4 implementation checklist

Prepare checklist

√ Plan - Create Project Roadmap

√ Plan - Create Project Charter

√ Project Operations – Define Team Structure

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√ Setup - Access Requests & Documentation Review

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Design checklist

√ Solution Requirements document

√ Solution Design Workbooks for media and analytics platforms

√ Implementation Plan

Implement checklist

√ Create A New GA4 Property

√ Create Event Tags For GA4

√ Configure Conversions

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√ Link Google Ads And Search Console

√ Validate Data Being Collected

Launch checklist

√ Launch Readiness Assessment

√ Organisational Readiness

√ Operational Readiness

√ Reporting review
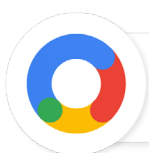
"The team are super responsive and easy to work with. They're professional and thorough, and you always know where you stand – they're clear about timeframes, costs, and the process – and they stick to it! It's easy to see that each team member is an expert in their field, and they empower you to take back control of your own data, so that you can grow your expertise in-house. This is unlike many other agencies, who often do this kind of work in a way that ties you to them unnecessarily."

Taryn Williams / Founder and CEO / THERIGHT.FIT

Ready to upgrade to GA4?

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How In Marketing We Trust can help you with GA4

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If your company is still using Universal Analytics, you are required to take immediate action to ensure you have at least 12 months of data for analysis within your new GA4 account (this is best practice). You should migrate your account to GA4 as soon as possible.

Book a meeting with us to discuss GA4 implementation for your business.

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