KOOKIES

GUIDE

The Marketing Site Tracking Playbook

6 CHAPTERS

01 What to track and why

02 Google Tag Manager and GA4 setup

03 Consent done right

04 Events that matter

05 Clarity, Search Console and Bing

06 Checking it works and a monthly report

SEO AND AEO

The Marketing Site Tracking Playbook

Good tracking on a marketing site starts with a one-sheet plan of the few events that matter, mainly leads sent and calls booked. Run GA4 through one Tag Manager container, set consent defaults before any tag runs, and fire each event from the most reliable signal. Then test with real leads and compare GA4 with your inbox every month.

Who it is for. Marketing leads, founders and developers who want tracking on a Webflow or Astro marketing site set up properly and kept correct.

01 What to track and why

02 Google Tag Manager and GA4 setup

03 Consent done right

04 Events that matter

05 Clarity, Search Console and Bing

06 Checking it works and a monthly report

Read online at www.kookies.io/guides/tracking-playbook. Updated 2026-11-16.

CHAPTER 1 OF 6

What to track and why

01

The three questions, the one-sheet plan, key events and naming rules.

The short answer

Before you add a single tag, write a measurement plan: the few questions your team needs answered, the event that answers each one, what fires it, and whether it counts as a key event. Keep it on one sheet. For most marketing sites, that is five to eight events, and only two of them are real outcomes: a lead sent and a call booked.

Everything in the rest of this guide hangs off that sheet. Tag Manager, consent, Clarity and the monthly report all get easier when you know exactly what you are trying to count. If you want the shorter version of the whole setup first, read Marketing site tracking: a setup you can trust. This guide is the longer, working version.

Start with three questions

Most marketing teams need the same three answers each month:

1. **How many leads did we get?** Forms sent and calls booked.
2. **Where did they come from?** Channel, campaign and, where you can see it, the search query.
3. **What did they read first?** The pages people visit before they get in touch.

Write your own version down and share it with whoever reads the reports. Then test every event idea against it. If an event does not help answer one of these questions, and nobody will change a decision because of it, leave it out. Every extra event is one more thing to test after each site change, and one more number that can drift without anyone noticing.

> DECISION RULE
>
> If you cannot name the person who will look at a number and the decision it feeds, do not track it yet. You can add an event later in ten minutes. Cleaning a year of confusing data takes much longer.

The one-sheet measurement plan

Here is the sheet we start from on a typical Webflow or Astro marketing site. Copy it into a spreadsheet and change it to fit. The example uses Kookies as the site.

QUESTION IT ANSWERS	EVENT NAME	FIRES WHEN	KEY EVENT?	TRUE COUNT LIVES IN
How many leads?	`generate_lead`	The form has been accepted by the server	Yes	Inbox or CRM
How many calls?	`call_booked`	The booking tool confirms a booking	Yes	Calendar

QUESTION IT ANSWERS	EVENT NAME	FIRES WHEN	KEY EVENT?	TRUE COUNT LIVES IN
Who wanted a call?	`book_call_click`	Someone clicks a booking link	No	GA4 only
Who wrote to us?	`email_click`	Someone clicks a mailto link	No	GA4 only
Who called us?	`phone_click`	Someone clicks a tel link	No	GA4 only
Which buttons work?	`cta_click`	A main call to action is clicked	No	GA4 only
What did they read?	`page_view`	Built in, no setup	No	GA4 only

Add two columns when you build it for real: **parameters** (for example `form_name` or `button_text`) and **owner**, the person who fixes it when it breaks. The owner column matters more than it looks. Tracking usually breaks quietly, when someone redesigns a form or swaps a booking tool, and an owner is the only thing that makes anyone notice.

Key events versus everything else

In GA4, a key event is an event you mark as important to your business. You mark it in Admin, under Data display, Events, by clicking the star next to it. You can also create one ahead of time, before the event has any data, and GA4 will treat it as a key event once it arrives. A standard property can have up to 30 key events, but you should need two or three.

The reason to keep the list short is honesty. If button clicks and email clicks are key events, your key event count looks three times bigger than your real lead count, and someone will put that number in a board slide. Clicks are useful steps. They are not outcomes.

- ✓ Mark `generate_lead` and `call_booked` as key events.
- ✓ Leave clicks, scrolls and page views as normal events.
- ✓ If a newsletter signup matters to you, give it its own event and decide on purpose whether it is a key event.
- ✓ Write the list in the plan, so nobody adds a key event without telling the people who read the reports.

Names that stay readable

Event names are hard to change later, because old data keeps the old name. Pick a style once and stick to it.

- **Use Google's names where they exist.** GA4's recommended events reference lists `generate_lead` for a lead, such as a form. It also lists `qualify_lead` and `close_convert_lead` for later stages, but those usually belong in your CRM, not on the website.
- **Lowercase with underscores.** `call_booked`, not `CallBooked` or `call-booked`.
- **One event, many forms.** Send `generate_lead` with a `form_name` of `contact`, `quote` or `guide`. One event with a parameter is far easier to report on than ten events.
- **Say what happened, not where.** `email_click` with a page parameter beats `footer_email_click` and `contact_page_email_click`.

- **No personal data.** Google's policy does not allow names, emails or phone numbers in Analytics. Keep them out of event values and out of URLs.

The same reference lists `value` and `currency` for `generate_lead`, and says each is needed if you set the other. Leave them out unless you have a lead value your finance team would sign off. A made-up value makes the report look precise when it is not.

What GA4 already counts

GA4's enhanced measurement collects a set of events with no code, once it is switched on for your web stream:

EVENT	WHAT IT MEANS
`page_view`	Each page load or history change. Always on.
`scroll`	The first time a visitor sees 90% of the page height.
`click` (outbound)	A click on a link to another domain.
`view_search_results`	A site search results page, read from URL parameters such as `q` or `s`.
`video_start`, `video_progress`, `video_complete`	Embedded YouTube videos that support the JS API.
`file_download`	A click on a link to a common file type, such as a PDF.
`form_start`, `form_submit`	Form interaction and submission.

Do not rebuild these by hand. The one to think about is `form_submit`. A submit is not the same as a lead that arrived: it can fire on a newsletter box, a search field or a form that failed. We report leads from `generate_lead` only, and chapter 4 explains how to decide whether to keep `form_submit` switched on.

Where the true count lives

GA4 will almost always show fewer leads than your inbox. Some visitors reject cookies, some block scripts, and some events get lost when a page closes. That is normal, and it is not a bug to chase forever.

So set the rule up front: your inbox or CRM is the true count of leads, your calendar is the true count of calls, and GA4 is the tool for comparing channels, pages and trends. If GA4 shows 70% of your real leads every month, you can still trust it to tell you which channel grew. If the gap jumps from one month to the next, something broke, and chapter 6 shows how to find it.

> DECISION RULE
>
> Never report a lead number from GA4 alone. Report the real number from the inbox or CRM, and use GA4 to explain where those leads came from.

TAKEAWAYS

- Write the questions first, then pick events that answer them.
- Mark only real outcomes, a lead sent and a call booked, as key events.
- Use Google's names where they exist, such as generate_lead, with a form_name parameter.
- Your inbox, CRM and calendar are the true counts. GA4 is for comparing channels and pages.

CHAPTER 2 OF 6

Google Tag Manager and GA4 setup

02

Accounts, GA4 settings, the container on Webflow and Astro, and one copy of GA4.

The short answer

Put one Google Tag Manager container on every page, as high in the head as you can. Inside it, add one Google tag with your GA4 measurement ID, and remove every other copy of GA4 from the site. Before you collect real data, set data retention, define your own office traffic as internal, and review enhanced measurement. Then test in preview mode before you publish anything.

Tag Manager is worth it even on a small site. It lets you add, change and test tags without touching the site code each time, and it is where the consent rules in chapter 3 live.

Own the accounts first

This step has nothing to do with code, and it causes more trouble than any tag. The GA4 property, the Tag Manager account and the Search Console property should belong to your company, under a company Google account, not to a freelancer or an agency.

- ✓ Create the accounts under a shared company login, or make sure at least two people inside the company are admins.
- ✓ Give your agency or developer their own access, at the level they need, so you can remove it later.
- ✓ Write down who has access to what, in the same sheet as your measurement plan.
- ✓ Do it before launch. Moving a property's history to a new owner later is much harder than adding a user now.

When we set up tracking for a client, we work inside their accounts with our own logins. When the work ends, they remove us, and nothing breaks.

Set up GA4 before data arrives

Create a GA4 property and a web data stream for your domain. Then change these settings on day one, because several of them only apply to data collected after the change.

SETTING	WHERE	WHAT TO DO
Data retention	Admin, data retention settings	Standard properties can keep event data for 2 or 14 months. Pick 14. Google says this only affects explorations and funnel reports, not standard reports, but you will want explorations later.

SETTING	WHERE	WHAT TO DO
Internal traffic	Data streams, your web stream, Configure tag settings, Define internal traffic	Add your office IP addresses. GA4 labels matching traffic with a `traffic_type` value.
Data filter	Admin, Data collection and modification, Data filters	Create an Internal Traffic filter set to Exclude. Leave it in Testing first.
Enhanced measurement	Data streams, your web stream	Review each event in the list. Leave form interactions on until you decide, in chapter 4.

Be careful with the filter. Google's internal traffic help explains three states. Testing labels matching data so you can check it. Active applies the filter to incoming data, and the change is permanent: excluded data is never processed. Inactive turns it off. It can also take 24 to 36 hours to take effect. Leave it in Testing for a few days, check that only your own visits are caught, then switch it to Active.

The data retention details are on Google's data retention page. Longer periods are only for Analytics 360.

Install the container

Google's install guide says to paste the first code block as high in the `<head>` as possible. Where you do that depends on the platform.

Webflow. Go to Site settings, then the Custom code tab, and paste it into Head code. That code appears before the closing head tag on every page. Webflow's custom code help says custom code needs a paid Workspace or an active site plan, and that the Head code box takes up to 50,000 characters. Webflow support does not help with custom code, so keep the snippet exactly as Google gives it.

Astro. Put the snippet in the shared layout that renders the head for every page, so no page can miss it. If your site sends a Content Security Policy, the policy must allow the Tag Manager script and the hosts your tags call. On our own Astro site, a build step adds the hash of each inline script to the policy, and Google hosts are only allowed when an analytics ID is set.

Both. Most consent setups need the container to load in a controlled way. If you use a consent tool, read chapter 3 before you paste anything, because the order of scripts is the part that most often goes wrong.

> DECISION RULE
>
> One container per site. If a second container or a second GA4 snippet turns up, remove it rather than working around it.

Add GA4 inside Tag Manager

In your container, add a Google tag with your GA4 measurement ID (the one that starts with G), and fire it on all pages. That gives you page views and enhanced measurement. Your own events, from chapter 4, are GA4 Event tags that use the same measurement ID.

Then go looking for other copies of GA4, because a second copy counts every visit twice. These are the places we find them most often:

WHERE GA4 HIDES	HOW TO CHECK
An old `gtag.js` snippet in head or footer code	Search the site code and the page settings for `G-`
A platform setting or app that adds Google Analytics for you	Check site settings, installed apps and integrations
An embed element on one page	Search embeds for `googletagmanager`
A second Tag Manager container	Search the page source for `GTM-`
A booking or chat tool that sends its own GA events	Read that tool's analytics settings

The quickest check: open the live site, open your browser's Network tab, filter for `collect`, and load one page. You should see one page view request to GA4, not two.

Workspaces, versions and notes

Tag Manager keeps every published version of the container. Use that.

- **Name every version.** When you publish, write what changed and why, for example "Add call_booked from Cal.com embed". Six months later, this is the only record of when a number started or stopped.
- **Test before you publish.** Preview mode, covered in chapter 6, runs your draft in your own browser only.
- **Keep it tidy.** Name tags, triggers and variables the same way: `GA4 event, generate_lead`, `CE, lead_sent`, `DLV, form_name`. A container nobody can read is a container nobody fixes.
- **Delete what you do not use.** Paused tags and old triggers are where mistakes come from.

Setup checklist

- ✓ GA4 property and web stream created under a company account.
- ✓ Data retention set to 14 months.
- ✓ Internal traffic defined, filter in Testing, then Active once checked.
- ✓ One Tag Manager container, high in the head of every page.
- ✓ One Google tag with your measurement ID, firing on all pages.
- ✓ No other GA4 snippet, app or container anywhere on the site.
- ✓ Enhanced measurement reviewed.
- ✓ Access list written down, with at least two company admins.
- ✓ First version published with a clear note.

Once this is done, the site is counting page views and the basic events. Nothing marks a lead yet. That comes after consent, because the order matters.

TAKEAWAYS

- The accounts belong to your company, with at least two company admins.
- Set data retention and internal traffic before real data arrives, and test filters first.
- One container, high in the head, with one Google tag inside it.
- Remove every other copy of GA4, then check the Network tab for a single page view.

CHAPTER 3 OF 6

Consent done right

03

Basic or advanced, the four types, the order of scripts and how to test it.

The short answer

A cookie banner only matters if your tags actually follow it. The working setup is: set consent defaults before any tag runs, usually denied where consent is needed, then send an update the moment a visitor accepts, and save that choice so it carries to the next page. With Google tags, this is Google consent mode. Other tools, such as Clarity or ad pixels, need their own consent handling.

This chapter is general, technical information, not legal advice. What you need depends on where your business and your visitors are, and what your tags do. Ask a qualified adviser what applies to your site. For the Webflow side of banners and apps, read Cookie consent on Webflow.

Basic or advanced consent mode

Google's consent mode overview describes two ways to run it:

	BASIC	ADVANCED
When Google tags load	Only after the visitor responds to the banner	As soon as the page opens
Before a choice	Nothing is sent to Google	Tags send measurements without cookies, with consent denied by default
After consent is denied	No data is sent	Cookieless measurements continue
After consent is granted	Full measurement	Full measurement, with cookies
Modeling	A general model	A more detailed, advertiser-specific model

Google's own guide says to choose based on your company's guidelines. Basic is simpler to explain, because nothing reaches Google until a visitor says yes. Advanced gives Google more to model from. Which one is right for you is a question for your adviser, not your developer.

On our own site, Tag Manager loads only after a visitor clicks Accept, and the banner shows only on our live domains. That is a basic-style setup, chosen on purpose.

The four consent types

Google's consent mode guide uses these types for Google tags. Consent mode v2 is the version that added the last two.

TYPE	WHAT IT CONTROLS
`analytics_storage`	Cookies and storage for analytics, such as GA4
`ad_storage`	Cookies and storage for advertising
`ad_user_data`	Sending user data related to advertising to Google
`ad_personalization`	Personalised advertising

If you do not run Google ads, you still set all four. Denied ad types simply keep ad features off. If you add ads later, the defaults are already in place.

Get the order right

Google's guide is blunt about order: set the default before any command that sends measurement data, and if your consent code runs out of order, the defaults do not work. In practice, the sequence on every page load looks like this:

1. **Default.** Set the default state, for example all four types denied. You can add a `wait_for_update` value in milliseconds, which gives your consent tool time to send an update before tags fire. Google's example uses 500.
2. **Restore.** If the visitor already chose on an earlier page, send that choice straight away. Google notes that consent mode does not save choices, so your banner has to store it, for example in a first-party cookie or local storage.
3. **Update.** When the visitor clicks Accept, Reject or saves settings, send an update for the types they chose. Send one again if they change their mind later.

Defaults can also be set per region with a `region` list of country or state codes. A default without a region applies to everyone else, and the more specific region wins. This is how some sites show a strict default to visitors in one region and a different one elsewhere. Your adviser decides the regions. Your developer only sets them.

Consent inside Tag Manager

If you run tags through Tag Manager, use its own consent tools rather than pasting gtag code.

- **Consent Initialization trigger.** Google's Tag Manager consent help says every web container has a *Consent Initialization - All Pages* trigger that fires before all other triggers. Put your consent tool's tag, or the tag that sets defaults, on it.
- **Use a template.** Most consent tools have a template in the Community Template Gallery that sets defaults and sends updates for you. Google's guide says not to call `gtag('consent','update', ...)` inside Tag Manager. A custom template uses `setDefaultConsentState` and `updateConsentState` instead.
- **Consent overview.** Turn it on under Admin, Container settings, Enable consent overview. It splits tags into Consent Configured and Consent Not Configured, so you can see what you missed.

- **Additional consent checks.** Google tags have built-in consent checks. For any other tag, such as an ad pixel or a heatmap tool, set "Require additional consent for tag to fire" and pick the types it needs. That tag then fires only when all of them are granted.

> DECISION RULE
>
> Every tag in the container should show as Consent Configured. If one shows as Not Configured, it is either a Google tag you have not reviewed, or a third-party tag that runs whatever the visitor chose.

The banner itself

The banner is the part people see, so it is where most opinions land. Keep it plain and fair.

- ✓ Say in one or two sentences what you use cookies for.
- ✓ Offer Accept and Reject as clear choices. We give them equal weight.
- ✓ Add a settings option if you use more than one category, such as analytics and ads.
- ✓ Link to your privacy or cookie policy.
- ✓ Add a Cookie settings link in the footer, so people can change their mind.
- ✓ Keep the choice for a set period and say what it is. Ours is kept for 12 months.
- ✓ Make it work with a keyboard and on a phone, and do not let it push the page around.

Your privacy policy should match the setup: which tools you use, what they do, how long the choice lasts and how to change it. When you add a tool, update the policy in the same change.

Test what really happens

Do not judge consent by how the banner looks. Open a private window, open your browser's developer tools, and watch the Network tab and the cookies list.

STEP	WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE
Load a page, choose nothing	No analytics or ad cookies. In basic mode, no requests to Google at all.
Reject, then browse three pages	Still no analytics cookies. Requests follow the mode you chose.
Accept	GA4 loads or switches to full measurement. A page view appears in Realtime.
Reload and browse	The choice is remembered, and the banner does not come back.
Open Cookie settings and withdraw	Tags stop, and new requests follow the denied state.

Tag Assistant, which opens with Tag Manager preview, shows the consent state for Google tags at each step, which makes the default and the update easy to see. Repeat this test whenever someone adds a tag. Most consent problems arrive months after launch, when a new script goes in without anyone checking.

Expect your GA4 numbers to drop once consent is enforced. Traffic did not fall. You are now seeing the part of it that agreed to be measured. Note the date in your reports.

TAKEAWAYS

- Set defaults before any tag runs, then update on the visitor's choice.
- Consent mode does not save the choice. Your banner has to.
- In Tag Manager, use the Consent Initialization trigger and a template, and check the consent overview.
- Non-Google tags need their own consent checks. This is not legal advice: ask an adviser.

CHAPTER 4 OF 6

Events that matter

04

Forms, booked calls, clicks, UTMs and an AI assistants channel group.

The short answer

Track the moments that show intent, and fire each one from the most reliable signal you have. A lead fires `generate_lead` once, after the form is accepted. A booked call fires from the booking tool's own success signal, not from the click. Email, phone and button clicks are clicks, and you report them as clicks. Save UTM values with every lead. And give AI assistants their own channel in GA4, so that traffic stops hiding inside Referral.

The two detailed posts behind this chapter are tracking forms in GA4 with Tag Manager and tracking booked calls in GA4.

Form submits

Send the form once, with Tag Manager preview open, and watch what happens. That tells you which signal to use.

WHAT YOU SEE	BEST SIGNAL
You can edit the form code	A data layer push after the server says yes, picked up by a Custom Event trigger
A success message appears, no code access	An Element Visibility trigger on the success message
Preview shows a Form Submit event	The Form Submission trigger, with Check Validation on
A thank-you page loads	A Page View trigger on that URL, tested against reloads
The form sits in another service's iframe	That service's own callback or redirect

On Webflow, native forms show a success message on the same page, so the Element Visibility trigger is the usual route when you cannot add code. Point it at the success block with a narrow selector, fire once per page, and turn on Observe DOM changes. Test it at phone width, because a message below the fold may never enter the viewport.

On Astro, you write the submit code, so push the event in the success branch of your `fetch` call: `dataLayer.push({event: 'lead_sent', form_name: 'contact'})`. Then a GA4 Event tag named `generate_lead` fires on that custom event.

Then decide about GA4's own `form_submit`. If it confuses people or counts newsletter boxes as leads, switch off Form interactions in your stream's enhanced measurement settings. Report leads from `generate_lead` only.

Booked calls

A click on Book a call shows intent. Only the booking tool knows a call was booked. Use its signal.

- **Cal.com.** Its embed events include `bookingSuccessfulV2` for a new booking, `rescheduleBookingSuccessfulV2` for a reschedule and `bookingCancelled`. Listen with `Cal("on", {action: "bookingSuccessfulV2", callback: ...})` and push `call_booked` to the data layer. The docs say the booking "might not be confirmed", so decide whether a booking that needs approval counts.
- **Calendly.** Its Google Analytics guide lists four events, and only `calendly.event_scheduled` is a booking. It says real-time data shows at once but full results can take 24 to 48 hours, and that visitors in some regions see a cookie banner inside the embed, so some activity may not be tracked if they reject it.

> DECISION RULE
>
> One route per calendar. If the built-in connection and your own listener are both on, one booking shows as two.

Our own site's `book_call` event fires on a click on a booking link, so we read it as clicks, not calls. That is fine as long as nobody reports it as bookings.

Email and phone clicks

Email and phone links are easy to track and easy to overread. A click on an email address does not mean anyone wrote to you.

Use Tag Manager's Click trigger set to Just Links, which listens only to link elements. Under Some Link Clicks, add a condition on Click URL:

EVENT	TRIGGER CONDITION
`email_click`	Click URL starts with `mailto:`
`phone_click`	Click URL starts with `tel:`

You need the built-in Click variables switched on (Variables, Configure) before Click URL shows up. Send the page path as a parameter, so you can see which page the click came from. Never send the address or number that was clicked if it could belong to a person rather than your business.

Main button clicks

Track the handful of buttons that lead to a lead: Get a quote, Book a call, Start a project. One event, `cta_click`, with two parameters, the button text and the link, tells you which button did the work without a separate event per button.

Keep it to buttons that matter. If every link on the site fires `cta_click`, the report turns into noise. On a Webflow build, a shared class or a data attribute on the main buttons gives Tag Manager something stable to listen to. On Astro, the button component can carry the attribute, so every new page gets it for free.

UTM parameters on every campaign link

UTM parameters tell GA4 where a visit came from when the referrer cannot. Google's UTM guide says to always use `utm_source`, `utm_medium` and `utm_campaign`, and that values are case sensitive, so lowercase is the safe standard: `linkedin` and `LinkedIn` count as two sources.

- ✓ Tag every link you control outside the site: emails, social posts, ads, partner links.
- ✓ Never tag links between your own pages. Our advice: it starts a new source mid-visit and muddles the report.
- ✓ Agree on a short list of mediums, such as `email`, `social`, `cpc` and `partner`, and keep it in the measurement plan.
- ✓ Read the UTM values when a visitor lands, keep them for the session, and send them with the form, so each lead in your CRM shows its source.
- ✓ If your form saves this data, say so in your privacy policy.

Build links with the free UTM builder so the format stays the same every time.

AI assistants as their own channel

Visits from AI assistants usually land in Referral, mixed in with every other site that links to you. GA4's custom channel groups help has an example for exactly this: create a channel called something like "AI assistants", with a *matches regex* condition on the source, and place it above Referral.

1. Go to Admin, Data display, Channel groups, and create a new group. It starts as a copy of the default group.
2. Add a channel named `AI assistants`. Set the condition to Source matches regex, with a pattern such as `chatgpt|openai|perplexity|gemini|copilot|claude`. That pattern is our starting point. Check your own source report and adjust it.
3. Move the channel above Referral. GA4 assigns traffic to the first channel that matches, so order decides the result.
4. Save, and use the new group in your acquisition reports.

Google's page says custom channel groups can be applied to reports retroactively, and that standard properties get two custom groups besides the default. It also says to update the pattern when the list of assistants changes.

Read the number as a floor. Some AI tools and apps do not pass a referrer, so some of that traffic will show as direct. For what makes pages worth citing in the first place, see the AEO Readiness Guide.

TAKEAWAYS

- Fire generate_lead once, after the form is accepted.
- Track calls from the booking tool's success signal, one route per calendar.
- Email, phone and button clicks are clicks. Report them that way.
- Lowercase UTMs on every outside link, saved with each lead.
- Put an AI assistants channel above Referral in a custom channel group.

CHAPTER 5 OF 6

Clarity, Search Console and Bing 05

Recordings and heatmaps with consent, search data from Google and Bing.

The short answer

GA4 tells you what visitors did. Three free tools fill the gaps. Microsoft Clarity shows how they did it, with session recordings and heatmaps. Google Search Console shows what people searched for before they arrived. Bing Webmaster Tools does the same for Bing. Set up all three, and treat Clarity like any other analytics tool when it comes to consent.

What each tool answers

TOOL	ANSWERS	DOES NOT ANSWER
GA4	Which channels, pages and events led to leads	Why people stopped, or what they searched
Clarity	Where people click, scroll and get stuck on a page	How many leads a channel sent
Search Console	Which Google queries showed and clicked your pages, and indexing problems	What visitors did after they arrived
Bing Webmaster Tools	The same view for Bing search	Google search

Use them together. A typical month: Search Console shows a page getting more clicks, GA4 shows those visitors rarely send the form, and Clarity recordings show the form is below a long block of text on phones. No single tool would have told you that.

Install Clarity

Clarity's setup guide gives three ways to install it: a third-party platform integration, the tracking code pasted into the head, or an npm package. It also has a Google Tag Manager integration that it detects automatically and can publish into your container.

On a Webflow or Astro site that already runs Tag Manager, adding Clarity through the container keeps every tag in one place and under the same consent rules. On Astro, the npm package is an option if you prefer code.

A few points from Microsoft's own docs worth knowing before you switch it on:

- Clarity should not be used on sites or apps aimed at people under 18.
- It cannot capture what is inside a canvas or a third-party iframe. A Cal.com or Calendly embed will show as a box, not as the booking flow.

- It detects bot traffic by default and leaves it out of session counts.
- To check the install, look for POST requests to `clarity.ms/collect` in the Network tab, or open the project and watch live sessions.

Clarity also has a Google Analytics integration, set up from its own settings, that links session recordings to your GA4 data.

Clarity and consent

Microsoft's Clarity consent mode page says that from 31 October 2025, Clarity enforces consent signals for visits from the European Economic Area, the UK and Switzerland, and that a valid signal is needed for full functionality there. Consent mode is on by default for visitors from those regions. You can also turn cookies off for everyone, under Settings, Setup, so Clarity waits for consent everywhere.

You pass the choice with the ConsentV2 API:

```
window.clarity('consentv2', {ad_Storage: "granted", analytics_Storage: "granted"})
```

Without consent, Microsoft says Clarity runs in a no-consent mode: it sets no cookies and gives each page view its own ID, so recordings are not joined into multi-page sessions. If a visitor rejects after accepting, Clarity deletes its cookies and restarts in no-consent mode. You are responsible for telling Clarity when consent changes.

The practical setup: if you use a consent tool, check whether it passes the signal to Clarity. If you built your own banner, call `consentv2` in the same place you send Google's consent update. To check it, Microsoft gives a console snippet that prints the current `consentStatus`, which should read denied before a choice and granted after Accept.

> **DECISION RULE**
>
> If Clarity runs outside Tag Manager's consent checks, it needs its own consent call. A heatmap tool that ignores the banner is the most common gap we find in audits.

Keep recordings private

Recordings show real people using your site, so set masking before you watch any. Clarity's masking docs describe three modes, set under Settings, Masking:

MODE	WHAT IS MASKED
Strict	All text content
Balanced (default)	Content Clarity treats as sensitive, such as numbers and email addresses
Relaxed	No content, except input boxes and dropdowns

Input boxes and dropdowns are masked in every mode. To mask one part of a page, add `data-clarity-mask="True"` to the element, and it and its children are masked whatever the site setting says. Masking changes apply to new recordings only, so set it before launch, not after someone notices a problem.

Search Console

Add a **domain property**. Google's property help says it covers both protocols and every subdomain, including www and non-www, and that it verifies by DNS record only. A URL-prefix property covers only the exact prefix you type, so it misses data from other versions of your address.

- Verify the domain with the DNS record Google gives you.
- Submit your sitemap in the Sitemaps report. Google says this does not guarantee every URL is crawled, but it helps it find them.
- Link Search Console to GA4 in GA4 Admin, under Product links. You need the Editor role in GA4 and verified owner status in Search Console.
- Publish the Search Console report collection in GA4's Library. Google says it is unpublished by default.
- Expect Search Console data in GA4 about 48 hours after Search Console collects it.

For what to do with the data once it is there, see Search Console quick wins.

Bing Webmaster Tools

Bing is smaller than Google, but it costs ten minutes to set up. When Bing announced its import option, it said you can import your verified sites from Search Console, including their sitemaps, and that imported sites are verified automatically. Check the current sign-up screen, as the steps may have changed since.

Once the site is in, check that your sitemap shows as processed, and look at the search performance report once a month alongside Search Console. If the two disagree on which pages matter, that is worth a look.

TAKEAWAYS

- Clarity shows how people use a page. GA4 shows what they did. Search Console shows what they searched.
- Clarity needs its own consent signal, through ConsentV2 or your consent tool.
- Set masking before you watch recordings.
- Use a Search Console domain property, link it to GA4 and publish the report collection.

CHAPTER 6 OF 6

Checking it works and a monthly report

06

The test script, common mistakes, the monthly page and checklist.

The short answer

Test every event in Tag Manager preview, confirm it reaches GA4 in DebugView, then send a real form and book a real call and check they arrive once, in GA4 and in your inbox or calendar. After you publish, check again the next day. Then, once a month, compare GA4 with your real lead count, read the channel report, and look for anything that suddenly changed. One page is enough.

The tools you test with

- **Tag Manager preview.** Google's preview help says it runs your current draft as if it were published, in your browser only. Click Preview in the Workspace, enter your URL and connect. Tag Assistant then shows which tags fired, in what order and with what data. Regular visitors see nothing. You can share a preview link with a colleague.
- **GA4 DebugView.** In Admin, under Data display. Google's DebugView help says preview mode or Tag Assistant puts your browser into debug mode. It also says events will not appear if consent mode is on and you have not consented to analytics, so accept the banner first. A blank DebugView often just means you have not accepted.
- **GA4 Realtime.** The Realtime report shows activity from the last 30 minutes. Useful after publishing, when preview is off.
- **Your browser's Network tab.** The final word on what actually left the page.

The test script

Run this on the live site or a staging copy, from a tagged test link, with a test email address you can spot later.

ACTION	IN PREVIEW	IN GA4	IN YOUR TOOLS
Load a page and reject the banner	Consent denied, tags held as planned	Nothing, or cookieless pings in advanced mode	No analytics cookies
Accept the banner	Google tag fires once	One page view in DebugView	Clarity consent shows granted
Click each main button	`cta_click` with text and link	Same event in DebugView	
Click the email and phone links	`email_click`, `phone_click`	Same events	

ACTION	IN PREVIEW	IN GA4	IN YOUR TOOLS
Send a real form	`lead_sent` custom event, GA4 tag fires	One `generate_lead` with `form_name`	Lead in inbox or CRM with UTM values
Book a real call on a test event type	`call_booked`	One `call_booked`	Booking in the calendar
Reload the thank-you screen, send an empty form	Nothing new	No new lead	No new lead

Repeat the form and booking steps on a phone. Then publish the container with a note, and check Realtime the same day and the standard reports the next day.

Common mistakes

MISTAKE	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	FIX
GA4 loaded twice	Page views roughly double, engagement looks low	Remove every copy outside the container
Lead counted on a thank-you page view	More leads in GA4 than in the inbox	Fire on the accepted submit, or guard against reloads
Event fires in preview but never arrives	Tag shows as fired, DebugView is empty	Check consent, the measurement ID and the destination. On our own site, custom events only arrived once they named their GA4 destination with `send_to`
Staging traffic in reports	Visits from a staging domain	Load tags only on the live domain
Personal data in URLs	Emails in page paths or parameters	Keep names and emails out of URLs and redirects
Filter switched to Active too early	Real visits missing for good	Leave filters in Testing until checked, since Active is permanent
Too many key events	Key events far above real leads	Keep only real outcomes as key events
Tracking broke after a redesign	Leads in the inbox, none in GA4	Rerun the test script after every form or template change

Most of these show up the same way: the gap between GA4 and the inbox changes. That is why the monthly check below starts with that gap.

The one-page monthly report

Keep it short enough that someone reads it. This is the page we use.

LINE	SOURCE	WHAT TO WRITE
Leads this month	Inbox or CRM	The real count, by form
Calls booked	Calendar	The real count, minus cancellations if you track them

LINE	SOURCE	WHAT TO WRITE
GA4 coverage	GA4 `generate_lead` divided by real leads	A percentage. Flag it if it moved a lot
Leads by channel	GA4, your custom channel group	Top channels, including AI assistants
Top pages before a lead	GA4 exploration or path report	The three pages most leads read
Search	Search Console and Bing	Clicks, top queries, any new indexing errors
Behaviour	Clarity	One thing you saw in recordings worth fixing
Changes	Tag Manager versions, site changes	What changed this month that could move numbers
Next action	You	One fix or test for next month

The Changes line is the one teams skip and later wish they had. A consent change, a new form or a redesigned page can move every number on the sheet. Writing it down the month it happens saves a long argument the month after.

Monthly checklist

- ✓ Compare GA4 leads with the real count. Investigate if the gap changed sharply.
- ✓ Send one test form and book one test call, then delete them from the CRM.
- ✓ Check that every tag in Tag Manager's consent overview is Consent Configured.
- ✓ Look for new scripts on the site that are not in the container.
- ✓ Check that your internal traffic filter still matches your office IP addresses.
- ✓ Review the AI assistants pattern against your source report.
- ✓ Check Search Console and Bing for new indexing or sitemap errors.
- ✓ Watch five Clarity recordings of your highest traffic page on a phone.
- ✓ Update the measurement plan if an event was added, renamed or removed.

For a deeper check once a quarter, run through our GA4 audit.

When to get help

Everything in this guide can be done in house with a few days of care. If you would rather hand it over, our analytics and tracking service starts from $500 and covers GA4, Tag Manager, conversion events and the consent setup, tested the way chapter 6 describes. Care plan clients get tracking upkeep as part of the plan, see the Webflow care plan or the Astro care plan.

We set up and test the technical side. What your site legally needs is for your adviser to decide. Want us to look at your current setup first? Get in touch.

TAKEAWAYS

- Preview first, DebugView second, a real lead and a real booking last.
- Accept the banner before you expect anything in DebugView.
- Start each monthly report with the gap between GA4 and your real lead count.
- Write down what changed each month, so a jump in numbers has an explanation.

QUESTIONS

Questions people ask.

Do I need Google Tag Manager for a small marketing site?

You can run GA4 without it, but we recommend it. Tag Manager lets you add and test events without changing site code, and it is where consent rules for every tag live. Use one container and do not also load GA4 directly.

Why does GA4 show fewer leads than my inbox?

Some visitors reject cookies, block scripts or leave before an event is sent. That gap is normal. Treat your inbox, CRM and calendar as the true count, and use GA4 to compare channels and pages. If the gap changes sharply from one month to the next, something broke.

How many key events should a marketing site have?

Usually two or three: a lead sent, a call booked and maybe a newsletter signup. GA4 allows up to 30 on a standard property, but marking clicks as key events makes your results look bigger than they are.

What is Google Consent Mode v2?

It is how Google tags learn what a visitor chose on your banner. You set defaults before any tag runs, then send an update when they choose. Version 2 added two advertising types, ad_user_data and ad_personalization. It is a signal for Google tags only, and this is not legal advice.

Does Microsoft Clarity need cookie consent?

Microsoft says that from 31 October 2025 Clarity enforces consent signals for visits from the EEA, the UK and Switzerland. Without consent it runs without cookies and gives each page view its own ID. Pass the choice with its ConsentV2 API or a supported consent tool, and ask your adviser what applies to you.

How do I see traffic from ChatGPT and other AI assistants in GA4?

Create a custom channel group in Admin, Data display, Channel groups, add an AI assistants channel with a source regex, and place it above Referral. Some AI tools pass no referrer, so read the number as a floor.

Is tracking a booking link click the same as a booked call?

No. A click shows intent. Only the booking tool knows a call was booked, so use its success signal, such as Cal.com's bookingSuccessfulV2 or Calendly's calendly.event_scheduled, and use one route per calendar.

Can you set this up for us?

Yes. Our analytics and tracking service starts from $500 and covers GA4, Tag Manager, conversion events and consent, tested before handover. We set up the technical side; your adviser decides what your site legally needs.

Keep going

- Marketing site tracking setup
- Track form submits in GA4 with Tag Manager
- Track booked calls in GA4
- GA4 audit: is your data right?
- Cookie consent on Webflow
- Analytics and tracking service

Build tracked links with the free UTM builder

Kookies. www.kookies.io. hello@kookies.io