

EBOOK

How Our Company Put HubSpot To The Test

130+ Pages Of Real-World Results From Our Experiment
To See If HubSpot Really Works

nectafy

How Our Company Put HubSpot To The Test

*130+ Pages Of Real-World Results From Our Experiment To See
If HubSpot Really Works*



By Marisa Dube, Tiffany Nix, and Lance Cummins

Table Of Contents

Introduction *(Page 4)*

Some Intense Research *(Page 4)*

Wait, what exactly is HubSpot? *(Page 5)*

OK, and what does HubSpot do? *(Page 7)*

So, does HubSpot actually work? *(Page 8)*

A “Nectafied” Case Study *(Page 9)*

Month 1 *(Page 9)*

Month 2 *(Page 11)*

Month 3 *(Page 13)*

Month 4 *(Page 14)*

Months 5 & 6 *(Page 15)*

Months 7 & 8 *(Page 18)*

The moral of the story? *(Page 19)*

Getting Down To The Nitty Gritty *(Page 20)*

Kickoff Post: *Does HubSpot Really Work? (Page 21)*

Month 1: *My First Month On HubSpot: The Good, The Bad, The Data (Page 30)*

Month 2: *HubSpot Review, Month 2: Loving, Loathing, Learning (Page 55)*

Month 3: *After 3 Months Of HubSpot, I’ve Had Enough (Page 77)*

Month 4: *What Happens When You Use HubSpot For 4 Months? (Page 100)*

Months 5 & 6: *How Does It Feel When HubSpot Calls You Professional? (Page 117)*

Months 7 & 8: *HubSpot Lead Generation: Is It A Bunch of Hype? (Page 132)*

If I had to sum up HubSpot in a very simple, brief sentence, it would probably sound something like this:

“HubSpot is an incredibly useful and effective, yet slightly intimidating inbound marketing software program.”

HubSpot is a game changer in many, many aspects. There’s no doubt about that. First, to use the software the way it was intended to be used, you need to put in a lot of work. Second, instead of “magically” making awesome things happen for your company, HubSpot makes you the magical one by teaching you how to be a more effective marketer. And let’s be honest, when you have a product that delivers great results, you don’t give it away for free. So, not only does HubSpot require a good portion of your time, it will require a portion of your budget, too.

Given those facts, chances are you want to know as much as you can about HubSpot before diving in, right? If you’re like me, you’d say yes.

Some Intense Research

When my husband and I found out we were expecting our first child, we were ecstatic. When it came time to create a registry, I was excited, but also a little anxious. I didn’t want to select products

without knowing how well they performed, if they caused any adverse reactions or problems, what the pros and cons were, or how useful other parents found them. So, I researched like crazy! (And I mean *crazy*.) I was glued to my husband's iPad for weeks pouring over reviews and articles. I wanted to have confidence in the items we would use to care for our baby.

I know that you're the same way when it comes to the "life" of your business. Your company's success depends on the kinds of investments you make. So, naturally, you'll do everything you can to learn the ins and outs of something before committing—just like myself and all those baby products.

That's exactly why we've created this guide. We totally understand that you want to have 100% confidence in the investments you make for your company, but that you don't have extra hours to spend scouring the internet for trustworthy research sources. We want to help instill your confidence, so we've put together everything you could want to know about HubSpot in one simple guide—so you can find out if HubSpot is right for your business.

Wait, what exactly is HubSpot?

Let's start at the beginning. HubSpot is an all-in-one software solution for [inbound marketing](#). You can manage your web content,

create landing pages, manage your social media accounts, and measure the success of your results by leads and customers instead of the more traditional statistics like page views, time on page, bounce rate, and other kinds of analytics. In short, it's a software that will help you attract visitors, generate leads, and close customers when used correctly. (I say, "when used correctly," because it can appear that HubSpot is some magic tool with a big green "Go" button that makes great stuff happen. Great stuff can and does happen, but doesn't come without putting some work into it).

Because inbound marketing might be a new concept for you, let's take just a minute to make sure we're clear about what inbound marketing actually is. In short, inbound marketing is a marketing strategy used to attract people to your business' website by creating and sharing useful information with them—the general idea is for your business to become a helpful resource.

Traditional marketing methods like sales calls, trade shows, direct mailers, and mass email campaigns just don't work like they used to. Today, people don't want to be sold to, they want to be helped. So, inbound marketers share relevant, useful information (also called "content") with their target audience to build brand awareness, brand loyalty, and ultimately, generate business.

HubSpot's mission is to help you accomplish your business's inbound marketing goals with one, simple software solution.

OK, and what does HubSpot do?

When you visit HubSpot's website, you'll see a lot of terms that really aren't easily understood by someone who isn't familiar with marketing jargon. So, let's explain what HubSpot does, in a nutshell.

You probably already understand that "traffic" refers to visits to your website. HubSpot will help you generate more traffic because the more people you have looking at your website, the more opportunity you have to get them to take the next step toward doing business with you. Important, right?

HubSpot will also set you up to generate more leads (people who give you contact information about themselves), with the hope of generating more sales. Also very important!

There are automation tools you can use within HubSpot that essentially do some of the work for you. Using automation makes some of your marketing activities "automatic." For example, a user gets a personalized email after they take some sort of specific action on your website without you having to personally create the email every time.

With HubSpot, you'll also have analytics to help you see how you're doing. The graphs, reports, and numbers that you look at help you make better decisions about what's working well for your website, and what needs to be improved.

HubSpot also helps you with search engine optimization (SEO). To optimize something for a search engine simply means that you make sure that the pages and other content on your website can be easily read by search engines. You need a title that explains your topic, images that support your topic, and then, most importantly, you need to actually have content about that one topic.

There's obviously a lot more that goes into what HubSpot does, but that's a general idea.

So, does HubSpot actually work?

The best way to discover if something actually works is to try it yourself, right? Well, I happen to know that you can't afford to spend months (and a good chunk of change!) trying out an inbound marketing software just to see if it will work for your company. Instead, you can learn from our experience.

At Nectafy, we decided to see if HubSpot was as wonderful as it seemed. So, we decided that Nectafy would completely embrace

the HubSpot philosophy for the next year for our own web presence, and that we would track our success/failure publicly.

Now, in order to see if it really worked, we decided to be “A” students and do all of the recommended training and exercises. And, we committed to put in at least the recommended 10 hours per week into actually creating content and working the system. So, you can trust that we’ve made sure we’re doing everything we can to set ourselves up for success with HubSpot. Right now, we’re eight months into our one-year experiment. Below is everything for months one through eight, month-by-month.

A “Nectafied” Case Study

Throughout our experiment, Lance has written a detailed blog post about each month we’ve spent with HubSpot, which we’ve attached at the end of this guide. (Skip to page 20 if you’re ready to read them now.) But, if you’re more in the mood for some quick summaries of each of our first eight months, read on.

Month 1

To begin, let’s look at the positive things Nectafy learned during the first month with HubSpot. Perhaps most importantly, we learned to set more strategic goals, which were to have 750 visits per month (a

46% increase over our current average at that time), 20 leads per month (a 53% increase over our current average at that time), and two customers per month (the same as last year). As we toyed around with the software, we discovered how easy it is to work with HubSpot's interface and that their social media tools are outstanding.

We also learned a lot about HubSpot as a company—they have a ton of really good resources to help you get going, their webinars are first-class, the coaching support from HubSpot is phenomenal, and when you call the tech support line, there is an actual real-live person on the other end of the line that's nice to talk to.

On the other hand, there were some things we weren't so crazy about. For instance, when you run some tests, your own actions will reflect in your reports. We're hoping HubSpot will address this, and make it simpler to test things without affecting analytics. Also, a few other things—we still needed to use Google Analytics to see some specific insight about our website, it was a little difficult to customize some things, and some really helpful features were still off limits for our price range (which we really can't blame HubSpot for, but it still stunk).

We knew it would be a lot of work to do HubSpot right, but it was still a challenge. Over 40 hours were allocated to HubSpot work,

doing things like creating premium content offers, writing blog posts, creating landing pages, doing on page SEO, and updating social media. But overall, the first month was exciting. HubSpot made it much more interesting to add new content and mentally tie-in this content with real-live data. And, probably the most positive indicator for us was that our organic search traffic grew steadily throughout the month.

You can skip to the whole “stupid-long” (as Lance calls it) original post, *My First Month On HubSpot: The Good, The Bad, The Data*, on page 30, if you’re interested in more details.

Month 2

We kept learning to love HubSpot during month two. We learned that HubSpot’s reporting interface packs a ton of super-useful information all into one window (in an organized, completely un-overwhelming way). The Page Performance Tool showed us that we had some speed issues with page loading and helped us resolve them quickly, the Calls-To-Action page showed us how well our calls-to-action were working, and the monthly email report was clear and easy to share.

Our visits decreased a little, but, our organic traffic grew. We gained leads, and, the best news of all, we partnered with a client! Woo hoo!

Now that you have the good news, here's the "meh" news. First, we discovered that data does *not* show in real-time, and sometimes the data in our Sources report can be up to three hours behind. Second, we learned that leads get reported by the date they first converted or otherwise entered your database, and customers are displayed by the date they entered the database, rather than the date they actually became customers. We understand that it's an effort to help better gauge the impact of your marketing by connecting the dots back to your first encounter with that customer. But, it would be nice to have the option of viewing a customer either in the month they became a customer, or when we first connected.

What else did we learn this month? The more content you create, the more results you get. Additionally, editorial calendars are incredibly helpful, writing for your buyer personas is critically important, hand-crafted, personal emails are pretty effective, and having offers that are relevant to your blog post content seriously improves click-through rates.

For even more detail about our second month with HubSpot, check out our original post, *HubSpot Review, Month 2: Loving, Loathing, Learning*, on page 55.

Month 3

After three months of experimenting with HubSpot, we were pretty certain that it *does* work when you put the necessary work into it. We saw a 45% increase month-over-month for all visits, which represents 457% growth from the month before we started our experiment. And, our organic search was up huge! How huge? How about a 95% growth over one month! Plus, our leads increased by 39% month-over-month. *And*, we gained two customers offline. (But, since all of our marketing is inbound focused, we feel like inbound marketing deserves an “assist” for any new customer.)

The things that we wished were different? Again, the time delay in reporting. Too. Slow. Also, some of our calls-to-action didn't seem to consistently show the right data. We chalked that one up to our insistence on using WordPress as our website instead of the HubSpot COS. There was a snag with reporting on our biggest traffic day ever (big-time thumbs down). Tech support, though, was very helpful, and said the only explanation they could find is that we must have changed some core settings. But, we didn't touch *any* of the settings. (Who knows? Not us!)

Our little nugget of wisdom for this month wasn't really new knowledge, but something we got to prove: professionals use professional equipment for a reason. It lets them focus on what they need to focus on. That's what HubSpot does. It delivers results

because *you* become efficient in inbound marketing. The whole story for month three is available in our article, *After 3 Months Of HubSpot, I've Had Enough*, on page 77.

Month 4

What happened after four months of this experiment? Things just kept getting better.

At this point, our website was a critical, integrated component of our business. Before our HubSpot experiment, we didn't have a tangible, quantifiable grasp on who was coming to our site, what they were doing, and why. HubSpot has completely changed all of that. One reason it's probably been so effective at connecting us to our web presence is that it's an all-in-one tool that has (just about) everything that you need to fully integrate yourself with your inbound marketing.

And, after four months of using the tool, our focus began to shift. Because HubSpot enables you to gather lead information so effectively, you quickly begin to think of the visitors to your site as real-live people, instead of statistics. This lead us to shift our focus from the statistics to unexpectedly great service. With this mind set, as your leads re-visit your site and spend time reading your content, you begin to think more effectively about how to meet their needs with your content and with your services.

Statistically, we did awesome! (I know I just said our focus shifted away from numbers, but I'd be lying if I said they didn't still excite us.) Before the experiment, our site had an average of 550 visits per month. Month four saw 4,901 visits, representing 790% growth from the month before we started our experiment. (Cue a happy dance!)

Our point of pain for this month is a repeat—HubSpot's reporting methods. Leads and customers are both reported in the month that they first visited the site, not when they convert. For example, at the end of month three, our reports said we had 50 leads. At the end of month four, reports said that we had 62 leads in month three. Come again? Did we pull off of some kind of *Back To The Future* stunt? Nope. Twelve people became leads in month four, but their first visit to our site was in month three, so that is where they appear. Grr.

For the complete story, check out our original blog post on page 100, *What Happens When You Use HubSpot For 4 Months*.

Months 5 & 6

Up until our fourth month, we were on HubSpot's Basic plan. (They have three plans that are based on the needs of your business: Basic, Professional, and Enterprise.) As we approached our fifth

month, we were itching to try the features available in the Professional package, and honestly, we were about ready to move up to a better plan, too.

So, when month five rolled around, we were finally able to introduce ourselves as, “Nectafy, HubSpot Professionals.” We didn’t really do that, but it does sound nice, doesn’t it?

You’re probably wondering what wonderful features led us to finally buy into the Professional plan. Well, there were four in particular that had our interest.

One was workflows. A workflow is basically a sequence of actions that you can have the software take on your contacts.

The second feature was lead scoring. With lead scoring, you can assign points to certain activities on your site, and can kind of see how interested someone is in what you’re saying or offering.

The third feature was smart CTAs. Instead of showing a call-to-action for an offer your prospect has already seen, smart CTAs will automatically show a different one.

And lastly, progressive profiling. Instead of having to ask for a ton of information on one landing page, you can ask for smaller pieces on

multiple landing pages. As your prospects complete some fields, they don't have to answer them again, and instead, get served other questions.

Neat, right?

(Before we continue, did you notice that two months were posted together? That's because we understand one of the basic plights of humanity—too much work, not enough time. Anyway, moving on.)

Months five and six saw very similar results. Our traffic from organic searches continued to grow, while visits as a whole were kind of at a plateau. Leads were increasing, and our conversion rate was at a steady 2.2%.

Unfortunately, we didn't gain any new clients during these two months. But, this taught us a lesson. We learned the value of having a better sales process to integrate with our marketing. If you want to see strong customer results, you need to make sure that you have your sales process and sales team already in place. So, we worked on developing our own voice when it came to our sales process, making sure that we provided a ton of value all along the way.

To read more about our fifth and sixth months, check out *How Does It Feel When HubSpot Calls You “Professional”?*, on page 117.

Months 7 & 8

We came to the realization over months seven and eight that HubSpot is really great about continually rolling out improvements and updates to their software, which we absolutely appreciate. It was also at this point that we realized how integral of a part HubSpot has become in our daily inbound marketing efforts.

Over these two months, our overall traffic pretty much leveled off, however our organic search proved, once again, to grow consistently. Our lead generation grew steadily as well, and our conversion rates were hovering right around 3%. (Yay!)

Even more exciting is that we were able to partner with three new clients during that time! But, like you’ve heard us rant about in previous months, we still can’t see that on the reports specifically for months seven and eight, since they show up in the month the prospect first became a lead, rather than when they became a customer. (Wah, wah.)

But, despite that small gripe, by month eight, we were able to unapologetically state that HubSpot *can* deliver on their promise to make it possible to generate leads with their software.

Want to learn more about months seven and eight? Check out our original blog post, *HubSpot Lead Generation: Is It A Bunch Of Hype?*, on page 132.

The moral of the story?

Overall, what did we learn over the course of these crazy months? That by using the right tools for the job, and pouring a ton of focused effort into inbound marketing, you **will** see results. It's not the "quick and easy" fix that some may be looking for, but it will make you an incredibly effective marketer if you'll do the work.

Take it from us—our company is living proof.

Getting Down To The Nitty-Gritty

Get the details from each month of our experiment (including charts, statistics, graphs, observations, rants, analytics—you name it) from each of the posts below. (Here are some page numbers, if you'd like to skip around.)

Kickoff Post: *Does HubSpot Really Work? (Page 21)*

Month 1: *My First Month On HubSpot: The Good, The Bad, The Data (Page 30)*

Month 2: *HubSpot Review, Month 2: Loving, Loathing, Learning (Page 55)*

Month 3: *After 3 Months Of HubSpot, I've Had Enough (Page 77)*

Month 4: *What Happens When You Use HubSpot For 4 Months? (Page 100)*

Months 5 & 6: *How Does It Feel When HubSpot Calls You Professional? (Page 117)*

Months 7 & 8: *HubSpot Lead Generation: Is It A Bunch of Hype? (Page 132)*

Kickoff Post

Does HubSpot Really Work?

NOVEMBER 1, 2013 | *Lance Cummins*



We're going to find out.

Before I start, let me just mention that at the end of this post, I'm going to show our actual traffic, leads and customer conversion numbers from our website for the past year. I'm holding nothing back. But, let's talk [HubSpot](#) first.

I've always been skeptical of HubSpot, I have to be honest.

(By the way, for those of you not familiar with HubSpot, let me introduce you. Briefly, HubSpot is an all-in-one software solution for managing your web content, creating landing pages, managing your social media accounts, and measuring the success of your results by leads & customers instead of the more traditional page views, time on page, bounce rate, and other, shall we say, “geeky” analytics. HubSpot is headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, so they're one of us.)

I've been pretty convinced of the effectiveness of a WordPress website combined with a huge array of free-ish tools to research, create content, monitor results, and engage in social marketing. And it has been working. But, as a content marketing company super-crazy about delivering real results, we're always looking for ways to deliver more for our clients. Particularly, I want to be able **to track and understand more about how visitors become leads who become customers.** Google Analytics has always been the main source of a sort of general understanding for us, but as of late, Google is hiding more and more information from its non-paid (Google AdWords) users. Plus, it's been difficult (read impossible) to track the full customer process from the first touch, through email

marketing & downloads, through conversion of a visitor to a customer.

I've never been one to recommend something that I'm not doing myself, so I decided that Nectafy would completely embrace the HubSpot philosophy for the next year for our own web presence, and we're going to track our success/failure publicly.

A few ground rules.

1. In order to see if it really works, we're going to be "A" students, and do all of the recommended training and exercises. We're going to pursue HubSpot certification for all 3 of us on our content creation team, by the end of November 2013.
2. We're going to put in at least the recommended **10 hours/week** into actually creating content and working the system. The content creation is the engine under the hood. We already put quite a bit of time into our content, although honestly, it's probably closer to 5-6 hours a week lately. We'll document how much time we spend each week, so we can accurately gauge input to output ratio.
3. Since we've built our site on WordPress, instead of using their built-in blogging software, we're going to use WordPress integration with their tools. That means that there are a couple of their dashboard tools that will be meaningless to us, but I think, on the whole, the experience should still be the same.

What I already like about the experience so far...

1. HubSpot takes customer training very, very seriously.

They have a fantastic library of webinars that help you understand the process of inbound marketing. You can participate in live webinars, or you can enjoy the recorded ones. (I like recorded ones because I tend to do things at my own pace.) The software itself also makes it easy to understand how the different components work. Plus, they have done a great job of making all of their help resources available everywhere in the tool.

2. HubSpot teaches philosophy, marketing, and business principles as a key part of success.

One issue that I've had watching HubSpot's marketing from the outside is that they sort of downplay how critical creating content is to the success of their system. Without creating the right kind of content, you will fail. I suppose that HubSpot assumes that their customers know this key information before they sign up, but for

many companies looking to gain customers from their online presence, it can appear that HubSpot is some magic tool with a big green “Go” button, and great stuff happens.

So, I’ve been pleasantly surprised with how much effort they go to to help you understand the why’s and how’s of creating the right kind of content.

3. HubSpot is “smoking what they’re rolling.”

That’s a memorable way of saying that HubSpot is leveraging the tools of inbound marketing to create their own success. That may seem obvious, but so many companies fail to practice what they preach. (Ha, ha.) I just realized how funny it is that I used the phrase “smoking what they’re rolling” and “practicing what they preach” in the same paragraph.

What I’m skeptical about...

1. I’m not sure that having an all-in-one tool will be that much more effective.

By using a combination of tools like WordPress, Gravity Forms, MailChimp, HootSuite, Capsule CRM, and so forth, I think we've already got the bases pretty well covered.

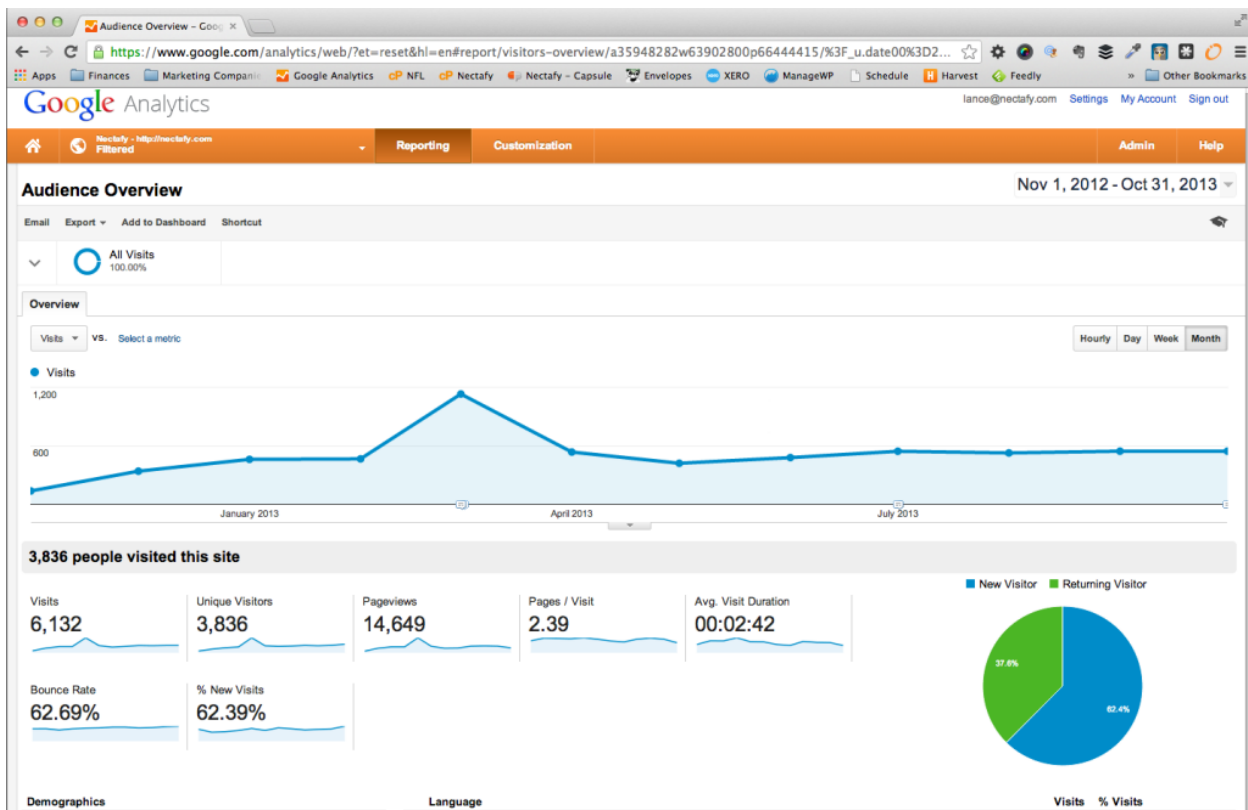
2. In our industry, content marketing, the internet is pretty crowded with plenty of other companies trying similar strategies. My thought here is that if HubSpot works for us, it should work for any B2B business.

Again, that's what this test is all about. I want to prove to myself one way or the other that HubSpot really works.

The Benchmarks

In October of 2012, our company became Nectafy. We had previously focused on simple website design and a little bit of marketing strategy. Nectafy, though is a content marketing company first, with the ability to build websites that support your content marketing goals. That's just a little background. We began using content marketing at the end of November 2012, and here is what our traffic has looked like.

Unique Visitors



First, you can see that we currently average almost 600 visits per month. (The fun spike in March was thanks to being listed in a very active email list by [D Bnonn Tenant](#), which sent many curious marketers to check us out.)

Secondly, although we have seen consistent growth through our ongoing marketing, it is been quite gradual.

Total: 3,836

Leads

The traffic only tells part of the story, though. Let's look at how we did with getting visitors to take the next step and download a guide, or somehow offer their email so we could follow up with them.

Page	Visitors	Form Completions	Conversion Rate
Home Page	1246	90	7.22%
About Lance	733	16	2.18%
All Other Pages	4706	48	1.02%

Total: 154 Leads

New Clients

If we only cared about leads, we'd be kidding ourselves. We need to gain new clients from all of this content marketing. Of course, some of our new client gains are from sources other than direct website traffic, but our ongoing content marketing strategy was still a huge part of bring that conversion about, so I feel good that this will still be an apples-to-apples comparison one year from now.

Lead To Client Conversion: November 1, 2012 - October 31, 2013			
Leads	New Clients	Average Annual Customer Value	Customer Conversion Rate
154	23	\$2,160	14.94%

I included the average annual customer value in this chart, because I want to see if increasing our content marketing effectiveness also increases the value of the clients we have. In other words, the more we educate and advocate for our clients through content, will we be able to solve more and bigger issues and thus be able to generate more revenue?

Total: 23 New Clients

Let the games begin

Alright, so we have our benchmarks, and we have our ground rules. We're going to jump in and see what happens. At the beginning of each month, I'm going to post an update on these numbers using HubSpot. And at the end of October 2014, we should see pretty clearly whether we have a winner or a dud.

Month 1

My First Month On HubSpot: The Good, The Bad, The Data

DECEMBER 6, 2013 | *Lance Cummins*

Last month, I kicked off my experiment to find out [if HubSpot really can deliver the goods with inbound marketing](#).

It's been a really interesting month, and I've learned a ton about HubSpot, and a little about myself.

I'll show you my actual data from my first month sipping the HubSpot Kool-Aid, and you can help me make some observations. I'm sure you'll have more insight than I will, but I'll get the conversation started.

The Good

I'm becoming an actionable-data addict.

- I keep my HubSpot dashboard pulled up on my second monitor all day long, and I'll confess that I actually use the mobile dashboard sometimes

during the evening when there's a lull in family activities. (I know, shame on me. Addictive behavior.)

- When I look at my numbers, I take action to try to increase those, like tweeting a few links, or brainstorming a piece of content. That does nothing but help the success of the site.
- The dashboard is really, really gorgeous. So is the mobile app. Well designed, beautiful interfaces are important to me. It's the same reason I use [Xero](#) for my company accounting instead of the butt-ugly interface on that other accounting software that everyone else uses.

I'm setting more strategic goals.

I've been forced to set initial 6 month goals as a part of HubSpot's emphasis on measurable, strategic goals.

- 750 visits per month (46% increase over current average)
- 20 leads per month (53% increase over current average)
- 2 customers per month (the same as last year)

HubSpot has a ton of really good resources to help you get going.

The resources that HubSpot makes available for learning, like webinars and workshops, are extremely helpful.

Their webinars are first-class.

They're fun, engaging, and very, very focused.

The coaching support from HubSpot has been outstanding.

My consultants, Kelsey Norberg ([@kelseynorberg](#)) and Casey Lockwood ([@caseylockwood](#)) have been unbelievable to work with! I had a question the other day, and within a few minutes, we had scheduled a phone call to talk through it. In our one-on-one meetings, I'm getting answers to specific questions and they're giving advice that is direct and practical. It feels like they're my biggest fans cheering for me from the sidelines. And that feels good.

Real-live tech support that's nice to talk to.

One morning at the beginning of last month, I called support even though I knew it was before office hours. I was shocked when someone answered the phone and helped me just because they could. They said they figured they should try to help. Now that's something special.

HubSpot's interface is easy to work with.

Most of the content creation areas like landing pages, calls to action, forms, and emails are drag and drop. My website is on WordPress, so I haven't used the module for creating pages, but I think it's similar. I really like how simple it is to create calls to action, especially.

HubSpot's social media tool is outstanding.

- It's easy to do bulk, customized tweet scheduling.
- It merges my contact list with my Twitter feeds. Genius.
- It makes it a part of my data-driven workflow instead of a peripheral activity.

The Bad

I'm becoming an actionable-data addict.

There are two sides to every coin, right?

I'm missing MailChimp a little.

While I love having the email marketing tool integrated for better analytics and reporting, I have to confess that I do miss MailChimp

just a little. The formatting isn't quite like I want it to be—especially with my company information that gets inserted at the bottom of my emails automatically—and it seems like the reporting of the emails I send is a little sluggish.

It's tough to test stuff while you're learning.

I didn't read the warnings in the help files until after I had gone through and submitted several tests for my landing pages.

Unfortunately, once that data hits your reports, you can't filter out your own actions. I'm hoping that they address this, and make it simpler to test things without impacting your analytics. By the way, they do make it simple to filter out IP addresses for traffic reporting; it's just the form submissions that gave me fits. So, now I know that some of my data from this first month isn't quite right.

I still need to use Google Analytics to see more insight about my site.

I guess I was hoping to not have to open Google Analytics again, but as it turns out, for instance, if I want to see how many visitors came from Twitter to one certain page, I'll have to go check that out in GA... unless, of course, I'm missing something.

Customizing some things seems a little clunky.

Since my site is built on WordPress, I needed to “skin” the landing pages to look like my website. Although the template builder and design center are very well laid-out, I found it pretty confusing for quite a while to find my custom style sheets. Honestly, it’s probably just something that you have to kick around for a while to understand, but maybe they could make that a little simpler to figure out. My guess is that if you are a designer, you’ll figure it out like me. Everyone else probably won’t go anywhere near that side of things.

Some really helpful features are still off limits for my price range.

- Workflows, which are very powerful, automatic lead-nurturing features, aren’t in the basic package.
- API access.
- I’ve maxed out my pricing plan for contacts and email sending, so I’m trying to figure out my course of action. I could send my blog post updates from MailChimp again, but then I’ll miss some of the key user data that makes HubSpot so valuable. And, as you know, now I’m an actionable-data addict.

The Challenge

Required Time

While I knew that there would be a lot of time required to begin the transition, I think I underestimated just how much time it would take. HubSpot recommends that you spend 5-10 hours a week, at a minimum to make this fly. It was higher for me personally, and that's with help writing some content. As I look at my time sheet, I can tell that I forgot to hit the timer quite a bit, so I don't know how helpful this time sheet even is.

Change Filters

Staff Lance Cummins

33.17 Uninvoiced Billable Hours

Total	34.44
-------	-------

Closing

HubSpot's approach to moving a lead to a customer is more sales-based than I'm used to, so I'm going to see how that plays out for my company. In the past I've taken a pretty hands-off approach toward "key leads" and just waited for them to come to me. In HubSpot methodology, while you still use email and content to nurture leads, you also need to reach out to sales qualified leads using more typical sales techniques. For most companies with a sales team, that's a very natural thing. For me, it's a little more of a challenge. Of course, I haven't consumed all of their "closing" videos yet, but that's what I know so far.

The Work

Remember, the goal for me was to be a good student, completely immersing myself in the HubSpot methodology. **I want to see what happens if someone really embraces the whole process**, not just dips a toe in. Also, I want to see how doable it is to do this and keep your business running at the same time. Honestly, it feels a little like trying to change a tire on a moving bus.

Also, because we have three of us as writers at Nectafy, we divided up some of the blog writing. I would not have been able to write all the articles this month by myself.

I've watched 20 or so webinars or workshops. For most of these, I obviously forgot to hit my timer, but they were each about an hour long. Fortunately, HubSpot does these videos very well, so they're packed with information and enjoyable to be a part of.

I spent time developing our buyer persona, and I have it pretty much down, but I still need to tweak a few things. Also, I figured out over the course of this past month, that I actually need two buyer personas. So, that's on the task list for this month.

I spent the remainder of my time split between learning the interface, writing content, creating landing pages, forms, calls to action, and doing social media work.

Creating Premium Content Offers

I took an existing seven-part email course that I had created called "7 Sweet Steps To Turn Visitors Into Customers" and turned it into a multi-page PDF called, "[The Unconventional Way To Win Customers](#)." By the way, I highly recommend taking something that

you already have and converting it so that you get a piece of “premium content” right away. Otherwise, you’ll feel overwhelmed with all that has to be done to get rolling.

I took an eBook that HubSpot made available for redistribution about lead generation, and added my own ideas to it, spent time reformatting it to match my branding and created “[39 Lead Generation Ideas To Fill Your Funnel.](#)”

I wrote an eBook called “[The 13 Website Redesign Secrets Your Web Design Company Wishes You Knew.](#)”

We just recently had created a style guide for our company, so we had Emily write a post to coordinate with it, and we are now offering it as a “[Style Guide Template](#)” to help people get a quick start to writing their own.

Kelsey, my HubSpot marketing consultant, has asked me to create offers for all three phases of the lead funnel: top, middle, and bottom. Their methodology is very clear and easy to follow about what types of offers work well at each stage. So, the offers I created here are pretty much all top of the funnel, I know that my bottom of the funnel is for someone to contact me, or request an

assessment of their web presence. Now, next month, I'll be creating my middle of the funnel offers. (Stay tuned!)

Writing Blog Posts

Between the three of us writers at Nectafy, we created 7 blog posts, which averaged about 1,300 words each because we wanted to be as thorough as possible on each topic.

We wrote them all to speak to the buyer persona that we created.

- [Does HubSpot Really Work?](#)
- [Working With A Perfectionist? Here's What They Wish You Knew](#)
- [4 Ways To Make Writing For The Web Less Complicated](#)
- [The Messy Marketer's Guide To Using Evernote](#)
- [How To Quickly Create A Written Style Guide For Your Company](#)
- [Tough Truths About Website Redesign Told in 12 Tweets](#)
- [How To Create An Editorial Calendar With Basecamp In 7 Simple Steps](#)

Creating Landing Pages

Each premium content offer needs its own optimized landing page, so we created six landing pages, and then four Thank You pages that also offer additional interaction. Each form on the landing page has a custom follow up email that offers something additional

if the user wants it. So, it takes a decent amount of time to get that all written up so that it all makes sense as the user moves down that path. (If you'd like to see how it works, you can just download any of those premium content offers up above and experience it first hand. Don't worry, you can opt out from any emails later if you want. I am still working on making those follow-up emails better, so don't judge me too harshly.)

On Page SEO

Honestly my existing pages are doing OK, even though HubSpot's page performance tool says that there are all kinds of problems. Most of those issues have to do with the fact that my main site is built on WordPress and not on the HubSpot platform. Our blog posts are doing great with this as well, and that's where the majority of our online traffic is coming from.

Social Media

I have discovered that there have been two large flaws in how I approached Twitter. First, I wasn't talking directly to people and just enjoying the conversational aspect of the medium. Secondly, I was only putting links to my content out a few times and then letting it disappear. Using HubSpot's scheduling feature, it's now super easy

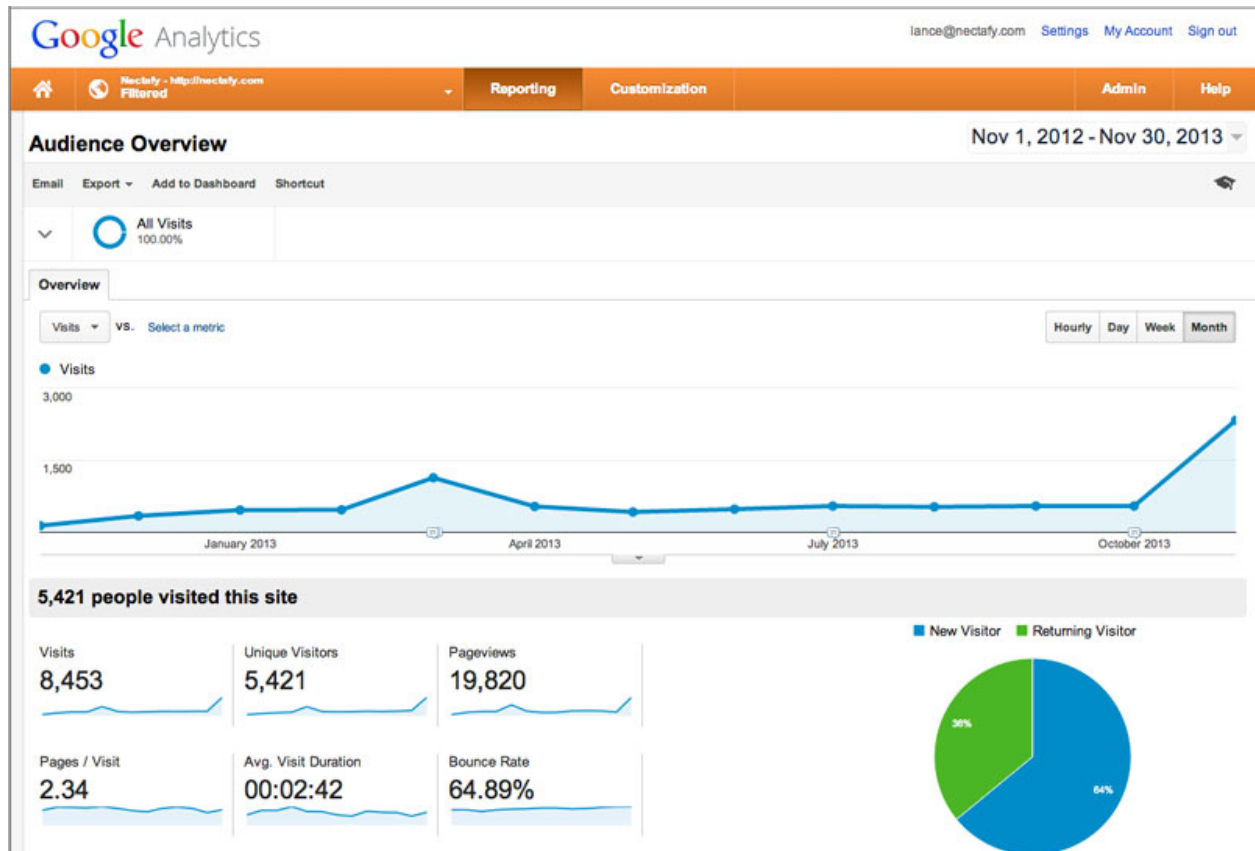
to schedule tweets out over time and keep them from being redundant.

So I have spent more time this month working hard to keep my Twitter presence moving forward. I've also done just a little work with LinkedIn, but I've got so far to go there.

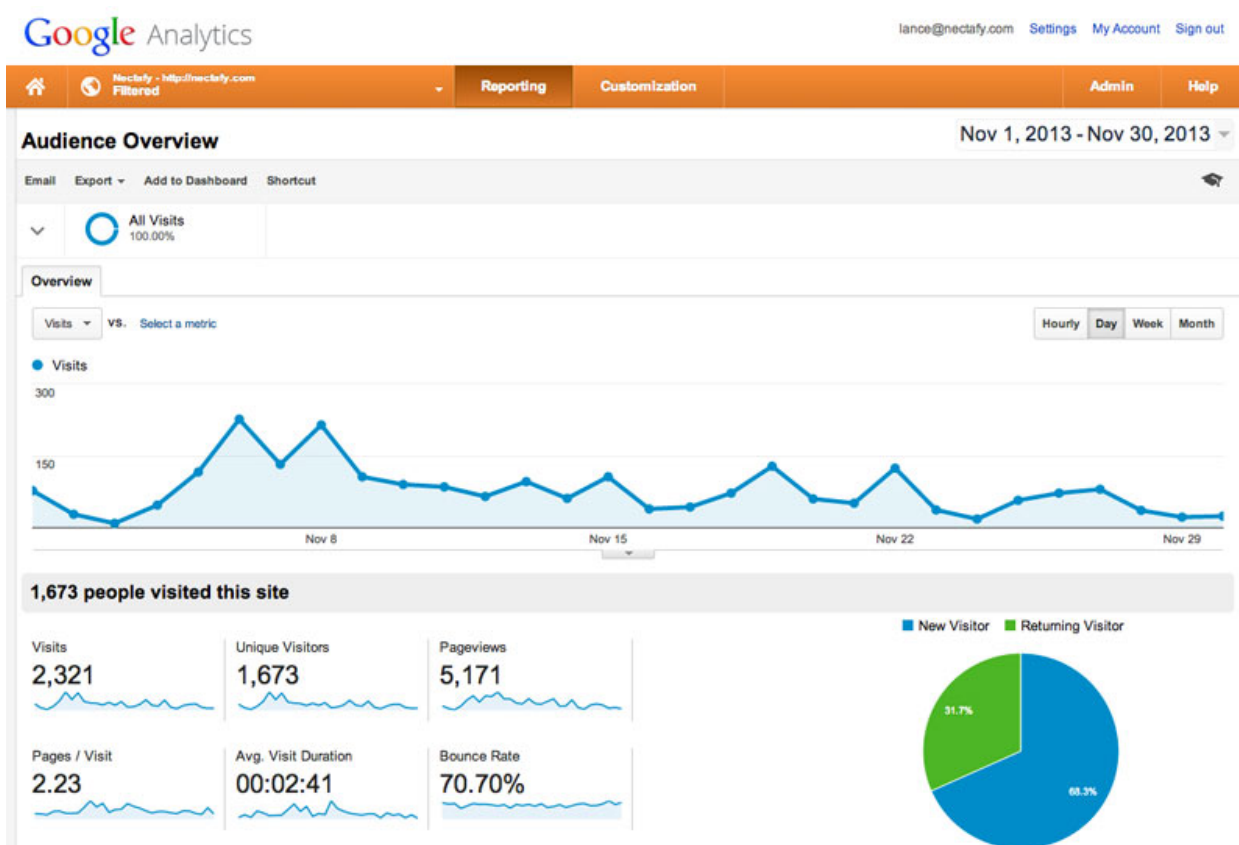
The Data

Unique Visitors

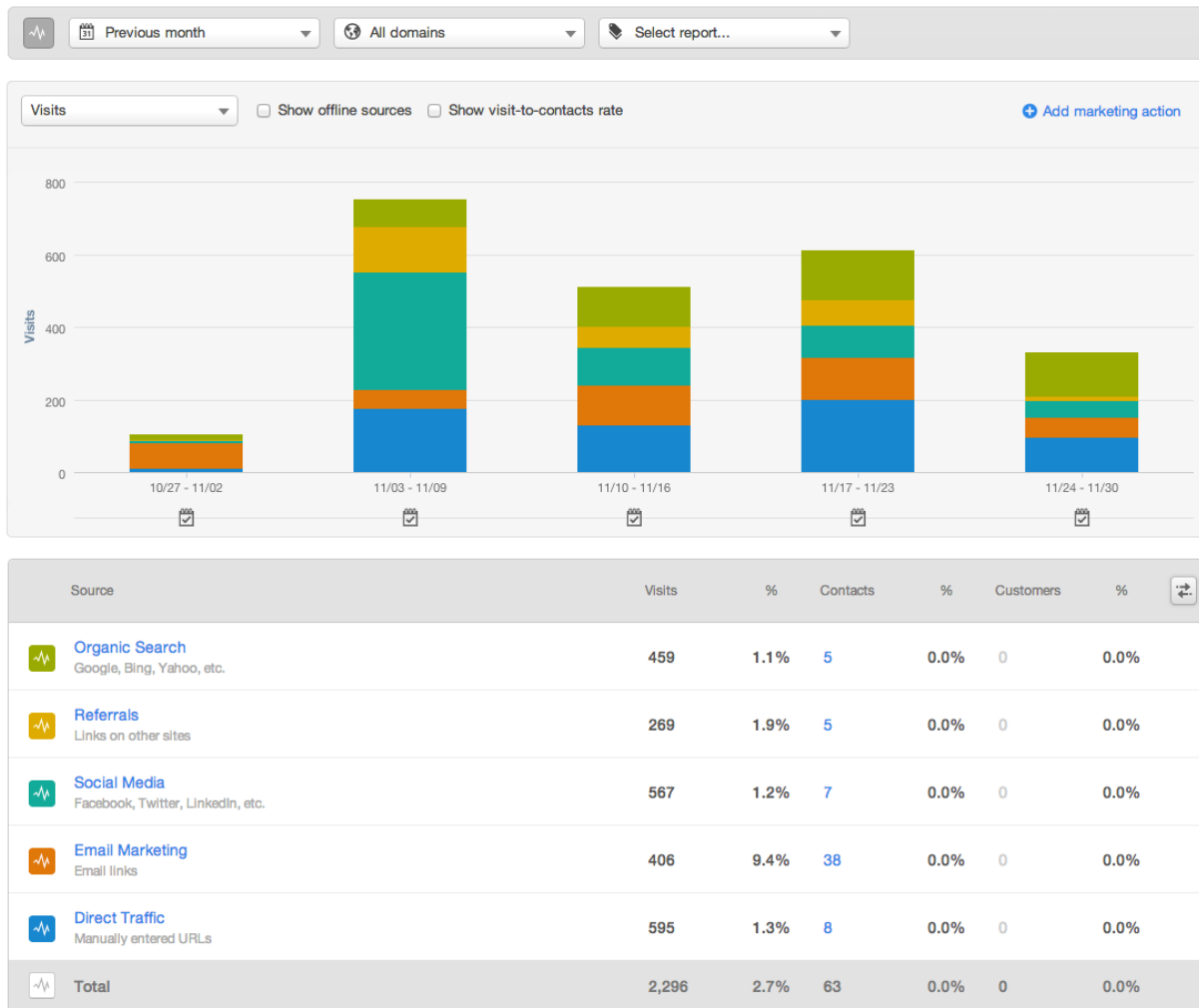
This is the same screenshot as our launch post, just with November, 2013 added in. There's a pretty crazy spike at the end.



This is just for the month of November. The little dribbling at the end coincides over Thanksgiving and the weekend, so that may explain the sudden drop.



This is what that graph looks like in my HubSpot reports dashboard.



According to Google Analytics

Total visits in November: 2,321

Unique visits in November: 1,673

According to HubSpot

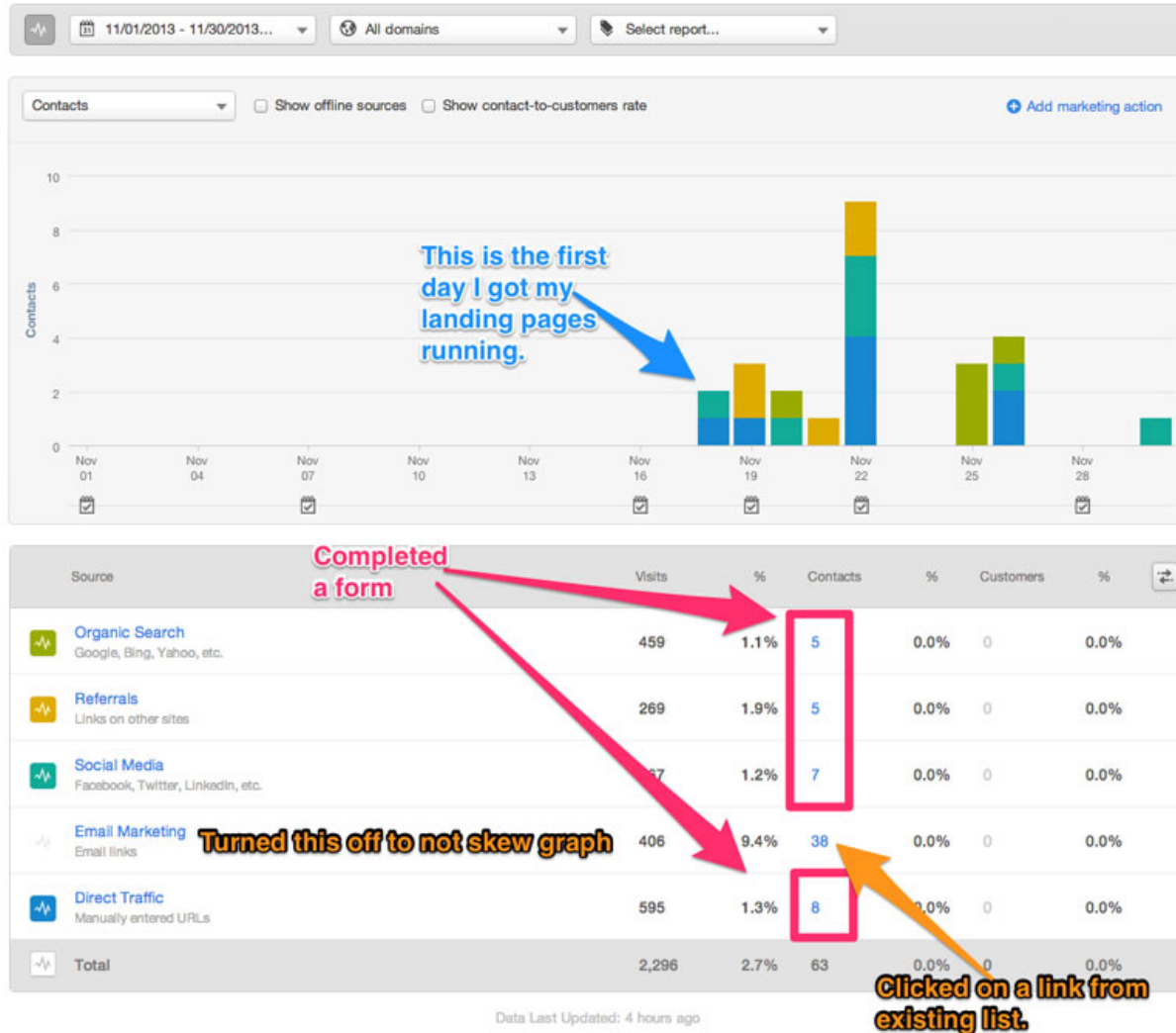
Total visits in November: 2,296

(Just as a point of reference, my monthly average for 2013 is 511 visits.)

In my initial post, we were measuring unique visits. Now that I've gotten into the HubSpot methodology, I can see why they don't measure unique visits, but instead display all visits, since every visit is a part of the lead nurturing process.

Leads

Sources



This graph is very colorful, and potentially a little confusing. As a part of integrating with the HubSpot methodology, I moved my existing email list of 314 addresses to HubSpot. When I sent my next blog update email, clicks from that email were registered as a

contact (lead) even though they were already in my system. So, to be as accurate as possible, I disabled that section from this graph.

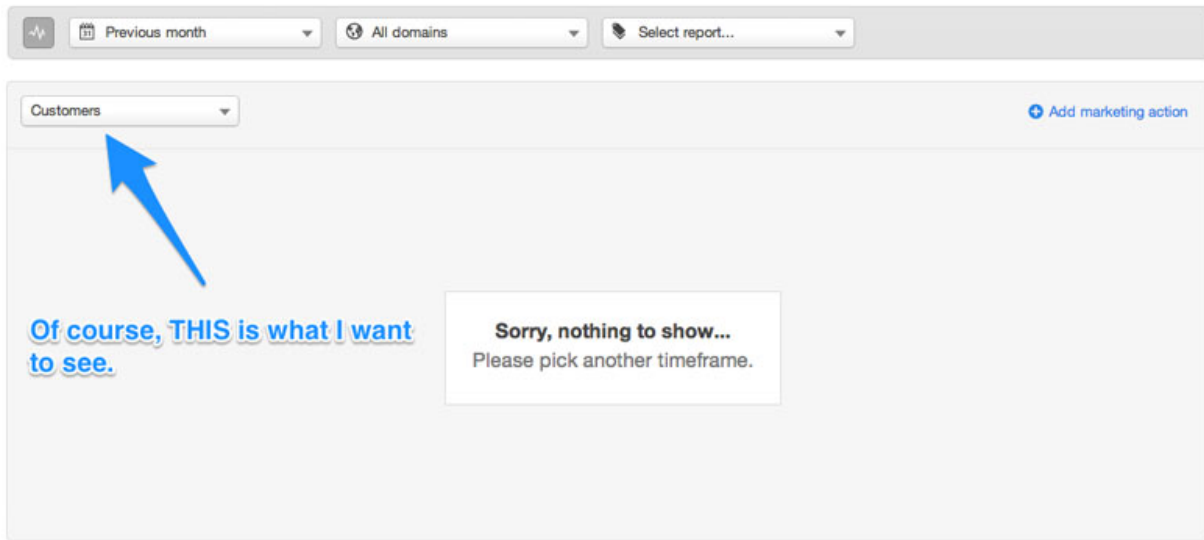
Also, it took me about 15 days into the month to get my first premium content offers done and my landing pages created. So, for leads, we're really looking at 2.5 weeks.

So, if you subtract the "contacts" that were already leads, we generated 25 leads in 2.5 weeks. I know that one of these was my testing, and two were friends that were testing for me, so we won't count them.

Total for November: 22 Leads

Customers

Here's my chart for customers.



To give the benefit of the doubt, I know that this process is going to take some time. Plus, I am just starting to create my manual workflows to tie all of this together.

Total for November, 2013: 0 Customers

The Story

There are so many moving parts and pieces that are outside my control in this experiment. Since I'm trying to be as candid and honest about this entire process, I want to give you a brief synopsis of how I learned about the power of one blog post, one tweet, and one link.

When I wrote my blog post introducing my “grand experiment” on HubSpot, I was pretty scared. Looking back to one month ago, it doesn’t seem so scary, and probably to everyone else it seems a little silly, but right before I clicked the publish button, my heart was beating kind of fast. One author said that’s how you know you’ve written something decent—if you’re a little scared to make it public. I knew that I had created something that people would actually care about. And that was cool.

Within a couple of days, I was excited to see, based on my traffic, that other people had the same question as me about HubSpot. But I was really surprised to get a blog comment from Dharmesh Shah ([@dharmesh](#)), the CTO and co-founder of HubSpot. To make things even more interesting, he tweeted a link to my blog to his 214,000 followers. From here, I’m not sure the order, but somehow in a matter of a day or so, the New York Times Small Business ([@NYTSmallBiz](#)) folks retweeted that link to their 240,000+ followers, and put a link in the Small Business blog of the New York Times to my article.

Those tweets have introduced 189 people to my blog post, and that NYT link introduced 141 more. 80 of you wonderful readers then subscribed to my blog update list so you could find out how the

experiment is going. I'm so grateful for each of you who were a part of making this fun sequence of events happen! Of course, that immediately opened up some new channels of communication and new relationships that I hadn't had before. All because of one blog post, one tweet, and one link.

The Analysis

First, it's pretty obvious that I had a huge spike in traffic over that first HubSpot post, which has lead to increased leads, and so on. I think this month set a pretty high, and maybe slightly artificial, bar for the months to come. In some ways, I'm preparing myself for a letdown in December.

As many of you postulated in your comments in my initial experiment post, simply focusing on my online marketing efforts so intentionally has had a huge impact on both my behavior toward my marketing and the results, whether that was on HubSpot or not. Also, some of you have told me that you figured that if I applied their methodology I would see results, even if I didn't use their platform.

But there's also something to be said for accountability and some good, insightful coaching. The webinars, learning resources, and the

one-on-one conversations with Kelsey and Casey have been huge for keeping me focused, when in the past it would be pretty easy to slip off the rails. I think many of us overlook the value of coaching in business overall, and that's something I'm working on as well.

Maybe it's just the freshness of a new toy, but I have actually had a lot of fun working with HubSpot's tools. They have made it much more interesting to add new content and mentally tie-in this content with real-live data. I can especially testify that their social media tool has helped me do a much better job of getting our content out there consistently instead of a stop-and-go approach.

The fact that we worked very hard to get seven posts published instead of our normal four also played a huge part in the added traffic. That meant that we were able to send out almost twice as many email updates which also brought more traffic to our new content.

Probably the most positive indicator for me this month is that **our organic search traffic has grown steadily throughout the month** (the last 4 days of November were the holidays, so I'm guessing that explains the lower volume the last week.) Our latest posts are all bringing in traffic steadily. I do think that HubSpot's emphasis on

writing for a specific buyer persona and our intentionality with writing have played an important role in that success.



So, overall I'm pleased so far, especially considering it's only been one month. Now, the big question in my mind for next month is, "Will we actually see that all important number that I really care about—a new customer?"

Month 2

HubSpot Review, Month 2: Loving, Loathing, Learning

JANUARY 10, 2014 | *Lance Cummins*



Photo Credit: Kevin Dooley

Our second month was less exciting in some ways than our first month on HubSpot. No tweets from HubSpot's co-founder. No link in the New York Times. But, in one all-important category, our second month blew away our first! Before I spill the beans, though, let's talk about what I'm loving, loathing, and learning in my second

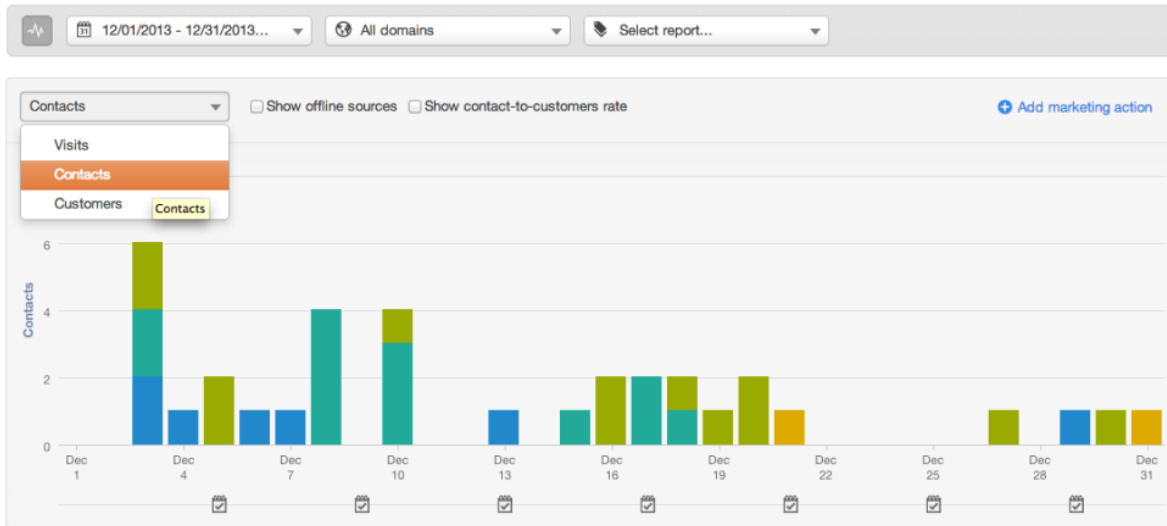
month HubSpot review. I'm going to do my best to be more brief in this review. No long-winded rants. No sidetracking. (Wait. I did it again.)

What I'm Loving

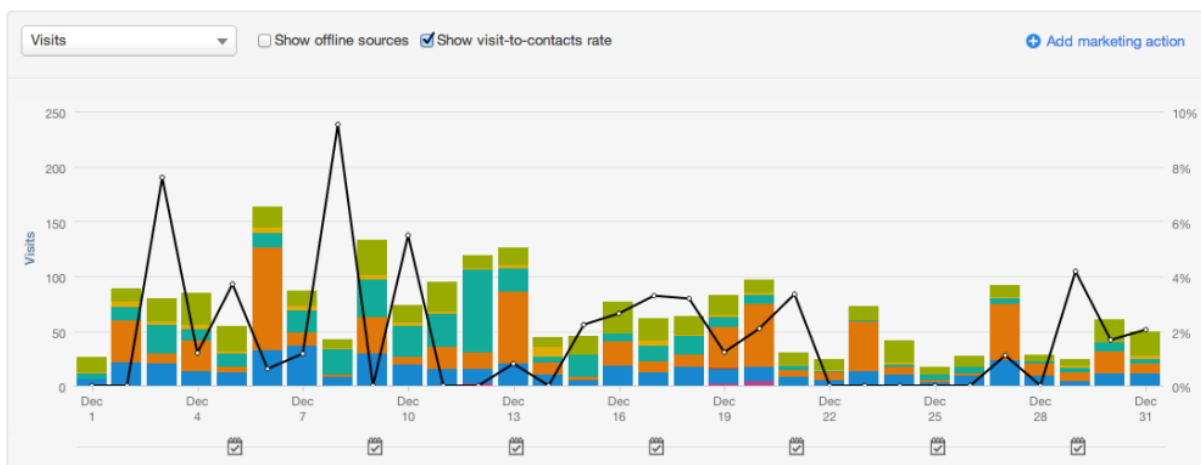
HubSpot's reporting interface is deceptively simple.

There are several areas in the interface that let you create reporting on your visits, contacts, and customers, but I spend most of my time in the Sources report. At first blush, the Sources report doesn't seem to offer much information, but HubSpot has packed plenty of interesting insight into that tiny frame. I particularly like the ease with which you can break out the information into visits, contacts, and customers.

Sources







With a click of a checkbox, I can see my visit-to-contacts rate.



HubSpot's Page Performance Tool helped me identify page loading speed issues easily.

See those red Xs and warning signs to the left of the page?

Page	Views	CTA %	Keywords	Links
 Does HubSpot Really Work? http://nectafy.com/does-hubspot-really-work	931	0.7%	5	26
 Inbound Marketing & Content Marketing With Personality Boston http://nectafy.com/	772	2.78%	4	8
 My First Month on HubSpot: The Good, The Bad, The Data http://nectafy.com/first-month-2013-hubspot-review	589	0.35%	2	1
 Blog Wisdom - Internet Marketing Consulting Boston, MA Nectafy http://nectafy.com/blog	407	0.3%	0	0

HubSpot identified that something wasn't working quite right.

Thanks to that insight, I did a little digging and found out that I am having real page load issues. Now I'm moving my site to WP Engine for hosting and using CloudFlare as my CDN to speed things up. Hopefully, I'll have a good report next month that speed issues are

gone.

Page Detail - Inbound Marketing & Content Marketing With Personality | Boston

<http://nectafy.com/>

11/01/2013 - 12/31/2013

Back to Pages List

693

Views from 11/01/2013 - 12/31/2013

Page Details

On Page SEO

Ranked Keywords

Inbound Links

CTAs

Internal Links

Links to this Page

Links from this Page

Social Media

83%

4

8

5

1

20

Page Load

There is one problem with this page's page load [dismiss all](#)

This page took too long to load. [dismiss](#)

It took 3.577 seconds to load the HTML of your page.

Page Title

There are no problems with this page's title

Meta Description

There is one dismissed problem with this page's meta description [reset all](#)

Calls-to-Action

There are no problems with this page's calls-to-action

H1 Tags

There is one dismissed problem with this page's h1 tags [reset all](#)

Images

There are no problems with this page's images

Links

There are no problems with this page's links

Dismiss all suggestions

Reset Suggestions

Refresh page data

The Calls-To-Action page shows how well these calls-to-action are working.

Calls-to-Action [Tutorial](#)

Status	Preview	Views	Views → clicks	Clicks	Clicks → subs.	Subs.	Updated	
Download 26 Professional Photography Secrets								
						3 pages	Embed code	Details
		343	4.4%	15	26.7%	4	Dec 19, 2013	▼
13 Secrets Website Redesign								
						2 pages	Embed code	Details
		620	1.6%	10	30%	3	Nov 22, 2013	▼
Download Written Style Guide								
						3 pages	Embed code	Details
		228	12.3%	28	60.7%	17	Nov 18, 2013	▼
Single Pages - Download Unconventional Guide								
						22 pages	Embed code	Details
		617	1.3%	8	62.5%	5	Nov 18, 2013	▼
Home - Download Unconventional Guide								
							Embed code	Details
		139	1.4%	2	50%	1	Nov 18, 2013	▼
Single Pages - Request Free Assessment								
							Embed code	Details
		0	0%	0	0%	0	Nov 17, 2013	▼
Single Pages - Download 39 Lead Generation Ideas								
						68 pages	Embed code	Details
		3,604	0.6%	22	36.4%	8	Nov 17, 2013	▼
Home - Request Free Assessment								
						1 page	Embed code	Details
		633	1.7%	11	0%	0	Nov 17, 2013	▼
Home - Download 39 Lead Generation Ideas								
						1 page	Embed code	Details
		637	3.6%	23	30.4%	7	Nov 17, 2013	▼

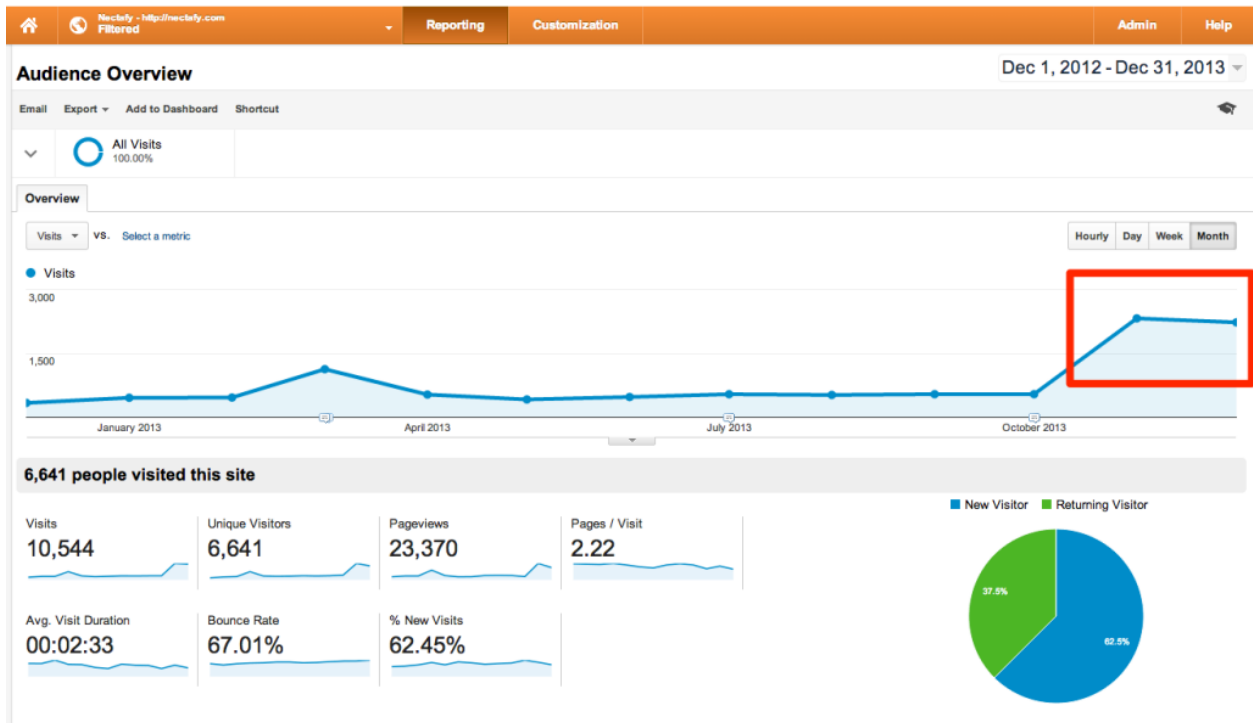
The monthly email report is clear and easy to share.

I receive this in my inbox at the end of each month.

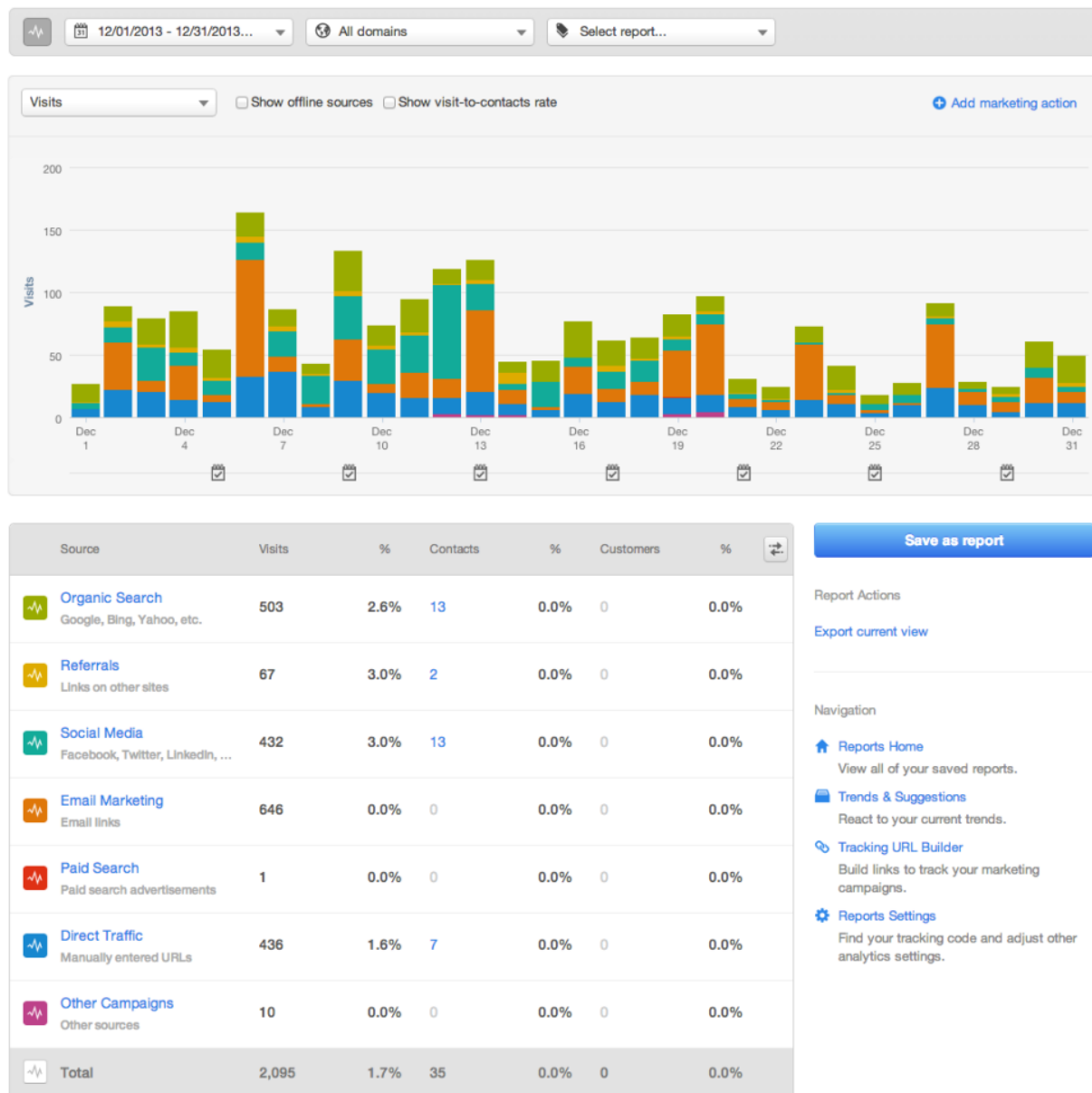


Unique Visits

From Google Analytics, just wanted to show you how it looks compared to my “pre-experiment” days.



Sources



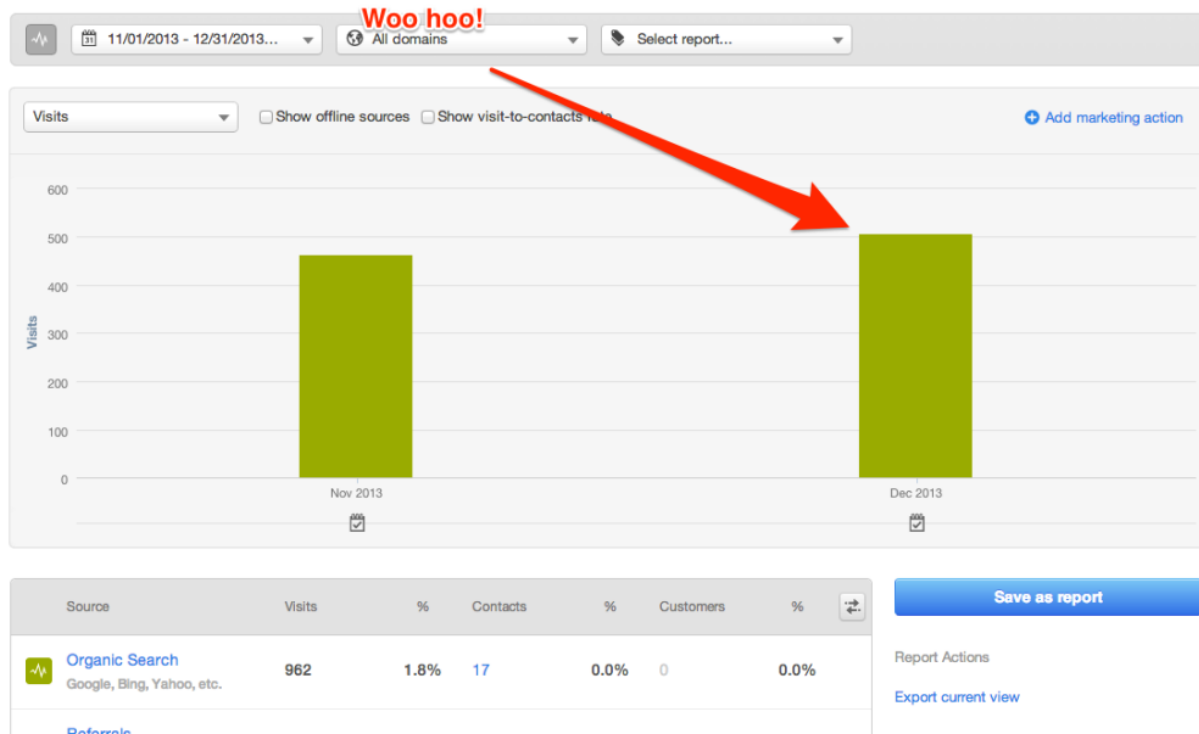
Visits in December 2013: 2,095

Visits in November 2013: 2,296

The good news is that even though our total traffic was down, our organic traffic actually grew in December, even with the crazy

schedule.

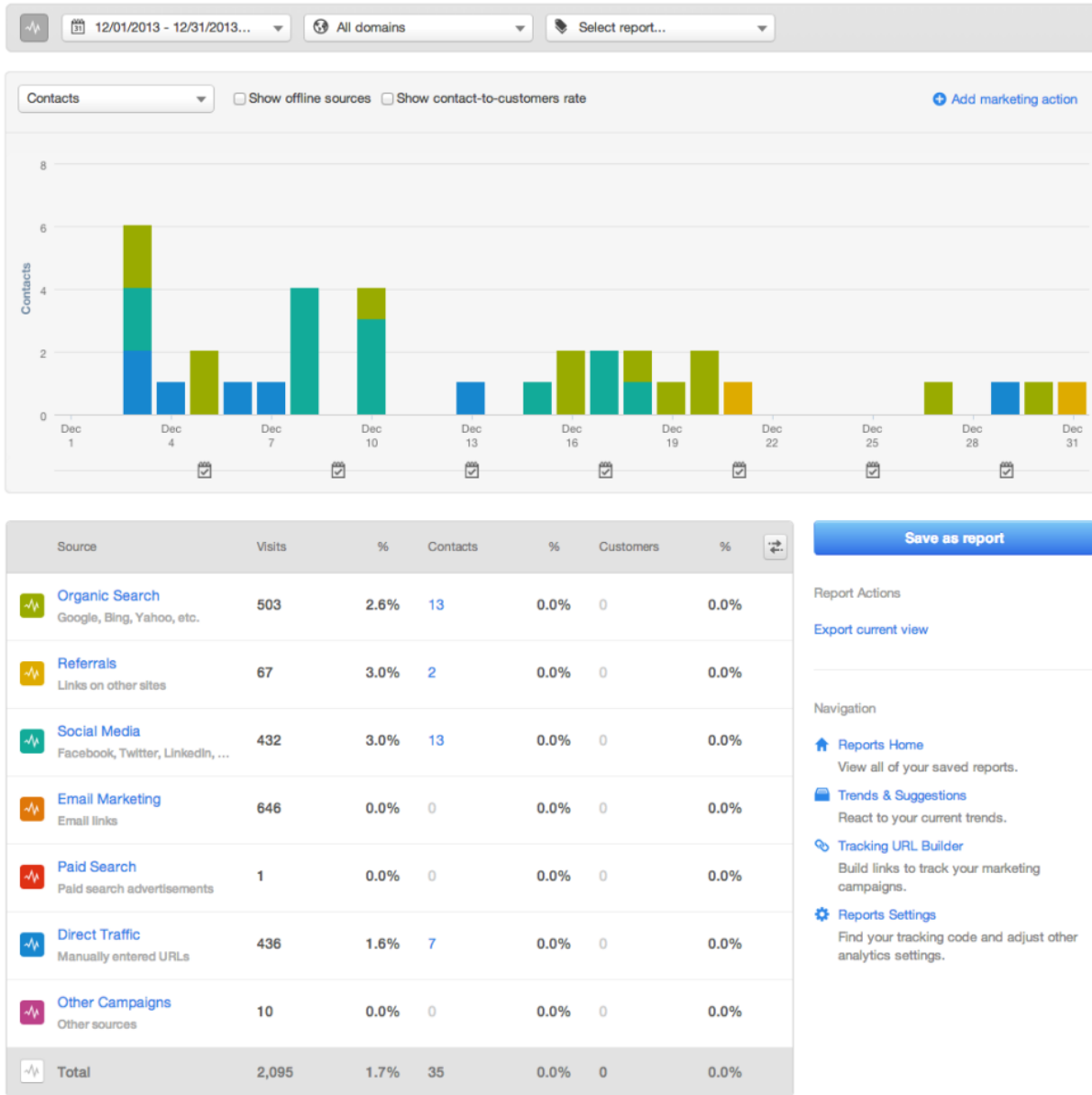
Sources



Leads

According to last month's report, we had 22 leads in November. This chart shows quite a bit more for the previous month due to two reasons: 1) It attributed a bunch of leads when I imported my email list from MailChimp, and 2) it seems that HubSpot updates previous months' data when visitors become leads. (More on that in the "Loathing" section.) But, let's stay focused. Leads are doing great!

Sources



Total leads for December 2013: 35

Leads for November 2013: Originally 22, now appears to be updated to 97.

Response rate for December 2013: 1.7%

Response rate for November 2013: 4.2% (this includes post-month updates and that email import)

Customers

Alright, so here's the exciting part! In December, we were able to partner with one new client as a result of our inbound marketing efforts. We're so pumped to be able to serve them and to become a part of their team. I'm so crazy excited I can hardly type straight.



Total Customers for December 2013: 1

What I'm Loathing

"Loathing?" Really? OK, let me clarify this right off the bat. Loathing is probably too strong of a word to use here, but it works so well with "Loving" that I had to use it in my title. (For some odd reason, I

was reminded of this song. To get the joke, fast forward to a couple of minutes in if you're impatient.).

After two months of working with HubSpot, I'm a lot more familiar with the tool. And we all know what familiarity breeds, right? (The right answer is "contempt," but again, that's too strong of a word... but it's still a lot of fun to use.) Actually the things I'm loathing are probably better described as "annoyances." So what's sticking in my craw after two months of using HubSpot?

1. Data is NOT real-time.

This is not a big deal in the larger scope of things, since (most likely) you're not making inbound marketing decisions moment to moment. But it does make staring at my dashboard in HubSpot slightly less exciting. So far, it appears that the data in my Sources report can be up to three hours behind. This screen shot is a little kinder than some I've taken.

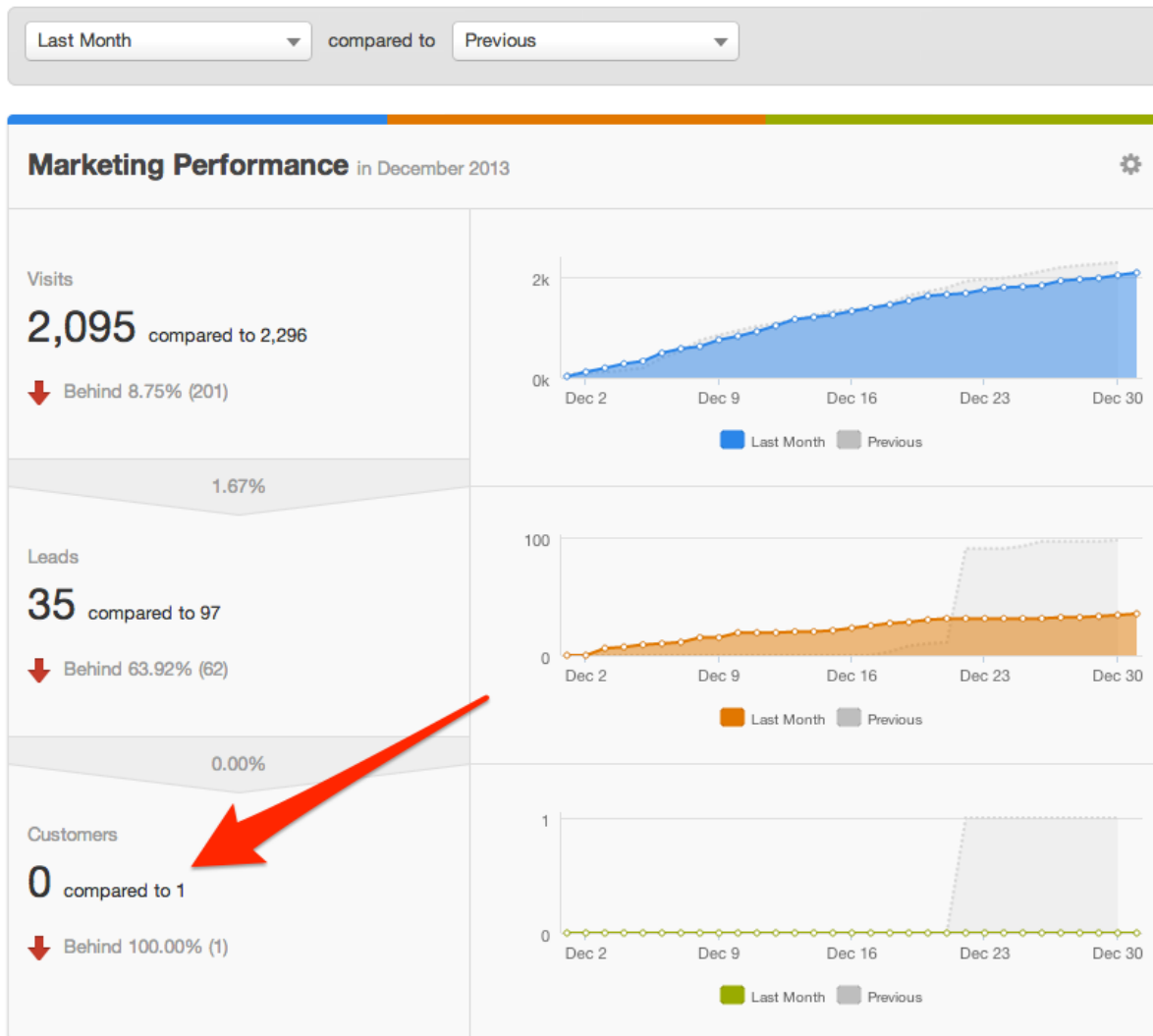
154	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
175	To quote Inigo Montoya in The Princess Bride, "I hate waiting."				
658	1.2%	8	0.0%	0	0.0%
Data last updated an hour ago					

Man, I hate waiting. The upside, though, is when I check my Sources report before quitting for the night, it never looks as good as it does the next morning. This gets my day off to a better start. I realize that's kind of weird and may give you some insight into my psychological underpinnings.

2. Customers and leads are shown in past, not current, reports.

Customers and leads apparently get reported in the month they first connected with your site and NOT in the more obvious month of the date of their becoming a lead or a customer. Let me explain. We were able to change the status of one lead to a customer on December 31st. I was pretty excited to see a big "1" under customers in my Dashboard. The next day, I looked and was pretty

bummed to see this instead.



Huh? To make matters more “loathsome” (annoying), it appears that leads are attributed in a similar way. I’ll save the part about leads for another day. Let’s focus on customers. Now, I’ve talked about this with my HubSpot consultant, Kelsey, and she’s checked it out with her sources. She said that there was much discussion and engineering that went into making the reporting perform this way.

And I think I understand that it's an effort to help you better gauge the impact of your marketing by connecting the dots back to your first encounter with that customer. But, I would at least like some sort of option to view a customer either in the month they became a customer OR when we first connected. In my accounting software I have something similar to this. I can either view income statements based on what was billed, or I can check a box and view those statements on a cash basis, to see what actually came in.

What I'm Learning

More content equals more results.

We ramped up our content output to three times per week, with one of those posts being a "roundup" post. We realized pretty quickly that we need to create specific topics for those roundup posts for them to be helpful and also to help with organic searches more effectively. We are changing the format of that series for the next month.

Editorial calendars are really necessary.

We've developed an internal calendar that is working well for us, based on the tips that Tiffany outlined in her [post about creating](#)

[an editorial calendar in Basecamp](#). She's so organized that I can't help but look organized, too.

Buyer personas are critical.

Creating more focused content based on our buyer personas is working. (If you'd like to have a look at our buyer personas, just [ask me on our contact page](#), and I'd be glad to share.)

Handcrafted emails are not quite as cool as handcrafted leather bags, but almost.

Email updates are working well for us to bring readers back to the site. Our click rates are staying pretty strong. We haven't started sending many manual workflow emails because we only just now have our next offer ready to go. Instead, we're using our email in a more traditional content marketing role by handcrafting emails and

sending them out each time we create a fresh piece of content.

Accelerate Your Brand In 2014 ● Sent Dec 30, 2013 — Updated Dec 30, 2013 by Tiffany Nix	347	30.3%	7.2%	⚙️ ▼
No Email Blast ● Sent Dec 27, 2013 — Updated Dec 27, 2013 by Lance C...	346	43.1%	19.4%	⚙️ ▼
5 Brilliant Marketing Tips In 2 Minutes Or Less ● Sent Dec 23, 2013 — Updated Dec 23, 2013 by Tiffany Nix	350	33.1%	11.7%	⚙️ ▼
Online Marketing Mistakes Make You Sound Clue... ● Sent Dec 20, 2013 — Updated Dec 20, 2013 by Lance C...	349	36.4%	16.3%	⚙️ ▼

HubSpot, WordPress, Gravity Forms, and Zapier create online marketing harmony.

We've tied in our WordPress website to HubSpot's lists with [Zapier](#) and [Gravity Forms](#). Oh. Yeah. It works pretty well, and only feels a little buggy. I don't think that bugginess is HubSpot's fault though. Once I can afford to move to the [Pro version](#), I'll actually have an API that I can use for all of this and it should be at least **27% more**

reliable. Yes. I made up that percentage.

The screenshot displays the Zapier dashboard interface. At the top, the Zapier logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'Make a Zap!', 'Explore', 'Pricing', 'Get Free Tasks!', and 'Dashboard' are on the right, along with a user profile icon. The main section is titled 'My Zaps (Shared)' and includes a search bar 'Filter my Zaps by name or app...'. Below this, there are two sections: 'On' and 'Off'. The 'On' section contains three active Zaps: 'Add MailChimp to HubSpot', 'New Blog Subscribe', and 'Add Evernote Note to CRM Note'. The 'Off' section contains one inactive Zap: 'Capsule CRM New Organization to Harvest Create Client'. Each Zap entry shows the source and target app icons, the Zap name, and a toggle switch. On the right side, there are three panels: 'Make a New Zap' or 'Explore Zaps', a tip section 'Want tips to help you become more efficient, productive, and awesome?' with a 'Subscribe to the Zapier blog!' button, and an 'Account Usage' section showing 'Tasks' (5 / 3185), 'Active Zaps' (3 / 20), and 'Monthly Usage Resets In: 3 weeks, 2 days' with a link 'Need more tasks or Zaps?'.

zapier

Make a Zap! Explore Pricing Get Free Tasks! Dashboard

My Zaps (Shared)

Filter my Zaps by name or app...

On

Add MailChimp to HubSpot OFF ON

New Blog Subscribe OFF ON

Add Evernote Note to CRM Note OFF ON

Off

Capsule CRM New Organization to Harvest Create Client OFF ON

Make a New Zap or Explore Zaps

Want tips to help you become more efficient, productive, and awesome?

Subscribe to the Zapier blog!

Account Usage

Tasks 5 / 3185


Active Zaps 3 / 20

Monthly Usage Resets In: 3 weeks, 2 days

Need more tasks or Zaps?

When offers match blog content, it's a beautiful thing.

This should probably be obvious, but when you create an offer and blog content around the same things, click through rates go up.

CTA	Click-Through %
Download Written Style Guide	13.33%
	http://explore.nectafy.com/download-written-style-guide-template 13.33%

I'm now bonafide and certified.

I passed the certification exams for inbound marketing & HubSpot certification. If you're serious about using HubSpot, these certifications are a must. No joking. They've done an excellent job of distilling inbound marketing in their training videos. These exams help confirm that you paid attention.



You get used to spending a lot of time on inbound marketing.

I didn't think I had spent as much time on inbound marketing as in December as I did in November. My time sheets tells a different story, though. I put in just about the same time month over month: around 40 hours. I think time is the single biggest obstacle for success with HubSpot for most small businesses. Inbound marketing takes a boatload of it, and to succeed, you'll need to get creative with getting help creating content and mining this data for your next steps.

It's a good idea to share what you've learned.

While I don't claim to be a HubSpot expert yet, I am an **eager learner**. I'm also eager to share what I'm learning. We've gotten off to a great start using HubSpot, and that's something I'm proud of, and also very grateful for. Overcoming the inertia to get started with inbound marketing can be difficult for all of us, so I want to share my "[30 Insider Tips For Getting Fast Results With HubSpot](#)" with you. Watch the video and benefit from our experience so far.

Month 3

After 3 Months Of HubSpot, I've Had Enough

FEBRUARY 14, 2014 | *Lance Cummins*



You could say that the honeymoon is over.

I guess it has lasted longer than most honeymoons. Three months.

For the last three months I've plunged myself into a self-inflicted experiment to see if HubSpot really works like they claim it does. Each month, I've written an in-depth review of my data, my

experiences, and my gripes as I've completely immersed myself in the "HubSpot ideology."

I've been a good student (although I will confess that this past month I haven't been an "A+" student, more like a high "B") following the process exactly as much as I can. I've watched the videos. I've created buyer personas, landing pages, and calls to action. I've emailed and tweeted and shared. I've enlisted the aid of two Nectafy employees to help me create a ton of really solid content.

I've added 40 additional hours of work personally each month to the time I was already spending running my business. I've checked my HubSpot reports at least 127,238 times...a day. (OK, that last sentence was an exaggeration just for effect. Humor me.)

After pouring my heart and soul into this HubSpot experiment, I'm left with only one thing to say.

I've had enough.

I've had enough time and practical experience with HubSpot to say that undeniably, categorically, data-phorically, HubSpot works.

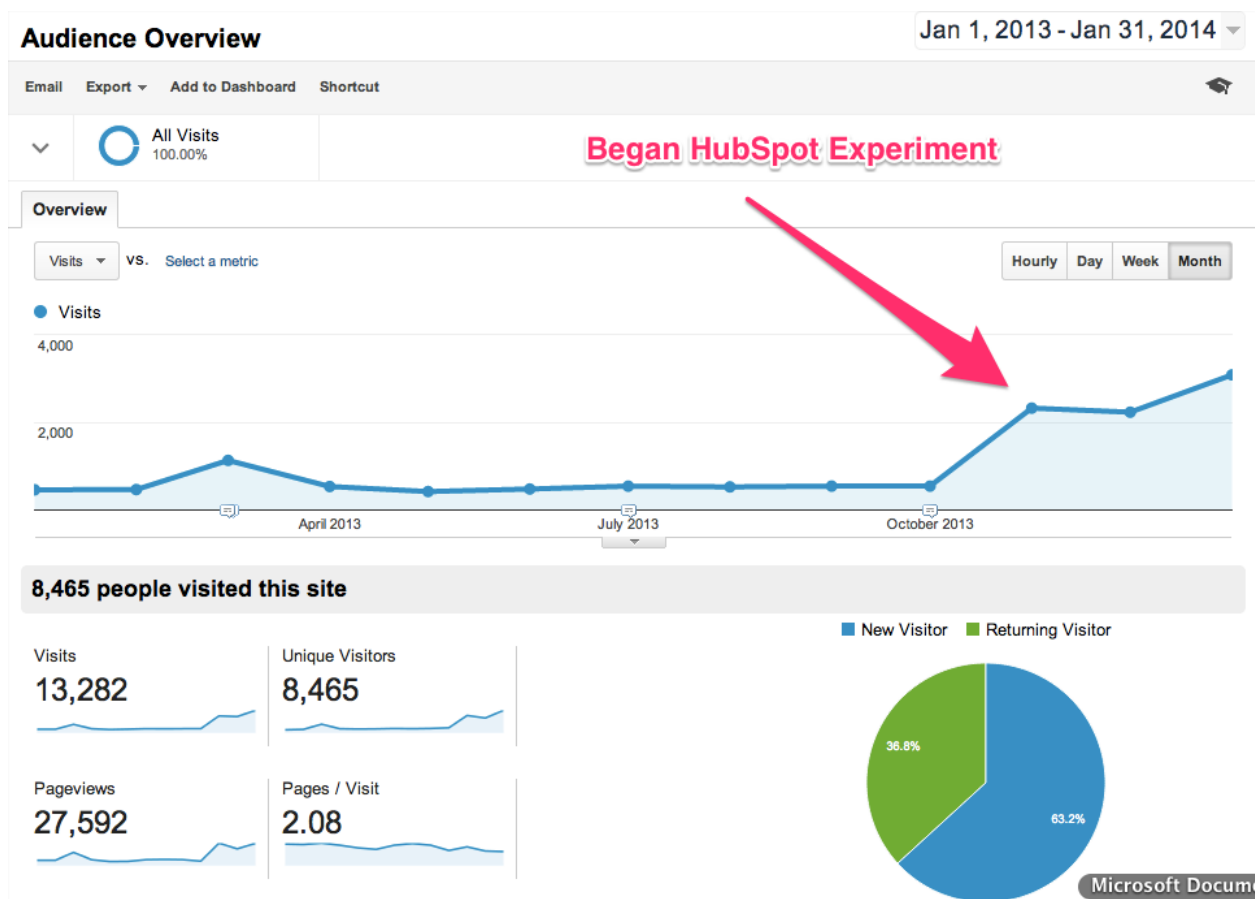
(Alright, you can hate me now for the tease.)

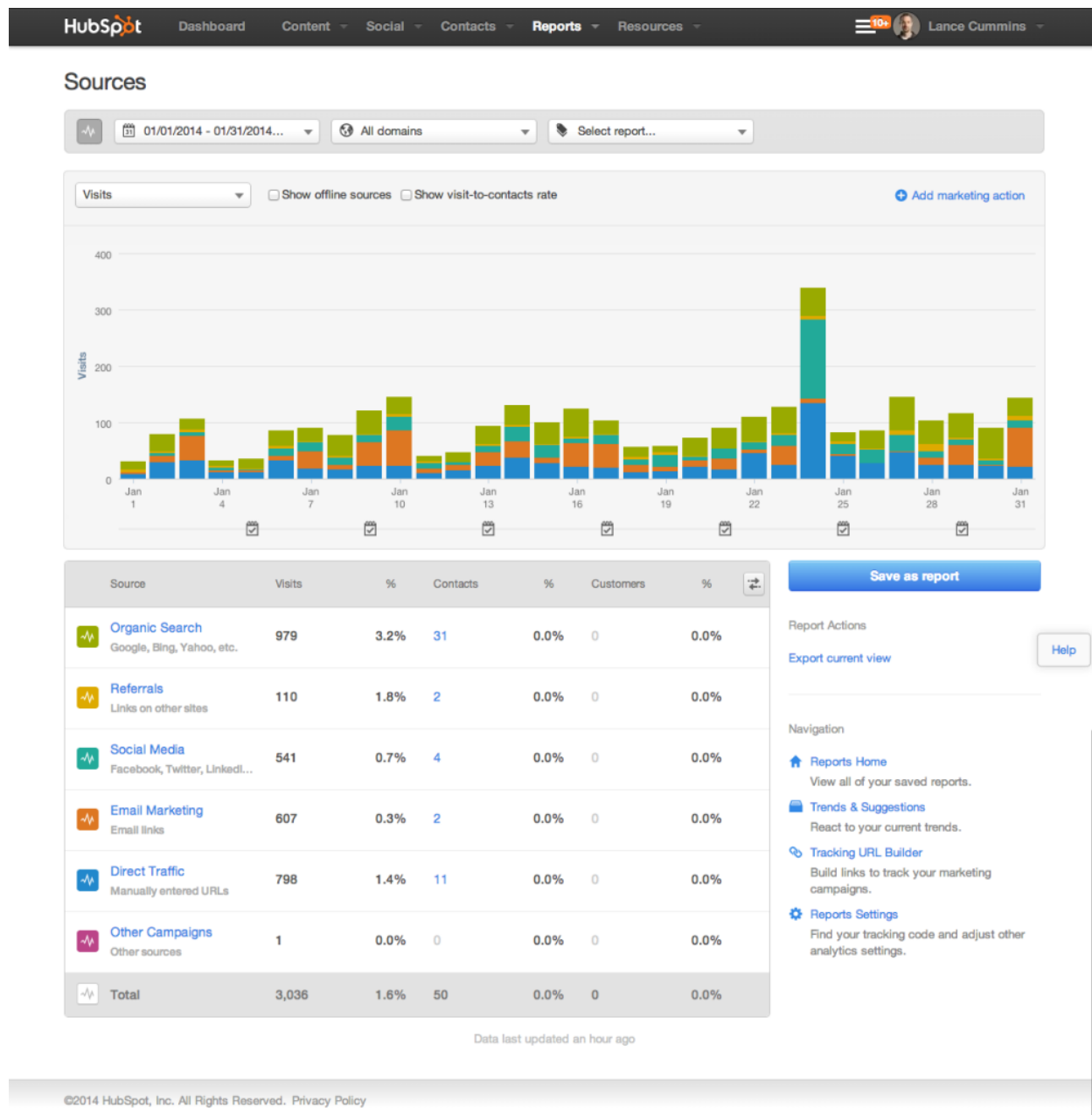
So, yeah, my HubSpot honeymoon may be over, but it looks like this is a long-term relationship that's going to last.

But enough of my own opinions. **Here's the data for January 2014, so you can draw your own conclusions.**

Let's dive into data.

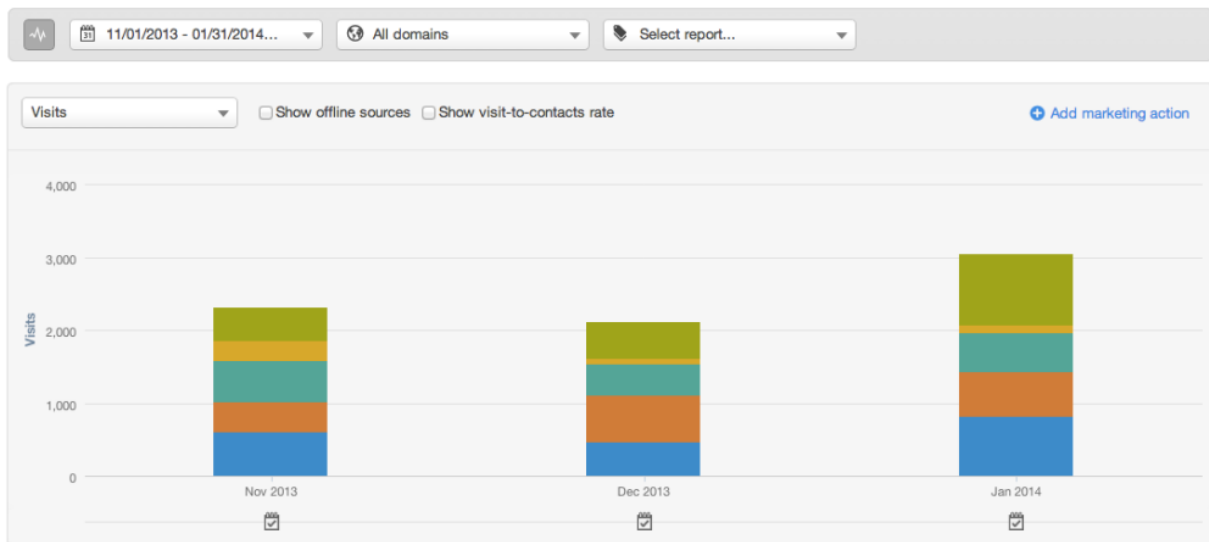
Visits





That crazy spike on January 24 was from my, [What Is Content Marketing? You're Thinking Of It Backwards](#), post. Thanks to everybody who shared it out there! That was a fun day to watch the

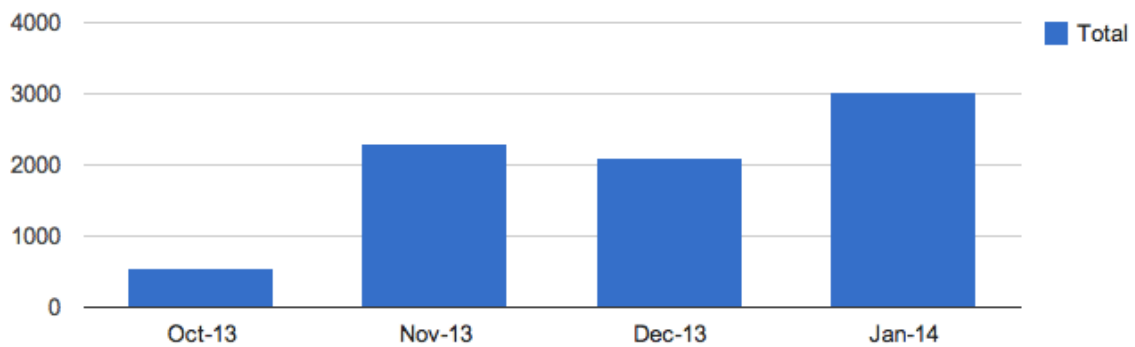
reports. That day, we had our highest visits since we started this HubSpot experiment.



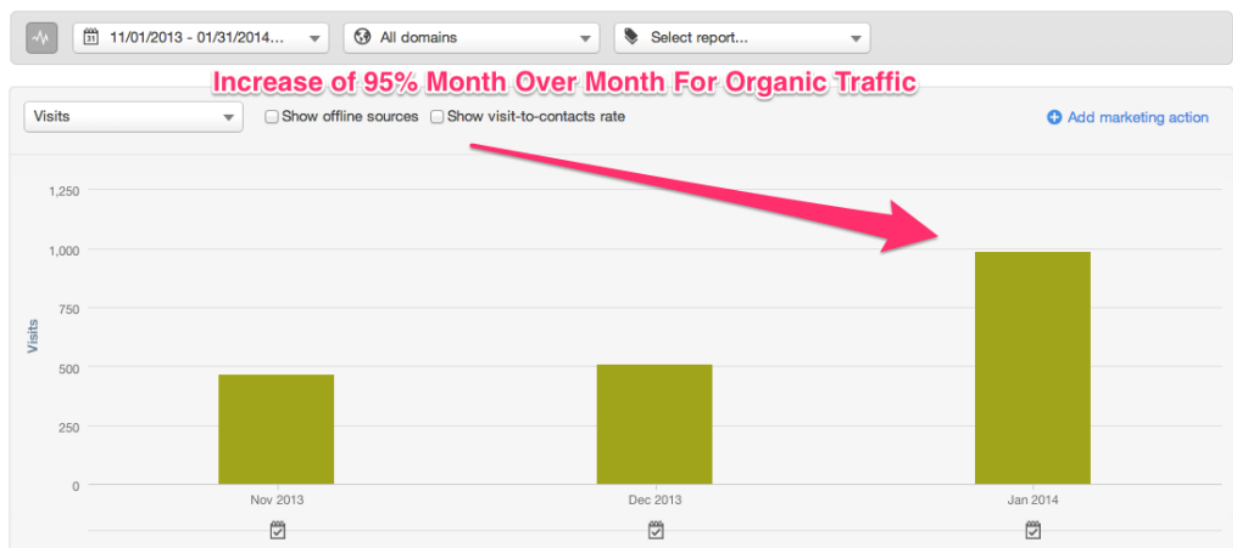
Visits in January 2014: 3,036

Visits in December 2013: 2,095

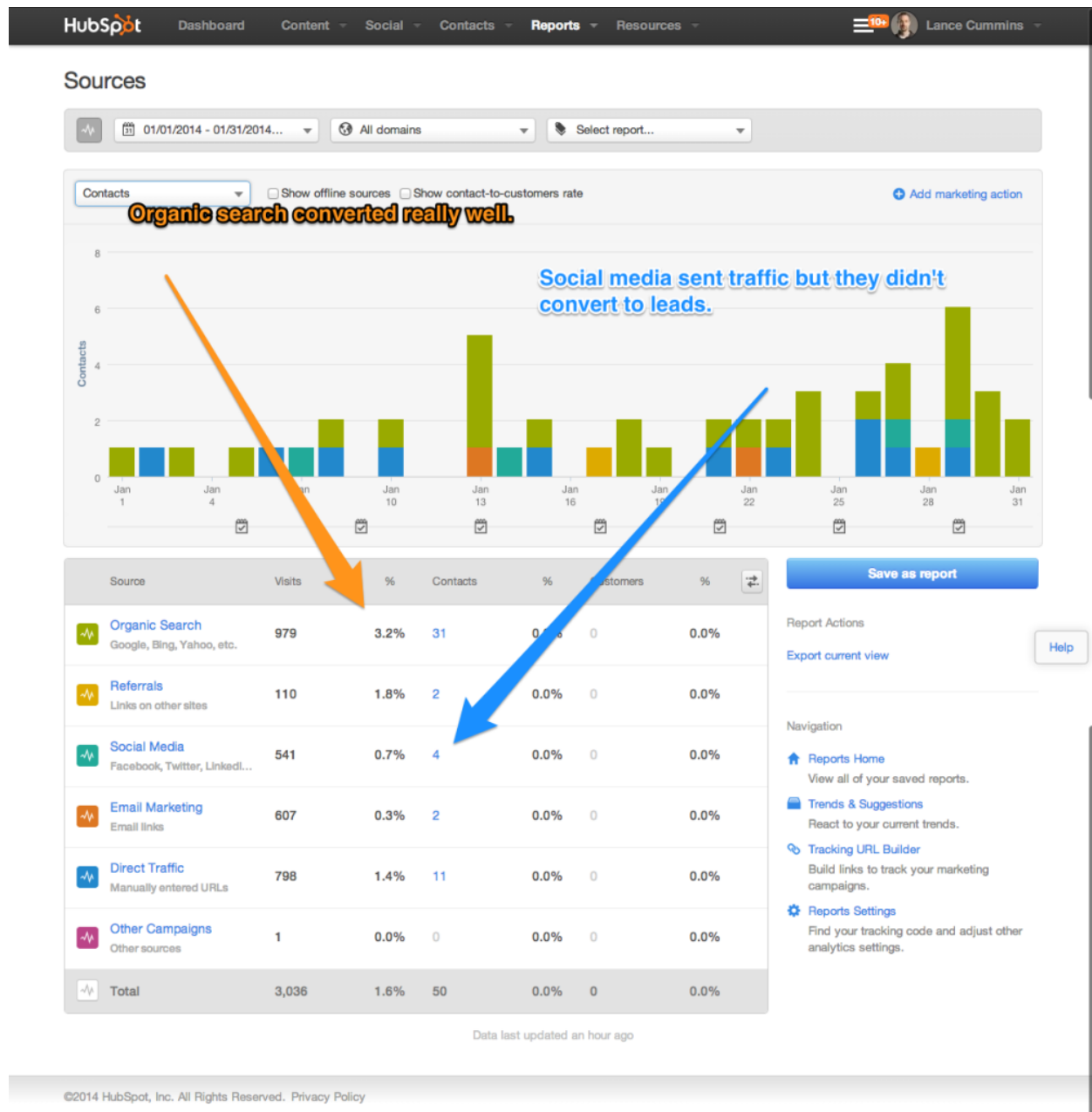
That's a **45% increase month over month** for all visits, and represents **457% growth** from the month before we started our experiment.



But here's the exciting part, organic search was up **huge!** How huge? How about a **95% growth** over December?



Leads



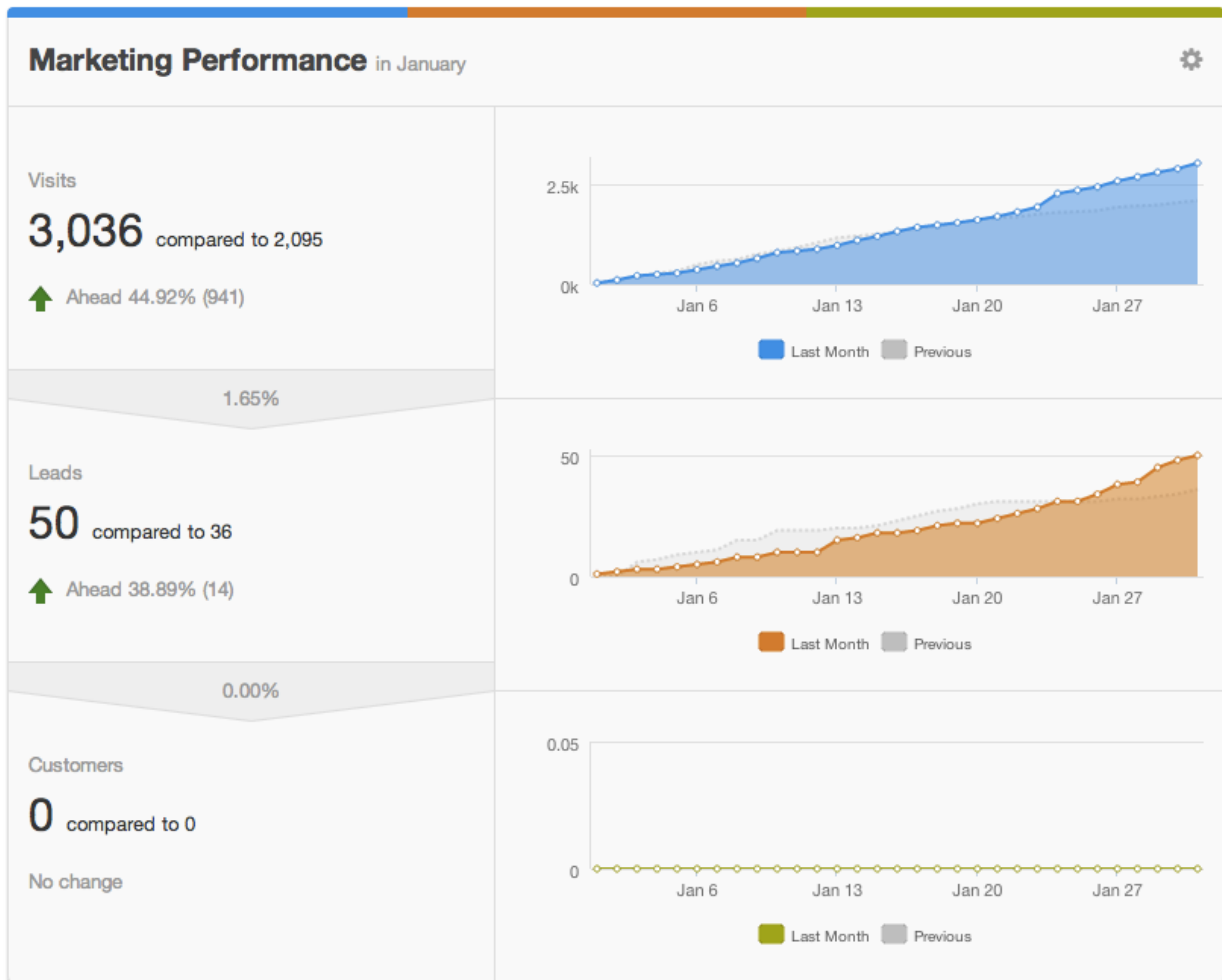
Leads for January 2014: 50

Leads for December 2013: 36

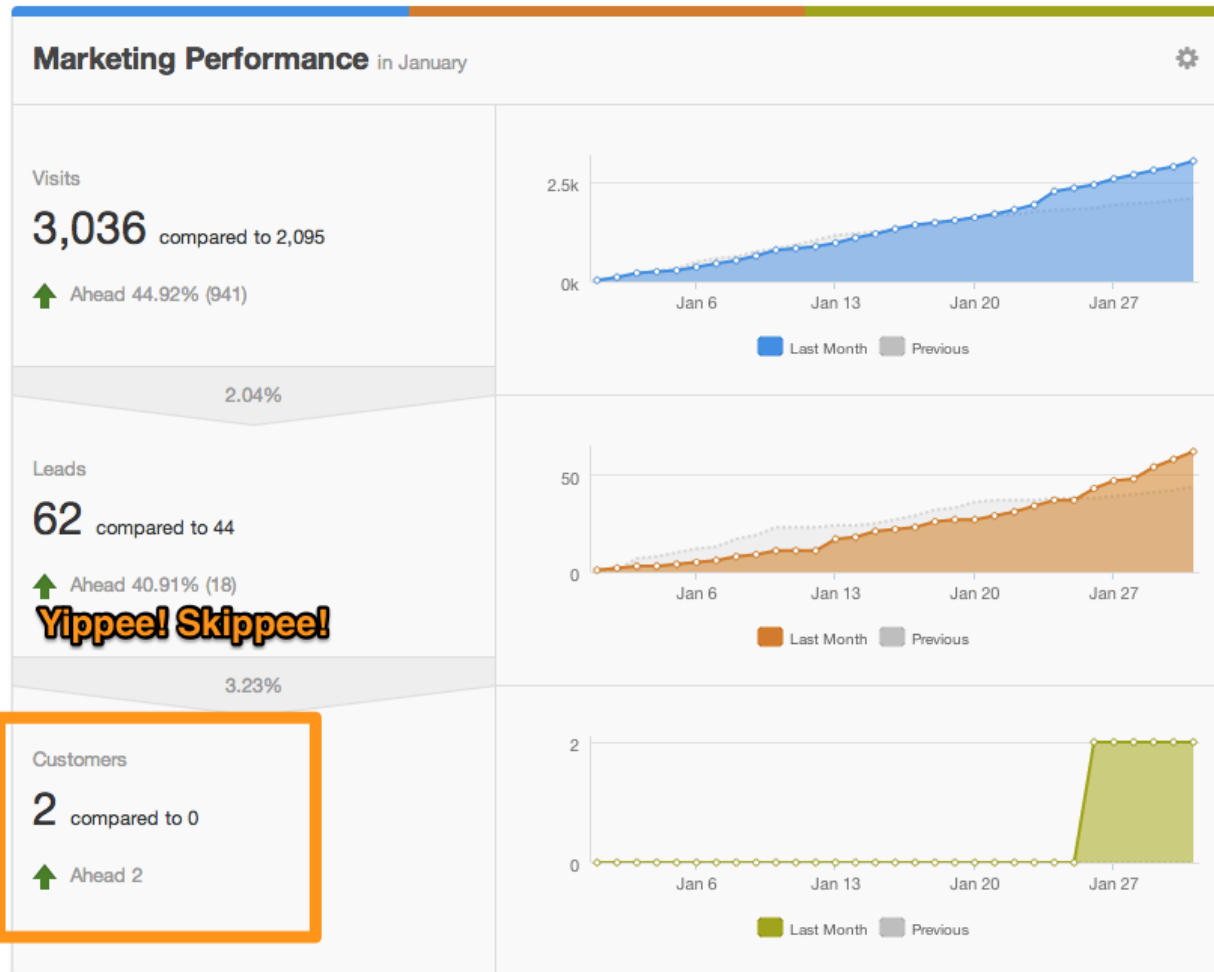
That's a **39% increase** month over month. We learned some interesting things about our visits to leads conversion rate when we looked at these reports. Organic search converted at 3.2% while social media converted at .7%. That's much more dramatic than it's been in the past months. We're going to keep an eye on that.

Customers

We didn't gain any customers via inbound marketing activity this month. But we did gain customers offline. And all of my marketing is focused on inbound, so I feel like inbound marketing gets an "assist" for any new customer.



We did, however, gain two customers off-line, and we're tracking that in HubSpot as well. I just check the "Show Offline sources" box, and this is what we show.



Customers in January 2014: 2

Customers in December 2013: 1

Even though inbound marketing didn't directly convert these customers, I'm pretty pleased with how our pipeline is looking. It's a critical factor to determine how much capacity your sales team and your production team has when you're attempting to onboard new

customers. As a small inbound marketing agency, we don't need tons of new customers every month. We just need a steady stream.

More reporting love.

I've already shown in my past posts about how useful HubSpot's reporting is. Today, I just want to show off a little email that they send you at the end of the month that's really simple, and very cool. First, as I've shown before, you get a recap email with highlights of your work. (I am just a touch confused why those lead numbers don't match up...but I digress.) But, this month, I actually downloaded the Powerpoint, and I was pleasantly surprised. It's kind of nice!

Cool.



January 2014 Recap



Visits

3,036 ▲ 44%

2,095 last month



Blog Views

2,120 ▲ 100%

0 last month



Leads

49 ▲ 36%

36 last month



Social Reach Growth

5 ▲ 400%

1 last month



Landing Pages Conversion Rate

29.23% ▲ 6.47%

22.76% last month



Email Opens

2,841 ▲ 17%

2,423 last month

[Download Powerpoint](#)

[Go to my Dashboard](#)

Very cool.

Here are the slides from the PowerPoint.

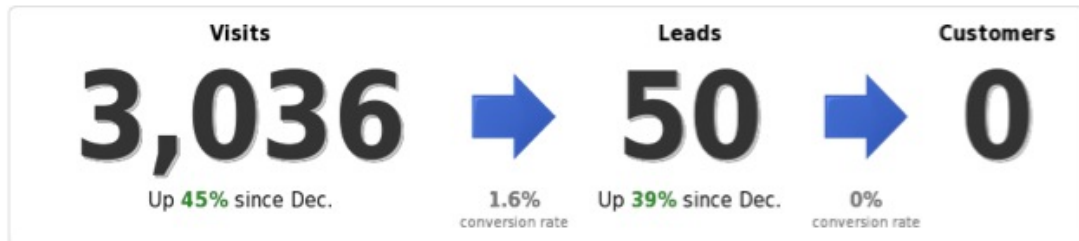
Monthly Marketing Performance Report

nectafy.com

January 2014

Powered by: **HubSpot**

nectafy.com: Monthly Marketing Summary



Source: HubSpot

nectafy.com:

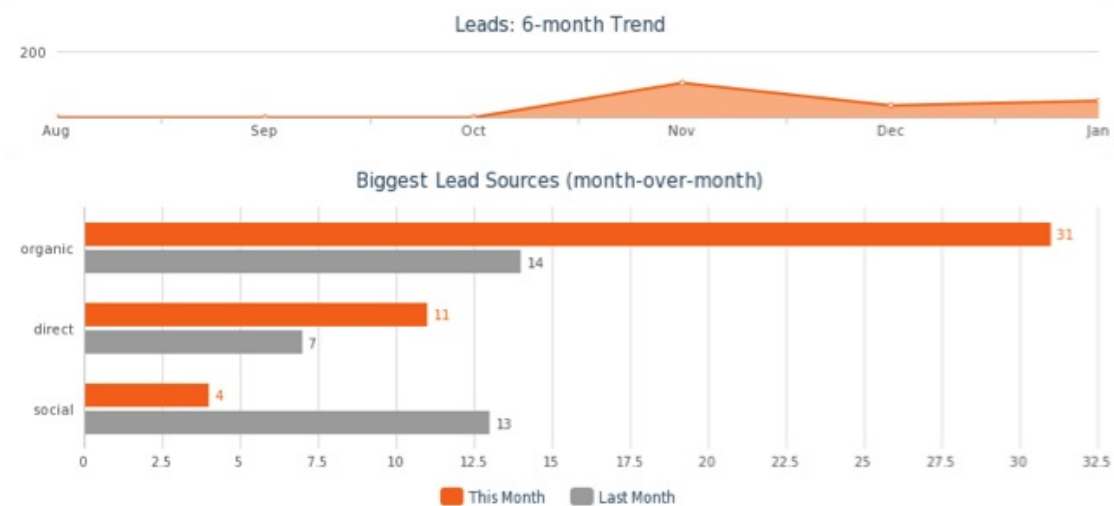
Visits: Monthly Trend



Source: HubSpot

nectafy.com:

Leads: Monthly Trend



Source: HubSpot

nectafy.com:

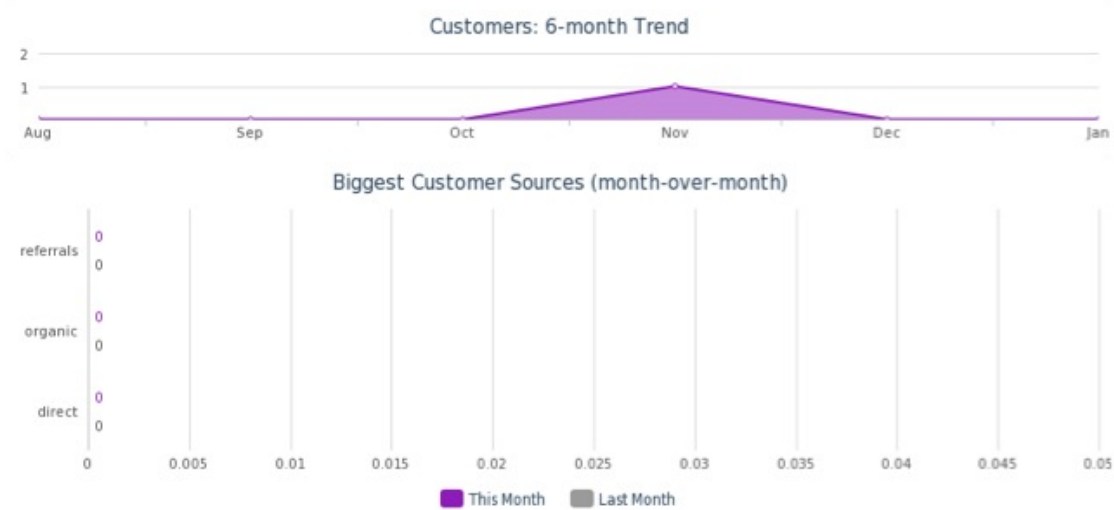
Organic vs Paid Search Traffic: Monthly Trend



Source: HubSpot

nectafy.com:

Customers: Monthly Trend



Source: HubSpot

nectafy.com:

Landing Pages: Top Pages this Month

Landing Page	Views	Submissions	Conversion Rate
Written Style Guide Template Download	48	25	52.08%
Video: 30 Insider Tips For Getting Fast Results From HubSpot	53	19	35.85%
39 Lead Generation Ideas To Fill Your Funnel	40	18	45.00%
Contact Us	43	12	27.91%
The 13 Website Redesign Secrets Your Web Design Company Wishes You Knew	19	10	52.63%

Source: 

nectafy.com:

Blog: Top Posts this Month

Article	Published	Comments	Inbound Links	Page Views
What Is Content Marketing? You're Thinking Backwards	24-Jan-2014	8	1	400
59 Benefits Of Content Marketing From 50 Expert Marketers	03-Jan-2014	7	9	364
HubSpot Review, Month 2: Loving, Loathing, Learning	10-Jan-2014	14	6	220
Video Content Marketing And Why You Shouldn't Freak Out	17-Jan-2014	0	0	95
9 Mistakes That Prove You're Not Effectively Maintaining Your Business's Website	15-Jan-2014	0	0	85

Source: 

Not a bad little presentation, with **zero effort** from me!

I really wanted to show off some pretty cool stuff that you can see about contacts, but I'm going to save that for another day.

Yeah, but it can't be all flowers and candy.

Of course, I can't say that my third month on HubSpot has been free from troubles. But really, what relationship can say that?

- I am getting more and more concerned with the time delays on reporting. Last month I complained about this, but I think it's getting more serious. I contacted tech support, and they were super helpful. They confessed that they're dealing with very large amounts of data, so updating that data becomes more time consuming. I can understand that. But a company that is all about data needs to take some pretty serious steps to guarantee scalability as more and more people find out about HubSpot. The data is only going to increase. So, as pathetic as this seems, I beg whoever can do something about it there at HubSpot, "Please do something to improve reporting update times. Pretty please?"
- Some of my calls-to-action don't seem to be consistently showing the right data. I'm chalking that one up to my insistence on using WordPress as my site instead of the HubSpot COS. Still, I don't think should be a problem.
- There was a snag with reporting on my biggest traffic day ever. It wasn't because I overloaded the circuits or anything, but for some reason, the reporting showed hardly any email response, and instead attributed it to direct traffic. That just means that my email numbers are all off now, which kind of stinks. When I contacted support, again they were very helpful, but the only explanation they could find is that I must have changed some core settings. I did not touch any of the settings, so now I'm a little jumpy.
- I had to increase my pricing plan to \$300/mo because of exceeding the 100 contacts level. I'm not one to question their pricing strategies, but limiting the basic plan to only 100 contacts seems a little stingy to me. But I probably should just shut my mouth at this point. It looks like based on my traffic volume and email sends, I'm going to be pushed into that \$800/mo professional plan sooner than I expected. I guess this

traffic is a double-edged sword. I guess if you have to have problems, these are the right ones to have.

- I've been really antsy to do A/B testing on our email marketing, but sadly, HubSpot doesn't offer that even if I dish out \$800/mo for the professional plan. Aw, man. (Ooh, I have an idea for HubSpot movers and shakers. Could you make email A/B testing a purchased add-on?)

My very brief explanation of why HubSpot works.

HubSpot is a very efficient tool for doing inbound marketing. It's high-quality equipment.

Think about a professional golfer for a minute. Sure, he could use rusty old clubs and still beat me any day. Heck, he could use a baseball bat out there and beat me easily. But you notice that those professionals use professional equipment. It lets them focus on what they need to focus on. That's what HubSpot does. It delivers results because you become efficient in inbound marketing. Yes, you can cobble together tools for cheaper, but the best tools will always work better.

Looking toward the future.

I'm excited to "settle in" with HubSpot and see how I can implement the tools into my ongoing marketing efforts. Plus, I'm working on upgrading our internal sales process so we can help move leads to customers. I know I still have much to do with our website to explain what we do, and make the path more clear. And, we're working like crazy on producing more offers and content that our buyer personas care about.

Month 4

What Happens When You Use HubSpot For 4 Months?

MARCH 21, 2014 | *Lance Cummins*



I'm an optimistic guy. Even with that glaring genetic deficiency, I've found myself mentally keeping my own expectations low for each new month with HubSpot. Every month of this experiment I've thought, "OK, last month things were wonderful, and I can't imagine

that this next month will be better. At some point, the joy ride has to stop.”

But so far, it has been increasingly **more amazing**.

How amazing?

I'll show you in just a second.

If you don't know about my HubSpot experiment, I'll briefly catch you up to speed. In November 2013, I launched an experiment to see if HubSpot really was all that great. I published all of my existing numbers and swore to follow the HubSpot methodology and be an “A” student. The results have been shocking.

My Disclaimer

Some of the heady *intelligentsia* have (rightly) suggested that my experiment is flawed because of the interest generated by my experiment itself. In other words, by talking about a topic that many people are interested in and then performing a public experiment, I don't have real, scientific data. I somewhat agree. But as a case study, it's incredibly fascinating. In every industry (yes, even yours), potential customers have real, burning questions on

their mind. By tapping into those questions, and then talking about them in an open, honest way, you could experience a similar phenomenon.

Of course, in my case, it helps that the topic in question involves a company that is super-excited about their product and has taken a keen interest in what I'm doing. I've discovered that HubSpot employees are genuinely fired-up about their company, and are empowered to speak individually for their company. I commend the leadership at HubSpot for creating that kind of social environment!

Working with the staff at HubSpot has been an overwhelmingly positive experience for me, from my account reps, Casey & Kelsey, to the training folks like Nick and David, to the product development team who have asked for my opinions on a few things and seemed genuinely interested. (By the way, if you want to win someone's heart, ask their opinion on something and then listen. Bam. There's a free inter-personal relationship tip!)

So what happens when you use HubSpot for 4 months?

1. Your website suddenly becomes an integrated, critical component of your business.

Yes, we would all give an emotionless head nod if asked if our website is important to us. We all want more traffic. We want more high quality leads. But, I would almost bet that at this point, your website and its visitors seem like an unknowable, vague entity that both exist in some alternate reality.

Sure, you look at your analytics from time to time, and yes, the phone rings and you can only assume that it was because they saw your unbelievably cool website. But you don't have a tangible, quantifiable grasp on who is coming to your site, what they're doing, and why. Most importantly you have no idea if they're warming up to you or cooling down. Even if you did, you've got no way to do anything about it.

Well, honestly that's how I felt about my own web presence before I launched this experiment.

I've done content marketing for quite a while, complete with creative blog posts, email marketing, and a so-so effort with social media. But I wasn't connected to my site or my visitors. HubSpot has completely changed all of that. I think there are a couple of reasons it's so effective at connecting me to my web presence. First,

it's an all-in-one tool that has (just about) everything that you need to fully integrate yourself with your inbound marketing.

Now, before you roll your eyes at me and tell me that I could accomplish the same thing with a bunch of much cheaper tools from around the internet, just take a deep breath and let me explain. This statement is the equivalent of saying that instead of buying a Toyota Tundra, you can really accomplish the same thing with sheet metal, a set of wheels, and a couple of leather bucket seats. Could you feasibly build your own truck? **Absolutely**. But only a select few would have the know-how and patience to make it happen. And even then, there would always be annoying issues that just somehow make it not quite right. That's how it feels to piece marketing software together: tedious, time-consuming, and annoying. And it only serves to distance you from your website, not connect you more fully.

2. You begin to obsess about service even more than statistics.

In my first couple of months using HubSpot, I got pretty fired up about the statistics that I was seeing. That's understandable because the reports are easy to read and are simple to interpret. And, honestly, if you are used to not having much traffic or not

generating many leads, it's pretty euphoric. (In complete candor, I still get fired up when I look at these reports, especially on my phone. Their mobile app is a study in simplicity and clean design.)

But after four months of using the tool, my attitude and focus has begun to shift. Because HubSpot enables you to gather lead information so effectively, you quickly begin to think of the visitors to your site as real-live people, instead of statistics. I'm not saying that statistics and numbers and data aren't hugely critical to your success, I'm just saying that after four months of using HubSpot, I am so much more aware of the people who visit my site.

[I've talked about this before](#), but that benefit alone makes my web presence so much more personal and meaningful. As your leads re-visit your site and spend time reading your content, you begin to think more effectively about how to meet their needs with your content and with your services. It's a very powerful customer-service driver for me.

3. You develop a pretty awful sense of dissatisfaction with your current position.

This may sound weird, but I've noticed that after four months of using HubSpot, I find myself becoming more driven to make things

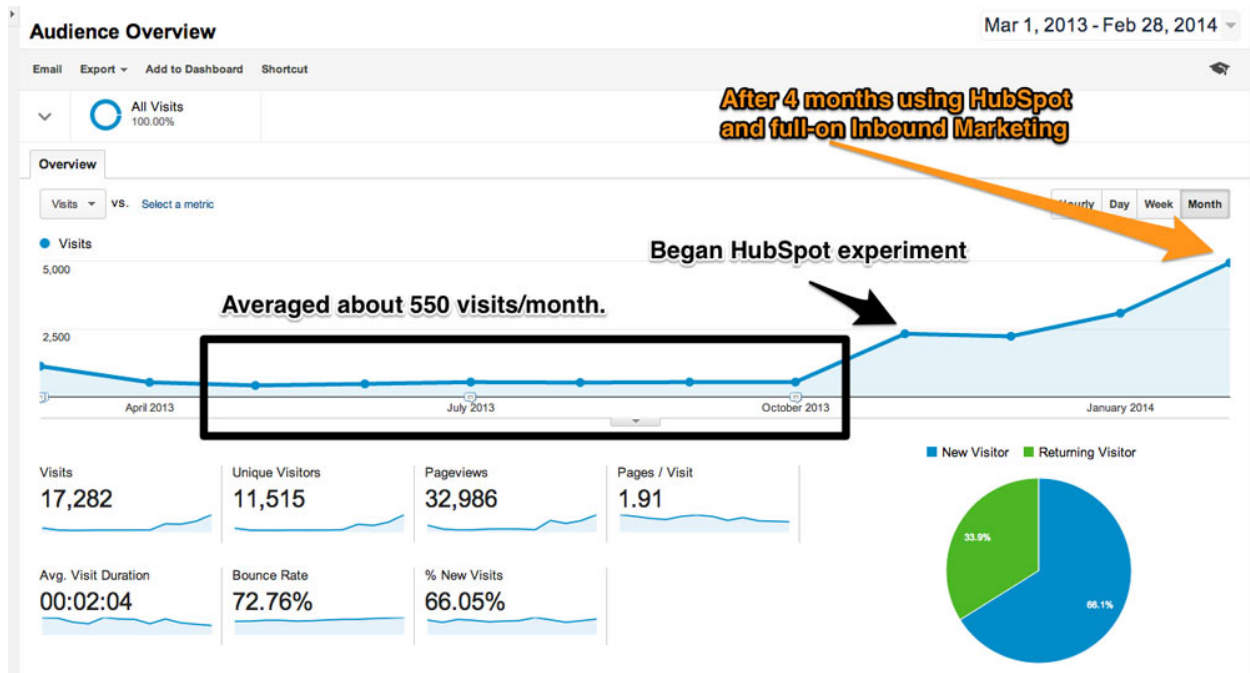
work even better. I'm constantly thinking about how to tweak our email marketing, or how to write something more helpful that gets more attention, or how to use the tools to generate better response. Before I used HubSpot, I think I felt like my marketing activity was somehow unrelated to results, as strange as that may sound. Since there was no solid connection from a visitor consuming content to becoming a customer, the process seemed static. Now, though, I get incredibly antsy to try something new to watch what happens. I've become a million times more proactive with my marketing.

4. You still get pretty pumped about numbers.

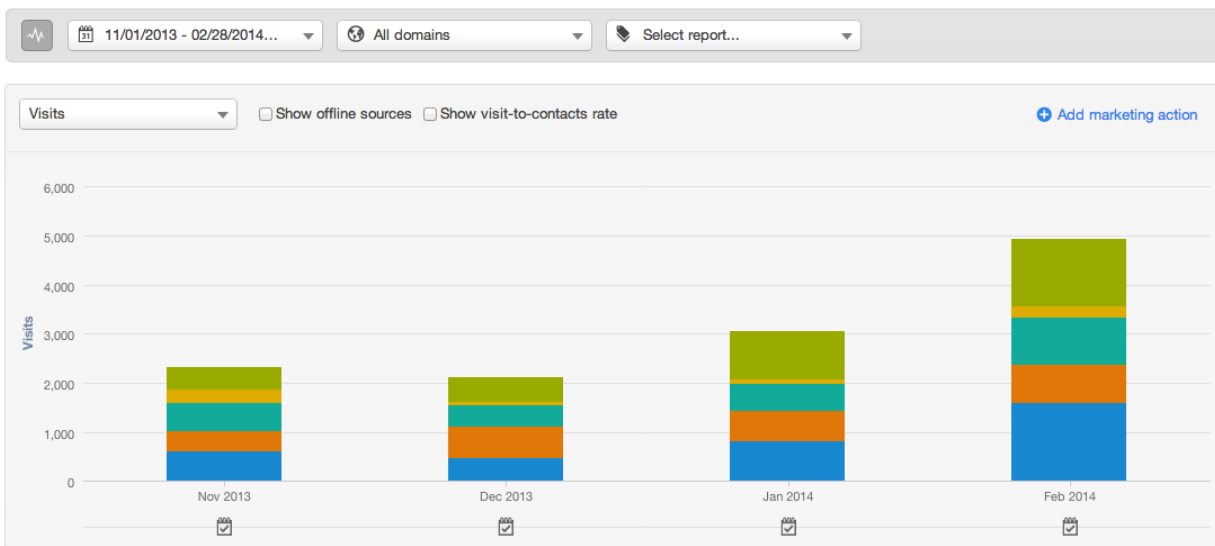
I can't lie. I love seeing these numbers increasing. So, let's dive in, shall we?

Visits

Here's a shot of our Google Analytics.



Now, here's my report from HubSpot.



Visits in February 2014: 4,901

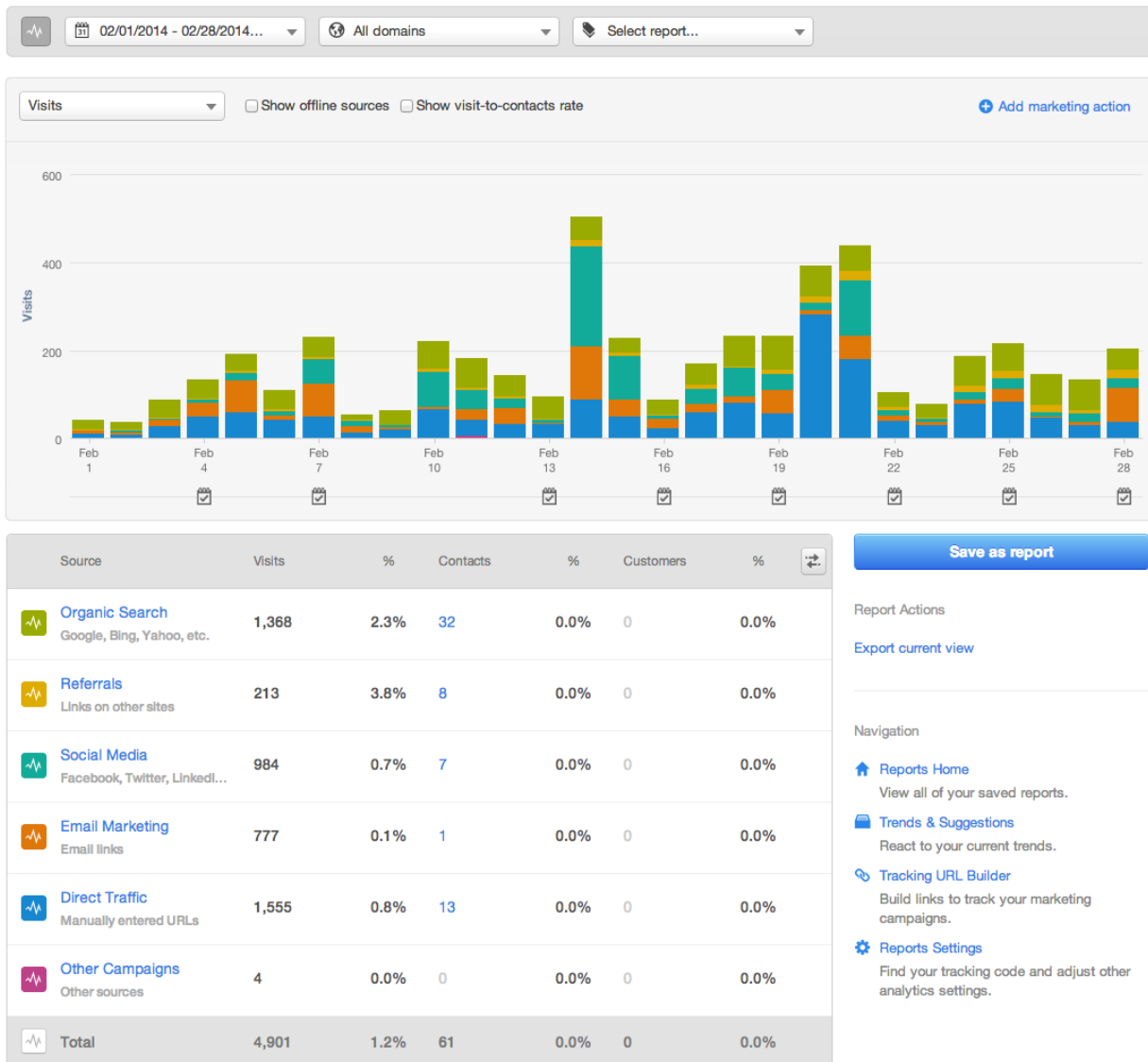
Visits in January 2014: 3,036

That's a **61% increase month over month** for all visits, and represents **790% growth** from the month before we started our experiment.

Wowzas!

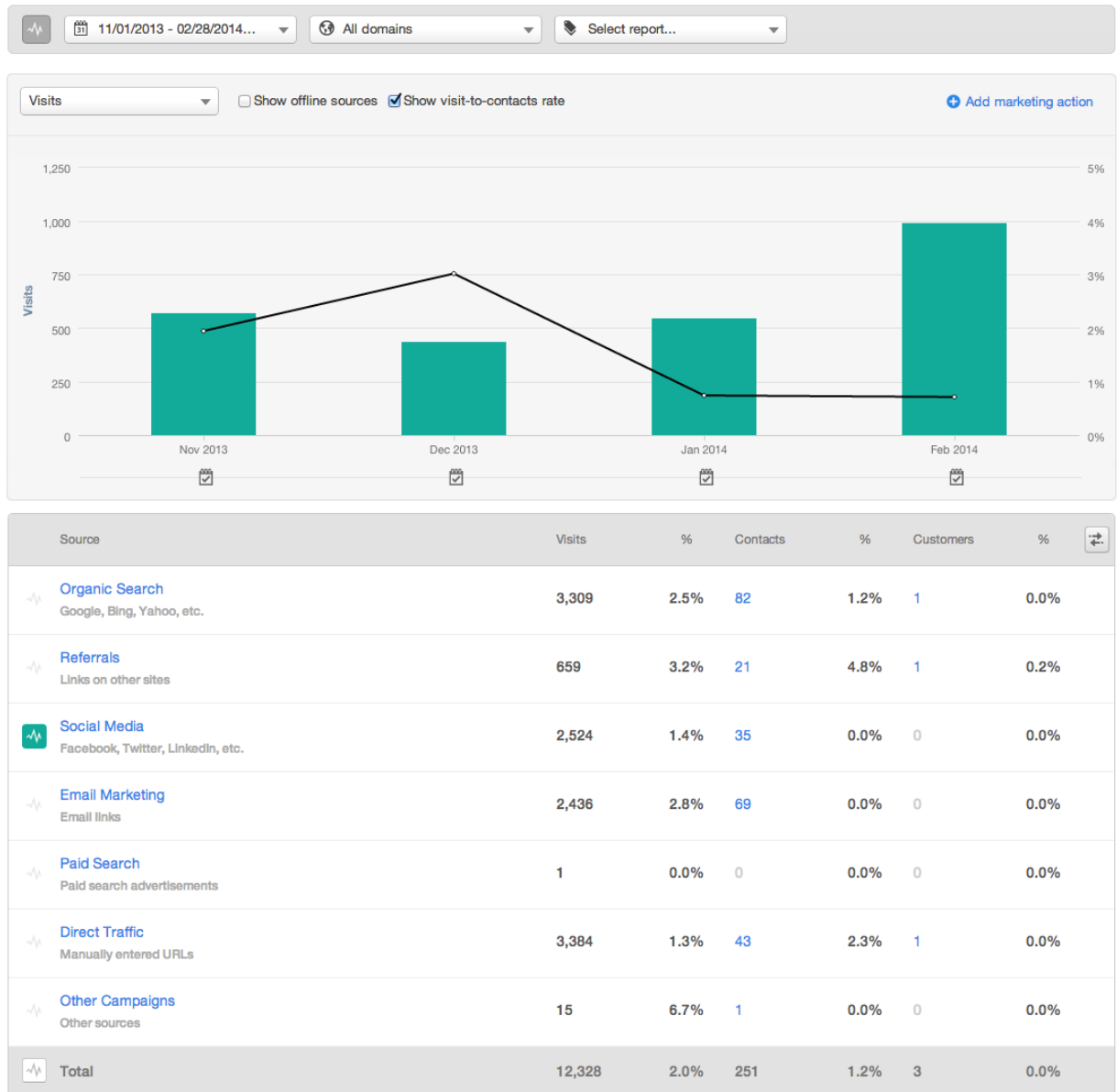
And here's how the visits looked *just for February 2014*.

Sources

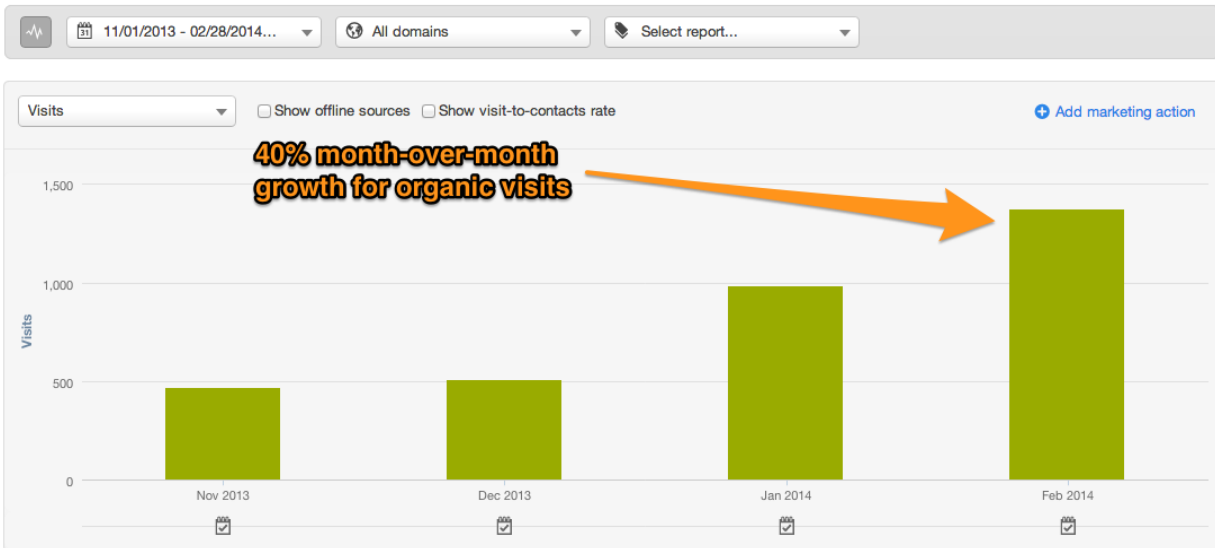


We had a couple of posts that got some attention. We had a good month for social media, but as you can see, increased social traffic didn't necessarily convert to leads. That may be partly due to the content. It was a video of me and my kids singing a parody of [Still](#)

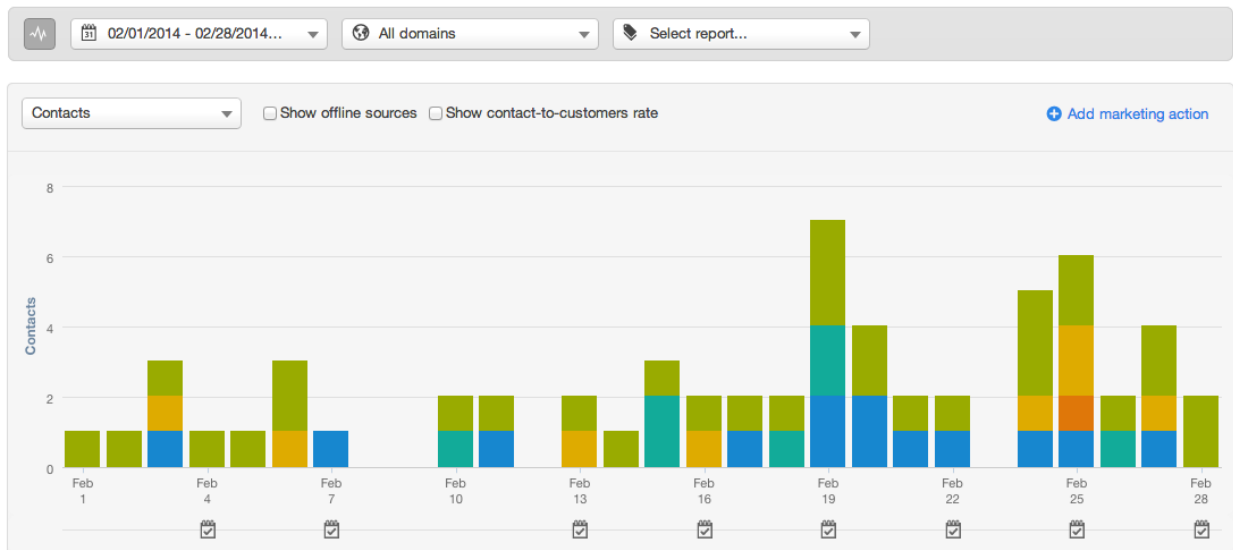
Haven't Found What You're Looking For. Probably not the best conversion material, right?



But this final visits report is my favorite, because it shows that organic visits are growing fast!



Leads



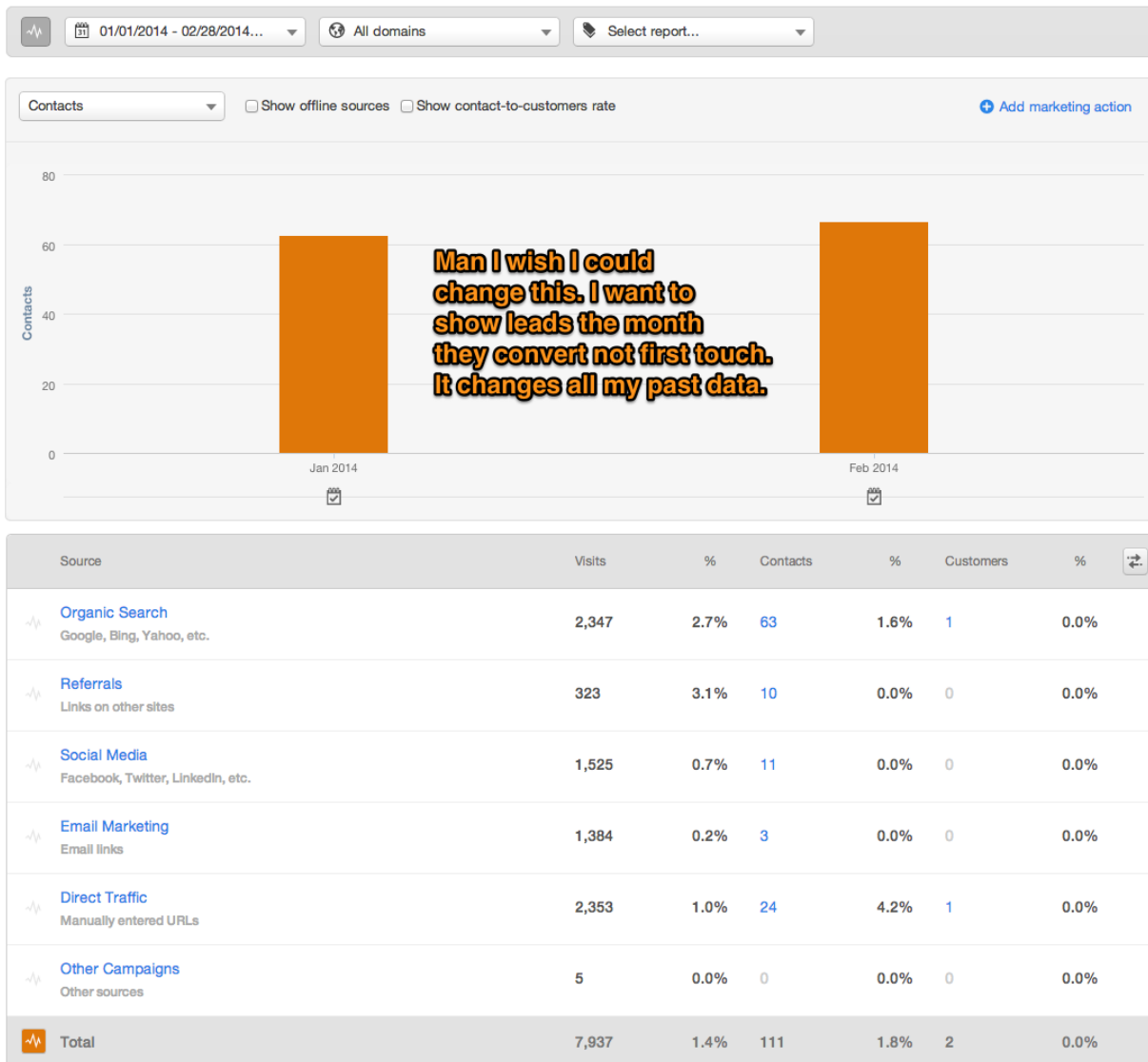
Leads for February 2014: 61

Leads for January 2014: 50

That's a **22% increase** month over month. But, hold everything.

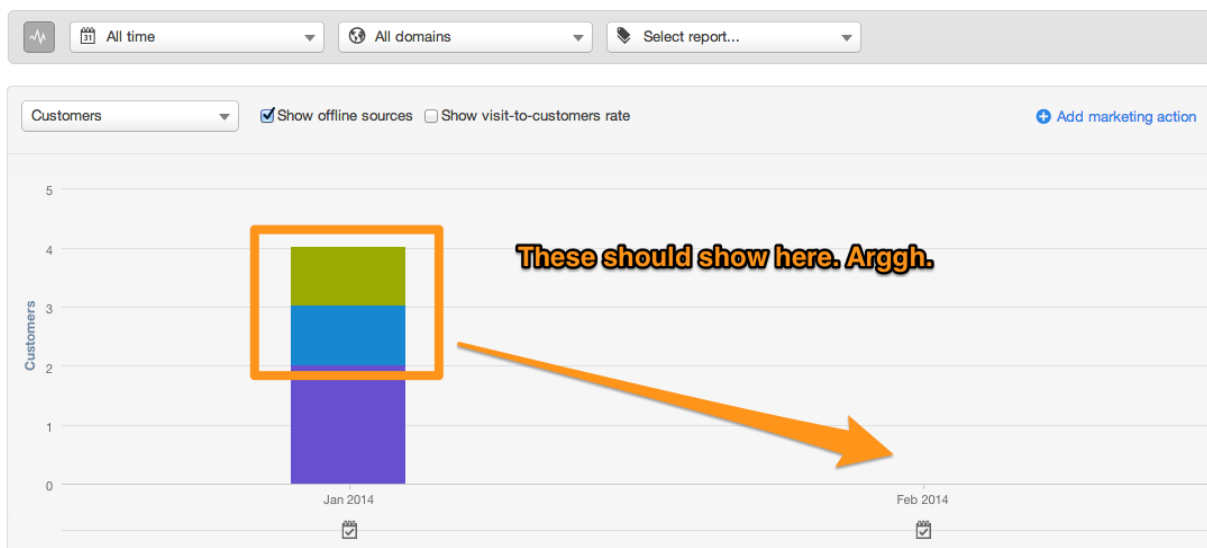
One of the grievances I have with HubSpot's reporting is that leads and customers are both reported in the month that they first visited the site. That may be helpful to someone, but it's not to me. Plus, it makes this experiment really crazy to show past months, because at the end of January, we showed 50 leads, but now that we completed February, it's showing 62 for January. Huh?

(If you're a HubSpot influencer, please, I beg you, give me a check box that lets me show attribution either in the month of first contact OR the month of conversion... please. I'm actually on my knees typing this.)



Customers

Not to beat a dead horse, but my customers report feels even more extreme, because there are fewer results. If you remember last month, I showed two customers for January. Well, look at this report for the end of February.



Customers in February 2014: 2

Customers in January 2014: 2

I know for a fact that we closed two new customer accounts, I don't care what this report says! (Sorry, I'll tone it down a little.)

I know that for many businesses, landing only a couple accounts doesn't seem like much, but for our company, we're scaling slowly on purpose. We're trying to maintain our company culture, and provide the best possible service for our clients. Before we began inbound marketing, all of our clients came from personal referrals. Now, we're actually developing client relationships with amazing

folks who didn't even know we existed a couple of months ago. **And that's what I love!**

Additionally, the value of the clients we are dealing with now are many times the value of the accounts we were closing before we began implementing inbound marketing with HubSpot.

What will your results be after 4 months with HubSpot?

Good question.

Am I implying that if you just sign up with HubSpot, magically your numbers will grow like crazy? No way. No how. But I am saying that if you use HubSpot to completely change the way you're using your site, and dedicate creativity, energy, and lots of time to fueling HubSpot, you're going to see real results. Apparently it's not just true for me—here's a chart that shows reported results from [HubSpot's ROI page](#).

Customer Group	After active use of HubSpot for		
	6 Months	1 Year	2 Years
All	2.37x more leads	6.12x more leads	32.94x more leads
1 to 5 starting leads	5.03	15.18	44.75
6 to 20 starting leads	2.80	7.49	22.42
21 to 99 starting leads	2.58	5.74	25.55
100 to 499 starting leads	1.80	4.12	12.38
500+ starting leads	1.05	2.75	13.96

From <http://www.hubspot.com/roi>

So, what happens when **you** use HubSpot for four months? Why don't you try it yourself and find out? Bet you'll be pleased.

Months 5 & 6

How Does It Feel When HubSpot Calls You “Professional”?

MAY 8, 2014 | *Lance Cummins*



Nobody wants to be an amateur. That's never an athlete's goal. A musician doesn't aspire to be a hobbyist on their instrument. No

way. We want to go for the big leagues, no matter what activity we're engaged in, right?

I'm no exception.

That's why one of the most humbling and mildly annoying parts of signing on with HubSpot to kick off [my HubSpot experiment](#) was having to settle for the blandly named "Basic" plan. Man, talk about an uninspired name. My guess is that it's some psychological ploy to which I've fallen victim. I don't want to be "basic." I want to be "professional." (And, yes, I realize that I want the "middle" package which is why marketing psychology always pushes for 3 different price points/service levels.)

BASIC	PRO	ENTERPRISE
\$200 /month	\$800 /month	\$2,400 /month
"An entry tool for those new to inbound marketing"	"An integrated solution for professional marketers"	"An advanced platform for marketing teams"
100 Contacts + \$100 per 1k extra	1,000 Contacts + \$50 per 1k extra	10,000 Contacts + \$10 per 1k extra
Customize Price	Customize Price	Customize Price

It seems like ages ago that I signed my one-year contract with HubSpot to kick off my test. I was signing on to spend way more

money on my marketing than I ever had before, just to see if it really worked. But, it wasn't ages ago at all. It was exactly six months ago, in November 2013.

Wow, have I learned a boatload of stuff in the past 180 days. Even though I had quite a bit of experience in helping others implement content marketing, I was unprepared for how much differently I would view my online marketing 6 months into this crazy test.

I have experienced a tangible transition in how I feel about my inbound marketing now within the last two months. For the first 3 or 4 months, it seemed like every week something unexpected was happening, and while it was thrilling, I also had this gut feeling that I was riding some kind of temporary wave of enthusiasm that couldn't sustain itself. Now, though, I'm seeing just day to day consistent results. And, thanks to some work on my [services pages](#), I'm now getting to have better conversations with prospects because they can understand how I can help them experience the power of HubSpot for their own company. So, while the last two months have not created the adrenaline rush of the first four, we're actually making sustainable headway in growing our own company through inbound marketing. (In fact, I've intentionally not pursued taking our partner certification exam until I was fully convinced that

I can recommend HubSpot for certain companies. Now, it's time. I don't think HubSpot is the solution for every company, but for those companies who are fully committed to intentional inbound marketing, it makes complete sense.)

There has been one very obvious change in the last 2 months, though. All this sustained traffic meant that I had to move from the boring ol' "HubSpot Basic" plan to the "HubSpot Professional" plan.

Yep, I've been called up to the big leagues.

I can imagine the roar of the home crowd. The smell of the grass. The salty sunflower seeds. The spitting. It's a great day for... (Wait a second. I just remembered, I don't even like baseball. Not sure why I even went down that path. Go Sox.)

All kidding aside, the Professional plan is the real deal. The features that are available on this plan make HubSpot a real marketing automation tool. The "Basic" plan was a good first taste (maybe they should call that plan, "Appetizer"), but it lacks the features that actually make inbound marketing an automated lead generation process. Here is an overly-simplified brief explanation of four of the features that are only available on the Professional plan that are

critical to truly automating my inbound marketing. (I think each of these probably deserve their own review post at some point.)

Workflows

Basically, a workflow is a sequence of actions that you can have the software take on contacts. So, for instance, if you want to send an email a couple of days after a prospect has downloaded an offer, you can do that, followed by more activities a certain number of days/hours later. You get Smart Lists on the basic plan which is great for organizing and gathering your contacts, but workflows let you actually *do stuff* with them. And that's a good thing.

Lead Scoring

All of my prospects are either getting closer to working with me or farther away. By assigning points to certain activities on my site, I can kind of see how interested someone is in what I'm saying or what I'm offering. It's a pretty interesting idea. At some number level, you can then send that contact information into a CRM or whatever you use for reaching out to prospects. I'm experimenting with the right numbers both for my own company and for our clients, but it's been fascinating so far.

Smart CTAs

Honestly, I've not taken advantage of this on my site, but we do have it implemented on some client sites. The idea is that instead of showing a call-to-action for an offer your prospect has already seen, you can automatically show a different one. That's cool. It should improve conversion rates, but we'll keep an eye on that.

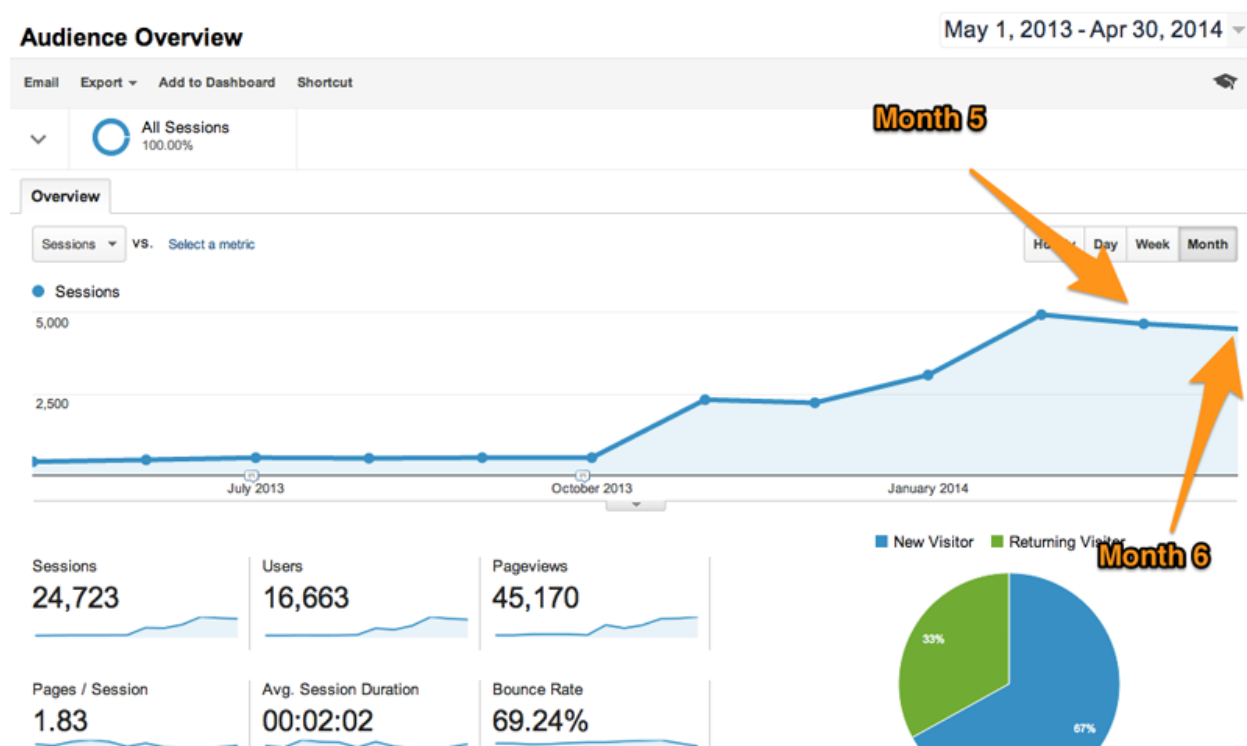
Progressive Profiling

One of the biggest challenges to getting prospects to complete forms is the “friction” that comes from having too many fields for them to complete. Instead of having to ask for a ton of information on one landing page, you can ask for smaller pieces on multiple landing pages. As your prospects complete some fields, they don't have to answer them again, and instead, get served other questions. It's a very elegant solution to learning more about your prospects without annoying the stew out of them.

Enough blabber. Bring on the numbers.

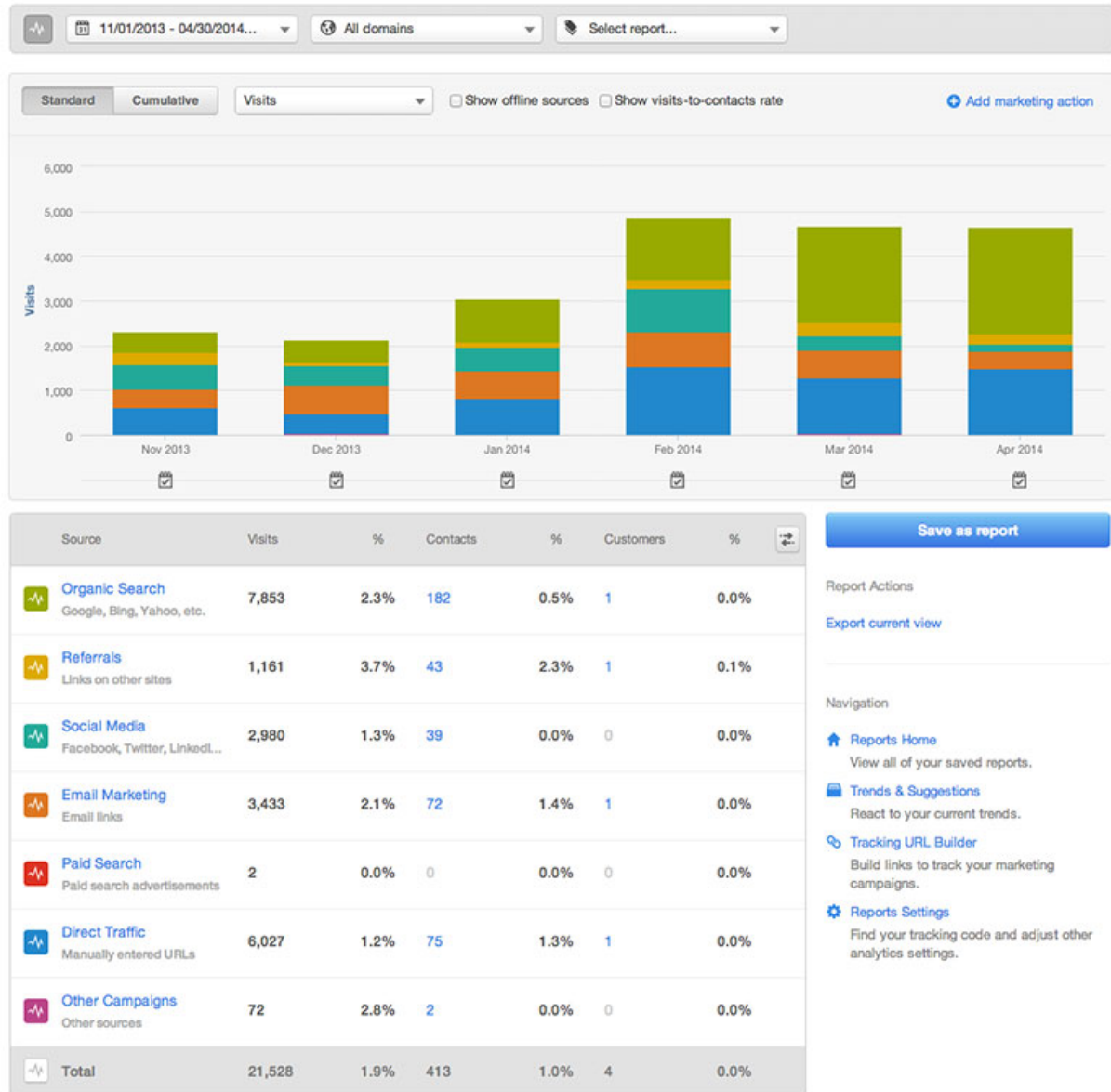
Since I somehow spaced out last month on posting my review, and since March 2014 and April 2014 had a similar trajectory, I'm just throwing them in together.

Visits (Months 5 & 6, March & April 2014)



And here's my HubSpot charts from the same period. Remember I'm showing you results from March 2014 and April 2014.

Sources



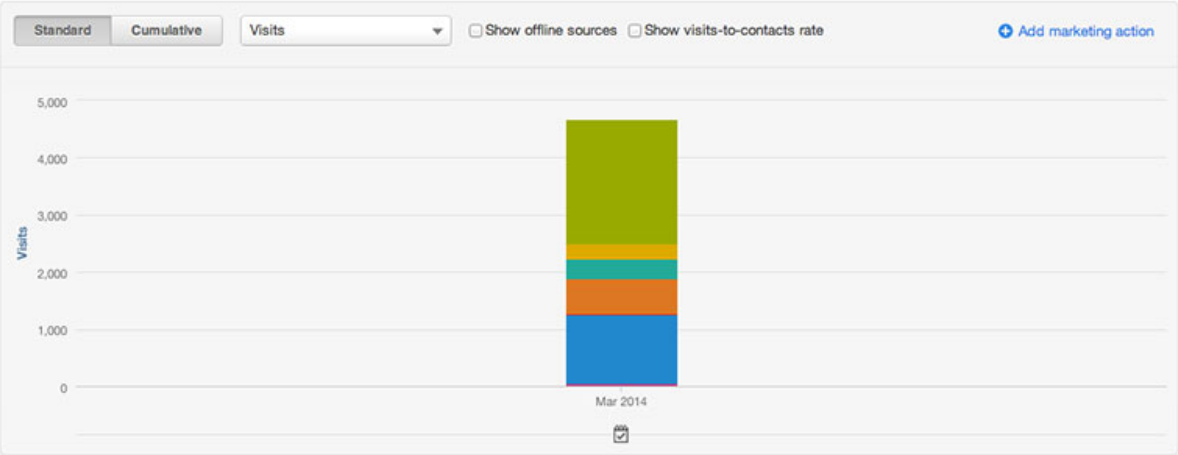
Data last updated an hour ago

Sources **March 2014**

03/01/2014 - 03/31/2014...

All domains

Select report...



Source	Visits	%	Contacts	%	Customers	%	
Organic Search Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc.	2,170	2.2%	47	0.0%	0	0.0%	
Referrals Links on other sites	276	4.0%	11	0.0%	0	0.0%	
Social Media Facebook, Twitter, Linkedl...	331	0.3%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	
Email Marketing Email links	627	0.3%	2	0.0%	0	0.0%	
Paid Search Paid search advertisements	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
Direct Traffic Manually entered URLs	1,219	1.5%	18	0.0%	0	0.0%	
Other Campaigns Other sources	31	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
Total	4,655	1.7%	79	0.0%	0	0.0%	

Save as report

Report Actions

Export current view

Navigation

Reports Home
View all of your saved reports.

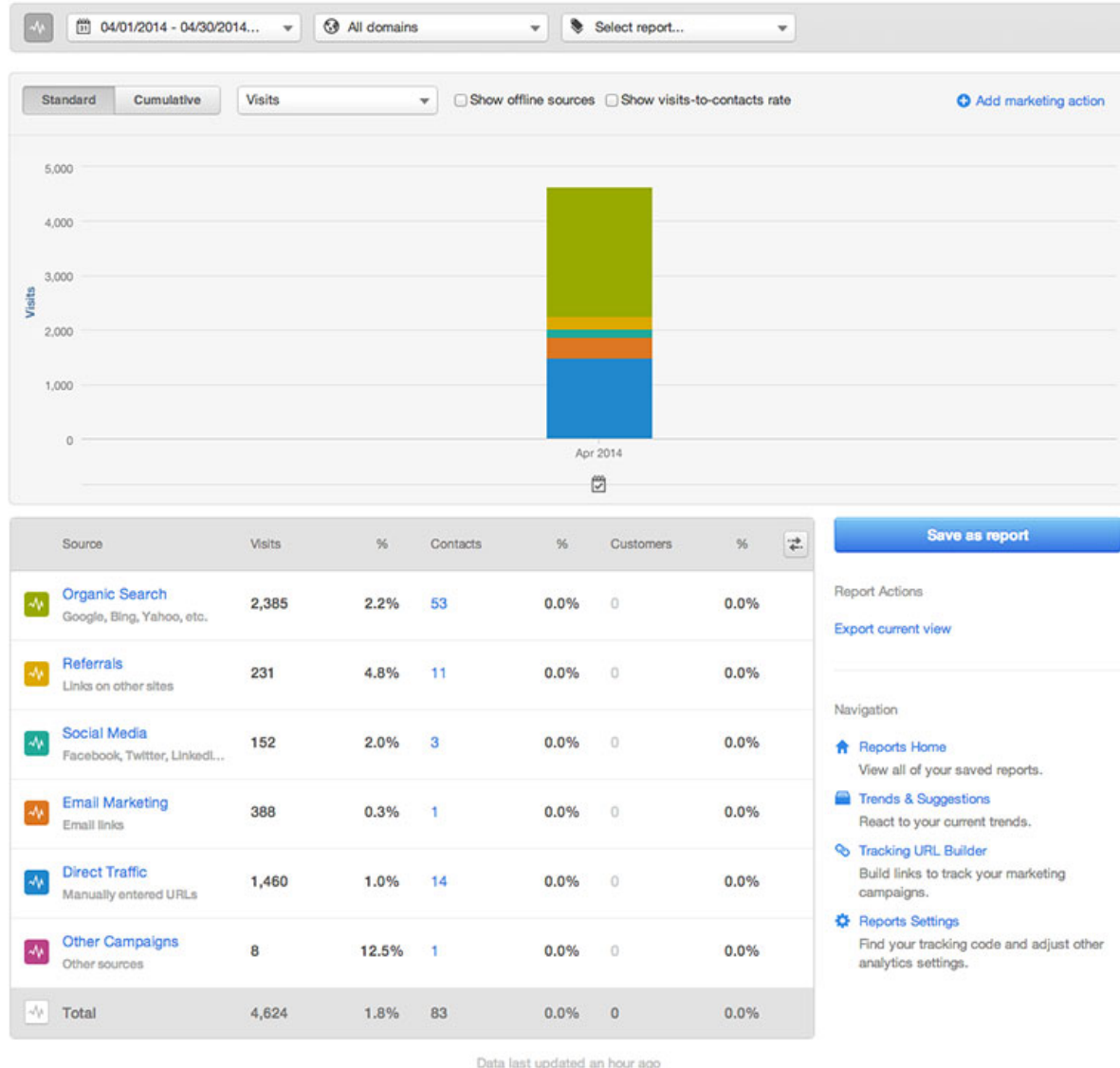
Trends & Suggestions
React to your current trends.

Tracking URL Builder
Build links to track your marketing campaigns.

Reports Settings
Find your tracking code and adjust other analytics settings.

Data last updated an hour ago

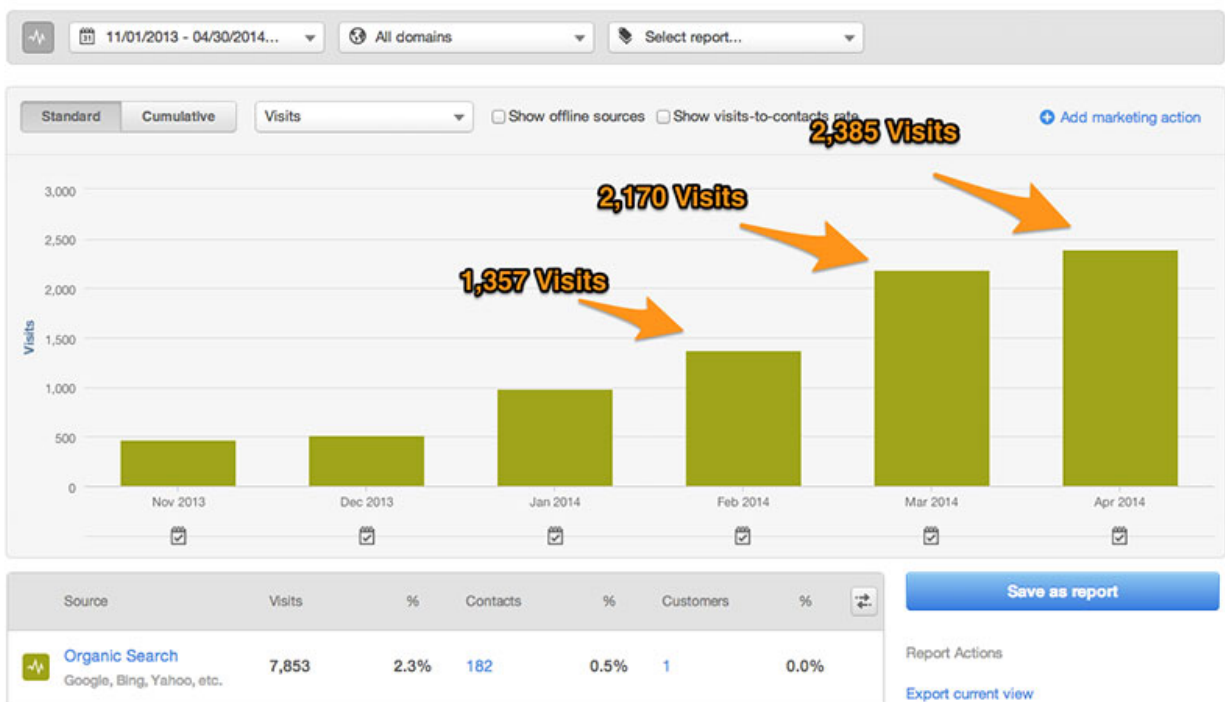
Sources **April 2014**



As you can see, March and April are very similar both in volume and sources of the traffic. But they both cooled down from February. I don't feel too bad, though, because February had some pretty crazy traffic from Twitter that I didn't figure would keep coming. Also, we've intentionally slowed down our email marketing as we have

had access to workflows to send specific emails at specific times. We're actually recalibrating our email marketing strategy right now.

But, there is some super exciting stuff buried in this report. Take a look at this chart showing visits coming from **organic search traffic only**. If we can keep growing steadily in this category, we're going to be effective in the long run.



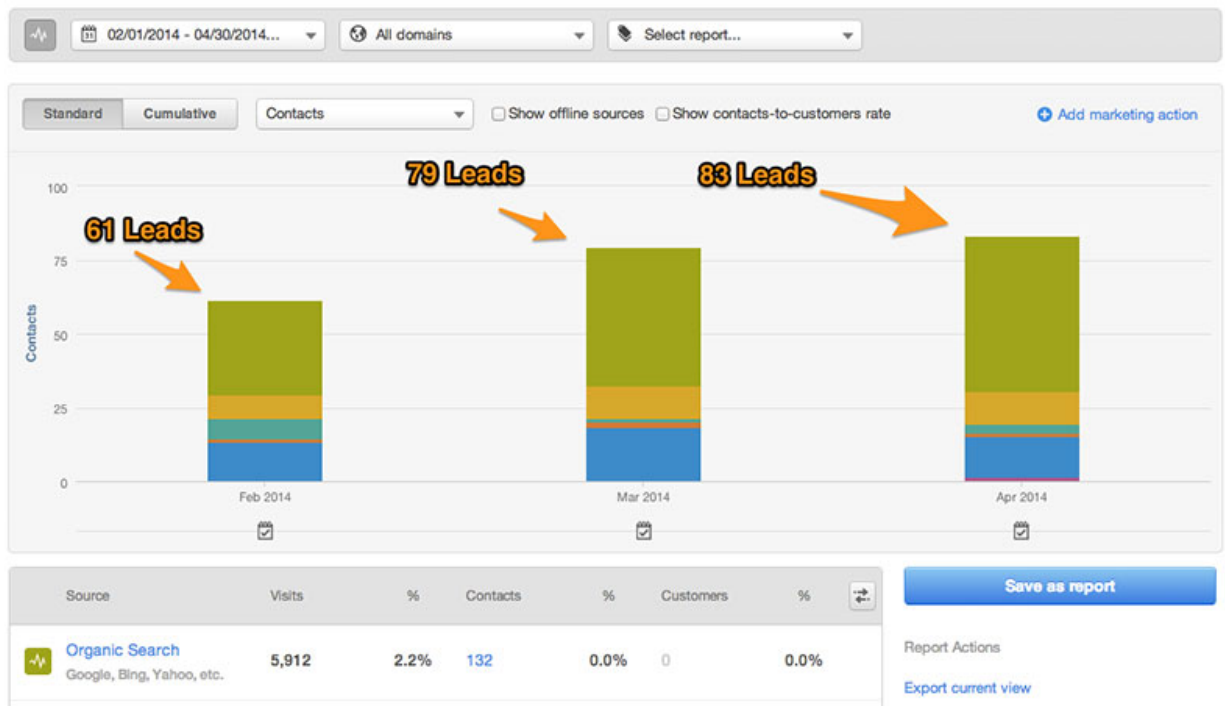
Total Visits:

March 2014: **4,655** (Down 3.4% from February 2014)

April 2014: **4,624** (Just about even with March 2014)

Leads

While our total visits haven't grown much over the last couple of months, our leads have continued to grow.



Total Leads:

March 2014: **79** (Up 29.5% from February 2014)

April 2014: **83** (Up 5% from March 2014)

I've been pleased with these results, as they seem connected to two important sources: organic search and referrals. Our organic search traffic has increased and our conversion rate is consistently at 2.2% or so each month. Referrals have picked up and have had a much higher (~4%) conversion rate even though the numbers aren't nearly as high.

Customers

The Bad News:

We were not able to create any client partnerships in March or April. That was both a little discouraging and also enlightening. We are learning the value of having a better sales process to integrate with our marketing. If you want to see strong customer results, you need to make sure that you have your sales process and sales team already in place. Great marketing isn't necessarily a substitute for great sales. They complement each other. So, we're working on developing our own voice when it comes to our sales process, making sure that we provide a ton of value all along the way.

The Good News:

Because we sell a high-value service, our sales process is pretty long. That's come as no surprise to us. We take our time working with prospects to make sure that we're both a good fit for working together. For March and April, we've been moving forward steadily on several potential partnerships. But, they haven't become clients yet, so March and April's customer charts are non-existent. One thing that those charts can't show is additional business from existing clients. And that's been keeping us very, very busy over the last couple of months.

To date, since we've started the HubSpot experiment 6 months ago, we've been able to create 6 new long-term client relationships. It's been a huge sea-change for us. Instead of us trying to create a ton of new projects month in and month out, we've been able to partner with companies who are serious about adopting inbound marketing for the long haul and help them succeed with their own HubSpot implementations.

So what have I learned after 6 months?

By using the right tools for the job, and pouring a ton of focused effort into inbound marketing, we are seeing results. It can be done. But it's not the "quick and easy" fix that some may be looking for.

Let's face it, there is no "silver bullet," or special potion that's going to bring in leads by the droves. What I've loved about inbound marketing with HubSpot is that I'm able to do marketing in an authentic, helpful way. I've learned that you have to create systems to keep your content and your marketing consistent for the long haul. You can't rely on enthusiasm alone.

**And, I've learned that it feels really great to be called
"professional."**

Month 7 & 8

HubSpot Lead Generation: Is It A Bunch of Hype?

JULY 22, 2014 | *Lance Cummins*



Can HubSpot actually help you generate leads?

I don't know. But I do know what it's done for us.

Since we started [using HubSpot almost 9 months ago](#), I committed to making our results public for as long as someone was interested. It's an attempt to be as transparent as possible about whether HubSpot can really deliver more traffic, leads, and customers.

(Of course, secretly, I wish that every month's results would be un-stinking-believable so that you would be thoroughly convinced that Nectafy should become your [inbound marketing agency of choice](#), but I digress. The numbers are the numbers.)

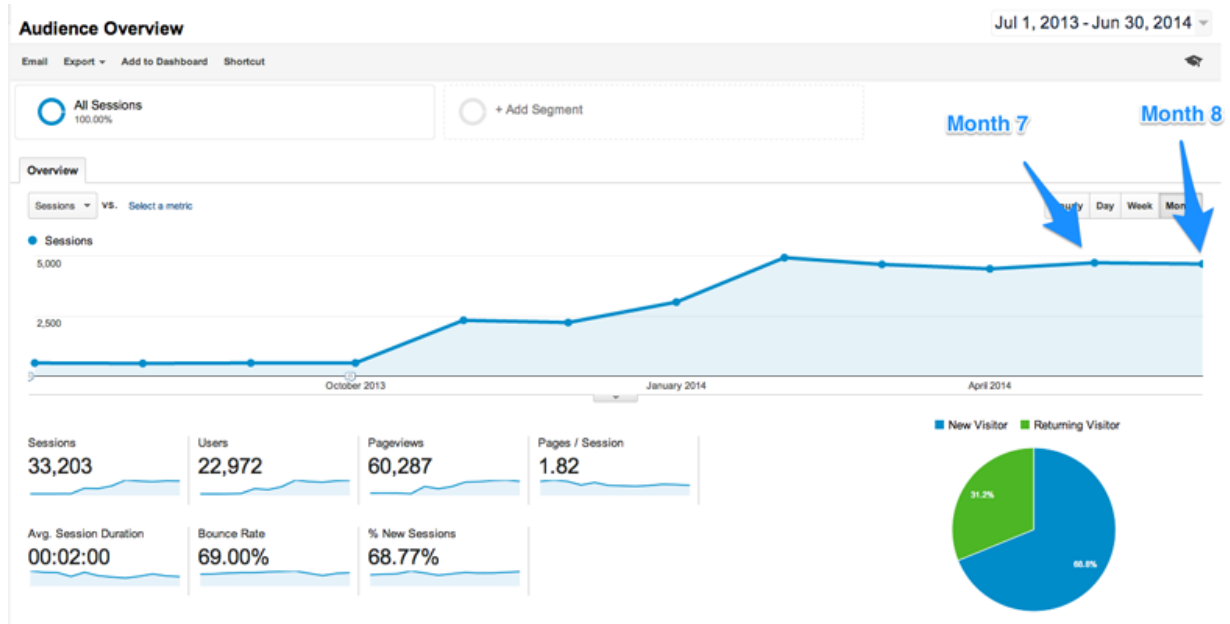
Let's cut right to the chase, shall we?

In past months, I've talked about the different pieces of [HubSpot's software and my waxing/waning love](#) for each of them. This month, I'm going to stick with the numbers and keep my rants to a minimum, except to say that I've noticed that over the last 35 weeks or so, HubSpot continually rolls out updates and improvements that are designed to make you more effective. I appreciate their proactive approach to marketing. In fact, just the other day, I got an email from a product manager at HubSpot following up with some ideas about making one of the tools better. It's obvious that they're working hard to make their clients better marketers. Nicely done, HubSpot.

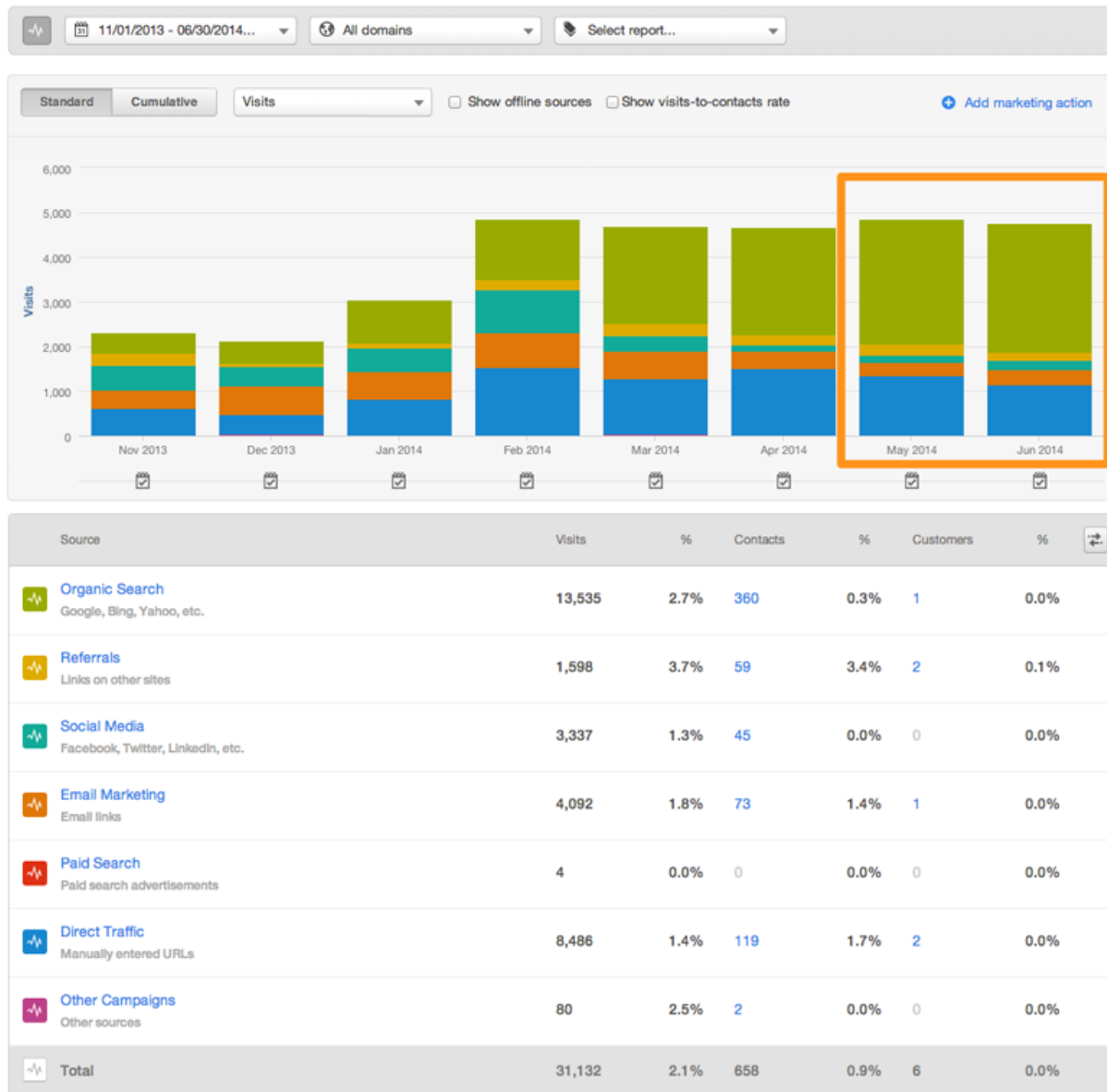
Somehow I dozed off in months 7 & 8 (May and June) of our HubSpot experiment and failed to post an update. Some of that complacency speaks to the human condition. (Cue psychological mumbo jumbo.) As soon as something starts to go well, or becomes predictable, we quit thinking about it. I think it's called adaptation. (It's the same reason your new car doesn't rev you up the way it did when you drove it off the Audi lot.) I've adapted. I'll confess. I've gotten used to things working the way they should, without fooling around with a bunch of platforms. And I like it.

We've embraced a system of inbound marketing that has just become a part of our company. We write helpful articles twice a week, we create offers and drop them on landing pages about once a month, we use email lead nurturing, both automated and manual, we interact on our social profiles regularly, we check our reports daily, and, doggone it, things are just working. (Of course, we're staying agile so we can try plenty of new things, since change is the only constant in online marketing.)

Visits (Months 7 & 8, May & June 2014)



Sources

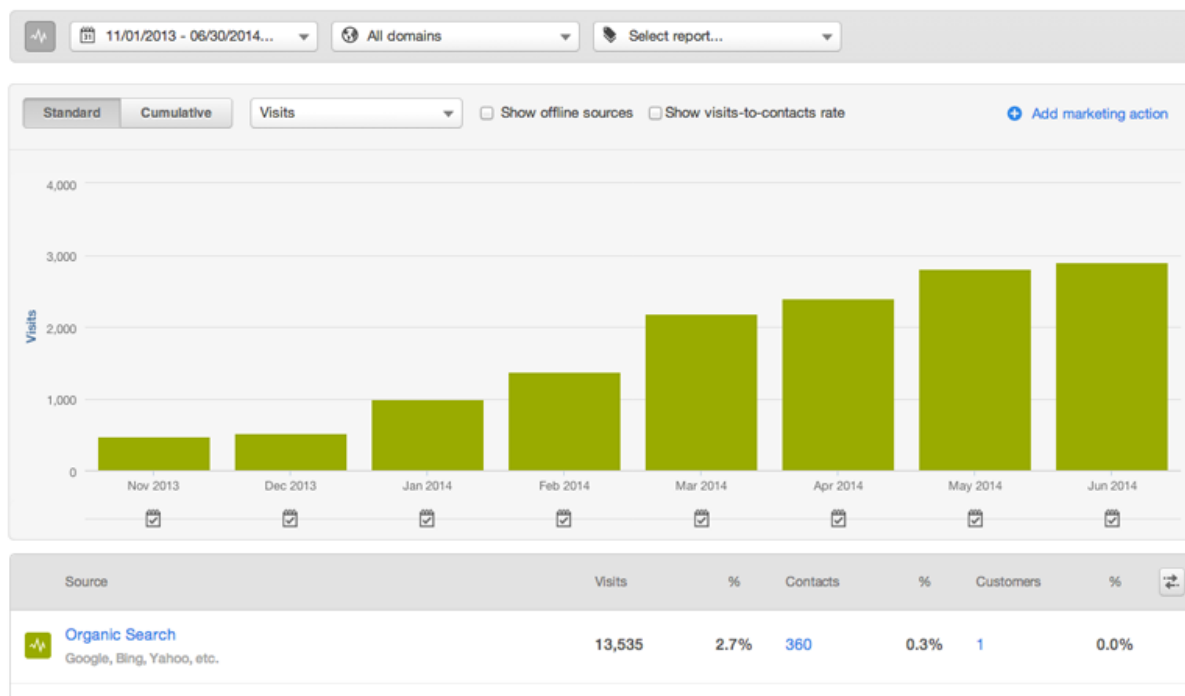


Organic Traffic Is Growing

Are we seeing record setting months for traffic month after month?
Well, yes and no. We've sort of leveled off with traffic. We seem to be bumping right up against 5,000 visits each month.

But, the good news is that our organic traffic has consistently grown each month. It seems like some months we'll have an unpredictable spike in one of our other marketing channels, but organic search marches on.

Sources



Total Visits:

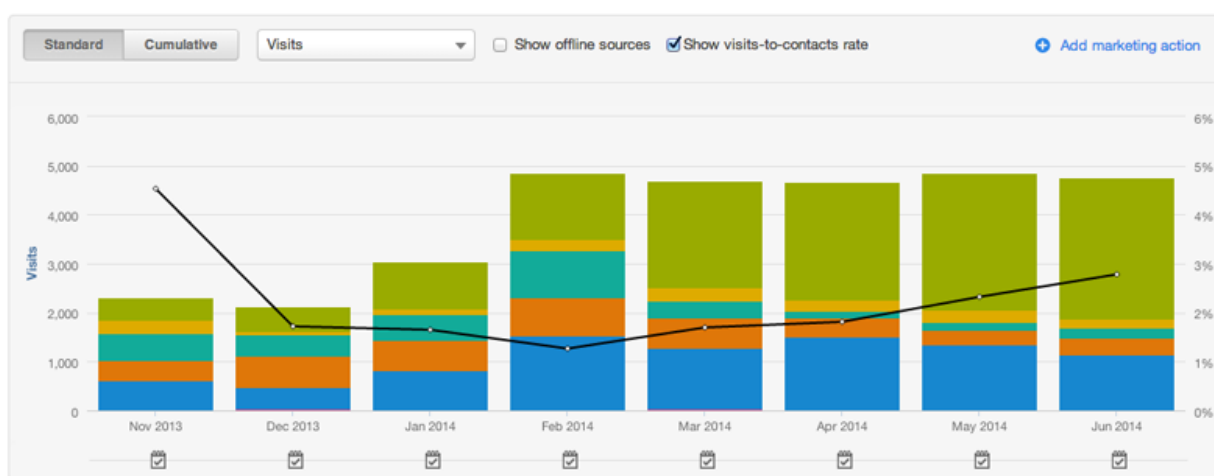
May 2014: **4,828**

June 2014: **4,750**

Lead Generation

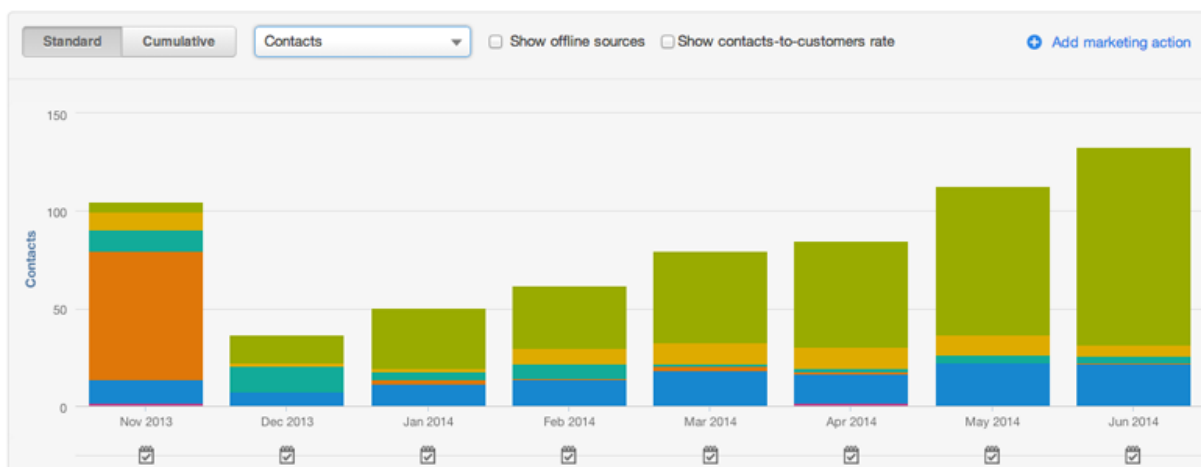
What has been interesting is that our conversion rates have been steadily increasing, too, meaning that our lead generation has grown steadily over our first 8 months. By the end of June, **we're hovering right under 3%. Yay.**

Here's our conversion rate graph over our visits.



(Our first month was pure craziness, so you can essentially ignore all the fun there.)

Take a look at our lead generation over the last 8 months. Maybe not groundbreaking, but we're pretty pumped about it.



Since conversion rates are growing, and our traffic is growing steadily as well, we're thrilled to see the increase in leads each month. Again, that first month, because it was our first month using HubSpot, we charted leads from existing emails which kind of skews that graph.

Total Leads:

May 2014: **112**

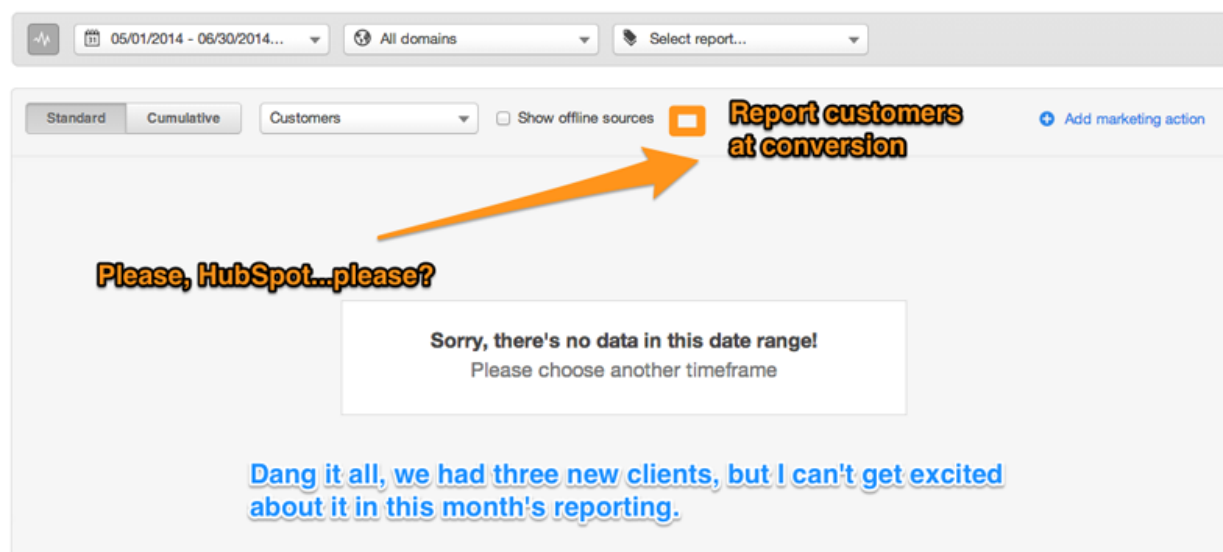
June 2014: **132**

Customers

May and June were pretty exciting months for us, since we were able to partner with **3 new clients!**

That's super exciting!

What's **not** super exciting is that HubSpot still only gives me an option to show customers on the month when they first became a lead, and does not let me display the customer in the month when they actually converted.



Since we have a long-ish sales cycle, that means that many of our customers have been leads for more than 3 months. Reporting that adjusts past data is not very helpful for month to month reporting. In fact, it's downright confusing. I'm hopeful that if I gripe about it long enough, one of HubSpot's product managers who has some pull, will give me a way to report customers either when they became a lead or when they became a customer.



If you'd like to explore inbound marketing for your company, or just have questions about how it even works, we'd be glad to talk through the process with you.

[Just complete this brief form, and we'll connect right away.](#)

Nectafy, LLC | 28 Webster Street | Rockland, MA 02370 | nectafy.com

We create a fresh, organic blend of content and inbound marketing, infused with personality, for B2B companies who are ready to stand out from the crowd.