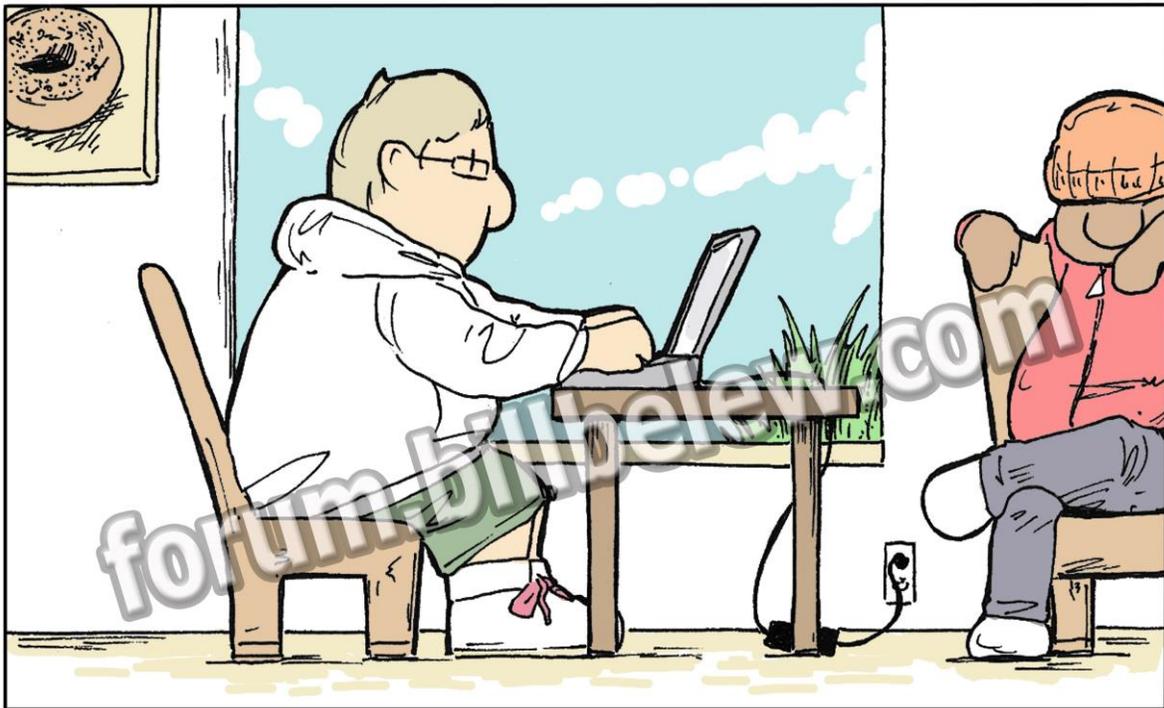


# Chapter 4: Case Study: How Long Does It Take to See Organic Search Results?

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By Bill Belew

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One of the first things all new and prospective clients want to know is how long it take for a content marketing strategy to see real organic results on Google (yes, I know they aren't the only search engine). Some want to know how long it will take to get from zero, as they don't have a website or have as few as 100 unique relevant search visits daily. For others, they have a bit of history and want to step it up.

I know the answer for what happens when we content marketers start from zero, too.

**The vague answer is:** it depends on how hard your client wants to work, meaning how much real and relevant content can be created and how much competition there is for their key word phrases. Also, how big is their niche? If no one would ever search for their desired niche, they may never be found. And if they don't have time or desire to work hard, it depends on how much money they have to invest in their content marketing team.

**A concrete answer:** 100 unique organic visits daily in almost any niche topic can be acquired in about three to four months.

## A Course in Content Marketing

### Background

In January of 2013 I knocked on the door of a Dean of a graduate school in Silicon Valley. I asked simply, "Can I teach a class here on Marketing with Social Media? I want to prove that content marketing works. I will teach the class for free."

"....." was the stunned reply.

After haggling a bit, the school insisted on paying me anyway and more than 70 students signed up for my class. It was clear in the syllabus description of the course, but I am equally sure most of the prospective students didn't read the syllabus and just thought they were going to be able to play around in the social network for a semester and think they were doing some marketing. They were wrong.

10 students didn't show up. Another 10 students just plain didn't want to work and I had to throw them out. A third 10 students cheated and I threw them out and had to clean up their mess. That left me with 40-ish students who did what I told them to do... more or less.

The students were required to purchase a domain and basic self-hosting if they didn't have one already. Some wanted to work from existing sites. We (my staff) installed WordPress for them and the students worked off the 2013 WordPress default template. No more, no less. I had access to their WordPress dashboards to make sure they did the assigned work and we installed Google Analytics to track the results.

One last thing – each student was permitted to decide on a niche topic of their own choice – health, nutrition, sports, dance, travel, technology, entertainment – one even wrote in Chinese!

## The Results

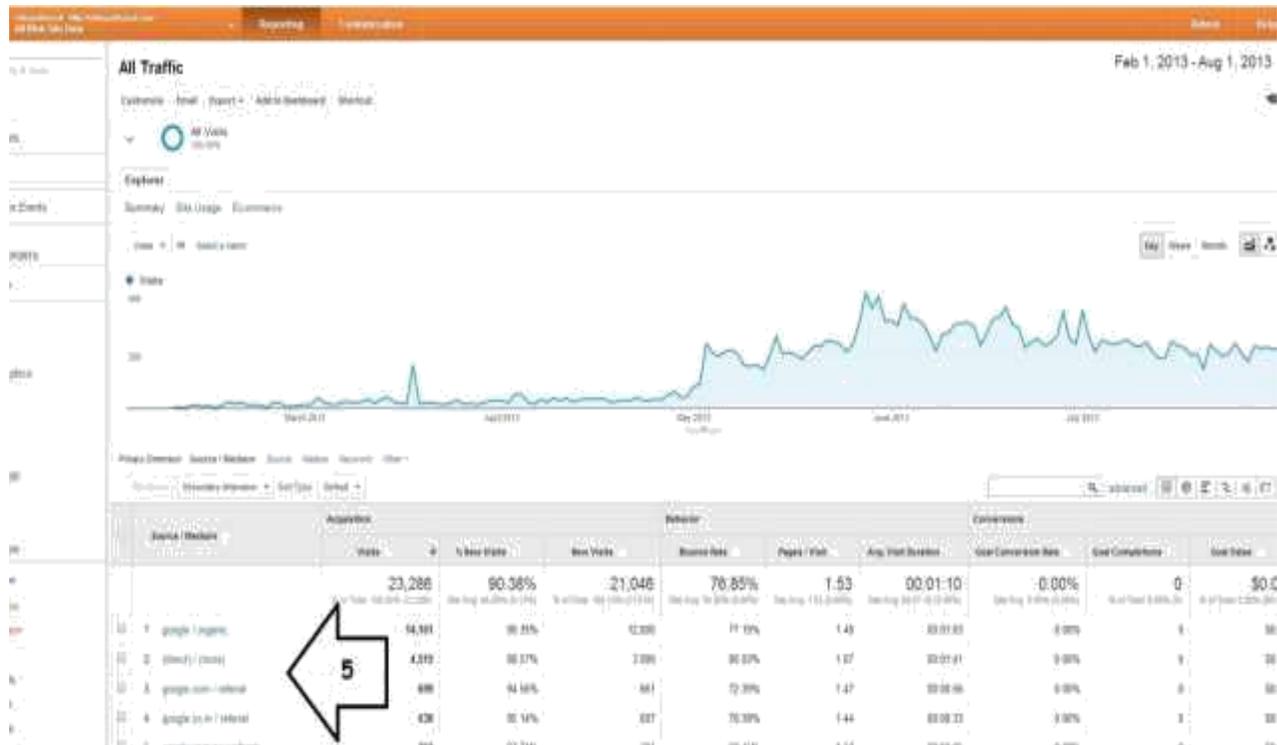
Following are three screen shots from Google Analytics of students in each of three niches. If you want to see even more results, there are some on my website: [content marketing case studies](#).

### The key to looking at the screen shots:

1. **Starting Point** - Note the flat line. This is because the sites did NOT exist before Feb 11. It is NOT because that is when Analytics was first installed.
2. **Reference Line for Traffic** – From 100 – 250.
3. **Metric** – Visits
4. **Time Frame** – First 6 months of the new site.
5. **Traffic Source** – Google/organic, Google referral for the same time frame.
6. **Unique Visitors** – 1 month’s traffic in the 4th – 5th month from when the site was born.
7. **Time unit** – 1 month.

### Travel Niche:



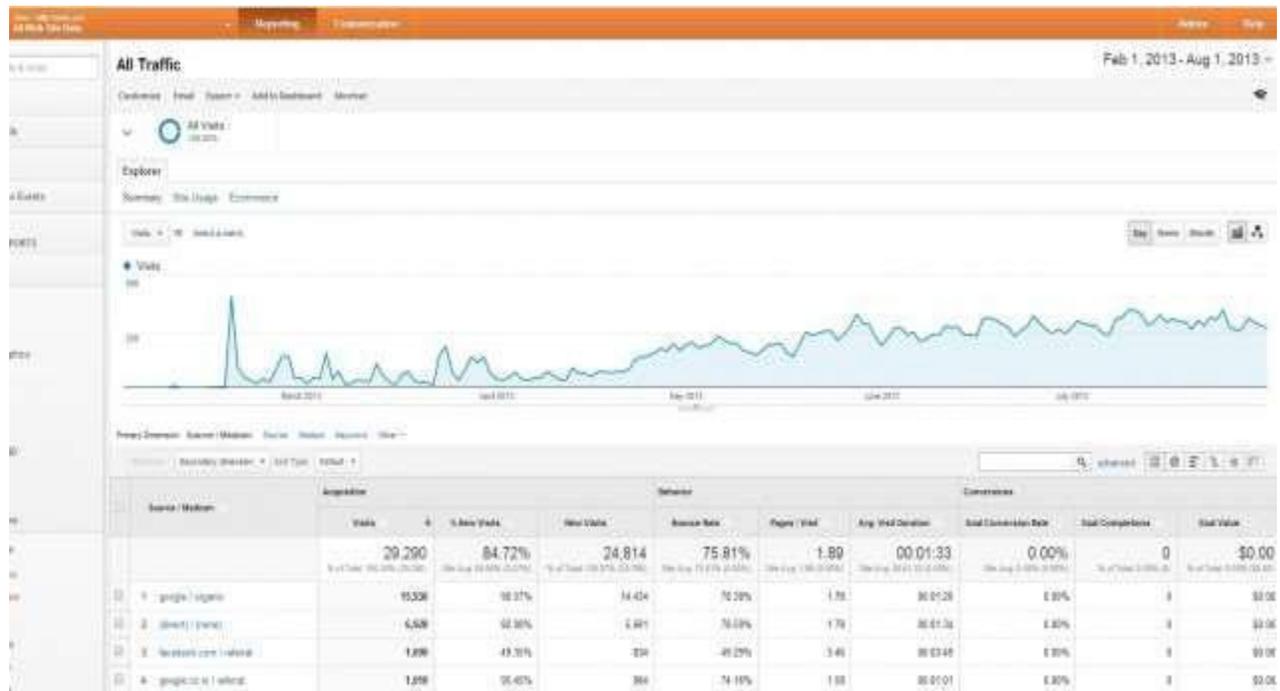


Case Study in Travel

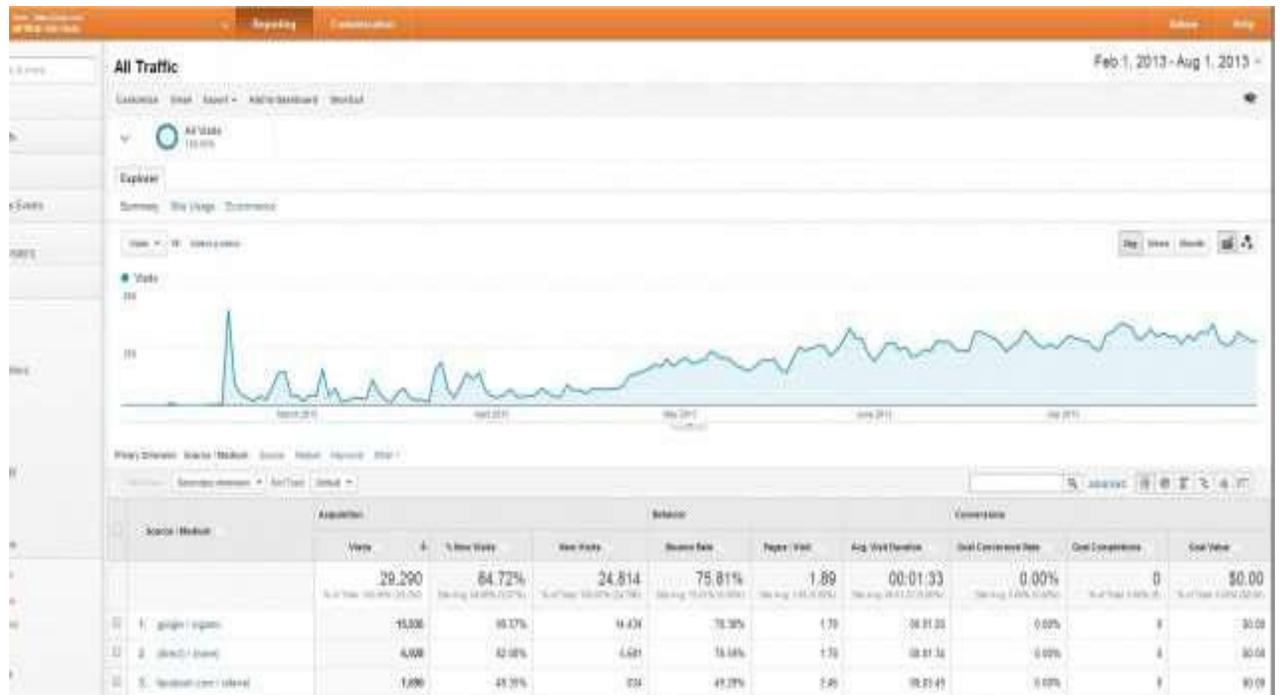


Case Study in Travel Site Growth

## Health/Nutrition Niche:



Case Study in Health



Case Study in Health



Case Study in Health

**Entertainment Niche:**



Case Study in Entertainment



Case Study in Entertainment



Case Study in Entertainment

In each of these 3 very different niches, the students were able to go to 3,897, 7,052, and 7,528 total unique visitors, mostly via organic search, in a 30-day period just 4-5 months after the site was launched, from zero = see the flat line.

Each site had an incubation period before it caught on. Each caught on. And this was just three out of the group of 40-ish.

## The Method

I hate to sound like a broken record but I applied the strategy I articulated in Chapter 1 – [4 Steps to Beat Any Website in Any Niche Topic](#).

## The Advantage

Most people have to find a rhythm. I got the students into a rhythm of writing regularly quickly. Their grade depended on it. They balked, screamed, whined, even threatened to get me fired by taking their case to the dean to get me booted out. I held my ground and the results bore me out.

**Quality articles** – no junk. Solid stuff that ‘added to the discussion’ of whatever niche they were in. I will dive into quality in future articles here. They guest wrote on one another’s site when there was an obvious connection. And they reached out to others in their niche outside of the class structure. They learned to write anchor/pillar/evergreen (what ever you call them) posts. And I did NOT send them out to get ‘social signals.’ That’s another topic I will dive into that in a future article as well. Nor did I require them to do keyword research. My instructions were to write about what they love and follow the four steps.

**Question:** Can you get similar results in your niche, with your product or service? Can your client?

**Answer:** A hearty yes.

**Question:** Could they have gotten better results had they done extensive research on keyword phrases – what’s popular and what’s not?

**Answer:** You show me. Open up your dashboard and let me see how much difference it could have made.

**Question:** Could they have gotten better results had they written lengthy, deep, well-researched articles on a more infrequent basis?

**Answer:** No. I know this because I gave the students that option. Some of them tried. Their traffic paled in comparison. That, too, I will go into in a future article.

## Chapter Conclusion

Content marketing done right, works. Simple as that.