Speaker 1 ([00:00](00:00)):

Michael Roberts ([00:10](00:10)):

Welcome to the Health Connective Show. I'm your host, Michael Roberts, joined by our marketing manager, Ashley Hohensee. Our guest today is a friend of mine, Kyle Akerman of Akerman Analytics. Kyle specializes in helping marketing teams with measurement, planning, and implementation, analytics, reporting, and data analysis to help determine marketing performance. Kyle, thanks for joining us, man.

Kyle Akerman ([00:30](00:30)):

Hey, thanks for having me. Glad to be here.

Speaker 2 ([00:32](00:32)):

Absolutely. So today we're gonna be talking about analytics. This is what you do all the time, but we're specifically looking at it through, through the lens of, of what med tech companies would need to know. I'll say kind of here at the start, we're not gonna be just talking about Google Analytics or Adobe Analytics or any of the hundreds of other platforms that are out there. So we're trying to look at some sort of like big ideas around this. So there's a lot of different ways that people can measure success and a lot of different tools that help collect that data. So it's helpful in just doing some planning to really figure out what we wanna track from the start. So this is what Kyle does every day, all day. So we're gonna walk through that process a bit. So Kyle, if you have a company and, and we're gonna just, right now we're kind of talking very broad categories here. They're just, they come to you, they're trying to get their analytics set up for their website. Where do you even start with 'em?

Kyle Akerman ([01:19](01:19)):

Well, so first I kind of do my own research just of their website. So one thing I like to do is just check the entire tech stack. So I use a tool called builtwith.com. You can enter any website there and then it'll just quickly scrape their site and tell you, you know, do they have HubSpot? Do they have MailChimp, do they have, you know, whatever. So I can get an idea of what kind of tools they're using. 'Cause that can, can help me understand what's happening on the site. Then I will look specifically at what kind of analytics they might have set up on the site. So I am usually looking for Google Analytics, cause that's a free tool. So most people use that on their site. So I look to see how it's implemented. You know, is it hardcoded, is it through Google Tag Manager?

Kyle Akerman ([02:04](02:04)):

And then I also have open ways to see what actions they're measuring that they send to Google Analytics. So what custom actions I should say. So I could see if they're measuring, you know, like a form completion or a, you know, a specific link click or you know, just some things like that. I just wanna know, do they have the basic setup or are they a little more advanced? 'Cause then that gives me an idea of their measurement sophistication, which can come in handy. So that's kind of my research. That way I'm a little bit prepared or, or better prepared when I go and actually talk to them. That's the first step that I do.

Michael Roberts ([02:39](02:39)):

I guess. So you get them in the room, whether that's in Zoom or whether you're talking with 'em directly or whatever. They come to you with like, Hey, we need analytics help. Then how are you kind of like coaxing out, like what they're actually after? Because I don't think anybody's just like, geez, I really wish I had better analytics all day long. Right? Like that's not necessarily the problem they're trying to solve.

Kyle Akerman ([02:58](#)):

Yeah, usually it's kind of along the lines of, you know, we want to measure things, we don't know what to measure, or we have a lot of data but we don't know what to do with it. You know, those different variations. So I like to take a step back when I'm, when I'm talking with them, like we always start out with a, with a planning phase, try to set the, the strategy and how do we wanna measure and what do we wanna measure. So I need to know a little bit about their business. Now obviously I can kind of figure out, you know, how they make money and that kind of thing. But specifically, do you sell products? Do you have a service? You know, what are the main ways you make money? And then I kind of wanna know the high level sales process.

Kyle Akerman ([03:41](#)):

You know, how does a visitor, you know, find out about your company or in this case your medtech company. And then how do they move from like a prospect or someone that's aware of you to becoming a, you know, making a purchase or becoming a client or you know, whatever that end point is. And then also like, what's the length of the sales cycle? So I'm not that familiar with medtech, but I imagine that could be a long sales cycle. Like if we're talking about high price ticket items, you know, so that's all important cause I need to factor that into how we measure things. Then I kind of get into with them, I ask them about more of the marketing side that they're doing. You know, what do they do to attract visitors to their website? You know, are they using content, you know, to be found in organic search?

Kyle Akerman ([04:27](#)):

Do they use email to promote things? Are they, you know, connecting with people through social networks? Do they run ads? Maybe they go to live events. You know, I'm sure that's a, a big thing in some industries. So understanding some of those basics. And then how does the marketing team, where do they spend their time and their money? Because we're gonna wanna start, I think, with measuring those things. 'Cause I think it makes the most sense, especially if you've got a small marketing team. You know, so if you have one to three people and they're trying to do everything, it would really be useful for them to know where they're getting the most bang for their buck or their time. I try to flesh out what are your key metrics, and those can be macro or micro. Obviously we wanna know the big ones, you know, is it like qualified leads?

Kyle Akerman ([05:15](#)):

Is it demo signups or product signups? You know, that kind of thing. And then, you know, how do you currently use data because, and this kind of goes back to the sophistication. So sometimes I'll get people that are like, look, we're measuring X, Y, and Z. We kind of know what this means, but we're not sure, you know, the next step. So those people are a little more advanced in their measurement capture and porting and analysis. But then other people are like, you know, we're, we don't even know how to measure what we should be measuring. So in those cases, I try to connect the dots to, okay, you've got these key metrics, so the next step is what questions do you wanna answer with data? Like, what would

help you improve your marketing, grow your business? That kind of thing. cause usually they know that, they're like, oh, we wanna know this, we wanna know this.

Kyle Akerman ([06:07](#)):

You know, we wanna know how people get to the website. We wanna know what content they're consuming. We wanna know why they, you know, only look at these pages. So if I kind of frame measurement in, you know, not in like the tool itself or even data, I just like to start out with what do you want to answer? Like what are those burning questions? And then I can say, okay, here's the information we need to measure, answer that question. So that's where the, you know, the data and the implementation of whatever measurement tool you're using comes into play. And then kind of the final part of that, when I'm talking with clients in the planning stage is what kind of actions are you gonna take once you get the answers to your questions? So if you're targeting, I need a hundred product demos each month, let's say, and we find that you only get 80 last month, what are you gonna change in your marketing or on your website? Conversely, if you're at 120, what are you gonna change? And that just might be, oh, we're gonna keep spending on this channel. You know, that kind of thing. So I, it boiling it down to just what are the questions that you need to answer That usually helps people that are less sophisticated about measurement, it helps them kind of wrap their head around it and how we can use it. Yeah.

Ashley Hohensee ([07:24](#)):

Uh, so I think, uh, it may vary from company to company obviously, but what are some of the common metrics that you recommend a company look at tracking?

Kyle Akerman ([07:34](#)):

Yeah, I was thinking about this one, you know, right before we jumped on specifically for, you know, medtech companies at a higher level. You know, all companies, the, the basic questions are kind of, you know, how do people get to your site? You know, that's always a popular one. And then, uh, what pages are they looking at? Like, what content are they consuming? Maybe how do people navigate through your site? And then what actions do people complete? Now in the case of a, a medtech company, you know, I'm imagining, you know, they've got some product, you know, whether it's like a physical product that's in like an emergency room or something, or maybe it's a software that's, that's used. So in those cases, they're probably wanna measure, you know, signups for like, trials of that product or maybe demos, you know, so if it's like a software, you know, maybe they're just demoing the product. So how many people are signing up for those key metrics? So that was the only real thing that I came up with specifically for MedTech. Yeah,

Michael Roberts ([08:38](#)):

A lot of times, um, just, just from what I'm seeing, like in terms of like the, the actual calls to action sort of thing, it's a lot of contact the rep, contact, like the person that can show you this thing. And sometimes, you know, depending on like who is asking, and this could be resolved either through like a really in depth form, you know, or whatever, but you know, you could have that like, "Hey, I'm interested in learning about the product and I'm a hospital administrator," not a physician, you know, and that's, and so that kind of gets them routed to different pipelines and all that kind of stuff as well. So

Kyle Akerman ([09:09](#)):

Yeah. Yeah, any kind of form intake like that where people will kinda self-identify, then that definitely is, is something that, you know, you wanna measure too. And then ultimately you'd like to be able to connect like those contact forms, somebody filled that out to a, to a traffic source, you know, so it'd be great to be able to say, "oh, Google Ads is driving most of our, this specific contact form" or, you know, LinkedIn ads or you know, I don't know, our YouTube channel, whatever it is. You know, so when you can kind of connect the dots between the traffic and the conversion, like that is really useful for the marketing. Now you, you mentioned, you know, specific people, am I a physician? Am I a, you know, I don't know, an HR rep at a hospital? It can be a little tricky to measure if those people are coming to your site, you know, because most of these tools, it's anonymous, aggregated data, you know, so unless you have a form where you're asking, "Hey, what's your job title or job role?"

Kyle Akerman ([10:13](#)):

Or, you know, obviously collecting a name, then you'd have to go do your own research, maybe go to LinkedIn, try to find that person and be like, oh, they're a, you know, they're a physician's assistant or, or whatever. Hey. But yeah, without that specific way to capture the person, the other way you could kind of do as a proxy is have stuff on your site or in your marketing that would attract those specific people. You know, so create content that really only, you know, maybe certain physicians would be interested in or certain types of, you know, medical institutions. You know, same thing with, your podcast is a perfect example, you know, like creating the content that people that listen to that are going to, there's a high probability that it's the people you are trying to reach. So that's another way to try to attract people and, and kind of filter out, well, who is actually looking at my site and are they the right people?

Ashley Hohensee ([11:11](#)):

Yeah. So I think another thing is sometimes when you've seen, like they'll have, you know, analytics already set up and they're collecting all this data, and then what do you do when they're just overwhelmed with what they have? How do you help them filter that down?

Kyle Akerman ([11:24](#)):

Yeah. And that's a, that's a common problem for, you know, any company, um, you know, medtech or otherwise, because the tools have made it so easy to collect large amounts of data. So this is, this is why planning is so important. So, you know, I'll refer back to the, the planning that we do, you know, with each company. And I, I kind of, my philosophy is less is more. So I try to get people to focus on, you know, the three to five metrics that drive the business. You know, I, I hear some people, if you wanna be really extreme, you could be like, well, what metrics if they go up or down will get you fired or fired? You know, that that's kind of extreme, but, but you get the idea then like, oh, this is important. You know, so maybe it's the how many product demos did we get this month or, or I should say sign up for demos or how many phone calls did my sales guy get?

Kyle Akerman ([12:21](#)):

That kind of thing. So I focus in teams, especially small teams on, you know, those three to five metrics and you know, the kind of adjacent data that's relative to those. Like, just keep it simple. And I know, you know, it's hard cause you know, there's a lot of shiny object syndrome. People go into Google Analytics or into whatever dashboarding tool they're using and they look at everything. But a lot of the stuff doesn't help them necessarily figure out what's happening and what to do next. So just getting people to focus. So one of the things I try to get people to focus on their key three. So there I'm saying, you know, just pick three metrics and let's start off focusing on those and as measurement

sophistication grows and maybe your needs, you know, hey, I need to know this too, then expand your measurement. But don't start with a big pile of data and you know, be sifting through that, you know, every week or every month. cause you know, we know that usually when people have to do that, they do it once and then they just kind of stop looking at their data. <laugh>, that's true. Right?

Michael Roberts (13:32):

Yeah. Now I've answered the question. So it'll be true forever. It'll always be this way. This is how people behave. <laugh>. So good to go. Let me ask sort of the flip of that question then. So you're talking about like being overwhelmed. I think it's easy too for people to look at their business and go, I need more sales. So okay. Make more sales. And it's like if they, instead of having like too many metrics, you know, they only have, they have a big one, not big three. Yeah. They only have big one. Yeah. And they're just like, dollars need to go up. How do you handle those kinds of conversations? Well,

Kyle Akerman (14:01):

I mean, then you just kind of need to, so that almost goes to the, it's not quite macro, micro, but it's definitely the metrics that then kind of feed into, you know, say it. So that's, so then it goes back to, all right, what's the process, you know, that gets somebody from awareness, you know, being a prospect through to making that sale. And you know, whether you call it a funnel or a customer journey or you know, whatever term you wanna use, you then try to break up those stages and see where you can make improvements in, in those stages. You know, cause do you have an awareness problem, so you're not getting enough of the right people, you know, in the top of the funnel? 'Cause then you would do specific activities for that. Or if you go to the other end, do you have a conversion problem where you're getting, you know, I don't know, a hundred qualified leads a month, which is what you need, but you know, you're only converting 5% of them into sales. So then, you know, that's a different action you'd have to take. So I think going backwards from sales measuring what's feeding that and try to figure out where you can make improvements that will have the, the biggest effect. But yeah, you can definitely focus on just one thing and, and that doesn't necessarily help you because you need to know what the levers are that affect that metrics, you know? So measure that stuff. Yeah,

Michael Roberts (15:26):

Yeah, absolutely. So let's shift gears here. So Kyle, you do work with analytics, you do help companies like kind of like talk through these products? Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, uh, talk through these, these projects quite a bit. Ashley, who is the co-host for this episode, Ashley does a lot of work on helping some of our clients like figure out how people are actually using the products. So they've gotten through a different type of analytics, right? There's, there's a digital component, there's some sort of software component. People are coming in, they're using it. Long ago we were using Google Analytics as one of the ways to measure that. We found it really insufficient. The client really found it insufficient in terms of like really understanding. So I wanted to kind of like compare and contrast. 'Cause I know that this is long enough ago that like analytics has changed. We were using whatever is not the current version. And I've, I've so completely kinda like checked out of Google Analytics at this point. Like I don't remember which. It's not Universal Analytics anymore, it's GA four, is that right?

Kyle Akerman (16:17):
Correct. Yeah. Google Analytics 4, GA4

Michael Roberts (16:19):

Okay. I just make sure I'm getting it right. So, and I know that there was a lot of gnashing of teeth and a lot of it still is major, major transitions that happened. There still is a lot of gnashing of teeth. So there, there's, there's a lot of stuff that really, really changed. Like, it, it was a very big shift in that particular thing. But I, I wanted to just kind of talk about sort of like what the difference is and I, I think Ashley, like, I'll start with you and then Kyle, I wanna hear from you on this in, in terms of like, hey, like how do these things differ? You're overall, conceptually we're trying to keep up with someone came to the website or the product, they completed some actions that we wanted them to take, you know, yay or nay. Did we succeed? You know, like how things look. So actually let's kind of talk through some of the differences like as you've delved in more deeply and you've really been working in this the last, you know, few months especially like pretty aggressively. So let's kind of talk something about like, I guess what you've observed on differences. Yeah,

Ashley Hohensee ([17:08](#)):

I mean I think the biggest one is just kind of on the commercial side, you're focused on trying to get the sale or those kind of things. On the product side, you're really trying to like keep the customer happy. Are, are they using the system the way we thought they would, do they seem happy with the features that we have? Are they coming into, are they running into certain issues with the way we have things set up? What are they interacting with, what are they completely ignoring? Those kinds of things. So it's kind of more about just making sure that they stay happy and that we're continuing to improve the product.

Michael Roberts ([17:41](#)):

So there's a lot more about not only getting them there the first time, but getting them coming back. What's

Ashley Hohensee ([17:46](#)):

Yeah, getting them to come back. Yeah.

Michael Roberts ([17:48](#)):

What that repetitive use looks like. And then Kyle, I know that there are scenarios where you do want to have people come back more than just once, but like, I guess kinda, I talked about that on the product, on the like front end I'll say. Like in terms of like trying to win a customer

Kyle Akerman ([18:00](#)):

Over. Yeah, I mean, well first of all, everything Ash has said was like, I had those exact same notes. I mean the, the main difference I guess is the tools that measure everything about what's happening on your website. And then you know, what's happening like behind a login, you know, of the tool and you can take what you learn from those product analytics, you know, how are people using it or what are they not using, what are they not aware of that maybe is a feature. Then that stuff can go into your marketing and sales material that's on the website. So like you can take those product analytics and improve your marketing, which then, you know, kind of goes in a circle, you know, we, you know, a feedback loop. cause now, oh, I didn't know that you had that feature. Oh, now this product just became even more valuable.

Kyle Akerman ([18:49](#)):

I, I haven't worked a ton with product analytics tools, but you know, I kind of know what they measure and you know, you can kind of get this symbiosis of, you know, the, the data in in each, you know, cause obviously there's that, you know, you want people to use it and keep using it, you know, the the retention component of the tool and well, and you mentioned that Google Analytics wasn't great at measuring this stuff. It might be better now because they changed the way they collect data. So now it's an event based measurement model. And I think that's also what a lot of the product analytics tools do. Like they're measuring events. So maybe you could use GA four as a product analytics tool. But I have never done that and I don't really have experience in it. But I, my guess is it would be better than Universal Analytics.

Ashley Hohensee ([19:42](#)):

Yeah, I think so. I think the biggest thing with the tools that we use is that, um, you, you can get aggregate data, but you can also like look at an individual user journey. If you have power users or if you have somebody that's reported a problem, and that's where like our customers have found value outside of Google Analytics. So you can get, you know, you can import all that profile data.

Kyle Akerman ([20:05](#)):

That's, I think you hit it on the head. That's probably the biggest advantage of a product analytics tools. 'Cause it's seeing that login and you know, tracking, oh, Kyle used the tool this way, or Ashley used it this way, Google Analytics can do that, but it's a little trickier like with their privacy and data restrictions. And so that's probably one of the biggest advantages. So yeah. Yeah.

Ashley Hohensee ([20:31](#)):

And then being able to import, you know, their profile data, there's different user types so you can start to segment on that. So you can aggregate like within a specific user type. Yeah, that definitely helps a lot.

Michael Roberts ([20:43](#)):

Something that I just wanted to kind of comment on, just sort of like on an overarching, as we've been kind of bouncing back and forth between different types of companies, what they're looking for different sort of like sales cycles versus like what you can answer with a website analytics tool versus where you may need to also bounce over to your CRM versus where you may need to bounce over to your email newsletter stats and all these kinds of things. It's like, I I think like the understanding of how much each of these, like play a part, right? Like no one tool is going answer all the questions. You, you need all of these different things to play together nicely. But I, I really do think there's a lot that you brought up at, at the top there, which is like, what are the questions that you have to answer?

Michael Roberts ([21:21](#)):

Like what are the problems you really trying to solve? And then how are all of these different systems feeding back into it, you know, knowing that you need your product retention to stay high in order to keep your customers happy, in order to keep your product sales up and all of those different things. And then you can link that back. And so I, I think there's some really interesting things that we're pulling out of this in terms of how to sort of see a holistic picture. 'Cause I think any one of these tools you really run into the danger of getting very tunneled in on only this aspect of your marketing.

Kyle Akerman ([21:51](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. They, each tool can really only provide part of the picture. And during that planning session, when I'm talking with people, you know, I try to, so we, we've identified the questions. Then we look at, you know, the next step is, okay, what information do we need? Well that some of that information, like you said it, that might live in your CRM or in your email platform or in your ad platform or you know, wherever. Then you gotta figure out, okay, you know, when we're now ready at the reporting and analysis stage, well do we go into each of those tools and try to report and analyze the data that's there or do we bring it all into one unified dashboard where we have everything in one place or you know, how do we wrangle all of that data? And that just gets more complicated as your company gets larger and larger as you have more and more places where there's data.

Michael Roberts ([22:44](#)):

Yeah, I think the, the whole like less is more mantra is, is a good way to like really start getting a handle on what we can be doing because in terms of medtech companies that, you know, subscribe to the newsletter, that listen to the show, like certainly got that full range, right? You know, of very simple websites still in stealth mode and you can barely learn anything about the company all the way up to literally hundreds of products on their website that you can look through. And so it's very, very in depth, uh, sort of analytics. So, you know, kind of starting with less is more, I think is, is a huge way to really like tackle this. So, you know, we've looked at a variety of ways that med tech companies can be tackling this problem. Kyle, thanks so much for joining us. There are topics that we didn't go on today, like I didn't pull all the tangents that I could start asking you about in terms of like, hey, now that like we're starting to see AI and search results, how's that affecting analytics and, you know, how does voice search work?

Michael Roberts ([23:30](#)):

And there's so many other things that I could, I could see, uh, pestering you about. So maybe we'll have you back on the show at some point if you get a chance. But, uh, people can find you at kyleakerman.com. Yep. Um, and we'll have the links and everything in the show notes here. And you've got a newsletter that goes out how often?

Kyle Akerman ([23:47](#)):

Uh, a couple times a week. Yeah. I mean, I call it a newsletter. It's emails. We're not talking about like a, like a marketing dive or, you know, marketing cup, cup of coffee long newsletter. These are just individual emails that go out a couple times a week.

Michael Roberts ([23:59](#)):

So marketing thoughts, analytics thoughts with, uh, with Kyle. Definitely worth checking out. So for more on the, uh, on the Health connective show, please visit hc.show for any previous episodes in Health Connective as a company. Thanks for listening today, Kyle, thanks so much for joining us. It's a lot of fun.

Kyle Akerman ([24:14](#)):

Thanks for having me here.

Michael Roberts ([24:15](#)):

Absolutely.