



Tag Manager

GOOGLE TAG MANAGER AUDIT CHECKLIST



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Google Tag Manager Audit Checklist

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About the author

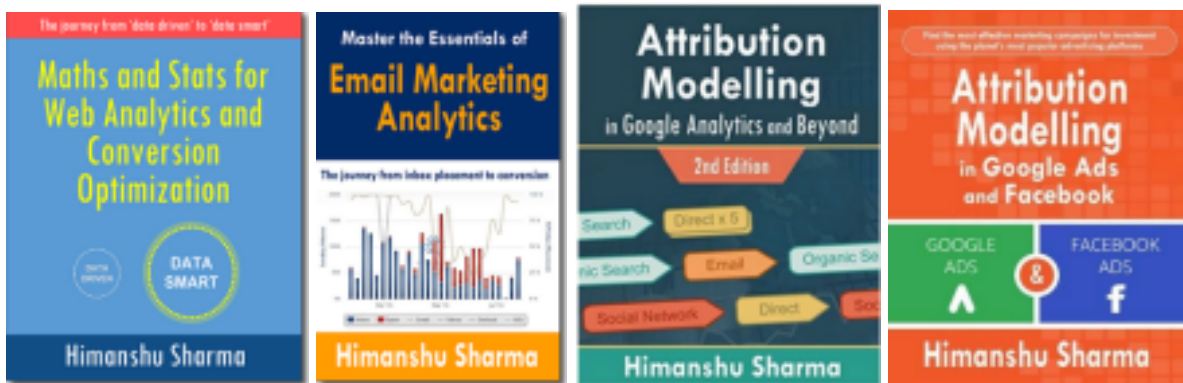
- Founder, OptimizeSmart.com
- Over 15 years of experience in digital analytics and marketing
- Author of four best-selling books on digital analytics and conversion optimization
- Nominated for Digital Analytics Association Awards for Excellence
- Runs one of the most popular blogs in the world on digital analytics
- Consultant to countless small and big businesses over the decade



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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/optimizesmart>



Following are our most downloaded ebooks for career advancement:

#1 [Sales and ROI Accelerator \(150+ pages\)](#)

WHAT'S INSIDE: My step-by-step blueprint for generating record sales and ROI by leveraging analytics data.

#2 [Set Up Your Google Analytics 4 \(GA4\) Account Correctly And Fast \(70 pages\)](#)

WHAT'S INSIDE: Learn to set up your GA4 account correctly and fast using this 62 points checklist.

FAQ: Do you show “How” to do each item on the checklist? If so, with screenshots?

Yes. There are links to the articles with detailed step by step instructions.

FAQ: Does this ebook cover GTM too?

Yes.

#3 [Google Tag Manager Data Layers \(100+ pages\)](#)

WHAT'S INSIDE: My step-by-step blueprint for getting started with data layers. Get the only ebook on GTM data layers ever published. Learn the JavaScript behind it.

#4 [Learn to Read E-Commerce Reports in Google Analytics \(100+ pages\)](#)

WHAT'S INSIDE: My step-by-step guide to reading both standard and enhanced e-commerce reports in Google Analytics. E-commerce reports are the most valuable reports in Google Analytics.

#5 Do you want better skills in digital analytics and marketing? If yes, then [register for the free training:](#)

Here's what we're going to cover...

1. Why digital analytics is the key to online business success.
2. The number 1 reason why most marketers are not able to scale their advertising and maximize sales.
3. Why Google and Facebook ads don't work for most businesses & how to make them work.
4. Why you won't get any competitive advantage in the marketplace just by knowing Google Analytics.
5. The number 1 reason why conversion optimization is not working for your business.
6. How to advertise on any marketing platform for FREE with an unlimited budget.
7. How to learn and master digital analytics and conversion optimization in record time.

Get helpful tips on a daily basis

If you are the type of person who finds it helpful to receive short tips on building your website traffic, improving conversions, fixing attribution issues and learning about analytics in general, then follow me on LinkedIn. I post a few short tips each day.

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Follow the checklist below to set up GTM correctly:

#1 Create a measurement plan

The first step before even implementing the Google Tag Manager snippet on your website is to create a measurement plan.

This plan should cover all the activities performed by the user on your website, such as button tracking, form completion, enhanced ecommerce, implementing cross-domain tracking, etc.

Make sure to document your measurement plan for future references. You should have a clear picture of every tag implemented in your Tag Manager account.

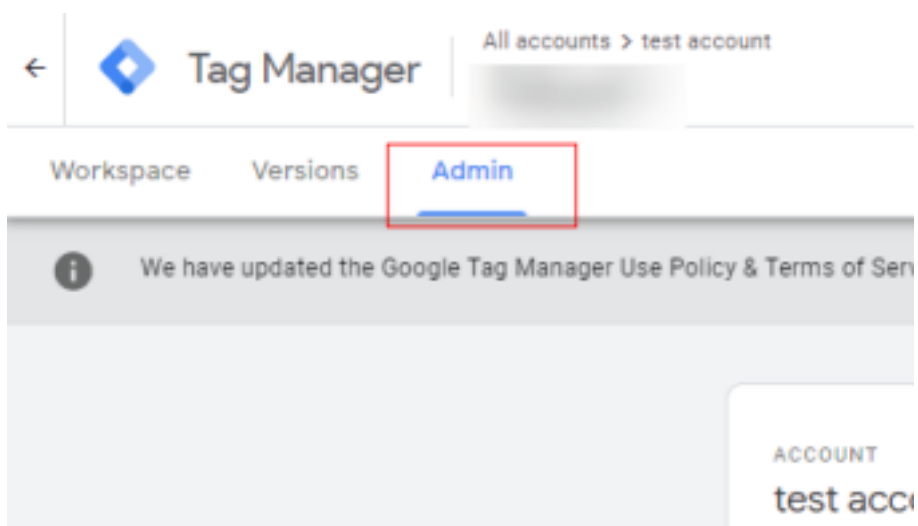
#2 Add GTM container snippet

The GTM container snippet is a piece of JavaScript code that should be implemented on all the pages that you would like to track.

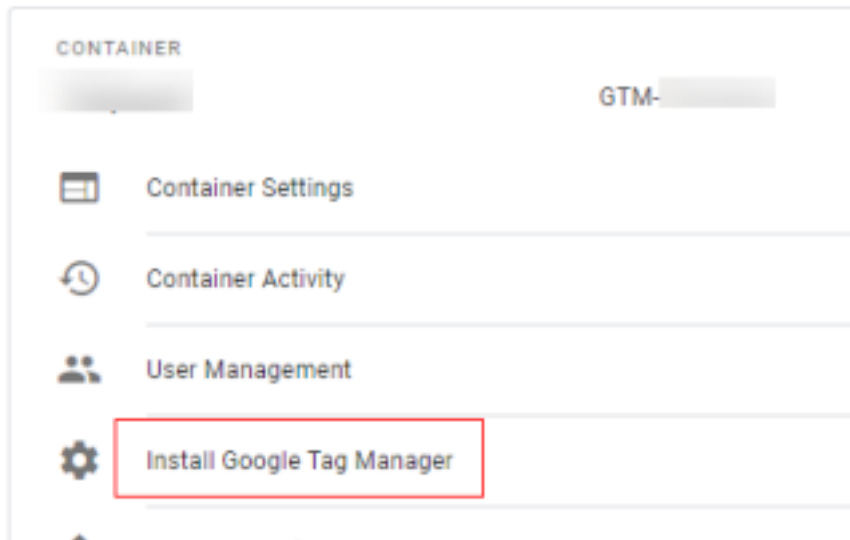
Let us see where to find this snippet and how to implement it.

Step-1: Login to your Google Tag Manager account.

Step-2: Click on the 'Admin' section at the top.



Step-3: Under the 'Container' column, select 'Install Google Tag Manager'.



Step-4: Copy the below code and paste it to every page of your website. This code should be placed in the head section of the page and the second part should be right after the body tag.

← Install Google Tag Manager

Copy the code below and paste it on to every page of your website.

Paste this code as high in the <head> of the page as possible:

```
<!-- Google Tag Manager -->  
<script>(function(w,d,s,l,i){w[l]=w[l]||[];w[l].push({'gtm.start':  
new Date().getTime(),event:'gtm.js'});var f=d.getElementsByTagName(s)[0],  
j=d.createElement(s),dl=l!='dataLayer'?'&dl='+l:'';j.async=true;j.src=  
'https://www.googletagmanager.com/gtm.js?id='+i+dl;f.parentNode.insertBefore(j,f);  
})(window,document,'script','dataLayer', );</script>  
<!-- End Google Tag Manager -->
```

Additionally, paste this code immediately after the opening <body> tag:

```
<!-- Google Tag Manager (noscript) -->  
<noscript><iframe src="https://www.googletagmanager.com/ns.html?id="<br>height="0" width="0" style="display:none;visibility:hidden"></iframe></noscript>  
<!-- End Google Tag Manager (noscript) -->
```

For more information about installing the Google Tag Manager snippet, visit our [Quick Start Guide](#).

#3 Check if all the pages have the GTM container snippet

Make sure that you have added the GTM container snippet on all the pages of your website that you would like to track.

GTM container snippet validation can be done by two methods. 1. Using the Google Tag Assistant Chrome extension.

2. Checking the code in the source code of the page.

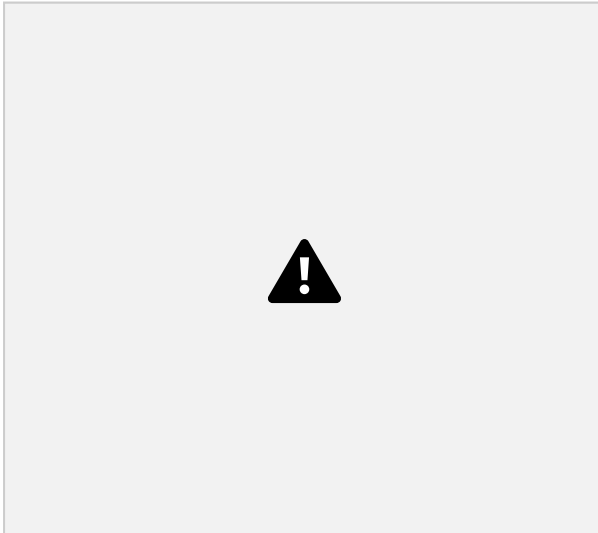
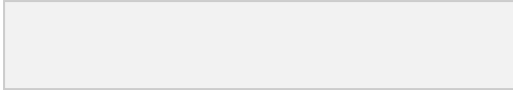
Validation using Tag Assistant Chrome extension:

Google Tag Assistant is the chrome extension that checks all the tags added on the page. Download this extension from the chrome web store.

Follow the below steps to validate if the GTM snippet is loading properly on your page.

Step-1: Visit your website and now click on the 'Enable' icon for the extension.

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Step-2: Check for the tags loaded on the page in the Tag Assistant with status green, red or blue.

Step-3: If the status is green or blue it means that the GTM is installed properly on the page as shown above.

Validation using source code of the page:

Step-1: Visit your website in the Chrome browser.

Step-2: Right-click anywhere on the page and select 'view page source' or use the command Ctrl+U.

Step-3: You would now notice that your source code is now open in the new tab.

Step-4: Press 'Control +F' and search for GTM- and if your developer has installed the code, you would see it in the results. If GTM is installed correctly you will see two instances, one in the head tag and one in the body tag.

#4 Use an appropriate naming convention for your tags and triggers

While creating tags and triggers in your GTM make sure that you have named the tags and triggers uniquely so that they will be easier for identifying.

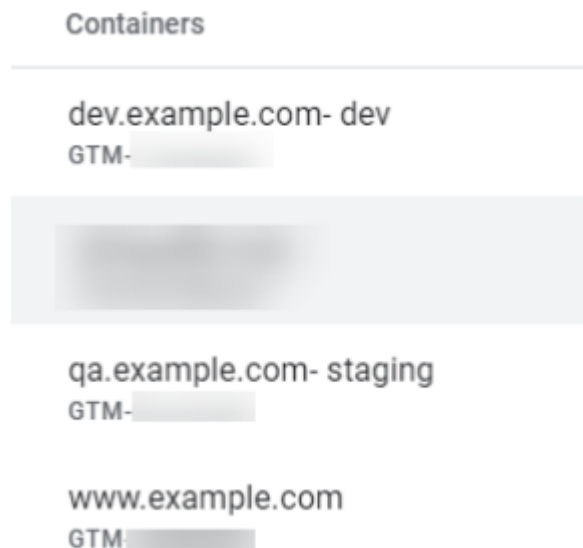
The best practice is to be consistent with your tag and trigger names in GTM.

For example, if you are naming GA event tags with GA-Event-Form Completion, then every event tag follows the same format.

<input type="checkbox"/>	GA- Event - Main Navigation	Google Analytics: Universal Analytics
<input type="checkbox"/>	GA- Event- Button Tracking	Google Analytics: Universal Analytics
<input type="checkbox"/>	GA-Event-Download Tracking	Google Analytics: Universal Analytics

Following the proper naming convention will be easy for maintenance and helps your container to stay more organized.

If you are using multiple containers for different environments (dev, staging and production), you can create containers based on the environment as shown below.



Additionally, if you are creating tags for different products then include the product name at the beginning of the tag name.

For example, if you are creating a tag for Google Ads then you can name it as GA-Conversion-Tag.

#5 Implement data layers on your website

A data layer is a JavaScript array that stores the custom information that you need and can be used in GTM tags, triggers and variables.

The data layer method is recommended and the best method for implementation.

For example,

Let us consider that you have created a tag based on the click element or class ID on the webpage and, due to some business reason, the page has been modified and they do not have the same class Id or click element, in that case, it will break your tag or implementation.

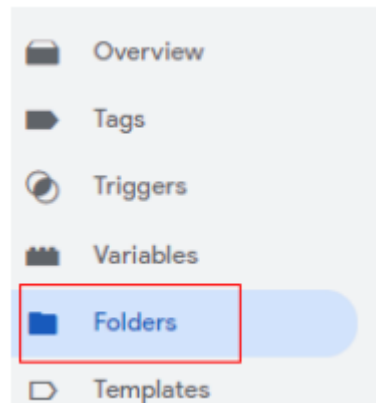
However, if you have implemented a data layer this issue will be resolved.

#6 Use folders for organising your tags, triggers and variables

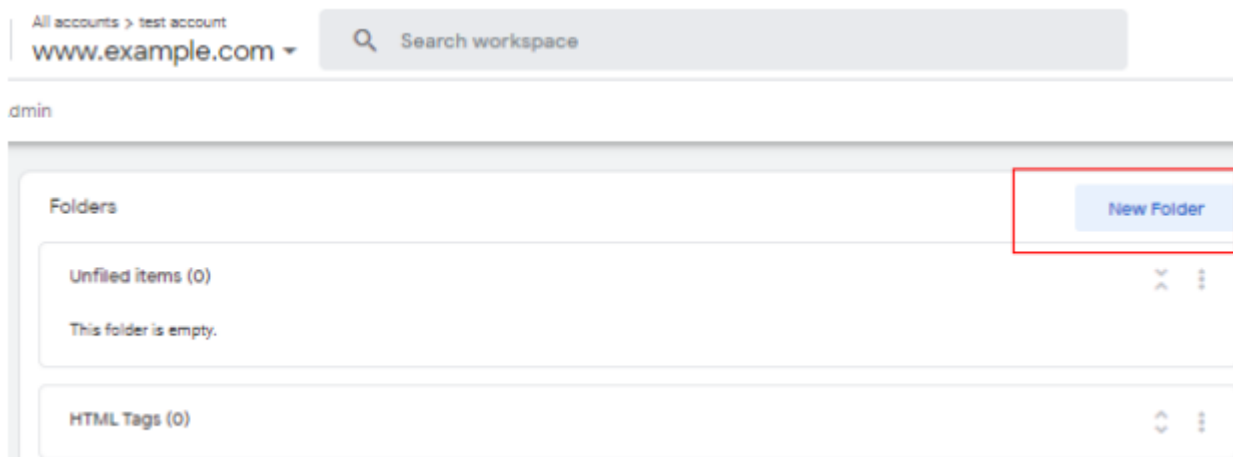
Google Tag Manager provides a folder option that helps organise your tags, triggers and variables in one place.

You can create a folder to manage all marketing tags, like DoubleClick, Facebook, Google Ads, and organise them.

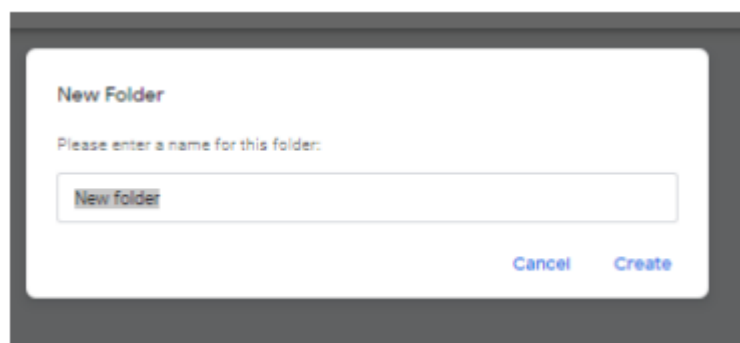
Step-1: Login to your GTM account and click on 'Folders'.



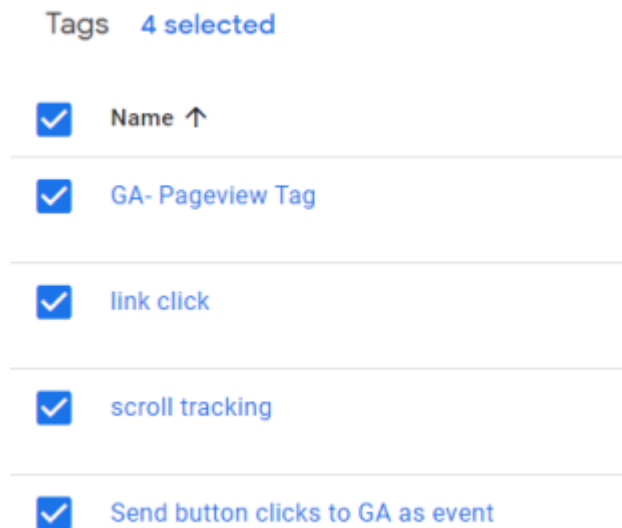
Step-2: Click on the 'New folder' button as shown below:



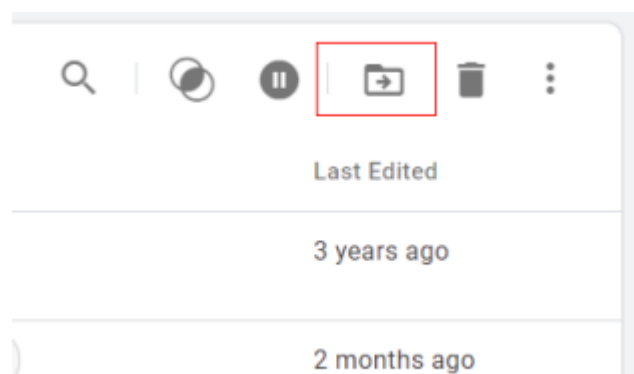
Step-3: Name your folder and click on 'Create'.



Step-4: Now navigate to your tags and select the tags that you would like to move into the folders.



Step-5: From the top right, select the 'Move to folder' icon to add tags to a specific folder.



Step-6: Choose the folder to move your tags to that folder.



The screenshot shows a modal window titled "Choose a folder" with a close button (X) on the left and search and add buttons (magnifying glass and plus sign) on the right. Below the title bar is a table with a header "Name ↑" and three rows of folder options:

Name ↑		
	Unfiled items	3 items
	Google Analytics	4 items
	Marketing	No items

#7 Consolidate all the similar tags

If you are using multiple tags for similar purposes, then you can replace them with a single tag.

For example, if you have button tracking on your website and all the buttons have a similar class on the page, instead of creating multiple tags, you can create a common tag and use it for every button.

#8 Use Google Analytics settings variable for tags

The Google Analytics settings variable acts as a central location for all the custom settings that can be used in multiple tags.

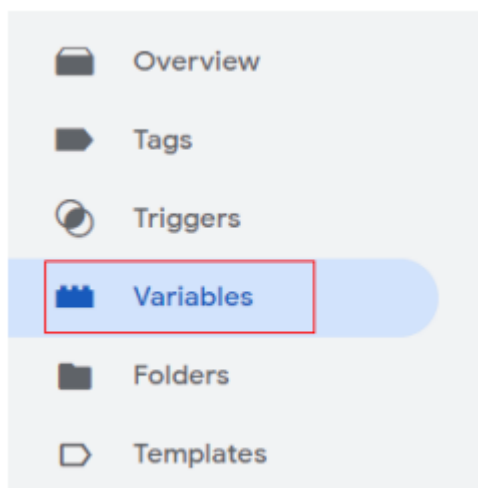
Let's say you have only five tags in your container then it is easy enough to enter the tracking code (UA-XXXX-X) manually and add any other settings like custom dimensions, anonymize IP and cookie settings. But if you have more tags in your GTM container then it is going to take a lot of time.

Instead of entering tracking code manually create a constant Google Analytics settings variable that can be used in all tags.

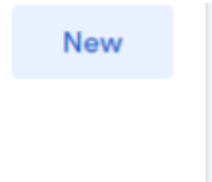
Step-1: Login to your Google Tag Manager account.

Step-2: Select the account in which you would like to create a GA settings variable.

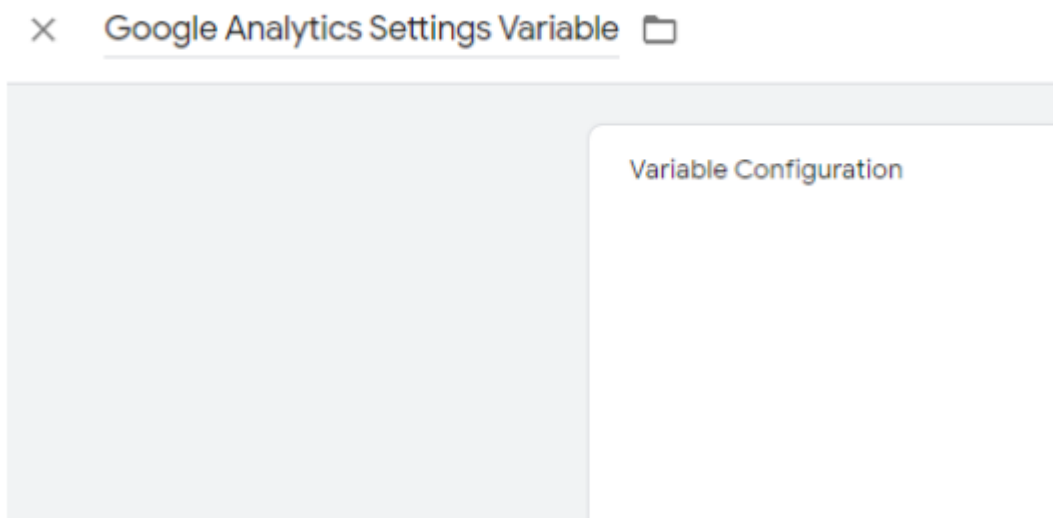
Step-3: Select 'Variables' from the left-hand menu.



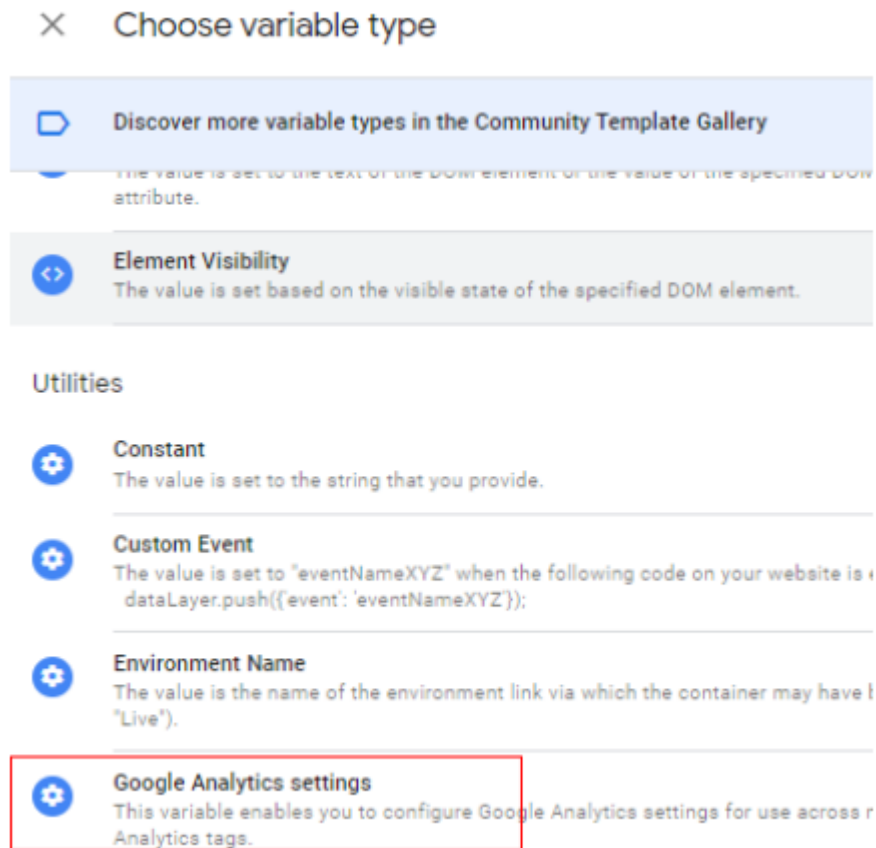
Step-4: Now, from 'User-defined variables', click on 'New' to create a GA settings variable.



Step-5: Provide a name for your variable. For example, 'Google Analytics settings variable'.




Step-6: Click on the 'Variable configuration' and choose the 'Variable type' as 'Google Analytics settings'.





Step-7: Now, in ‘Variable configuration’ provide the tracking ID and you can set the cookie domain and other values like custom dimensions, custom metrics, etc.


Variable Configuration


Variable Type

 Google Analytics settings

Tracking ID 



Cookie Domain 



▼ More Settings

- > Fields to Set
- > Custom Dimensions
- > Custom Metrics
- > Content Groups
- > Advertising

Step-8: Click on ‘Save. This variable can now be used for the tags that you create.

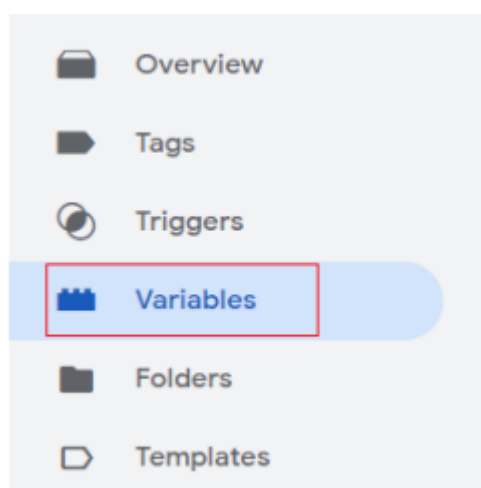
#9 Use built-in variables templates instead of custom templates

Instead of using the custom HTML tags in Google Tag Manager use the built-in tags to reduce code mistakes in HTML tags.

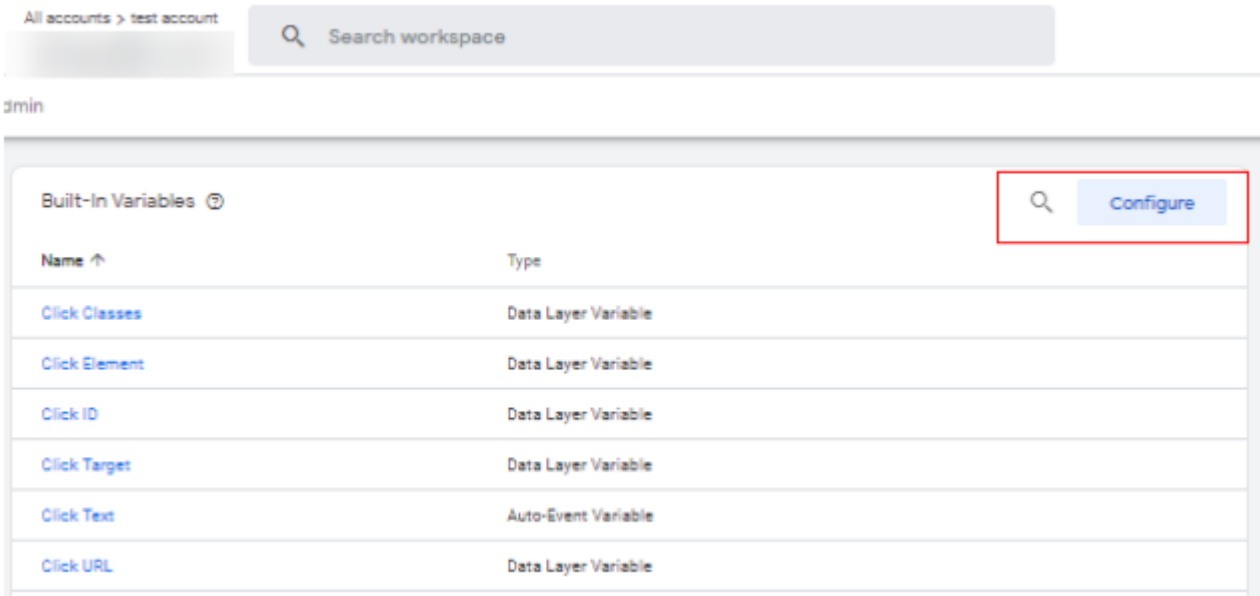
Google Tag Manager provides many built-in variables that make it easy to use. They have multiple built-in variables for scroll tracking, video tracking, forms, clicks. etc.

For example, if you would like to track video on your website using the built-in variable, then follow the below steps.

Step-1: Login to your Google Tag Manager account and select 'Variables' from the left-hand side.



Step-2: Click on the 'Configure variable' button from the 'Built-in variables' option.



All accounts > test account

Search workspace

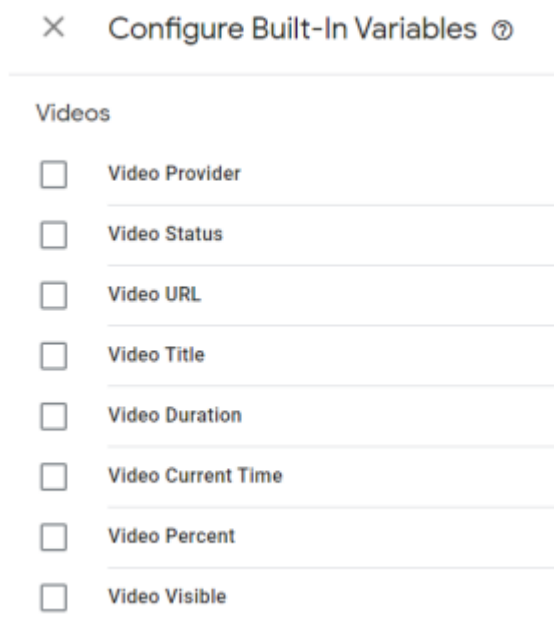
3min

Built-In Variables ⓘ

Name ↑	Type
Click Classes	Data Layer Variable
Click Element	Data Layer Variable
Click ID	Data Layer Variable
Click Target	Data Layer Variable
Click Text	Auto-Event Variable
Click URL	Data Layer Variable

Configure

Step-3: We will enable all the video related variables for this example. However, you can enable any variables as per your tracking request.

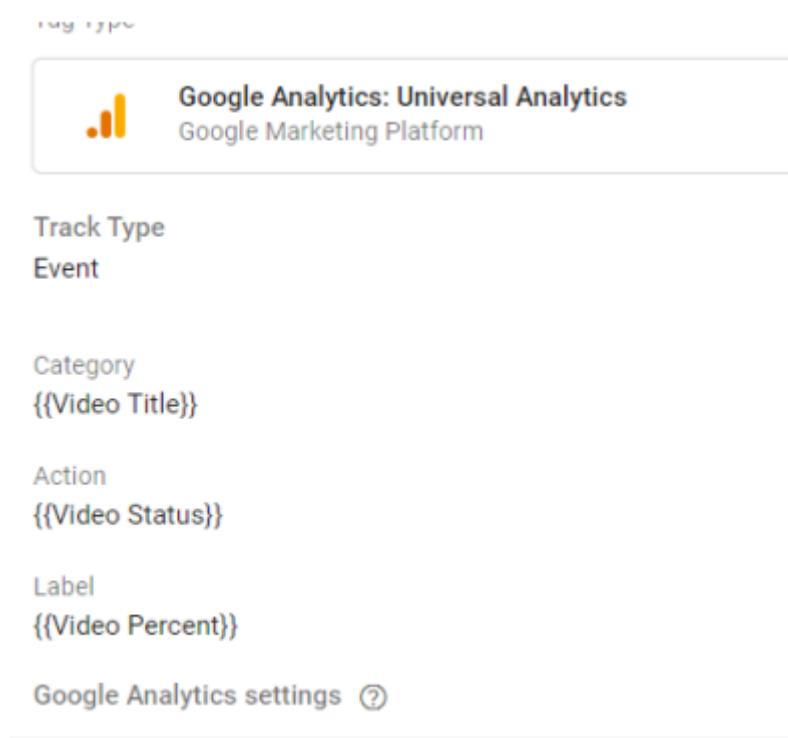


× Configure Built-In Variables ⓘ

Videos

- Video Provider
- Video Status
- Video URL
- Video Title
- Video Duration
- Video Current Time
- Video Percent
- Video Visible

Step-4: Now you can create a new tag and use these variables for video tracking as below.



#10 Use regular expressions instead of creating multiple triggers

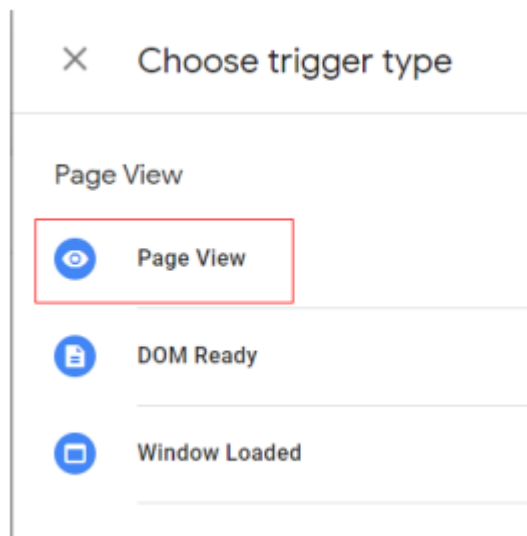
Instead of creating multiple triggers in your container, try using regular expressions.

Let's say, for example, you have a requirement to implement the Facebook trigger on your about us page, services page and contact us page, you can simply create a regular expression for this case.

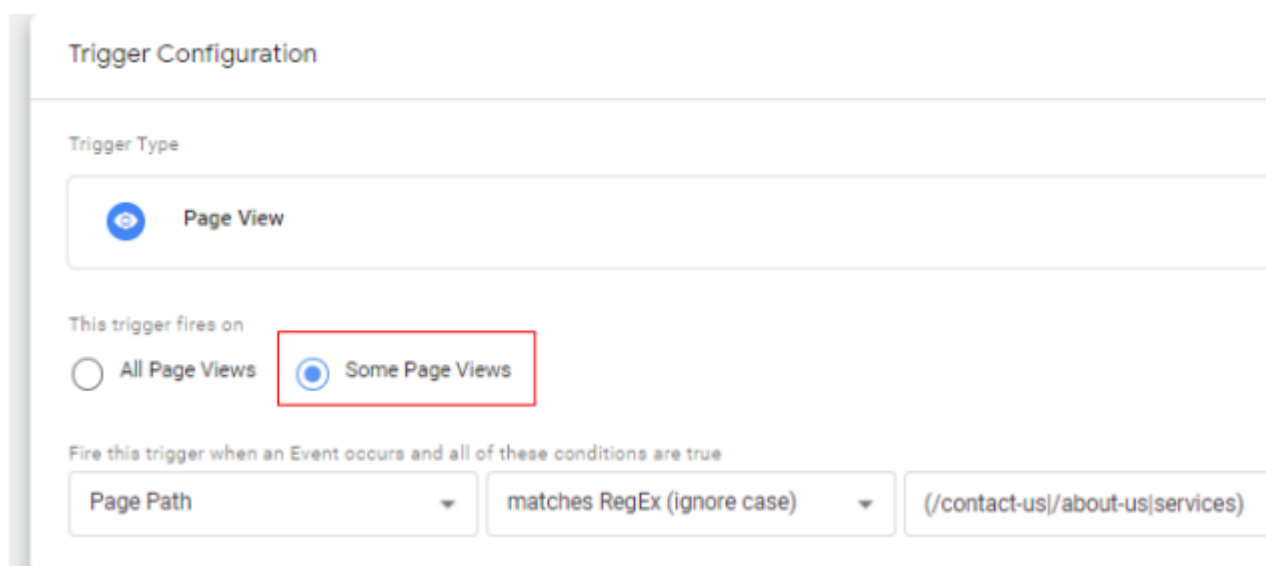
Step-1: Login to your GTM account and select 'Triggers'.

Step-2: Click on 'New trigger' and provide a name for your trigger.

Step-3: Select the 'Page view' trigger type, as shown below.



Step-4: Select the tag to fire on some pages by selecting 'Some page views'. Set 'Page path' as 'matches regex' and enter the path name of the URLs to fire the tag.



Step-5: Use this trigger in any marketing tags where you want to fire the tag on multiple pages (in this case contact us, about us and services).

#11 Use the preview option before publishing any tags on your website

Before publishing any tags on your website, make sure that you have validated if the tags are working fine on the website.

Use the preview option to check this and validate that the custom values have been captured correctly, are the event values, and variables are populating correctly based on specific actions.

#12 Check real-time reports in Google Analytics to validate the implementation

After the implementation, setup is done in Google Tag Manager and you have created the test events (Pageview, events, form completion, button tracking), navigate to Google Analytics reporting and check if the data is been captured correctly.

Step-1: Login to your Google Analytics account.

Step-2: Click on the 'Real time' reports from the left-hand menu.

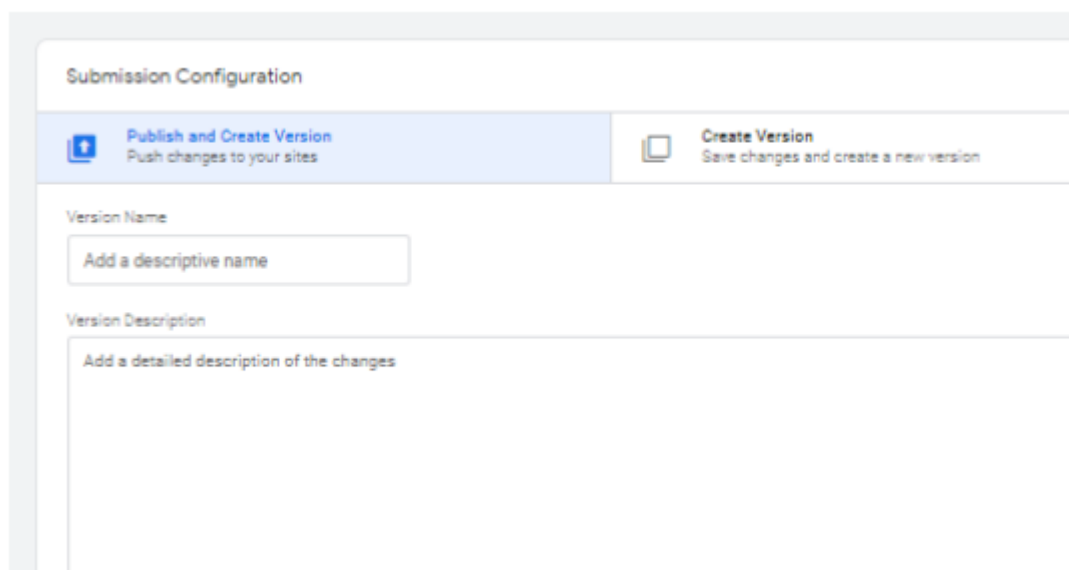
Step-3: If your GTM setup is fine, then you should be seeing the data for your website in real-time reports.

#13 Follow publishing guidelines in Google Tag Manager for every change

After you are done with your implementation and validation of the tags, the next step is to publish the changes to your website.

Make sure that you are adding a descriptive name for your versions, as it can be useful for future reference.

For example, if you are about to publish a Facebook pixel on some pages, you can describe it as 'FB Pixel implementation on contact us page'.



You are doing Google Analytics all wrong. Here is why...

I have dealt with hundreds of Google Analytics accounts in my career.

I have seen a lot of issues from incorrect tracking code, selecting the wrong KPIs to analyzing data without using custom reports or advanced segments.

But do you know the biggest issue of all in Google analytics?....

It is the “misinterpretation of analytics data”.

Many marketers make the mistake of crediting conversions to the wrong marketing channel.

And they seem to be making this mistake over and over again.

They give the credit for conversions to the last touchpoint (campaign, ad, search term...).

They can't help themselves because they believe that the Google Analytics reports are 'what you see is what you get'.

But they are actually 'what you interpret is what you get'.

This has resulted in marketers making wrong business decisions and losing money.

All the data you see in Google Analytics reports today lies to you unless you know exactly how to interpret it correctly.

For example, let's talk about direct traffic.

All untagged or incorrectly tagged marketing campaigns from display ads to emails could be reported as direct traffic by Google.

Whenever a referrer is not passed, the traffic is reported as direct traffic by Google.

Mobile applications don't send a referrer. Word/PDF documents don't send a referrer.

'302 redirects' sometimes cause the referrer to be dropped. Sometimes browsers

don't pass the referrer.

During an HTTP to HTTPS redirect (or vice versa) the referrer is not passed because of security reasons.

All such traffic is reported as direct traffic by Google.

So on the surface, it may look like that most people are visiting your website directly but this is not usually the case.

But this analysis does not end here, because you are still not looking at the complete picture.

People do not always access your website directly and then make a purchase straight away.

They are generally exposed to multiple marketing channels (display ads, social media, paid search, organic search, referral websites, email etc) before they access your website directly.

Before they make a purchase.

So if you are unaware of the role played by prior marketing channels, you will credit conversions to the wrong marketing channels.

Like in the present case to direct traffic. To get this type of understanding you need to understand and implement web analytics.

But **you learn data analysis and data interpretation from web analytics and not from Google Analytics.**

The direction in which your analysis will move will determine the direction in which your marketing campaigns will move.

You get that direction from 'web analytics' and not from 'Google Analytics'.

Web/Digital analytics is not about Google Analytics (GA) or Google Tag Manager (GTM). It is about analyzing and interpreting data, setting up goals, strategies and KPIs.

It's about creating a strategic roadmap for your business.

That's why the knowledge of web/digital analytics is so important.

So, what I have done is put together some completely free training for you.

This training will teach you what digital analytics really is and how I have been able to leverage it to generate floods of new sales and customers.

I will also show you how you can copy what I have done to get similar results.

You can sign up for the free training here:

[**Reserve My Seat Now**](#)

I hope you find it helpful.

