

# TOP 10 GA4 Fails and How to Fix Them

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Google Analytics 4 is a powerful and versatile analytics platform. It offers advances in data and tracking to optimize your customer experience, while balancing personalization and privacy as increasing regulations make this more and more difficult. However, it's fundamentally different than its predecessor, Universal Analytics, and comes with a steep learning curve for implementation and true understanding.

This guide dives into the top 10 challenges you might face, from missing tracking tags to bot infestations, and equips you with actionable solutions to ensure consistent, reliable data that drives strategic decision-making. Get ready to lay those GA4 nightmares to rest, and unlock the full potential of your data-driven journey!

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If you're still having issues with GA4, even after resolving these top 10 troubles, sign up for our no-cost web data audit. As a Google Partner we're able to offer this free program to select companies to quickly get you back on track with your data and analytics.

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# Tracking Tag Troubles

## **PROBLEM:**

Missing or misconfigured tracking tags lead to incomplete or inaccurate data. Numbers are off, revenue is lower than expected, and things don't quite add up based on what you're used to seeing.

## **SOLUTION:**

Double-check your implementation against Google's guidelines which can be found here: [https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/9304153hl=en&ref\\_topic=14088998&sjid=15856518516474958198-NC](https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/9304153hl=en&ref_topic=14088998&sjid=15856518516474958198-NC). Use the GA4 debugger and test events to ensure proper tracking.



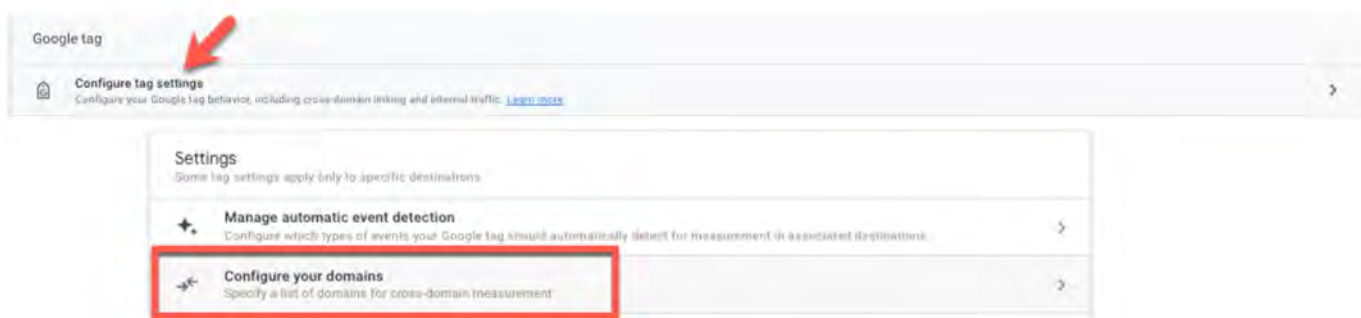
## Cross-Domain Conundrum

### PROBLEM:

Users vanish like smoke between domains, hindering cross-platform insights. Despite both domains having GA4 implemented, you can't connect the dots across domains.

### SOLUTION:

Configure domain settings (including subdomains) and enable data collection for both websites and apps. Cross-Domain tracking can be managed from within your GA4 property under the Data Stream. Navigate to configure your Google tag and then add the domains you'd like to configure:



Once configured, test cross-domain tracking using the debugger. Please note that if cross-domain tracking is working correctly, Google appends the linker parameter “\_gl” to the URL.



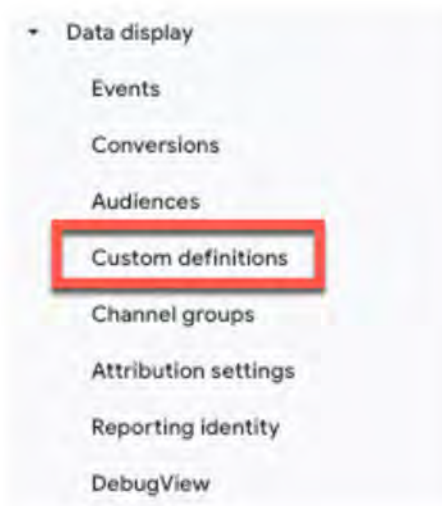
# Event Enigma

## PROBLEM:

Events are missing parameters or inconsistently named, making analysis messy.

## SOLUTION:

Define clear event naming conventions and leverage parameters to capture relevant details. Ensure that any custom dimensions or metrics being used in event tracking are scoped within the GA4 property to leverage in reporting. These parameters can be scoped under the Custom definitions tab from the property's admin panel:



Utilize event debugging tools to ensure event data consistency.

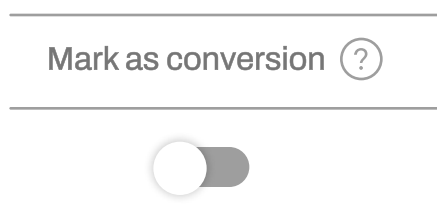
## Conversion Catastrophe

### PROBLEM:

Conversions aren't firing correctly, leaving you in the dark about key business metrics.

### SOLUTION:

Double-check conversion setup, ensuring all triggers and parameters are accurate. In GA4, conversions must be scoped within the property. Confirm that any existing events you want to designate as a conversion are toggled on properly within the Events tab of the admin panel.



Test conversions using the debugger and analyze attribution models to identify any discrepancies. When deciding which events to toggle as a conversion, bear in mind that GA4's Engaged Session metric counts any session that spends 10 seconds on site, views 2+ pages or completes a conversion event. If your conversions are high funnel events i.e. a page view, this can inflate the Engaged Session metric.



## eCommerce Breakdown

### **PROBLEM:**

Revenue and purchases are discrepant from your internal reporting, rendering your Monetization reports useless.

### **SOLUTION:**

Confirm your development team is following Google's protocol for sending eCommerce events and passing back all necessary parameters to power your eCommerce reports found here: [https://developers.google.com/analytics/devguides/collection/ga4/ecommerce?client\\_type=gtag](https://developers.google.com/analytics/devguides/collection/ga4/ecommerce?client_type=gtag).

Be cognizant of the parameters being sent with eCommerce events as Google has required parameters for each event type. Example: purchase event required parameters are currency, transaction\_id, value, and items. Google provides documentation for all parameters to be associated with events in their development guide here: <https://developers.google.com/analytics/devguides/collection/protocol/ga4/reference/events>.

Utilize the debug tool to verify that all eCommerce events are firing and passing back the proper parameters for tracking.



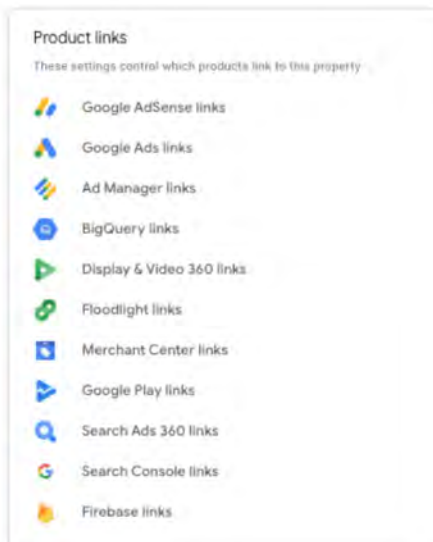
# Google Ads Goof

## PROBLEM:

Google Ads data is not present or misreported in GA4. Metrics like ad spend are unavailable, leaving you unable to analyze your marketing data.

## SOLUTION:

Verify that you have properly linked your GA4 property to your Google Ads account and enabled the auto-tagging feature. Product linking is done from the admin panel by product:



To create this product link, you must have editor access to the GA4 property and administrator access to the Google Ads account. If you plan to use the recommended auto-tagging feature to append a gclid parameter to your traffic that handles all standard UTM parameters, that will need to be setup within Google Ads. This setup removes the need for manual tracking and allows you to leverage Google Ads specific dimensions and metrics from within GA4 without additional tracking setup.



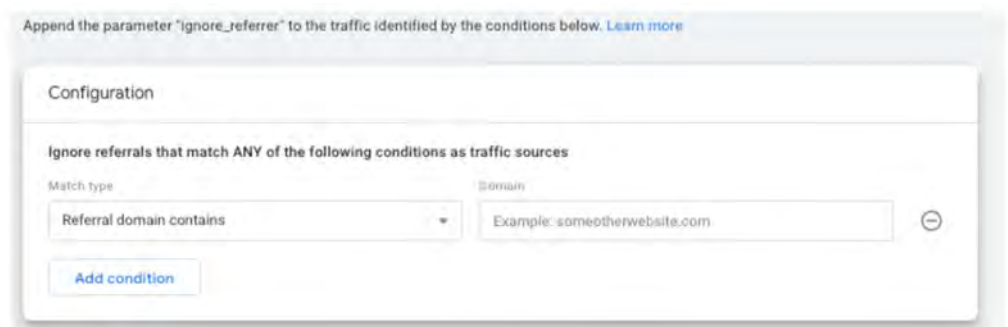
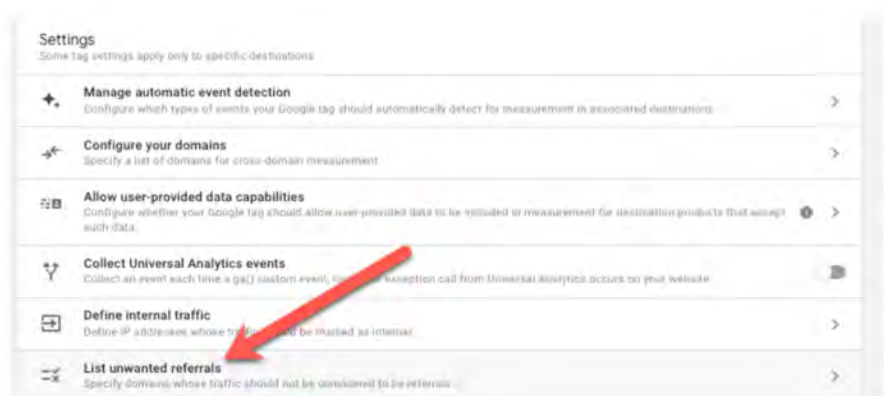
# Unwanted Referrals on the Rampage

## PROBLEM:

External sources appear as referral traffic, obscuring real user acquisition channels. Things like third-party payment processors or website-managed interactions that you'd not want to be considered as referral traffic are pulling in.

## SOLUTION:

Monitor referral patterns and investigate any unexpected spikes. If you're an editor of the GA4 property you can configure a referral exclusion list to eliminate unwanted URLs and track only relevant sources. From within the data stream, configure your Google tag's settings and list any unwanted referral domains within the List unwanted referrals tab.





# Unassigned Traffic Tango

## **PROBLEM:**

A high percentage of your traffic is coming in under the dreaded “Unassigned” default channel grouping despite being able to identify the traffic sources.

## **SOLUTION:**

Implement UTM parameters in campaign links to properly attribute paid traffic and organic traffic. Follow Google’s standards for default channel groups when trafficking campaigns so they’re bucketed to the proper channel group: <https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/9756891?hl=en>.

If your tracking setup is more customized and unable to conform to Google’s standards, generate a custom channel grouping from the admin panel that fits your needs. If your Unassigned traffic is pulling in with the “(not set)” source / medium, the problem is most likely to be something more complex than needing to adjust your UTMs. The cause of this issue can vary and is where analytics professionals can assist in diagnosing and devising a solution.



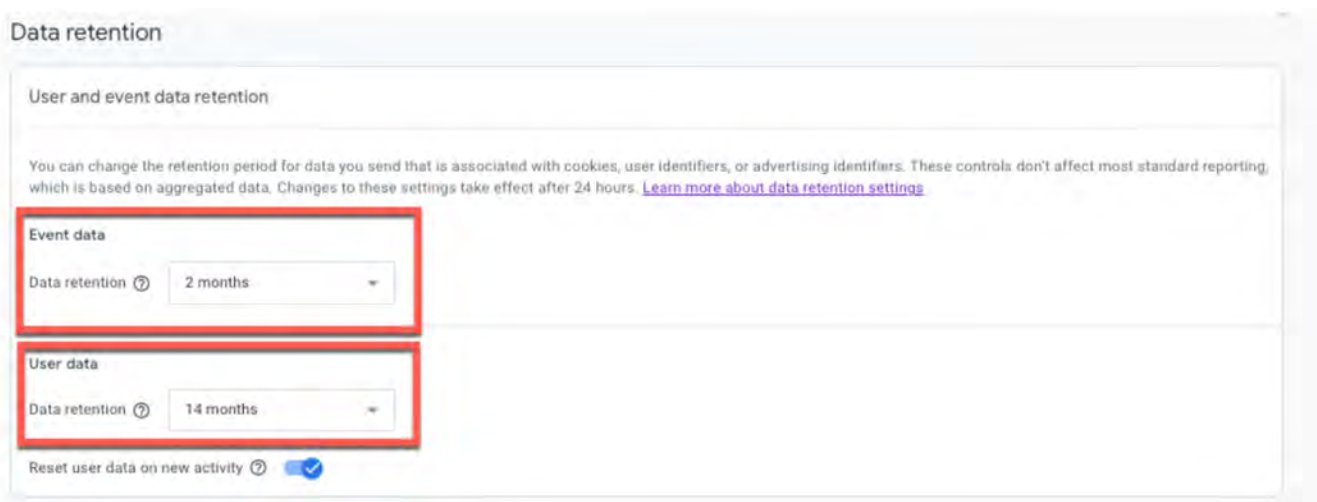
# Data Retention Dilemma

## PROBLEM:

Data disappears after a short period, limiting historical analysis and long-term insights. When building customized Explorations, you can only view data from the last two months despite having your GA4 property configured for longer.

## SOLUTION:

Adjust data retention settings based on your business needs and legal requirements. For standard GA4 users your options are either 2 months or 14 months. GA4 360 users can set retention for up to 50 months. These retention settings do not impact standard aggregated data as seen in the GA4 user interface and are only applied to Explorations and Funnels. For more extensive long-term archiving, explore data export options.





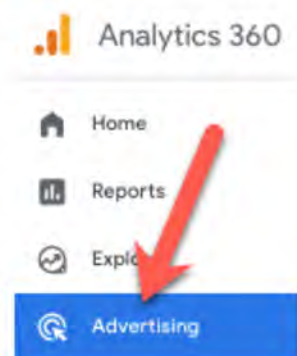
# Attribution Anxiety

## PROBLEM:

Determining the true "credit" for conversions is unclear, leading to attribution confusion. What channels are driving users to convert?

## SOLUTION:

Experiment with different attribution models in GA4 to compare their impact. Track multi-touch attribution points to understand the full user journey through the Advertising reports in the GA4 platform.



The Model Comparison tool allows you to visualize how conversion credit is weighted based on different attribution models such as last click, time decay, and data-driven. Use these tools to decipher the user journey to conversion and investigate which channels may be providing greater value than the standard reporting attribution model shows.

## Need More Help?

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