PRODUCT CASE STUDY

Google Analytics Premium

Building an enterprise tier on top of a free product

How Google packaged, positioned, and sold its first paid analytics offering — reconstructed from the product's own marketing site.

LAUNCHED	CATEGORY	PRICING	LATER RENAMED
September 29, 2011	**Enterprise Web Analytics**	**~$150,000 / year, flat**	**Google Analytics 360 (2016)**

01 — BACKGROUND

A free product needed a paid ceiling

Google Analytics had been free since Google acquired Urchin Software in 2005 and turned its paid on-demand tool into a no-cost product — a move that reshaped the web analytics market almost overnight, since most competitors were charging monthly fees for comparable tracking. That free strategy won enormous adoption, but it created a ceiling: the free tier capped data collection at roughly 10 million hits a month, offered no service-level agreement, and gave large enterprises none of the data-ownership guarantees or dedicated support that vendors like Omniture (by then owned by Adobe), Webtrends, and IBM Coremetrics were already selling to Fortune 500 marketing teams for $100,000–$400,000 a year.

Google Analytics Premium, announced on September 29, 2011, was built to close that gap — not by replacing the free product, but by sitting above it as a flat-fee enterprise tier developed in close coordination with a handful of its heaviest existing users, including Travelocity, Gucci, TransUnion, and Papa John's, some of whom had been piloting it since earlier that year.

$150K	1B+	4 hrs	99.9%
Reported flat annual fee (US)	Hits/month processing guarantee	Max data processing latency	Data collection SLA

> **The competitive logic:** Price was set independent of traffic volume, which made it deliberately attractive to companies already paying $200,000–$400,000 a year to competitors for comparable enterprise analytics — Google Premium undercut the incumbents while still commanding enterprise-grade pricing well above its own free tier.

02 — GO-TO-MARKET STRUCTURE

Three paths to "get help," one of them paid

The support and marketing site frames Premium as one of three ways to get value from Google Analytics — not as a separate product competing for attention, but as the natural next step for a subset of existing free users. That framing does real positioning work: it keeps Premium's page selling an *upgrade path* rather than a hard sell.

Self-Service Resources

Help Center, blog, forums, YouTube channel, developer docs — serves the long tail of free users at near-zero marginal cost.

Certified Partner Network

Third-party agencies handle implementation, training, and customization — Google outsources services it doesn't want to staff directly.

Google Analytics Premium

Direct relationship with Google for "enterprises with heavy data and complex customer analysis needs" — the only tier with an SLA.

03 — THE UPGRADE ARGUMENT

What, specifically, does the flat fee buy?

The Premium overview page organizes its pitch around three benefit clusters, each backed by a concrete, checkable claim rather than a vague promise — a deliberate choice for a product whose buyers are enterprise procurement teams, not individual marketers.

PILLAR	WHAT IT INCLUDED
Dedicated Support	24/7 support, a dedicated account manager, business and technology assessment, implementation review, QA and training — the human layer entirely absent from the free tier
More Data & Flexibility	Billions of hits per month, 50 additional custom variables, unsampled data for accurate analysis, the freshest data possible — direct answers to the volume and precision limits that pushed heavy users elsewhere
Reliable & Secure	99.9% monthly data collection SLA, 99% reporting SLA, processing within 4 hours 98% of the time, plus explicit data-ownership agreements — the contractual guarantees enterprises require and the free product couldn't offer

Customer logos for Travelocity, TransUnion, and Formspring sit directly beneath this table on the actual page, doing the social-proof work immediately after the feature claims — a standard enterprise-SaaS pattern, but notable here because it was Google's first time running that playbook for Analytics.

04 — PRODUCT ARCHITECTURE

One feature taxonomy, two tiers

Rather than building a separate marketing site for Premium, Google folded it into the same Features navigation used for the free product — Analysis Tools, Content, Mobile, Conversion, Social, and Advertising — with Premium-only capabilities called out inline. This reinforced the core message: Premium is *more* Google Analytics, not a different product.

Shared across both tiers

- **Analysis Tools:** Intelligence (automated anomaly alerts), Custom Reports, Annotations, Advanced Segments
- **Content:** Content Experiments (A/B testing), Site Search, In-Page Analytics, Site Speed, Event Tracking
- **Mobile:** device reporting, app measurement via iOS/Android SDKs
- **Conversion:** Goal Funnels, Ecommerce Reporting, Multi-Channel Funnels
- **Social:** Conversions, Sources, and Sharing reports tying social activity to business outcomes
- **Advertising:** SEM tagging, Remarketing, Display and mobile campaign analysis

Premium-exclusive

- **Attribution Modeling:** build, customize, and compare up to 3 credit-weighting models side by side
- 50 additional custom variables beyond the free-tier limit
- Unsampled reporting at any traffic volume
- Guaranteed intra-day processing at up to 1 billion hits/month
- Dedicated account manager and enterprise SLA

05 — SIGNATURE FEATURE

Attribution Modeling as the headline differentiator

Of everything gated behind Premium, Attribution Modeling gets the most dedicated page space — its own overview, benefits list, and downloadable playbook and whitepaper. That emphasis makes sense as a sales argument: attribution was the one capability enterprise marketers could not get in the free tier at all, versus features like Custom Reports or Advanced Segments, which existed for free users too, just with tighter limits.

Multi-channel credit **Custom model builder** **3-way model comparison**
Works with existing Goals/Ecommerce data

The pitch leans on a single third-party statistic — that a large majority of surveyed marketers and agencies agreed attribution enables better budget allocation and returns — positioned as the "why this matters" hook before the feature description. It's built to require no additional setup on top of data already being tracked, which lowers the perceived cost of adopting it once a company is already paying for Premium.

> **Why this page works as marketing:** It answers a CFO-level question (how do we justify marketing spend across channels) rather than an analyst-level one (how do we build a report) — a different register from most of the free-tier feature pages, and a sign of who Premium's actual buyer was.

06 — CUSTOMER PROOF

Borrowed credibility from day one

Because Premium launched already co-developed with major accounts, the marketing site could lead with real customer names instead of generic enterprise iconography — a luxury most new enterprise products don't have at launch.

Travelocity · TransUnion · Formspring · Gucci · Papa John's

> *"Remarketing with Google Analytics is very easy to use, and it lets us reach exactly the types of users we want. The fact that it's integrated with Google Analytics and AdWords is very efficient — we didn't need any new training for our teams."*
>
> **— Jeroen van der Veen, Senior SEA Specialist, Spil Games**

The testimonial's emphasis on "no new training" is doing quiet positioning work: it counters the most obvious objection to switching analytics platforms — that adopting an enterprise tool means retraining a whole marketing team — by pointing out this was still the same interface teams already knew.

07 — OUTCOME & LEGACY

From standalone product to platform anchor

Google Analytics Premium ran under that name for roughly four and a half years. On March 15, 2016, Google folded it into a broader enterprise offering, the Google Analytics 360 Suite, renaming Premium to **Analytics 360** and pairing it with four new companion products — Tag Manager 360, Optimize 360, Audience Center 360, and Data Studio 360 — plus a rebrand of its recently acquired attribution company Adometry into Attribution 360.

Google was explicit that the rename carried no functional changes at launch: the same data limits, SLAs, and attribution modeling capability simply moved under new branding, now positioned as the anchor product of a full enterprise marketing stack rather than a standalone upsell from free Google Analytics.

1. **Sell the upgrade, not a new product**

   Keeping Premium inside the same navigation and feature taxonomy as free Google Analytics made switching feel like unlocking a ceiling, not learning new software.

2. **Lead with the one feature competitors can't match**

   Attribution Modeling got outsized page space because it was the single capability with no free-tier equivalent — a sharper sales argument than "more of what you already have."

3. **Co-develop with anchor customers before launch**

   Shipping with Travelocity, Gucci, and TransUnion already live meant the launch could lead with proof, not just promises — critical for an unproven $150K/year price point.

4. **Price to undercut incumbents, not to match your own free tier**

   A flat fee below the $200K–$400K competitors charged made Premium a rational switch for existing Omniture/Webtrends customers, not just an upsell target for GA's free base.

Sources: this case study is based on archived Google Analytics Premium marketing and feature pages (fattysdiner.com/booth, hosting a 2012-era capture of google.com/analytics), cross-referenced with contemporaneous press coverage of the September 2011 launch and the March 2016 Google Analytics 360 rebrand. Pricing figures were reported by industry press at the time; Google's official position was "contact us for pricing."