

The GA4 Self-Audit: 15 Checks Before You Trust a Single Number 2026

A practical audit of the tags,
containers and referral settings
behind every number you report.

PROPERTY

DATE



How to use this checklist

Most GA4 properties are technically live. Most also carry at least one active data quality problem — and none of them produce an error message. The dashboard looks fine while budgets leak and quarterly reports become difficult to defend.

Each check tells you what it catches, where to look, and what a clean result looks like. Tick **Pass**, **Fail** or **Review** as you go, then score your property on the last page. Fix a Fail before continuing — duplicated tags and missing referral exclusions distort the checks below them.

BEFORE YOU START

- Allow **60 to 90 minutes** per property.
- You need **GA4 Admin** and **GTM Editor** access, plus GTM Preview mode.
- With GA4 Admin only you can still complete checks 1, 3 and 11 to 15.
- Fix every **High** failure first — those corrupt attribution and smart bidding directly.

PRIORITY KEY

HIGH**MEDIUM****LOW**

STATUS KEY



PASS



FAIL



REVIEW

Tags — Checks 1 to 5

How the GA4 tag itself is implemented on your site

1 GA4 tag present on every page **HIGH**



Untagged templates record nothing. Thank-you pages, later blog posts and checkout subdomains are the usual misses — and a missing tag on a conversion page loses the conversion.

Where: GA4 > Realtime while browsing 4–5 page types, or Google Tag Assistant for exact firing detail. Pause any IP exclusion filter first.

✓ Every page type fires page_view within 5 seconds, conversion pages included.

2 No duplicate GA4 tags **HIGH**



A hardcoded gtag.js snippet plus a GTM tag on the same Measurement ID counts every event twice — sessions, conversions and smart bidding all run on doubled data. Common after a Universal Analytics migration.

Where: search your G-ID in GTM > Tags, then in the page source (Ctrl+F / Cmd+F). Twice in source means two sources are firing.

✓ The Measurement ID fires from one source only — GTM tag or hardcoded snippet, never both.

3 Correct Measurement ID in the tag **HIGH**



Wrong IDs turn up after migrations, when staging config is promoted to production, or when a tag is copied from another client. Data goes elsewhere and production receives nothing.

Where: GTM > GA4 Configuration tag > Measurement ID, compared against Admin > Data Streams > web stream.

✓ IDs match exactly, no trailing spaces and no staging ID in production.

4 Config tag fires before event tags **HIGH**



Events firing ahead of the configuration tag arrive with no session context. They show in reports but never connect to the channel that drove the visit — attribution breaks silently.

Where: GTM > each GA4 event tag > Advanced Settings > Tag Sequencing, plus any trigger that could beat a Page View.

✓ Config fires on Page View; every event tag sequences after it.

5 Enhanced Measurement not duplicating events **MEDIUM**



Enhanced Measurement already collects scrolls, outbound clicks, downloads, video and form interactions. GTM tags using the same event names double every one of them, along with any audience built on them.

Where: Admin > Data Streams > Enhanced Measurement, against GTM tags sending scroll, click, file_download, video_start or form_submit.

✓ No event type fires from both Enhanced Measurement and a manual tag.

Containers — Checks 6 to 10

How GTM is configured around your GA4 implementation

6 Container published with all changes live **HIGH**

☐
P☐
F☐
R

Saved-but-unpublished changes do nothing to the live site. It is the usual explanation when someone is certain a tracking fix was made but the data never changed.

Where: GTM > Versions — compare the published version against the current workspace.

✓ The published version matches the intended live state; no forgotten workspace edits.

7 Triggers not over-firing **MEDIUM**

☐
P☐
F☐
R

Unconditional All Pages triggers fire on admin, login and error pages; unscoped click triggers capture every click including internal navigation. Both inflate event counts and add noise.

Where: GTM > Triggers — review the conditions on each one.

✓ Every click trigger has a scoping condition; All Pages is used only where genuinely required.

8 Variables returning expected values **MEDIUM**

☐
P☐
F☐
R

When a GTM variable returns undefined the event still fires, but the parameter arrives empty — useless for filtering, segmentation or audiences. Product IDs, form names and page categories break most often.

Where: GTM Preview on the live site — inspect the Variables tab while triggering the event.

✓ Every variable returns the expected type, and no parameter arrives empty in DebugView.

9 Consent Mode v2 signals reaching GA4 **HIGH**

☐
P☐
F☐
R

Without v2 signals GA4 cannot model behaviour for users who decline cookies, and Google Ads loses those conversions. From June 2026 Google enforces v2 for ad personalisation.

Where: GTM Preview — a consent update firing before the config tag with `ad_storage`, `analytics_storage`, `ad_user_data` and `ad_personalization`.

✓ All four parameters pass on every page, for consenting and non-consenting users alike.

10 No conflicting GTM workspaces **LOW**

☐
P☐
F☐
R

Publishing one workspace can overwrite work done in another. Rare in small teams, a real risk wherever several people hold GTM access.

Where: GTM > Workspaces — look for unsynchronised changes to the same tags or triggers.

✓ One workspace owns production changes; experiments are merged and deleted after use.

Self-referrals — Checks 11 to 15

Where your own domains and third parties contaminate attribution

- 11

Own domain excluded from referral list **HIGH**

☐ P ☐ F ☐ R

Your own pages appearing as a referral start a new session and reset attribution. Sites with subdomains, embedded booking widgets or mixed URL structures are most exposed.

Where: Admin > Data Streams > Configure Tag Settings > List Unwanted Referrals, plus the Referral channel in Traffic Acquisition.

✓ Your root domain and subdomains are excluded; no Referral sessions from your own domain.
- 12

Payment gateway domains excluded **HIGH**

☐ P ☐ F ☐ R

A return trip from a gateway starts a new session, so the gateway takes credit for the purchase instead of the campaign that drove it — straight into your ROAS and bidding data.

Where: Traffic Acquisition filtered to Referral, then List Unwanted Referrals. AU: stripe, paypal(.com.au), afterpay, eway, securepay, tyro, poli, limepay.

✓ Every gateway your checkout actually uses is listed as an unwanted referral.
- 13

Cross-domain tracking configured **HIGH**

☐ P ☐ F ☐ R

Moving between two domains you own — booking portal, member area, separate checkout — reads as an external referral and resets the session, losing the original source.

Where: Admin > Data Streams > Configure Tag Settings > Configure Your Domains, then test the handoff in Realtime.

✓ Every domain in the conversion journey is listed and sessions survive the handoff.
- 14

Staging and dev hostnames excluded **MEDIUM**

☐ P ☐ F ☐ R

Staging and localhost running the production tag mixes developer testing into live data — including conversion events from test form submissions.

Where: Reports > Tech > Tech Details > Hostname — look for staging, dev or localhost.

✓ Only production sends data; non-production uses a debug property or has the tag off.
- 15

No unexpected hostnames sending data **MEDIUM**

☐ P ☐ F ☐ R

A Measurement ID has no domain restriction, so scraped tags, stale site copies and iframed pages can all send events in — inflating every metric and inventing conversions.

Where: Reports > Tech > Tech Details > Hostname; exclude confirmed strangers with a Data Filter.

✓ Only domains you own and manage appear; anything else is explained or filtered out.

What to fix first

If you found several failures, this order applies to any business running paid campaigns.

WINDOW	CHECKS	WHY
IMMEDIATELY	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13	These corrupt attribution, distort conversion counts or degrade smart bidding. Every day unfixed makes more campaign data unreliable.
THIS WEEK	5, 7, 8, 14	Noisy or incomplete data, but core attribution survives. Fix once the High items are closed.
THIS MONTH	10, 15	Real risks, rarely active. Handle them in your next quarterly review.

Score your property

Count your Fails, weighting each High-priority failure as two.

0–2 TRUSTWORTHY Your reporting can be defended. Fix the outliers and re-run next quarter.	3–6 DISTORTED The dashboard looks fine but individual numbers are wrong. Treat conversions as indicative.	7+ UNRELIABLE Do not set budgets on this data. Remediate the High items before the next reporting cycle.
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NEXT STEP

Found failures that need more than a settings change?

CCM can audit and remediate your GA4 and GTM setup in a single session — useful before reporting begins, or as a second opinion on someone else's container.

Book a free GA4 audit

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