



How to add custom goals in Google Optimize through Google Tag Manager

WHITE PAPER

CONVERSIONISTA!

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How goals & objectives work in Google Optimize

Unlike other AB-testing tools like Optimizely, VWO or Convert, Google Optimize (GO) don't have the functionality to add *on the fly goals*. And “goals” are not called goals in GO, they are called objectives, and are divided into primary and secondary objectives.

So, being able to add custom goals in GO can be very helpful when running experiments on your website. *E.g.* if you want to measure clicks on a button in a single page application (SPA) or measure how many users/sessions ended up in the checkout.

There are already a few pre-defined objectives in Google Optimize:

- Pageviews
- Session Duration
- Bounces
- Transactions (if GA ecommerce is enabled)
- Revenue (if GA ecommerce is enabled)

So if you want to measure something that is not on the list above you'll **need to add a custom goal** in Google Analytics (GA) and then **pick it as an objective** for your experiment. Since the objectives in Google Optimize are connected with the goals in GA, we need to create a new goal there first. Since there are a [few limitations to GA](#), only create goals/objectives for such actions that are reusable in more than one experiment.

A goal in Google Analytics can be:

- Destination
e.g. thanks.html
- Duration
e.g. 5 minutes or more
- Pages/Screens per session
e.g. 5 pages
- Event
e.g. played a video
- Smart goal
Measure the most engaged visits to your website and automatically turn those visits into Goals. Then use those Goals to improve your AdWords bidding

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A few reminders about goals in Google Analytics

- Goals look at the data collected by Google Analytics and label sessions as either converted or not converted (called goal completions)
- Goals are session-based and measure if that particular Goal happened “at least once” during a session
- **You’ll need edit access** (in GA) on the view level to set up new or edit goals
- **Goals can’t be deleted!** But, you can change their definition at any point and the change will only work going forward
- **You can only have 20 goals per view¹**. This does not change with Google Analytics 360. If you have GA 360 you can create multiple views though, but that is a bit of a hassle
- Goals do not influence other metrics like *Session Duration* or *Bounce Rate*
- Goals are configured inside of Google Analytics. If you do not already have information like events in GA, you’ll have to add that to your website before you can use them to set up a goal

If you also use Google Tag Manager, which we hope you do, you need to do some setup there as well before you can get started with your experiments.

¹ If you want to measure a certain action for a specific experiment it’s better to use **events** to track it since there is no real limitation on how many events you can send to GA

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Example 1 – Track clicks on a single page application

The donation page on raddabarnen.se (Save the Children Sweden) is a single page application (SPA). Let's set up an objective to track how many visitors continues to the next step in the donation process. You can find the donation page at:

<https://www.raddabarnen.se/stod-oss/manadsgivare/>



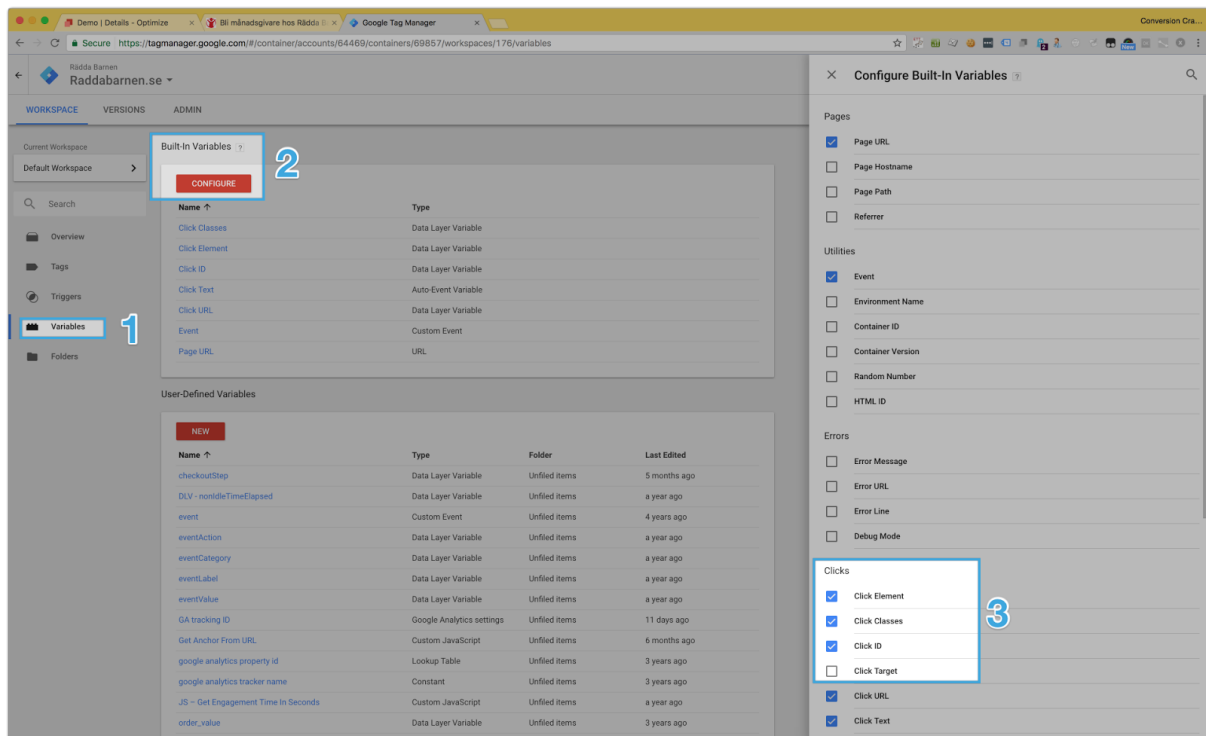
Click on the button above does not generate a new page, therefore this part of the webpage is to be considered as an SPA.

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Step 1: Google Tag Manager

1.0 (Might not be required) enable built-in variables

If you already have been using GTM for a while you probably already enabled this feature(s).



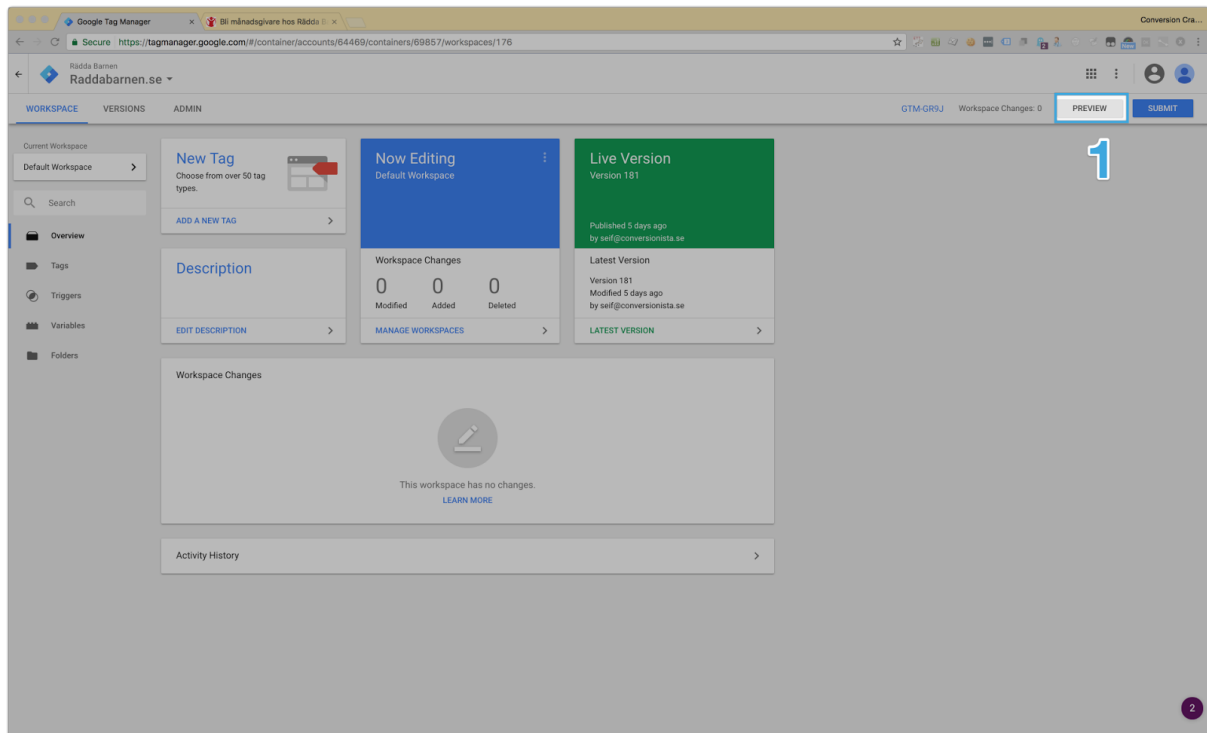
1. Click *Variables*
2. Click *Configure*
3. **Enable** the built-in variables you are going to use. In the following example we are going to use *Click ID*, in your case you might need a combination of the available variables.

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1.1 Create a trigger

We are going to use a few of the built in variables in GTM.

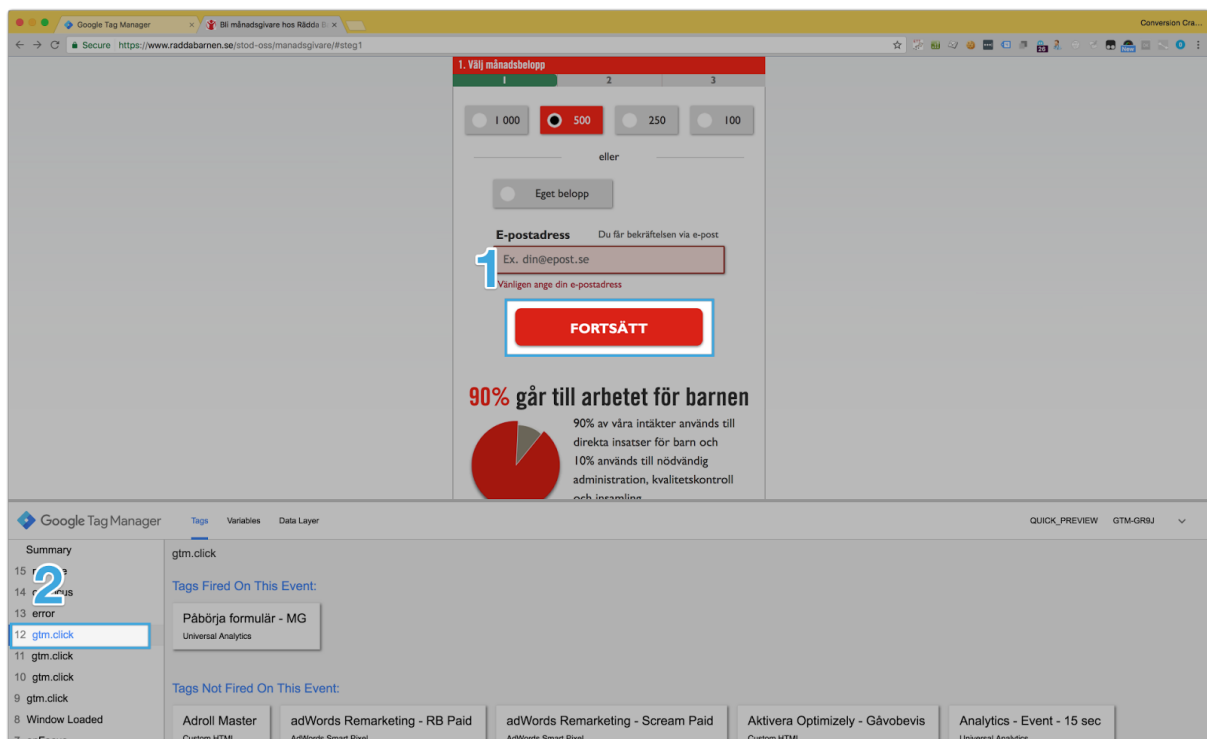
1.1.1 Enter preview mode



1. Click the *Preview* button to enter preview mode

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1.1.2 Trigger an event



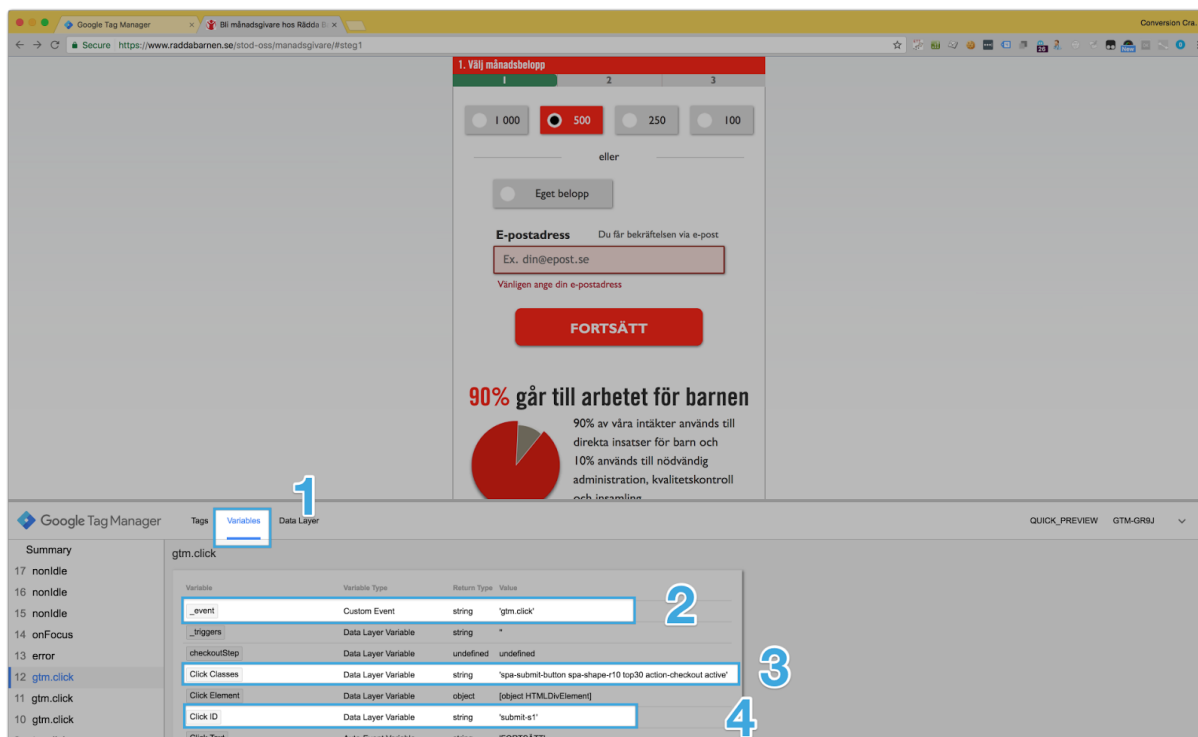
The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a form titled "1. Välj månadsbelopp" (1. Choose monthly amount). The form has radio buttons for "1 000", "500", "250", and "100". The "500" option is selected. Below the radio buttons is a text input field for "E-postadress" (E-mail address) with the placeholder "Ex. din@epost.se". A red "FORTSÄTT" (Continue) button is highlighted with a blue box. A blue number "1" is next to the email field. Below the form is a pie chart and text: "90% går till arbetet för barnen" (90% goes to work for children). The Google Tag Manager interface is visible at the bottom, showing a list of tags on the left. The "gtm.click" tag is selected and highlighted with a blue box. The main panel shows "Tags Fired On This Event:" with "Påbörja formulär - MG" (Start form - MG) listed. Below that, "Tags Not Fired On This Event:" lists several other tags like "Adroll Master", "adWords Remarketing - RB Paid", etc.

1. Click the button (or another element that you want to track)
2. See the event appear in the list to the left. In this case the event is called *gtm.click*. This could also be the built-in event like *gtm.linkClick* or a custom GTM event. Everything depends on your specific website.

Check the [related resources section](#) for links how to configure custom GTM events.

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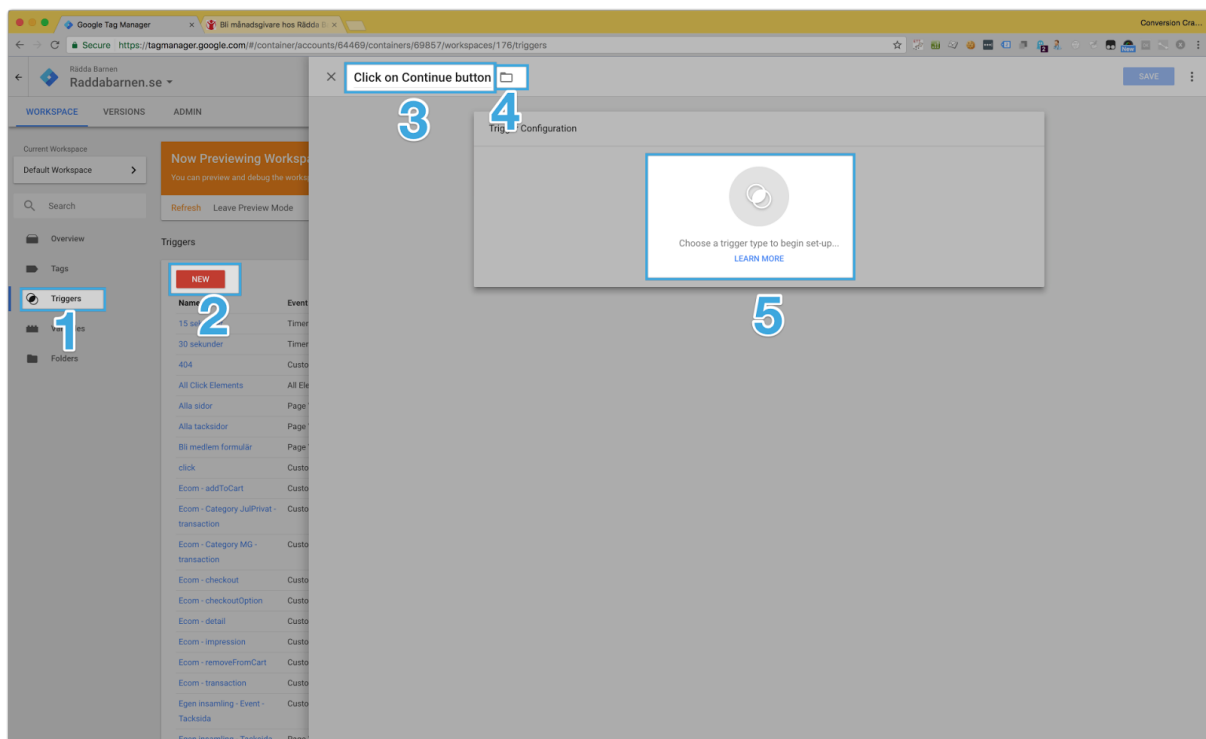
1.1.3 Check variables for the clicked element



1. **Click Variables**
2. Check event name if you are doing a custom event
– in this example you can ignore this
3. In many cases, depending on your website you might need to find a combination of (click) *Classes* and (click) *IDs* in order to create a proper event. In this specific case the website is well built and have unique *IDs* on all important element
4. **Note the value of the *Click ID*, we are going to need it in the next step**

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1.1.4 Create a new trigger in GTM

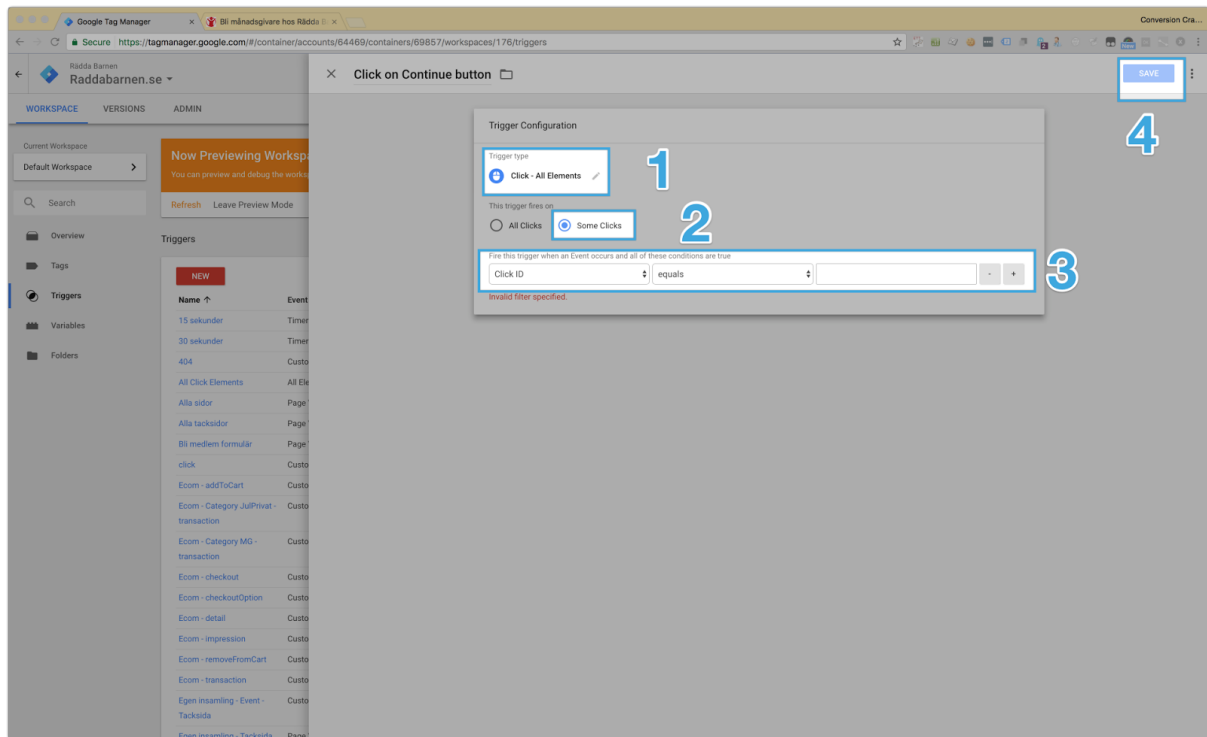


1. Click *Triggers* tab
2. Click *New*
3. Give the trigger a meaningful name², so you can find it later and so that other people working in your GTM container understand what it is
4. Add it to a folder to help you organize your triggers and tags in GTM – this is good practice
5. Click *Choose a trigger type*

² If you have existing naming conventions within your team, use them. Naming structure will help you find the tags, rules and macros you need. [Check the related resources section to find a great article on naming conventions for GTM](#)

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1.1.5 Click tracking

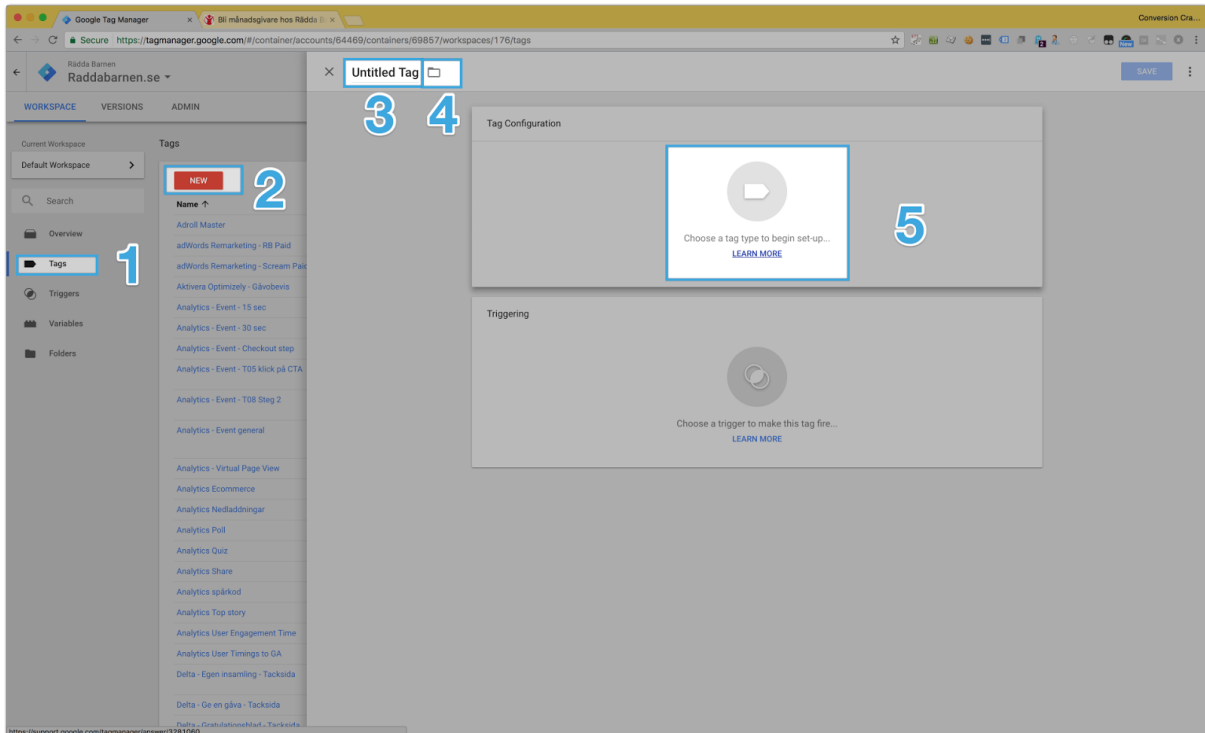


1. Choose *Click - All elements*
2. Let it trigger on *Some clicks*
3. Let's match it to the variables [in step 1.1.3](#), in this case *Click ID* is set to *equals* and the value to *submit-s1*.
4. Click *Save*

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1.2 Create a tag

1.2.1 Create a new tag in GTM

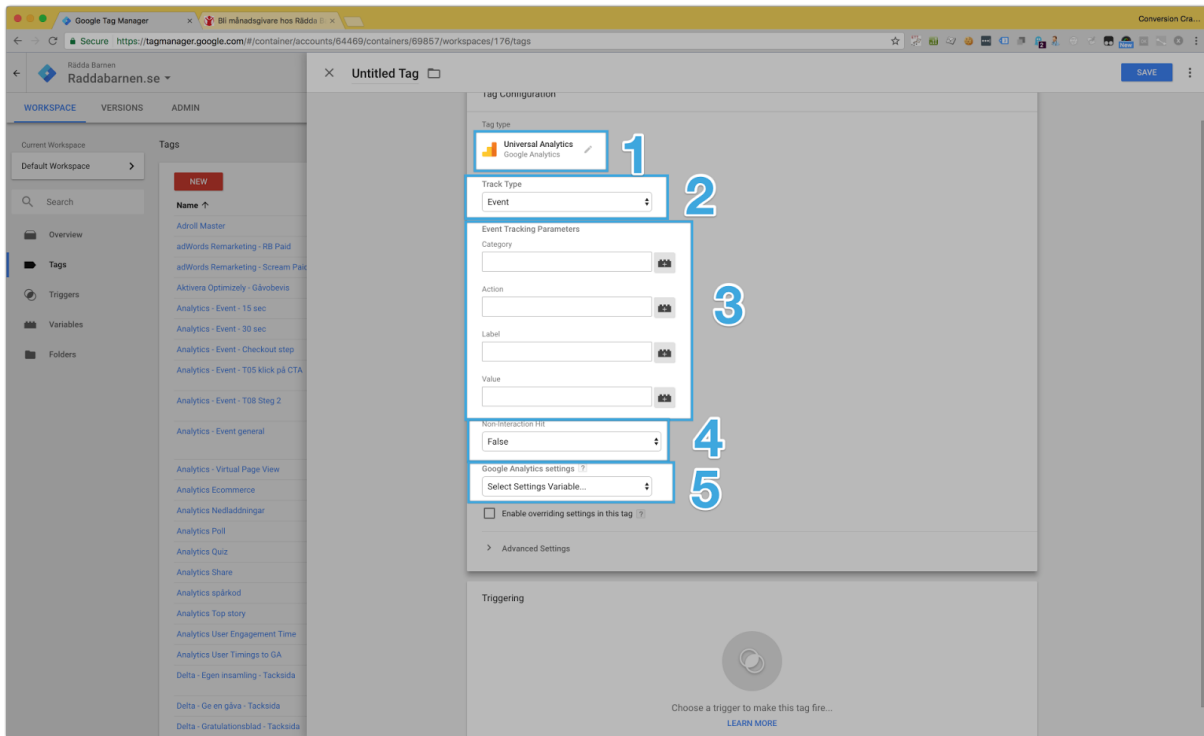


1. Click the *Tags* tab
2. Click *New*
3. Give it a meaningful name³
4. And add it to a folder
5. Click *Choose a tag type*

³ If you have existing naming conventions within your team, use them. Naming structure will help you find the tags, rules and macros you need. [Check the related resources section to find a great article on naming conventions for GTM](#)

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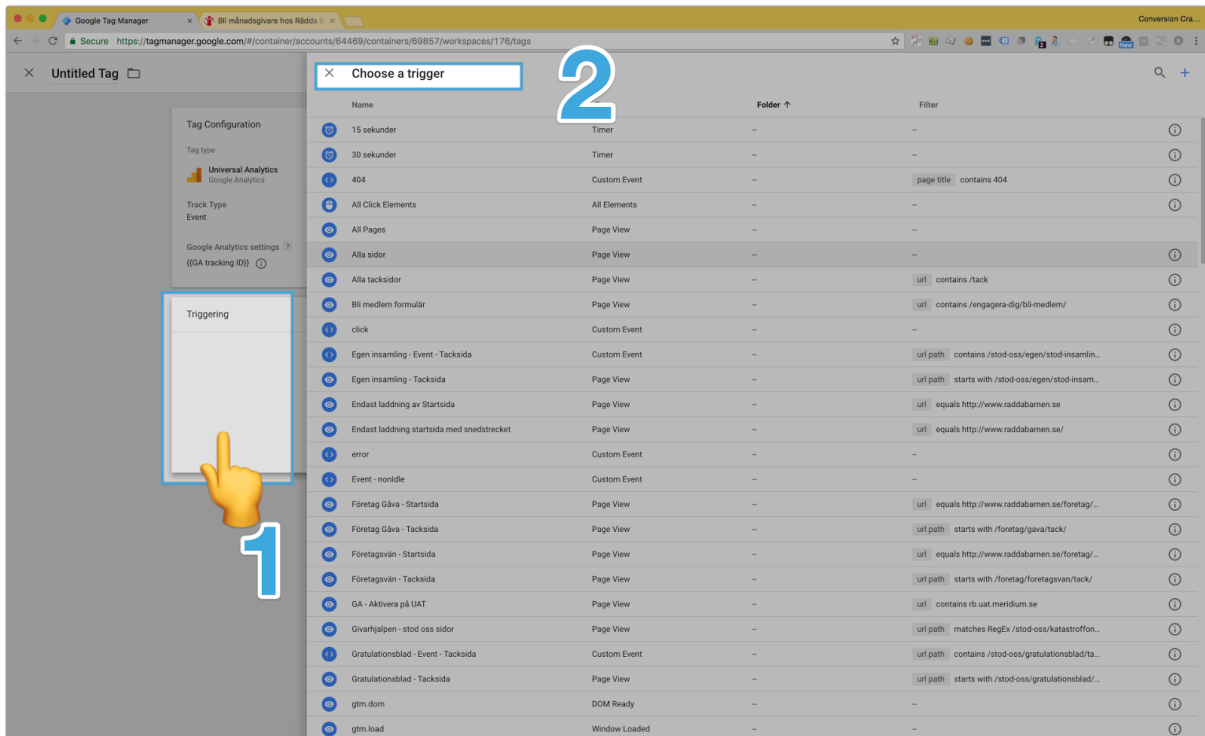
1.2.2 Configure the new tag



1. Choose *Google Analytics (Universal)*
2. Track type should be set to *Event*
3. Add information about the event, the following three fields are required for Google Analytics. Also use descriptive words (with a semantic meaning) so it's easy for other people to understand even if they haven't seen the page or experiment. In this case we will go with:
 - a. **Category:** Optimize
 - b. **Action:** Click
 - c. **Label:** Continue
4. (Optional) if this is set to *False* (default) the event will “break” the bounce rate on the page, meaning that GA will consider it as a non-bounce visit.
5. Pick the GTM variable for your *Google Analytics Property ID*

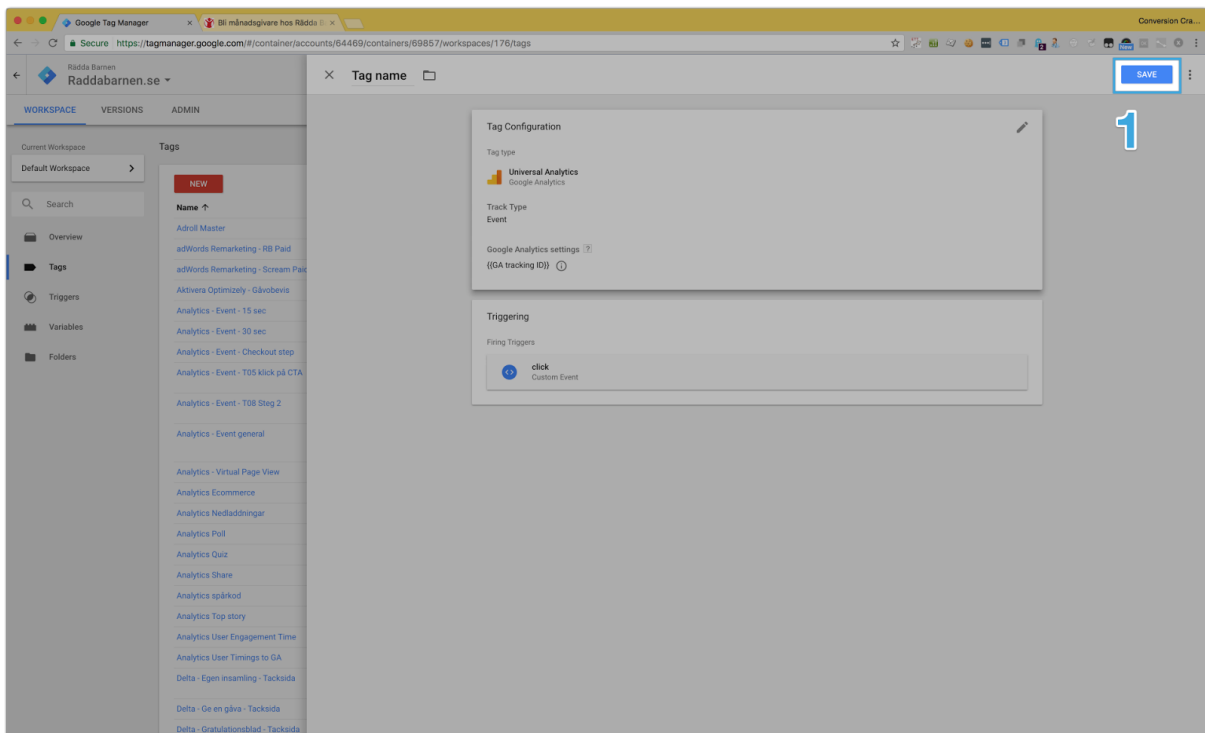
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1.2.3 Choose the previous created trigger for the new tag



1. Click somewhere in the *Triggering* field
2. Choose the *Trigger* you [created in step 1.1](#)

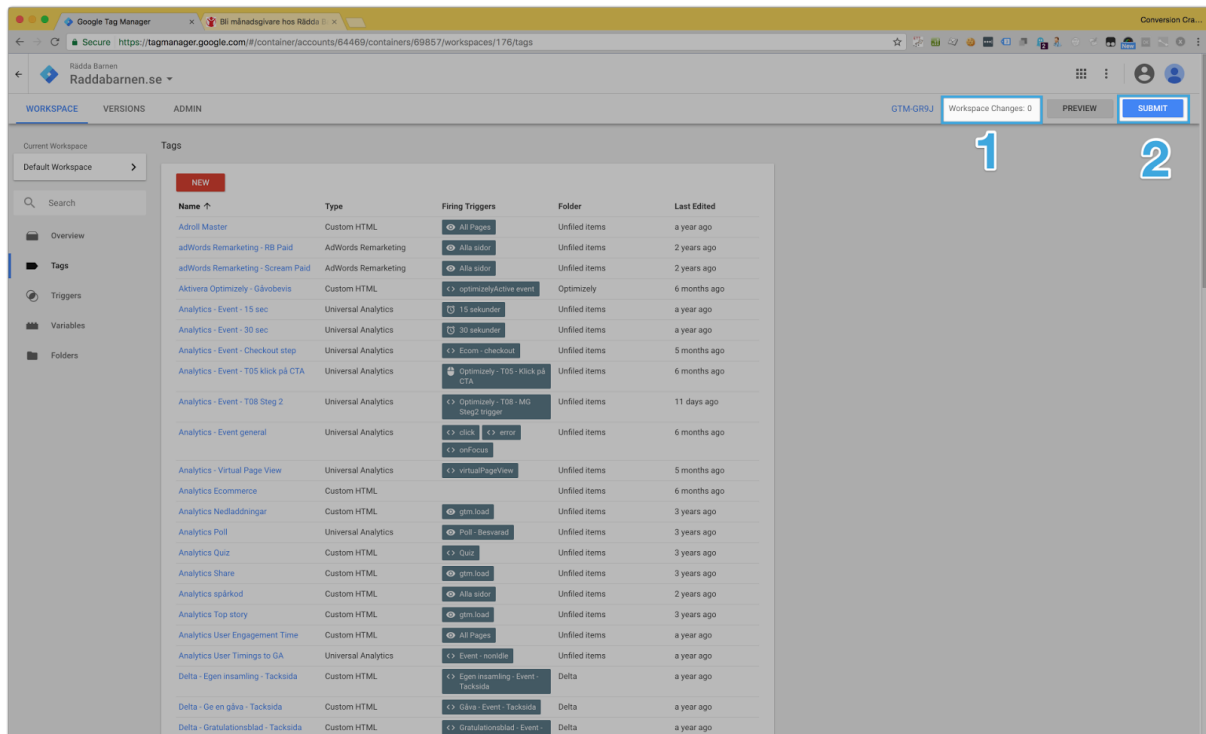
1.2.4 Save the tag



1. Save your new tag

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1.3 Review and publish your changes



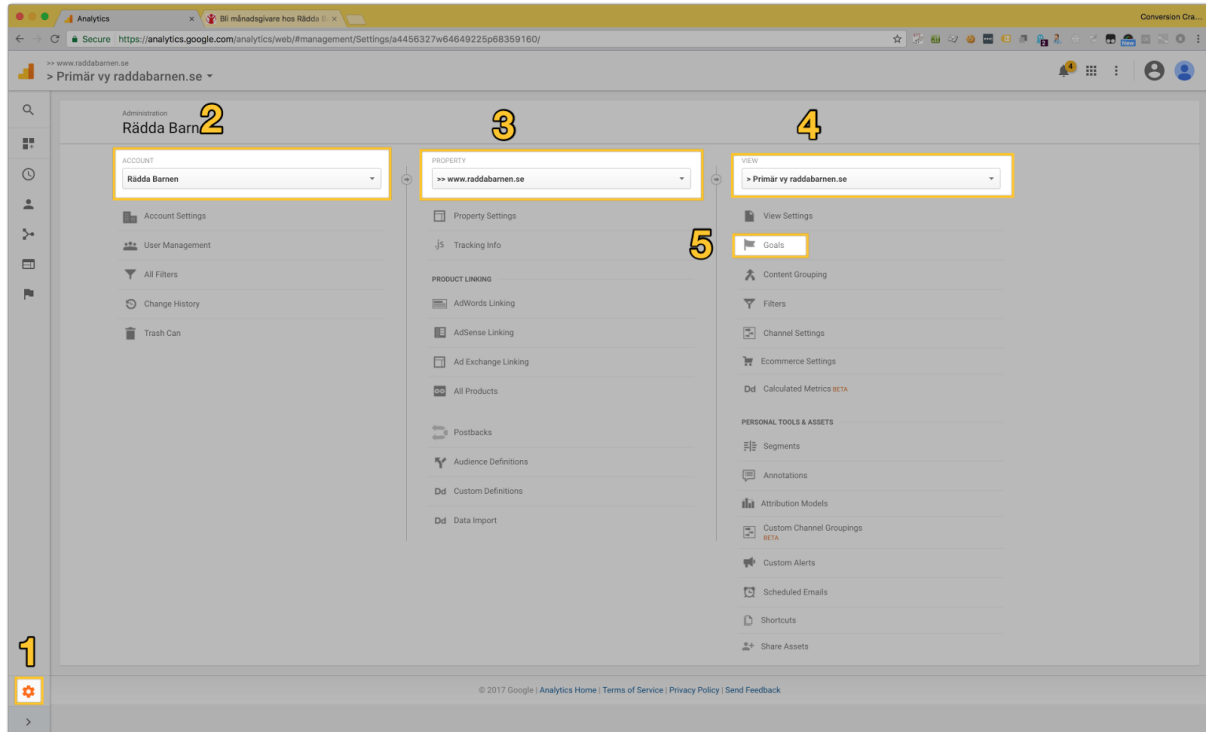
1. In this example we have made **two** changes – you might also go back to your site through preview mode to see that everything is working correctly
2. When ready, publish your changes

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Step 2: Google Analytics

Head to your Google Analytics account

2.1 Open the admin panel in GA



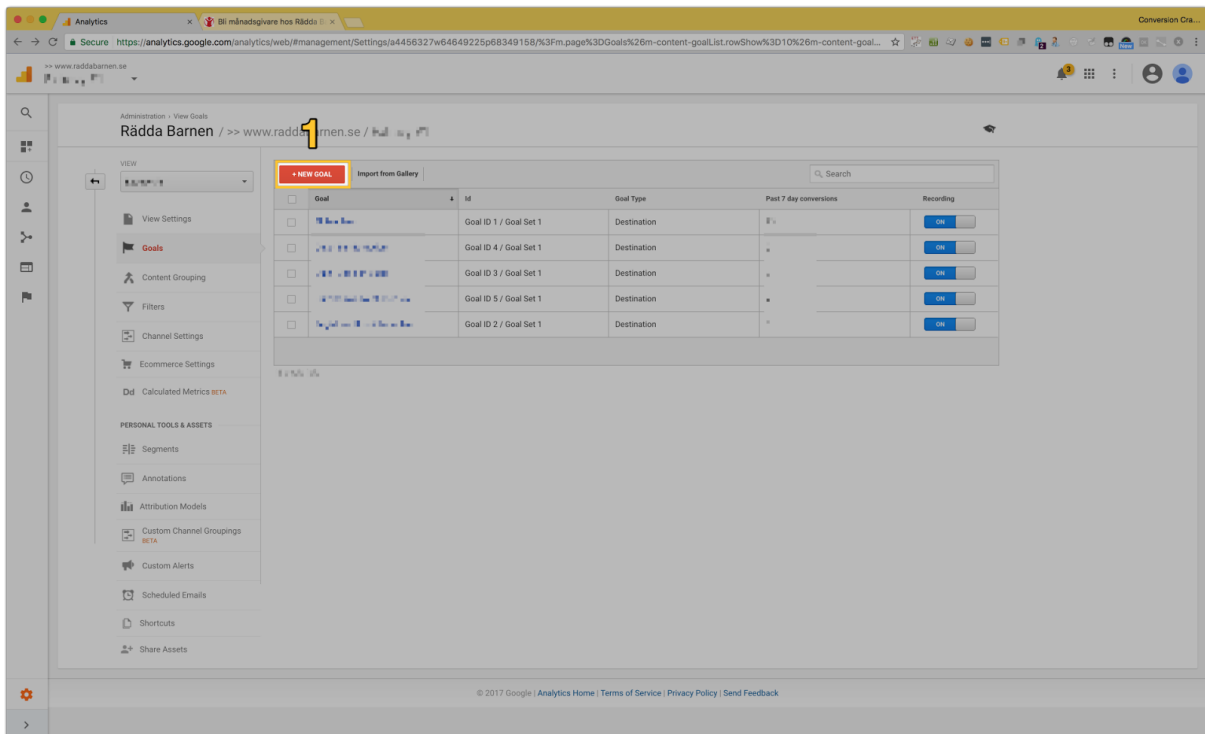
1. Click the admin icon
2. Choose your correct account
3. Choose your correct property
4. Choose your correct view
5. Click on *Goals*

NOTE

Must be the same Google Analytics settings that you configured your Optimize container with

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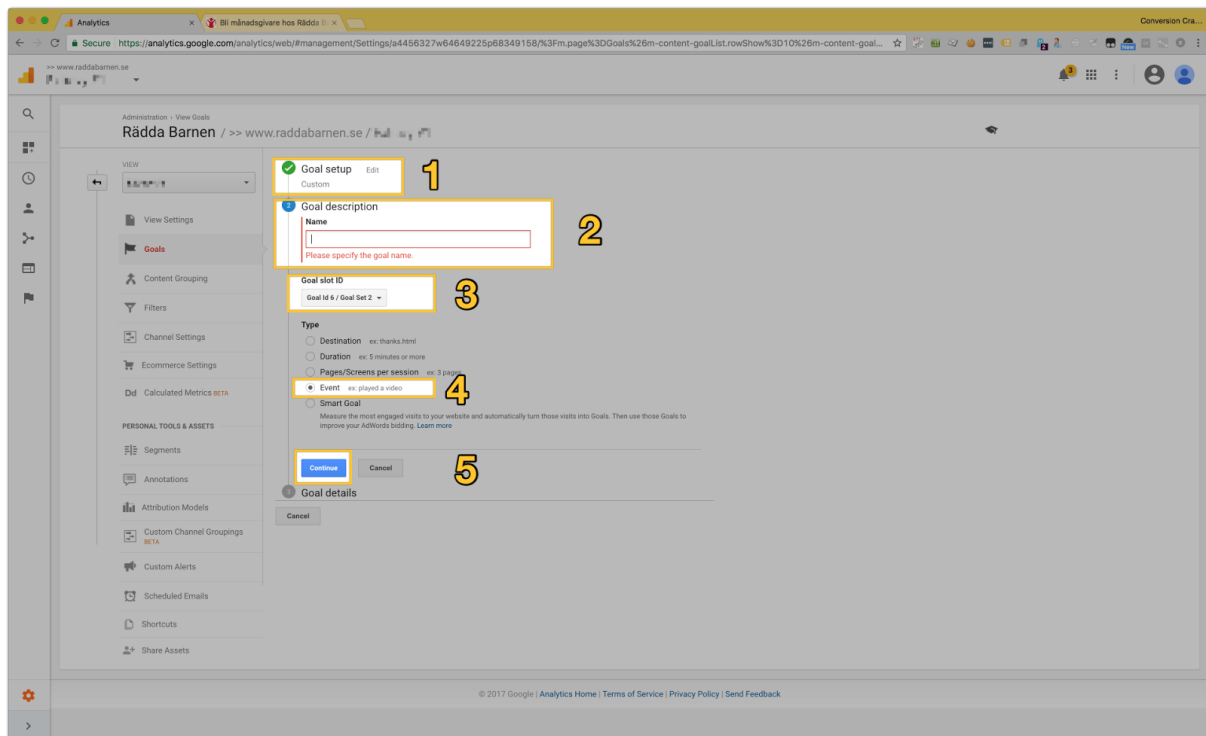
2.2 Create a new goal



1. Click on *New goal*

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2.3 Create the new goal

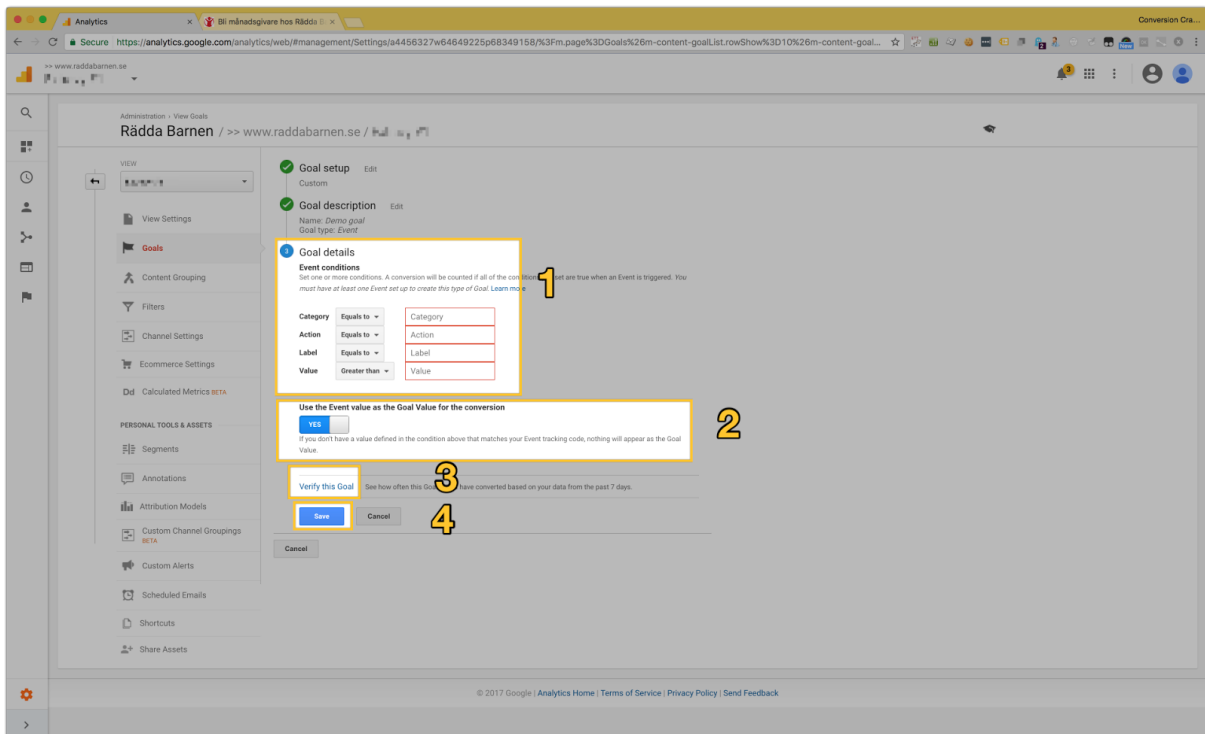


1. Choose *Custom*
2. Give it a meaningful name⁴
3. Set the goal ID
4. Set goal type, in this case *Event*
5. Click *Continue*

⁴ If you have existing naming conventions within your team, use them. Naming structure will help you find the tags, rules and macros you need. [Check the related resources section to find a great article on naming conventions for GTM](#)

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2.4 Configure the event goal



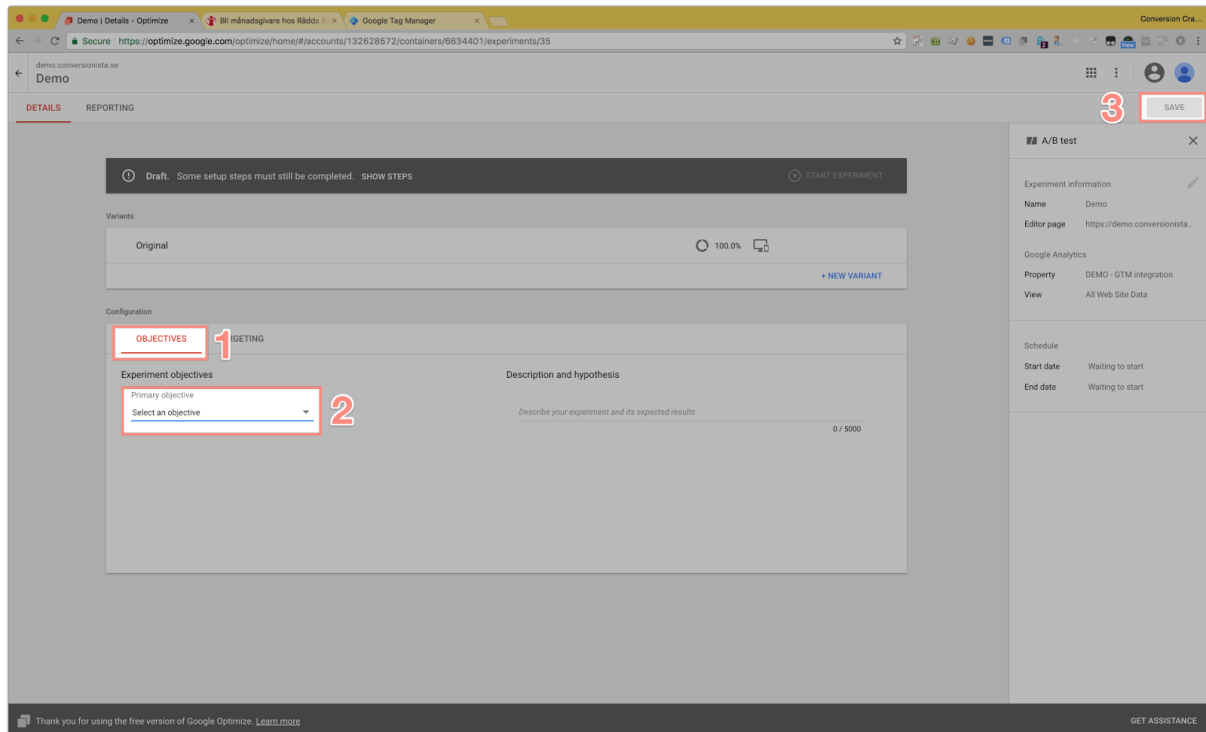
1. Configure the goal details so it matches what you typed in in [step 1.2.2.3](#), remember this is by default case sensitive
2. Enabling goal value is optional, in this case we are going to disable it
3. Verify the goal – **Note:** might not show up if you just created the event in GTM
4. Click Save

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Step 3: Add the goal as an objective in Google Optimize

Open up your Google Optimize account and your previously configured project. Here is a complete guide on [how to setup Google Optimize](#).

3.1 Configure your experiment



1. In your experiment, click *Objectives*
2. Under *primary/secondary goals* choose the goal you created in [step 2.4](#)
3. *Save* the changes

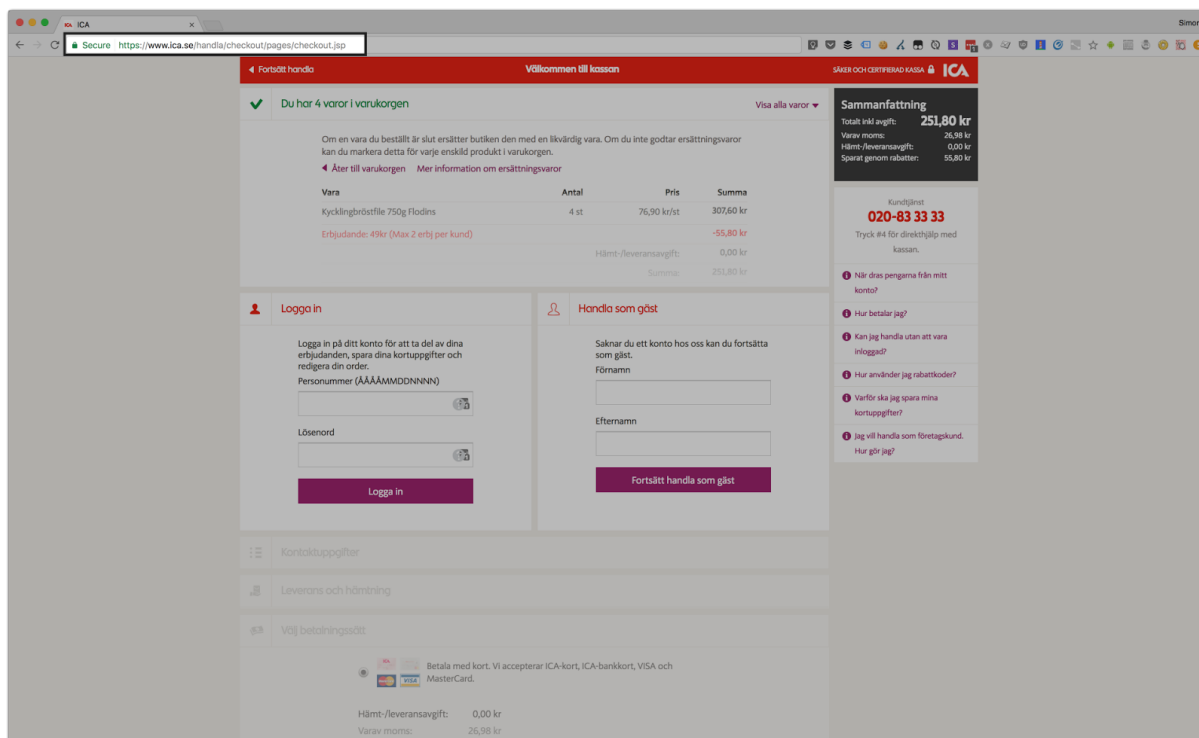
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Example 2 – Track visitors/sessions further down in the funnel

Example 2 is from ICA Online where the cart/checkout page is at an own URL.

In this example we will add this URL as a destination goal in Google Analytics and then add that goal as an objective in Google Optimize.

In this example we don't need to configure anything in GTM since we are not adding any new events.



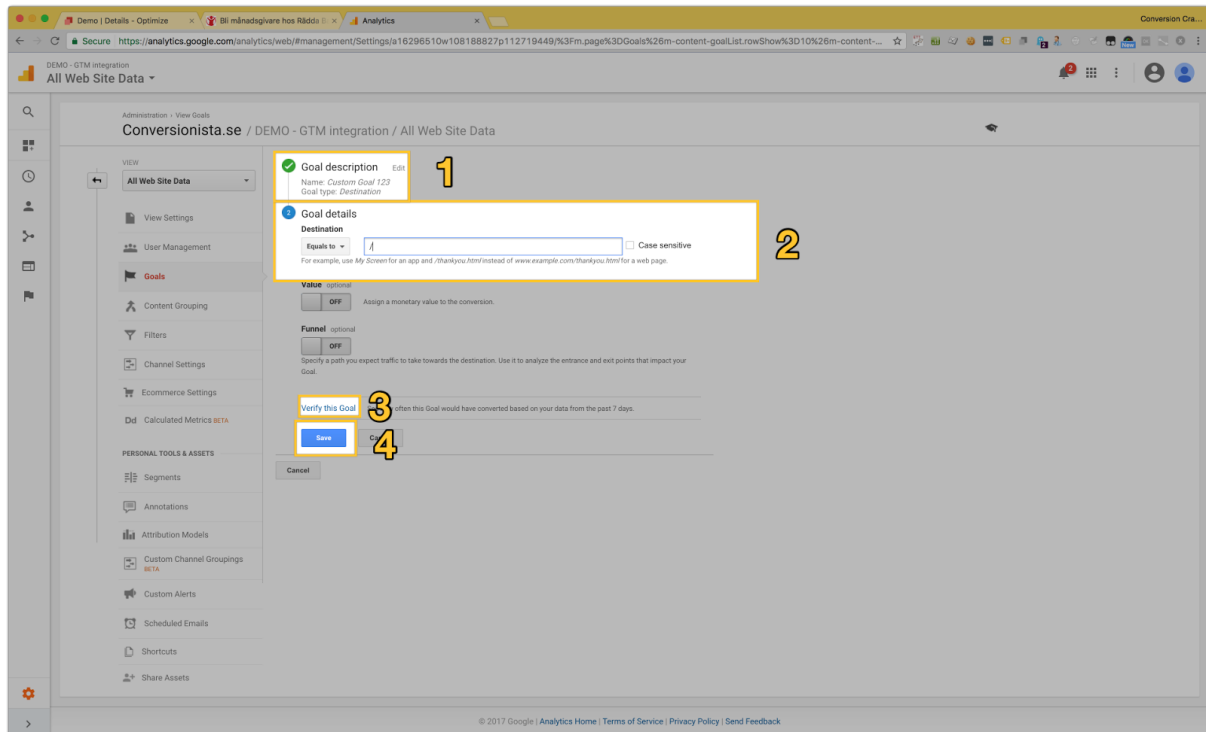
Checkout page at ICA Online <https://www.ica.se/handla/checkout/pages/checkout.jsp>

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Step 1: Configure goals in Google Analytics

Open up your GA account and go the admin tab,
for detailed instructions check [step 2 in Example 1](#).

1.1 Configure a destination goal



1. Choose *Custom* → **Destination** and give it a meaningful name⁵
2. Set the *value* to match your URL,
in this case we will enter `/handLa/checkout/pages/checkout.jsp`
3. *Verify* the goal
4. Click *Save*

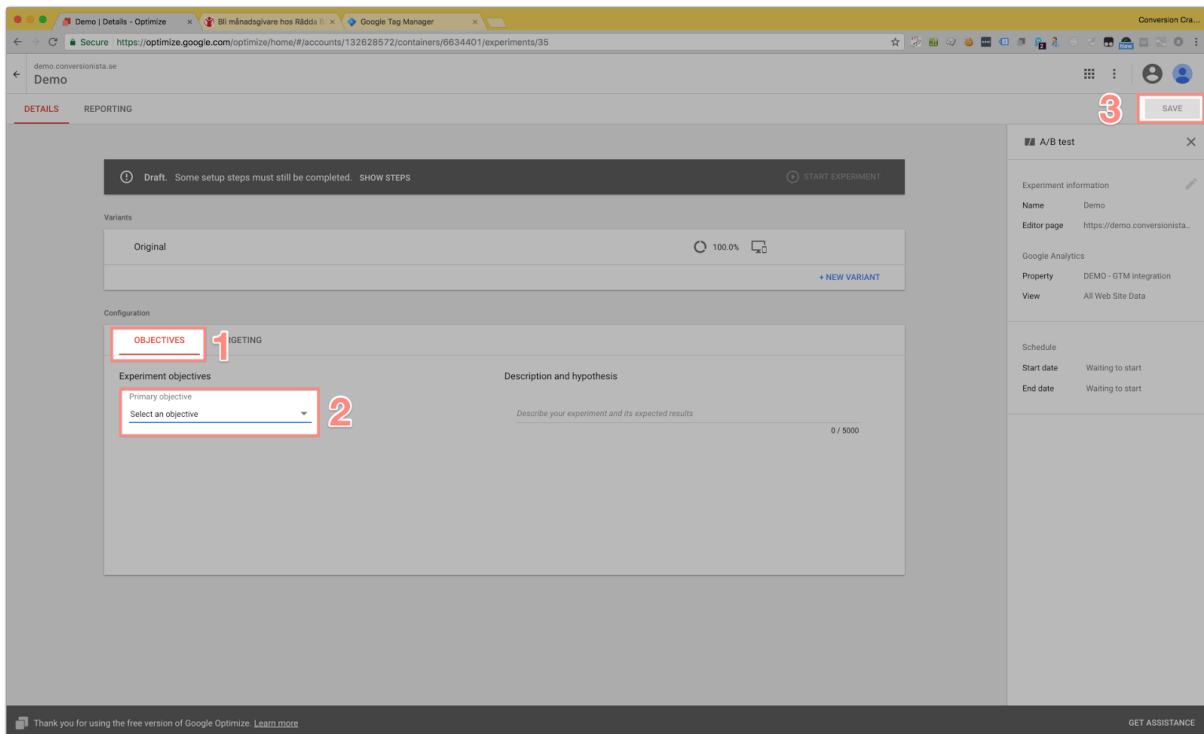
⁵ If you have existing naming conventions within your team, use them. Naming structure will help you find the tags, rules and macros you need. [Check the related resources section to find a great article on naming conventions for GTM](#)

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Step 2: Add the goal as an objective in Google Optimize

Open up your Google Optimize account and your previously configured project. Here is a complete guide on [how to setup Google Optimize](#).

2.1 Configure your experiment



1. In your experiment click objectives
2. Under *primary/secondary goals* choose the goal you created in [step 1.1](#)
3. Save the changes

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Related resources

Here are some great Google Tag Manager resources

- [Variable Guide For Google Tag Manager](#)
- [100+ Google Tag Manager Learnings](#)
- [Track Form Engagement With Google Tag Manager](#)
- [Custom Event Listeners For GTM](#)
- [Google Tag Manager: Track Social Interactions](#)

- [Coding & Naming Conventions for Google Tag Manager](#)

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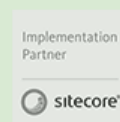
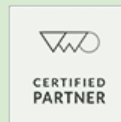
"We have come to Earth to save humans from bad conversion rates and websites that suck"



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