

# Are You On Track for Success?

By Deirdre L Jones

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Explode YOUR Home Business Potential <http://homebizpotential.com>

Do you know what one of the major killers of home and small businesses on the web and in the real world is? I should not even have to tell you. But I will - not having a system of tracking advertising in place. And the sad thing is that tracking your ads does not have to be a burden. In fact, your tracking system can be relegated to pen and paper if you wish. But you must have a tracking system in place to start with. And if you do not realize how simple it really is (only requires minimal time and effort) to track your advertising, you should by the end of this article.

Okay, so let's get started. First question - why should you track your advertising efforts? Well, how are you going to know which ads bring you more customers and prospects if you don't track your ads? You might as well be throwing your advertising dollars down a black hole if you are not tracking your advertising. Tracking your advertising allows you to test different advertising concepts to see which ones are working best. Sometimes, just changing one single word has a tremendous impact on the pulling power of your ad.

We will begin with increasing the response rate of your ads. There are few things to consider when you are trying to increase your ad response rate:

==1. **Headline** - you must have an interesting and captivating headline that grabs your reader's attention. After all, the headline is the first thing that your customer sees. Most people skim headlines first to see what catches their interest. If your headline does not captivate your audience, your ad definitely will not.

==2. **Product Pricing** - you must price your product adequately. If the price is too low, your potential customer will think that is a worthless piece of junk. Just take a look a lot

of the freebies people offer (get my point, not even worth your time). If the price is too high, people will not be able to afford your product. If you need help with pricing your products, there is a great email course that will get you started. Just send a blank email to:  
mailto:tpmsmakesales@sitesell.net

==3. Your Actual Offer - okay, so you have grabbed your potential customer's attention with your great headline and opening sentence. Now, what? Play around with your offer. Try changing different words and phrases and emphasizing different benefits. Use powerful action words and action phrases. There is a great tool for developing your advertising copy located at:  
<http://homebizpotential.com/cc.html>

Now that we have covered the main points of constructing your ad, let's get started with developing your advertising system. The first thing you should do is to make a table on paper or using a spreadsheet program. I personally prefer using a spreadsheet program. But if you do not have a spreadsheet program, most computers come with word processing software such as Microsoft Word or Corel WordPerfect. You can also use the table function in either of these programs. And as I have stated above, there is always the handy pen and paper method.

You should have the following categories or similar ones on your spreadsheet of table:

==Medium used - where you placed the ad. Besides noting the medium (ezines, newsgroups, online classifieds, print classifieds, print sales letter, etc.), you will also note the name of the medium and the URL address if the ad was placed online.

==Headline - which headline you used for a particular ad. This allows you to identify the ad that you are tracking.

==Ad code - the code you placed in the headline, ad copy, or email subject, or address that makes it possible for you to track the ad.

==Date ad posted - lets you know when an ad was posted or will run in an ezine or print media (magazine, newspaper, etc.)

==Ad special offers - if you are offering bonuses, special prices, free reports, or any other incentives, you would list them in this area

==Number of Responses - the number of responses that you get from an ad help you to determine how well the ad is working

==Was follow-up email sent - so that you can track your

follow-ups to your advertising responses

==Number of orders - the orders you received as a result of your advertising. Along with responses to your ad, this helps you to calculate how effective your advertising efforts have been.

Once you have your spreadsheet organized, then it is all pretty much smooth sailing because you have the basis for our advertising tracking system in place. Now, you just need to know a little about actually tracking your ads.

### Offline Advertising Tracking

Ok, so now you have your tracking system in place. Now how do you track your ad? There are several different methods used to track ads both online or off. We will start with offline tracking methods since they are a bit more simple.

If you are tracking you ad offline, typically you just key the ad by department or some key phrase. So if you placed three ads in three publications, these ads might represent departments 1,2, and 3 or your key phrase. For example, for the first ad in the first publication, you might tell people to write to:

Your Company  
Your Street Address  
Dept. 1 (or whatever number/letter combo you decide to use)  
Your City, Your State, Your Zip

Are you following me? Each ad and where it was placed would represent a different department. If word count is an issue in your offline advertising ventures (and it often is), then you could also use different key phrases (ex. "FREE Info") in the place of your company name and eliminate the "Dept. \_" line all together. For example, if you were advertising a book about classified advertising:

Classifieds  
Your Street Address  
Your City, Your State, Your Zip

Also, never ever forget to include your web address in your offline advertising ventures. If you are referring people to a specific web page in your ad or sales material, then you should key this also ("how-to" in next section), so that you know what kind of response you get from a particular ad, sales letter, or mailing. Use this simple method for tracking ALL of your offline advertising and feel free to improve on the system.

### Online Advertising Tracking

Tracking advertising online is a bit more involved, but not much more once you get the hang of it. There are several different ways of tracking your advertising campaign online. We will discuss email subject keying, web page keying, autoresponders, mirror pages, and ad tracking software.

We will start with email subject keying. you would use this method if your prospects are responding to your ad via email. For example:

mailto:jmoent@bellsouth.net?subject=CT. CT is your key which stands for Cash Times, the name of the ezine where you have placed your ad.

Another method of tracking your ads is to use autoresponders. You would simply set up a different autoresponder with the same information in each autoresponder. You only have to check your log files to see how many responses you received for each autoresponder.

You can also track your response rate via mirror sites. However, your website stats must be accessible to employ this method. Also, be sure to use a robot.txt files to exclude these pages from search engine spiders.

Mirror pages basically lead in to your main page. Just set up the HTML code for your mirror pages with a one second refresh rate. Then you will be able to check your stats to see how many hits that particular page received. Or if you choose (instead of the refresh), you may just use a software tracking tool like Wes Blaylock's "Ultimate Link Tracker", which you can get FREE if you are a member of the Site Sell Five Pillar Program. Check it out at: <http://www.sitesell.com/makesales4.html> You must be able to support CGI scripts on your server, though.

Next, there is web page keying, which is very similar to email keying. However, you must be able to access your website log files. For example:

<http://homebizpotential.com/articles.html?info1> where "info1" would be your key. Simply decide which dates you want to check your response rates for, copy the log information for those dates, and paste into a keyword counter. The keyword counter will tell you how many times your key shows up and this is the response rate for your ad. There is an excellent keyword counter that is perfect for this purpose at: [http://www.ezinefactory.co.za/keyword\\_counter.htm](http://www.ezinefactory.co.za/keyword_counter.htm)

Okay, here is my favorite - ad tracking software. You can track email campaigns, web pages, and some of everything else. If you are lazy (like me) or pressed for time, then this is definitely the way to go. Two are my favorites are located at:

[http://www.roibot.com/r.cgi?R11658\\_campaign](http://www.roibot.com/r.cgi?R11658_campaign) - try it FREE and if you like it, then you upgrade and get all of the features. Impressive...

<http://www.sitesell.com/makesales4.html> - as I mentioned earlier, you can get the "Ultimate Link Tracker" free when you join the Site Sell Five Pillar Program (good program with excellent support). You must be able to install and support CGI scripts on your server, though.

And there you have it in the short version. If you would like more detailed information on tracking your advertising campaigns, "Are You On Track for Success" will be released in ebook form on May 30th. If you would like a copy of this ebook, subscribe to CashTimes Ezine (mailto:CashTimes-subscribe@topica.com) AND send your name and email address to <mailto:jmoe711@yahoo.com?subject=ebook>

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Deirdre Jones is the webmaster of <http://homebizpotential.com> which provides FREE and low cost resources for home business owners for use in the development of their marketing and promotion campaigns both online and off. Helpful tools and tips for starting and building home businesses are the focus of <http://homebizpotential.com>

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