

Evaluating the Success of Your Marketing Campaigns

By Neal ST. Clair

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One of the greatest benefits of the Internet is the ability to track where visitors to your website are coming from. Each time you send out an email with links to your website, place a banner ad on someone else's website, or advertise in an electronic newsletter you can determine how many people are clicking on your link. The small amount of work it takes to setup a tracking system is well worth the benefit you will receive from knowing what marketing campaigns are working and what are not.

Each Marketing campaign you employ takes valuable resources to implement. More often than not money is required to market your business and if money is not required your time definitely is. By tracking click-throughs and conversion rates for each campaign you can make an "Apple to Apple" comparison of all your campaigns. For example, wouldn't it be valuable to your business to know that on average you spend \$.50 per click for email campaigns and \$.75 per click for Newsletter Ads. In addition you would know your conversion rate for click-throughs to sales for each specific marketing campaign. With this knowledge you can easily optimize your marketing efforts by increasing spending on tools that work and decreasing spending on less-effective methods.

Setting Up Tracking Mechanisms for your Website

I have outlined three different methods you can use to begin tracking your marketing campaigns below. These methods are in order of ease to set up.

1. Create Unique URLs For Each Campaign

Let's say you are using several different marketing tools to increase subscribers to your Online Newsletter. You are using Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising, banner ads, and email to bring people to your newsletter sign up page on your site. The easiest way to evaluate each tool is to create unique URLs for each campaign. For example, for the PPC campaign direct users to www.yoursite.com/newsletter_ppc.htm , for your banner ads send people to www.yoursite.com/newsletter_banner.htm , and for your email campaigns send people to www.yoursite.com/newsletter_email.htm . Each one of these pages should contain identical content so you can make a fair comparison of each campaign.

2. Use Hidden Fields in Your Online Forms

If you use forms on your website to collect user information you should always add a hidden field within the form to record the source of the sign up. In the example above about unique URLs, assume that the landing page contains a form so people can subscribe to the newsletter. In each

form you should include one line of code within the form that matches the campaign source. For example, for the banner ad page I would add the following code:

```
input type="hidden" name="source" value="banner".
```

3. The Power of the ? in ASP and Perl Programming

I must stress that this method of tracking is for people that are comfortable with HTML and database programming. When using ASP or Perl programming you can add a ? to a URL to assign a value. For example, if we were tracking the success of our banner ads in the example above we could use one URL to track all campaign sources. The URL for the banner ad would look like - www.yoursite.com/newsletter.asp?source=banner , the URL for the email campaign would look like - www.yoursite.com/newsletter.asp?source=email , and the URL for the PPC campaign would look like - www.yoursite.com/newsletter.asp?source=ppc .

Once you have added the ? to the URLs, you can then use the Request.QueryString function in ASP and Perl to isolate the source of the visitor.

I hope this article helps you begin tracking your Internet Marketing campaigns. We would be happy to help you set up specific tracking mechanisms for your website if you are interested. For more information, please send an email to mailto: info@idesignbusiness.com.

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