

PHONE CALLS

The Missing Metric

By Richard Teahon

According to industry figures released by WebVisible, Bia/Kelsey ConStat, Commerce Monitor Wave XIII, and Adinsight, over 40 percent of sales leads are closed via a phone call rather than a mouse click. In addition, 65 percent of companies surveyed believe phone-call-generated leads are of a higher quality than their mouse-click counterparts.

Phone numbers in ads are proving to be a good idea: the survey shows 10 percent more click-throughs on ads with numbers than ads without. Clicks resulting in customer and client calls to the businesses increased by 35 percent.

Despite the statistics, most online marketing campaigns don't take calls into account and put no tracking software in place to assess phone communication.

Given that tracking systems can monitor the keywords leading to a phone call from a PPC ad, an organic search result, a social-media link, and offline sources, it's fair to say that the missing phone-call metric is affecting the results of many a marketing campaign.



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Keyword call-tracking software records the sources of phone calls and pinpoints them to unique numbers, which are interpreted by the tracking software for reporting purposes. The better call-tracking software will show the source of the call and other metrics, such as which company operative took the call, how long the caller spoke to the operative, and whether or not the call led to a sale. Call measurement is a highly useful metric to record. Such detailed tracking software makes call tracking a powerful tool for business. The better software also presents the information in real time and is easy to interpret.

In addition, the better call-tracking systems can be up and running in less than 40 minutes and can automatically record the keywords leading to business-directed calls. Many systems are web-based.

It seems odd that so few marketing companies have caught on to the business-phone-call metric and the importance of tracking it, especially when the PPC ad contains a phone number.

Reports are surfacing that marketers are losing faith in social media as a marketing tool. Big brands such as GAP and GameStop have effectively closed the Facebook door, and other companies are following suit. Could this be a result of the fact that call tracking isn't being recorded, skewing the results of the marketing campaign? **N**

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