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# Call tracking: Basics and beyond

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## So, you're launching a new marketing initiative to generate phone response...

You're hitting all your usual channels—search, web banners, direct mail. Now comes the fun part, parsing the results. How do you know which media generates the most calls? Which stream has the highest close rate? What about messaging, and how best to land it? The answers to all these questions, and many more, is call tracking. Today's advanced tracking solutions enable marketers to close the loop between online and offline channels to gain a complete, 360-degree view of which campaigns are most effective.

Assigning unique phone numbers to each placement reveals exact response rates. Instead of weighting media based on limited data, you can allocate precious marketing dollars precisely. You can test different messages for effectiveness, or any unique metric you specify. With call tracking, you get the details you need to maximize calls—the customer action that's far and away most likely to lead to a sale.



# What is call tracking?

A couple decades into the digital age, the phone call remains a key sales driver for companies across industries and market segments. The proliferation of click-to-call mobile and search ads have made phone response more relevant than ever. Yet for most sellers, the moment customers go offline marks the moment they go off the metrics radar. Maintaining and enhancing this continuum of customer interaction is the job of call tracking.

In its basic form, call tracking is software that collects data on inbound calls. In addition to detailing response by channel and even by individual placement, today's advanced solutions also gather data on sales conversions and call quality metrics.

With call tracking, advertisers can gain 360-degree views of campaign results. It enables users to better target placements and messaging based on precise response rates. Advanced analytics also promote higher conversion rates through call pattern assessment, keyword spotting and marketing channel attribution. Certain solutions even allow users to drill down to individual calls to identify statements and benefits that resonate with buyers and lead to sales.

Ultimately, call tracking is a dynamic tool that enables marketers to maximize the potential impact of inbound calls, which, according to a recent [Forrester study](#), is the most valuable form of customer contact.<sup>1</sup>

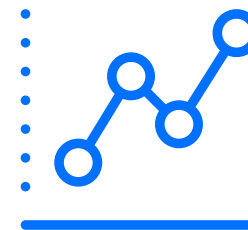
## Call tracking software



Mobile ad



Phone response



Metrics collected

<sup>1</sup>Pick up the phone: Your best customer is on the line (Forrester)

# Why are more and more companies adopting it?

As the role of marketing continues to expand beyond generating leads, the separation between sales and marketing operations is also disappearing. Gone are the days when marketers were called upon to merely drive inquiries. Today, they're increasingly expected to contribute to actual sales. Call tracking delivers the data stream and tools to empower marketing pros to fully coordinate and drive customer engagement right through to sales conversion, and beyond.

As response channels continue to multiply, so do pressures to quantify ROI for each and every media outlay. By closing the gap between online and offline customer interactions, call tracking takes away all the guesswork. Marketers no longer must weight placements based on hunches, but can use exact numbers down to individual ads.

More and more sellers are recognizing the effectiveness and importance of phone response for overall sales. The proliferation of mobile click-to-call ads have made inbound calls as relevant as ever. **New users of call tracking are often surprised to discover their actual number of sales conversions by phone versus those made online.** Analytics include quantitative and qualitative metrics to help users continually improve their response and conversion rates.

## Refine which ads to keep running and which to nix



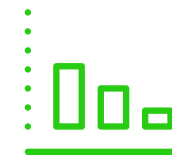
Advertisement A



Advertisement B



Ad response



Ad response



Keep running ad



Remove ineffective ad

# How do you know if you need it?

Companies of all sizes in a wide range of categories have successfully incorporated this powerful technology into their marketing programs. Here are some questions to help determine if it's right for you:

## ✓ 1. Are phone orders a big part of my business?

Smartphones and click-to-call mobile ads make phone response as vital as ever to sales performance. More and more companies are discovering the true value of phone response over online channels in generating sales conversions. If call response is a big contributor to your bottom line, then call tracking can help you amplify its impact and effectiveness.

## ✓ 2. Are click-to-call search and mobile ads integral to your marketing?

Click-to-call response is becoming central to digital ad campaigns. [A Google-commissioned report by Ipsos](#) found that 70% of mobile searchers have used click-to-call to connect with a business.<sup>2</sup> In addition, over 60% of mobile searchers state that click-to-call is most important in the path to purchase.<sup>2</sup> Call tracking captures click-to-call response, bridging the gap between online and offline engagement, and maintaining continuous, end-to-end customer communication.

## ✓ 3. Do you have a dedicated team in place to handle incoming calls?

Call responses are only as valuable as your ability to convert them to actual sales. The most targeted media and messaging can only bring consumers to your business. Getting them to follow through to the sale requires a ready staff of dedicated agents equipped with answer scripts and key benefits to inspire a purchase. Delivering outstanding end-to-end buying experiences can turn first time shoppers into lifetime brand devotees.



<sup>2</sup> The Role of Click to Call in the Path to Purchase, p. 5-6.

#### ✔ 4. Do you keep selling to customers after they've already purchased?

For most companies, when a customer puts down their mouse and picks up the phone, their data trail is broken. Sellers risk alienating otherwise satisfied customers by inundating them with solicitations after they've already purchased. Call tracking bridges the gap when buyers go offline. You get the data you need to keep customers coming back.

#### ✔ 5. Is your marketing driven by data?

The pressures to quantify ROI have never been greater. Long gone are the days when marketers fretted over which half of their budgets they were wasting. Today, digital analytics can deliver response and conversion rates on click-to-buy purchases. Call tracking brings offline transactions firmly into your data fold, providing a wealth of call metrics that are as detailed as those available for clicks. Keyword and call pattern analyses deliver the call quality data you need to continually refine and improve buyer experiences.

If you answered 'yes' to one or all of these questions, then call tracking may be the solution you need to supercharge your marketing program. By closing the loop in consumer interaction, call tracking gives users an overall view of its effectiveness. It's a powerful tool to boost sales and customer loyalty. For brands that rely on calls in their customers' path to purchase, call tracking is an important addition to the toolbox.



# How can you get the most from it?

Successfully incorporating call tracking, as with any technology, depends upon both usage and adoption. All tracking solutions detail the source of inbound calls, empowering users to maximize response. Higher end solutions will also provide call quality metrics to boost conversion rates. The more you and your team integrate call tracking into your workflow and decision making, the more impact it will have on your results. Here are some tips to get the most from this dynamic tool:

## 1. Test multiple channels

Through generating unique phone numbers to each channel, even down to individual placements, call tracking can provide metrics on response rates. By running the same content across a range of channels, you can pinpoint the ones that generate the most response.

## 2. Test multiple versions of content

In addition to placement, call tracking enables you to determine which messages resonate most with your audience. Running ads with different messaging in the same outlets, can reveal which selling points inspire the greatest response.

## 3. Empower sales agents with information

Advanced call tracking solutions provide quality metrics to help marketers maximize sales conversions. Features such as keyword spotting and call pattern analysis enable you to hone scripts and rank benefits based on which points are most likely to inspire a sale.

## 4. Enhance callers' experiences

Treat each shopper as a potential lifelong loyalist. Call tracking bridges the gap between online and offline customer interactions, giving you the power to maintain relevant communications from initial search query through the sale and beyond with timely offers and updates.

## 5. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat.

Leverage call tracking to its fullest capability to promote continuous improvement up and down your sales and marketing operations. Review call response data of each advertising campaign to hone media placement and messaging hierarchies. Coordinate consumer interaction end to end.



# What has call tracking done for others?

Call tracking has been around for more than a decade. Today, providers offer a range of solutions that capture data far beyond the origin of inbound calls. The world's foremost brands use tracking technology to increase sales conversions, fine tune media placements and save costs. Checkout a few examples:

## Meineke Car Care Centers

Operating 900 franchise locations throughout North America, Meineke depends on customer calls to schedule appointments. They use call tracking to measure and improve the conversion rates of the thousands of calls they receive every day. It's enabled them to save training and secret shopper costs while gaining key insights that helped optimize agent scripts and improve ROI.

"We get actionable data that helps us train stores and agents to optimize sales performance which improves our bottom line."

- Mo Khalid, VP of Operations at Meineke



## InterContinental Hotels Group

With more guest rooms to fill than any other hotelier in the world, IHG uses pay-for-call advertising across more than 100 online and mobile outlets to generate reservations. Call tracking enables the company to quantify return on investment (ROI) on each pay-for-call (PFC) campaign while helping raise conversion rates.

“We've seen a 14 to 1 return on ad spending, and new bookings continue to increase.”

– InterContinental Hotel Group representative



## ADT

The world's largest home security provider, ADT must still effectively allocate marketing dollars to stand out among a crowded field of competitors. Their call tracking solution filters spam calls to improve the quality of calls that reach an agent.

## YMT Vacations

YMT Vacations is one the world's leading providers of travel services for seniors. Call tracking enabled their sales and marketing leadership teams to listen to call recordings for training purposes while adhering to company data security policies by redacting credit card numbers.

“We value call recordings to inform Sales and Marketing leadership. Our technology works very well at redacting PII we want to mask.”

– Tom Garrett, VP of Marketing at YMT Vacations

# What should you ask when selecting a call tracking provider?

As the field of call tracking has grown, so have the choices in vendors. Finding the right solution provider for your organization requires evaluating both their product and the team behind it. Here are some questions to ask of potential vendors to find the one that best meets your needs:

## 1. Do they understand my business?

Every category has unique demands and audience dynamics. Your provider should know your industry as well as theirs. The greater their depth of experience serving companies in your sector, the better their ability to help you turn raw metrics into actionable data to attract new shoppers, convert them to buyers and keep them coming back to buy more.

## 2. Can they meet my requirements now and in the future?

Perhaps you're looking for basic call tracking, which many providers can deliver. However, only a select few offer the breadth of solutions and depth of knowledge necessary to serve companies with specialized or evolving needs. If you have unique analytics needs or plan to expand into new markets or categories, you want a vendor with the products and people to hit the ground running and keep pace.

## 3. Can they help me today?

When you're launching a timely promotion or other marketing campaign, you don't want to wait for your tracking provider to play catch up. Find one that's ready to go with the capabilities you need, when you need them.

## 4. Can I afford them?

There's no need to dive directly into the deep end of the pool. Find a vendor with pricing options that fit within your budget. Formulate a trial run to help project future ROI in raising sales rates and lowering media inefficiencies.

## 5. Will they track my offline sales?

The measurement that matters most is obviously sales conversions. Your vendor should be able to track callers through to the sale. They should enable you to avoid alienating otherwise satisfied customers with uncoordinated communications, and more effectively reach out to those who've yet to purchase. They should deliver the analysis you need to better train agents and hone answer scripts to inspire more sales.

# How can you get started?

Even the most-advanced, user-friendliest call tracking solution won't add to your bottom line until you start using it. The response data you're not currently leveraging, your smartest competitors surely are. The sooner you incorporate this powerful analytical tool, the sooner you'll reap its rewards. Take the following steps to successfully make call tracking an integral part of your marketing program:

## 1. Do your research

There's lots of great information available on call tracking and its capabilities. Visit top research sites such as G2 Crowd, Gartner and Forrester to search for articles on this rapidly growing technology. Consult your network for contacts who are using tracking, and learn their results. Visit vendor websites, and read up on their services and costs to narrow down a list of potential matches.

## 2. Set your goals

Know your current gaps in call data and how they affect your bottom line. As much as possible, quantify your lost opportunities, and identify areas for improvement. The clearer you are about where you want to go with the help of call tracking, the more likely you are to get there.

## 3. Get management buy-in

Make sure your company's key players are on board. Show them the advantages of call tracking and what it can do for your marketing and sales. Share competitor case histories detailing how they're using it to gain market share. Present an actionable plan to implement tracking and evaluate its effectiveness. Once the right folks are behind you, it's time to move forward.

## 4. Choose a vendor

Once you've secured buy in, the next step is to find a provider with the right capabilities and pricing options. Ask your contacts for referrals. Visit vendor websites, and reach out to discuss your goals. Choose the one with the people and solutions that offer the best match to you and your needs.

## 5. Take the leap

After you have done your homework and set a foundation, give call tracking a go. Develop a test project with your chosen vendor to get a taste of its potential to drive response. Fortunately, it's a low cost investment which offers high return.

# Conclusion

Despite an increasing number of response channels, the phone call is still king. According to a recent [Forrester study](#), phone customers buy more, convert faster and churn less. Call tracking, when fully implemented throughout your advertising and marketing programs, can be a potent force in generating new customers and fostering long term brand loyalty.

Say hello to call tracking, the force you need to raise your analytics to a whole new level.

A man with a beard and glasses is shown in profile, wearing a blue button-down shirt and talking on a smartphone. The background is a blurred office setting. A green call-to-action box is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

Visit [Marchex.com](https://marchex.com) to schedule a demo for your team today.

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