

Running Advertising using Google Ads is easy right? Sign up, put the code into your website, put keywords in, enter your credit card details, and you're running live ads. Right?

Actually, the opposite might be true.

You might be thinking that all those sales you are hoping to generate will soon knock on your door.

When people start clicking on your ads, you are certain you'll drive instant sales and expect to land new customers and grow your business.

But you quickly realize that you have no idea how to track your conversions. You have no clue if you're wasting your budget without a return. You don't even know what return you should expect.

I've been there, and you are not alone.

Research indicates that more than 70% of marketers are struggling to track their ROI on such campaigns. But it shouldn't be that way. Tracking is essential for a number of reasons, and isn't terribly difficult if you know how. Here, we'll talk about different ways you can track your ROI so you can adjust your campaigns and spends as needed. Let's start with the basics.

Traditional Online Advertising

You may already be familiar with some of these digital advertising methods, but for the sake of brevity, we'll explain them:



Google Ads (formerly known as Adwords)—the ads that appear at the top of search rankings, marked with an “ad” icon. This pay-per-click campaign charges only for the results you’re after, whether it’s clicking to your website, calling or other action. You decide where you want your ads to appear, from local to worldwide, and you set the budget cap.

Facebook ads—with two billion users every month, reaching out on Facebook one of the best ways to get in front of prospects.

Instagram—owned by Facebook it’s all about pictures. Advertising on Facebook can also help you advertise on Instagram, since both the platforms are owned by Facebook.

Pinterest—with more than 50 million users, 70% of whom are female, this search engine is the second largest behind Google. “Pins” are found when a user does a search. “Sponsored Pins” are paid to not only show up in a search but show up first.

There is one goal of each of these types of advertising: conversion. [Tracking your conversion rate will show you your ROI](#). If the results aren't what you're expecting, your next step is something called Conversion Rate Optimization, or CRO.

What Is A Conversion?

The word “[conversion](#)” can mean different things to different businesses. How you define it depends on what kind of business you have, what your website does, and what you're asking the visitor to do. But on a basic level, a conversion indicates that a visitor has taken an action you wanted them to take. Actions like:

If you're selling products, a conversion is either a sale, signing up for your company's emails, a discount code for their first or next purchase, or free information (in exchange for their email address, usually) that they want to download and read before buying from you

If you're a digital marketing agency, your visitors may sign up for your emails, or to download a white paper that gives them a solution to a problem before contacting you to do business

If you're a law firm for a specific field (such as DUI or divorce), you're offering a free consultation by using the online contact form, to sign them up for your blog, or download a PDF guide to the specific issue they are considering hiring you to help them with

If you're a vocational school or institution of higher learning (university, college, etc.), you're offering a brochure, white paper, or other information in exchange for their email address. You may also be offering prospective students the chance to sign up for your emails, for classes, or to be put on a waiting list for a specific curriculum (i.e., nursing.)

Whatever you're asking a prospect to do becomes a “conversion” when they actually do it, whether it's call, email or something else. These visitors might become either leads, prospects or customers, depending on the action taken.

Conversions Tracking

There are multiple ways to track your conversions based on how someone came in contact with your company. While website actions are fairly straightforward, using a “tag” (also called a “conversion tracking code”) on your website that adds a piece of code to the visitor’s computer or mobile device that tracks their actions. Other forms of contact, such as calls and emails, require something different. You’ll set up conversion tracking for each type of conversion that you want to track.

Using Google Ads’ [conversion tracking tool](#), you can:

[Track phone calls](#) that come from your website, through your website or via the phone number on your mobile website.

Track actions that [go through your apps](#), such as purchases and other activity.

Track local actions when users take action that’s related to a physical and/or retail location, called [local conversion action](#).

Track [offline conversion activity](#) that starts online and ends offline.

The last two of these don’t require a tracking code, and conversions are recorded automatically.

[Google Tag Manager](#) allows you to configure your Google Tags as well as other configurations without installing them directly into your website. You can configure the tags in GTM, including how they fire. These small pieces of code allow you to monitor and track all manner of conversion information along with Google Analytics, and never handle source code yourself. GTM allows you to bypass your IT department, and take care of the tagging yourself, quickly and easily.

Another form of tagging you can use is a UTM code. (The initials mean “Urchin Tracking

Module,” but now known as “Google Analytics.”) These codes are not only great for conversion tracking, they’re useful for A/B testing, as well. The simple code is added to a custom URL, and allows you to track where the contact came from. ([Google’s URL Builder](#) can help you get started.)

Using one domain with multiple UTM codes can also forward to your main website or standard landing page. For instance, you can use UTM codes to distinguish between radio, newspaper, TV and online ads, or to track specific keywords you’re using.

Tracking Calls In Google Ads

There are four ways to track calls:

Calls [from your ads](#)

Calls via a [phone number on your website](#), using a tag and a Google Forwarding Number on the website

[Mobile website](#) phone number clicks, which tracks clicks on your phone number, not actual phone calls

Imported phone call conversions, using a [Google Forwarding Number](#) (if available in your country)

With each type, you’ll set up the parameters for your calls, such as minimum length of time to be counted as a true conversion.

Tracking Emails In Google Ads

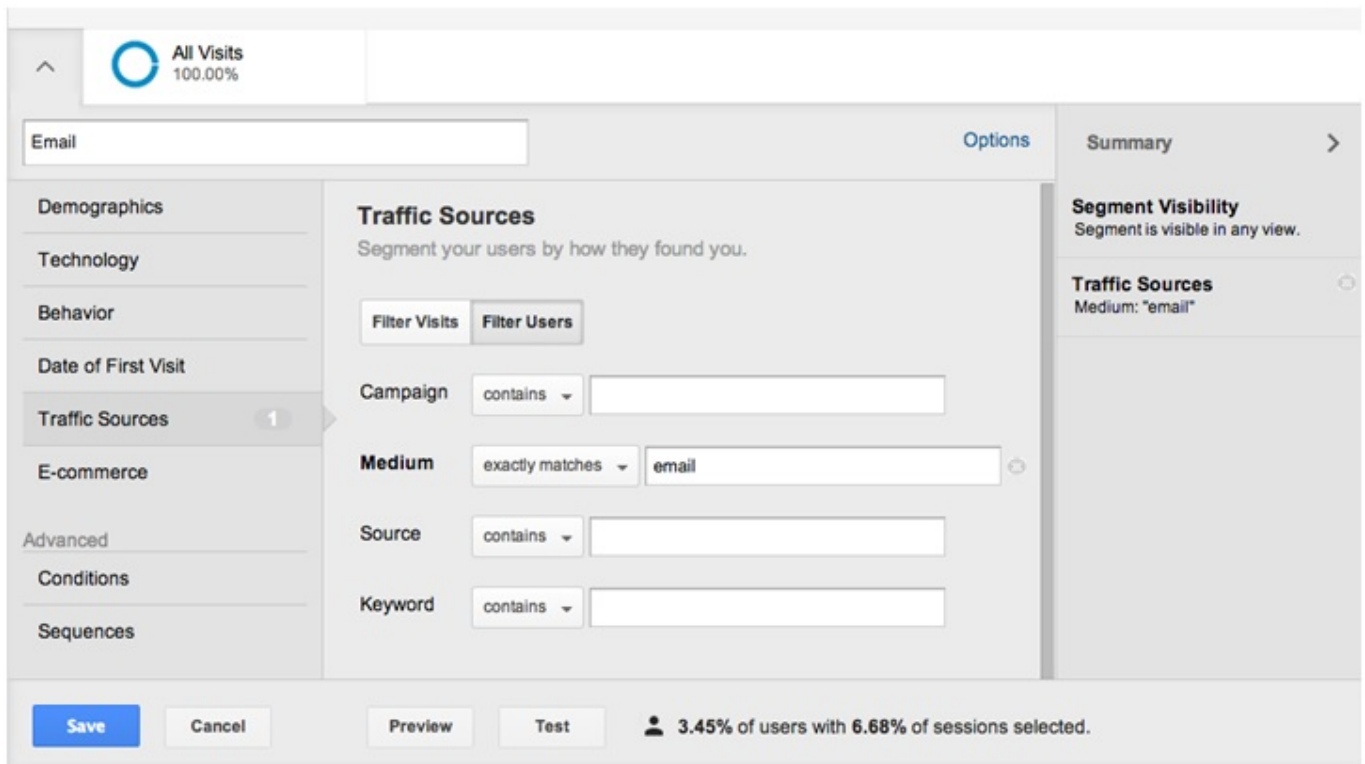
This is a little easier than tracking calls, since an email is a lot simpler. But you also want to know what they do beyond the click, after they click out of the email to your landing page.

Adding a UTM to a unique URL is useful for email campaigns, where users can click on a link that takes them to your landing page for a specific product or service. With targeted email campaigns, UTM codes can take users to pages that are more tailored for them.

Two caveats for your email tracking:

When selecting an email broadcasting system, make sure it's one that's compatible with Google Analytics or another tracking tool. Using automated link tracking makes it fast and easy to set up your campaign's tracking tags directly in the system instead of adding them manually.

To separate email visitors from other visitors, use the custom Advanced Segment. Select the "advanced segment" option by using the down arrow at the top left above the reports in Google Analytics. Choose "Create New Segment," then set the traffic medium to "Email".



As we mentioned before, you can use Google's URL Builder to set up the parameters for the destination page that users will click on from your email.

Google Analytics Search An

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Traffic

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Traffic

URL builder

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Fill in the form below and click the **Submit** button to create URLs for custom campaigns for website tracking. Use the [Google Play URL builder tool](#) for mobile app tracking.

Step 1: Enter the URL of your website.

Website URL *

(e.g. <http://www.urchin.com/download.html>)

Step 2: Fill in the fields below. **Campaign Source, Campaign Medium and Campaign Name** should always be used.

Campaign Source *

(referrer: google, citysearch, newsletter4)

Campaign Medium *

(marketing medium: cpc, banner, email)

Campaign Term

(identify the paid keywords)

Campaign Content

(use to differentiate ads)

Campaign Name *

(product, promo code, or slogan)

Submit

`http://www.domainname.com/landing-page?utm_source=house-list&utm_medium=email&utm_term=editorial-link&utm_content=header&utm_campaign=EnewsNov`

Helpful Information

Campaign Source (utm_source)	Required. Use utm_source to identify a search engine, newsletter name, or other source. <i>Example:</i> utm_source=google
Campaign Medium (utm_medium)	Required. Use utm_medium to identify a medium such as email or cost-per-click. <i>Example:</i> utm_medium=cpc
Campaign Term (utm_term)	Used for paid search. Use utm_term to note the keywords for this ad. <i>Example:</i> utm_term=running+shoes
Campaign Content (utm_content)	Used for A/B testing and content-targeted ads. Use utm_content to differentiate ads or links that point to the same URL. <i>Examples:</i> utm_content=logolink or utm_content=textlink
Campaign Name (utm_campaign)	Used for keyword analysis. Use utm_campaign to identify a specific product promotion or strategic campaign. <i>Example:</i> utm_campaign=spring_sale

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You can also use UTM as you would with other types of tracking.

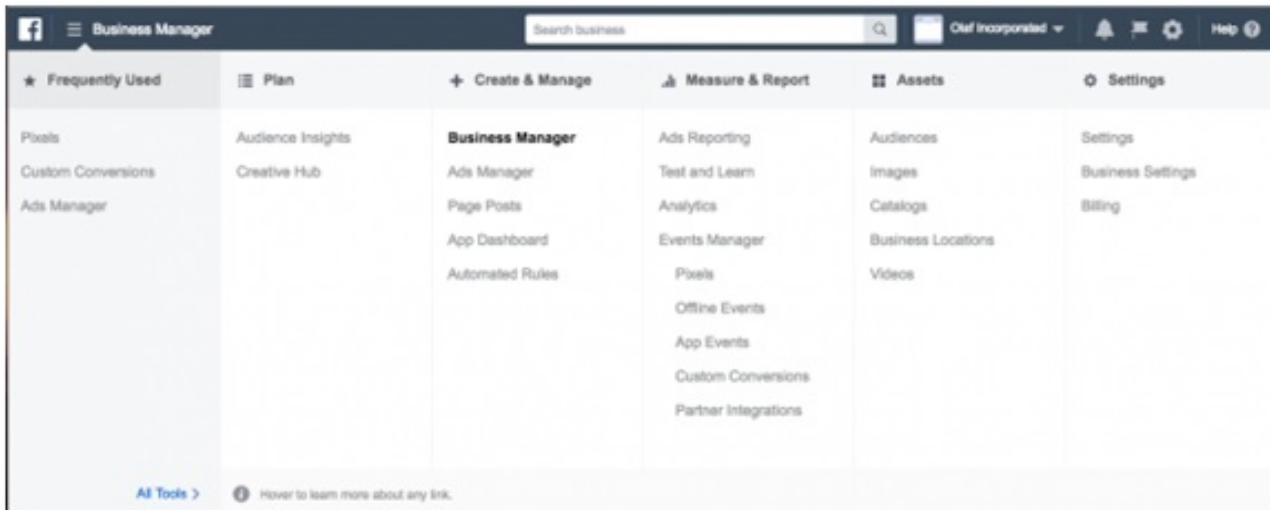
This [guide from an email service provider](#) can help you set up your email campaign tracking. However, you should ensure that you stay within [Google Analytics' terms of service](#), and ensure that no information is so specific that an individual can be identified with it.

Facebook Advertising

If you want to get in front of people where they are, Facebook is the way to do it. There are more than two billion users on Facebook every month. With an easy-to-use interface and fine-tuned targeting, you can [reach an ultra-specific audience](#) that's not available with any other tool.

Facebook Ads allows you to create ads that can be visible not only on Facebook, but Instagram, Audience Network and Facebook Messenger, with options for desktop and mobile. You can create a campaign that's as big or as small as you need it, within the budget you set, to get in front of the people who are most likely to be a conversion.

There are two options for placing ads here: Facebook Ads and Facebook Business Manager. This guide from Hootsuite shows you how to [set up your Ads account](#), and the different types of ads you can use. Hootsuite's [guide for Business Manager](#) explains the difference, and shows you how to use it to gather together all your ads, your pages, and your social media team into one interface. You can also do A/B testing for your campaign right in the interface.



Business Manager’s dashboard allows you to create, manage and review everything about your campaign, make changes and update what’s not working.

A [Facebook Pixel](#) is a piece of code that are similar to UTM and code from Google Analytics, generated for you by Facebook. Placing the code on your website will not only allow you to track conversions, you’ll also be able to re-marketing—re-showing your ad to users in different places, such as browser ads. Your ad will actually “follow them around” even after they leave Facebook and Instagram, whether it’s an item they looked at and left, or put on a shopping or wish list. By optimizing your ads and using the tracking pixel, you can target a very specific audience, optimize it for conversions and expand the ad’s reach to a wider audience.

Like Google Ads, you must define what “conversion” means in order to get metrics for them. Do you want to get likes, clicks, engagement, click-throughs, emails signups, or sales? Define it before you get started.

Even if you're not yet using Facebook advertising, putting a Pixel on your website before you start will allow you to collect data so you'll have something to start with. Once your ad campaigns are rolling, you'll already have data you can use to start your campaign and do conversion tracking.

Even though advertising on Facebook is primarily on their sites, using the Pixel increases the reach nearly as far and wide as using Google Ads tools, with many of the same results.

Bringing It Together

The goal of your campaign, of course is to drive conversions. Whether you're trying to get their contact information, sign them up for your email marketing, a free trial or consultation, or actually turn them into sales, you first need to know what makes them convert. tracking and comparing them to ROI will be different depending on what "conversion" means in your campaign. Unless a conversion is a sale, it isn't money coming in.

[Monitoring your website traffic](#) is important, and integrating it with customer data in your CRM is a good idea but may be difficult. You can read more about the ConversionXL [setup here](#), which will help you create and track campaign codes within Google Analytics. From there, you can begin tracking your demographics and comparing them to your customers. With this data, you'll be able to determine which landing pages are working, and which are not, and you can determine what kind of return you're receiving on your advertising spending. Once you've calculated these returns, you can begin optimizing your conversion rate to increase sales.

Whether you're using Google Ads, Facebook, sponsoring pins on Pinterest, or other types of [online advertising](#), tracking is essential to tracking and understanding your how effective your [marketing ROI](#) is on your conversions. Without it, you'll have no idea if any of your

marketing spends are effective. Once you begin tracking, you'll be able to see what works, and what doesn't, so you can make needed changes that improve your conversions.