

Conversion Tracking: What Is It and Why Can't Your Business Succeed Without It?

A crucial factor that can either make or break your marketing campaign is the extent to which you are able to effectively measure your results. The inability to track whether or not a user is performing a desired action is tantamount to marketing failure. There are areas of every website that we want to drive traffic toward. Places outlined by calls to action: “contact us,” “book now” “request a quote.” These are the areas of the website that are most likely to bring in new customers. It is therefore necessary to track how users interact with these areas on the website to gain a better understanding of the success or failure of your marketing campaign. This is what we call conversion tracking. A conversion takes place every time a user performs an action that you deem desirable. If you sell goods over your website, one completed purchase would be considered a conversion. Many websites are however informational; in this case a completed contact us form may be considered a conversion. By determining what actions you want users to take and setting up conversion tracking you will save your company time, money and frustration.

Where should you be tracking?

The two places most commonly lacking conversion tracking are within website analytics and paid advertising. There are many different providers for website analytics, Omniture, Webtrends, Visistat, SiteMeter, and the list goes on. The most commonly used and cost effective solution is Google Analytics. This is what I will be focusing on today, however the principles discussed should be applicable to all conversion tracking software.

Within Google Analytics you have the ability to set up “goals.” There are three types of goals which include URL Destination, Time on Site, or Pages/Visit. The last two are self explanatory while URL destination goals are basically website pages with code placed on them that identify conversions on your website. Some examples are a purchase confirmation page, or a thank you page after a user filled out the contact us form. Pages that show after a certain action was completed on the site are considered the URL Destination page. It is extremely beneficial to set up these goals because you can then track user behavior and get a better understanding of how that user got to your site and what led them to convert. This data will open doors to problems you may never have known existed and allow you to fine tune what works to make it even better. The bottom line is that you can track success, not only by visits to your site, but also how many conversions were performed. View step by step instructions on [how to set up goals in Google Analytics](#).

If your website has shopping cart functionality and users can purchase through the website, you can take this a step further and add ecommerce tracking to your site. In doing so you will be able to track actual purchases made on the site. Rather than seeing that referring traffic led to 20 purchases, you can now see that referring traffic brought in \$19,125. This allows you to put physical dollar amounts on traffic sources and better

determine ROI for your online marketing campaigns. Get more information on [adding ecommerce](#) to your website.

The second place companies most commonly under utilize conversion tracking is in paid advertising. Google is the current leader in the search market so I will specifically speak about AdWords, Google's source for paid advertising. In order to effectively track user behavior *after* he/she clicked on your ad and went to your website, be sure to [link your Google Analytics and AdWords accounts](#). Also, in your Google AdWords account preferences, turn on Destination URL auto-tagging – this allows Analytics to display details about your AdWords keywords and costs. Conversions from AdWords will show as Google / cpc. This will help you to identify which of your keywords best lead to conversions and help you to make more informed bids to increase your ROI. You can also set up conversion tracking through your Adwords account. Setting up this tracking is relatively easy, view instructions for [setting up AdWords conversion tracking](#). Just be aware that comparisons between the two may not match for various reasons [click here for more information](#). As always in paid advertising, if you want to increase conversions, it is necessary to continually test your ads. With the proper conversion tracking in place you will be able to not only see what ads lead to more clicks, but also more goal completions.

Conversion tracking is certainly worth the time and energy. If you are committed to increasing the efficiency of your online marketing efforts and ROI this is certainly where you need to start.