



Call Tracking

A secret weapon in analysis-based advertising that can dramatically increase Return on Ad Spend (ROAS)

What is call tracking?

Call tracking is a technology that allows advertisers to assign telephone numbers to their advertising campaigns or components of their campaigns.

This allows advertisers to answer the question "How many phone calls did that campaign generate?" More sophisticated call tracking solutions go a step further by providing metrics on the outcomes of those calls, thus allowing advertisers to also track new sales and revenue.

Call tracking does not replace your phone system, change your standard phone numbers, or affect your relationship with your current phone company in anyway.

When do you use it?

Use call tracking when:

- A significant portion of your sales are made via inbound telephone calls
- Prospective customers are likely to call prior to completing a sale via another channel (e.g. online)
- You want to track which advertising campaigns are generating more telephone activity or sales, so you can adjust your ad spending and strategy accordingly

What type of advertising campaigns can be tracked?

Both off-line and online advertising campaigns can be tracked. Examples include:

Off-Line Campaigns

- Newspaper
- Magazine
- Direct Mail
- Radio & TV

Online Campaigns

- Pay-per-click (e.g. Google AdWords)
- SEO
- Email

How call tracking benefits you?

- Provides insight into which ad campaigns are profitable and which aren't, so you know where to increase or decrease ad spend
- Allows you to run tests comparing call volumes and results from different ad variations
- Creates a competitive advantage vis-à-vis competitors who lack similar analytics

What are the different types of call tracking?

Call tracking falls into two general categories: static and dynamic.

With **static** call tracking, the call tracking vendor provides you with a pool of phone numbers. At your discretion, you assign individual phone numbers from this pool to your individual campaigns. For example, you may assign one phone number to your radio ad and one phone number to your newspaper ad.



Alternatively, you may assign one phone number to one radio ad and a second phone number to a competing ad (or the same ad running on a different station). In all cases, you can generate ROAS (return on ad spend) metrics for each individual campaign and compare their profitability.

If you use static call tracking for *online* campaigns, you can assign a separate phone number for each online segment you want to track. For example, you may assign one phone number to each keyword you bid on in Google AdWords.

With ***dynamic*** call tracking, you are also provided with a pool of phone numbers. However, phone numbers within your pool don't need to be assigned statically to individual online campaigns or keywords. Rather, dynamic call tracking technology automatically assigns a phone number from your pool at the time of the click. This allows you to track more segments of online traffic with fewer phone numbers. It also eases the process of phone number assignment.

Vendors that provide dynamic call tracking still give you the option of static allocation for tracking off-line campaigns and your simpler online campaigns.

Recommendation:

- If you are only tracking off-line campaigns only and/or a limited number of keywords or segments for online campaigns, choose static call tracking.
- If you are tracking a large number of keywords or online segments, choose dynamic call tracking.

How do call tracking vendors differ?

The first criteria to consider when evaluating a call tracking vendor is whether they provide dynamic call tracking technology. If you need dynamic tracking, you will restrict your selection to those with dynamic technology. If not, choosing a company that uses static tracking will usually be cheaper.

Once the question of dynamic versus static is settled, there are a number of other important differences to consider when evaluating vendors:

Local versus toll-free phone numbers

Some vendors provide a choice of local or toll-free telephone numbers; others provide only one or the other.

Call recording

Some vendors provide you with recordings of your incoming telephone calls. You can then listen to the recordings in order to analyze the types of prospects different campaigns are producing and the nature of their questions, or to evaluate (or spot-check) how well your sales reps are handling calls.

IVR

Some vendors offer IVR (Integrated Voice Response) technology, which allows you to track details about the *results* of individual phone calls. If IVR is in place, the sales representative will stay on the line after the prospect hangs up. At that point, the sales rep will hear a tone prompt and be guided to provide details about the call. These details can be as simple as "won" or "lost" or more sophisticated, including value of sale.



If you want to measure close rates or revenue generated, you will need the IVR feature.

Online Segmentation

Some dynamic vendors will provide more or less granularity in terms of segments tracked. For example, some vendors may provide a breakdown by search engine (Google versus Yahoo versus Bing, etc.) but won't provide a breakdown between paid versus non-paid traffic for an individual search engine.

Reporting

The nature and quality of reports can vary from vendor to vendor. Further, while most vendors will allow you to export data to Excel for additional analysis, the data available for export from one vendor to the next may vary. We recommend reviewing sample reports before selecting a vendor.

Google Analytics integration

A couple of the vendors provide a special plug-in for Google Analytics that will allow you to see call data within your Google Analytics reports. Note, this isn't required for tracking Google traffic. It's simply a convenience that allows you to see call data alongside your other traffic statistics, if you use Google Analytics.

Google AdWords integration

Again, this isn't a feature which is required to track Google traffic. Rather, it's a convenience for seeing call tracking data alongside AdWords tracking data without having to export data to Excel and create additional custom reports.

How much does call tracking cost?

Costs for call tracking depend on:

- Whether you are using static or dynamic tracking
- How many phone numbers you require
- How many minutes of conversation you are tracking each month

Projections are generally a little bit easier for off-line campaigns, since fewer phone numbers are needed. For online campaigns, cost projections can be made based on the number of visitors to your website each month.

Tracking an online campaign with 1000 visitors per month may cost \$100 - \$200. However, keep in mind that these numbers can go up or down based upon the percentage of your website visitors that call your business and how long those conversations last. Such metrics will vary from industry to industry and business to business.

Most vendors will allow you to restrict call tracking to a segment of website visitors. For example, if you receive 10,000 visitors per month, but only 2,000 of those visitors are from paid-search campaigns, you may choose to only track telephone calls generated by paid search, thus reducing your call tracking costs.



Which companies provide call tracking?

There are numerous companies that offer call tracking. Based on our research, CommonMind identified four vendors with strong offerings. Depending on your needs, one of these vendors may be more appropriate than another.

	AvidTrak	Click Path	IfByPhone	Mongoose Metrics
Static Tracking	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dynamic Tracking	✓	✓	X	✓
Toll Free Phone Numbers	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local Phone Numbers	X	X	✓	✓
Call Recording	X	✓	✓	✓
Direct Google Analytics Integration	X	X	✓	X
Direct Google AdWords Integration	✓	X	X	X
Website	AvidTrak.com	ClickPath.com	IfByPhone.com	Mongoose Metrics.com
Phone	(866) 613-5768	(866) 856-4330	(877) 295-5100	(877) 784-0496

How do you activate?

- Decide which advertising campaigns you want to track telephone calls for
- Determine whether you'll track online traffic and if so, whether you will track paid traffic, unpaid traffic or both
- Review available call tracking features and decide which are needed to provide the business intelligence you require
- Request quotes from call tracking vendors that meet your requirements
 - Supply as much information as you can to the vendors to assist them in generating an accurate quote (e.g. visitors per month, visitors per month from paid search, length of an average sales call, approximate number of calls per month)
- Select a call tracking vendor
- If tracking online campaigns, update website with tracking code from vendor

About this report

This report was prepared by Will Rico, CEO of CommonMind LLC, a boutique SEM agency specializing in Google AdWords and Analytics. CommonMind invites your comments or questions about this report, and is available to consult on the selection of a call tracking vendor and integrating call tracking with your online campaigns. Will Rico can be reached at (212) 967-9457 or via email at will@commonmind.com.