

# Measuring and monitoring marketing performance

## CASE STUDY

### Measurement reveals business impact of social media

**SITUATION** BreakingPoint (a high-tech startup selling network testing equipment) generated leads and established thought leadership by using social media. Because the business understood that measurement is the key to improvement, they implemented a sophisticated system for understanding the benefits and results of a wide range of social media efforts.

As they experimented with using social media platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn and a company blog to grow their reputation and their business, BreakingPoint diligently tracked, measured and analyzed the results. Kyle Flaherty, BreakingPoint's Marketing Director, reported that his team used a wide selection of tools to help them understand their return on investment. In addition to Google Analytics, he also reported using the following online monitoring tools: GetClicky, BUDurl, Google Reader, HubSpot and more.

**RESULT** Kyle talks about the advantages of integrating social media efforts with other marketing tactics, and how to measure and understand the resulting traffic, leads and purchases:

"For example, we are running an upcoming webinar, and I've used all of our social media outlets to let the community know and interact. Using BUDurl I can tell how many folks have signed up for the webinar through Twitter; I use GetClicky to see the folks who went to the webinar page from our LinkedIn group; and I'll even be able to view the folks who watch the webinar live on USTREAM the day of the event.

"We can see how many participants then sign up for a product demo, choose to do a product evaluation and ultimately buy the product. I'm obviously simplifying this process, but it is just that — a process of measurement based on certain triggers that can show me the business impact of social media."

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# Marketing measurement questions & answers

Are you throwing your marketing dollars at bad ideas? If you don't analyze and evaluate your marketing efforts, you'll never know. Yet despite the clear benefits, many businesses struggle to find meaningful ways to measure the results of marketing efforts — especially online marketing efforts.

Here are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions small businesses have about measuring their marketing.

## How would measuring and monitoring my marketing performance help me?

When you're dedicating time and money to marketing, you want to know what works best at delivering the results you want. With a simple and effective measurement system, you can learn how to get the best possible value from your marketing investment.

## What does marketing measurement involve?

The old adage goes, "Measure twice and cut once." For small-business marketing, this translates to: look before (and after) you leap, so you can be as efficient and effective as possible with your marketing efforts. You can do this by defining goals and objectives, creating a system for capturing data about campaign responses, using response mechanisms to measure the results of each campaign, conducting market research and requesting feedback. If this sounds complicated, don't worry. The checklist on the next page will walk you through each step.

## I look at Google Analytics every now and then and check my blog visitor statistics occasionally. Isn't that enough?

You're off to a good start, but there's far more you can do to learn about the success of your campaigns and the behaviors of your key audiences. For example, do you know how your website or blog page views relate to sales, or how many people who received your recent email marketing campaign took advantage of that special, one-time discount you offered?

## What kinds of actions or results should I be measuring?

Your opportunities to measure will vary depending on how and what your business is marketing. Here are some ideas to get you thinking about the possibilities:

### Online measurements:

- Growth rate of fans/followers/friends in social media platforms
- Downloads or uploads from your website or blog
- User-initiated views of videos/listens to podcasts
- Online comments
- Subscriptions (RSS, podcasts, video series)
- Page views (for blogs or websites)
- Change in search engine rankings
- Click-throughs and views
- Overall impact on online sales

### Offline measurements:

- Overall impact on offline sales
- In-store sales as a result of specific campaigns/offers/discounts
- Attendance at live events
- Number of job applications received
- Volume and type of in-store customer feedback
- Customer awareness of products, promotions, etc. advertised offline
- Volume of in-store traffic

## How will this benefit my business?

When you have meaningful measurement controls in place, you can:

- **Quantify value.** Understand which of your marketing efforts are creating the best value — in terms of profit, visibility, community-building and any other business goals.

**Tip: Decide upfront what your key performance indicators and success metrics are for your campaign.**



- **Budget effectively.** You can put your marketing dollars toward repeating what works best.
- **Evolve in the ways that best serve your business community.** Not only will you learn how to market smarter, you will become better informed about the needs of your customers and prospects — so you can continue to refine your products and services to serve them even better.

**Most of my marketing doesn't happen online.  
So there's no way to track it, right?**

There are many ways to track offline campaign results, using special 800 phone numbers, mobile phone codes, coupon coding and more.

**How do I get started?**

Many small businesses are surprised to learn that some basic measurement strategies work equally well for both traditional and online marketing. While your approach will depend on how you market and the tools you use, these basic steps will give you a sense of your options and can help you get started:

**1. Set goals**

Every time you plan a marketing campaign, determine what you'd like it to accomplish. For example, set a dollar amount for new sales, a target number for new customer inquiries and a desired quantity of new subscribers to your email list. (Check out the list under "What kinds of actions or results should I be measuring?" for more ideas.)

## Do you know:

- **Who is opening the emails you send** — and what actions they take when they do?
- **How many people visit your website or blog daily** — and how they get there, how long they stay and what actions they take?
- **What kind of buzz you're creating with social media** — and how it is benefiting your business?
- **How your traditional marketing affects online purchasing** — and vice versa?
- **What kind of return you're getting on your marketing investments?**

If you answered "no" or "not sure" to any of these, it's time to consider measuring your marketing efforts so you can learn how to become even more effective at reaching customers and prospects, and convincing them to take action.

## Related guides:

Benefiting from Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Harnessing social media

Marketing your business offline

## 2. Create a tracking system

Create a marketing database — preferably using common database software already in use at your business — where you track promotional responses, website registrations, prospect inquiries, sales, new customers, purchasing history and any other information that will help you save and measure campaign results.

## 3. Use response mechanisms

Your database will be most effective when you have specific ways to capture information from each campaign. You can do this by coding each communication with unique 800 numbers, website pages/URLs, business reply cards, fax-back forms, coupon codes and mobile phone “short codes” — so every response can be tracked to the specific campaign that inspired it.

## 4. Evaluate and evolve

Use your campaign codes to track results, record what you’ve learned in your tracking system and evaluate the success of each campaign. Over time, you’ll be able to compare campaigns and learn whether, for instance, the coupon offer was most effective when sent to your email subscriber list, offered to your Facebook friends or handed out in your place of business. Following are some of the ways you can track various campaigns:

- Use Web analytics. Web analytics tools like Webtrends and Google Analytics are invaluable for showing the number of people visiting your website, understanding how they got there and what actions they took while there.
- Track campaign results. Marketing automation tools and email marketing systems give statistics on email results. Plus, you can create specific 800 numbers, email addresses, mobile phone “short codes” and coupon coding to track the results of each campaign.
- View blog statistics. Blog platforms offer reporting pages that let you easily track visitors, and see how they found you.
- Measure social media buzz. Facebook and Twitter offer simple reporting tools to help you see how your community and conversations are growing over time.

## 5. Assess the “soft” return on your marketing investments

Numbers don’t lie, but sometimes they don’t tell the whole story either. While the focus of your marketing analysis should be the straightforward statistics and reports outlined in the previous step, it also makes sense to look for less obvious or direct results. For instance, you may see an uptick in client referrals, higher attendance at events or indications of greater customer loyalty.

## 6. Incorporate marketing into your routine

It’s easier to establish marketing measurements at the beginning of a campaign rather than midstream. The more routine marketing measurement becomes, the less time and energy it will take and the better it will serve your business.

## 7. Keep your ear to the ground

Because technology trends and marketing best practices change frequently, your opportunities for tracking and understanding campaign results will likely expand and change over time. Find a trusted source or two and read regularly about how to get the best possible results from your marketing measurement. Then be willing to experiment as you go, learning along the way about what gives you the best information and results.

**Tip: Web analytics tools are not just for measuring website traffic. They can also be used for business and market research.**



# Need more? We're with you.

Your community representative is always happy to help. You can count on them as a resource for compliance solutions to consider that fit your specific business needs, budget and level of expertise, as well as advice and resources on a range of small business technology issues.

Visit <http://centurylink.com/smb-resources> to contact your community representative, and learn more about how technology can boost your business. You'll find information sheets, videos, case studies and more.



For more detailed information about measuring and monitoring marketing performance please refer to the white paper.  
Service not available in all areas. Contact CenturyLink for details.