

# Measuring and monitoring marketing performance

## Get smart. Go further.

Most businesses know they need to market if they want to grow. But many don't understand how important it is to measure the marketing they do.

Why does measurement matter? Because when you understand what types of campaigns get the best results with your audience, you're likely to get the best bang for your buck. And when you don't know the return on your marketing investments, you could be throwing money away.

While there are a wide range of technologies and tools available to track both traditional and online marketing, the approach to using them successfully remains constant:

**Know what you want to accomplish with your marketing, find simple and effective tools for evaluating your results, save and track these results over time, and be willing to modify your approach to better connect with prospects and customers.**

This quick overview of tools, technologies and smart strategies can help you make the greatest impact when measuring and monitoring your marketing performance.

## Related guides:

Benefiting from Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Harnessing social media

Marketing your business offline

## Measurement reveals business impact of social media

### OBJECTIVE

- See how social media impacts business for high-tech startup BreakingPoint.
- Track which interactive tools relate to which business leads, purchases and increased online community.

### SOLUTION

- Strategically use social media (e.g., blog, Twitter, TweetScan, LinkedIn profile).
- Use measurement to identify how social media tools drive desired actions from various users.
- Chart relationship between social media activities, leads generated and actions taken to see cause and effect.

### RESULT

- Complete sales leads trajectories are recorded: how many participants sign up for a product demo, choose to do a product evaluation and ultimately buy the product.
- BreakingPoint can create a realistic and real-time picture showing the business impact of social media.

Read the full case study in the *Measuring and monitoring marketing performance* brochure

# How to get started with measuring and monitoring your marketing efforts

## STEP 1: Know your baseline

Before you launch any marketing campaign, it's important to understand your level of visibility and influence today.

The more detailed you can get about where your business stands now, the better you'll be able to understand the value/results of any new, campaign-related traffic.

### 1. Evaluate your offline baseline:

- How big is your direct mailing list?
- How many customers are buying from you per month, at what net sum of income?
- If it is open to the public, how much foot traffic does your business get every month?
- Historically, which types of offline marketing have been most effective?
- When people call, email or enter your place of business, where do they say they've heard about you?
- What's your offline marketing budget?

**2. Evaluate your online baseline.** To do this, you need to use online analytics, which are available for each of your online tools, and you need to know your online marketing budget. For example:

**Websites:** Online tools like Omniture and Google Analytics can provide a wide range of information, including:

- How many visitors your website had in a given time period?
- How many Web pages each visitor viewed?
- How many visitors became buying customers?
- How each visitor found your website?

***Tip: Ask yourself what information would help you reach your marketing goals and establish corresponding metrics that will help you monitor your marketing program.***

**Social media:** Simply look at your Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts to see how many people are connected to your business. You can also use websites like Social Mention to measure what and how much people are saying about your business online.

**Email marketing:** Begin by identifying how many people are signed up for your email newsletter. Is the number growing? You can also look at analytics supplied by your service provider such as Constant Contact, iContact, Aweber, etc. They should be able to tell you:

- Who opened your email?
- Which links were clicked?
- How much revenue was generated?
- How many people unsubscribed?

**Blogs:** Is the number of people following your blog increasing? That's an easy number to track, as is the number of comments. Depending on your blog host (TypePad, WordPress, Blogger, etc.), you can also find out:

- How many people logged onto your page this week?
- How long the average visitor stays on your website?
- Which other websites your blog's visitors come from?

## STEP 2: Set goals

Every time you plan a marketing campaign, determine what you'd like it to accomplish. Set clear and measurable goals about results.

### 1. Define who you are trying to reach, exactly:

- How many people?
- How do you group or identify them?
- What is their existing relationship (if any) with your business?

### 2. Identify what you want them to know/do, such as:

- Raise awareness of your company, product or service among a clearly identified audience.
- Communicate the benefits of a product or service.
- Encourage prospects to buy directly through a direct response campaign.
- Persuade prospects to switch brands.

- Support a special marketing event such as a sale or an exhibition.
- Ensure that customers know where and how to buy what you are offering.
- Build confidence and trust in your business.

### 1. Define specific, desired results of the campaign:

- Increase sales by what percent?
- Income target?
- New online community members?
- New subscribers to (e)mailing list(s)?
- What is your awareness goal in the online community?
- What do you want your brand to represent — both online and in the community?

## STEP 3: Create a tracking system

A database can help you keep track of what you're learning as you measure and monitor your marketing efforts. Over time, you'll know more about what worked and what should not be repeated, and you'll become better at reaching your audience.

You may already have database software in place to measure other elements of your business. Now leverage it to track your marketing results over time. Here are examples of the metrics you should track:

- Prospect inquiries
- New customers
- Sales
- Online registrations
- Purchasing history

## STEP 4: Use response mechanisms

Create specific ways to capture information from each campaign. The best way to do this is by giving each campaign a unique type of response mechanism — so you can track every response and sale to the specific campaign that inspired it.

- **Unique 800 number.** Check with your phone provider or use a service such as [realtyone800.com](http://realtyone800.com) to create a unique, toll-free phone number for each marketing promotion. Then use your existing phone line to easily track campaign-related calls. You could even send the same promotion by mail and email, each with a different 800 phone number, to see which is more effective.

- **Website pages/URL.** You can create a unique website or blog page (and URL) for each campaign, making it absolutely clear how visitors got there.
- **Business reply card (BRC).** Include a unique BRC with each direct-mail campaign so responses can be tracked back and measured.
- **Fax-back form.** If your direct mail or email promotion includes a fax-back form, simply give it a unique phrase or number code to reflect the campaign.
- **Coupon code.** When you offer special discounts online or in person, create a targeted coupon code for each one that gets entered when people buy.
- **Mobile phone short codes.** Using a service such as [mobilemarketing.net](http://mobilemarketing.net), you can choose a keyword that identifies your business or campaign. Then, you invite your customers and prospects to respond to the offer by sending a text message with your keyword to a special short code — a five- or six-digit number that can receive text messages. You can measure and manage responses through the mobile marketing service, with the senders' mobile numbers saved for future campaigns.
- **Ask your customers.** Simply ask customers how they found you when they enter your place of business or contact you by email.

## STEP 5: Evaluate and evolve

You can use many of the same analytic tools you employed in step one to identify your online marketing baseline to evaluate your individual campaign results. Following are some steps that can help.

### Use Web analytics

Generating Web traffic was once considered a sure sign of success, but it's critical to understand the value generated by that traffic.

Web analytics tools like Webtrends and Google Analytics are invaluable for identifying the number of people visiting your website, understanding how they got there and learning what actions they took while there. Your Internet service provider (ISP) is also likely to provide such reporting. Evaluate:

1. As unique visitors are increasing, how long are they staying at the website?
2. Can your website performance scale to handle increased, campaign-related traffic to ensure that users have a good experience when they arrive?
3. Consider the cost of clicks, estimate engagement of visitors and approximate the value created for your business.

## Track campaign results

1. View reporting from your marketing service vendors (email, blogs, etc.) to learn more about the success of your campaign. For instance, for an email marketing campaign, you can find out how many emails were opened and which links were clicked the most. Or for a direct mail campaign, you can attach an offer code that recipients can use to get a deal and you can use to track campaign performance.
2. If your campaign provides a link to a specific page on your blog or website to take action, you can measure how many people went to the page, and then use the reporting tools for the website or blog to learn what actions people took once there — such as purchases made. You can even track your offline campaign by providing a PURL that takes them online.

## View blog statistics

1. Your blog statistics page, accessible from the user dashboard, will indicate how many unique viewers your blog gets per day and where they came from.
2. If you've sent viewers to your blog from a link in a Facebook post or tweet or email campaign, you'll be able to track the traffic those links generated.
3. Notice which types of posts seem to get the most interest so you can repeat those successes by giving readers more of what they want:
  - Do they include photos, illustrations or videos?
  - Do they engage readers in a way that generates conversation in the comments section?
  - Are they newsy or inspirational? Long or short? Punchy or poetic?

## Measure social media buzz

1. Track increases in "friends" and "followers" in the days and weeks following each campaign.
2. Make sure to include your social media contact information in all traditional marketing. Notice how offline campaigns influence the expansion of your online community, compared to digital campaigns.
3. Quantify the buzz a particular social media campaign has attracted by using a website like Social Mention or doing a campaign that relies solely on social marketing.

## STEP 6: Assess the "soft" return on your marketing investments

Marketing campaigns have ripple effects that may be subtle and tricky to track.

Determine all of the secondary benefits or results that might indicate that a marketing campaign has been effective.

Your opportunities to measure campaign results will vary depending on how your business markets. Here are some possible signs that your marketing is making a positive difference:

- More industry contacts
- Increased name recognition
- New referral opportunities
- Increased traditional media opportunities
- Greater influence in your business community
- Satisfied customers due to better communication
- Better customer service due to online dialogue
- Better understanding of your competition
- Greater customer loyalty
- More views of videos/listens to podcasts
- Better ratings and reviews on websites like citysearch.com and angieslist.com
- More subscriptions (RSS, podcasts, video series)
- Improved search engine rankings
- Increased customer feedback
- Growing attendance at live events
- Quality and quantity of job applications received

## STEP 7: Nominate a marketing expert

Your business needs a team member dedicated to building measurement into the process of every marketing campaign so you can get the best possible results over time.

1. Work with your marketing expert to create a simple and flexible database for tracking campaign results.
2. Establish a clear process for setting targets, then measuring and reporting results.
3. Get ready to market smarter than you ever have before, and get the greatest value for every dollar you spend.

## STEP 8: 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.

1. Find a few trusted sources of information about small business technology, such as: [openforum.com](http://openforum.com) and the [businessweek.com](http://businessweek.com) World of Technology blog. Read regularly about how to get the best possible results from your marketing measurement.
2. Be willing to experiment as you go, learning along the way about marketing and measurement strategies and systems that give you the best information and results.

## 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.



Service not available in all areas. Contact CenturyLink for details.