

# Creating Campaign Tracking URLs

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Best Practices Guide to Creating Campaign Tracking URLs  
to Effectively Measure Success in Google Analytics

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ADVERTISING

**ToTheWeb LLC**

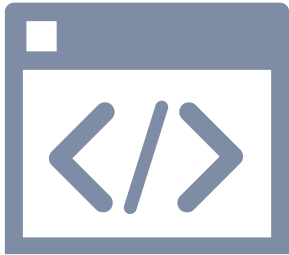
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# STEPS

- 1** What is a Campaign Tracking URL?
- 2** When *Should* I Use a Campaign Tracking URL?
- 3** When *Shouldn't* I Use a Campaign Tracking URL?
- 4** How do I Create a Campaign Tracking URL?
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This best practices guide provides step-by-step instructions to implement Custom Campaign Tracking URLs for marketing campaigns such as email, social media and banner/pay-per-click advertising programs.

### STEP 1. WHAT IS A CAMPAIGN TRACKING URL?

A tracking URL is a campaign landing page URL that has been amended to include additional information (called UTM parameters) to allow analytics programs to allocate traffic to the correct media source.

▶ **Standard URL Example:**

[www.totheweb.com](http://www.totheweb.com)

▶ **Campaign Tracking URL Example:**

[www.totheweb.com?utm\\_source=linkedin&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=2017-11-nine-quick-wins-blog](http://www.totheweb.com?utm_source=linkedin&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2017-11-nine-quick-wins-blog)

#### What is a UTM Parameter?

UTM parameters are tags you add to the end of a URL so that when your link is clicked, the tags are tracked by Google Analytics.

The beginning of the URL is the same for both examples, but the campaign tracking URL has new information appended to the end. Both URLs lead to the same page. The only difference is that programs like Google Analytics can now assign marketing campaign data based on the information in the URL string.

This is the information Google Analytics will use to organize your information so the data in your analytics reports is useful.

Tracking URLs are essential to correctly calculate impressions, visits and leads for marketing campaigns.



Campaign Tracking URLs are required by analytics programs to correctly label marketing campaign traffic sources.

### STEP 2. WHEN TO USE A CAMPAIGN TRACKING URL

Use campaign tracking URLs for all links that drive traffic to your website from marketing efforts. When done properly, seeing the performance of each marketing channel is much easier.

To differentiate between paid and organic inbound links from companies such as LinkedIn and Facebook, use campaign tracked URLs for the paid traffic. You should be able to look at how a channel performs as a whole, as well as be able to drill down in the channel and optimize at various levels. Analytics programs will automatically tag organic and referral traffic so you do not need to use tracking URLs for these sources.

### Examples For Campaigns Requiring Tracking URLs

- Email Marketing Campaigns
- Advertising in networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook and for content syndication
- Within the links of a Press Release or an Email signature.
- If you are using a shortened URL, add the campaign tracking data to the end of the original URL and then drop it in your URL shortener.
- To track QRC codes by adding the code as the MEDIUM.
- For redirects of vanity URLs.
- Campaign tracking URLs are not required for tracking Google Adwords and Bing if you have auto-tagging enabled. If your account is managed by Yahoo, you'll need to request auto-tagging be enabled.
  - **Enable auto-tagging for Google Adwords.**
  - **Enable auto-tagging for Bing.**



### STEP 3. WHEN NOT TO USE CAMPAIGN TRACKING URLS

Use campaign tracking URLs if you are linking visitors to your domain from another domain.

It does not apply when you link internally from one page within your own domain (or sub-domain) to another page on your domain.

- If you add a campaign tracking URL on a landing page located on your domain that links to another page on your own domain, the tracking parameter will break any attribution from the original source. Analytics will change the attribution of that visitor to a new source and medium data.
- Google will report the event data but not the original source.

#### Correct Use

Google Ad



www.totheweb.com/a

*Add the tracking URL parameters to the ad link and Analytics will correctly report the source in Analytics.*

#### Incorrect Use

Google Ad



www.totheweb.com/a



www.totheweb.com/b

*In this example if you add a tracking URL linking from totheweb.com/a to totheweb.com/b, and if visitors click from totheweb.com/a to totheweb.com/b the original source (Google Ad) will be lost.*

### ► Other Examples Where Campaign Tracking URLs Do Not Apply

**Linking From Your URL to a 3rd Party Page:** If you link people to another website such as a GoToWebinar landing page hosted at [www.gotowebinar.com](http://www.gotowebinar.com), you wouldn't add a campaign tracking URL to your site's landing page because you do not have access to the analytics on that 3rd party page.

**PDFs:** Campaign tracking URLs cannot be used for links to PDF downloads because the PDF doesn't contain analytics tracking code and therefore cannot be tracked.



## STEP 4. CREATING A CAMPAIGN TRACKING URL

Create custom URLs with tracking variables using the Campaign Tracking URL Builder. That way, you can track which of your marketing promotions are generating the most traffic and conversions.

### A. Create your landing page URL.

### B. Generate custom campaign parameters for advertising URLs.

#### \*Example Input Fields

► **Step 1:** Enter the URL of your website:

(eg: http://totheweb.com )

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

Campaign Source: \* Required Field  
 (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)

Copy and paste this new campaign tracking URL into your marketing campaign.

#### ► **Landing Page URL:**

<http://www.sampleurl.com/45-daytrial.html>

#### ► **Landing Page amended with Campaign Tracking Parameters:**

This becomes your campaign URL for emails, banners, social media, etc.

[www.yoururl.com/45-daytrial.html?utm\\_source=techtarget&utm\\_medium=display&utm\\_campaign=2017-q4&utm\\_content=gartner-wp](http://www.yoururl.com/45-daytrial.html?utm_source=techtarget&utm_medium=display&utm_campaign=2017-q4&utm_content=gartner-wp)



## STEP 5. BEST PRACTICES FOR CAMPAIGN TAGGING

- **Maintain a consistent naming convention.**  
(standardized tag names will make future analysis easier and more effective)
- **Use lowercase names.**  
(If you use "CPC" and "cpc" as Medium – you will see two different Mediums)
- **Use dashes (-) or underscores (\_)** to replace spaces between words.
- **Don't use punctuation** such as commas, question marks and periods.
- **Keep a list of all your campaign tracking URLs in Excel as a guide.**

This chart is an example of how to fill in the data within the URL builder tool. It can also be used as a guide for setting up your own Excel tracking spreadsheet. In that tracking file, also include columns for the new tracking URL and notes that will be useful when analyzing data.

### IMPORTANT CAMPAIGN FIELDS

#### Other URL Parameter Fields

- **Campaign CONTENT** field can be used to show the different ad banner sizes. This is useful if you are running multiple ads in the campaign to help you identify the ad size that converted. Can be used for A/B testing and content-targeted ads
- **Campaign TERM:** Not required but can be used for paid keywords in non-AdWords campaigns.

SOURCE Enter the site or publication. <i>*Required</i>	MEDIUM Marketing channel such as "cpc, email or affiliate"	NAME Include the name of the overall marketing campaign
Example for Ads Running in Display Network		
marketwatch	display	2017-11-security-webinar or something that can sort alphabetically like: 2013-10-31
Example for Email Campaigns		
newsletter-list Can be expanded to provide list details like this: email_type- email_series#email_list_name	email	2017-11-security-webinar Can be expanded to include additional details like this: campaign_type-email_ subject-offercode
Example for Paid Search (excluding AdWords & Bing)		
linkedin	cpc Best to use 'cpc' instead of 'ppc' for cost-per-click advertising"	2017-11-security-webinar



### COMMON URL PARAMETERS SUGGESTIONS

#### **SOURCE** (required field)

**Think about the website that is driving visitors.**

Source fields would be the advertiser, site or publication name:

- marketwatch
- linkedin
- facebook
- email-sig

For email campaigns be clear about the list source:

- newsletter-list-paid
- newsletter-list-prospects
- newsletter-list-house
- email-promo

#### **MEDIUM**

**Think about high-level marketing channels.**

Typical Medium options:

- email (don't mix e-mail, Email and email as they will show up separately)
- cpc (non-display paid traffic)
- display (use in place of banner)
- social
- print (if you are using a QR code enter QR in the Content field)
- direct-mail
- infographic
- press release



**For Campaign NAME, use the nomenclature your company uses.**

### Campaign NAME

**This is the high-level campaign name or slogan.**

It's really important to standardize what people are using for their campaign names so all marketing efforts for one campaign can be gathered together.

Suggested naming conventions:

- 2017-11-nine-quick-wins
- nine-quick-wins-2017-11
- 2017-06-summer-rewards-sweepstake

(we like adding a year for campaigns)



### Campaign CONTENT

**Describe the advertising copy that sends buyers to your website.**

Use this field to differentiate calls-to-action on the same page or in A/B testing.

This way you can tell which version is most effective.

- free-demo
- qr-code: use to track a qr-code's use in print material.
- summer-reward-300x250
- summer reward-600x250e

### Campaign TERM

**For non-Adwords PPC campaigns to identify the keyword driving buyers.**

- Enter the keyword theme that is driving visitors from an ad.



## STEP 6. FINDING YOUR DATA IN GOOGLE ANALYTICS

If you're using Google Analytics, it's easy to locate your data. Go to **"Acquisition > Campaigns"**

### Campaign URLs only send data to GA if:

- 1) They are present in the URL when viewed in the browser.
- 2) The related page viewed has GA tracking code

It's really important to agree on a single **Campaign Name** (and the exact format) so that all activity will be measured together.

Here's a sample of how your data will appear. You can drill down into this data for more information.

Source ?	Medium ?	Sessions ? ↓
1. <a href="#">google</a>	cpc	<b>184,247</b> (97.21%)
2. <a href="#">marchex</a>	cpc	<b>3,836</b> (2.02%)
3. <a href="#">AdRoll</a>	cpc	<b>663</b> (0.35%)
4. <a href="#">marchex</a>	email	<b>521</b> (0.27%)
5. <a href="#">linkedin</a>	cpc	<b>186</b> (0.10%)

## About Us

[www.totheweb.com](http://www.totheweb.com)

ToTheWeb offers the proven website strategies and tactics you need to generate more qualified traffic, leads and sales. Count on our expertise to execute advanced search engine marketing programs to grow your business.



**Is Your Website Your Best Sales Tool?**



**It Should Be!**

