

ADVERTISING

# Creating Campaign Tracking URLs



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

to the web

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# Track Marketing Campaigns with Custom Tracking URLs to Effectively Measure Success in Google Analytics

This 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 and advertising programs.

## What is a campaign tracking URL?

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

- Standard URL example: **www.totheweb.com**
- Campaign Tracking URL example for a paid LinkedIn campaign driving traffic to a blog post.

**www.totheweb.com?utm\_source=linkedin&utm\_medium=cpc&utm\_campaign=quick-wins-blog**

## How do I create a UTM Parameter?

Campaign tracking URLs are tags you add to the end of a URL so that when your link is clicked, the tags are tracked by Google Analytics. This is the information Google Analytics will use to organize your information so the data in your analytics report is useful.

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.

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

- Advertising in networks such as LinkedIn and content syndication
- Email Marketing Campaigns
- Within the links of a Press Release or an Email signature to your site.
- To track QRC codes by adding the code as the MEDIUM.

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

Google Ad



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

# Use campaign tracking URLs ONLY if you are linking visitors to your domain from another domain or platform.

## Examples Where Tracking URLs Do Not Apply

1. UTM's are not required for tracking Google Ads and Bing if you have auto-tagging enabled.

1. **Linking From Your URL to a 3rd Party Page:**

If you link people to another website such as a Webex 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.

3. **When linking to a PDF:** UTM's cannot be used for links to PDF because the PDF doesn't contain analytics tracking code.

3. **On Pages within your own domain:** UTM's do not apply when you link internally from one page within your own domain (or sub-domain). Doing so 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.

Create custom URLs with tracking variables using ToTheWeb's Campaign Tracking URL Builder.

## Create a Campaign Tracking URL Tool

### Get Started

- Create your landing page URL.
- Generate custom campaign parameters for advertising URLs. For best results, enter a **Source**, a **Medium** and a **Name**.
- Copy your tracking URL into your campaign.

The screenshot shows the ToTheWeb Campaign Tracking URL Builder interface. At the top, there is a text input field with the placeholder text "Enter page url: https://". Below this is a section titled "Why Use This Tool?" with three bullet points: "Easily create URLs with custom campaign tracking variables to identify the promotions are generating the most traffic/conversions.", "Enter your page URL and then add variables into each of the fields below based on the way you want them to appear in Google Analytics. The output will appear at the bottom.", and "We recommend always adding your own Campaign Source, Medium and Campaign Name." Below this is a section titled "Create Your Tracking URL" with four input fields: "\*Campaign Source (referrer: google, citysearch, newsletter)", "\*Campaign Medium (marketing medium: cpc, banner, email)", "\*Campaign Name (product, promo code or slogan)", and "Campaign Term (identify the paid keywords)". Below these is a "Campaign Content (use to differentiate ads)" input field. At the bottom, there is a text input field with the instruction "Copy and paste this new campaign tracking URL into your marketing campaign." and two buttons: "COPY URL TO CLIPBOARD" and "COPY SHORT URL".

## Consistency in tagging labels is critical to successful campaign reporting.

- 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 (-) rather than underscores (\_) to replace spaces between words.  
Spaces will "break" the URL and analytics programs will not be able to track your campaigns properly.
- Don't use punctuation such as commas, question marks and periods.
- Don't use symbols such as: & or include spaces.

### TIP

Keep a list of all your campaign tracking URLs in Excel as a guide



This chart shows examples for important UTM fields. 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

<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>MEDIUM</b>	<b>NAME</b>
Enter the site of publication *required	Marketing channel such as "cpc, email or affiliate"	Include the name of the overall marketing campaign
Example for Ads Running in Display Network		
marketwatch	display	2022-11-security-webinar Or something that can sort alphabetically like 2022-11
Example for links from an Email Broadcast		
house-email-list Can be expanded to provide list details like this: email_typeemail_series#email_list_name	email	2022-11-security-webinar Can be expanded to include additional details like this: campaign_type-email_subject-offercode
Example for Paid Search (including Google Ads and Bing)		
linkedin No need to use the full path of the source.	cpc Best to use 'cpc' instead of 'ppc' for cost-per-click advertising"	2022-11-security-webinar

## 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.



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

## Common URL Parameter Suggestions

### SOURCE (required field)

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

Source fields are 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 (required field)

**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 trac)
- 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

## 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.

For Campaign NAME, use the nomenclature your company uses.

Suggested naming conventions:

- 2022-11-nine-quick-wins
- nine-quick-wins-2022-11
- 2022-06-summer-rewards-sweepstake

(we like adding a year at the beginning)



### 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.



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

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

Campaign URLs only send data to Google Analytics 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. Below is 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%)

Create a UTM Parameter Tool

# Convert your visitors **into leads**

We work with B2B companies with lead generation challenges.

<https://totheweb.com>



to the web