

An abstract graphic featuring large, bold, blue and white geometric shapes that resemble stylized letters or calligraphic strokes, filling the top half of the page.

Call Tracking 101

Spring 2019

CallRail

Overview

Call tracking allows marketers to bridge the attribution gap between offline and online conversions, such as calls, texts, digital ads, traditional media and more. It also enables you to get more value out of your phone calls so you can spend your marketing dollars wisely.

In this e-book, we'll go over:

- Why calls are an important marketing channel
- How call tracking software works
- Choosing a call tracking provider
- Real life call tracking success stories



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Why track calls anyway?


“Phone calls are dead” is a common refrain among marketers. But contrary to popular belief, phone calls are actually on the rise for businesses. According to a BIA/Kelsey report, over **85 billion** calls are made to businesses today via mobile ads and other digital marketing channels. By 2020, that number will be north of **169 billion**.

The most effective digital marketing channels for driving calls are also changing. Traditional display ads are on the decline, and are being surpassed by native social and messaging apps.

Clearly, it's worth optimizing for phone calls as part of your overall digital marketing strategy. But how do you figure out which of your channels drive the most calls, and figure out which kinds of calls are best at driving conversions and revenue?

That's where call tracking comes in. By adding call tracking to your marketing tech stack, you can see which of your marketing channels — like display ads, organic search, social media, billboards, or mailers — drive the most calls to your business. Even better, you can also harness the power of artificial intelligence to automatically score calls, qualify leads, and zero in on your top-performing channels.

169
85



“If you’re focusing your analytics only on form submissions, you’re missing a lot of conversion data, you’re missing out on a ton of leads, and it’s much harder to make effective decisions about your marketing campaigns,”

Michael Golubev,
CEO and co-founder of Mold Busters

How call tracking works

There are two main ways to use call tracking. First, there's the attribution and analytics side of call tracking that tells you which channels or campaigns generate the most calls.

Second, there's what we've termed 'call intelligence.' This is the more qualitative side of call tracking, allowing you to extract useful information from your prospects and customers. You can then use this data to improve your pricing, service offerings, product development, customer support processes, and more.

Let's dive into a hypothetical use case to see how this works in practice.

Annie's Automotive

Annie is the owner of Annie's Automotive, an auto repair shop located in Atlanta, GA, that specializes in European cars. Like all auto repair shops, phone calls are an important part of her business. Her customers and potential customers will call the shop to schedule appointments, ask questions, and get information or quotes over the phone.

Unfortunately, Annie has noticed her business isn't doing as well as some of her larger, more established competitors. She has a small marketing budget, but she doesn't think she's getting much of a return on her investment. Her marketing channels include:

- Facebook ads
- Paid search
- An ad in a local newspaper

To get to the bottom of things, Annie decides to try out call tracking to get a better sense of what's working and not working with her marketing efforts.

Attribution and analytics

Prior to using call tracking, Annie used the same phone number in all her marketing channels. After adding call tracking, she uses different numbers for all three channels and her company website. In doing so, Annie knows for certain how many phone calls each channel generates relative to her marketing spend.

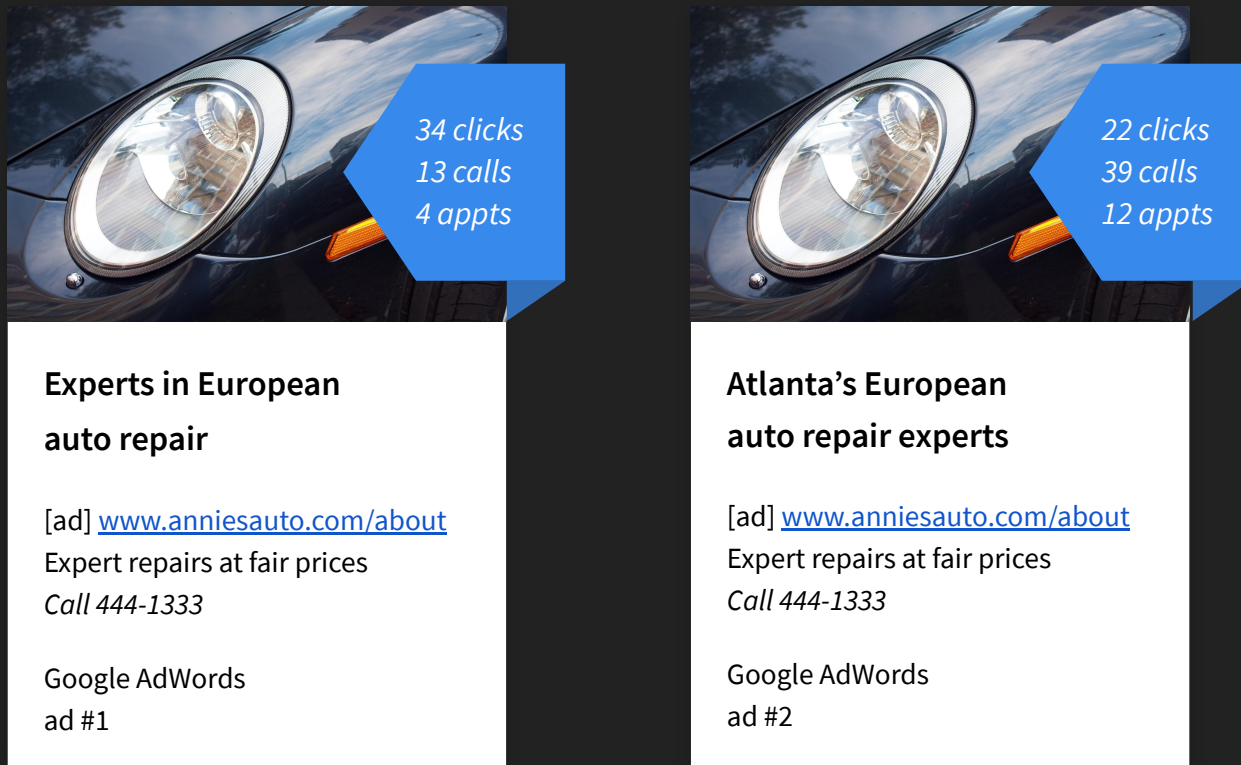
After her first month using call tracking, Annie has the following results:

Tactic	Tracking #	Results	Total cost	Cost per acquisition
Facebook ads	444-1222	27	\$600	\$22.22
Paid search	444-1333	56	\$800	\$14.29
Newspaper ad	444-1444	7	\$1000	\$142.86
Organic search/direct	444-1555	3	n/a	n/a

Based on these numbers, Annie knows 4 things:

- Facebook ads are expensive, and don't yield many phone calls
- Paid search is her most successful and cost effective channel
- Her newspaper ad has a very high cost per acquisition
- Her website does not generate many phone calls

Since paid search is by far the most lucrative channel, Annie decides to use call tracking to A/B test ad copy.



If Annie measures campaign success with clicks, then ad #1 is the most successful. But by using call tracking, she can see that **clicks don't provide a full picture of marketing campaign results**. Ad #2 had significantly fewer clicks, but generated over three times as many calls to her business.

By using call tracking, Annie was able to see which of her marketing channels works best. Based on her results, she made the following changes to her marketing strategy to improve ROI:

- Incorporated the word "Atlanta" into her ad copy to improve her local search presence
- Canceled her newspaper ad in favor of putting that money toward paid search
- Updated her Facebook ad targeting and messaging to improve results
- Updated her website copy and blog posts to generate more organic traffic

But what about what happens *after* someone dials Annie's Automotive? That's where call intelligence comes in.

Call Intelligence

While call intelligence features vary by company (more on that in “Choosing a Call Tracking Provider”), you can expect all call tracking tools to use artificial intelligence to pull rich information from your phone calls.

For example, let’s say Annie made changes to her marketing strategy based on the data in her call tracking dashboard. But even after making the changes and seeing an increase in the number of calls she receives, there hasn’t been a corresponding uptick in new customers.

Annie uses call intelligence to get to the bottom of things. She listens to several call recordings to hear things straight from her customers’ mouths. Lo and behold, Annie quickly realizes that her receptionist’s European car knowledge isn’t quite up to par, leaving potential customers confused, frustrated, and ready to call up one of her competitors.

She also uses keyword-level tracking to see if there are any common questions, requests, or complaints from potential customers. Her call tracking tool automatically parses each phone call recording for commonly used phrases — all Annie has to do is click the tags, and the software will take her straight to the points in the phone call where those words were mentioned.

Annie notices a trend of potential customers asking questions about Volvos in particular. Annie doesn’t mention Volvo much on her website because she assumed it was less common in Atlanta, but her call intelligence data is suggesting otherwise.

Based on both of these findings, Annie decides to:

- Have her receptionist go through a more formal training program on European car repair so they can better field customer questions.
- Update her website to better highlight her expertise working on Volvos.
- Experiment with an paid search campaign around the keywords “Volvo repair Atlanta.”

If call attribution and analytics tells you the “what”, call intelligence tells you the “why”. Together, these features make call tracking an effective tool for businesses to not only make smarter marketing decisions, but also make better decisions with customer support, business development, service offerings, and more.

Now that you understand how call tracking works, it’s critical to choose a provider that meets your needs and budget.

How to choose a call tracking provider

When it comes to adding new tools to your marketing tech stack, you want something that's in your budget, has the features you need, and, above all, is worth the money.

Call tracking is no exception, but features and pricing packages vary from company to company. In order to make shopping around easier, come prepared to ask your prospective call tracking provider the following questions:

What features come standard?

Call tracking providers share some features, but there can be a big difference in how much they charge for those features. For example, one provider may charge more per minute for call transcription if you're on their cheapest plan, while others may have a set rate for smaller plans and a discount for larger plans.

What is your monthly rate *and* rate per minute?

All call tracking providers charge a monthly rate that depends on the size of the plan you buy. More expensive plans typically include the integrations and advanced features excluded from smaller plans.

It's important to keep in mind, however, that not all call tracking providers include minutes in their plans. For example, one provider may include 500 minutes in a plan, while another doesn't include any and charges based on usage.

This is crucial when selecting a call tracking provider that fits in your budget. Depending on your needs and usage, a company's pricing and packaging can have you over spending for things you don't need or use.

Can you accommodate all of my campaign types?

Chances are your business uses more than one marketing channel, including digital (like paid search) and offline (like paper mailers). Make sure your call tracking provider can accommodate not only your current needs, but also scale with your business as you grow.

Do you integrate with the other tools in my marketing tech stack?

In order to have the fullest marketing attribution picture possible, it's wise to connect your call tracking tool with other marketing tools, such as Google Analytics, HubSpot, and more. Make sure your call tracking provider integrates with the tools you use or may use in the future, and ask which pricing tiers include the integrations you need.

Are you HIPAA, HITECH, and/or GDPR compliant?

Depending on your business, you may have non-negotiable data privacy needs that your call tracking provider must comply with. Be sure to ask your prospective call tracking provider if they are HIPAA, HITECH, or GDPR compliant — and whether or not they charge extra for it.

By asking the right questions and assessing your needs, you can choose the call tracking provider that fits your needs and budget so you can get to optimizing your marketing efforts.

Let's take a look at some real life examples of companies like yours who used call tracking to massively improve their ROI.



Real life call tracking success stories

Call tracking can make a massive difference in businesses of different sizes, industries, and marketing expertise. Below are six diverse call tracking use cases that drove real results for real companies.

Thriving on phone calls: Mold Busters

<https://www.callrail.com/blog/call-tracking-for-home-services-mold-busters/>

Like all home services businesses, Mold Busters relies heavily on phone calls to grow their business. But measuring call-based marketing campaigns can be difficult, so they added call tracking to their marketing tech stack to optimize their investment. It didn't take long for them to see results — within six months, they went from 30-50 calls a day to 70-100, with a corresponding increase in sales and revenue.

“[Call tracking] has helped us to create a truly versatile phone analytics system for our business, while also helping us continue to deliver great customer service.”

[Michael Golubev, CEO and co-founder of Mold Busters](#)

Thinking outside the box to make an impact: The Arbor Company

<https://www.callrail.com/blog/customer-spotlight-arbor-co-hurricanes/>

With innovative thinking, you can come up with some clever use cases for call tracking — just ask The Arbor Company, an Atlanta-based company that manages senior living communities in the Gulf Coast of Texas and Florida. When Hurricane Harvey left many of their residents and their families out of communication, they used call tracking to set up a hotline for residents' families to call. They then took those transcribed voicemails and emailed them directly to residents in a matter of minutes.

“The families of our community members told us how the fact that they could call us and ask us questions brought so much peace of mind.”

[Chris Harper, VP of Communications at The Arbor Company](#)

Connecting the multichannel marketing dots: Humberview Auto Group

<https://www.callrail.com/blog/humberview-callrail-automotive-case-study/>

Humberview Auto Group knows that a prospective car buyer usually has multiple online and offline touch points before contacting a dealer directly. But by implementing call tracking, they were able to get a fuller picture of their marketing efficacy and increase phone calls by 300%.

“It’s awesome, and not only has this saved a lot of time, it has made our marketing so much more effective and more efficient.”

Maxim Poliakov, Digital Marketing Manager at The Humberview Group

Optimizing e-commerce advertising: Supply.com

<https://www.callrail.com/blog/national-builder-supply/>

Home renovation product supplier, Supply.com, mainly works with e-commerce and sales to large retailers. Although they had a Google Ads strategy, their strategy fell short when it came to tracking campaigns that directed customers to their call center. By adding call tracking, they were able to focus their advertising dollars on the products that convert most, resulting in a 50% decrease in ad spend with no negative impact on sales volume.

“CallRail helps us better understand our products, our customer interactions and what’s happening through our call center. Through that visibility, we can significantly boost the performance of every advertising dollar, while recapturing previously wasted spend to put back into our business.”

David Gallmeier, Marketing and Development at Supply.com

Maintaining customer relationships: AltLine Banking

<https://www.callrail.com/blog/altline-banking-case-study/>

AltLine Banking is the commercial lending division of The Southern Banking Company. In order to keep AltLine competitive in the specialty finance space, it was crucial to optimize marketing efforts not just for client acquisition, but also client retention. By adding call tracking, AltLine was able to increase online conversions by 108%, lower customer acquisition cost by 39%, and increase online customers by 67%.

“The ability to closely and easily track our ROI for online marketing spend has been eye-opening and serves as validation for where we choose to place the dollars we’re spending.”

[Gates Little, President of The Southern Bank Company.](#)

Giving clients confidence and peace of mind: Lawyer Connection

Hiring a lawyer can be stressful and complicated, so Lawyer Connection helps streamline the process. Since most legal clients prefer to speak to a real person, phone calls are a critical part of their marketing and customer service strategy. By introducing call tracking, Lawyer Connection was able to more than double their amount of monthly callers and make smarter Google Ads bidding decisions.

“With call tracking, not only do you have the opportunity to answer the call, you can even see what keyword drove the call and gauge how valuable the call might be just from that.”

[Rafe Malach, Co-founder of Legal Connection](#)

Conclusion

Phone calls aren't dead. In fact, your prospects are placing more calls than ever, making your phone lines a valuable and powerful source of data for your business. By investing in a call tracking tool that meets your unique business needs and budget, you can achieve marketing insights that you simply can't get from other analytics tools alone.

