

## Three Critical Steps to Tracking Direct Marketing Campaigns

To optimize campaign performance, you must understand which media is driving response, which creative is most responsive and whether new offers increase response versus previous efforts. You can only draw conclusive results if clients are willing to adopt tracking and measurement strategies and tactics prior to launching campaigns.

Tracking and buy-managing campaigns are core competencies in direct marketing, of course. Without them, marketers would be unable to generate the invaluable performance learnings. Tracking allows us to optimize campaigns—to increase response volume, reduce cost per response or generate a more positive ROI.

Agencies as well as clients need to take these three critical steps to ensure flawless execution of tracking:

1. Establishing and prioritizing test elements, evaluation criteria and metrics
2. Constructing appropriate tracking mechanisms to deliver the learnings
3. Continually optimizing campaigns based on learnings

### **Step 1: Establish and prioritize test elements, evaluation criteria and metrics**

Acting as a team, clients and agencies need to identify and agree on the key levers that are likely driving response and sales—such as creative, offer and media selection. You may need to prioritize one or two key learnings that need to be tested in order to ensure proper tracking and measurement is obtainable. The test variables need to be isolated, else you may lose or dilute the results.

It is important that tracking and measurement needs are established based on the objectives, including front-end (calls, clicks) as well as back-end information (sales, revenue). Creating a sample results report pre launch can help preempt any technical difficulties once a campaign is in progress. This also helps to aid automation of reporting and analysis.

## **Step 2: Construct appropriate tracking**

Establishing appropriate tracking is critical. Making certain all parties discuss and agree on tracking system and metrics prior to launch ensures the ability to optimize based on learnings. Teams should discuss limitations and consider several options to ensure that tracking does not negatively impact overall call volume. For example, for clients with call center restrictions, agencies can provide recommendations to help reduce call volume outside of call center hours or minimize the number of lost calls.

Direct marketers understand that there are several ways to generate consumer response in a campaign. Traditional direct response campaigns typically drive responders to an 800 number (mnemonic or unique) or a Web address, which provides front-end response information on an immediate basis.

Individual 800 numbers/unique URLs are often recommended because they can provide the exact number of calls or clicks by channel. For example, we can track results by specific network or station and by creative or offer. If individual numbers are used while in campaign, changes can be made quickly (daily for some media vehicles), resulting in improvements in volume and efficiency while a campaign is still in market.

The use of a memorable mnemonic number will result in greater overall response. However, learning by specific channels is sacrificed. It's important to evaluate whether the improvements generated from buy-management would outweigh the likely increased response from the use of the mnemonic.

In many cases, clients establish testing periods throughout the year using unique 800 numbers, and then roll out campaigns leveraging learnings with a mnemonic phone number.

Other important metrics can also be considered when evaluating a campaign's overall success. These include awareness tracking, lift to non-advertising channels and/or other products.

### **Step 3: Continually optimize campaigns, based on learnings**

Together, clients and agencies can discuss options for rollout based on results, both positive and negative, for the key levers being measured. Appropriate timing for proper evaluation of campaign and test variables performance also needs to be addressed.

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Ultimately, tracking provides critical learnings, which can be used to optimize campaigns and maximize results for clients.

For information on learning how you can start tracking your campaigns visit ResponDex Marketing, Inc. at [www.respondex.com](http://www.respondex.com) or contact them at 877-463-6177.

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