

Written by Doug Kruhm
Monday, 30 September 2013 -

So we started an external ad campaign to one of our web sites. An external ad campaign is an advertising campaign that isn't sourced from Google AdWords. It's sourced from another web site like a media/news outlet.

Eventually the question is going to become, "Is the advertising working?"

Good question. The only way to see this is with Analytics. While there are many analytic tools out there, Google Analytics is what we run into most. Probably because the price tag of free and the backing of Google's brand name makes it an obvious choice.

Like our other posts about Google Webmaster Tools, Google Analytics is powerful. It will tell you all sorts of items about the traffic that is coming to your web site.

So if you want to know if traffic is coming from an external ad campaign, it will show that right?

Yes and No. It will show traffic from the external ad campaign but it won't show it out of the box. You have to do some work.

Create a custom URL

The first step is to create a custom URL also known as a custom link. You can do that with the Google Custom URL Builder here:

<https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1033867>

Basically, you're taking your web site name and you are adding nonsense at the end. This nonsense, technically called parameters, doesn't do anything other than track a few items.

It tracks the following:

1. source: where the traffic came from.
2. medium: what did the traffic come from (banner, newsletter, etc).
3. campaign: what campaign, the one in September or the one in October.
4. term: what terms were we trying to shoot for.
5. content: a drill down of what was clicked.

Link it to your advertising

It should be pretty obvious but after you create a custom URL, you have to link it to your advertising. This way when someone clicks on the ad, the link will redirect to your site with the parameters. With those parameters in place, Google Analytics will pick up and track that it was traffic from the external ad campaign.

If you would like to see more about Traffic, you can do so here:

https://support.google.com/analytics/answer/1006930?hl=en&ref_topic=1631856
