



Keeping Track: Defining One's Tracking Efforts is an Important Aspect of ROI

By **David Evans, PhD**, Ceatus Media, L.L.C.

Many sales consultants have talked about how many “touches” are required to convert a prospect into a sale, with the general conclusion being that seven touches are required. Closing and converting prospective patients into consultations and treatment/surgeries is no different.

It wasn't that long ago that cosmetic surgeons had a lot of control over how he or she “touched” prospective patients. Your patients would receive a word-of-mouth referral, read a print ad, see a Yellow Pages spread, hear a radio ad, etc, and then contact the practice. The practice had a direct link to these patients and could readily define and control the contacts and touches. Tracking these touches and resulting conversions was a lot easier.

Many surgeons think that due to the digital nature and the wealth of statistics available for online marketing, tracking has become easier. Naught! Tracking has gotten a lot harder. Patients now do their own research in ways you cannot control.

Fortunately, technology advancements can offset the difficulties in tracking the many ways consumers research your practice online.

The following are a few pointers to enhance tracking email and phone leads.

Email is Easiest

Email is the easiest to track because you can directly measure where the lead came from. Emails can also automatically feed into the practice management software, which can then track whether the lead turned into a consultation or surgery, and how much revenue the lead generated.

Email lead tracking can now be enhanced through special tools applied to Google Analytics. Now you can determine, for example, not only that the lead derived from your website, but also which page in the website and what page the visitor entered the site. This information can then be used to help increase conversion.

The downside of email tracking is that too many practices base their marketing ROI solely on these conversions, precisely because they are the easiest to track. In cosmetic practices, email leads represent only a third of overall leads, and typically these leads convert at a lower rate than incoming phone calls.



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Phone Calls are Harder to Track, But Better Leads

Phone calls are much harder to track than email leads. At its core, the practice has to rely on the patient to tell the practice why they called. And, patients are notoriously unreliable. Therefore, call tracking numbers are a very good way to overcome the vagaries of evaluating phone leads.

Call tracking, like email tracking, has its own set of weaknesses. Calls don't automatically feed into the practice management software. Many calls are not leads. And sometimes, the name listed with the call number is not the caller's true name.

No Silver Bullet

Tracking is a major part of evaluating the ROI of your online marketing efforts, but it is impossible to track and evaluate everything. Tracking only evaluates the last touch of the practice, and not the many touches that may have occurred before a phone call or email lead.

Don't forget about the importance of branding and overall market visibility, when evaluating lead tracking and ROI.

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