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TRACKING MAGICK

THE 1-HOUR GUIDE TO
CLICK TRACKING

THE COMPLETE "CLICK TRACKING FOR BEGINNERS" GUIDE

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Tracking Magick
The 1-Hour Guide to Click Tracking

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Track It Or Die Tryin'

From the desk of Patrick Kelly
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John Wanamaker was the owner of a department store and the first retailer to ever run a full-page newspaper ad in 1879.

But before long he realized something, and uttered the now famous line ...

"Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; I just don't know which half."

And ever since then, smart marketers have been tracking their advertising in order to optimize their marketing, reduce costs, and make more money.

Before long, direct mail advertising was all the rage.

Advertisers would "split test" their marketing by sending out different offers, using a unique 800 number for each one so they could track the incoming calls and resulting sales and see which offer did the best.

Then advertisers did the same thing with radio and TV infomercials ...

... and today the Internet has made it easier and faster than ever to track, optimize and scale your direct response advertising campaigns.

And while a lot has changed in the world since John Wanamaker was the first retailer to place a full-page newspaper ad in 1879, one thing hasn't ...

The fact that tracking is critical to your success as a direct response marketer.

So whether you're selling your own stuff, you're an affiliate marketer, you're a coach or a consultant, a network marketer, or anything else—unless you have a "marketing department" to do it for you, this is just something you need to get good at.

In fact, let's get one thing straight right now:

If you're paying for traffic, unless you get ridiculously lucky, you have almost no chance of success if you don't track your traffic and optimize your marketing "funnel."

It may not sound terribly sexy on the surface, I'll give you that ...

But I've been marketing online for almost 20 years now, and I can tell you that tracking is truly one of the only "secrets" to making a ton of money online.

It's how your top competitors can afford to buy up advertising all over the place, while you sit there and scratch your head wondering how they can possibly afford it all.

Every successful direct response marketer tracks their stuff, and you need to do it too.

In fact, as a small online business owner or "solopreneur" it's even more important for you because you probably don't have a lot of money to waste, right?

The cool thing about tracking is that while it may not be terribly exciting or "fun" on the surface, the minimal time that you spend learning and setting it up now will pay you dividends every single day for the rest of your marketing career.

It's basically free money. And possibly a whole lot of it.

It's crazy really ...

Every day I watch newbie marketers spend their time messing around with this or that "hot" new tactic of the month just trying to get a few more opt-ins or whatever, when they don't even have proper tracking set up.

I guess it's just one of those things where you don't know what you don't know ...

And in this case they just don't realize that the average small online business owner or entrepreneur can easily increase their profits by 20-50% or more just by implementing some basic tracking and optimization strategies.

The other cool thing about tracking is that, unlike some of the other skills you might need to learn, anyone get can really good at it really quickly.

Let's face it—not everyone can be a great copywriter.

Sure you can learn, and practice, and practice some more, and you'll get better at it—but some people just aren't cut out to be great copywriters. And even if you do "have it in you" it will take many years to accomplish.

But anyone can relatively quickly and easily become an expert on tracking. At the end of the day it's all just a handful of relatively simple tactics, and math.

And even though you may not think of yourself as "a numbers person," it doesn't matter because a good tracking system like ClickMagick will handle it all for you.

I created AdMinder.com in 1996—one of the first click and conversion tracking systems for online direct response marketers.

I sold it within a few years, and since then I've built, bought and sold, or have been involved with at least nine different online businesses in a handful of niches.

Then it all came full-circle in 2014 when I dropped everything to launch ClickMagick.

Why did I decide to create yet another "click tracker" after all these years?

I did it because tracking is so darn important ...

... and I just didn't think the tracking systems people in our industry were using are that great. So I felt this is where I could provide the most value to our industry.

So yeah, I'm a numbers guy. I always have been, and you should be one too. Even if you "don't like math," I bet you do like making lots of money right?

Don't worry, it's easy. All you need is this little guide and a good tracking system.

You can get really fancy with this stuff, but you don't have to.

I've helped friends literally double their business in three to six months with just the basic tracking and optimization strategies you'll learn in this short guide.

And you'll be able to implement what you learn right away and literally start seeing results in a matter of days ...

...which if I'm correct, will get you even more excited about doing even more.

Look, I'm not a writer and I don't even enjoy writing. I put off writing this guide for almost two years because I just didn't want to do it.

But after personally interacting with at least 500-1,000 of our ClickMagick customers, and realizing that most people in our industry have no freakin' clue about tracking, I just had to write up something.

Like I said, I'm not a writer. To be perfectly honest, I hate writing.

I cheated in most of my high school English classes, and I dropped out of college after one year of non-stop partying.

So I can't promise this will be the most amazing piece of literature you've ever read.

But what I can promise you is this …

I've made millions of dollars online over the past twenty years, quietly making a small fortune under the radar, doing the stuff most "gurus" only talk about.

And aside from the basics like promoting stuff that people want to buy, and good old fashioned hard work, I can attribute most of my success to the fact that I became an expert at tracking, testing and optimizing.

So keep reading, and most importantly, take action on what you learn in this guide.

If you do, I promise you that thirty days from now you'll be making more money, and you'll be well on your way to dominating your competitors.

And whatever you do, please don't be fooled by the "simplicity" of this guide.

Sure, some of this tracking stuff can get a bit technical at times, but overall it's all very simple and straightforward.

You may even read through this guide and say to yourself, "That's it?!"

To which I'd say, "Yup, that's it."

If I go too deep you'll just get overwhelmed, and probably do nothing.

Instead, I'm going to talk about the 20% that'll generate 80% of your results, so you can get started right away and literally start to see results within a matter of days.

Really. My goal is to teach you everything you need to know in the next hour.

I may write another guide covering more advanced strategies, but for now this is it …

… and I promise that implementing even these simple strategies will give you a better return on your time than just about anything else you're doing in your business.

Just trust me for now, OK?

Great! Grab a pen and paper and let's get started.

No really, get that pen and paper because you're going to need to take a few notes.

I purposely wrote this like a book—without nice tidy sections, sub-headlines or bullet lists—because I don't want you to just scan through this guide.

You need to read every word, think about this stuff, and really understand the concepts. This isn't something you want to just quickly scan. It's way too important for that.

But don't worry, I promise I've tried to make this as easy for you as possible. This whole guide is only about 10,000 words, or about 30 printed pages.

You'll know more than 98% of your competitors within the next hour.

Ready? Let's do this…

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3 THINGS YOU MUST TRACK

There really is a lot you can, and eventually should be tracking in your business.

But the 80/20 rule is definitely in affect here, and the majority of your results will come from tracking and optimizing just a few key things.

When you get to the point where your online business is consistently generating serious profits, month in and month out, you may want to get really crazy with your tracking and testing as you try to incrementally grow your business bit by bit ...

But until then, here's all you really need to worry about:

To optimize your marketing, and your entire online business, you'll want to track all the money coming in and all the money going out—down to the penny.

And aside from any hard product costs and fixed expenses, most of the money you'll spend in your business will probably go towards advertising and buying traffic, so that's really what we're talking about here.

It's simple, and there are really only three parts to it. Here's all you need to do:

1. Track all the money you spend buying traffic.

2. Track all of the resulting sales and revenue.

3. Optimize, rinse and repeat.

So let's talk about how to do this in your business …

One of the most important metrics you'll need to pay attention to, starting right now and for the rest of your marketing career, is Return-On-Investment or ROI.

This is a great metric—especially as a "newbie" to tracking—because it takes just about everything into account and gives you just one thing to look at.

One of the biggest challenges people face with this tracking stuff, especially if they "aren't good with numbers," is overwhelm.

A common problem for many Internet marketers in general …

But in this case I'm talking specifically about "stats" overwhelm.

I mean, if you don't really like looking at numbers to begin with and you start out trying to monitor ten or twenty different metrics, KPIs and stats you're probably not going to get off to a great start, right?

But if you just focus on ROI and a few other key things we'll talk about you won't have this problem, so that's exactly what I recommend you do starting out.

ROI is just what it sounds like. It's the amount of money you make compared to the amount of money you spent to make it, expressed as a percentage.

So if your ROI, either overall in your business or for any specific ad or marketing campaign, is positive that means you're making money, and if it's negative that means you're losing money.

Since the goal is a positive ROI, and one that's ideally as high as possible, let's work backwards and try to figure out the best way to achieve that ...

To increase your ROI you need to either increase your revenues or reduce expenses.

And tracking is the key to both of these things.

Like John Wanamaker, after personally talking to and working with over 1,000 online marketers over the past twenty years, I can say there's a pretty good chance that you're wasting about half the money you spend buying traffic.

And proper tracking is the only way to identify and eliminate this waste.

But that's just the start, because proper tracking also allows you to easily test and optimize your marketing and increase your revenues as well.

Sometimes very quickly.

Let's just keep working backwards. How can you increase your revenues?

The easiest way is to increase your Sales Conversion Rate, which is simply the number of buyers divided by the number of visitors you get.

So if you average five new customers out of every 100 visitors, that'd be 0.05 or 5%.

Let's keep working backwards ...

What else happens before someone becomes a customer?

The exact specifics depend on your individual business, but they may have opted-in to your email list, signed up for a webinar or downloaded a whitepaper, submitted a request for a quote, or any number of other things.

For the sake of discussion, let's just call these desirable "Actions."

And then of course before that they probably clicked on an ad somewhere or responded to some other type of call to action, which is where it all begins.

So these are all the basic but super critical things you need to be paying attention to.

Let's go ahead and make a list of the things you need to track ...

1. All of your ads, promotions, or other sources of traffic.

2. Your "Action" and Sales Conversion Rates.

3. Your ROI for each individual source of traffic.

That's all you really need to worry about for now.

If you track and pay attention to just these three things, you'll be well on your way to seriously optimizing your online business.

And, believe it or not, if you're not tracking anything now you could literally and very realistically double your online revenues in the next three to six months doing it.

Now obviously not all of these things are going to apply to every business...

Maybe you're YouTube famous and don't have to pay for any of your traffic. Congrats!

Maybe you've found that for your business, running ads straight to your sales page works the best and you don't have any other types of "actions" you need to track.

That's great. If something doesn't apply in your business, just focus on what does.

Now that you have your list, let's start at the beginning and talk about each one ...

It all begins with the click, and you should strive to know where each and every click comes from, and how much each and every click costs you.

Whether it's an ad on Google or Facebook or some other network, an ad you're running on a blog in your niche, a "guest post" or other piece of content you've published somewhere, "solo ads" you're buying or anything else, you need to track it.

You can do this a few different ways depending on the tracking system you're using, but generally speaking you'll want to use a unique tracking link for all of your different ads and traffic sources.

This way you can easily track them all separately, which is the crucial first step.

With ClickMagick for example you can do this very easily.

It takes just a second to create a new tracking link for each new ad or promotion, or you can use one or more links with "Sub-IDs" which we'll talk about in a bit.

For now you can just think of Sub-IDs as unique identifiers that you can add to the end of your tracking links in order to track multiple things using one link ...

For example, you might create one tracking link for your Google ads, another tracking link for your Facebook ads, and another one for your YouTube ads, and then use Sub-IDs with each link to track the specific keywords or ads generating clicks and sales.

In this way, you could track all your Google, Facebook and YouTube ads with just three links that you can set up in a few minutes, rather than having to create a separate tracking link for each ad or keyword.

So regardless of what you're doing online or where your traffic is coming from, the first step is to start tracking all of your incoming clicks as best as you can.

The more accurately and precisely the better ...

Remember, you can't optimize what you don't track.

The next thing you'll want to track, if it applies to your business, are any desirable "actions" that users take as they progress through your marketing funnel.

This could include—but obviously isn't limited to—opting in to your email list, registering for a webinar, filling out a form to request more info or schedule a call, simply clicking on other "key" links on your site, or whatever else it may be.

Just think of the most important things that you want people to do as they move through your funnel, and make sure they're on your list of things to track.

For a lot of people this is simply going to be tracking their opt-ins, and that's fine.

And lastly there's your sales. You'll definitely need to track those.

But that's it.

That's all you need to start tracking and optimizing to literally double your online business faster than you'd think possible.

Before we move on though, there's one more thing I want to say ...

Look at that list you just made, will you?

In case I haven't made it perfectly clear yet, you need to understand that if you can't track every item on the list you just made, you need to fix that problem right now.

If your tracking system doesn't allow you to easily track the things you need to track to grow your business, get a new tracking system.

If your ecommerce platform or shopping cart makes it difficult or impossible to accurately track your sales, it's time to get a new one.

If you're promoting affiliate programs and they're so behind the times that they don't allow you to easily track your sales, you need to find something else to promote.

Seriously. If you take nothing else from this guide, please just know this: That little list you just made holds the keys to the easiest money you'll ever make.

But on the flipside, if you don't accurately track all the things on that list going forward, the odds of your reaching your goals—for both your business and yourself personally—are pretty close to zero.

So please, after going through the next one or two chapters, if you determine that you're not able to easily and accurately track everything on your list, go take care of that first.

Don't make the same mistake all the amateurs do by trying to "wing it" with excel spreadsheets and other nonsense, or worse yet, no real tracking at all.

The success of your online business depends on this stuff. Literally.

OK, with that out of the way let's talk about how to actually do it ...

3

CONVERSION TRACKING BASICS

Tracking your clicks is easy ...

Depending on your tracking system and what you're promoting, you'll either create some tracking links or just add some code to all your pages that allows your tracking system to track all of your visitors.

There's a little more to it if you want to track individual keywords generating sales from your PPC campaigns for example, but that's all just a matter of "do this, this and then this" and we have step-by-step tutorials showing you how to do that.

You'll remember we also talked about the importance of tracking your ROIs ...

But any decent tracking system will calculate that for you automatically once you set up your tracking, so you don't really need to worry about that now.

That leaves tracking your sales and other "actions" ...

... so let's talk about these a bit, since this involves a bit more work to set up.

In this chapter, I'm going to talk about tracking actions and sales of your own products or services, primarily by adding tracking "pixels" to your own webpages.

Then in the next chapter I'll talk about different ways to track affiliate sales, which is an entirely different ballgame altogether.

If you're an affiliate promoting other peoples' stuff, but you've created your own landing pages with opt-in forms or anything like that, then keep reading because at a minimum you'll definitely want to track your opt-ins using tracking pixels.

On the other hand, if you're an affiliate who is simply running ads and sending traffic directly to your affiliate links, you can skip this chapter and go on to the next.

The industry standard for tracking conversions is something call a tracking "pixel."

And this is what you'll normally use to track your sales and other actions, like opt-ins.

A pixel is just a bit of HTML or JavaScript code you get from your tracking platform and add to the "source" of the appropriate "thank you" page on your site.

This is just the page the user sees after completing the action that you want to track.

For example, if you want to track your opt-ins you'd just add an action tracking pixel to whatever page users are redirected to after they enter their email address.

Simple stuff, and it just takes a second. Just cut and paste the code and you're done.

If you're not sure how or where to add this code, check out the step-by-step examples we've put together for most of the popular page builders and content management systems, or ask your webmaster or whoever is in charge of your website.

Once you do this your tracking platform can begin to track your opt-ins or other actions, and show you helpful stats like the percentage of visitors that opt-in to your mailing list or complete some other action …

But even more importantly, you'll be ready to start testing and optimizing.

We'll get to this soon enough in Chapter 5, but for now let's just make sure you understand and get all the proper tracking in place first.

Because remember, you can't optimize what you're not tracking.

A good tracking system like ClickMagick allows you to track as many different actions as you want, so make sure you set up tracking for everything on your list.

If you're selling your own products or services, you'll need to track your sales too.

It's the same as tracking opt-ins really—just add tracking pixels where appropriate.

If you're just selling one product for one price, all you really have to do is add one sales tracking pixel to the page that people see after buying your product and you're done.

With ClickMagick this takes about two minutes.

If you sell various products or you have a more complex funnel with one-time offers, upsells and downsells or anything like that, you'll need to do a bit more.

In this case, there are two important things you want to keep in mind …

The first is that for accurate stats you need to properly track your exact order amounts for each and every sale, whether it's for your primary offer, an upsell or anything else.

Normally you do this by tweaking the tracking pixel code that you add to your webpage to include the correct order amount.

For example with ClickMagick you just change the "&amt=" part of the pixel and set it to the actual order amount before adding it to your page.

For example, if your primary product costs $97 you'd set "&amt=97.00" in the pixel.

Then if you have an upsell for say $67, in the tracking pixel used to track the upsell sales you'd just use "&amt=67.00".

Easy enough. But what if your prices vary?

If you sell lots of products with different prices, as in an ecommerce store for example, you'll have to rely on your ecommerce system or shopping cart to handle that.

Normally you do this by using what's called a "token" to represent the order amount.

For example, if your ecommerce platform uses the token "[amount]" to represent the order amount, and you were using ClickMagick, you'd just modify the tracking pixel to include "&amt=[amount]".

When you do this, what happens is that your shopping cart will automatically replace "[amount]" in the tracking pixel with the actual order amount when each sale occurs, and this allows your tracking system to log the exact order amount for each sale.

Most good ecommerce platforms and shopping carts support the use of tokens like this, so just check the docs for the platform you use for the correct token to use in your sales tracking pixels to represent the order amount.

The other thing to keep in mind is that you want to make sure you're tracking all of your sales, including all one-time-offers, upsells and downsells, and things like that.

I know it sounds obvious, but forgetting to add a tracking pixel somewhere is a very common newbie mistake, and it renders your stats just about meaningless...

So if you have a more complex funnel, just make sure that you go through everything carefully and add the appropriate sales tracking pixels to each one of your "thank you" pages for your different offers, with the correct amounts for each.

With ClickMagick you only have one global sales tracking pixel, so it's pretty easy.

You just copy and paste the sales tracking pixel into your various Thank You pages, and tweak the order amount and reference value as needed.

And that's really all there is to setting up conversion tracking.

Congrats. Now the fun begins!

If you also promote 3rd-party products and services as an affiliate you'll want to read the next chapter which is all about tracking affiliate sales …

Otherwise just skip it and I'll see you in Chapter 5.

4

TRACKING AFFILIATE SALES

This chapter is all about tracking affiliate sales, so if you don't promote other peoples' products or services as an affiliate, just go ahead and skip to the next chapter.

OK, so here's the deal affiliates ...

Unless you're an online celebrity or "guru" with a loyal following, you literally have no chance at making any real money unless you become an expert at tracking.

I've made millions as an affiliate over the years, and becoming an expert at tracking was probably responsible for at least 80% of my success.

I know hundreds of successful direct response affiliates, and every single one of them will tell you the same thing.

It's simple really, and it all boils down to this ...

Without proper tracking, you just won't be able to spend enough money on traffic to effectively compete in the marketplace, and so you'll never really get anywhere.

Just trust me on this, OK?

And whatever you do, please don't get lazy and give up just because some of this affiliate tracking stuff may get a bit technical in a minute.

Instead, see this as the huge opportunity that it really is.

Because the reality is that a lot of affiliates are lazy, and they won't make the effort to learn and implement this "tracking stuff"—and that's exactly how YOU can gain a huge competitive advantage.

So do yourself a huge favor and commit, right now, to really learning this stuff.

OK, now that you're committed to becoming an affiliate tracking expert so you can dominate your niche, let's talk about the three ways to track your affiliate sales.

The first method is using our good friend, the tracking "pixel."

Many of the top affiliate networks and some private affiliate programs allow you to use tracking pixels to track your affiliate sales. Ask yours and find out.

If this is the case with what you're promoting, consider yourself lucky.

Tracking affiliate sales with tracking pixels is by far the easiest and most pain-free method, so just go back and read the previous chapter that you may have skipped to learn about tracking sales with conversion tracking pixels.

In a nutshell, you'll just grab your sales tracking pixel(s) from your tracking platform and paste them into your affiliate back-office wherever necessary.

If your affiliate network supports the use of tracking pixels you'll normally see a spot for each offer you're promoting where you can add in your tracking pixel.

Many times, however, you won't be able to use tracking pixels ...

The next most popular method, supported by all of the major CPA networks and some private affiliate programs, is something called Postback URLs.

This method is also sometimes referred to as Server-To-Server tracking.

Technically speaking this is the most accurate way to track your affiliate sales. With Postback URLs your stats should always be 100% accurate.

On the other hand, while tracking pixels are an industry standard method of tracking and work fine 99.5% of the time, there's always the chance that a pixel won't "fire" due to a slow loading web page, or for some other technical reason.

It's just that there's a lot more setup involved in using Postback URLs so that's why I recommend that new affiliates start out using tracking pixels if at all possible.

But if you're not scared of getting a little "technical" and doing a bit more work to get things set up, Postback URLs are definitely the way to go.

Here's how it works ...

A Postback URL is a special URL that you get from your tracking platform, which you then enter into your affiliate back-office.

This allows the affiliate network you're promoting to "talk" to your tracking system, so that your affiliate sales show up in your tracking system automatically.

So on the surface it's pretty simple, and similar to using tracking pixels ...

You just cut and paste your Postback URL provided by your tracking platform into the appropriate spot in your affiliate back-office.

We have some step-by-step examples of this with some of the popular CPA networks, or you can just ask your affiliate manager for help if you need to.

But there's another step, and this is where some people get confused ...

In order for the affiliate system to "post back" info about your sales to your tracking platform, the two systems need a way to identify individual clicks and sales.

And the way this is done is with something called a "Sub-ID."

Think of a Sub-ID as a unique identifier that can be used to track individual "things."

Sub-IDs can be used to track individual clicks, visitors, actions or sales, individual keywords, or just about anything else.

In this case Sub-IDs are used to help track your affiliate sales back to the tracking link or campaign, and ultimately back to the individual click, that led to the sale.

This is where it can get a bit technical, and some people get scared off.

But it's not that bad, and like I said before ...

If you make it a point to get good at this, you'll have a huge advantage over much of your "competition" who are all too lazy to track their affiliate sales properly.

Don't worry, it's like just about everything else. Once you do it a few times it's easy.

OK, so here's how it generally works ...

What you'll need to do is pass a unique Sub-ID with each click to your affiliate link.

With ClickMagick for example you just use the token "[clickid]" wherever it needs to be in your affiliate link, and ClickMagick will replace it with a unique Sub-ID for every click.

The affiliate network or affiliate program you're promoting will then record that Sub-ID with the click in their system ...

... and then if that click later leads to a sale they'll post information about the sale back to your Postback URL—including the unique Sub-ID that generated the sale.

This allows your tracking platform to properly attribute the sale to the tracking link, campaign and individual click that actually generated the sale.

The other thing you'll want to do is have your affiliate network post back the actual sale amount with each sale, by using another special token in your Postback URL, so your revenue stats will be as accurate as possible in your tracking system.

This token is just a placeholder that you can use in your Postback URL which your affiliate network will replace with the actual value at the time of the sale.

For example, here's what a ClickMagick Postback URL looks like:

`http://www.clkmg.com/api/s/post/?uid=12345&amt=&s1=`

To have your affiliate network properly post back the unique Sub-ID and the sale amount to your ClickMagick account, you'd start by asking your affiliate manager which two tokens to use.

They'll normally tell you to use something like "`[payout]`" for your commission amount and "`[sid]`" or "`[s1]`" for the Sub-ID that you passed to your affiliate link.

Then all you do is plug those two tokens into the Postback URL from your tracking system before you submit the Postback URL to your affiliate back-office.

So using the example above, your ClickMagick Postback URL would look like this:

`http://www.clkmg.com/api/s/post/?uid=12345&amt=[payout]&s1=[sid]`

You'd just submit this into your affiliate back-office, and from that point on your sale details would be posted back to your ClickMagick account, and ClickMagick would attribute the sale and revenue to the link and click that generated the sale.

Now, if that all sounds "too technical" for you, hear me out ...

Both your tracking platform and your affiliate network should have documentation or tutorials covering the exact specifics on how to use Postback URLs.

Here at ClickMagick we have video tutorials showing you not only how to set this up in ClickMagick, but we also have tutorials on how to set this up on the other side with most of the major affiliate networks too.

Anyone, and I mean absolutely anyone, can learn how to do this in an afternoon.

Heck, even if it took you an entire 8-hour day to learn how to do this, it'd be time well spent considering that getting this right is one of the most important things you'll ever do in your affiliate marketing career.

So, if you're good with "this stuff" it may only take you an hour to get the hang of it …

Or it might take you an entire day if this isn't exactly your cup of tea.

Whatever the case, just do it. Because your success depends on it.

Finally, keep in mind that not all tracking systems support the use of Postback URLs.

If yours doesn't, you'll want to switch to a more feature-rich tracking system if you need the ability to use Postback URLs or Server-To-Server tracking.

The third and final way to track affiliate sales is just by using Sub-IDs alone...

You pass a unique Sub-ID to your affiliate links the same way you would when using Postback URLs like we just talked about, and then you'll be able to see your Sub-IDs in your affiliate stats along with all of your clicks and sales.

Then from time to time you could manually try to match up those Sub-IDs with your tracking system to figure out which links or campaigns generated those sales.

This is a real pain in the butt, and I don't recommend you even try to go this route.

ClickMagick allows you to import conversion reports from your affiliate network which makes it a little easier, but it's still a manual process and it's really not something you want to hassle with unless it's absolutely necessary.

If the affiliate network or affiliate programs you're promoting don't support Tracking Pixels or Postback URLs, I would honestly ditch them and promote something else.

Affiliate marketing is hard enough, and when you're first starting out your tracking needs to be as accurate and hands-free as possible so you can focus on other things.

Like optimizing your marketing and making more money, which we'll talk about next.

5

TESTING &
OPTIMIZATION

I like to look at testing and optimization as a game. Tracking is the way you keep score, and the prize for playing well is lots more cash in your pocket.

So now that you're ready to play, let's talk about how to win the game.

There are two things you'll want to focus on:

Optimizing your traffic, and optimizing your marketing funnel.

Let's talk about optimizing your traffic first since it's pretty darn simple ...

If you're tracking things properly, your tracking system should be able to tell you the ROI of just about every source of traffic you have. The paid stuff at least.

From there it's really just a matter of cutting the losers and running with the winners.

I mean, unless you're purposely losing money as part of a customer acquisition strategy, some "branding" campaign, or a marketing test, it's pretty cut and dry:

If a source of traffic doesn't have a positive ROI, you should kill it.

When it comes to pay-per-click ads on Google or Bing, any individual keyword that isn't making you money should be paused or deleted.

Same thing with all of your individual interests and audiences on Facebook.

If you're running banners all over the web on lots of different sites, any individual placement with a negative ROI should be shut down.

Advertising on a blog but it's not generating enough sales to cover the ad? Kill it.

If you're buying solo ads from twenty different sellers you're certainly losing money on some of them, so you need to identify which ones and stop buying from them.

And even if you're not spending money on something, it still has a cost and you still need to track it so you know if it's actually worth doing or not ...

So if you're spending time posting in forums, commenting on blogs, writing "guest posts," or anything else like that as a way to get traffic, make sure you're tracking the results so you know which ones to focus on and which ones are a waste of time.

But in a nutshell, it really is that simple.

About the only thing there is to even think about here is how much money you're willing to lose on any individual traffic source before you shut it down ...

Technically speaking, there is a correct answer here—if you can stomach it.

The "correct" time to shut off a traffic source is when the negative ROI is considered to be statistically valid (and there's nothing you can do to increase it).

And while ClickMagick does all this complicated math for you and tells you when your conversion rates are statistically valid, so you know it's safe to actually make marketing decisions based on the stats you're looking at ...

Most other tracking systems don't, so if you're not using ClickMagick you'll just have to use a bit of common sense and good judgement.

For example, you might have one new traffic source with an ROI of 30% after 200 clicks, and another traffic source with an ROI of -30% after 200 clicks ...

The first seems to be "winning" but neither result is statistically significant, and at this point you just don't have enough data to act on.

The traffic source that currently has a -30% ROI after 200 clicks could easily end up with a 50% ROI after 1,000 clicks and be a great long-term source of traffic for you.

There's lots of complicated math involved, but if you're looking at an individual source of traffic I would generally recommend that you don't consider things like conversion rates and ROI to be even remotely accurate until you have at least 500 clicks or so.

Now sometimes it's clear that a traffic source is just never going to work for you, but sometimes you can take a loser and turn it into a winner with a bit of testing.

Testing is really something you should be doing all the time in your business, and it's one of the only real "secrets" to success, so let's talk about testing.

Specifically let's talk about "split testing" which is also referred to as A/B testing, or multivariate testing.

Multivariate testing involves testing multiple changes at once. This is an advanced method of testing, and you don't even want to think about this now.

But regular split testing is very simple, and it can literally double your business.

This is where you simply show two or more different variations of something to different groups of visitors to see which one performs better.

To keep things simple I suggest you stick with basic A/B testing for a while. This is where you literally just test "Page A" against "Page B" and see which one wins.

Page A is your currently best-performing page, also known as your "control," and Page B is simply the new variation you've created in an attempt to beat your control.

So in terms of optimizing your traffic you'll want to focus on split testing things like your ads, your banners, and your marketing message ...

But you can split test just about anything—headlines, copy, offers, images, colors, the location of elements on a page, button text, and just about anything else.

That's the cool thing about it ...

You can dramatically increase your business just by testing and optimizing a few key things, but at the same time there are an almost endless number of things you can continue to test and tweak to continually increase your profits over time.

As long as you have the right tools it's easy. Some people even find it "addicting."

I really hope you get into it, because I can confidently say it's one of the most profitable things you can do even without knowing a single thing about your business.

Now there are a handful of great standalone apps for split testing, but most people find it's a real pain to use multiple tools just to do this stuff.

I wholeheartedly agree, which is why I made sure that ClickMagick has a full-featured and fully-automated split testing system built right in to it.

With ClickMagick it's super easy to test stuff ...

For example, if you wanted to test different pay-per-click ads, all you have to do is use a different tracking link for each ad (or one tracking link with a unique Sub-ID for each ad) and ClickMagick will show you detailed stats for each ad individually.

If you want to test different elements on your own webpages, that's super easy too.

First you just create whatever you want to test. For example, if you want to test a new opt-in page, you'd just make a copy of your existing opt-in page—your control—and then change the headline, call to action, or whatever else you want to test.

Then in ClickMagick you'd simply set up a tracking link for your control page, click a button to start a split test, and then enter the URL of your new test page.

ClickMagick will then split up your incoming traffic accordingly, ensuring that repeat visitors always see the same variation so your stats are as accurate as possible ...

... and then let you know automatically when you have a statistically valid "winner."

If your test page wins you'll want to make this the new control in your marketing, then come up with a new variation for another test and do it all again.

It really is that simple with ClickMagick. Even total newbies can do this stuff.

Now let's talk a bit about optimizing your marketing funnel ...

There are entire books and courses on optimizing your marketing and your funnels, so obviously, any type of in-depth training is beyond the scope of this simple guide.

I'm just going to talk about testing and optimizing the few key items on that short list you made earlier—which is fortunately all you need to focus on for now anyway.

We've just talked about optimizing your traffic, so now let's talk about optimizing your funnel in terms of sales and any other "actions" that are on that list of yours.

It's really all just a matter of methodical split testing.

One at a time you just go down your list, pick an item you want to test and optimize, work on it for a while, then move on to the next item on the list.

Testing is never "done," but you can quickly reach a point of diminishing returns so at least initially you don't want to spend too much time on any one thing.

So work on testing and optimizing your opt-in page for a bit, but then move on.

You can always come back and try to optimize your opt-in page some more later after you've already grabbed the "low hanging fruit" for each item on your list.

After your opt-in page, work on testing and optimizing any other desirable actions that you're tracking like webinar registrations, inbound calls, or anything else like that.

Optimizing these things should increase your overall sales, but if it's applicable in your business you should of course also split test and optimize your actual sales pages, order forms, your checkout process, and anything else directly related to generating sales.

I can't tell you exactly what you should test, or what to focus on specifically for the best ROI on your time, because it really does depend on your business.

But here's a short list to get you started. These are all things that apply to just about any page you want to improve, and can lead to huge conversion increases...

1. The headline.

This is what people see first, and it can literally determine if someone spends more than three seconds on your page, so split testing your headlines can seriously increase your conversions—and profits.

Focus on simplicity and explain what your business does and how it can help the visitor in as few words as possible. Using specific numbers or figures and invoking curiosity are two things that can almost always improve a landing page headline.

Above all else, here's the secret to a great headline:

It needs to speak to the visitor and grab their attention. Fast. A good headline will cause just about anyone in your target audience to sit up straight and say to themselves:

"Hey, this is exactly what I want. They're talking to *me*. I should keep reading!"

2. The images.

Aside from the headline, the next thing most people see when they quickly scan a webpage are the images "above the fold" (this means what the user can see on their screen right away, without having to scroll down the page).

While you need to test everything for yourself, images of people have been "proven" time and time again to increase conversions in all sorts of niches.

Especially people who seem to be looking at something important on the page, like a call to action—because the website visitor almost automatically follows their gaze.

If testing images of people doesn't work great for you, test product images instead.

There will probably be a very real difference between no product images, images of real people using your product, and images of just the product itself, but there's only one way to find out and profit from the one that'll work best for you.

3. The copy.

Hopefully it goes without saying that improving your sales copy can lead to significant conversion increases. You just have to do it systematically and split test properly, rather than just going with whatever you think sounds the best.

Writing good copy is obviously well beyond the scope of this little guide. I'd highly recommend you work with a good direct response copywriter if you can afford it.

Otherwise, my best advice is to focus on uncovering the specific problems your target market wants to solve, and then positioning your product as the solution.

This usually means explaining your product or service in terms of benefits, rather than just features. So if you're like most "self-taught" copywriters who tend to focus on just features, this is definitely a good place to start tweaking and testing.

Definitely test your sub-heads, testimonials, and all the other important elements too.

4. Button copy and other "call to action" text.

You may have seen someone claim to have increased their conversions 132% simply by changing the color of a button.

You know what they say about if something sounds too good to be true, and in a case like this most likely they didn't do the test properly, or they're flat out lying.

Tweaking button colors can certainly make a difference (Supposedly Facebook tested over 50 shades of blue!), but it's rarely anything to write home about unless the color you're starting with is ridiculous e.g. a light yellow button on a white page.

The main thing with button color is to just make sure it stands out well on the page.

What can make an even bigger and often very meaningful difference though is your button copy, and any other "call to action" text you might have on your page.

Buy Now? Checkout? Purchase? Add To Cart? One will work better for you.

All I can say is test your button copy as much as you test your headlines.

Tell people what to do and why they should do it. Every word counts in a button.

If you can use the word "free" you're almost guaranteed an increase in clicks. Also test text-only calls-to-action against calls-to-action that have both text *and* images or icons.

5. Social proof.

Social proof can make a huge difference with some businesses and some products, so it makes sense to spend some time split testing this too.

Test a page with a testimonial against a page without one. Test just one or a few testimonials versus a whole bunch of them. Test "better" more specific testimonials against usually weaker more general testimonials.

Try to acquire and test testimonials that address common questions or concerns that your prospects may have. A testimonial from an existing customer that reassures the prospect about something they're concerned with can really boost conversions.

You can also test how they're presented, and where they appear on the page.

6. Reassurance Copy

Sometimes people have concerns, and it's your job to address them while you still can. The way to do this is by using what's generally called "reassurance copy."

This includes things like strong guarantees that remove risk for the customer, letting people know you won't spam them or sell their email when they opt-in, showing people that your checkout process is safe and secure, and things like this.

This type of thing is more important with some businesses than others, and no one on the planet can tell you what will help your specific business, so you just have to test.

7. Video

Some people respond especially well to video, especially in certain niches, so you'll definitely want to do some testing with videos.

Test a page with a video versus the same page with no video. Test a short "explainer" video versus a longer demo video if appropriate. Test an animated video versus an "over the shoulder" screen capture video if it makes sense for your product.

Test videos that start playing automatically versus videos the user has to click on to watch. Test different types of voices for your videos, especially male versus female.

Testing videos is usually more work and can be a pain in the butt which is why I've added it last, but it can have dramatic results and it could be worth testing once you've already tested all the "easy" stuff.

Anyway, I think you'll agree that's more than enough to keep you busy for awhile ...

And "just" optimizing these basic things can have a serious impact on your bottom line, because there's low hanging fruit everywhere and it all adds up quickly.

For example, say you work on optimizing your traffic and increase your ROI 30% there.

Then you split test a bunch of opt-in pages and end up with another 30% boost there.

Next you work on your actual sales copy and see another 30% increase ...

And then you get another 10% bump optimizing your order form and checkout process.

Individually these are actually all very conservative numbers. Most people are able to see even larger increases if they have never done any testing or optimization before.

But even with these conservative numbers you've just doubled your business. It's actually more than that because the conversion bumps compound one another.

It's not going to happen overnight, but I promise you that it's entirely possible.

In fact it's quite realistic if you're willing to put in a bit of effort and do the work.

Compared to most of what it takes to grow a successful business this is probably some of the easiest, most profitable, and most fun work you'll ever do—so I encourage you to jump in with both feet and strive to become a master of the optimization game.

I'll leave you with this one final thought about testing ...

Make sure that you actually do it, and *never* guess about anything important.

No matter how long you've been marketing, how "smart" you think you are, or how well you think you know your customers or your business, you WILL often be wrong.

And don't ever make changes based on what some other marketer says either. Just because a blue button works for them doesn't mean it'll work for you.

It's great to see what other marketers are doing and what they're testing in order to get ideas for your own testing, but never, ever assume you'll get the same results as anyone else and NEVER make any meaningful changes to anything without testing.

If you do, you won't make as much money as you could be making. End of story.

6

BOTS &
CLICK FRAUD

According to [Incapsula.com's 2016 Bot Traffic Report](#), 51.8% of all web traffic is fake.

And if that's the case, what do you think this could mean for the accuracy of your tracking, your stats, your split tests, and ultimately your profits?

Just let that sink in for a minute …

Now obviously, this is just an average and not every source of traffic to your site or your tracking links is going to be 51.8% fake, but it's almost always more than you'd think.

Honestly, for "small" sites like ClickMagick the percentage of bot traffic is usually even higher because bots don't generally favor big and popular sites the way people do.

That means small sites get most of the same bot traffic that big sites get. They just get less real human visitors, so the overall percentage of bot traffic is even higher.

I always wondered why people in our industry don't make a bigger deal about this ...

And then after launching ClickMagick and talking to many of our customers it became immediately obvious that most people just have no clue how pervasive bots are.

For example, did you know that any time you share a link on Facebook or Skype it will be immediately "clicked" by several bots?

In this case they're Facebook and Microsoft bots that are just checking to make sure you're not sharing links to banned content and that type of thing...

... but this is just one simple example, and the point is that there are literally millions of bots "behind the scenes" doing all sorts of things you can't even imagine.

The whole bot problem is even worse than it sounds on the surface.

Because not only do bots artificially inflate your click counts, but they can also generate fake opt-ins, and if you're really unlucky, even fake sales believe it or not.

Bots wreak havic when it comes to tracking.

Off the top of my head I'd say that around 15% of the support tickets we get at ClickMagick are due to confusion caused by bots.

For example, just the other day we received a support ticket from someone who swore ClickMagick was "broken" because one of their new tracking links showed 12 flagged clicks but they hadn't even started promoting the link yet.

Turns out they had given the link to a handful of different people on Skype and FB.

But the idea that bots had generated the "clicks" was so foreign to them that they still had a hard time believing it even after we explained it, and even proved it to them.

So what exactly are bots anyway, and how can you fight back? Let's talk about this ...

A bot is any type of automated system or software that accesses your links.

They can be both innocent like a search engine spider or a link monitoring system, or they can be malicious like a content scraper or a script used to generate fake clicks—but either way they seriously screw up your stats.

The thing is that most tracking systems can't identify these bot "clicks," so they treat them just like a real click from a real person, and that's a real problem.

Really think about what this means for the accuracy of your split tests for example.

You could be leaving a lot of money on the table due to skewed stats caused by bots, and all the bad decisions you've possibly made based on this bad data.

Because bots do some crazy things—for example requesting the same page 50 or 100 times in a minute or two—and this type of thing can literally render your split test results almost completely meaningless.

Even the "best" and most popular tracking and analytics systems like Google Analytics do a really poor job dealing with this problem.

Google Analytics has a setting you can turn on to filter clicks from "known bots and spiders," but the source of their data is the *IAB/ABC International Spiders & Bots List*, and let's just say this list covers only a small percentage of what's really out there.

And yeah, if you're running pay-per-click ads on Google, Bing or Facebook I can assure you that you're paying for fake clicks.

This is actually one of the reasons I created ClickMagick.

Obviously I can't promise anything specific but, armed with the data that ClickMagick provides, our users are constantly getting refunds from ad networks for bad clicks.

See, at the very core of ClickMagick is our click auditing and "traffic cleaning" technology that carefully analyzes each and every click that flows through the system.

A few other trackers claim to filter out "known bots," but what good does that do if their system only knows about 5 or 10% of the bots out there?

With other systems bot filtering is just an add-on. An afterthought.

But ClickMagick was built from the ground up to do a better job of identifying bots and other bad traffic than anyone else, and that's exactly what it does.

ClickMagick has over a dozen different monitoring systems that constantly monitor and analyze not only every detail of every click, but actual click and session "behavior," conversions, and lots more we just can't talk about publicly.

This allows our system to do something that most others can't, and that's to identify all of the bots that don't properly identify themselves like good bots do.

See, bad bots try to fly under the radar by disguising themselves as legitimate web browsers instead. And that's why most other trackers can only identify a small portion of bot clicks—because they only know about the good bots that identify themselves.

But once ClickMagick identifies a potential new bot, it's tracked and monitored for a period of time to determine with 99.99% accuracy whether it really is a bot or not ...

... and then if it is, ClickMagick can begin to flag or block this new source of bad clicks, and all of our users' traffic gets just a little bit cleaner, and their stats get even more accurate.

Between our automated monitoring systems, lots of human oversight on our end, and input from our users, ClickMagick's click auditing system actually gets smarter and more accurate each and every day.

There's nothing else like our click auditing system, and I'm quite proud of it.

You might think this sounds like overkill or it's unnecessary, but really ...

... what's the point of tracking anything if your stats aren't accurate?

This is such a no-brainer that I'll actually make you a promise right now:

If you want to give ClickMagick a try, I guarantee it'll pay for itself just in the fake clicks and click fraud that it detects for you automatically.

If you don't find that to be true just let me know and I'll personally send you back twice the amount of money you paid for your ClickMagick account.

It hasn't happened yet but that's how confident I am in ClickMagick's ability to clean your traffic and provide you with the most accurate stats possible.

If you don't use ClickMagick, I really don't have many other recommendations...

Simply because there really isn't much else I can recommend that you do.

If your tracker filters "known bots and spiders" that's a start and better than nothing.

Other than that, about the only thing you can do is manually comb through your raw click logs and try to identify suspicious clicks and IP addresses, and then manually investigate each and every one to look for patterns and things like that ...

And that was painful just to think about and write.

Either way, at least now you're aware of the problem ...

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Patrick Kelly is a wildly successful online marketer, generating over $20 million in revenue over the past two decades. During that time, he has created numerous tools to help maximize the effectiveness of his marketing efforts.

Patrick also created AdMinder.com in 1996—one of the web's first click trackers for online direct response marketers. He sold that business within a few years.

Since then, he has built, bought and sold, or has been involved with at least nine different online businesses in a handful of niches.

This all came full-circle in 2014 when Patrick dropped everything to launch ClickMagick. Patrick has poured 20 years of experience into the ultimate tracking tool for online marketers.

Patrick didn't launch ClickMagick to make a lot of money—he launched it to give today's online marketers the edge they need to succeed by providing both the necessary tools to track their businesses, and also the knowledge and education on how to use those tools effectively.

Patrick eats, sleeps, and breathes ClickMagick —and he's in it for the long haul.

You can reach Patrick at patrick@clickmagick.com.

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