



More Calls. More Sales. More Profits.

The Impact of Digital Media on Lead Quality:

Guide to Using Toll-free Vanity Numbers as Response
Tools in Advertising to Get Higher Quality Leads

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| The Channels of Lead Generation Are Expanding – Are They Also Weakening? | 2 |
| Phone Leads vs. Web Leads – Which are More Valuable? | 3 |
| Phone Numbers for Lead Generation – How to Drive Higher Quality Leads | 4 |
| Tracking Leads Back to the Source to Prove Out Marketing Strategies | 7 |
| Conclusion | 9 |
| About 800 response..... | 10 |

US consumers prefer to resolve their customer service issues using the telephone (90%), face to face (75%), company website or email (67%), online chat (47%), text message (22%), social networking site (22%)

- Source: American Express 2011 Global Customer Service Barometer

The Channels of Lead Generation Are Expanding – Are They Also Weakening?

Most businesses agree that building relationships is a key component to a successful sales organization. Yet, in this ever-growing digital age, internet-driven communications are becoming more prevalent. And while an online presence is certainly an important component of the media mix, the opportunity cost of providing consumers with only an online response mechanism is too high to justify a strategy that omits immediate, live dialogue.

After all, it is well-known that interactions within the online environment are inherently impersonal and provide people with many opportunities to shop the competition, remain anonymous, and non-committal, where as a live conversation immediately starts to build trust and relationships. These less engaged communication paths include click-to-chat, web contact forms, emails, and even texting.

Regardless of the product, service, or industry, Sales Managers share one common opinion, that a live conversation is always preferred as it is a stronger, more direct path to a sale. With these live leads offering better quality, higher close rates and shorter sales cycles, it's no surprise that given a choice, a sales professional will prefer the lead calling in on the phone rather than the lead from an email form.

Despite the influence that digital and social media have on our communication patterns, studies show consumers still prefer to use the phone to speak with the companies that hold their money, manage their credit, provide their cable or phone service, and many other companies who provide the services and products that consumers use and research every day.



This consumer behavior emphasizes how digital communication paths should not overshadow or eliminate the option to have a live, immediate and personal conversation. It only makes sense then that businesses should continue to include the primary channel – a phone number – that allows for a live interaction amidst the less engaging digital options.

This white paper details the differences between phone and digital channels for lead generation, in the context of advertising and lead quality and value – and ultimately how businesses can drive more valuable, live sales conversations with a balanced approach of contact channels.

Phone Leads vs. Web Leads – Which are More Valuable?

Marketers face a litany of tools to improve business performance, generate more leads, and grow their business. Often though, they are not given good direction on how to incorporate all of those tools into their multi-channel strategy so that they work together to deliver optimal leads to their sales force.

Connecting with customers and building relationships is increasingly important in order for businesses to compete and survive in today's crowded and competitive marketplace. Connections can be made online through Twitter, Facebook, live chat and other social outlets, but live phone conversations are often more productive and a better way to build relationships with customers. And so, encouraging customers to contact a business by phone, to have a live conversation, still plays an extremely important role in advertising strategies.

A recent study conducted by American Express Co. finds that 90% of respondents still want their inquiries handled by live representatives over the telephone. And, a BIA/Kelsey & Constat Local Commerce Monitor Wave study found that 65% of businesses rate phone calls as their highest quality lead source.

“We use 1-800-NEW-FORD in our radio and TV ads because it is easy for people to remember. Phone calls are more valuable than online web leads. Having an inbound phone call eliminates a few steps and shortens the sales process.”

- Internet Marketing Manager,
Auto Dealer

Consumers have a 57.6% Average Higher Recall Rate of Vanity 800 Numbers over URLs: Respondents find it easier to recall a vanity 800 number over a URL after listening to ads featuring both response tools.

- Source – InfoSurv 2011

Although it is undeniable that a company's website is becoming increasingly important as a resource for their customers, it is still not always the preferred method for the sales force, or the most easily remembered method of contact for the customers.

Most recently, social media is playing a large role in the communication channels between companies and their customers. As with a website, this is not always the best way for customers to interact with a company. Tracking a company's promotions and special events can be done effectively on these social media sites but they are not as user-friendly, or secure, when it comes to resolving a customer issue via a live conversation.

Consumer preferences of having live interactions with companies demonstrate that it is prudent for businesses to include a phone number in their advertising campaigns. Doing so ensures customer satisfaction, higher customer recall, as well as improved lead generation and quality.

Phone Numbers for Lead Generation – How to Drive Higher Quality Leads

The phone is the original direct response method and one that is still very much alive today. That said, there are many different types of phone numbers now available; local phone numbers, toll-free phone numbers, and vanity 800 toll-free numbers. However, when putting together an advertising strategy, it is important to understand that not all of these phone number types will perform well in all types of advertising.



In Visual Media (print ads, outdoor ads), Consumers have a 78% Average Higher Recall Rate of Vanity 800 Numbers over URLs.

- Source – InfoSurv 2011

In Broadcast Media (radio, TV), Consumers have a 50.8% Average Higher Recall Rate of Vanity 800 Numbers over URLs.

- Source – InfoSurv 2011

The breakdown of pros and cons of each phone number type follows:

Vanity 800 Toll-free Numbers: A vanity 800 number is the strongest tool in terms of being remembered by customers, thereby generating more leads. An independent research survey including over one thousand consumers tested recall of vanity 800 numbers, versus numeric toll-free numbers, and versus URLs in advertising.

The study data shows that consumers have a 75.4 percent average higher recall for a vanity number over a numeric phone number. Vanity 800 numbers, like numeric toll-free numbers, provide businesses with critical call data via call tracking systems, but vanity 800 numbers are better at building strong credibility and brand image for a business.

Think of the companies you see that regularly use a vanity 800 number, 1-800-GOT-JUNK[®], 1-800-FLOWERS[®], 1-800-CONTACTS[®]. These successful businesses have built impressive reputations all around their vanity 800 numbers.

Numeric Toll-free Numbers: It is, however, common to see businesses advertise a numeric toll-free phone number. This may be because they could not obtain a vanity toll-free number. Either way, a ten-digit numeric toll-free number can be effective at tracking leads, but it is not as easily remembered by customers, nor as effective as a vanity 800 number at generating leads.

Local Phone Numbers: For businesses that do not spend a lot of money on advertising – typically smaller businesses – using a local phone number on marketing materials can be effective. In rural areas, where competition is not as intense, a business using a local phone number may resonate with their local customers. For larger businesses, or those in more competitive markets, it is not always the best response tool. In fact, the research shows that when presented with two options, a ten-digit local phone number or a vanity 800 toll-free phone number, 57% of the consumers stated that they would prefer to dial the vanity 800 number over the local phone number, citing reasons such as “because the vanity number is easier to remember” and “is more professional looking.”

“We saw a significant increase in calls once we started advertising 1-800-NEXT-CAR – at least a 30% increase, maybe more. Our sales teams now close approximately 1 in 4, or 25%, of our phone prospects, compared to web leads, which close just 12% of the time.”

- Auto Dealer

When to Use Which Type of Phone Number:

Another consideration when choosing which type of phone number to use in advertising strategies, is what type of media is being used in the campaign; radio, television, outdoor, print, or digital.

For broadcast media, like radio advertising, and for outdoor media like highway billboards, both of which are fleeting and “in the moment,” it is important to use a phone number that will be easy to remember at a later date, and which does not need to be written down. This is where a vanity 800 number will work best.

However, in print media such as magazine ads, or in digital media like online banner ads, using a numeric toll-free number is more acceptable and effective since the reader has the ability to tear out, print out, or write down the phone number they need.

How to Drive More Valuable Leads

The world of advertising continues to move online as digital options become more cost-effective, and human nature drives people to the web. However, marketing experts agree that advertisers should not completely abandon the use of traditional forms of advertising, like radio, television, outdoor and even newspapers, and they should always encourage their customers to call their business to have live conversations. As noted above, direct calls and conversations with customers are more valuable to a business as they are higher quality leads.

It is proven that using a vanity 800 phone number (i.e. 800-NEW-CARS) in advertising campaigns, including radio, television, outdoor, and print media, will get a business 25-50%



“Since activating the vanity phone numbers, our client is able for the first time to benchmark advertising campaign performance, access tangible data associated with their campaigns, and evaluate media performance.”

- Vice President, Advertising Agency

higher response rates to their advertising campaigns, and also deliver more valuable leads than if a business drives customers to contact them through their website.

Numeric toll-free numbers, like vanity 800 numbers, provide businesses with critical call data through online call tracking systems, but vanity 800 numbers are better at building strong credibility and brand image for a business while also providing a memorable response tool.

So, if a business’s goal is to generate more incoming leads for their sales force, then advertising and branding with a vanity 800 number will be the best option to produce more leads, and get the sales force further down the path to a sale.

Tracking Leads Back to the Source to Prove Out Marketing Strategies

Business executives and their teams are tasked with compiling masses of data to be categorized, analyzed, digested, and reported to management leaders and boards of directors in every imaginable form. But, is it really happening? Are companies able to take on the seemingly insurmountable responsibilities of extracting the right data that will be most useful, analyzing those metrics correctly, and then making sound business decisions?



With call tracking data, a company can capture and access essential customer information and discover which marketing efforts are most effective at generating sales. Metrics on the call traffic flowing through a business includes information that can help them make crucial business decisions and build a powerful database for future marketing efforts.

Call tracking services provide accurate insights to answer many of the business questions that run through the minds of executives every day, and that are discussed during management meetings:

- Are we missing potential sales calls, and how does the sales team get those callers back?
- Are we spending our marketing and advertising dollars most effectively and in the right places?
- How can we improve our employee training programs to reduce turn-over?
- On average, how many unique, new leads do we have each month?
- What are our customers telling us they need and want from our service?
- What markets are we most successful in, and where are our advertising efforts not effective?
- How do we keep a pulse on what our competitors are doing?
- Are our reps following the required script and asking for the sale?

To be successful, and to answer these questions, it is crucial for a business to have the ability to capture and access the data contained within their calls. A business can answer these questions rather easily if they use a robust call tracking system along with call recording technology. The information required to get to these answers is available in real-time, so data is 'up to the minute' and downloadable for easy reporting and analysis.

Call tracking reports quickly and easily segment your call data and provide you with tangible evidence to support strategic marketing, customer service process, and overall business decisions. Having access to this in-depth data empowers a business with accurate business intelligence and eliminates the guesswork and uncertainty about employee and customer behaviors.

Conclusion

The use of toll-free numbers in advertising has been around since the introduction of the tools in 1967. It is not a new concept, but it is a strategy that continues to produce results for businesses that use these tools in advertising efforts to connect with consumers. In fact, we could very well see a resurgence in the use of phone number response tools, as businesses realize that to successfully navigate the progressively competitive waters, customer satisfaction is king and customer service is often the key differentiator.

Despite the continuing emergence of social media outlets to advertise and communicate, research has shown that an overwhelming majority of people say they still want their inquiries handled by live representatives over the telephone as opposed to Twitter[®],

Facebook[®], live chat, or other less personal communication avenues. Online communication services do not always provide the same depth of information as a live person, and cannot fix problems the way a personal conversation can. This is good news for businesses that use a phone number in their advertising campaigns as a response and lead-generation tool.

Furthermore, consumer preference and research proves that when businesses advertising with a vanity 800 toll-free number, they will see better results through more inbound calls, leads, sales and profits.



About 800response – An Industry Leader

For 23 years, **800response** has maintained the widest selection of true vanity 800 numbers available today. We offer these dynamic advertising tools to businesses throughout North America to help them drive increases in advertising response rates, improve ROI, and track cost-per-lead. In addition, **800response** maintains a robust platform of toll-free tracking services including a sophisticated Call Routing platform, Real-time Call Tracking reports, and Call Monitoring services like Call Recording, CallFinder[®] Speech Analytics, and Missed Call Monitor.

A champion of toll-free industry issues, **800response** participates alongside major long distance carriers in telecom regulatory meetings, and makes recommendations to the FCC on the future development of the toll-free industry.

The **800response** management team collectively has more than 140 years of experience in the telecommunications industry, ranging from telecom operations, technical hardware and application development, service provisioning and trouble-shooting, and regulatory and tax compliance.

800response

1795 Williston Road
South Burlington, VT 05403
Phone: 802-860-0378
Fax: 802-860-0395
www.800response.com

