HOW TO TRACK PAID CAMPAIGNS IN ADOBE ANALYTICS

ABSTRACT

Tracking digital marketing campaigns inside Adobe Analytics is different than what you're likely accustomed to doing for Google Analytics Campaign URLs. Campaign URL (or UTM) tracking is not set up for you "out of the box" (as it is with Google Analytics) and even the campaign URL structure is different from the links created by forms like the Google Analytics campaign URL builder or even Facebook's own Campaign Link Builder.

This document was created to help you learn how to track Paid Campaign URLs in Adobe Analytics the "right way".

INTRODUCTION

One of the primary reasons digital marketers utilize Adobe Analytics is to track the effectiveness of online marketing campaigns in order to allocate resources away from poorly performing campaigns and into best performing campaigns. This goal, simple as it might sound, is not possible if you or your marketing team has not implemented the appropriate Adobe Analytics campaign tracking system. Unlike Google Analytics, Campaign URL tracking is not available "out of the box" for Adobe Analytics. Consequently, if you or your marketing stakeholders (vendors, agencies, etc) don't implement a sound foundation inside Adobe, you will have a very difficult time understanding the effectiveness of your paid online marketing campaigns. In this article, we outline how you and your marketing team should track paid campaigns in Adobe Analytics.

Understanding "Campaign URLs" in Adobe Analytics

A trackable campaign in Adobe Analytics is structurally different than the campaign URLs you're accustomed to building for Google Analytics (also known as UTM links). To understand your marketing campaigns within Adobe, Adobe utilizes a "Tracking Code" that is captured when visitors go to your website from one of your campaign URLs. These codes are structured differently from the Google UTM link structure you might be familiar with. Unfortunately, if at any point, your marketing team, agency, or vendors build links using Google's Link builder or a non-Adobe Analytics campaign URL builder, you will not be able to determine which campaigns produced the best results inside Adobe Analytics. The challenge with Adobe, however, is that even if you're building Campaign URLs the right way, there are still a few steps you'll need to take in order to track your results correctly and it starts with understanding how Campaigns are tracked.

So How Do Campaigns Work in Adobe Analytics?

In order to track your results from your marketing campaigns, the very first step you will need to follow is to make sure your setup is properly capturing "Campaign tracking codes" when visitors get to your site or landing pages. This was typically done using a Javascript plugin named the "GetQuery Param" plugin. The plugin essentially captures a URL parameter and places it in the campaign variable (s.campaigns) so that Adobe Analytics can recognize it. Let's look at an example of what this looks like:

If you were to advertise on Facebook, you build your campaign URL (or landing page) as follows:

https://utmsmartmanager.com/adobe?cid=893875

In this example, the plugin would help Adobe identify the code 893875 and place it in the Adobe campaigns variable for your campaign tracking purpose. While the number "893875" means absolutely nothing to you, but you can see how once you begin replacing it with terminology relevant to your daily job (i.e. "facebook:cpc:campaignname"), you'll start getting closer to identifying which campaigns are performing best.

On the technical side, setting up the URL with this structure will create a call to the JavaScript plugin to look for the "cid" parameter and populate the s.campaign variable with its value as follow:

s.campaign = s.getQueryParam('cid'):

Once your JavaScript file is set up appropriately to capture campaign tracking codes, the next step is to begin assigning tracking codes to all of your campaign URLs that will refer traffic to your site.

This is the part of the campaign process in which most Adobe Analytics marketers and digital agencies make the most mistakes.

They key to assigning tracking codes to campaign elements is that they have to be unique and maintain the s.campaign structure we mentioned. As long as the same tracking code is not associated to more than one campaign you are in good shape. Let's go back to the Facebook link example:

If you were to use the code "893875 or "facebook:cpc:campaignname" on all your Facebook ads, it will be extremely difficult to determined which Ad worked and which ad didn't. Consequently, as a rule of thumb, no tracking codes should ever be repeated, or you will run into some big trouble later on.

This is the one of the main reasons why we recommend the [UTM Smart Manager for Adobe Analytics](). This Adobe Campaign URL Builder and Tracker automatically sidesteps any of these potential issues with building and maintaining good campaign URL structures in order to help you get a handle on your Adobe Analytics.

Understanding Campaign Tracking Codes in Adobe Analytics

Now that you have your Javascript Plugin working and can capture tracking campaign codes like a champion, it's time to understand how to set up your Campaign Tracking. If we don't do this, as traffic begins to come in and you open up the Tracking Code report to see "Click-throughs" and other success events, you will have a very difficult time understanding your campaign tracking codes in an easy to digest manner (i.e. what does 893875 mean?).

As you can imagine, making sense of hundreds of tracking codes made up of numbers will not be easy. That's why there is a way for you to add metadata to your "conversion variable" (remember when I wrote "facebook:cpc:campaign name"?). With this process, you can group your campaign variables in different ways AND display them in Adobe Analytics in a manner that makes sense to you. Thus, the next step to help you setup for good campaign management is: **setting up Classifications.**

What is a Classification?

The purpose of a "Classification" is to gives the ability for the user to classify the raw data coming into any of your custom reports. In the case of campaigns, you want your Campaign Tracking report to follow a classification that you can digest. This means you can make the report to be more user-friendly.

Setting up Your Adobe Classifications to Track your Campaign URLs

If you are familiar with Google UTM link structures, you can think of the Source, Medium, Campaign Name, Term, Content as the "metadata" that you will want to set up as Classifications as a starting point. Unlike Google Analytics, Adobe Analytics is structured in a way that you can add as many as these variables as you'd like. The only downside is that you have to set up rules or "classifications" to tell Adobe how to read these variables. To learn more **Adobe Campaign UTM Classifications** you

can read the [Complete Guide to Using Adobe Analytics Parameters](#). Here's a quick installation summary to add your Classifications:

Step 2: Set up Your Reporting using UTM Parameters Codes by adding your Classifications

Now that you have your "UTM links reported" using a consistent format (and you will maintain it that way because you're using a Smart UTM Builder form because you're awesome), you will use the classifications to split out each of the parameters into separate reports/categories. To do this, you will need to build a new Classification for each UTM parameter you used. Here's how you can do this:

Go to the Admin Console->Select your Classification Type and then add your new classifications (Source, Medium, Campaign, Content, Term, Campaign Owner).

Let's look to another Facebook Adobe Campaign URL example to see what happens when you install the Classifications correctly:

You're launching a new campaign for Best Company Inc., which includes a big Facebook awareness and conversion campaign. You need to make sure you're monetizing on these ads or you could end up losing a lot of money. In this scenario, Best Company Inc hired you because you're a genius social networker. You've done the work and identified the right audiences, time of day, and creative that will create the most conversions on the planet! Soon, you start pushing your ads out with some great CTAs using your CTA link:

https://bestcompany.com/landing?cid=facebook:cpc:awesomecampaign:bluebackground:redbutton

Now, as Facebook users click on your CTA link, they are routed to your Landing page where click-throughs and purchases can be tied to your Facebook cpc initiative. Success! Since you've set up your classifications and Classification rules, you can go into your Campaign Tracking report and sort by "Facebook" and "cpc" which ads performed best. Now you can measure and optimize since all of your Facebook tracking codes can now be grouped together using Classifications and later compared to your other marketing initiatives.

If, on the other hand, you hadn't implemented Classifications or the Classification Rules (setup from guide above), all of this traffic would not be so easy to understand.

By the way, did you catch the issue with the CTA link? Props for those who did!

If you didn't, here it is: **THE TRACKING CODE IS NOT UNIQUE!**

In the example this means that Adobe Analytics will lump all Facebook ads into one tracking code (remember I said you needed to make it unique for a reason!). You should have used ..."redbutton1" or "redbutton:rounded:etc" to make each link unique. Once you do this, you can start showing off how good of a marketer you really are.

Once you've set up the Classifications and Classifications rules, you'll be officially set up to track campaign traffic correctly inside Adobe Analytics! Just make sure that your team, your agency, and your vendors (basically anyone you spend money with and is building a link) follows your campaign URL structure. Go get'em!

CONCLUSION

Determining your campaign results doesn't Adobe Analytics doesn't need to be an overwhelming challenge. Just follow the simple steps outlined above and you'll be a pro in no time. Just make sure your links include your campaign identifier and that you've set up the right processes to break down the variables within Adobe Analytics. We recommend that you use a tool like the [Adobe Analytics Campaign URL Builder](#) to maintain your link structure (across your teams, agencies, and third party vendors) and ensure your marketing data integrity inside Adobe Analytics.

If you have any questions about Adobe Analytics, Campaign URLs, or even how to implement UTM links for Adobe Analytics, please send me an email at support@factivate.com and I will do my best to answer it on our blog so that everybody can learn! (Don't worry, I won't use your name or company name)

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