Driving More Inbound Calls from Mobile Search

How Call Performance Marketing Delivers Increased Revenue and Better ROI for Search Marketers

RingRevenue®

What's Inside:

- Trends in Search Marketing
- The Challenge: How to drive more inbound calls from mobile search and do it more cost effectively.
- The Solution: Using campaign-specific phone numbers and RingPools to tie calls to keywords.
- How Performance SEM Agency, imwave, Inc. Generated Calls for Clients and Improved Campaign ROI
    - 12% increase in commissions from call-based campaigns
    - Mobile search ads with phone numbers saw 250% higher CTR.
    - Average mobile call to conversion rates above 30%.

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TRENDS IN SEARCH MARKETING

Search marketing continues to dominate the online marketing landscape. According to a recent survey by Internet Retailer[1], 37% of respondents spent more than half of their online marketing budgets on search engine marketing (both paid and organic), which makes sense given that 93% of global consumers use search engines to find websites on the Internet.[2]

Mobile and smart phone technology is being adopted at an alarming pace with 5.1 billion of the 6.8 billion people on the planet owning a cell phone[3]. Resulting in consumers becoming "multi-channel shoppers"--leveraging mobile technology (such as smart phones and tablet computers) to research products and make purchases. In fact, according to the Mobile Marketing Association 70% of all mobile searches result in action within an hour[4]. Google also recently reported that mobile search is quickly gaining ground on traditional search, with between 15 and 30% of all searches now take place on mobile devices, up 300% since 2010[5].

FACT

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FACT

30% of all searches now take place on mobile devices, up 300% since 2010[5].

Tracking consumer behavior from keyword search to online conversion is a science that web marketers have expertly refined. With the help of tracking links, Google Analytics and other web analytics tools marketers can quickly narrow in on which keywords are driving online conversions and they can easily adjust their search bids to maximize their ROI.

But what happens when consumers pick up the phone to call?

Nearly 4% of working population in US are employed by call centers[6] and many businesses convert a significant percentage of their business through call centers. This is especially true if their product or service is high-value or requires a consultative sale as with industries such as insurance, financial services, home services, high-end retail and consumer goods, and higher education.

How do marketers structure search-based promotions to drive more high-value inbound calls? And how can they track call-based revenue back to search ads and keywords so they can optimize the ROI on their search campaigns?

THE CHALLENGE:
DRIVING INBOUND SALES CALLS FROM MOBILE SEARCH

Consumers want the option to call to complete their transactions. Research shows when making purchasing decisions, 77% of online shoppers want live assistance available with their purchase; yet 84% could not get the help that they wanted.[7] With telephone conversion rates at least 10x higher than pay-per-click and average order values 1.5-2x higher, many marketers are missing out on measuring a significant percentage of their business by not attributing sales calls to their search marketing efforts. And with 91% of all U.S. citizens having their mobile device within reach 24/7[8] today's multi-channel consumer is constantly connected via the phone in their pocket.

In order to identify the true ROI of search spending, be able to accurately allocate budget, set bid pricing, and adjust SEO strategies, marketers need to have the ability to link phone calls and sales to the keywords that are driving them. They need to have a complete picture of the sales volume their search efforts are delivering, not just clicks.

Many marketers have shied away from including phone numbers in search placements or even on their website because of inherent difficulties of tracking and attribution, but they are missing out on incremental business from consumers who prefer to call.

THE SOLUTION:
CALL PERFORMANCE MARKETING

Call performance marketing gives marketers a complete picture of how their search initiatives are performing by connecting calls with their search initiatives. With campaign-specific phone numbers and pooled promotional phone numbers tied to keywords, marketers can see which ad groups and keywords are driving phone calls and phone conversions. According to Google, adding phone numbers to search placements also has the added benefit of helping improve click-through performance by 5-30%. With call performance marketing, marketers can essentially track calls, like clicks.

Search marketers can leverage dynamic number insertion technology, such as the RingPools™ feature available on RingRevenue's call performance marketing platform and tie a pool of promotional phone numbers directly to their keyword inventory. When a keyword search is performed, a promotional phone number is assigned to the keyword for a period of time. Calls placed to promotional phone numbers are tracked and reported on in real-time so marketers can see exactly which keywords are driving calls. Conversion tracking and call center integration allows marketers to tie conversion data back to the calls and keywords. The phone number assignment time period and size of the promotional phone number pool are completely customizable based on site traffic patterns and search volume.

Real-time reporting gives marketers immediate insight into campaign performance, top performing keywords, paid vs. organic search, search engine breakdown and detailed call analytics whether their search portfolio is 10 keywords or 10,000.

The following case study details how call performance marketing delivered increased ROI and better keyword insight for performance SEM Agency imwave, Inc.

Performance SEM Agency Generates Calls for Clients and Improves Campaign ROI

How imwave, Inc. drove additional revenue and increased commissions with Call Performance Marketing

Imwave, Inc. is not your typical search agency. Their motto: "We only make money, when our clients make money!" is not just a motto, but a reality. As a performance-based SEM agency, they are paid based on the sales and leads they generate for their clients. For imwave, taking on new clients means creating strong partnerships with their clients to deliver added value through paid search initiatives. With many national brands on their client roster, they are very selective in who they partner with. Imwave looks for long-term partnerships where they can build successful search engine strategies based on driving conversions and sales, not just clicks.

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

- 12% Increase in commissions from call-based campaigns
- 250% Higher CTR on ads with phone numbers
- Average call to conversion rates above 30%

Many of imwave's clients convert a substantial percentage of their business through their call centers, and it was clear that for these clients, driving clicks was only part of the picture. Products or services that are more consultative sales such as insurance, financial services and home services typically fall into this category and for these vertical segments they saw an opportunity to deliver **incremental revenue** by driving phone calls as well as clicks.

Imwave also prides themselves as leaders in understanding digital marketing trends and consumer behavior. Imwave saw that mobile technology was changing how consumers search and with 2011 being declared "The Year of Mobile" by everyone from Gartner to Google, they knew there was an opportunity to drive additional value for their clients by reaching mobile audiences. Serving national brands in industries like insurance, financial services, home services and higher-education, imwave decided they needed a true multi-channel search strategy that would deliver incremental revenue to their clients with calls and clicks.

As a part of their performance-based search services, imwave leveraged performance tracking tools provided by companies like Commission Junction, LinkShare, Google Affiliate Network, ShareASale, and PepperJam to manage the sales and lead tracking of their online search campaigns. When they were ready to start driving calls, they looked no further than the companies they were already working with who each offered pay-per-call programs powered by RingRevenue's call performance marketing platform.

"RingRevenue is partnered with many of the networks we were already working with, so it was incredibly easy for us to get started promoting call-based campaigns," said imwave President and Founder Adam Viener.

THE RESULTS

Imwave began promoting advertiser pay-per-call campaigns through online and mobile search and quickly saw that driving calls had the potential to become a significant part of their business. "We started focusing on call-based campaigns about a year ago and using RingRevenue's platform have generated more than a quarter of a million in commissions from pay-per-call this year. These days we are driving in excess of ten thousand calls per month to the advertisers we are working with," added Viener. "It has become a substantial part of our business that we believe will continue to grow.

As imwave expanded the use of call performance marketing in their business they evaluated the impact of using call-based campaigns and phone numbers in some of their more traditional search initiatives. The following themes emerged and are covered in the results of this case study.

- Calls and clicks equals more commissions
- Phone numbers improve mobile search performance
- RingPools™ Drives Keyword Insight on Calls to Improve ROI

Calls and Clicks Equals More Commissions

When imwave first set out promoting call-based campaigns, they wanted understand how driving calls in addition to clicks would change the performance of their traditional pay-per-click search campaigns.

Traditionally, performance marketers have struggled with the presence of phone numbers on advertiser landing pages. When consumers picked up the phone to call, affiliates were not compensated on the calls, a scenario often referred to as leakage. Spurring a trend where many advertisers were encouraged to remove phone numbers from their landing pages to satisfy affiliate partners and drive site visitors to transact online and not call.

The RingRevenue platform solves this problem by allowing publishers to be compensated for calls they drive using campaign-specific phone numbers placed on the advertiser's landing page. When publishers are compensated for calls, they are free to invest more in driving additional traffic, resulting in incremental revenue for the advertiser.

Using an existing pay-per-click campaign with a national music instrument retailer, imwave began promoting their pay-per-call program as well. Instead of sending traffic to the standard landing page with no trackable phone number, they began sending traffic to a web-enabled[9] landing page that included their campaign-specific phone number.

When they analyzed the results of their campaign after swapping out the direct link for the web-enabled landing page with their phone number, imwave saw an impressive 12 percent increase in commissions associated with the campaign.

"We were pretty surprised the increase was so substantial. Seeing a 12 percent lift in commissions by making a simple change like adding a campaign-specific phone number is *huge*. Publishers who aren't driving calls in addition to their click traffic are missing out on incremental revenue," observed Viener. "The lift in our commissions was a huge bonus for us, but it is also important to note that our partner also benefited from more high-quality leads. And with the increase in commissions, we are able to reinvest in the program and find new ways to drive more traffic and sales."

> "Seeing a 12 percent lift in commissions by making a simple change like adding a campaign-specific phone number is *huge*. Publishers who aren't driving calls in addition to their click traffic are missing out on incremental revenue," Viener

Phone Numbers Improve Mobile Search Performance

Seeing the results of converting traditional pay-per-click campaigns to driving calls as well, imwave began looking at how pay-per-call could help better monetize their mobile search campaigns.

To see which mobile search ads performed the best and generated the highest return, imwave ran a series of test campaigns to draw out empirical data to help them define best practices and guide the growth of their call-based business.

Imwave wanted to understand:
*   What types of mobile search ads have the highest click-through?
*   Which type of mobile search ad drives the most leads/sales conversions?
*   Would they be able to improve the ROI on their ad spend using RingPools™ to link the performance of keywords to calls?
*   Which type of mobile search ad delivers the highest ROI?

Imwave conducted their mobile tests using the pay-per-call campaign of a national auto insurance provider. They used a control group of ten keywords in broad, phrase and exact match types and the test consisted of three different ad groups:

National Auto Insurance Provider
First Line of comelling ad copy.
Second line of very compelling ad copy.
www.sampleurl.com

National Auto Insurance Provider
First Line of comelling ad copy.
Second line of very compelling ad copy.
www.sampleurl.com
(888) 888-8888

(888) 888-8888
National Auto Insurance Provider
First Line of comelling ad copy.
Second line of very compelling ad copy.
www.sampleurl.com

Ad Group A
*   Standard URL
*   No phone number

Ad Group B
*   Standard URL
*   Campaign phone #

Ad Group C
*   Call-only format
*   Campaign phone #

Over the testing period, the results demonstrated that the inclusion of campaign-specific phone numbers in mobile search does indeed impact the performance of the ad.

Here are some of the key findings:
*   Ads with no phone numbers had an average click/call-through rate of .9 percent, compared to the ads with phone numbers which had an average click/call-through rate of 3.2 percent or a 250 percent increase.
*   Ad Group B saw the best overall performance at nearly 85 percent ROI.
*   Ads that included a phone number and URL (Ad group B) had the highest call to conversion rate at 37 percent.
*   The average mobile call to conversion rate across the entire campaign was above 30 percent. Meaning that more than 30 percent of consumers who called met the advertiser's quality criteria.

"The findings from our mobile search test tells a pretty clear story. Mobile search ads with phone numbers simply perform better and drive more valuable conversions for advertisers," added Viener. "RingRevenue's platform allows us to quickly and easily get phone numbers for our call-based search campaigns and see our campaign analytics right away."
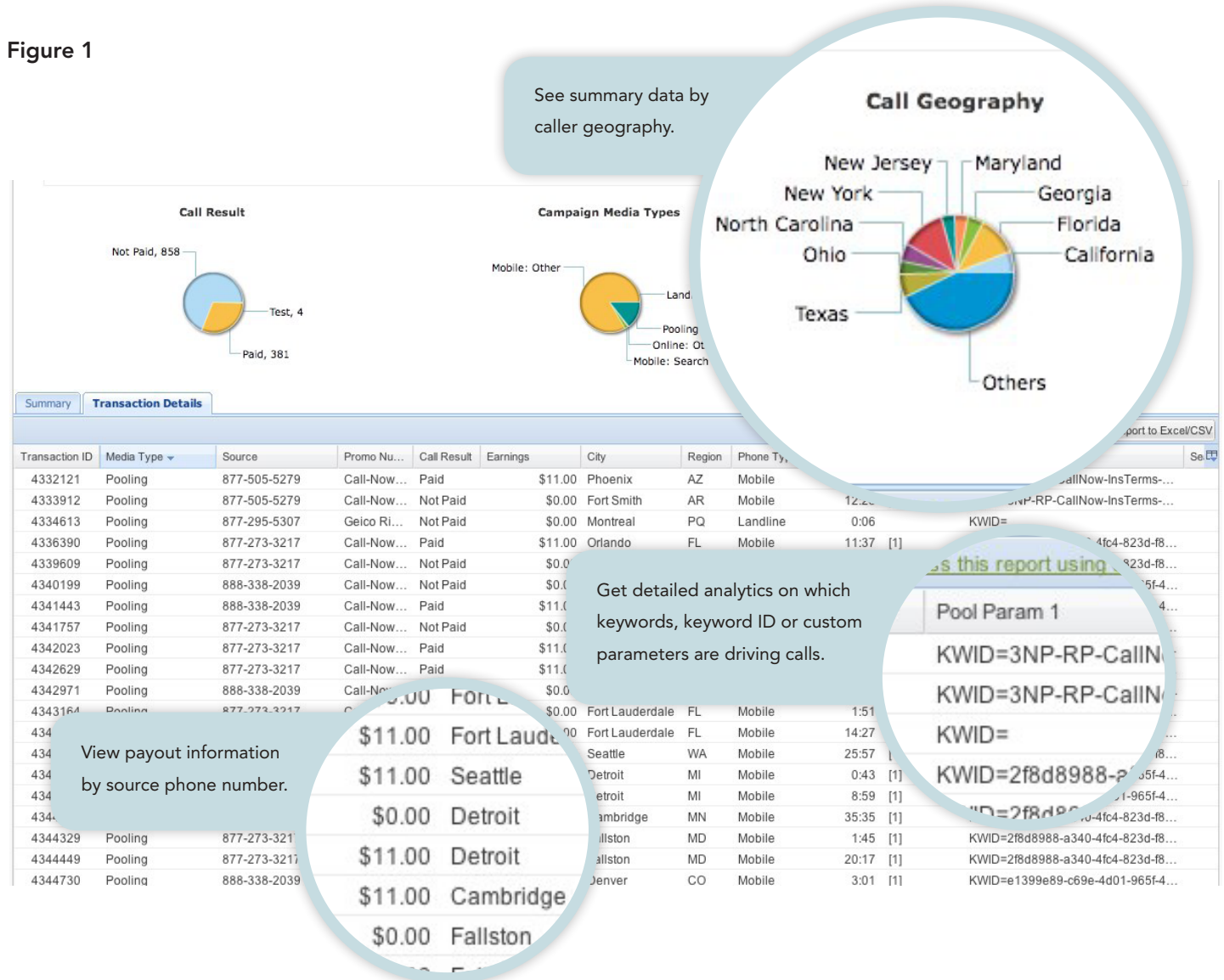
RingPools Drives Keyword Insight on Calls to Improve ROI

To track the performance of their traditional click-based search initiatives, imwave relies heavily on a sophisticated analytics toolset they've built to track keyword performance to commissions and payouts they earn through their performance campaigns. As they dove into call performance marketing, they quickly realized to measure the ROI of their call-based campaigns, they needed to know which keywords were driving the calls that converted and earned them commissions. The RingPools feature available on RingRevenue's call performance marketing was designed to give them exactly that.

Imwave placed a piece of javascript provided by the pay-per-call platform on their landing page. When a consumer clicked the URL on the search ad, they were directed to imwave's landing page where the javascript dynamically displayed a phone number unique to their keyword search. RingPools linked the call to the keywords and reported real-time call analytics and conversion results.

RingPools reporting (see Figure 1) can be configured to tie calls to keywords or custom parameters such as keyword ID to have better reporting granularity for keyword match types (broad, phrase and exact).

Figure 1

See summary data by caller geography.

Get detailed analytics on which keywords, keyword ID or custom parameters are driving calls.

View payout information by source phone number.

Imwave could see exactly which of their keywords were driving calls that resulted in commissions, and which were not. Using the keyword data provided by RingPools, they could analyze the cost per keyword with the revenue they earned on calls and make search bidding decisions to improve keyword performance and ultimately drive a higher ROI on the campaign.

"To be successful in this industry, you have to have the right tools for the job. With search that means being able to analyze the details like keyword ROI from the calls we are driving and see how that fits into the big picture. RingRevenue's platform gives us visibility into this data across all of the pay-per-call campaigns we are running search for. Taking a step back and going through this testing process gave us invaluable insight we will apply as we continue to grow and scale our call-based business," concluded Viener.

KEY TAKEAWAYS AND MOBILE SEARCH BEST PRACTICES

Based on the results of imwave's tests and campaign performance, here are a few key takeaways and best practices for mobile search:

1. Combining pay-per-call with traditional pay-per-click campaigns offers substantial increase in commissions and earnings.
2. Include campaign-specific phone numbers in mobile paid search ads.
3. "Call-only" format may drive higher call/click-through rates, but be sure to evaluate conversion rates. Imwave's test showed "call-only" format delivered a lower number of callers converting to customers in this test group.
4. Overall top-performing ad group (highest click-through/click-to-call and conversion rate) included a phone number and URL where consumers were directed to a landing page.
5. To achieve greater ROI on search initiatives track keyword metrics for call-based campaigns. Use RingPools to show dynamically generated keyword-specific phone numbers on each landing page.

The RingRevenue Advantage

RingRevenue enables marketers to maximize the performance of their media investments.
RingRevenue improves every marketing campaign with better quality leads, higher conversions and increased ROI. By tapping into the power of the phone, RingRevenue's patent-pending call performance marketing platform captures and converts more high-value customers.

A purpose-built advertising platform for media managers, RingRevenue's management console puts 100% control of all campaigns, phone numbers, IVR configuration and publisher payouts in the hands of the marketing manager, all through a single web-based interface. RingRevenue's pay-per-call solution is built on a carrier-grade VOIP platform that offers 99.999% reliability.

As the market leader in call performance marketing, RingRevenue's leadership team has extensive experience managing and driving growth through performance marketing networks. This powerful combination makes RingRevenue the platform of choice for the world's leading performance marketing networks including Commission Junction, Google Affiliate Network, LinkShare, ShareASale and many others — generating millions of dollars in new revenue for advertisers using call performance marketing. These networks offer RingRevenue's solution to ensure a smooth experience for their advertisers and publishers whether the consumer clicks or calls.

Watch the video to learn more about RingRevenue.
www.ringrevenue.com/videos

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1 Internet Advertising Bureau Revenue Report 2010

2 Forrester Research

3 Mobile Marketing Association

4 Mobile Marketer

5 Google Webinar: Are you Mobile Ready?

6 American Teleservices Association

7 Harris Interactive IMShopping Poll (August 2009)

8 Mobile Marketing Association

9 With pay-per-call campaigns, web-enabled landing pages dynamically insert the publisher's campaign specific phone number.