



 NAPKYN

# UTM Tracking Recommendations and Best Practices



## What are UTM Parameters?

“UTM parameters are simply tags that you add to a URL. When someone clicks on a URL with UTM parameters, those tags are sent back to your Google Analytics for tracking.”

“UTM” stands for Urchin Tracking Module. UTM parameters, also referred to as UTM codes are query values added to the end of URLs to measure the effectiveness of digital marketing initiatives.

Why are they important?

- UTM's help you understand what medium users take to visit your website with little effort.
- UTM's help you see where your traffic is coming from and help you track the performance of your URLs.

## Why Use UTM's?

Without UTM's you cannot attribute Revenue and Transactions to your marketing efforts. In fact Measuring their effectiveness becomes virtually impossible without UTM's. They provide valuable insight such as which online marketing campaign drives the maximum traffic and business to your website, and also allow you to categorise campaigns into traffic buckets which are known as channel groupings in GA.

Other reason to use UTM'S

- UTM's can be used in parallel with everything you are doing now.
- Improves your ability to prove the value of your marketing efforts.
- Helps the enterprise in the long-run by aligning many channels with a consistent tracking method.
- Helps with page aggregation by eliminating the need for one page to appear in multiple rows.
- “I want to know more about how groups of marketing efforts can lead a customer to take a desired action. I want to look beyond one email at a time.”
- Enterprise reporting is very easily achievable with consistent UTM tagging. Additionally, it allows you to be granular with brand-specific marketing initiatives.

Group Channeling Helps companies in the long-run by aligning many marketing channels with a consistent tracking method.

Default Channel Grouping	Acquisition			Behavior			Conversion		
	Users	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration	Conversions (Goal 1 Completions)	Registration (Goal 2 Completions)	Registration (Goal 3 Value)
	243,942 <small>9.4% Total (243,942)</small>	236,872 <small>9.0% Total (236,872)</small>	354,914 <small>100.0% (354,914)</small>	39.47% <small>46.1% (243,942)</small>	4.68 <small>24.1% (243,942)</small>	00:03:07 <small>18.3% (243,942)</small>	0.67% <small>1.0% (243,942)</small>	2,385 <small>1.0% (243,942)</small>	\$0.00 <small>0.0% (243,942)</small>
1. Organic Search	139,898 (58.19%)	130,682 (54.91%)	178,102 (50.20%)	45.89%	4.12	00:02:37	0.69%	1,162 (48.72%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
2. Direct	47,162 (19.52%)	46,198 (19.50%)	65,523 (18.46%)	29.61%	5.44	00:02:54	0.95%	622 (25.12%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
3. Referral	36,348 (14.91%)	27,681 (11.62%)	64,271 (18.11%)	23.88%	6.24	00:04:28	0.61%	393 (15.89%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
4. Affiliate	14,547 (5.97%)	11,482 (4.86%)	17,205 (4.85%)	45.32%	3.83	00:02:39	0.61%	105 (4.39%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
5. Social	12,652 (5.20%)	11,102 (4.69%)	13,357 (3.76%)	58.49%	2.59	00:01:36	0.30%	40 (1.64%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
6. Paid Search	7,217 (2.96%)	5,937 (2.51%)	9,464 (2.67%)	39.74%	4.51	00:02:41	0.49%	41 (1.72%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
7. Display	4,364 (1.80%)	3,985 (1.63%)	5,164 (1.45%)	73.35%	2.28	00:01:04	0.21%	11 (0.45%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)
8. (Other)	1,826 (0.75%)	1,065 (0.45%)	1,778 (0.50%)	31.89%	5.06	00:02:55	0.56%	10 (0.42%)	\$0.00 (0.00%)

## Where to use UTM's?

The top three use cases for using UTM's are:

1. Social Media urls
2. Email Newsletter urls
3. Banner Advertisements

## UTM Parameters

UTMs consist of 5 main form fields:

[http://www.example.com/landing-page?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=march2012](http://www.example.com/landing-page?utm_source=google&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=march2012)

[http://www.example.com/landingpage?utm\\_source=linkedin&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=20190803\\_summer\\_sale\\_20&utm\\_keyword=runningshoes](http://www.example.com/landingpage?utm_source=linkedin&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=20190803_summer_sale_20&utm_keyword=runningshoes)

Source	Medium	Campaign	Ad Content	Keyword
The origin of your traffic. In other words it is the name of the ad platform, site email service, etc. that is sending traffic to your site.  Example: google, twitter, facebook, linkedin	Identifies the general category of the source of your traffic.  Example: social, email, affiliate, display	Identifies a promotion or campaign for a given product, service, etc.  Example: 20190803_summer_sale_20	Although meant to differentiate similar content, or links within the same ad, this can be used for any purpose.  Example: logolink, textlink	Used to identify keywords for your ad, but can be used for any purpose.  Example: running shoes

## Channel Set Up Strategy

1. List all your marketing tactics
2. List your traffic sources for those tactics (e.g. Facebook, SFMC, etc.)
3. Define the mediums that need to be tagged with UTMs (i.e. brand campaigns for Facebook, all emails, etc.)
4. Create separate channels for each medium. You can get as granular as you want when creating these channels. For instance, you can have a single bucket for all social traffic or you can break this channel further into Social - Paid and Social - Organic buckets.
5. Ensure similar campaigns are named consistently across mediums to allow for their comparative analysis.

# UTM Best Practices & Guidelines

## Be Consistent in Your UTM Tagging

- Always use the same tag for the same use. This allows aggregation of data to be the best it can be.
- Letter casing matters. GA is case sensitive - different cases of the same UTM parameters will be treated as separate rows of data (e.g. EMAIL, Email, and email will be treated differently). If you anticipate letter case usage to be an issue there are filters (e.g. force lowercase) that can be implemented to ensure things are consistent. However, consistent labelling should be priority number one.
- Develop an organizational naming convention
- Perform audits on your source / medium reports in Google Analytics to ensure this is being adhered to. Remember, tagging should be short, unique, and descriptive and abbreviations should be avoided with the exception of those that are part of your corporate culture or are easily recognizable.

## Don't Use Source/Medium for which they are not intended

Adding extra granularity in these parameters will cause your reporting to suffer.

Example: Adding "Email - Marketing" for your medium as opposed to simply "Email" will add extra information in the source field but at the loss of a better understanding of your holistic performance in the email channel.

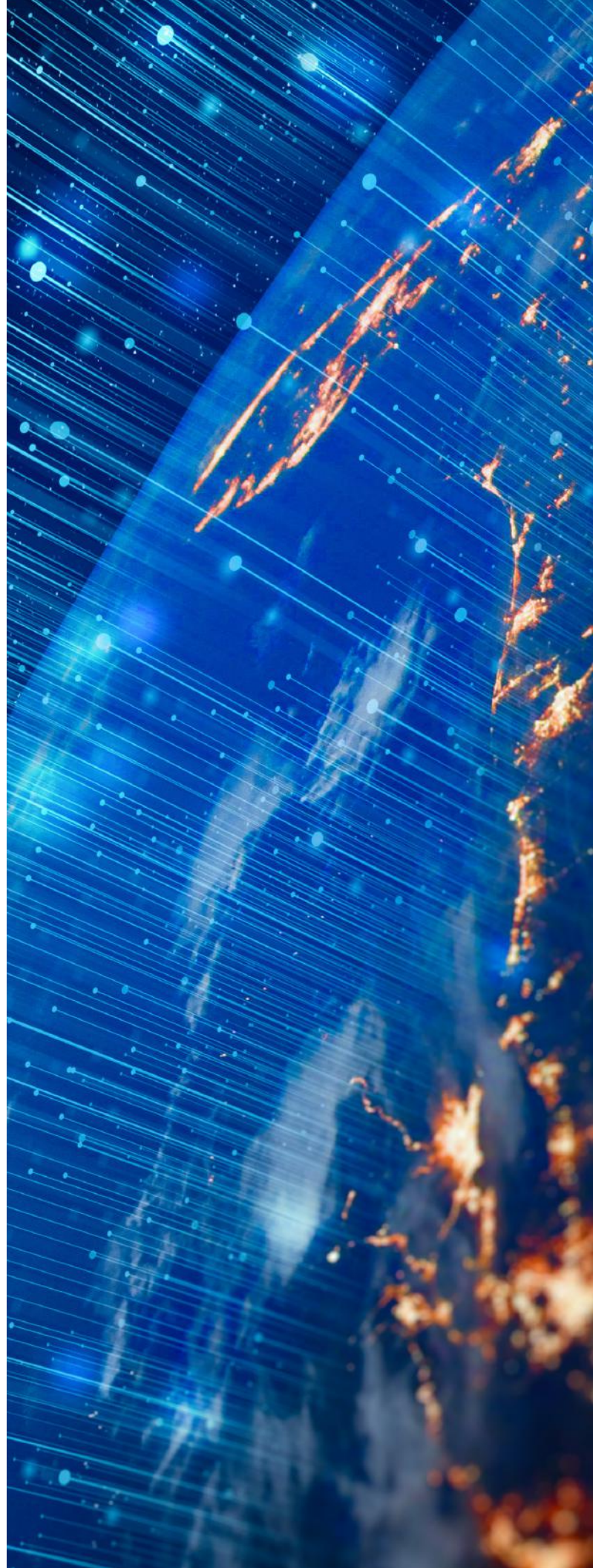
## NEVER Tag an Internal Links with UTM Parameters

This causes numerous issues including:

- It will overwrite the UTM information that the user arrived with.
- It will start a new session causing session duplication.

## Track Your UTM Parameters

As you grow your marketing efforts, it is important to keep track of your UTMs.



# Custom Campaign URLs: Best Practices for Collecting Campaign Data

Google Analytics automatically tracks all of your Google Ads campaigns

- No need to tag destination URLs if auto-tagging is enabled. However if you run Paid Search campaigns on search engines other than Google, you'll need to tag the destination URLs for those ads.
- Referral Sites are automatically detected, only tag links on referral sites if you need to associate campaign names or ad types with referral traffic.
- Do not attempt to tag organic keyword links from search engines - these are automatically detected.

## Create links using URL builders

Either develop an internal URL builder (which Napkyn can help with), or use the tool Google has [made available online](#).

### URL builders:

- Ensure the proper syntax is consistently followed
- Mitigate potential human error in building out links
- Minimize effort

## Important: Ensure you are not SENDING Personally identifiable information (PII) IN CAMPAIGN URLs.

### Use only the variables you need for reporting

Typically speaking you can populate six fields for UTM tracking, but the vital UTM's to define are:

- Campaign Source
- Campaign Medium
- Campaign Name

### In Conclusion

UTM parameters provide insights into your traffic that are extraordinarily valuable. They can improve your overall marketing strategy and assist in raising revenue because they are an excellent source of behavioural data.

## Our Services

Napkyn offers a wide range of services to both brands and agencies to help you tackle your biggest and most complex measurement objectives including but not limited to GTM Workflow Best Practices, Analytics Instrumentation, and Audience Strategy and Development. [Contact Napkyn](#) for a complementary 1-hour Q&A with a Napkyn expert.

## About Napkyn

Napkyn is a digital analytics and data engineering company with more than a decade of experience working with data-driven enterprise marketing and technology leaders of Fortune 1000 and hyper-growth organizations. They select and retain Napkyn for expertise in Data Enablement, Data Quality and Data Analysis developed and delivered across a wide range of industries - Financial Services, Utilities/Energy, Healthcare, Retail/eCommerce, Automotive. Napkyn is a Google Premier Solution Partner for Google Marketing Platform and a Certified Google Cloud Service Partner. Napkyn's vision is a world where marketers are ethically collecting, integrating, managing and putting into action high quality data to produce outsized benefits for customers, employees, and their community. You can learn more about Napkyn at [napkyn.com](https://www.napkyn.com) or by following Napkyn on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#)

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## Contact Napkyn

For more information regarding Napkyn's services:

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