

COLUMNS

Clicks do not matter as much as calls

July 11, 2013



By **Jason Wells**

Clicks do not matter. Traffic does not matter. Click-through rate does not matter.

If you are in the mobile marketing world especially local mobile world as an agency or a local business, the traditional metrics you have gotten used to for success no longer matter. Why?

Because calls are the only things that local marketers and mobile marketers should care about.

BIA/Kelsey researches local marketing. Lately, pretty much all of its research has focused around mobile. It writes about the mobile call revolution regularly.

Here is what some of its research is finding:

Local businesses and local marketers say that phone calls are their best leads. Sixty-four percent of local marketers say phone calls are better than any other lead source. They are better than clicks, traffic, form fill-outs, social media leads and even foot-traffic. These local marketers value calls above anything else.

Phone calls are the best. Why are they the best? Because they convert to customers more often than anything else.

Guess what mobile is really good at doing? Yep, generating calls.

Local businesses spent \$68 billion last year to generate calls. That number is increasing. And an increasing percentage of that \$68 billion is coming via mobile.

An increasing number of local businesses are turning to mobile to generate high-quality calls. The first foray into mobile for these businesses is an effort to drive calls via paid search.

Phone calls turn into customers 10x to 12x more often than Web leads do. This is pretty powerful stuff.

Research from Marketing Sherpa and Hubspot indicates that form fill-out leads only convert to customers about 2 percent of the time. Our data shows, clearly, that 25-40 percent of inbound phone calls to local businesses turn into customers.

That means, literally, that calls turn into customers 10x to 12x more frequently than Web leads do.

This is staggering when you consider the impact of mobile on the buying cycle. It is pretty well established by this point that mobile callers are farther down the buying funnel than Web leads or form fill-outs. If someone calls, they are ready to buy.

This new data simply confirms this long-held view.

RESEARCH IS important, but what really matters is how businesses are using mobile to drive calls. Their feedback confirms the research: phone calls matter more than anything else. Increasingly, these local businesses, small and

large, are turning to mobile to quickly and easily generate these calls.

In the local space clicks only matter insofar as they help to generate calls. Calls produce customers more often than clicks. Clicks just do not matter anymore.

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