



# **Introducing the PCG Engagement Project**

**Summary of Metrics & Events**

**December 10, 2016**

**By Brian Pasch**

# Dealers Are Invited to Track Engagement

This document is designed to explain the three metrics PCG has defined to help you track which marketing investments are bringing engaged shoppers to your website. If you increase engagement you will sell more cars.

The **PCG Engagement Project** is a nationwide movement to empower dealers to hold all marketing agencies, website providers, third-party website tools, and OEM approved vendors to a single set of metrics that are easily inspected and actionable. We also wanted to clarify some of the program elements to give you a higher comfort level that participating will be a great decision for your stores.

To maximize the data recorded in Google Analytics (GA) for hard conversion events (lead forms, calls, chats, and text message) we will need you to work with our team to get your vendors to send conversion into GA. Many vendors already do that for the PCG Engagement Project (i.e. CarNow, CarChat24, CarWars, AutoHook, etc.) All of you should have websites that record lead form conversions in GA as well.

Since phone calls are your #1 source of hard conversions, we recommend that you have Dynamic Number Insertion (DNI) on your website. There are many companies that provide DNI and our team will work with you to integrate all existing companies.

If you are NOT using DNI, you should consider subscribing to CarWars or CallRevu. It is not required, but if you take a minute to speak with Brian Pasch, he can make it very clear why this single tool will help you sell more cars! You should know which marketing sources are making your phone ring! *(We have also negotiated a great package for dealers in our program.)*

**The PCG Engagement Project will work with any chat company, any texting company, and any call tracking company that is transparent.** The key is that your vendor partners are willing to record conversions in Google Analytics. If they will not, you can still participate but will be missing some important data.

The key is to get your websites tagged with our Engagement Events in December so that all traffic in 2017 is properly associated with website engagement. When you read through this document you will see that PCG is serious in measuring engagement to help you identify BOTS, waste, and make it easy for you to reallocate funds to investments that help move metal!

# Roadmap to Getting Started

- Subscription to VistaDash for six-months at \$299 / month. Contracts should be send to Dan Webb: [Daniel.webb@pcgmailer.com](mailto:Daniel.webb@pcgmailer.com)
- If VistaDash cannot identify 10-20% of your paid advertising traffic that should be replaced or removed from your budget, based on low engagement scoring, **we will refund your six-month subscription.**
- Cooperation with our VistaDash onboarding team to get access to Google Analytics, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, CRM data, Call Tracking Data, Chat Data, etc. to pull in all your marketing data.
- Cooperation with the VistaDash onboarding team to forward an email to your website vendor to install the PCG Engagement Scripts in Google Tag Manager.
- Cooperation with the VistaDash onboarding team to forward an email to your chat vendor asking them to record chat conversions in Google Analytics.
- Cooperation with the VistaDash onboarding team to forward an email to your DNI phone vendor to record chat conversion in Google Analytics.
- Cooperation to attend periodic webinars, led by the PCG Management Team, to review the progress of the PCG Engagement Project with dealers in the Project. Each month you will can join your peers on a webinar that discusses the data and learning that can help dealers identify and reduce waste.

## Contract Execution

If you have any specific questions about VistaDash features, please schedule a demo with Dan Webb 732-500-1081. Please send your signed contracts as quickly as possible so we can tag your websites before January 1<sup>st</sup>. Contracts received after December 23<sup>rd</sup> will most likely not be able to be tagged since your website vendor will likely have limited support between Christmas and New Year's.

**Additional Stores** – If you are part of a larger dealer group, and you would like to add those stores to your account, we will honor the \$299 / month price for those stores. Dan will send you a revised contract if you send him the names and URLs of the stores. Dealers who sign up after NADA 2017 will see a rate increase of \$399 / month. Your group will be locked in at \$299 / month.

# Background: PCG Engagement Project

In 2016, I started to share my thoughts about creating a new set of metrics to track consumer engagement on dealership website pages. If you are going to invest in online marketing, don't you deserve reports that show if your website visitors are acting like shoppers?

Once you understand the impact of not knowing engagement -- your advertising blind spot -- you will want to get your website configured to start tracking engagement. The good news is that I can help! You can join the PCG Engagement Project.

Dealership websites have many unique features that prevent a single implementation of Google Tag Manager to count engagement events on all website platforms (i.e. Dealer.com, Dealer eProcess, DealerInspire, etc.). To track engagement on dealership websites we had to address these specific challenges:

- There are over 20 different website platforms used by franchise dealers in the U.S. and each has unique website coding to create their templated designs.
- Each franchise dealership website is different, even from the same website provider. Dealers use a wide variety of third-party tools and plugins.
- Dealership websites and third-party tools were not designed to easily track engagement in Google Tag Manager.
- Not all website providers install and support Google Analytics. Most will install GA upon request but may not support triggering conversion goals for lead forms, calls, and chat sessions.
- Website platforms vary in the number of call-to-action events that they offer on Search Results Pages (SRPs) and Vehicle Detail Pages (VDPs).

PCG built scripts for the seven most popular website platforms first. We are adding support for other website platforms based on demand. The initial scripts that PCG built were focused on typical engagement actions that consumers would take to shop for a vehicle.

## Zero Engagements per Page (ZEPs)

Since we uncovered a significant amount of bot traffic on dealership websites, we also wanted to create a metric that makes it easy to spot visitors that have ZERO engagements when they visit your website. If your dealership is paying an agency to deliver in-market shoppers to your website, should those visitors act like shoppers?

Digital Sharks may not care about the quality of website traffic that they send to your website. For many sharks, quantity is so much more exciting to talk about than quality. To pump up traffic numbers, Digital Sharks may use marketing automation tools (i.e. BOTS) to inflate website traffic.

What percentage of your traffic, that you think is from local consumers, has bot traffic intermixed? Could this explain why increasing website traffic has not resulted in an increase in vehicle sales? There are companies that now focus on telling you precisely how much BOT traffic you have across all your digital campaigns (Orbee.co).

The ZEP metric calculates the percentage of sessions that have ZERO engagement points. Keep in mind that page views do not increase engagement points because bots can click through page links. I will discuss the application of the ZEP metrics in greater detail later in this document.

The quick application is this: If you have campaigns that have a ZEP score higher than 70%, you are paying for very poor quality traffic. If the ZEP score is over 90% you are likely dealing with BOT traffic.

ZEPs also help to clarify bounce rate metrics. If a campaign generates a bounce rate of 70% but the ZEP is 40%, it means that some consumers who visited only one page, did engage with the landing page. This is very important to note, since ZEPs can be used to improve A/B testing of landing page designs.

## Calculating CPE and ZEP

To calculate your Cost per Engagement (CPE) by advertising campaign, you would just need two numbers. You would need to know how much you spent on each campaign and how many engagement events the campaign generated.

Thankfully the CPE and ZEP calculations are automatically generated in [VistaDash](#).



December 1st - 9th											
Campaign	Sessions	Cost	CPE	ZEP	Clicks	Avg. Session Duration	Bounce	% SRP Views	% VDP Views	Cost VDP	Leads Completions
Remarketing - [redacted]	134	\$ 191.78	\$ 0.33	85.07 %	69	02:05	27.61%	80.77%	5.45%	\$11.28	1
Behavioral Targeting - [redacted]	45	\$ 109.48	\$ 3.32	80.00 %	34	00:11	77.78%	94.83%	3.45%	\$54.74	0
Remarketing - [redacted]	24	\$ 69.67	\$ 2.79	79.17 %	24	00:48	70.83%	86.21%	6.9%	\$34.84	0

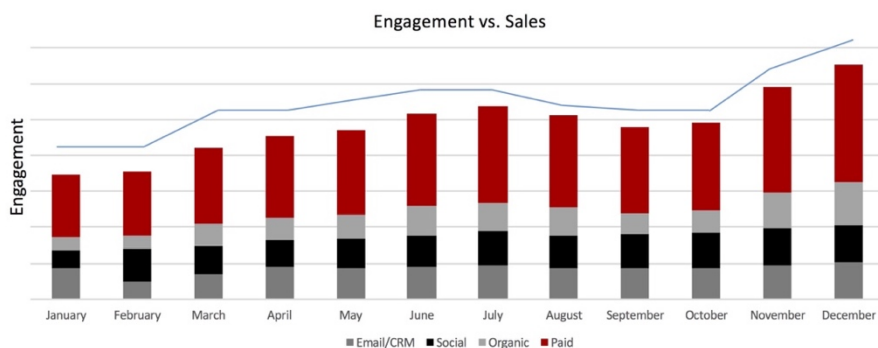
The VistaDash excerpt shown above shows three online advertising campaigns; the CPE and ZEP is calculated for each campaign. It should be of no surprise that some display and remarketing campaign have a high Cost per Engagement (CPE) and dangerously high ZEP scores. The first remarketing campaign is a perfect example of how the PCG engagement metrics help to identify waste.

The first campaign sent 134 “consumers” to the dealership’s website in 9 days. The bounce rate was low (27.61%) but 85% of the visitors never registered a single engagement point. That means that 85% of the “consumers” never scrolled down a page, clicked on a vehicle photo/video, or never clicked on a conversion button associated with a vehicle listing. With this behavior exposed, dealers can now demand that their advertising agencies execute better advertising messages, targeting, and landing page choices.

What I want to make clear is that the marketing metrics you are likely using (i.e. CPC, CTR, Bounce Rate, Impression) are broken and blind . You and your team must insert the new metrics that track the quality of website traffic and measure consumer engagement. When bounce rate is LOW and ZEP is HIGH, this is another signal that your website traffic is filled with BOTS!

## Engagement vs Sales

The goal of the PCG Engagement Project is to produce a simple set of metrics that are aligned with selling more vehicles and/or service. Current advertising metrics (CPC, CTR, Bounce Rate) are not metrics that predict sales; neither is the amount you spend on marketing.



As shown in the representative chart above, I believe that as we refine the Cost per Engagement (CPE) formula and get more third-party vendors to trigger Google events when leads are submitted, we will be able to plot engagement vs. sales. The total engagement on your website should be aligned with selling more cars.

Doesn't that make sense? 90% of the traffic to your website will not convert through a traditional channel. You must stop making marketing decisions based only on the 10% that submit a lead, chat, or call the dealership. If your marketing campaigns are relevant and your website is merchandised properly, then increased engagement will increase sales.

Once your website is tagged with the correct Tag Manager scripts for your website platform, you will be on your way to collecting valuable engagement data. What will hurt your website engagement? Your vehicle inventory, pricing, and merchandising will also have an impact on engagement. I will not go into details on market pricing strategies, but your dealership needs to be competitively priced when consumers arrive on your website. Don't forget—Great photos make a difference!

## **What About “Free” Traffic?**

If you are following the discussion on tracking Cost per Engagement (CPE) you probably asked yourself, “What about my email campaigns that don't have a hard cost?” All traffic sources that don't have a hard cost will be measured by Engagements per Session (EPS). The EPS metrics will allow you to test different non-paid traffic strategies to increase engagement on your website.

As a side note, your marketing agency may call this "Owned Media". This is a term used for audience that you have earned through word of mouth or brand name recognition or former customers. "Earned Media" is any marketing activity you do that costs you money.

Keep in mind that the ZEP metric applies for both paid and earned media. You should be inspecting earned media campaigns to reduce your ZEP percentages. A high ZEP on an existing customer email marketing campaign would likely be due to a wrong landing page being chosen in the email content.

Here is an example of how it would work. You have an email template that you send out each month to advertise your current promotions and OEM incentives. The current design has an EPS score of 7.1, which for this example is average.

Now you redesign the email template for the next month, based on traffic analysis and click paths, and you send out the campaign. This time the email campaign has an EPS score of 12.1. This new template has generated a huge lift in engagement: 70% more engagement points per session. The EPS metric can assist you to improve email templates,



landing page designs, and keywords strategies for all non-paid traffic. This would apply to email blasts, CRM communications, SEO campaigns, and organic social media posts.

## What About Conversions?

If you were reading the list of conversion events carefully, you should have noticed that your website vendors should be tracking traditional conversion metrics in Google Analytics. The mandatory conversion tracking events are:

- Lead form submission
- Phone call conversation (two-way connected speaking)
- Chat conversions
- SMS/Messenger conversions

If you are sloppy about tracking traditional conversions in Google Analytics, you will never have accurate engagement tracking.

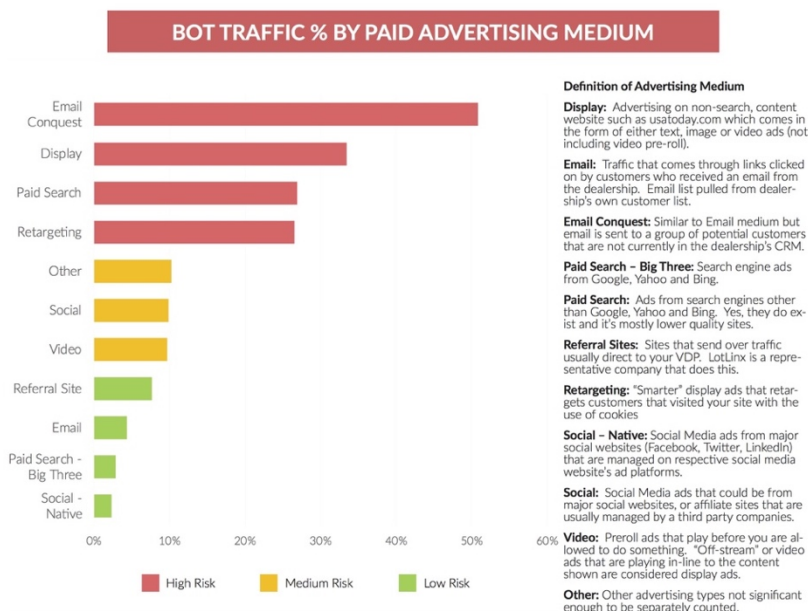


The number one conversion channel for your marketing investments is the phone. With that in mind, you must invest in accurate call tracking. All referral channels should be tracked, not just Google AdWords. The technology that tracks phone conversions for all referral traffic is called Dynamic Number Insertion (DNI). You will absolutely want to get phone conversion tracking right if you want to optimize your marketing investments using CPE, EPS, and ZEP.

## What Can We Expect from Engagement Tracking?

Using our engagement metrics (CPE, ZEP, and EPS) discussed in this chapter, you will be able to optimize your marketing strategy to increase website engagement. These new metrics will also confirm the growing research from other companies regarding the infiltration of BOT traffic in advertising campaigns.

The Q3 2016 Automotive Website Traffic Quality Report documents an alarming trend. Dealers are investing in online marketing channels that have a high percentage of questionable traffic, often associated with BOTS. Paid advertising traffic quality can vary greatly; all agencies are not created equal. If you realized that 20-40% of your paid



advertising investments generate poor quality traffic, with low engagement scores, wouldn't it make sense to get your website tagged with PCG engagement events to know what is working and what is not?

## CPE Engagement Events

Here is a list of some of the events that we are collecting in Google Analytics today, and we have additional events outline in the coming pages.

**PCG works with their VistaDash clients to HANDLE ALL the vendor setups so dealers do not have to get bogged down in the details of setting up engagement tracking.**

- CPE-Financing-Start
- CPE-Get-ePrice
- CPE-Lead-Form-Submit
- CPE-Phone-Call
- CPE-Photo-Gallery-View
- CPE-Schedule-Test-Drive
- CPE-Specifications-Tab
- CPE-Trade-in-Start
- CPE-Scroll
- CPE-Video-Play
- CPE-Chat-Start
- CPE-CarFax-Start
- CPE-PureCars-Start
- CPE-DDC-MyCars-Viewed
- CPE-DDC-MyCars-Saved
- CPE-DDC-MyCars-Alerts

To make our events stand out from other events that your website provider has programmed for your website, all our events start with “CPE-.” The names are designed to be self-explanatory, but let me define a few:

**CPE-Financing-Start** – is a counter that is triggered when a consumer clicks on a button that takes them to an online finance application or first-pencil tool.

**CPE-Get-ePrice** – is a counter that is triggered when a consumer clicks on a “get price” button on your SRP or VDP pages. The button can be named anything you like, but this is the counter for pricing questions that are triggered by a consumer.

**CPE-Lead-Form-Submit** - is a counter that is triggered when a lead form is completed on your website and sent to your CRM.

**CPE-Phone Call** - is a counter that is triggered when a DNI tracked phone call is completed on your website. If your phone tracking software will differentiate between sales, service, and parts calls we have additional metric names that can be used, like our chat metrics.

**CPE-Photo-Gallery-View** – is an important counter that is triggered each time a consumer swipes or clicks to view photos of a vehicle. Viewing photos of a vehicle is highly correlated to an engaged shopper. It’s also related to a higher likelihood of a showroom visit or upcoming conversion.

**CPE-Schedule-Test-Drive** - is a counter that is triggered when a test-drive button is clicked on your website.

**CPE-Specifications-Tab** - is a counter that is triggered when a vehicle specifications tab is clicked on your website.

**CPE-Trade-in-Start** – is a counter that is triggered when a consumer clicks on a button that takes them to an online trade-in tool. If your trade-in software company is committed to tracking engagement, they can also send into Google Analytics an event when the application is finished

**CPE-Scroll** – is a counter that is triggered when a consumer scrolls

down a website page. If a consumer is engaged with a page, they will normally scroll, so we are tracking this activity.

**CPE-CarFax-Start** – is a counter that is triggered when a consumer clicks on a button to read the CarFax for a vehicle.

I hope that this discussion is getting your excited. For the first time, you will be able to measure the shopper engagement on your website pages. You will be able to see which advertising sources and campaign strategies are working to deliver the highest engagement at the lowest cost.

## **Event Tracking for Third-Party Applications (iframes)**

PCG is also working with third-party software developers to record an event in Google Analytics when an engagement or conversion event is triggered by their software. One event that I want to have triggered would occur when their software sends a lead into your CRM.

For example, if you are using eAutoAppraise for your online trade-in tool, when the consumers complete the form a lead is sent to your CRM. We are working with companies like eAutoAppraise, AutoHook, and chat companies to also send an engagement event to your Google Analytics account.

Some of the events that we are tracking for third-party software tools include:

- CPE-Trade-In-Complete
- CPE-Finance-Complete
- CPE-AutoHook-Form-Complete
- CPE-AutoHook-Redemption
- CPE-AutoHook-Vehicle-Sold
- CPE-Service-Appt-Complete
- CPE-Parts-Order-Complete
- Edmunds-Vehicle-Report-Start
- Edmunds-Read-Full-Review-Start
- Edmunds-Explore-Compare-Start

Certain events will be named generically like CPE-Trade-In-

Complete because they will be used for any trade-in software. AutoHook has their own event name because they are a unique software solution in a class by itself.

Please make sure that all your vendor partners use a compliant CPE event name for the list above. If you need a new event name created, have them contact PCG immediately.

## **Event Tracking for Chat**

The chat events that we will be asking each chat company to provide are listed as follows:

- CPE-Chat-Start-Sales
- CPE-Chat-Start-Service
- CPE-Chat-Start-Parts
- CPE-Chat-Engage
- CPE-Chat-Complete-Sales
- CPE-Chat-Complete-Sales-With-Appointment-Set
- CPE-Chat-Complete-Service
- CPE-Chat-Complete-Service-With-Appointment-Set
- CPE-Chat-Complete-Parts
- CPE-Chat-Complete\*

At a minimum, we would want each chat company to trigger the **CPE-Chat-Complete** event when they submit a lead to the dealership's CRM platform.

However, chat companies that we have spoken with realize that they can EXPAND the engagement measurement by sending additional details to Google Analytics about the consumer chat session. Some chat services do not differentiate between sales, service, and parts but some do. With that in mind, we can explain the meaning of these events to help chat companies partner with PCG.

**CPE-Chat-Start** – is a counter that is triggered when a consumer starts a chat session. If the chat operator can differentiate the type of chat (sales, service, parts), we have a specific start event for each inquiry

type, and their names are:

- CPE-Chat-Start-Sales
- CPE-Chat-Start-Service
- CPE-Chat-Start-Parts

*If the chat company does not differentiate the type of chat session, then they would just trigger the CPE-Chat-Start event with a value of one.*

**CPE-Chat-Engage** – is a counter that is triggered each time a consumer answers back to your chat operator. This will allow us to see how engaged the consumer was with the chat operator.

When the session ends, the chat software company would trigger with event with the number of engagements. For example, if the consumer sent responses 10 times, the event would have the value of 10.

**CPE-Chat-Complete** – is a counter that is triggered when a chat platform sends a lead into your CRM. This event is also available for sales, service, and parts leads.

- CPE-Chat-Complete-Sales
- CPE-Chat-Complete-Service
- CPE-Chat-Complete-Parts

*If the chat company does not differentiate the type of chat session, then they would just trigger the CPE-Chat-Complete event with a value of one.*

**NEW**

**CPE-Chat-Complete-Sales-With-Appointment-Set** – and the event for service (CPE-Chat-Complete-Service-With-Appointment-Set) will be used by chat companies that will indicate whether the lead that is sent to the CRM has a firm appointment set.

If that is set, the event will have a higher weighting because it increases the likelihood that the consumer will come to the dealership.

## Event Tracking for Calls and Text Messaging

Here are the events that will be required for companies that provide DNI and Text Enabled phone numbers:

- CPE-Call-Confirmed-Sales
- CPE-Call-Confirmed-Sales-With-Appointment-Set
- CPE-Call-Confirmed-Service
- CPE-Call-Confirmed-Service-With-Appointment-Set
  
- CPE-Text-Confirmed-Sales
- CPE-Text-Confirmed-Sales-With-Appointment-Set
- CPE-Text-Confirmed-Service
- CPE-Text-Confirmed-Service-With-Appointment-Set

Companies that have engaged with PCG to support this initiative include CallRevu.com and CarWars.com.



## **Getting Your Dealership/Software Solution Setup with Engagement Tracking**

Any existing VistaDash dealer that wants to start tracking engagement to leverage the new metrics of CPE, EPS, and ZEP will need to contact their VistaDash account manager.

Dealers who are not currently a VistaDash client should call Dan Webb at 732-500-1081 to sign up for our dashboard software.

Vendor who would like assistance with configuring their software to be recognized in VistaDash should contact Shawn Hoagland or Brian Pasch at 732-450-8200.