

Unexpected Traffic Acquisition Bucketing

A common question the Analytics team receives is, “Why does (organic) show as Campaign name in GA4?” or “Why is my email traffic showing up as unassigned?” Sometimes traffic acquisition doesn’t make sense or is totally different than what you are expecting to see. There are several factors that can contribute to this happening, not just for paid traffic but for any kind of traffic. Below, we’ve outlined some of the most common reasons, as well as possible solutions to help resolve the issue.

Missing or Incorrect Campaign Tagging:

Correct campaign tagging is essential for paid advertising to be attributed accurately. If Google cannot determine attribution, the traffic will be bucketed as “Unassigned.”

- Auto-tagging not enabled: For Google Ads, ensure auto-tagging is enabled to automatically append campaign parameters to URLs.
- Manual tagging errors: If manually tagging URLs, double-check for accuracy and consistency in campaign parameters.
- Third-party ad platforms: Verify proper integration with GA4 and accurate campaign tagging for non-Google platforms

Possible solution:

If you suspect this might be the issue, check with the DigAd team or third-party providing services and ask them to audit tagging and integration to ensure everything is set up correctly. Unfortunately, this will only fix the issue going forward, but can help ensure proper traffic bucketing in the future.

Additional Resources:

- [GA4 Default Channel Groupings](#)
- [GA4 UTM/URL Builder](#)

UTM Parameters Mismatch:

Capitalization and naming conventions need to be consistent across UTMs.

- Case sensitivity: UTM parameters are case-sensitive. Ensure consistency in capitalization (e.g., "utm_source" vs. "UTM_Source").
- Typos or misspellings: Check for any errors in parameter names or values.

Possible solution:

This is another issue that can be resolved by auditing tagging and UTM parameters for consistency. Again, this will only fix the issue going forward, but can help ensure proper traffic bucketing in the future.

Additional Resources:

- [GA4 Default Channel Groupings](#)
- [GA4 UTM/URL Builder](#)



URL Rewriting or Shortening:

- URL shorteners: Some shorteners can strip campaign parameters.
- Internal redirects: Review any internal redirects that might inadvertently remove campaign data.

Possible solution:

One way to check for redirects is to enter the full URL with the UTM or the the shortened URL in your browser and watch to see what happens to it when the page is loaded. If it redirects to another slug without the UTM parameters, there is a good chance a redirect is in place. For DI sites, support can help remove/update redirects, so we would recommend opening a case to have the issue investigated. If your site is on another platform, you will have to reach out to your website provider or person who set up your redirects to have this looked into.

If the URL shortener in use is stripping campaign parameters, use a shortener that preserves UTMs or consider alternatives.

Browser Extensions or Privacy Settings:

All browser elements need to be configured to allow proper tracking.

- Ad blockers or privacy extensions: Some of these might interfere with tracking parameters
- Privacy settings: User-configured browser privacy settings might block certain tracking elements.

Possible solution:

Unfortunately, you cannot control how users are configuring their privacy settings or what extensions they're using. You can do testing to try to determine if ad blockers or privacy extensions may be causing issues, but this will only give you a possible reason, not a fix.

Data Processing Delays:

Unlike, Universal Analytics, GA4 does not process data instantaneously. Google Analytics 4 may take up to 72 hours (3 days) to fully process data.

- Recent campaign launches: Allow up to 24 hours for data to process and reflect correctly in reports.
- Sampling: GA4 might use data sampling for large datasets. This could potentially affect campaign attribution.

Possible solution:

Be mindful of time frames when looking at data and creating reports. A general guideline to follow is to avoid using the last three days when selecting a time frame to analyze.



These are just some of the reasons traffic acquisition data might be incorrectly bucketed, not an exhaustive list of everything that could happen. One of the most common issues the DI Analytics team sees is with incorrect tagging and UTM implementation, so that is a good place to start if paid traffic looks unusual.

Dealer Inspire clients can reach out to their Performance Manager or Support for further assistance if needed. Non-DI clients should follow up with their website, DigAd or marketing vendor for assistance.