A REFERENCE ARCHITECTURE FOR SERVICE BUSINESSES

The Lead Quality Stack.

Eight layers, one architecture. The exact lead quality stack I rebuild every service-business ad account around. No email gate.

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Working directly with founders. A decade in. Independent since 2024.

The Architecture, at a glance.

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01 The CRM

Salesforce / HubSpot / Pipedrive / GoHighLevel. The source of truth for leads, qualification stage, and closed-won. Everything downstream depends on the CRM data being clean.

02 GTM web

Browser-side tag manager. Fires form-submission and engagement events client-side.

03 Server-side container

First-party endpoint. Proxy for every platform. The spine.

↓

04 GA4

Behavioral analytics. Not the source of truth for ad performance. Used for form/call event modeling, audience export, and triangulation.

05 Call tracking

WhatConverts / CallRail. Dynamic number insertion. Calls recorded, transcribed, scored. The lead-gen equivalent of a catalog feed.

06 Google Ads

Enhanced Conversions for Leads + sCAPI. Smart Bidding tuned to qualified leads.

07 Meta + paid social

On-platform lead-gen forms + CAPI. Lookalikes seeded from closed-won, not all leads.

↑

08 Closed-won feedback

Offline conversion imports from CRM into Google Ads + Meta. Smart Bidding optimizes for revenue, not lead volume. Plus the written Monday summary.

Direction of data flow: 01 (the CRM) is the source of truth for leads + closed-won. 02 (browser GTM) fires form-submission and engagement events client-side. 03 (server container) is the first-party proxy. 04 GA4 reads behaviorally. 05 Call tracking captures voice as a conversion. 06/07 Google Ads + Meta consume conversions for bidding. 08 closes the loop: CRM closed-won imports back into ad platforms upstream so Smart Bidding optimizes for revenue, not lead volume.

Built for the tracking lead at a $5K to $200K Shopify brand.

Whether that lead is the founder, the in-house marketer, or a contracted developer. The doc is opinionated. Read the architecture poster on page 2 once, then dip into individual layers as needed.

01

It is a reference, not a tutorial.

The exact menu paths and code snippets live in vendor docs. This document tells you what to build, what order to build it in, and what the failure modes look like in 2026.

02

It assumes you have a CRM.

The architecture works for any CRM with an API or webhook surface. Salesforce, HubSpot, Pipedrive, GoHighLevel, Zoho. If your CRM does not expose webhooks for stage transitions and closed-won, the L08 feedback loop breaks. Migrate before building the rest.

03

Every layer has a fixed shape.

Each of the eight layers gets two pages. A summary on the opener (what it is, what it costs you when it breaks). A tactic page with symptom, why it bleeds, five minute check, the fix, and an illustration of the pattern.

04

Page 21 is the cheat sheet.

The dedup and event-ID reference table on page 21 is the single highest-value page in this document. If your engineering team only reads one page, point them there.

Every service business I audit has a lead quality problem before it has a media problem.

The two compound. Smart Bidding optimizes against whatever signal you give it. Give it raw form fills and it will find you cheap junk leads. Give it closed-won and it will find you the closest fit to your actual customer. Most accounts give it the first signal and call the channel broken when the leads do not close.

The fix is not a better media buyer. The fix is the architecture below. Once it is in, every dollar of paid spend gets cleaner signal, every campaign optimizes against qualified leads (not raw form fills), and the reporting ties to closed-won deals from your CRM instead of platform-reported conversions.

Three rules that compress everything in this document:

01 **The CRM is the source of truth, the server container is the spine.** Smart Bidding reads from the spine. The spine reads from the CRM. If either is dirty, every platform downstream is dirty.

02 **Closed-won feedback is the unique-to-lead-gen mechanism.** Without offline conversion imports tying CRM closed-won back to the original gclid + fbclid, Smart Bidding optimizes for cheap form fills instead of clients who close.

03 **Reporting is closed-won, not lead volume.** The Monday summary tied to deals that closed beats the dashboard showing form-fill counts that nobody trusts.

The CRM is the source of truth.

Salesforce, HubSpot, Pipedrive, GoHighLevel, Zoho. The CRM emits the canonical events: leads, qualification stage transitions, closed-won, customer LTV. Everything downstream is a copy. If the CRM is wrong, every downstream platform is wrong. This is also where most service businesses lose Smart Bidding signal: the closed-won event never makes it back to the ad platforms.

THE NON-NEGOTIABLE

Your CRM must expose **webhooks or an API** for stage transitions and closed-won events. Without that, Layer 08 (the closed-won feedback loop) cannot fire. If your current CRM does not have this, migrate before building the rest of the stack. Modern CRMs all have it. Spreadsheets and email-only setups do not.

Capture lead source on every record. Expose a closed-won webhook.

CRM · LEAD SOURCE + WEBHOOK

SYMPTOM

Your CRM has lead records, but the source field is mostly empty or set to "Website" for everything. Stage transitions are not timestamped. Closed-won deals are not exposed via webhook. The deal data lives only inside the CRM and never makes it back to Google Ads or Meta.

WHY IT BLEEDS

Without lead source captured per record, you cannot attribute closed-won back to the ad campaign that produced it. Without closed-won webhooks, Layer 08 (offline conversion imports) cannot fire. Smart Bidding then optimizes against form fills only, finds you the cheapest junk leads, and your CPL looks great while CAC silently rises.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

```
CRM → Random lead from last week → Source / UTM fields
Pull a recent paid lead. If the source field is empty, generic, or only shows "Google" without the gclid, this layer is broken.
```

THE FIX

Capture full attribution on every form and wire the webhook for closed-won.

01 Add hidden form fields for utm_source, utm_medium, utm_campaign, gclid, fbclid. Capture them from URL params on every form submission.

02 Map them to CRM fields on the lead record. Make them required by mapping logic, not user input.

03 Stand up a webhook (or use the native CRM integration) that fires on stage transition to "closed-won" with the original gclid + fbclid in the payload.

04 Test by submitting a sandbox lead with utm_source=test and verifying it lands in the CRM with all attribution intact.

ONE ACCOUNT (N = 1)

A medical practice I moved to a new site. Five redirects were stripping the gclid from about a quarter of its paid clicks, and every one of them still returned a 200. *I carried the query string through each redirect and re-tested with a tagged URL. The gclid now survives every hop.*

GTM web does browser-side only.

The browser GTM container fires events client-side. Form submissions, click events, page views, scroll depth, engagement signals. Most teams have GTM web. Most teams stop there. The miss is treating GTM web as the only tag manager. Every platform you actually care about (Google Ads, Meta, GA4) should be receiving from the server container, not the browser, with the browser as a deduped backup.

THE PATTERN

Browser GTM owns: page views, scroll depth, button clicks, engagement signals on service pages. Server container owns: form submissions (the actual conversion event), qualified-call events from L05, closed-won imports from the CRM. The split keeps the heavy lifting on the server where Smart Bidding can read it cleanly.

Split the work between web and server.

GTM WEB CONTAINER

SYMPTOM

Your GTM web container fires every form-submission event from the browser. Server-side container does not exist or is misconfigured. Google Ads is importing form submissions via the GA4 link with no direct conversion API.

WHY IT BLEEDS

iOS Safari ITP and ad blockers eat browser pixel data. Form submissions get under-reported, and how much depends on the audience mix. Smart Bidding optimizes against a fictional, smaller pool of leads. CPL looks worse than it is, you scale slower than you should.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

GTM web container → Tags

```
If your form-submission event is
firing as a browser tag with no
server-side equivalent, this layer is
misconfigured.
```

THE FIX

Form submissions fire from the server. Keep engagement on browser.

01 Stand up the server-side container (Layer 03).

02 Move form-submission and qualified-call events to fire from the server.

03 Keep the browser tags firing in parallel with deduplication via event_id.

04 After two weeks, compare server vs browser counts. The server number is the truth.

ILLUSTRATION, NOT A CLIENT RESULT

Picture a contractor whose form events fire only in the browser. *Ad blockers and Safari's tracking limits drop some of those events, so Google Ads records fewer leads than the CRM holds. Moving the form event server-side closes that gap. Same leads, counted more completely.*

The server container is the spine.

The server-side container is where every platform downstream reads from. It is the first-party proxy. It is the only layer in this entire architecture that you cannot skip and still have a working stack in 2026.

PICK ONE AND COMMIT

Stape ($120 to $300/mo, fastest setup, Shopify-friendly), **Google Cloud Platform GTM SS** ($250 to $500/mo, full control, requires devops), or **Elevar managed** ($300+/mo, white-glove, opinionated). Don't try to roll your own server endpoint. The maintenance burden is not worth saving $200 a month.

Put the container on a first-party custom subdomain.

STAPE · GCP · ELEVAR

SYMPTOM

Server container exists but lives on the vendor's default subdomain (e.g. .stape.io or .gcp-something). Cookies set there are third-party, dropped by Safari, and the whole point of server-side is wasted.

WHY IT BLEEDS

The reason server-side beats browser is the first-party cookie context. If your container is on a vendor subdomain, browsers treat it as third-party and you lose much of the signal you thought you were capturing.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

```
Browser → DevTools → Network tab
Find your sGTM endpoint. If the
domain is not your own (e.g.
tracking.yourbrand.com), this layer
is misconfigured.
```

THE FIX

CNAME a subdomain to the server endpoint.

01 Pick a subdomain. tracking.yourbrand.com or sgtm.yourbrand.com both work.

02 CNAME it to your server container endpoint (Stape / GCP / Elevar).

03 Update your GTM web tags to send to the new subdomain.

04 Verify in browser DevTools that requests now go to your domain.

ILLUSTRATION, NOT A CLIENT RESULT

Picture a practice with a server-side container set up correctly but running on the vendor's default subdomain. ***Browsers treat that as third-party traffic and block more of it. Pointing a CNAME at a first-party subdomain is a short DNS change that lets more events through.***

GA4 is for behavioral analytics, not attribution.

GA4 is for behavioral cohorts: which service pages produce form submissions, which campaigns drive call volume, which traffic sources correlate with high-quality leads. It is not the place to grade ad performance against your CRM closed-won number. Those numbers will never agree, because GA4 sessionizes and your CRM counts deals. Wire GA4 cleanly, then judge ad performance from inside the ad platforms with closed-won imported as the conversion event.

THE MISMATCH NOBODY FIXES

Founders ask "why don't GA4 lead numbers and our CRM lead numbers match?" They never will. GA4 attributes by session and dedupes its own way. Your CRM just counts records. The right answer is to stop comparing them and use each for its actual purpose: GA4 for behavioral cohorts, the CRM for revenue truth.

Wire GA4 for behavior. Wire Google Ads for conversion.

GA4 · KEY EVENTS

SYMPTOM

Google Ads is importing GA4 conversions. The two systems show different numbers. Founder asks every Monday which one to trust.

WHY IT BLEEDS

GA4-imported conversions lag, and GA4 credits them by its own attribution rules rather than Google Ads' rules, so they usually come in lower than a direct conversion API import. Smart Bidding optimizes against incomplete signal. CPA looks worse than it is, you scale slower than you should.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

```
Google Ads → Goals → Conversions
If your primary purchase conversion is sourced from "Google Analytics 4", this layer needs work. Server-side conversion API should be primary; GA4 is a backup.
```

THE FIX

Server CAPI is primary, GA4 is secondary, and the GA4-Ads link feeds audiences only.

01 Set up a server-side purchase conversion in Google Ads via the conversion API.

02 Mark it as primary. Demote the GA4-imported version to secondary.

03 Keep the GA4-Ads link, but use it for audience export only, not conversions.

04 After 14 days, check that the new primary conversion count is at least as high as the GA4 number was. If it is lower, check the server tag before going further.

ILLUSTRATION, NOT A CLIENT RESULT

Picture a lead-gen account importing conversions from GA4 only. *Anything GA4 loses to Safari or an ad blocker never reaches Google Ads. Sending the lead server-side gives bidding the same leads, collected at a layer the browser can't block.*

Most service-business leads come from phone calls.

Most service businesses get more leads from calls than from form fills. Most of them have zero call tracking wired into Ads. WhatConverts (or CallRail) installs dynamic number insertion on the site so every paid-traffic visitor sees a unique trackable number. Calls get recorded, transcribed, and quality-scored. The qualified-call event fires into GTM, then the server container, then Google Ads + GA4. Without this layer, every call that starts on your website is invisible to Smart Bidding.

THE SCORING RUBRIC

Quality scoring is the difference between counting "we got 80 calls" and counting "we got 80 calls, 23 of which qualified." Author the rubric to your service lines: did the caller mention a service we offer, did they have budget context, did they book a follow-up. Score the transcripts within 48 hours. Push only the qualified-call event into the conversion stream.

WhatConverts with dynamic number insertion. Score every paid call within 48 hours.

WHATCONVERTS · CALLRAIL

SYMPTOM

Phone number on the site is static. Either no call tracking installed at all, or call tracking installed but not feeding events into Ads. Google Ads Smart Bidding optimizes against form fills only, missing the calls entirely.

WHY IT BLEEDS

27 of the 28 lead-gen accounts I manage bid on calls (30 days to October 21, 2026). When Smart Bidding can't see the call volume, it under-bids on the keywords actually producing your best leads. CPL looks bad on those campaigns, you cut spend, you starve your highest-intent traffic.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

```
Site phone number → Click and verify
If the same phone number renders for every paid-traffic visitor (no dynamic number swap based on UTM source), call tracking is not installed. If it swaps but the call event is not a conversion in Google Ads, it is installed but not wired in.
```

THE FIX

Use dynamic number insertion, quality-score each call within 48 hours and push only the qualified ones.

01 Install WhatConverts (or CallRail) with dynamic number insertion driven by UTM + gclid.

02 Author a quality-scoring rubric tuned to your service lines (3 to 5 yes/no criteria).

03 Process call transcripts within 48 hours. Mark each call qualified or junk.

04 Push only qualified-call events through GTM → server container → Google Ads + GA4. Treat them as the same conversion as form submissions.

ILLUSTRATION, NOT A CLIENT RESULT

Picture a contractor running ads with no call tracking. ***Smart Bidding sees the form fills but not the calls, so it under-bids on the keywords that make the phone ring. Call tracking with quality scoring gives it the qualified calls to bid toward.***

Google Ads needs Enhanced Conversions for Leads on every action.

Server-side conversion API is the primary input. Enhanced Conversions for Leads is the multiplier. Together they recover conversions that would otherwise be lost to cookie loss, ITP, and consent denials. Without both, Smart Bidding is making decisions on a fraction of the actual lead signal. One primary conversion: qualified lead, not raw form fill.

CONSENT MODE V2 + EEA

If you take any traffic from the EU or UK, Consent Mode v2 is required. Without it Google throttles delivery and reporting. Implementation is one config change in your CMP (Cookiebot, OneTrust, Consentmanager) plus one parameter in your GTM container. Do not skip it because you "barely take EU traffic."

Enhanced Conversions for Leads on every action. One primary, all others secondary.

GOOGLE ADS · CONVERSIONS

SYMPTOM

Enhanced Conversions for Leads is "enabled" in Google Ads but firing inconsistently. Multiple form-submission actions all set to primary. Smart Bidding split-tests against fragmented signal and underperforms.

WHY IT BLEEDS

Multiple primary conversions split the bidding signal. Smart Bidding cannot tell whether the goal is form-fills, callbacks, downloads, or qualified leads. It picks the cheapest of the bunch and optimizes against that. Quality drops, lead volume rises, CAC quietly worsens.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

Google Ads → Goals → Conversions → Diagnostics

If Enhanced Conversions for Leads diagnostic shows anything other than green, it is not actually firing. Also: count your primary actions. There should be exactly one. Qualified lead, not raw form fill.

THE FIX

Make qualified lead the one primary, enhance every action and upload hashed identity.

01 Enable Enhanced Conversions for Leads on every action via the Google Ads tag, not GTM.

02 Pick one primary conversion: qualified lead (the L05 quality-scored event). Demote raw form fills + add-to-cart equivalents to secondary.

03 Push hashed email and phone through the server container so the Enhanced Conversions match rate stays above 80%.

04 Run for 14 days. Check the EC diagnostic stays green and Smart Bidding has rebalanced toward the qualified-lead signal.

ONE ACCOUNT (N = 1)

An HVAC shop in my July 2026 benchmark reported a 67% conversion rate, because taps on its phone number were counting as calls. *With most of those taps taken out of the primary conversion, it reported 6.3% in Q3 2026, and its dashboard cost per lead went up. The account was finally counting leads instead of taps.*

Meta runs on the same spine. Lookalikes from closed-won, not all leads.

Conversions API on every event. Browser pixel fires the same form-submission and qualified-call events with an event_id so Meta can dedupe them. The lookalike audience is built from closed-won customers exported from your CRM, not from raw lead lists. The lookalike is bounded by the quality of the seed. Seed it with junk leads and Meta finds you more junk leads.

WHEN META MAKES SENSE FOR SERVICE BRANDS

Meta is high-intent for some service verticals (med spa, dental, home services, residential remodel), low-intent for others (B2B SaaS, financial advisory, complex professional services). When it fits, on-platform lead-gen forms are lower friction than off-site landing pages. When it does not fit, do not force it. Google Search alone runs the program for plenty of accounts.

On-platform lead forms. CAPI sharing event_id. Lookalikes from closed-won.

META LEAD FORMS · CAPI

SYMPTOM

Meta lead-gen ads use off-site landing pages with browser-pixel-only conversion tracking. Lookalike audiences are built from "all leads" or "all form fills" without quality filtering. CAPI is not configured.

WHY IT BLEEDS

Off-site landing pages usually convert lower than on-platform forms (the friction of leaving Meta to fill out a form is real). Lookalikes seeded from raw lead lists find you more raw leads, mostly junk. Without CAPI you lose part of your conversion attribution to ad blockers and ITP.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

Meta Ads Manager → Audiences → Lookalikes

If your top-performing lookalike was seeded from "Website Visitors" or "All Leads" instead of an uploaded list of actual closed-won customers, the lookalike is bounded by the quality of the seed. Refresh from CRM closed-won.

THE FIX

Run on-platform lead forms, send CAPI on every event and build lookalikes from CRM closed-won.

01 Replace off-site landing pages with on-platform Meta lead-gen forms where the form is short (3 to 5 fields max).

02 Wire CAPI to receive form-submission and qualified-lead events from your server container with shared event_id for dedup.

03 Export closed-won customers from your CRM monthly. Upload as a Custom Audience. Build a 1% lookalike from that audience.

04 Exclude existing customers from prospecting campaigns. Pure waste otherwise.

ILLUSTRATION, NOT A CLIENT RESULT

Picture a clinic seeding Meta lookalikes from "all form fills." *Meta learns to find people who fill out forms, not people who book. Seeding from a list of customers who actually booked points it at the right people.*

The closed-won loop is the unique-to-lead-gen mechanism.

When a lead becomes a closed-won deal in the CRM, that win gets imported back into Google Ads and Meta as an offline conversion (with the original gclid and fbclid attached). Smart Bidding then optimizes against revenue, not lead volume. This is the layer that closes the loop. Without it, the algorithm finds you the cheapest form fills (which are usually the worst leads). With it, the algorithm finds you the closest fit to your actual closed-won customer.

THE LAG TOLERANCE

Service-business sales cycles are longer than ecom. A lead that came in 60 days ago might just now be closing. Set up the closed-won import to look back at least 90 days (or your typical sales cycle plus 30 percent). Smart Bidding handles the lag fine. Most account managers do not configure for it, so deals that close after the window never reach the ad platform.

Wire the offline conversion import and tie reporting to closed-won.

OFFLINE CONV. IMPORTS + REPORTING

SYMPTOM

Closed-won deals live only inside the CRM. Google Ads and Meta have no idea which form fills became actual clients. The agency reports lead volume on Mondays. The partners ask "but how many closed?" The agency does not know.

WHY IT BLEEDS

Smart Bidding is a black box that optimizes against the conversion signal you give it. If the only signal it sees is form fills, it goes and finds you cheaper form fills. The closed-won feedback loop tells it which form fills actually became revenue. Without that loop, you are paying the algorithm to chase volume, not value.

FIVE MINUTE CHECK

Google Ads → Goals → Conversions

Look for a conversion action named "Closed-won" or "Imported lead" with a recent import date. If it does not exist, the offline conversion import is not wired. Same for Meta: check Events Manager for an offline event source from your CRM.

THE FIX

CRM → Google + Meta offline conversion imports, with the Monday summary tied to closed-won.

01 Wire the CRM closed-won webhook to Google Ads (via Zapier or a Cloud Function). Pass the original gclid + deal ID.

02 Wire the same closed-won event to Meta via the offline conversions API.

03 Create a new Google Ads conversion action ("Closed-won lead") and demote the form-fill conversion to secondary. Smart Bidding now optimizes against the imported event.

04 Write the Monday summary tied to closed-won deals (not raw lead volume) plus pipeline movement (stage transitions). Under 300 words.

FROM MY ACCOUNTS

Across the 28 lead-gen Google Ads accounts I manage, 27 bid on calls and only 6 send any offline conversion back to Google (30 days to October 21, 2026). ***So I start with a WhatConverts-qualified call or a booked appointment. A CRM import comes later, only where the CRM records the outcome.***

Event dedup contract, by platform.

If your engineering team only reads one page in this document, point them here. The dedup key per platform for lead-gen events. Use these IDs consistently across browser and server events for form submissions, qualified-call events, and closed-won imports.

PLATFORM	DEDUP KEY	NOTES
Meta	`event_id`	Generate per form submission and per qualified call in sGTM. Pass to both browser pixel and CAPI. Verify in Events Manager Test Events.
Google Ads	`gclid + lead_id`	CRM deal ID is the dedup key. Do not import the same closed-won twice for the same gclid + deal_id pair.
GA4	`lead_id`	Custom event with lead_id as the canonical identifier. Same event from server and browser dedupes by ID.
TikTok	`event_id`	Same pattern as Meta. Pass event_id from sGTM to both Pixel and Events API.
Pinterest	`event_id`	Same pattern. Pinterest CAPI added in 2024, dedup behavior matches Meta.
Microsoft Ads	`UET tag conversion ID`	UET fires browser-side. Server-side via Microsoft CAPI uses the same conversion ID for dedup.
CRM	`deal_id + gclid`	The CRM is the source of truth. The deal_id is canonical for offline imports into Google Ads + Meta.

THE PATTERN THAT WORKS ACROSS EVERY PLATFORM

Generate one event_id per real-world event in your server-side container (one per form submission, one per qualified call, one per closed-won import from the CRM). Pass it to every platform you fire to (browser AND server). Each platform dedups on that ID. Generate IDs once, use them everywhere.

What this PDF does not cover.

Three things sit one layer deeper than this stack. They are real and worth doing eventually. They are not in scope here because the eight layers above need to be solid first.

Customer data platforms (Segment, RudderStack)

If you are at $5M+/year and have multiple data destinations (CRM, warehouse, support tools, multiple marketing platforms), a CDP becomes the right answer. Below that scale, the server-side container plus the CRM is the CDP. Do not add a layer you do not need.

Lead scoring at the warehouse layer (BigQuery + dbt)

For service businesses doing more than 500 leads/mo across multiple service lines, modeling lead quality at the warehouse layer (cross-referencing CRM stage progression with paid-traffic source) becomes the right answer. Below that volume, the L05 manual scoring rubric does the work. Do not bolt on a data warehouse before you need one.

Multi-channel attribution at scale (MMM, MTA)

The right answer above $200K/mo in spend across multiple channels. Below that, attribution model selection inside Google Ads + Meta plus the closed-won feedback loop is sufficient. MMM at smaller scales is statistically noisy and produces decisions you would have made anyway.

Send the three above to a CDP-specialist consultancy or a data engineering firm. They are not the eight layers in this doc. Do not try to bolt them on before the eight layers above are solid.

If you'd rather not rebuild this alone.

I rebuild this exact stack for a small number of service businesses each quarter. Not a quote. Not a discovery deck. A working lead-quality architecture inside your accounts.

- **A ranked, screenshotted list** of every layer in your current stack and what's broken.
- **The exact migration path** from your current setup to the eight layers above, in priority order.
- **A 30 day rebuild plan** with task owners (yours or mine) and rough ETAs.
- **Honest take** on whether you should DIY, hire your dev team, or bring me in.

Send me read-only access for the free written audit.

5 TO 7 PAGES, WRITTEN BY ME, BACK WITHIN 24 HOURS OF ACCESS. NO CALL NEEDED.

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Glossary.

If you handed this PDF to your developer or your in-house operations lead and one of these landed unfamiliar, the page is here.

CAPI

Conversions API. Server-side endpoint for sending event data to Meta, TikTok, Pinterest. Replaces / complements browser pixel.

CMP

Consent Management Platform. Cookiebot, OneTrust, Consentmanager. Required for EEA traffic.

CMv2

Consent Mode v2. Google's framework for adjusting tag behavior based on user consent. Required as of 2024 for EEA traffic to Google Ads.

EC4L

Enhanced Conversions for Leads. Google Ads feature that hashes user-provided data (email, phone) for higher conversion match rates on form-submission and qualified-lead events.

event_id

Unique identifier per event used to dedupe between browser pixel and server-side CAPI. Generate in sGTM.

gclid / fbclid

Google Click Identifier / Facebook Click Identifier. URL parameters appended to ad clicks for downstream attribution. Capture both on every form submission so closed-won feedback can route correctly.

GTM

Google Tag Manager. Browser tag manager. The web container.

GTM SS / sGTM

Google Tag Manager Server-Side. The server container that proxies data to platforms.

ITP

Intelligent Tracking Prevention. Safari's privacy framework that limits cross-site cookies and breaks browser-side tracking.

MMM / MTA

Marketing Mix Modeling / Multi-Touch Attribution. Statistical modeling of marketing spend impact on revenue. Higher-order analytics, useful at $200K+/mo in spend.

tCPA / tROAS

Target Cost Per Acquisition / Target Return On Ad Spend. Smart Bidding strategies in Google Ads.

UET

Universal Event Tracking. Microsoft Ads tracking tag (Bing).

WhatConverts / CallRail

Call tracking platforms. Dynamic number insertion shows different phone numbers to different paid-traffic visitors so calls can be attributed back to the campaign that produced them.

DNI

Dynamic Number Insertion. The mechanism call tracking uses to swap phone numbers based on UTM source / gclid / fbclid.

Offline conversion import

The mechanism for sending CRM closed-won events back into Google Ads and Meta with the original gclid + fbclid attached. The unique-to-lead-gen layer that closes the loop.

Smart Bidding optimizes against the signal you give it. Closed-won is the right signal.

More spend does not fix unqualified leads. A new agency does not either. The eight layers above are the architecture every service business at $5K to $100K per month in paid acquisition needs to have right before scaling spend. The accounts that win the next two years are the ones that close the closed-won feedback loop first.

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