Newsletter
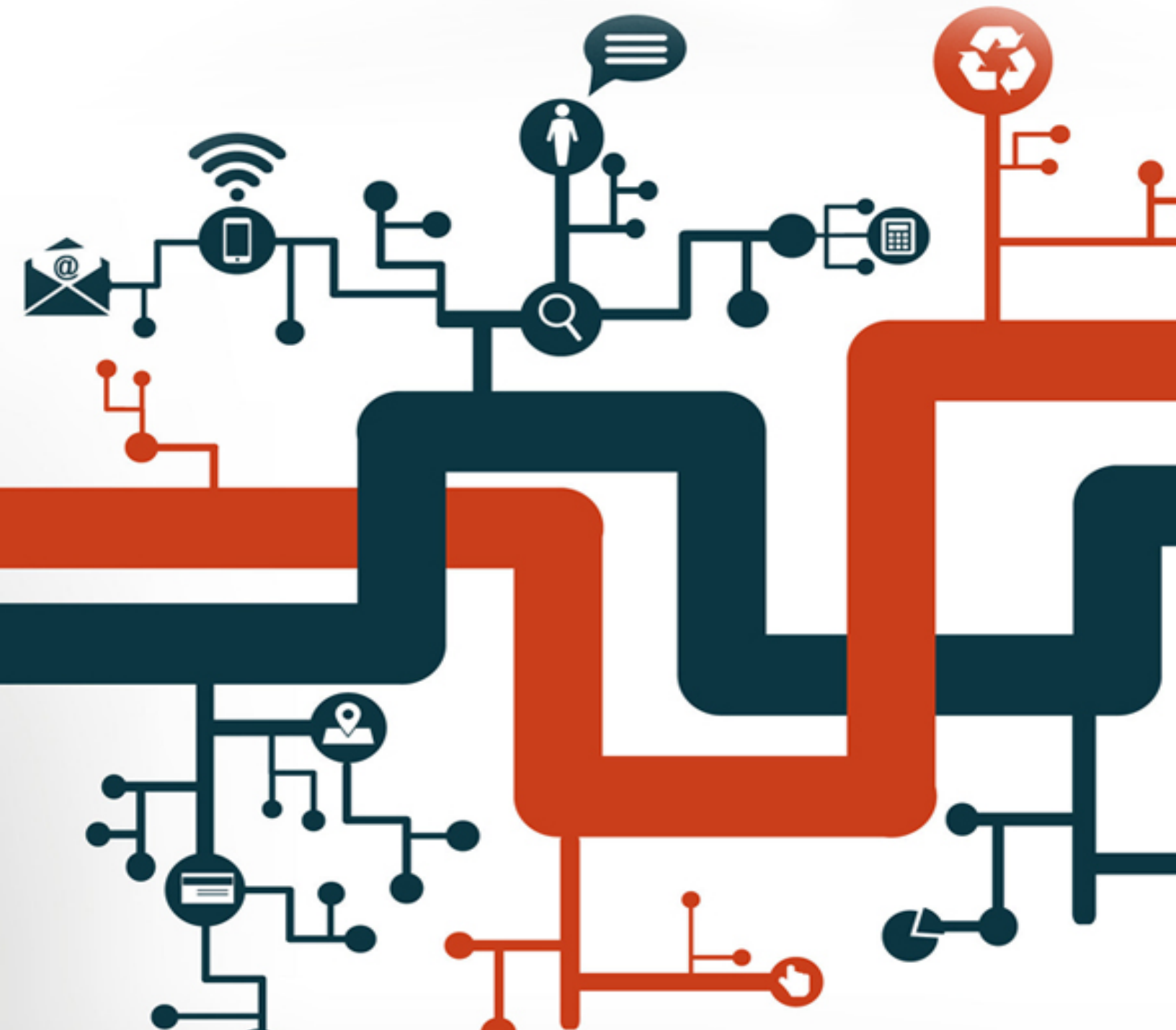
November 2013

Google Search   I'm Feeling Lucky

Index

01. THE BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING CALL TRACKING FOR YOUR BUSINESS

What is call tracking?

Basically, call tracking is an easy and effective way to know which marketing methods and advertising campaigns are working, and which aren't, by tracking the number of phone calls generated by a campaign.

If all leads and sales came from online form conversions, it would be easy to know which ads provide the best ROI without any call tracking whatsoever. But for most industries outside of basic ecommerce – including travel, healthcare, automotive, financial services and B2B technology – the vast majority of leads and sales are generated offline i.e. via the telephone.

Call tracking allows businesses to know for sure which campaigns are driving calls, and stop wasting money on marketing that isn't working.

How does call tracking work?

Let's look at a simple example. Suppose you are a medium sized business running various marketing campaigns via Google Organic Searches, Google Adwords, Facebook Marketing and even Banner Ads.

By implementing call tracking, you can assign a unique phone number (tracking number) to each of these campaigns. The tracking number will not replace the actual number on the website. Instead a dynamic tracking code implemented on your website will enable your business phone number to update / swap to the correct tracking number based on how a visitor found your site.

By doing this you can track which phone numbers are generating phone calls and which are not thus helping you to discern the effectiveness of a marketing campaign and accordingly make business decisions.

To be honest, if you're not tracking your marketing campaigns this way, you are almost certainly wasting money on campaigns that are not performing for you.

How to get started with call tracking?

Below are the steps to get started with call tracking:

1. The very first step is to buy a local number or toll free number which will be used as a tracking number. Obvioxusly, a toll free number will cost more than a local number.
2. Using one number, we can track different sources like Google Organic, Google Adwords, Bing, Yahoo, YouTube, etc. However, it is recommended to use different tracking numbers for different sources you want to track to get accurate data and measure effectiveness of each campaign (lead source). This also applies if you serve different areas and want to track different locations.
3. Once the number is setup, we just need to add a simple one line JavaScript tracking code which will be added to the <head> section of the website pages. This code will enable your business phone number to swap with the correct tracking number based on how a visitor found your site.
4. As calls are received, they are instantly matched to the correct web visitor. Obviously, all this data will be collected by AgencyPlatform and displayed to you in a sophisticated manner easier for you to understand.

What data will be displayed in AgencyPlatform?

Our reporting dashboard will display who's calling you, how they found you, patterns in call timing/caller location, keywords leading to calls, landing pages leading to calls, which will help you to calculate ROI on your advertising costs for each of your campaigns (lead sources). Here is a screenshot of the data displayed on AgencyPlatform.
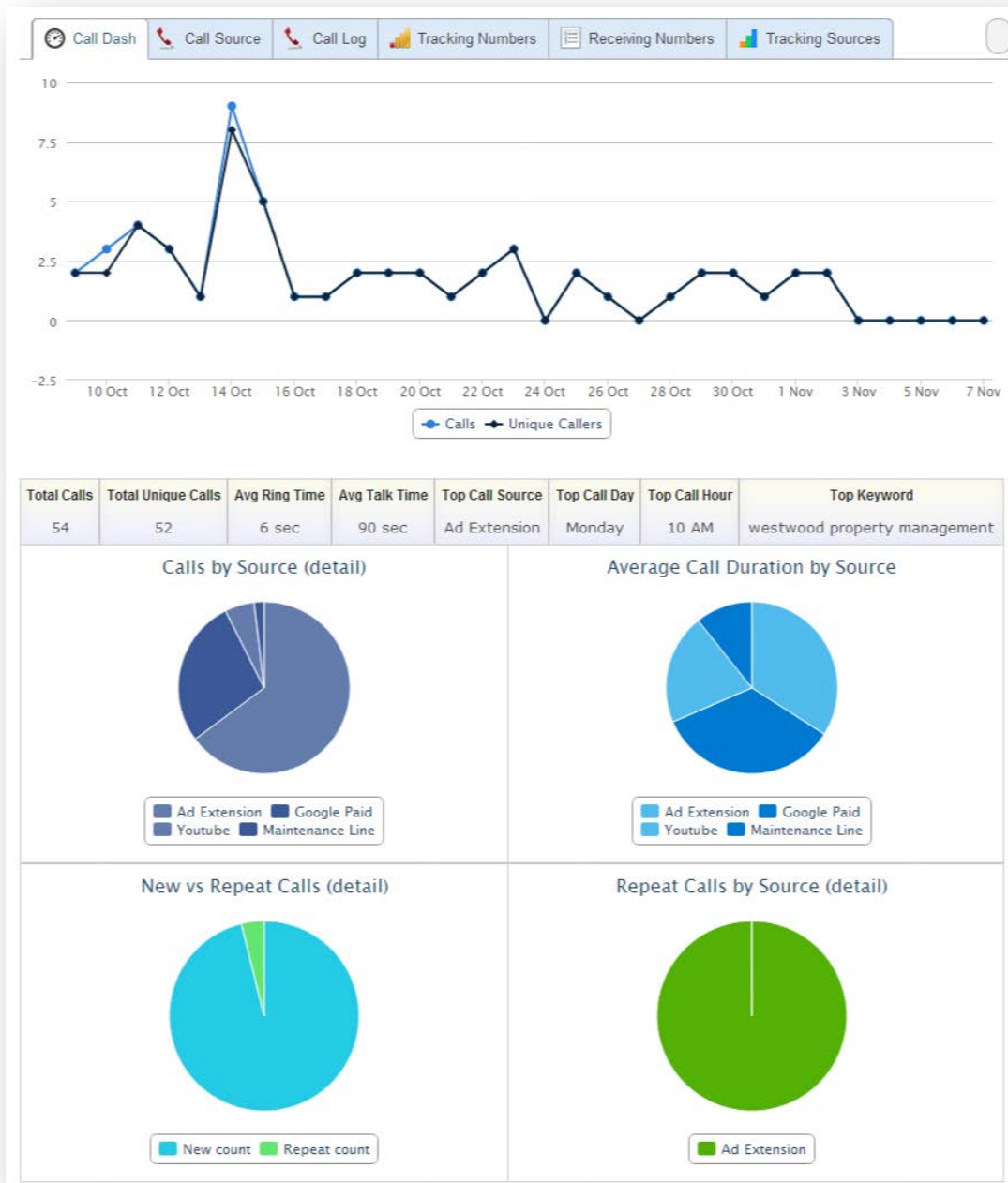
We can even setup an email alert for each call, this alert will include following details.

Caller | Source | Keywords | Time | Location | Audio | Receiving Number

We have recently added this service to our latest deliverables. For more details on implementing call tracking for your business, please consult with your concerned project manager.

02. DEEP INSIGHTS ON THE MATT CUTTS PUBCON 2013 KEYNOTE

Last month, in Pubcon Las Vegas 2013 Matt Cutts delivered a keynote presentation featuring his unique and always-fascinating Google insider's take on the world's most popular search firm and the future of search.

Matt's presentation was an intriguing review of what Google has done over the last year and how all this was a build up to the future. Here are is an overview of the takeaways from the speech:

1) **Hummingbird:** Google's recent core change to search was a "Moonshot" change that was meant to incorporate knowledge graph, voice (Google Now), increased conversational search, and enhanced deep learning for better "linked" query searches.

   Our Take: There's a lot being written about Hummingbird and the fact is it hasn't affected SEO (at least so far). It makes the results of long-tail and specific queries much better. The content on your site should be written accordingly to target such queries and at the same time being informative. We have even covered a full topic on Hummingbird update in our last newsletter.

2) **Authorship:** Matt said that they are tightening the relevancy of authorship (around 15%) and removing some quantity with the goal being to raise quality. He also touched on the rise of "topical authority" which many SEO's refer to as Author Rank.

   Our Take: We have mentioned about Google Authorship several times in our earlier newsletters as to why it is of utmost importance. We started implementing Authorship on websites since it was announced and till date most of the sites have Authorship set up on them.

3) **More Spam Algorithms:** It was stated that Penguin 2.0 in May was a "soft" launch and Penguin 2.1 in October was not. More spam algorithms are in the pipeline as Google continues to reward sites with high-quality content and natural backlink profiles and punish those sites that may be using techniques "outside" their accepted guidelines.

Our Take: We completely agree with this and we are continuously making sure to create strategies that work and future proof our clients against future updates. New strategies include reducing link velocity, varying the anchor texts, getting social signals, etc. We have also covered an in-depth research on this topic in our previous newsletter.

4) **Natural Link Building:** Matt stated that Google is going to focus anew on the use of Advertorial and Native Advertising as possible violations of link scheme guidelines.

   Our Take: Google does not want you buying links or content that passes PageRank. To tackle this, we are getting links with proper no-follow to do-follow ratios thus making it look like a natural profile. Since Google prefers a diversified link profile, we recommend getting links from Guest Blog Posts, Infographics, Videos, Local Business Directories, Presentations, Coupon Submissions etc. Most of these sources are also now part of new deliverables.

5) **Increased Hacking / Malware Support:** Google knows that hacking and malware attacks on sites are on the rise and has made a concerted effort recently to provide more resources, support and personnel to address the issue. Here is a great resource for you about Malware and Hacked sites - https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/163633?hl=en

6) **Mobile is Booming:** Matt reinforced that success in Google depends on a strong mobile presence. Those that do will get increased algorithmic consideration. Focus on responsive design and making sure your site is loading as fast as possible. We have added mobile website design as a part of our deliverables now. Contact your project manager or Sales executive for more information on how to get started.

7) **Implement request Autocomplete:** Visitors do not like filling-out forms on Web sites. The attribute request Autocomplete is a markup that site owners should be adding to their sites so users can one-click fill-out forms. Matt implied this is a best practice he wants to see all site owners implement. From our end, we have added a feature wherein will set up a form on your website FREE of Cost which will track incoming leads to your business. The best part is you can track all the stats via the AgencyPlatform Dashboard at no extra price.

8) **Rich Snippets:** Matt made an interesting statement when he said that all sites SHOULD NOT be using rich snippets. Rich snippets should be used to enhance quality sites. In contrast, rich snippets may be ignored completely on non-quality site results.

For more detailed coverage of the strategies taken from Pubcon 2013, you can go through this article - http://searchengineland.com/matt-cutts-at-pubcon-174906.

03. GOOGLE ADWORDS' NEW AD RANK FORMULA

Google quietly announced a change to its Ad Rank algorithm that represents a huge shift in the way it evaluates and ranks paid search ads. It plays a huge role in determining how prominently your ads are displayed in a SERP and also your cost-per-click.

What Is Ad Rank?
Ad Rank is the equivalent of the mysterious algorithm that ranks sites in Google's organic search results. The difference between Ad Rank and that algorithm is that Ad Rank determines where ads appear in the sponsored results as well as how much the advertiser pays when someone clicks the ad.

The other key difference is that Google has always been completely upfront about how this is calculated. Up until this October, and for many years, this was the formula for Google Ad Rank:

Ad RANK = CPC BID × QUALITY SCORE

The best combined
CPC Bid x Quality Score
gets the best position:

AdRank in AdWords has historically been calculated based on your Max CPC and Quality Score.

The preceding figure illustrates how competing ads on Google are ranked in descending order of Ad Rank. The advertiser that has the highest product of maximum CPC bid and Quality Score wins the coveted top ad spot.

How AdRank Impacts Cost-Per-Click?
AdRank plays a huge role in determining the actual cost-per-click that your competitors pay when someone clicks on their ads, as you can see by the following figure:

YOUR PRICE = THE AD RANK OF THE PERSON BELOW YOU / YOUR QUALITY SCORE + $0.01

The CPC You Pay is Determined by the Ad Rank of the Person Below You Divided by Your Quality Score.

The cost-per-click you get charged by Google when someone clicks on your ad (which is not the same thing as your maximum CPC bid — which is the most you are willing to pay, but not necessarily what you are actually charged) has everything to do with what other people were willing to pay for the click and their Quality Score, divided by your Quality Score, plus 1 cent.

How Has Ad Rank Changed?
The Ad Rank formula now has three components instead of two: In addition to CPC bid and Quality Score, your Ad Rank takes into account "the expected impact from your ad extensions and formats." In translation, this means the more fancy features and ad formats you use, the better your Ad Rank is going to be.

So, if you're using the most basic, default ad types, you're not necessarily going to be able to rank in the top spots, even if your Quality Score and bid are strong.

What Does the Ad Rank Change Mean for You?
Well, first off, you should've been using ad extensions all along. They're free to set up and one of the easiest ways to improve ad performance!

The problem for Google? Advertisers have been a little slow on the uptake, especially small and medium-sized businesses, which tend to have less time, budget, and PPC expertise.

Google is drawing a line in the sand. Use ad extensions or else! They're not really an option anymore -- if you're advertising on AdWords, you need to start using extensions ASAP. Otherwise, your competitors are going to take the top spots, and your PPC performance is going to suffer.

04. A PERSONAL TOUCH TO YOUR GOOGLE+ PROFILE WITH CUSTOM URLS

Do you find Google+ URLs to be lengthy in connecting with a particular person or brand? If your answer is yes, then you wouldn't want to miss out on an important update – a shortened web address, that would give Google+ Profiles & brand pages a more customized look.

Let's have a look at the requirements that one needs to fulfill to get a personalized URL:

1. Follower count should be more than 10 (Not of a much task to do.)
2. Account should be 30 days old.
3. Profile photo is a must
4. Local business account should be verified & in-case of a non-local business account it should be linked to a website.

You can create your Google+ custom URL in just a few simple steps:
– Click on the "About" tab of your profile.
– Go onto "Links" section & click on get URL.
– You will see few URLs that you have been approved of & it will ask you to fill in more characters or numbers to get a URL which has not be taken yet.
– Check the box to agree to terms of service.

- Click on Change URL
- You may be asked to verify the account by your mobile phone number. So enter your no., enter the code that has been sent on your no. & click on the "verify" tab.

Once the URL is approved, it will be linked to your profile or page. Custom URL once set, can't be changed so be sure of the vanity URL that you want to claim.

With this being set, it will get easier to find the content on Google & build a strong presence on Google+ (google.com/+customURL/photos or google.com/=customURL/video).

05. PINTEREST INTRODUCES NEW FEATURE - RELATED PINS

It's not every day that Pinterest comes up with a new feature but when it does, it surely makes the site user friendly. The photo sharing social network, will make it easier for the users to see images that they like thereby improving its discovery feature.
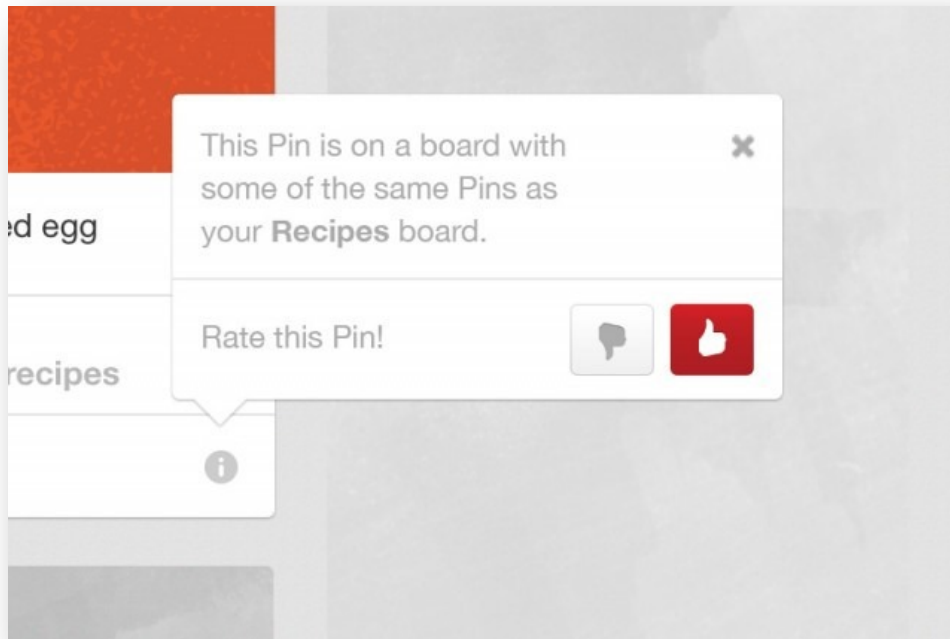
Related pins will appear on the bottom right of a pin as a small icon "i". Gaining more control over Pinterest, one can also rate the pin by hitting thumbs up or thumbs down button to express their likes or dislikes. According to your feedback, it will show more stuff that you might be of interest to the user. Brands are more likely to benefit with this useful feature, as crazy fans of the brand can just click on related pins to see more stuff from the brand they like.

Pinterest will track the websites that you surf on & relatively show the pins by picking up the cookies from your browser. If this doesn't appeal to you much, then you can also choose to turn off these cookies!

Getting engaged with interesting pins will get easier with "related pins" feature. Pinterest also says that related pins have no relation with the promoted pins.

Or maybe, Pinterest is just collecting data through this new feature for advertising? A question that every Pinterest marketer can supposedly ask.