Ad platforms vs reality September 2026

Your ad platforms counted 175 conversions your forms never got.

Google Ads reported 510 for 415 real leads (+23%); Meta Ads reported 367 for 287 real leads (+28%). Prospecting - Lookalike New Patients is furthest off at +48%.

northwinddental.com Gravity Forms 30 days

- **UTM Grabber** 1,120 leads
- **Google Ads** 510 conversions
- **Meta Ads** 367 conversions
- **Sample data** fictional business

01

The gap

What your platforms reported, and what arrived.

Platform conversions from your ad accounts; leads from your forms, as UTM Grabber saw them.

Platforms said

877

conversions reported

Google Ads 510, Meta Ads 367.

Your forms got

702

leads from those ads

Google Ads 415, Meta Ads 287.

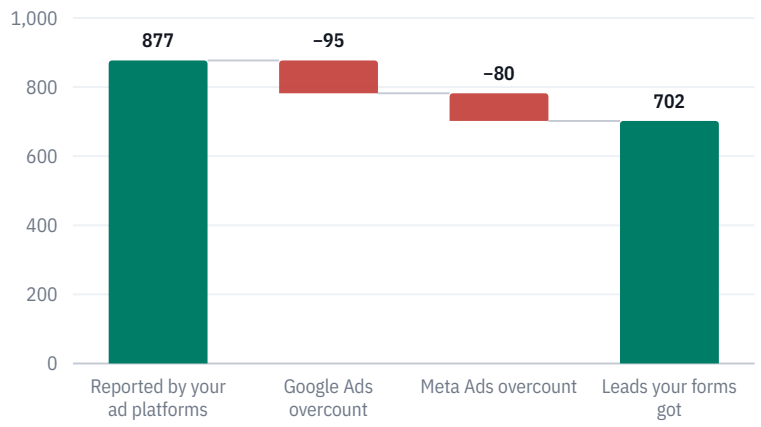
Over-reported

+25%

more than real

August: +25%.

From reported to real



Red bars: conversions a platform counted that never reached your forms.

By platform

Meta Ads over-reports the most: +28%.

Meta Ads reported 367 conversions; your forms got 287 leads from it.

It shows $24.80 per conversion; the real cost per lead is $31.71.

Google Ads: 510 reported, 415 real (+23%).

02

By campaign

Which campaigns count leads that never came.

Reported conversions next to real leads, campaign by campaign.

Reported vs real, by campaign

Campaign	Platform	Reported	Real leads	Over-reported	Status
Emergency Dentist - Exact	Google Ads	144	**109**	+32%	Over-reports
Prospecting - Lookalike New Patients	Meta Ads	141	**95**	+48%	Far over
Brand - Northwind Dental	Google Ads	131	**96**	+36%	Over-reports
Invisalign Consult Promo	Meta Ads	106	**86**	+23%	Over-reports
Retargeting - Site Visitors	Meta Ads	84	**72**	+17%	Over-reports
General Dentistry - Local	Google Ads	82	**62**	+32%	Over-reports
Invisalign - Phrase	Google Ads	68	**49**	+39%	Over-reports
Teeth Whitening - Broad	Google Ads	45	**34**	+32%	Over-reports
Dental Implants - Phrase	Google Ads	40	**32**	+25%	Over-reports
Whitening Offer	Meta Ads	36	**32**	+12%	Over-reports
No campaign tag	Google Ads	–	33	–	Add UTMs
Tag matches no campaign	Meta Ads	–	2	–	Fix tags
Total		**877**	**702**	**+25%**	

Status: Matches within 10%, Over-reports from 10% to 40%, Far over above 40%. The grey lines are real leads no campaign could claim.

03

Ready to send back

Can your real leads go back to the platforms?

To bid on real leads, each platform needs a way to match a lead to its click.

Click ID capture

✓	**Google click ID (gclid) on Google Ads leads** 402 of 415 carry one. Google Ads offline conversion import matches a lead to its click with it.	97%	Healthy
✗	**Meta click ID (fbclid) on Meta Ads leads** 115 of 287 carry one. Meta uses it to match a lead you send back to its ad click.	40%	Fix
✓	**Email on leads from ads** 702 of 702. Google's enhanced conversions and Meta also match a lead on its hashed email.	100%	Healthy

04

Next steps

What to do next.

This month

Send real leads back to Meta Ads

It reported 367 conversions for 287 real leads (+28%), so its bidding learns from conversions that never reached you. Import your UTM Grabber leads as server-side conversions; UTM Grabber Premium can send them for you. Do the same for Google Ads.

High impact · Medium effort

80 conversions with no lead behind them

This week

Judge Prospecting - Lookalike New Patients on real leads

It reported 141 conversions; your forms got 95 (+48%). Its real cost per lead is $37.89, not the $25.53 per conversion the platform shows.

High impact · Low effort

This month

Keep the fbclid on Meta Ads leads

Only 40% of Meta Ads leads (115 of 287) kept it. Check that redirects and form pages keep URL parameters, so more leads can be matched when you send them back.

Medium impact · Low effort

This month

Fix the mistyped campaign tags

34 leads from your ads carried a mistyped campaign tag (for example invisaline_consult_promo, retargetting_site). 32 were close enough to count for the right campaign here, but anywhere else they show up as separate campaigns. The UTM hygiene audit lists every one.

Medium impact · Low effort

How we built this report

- Reported: conversions from Google Ads and Meta Ads, September 2026, as each platform counts them (its own attribution window and conversion actions).
- Real: 702 form submissions UTM Grabber captured in the same window from those platforms, recognized by utm_source and utm_medium or a click ID.
- Campaigns match when utm_campaign equals the campaign name, ignoring case and punctuation; 32 tags one or two letters off counted for the closest campaign. 35 leads from your ads matched no campaign (33 had no campaign tag).
- Over-reported = (reported - real) / real.
- August: your platforms reported 807 for 645 real leads (+25%).

The truth in one line

Next: send real leads back to Meta Ads. It over-reported by 28%.

Reported	Real leads	Over-reported	Worst campaign
877	702	+25%	+48%

- Google Ads: 510 reported, 415 real.
- Meta Ads: 367 reported, 287 real.

Data: UTM Grabber, Google Ads, Meta Ads, Sample data for northwinddental.com

Prepared with UTM Grabber, v2.0.0, Oct 5, 2026