

Rules and Best Practices

Personalized URLs (PURLS) are webpage addresses that are personalized for individuals. The address is easier to remember and attention grabbing – seeing your own name in print can drive engagement.

Need an example? Instead of typing www.yourcompany.com a PURL might be: www.yourcompany.com/johndoe

PURLs bridge the gap between direct mail and digital marketing. PURLs are best used when they lead a prospect to a personalized landing page that serves up content suited for that lead.

What makes a great PURL?

Great PURLS follow 3 rules:

01 > SHORT, SIMPLE, CORRECT

PURLs should be as short as possible. By directly referencing the prospect's name, you tap into a powerful mnemonic. Even if the individual doesn't respond, you may still lodge your brand's name in their memory.

As a best practice, put their name before your company name in the web address.

Bad PURL	Good PURL
yourcompany.john.doe.com	yourcompany.com/johndoe
company.com/product/specialoffers/johndoe	

Of course, none of this works if you have bad data. Make sure the contact info you have is correct and trustworthy and make sure you set up your PURL campaign correctly in your marketing automation platform.

02 > COMBINED WITH ENGAGING CAMPAIGNS

PURLs aren't a substitute for a great campaign. The mailer you send that includes the PURL should have a strong call to action. Consider using the PURL to direct the prospect to a special offer page, a free download, or valuable content.

Remember, too, that a PURL is a great way to start a digital conversation with your prospect. The value of a digital conversation is, of course, the data you can gather on your prospects. Use the PURL as a gateway to capture their email, track digital engagement, and launch targeted display ads.

03 > SOLE CALL TO ACTION

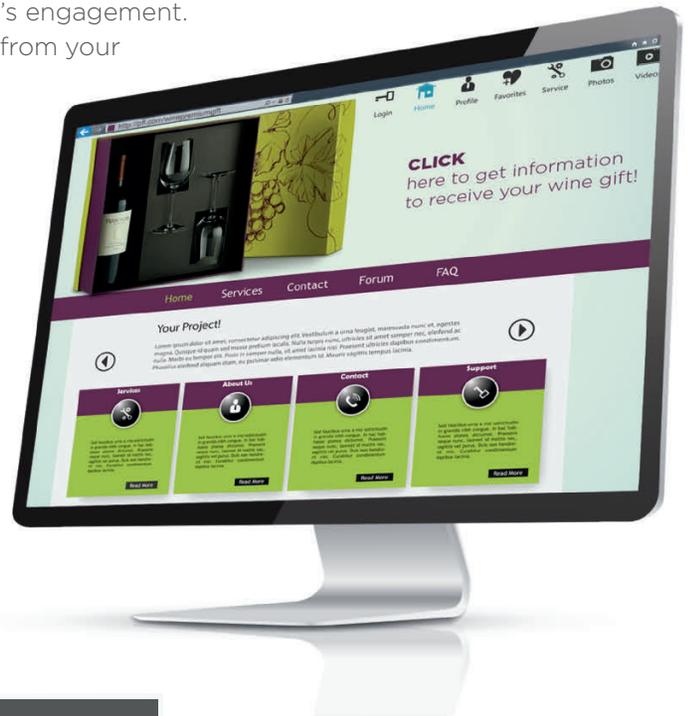
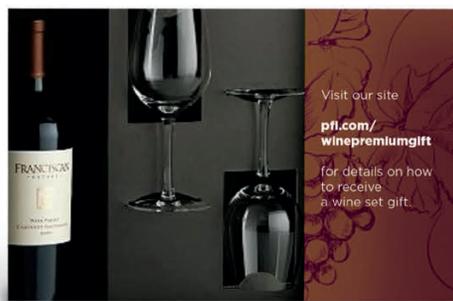
Don't confuse your prospect with multiple calls to action if you're using a PURL. Make it the only way they can activate their discount, claim their offer, or get in contact with your brand. Don't add a customer service phone number, email address or other contact info. Keeping their attention focused on engaging with your digital efforts should be the main focus of any PURL development.

How Should You Implement PURLS?

PURLs are an excellent way to bridge the gap between digital and physical efforts. Printing a PURL on a direct mailer is the most common way to implement the tool. Anything that can carry print, can carry a PURL – so your imagination is the only limit.

More importantly, you need a strategy for how you're going to engage those folks that respond to their PURL. Some good ideas are: creating a dynamic, personalized landing page, providing offers or discounts, and dropping them into a fun, interactive experience.

Make sure you're adding some sort of value to your prospect's engagement. Even though PURLs are easy to use, they require some effort from your contact. Don't punish them with a poor experience; reward them instead and start having a digital conversation.



How Can PURLs Help Your Campaign?

PURLs are able to bridge the digital and physical elements of any campaign. The effectiveness of PURLs varies greatly – they are part of a larger campaign and not a magic solution. But, some campaigns have seen up to a 40% increase in response rate when they included a PURL.

Obviously you want your campaign to engage your prospects, but don't forget that PURLs can do more. If you are using PURLs in a demand generation campaign, they can fill holes in customer data by capturing data on a landing page. In a customer advocacy campaign, they can establish a compelling human touch that gets your customers excited about working with you. If you are driving sales, usage, or engagement, PURLs can create powerful calls to action to drive your numbers.

Ultimately, the great benefit of PURLs is to leverage a physical channel to drive digital action and start an important, data-rich conversation with your brand.