



The Definitive Guide to Data-Driven Attribution

STEPS FOR GETTING STARTED WITH DATA-DRIVEN ATTRIBUTION





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Introduction

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO DATA-DRIVEN ATTRIBUTION



5x

Top-performing marketing organizations are five times more likely to use advanced attribution.

54%

By contrast, 54% of marketer still credit the last-click, only.

Source:
The State of Marketing 2013, IBM's Global Survey of Marketers. Global Summit 2013, n.d. Web.

Introduction

Data-driven attribution helps marketers know more and guess less. If your organization is still focused on crediting only the last touch point for your marketing success, you may be leaving up to 20%-40% of potential ROI improvement on the table.

Data-driven attribution offers an unprecedented level of visibility into the customer journey, enabling marketers to make fact-based decisions, gain efficiencies and realize greater returns on marketing investments.

In this guide, you will find an extensive introduction to data-driven attribution so that you can better understand how and if a solution can help you move your marketing forward. In addition to understanding the questions that attribution can help your organization answer, you will learn if it is a fit for your business. Lastly, you will be left with tips and tricks for how to move forward with a data-driven attribution program.

Opportunities for Growth

 **20-30%**
Decrease in effective display and retargeting CPA.

 **25-50%**
Decrease in level of effort to pull, aggregate, and distribute cross-channel reporting.

 **10-20%**
Increase in optimization within channels including PPC, Affiliate, Email, and Social.

 **20-40%**
Increase in performance across channels.

 **25-50%**
Increase in overall marketing investment performance.



What is Attribution?

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Summary

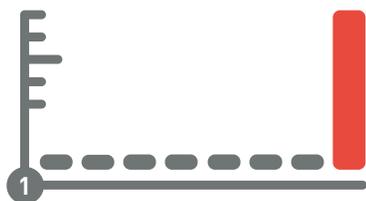
Assumptions about how your marketing activities impact your customers lead to a misinformed marketing strategy. Data-driven attribution reveals the real path-to-purchase, allowing you to fine-tune strategies based on real customer behavior.



RULES BASED MODELS



FIRST TOUCH



LAST TOUCH



EVEN



CUSTOM

What Is Attribution?

Attribution is the practice of tracking and valuing all marketing touch points that lead to a desired outcome. Data-driven attribution employs a powerful combination of predictive algorithms and integrated analytics to reveal — and properly credit — every bit of marketing spend that contributes to conversion.

THE MODEL MATTERS

Not all attribution models are created equal. Simple or “rules-based” methodologies assign credit according to a pre-defined formula.

- 1. Single-Touch:** Assigns 100% credit to one touch point — usually the first or last touch.
- 2. Even:** Assigns equal credit to all touch points on the path — if 4 exist, each gets 25%.
- 3. Custom:** Assigns arbitrary credit to each touch point — the first is the “introducer,” the last is the “closer” and intervening points are “promoters.” Introducers and closers often get outsized credit, while promoters divide the rest without regard to order of exposure or creative assets used.

While simple attribution models offer general answers across a basic marketing mix, today's cross-channel marketers may want a more scientific approach to drive the results they need.

RULES WERE MADE TO BE BROKEN

Because credit is dictated from the top-down, rules-based attribution models obscure the real value of each touch point. By contrast, data-driven attribution models determine the importance of each touch point as data accumulates “from the bottom-up.”

In this case, sophisticated algorithms to determine which touch points are the most influential. By comparing each conversion path, factors such as the number of touch points in the sequence, the order of exposure and the creative assets used are all factored into results.



Next Up: Having defined data-driven attribution, the next question is whether your organization is ready to embrace this data-intensive practice. Looking at your organizational and data maturity can yield the answer.





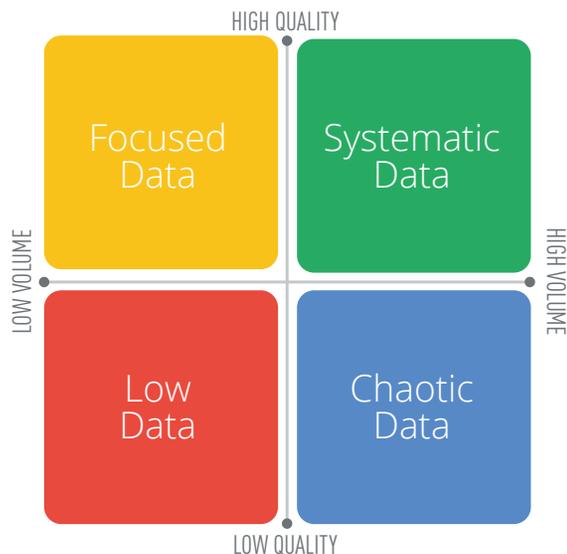
Would We Benefit from Data-Driven Attribution?

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Summary

Look at your marketing mix and resulting data to determine your organization's readiness for data-driven attribution. Some solutions require volumes of high quality data — and an organizational appetite to operationalize attribution insights.





Would We Benefit from Data-Driven Attribution?

Data-driven attribution is an intensive data-modeling exercise in which complex algorithms find and analyze statistically relevant patterns across volumes of quality data. Not all organizations have the level of data maturity required to benefit from a stand-alone enterprise level data-driven attribution solution.

LOW DATA MATURITY

Full cross-channel data-driven attribution may not be a fit for organizations that have lower levels of data maturity due to having little data or low data quality.

Low Data. Organizations that do little measurable marketing, leverage few channels and as a result, have little or no data are usually unable to use data-driven attribution.

Disorganized Data. On the other hand, marketers who pursue many channels with non-standardized goals and objectives (generally in the form of mismatching KPIs) may struggle to derive actionable insights.

HIGH DATA MATURITY

Data-driven attribution benefits organizations with high data maturity with large data volumes and high data quality across their channel mix.

Focused Data. Organizations with ready access to high-volume, high-quality data are excellent data-driven attribution candidates. Many “digital native” organizations focus all marketing efforts in digital channels, allowing relatively easy access to data.

Organized Data. Organizations with a complex online and offline marketing mix, that can access volumes of high-quality data across all channels and that have the people and processes needed to access data and take action, are the best candidates for data-driven attribution.

Pro Tip

If your complex marketing mix includes both online and offline channels, your data-driven attribution solution must be able to handle a wide variety of data sources and volumes, including the ability to integrate with next-generation marketing mix modeling for a more holistic view.



Next Up: If your organization is ready for data-driven attribution, chances are you have a wide range of analytics tools to measure and manage the customer lifecycle. Gaining support for data-driven attribution means understanding where it fits within that toolset. Let's take a look.





How Does Data-driven Attribution Fit Into My Analytics Toolset?

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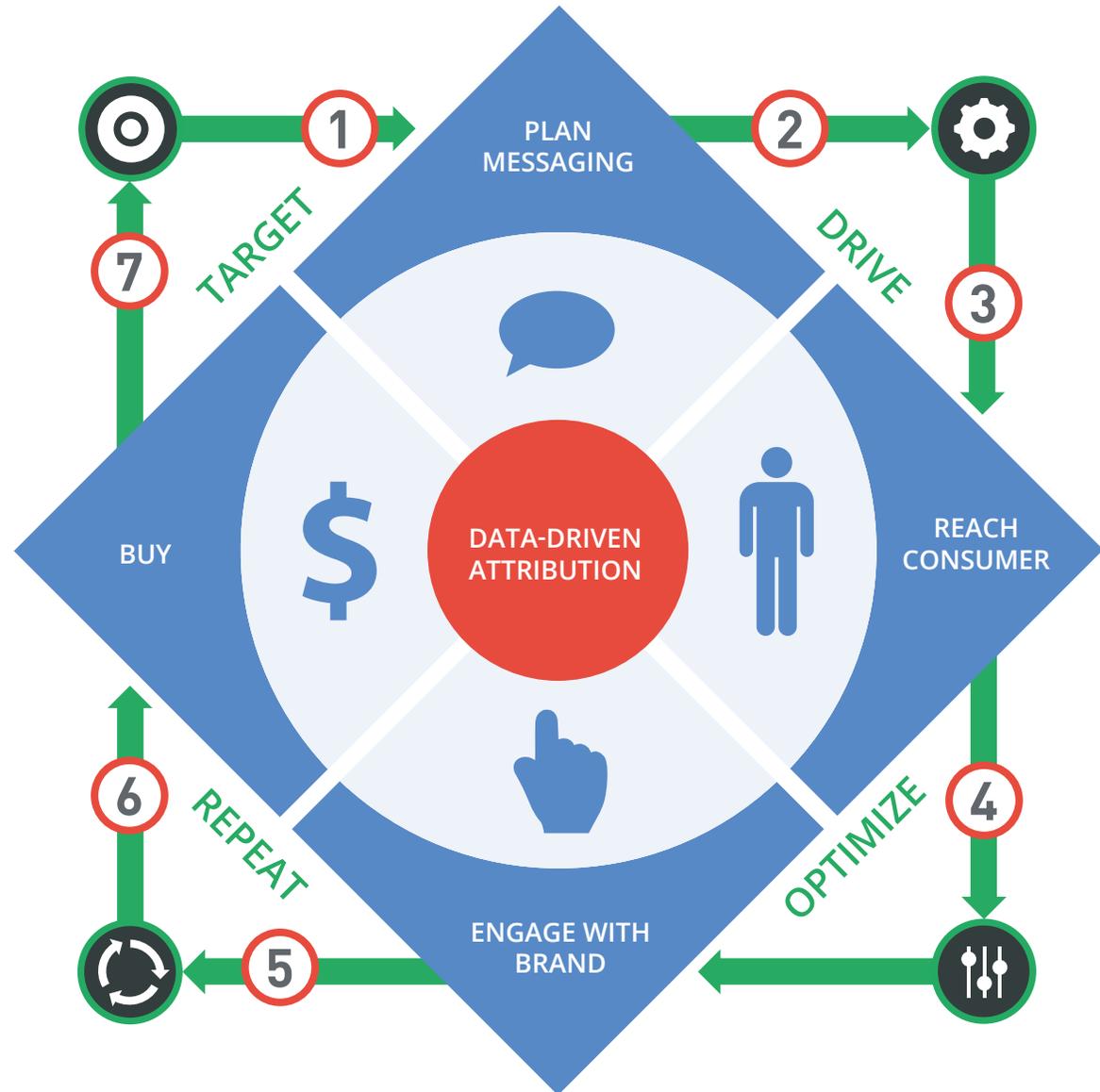
Summary

To build momentum towards a new attribution strategy, ensure that all key stakeholders understand the purpose and limitations of all analytics tools — and how data-driven attribution can unify and complete marketing performance measurement.



The Analytics Toolset

- ① Marketing mix modeling
- ② Real-Time Bidding (RTB) and Demand-Side Platforms (DSP)
- ③ Ad servers and search management systems
- ④ Website Analytics
- ⑤ Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- ⑥ Cross-Channel Campaign Management (CCCM)
- ⑦ Data Management Platforms (DMPS)
- Advertising Agency



How Does Data-driven Attribution Fit into My Analytics Toolset?

You can sit in a lawn chair to watch the big game on your TV — but isn't your recliner better suited to the task? While a number of measurement tools help you assess and track the customer lifecycle, it is important to use the right tool for each job and to recognize the limits of each.

Data-driven attribution creates a “single source of truth” about marketing performance that unifies and completes your analytics toolset. While other tools provide specific insights, data-driven attribution provides an overall view of marketing performance. Let's explore the marketing analytics landscape and where attribution fits into the mix.

Resource

Learn more about incorporating marketing mix modeling with data-driven attribution in Adometry's article about “The Evolution of Marketing Mix Modeling”.

1. MARKETING MIX MODELING (MMM):

You've run your campaign and it's time to re-assess the big picture. Do you need MMM or data-driven attribution? The answer is both. Attribution allows you to understand your marketing down to the user-level, accurately measuring the impact of each touch points and tactic. MMM on the other hand helps you look across all your marketing influences at an aggregate level, including factors like competition and comparing against your “business as usual”. To create the best possible plan, make sure data-driven attribution insights are used to inform MMM activities.

Bottom Line: MMM helps you plan and optimize at the highest levels while Attribution shows how to improve more granularly. For the best marketing intelligence, use next-generation MMM and data-driven attribution in concert.

2. REAL-TIME BIDDING (RTB) AND DEMAND-SIDE PLATFORMS (DSP)

How will your campaign reach highly targeted audiences across a variety of publishers? Programmatic buying platforms may be the answer. Based on conversion data, RTBs and DSPs constantly improve placement targeting. Keep in mind that since their revenues are tied to placement volumes, RTBs and DSPs have a vested interest in high attribution credit for their placements. Because they only measure the media *they* place, they end up over-crediting themselves for all conversions. They do not have the ability to assess the full path-to-purchase, nor can they accurately assess attribution credit for the media they place.

Bottom Line: RTBs and DSPs have limited visibility and cannot assess credit in an unbiased or fractional way. Data-driven attribution can provide insights that real-time bidding partners can use to buy top performing ad placements.

3. AD SERVERS AND SEARCH MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Ensuring that your ads are managed and served according to your media buy is the domain of ad servers and search management systems. These tools not only show you when and where an ad was shown, they also measure the basic performance of each asset. As such, an ad server can reveal which ads are performing best — but only regarding portions of your campaign that fall within the channel it manages. As they attempt to distribute credit for all conversions to this single channel, they can cause double-counting.

Bottom Line: While ad servers and search management systems allow spot-checking within a channel, their focus is too narrow to offer data-driven attribution.

4. WEBSITE ANALYTICS

Site Analytics is a critical tool for improving your website and mobile apps. The measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of on-site activities allow you to understand user needs and fine-tune your site to meet those needs. Website analytics typically provide only a “last-touch” or rules-based view of campaign performance as they measure only the clicks immediately prior to a website visit. Upper-funnel touch points (such as display and social) are going to be highly disadvantaged when held to this analysis.

Bottom Line: Website analytics are a complement, not a replacement, for data-driven attribution, which offers a more comprehensive view of what brought users to your website.

5. CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM)

As customers roll in, your CRM is there to capture transaction, contact and segment data, and that’s a good thing. But, CRMs are primarily focused on customer service and support, not marketing. Though CRMs can track multiple channels, they look mainly at lower-funnel activities, offering limited visibility into acquisition and cross-channel marketing in “non-direct” channels such as social, display or affiliate.

Bottom Line: CRM data is an input that can feed your data-driven attribution solution to yield a more complete picture of customer behavior.

6. CROSS-CHANNEL CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT (CCCM)

CCCM systems are similar to CRMs, but with a greater focus on marketing than on customer service. These marketing databases contain contact information — names, addresses, emails and SMS data — for both customer and prospects. This aids you in determining which audiences to target and where to find them. While CCCMs may help with selection and execution, they are unable to tell you how that audience responded, offering little or no performance analytics.

Bottom Line: CCCM data is a valuable input for data-driven attribution. Once attributed performance is known, these insights can be fed back to your CCCM for even better selection.

7. DATA MANAGEMENT PLATFORMS (DMPs)

DMPs are unified technology platforms that intake disparate first, second, and third-party data sets, provide normalization and segmentation on the data, and allow marketers to push the resulting segmentation into live interactive channel environments. While DMPs are excellent data collection tools that can provide input to data-driven attribution solutions, they do not in themselves provide insights or recommendations to marketers regarding optimal channel mix.

Bottom Line: Data-driven attribution solutions complement DMPs. DMPs collect valuable segment data, allowing attribution solutions to provide a deeper level of actionable insights.

● ADVERTISING AGENCIES

Let's suppose you start with developing a creative campaign and detailed targeting recommendations designed to catch the eye of your audience — in addition to all these tools. A good ad agency is an invaluable asset, from recommending strategy, to creative development, and on to tactical execution. Keep in mind that an agency's viewpoint is often limited to the channels they manage, and includes a vested interest in justifying their own value. While most agencies do offer analytics — and some are even building in-house attribution capabilities — they often lack the data, machine learning and mathematical expertise to tackle in-depth analysis.

Bottom Line: Augment your agency's understanding with third-party, data-driven attribution insights you provide to inform, guide and inspire agency teams.



Next Up: To propel the organizational conversation about data-driven attribution, let's take a closer look at the questions that marketing performance management platforms can answer.





What Questions Does Data-Driven Attribution Answer?

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Summary

Get ready to guess less and know more. Data-driven attribution offers a range of unique benefits both within and across channels, including the insights you need to make fact-based budget planning and investment decisions.





Budget Planning

Wondering how to set your display budget? If you learn that display offers a 30% lift to search conversion rates, it makes sense to increase your display budget. It could also inform an overall marketing budget increase — increasing display will generate more search traffic and give you more overall reach.



Optimization

To improve your in-flight campaign, do you invest more in that top performing ad? If you're saturated with a publisher, it may be the wrong move. Data-driven attribution reveals the value of each incremental dollar, so you can make fact-based decisions. As a result you, you may decide to allocate additional budget to email or search instead.

What Questions Does Data-driven Attribution Answer?

Data-driven attribution offers a clear, comprehensive view of the customer journey. This clarity allows you to both build better campaigns and optimize those that are in-flight. Before implementing a solution, it is important to both understand — and set stakeholder expectations around — the three main benefits of data-driven attribution.

- 1 **Intra-Channel Performance.** See exactly which elements of your marketing programs are working within each channel — to a high degree of granularity — so you can identify top-performers and take advantage of the best opportunities.
- 2 **Cross-Channel Performance.** Get clarity across all channels, so you can compare performance and correct both over and under-spending. Breaking down silos allows your organization to unify accountability and plan holistically to drive more strategic marketing success.
- 3 **Efficiency and Cohesion.** Replace time-consuming data comparison and report pulling with easy-to-understand dashboards. This means that teams across your organization can move faster and make better decisions based on a cohesive set of actionable insights. The best solutions can even push out real-time insights to ensure cohesion with external partners working on your behalf.

Data-driven attribution allows you to look back, forward and act on-the-fly to improve marketing performance. Marketers that leverage a full data-driven attribution solution can measure benefits within and across channels in these key areas of return.

INTRA-CHANNEL BENEFITS

- **Brand Safety.** Ensure that ads are not served on negative websites or next to inappropriate or brand damaging content.
- **Viewability.** Ensure that impressions are actually viewed and not served off the viewable area of the page.
- **Monitoring.** Ensure that geotargeting, pacing and other campaign goals are being met.
- **Frequency Capping.** Ensure that the optimal daily frequency caps are in place and operating properly.
- **Geo and Time of Day.** Ensure that audiences are targeted geographically and at the right time of day with the appropriate message based on their responses.
- **Creative Messaging and Placement.** Identify best and worst performing ads to ensure that the best creative, messaging, sequencing, targeting and placements are in the media plan.
- **Overlap Reduction.** Ensure that overlaps between sites — that do not increase conversion — are reduced to eliminate wasted ad spend and guard against overexposure.

CROSS-CHANNEL BENEFITS

- **Budget Planning.** Data-driven attribution insights allow you to have a clear understanding of the contribution that each channel has on your end goal, which can aid you in finding the optimal budget.
- **Optimization.** Non-linear modeling allows you to tweak and improve the performance of in-flight campaigns in a more holistic and accurate way.
- **Impact Analysis.** Lift and funnel stage reports provide you with a view into how each channel is impacting other channel's performance to give you a full understanding of the true value of each channel.
- **Campaign Strategy.** Evaluating creative and placements across all channels will show you which tactics within your campaigns are working and which need to be tweaked so that you can reach consumers with a consistent message.

EFFICIENCY AND COHESION BENEFITS

- **Unified Metrics.** By evaluating all channels through a single system, you will start measuring all channels by a common set of metrics that are based on the business rather than by the individual channel which cuts down on the time spent "translating" metrics across channels for one view of performance.

- **Unified Reporting.** Similarly, by utilizing one system for all reporting and metrics, it will cut down on the time required to pull reporting from multiple systems and minimize confusion across the organization as to what actual results look like.
- **Flexible Reporting.** Data-driven attribution platforms generally allow you to view reporting in a number of different ways as well as export results into your internal business intelligence tools so you don't have to scrutinize a "one-size fits all" report but can instead spend the time improving your campaigns based on findings.
- **Ecosystem Integrations.** Programmatic connectors into the marketing ecosystem allow you to have fractional attribution metrics pushed directly to RTB partners for automatic optimization, cutting down on the time you have to manually pass reporting back and forth.

Now that we've explored the definition, uses and benefits of how attribution fits into the space today, we're going to walk you through how you go about selecting an attribution solution.



Next Up: Now that you've made your stakeholders aware of the purpose and benefits of data-driven attribution, it's time to get serious about selecting the right solution for your organization. Let's look at the 5-step selection process that will help drive success with data-driven attribution.





Five Steps to Your Data-Driven Attribution Strategy

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Summary

Data-driven attribution offers a strategic viewpoint. Ensure that your business goals are defined to connect marketing metrics back to valuable business outcomes so that data-driven attribution will help you drive business success.



Five Steps to Your Data-Driven Attribution Strategy

As with any emerging discipline, data-driven attribution solutions differ widely. To get the benefits of data-driven attribution for your organization, you must ask the right questions, solidify the right budgets and motivate the right resources. Here are five key steps you can take, right now.

"We like to help our clients get away from channel-only thinking. Bragging rights in the form of "my channel gets more than 50% credit" doesn't help increase sales in a vacuum. The metrics must connect back to business goals."

- Paul Pellman, Head of Adometry, Google



Step 1

Define Goals

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○ Example

Is your goal to get more “likes” or to get more sales? While Facebook likes may be a goal for your social campaigns, the ultimate goal for your clothing brand is to sell jeans. Avoid “soft” goals and focus on finding a solution that allows you to see the lift social provides to sales — regardless of likes.

💡 Pro Tip

Adopting data-driven attribution strategies can mean overhauling your internal measurement mechanisms. Do not undertake this task without clarifying and gaining consensus on business objectives.

Step 1: Define Goals

In order to choose the right measurement and analytics tools for your business, consider your current pain points and business goals. It isn't enough to find out how much “credit” each channel deserves — you must determine how attributed credit drives value for the business.

Begin by determining the value all your marketing activities must deliver for the business and prepare to take a holistic view of data-driven changes you will make to meet those goals. Once you do, you will be able to determine marketing's impact on revenue, and therefore, formulate budgets that will yield high return for the business.

Here are some of the questions you should answer internally before beginning any data-driven attribution selection process.

WHAT ARE YOUR OBJECTIVES AND MEASUREMENT GOALS? DO THEY ALIGN ACROSS YOUR BUSINESS?

Data-driven attribution requires a common, unified success metric, and knowledge of your long-term goals. Define objectives and KPIs that align across channels and departments. Attribution doesn't work overnight and it won't work if various business units or channels measure success differently.

WHAT ARE YOUR TACTICAL CONVERSION EVENTS?

Your attribution solution will credit touch points along the way to your defined conversion events. If you are doing any website optimization, you have probably already thought about how to guide consumers to specific actions on your site. Whether a sale, a content download or a lead form submission, determine what digital conversions you will “attribute” towards. Ensure that these conversion events are agreed upon across your organization and are the main goal across the entire business (not just for a specific channel).

WHAT DOES MARKETING SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Now, let's take your success events one step further in order to understand what marketing will attempt to accomplish for your company as a whole. If you are accountable to help increase sales, is there a way to tie revenue or margin to your website or digital elements? Often, goals are not just about revenue — but they must be something actionable.

Don't succumb to “shiny new object syndrome” by purchasing a solution just because of the buzz. Instead, carefully examine the questions you'd like to answer, clearly define success metrics based on facts and ensure that your goals are in line with vendor abilities.

Pro Tip

Identify a strong program owner who can set and manage stakeholder expectations throughout the process, and who will be able to resolve roadblocks to drive organizational success.

“The optimizations we were able to make paid off the solution within a quarter.”

Drew McKenzie, Senior Manager,
Digital Media at Luxottica

Ready, Set, Go!

Once you’ve laid out your goals, you are ready to start your data-driven attribution selection process. On the road to a great solution, you will need to recruit cross-company involvement. Don’t overwhelm your team or other resources all at once. Taking on more than your organization can handle could sabotage your chance at success.

Alternatively, avoid the “we’re not there yet,” mentality. Change isn’t easy, but you will never be ready if you don’t take the plunge. The results are well worth the effort but you have to take a leap!

With all of this in mind, think about what you’d like your timeline to look like. Knowing that it will take time to walk before you run, pick a provider that will act as a long-term partner, and that shows potential for growth in the future.

Bottom Line: Data-driven attribution offers a strategic viewpoint to your marketing campaigns. Ensure that your business goals are defined to connect marketing metrics back to valuable business outcomes so that data-driven attribution will help you drive business success.

Step **2**

Justify Budget

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Step 2: Justify Budget

Attribution requires thinking outside the silo — and that means finding the dollars to pay for the analytics that break down those silos. Before engaging a provider, set yourself up for success by earmarking a cross-departmental budget.

Since the analytics portions of your budget may already be allocated, guide the conversation by promoting the benefits of data-driven attribution to key stakeholders. The right solution will pay for itself by creating cross-department efficiencies and increasing the return on each marketing investment.

Bottom Line: To determine your budget threshold for data-driven attribution, consider its overall value to the business. Then, consider real-world returns of 5% - 15%.

A Real-World Budgeting Exercise

Setting expectations around the potential results of data-driven attribution is critical. Account for any expense of your attribution program (whether external or internal) with realistic analysis for your organization in order to gain support for cross-departmental budgeting.

Let's walk through a budgeting exercise that typifies returns you can expect with data-driven attribution. Though no two businesses are alike, and there is no way to predict actual results, this outline — from current cross-channel marketing budget distribution to quantified results — offers realistic proportions. The following low, average and high yields can help you estimate your expected returns.

The Current Spend

In this simple example, we'll assume Display, Search, Email and Affiliate are the primary digital marketing channels, with the following monthly spend, revenues and conversions.

Channels and Current Spend Allocation Per Month

CHANNEL	SPEND
Display Impressions	\$375,000
Search Clicks	\$325,000
Emails Delivered	\$75,000
Affiliate	\$225,000
Online Spend	\$1MM
Current Digital Return on Ad Spend (ROAS)	\$2.50
Current Online Monthly Conversions	345,366
Current Annual Conversions	4.14MM
Current eCPA	\$2.90
Current Yearly Revenue	\$30MM
Total Yearly Spend	\$12MM

The Interest Level

Now, let's go a step beyond current spends to consider your organization's appetite for change. To estimate returns, you must take into account how much action your organization will be willing to act upon data-driven attribution insights.

Often, organizations have a medium to high interest in results (interest must be fairly high to implement a solution) but only a moderate ability to take action. For the purposes of this example, we'll assume you can take action on some recommendations — but by no means all of them — whether due to a lack of resources or the need to prove results before acting.

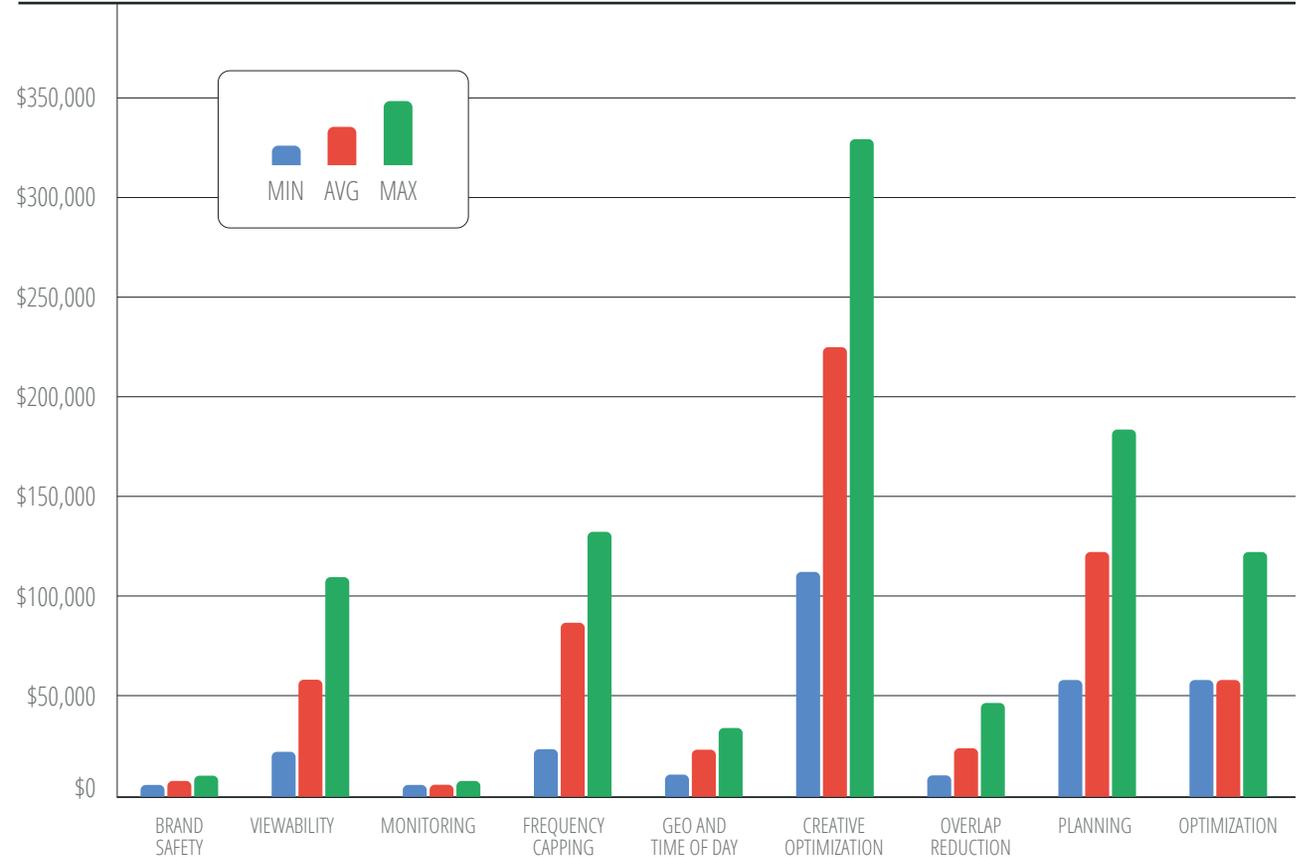
Interest in Implementing Change and Resource Investment Level

FEATURE	INTEREST	RESOURCE INVESTMENT	ACTION TO TAKE
Brand Safety	Medium	Low	Make sure that ads are not being served on negative category websites or next to inappropriate content that can be brand damaging
Viewability	Medium	Medium	Ensure that impressions are actually being viewed and not being served off page
Segment Optimization	Medium	Low	Ensure that the right segments are being targeted within search, email, affiliate etc.
Frequency Capping	Medium	Medium	Ensure that the optimal daily frequency caps are in place
Geo and Time of Day	Medium	Medium	Understand the core audience and their responses to target them geographically and at the right time of the day with the appropriate message
Creative Optimization	High	Medium	Use the right creative sequencing, targeting and ad combination across channels
Overlap Reduction	Medium	Medium	If there is overlap between sites, campaigns or channels that does not increase the conversion rate and is negative, then reduce the offending combinations
Planning	High	Medium	Use attribution insights such as top and bottom performers to plan out future campaigns
Optimization	High	Medium	Use non-linear optimization to tweak and improve performance of in-flight campaigns

The ROI Results

Assuming that data-driven attribution recommendations yield 5% improvement on our low end and 15% on the absolute high end of returns (based on your ability and willingness to make changes), here are the estimated results you can expect. Industry standard assumptions suggest that returns on your digital attribution solution will typically be 10x the cost of the solution. As you can see, even low results in all categories offer savings that allow you to pay for your data-driven attribution program.

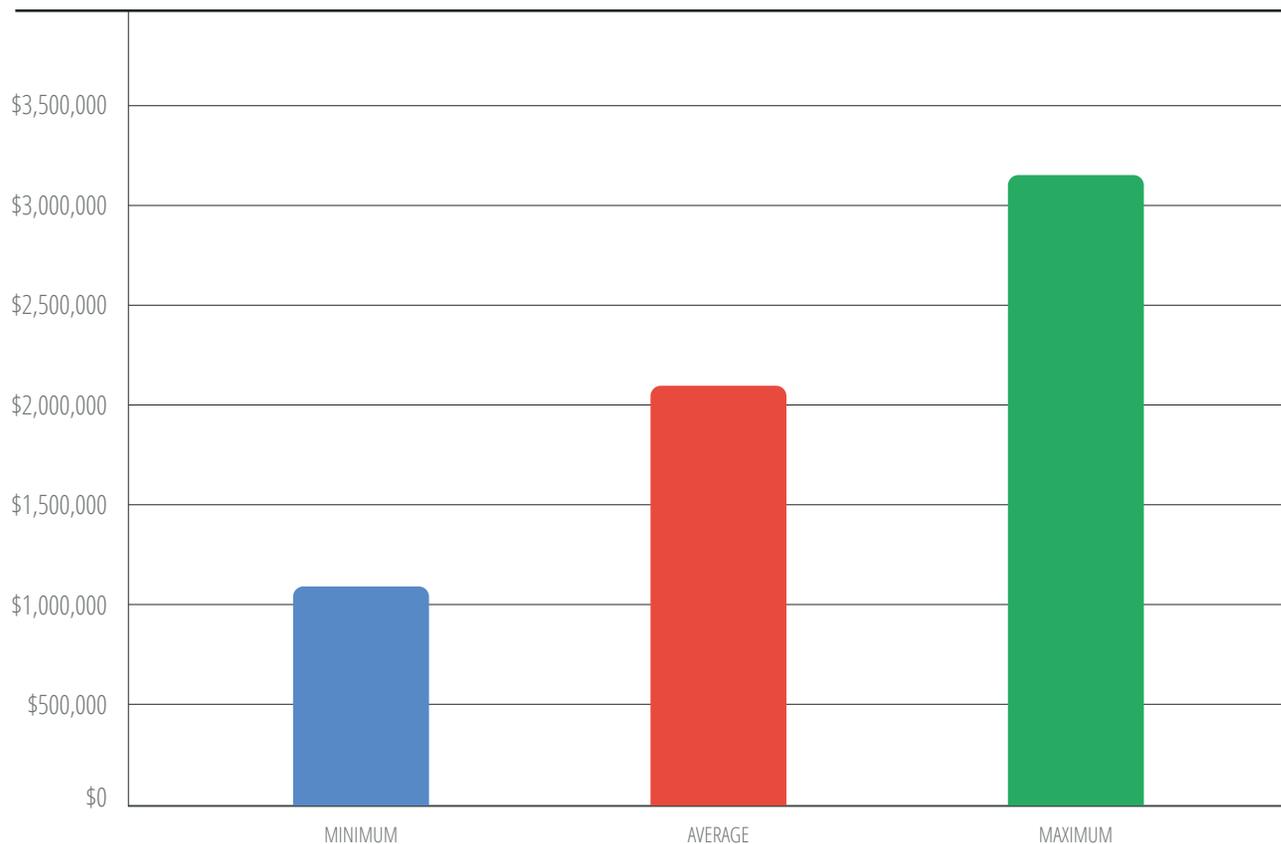
Yearly Savings Using Attribution



The ROI Over Time

Let's take a step further to assume that as you are looking to do more than break even, you will take your savings and re-invest in improved marketing strategies. In this case, reinvesting your savings using data-driven attribution recommendations could yield millions in new revenue.

New Revenue with Reinvesting



Bottom Line: Even minimum returns recover the costs of a data-driven attribution solution. In this light, justifying a budget within existing marketing allocations may be easier than you think.

Step **3**

Be Selective

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Resource

To ensure complete and consistent evaluation of potential data-driven attribution providers, see the Vendor Evaluation Scorecard.

Resource

Learn more about Adometry's flexible ability to capture and gather data with a proprietary tag-and-pixel approach or by leveraging existing ad server log files.

Step 3: Be Selective

You have determined the need for a data-driven attribution program and successfully set aside a budget — but what solution will you pick? Which attribution partner will allow you to glean maximum results?

To find out, evaluate potential partners against the following key criteria. End-to-end considerations can make or break your ability to implement and operationalize attribution insights.

Ease of Implementation

Data-driven attribution requires a breadth and volume of data. Therefore, ease of data gathering and integration are critical considerations for success. At a minimum, your solution must be able to integrate all marketing event data (impressions, clicks, conversions) as well as cost data. Many solutions add external and dynamic data sets (seasonality, audience data, offline conversion sets or dynamic bidding data) for even more robust results.

Any solution that promises “quick and easy” implementation should be vetted carefully. These solutions may “simplify” by handling only a subset of your data — or they may simply be telling you what you want to hear.

To ensure that potential providers are grasping the complexity of your marketing landscape be sure to investigate the following questions.

CAN YOUR PARTNER HANDLE YOUR DATA?

Organizing your data will be a project in and of itself. A good partner should also be able to provide flexible options for collecting data. Ensure your methods match what your partner can ingest. Pick a provider that can guide you through the process of setting up, collecting and transferring required data sets.

ARE THEY CERTIFIED ACROSS MULTIPLE PARTNERS FOR DATA TRACKING AND INTEGRATION?

Data set flexibility is important, but it is just as important to assess onboarding efficiencies with the industry's most commonly used marketing and advertising platforms. If you are pursuing a tag collection method, make sure that your provider is certified across the industry's leading media partners. Without a long history of certification, new approvals may take time to obtain — and that may be time you don't have.

Even in the case of log file data collection, check for a list of preferred and standardized partners and file types to troubleshoot onboarding.

HOW WILL THE PROVIDER WORK WITH YOUR VARIOUS PARTNERS, INCLUDING YOUR AGENCY?

Top marketers work with a variety of technology partners and marketing management organizations. Partner agencies or organizations may own various components of your data (for example, one for display data, another for search and so on).

While all players are critical to implementation, not all are direct stakeholders. During onboarding, it may take persistence, organization and relationship management to get all parties to submit data in a timely manner. Check that your provider has the skills and experience to help you through this process.

Breadth of Services

How much support will your organization need to use and interpret data-driven attribution insights? Your answers will vary depending on the size of your organization and the skill sets you have available in-house.

In addition to evaluating a provider's technology, don't forget to assess the support you need versus what you can expect from any given provider. Check that your partner provides the right level of consultation, training and direct access to experts to ensure you can leverage attribution insights.

DOES THE PROVIDER OFFER A CONSULTATIVE PARTNERSHIP?

Do you plan to analyze data-driven attribution outputs yourself or do you want someone to provide insights for you? Don't forget to consider your needs during onboarding as well as once implementation is complete.

Next, consider how much training you will need to operationalize your organization's use of data-driven attribution. Will you want consistent support from a resource who has learned your business or do you prefer doing things on your own with occasional support on request?

DOES THE PROVIDER PROVIDE DIRECT ACCESS TO EXPERTS?

Seek a solution that offers the right balance between self-serve insights and access to deep data and marketing expertise. Evaluate the type and amount of access your provider provides to their database management, media and marketing planning, and analytics experts. Even if you employ marketing analysts in-house, data-intensive solutions require an expert team of data scientists — resources that can offer custom insights as opportunities arise.

Very sophisticated marketers still seek providers due to the intense data expertise data-driven attribution requires. Even with a brilliant in-house team, gaining third-party perspective can be especially valuable in fine-tuning marketing practices across your organization.

Best-in-Class Methodology

What is the basis of your provider's attribution crediting system and is it inline with your business needs? Ask tough questions to find out how any provider's model works, how it is validated and how it is ensured to be accurate.

IS THE PROVIDER'S MODEL DATA-DRIVEN OR RULES-BASED?

Knowing that you wish to adopt data-driven attribution, be sure to establish that any provider you consider is employing an algorithmic model. Avoid providers who utilize pre-determined rules in assigning attribution credit.

Resources

Adometry offers standardized, real-time access to check data inputs with Monitor.

Learn more about validating data-driven attribution models and the strength of complete data sets.

Learn more about verifying viewability across campaigns with data-driven attribution.

Learn more about data-driven attribution insights that inform strategic planning versus the value of incremental metrics to drive in-flight campaign optimization.

IS THE PROVIDER MEDIA AGNOSTIC?

Consider partner motivations carefully. Does a provider you are considering have a vested interest in any media property? When a provider has a stake in the media serving or content landscape, they aren't an unbiased third party capable of giving you the best recommendations for your business. Don't settle for a "good enough" solution — especially if the provider has a hand in the cookie jar.

HOW IS THE PROVIDER'S MODEL VALIDATED?

Your provider should be able to tell you how their solution's model is validated to provide accurate insights. One best practice to look for is lift analysis, in which conversion rates are compared by including and excluding touch points to reveal the true value or "lift" each provides along the way.

If excluding a touch point yields identical or similar conversion rates, the missing event offers little value. If including it increases conversion, the touch point demonstrates value — and deserves more credit. Probe into the manner in which your provider proves the value of their algorithms by asking them about validation.

HOW ARE YOUR DATA INPUTS MONITORED?

Gaining visibility into the customer journey may suggest strategic shifts — and create new debates. Stakeholders may ask: "How do we know that these attribution insights are accurate?"

To answer that question, you need to be able to verify and monitor data inputs to ensure accuracy. Talk to your provider about real-time access to your data inputs, so your organization can trust the validity of the outputs.

HOW ARE NON-CONVERTING AND NON-SAMPLED DATA HANDLED?

While a sampled data set can provide directional information, it doesn't provide a clear picture of all audiences and segments. A data-driven model determines the importance of each touch point by looking at the entire data set — including both converting AND non-converting data.

Ask potential providers about non-converting data. If the solution doesn't consider it, it can't offer insights about which touch points aren't as impactful and may over-credit them.

HOW DOES IT HANDLE VIEWABILITY?

When you think about the fact that as much as 50% of your campaign ads may never be seen by a consumer, you realize that viewability is a key concern. Ask potential providers whether ads that are served off the viewable portion of the page are given credit.

Accurate solutions will only count those ads that COULD have had an impact in your journey by being seen. If not, your solution is applying pre-determined rules or assumptions, rather than measuring the true impact of each touch point.

Resource

For more on factors from seasonality to economic indices data, see Adometry's whitepaper, "Incorporating External factors into Marketing Attribution and Optimization Models".

"Ideally, attributed values would inform the mix models, so the mix models can optimize more effectively. Like a harmonious circle of life."

Tina Moffett, Forrester

HOW DOES THE PROVIDER'S MODEL HANDLE AVERAGE VERSUS INCREMENTAL METRICS?

If you want your data-driven attribution solution to drive campaign optimization, check that it offers incremental metrics. While average metrics inform strategic planning for your next campaign, optimization requires an incremental view.

You know instinctively that simply doubling investment doesn't double your return. Rather, you need to see the impact of each dollar spent during a campaign to know where to spend the next dollar. Likewise, if certain conversions or actions are driving incrementally higher revenues, you'll need to be able to change your goals. Ensure your chosen solution offers incremental insights.

IS THE SOLUTION ABLE TO ACCOUNT FOR EXTERNAL FACTORS SUCH AS SEASONALITY?

Consider whether you want a holistic data-driven attribution model that can factor in external impacts like weather or seasonality. For example, while retailers often see a spike around the holiday season, is their marketing driving growth in revenue or is it just the holiday season alone? A model that takes seasonality into account helps you make the best use of your marketing during the times of year when you spend the most.

Cutting-Edge Capabilities

Now that we've explored the underlying methodology, look carefully at capabilities various data-driven attribution solutions offer. Is the solution you are buying comprehensive enough for you? Be sure to choose robust marketing performance measurement

and capabilities that are actionable for your organization. Here are some key areas to focus on when looking into capabilities.

DOES YOUR ATTRIBUTION SOLUTION INPUT BOTH DIGITAL AND OFFLINE MARKETING DATA?

The worlds of MMM and attribution are colliding and the ability to combine data-driven attribution with a marketing mix modeling is rapidly becoming a reality. As you assess possible partners, note those who are moving to combine additional offerings such as next-generation MMM. If you are using both traditional and digital channels, choose a provider that offers a solid approach to both disciplines.

CAN THE PROVIDER ACCOUNT FOR OFFLINE ACTIVITIES AND SALES?

While consumers research products online, the majority of purchases take place offline — either over a phone or in a store. While most digital marketers target online conversions only, to truly see the full consumer journey you must link online and offline consumer behavior. Matching offline purchases to online marketing requires a provider that has built a technological platform that accepts the right data, but also that has built an array of partnerships to tie data from across the marketing ecosystem.

HOW DOES THIS SOLUTION HANDLE MULTI-SCREEN CUSTOMER JOURNEYS?

More than a device to target, mobile is a connective platform. As consumers grab the screen that is most convenient to their purpose and location at any given

Resource

Learn more about what it takes to connect online activities and offline sales, as well as tie together multi-screen customer journeys.

Example

Access and Interpretability: Can you get the insights you need when you need them? Your team may need to see creative by audience segment in order to determine the best messaging for best performing audiences. Be sure that you can.

Example

Cohesion with RTB Partners: How much does attribution-informed RTB help? An Adometry customer saw an estimated gain in efficiencies of 3-5% of PPC spend by integrating attribution results into search bid management platforms.

Resource

Learn more about Adometry's ability to automatically connect with Real Time Bidding providers.

time, marketers are reaching the same audiences on both PCs and mobile devices. The right data-driven attribution solutions can help you to assess mobility across your media efforts.

Explore potential providers' ability to identify users across multi-screen journeys and be sure to ask about cookie related issues — such as cookie deletion and blocking — that are exacerbated as users move from screen to screen.

WILL YOUR ORGANIZATION BE ABLE TO OPERATIONALIZE SOLUTION OUTPUTS?

Revealing the true value of each touch point with data-driven attribution is a huge achievement — but it's not enough. To understand what is driving your success, you have to be able to take action on the insights your solution provides. There are two main concepts to evaluate regarding ability to fully leverage data-driven attribution insights.

1 Access and Interpretability: Ensure that you can understand and easily act on data-driven attribution results. First, check that the solution offers interactive access with a well-designed user interface. You should be able delve into your data in detail and customize views based on your role. Likewise, tactical budget recommendations should be provided in an easily exportable format that allows you to feed information directly to your media partners. The right solution should create internal efficiencies over time.

2 Cohesion with RTB Partners: Real-time Bidding (RTB) has grown at a phenomenal rate — the fact that this is the future of media buying is clear. According to eMarketer, RTB spending in the United States will reach \$7.1 billion by 2016. An ability to tie data-driven attribution information directly into your programmatic bidding platforms can increase the efficiency of your media buying without adding additional resources or costs.

CAN THE PROVIDER OFFER YOU AUDIENCE DATA?

Lastly, as your brand continues its battle for market share in an increasingly competitive market, you must understand who your audience is and how to best reach them. Picking a partner that has access to the best audience segmentation data — and that will incorporate this information into your reporting — is a critical advantage.

Ensure that your chosen solution partners with the top audience data companies and provides a variety of mapping options to capture the audience information you need.

Technology Roadmap

After careful consideration of any provider's current capabilities, looking at their technology roadmap will confirm the company's ability to keep up with the industry. Will your partner be positioned to handle your needs both now and into the future?

Pro Tip

The Forrester Wave for Attribution showed leading providers changing every year from 2009 through 2011. Be sure to pick a provider that is positioned for future growth.

It's great to ensure a provider offers the specific capability you need today. But what about next year when you triple your mobile spend? Or when you decide to tie a new social technology to your TV strategy?

Look at any potential provider's future strength by assessing the frequency of updates, strength of partnerships and their habitual response to feedback in order to select a solution that has the best potential to keep up with your evolving channel strategy, teams and tactics.

HOW OFTEN IS THE SOLUTION UPDATED OR IMPROVED?

When it comes to data-driven attribution, most companies are still quite young — which can mean amazing growth spurts or big stumbles. What's the history of the company you are considering? Have they innovated quickly over the past years? Do they spend time on the right improvements? It's ok if they don't have every capability today, but do you have confidence that they will tomorrow?

DOES THE PROVIDER HAVE POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS?

We told you how important partnerships are in terms of operationalizing your outputs, streamlining your implementation and onboarding and incorporating third party data sets like mobile and audience data. Therefore, you need to ensure that your company has a continuous business development plan for partnerships that is tied to their roadmap. You aren't going to stop exploring the newest technologies any time soon, they shouldn't either.

HOW DOES THIS PROVIDER HANDLE FEEDBACK?

Accepting and responding to feedback is a true sign of the kind of partnership that is critical to your success with a data-driven attribution provider. Ask yourself: does this company accept client feedback — and even criticism — with interest? Do they actively solicit feedback to improve the offering — and do they act on it?

Bottom Line: Selecting the right data-driven attribution partner is critical to your success in overall marketing performance measurement. Be sure to consider every aspect of the partner's offering and organization to make a great selection.

Step 4

Get Prepared

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○ Example

Does your provider know both your common metrics and your specific needs? Though you are measuring all channels' success based on ad spend return, the email team may see opportunities to fine-tune the creative message by audience segment. Meanwhile, the display team may need to make decisions across creative, site and campaign levels, including a custom behavioral targeting grouping. These needs can be met!

Step 4: Get Prepared

Picking an attribution provider is just the beginning — next, you must get ready for integration. Streamline your implementation by preparing both human and data resources to hit the ground running. Evaluating data readiness and preparing stakeholders ahead of time will help you determine the depth of support you may need during implementation and sets your organization up for focused progress towards business goals.

Recruit Cross-Departmental Teams

Establish cross-company involvement, ensuring that all teams are invested in utilizing attribution insights and all are accountable to a program owner for providing required inputs. The most successful teams tend to have representation in the following skill sets:

PROGRAM OWNER

You need a program owner to manage onboarding and provide ongoing leadership. Responsible for getting your data-driven attribution program up and running, this person will ensure all inputs are provided to your provider — even if they are not interested in the outputs. The program owner must keep the project plan provided by your attribution vendor, tracking down all data sets across departments as needed.

CHANNEL OWNERS AND ANALYSTS

You will need to gain input, consensus and data access from each of your channel owners. At the minimum, you will need them to provide:

- Access to reporting systems for event identification as well as impression, click and cost aggregate data for each channel
- KPI and objectives definitions

During step 1, your team came to consensus on unifying metrics for your marketing campaigns. Now, it is necessary to brief your data-driven attribution provider on your planning and optimization process. This will ensure that their consultants set up the most beneficial views for each of your channel teams.

TRAFFIC MANAGERS

These are the team members within your organization that ensure your ads get trafficked through ad servers and bid management systems. They set up reporting systems and ensure all tracking tags are sent to your third party publishers and advertising partners. As such, they will need to help implement data-driven attribution tracking tags throughout the life of the program.

Pro Tip

Don't forget to ask about site freezes. Many retailer IT teams lock down websites at critical times, such as during the holiday season, to avoid any accidental maintenance outages.

IT TEAMS

Don't overlook the need to secure support from IT and web management teams — they likely hold the keys to data you have or will wish to collect. Who are the key IT leads that will need to participate? While IT teams may not be interested in the outputs of your data-driven attribution program, it is crucial that you involve them if you need to make any changes to your website. Other questions to consider asking your IT teams:

- Are there known issues that must be resolved in order to gain access to data?
- Once we access the data, considering the volumes available, do we expect significant time delays in being able to transfer it?
- Are there any website freeze or maintenance periods we should be considering?

Prepare your Data

Having prepared the people you need to succeed, let's explore the actual data requirements you must consider. How clean and standardized is your data? While your data-driven attribution provider will help you through the process, putting some thought into data readiness will speed up your implementation and thwart any unwelcome surprises. Data modeling solutions are only as good as the data that goes into the model. Examine the inputs required in order to run data-driven attribution and take action where needed.

EVENT DATA

Your solution will need data on impressions, clicks and conversions for each marketing factor that you want incorporated. For example, you may want to include display, search, email and social media in your analysis. At a minimum, you will need display impressions and clicks, search clicks, email clicks and opens, and social media impressions and clicks. You will also need the volume of action taken on your website from there (total sales, downloads or lead submissions).

REFERENCE DATA

Event data is time-stamped and associated with a unique identifier, but adding reference data is a key step in making results more interpretable. For example, event data may show 100 impressions for creative 12345 in placement 6850385. You would rather know that it was your spring sale creative on Mediamath's behaviorally targeted 300x250 placement. Likewise, reference data allows data groupings. If you have 1000 creative types, you want to group them by message (across different sizes) to evaluate the creative content. Without reference data to provide context, reporting becomes less actionable for your teams.

COST DATA

The last major piece of data that an attribution solution should take into consideration is cost. Without associating cost to your various marketing tactics, it's difficult to evaluate performance across tactics. For example, if you had a search ad that brings in 10 sales and an email that brings in 10 sales, you might consider them equally valuable. If you added in cost, however, you will see that your search ad cost \$10 total for those

10 sales (eCPA of \$1) while the email cost \$1000 (eCPA of \$100). It is extremely important to incorporate cost data for all paid marketing channels in order to get true value comparisons.

Resource

Explore more tips on building a data-driven attribution program once you've selected a provider, in the "10 Tactics for Building an Effective Attribution Program" whitepaper.

Once you have know which data points you want and need to incorporate into your data-driven attribution solution, be sure to consider plan three key factors into your timeline:

- 1 **Data Standardization:** Clicks are generally captured on your website through a piece of code that captures the referring source information. In order to capture them, you will need to define unified tracking URL parameters.
2. **DMP Integration:** Data collection is difficult. Ensure that you compare capabilities and formats between your DMP and your data-driven attribution provider. Connect the two early and ensure a compatible working relationship.
- 3 **Data Hygiene:** To begin prepping data sets for transfer to your attribution provider, your organization must run tests to ensure that the data is "clean", not garbled and ready to run through the model smoothly.

Bottom Line: Integration is a project in and of itself. To drive the maximum benefit in the shortest amount of time, rally your organization to prioritize timely integration actions.

Step **5**

Evaluate Success

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Step 5: Evaluate Success

To build enthusiasm and credibility for data-driven attribution, you must envision and evaluate success. Having defined your conversion events and what marketing success looks like for your organization, leverage those goals and metrics to rigorously evaluate your provider's performance. To do so, consider the entire engagement — from measured gains to quality of service.

MARKETING PERFORMANCE

As you see increases in marketing performance and decreases in cost or inefficiency, share bottom-line indicators of success with stakeholders. Success indicators include:

- eCPA reduction
- Optimization within channels
- Optimization across channels
- Level-of-effort reduction in reporting

ENTERPRISE ABILITY

Your provider should help you identify and break down organizational silos. Note areas for potential improvement and move to address them. Success indicators include:

- Holistic budgets more easily managed across marketing teams
- KPIs and success metrics aligned across all departments

EASE AND FLEXIBILITY

It should be easy to make changes in your data-driven attribution program as you learn more. Be sure that your provider tailors services and processes to your specific needs. Success indicators include:

- Clear ownership of the change process
- Progress tracked between your teams and your provider team
- Timely responses to customization or cancellation requests

QUALITY OF OUTPUT

Data-driven attribution insights should be reported and interpreted in a way that is clear and actionable for your organization. Success indicators include:

- Teams use attribution tools to easily view and interpret insights
- Organization able to readily put these insights to use
- Ability to confirm that insights are based on accurate data

TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP

Your provider must deliver within established budget parameters and without hidden costs or scope issues. Success indicators include:

- Clear, up-front pricing options and variations
- Flexible choices in attribution reporting so you can tailor the solution to your needs without hidden charges for customization
- Data-driven attribution costs represent a reasonable percentage of overall marketing spend

INNOVATIVE ROAD MAP

To provide ongoing success, your provider will both keep pace with industry advances and adapt to your changing needs. Success indicators include:

- A flexible platform that can combine data-driven attribution with next-generation MMM
- A growing customer base, strong partnerships and a track record of innovation

Bottom Line: Your stakeholders will be more invested in driving success with data-driven attribution if they can envision what success looks like, and concretely evaluate whether goals are being achieved. Show them the way.



Conclusion

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO DATA-DRIVEN ATTRIBUTION





Conclusion

MAKE YOUR MOVE TO DATA-DRIVEN MARKETING

Today's top marketers need better marketing performance measurement practices as part of their marketing intelligence platform. Adopting data-driven attribution means looking inward before you can look out — but the potential gains are worth the effort.

Get on the road to fact-based decision-making by evaluating potential solutions and providers with an informed eye. Ensure your organization can onboard, gather and take action on insights. Soon, you'll find that examining the customer journey with data-driven attribution is the key to refining your marketing strategy and maximizing performance at every step.



Glossary

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO DATA-DRIVEN ATTRIBUTION



Glossary

C

Conversion Path – A series of marketing touch-points encompassing all interactions a customer has with a business before making a purchase.

Conversions – Conversions are actions that convert a visitor into a paying customer. While they typically involve the sale of goods or services, conversions can also be softer, such as signing up for a newsletter, or downloading a coupon.

D

Data-Driven Attribution – A form of marketing attribution modeling that relies on the marketing data itself to help build and refine the model, instead of using arbitrary rules or pre-determined weights to determine attribution credit.

Data Normalization – The process organizing the contents of one or many databases to reduce redundancy and dependency, thereby increasing efficient use of the data.

Data Modeling – The process of modeling an information system, (in our case a business's marketing operations), based on known data about the system in order to better understand the complicated interdependencies and effects of change upon the system.

E

eCPA – (Effective Cost Per Action) A metric used to gauge the effectiveness of advertising in terms of the average cost of each action or conversion.

K

KPIs – Key Performance Indicators are qualitative business measurements intended to gauge success or failure by. KPIs will differ based on department or business goals, but a good KPI will always be formulated after a clear understanding of business operations, limitations and goals has been achieved.

P

Programmatic Buying – Programmatic buying refers to automated advertising exchanges that buy, sell and serve display ads. These integrated marketing systems allow marketers to dynamically control the volume, price and targeted audience of display advertising.

Marketing Segmentation - Segmentation is a marketing strategy that involves breaking a large target audience into smaller sub-sets based on similar traits. Common marketing segments center around geographic, demographic and behavioral intent data.

R

ROI – (Return on Investment) A metric used to judge the efficiency of an investment. $ROI = (\text{gain from investment} - \text{cost of investment}) / \text{cost of investment}$

RoAS – (Return on Ad Spend) RoAS is a ratio used to determine the dollar amount earned for every dollar spent in advertising. An RoAS of 11:1 would mean you received \$11 in sales for every \$1 you spent on advertising.

RTB - (Real Time Bidding) A programmatic way of selling individual ad inventory to the highest bidder on an per-impression basis. RTB allows advertisers to optimize ad spend across multiple platforms and is a component of the larger programmatic buying ecosystem.



About Adometry by Google™

Adometry by Google transforms the way the world's top brands improve marketing performance. Acting as marketing's "system of record," Adometry solves the complex challenge of integrating, measuring, and optimizing marketing performance across all channels—both online and offline. Combining and interpreting previously silo'd sources of data; the Adometry Marketing Performance Management Suite provides data-driven attribution, modern marketing mix modeling, and intelligent optimization recommendations across and within channels. As a result, marketers are able to identify their true impact on the customer journey and generate actionable insights that improve ROI.