Combine attribution with data onboarding to bridge the digital marketing divide

Understand how online marketing impacts offline sales

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Digital marketing offers new ways to connect with people. It also generates a wealth of valuable data for marketers. The rise of digital marketing and data-driven attribution has dramatically expanded insight into the customer journey.

Meanwhile, customer journeys have become more and more complex, often including both online and offline touchpoints. Though online purchases account for a greater percentage of spending each year, offline sales continue to capture the lion's share of revenue for many businesses.

When offline and online purchase data are siloed, it is difficult for marketers to know which marketing touchpoints influenced conversions, especially in the case of offline sales.

Even with attribution, how can marketers truly determine which messages were the most compelling or which channels produced the best returns if offline data is excluded? Without tying offline purchases to digital campaigns, how can marketers accurately assess effectiveness or how to optimize spending?

The answer is data onboarding. To get full value from attribution with a tool like Google Attribution 360, part of the Google Analytics 360 Suite, onboard offline data for a holistic view of marketing performance. This may mean selecting the right data onboarding partner for your business.

Bringing offline data to digital attribution

Attribution is the process of identifying a set of user interactions, or "touch-points" that contribute in some manner to a desired outcome, and then assigning value to each of these events. Marketers can use this information to measure and understand campaign performance.

While there are multiple techniques, sophisticated marketers prefer data-driven attribution models that take into consideration all marketing touchpoints—across multiple channels and campaigns—leading to a conversion.

Using a combination of probabilistic algorithms and predictive modeling, an attribution platform like Attribution 360 gives the proper amount of fractional credit to every element of the media mix. Attribution insights can be used to:

- Identify high-performing media inventory and/or publishers
- Predict campaign performance among specific audience segments and geographies
- Perform lift analysis across channels to assess relative value of each spend in a multi-channel campaign
- Create flexible "what if" scenarios for advanced media planning and budget allocation
- Understand the influence between online channels and offline channels such as TV, print, and radio

All of these capabilities are more powerful and complete when data regarding offline purchases and channels are included in attribution analysis. Onboarding offline data lets marketers:

1. Assess the impact of cross-channel efforts on total purchases including online, offline and in-store purchases

2. Improve optimization recommendations through holistic investment-to-conversion analysis

3. Increase predictive capabilities and performance projections for subsequent campaigns

4. Calculate more precise return on investment (ROI) and margins for campaigns

Attempts to understand the influence of online advertising on offline purchases used to be a guessing game. Now, advertisers can onboard data such as purchase history, CRM databases, email campaigns, and loyalty program information to gain a comprehensive view of complex customer journeys.

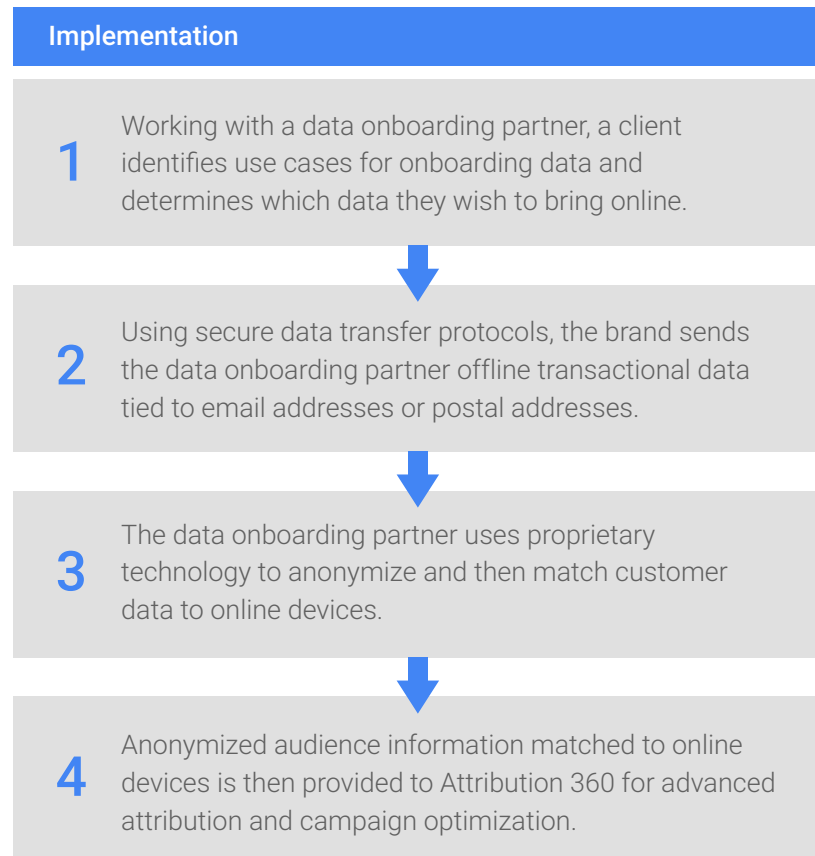| Marketing Data	Conversions	Audiences
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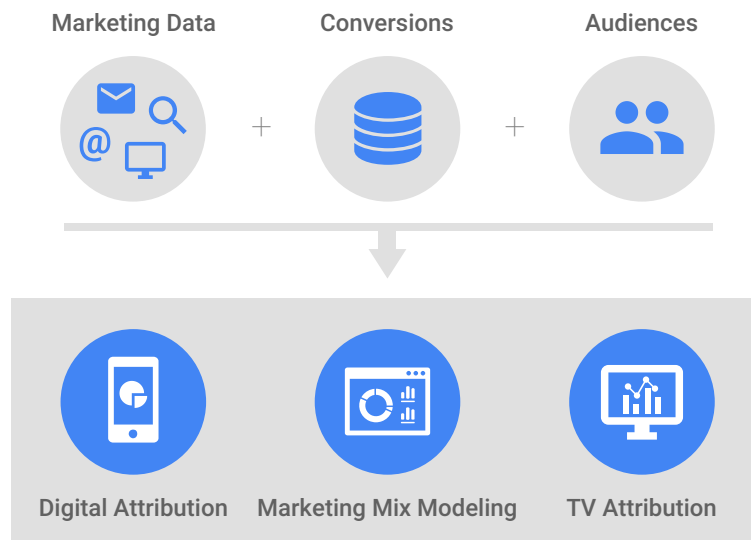
Real-world examples

Businesses that have a large customer base and rely on offline sales need to onboard offline data into attribution tools like Attribution 360 to get a real read on marketing performance. To understand more about how it works, consider a few examples.

Imagine a department store where the majority of sales take place offline. The retailer wants to run an online campaign promoting their annual in-store sale. They can collect purchase data tied to email and postal addresses via their loyalty card. But how can they measure the true impact of their online ad campaign on offline sales?

Working with a data onboarding partner, the retailer can anonymously match offline data sets to online devices. This allows the company to attribute in-store transactions to online ad impressions. The true impact of digital marketing campaigns—regardless of whether conversion took place online or offline—is revealed by analyzing all conversion data.

Implementation
1 Working with a data onboarding partner, a client identifies use cases for onboarding data and determines which data they wish to bring online.
2 Using secure data transfer protocols, the brand sends the data onboarding partner offline transactional data tied to email addresses or postal addresses.
3 The data onboarding partner uses proprietary technology to anonymize and then match customer data to online devices.
4 Anonymized audience information matched to online devices is then provided to Attribution 360 for advanced attribution and campaign optimization.

In another example, an automotive company wants to roll out a multi-channel marketing campaign to generate awareness for a new fleet of vehicles and increase dealership foot traffic among targeted demographics. Working with a third-party data provider, the company identifies desirable audience characteristics.

Using optimization recommendations from Attribution 360, the company can determine which touchpoints are most effectively leading to conversions—in this case, visiting the company's website for more information about the vehicles or using the 'store locator' feature to find a local dealership.

But how does the company account for people who see a display ad or read a review from an affiliate, then later visit the dealership on their way to work? Also, how does the company effectively retarget existing customers that may be ready to upgrade to a new model? The company may be missing valuable opportunities to target existing and prospective customers with the right message at the right time.

Onboarding purchase history and valuable CRM data into Attribution 360 lets the retailer evaluate the performance of the marketing campaign using both online and offline conversion data. Tying offline activity and purchase data to online marketing efforts provides a complete picture of campaign effectiveness.

Attribution, optimization, and "what if" scenarios

Attribution 360 can integrate many important data streams. With offline data in place, Attribution 360 analyzes it alongside online conversion data to assess which marketing touch points during a configurable "look back" period played a role in influencing each purchase decision.

Attribution 360 then compares converting and non-converting sequences to analyze how valuable each event was relative to the others. Analyzing complete data sets rather than samples yields highly accurate and insightful results.

Once the impact of digital on offline conversions is determined, marketers can use the media modeler within Attribution 360 to optimize in-flight campaigns and drive maximum results.

Incremental metrics enable testing of "what if" scenarios and budget allocations to generate the biggest lift in key metrics such as conversions, reach, or revenue. Saturation points help marketers see when additional spending will result in diminishing returns.

Results in dollars and cents

Onboarding real-world purchase data builds confidence that attribution and optimization recommendations are informed by all customer behavior, not just activity taking place online. Added context results in more precise performance measurement and better ability to identify hidden marketing revenue streams.

For businesses that provide a feed of offline purchase data through a data onboarding partner, Attribution 360 can make ROI calculations tied to specific marketing campaigns and evaluate granular performance data down to the impression level.

Consider a retailer selling goods both online and in a physical store. Onboarding offline purchase data shows how marketing campaigns are contributing to sales—both on the website and in the store—so marketers can better assess the cost of each conversion as well as the best performing conversion paths.

With ROI calculated for each campaign, the marketing team can use powerful predictive capabilities in Attribution 360 to determine the best marketing mix to reach people efficiently.

Picking a data onboarding partner

Data privacy and security are high priorities when evaluating a data onboarding partner. Take the time to identify vendors that take privacy issues seriously. Look for controls that ensure your data is not only secure, but also sourced properly and permissibly. Use of data must be sensitive to individual privacy concerns. Ask these questions:

☑ Is the company considered a leader in its market as determined by credible third-parties such as analyst firms and experts from digital agencies?

☑ Does the company have experience working with other brands in your industry?

☑ Does the company have transparent privacy and security measures?

☑ Is the company's methodology transparent and backed by proven technology?

☑ Can the company provide expamples of real-world results?

Data makes all the difference

Bringing offline data into attribution analysis helps marketers understand the complete spectrum of customer behavior, and the true impact of marketing activities. Data-intensive verticals such as retail, travel, financial services, and automotive will get greater prediction, precision and performance in multi-channel marketing campaigns.

Retail – A department store trying to reach an audience segment of 25-34 year old females with display ads promoting an annual sale event can compute a more accurate campaign ROI leveraging both in-store and online conversions.

Auto – An auto manufacturer remarketing site visitors with ads about their newest car model can measure campaign influence on purchases of the car at their dealerships.

Travel – An airline trying to reach people searching for beach vacations with flight deals to the tropics can connect all purchases to online ad impressions and determine how well the campaign performed.

Financial Services – A bank running a multi-channel campaign to small-business owners with a line of credit offer can incorporate in-branch conversions into attribution analysis for each channel.

To get the full value from attribution tools such as Attribution 360, carefully consider your customer base, sales strategy, and your potential to break down data silos. Working with a data onboarding partner can help you tie together all of your online and offline data to better inform marketing efforts.

About the Google Analytics 360 Suite

The Google Analytics 360 Suite offers powerful and integrated analytics solutions for today's biggest enterprises. Measure and improve the impact of your marketing across every screen, channel and moment in today's customer journey. It's easy to use, and makes data accessible for everyone so the "aha" moments are simple to discover and share. Move from insight to impact faster with the Analytics 360 Suite.

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