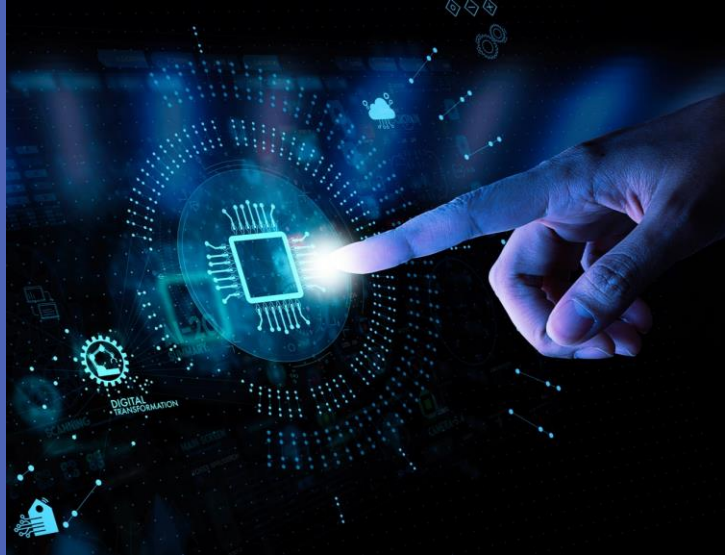
# Marketing Attribution in the Age of Cookie-less Media

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## IS YOUR MARKETING ATTRIBUTION CAPABILITY PREPARED TO ADDRESS THE CHANGING MEDIA DATA LANDSCAPE?

Marketing attribution has evolved dramatically in the past 20 years, migrating from 'Last Click' to data-driven Multi-Touch Attribution. However, the foundation of these approaches has primarily relied on third-party, individual IDs. With ongoing changes in the data landscape due to privacy, data-sharing and technology restrictions, the future of individual 1:1 targeting has grown murkier, requiring more thoughtful and innovative approaches to clearly identify the opportunity that is there.

This ongoing evolution is transforming measurement, as incomplete datasets impact the promise of 1:1 attribution modeling for all addressable channels. While identity is at the heart of most attribution approaches today, match rates *across* datasets are increasingly declining, driving Marketers and measurement providers to adjust strategies toward first-party data assets, given the impending loss of third-party cookies.

As a Marketer, what is the implication to you? Very simply, planning that is dependent upon siloed attribution measurement can no longer use small samples of third-party, individual data to project to the entire customer population. There are too many biases and 'bad actors' within the ad ecosystem to accurately project digital media's impact on to sales without a more robust, flexible approach.

***"Third-party cookies have been a key tech enabler of digital fraud. And many marketers already have been building their own consumer databases anyway, in part because of the poor quality of third-party data that fueled cookie-driven ad buys."*** – 'Why Marketing Might Be Better Without Cookies', AdAge (May 4, 2021)

## WHY IS THE INDUSTRY MOVING AWAY FROM THIRD-PARTY COOKIES FOR TARGETING AND MEASUREMENT?

There are multiple reasons, but they all are linked by one thread – third-party, cookie-based data is increasingly unreliable, and accuracy is only likely to degrade more moving forward:

- Cookie synching across DSPs and DMPs to target individuals are perfect, but match rates today are only 40%-50% at best and continue to decline. In short, model-ready datasets are becoming less reliable.
- Key platforms are shifting strategies to enable privacy-focused, alternative methods to target audiences. In turn, this challenges existing approaches to resolve identities, meaning 1:1, deterministic datasets are becoming obsolete.
- Mobile device tracking is more challenging than ever with the early-stage loss of the IDFA (Apple's Identifier) and the roll-out of App Tracking Transparency (ATT), which requires publishers to ask users for permission to track their behavior across apps and websites.

From a measurement standpoint, the net effect of these challenges is an increasing bias in traditional attribution models. Without the ability to rely on device-based third-party cookies, measurement via data-driven models only is, in some cases, impossible.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2022 AND BEYOND, MARKETERS NEED TO EMBRACE THESE SHIFTS AND ENHANCE THEIR TARGETING AND MEASUREMENT STRATEGIES.

There are new opportunities for Marketers to shift from channel-focused approaches to omni-channel, audience-focused planning and optimization capabilities including:

- First-party data strategies with real-time targeting tactics that group anonymous users into unidentifiable cohorts based on behaviors and contextual signals
- Identity solutions with first-party alternatives, such as publisher-server cookies and email-based site authenticated data
- Brand-built first-party networks that enable activation against their own customers and leverage relationships between advertiser and publishers

## ENTER A NEW AGE OF MARKETING ATTRIBUTION

What does all of this mean for measurement?

Very simply, *cross-platform datasets are becoming less deterministic* since existing targeting approaches reliant on third-party cookies are fading away. To address this shortcoming, Ipsos MMA's approach to *Unified Marketing Attribution* is purposely designed to remain data-agnostic, use multiple levels of data aggregation to deliver consistent activation insights across channels, and scale globally, all without reliance upon third-party identifiers.

Naturally, we hear many questions from clients about our approach: What is so unique about it? Why should I trust it? How will I use it for real-time planning and how do I prove it works?

There are three primary reasons for this:

## 01 Future-proofed data

Not all brands have the same objectives, ad-tech stack, or partner integrations so a measurement framework must be flexible to accommodate all states of data readiness.

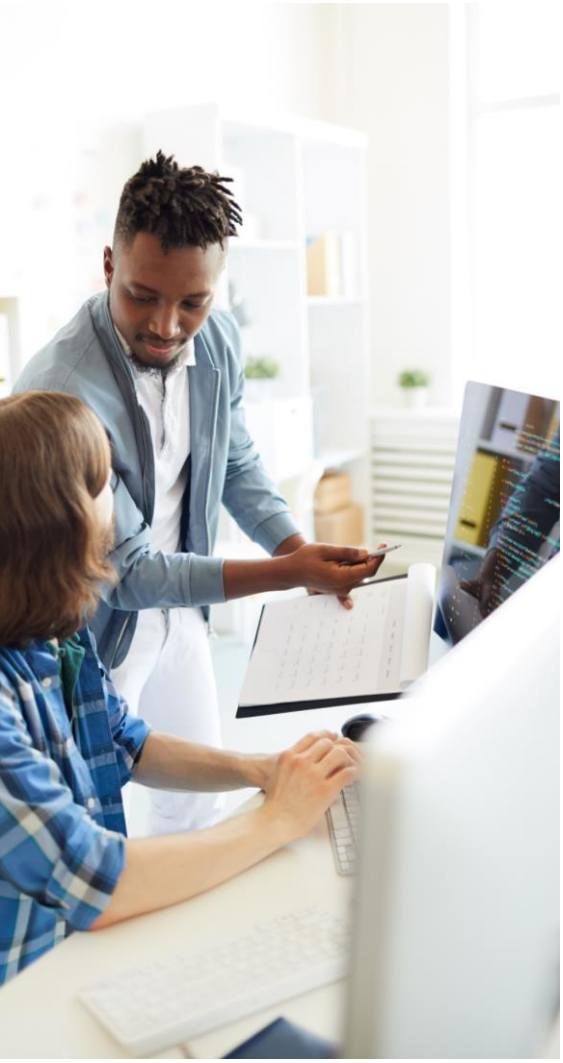
To address the rapidly changing needs of today's advertiser, and to ensure a future-proofed transition into the new world of first-party data and media targeting, Ipsos MMA's *Unified Measurement* leverages individual data when available, but we do not solely rely on third-party IDs or 1:1 deterministic approaches.

Instead, our strategy is designed to accommodate all types of data as platforms expand audience targeting via broad-reach, contextual and behavioral cohorts (micro segments of anonymized individuals that meet specific targeting criteria, such as being in-market to buy a car). This broader data strategy approach enables Marketers to optimize their plans even as their targeting evolves over time.

## 02 Innovative and customer validated modeling

Ipsos MMA's measurement approach is unified across multiple types of data hierarchies, including aggregate marketing mix data sets and granular digital targeting data. We integrate these disparate data sets along with first-party log data on a weekly cadence, ensuring that all marketing spend is accounted for, not just a biased sample dependent on individual ID match rates.

Importantly, our *Unified Measurement* models do not simply ingest these new data sets on a weekly basis for reporting purposes. Instead, our models are continuously updated each week, accounting for changes in consumer purchase patterns and any shifts in audience targeting. With fresh measurement each week, we ensure accuracy by accounting for adjustments in channel performance without sacrificing timeliness or reporting.



## 03 Activation

With continued uncertainty around data, targeting, and measurement, Ipsos MMA emphasizes on-going value-tracking and measurement activation. Our analytic consulting teams collaborate closely with internal clients and agency partners to interpret results, identify recommendations via our *Activate scenario planning platform* and monitor performance and accuracy via a continuous measurement cycle.

To assist clients in the ongoing activation of *Unified Measurement* recommendations, Ipsos MMA partners with strategic data providers such as Google and Amazon to eliminate measurement disruption as data and targeting changes continue. We ensure our measurement frameworks continuously evolve in real-time so that clients can remain focused on activating our recommendations, not questioning their validity.

**Bringing all this together requires a new approach to dynamic measurement, and Ipsos MMA partners with clients on three distinct approaches that are based upon current and future data readiness:**

### Level 1: Agile MMM + Platform Deep Dives

For brands without a need for continuous, always-on Attribution measurement, Ipsos MMA's approach to Marketing Mix Modeling includes the opportunity for rapid monthly or quarterly updates with connections directly into ad platforms, enabling planners to match media formats to campaign objectives and maintain a cross-platform view of omnichannel sales.

### Level 2: Marketing Attribution using Cohorts and Audience Segments

For brands without the budget or data stack to support individual data, our approach to Customer Attribution incorporates cohorts that are targeted based on campaign objectives, helping planners allocate spend across campaigns, build creative best practices, optimize frequency and discover which placements work best across all key priority audiences. To do this means moving beyond standard weekly, geo and product-level MMM to incorporating new data dimensions, such as brand affinity and in-market or lifestyle activity into weekly measurement, reporting and optimization.

This is done for each marketing channel/device by customer segment, where possible. In other words, expanding the dataset and dimensions add variations due to how media is targeted, accounting for time, audience, and attributes for 100% of all addressable channels. Utilizing this approach to Customer Attribution provides Marketers with deeply granular insights and recommendations, independent of needing individual data sets.

**Level 3: Individual first-party, 1:1 activation**

The Ipsos MMA *Unified Measurement* framework does not mean that individual people-based measurement will go away entirely. In fact, as the media ecosystem continues to evolve and first-party data sets expand, our approach can capture individual-level responsiveness across digital, video, social and TV by using advanced, machine-learning algorithms across conversion pathways.

With this more advanced approach, Marketers benefit from the deeply granular measurement and reporting in our Level 2 approach, while also being able to activate recommendations against known prospects or customers. What is your next best action? How should you optimally sequence touchpoints and messages to drive the most efficient consumer journey to conversion?

As closed-loop buying (onboarding a known individual to an advertising partner to generate incremental lift) will still be relevant moving forward, the Ipsos MMA *Unified Measurement* framework will continue to power platforms with attribution scores at the *individual* level. This approach will help Marketers make better buying decisions and truly drive value both across and within addressable channels on a 1:1 basis.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The pace at which the media landscape is changing is so rapid that having a long-term measurement plan should be mission-critical for all Marketers.

Most measurement providers face an either/or scenario:

- Measure attribution in a channel-specific silo which limits the understanding of true incrementality and lacks clarity on cross-channel efficiency
- Revert to conventional styles of MMM only, which is best practice for strategic, cross-portfolio measurement and planning, but lacks the deeply granular capabilities of Customer Attribution

Conversely, Ipsos MMA's *Unified Measurement* approach is unique in that it is specifically designed to help brands navigate data and measurement strategies to stay ahead of the continuous change via our tiered approach. By building a strategy across a combination of individual and first-party data sets, we can flexibly deliver granular insights and recommendations that drive strategic and tactical audience planning, and dynamically track and unlock value on a rapid cadence.

In summary, yes, the addressable media ecosystem is in a period of great upheaval and change. That does not mean, however, that your measurement needs to pause or slow down. In fact, we view this as a period of opportunity for Marketers to separate themselves from the pack as well as gain measurable financial and share advantages. Ipsos MMA's approach to *Unified Measurement* is a solution that shines a light on the path to increased marketing effectiveness and investment successes.

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