



# WHY BRANDS SHOULD INVEST IN INDEPENDENT CAMPAIGN MEASUREMENT

## AN ACXIOM POV

Marketers today face trade-offs of all kinds – no more so than in campaign measurement.

On one hand, there is the “free” approach. Publishers and platforms commonly provide brands post-campaign analysis as a value-added service. Many marketing leaders looking for savings embrace the free reporting and quantifiable metrics, which are normally deemed sufficient to demonstrate campaign success to their internal stakeholders.

But stopping at free is holding marketers back. Relying solely on complimentary campaign analysis based on publisher or platform-specific KPIs limits their ability to optimize their marketing and maximize their investments.

That's why savvy marketers are opting for independent reviews of campaign performance, which are critical to developing effective test-and-learn strategies that will ultimately drive better overall marketing performance and an improved customer experience. Third-party measurement requires an investment, but that can quickly pay for itself by making it easier to determine attribution and conversion, not just within one platform, but wherever your customers may be.

In this Point of View, we'll discuss the advantages of independent measurement and what to look for when choosing the best analytics partner for your marketing and customer experience needs.



## TAKING OWNERSHIP OF MEASUREMENT

Advertisers spending top dollar for media want to make sure they're getting the most for their money. The ability to effectively assess campaign performance and course correct to develop a better understanding of your customer, their habits and preferences is more critical than ever. Some leading marketers have made drastic changes that have shaken up the status quo.

Many large advertisers are starting to take ownership back from platforms and publishers to better understand and strategize how to more effectively drive engagement on these platforms. Procter & Gamble recently cut \$200 million<sup>1</sup> in its digital ad spend while increasing its reach by 10 percent, eliminating 20 percent of ineffective marketing. In a brand safety play, JPMorgan Chase slashed the number of sites where it advertises from 400,000 to 5,000 and ended up questioning a broad programmatic approach.<sup>2</sup> Intense scrutiny around digital ad spend means a challenge of the status quo and a call for increased visibility into programs, as viewability and lack of measurement were cited as transparency issues. Proper measurement will allow marketers to make the adjustments and pivot if necessary before diving deeper into ineffective areas.

Digital ad platforms and channels often provide reports that accompany campaigns, which usually provide enough metrics to roll up in a dashboard. Since methodologies used across reporting platforms vary widely, however, these metrics are not consistent, making it more difficult to measure and assess the return on a campaign and its performance. Marketers need to understand the basis for the measurement reports they receive, whether that be the total audience, onboarded audience or distributed audience, as well as ensure that the test and control groups are comparable. Few brands have the in-house expertise to meet all these requirements or can apply this rigor across the multiple campaigns they may be running concurrently.



## UNDERSTANDING THE OPPORTUNITY COST

When marketers want to take a deep dive into their campaigns, complimentary is often only complementary. It's to be expected that self-reporting would have some inherent – even unconscious – positive bias. It's important for marketers to critically evaluate the reporting they are receiving, what they are really looking to measure, and if the tools and resources they currently have are able to succinctly perform those tasks. Here's what marketers give up by taking the free path to measurement:

### EASE OF VISIBILITY

Marketers analyzing reports are often looking for analytics that will provide actionable insights into the campaign. While marketers want to highlight their wins and put their best foot forward, they also want to understand the tactics that drove performance. Complimentary reporting often only scratches the surface of the underlying why and how in the delivered results. Consequently, marketers are often left to make educated guesses on where to make material improvements for the next campaign.

### STANDARDIZED REPORTS

Creating a holistic campaign report that spans across all channels based on various channel-specific reports can be time consuming. In addition to spending time analyzing disparate data sets, reports among various vendors will also often have a different look, feel and substance from what you need. Advertisers often have to spend additional time slicing various reports in different formats to develop the report they need that delivers the campaign results that are meaningful to their organization.

### ABILITY TO MAKE DIRECT COMPARISONS ACROSS CHANNELS

Platforms like Google DoubleClick Campaign Manager and Facebook use their own proprietary units of measure. Ad agencies may rely on DCM cookies to provide their clients with measurement. Facebook also utilizes its own identity graph. Advertisers are often left trying to assess campaigns using disparate pieces of a puzzle whose pieces do not fit together.

Spending time analyzing disparate data sets can be a complex exercise due to inconsistencies in measurement platform methodologies. For instance, if one platform uses “total test vs. control” audiences and another uses “test exposed vs. synthetic control” audiences, campaign reports are largely not comparable side by side.



# WHY IS INDEPENDENT MEASUREMENT IMPORTANT?

Investing in independent measurement pays off in other savings over time – either in work hours or dollars saved. Complimentary reporting from various sources only scratches the surface of analytics. Turning to an independent third-party resource may save the organization advertising dollars, preventing advertisers from taking the wrong path in a campaign, no matter how tried and true a tactic may be.

## TRUST IN NEUTRALITY

For the advertiser, having an independent third party analyze campaign results ensures an unbiased view of the performance. A third-party participant who is not invested in the project, either emotionally or financially will provide an objective analysis to the campaign.

## CONSISTENCY PROVIDES CLARITY

In addition to providing an unbiased analysis, a third-party measurement resource can look more deeply into and across campaigns, investigating the buyer on their journey. Rather than zeroing in on a campaign within one channel, independent measurement analyzes multiple platforms and channels used within the campaign to connect the dots and provide true correlation data.

Consequently, marketers can focus on a people-based approach and follow a customer along their journey. Independent measurement then helps marketers better provide for their customers by tailoring to a customer's specific platform and purchasing preferences.

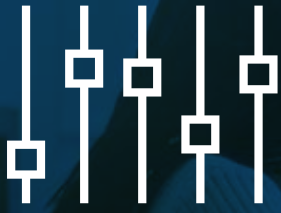
## CONDUCTING INDEPENDENT MEASUREMENT WILL PAY FOR ITSELF

Consider the investment of an independent measurement partner as paying it forward. Over time, marketers will develop a better understanding of their customers and are able to adjust communications to better reach them. Reaching customers where you know they are listening leads to faster conversions. When you invest more, you also get more in return.

Some examples of incremental lift of omnichannel campaign performance (without bias) include:

- 12 percent lift in new accounts opened
- 583 incremental buyers and \$230,000 increase in sales
- 24 percent increase in logins\*

*\*Logins are an important distinction from downloads, as they demonstrate the customer has not only downloaded, but is using/implementing*



# WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN AN INDEPENDENT MEASUREMENT PARTNER

Once you've decided to invest in independent measurement, here are some things to consider when choosing a partner that fits your needs.

## FIND A PARTNER THAT CAN NAVIGATE COMPLEXITY AND ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

To ensure the sourcing step doesn't slow you down or distract your organization, pick the right partner who understands how different publishers provide reporting and can ask the questions you didn't think of asking – a partner who has seen what works and what doesn't, and can help guide you in your campaign design decision-making. Consider what are your must-haves metrics – the numbers that answer your most pressing questions that respond to your KPIs. Then, choose someone who is equipped to cater to those needs.

## CHOOSE A PARTNER THAT GIVES YOU A 360 VIEW OF YOUR CAMPAIGN

Make sure you pick a partner that will let you see across a campaign, rather than just small parts of it, measuring results with a consistent and highly qualified methodology. Getting the entire picture of a campaign helps you understand the motivation behind a conversion – or lack thereof – and where in the customer's journey this occurred.

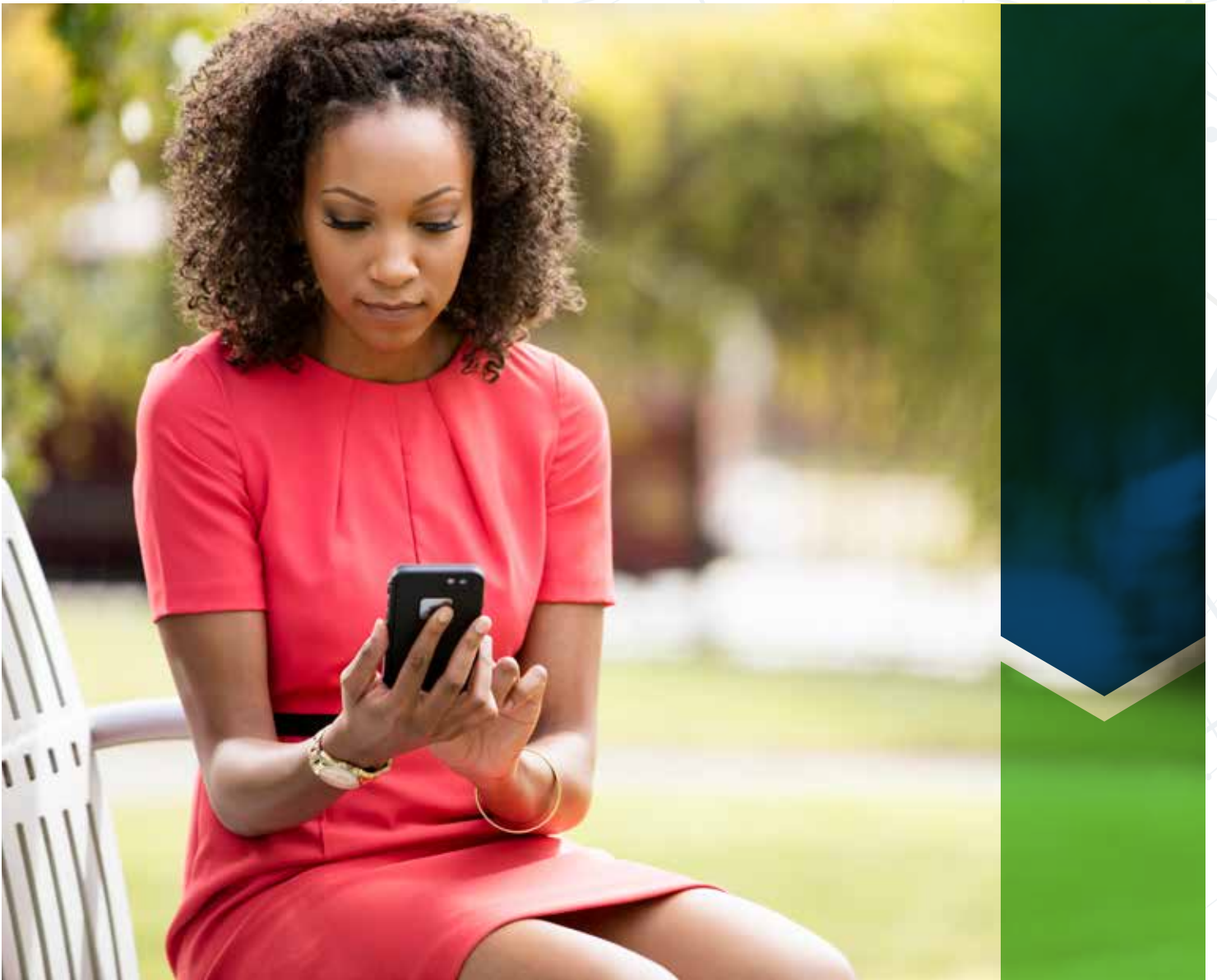
Explore experimental design, where you compare a test group and a control group, with all else being equal, except exposure to the campaign. Using this method helps marketers see what tactics are working – and for who – and which ones don't perform as well.

A people-based tool also lets marketers see a campaign across multiple channels to understand their relative impact. For example, an advertiser may be evaluating a campaign conducted during Independence Day. The brand wants to see which channels received the most impressions but also close the loop with product purchases from multiple sales channels (online and in-store) and further understand the demographics of the people who purchased.

## WORK WITH A PARTNER THAT CAN MAKE AN IMMEDIATE IMPACT

Choose a partner that doesn't take a user's manual – and multiple hours – to begin implementation and who can simplify the process of implementation, from identity resolution to analysis across channels. You want a measurement tool that is not only intuitive and easy to use, but also takes care of the tough stuff for you.

While it is sometimes important for marketers to measure mid-campaign, look for a partner that focuses on the long-term learning and benefitting results, who can assist in developing campaigns and campaign series that will yield the most actionable learnings for ongoing improvement. Ideally this partner will also be at the forefront of the evolution of marketing and spot trends, providing strategic guidance to help brands lean into these evolutions and create solutions when challenges arise.



## AN INVESTMENT THAT PAYS DIVIDENDS

While complimentary analytics are a good starting point to campaign measurement, using a third party partner to do true people-based measurement will fast track your marketing performance and maximize your spend for current and future campaigns. Make sure you choose a partner that understands your needs and is able to meet them, and can help you become an expert marketer who fully understands your customers.

Traditional campaign measurement only gives a snapshot view. A third-party partner who can activate people-based measurement will allow advertisers to see a holistic view – like watching the entire film, rather than the highlights reel. Taking this people-based approach to measurement pivots marketing from individual campaigns to creating true omnichannel customer experiences.

# CONTRIBUTORS

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Anthony Ferrara is an analytics and measurement expert with more than 20 years of experience in data and development. At Acxiom, Anthony leads a talented team of measurement experts who drive insights for leading brands. He began his career as a consultant at Accenture, and served as a vice president at Hubbard One. Anthony earned a BS and MS from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York.

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Find out how you can get a holistic and neutral view of your marketing performance and implement people-based measurement at your organization. Contact [info@acxiom.com](mailto:info@acxiom.com) for more details.

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