

Unified Marketing Measurement for Luxury Retail & eCommerce

How to discover what's working, what's not and **improve performance**



Table of contents

Introduction [03](#)

Standard practices in marketing measurement	04
What most marketers are doing to measure results	04
Challenges marketers need to overcome	05
Two core questions	05
Setting the right KPIs and processes	05

Measurement challenges [06](#)

Third-party cookies	06
Google Analytics 4 limitations	07
Ad platform duplication and bias	08
Longer and more complex journeys	10
Privacy regulation	11
Siloed data across tools	

New approach to measurement: Overview [12](#)

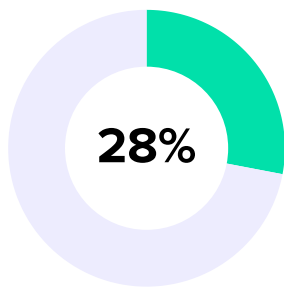
Data foundation	13
Measurement	14
Triangulation: Methodologies in unison	15
Reporting	16
Activation	17

New approach to measurement: Overview [18](#)

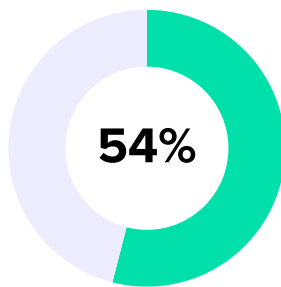
Data:	18
• Build a first-party marketing data warehouse	
• Integrate ad platform, campaign, and offline data for a holistic view	
Measurement methodologies:	21
• Multi-touch attribution & marketing mix modeling	
• Scenario planning, and budget optimisation	
• DDA + impression models & incrementality testing for model validation	
Reporting & Insights:	29
• Track core metrics & apply custom segmentation	
• Contextualise & connect insights to commercial outcomes	
Activation:	32
• Enrich CRM/SIS with marketing insights	
• Activate campaigns & audiences with refined targeting	

The luxury retail & high-value e-commerce industry has measurement challenges

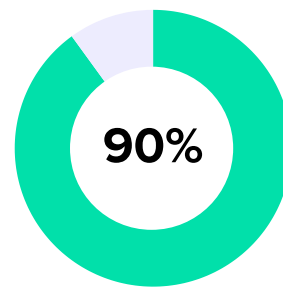
We asked our customers what their biggest marketing measurement challenges are:



of purchases happen over the phone and most reports never see them



of marketers cannot fully track the customer journey



hesitate to invest in long-term or brand marketing due to poor attribution.

Purchasing a luxury watch, investing in fine art, choosing a new car, or buying a high-value designer product are all considered decisions. Potential customers might see an ad, browse your website, view multiple products, speak to your team, visit a physical store or showroom, then convert weeks later. These are long, fragmented journeys.

Tools like GA4 would file that as "Direct," and every ad platform along the way would claim the purchase as its own. The tools most luxury retail and high-value e-commerce marketers rely on weren't built for this. GA4 doesn't know about the conversation your sales team had with a customer.

Last-click attribution doesn't know that a social ad from a month ago is what started the journey. Platform-reported conversions look strong until you check them against actual orders and customer data and the data doesn't stand up to scrutiny.

For luxury retailers and e-commerce brands, that gap comes with an extra layer. A high-value jewellery purchase and a lower-value accessory purchase can look identical in GA4, even though one is worth many times more to the business. An existing customer should be measured differently from a first-time customer. And the channel that first inspired someone to consider a purchase, the one that actually deserved the budget, is almost always the one getting the least value.

There's a measurement gap in marketing. Unified marketing measurement closes it.

Marketers are losing visibility into a large share of their purchases, flying blind on the upper-funnel activity that builds desire and intent, and making budget decisions without the data to back them. This guide exists because those problems are solvable, and unified marketing measurement is how you solve them.

Traditional measurement vs UMM

Overview of the measurement problems luxury retailers & high-value e-commerce brands face, and what UMM does:

Without unified measurement	With unified measurement
Long purchase journeys Short attribution windows miss most of the journey. A customer who purchases a high-value product weeks or months after their first touchpoint goes unattributed.	✓ First-party tracking follows the full journey across sessions, channels, and weeks, not just the last click.
Offline customer and store enquiries Phone calls, showroom visits, private appointments, and clienteling interactions are lost to digital attribution. Your highest-value purchases have no marketing source.	✓ CRM and e-commerce integration ties offline purchases and customer interactions back to the campaigns that drove them, regardless of how or where the purchase was made.
Customer record fragmentation Many luxury retailers and high-value e-commerce brands rely on e-commerce, CRM, POS, clienteling, and customer service platforms where customer and transaction data is inconsistent, incomplete, or siloed.	✓ Data ingested from both industry-standard and proprietary e-commerce, CRM, and POS platforms via API, creating a single source of truth.
Platform duplication Both Google and Meta might claim value for the same lead, inflating platform-reported performance.	✓ Deduplicated unified performance across all channels, one number that reflects reality, not one inflated figure per platform.
Upper-funnel attribution Brand awareness campaigns, display and social drive interest but rarely get the last touchpoint. They look like they're doing nothing, and budgets get cut accordingly.	✓ DDA + impression modelling redistributes value to channels that influenced the journey, even when they generated no clicks.
Returns & cancellations Orders, returns, cancellations, and completed purchases often happen days or weeks apart. Short-term windows miss this lag, distorting channel performance.	✓ MMM models on completed purchases, adjusting for returns and cancellations and factoring in the lag between initial consideration and purchase.
Customer value visibility A lower-value accessory purchase and a high-value luxury purchase can look identical as purchases. You're optimising for volume, not value.	✓ Attribution connects every purchase to its actual value, so you can optimise for high-value customers and purchases, not just high-volume channels.

Standard marketing measurement practices in home services

John Wanamaker's quote, "Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is, I don't know which half," is familiar to most marketers. While this insight was first shared over a century ago, it continues to reflect a challenge that remains prevalent in the industry today.

What most marketers are doing to measure results

Marketing measurement has evolved significantly in recent years, yet many teams continue to rely on familiar and easy-to-implement methods despite them becoming more limited in terms of accuracy. The main reason is that these tools are accessible, widely used, and often integrated into the platforms marketers already depend on. Commonly used approaches include:



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- John Wanamaker



Last-click or data-driven attribution modelling in Google Analytics 4



Ad platform reporting from Google and Meta with limited view-through data



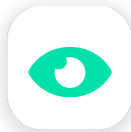
Internal siloed data that lacks integration to other tools

Challenges marketers need to overcome

Marketers are relying on these common measurement approaches, but what challenges are they actually trying to address? At its core, the goal is to gain a clearer, more accurate picture of marketing performance beyond surface-level metrics. Key challenges include:



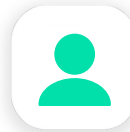
Navigating complex, multi-touchpoint journeys



Attributing impact to clickless upper-funnel campaigns



Removing duplicate purchases for clearer unified reporting



Integrating first-party data for deeper insights & decision making



Finding areas to scale or reduce marketing spend

Two core questions

Most of the challenges and requirements faced can be summarised into two core questions that act as a directional sense check to revisit overtime:

1 What's working and what's not?

Assess all sources (online and offline), channels, the entire marketing funnel, and key campaign goals (awareness, consideration, purchases, and customer retention).

2 How do we improve?

Continuously refine budget allocation, optimise channels and campaigns, test creatives, and adjust KPIs like Cost Per Acquisition to enhance outcomes.

The measurement framework answers these questions by providing decision-makers with a holistic view, while offering the granular detail required for optimisation and testing decisions.

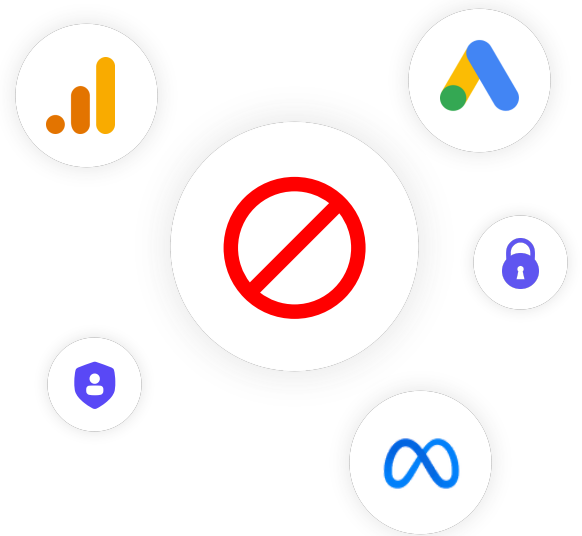
Setting the right KPIs and processes

Picking the right measurement approach also means setting the right performance KPIs based on your goals and keeping an eye on important metrics. While this may seem obvious, it's important to consider that people have been used to previous measurement approaches that are now becoming redundant, which may or may not have reported their area of responsibility favourably. Therefore, it's vital to ensure the team is bought in on the approach.

The core challenges in marketing measurement

In the introduction, we touched on how most marketers measure performance and briefly noted that their methods often fall short when addressing common tracking and reporting challenges, but what's causing this?

Changes in data privacy regulations and technology have led to massive disruption, and these challenges are only expected to grow. Let's take a closer look at why traditional measurement methods and tools are becoming less reliable, and how evolving data privacy laws are adding to the complexity.



Third-party cookies

As data privacy laws continue to evolve, new layers of complexity are added to digital advertising. A significant shift began in 2021 with Apple's iOS 14.5 update, which introduced stricter privacy controls.

With over 80% of users opting out of tracking via the "Ask App Not to Track" feature, platforms like Meta can no longer rely on third-party cookies for view-through tracking.

This method, which allows advertisers to measure purchases from users who saw but didn't click an ad before making a purchase, has become far less effective, creating major gaps in tracking and reporting.

Beyond just measurement challenges, these changes also impact ad performance.

With fewer signals available, algorithms struggle to target the most relevant users, leading to diminished ad effectiveness.

Google Chrome is also moving in this direction, giving users the ability to opt out of third-party cookie tracking, further limiting advertisers' ability to track online behavior.

Limitations in GA4

Previously, we discussed how marketers rely on data-driven and last-click attribution models in GA4 to navigate complex, multi-touchpoint journeys and allocate value to upper-funnel social campaigns.

While these models have their limitations, GA4 introduces even deeper challenges beneath the surface.

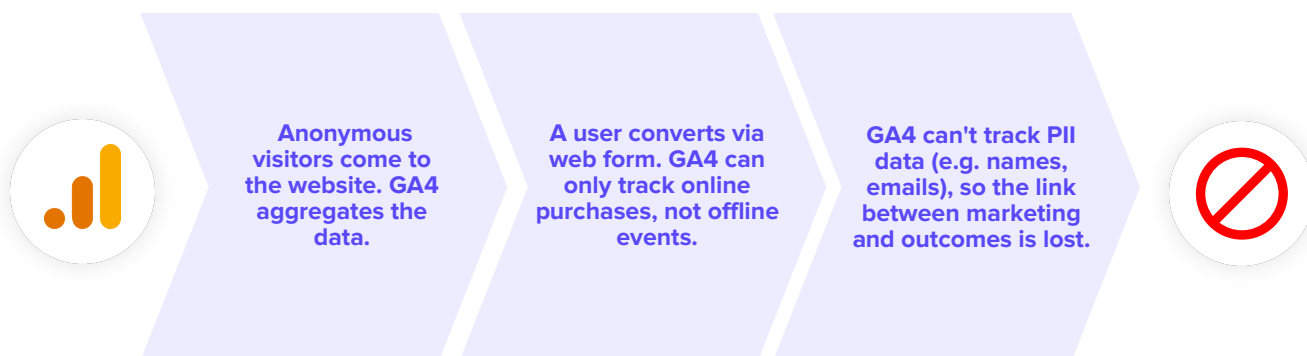
Google Analytics 4 was introduced a few years ago, shifting from a user-based model to a sampled-based approach. This means reports are no longer built on individual user tracking, but instead rely on aggregated data from a smaller sample of visitors.

This has led to clients anecdotally reporting 25% difference between Universal Analytics (UA or GA3) and GA4 for the same data set and a loss of granularity around campaign performance.

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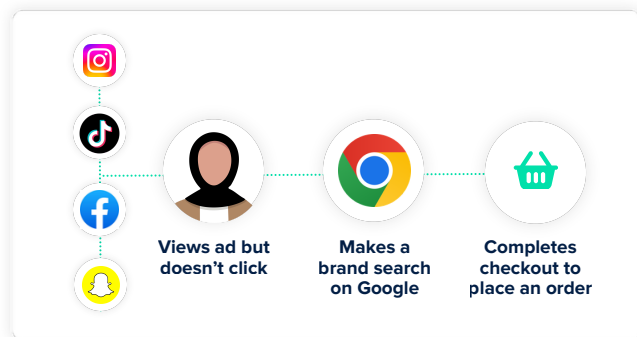


Ad platform duplication and bias

Due to the explosion in new digital ad platforms and channels, people are navigating the internet in different ways.

A decade ago, the main ad platforms would have been Google, Bing and Facebook.

Now, we have Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Pinterest, and Reddit, as well as industry-specific channels like Farfetch, NET-A-PORTER, Lyst, luxury publisher networks, fashion and lifestyle publications, retail media networks, and premium marketplace platforms.



The nature of social channels also means they act like more traditional channels where there are no clicks to track but brand awareness is being created in the form of impressions and reach.

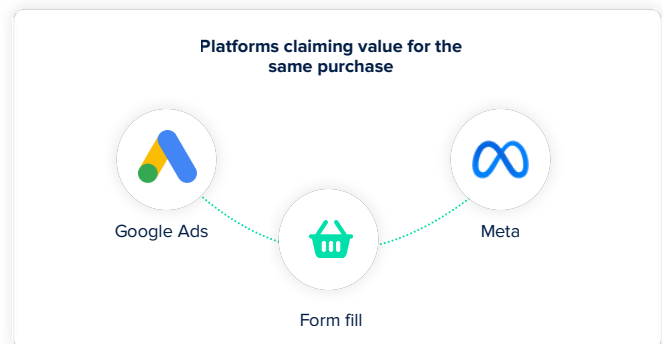
As customers navigate multiple channels, they experience various touchpoints with your brand, some of which impact purchases.

However, certain touchpoints cannot be tracked using click tracking, and others may be duplicated.

For example, both Google and Meta might claim a single purchase, making platform performance appear better than it is.

It's important to remember that these platforms have a vested interest in encouraging advertisers to spend more.

In reality, the customer saw ads on both platforms before making a purchase, meaning each channel deserves only partial acknowledgment for the sale, effectively halving the ROI.



Ad platform duplication and bias

Additionally, many purchases aren't captured in ad platform reporting. The modern customer journey has become longer and more intricate than ever before.

With a wealth of information at their fingertips, people now exercise greater caution and independence, dedicating time to researching and comparing options prior to making a purchase decision.

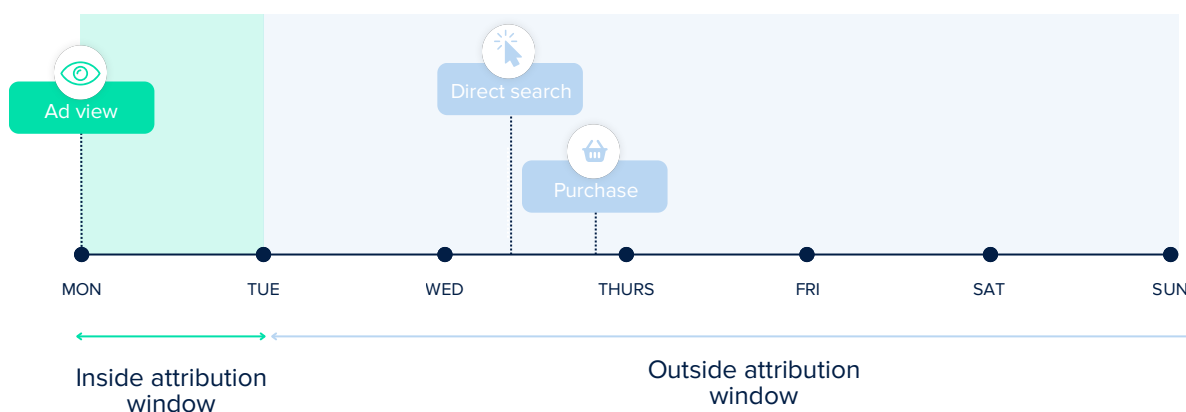
Prospective customers often spend weeks or months researching luxury products, comparing brands and products, reviewing pricing and availability, speaking with sales or clienteling teams, visiting stores or showrooms, and returning to websites multiple times before making a decision.

Platforms like Meta use a 7-day click attribution window combined with a 1-day view attribution window, which can lead to many purchases going unattributed.

This is especially challenging for brands running upper-funnel brand and nurturing campaigns that prioritise awareness and consideration over immediate clicks.

As a result, these touchpoints often go unrecognised, while remarketing campaigns end up receiving most of the value.

1-day lookback window in Meta



Longer and more complex journeys

Since we're on the topic of long customer journeys, let's explore some of the key challenges they bring.

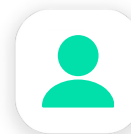
As pointed out above, the length of customer journeys and the number of touchpoints pose significant hurdles for marketers running campaigns across ad platforms. However, customer journeys extend far beyond ad platforms. They can include:



Offline channels such as TV, radio, OOH, luxury events, private client events, and showroom visits



Multiple devices used by a customer throughout their journey



Luxury purchase decisions researched by both partners or household members, attributed to one

With activity spread across various online and offline channels, it becomes increasingly difficult to gain a clear, real-time understanding of what's truly influencing KPIs and overall results.

Growing privacy regulations

Governments and regulatory bodies are enforcing stricter privacy and data protection laws aimed at protecting consumers' personal information. Regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA), and data protection regulations governing the handling of sensitive customer data require luxury retailers and high-value e-commerce brands to manage personal information responsibly. These regulations place increasing scrutiny on customer profiling, user tracking, data sharing, and the use of sensitive customer information, making privacy-first measurement, analytics, and marketing more important than ever.

Additionally, customers themselves are becoming more proactive in protecting their privacy. Many are blocking trackers, rejecting cookie consent banners, and using ad blockers more frequently than ever.

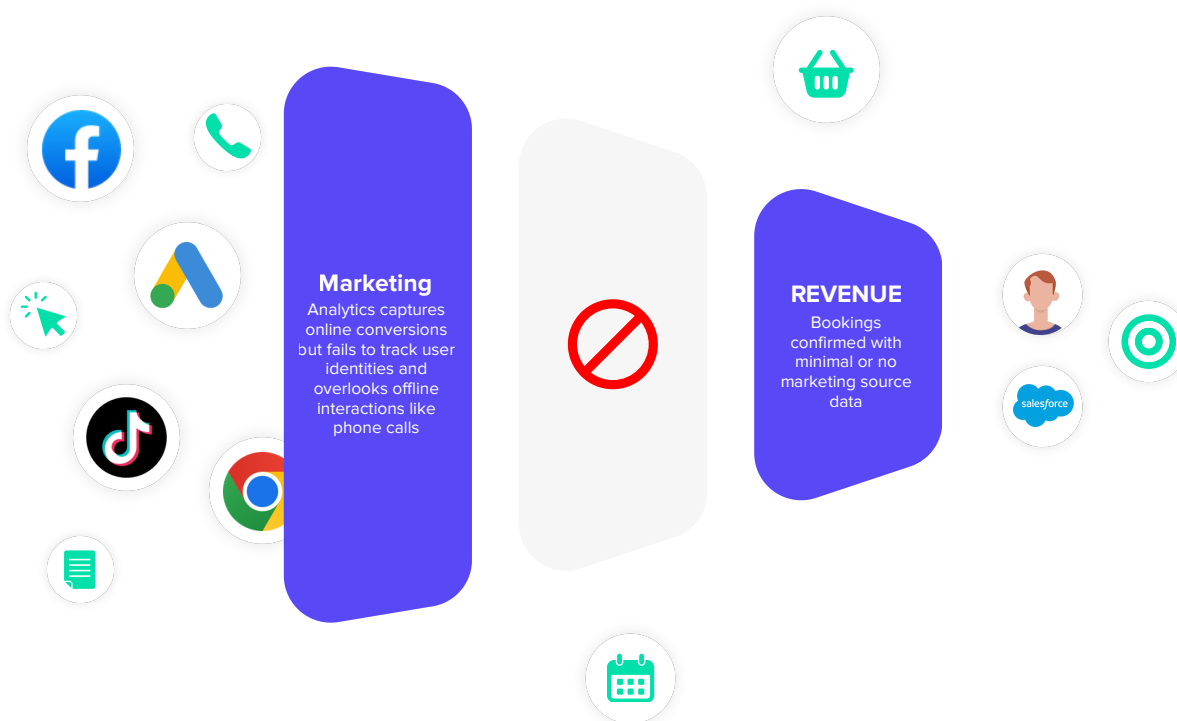
Siloed data across tools and teams

Like touchpoints, marketing data is scattered across disconnected silos, making it difficult for businesses to gain a comprehensive view of customer behaviour and marketing performance. Luxury retailers and high-value e-commerce brands collect data across a range of systems, including marketing analytics platforms, CRM systems, e-commerce platforms, point-of-sale systems, clienteling platforms, customer service systems, and more.

In luxury retail and high-value e-commerce, this challenge is often amplified. Unlike standard CRM tools, luxury retail platforms are frequently proprietary or custom-built, with no out-of-the-box integration to marketing tools. Customer data lives in one system, marketing data in another, and there's no native bridge between them. However, each tool is managed by different teams and tracks data in its own way.

For example, GA4 can't capture personally identifiable information (PII) about website visitors. This means that when a prospective customer makes an enquiry, requests more information, books a private appointment, or completes a purchase, you can't track their email, name, or other contact details directly in GA4. At the same time, your CRM, e-commerce, POS, or clienteling system does store PII but often lacks visibility into the marketing sources, campaigns, and costs that influenced the customer's journey.

Without a way to connect user identity in Google Analytics, it becomes impossible to link high-value customers and purchases back to their marketing origins. This disconnect creates a ripple effect, impacting everything from attribution to online and offline budget allocation.



The approach to marketing measurement

- Overview

You need a more flexible, data-savvy approach that mixes the right methods for your channel and objectives

To tackle these challenges, a more flexible and data-driven approach is essential, one that blends multiple methodologies suited to the channel and objectives.

While no system is perfect, using the right models can unlock far deeper insights. Once the foundation is in place, a test-and-learn process can be introduced to pinpoint and validate the key drivers of effectiveness.

This ongoing process allows for continuous improvement, ensuring that marketing strategies remain aligned with wider business goals.

By regularly assessing performance and making data-informed adjustments, marketers can optimise their efforts, allocate budget more effectively, and stay ahead of shifting customer behaviours.



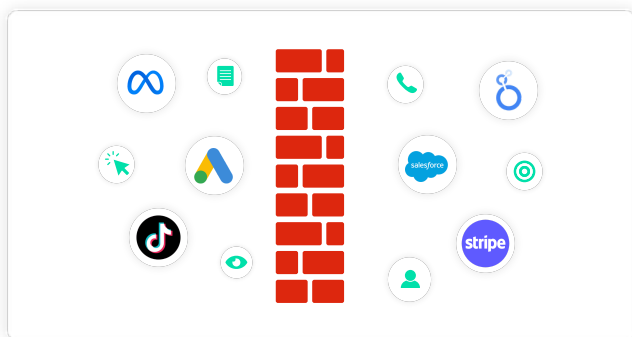
First-party data foundation

A well-structured marketing data ecosystem serves as the backbone of effective measurement and analysis.

A well-structured marketing data ecosystem is essential for accurate measurement and analysis.

It integrates disparate data sources by ingesting, cleaning, and matching information to create a unified, actionable view.

This approach breaks down data silos, enabling better decision-making.



Comprehensive tracking captures detailed user interactions, such as page views, traffic sources, UTM parameters, and purchase events, across multiple touchpoints.

These events, tied to individual identifiers (e.g., email addresses or phone numbers), provide a granular view of user behavior.

To enhance insights, marketing systems can integrate advertising platform data, including costs, campaign metrics, and attribution, with on-site behaviour and customer data from CRM, e-commerce, POS, clienteling, customer service, and other luxury retail and high-value e-commerce systems.

Modern measurement frameworks can connect to both industry-standard and custom-built luxury retail and e-commerce systems via APIs, allowing marketers to unify data regardless of their existing technology stack. This closed-loop feedback system connects marketing activity to enquiries, product interest, purchases, returns, and ultimately revenue, providing a more holistic view of marketing performance.

However, traditional analytics tools like GA4 rely on their own tracking tags, providing sampled data and lacking integration with first-party data, luxury retail systems, and external platform data. This results in a fragmented view that can skew toward platform biases, such as Google Ads.

To achieve a truly unbiased and comprehensive understanding of marketing effectiveness, businesses must move beyond these limitations and embrace a more integrated approach that combines first-party data, purchase insights, and advertising platform data.

Measurement

With a solid data infrastructure and aligned tools, it's time to refine your measurement methods.

No single measurement methodology is perfect; each serves a specific purpose and comes with its own strengths and limitations. To illustrate this, the table below outlines key measurement methodologies, explaining how they work, their advantages and drawbacks, how frequently they should be used, and their ideal applications.

Method	MTA (Multi-Touch Attribution)	MMM (Marketing Mix Modeling)	Incrementality Testing	DDA + Impression Model
What	Tracks first party user interactions (clicks) across multiple touchpoints, providing detailed insights into the user journey.	Models full-funnel activity for a fairer view of impression-based channels and offline channels. Can also be used for historical look back and forward-looking forecasting.	Validates and calibrates models using a "gold standard" approach to determine if a campaign brought new purchases or simply captured demand that would have converted anyway.	Combines click-based MTA and MMM to provide a holistic view of overall marketing effectiveness.
How	Uses tracking tags/pixels and cookies to track website touchpoints across multiple sessions. Server-side tags can also be used.	Rigorous statistical modeling (e.g., multivariate linear regression). Analyses the impact of ~30 variables (e.g., spend, promotions) on a target variable like conversions.	Conducts holdout tests with similar audience groups, one exposed to the campaign message, the other not. Outcomes are compared, similar to medical testing.	Uses DDA (Data-Driven Attribution) for clicks and MMM results to derive weightings, redistributing value to impression-based channels.
Pros	Real-time and granular (campaign, keywords, etc.). Best for click-based traffic.	Holistic view of all channels' impact on target objectives (e.g., purchases).	Gold standard for measuring true incremental impact.	Provides a balanced, holistic, and granular perspective.
Cons	Digital-only, over-attributes clicks versus upper-funnel awareness campaigns.	Lacks granularity, requires historical data, and often needs human intervention.	Difficult to implement and not suited for ongoing reporting. Control groups can harm purchases and don't account for diminishing returns.	Assumptions made in weightings need periodic calibration.
Frequency	Ongoing / Real Time	Quarterly	Quarterly	Ongoing / Real Time
Use for	Click-based channel effectiveness and optimisation.	Holistic ROI, budget forecasting, historical lookback.	Proving campaign effectiveness, validating models.	Fair balance of holistic and granular attribution.

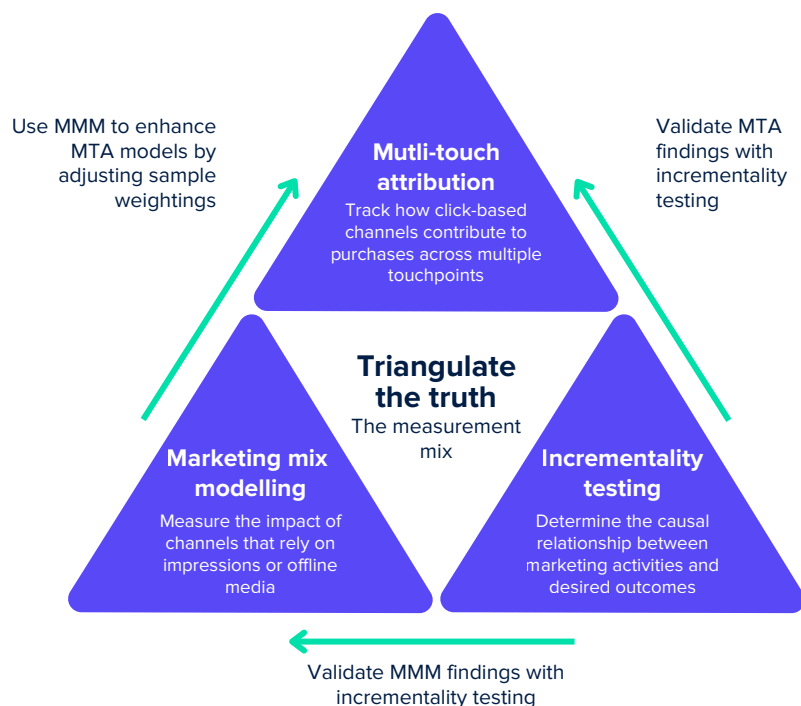
Triangulation

Blend MTA, MMM, and incrementality testing to reveal the full impact of your campaigns.

Triangulating the truth, a unified approach using multi-touch attribution (MTA), marketing mix modelling (MMM), and incrementality testing provides a nuanced understanding of campaign performance.

MMM offers a holistic view of channel impact, while MTA delivers granular insights at the campaign and keyword levels. It's essential to reconcile against a core metric, typically purchases, to ensure alignment with desired outcomes.

Historically, relying on platform-reported results may have suggested cost-effective campaigns, but this often didn't translate to improved outcomes. Using these methods together provides a more complete view of marketing performance.



Ways to triangulate:

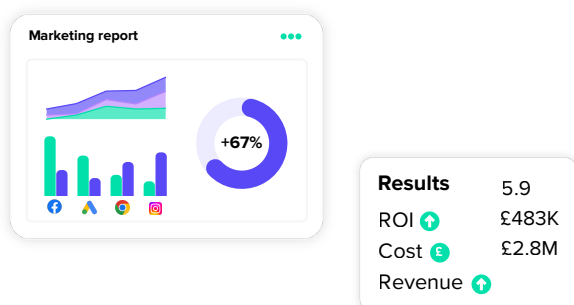
- 1 Use MTA to track click-based channels like paid search, mapping user interactions across touchpoints to understand how clicks contribute to purchases.
- 2 Apply MMM to measure the impact of impression-based or offline channels, such as TV, radio, and print, by analysing historical data to assess how different marketing activities drive overall purchases.
- 3 Validate findings with incrementality testing to isolate the true impact of marketing efforts, distinguishing causation from correlation.
- 4 Combine insights from MMM and MTA to identify top-performing channels and focus testing efforts more effectively.
- 5 Leverage MMM findings to refine MTA models by adjusting sample weightings, delivering a more accurate and balanced evaluation.

Reporting

Focus on the metrics that actually matter and help guide both big-picture strategy and day-to-day decisions.

By combining first-party data with advanced methodologies, marketers can generate full-funnel reporting that connects marketing performance with enquiries, purchases, customers, and ROAS, segmented by key customer and business variables.

The ability to drill down into specific channels, campaigns, tactics, and even individual ads or keywords, filtered by criteria such as product category, customer segment, purchase type, geography, and revenue metrics, is crucial for answering common leadership questions about performance and where to invest next.

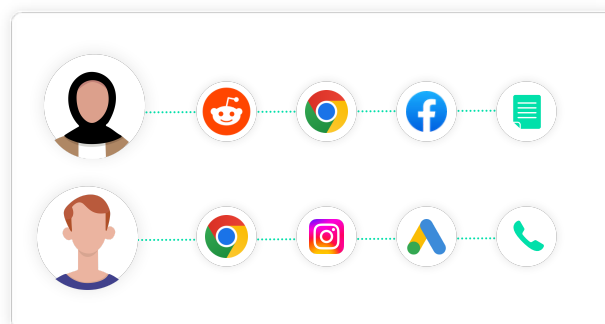


With a balance of high-level customer acquisition and marketing ROI insights, alongside the flexibility to analyse performance in detail, marketing leaders gain greater confidence in the KPIs that matter most.

They can easily track key metrics such as Cost Per Acquisition, Cost Per Purchase, and ROAS, enabling more productive discussions about optimisation and future investment.

Beyond strategic decision-making, this data plays a critical role in day-to-day customer acquisition and marketing operations. Having immediate access to detailed, channel-specific reports allows teams to identify underperforming campaigns quickly and respond to significant performance shifts.

For example, by analysing prospective customer journeys, teams can gain deeper insight into why campaigns are performing well and which touchpoints contribute most to product interest and purchases.



Activation

Leverage your first-party data to enhance targeting and optimise budget allocation efficiency.

One of the major issues we see with analytics reporting tools like GA4 is that they provide static, retrospective data, which you're then expected to base decisions on. With so many possible scenarios to consider, it can quickly become overwhelming.

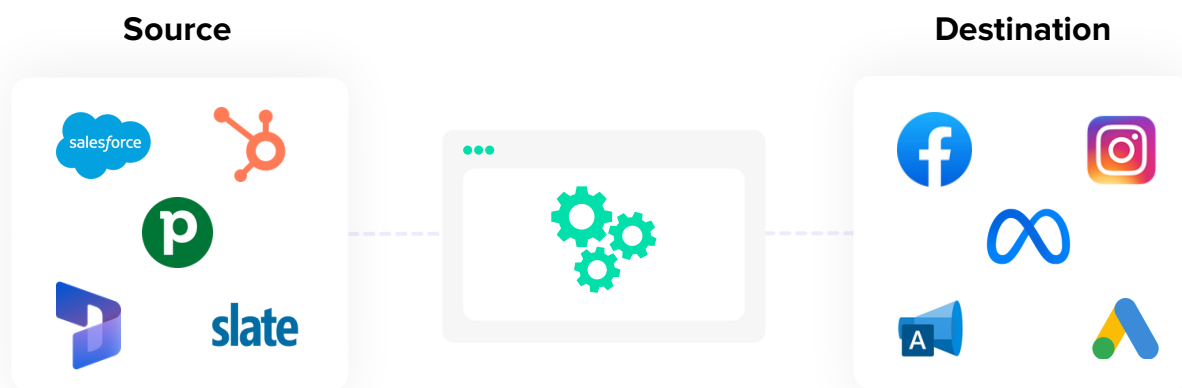
With marketing leaders responsible for measuring and optimising performance across such a broad range of channels, it can be hard to identify which interventions are likely to have the most impact.

Therefore, anything we can do to automatically improve efficiency is extremely beneficial. We call this automatic activation.

Campaigns suffer from a lack of efficiency by targeting existing customers and people with messages at the wrong stages of the funnel.

This is because ad platforms are working without signals provided in the form of first-party data context.

A first-party data platform collects IDs along the customer journey and automatically sends them to the platform, providing more signal for targeting and tailoring specific audiences to each stage of the customer journey.



In practice - a deep dive into the measurement framework

To help you navigate each stage, we've provided a more detailed explanation along with some practical tips and advice.

Data - building a first party marketing data warehouse

In the ever-evolving landscape of digital marketing, data serves as the foundation for effective measurement and optimisation. A well-structured marketing data ecosystem enables luxury retailers and high-value e-commerce brands to transition from fragmented data sources to a cohesive, actionable framework that drives informed decision-making.

As we've briefly touched on above, a successful data-driven marketing strategy begins with consolidating disparate data sources into a unified system.

By integrating data from multiple touchpoints, such as tracking tags, CRM systems, e-commerce and POS systems, clienteling platforms, and advertising platforms, luxury retailers and high-value e-commerce brands can achieve a holistic view of customer behaviour. This approach ensures that marketing efforts are measured accurately and linked to outcomes.

Revenue

£2,393,040

ROI

£1,906,747



The importance of first-party tracking

Comprehensive tracking plays a key role in understanding customer behaviour. With first-party tracking tags, luxury retailers and high-value e-commerce brands can capture detailed interactions like page views, traffic sources, UTM parameters, product views, and purchase journeys.

This makes it possible to attribute customer actions, whether it's a product enquiry, live chat, phone call, private appointment, or purchase, giving a clear picture of marketing performance. As privacy regulations and browser policies limit third-party tracking, first-party tracking has become a reliable, compliant alternative.

Tracking type	Description
First-party tracking	This method focuses on tracking users on a single website, maintaining accuracy and respecting privacy standards. It remains less effected by recent changes in browser policies and privacy regulations, making it a reliable approach for detailed and granular data collection.
Third-party tracking	This technique uses third-party cookies to track users across multiple websites, including ad impressions and purchases. However, its reliance on cross-site profiling has made it increasingly problematic and restricted.

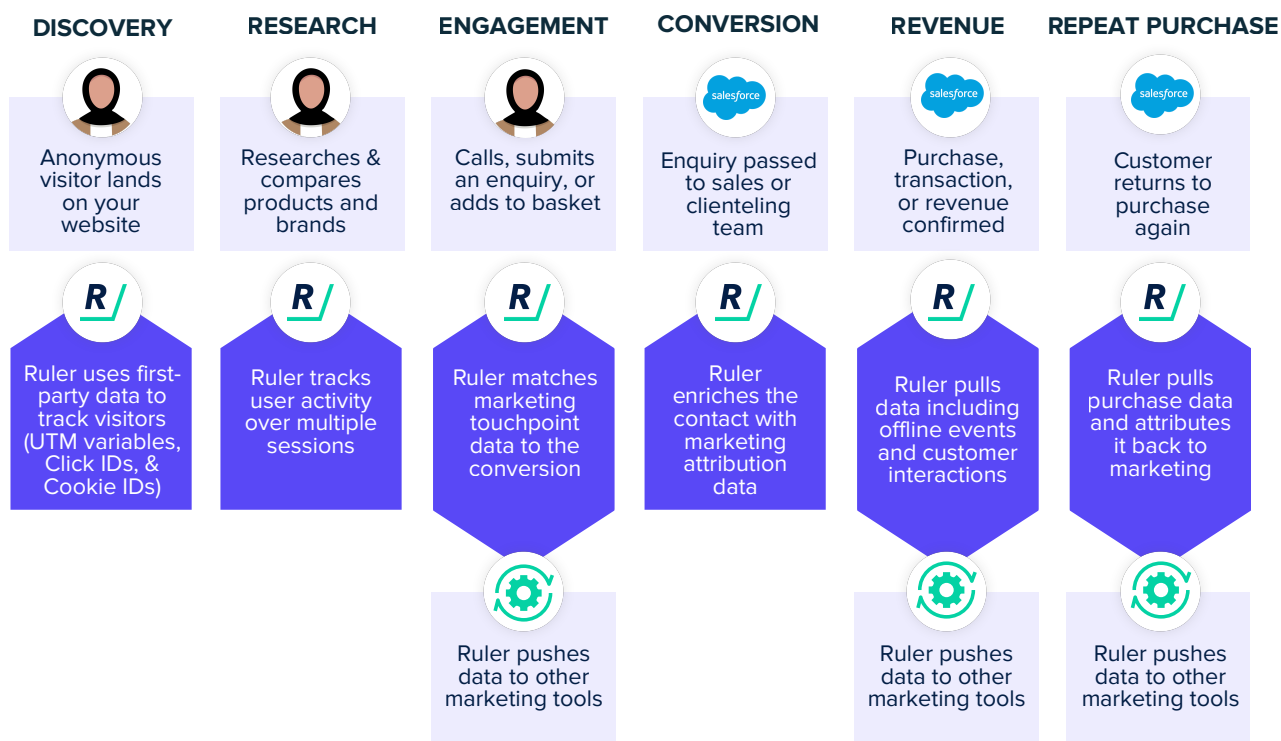
Unlike third-party cookies that follow users across different sites, first-party tracking focuses on activity within a single domain, ensuring accuracy while respecting privacy. To keep data secure without losing valuable insights, marketers can also hash personally identifiable information (PII), balancing privacy with strong analytics.

Integrating ad platform and campaign data

Ad platform data, including costs, campaign metrics, and click data, also plays a critical role in optimising marketing performance. By mapping platform IDs to customer interactions via API integrations, marketers can refine their strategies accordingly. Utilising value track parameters, marketers can append campaign and keyword identifiers to landing page URLs, enabling more accurate attribution.

Incorporating offline data for a holistic view

Relying solely on platforms like GA4 results in an incomplete assessment of marketing performance. While these tools track first-party data and measure purchases, they often reduce outcomes to binary events, offering little insight into customer value or progression through the purchase journey. Second, progression data in luxury retail and high-value e-commerce is often stored in proprietary or custom-built CRM, e-commerce, POS, clienteling, or customer service systems, creating an additional barrier to connecting marketing activity with outcomes. For a more comprehensive view, marketers should integrate customer outcome data and link it to individual-level interactions.



Whether it's form submissions, inbound calls, or bookings, linking online behaviours with offline outcomes, such as private appointments, showroom visits, or purchases completed through a sales or clienteling team, helps bridge the gap between marketing efforts and outcomes.

Measurement methodologies: Tracking & modelling

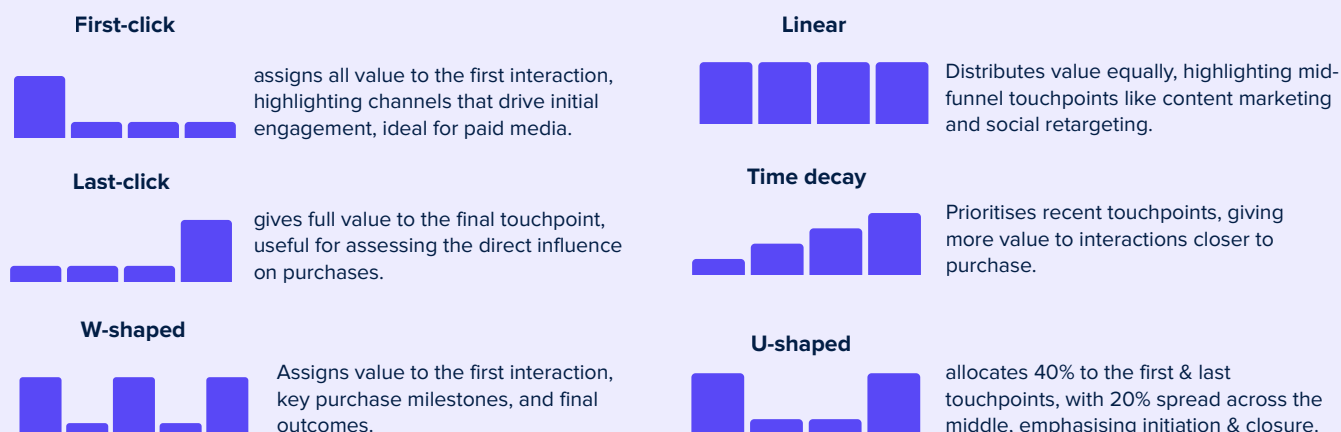
Once your data infrastructure is in place, the next crucial step is selecting your measurement approach. As we highlighted earlier, no single method is perfect, each has its own strengths and limitations. The right choice depends on your objectives and what you aim to achieve.

The modern approach is to adopt a unified method, combining MMM, MTA, and incrementality testing. This triangulation strategy allows for a more nuanced understanding of campaign performance, ensuring that measurement aligns with the specific characteristics of each marketing channel and customer journey.

Multi-touch attribution: A deterministic approach

Multi-touch attribution (MTA) lies at the core of digital marketing measurement. It uses deterministic click tracking to assess touchpoints like ads, organic search, and social media before purchase. MTA highlights which journey touchpoints drive purchases and customers, offering a clearer view of marketing performance and enabling data-driven decisions to optimise future campaigns.

Multi-touch attribution includes several attribution models, each with a different approach to assigning value across touchpoints. These models fall under rule-based attribution, meaning they apply fixed rules for value distribution without considering the actual influence of each touchpoint on the customer journey.



Data-driven attribution for a more sophisticated approach

Instead of relying on pre-set rules, this method dynamically assigns value based on real-world influence. The advantage of DDA is its ability to eliminate the biases inherent in rule-based models, offering a more accurate representation of marketing impact.

A particular strength of DDA is its ability to uncover the true influence of upper-funnel activities. For instance, if a paid search ad introduces someone to a website, but they later return via organic search or by typing the URL, a rule-based model like last click would assign all the value to the final touchpoint, ignoring the paid ad’s contribution.

However, a data-driven approach recognises the original ad’s role in initiating the customer journey, attributing it more weight while downplaying subsequent navigational visits.

You’ve likely encountered data-driven attribution in tools like Google Ads and GA4, but not all implementations are equal.

The key difference lies in transparency, data ownership, and customisation.

Tracking type	Description
First-party enriched MTA	Uses collected data for full attribution control and a detailed journey view. Enriches models with industry-specific insights, delivering more precise, actionable results tailored to the organisation and audience.
Third-party tracking	Relies on proprietary algorithms with limited transparency, often favouring Google’s paid search. Its use of aggregated data reduces accuracy and lacks visibility into all platforms, limiting unbiased cross-channel performance insights.

Marketing mix modelling: The probabilistic approach

Marketing mix modeling (MMM) complements multi-touch attribution by using a probabilistic approach to identify the cause-and-effect relationships between marketing activities and outcomes.

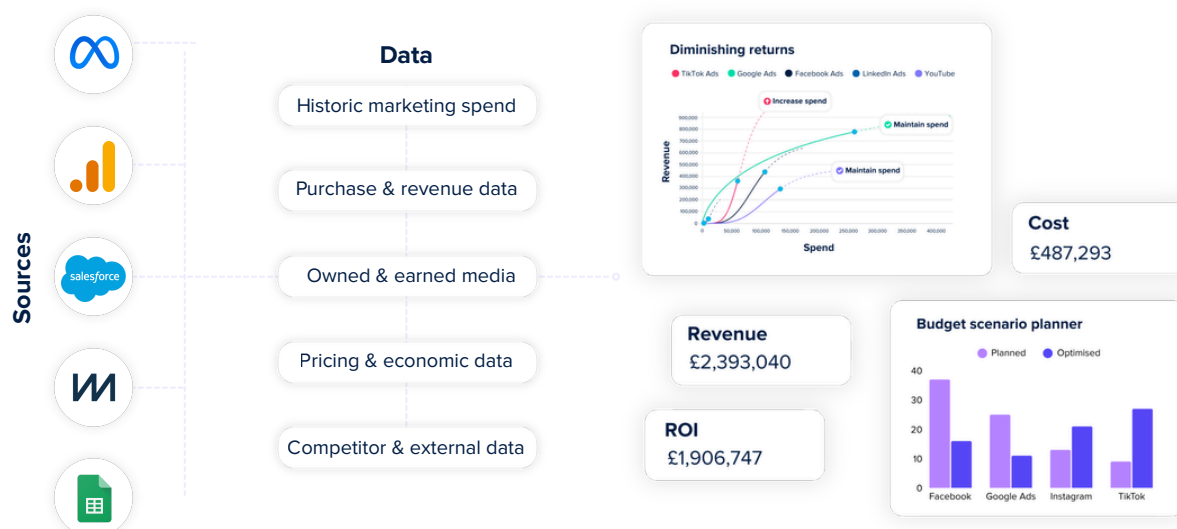
Originally developed in the 1950s to measure traditional channels like Print, TV and radio ads, MMM has regained prominence due to the decline of third-party cookies and the need for a holistic view of both offline and online marketing.

Unlike deterministic models that track individual touchpoints, MMM analyses aggregated data over time using statistical techniques such as multivariate linear regression to estimate the impact of various marketing efforts on purchases and revenue. A key advantage of MMM is its ability to evaluate both digital and traditional channels equally.

It offers a more comprehensive understanding of marketing effectiveness. MMM can incorporate up to 30 variables simultaneously, including brand awareness, seasonality, promotions, competitor activity, product launches, and external factors such as economic conditions and consumer trends.

Campaign types can also be grouped to prevent overfitting by isolating performance metrics for different objectives such as brand, remarketing, and awareness campaigns.

Another significant benefit is that MMM attributes value only where incremental impact is detected, while residual value is allocated to the base, representing the cumulative effects of past marketing efforts that continue to influence brand awareness and customer demand.



Historical lookback

MMM's use of aggregated data means you can easily explore both past trends and future forecasts. In practice, you can analyse performance as far back as your data allows. Typically, we recommend using at least two years of historical data to establish a robust baseline rather than starting from scratch. In luxury retail and high-value e-commerce, customer purchases and revenue often lag behind the original awareness, product consideration, or enquiry by several weeks or months.

Returns, cancellations, abandoned purchases, delayed transactions, and variations in final order value can also mean that the value associated with an initial interaction isn't the final value recognised by the business. To account for this, MMM should be built using completed purchases or recognised revenue, with the model updated as customer and revenue data matures. This ensures the analysis is based on stable business outcomes rather than figures that may change over time.

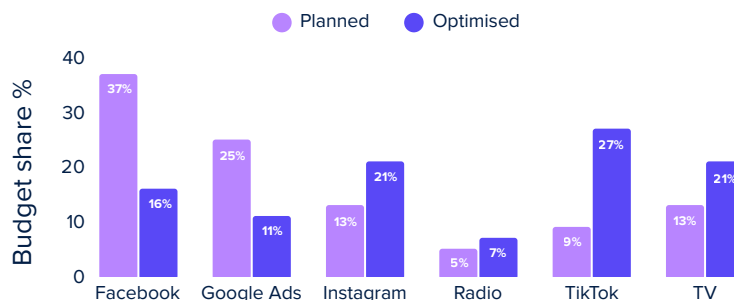
Budget scenario planning

MMM provides valuable insights for budget optimisation by simulating different scenarios to identify the most effective allocation of marketing spend. For example, it generates diminishing returns curves that show when additional investment no longer delivers a proportional increase in purchases, customers, or revenue. This helps marketers understand the available headroom and estimate the potential impact of increased investment.

The model also accounts for the lag between campaign exposure, product consideration, enquiries, purchases, and revenue recognition. As a result, short-term marketing performance metrics can understate the true impact of customer acquisition activity, making MMM's longer lookback period particularly useful for evaluating channel performance.

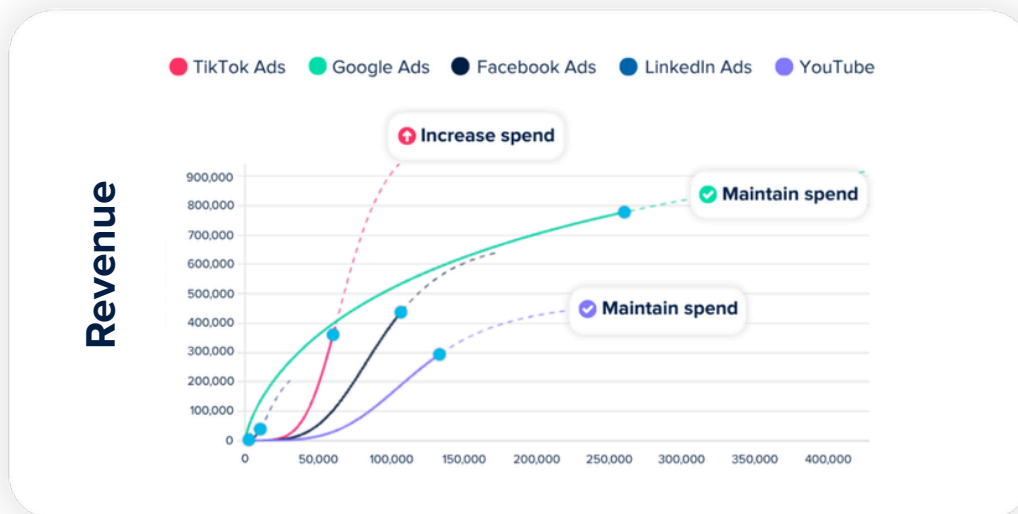
The statistical rigour and clear visual outputs also help build stakeholder confidence, especially when customer acquisition planning and budget allocation have previously relied on assumptions rather than evidence.

Budget scenario planner



Scenario planning and budget optimisation

These curves are crucial for recognising the saturation point of marketing channels. If a campaign reaches saturation, further investment may not deliver the same return.



The platform tests budget adjustments incrementally (for example, in £100 increments) to determine where each additional pound can be best allocated for maximum return. Our solution offers a number of preset scenarios:

- Optimised position: Reallocates the past eight weeks of spend to maximise revenue returns, with channel budgets constrained between 70% and 150% of actual spend to maintain realism. Variations with +10% and -10% budget adjustments are also available.
- Efficiency position: Allocates the budget to achieve a targeted Return on Ad Spend (ROAS) of 4.0, potentially reducing overall spend compared to previous allocations.

It's best to refrain from major budget changes when a model is newly implemented. A prudent approach is to adjust budgets by 10% at a time and review outcomes during the next model refresh, typically quarterly. In the meantime, DDA and Impression models can be used with previous weightings.

Our data often reveals predictable patterns across channels. Saturated channels, like search engines, offer less headroom due to long-term use.

In contrast, platforms like Snapchat and TikTok show greater growth potential. Although less saturated, these platforms can be harder to measure but offer promising opportunities for expansion.

DDA + impression model: Blending deterministic & probabilistic

A Ruler proprietary model, the innovative DDA + Impression Model combines the strengths of deterministic click-based models and probabilistic impression-based models.

The DDA only (Data-Driven Attribution without impression weighting) model excels at identifying the most influential campaigns and touchpoints for driving enquiries and customer purchases.

However, it can under-value upper-funnel channels, such as social media, which may not always generate clicks but are crucial for building brand awareness.

To address this, the DDA + Impression Model integrates insights from marketing mix modelling to account for upper-funnel channels effectively.

MMM-derived weightings are applied to DDA data, ensuring that channels responsible for brand awareness are properly acknowledged.

The model re-distributes value, shifting weighting from lower-funnel activities (like direct and brand search) to upper-funnel channels such as social media or display ads.

This re-attribution is essential because upper-funnel channels often create the initial awareness and consideration that leads to subsequent enquiries and purchases.

Without these initial engagements, lower-funnel efforts would be less effective.

Channel	Cost	First-click attribution			ML impression attribution		
		Conv	Cost per conv	Revenue	Conv	Cost per conv	Revenue
Direct	£0.00	1569	£0.00	£626,031	784	£0.00	£312,816
Instagram Ads	£5,182.59	5	£1,036	£1,995	372	£13.93	£148,428
Google Ads	£11,630.66	401	£29.00	£159,999	667	£17.44	£266,133
TikTok	£5,577.12	9	£619	£3,591	475	£11.74	£189,525
Google Search	£0.00	890	£0.00	£355,110	576	£0.00	£229,824

DDA + impression model: Blending deterministic & probabilistic

In some cases, marketers have seen up to 95% of value reattributed to upper-funnel activities, especially those focused on driving high-value purchases.

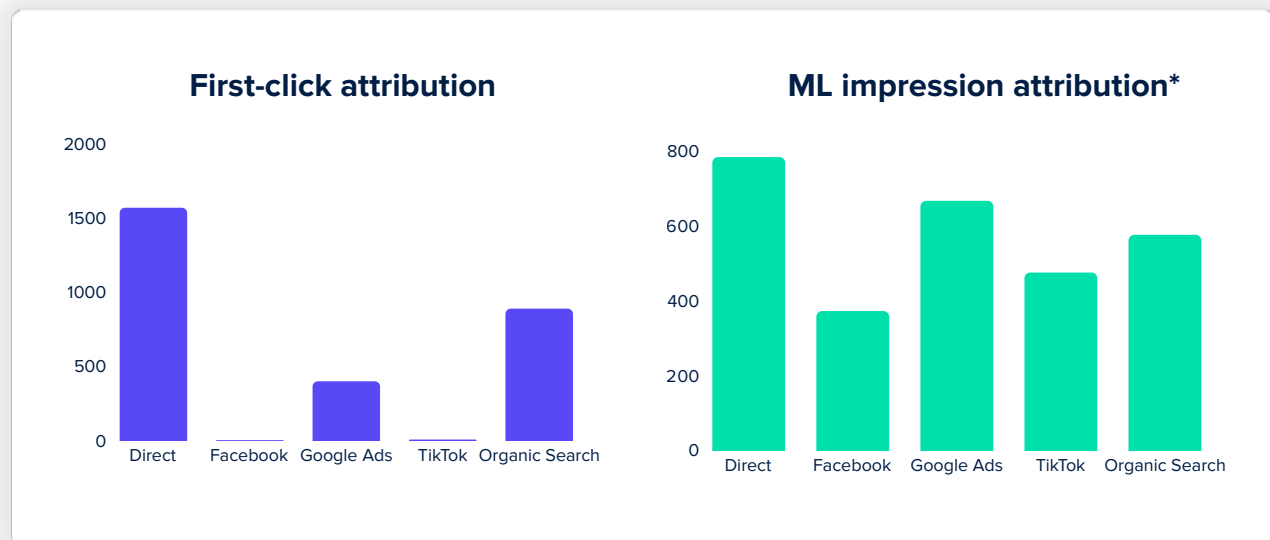
Even brands with established awareness can see a significant percentage of value shifting to these upper-funnel channels, typically around 50%.

This model effectively balances the precision of a deterministic data-driven attribution approach with the broader insights of a holistic MMM strategy.

For marketers, without MMM, we offer industry-specific weightings tailored to their campaign types, industry verticals, and maturity levels.

These weightings help redistribute value more effectively, incorporating signals from customer activity such as click-through rates, impressions, and on-site behaviour.

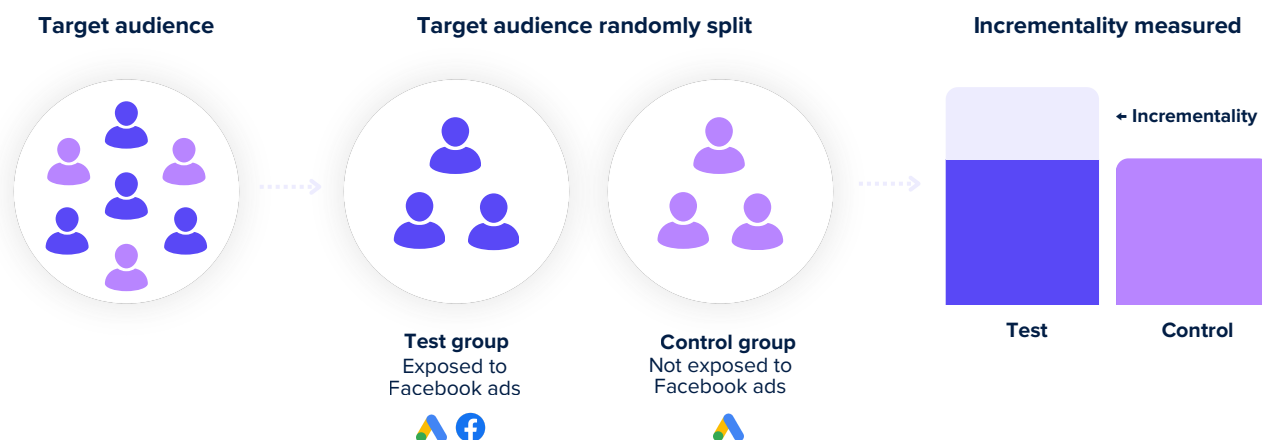
They provide a sophisticated and adaptable solution for marketers without access to MMM.



***Purchases have been redistributed from Direct and Google organic to upper-funnel advertising channels**

Incrementality testing: Validating models

The final methodology we highlighted is incrementality testing, also known as lift tests or randomised control trials. This approach is widely regarded as the gold standard for measuring causality in marketing. By splitting audiences into two groups, one exposed to a campaign (the treatment group) and one that isn't (the control group), incrementality tests help validate attribution models.



For example, a luxury retailer or high-value e-commerce brand might implement this by selecting two similar geographical regions, such as North West and North East, and comparing purchase rates between them.

This allows marketers to quantify how much of the observed impact is directly attributable to the campaign, as opposed to purchases that would have happened regardless. The difference in performance between these groups represents the campaign's true incremental impact. While setting up incrementality tests can be complex, and they're not typically used for continuous measurement, they provide invaluable insights into campaign effectiveness.

Many platforms, including Meta, Google, and Microsoft Ads, offer built-in options for incrementality tests. Since these are advanced features, account manager approval may be required. Strategically applied, these tests support a continuous test-and-learn approach, helping marketers refine strategies.

When combined with probabilistic models, they ensure validation and calibration. While models predict outcomes based on assumptions, incrementality tests provide empirical evidence of impact. This combination enhances accuracy, reduces bias, and minimises external confounding factors, driving more reliable, data-backed decisions.

Reporting and insights

Whilst first-party data and measurement methodologies are vital components of a successful approach to measurement, they are only useful when paired with actionable insights and clear reporting.

Reporting serves as the foundation for decision-making, providing marketers with the context they need to optimise campaigns, allocate budgets, and demonstrate value to leadership.

Core metrics: Cost per purchase & ROAS

At the heart of marketing reporting are metrics such as Cost per Acquisition (CPA), Cost per Purchase (CPP), Cost per Customer (CPC), and Return on Ad Spend (ROAS). These core metrics provide a clear view of customer acquisition performance, helping marketers understand how their marketing investment translates into purchases and customers. Marketing teams typically align these metrics with business objectives, such as revenue targets, customer acquisition goals, acquisition efficiency, or customer acquisition costs. For example, luxury retailers and high-value e-commerce brands may work towards a target cost per purchase or cost per customer while maximising ROI across their acquisition campaigns. These metrics form the backbone of reporting and are critical for day-to-day campaign optimisation.

Custom segmentation for tailored insights

One of the most valuable features in modern reporting tools is the ability to create custom segmentations. Segmentation allows marketers to categorise and analyse performance across different dimensions, such as:

- Product or product category
- Customer segment (e.g. new, existing, VIP, high-value)
- New vs. existing customer
- Sales or purchase journey (e.g. enquiry, consideration, purchase, repeat purchase)

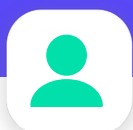
For example, luxury retailers and high-value e-commerce brands with multiple product categories, locations, or customer segments may have unique acquisition targets or budgets for each segment.

Custom segmentation ensures that reporting reflects these specific requirements, enabling marketers to provide more granular, commercially relevant insights.

Contextualising campaign performance:

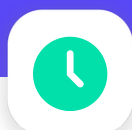
Insight reports

A critical challenge in reporting is ensuring that campaign performance is properly contextualised, particularly when communicating insights to senior leadership. For example, de-duplicated reports that provide a unified view of performance are valuable for high-level summaries but may not capture the full role individual campaigns play within the customer journey. Therefore, additional insight reports are required to provide a more complete understanding of campaign impact, such as:



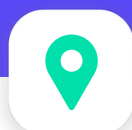
Path-to-purchases analysis

Identifies the most effective paths and key touchpoints leading to purchases



Time-to-purchase

Measures how long it takes for a lead to convert after the first interaction



Campaign touchpoint frequency

Shows how often a campaign plays a role, even without generating a direct purchase



Uplift impact analysis

Evaluates a campaign's influence on other touchpoints and its measurable contribution

There's also channel contribution, which highlights where different channels appear in the funnel. For example:

- Upper funnel: Social media often drives awareness and is commonly used for long-term brand building.
- Middle funnel: Search engines guide customers as they evaluate products and brands, often referred to as the consideration stage.
- Lower funnel: Email, organic search, and affiliate marketing tend to generate the purchase, also known as short-term activation, direct response, or demand capture.

By visualising these stages, marketers can better understand how each channel contributes to the overall customer journey and plan campaigns more effectively.

These insights not only validate the effectiveness of marketing efforts but also help marketers communicate their value to stakeholders who may not fully grasp the nuances of attribution or campaign interplay.

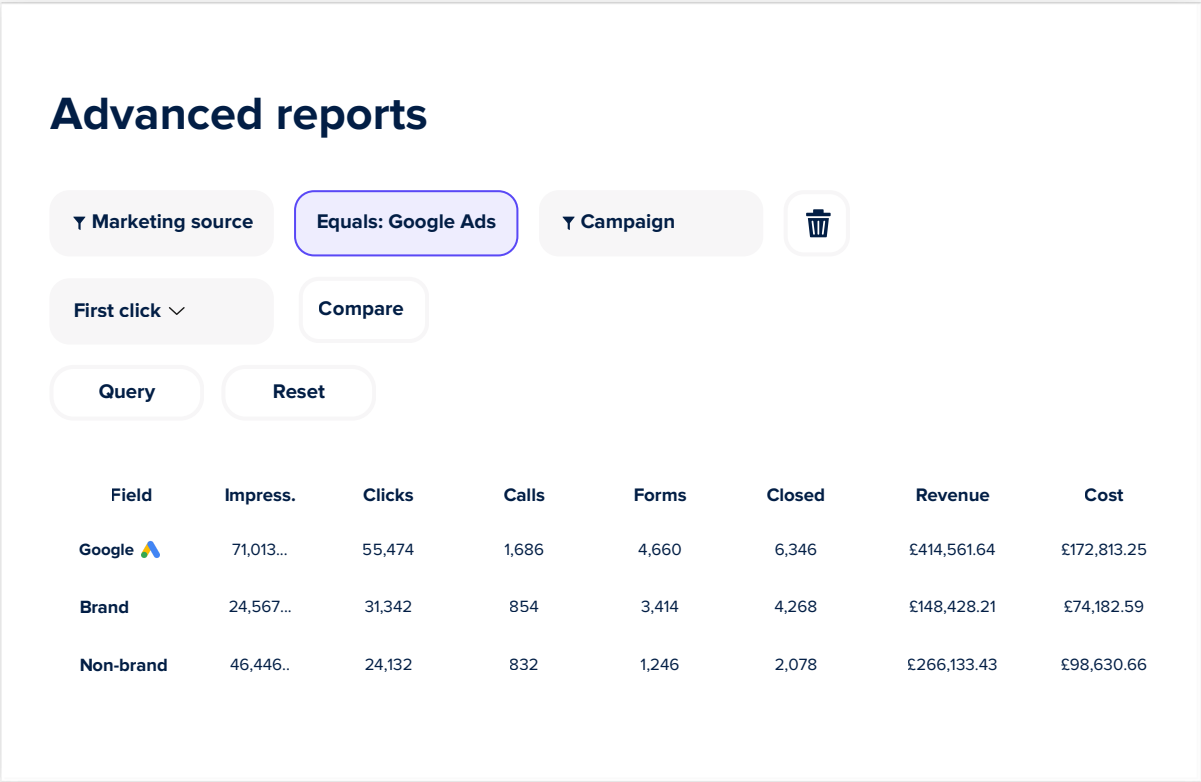
Bridging insights with commercial outcomes

Ultimately, reporting is not just about tracking metrics, it’s about providing the context and insights needed to make informed decisions and drive significant outcomes.

By combining attribution modelling, advanced analytics, and custom segmentations, marketers can not only measure but also demonstrate the full impact of their efforts. This helps them optimise campaign strategies effectively while showcasing their value to leadership teams.

In an increasingly competitive marketplace, robust reporting and actionable insights are no longer optional, they are essential.

They serve as a critical enabler, empowering marketers to achieve marketing success and gain a competitive advantage over others in the industry.



Activation: Optimisation on autopilot

As previously discussed data is at the core of decision-making, however analytics platforms and reporting tools provide retrospective insights, but marketers need actionable strategies to leverage this data in real time.

Enter the activation layer, a transformative approach that bridges the gap between data collection, analysis, and actionable outcomes.

Enriching platforms with marketing insights

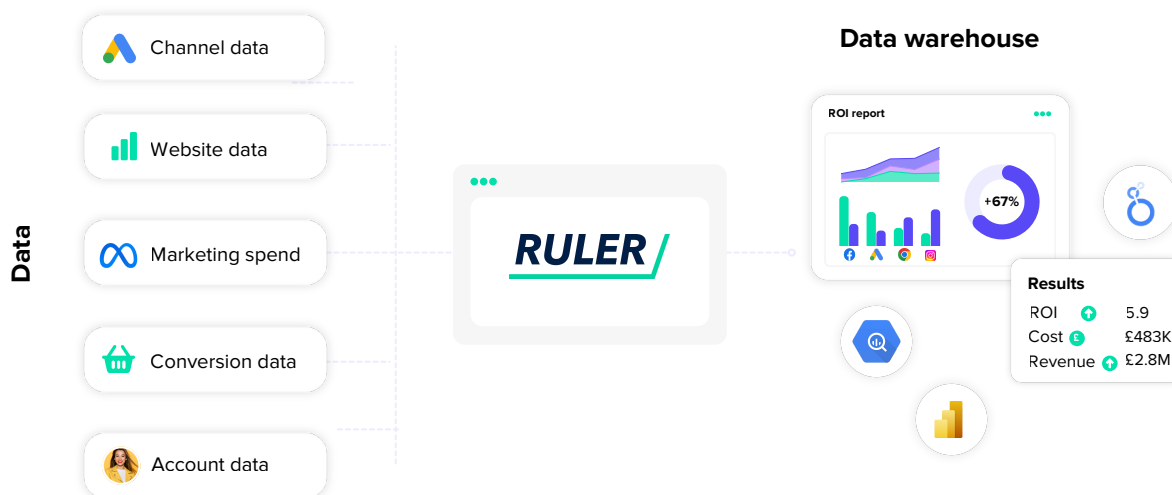
One of the most powerful use cases of the activation layer is enhancing your e-commerce platform and other customer-facing tools with rich marketing data.

By combining key insights, such as customer enquiries and purchases, with marketing source data, e-commerce platforms evolve from simple transaction systems into powerful strategic tools. They provide a complete view of customer interactions. This enriched data not only improves internal reporting but also gives e-commerce, sales, clienteling, and marketing teams the intelligence they need to make smarter, data-driven decisions.

The same concept applies to intelligence and data warehousing platforms like BigQuery or Snowflake.

These systems cater to a wide range of reporting needs, allowing teams to build customised dashboards that deliver precise, actionable insights.

Automating data transfers to these platforms streamlines reporting workflows and ensures leadership teams have real-time access to the data they need to make informed decisions.



Campaign and audience activation

Activation extends beyond reporting, it's pivotal for optimising campaigns and audience targeting. By sending identifiers, such as click IDs captured from landing page URLs, back to advertising platforms like Google Ads or Microsoft Ads, marketers can link offline events, such as telephone enquiries, and purchases completed offline, to ad performance.

This enables ad platforms to optimise bidding and targeting algorithms, which have become increasingly reliant on signal inputs due to the decline of third-party cookies. For example, if an ad campaign drives enquiries, appointments, or purchases offline, marketers can use this data to inform ad platforms. The platforms, in turn, can target audiences with similar characteristics more effectively, enhancing the performance of campaigns.

Fine-tuned audience targeting

Audience segmentation is another area where activation is key. By leveraging first-party data, marketers can dynamically segment audiences into categories such as prospective customers, existing customers, and customers at different stages of the purchase journey.

This ensures prospective customers are grouped into the right segments based on where they are in the funnel. For example, you could set up and personalise strategies, such as:

- Retargeting audiences: Retarget users who viewed a specific product or product category but didn't purchase.
- Suppressing ads: Suppress ads to confirmed customers; switch to post-purchase, loyalty, or customer service messaging instead.
- Cross-selling products: Post-purchase cross-sell complementary products, collections, accessories, or other relevant luxury products.
- Funnel-based campaigns: Move customers from brand or product awareness (awareness) → product and brand comparison (consideration) → purchase intent (conversion), with messaging tailored to each stage.

Automation plays a key role here, with API connections facilitating seamless data transfer between platforms and enabling real-time adjustments based on customer behaviour and insights.

Shaping the future of marketing measurement

The success of marketing campaigns depends on how well we measure its impact and adapt strategies in real time.

A robust marketing measurement framework provides a structured way to assess performance by integrating advanced methodologies and tools. At the heart of this framework is data, the essential fuel for generating actionable insights.

By using a combination of multi-touch attribution, marketing mix modelling, and incrementality tests, marketers can get a clearer picture of both short-term and long-term campaign effects. Triangulating these methods helps navigate the complexities of cross-channel and cross-device interactions with greater accuracy. To refine attribution even further, the dynamic data-driven attribution model, paired with impression-based modelling, ensures that every impression and interaction is linked to its actual contribution to purchases and revenue.

This level of detail allows brands to allocate budgets more effectively, ensuring that every marketing pound drives maximum impact. Marketers who embrace this approach can make smarter, data-backed decisions that drive growth, fuel innovation, and strengthen customer relationships.

Taking it a step further, automatic activation turns insights into immediate action.

By automating decisions, like campaign optimisations or budget shifts, marketers can stay agile in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

Ultimately, a well-rounded marketing measurement framework combines diverse data sources, rigorous methodologies, and cutting-edge technology to provide a complete view of performance.



How we helped an ecommerce brand unify digital advertising, retail and TV measurement

eCommerce brand unified digital advertising, retail media and TV measurement into a single, end-to-end platform view.

\$103m

Revenue attributed
across channels

53%

of revenue attributed
to paid media

11%

of revenue contributed
by Amazon alone

A fast-growing health consumer brand was running paid media across Google, Meta, connected TV, Amazon, Walmart and QVC simultaneously, but each platform was reporting its own version of the truth.

Last-click attribution gave Google value for purchases that TV had influenced weeks earlier, upper-funnel activity was lost, and offline retail sales sat in a completely separate silo with no way to connect them back to digital spend.

Ruler provided a marketing mix model covering two years of spend and revenue data, bringing online and offline into a single framework for the first time. Adstock and lagged effects analysis revealed how long each channel's influence actually lasted.

Multi-touch attribution then ran alongside this, properly weighting upper-funnel activity. Diminishing returns curves were modelled for every channel, and incrementality testing was layered in via Microsoft Ads holdout audiences.

The model attributed \$103m in total revenue, with paid media accounting for 53% of that. Non-brand paid search emerged as the strongest performer with real headroom for additional spend.

Most significantly, DRTV, previously near-impossible to measure, was shown to carry 85% of its impact beyond the week the ad aired. TV as a whole accounted for a significant share of total modelled revenue, a contribution that had been completely missing before.

Next Steps

The marketing measurement framework provides a high-level view of key measurement challenges, strategies to address them, and potential opportunities.

Explore our Playbooks for detailed guidance on implementing specific tactics, or reach out to us by booking a demo to learn more.

[Book a demo](#)

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