

Unified Marketing Measurement

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



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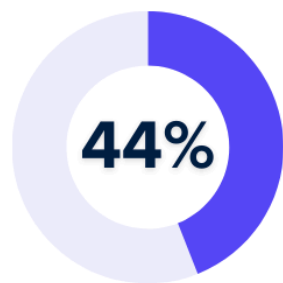
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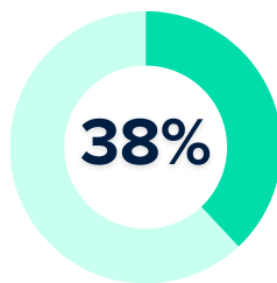
Introduction - marketing is changing and the way we measure it

Marketing and the way we measure it is changing, shifts in the data privacy landscape and technology have severely limited insight and the problem is only set to get worse. Previous industry standard methodologies and tools are no longer reliable, marketers are forced to seek more robust, long term solutions.

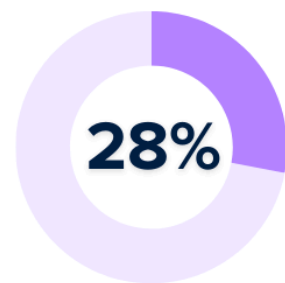
We asked our customers what their biggest marketing measurement challenges are:



identified difficulties in tracking cross-channel journeys



highlighted misalignment between sales & marketing teams



pointed to challenges with siloed data across tools

There's a marketing data crisis, but it can be resolved.

Ruler's unified marketing measurement provides a simple yet rigorous approach based on industry best practices. It's an introductory guide designed to be clear, digestible, and practical, offering actionable insights tailored to your budget, activity type, and level of marketing maturity. Suitable for both senior decision-makers and platform specialists, unified marketing measurement is applicable across all sectors and industries whether B2B, B2C, lead generation, e-commerce or retail. However, specific applications may vary depending on the nuances of your business model.

You'll learn:

1. How to tackle marketing measurement challenges
2. Best Practices for implementing unified marketing measurement
3. Practical steps to spot what's working and improve performance

Standard practices in marketing measurement

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:



Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is, I don't know which half.

—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 in the organisation

Challenges marketers need to overcome

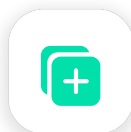
Marketers are relying on these common measurement approaches, but what challenges are they actually trying to address? At its core, the goal is to gain a clearer, more accurate picture of marketing performance beyond surface-level metrics. Key challenges include:



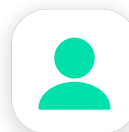
Navigating complex, multi-touchpoint customer journeys



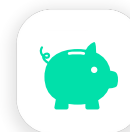
Attributing revenue impact to clickless upper-funnel campaigns



Removing duplicate conversions for clearer blended ROAS



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 revenue sources (online and offline), channels, the entire marketing funnel, and key campaign goals (awareness, consideration, conversions, and loyalty).

2 What's working and what's not?

Continuously refine budget allocation, optimise channels and campaigns, test creatives, and adjust KPIs like ROAS and CPA to enhance outcomes.

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

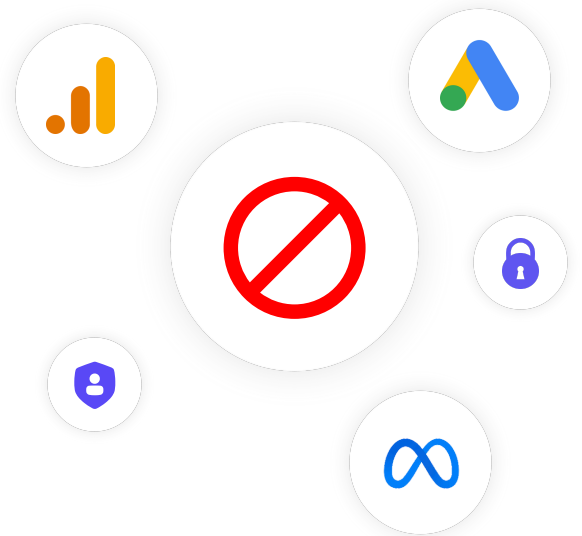
Setting the right KPIs and processes

Achieving unified marketing measurement also means setting the right performance KPIs based on your business goals and keeping an eye on important metrics like blended CPA and ROAS. 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 favorability. 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 conversion tracking.

This method, which allows advertisers to measure conversions 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 customer journeys and allocate credit to upper-funnel social campaigns.

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

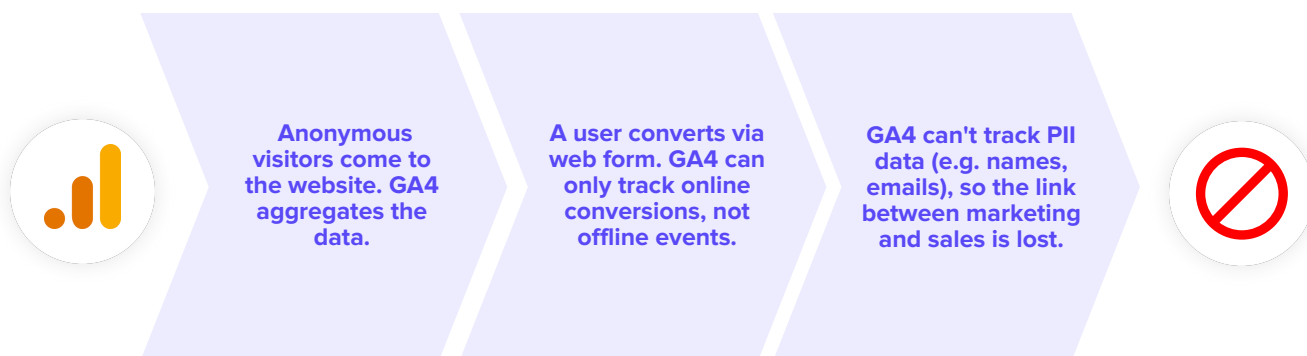
Google Analytics 4 was introduced a few years ago, shifting from a user-based model to a sampled-based approach. This means reports are no longer built on individual user tracking, but instead rely on aggregated data from a smaller sample of visitors.

This had 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.

The lack of first-party and user-level reporting is also a major issue that existed in UA, particularly for lead generation-focused industries where quality is key. Two conversions can vary significantly in value. For example, one might be a highly qualified and valuable opportunity, while the other could be someone simply looking for a job.

Traditional analytics reporting would report them both as one conversion or key event with no way to differentiate between them. GA doesn't contain first party data from website touch points, online conversions, or CRM data such as leads, opps and revenue.

This means you are looking at a set of reports which has key data missing, doesn't have the level granularity required to make effective decisions, and doesn't align to your internal business data.

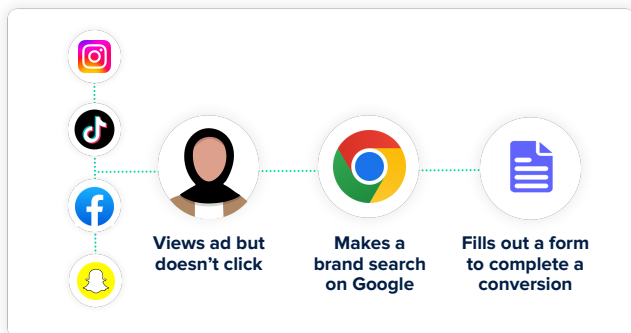


Ad platform conversion duplication and bias

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, Reddit as well as industry specific channels such as G2, StackAdapt, OutBrain etc.



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.

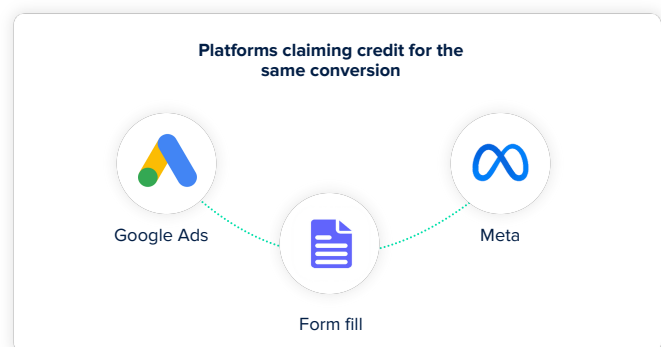
As clients navigate multiple channels, they experience various touchpoints with your brand, some of which impact conversions.

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

For example, both Google and Meta might claim a single conversion, making platform reporting and ROI performance appear better than they are.

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

In reality, the visitor saw ads on both platforms before converting, meaning each channel deserves only partial credit for the conversion, effectively halving the ROI.



Ad platform conversion duplication and bias

Additionally, many conversions 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.

Recent data indicates that the duration of the customer journey, from the initial touchpoint to final conversion, can take up to 12 months.

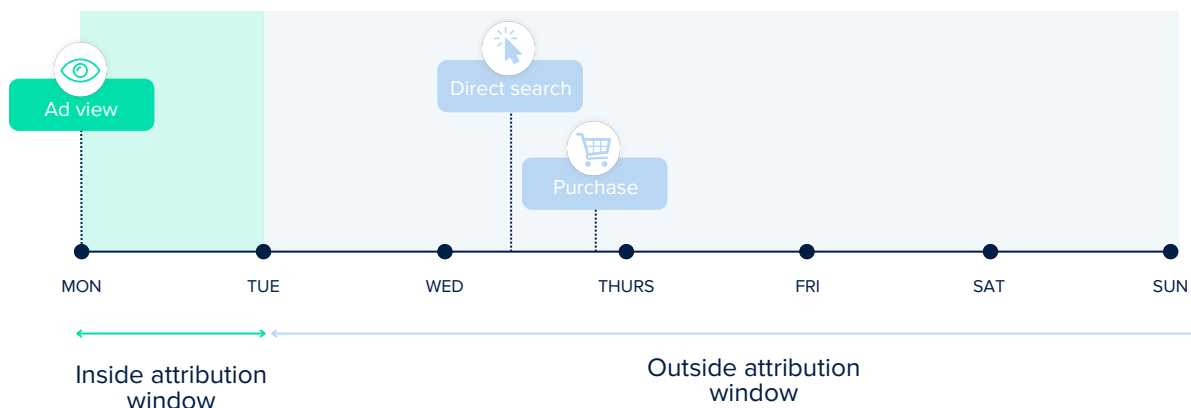
On average, a B2B customer engages in approximately [60 touchpoints](#) prior to finalising a deal.

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

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

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

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.

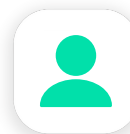
As pointed out above, the length of customer journeys and the number of touchpoints pose significant hurdles for marketers running campaigns on ad platforms. However, customer journeys extend far beyond ad platforms. They can include:



Offline channels like TV, radio, OOH, sales activities, and trade shows



Multiple devices used by a customer throughout their journey



Multiple accounts from different users within the same business

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 laws aimed at protecting user data. Regulations such as General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), and California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) focus on restricting interest-based profiling, tracking user activity across the web, and processing sensitive data.

Additionally, users 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 to gain unified marketing measurement insights.

Organisations collect data through various applications, including marketing analytics, CRM systems, customer success tools, and more.

However, each tool is managed by different teams and tracks data in its own way.

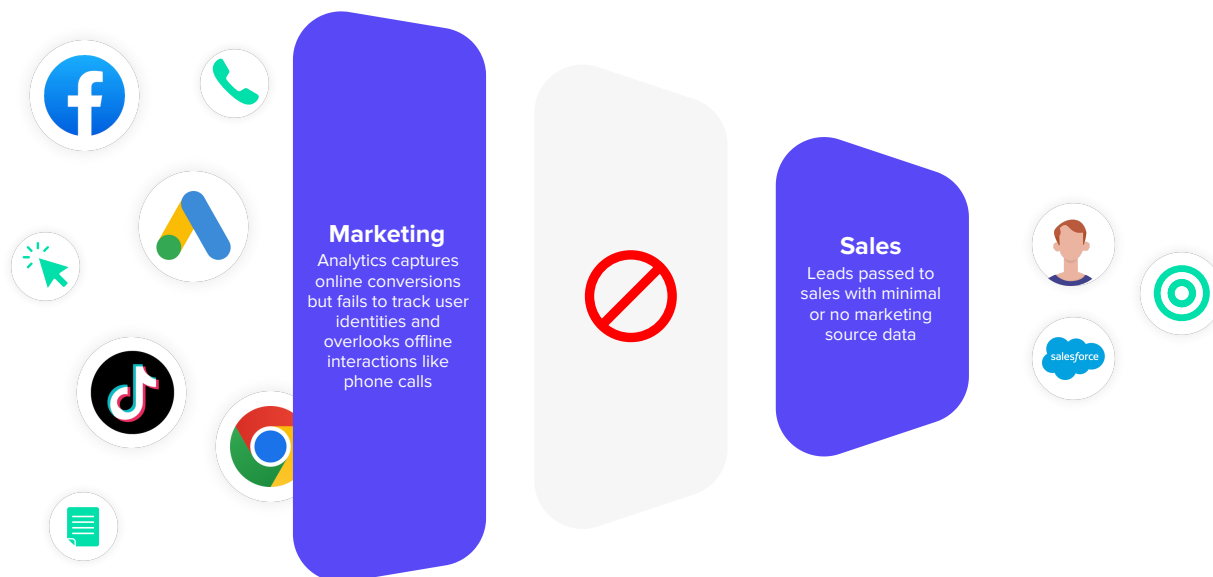
For example, we know GA4 can't capture personally identifiable information (PII) about website visitors.

This means that when a user converts on your site, you can't track their email, name, or other contact details.

At the same time, your CRM does store PII but lacks visibility into marketing sources and cost data.

Without a way to connect user identity in Google Analytics, it becomes impossible to trace high-value leads back to their marketing origins in your CRM.

This disconnect creates a ripple effect, impacting everything from lead attribution to subscription analytics.



The approach to unified marketing measurement - Overview

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

Addressing these challenges and achieving unified marketing measurement requires a more flexible, data-driven approach. One that integrates multiple methodologies tailored to specific channels and business models.

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 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 behaviors.



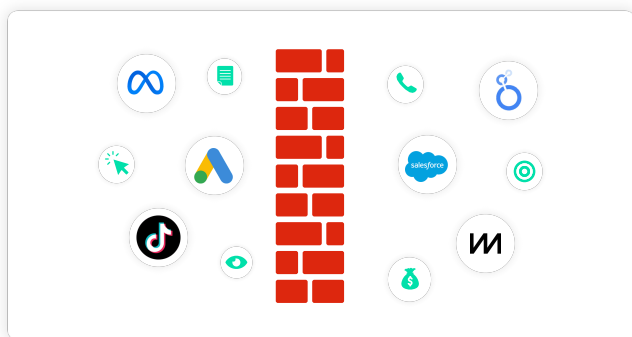
First-party data foundation

Effective unified marketing measurement and analysis rely on a well-integrated marketing data ecosystem.

A well-structured data ecosystem is essential for unified marketing 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 conversion 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 integrate advertising platform data (costs, campaign metrics) with on-site behavior and align sales data (leads, opportunities, revenue) from CRM systems. This unified feedback system connects marketing efforts to revenue outcomes, ensuring a holistic view of performance.

However, traditional analytics tools like GA4 have limitations. They often rely on their own tracking tags, providing sampled data and lacking integration with first-party, CRM, 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 and unified approach that combines first-party data, CRM 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 customer 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 revenue 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 customer 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 revenue.	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 credit 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 business objectives (e.g., revenue).	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 sales 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 RoaS, budget forecasting, historical lookback.	Proving campaign effectiveness, validating models.	Fair balance of holistic and granular attribution.

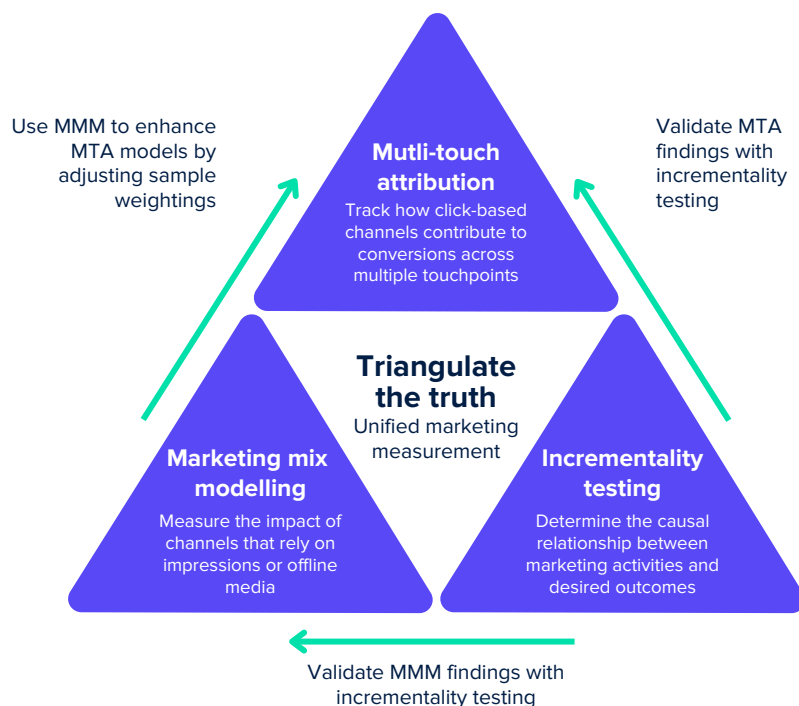
Triangulation

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

Triangulating the truth, a blended 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 business metric, typically revenue growth, to ensure alignment with desired outcomes.

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



Ways to unify measurement:

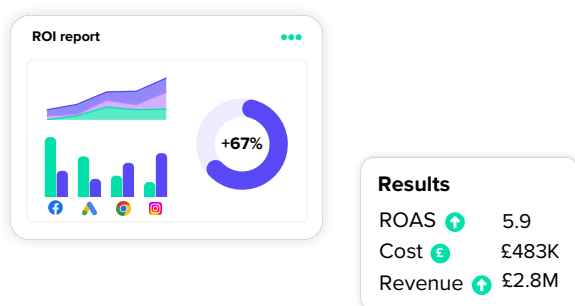
- 1 Use MTA to track click-based channels like paid search, mapping user interactions across touchpoints to understand how clicks contribute to conversions.
- 2 Apply MMM to measure the impact of impression-based or offline channels - such as TV, radio, and print - by analysing historical data to assess how different marketing activities drive overall sales.
- 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, businesses can generate full-funnel blended ROAS and revenue reports segmented by key commercial variables.

The ability to drill down into specific channels, campaigns, tactics, and even individual ads or keywords - filtered by criteria like country and business metrics - is crucial for answering common leadership questions about performance and next steps.



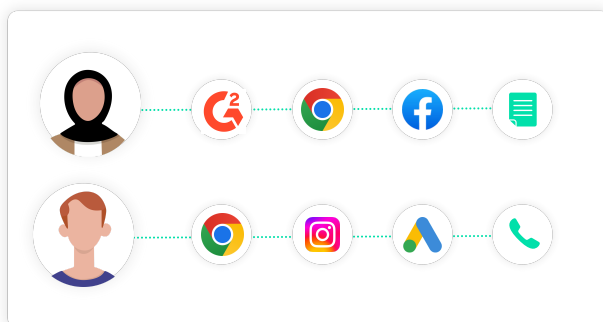
With a balance of high-level marketing ROI insights and the flexibility to analyse performance in detail, marketing leaders gain greater confidence in the KPIs that matter most.

They can easily track key metrics such as CPA, ROAS, ROI, and ACV/LTV, enabling more productive discussions about optimisation opportunities and potential investments.

Beyond strategic decision-making, this data plays a critical role in day-to-day marketing operations.

Having immediate access to detailed, channel-specific reports allows teams to identify underperforming areas quickly and respond to significant performance shifts.

For example, by analysing user journey patterns, teams can provide additional insight on the context around why things are working and what leads to profitable outcomes.



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.

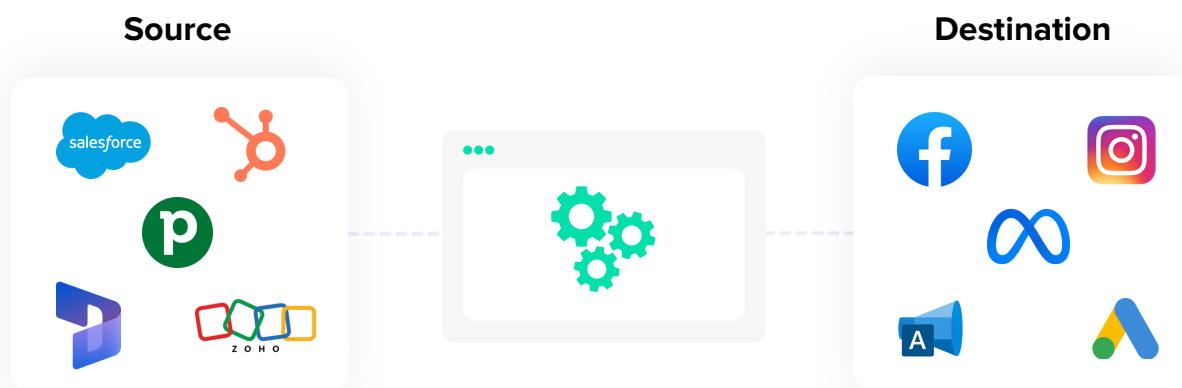
With marketing leaders responsible for measuring and optimising performance across such a broad range of channels, it can be hard to identify which interventions are likely to have the most impact.

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 unified marketing measurement

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

Data - building a unified first-party marketing data warehouse

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

As we've briefly touched on earlier, 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, and advertising platforms - organisations can achieve a holistic view of customer behavior. This approach ensures that marketing efforts are measured accurately and linked to business outcomes.

Revenue

£2,393,040

ROI

£1,906,747



The importance of first-party tracking

Comprehensive tracking plays a key role in understanding user behavior. With first-party tracking tags, businesses can capture detailed interactions like page views, traffic sources, UTM parameters, and conversions.

This makes it possible to attribute user actions - whether it's a form submission, live chat, phone call, 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 conversions. 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.

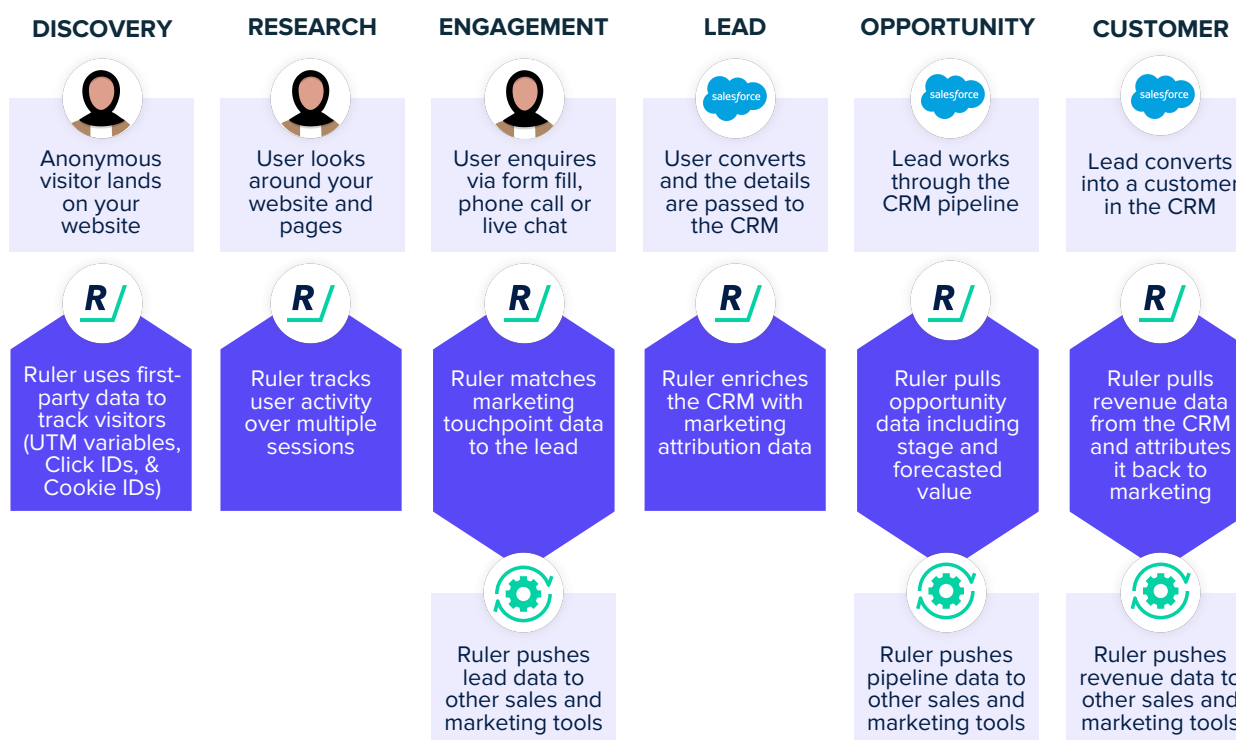
To keep data secure without losing valuable insights, businesses can also hash personally identifiable information (PII), balancing privacy with strong analytics.

Integrating ad platform and campaign data

Ad platform data, including costs, campaign metrics, and click data, also play a critical role in unified marketing measurement. By mapping platform IDs to user interactions via API integrations, businesses can calculate ROAS and refine their strategies accordingly. Utilising value track parameters, businesses 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 limits a business's ability to assess marketing performance. While these tools track first-party data and measure conversions, they often reduce outcomes to binary events - offering little insight into lead quality, revenue impact, or customer progression. For a more comprehensive view, businesses should integrate CRM data and link it to individual-level interactions



Whether it's form submissions, inbound calls, or e-commerce transactions, linking online behaviours with offline outcomes - such as product demos, phone negotiations, or in-person deals - helps bridge the gap between marketing efforts and revenue generation.

Measurement methodologies: Tracking & modelling

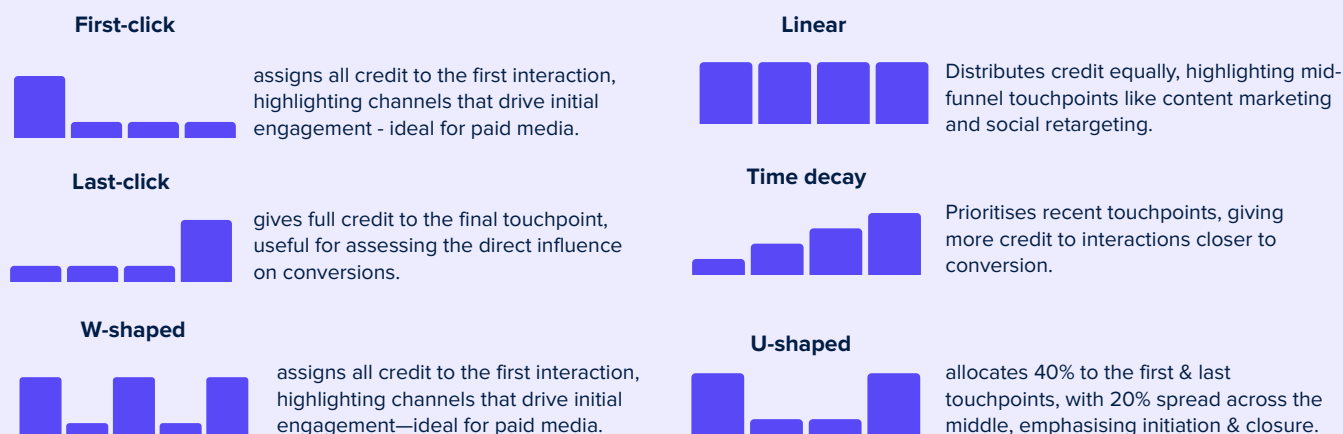
Once your data infrastructure is in place, the next crucial step is selecting your measurement approach. As we highlighted earlier, no single method is perfect, each has its own strengths and limitations. The right choice depends on your business model and what you aim to achieve.

The modern approach is to adopt a blended 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.

Multi-touch attribution: A deterministic approach

Multi-touch attribution (MTA) lies at the core of digital unified marketing measurement. It uses deterministic click tracking to assess touchpoints like ads, organic search, and social media before conversion. MTA highlights which customer journey elements drive conversions, 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 credit across touchpoints. These models fall under rule-based attribution, meaning they apply fixed rules for credit distribution without considering the actual influence of each touchpoint.



Data-driven attribution for a more sophisticated approach

Instead of relying on pre-set rules, this method dynamically assigns credit 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 credit to the final touchpoint - ignoring the paid ad's contribution.

However, a data-driven approach recognises the original ad's role in initiating the 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 business-collected data for full attribution control and a detailed customer journey view. Enriches models with industry-specific insights, delivering more precise, actionable results tailored to the business 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 business outcomes.

Originally developed in the 1950s to measure traditional channels like TV and radio, 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 revenue.

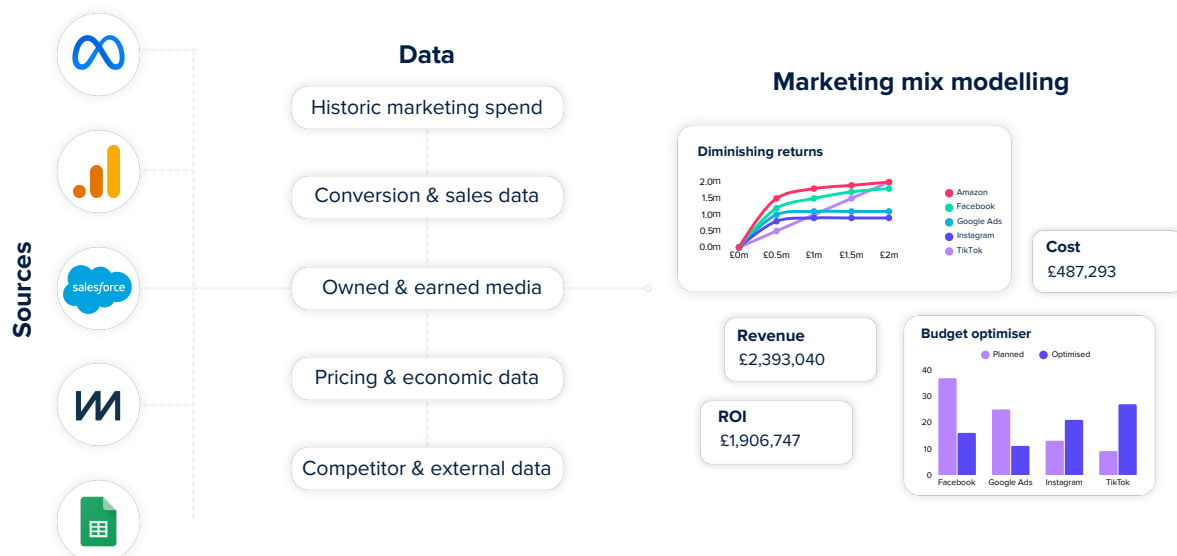
A key advantage of MMM is its ability to evaluate both digital and traditional channels equally.

It offers a more comprehensive understanding of marketing effectiveness.

MMM can incorporate up to 30 variables simultaneously, including brand awareness, seasonality, promotions, competitor activity, and external factors like weather.

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 credit only where incremental impact is detected, while residual credit is allocated to the base, representing the cumulative effects of past marketing efforts that continue to influence brand awareness.



Historical lookback

MMM's use of aggregated data means you can easily explore both past trends and future forecasts.

In practice, you can dig as far back as your data goes.

Typically, we like to pull at least a couple of years of history to build a solid baseline rather than starting from scratch.

This historical benchmark helps us gauge current performance.

On the other hand, a click model only captures data from when click tracking was first set up, so it lacks that deep historical context.

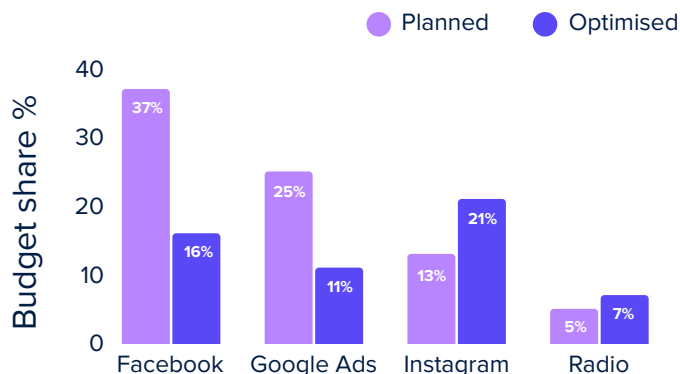
Scenario planning and budget optimisation

MMM provides valuable insights for budget optimisation by simulating various scenarios to determine the most effective allocation of marketing spend.

For example, the platform generates diminishing return curves that indicate when additional spend no longer yields a proportional increase in revenue.

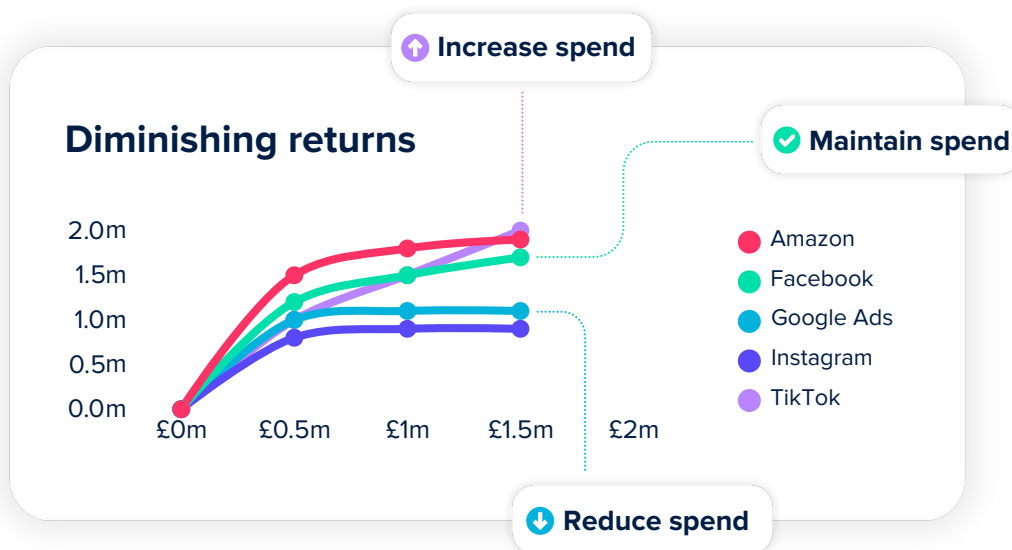
This allows marketers to understand the available headroom and predicted upside. The statistical rigour and clear visual outputs of these models help secure buy-in, especially when previous budget planning relied on rough estimates.

Budget optimiser



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 conversions and revenue

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 credited.

The model re-distributes credit, 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 that leads to subsequent conversions.

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

Channel	Cost	First-click attribution			ML impression attribution		
		Conv	Cost per conversion	Revenue	Conv	Cost per conversion	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 credit reattributed to upper-funnel activities, especially those focused on driving search leads.

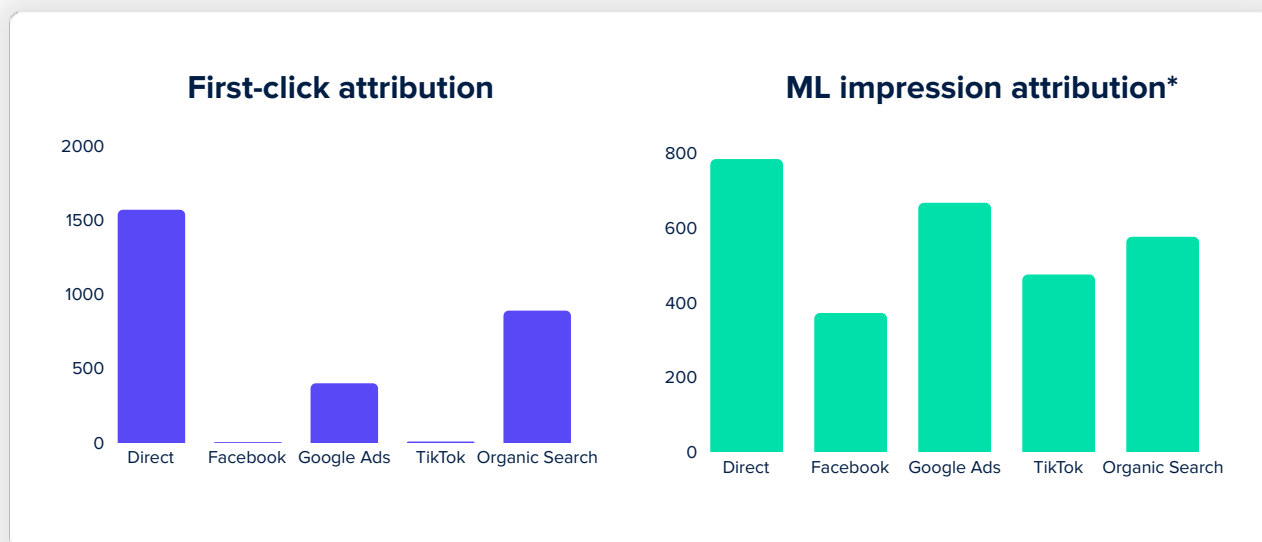
Even brands with established awareness can see a significant percentage of credit shifting to these upper-funnel channels, typically around 50%.

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

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

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

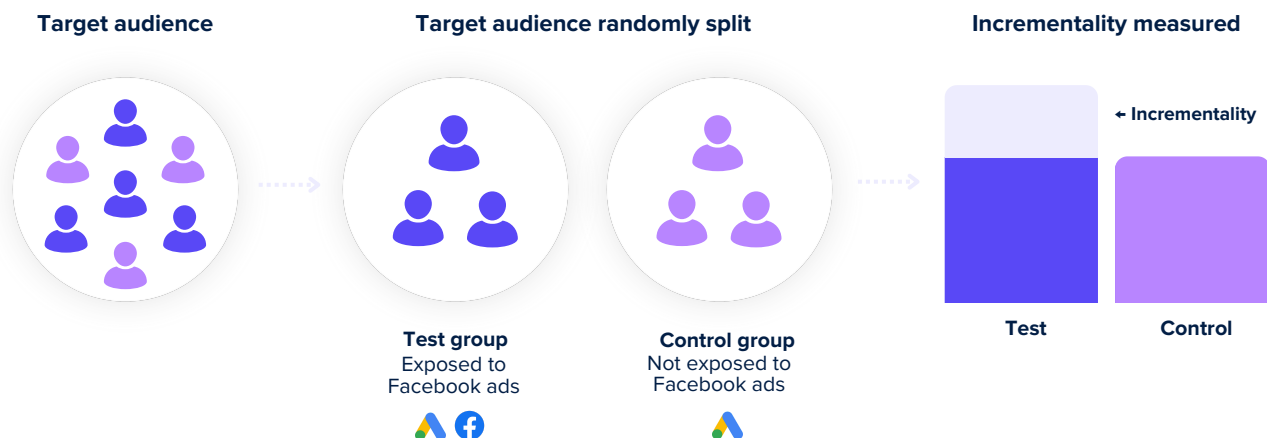
They provide a sophisticated and adaptable solution for businesses without access to MMM.



***Conversions 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 a conversion lift studies, 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 brand might implement this by selecting two similar geographical regions, such as New York and Los Angeles, and comparing conversion rates between them.

This allows marketers to quantify how much of the observed impact is directly attributable to the campaign, as opposed to conversions 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 unified marketing 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 key stakeholders.

Core metrics: Cost per acquisition and return on ad spend

At the heart of marketing reporting are metrics like Cost per Acquisition (CPA) and Return on Ad Spend (ROAS). These core metrics offer a straightforward view of performance, helping businesses track how their investments translate into revenue. Marketers typically align these metrics with financial targets, such as revenue goals, margins, or campaign-specific objectives. For example, businesses may work toward a specific ROAS multiplier or set CPA targets based on their business models. These metrics form the backbone of reporting and are critical for day-to-day campaign management.

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:

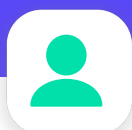
- Locations
- Marketing source
- Business units
- Verticals or industries

For example, organisations with multiple industries or regions may have unique revenue targets or budgets for each segment.

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

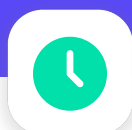
Contextualising campaign performance: Insight reports

A critical challenge in unified marketing measurement is ensuring that campaign performance is contextualised, particularly when reporting to senior leadership. For example, de-duplicated reports that offer a blended ROAS are valuable for high-level summaries but may lack the context to prove a specific campaigns' roles in the conversion path. Therefore additional insight reports are required, such as:



Path-to-conversion analysis

Identifies the most effective paths and key touchpoints leading to conversions.



Time-to-conversion

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



Campaign touchpoint frequency

Tracks how often a campaign contributes to conversions, even without closing the sale.



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 prospects as they evaluate options, often referred to as the consideration stage.
- Lower funnel: Email, organic search, and affiliate marketing tend to close the sale, 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 business outcomes.

By combining attribution modeling, 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 businesses to achieve marketing success and gain a competitive advantage over others in the industry.

Advanced reports

Marketing source

Equals: Google Ads

Campaign

First click

Compare

Query

Reset

Field	Impress.	Clicks	Calls	Forms	Opps	Sales	Revenue	Cost
Google	71,013...	55,474	1,686	4,660	6,346	1,939	£414,561.64	£172,813.25
Brand	24,567...	31,342	854	3,414	4,268	1067	£148,428.21	£74,182.59
Non-brand	46,446..	24,132	832	1,246	2,078	872	£266,133.43	£98,630.66

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.

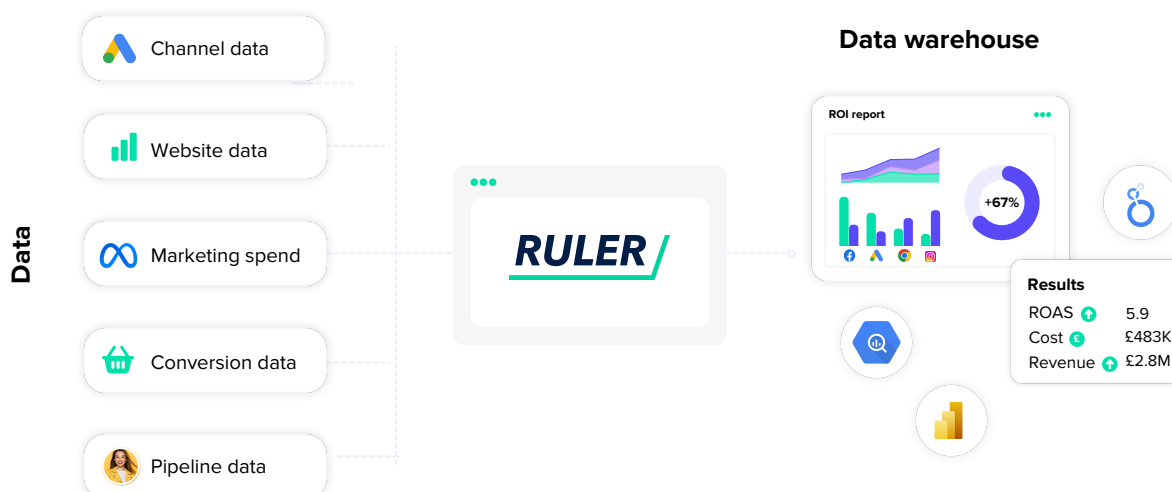
Enriching CRM and other tools with marketing insights

One of the most powerful use cases of the activation layer is enhancing your Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and other tools with rich marketing data. By combining key insights - such as leads, opportunities, revenue, and account activity - with marketing source data, CRMs evolve from simple databases into powerful strategic tools. They provide a complete view of customer interactions. This enriched data not only improves internal reporting but also gives sales and marketing teams the intelligence they need to make smarter, data-driven decisions.

The same concept applies to business 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 stakeholders 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, businesses can link offline events, such as telephone conversions and CRM revenue, 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 revenue or opportunities offline, businesses can use this data to inform ad platforms. The platforms, in turn, can target audiences with similar characteristics more effectively, enhancing the ROI of marketing 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 potential customers, existing customers, or leads at different stages of the sales funnel.

This ensures potential 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: Showing tailored ads to potential customers who've engaged with initial campaigns.
- Suppressing ads: Excluding existing customers from campaigns to avoid redundancy.
- Cross-selling opportunities: Displaying ads for complementary products or services to current customers.
- Funnel-based campaigns: Transitioning audiences from awareness campaigns into consideration or conversion campaigns, depending on their journey stage.

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

Unified marketing measurement shapes the future of insights

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

Unified marketing measurement provides a structured way to assess performance by integrating advanced methodologies and tools. At the heart of unified marketing measurement 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 modeling, ensures that every impression and interaction is linked to its actual contribution to conversions.

This level of detail allows brands to allocate budgets more effectively, ensuring that every marketing dollar drives maximum ROI.

Marketers who embrace this approach can make smarter, data-backed decisions that drive growth, fuel innovation, and strengthen customer connections.

Taking it a step further, automatic activation turns insights into immediate action. By automating decisions - like campaign optimisations or budget shifts - brands can stay agile in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

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



Next Steps

Unified marketing measurement provides a high-level view of key 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.

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