STATE OF DATA 2026

THE AI-POWERED MEASUREMENT TRANSFORMATION:

Implications for Attribution, Incrementality, and MMM

February 2026

Contents

Preface

Marketing and media performance matter more than ever, yet the systems we use to measure them are fundamentally broken. Privacy regulations and platform changes have scattered data across disconnected systems, preventing consistent cross-channel measurement and making it difficult to tie exposure to actual results.

As a result, marketers lack reliable ways to measure attribution, incrementality, and ROI. Marketing mix models (MMM) fail to reflect modern media consumption, leading to billions in misallocated spend while teams waste time stitching together fragmented data instead of generating insights.

At the same time, the industry faces an inflection point: the rapid rise of generative and agentic AI is transforming how marketing decisions are made, intensifying pressure to modernize advanced measurement processes.

AI can unify data, automate analysis, and increase measurement speed and frequency—but without transparency, governance, and data quality, it risks reinforcing black-box decisioning. Many marketers struggle to distinguish where AI delivers value today, what's achievable in 1-2 years, and what may be a mirage.

IAB State of Data 2026: The AI-Powered Measurement Transformation provides clarity on these questions. In partnership with BWG Global, IAB surveyed 400+ senior planning and analytics decision-makers at U.S. brands and agencies to explore:

- Current challenges in advanced measurement
- AI adoption across measurement workflows
- Where AI can deliver impact in the next 1-2 years
- AI challenges, solutions, and standards

The study gives the digital advertising industry a clearer view into where the buy-side sees AI improving advanced measurement, the considerations guiding its adoption, and the opportunities ahead over the next 1-2 years.

It also offers practical guidance on what comes next: how the industry can address foundational data, operational, and investment gaps in advanced measurement, and better position itself to realize AI's potential.

It also highlights opportunities for industry participation, including IAB's new initiative, **Project Eidos**, focused on strengthening advanced measurement through shared principles, standards, and frameworks.

STATE OF DATA 2026

THE AI-POWERED MEASUREMENT TRANSFORMATION:

An Outlook for Attribution, Incrementality, and MMM

KEY INSIGHTS

01

Advanced measurement is falling short on its core promises while the cost of failure has never been higher.

Up to 75% of the buy-side says leading advanced measurement approaches underperform on rigor, timeliness, trust, and efficiency. With marketing budgets shrinking*, organizations can no longer afford measurement systems that fail to justify spend or prove ROI.

02

AI could help unlock $32B in media investment and productivity in 1-2 years.

Marketers expect AI will narrow critical gaps by automating more strategic work, increasing measurement frequency by 2-3×, and enabling more sophisticated approaches. These improvements could help unlock $26B in media investment and $6B in productivity value.

03

AI adoption in advanced measurement is underway, with rapid expansion expected.

Today about half of the buy-side reports scaling AI within their advanced measurement frameworks. Among those yet to scale, most (70%+) expect to do so within the next 1-2 years.

04

Concerns with AI may inhibit the progress of improving advanced measurement.

Half of the buy-side anticipates significant AI challenges over the next 1-2 years related to legal and security risks, accuracy, and data quality. These unresolved issues threaten measurement rigor, consistency, and trust—especially as AI adoption accelerates.

05

Though few AI risk solutions are currently in place, the market is course-correcting through contracts.

Despite limited adoption of AI risk solutions, relevant clauses are already appearing in ~40% of partner contracts. This rate is expected to double within 1-2 years, signaling a shift toward formal accountability.

Current Challenges with Advanced Measurement

Advanced measurement are table stake applications on the buy-side

Most U.S. buy-side decision-makers (67-76%) use at least one of today's three leading advanced measurement approaches: incrementality tests, attribution analysis, and marketing mix models (MMM).

Incrementality testing is the most common, driven by the ease of platform-embedded A/B tests and holdouts.

Yet only 39% use all three together, despite each serving a distinct purpose—incrementality measures causal lift, attribution captures conversion paths, and MMM informs budget allocation. This suggests combining them is too complex, leaving most marketers without the holistic view of ROI that today's landscape demands.

TYPES OF ADVANCED MEASUREMENT BEING USED TODAY

76%

Incrementality tests

(experiments designed to isolate the true impact of a specific marketing activity (e.g., geo-based or user-based lift tests))

73%

Attribution analysis

(e.g., multi-touch attribution (MTA), publisher first-party attribution, etc.)

67%

Marketing mix models (MMM)

Base: Total (n=430)
Source: IAB/BWG Strategy, 2026

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Yet advanced measurement falls short of its core promises

60-75% of marketers say advanced measurement underperforms on the rigor, coverage, timeliness, trust, and efficiency needed to assess ROI. As marketing budgets shrink as a share of company spending,* there's less room for inefficiency—measurement must provide timely, credible insights to justify spend and guide optimization.

% THAT SAY CURRENT APPROACH <u>DOESN'T</u> PERFORM VERY WELL

	Incrementality	Attribution	Marketing Mix Models (MMM)
Measurement Rigor, Coverage & Consistency:			
Captures performance across all channels	N/A	72%	61%
Reflects performance across full-funnel outcomes	N/A	71%	69%
Cross-validated with other measurement approaches	72%	73%	67%
Produces reliable/consistent results	68%	72%	67%
Timeliness & Actionability:			
Provides useful insights for planning/optimization	67%	66%	61%
Delivers quickly enough to inform planning/optimization	73%	66%	68%
Trust & Transparency:			
Is transparent and explainable to stakeholders	69%	67%	63%
Is trusted by planning and analytics teams	N/A	61%	61%
Is widely used by planning and analytics teams	72%	71%	60%
Operational Efficiency:			
Operates within cost, staffing, and tech constraints	71%	70%	69%

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Alarmingly, no media channel is fully represented in marketing mix models (MMM)

While the buy-side believes all channels suffer from representation gaps in MMMs, **gaming, commerce media, creator/influencer, and traditional media are most frequently cited as underrepresented**.

The result is a myopic view of performance that reduces confidence in MMM outputs and reinforces bias toward more measurable channels (display, search, social) rather than those driving true incremental impact. To optimize ad spend, measurement must reflect the full media mix.

KEY QUESTION: Does the buy-side believe AI can realistically and meaningfully improve advanced measurement in the next 1-2 years?

% WHO SAY CHANNEL IS _UNDERREPRESENTED_ IN MARKETING MIX MODELS (MMM) TODAY
(Among those with line of sight into each channel)

Channel	%
Gaming	77%
Commerce Media	50%
Creator / Influencer Marketing	48%
Other Trad Media: Radio, Print, OOH, Direct Mail	46%
Digital Out-of-Home (DOOH)	43%
Digital Video: CTV	41%
Podcasts: streaming or downloading	39%
Linear TV: Broadcast and Cable	38%
Digital Video: excl. CTV	37%
Digital Audio: streaming; excl. Podcasts	36%
Social Media	35%
Paid Search (SEM)	35%
Digital Display	31%

Base: MMM users with line of sight into each channel (n=floating base)
Source: IAB/BWG Strategy, 2026

How the Buy-Side Thinks AI Can Mitigate the Challenges

The buy-side expects that AI can uplevel the execution of more strategic tasks

Today, AI is used in advanced measurement primarily for data "heavy lifting": automating collection, cleaning, and normalization before human analysts interpret results.

In 1-2 years, AI is also expected to take on more high-impact work like incrementality test design/analysis, attribution outcome matching, and MMM tuning.

This signals a shift from passive automation toward more cognitive use cases, as LLMs, generative, and agentic AI begin supporting synthesis and interpretation of marketing performance, not just data organization.

TOP 5 TASKS AUTOMATED USING AI TODAY

TOP 5 TASKS EXPECTED TO BE AUTOMATED IN 1-2 YEARS

INCREMENTALITY

TOP 5 TASKS AUTOMATED USING AI TODAY	TOP 5 TASKS EXPECTED TO BE AUTOMATED IN 1-2 YEARS
1 Monitor test performance	1 Clean, label & classify data
2 Collect media & performance data	2 Collect media & performance data
3 Clean, label & classify data	3 Select target & control groups
4 Share findings internally/externally	4 Analyze & interpret results
5 Translate insights into recommendations	5 Define test objectives & hypotheses

ATTRIBUTION

TOP 5 TASKS AUTOMATED USING AI TODAY	TOP 5 TASKS EXPECTED TO BE AUTOMATED IN 1-2 YEARS
1 Integrate & normalize data	1 Clean, label & classify data
2 Document learnings for future planning	2 Match exposures to outcomes
3 Run scenario planning	3 Integrate & normalize data
4 Select & configure attribution methodology	4 Collect media & performance data
5 Interpret model results	5 Run scenario planning

MARKETING MIX MODELS (MMM)

TOP 5 TASKS AUTOMATED USING AI TODAY	TOP 5 TASKS EXPECTED TO BE AUTOMATED IN 1-2 YEARS
1 Integrate & normalize data	1 Clean, label & classify data
2 Run scenario planning	2 Integrate & normalize data
3 Share findings internally/externally	3 Update & maintain models
4 Clean, label & classify data	4 Collect media spend & performance data
5 Conduct QA or governance checks	5 Run scenario planning

Note: The highlighted choices reflect key findings most relevant to this analysis.
Base: Incrementality test regular users (n=292); Attribution users (n=315); MMM users (n=287)
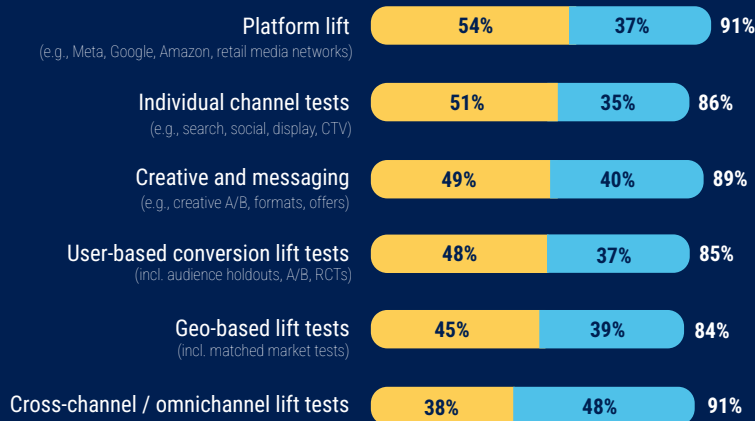*Source: IAB/BWG Strategy, 2026*

AI can accelerate adoption of more sophisticated measurement approaches

Over the next 1-2 years, buyers expect AI to make omnichannel lift tests and multi-touch/algorithmic attribution more accessible, bringing them closer to parity with today's dominant platform-level and first/last-touch methods.

By making it easier to incorporate additional channels and data, AI could enable more holistic measurement—essential for truly optimizing ROI.
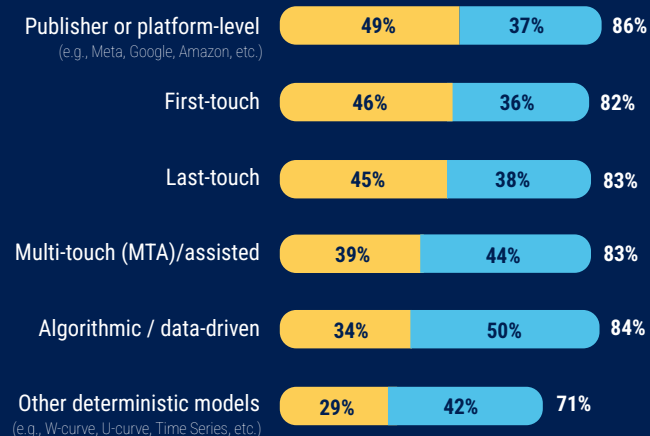
INCREMENTALITY TESTS USED/EXPECTED TO USE

🟡 Used Today   🔵 Expect to use in the next 1-2 years with AI-driven improvements

Category	Used Today	Expect to use	Total
Platform lift (e.g., Meta, Google, Amazon, retail media networks)	54%	37%	91%
Individual channel tests (e.g., search, social, display, CTV)	51%	35%	86%
Creative and messaging (e.g., creative A/B, formats, offers)	49%	40%	89%
User-based conversion lift tests (incl. audience holdouts, A/B, RCTs)	48%	37%	85%
Geo-based lift tests (incl. matched market tests)	45%	39%	84%
Cross-channel / omnichannel lift tests	38%	48%	91%

ATTRIBUTION APPROACHES USED/EXPECTED TO USE

🟡 Used Today   🔵 Expect to use in the next 1-2 years with AI-driven improvements

Category	Used Today	Expect to use	Total
Publisher or platform-level (e.g., Meta, Google, Amazon, etc.)	49%	37%	86%
First-touch	46%	36%	82%
Last-touch	45%	38%	83%
Multi-touch (MTA)/assisted	39%	44%	83%
Algorithmic / data-driven	34%	50%	84%
Other deterministic models (e.g., W-curve, U-curve, Time Series, etc.)	29%	42%	71%

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STATE OF DATA 2026: The AI-Powered Measurement Transformation

Next-level AI in MMM could help unlock billions of dollars in media investment in 1-2 years

$14.5 - $26.3B

Media investment AI-driven improvements in MMM could help unlock in 1-2 years

Building on expectations that AI will enable more holistic measurement, buy-side planners said they would **increase spend in underrepresented media channels by an average of 5.6% over the next 1-2 years** if AI-enhanced MMM became more accurate and trusted—through both budget reallocations and incremental dollars.

Applied to current U.S. market levels, this could represent ~$14.5B in digital investment alone* and **$26.3B across total ad spend,** with the potential for additional growth from incremental budgets.

Base:: Planning MMM users (n=148)
Source: IAB/BWG Strategy, 2026
*IAB/PwC Internet Advertising Revenue Report: Full Year 2024; **Omnicom U.S. Advertising Report Winter 2025 Update*

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STATE OF DATA 2026: The AI-Powered Measurement Transformation

12

AI can enable marketers to run models 2-3x more often than they do today

Over the next 1-2 years, the buy side expects AI to enable faster planning/optimization by scaling incrementality testing from 3-5 tests per year to 11+ annually and shifting attribution and MMM from annual/biannual to monthly runs.
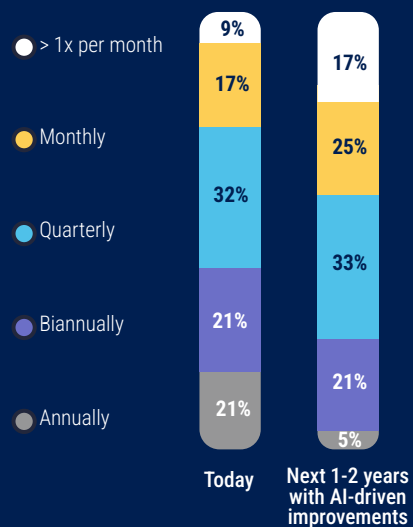
OF INCREMENTALITY TESTS RUN PER YEAR

- 11+
- 6-10
- 3-5
- 1-2

Today
- 8%
- 34%
- 47%
- 11%

Next 1-2 years with AI-driven improvements
- 28%
- 38%
- 30%
- 4%
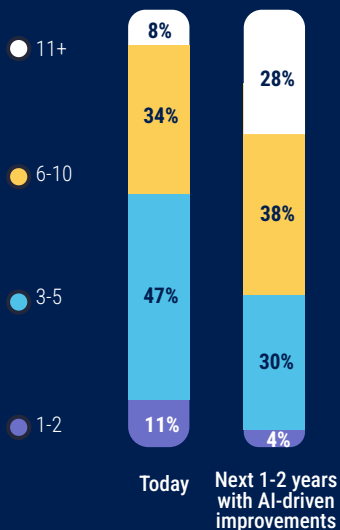
HOW OFTEN MODELS ARE RUN: ATTRIBUTION

- In real-time
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Biannually
- Annually

Today
- 6%
- 15%
- 20%
- 23%
- 16%
- 19%

Next 1-2 years with AI-driven improvements
- 20%
- 16%
- 23%
- 26%
- 12%
- 4%
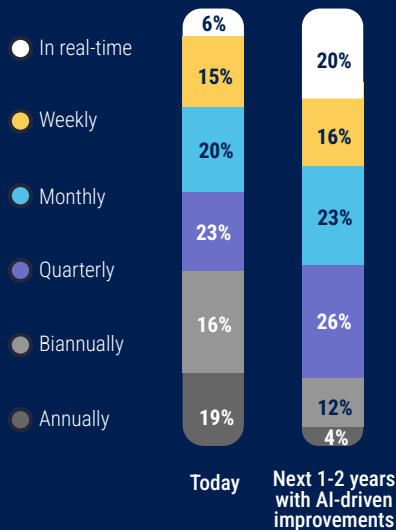
HOW OFTEN MODELS ARE RUN: MARKETING MIX MODELS (MMM)

- > 1x per month
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Biannually
- Annually

Today
- 9%
- 17%
- 32%
- 21%
- 21%

Next 1-2 years with AI-driven improvements
- 17%
- 25%
- 33%
- 21%
- 5%

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STATE OF DATA 2026: The AI-Powered Measurement Transformation

AI can help unlock billions of dollars in productivity value by shifting time from data prep to strategy work

With greater automation and more frequent measurement, planning teams see AI shifting their time from data preparation to insight generation and strategy, **expecting to reallocate nearly 10% of their time per quarter over the next 1-2 years.**

This could mean ~$14.4K per planner per quarter*, or **~$6.2B in potential industry-wide productivity value** across an estimated 434K U.S. ad managers.*

However, analytics teams are more cautious and expect less change in time spent (not shown), citing challenges around scale and resistance to change that may slow how quickly AI-driven efficiencies materialize (see page 21).

SHARE OF PLANNERS' TIME SPENT ON ADVANCED MEASUREMENT TASKS

● Insights and strategy ● Model maintenance ● Data preparation

Today

42% 39% 19%

Next 1-2 years with AI-driven improvements

32% 48% 20%

+9% =

$6.2B in industry productivity value
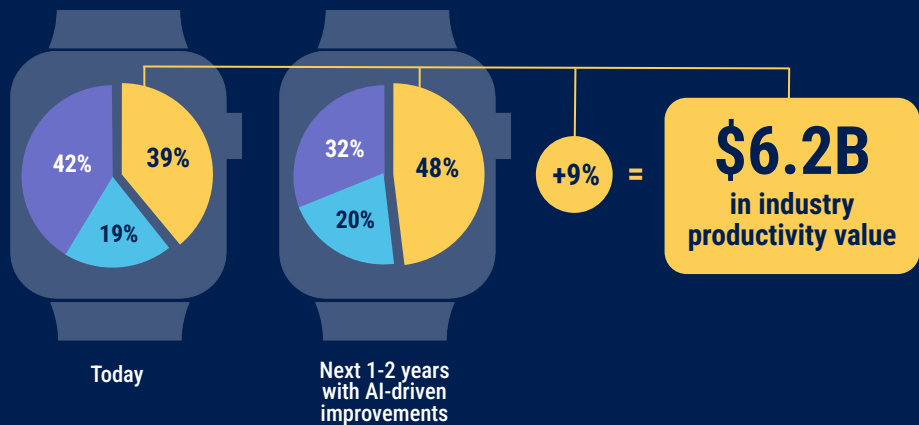
Where AI Adoption for Advanced Measurement Stands

Adoption of AI in advanced measurement is underway – driven by analytics teams

The industry's expectations for AI in advanced measurement are already translating into action. **Half report scaling AI today**, with nearly another third in proof-of-concept—signaling growing confidence in AI's ability to drive meaningful impact.

Analytics teams are leading adoption; they're more than twice as likely as planning to be scaling AI in current workflows. This reflects their extensive machine learning background, technical fluency, and ability to implement AI capabilities independently

CURRENT AI ADOPTION IN ADVANCED MEASUREMENT

● Exploratory/Conceptual ● Testing ● Proof of concept (POC) ● Scaling deployment

	Exploratory/Conceptual	Testing	Proof of concept (POC)	Scaling deployment
Total	8%	17%	27%	49%
Planning	11%	26%	32%	30%
Analytics	5%	6%	20%	69%

Exploratory/conceptual – Early-stage research or brainstorming on how AI could be applied; discussions are conceptual

Testing – AI solutions are being piloted in small-scale, controlled environments to assess feasibility and effectiveness

Proof of concept (POC) – AI has demonstrated measurable success in specific applications, but deployment remains limited to certain campaigns or use cases

Scaling deployment – AI is being integrated and operational across current processes, applied consistently and at scale

Base: Total (n=430); Planning roles (n=225); Analytics roles (n=205)
Source: IAB/BWG Strategy, 2026
Numbers many not add up to 100% due to rounding

Looking ahead, both planning and analytics teams expect to be scaling AI adoption in the next two years

Although analytics currently lead in scaling AI, this gap is expected to narrow quickly.

Among those not yet scaling, more than 70% of both planning and analytics teams expect to be scaling by 2027 as tools mature. Planning teams are especially motivated by AI's potential to shift their time from data preparation to insight generation and strategy (see page 14).

Notably, nearly all respondents plan to scale AI, with just 6% saying they do not plan to or are unsure—underscoring the industry's bullish outlook.

TIME EXPECTED TO SCALE AI ADOPTION IN ADVANCED MEASUREMENT
(Among those who are not yet scaling)

● 2026　● 2027　● 2028 or later　● Never　● Not Sure

	2026	2027	2028 or later	Never	Not Sure
Total	28%	45%	21%	1%	5%
Planning	29%	46%	18%	1%	6%
Analytics	27%	44%	27%		2%
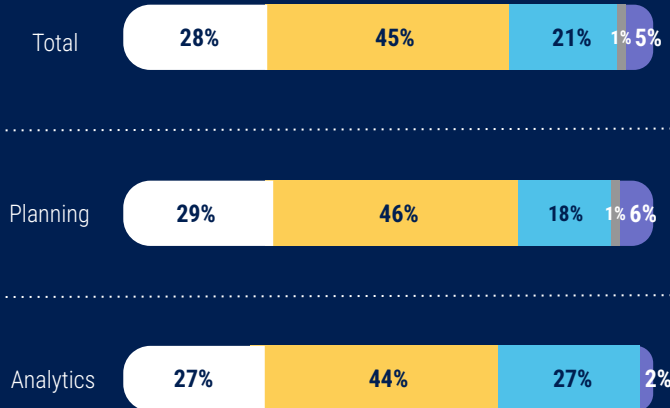
Base: Among those who are not yet scaling AI: Total (n=219); Planning roles (n=156); Analytics roles (n=63)
Source: IAB/BWG Strategy, 2026
*Numbers many not add up to 100% due to rounding

AI's use today points to the next phase of adoption

Planning teams primarily rely on general purpose AI tools that are easy to access but lack the functionality needed for scaling adoption across advanced measurement workflows.
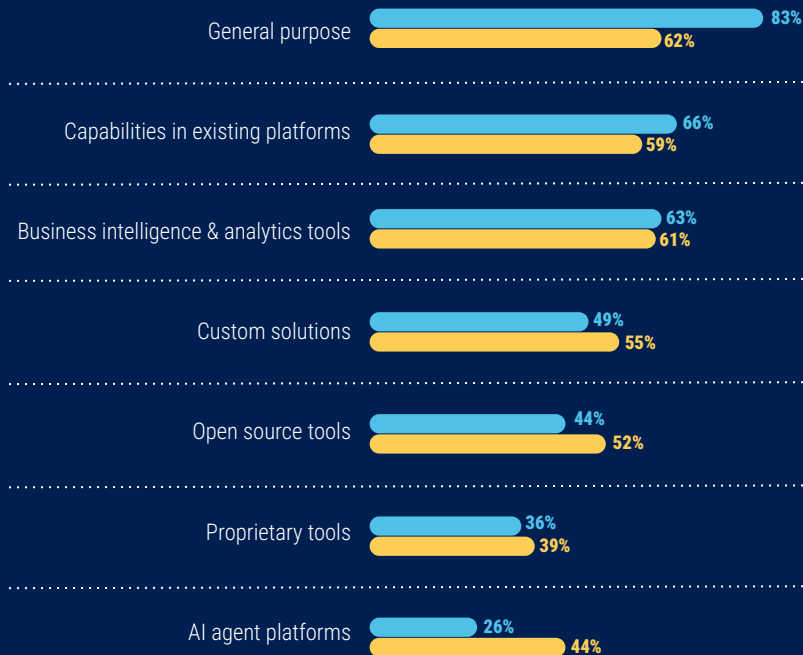
Analytics teams, by contrast, use a broader mix of AI tools and show significantly higher adoption of agent-based platforms, alongside other solutions that can enable broader integration.

This suggests how AI tool usage may evolve as planning teams mature in their adoption—likely shifting toward more interoperable and unified solutions over time.

TYPES OF AI TOOLS AND PLATFORMS BEING USED
(Sorted high-to-low by Planning)

● Planning ● Analytics

Tool/Platform	Planning	Analytics
General purpose	83%	62%
Capabilities in existing platforms	66%	59%
Business intelligence & analytics tools	63%	61%
Custom solutions	49%	55%
Open source tools	44%	52%
Proprietary tools	36%	39%
AI agent platforms	26%	44%

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Challenges with AI Adoption

Despite high optimism, significant challenges persist that threaten progress

Despite seeing AI's potential and expecting to scale adoption within 1-2 years, **half of marketers anticipate that legal and security risks, accuracy, and data quality will be significant or critical challenges**—foundational issues that could slow momentum.

Advanced measurement relies on secure access to sensitive customer and performance data, often shared across teams and fragmented across partners. Unresolved legal, security, accuracy, or data issues could force companies to limit what data is included, how it's validated, and how it's used and shared.

These constraints can reduce model scope, frequency, and insight breadth, making insights harder to trust and often outdated.
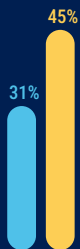
TOP EXPECTED AI CHALLENGES FOR ADVANCED MEASUREMENT
% Cited as a significant or critical concern in the next 1-2 years

Challenge	%
Legal, governance, compliance concerns	51%
Concerns about AI accuracy/transparency	49%
Data security risks	49%
Data quality or accessibility issues	45%
Complexity of setup/maintenance	41%
Lack of industry standards for AI	40%
High implementation costs or budget constraints	40%
Ethical and bias concerns	39%
Resistance to change from team members/clients	39%
Challenges scaling AI solutions	39%
Job displacement concerns	39%

Analytics teams express greater concern around scaling and execution

While both planning and analytics expect challenges with AI in the next 1-2 years, analytics teams are more likely to flag issues with scalability, unclear ownership, and resistance to change.

This reflects their responsibility for model integrity and long-term performance, where governance and organizational readiness are harder to work around. As a result, analytics surface execution risks earlier as AI moves from experimentation to scaled use.

KEY EXPECTED AI CHALLENGES FOR ADVANCED MEASUREMENT (BY JOB ROLE)

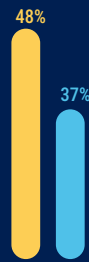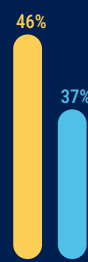*% Cited as a significant or critical concern in the next 1-2 years*

● Planning　● Analytics

	Unclear ownership or funding responsibilities	Challenges scaling AI solutions	High implementation costs or budget constraint	Resistance to change from team members/clients
Planning	31%	34%	36%	35%
Analytics	45%	45%	45%	43%

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The C-suite express greater concern around cost, ethics, and workforce impact

Compared with VP-level leaders and below, the C-suite is more likely to cite concerns around costs, ethics, and job displacement—reflecting their accountability for enterprise-wide budgets, workforce outcomes, and responsible AI deployment.

As AI adoption scales, these considerations become more prominent at the executive level, where decisions must account for financial exposure, organizational impact, and broader implications of AI application.

KEY EXPECTED AI CHALLENGES FOR ADVANCED MEASUREMENT (BY JOB TITLE)

% Cited as a significant or critical concern in the next 1-2 years

● C-Level   ● VP and Below

High implementation costs or budget constraints	Ethical and bias concerns	Job displacement concerns	Lack of AI knowledge or in-house expertise	Challenges customizing AI solutions
49% / 38%	48% / 37%	46% / 37%	43% / 33%	43% / 34%
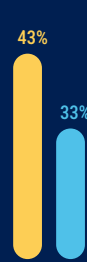
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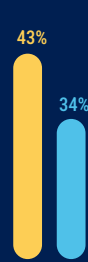
Solutions for AI in Advanced Measurement

Most organizations recognize AI adoption challenges but have yet to take action to address them

Despite broad recognition of AI challenges, **fewer than 40% of marketers report having or planning solutions,** underscoring how early most remain in operationalizing responses.
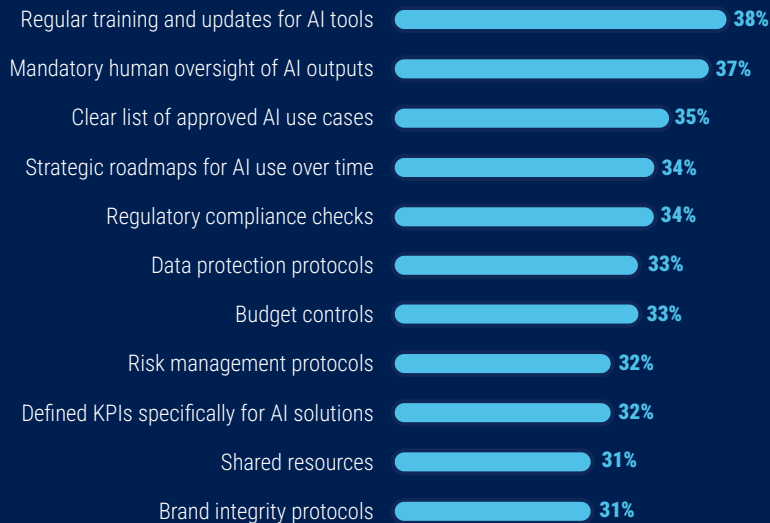
The most common solutions—regular training and mandatory oversight—signal that organizations are prioritizing guardrails to mitigate accuracy and misuse as broader frameworks take shape.

Planning teams, recognizing the need to catch up on AI adoption (see page 16), are 1.3-2× more likely than analytics to implement solutions, particularly around governance, partner requirements, and internal processes (not shown).

TOP SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS AI CHALLENGES IN ADVANCED MEASUREMENT
% Using or planning to use in the next 1-2 years

Solution	%
Regular training and updates for AI tools	38%
Mandatory human oversight of AI outputs	37%
Clear list of approved AI use cases	35%
Strategic roadmaps for AI use over time	34%
Regulatory compliance checks	34%
Data protection protocols	33%
Budget controls	33%
Risk management protocols	32%
Defined KPIs specifically for AI solutions	32%
Shared resources	31%
Brand integrity protocols	31%

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The market is beginning to course-correct as AI requirements rapidly expand in partner contracts
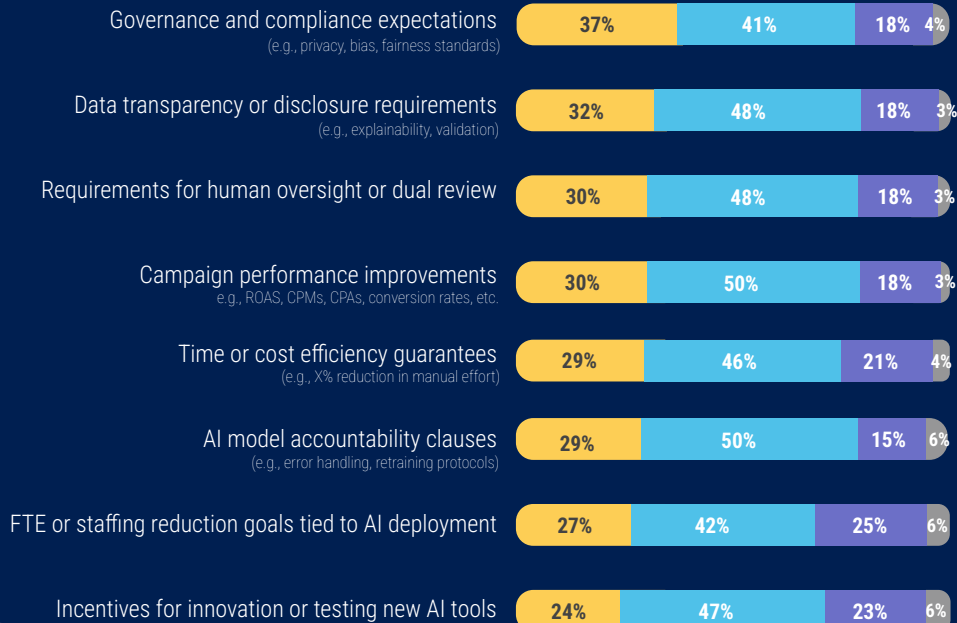
While formal solutions to address AI-related concerns remain limited today, the market appears poised to course-correct as **AI-related clauses already appear in 37% of brand-agency and partner contracts today,** setting expectations around performance, efficiency, transparency, and governance.

This share is expected to more than double within 1-2 years (70-80%), signaling a shift toward contractual accountability.

This marks a fundamental change in market dynamics, where AI governance is no longer discretionary but built into how partners are selected, evaluated, and held accountable.

TYPES OF AI-RELATED CLAUSES IN BRAND-AGENCY OR PARTNER AGREEMENTS BEING USED

● Included Today   ● Expected in 1-2 years   ● Not included or expected   ● N/A or not sure

Governance and compliance expectations
(e.g., privacy, bias, fairness standards)
37% | 41% | 18% | 4%

Data transparency or disclosure requirements
(e.g., explainability, validation)
32% | 48% | 18% | 3%

Requirements for human oversight or dual review
30% | 48% | 18% | 3%

Campaign performance improvements
e.g., ROAS, CPMs, CPAs, conversion rates, etc.
30% | 50% | 18% | 3%

Time or cost efficiency guarantees
(e.g., X% reduction in manual effort)
29% | 46% | 21% | 4%

AI model accountability clauses
(e.g., error handling, retraining protocols)
29% | 50% | 15% | 6%

FTE or staffing reduction goals tied to AI deployment
27% | 42% | 25% | 6%

Incentives for innovation or testing new AI tools
24% | 47% | 23% | 6%

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Accountability in contracts is driving calls for shared standards

With AI accountability increasingly embedded in contracts, **half of the buy-side is calling for standards around transparency, data protection, and accuracy** to enable broader adoption and reduce risk.

These areas can create the greatest friction when scaling AI across organizations and partners. Transparency is required to validate AI-driven outputs; data protection carries elevated legal and reputational risk due to the use of sensitive data; and accuracy determines whether insights can be trusted and acted upon.

Without these standards, companies face inconsistent implementations and heightened uncertainty, making it harder to scale AI responsibly.

TYPES OF INDUSTRY STANDARDS NEEDED MOST FOR USING AI IN ADVANCED MEASUREMENT

Standard	Percentage
Transparency standards	50%
Data privacy and protection protocols	48%
Accuracy and reliability standards	47%
Ethical use guidelines	40%
Standardized definitions and taxonomies	39%
Educational courses and materials	39%
Regulation compliance frameworks	38%
Governance frameworks	36%
Standards for purchasing or licensing tools	34%
Model bias and fairness measures	33%
Interoperability standards	26%
Environmental & sustainability guidelines	26%

We've Been Wasting Billions—It's Time to Fix the Root Cause

Dear Advertising Industry Colleagues,

The findings in **IAB State of Data 2026: The AI-Powered Measurement Transformation** make one thing clear: our industry is at a breaking point. Advanced measurement is widely adopted, yet the buy-side says it falls short on rigor, timeliness, trust, and efficiency.

Systems struggle with signal loss, inconsistent channel representation, and unreliable connections between exposures and outcomes—nowhere more evident than in marketing mix models (MMM), where channels such as CTV, retail media, creator-led formats, gaming, and commerce media remain underrepresented, distorting ROI and driving misallocated spend.

These gaps are costly. Teams waste time stitching together fragmented data instead of generating insights, just as marketing budgets are tightening.

At the same time, the industry is entering a major inflection point. AI is accelerating what's possible. While today it is used primarily for data preparation, in the next 1-2 the buy-side expects AI to support higher-impact analytical work—including attribution matching, experiment design, and MMM tuning.

With stronger rigor and fuller channel coverage, AI-enabled MMM alone could unlock tens of billions in media value and generate meaningful productivity gains as time shifts from data prep to strategy.

But AI is not a silver bullet. Without shared standards, transparent governance, and trusted data foundations, it risks reinforcing black-box dynamics and introducing new legal, security, accuracy, and quality concerns.

Incremental fixes are no longer enough. We must address the root causes: fragmented operations, inconsistent data, underrepresented channels, conflicting signals across attribution, incrementality, and MMM, and siloed AI adoption without shared guardrails.

This is why IAB is launching **Project Eidos**—an industry-wide initiative grounded in shared principles, standards, and frameworks. Named after the Greek verb "to see," Eidos aims to bring clarity, consistency, and confidence to modern measurement by unifying approaches, improving channel coverage, promoting transparency, clarifying each methodology's role, and ensuring AI becomes a trusted co-pilot, not another black box.

True measurement progress requires both industry-wide reform and method-specific modernization. While holistic change is essential, attribution, incrementality, and MMM each need their own modernization paths to become truly decision-grade and AI-ready.

We provide recommendations for both: the broad structural reforms the industry needs and the critical updates required for each measurement method.

The future of measurement will be defined not by tools alone, but by our shared commitment to rebuild its foundation—together, transparently, and with intention.

The time for workarounds is over.
Let us fix the root cause.

Sincerely,

Angelina Eng
Vice President, Measurement Center
IAB

Overall Recommendations

Act Now

The industry is at a breaking point: measurement systems are strained, data is fragmented, and AI adoption is accelerating faster than governance, readiness, and standards.

To close today's gaps and prepare for the next 1-2 years of transformation, companies must address foundational, industry-wide priorities while modernizing each measurement approach.

Industry-wide priorities must include:

1 Strengthen data quality, accessibility, and governance

2 Standardize measurement frameworks for rigor and trust

3 Modernize operations to increase speed, frequency, and scale

4 Expand measurement coverage across the full media mix

5 Adopt AI responsibly with clear ownership and guardrails

The following pages provide details on these priorities. Method-specific guidance is outlined in the "*Recommendations by Advanced Measurement Approach*" section beginning on page 33.

1 Strengthen data quality, accessibility, and governance

❏ Conduct data readiness assessments to identify gaps in quality, completeness, and accessibility.

❏ Implement stricter data hygiene: cleaning, labeling, and normalizing.

❏ Establish ongoing data QA for consistency as models run more frequently.

❏ Expand access to high-fidelity outcomes data to improve accuracy.

❏ Integrate attribution, incrementality, and marketing mix modeling (MMM) systems to enable seamless data sharing and cross-calibration.

❏ Strengthen privacy, compliance, and security protocols for safe data sharing.

❏ Create governance rules for how data can be used in AI-enhanced measurement workflows.

2 Standardize measurement frameworks for rigor and trust

❏ Audit current models for gaps in coverage: full-funnel outcomes and channels, especially gaming, commerce media, audio, and creator/influencer.

❏ Standardize measurement frameworks across teams to reduce fragmentation, including KPIs, attribution windows, and success metrics.

❏ Adopt industry taxonomy and standards to ensure consistent definitions for channels, outcomes, and data inputs across partners.

❏ Triangulate and validate results across measurement approaches to identify and action on differences.

❏ Set clear criteria for when to use each measurement approach.

❏ Build a roadmap to unify measurement outputs into a single source of truth.

3 **Modernize operations to increase speed, frequency, and scale**

❏ Establish cross-functional roles and responsibilities between planning, analytics, and other teams.

❏ Automate manual data prep steps to free teams for higher-value analysis, insights, and strategy.

❏ Shift incrementality testing from ad-hoc to always-on, with a structured testing calendar.

❏ Move MMM and attribution toward monthly or near-real-time updates with AI accelerated automation capabilities.

❏ Build repeatable workflows for scenario planning/budget optimizations.

❏ Centralize dashboards to reduce reporting friction and improve decision speed.

4 **Expand measurement coverage across the full media mix**

❏ Use experiments to validate incremental impact in emerging channels where direct conversion signals are limited.

❏ Apply AI-enhanced approaches to put emerging and hard-to-measure channels on equal ROI footing with the rest of the media mix.

❏ Incorporate full-funnel outcomes to capture brand, mid-funnel, and performance impact consistently across channels.

❏ Improve data access and transparency with closed or fragmented platforms by advocating for standardized reporting formats.

❏ Develop channel-specific measurement playbooks that reflect nuances while maintaining consistent methodology.

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5 Adopt AI responsibly with clear ownership and guardrails

❏ Define organizational ownership for AI in measurement across planning, analytics, legal, and tech.

❏ Establish responsible AI guidelines covering accuracy, transparency, explainability, and bias mitigation.

❏ Implement mandatory training for teams using AI tools or workflows.

❏ Introduce governance checkpoints for model validation with clear roles for human vs. automated review and protocols for failures.

❏ Update partner contracts to include AI clauses around data use, risk, and accountability.

❏ Prioritize AI use cases that deliver measurable value (e.g. test design, matching exposure to outcomes, scenario planning, etc.).

❏ Build a phased AI adoption roadmap balancing innovation with risk management.

Recommendations by Advanced Measurement Approach

Incrementality Testing-Specific Recommendations

OPERATIONS & EXPERIMENT DESIGN

❏ **Be purposeful about when to conduct incrementality tests.** Define when tests are required (large budget shifts, high-risk strategy changes, channel validation) so experimentation becomes a planned, proactive input rather than an ad hoc request.

❏ **Create an always-on experimentation calendar.** Move from episodic tests to a sequenced pipeline.

❏ **Right-size tests to match decision needs.** Use smaller, faster experiments when directional guidance is enough, reserving larger powered designs for high-stakes decisions.

❏ **Standardize test design templates and workflows.** Create reusable blueprints for geo tests, holdouts, and platform lift studies so teams can launch experiments quickly without reinventing steps.

❏ **Create a central repository of past tests and outcomes.** Archive past tests so teams can reuse insights, avoid duplication, and accelerate planning.

RESOURCES, TRAINING & STRUCTURE

❏ **Scale experimentation strategies to fit organizational resources.** Large firms run cross-brand, cross-region tests; mid-market teams pool testing; small teams focus on a few high-impact, AI-supported experiments.

❏ **Pool experimentation resources across brands and markets.** Establish a center of excellence so teams with fewer in-house analysts can still run rigorous tests.

❏ **Train planners and channel owners on experiment-first habits.** Build lightweight education so non-technical teams know when to request a test and how to interpret results.

❏ **Integrate testing into annual and in-flight planning.** Require that major reallocations cite recent tests or AI-extended test evidence to embed incrementality into financial and media processes.

❏ **Hold regular cross-method working sessions.** Bring MMM, attribution, and incrementality testing owners together to review outputs, discuss conflicts, and prioritize gap closure.

AI-ENHANCED SCALE & ORCHESTRATION

❏ **Use AI to generate draft test designs and power calculations.** Let AI propose sample frames, holdout structures, and minimum detectable effects so analysts can focus on refinements.

❏ **Use AI to translate lift results into clear business narratives.** Convert statistical outputs into clear narratives on incremental revenue, ROI, and risk.

❏ **Use AI agents to monitor platform changes and trigger re-testing.** Detect shifts in bidding, targeting, or auction dynamics that may invalidate prior lift assumptions and signal the need to re-test.

❏ **Detect when test results deviate from expected patterns.** Monitor variations in lift metrics unexplained by changes in test design or market conditions.

❏ **Automate reconciliation across methods.** Compare attribution, incrementality, and MMM on a set cadence. Flag divergences and apply decision rules so teams see where and why signals differ.

Attribution-Specific Recommendations

OPERATIONS & GOVERNANCE

❏ **Build and compare multiple attribution models.**
Develop multiple models with aligned inputs and rules to enable valid, apples-to-apples comparison.

❏ **Implement scheduled attribution refresh.**
Move to weekly or monthly rebuilds aligned to planning and optimization cycles.

❏ **Build match tables and apply mapping standards.**
Create standardized lookup tables connecting campaign data, events, and conversions across platforms and channels.

❏ **Standardize attribution outputs company-wide.**
Create unified dashboards with consistent metrics across channels and business units. Ensure all teams reference the same source of truth.

❏ **Hold regular cross-method working sessions.**
Bring MMM, attribution, and incrementality testing owners together to review outputs, discuss conflicts, and prioritize gap closure.

DATA QUALITY & SIGNAL STEWARDSHIP

❏ **Standardize event taxonomy before ingestion.** Map and harmonize platform APIs and partner feeds into a single schema for spend, exposures, and outcomes.

❏ **Separate engagement, KPIs, and business outcomes.**
Distinguish engagements (clicks, visits), performance KPIs (CPA, ROAS), and true outcomes (revenue, LTV).

❏ **Map and quantify signal loss by channel.**
Document where degradation occurs (e.g., iOS ATT, cookie loss, proprietary platforms, etc.). Model real coverage instead of assuming completeness.

❏ **Validate outcome signal quality.**
Ensure outcome events are captured with correct business rules. Validate that attributed conversions are tied to actual revenue, not just pixels.

❏ **Reconsider tactics with poor attributability.**
Limit media that's difficult to collect, measure, and model—such as site-served data—unless validated through separate studies (ad effectiveness, brand health).

AI-ENHANCED ANALYTICS & EXPLAINABILITY

❏ **Make attribution models understandable to leaders.**
Use AI to translate outputs into clear explanations of how each touchpoint influenced conversions. Build executive confidence in attribution-driven decisions.

❏ **Detect instability that signals data/platform changes.**
Monitor swings in channel credit unexplained by spend or creative changes. Distinguish real shifts from noise created by privacy updates.

❏ **Wire test results into attribution updates.**
Feed incrementality findings and other test results into periodic attribution refreshes. Re-calibrate coefficients with new causal evidence.

❏ **Use AI to automate reconciliation across methods.**
Compare attribution, incrementality, and MMM on a set cadence. Flag divergences and apply decision rules so teams see where and why signals differ.

Marketing Mix Modeling (MMM)-Specific Recommendations
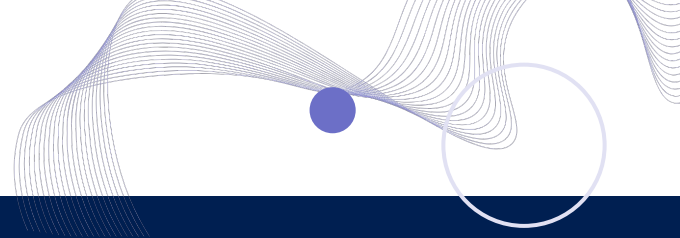
OPERATIONS & SPEED

- ❑ **Increase MMM update cadence using AI-assisted model fitting.** Move from annual/biannual runs to more frequent refreshes so insights align with planning and optimization cycles.

- ❑ **Enable interactive scenario simulation for planners.** Leverage and/or build what-if capabilities so planning teams can compare allocations without analyst bottlenecks.

- ❑ **Automate health checks and diagnostics.** Use AI to flag instability, multicollinearity, and input issues.

- ❑ **Integrate MMM recommendations directly into media planning systems.** Sync MMM outputs to planning workflows so recommended shifts appear as actionable line-item changes within existing budget and activation tools.

- ❑ **Hold regular cross-method working sessions.** Bring MMM, attribution, and incrementality testing owners together to review outputs, discuss conflicts, and prioritize gap closure.

DATA QUALITY & ARCHITECTURE

- ❑ **Standardize data collection and taxonomy for inputs.** Align platform APIs and vendor feeds to a single MMM input schema.

- ❑ **Structure outputs for easier cross-method comparison.** Align time granularity, channel definitions, and outcome groupings so MMM results are easier to reconcile with attribution and incrementality.

- ❑ **Publish a shared data dictionary.** Define channels, audience segments, and conversion events so outputs can be compared across measurement frameworks.

- ❑ **Shift from batch files to frequent pipelines for modern channels.** Configure daily or near-real-time connectors for social, retail media, CTV, and creator platforms.

- ❑ **Run quarterly data-quality audits focused on signal loss and coverage gaps.** Document limitations so stakeholders interpret coefficients with the right context.

AI & INTEGRATION

- ❑ **Use AI to validate MMM inputs before modeling.** Automatically check volumes, outliers, and anomalies to prevent unstable or noisy coefficients.

- ❑ **Use AI to synthesize outputs into clear recommendations.** Provide plain-language summaries with recommended actions for non-technical stakeholders.

- ❑ **Document shared practices for AI transparency and validation.** Outline data access, model description, and review steps so AI-supported MMM remains explainable and trusted.

- ❑ **Use AI to automate reconciliation across methods.** Compare attribution, incrementality, and MMM on a set cadence. Flag divergences and apply decision rules so teams see where and why signals differ.

Appendix

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Further Resources from IAB and IAB Tech Lab

The following guidelines and playbooks are resources to help the digital advertising industry expand its knowledge of measurement and AI and adapt to their evolving impact.

MEASUREMENT

IAB's Modernizing MMM Best Practices for Marketers: Synthesizes field experience, case studies, and cross-industry expertise into clear, actionable best practices—whether you run models in-house, through an agency, or with a third-party partner.

IAB's Cross-Channel Measurement: Implementation Playbook + Best Practices Guide: Provide marketers with step-by-step strategies to understand campaign impact, optimize spending, and overcome challenges like data silos and attribution complexities.

IAB's State of Data Hub: Features previous editions of the State of Data reports and other, in-depth analyses of key trends, insights, and strategies shaping the future of data-driven advertising.

IAB's Standardized Measurement Guide for CTV: Provides an integrated view of how today's standards and solutions work together to enable cohesive, consistent CTV measurement. It serves as both an accessible educational resource.

*For more, explore **IAB's standards, guidelines & practices** and **IAB Tech Lab's measurement technical standards, protocols, and specifications**.*

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

IAB's AI in Advertising Use Case Map: Provides a comprehensive, practical guide to today's most relevant and emerging AI use cases across the marketing campaign lifecycle, from creative development to media buying, measurement, and brand assurance.

IAB's AI Personalization Playbook: A practical guide to move from isolated pilots to measurable, scalable impact with AI personalization. Built for brands, agencies, publishers, and platforms, it provides a cross-functional roadmap for briefing, building, and benchmarking AI-driven advertising at enterprise scale.

IAB's AI Transparency and Disclosure Framework: An industry framework for AI disclosure in advertising that balances transparency with operational efficiency, helping brands, agencies, publishers, and platforms navigate responsible AI use.

Actively Participate in IAB Boards & Committees

The following IAB groups offer marketers valuable opportunities to deepen their knowledge and actively contribute to the growth and standardization of measurement and AI.

IAB Measurement Center Board: Composed of executive leaders from agencies, brands, ad tech, publishers, media owners, and measurement companies, the Board guides IAB's work to unify a fractured measurement ecosystem through shared language, infrastructure, and frameworks that promote consistency, comparability, and confidence across media.

IAB Addressability & Measurement Committee: Brings together leaders across the ecosystem to provide updates, establish guidelines, and disseminate best practices—alongside market solutions covering analytical measurement and commercial frameworks for data collection, automation, audience activation, and measurement.

IAB AI Board: Kicks off its inaugural quarterly meeting onsite at IAB's Annual Leadership Meeting in February 2026. Offering unmatched influence, access, and visibility, this invitation-only forum will bring together senior leaders to define the best practices and standards to navigate AI's role in advertising.

IAB AI Committee: Brings together leaders across the ecosystem to explore how artificial intelligence is reshaping the future of media, marketing, and measurement. From planning and personalization to optimization and oversight, this group will tackle the real-world applications and challenges of AI across the advertising value chain.

Project Eidos: IAB's industry-wide initiative to define the principles, standards, and frameworks that guide how measurement is developed, evaluated, and compared across the industry.

Led by IAB's Measurement Center and guided by the Measurement Advisory Committee, it brings together expertise across IAB's Centers of Excellence and AI Strategic Initiatives to provide shared direction for modern measurement. This work is designed to strengthen the foundation measurement is built on, so future tools, models, and methodologies can scale with greater consistency and confidence.

About IAB

The Interactive Advertising Bureau empowers the media and marketing industries to thrive in the digital economy. Its membership comprises more than 700 leading media companies, brands, agencies, and the technology firms responsible for selling, delivering, and optimizing digital ad marketing campaigns. The trade group fields critical research on interactive advertising, while also educating brands, agencies, and the wider business community on the importance of digital marketing.

In affiliation with the IAB Tech Lab, IAB develops technical standards and solutions. IAB is committed to professional development and elevating the knowledge, skills, expertise, and diversity of the workforce across the industry. Through the work of its public policy office in Washington, D.C., the trade association advocates for its members and promotes the value of the interactive advertising industry to legislators and policymakers. Founded in 1996, IAB is headquartered in New York City.

About IAB's Measurement Center

The Measurement Center drives industry alignment to reduce fragmentation and inconsistency in how advertising performance is defined, measured, and reported. Our mission is to establish scalable, privacy-by-design measurement practices that give marketers and media owners a clear, comparable view of exposure, reach, attention, engagement, and outcomes across channels. Through research, education, and collaboration, including IAB's State of Data initiative, the Center helps the industry navigate the evolving data, privacy, and measurement landscape.

IAB Measurement Center Board Member Companies

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BWG Global has set the industry standard as the premier provider of industry intelligence across leading hedge funds, mutual funds, long-only investment firms, family offices and corporations. Supported by a robust compliance structure and anchored in proven research methodology, BWG Global identifies key market inflections and uncovers unique investable ideas. The firm offers products and services through a license subscription to its digital research library and live events, including Primary Intelligence Virtual Forums, Forum Synopses, Channel Intelligence Research Reports, Market Insight Survey Reports and Custom Research.

BWG Global pioneered an investigative, interview-based methodology providing channel research to the institutional investment community in the 1990s and then expanded its footprint internationally to conduct live, in-depth interviews in more than 20 countries in North and South America, Europe and Asia. In 2013, the company fundamentally changed how investment managers and corporations' access real-time information through live forum events. BWG Global provides much-needed transparency by creating access to real-time information and data on sector, company and technology trends.

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Dstillery is the leading AI ad targeting company. We empower brands and agencies to target their best prospects for high-performing programmatic advertising campaigns. Our audience targeting solutions are powered by multimodal AI — a breakthrough in AI that learns from any form of data and applies it to any form of data, making it the most flexible targeting engine in the market. Backed by our award-winning Data Science, Dstillery has earned 24 patents (and counting) for the AI technology that powers our precise, scalable audiences.

To learn more, visit us at www.dstillery.com or follow us on LinkedIn.

OPTIMINE
AN UPTEMPO COMPANY

OptiMine, an Uptempo company, is a leader in agile marketing measurement and optimization, delivering fast, deeply granular measurement and budget guidance for brands and agencies to maximize ROI for all digital and traditional channels across online and offline conversion points. For the last 18 years, OptiMine's solutions have been trusted by leading brands around the globe for expert guidance to achieve higher enterprise growth and greatly improved marketing effectiveness and efficiency. OptiMine is recognized among top measurement providers by industry analysts and reports including The Forrester WaveTM for Marketing Measurement & Optimization Services and Gartner's Magic Quadrant for Marketing Mix Modeling Solutions.

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