

IAS QUALITY ATTENTION™

Keys to Driving
Meaningful Outcomes



OCTOBER 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Attention has become one of the fastest-growing prioritized signals that unlock in digital advertising.

As marketers shift focus from delivery metrics toward real business results, attention has emerged as a key signal for determining the quality of advertising inventory. Advertisers measure and improve campaign performance by scoring impressions that have a higher propensity of outcomes. To support them, Integral Ad Science built **IAS Quality Attention™**.

The industry has embraced attention measurement at rapid speed, shifting it from an emerging concept into an operational media planning standard. A survey of U.S. digital media professionals conducted by IAS and YouGov underscores this rapid shift:

88%

of media experts report that their organizations already use attention measurement

83%

state that an effective attention strategy matters to their company

78%

of those already measuring attention feel ready to optimize campaigns using it

Despite the growing adoption for attention as a core signal marketers rely on, there is an increasing need to connect attention to advertisers' downstream business goals.

These two critical questions remain unanswered:

How much value does higher attention actually create?

Many advertisers track attention scores, but few possess hard evidence linking higher scores to business outcomes. In practice, attention often remains a reporting metric, with optimization limited to minor score nudges.

What does chasing higher attention cost?

If high-attention inventory is concentrated in a smaller slice of supply, advertisers face reduced volume, higher prices, or both. Performance gains only create net value if they outweigh lost scale and rising media costs.

This study uses observational campaign data across multiple advertisers to measure the relationship between IAS Quality Attention™ and business outcomes while controlling for country, media type, operating system (OS), OS version, and browser. It evaluates how attention impacts impression volume and cost, drawing a clear distinction between **raising average campaign attention** versus **enforcing strict minimum-attention cutoffs**.

KEY STUDY FINDINGS

Controlled statistical analyses reveal four core findings regarding attention optimization:

PERFORMANCE LIFT

Substantial attention increases strongly drive conversions. Moving attention from 55 to 75 increased the calibrated success rate (the actual conversion rate adjusted for baseline variables like placement and audience) from 0.1276% to 0.3918%—an absolute gain of 0.264 percentage points and a relative lift of 207.0% (p<.001; 95% bootstrap interval: 59.0% to 372.6%)

SCALE & VOLUME

Although higher attention scores aligned with an average 3.8% volume increase, the underlying data ranged wildly from a 15.6% drop to a 32.0% gain (p=0.774). **In practice, this means higher attention scores had no reliable impact on volume.** Volume outcomes depend primarily on planning and execution decisions that limit inventory rather than higher attention scores.

MEDIA COST PREMIUMS

Higher attention increases unit pricing. CPM climbed an estimated 29.4% per 10-point rise in attention, resulting in a 57.5% increase across the 55-to-75 range.

NET ROI LIFTS

Even after accounting for higher CPMs and conservative scale loss assumptions, **overall Return on Investment (ROI) increased.**

OPERATIONAL CAUTION

Enforcing rigid score floors severely damages campaign economics. Raising a minimum cutoff score from 55 to 75 eliminates 87.9% of eligible volume (retaining only 12.1%). To offset this loss and maintain total conversion volume, surviving impressions would need a 723.2% success-rate lift, while survivor CPMs rise 43.4%. Attention creates value as an optimization signal to lift average quality, not as a hard inventory filter.

METRIC	RESULT	STATISTICAL INTERPRETATION
Calibrated success-rate lift, 55 → 75	+207.0%	Significant; 95% CI +59.0% to +372.6%
Impression change per +10 points	+3.8%	Not significant; 95% CI -15.6% to +32.0%
CPM change per +10 points	+29.4%	Significant; 95% CI +18.4% to +39.2%
Hard-threshold impression retained	+12.1%	Descriptive result for minimum score 55 → 75
Conservative adjusted net revenue per \$1	\$5.07 → \$11.12	Scenario-based; depends on frequency, attribution, and delivery assumptions

METHODOLOGY

To evaluate the relationship between attention and campaign performance, IAS analyzed a multi-advertiser observational dataset from July 2026.

DATASET OVERVIEW

Scale: 100,000 URL-level observations representing ~197.0 million measured impressions and \$672,214 in media spend.	Source: DV360 DSP campaigns measured via IAS Total Visibility™, spanning diverse verticals, creatives, audiences, and environments.
Breadth: 30,358 unique website domains across 182 countries.	

CORE METRICS & OUTCOME VARIABLES

Each observation represents a single web page capturing the impression-weighted average attention score alongside three independent outcome variables:	
Success Rate: (Advertiser-defined conversions + clicks) ÷ Impressions.	Impression Volume: Total measured impressions delivered per URL.
Cost Per Thousand Impressions (CPM): Average media cost per 1,000 delivered impressions.	Attention Signal: Measured via IAS Quality Attention™, a predictive metric estimating the likelihood an impression captures meaningful consumer engagement.

STATISTICAL CONTROLS & MODELING

To isolate attention from external campaign noise, models incorporated fixed-effect controls for country, media type, operating system, OS version, and browser .	
Model Structure: Second-degree quadratic weighted regressions, weighting each observation by impression volume so high-delivery inventory carried proportional influence.	Uncertainty & Significance: 1,000 bootstrap resamples generated empirical distributions and confidence intervals for all relationships.
Calibration Baseline: The model-based change from attention score 55 to 75 was calibrated against empirical success rates observed within ±2.5 points of the starting score (grounded in 14,587 URL rows and ~62.4 million impressions).	Threshold & Scenario Frameworks: Inventory-selection modeling evaluated supply concentration under hard minimum cutoffs. Model outputs were then fed into financial frameworks incorporating attribution, frequency, delivery, and conversion values.

ATTENTION AND ADVERTISING PERFORMANCE

Substantial increases in attention directly move business outcomes. The controlled quadratic model demonstrates that shifting an attention score from 55 to 75 significantly drives success rates, even after accounting for environmental variables like device, OS, and country.

Performance Lift

207.0% relative lift

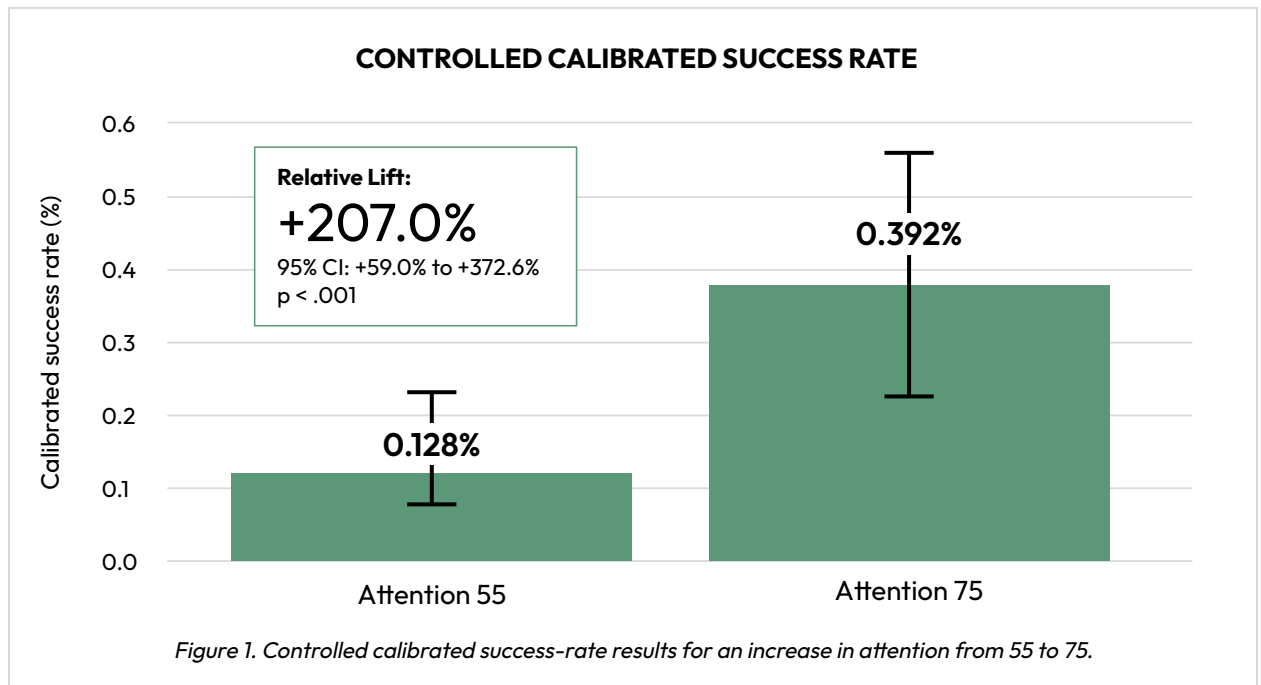
Calibrated success rate jumped from 0.1276% to 0.3918%—an absolute gain of +0.264 percentage points and a 207.0% relative lift.

Scope Matters

Smaller score shifts yielded no statistically significant relative lift.

Strategic Takeaway

Attention works best as a macro-optimization signal across a wide score range. Treating attention as a vanity metric to nudge by minor increments will not produce measurable business impact.



ATTENTION AND IMPRESSION VOLUME

Higher attention does not inherently require a sacrifice in campaign scale, challenging a common industry assumption.

Volume Impact

+3.8%

Moving attention from 55 to 75 was associated with a modest volume change.

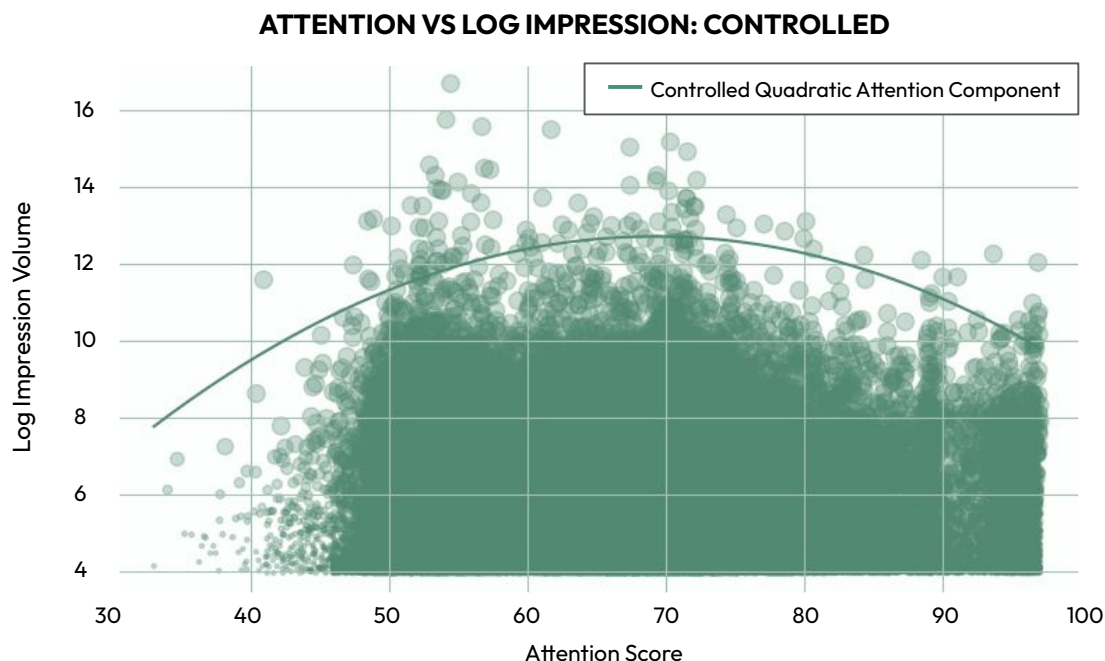
Statistical Context

$p = .774$

95% CI: -15.6% to +32.0%. Effect is statistically indistinguishable from zero.

Strategic Takeaway

Scale outcomes depend on operational decisions—such as targeting, budget allocation, pacing, and bidding strategy—rather than inherent supply constraints of higher-attention inventory.



ATTENTION AND CPM

Higher attention commands a clear pricing premium in programmatic markets, as inventory capable of driving engagement carries higher unit costs.

Pricing Sensitivity

29.4% for every 10-point rise

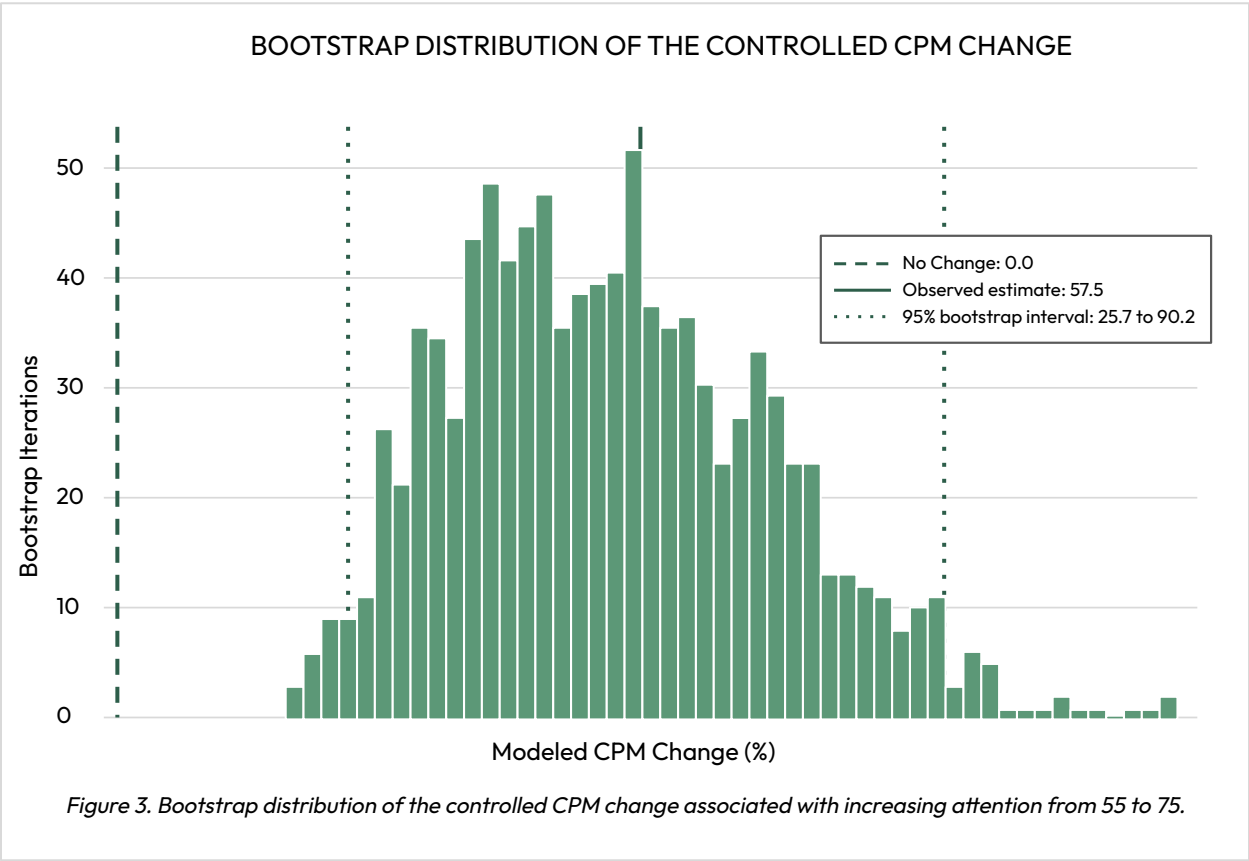
CPM increased an estimated 29.4% for every 10-point rise in attention

+57.5% total CPM premium

resulting in a +57.5% total CPM premium from score 55 to 75 (95% CI: 25.7% to 90.2%, $p < .001$).

Strategic Takeaway

CPM should not be evaluated in isolation. Because performance lifts (+207.0%) significantly outweigh pricing increases (+57.5%), higher unit costs are justified by stronger overall returns.



HARD MINIMUM-ATTENTION THRESHOLDS

Imposing rigid cutoff floors produces vastly inferior outcomes compared to optimizing average campaign quality.

Scale Contraction

87.9% eligible impressions eliminated

Raising a minimum score floor from 55 to 75 eliminates 87.9% of eligible impressions, retaining just 12.1% of volume.

Pricing & Efficiency Penalty

723.2% success-rate lift

Surviving inventory CPM rises 43.4% (from \$3.74 to \$5.36). To maintain baseline conversion volume, surviving impressions would need an unachievable 723.2% success-rate lift.

Strategic Takeaway

The goal is to move the center of the distribution up, not cut off its lower edge. The most reliable lever advertisers control is the attention of the inventory they already run: optimizing creative, format, and placement toward higher-attention outcomes lifts scores without sacrificing reach, and validating that lift on a measurement baseline before scaling keeps the gains durable.

INVENTORY AND CPM TRADE-OFFS AT INCREASING ATTENTION THRESHOLDS

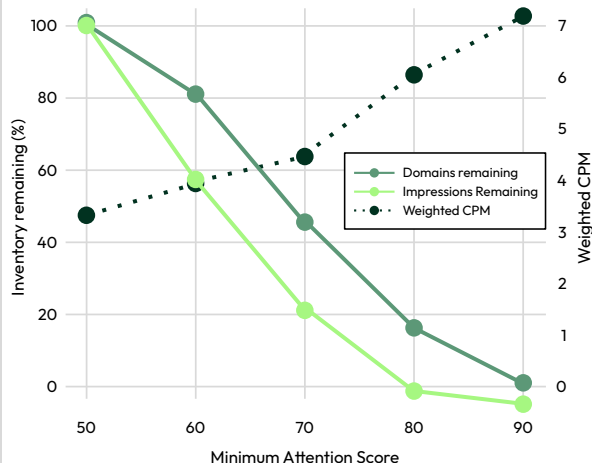


Figure 4. Inventory and CPM trade-offs as minimum attention thresholds increase.

HARD-THRESHOLD IMPLICATIONS: MINIMUM ATTENTION 55 TO 75

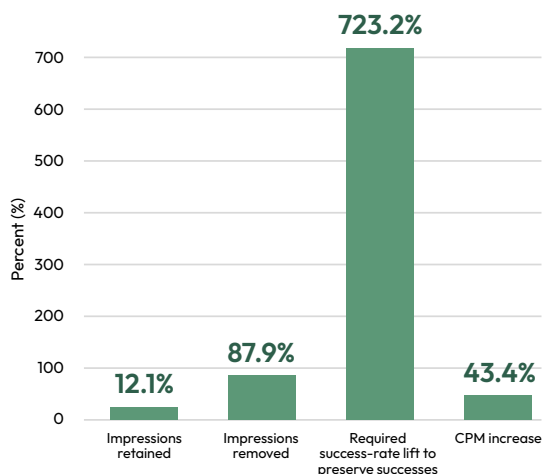


Figure 5. Inventory implications of raising the minimum attention threshold from 55 to 75.

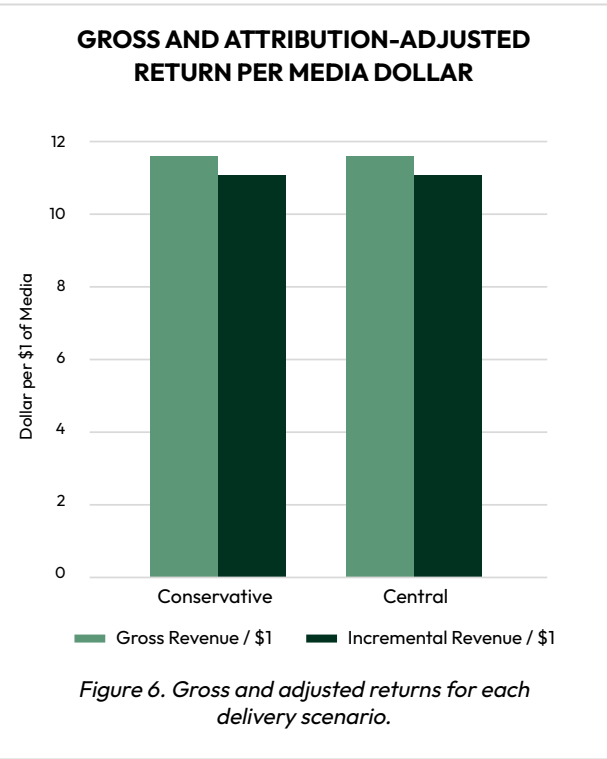
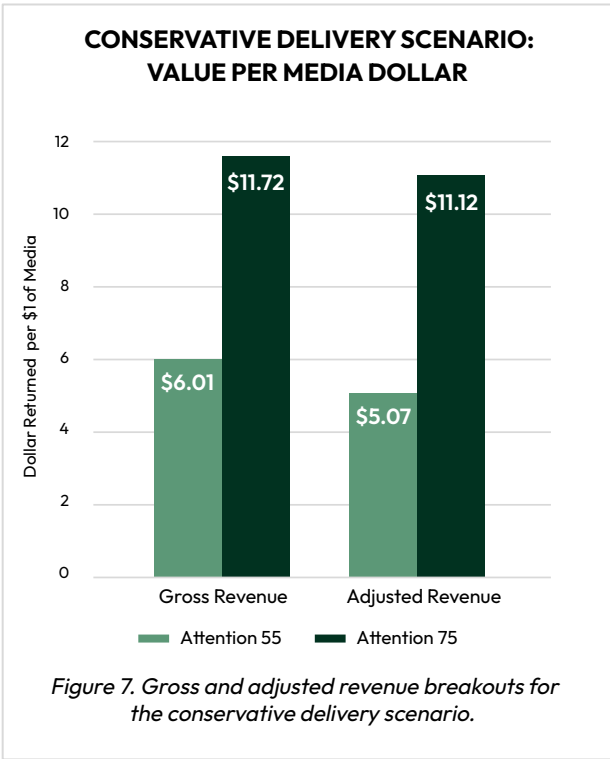
ROI IMPLICATIONS

Integrating empirical findings into financial models demonstrates that higher attention improves net returns, even when accounting for potential scale loss. (Assumptions: \$50 value per success, frequency of 5, 0.02% attribution baseline).

Conservative Delivery (25% Volume Loss)			Central Delivery (50% Volume Loss):	
18.1%	130.2%	\$11.12	+53.5%	
Total Spend Rise	Total Successes	Net Revenue	Total Successes	
CPM premium offsetting lower volume	95% CI: 19.2% to 254.4%	Per media dollar increases from \$5.07 (\$6.01 to \$11.72 gross)	Even under severe delivery cuts, total successes still increase by +53.5%	

Strategic Takeaway

Higher attention isn't just an engagement metric; it is a net-value multiplier. Because conversion lifts outpace higher CPM unit costs, campaigns can absorb moderate scale losses and still more than double their net returns per media dollar.



SENSITIVITY AND INTERPRETATION

While financial returns remain directionally positive across tested scenarios, operational variables dictate the magnitude of return.

Frequency Sensitivity

87.9% eligible impressions eliminated

User frequency is the primary driver of ROI. At a 0.010% attribution baseline, increasing frequency from 3 to 10 cuts net revenue per dollar by ~70% (\$19.03 down to \$5.71).

Attribution Sensitivity

723.2% success-rate lift

Adjusting the attribution baseline has a minimal impact. Raising the baseline from 0.005% to 0.015% reduces net return per dollar by only ~2.6% (\$11.57 down to \$11.27).

Strategic Takeaway

Three moves make it practical:



Manage frequency so the high-attention premium funds new reach instead of repeat exposure



Aim for a real lift in average attention, not marginal nudges



Test on your own campaigns to set a baseline, then optimize, before going always-on.

CONCLUSION

Taken together, the controlled analyses show that higher attention is associated with stronger advertising performance and a meaningful CPM premium, while its relationship with impression volume stays statistically uncertain.

▲ 207.0%

Success-Rate Lift

Calibrated lift achieved by moving attention score from 55 to 75

▲ 57.5%

CPM Increase

Modeled cost premium required across the same interval

The results support the potential for higher attention to improve returns — provided delivery and planning assumptions stay favorable.

The findings do not support a simple story that higher attention automatically cuts scale. The controlled impression model is not statistically significant. Instead, the trade-off hinges on how you use attention: to guide optimization across available supply, or to impose a rigid minimum.

That distinction sits at the heart of this study. A strategy that raises average campaign attention can improve outcomes while keeping a meaningful share of delivery. A hard threshold of 75 removes 87.9% of the impressions available at a threshold of 55 and would demand a 723.2% success-rate improvement to hold total outcomes steady — far above the modeled calibrated lift.

Attention delivers the most value when it is built into optimization systems that balance performance, cost, and scale — not when it is used as an isolated on-off filter.

The strongest business case emerges when attention improvements travel with disciplined execution: coordinated reach, managed frequency, strong creative, sound attribution, and steady media delivery.