

Future-Proofing Your Marketing Attribution Strategy for a Cookieless World



The digital marketing landscape is changing. Ever-increasing regulations – driven by global concerns over online privacy – mean a decrease in cookie-derived user insights and less data to make decisions. With marketers everywhere facing this new scarcity of information, you're not alone in wondering how to effectively target your ideal customers.

According to a **SparkPost report**, 82% of marketing leaders are actively preparing for privacy changes, and 67% say they're concerned with how privacy changes will affect their ability to perform.

The good news is, the future is far from grim. Unified measurement platforms and machine learning solutions may very well usher us into the next “Golden Age” of digital marketing. Moving beyond first-person data will be essential to success and help ensure we are prepared for the future.



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How the Latest Privacy Regulations are Creating Marketing Challenges

Online privacy is and will continue to be a concern for anyone who browses or shops on the web. While cookies themselves may be fairly innocuous, leaks and breaches in security can mean users' very personal data is at risk. Due to these concerns, more and more companies and countries are passing regulatory laws to protect user data.

Unfortunately for marketers, these data privacy laws directly decrease or prohibit access to the data we have long relied on to target customers and make marketing decisions. The result? New marketing challenges.

Third-Party Cookie Deprecation

First party cookies, the ones that directly impact your experience on individual sites, aren't going anywhere. But within the next few years, third-party cookies – the meat and potatoes for online marketers – may very well be a thing of the past. Safari and Firefox have already ceased support of third-party cookies, and Google is phasing out Chrome support starting in 2024.

Walled Gardens

Heavy hitters Google, Amazon and Facebook are known for creating “walled gardens” around their users' data. These “walled gardens” are enclosed marketing ecosystems, with these companies holding the keys to the door. The owners of these gardens control access to all first and third party data – meaning you have to play by their rules if you want to access that data, and you will only ever access it on their terms.

Google's Privacy Sandbox

Google's cookie-free solution to user privacy concerns, their Privacy Sandbox, allows individuals to keep their privacy intact while also allowing advertisers to create targeted advertising. The goal is group-oriented targeting, depriving marketers of the more granular views they're used to. And it puts boundaries on just how and where you can find and implement that user data.



Traditional Workarounds That Don't Work

Marketers are clever and almost always find solutions to new problems. Data privacy is no exception. The downside is, many of these workarounds are not built to handle the amount of data typically collected and not really built for marketing as a whole. This results in costly and time-consuming data-collection methods without the unified analysis needed to make accurate decisions.

Clean Rooms

Data clean rooms allow for secure, user-anonymous data exchanges between marketers and data sources like Google or Facebook. These are safe spaces where marketers can access user data, without compromising the privacy of those users. But the owners of these rooms control that access, only granting permission on their terms.

Customer Data Platforms

These customer databases are where marketers gather data collected from different sources to create more in-depth customer profiles. CDPs collect a wide variety of data, from which a unified customer profile is built. With walled gardens and other clean rooms on the rise, having a centralized location to store and manage data from disparate sources is a must. But CDPs have a rubicon in terms of scalability, and are time-consuming overall.

Contextual Advertising

With contextual advertising, marketers create target ads that play off of the context of a page, or the content of what a user is looking at. It involves a system that scans for keywords in much the same way search engines do. This method of advertising, however, requires a high degree of adaptability from marketers, and many users, concerned about privacy, may not like the way ads sync up with their online activity.



Getting Person-Level Results without Person-Level Data

With cookie deprecation, walled gardens and new solutions that don't quite fit right, our data is becoming more and more fragmented. Evaluating interactions, measuring media impact on conversions, and understanding all the unique stages of the customer journey is becoming increasingly difficult as a result.

How can we come to understand the customer journey in an effective, privacy-compliant way and arm ourselves for a cookieless future?

Privacy-compliant AI

With the myriad of privacy concerns we've already discussed, it's clear that getting the granular customer data you need is becoming increasingly difficult. Aggregate data, or data without user-level details, is one way to solve this challenge, but often leaves out the important who-what-when-where-why details marketers desperately need.

That's where privacy-compliant artificial intelligence (AI) comes in. This type of intelligence, used within a unified marketing measurement platform, can rebuild the customer journey using the fragments created by the loss of cookies and other growing privacy-related obstacles. In other words, AI and machine learning can help to bridge the gaps left by the loss of cookies, creating highly successful predictive modeling to forecast exposure, interactions and impact on a person-level, without infringing on any privacy laws.

AI and Machine Learning: Faster Analysis for Real-Time Insights

According to [Zippia](#), 61% of marketers say machine learning and AI are the number one priority in their data strategies. This makes sense. Between the new challenges taking place and the sheer amount of data available, we need tools that can sort through data and create clean, real time user-level insights across channels.

Leveraging AI and Machine Learning (ML)

With AI and ML, collection, aggregation, analysis, and implementation can move faster than has ever been possible. We can bring all of our data together into one place, and let the AI predict the impact of our marketing at a granular level, all without the challenges of navigating first-party data. We can even measure the impact from channel to channel and touch point to touch point, at every step of the customer journey, creating a true omnichannel strategy.

Cut Down Lag Time with Automated Systems

A unified measurement solution fueled by AI aggregates data from all of your platforms, giving you a true picture of how marketing campaigns are performing. It also reduces the lag time between analysis and implementation. AI and ML then work together to make managing your marketing faster, easier and more adaptive to changing privacy regulations and other challenges. AI analysis and machine learning give you better results, fast so you can make smarter decisions about what to do next.



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AI + Human Know-How = Increased ROI

One of the biggest challenges marketers face even without the loss of third-party cookies is time and resources. The bottom line is, we simply don't have the time to sift through the sheer amount of data in our hands.

Even worse, by the time we've actually sorted through one data set and moved onto the next, we're already behind the curve. Having the right tools in place to aggregate and analyze all our data is imperative.

On the other hand, tools can't replace the expertise held by marketers, particularly when it comes to things like target audience and messaging.

A truly successful marketing strategy involves the right tools to help you make the most informed decisions. It also involves continuous optimization through planning, testing, and analysis. Once we've analyzed the successes (and missed opportunities) of our current strategy, the goal should always be to optimize our marketing efforts and improve ROI. A few important points to consider:

Analysis and Implementation Are Not Enough

It's all too easy to get lost in analysis. As a result, your implementation can lag. Automation is the key to breaking this cycle, and it needs to be done at speed. The right tool will bring together your data and offer insights, but it's up to you to implement changes, execute on new experiments, and make the appropriate decisions.

Optimize Faster to Drive Results

To drive better results, you need to make decisions quickly, which means moving beyond the traditional one-to-one testing strategies of the past, or waiting around for months to get last quarter's results. Shifting to a unified measurement solution lets you optimize everything, everywhere, all at once -- and quickly -- increasing efficiency and helping you see results faster.

Have the Right Tech Stack in Place

The right tech stack will level up your results and allow you to leverage insights from your chosen platforms, and real-time human instinct to increase your ROI. Look for a measurement solution that helps you create, test, and optimize your future media plans, showing you where to scale, and where to cut back, to eliminate waste and optimize your budget.

Future-Proofing Your Marketing Strategy

Digital marketing is changing and it's changing fast. We are not far off from a cookieless world and we must take the appropriate steps today to future-proof our marketing strategies.

This means moving away from solutions that don't work, finding tools that do, and, in our humble opinion, thinking seriously about how AI and ML can help achieve your marketing goals.

Want to learn more about how Marketing Evolution can help you future-proof your marketing strategy?

Talk to a member of our team today and see how we can help.

MARKETING EVOLUTION.

About Marketing Evolution

Marketing Evolution enables customers to boldly navigate the choppy waters of media buying, growth hack their marketing strategies, and maximize ROI. The scalable technology and proprietary machine learning algorithms behind the flagship Mevo platform are backed by Nobel Prize winning research, designed by marketers and made to scale. Using Mevo, marketers can confidently chart their course with attribution insights and actionable investment strategies, reducing waste from their budgets and making better decisions, faster.