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Attention Measurement Playbook for Marketers

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ABOUT THE GUIDE

The CIMM and IAB Attention Measurement Playbook for Marketers seeks to help marketers operationalize attention metrics for digital campaigns, providing practical frameworks and an overview of the latest research. As the digital ecosystem evolves, attention measurement has moved beyond merely studying duration or determining whether an ad was seen. Instead, it offers a dynamic lens for evaluating ad impact, resonance, and the deeper quality of an advertising impression, complementing existing metrics without attempting to replace them.

Adoption success, however, hinges on aligning attention metrics with clear business objectives, recognizing their probabilistic—not deterministic—nature, and avoiding the temptation to treat attention as a currency or binary outcome.

> **"Consumer attention is the scarcest resource in the advertising industry, and every marketer should focus on how to best capture and retain it."**
> ***Paolo Provinciali (LinkedIn)***

Instead of just counting impressions, leading marketers are shifting their focus to the impression they make.

> **"What companies should really concentrate on is thinking about the impression that you make. People are waking up to the fact that attention is the thing that really moves the needle."** ***Mike Follett (Lumen)***

This playbook distills actionable steps and validation tips for integrating attention into media, creative, and campaign processes, guiding marketers toward privacy-safe, transparent, and business-driven measurement.

Among the leaders and practitioners we interviewed for this playbook, there is broad alignment about the value and purpose of attention measurement, though some industry organizations differ on its precise definition and application. Industry standards bodies such as IAB and MRC do not define attention as a definitive differentiator between high- and low-quality impressions. Instead, these organizations view attention metrics as tools for evaluating the effectiveness of advertising and/or the relevance of the surrounding content.

Fundamentally, this playbook recognizes that the true purpose of attention measurement is not simply to uncover what is "seen," but to understand how different media placements, creative assets, and environments drive meaningful consumer outcomes. Attention measurement is most valuable when integrated into a robust testing, validation, and optimization feedback loop.

The consensus among early adopters is that a rigorous, business-oriented approach—combining robust correlation analysis, hypothesis testing, and practical implementation—delivers measurable campaign performance and business impact.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Originally, attention metrics were used to assess viewability and duration—whether and how long someone looked at an advertisement—but the discipline has evolved. Today, attention measurement is recognized as much broader than this, a way to estimate the resonance, impact, effect, and, ultimately, the value of advertising impressions. This shift reflects an industry-wide understanding that impact is influenced by far more than mere exposure time.

There is a growing adoption among practitioners, who broadly agree that attention measurement enables smarter campaign decisions and can power outcome-based optimization.

> **"Attention measurement is really about the quest for impression quality measurement, which everyone agrees should be part of the media selection equation."**
> ***Bill Harvey (Research Management Technologies)***

The key to successful implementation lies in starting with clear hypotheses about how attention measurement will help achieve specific business outcomes, selecting a suitable method to test those hypotheses systematically, and scaling proven approaches gradually while maintaining measurement discipline throughout the process.

> **"Attention measurement provides the missing link between media delivery and business outcomes. It helps us understand what actually drives consumer behavior."** ***Marc Guldimann (Adelaide)***

Key Use Cases

Attention metrics support a range of different use cases and their range and utility are expanding, but current usage is largely structured around four main use cases:

1. **Inventory Assessment:** Identify and compare media placements that are more or less likely to capture audience attention and drive desired outcomes. This core activity involves using attention metrics and insights scores to evaluate the effectiveness of publisher inventory and specific placements within their actual context. This methodology is prioritized by both brand marketers and agencies because it provides a foundational layer of understanding that directly guides smarter media placement decisions and more effective campaign planning.
2. **Campaign Optimization and Media Strategy:** Leverages attention data to maximize campaign performance both in near-real-time and through post-campaign analysis, relying on activities like pre-bid filtering and real-time optimization based on attention predictions, as well as evaluating which placements and formats generated the highest attention once the campaign concludes. By systematically linking attention scores to campaign KPIs and actual business outcomes, marketers and agencies gain the ability to make smarter, data-driven decisions that enhance both campaign efficiency and overall effectiveness, and to use those learnings to inform future media strategies and plans so strategies are continually refined based on measurable impact during and after each campaign.

3. **Creative Testing and Optimization:** Using attention data to evaluate and improve the performance of creative assets involves a series of targeted activities: Testing both pre-and in-campaign enables marketers to assess creative effectiveness before launch and throughout the campaign, helping identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for refinement; iterative improvement uses attention metrics to guide ongoing creative decision-making and fuel creative evolution; format innovation leverages insights to develop new ad formats specifically optimized for attention capture; and AI-powered creative scoring—rapidly emerging as a scalable capability—enables synthetic attention modeling for large-scale creative evaluation across pre-launch and in-flight phases, predicting likely performance and impact. Collectively, these activities empower marketers to continually refine and evolve creative assets, driving maximized impact and more meaningful audience engagement.

4. **Refining Media Mix Modeling (MMM):** Adding a new layer of granularity and actionability. Because MMM relies on aggregate and time series data, attention metrics should be integrated at the channel, subchannel, publisher, and format levels as indices or quality modifiers—aligned with existing inputs such as GRPs and aggregated by period within the MMM framework. This allows marketers to decompose broad channel performance into the effectiveness of specific placements, formats, and partners. This integration also supports more detailed scenario planning, enabling tactical recommendations and not just high-level allocation by using attention signals to continuously refine the MMM. As new audience patterns emerge, the model can favor inventory, formats, and placements that deliver stronger resonance and performance in each channel over time, making outputs vastly more actionable for ongoing optimization.

I. WHAT IS ATTENTION MEASUREMENT?

While attention measurement originated as the study of duration—the quest to measure whether and how long someone looked at an advertisement—the discipline has fundamentally evolved to a focus on estimating the **resonance, impact, effect, and value** of advertising impressions. This shift represents the industry's recognition that an ad's impact—or more precisely the likelihood of that impact—is dependent on far more than mere exposure time. Although some of the literature on attention measurement's efficacy—or lack thereof—remains largely focused on the study of duration in advertising, the methodology and application of attention measurement by marketers and providers has evolved quickly. Nevertheless, there is still considerable debate regarding attention measurement's accuracy, validity, and overall effectiveness.

When it comes to attention measurement, there are various data collection and analytical methods, each with unique strengths and capabilities.

> **"We've used eyetracking for product insights, predictive modelling methods for campaign optimisation where scale matters and also panel studies/surveys for understanding brand recognition. Each approach serves its purpose, but the goal is always to help brands cut through and make an impact. It's about using the right tool for the job."** ***Joshua Ford (Financial Times)***

While there are disagreements among providers around approaches, from the perspective of *both practitioners and providers* there is near-universal agreement on the objective, application, and value to marketers.

The overarching value of attention measurement is its ability to offer a way to assess ***the likelihood that an ad will drive an outcome*** ahead of full campaign deployment. It's important to emphasize there are no guarantees—attention measurement is probabilistic not deterministic—but the universal finding of early adopters is that the net effect of careful implementation through hypothesis testing and integration into the measurement feedback loop provides useful and measurable campaign performance and valuable insights into likely business impact. Notably, attention measurement yields unique insights in cases where direct transaction or outcome data are limited or unavailable, helping marketers understand potential drivers of performance that may not be captured through standard metrics alone.

Primary Attention Measurement Methodologies

The industry uses a mix of approaches to capture and analyze attention, each contributing unique perspectives to the measurement landscape. Below are the primary approaches and the main points of differentiation between each measurement approach.

Today, there are four main attention measurement methodologies:

1 DATA SIGNALS	2 VISUAL TRACKING METHODS	3 PHYSIOLOGICAL & NEUROLOGICAL	4 PANEL/SURVEY
BEHAVIORAL	EYE TRACKING	BODILY RESPONSES AND BRAIN ACTIVITY	COGNITIVE

1. Data signal-based models leverage automated and scalable detection of behavioral signals across digital environments, offering efficiency and breadth.
2. Visual tracking methods such as eye tracking, gaze analysis, and facial coding provide detailed observation of visual attention at a granular level.
3. Physiological and neurological tools surface subconscious responses to creative and media context, highlighting deeper, often unarticulated drivers of engagement.
4. Panel and survey-based research capture attitudinal, self-reported, and behavioral data from controlled audiences, useful for linking attention to brand outcomes.

For a full breakdown of methods, requirements, and measurement scope, refer to the IAB and MRC Attention Measurement Guidelines.

Attention's Relationship to Viewability

Does attention measurement complement or entirely replace viewability? Some industry participants position attention as an evolution beyond viewability, suggesting it may become a **vital data point or standard** in evaluating impression value and campaign effectiveness over time.

"Attention measurement provides additional data points beyond viewability to understand user engagement. It's transparent, valid, and reliable measurement that helps improve media buying and creative design decisions."
- Vanessa Turner (IAS)

However, some industry leaders claim that there is a fundamental gap between viewability metrics and campaign performance. High viewability ensures that ads can be seen, but does not guarantee that they will capture attention or influence outcomes.

Industry bodies like IAB, MRC and Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) argue that viewability and attention are not in competition per se, suggesting that attention is both complementary to and builds on viewability.

> **"Viewability and attention have two different objectives, the former attempting to determine whether an ad was delivered with an opportunity to see it, and the latter measuring whether it was seen and to what degree." - *Ron Pinelli (MRC)***

Rather than replacing viewability entirely, effective use of attention metrics and scores provide added context and act as an additional quality filter. Viewability remains the foundation—confirming ads have the opportunity to be seen—while attention metrics offer insight into which viewable impressions are more likely to hold audience focus and contribute to desired campaign outcomes.

> **"Not everything that's viewable gets viewed, and the things that do get viewed, that's when advertising works. One of the things that we've found is that people are very good at ignoring stuff. Humans have this amazing superpower, which is simply to ignore what's staring them in the face." - *Mike Follett (Lumen)***

Full-Funnel Efficacy

There is broad agreement that attention measurement helps inform and optimize upper- and mid-funnel outcomes such as awareness, recall, consideration, and favorability. However, industry practitioners do have somewhat differing perspectives on attention measurement's effectiveness for lower-funnel, conversion-focused campaigns.

For example, some experts express reservations that for direct marketing and performance campaigns, attention measurement may oversell its value compared to existing attribution and conversion optimization methods—where the use of audience data may play a more impactful role and in some ways bias towards attention. That said, attention measurement can help when calibrated by category dependence (CPG versus direct response e-commerce), signal context (retargeting or intent-based exposures), and creative role (distinctive brand assets that can shorten required exposure time).

These disagreements often center on attribution model complications, where multiple variables make it difficult to isolate attention's specific contribution to conversion outcomes.

"Attention measurement provides the correlation with sales lift that we need. At both Nestlé and Kimberly Clark, I was lucky enough to have the resources that there were real measurement studies that ended up tying attention as a correlation to sales lift, and we had real proof at both companies that metrics that fall within attention are truly correlated to sales lift for CPG."
- Rachel Mervis (formerly of Kimberly Clark)

Other practitioners argue that attention metrics can provide valuable quality signals even for conversion campaigns, helping to optimize the "batting average" of conversion opportunities rather than directly predicting conversions.

II. MEASUREMENT METHODOLOGY MIX

There are valid reasons to use different approaches to measure attention and clear trade-offs between them. In practice, leveraging hybrid methods—using at least two or more together—tends to produce more actionable insight than any single approach alone. For example, findings from visual tracking and physiological datasets can be used to calibrate and weight signal-based models, improving the precision of data signal approaches. These methods are not interchangeable, but rather illuminate different parts of the attention story.

Each company should consider which methodology best aligns with their objectives (refer to the IAB Attention Measurement: Request for Information Questions, Agency/Advertiser Checklist, or Publisher Checklist), and if resources allow, applying more than one approach will provide a more holistic and nuanced perspective. The insights can complement or supplement one another, offering a broader and more reliable view of how attention works across stages of perception, communication, and persuasion.

Together, a mix of methodologies can build a fuller picture of attention. While signal models scale, visual or neurological tools add depth and panels link outcomes back to perception. When combined with predictive modeling, where visual or physiological measures or panel-derived reference datasets are used, those models can translate into scalable decisioning tools advertisers can use to optimize. No single method can measure the full spectrum of attention, but they can be used in combination (and often are by providers), creating a richer and more actionable understanding.

"There are also some things that are still unsolved. For instance, the issue of audio—almost all providers focus on visual attention. Many use visual methods to analyze the audio and make predictions. The fit between the audio and the visual is so important, as we all know, for really good creative. But if you don't measure the audio, I'm not sure you get the full picture." - *Tracy Adams (ARF)*

Organizations are encouraged to use the IAB Attention Measurement: Request for Information Questions to evaluate and compare attention measurement providers with a standardized set of questions.

"It's really important to understand methodology. You know, panel-based versus tag-based, versus hybrid. You should understand how you're getting the score you're getting, if it's going to inform the actions you're going to take."
- *Christina DiLaura (DoubleVerify)*

III. THE CORE APPLICATIONS

Today, there are four main use cases for attention metrics. These use cases help to deliver measurable ROI within single campaign cycles while building toward more sophisticated attention-driven strategies.

> **"Attention measurement provides objective assessment of media and creative quality. It helps move the industry away from flawed traditional metrics toward more scientifically grounded measurement approaches."**
> ***- Jonathan Waite (Havas Media Network)***

Note that in the context of attention measurement, "inventory" refers broadly to both the content environment (such as the channel, site, app, or surrounding editorial content where an ad appears), and/or the specific ad placement itself (including ad slots, video pre-rolls, banners, or other creative positions). This comprehensive view enables marketers to better understand how both the broader context and the exact placement influence audience attention and advertising impact.

This section provides practical guidance for marketers exploring these applications, drawn from comprehensive interviews with industry leaders who have successfully implemented attention measurement to enhance media planning, evaluate campaign performance, and make more informed optimization decisions.

1. INVENTORY ASSESSMENT

Attention metrics and scores identify placements that are most—and least—likely to capture real audience engagement by evaluating impressions in their true context (page position, surrounding content, device, creative role). Used for inventory assessments, these signals let teams compare placements side-by-side, surface high-value opportunities, and prioritize where attention—not just raw impressions—will be highest. Brand marketers and agencies consistently rank this work as a top priority because it provides an evidence-based foundation for buying, creative optimization, and publisher negotiation.

2. CAMPAIGN OPTIMIZATION AND MEDIA STRATEGY

Programmatic Optimization: Within a programmatic buy, pre-bid filtering and in-flight campaign adjustments are made based on attention predictions, prioritizing placements with a higher likelihood of capturing audience attention and reducing spend on those less likely to do so.

In-Flight (Direct Buy) Optimization: For direct media purchases (guaranteed/reserved buys), **attention data informs manual optimization**. Analysts use attention scores and metrics to identify placements, publishers, or creative units that are underperforming or over-performing against attention goals. This data drives **mid-campaign adjustments** like manually shifting budget, adjusting flighting, or requesting creative swaps to improve overall attention efficiency.

Post-Campaign Analysis: Uses attention data to understand which placements, formats, content, and creative combinations were most effective at capturing and holding attention, helping to inform future media planning and creative development decisions.

"We were able to quantify the amount of money that was currently being spent on media that was below those floors, and there were double- or triple-digit thousands of dollars that could potentially be reinvested into placements that had higher scores." - *Phil Jackson (Haleon)*

In media planning and strategy, attention becomes a practical lever: it improves portfolio optimization by working alongside reach and frequency to give deeper context to impression value; it sharpens budget allocation by combining attention data with traditional metrics so spend is prioritized toward inventory channels, and formats that drive outcomes—including emotion and resonance—more efficiently; and it strengthens publisher partnerships by supplying objective evidence to evaluate inventory and negotiate better commercial terms. The net impact is smarter, more efficient spending and a clearer, decision-ready sense of true impression value—i.e., less money on pretty reports, more on places people actually watch.

Privacy-Forward Implementation

Due to continued signal loss and tighter privacy regulations, there are attention measurement providers that can offer alternative approaches to campaign optimization. Many attention measurement methodologies are designed to operate with limited or no reliance on personal data. However, privacy practices and compliance may vary depending on the specific implementation and technology/measurement provider. It remains important for marketers to evaluate privacy considerations and regulatory alignment when adopting attention measurement solutions.

"In a privacy-first world, attention measurement offers a path forward that doesn't rely on personal data while still providing meaningful optimization signals." - *Vanessa Turner (IAS)*

3. CREATIVE TESTING AND OPTIMIZATION

Creative testing and optimization encompass a range of approaches that help marketers evaluate, refine, and maximize the impact of their creative assets—drawing on both scalable, data-driven techniques and rigorous in-depth analysis to meet the complexity of today's advertising landscape.

The main approaches are:

- **Scalable Modeling and Screening:** AI-powered creative scoring and predictive modeling enable large-scale portfolio evaluation—identifying high-potential assets both pre-flight and in-flight. These tools support dynamic creative optimization, allowing for adjustments to creative across environments and placements, and helping manage creative wear-in and wear-out during campaigns.

- **Strategic and Panel-Based Creative Analysis:** For high-value or strategic campaigns, panel-based testing and controlled studies provide rigorous empirical insights into how creative assets perform in realistic conditions. Element-level analysis, such as A/B or multivariate testing of text, color, or sequencing, further optimizes creative design for engagement.
- **Cross-Platform Adaptation and Media Integration:** Understanding how creative performs across different platforms, formats, and device contexts is vita Leading practices include evaluating contextual creative performance—in specific environments and placements rather than in isolation—and aligning creative delivery with media environments most likely to drive higher attention. Integrated campaign planning ensures creative and media strategies work together toward overall campaign effectiveness.

"Attention measurement enables predictive analysis of creative effectiveness and sales outcomes. It's about moving from measuring attentiveness to predicting advertising responsiveness." - *Max Kalehoff (RealEyes)*

4. MEDIA MIX MODELING INTEGRATION

An emerging application involves integrating attention data into MMM to make outputs more granular and actionable. Traditional MMM provides strategic allocation guidance but lacks tactical implementation details. Attention data can help decompose broad channel performance into specific placement and format insights, enabling more nuanced optimization decisions.

Cross-Platform Optimization

As attention measurement becomes more widely tested and validated across digital channels, marketers can begin applying quality thresholds across display, video, connected TV, and mobile advertising, as well as other media formats such as audio, digital OOH, social, etc. However, thresholds should not be assumed equivalent across environments. For example, CTV viewability baselines can differ based on device detection and autoplay or UX constraints. Rather than enforcing uniform thresholds, use documented, channel-specific baselines to weight attention in portfolio optimization.

IV. MEASURING SUCCESS AND ROI

Effectively measuring success with attention metrics requires a clear framework for evaluating both immediate campaign performance and longer-term business outcomes. By defining attention-driven key performance indicators (KPIs) and consistently tracking ROI improvements using robust analytics, marketers can validate the incremental value attention measurement brings to both planning and optimization. These metrics—ranging from improvements in attention scores to cost efficiency and deeper business impact—provide the necessary evidence for continued investment and advancement.

"Our recommendation is always to start with some kind of historical audit. Let's understand what's going on ... a lot of people get so excited about this and apply it to their entire media plan ... I think that's a bit risky and also too aggressive."
- Yan Liu (TVision)

Key Performance Indicators

Attention-based marketing programs leverage a mix of immediate, outcome-driven, and long-term value metrics to provide a holistic view of media effectiveness. Immediate signals like inventory-level attention scores and cost per attentive impression offer fast feedback, while business outcome correlations and long-term publisher/creative performance trends unlock strategic value and guide future optimization.

"Attention measurement enables us to demonstrate clear ROI improvement for clients through better inventory selection and creative optimization strategies."
- Phil Sumner (Publicis Groupe)

IMMEDIATE METRICS	BUSINESS OUTCOME CORRELATION	LONG-TERM VALUE INDICATORS
• Attention score improvements across inventory • Cost efficiency changes (attention per dollar spent) • Engagement rate improvements within high-attention inventory	• Brand awareness and consideration lift in attention-optimized campaigns • Conversion rate improvements for high-attention impressions • Overall campaign ROI improvements when optimizing for attention quality	• Publisher and inventory performance consistency • Creative effectiveness insights from attention data • Media mix optimization improvements from granular attention insights

Testing Methodologies

To credibly link attention improvements to ROI or business outcomes, marketers should select from a range of experimental and observational techniques. Each approach balances scale, speed, and statistical rigor, and a blended methodology is often best suited to validate both broad and tactical attention measurement benefits.

A 3-Step Approach

1. **Start with a control.** Stand up an always-on baseline using either a holdout or champion strategy to anchor causality.
2. **Layer tests by objective.** Use A/B or sequential tests for channel allocation questions, multivariate for creative and context pairings, and behavior tracking for real-world validation.
3. **Calibrate models locally.** Before activating any AI-based scoring, map predicated attention to your own outcome metrics, retrain on recent data, and re-check for bias.

Exhibit: Attention Testing Methods at a Glance

METHOD	WHAT IT DOES	WHEN TO USE	COST AND SPEED	BIAS RISK AND GUARDRAILS
A/B Split Testing	Run parallel campaigns with traditional optimization versus attention optimization to measure performance differences in a controlled comparison.	Proving incremental lift from attention strategies within the same period and budget.	Moderate cost. Medium speed. High clarity.	Randomize at the decision unit you optimize on (user, household, placement, or geo) to avoid overlap. Match frequency and reach caps. Define success metrics and the exact performance threshold for switching to the new approach.
Hold-Out Groups	Reserve a share of budget or audience for traditional optimization as an ongoing control. (e.g., 10-20%)	Establishing a baseline while rolling out attention tactics over time.	Low to moderate cost. Slower reads. Durable signal.	Monitor audience drift and contamination. Refresh samples and reweight periodically. Keep test eligibility rules consistent over time.
Hold-Out and Champion or Challenger	Test new attention-optimized approaches against an existing champion in controlled increments.	Phased rollouts where risk needs to be minimized.	Low incremental cost. Faster than full A/B once baseline exists.	Decide upfront what lift and consistency are required before switching the challenger to the default. Use a staged ramp plan to control exposure. Require sustained results to avoid novelty effects.

METHOD	WHAT IT DOES	WHEN TO USE	COST AND SPEED	BIAS RISK AND GUARDRAILS
Sequential Testing	Compare current performance to historical campaigns using traditional metrics while adjusting for seasonality and context.	When simultaneous A/B is not possible due to budget, timing, or channel constraints.	Low cost. Fast setup. Medium confidence.	Prone to seasonality and market shifts. Use matched markets or synthetic controls and include external factors to adjust. Document any mix or pricing changes.
Multivariate Testing	Test combinations across environment, placement, and creative to see interaction effects on attention and engagement.	Creative and context optimization where many factors interact.	Higher cost. Slower reads. Rich insights.	Multiple comparisons inflate false positives. Pre-register variables, cap factors, apply statistical corrections, and validate winners in a simpler follow up test.

Each testing methodology offers different benefits and suits various operational contexts depending on scale, precision, resource availability, and campaign objectives. A blended approach—combining experimental designs, behavioral analysis, and model-based predictions—often yields the richest insights and most robust validation for attention-driven media optimization.

"Attention measurement provides additional layers of data that can enhance our analytics capabilities, particularly for understanding the relationship between media quality and business outcomes. The value of attention measurement increases when it can be applied consistently across channels, enabling true cross-media optimization strategies." - *Parvati Vaish (Crossix Strategy)*

Creative Analysis Applications

Creative analysis represents one of the most complex and debated applications of attention measurement, with industry perspectives ranging between traditional research methodologies and emerging AI-powered approaches. The fundamental challenge centers on balancing measurement accuracy with the scalability demands created by exponential growth in creative asset volumes driven by generative AI and programmatic creative production.

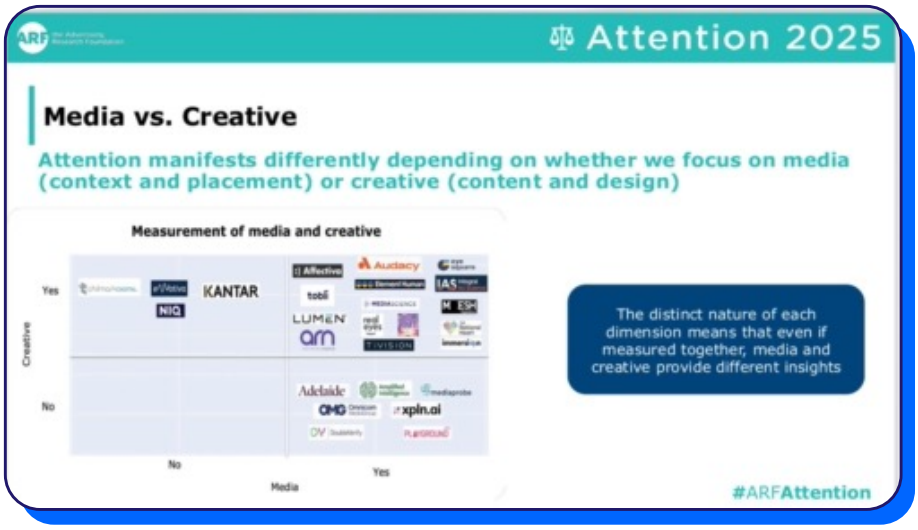
"The fragmentation in today's media landscape makes attention measurement crucial for understanding true media quality and effectiveness across channels." - *Claire Browne (Adelaide)*

At the same time, there is broad industry consensus that creative performance must be evaluated within the specific context of media environments, placements, and audiences—not in isolation. Integrated approaches recognize that the same creative asset can perform very differently depending on where, how, and to whom it is delivered. As a result, the most sophisticated strategies in attention measurement seek to align creative and media insight, ensuring that measurement frameworks consider environment quality, platform dynamics, and the interplay between placement and creative itself.

Creative-Media Integration

Some marketers and practitioners are evaluating creative effectiveness within specific content environments and ad placements (inventory) rather than in isolation. This approach measures how the context in which a creative appears influences audience attention and engagement.

Exhibit: Creative and media work together



Considering creative attention potential and media environment/placement characteristics together during planning stages ensures both elements are aligned to support overall attention objectives and campaign effectiveness goals.

Connecting Attention to Outcomes and MMMs

Integrating attention data into attribution models and MMMs can provide more granular and actionable insights. Attention data can provide valuable new results for both attribution reporting and MMM, allowing recommendations to adjust as audience patterns shift. Over time, models may tilt toward the inventory, formats, and placements that show stronger resonance and in-channel performance.

Use tests and modeled analysis to link attention to business KPIs rather than assume causation. At a minimum, the IAB and MRC baseline expects persons based measurement with sophisticated invalid traffic (SIVT) filtration, a viewable or audible foundation where applicable, reasonable confirmation of user presence, counting based on compliant begin to render or initiated playback impressions, and clear disclosure of audibility status, methods, and assumptions. See the IAB and MRC Attention Measurement Guidelines for more details.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

Practical Implementation Approaches

Attention measurement succeeds through deliberate, staged implementation, progressing from baseline measurement to selective optimization, and ultimately to strategic integration. By starting with inventory assessment and layering attention data alongside traditional campaign signals, marketers can validate benefits, minimize disruption, and expand attention-driven solutions across portfolios and platforms.

Exhibit: Starting With Inventory Assessment

PHASE 1: BASELINE MEASUREMENT	PHASE 2: SELECTIVE OPTIMIZATION	PHASE 3: STRATEGIC INTEGRATION
• Tag campaigns with attention measurement alongside viewability, audibility, and brand safety tools (when relevant). • Alternatively, use predictors from historic campaigns to establish a baseline without new tagging. • Collect and analyze at least 2–4 weeks of baseline data across all active media. • Correlate attention scores with campaign KPIs to prioritize optimization efforts—focusing on placements with improvement headroom. • Identify patterns in inventory and placements that exhibit high or low audience attention.	• Shift incremental budget allocation toward inventory and placements with stronger audience attention. • Test attention-driven optimization in 10–20% of the campaign budget while maintaining control groups for traditional approaches. • Measure and compare performance differences to validate the approach. • *Note: Always factor in the content's attention context alongside the ad's attention.*	• Incorporate attention metrics into ongoing media planning and buying conversations. • Use both internal and external attention data/research to guide contract negotiations and inventory selection, aligning to attention goals. • Expand proven optimizations across broader campaign portfolios.

Advancing to Campaign Optimization

As marketers advance to campaign optimization, integrating attention metrics across programmatic bidding, creative analysis, and channel planning becomes critical for unlocking consistent and scalable improvements in campaign effectiveness. By embedding attention scores in real-time buying algorithms, refining creative and media strategies based on engagement patterns, and applying insights across all major display, video, CTV, and mobile environments, marketers can make every campaign cycle more data-driven and outcome-focused—balancing efficiency, resonance, and cross-channel reach.

Programmatic Optimization: Work with technology providers and DSP partners to integrate attention metrics and scores into bidding algorithms—including pre-bid filtering, custom algorithms, private marketplace (PMP) deal optimization, and attention-focused segments

"The challenge is integrating attention signals into real-time bidding algorithms while maintaining campaign performance. Success requires balancing attention optimization with existing efficiency metrics." - *Phil Sumner (Publicis Groupe)*

Creative and Format Optimization: Use attention data to understand which creative elements and ad formats within content generate highest engagement within specific contexts. This approach helps optimize both media placement decisions and creative development processes.

Cross-Channel Insights: Apply attention measurement across display, video, connected TV, and mobile channels to identify format and placement patterns that are more likely to capture attention consistently, regardless of platform.

From a programmatic perspective, attention measurement provides additional quality signals that can be integrated into bidding algorithms and inventory scoring to improve campaign performance systematically." - *Casper Verhoofstad (Google)*

Hybrid Testing Approaches: Most effective organizations combine scale-driven AI portfolio optimization for routine decision-making with traditional, controlled testing for strategic or high-stakes creative.

Testing Frameworks and Correlation: Systematic evaluation protocols focus on the creative variables that matter most, while ongoing performance correlation analysis helps establish relationships between attention scores and actual business outcomes.

VI. PROVIDER SELECTION

Selecting the right attention measurement partner is pivotal for long-term success, but the process can be complex given the diversity of methodologies, technical requirements, and integration needs in the marketplace. Marketers must evaluate providers on measurement quality and transparency, capacity to align with existing reporting systems, and coordination abilities across internal teams. For additional support, review the IAB Attention Measurement: Request for Information Questions, which provide a robust framework to help advertisers and agencies assess provider capabilities and ensure attention metrics generate reliable, actionable business insights for ongoing optimization

Methodology Evaluation

- **Signal-Based Approaches:** Some providers use direct measurement of granular contextual signals (placement characteristics, format types, audience behaviors) to predict attention likelihood without requiring direct measurement of individual consumers.
- **Direct Measurement Approaches:** Other providers use eye-tracking studies, attention panels, or behavioral inference to create attention models based on actual human engagement data.
- **Hybrid Methodologies:** Many providers combine multiple approaches, using large-scale signal collection in combination with panel-based data to validate predictive models that can then be applied at scale.

Integration Requirements

- **Technical Implementation:** Implementation requirements differ by provider. Some offer tag-based measurement that operates alongside existing ad verification tools, while others require extensive technical set up and coordination. Implementation typically requires minimal technical resources and can run in parallel with current measurement approaches.
- **Data Integration:** Consider how attention data will integrate with existing reporting dashboards, marketing mix modeling, and business intelligence systems. Many providers offer APIs and data export capabilities to support custom integration needs.
- **Team Coordination:** Successful implementation requires coordination across media planning, campaign management, creative teams, and analytics functions. Identify internal champions with cross-functional influence to drive adoption.

Common Implementation Challenges and Solutions

While attention measurement brings new depth and nuance to campaign evaluation, integrating these metrics at scale is not without its challenges. Marketers routinely encounter hurdles with technology stack alignment, balancing scale with precision, and ensuring that attention signals drive real business outcomes rather than becoming superficial performance metrics. Addressing these challenges head-on—with a focus on integration, validation, and practical balance—enables teams to unlock the full potential of attention-driven strategies while avoiding common industry pitfalls.

Today, marketers face three main implementation challenges:

1. OPTIMIZATION DISCONNECT

- **The Issue:** Many marketers find that their programmatic platforms, dynamic creative systems, or media buying practices aren't aligned with attention-driven strategies—even after adopting attention measurement.
- **Solution:** Audit and update your existing optimization stack to ensure end-to-end integration. Confirm each system can accept and act on attention signals for true, data-driven campaign optimization.

> **"Standardization is crucial for attention measurement to achieve widespread adoption across the programmatic ecosystem." - *Casper Verhoofstad (Google)***

2. BALANCING SCALE AND ATTENTION

- **The Issue:** Placements with high attention scores often don't scale, making it difficult to meet campaign reach and efficiency goals.
- **Solution:** Optimize for the right level of attention based on brand/campaign objectives while maintaining scalable solutions—don't pursue maximum attention at the expense of reach or cost-effectiveness. Focus on striking an optimal balance, not just chasing higher scores.

3. CORRELATION WITHOUT CAUSATION

- **The Issue:** Attention scores frequently align with campaign performance, but relying on them in isolation (without linking to true outcomes) risks ill-informed decisions.
- Use robust validation methods—A/B testing, multivariate, hold-out groups, or benchmarking—to establish a clear causal link between attention optimizations and real business KPIs before scaling spend or strategy.

VII. ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT

Adopting attention measurement can deliver compelling benefits, but it can also create important organizational challenges for modern marketers. Successful implementation goes beyond selecting the right technology—it requires alignment across teams, executive buy-in, and a clear strategy for integrating attention metrics into broader measurement frameworks. This section provides guidance on best practices for building internal support, outlines the risks of misapplication and oversimplification, and offers actionable recommendations to ensure attention measurement delivers meaningful business outcomes while avoiding common pitfalls identified by industry leaders.

The Need for Internal Champions

A recurring theme across interviews was the necessity of having a dedicated internal "sponsor" or "driver" on the brand marketer side to ensure successful attention measurement implementation.

> **"Success with attention measurement requires both technological capabilities and organizational change management—it's not just about the measurement, it's about acting on the insights."**
> ***- Damon Bethel (AMS)***

To succeed, internal attention champions will need

- **Cross-functional influence:** Ability to coordinate across media, creative, analytics, and measurement teams
- **Technical literacy:** Understanding of both attention measurement methodologies and existing measurement frameworks
- **Business outcome focus:** Linking attention metrics to concrete business objectives rather than treating them as standalone metrics
- **Resource allocation authority:** Securing budget and team bandwidth for proper implementation and testing

Critical Watchouts: Avoiding the Pitfalls

While attention measurement offers significant potential for improving advertising effectiveness, the industry faces critical risks from over-simplification, premature adoption, and binary decision-making. This section outlines the key dangers identified by industry leaders and provides guidance for responsible implementation to avoid repeating historical measurement mistakes.

1. THE CORE DANGER: SPEED TO COMMODITIZATION

The Risk and Consequences: The most significant danger facing attention measurement is the industry's tendency to pursue rapid commoditization at the expense of quality and accuracy. Advancing attention metrics too quickly without proper validation or robust empirical support can create systematic risks that undermine the entire category's credibility and effectiveness.

"Measurement change should be expedited because we need it, but not to the detriment of error." - *Dr. Karen Nelson-Field (Amplified Intelligence)*

Optimal Approach: Attention measurement must evolve with careful validation, ongoing evaluation against real outcomes, and a sustained commitment to accuracy and empirical rigor—ensuring credibility is built for the long term rather than compromised for the sake of speed.

2. THE BINARY DECISION TRAP

The Risk and Consequences: Using attention measurement as a simple binary filter to eliminate publishers, inventory, or creative variants. Binary approaches risk eliminating valuable inventory or audiences that may perform well for specific objectives, content types, or demographic segments. This mirrors past mistakes with viewability/audibility implementation.

"I'm not considering attention as this binary concept. I'm looking at levels, and I'm running tests, and I'm doing validation, hopefully with real outcomes, with real robust empirical support that lets me know what the relationship is." - *Ron Pinelli (MRC)*

Optimal Approach: Use attention scores as graduated indicators within a broader decision framework, not as elimination filters.

3. BLIND OPTIMIZATION WITHOUT DEEPER ANALYSIS

The Risk and Consequences: Optimizing campaigns based purely on attention scores without understanding what drives those scores or their correlation to business outcomes. A narrow focus on higher attention scores can lead to deprioritizing placements, audiences, or contexts that are well-suited to your objectives but naturally return lower attention readings. These opportunities—whether they support certain reach goals, align with brand positioning, or effectively engage specific segments—may still deliver strong results despite lower scores. Over-optimizing toward attention alone risks reducing campaign diversity, reach, and strategic fit.

"I'd strongly caution against blindly optimizing based on attention information without understanding what it actually means." - *Travis O'Neil (GumGum)*

Optimal Approach: Build and validate clear correlation frameworks linking attention metrics to your key performance indicators before optimization. Combine attention metrics with audience, contextual, and outcome-based insights to ensure your decisions preserve strategically important opportunities even when their attention scores are comparatively lower.

4. OVER-SIMPLIFICATION AND ERROR AMPLIFICATION

The Risk and Consequences: Oversimplifying attention measurement systems—often to achieve scalability—can significantly increase errors around statistical means and reduce measurement accuracy. Reducing complexity too much leads to systematic measurement errors which can compound across campaigns, misrepresenting attention levels and leading to misguided optimization decisions. This can distort portfolio-level insights and damage the reliability of attention as a metric.

> **"When you simplify, the error around the mean is significant ... Binary measurement that's simplified—and this is where some want to go because it's scalable—has significant error around the mean."**
> ***- Dr. Karen Nelson-Field (Amplified Intelligence)***

Optimal Approach: Balance the need for accessibility and scalability with sufficient nuance and granularity in measurement methodologies. Maintaining detailed, validated measurement approaches that reflect actual audience behavior and attention patterns helps preserve accuracy while supporting actionable insights.

5. ISOLATION USAGE WITHOUT BUSINESS CONTEXT

The Risk and Consequences: Implementing attention measurement as a stand alone metric without correlation to business objectives or integration with existing measurement frameworks Using attention scores without validating their relationship to brand lift, sales outcomes, or other key performance indicators reduces the measurement to vanity metrics. Without business context, attention results risk misleading decision-makers and failing to drive meaningful campaign impact.

Optimal Approach: Integrate attention metrics within a comprehensive measurement framework that connects these metrics to specific business goals, such as brand awareness, consideration, conversions, or sales. Establish and continuously validate correlations between attention data and business KPIs to ensure meaningful interpretation and effective optimization.

For further step-by-step guidance on attention measurement integration and best practices, see the IAB Attention Measurement: Agency/Advertiser Checklist or the Attention Measurement: Publisher Checklist.

VIII. GUIDANCE FROM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

Attention measurement offers genuine potential for improving advertising effectiveness, but fully realizing this value requires a careful approach—one that avoids both over-simplification and the premature commoditization that have challenged previous measurement innovations. As attention metrics increasingly rely on AI-driven models and are deployed at scale, it is critical for practitioners and providers to exercise caution: demanding transparency, empirical validation, and constant testing to ensure accuracy, minimize bias, and prevent over-reliance on any single predictive system.

Equally essential is a privacy-by-design mindset. With evolving regulations and growing signal loss, stakeholders must prioritize user consent, data minimization, and responsible use of attention data. Today's leading methodologies actively align with privacy frameworks to ensure future-proof measurement.

Inventory assessment and campaign optimization remain proven, actionable applications—most effective when attention is applied with scientific rigor, robust integration, and a sustained commitment to responsible, context-aware measurement innovation.

"The challenge is moving from individual success stories to industry-wide adoption, which requires standardized measurement approaches and consistent provider methodologies." - *Caroline Hugonenc (TEADS)*

Key Principles

- Maintain scientific rigor in implementation and validation.
- Use privacy-by-design frameworks and stay aware of evolving egulations to ensure respect for user consent and data minimization.
- Embrace scalable, AI-driven modeling with transparent validation, while understanding the limitations of both machine learning and traditional testing approaches.
- Integrate attention with existing measurement stacks and avoid binary decision-making in favor of nuanced optimization.
- Establish clear correlation frameworks linking attention and business outcomes before optimization at scale.
- Implement and scale gradually with proper resourcing, internal sponsorship, and systematic, long-term deployment.
- Stay current with evolving industry standards, best practices, and new regulatory and technology shifts.

The industry's past experience with viewability provides valuable lessons. By learning from past mistakes and maintaining focus on measurement quality over speed to market, attention measurement can fulfill its promise as a more effective way to evaluate advertising impact.

Final Guidance

Industry leaders and standards bodies agree: Attention measurement offers substantial value, but it is not a standalone solution. The ARF's multi-phase research demonstrates that attention metrics are most effective when implemented as part of a comprehensive, multi-metric strategy—serving as a complementary signal rather than a "silver bullet" for all objectives. The ARF, CIMM, IAB, and MRC emphasize that attention data must be interpreted thoughtfully, validated empirically, and always linked to clear business outcomes.

> **"Attention isn't binary; it's a spectrum." - *Ron Pinelli (MRC)***

Ultimately, attention data should never be treated as a commoditized rank or a binary filter. Instead, attention is a nuanced, graduated metric that enhances campaign evaluation, media optimization, and creative refinement. Marketers should focus on testing, integration with existing measurement systems, and ongoing industry collaboration as standards and technologies evolve. In this way, attention measurement can help bridge the gap between exposure and engagement—serving as a key input for smarter media, more insightful reporting, and stronger business outcomes.

> **"The key is integrating attention data with existing measurement systems rather than treating it as a standalone metric. It works best as part of a holistic measurement approach." - *Edward McElvain (Mediahub Worldwide)***

Specific Association Positions

ARF: ARF advises marketers to have their technical and research teams dig into the field and select partners for experimentation while maintaining focus on incremental improvement rather than revolutionary measurement transformation.

> **"If I were going to seriously think about using attention … I would first seriously study whether I needed to look at the dimensions of attention, or whether one number is good enough. The first thing I've got to do is, am I comfortable with one number, or should I really study the nuances?" - *Scott McDonald (ARF)***

IAB and MRC: Attention measurement should be applied as a transparent, context-aware signal, never as a stand-alone currency or simplistic ranking. Attention only has meaning when interpreted with content, placement, and creative, as well as with media environment, device, and the person(s) the ad is being delivered to.

"Attention metrics should be used as graduated indicators within a broader framework, not as blunt filters." - *Angelina Eng (IAB)*

CIMM: Attention metrics have the potential to be hugely powerful, especially in combination with other signals—and have the potential to become a critical indicator of inventory quality, with predictive capabilities. However, attention is a complex neurological phenomenon and the optimal attention dynamics may vary widely, across different categories, user journeys and purchase behaviors, and even campaigns. Marketers need to build out their capabilities carefully, testing regularly and developing their own approaches.

"Every brand will have its own attention journey. Testing and learning are critical." *- Jon Watts (CIMM)*

Marketers should phase in attention metrics carefully, ensuring validation and integration with business objectives. Attention should be part of a multi-metric approach, always interpreted in context and aligned with evolving standards.

APPENDIX

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Definitions and Fundamentals

Q: What exactly is attention measurement?

A: Attention measurement represents an evolution beyond traditional metrics like impressions and viewability by assessing where, and to what extent, an advertisement captures human attention. Attention measurement is not defined as a direct measure of advertising quality or effectiveness. Instead, it is a complementary metric that provides additional insight into the opportunity for engagement beyond simply whether an ad was viewable.

Different methodologies exist, from visual tracking and physiological and neurological observation-based approaches to data signal-based and cognitive or emotional models.

Q: How does attention measurement differ from viewability?

A: While viewability answers whether an ad has the opportunity to be seen (meeting basic technical standards like 50% of pixels in view for one or more seconds), attention measurement goes deeper to assess whether someone actually engaged with or noticed the advertisement. Viewability serves as a foundation, but attention measurement provides further assessment of impressions that meet viewability standards.

As one industry expert explained: *"Viewability is a starting point for attention. You need viewability as a foundation, then attention provides additional engagement insights."*

Bill Harvey (Research Management Technologies) summarizes: *"Viewability answers 'Was the ad potentially visible?' Attention measurement goes further to ask 'Did someone actually pay attention to it?' It's the difference between opportunity and engagement."*

Q: Is attention measurement scientifically valid?

A: The scientific validation of attention measurement is ongoing through industry research initiatives. Current adoption rates show significant industry confidence, with approximately 50% of advertisers and 60% of agencies using attention metrics, according to ARF research. Multiple validation studies are underway, including comprehensive research comparing different methodologies across the same campaigns, and most significantly IAB and MRC standards definition (in-process at the time of this guide's creation.)

However, approaches vary significantly in their scientific rigor, sample sizes, and correlation with business outcomes. The key is understanding the methodology behind your chosen approach and validating its correlation with your specific business objectives through controlled testing.

Business Value & ROI

Q: What business outcomes can I expect from attention measurement?

A: Results vary significantly by implementation approach, category, and measurement methodology. Documented case studies show varying levels of impact across different applications. Some implementations report substantial improvements in campaign effectiveness metrics, while others show more modest but consistent gains in media efficiency. The most reliable outcomes tend to focus on media optimization—identifying inventory and placements that drive better performance per dollar spent.

Creative applications show promise but require more sophisticated implementation. The key is setting realistic expectations and measuring attention measurement impact using appropriate, rigorous measurement approaches, rather than treating it as a magic solution.

Q: Does attention measurement work for lower-funnel, conversion-focused campaigns?

A: **Mixed evidence with important nuances.** While attention measurement shows strong correlation with upper and mid-funnel metrics (brand awareness, consideration), its effectiveness for direct response campaigns is debated. The consensus suggests attention measurement works best as a quality filter to improve the "batting average" of conversion opportunities rather than directly predicting conversions, though some practitioners report strong and consistent results. Others argue that for ecommerce and direct response campaigns, traditional attribution and conversion optimization methods may provide more immediate value.

Q: How does attention measurement integrate with marketing mix modeling (MMM)?

A: This represents a significant emerging use case for making MMM more actionable at the tactical level. Traditional MMM excels at strategic allocation decisions but often leaves media planners wanting more granular guidance. Attention data integration can help decompose broad channel performance into specific placement and format insights, enabling more nuanced optimization decisions. The integration typically involves incorporating attention scores at the impression level within existing MMM frameworks, allowing for scenario planning and optimization at much more granular levels than traditional approaches. Implementation requires coordination between MMM agencies, media planning teams, and attention measurement providers, but can significantly enhance the practical utility of MMM investments.

Implementation

Q: How do I get started with attention measurement?

A: The most effective approach involves starting with clear objectives and controlled testing rather than wholesale adoption. Begin by identifying specific use cases where attention measurement could provide value—typically inventory quality assessment or campaign optimization. Implement measurement across a trial or subset of campaigns to establish baseline performance and correlation with your key business metrics.

For additional guidance, see the IAB Attention Measurement Checklist and Request for Information.

Q: What was the biggest surprise brands had from using attention data?

A: Many brands discovered significant disconnects between their optimization systems and attention outcomes. The most common surprise involves realizing that existing programmatic optimization, dynamic creative optimization, and media buying practices weren't aligned with attention-driving strategies, even when attention measurement was in place. This highlights the importance of end-to-end integration across the entire advertising technology stack rather than treating attention measurement as a standalone measurement exercise.

Q: What organizational structure do I need for successful attention measurement adoption?

A: Successful implementations require dedicated internal champions with cross-functional influence and technical literacy. The most critical factor is having someone who can coordinate across media, creative, analytics, and measurement teams while securing necessary budget and resources for proper implementation. This person needs to understand both attention measurement methodologies and existing measurement frameworks to facilitate integration rather than replacement. The complexity of coordinating multiple teams and systems often determines success more than the elegance of the measurement approach itself.

Q: What advice would you give to other brands considering attention measurement?

A: Start with a clear hypothesis and correlation plan. Begin with controlled tests comparing attention-optimized campaigns against your current approach, and scale based on proven results. Focus on integration with existing measurement frameworks rather than wholesale replacement.

For additional guidance, refer to the IAB Attention Measurement Checklist and Request for Information.

Creative Testing and Analysis

Q: How effective is attention measurement for creative testing?

A: Creative applications of attention measurement show significant promise but require sophisticated implementation approaches. Some strategies focus on measuring creative performance within specific media contexts while some evaluate creative assets in isolation. This represents a departure from traditional creative testing approaches and requires integration between creative and media measurement strategies. The explosion in creative volume driven by AI and programmatic creative generation has created new scalability challenges that attention measurement can help address, though the approaches vary significantly in methodology and validation.

Q: Can AI-powered attention measurement replace traditional creative testing?

A: AI-powered synthetic attention modeling offers compelling solutions for scale challenges but adoption is still nascent. It can also be considered as a complement to rather than replacement for traditional creative research methods. The technology enables evaluation of massive creative volumes that would be impractical through traditional testing approaches. Some brands report creative volumes expanding from thousands to over 100,000 assets annually due to generative AI adoption. However, some practitioners emphasize using AI-powered attention measurement for efficiency and scale while maintaining traditional methods for strategic creative decisions and validation.

Q: How should marketers approach creative optimization using attention data?

A: The most effective approach involves a two-step process: first establishing high-attention media environments, then optimizing creative performance within those contexts. This recognizes that creative performance varies significantly across different media environments and platforms. Rather than optimizing creative and media in isolation, leading practitioners emphasize integrated measurement approaches that consider both elements simultaneously. Pre-flight creative testing, media environment assessment, and in-market performance monitoring should work together as part of a comprehensive optimization strategy.

Provider Selection and Technology

Q: How do I choose between different attention measurement providers?

A: Provider selection should focus on methodology transparency, correlation with your specific KPIs, and integration capabilities with your existing technology stack. Different approaches suit different use cases—some emphasize real-time optimization while others prioritize post-campaign analysis and learning. Consider your primary objectives (media optimization, creative testing, or comprehensive measurement), required scale, and internal technical capabilities. Evaluate providers based on their validation studies, client case studies in your category, and ability to demonstrate correlation with your business outcomes rather than just attention metrics. The most important factor is finding an approach that provides action able insights for your specific marketing objectives.

For additional guidance, refer to the IAB Attention Measurement Checklist and Request for Information.

Q: Should I use attention as a binary decision-making tool?

A: Attention measurement works best as one factor in a sophisticated analysis framework rather than a binary decision-making tool. Automated optimization based solely on attention thresholds can lead to oversimplified decisions that miss important nuances in campaign strategy and audience targeting. The most effective implementations use attention data to inform optimization decisions while considering other factors like reach, frequency, audience quality, and campaign objectives. Sophisticated marketers avoid creating rigid thresholds that automatically exclude inventory or creative, instead using attention insights to guide more nuanced optimization strategies.

Q: What integration challenges should I expect?

A: The most common integration challenges involve data coordination across multiple technology platforms, stakeholder alignment on new metrics and processes, and organizational change management. Technical integration typically requires coordination between attention measurement providers, demand-side platforms (DSPs), attribution systems, and reporting platforms. Many brands underestimate the organizational complexity of shifting optimization strategies and metrics definitions across multiple teams. Success requires dedicated project management, clear communication about methodology and limitations, and gradual implementation rather than wholesale changes to existing processes. Budget allocation for both technology and internal resources often determines success more than the technical capabilities of the measurement approach.

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Methodologys

The CIMM and IAB Attention Measurement Playbook for Marketers is intended to be a practical how-to guide for marketers considering the adoption of attention metrics. The playbook strives to be a vendor-neutral resource that provides honest, clear guidance about the current state, benefits, drawbacks, and practical applications of attention measurement.

The playbook is based on interviews with nearly 40 industry leaders and a synthesis of industry research, guidelines, standards-in-progress, case studies and industry coverage. Interviews were conducted over the course of July and August 2025.

Key Resources

Standards, Guides and Working Groups

ARF

The Advertising Research Foundation's (ARF) three-phase Attention Measurement Validation Initiative represents the industry's most comprehensive empirical evaluation of attention measurement tools. Their findings reveal both opportunities and significant limitations that marketers must understand.

> **"Discussions of attention-based currencies are premature in the absence of better information on the validity, reliability and predictive power of these measures."**
> ***- Scott McDonald (ARF)***

- The ARF Attention Measurement Validation Initiative
- Phase 1 Report
- Phase 2 Report
- Attention as a Metric: Perspectives from Advertisers and Agencies

CIMM

CIMM's Attention Working Group focuses on discovering and exploring the latest insights and innovations in the development of metrics related to attention.

IAB and Media Rating Council

The IAB Attention Task Force is focused on enhancing how attention is measured and understood within advertising and marketing. It aims to create a standardized framework, develop metrics for broad use, and establish a common industry language. Importantly, the task force is collaborating with the Media Rating Council (MRC) to set guidelines for accrediting attention measurement solutions. A significant addition to their work is the creation of additional resources for attention measurement.

- IAB & MRC Attention Measurement Guidelines
  - Attention Measurement: Agency/Advertiser Checklist
  - Attention Measurement: Publisher Checklist
  - Attention Measurement: Request for Information Questions

eMarketer

- Attention Metrics Ecosystem 2024
- Attention Metrics 2023

WARC

- WARC Guide to Attention

Additional Research and Studies

Please note that neither CIMM nor IAB have analyzed or audited these resources for accuracy, reliability, or methodology. Inclusion here should not be construed as an endorsement of the studies or their findings. Practitioners should apply appropriate sourcing, validation protocols, and fact-checking before referencing this data for business or strategic decision-making purposes.

Adelaide

- The Adelaide 2025 Outcomes Guide

Amplified Intelligence

- The Eye-Watering Cost of Dull Media
- Business Case for Attention
- Restoring ad effectiveness with a framework for attentive reach (WARC)

Danone

- How Danone Improved Click-Through Rates by 1,243%

Dentsu

- The Attention Economy
- Play Attention - Calling Focus to Gaming

DoubleVerify

- May We Have Your Attention, Please?

Ebiquity (in partnership with Lumen & TVision)

- The Challenge of Attention
- Maximising Profit Through Attention: New Insights for Media Leaders

Havas Media Network

- Three Seminal Papers on Attention and Brand Growth
- What Do 9,000 Brand Lift Studies Teach Us About Attention & Memory? (in partnership with Lumen and BrandMetrics)

MAD//FEST London (in partnership with Lumen)

- The attention wars: 5 raging arguments shaping the future of advertising

Newsworks

- Attention - A Newsworks Study

NPR & Sounds Profitable

- The Advertising Landscape: Attention & Trust

PlaygroundXYZ

- Optimal Attention: Exploring the relationship between brand outcomes and Attention Time

RealEyes

- Meta Decodes Advertising Attention by Environments in the Wild

Screenforce Finland

- Attention measurement:An international status report

VCCP Media (in partnership with Amplified Intelligence)

- Hacking the Attention Economy

Videoweek

- Attention Please: How Does YouTube Measure Up to TV?

WARC

- Attention is not a silver bullet

Recent or Key Industry Coverage and Announcements

October 2025

Uber launches a platform-specific attention metric with Adelaide and Kantar (AdExchanger)
Nielsen enhances its cross-platform offering with attention metrics from Adelaide (Digiday)

September 2025

High-attention media is more profitable, finds Peter Field, Lumen and Newsworks (The Media Leader)
How Danone Improved Click-Through Rates by 1,243% (IAS)
4 lessons from Haleon on making attention metrics work in media buying (AdAge)

August 2025

Nielsen's RealEyes partnership offers an outcomes measurement solution (Digiday)

July 2025

Nielsen Launches Outcomes Marketplace, Debuts Ad Attention Metrics from Realeyes to Expand Beyond Reach and Frequency (Nielsen)
Amplified's Reach Curves™ Boost Smartly's Attention Tools (Amplified Intelligence)
DoubleVerify, IAS develop attention measurement solutions for Snap (MarketingDive)
Adelaide's Attention Unit 'follows data science best practice', according to audit (The Media Leader)

June 2025

Adelaide and Lumen Included in WPP Open Intelligence (WPP)
Not All Attention Is Created Equal – Especially In Sports (Infillion)
DoubleVerify Debuts Attention Measurement for Social Media (DoubleVerify)
Streaming Ad Exposures Drive Attention, Study Finds (AdvancedTV Insider)
Dentsu adds eye-tracking insights to retail media planning tools (The Grocer)
Comscore Adds Attention Metrics to Deal IDs (mrweb)
Attention Measurement Guidelines (IAB)

May 2025

How Attention Metrics Empower Brands Amid Budget Scrutiny (Alex Khan)
Unlocking Video's Full Potential: An Attention-Based Analysis of YouTube's Premium Ad Solutions (Adelaide)
Google's Move Toward Attention Metrics Could Be A Viewability Killer, Says Jaguar Land Rover (AdExchanger)
Why Attention Is No Longer Just a Metric—It's a Guarantee (TEADS)
The (next) attention revolution is here, says Dr Karen Nelson-Field (The Drum)
Dozens of Premium Publishers Join Adelaide's New 'AU Ecosystem' (ADWEEK)
Why Attention Metrics Are Showing Up In The Financial Times' RFPs (Admonsters)
What's Inside IAB and MRC's Attention Measurement Guidelines (Martech)

April 2025

High Attention, Happy Audience: Understanding the Role of Platforms & Creatives on Attention, Emotions & Outcomes (Snapchat)

December 2024
IAS Introduces New Quality Attention™ Optimization and Social Attention Measurement (IAS)

August 2024
How Sensodyne Is Optimizing TV Ads Using Attention Metrics (AdExchanger)

November 2023
Why advertisers are excited about attention metrics (Marketing Brew)