

The background features a series of concentric circles and arcs in white, green, blue, and orange. A yellow circle is partially visible in the top left corner.

THRIVE IN A SIGNAL-BASED WORLD

A PLAYBOOK FOR BRANDS
AND AGENCIES

ADWEEK BRANDED

amazon ads



A SHIFTING DIGITAL ADVERTISING LANDSCAPE



WHEN YOU EXPERIENCE SIGNAL LOSS ON YOUR PHONE,

frustration or even panic can quickly set in. Suddenly you have no way of connecting with friends, family or coworkers.

Signal loss on your GPS can be just as unnerving. Unless you have a physical map, how will you know if you're driving in the wrong direction?

Many digital marketers are feeling like they're without a map in 2024. Approximately 40% of current web traffic already operates without third-party cookies. Additionally, other non-durable identifiers are increasingly unfit for the evolving digital landscape of 2024, creating an environment that looks fundamentally different to anything most of them have ever operated in. How can

marketers ensure they can reach the right customers, with the right ads, at the right time? How will marketers understand what worked and what didn't, so they can effectively deploy their finite marketing budgets?

A 2024 IAB survey found that organizations expect these industry shifts to change the way they work, with 80% saying it's affecting the make-up and structure of their business. All these changes are occurring as marketers are grappling with a growing operational burden, stemming from the advent of retail media, and the continued transformation of TV, which continues to fragment their customers across more channels and formats. And let's not forget the push to innovate with AI.

Feeling overwhelmed and without a compass, many marketers find

themselves exhausted by all the talk of what the future of digital advertising will look like. They want less talk and more action. And above all, they want clear guidance and realistic solutions.

That's what this guide is all about. It dives into how to thrive in a world of disparate signals, turn down the noise and take back control of your advertising strategy.

Maximizing signals requires a new approach. One that will demand more integration across content, commerce, ads and media. One that will link creative, audiences and media with more depth. One that empowers humans to leverage technology to achieve their objectives. One that requires trusting models to deliver results regardless of the presence of identifiers.





3 KEY STEPS TO BUILD YOUR SIGNAL-BASED MARKETING STRATEGY:

UNIFY

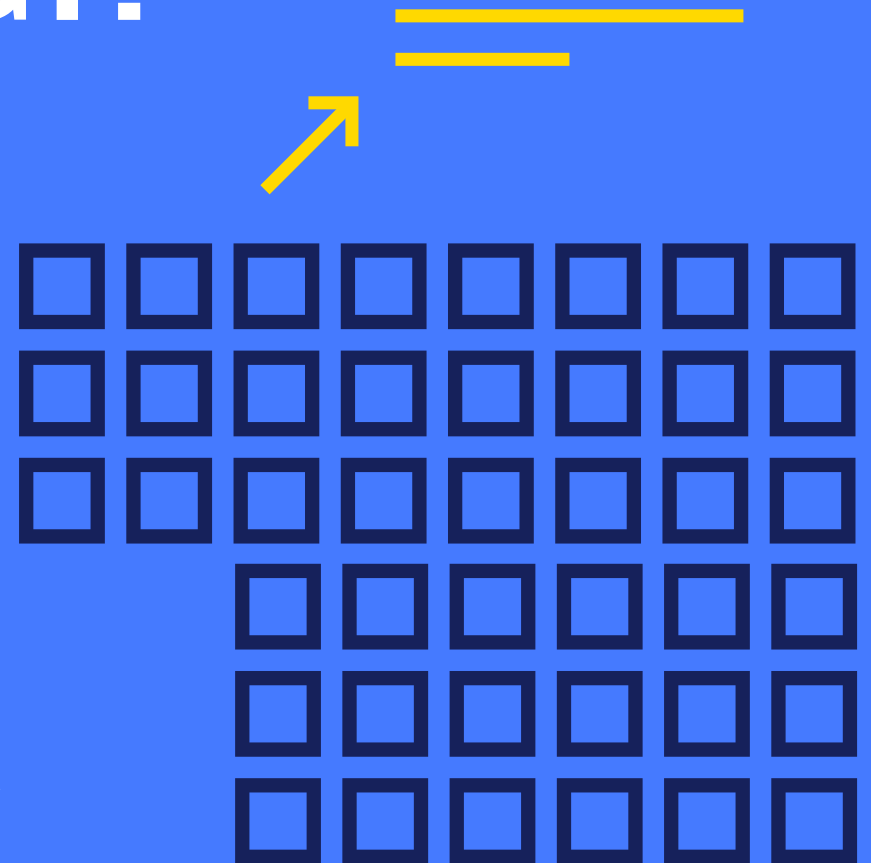
signals from your first-party environments, your partners and your marketing channels to gain a single view, which you can use to drive your audiences, planning and optimization.

BUILD

audiences and strategies based on these unified insights. A richer view creates a more precise understanding of your audiences, which in turn means your ads are more relevant. As a result, you get more out of your advertising budgets.

ACTIVATE

the insights you've developed with this unified view. Leveraging improvements in AI, automation and modeling, you can now direct goal-based technology to deliver on your objectives, harnessing the signals that you've put together from across channels.

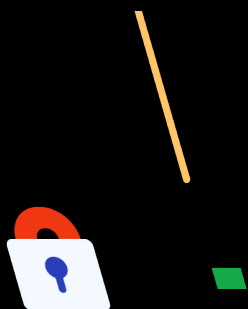


IT'S TIME TO UNIFY YOUR SIGNALS

The term **signals** refers to a wide range of aggregated consumer events and behaviors, across the path to purchase. Bringing them together, like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, can give you a unified view and help you make more informed decisions about whether or not to serve an ad, what type of ad to serve, and uncover how valuable an impression may be—and much more.

As consumers engage with brands across channels, devices and touchpoints, valuable signals can be derived from different locations.

There are three main sources for the signals you want to capture to create your unified view:



ADVERTISING SIGNALS,

such as ad performance and engagement and bid stream information, are most predominantly leveraged as they are the easiest for advertisers and technology solutions to access. However, there's so much more that you can learn about your audience's needs by going beyond ads.

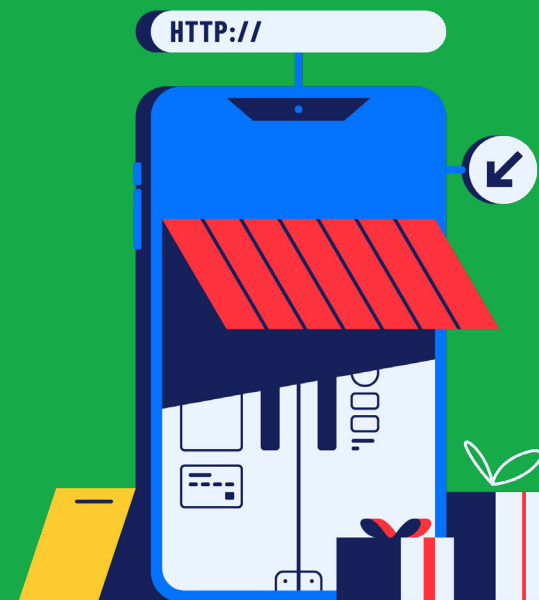
A BRAND'S FIRST-PARTY SIGNALS,

such as website app interactions and hashed customer profiles are key to ensuring strategies are relevant to the brand's relationship with its customers. This is why 71% of brands are focusing on increasing their first-party insights in the wake of signal loss, according to the IAB "State of Data" 2024 report.

A PARTNER'S SIGNALS

are a critical component to help enrich your view, especially as there are a lot of interactions taking place outside a brand's relationship with its customers and the ads it runs. Publishers, retailers and content owners have rich signals, which can provide more context into how customers like to engage with them on their properties, and what they may be likely to do next. This can include profile information, what they've historically watched or browsed, and what they've previously purchased.

Signal-based marketing brings these three essential pillars—advertising, first-party and partner signals—together in a privacy-forward manner to create a more holistic picture of audiences.



AMAZON ADS' TAKE

To maximize the power of signal-based marketing, brands and agencies need advanced interoperable technology to minimize manual effort and maximize the utility of available signals—while being privacy compliant. Brands can onboard their first-party signals securely via AWS, their CDP of choice, Amazon Events Manager or via manual upload to prepare audiences for full-funnel activation in Amazon DSP.

BUILD PRECISION-DRIVEN AND RELEVANT AUDIENCES AND MODELS



Signals that come from outside the advertiser's relationship with its customer will remain a critical element in delivering relevance. An auto brand will always benefit from shopping behaviors that might indicate someone is in the market for a new car, while a tourism brand might find customers daydreaming on travel sites as a good indicator a trip may be around the corner.


But according to the IAB "State of Data" 2024 report, 61% of brands surveyed expect it to become harder to collect demographic, user preference and behavioral data from third parties, and up to 59% of those surveyed expect to be less confident in the accuracy of data they will receive from ad partners.

The way marketers collect signals to gain a unified view of customers will change. Rather than audiences and bidders that rely on identifiers, advertisers will need to come to trust modeled audiences built in data clean rooms and predictive bidders

that leverage signals and automation to effectively deliver relevant advertising.

Rather than an obstacle, this shift is actually a great opportunity to build on traditional approaches and create a more effective targeting strategy, while also preserving customer privacy. Audiences and models limited to identifiers often ignored customers who were interested but cleared their cookies, or were on the "wrong" browser. With a signal-based marketing approach, advertisers can now maximize their opportunity to reach customers, wherever they are, at the right moment.

However, as marketers rely more on predictive technology to create audience models and drive optimization tactics, they will need to understand the methodology and controls used to create them. This will build confidence in partnerships. A unified set of signals, combined with quality methodology for building audiences and bidders, will enable marketers to continue to achieve results.



AMAZON ADS' TAKE

Advertisers need to demand technology that leverages the tools of the future to maximize ad performance. Amazon Ads' new Ad Relevance is built on Amazon Ads' extensive understanding of what creates great shopping experiences, and the connection those experiences have with ad interactions, product and category interests, and cadence of actions along the path to conversion. This technology is delivering meaningful impact for brands, including extending addressability of up to 65% of previously anonymous impressions, lowering CPMs by up to 34%, and improving CPCs by 8.8%—all with 100% budget delivery.

ACTIVATE USING AUTOMATION TO DELIVER RESULTS AT SCALE

Unifying signals and building audiences may sound like the right approach, but it may also sound like a lot of work. That brings up the question on many marketers' minds: "I see the value in unifying signals. But where am I going to get the time to do this?" As the advertising landscape continues to grow in complexity, the job of media planners, strategists and activation teams seems to grow in scope.

Agency and brand teams want to act as strategists and get ahead of these priorities, but the increasing operational burden of managing the status quo is holding them back. In research commissioned by Amazon Ads and conducted by Forrester Consulting, agencies

called out the need to automate this growing workload, citing it as the top obstacle to delivering great experiences for customers and results for their advertisers.

How can agencies overcome these challenges and move forward to a signal-based marketing approach? By embracing automation in activation. Marketers that have unified signals, and build effective models and audiences they trust, should be able to rely on their technology to do the work of achieving their objectives.

For example, advancements in the ability of Demand Side Platforms (DSPs) to deliver on a brand's goals can now enable marketers

to achieve better results in less time. Those that use signals effectively can take marketers' first-party signals and their goals to inform bidding decisions to drive desired performance throughout the funnel.


Marketers may feel like they are losing a semblance of control in making this shift, even if it does free up more time to be strategic. This is why controls are so important. Marketers should demand the ability to direct these automated tools to the inventory quality and audiences that matter to them. This enables them to build the confidence that their DSP is acting as a co-pilot, working hand in hand to deliver results.



AMAZON ADS' TAKE

Automation is the way out of marketer's operational burden, but they need solutions they can trust to deliver results. Amazon's new performance offering, Performance+ within Amazon DSP, enables marketers to load their first-party signals, set the controls they care about, input their goals and let machine learning do the rest. Performance+ is already delivering strong results for advertisers across industries and verticals, improving cost per acquisition by 30-90% over traditional manually delivered DSP campaigns, according to Amazon Ads' internal and advertiser-provided data.





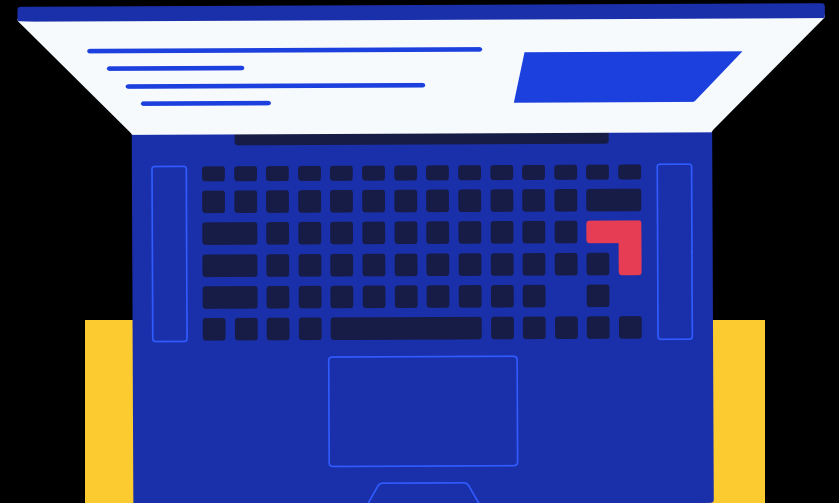
CREATE A CONNECTED SYSTEM FOR YOUR ADVERTISING STRATEGIES

Today, just **36% of U.S.** consumers surveyed by CivicScience say the majority of ads they see online are “somewhat” relevant to their interests. Signal-based marketing is how brands will address that issue through more effective advertising that boosts their credibility and conversions alike.

Part of how it will help marketers advance is that both technology and humans will be able to learn how customers respond to ads, what channels work and how they work together. This knowledge can inform the next ad served as well as the next campaign designed.


Building a connected system in which the last campaign informs the next automatically will enable marketers to work within a system that delivers compounding results.

As you become more proficient in signal-based marketing, you'll discover you're able to capture metrics in a safe environment that creates a powerful feedback loop and continuously improves ROI. While the legacy signal loss marketers are experiencing today marks a definite turning point, the transition to signal-based marketing now will result in a brighter future for brands.



AMAZON ADS' TAKE

It's never been easier to start your signal-based marketing journey, and there's no better time than now. By onboarding and activating your first-party signals onto Amazon DSP, with audiences built in Amazon Marketing Cloud, you can navigate through the complexity, and get back to delivering relevant advertising that reaches your customers.



ABOUT AMAZON AD TECH

Amazon's Ad Tech can deliver relevancy at scale throughout the funnel, for any advertiser. With unique, premium supply, billions of differentiated signals, and next-generation technology built for the future of advertising, Amazon DSP is helping marketers achieve their outcomes, drive greater insights, and connect media, commerce, content, and business signals in privacy-first ways.



The background is a solid black field. It features several concentric circles of varying diameters, drawn with thin white lines. Interspersed among these circles are various colored arcs and segments: a yellow arc in the top-left corner, a green arc on the left side, a red arc on the bottom-right, and a blue arc at the very bottom. Small white dots are placed at specific points where the circles intersect or at other strategic locations. The central text is horizontally aligned and spans across the middle of the composition.

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