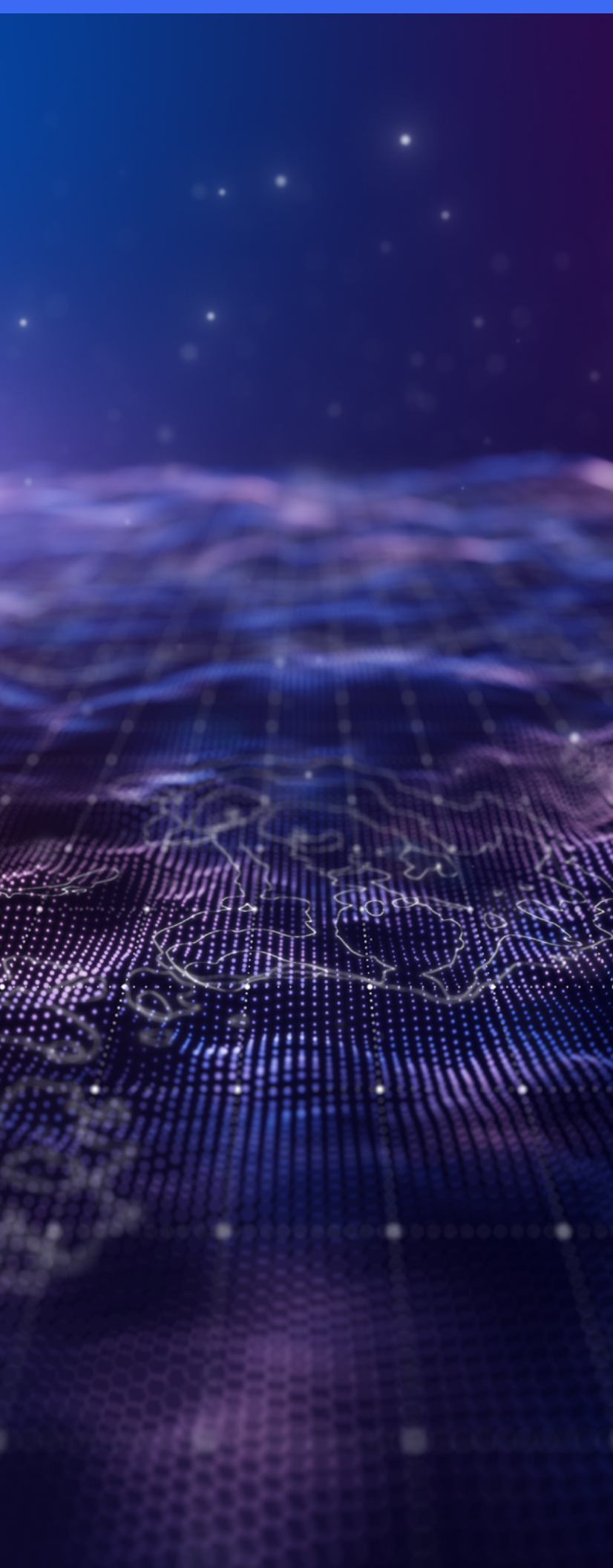




Crumbling Cookies, Fresh Strategies

A Playbook of Marketing Lessons
from the Cookie Countdown



Executive Summary

The anticipation of a cookieless digital ecosystem prompted marketers to engage in deep, forward-thinking strategies and innovations. While third-party cookies remain, their reduced significance—along with broader signal loss—continues to push brands to evolve in a landscape increasingly focused on privacy and consumer trust.

This report provides actionable strategies for the post-cookie era by harnessing the innovative ideas and insights that emerged during this critical period. Marketers can turn their strategic preparations into real-world success by applying these forward-thinking concepts—the evolution of first-party data, capitalizing on walled gardens, and redefining approaches to targeting, personalization, and measurement. The goal is to future-proof marketing efforts and build stronger, more authentic connections with today's privacy-conscious consumers.

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Introduction: Harnessing Innovation from the Cookie Crisis

In 2020, when Google announced its plan to phase out third-party cookies in its Chrome browser, it sparked a period of unprecedented innovation in marketing. With other browsers like Safari, Firefox, and Opera already limiting third-party cookie use, the looming changes for Chrome—accounting for over 60% of global browser activity—signaled a major shift. Nearly 95% of browser activity was poised to be impacted, forcing marketers to prepare for a future without the data collection methods they had relied on for years.

Faced with this impending loss, marketers began developing new, forward-thinking strategies. Teams around the world reimagined how they could collect and use data, invest in first-party data strategies, and build stronger, privacy-conscious relationships with consumers. Creative solutions emerged as marketers turned signal loss into an opportunity for deeper innovation—rethinking everything from targeting and personalization to measurement and optimization.

Then, in an unexpected twist, Google announced it would delay the deprecation of third-party cookies, allowing their use to continue for now. While this brought temporary relief, the writing was on the wall: third-party cookies were never going to be the same. Their influence has diminished, consumers are more aware of data privacy, and governments are enacting stricter regulations. And as [eMarketer reported](#), almost 90% of US browsers could become cookieless long-term: “cookies are going to be the exception rather than the rule.”

In an era where cookies persist but their role is increasingly limited, it's incumbent for digital marketers to adopt a post-cookie mindset today—not tomorrow.

The creative thinking and problem-solving that marketers have been refining over the last several years weren't developed in vain; in fact, they're more relevant now than ever as the industry shifts toward privacy-first strategies that prioritize trust, transparency, and consumer choice.

In this report, we'll explore how to apply these groundbreaking ideas—honed during preparations for a cookieless world—to marketing in the post-cookie era. From first-party data strategies to creative targeting and measurement approaches, marketers now have the opportunity to transform uncertainty into opportunity and build a stronger, future-proofed foundation for success.





Research and Planning in a Privacy-First World

As marketers anticipated a world with reduced reliance on third-party cookies, they unlocked new and creative ways to build campaigns. The shift toward privacy-compliant methods of collecting audience insights has led to exploring richer, more direct engagement strategies that extend beyond cookie-based tracking. Walled gardens have emerged as a critical component of this evolution, offering access to large, first-party datasets and advanced tracking systems that help fill gaps left by third-party cookies.

This chapter explores how marketers can continue to innovate in the initial stages of marketing campaigns—research and planning—by leveraging walled gardens and first-party data to create more dynamic and privacy-conscious campaigns.

NAVIGATING AUDIENCE INSIGHTS IN A DATA-LIMITED ENVIRONMENT

For years, marketers relied heavily on third-party cookies to gather audience insights, but this created a one-size-fits-all approach to data collection. As the industry shifts away from this model, marketers are realizing the value of more diverse, creative methods to understand their audience. Direct engagement through surveys, focus groups, and other techniques offers a more personal, authentic connection to consumer behavior.

While first-party data collection offers an opportunity for more nuanced insights, walled gardens can play a vital role in maintaining access to detailed audience behaviors at scale. Platforms like Google, Meta, and Amazon provide a treasure trove of first-party data that allows marketers to continue building strong audience profiles, even as cookie usage changes.



The new playbook:

- **Engage in qualitative research.** Surveys, focus groups, and interviews provide rich, first-hand insights into consumer preferences and motivations. This helps marketers tailor more personalized experiences and anticipate future behavior shifts.
- **Encourage voluntary data sharing.** [67% of US adults turn off cookies or website tracking to protect their privacy.](#) Use incentives such as loyalty programs or exclusive content to build trust and transparency with customers. When consumers opt in, they're more likely to share accurate information, improving personalization and compliance.
- **Utilize walled gardens for scale.** Platforms like Google, Meta, and Amazon still offer extensive audience insights, allowing for detailed segmentation. These platforms help bridge the gap left by third-party cookies, maintaining the scale needed for large campaigns while respecting privacy constraints.

REIMAGINING LONG-TERM TRACKING STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT

Third-party cookies provided a convenient way to track users across sessions, but this often led to a narrow focus on passive data collection. As marketers looked beyond cookies, they began focusing more on fostering active engagement and building long-term relationships through repeat interactions. This shift allows for more personalized and dynamic customer journeys, where user-initiated actions become a central part of tracking efforts.

Walled gardens are particularly useful in this context, as their built-in log-in systems offer a consistent and unified view of users across devices and sessions. This continuity makes it easier for marketers to maintain long-term profiles without relying on third-party tracking, allowing them to design more meaningful, personalized user experiences.



The new playbook:

- **Promote repeated log-ins.** Encourage users to log in frequently by highlighting benefits like personalized recommendations and easier access to exclusive features. Consistent log-ins help brands gather more accurate, first-party data while enhancing the customer experience.
- **Offer exclusive content.** Incentivize user engagement with special deals, early access to products, or unique content only available to logged-in users. This approach builds loyalty while simultaneously gathering valuable, permission-based data that supports long-term user tracking.
- **Utilize walled gardens for seamless tracking.** Platforms like Meta, Google, and Amazon leverage mandatory log-ins to create consistent profiles across devices and sessions. This continuous tracking allows marketers to maintain detailed user data without relying on third-party cookies, ensuring long-term relationship building at scale.



BRIDGING DATA GAPS ACROSS CHANNELS AND PLATFORMS

Historically, third-party cookies allowed marketers to track users across platforms, giving them a broad view of consumer behavior. However, this approach often limited how data was collected and shared. As marketers began to prepare for a reduced cookie environment, they realized that creative partnerships and new tools could provide broader insights than cookies alone ever did.

By forming strategic partnerships and utilizing tools like data clean rooms, marketers can collaborate with other platforms to create privacy-compliant data sharing that fills the gaps left by less cookie usage. Walled gardens also serve as a critical bridge, providing a unified view of users across their vast ecosystems, allowing for more complete cross-channel strategies.



The new playbook:

- **Form platform partnerships.** Collaborate with other platforms to exchange first-party data, which provides a more complete understanding of cross-channel behavior. This collaboration enables brands to enrich audience insights while staying compliant with data privacy regulations.
- **Use data clean rooms.** Leverage data clean rooms to securely analyze shared datasets without violating privacy laws. These tools enable marketers to merge data with partners, gaining a clearer view of consumer activity across platforms while maintaining compliance and data integrity.
- **Focus on owned data.** Strengthen first-party data collection through interactions on websites, apps, and emails to create a more comprehensive audience profile. By centralizing data, brands can enhance personalization efforts and drive deeper customer engagement without relying on third-party cookies.





PREDICTING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR WITH LESS DATA

As marketers prepared for a post-cookie world, they began finding new ways to predict consumer behavior with less granular data. Predictive models that once relied heavily on third-party cookies began to incorporate broader, more dynamic datasets, such as transactional and customer service data.

This shift pushed marketers to rely more on real-time analytics, AI, and machine learning to refine their predictions and develop smarter strategies. Now, with third-party cookies still available, we can combine the new thinking with the old for transformative views into consumer behavior.



The new playbook:

- **Incorporate broader data sets.** Leverage transactional, CRM, and customer service data to enhance prediction accuracy in a cookieless world. This approach deepens consumer insights and offers a more holistic view of behavior, leading to improved decision-making and strategy development.
- **Utilize real-time analytics.** Real-time data helps marketers quickly adapt to consumer behaviors as they evolve, improving responsiveness. By integrating live insights, brands can make data-driven decisions faster, staying ahead of consumer trends with greater precision.
- **Employ AI and machine learning.** AI and machine learning algorithms allow marketers to analyze and interpret complex datasets efficiently. These tools refine predictive models, enabling more accurate forecasting and optimizing campaigns based on evolving customer behaviors.



RETHINKING CONTINUOUS DATA COLLECTION

Marketers once depended on third-party cookies to passively gather data about users without needing their active participation. As the landscape evolved, many began exploring ways to actively engage consumers in data collection. The shift from passive to active data collection allows marketers to build stronger, more meaningful relationships with customers by encouraging them to share data willingly.

Walled gardens, with their ability to facilitate both passive and active engagement, offer significant opportunities for continuous data collection. Through interactive content, incentives, and advanced first-party tracking, marketers can now foster deeper engagement with their audiences, while still complying with privacy regulations.



The new playbook:

- **Offer interactive content.** Use engaging tools like quizzes, polls, or interactive videos to encourage users to willingly share data. This active approach enhances personalization, leading to deeper relationships with customers and more precise audience segmentation.
- **Provide incentives for data sharing.** Reward consumers for willingly sharing their data by offering exclusive content, discounts, or loyalty program perks. This fosters trust, encourages more accurate data input, and strengthens customer loyalty.
- **Leverage walled gardens for continuous engagement.** Platforms like Google, Meta, and Amazon enable both passive and active data collection through tools like interactive ads and in-app activities. These ecosystems ensure marketers can continuously gather and analyze engagement data, maintaining compliance without sacrificing depth of insights.

Targeting and Bidding: Evolving Data Strategies

As marketers look ahead to a future with reduced third-party cookie usage, new challenges and opportunities arise in how to reach the right audiences and maximize ad spend. While cookies once made targeting and bidding feel almost effortless, they also limited the creativity marketers could apply to their strategies. Now, as cookies become less central, marketers are turning to alternative approaches that blend first-party data with innovative methods to maintain precision. In this landscape, walled gardens are proving invaluable, offering access to high-quality data that helps marketers navigate this new reality while staying privacy-compliant.

This chapter explores how marketers can adapt their targeting and bidding strategies to use some of the smart ideas from the last few years of the cookie crisis.

MAINTAINING PRECISION MARKETING IN A PRIVACY-FIRST LANDSCAPE

Even though third-party cookies aren't fully gone, their relevance is diminishing, and marketers must rethink how they deliver personalized experiences. In the past, cookies allowed for almost effortless retargeting, following users across the web and delivering ads based on their behaviors. But as consumers increasingly reject this “creepy” form of targeting, it's clear that the old way of using cookies for precision marketing has run its course.

This transition opens the door for marketers to explore alternative data sources that are both more respectful of user privacy and more effective at driving relevant messaging. By focusing on first-party data from loyalty programs, customer feedback, and surveys, marketers can still deliver highly targeted experiences without relying so heavily on third-party data. Walled gardens, with their vast pools of first-party data, are crucial in maintaining precision targeting in this environment.



The new playbook:

- **Leverage first-party data from loyalty programs and surveys.**
Use customer interactions from loyalty programs, surveys, and direct feedback to inform your targeting strategies. This data is not only more accurate but also builds trust with consumers, enabling more personalized and privacy-conscious marketing.
- **Collaborate with publishers with access to first-party data.**
Partner with publishers and platforms that possess large pools of first-party data to tap into their audience insights. This collaboration ensures marketers can maintain precision in their campaigns without relying on third-party cookies.
- **Explore contextual targeting.** Shift towards contextual targeting by aligning ads with relevant content rather than tracking users across the web. This strategy increases ad relevance while respecting consumer privacy, as it does not require invasive tracking techniques.



OPTIMIZING BIDDING STRATEGIES WITH REDUCED DATA ACCESS

Accurate bidding has always relied on conversion signals to optimize media spend and maximize ROI. However, as third-party cookies become less effective, the feedback loop that fuels bidding decisions may start to break down. Without third-party data to track conversions across multiple sites, it becomes harder to ensure your bidding strategy is delivering the right results.

But instead of seeing this as a limitation, marketers can embrace new tools and technologies that allow them to continue gathering conversion signals through first-party data. By adopting enhanced conversion strategies and utilizing APIs that connect CRM data, marketers can still refine their bidding to hit that sweet spot of maximizing impressions without overspending. Walled gardens have developed sophisticated tools to help advertisers maintain accuracy in bidding through direct access to high-quality data.



The new playbook:

- **Utilize enhanced conversions.** Securely collect and match first-party data to maintain strong bid adjustments and performance. This strategy helps optimize conversions even as third-party tracking declines, ensuring your campaigns remain effective and privacy-compliant.
- **Adopt conversion APIs.** Leverage APIs that connect CRM data to digital advertising platforms to enhance the accuracy of conversion tracking. This integration enables smarter bidding decisions, giving marketers the ability to refine campaigns based on reliable first-party signals.
- **Explore dynamic bidding strategies.** Implement AI-powered bidding tools that adjust bids in real-time based on first-party and contextual data. These tools allow for more agile media spend management, ensuring you can maximize impressions without overspending.



ADAPTING REAL-TIME BIDDING FOR MODERN PRIVACY STANDARDS

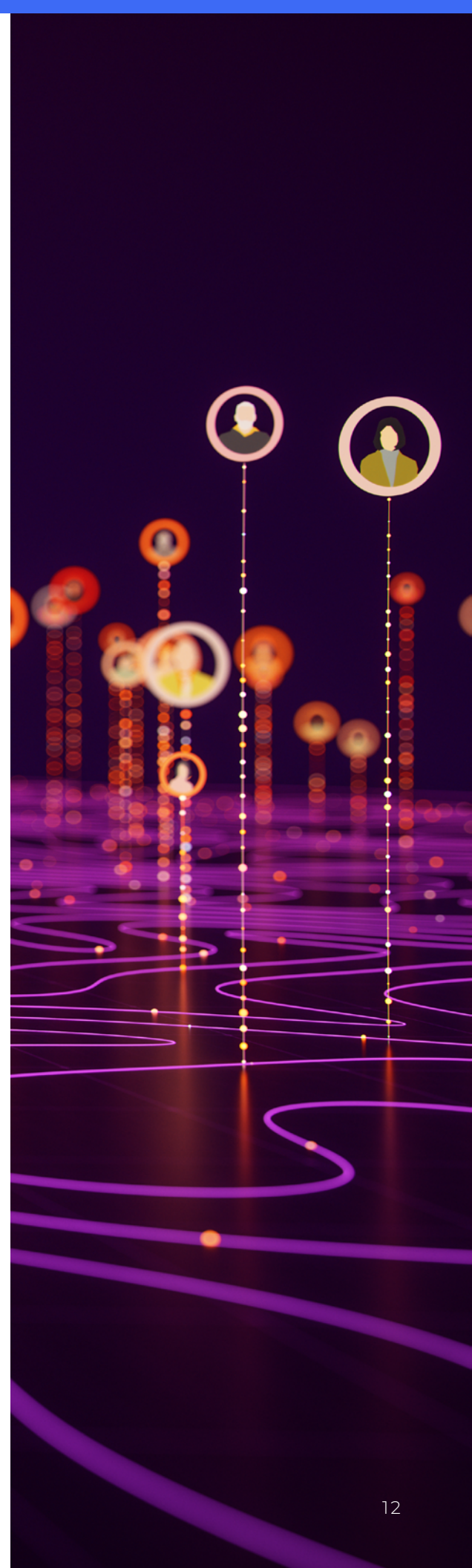
Real-time bidding (RTB) is a cornerstone of programmatic advertising, but as third-party cookies lose their value, RTB's efficiency is being challenged. The ability to instantly process user data to bid on ad impressions in real-time has long been fueled by third-party cookies, which provided crucial insights on user demographics and behaviors. As the landscape changes, RTB strategies need to evolve to maintain efficiency.

Marketers are now exploring alternatives to traditional RTB by integrating first-party data into their bidding strategies and leveraging private marketplace (PMP) deals to access premium ad inventory. Walled gardens are uniquely positioned to support this shift, as their real-time bidding platforms are powered by extensive first-party data, ensuring that ad impressions are still targeted efficiently even as third-party cookies diminish.



The new playbook:

- **Integrate first-party data into RTB.** Incorporate data from your own platforms—such as CRM interactions and website activity—to refine your real-time bidding strategies. This shift allows for more accurate targeting and better ad placement without relying on third-party cookies.
- **Adopt alternative RTB technologies.** Explore new real-time bidding solutions that rely on machine learning and contextual signals, rather than cookies, to drive ad performance. These innovations ensure that RTB remains efficient while aligning with privacy standards and evolving user behaviors.
- **Leverage walled gardens for efficient RTB.** Platforms like Meta and Amazon offer RTB solutions powered by first-party data, ensuring continued accuracy in targeting high-value users. Their vast data ecosystems allow for efficient real-time bidding, even as cookie-based strategies decline.





OVERCOMING AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION CHALLENGES IN A POST-COOKIE ERA

Audience segmentation is a critical aspect of any marketing strategy, but with fewer third-party cookies to rely on, marketers will face challenges in creating highly specific audience segments. Traditional segmentation methods that tracked user behaviors across websites are becoming less feasible, forcing marketers to rethink how they group and target consumers.

Rather than defaulting to broader, less accurate segments, marketers can lean on first-party data for more granular segmentation. By encouraging interaction through loyalty programs, customer engagement initiatives, and personalized experiences, marketers can still create detailed audience segments that allow for targeted messaging and bidding. Walled gardens provide a wealth of data around user preferences and behaviors, helping advertisers build and target more precise segments.



The new playbook:

- **Use first-party data for segmentation.** Leverage customer interactions like purchase history and preferences to create more granular audience segments. This approach ensures that even without third-party cookies, you can deliver targeted messaging that resonates with specific customer needs.
- **Foster interaction through engagement programs.** Build loyalty programs and customer engagement initiatives to encourage users to share data. These interactions provide valuable first-party data, helping you refine audience segments and offer more personalized experiences.
- **Refine messaging through segmentation.** Tailor your offers, recommendations, and content to fit the specific needs of different audience segments. This not only increases relevance but also drives higher engagement and conversion rates.



ENHANCING TARGETING ACCURACY AMIDST STRICTER PRIVACY REGULATIONS

As privacy regulations become stricter, marketers must balance their need for accurate targeting with the demand for compliance. Traditional methods of tracking users across sites are no longer viable, pushing marketers to embrace privacy-first targeting approaches that still deliver relevance without invading user privacy.

One promising method is contextual targeting, which allows marketers to serve ads based on the content users are engaging with rather than their browsing history. This respects user privacy while still ensuring that ads are relevant and engaging. As more users become aware of how their data is used, trust and transparency will become key elements in building effective targeting strategies. Walled gardens, with their vast, privacy-compliant data, help marketers target users while maintaining a high level of trust.



The new playbook:

- **Develop comprehensive consent systems.** Implement clear, user-friendly consent mechanisms to ensure all data collection is fully compliant with privacy regulations. This approach builds trust and helps maintain targeting accuracy while respecting user preferences.
- **Embrace transparency.** Clearly communicate how and why user data is being collected and used. According to a study, [71% of consumers are more likely to trust a company with their data if it's transparent](#) about how it's handled. Transparency fosters loyalty and positions brands as privacy-conscious, a key factor in retaining trust amid stricter regulations.
- **Leverage walled gardens for privacy-compliant targeting.** Platforms like Meta and Google utilize rich, privacy-compliant first-party data and AI-driven personalization tools to offer targeted ads without relying on cookies. Their vast ecosystems provide marketers with the ability to deliver relevant messages while maintaining compliance with privacy regulations.

Ad Creative and Personalization: Engaging Audiences in the Post-Cookie World

As the landscape of digital marketing evolves with growing privacy concerns, the role of ad creative and personalization is shifting. While third-party cookies are still part of the ecosystem, their influence is diminishing, prompting marketers to rethink how they create personalized ad experiences. The reduced reliance on cookies doesn't have to mean the end of personalization—it's an opportunity to innovate with new approaches that balance broad audience appeal and personal connections.

In this chapter, we'll explore how marketers can continue to create tailored ad experiences using a combination of first-party data and scalable, adaptive content. Walled gardens play a pivotal role here, offering access to high-quality data that helps maintain personalization without violating privacy standards, enabling marketers to craft more engaging and creative campaigns.

PERSONALIZING AD EXPERIENCES IN A POST-COOKIE ENVIRONMENT

Third-party cookies once made hyper-targeted ad personalization effortless, but the growing emphasis on privacy means brands are increasingly turning to other methods for personalizing ads. While it may seem like personalization is becoming harder without cookies, it's actually an opportunity for marketers to explore more creative ways to engage their audiences. Moving toward thematic campaigns and scalable content allows brands to maintain a sense of personalization while broadening their creative approach.

By leveraging first-party data and interactive content that adjusts based on user interactions, brands can continue to deliver personalized experiences that resonate with diverse audiences. Walled gardens offer a reliable solution by providing detailed audience segmentation through their extensive first-party data, ensuring that ads can still be personalized to the right users.



The new playbook:

- **Focus on thematic campaigns.** Build campaigns around broad, universal themes that resonate with different audience segments. This approach allows for personalization through user interaction, maintaining relevance without needing third-party cookies.
- **Utilize dynamic, adaptive content.** Create adaptive content that changes in real-time based on user behavior on your platform. Studies show that [91% of consumers are more likely to engage with content tailored to them](#), highlighting the importance of dynamic personalization in keeping audiences engaged.
- **Leverage walled gardens for personalized insights.** Platforms like Google and Meta enable detailed audience segmentation through their extensive first-party data. This allows for personalized ad experiences to continue at scale, all while maintaining privacy compliance.



ENSURING CONSISTENT BRAND MESSAGING ACROSS FRAGMENTED PLATFORMS

In an omnichannel world, ensuring consistent brand voice and messaging across all platforms is crucial. However, as privacy regulations increase and tracking capabilities become more limited, maintaining that consistency becomes harder. With reduced access to cross-platform data, marketers face the challenge of ensuring that their ads reflect the right messaging, no matter who is seeing them or where they are in the customer journey.

To overcome this, marketers must develop comprehensive brand guidelines and use centralized creative management tools that can track and measure campaign performance across platforms. This ensures that even as data becomes less granular, the brand's voice remains clear and consistent. Walled gardens provide a helpful solution, offering tools to manage content and maintain consistent messaging across their ecosystems.



The new playbook:

- **Develop strong brand guidelines.** Establish clear, comprehensive brand guidelines that define your voice, tone, and visual elements. This foundation ensures consistency across all platforms, even when tracking capabilities are limited, helping maintain a cohesive customer experience.
- **Centralize creative management.** Use centralized creative management tools to oversee campaign performance across channels. According to a study, consistently presented brands are 3.5 times more visible to customers, making creative management crucial for maintaining brand identity across different touchpoints.
- **Focus on omnichannel measurement.** Analyze performance data from multiple platforms to ensure your messaging remains aligned and consistent. This approach enables you to adapt campaigns in real-time, ensuring that your brand's voice stays strong across every stage of the customer journey.



DISCOVERING NEW AUDIENCES WITHOUT RELYING ON TRADITIONAL TRACKING METHODS

While third-party cookies still exist, marketers can no longer rely on them as the primary tool for discovering new audiences. Cookies once enabled advertisers to track user behavior across sites and deliver ads at the right time, but with privacy concerns growing, brands are finding it harder to identify and reach new customers. This shift challenges marketers to get creative with how they connect with audiences and establish their brand presence.

By optimizing organic channels like SEO, collaborating with influencers, and creating content with viral potential, brands can continue to expand their reach and build awareness. Walled gardens also offer promotional tools like boosted posts and sponsored content that help increase visibility and engagement in privacy-compliant ways.



The new playbook:

- **Optimize SEO for organic reach.** Prioritize high-quality, valuable content that aligns with search intent to improve your visibility in search results. Brands that invest in SEO see an average of [14.6% conversion rate from organic search traffic](#), making it a powerful tool for reaching new audiences without relying on cookies.
- **Collaborate with influencers.** Partner with influencers who align with your brand values to authentically reach new audiences. Influencer marketing delivers an [11x higher ROI than traditional banner ads](#), making it a cost-effective way to drive awareness and discover new customers.
- **Create viral, shareable content.** Develop content that resonates with your audience and encourages them to share it. Engaging content helps your brand gain visibility organically, as [92% of consumers trust recommendations from peers](#) over traditional ads, boosting your chances of going viral.





MAINTAINING FEEDBACK LOOPS TO REFINE CREATIVE PERFORMANCE

The challenge of reduced tracking extends to measuring the success of creative campaigns. Without clear metrics, it becomes difficult to assess which ad creatives are driving the most engagement and conversions. In a world where detailed data is harder to come by, marketers must rely on more iterative approaches, like A/B testing, to optimize creative strategies. This process, while slower, ensures that brands can continue to refine their messaging for maximum impact.

Aggregated engagement metrics like clicks, shares, and comments provide valuable insights into how well your content is resonating with audiences. Walled gardens, which offer comprehensive performance analytics, can help guide this process by providing detailed, real-time feedback on creative effectiveness.



The new playbook:

- **Develop a robust A/B testing framework.** Continuously test different variations of your creative to understand what resonates best with your audience. According to research, [A/B testing can increase conversion rates by 49%](#), making it an essential tool for optimizing creative performance in a low-tracking world.
- **Use engagement metrics to guide creative development.** Analyze aggregated metrics like clicks, shares, and comments to refine your creative strategy. These metrics provide valuable feedback in lieu of detailed tracking data, helping marketers identify which content drives the most engagement and impact.
- **Implement AI-powered creative optimization.** Leverage AI tools to automate the A/B testing process, allowing for faster iterations and more efficient optimization of creative. With AI, you can automatically promote the best-performing creatives, ensuring maximum efficiency and impact.

Measurement and Optimization: Adapting to a New Data Landscape

As marketers transition into a more privacy-conscious world, the ability to measure and optimize campaigns is becoming more complex. While third-party cookies are still in play, their relevance is diminishing, requiring marketers to rely on alternative methods to gather insights, track effectiveness, and optimize future campaigns. This shift encourages marketers to rethink how they capture and interpret data, leaning more heavily on first-party sources and creative solutions.

Walled gardens offer a significant advantage in this evolving landscape, providing robust measurement tools that are both privacy-compliant and effective. In this chapter, we'll explore how marketers can continue to optimize campaigns using new measurement frameworks while leveraging the powerful insights available within walled gardens.

SUSTAINING EFFECTIVE MEASUREMENT WITH LESS GRANULAR DATA

For years, third-party cookies gave marketers access to granular insights about users, including demographics, device types, and behaviors. However, as reliance on these cookies fades, marketers need to adjust their measurement strategies. The challenge now lies in optimizing campaigns with less precise data, which can lead to a more generalized view of user behavior and campaign performance.

The key to overcoming this challenge is leveraging first-party data and adopting transparency-first approaches to data collection. This ensures that while metrics may be less granular, they are still accurate and reliable. Walled gardens, with their opt-in environments, provide aggregated data and cohort-based insights that respect user privacy while still delivering actionable metrics.



The new playbook:

- **Implement cross-device tracking.** Establish a system that connects user interactions across multiple devices to create a unified view of customer behavior. This approach can help fill gaps left by the loss of cookie-based insights, with research showing that 52% of users switch between devices while interacting with brands online.
- **Adopt opt-in data strategies.** Prioritize transparency in your data collection efforts by asking users for explicit consent. Deloitte reports that brands prioritizing transparency and humanity in their data practices are 2.5 times more likely to gain customer consent for personal data sharing, leading to more reliable and compliant data while respecting user privacy.
- **Utilize user surveys and feedback.** Use surveys and direct feedback to gather qualitative insights from your audience. Personal insights from these methods can help you compensate for the lack of detailed tracking, ensuring your campaigns remain relevant and user-focused.



BRIDGING THE ONLINE AND OFFLINE DATA DIVIDE FOR HOLISTIC INSIGHTS

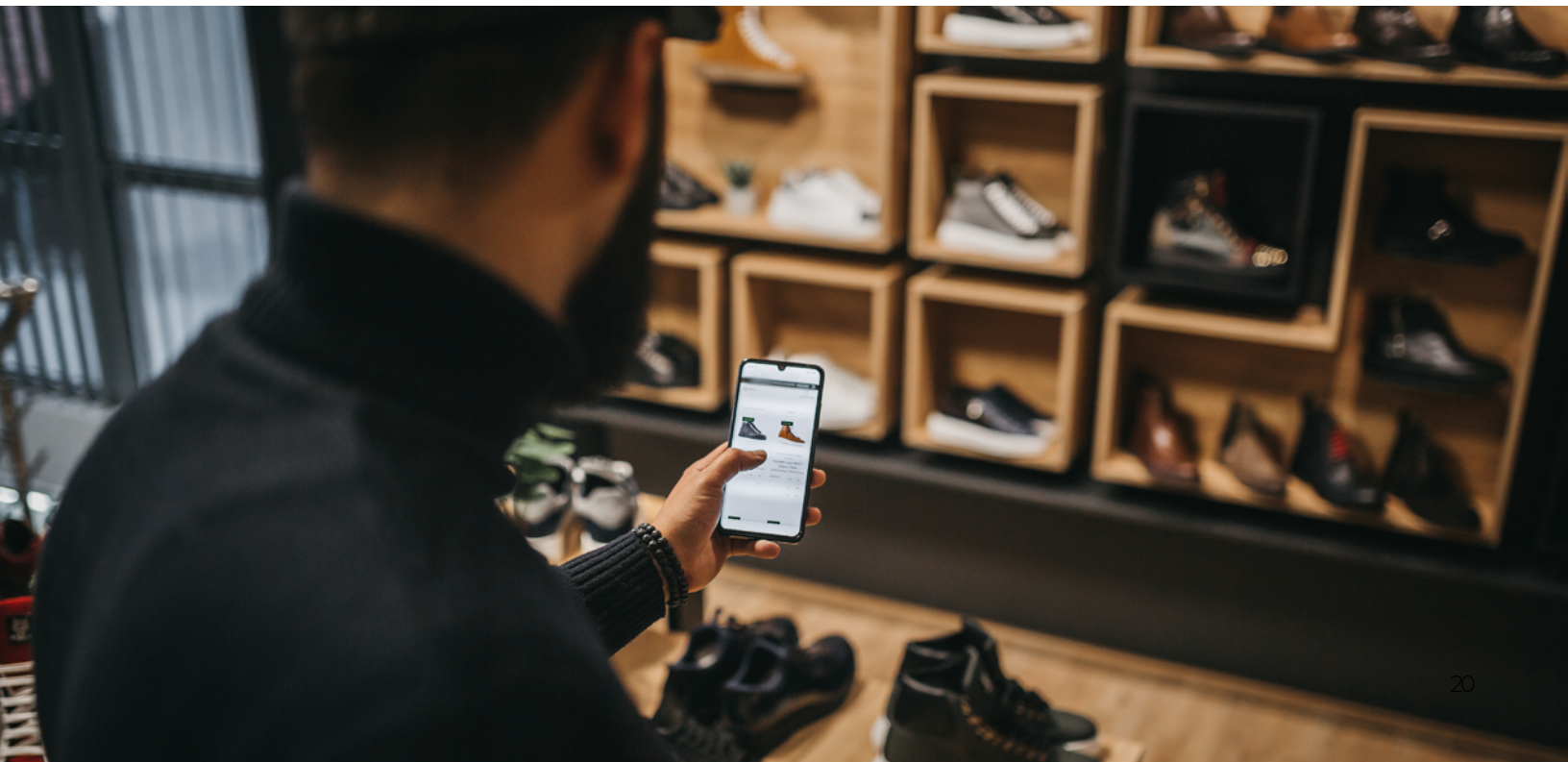
Connecting online marketing efforts to offline behavior has always been a challenge, but with fewer third-party cookies to bridge the gap, it becomes even harder. Measuring how online campaigns impact in-store purchases or offline actions requires new technologies and strategies that offer a holistic view of the customer journey.

By integrating CRM software with other systems like ERP or POS, marketers can connect the dots between online and offline behaviors more effectively. These integrations enable better data sharing and collaboration across teams, allowing for a more accurate understanding of how digital campaigns drive real-world engagement. Walled gardens further enhance this connection by offering tools that help marketers measure the impact of online efforts on offline results.



The new playbook:

- **Utilize POS data integration.** Connect in-store purchases to online ad campaigns to measure the direct influence of digital strategies. Studies reveal that [87% of consumers start their purchase journey online before completing transactions in-store](#), making it crucial to align POS and online data.
- **Create holistic measurement frameworks.** Develop systems that combine online and offline metrics for a comprehensive view of campaign success. A holistic approach helps marketers see the full impact of their efforts across all channels, ensuring they optimize strategies based on both digital and in-store insights.
- **Leverage walled gardens for measuring online-to-offline impact.** Platforms like Meta and Amazon provide tools that allow advertisers to import CRM data and track online ad exposure's effect on offline actions, such as store visits and sales. These tools help marketers better connect digital efforts to real-world outcomes.



MAKING FIRST-PARTY DATA THE CORE OF PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

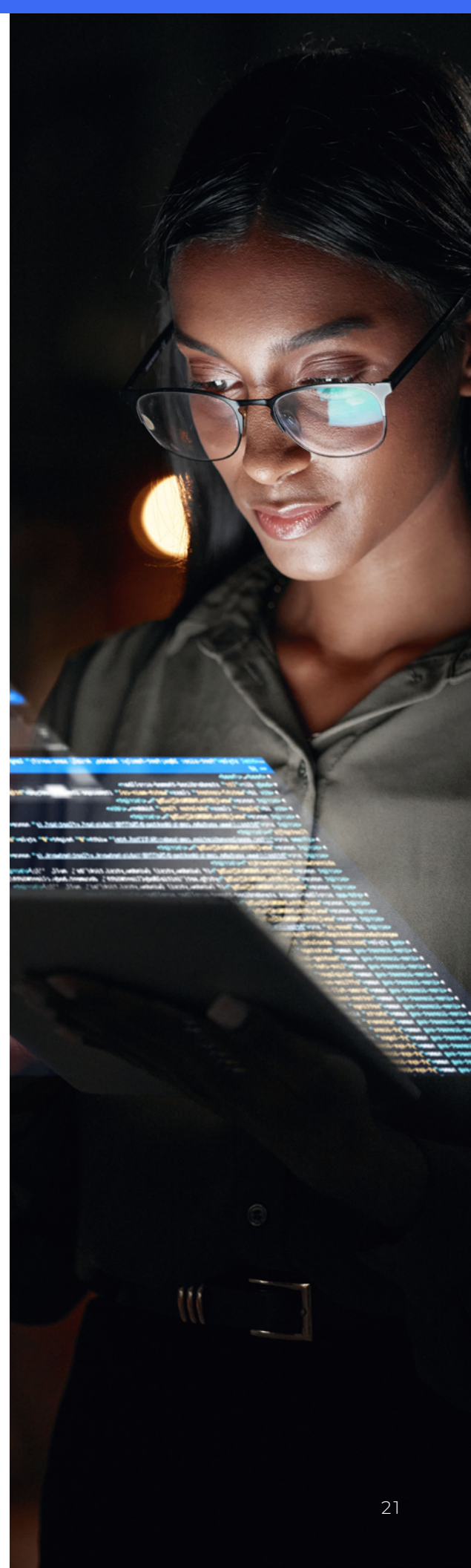
As third-party data becomes less reliable, first-party data is poised to take center stage in measurement and optimization efforts. Marketers who can effectively collect, manage, and analyze their first-party data will have a significant advantage when it comes to building personalized, privacy-compliant campaigns. This shift presents an opportunity to form deeper customer relationships through personalized experiences that build on trust and transparency.

Using first-party data also allows marketers to explore advanced analytics techniques, such as predictive modeling, to anticipate customer needs and optimize campaigns accordingly. Walled gardens, with their advanced data-processing capabilities, can help marketers maximize the potential of their first-party data by providing tools to personalize experiences based on detailed audience insights.



The new playbook:

- **Utilize predictive analytics.** Businesses that effectively utilize predictive analytics can achieve a [10-20% increase in revenue and a 15-30% reduction in costs](#) compared to their peers who do not leverage data insights.
- **Build loyalty programs.** Encourage data sharing by offering incentives like discounts or rewards in exchange for completing surveys or providing feedback. This enriches your first-party data, with research showing that [84% of consumers are more likely to stick with a brand that offers a loyalty program](#).
- **Leverage walled gardens for enhanced personalization.** Platforms like Amazon Marketing Cloud allow you to integrate first-party data with platform insights, providing a complete view of your audience. This leads to more personalized campaigns and better performance tracking without reliance on third-party cookies.





SHIFTING ATTRIBUTION MODELS TO ADAPT TO PRIVACY-DRIVEN LIMITATIONS

As privacy-driven changes reshape the digital landscape, traditional attribution models that rely heavily on third-party cookies are becoming less effective. With these cookies now playing a diminished role, marketers must rethink how they track and attribute conversions across the customer journey. The challenge lies in ensuring that marketing resources are allocated accurately without the same level of visibility that third-party cookies once provided.

By adopting cookieless attribution models like incrementality testing and media mix modeling (MMM), marketers can continue to measure performance effectively across channels. Walled gardens, with their proprietary attribution tools, offer an added advantage by providing deeper insights into user behavior within their platforms, helping brands refine their strategies in a privacy-first world.



The new playbook:

- **Adopt incrementality testing:** Run controlled experiments to measure the additional impact of your marketing campaigns beyond baseline activity. Incrementality tests provide clearer insights into whether a campaign drives new engagement or conversions.
- **Leverage media mix modeling (MMM):** Use historical data across channels to understand which marketing efforts contribute most to key outcomes. MMM helps marketers better allocate resources based on what's working across both digital and offline channels.
- **Integrate AI-driven attribution tools:** Implement AI-based solutions to analyze user behavior, predict the effectiveness of campaigns, and offer real-time insights into where adjustments should be made.



BUILDING A FLEXIBLE, FUTURE-PROOF MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

In an environment where privacy regulations are constantly evolving, building a measurement framework that is both flexible and future-proof has become a necessity. As third-party cookies lose relevance and consumer trust becomes paramount, marketers must ensure that their strategies can quickly adapt to new privacy requirements while continuing to drive performance.

To stay ahead, marketers need to regularly audit their data collection practices and integrate emerging technologies into their measurement frameworks. Walled gardens offer a solution through their closed ecosystems and built-in compliance tools, allowing brands to navigate privacy regulations with minimal disruption while maintaining access to essential performance data.



The new playbook:

- **Stay informed of regulatory changes:** Continuously monitor industry and legal developments to stay ahead of evolving privacy laws. This ensures that your measurement strategies remain compliant and can adapt as new rules come into play.
- **Conduct regular audits:** Periodically review your data collection and management practices to ensure they align with current privacy standards. Audits help maintain customer trust and avoid costly penalties for non-compliance.
- **Build an adaptable framework:** Design measurement systems that can easily incorporate new tools, technologies, and compliance requirements, ensuring your strategies remain agile as the privacy landscape shifts.



Embracing Innovation And Privacy In The Evolving Marketing Landscape

As we navigate this “post-cookie” era, it’s not enough to simply continue what worked before. The strategies developed in anticipation of a cookieless world remain invaluable—not as contingency plans but as catalysts for ongoing evolution. While third-party cookies may persist, marketers must resist the temptation to fall back on old habits. The true opportunity lies in blending the innovative thinking of the last few years with the capabilities we still have, creating a hybrid approach that’s more resilient, adaptive, and future-focused.

This is a moment to harness the best of both worlds. First-party data strategies, privacy-compliant targeting, and walled garden ecosystems are not just alternatives—they are advancements that allow marketers to engage with their

audiences more authentically and transparently. By embracing this duality—leveraging the precision of past methods while fully committing to privacy-first practices—marketers can carve out a new path, one that deepens consumer trust and drives long-term growth.

Rather than merely keeping pace with change, it’s time to lead it. Marketers who evolve their approach by merging the old with the new will not only stay ahead but also redefine what success looks like in this new era of digital marketing. Now is the time to break away from the past while learning from it, pushing forward with bold ideas that prioritize both innovation and privacy. Those willing to adapt and innovate in this blended environment will be the ones who truly thrive.

About Skai

Skai is an omnichannel advertising platform, uniquely enabling brands and agencies to run data-driven programs across walled garden media. It empowers both media leaders and activation teams to drive impactful results from their advertising program with AI-powered decisioning, activation and optimization solutions. Its partners include Google, Amazon Ads, Microsoft, Walmart Connect, Apple Search Ads, Instacart, Criteo, TikTok, Snap, Pinterest, Meta and more.

For over a decade, Skai has earned trust from notable brands such as HP, DoorDash, Sony, Philips, and L'Oreal. Renowned for innovation and a values-driven culture, Skai is headquartered in San Francisco and has eight international locations.