

# How Poor Data Quality Mucks Up Attribution

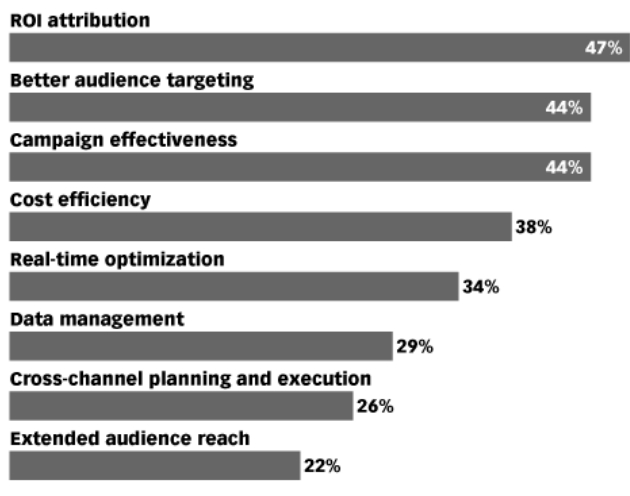
## Article

- Attribution remains a **majority priority for marketers**.
- But many marketers **see gaps in their attribution**.
- One issue that messes up attribution efforts is that the data that gets transferred to marketers often has missing gaps.
- Data transference is complicated by the complex ad supply chain.

Marketers have long grappled with how to best assign credit for sales. This age-old problem has **become only more complex** with the proliferation of cross-device marketing.

An approach that some marketers have taken to assert more control over their attribution is bringing the operation in-house. Among the 119 media decision-makers from US brands that **Advertiser Perceptions and the Interactive Advertising Bureau** surveyed in April, return on investment (ROI) attribution was the programmatic initiative most frequently being brought in-house. Nearly half of the respondents said they in-housed attribution.

**Current and Past Programmatic In-House Initiatives According to US Media Decision-Makers, April 2018**  
*% of respondents*



*Note: n=65 brands involved in programmatic in-housing; top 3 objectives*  
*Source: Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB), "Programmatic In-Housing: Benefits, Challenges and Key Steps to Building Internal Capabilities" conducted by Advertiser Perceptions, May 22, 2018*  
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To properly attribute a sale to a piece of marketing, marketers seek information about many variables that can impact an ad’s effectiveness, such as what type of ad creative the user saw, what kind of device the ad was seen on, where the user is located and so on. Roughly 30% of the time there are missing blanks in the information that marketers receive to inform their attribution efforts, according to Grant Simmons, head of client analytics at mobile attribution firm Kochava.

“It’s an informed guess, but let’s just say most of these companies are at a C,” said Simmons, who spoke with eMarketer about the challenges of attribution.

**eMarketer:** Why are there so many missing pieces in the data that marketers rely on for attribution?

**Simmons:** You could take an optimistic or a pessimistic approach to that question.

**eMarketer:** What's the pessimistic approach?

**Simmons:** If left to their own devices, ad networks will provide the least amount of detail to get the most credit.

That's the pessimistic view, meaning they're trying to report as little as possible to garner the most possible app install credit.

**eMarketer:** What's the optimistic approach?

**Simmons:** The more optimistic view is, well, perhaps the attribution vendor just didn't do a great enough job communicating opportunities to ad networks.

**eMarketer:** Is attribution made more difficult by the complexity of the ad supply chain?

**Simmons:** For sure. But said another way, the ad supply chain can be an excuse. The Lumascope is complicated by design. There is a lot more transparency that is possible than what is actually being delivered in today's environment. But there are opportunities to cut out a lot of what I'll call "bloatware" in the middle.

**eMarketer:** How so?

**Simmons:** We can see traffic post-supply-side platform [SSP], meaning that we start to pick up the signal after the ad unit has been placed. When we get introduced into the ad supply chain, it's most often at the SSP going forward. We have good visibility from the ad placement and onward.