Using Attention Metrics for Efficient Marketing

A guide from Adelaide and the ANA
Digital has offered poor proxies for quality. Metrics like CTR, VCR, and viewability are stand-ins. These metrics provide only an imperfect, and easily gamed, view of quality. Enter attention metrics.

Attention metrics calculate the likelihood of attention paid to an ad placement. They offer a multi-dimensional perspective, integrating myriad measurements into cohesive, research-backed, and fast-moving quality ratings. These ratings can help marketers optimize their campaigns in near-real-time, adjusting spend based on the value of media instead of hygienic scores.

This guide covers the basics of attention metrics, some of the ways attention metrics can improve digital media, and responsible attention data usage.

“Attention Metrics are the common language of media quality.”

Marc Guldimann | CEO, Adelaide
Why Attention Metrics?

Wait: another metric? Marketers already rely on a suite of KPIs to measure campaign performance. The average campaign takes a multi-channel approach out of necessity, given ever-increasing media fragmentation. But with each channel comes a slightly different measure of success. It’s an “apples-to-oranges” conundrum.

Attention metrics, on the other hand, offer marketers an “apples-to-apples” comparison of media placement—a unified measure of placement performance across digital channels.

What Gets Measured

Attention metrics refer to data points used to model consumer attention to both media placements and creative. These metrics range from loose proxies like viewability to exact measures like lab- or panel-based eye-tracking that record actual gaze and focus. Broad-spectrum attention measurement includes:

- Size
- Position
- Viewability
- Relative Position
- Duration
- Clutter
- Device
- Eye-Tracking

Research demonstrates each of these variables has a direct effect on the amount of attention consumers pay to advertising.
The Benefits of Attention Metrics

PLANNING
Reach is no longer uniform, and planning tools that treat it as such are missing an opportunity to increase efficiency. Understanding true attentive reach helps cut down on waste from over- and underexposure. Attention metrics also highlight underpriced attention.

Planners can look at their attention dashboard and quickly determine the best values—those placements that are delivering healthy attention-to-cost ratios.

OPTIMIZATION
Today, campaigns are typically optimized to viewability or completion rates, easily-gamed hygienic metrics that are fast but not very predictive of impact. Brand lift and attribution data can take a long time to collect, making optimization hard; brand lift is notoriously slow, sometimes not arriving until after the next campaign.

Attention metrics offer the opportunity to optimize toward a metric with proven correlation to outcomes, and the speed and granularity of verification tools.
At Adelaide, we’ve seen that attention correlates to brand impact.

And that attention correlates better to brand impact than other KPIs, such as viewability or VCR.
ATTRIBUTION MODELING

Multi-touch attribution tracks individuals across digital platforms (and even devices) to record every advertising waypoint they have "touched" throughout a marketing campaign. MTA is used to ascertain the contribution to a conversion, attributing performance to various impressions and clicks. These values are arbitrary, however: they don’t provide a clear picture of impact.

When used in conjunction with MTA tactics, attention metrics provide a high-resolution view of the impact of each impression—rather than a discreet count. Augmenting campaigns with attention metrics enriches every touchpoint in the attribution model.

CREATIVE A/B TESTING

A/B testing creative is the gold standard for good reason—it takes an evidence-based approach to find the best option. That approach can be limiting, however. A tweak to a CTA button can increase conversions; a bump in logo size might juice brand awareness. But in both instances, best practice requires changing only one element at a time. Split testing allows for comparing two distinct designs, but the results become murky. What’s a brand marketer to do?

Adding attention metrics to the mix offers benefits here, too. Attention metrics enable a normalized view of media quality. Advertisers can run a campaign, quickly analyze fast-moving attention metrics to find equally attentive placements, and then introduce either an A/B or split test on creative.
Which version is attracting more attention? Simply compare the resulting attention metrics, then heavy-up on the winning variation.

### SEQUENCING

Similarly to attribution, layer attention data with your DSP user-level data to supercharge creative sequencing.

Customize the sequence based on how much cumulative attention a consumer has paid to each stage, pathing or branching at attention thresholds to guide consumers through your brand story.
Using Attention Metrics Responsibly

Attention metrics respect consumers' right to privacy. Fingerprinting based on attention metrics data—or any data—is strongly discouraged. There are some aspects of attention metrics, such as eye-tracking or device orientation tracking, that marketers should never capture without permission. Responsible attention metrics do not surreptitiously seek access to a consumer's device to measure real-world attention responses. Instead, these responses are modeled in laboratory or panel settings with informed subjects.

Enabling Greater Efficiency

Attention has always underpinned successful advertising, but the popularity of attention metrics is a recent phenomenon. Responsible, research-backed attention metrics can improve both the efficacy and efficiency of digital advertising. Attention metrics offer a powerful new toolset to assess the quality and value of media—at a time when efficiency is more important than ever.

Armed with the ability to evaluate the likelihood of attention for every placement across channels, marketers gain a powerful tool to improve their bottom line—driving the same brand impact for less spend, making this apples-to-apples metric a win-win.

Adelaide has demonstrated that optimizing to attention increases efficiency versus optimizing to viewability.