B2B MARKETING ATTRIBUTION

An introductory guide to attribution
for revenue-driven B2B marketers

Marketo™
An Adobe Company

B2B MARKETING ATTRIBUTION

An introductory guide to attribution
for revenue-driven B2B marketers

The B2B buyer journey 3
Measuring the buyer journey: marketing data 6
Measuring the buyer journey: sales data 9
Why should marketing care about sales data? 12
How attribution connects marketing and sales data 15
What are marketing attribution models? 20
What is omnichannel attribution? 28
What is account-based attribution? 30
The benefits of good attribution 33
How to perform reporting using attribution data 37
Are you ready to get started with advanced attribution? 40

The B2B

Buyer Journey

THE B2B BUYER JOURNEY

The B2B buyer journey is complex and requires in-depth understanding.

It consists of interactions through offline channels, like industry conferences, and a multitude of online channels (search, social, display, referral, email, etc.), all of which make the journey from prospect to buyer. Engaging them with the right content at the right time as they move through the funnel is key.

While the exact buyer journey is unique to every company, data shows that, on average, B2B buyers engage 36 times before deciding to make a purchase, with some journeys having hundreds of touchpoints. With so much information at every buyer's fingertips, much of the B2B buying process happens before the buyer ever reaches out to a salesperson.

With so many different ways to go through the funnel, hardly any journey is typical. Here is one example of what a B2B buyer journey might look like:

A marketing manager is going to attend a conference in one week and decides to see which companies will be there. They navigate to your website and maybe check out a blog post or two. When the conference rolls around, they

CLOSED-WON BUYERS ENGAGED 36 TIMES ON AVERAGE BEFORE DECIDING TO MAKE THE PURCHASE.

drop by your booth, chat with your sales reps, and scan their badge, which makes them a lead. A week later, they see your company name pop up in a Twitter chat and it occurs to them that they saw you at the conference. They go to visit your website, however become distracted by the Twitter chat and move onto other things.

The next day, they see one of your ads on LinkedIn. Remembering that they were going to search your company the day before, they google your company name, navigate to an ebook, and download it. At this point, a sales rep reaches out and schedules a demo for the following week. After weeks of swapping emails and answering questions, they bring their boss, the VP of marketing, into the conversation. After a few more emails and phone calls, they agree to start a trial.

Suffice to say, there is a lot of consumer data to track and interpret. Just in this hypothetical journey, there was a handful of touchpoints, both online and offline, and multiple people involved in the purchase process.

Measuring the Buyer Journey:

Marketing Data

MEASURING THE BUYER JOURNEY: MARKETING DATA

Gone are the Mad Men days of marketing, where creativity and intuition completely overruled metrics and data. Now, they must work hand-in-hand.

This is especially true in B2B marketing. With heavy competition and tight budgets, marketers are under tremendous pressure to demonstrate measurable results—to prove that marketing is doing its job and getting better every day.

How marketing does this traditionally falls into two categories: activity metrics and engagement metrics.

Activity Metrics

When it's the marketing team's turn to give an update to the company, how often do you hear something like: "We published 15 articles, sponsored two events, contributed to a webinar, and launched new paid media campaigns this month."

These are activity metrics, and all too often the only input marketing brings to the table. These types of content and activities need to demonstrate measurable impact—because if you can't measure something, you can't improve it.

Creditability is diminished within the organization when all you have to report on is the number of posts published or types of events attended. While interesting, reporting based on activities highlights the cost side of the equation—event sponsorships and ad campaigns cost money, producing a webinar requires time and effort—it exhibits nothing about contributing to the success of the company.

Activity metrics are good to know internally. They keep the marketing team organized and up to date with what everyone is doing. But what the company really wants to know is the success of these activities—the results. This brings us to the second category of marketing metrics.

Engagement Metrics

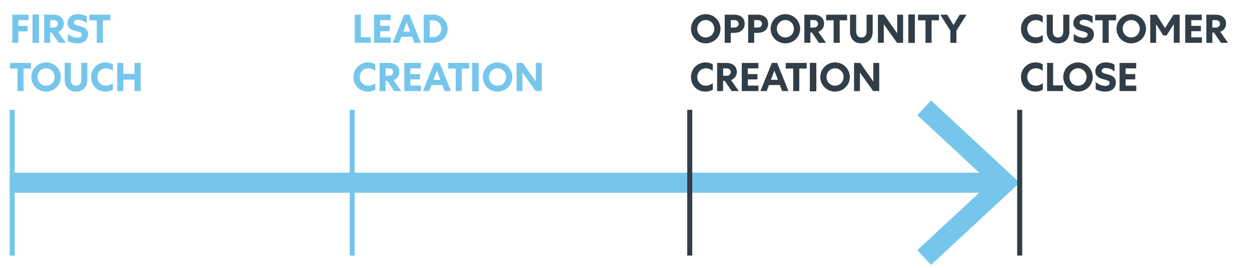
So now you've moved beyond activity metrics and want to show the results of your activities. Did people read the 15 articles you wrote? How many prospects did you talk to at your two events? Did any buyers follow up after attending the webinar? Are the new paid media campaigns effective?

All of these questions can be answered with engagement metrics: views, clicks, likes, comments, time on site, and click-through rates (CTRs)—anything up to and including converting anonymous visitors (online and offline) into leads.

Engagement metrics, however, only measure the top and middle of the funnel. Once a visitor fills out a form and becomes a lead, they typically go through a "qualifying" process. Is their company big enough (or small enough) to be a legitimate buyer? Do they use the tools necessary for your solution to make an impact? Do they have the problems that your product solves? If you're selling enterprise software, an employee of a three-person startup can fill out a form and download your ebook, but that doesn't make them a potential buyer.

As soon as a visitor turns into a qualified lead, they get passed to the sales team. Once they leave marketing's domain, no more marketing metrics are tracked through the remainder of the funnel. Engagement metrics are a good step along the way to reporting marketing outcomes, but they don't remain active all the way to the sale.

When marketers prioritize achieving engagement metrics that only capture the top and middle of the funnel, they fail to optimize for the ultimate outcome of marketing: customers and revenue.



Measuring the Buyer Journey:

Sales Data

MEASURING THE BUYER JOURNEY: SALES DATA

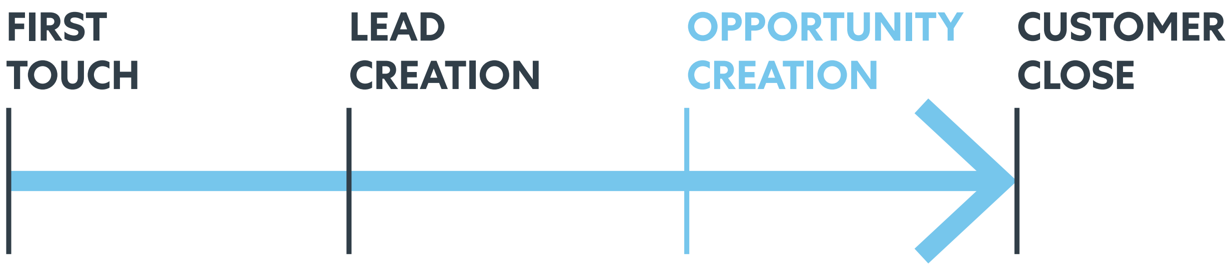
Sales data is a lot more clear-cut than engagement metrics. It mirrors the funnel, and these metrics are what the business really cares about.

When it comes down to it, the numbers at the bottom of the funnel are a lot more critical than the numbers at the top.

Opportunity Creation

Once marketing hands over control of the relationship at the qualified lead stage, the first step for the sales team is converting the qualified lead into an opportunity. Where this transition occurs differs from company to company, but typically it's at the stage where the lead agrees to a demo meeting. Depending on your offering, this could also be when the lead signs up for a free trial.

Converting a lead into an opportunity is a big deal because it's typically the first time potential revenue can be added to your customer relationship management (CRM) system. Once the sales representative begins speaking to the lead, they're able to learn much more about the organization. For example, if you are a SaaS company, you'll be able to feel out what pricing tier the prospect would fall under based on their size and needs.



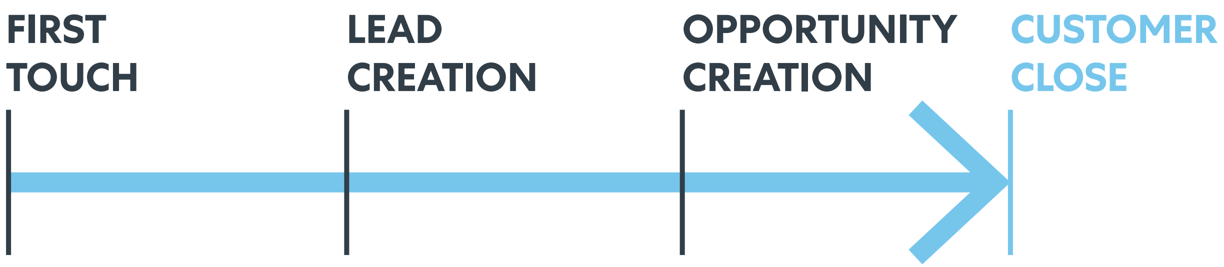
Buyers/Sales/Revenue

This is the big one—buyers/sales/revenue is the ultimate metric. Generally speaking, this is the bottom of the funnel. An effective funnel operates with this goal in mind: it moves visitors to leads, leads to opportunities, and opportunities to revenue while leaking as few people as possible at each transition.

Of course, converting opportunities into buyers is not truly the end. The post-purchase journey includes important stages like retention, upgrades, and referrals. Data for these stages is typically within the domain of the sales and buyer success teams.

From a technology perspective, all of this data is held in the CRM system, the data warehouse for the sales and buyer success teams. CRM data includes deal size, buyer engagement, upsell potential, how long they've been buyers, and more.

If the sales team and the marketing team are siloed—as many are—the buyer conversion and revenue information in the CRM system never make it back to the marketing team. Sales and marketing need to work together to win business.



Why Should Marketing Care About

Sales Data?

WHY SHOULD MARKETING CARE ABOUT SALES DATA?

In many B2B organizations, the marketing team has their data, the sales team has their data, and the two data sets rarely overlap. But there needs to be some crossover.

Marketing should care about sales data because the sales data holds the ultimate measure of success: revenue. When marketing can connect their efforts to revenue, they no longer have to report on activity metrics or even engagement metrics. They can report on their impact on true business value, which helps them achieve credibility within the organization. This also helps them be more effective in their efforts because they are optimizing for the right outcome.

So, instead of simply noting that 500 people filled out forms on the website, marketing can now give more specifics, like that they contributed to 20 new buyers, which accounts for $10,000 in monthly revenue. This is a stronger statement.

Furthermore, the marketing team can see that three pieces of content contributed to 50% of new monthly revenue, for example, so they can focus on creating more content like that. When marketing has access to sales data, they can measure and optimize their efforts based on what really matters—creating business value—rather than top-of-the-funnel engagement metrics.

From the perspective of the organization as a whole, having marketers measure their success with sales data means that the marketing team and the sales team are speaking the same language—marketing is meeting the sales team on their turf. This alignment makes the company as a whole more effective with both teams getting the credit they deserve.

The 2018 State of the Pipeline Marketing Report, a survey of more than 400 B2B marketers, found that 36% of organizations with a marketing return on investment (ROI) of 1.5X or greater, map their investments and data to pipeline and revenue, compared to only 14.3% of organizations with a marketing ROI of 1X or less, a difference of 152%.[1]

When potential buyers engage with your company, what department they're interacting with is of little concern- it's all one and the same to them. Whether it's with the marketing or sales team, their experience should be seamless. When working together, marketing and sales deliver a consistent buyer experience, which makes for a more efficient and effective funnel.

Now that you understand marketing's strong need to connect to sales data, how do you do it?

MARKETING ORGS THAT PLAN BASED ON REVENUE ARE 58% MORE LIKELY TO BE ALIGNED WITH SALES.[2]

[1,2] 2018 State of Pipeline Marketing Report, 2018.
https://www.bizible.com/hubfs/2018-State-of-Pipeline-Marketing-Report-Final.pdf

Marketo™
An Adobe Company

How Attribution Connects Marketing and Sales Data

HOW ATTRIBUTION CONNECTS MARKETING AND SALES DATA

Marketing attribution solutions connect marketing and sales data by tracking and collecting buyer data —across all marketing channels—from the very first interaction all the way down to the final purchase, recorded in the CRM system.

For B2B organizations, this means connecting data from marketing channels, like Google Ads and LinkedIn, to website data, and then to the CRM system. In doing so, ads can be tracked all the way to downstream metrics, like opportunities and revenue.

With attribution, the all-important sales data ***is*** marketing data.

THERE ARE THREE MAIN COMPONENTS INVOLVED IN CONNECTING MARKETING DATA TO SALES DATA:

1 **Tracking Traffic from Marketing Channels**

which is usually done through URL parameters

2 **Using On-Site Javascript**

to track visitor behavior on your website

3 **Integrating with the CRM**

to connect on-site behavior to sales data

Marketo™
An Adobe Company

Tracking Traffic from Your Marketing Channels

URL parameters are tags attached to the end of a URL, allowing marketers to track web source traffic (the most common is the UTM parameter).

Here are some common parameters:

utm_medium= (insert channel medium, e.g. search, social, email, display)

utm_source= (insert specific channel source, e.g. Google Ads, bing)

utm_campaign= (insert campaign name)

utm_content= (insert content name, e.g. ad title, ad dimensions)

utm_term= (insert more specific term, e.g. paid search keyword)

For example, a LinkedIn ad for an ebook about the best Google Ads strategies may have the following parameters:

utm_medium=social

utm_source=linkedin

utm_campaign=content-GoogleAds-ebook

utm_content=GoogleAds-strategies

utm_term=GoogleAds-ebook-200x400

In practice, the URL would look like this:

marketo.com/?utm_source=linkedin&utm_medium=social&utm_term=adwords%20strategies&utm_content=adwords%20ebook%20200x400&utm_campaign=content%20googleads%20ebook

A good attribution system does some of this work for you. Because it is integrated with your website through on-site JavaScript, a lot of this information can be pulled automatically through referral analysis.

URL parameters, however, give marketers the ability to determine what specific marketing effort drove a person to their website. That's why URL parameters are particularly important for tracking paid media efforts.

From there, marketers are able to follow their actions on site, thanks to a line of JavaScript code (or snippet).

On-Site JavaScript

On-site tracking scripts, in the world of marketing analytics, are most commonly related to web analytics (such as Adobe Analytics or Google Analytics) to track on-site visitor behavior. It tells them what pages web visitors navigate to, buttons they click on, and forms they fill out.

Because form fills (i.e., how leads are created) are so important in B2B marketing, on-site behavior is a crucial element of understanding the buyer journey. Web analytics answers questions like, "When a visitor reads blog post X, do they bounce, or do they visit an ebook download landing page?". On the other hand, the analytics offered by marketing automation solutions tell you whether your content is driving lead creation. While tracking bounce rates and what content is driving form fills and other activities are important in their own right, their main goal isn't to attribute those activities to revenue—that's the specific role of attribution. That's why it's critical to also have on-site tracking specifically built for attribution.

Understanding buyer behavior on your website isn't particularly actionable if you don't understand how it influences the next step in the buyer journey. Finding this out requires integrating marketing data with sales data in the CRM system.

CRM Integration

The final step in connecting marketing data to sales data is integrating your marketing data from URL parameters and on-site JavaScript with your CRM, which houses your pipeline and revenue data. While your marketing automation software may track and house lead information, your CRM system keeps all the information from qualified leads to sales opportunities and closed-won deals.

Putting It All Together

So with these three steps—tracking with URL parameters, on-site JavaScript, and CRM integration—marketers are able to track how specific marketing initiatives (e.g., a LinkedIn ad for an ebook) got someone to fill out a form on their website (e.g., to download the ebook), and then continue to become a buyer down the road (e.g., after speaking with a sales rep, they decided that the product met their needs and purchased it).

While there is software that builds and organizes URL parameters, provides web and channel analytics, and focuses on lead creation, a marketing attribution solution does all of the above in a single place. This centralization is important.

Marketers may try to put together an attribution system themselves, using a piecemeal combination of web and channel analytics and a spreadsheet. But this leads to issues where the siloed pieces of tech don't speak to each other, and if you're taking the time to invest in a marketing solution, decentralization is not the answer.

When you hack together spreadsheets of channel-specific data, such as Facebook Insights reports or LinkedIn Ads Campaign Manager reports, the attribution data for each marketing channel is siloed, which creates the challenge of double-counting credit.

For example, if a visitor clicks on a Google Ads advertisement on Monday, a Facebook ad on Wednesday, and then buys something for $100 on Friday, both your Google Ads data and your Facebook data will claim 100% conversion credit. That's because they don't communicate with each other. When you bring both data sources into your spreadsheet and associate that conversion with its $100 value, your report will show $200 of revenue—2X your actual revenue—a large and potentially embarrassing problem.

Buyer Journey

Reporting

MARKETING REPORT		SALES REPORT	
GOOGLE ADS	1 conversion $100		
FACEBOOK	1 conversion $100	SALE	$100
REVENUE	$200	TOTAL REVENUE	$100

As you can see, if you're using multiple marketing channels with regularity, a single source of attribution data is necessary for accuracy and reliability.

What Are Marketing Attribution Models?

WHAT ARE MARKETING ATTRIBUTION MODELS?

Integrating marketing data with sales data is just the first step in producing useful data.

Next, marketers must use attribution models to determine how much revenue credit each marketing touch should receive. There are many different ways marketers can model their impact on revenue, but they fall into two main categories: single and multi-touch models.

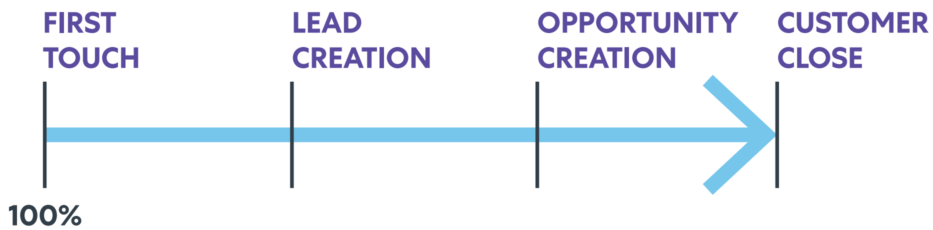
Single-Touch Attribution Models

The easiest way to apply revenue credit is with a single-touch model. As the name sounds, each of these models applies all of the revenue credit to a single touch point in the buyer journey. There are three common single-touch models: first touch, lead-conversion touch, and last touch.

First Touch

The first-touch attribution model is when 100% of the revenue credit is given to the action that drives the first visit to the website. For example, if an anonymous visitor comes to your website for the first time from an advertisement on Google, then later closes as a buyer for $1,000 per month, 100% of this revenue is attributed to Google.

To accurately measure this buyer journey, you need to cookie visitors that do not fill out a form on their first session. When the same visitor returns to your website and fills out a form, the email and cookie ID can be matched. This connects the first anonymous touch to the lead, enabling you to give credit to the channel that drove the initial engagement.

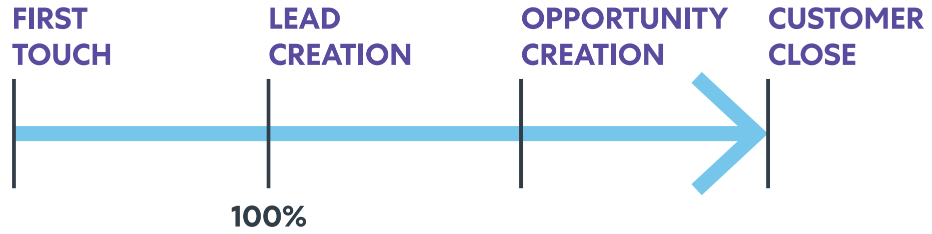


Lead-Conversion Touch

The second single-touch attribution model is lead-conversion touch attribution. This is where 100% of the revenue credit is given to the action that drives the visitor to become a lead (i.e., when they give you their contact information by filling out a form).

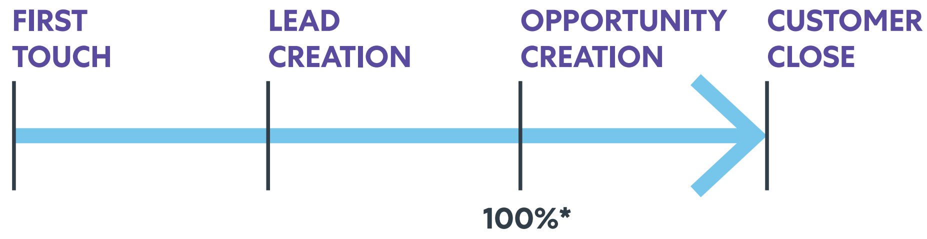
For example, if an anonymous visitor browses your website multiple times and downloads content on their fifth visit, the channel that drove the fifth visit would receive 100% of the revenue credit when that lead becomes a buyer. All of the other visits would be ignored and would receive 0% of the revenue credit.

The tricky part is that both the first-touch attribution model and the lead-conversion touch attribution model are sometimes called "first touch." Many marketing automation systems typically view first touch as when the lead was created, not the actual first visit to your website. But when it comes to web analytics that are cookie based, first-touch attribution refers to the first touch, even if it does not include a form fill.



Last Touch

The third single-touch attribution model is last-touch attribution. This attribution model is similar to the lead-conversion touch model, but it gives 100% of the credit to the marketing channel that drove the engagement where the lead converted into an opportunity.



*or the touch before if the opportunity creation touch is direct

Marketing An Adobe Company

Problems with Single-Touch Models

Although single-touch models are the easiest to implement, they have flaws. Because each of these models give 100% of the revenue credit to a single marketing channel, they don't do a good job of representing the long and complex B2B buyer journey that typically spans multiple touchpoints and various channels.

By reducing the entire buyer journey to a single touchpoint, these attribution models give rise to channel bias (also known as model bias). First-touch attribution, for example, gives 100% of the revenue credit to the marketing channel that first brought the visitor to your website, which is a top-of-the-funnel (TOFU) marketing activity, and it gives zero credit to the other marketing activities that affected the lead further down the funnel. Naturally, this overvalues the importance of TOFU marketing activities and undervalues middle-of-the-funnel (MOFU) and bottom-of-the-funnel (BOFU) marketing activities.

Lead-conversion touch attribution creates a similar channel bias, but for MOFU marketing activities, which are efforts that convert visitors into leads. It ignores marketing efforts that facilitate discovery, as well as lower-funnel activities that nurture the prospect from lead to buyer.

Multi-Touch Attribution Models

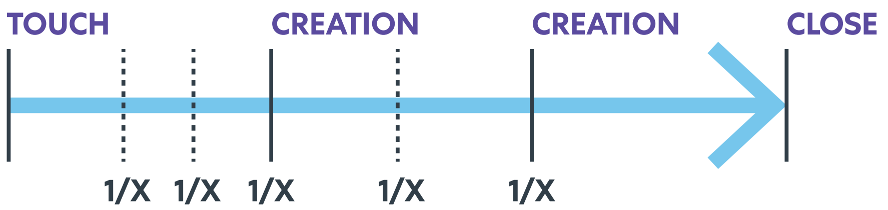
In order to eliminate channel bias, marketers should use multi-touch attribution models. While they do add a degree of complexity, they are much better at properly attributing revenue across all your marketing channels to give credit where it's due.

Rarely, if ever, will an anonymous user come to your website, fill out a form, and close as a buyer in one session. This is where the value of multi-touch attribution comes into play. In multi-touch attribution models, the credit for revenue output is distributed across multiple touchpoints.

Just like single-touch attribution, there are many different multi-touch attribution models.

Linear

Linear attribution gives equal weight to every touchpoint. If there are three touchpoints that lead to a conversion, each touchpoint receives one-third of the conversion credit. If there are 10 touchpoints that lead to a conversion, each touchpoint receives one-tenth of the conversion credit. It's a simple way to apply credit over multiple touchpoints, but it often oversimplifies how marketing works by making all touchpoints equal.

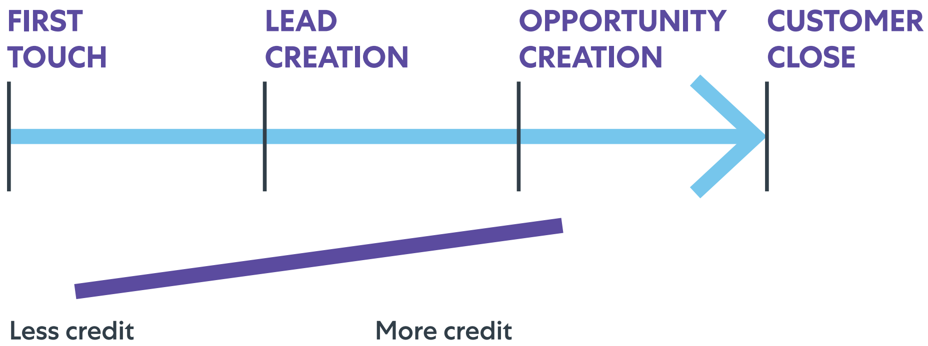


Where X equals the total number of touchpoints

Marketo™
An Adobe Company

Descending (Or Time Decay)

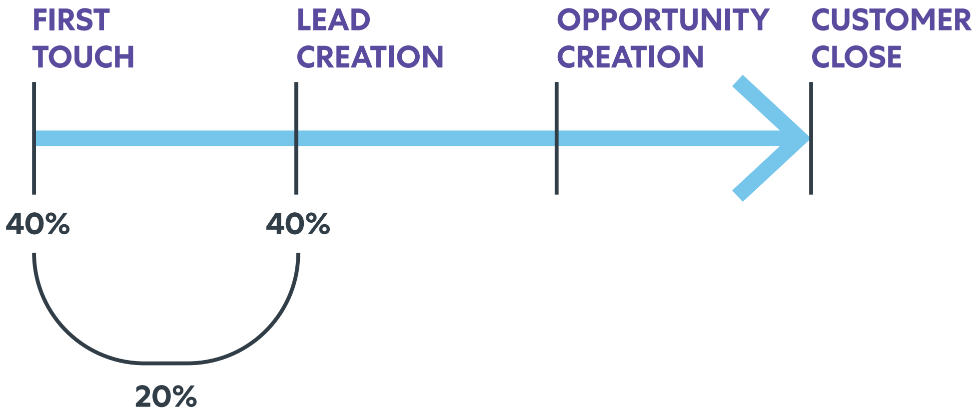
A descending attribution model attempts to address some of the oversimplifications of the linear model by giving more credit to the touchpoints closer to the conversion. It ends up looking like a staircase, where the touchpoint closest to the conversion receives the most credit.



U-Shaped

One of the simplest multi-touch attribution models is U-shaped. With this model, 40% of the revenue credit is applied to both the first touch and the lead conversion touch, with the remaining 20% applied evenly to all other touches. The biggest benefit with the U-shaped model is its simplicity and that it accounts for the marketing efforts that drive visits and lead conversion.

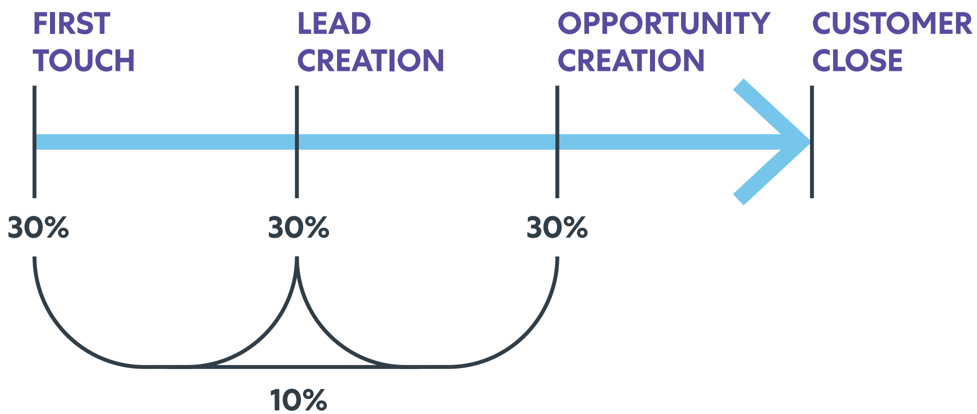
However, the drawback is that no revenue credit is applied to the down-funnel marketing that's done to convert a lead to a sales opportunity, such as lead nurturing. While it is a great candidate for understanding how your marketing efforts generate top-of-the-funnel leads, it does not measure the entire funnel.



W-Shaped

Arguably one of the most accurate out-of-the-box attribution models for an advanced B2B marketing team is the W-shaped model, which emphasizes the major transitions in the buyer journey: the first visit, the lead-conversion session, and the opportunity-creation session. By attributing 30% of revenue to each of those three major transitions, marketers are able to accurately make decisions based on which marketing efforts had a big impact. The remaining 10% is split among the touchpoints that were not responsible for any of the major transitions.

For the many marketing teams that do little or no marketing to prospective buyers who are beyond the opportunity stage, the W-shaped model may be the most advanced attribution model necessary.

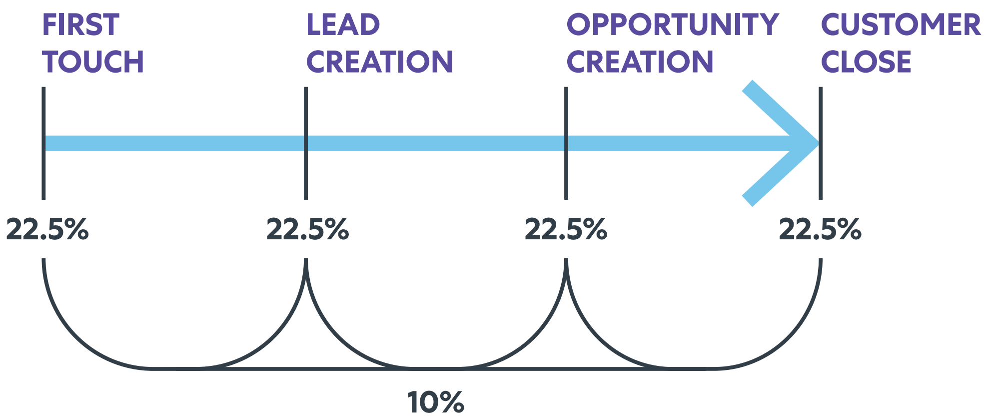


Full Path

The full-path attribution model is a great out-of-the-box option for marketing teams that want to understand their impact at every stage of the funnel. If you're doing any marketing that's targeted at people already in the sales funnel (opportunity creation stage and beyond), then you should consider using a full-path model.

The full-path model attributes 22.5% of the revenue credit to the first touch, the lead-creation touch, the opportunity-creation touch, and the closed-revenue touch. The remaining 10% is distributed among the other touchpoints.

Of the advanced, weighted multi-touch attribution models, this is the only model that accounts for marketing efforts past the opportunity stage.



Custom

Finally, it's sometimes possible to work with attribution solutions to create custom models. This is a great option for organizations with unique buyer journeys, or that want to add the granularity of additional key stage transitions, such as lead-to-marketing qualified lead (MQL) or opportunity created-to-demo scheduled.

With custom attribution models, marketers can work with their attribution solution provider to emphasize certain stages in the funnel by adding additional weight. For example, you could create a custom model that gives 25% of the revenue credit each to the first touch and lead-conversion touch, and the remaining 50% to the opportunity-creation touch. This would act as a hybrid of the W-shaped model and the descending model by emphasizing the three key transitions but giving extra credit to the touchpoint closest to the opportunity conversion.

Attribution Models

Single-touch models

- First touch
- Lead-conversion touch
- Last touch

Multi-touch models

- Linear
- Descending (or Time decay)
- U-shaped
- W-shaped
- Full path
- Custom

What Is
Omnichannel Attribution?

WHAT IS OMNICHANNEL ATTRIBUTION?

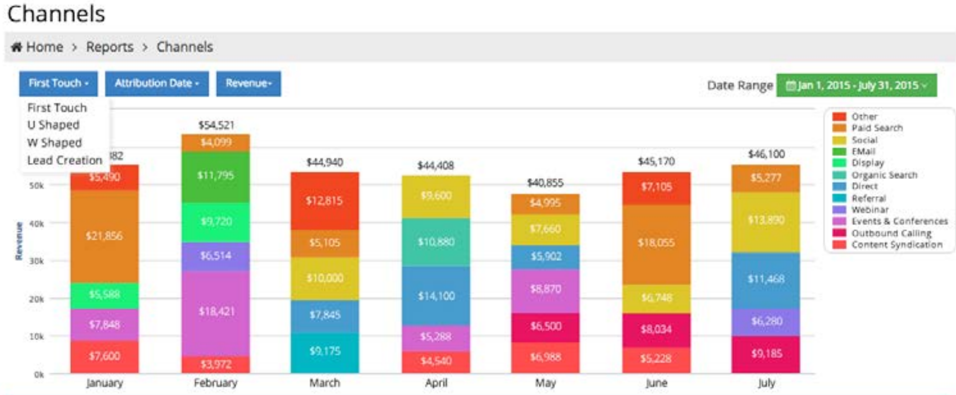
Omnichannel (online and offline) is another B2B-specific attribution challenge due to the multitude of marketing channels a typical buyer journey spans across.

Omnichannel attribution allows marketers to see the impact of every buyer interaction from search keywords to conference booth demos. When other analytics tools are used to perform attribution analysis, like web analytics or marketing program analytics, they often miss data from key channels. Web analytics, for example, only track online interactions.

For B2B marketers who do offline marketing as well, this leaves a huge gap in understanding. Advanced attribution solutions track and attribute revenue credit to offline touchpoints just as easily by integrating with the CRM system, where offline marketing data, like leads from event attendance, are typically uploaded.

Having online-only—or offline-only—attribution leaves B2B marketers with a lot of guesswork. How are you supposed to be able to best allocate the marketing budget when you can't accurately compare the impact of offline channels, like conferences, with online channels? You may be reaping two times as much revenue per dollar at conferences compared to Google Ads, but you'd never know without omnichannel attribution. This is a huge missed opportunity.

Omnichannel attribution allows marketers to see and assess their efforts the same way their audience experiences them—not as separate online and offline engagements, but



bizible

Copy Print CSV

	Channel Name	Revenue - Settled	Revenue - Projected	Average Revenue / Deal
	Other	$25,410	$48,962	$18,250
	Paid Search	$59,387	$120,260	$19,972
	Social	$47,838	$99,105	$8,862
	EMail	$11,795	$42,679	$17,245
	Display	$15,308	$40,225	$30,087
	Organic Search	$10,880	$84,575	$49,300
	Direct	$39,315	$68,900	$22,760
	Referral	$9,175	$17,250	n/a
	Webinar	$12,794	$57,280	$2,966
	Events & Conferences	$40,427	$62,206	$7,222
	Outbound Calling	$23,719	$59,050	$67,375
	Content Syndication	$28,328	$78,210	$32,451

What Is

Account-Based Attribution?

WHAT IS ACCOUNT-BASED ATTRIBUTION?

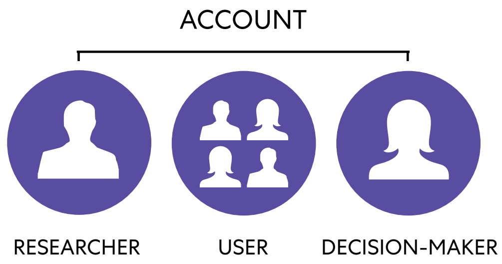
Similar to the necessity of multi-touch attribution models, B2B marketers also need account-based attribution due to the complex nature of the B2B buyer journey.

Rarely will a buyer in a B2B marketplace click an advertisement, read a blog post, and then purchase your product in one visit. The journey isn't that linear. Typically, there is a great deal of research involved in B2B sales, and that research requires many website visits and interactions, done by multiple people. Often, there are at least three buyer "roles" in a B2B sale: the researcher, the user, and the decision maker.

The person assigned to research a product may not be the same person who will use the product. They also may not have the power to make the buying decision. But all of these players are under a single account, and only one purchase can be made collectively.

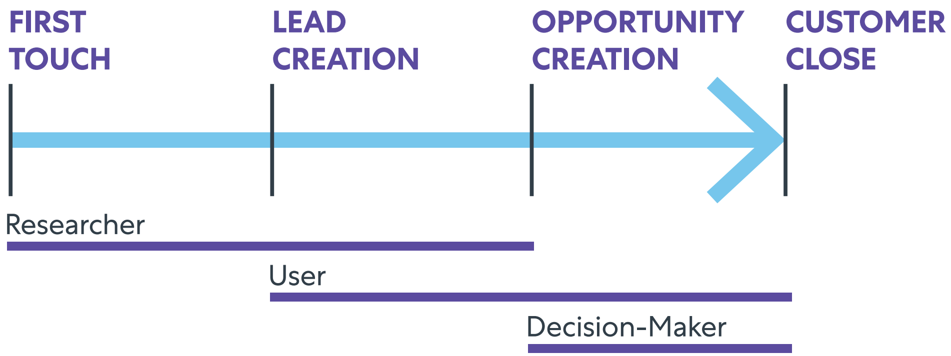
Most marketing measurement tools are people-based or lead-based. As such, the three roles are treated as three (or more) different people—and for good reasons. Web analytics focuses on optimizing the web experience for the unique visitor. And marketing automation focuses on lead creation and lead nurturing, so it often wants these people on different nurturing tracks based on their job titles. Their technology was built with a different purpose, so naturally, they're ill-equipped to deal with complex accounts.

However, we know that when it comes to B2B marketing, these people need to be treated as a single account. The researcher may start at the top of the funnel and once they've hit the middle, they'll pass it on to the user to evaluate. Once the user has evaluated and decided to move forward, they'll try to sell it to the decision maker, who starts near the bottom of the funnel. B2B marketers need to understand the nuance of this journey and see each contact under the same account, rather than three leads with unique buyer journeys.



Furthermore, the sales team will want to know who within the account engaged with what content, so they can have meaningful and effective conversations.

In the same way, the marketing team will want to know which pieces of content resonated with different job roles, so they can refine their audience targeting and content creation. At the same time, when it comes to attributing revenue credit when the deal closes, the marketing efforts that touched each individual should be represented, rather than just the marketing targeted at decision makers. The only way that can happen is through account-based attribution.



Marketo™
An Adobe Company

The Benefits of
Good Attribution

THE BENEFITS OF GOOD ATTRIBUTION

Intangible Benefits

B2B marketing attribution is all about measurement, but included in some of its benefits are things that cannot be monetarily measured.

Alignment

Attribution makes it possible to see which marketing pieces have the most impact on the bottom line. To do this, it connects sales data and marketing data, which comes with a common side effect of sales and marketing alignment. The 2018 State of Pipeline Marketing Report shows that marketing orgs with sophisticated attribution models are 84% more likely to be aligned with sales.[3]

Communication

Similarly, organizations that are effectively using attribution data to make decisions benefit from better communication between teams. Attribution makes it possible for everyone to speak the same language. Instead of the marketing team reporting on page views and social shares, they can now report on revenue numbers, just like the sales team.

The better communication is within teams and across departments, the better the company will operate.

Accountability and Transparency Benefits

Now that teams and departments are speaking the same language, it's possible to hold everyone accountable to revenue goals.

Proving Value

No longer can marketing simply report on activity metrics or lead goals. Lead numbers are irrelevant if they aren't high-quality leads that turn into buyers. With attribution, everything connects to revenue, which means that each department can be held to a revenue goal. This may be worrisome to some marketers, but revenue numbers are the best way to prove value.

Being able to say how much impact you had on new buyers and new revenue—and having the data to back it up—makes for a much stronger statement than just describing what you did.

[3] 2018 State of Pipeline Marketing Report, 2018.
https://www.bizible.com/hubfs/2018-State-of-Pipeline-Marketing-Report-Final.pdf

Evaluating Referral Sources' Value

Through the use of URL parameters, B2B marketing attribution can track where prospects are coming from and the revenue they generate. This is an extremely valuable tool when working with partners, guest bloggers, or placing display ads on other websites.

Evaluating Guest Blogging Value

Guest blogging can be a referral source. Blogging on other websites is a great way to get your company's name in front of a new audience. Web analytics can tell you how many of the post's readers click the link to your website, but you need to look at how many of those who click eventually turn into buyers. If those visitors don't eventually turn into buyers, then it may not be worth the effort to write for other sites. If you don't have attribution in place, the value from guest blogging is largely a guessing game.

Reporting and Forecasting Benefits

With B2B marketing attribution, companies can confidently report on various aspects of the funnel, including conversion rates and pipeline, which enables them to make accurate predictions about the future.

Creating Team Goals

Historical data obtained from marketing attribution can be used to forecast and create departmental goals. When you can track how prospects have historically flowed through the funnel with accuracy and granularity, it's easier to predict how future ones will. With this information, you can create monthly goals that will place the company on track to hit its yearly goals.

Reporting Accurate and Granular Conversion Rates

Good B2B marketing attribution tracks all touchpoints from the anonymous first touch through to revenue. Companies can use this data to see which marketing channels push prospects through the funnel and answer other questions, such as which days are best for converting leads. Marketing attribution can show how long it takes a lead to convert to an opportunity and then to a buyer, what the average number of touchpoints a lead has before they become an opportunity, and which retargeting efforts lead to the most conversions.

Accurate Account-Based Reporting

Through attribution, companies can implement account-based marketing and reporting. With account-based reporting, instead of seeing, for example, that five people visited your website and only one went on to purchase, you can see that all five of those people were from the same company and contributed to a single conversion touchpoint for the account as a whole.

It's also beneficial to see which personas have a hand in the decision-making process and the flow of the purchase process for the company. Attribution might show you that marketing operations managers are typically the lead-creation touch, paid media managers are the opportunity creation, and the VP of marketing is the one who makes the purchase. This information can then be used with future accounts to target the right stakeholders who have a hand in the purchase decisions.

Optimization Benefits

Attribution connects everything back to revenue, which means it's easy to see which areas are performing and which need more work. Rather than relying on what you did previously or going with your gut, use attribution data to make informed decisions.

Optimizing Paid Media

Paid media includes promoted social posts, display advertising, and pay-per-click campaigns. These areas tend to have a strong top-of-the-funnel impact, so this is where it's even more important that your attribution solution is able to track anonymous first touch.

With this information, you can see which paid media campaigns are driving the most leads, and then track those leads to see which are converting to buyers.

Evaluating Events

Event attendees may scan their badge at your booth, or add their email address to a sign-up sheet during the event. From there, they get uploaded to your CRM system after the event, and if/when they come back to your website, attribution recognizes them and assigns the event as a touchpoint. Whether the event touchpoint occurred at the top of funnel, middle of funnel, or bottom of funnel, it will be attributed the proper revenue credit once that lead converts to a buyer.

Identifying the Real Cost per Lead (CPL)

Attribution tells you the channels that provide the highest quality leads, which also tells you what the CPL limit should be for those channels. Most marketers set a single CPL limit, but leads from certain channels convert at a higher rate and therefore should have a higher limit. Using a single limit for all channels means you lose out on both sides by spending too much money on low-quality leads and not enough money in areas with high revenue potential.

Optimizing Budget Allocation for Campaigns and Channels

If you're investing in new channels and want to see what works best for your company, attribution is the solution. If you have an outbound or direct mail campaign, or have recently increased spending on social, marketing attribution can show you the ROI. It shows which campaigns and channels are working best to drive the most pipeline and revenue. From there, you can make smart budget decisions, moving money to effective campaigns and channels.

How to Perform Reporting Using Attribution Data

HOW TO PERFORM REPORTING USING ATTRIBUTION DATA

Attribution data is one of the most powerful types of data for marketers—it shows the journey a person or account makes from anonymous visitor all the way to buyer.

To make it really actionable and understandable to outside parties, it's important to know how to do reporting using attribution data.

There are three main categories of reports using attribution data:

- Lead reports
- Opportunity reports
- Revenue reports

Lead Reports

Lead reports are a good way to understand the early success of marketing initiatives. These tell you if your target audience is taking the first big step.

When it comes to picking the right model for your report, if you have a shorter marketing cycle, it's often sufficient to use a single-touch attribution model (first touch or lead-creation touch) for lead reports. However, if you have a long marketing cycle, it may be useful to use a multi-touch attribution model (linear or U-shaped).

Using these attribution models, marketers can understand which of their efforts are moving visitors down the funnel. Are people reading blog posts, but not acting on them? Are they going on to become leads? Are the clicks you're driving from your paid social campaigns just creating traffic, or do they turn into something more valuable?

There are several types of lead reports, and marketers can create them by marketing channel. Look at what percentage and how many leads are coming from social, paid search, and organic search, and note if this reflects where resources are being invested.

You can also create more specific lead reports with attribution data. If you want to dig into your content marketing efforts, you can create lead reports based on landing page. These reports will answer questions like, “if readers visit the website to read blog post A, do they convert into leads at a higher rate than when they read blog post B?”

Understanding how your efforts are driving leads is the first step in understanding your marketing’s effectiveness, however leads alone aren’t particularly valuable. Marketers want to know how leads convert into opportunities, and eventually, buyers.

Example Lead Reports

- Leads by channel
- Leads by campaign
- Leads by URL parameters
- Leads by landing page
- Leads by referring domain

Opportunity Reports

Opportunity reports cover the next step in the funnel. They expand on lead reports, and because the sales team attaches a projected deal value, opportunity reports can tell you the value of your pipeline.

Just like lead reports, you can use attribution data to tell you which marketing channels, pieces of content, or ad campaigns contribute most to the pipeline.

One of the most powerful reports marketers can create is an opportunity conversion report. Having both a lead and opportunity report allows you to sort your opportunity report based on lead characteristics, giving you the power to create conversion efficiency reports.

This answers questions like, “do leads who download one ebook convert to opportunities at the same/greater/lower rate than leads who download a different ebook?” The answer to this question tells you which piece of content is truly more impactful on the business. In action, this allows your paid media manager to adjust how much they spend sponsoring each piece of content.

Volume is something that can be turned up or down with relative ease. For many channels, it’s a function of how much you spend. Efficiency, on the other hand, is a measure of how well you turn that volume into something useful. Generating 1,000 leads that convert to buyers at 1% would result in 10 buyers. To double your buyers, you could spend twice as much and generate 2,000 leads. Or, you could improve your efficiency and try to increase your conversion rate to 2% by doing things like creating higher quality content, improving your targeting, optimizing your website for conversions, and so on.

Creating efficiency reports by combining opportunity and lead reports allows marketers to identify and double down on areas that convert at a high rate, while at the same time identify areas where they can reduce spend or rethink strategy.

Revenue Reports

In practice, revenue reports are very similar to opportunity reports. However, rather than attaching a projected deal value, you now have a concrete deal value.

With revenue reports, you can see how each marketing campaign—even down to how each individual ad or blog post—contributed to downstream revenue, something more and more marketers are required to do. Revenue reports are how marketers demonstrate real business results.

Ready to Get Started with

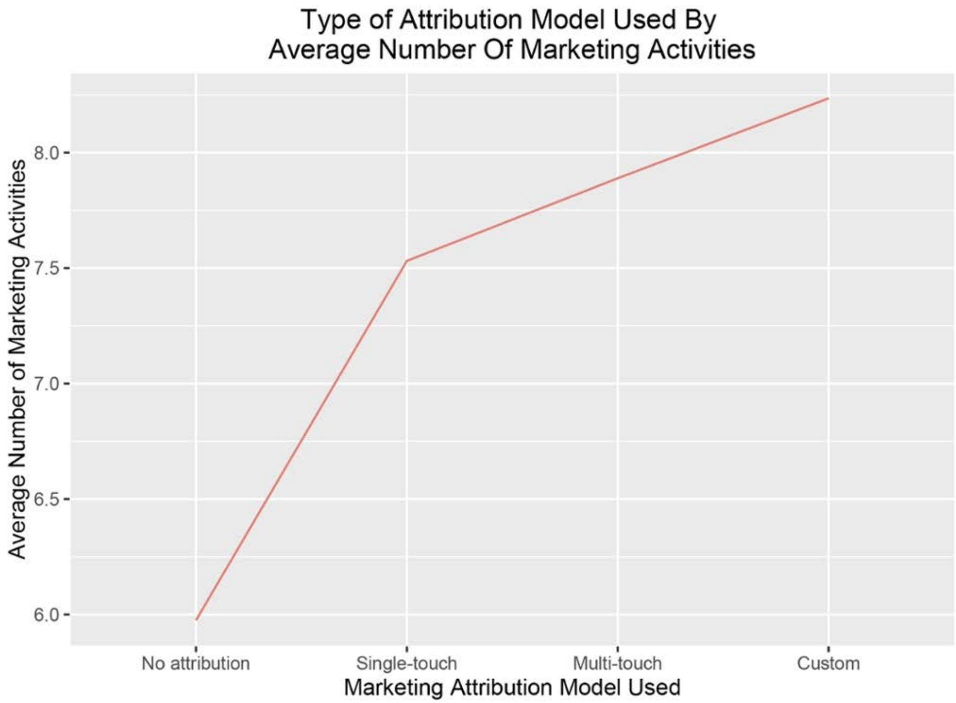
Advanced Attribution?

ARE YOU READY TO GET STARTED WITH ADVANCED ATTRIBUTION?

How do you know if and when advanced attribution is right for you? Here are some questions to help assess whether or not it makes sense for your organization.

Q: How many marketing channels are you using?

Here's the general rule: the more marketing channels you use, the more you need attribution. B2B marketers who only use a few marketing channels can more easily get away with doing attribution by spreadsheet because cross-channel, multi-touch capabilities aren't as necessary. But as B2B marketers add to their toolbox, advanced attribution becomes more necessary and more valuable.



Q: How much are you spending on marketing?

According to the State of Pipeline Marketing Report, marketing attribution is used by marketers from companies large and small. Similar to what we see with the number of marketing channels, attribution has a greater impact when there is more to measure and more to optimize.

For example, if you could improve 20% because of accurate attribution data, that's a $200,000 improvement on $1,000,000 compared to only a $2,000 improvement on $10,000.

Q: What is the primary metric that the CMO is accountable for? What are non-CMO-level marketers accountable for?

CMOs are increasingly responsible for revenue, while many non-CMO-level marketers are held to higher funnel metrics, like engagement and lead volume.

When the CMO is optimizing for one metric and their team is optimizing for another, the team does not operate as effectively. Do a quick audit of your marketing team's metrics and find out which metrics your colleagues think they are responsible for. If there is a great disparity, it's a good sign it's time for advanced attribution. Not only does attribution align the marketing team with the sales team, it aligns the marketing team itself.

Q: How long is your sales cycle?

Companies with long sales cycles often require dozens of prospect touchpoints before the sale occurs. That's a lot of data, but it's only useful if you can turn it into something actionable. Single-touch attribution models will ignore too much important buyer data. On the other hand, overly simplistic multi-touch attribution models like linear or descending (time decay) have the potential to misrepresent the data as well.

If you're seeing that it takes many touchpoints to create an opportunity or a sale, it may be time for advanced attribution.

Q: What's your relationship with your sales team?

In today's hyper-competitive landscape, it is essential to give your leads and buyers a clear and aligned experience, whether they are engaging with your marketing team or your sales team. You can't give a great buyer experience if your relationship with your sales team is misaligned. Attribution unites both teams around a common goal—revenue—which, in turn, aligns all of your efforts. When marketers are accountable to revenue, they are no longer incentivized to inflate their lead volume with low quality leads in order to achieve certain goals.

Marketo™
An Adobe Company

Marketo, an Adobe company, offers the solution of choice for lead management and B2B marketing professionals seeking to transform customer experiences by engaging across every stage of complex buying journeys. Natively supporting both lead and account-based marketing strategies, Marketo Engage, as part of Adobe Experience Cloud, brings together marketing and sales in a comprehensive solution designed to orchestrate personalized experiences, optimize content, and measure business impact across every channel, from consideration to conversion and beyond. To learn more about Marketo Engage, the vast community of passionate marketers in the Marketing Nation, and Marketo's robust partner ecosystem, **visit www.marketo.com**.