

OUTSELL PLAYBOOK

OUTSELL JOURNAL — DECISION WORKSHEET

Advertising holdouts and ABM: preserve the counterfactual

QUESTION

What should an account programme measure before claiming advertising caused an outcome?

GUIDE TAKEAWAY

Preserve eligibility and assignment before interpreting exposure. Attribution records a relationship between touches and outcomes; a credible experiment addresses what would have happened without the intervention.

START HERE

Specify the intervention.

YOUR SITUATION

Account or cohort

Decision to make

Starting state and exclusions

Evidence sources, dates, and limitations

Unknowns to validate

WORK THROUGH THE GUIDE

1. Specify the intervention

Evidence or input

Output or decision

Owner and review point

2. Freeze eligibility and assignment

Evidence or input

Output or decision

Owner and review point

3. Monitor account spillover

Evidence or input**Output or decision****Owner and review point**

4. Count defined outcomes

Evidence or input**Output or decision****Owner and review point**

5. Report uncertainty and delivery

Evidence or input**Output or decision****Owner and review point****COMPARE THE OPTIONS**

Assigned groups

Useful when: Estimating a programme effect

Limitation: Needs adequate independent accounts

Suggested action: Preserve the original assignment

Why this fits our situation**Evidence needed before acting**

Exposed groups

Useful when: Inspecting delivery

Limitation: Exposure may be selected

Suggested action: Separate from causal analysis

Why this fits our situation**Evidence needed before acting**

Attribution

Useful when: Describing observed touchpoints

Limitation: Does not supply a counterfactual

Suggested action: Label as contribution evidence

Why this fits our situation

Evidence needed before acting

Subgroup effects

Useful when: Different responses may matter

Limitation: Sparse data can overfit

Suggested action: Predefine and validate the analysis

Why this fits our situation

Evidence needed before acting

COMMIT TO A BOUNDED NEXT STEP

Chosen action

Responsible owner

Required approval

Success measure and definition

Review date

Continue, revise, or stop criteria

Guide: <https://outselll.com/blogs/advertising-holdouts-and-abm/>

Publisher and evidence policy: <https://outselll.com/editorial-policy/>