

How to select the right advertising technology solution.



With the broad fragmentation of advertising buying sources and the escalating need to better leverage customer data, more organizations are looking to programmatic advertising technology solutions to bring their media buying, ad targeting, and advertising operations under control. Marketers see advertising technology solutions as a way to consolidate disparate advertising efforts, giving them one centralized place where they can buy advertising and target their users in a data-driven, efficient, and seamless way. Every organization is at a different point in their journey to unify their advertising efforts and has different levels of familiarity with relevant requirements and capabilities to look for in an advertising technology solution.

Wherever you are in your advertising technology journey, investing in a new solution is an important decision that will have significant short-term and long-term impacts on your advertising efforts. Reaching the best decision for your organization will take considerable time and effort that will likely involve you engaging in substantial research and evaluation. To help you in that process, this guide covers some of the most important questions you should ask and issues you should investigate. It provides tips for navigating the information and targeted marketing you'll encounter along the way to help you make informed, objective assessments of the solutions you evaluate.

Independence, transparency, and data control.

In the advertising world there has been a history of broken trust. Sadly, brands often have to wonder if an advertising partner is really looking out for their best interests. News of an abundance of fraudulent ads, as well as performance report manipulations and inaccuracies, continue to fuel that mistrust. That's one reason more marketers are using third-party verification tools

that can provide unbiased reporting on how the advertising they bought performed. But, even more foundational than third-party verification, you need a level of independence or separation from the solution vendor and the advertising provider. If they're one and the same, you can't guarantee the accuracy and truthfulness of what they tell you. The vendor has a conflict of interest that can incentivize it to shift measurement or purchasing toward the media channels it owns.

POTENTIAL GOTCHA:

Some vendors claim they leverage artificial intelligence in their predictions, but they don't show the accuracy of performance relative to forecasts. This can be because their accuracy is off by as much as 50 to 60%. Ask vendors to show you the accuracy of their performance reports.

Ensure real results with transparent media quality controls.

Fraud Prevention	Brand Safety	Viewability
 Blocking Bots	 Site-Level Screening	 Cross-Screen Measurement
 Blocking Mismatched URLs	 App-Level Screening	 Pre-Bid Optimization
 Blocking Fake Pre-Roll	 Contextual Targeting	 Transparent Metrics
 NHT Credit Program		 Media Quality Assessment

Questions to ask:

Does the vendor offer simulations for planning purposes? What level of visibility or reporting do you provide for forecasting versus actual results?

That's why transparency is a crucial element to look for in any advertising technology solution. Some may rationalize that predictable spend is more beneficial than transparent performance. While predictability is an advantage, knowing actual performance results is even more important. So look for a solution that includes spend recommendation capabilities that can help you optimize budget allocations across portfolios to meet your goals. You also need to be able to clearly see and understand how your goals were achieved and what inventory was purchased.

The best way to ensure transparency is to choose an independent and open advertising technology platform that allows you to retain ownership and control of your data, so you can view and analyze it any way you want. Your data has significant value. Don't fall prey to vendors that require you to blindly hand over your data for their own analysis and then turn around and try to sell back to you a narrow and non-transparent set of analysis results. An open solution lets you control and maximize the value of your data. Your

data not only influences how you market to your customers, but it can give you insights into their entire journey, including guidance on new business opportunities or the development of services and products your customers might crave. Without ownership of your data, you lose that vital capability.

Omnichannel vs. multichannel.

Marketers need to be able buy all of their media in one central location and measure it alongside everything else they're doing. To enable that, advertising technology vendors need to offer full programmatic omnichannel solutions that allow marketers to use insights from one channel to inform another. But while many vendors say they have omnichannel, the majority fall short by not integrating with the full spectrum of channels marketers need. For example, a solution might support display, video on one streaming service and one search engine and claim to be omnichannel. What about the other search engines, premium video services, and traditional TV?

Question to ask:

Does the vendor support search, display, video, mobile, and traditional TV?

Questions to ask:

What support does the vendor provide for audience activation, and for which channels? Can the vendor activate the same audience in Remarketing Lists for Search Ads (RLSA) as well as other channels to deliver more personalized experiences?

There are multiple reasons why vendors fail to provide true omnichannel support. Sometimes it's the result of a conflict of interest, as the vendor might own certain channels and want to promote those, downplaying the importance of other channels regardless of how crucial they really are to marketing success. Other times it's because many vendors haven't reached a level of advertising maturity to support all formats. A solution that gives you true omnichannel capabilities lets you buy everything from top-of-funnel awareness, such as traditional TV or digital-out-of-home advertising, down to the best response formats for search and display. When buying an advertising technology solution, a vendor that goes narrow and deep in a channel of interest may seem like a good choice. But you'll see faster time to value—and more long-term ROI—opting for a provider that can accommodate the full customer journey and understands advertising's role as part of the broader marketing continuum.

Along with omnichannel support, it's important to have strong artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities to power forecast simulations and optimize your budget allocations across different channels and keywords. Your solution should be able to decide on the right bid amount and optimize the efficiency of your campaigns across all channels. The best way to determine AI adequacy is to request a demonstration or proof of concept from all the vendors you evaluate.

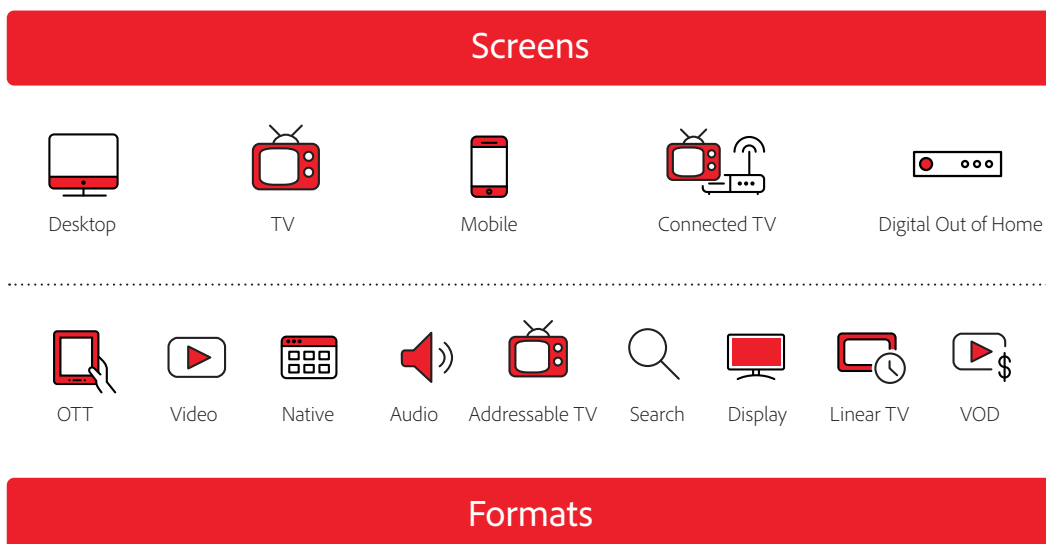
Enterprise marketing stack.

Successful marketers and advertisers strive to understand the entire customer journey. To connect with customers, advertisers need to present a consistent message across all their channels. Inconsistency frustrates customers and sometimes leads to mistrust and other negative attitudes. Having a complete, integrated enterprise marketing stack is essential to ensure your messages align across all customer touchpoints. That requires making sure your advertising technology has native integrations (or supports third-party integrations) with your current or future marketing technologies.

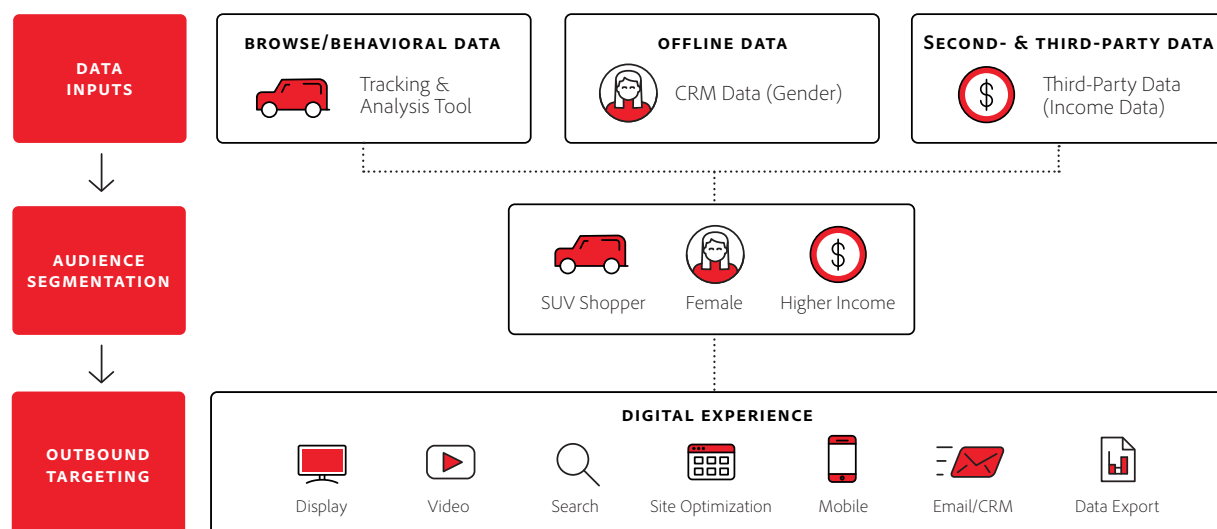
Question to ask:

Does the platform integrate with all major search engines and ad exchanges?

Advertising solution capabilities to consider.



Break down data silos for a 360-degree view of your customer.



Even if you're a novice advertiser or have just started moving into cross-channel advertising, it's important to be forward-thinking. Consider whether or not the advertising technology solution you're evaluating will facilitate or frustrate your ability to navigate the entire customer journey. Will it help you deliver a consistent experience in paid media that is aligned with all your owned and earned media? What level of integration does it have with the analytics, experience optimization, and data management platform (DMP) solutions you currently use or plan to use?

For example, native DMP integrations can streamline your workflows, maximize addressable audiences, and save you the time required to manually map taxonomies. Integrations with your analytics solution that allow you to import data from your demand-side platform (DSP) give you combined visibility into pre-visit and onsite behavior. And integrations that allow you to push data from your analytics solution into your advertising technology solution can open up new reporting and campaign optimization opportunities, such as optimizing on analytics metrics beyond clicks, conversions, or standard onsite conversion signals.

Choosing a transparent solution built on an open platform with both native and robust third-party integrations is the best way to ensure your advertising technology solution will be able to tie into your entire enterprise marketing stack. That should include being able to integrate with ecommerce platforms so you can link paid media touchpoints, site interactions, and purchase behavior. It should also include the ability to integrate with sales engagement platforms, which create opportunities to leverage customer information from B2B partners for remarketing purposes.

Questions to ask:

What level of integration does the solution have with our organization's current and future advertising and marketing technologies? How does it integrate with our DMP or analytics solutions? What integrations does it have with ecommerce or sales engagement platforms?

Creative process integration.

Creative is a critical pillar of advertising, but too many advertising technology solutions focus so much on being data-driven, audience-focused, and media-based that they tend to give little to no attention to the creative aspect. But to deliver relevant and compelling experiences, you need creative assets that are personalized and unique to each customer. That requires an advertising technology solution that can ingest creative files and/or product feeds and configure ads at scale based on pre-defined templates and rules.

It also requires streamlined or dynamic processes that make it easy to execute creative revisions. Rather than being stuck in a feedback loop that requires designers to take care of every

revision, personalization needs to be technology-driven. To determine if an advertising technology solution can deliver this kind of support, vendors need to be able to answer a number of questions. Can you make changes to creative elements within an ad? Can you leverage product catalogs or data feeds to personalize and optimize the creative being served up? Can you sequence ads in a way that takes the audience on a journey as they discover your product? Can you set up multiple targeting plus creative rules in an easy-to-understand decision tree workflow? Are the templates flexible enough to let you customize and differentiate your brand online, or are they canned templates with rigid constraints? Will you get transparent reporting on the costs of personalization and media, as well as where your creative is being delivered?

POTENTIAL GOTCHA:

Even though creative assets are critical to customer personalization, many solutions don't provide robust integrations with creative processes and tools. This creates a severe disconnect between your creative processes and the rest of your marketing and advertising processes.

To execute on the personalization of your creative assets, the solution also needs to be able to create connections between all your target audiences and the channels you're buying. Otherwise, you end up only achieving personalization for part of your funnel or part of your audience. So, another question to ask is whether the solution's dynamic creative capabilities also integrate with your organization's analytics solution, data management platform, and other data sources and tools in your marketing stack. For example, integrating with your DMP and analytics solution gives you insight into what prospects have already visited and seen, allowing you to target follow-on offers effectively. Integrating with your ecommerce solution tells you what products are available and

Questions to ask:

Does the solution enable the dynamic delivery of personalized creative that is most relevant to my customers and prospects? Do those dynamic creative capabilities integrate with my design tools of choice?

where inventory is low—so you don't spend budget advertising offers you can't fulfill.

The bottom line is that creative is a core element of your advertising efforts and needs to be equally integrated into any solution you buy. The delivery of personalized, relevant customer experiences across the entire journey requires a solution that makes creative elements and processes a primary focus and provides the integrations that enable the dynamic delivery of personalized creative assets.

Recognized advertising technology leader.

Named a Leader in the Gartner *Magic Quadrant for Ad Tech*, Adobe Advertising Cloud is uniquely positioned to address all the critical elements covered in this buyer's guide. Adobe Advertising Cloud gives you an independent, omnichannel advertising platform that simplifies the management and delivery of brand and performance campaigns in display, video, native, search, and TV across any screen in any format. With Adobe Advertising Cloud Creative as a core element of the Advertising Cloud portfolio, you can easily integrate, manage, and optimize your processes for serving up dynamic, personalized creative. And with native integrations to Adobe Experience Cloud solutions, you can connect your advertising efforts to the broader marketing journey and use advertising to orchestrate and deliver great customer experiences.

To learn more about what Adobe Advertising Cloud can do for your business, visit www.adobe.com/advertising/adobe-advertising-cloud.html