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# State of Data 2025

THE NOW, THE NEAR, AND THE NEXT  
EVOLUTION OF AI FOR MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

March 2025



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# Welcome to Your New Media Campaign: *Brought to You by AI*

IAB's *State of Data* series has tracked major shifts in digital advertising that have forced nearly every company to adapt or else fall behind. Most recently, signal deprecation has driven an industry-wide movement to the use of first-party data, alternative IDs, and data clean rooms.

Now, driven by the rapid evolution of AI, the industry is on the brink of an even larger shift. Although AI has helped analyze data, optimize targeting, and automate workflows for years, it has not fundamentally changed how media campaigns are executed from start to finish.

**Today, a new evolution of AI is upon us that will upend the industry's traditional workflows, job roles, and execution.**

New forms of AI, including but not limited to generative and agentic, are transforming AI's role from a tool that makes existing processes smarter into one that can now think, strategize, and execute in unprecedented and even human-like ways.

AI can now be used to build media plans, generate audience segments, select media partners, and fashion customized sales packages. It can scenario plan, forecast performance, and even use synthetic, or "fake", data to enhance audience building, marketing mix modeling, and sales attribution.

**Full-scale deployment of AI, where it is integrated and operational across all media campaign processes**, requires a foundational rethinking of how agencies, brands, and publishers execute their media campaigns within their own companies and with their partners.

To understand where the industry currently stands in adapting to this evolution, **IAB partnered with BWG Global and Transparent Partners to survey over 500 subject matter experts at agencies, brands, and publishers to explore:**

- AI's adoption across media campaign lifecycles
- Perceptions of AI's reliability and effectiveness
- Challenges, opportunities, and future needs

***State of Data 2025: The Now, The Near, and The Next Evolution of AI for Media Campaigns*** provides agencies, brands, and publishers critical insights into the adoption of AI, including both the challenges faced and perceptions of success so far.

The study looks to inspire roadmaps to help those businesses transition from AI-assisted workflows to complete integration—and ultimately unlock AI's full potential.

The final section of this report offers recommendations that can help agencies, brands, and publishers navigate this exciting and monumental evolution within digital media advertising.

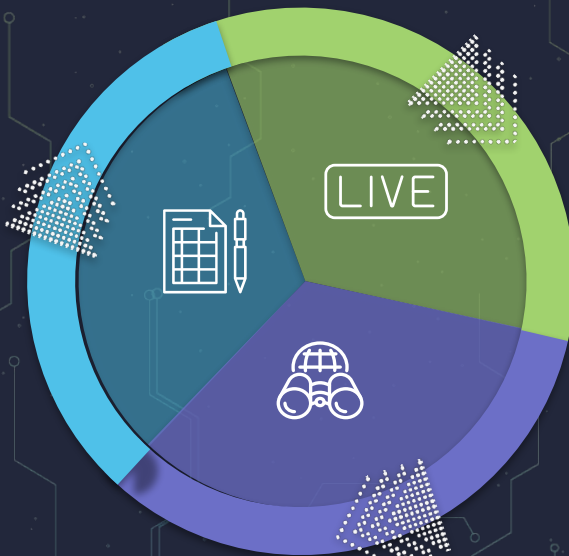


# Explainer: Realizing AI's Full-Scale Potential in the Media Campaign Lifecycle

Just as brands like Coca-Cola, Suzuki, and Toys"R"Us have used AI to fully produce ads, AI can now power the entire media campaign lifecycle—from planning to activation to analysis. **The use cases below highlight the many ways advertisers and publishers can harness AI to transform their strategies and maximize its potential, as explored in this study.**

## 1 PLANNING

- Identify/segment audiences
- Determine optimal media mix/pacing/pricing
- Forecast campaign inventory/outcomes
- Automated gathering of market intelligence
- Structure testing frameworks
- Select partners and evaluate RFPs
- Recommend ad placements/formats
- Automate campaign setup, IOs, media tags
- Generate audience personas via synthetic data
- Create RFPs/RFP responses



## 2 ACTIVATION

- Track and optimize ad delivery/conversions
- Predictive real-time budget/bid adjustments
- Analyze content and audience behavior
- Predict and manage budget pacing/pricing/inventory
- Optimize cross-channel bids and targeting tactics
- Optimize bidding and yield
- Detect anomalies and make real-time adjustments
- Monitor content adjacency and brand safety
- Identify and block ad fraud
- Automate and optimize A/B or multivariate tests

## 3 ANALYSIS

- Analyze and attribute campaign incremental lift
- Dynamic summaries of inventory performance
- Automated data collection/integration and cleansing
- Attribute engagement/actions across devices/platforms
- Automate analysis of A/B or multivariate testing
- Multi-touch attribution (MTA) and marketing mix models (MMM)
- Analyze performance data against campaign goals
- Attribute outcomes using synthetic data
- Leverage synthetic data to strengthen MMM
- Interpret results and produce recommendations



# STATE OF DATA 2025

THE NOW, THE NEAR, AND THE NEXT EVOLUTION  
OF AI FOR MEDIA CAMPAIGNS



## KEY INSIGHTS

01

**Most companies have not yet fully scaled AI across their media campaigns.**

70% of agencies, brands, and publishers are not fully integrating AI across media planning, activation, and analysis. However, since half of those expect to be fully scaled by 2026, companies will differentiate themselves by those who have widely adopted AI vs. those who have not.

02

**Agencies and publishers lead AI adoption to date, praising its ability to save time, resources, and money.**

The initial focus is clearly on driving efficiency, as nearly twice as many agencies and publishers have fully scaled AI compared to brands. They also rate AI higher, with more than 7-in-10 saying it meets or exceeds expectations for reducing manual work, achieving AI goals, and delivering consistent performance.

03

**Challenges to full-scale AI adoption center around data readiness, security, and tool fragmentation—not job loss.**

Nearly two-thirds cite significant challenges, including the quality of the data being used and produced, the protection of that data, and the fragmentation that exists among disparate AI tools. In contrast, and contrary to popular assumptions, job security is the least of their concerns at just 37%.

04

**Despite major hurdles in AI adoption, only half of companies are taking action to overcome them.**

At most, only 49% of agencies, brands, and publishers are using or planning to use any of 18 key solutions to mitigate AI adoption challenges, such as strategic roadmaps, clear use cases, formal training, and governance boards—leaving many vulnerable to falling behind the market, and their competition.

05

**Companies need clearer AI adoption plans and stronger governance to keep pace with AI's rapid evolution.**

Agencies, brands, and publishers must take a phased approach to AI adoption, ensuring that data inputs and outputs are secure and of high quality. They also need to train teams on best practices, collaborate with the industry to develop standards, and prioritize key use cases to establish a strong foundation for full-scale adoption.

# Current AI Adoption Status



# Full-scale AI adoption in the media campaign lifecycle is nascent, especially for brands

Although AI has been a key part of digital advertising for years, and new forms of AI are on the rise, **70% of agencies, brands, and publishers have yet to fully scale it across media planning, activation, and analysis.**

Agencies and publishers are leading AI adoption, while many brands, following broader industry trends, are still in the pilot stage, using AI only in select campaigns and use cases. One reason for this delay is resource constraints, with 60% of brands citing cost as the biggest factor influencing which AI tools they choose to use (data not shown).

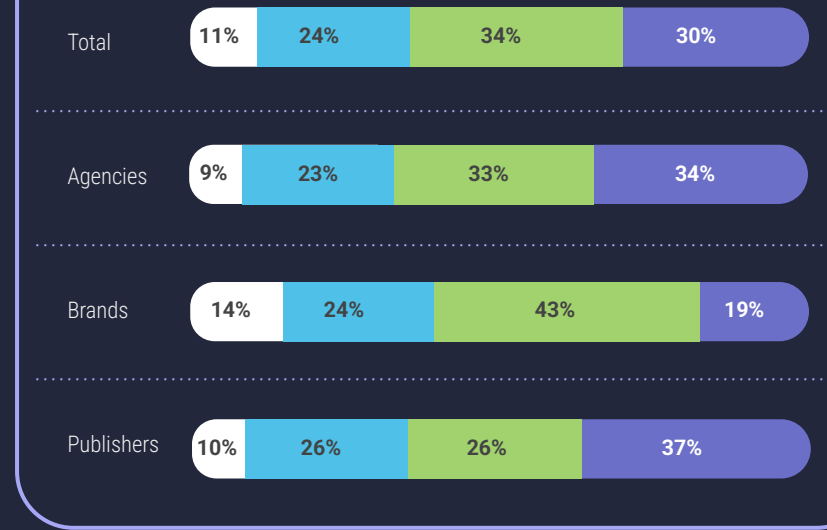
+ *"We have been slow to fully implement AI into our day-to-day processes. We are wary to go 'all in' until it's become a bit more of a societal norm with a long-standing track record of scalable success. However, we are optimistic that it will be a huge piece of our tech stack and workflow in the future."*

- SVP, Brand



## CURRENT AI ADOPTION IN THE MEDIA CAMPAIGN LIFECYCLE

● Exploratory ● Testing ● Proof of Concept ● Full-Scale



**Exploratory/conceptual** – Early-stage research or brainstorming on how AI could be applied; discussions are conceptual

**Testing** – AI solutions are being piloted in small-scale, controlled environments to assess feasibility and effectiveness

**Proof of concept (POC)** – AI has demonstrated measurable success in specific applications, but deployment remains limited to certain campaigns or use cases

**Full-scale deployment** – AI is fully integrated and operational across all processes, applied consistently and at scale

# Despite its nascency, full-scale AI adoption is rapidly approaching

Full-scale AI adoption in the media campaign lifecycle isn't a question of if but when, as more than 80% of agencies, brands, and publishers who haven't yet scaled their adoption have a timeline for when they expect it to happen.

**In fact, half expect full integration in the next two years (by 2026), with the buy-side leading the way.** This progress is driven by companies already testing AI, seeing strong results, and responding to industry changes and competitive pressure. Publishers, however, expect a slightly longer timeline due to the many variables they must manage between clients, data providers, and currencies.

+ "The ways we are leveraging AI for our company and clients is increasing month by month. We anticipate full-scale AI development for media campaigns by 2026, driven by improved AI capabilities, competition and proven ROI."

- Director, Agency



+ "The AI adoption process involves multiple stages, including pilot testing, various stakeholder buy in, and ensuring compliance with regulations."

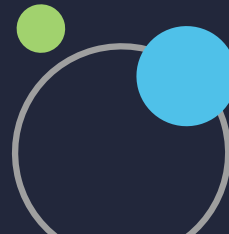
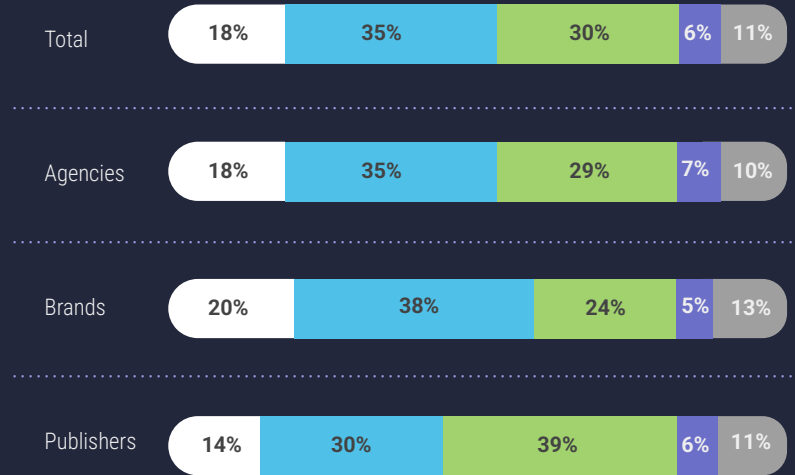
- SVP, Publisher



## TIME EXPECTED TO FULL-SCALE AI ADOPTION IN THE MEDIA CAMPAIGN LIFECYCLE

Among those who have not yet fully scaled AI

● 2025 ● 2026 ● 2027+ ● Never ● Not Sure





# Full-scale AI adoption remains elusive as AI solutions continue to mature

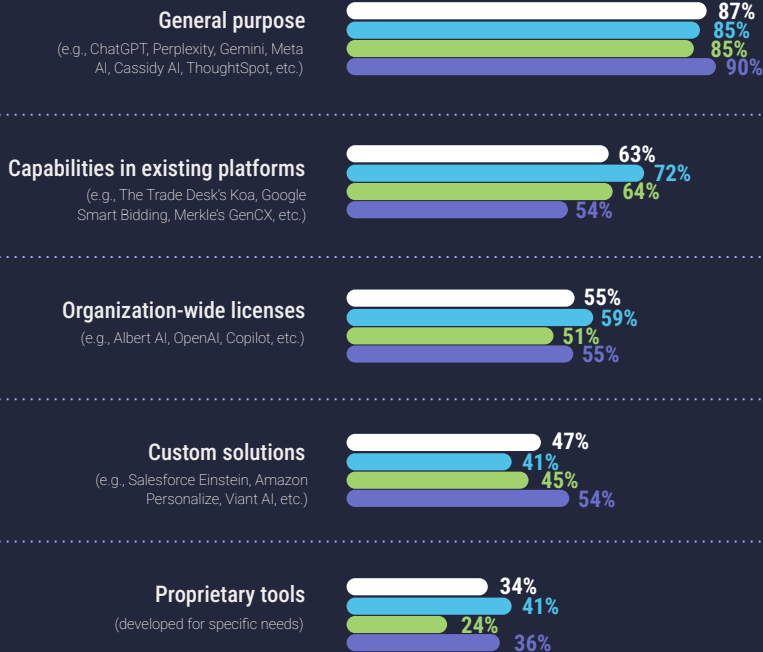
**Two-thirds to nearly 90% of agencies, brands, and publishers are using AI tools that are easy to access, but lack the functionality needed for full-scale adoption**, including general purpose tools, such as ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Meta AI, and features within platforms they're already using, such as The Trade Desk's Koa, Google Smart Bidding, and Merkle's GenCX.

In contrast, only one-third to just over half are using tools that would enable broader integration such as organization-wide licenses, custom solutions, such as Salesforce Einstein or Amazon's Personalize, or proprietary tools. So far, agencies and publishers are at the forefront of using these tools, leveraging them to meet their clients' diverse needs.



## TYPES OF AI TOOLS AND PLATFORMS BEING USED

● Total ● Agencies ● Brands ● Publishers



# On the buy-side, agencies lead AI adoption and are focused on audience segmentation

Agencies have adopted AI more than brands across all of the top use cases as they have greater opportunities to create efficiencies across clients.

Their main AI use case—already adopted by half—is audience identification and segmentation as they recognize the need for continually refining audiences for targeting as consumer behaviors shift. In fact, both agencies and brands are doubling down on this practice as one-quarter to one-third are using emerging generative AI to build segments with synthetic (e.g., “fake” data), filling gaps where data signals are no longer available.

## TOP 10 AI USE CASES IN THE MEDIA CAMPAIGN LIFECYCLE (BUY-SIDE)

● Agencies ● Brands

Identify/segment audiences



Predictive real-time bid adjustments



Automated data collection/integration



Track and optimize ad delivery/conversions



Generate audience personas via synthetic data



Optimize campaigns across channels



Optimize targeting tactics



Track and analyze audience actions taken after ad exposure



Determine media mix/pacing



Analyze performance data against campaign goals



# While publishers are currently using AI to manage supply and analyze audience engagement

Publishers' top AI use cases are inventory forecasting, cross-device attribution, and analyzing audience behavior, which enable them to deliver ads efficiently where audiences are most active.

One-third are also using generative AI to create client deliverables—sales proposals, campaign reports, and recommendations—allowing them to streamline workflows and enhance client communication.



## TOP 10 AI USE CASES IN THE MEDIA CAMPAIGN LIFECYCLE (PUBLISHERS)



# In the future, companies are planning to use AI to advance measurement and agility

Agencies, brands, and publishers are piloting or actively planning to implement a number of key AI use cases in the months ahead.

Agencies are working to automate campaign management and leverage advanced analytics to make smarter media investments, while brands are piloting opportunities to detect issues faster and integrate data seamlessly, improving agility. Meanwhile, publishers will be focusing on measuring campaign impact and optimizing inventory to maximize revenue and audience engagement.

## TOP 5 AI USE CASES BEING PILOTED IN THE MEDIA CAMPAIGN LIFECYCLE

### AGENCIES

- 1 Real-time budget allocation shifts
- 2 Predictive real-time bid adjustments
- 3 Multi-touch attribution modeling (MTA)
- 4 Execute marketing mix models (MMM)
- 5 Automated gathering of market intel

### BRANDS

- 1 Identify/segment audiences
- 2 Detect anomalies and make real-time adjustments
- 3 Automate campaign setup
- 4 Contextual targeting
- 5 Create RFPs/other media campaign docs

### PUBLISHERS

- 1 Use behavioral data to recommend ad placements
- 2 Identify/segment audiences
- 3 Analyze and attribute campaign incremental lift
- 4 Recommend optimal ad products/formats
- 5 Optimize targeting tactics





***“We use AI to increase efficiency, optimize performance, personalize messaging, and adapt dynamically based on campaign results. As AI evolves, we look forward to further enhancing our ad strategies across all platforms and deliver an improved ROI.”***

*Manager, Brand*



# Current AI Perceptions



# So far, companies feel AI is delivering on its overall promise

Agencies and publishers are highly satisfied, with 70% or more saying it meets or exceeds their expectations for driving, time, resource, and cost savings, achieving their AI-specific goals, and delivering consistent performance over time.

Brands, on the other hand, view AI as slightly less effective and reliable, likely because they are behind agencies and publishers in adoption and face greater pressure to demonstrate ROI.

+ *"One of the best benefits of AI is we rely on it to generate comprehensive performance reports without any manual effort."*  
 - Director, Agency

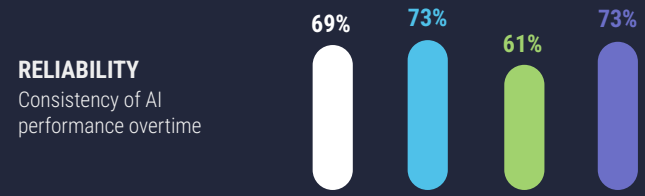
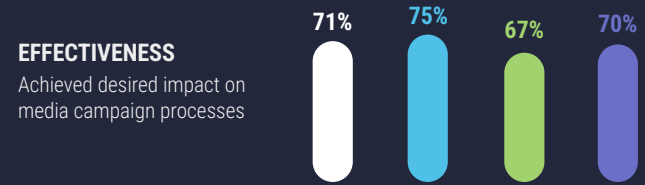
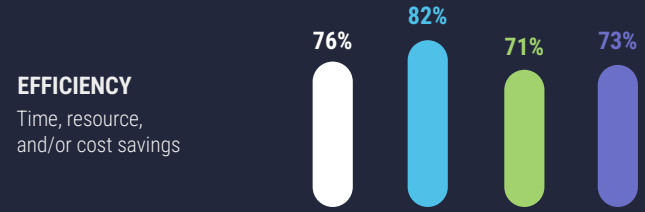
+ *"AI has significantly improved the efficiency of our company. It helps our employees explore more opportunities for clients and provide more accurate data and clear results."*  
 - SVP, Publisher



## AI RATINGS

% agree it generally/consistently meets expectations

● Total ● Agencies ● Brands ● Publishers



# Specifically, AI excels at precision and data consolidation but falls short today where human judgment and strategy are required

Agencies, brands, and publishers alike feel that AI delivers the most efficiency, effectiveness, and reliability in audience segmentation and data aggregation, while ad fraud prevention, brand safety, and contract management rank the lowest.

## AI RANKING BY ASPECT OF THE MEDIA CAMPAIGN LIFECYCLE

	EFFICIENCY	EFFECTIVENESS	RELIABILITY
<b>More than two-thirds rate as efficient, effective, and reliable</b>	1 Audience segmentation	1 Audience segmentation	1 Data aggregation & reporting
	2 Data aggregation & reporting	2 Data aggregation & reporting	2 Audience segmentation
	3 Audience targeting	3 Audience targeting	3 Ad delivery & conversion monitoring
	4 Real-time optimizations	4 Media mix/pricing planning	4 Audience targeting
	5 Media mix/pricing planning	5 Real-time optimizations	5 Performance & anomaly monitoring
	6 Performance & anomaly monitoring	6 Ad delivery & conversion monitoring	6 Media mix/pricing planning
	7 Ad delivery & conversion monitoring	7 Post-campaign insights & recos	7 Real-time optimizations
	8 Attribution/lift analyses	8 Campaign ROI/inventory forecasting	8 Post-campaign insights & recos
	9 Campaign ROI/inventory forecasting	9 Attribution/lift analyses	9 Campaign ROI/inventory forecasting
	10 Post-campaign insights & recos	10 Performance & anomaly monitoring	10 Attribution/lift analyses
	11 Campaign setup & activation	11 Budget pacing/yield management	11 Campaign setup & activation
	12 Budget pacing/yield management	12 Campaign setup & activation	12 Budget pacing/yield management
<b>Less than half rate as efficient, effective, and reliable</b>	13 Ad fraud & brand safety monitoring	13 Ad fraud & brand safety monitoring	13 Ad fraud & brand safety monitoring
	14 RFP & contract management	14 RFP & contract management	14 RFP & contract management





***“AI is great when you need to make real-time, specific, high-volume decisions. It does not do a good job at providing larger scale, strategic guidance, or recommendations that don't skew towards what's already working.”***

*Supervisor, Brand*



# Future AI Challenges and Opportunities



# Companies across the industry face the same AI adoption hurdles, including data readiness, security, and tool fragmentation

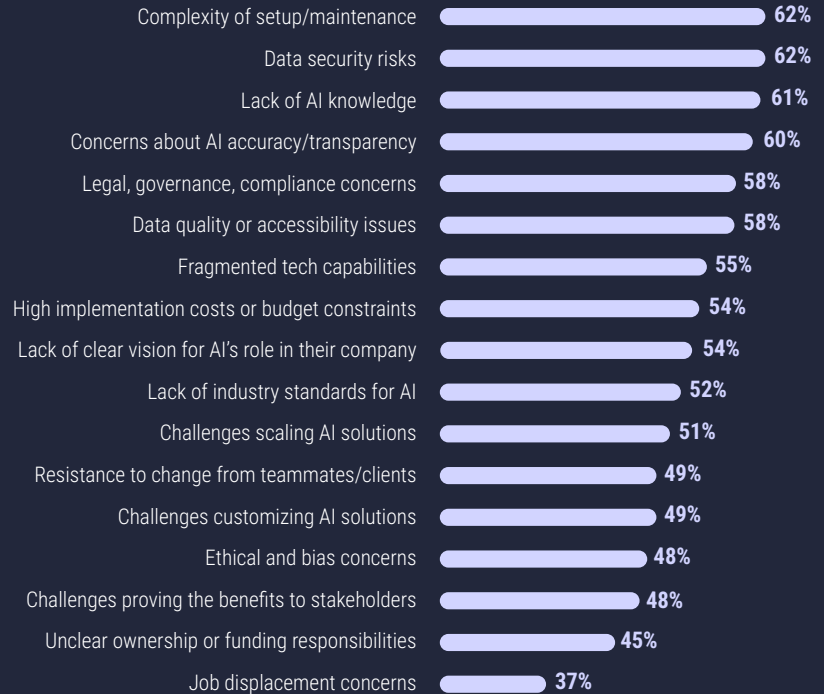
Nearly two-thirds of agencies, brands, and publishers cite significant challenges in adopting AI in media campaigns, including the complexity of setting up and maintaining AI tools, ensuring the quality of the data being used and produced as well as its protection, acquiring enough AI expertise, complying with legal requirements, and managing fragmentation across disparate AI tools.

On the other hand, despite common assumptions, job displacement is the least of their concerns, ranking lowest at 37%. **This shows that the industry recognizes that AI requires a strong foundation before it can take on human tasks and realize its full potential.**



## AI ADOPTION CHALLENGES

% Cited as a significant or critical concern



# However, when it comes to setup, ethics, and managing stakeholders, the buy- and sell-sides face unique challenges

Publishers face some of the toughest tech challenges, dealing with tool complexity and integrating their processes into a fragmented ecosystem. They must also navigate AI ethics, mitigating bias to maintain trust with both audiences and advertisers.

Many brands and publishers struggle with unclear AI strategies, highlighting the need for those still scaling to define a clearer path toward their AI goals. Meanwhile, agencies face the most resistance to change from teammates and clients while managing both cross-team and cross-client communication.

+ *"We still think AI is immature in integrating it with existing systems. We need protocols such as APIs to work with."*

- Manager, Publisher



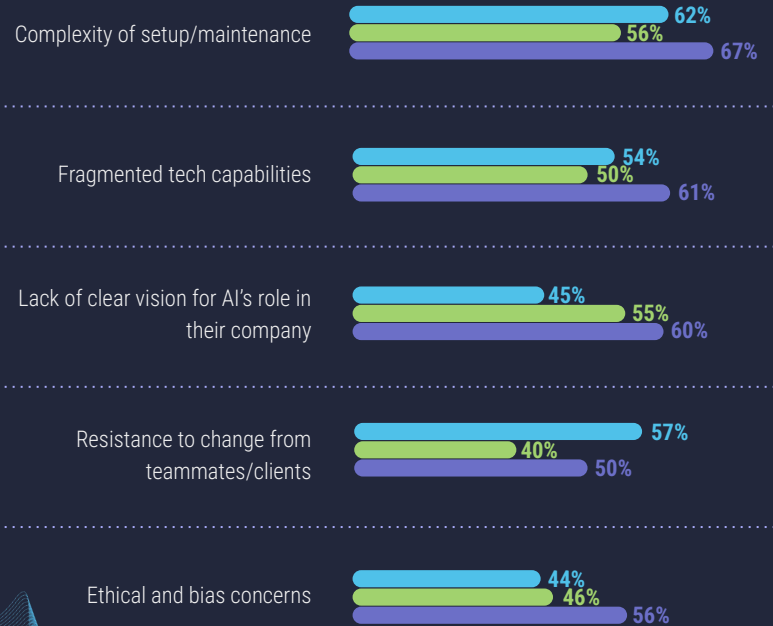
+ *"Our biggest concern is the time needed for our leaders to become aware of available technologies, implementation, and maintenance."*

- SVP, Agency



## KEY SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS & CHALLENGES ABOUT AI, BY COMPANY TYPE

● Agencies ● Brands ● Publishers





## And for the buy-side, AI transparency is becoming a key concern

Even in the early stages of AI adoption, brands and agencies are navigating a delicate balance as **half of brands are concerned about visibility into their partners' AI practices, while half of agencies are wary of brands bringing capabilities in-house.**

As AI adoption accelerates, both will need to refine their operating models to strengthen trust, enhance collaboration, and drive greater efficiency across the media campaign lifecycle.

51%

of brands are concerned about a lack of transparency into how agency/publisher partners use AI on their behalf

52%

of agencies are concerned brands will bring AI capabilities in-house and reduce reliance on partners



***“The biggest challenges we face in fully adopting AI for the media campaign lifecycle are data privacy and compliance, data quality and integration, bias and fairness, and the resource requirements to make it all work.”***

*Director, Agency*



# Future AI Solutions and Standards



# Despite facing significant AI adoption challenges, only half of companies are developing solutions to address them

At most, only 49% of agencies, brands, and publishers are using or planning to use any given one of 18 key solutions to overcome AI adoption challenges for media campaigns.

This means half or more still lack long-term strategic roadmaps, clear use cases, or defined KPIs—leaving their AI adoption vulnerable to becoming scattered, slowing progress, and creating inefficiencies.

Governance is also lacking, with only 1-in-5 putting in place AI boards or contract clauses. Without strong accountability and training, companies face the threat of biased outputs, data breaches, and compliance failures, making them susceptible to falling behind, losing consumer trust, and facing legal consequences.



## SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS AI CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES

*% Using or planning to use*



# But, the industry recognizes the need for standards to help mitigate risks as AI rapidly evolves

More than half of agencies, brands, and publishers cite data privacy and protection, as well as accuracy and reliability as the most valuable industry standards needed, recognizing that without them, their businesses face the greatest threats.

In addition, nearly half of agencies call for transparency standards and unified definitions to ensure consistency across their accounts and strengthen trust amid client concerns (data not shown).

+ *"We are concerned about the mismanagement or misuse of personal data and how it can lead to privacy violations and reputational damage."*

- Director, Agency

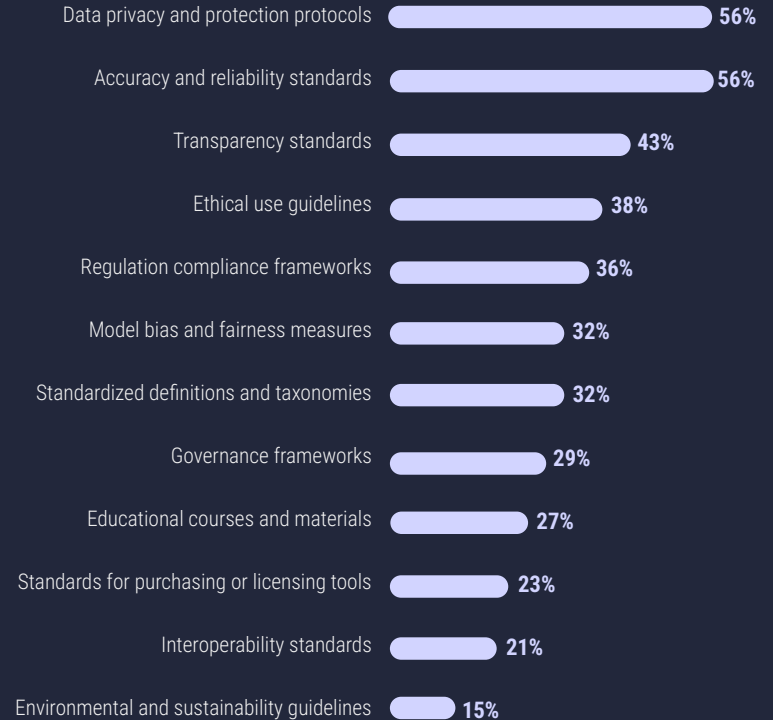


+ *"Fear of AI-driven campaigns producing biased or unethical outcomes will slow our implementation."*

- Manager, Publisher



## MOST VALUABLE AI INDUSTRY STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE



# Recommendations







# Act Now

To realize AI's full-scale potential across media planning, activation, and analytics, agencies, brands, and publishers must focus on five key areas:

- 1 **Build a phased roadmap for full-scale AI adoption**
- 2 **Ensure data readiness: quality, security, and governance**
- 3 **Implement organization-wide training and best practices**
- 4 **Strengthen industry collaboration, trust, and standards**
- 5 **Prioritize key, company-specific AI use cases**

See the following pages for more details on the above.

## 1 Build a phased roadmap for full-scale AI adoption

- ❑ Map out all potential AI use cases across media planning, activation, and analysis—see page 4 for a full breakdown
- ❑ Create a structured integration plan with clear milestones and specific AI solution KPIs
- ❑ Benchmark your company's maturity against competitors and partners to address gaps using this report
- ❑ Consider adopting AI tools and platforms that have the capabilities to enable full-scale adoption, including company-wide licenses, custom solutions, or proprietary tools
- ❑ Continually update roadmaps based on media performance, audience behaviors, market trends, regulatory shifts, and AI advancements (e.g., generative and agentic)

## 2 Ensure data readiness: quality, security, and governance

- ❑ Audit and optimize data collection, storage, and management to ensure AI uses clean, structured, and secure data
- ❑ Strengthen data security with audits, access controls, encryption, and limits on sensitive data use
- ❑ Require human oversight to verify AI inputs and outputs, mitigate bias, and ensure compliance with evolving privacy regulations
- ❑ Use privacy-preserving techniques such as synthetic data to enhance audience building, marketing mix modeling, and attribution
- ❑ Optimize AI solution interoperability with martech, adtech, and data provider systems
- ❑ Establish AI governance with dedicated boards, contract clauses, and regular audits to ensure responsible use
- ❑ Continually update data infrastructure, security, and oversight processes based on market trends, regulatory shifts, and AI advancements (e.g., generative and agentic)

### 3 Implement organization-wide training and best practices

- ❑ Create structured AI training programs tailored to each seniority level and department
- ❑ Develop shared resources, including prompt libraries, standard operating procedures, best practices, guides, etc.
- ❑ Create cross-functional AI Centers of Excellence (COEs) to ensure consistent AI execution
- ❑ Hire or partner with AI experts or consultants to fill knowledge gaps
- ❑ Foster a culture of AI experimentation to improve workflows, drive innovation, and quickly adapt to industry changes
- ❑ Continually update training programs based on market trends, regulatory shifts, and AI advancements (e.g., generative and agentic)

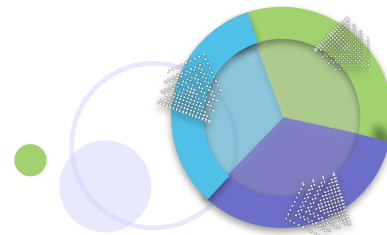
### 4 Strengthen industry collaboration, trust, and standards

- ❑ Advocate for industry-wide AI standards on data protection, accuracy, transparency, and measurement
- ❑ Create and enforce industry-wide AI governance compliance guidelines and best practices for responsible adoption
- ❑ Partner with adtech companies to advance AI tools, improve interoperability across systems, and enhance AI's ability to handle strategic decision-making
- ❑ Provide or ensure partners provide transparent AI reporting, including data sources, model decision-making, and measurement
- ❑ Align AI goals and best practices between advertisers and partners to improve collaboration in media planning, activation, and analysis



## Prioritize key, company-specific AI use cases

Below are vital AI use cases that agencies, brands, and publishers should focus on at each stage of the media campaign lifecycle to build a strong foundation for full-scale adoption.



### AGENCIES

#### 1 PLANNING



**Determine the optimal media mix and budget pacing** by simulating different budget scenarios across channels, partners, and placements, forecasting reach, frequency, and ROI

#### 2 ACTIVATION



**Optimize cross-channel bids and targeting** by analyzing real-time performance and behavioral data to refine audience segments and adjust budgets across devices and platforms

#### 3 ANALYSIS



**Execute and strengthen marketing mix models** to drive smarter media investments, using synthetic data to fill gaps in a privacy-compliant manner

### BRANDS

**Generate audience personas** and a comprehensive understanding of the consumer journey by unifying data from CRM, CDP, site analytics, and other platforms

**Predict and manage investments** by continually running scenario plans based on real-time performance data across from paid, earned, and owned media as well as ongoing market changes

**Interpret results and produce data-driven recommendations** by analyzing real-time performance and behavioral data to identify high-engagement areas and pinpoint areas for refinement

### PUBLISHERS

**Forecast campaign inventory and revenue** by analyzing past performance, identifying high-value placements that match client needs, and predicting their real-time availability

**Optimize bidding and yield** by dynamically adjusting bid strategies and pacing across direct and programmatic channels, including header bidding, to maximize revenue and fill rates

**Attribute campaign lift** by aggregating and analyzing performance data across devices and platforms to determine the reach, frequency, and incremental impact of the ads

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# A Letter from IAB's Measurement, Addressability & Data Board of Directors

*Dear Advertising Industry Colleagues,*

AI is redefining how advertising works, transforming every stage of the media campaign lifecycle—from planning to activation to analysis. But technology alone won't move the industry forward. Real progress depends on how agencies, brands, publishers, and platforms adopt, align, and advance AI together.

**At IAB's Measurement, Addressability & Data (MAD) Center, we see the opportunity not just in adopting AI but in driving shared outcomes and creating meaningful impact.**

The next era of AI isn't about efficiency—it's about impact. Automation alone isn't enough. Success will come to those who use AI to solve complex marketing challenges and drive measurable outcomes. But impactful outcomes require trust, and trust starts with transparency. As AI decision-making becomes more sophisticated, it's essential to explain clearly how models work, how performance is measured, and how data is used. However, full model transparency isn't always the answer—it could compromise effectiveness or lead to unintended consequences. Instead, clear explanations of model applications can build trust without exposing every technical detail.

To build ethical AI systems, the industry must prioritize sustainability, fairness, and bias mitigation. This means using energy-efficient computing resources, well-defined data sets, and clear baselines to ensure models respond appropriately and fairly. Human oversight is essential—not just for training models but also for interpreting outputs and ensuring ethical applications. It's equally important to identify when models don't perform as expected, avoiding scenarios where AI becomes a black box. Robust governance frameworks will help maintain trust and credibility.

We have seen that inadequate data inputs will deliver misleading AI outputs. Getting the right data inputs to train models is critical to reliable AI-driven outputs and this requires audited and properly scaled training data. No single player holds all the signals needed to unlock AI's full potential. Yet, fragmented data ecosystems and poor data quality limit AI's effectiveness. Privacy-safe data collaboration and interoperable solutions will fuel better models and more effective campaigns.

As AI adoption grows, so does scrutiny from regulators and consumers. The industry must lead in setting standards for privacy, fairness, and accountability. Establishing common guardrails for data use, model transparency, and performance measurement will benefit the entire ecosystem. A balanced approach—maintaining flexibility while ensuring accountability—will help the industry adapt to changing technologies and market needs.

AI has already transformed how campaigns are planned, activated, and measured. But its full potential will only be realized if the ecosystem moves forward together. The future of AI in advertising depends on alignment on outcomes, transparency, privacy-safe data collaboration, and adaptable standards. Building trust, fostering collaboration, and setting clear standards will determine whether AI drives growth across the ecosystem. The future belongs to those who align for impact.

*Sincerely,*

**iab** ● MEASUREMENT,  
ADDRESSABILITY &  
DATA CENTER  
Board of Directors



# Further resources from IAB and IAB Tech Lab

The following guidelines, insights, and playbooks are resources to help the digital ad industry expand their knowledge of AI and adapt to its evolving impact.

## [IAB's State of Data 2025 Companion Guide](#)

is a strategic playbook that provides tactical recommendations for agencies, brands, publishers and adtech providers on integrating AI into day-to-day media planning, activation, and analysis processes.

[IAB's State of Data Hub](#) features previous editions of the *State of Data* report and other, in-depth analyses of key trends, insights, and strategies shaping the future of data-driven advertising. Gain expert perspectives on critical topics such as privacy regulations, AI integration, and the evolving data ecosystem.

## [IAB Generative AI Playbook for Advertising](#)

provides an overview of AI models, dives into key use cases including content creation, campaign optimization, and measurement, and offers frameworks and checklists for evaluating tools and ensuring responsible implementation and use.

## [IAB AI Use Cases and Best Practices for Marketing](#)

explores how AI enhances digital marketing through audience targeting, creative optimization, privacy compliance, and automation, providing best practices and real-world use cases for agencies, brands, and technologists.

## [Legal Issues and Business Considerations When Using Generative AI in Digital Advertising](#)

examines the opportunities and risks of creating, training, and implementing generative AI in digital advertising, focusing on legal, ethical, and operational challenges such as intellectual property concerns, bias, misinformation, and brand safety.

## [Understanding Bias in AI for Marketing](#)

provides a comprehensive guide on identifying, mitigating, and managing bias in AI-powered marketing and advertising systems, emphasizing the importance of transparency, accountability, and ethical AI practices across the AI system lifecycle.

## About IAB



The Interactive Advertising Bureau empowers the media and marketing industries to thrive in the digital economy. Its membership comprises more than 700 leading media companies, brands, agencies, and the technology firms responsible for selling, delivering, and optimizing digital ad marketing campaigns. The trade group fields critical research on interactive advertising, while also educating brands, agencies, and the wider business community on the importance of digital marketing.

In affiliation with the IAB Tech Lab, IAB develops technical standards and solutions. IAB is committed to professional development and elevating the knowledge, skills, expertise, and diversity of the workforce across the industry. Through the work of its public policy office in Washington, D.C., the trade association advocates for its members and promotes the value of the interactive advertising industry to legislators and policymakers. Founded in 1996, IAB is headquartered in New York City.

## About IAB's Measurement, Addressability & Data Center



IAB's Measurement, Addressability & Data (MAD) Center Board of Directors aims to provide essential industry guidance and education on solutions and changes in underlying technology and privacy regulations. The MAD Center specializes in measurement and attribution, addressability, advances in retail media, and privacy concerns, providing a comprehensive approach to digital media challenges. Board members set the agenda and direction for IAB and the industry, approve and prioritize key initiatives, influence industry best practices, receive priority access to IAB experts, research, and tools, and participate in exclusive events and meetings.

### IAB MAD Center Board Member Companies

Acxiom	Google	Publicis Media
Amazon Ads	Havas Media	Quigley Simpson
Audigent	Horizon Media	Real Chemistry
Bayer	Infillion	Roundel
Beacon Media Group	Integral Ad Science	Spectrum Science
Butler/Till	LiveIntent	The Trade Desk
Canvas Worldwide	Mars United Commerce	TikTok
dentsu	Meta	TransUnion
Dotdash Meredith	Nielsen	USIM
DoubleVerify	Nomology	Visit Orlando
GlassView	Pinterest	Yahoo

## About BWG Strategy



BWG Global has set the industry standard as the premier provider of industry intelligence to more than 100,000 professionals across leading hedge funds, mutual funds, long-only investment firms, family offices and corporations. Supported by a robust compliance structure and anchored in proven research methodology, BWG Global identifies key market inflections and uncovers unique investable ideas. The firm offers products and services through a license subscription to its digital research library and live events, including Primary Intelligence Virtual Forums, Forum Synopses, Channel Intelligence Research Reports, Market Insight Survey Reports and Custom Research.

BWG Global pioneered an investigative, interview-based methodology providing channel research to the institutional investment community in the 1990s and then expanded its footprint internationally to conduct live, in-depth interviews in more than 20 countries in North and South America, Europe and Asia. In 2013, the company fundamentally changed how investment managers and corporations' access real-time information through live forum events. BWG Global provides much-needed transparency by creating access to real-time information and data on sector, company and technology trends.

## About Transparent Partners



Transparent Partners is a Services-as-a-Solution company that helps enterprise brands transform their marketing capabilities with AI-driven solutions.

Today's marketing organizations struggle with fragmented technology, underutilized data, and increasing pressure to drive measurable impact. AI and automation have the power to solve these challenges—but only when applied effectively.

Transparent Partners delivers AI-powered services and embedded solutions that unlock the full potential of marketing technology and data. Our deep domain expertise helps enterprise brands operationalize AI, automate workflows, optimize investments, and accelerate business growth.

### How We Deliver Value:

- AI-Driven Decisioning & Automation – Scaling marketing efficiency and precision
- Data & Analytics Activation – Turning intelligence into action
- MarTech & Operational Enablement – Reducing complexity and optimizing investments
- Agentic Marketing Solutions (AMS) – AI-powered automation across marketing functions

We help the world's largest brands win with AI—delivering measurable business outcomes, maximizing ROI, and turning marketing investment into competitive advantage.

# Report Contributors

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