



Martechvibe

# Enhancing Ad Performance

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The State of Channel Optimisation  
in The Middle East



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# METHODOLOGY

Martechvibe, in collaboration with Adwake, presents **Enhancing Ad Performance: The State of Channel Optimisation in The Middle East**, an in-depth analysis of digital marketing and adtech in the region. It highlights the current landscape, strategies, key trends, and ad performance analytics.

To deliver data-driven insights, a survey was conducted with 230 professionals within functions such as marketing, product development, content growth, and advertising, including Directors, C-suite executives, Heads of departments, Senior Managers, and Managers.

Respondents represented industries such as Banking,

Financial Services and Insurance (BFSI), Retail, Hospitality, and Healthcare across the United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Egypt. Additionally, the study includes perspectives from senior marketing, growth, martech, and product leaders captured via in-depth interviews.

This report offers a detailed examination of how Middle East marketers navigate digital advertising challenges, from attribution to cross-platform integration, while prioritising future strategies for optimal performance and channel efficiency.

# EDITOR'S NOTE

Change is constant, and for the marketing team – it's a lived experience.

In fact, the CMO knows better than anyone. The role has been shifting in its lines, and it's been discussed widely among business leaders. The shift is both a need and a consequence of our times.

There are new responsibilities like mobile marketing driving business revenue. The CMO has a new focus on activities previously considered beyond the purview of the role, such as ecommerce, pricing, revenue growth, new products, innovation, among others. This is a strategic enhancement of the role.

This new outlook also echoes the digital marketing and advertising team's evolving role.

For example, mobile advertising reacts to market trends and drives new business strategies simultaneously. This is a critical skill that astute professionals will undoubtedly want in future CMOs.

For this reason, digital marketers must be futurists. They must understand what is coming next and have the agility and critical thinking skills to tackle it. They must also be realists, making the most of ad budgets. It is a lesson in balancing the brand's short-term goals and long-term visions.

This report will shape future CMOs, no matter the new definition of the role.



Yolande D'Mello  
Senior Editor  
**Martechvibe**

# TOP INSIGHTS

## Current Challenges

**1- Budget constraints:** 80% of marketers face challenges integrating brand-building with performance marketing and attribute it to limited budgets. It highlights the struggle to balance short-term performance with long-term brand equity.

**2- Attribution complexity:** 73% of marketers shared that multi-touch attribution and integrating offline and online data are crucial challenges. It contributes to an ongoing struggle to create a seamless, accurate measurement of campaign impact across channels.

**3- Lack of confidence in predicting ad performance:** Only 26% of respondents are confident in predicting ad performance, while a total of 41% express varying degrees of uncertainty. This indicates a widespread lack of certainty in measuring campaign success.

## Future Opportunities

**1- Demand for predictive modelling:** 56% of marketers want to develop enhanced capabilities. They want to leverage data-driven insights for forecasting and optimising ad outcomes in a competitive landscape.

**2- Interest in AI and automation:** 55% of marketers seek automated creative optimisation, while 50% seek advanced AI-driven analytics. These trends reflect the growing interest in leveraging AI to enhance efficiency, personalisation, and performance in ad campaigns.

# INTRODUCTION

If there is one function within the team that feels all the ripples of the technology and business world, it's digital marketing and advertising. Modern digital ad campaigns are a power-packed consequence of what customers want, what data tells us about those customers, a curated message that automation can deliver at scale and speed, and, most importantly – human ingenuity.

But if digital marketing teams reflect the prowess of today's technology landscape, they also demonstrate the complexity that comes with it. It's tough to keep pace with changing search algorithms and privacy compliance. It's easy to get caught up in new tools and be tempted to use every feature, regardless of whether it lends

itself to the larger strategy. It's challenging to train teams to trust the data and optimise the media mix.

How can marketing leaders build teams with a stable understanding of their tech stack, choose sustainable strategies that use data to inform decisions, and retain the flexibility to pivot and keep pace with the currents? It is undoubtedly a significant challenge.

This report aims to tap into the collective knowledge of the digital advertising community in the Middle East. It works to understand attitudes towards technologies and trends, identify mobile marketing challenges, and explore possible solutions to move ahead of competition.

## CHAPTER 1

# NAVIGATING BRAND BUILDING AND PERFORMANCE MARKETING

*Brand spend in The Middle East and Africa was estimated to rise by 4.2% and hit \$12.6 billion in 2024, based on World Advertising Research Centre (WARC) data. The global ad market has doubled over the last decade, with advertising investment growing almost*

*three times faster than economic output since 2014.*

*What are these ad dollars being spent on? For one, performance marketing, where advertisers pay only when a specific action, like a purchase, app install, or registration, is completed.*

### **Why Do Brands Choose Performance Marketing?**

**Pay post results:** Advertisers only pay for completed actions, like purchases or app installs, reducing financial risk.

**It's cost-efficient:** Every dollar spent directly drives measurable outcomes, ensuring a clear return on investment (ROI).

**Reduce wasted ad spend:** Marketing budget is focused on results, eliminating the risk of paying for visibility without conversions.

**Real-time optimisation:** Campaigns can be adjusted dynamically based on performance data, improving overall effectiveness.

**Measurement is easier:** Success is tracked through data and metrics, offering transparency and continuous improvement.

## Why Should Brand Building and Performance Marketing Work Together?

Brand-building and performance marketing have distinct missions: one to create long-term emotional connections and the other to drive immediate conversions. Nevertheless, they contribute to a larger masterpiece that balances **emotion with analytics, creativity with precision, and long-term vision with short-term impact.**



*Brand marketing is long-term and is the best way to help people remember your brand. So when the time is right, brand recall will help them convert. Performance marketing is critical to capturing intent. Brand and performance marketing should work hand in hand and should target different stages in the customer funnel.*



**Faheem Ahmad**  
Head of Growth  
Chalhoub Group

Integrating these two elements ensures a strong brand foundation and supports short-term efforts. It leads to enhanced brand performance and optimised channel strategies, driving immediate sales and long-term growth.

Can one ad serve both?

The short answer is no. A **'double duty ad,'** in which the marketer tries to achieve both brand-building and sales activation, is an elusive execution.

Effective marketing strategies typically strike a balance by allocating resources to both immediate, short-term gains and sustained long-term growth.

## The Balancing Act

- **Finding equilibrium:** Combining brand building and performance marketing creates a holistic strategy to balance long-term brand reputation with immediate sales.
- **Channel calibration:** Fine-tuning each channel's unique role helps optimise the marketing mix and boost overall ad performance.
- **Harmonising efforts:** Striking the right balance ensures that brand messaging and performance metrics align seamlessly with marketing objectives.
- **Composability for flexibility:** Continuous improvement aids in meeting evolving customer needs and business goals.
- **A balanced future:** This integrated approach prepares brands to navigate the marketing landscape for sustainable growth and resilience.

## Challenges in Integrating Brand-Building with Performance Marketing



**80%** face budget constraints as a significant challenge



**64%** struggle with inconsistent messaging and resource allocation



**63%** find it difficult to measure brand impact

## Implications:



Difficult to allocate enough resources to both simultaneously



Difficult to maintain a cohesive brand narrative across channels

Today's CMOs are expected to drive more business growth with less budget. But it's still a struggle.

What can help? Robust tools and metrics to effectively assess brand-building efforts alongside performance marketing.



*To avoid audience exhaustion, it will become increasingly essential for brands to focus on executing more upper-funnel activities, such as creating further awareness and driving brand loyalty. This should be implemented with the objective of 'driving new users down the marketing funnel.'*

*This is becoming more essential, specifically in this region, since one of the biggest challenges is driving direct channel bookings. It is necessary to build a long-term marketing strategy that will impact the conversion of users' bookings on online travel agencies (OTAs) to direct channels and, consequently, save dollars on commissions.*



**Sami Savanur**  
Digital Marketing  
Manager  
**Park & Grand Hyatt**  
Abu Dhabi

## Current Tech Stack for Campaign Performance



**36%** of respondents use programmatic advertising tools



**30%** rely on ad platform collaborative tools



**29%** utilise AI & ML analytics and SEO tools



**27%** use CRO tools, data management, and attribution & measurement tools



**25%** use data integration & ETL



**24%** depend on social media management tools



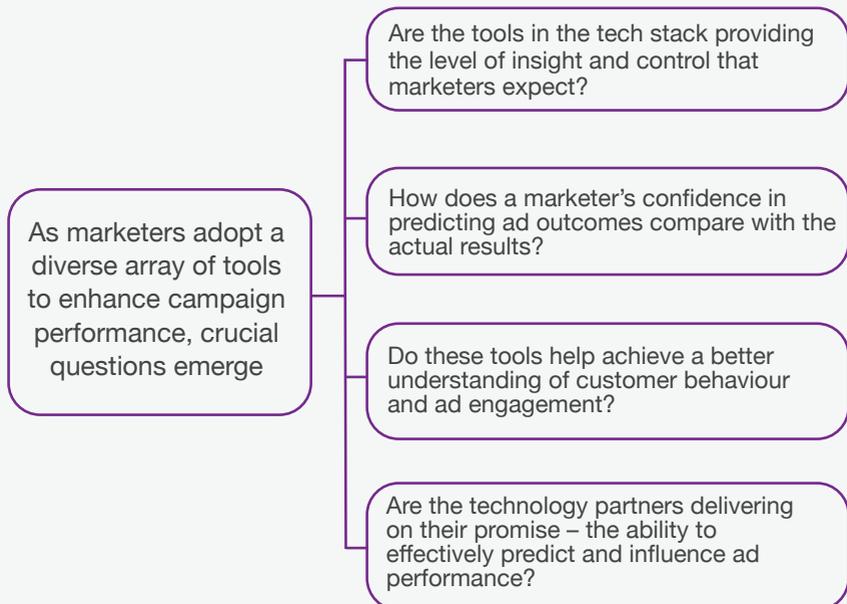
**20%** employ heatmap, user behaviour analytics, and ad fraud prevention tools

The top tools are **programmatic advertising and ad platform collaborative tools**.

**29% of respondents rely equally on AI and ML analytics**, which is a surprisingly low number, considering the buy-in to how AI tools can help optimise ad spend.

Tools like **heatmap, user behaviour analytics, and ad fraud prevention** are used by **20%** of respondents, suggesting a growing awareness of user behaviour insights and the need for securing ad campaigns.

## The Gap between Expectations and Reality



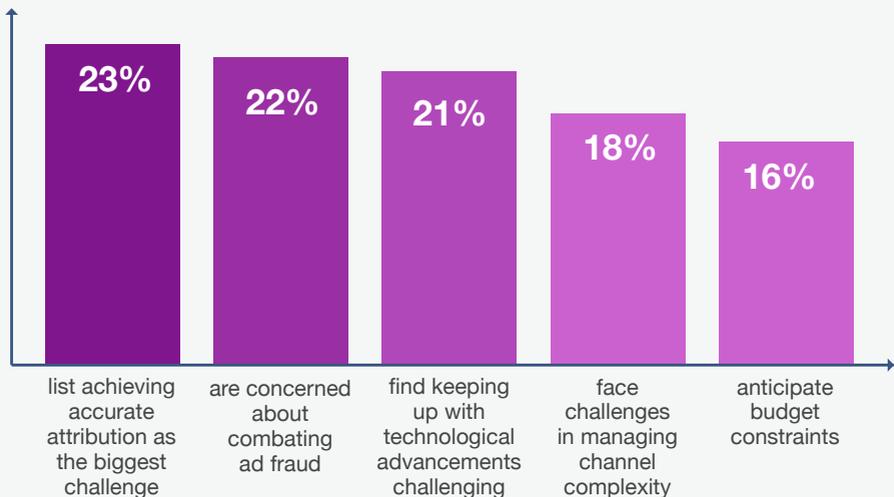
## Confidence in Predicting Ad Performance



Despite the diversity of tools that marketers employ for campaign performance, there appears to be a confidence gap in ad performance prediction. While 26% of respondents are very confident in predicting how their ads will perform, a significant 40% remain uncertain, feeling either somewhat unconfident or very unconfident.

This disparity suggests that even with access to advanced tools and technologies, many marketers still struggle to forecast campaign outcomes accurately. The lack of confidence indicates the need for brands to invest in advanced tools and comprehensive training for teams to effectively apply analytics methodologies, ensuring they unlock the full potential of their data.

## Challenges in Advertising Efforts



The following chapters focus on three addressable challenges in advertising performance: metrics and attribution, ad fraud, and channel complexity.



### **Challenge #1** Metrics & Attribution



### **Challenge #2** Ad Fraud



### **Challenge #3** Complexity of Channels

While technological integration and budget constraints are inherent challenges in the advertising landscape, they are secondary to these three challenges. Achieving accurate attribution, navigating the complexities of multiple marketing channels, and mitigating ad fraud are central to optimising performance. Addressing these challenges will lead to more effective, measurable, and secure advertising strategies.

## CHAPTER 2

# CHALLENGE #1 METRICS & ATTRIBUTION

*Ad campaigns may have varied objectives, but all necessitate the same level of measurement and attribution. Evaluating effectiveness becomes challenging when marketers struggle with insufficient or unreliable data insights.*



**73%** find multi-touch attribution complexities and integrating offline and online data to be major challenges



**72%** struggle with determining the influence of each channel

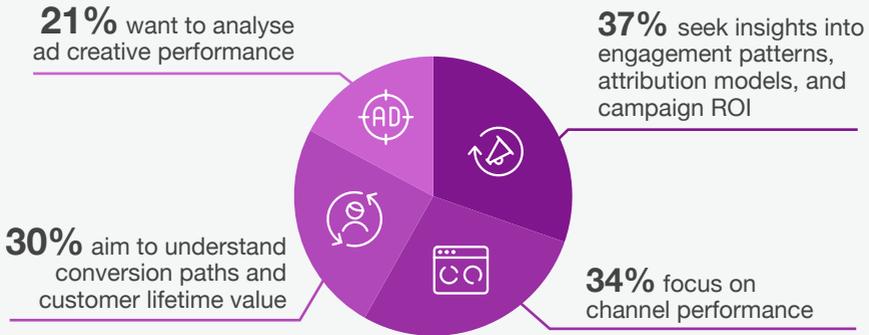


**70%** face issues with the lack of accurate data

These survey statistics reflect the core difficulties of connecting performance to specific marketing activities. Marketers must analyse how each channel contributes to their overall business goals, understand its role in guiding customers through the funnel, and align budgets accordingly to boost performance. The ultimate goal: linking success to incremental growth.

**Digital advertising and marketing channels are a complex network.** It starts with analysing business data—how does each channel contribute to the business? Next, what is its perceived role in moving customers through the funnel? The marketing budget allocated to each channel is then based on elevating its performance.

## What Do Marketers Look for in Their Advertising Data?



Connecting marketers' data-driven needs with their strategic goals forms the foundation of successful campaigns. By aligning advertising data to engagement and revenue outcomes, marketers can refine their campaigns for better results.

## Do Seasonal Shopping Temperaments Matter?

Seasonality significantly influences consumer behaviour, and marketers tailor their strategies to align with changing seasons. Do they succeed in gaining maximum impact? They create engaging, effective campaigns by leveraging platforms like Google Search, Display, and social channels and applying behavioural consumer psychology.

## Are Marketers Confident in Adjusting for Seasonal Variations in Ad Performance?



**22%**  
Very confident



**19%**  
Somewhat confident



**19%**  
Neutral



**22%**  
Somewhat unconfident



**18%**  
Very unconfident

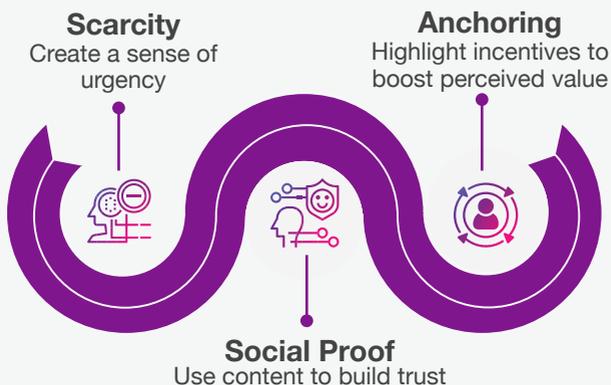
For example, in the Middle East, Ramadan is seen as a period of heightened spending on food, gifts, and charitable donations. It also influences shopping patterns. This is not a negative point but one that needs to be considered and accounted for. Studying data on these spending patterns can enhance the effectiveness of ad campaigns. For example, a back-to-school campaign that focuses on highlighting competitive pricing can be beneficial for a brand.

The seasonal shifts are not in their favour. The numbers suggest that the seasonal shifts are challenging for many, and strategies may not fully align with changing consumer behaviour. Better tools and strategic pivots are needed to navigate these fluctuations effectively.

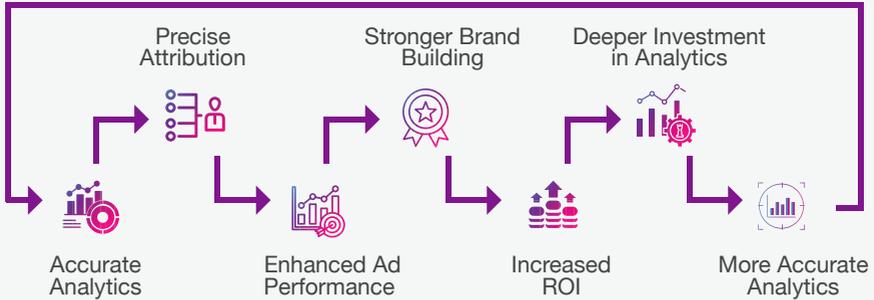
In an oversaturated market, consumers can experience mobile ad fatigue. Moreover, ads that appear repeatedly are mass-manufactured or irrelevant can have a negative effect on ad effectiveness. The appropriate balance of reach and frequency differs widely based on your industry, audience, and the nature of the brand.

Rooted in behavioural economics, nudges are a subtle way to influence a customer's economic decision-making. Nudges are based on a deep understanding of user experience and human psychology. Heuristics refers to mental short-cuts, the tendency of humans to act instinctively.

## Behavioural Nudges to Help



# The Ad Performance Loop



## Key Metrics for Measuring Advertising Success

Marketing channels are becoming more complex leading to the need for clear, actionable metrics to guide strategy and budget allocation grows.

### Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC)

*CAC remains the most widely used metric (49%)*

Understanding the dire need for accurate measurement and attribution is necessary. It directly impacts overall ROI and also helps drive strategic decisions.



**Quick tip:** *Optimise CAC by improving ad targeting and re-aligning landing pages for higher conversion rates.*

### Revenue Attributable to Ads

*46% measure revenue attributable to ads*

Measuring direct revenue from ad campaigns helps link ad spend to financial outcomes.



**Quick tip:** *Set up tROAS (Target Return on Ad Spend) to assign clear revenue values to conversion actions.*

### Engagement Metrics

*45% track engagement metrics such as likes, shares, and comments*

This helps track the effectiveness of brand awareness, customer interaction, and long-term relationships.



**Quick tip:** *Combine metrics to analyse how ad placements generate revenue (RPM) compared to user engagement (CTR).*

## Incremental Sales and Click-Through Rates (CTR)

43% rely on incremental sales and click-through rates (CTR)

They help measure direct response and the immediate impact of campaigns.



**Quick tip:** Use CTR alongside conversion rates to get a clearer picture of ad effectiveness.

## Impressions

42% track impressions as a primary metric

They are used to gauge online campaign performance and the extent of brand awareness.



**Quick tip:** While impressions indicate potential reach, they must be paired with engagement and conversion metrics for a holistic view.



*For social media, the most important metric is the engagement rate. Many people also calculate it as a percentage of followers. The engagement rate is a better metric to track, and the raw number of indicators should never be completely overlooked. What if the higher engagement rate you are considering results from comments and shares made by unhappy customers? The analysis will be completely skewed! So, very careful consideration of factors is required during measurement. It will help you pinpoint what's working and what's not for your brand and industry and what new trends and patterns you should consider when designing your next post or campaign.*



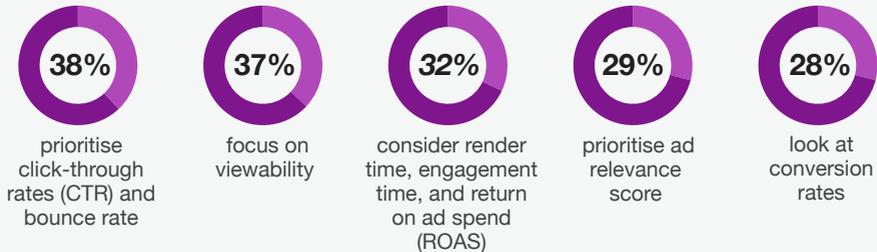
**Shaily Singh**  
GDP: Social Media  
Analyst  
**Henkel**

## Using Metrics to Identify High-Performing Ad Units

Marketers must focus on key metrics that offer critical insights into audience engagement and campaign performance. These metrics can help marketers adjust creatives, targeting, and budgets in real time.

Prioritising these indicators fine-tunes ads to resonate with the right audience, reduce waste, and drive higher brand visibility and conversions, ensuring maximum impact and return on investment.

## Metrics Chosen by Marketers to Optimise Ad Units



## The Emphasis is on Immediate Engagement and Visibility

A significant portion of marketers (38%) prioritise **click-through rates (CTR)** and bounce rates, focusing on how well ads capture attention and lead users to take action. Close behind, **viewability** (37%) is crucial in ensuring that ads are actually seen by the target audience.

This focus on immediate engagement suggests marketers increasingly prioritise real-time, actionable insights to fine-tune campaigns, reduce wasted spend, and enhance ad effectiveness.

Metrics like **ROAS**, **ad relevance score**, and **conversion rates** reflect a growing demand for a deeper understanding of how well ads align with audience expectations and contribute to long-term performance. Ultimately, conversions and return on spend validate the impact of these efforts.

### How to Maximise In-App Ad Engagement with tROAS (Target Return On Ad Spend)

- Set up a tROAS bidding strategy by assigning a value to each conversion.
- Ensure accurate conversion tracking, generate sufficient data, and set a realistic target ROAS.
- Further, performance can be enhanced by segmenting campaigns and conducting bidding strategy experiments to maximise return on ad spend.



### **How to Measure The Performance of Different Ad Units**

1. **Conversion rates:** *It's all about how many people sign up or download after seeing your ad. If your ads aren't turning heads, it's like trying to sell ice to Eskimos!*
2. **Cost-per-acquisition (CPA):** *Keep an eye on how much you spend to get each customer. If you're spending more than a fancy dinner in Dubai, it's time to rethink your strategy.*
3. **Engagement metrics:** *Look at how long users stick around in your app. If they're bouncing faster than a tennis ball at Wimbledon, you've got a problem.*
4. **ROI:** *Make sure you're getting more back than you're putting in. If your ads aren't paying off, it's like throwing money down the drain—nobody wants that!*



**Meghna Vyas**  
Associate Vice  
President, Performance  
Marketing  
**First Abu Dhabi Bank**

Inefficiency in advertising performance negatively impacts brands and consumers. According to Google, a staggering 56.1% of digital ad impressions remain unseen by consumers, resulting in substantial wastage. Brands suffer

from diminished returns on investment, compromised brand awareness, and wasted resources. Consumers experience information overload, decreased relevance, and increased frustration.

## CHAPTER 3

# CHALLENGE #2 AD FRAUD

*Ad fraud—is it a threat to the global advertising industry? Yes.*

*Ad fraud refers to the practice of manipulating mobile advertising metrics to generate revenue through fraudulent means. Over the last few years, reputed research reports and case studies have proven this.*

*It can severely disrupt a brand's mobile marketing efforts by distorting traffic data. This leads to inaccurate performance metrics, making it difficult to optimise campaigns and scale efforts even with the most effective channels.*

*Moreover, inaccurate data leads to misattribution, preventing marketers from identifying which strategies are driving sales or conversions. As a result, a massive amount of ad dollars goes to waste.*

*According to WARC data, up to 25% of marketing ad spend is wasted due to invalid traffic (IVT) and bot-generated activity. Global losses were projected to hit a staggering US\$100 billion by the end of 2024. However, lost revenue isn't the only significant impact brands face from invalid traffic and ad fraud.*

### What is The Significance of Ad Fraud in Advertising Efforts in The Middle East?



Only **37% and 34%** of advertisers in the Middle East find it very significant and somewhat significant. Interestingly, 29% of respondents do not view ad fraud as significant, highlighting a potential underestimation of its impact within specific market segments.



## Why isn't The 29% Worried?

**Lack of awareness:** Many marketers may not fully grasp the complexities and impact of ad fraud, leading them to underestimate its potential to “mysteriously” deplete mobile advertising budgets.

**Minimal financial impact perceived:** Marketers might not have experienced significant financial losses from ad fraud, leading to the perception that it's not a substantial threat to their overall strategy.

**Insignificant encounters:** Ad fraud instances may be small or isolated and not enough in number to noticeably affect performance metrics or ROI, leading to a more reactive rather than proactive stance.



## Overcoming Ad Fraud -- An Action Plan

**Awareness of evolving ad fraud:** There's a clear need for increased education around ad fraud and its potential impact. Marketers must understand that even small-scale fraud can accumulate over time, affecting the integrity of mobile campaign data and financial performance.

**Possible change in attitude:** The assumption that it's only the job of the ad platforms to handle fraud prevention leads to a hands-off approach. Instead, advertisers should remain vigilant and work together to integrate additional tools and new strategies to protect their investments.

**'Discover' the hidden costs:** Marketers must stay vigilant and combat ad fraud to protect their budgets and reputation, which can take a severe hit if left unchecked.

## Types of Ad Fraud Encountered



**Click fraud**  
**78%**

This involves generating fake clicks on ads, inflating click-through rates, and wasting advertising budgets.



**Attribution fraud**  
**77%**

Fraudsters manipulate attribution models to claim credit for conversions they didn't influence, skewing performance data.



**Impression fraud**  
**73%**

This occurs when ads are falsely reported as being viewed by users, artificially boosting impression numbers.



**Bot traffic**  
**60%**

Bots can mimic human behaviour, generating fake traffic and engagement, leading to inaccurate data and wasted spending.

## Measures Taken to Combat Ad Fraud



**76%** implement strict ad verification processes and partner with trusted platforms



**73%** regularly audit ad traffic



**68%** use third-party fraud detection tools



## Strategies to Combat Ad Fraud

1. *Leverage first-party data to create precise audience segments and for data validation.*
2. *Use advanced anti-fraud technology such as detection tools and verification services.*
3. *Implement multi-layered defence such as IP blacklisting, behavioural analysis, and device fingerprinting.*
4. *Monitor campaigns rigorously with real-time analytics and performance audits.*
5. *Partner with reputable networks and ensure transparency in reporting.*
6. *Set up clear metrics and KPIs and choose quality over quantity metrics that focus on metrics that reflect genuine user engagement.*
7. *Use whitelists and blacklists to reduce the risk of your ads appearing on fraudulent or low-quality sites.*
8. *Adopt blockchain technology for transparency and accountability, and utilise smart contracts.*
9. *Educate and train your team, and work with industry coalitions.*



**Aaryan Kapur**  
Group Head Digital  
Marketing  
**Medcare and Aster  
DM Healthcare**

All signs point to one undeniable reality—loss of ad dollars. While many marketers recognise ad fraud as a significant challenge, a surprising number remain unaware of its full impact. What will it take for these marketers

to shift their approach, adopt greater vigilance, and implement more robust fraud prevention strategies? The time to act is now, as the future of mobile advertising depends on it.

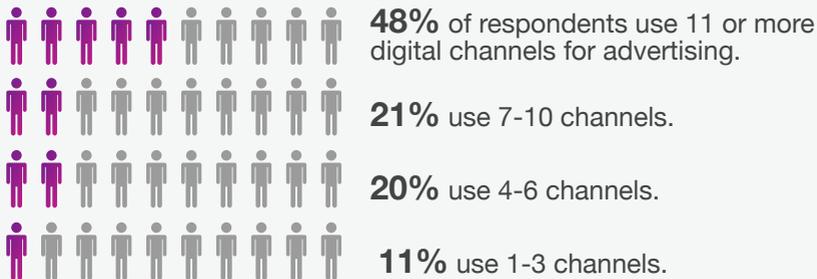
## CHAPTER 4

# CHALLENGE #3 COMPLEXITY OF CHANNELS

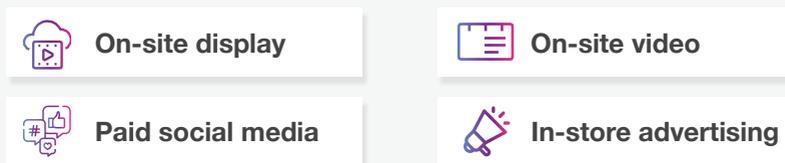
*Navigating digital advertising and marketing channels is like navigating a complex and often overwhelming maze. Marketers are constantly adding new platforms to their mix, each with its own rules. But here's the*

*distinct truth: effective channel integration isn't about being everywhere at once. It's about strategically managing these channels to create a seamless customer journey and boost performance.*

### Number of Digital Channels Actively Used for Advertising



### The Top Digital Channels for Advertising





**Email**



**On-site sponsored**



**Paid search**



**Affiliate**



**Mobile app**



**Programmatic**

With brands juggling social media, search engines, email, and more, each channel demands a distinct approach. The real challenge is not just being present but knowing which channels to prioritise, how to integrate them, and how to measure their impact.

For example, search engine optimisation (SEO) is a cost-effective channel because it aligns

well with the customer's intent via the search term. Social media works well because it amplifies brand voice via user-generated content, so a small investment, like running a contest, can lead to exponential impact. What score would you give to channels that offer more personalisation for a brand showcasing tailored products or services?



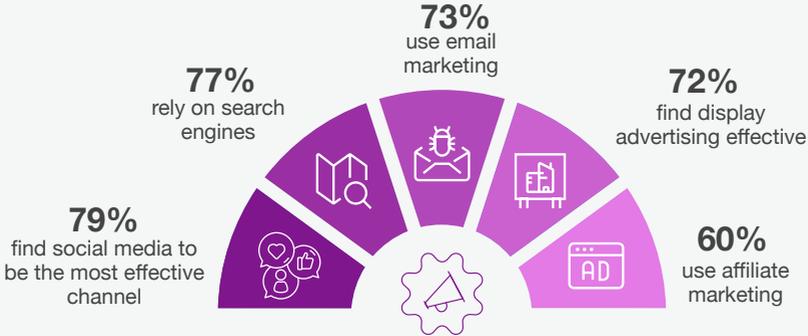
*A key challenge in channel optimisation across the region is the fragmentation of media consumption. The Middle East has diverse social media preferences, with different platforms gaining traction among various demographics and markets. Keeping up with these shifting trends while ensuring consistent messaging across platforms can be challenging. Moreover, varying digital infrastructure between countries complicates targeting, as highly developed regions like the UAE may respond differently compared to emerging markets with slower internet speeds or limited mobile access.*

*Additionally, ensuring that data collection and personalisation strategies remain compliant with global and local regulations while delivering high engagement across channels is a constant balancing act. These challenges require a flexible, data-driven approach to ensure channel diversification efforts are effective and legally compliant.*



**Deepak Kumar**  
Director of Marketing  
**Boutiqaat**

# Most Effective Digital Channels for Campaigns



## Understanding The Real-Time Interplay between Channels

Marketers must also contend with the challenge of measuring the effectiveness of their cross-channel campaigns in real time. Traditional measurement methods fail to understand how each channel contributes to the overall

campaign comprehensively. Hence, a blended measurement approach—combining real-time attribution with, possibly, regular incrementality tests across both paid and owned channels—is essential.

## Key Challenges in Real-Time Cross-Platform Campaign Management



**78%** face challenges with resource and budget allocation



**77%** struggle with consistent messaging



**76%** have difficulties with performance tracking



**57%** encounter data synchronization issues





### **Role of Real-Time Reporting Tools in The Decision-Making Process for Campaigns**

- *Quick adjustments: They allow you to monitor performance indicators such as spending, CTR, CPC, and conversion rates immediately.*
- *Optimising spend: If one campaign is shown to deliver better results, more budget can be allocated towards it, while underperforming ones can be paused or adjusted.*
- *Identifying trends: You can spot trends or emerging customer preferences in real time, allowing for agile campaign modifications.*
- *Testing and learning: With real-time data, you can assess which variations (headlines, images, CTAs, etc.) work best and pivot quickly.*
- *Reduce dependency: They provide transparency, enabling clients to track campaign performance in real time, leading to better trust and accountability.*



**Umar Khan**  
Head of Digital  
Marketing  
**Emaar**

## **A Step-by-Step Approach for Channel Optimisation**

- *Use data analytics to identify high-performing channels and allocate budgets accordingly.*
- *Conduct A/B testing across individual channels before investing heavily in many.*
- *Select channels based on specific campaign objectives like brand awareness or lead generation.*
- *Centralise content creation to maintain consistent messaging across platforms.*
- *Utilise tools that combine data from all channels into a single dashboard for unified performance tracking.*
- *Set clear KPIs for each channel to guide real-time, data-driven adjustments.*
- *Automate data synchronisation with APIs or data connectors for seamless integration.*

With brands using over ten channels, they are learning to navigate the complexity of channel diversification well. The real success hinges not on the number of platforms but on the seamless integration and strategic use of

each. However, the challenge persists: how can brands optimise their cross-channel strategy to deliver cohesive, data-driven experiences without spreading resources too thin?

## CHAPTER 5

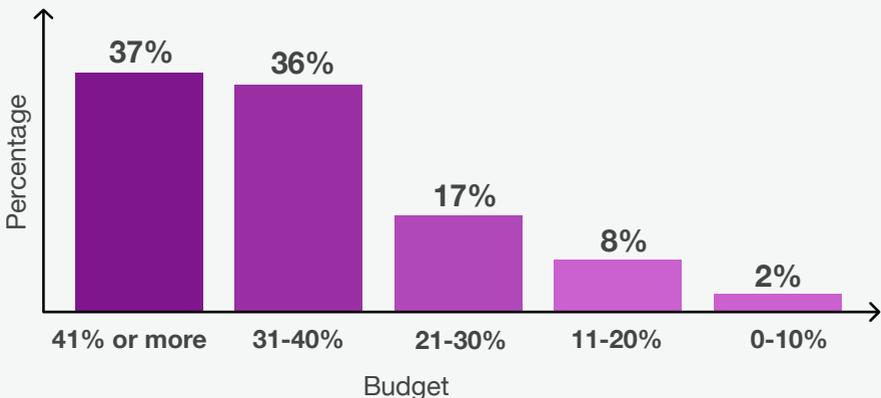
# WHERE ARE MARKETERS SPENDING THEIR NEXT AD DOLLARS?

*The advertising landscape is shifting, and as marketers look to the future, their focus is clear: optimising ad performance and mastering channel integration are at the forefront of their strategies. In 2025, the emphasis is on*

*leveraging advanced technologies and refining strategies to stay ahead.*

*As established, budget constraints are the most significant challenges for marketers striving to achieve optimal mobile ad performance.*

### How Much of The Marketers' Limited Budget is Allocated to Tools and Technologies?



Budget constraints pose a significant challenge for marketers, but the data reveals a clear prioritisation of spending on tools and technologies crucial for optimising ad campaigns. A notable **37%** allocate **41% or more** of their budget to technological tools, indicating a strong recognition of their importance in enhancing ad performance. Additionally, **36%** invest **31-40%**, showcasing a commitment to leveraging technology to drive better results.

This trend highlights that, despite financial limitations, marketers understand that investing in the right tools is essential for improving campaign efficiency, maximising ROI, and staying competitive.



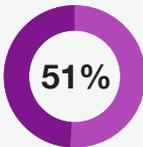
*When determining which channels to invest in, my approach is guided by three core principles: audience alignment, data-driven performance insights, and scalability potential. At FIVE Hotels and Resorts, it is crucial that the platforms we engage with resonate with our diverse audience and mirror their evolving behaviours.*



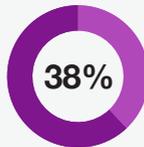
**Ahmad Khair**  
Director of Digital Marketing & Ecommerce  
**FIVE Hotels and Resorts**

*Data from previous campaigns serves as a cornerstone of my strategy, complemented by ongoing experimentation with emerging platforms to identify those delivering optimal ROI. Equally important is the ability to scale fluidly in response to shifting market demands. For example, the increasing prominence of video content and influencer marketing is integral to my decision-making process, as these strategies have consistently demonstrated their effectiveness within our niche.*

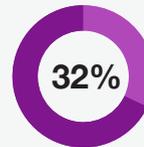
## Top Priority for Budget Allocation in Ad Campaigns



**Social Media Advertising**



**Video Advertising**



**Affiliate Marketing**

The data emphasises the dominance of social media marketing in reaching and engaging target audiences. With advanced targeting tools, cost-effective solutions, and the integration of influencer marketing, platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok enable brands to drive awareness and conversions. Video advertising, chosen by 38%, reflects its rising importance in capturing audience attention.

The 32% allocation to affiliate marketing is also noteworthy. Affiliate marketing's appeal lies in its performance-based model, which ensures measurable ROI and cost efficiency.



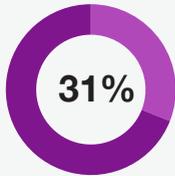
### **Factors to Consider When Deciding on Channel Investment**

- **Demographics, psychographics & behaviour:** Understanding where the audience spends most of their time. Are they more active on social media, email, or search engines? For example, in UAE, the key channels are Instagram and TikTok; for KSA, it is Snapchat.
- **Buyer journey stage:** Determining which channels are best suited for specific stages of the buyer's journey—awareness, consideration, or decision.
- **Audience preferences:** Some audiences respond better to videos, others to blogs or podcasts. Understand their content consumption habits.
- **Brand awareness vs. direct response:** Depending on the objective, is it long-term brand-building or immediate conversions? Channels like display ads are better for awareness, while search ads seem better for conversions.
- **Customer acquisition vs. retention:** Some channels are better for acquiring new customers (e.g., paid social), while others may be more suitable for retention (e.g., email marketing and CRM).

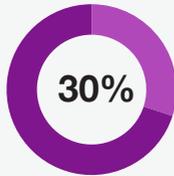


**Purab Bhatt**  
Marketing Head  
**Lals Group**  
(Mom Store, Carter's  
and U.S. Polo)

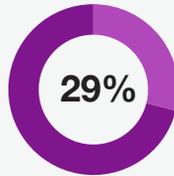
## What Do Marketers Want from Tech Partners?



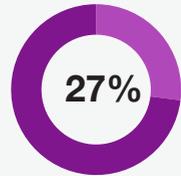
are looking for real-time reporting tools, fraud detection and prevention, and customisable solutions



prioritise integration with existing tech stacks



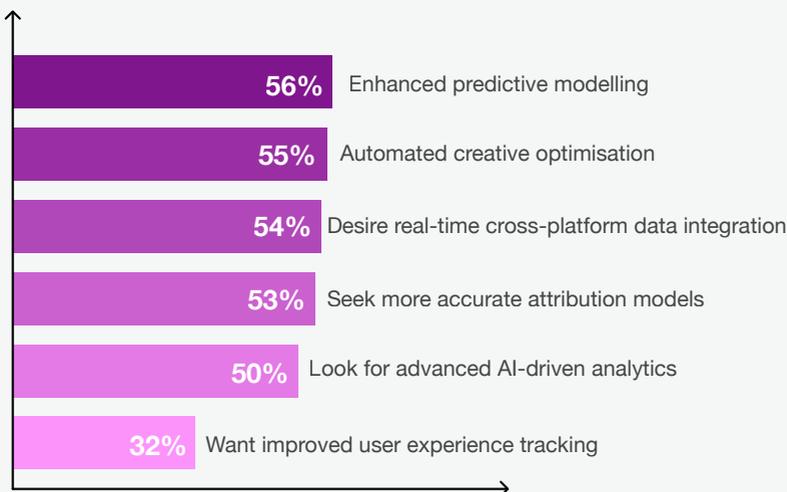
value cross-device journey measurement tools, mobile security and privacy tools, compliance, and adapting to changing algorithms



look for advanced analytics capabilities

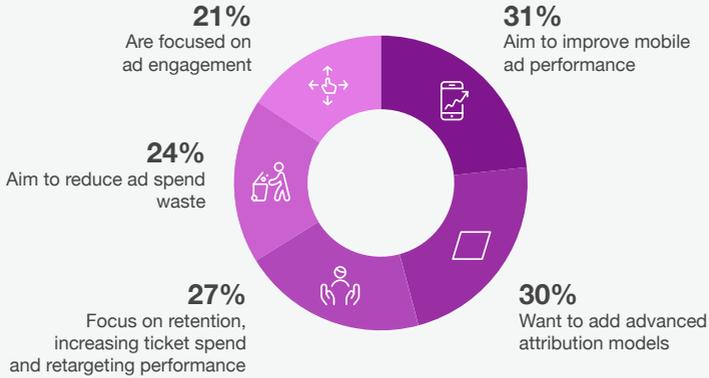
31% of marketers consider choosing technology partners, real-time reporting tools, fraud detection, and customisable solutions critical features. The demand for advanced capabilities is evident, with 56% desiring enhanced predictive modelling and 55% seeking automated creative optimisation. However, with 23% anticipating accurate attribution as a hurdle and 22% concerned about fighting ad fraud, challenges remain.

## What Capabilities are The Top Demands from Technology Partners?



Marketers are already setting ambitious goals to enhance ad performance. It is fueled by the rapid advancement of technology and evolving consumer behaviours.

## Ad Performance Goals for 2025



These priorities signal a shift toward data-driven optimisation and efficiency-focused advertising in 2025.

### The Ad Performance Goals for 2025 Reveal Key Priorities for Marketers

**Mobile ad performance:** As mobile continues to dominate, brands want to optimise mobile-friendly designs, short-form content, and use mobile-specific features like click-to-call can boost engagement and conversion.

**Advanced attribution models:** There's a focus on the need to improve visibility across customer touchpoints. Implementing multi-touch attribution and using AI-driven insights will help track the full customer journey.

**Retention & retargeting:** Increasing customer retention and ticket spend will require a strong focus on personalised offers, loyalty programs, and effective retargeting to maximise ad ROI.

**Reducing ad spend waste:** Brands want to employ strategies like better targeting, A/B testing, and audience segmentation to minimise wasted ad dollars and improve efficiency.

**Ad engagement:** There is a need to enhance ad engagement through dynamic creatives, interactive formats, and by aligning content with user preferences.



### **Top Three Priorities in Adtech**

*AI is a game changer in advertising and will only become more critical. It will be crucial in changing how we target audiences and optimise our campaigns within a few clicks. CRM automation is vital, especially when keeping customers engaged and reducing churn. Audience targeting needs to be a priority as brands need to get smarter about reaching the right people. At talabat, we're always pushing to be innovative, not just in our product but in how we market it. Our marketing needs to keep up with our product's advanced tech, so we focus on campaign optimisation based on results and what the business needs. We rely heavily on good reporting tools to help us understand what's happening in the market and make better decisions.*



**Mohamad Ayoub**  
Senior Marketing Manager  
**talabat**

The path forward is clear: embracing new capabilities, fostering strategic partnerships, and continuously refining approaches. The digital advertising landscape is at a crossroads, where the decisions made today will shape the future of mobile marketing.

How will Middle East marketing teams position themselves to thrive and work with limited budgets in this dynamic environment? Now is the time to rethink, adapt, and innovate.

# ACTIONABLE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT

The mobile marketing landscape in the Middle East is evolving rapidly, presenting both challenges and substantial opportunities for brands seeking to thrive. As highlighted in this report, regional marketers face the task of balancing brand-building with performance marketing, optimising a diverse mix of digital channels, and adopting data-driven strategies to remain competitive. Long-term success in this environment hinges on a robust foundation in technology and AI, where advanced tools and strategic partnerships provide brands with the precision, adaptability, and scalability required for growth.

Partnerships with technology-oriented allies, such as Adwake, offer essential support to marketers in this journey. With multivariable dashboards that unify data from multiple sources and seamless MMP integration, these collaborations deliver clear, transparent, and real-time insights into campaign

performance. This enhanced visibility allows marketers to make agile adjustments and respond effectively to market changes with informed decision-making. Furthermore, by enabling performance-focused models like Cost Per Install (CPI) and Cost Per Action (CPA), brands can directly link ad spend to measurable outcomes, reducing financial risk and improving budget efficiency while directing resources toward high-impact initiatives.

These are precisely the capabilities that empower brands to navigate the fast-paced mobile marketing environment with confidence, optimising their reach, maximising returns, and positioning themselves for sustainable success.



**Oussama Yousfi**  
Regional Director  
Middle East & Africa  
**Adwake**

# Martechvibe

The Leading Marketing Technology Magazine

## ABOUT MARTECHVIBE

Martechvibe is a leading global digital magazine and trusted authority on marketing technology and customer experience. As the go-to resource for enterprises, marketers, CX professionals, and brands, Martechvibe provides critical insights into the evolving adoption of martech and CX solutions that help leaders make informed decisions. It serves as

a vital connection between top martech and CX providers and the professionals who rely on them. With its finger on the pulse of industry disruptions, regulatory shifts, challenges, and enterprise objectives, Martechvibe creates a platform for marketing leaders to share insights, engage in debate, and inform the broader professional community.



## ABOUT ADWAKE

Adwake is a tech-enabled services company powered by Entravision. At Adwake, we place cutting-edge technology and quality service at the heart of our approach to effectively find, connect and engage with your ideal customer across every screen.

Entravision is a global ad-tech, media, and marketing solutions company offering

consumer engagement products through a dynamic range of digital, ecommerce, and media options. Using state-of-the-art and proprietary advertising technologies, we foster creativity, optimise strategies, and capitalise on strategic industry partnerships to help you expand your business locally or globally. Your growth is our purpose.