Universal Ads

UNIVERSAL ADS INSIGHTS REPORT

Beyond the Click

How premium TV drives performance your attribution misses



Introduction

Universal Ads launched in 2025 with one simple idea: make premium TV as performant as social, and just as easy to buy and measure. From day one, we've believed TV can drive performance, alongside its long-standing role in building brands.

Proving it is easier said than done. TV ads don't get clicked. A viewer sees an ad during their favorite show, and days later they might search the brand, tap a social ad or click a search ad. Standard attribution gives that visit or purchase to the last channel they touched, and TV gets no credit for starting the journey or building the trust behind it.

So, we set out to measure what attribution misses. We analyzed a cohort of brands advertising on Universal Ads and asked a simple question: **how much of the traffic and sales they were already paying for in other channels did TV actually create?** The results were clear: TV was associated with a **lift in paid site traffic for nearly 90% of brands** studied, all from new or lapsed visitors. And that increased site traffic? It carried through to purchase: **every brand with sufficient purchase data saw a lift in purchases** made through paid search, social and other paid channels: sales their dashboards credited to those channels.

In this report, we share what we found, why your dashboards don't show it, and what it means for how you evaluate TV.

~90%

of brands saw a lift in paid site traffic

100%

of brands with sufficient purchase data saw an estimated lift in purchases

Source: Universal Ads halo analysis of a cohort of advertisers running premium TV on Universal Ads. Purchase results include brands with enough purchase data to measure. Website outcomes include sessions from paid sources by visitors with no site activity in the preceding 90 days. Ad exposure measured with a 30-day impression lookback using hourly delivery data. Lift estimated with a hierarchical Bayesian model; high-confidence results are those whose full uncertainty range sits above zero. Results are modeled estimates, reflect this cohort and period only, and are not a guarantee of future results for any advertiser.

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About the study

Universal Ads analyzed aggregated site data and ad delivery data from a cohort of brands running premium TV campaigns on Universal Ads.

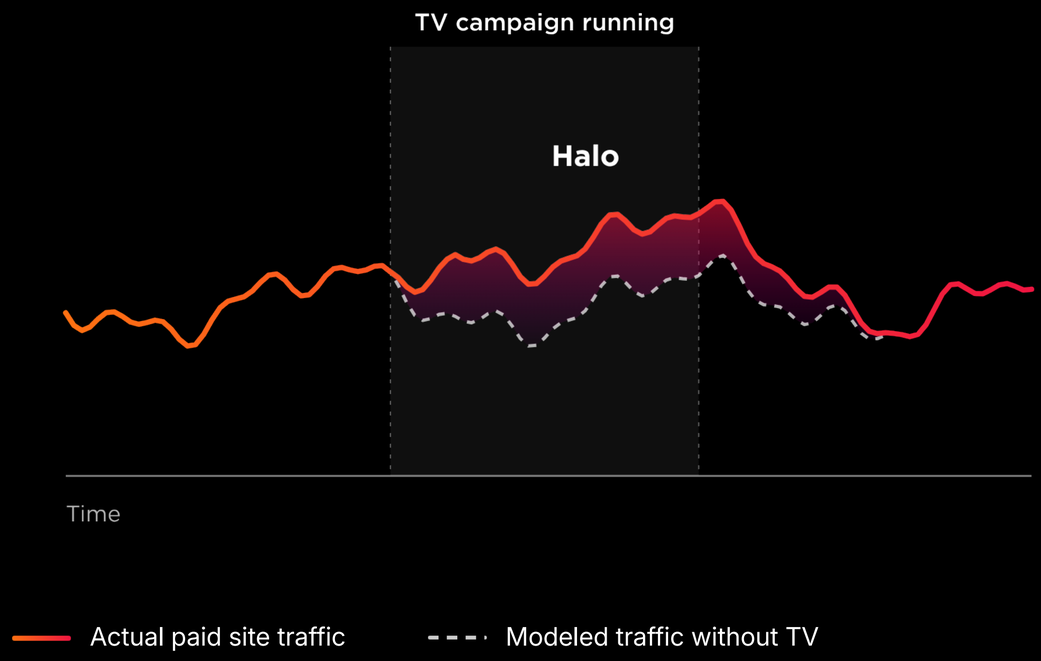
Who	Direct-to-consumer and ecommerce brands across apparel, beauty, home, health, insurance, finance, food and sports.
What we measured	Visits to each brand's website that came from paid channels like search and social and, for brands with purchase data, the purchases made during those visits.
Whose visits counted	Only new or lapsed visitors, meaning people who hadn't been to the site in the previous 90 days.
How	We compared each brand's actual site traffic with a model of what its traffic would have looked like without TV. The gap between the two is the halo.
Confidence	Every result comes with a range of likely outcomes. When the whole range sits above zero, we call it a high-confidence result.

Defining halo

In this report, **"halo"** means the additional paid site visits, and the purchases made during them, that happen because someone saw a TV ad and that attribution credits to whichever channel got the last click, such as paid search or social.

How we measure the halo

Illustrative view of one brand's paid site traffic from new or lapsed visitors



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Your best-performing search campaign might have started on TV.

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TV creates the demand. The click gets the credit.

Performance teams judge channels by the conversions their dashboards report. Most of those dashboards use **last-click attribution**, which gives full credit to the final touchpoint before a sale. That works for channels people click, like paid social and search, but it misses a channel people watch.

Multiply one viewer's journey across thousands and the pattern is predictable. Search and social appear to drive more of the result than they do on their own, TV appears less efficient than it is, and **budgets begin to drift toward the channels collecting the credit.**

Our earlier research, *Beyond the Scroll*, found that people who saw an ad on both streaming TV and social were **2.1X more likely to visit the brand's website** than those who saw social alone. This study set out to find those visits, and the sales that followed, in real site data.

One viewer's path to purchase



Tuesday night
Sees a skincare ad during her favorite show

Thursday
Searches the brand on her phone

Taps
the sponsored search result

Buys
a moisturizer

What happened

TV started the journey that ended in a sale

What last-click credits

TV: no credit

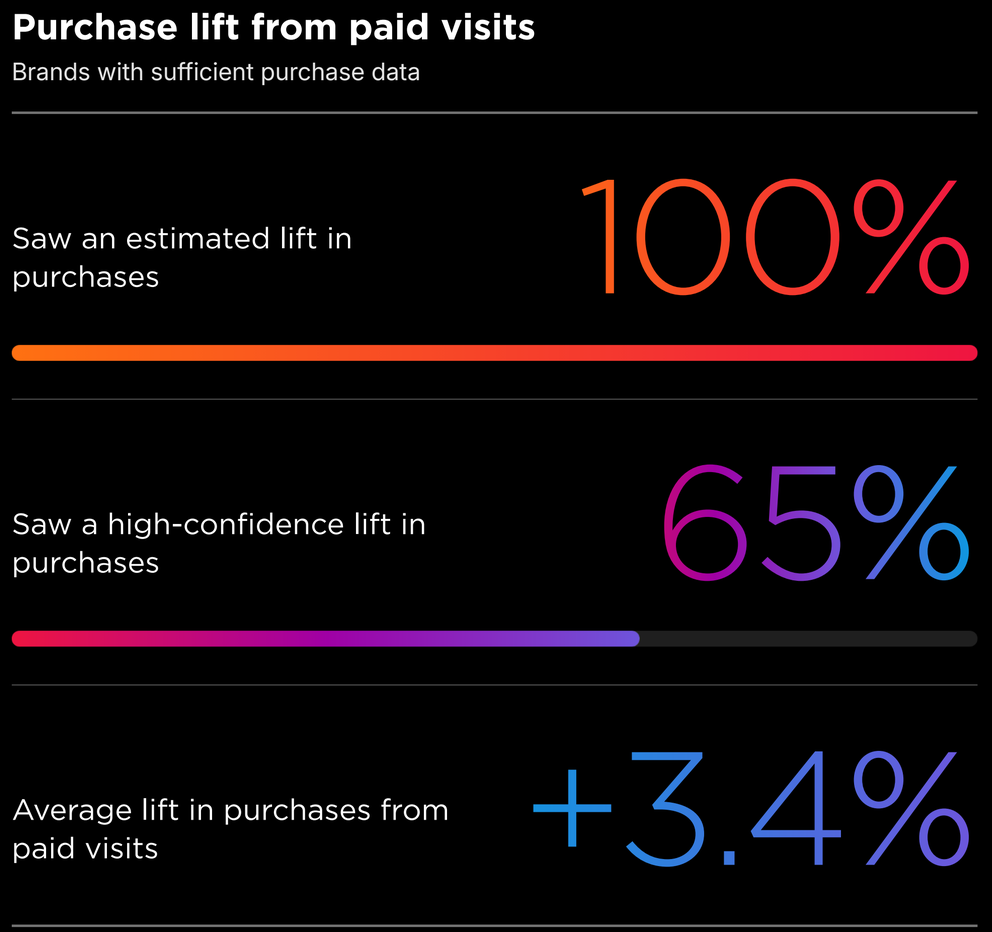
Search: 100%

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The halo carries through to purchase

The strongest signal in the study showed up at the checkout. **Every brand with sufficient purchase data saw a lift in purchases** from paid visits, with an **average lift of 3.4%**.

65% of brands saw a high-confidence lift in purchases, meaning even the low end of the estimate sat above zero. TV's halo didn't stop at the homepage.



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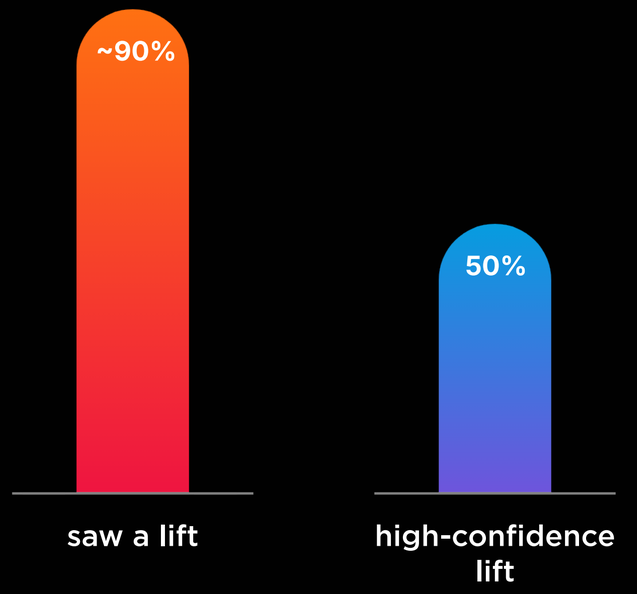
TV lifted paid site traffic for nearly 90% of brands

Those purchases came from more visits. When their TV campaigns ran, **nearly 90% of brands saw more visits from paid channels** than our model expected without TV. A typical brand saw about a **2% lift**. For half of all brands, the traffic lift was high-confidence.

Every one of those visits came through a paid click on search, social or another paid channel. **The brand paid for the click, and that channel took the credit.**

Paid site traffic lift across the cohort

Share of brands, new or lapsed visitors only



~2%

lift in paid site traffic for a typical brand

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TV puts your brand in front of people who haven’t discovered you yet

Who those visitors were mattered as much as how many there were. We counted only people who hadn’t been to the brand’s site in the previous 90 days, so **none of this lift came from shoppers who were already browsing the site.**

Search, and increasingly AI shopping assistants, capture intent that already exists: a shopper has to know a brand before they can ask for it. TV builds that awareness. In our *Beyond the Scroll* research, survey respondents were **42% more likely to say they discover a new brand through a TV ad** than through social media.



Every additional visit we measured came from a **new or lapsed visitor**: the audiences performance marketers work hardest to acquire.

Who TV brought to the site

100%

of the measured traffic lift came from new or lapsed visitors, with no site visit in the previous 90 days

+42%

more likely to say they discover a new brand through a TV ad than through social media[1]

1. Beyond the Scroll: Dynata survey commissioned by Comcast Advertising, March 2025, n=1,000.

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A note on the numbers

Halo results vary widely depending on methodology. Some approaches compare results before and after a brand adds TV, which can produce larger figures. **We took a more conservative approach:** we counted only paid visits, only from new or lapsed visitors, and only the lift our model attributes to TV.

That makes our lift results harder to dismiss. A typical brand in this study saw about a 2% lift in paid traffic, and **every one of those visits was traffic the brand was already paying for** and crediting to another channel.

It also means these results capture part of TV's effect. Direct and organic visits, returning visitors and marketplace sales all sit outside this analysis.

What this study counted

- Paid visits only
- Only new or lapsed visitors
- Only the lift our model attributes to TV

What sits outside the analysis

- Direct and organic visits
- Returning visitors
- Marketplace sales

The halo we report is a floor, not a ceiling.

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What this means for performance marketers

If your dashboards hand TV's results to other channels, here's how to read them more accurately.



Look past the last click

Attributed conversions are useful for day-to-day campaign management. For budget decisions, add an incremental view: lift tests, media mix modeling, or a unified approach that reads lift and multi-touch attribution together.



Read search and social with TV in mind

Mark your TV flights in your search and social reports and watch paid traffic from new visitors during and after each flight. That's where this study found the halo.



Test before you cut

If TV is feeding your search and social results, pausing it can quietly weaken them. Before you cut TV based on dashboard ROAS, run a holdout or geo test.

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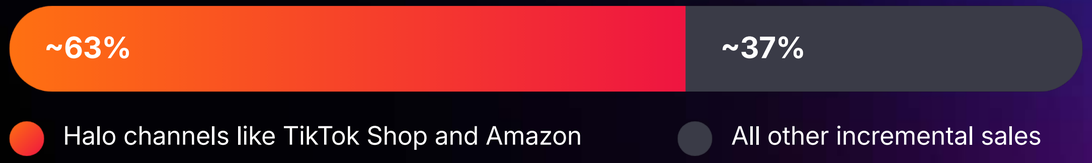
CASE STUDY

Neuro Gum & Mints

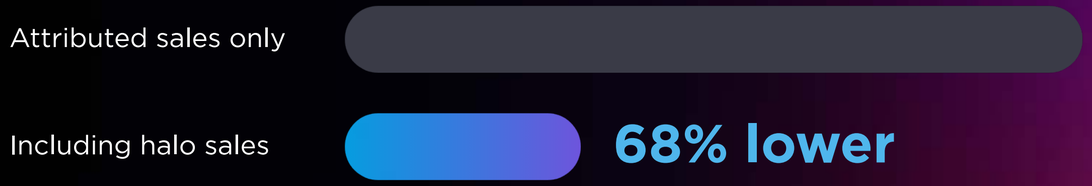
Neuro ran a four-week geo-based lift test with Universal Ads and WorkMagic to measure TV's impact on its ecommerce sales.

In that test, **about 63% of incremental sales came through halo channels** like TikTok Shop and Amazon, where shoppers bought without clicking an ad. When those sales were included, **Neuro's measured CPA for the campaign was 68% lower** than when using attributed sales alone.

Where Neuro's incremental sales happened



Measured campaign CPA



Neuro four-week geo-based lift test with Universal Ads and WorkMagic. Bar lengths are indexed to attributed-only CPA.

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TV works harder than your dashboard shows.

TV creates traffic and sales that your dashboards hand to other channels. Judge it on last click alone and you'll undervalue it, and you may cut the channel that's quietly feeding your search and social results.

That's why we built Universal Ads: to make TV a channel performance marketers can buy, test and measure with the same confidence as social.

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Want to see it firsthand?

Put TV to work for your brand.



Buy it like social

Build and launch premium TV campaigns yourself in Universal Ads Manager, with a budget that fits your brand.



Make creative fast

Use our AI Creative Generator to produce TV-ready ads and test multiple versions to see what lands.



Prove the impact

Install the Universal Ads Pixel and validate results with our third-party lift and incrementality partners.

Start your first TV campaign at UniversalAds.com

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Frequently asked questions

What is the TV halo effect?

The TV halo effect is the extra activity TV advertising creates in other channels, such as more paid search clicks, social clicks, site visits and purchases. Attribution usually credits that activity to the channel with the last click, so TV's contribution goes uncounted unless it's measured separately.

Why doesn't TV show up in last-click attribution?

TV ads aren't clickable, so viewers take action in other ways: they search the brand, tap a social ad or visit the site directly. Last-click attribution gives the conversion to that final touchpoint, which moves the credit for demand TV created to search, social and direct traffic.

How do you measure the TV halo effect?

Compare what happened on your site with a model of what would have happened without TV. Universal Ads uses hourly ad delivery data to estimate how many extra paid visits and purchases TV created, with a range showing how confident each estimate is.

Beyond the Scroll sources: Universal Ads and MediaScience study, 2025, n=436 participants in lab and in-home environments; Dynata survey commissioned by Comcast Advertising, March 2025, n=1,000.

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