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eBook

Clean Room Guide: 12 Essential Strategies for Marketers

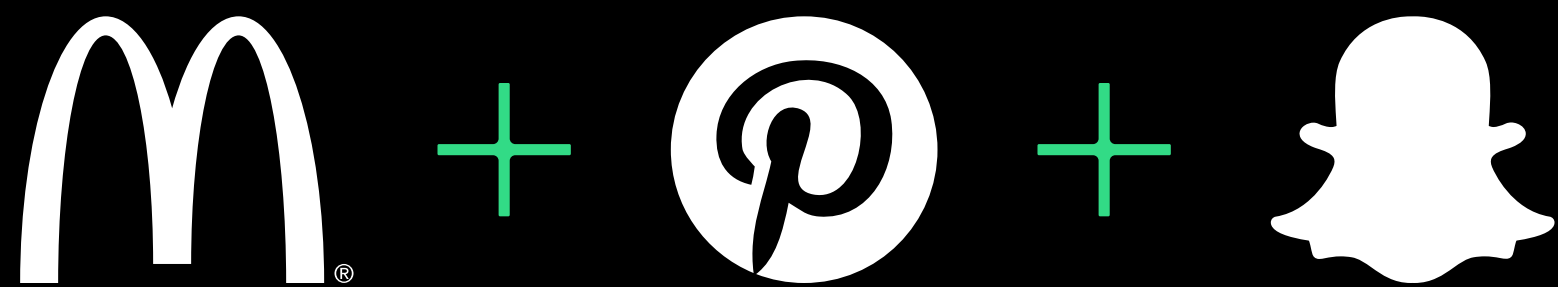


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Introduction: From signal loss to signal gain

McDonald's, Pinterest, and Snapchat all know one thing: to drive effective cross-screen advertising, you can't do it alone. You need to join forces with retail, social, and media partners to understand how every ad exposure impacts consumer engagement, sales, and loyalty.



Marketers face growing pressure to optimize their spending in light of shrinking budgets. But, it's only getting harder to be truly data-driven. Traditional identifiers such as [third-party cookies are crumbling](#), data privacy laws and consumer opt-outs are spreading, and the audience insights you need are siloed inside walled gardens. How can you turn the threat of signal loss into an opportunity?

The answer is [data collaboration](#). A 2024 Forrester survey found that nearly 60% of companies now run external data-sharing partnerships, and the vast majority (93%) of U.S. executives believe combining and analyzing data sets is critical to driving increased revenue¹. With privacy-enhancing technologies like data clean rooms, brands and publishers can safely match first-party data and unlock combined insights, from richer audience profiles for CPG brands to media ROI insights that aren't guesswork.

To succeed in this new era, you need to know which partners and use cases to start with. And, since technical resources are scarce, you want to seek out [data collaboration platforms](#) that help you scale most efficiently. This guide collects 12 data clean room–powered moves that brand advertisers are leveraging today, so you can learn how to maximize every dollar. Let's dive in!

Why digital advertising needs data clean rooms

In science or manufacturing, a “clean room” is a strictly controlled environment that limits exposure risk during a procedure or experiment. A [data clean room](#) operates similarly for customer data, providing a secure collaboration space for brands, retailers, and publishers. First-party data goes in, and aggregated insights come out, without copying any data and concealing all personally identifiable information (PII).



The clean room future is here: Gartner predicts that over 80% of advertisers spending more than \$1 billion annually on media are now using data clean rooms². Even across mid-size companies, as many as 93% of U.S. marketing executives will be using clean rooms by 2025³.



Built-in network effects matter: While cloud adoption and expertise were once barriers to collaboration, [modern clean rooms](#) support full interoperability across cloud data warehouses and walled gardens operated by brands, retailers, media partners, and other data owners.



Every team needs more insights: Modern data clean rooms match non-technical users with relevant insights templates and generative AI, while empowering technical users with advanced querying and methodological application tools.

As more brands use data clean rooms to unify and augment their first-party data with second-party insights, most are still scratching the surface of what’s possible. Beyond audience insights and segmentation, only a third have tapped into advanced measurement across attribution, media mix modeling, and ROAS calculations⁴.

Accelerate your marketing data strategy

Before we dive into the playbook, here’s a quick note on first-party data. Clean rooms represent a paradigm-shift for data collaboration and require new ways of working. It’s important to evangelize this effort, internally and externally, to make sure everyone understands their potential value. Here are a few foundational best practices to keep you moving in the right direction.



Audit your data. To partner effectively, you first need to organize your own data. Evaluate the full scope of your relevant sets, including format, quality, location, and recency. Then, identify the gaps you need to fill.



Build a tiger team. As early as possible, bring together a core of data-driven internal experts. This includes your CMO, marketing VPs, business users, legal, and InfoSec. You’ll want to articulate the unique value for each stakeholder.



Focus your strategy. Identify the core business questions you’d like to answer, and start with a single use case that offers fast, tangible value, with a non-intimidating technical scope. The right data collaboration partner can help (more on that later).

While this preparation requires more upfront work, it ultimately saves time and resources and is often the difference between cumbersome, low-return engagements and seamless, high-value collaborations.

Unlock consumer insights hidden in silos

Campaign success begins with identifying the right audiences. Instead of guessing where groups linger online, look under the hood at publishers' and retailers' first-party data. Here's how you can understand cross-platform behavior, and identify where your high-value audiences over-index across the crowded media landscape.

01

Build richer audience profiles

Never buy blind, especially when it comes to walled gardens or CTV networks. With a data clean room, you can go beyond basic demographic data (e.g., age, gender, income) to resolve identity for your known audiences. Combine first-party data with retailers' email datasets or purchase histories, and compare [match rates](#) across channels – while keeping personal data anonymous.

Each collaboration partner helps you discover and refine your most relevant audiences, so you can tailor ad content and campaign strategies to specific interests and lifestyles. These granular profiles may come with higher effective CPMs, but the lift in conversion rates is worth it.

02

Identify local market trends

For all the network effects of digital, consumer behavior is often highly localized. Rather than deploy the same audience, creative, and merchandising tactics to everyone, data clean rooms help you cater to potential customers in each region.

Collaborate with retail partners to understand the area's seasonal patterns and trending product categories. As you compare media profiles by country, you may find it's worth cutting Google spend 20% in one region, while juicing Meta budgets by 30% in another.

If you're a global hotel chain, airline, entertainment group, or other organization with a trove of first-party data, clean rooms can also boost your internal marketing efficiency by breaking down data silos across regions or business units to create a connected, granular customer view.

03

Personalize at scale, without cookies

You don't need PII to find winning personalization opportunities. Data clean rooms help you aggregate demographics, interests, behavior, location, and other intent data, so you can deliver hyper-relevant ad messages for each audience group.

If you don't have a wealth of first-party data, augment your audiences with third-party segments through a [data marketplace](#). Guide your ad buys using behavioral and psychographic data that speak to patterns in how people buy, from “environmentally conscious” to “rock music concert fans.”

04

Build your own lookalike audiences

With every clean room collaboration, your consumer insights compound in value. You can identify common themes in your most engaged customers by comparing performance data across social, retail, and CTV networks. With hundreds or potentially thousands of data points to consider, many companies are now using sophisticated machine-learning programs in their audience or marketing departments to identify the characteristics that indicate a propensity to buy in the future.

Clean rooms enable data scientists to execute these ML models without accessing partner data, or exposing the underlying algorithmic data and logic. Use these characteristics to build your own custom segments, so you can target “lookalike” audiences across the walled gardens and other cookieless media environments who may be likely to buy products in a similar way.



Blockbuster campaign launch? Automate your audience creation.

Faster campaign velocity led one leading video gaming company to rethink how it manages walled garden campaigns. Using a data clean room, the team automates audience creation between its first-party data — including over 200 million player profiles — and social channels like Google, Facebook, and Instagram.

Best of all? Its first clean room was fully implemented in less than three weeks, just in time for a hotly anticipated launch. “Data clean rooms help us maximize the impact of our 1P gamer data,” says the director of global audience analytics and audience development. “We can improve our marketing without sacrificing control, and while protecting our data at the same time.”



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Director of Global Audience Analytics and Audience Development

Drive targeted activation for each placement

After collaborating with retailers and publishers to create audiences, the next step is to activate your media buys against those identified segments. Data clean rooms help advertisers identify optimal media buys across all screens, touchpoints, and IDs. Here are a few ways to fuel your activation.

05

Verify the reach of your campaigns

With a growing number of media channels, it can be hard to piece together the full reach of any given ad campaign. Collecting actual impression-level data from each media partner via a clean room helps you see cross-channel delivery and begin to measure the quality of those audiences.

Verify your addressable match rates by reviewing second-party data logs, and make sure ads reach the right audience on the right channels. Quickly identify fraud, errors, or competitive violations in ad delivery, so you can recoup make-goods while your campaign is still in-flight.



Manage cross-platform frequency caps

The fastest way to get more efficient with your ad spend is to cut down on waste. Cross-channel data in a clean room provides a unified view of audience and household delivery data across all products and brands in your portfolio, so you can identify the optimal frequency and recency across devices, browsers, CTV platforms, and walled gardens. Root out instances where similar ads were over-delivered to the same audience, or in too short of a time window.

Better frequency management helps you avoid getting on consumers' nerves. It can also help optimize your ad rotations. For example, [McDonald's](#) monitors its TV impressions to avoid wear-out and lean into better-performing creatives, a tweak that generates [over \\$2 in ROI](#) from that single clean room use case.

Retarget high-value, in-market buyers

Focus your ad spend on your most valuable audience subsets by identifying users who visited your site, downloaded your app, added a product to a cart, or interacted with a piece of content, but did not convert. By matching first-party behavioral data with retailers' audience segments, you can precisely re-target these audiences with a special discount or related product recommendation.

If you're short on first-party retargeting data, you can still tap into the granularity of retailers' audience segments.

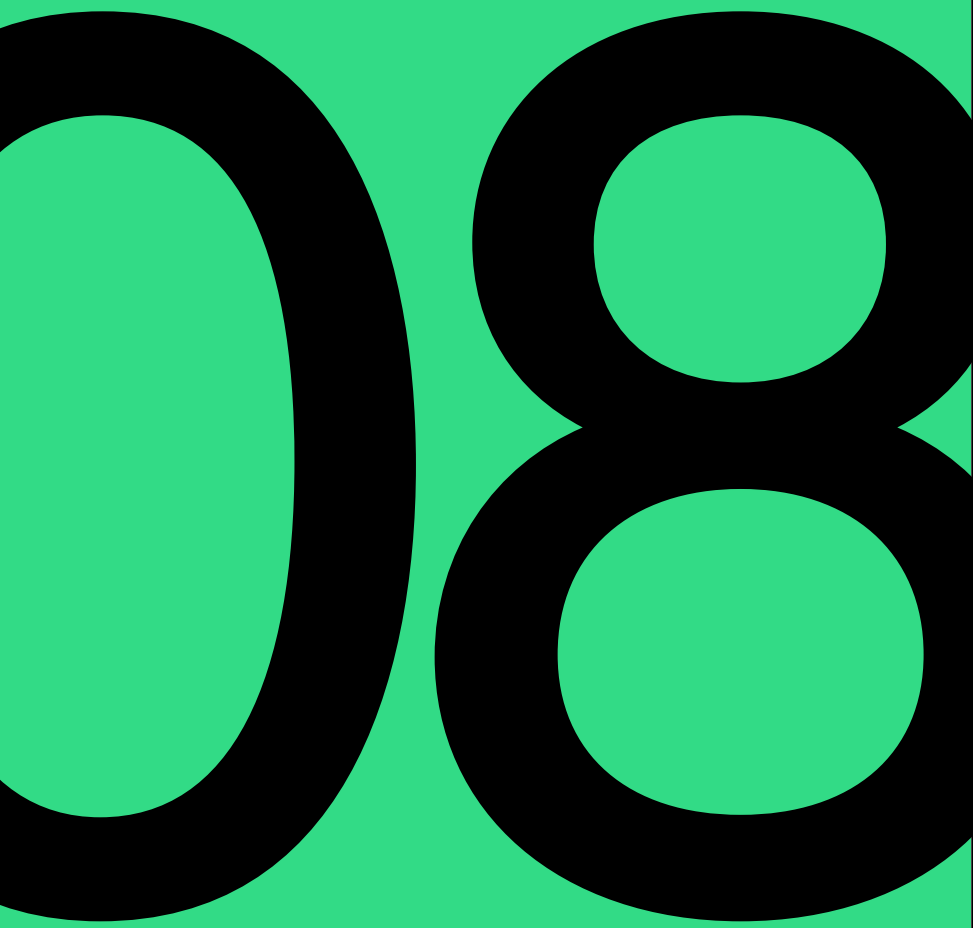


For example, [Mondelēz International](#), the CPG parent behind beloved snacks like Triscuits and Wheat Thins, tapped its business partners for a new charcuterie board campaign. Using clean room integrations with Pinterest and grocery leader Albertsons' Media Collective, the team saw a [16% sales lift](#) and 19% lift in new buyers, from enhanced targeting of in-market consumers who have purchased other brands of crackers. Third-party segments from [data marketplaces](#) offer additional groups to activate against for big purchases like automobiles or home appliances.

Build trusted, cross-platform ad measurement

Marketers face increased pressure to prove ROI. In recent years, CEOs have trimmed department budgets by 10-20%, requiring teams to justify every dollar of investment⁵. But, with an average of [28 data sources](#) required to assess marketing impact, most companies (86%) still struggle to accurately measure their cross-channel return on ad spend (ROAS)⁶.

By matching advertising and transaction data across partners, you can build [cross-screen measurement](#) reports that demystify ad performance and enable teams to adjust spending with confidence. Here's how data clean rooms support a variety of marketing analyses with minimal technical resources.



Connect online and offline touchpoints

The path to purchase is rarely straight or simple. Closing the [attribution loop](#) for any click, sale, or other consumer action only gets harder as you add more channels. But it's the critical building block behind any marketing KPI.

Before you calculate higher-order metrics, connect your online and offline touchpoints to get a holistic view of conversions. Using a clean room, merge household-level loyalty data with retailer purchase history, and identify which touchpoints drive consumer outcomes, without exposing customer data.

The power of these joined datasets can fuel a variety of revenue growth strategies, including store and segment-level tactics around merchandising, promotions, assortment, and pricing.



Compare ROAS across channels

While third-party cookies helped marketers count some conversions, their view was always riddled with gaps – even when matched against a multitouch attribution model. The [interoperability](#) of clean rooms brings together cross-platform data in a unified view, so you can connect the dots between media exposures, in-store visits, online purchases, and every other touchpoint.

Combining conversion data with historical ad spend, you can confidently [measure campaign impact](#) and compare ROAS across your media mix. Find the high performers – whether that's CTV advertising, mobile video, or retail media – as well as which ad creatives drive the highest conversions.

Social platform [Snapchat](#), for example, uses data clean rooms to match more website conversion signals to its exposure data, helping advertisers refine live campaign targeting toward the most engaged users and unlock [10% lower acquisition costs](#).

10

Democratize your data analytics

With data talent in short supply, clean rooms make it easier for non-technical marketing users to benefit from greater insights. Embedded analytics and business intelligence (BI) tools help teams build and refresh cross-channel reports to reveal a variety of marketing KPIs, without the need to constantly merge manual dashboards, PowerPoint slides, or SQL queries from multiple media partners.

Time-strapped data engineers and scientists can build a model once and deploy it widely, while focusing their time on higher-value tasks.

The rise of generative AI powers advanced use cases, too. Non-technical users can proactively discover the types of insights that can be derived from a given dataset. With natural-language processing, they can simply ask a question about which partner has the highest audience overlap or lowest ROAS in a given geography, then implement this query without writing a single line of SQL code.

11

Test incremental impact

Call it the holy grail of any marketing program. Every advertiser wants to pinpoint the expected lift in sales for every dollar in additional spending. By analyzing the direct impact of a campaign on sales volume and conversions, you can assess this lift without exposing individual customer purchase data.

Incrementality testing requires carefully constructed experiments, which clean rooms can facilitate between brands and publishers. This process comes at the cost of suppressing ads – with the potential to convert at a high rate – so it’s important to run A/B tests quickly, then learn and implement changes.

The payoff is more than worth it. As Preeti Farooque, global head of measurement at Pinterest, recently noted about their clean room solution, “We find that brands who take a test-and-learn mindset see two times more lift and action intent compared to those who take a one-and-done approach.”

12

Measure customer lifetime value

While ROAS is a powerful signal, it's also a point in time. To boost customer retention, which is many times more cost-effective than net-new acquisition, you want to look beyond any given ad:

- How can you assess the longer-term impacts of repeated exposures to multiple campaigns or product launches?
- How does the lifetime value (LTV) of customers vary across different online and offline touchpoints?

In a data clean room, you can combine cross-channel conversion reports with historical ad performance, then see which sources or campaigns lead to higher-quality, repeat customers. Identify shared characteristics of your most loyal fans and brand advocates, so you can nurture these long-tail segments and watch your overall marketing ROI skyrocket.



Reimagine your customer journey for the cookieless era

For a major purchase like a car, mapping the full customer journey has always been tricky. Add in the latest complications of cookieless targeting, and one leading luxury automotive brand decided to take a new approach.

Inside its data clean rooms, teams integrate publisher, demand-side platform (DSP), and offline touchpoints, including log-level events from The Trade Desk, media performance from Cars.com, and Foursquare dealership check-ins.

“We saw this opportunity to bring in core partners that have the datasets that will be really valuable to us in an ID-free world,” says the director of programmatic and advanced media. “An auto-centric website, a foot traffic analysis provider, one of our most innovative DSPs. We can achieve a stronger understanding of the customer journey across these touchpoints and get really creative in answering key questions about ROAS, acquisition, and overall marketing ROI.”



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Director of Programmatic and Advanced Media

Conclusion: Grow faster, together

In the new era of clean room collaboration, advertisers are working alongside publishers and retail partners to build richer and more durable consumer insights than ever before.

Reimagining your data strategy not only combats signal loss and media fragmentation, but also provides the feedback loops you need to optimize everything from creative rotation and audience activation to hyper-accurate ROAS measurement. To start, you just need to take the next step.

- 1 Choose a few high-value use cases that can deliver fast results against top business priorities.
- 2 Identify the partners you'll need to create those combined datasets, internally and externally.
- 3 Decide on success criteria with specific, shared KPIs, and get buy-in across teams.
- 4 Find a clean room partner with scale, speed, and simplicity to ramp quickly and maximize value.

You don’t have to look far to find a solid match. Marketers now have access to the industry’s only interoperable platform for data collaboration across all cloud, walled garden, and media partners. LiveRamp’s [ground-breaking acquisition](#) of Habu brings together two IDC MarketScape leaders, and a best-in-class [enterprise identity](#) ecosystem of 900+ global partners and customers, giving advertisers unparalleled express lanes to all kinds of breakthrough insights.

Ready to supercharge
your digital advertising?
Request a [live tour](#) — see
how clean rooms can help.

Endnotes

- 1 LiveRamp commissioned study conducted by Forrester, “[Data Collaboration Fuels Revenue Growth](#),” 2024
- 2 IAB and Ipsos, “[State of Data 2023: Data Clean Rooms & the Democratization of Data in the Privacy-Centric Ecosystem](#),” 2023
- 3 Wakefield Research, “[Looking to Improve ROAS. Organizations Shift Focus from Data Collection to Measurement Optimization in 2024](#),” 2024
- 4 IAB and Ipsos, “[State of Data 2023](#)”
- 5 McKinsey Quarterly, “[Beyond belt-tightening: How marketing can drive resiliency during uncertain times](#),” 2023
- 6 Wakefield Research, “[Looking to Improve ROAS](#),” 2024

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