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eBook

The First-Party Data Playbook for the AI Era

How to get your first-party data AI-ready and show up on every new surface that matters.

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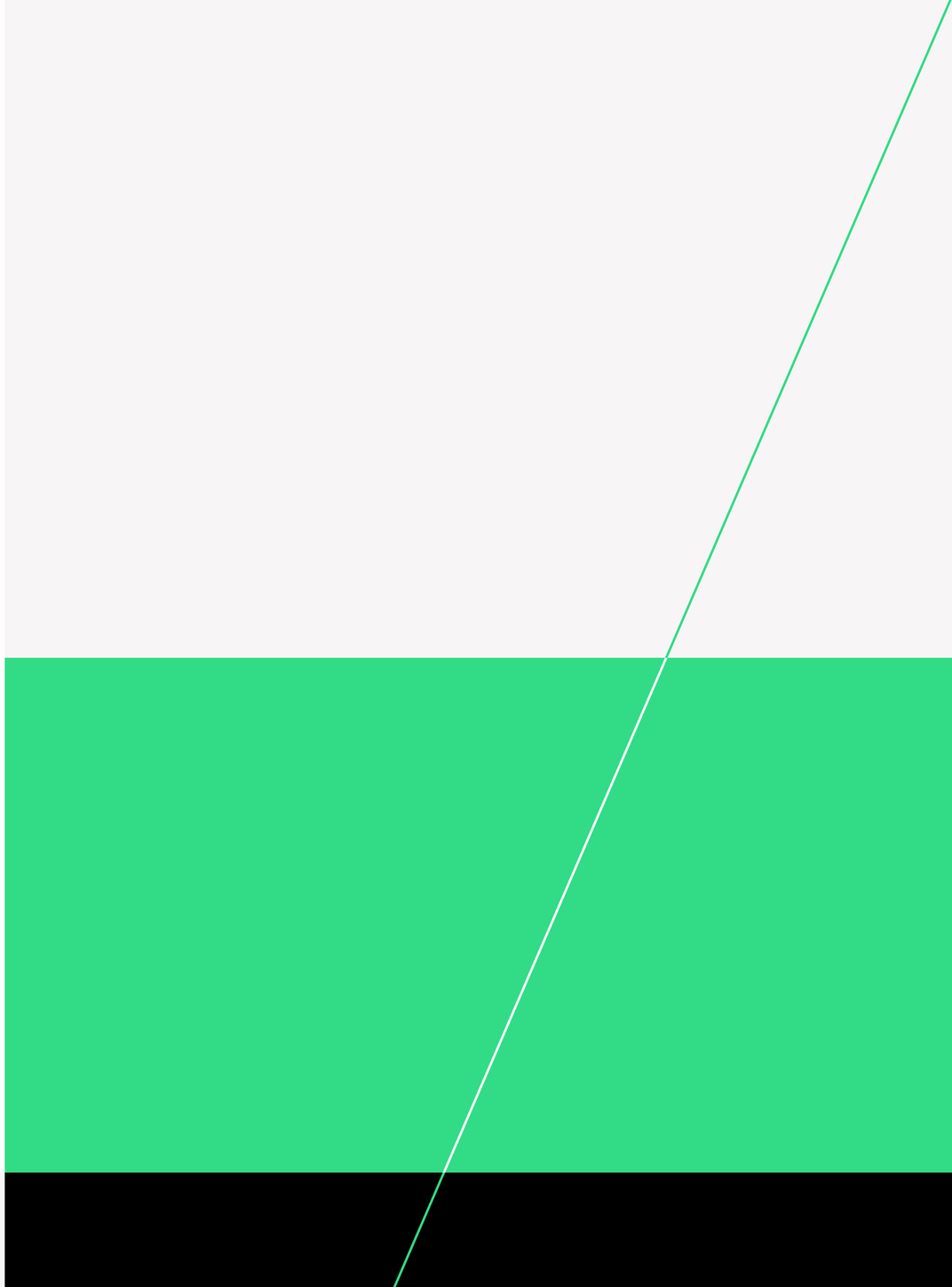
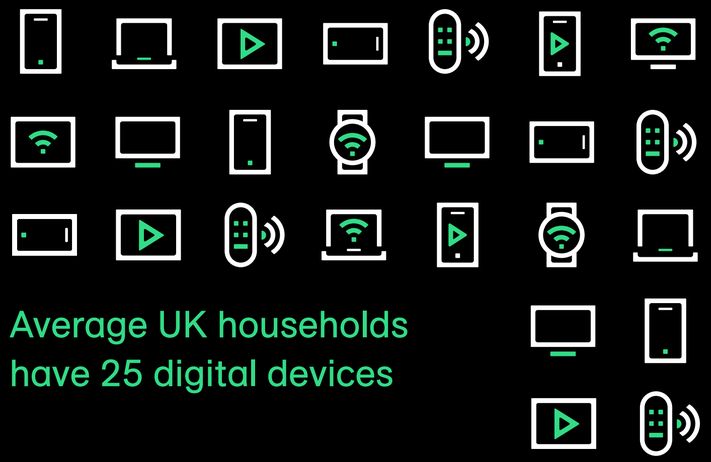


Intro:
Data is everywhere



Average UK households have 25 digital devices

Think about every website, app, and streaming service you visit on an average day. You might start your morning reading promotional emails over coffee, click on an ad while scrolling social media, or ask ChatGPT for birthday gift ideas for your soccer-loving niece. Minutes later, you're browsing products across multiple sites, interacting with ads, recommendations, and content tailored to your interests – all before leaving the house.

Today, AI destinations have further expanded and fragmented the digital ecosystem. More than half (62%) of Americans say they intentionally interact with AI several times a week, if not several times a day.[1] A Gallup poll revealed that almost all (99%) of Americans use AI-enabled products, including virtual assistants, social media, and online shopping apps, at least once a week (whether they realise it or not).[2]

Average UK households have 25 digital devices,[3] from smartphones to tablets to smart TVs. At the same time, the ways consumers search for information and discover brands continue to evolve. More than half (53%) of generative AI users rely on the technology for product recommendations, while 36% use it for travel planning.[4] Yet consumer behaviours remain highly fragmented across generations, channels, and devices.

52%

of British adults use AI tools at least once a week, highlighting how AI is becoming part of everyday life.

With customers active across more digital and real-world touchpoints than ever before, navigating and personalising the modern customer journey can feel almost impossible. Marketers are balancing rising customer expectations, increasing privacy regulations, tighter budgets, and disconnected data spread across siloed platforms. The encouraging news is that AI-powered marketing has finally caught up to these challenges. With the right data foundation, marketers can connect signals across the customer journey, activate real-time campaigns, and deliver more relevant experiences at scale.

But AI is only as powerful as the data fuelling it. So how do brands build the trusted, connected first-party data strategies needed to power modern marketing?

With data collaboration.

Data collaboration allows marketers to securely connect data and signals across organisations, partners, and platforms to reveal and take action on valuable insights, which is more important than ever in the AI era.

Unlock more AI value from your first-party data

Marketing teams today are experimenting with AI as rapidly as consumers. From content creation and audience segmentation to media optimisation and search strategies, advertisers are using AI tools to build stronger customer relationships and improve campaign performance. But the foundation of meaningful customer connections isn't AI – it's first-party data.

Connected first-party data has become far more than a valuable measurement tool or media asset. It's now the foundation for AI-powered marketing that scales personalisation, predictive insights, and real-time campaign optimisation.

That's exactly what Kimberly-Clark achieved when they partnered with LiveRamp.

The global consumer packaged goods giant wanted to deeply understand consumer needs despite signal loss and limited direct retail data. By deploying the LiveRamp Data Collaboration Platform on top of Google Cloud, Kimberly-Clark created a secure environment that gave teams detailed access to rich transactional data from retail partners. This newly enriched data ecosystem empowered the company to build predictive models with machine learning, eliminating their reliance on third-party black box models. As a result, Kimberly-Clark gained deeper visibility into product affinities, customer behaviour, and person-based activation opportunities.

"Driving our focus on the consumer, day in and day out, and being able to test that, is a testament to the journey we're on and where we're going because we can't always know what will happen next," said Jason Niemi, Global Technology Director at Kimberly-Clark.

What's the first step toward making AI-powered personalisation goals a reality? Start by preparing your first-party data for activation and collaboration.

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Kimberly-Clark

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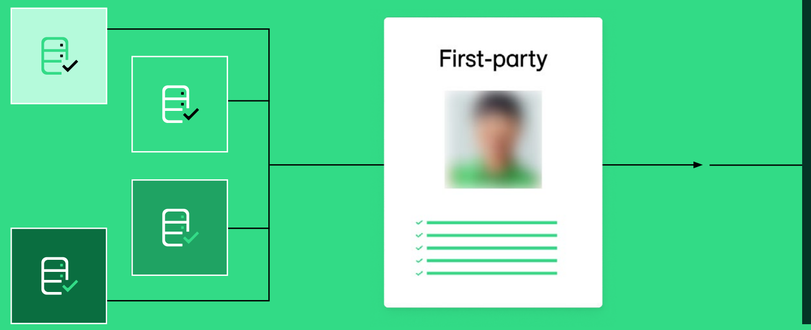
Jason Niemi / Global Technology Director, Kimberly-Clark

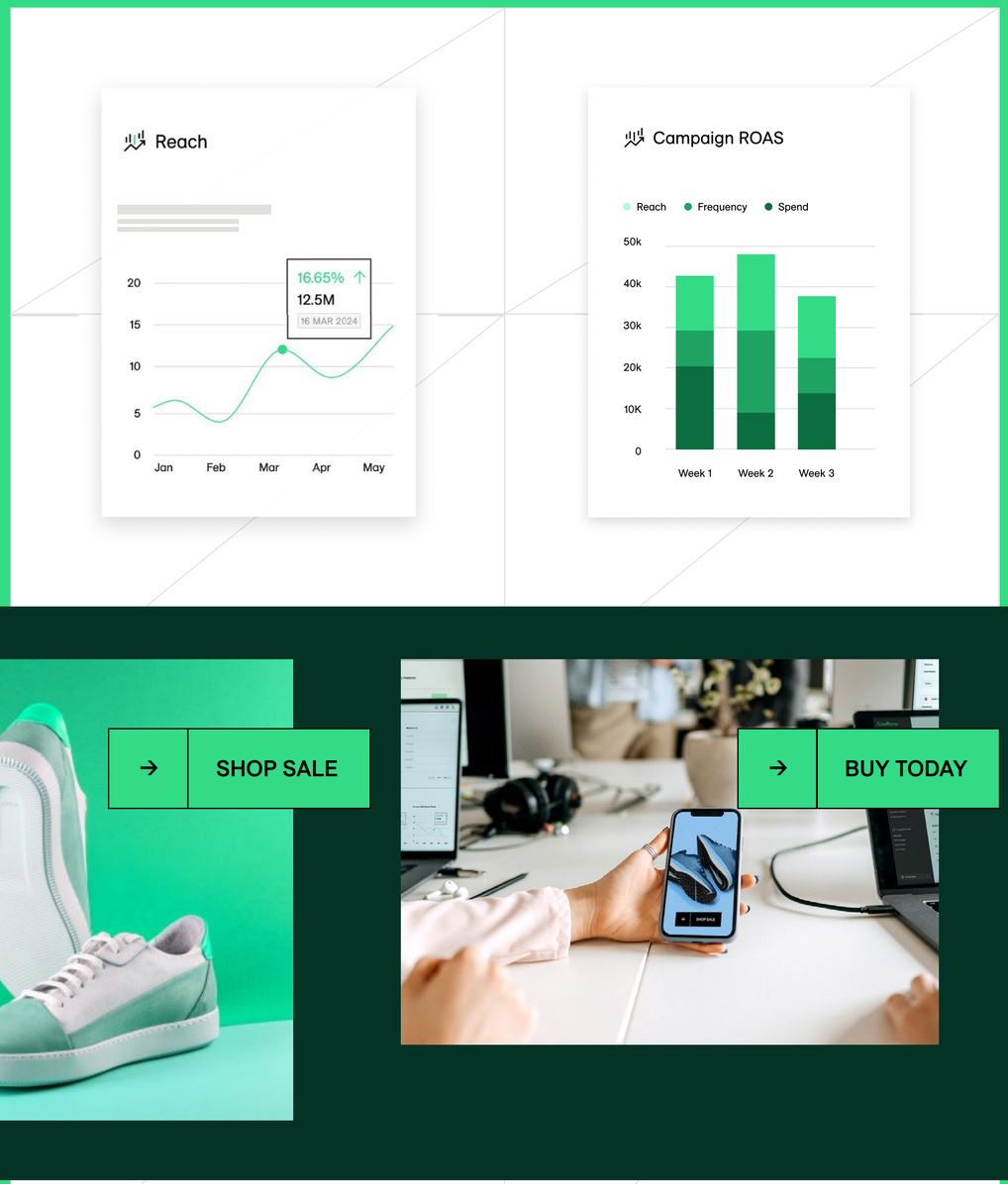
/LiveRamp

How to prepare your first-party data for AI-powered marketing

AI marketing tools will only deliver the best results if your consumer data strategy evolves. The best, and safest, way to evolve is with the trusted data collaboration network for the AI era. With LiveRamp, advertisers are connecting every signal, agent, surface, and channel to fuel AI-powered marketing that drives exponentially better personalisation and performance – grounded in trust.

Here are five best practices to prepare your first-party data for responsible collaboration while improving marketing efficiency, personalisation, and business outcomes.





1 Identify where AI can drive the greatest business impact

Today marketers are challenged to do more with less. Average marketing budgets remain stalled at just 7.7% of company revenue, according to Gartner's annual CMO Spend Survey.[5]

For Adam Heimlich, CEO of Chalice.ai, overcoming this challenge requires transforming ad dollars from simple expenditures into investments that drive measurable growth. As an AI media decisioning company, Chalice.ai partners with LiveRamp to help brands embrace efficiency by securely using their first-party data to fuel custom AI models. Instead of focusing on standard advertising metrics, this approach aligns marketing directly with high-level business goals.

"We are an AI growth partner focused on driving outcomes that actually matter for your business, like what your CEO and CFO would talk about on earnings calls," Heimlich said at RampUp.

He noted that even the most powerful AI agents will deliver mediocre results if they aren't decisioning on valuable, customised data. To achieve these C-suite-level goals, AI must be powered by a strong data collaboration foundation.

"Just as language is now fuel for AI reasoning, consumers and their attributes help AI drive the most effective possible ad targeting," Heimlich explained. "LiveRamp is essential for allowing Chalice to do this for advertisers in trusted execution environments like the LiveRamp Clean Room."

As you re-evaluate your marketing budget and strategies, ask yourself:

- What are the business goals you're aligned to for the next 12, 18, and 24 months?
- How can AI-powered marketing drive measurable business impact?
- What resources and tools does your team need to achieve these goals?
- How can you securely leverage customer insights to improve personalisation and efficiency?

With clear goals, you'll have a better understanding of where and how to activate your first-party data across channels, tools, and AI destinations to enhance scalable personalisation and prevent media waste.

CHALICE

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Adam Heimlich / CEO, Chalice.ai

2 Connect your organisation's first-party data

No matter how much first-party data your organisation has, it's most valuable when it's unified in a secure, responsible way. When you connect customer data from across your organisation to a consistent identity framework with clear rules that protect consumer trust, internal data collaboration becomes both accessible and empowering. Teams gain a more complete understanding of customer behaviour across channels, campaigns, and devices.

Citi achieved a 30% improvement in cost per acquisition by restructuring its fragmented ad tech stack and linking it to an enterprise identity. The financial leader already developed robust in-house data science capabilities, but the team wanted to understand the complete, cross-channel customer journey on a deeper level. By threading a consistent identity framework through the enterprise's data, the team unlocked the most accurate, connected view of its customers – breaking down silos to see exactly what ads visitors were served before they converted.

"Getting to this as full or complete view of the customer as we can has been a big enabler," explained Kinjal Parikh, Head of Media Sciences at Citi, at RampUp. Dezerèe Christman, Head of Media Transformation & Ad Tech at Citi, added that their foundational goal was "making sure that any targeting that we do, any measurement that we do, it all works off of a common identifier."

With a unified first-party data strategy, you can begin to expand your advertising impact and reach by activating your audience data anywhere – from expansive partner networks to integrations, including AI destinations, CTV, and top media networks.

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Kinjal Parikh / Head of Media Science, Citi

3 Analyse your data for new customer trends and opportunities

Once your data is unified across your enterprise and media partners, you have a unique opportunity to uncover trends in customer behaviour and preferences. Start by analysing patterns, such as buying group tendencies, time-specific website engagement, and repeat product purchases. These trends will not only help you identify new audiences for targeting and suppression, but you can begin to strategise how to capture more authenticated customer data, while building consumer loyalty and trust.

Whirlpool faced the challenge of highly fragmented online, shopping, sales, and call centre data. To solve this problem, the company chose LiveRamp to connect this information across internal silos using RampID, the most durable, interoperable identifier, while scaling insights with trusted partners like Circana.

"When we start to pull all of that data together and have it talk to each other and start to see a 360-degree version of the consumer, there's a lot that you can do with that that informs what is the right content and creative to serve them," said Kellie Jones, Director of KitchenAid Small Appliances D2C & Digital Marketing at Whirlpool Corporation. She added that this unified customer view allows the brand to "gain short-term investment efficiencies, make media dollars work harder, and bring in better-qualified audiences."

Gaining a clear picture of your customers through first-party data is the first step toward enabling targeting and personalisation that maximise ad spend and expand audience reach.

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Whirlpool®

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Kellie Jones / Director of KitchenAid Small Appliances D2C & Digital Marketing, Whirlpool Corporation

4 Expand your audience reach

By combining first-party data with third-party data from trusted partners, you'll be able to tap into prospective customers through demographic, behavioural, and transactional data in a trustworthy way, while filling critical gaps in the customer journey.

Hospitality and entertainment leader MGM Resorts uses data collaboration to expand its campaign reach and find high-quality guests. While the resort already had rich first-party data on its guests' on-property behaviours, its marketing team recognised the need for third-party insights to understand customer interests beyond its owned environments.

"We have a lot of rich first-party data. We don't have much third-party data and we need to be able to layer that on top of what we're doing," explained Derek Schoen, VP of Integrated Media Strategy at MGM Resorts. "We know when our higher end customers are coming to Vegas, what their preferences are. We don't know much about them once they leave our four walls."

By layering external data over its proprietary audience segments, MGM builds powerful lookalike models and reaches prospective new audiences through highly relevant campaigns. But identifying audiences is only part of the equation. To maximise performance in today's fragmented ecosystem, marketers also need the ability to activate, measure, and optimise campaigns seamlessly across every channel customers engage with.

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MGM RESORTS INTERNATIONAL®

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Derek Schoen / VP of Integrated Media Strategy, MGM Resorts

5 Activate and optimise campaigns across every channel and AI destination

Data activation, or the process of operationalising data from siloed locations into tools where it becomes accessible, connected, and actionable, enables marketers to connect first-party data for greater efficiency and precision. The goal isn't simply centralising data – it's enabling teams to make faster, more informed decisions in real time.

However, activating data across media partners, channels, and platforms can feel overwhelming. How can marketers connect insights across CTV, social platforms, retail media networks, gaming apps, and emerging AI experiences while maintaining customer trust? As AI-powered discovery platforms like ChatGPT and Perplexity increasingly influence how consumers research and make purchasing decisions, marketers also need ways to turn these emerging AI surfaces into addressable, measurable media destinations.

With a first-party data strategy connected to a durable, interoperable identifier like RampID, marketers can confidently activate, optimise, and measure campaigns across partners, channels, and AI destinations in a trustworthy way.

Lynne Kjolso, VP of Global Partnerships and Retail Media at Microsoft Advertising, and her team work with LiveRamp's clean room solutions to help advertisers safely reconcile customer data across channels – from search to connected TV.

"LiveRamp enables us to collaborate with advertisers in ways where everybody is confident that their trust and safety needs are met," she said.

Kjolso added that multi-cloud capabilities unlock deeper measurement, analysis, and personalisation opportunities when data silos are eliminated. "You can dream big on the analysis that you can do together, on the measurement that you can do together, and on the insights you can generate," she noted.

As AI continues reshaping marketing, brands that invest in connected customer insights, trusted collaboration, and interoperable activation strategies will be best positioned for long-term growth.

Microsoft

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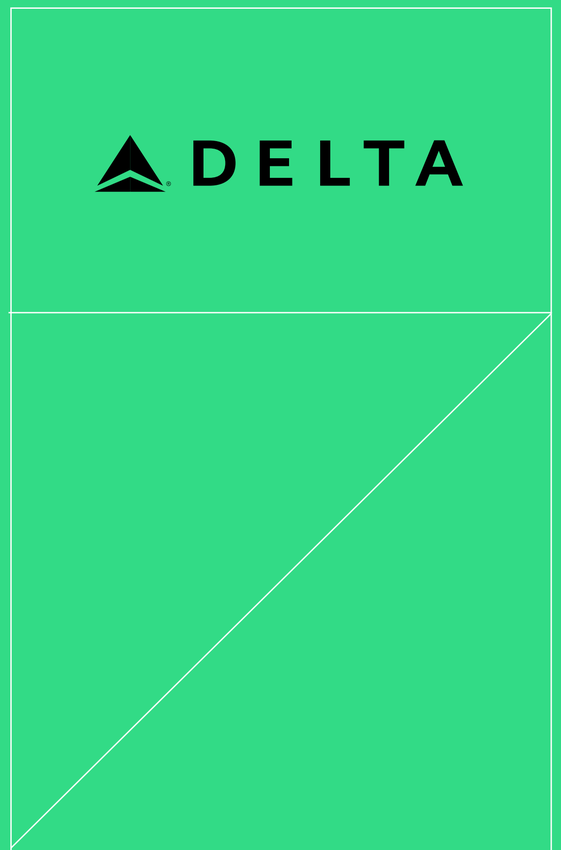
Lynne Kjolso / VP of Global Partnerships and Retail Media, Microsoft Advertising

Personalisation at cruising altitude: How Delta activates customer data for every journey



When Delta Air Lines wanted to personalise flight experiences for almost 200 million travellers, the organisation connected and activated its trove of first-party data in the LiveRamp Data Collaboration Platform. By partnering with LiveRamp, Delta unlocked a clearer customer view and the ability to personalise each trip based on travellers' preferences – from streaming services to in-app experiences tailored to their schedule, preferences, and journey. Plus, Delta gained a deeper understanding of customers without relying on third-party cookies and mobile identifiers.

"If you've got strong first-party data and you can find a partner that has relevant customer attributes that can enrich what you have, you start to bring those things together," said Sarah Downs, Director of Engagement and Optimisation at Delta Air Lines. "That is where you see a little bit of the magic happen, delivering an experience together that strengthens the value proposition for the customer."

Effective data collaboration starts with a trusted partner. With LiveRamp, Delta's consumer data strategy grew beyond its first-party data to create satisfying, value-added experiences while on the ground and in flight.

Conclusion

Your company's first-party data has never been more valuable than it is in the AI era. But disconnected data won't drive meaningful personalisation, measurement, or performance. To unlock the full value of AI-powered marketing, brands need secure ways to connect customer intelligence across channels, partners, and platforms.

With the LiveRamp Data Collaboration Platform, marketers can collaborate responsibly across a global network of more than 500 partners while improving campaign performance, customer insights, and personalisation at scale. The future of marketing belongs to brands that can transform trusted customer data into smarter, more connected experiences wherever the customer journey goes next.

Endnotes

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5 Gartner. (2024, May 13). Gartner CMO survey reveals marketing budgets have dropped to 7.7% of overall company revenue in 2024. Gartner Newsroom

If you're ready to start building out your first-party data strategy for maximum advertising value, reach out to us.

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LiveRamp is the trusted data collaboration network for AI-powered marketing. Visit us at LiveRamp.com/uk

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