



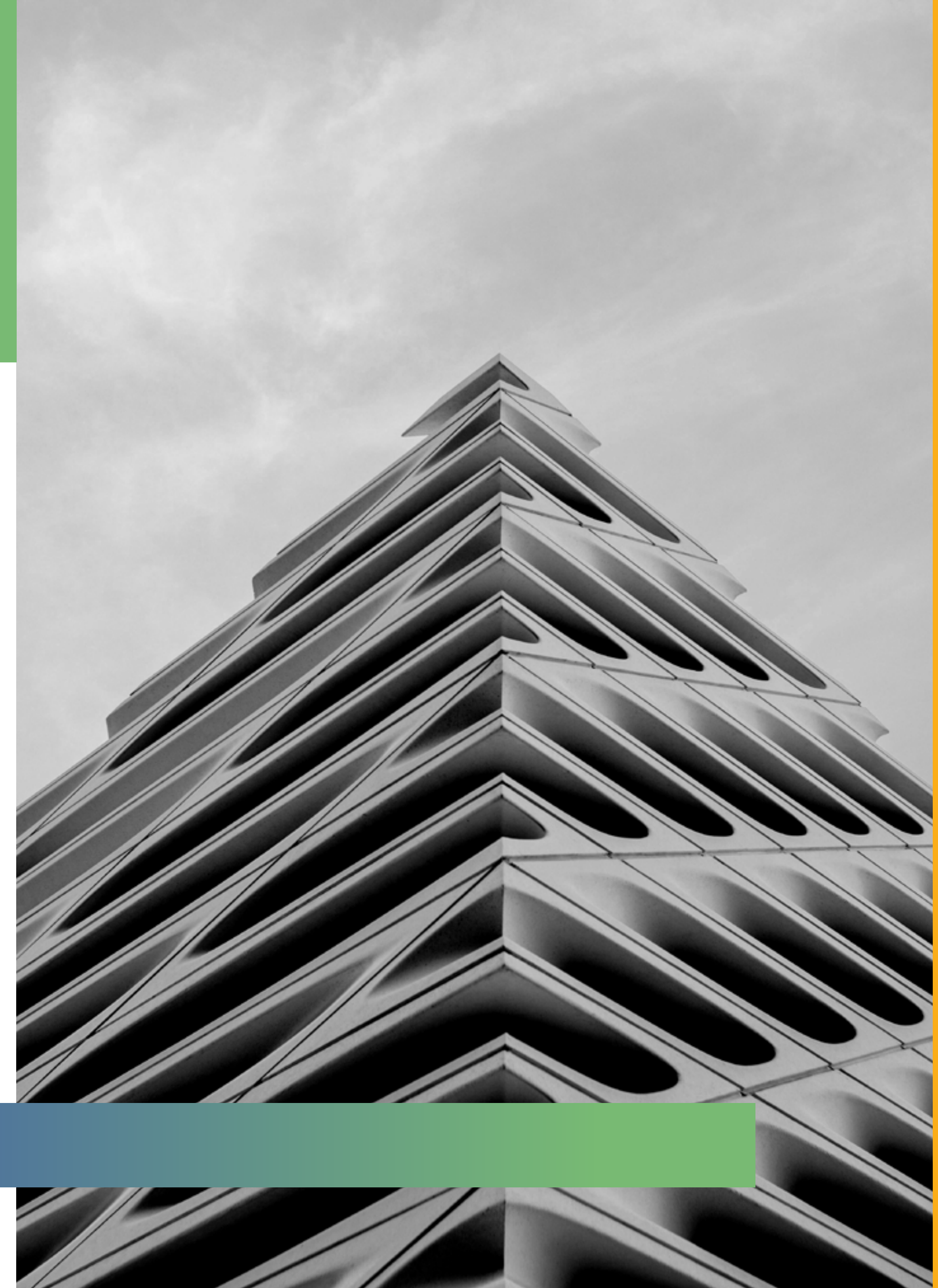
Think
↳ Medium™

Marketer Readiness Playbook

for the New Data
& Identity Landscape

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Introduction

Consumer data has long powered marketers' ability to forge meaningful connections with their customers – but growing privacy scrutiny and actions from consumers, regulators, and platforms are now reshaping the strategies and practices required for marketing success. Some marketers have clung to legacy practices. However, with more extensive and increasingly restrictive privacy laws, alongside constantly evolving platform policies and technologies, marketers must reshape their approaches or risk reputational damage, financial loss, and competitive disadvantage.

ThinkMedium's (www.thinkmedium.tech) **Readiness Strategy Program**, including this Marketer Playbook, helps you confidently navigate the evolving landscape of privacy regulations, platform policies, technologies, and solutions. Our deep expertise and industry engagement empower you to anticipate changes, allowing you to focus on your core business while simultaneously protecting and growing returns.

Changes of this magnitude mean tactical shifts to patch holes are no longer sufficient. Marketers, publishers, and everyone in between must reset advertising strategies—and even broader marketing mindsets.

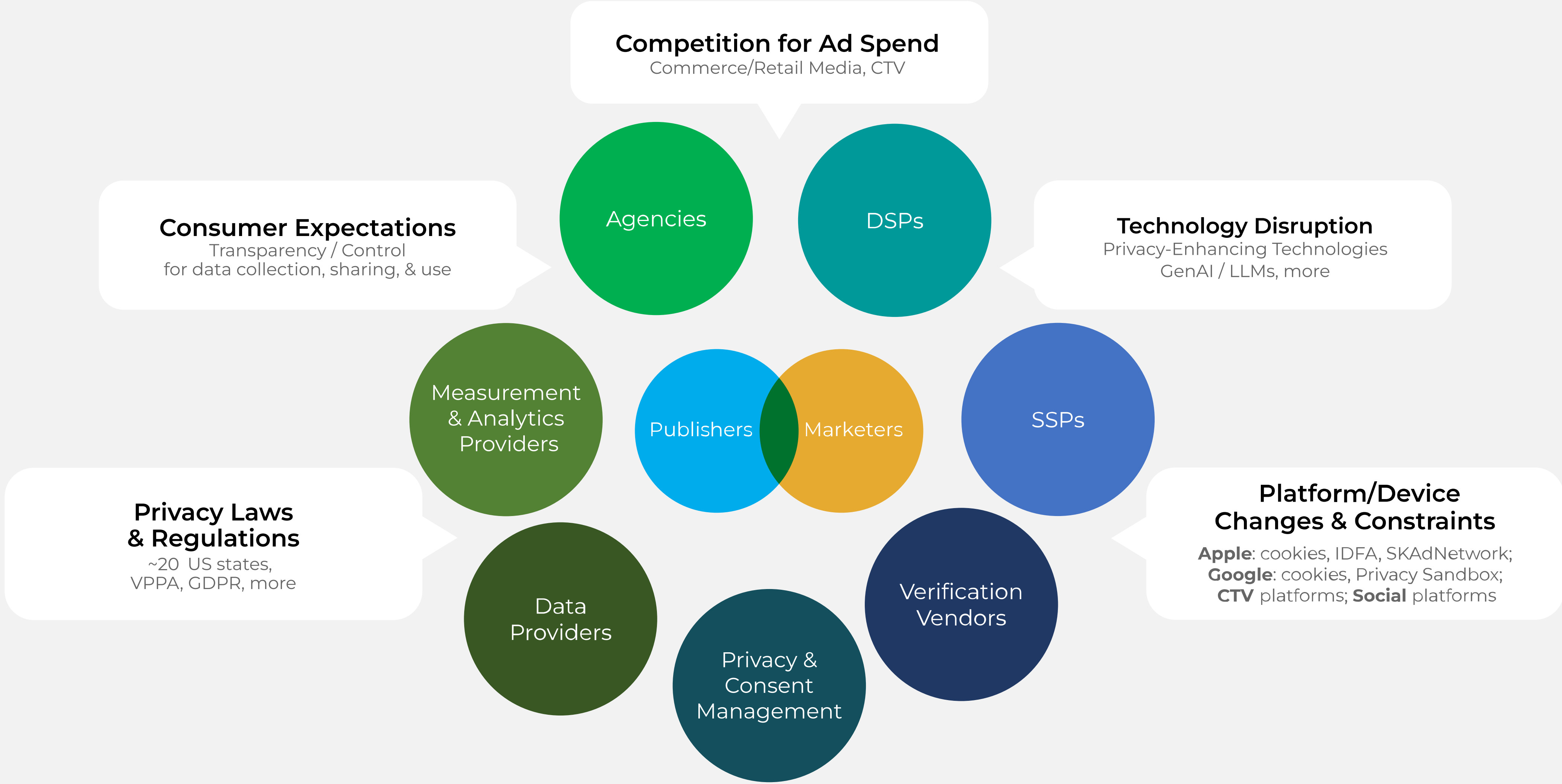
How We Got Here

Mounting regional, country, and state laws¹ and platform policies (e.g., Apple ATT² and Google moving towards cookie consent and introducing Privacy Sandbox) – fueled by cycles of increasing consumer awareness and demand – have eroded marketers' ability to granularly identify and understand consumers and their associated attributes (e.g., demographics, behaviors). These changes, underscored by updates coming to Google Chrome and already made in other browsers and mobile operating systems, signal a shift towards identity-less advertising as the new baseline. While identity-based advertising will not vanish, its use will become more nuanced and reliant on a level of consumer consent. Both ID-based and ID-less solutions will thus need to be a consciously-structured part of your advertising solutions portfolio, to protect and grow your business in the medium term.

¹ [IAPP Global Privacy Law and DPA Directory](#), [IAPP US State Privacy Legislation](#)

² [App Tracking Transparency](#) | [Apple Developer Documentation](#)

Concurrent Marketplace Forces Affecting Marketers and Agencies



Our Approach:

A portfolio of ID-based and ID-less solutions

As marketers, recognizing, understanding, and reaching your customers – and constantly evolving your strategies to do so – is key to driving value. However, the fundamental technical changes already in progress (outlined above) affect every part of your business that currently helps you achieve planning, targeting, activation, attribution, and measurement.

As a result, the risks to your return on marketing programs can be considerable, for example:³

- Reduced measurement at the user level⁴, leading to suboptimal budget allocation across channels, publishers, and audience profiles
- Less ability to prospect and conquest effectively, resulting from the restrictions of ID-less, aggregated, statistically-“noised” audience segments, which will increasingly be the norm
- Less effective campaigns⁵ overall, caused by gaps in the ability to cap frequency or target the right audience, leading to decreased conversions and return on marketing investments
- More opaque planning processes, as marketing personas and segments used for planning become less addressable during activation

³ See [IAB Tech Lab Privacy Sandbox Assessment](#) for more details on what gaps are expected in Chrome

⁴ “Addressable audience sizes such as retargeting pools have decreased by 10% – 30% on average” – [The Impact of iOS14.5+ and App Tracking Transparency \(ATT\) | Media Matters Worldwide](#)

⁵ Apple ATT rollout in 2021 initially led to up to 40% ROAS declines on platforms like Meta – [Advertisers reflect on iOS 14 changes a year later](#)

If they take insufficient action now, marketers face the double challenge of reduced efficiency and effectiveness, coupled with less visibility into the impact of (privacy-related) changes and ongoing optimization efforts.



The “good news” is that these are industry-wide changes, so there are opportunities for disruptive thinkers to “tilt the playing field” in their favor and foster a new equilibrium. As a marketer, you are well-positioned to achieve gains and recover control through your direct relationships with consumers. You also have agency to select which solutions and partners to deprecate and which to adopt and embrace.



Determining next steps and the right portfolio of solutions for your business starts by considering:

ID-based solutions:

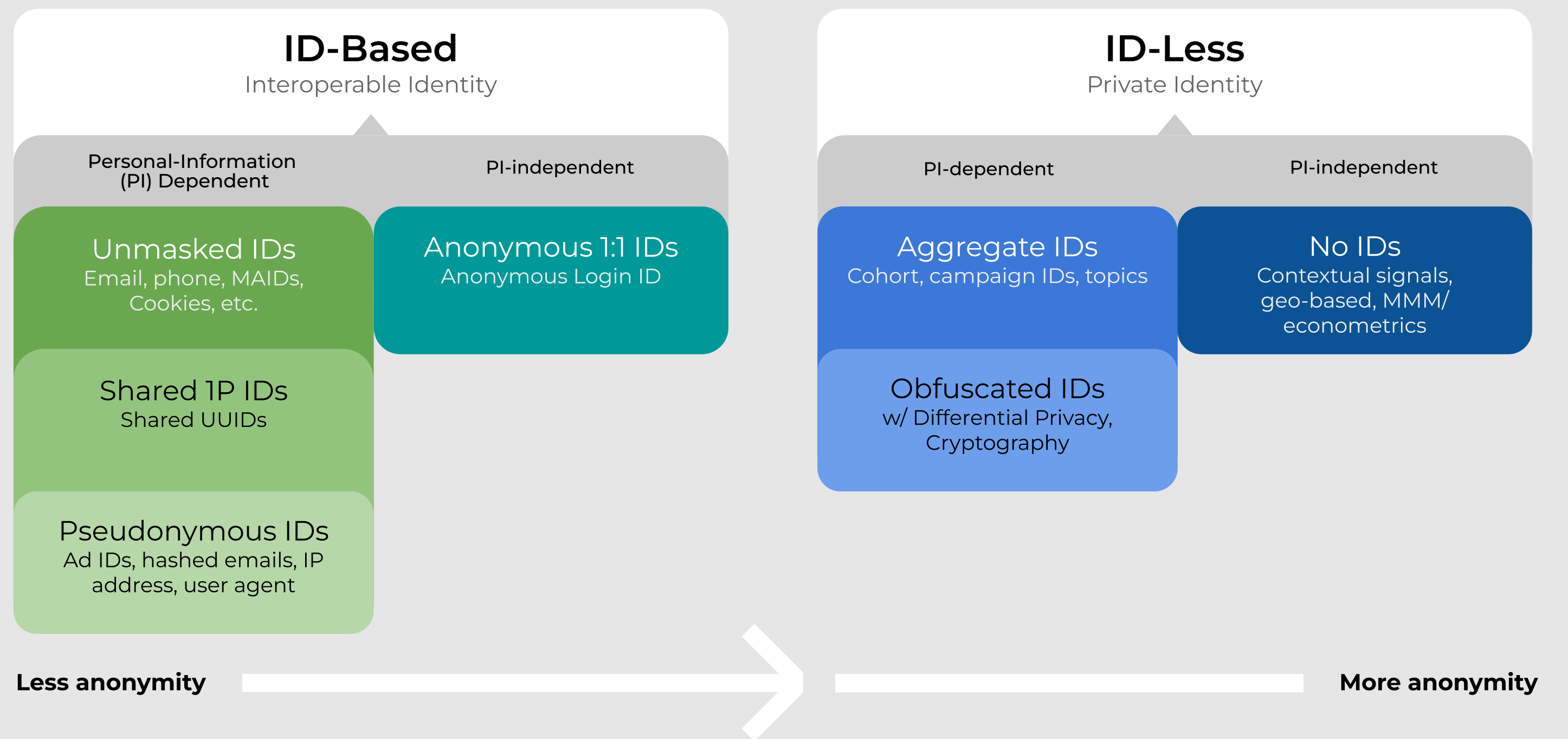
Solutions that leverage unique identifiers, such as hashed emails, mobile ad IDs, IP addresses, or universal IDs (e.g., UID2, RampID), to identify and connect consumer data across touchpoints

ID-less solutions:

Solutions reliant on aggregated, anonymized forms of consumer data (consented as needed), which span new foundational technologies, such as Google Privacy Sandbox, to econometrics solutions, such as media mix models (MMM)

Selecting the most effective solutions and partners can seem daunting because of the technical complexity, evolving nature of technologies, and up-front investment required. But this period of uncertainty offers the opportunity to test and rethink your strategies holistically to benefit your business. Early movers will gain a defensible advantage, while laggards will fall behind those that master new approaches to revenue maximization in an ad ecosystem that will operate markedly differently than it does today.

Overview of the ID-based and ID-less Landscape



Our Framework: Readiness Review

For each of these components, this Playbook provides thought-starter questions that represent a subset of the full Readiness Review offered by ThinkMedium. These initial questions may be sufficient to help you understand and define your path forward – or you can opt to engage with ThinkMedium to go deeper and gain additional expert insights and recommendations.

This Marketer Readiness Playbook⁶ centers on a framework that provides insight into:

- Addressing gaps in your current strategies, assets, and systems
- Aligning your teams to adjust to the latest shifts in our industry
- The impact of these changes on your business

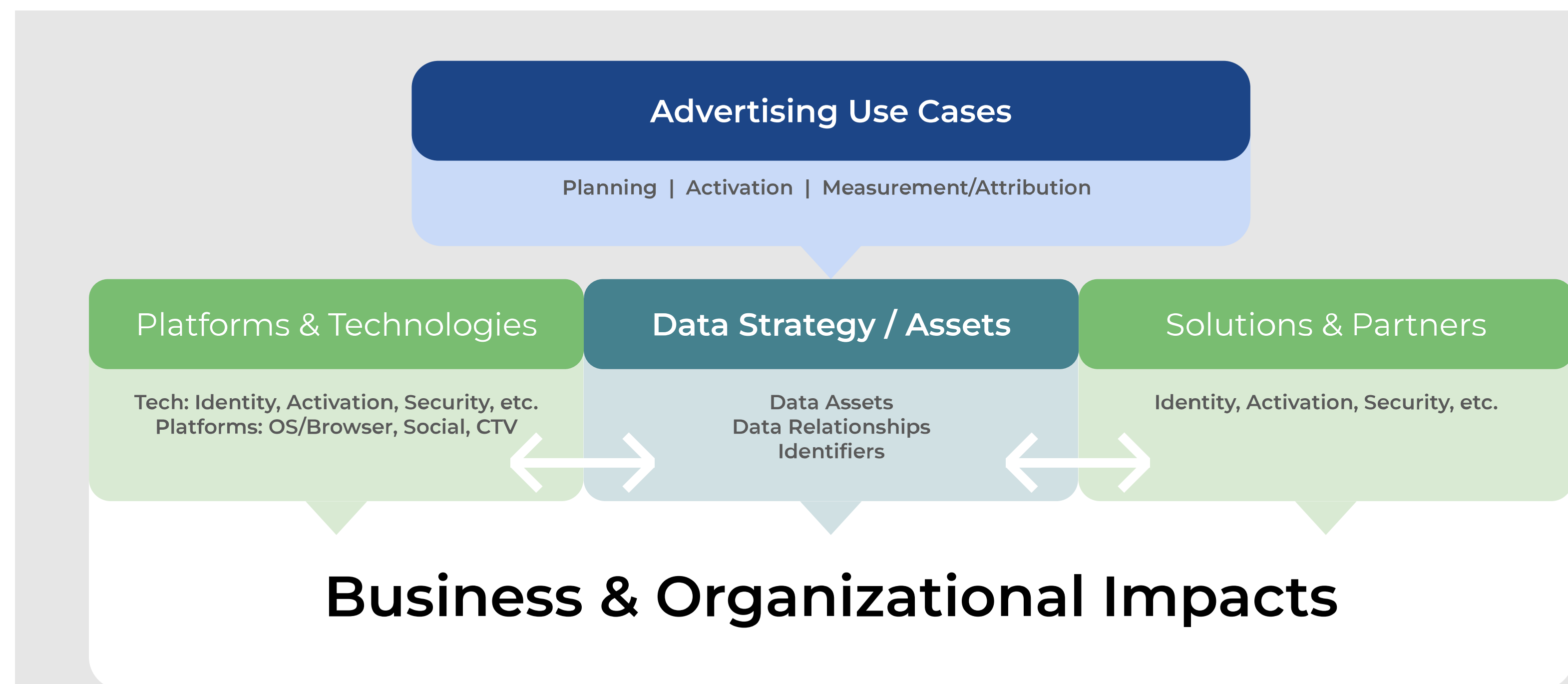
Staying ahead of rapidly evolving, fundamental shifts and choosing and deploying the right solutions requires significant resources. Just the technical and platform changes and upgrades to accommodate ongoing shifts have already cost companies millions of dollars⁷.

⁶ Our [Publisher Readiness Playbook](#) may also be relevant for marketers who directly engage with consumers across sites/apps/CTV

⁷ It is well-known that participants in the Google Privacy Sandbox Field Origin Trial #1 have been reimbursed between \$3 - \$5mm for the costs of participation

To help you move quickly, minimize costs, and maximize revenue in the face of these changes the ThinkMedium Readiness Review framework is structured around 5 sequential components (see Appendix for a visual representation of each):

- 1. Advertising Use Cases
- 2. Data Strategy & Assets
- 3. Platforms & Technologies
- 4. Solutions & Partners
- 5. Business & Organizational Impacts



Advertising Use Cases

The framework starts by articulating your **marketing strategy and key use cases** (see appendix for more details). The impact of ecosystem shifts on each use case varies significantly. This step identifies the essential elements of your marketing strategy that must be maintained to continue to derive value from your marketing activities, even if the methods for achieving it must change.

Consider the following thought-starters:

- Where do your customers primarily shop and convert online: web, mobile, or CTV? What percentage of your sales occur on 1st-party (owned) vs. 3rd-party properties?
- What are your most important advertising use cases and which do you consider most at risk from 3rd-party cookie opt-outs and a shift to ID-less solutions (both of which may cause return-on-ad-spend (ROAS) declines and/or gaps in measurement)?
- How critical are prospecting and retargeting tactics within your advertising program, and how do/will you target and activate those respective audiences, considering growing addressability limitations?



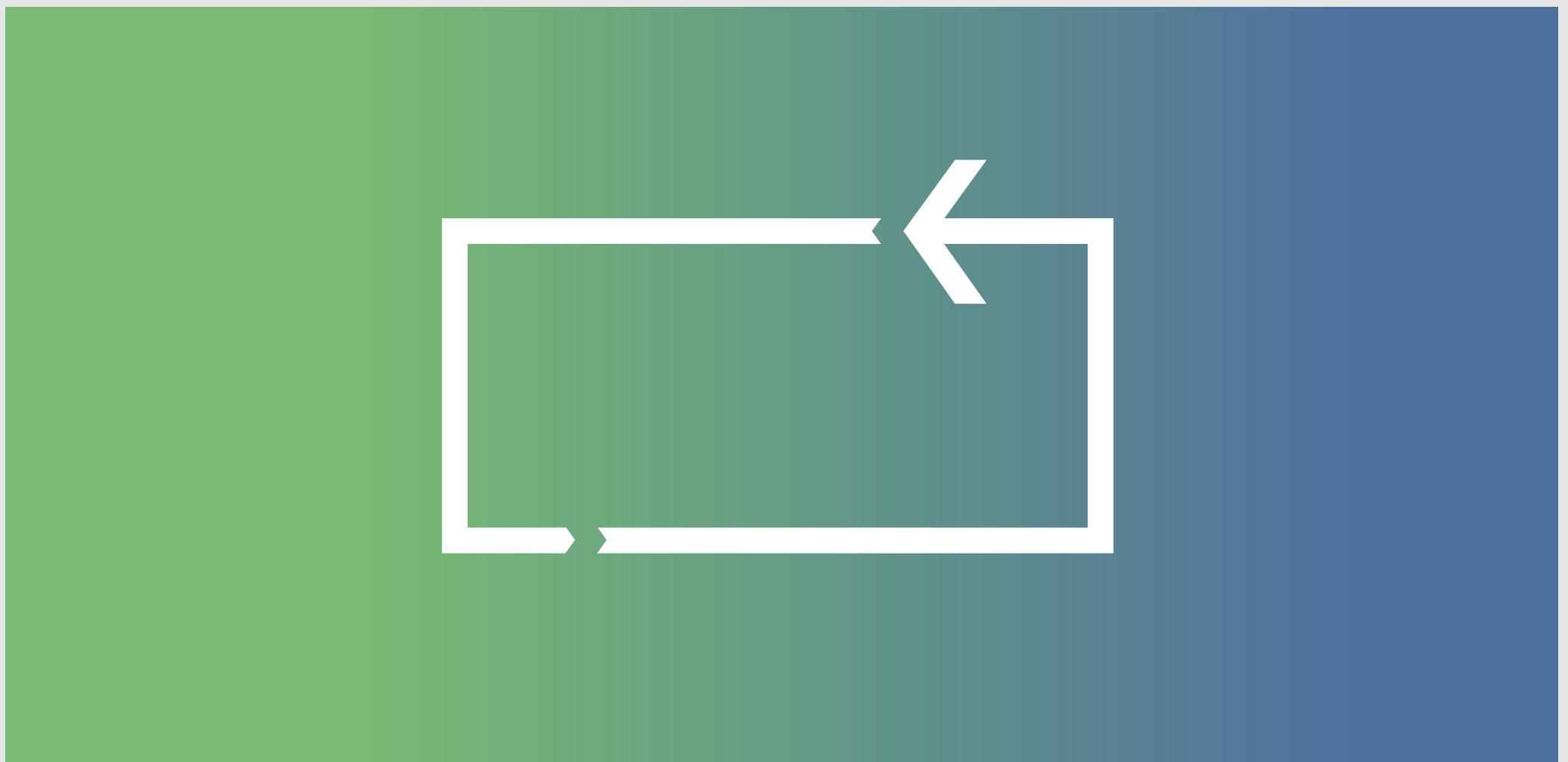


Data Strategy & Assets

Next, the framework focuses on your **data strategy and assets**, assessing what data you own, how you enrich and scale data, and how you leverage data overall (see appendix for more details).

Consider the following thought-starters:

- As part of your data collection and activation strategy, do you have an estimate of the percentage decline in identifiable traffic through current channels? How are you adapting channels or vendor relationships (e.g., data clean rooms, identity providers) to offset some or all of these losses?
- Is your measurement and attribution in-house, built on vendor solutions, or a hybrid? How do you leverage consumer purchase data across systems and vendors in this context?
- How do you account for any offline conversion today, in order to keep an omnichannel view of your marketing program?



Platforms & Technologies

In the third phase, the framework focuses on the benefits and constraints of the **platforms and technologies** you use directly and have dependencies upon indirectly (see appendix for more details). This is where having deep insights into ecosystem technical trends is crucial to understanding how your current use cases and strategies will be impacted.

Solutions & Partners

The next part of the framework focuses on the **solutions and partners** you use today or may consider to take advantage of changes, mitigate further impacts, and align practices and processes with your values and expectations (see appendix for more details).

Consider the following thought-starters:

- What is your current understanding of the data clean room landscape for targeting, measurement, and/or other use cases?
- What is the value proposition you offer to consumers to gain their consent/opt-in to further digital marketing?
- Do you have an understanding of privacy-enhancing technologies, how platforms and vendors are employing them to update their solutions (e.g., Apple AdAttributionKit, Google Privacy Sandbox), and how their adoption could benefit your own programs?

Consider the following thought-starters:

- How do you assess your partners' conformance to regulations and platform policies to maintain effectiveness, avoid putting consumers' data at risk, and protect your proprietary 1st-party data from "leakage"?
- Are you evaluating or planning to onboard any partner with AI-based predictive modeling capabilities (e.g., to predict lifetime value and fill gaps in deterministic signals)?
- Which solutions/partners with demonstrated high resilience to industry shifts have you considered or adopted? Which use cases are they intended to solve?

Business & Organization

Lastly, the framework synthesizes all of this and evaluates how addressing your current state of readiness could impact your **business and organization** (see appendix for more details). This understanding will help determine investments and restructuring needed, implementation timelines, and potential revenue and margin impacts.

Consider the following thought-starters:

- How are you estimating the revenue and ROAS impact of platform policies and regulations on your marketing program, to adjust growth forecasts and provide visibility to your CFO/Finance organization?
- What is your 12- to 24-month cross-organization roadmap to adapt to known impending industry shifts (e.g., Chrome cookie consent) and ensure your marketing programs are set up for success when these shifts are implemented?
- Do you have the right resources in place to support the necessary technical and process changes internally and oversee changes required by your relevant partners? If not, do you have a budget to remedy any gap?



Readiness Review Output & Example

Information collected and organized from the components of the Readiness Review is then combined to provide an estimate of your readiness for each use case prioritized in the first step. Each use case is scored for “readiness” regarding data strategy/assets, platforms and technologies, and solutions and partners. This gives you a tailored reading of potential business impact (relative revenue opportunity, cost, and organizational impacts) corresponding to each use case.

Let’s consider a hypothetical streaming app with a diversified growth strategy leveraging multiple performance-oriented ad networks to acquire new users.

This marketer advertises across web and app programmatic display and video, paid search, and paid social and needs to understand which of these channels drive incremental installs, as well as satisfactory post-install LTV.

Customer is considering the following use cases:



Measurement/Attribution

1. Data Strategy/Assets: “Somewhat Ready” – Over reliance on 3rd-party last-touch models based on user-level data
2. Platform & Technologies: “Mostly Not Ready” – Significant gaps in user-level attribution as a result of iOS14, Android policies
3. Solutions & Partners: “Somewhat Ready” – Some MMPs have developed unified models using aggregated data

Activation

4. Data Strategy/Assets: “Mostly Ready” – Greater control over user experience and helps mitigate app store shifts
5. Platform & Technologies: “Mostly Not Ready” – Both Apple ATT and Chrome 3rd-party cookie shifts affect deep linking
6. Solutions & Partners: “Somewhat Ready” – Various solutions help optimize user journeys to boost post-install conversions

Customer is considering the following use cases:

Use Case 1: Measurement/Attribution – leveraging last-touch attribution by implementing a 3rd-party mobile measurement partner (MMP) vendor and relying on their proprietary attribution logic to performance reporting and channel allocation

Use Case 2: Activation – running web-to-app campaigns with deep linking to take users from mobile web to app stores and drive new downloads, in order to reach a more cost-effective and broader audience that may not have discovered the app through stores alone

Below is how each use case might score in terms of readiness:

Assessment, Considerations, Recommendations				
Advertising Use Case	Data Strategy/Assets	Platforms & Technologies	Solutions & Partners	Business Impact
Measurement / Attribution	Somewhat Ready	Mostly Not Ready	Somewhat Ready	Revenue/Cost Org Impacts
Activation	Mostly Ready	Mostly Not Ready	Somewhat Ready	Revenue/Cost Org Impacts

Key:

Not Ready	Mostly Not Ready	Somewhat Ready	Mostly Ready	Ready
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Brand/Marketer

Agency

Gather relevant plans and documentation your company and/or agency and solutions partners have already completed.

Create a cross-functional team from in-house staff, vendors, and agencies. Include Business Leadership, Marketing, Product/Engineering, Partner Business Development, Legal/Policy, Operations, and Finance.

Identify and/or nominate subject matter experts and form a dedicated task force to research impacts and disseminate knowledge internally.

Get/Stay current on the landscape of risks and opportunities caused by privacy-related regulatory and platform shifts.

Identify external milestones to track and their implications on each use case (e.g., when Google Chrome is expected to roll out user choice for 3rd-party cookies).

For each at-risk implementation – both in-house and via agencies and other partners:

Define its current revenue scope and develop a “business-as-usual” revenue/cost forecast as a baseline.

Identify alternative solutions, partners, and strategies that can mitigate impacts, based on their utility and durability vs. your use cases.

Define predicted impacts that may require broader product, partner, and technology changes; assess costs.

Understand opportunities to leverage privacy/ID shifts to reposition services and pricing.

Update client playbooks and collateral, including adjusting measurement and performance expectations (e.g., shift from deterministic MTA to MMM and lift).

Understand how privacy shifts may affect other ad tech solutions used to service your clients (e.g., ad serving, creative, verification) and what changes might be needed.

Gauge the future impact of signal loss (e.g., via Chrome) on advertiser budgets and adapt financial models and staffing.

Develop a plan for testing and implementation:

Include selected solutions, partners, and technologies, with timelines, resourcing, and funding.

Reconcile your plan timelines with industry milestones and address gaps by shifting strategies or partners, and adding resources as needed.

Develop a framework to monitor how well new/remedial approaches mitigate business impacts.

Optimize your organization to address identified changes efficiently, and communicate changes to agencies and other partners.

Define a portfolio of resilient solutions, partners, and technologies to invest in and recommend to clients.

Align agency team operations with industry milestones to shift resources as needed and proactively support clients.

Develop a framework to monitor campaign performance and mitigate fluctuations as needed.

Optimize your agency talent with subject matter experts in emerging fields and solutions (e.g. ID-less, clean rooms, contextual advertising).

Next Steps, A Checklist

Now that you’ve seen how a Readiness Review can help prepare your organization for the changes that are coming, what should you do now?

While doing our suggested discovery work, you may identify gaps in your planning. If you do – or if you just need to free your team to focus on their “day jobs” – consider a follow-on Readiness Review self-assessment or direct engagement with ThinkMedium’s team of experts, who are actively engaged with other

Note: if you’re a brand/marketer working with an ad agency, we recommend considering the Agency checklist to inform any needs-based assessment of their capabilities.

About ThinkMedium

ThinkMedium supports the health and sustainability of the advertising and media ecosystem by providing advisory services to industry companies large and small, helping them navigate challenges and opportunities related to privacy and data strategy, brand and consumer safety, and business and ecological efficiency.

Our core team of neutral industry leaders and practitioners ([link to bios](#)), founded and led by Dennis Buchheim, has deep expertise in ad tech, measurement, privacy, data strategy, safety, and more gained from collective decades of experience at Meta, IAB Tech Lab, Microsoft, Yahoo, GoPuff, and other companies. We also partner with other firms and individuals where applicable to augment capacity and expertise for specific client projects.

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To learn more email:
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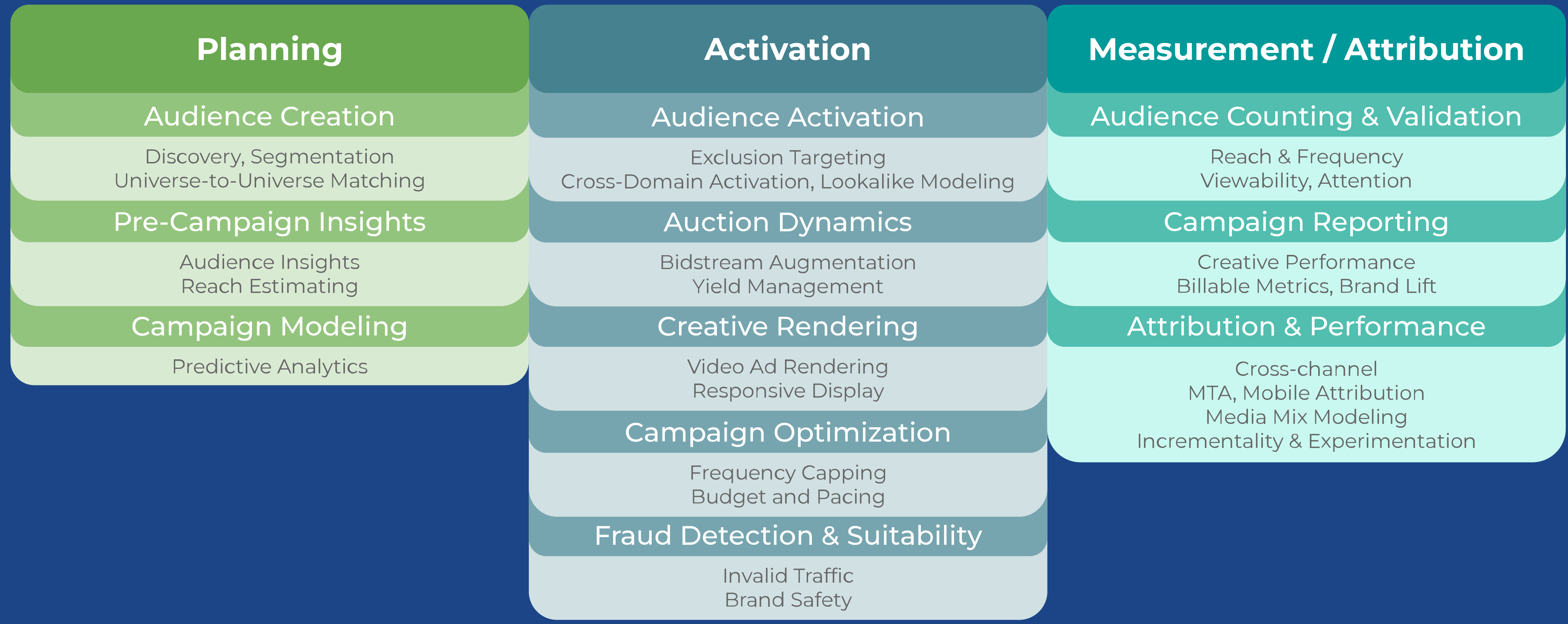
Appendix

Readiness Review Framework Components



Use Cases

Start with What You're Solving for...



Data Strategy & Assets

Have you evolved sufficiently?

Data Assets

What You Collect and Use via Properties

Demo

Geo

Contextual

Interest

Behavioral

Identity

Consent

Data Relationships

How You Collect & Match Data

0-Party

Shared directly
by consumer

1st-Party

Collected with consumer
consent as needed

2nd-Party

Added via direct connection to
another org's 1P data

3rd-Party

Collected without direct
relationship with consumers

Identifiers

How Data is Obtained/Matched

1st-Party Identifiers

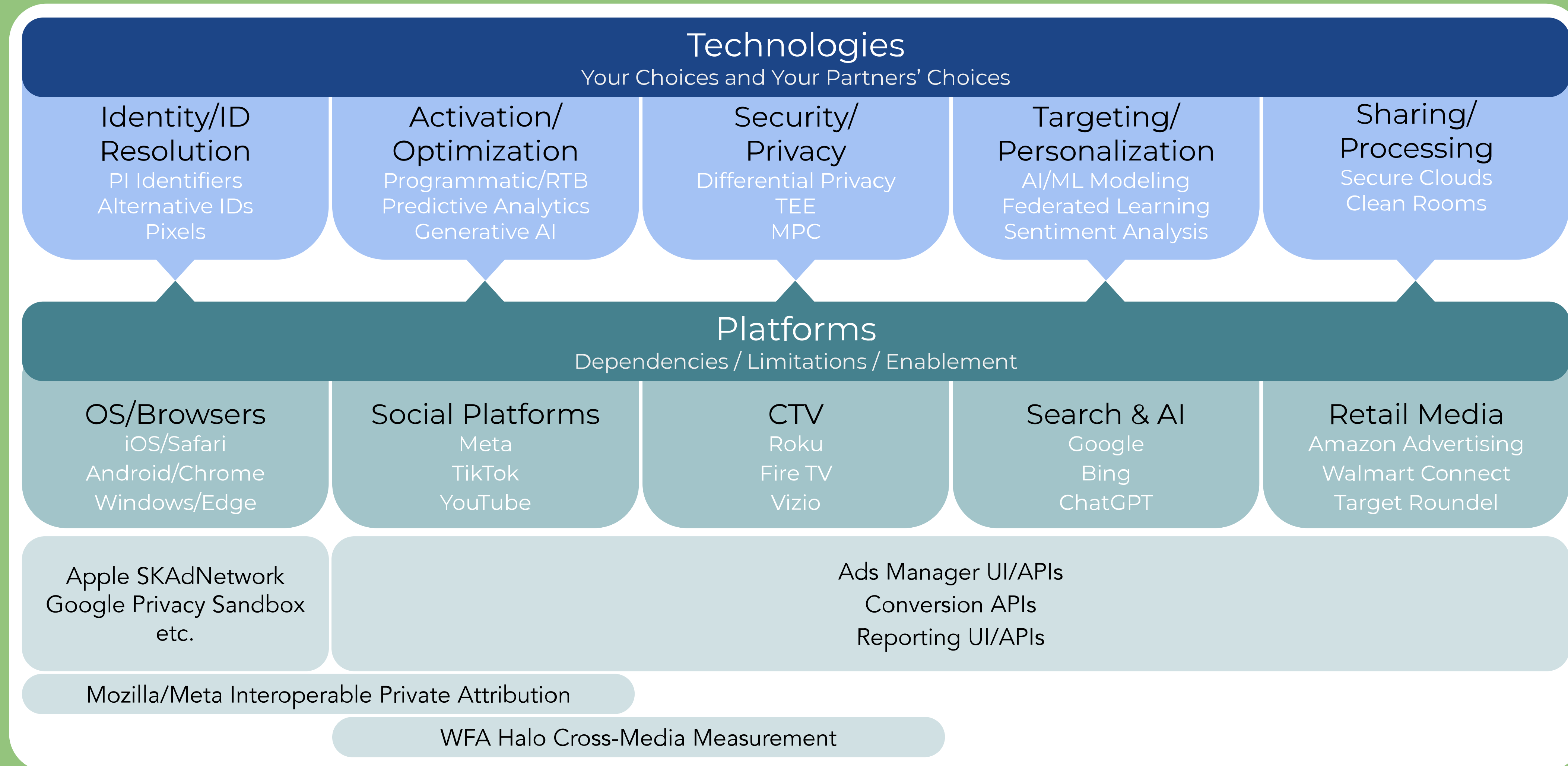
UUIDs, 1P Cookies, IDFV,
Local Storage

3rd-Party & Personal Information Identifiers

Email, Phone, Address, 3P Cookies, IDFA/GAID
Device / IP / User Agent

Platforms & Technologies

Resources & Constraints



Solutions & Partners

Key Assets in Your Portfolio

Solutions

Which Classes of Products, Services, & Enablers You Choose

Identity/ID Resolution	Activation/Optimization	Security/Privacy	Targeting/Personalization	Sharing/Processing	Measurement/Attribution
Universal IDs Identity Resolution (IDR) Solutions Cookieless Technologies Customer Data Platforms (CDP)	DSPs/SSPs Ad Servers RTB Engines Yield Management Digital OOH	Consent Management Platforms (CMPs) Encryption Technologies Tokenization Platforms	PMPs Audience Segmentation Solutions Curated Audiences Dynamic Creative Optimization Contextual Solutions	API Management Tools Data Clean Rooms Cloud-based Processing Solutions Data Management Platforms (DMP)	Analytics Tools Calibration Panels Mobile Measurement Partners (MMPs) MTA Providers Ad Verification & Viewability Tools MMM & RCT Providers

AI/ML & LLM Enhancement

Partners

Who You Rely On (examples)

The Trade Desk LiveRamp Tealium Lotame	GAM PubMatic AdForm Magnite	OneTrust SourcePoint Virtru Skyflow	Adobe Cloud Oracle BlueKai Criteo	InfoSum Snowflake Zapier Databricks	Nielsen AppsFlyer IAS Google Analytics
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