SEQUENT Partners

**The Stars of Attribution:  People and Ideas Reshaping Advertising Measurement**
**February 2020**

From our vantage point as industry consultants, we've seen attribution evolve from a simplistic, naïve practice to one genuinely grappling with challenging issues and in many respects, succeeding.  In our talk on February 28 at the New York-based Marketing Research Council, we highlighted a wide range of things we like right now, ideas that are advancing the practice and individuals who've pushed the envelope by setting a shining example or  being "first in" with an innovation.

### *Category 1.* True Read of Advertising Effects

It couldn't be any more important for Attribution and performance analytics to reflect the fundamentals of how advertising works -- the dynamics of  diminishing returns and adstock, and ensure incrementality in measurement, and incorporating multiple media, other marketing and non-marketing factors and their interactions. That's how it's done right. Who's a strong example in this category?

⭐ **Data + Math.**  We have been impressed with their focus on getting a true read of advertising's contribution in their model, with diminishing returns, adstock, measures of

incrementality, interactions and incorporating other media and marketing variables into the model.  We think it's important to reflect everything we've learned as an industry, about how advertising works.

We also award this to **Marketing Mix Modelers** whose products incorporate these important metrics as a matter of course. You know who you are. Congratulations.

### *Category 2.* Right Tool for the Right Job!

Recognizing "Fit for Purpose," which is a cool way of saying understanding the multiple measurement tools, and aligning them by  need or decisions. We think it's important not to be swayed by glossy new tools and cool applications … even when they  promise unheard-of speed and efficiency. It's important to think holistically and strategically.

⭐ **Chris Cable, Diageo**. We have heard Chris talk about privacy challenges in multi-touch attribution and his development of daily, zip-level and more frequent MMMs. That works for his business, where they're managing 200-year old brands.   This star is awarded for laser-focus on your brands and business needs.

⭐ **Greg Pharo, Coca-Cola.** We have heard Greg talk about more frequent MMMs, too,  in lieu of attribution.  We awarded this star for focusing on your business needs and for innovating on the MMM front. Far from being slow, annual look-backs at last year, when done more strategically, marketing mix models can bring insights and management guidance as well as attribution.

*Category 3.* **Hyper-Vigilant About Data**

Attribution depends on data quality, which is not always sufficient. It requires a strategy and framework for understanding business needs and the operational decisions that will be made with the data And it takes an intense focus on collection, processing, integrating data across silos. We know this is incredibly hard work, and requires a top-down commitment. But the effort is ultimately worth it.

⭐ **Lauren Ratcliffe, E*Trade.** We have been impressed with your focus on data and data quality. Your presentation at the Attribution Accelerator a few years back reminded the industry how important it is to get your data house in order before embarking on any performance evaluation. You helped solidify the importance of an end-to-end data gathering framework firmly grounded in needs of different constituencies across the company.

⭐ **Dave Szahun, American Express.** You have been very vocal about the importance of a fundamental strategic framework for data and analytics that are, again, completely aligned with decision-making. The discipline associated with your approach is critical to organizational adoption and relevant business-driving insights. It's the antitheses of jumping into attribution and it's an important story to tell.

*Category 4.* **Expanding Outcome Variables**

Initially attribution was just about digital outcomes – website visits, or app downloads, for example. Today, the outcome variables have expanded considerably – sales, location data, brand metrics, and customer lifetime value. Over the years, the industry needed to move beyond convenient digital outcome

variables to more meaningful KPIs that marketers can use to run their businesses.

⭐ **David Shim, Placed/Foursquare. Location data.** For many businesses, the number of people on the premises is a very strong indicator of revenue and thanks to you and your work at Placed, location data, with its granularity and real-time reporting is a natural fit for attribution. We believe you're one of the innovators in our industry who took this idea and made it a reality.

⭐ **Rex Briggs, Marketing Evolution**. **Brand metrics.** We know brand metrics are used in MMMs, tied to brand tracking data. But you pioneered the practice of applying attribution to brand survey data at the individual level, and led the industry in a new direction.

⭐ **Chiara Ravalli, New York Times**. **Long term affinity.** Last year at the Attribution Accelerator, you presented how the New York Times found balance between short-term revenue needs and longer-term brand building. The integration of consumer sentiment towards the brand, *Affinity* ROI – was brilliant! We think this kind of work is smart and a critical to bran building.

⭐ **Abha Dawesar**, **HSBC.** **Customer Lifetime Value.** You have shared how you used first-party CLV as the dependent variable in HSBC's attribution work to drive long-term business growth. We think that was a watershed development for the industry and know you and others will continue to develop this kind of approach to attribution modeling.

**Category 5. Driving Business Processes**

The promise of attribution, with fine granularity and "real-time" measurement has been to optimize "real-time" business decisions. But we're not really there yet, and "real-time" has remained in quotes. It's clear one tool won't entirely fit and a system of intelligence needed to link MMM, MTA and TVA with a network of KPIs for each media task.

⭐ **Joy Joseph, Group M**
At last year's Attribution Accelerator, Joy highlighted how attribution is being harnessed to drive programmatic buying at the Trade Desk for Group M. Bridging the systems directly from analytics to media selection and buying is a critical development for the industry.

⭐ **George Musi, Publicis, Ashley Chauvin, Citi**. You showcased a system of intelligence linking a variety of tools that best fit Citibank businesses -- linking specific KPIs and media tasks. "Triangulating truth," is a very smart concept and helps guide the brave new world of reconciling multiple truths and drive business performance.

**Category 6. Fortitude!**

For years, marketers have clamored for accountability for their media investments … in terms of sales. On the media side, guaranteeing business results, not audience delivery, was a bold, brave move that is likely to drive higher quality modeling and greater focus on data quality.

⭐ **David Ernst, A&E**. Our industry has always been slow to change because there is so much revenue at stake. But you and AMC bravely first stepped up and answered advertisers' demand

for more accountability for their television spend.

⭐ **Britta Cleveland, Meredith**. This award recognizes your bravery in pioneering the practice of guaranteeing business results for digital and print ads. We suspect sales guarantees will become standard practice across the industry and hopefully, this will continue driving demand for higher data quality and attribution modeling precision.

**Category 7. If Not Us, Who?**
The title of this category came from JWT's recognition that as an industry leader, it had a unique role to play advancing the state of the art in media research. If they didn't do it, who would? Sharing research … bringing provocative new ideas and approaches to the industry moves the whole practice forward. In an era of walled gardens and outsized notions of proprietary IP, the "Sharers" and "Catalysts" in our industry need recognition and our thanks.

⭐ **Leslie Wood, NCS**
This award is for all the work you've done sharing research and a bringing provocative new approaches to the industry. Your work in household-level sales outcomes and targeting – two key aspects of attribution, has helped move the industry forward and you are genuinely one of the industry's great catalysts.

⭐ **Jane Clarke, CIMM**
Your strong funding and support of foundational work on attribution has moved the whole industry forward more quickly than it would have moved on its own. You've funded research and focused on innovation, best practices, and standards – you are a shining example of doing what it takes to drive change.

⭐ **Mike Finnerty, Alex LePage, Neustar** This award recognizes your contribution to the industry's understanding of identity graphs. Neustar's foundational work on this critical component of attribution has cultivated new insights and thinking. The use of synthetic data in experiments demonstrated how rigorous learning could be developed in the absence of in-market or persons-level data.

*Category 8.* **Standards & Industry Education**
Breaking barriers, advocating consistency and mutual understanding across the industry is tough work. And we are grateful for those who tackle this important task. Their unwavering commitment, tireless attention to detail and knowing where to compromise helps advance the art and the science of Attribution and performance measurement.

⭐ **Jeff Greenfield, C3 Metrics**. You understand, firsthand, how tough attribution is to get right. Your educational attribution certification program, your insistence on viewability metrics in analytics, and your support of MRC accreditation are perfect examples of the commitment you're making to raise the bar in this area.

⭐ **Pete Doe**, Your work on the ATSG data standards will have a lasting impact on advanced television data and attribution. We know how tough standards are to develop and how important ongoing education is … and that's why we've showcased this category, and your work in it.

⭐ **George Ivie, Media Rating Council**
The MRC is a force in the media industry and has made a lasting impact in data and attribution. We are all better because of the process by which standards and guardrails are developed in media measurement. Breaking barriers, advocating consistency and standard processes are hugely important for an area as nascent as attribution.

*Category 9.* **Context.**
And now, something different. We know ads run in programming – content. And *where* and *when* ads run really matters. And so does the mindset the consumer brings as they experience that content. We want to keep the industry's eyes focused on content – and contextual relevance in advertising measurement. The issue of context is both our past and our future. The industry knows context has a multiplier effect on advertising performance. But it's been excruciatingly difficult to operationalize. Contextual congruence, especially emotional congruence, improves ad performance, but how will it ever become a variable in attribution?

⭐ **Bill Harvey, RMT.** Embracing contextual congruence has always been stymied by scale and technical hurdles. But your steadfast and pioneering efforts in operationalizing contextual effects through Driver Tags has the potential to change that. We know context isn't a main variable in attribution yet, but we believe it should be … and may be through your work.

⭐ **IBM Watson.** This next star is awarded for audacity. IBM's Watson has won at Jeopardy, Chess and Go …. And now promises to provide a solution to coding ads and media for contextual congruence at scale. Rock on. This enormous task needs AI and all the power IBM can bring. But the possibilities are endless if we get this right.

**Category 10. Protecting Our Privacy**

⭐ **Apple, Mozilla, Google, EU and California.**
The data that drives attribution exists on the premise that everyone reads End User License Agreements and the hope that no one does. It was kind of a "wink and a nod" strategy, which is unsustainable. Today, a "privacy-first" world makes us more creative. And it should. For giving consumers greater control over their PII, we award stars to Apple & Mozilla. For strapping a time-bomb to the cookie, Google. And finally, for establishing consumers' rights to privacy online, the European Union and California.

**Category 11. Leading When There's Less Data**

For the first time in a while, privacy protection will take us into a less data-rich world. What do we need to know to cope? This award recognizes those who study and publicly share insights into the potential fall-out in attribution data as privacy regulations take hold.

⭐ **Nancy Smith, Analytic Partners.** The experiment you shared at the 2019 San Francisco ARF provided powerful insights about the impact of consumers opting out of databases and tracking. It provided strong navigational clues about the potential size of the problem We encourage more work like this as even more privacy regulations and tracking restrictions gather steam.

⭐ **Helen Katz, Publicis & The ARF Attribution Team.** This award recognizes your series of experiments illuminating attribution approaches and the emerging impact of privacy regulations. We recognize that you are leading the industry through unchartered waters and

hope future studies will continue sparking conversation and new solutions.

**Category 12. Guiding Us Through Identity Crisis**

⭐ **Jonathan Steuer, Omnicom.** You rang the bell on third-party audience data quality and were instrumental in the development of the Data Transparency Standard. We consider the data label an important tool that has led to greater transparency and hopefully, smarter buyers of audience segments. Transparency and data quality continue to be areas of concern in attribution, and steps like the data label are worth acknowledging.

⭐ **Carlos Santiago, AIMM**
This award recognizes your wiliness to step up and wrestle one of the most complicated yet fundamental issues in marketing performance, consumer identity. Your steadfast commitment to illuminating the darkness around multicultural identity and transparency will benefit all marketers.

⭐ **Christine Pierce, Ana Petra, Nielsen**. Privacy laws are not the only threat to household/individual-level data required for attribution. The lack of transparency that permeates third-party data sources and products hurts the industry and confounds best practices. Your Alliance for Inclusive Multicultural Marketing Accuracy and Coverage Benchmarking study has laid out the magnitude of the problem and the foundation for all improvements in this area.

⭐ **Robin Opie, Oracle.** Your paper, "Advancing Toward Data Quality," is an important look at the critical issue of digital attribute data quality. We share your concern that the lack of transparency undermines the effectiveness of the entire advanced targeting enterprise.

⭐ **Jolt***!* We think Jolt! has developed an innovative method for evaluating the quality of digital advanced targets that's the key to attribution. Their ongoing efforts to bring greater transparency to target segments will eventually deliver a stronger ecosystem and greater value for advertisers. Yes, Sequent Partners is part of Jolt*!* Just for the record.

⭐ **Lucid.** This award also recognizes Lucid's innovative method for evaluating the quality of audience attribute data that's so essential to attribution. We award this star for your ongoing efforts to bring greater understanding to buyers of third party audience segments -- an essential piece of the attribution puzzle.

⭐ **Truth{set}** This award recognizes your emerging innovation that has the potential to elevate the quality of data matching … and improve attribution. We're hoping your work produces strong insights and transparency and, as always increased data quality in attribution.

*Category 13.* **Wrestling With New Identity Solutions.**

⭐ **Digitrust IAB, Tradedesk Unified ID, Ad ID consortium, ID5, PubCID and WFA.** Attribution requires device-level data matched from all sources to a single "identity." But as we've discussed, this will be increasingly more challenging. We applaud these groups for

facing this issue and rethinking new identity solutions, from scratch, in order to be privacy compliant.

*And that's all! To recap:*

**Sequent Partners' Stars of Attribution, 2020**

⭐ **People Reshaping Advertising Measurement**



Jonathan Steuer, OMG   Nancy Smith, AP & Helen Katz, ARF Attribution
Oracle, Christine Pierce, Nielsen
Joy Joseph, Group M      Data & Math      Greg Pharo, Coca-Cola
Chris Gable, Diageo
George Ivie, MRC   Pete Doe, Clypd & ATSG
Jane Clarke, CIMM
Dave Szahun, Amex
Lauren Radcliff, E*TRADE      Carlos Santiago, AIMM
David Ernst, A&E      Rex Briggs, Marketing Evolution
Britta Cleveland, Meredith      Bill Harvey, RMT
Lucid, Jolt, Truthset   Abha Dawesar, HSBC   Watson, IBM
Chiarra Ravalli, NYT      George Musi, Publicis & Ashley Chauvin, Citi
David Shim, Placed      Robert Stratton & Dirk Beyer, Neustar

Jeff Greenfield, C3 Metrics      Leslie Wood, NCS
Digitrust IAB, Tradedesk Unified ID, Ad ID consortium, ID5, PubCID, WFA

⭐ **Ideas Reshaping Advertising Measurement**



Right Tool For the Job

Expanding Outcome Variables

Getting A True Read of Advertising

Leading When There's Less Data

Driving Business Process      Hyper-Vigilant About Data Quality

Guiding Us Through The Identity Crisis      Fortitude!

If Not Us, Who? Sharers & Catalysts      Wrestling With New Identity Solutions

Standards & Industry Education      Protecting Our Privacy