

Five things you can do to prepare for a cookieless future.

I know, the 'cookiepocalypse' is scary. You have probably heard about how it is the end of the world, but how every business is fine. You've probably heard about how everyone has a shiny new third-party cookie alternative ID. You are probably wondering what is going on with all the bird-themed acronyms.

Ad-tech loves talking about ad-tech, and not all of this is worth paying attention to. But the signal behind the noise is a shift towards fair, transparent relationships between people and brands, built over time through great experiences.

We need this. People spend more time than ever consuming content, getting information and buying products online. Convenience and privacy are both important and it is not about having one or the other. For most brands, digital advertising is more important than ever to find people who will love their products, and the end of the third-party cookie creates a huge hole in their existing strategies. Adobe found under 2 in 5 brands are ready for a cookieless future.

To help brands get started, we tried to get to what is important. Five simple (but hard) steps you can take to get your business ready for a cookieless future and be ready for the next decade of digital experience. Jargon free, acronym free.

1. Orient your team around the facts and the overarching trends

For the last 26 years, digital advertising technology has been powered by the third-party cookie and the mobile ID. It would be foolish to think that a step change will not have an outsized impact on the way we reach customers across the internet.

The first step to understanding what a world without third-party cookies will look like is to review the facts. We are about to undergo significant change and direct customer relationships will be key to succeeding in the next decade. This is about recalibration, not replacement. Assign a point person or team to help educate and navigate your teams through the uncertain horizon.

2. Audit your technology and make changes accordingly

The next decade will be oriented in first-party relationships, which is a clearer value exchange between you the brand and your consumers. This means you will need fewer intermediaries and more tools to help you build your own relationships.

Some technologies may not be able to perform the same use cases without utilities like third-party cookies and mobile IDs so it is critical you (or your new point team) audit and investigate exactly how your current solutions will make the jump. Understanding how your partner will work without any user-level identifiers or how they are capturing consent are critical questions. If your current partner cannot answer these questions, it is time to start finding someone who can.





3. Make sure you own the customer relationship

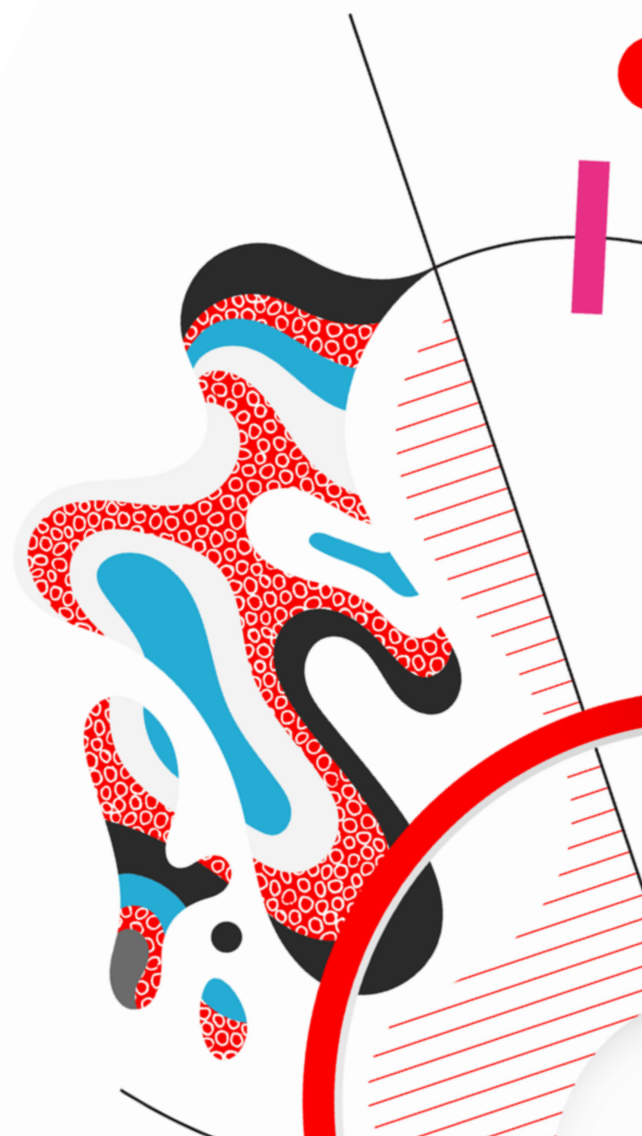
First-party data is the key that will unlock differentiation with your customers and prospects. It will be the foundation of your direct customer relationships that will help you give your customers what they want, when they want. Building a first-party data foundation is a process, but owning the data is worth it.

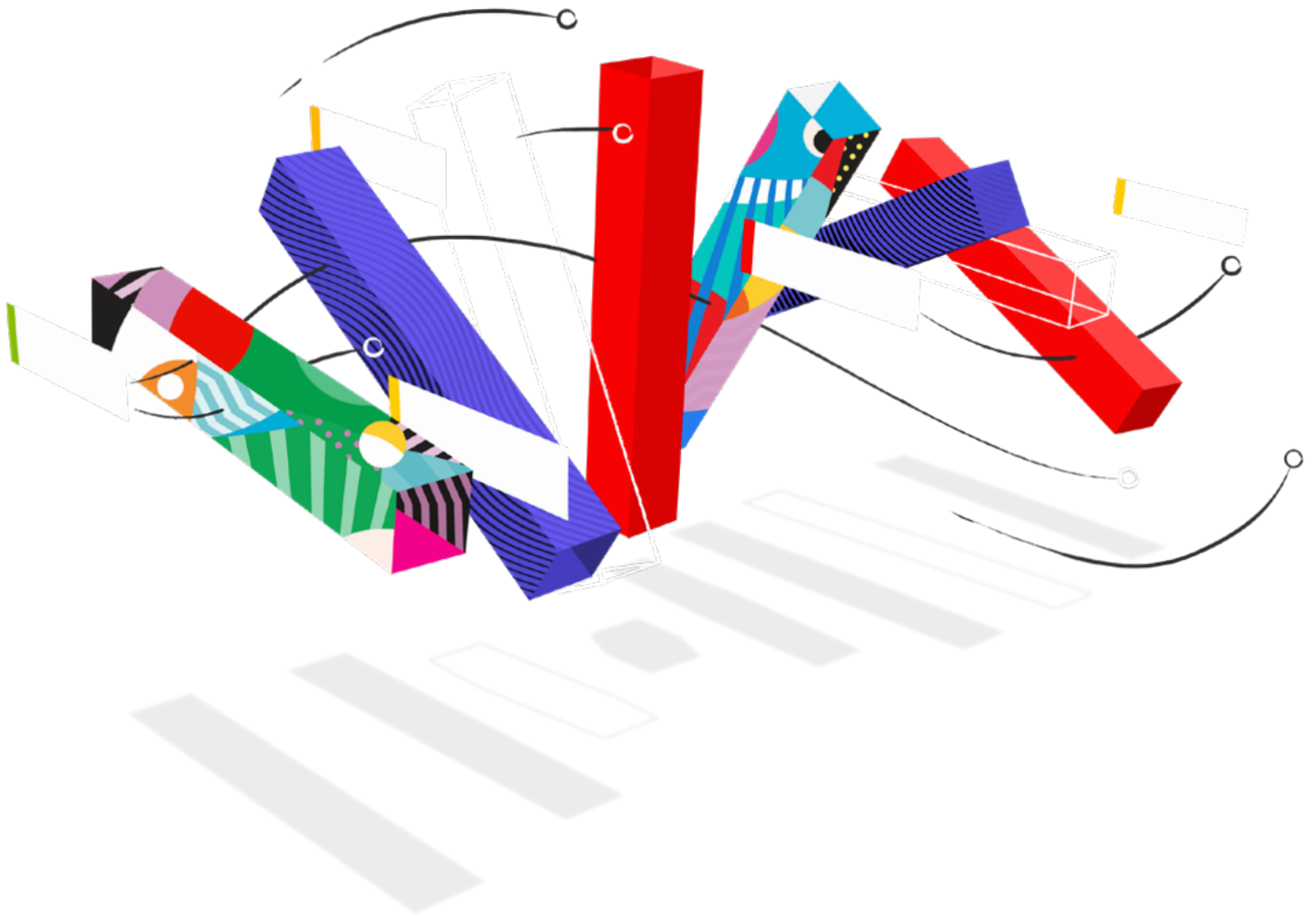
If you want to prioritise first-party data collection, make sure it is being enabled by technology that makes it yours. While many marketplaces and platforms can offer scale and ease, they might not let you own the customer relationship. Make sure that when you talk about first-party data, it is your first-party data.

4. Create innovative experiences to reduce the friction around first-party data collection

In the past, we could buy third-party data which would allow us to quickly understand someone we had never talked to. Building direct customer relationships means asking prospects directly to share something about themselves, in return for personalisation, content or value. Asking for information will inherently create friction, whether we like it or not.

First impressions are vital. Innovating in the way we establish relationships with our customers will be critical to sustaining them long-term. Rather than simply putting up a consent form, thinking about the value that you offer a potential customer to influence their mindset at the point of consent will be of immense strategic value long-term. Offers, discounts, loyalty clubs, free content, collaborative projects or digital exclusives are all great examples of brands doing this today.





5. Hold your paid media accountable to what matters

Third-party cookies enabled us to create a timestamp of a large percentage of ads that a customer saw and figure out which ones were the most influential. In a world without them, it will become much harder for brands to hold their media partners accountable, which means every one of them will be incentivised to take credit for selling your latest product.

Brands must work hard to centralise their available media data alongside their first-party data to create frameworks that will allow them to have an independent view of performance or risk a world where they really do not know which half of their ad spend is working.

By Nick McLachlan, Product Marketing Manager, Advertising Cloud

As Product Marketing Manager for Advertising Cloud, Nick focuses on product launch and industry points of view across the Advertising Cloud set of solutions, including its integrations with Adobe Analytics and Audience Manager.

This journey will be hard and there is still a lot to be figured out. But this cannot be a reason you do not act today. This is an opportunity to rebuild digital in a way that is simpler, more transparent and more human.

Ask questions, call out the jargon and focus on your business, your data, and your customers and you will be on your way to building the trust that will power experiences for the next decade.

Learn more about how to solve for the [new era of cookieless engagement](#).