The Media Buyer's Guide to Mid-Funnel TV Outcomes

Know How Consumer Behaviors Can Be Competitive Advantage



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The Outcomes Era Has Arrived. Now What?



If you work in TV advertising, you've noticed: everyone is suddenly talking about outcomes. Every vendor claims to measure them, and it's genuinely hard to tell what's real from fluff. Mentions of "outcomes" in upfront trade coverage **rose 350% year over year**. More than one in four CTV ad buyers now rank conversions or **sales impact as their top KPI**.

350%

YOY INCREASE IN THE TERM "OUTCOMES"

TV has always carried the biggest budgets and the weakest proof. Now the data finally exists to close that gap and measure what ads actually make people do. The problem is that every vendor is claiming these metrics without doing the actual work:

- Survey companies call brand-lift studies "outcomes"
- Attention vendors are rebranding viewability metrics as "engagement outcomes"
- Audience platforms are bolting on attribution layers and calling it "outcomes"

The label has become so elastic that it means everything and nothing at the same time.

Knowing what kind of outcomes to trust can mean the difference between a record quarter and millions in incremental TV ad impact left on the table.

Rather than map every metric or vendor, this guide walks through the basic requirements of **outcomes you can act on** — incrementality, competitive coverage, and durable signals.

Along the way, we'll share the questions that can help you separate the vendors doing real outcomes measurement from the ones simply borrowing the vocabulary.

What Is An "Outcome," Really?



Many vendors like to define outcomes by their technology stack or infrastructure. They point to layers of identity graphs, data-matching pipelines, and verification tools. But if this machinery is directed at the wrong signals, even the most sophisticated platform will fail the basic purpose of outcomes measurement: Did this ad change what people did? ***And can you use that answer to better invest your next dollar?***

Simply showing that a person who saw your ad also visited a website, or bought a product, is **correlation, not causation**. Instead, a trusted "outcome" must isolate the incremental, ad-driven contribution on consumer behavior.

Having been in the TV outcomes business for over a decade, building this category from its early days, we see three underlying requirements for any metric worth putting your dollars behind. We'll explore each further in the pages ahead:

A signal rooted in actual consumer actions.

Outcomes should reflect what people do, not what they say they'll do. Search queries, site visits, and app downloads are behavioral signals. Surveys about purchase intent or ad recall are stated preferences, and decades of research show that people are unreliable predictors of their own future behavior.

1

A baseline model of expected behavior.

To separate lift from noise, you need to know what consumers would have done in the absence of the ad. That means building sophisticated AI propensity models that account for a wide range of natural demand patterns and situational variables — by geography, daypart, day of week, seasonality, and category dynamics.

2

Competitive context across the full category.

An outcome measured in isolation tells you very little. To know how your ads performed, you need comparative category data that shows how you stack up against every other brand in your space. Because you're only *really* succeeding if you're taking market share from the competition.

3

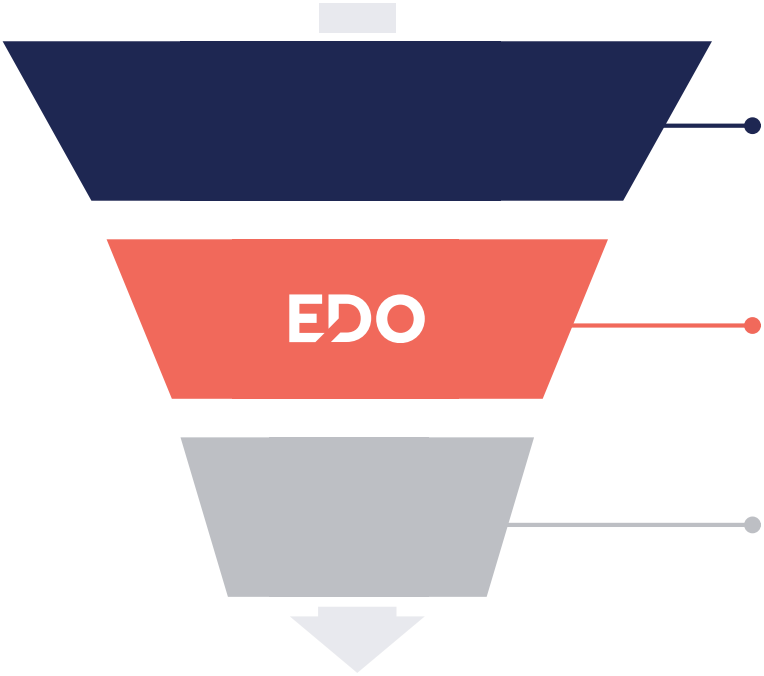
Why Mid-Funnel Is the Sweet Spot.



With so many industry players finally waking up to outcomes, it can be hard for marketers to know where to focus. **Top-funnel metrics tell you about awareness and recall. Bottom-funnel metrics track conversions and sales** — after the chance to optimize has come and gone. But the middle tracks the moment when a consumer moves from awareness to intent, fast enough to action. For TV strategy, this is where predictive power, speed, and clarity converge.

Be more predictive than top-of-funnel.

Brand-lift surveys can tell you what people say they think about your ad. Mid-funnel behaviors — search queries, site visits, app engagement — capture what people actually do after seeing your ad. Cross-industry research has established **a nearly 1:1 relationship** between share of search activity and market share, making it one of the strongest leading indicators you have that the money is working.



BUSINESS OUTCOMES ARE NOT:
Reach, frequency, viewability, attention, or sentiment.

PREDICTIVE OUTCOMES:
Behavioral signals such as search, website visits, or app downloads.

BUSINESS OUTCOMES ARE:
Sales, online orders, store visits, RFIs, or quotes.



Move faster than bottom-of-funnel.

Sales attribution, marketing-mix models, and multi-touch attribution are valuable, but they take weeks or months to deliver results. Mid-funnel engagement data lands within days — fast enough to act on through **creative rotation**, **frequency optimization**, **DMA targeting**, and other **savings and efficiency plays**.

Get cleaner than bottom-of-funnel.

Sales data is inherently noisy. Dozens of variables sit between an ad and a purchase, including pricing, distribution, weather, competitor promotions, and macroeconomic shifts, making it difficult to truly connect bottom-funnel sales data to a single ad airing. Mid-funnel intent signals surface within minutes of an ad airing, which means fewer confounding variables and a cleaner read on whether that specific creative and placement actually worked.



"EDO is the first signal we get during a campaign to know how we're doing … that's crucial for us on TV."

— Senior Marketing Manager
Major Software Brand

Incrementality: Why You Can't Measure Growth Without a Baseline.

How does your model separate incremental lift from baseline behavior?

Incrementality is the **toughest challenge in outcomes measurement**, but the most important. Vendors who skip this step — who simply match ad exposures to downstream activity without a propensity model — mislead clients into thinking their ads are responsible for what is actually regular consumer behavior.

Building that baseline is far more complex than most vendors let on. It needs to account for a wide range of factors and variables, including geography, daypart patterns, day of week, seasonality, competitive activity, and category-specific dynamics. Every product has different demand cycles throughout the year, and even within a single category, average engagement can vary dramatically by market or programming.



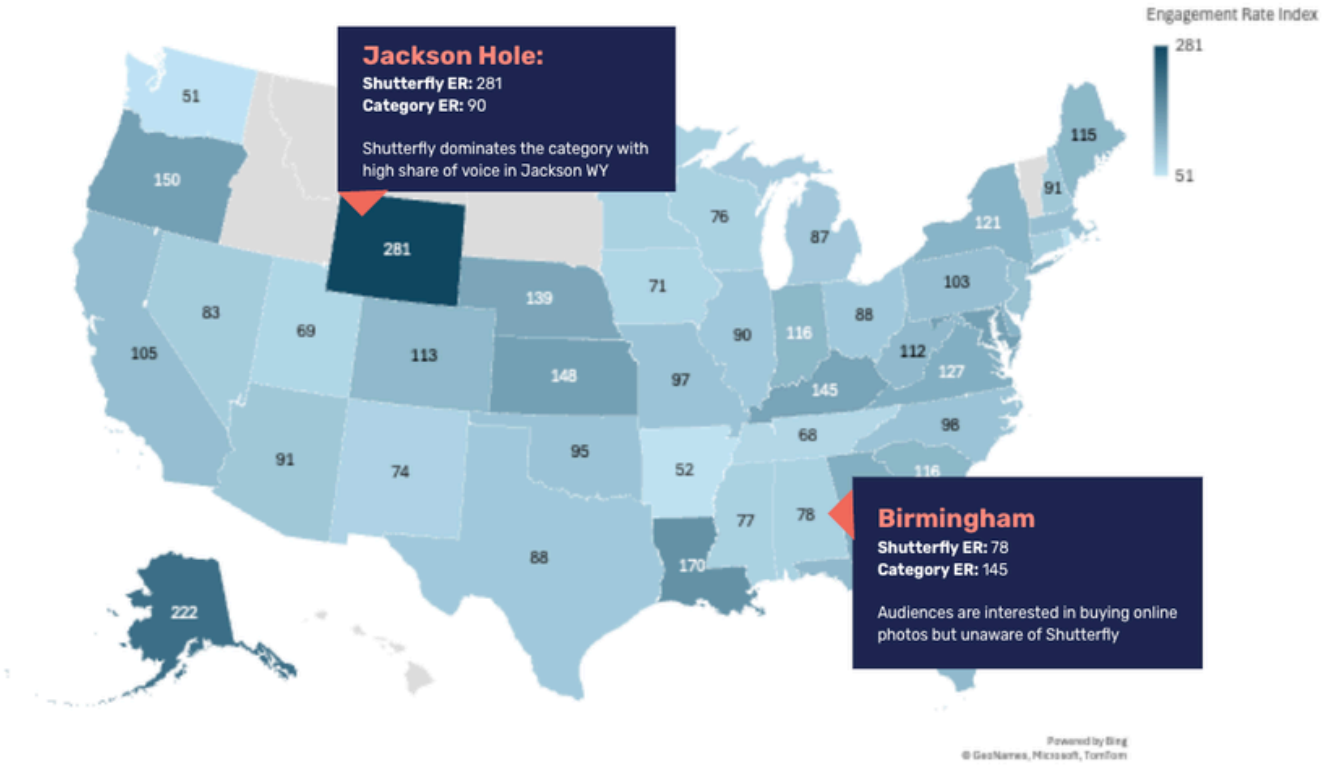
76%

DECREASED CUSTOMER ACQUISITION COSTS

When EDO mapped baseline category engagement for online photo services by DMA, some markets showed high category interest but low brand awareness. **Shutterfly**'s existing targeting had missed this incremental demand entirely. By reallocating spend to those high-potential markets, **Shutterfly cut customer acquisition costs by 76%.**



The best propensity models are built with **Vertical AI** and trained at scale. For example, we've developed our model on **over 11+ years of TV outcomes,** including 128+ trillion ad impressions across every national network and major streaming service. The more airings measured, the more precisely the models distinguish signal from noise — and the more confidently you can act on what they find.



604 MILLION
Ad Airings

128+ TRILLION
Impressions

2.7 MILLION
Creatives

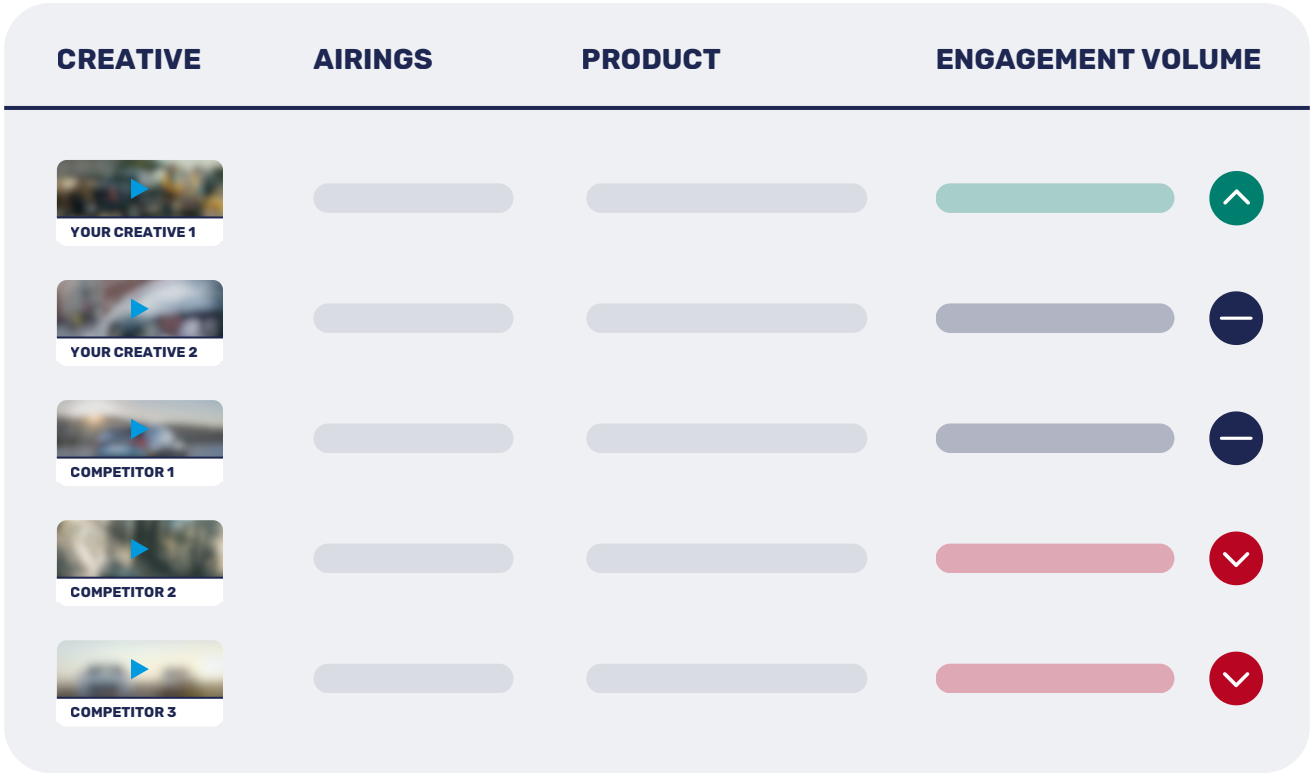
11+ YEARS
of TV Outcomes

Syndicated Data: Never Measure Performance in a Vacuum.

How much of my category does your data actually cover?

When it comes to TV outcomes, you need a scoreboard — not a report card. A campaign engagement number without competitive and category context tells you little about whether you're winning, losing, or holding market share. **That's because success looks radically different across categories.**

A volume of engagement that leads Banking and Finance would barely register in Entertainment. Without category benchmarks, you can't distinguish a breakout result from a middling one — and you can't spot the competitor who's quietly gaining ground.





This is why syndicated, single-source measurement matters. When every brand in your category is measured the same way, comparisons are genuinely apples-to-apples. You can see how your creative performs against direct competitors, which networks and dayparts over-index in your category, and where the white-space opportunities are that competitors haven't spotted.

Every year, we publish in-depth **TV outcomes reports** on major sports leagues, showing how engagement varies by category and across programs or dayparts. Take women's sports, where ads generated 15% more impact than the average primetime broadcast and cable ads. **Auto & Home Insurance brands saw 1.6x the ad impact of their primetime average, Credit Card brands saw 1.4x, and QSR brands 1.2x.**

Auto & Home Insurance



Financial Services



Quick-Service Restaurants



Watch What They Do: Trust Behavioral Data Over Surveys and Attention Scores.

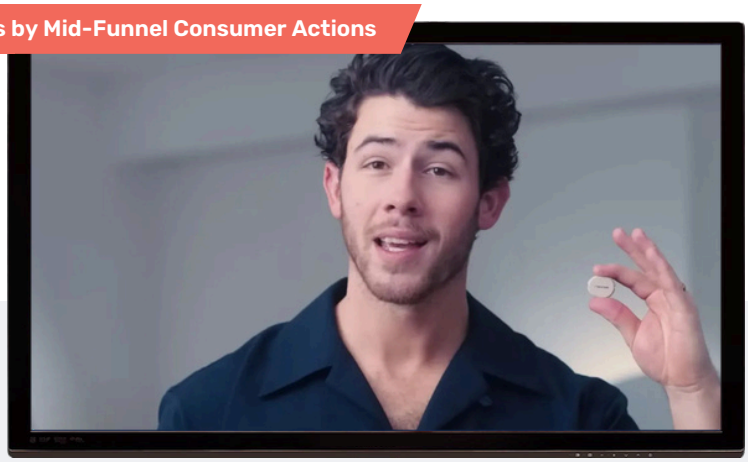
Can I trust this data enough to make big-budget investment decisions?

As outcomes become table stakes, **TV measurement vendors have rushed to relabel what they've sold for decades**, moving attention metrics and survey-based brand lift under the "outcomes" umbrella. Neither belongs there, and marketers who trust their budget to these weaker signals may already be losing market share.

Attention measures exposure, not response.

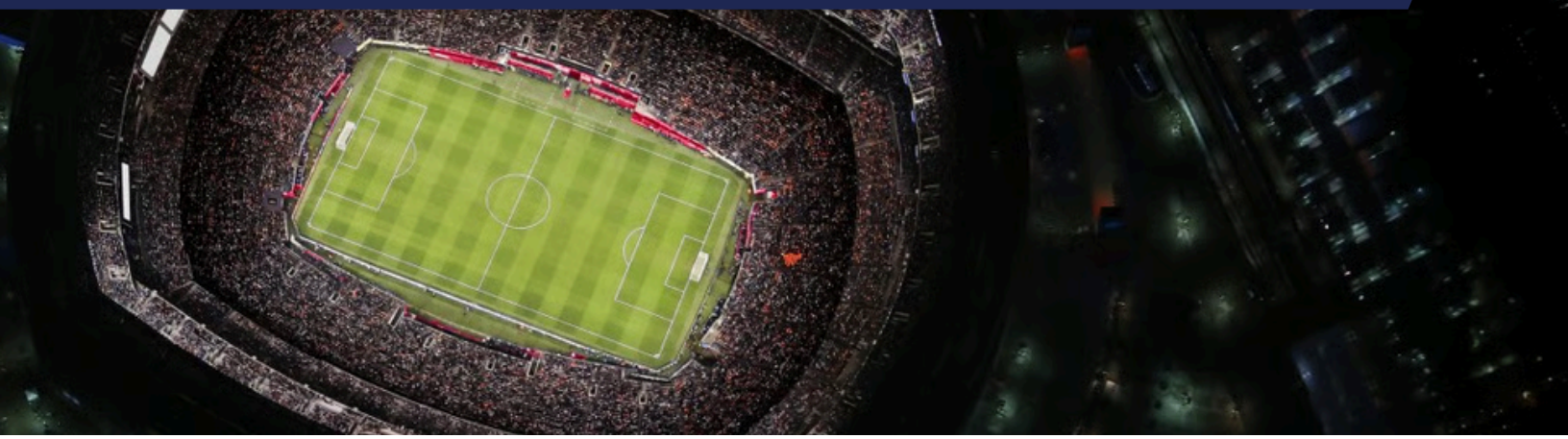
TV attention scores **tend to be uniformly high**, from live sports to cable news, and daytime to primetime. This provides little variance to act on — even if you believed there was value in measuring how many people merely looked at a TV ad. Attention makes sense for programmatic buyers who need a basic quality signal for unknown placements, but for TV advertisers who know where their ads ran and need to understand what consumers did next, it answers the wrong question.

Most Effective Dayparts by Mid-Funnel Consumer Actions



AM						PM
	Early Morning	Morning Daytime	Afternoon Daytime	Early Fringe	Primetime	Late Fringe
	-29%	+16%	+17%	+10%	+11%	-31%

***READ AS:** Diabetes ads during this daypart were **x%** more/less engaging than the average diabetes ad.*



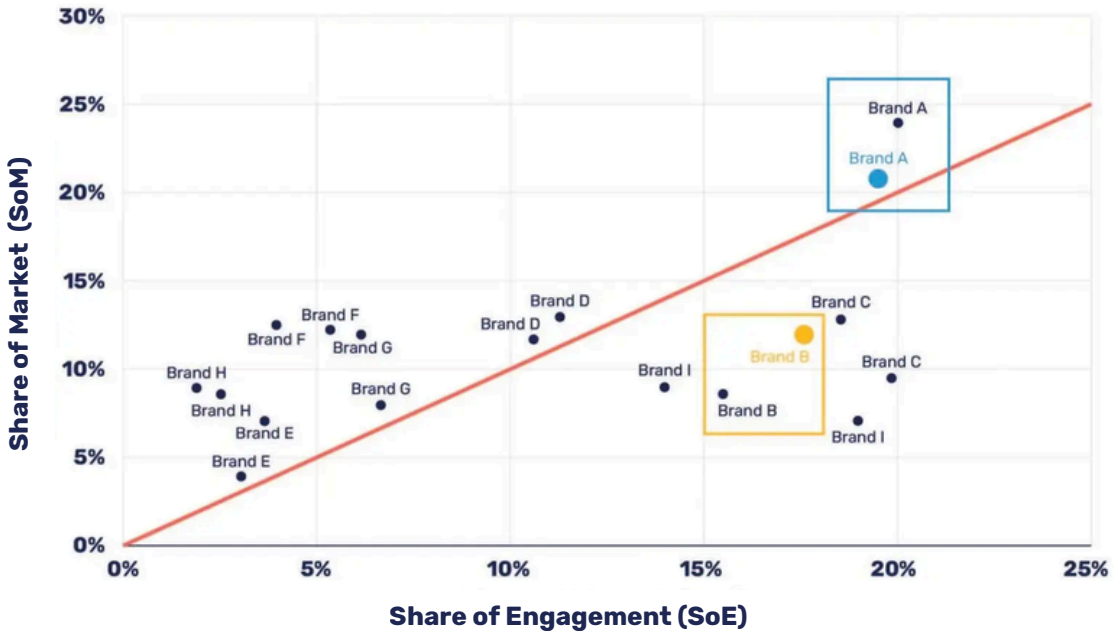
Surveys measure stated preferences, not actual behavior.

Brand-lift studies ask people whether they recall an ad and how they feel about the brand afterward. But the gap between stated preference and actual behavior is **well-documented across decades of research**. People overestimate their likelihood of purchasing, underestimate the influence of advertising, and give answers that reflect social desirability rather than genuine intent. Survey-based metrics are also slow and expensive, yet vendors are rebranding recognition, likeability, and purchase intent as "outcomes" rather than what they are: leading indicators with significant error margins.

Measure what people do.

The alternative is straightforward: measure what people do, especially around the middle of the funnel. Search queries, site visits, app engagement are observable behaviors that reflect real consumer intent. They arrive within days, not weeks. They scale across every brand in a category without requiring panel recruitment. And they have consistently proven **more predictive of future sales** than what consumers report in a survey.

Engagement Drives Outcomes



Zero Click is Here: Build on a Signal That's Growing, Not Shrinking.

What happens to your measurement as zero-click search grows?

Much of the outcomes industry was built on the **tracking pixel**. For decades, it's been the connective tissue between advertising and digital response; an ad airs, a consumer visits a website, a pixel fires, and the visit is attributed to the campaign. That approach worked great — until recent waves of privacy regulations and now AI search have put it in structural decline.

Zero-click search is shrinking the pixel's data pool.

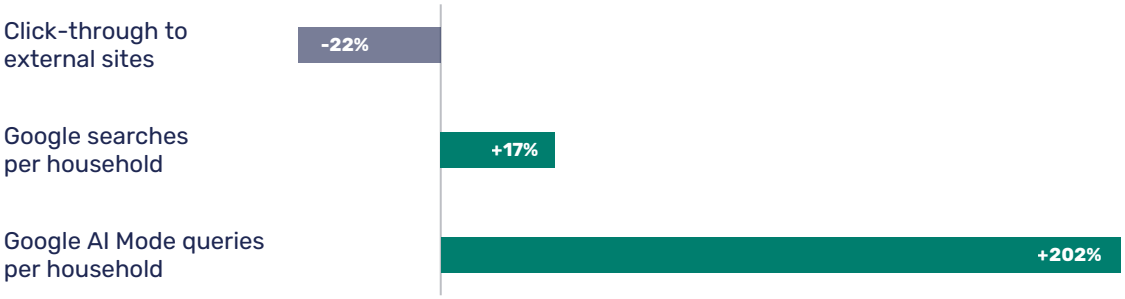
When a consumer types a query into Google and gets an AI-generated overview, they increasingly get their answer without ever clicking through to a website. EDO research found that the likelihood of a Google search leading to an external site visit fell 22% between June 2025 and March 2026 — and that decline is accelerating as AI overviews and chatbot interfaces absorb more queries.

The query is a durable signal that keeps growing.

While clicks are fading, the intent signal in search is only getting more powerful. When a consumer types a brand name, a product category, or a question about something they just saw on TV, we can track that intent — and act on it. EDO research found that Google searches per household rose 17% since June 2025, and AI Mode queries per household climbed 202% over the same period.

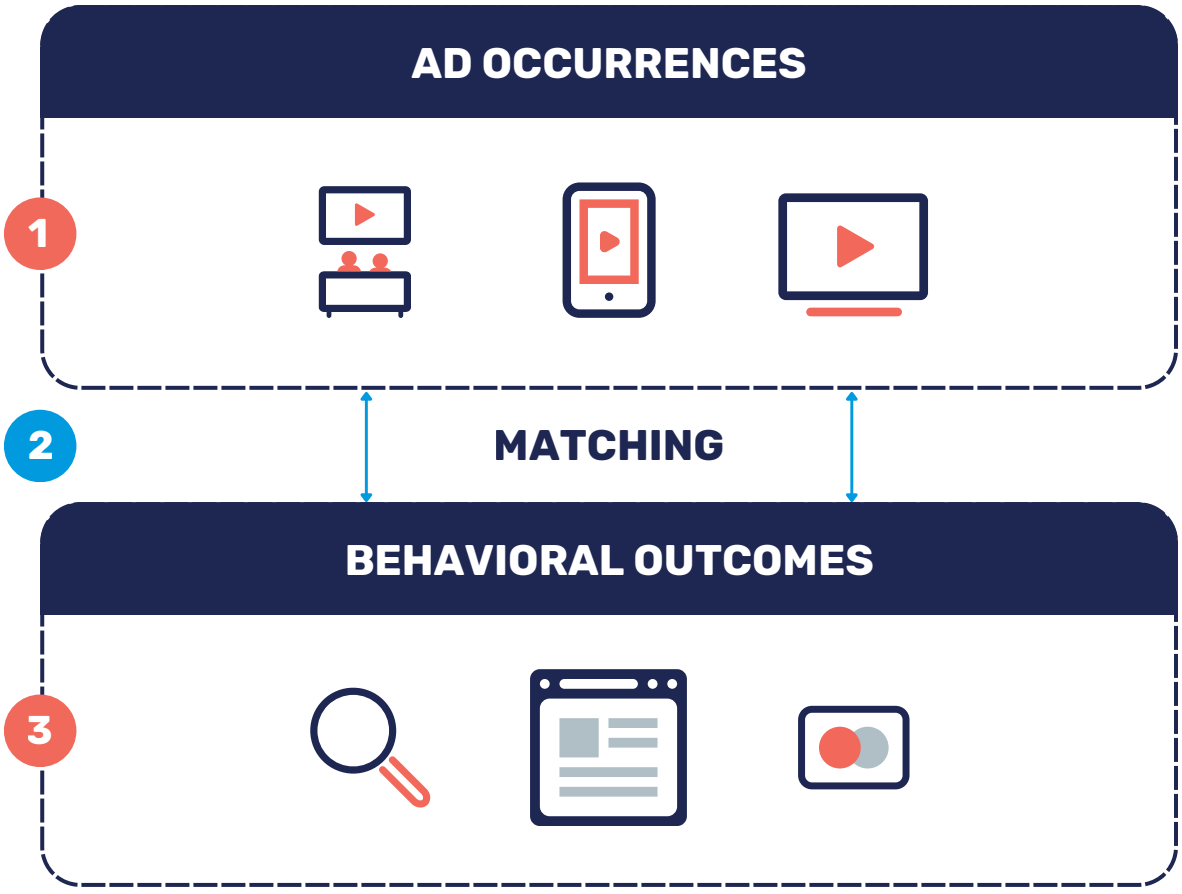
202%
INCREASED AI MODE QUERIES PER HOUSEHOLD

Percentage change: June 2025 - March 2026





EDO measures ad-driven consumer engagement across both traditional search and AI interfaces, capturing the intent signal regardless of where or how the consumer searches. As the rest of the industry watches its core measurement signal shrink, query-based intent measurement is becoming more robust and actionable, not less.



Investment-Grade Decisions Require Seamless Activation.



Who are the people working on my business, and what do they offer?

From streaming fragmentation to unexpected tariffs, media leaders are constantly fielding new questions from their key stakeholders. Your team wants to know whether to renew a sponsorship. Finance wants to see the incremental ROI of the last campaign. The CMO needs competitive context for a board presentation by Friday. These questions don't arrive on a set schedule, and they rarely map neatly onto a dashboard tab.

While this guide has focused on the methodology behind trusted outcomes data, this intelligence only becomes useful when you turn it into decisions. **Here's why leading brands, agencies, networks, and streamers have trusted EDO with their Convergent TV ad measurement for over a decade:**

Strategic depth, not ticket queues.

From day one, EDO's media analysts know your category, campaigns, and competitive landscape. That's because TV outcomes are our entire business. Other data partners have bolted outcomes onto a sprawling stack of ad serving, targeting, and currency products, with account teams juggling a dozen product lines.

Our TV outcomes experts are laser-focused on helping clients understand what drives consumer action and how they can optimize.

> **"EDO's team partners with us on more than just the data — they dig in, draft the narrative, and help us find the story."**
>
> ***— Campaign Media Director***
> *Major Entertainment Brand*



Platform integration and activation.

Outcomes data that lives in a standalone dashboard is a report, not infrastructure. At EDO, data flows directly into your buying platforms, publisher systems, and planning tools, including **programmatic DSPs** and **network partners**. That way, mid-funnel engagement signals can inform bidding, optimization, and planning without a separate workflow or manual export.

> ***"We've watched EDO go from a 'best kept secret' to an industry standard. Seeing major networks and streamers put EDO front and center in their own pitches says everything about staying power."***
>
> ***— Chief Analytics & Data Officer***
> Media Agency

Automation and always-on measurement.

Measurement should help you actively make your media work harder, not just tell you what happened. Across streaming CTV, live sports, and year-round sponsorships, EDO delivers data that can keep up with increasingly speedy optimization cycles. Our **always-on delivery** monitors every airing automatically and feeds outcomes to your platforms in real time — with no manual flight setup every time a campaign launches.

> ***"My leadership asks me TV performance questions every week, and EDO's reports consistently have the answer. It almost feels like an unfair advantage next to teams working off slower, less reliable data."***
>
> ***— Marketing Manager***
> ***Leading Consumer App Brand***



Accessibility beyond the power user.

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> ***"ChatEDO gets us to an answer so much faster. Most hand us a dashboard and leave us to go it alone — EDO helps us figure out where to go."***
>
> ***— Director of Analytics,***
> *Media Agency*

> ***"EDO helps us optimize our TV campaigns to increase consumer engagement across the audience spectrum, delivering a deeper understanding of what drives awareness and action... EDO plays an integral role in how we can make business decisions based on meaningful and timely data."***
>
> ***— Chief Marketing Officer***
> *Financial Services Brand*

Stop Guessing, Start Optimizing.



For most of TV's history, measurement stopped at "did the ad air?" and "did anyone see it?" More recently, vendors have tried to assess ad impact through misleading survey data or brand-lift studies. Mid-funnel signals finally answer the most important question: did my ad influence consumer behavior? By tracking behavior close to the ad, we can see incremental engagement with minimal noise, compare it across any brand, and surface insights fast enough to act on and optimize.

Outcomes measurement is increasingly table stakes for Convergent TV. Every vendor claims to offer it. The next step is to distinguish those truly predictive metrics from rebranded guesswork that leads to muddled analysis and poor decisions. Advertisers who apply the lessons from this guide will be on the path to making TV as efficient and measurable as search or social, turbocharging growth for years to come.

See trusted outcomes in action.

Discover how EDO connects your Convergent TV airings to the consumer behaviors most predictive of future sales — with the competitive, category, and historical context to invest with confidence.

QUESTIONS? Request a demo @ edo.com/meet



EDO
Know What Works

EDO is the TV outcomes company. Our leading measurement platform connects Convergent TV airings to the ad-driven consumer behaviors most predictive of future sales. Leading brands, agencies, networks, streamers, and studios trust EDO to know what works.

Five Questions to Ask Any Outcomes Vendor.



When it comes to actionable TV outcomes, media investment leaders are surrounded by vague promises and buzzwords galore. Below we've distilled the basic questions that any trusted outcomes vendor should be able to answer. These are the ones worth drilling into in any vendor meeting, RFP evaluation, or internal conversation about your measurement strategy.

1 How does your model separate incremental lift from baseline behavior?

Real outcomes measurement isolates the ad's causal impact from baseline consumer behavior. Many models count every engagement that follows an ad exposure, including activity that would have happened without it. The result is an inflated number with unreliable intent. If the vendor can't walk you through their propensity model — how they account for geographic, temporal, seasonal, and category variation — they're showing you correlation, not causation.

2 How much of my category does your data actually cover?

If your vendor only sees the brands that share first-party data with their platform, you have no real competitive benchmarks and a lack of full category context. And coverage is only half the question. Ask whether every brand in the dataset is measured using a single, consistent methodology, or if the vendor is stitching together different measurement approaches to fill gaps. If they won't share what goes into their norms, the benchmarks are black boxes.

3 Can I trust this data enough to make big-budget investment decisions?

This is the ultimate litmus test. If the data isn't trusted enough to move dollars — to shift spend from one network to another, to kill an underperforming creative, to defend a sponsorship renewal in a board meeting — it's not investment-grade. It's a reporting exercise.

4 What happens to your measurement as zero-click search grows?

Website visitation is in structural decline. Query-based intent signals are growing. Ask your vendor which one their measurement depends on — and what their plan is as AI continues to reshape how consumers search.

5 Who are the people working on my business, and what do they offer?

The difference between a measurement vendor and a measurement partner is whether someone picks up the phone with something useful when the stakes are high. Ask for the names. Ask what they delivered last quarter that wasn't on a dashboard.

Ready to know your brand's outcomes? Book time @ edo.com/meet

EDO
Know What Works

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