OMNICHANNEL

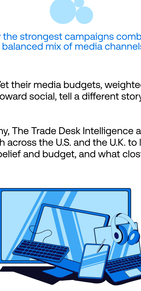
The Takeaway

Quick insights to drive your business forward

Better media decisions start with balance

Marketers have never known more about how audiences engage with media.

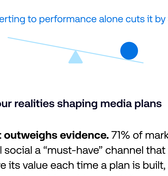
Most advertisers also know what works:



say the strongest campaigns combine a balanced mix of media channels.[1]

Yet their media budgets, weighted toward social, tell a different story.

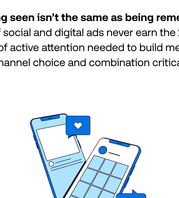
To understand why, The Trade Desk Intelligence and PA Consulting conducted research across the U.S. and the U.K. to learn what's behind the gap between belief and budget, and what closing it could unlock.



According to our study, no single channel does it alone.

Media plans that balance channels earn more attention, build deeper brand connections, and create stronger memory.[1]

And balancing performance with brand-building can lift median revenue ROI by



while reverting to performance alone cuts it by 40%.[2]



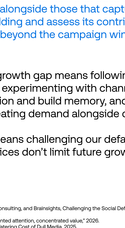
Four realities shaping media plans

01 **Default outweighs evidence.** 71% of marketers surveyed call social a "must-have" channel that doesn't need to prove its value each time a plan is built, with 1 in 4 saying they over-invest in paid social. When every channel has to earn its place, the whole plan gets stronger.

02 **Budgets are stuck in the feed.** Consumers are not. 83% of consumers' digital time is spent outside social media, yet nearly 40% of global digital ad spend goes to social.[3]

03 **Immediacy tips the scale.** 70% say some channels are underfunded because their value builds over time rather than delivering immediate results. The appetite for change is already there.

04 **Being seen isn't the same as being remembered.** 85% of social and digital ads never earn the 2.5 seconds of active attention needed to build memory, making channel choice and combination critical.[4]



Strategies combining social with other connected channels help win results

Our research backs this up: A second social exposure lifts attention by just 1%, while adding a connected channel lifts attention by 109%.

In fact, balanced media plans deliver:

1.4x

greater attention, helping brands capture more meaningful audience engagement.

2.3x

stronger brand connection, demonstrating the potential for deeper consumer relationships.

1.5x

stronger brand memorability, boosting brand recall.

What this means for you

- **Challenge your defaults.** Question which channels get an automatic place on your media plan, and whether the evidence justifies it. Make every channel, social included, earn its role each time a media plan is built.
- **Build a mix that creates demand and captures it.** Look beyond repeated exposure within a single channel. Combine social with connected channels to earn more attention, strengthen brand connections, and build memory.
- **Experiment and learn.** Test different channel combinations to understand what drives greater attention, stronger brand connections, and better business results. Use those findings to guide future investment.
- **Measure the full contribution.** Look beyond the last click so channels that build demand get credit alongside those that capture it. Fund brand-building and assess its contribution over time, beyond the campaign window.

Bridging the growth gap means following consumers beyond the feed, experimenting with channel combinations that earn attention and build memory, and measuring the value of creating demand alongside capturing it.

Most of all, it means challenging our defaults, so familiar choices don't limit future growth.

Sources:
1. The Trade Desk Intelligence, PA Consulting, and Brainsights, Challenging the Social Default study, U.K. and U.S., August 2026.
2. WARC, The Multiplier Effect, 2025.
3. WARC, Media, Slightlies "Fragmented attention, concentrated value," 2026.
4. Amplified Intelligence, The Eye-Watering Cost of Dull Media, 2025.