

# MEASURING DOORDASH ADVERTISING RESULTS IN MARKETING MIX MODELS

Evidence from a Cross-Brand  
Analysis of Six QSR Advertisers



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# THE MEASUREMENT CHALLENGE

Retail media has become one of the fastest-growing segments of digital advertising, requiring Marketing Mix Models (MMM) to accurately measure media that influences consumers at the point of purchase rather than earlier in the purchase journey.

DoorDash in-app advertising differs fundamentally from traditional media channels. While television, online video, and display advertising are typically modeled using impressions, GRPs, or spend, DoorDash campaigns are optimized to drive immediate transactions. As a result, modeling choices that may be relatively minor for awareness-oriented media, such as KPI selection, ad-stock assumptions, and statistical prior specification, can materially influence estimates of DoorDash's incremental contribution and return on investment.

This white paper presents evidence-based recommendations for representing DoorDash advertising within Marketing Mix Models.

## RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Ipsos MMA evaluated alternative MMM specifications across six national and regional Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) advertisers investing in DoorDash advertising. Using a consistent modeling framework, the study isolated the impact of three core modeling decisions:

- Selection of the DoorDash activity metric (Campaign Orders, Campaign Sales, Campaign Spend, Impressions, or Clicks)
- Selection of ad-stock and response curve assumptions
- Calibration of Statistical priors using independent incrementality studies

Each specification was evaluated using common measures of model fit, predictive accuracy, parameter stability, statistical significance, cross-brand consistency, and alignment with experimentally observed incremental lift.



# THE KEY FINDINGS

## CAMPAIGN ORDERS ARE THE PREFERRED MMM INPUT

Campaign Orders consistently produced the strongest combination of explanatory power, coefficient stability, and business interpretability across advertisers.

While Campaign Sales and Campaign Spend also performed well, Orders most directly reflect DoorDash's conversion objective while avoiding endogeneity effects of using Sales as an independent variable to predict a Sales dependent variable as well as the auction effects that can complicate interpretation of spend-based measures.

Models using impressions or clicks consistently underrepresented DoorDash's contribution, indicating that exposure-based metrics are generally less appropriate for conversion-oriented retail media.

## EXPERIMENT-INFORMED STATISTICAL PRIORS IMPROVE MODEL STABILITY

Statistical priors calibrated using high-quality incrementality experiments consistently produced more stable and interpretable estimates than weak or non-informative priors.

Incorporating experimental evidence improved alignment between MMM estimates and independently measured business outcomes while reducing parameter volatility for a channel that is often highly correlated with underlying consumer demand.

## DOORDASH IN-APP ADVERTISING BEHAVES LIKE A LOWER-FUNNEL PERFORMANCE CHANNEL

DoorDash In-App advertising exhibited a response pattern distinct from traditional awareness media.

Across advertisers, most advertising impact occurred during the week of exposure, with modest residual effects extending into the following week(s). Models assuming long carryover generally performed worse and aligned less closely with observed business outcomes. This is likely a byproduct of the nature of the DoorDash platform, where consumers are highly engaged and very close to the point of conversion when they are on the platform. Accordingly, a large majority of conversions driven by DoorDash advertising occurred within a short period of time after exposure.

The analysis also found limited evidence of strong diminishing returns within observed investment ranges, suggesting that practitioners should test near-linear response curves before imposing aggressive saturation assumptions.



# RECOMMENDED MMM FRAMEWORK

Based on these findings, Ipsos MMA recommends the following framework for modeling DoorDash advertising:

- Model DoorDash as a standalone media channel rather than combining it with other third-party delivery platforms.
- Separate paid DoorDash advertising from organic marketplace activity, combining Sponsored Listings and Promotions into a single paid variable where appropriate.
- Ideally, the MMM would be built at the store-level to maximize measurement sensitivity and model robustness, though market-level modeling is also a viable option. National models should only be used as a last resort, as they produce lift estimates with much wider confidence intervals.
- Use Campaign Orders as the preferred modeling KPI; use Campaign Spend only when order-level data are unavailable.
- Apply short-duration ad-stock assumptions that reflect DoorDash's lower-funnel response dynamics.
- Calibrate statistical priors using high-quality incrementality studies whenever available.
- Allow each media channel within the MMM to use the activity metric that best represents its role in influencing consumer behavior, rather than enforcing a single KPI across all channels. There is no cost to the MMM provider to do this; rather, implementation depends on the individual modeler's knowledge and experience.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Retail media is reshaping how brands influence purchasing decisions, but many Marketing Mix Models continue to rely on assumptions developed for awareness-oriented media.

This research demonstrates that aligning model specifications with the behavioral characteristics of conversion-focused retail media produces more stable, interpretable, and decision-ready results.

Although this study focuses on DoorDash advertising across six QSR advertisers, the broader implication extends to retail media measurement as a whole: channel-specific modeling choices matter. As retail media investment continues to grow, adopting standardized, evidence-based modeling practices will improve measurement consistency, strengthen confidence in media investment decisions, and better align Marketing Mix Modeling with modern causal measurement approaches.

# RESEARCH DESIGN

## DOORDASH MMM BEST PRACTICES AT-A-GLANCE

| Modeling Component | Recommended Practice                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Channel Structure  | Model DoorDash separately; distinguish paid and organic activity                                                                       |
| Primary KPI        | Campaign Orders                                                                                                                        |
| Secondary KPI      | Campaign Spend (when Orders are unavailable)                                                                                           |
| Ad-stock           | Short, low-but-nonzero carryover with most impact in the current week                                                                  |
| Response Curve     | Test modest saturation before imposing more aggressive saturation assumptions                                                          |
| Statistical Priors | Calibrate using high-quality incrementality experiments                                                                                |
| Overall Principle  | Match each media channel's modeling inputs to its role in the consumer journey rather than applying a single approach across all media |

## STUDY OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research was to identify evidence-based best practices for representing DoorDash advertising in Marketing Mix Models (MMM). Rather than evaluating DoorDash as a media channel in general, the study focused on three modeling decisions that consistently influence estimates of media effectiveness:

- The KPI used to represent DoorDash advertising
- The assumptions governing advertising carryover and response
- The specification of Statistical priors

Each was evaluated independently while holding the underlying model architecture constant.

## STUDY DESIGN

Ipsos MMA analyzed DoorDash advertising across six Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) advertisers representing a range of investment levels, campaign strategies, and marketplace conditions.

For each advertiser, multiple Marketing Mix Models were estimated using identical datasets, control variables, and estimation procedures. Individual model specifications differed only in the parameter being evaluated, allowing the impact of each modeling decision to be isolated without introducing other sources of variation. This controlled design enabled consistent comparisons across advertisers while minimizing confounding effects.

# STUDY DESIGN OVERVIEW

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Brands                    | Six national & regional QSR brands                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Study Period              | Models span periods ranging from July 2023 to June 2025                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Data Periodicity          | Weekly (104 weeks)                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Dependent Variable        | Dollar Sales                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Control Factors           | DoorDash Advertising, DoorDash Organic Sales, Other 3PD Advertising, non-DoorDash Paid/Owned/Earned Media, LTOs, Price, Store Status, Menu Assortment, QSR category trend, Seasonality, Weather, Macro-economy, Competition |
| DoorDash KPIs Tested      | Orders, Sales, Spend, Clicks, Impressions                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Statistical Priors        | Model tests with vs. without statistical priors                                                                                                                                                                             |
| DoorDash Ad-stock Testing | Low to high diminishing returns (0% to 70% saturated)<br>Low to high media retention (0-6 weeks)                                                                                                                            |



## MODEL EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Each alternative specification was evaluated using the same set of statistical and business criteria.

## STATISTICAL PERFORMANCE

Models were assessed using standard measures of:

- Overall model fit
- Predictive accuracy
- Parameter stability
- Statistical significance
- Cross-validation performance



## BUSINESS VALIDITY

Because statistically equivalent models can produce very different business conclusions, each specification was also evaluated for:

- Consistency across advertisers
- Interpretability of media contribution
- Alignment with independent incrementality studies
- Stability of estimated return on investment

This dual evaluation framework ensured that recommendations reflected both statistical performance and practical decision-making value.

## MODEL EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

### Statistical Performance

- Model Fit – R2 and MAPE
- Predictive Accuracy – Hold-out MAPE
- Statistical Significance
- Parameter Stability
- Cross-validation Performance

### Business Validity

- Results consistency across advertisers
- Interpretability of media contribution
- Alignment with independent lift studies
- Stability of estimated ROI



# THREE SEQUENTIAL EVALUATIONS

## 1. KPI SELECTION

The first analysis compared alternative representations of DoorDash advertising, including Campaign Orders, Campaign Sales, Campaign Spend, Impressions, and Clicks. The objective was to determine which activity metric most accurately represents the incremental impact of DoorDash advertising within an MMM.

## 2. RESPONSE DYNAMICS

Using the preferred KPI identified in the first analysis, the second evaluation tested alternative assumptions regarding advertising carryover and response. Models compared different ad-stock specifications and response curve shapes to determine how long DoorDash advertising continues to influence consumer behavior and whether incremental returns diminish within observed investment levels.

## 3. STATISTICAL PRIOR CALIBRATION

The final analysis evaluated whether Statistical priors informed by independent incrementality experiments improve MMM performance. Weakly informative, neutral, and experiment-informed priors were compared while holding all other modeling decisions constant.

# INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The objective of this study was not to identify a single universal specification applicable to every advertiser. Differences in brand size, customer behavior, competitive intensity, and campaign strategy naturally lead to some variation across models.

Instead, the analysis sought to identify modeling choices that consistently resulted in more accurate measurement across advertisers and therefore provide evidence-based defaults for representing DoorDash advertising within Marketing Mix Models.

The recommendations presented throughout this paper should be viewed as informed starting points that can be refined using advertiser-specific data rather than rigid modeling standards.

# RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The remainder of this paper follows the same progression as the study itself:

1. Identify the optimal KPI for representing DoorDash advertising.
2. Determine advertising response dynamics through ad-stock and response curve testing.
3. Evaluate Statistical priors using independent incrementality evidence.
4. Integrate these findings into a practical modeling framework for DoorDash advertising.

Together, these analyses establish an evidence-based approach for improving the accuracy, consistency, and interpretability of DoorDash measurement within enterprise Marketing Mix Models.



# THREE EVIDENCE-BASED FINDINGS

The study identified three modeling decisions that consistently influenced how DoorDash advertising was measured within Marketing Mix Models. Across six QSR advertisers, these decisions affected model stability, attribution, and alignment with independent incrementality evidence.

Although each decision was evaluated independently, the findings are complementary. Together they provide an evidence-based framework for representing DoorDash advertising in MMMs.

The analyses addressed three questions:

1. Which KPI best represents DoorDash advertising?
2. What advertising response dynamics most accurately reflect consumer behavior?
3. Can Statistical priors informed by incrementality studies improve MMM performance?

The following sections summarize the evidence supporting each recommendation.





# FINDING 1: CAMPAIGN ORDERS ARE THE PREFERRED KPI



## RESEARCH QUESTION

Which activity metric provides the most accurate representation of DoorDash advertising within a Marketing Mix Model?

## WHAT WE TESTED

Five commonly available campaign metrics were evaluated while holding all other model specifications constant:

- Campaign Orders
- Campaign Sales
- Campaign Spend
- Campaign Impressions
- Campaign Clicks

Each metric was assessed using the evaluation framework described in Section 2, including statistical performance, parameter stability, cross-brand consistency, business interpretability, and alignment with independent incrementality evidence.

## WHAT WE FOUND

Across all six advertisers, Campaign Orders consistently produced the strongest overall performance. Compared with alternative KPIs, Orders generated:

- Stronger explanatory power
- More stable coefficient estimates
- Better agreement across advertisers
- Clearer business interpretation
- Closer alignment with observed incremental performance

Campaign Spend generally performed better than exposure-based metrics and represents a practical alternative when order-level campaign data are unavailable.

Campaign Sales also produced competitive statistical performance but introduced additional variation associated with pricing, promotional intensity, fees, and average order value. While appropriate for some analytical applications, sales are not suited as the primary modeling variable in cases where this metric is also the dependent variable.

Impressions and Clicks consistently produced weaker model performance, suggesting that exposure-based metrics do not adequately capture the transactional nature of DoorDash in-app advertising.

## MODEL EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

6-Brand Average Results by KPI

| KPI         | R2  | % Contribution to Sales | iROAS  |
|-------------|-----|-------------------------|--------|
| Orders      | 83% | 1.01%                   | \$1.72 |
| Spend       | 83% | 1.03%                   | \$2.02 |
| Clicks      | 80% | 0.93%                   | \$1.32 |
| Impressions | 81% | 0.93%                   | \$1.58 |



## WHY ORDERS PERFORM BETTER

The findings reflect the role DoorDash advertising plays within the consumer journey.

Unlike awareness media, DoorDash campaigns are optimized to generate transactions from consumers who are already shopping within the marketplace. Campaign Orders therefore represent the platform's primary optimization objective and most directly capture the incremental behavior the model seeks to explain.

Because Orders measure completed customer actions rather than advertising exposure, they provide a more direct signal of advertising effectiveness. Campaign Spend also performed well, as would be expected given its high correlation with Orders due to the CPA model. However, Spend may also be influenced by pricing and auction dynamics and therefore should be used as an alternate KPI when Orders data are not available for use in modeling.

While Campaign Orders is an outcome variable that is partly driven by the same underlying demand that drives brand sales and could alone explain why Orders/Sales/Spend outperform Impressions/Clicks, this concern is mitigated because:

1. Organic marketplace demand is controlled for separately in the model
2. Experiment-calibrated statistical priors discipline the coefficient
3. Alignment with independent incrementality results validates that estimates are not correlation artifacts.

## BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION

When order-level campaign data are available, Campaign Orders should be used as the primary activity metric for DoorDash advertising within Marketing Mix Models.

When orders are unavailable:

| Priority | Recommended KPI      |
|----------|----------------------|
| 1        | Campaign Orders      |
| 2        | Campaign Spend       |
| 3        | Campaign Impressions |
| 4        | Campaign Clicks      |

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

For conversion-oriented retail media, selecting the appropriate KPI is one of the most important modeling decisions.

Across six advertisers, Campaign Orders consistently provided the most reliable representation of DoorDash advertising and should serve as the default input for Marketing Mix Models.



# FINDING 2: DOORDASH EXHIBITS SHORT- DURATION ADVERTISING EFFECTS



## RESEARCH QUESTION

What advertising response dynamics best represent DoorDash advertising within a Marketing Mix Model?

## WHAT WE TESTED

Using Campaign Orders as the modeling input, alternative ad-stock specifications and response curve assumptions were evaluated while keeping all other model components unchanged.

The analysis compared models representing:

- Minimal carryover
- Short carryover
- Moderate carryover
- Extended carryover

Response curve specifications were also evaluated to determine whether DoorDash advertising exhibited meaningful saturation within observed investment levels.

## WHAT WE FOUND

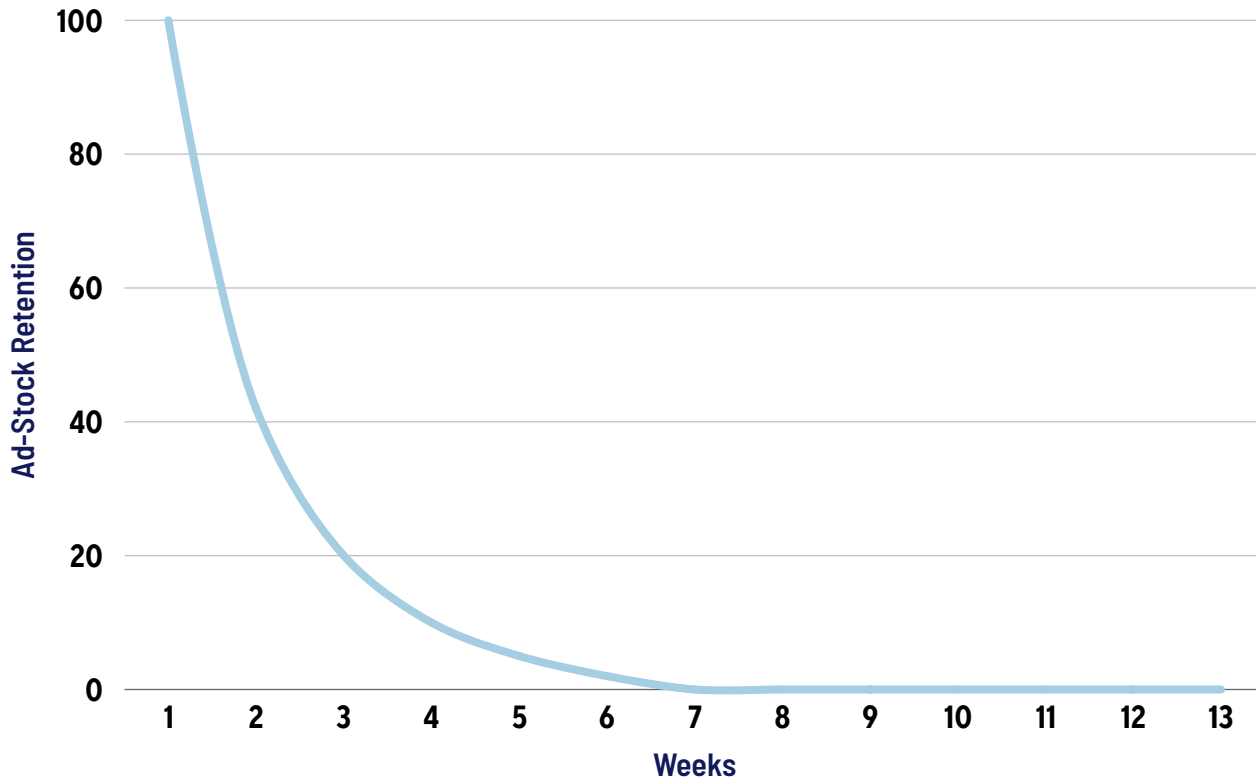
Across advertisers, DoorDash consistently behaved like a lower-funnel performance channel rather than an awareness medium. Most advertising impact occurred during the week of exposure, with modest residual effects extending into the following week(s).

Models assuming long carryover generally performed worse and aligned less closely with observed business outcomes.

## TESTED AD-STOCK AND RESPONSE CURVE COMPARISON

|               | Weekly Retention Rate (%) | Diminishing Returns (Power) |
|---------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ranges tested | 25% - 75%                 | 0.25 - 0.95                 |

### EXAMPLE AD-STOCK RETENTION OF 42%



The analysis also found limited evidence of strong diminishing returns across observed spending ranges, with brand-level variation. Accordingly, aggressive saturation assumptions may underestimate incremental contribution when applied without empirical support.

## WHY RESPONSE DYNAMICS DIFFER

DoorDash advertising reaches consumers who are already evaluating purchase options within the marketplace. As a result, advertising influences purchase decisions much closer to the point of transaction than traditional media.

This behavior naturally produces rapid conversion, limited advertising persistence, and relatively linear response over typical investment ranges.



## BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION

DoorDash advertising should generally be modeled using:

- Short, low-but-nonzero ad-stock
- Primary impact in the current week
- Limited carryover into subsequent weeks
- Modest diminishing response assumptions unless advertiser-specific evidence supports stronger saturation

## AD-STOCK HYPER-PARAMETER ESTIMATION

| 6-brand Average | Weekly Retention Rate (%) | Diminishing Returns (Power) |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                 | 42%                       | 0.62                        |

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

Applying ad-stock assumptions developed for awareness media can materially distort estimates of DoorDash effectiveness.

Models should instead reflect the rapid response dynamics of conversion-oriented retail media.



# FINDING 3: EXPERIMENT-INFORMED STATISTICAL PRIORS IMPROVE MODEL STABILITY



## RESEARCH QUESTION

Can Statistical priors informed by incrementality studies improve Marketing Mix Model performance?

## WHAT WE TESTED

Three prior strategies were compared:

- Weakly informative priors
- Neutral informative priors
- Priors calibrated using high-quality DoorDash incrementality experiments

All other model specifications remained unchanged.

## WHAT WE FOUND

Experiment-informed priors consistently produced more stable and interpretable model estimates.

Compared with less informative priors, calibrated priors reduced parameter volatility, improved consistency across model runs, and aligned more closely with independently observed causal outcomes.

These improvements were particularly valuable for DoorDash because retail media investment often correlates with underlying marketplace demand, making causal attribution more challenging when relying on observational data alone.

## WHY EXPERIMENTAL CALIBRATION WORKS

Marketing Mix Models estimate relationships from historical market behavior, while incrementality studies provide independent causal evidence.

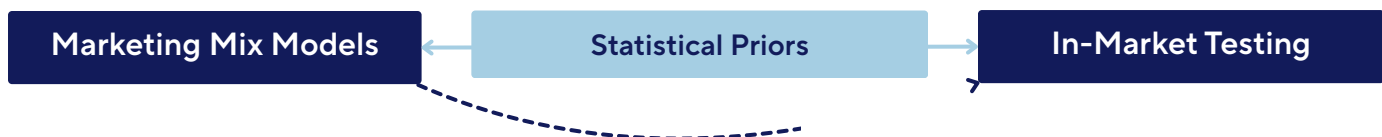
Combining these complementary sources of information produces estimates that are both statistically robust and grounded in observed advertising performance.

## BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION

When robust incrementality studies are available, Statistical priors should be calibrated using experimental evidence rather than relying solely on weak or non-informative priors.

Organizations should also establish a recurring process for updating priors as new experimentation becomes available, typically at least on an annual basis. Test attributes that should be shared with the MMM provider include iROAS, test dates, investment level and testing criteria.

## INTEGRATED MMM & TESTING MODELS



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Rather than viewing experimentation and MMM as competing approaches, organizations should integrate them into a unified measurement framework in which experimental learning continuously strengthens future Marketing Mix Models.

# AN EVIDENCE-BASED FRAMEWORK FOR MODELING DOORDASH IN MARKETING MIX MODELS

## FROM RESEARCH TO IMPLEMENTATION

The preceding analyses identified three modeling decisions that consistently improved the representation of DoorDash advertising across six QSR advertisers. Together, these findings form a practical framework for incorporating DoorDash into Marketing Mix Models.

The intent is not to prescribe a single specification for every advertiser. Differences in campaign strategy, customer behavior, competitive intensity, and investment levels will always require model-specific refinement. Instead, this framework establishes evidence-based defaults that improve consistency, interpretability, and alignment with observed consumer behavior.

## THE DOORDASH MMM FRAMEWORK

The recommended framework consists of four complementary components.

### 1. Model DoorDash as a Standalone Media Channel

DoorDash should be represented as its own media channel rather than combined with other third-party delivery platforms or retail media networks.

Each marketplace operates with different consumer behaviors, auction dynamics, advertising products, and optimization objectives. Aggregating platforms into a single variable can obscure platform-specific performance and reduce attribution accuracy.

Within DoorDash, paid advertising should also be modeled separately from organic marketplace activity.

Recommended structure:

- **Paid DoorDash Advertising**
  - Sponsored Listings and Promotions (combined where appropriate)
- **Organic DoorDash Activity**
  - Marketplace demand control variable

Separating paid and organic activity helps ensure that underlying marketplace growth is not incorrectly attributed to advertising.



## 2. Use Campaign Orders as the Primary Modeling KPI

Campaign Orders should be the preferred activity metric whenever order-level campaign data are available.

Among all KPIs evaluated, Orders most consistently produced the strongest combination of statistical performance, coefficient stability, and business interpretability.

When Orders are unavailable, Campaign Spend is the preferred alternative. Campaign Sales may be appropriate in some situations but should be interpreted carefully because pricing, promotions, fees, and average order value can influence results independently of advertising effectiveness.

Impressions and Clicks should generally be reserved for campaign reporting and optimization rather than serving as the primary input to Marketing Mix Models.

### Recommended KPI hierarchy:

| Priority | Activity Metric      | Recommended Use                |
|----------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1        | Campaign Orders      | Preferred                      |
| 2        | Campaign Spend       | Acceptable alternative         |
| 3        | Campaign Impressions | Not recommended as primary KPI |
| 4        | Campaign Clicks      | Not recommended as primary KPI |

## 3. Align Response Assumptions with Consumer Behavior

DoorDash advertising operates differently from traditional awareness media and should be modeled accordingly.

Across participating advertisers, the strongest-performing models consistently reflected:

- Short-duration advertising carryover
- Most impact occurring during the current week
- Limited residual impact into the following week(s)
- Modest diminishing response assumptions across observed investment ranges

These findings suggest that practitioners should avoid automatically applying ad-stock and saturation assumptions developed for television, online video, or other upper-funnel channels.

Instead, begin with response assumptions that reflect DoorDash's role as a conversion-oriented marketplace and refine them using advertiser-specific evidence.

## 4. Integrate Incrementality into MMM Estimation

Marketing Mix Models are most effective when informed by high-quality external evidence.

Whenever robust incrementality studies are available, Statistical priors should be calibrated using experimentally observed lift rather than relying exclusively on weak or non-informative priors. It should be noted that high-quality statistical priors should be achieved via designed experiments that include randomization, control groups and absence of sample manipulation.

When incrementality tests adhere to high-quality design standards, MMM practitioners should consider allowing 20-30% deviation in posterior estimates. When incrementality tests fail to adhere to quality design standards, posteriors may deviate by a much higher range.

Organizations should also establish a regular process for reviewing and updating statistical priors as additional experimentation becomes available. This creates a measurement system in which experimentation continuously improves future Marketing Mix Models.

## RECOMMENDED MODELING WORKFLOW

The research suggests a straightforward implementation sequence for incorporating DoorDash into an MMM.

### Step 1: Define the Channel

- Model DoorDash separately from other retail media platforms.
- Separate paid advertising from organic marketplace activity.
- Combine Sponsored Listings and Promotions when appropriate to improve statistical stability (to be tested as a sum total of Orders or Spend across Sponsored Listing and Promotions).

### Step 2: Select the KPI

- Use Campaign Orders whenever available.
- Use Campaign Spend when order-level data are unavailable.
- Avoid using Impressions or Clicks as the primary modeling input.

### Step 3: Configure Response Dynamics

- Apply short-duration ad-stock.
- Begin with modest diminishing response curves.
- Validate assumptions using advertiser-specific data.

### Step 4: Estimate the Model

- Begin with informed Statistical priors.
- Incorporate high-quality incrementality studies when available.
- Periodically recalibrate priors as new experimental evidence becomes available.

This sequence provides a repeatable process that is grounded in empirical evidence while remaining flexible enough to accommodate differences across advertisers.

## DOORDASH MMM BEST PRACTICES

| Modeling Component      | Recommended Practice                                                               | Expected Benefit                                                 |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Channel Structure       | Model DoorDash separately from other retail media platforms                        | Improves attribution accuracy                                    |
| Paid & Organic Activity | Model independently                                                                | Prevents marketplace growth from being attributed to advertising |
| Primary KPI             | Campaign Orders                                                                    | Strongest statistical performance and business interpretation    |
| Secondary KPI           | Campaign Spend                                                                     | Practical alternative when Orders are unavailable                |
| Ad-stock                | Short, low-but-nonzero carryover                                                   | Better reflects observed purchase behavior                       |
| Response Curve          | Test modest diminishing response curves before imposing more aggressive saturation | Produces more realistic estimates of incremental contribution    |
| Statistical Priors      | Calibrate using high-quality incrementality studies                                | Improves estimate stability and alignment with causal evidence   |





# IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETING MEASUREMENT

Although developed using DoorDash advertising, the framework reflects a broader principle for retail media measurement: model specifications should align with each channel's role in the consumer journey rather than applying uniform assumptions across all media.

As retail media continues to expand, organizations that tailor KPI selection, response assumptions, and Statistical prior calibration to channel-specific behavior will produce more accurate attribution, more consistent measurement, and more reliable investment recommendations.

The framework presented here provides an evidence-based starting point for doing so while remaining flexible enough to evolve as additional data and experimentation become available.

## BEYOND DOORDASH: WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MARKETING MEASUREMENT

Retail media has fundamentally changed where and how advertising influences consumer decisions. Unlike traditional media, which primarily builds awareness and consideration, retail media often reaches consumers at the point of purchase, where advertising directly influences transaction decisions.

This shift challenges many of the assumptions that have historically underpinned Marketing Mix Models. Applying the same modeling conventions across all channels may overlook meaningful differences in consumer behavior, resulting in less accurate estimates of media contribution and return on investment.

The findings from this study suggest that marketing measurement should evolve alongside the channels it is intended to evaluate.



## **IMPLICATION 1:** **CHANNEL REPRESENTATION MATTERS**

One of the clearest findings from this research is that how a channel is represented within a MMM can materially influence measured performance.

For DoorDash, selecting Campaign Orders rather than impressions or clicks produced more stable and interpretable models because the KPI more closely reflected the platform's role in driving transactions.

The broader lesson extends beyond DoorDash. Rather than requiring every channel to use the same modeling input, practitioners should select the activity metric that best represents each channel's role in influencing consumer behavior.

As retail media continues to diversify, channel-specific representation will become increasingly important for producing reliable attribution.



## **IMPLICATION 2:** **MEDIA RESPONSE ASSUMPTIONS SHOULD REFLECT CONSUMER BEHAVIOR**

Many commercial MMM implementations rely on standard ad-stock and response curve assumptions developed for traditional awareness media.

This research suggests that those defaults may not accurately represent conversion-oriented retail media.

DoorDash advertising demonstrated rapid response, limited carryover, and relatively modest diminishing response curves across observed investment ranges, behavior that differs meaningfully from channels designed to build awareness over time.

Rather than applying uniform assumptions across all media, practitioners should validate response dynamics against observed consumer behavior and adopt channel-specific parameters when supported by evidence.

## **IMPLICATION 3:** **UNIFIED MEASUREMENT PRODUCES BETTER DECISIONS**

Marketing Mix Modeling and incrementality experiments are often viewed as competing approaches to measuring advertising effectiveness. This research demonstrates that they are most valuable when used together.

Incrementality experiments provide causal evidence that can strengthen estimation, while MMM places those causal insights within the broader context of total marketing investment and market conditions.

Organizations that integrate experimentation and MMM into a unified measurement framework are better positioned to produce estimates that are statistically robust, operationally practical, and aligned with real-world business outcomes.



## **IMPLICATION 4:** **STANDARDIZATION IMPROVES MEASUREMENT QUALITY**

Retail media has expanded rapidly, but measurement practices have not always evolved at the same pace.

As a result, advertisers, agencies, and measurement providers often represent similar retail media investments using different KPIs, response assumptions, and model specifications. These differences can produce inconsistent estimates that reflect modeling choices as much as underlying media performance.

Establishing evidence-based defaults can improve consistency across studies while preserving the flexibility to adapt models to advertiser-specific conditions.

Standardization should not eliminate professional judgment. Instead, it should provide a common starting point that makes results more transparent, comparable, and actionable.



## IMPLICATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

The recommendations presented in this paper have practical value across the marketing measurement ecosystem.

### BRANDS

Brands can improve confidence in investment decisions by ensuring that DoorDash advertising is modeled using assumptions that reflect how consumers actually interact with the marketplace.

### MARKETING MIX MODEL PROVIDERS

Measurement providers can strengthen standard model templates by incorporating empirically supported defaults for retail media channels instead of relying solely on assumptions developed for traditional advertising.

### AGENCIES

Agencies can apply a consistent modeling framework across clients, improving comparability while reducing unnecessary variation caused by inconsistent model specifications.

### RETAIL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Retail media networks can benefit from more transparent and consistent measurement standards that improve confidence in reported performance and facilitate more meaningful comparisons across measurement methodologies.



# A FRAMEWORK THAT SHOULD CONTINUE TO EVOLVE

The recommendations presented in this paper represent evidence-based defaults derived from six QSR advertisers, not universal modeling rules. As additional advertisers, industries, campaign formats, and incrementality studies become available, these recommendations should continue to evolve.

Future research should evaluate these findings across additional retail media platforms, industry verticals, and advertising products while refining parameter ranges as more empirical evidence becomes available.

The broader objective is not simply to improve the measurement of DoorDash advertising today, but to establish a repeatable framework for measuring conversion-oriented retail media as the channel continues to mature.

## STUDY LIMITATIONS

As with any empirical research, the findings presented in this paper should be interpreted within the context of the study design.

First, the analysis was a DoorDash-funded study conducted across six Quick Service Restaurant advertisers. While the consistency of findings across participating brands provides confidence in the recommendations, results may not fully generalize to other industry verticals, advertiser sizes, campaign objectives, or retail media environments.

Second, advertiser characteristics (including investment levels, campaign strategies, geographic coverage, and observation periods) varied across participating brands. Although a common modeling framework was applied consistently throughout the analysis, future research should evaluate these recommendations across additional advertisers and industries to further assess their generalizability.

Third, the statistical prior recommendations presented in this paper depend on the availability of robust incrementality experiments. Experiment-informed priors improve Marketing Mix Model performance only when the underlying lift studies are themselves well designed and adequately powered. Poorly executed experiments may introduce bias rather than improve estimation.

Fourth, as this study did not assess the impact of in-app exposure to in-store behavior, there are potentially non-measured carry-over effects that extend beyond those measured explicitly within this study.

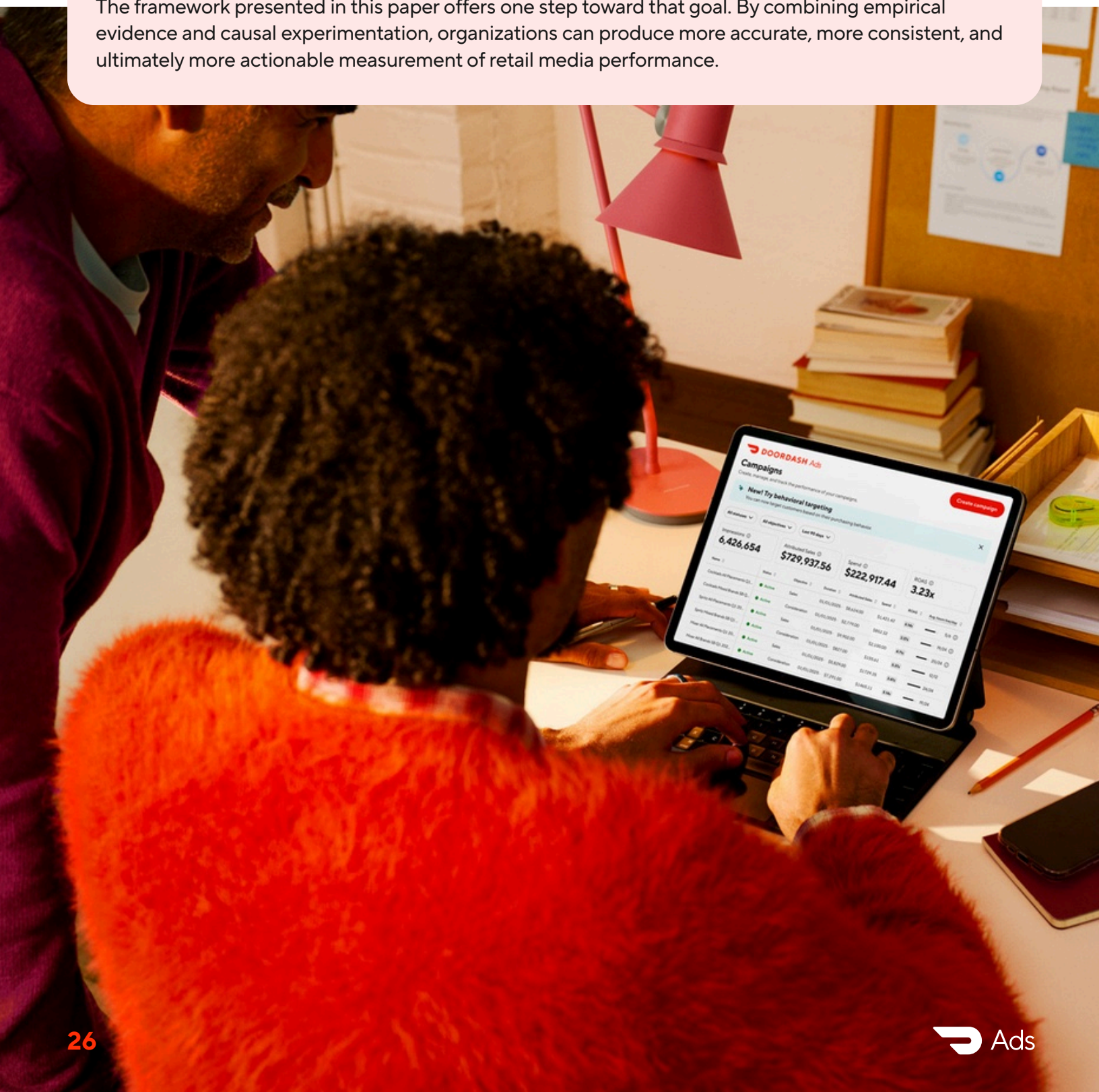
Finally, this study focused specifically on three core modeling dimensions: KPI selection, ad-stock configuration, and Bayesian prior calibration. Other modeling decisions, including alternative functional forms, interaction effects, competitive controls, and hierarchical modeling approaches, may also influence measurement outcomes and represent important areas for future investigation.



## LOOKING AHEAD

Retail media is becoming an increasingly important component of the modern marketing mix. As investment grows, the quality of measurement will depend less on applying legacy modeling conventions and more on aligning model specifications with how each channel influences consumer behavior.

The framework presented in this paper offers one step toward that goal. By combining empirical evidence and causal experimentation, organizations can produce more accurate, more consistent, and ultimately more actionable measurement of retail media performance.





# A NEW STANDARD FOR MEASURING DOORDASH IN MMM

Retail media has fundamentally changed how brands engage consumers. By reaching shoppers at the point of purchase, platforms such as DoorDash influence decisions much closer to the transaction than traditional awareness media. As investment in these channels continues to grow, measurement approaches must evolve to reflect their unique role within the consumer journey.

This research demonstrates that how DoorDash advertising is represented within a Marketing Mix Model is not simply a technical implementation detail; it is a meaningful driver of measurement quality.

Across six Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) advertisers, three modeling decisions consistently improved model performance, stability, and alignment with independently observed business outcomes:

- Campaign Orders provided the strongest representation of DoorDash advertising, outperforming spend-, sales-, impression-, and click-based alternatives.
- Short-duration, low-but-nonzero carryover most accurately reflected the rapid response dynamics of conversion-oriented retail media.
- Experiment-informed Statistical priors produced more stable, interpretable estimates and strengthened alignment between Marketing Mix Models and causal incrementality evidence.

Together, these findings establish an evidence-based framework for representing DoorDash advertising within Marketing Mix Models.

## THE BROADER LESSON

While this study focused on DoorDash, its implications extend beyond a single platform.

Retail media operates differently from traditional advertising. Consumers are often already engaged in the purchase process, campaign optimization is centered on transactions rather than exposure, and advertising effects occur over a much shorter time horizon. These characteristics require measurement approaches that reflect the behavior of the channel rather than relying on assumptions developed for awareness-oriented media.

The broader lesson is straightforward: Marketing Mix Models should be tailored to the role each channel plays in influencing consumer behavior.

Selecting appropriate activity metrics, response assumptions, and Statistical priors based on empirical evidence produces measurement that is more accurate, more consistent, and more useful for investment decisions.

## FROM BEST PRACTICES TO BETTER DECISIONS

The framework presented in this paper is intended to provide practitioners with an evidence-based starting point for modeling DoorDash advertising.

It is not a rigid specification, nor is it intended to replace advertiser-specific expertise. Every Marketing Mix Model should ultimately reflect the characteristics of the business, the available data, and the marketing objectives being evaluated.

However, beginning with empirically supported defaults offers important advantages. It improves consistency across studies, reduces unnecessary variation caused by arbitrary modeling choices, and increases confidence that reported performance reflects underlying business outcomes rather than differences in model specification.

For brands, agencies, and measurement providers, adopting common modeling principles can strengthen collaboration and improve the comparability of results across advertisers and over time.

## A FRAMEWORK THAT EVOLVES WITH THE INDUSTRY

Retail media continues to evolve rapidly, and measurement practices must evolve with it.

The recommendations presented here should therefore be viewed as evidence-based defaults rather than permanent standards. As additional advertisers, industries, campaign formats, and incrementality studies become available, the framework should continue to be refined and validated.

This iterative approach reflects one of the central themes of the paper: effective measurement is built through continuous learning. Marketing Mix Modeling and experimentation are most valuable when they operate together, with each informing and strengthening the other over time.

## FINAL PERSPECTIVE

Retail media represents one of the most significant shifts in modern marketing. As these channels become an increasingly important component of enterprise media investment, organizations need measurement approaches that accurately capture how they influence consumer behavior.

By modeling DoorDash as a distinct retail media channel, selecting KPIs aligned with conversion outcomes, applying response assumptions consistent with observed purchasing behavior, and integrating incrementality evidence into estimation, organizations can improve the accuracy, consistency, and actionability of Marketing Mix Models.

More broadly, this research demonstrates that the future of marketing measurement lies not in applying the same assumptions across every channel, but in aligning model specifications with how consumers actually respond to each form of advertising.

That principle extends beyond DoorDash. It provides a foundation for measuring the next generation of retail media with greater rigor, transparency, and confidence.

# ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM

## ADVANCING THE MEASUREMENT OF DOORDASH MEDIA

This research was developed through a collaboration between Ipsos MMA and DoorDash to advance best practices for measuring DoorDash advertising within Marketing Mix Models.

As commerce media continues to grow, advertisers need measurement frameworks that accurately reflect how consumers interact with retail media channels and provide consistent, decision-ready estimates of business impact. This paper contributes to that effort by presenting an evidence-based framework for representing DoorDash advertising in Marketing Mix Models.

While the recommendations are grounded in analysis across six Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) advertisers, they are intended to serve as a foundation for continued research, refinement, and industry collaboration as retail media measurement continues to evolve.

## ABOUT IPSOS MMA

Ipsos MMA (Euronext Paris: IPS) is a global leader in marketing measurement, commercial analytics, and marketing optimization. The organization helps leading brands improve marketing performance by integrating econometric modeling, experimentation, customer analytics, forecasting, and AI-enabled decision support into unified measurement frameworks.

Ipsos MMA partners with organizations across industries to design and implement Marketing Mix Models, incrementality testing programs, measurement modernization initiatives, and marketing optimization strategies that improve business decision-making.

## ABOUT DOORDASH

DoorDash (NASDAQ: DASH) is one of the world's leading local commerce platforms that helps businesses of all kinds grow and innovate, connects consumers to the best of their neighborhoods, and gives people fast, flexible ways to earn.

Since its founding in 2013, DoorDash has expanded to more than 40 countries, using technology and logistics to shape the future of local commerce and broaden access to opportunity.

With a growing international presence that now includes Deliveroo and Wolt, DoorDash combines global scale with local expertise to serve communities around the world.



## CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

Retail media measurement is evolving rapidly. As advertisers expand investment in commerce media, measurement approaches must continue to evolve alongside the channels they are designed to evaluate.

Organizations reviewing or modernizing their Marketing Mix Models should consider several questions:

- Is DoorDash represented as a distinct media channel rather than combined with broader retail media or third-party delivery variables?
- Are paid advertising and organic marketplace activity modeled separately?
- Is the KPI used for DoorDash aligned with the channel's conversion objective?
- Do ad-stock assumptions reflect observed consumer response rather than inherited media defaults?
- Are Statistical priors informed by high-quality incrementality evidence when available?

Answering these questions can help improve the consistency, credibility, and actionability of Marketing Mix Models while ensuring that retail media is represented appropriately within broader measurement frameworks.

## LEARN MORE

Organizations interested in applying the framework presented in this paper can work with Ipsos MMA and DoorDash to evaluate existing measurement approaches and identify opportunities to strengthen retail media measurement.

Potential areas of collaboration include:

- Marketing Mix Model modernization
- Retail media measurement strategy
- Incrementality testing and unified measurement
- Measurement framework assessments
- Executive workshops on marketing measurement and retail media

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We also acknowledge the partnership between Ipsos MMA and DoorDash throughout the study. Ipsos MMA designed the research methodology, developed the Marketing Mix Models, conducted the analyses, and interpreted the findings. DoorDash provided advertiser campaign data, platform expertise, and support throughout the research process.

The recommendations presented in this paper are intended to encourage continued collaboration among advertisers, agencies, retail media platforms, and measurement providers as the industry works toward more consistent, evidence-based standards for measuring retail media.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

Marketing Mix Modeling remains one of the industry's most important tools for understanding marketing effectiveness. As retail media becomes a larger component of the modern media mix, measurement practices must continue to evolve.

The framework presented in this paper is intended to support that evolution by providing an evidence-based approach for representing DoorDash advertising within Marketing Mix Models.

More broadly, it demonstrates how channel-specific modeling decisions can improve the accuracy, consistency, and credibility of marketing measurement across the rapidly expanding retail media ecosystem.



