

2026

COMCAST ADVERTISING REPORT

Actionable advice for the modern TV advertiser





Evolving to meet audiences

Dear reader,

The TV advertising space shows no sign of slowing down. As audiences seamlessly move between screens and platforms, it is only growing more complex for brands to navigate. One thing remains constant: viewers love premium entertainment experiences and TV has the ability to drive real connections – and results – for advertisers.

2026 promises to be a momentous year for the TV industry, from the Milan-Cortina Olympics and Super Bowl to the World Cup and U.S. political midterms – all as AI shifts the industry and acts as a tailwind to address many of the complexities that have held advertisers back from TV in the past.

Developed from our unique position between viewers, buyers, and sellers of multiscreen TV, the Comcast Advertising report aims to provide holistic perspective and actionable advice for advertisers heading into the year ahead.

Let's dive in.

James Rooke

President, Comcast Advertising

How viewers are viewing

01

Viewers are choosing ad-supported streaming

Q: Of the services you subscribe to or have access to, do they have ads?¹



- Some have ads, some are ad-free
- All have ads
- All ad-free

89%

of viewers who watch video content subscribe to ad-supported tiers.



02

Viewers love a premium experience



Households that engage with traditional TV watch an average of **6+ hours** a day.²

And 82% of streaming happens on the biggest screen - the TV screen.



03

Viewers are more likely to pay attention to TV ads compared to other media types

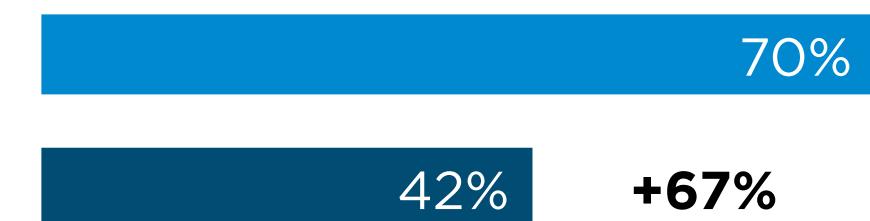
Visual ad attention by media type³

Percent who looked



● Streaming TV ● Social

Percent of time looked

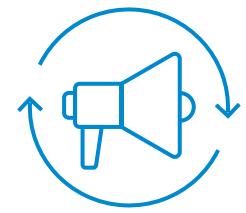


Research found that viewers of streaming TV content are **+43%** more likely to look at an ad and spend **+67%** more time watching ads compared to social media.

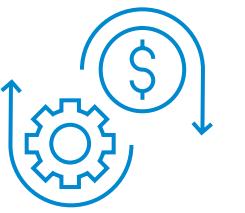
04

Audiences are paying attention to relevant ads

Viewers report being twice as engaged when ads are relevant:⁴



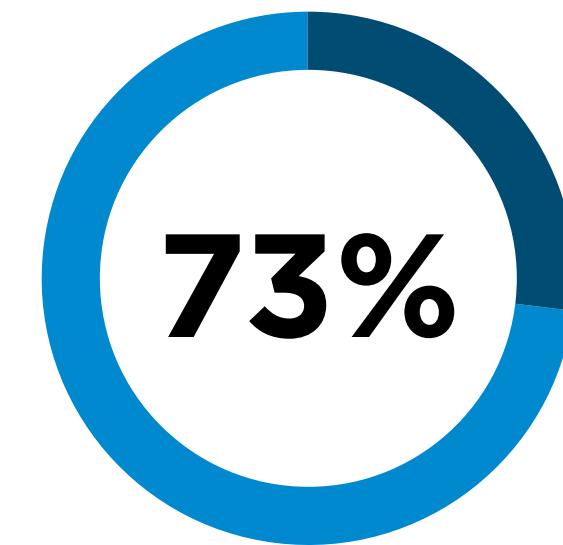
2X higher unaided recall for relevant ads



5.2X higher brand purchase intent

05

Audiences are taking an action after seeing ads on TV



TV is not just about branding; on average, **73%** of converting households can be attributed to traditional TV.²

How buyers are buying



01

Buyers continue to lean into programmatic transactions for streaming

+29%

Programmatic ad views showed impressive YOY growth, rising by +29% in the U.S.⁵

Over half of advertisers said they'd be influenced to programmatically buy streaming inventory based on signals for audience engagement (**59%**), premium content (**56%**), and premium ad experience (**51%**).⁶

02

As programmatic helps make streaming more accessible, a greater number of brands are harnessing the medium

Unique programmatic advertisers⁵

1H 2024 vs. 1H 2025 (U.S. and Europe)

Growth in unique advertisers delivering programmatically



1H 2024

1H 2025

Growth in ad views from new advertisers programmatically



1H 2024

1H 2025

In 1H 2025, there was **+14% growth** in new advertisers delivering programmatically.

03

Advertisers are increasingly looking for partners that offer end-to-end solutions

A circular graphic with a blue and grey gradient. The number '58%' is prominently displayed in the center of the circle.

58%

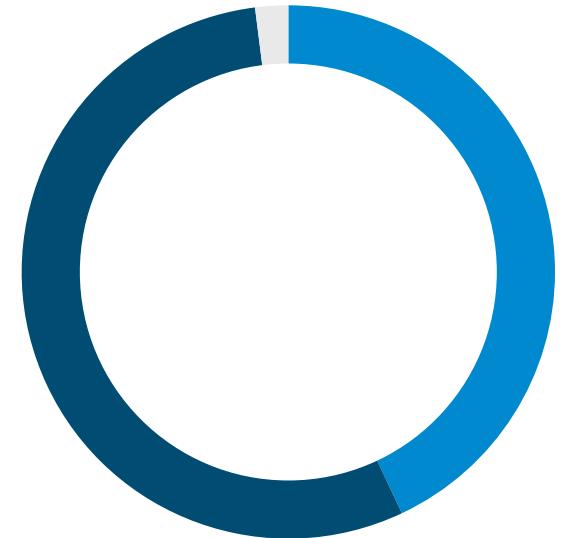
58% of advertisers prefer to work with platforms that provide end-to-end solutions that include planning, buying, and reporting.⁷

04

Buyers are looking to addressable as a performance driver

43%

say they expect to increase their addressable spend in 2026, a slight lift from 2025.⁸



Expected spend on addressable TV in 2026⁸

43% Spend more

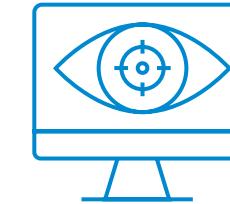
55% Spend the same

68%

of buyers view addressable advertising as a performance driver.⁷

05

Advertisers are seeking more TV attribution capabilities



68% say they would increase TV ad spend with more audience reach and engagement metrics, and **63%** noted they want to see more attribution linking TV ad exposure to specific consumer actions or purchases.⁷

How sellers are selling



01

Publishers are leveraging AI to increase contextual advertising solutions



AI is helping to develop more efficient contextual targeting.
Contextual alignment - aligning keywords for ads and content
- drives up to **+40% more** brand recall.⁹

Brand recall based on contextual alignment⁹

Match for 1 of 3 top keywords



Match for 1 of 2 top keywords



Match for 1 of 1 top keyword



- Not aligned
- Aligned

02

Sellers are offering more innovative ad formats

With viewers being **+80% more likely** to seek more info online after seeing a shoppable ad (vs. seeing the same brand's standard mid-roll ad),¹⁰ publishers are exploring innovative ad formats to enhance viewer engagement and create new monetization opportunities:

- During ad breaks (interactive, shoppable ads)
- Within content (L-banner, lower third ads)
- While content is idle (pause, native ads)

03

Publishers are enriching signals in the bidstream to help advertisers make more informed decisions

Enriched signals sent to DSPs unlock more value and produce higher returns on their programmatic inventory.¹¹

% increase in bid price when signal is passed

+37%

Genre

+27%

Channel

+29%

Universal ID

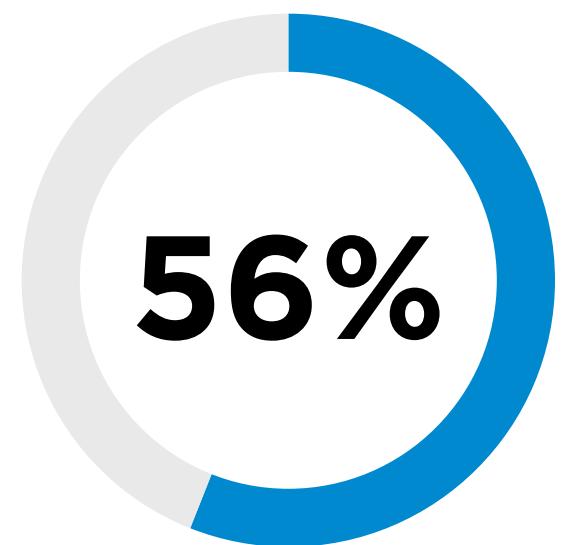
+26%

Network

04

Sellers are enabling more programmatic opportunities for live events

Sellers are enabling more live tentpole events to include direct sold and programmatic delivery, opening opportunities to more advertisers and enabling more relevant ads for users.



56% of advertisers say access to live event inventory would influence them to buy more streaming inventory programmatically.⁶

05

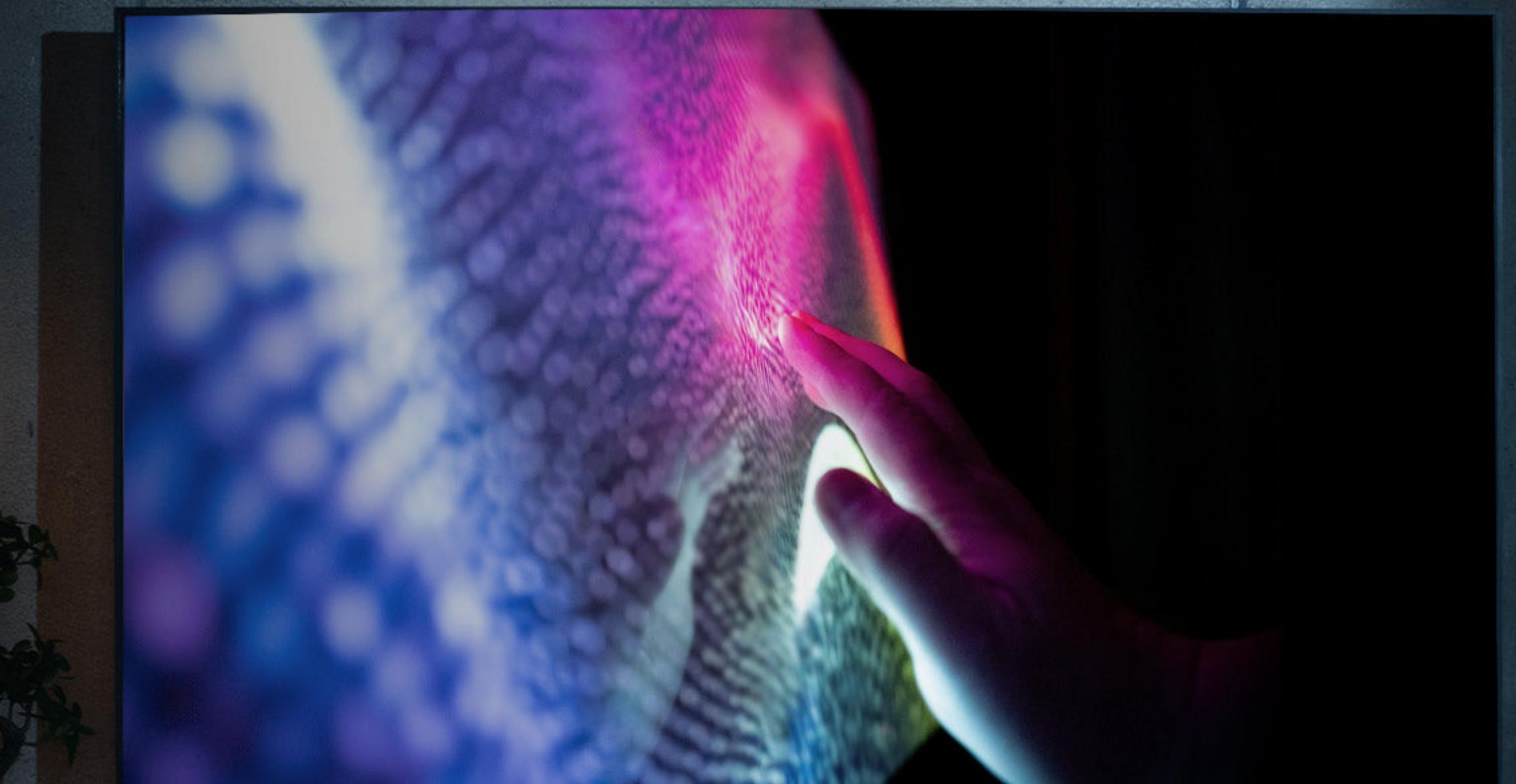
Publishers are thinking about demand path optimization

Publishers are looking to better understand how their inventory is making its way to advertisers, and their most efficient and valuable paths so they can best optimize the process in a strategic and transparent way, so it benefits both sides.



An analysis found that there was a **+72%** increase in revenue per bid request when the demand path was optimized.¹²

The state of AI in TV advertising



AI is impacting all corners of the industry

Viewers

Viewers are looking to AI for smarter content recommendations and more dynamic interfaces when watching TV and streaming. And when it comes to ads, **66%** say they are open to AI deciding which ads they see in content.¹

Buyers

AI promises to transform not only how advertising is created, but also how it's transacted, optimized, and measured. AI will democratize TV advertising, as what was once complex, time-consuming, and out of reach will become increasingly streamlined and accessible.

Sellers

AI will be a tailwind for sellers by better matching supply and demand and classifying creative content to ensure brand safety and relevance. It will also help media companies close the gap with Big Tech by simplifying the buying experience and better demonstrating the power of TV as a full-funnel performance vehicle.

Here's what advertisers had to say about the impact of AI on the TV advertising industry...





Advertisers are using AI most frequently to analyze their audiences and manage data

Top five ways organizations are using or planning to use AI to support advertising campaigns¹³

Identify or segment audiences

82%

Analyze audience behavior

82%

Automate data collection/integration

80%

Generate reporting visuals

79%

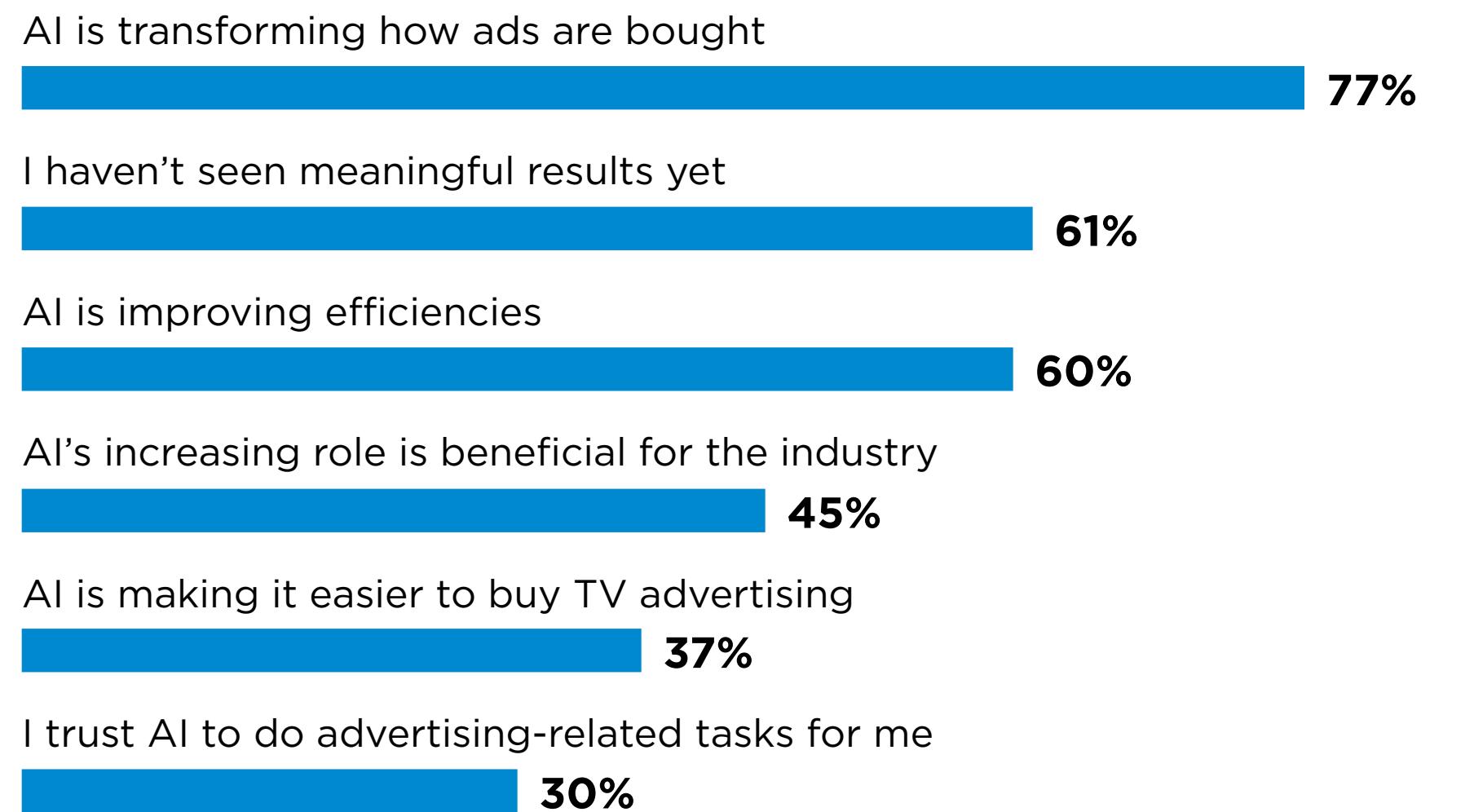
Use behavioral data to recommend placement

75%

AI isn't just about simplifying the buying process; in fact, the top two ways advertisers are using AI are related to identifying and understanding audiences.

AI is transforming advertising, but advertisers aren't sure how yet

Agreement with the following statements about the use of AI in the advertising industry¹³



77% of advertisers say AI is transforming the industry... but **61%** haven't seen meaningful results yet and only **30%** trust AI to do advertising tasks for them.





Advertisers are turning to AI for creative development

Top ways advertisers are using AI to support ad creative development¹³

Generate initial creative ideas

41%

Produce multiple versions of concept

35%

Create ads through third-party vendors

21%

Fully produce ads

20%

Other

3%

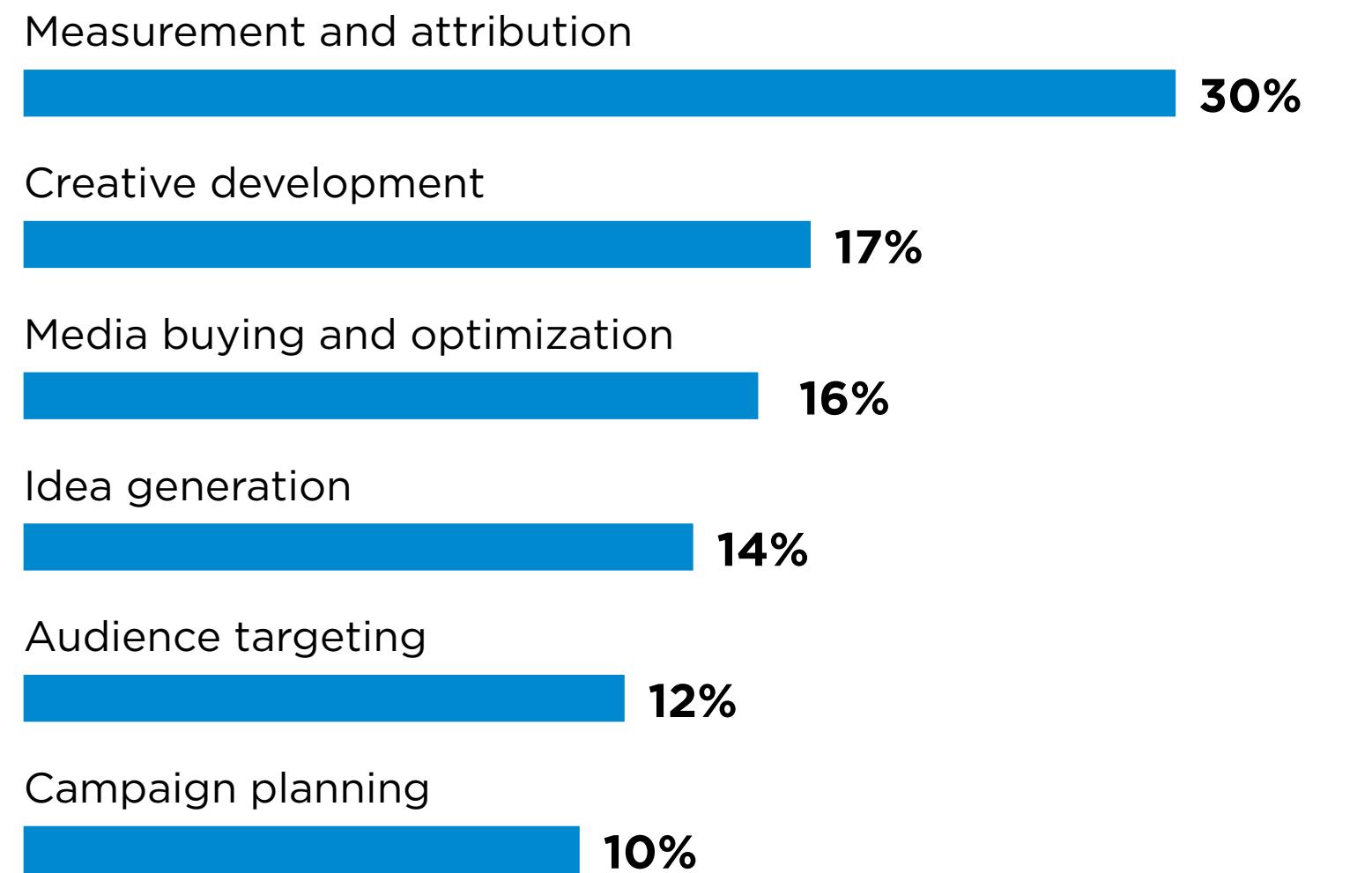
Have not used AI for ad creative

28%

66% of advertisers are using or exploring AI in the creative development phase to spark ideas and version creative¹³, but consumer sentiment is mixed, with only **50%** saying they are open to AI being used to create ads.¹

Advertisers want AI to help make measurement and attribution easier

Top ways advertisers are using AI to support ad creative development¹³



When asked where they most want AI to make an impact in 2026, advertisers were somewhat split. However, measurement and attribution emerged as the leading area of opportunity (30%), as less than one-third of advertisers say measuring TV advertising effectiveness is easy or very easy.¹³





Another year of change

In 2026, opportunities abound for TV advertisers to find smart and efficient ways to work with publishers to reach viewers across screens. And, as AI reshapes the TV industry in momentous ways, data will get smarter, programmatic tools will get faster, and advertisers will continue turning to live events to reach viewers in the moments that matter.

TV buying will shed its reputation of being complex and cumbersome, as buying tools mirror the ease and simplicity of self-service social buying platforms. As a result, more advertisers will have a chance to benefit from all that TV advertising can offer across screens.

The TV industry is propelling into a new era powered by advancements in technology and data. As AI's incredible momentum further bolsters innovation, the next phase will be one of transformation. **Are you ready?**

Sources

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13. FreeWheel survey of marketers and agencies conducted by AdExchanger, November 2025, n=216.

Dive deeper into some of the research found in this report



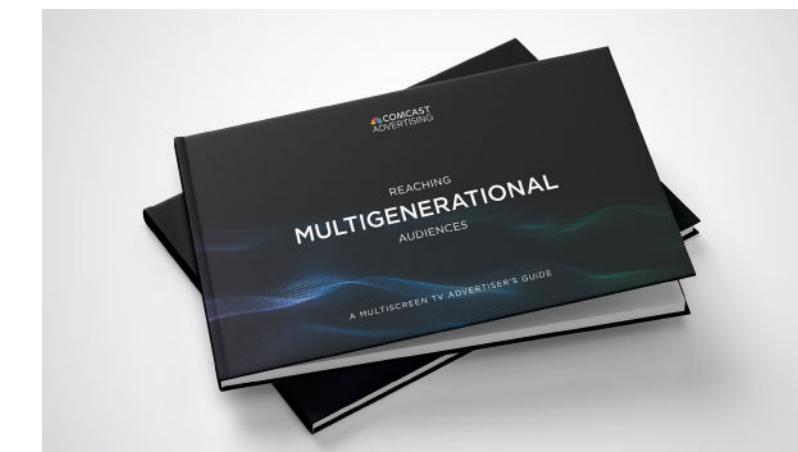
Comcast Advertising
The Local Advertiser's Guide to Addressable TV Advertising



Comcast Advertising
Winning Strategies: Advertising Lessons from the 2024 Election Cycle



Comcast Advertising
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FreeWheel
Beyond Branding: Why Multiscreen TV is a Full-Funnel Performance Engine



FreeWheel
Innovative Ad Formats in Streaming



FreeWheel
Maximizing Brand Recall Through Contextual Alignment



FreeWheel
Video Marketplace Report: 1H 2025



Universal Ads
Beyond the Scroll: How TV Drives Performance for Emerging Brands

Fueled by insights from across
the Comcast Advertising portfolio

