

The background of the slide is a dark teal color with several overlapping circles of varying sizes and colors (green, blue, and teal). Some circles are solid, while others are dashed. The Claravine logo is in the top left corner.

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Stop Fixing Your Media Analytics:

Keys to Implementing Automated Data Governance

Despite the growing importance of digital media, many organizations effectively track 40 to 60 percent of their digital media spend. The gap is caused by manual processes, which make it hard to ensure consistent tracking across platforms and teams, and by the dramatic increase in platforms used to execute campaigns. As a result, analytics and marketing leaders are left with little insight into which ads or ad elements are driving results, while spending precious time manually validating tracking elements and piecing together reporting. In addition, advertising platforms are unable to drive the optimization they need with clean, rich data.

This document elaborates on these roadblocks and highlights the steps leading organizations are taking to ensure rich, consistent tracking of digital media. It will show you how to automate the process of governing data creation across execution platforms, how to align execution platforms to analytics platforms, and key steps you can take to systematically ensure ad visibility.

Common roadblocks to effective media analytics

Most media organizations employ a multi-step process to define, execute, and track media campaigns. That process potentially spans media agencies, internal ad ops teams, creative teams, analysts, and other stakeholders. Complicating this flow is the expansion of platforms and channels, each with a potential agency or team supporting execution.

Core to this process is the implementation of tags and tracking parameters that ensure metadata flow to analytics and reporting platforms. It requires an immense effort to systematically validate that tags are applied correctly, tracking codes comply with required taxonomies, and landing pages are live. In many organizations, tracking codes, campaign details, and other key pieces of

metadata are often created, managed, and stored in spreadsheets. These spreadsheets form the basis of the information loaded into media and analytics platforms. Given the volume of ad iterations submitted, opportunities for human error at each step are inevitable.

Traditional data quality assurance strategies have focused on spot checking and page testing, while acknowledging that data will need to be cleaned up after the campaign has launched. Not surprisingly, hoping to fix data on the back end rarely results in the consistent, rich data that can drive better experiences and decisions. Furthermore, a general lack of transparency means agencies are often at odds with brands, and unified campaign insights remain elusive for leadership.

The Process: Where Things Break

Once strategy and objectives have been set, most media campaigns begin with the creation of an insertion order (IO) that details the core budget and basic parameters of the media campaign. These details are exported into an Excel-based trafficking sheet, in which additional campaign data fields are populated for each ad variation.

Many of these fields are either populated in bulk or generated through formulas. For example, the tracking code for each ad is often generated through a formula or a macro, based on the metadata fields that are manually entered relating to the ad.

Obviously, any mistake in the manual data entry process means that the resulting tracking code and landing page URL fail to accurately capture data fields downstream. Of course, a particular trafficking sheet may include hundreds or thousands of lines for each ad iteration, multiplying the challenge of manually governing compliance to protocol. In addition, these manual, Excel-based processes often leave potentially valuable metadata uncaptured, given the disconnected nature of the data itself.

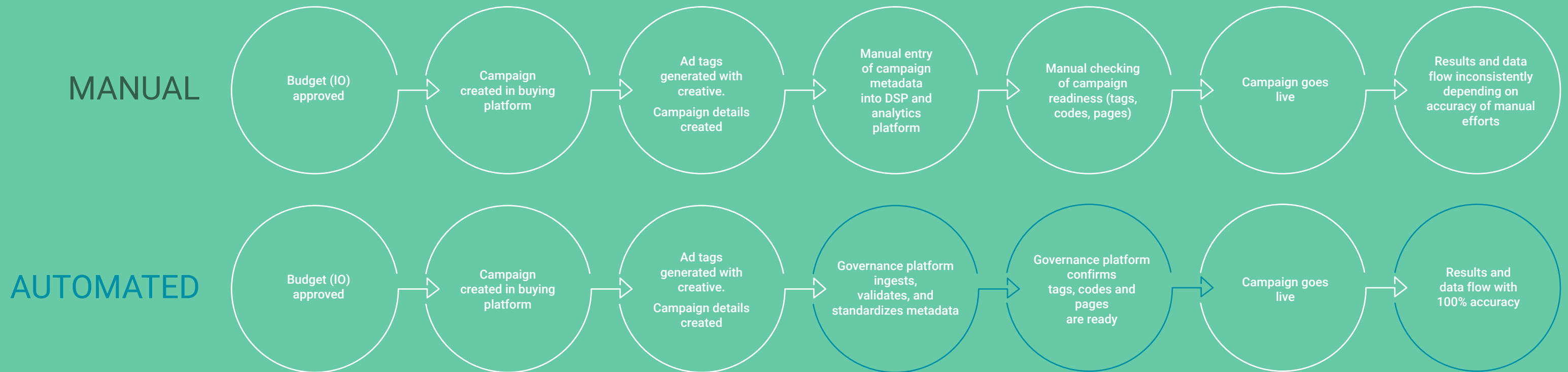
For example, the Creative ID associated with each ad is auto-generated by the ad server and not connected to the Creative ID in the digital asset management system or the metadata about that creative asset. In short, less metadata is collected, and that which is created is ungoverned and prone to inaccuracy.

Once the trafficking sheet is complete and corresponding data fields are populated, traffic placements, creatives, and URLs are configured in the media buying platform. Tags are generated and loaded into the publishing ad server. In addition, tracking codes and metadata are likely uploaded to the relevant analytics platform before the campaign goes live.

EXAMPLE AD CAMPAIGN DATA FIELDS:

- Campaign Name
- Ad Set
- Ad Name
- Creative ID
- Campaign Tracking Code

Media Data Governance Process



Traditional media tracking processes have relied on spreadsheets and manual QA processes to ensure data quality post-campaign. In contrast, automated data governance processes rely on a scalable platform to validate campaign readiness across ad and marketing platforms, including systematic validation of tracking codes, tags, and landing pages. The result is richer more unified insights and faster time to launch.

The Process: How To Insert Automated Governance

Fortunately, there's a better option, and it consists of inserting automated governance into key elements of this process.

Once a trafficking sheet is populated with campaign details, this same information can be automatically ingested into a governance platform. At this stage, the role of the governance platform is to automate the following:

- Validate tracking codes match the required taxonomy based on predefined standards.
- Where required, the platform will correct a tracking code and append missing data.
- Validate other metadata fields are present and conform to a common taxonomy.
- Automatically validate landing pages are live and tags are placed correctly.

Where appropriate, a governance platform can connect directly to the execution platform itself — such as Facebook Ads Manager or Google Campaign Manager — automating the process of ingesting, validating, and correcting campaign metadata and tracking code details. These integrations

into a common platform mean data is automatically standardized across channels and execution platforms, removing the need to manually check data quality and saving an immense amount of time.

With validation complete, a governance platform can also automate the bulk export of metadata to demand-side platforms (DSPs) and analytics platforms, removing an additional opportunity for human error while also saving time. The platform can even expedite format requirements so that data automatically enters with the appropriate structure. As data standards change, this governance platform allows teams to centrally manage data taxonomies and make changes that span channels and platforms.

The net result is that digital media experiences go live faster and with the assurance of richer, more accurate analytics. Better data means everything from attribution models to personalization engines operate with cleaner fuel. Furthermore, teams spend less time trying to fix data quality on the back end and can focus instead on planning the next campaign and creating better experiences for customers.

Conclusion



The proliferation of platforms and data requirements involved across the media execution process has created a scenario where ad ops teams and agencies must manually execute critical parts of the process. While teams have traditionally solved this complexity with equally complex manual processes for extracting and transforming data after a campaign has launched, automated data governance promises to streamline efforts and allow for accurate, richer media tracking.

This trend towards greater automation complements the increasing need for transparency across enterprise teams and agencies. It also allows data quality to become a source of competitive advantage, rather than a competitive liability.

Best Practice Highlight

In July 2019, while U.S. soccer stars Megan Rapinoe, Rose Lavell, and their teammates were celebrating their victory over the Netherlands in the women's World Cup, sports commentators around the world were discussing each dramatic moment of the big game. Meanwhile, marketing analysts at a leading sporting gear company were doing a different kind of post-game analysis: trying to assess the effectiveness of the company's World Cup campaign, which involved thousands of digital ads run on multiple channels and platforms in dozens of countries.

Automated data governance allowed the marketing team to focus less on tracking validation and more on driving decisions from richer insights into the channels, placements, offers, and creative elements, allowing teams to adjust their planning for future campaigns and ultimately drive ROI.

Benefits extended beyond data quality to improved efficiency across the entire media process. "We want to make sure that we're making our teammates' lives and jobs easier," said a media science manager at the

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company, which began working with Claravine in early 2019.

The new model has benefitted teams that are optimizing media programs within a specific channel or region, as well as the centralized Media Science team, which is searching for broader insights. Those insights inform choices about how media budgets are allocated across channels. They also lead to better decisions about audience targeting, placements, offers, and even very specific creative elements.

In short, automated governance means the media science team spends more time on the questions that matter.

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