

AI-in-Advertising Readiness Checklist

Five criteria for testing whether your measurement stack can tell you what AI is actually doing

Every measurement vendor is claiming AI-readiness. Almost none have defined what AI-readiness actually requires. These five criteria are drawn from what measurement must do to give a true picture of AI's effect on advertising — across discovery, awareness, and conversion. Bring them to your current stack. Bring them to any vendor conversation, including ours.

SECTION 1 — AI AS A SEPARABLE CHANNEL

1. **Does your analytics platform identify AI-source traffic — ChatGPT, Perplexity, Claude, Gemini, Copilot — as separately named sources, or is it bucketed into “direct” or “organic”?**

Yes Partial Not Met

Why it matters: Roughly 70% of AI-source traffic is currently misclassified as “direct” in standard analytics. If your stack is in that majority, you have a confident-looking blind spot — every report on AI's contribution is inferred, not measured.

2. **Does your attribution model credit AI-source conversions, with AI competing as a first-class peer against search, social, and the rest?**

Yes Partial Not Met

Why it matters: Even when AI traffic is captured at the analytics layer, many attribution models treat it as a residual rather than a comparable channel. AI-readiness means AI is in the budget allocation conversation.

SECTION 2 — WINDOW MATCHED TO JOURNEY LENGTH

3. **Does your measurement window span the full consumer journey for your category (typically 30 to 90+ days), or is it set to a shorter conversion-window default (7, 14, 30 days)?**

Yes Partial Not Met

Why it matters: Most AI influence is upstream — at awareness and consideration. A window shorter than the journey will undercount AI substantially, and confidently. The shorter the window, the larger the undercount.

4. **Can you trace conversions back to AI-source touchpoints earlier in the journey, even when the final touch was a different channel (direct, branded search)?**

Yes Partial Not Met

Why it matters: AI's primary role today is upstream — recommending, summarizing, surfacing. The conversion arrives later via another channel. Without multi-touch attribution, the AI touch is invisible and credit goes to the closing channel.

SECTION 3 — DISCIPLINED INPUT LAYER

5. **Are the signals entering your attribution model audited, deduplicated, and reconciled before modeling — or do they enter raw from platform self-reports?**

Yes Partial Not Met

Why it matters: Garbage-in produces confident-sounding AI claims that aren't true. Privacy fragmentation and identity break already corrupt downstream output; AI adds another layer of upstream uncertainty.

6. Do you have a documented chain of custody for AI-source data — from collection through reconciliation to model — that an auditor or CFO could walk through?

■ Yes ■ Partial ■ Not Met

Why it matters: AI claims that can't be traced to their source data are not measurement; they are commentary. A documented chain is what makes findings defensible in a budget review.

SECTION 4 — CALIBRATED, SPECIFIC OUTPUTS

7. Does your AI attribution output carry confidence intervals — a range — or just point estimates dressed as truth?

■ Yes ■ Partial ■ Not Met

Why it matters: AI measurement is observational, not experimental — there are real uncertainty ranges, and outputs that hide them mislead decisions. "7x AI brand visibility" without an interval is marketing theater.

8. Are AI claims in your reports specific enough to be wrong — three states, percentages, reallocation curves — or are they vague directional commentary?

■ Yes ■ Partial ■ Not Met

Why it matters: "AI is reshaping the funnel" is commentary, not measurement. A claim that cannot be wrong cannot be right either; it can only be repeated.

SECTION 5 — INDEPENDENT CROSS-SOURCE OBSERVATION

9. Do you compare your AI measurement against multiple independent sources (tag-side, third-party, platform self-reports) — or rely on a single source's account?

■ Yes ■ Partial ■ Not Met

Why it matters: Single-source AI claims are unfalsifiable by construction. Triangulation across sources is how confidence is earned. Where sources point the same direction, the finding holds; where they diverge, the gap is information.

10. Is your AI measurement methodology authored by an independent measurement provider, or by the AI vendors themselves (Google, OpenAI, Microsoft, Meta)?

■ Yes ■ Partial ■ Not Met

Why it matters: When the channel owner authors the measurement of the channel, you don't have measurement; you have marketing. AI-vendor methodology is one input, not the truth.

Readiness Scorecard

Tally Met / Partial / Not Met for each criterion. A 'Partial' on cross-source independence (questions 9 and 10) deserves additional scrutiny regardless of total score.

#	Dimension	Met	Partial	Not Met
1	AI separately identified as source			
2	AI credited as first-class channel			
3	Window matches journey length			
4	Cross-channel AI traces enabled			
5	Inputs audited before modeling			
6	Documented chain of custody			
7	Confidence intervals on outputs			
8	Specific, falsifiable AI claims			
9	Multi-source verification			
10	Vendor-independent methodology			
TOTAL (10 possible) →				

How to read the result.

A stack scoring **8/10 or above** meets the bar — the data your team uses to make AI-related decisions is reliable enough to bet on. A stack scoring **5–7/10** has signal in some places but blind spots in others; decisions will be partly informed and partly inferred. A stack scoring **below 5/10** has significant gaps; AI decisions are being made on data that doesn't reliably reflect what AI is actually doing.

For a deeper diagnostic — applying these criteria to your specific stack with confidence intervals on each finding, and identifying where AI is currently acting in your consumer journey (absorbing demand, augmenting it, or replacing it) — talk to us about a 4 to 6 week AI-in-Advertising Audit. c3metrics.com/c3metrics-contact