

# Top 10

questions to ask  
your agency

about your TV and CTV  
investments in

**2026**

CTV advertising is growing rapidly, both in terms of available inventory and the advertising budgets flowing into the channel. Investment in CTV is projected to reach around \$38 billion<sup>1</sup> in the U.S. this year and is expected to reach \$46.9 billion by 2028<sup>2</sup>, surpassing linear for the first time. While market dynamics and definitions vary by region, similar shifts are evident globally, with streaming accounting for a growing share of total TV viewing across Europe and Asia-Pacific. However, as investment increases, challenges around measurement and transparency are becoming more visible. There is still no universal industry standard for how CTV impressions, viewability, or completions are counted, and - because streaming platforms control their own environments and rarely share user-level data - advertisers often have less visibility into reach and frequency than they do for linear TV.

Ad dollars always follow eyeballs. In the US, streaming viewing has already reached and slightly surpassed linear TV viewing<sup>3</sup>; while linear remains a powerful channel for broad reach, advertisers are increasingly using CTV to extend reach beyond linear TV's diminishing marginal utility curves and to connect with audiences who spend a growing share of their viewing time on streaming platforms. CTV also offers capabilities that go beyond traditional TV, including more granular audience targeting, new creative formats, and greater potential to connect investment with outcomes further down the funnel. While these capabilities create new opportunities for advertisers, they also contribute to a more fragmented ecosystem.

In this increasingly complex TV environment, agencies have a crucial role in helping advertisers navigate both the opportunities and the risks. The following 10 questions are designed to help advertisers structure these conversations and ensure that TV and CTV investments are planned, executed, and measured with transparency and accountability.

**How to use this checklist:** Use these questions in planning sessions, QBRs, and contract renewals to clarify (1) how performance is defined and measured, (2) what data you will receive (and in what format), and (3) which commercial or technology decisions could influence outcomes. Strong answers should come with documented definitions, repeatable reporting, and clear ownership.

**1. The issue: Fragmentation across platforms makes it increasingly difficult to measure true campaign reach.**

*The question: How are you measuring cross-platform reach and managing duplicated audiences?*

As TV and CTV viewership fragments, measuring true reach is becoming increasingly complex. One viewer could be exposed to the same campaign across linear, streaming and connected devices, potentially leading to duplicated impressions and unnecessary frequency – which means wasted investment.

To address this challenge, measurement providers are developing cross-platform solutions. Nielsen One integrates traditional panel data with large-scale datasets to model reach across devices and platforms; other systems rely on a more data-driven approach, using identity solutions and AI-based modelling to estimate audience reach across platforms. These approaches depend on accurate campaign set-up and consistent identifiers; industry standards and interoperability frameworks supported by bodies such as the IAB can help improve consistency, matching and deduplication.

Alongside measurement providers, advertiser bodies are also working to address these challenges. Initiatives led by the WFA, including the ANA's Aquila and ISBA's Origin, aim to improve cross-channel measurement frameworks and comparability across TV and CTV. While adoption is still evolving, these efforts point towards a clearer industry direction on reach, duplication and accountability.

Understanding how cross-platform reach is being measured, which measurement providers are used and how campaigns are optimized is critical to minimize waste.

- **Ask for:** The deduplication methodology (identity vs. modeled), how incremental reach is calculated, frequency distribution by platform, and any known limitations and confidence ranges
- **Red flags:** 'Black box' reach numbers with no methodology, an inability to explain duplication controls, and reporting that cannot be reconciled across partners.

## 2. **The issue: CTV introduces new capabilities that require advertisers to rethink traditional TV measurement frameworks.**

*The question: How should we rethink KPIs when using CTV alongside TV?*

CTV introduces new planning, targeting and measurement capabilities for marketers, but these don't replace the role of linear TV. In many territories, linear TV remains effective at delivering broad reach, particularly through high impact programming such as live television and sport; CTV can be used to extend reach, target harder to access audiences and add greater precision. Understanding how these channels work together is essential when planning investment.

The differences between the two channels affects how success is defined and measured. While linear TV has historically been evaluated using reach, frequency and GRPs, CTV KPIs may also include engagement, site visits and, with the right data integrations, downstream outcomes such as sales. However, implementing a core set of KPIs that can be compared consistently across both channels – such as reach, frequency and audience delivery – will help determine the best balance between scale and precision.

Some CTV platforms offer interactive or enhanced ad formats designed to drive engagement and response - while these formats can deliver value, they can increase fragmentation and make consistent implementation, measurement and benchmarking difficult. Advertisers should ensure they understand how their agencies balance reach, targeting, creative formats and measurement when planning TV and CTV campaigns.

- **Ask for:** A KPI framework that separates brand outcomes (reach/frequency) from performance outcomes (site visits, conversions), plus a plan for how KPIs will be compared across linear and CTV.
- **Red flags:** KPIs that change by platform with no rationale, or 'engagement' metrics that are not clearly defined and independently measurable.

**3. The issue: The dynamic nature of CTV delivery means campaigns require active monitoring rather than a ‘set-and-forget’ approach.**

*The question: How are TV and CTV campaigns monitored and optimized during the campaign?*

TV and CTV campaigns increasingly need continuous monitoring throughout a campaign. Audience delivery can vary, leading to frequency building up too quickly or delivery falling below expectations—agencies should therefore actively monitor campaigns and adjust delivery as necessary. This may involve reallocating impressions across platforms, adjusting frequency, or changing targeting parameters to ensure the campaign remains aligned with the original plan.

Automation and AI are increasingly leveraged to support campaign optimization and decision-making – although they can undoubtedly improve efficiency and help process large datasets, they should complement rather than replace experienced, human media professionals.

- **Ask for:** Your pacing and frequency guardrails, how often optimization changes are made, and the reporting cadence (daily/weekly) with clear reasons for material shifts.
- **Red flags:** No agreed guardrails, optimizations that cannot be explained post-hoc, or heavy reliance on automation with no human review process.

**4. The issue: The growing use of agency-owned technology can improve efficiency, but it may also reduce transparency.**

*The question: How transparent are the technologies and platforms used to plan and buy my CTV campaigns?*

Many agencies now use proprietary platforms or Software as a Service (SaaS) tools to support campaign planning, optimization and measurement. These platforms increasingly incorporate AI-driven optimization and modelling capabilities to improve targeting and delivery. However, these bundled products can also reduce transparency; when buying decisions and optimization are driven by agency-owned systems or AI tools, advertisers may have limited visibility into how those decisions are made. They should ask their agencies which technologies and platforms are being used, how they compare to other solutions in the market and whether strategic campaign recommendations are independent of agency commercial interests.

- **Ask for:** A list of platforms/tech used (DSPs, buying tools, measurement), what is proprietary vs. third-party, and what log-level or decision-level transparency is available.
- **Red flags:** An inability to disclose decision logic, undisclosed fees linked to tools, or recommendations that cannot be separated from agency commercial incentives.

**5. The issue: Access to CTV inventory is often shaped by agency trading relationships and marketplace agreements.**

*The question: Which supply partners and marketplace deals are used to access CTV inventory?*

CTV inventory is often accessed via a complex programmatic supply chain involving DSPs, SSPs, private marketplace deals, and direct publisher relationships. Agencies may have preferred partners or private marketplace agreements that give them access to premium inventory or favorable pricing. Although these arrangements often have advantages for advertisers, they can also influence how campaigns are planned and executed. With that in mind, advertisers should ensure they understand which partners their agency works with, how inventory is sourced, and the reasons for its selection.

- **Ask for:** The supply path (DSP/SSP/publisher), deal types (PMP, programmatic guaranteed, open exchange), and how partners are selected (quality, price, access, incentives).
- **Red flags:** Refusal to disclose the supply path, unclear deal terms, or 'preferred' partners with no documented performance or quality rationale.

**6. The issue: Access to campaign data and insights is critical for advertisers seeking to maximize value from their investments.**

*The question: Who owns the data and insights generated from TV and CTV campaigns?*

They say data is the gold of the 21st century, and access to campaign data and insights is crucial for advertisers in order to maximize value from their media investments. They should understand what level of data access they have, whether raw campaign data can be exported, and whether data and insights can be transferred if the agency relationship changes. Without clear agreements in place, advertisers may become dependent on agency systems or platforms to access their own campaign data. Ensuring data ownership and portability helps maintain flexibility and independence.

- **Ask for:** Your data access rights (raw/log-level where possible), data retention periods, export formats, and portability clauses if the agency relationship changes.
- **Red flags:** Data only available inside an agency portal, no export capability, or unclear ownership of derived audiences and insights.

**7. The issue: As TV becomes more digital, risks traditionally associated with online advertising are emerging in the CTV environment.**

*The question: How do you minimize invalid traffic and measurement inconsistencies in TV campaigns?*

As TV becomes more digital, so risks that are more commonly associated with online advertising are introduced into the CTV environment. These risks include invalid traffic, spoofed inventory and inaccurate attribution caused by imperfect identity matching; IP addresses may not always correspond to the correct household, and the growing use of VPNs can further complicate targeting and measurement. Industry initiatives such as the IAB's Open Measurement SDK (OM SDK) aim to improve transparency and reduce invalid traffic. Ascertaining what verification partners and safeguards are in place to ensure campaign delivery is measured accurately is key.

- **Ask for:** Verification partners (e.g., fraud/IVT), how IVT is defined and reported, whether OM SDK (or equivalent) is enabled where applicable, and your make-good/refund policy for invalid delivery.
- **Red flags:** No third-party verification, inconsistent definitions of impressions/viewability/completions, or an inability to provide IVT rates by supply partner.

**8. The issue: Programmatic buying and advanced targeting introduce new considerations around brand safety and privacy.**

*The question: How do you ensure brand safety and compliance with privacy regulations in CTV campaigns?*

Programmatic buying and advanced targeting capabilities can create risks around brand safety and data privacy. Campaigns run across publishers, platforms, and markets, each with different standards and regulations around content moderation and data privacy. It is therefore important for advertisers to understand which controls and verification partners are used to manage brand safety risks, and how privacy regulations may limit targeting or measurement capabilities in certain territories—particularly the EU, where laws are especially strict.

- **Ask for:** Brand safety controls (inclusion/exclusion lists, content categories), privacy compliance approach by market, consent requirements, and how targeting/measurement changes under EU regulations.
- **Red flags:** One-size-fits-all settings across markets, weak documentation of privacy controls, or limited visibility into where ads ran.

**9. The issue: Greater targeting precision does not always mean greater cost efficiency.**

*The question: How do you evaluate the cost efficiency of CTV versus linear?*

The main appeal of CTV over linear is that it allows for more precise targeting. However, this precision can lead to higher costs per viewer than on linear. Linear TV campaigns typically reach a broad audience, including viewers outside the core target group who may in fact still be relevant for the advertiser. CTV, on the other hand, delivers impressions only for specified audience segments. Advertisers should evaluate how CTV fits within their overall TV strategy and whether additional targeting precision justifies the increased cost per viewer.

- **Ask for:** Comparable cost metrics (CPM/CPV), effective reach against your target and analysis of incremental reach & marginal cost curves for linear vs. CTV.
- **Red flags:** Efficiency comparisons based only on CPM, or targeting so narrow that it inflates frequency and cost without incremental reach.

**10. The issue: The contractual relationship between advertiser and agency ultimately determines the level of transparency and accountability.**

*The question: Does our contract provide sufficient transparency on fees, incentives and media buying practices?*

With TV and CTV ecosystems becoming more complex, agency compensation models and commercial arrangements can have a significant influence on how campaigns are planned and executed. Agency revenue comes from a variety of sources beyond client fees, including proprietary platforms, programmatic buying technology, data and measurement services, and trading arrangements linked to specific broadcasters, streaming platforms and private marketplace deals. While these models undoubtedly support innovation and drive value, they can also influence how inventory is selected and how budgets are allocated between TV and CTV environments.

An advertiser's contract with their agency should provide sufficient transparency on fee structures, technology costs and commercial incentives linked to TV and CTV buying decisions. Clear contractual agreements can help ensure that strategic advice and media recommendations are always aligned with the advertiser's interests. Ultimately, the answers to many of the questions in this white paper will depend on what transparency and access have been contractually agreed with the agency.

- **Ask for:** A fee and incentive schedule, disclosure of rebates/volume incentives (where applicable), clarity on principal vs. agent buying, and audit rights covering tech and programmatic buying practices.
- **Red flags:** Bundled fees with no breakdown, limited audit rights, or contractual language that prevents you from accessing data needed to validate performance and costs.

**The final word**

The evolution of TV and CTV is reshaping how advertisers plan, measure and evaluate their media investments. By asking the right questions around transparency, technology, data and commercial structures, advertisers can navigate this increasingly fragmented landscape with more confidence. Maintaining a clear view of value and accountability will be critical as the ecosystem continues to evolve.

## References

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# About ECI

## ECI: HIGHER MEDIA VALUE

Technology is transforming the media landscape at an unprecedented pace. But in the right hands, change can be a force for good. ECI, the market's fastest growing global media management company, leverages these changes to help you drive higher media value from your advertising investment.

## A modern, data-led approach

Ever since our formation we have championed a modern approach to media and financial auditing. As pioneers in the field of online auditing, we include sophisticated analysis of programmatic activity in our audit model, and we pride ourselves on a forensic, fact-based approach which harnesses the power of our world-class talent and proprietary technology. Along with our innovative benchmarking capabilities, we are confident in our ability to empower our clients to drive higher media value and media-led impact on business performance.

## Cutting-edge services

Capitalizing on today's dynamic, fast-paced media landscape to drive higher

media value requires data-driven decision-making, global experience and a deep understanding of the latest technologies. At ECI we are proud to be able to offer these and so much more. Our promise to our clients is that we will deliver actionable insights on their media investments in a timely fashion, and that we will always balance cost and quality KPIs to drive maximum media impact and value. We partner with advertisers to support their agency pitches and contract negotiations, identifying fee models that cultivate transparent, productive partnerships and deliver stronger outcomes.

## Global experience, local expertise

We are proud of our client portfolio, which contains some of the world's largest and leading advertisers. Our network of owned offices and leading affiliates supports them where they need us, across the Americas, Europe and Asia Pacific. We offer them high-level media intelligence and rigorous benchmarking and, ultimately, the insight, experience and savvy to ensure that their advertising investment and agency relationships drive higher media value

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