
Be empowered by the cloud

Part three:

Understand the people behind
complex customer interactions

ACX IOM
BRAND LOVE. THIS WAY.

Contents

Taming data chaos in the cloud | 3

How the cloud empowers brands | 4

Four steps to master data and identity | 8

Capture and collect data | 9

Build your first-party data and identity graph | 10

Synchronize across your enterprise and beyond | 11

Connect and activate your data | 12

It's time to synchronize data and identity | 13

Ready to get started? | 14

About Acxiom | 15





Taming data chaos in the cloud

When it comes to brands' data and identity challenges, it's safe to say things are getting more difficult. But data complexity doesn't mean data chaos is inevitable.

In this guide, which is the final installment in our three-part series, we're looking at how brands can use cloud technologies to master that complexity. In the two previous installments, we tackled [analytics in the cloud](#) and [data management in the cloud](#). Our focus now is on how brands can be empowered by the cloud in their approach to data and identity.

The crux of the matter is brands need to be able to measure and optimize engagements, now and in the cookieless future – and yes, in the metaverse, too. (If you think this sounds like

far-flung future-gazing, take a look at the numbers playing open-world games like Fortnite or using platforms like Roblox today.)

While immersive technologies are still in their infancy, they're a continuation of the trends already at play in our increasingly digital world. The digital landscape is becoming ever more complex, but managing data about your audiences needn't be complicated or chaotic.

Brands' approach to data and identity will continue to be a linchpin for creating relevant, rewarding customer experiences. And the cloud is strengthening those capabilities in lots of exciting ways. Let's take a look at some of them.

How the cloud empowers brands

It brings data closer to the action, securely

A common theme in our series is how the cloud empowers you to minimize the distance between your data and the action. For example, cloud analytics helps brands to close the loop between measurement and improvement, so that customer journeys can be optimized as they're happening – not just at a later reporting stage between campaigns.

This ability is critical when we talk about data and identity, too. Every brand should have a strong identity backbone, as we'll discuss in the next chapter, but how do you safely minimize the distance from this backbone to the many points of interaction between your brand and customers or prospects?

It's helpful to think of this as a process of synchronizing data and identity across your enterprise and beyond – so it's always as accurate, accessible, and secure as possible. Whether it's an online ad, a customer support phone call, an in-store purchase, or any other kind of interaction, the cloud can help you synchronize your data in a privacy-conscious way. You can achieve this using things like API calls and native cloud applications, so you can “move” your data without actually having to move it in most cases.



Clean rooms: sharing data in the cloud

Clean rooms are an increasingly popular way for brands to safely share or combine datasets with partner organizations, and they rely on cloud technology.

For example, an airline and a hotel chain might pool their data to create targeted loyalty programs.

Clean rooms are a powerful tool for brands looking to enhance and expand on their first-party data. And the beauty of clean rooms is that, whether you're sharing data with one, two, or a hundred partners, you don't need to move personally identifiable information. You can manage it all in a controlled, automated way with SQL statements.

We're always looking for ways to improve brands' ability to share data effectively and securely, to unlock higher match rates without compromising on data privacy. Earlier this year, we launched Match Multiplier, that helps to extend the reach of first-party data for programmatic efforts.

[Learn more](#)

It makes integrations effortless

If a synchronized data and identity capability is the goal, then integrations are the plumbing that helps to make it a reality. These integrations and connections take multiple forms, and have to work across different systems (you can't run a connected TV campaign from your in-house CRM!) and, crucially, they also have to work across multiple clouds.

So if you're working with a data and identity partner, make sure you understand their cloud strategy. Specifically, their ability to manage data across different clouds seamlessly. Our customers tell us they need data access and control capabilities that are simple yet powerful. They don't want to compromise on accuracy or speed.

So we're proud of our cloud-agnostic approach. Interoperability between data spaces is key, and the cloud – or rather the clouds – are no exception.



It takes an ecosystem

Every major brand's marketing strategy in the future will be a multi-cloud strategy. The explosion in digital channels and platforms means that complexity is inevitable – but fragmentation and chaos needn't be.

Building an effective data and identity capability is therefore an ecosystem-wide effort. When you work with a data and identity partner, you have to look at who they partner with, too. That's the surest way to understand if they have a strategy that aligns with your brand's needs, and if they have the expertise and resources to help you tame data chaos.

Looking for an identity partner? Here's a guide that tells you what to look for, and what questions to ask a potential partner.

[Get the guide](#)



It helps you adapt and innovate

When you're talking about the benefits of the cloud, you hear a lot about flexibility and elasticity. The ability to scale storage and compute up and down according to your needs, making your use of cloud technologies more effective – and more cost-effective too.

But we also like to look at the longer-term benefits of the cloud for data and identity. Simply put, the cloud is where the action is. New tools and technologies are being built for the cloud, in the cloud. So there's an element not just of FOMO, but of keeping critical opportunities open to your brand by having a strong, open-minded cloud strategy.



Four steps to master data and identity

Every organization's path to customer understanding is different, but we can break the journey down into a few steps you'll have to master along the way. Let's dive into each of them in turn.

- 1 Capture and collect data
- 2 Build your first-party data and identity graph
- 3 Synchronize across your enterprise and beyond
- 4 Connect and activate your data

1_

Capture and collect data

Start with what you can own and control: the first-party data you collect across owned and paid media. This data, and the identity graph it helps you build, is the foundation for everything. So think about how you're gathering and managing this data, but also about what kind of value exchange you can offer to maintain a steady flow of first-party data in the medium and longer terms.

One of the biggest disruptions hitting brands in the coming years is the deprecation of third-party cookies on Chrome, which is now expected in the second half of 2024. We've been encouraging brands to get ready for this major shift, and you can read more about it in [this guide](#) we put together. Whatever you do, don't procrastinate!





2_

Build your first-party data and identity graph

No matter what new and exciting digital channels and data sources come and go, every brand needs an identity backbone – this is your first-party data graph.

Indeed, as customer interactions and the data that flows from them become more decentralized, it's even more critical to have a foundational identity graph that's owned and controlled by you. This is where you'll bring all those signals together so your data is ready to be optimized and put to work, with nothing wasted.

As you build out your graph, you'll identify gaps in your first-party data – gaps that you can fill with high-quality third-party data. For example, a bit of data hygiene and standardization will help you identify missing contact data, as well as opportunities to enrich your data graph with data attributes – such as homeowner status, the presence of children, and interests and hobbies – that can help you segment your customers and send more relevant messages and offers. Third-party data providers and data marketplaces are critical here, and the cloud plays a big role in making these connections fast and secure – which brings us on to data synchronization.



3_

Synchronize across your enterprise and beyond

Your first-party data graph is the foundation, but it's just the beginning. You'll want to build on it by incorporating more data from various sources – and making sure it's all synchronized with your identity spine. So what kind of data are we talking about? While terms like second-party and third-party data are useful, they focus more on where the data has come from – rather than what you can achieve when you use it.

So we sometimes find it helpful to think about data in other ways. There's the data that helps you predict growth – taking what you know about your customers from their behavior and purchase history, for example, and combining it with additional data like someone's hobbies and interests, their buying power, and their media consumption preferences. This can help you predict successful paths to audience growth and new customer acquisition. The attributes and interests associated with a person are just as much a part of their identity as an email touchpoint or physical postal address.

Then you'll want to take your strategy for audience growth and execute it in the wider world, to maximize reach. That might mean working with an agency to connect to audiences out in the world: in digital display, on email, on CTV, via direct mail, and so on.

Once again, the cloud is the great enabler here in terms of connectivity, speed, and secure access to data. The connections you implement across your enterprise and the ecosystem of technologies and tools around it will be the all-important plumbing that lets you synchronize data and identity everywhere – for shorter time to market, faster feedback loops, and better insights to inform decision-making.



4_

Connect and activate your data

Finally, it's time to connect and activate your data – at the speed required for any use case.

This speed is one of the major enablers of powerful cloud computing, and it's critical for capabilities like analytics, real-time personalization, and any use case that relies on large data volumes and intelligent decisioning in the moment.

Another great thing about cloud-connected data and identity solutions is that they're exactly that: solutions. When Acxiom designs solutions for various industries, we're bundling decades of experience and the benefit of thousands of implementations into something that the next brand can access much more easily. In many cases they can be purchased off the shelf, or configured to your specific needs with expert consultants, and most of the technical heavy lifting is already done for you.

It's time to synchronize data and identity

Throughout this cloud series, we've seen how adoption levels vary across capabilities, from the more mature cloud analytics space to the emerging cloud data management space – and across industries, where even in regulated industries with greater security concerns there's a feeling that the cloud is the future.

In the world of data and identity, the outlook is clear: if you're not embracing cloud technologies or working on your cloud strategy today, you're already behind.

The speed of change in recent years is like nothing we've ever seen before, both in terms of how brands advertise and how people choose to interact with you. To keep pace, and to make sure you can prevent digital complexity from turning into chaos, you need to harness the powerful new technologies and connections that the cloud offers.

Making sense of this complexity, and the cloud technologies that can help you master it, is no easy feat. But the good news is that, when it comes to the cloud, collaboration and partnerships are everything.

Acxiom has worked hard to build a network of partners across the entire ecosystem, from cloud vendors and clean room players, to data providers, marketing platforms and, of course, the brands we serve. We know that our investments in cloud technologies today will give us the best chance of adapting to change quickly and flexibly in the future.

So when you're thinking about how the cloud can help you understand the individuals behind increasingly complex customer interactions, remember that this is about a strategy that will leave you best placed to take advantage of new opportunities and innovations down the road.

Ready to get started?

Gain a better understanding of the individuals behind increasingly complex digital interactions. Learn more about Acxiom's data and identity solutions, from first-party identity graphs and data quality services to data-sharing and matching solutions. Explore our solutions or get in touch to speak with our experts.

[Explore solutions](#)

About Acxiom

Acxiom partners with the world's leading brands to create customer intelligence, enabling data-driven marketing experiences that generate value for people and for brands. The experts in identity, the ethical use of data, cloud-first customer data management, and analytics solutions, Acxiom makes the complex marketing ecosystem work, applying customer intelligence wherever brands and customers meet.

Acxiom's Customer Intelligence Cloud (CIC) brings it all together, combining data, technology, and expert services so brands can acquire the customers they'd love to have, grow trusted and valued customer relationships, and retain their best customers for today and tomorrow. CIC is a connected suite that includes identity solutions, data and audience insights, and analytics, integrated with leading marketing platforms and technology partners, and supported by award-winning services.

By helping brands genuinely understand people, Acxiom enables experiences so relevant and respectful, people are willing to explore new brands and stay loyal to those they love. For more than 50 years, Acxiom has turned the complexity of customer data into the simplicity of customer understanding, delivering better experiences for people and growth for brands.

With locations in the US, UK, China, Poland, and Germany, Acxiom is a registered trademark of Acxiom LLC and is part of The Interpublic Group of Companies, Inc. (IPG).

For more information on Acxiom and their Customer Intelligence Cloud, visit [acxiom.com](https://www.acxiom.com).



ACXIOM

Acxiom is a registered trademark of Acxiom LLC and is part of The Interpublic Group of Companies (IPG).