Klearly.™

A Guide to Reframing Attribution

The concept of attribution was never wrong.
We simply need to reframe it to understand
what to do next.

Here's how.

Klearly.™

INTRODUCTION

ATTRIBUTION.

For many marketers and revenue professionals the word alone elicits all the feels.

It may have been David Ogilvy who began to lead us down the path of exploring attribution in 1963, when he shared the following in his book, Confessions of an Advertising Man:

> **"Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted, and the trouble is I don't know which half."**

Nearly 60 (!!) years later the struggles continue. And it's become considerably more complex.

Marketers have attempted to solve for attribution for many years. There are countless companies that have been built—and sold—while trying to discover the Holy Grail. Hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of people have been focused on it. So we can all admit it's an important topic.

But why have we been so engrossed with attribution?

It's likely for the reason David Ogilvy illuminated in his book: understanding what had an impact. Yet, we really need to take that reasoning a step further.

Ultimately, we desire to know what has worked so we can do it again.

CONTEXT

We know from experience the B2B buying journey is cumbersome. There are dozens if not hundreds (or even thousands!) of touchpoints between a prospective customer and the product or service they're considering. And in today's world it's not only Marketing interacting with prospects. We also have Pre-Sales, Field Sales, Sales Engineers, Customer Success, and Product. Things have become exponentially more complex.

As with most things there's good news and there's bad news.

THE GOOD NEWS

Many of our interactions with prospective customers are captured as data points. We've gotten really good at capturing data. Yay us!

THE BAD NEWS

We've been terrible at using our data for its ultimate value. The same data points we capture are usually in different systems, isolated from each other and out of reach of any meaningful intelligence.

And even if we could access and aggregate our data in a frictionless manner, those systems were absolutely not originally designed to capture data in a way that would be helpful to solve for attribution (or a litany of other things).

The data don't even make sense in their own systems, let alone trying to aggregate data from different systems. They all speak different languages. So, even if we could access our data, the data needs to be prepared and engineered before it can ever be effectively understood.

And even after the data are engineered and ready for analysis, the analysis then requires someone to have a contextual understanding of what they're looking at and trying to solve for.

So, we basically need a team member who is: skilled at technology systems, data engineering, analytics/data science, and is a subject matter expert in the given business domain so they translate insights into action.

That's unicorn status.

DISRUPTION

The current state of B2B marketing is in disarray. We continue to buy technology and create data. We invest heavily in operations roles and consulting partners with the hope of Frankenstacking the tools we buy into something that can tell us what has been working and, hopefully, what we should be doing. Not to mention we are also trying to keep the lights on, and grow our businesses at the same time. Good grief.

And while we try to solve for all the things, the B2B sales process is evolving (and really, we should be calling it the buying process). It's moving forward—and it's happening quickly.

Case in point: product-led growth (PLG) is a very real thing. The buying journey is becoming significantly more digital, which means fewer human interactions and more self-service buying experiences. It wouldn't be surprising within the next 10 years if many B2B purchases happen with very little traditional sales interactions. Some may occur with no sales interactions at all.

The buying process is becoming increasingly non-linear. And at the same time, it's theoretically becoming easier to understand because many of the now-digital touchpoints provide a meaningful trail of data. Reducing human interactions from the buying process—whether we like it or not—inherently results in higher quality and quantity data. Will we be able to collect all the data in the buying process, for example, from dark social? Certainly not. Just like all things in life, no one model can solve for all the things in the universe.

We can definitely improve the way we use all our existing first-party data that we have worked so hard to collect. It can be definitively directional.

The non-linear, digital buyer's journey that is evolving is particularly intriguing because it requires revenue teams—Sales, Marketing, and Customer Success —to work in a significantly more collaborative, data-informed manner.

Historical attribution methodologies have looked only at marketing data. We also need to be considering how sales, customer success, and product data are influencing revenue. All four teams are directly connected to revenue; as such, we must be considering them and how they not only impact revenue, but also how they influence each other.

A revenue team is like an orchestra, with all the moving parts hopefully playing in harmony. It's not an orchestra if only the french horn is playing. And it's a terrible orchestra if all the instruments are playing concurrently without alignment.

We have been talking about attribution for many years. And relatively new paradigms have been popping up, such as ABM and Revenue Operations. If we step back and consider these things objectively—and their underlying objectives—we realize they are deeply interconnected.

So, with all that said, let's take a look at Klearly's approach to prescriptive attribution.

OUR TAKE ON ATTRIBUTION

1   **We want to know what's happening.**

2   **We want to know what's working (or not).**

3   **We want to know how to prioritize and optimize our efforts.**

4   **And we want to know how we can have an impact on the business.**

This is where the team at Klearly is focusing on attribution. We are helping B2B revenue teams across Sales, Marketing, Customer Success, and Product confidently focus on these priorities and work together in concert.

Attribution is about the need to effectively and efficiently understand the past so we can make better decisions about the future. It's no longer about credit; rather, it is about contribution.

Finally, we strongly believe attribution should be considering all the things that may have influenced revenue. All revenue-focused teams likely had an impact on a win or a loss, and we should be considering them all as influencers. Or as we like to say at Klearly, Winfluencers.

If you're ready to lean in on attribution and embrace it in a more effective, efficient way—and you're inspired by using all your teams' historical data to look forward—we'd love to speak with you.

Message us at see@klearly.com and we'll get the conversation started.

The concept of attribution was never wrong. It just needed to be reframed.