DISQO | REPORT

2025 Social Media Advertising Effectiveness Benchmarks

Understand norms for brand and outcomes lift on social media

Beyond awareness—a catalyst for influence and action

Social media isn't just a platform—it's the pulse of human connection, shaping how people think, feel, and buy. With over five billion active users, it's become the world's largest marketplace and advertising canvas, where influence spreads meaningfully, trust and validation shape perception, and a single campaign can spark global trends.

It's where emotion-driven discovery meets decision-making, helping brands turn passive scrolling into active shopping. In 2025, it will surpass TV as the number one media driver of consumer purchases.

But influence doesn't always mean impact. To truly harness social media's power, brands need more than just likes and shares—they need measurable cross-platform insights that reveal how ads incrementally drive real consumer perceptions and actions, from awareness to purchase.

DISQO's Brand Lift and Outcomes Lift products provide a single-source, identity-based approach to measurement—capturing brand sentiment and digital behaviors across platforms, media partners, and in-market creative. Our deterministic, first-party data eliminates blind spots, giving advertisers a complete view of ad exposure, sentiment shifts, and behavioral outcomes across search, site visits, and online shopping activity.

Using social media ad effectiveness benchmarks to maximize your impact

To optimize and maximize ad spend, brands need to know how their campaigns perform relative to their peers. With these benchmarks, marketers gain a complete view of social media ad effectiveness—how it varies by category and what strategies align with their brand's existing awareness level to ensure the best results on one of the most important advertising channels.

How is DISQO able to measure advertising on siloed social platforms?

Because our audience opts in to share their digital behaviors across channels—including siloed social platforms—DISQO measures ad exposure without relying on platform data. This consistent methodology ensures a clear, unbiased view of campaign impact for our clients.

What do DISQO's social media benchmarks cover?

This report compares cross-channel benchmarks (OTT/CTV, digital display, mobile, streaming audio, social media) to social media benchmarks (including Pinterest, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, X, and Reddit). We calculate the differences across categories and brand maturity levels using an index.

DISQO's benchmarks include:

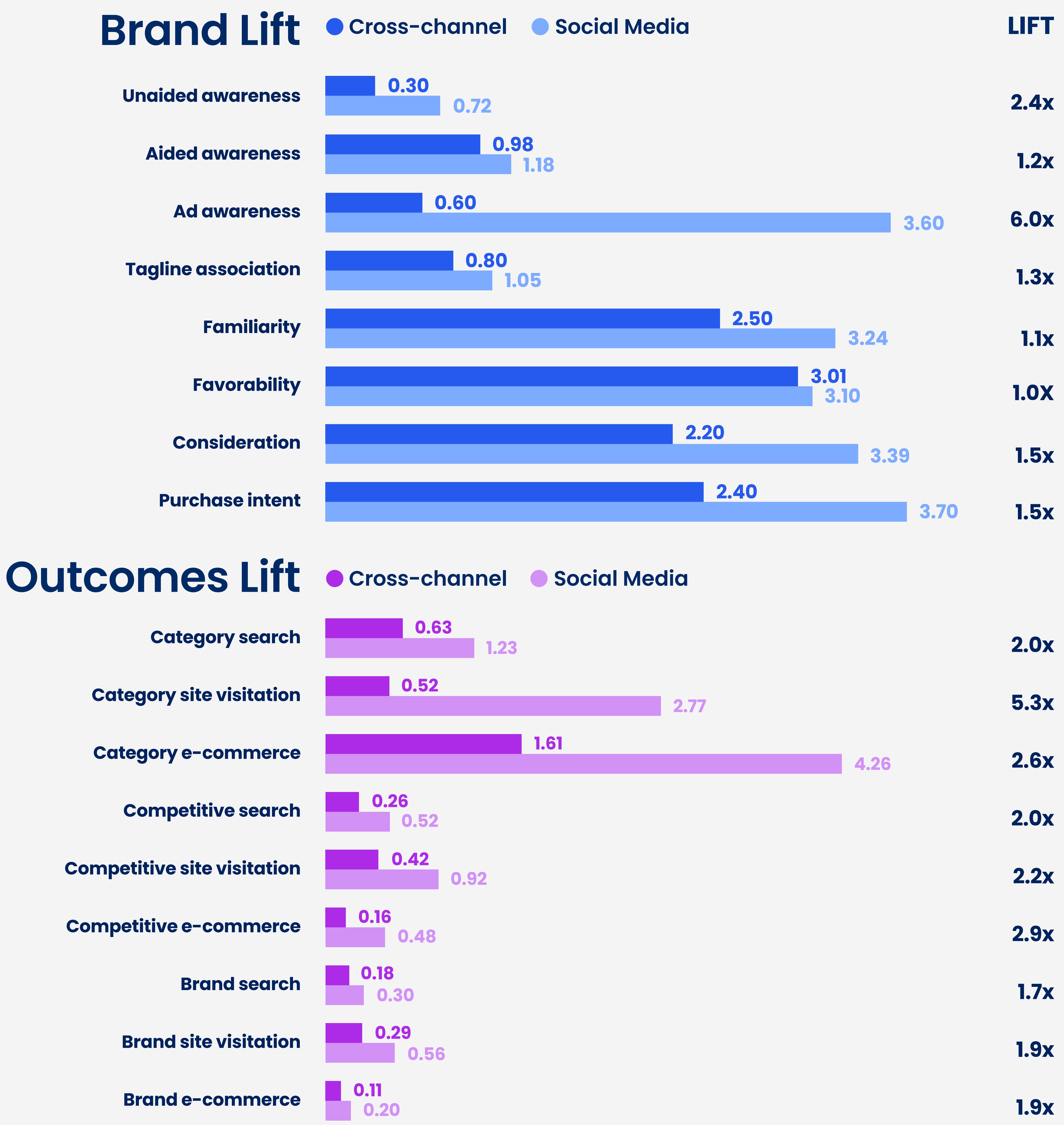
1. **Data from 1650 campaigns**
   from March 2021 through December 2024
2. **Seventeen lift metrics,** spanning brand awareness, favorability, and key consumer actions like site visits, search engagement, and e-commerce activity for brand, category, and competitors
3. **Four core business categories and three core brand maturity stages,** including new, emerging, and established

Social media's role in driving action is rising

Analyzing benchmark data across DISQO's 17 Brand and Outcomes Lift metrics makes the advantages of social media advertising clear. Here, we compared the median lift scores for a typical cross-channel campaign (●●) with those for social media only (●●). In every attitudinal and behavioral metric category, social media delivered a positive lift over the overall average. Brand familiarity, ad awareness, consideration, and purchase intent showed particularly strong gains, along with outcomes metrics like category site visitation and e-commerce.

Notably, all Outcomes Lift benchmark categories saw increased lift compared to [2024 benchmarks,] highlighting social media's growing influence in driving lower-funnel actions in unison with brand-building activities.

Median lift across all channels and campaigns (●●) and median lift on social channels only (●●), March 2021 to December 2024. "Social multiplier" (●) equals social channel only lift divided by cross-channel lift. Therefore, 1.0x means performance is equivalent for social vs. all other channels combined, while higher numbers indicate performance is "x" times stronger for social channels.



Social media excels at outcomes

Social media is amplifying awareness and reshaping the path to purchase

Social media is fundamentally altering how consumers move from discovery to action. With ad awareness at 6x, awareness at 2.4x, and purchase intent at 1.5x compared to cross-channel benchmarks, consumers aren't just seeing brands; they're actively considering, engaging, and remembering them.

Social media is turning engagement into action at scale

More than driving intent, social accelerates action. With category site visitation at 5.3x, consumers exposed to social ads are significantly more likely to explore products. Coupled with a 2.6x category ecommerce benchmark lift, well-executed social campaigns don't just inspire—they convert.

Winning in social means owning the full consumer journey

As competitive search (2.0x) and competitive site visitation (2.2x) continue to rise, social strategies should be laser-focused on nurturing through conversion. Clicks and engagement aren't enough—every touchpoint, from ad creative to landing pages, must drive action. Seamless buying experiences, compelling brand storytelling, and exclusive social-first offers can be the difference between capturing demand and losing it to competitors.

Understanding social performance by category

While social media outperforms cross-channel metrics overall, its impact varies by industry and metric. Here we see social benchmarks by category and how they compare to overall cross-channel and overall social-media norms. This comparison reveals that while social media often leads, its effectiveness varies across categories and metrics.

Data is not shown for specific category/metric combinations due to the lack of 15+ campaigns for analysis.

Benchmarks

	OVERALL (Cross-channel)	OVERALL (Social)	CONSUMABLES	GOODS	SERVICES	VEHICLES
Unaided awareness	0.30	0.72	0.55	1.42	0.48	0.13
Aided awareness	0.98	1.18	2.11	0.70	0.60	2.02
Ad Awareness	0.60	3.60	3.99	4.70	3.13	0.04
Tagline assocation	0.80	1.05	0.50	1.36	1.48	--
Familiarity	2.50	3.24	3.73	3.09	2.50	4.62
Favorability	3.01	3.10	3.71	2.87	2.94	2.84
Consideration	2.20	3.39	4.01	2.58	2.40	5.45
Purchase intent	2.40	3.70	4.49	2.22	2.99	4.59
Category search	0.63	1.23	0.86	1.41	2.02	0.29
Category site visitation	0.52	2.77	1.52	4.27	1.27	--
Category e-commerce	1.61	4.26	2.52	4.62	8.46	--
Competitive search	0.26	0.52	0.20	1.70	0.63	0.47
Competitive site visitation	0.42	0.92	0.46	1.92	2.28	0.16
Competitive e-commerce	0.16	0.48	0.47	2.36	0.02	--
Brand search	0.18	0.30	0.15	0.77	0.73	0.14
Brand site visitation	0.29	0.56	0.21	1.40	0.94	0.26
Brand e-commerce	0.11	0.20	0.10	0.51	0.35	--

Comparing social performance across categories

The “social index by category” compares social media’s performance across specific categories. The category social benchmark was divided by the overall social benchmark and then multiplied by 100 to create an index. Metrics with 100 as the baseline indicate parity with overall social benchmarks. Scores above 100 show where that category outperforms in social, while scores below 100 highlight areas where it underperforms the social norms.

Data is not shown for specific category/metric combinations due to the lack of 15+ campaigns for analysis.

Index

	CONSUMABLES	GOODS	SERVICES	VEHICLES
Unaided awareness	75.91	**195.97**	66.24	17.94
Aided awareness	**179.48**	59.54	51.04	**171.83**
Ad awareness	**110.83**	**130.56**	86.94	1.11
Tagline Association	47.82	**130.06**	**141.54**	--
Familiarity	**115.17**	95.41	77.19	**142.65**
Favorability	**119.52**	92.46	94.72	91.50
Consideration	**118.30**	76.11	70.80	**160.78**
Purchase intent	**121.35**	60.00	80.81	**124.05**
Category search	69.97	**114.72**	**164.34**	23.59
Category site visitation	54.90	**154.22**	45.87	--
Category e-commerce	59.22	**108.57**	**198.81**	--
Competitive search	38.53	**327.48**	**121.36**	90.54
Competitive site visitation	49.83	**208.01**	**247.01**	17.33
Competitive e-commerce	98.15	**492.85**	4.18	--
Brand search	49.32	**253.20**	**240.04**	46.04
Brand site visitation	37.56	**250.37**	**168.10**	49.50
Brand e-commerce	49.99	**254.94**	**174.96**	--

Category takeaways

Consumables

Convert impulse intent into instant action

Social media drives high purchase intent (4.49x) for consumables but weak competitive search (0.20x) and site visitation (0.46x), suggesting consumers aren't comparing brands—they're acting fast. Marketers must capitalize on seamless, in-platform shopping, limited-time offers, and finding the perfect strategic ad frequency that pushes timely conversions before consumers leave the platform.

Goods

Win customers directly from competitors

With competitive search (1.70x) and competitive e-commerce (2.36x) outperforming all categories, it's clear social media is a battleground for switching brand preferences. Consumers are actively comparing products, making retargeting, agile measurement, and optimization essential to steal share and close a sale before consumers browse and click elsewhere.

Services

Build trust, then drive conversion

Services see exceptional conversion rates, with category e-commerce (8.46x) and competitive site visitation (2.28x) outperforming all other industries. However, low awareness scores mean that brands must earn credibility first. Educational content, expert endorsements, and strategic retargeting with a pulse on consumer expectations should guide them seamlessly from discovery to decision.

Vehicles

Unlock social's untapped potential in auto buying

Vehicles lag in unaided awareness (0.13x) and ad awareness (0.04x), signaling that social media is not a go-to channel for automotive discovery. Yet consideration (5.45x) and purchase intent (4.59x) are among the highest. Consumers engaging on social media are serious buyers, but without cross-platform insights, brands may underestimate social's impact and where to allocate campaign budgets effectively.

At every growth stage, social media drives distinctive lift patterns

As brands grow, social media influences awareness, engagement, and conversion differently, making it essential to align strategies with brand maturity for maximum impact.

The "social and brand maturity benchmarks" compare how social media impacts brands at different stages of awareness—new, emerging, and established—against overall benchmarks.

Brand maturity is based on aided awareness control baselines: new brands (0-33%), emerging brands (34-66%), and established brands (67-100%). Data is not shown for specific category/metric combinations due to the lack of 15+ campaigns for analysis.

Benchmarks

	OVERALL	SOCIAL	NEW	EMERGING	ESTABLISHED
Unaided awareness	0.30	0.72	0.05	0.4	0.87
Aided awareness	0.98	1.18	3.67	3.7	0.91
Ad awareness	0.60	3.60	1.92	2.8	3.95
Tagline Association	0.80	1.05	0	0.35	1.48
Familiarity	2.50	3.24	3.2	3.45	3.36
Favorability	3.01	3.10	2.4	3.83	3.11
Consideration	2.20	3.39	2	4.2	3.48
Purchase intent	2.40	3.70	2.5	3.15	3.84
Category search	0.63	1.23	0.49	0.6	1.52
Category site visitation	0.52	2.77	--	4.16	3.84
Category e-commerce	1.61	4.26	--	4.76	5.55
Competitive search	0.26	0.52	0.47	0.49	0.6
Competitive site visitation	0.42	0.92	0.9	0.41	1.05
Competitive e-commerce	0.16	0.48	--	1.3	0.47
Brand search	0.18	0.30	0.14	0.16	0.38
Brand site visitation	0.29	0.56	0.32	0.18	0.74
Brand e-commerce	0.11	0.20	--	0.15	0.21

Comparing social performance across brand maturity

The “social and brand maturity index” compares social media’s performance across brand maturity levels. It was calculated by dividing the brand benchmark by the overall social benchmark and then multiplied by 100. Metrics with 100 as the baseline indicate parity with social benchmarks. Scores above 100 show where that brand maturity stage outperforms overall social, while scores below 100 highlight areas where it underperforms.

Index

	NEW	EMERGING	ESTABLISHED
Unaided awareness	6.90	55.20	**120.07**
Aided awareness	**312.18**	**314.73**	77.41
Ad awareness	53.33	77.78	**109.72**
Tagline Association	0.00	33.47	**141.54**
Familiarity	98.81	**106.52**	**103.75**
Favorability	77.32	**123.39**	**100.19**
Consideration	59.00	**123.91**	**102.67**
Purchase intent	67.57	85.14	**103.78**
Category search	39.87	48.82	**123.67**
Category site visitation	--	**150.25**	**138.69**
Category e-commerce	--	**111.86**	**130.43**
Competitive search	90.54	94.39	**115.58**
Competitive site visitation	97.50	44.42	**113.75**
Competitive e-commerce	--	**271.48**	98.15
Brand search	46.04	52.61	**124.95**
Brand site visitation	57.23	32.19	**132.34**
Brand e-commerce	--	74.98	**104.98**

Key brand maturity implications for marketers

Social media's role in brand growth is not linear

Social media's effectiveness shifts dramatically across brand maturity levels. New brands see massive gains in aided awareness (312.18) but struggle to push lower-funnel actions. Emerging brands excel in consideration (123.91), while established brands dominate in category e-commerce (130.43). These patterns highlight the need for brands to evolve their social strategy as they grow—what works in one phase may not in the next.

Emerging brands face the most volatility

Unlike new or established brands, emerging brands show the widest swings in social media effectiveness. While category site visitation (150.25) and competitive e-commerce (271.48) surge, brand search (52.61) lags behind. While social drives engagement, it doesn't always translate into direct brand interest. Marketers must monitor shifting campaign performance signals and optimize accordingly to sustain momentum.

Established brands must balance loyalty and competition

Established brands enjoy strong conversion metrics, but competitive search (115.58x) and competitive site visitation (113.75x) indicate rising brand-switching behavior. While social media remains a key driver of purchases, it also fuels exploration of alternatives. Maintaining dominance requires understanding when consumers are reinforcing loyalty versus when they are considering competitors—and using deterministic cross-platfrom measurement to optimize accordingly.

Methodology

More than 23 million people have opted in to share their opinions and online experiences with DISQO, empowering clients to cultivate deep insights about their target audiences and to perform objective, single-source measurement of advertising effectiveness on attitudes and behaviors. DISQO's normative benchmarks are based on campaigns measured by our Brand Lift and Outcomes Lift products, which are part of DISQO's ad effectiveness measurement platform.

Brand Lift and Outcomes Lift measurement

Lift is calculated as the difference between exposed and control consumers at the campaign level. Exposed consumers are those who have demonstrably seen the advertisement in question. Control consumers are built by creating a group comparable to exposed consumers on demographics (age, gender, income), and when the data is available, on prior brand interest and site visitation behavior.

Brand lift is calculated by delivering a survey to both groups and assessing the difference score. For outcomes lift metrics, the digital behaviors of both groups are assessed across the campaign's lifetime and a short post-campaign period (+7 days after). The percentage of consumers who engage in the outcome metric is computed and compared across groups.

Inclusion criteria

Our benchmarks include all campaigns completed between March 2021 and December 2024, with at least 30 validated responses in both the control and exposed groups.

Benchmarks are only published when the following criteria are met: (1) there are a minimum of 15 campaigns, (2) more than three distinct brands were tested, and (3) no single brand made up 50% or more of the campaigns included.

Methodology

Campaign count
The dataset includes over 1650 individual campaigns.

Social multiplier calculation
“Social multiplier” equals social channel only lift for that category and metric divided by cross-channel lift.

Social index calculation
The “Social index” is calculated by dividing the category social benchmark by the overall social benchmark and multiplying that by 100.

Calculations
The incremental lift for each metric is calculated by taking the response from the exposed group and subtracting the response from an unexposed control group.

Benchmarks are the median lift score across the entire campaign set. Median is used over mean or weighted average to account for abnormal lift distributions, and to avoid large campaigns heavily influencing benchmark results. If there is an even number of campaigns, the median is the average of the two campaigns at the center of the distribution.

	Search	Site visitation	Ecommerce
BRAND	For the brand or a curated list of key message terms within a search engine	Visits to the branded website or any subdomains	Exhibit a brand-specific shopping behavior (view, search, add-to-cart, etc.)
CATEGORY	For the larger brand category, or unbranded terms within a search engine	Visits not dedicated to the advertising brand’s sites, but related to the category	Exhibit a product-related (but not brand specific) shopping behavior (view, search, add-to-cart, etc.)
COMPETITIVE	For the competitor, or a curated list of key message terms within a search engine	Visits to the competitors’ websites or any subdomains	Exhibit a competitor-specific shopping behavior (view, search, add-to-cart, etc.)

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Curious how your campaigns match up against these benchmarks?

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