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Unlocking True Long-Term Brand Impact: Kantar's Unique MMM Approach

Modern Marketing Mix Modelling (MMM) often focuses on immediate sales uplift from media, but traditional models miss a large part of the story, the enduring brand-driven effects that continue long after a campaign ends.

However, Kantar's new advanced True Long-Term brand effect modelling is a breakthrough that now fills this gap, providing a more comprehensive view of the true ROI of your media investments.

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The Need for True Long-Term Modelling in MMM

Why do we need a long-term brand effect model? Traditional MMM approaches mainly account for the immediate impact of media on sales. They usually assume that once advertising stops, sales quickly revert to baseline levels. In practice, this isn't how brands behave – established brands often maintain momentum and continue to generate sales from past advertising, thanks to residual brand equity effects built over time.

Other MMM providers typically handle carryover effects through Adstock (assuming a short decay of media impact over a few weeks), or by attributing some form of persistent "indirect" effect via brand metrics extending these effects artificially over time with multipliers. Yet, such approaches still fail to reflect the genuine, long-term influence of brand equity:

Limited Persistence:
Adstock provides only limited persistence – the tail of impact usually dissipates within a few weeks. This means conventional models **undercount prolonged impact**, or do this artificially, especially for channels like TV, online video, or sponsorships that are known to build brand equity.

No Enduring Brand-Build:
Standard "indirect effects" do not formally carry brand strength forward. Without this, **brand equity built in the past can't fully influence future sales in the model.**

Abrupt Baseline Assumption:
As a result, typical models might predict a sharp drop to baseline when media spend stops, which **is unrealistic for strong brands** that enjoy continued sales due to their accumulated brand goodwill.

Under-valuing Brand Investments:
By not capturing the long tail of media impact, traditional MMM's **underestimate the total ROI,** particularly for brand-building media. This can lead marketers to **misallocate budgets,** favouring short-term sales activation over longer-term brand health building.

Artificial long-term carry-over:
The use of multipliers stretches the apparent impact of certain media channels by extrapolating their short-term results. This is misleading, once some channels excel at brand building yet show limited short-term sales lift, whereas others boost sales quickly but do little to strengthen brand equity over time.

Brand awareness as a modelled brand metric:
Relying on short-term indicators like brand awareness to represent brand equity is a common error. Such metrics swing in tandem with current media spend, so they fail to capture the capacity of the brand to sustain future demand. Their tight correlation with spend also distorts model attribution, deviating credit away from real marketing drivers, skewing ROI calculations, and leading budget-optimisation efforts astray.

The implication:
Marketers using only short-term focused MMM might be **leaving money on the table** – not recognising that a substantial share of their marketing impact and future sales comes from sustained brand effects. This is the gap that Kantar addresses head-on.

Kantar's Long-Term Brand Model – How It Works

Kantar's new solution Long-Term Brand Effect model explicitly models **both immediate sales impact and the prolonged "brand equity" impact** of media. In simple terms, we don't just ask "What did this campaign do to sales this quarter?" but also "How did this campaign strengthen the brand in a way that will drive sales **next quarter, next year, and beyond?**"

Key components of Kantar's approach:

Dual-Impact Modelling:
We model sales as a function of both **media investments and brand equity** (along with control factors like pricing, distribution, seasonality, and competitor activity). Media can drive sales directly in the short term and indirectly over the long-term by building brand equity.

Brand Equity as a Carryover Mechanism:
Our model includes a dedicated equation for brand equity, which itself is influenced by media spend. Crucially, today's brand equity is linked to **yesterday's brand equity.** This means that any boost to brand equity from marketing has a **persistent effect**, carrying forward into the future. In essence, we **mathematically "carry the brand forward"** so that strong brand health yesterday makes sales more likely tomorrow.

Brand Momentum:
We anchor current brand equity to its past levels. This is how our model **remembers the past** – if your brand has built up goodwill, the model knows that today's sales have a foundation beyond just today's advertising. This term captures the **momentum of brand strength**, a unique feature that standard MMM models lack.
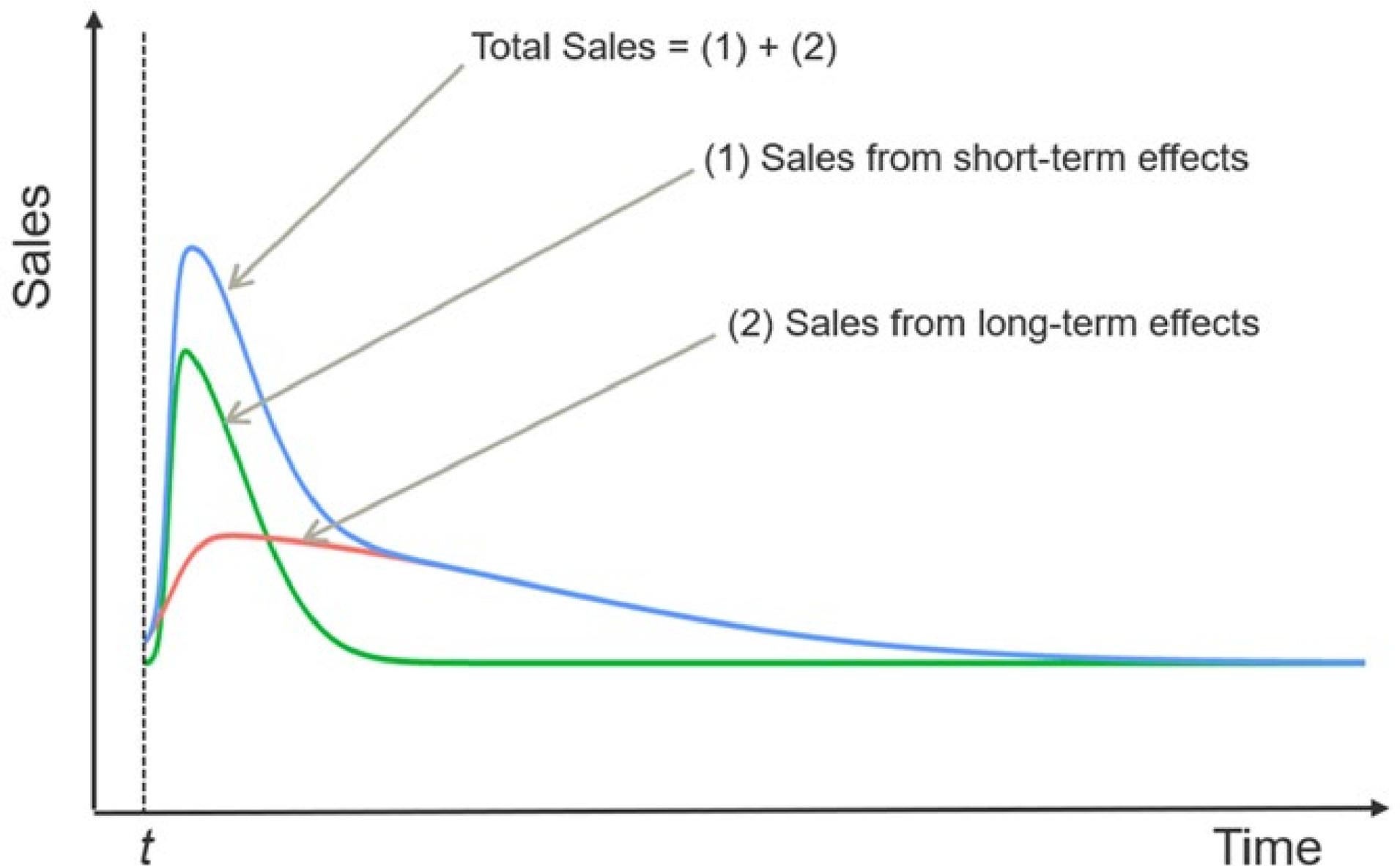
Isolating the True Brand Signal:
At Kantar we apply advanced ML techniques to our brand equity data to filter out the survey noise to detect meaningful shifts in brand perception with unprecedented clarity and speed measurement error. The result: reliable attribution of sales to brand effects by revealing the most accurate Bayesian estimate of brand performance at any given moment.

Integrated into LIFT ROI Platform:
This long-term model isn't just a theoretical exercise or black box multiplier – it's incorporated into Kantar's AI platform, meaning clients can routinely receive **long-term ROI insights** alongside traditional short-term results. The approach has been tested in multiple client engagements with **promising results** and is now operationalised in our toolset.

In sum, **Kantar's Long-Term Brand Model treats brand equity as a quantifiable asset that media spend builds over time and that continuously contributes to sales.** By capturing this, we unlock insights that other modelling approaches simply can't reach.

Long-term model (new framework)

Total Sales = (1) + (2)

(1) Sales from short-term effects

(2) Sales from long-term effects

Sales

Time

t

The Long-Term Brand Model offers a gradual decline, illustrated by the extended blue line. This gradual descent reflects the lingering effects of accumulated brand equity on sales. The model separates sales into short-term (green line) and long-term (red line) effects, where the red line demonstrates the sustained brand impact that continues even after media spend has paused. This realistic "long tail" in sales decline aligns with actual brand dynamics, where strong brands maintain a residual impact on sales due to their brand equity.

Key Benefits for Marketers

Adopting Kantar's true long-term modelling approach brings tangible benefits for marketing decision-makers, making the analysis not only more accurate but also more actionable and persuasive within the organisation:

Complete ROI Picture:
No more missing half the impact. By accounting for both short and long-term effects, you see the **total contribution of media**. For example, channels traditionally viewed as "upper-funnel" (like TV, online video, sponsorships) often show **much higher total ROI** once their long-term brand build is counted. In an illustrative analysis, including the long-term effect increased the measured "indirect" (brand-driven) portion of media impact dramatically – e.g., from virtually ~5% in a short-term model to over 40%+ in a long-term model for certain channels. This means marketing investments that seemed marginal can be proven truly valuable, **strengthening the case for brand-building budget.**

Sustained Sales, No Sudden Cliff:
The model predicts a **gradual tapering of sales** when media is paused, rather than an immediate crash to baseline. This aligns with real market dynamics: well-known brands don't vanish from consumers' minds overnight. For marketers, this insight is empowering – it means you can plan media flights or breaks with a realistic expectation of sales, leveraging your brand equity as a buffer. **Confidence in "going dark"** for a short period or reallocating spend is higher when you know your baseline sales are propped up by brand equity.

Optimised Short-term vs Long-term Balance:
With quantification of long-term effects, you can make **smarter budget allocation decisions**. Kantar's model helps answer strategic questions like: How much of our media mix should be devoted to brand equity building vs immediate activation? Because the long-term model reveals the payoff of brand media over time, you can balance your portfolio. For instance, you might find that an always-on brand campaign yields 20% higher total sales over the year than a burst campaign measured on short-term sales alone. This prevents under-investing in longer-term brand health and ensures **sustainable growth** rather than just quarter-by-quarter spikes.

Justifying Investment in Brand Equity:
Marketers often struggle to justify brand campaigns to Finance because the returns aren't immediate. Now, with Kantar's new approach, you can demonstrate with hard data that **brand equity translates into sales and profit** over a longer horizon. The model can show, for example, that a large share of your sales in Q4 is actually attributable to brand-building done in Q1-Q2. This kind of evidence is gold for conversations about maintaining or increasing brand spend – it **proves the value of brand marketing in driving financial outcomes** that matter to the business.

Key Benefits for Marketers
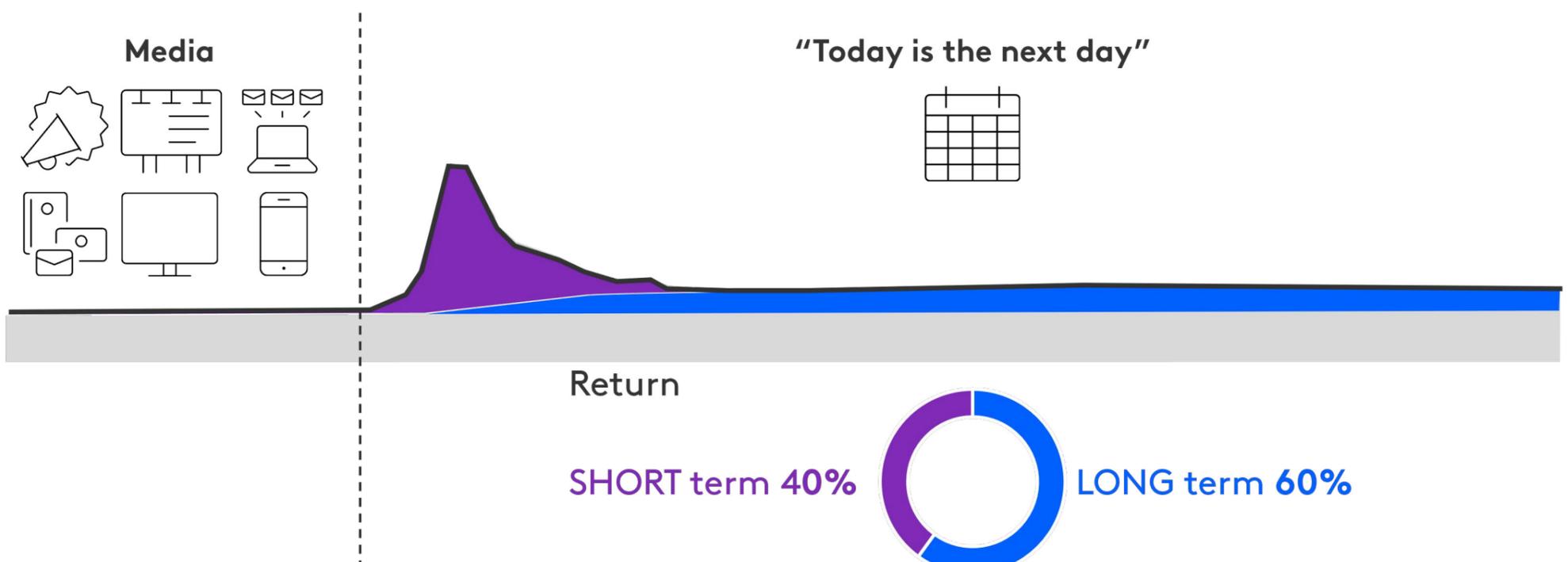
More Accurate Forecasting:
By incorporating the persistent effect of past advertising, forecasts of future sales become more accurate and realistic. For established brands, our approach **avoids the low-ball forecasts** that traditional models might produce when assuming minimal base growth. Instead, if you've been investing in brand, the model will show a higher base level of sales going forward. This improves planning for supply, revenue targets, and can inform scenario planning (e.g., "What if we cut media spend for 6 months? What hit can we expect?"). The answers will factor in brand momentum, which is a decidedly more **strategic view of business health**.

Flexibility to Media Strategy:
The insights from the long-term model allow for more nuanced media strategies. For example, a brand might learn it can pulse advertising (because brand equity sustains in off periods) or conversely, that it should avoid going completely dark in highly competitive moments because its brand equity decays at a known rate. These nuanced strategies are unreachable with basic MMM, but possible when you understand the decay curve of your brand's equity. (Indeed, our model outputs include the **rate of brand decay**, showing how long it takes for media's effect to wear off – in one case, **90% of a campaign's effect was realised only by week 81,** indicating a very long tail. See our Drinks brand example below:
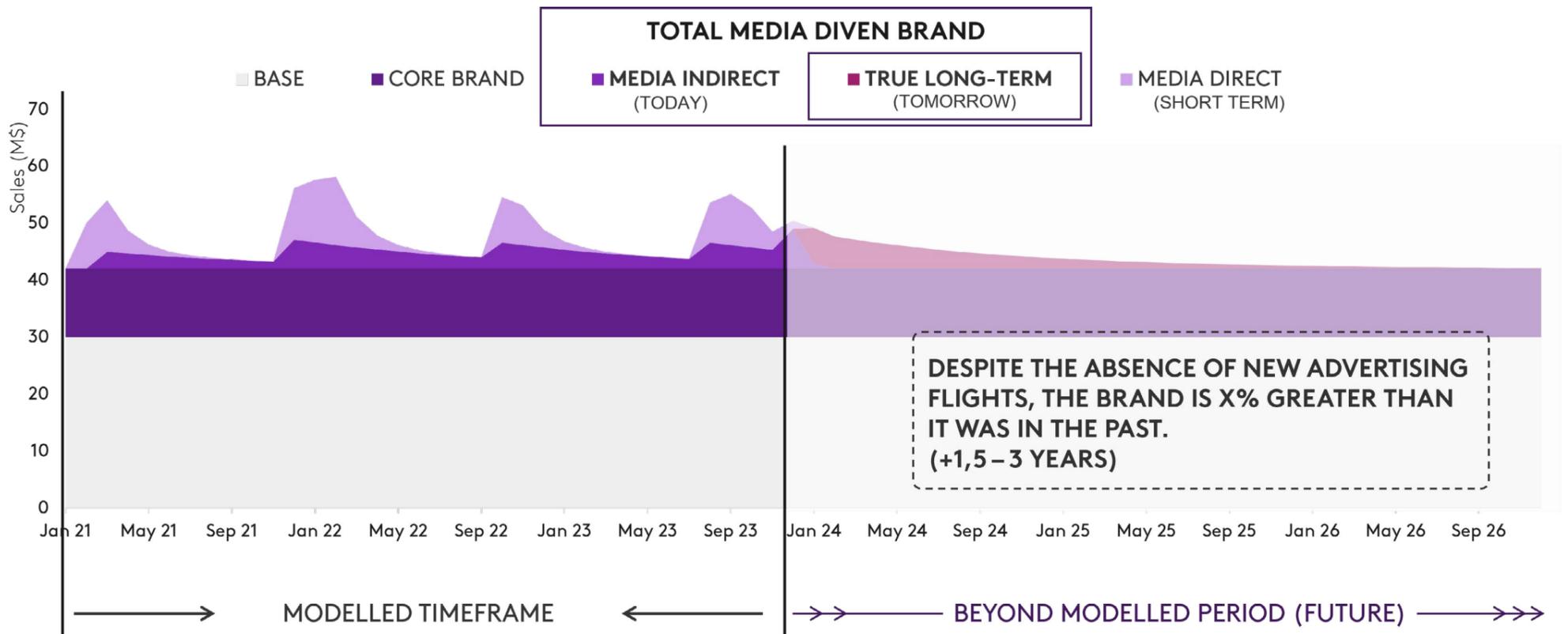
The short and the long-terms of marketing contribution
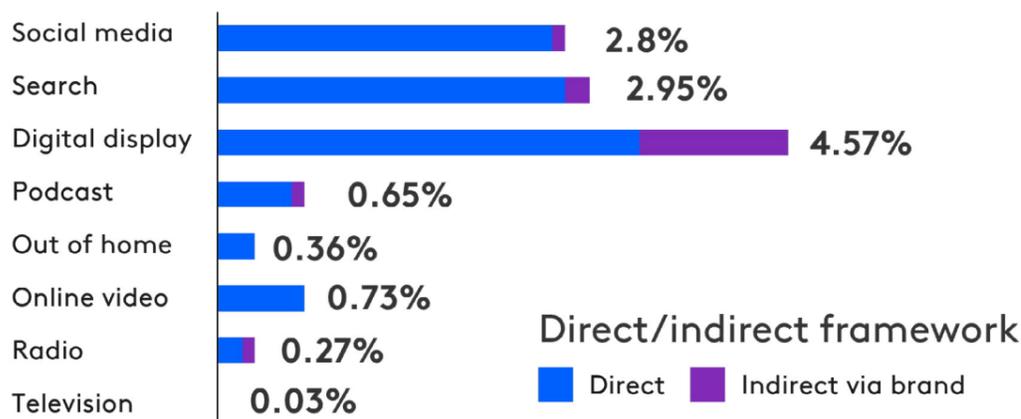The total effect of campaigns onBrand building sustaining future demand

Media

"Today is the next day"

Return

SHORT term 40%   LONG term 60%

Key Benefits for Marketers

True Long-term ROI measurement approach

TOTAL MEDIA DIVEN BRAND

- BASE
- CORE BRAND
- **MEDIA INDIRECT** (TODAY)
- **TRUE LONG-TERM** (TOMORROW)
- MEDIA DIRECT (SHORT TERM)

DESPITE THE ABSENCE OF NEW ADVERTISING FLIGHTS, THE BRAND IS X% GREATER THAN IT WAS IN THE PAST. (+1,5 – 3 YEARS)

MODELLED TIMEFRAME

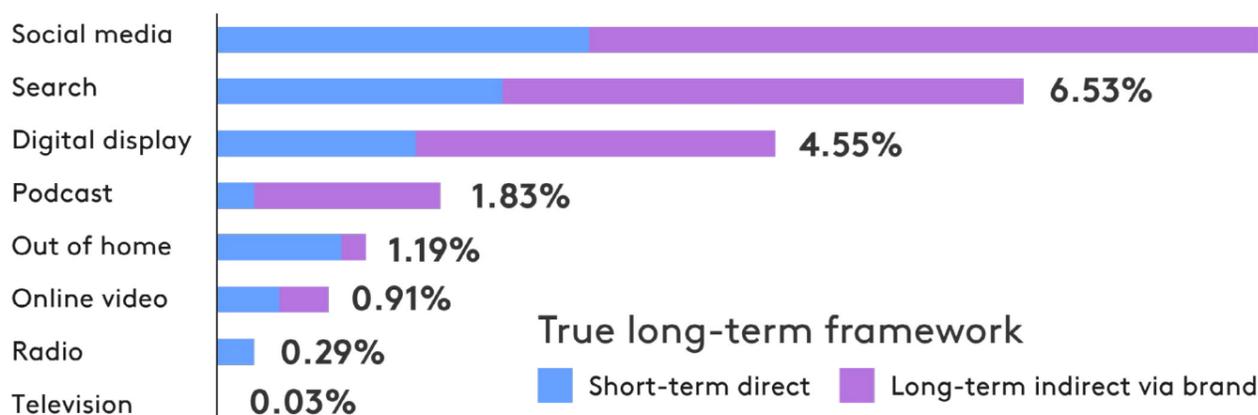BEYOND MODELLED PERIOD (FUTURE)

And for this **Financial Service Brand although a shorter time frame to realise its long term-brand impact without this new capability our client** would have neglected the true long-term impact of social, search and podcasts in favour of display and not fully utilised its media mix to unlock the true ROI of its brand equity.

A financial services company case study

Social media	2.8%
Search	2.95%
Digital display	4.57%
Podcast	0.65%
Out of home	0.36%
Online video	0.73%
Radio	0.27%
Television	0.03%

Direct/indirect framework
- Direct
- Indirect via brand

Without this long-term view we would not be able to unlock the true last effect of social, search and podcast.

Social media	8.44%
Search	6.53%
Digital display	4.55%
Podcast	1.83%
Out of home	1.19%
Online video	0.91%
Radio	0.29%
Television	0.03%

True long-term framework
- Short-term direct
- Long-term indirect via brand

How to read:
Social media contributes 8.44% to total sales, with only one-third of that impact occurring in the short term, while the remaining two-thirds drive brand driven sales in the long-term.

Key Benefits for Marketers

A financial services company
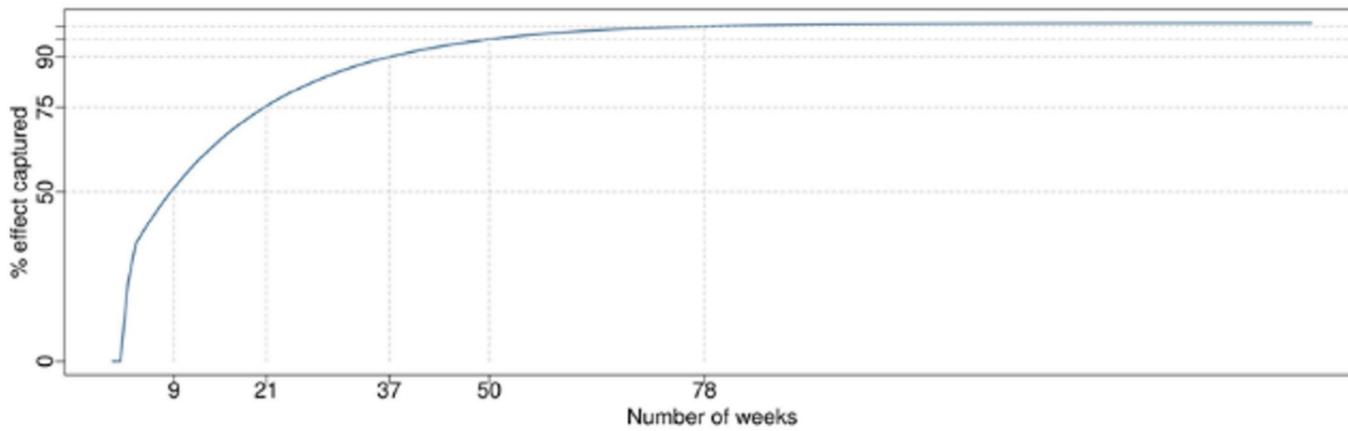
With our new long-term approach, the true effect of media on sales (via brand) persists for 80+ weeks, of which the majority is realized within 20-50 weeks. These effects represent a true "long-term" effect on/off brand.

All these benefits translate to a competitive advantage: K**antar's MMM approach empowers marketers to plan and defend long-term brand-building like never before,** using evidence that links brand metrics to financial performance.

How Kantar's Approach Stacks Up vs. Traditional MMM

To clearly illustrate what sets Kantar's True Long-Term modelling apart, the table below compares key aspects of our approach with typical MMM offerings from other providers:

Aspect	Kantar's Approach to Long-Term MMM (LIFT ROI)	Traditional MMM Approaches
Modelling of Brand Effects	Explicit two-stage model: media -> **brand equity** -> sales, with brand equity as its own modelled variable. Captures how media builds the brand and in turn drives sales over time.	Simplistic or no brand modelling: media to sales only, or at best a concurrent "brand" term without carryover. Little consideration of future sales driven by past ads.
Persistence/Decay Assumption	Rather than deploying a multiplier we anchor the current brand equity to its past values, ensuring that the effect of advertising persists for weeks/years unless actively eroded. Gradual decay aligns with real consumer behaviour and strong brand momentum.	Deploy multipliers to extrapolate the short-term effects to the future and tend to undervalue long-term brand-building channels like social media, PR, and sponsorships.
True Brand Signal	Our advanced approval removes the noise to isolate the true brand signal from survey data. We also leverage Kantar's MASB validated **Meaningful Different and Salient framework (MDS)** for the robust brand equity measurement.	Often ignores brand tracker data or uses it in a limited way. Few providers integrate established brand equity KPIs. As a result, **brand equity is not rigorously connected to sales** in the model.
ROI from Brand Media	**Reveals full ROI** of brand-building channels. Long-term effects often contribute 30–60% (or more) of total media impact, which our model makes visible. This supports investment in upper-funnel tactics with confidence.	**Undervalues brand media**: Tends to attribute most sales to last-touch or short-term effects. Long-term impact (if any) is minimal in the results, leading to bias toward short-term activation and lower reported ROI for brand campaigns.
Forecasting & Strategy	Provides **realistic forecasts** for scenarios like media pauses or reductions, thanks to brand carryover. Empowers strategic decisions on budget phasing, brand vs performance spend, knowing the **brand asset's strength** will backstop sales.	Forecasts assume "no spend = no sales lift," which can be overly pessimistic for strong brands. Offers less strategic guidance; can mislead planning by implying any gap in media causes an immediate loss of sales momentum.
Validation & Rigour	Grounded in Kantar's decades of brand research. **MDS equity metrics are academically validated** to predict business outcomes, adding credibility. Long-term model has been tested with clients across industries, showing improved explanatory power (capturing more of what drives sales).	Core methodologies are longstanding but **miss known drivers** of sustained growth. Often no independent validation that their models capture brand equity correctly. May have higher error in explaining sales of strong brands (because brand effect is left in the "residual").

Conclusion: Driving Growth with Confidence in the true value of your Brand assets

In a marketing world that increasingly demands **accountability and quick returns**, it's easy to neglect brand-building because its effects seem difficult to measure. Kantar's True Long-Term Brand Effect modelling changes that narrative by making the **invisible, visible** – quantifying the persistent sales uplift that strong brands deliver.

In summary, our unique MMM approach offers:

Distinctive Insight: A full view of how media spend creates **both short-term sales and long-term brand value**, captured in concrete numbers.

Competitive Edge: The ability to uncover hidden ROI that others miss, giving our clients an edge in budgeting and strategy. When you can show, say, a 150% ROI on TV once long-term effects are included (vs 80% in a short-term model), it's a game-changer for media planning.

Credibility: Backing from Kantar's robust brand analytics (MDS and BrandZ) – so stakeholders can trust that these long-term effects are real and grounded in how brands grow.

Actionability: Clear guidance to optimise investment levels, mix, and timing for maximum **total impact,** not just immediate gratification.

Marketers who embrace this approach can **invest in brand-building with confidence,** armed with a model that demonstrates how today's marketing fuels tomorrow's revenue and equity. In contrast to other MMM providers, who might only tell you where to cut spend for a quick boost, Kantar's approach equips you to **grow your brand and business for the long haul,** proving out the payoff of your marketing strategy end-to-end.

KANTAR

Kantar is the world's leading marketing data and analytics business and an indispensable brand partner to the world's top companies. We combine the most meaningful attitudinal and behavioural data with deep expertise and advanced analytics to uncover how people think and act. We help clients understand what has happened and why and how to shape the marketing strategies that shape their future.