
AI in TV Advertising

THE BUYER, SELLER, AND VIEWER PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

Identifying what buyers, sellers, and viewers **really** want from AI

Despite the rapid growth of AI in the TV advertising ecosystem, there is still no broad consensus on how or where AI will make the most impact.

To better understand where AI can deliver value, FreeWheel conducted surveys with media buyers, media sellers, and an often overlooked group—the viewers watching AI-influenced ads. This report examines how each group perceives AI’s role in advertising, where their priorities align or diverge, and what these dynamics mean for adoption at scale.

Comcast Advertising conducted in-depth surveys with three distinct groups:



Media Buyers¹



Media Sellers¹



Viewers²

What do buyers and sellers **really** want from AI?



BUYERS



SELLERS



VIEWERS

AI's promise for TV advertising depends on who you ask

Buyers and sellers are split on the impact of AI in TV advertising, with media sellers generally more optimistic about its functionality and ability to improve the medium.

AI will make TV advertising better¹



+29%

Sellers are +29% **more optimistic** that AI will improve TV advertising¹

AI has glitches that makes my job harder¹



+14%

Buyers are +14% **more concerned** about AI glitches¹



BUYERS



SELLERS



VIEWERS

Buyers want agentic tools that act like assistants, not replacements

Agentic buying tools have potential

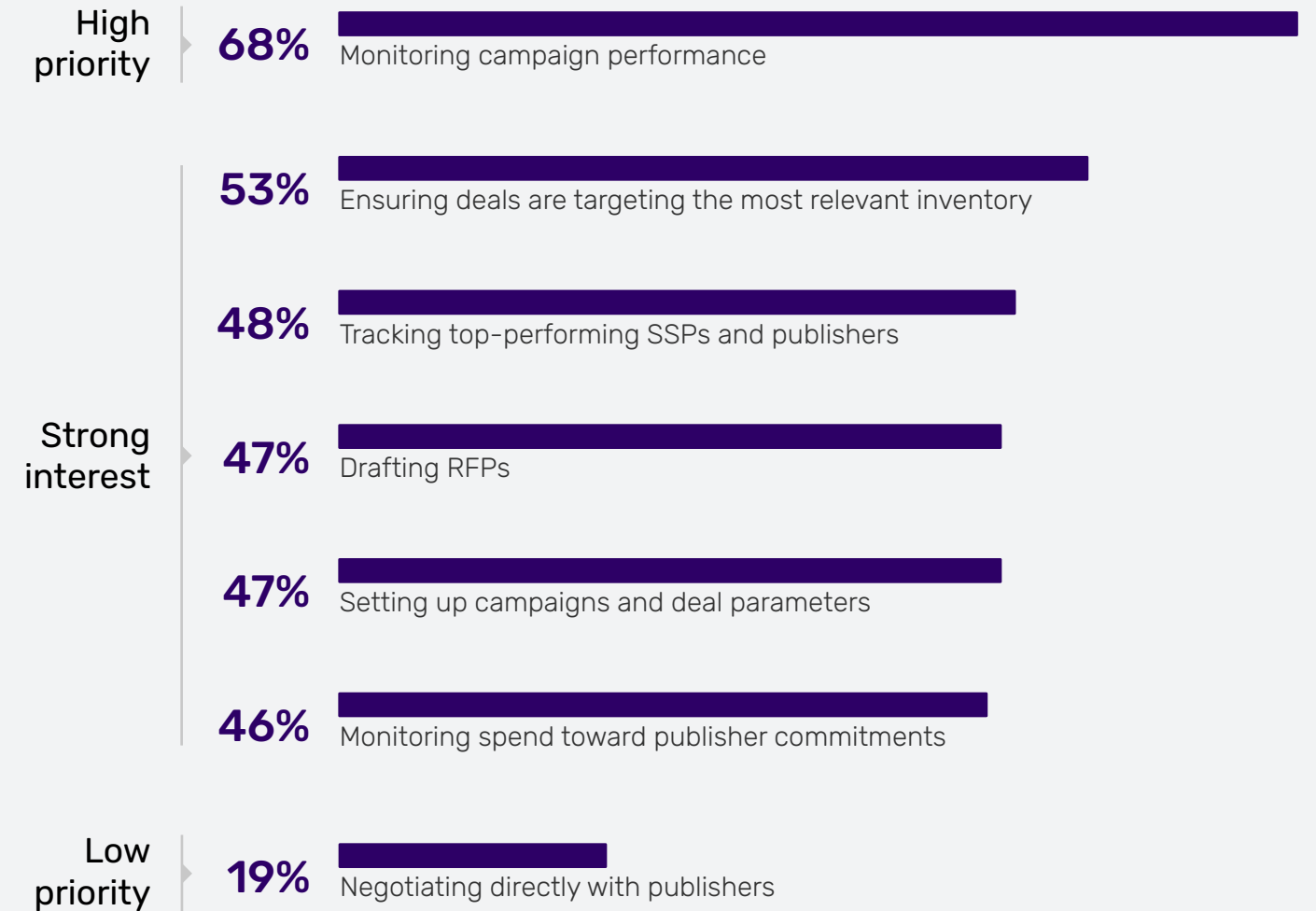
Buyers say campaign planning and optimization tools are where AI can make the most immediate impact (43%).¹

But not without human oversight

Buyers remain cautious about full automation with only 22% citing strong openness to AI autonomously managing campaigns. Few see AI as a near-term job threat, with just 13% expressing concern.¹

Agentic tasks that would make buyers' jobs easier¹

Percentage of respondents





BUYERS



SELLERS



VIEWERS

Sellers want tools to help them with smarter inventory and pricing decisions

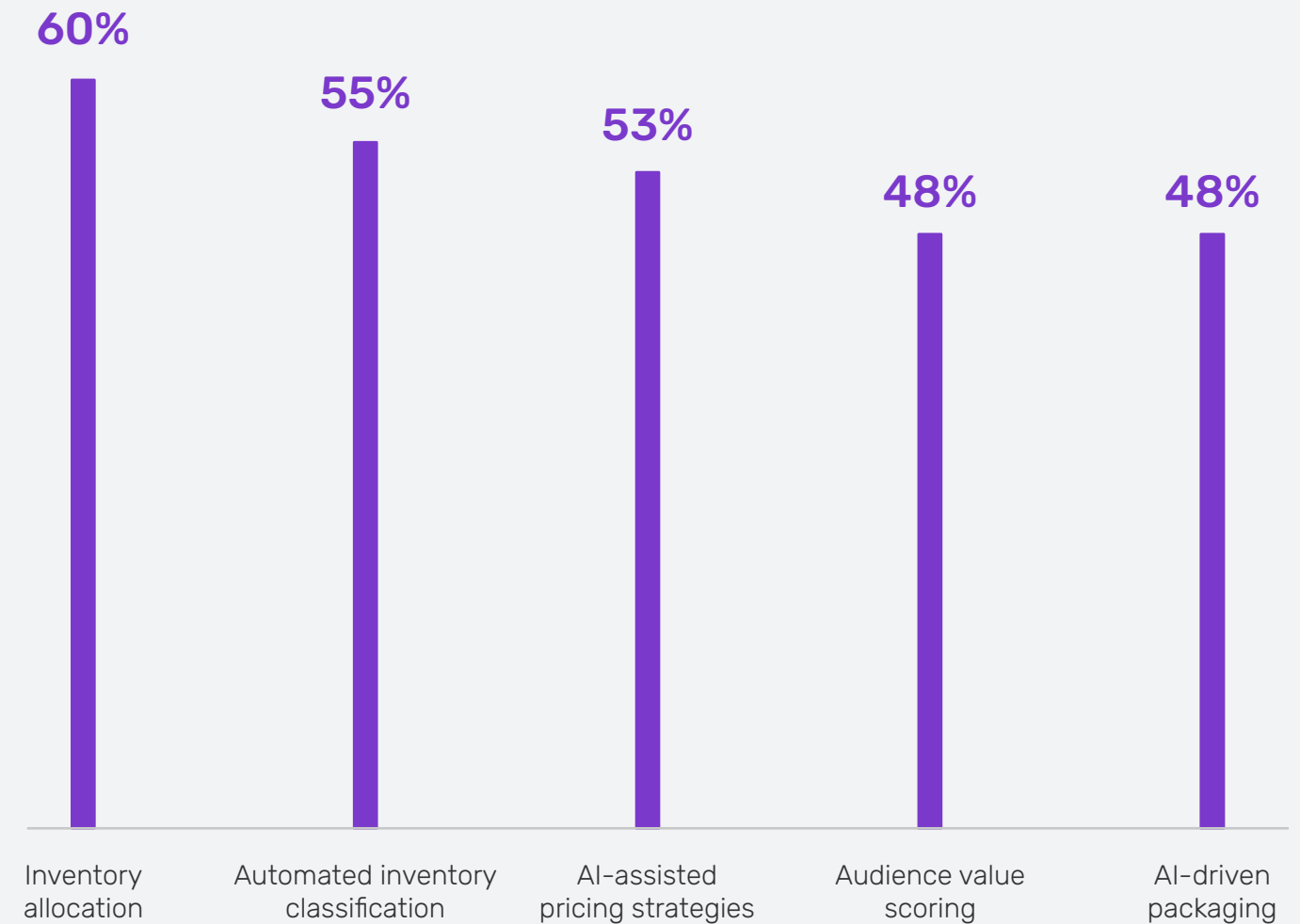
Sellers are less focused on agentic selling

Only 26% say this is where AI will have the most immediate impact.¹

Instead, they want tools that bring intelligence to inventory management

Sellers cite inventory allocation, classification, and pricing strategies as the most useful AI capabilities.

Capabilities that would most help sellers maximize yield and increase revenue¹





BUYERS



SELLERS



VIEWERS

Both buyers and sellers are leaning into AI for targeting

Advertisers are increasingly turning to AI to better understand their audiences.

43% of buyers used AI in the past year for audience segmentation and identification.³



This content was created in whole, or in part, using artificial intelligence.

Contextual targeting is a big growth opportunity

60%

of buyers believe AI improves contextual matching, helping ads align more closely with content.¹



Sellers are already deploying **AI-powered context engines** that automatically detect themes across video and transcripts.

Audience targeting is where AI scales fastest

67%

of sellers say AI-driven audience targeting helps them compete, and 59% of buyers are open to AI supporting audience segment creation.¹



AI adoption is already underway by analyzing audience patterns to find and scale lookalike users.



BUYERS



SELLERS



VIEWERS

Better attribution matters to both buyers and sellers

Proving ROI remains the biggest barrier to increased CTV investment and the area buyers most want AI to improve.³

If sellers can use AI to deliver advanced attribution and incrementality measurement, buyers gain confidence and sellers unlock faster, more defensible spend growth.



47%

say proving ROI remains the biggest barrier to increased CTV investment³



69%

say advanced attribution and incrementality measurement are the most important AI capabilities to compete with other advertising platforms¹



AI is only as strong as the data behind it—making source-level, seller-owned data critical for credible attribution.

This content was created in whole, or in part, using artificial intelligence.



BUYERS



SELLERS



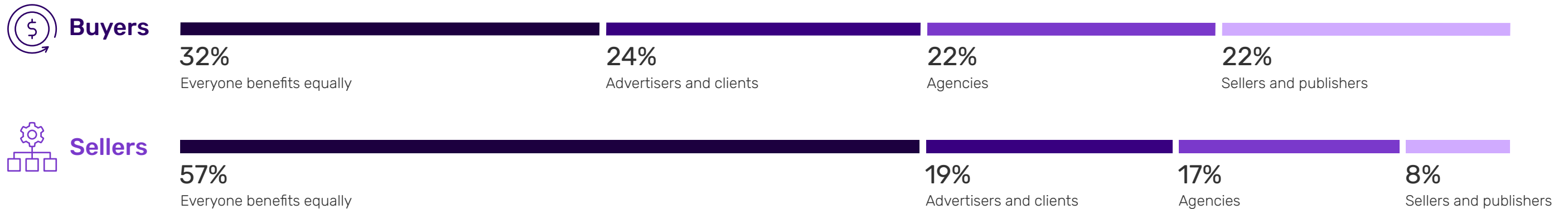
VIEWERS

AI adoption stalls without buyer-seller alignment

Sellers are much more likely to think everyone benefits equally from AI as compared to buyers.

This highlights the need for tools that deliver fair, transparent value on both sides of the marketplace to spur adoption.

In your opinion, who benefits the most from the integration of AI into media buying?¹



 In order for AI to really take off, buyers and sellers need to agree on what they want from AI.

The viewer perspective



BUYERS



SELLERS



VIEWERS

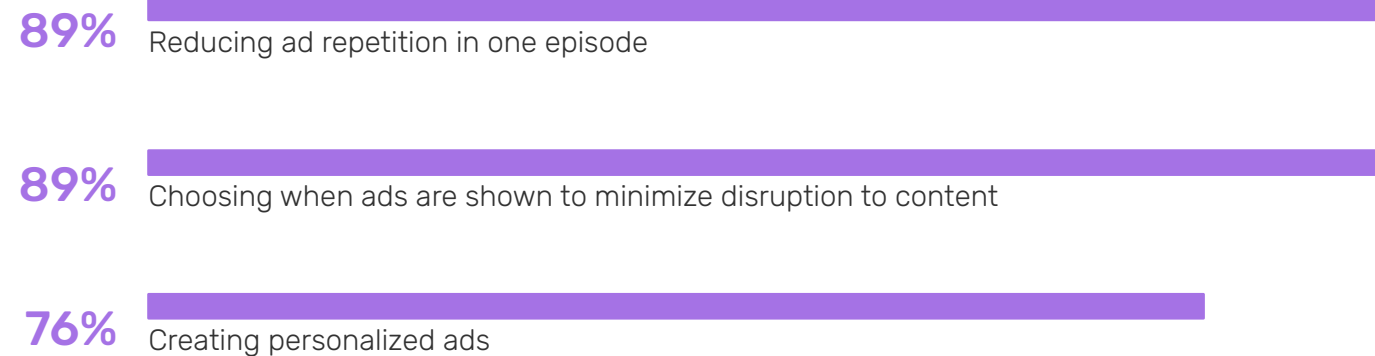


Spotlight on the viewer

While viewers don't play a deciding role in what AI tools are used by the advertising industry, they represent a critical voice in how it is used.

Audiences are open to AI improving their viewer experience and addressing pain points including reducing repetition, minimizing disruption, and serving more relevant ads.

Percentage of viewers open to companies using AI for the following²





BUYERS



SELLERS



VIEWERS

Buyers and sellers inaccurately assume viewers dislike AI creative

48% of buyers and 39% of sellers assume viewers find AI-generated creative off-putting.¹



Buyers



Sellers



In reality, **only 10%** of viewers disliked the AI creative they saw.²



Viewers



As advertisers recognize that AI creative connects with viewers who are open to personalized, multi-version ads, streamlined tools can unlock scale by reducing creative operational burden.

Summary

What buyers, sellers, and viewers want from AI

01 Buyers want agentic assistance, not full autonomy

Buyers see the strongest value in AI that supports planning, targeting, optimization, and decision-making, as well as ultimately measuring their results. However, this group remains cautious about full automation and wants to retain human oversight to ensure strategic control and accountability.

02 Sellers need tools that help them value their inventory

Sellers are prioritizing AI that enhances inventory, pricing, and yield. Top priorities include better forecasting, classification, and decision-making, balancing competitiveness with control over inventory, data, and outcomes.

03 Viewers are open to AI for enhanced ad experiences

Viewers, who are generally open to AI being used to improve advertising, often prefer AI ads without even knowing they are built with AI. Marketers can lean into AI creative to improve ad quality and relevance for viewers.

04 For all groups, ad relevance is at the heart of progress

Across buyers and sellers, AI delivers immediate efficiency value when applied to audience targeting, with the added benefit of improving viewer experiences. Increasing relevance and proving ROI related to that precision are critical to unlocking greater investment in TV.

Sources

1. FreeWheel survey of marketers, agencies, and media sellers conducted by AdExchanger, April 2026, Media buyers n=226, media sellers n=50.
2. FreeWheel survey of viewers conducted by Dynata, April 2026, Base: U.S. adults with access to traditional TV, paid streaming or FAST who have seen an ad while watching video content outside of social media (e.g. TikTok, Reels) in the past 3 months, n=2,496.
3. FreeWheel survey of marketers and agencies conducted by AdExchanger, November 2025, n=216.



FreeWheel technology is built for streaming and TV ads. We connect buyers and sellers directly, making it easier to access supply and demand. We provide all the tools, data, and insights you need to maximize results. [For more information on how FreeWheel is harnessing AI, visit here.](#)



Voice of the Viewer

How ad experiences impact streaming for viewers

This report dives into viewer sentiment on streaming, revealing where viewers are satisfied, where they're frustrated, and how advertising impacts their overall experience—offering advertisers and publishers advice on how to ensure the ad experience keeps up with viewer expectations.

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Maximizing Brand Recall Through Contextual Alignment

How contextual alignment drives results for advertisers

This report delivers findings from an innovative study on the impact of contextually aligned ads on the viewer's memory for brands and offers considerations for how advertisers and publishers can capitalize on the benefits of contextual alignment.

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2026 Comcast Advertising Report

Actionable advice for the modern TV advertiser

This annual report offers a holistic perspective of how viewers are viewing, how buyers are buying, and how sellers are selling by analyzing data insights from across Comcast Advertising. This iteration also aims to offer key insights into how AI is impacting TV advertising.

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