INDUSTRY INSIGHT 2026

The Attribution Gap

Why construction marketing keeps cutting the campaigns that are working.

loom

> These aren't fringe cases; they're the standard operating conditions of your business.

INTRODUCTION

Construction is not a simple sector to market in. Contracts are won over months, sometimes years. Decisions pass through procurement teams, commercial directors, architects and specifiers before anyone commits to spending.

Revenue is project-based, pipelines are uneven and a single contract win can dwarf everything that came before it.

The standard marketing framework wasn't designed for this environment. Most measurement tools assume a buyer who searches, clicks and converts within days. In construction, that assumption breaks down before the campaign has even begun.

THE ATTRIBUTION GAP

YOUR BEST-PERFORMING CAMPAIGNS ARE SILENT

What in-platform reporting tells you and what drives contracts are rarely the same thing.

YOUR BEST-PERFORMING CAMPAIGNS ARE INVISIBLE TO YOUR REPORTING

Standard attribution models assume a buyer who searches, clicks and converts within a measurable window. Most platforms default to 30 days.

That assumption holds for short sales cycles. It does not hold in construction, where the gap between first contact and signed contract is measured in months, not sessions.

Across the construction accounts analysed for this report, click-to-purchase journeys averaged 28 days, with the longest tracked journey reaching 309 days.

INSIGHT

80% of purchases outside the attribution window

For one major housebuilder, only 20% of purchases completed within Google's 90-day attribution limit.

The other 80% happened. They were simply invisible to the platform deciding where to spend next month's budget.

Campaigns were being cut for underperforming at the exact moment they were working.

THE CHALLENGES

42 vs 76 in-platform conversions = £421k vs £6.5k in actual revenue

The campaign with fewer conversions generated 65x more revenue.

Standard reporting would have scaled the wrong one.

A 30-day attribution window against a 12-month buying cycle meant the platform could not see the real outcome.

$128 in ad spend = $12,500 in revenue

Two long-tail keywords specific to a niche equipment category spent $128 combined and drove $12,500 in confirmed sales.

Neither ranked as a priority term in platform. Without offline tracking, that revenue was invisible.

$170k in pipeline from overlooked keywords

A cluster of lower-intent category terms showed unremarkable in-platform conversion numbers.

Connected to offline CRM data, they were carrying $170,000 in active sales pipeline.

Completely unattributed in standard reporting.

THE CONSTRUCTION BUYER'S JOURNEY IS UNIQUE BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO ATTRIBUTE.

Major construction contracts are won through a number of variables:

- Hard earned accreditations
- Relationships built and nurtured over years
- Decisions made by committees that were not in the room when you first made contact

The standard marketing framework isn't designed for this environment.
Most assume a buyer who is actively shopping now, a decision made by an individual and a journey that can be tracked from click to conversion. In construction, none of these assumptions hold true.

THE CHALLENGES

Extended sales cycles

For significant contracts, the buying journey spans eleven months or more.

A specifier files your brand away and returns six months later when a brief is confirmed passing through two more layers of scrutiny before you're invited to tender. By then, campaigns have ended and the lead has gone cold.

That's not a buyer failure – it's a marketing system not built for their timeline.

Multiple stakeholders

Construction buying decisions rarely sit with one person

Procurement leads, commercial directors, specifiers and MDs each encounter your brand at different moments, with different concerns, through different channels.

A single-channel strategy can't reach all of them.

A disconnected one loses coherence and customers.

Reputation-driven decisions

In construction, reputation precedes everything.

Accreditations signal capability, case studies demonstrate experience and relationships determine who gets called when a project moves from planning to procurement.

Winning work depends on being known and trusted before the brief is written. Marketing that only activates at the tender stage arrives too late.

Seasonality and uneven pipeline

Demand in construction is rarely consistent. Project completions, planning cycles and budget timelines create spikes and troughs that traditional campaign structures can't accommodate.

A marketing system needs to **maintain visibility during quiet periods and amplify reach when demand peaks** without the short-termism that erodes long-term brand equity.

Attribution challenges

Linking a contract win to a single interaction is genuinely difficult.

A specifier might initially find you through organic search, return via LinkedIn three months later, read a case study on a colleague's recommendation and call after seeing you at an industry event.

Last-click attribution credits none of this correctly.

Without the right frameworks, the activity that actually drove the win goes unmeasured and unfunded.

The offline gap

Trade shows, events and site visits still drive some of the most valuable relationships in construction and can quickly move a prospect further along the buying journey.

The problem is that most marketing systems never see it happen. When those interactions go unrecorded, they disappear from attribution, distort reporting and leave budget decisions based on an incomplete picture of what actually drives contracts.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

MEASURING WHAT ACTUALLY DRIVES CONTRACTS

When a sales cycle spans months, platform attribution runs out of road. Google's window closes at 90 days. The contract signed in month eight isn't visible to the platform deciding where to spend next month's budget.

The problem isn't that construction buying journeys are unmeasurable. It's that the platforms making your budget decisions stop looking too soon.

Three things need to be in place before the picture becomes clear: offline conversion data feeding back into your platforms, CRM tracking that follows prospects across the full journey and reporting aligned to pipeline stages rather than platform conversions.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Look beyond platform attribution

Google Ads caps its attribution window at 90 days. For construction businesses the platform is structurally unable to connect early campaign activity to contracts won months later.

The solution is to build measurement outside the platform using CRM data, offline conversion tracking and pipeline reporting to capture what Google cannot see.

Platform data tells you what happened inside the window. The full picture equires a system built around your actual sales cycle.

Capture what happens offline

Trade show conversations, site visits and referrals don't show up in platform reporting unless you build a system to capture them. Feeding CRM data back into your ad platforms closes the loop between offline relationships and the digital activity that supported them.

Without this, the campaigns that warm up a prospect before an offline interaction get no credit for the contract that follows. The platform sees silence. Your CRM tells a different story.

Report against pipeline stages

Measuring only at the point of final conversion loses everything that happened before it. Structuring reporting around pipeline stages: first contact, qualified lead, tender invitation, contract. This lets you demonstrate which activity is working long before a deal is signed.

It also shows where the journey breaks down. That's where budget decisions should be focused.

MAKING MARKETING FEEL SIMPLE FOR BUSINESSES THAT AREN'T

Loom Digital helps construction businesses build marketing systems that reflect how contracts are actually won

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