

The Last Knob to Turn

Why offline conversion data matters more as Meta automates advertising

Executive Summary

Meta's advertising system can only optimize against the outcomes it can see. For businesses with stores, branches, dealerships, or call centers, that leaves a significant part of the customer journey out of the picture.

As Meta automates more of targeting, bidding, and placement, marketers have fewer manual levers to pull. Two of the most important inputs left are the creative customers see and the conversion signals Meta receives. Many teams invest heavily in creative. Far fewer put the same attention into the signal, and for businesses with a physical footprint, the biggest gap is often offline conversions. Sending offline conversion data through Meta's Conversions API gives advertisers a more complete view of campaign performance, supports omnichannel optimization, and turns signal quality into something teams can measure and improve. Tealium customers sending offline data to Meta average a 9.5 composite Offline Data Quality score against Meta's 8.5 threshold (Tealium).

The Poster

A girl is sitting at the kitchen table making a poster.

The assignment is Amelia Earhart: a report, a costume, a presentation in front of the whole class, a real piece of her grade riding on it. She has been working on this for hours. Airplanes bank across the corners in colored markers, the lines are sharp and even, and the costume is perfect even down to the scarf.

Her father looks over her shoulder and starts hunting for information on Amelia Earhart. A birth date. Her first flight. The Atlantic crossing. Nothing. The poster is gorgeous, but it's missing the details.

"I'll do that later," his daughter tells him. "I'm really just focused on coloring airplanes."

Her father tries to break it to her gently. The airplanes look great, but the assignment is about Amelia Earhart. The facts are what she will actually be graded on.

The story opened a session at Tealium's Digital Velocity conference because the same pattern shows up in advertising all the time. Time and budget go toward the visible parts of advertising: the image, the copy, another round of creative testing. Far less attention goes toward the data telling the optimization algorithms what is actually working.

What Happens When There Are Fewer Knobs to Turn?

A decade ago, a paid social manager spent a lot of time turning knobs: audiences, lookalikes, bids, placements. Meta's guidance now points advertisers toward automated campaign types that handle targeting, bidding, and placement. Manual controls remain, but the platform adjusts those settings faster and in more dimensions than any human team.

At the same time, the signals feeding that system got worse. When Apple shipped App Tracking Transparency in 2021, Meta told investors the change would cost it about \$10 billion in revenue in a single year (CNBC, February 2022). The industry's response was to move measurement off the browser and into the server: the Conversions API, a direct line from your systems to Meta's.

\$10B

What Meta told investors App Tracking Transparency would cost it in a single year

CNBC, February 2022

As Meta automates more of campaign optimization, marketers still control two important inputs: what people see and what Meta learns from the results. The first is creative. The second is the conversion signal sent back to the platform.

Most teams spend time on the first.

Just like the Amelia Earhart poster, that detail is neglected. If Meta only receives data from limited parts of your business, it is optimizing an incomplete picture. Meta can't optimize for what it can't see.

The question every business with a physical footprint should ask: what data does Meta currently see of ours?

The Business Meta Can't See

For most retailers, banks, dealerships, hotels, and airlines, the honest answer is: a fraction. Run Meta ads without sharing offline data and the only conversions in your reporting are the online ones. The in-store purchase, the branch appointment, the phone booking the campaign inspired: if those events are not sent back to Meta, they are not part of the conversion signal the platform can use for reporting and optimization. In retail, roughly 80% of sales still occur in a physical store (Meta), and when the offline side of the business is invisible to Meta, two problems compound.

~80%

of retail sales still occur in a physical store

Meta

The first is personal for the paid social leader. Reported return on ad spend undercounts the business your ads actually produced, and budget conversations built around that result start from incomplete evidence. Campaigns get cut for underperforming when they were actually performing fine in offline settings.

The second problem is less obvious but costs more. Meta has ad formats built for in-person business: nearest-store creative, local inventory ads, digital circulars. These optimize toward in-person outcomes, which means they need offline conversion data to work from. Without a qualifying offline signal, advertisers may not be eligible for some of the Meta capabilities designed to optimize toward in-person outcomes.

The frustrating part is that most businesses already have this data. It's recorded in your point-of-sale system, loyalty program, call center logs, CRM, or data cloud.

For many companies, that offline data already lands in a cloud data warehouse such as Snowflake or Databricks. [Tealium's Data Cloud Activation](#) capabilities can use that warehouse data directly and send the relevant conversion events to Meta through the Conversions API, without requiring teams to first copy the data into another system or create a separate source of truth. That means an in-store purchase, completed loan, dealership sale, or call-center booking recorded in the warehouse can become part of the signal Meta receives, while the underlying customer data and governance remain where the business already manages them.

What Is Different When Meta Can See the Whole Picture?

Sending offline conversions to Meta affects performance in two ways.

First, measurement improves. Offline outcomes that were previously missing can now be incorporated into Meta's reporting and attribution.

Sofology, a UK furniture retailer, uploaded its offline data through the Conversions API for Offline and measured 1.8x offline iROAS and 3.5x omnichannel iROAS (Meta). The integration let Sofology measure offline outcomes that would otherwise have been missing from Meta's view of campaign performance.

Over time, optimization improves too. Once offline outcomes are available as a signal, eligible omnichannel campaigns can optimize toward a broader picture of customer behavior. Across Meta's own split tests, omnichannel optimization delivered 21% higher store incremental ROAS and 15% lower cost per omni purchase than website-only optimization (Meta meta-analysis of retail split tests).

Individual advertisers have gone further: Target saw 51% higher ROAS and 30% lower cost per purchase versus web-only optimization (Meta, Target). The common principle is straightforward: when Meta has access to a broader set of conversion outcomes, its optimization has a better signal to work from.

Signal Quality Now Has a Score

Sending offline data sounds straightforward until you get into the operational questions. How quickly does the data need to arrive? Which identifiers improve matching? What happens when Meta changes a requirement? And who owns the integration six months after launch?

Meta has made the quality side of this measurable. Every offline feed receives an Offline Data Quality score from 0 to 10, and advertisers generally need a composite score of at least 8.5 to meet the signal-quality requirement for omnichannel optimization. The score decomposes into factors a team can manage: match keys (identifiers like email and phone, hashed correctly), frequency (daily at minimum, hourly at best practice), freshness (events older than a few days lose value), completeness (purchase detail, order IDs, store locations), and accuracy (no online conversions in the offline set). Meta's eligibility requirements also evolve over time.

That is why signal quality can't be treated as a one-time implementation project. Building an API connection is only part of the work. The harder operational problem is keeping the integration healthy as schemas, requirements, source systems, and business processes change. An integration nobody owns falls behind, and the score makes that visible.

This is where the choice of integration approach matters. An offline conversion pipeline is not valuable simply because it exists. It has to stay current, deliver events reliably, protect customer data, and give teams visibility when something goes wrong.

3.5x

Sofology omnichannel iROAS
via the Conversions API for
Offline (Meta)

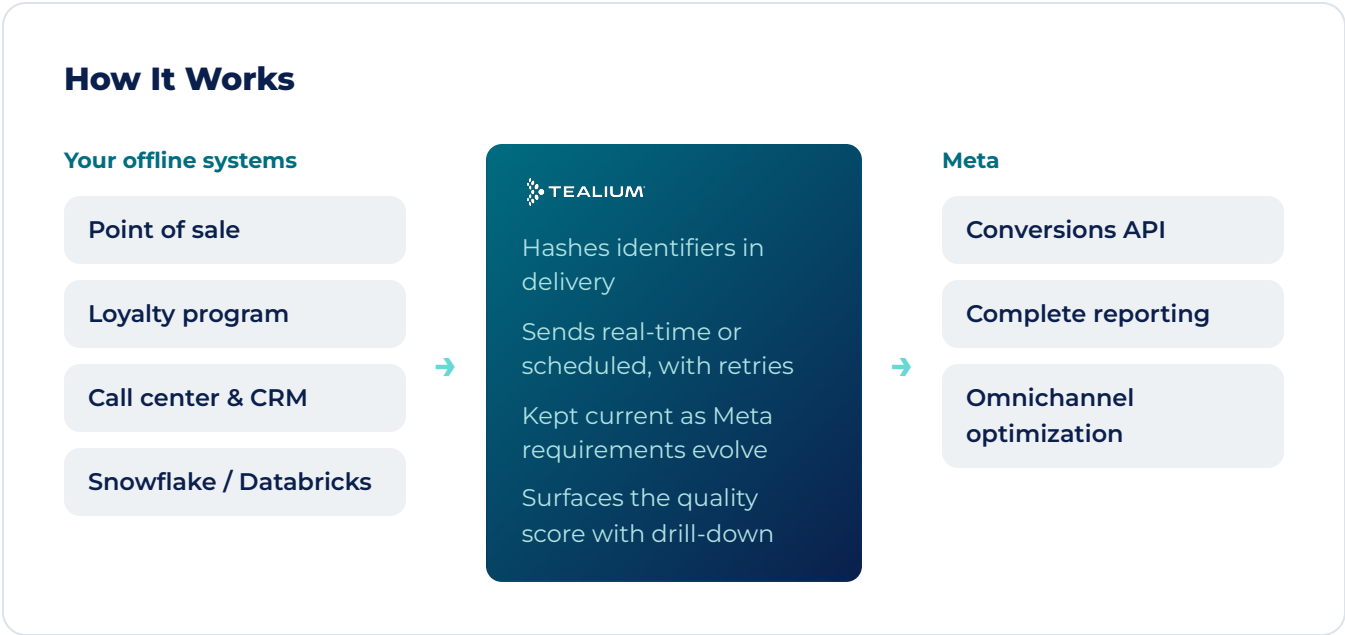
21%

Higher store incremental
ROAS with omnichannel
optimization (Meta split tests)

51%

Higher ROAS at Target versus
web-only optimization (Meta,
Target)

Tealium is built to manage that operational layer between a company's customer data and Meta. It connects the offline data already moving through your business, across point-of-sale, loyalty, call center, CRM, and data clouds like Snowflake and Databricks, and delivers it to Meta as a live signal, with identifiers like email and phone hashed as part of delivery so raw personal data is not exposed in transit. Events send in real time or on schedule, with automatic retries so conversions do not silently vanish.



The integration is maintained in ongoing contact with Meta and kept current as requirements evolve. For customers already moving the necessary transaction data through a Tealium-connected data cloud, configuring the Meta destination itself can take just a few minutes.

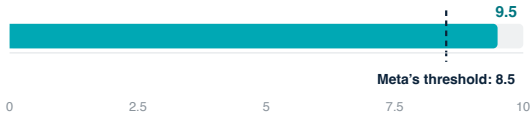
The results are visible in the score. Customers sending offline data to Meta through Tealium average a 9.5 composite, with a 9.8 match key score, a 10.0 frequency score, and a 9.3 freshness score (Tealium).

Tealium clears Meta's quality bar with room to spare.

Meta rates offline data 0–10 and needs 8.5 to optimize against it. Tealium customers average 9.5.

9.5

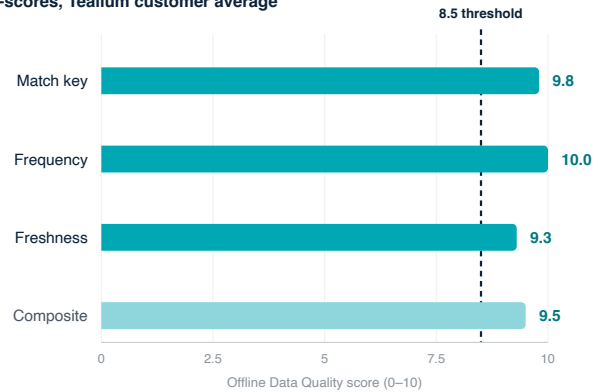
composite Offline Data Quality score
average across Tealium customers sending
offline events to Meta



2 out of 3 Tealium customers score 9.9 or better.*

The average isn't carried by outliers - it's the norm.

Sub-scores, Tealium customer average



Source: Tealium, average Offline Data Quality scores for customers using Meta Conversions API with Tealium.

*Stated at Digital Velocity 2026; confirm with Professional Services before external publication.

One national department store retailer moved from a Data Quality Score of 8 to 10 after activating in-store purchase events through Tealium. Customers migrating from other offline conversion solutions have improved their scores as well. And because the pipeline owner is often not the person logging into Meta Ads, the score is also made visible inside Tealium, with conversion-level drill-down and recommendations.

The relationship among those numbers is important. Meta's retail split tests found that omnichannel optimization delivered a 15% lower cost per omnichannel purchase than website-only optimization. An Offline Data Quality score of at least 8.5 is one of the requirements for that optimization. Tealium customers sending offline data average 9.5.

The quality score is not the performance result. It is an indicator that the underlying signal is strong enough for Meta to use in omnichannel optimization.

Where You Start Depends on Where You Stand

Every business with a physical footprint sits in one of three positions.

Not on the Conversions API at all. Start with online and offline together.

The same integration can handle both types of data; building web now and offline later means you're missing out on the value and still having to do an implementation twice.

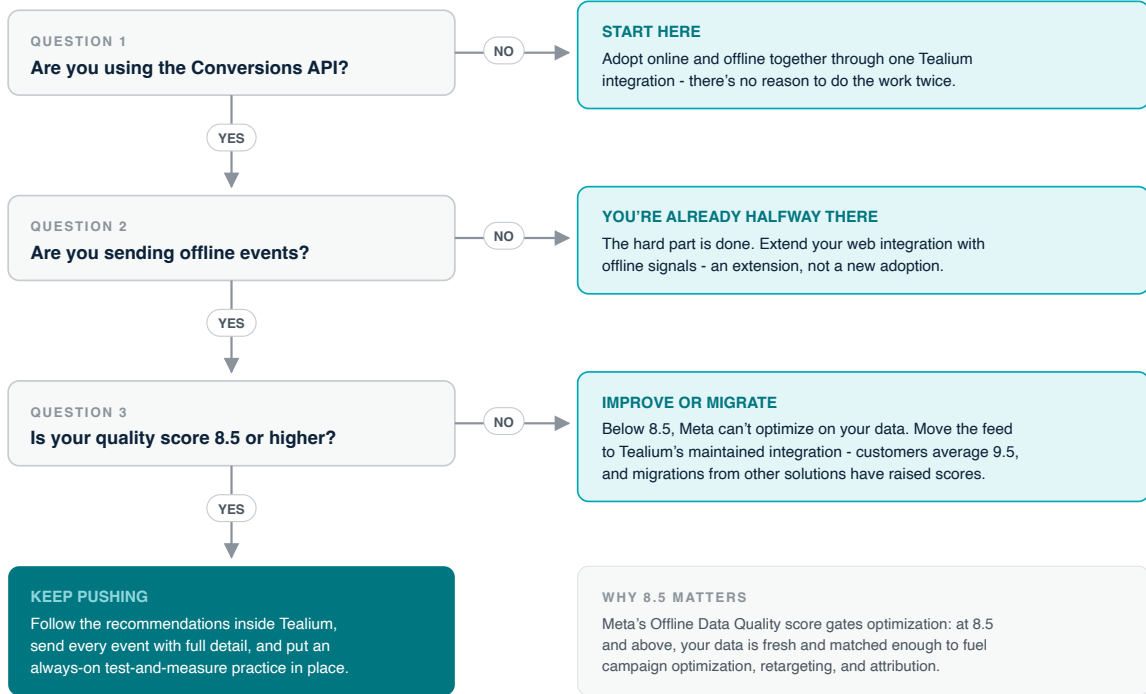
On the Conversions API for web, not sending offline events. The most common position, and the most frustrating one to stay in, because the hard part is behind you. Extending the pipe to offline events is the difference between showing Meta your website and showing Meta your business.

Already sending offline events. Check your score. If it sits below 8.5, identify which parts of the signal are holding it down: improving freshness, frequency, match keys, and event accuracy moves the dataset toward Meta's threshold for omnichannel optimization. If your current pipeline can't get there, move your feed to a maintained integration like Tealium's and let the sub-scores tell you what changed.

Creative still matters. It matters as much as it ever has. But as platforms take over more of the decisions marketers once made manually, the quality of the signal behind those decisions matters more than it used to.

WHERE DO YOU START?

There's a step for everyone - find yours in three questions.



Adapted from the Meta + Tealium Digital Velocity session ("Stop Optimizing Ads. Start Optimizing Data."). Score scale: Meta Offline Data Quality, 0–10.

For businesses where a meaningful share of revenue happens offline, that starts with a simple question: does Meta actually see the outcomes we are asking it to optimize for?

If the answer is no, there may be more performance to gain from improving the signal than from making another round of adjustments to the ad.



Start Optimizing for Offline Conversions

Tealium delivers offline conversion data to Meta through a maintained Conversions API integration. To see your Offline Data Quality score, get a demo.

[Request a Demo](#)