

## The Identity Trap: Why Big Agencies Are Buying the Pipes – Why It Won't Help You Win the Last Mile



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### The Seismic Shift: The End of Neutral Identity

Publicis Groupe's acquisition of LiveRamp is a defining moment for the advertising industry, but not for the reasons being discussed in trade headlines.

For a decade, LiveRamp's enterprise value was built entirely on a single promise: neutrality. Its identity graph functioned as a shared, independent language: a common currency that allowed advertisers, agencies, and publishers to move data safely across a fragmented web without funding a direct competitor.

***Here's what actually happened: The last neutral scorekeeper in advertising just joined one of the teams.***

Even if Publicis promises to firewall the data, the competitive reality is stark. Perception of non-neutrality is equivalent to non-neutrality. No competing agency will willingly route their clients' data through a rival's infrastructure. The mere possibility is enough to break trust.

The moment a neutral platform becomes owned by one of the biggest agency networks in the world, the rest of the industry starts asking the same question: "Should we still build on top of this?"

And that question matters because the entire ad industry is consolidating fast.

- Agencies are buying data.
- Retailers are becoming media companies.
- Platforms are closing their ecosystems.
- AI is compressing execution.

Everyone is trying to own more of the stack.

But while industry fights over infrastructure, most brands are still struggling with a much simpler problem: *How do you drive customers in specific markets?*

Not audiences. Not IDs. Not dashboards. Actual people walking into actual stores.

That is the problem worth solving.

### Precision With Purpose: Winning the Last Mile

Identity graphs are excellent at resolving audiences at scale. But they cannot tell a brand why one neighborhood responds differently than another, or how to scale local relevance across hundreds of markets.

The brands winning today are not asking:

*"How do we identify more consumers?"*

They are asking:

*Where is my next customer coming from? What will get them through the door? And how do I execute that flawlessly in Dallas as I do in Detroit?*

While big agency networks spend billions consolidating, their clients are left stranded at the local level where actual revenue growth occurs.

***We are built to win the last mile.***

## Built for the Last Mile

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The real competitive advantage isn't choosing the right pipe. It is building a business on a platform that doesn't depend on any single pipe to survive. Winning the last mile isn't about having the biggest data pipe. It's about how you apply that data to real-world geography.

## NOVUS Owns the Orchestration Layer

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True independence isn't about picking the right vendor. It's about building a system that doesn't care who owns the vendor.

At NOVUS, we recognized that relying on a single, monolithic identity provider leaves an agency and its clients vulnerable to Holdco politics and sudden market disruptions. So, we built a location-first media platform.

Think of it like a high-performance engine: it does the heavy lifting of mapping markets, analyzing neighborhoods, and driving local conversions regardless of the pipes.

Because our platform belongs to us, we aren't trapped. If a data vendor gets swallowed by a competitor tomorrow, we just hook up a different pipe to a platform we already own.

Your data stays yours. Your campaigns keep running. Your local strategy stays intact.

## What This Means for Our Clients

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### 1. Data & Intelligence Protection.

Your data remains yours. It is never routed through infrastructure that could inadvertently enrich a competitor's broader ecosystem. You accrue the learnings not someone else.

### 2. Immunity from Holdco Disruption.

While other agencies spend the next six months scrambling to audit their legal exposure and rewrite data agreements, NOVUS clients will experience minimal downtime.

### 3. Focus on What Drives Volume.

We keep the focus exactly where it belongs, using localized intelligence and spatial data to drive physical actions and measurable sales, free from the friction of ad-tech politics.

While the industry fights over infrastructure, the harder challenge remains the same: turning local intelligence into real-world growth.

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***This is the gap. This is where NOVUS plays.***

***And this is how we win the last mile.***

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