

The AMP logo is positioned in the top left corner. The background of the entire slide is a dynamic, abstract pattern of glowing dots in shades of blue and orange, creating a sense of depth and movement.

amp™

The Next Phase of Retail Media: *Five Shifts Defining 2026*

WHAT'S INSIDE

Insights to guide your
brand in the year ahead

An AMP Perspective

01. Retail Media Growth

01.1 Retail Media Growth

Despite its rapid growth over the past few years, retail media has retained a “wild west” quality, leaving many marketers struggling to keep pace with the constant flow of updates about new players, partnerships, and platforms clogging everyone’s feeds and inboxes.

This year will mark a more disciplined phase of growth for retail media. As investment accelerates, retailers, platforms, and industry groups are responding to increased demand for accountability, scale, and integration across the commerce ecosystem.

02. Retail Media Strategy

02.1 Retail Media Strategy

Already a core element in brands’ connection strategies, retail media will extend across onsite, offsite, and in-store environments, with retailer data powering activation far beyond owned properties. Paid social expansion will increase fragmentation, while CTV and in-store media become core components of performance-driven strategies.

At the same time, industry groups such as the IAB and Media Rating Council (MRC) are working to establish standardized measurement definitions, and platforms like Skai and Pacvue are building cross-retailer measurement capabilities. These efforts will improve transparency and comparability, though full convergence remains unlikely in the near term.

03. Retail Media Measurement

03.1 Retail Media Measurement

Brands that succeed will be those that integrate activation across channels, apply context to evolving measurement frameworks, and make intentional decisions about where and how retailer data is deployed.

We’re here to help you sort through the noise as retail media continues to demand a central role in brands’ growth strategies.

What's *Inside*

1. Paid Social Expansion Will Further Fragment an Already Fragmented Landscape



3. Agentic and Generative Commerce Will Begin Reshaping Retail Media's Influence



5. In-Store Media Will Become a Standard Line Item in Retail Media Plans



2. Incremental Measurement Will Advance Without Fully Converging



4. CTV Will Be Recognized as a Primary Performance Driver Across the Funnel



Paid Social Expansion
Will Further Fragment
*an Already Fragmented
Landscape*

1

The New Retail Media

Scaling Up, Trimming Down

Retail media networks will continue expanding paid social capabilities, extending retailer audiences beyond owned-and-operated environments. Brands will activate retailer-powered paid social through national eCommerce partners, retailer-managed and self-serve offerings, embedded third-party partners, and offsite placements across social, display, and CTV.

At the same time, brands are becoming more selective. As options proliferate, many marketers are actively consolidating retail media investments around fewer partners and platforms that can demonstrate scale, interoperability, and measurable impact.

This expansion will increase scale while introducing overlap across buying models, platforms, and audiences. And retailer data will be activated in more environments, often simultaneously. Concurrently, in the face of fragmentation, consolidation is inevitable.



Implications *for Brands*

1 Differentiate between core partners and experimental investments.

2 Define clear roles for onsite vs offsite retail media.

3 Intentionally allocate budgets across overlapping environments.

4 Actively manage audience overlap and frequency.

5 Ensure messaging is consistent and objective-driven.

Incremental
Measurement Will
*Advance Without
Fully Converging*

2

Retail Media Measurement *Progress Versus Perfection*

As retail media budgets grow, expectations for transparency and accountability will continue to rise. Retailers will expand incremental measurement frameworks to demonstrate media impact, while industry groups such as the IAB and Media Rating Council (MRC) work to establish standardized definitions and metrics across retail media. In parallel, platforms like Skai and Pacvue are developing cross-retailer measurement capabilities designed to support more consistent reporting and optimization.

These efforts represent meaningful progress, but convergence will remain limited. Most retailer-led frameworks will continue to operate within individual ecosystems, and emerging standards will not immediately result in full comparability across platforms.

AI-driven innovation will continue to accelerate development, but differences in data access, methodology, and retailer adoption will persist.



Implications *for Brands*

1 Stay close to emerging incrementality solutions and industry standards.

2 Understand where retailer-specific frameworks align with broader definitions—and where they diverge.

3 Look beyond retailer-level attributed sales.

4 Evaluate total sales impact across retail partners.

5 Apply context when comparing results across platforms.

Agentic & Generative
Commerce Will Begin
*Reshaping Retail
Media's Influence*

3

Beyond the Search Bar

Retail Media's Agentic Shift

Agentic and generative commerce environments will continue to grow in 2026, influencing how consumers discover, evaluate, and select products. While transaction volume driven directly by agents will remain relatively modest, their role in shaping decisions earlier in the journey will expand.

For retail media, the significance is not scale, but where influence is created. Agentic systems increasingly guide discovery and recommendation before shoppers reach retailer sites or traditional ad placements, compressing the path to purchase and abstracting familiar intent signals.

As a result, retail media effectiveness will rely less on isolated placements and more on the quality and consistency of signals feeding these systems.



Implications *for Brands*

1 Retail media will need to prove value beyond last-click performance, with greater emphasis on influence and lift.

2 Product content, data quality, availability, and reviews will function as core media inputs.

3 Optimization will shift from placements and bids toward relevance, consistency, and signal strength.

4 Attribution will rely more heavily on incrementality and modeled outcomes rather than deterministic paths.

5 2026 should be treated as a readiness and learning year, not a scale year.

CTV Will Be
Recognized as a
*Primary Performance
Driver Across the Funnel*

4

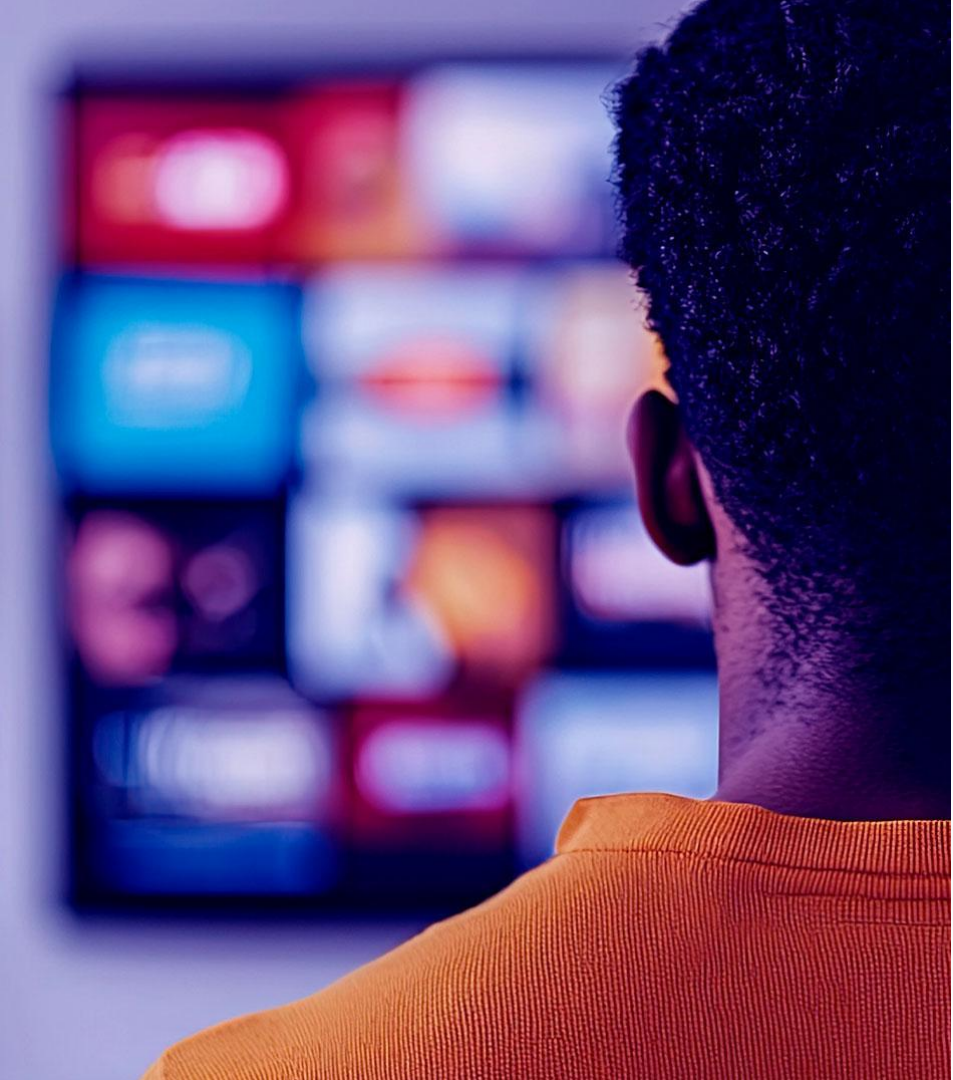
From Awareness to Checkout *CTV's Conversion Promise*

Connected TV will remain central to retail media strategies as streaming continues to grow and retailers expand offsite activation. CTV increasingly sits at the intersection of upper-funnel influence and lower-funnel accountability, making it one of the most versatile channels within retail media.

Retailer first-party data enables CTV to reach high-value audiences earlier in the journey, shaping awareness, consideration, and brand preference before shoppers enter search or retailer environments. At the same time, shoppable formats, scaled distribution, and commerce-linked measurement allow brands to connect those exposures to downstream retail outcomes.

As a result, CTV is becoming a primary driver of both demand creation and demand capture within retail media plans.

Generative AI creative tools will continue to accelerate adoption by reducing production barriers and enabling more frequent creative iteration, allowing brands without vast asset portfolios to take advantage of an essential touchpoint.



Implications *for Brands*

1 Use CTV to drive awareness and consideration among retail audiences, not just conversion.

2 Plan CTV alongside paid search, paid social, and onsite retail media.

3 Align upper-funnel CTV messaging with downstream retail moments.

4 Leverage the interactivity that CTV allows with buys that gamify the experience and prompt conversion.

5 Measure success using both brand- and commerce-based KPIs.

In-Store Media
Will Become a
*Standard Line Item
in Retail Media Plans*

5

A Brand's New Essential Ad Buy

The Store Floor

Retailers will continue scaling physical in-store media, turning stores into measurable media environments that complement onsite and offsite activation. Investments are focused on digital screens, audio networks, and placements tied to high-intent moments such as entry, aisle, and checkout.

Recent rollouts signal this shift

Albertsons Media Collective is expanding in-store digital display networks tied to closed-loop measurement

Ahold Delhaize USA is deploying in-store screens as part of its broader retail media platform

Hy-Vee and other regional grocers are scaling screens and messaging across key shopper zones

As these platforms mature, in-store media is increasingly planned alongside digital retail media rather than treated as a separate execution. The physical store remains one of the highest-intent moments in the shopper journey, and retailers are building the infrastructure to monetize that moment more consistently.



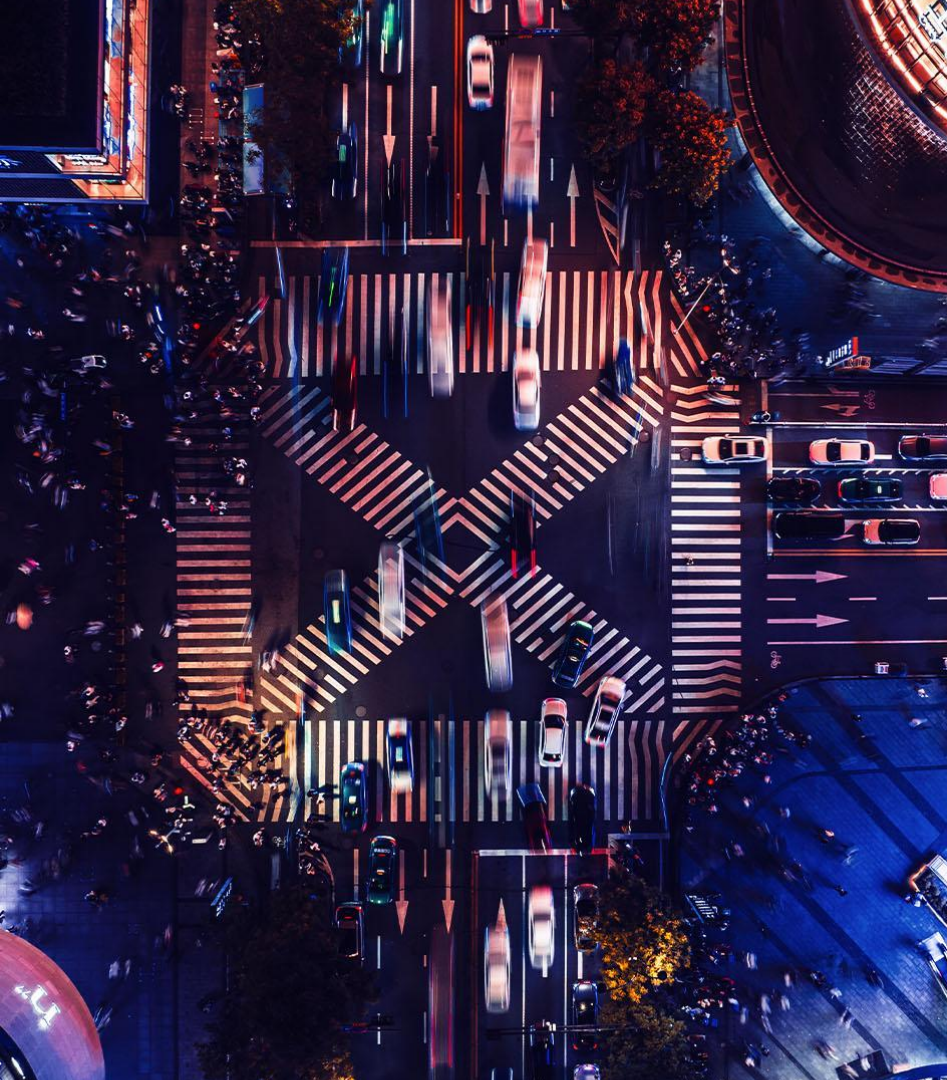
Implications *for Brands*

1 Include in-store media earlier in retail media planning.

2 Coordinate media, creative, and merchandising teams.

3 Align messaging across physical and digital environments.

4 Evaluate in-store exposure alongside digital performance.



The *Takeaway*

By 2027, retail media will span onsite, offsite, and in-store environments with increasing speed and complexity. Brands that integrate activation, apply disciplined measurement, and make intentional decisions about where retailer data is used will be best positioned to drive impact.



GET IN TOUCH

Let's talk.

Contact AMP to explore how we can collaborate to put these insights into action. Reach out to christopher.emery@ampagency.com and say hi.

ABOUT AMP

AMP is a full-service agency built to connect brand love with buyer behavior across every stage of the customer journey. With expertise spanning Strategy & Intelligence, Creative & Content, Retail & Commerce, Media & Measurement, Digital & Social, and Activation & Amplification, AMP delivers solutions that blend creativity, commerce, and data into one seamless experience. By unifying brand storytelling with shopper conversion, AMP helps clients resonate emotionally and drive measurable business growth. Follow along at ampagency.com.