DIGITAL RETAIL
COMMERCE 360

AUGUST 2025

AGENTIC COMMERCE SPOTLIGHT



Online retailers are seeing customers warm up to artificial intelligence, and new AI agents are ready to go shopping.

COMPLIMENTS OF:

KIBO®

INTRODUCTION

Amazon's Prime Day in 2025 proved to be a test for more than just consumer demand and the event's viability across four days instead of its traditional two. After Prime Day concluded on July 11, early data seemed to indicate that the summer tentpole for ecommerce not only brought in record numbers of shoppers for Amazon and other online retailers. It also boosted consumers' use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools as shoppers sought out deals.

As Prime Day played out from July 8 through July 11, traffic to U.S. retail sites from generative AI tools increased 3,300% year over year, according to data analysis from Adobe Analytics. Other channels, including paid search and email, benefited from Prime Day as well by even larger increases in web traffic volume. However, generative AI's growing utility among shoppers appeared impossible to ignore as Adobe tracked $24.1 billion in online retail spending across the U.S. during those four days.

So, now that shoppers are willing to do research using large language models (LLMs) such as OpenAI's ChatGPT and Anthropic's Claude, are they willing to turn over even greater control to AI, allowing it to seek out products and transact on their behalf? Digital Commerce 360 posed that question in survey results that are shared later on in this report, and once again, shoppers demonstrated both interest and comfort.

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In fact, more than 49% of those surveyed said they were already using AI tools at least once per month. Nearly the same share of respondents also said they were open to letting AI search for products and make purchases for them.

The emerging use case in online shopping for AI agents — virtual assistants empowered to execute tasks autonomously on behalf of users — is called agentic commerce. And it has major implications for online retailers, as well as the ecommerce platforms they use and larger ecosystems of search and payments that those retailers rely on.

After all, an ecommerce website optimized for human visitors who arrive via traditional search results may have different needs than one built to cater to AI agents. This report will explore what retailers are already doing with agentic commerce, as well as how tech companies such as OpenAI and the AI-powered search engine Perplexity are embedding agentic commerce into their own web browsers, built to compete against Google's Chrome and Apple's Safari.

While all of these companies are still testing the waters with agentic commerce solutions, they also see opportunities to meet customers within the generative AI experiences to which they are already becoming accustomed. For AI agents in ecommerce, this is just the opening act. ■



— Brian Warmoth, Director of Editorial, Retail

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HELPING RETAILERS OPTIMIZE THEIR AGENTIC AI INVESTMENTS

An executive conversation with **Sachin Sharma,** chief product officer, KIBO



Sachin Sharma, Chief Product Officer at KIBO, shares how KIBO is pioneering the use of Agentic Commerce with purpose-built AI agents that not only streamline backend operations for users but also create more intuitive and trust-building experiences for shoppers, ultimately driving loyalty and conversion.

What is agentic commerce, and how does KIBO's approach stand out?

At KIBO, we define Agentic Commerce as the use of intelligent automation across the entire customer journey and business user productivity, all underpinned by LLMs and agent-specific goals. What distinguishes KIBO's approach is our composable, API-first platform that brings together omnichannel commerce, order management, and AI-driven capabilities into a single, cohesive ecosystem. This allows our clients to deploy the specific agents they need to achieve use cases relevant to them, for use with KIBO's products and third-party products in their tech stacks. Finally, KIBO is deeply integrated with Google's Gemini, leveraging its market-leading AI infrastructure and capabilities for powerful and secure solutions.

How do KIBO's backend agents optimize operations, minimizing the need for traditional UI?

KIBO's backend agents significantly optimize operations by reducing the reliance on manual UI interaction. For example, CSRs can chat with agents in natural language to retrieve information (e.g. order status) or perform actions (e.g. add a product to an existing order), thereby saving time and reducing reliance on the UI. As another example, a merchandiser can converse with an agent to create a promotion or refine product information. KIBO's backend agents span configuration and explainability use cases across all core business users and technical personas.

What are key industry use cases for KIBO's agentic offerings, and how do you see the UI evolving?

KIBO's agentic offerings are designed for a variety of complex commerce scenarios, with a strong focus on omnichannel fulfillment and intelligent customer experiences. For example, shoppers can use our agents to navigate product search more efficiently, easily go through the add-to-cart process, and handle returns and exchanges. All the while, backend agents function simultaneously within the platform UI.

Over time, as specialized agents become more intelligent and autonomous, the UI will likely evolve from a tool used for manual configuration to a centralized dashboard for monitoring, configuration, and exception management. This next-gen UI will focus on actionable insights and high-level control, freeing up customer service teams and other administrative users for more complex issues.

How can retailers maintain shopper trust, privacy, and security in an increasingly autonomous environment?

At KIBO, we view security as a partnership and prioritize it through a multi-layered approach. Our platform provides a secure foundation by encrypting sensitive data and ensuring PCI compliance. This is enhanced by our integration with Google Cloud and Gemini, which adds robust built-in safety at the LLM-level. While we provide these powerful tools, we encourage retailers to complement them by implementing their own data governance policies and practicing responsible AI interaction, such as avoiding sensitive PII in prompts.

What impact do you anticipate KIBO's comprehensive agentic capabilities having on customer loyalty and checkout conversion?

KIBO's agentic capabilities will provide more compelling user experiences, which drive loyalty and conversion. For example, using natural language for site search reduces friction, letting shoppers quickly find what they're looking for. Our real-time inventory visibility and estimated delivery dates provide critically important information, minimize frustration, build trust, and drive conversion. Shoppers can then prompt agents to add products to cart with their desired fulfillment method, which will also take into account applicable promotions for the product and the cart overall.

As agentic commerce evolves, what should retailers prioritize to maximize their investment in KIBO's solutions?

As agentic commerce evolves, retailers will be able to maximize their investment in KIBO by prioritizing data completeness and accuracy, strong use of agentic capabilities, and the integration of additional systems with KIBO's agentic offering. KIBO's Shopper Agent will be smarter and provide better customer experiences as its knowledge of the retailer's first-party data grows. For example, exposing a retailer's blog articles to its Shopper Agent will provide the Agent with much more product and business context to provide better experiences to the customer during the product discovery phase in the buying journey. KIBO's purpose-built agents will benefit administrative users within the platform and while using third-party technology. As users become more familiar and comfortable with these agents, they will be able to operate faster on their tasks within KIBO and shift time to higher-ROI responsibilities.

KIBO®

KIBO

KIBO Agentic Commerce: Higher Conversions, Faster Fulfillment, Lower Costs

Automate conversational commerce experiences and see:

+30%	50%	+40%
Cart conversions	Customer support costs	Faster order fulfillment

Boost Your Bottom Line:
Slash customer support costs and eliminate repetitive manual tasks to drive operational efficiency.

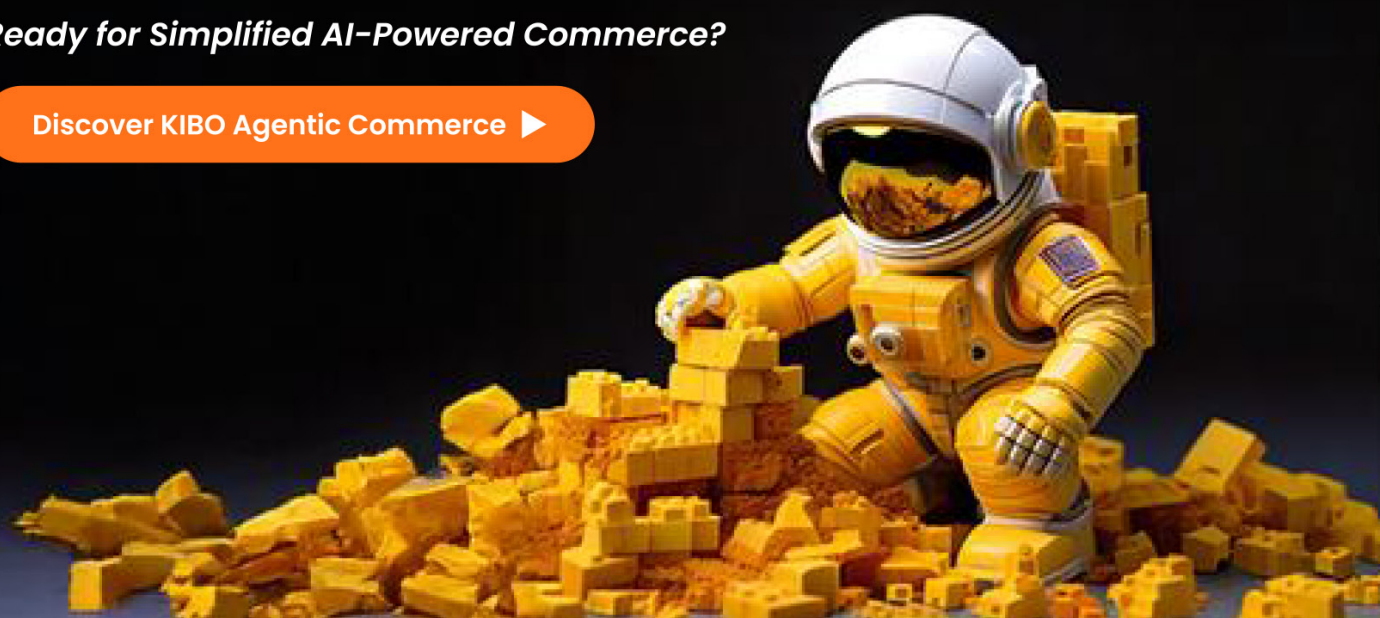
Build Unbeatable Loyalty:
Lower cart abandonment and increase customer retention with faster, smarter, automated responses.

Optimize Your Operations:
Accelerate order fulfillment while cutting inventory costs and return rates.

Empower Your Workforce:
Free your team from repetitive tasks so they can focus on productivity, fraud detection, and growth.

Ready for Simplified AI-Powered Commerce?

Discover KIBO Agentic Commerce ▶



HOW THE BIGGEST NAMES IN AI ARE MAKING A PLAY FOR AGENTIC COMMERCE

As OpenAI and Perplexity ready new web browsers, their desire to play roles in checkout experiences is clear.

BY BRIAN WARMOTH

Artificial intelligence isn't new to ecommerce, but in 2025, the role tech companies such as OpenAI and Perplexity want it to play could reshape online shopping experiences.

Artificial intelligence has long been a part of technology stacks for search and discovery. Now, an emerging field of agentic commerce solutions promises to elevate AI's role, catering to shifting consumer behavior and enabling systems to not only surface highly personalized results, but automate purchasing processes as well.

47% of Gen Z — in this case children and young adults born between 1997 and 2012 — is already using generative AI on a weekly basis, according to results in an April 2025 Gallup report released by the Walton Family Foundation and GSV Ventures. The generation's comfort level and engagement with these tools, which are powered by large language models such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Gemini and Meta's Llama, coincide with generative AI's encroachment on traditional search engine results.

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Historically, Google has dominated search — and for now, it continues to do so. However, the Alphabet-owned company's share has declined in recent years, down to 89.7% in April 2025 after once being as high as 93.4% in February 2023, according to the tracking firm Statcounter.

WHAT AGENTIC COMMERCE MEANS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING

Already, some of the biggest names in both generative AI and online retail are testing the waters with agentic commerce solutions meant to shorten shoppers' paths from initial research to final purchase.

Among them, OpenAI began the year unveiling Operator, its own AI agent with ecommerce applications. In addition, it announced it would be working with eBay, Instacart and Etsy to test Operator's capabilities. Use cases include asking Operator to order groceries, finding a gift and booking tickets through one of OpenAI's partners.

"Our collaboration with OpenAI will introduce a new paradigm of discovery and shopping online," wrote Nitzan Mekel-Bobrov, the chief AI officer at eBay, when Operator was announced. "We anticipate that through this collaboration, we will expand the reach of our sellers, giving more buyers exposure to eBay's unique inventory."

Importantly, OpenAI also updated its documentation in 2025 to include Shopify alongside Microsoft's Bing as official third-party search providers in ChatGPT results. At the same time, Shopify has added notes to the code for its merchants' ecommerce sites to dissuade unapproved agents from trying to crawl or check out.

"Our collaboration with OpenAI will introduce a new paradigm of discovery and shopping online."

— **Nitzan Mekel-Bobrov**, chief AI officer, eBay

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Meanwhile, OpenAI competitor Anthropic is partnering directly with Amazon Web Services (AWS) on the launch of a new AWS AI agent marketplace. The companies detailed their plans at the AWS Summit in New York City on July 15. Amazon has already invested billions of dollars in Anthropic, whose LLM Claude is a rival to OpenAI's ChatGPT.

In the meantime, Amazon has agentic plans of its own and has already put agentic commerce features in front of its shoppers.

AMAZON'S AGENTIC COMMERCE PLANS

Amazon holds unique status among retailers as a technology and cloud services provider. Those resources, along with its deep fulfillment operations, have long helped it to retain its spot as the No. 1 online retailer in North America by web sales in Digital Commerce 360's Top 2000 Database. The Seatle-based giant announced agentic capabilities for its new Alexa+ service in February.

Alexa+, which commands a $19.99 subscription fee on its own, also gives Amazon's Prime subscribers the option to automate discovery and transactions in some cases.

"Alexa+ is designed to take action, and is able to orchestrate across tens of thousands of services and devices — which, to our knowledge, has never been done at this scale," said Panos Panay, Amazon's senior vice president of devices and services, when the announcement was made.

Since then, Amazon has also tested its new Buy for Me options with shoppers who use its mobile app. These features, announced in April, keep users within the Amazon app experience while enabling them to buy products that are sold through third-party sites.

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"We're always working to invent new ways to make shopping even more convenient, and we've created Buy for Me to help customers quickly and easily find and buy products from other brand stores if we don't currently sell those items in our store," explained Oliver Messenger, director of Amazon Shopping.

THE BATTLE FOR NEW WEB BROWSING EXPERIENCES

Ultimately, Amazon is not alone in its desire to leverage agentic commerce to keep shoppers within its own app experience. OpenAI's Operator, for instance, promises the ability to browse websites on behalf of its users, making choices and initiating transactions without shoppers needing to view a web page or other app.

Moreover, OpenAI plans to launch its own standalone web browser that would compete against Google's Chrome and Apple's Safari, Reuters reported in July. Operator would be a major component of the new browsers, according to the report.

In addition to OpenAI, the AI-powered search engine Perplexity also has its eyes on providing an alternative web browser. The company launched its new Comet browser in July, rolling it out first to subscribers on its $200-per-month Max plan, along with some other early users who requested access.

Comet's agentic search and shopping capabilities build on tools Perplexity showed off in November 2024. At the time, it noted that the experience would use platform integrations such as Shopify to refer to timely and relevant information. Products in results can be surfaced from Shopify sites across the world that sell and ship to the United States.

"We're always working to invent new ways to make shopping even more convenient, and we've created Buy for Me to help customers quickly and easily find and buy products from other brand stores if we don't currently sell those items in our store."

— **Oliver Messenger**, director, Amazon Shopping

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DAVID'S BRIDAL'S AGENTIC WEDDING PLANNER

David's Bridal, which recently relaunched its own ecommerce site using Shopify's platform, has agentic ambitions within its own wedding planner tool. The retailer launched a closed beta for the latest version of its Pearl Planner, which CEO Kelly Cook told Digital Commerce 360 about in June.

"It updates tasks for you," Cook explained. "So if you say, 'I'm moving my wedding from Iceland to Aruba, make all the necessary adjustments,' it starts to change all your tasks."

She said the planner has the capacity to make recommendations and take actions as it becomes aware of choices being made throughout the wedding-planning process.

"An example would be I've changed my bridesmaids colors from pink to green," she said. "Pearl will say, 'Absolutely. I'm happy to do that for you,' and then it'll also say, 'Do you want to eliminate the greenery in the flowers you've already chosen?'" ■

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SURVEY: WILL CONSUMERS HAND THEIR CREDIT CARDS OVER TO AI?

BY BRIAN WARMOTH

As Amazon, David's Bridal, OpenAI and Perplexity all float early agentic commerce tools, they all face tests as consumers decide how much faith they are willing to place in AI to not only manage and store their personal information — but also use credit card information to make purchases for them autonomously.

That will be a significant and necessary step to ensure agentic commerce's staying power. However, consumers are already spending significant amounts of time with AI tools and developing comfort levels in their day-to-day lives.

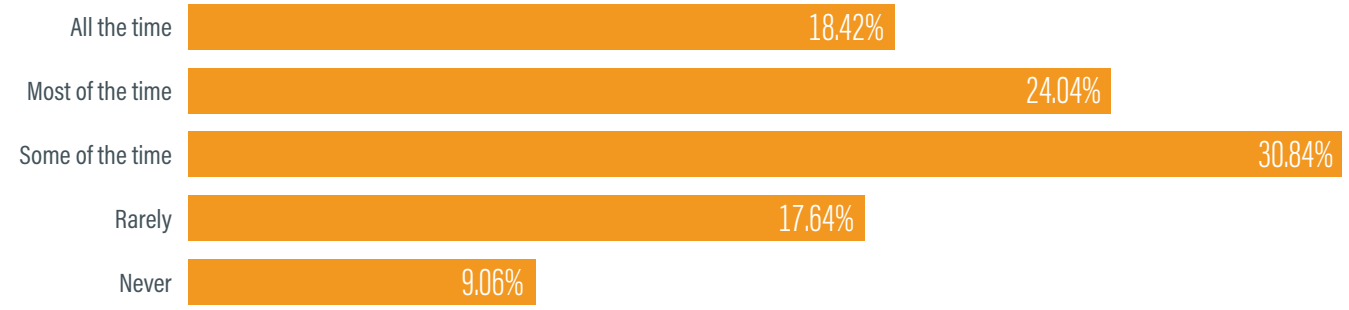
Bizrate Insights and Digital Commerce 360 surveyed 1,015 online shoppers in May to understand how they use OpenAI's ChatGPT, Perplexity, Google's Gemini or other similar AI tools. 49.4% responded in the survey that they were using AI at least once per month, with 11.1% saying they did so daily.

Importantly, when asked if they would trust an AI model to find and purchase a product on their behalf if they entered their desired price and other details, 49.8% responded that they were fine with doing so in at least some cases. 31.6% said that they would never be open to it.

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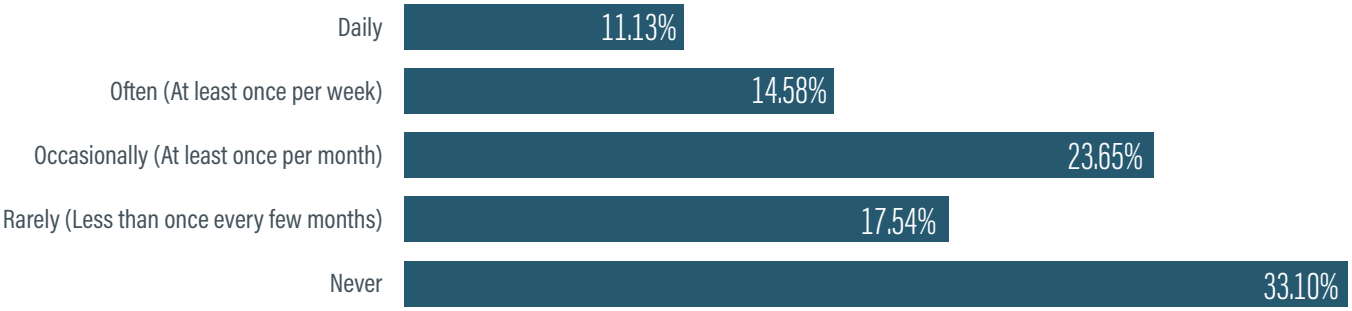
As for which models these shoppers use most often when doing research while shopping online, Google's Gemini had the highest rate of use within the past month. 44.8% of those surveyed said they had entered queries there. OpenAI's ChatGPT was next in line, having been used for online shopping research by 40.9% of shoppers. Perplexity trailed both, with 13.3% of shoppers saying they had used it for online shopping research within the past month.

HOW OFTEN DOES THE ADVERTISING YOU SEE WHEN SHOPPING IN MARKETPLACES SUCH AS AMAZON OR EBAY (AMAZON'S CHOICE, SPONSORED, ETC.) INFLUENCE YOUR ONLINE BUYING?



Source: Bizrate Insights and Digital Commerce 360 May 2025 survey of 1,015 online shoppers

HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE OPENAI'S CHATGPT, PERPLEXITY, GOOGLE'S GEMINI OR OTHER SIMILAR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS?



Source: Bizrate Insights and Digital Commerce 360 May 2025 survey of 1,015 online shoppers

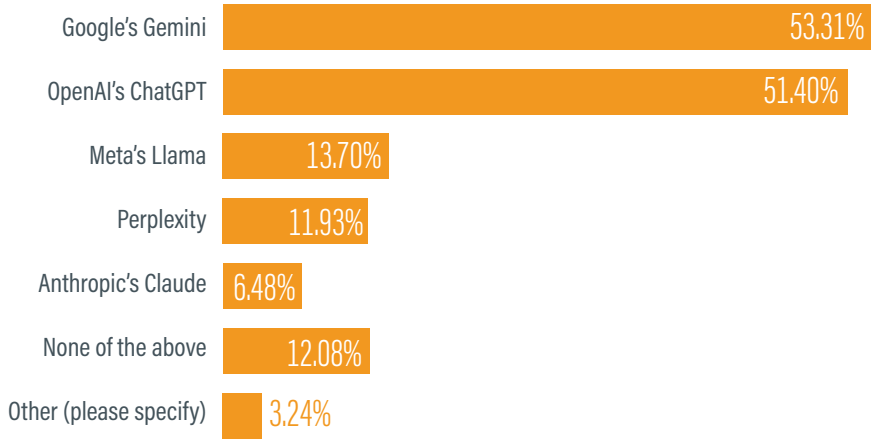
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Google's lead may not be surprising, given its multi-decade head start in search, which began in 1998. Nevertheless, as a young competitor, OpenAI's close proximity in these results show how far the company has come since ChatGPT first debuted in 2022.

As OpenAI and others continue to fight for market share in a field that Google has dominated for years, the resulting landscape will undoubtedly shape how and where online shoppers transact. ■

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HAVE YOU USED IN THE PAST MONTH?

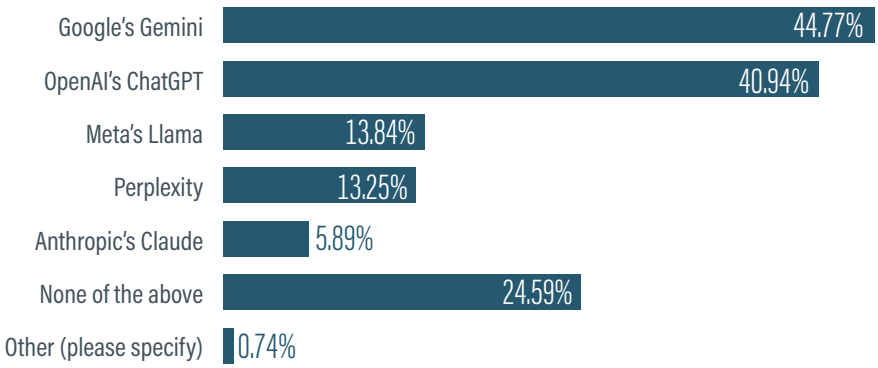
(Please select all that apply)



Source: Bizrate Insights and Digital Commerce 360 May 2025 survey of 1,015 online shoppers

HAVE YOU USED ANY OF THE AI MODELS LISTED BELOW TO DO RESEARCH WHILE SHOPPING ONLINE?

(Please select all that apply)



Source: Bizrate Insights and Digital Commerce 360 May 2025 survey of 1,015 online shoppers

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IN B2B ECOMMERCE AND ONLINE RETAIL, AI IS REWIRING OPERATIONS

Intuit, Best Buy and Parts Town are all trying to harness this technology to upgrade their operational capabilities.

BY MARK BROHAN

Behind checkout screens on the systems that B2B sellers and retailers use, artificial intelligence (AI) is changing how teams plan and work. In some cases, agentic AI-powered systems trained to reason, take initiative and learn from dynamic inputs have moved from research labs and pilot projects into the core operations across U.S. businesses. Manufacturers and distributors are no exceptions.

For manufacturers, distributors and retailers alike, these autonomous agents are no longer speculative. They are becoming foundational to how companies execute, scale and differentiate in today's fiercely competitive B2B landscape.

Unlike traditional automation tools, which follow pre-set rules or await human instruction, agentic AI can operate with autonomy. These systems observe, plan and act independently, based on real-time data and evolving business contexts. They can respond

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to complex scenarios, make nuanced decisions and even optimize themselves over time. That shift, from passive AI assistants to initiative-taking business actors, marks a critical turning point in how digital transformation is unfolding across the supply chain.

FROM WORKFLOW AUTOMATION TO INTELLIGENT ACTION

B2B ecommerce has long relied on automation to streamline processes like order management, invoicing and customer support. But those systems, while efficient, remain reactive. Agentic AI redefines that dynamic by embedding intelligence into the core of digital operations, creating adaptive workflows that evolve without constant human oversight.

This new paradigm is gaining traction fast. According to a recent survey conducted by the auditing and consulting firm PwC, 79% of senior U.S. executives reported using AI agents in some capacity, with 88% planning to boost AI investment over the next 12 months. Of those already deploying agentic systems, 67% say they've seen measurable results, particularly in faster decision-making and productivity gains.

"Agentic AI is no longer a fringe experiment," said Scott Likens, innovation and trust technology leader at PwC. "It's quickly becoming central to how companies drive efficiency, respond to customers, and create competitive advantage."

Yet adoption remains uneven. Only 17% of companies surveyed say they've deployed agentic AI across most or all operations, and just 45% are actively redesigning their business models to fully harness the technology. Many remain in the experimentation phase — piloting virtual agents in customer service or analytics —

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without yet embracing the deeper organizational shift that agentic AI enables.

INTUIT'S AUTONOMOUS FINANCE WORKFLOWS

One company that is leaning in aggressively is Intuit. Known for financial software platforms like QuickBooks and TurboTax, the company has repositioned itself as a pioneer in AI-powered automation for small and mid-sized businesses.

Intuit now operates a suite of AI agents within QuickBooks that automate end-to-end financial tasks, from categorizing expenses and reconciling bank statements to sending invoices and managing receivables. These agents also provide predictive insights, such as cash flow projections and personalized growth strategies, based on real-time data ingestion.

According to Intuit CEO Sasan Goodarzi, these features aren't about convenience. They are fundamentally reshaping how businesses operate.

"Our platform is transforming how businesses run and grow by combining AI with human expertise," Goodarzi said.

He added that small businesses using QuickBooks' AI features save an average of 12 hours per month, freeing them to focus on higher-value activities like sales and customer relationships.

Earlier this year, Intuit acquired Relevvo, a go-to-market automation startup specializing in AI-driven outreach and lead generation. The move signals Intuit's broader vision: evolving from a provider of financial software to a platform of autonomous services that can run core business functions with minimal input.

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BEST BUY'S CUSTOMER AND STOREFRONT EXPERIENCE

Retailers are also embracing the agentic shift, particularly those with hybrid physical-digital models. Best Buy, for example, is implementing agentic AI across multiple touchpoints — from digital storefronts to in-store service and backend logistics.

During the company's fiscal Q1 2026 earnings call, CEO Corie Barry laid out Best Buy's growing use of autonomous agents to improve efficiency and personalization.

"We're leaning into agentic AI not just as a way to improve productivity, but as a way to solve real customer problems quickly, meaningfully and at scale," Barry said.

On the ecommerce side, Best Buy has rolled out conversational search tools powered by AI agents that guide customers through product selection based on nuanced preferences and past behavior. These tools go beyond keyword filters, instead using contextual reasoning to surface relevant options and upselling services like warranties or installation.

Leading companies are also leveraging AI and machine learning to deliver personalized content, recommendations, and product offerings based on user behavior and industry- or account-specific data. This is often referred to as "personalization at scale," and it reflects rising expectations among B2B buyers for a B2C-like experience. Businesses are now able to offer tailored recommendations, create dynamic pricing strategies, and deliver bespoke marketing campaigns in real time, creating a seamless, customer-centric experience that mirrors the best B2C platforms.

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In stores, AI agents now assist sales associates through wearable tech, offering on-the-spot product information and restocking alerts. Meanwhile, in customer service, AI-powered voice systems can autonomously resolve common inquiries, reduce contact center volume, and boost satisfaction.

The results are already visible. Barry noted that AI-enabled shipping optimization has shortened delivery windows and reduced logistics costs. And while not all functions are fully autonomous, the company is pushing toward an integrated architecture where AI agents handle operational complexity behind the scenes.

“Agentic AI helps us make every interaction feel effortless,” Barry said. “It’s helping employees build trust, solve problems faster, and deliver more value to the customer.”

PARTS TOWN: AI TRANSFORMING DISTRIBUTOR OPERATIONS

Parts Town, a leading distributor of repair parts for the food service industry, has been undergoing its own AI transformation.

Chief information officer Jamie Head shared insights from the Applied AI for Distributors conference in June, explaining that Parts Town has had to evolve its approach to customer service as digital tools become increasingly essential.

“Parts Town used to differentiate itself by promising to answer phone calls in no more than three rings, so restaurant owners would know they could quickly order repair parts when equipment broke down,” Head said. “Over the years, the company has added many resources for customers to find the parts they need quickly and easily. But now the customers expect even more digital tools and self-service options than ever before.”

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Parts Town has embraced a range of AI-driven initiatives to meet these evolving expectations, achieving several notable successes in the process.

One of the standout projects is PartPredictor, an AI-powered tool it launched last year. The system helps technicians quickly find the right part by entering the equipment manufacturer, model number, and the specific issue. The AI combines historical data from technicians and its own intelligence to identify the parts most associated with that scenario. An updated version of PartPredictor is being developed to incorporate more manufacturers and offer a broader range of models.

Head also highlighted the company's use of AutoStore, an automated warehouse system that directs 125 robots to work alongside human employees. This system dramatically improves efficiency, putting parts away four times faster than humans could previously. It also optimizes warehouse space, with 70% of orders now being fulfilled from just 12% of the available warehouse area.

Parts Town Unlimited's Home Division has also applied AI to customer service, using sentiment-analysis tools to analyze inbound calls. These tools have provided insights into why customers prefer to call rather than use self-service options, revealing that they often seek faster service, expert advice, or help with complicated issues. This understanding is helping the company refine its approach to self-service tools and AI-powered customer engagement.

> "Parts Town used to differentiate itself by promising to answer phone calls in no more than three rings, so restaurant owners would know they could quickly order repair parts when equipment broke down. But now the customers expect more digital tools and self-service options."
>
> **— Jamie Head**, chief information officer, Parts Town

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NAPSTER'S REINVENTION FROM MUSIC DISRUPTOR TO AI-POWERED COMPANY

In an unexpected twist, Napster, a name once synonymous with digital music disruption, is returning to the tech spotlight, not as a music service but as an artificial intelligence (AI) company. Infinite Reality, which acquired Napster for $207 million earlier this year, is rebranding itself as Napster Corp. and launching an AI division aimed at transforming how users interact with the web.

This rebrand signals a significant evolution for a brand that was at the center of one of the internet's earliest and most polarizing legal battles. Founded in 1999, Napster initially revolutionized digital music through its peer-to-peer file-sharing service, but it was shut down in 2001 after facing a barrage of lawsuits. Now, that legacy is being reimagined.

The move is accompanied by the debut of Napster AI, a business unit focused on integrating AI into digital experiences. Through its Napster Spaces platform, the company is enabling users to transform static websites into interactive, AI-driven environments powered by lifelike, multilingual AI agents that guide users through sales, support and education.

According to CEO John Acunto, Napster's AI-driven rebrand channels its original "challenger spirit" into a new wave of disruption.

"We're not just launching another product," Acunto said. "We're redefining how brands connect with audiences through intelligent digital agents."

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The AI space Napster is entering is projected to grow from $5.2 billion in 2024 to $200 billion by 2034, making its timing particularly strategic. As generative AI tools become more interactive, Napster's platform offers companies flexibility in how they adopt AI-driven interactions, with models such as full-page, embedded, and agent-only deployments.

This rebrand has the potential to reshape how companies approach their digital presence, moving from a read-only web to a conversation-driven one.

"If Napster can make AI feel less like a tool and more like a teammate, they could be onto something," said James Currier, a general partner at NFX.

AI'S NEW TECH STACK FOR B2B

B2B ecommerce, long seen as lagging its consumer-facing counterpart, is entering a new phase. The static digital catalogs and manual quote requests of yesterday are giving way to dynamic interfaces powered by intelligent agents that anticipate customer needs, negotiate prices, and place replenishment orders without human prompting.

This transformation isn't limited to front-end experiences. Agentic AI is now embedded in the full stack — from inventory optimization and vendor selection to performance forecasting and compliance monitoring. For example, AI agents can monitor a supplier's on-time delivery rate, factor in geopolitical disruptions, and reroute orders accordingly, all without triggering human review.

Cisco's 2025 Global AI Adoption Report backs up these trends. It projects that 56% of tech vendors' support interactions will

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involve agentic AI within the next 12 months, with that number rising to 68% by 2028. The report also found that 93% of business leaders believe agentic systems will make B2B ecommerce more predictive, responsive and personalized.

TRUST, GOVERNANCE, AND THE HUMAN FACTOR

Despite the momentum, agentic AI adoption is not without hurdles. Cultural resistance, ethical concerns and organizational silos continue to slow progress — even as technical capabilities accelerate.

PwC's survey revealed that only 20% of executives are comfortable allowing AI agents to make financial decisions, and just 22% would trust them with HR-related tasks. Governance frameworks remain a work in progress, and many companies have yet to implement clear guidelines for transparency, accountability or escalation paths when agents make mistakes.

"There's a trust gap," PwC's Likens said. "Technology has outpaced culture in many organizations. Until companies fully understand how these agents operate, and what guardrails are needed, it will be hard to scale adoption responsibly."

That's leading some firms to pursue a hybrid model: using AI agents for well-defined, low-risk tasks while keeping humans in the loop for anything sensitive or strategic. Over time, experts say, the key will be to build systems that combine autonomous execution with human judgment, rather than replacing one with the other.

REINVENTING BUSINESS AROUND AI

What sets agentic AI apart from previous waves of digital innovation is its capacity to drive structural change, not just operational

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improvement. This isn't a tool to bolt onto legacy processes. It's a catalyst for reinvention.

Half of the executives in PwC's study believe their business models will be "unrecognizable" within two years due to agentic AI. Three out of four expect its impact to surpass that of the internet in reshaping the workplace.

"The companies that win won't just use AI agents — they'll build around them," said Likens. "This isn't about deploying a new tool. It's about reimagining how work gets done from the ground up."

WHAT'S NEXT IN B2B

Agentic AI specifically is now past the novelty phase. It is operational, measurable and fast becoming indispensable. From financial automation and ecommerce personalization to logistics and manufacturing, AI agents are driving a paradigm shift in how work is done.

But success will depend not only on technical deployment but on bold leadership. Businesses must redesign systems, rethink talent and instill new governance models that embrace, not fear, autonomy. The laggards won't be those that fail to deploy agents, but those that fail to trust them.

In the B2B economy, the future will belong to companies that act fast, experiment fearlessly, and build systems designed for intelligent, independent action. The agentic era has arrived — and it's moving faster than anyone expected. ■

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WALMART INTRODUCES ITS SPARKY VIRTUAL ASSISTANT TO NEW SHOPPERS

Sparky joins other assistants and agentic commerce efforts at Walmart as it rolls out for use across multiple categories.

BY BETH DUCKETT

As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to gain traction in ecommerce, Walmart is stepping up work with its assistant, Sparky, to get it in front of shoppers.

The retailer rolled out Sparky earlier this week and did not shy away from its agentic commerce ambitions. The AI-powered tool is designed to help customers search for products, compare different options and sift through reviews. Sparky is now live across all product categories and can be accessed through a new smiling "Ask Sparky" button in the Walmart mobile app, the company stated in a June 6 blog post.

Walmart is No. 2 in the Top 2000 Database, Digital Commerce 360's ranking of North America's online retailers by annual web sales. The retailer is also No. 9 in the Global Online Marketplaces Database. The list contains Digital Commerce 360's ranking

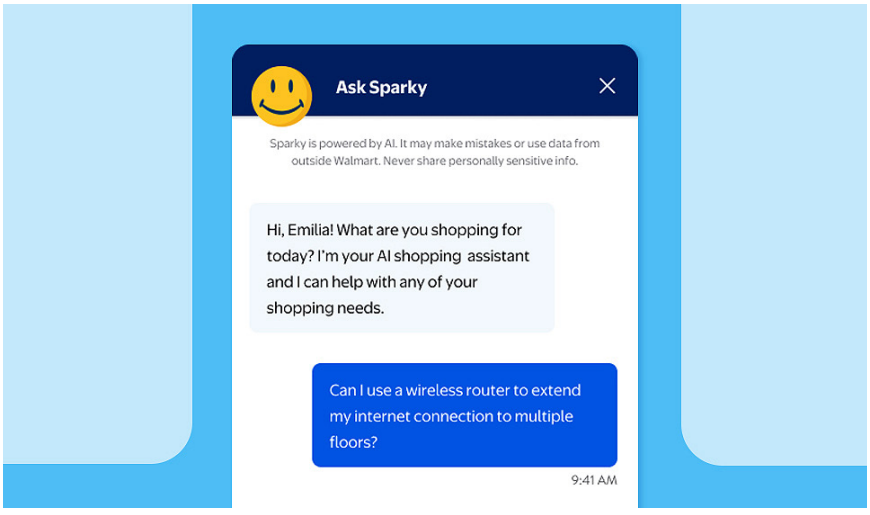
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of the largest 100 online marketplaces by third-party gross merchandise value (GMV). Digital Commerce 360 projects Walmart's online sales will reach $153.88 billion in 2025.

WHAT WALMART'S SPARKY ASSISTANT DOES

"In today's always-connected world, Sparky is here to do more than just answer questions, it is designed to be a trusted partner," wrote Desirée Gosby, senior vice president of tech strategy and emerging technology at Walmart.

Over time, Walmart plans to upgrade the customer-facing assistant with more advanced AI capabilities, she noted. These include automatic reordering and multimodal input, which will allow shoppers to interact with text as well as images, audio and video.



Walmart shows the user interface for its "Ask Sparky" feature on its mobile app.

Source: Walmart.com

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BUILT ON RETAIL-SPECIFIC AI MODELS

Unlike standard chatbots, Sparky is trained on large language models tailored to retail use cases. According to Walmart, the assistant can handle detailed product queries, summarize customer reviews, and help users compare items within its mobile app.

Sharing examples, Gosby said Sparky can support shopping scenarios such as checking which sports teams are playing and finding the right jersey, or looking up beach weather and receiving outfit recommendations. The assistant can also help with event planning or gift shopping, suggesting toys, decorations, or other occasion-specific items.

“From answering product questions to comparing options, Sparky takes the guesswork out of shopping, making recommendations so customers can add to cart with confidence,” Gosby said. “Sparky provides instant and comprehensive answers to product-related questions, helping customers quickly understand specific features, compare items and make informed choices.”

Sparky builds on Walmart’s existing suite of AI-powered shopping tools. These currently include product review summaries, product descriptions and comparisons, and AI-enabled search within the navigation bar, Gosby said.

Walmart has also been deploying AI tools internally. In March, the company introduced “Wally,” a generative AI assistant designed to support its merchants, Walmart’s term for employees who source products for its stores and online.

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MOVING TOWARD AGENTIC AI

Sparky also reflects Walmart's expanding investment in agentic AI. The category of artificial intelligence goes beyond content generation to perform tasks, such as picking out items or completing a transaction, on behalf of users.

Until now, Walmart's efforts in this space have focused primarily on internal tools and customer service applications, according to Hari Vasudev, the chief technology officer at Walmart.

But with Sparky, the retailer is shifting into more advanced, customer-facing capabilities. Walmart says it plans to evolve Sparky into a multimodal agent that can handle more complex tasks, like automatically reordering household items, scheduling services, or giving personalized suggestions based on a shopper's preferences.

"Ultimately, Sparky will solve everyday problems, freeing up time for what matters most," Gosby wrote. "'What's for dinner?' becomes a week of family-approved meal plans with ingredients automatically added to cart. 'How do I fix this leaky faucet?' turns into step-by-step guidance with the right tools ordered for same-day delivery."

"Sparky is more than a feature — it's a foundation for what's next," she added. "Fueling Walmart's trajectory into the future of shopping, Sparky isn't just revolutionizing retail; it's paving the way for a new and improved customer experience."

WALMART RESEARCH: SHOPPERS WANT AI WITH A HUMAN TOUCH

Walmart joins a growing list of retailers and tech platforms testing the waters of agentic AI. In April, Amazon began piloting "Buy

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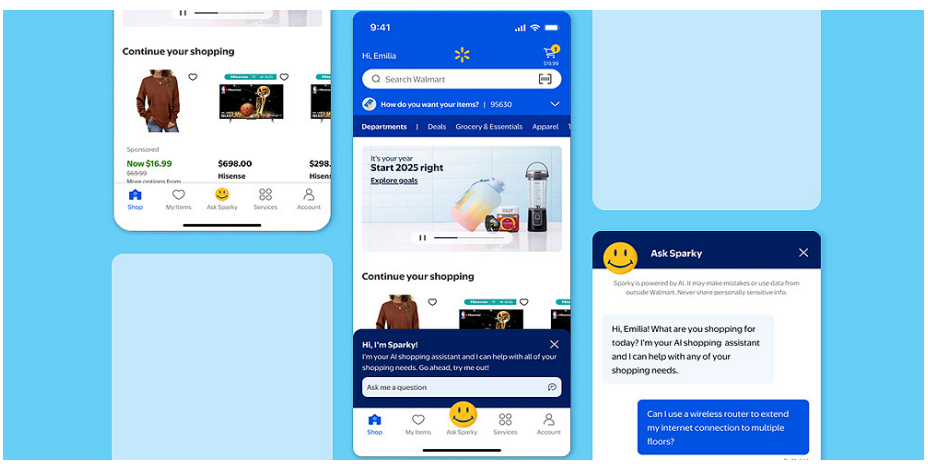
for Me," which lets customers purchase items from third-party brands directly through its app.

In its Retail Rewired 2025 report, Walmart identified AI — and agentic AI in particular — as central to the next phase of retail, describing it as "an invisible but indispensable layer of the shopping journey."

The report, from early June, found that 27% of consumers now trust AI-powered recommendations more than influencer suggestions (24%), and many say they already rely on AI to compare prices, receive alerts on price drops, and narrow down options based on historical preferences.

Yet despite the growing reliance, shoppers remain selective about when and how they engage with AI. Traditional search still dominates, and 46% of survey respondents said they were "somewhat unlikely or very unlikely" to let a digital assistant or agent oversee an entire shopping trip for them.

"From our research, shoppers are more comfortable using digital assistants for lower-stakes purchases like household essentials," the retailer stated. "But when it comes to big-ticket or emotionally significant items — furniture or food/groceries — AI hits a trust barrier." ■



Walmart shows its mobile app, with a button to "Ask Sparky" centered along the bottom navigation.

Source: Walmart.com

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HOW ECOMMERCE PLATFORMS ARE PREPARING TO MEET AI SHOPPING AGENTS

The future of agentic commerce has implications throughout shopping journeys, as well as the websites and apps where they take place.

BY MARK BROHAN

The future of ecommerce is being rewritten — not by humans tapping their phones, but by artificial intelligence agents acting on their behalf. These artificial intelligence (AI)-powered digital assistants, known as shopping agents, are quietly redefining the traditional ecommerce model. Designed to discover, compare and purchase products autonomously, they're not merely disrupting the customer experience — they're eliminating it.

The result is a form of commerce that doesn't require a person to browse, cart or check out. In this new model — dubbed agentic commerce — software does the shopping, based on instructions from consumers or entirely on predictive behavior. This evolution represents a profound shift in how platforms, merchants and software vendors must think about the future of digital transactions.

DIGITAL COMMERCE 360 RETAIL

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FROM HUMAN INTERFACES TO MACHINE INTERACTIONS

For decades, ecommerce was optimized for human interaction. Platforms competed on intuitive user experience (UX) design, search speed, personalization widgets and slick checkout experiences. The emphasis was on visual appeal, seamless navigation and emotional resonance. But AI agents don't care about design or marketing copy. They don't need reviews or lifestyle photography. They only need fast, clean data — and permission to act.

To support these agents, platforms must shift from being customer-facing interfaces to backend infrastructures. That means building fast, scalable APIs, exposing structured product data and enabling secure access to inventory, pricing, customer history and fulfillment capabilities.

"Agentic commerce demands that platforms stop thinking like storefronts and start thinking like operating systems," said Mike Lowndes, VP Analyst at Gartner, in a January 2025 webinar on composable commerce. "The new buyer is code."

This shift reflects a broader trend across digital industries. In banking, AI bots manage transfers and investments. In transportation, autonomous systems reroute logistics based on weather data. Now, ecommerce is following suit, becoming machine-mediated by default.

HOW PLATFORMS ARE INTEGRATING AGENTIC COMMERCE FEATURES

Many major ecommerce platforms are already evolving to support AI agents. These agents may be human-initiated or fully autonomous. Some may perform tasks to support staff, generating reports or handling marketing tasks. Others, which serve shoppers, handle some — or all — steps in the shopping process.

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Shopify, for example, has steadily expanded its developer ecosystem to accommodate agent-led buying. Its Storefront API allows AI systems to query real-time product availability, fetch price tiers and execute transactions. Through Shopify Flow — an automation tool used by Shopify Plus merchants — bots can trigger actions like sending order confirmations or adjusting inventory without any human intervention.

Its Hydrogen and Oxygen frameworks further support headless and serverless commerce. Combined, these tools allow merchants to decouple presentation from functionality — perfect for agentic systems that don't require user interfaces (UIs) at all.

Meanwhile, BigCommerce has leaned into MACH (microservices-based, API-first, cloud-native, headless) architecture to deliver flexibility. Its GraphQL APIs let agents ask for precisely the data they need, minimizing bandwidth use and latency. In an April 2025 blog post, Troy Cox, the chief technology officer at BigCommerce, noted that "agentic workloads are growing fastest in grocery, auto parts, and professional services," and that the platform is optimizing for machine decision-making at scale.

Elsewhere, Salesforce Commerce Cloud is weaving AI deeper into its core infrastructure via its suite of Einstein AI features and Agentforce, which is Salesforce's AI agent platform. Originally built for human-facing personalization, Einstein now powers backend automation — including bundling, reordering and cart optimization — based on customer relationship management (CRM) history and behavioral intent. Agents can act as digital proxies, retrieve tailored experiences and execute purchases based on Salesforce's unified customer profile.

"Agentic workloads are growing fastest in grocery, auto parts, and professional services."

— Troy Cox, chief technology officer, BigCommerce

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Elastic Path — which built its reputation through composable commerce — offers a modular framework that is designed for building autonomous workflows. Its Commerce Cloud and Composable Commerce Hub provide API access to pricing, promotions, product logic and fulfillment strategies. In February, Elastic Path rolled out agent-focused modules for inventory arbitration, enabling bots to select suppliers based on price, distance or lead time in real time.

Kibo Commerce is positioning itself as a backend engine for intelligent order routing. Its personalization and order management features are now optimized for machine logic. For example, an agent can prioritize shipping speed over price when placing urgent replenishment orders — adjusting decisions on the fly based on customer-defined rules. Kibo's orchestration engine acts like middleware between AI agents and fulfillment networks.

Optimizely, best known for A/B testing and content experimentation, is now tracking how bots respond to real-time pricing and availability changes. Its platform lets brands test variables not just on humans, but on digital agents — fine-tuning how they rank, filter and act. This is critical for marketplaces looking to optimize for machine-generated demand, especially in dynamic pricing environments.

Cimulate, a newer but highly specialized vendor, is built entirely around agentic commerce. Its platform simulates consumer behavior at scale — allowing brands to test, train and deploy AI agents for demand prediction, fulfillment modeling and automated purchasing. While still in early-stage adoption, Cimulate represents a category of vendors focused exclusively on autonomous transactional systems.

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REAL-WORLD ADOPTION: FROM REORDERING TO GIFTING

Agent-led commerce is no longer theoretical; it's happening now, especially in categories with frequent replenishment or low emotional involvement.

In grocery and household goods, AI shopping agents are embedded in consumer-facing apps like Amazon Dash, Instacart and Chefling. These AI agents monitor pantry levels, detect usage patterns and reorder items automatically. Walmart's InHome service now integrates with generative AI assistants that learn preferences and replace commonly used goods proactively.

In pet care, companies like Chewy are developing reorder agents that optimize shipping windows and suggest upsells based on a pet's breed, age, and health data. These agents don't just restock — they personalize.

Gifting is another ripe use case. Shopify merchant Saddleback Leather recently tested a bot-based concierge for holiday shopping. Customers answered a few prompts (recipient, budget, interests), and the system generated a shortlist, placed the order, and sent the gift — all without requiring a visit to the storefront. Early results showed a 22% higher average order value and a 50% reduction in abandoned carts.

In B2B, similar trends are taking hold. According to a March 2025 AI report published by McKinsey, 19% of surveyed firms are now using generative AI for procurement — letting bots source quotes, evaluate suppliers, and place orders automatically. Agentic behavior is proving more efficient than traditional requests for proposals (RFPs).

19%

Percent of firms now using generative AI for procurement.

Source: McKinsey

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DISAPPEARING INTERFACES

One of the most profound implications of agentic ecommerce is that the interface — the website or app — is disappearing.

AI agents don't see a homepage. They don't interact with email offers or retargeting ads. They engage with structured data, via application programming interface (APIs), according to logic trees and machine learning models. To these agents, the "customer experience" is just metadata.

This is forcing brands and platforms to rethink everything from search engine optimization to inventory management. Schema.org tags, GS1-compliant product identifiers and inventory availability feeds are becoming the new front end. Success in agentic commerce depends not on what a page looks like, but on how efficiently its data can be parsed and acted upon.

This mirrors trends across industries. In travel, tools like Google's AI Trip Planner book vacations based on a user's preferences and schedule. In finance, robot advisors such as Wealthfront adjust portfolios based on market conditions and risk profiles — with no user interaction required. Ecommerce is just the latest sector to undergo this invisible shift.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS: SPEED, TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY

As platforms race to support agentic commerce, several priorities are rising to the top:

First, latency is a dealbreaker. AI agents operate at machine speed and will drop platforms that don't respond quickly. Every millisecond counts.

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Next, structured data is currency. Clean, machine-readable product feeds are essential. Without them, agents can't make decisions or complete transactions.

Importantly, authentication and logging are critical. Agents need secure access to user credentials, purchase history, and saved preferences. Platforms must provide detailed logs to ensure traceability, accountability, and compliance.

Meanwhile, regulatory frameworks are lagging. As agents act independently, questions of consumer consent, data use and algorithmic bias become more urgent. The Federal Trade Commission and European Union regulators are already eyeing these systems closely.

As all of this is happening, retailers must also consider branding implications. When agents drive transactions, brand loyalty may shift toward the platforms or agents themselves. The question becomes: how do you market to a bot?

PREPARING FOR A MACHINE-LED FUTURE

Agentic commerce may still be emerging, but it's moving fast. The winners won't be those with the flashiest storefronts or the biggest ad budgets. They'll be those who build composable, transparent and bot-friendly systems that plug seamlessly into autonomous workflows.

For developers, that means API documentation, uptime and schema validation are paramount. For marketers, it means product feeds, structured metadata, and logic-driven personalization may matter more than UX or copywriting.

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This isn't headless commerce — it's brainful commerce that is brainless. The front end has vanished. What's left is an intelligent, data-rich back end designed to transact instantly, securely and autonomously.

As AI shopping agents grow more capable and trusted, the very idea of shopping may dissolve. What remains is fulfillment, efficiency, personalization, and invisibility. In the future, the buyer isn't you; it's your algorithm. And the platforms that win will be the ones that algorithms prefer. ■

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CONCLUSION

Generative AI is no novelty when it comes to ecommerce. A recent report from the web analytics firm Similarweb found that 66% of online shoppers used it for price comparisons, nearly 56% used it for discovery, and 42% used it to summarize product reviews. Likewise, online merchants have years of experience using AI tools for customer service chatbots, personalization and on-site search.

Now, AI may be ready to handle credit cards as well, shortening research processes and saving time for both shoppers and online retailers.

Based on what we have already seen in 2025, the infrastructure is being built and giants such as Amazon, OpenAI and Alphabet all care deeply about which platforms consumers prefer.

In reality, though, consumers may not yet know what they prefer. After all, generative AI models are evolving constantly, and the user interfaces built on top of them are still young.

In a 1998 interview with Bloomberg Businessweek, Steve Jobs, the late co-founder and former CEO of Apple, famously summed up a dilemma that AI companies now face:

“A lot of times, people don’t know what they want until you show it to them,” he stated.

Now, the technology providers behind agentic commerce solutions are trying to do just that — for shoppers, as well as the retailers who sell to them. ■

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