

The Rise of Agentic Commerce:

# Why Retail's Next Era Belongs to the **Generalist**

How AI Empowers Leaner Teams,  
Smarter Operations, and a New  
Breed of Retail Talent

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## Why Retail's Next Era Belongs to the Generalist

Introduction/Key Takeaways  
The Story Behind the Shift

KEY THEME 1:  
The Rise of the  
Retail Generalist

KEY THEME 2:  
From Generative AI to  
Agentic Commerce

KEY THEME 3:  
Reinventing Marketing,  
Sales & Ecommerce with AI

Case Studies/Examples  
Summary/Final Takeaway

In collaboration with:



## INTRODUCTION

### Agentic Commerce Is Here, And It's Rewriting Retail From the Inside Out

Retail has hit a breaking point: tighter budgets, shrinking teams, and rising expectations have forced brands to rethink how work gets done. AI is no longer a tool reserved for specialists, it's a structural shift that is fundamentally redefining every role, every workflow, and every customer interaction.

At the center of this shift is Agentic Commerce: a new operational layer where intelligent AI agents collaborate, make decisions, automate high-value workflows, and empower employees to work smarter, not harder.

The story we're about to share goes beyond technology, it's fundamentally a story about people.

We're entering a new age where versatile, cross-functional talent leads the way, an evolution driven and accelerated by AI.

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **From Tools to Autonomous Systems**  
Retailers are moving beyond basic automation and GenAI content tools toward autonomous, interconnected AI agents that manage complex operations.
- **Lean Teams, Outsized Impact**  
Marketing, ecommerce, sales, and operations teams are consolidating, and AI is enabling fewer people to outperform historically larger teams.
- **Faster, Smarter, More Resilient Operations**  
Agentic commerce improves speed, quality, consistency, and operational resilience.
- **Technology and Organizational Readiness**  
To access true value, retailers must tackle both technical readiness (data, infrastructure, orchestration) and non-technical readiness (change management, roles, workflows, trust).

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## THE STORY BEHIND THE SHIFT

**Industry Conversation: Why Agentic Commerce Matters Now:**

While most retailers are experimenting with generative AI, very few understand how to advance to agentic commerce, or what it requires organizationally.

Many retailers remain stuck in the “tool” mindset, using AI for isolated tasks, content, or experimentation. But the next wave demands a fundamentally different approach: AI not as a tool, but as a teammate.

**What Leaders Are Seeing Across the Industry:**

- Teams are shrinking, expectations are rising, and generalists are becoming the backbone of modern retail.
- AI enables marketers, ecommerce managers, and brand leaders to own more of the end-to-end workflow, from strategy to execution to analytics.
- The shift to agentic commerce requires new infrastructure, intelligent orchestration, and alignment across marketing, product, sales, operations, and data teams.
- Retailers increasingly rely on broader ecosystems like:
  - The Agentic Commerce Alliance, founded by Shopware
  - The Order Network Exchange, focused on AI-enabled order management

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

**The traditional siloed retail org model is breaking down; AI is accelerating cross-functional collaboration.**

**Retailers want direction on how to evolve: not just technology, but the operational path to get there.**

**Agentic commerce offers a clear framework for retailers to move from GenAI experimentation to autonomous, scalable, outcome-driven AI.**

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## 1

## KEY THEME 1:

## The Rise of the Retail Generalist

**Why it matters:** Retail roles are changing faster than job descriptions can keep up. Teams that once relied on dedicated specialists, graphic designers, copywriters, analysts, social managers, now require hybrid skillsets that blend strategy, creativity, analytics, and execution.

**AI hasn't eliminated roles.**

**It has expanded what one person can do.**

## THE NEW REALITY:

**A modern ecommerce or marketing professional must now:**

- **Create content**
- **Analyze performance**
- **Develop strategy**
- **Manage campaigns**
- **Understand customer journeys**
- **Collaborate with product, sales, and operations**
- **And increasingly... manage AI agents that automate everything in between**

**This isn't optional, it's the new baseline.**

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## Solution: AI-Enabled Generalists

Agentic commerce transforms individuals into high-impact generalists by giving them:

- Access to on-demand intelligence
- AI-driven workflow automation
- Creative, analytical, and operational support in real time
- The ability to execute end-to-end outcomes without relying on four separate teams

## Benefits:

- Faster output with higher consistency
- Reduced operational bottlenecks
- Increased organizational agility
- Empowered, resilient team structures

**“Marketers, ecommerce managers, brand leaders, we’re all being asked to do more with less. AI doesn’t replace us; it turns us into the kind of generalists modern retail actually needs.”**

—Gretchen Staubly, Marketing Director, Shopware North America

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## 2

## KEY THEME 2:

**From Generative AI to Agentic Commerce**

**Why it matters:** Most retailers are stuck in Phase 1 or 2 of AI maturity:

**Phase 1**  
**Basic Automation**

Scheduling tools, rule-based workflows, limited data visibility.

**Phase 2**  
**Generative AI Adoption**

Chat tools, content generation, prototype experimentation.

**Phase 3**  
**Agentic Commerce**

AI agents coordinating end-to-end processes, making decisions, and collaborating across systems.

**Retailers want to reach Phase 3, but don't know how.**

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## Solution: The Agentic Commerce Framework

To move into agentic commerce, retailers must evolve across two dimensions:

### 1. Technical Readiness

- Data consolidation
- AI-ready infrastructure
- Order management intelligence
- Ecosystem alignment (e.g., Order Network Exchange)

### 2. Organizational Readiness

- New team structures
- Cross-functional training
- Human + AI workflow integration
- Non-technical change management
- Role evolution toward generalist empowerment

### Benefits:

- Faster decision-making
- More accurate forecasting
- Unified customer experience
- Operational efficiency at scale

“Agentic commerce requires more than AI tools, it requires rethinking how teams collaborate and how work actually gets done.”

—Jason Nyhus, President, Shopware North America

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## 3

## KEY THEME 3:

**Reinventing Marketing, Sales & Ecommerce with AI**

**Why it matters:** Retailers have traditionally operated in silos, with Product, Marketing, Sales, and Ecommerce each working as separate, sequential functions.

But today, customer journeys are multichannel, nonlinear, and constantly evolving. Teams must operate as one.

**AI agents break down those barriers.**

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## Solution: Department-Level Enablement

### 1. Marketing

- Automated content generation, refinement, and campaign execution
- Creative production without relying on external teams

### 2. Ecommerce

- Product recommendations, catalog automation, and AI-driven merchandising
- Seamless AI-enabled order management (Order Network Exchange)

### 3. Sales

- Digital sales rooms
- Automated prospect research and preparation
- Tools that free up sales reps to actually sell

### Benefits:

- Faster decision-making
- More accurate forecasting
- Unified customer experience
- Operational efficiency at scale

**“AI gives organizations the ability to support every department, not just marketing or ecommerce, but sales and product, too. It’s a company-wide transformation.”**

—Gretchen Staubly, Marketing Director, Shopware North America

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## CASE STUDIES / SCENARIOS

**Scenario 1: The Empowered Ecommerce Manager**

A mid-sized retailer's ecommerce manager uses AI agents to:

- Generate product copy
- Optimize merchandising
- Monitor performance
- Create campaign assets
- Personalize experience segments

**Outcome:**

What once took a team of six now takes one person supported by AI, with improved accuracy and faster execution.

**Scenario 2: The Unified Marketing Team**

A brand with layoffs in its creative and analytics departments uses agentic commerce to:

- Automate briefing, design drafts, and messaging
- Produce multi-channel campaigns
- Run A/B tests autonomously
- Consolidate performance dashboards

**Outcome:**

Campaign velocity doubled. Content quality improved. Costs dropped significantly.

**Scenario 3: The Intelligent Order Operation**

A retailer joins the Order Network Exchange, gaining access to AI agents that:

- Predict delays
- Optimize sourcing
- Automate order orchestration
- Resolve fulfillment issues proactively

**Outcome:**

Reliability increases. Customer complaints drop. Operational stress lifts almost immediately.

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## SUMMARY

Agentic commerce marks a new era for retail, one where AI is not a tool, but a teammate. It expands the capability of individuals, helps organizations do more with fewer resources, and builds a foundation for innovation that scales.

Retailers who embrace both the technical and the organizational evolution, data, infrastructure, team roles, workflows, cross-functional collaboration, will be the ones who thrive.

## FINAL TAKEAWAY:

**Agentic commerce isn't the future. It's the new competitive baseline.**

**Retailers that evolve now will own the next decade.**

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