



The AI Fluency Gap

The Hidden Retail Opportunity
in Offline-to-Online
Engagement

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Consider this: 97% of retail marketing leaders say offline engagement visibility is critical, yet 42% openly admit they still can't connect the dots.

It's a telling contradiction. While retailers embrace AI as the answer, many still can't connect the dots on something as fundamental as offline engagement..Generative AI, in particular, dominates headlines, boardroom conversations, and strategy decks, but beyond the buzzwords, fluency falls away fast. Many retail organizations are still struggling to translate AI potential into everyday customer experiences that actually drive loyalty.

Nowhere is that struggle more obvious than in the offline-to-online handoff. Loyalty sign-ups pile up at the register, QR codes get scanned, and customers drift seamlessly between store aisles and online carts. But too often, the data goes nowhere, follow-ups remain generic, ROI is impossible to measure, and engagement fragments when it should be flowing.

New research from Brij uncovers that, although retailers are eager, curious, and actively investing, adoption is patchy, integration is messy, and confidence in emerging AI remains shallow. The findings align with broader industry research that reveals just [40% of retailers today](#) feel fully prepared to implement AI projects, citing data gaps as the main obstacle.

The result? A widening gulf between aspiration and activation.

This report explores the survey findings in depth and makes the case for a new approach. The AI fluency gap isn't just about identifying the most effective tools. It's about unifying signals, activating offline engagement, and building customer journeys that finally match consumer expectations.

The retailers who close that gap will lead. Those who don't will watch customers slip away.

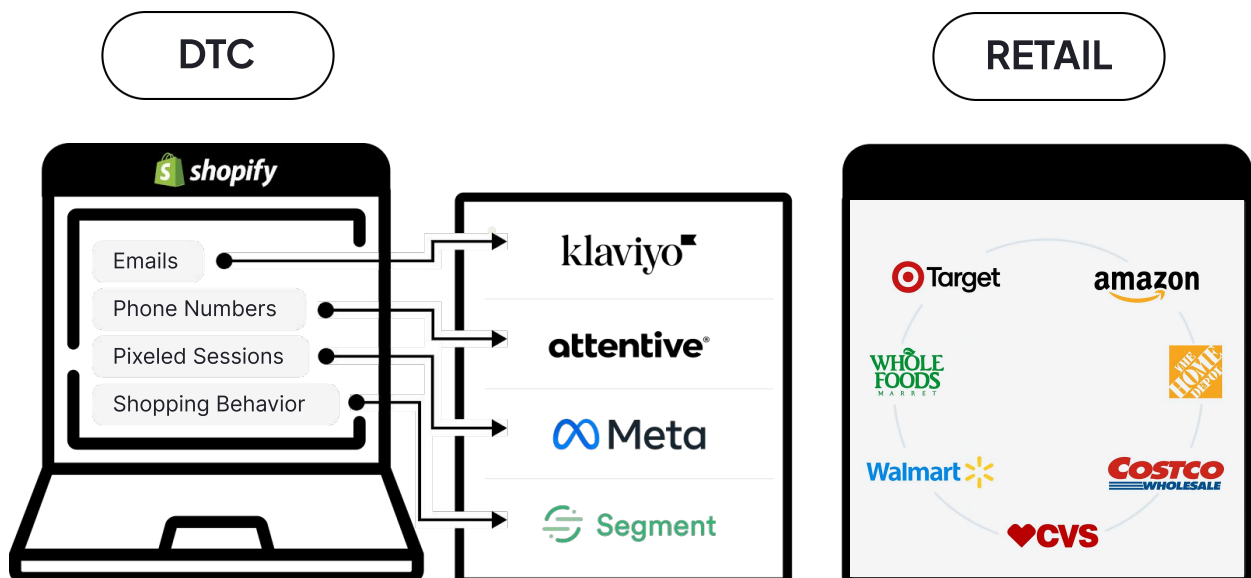
WHY OMNICHANNEL AI MATTERS NOW

Today's consumers flow seamlessly from in-store browsing to digital checkouts, expecting brands to recognize and respond across every touchpoint. But retailers still rely on fragmented tools, siloed data, and disconnected workflows.

Picture this: a shopper scans a QR code in-store, but their online profile never updates. A loyalty sign-up happens at the register, but the follow-up email is generic. Data exists, but it isn't connected, personalized, or activated.

The urgency is clear. According to a [2025 McKinsey survey](#), 71% of consumers now expect personalized interactions across both digital and physical channels, and 76% report frustration when this doesn't happen. That gap is where trust, loyalty, and revenue erode.

Omnichannel engagement isn't just about collecting signals. It's about turning those signals into real-time, AI-driven actions. Most environments fall short, leaving revenue on the table and customers disengaged. That's the gap Brij set out to measure.



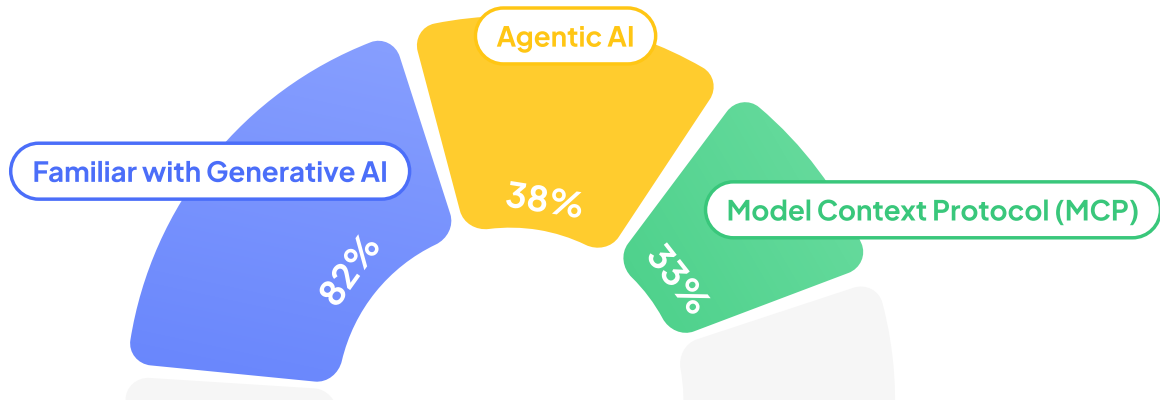
BRIJ AI & OMNICHANNEL ENGAGEMENT SURVEY – KEY FINDINGS

To ground this discussion in real data, Brij surveyed 100 decision-makers in marketing and brand roles at consumer product companies (revenues \$25M–\$100M+). The results reveal that AI enthusiasm is high, but true fluency and activation lag behind.

AI FLUENCY IS SURFACE-DEEP

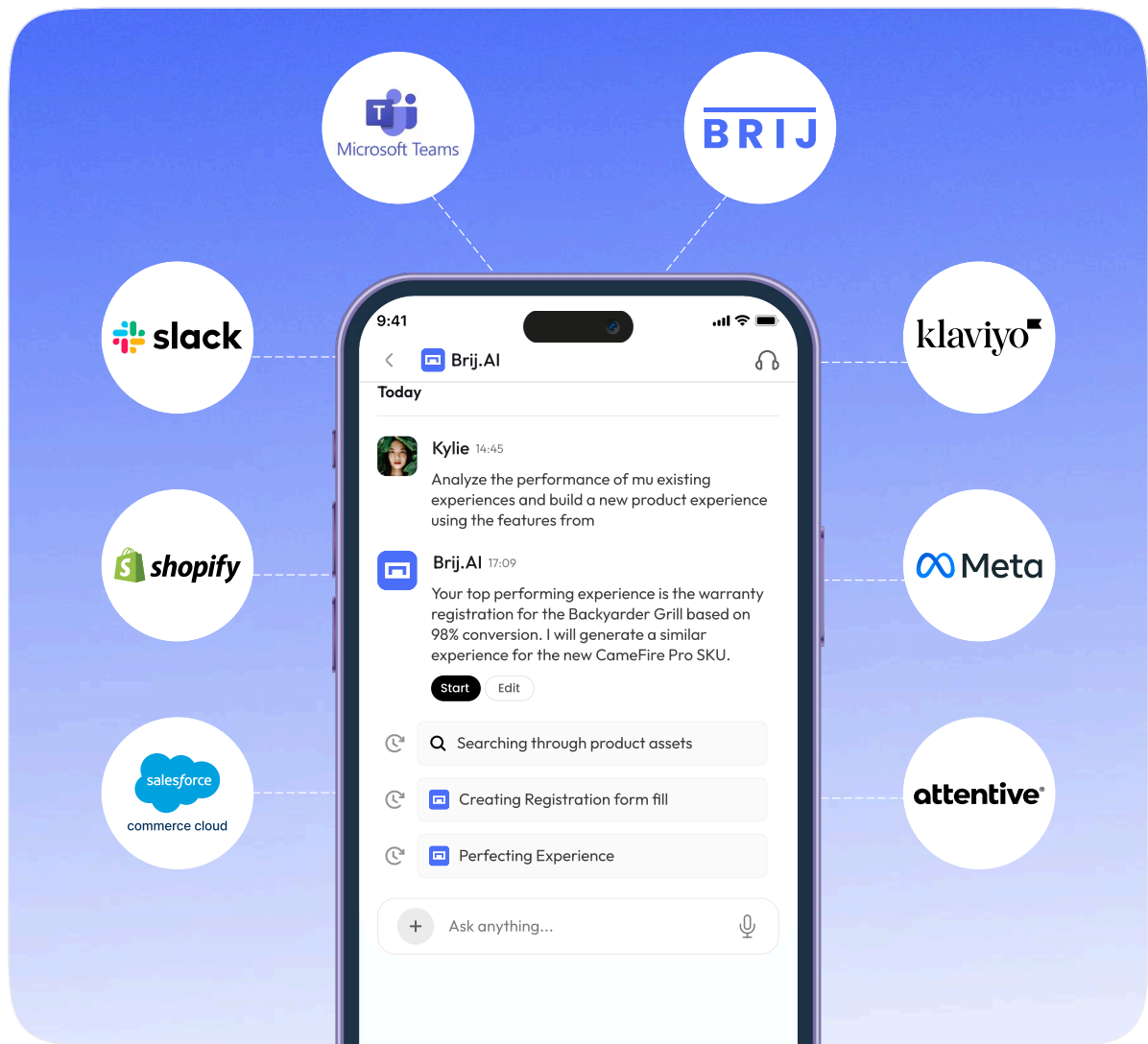
Marketers may speak the language of AI, but fluency rarely runs deeper than generative tools. Roughly 82% describe themselves as “very familiar” with generative AI, reflecting the dominance of text and image generation in industry conversations. But confidence plummets as soon as the discussion shifts to emerging technologies:

- Only 38% say the same about agentic AI
- Only 33% feel fluent with Model Context Protocol (MCP)



The result is a clear “fluency cliff.” Retailers can talk about AI in the abstract, but their understanding fades quickly beyond the most visible use cases. This shallow grasp leaves organizations vulnerable to stalled projects, misaligned investments, and missed opportunities to connect offline and online engagement.

The future of fluency is not expecting every marketer to become an AI engineer, but instead enabling natural language as the interface to complex systems. By connecting a brand’s tech stack through MCP, marketers can ask questions in plain English and get back structured, actionable answers. This shift transforms fluency from a barrier into a bridge—turning AI from hype into everyday execution.



Implication: Retail is saturated with GenAI buzz, but knowledge drops sharply where innovation could deliver the most value. Without deeper fluency, brands risk excitement without execution.

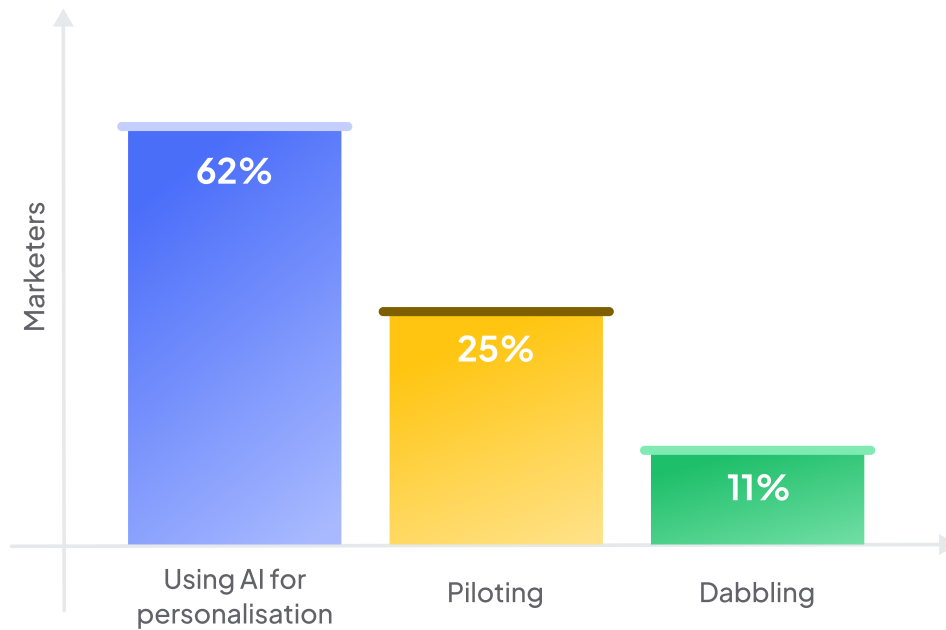
Theme: Fragmented fluency. Marketers know the headlines, but not yet the playbook.

ADOPTION EXISTS, BUT IT'S PATCHY

AI has found its way into retail marketing stacks, but scale remains elusive. 62% of marketers say they are actively using AI for personalization and workflow automation, a promising sign of momentum. Yet the rest of the field lags:

- 25% are still piloting projects
- 11% are only dabbling with tools like ChatGPT — experiments without structure, strategy, or measurable impact

Adoption Exists, But It's Patchy



What's holding adoption back isn't lack of interest, but the same roadblocks that have long slowed digital transformation. Integration challenges top the list (51%), followed closely by security concerns (50%) and a shortage of training (42%) to equip teams with the skills to succeed. These barriers fragment progress, leaving some organizations pushing ahead while others stall.

Roadblocks that have long slowed digital transformation



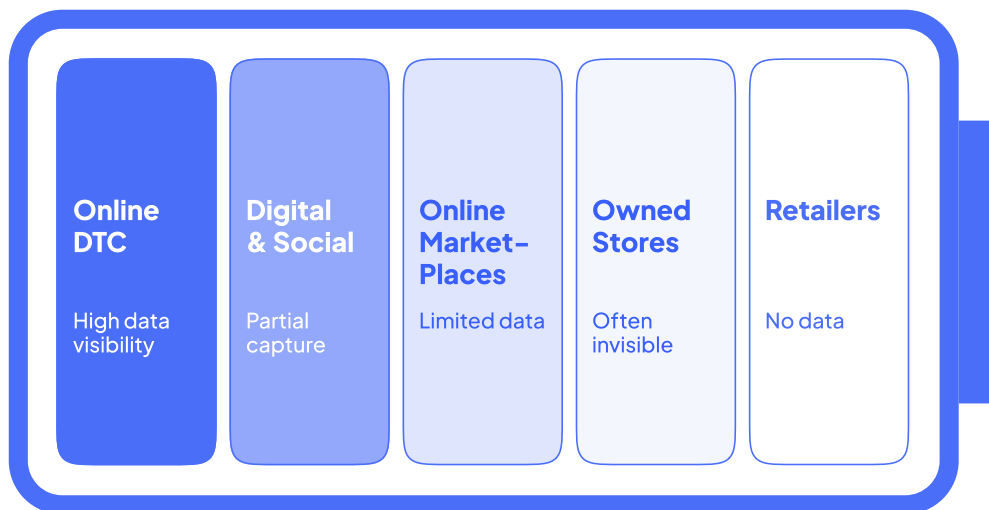
Implication: AI is in play, but technical and organizational bottlenecks prevent it from moving beyond pockets of success.

Theme: Fragmented adoption. Progress is visible, but not yet scalable.

OFFLINE-TO-ONLINE REMAINS A BLIND SPOT

Retailers have no shortage of offline touchpoints, but most of them still vanish into a black box. On paper, engagement looks rich:

- 72% of brands use loyalty sign-ups
- 57% deploy QR codes
- 40% depend on retailer data-sharing to capture in-store activity



Every missed customer drains the data that powers your growth

In practice, the signals rarely go anywhere. Nearly one in four marketers (23%) admit they still can't personalize follow-ups, and 22% say they can't even measure ROI from these efforts. The result: valuable customer intent is captured, but not activated. Every missed customer drains the data that powers your marketing engine.

Even more telling, 42% openly acknowledge significant gaps in their offline-to-online strategies. This isn't a lack of opportunity. It's a failure of connection. Customers are crossing channels seamlessly, but the systems meant to follow them are fragmented and incomplete.

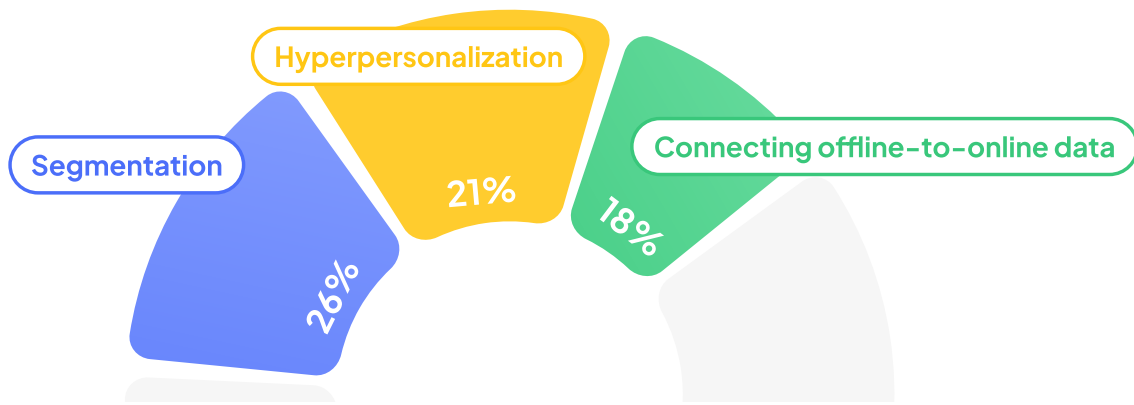
Implication: Retailers may be collecting offline signals, but without activation they're little more than static data points.

Theme: Fragmented touchpoints. Offline engagement exists in abundance, but remains disconnected from broader customer journey.

APPETITE FOR AI AGENTS IS RISING

Marketers have a clear sense of where AI could help, but readiness hasn't caught up with ambition. More than half (53%) believe generative AI will drive the most near-term impact, while 34% already view agentic AI as the next leap forward. When asked where they want AI to make the biggest difference, the top use cases were clear:

- 26% pointed to segmentation
- 21% to hyperpersonalization
- 18% to connecting offline-to-online data



The appetite is there, but execution is lagging. Marketers know the pain points and can articulate the opportunities, but most still lack the tools, confidence, and processes to bring AI agents into day-to-day operations. In fact, a recent MIT-NANDA study revealed that a **staggering 95% of corporate AI pilot programs fail** to progress beyond the initial testing phase, underscoring the tremendous gap between AI ambition and real-world deployment.

Implication: The desire for AI to solve omnichannel challenges is high, but activation is still out of reach.

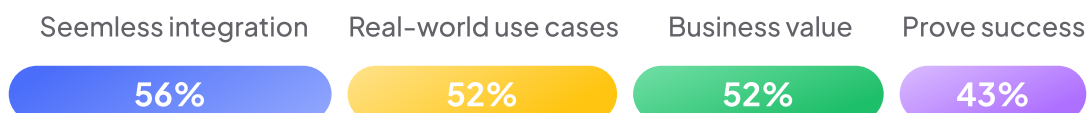
Theme: Fragmented confidence. Awareness without activation.

ENABLEMENT, NOT HYPE, WILL DRIVE ADOPTION

Marketers don't need more inspiration about what AI could do. They need support to make it real. When asked what would accelerate adoption, they prioritized enablement over vision:

- 56% want seamless integrations
- 52% want real-world use cases
- 52% want a clearer demonstration of business value
- 43% want hands-on pilots to prove success in their own environments

Hesitation from leadership isn't the main barrier. It's the technical and operational gaps that stand in the way of scaling.



Accelerating Adoption

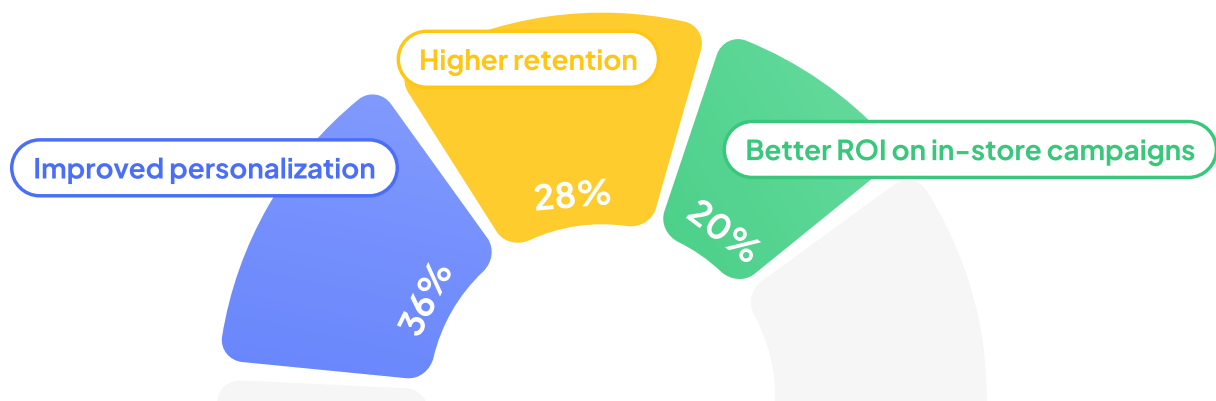
Implication: Adoption will move faster when vendors and partners deliver proof and seamless integrations, not promises.

Theme: Fragmented readiness. Brands are eager but still lack the practical roadmaps to move forward.

OFFLINE VISIBILITY IS NOW MISSION- CRITICAL

What was once considered a “nice to have” has become non-negotiable. An overwhelming 97% of marketers say improving visibility into offline engagement is critical or important. This underscores the fact that without visibility, personalization falls flat, retention suffers, and in-store investments can’t be measured for ROI. When asked about the outcomes they want most, marketers pointed to:

- Improved personalization (36%)
- Higher retention (28%)
- Better ROI on in-store campaigns (20%)



Implication: Offline-to-online engagement has moved to the center of the retail agenda.

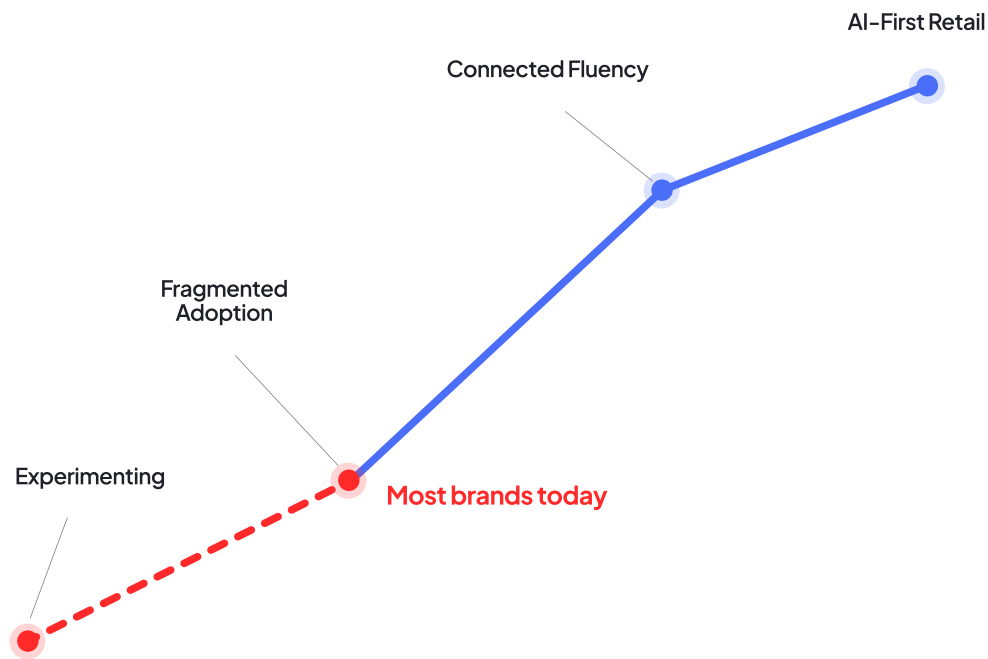
Theme: Fragmented journeys. Brands know unified customer experiences are essential, but the tools haven’t caught up.

THE AI FLUENCY MATURITY CURVE

Retailers fall along a clear AI maturity curve. On one end are brands still **experimenting** with tools in isolation.

Many more sit in **fragmented adoption**, where pilots and pockets of success exist but systems remain disconnected. The next stage, **connected fluency**, emerges when offline and online signals are unified, integrations are in place, and AI begins driving real-time engagement. The destination is **AI-first retail** — where intelligence powers every customer interaction seamlessly.

Today, most retailers remain stuck in fragmented adoption. The opportunity, and competitive edge, lies in progressing toward connected fluency.



THE ECONOMIC COST OF INACTION

Every time an offline customer profile goes unactivated, retailers lose \$20–\$100 in potential lifetime value (LTV). Multiply that across tens of thousands of loyalty sign-ups, QR scans, and product registrations, and the impact is staggering.

For example: A brand with 50,000 unactivated profiles could be leaving \$1M–\$5M in customer value on the table. At 250,000 unactivated profiles, the missed opportunity balloons to \$5M–\$25M in lost LTV.

This isn't a theoretical risk. It's a measurable revenue leak. The data exists, but without activation it remains static, unmonetized, and invisible to AI systems that could be driving personalization, retention, and repeat purchases.

By closing the offline-to-online gap, retailers don't just capture data. They unlock millions in incremental revenue and build a defensible edge in loyalty.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR RETAIL LEADERS

Retail is at an inflection point. AI fluency is shallow, adoption is uneven, and offline engagement remains fragmented. Yet the opportunity is equally clear. By unifying tools, connecting data, and activating offline signals with AI, retailers can transform a gap into a competitive edge. [Data from McKinsey](#) shows that firms leveraging a single customer view—one unified, cross-channel customer profile—see a 15% increase in revenue and 20% higher customer retention.

To get there, leaders should focus on three priorities:

- **Close the fluency gap:** Teams need more than GenAI familiarity. Launch small-scale pilots where teams can apply agentic AI to real-world challenges like personalization, customer service, and campaign automation, building confidence through use, not theory.
- **Connect offline signals to customer profiles:** Every QR scan, loyalty sign-up, product registration, or in-store interaction should feed into one unified view of the customer.
- **Activate with AI agents:** Use agents to handle tasks that humans struggle to scale. Segmenting audiences, personalizing offers in real time or triggering follow-ups when offline and online touchpoints intersect are great first Agent workflows. Agents bridge the silos, enabling retailers to deliver seamless engagement across channels
- **Prioritize Connectivity:** Leaders risk limiting the impact of AI if their systems remain siloed. A lack of integrations prevents organizations from connecting core tools to LLMs, delaying insights and reducing agility. To overcome this, prioritize vendors and partners who are actively investing in integrations and adopting frameworks like MCP. This connectivity ensures your data and workflows are accessible to AI, enabling faster, more actionable insights across the business.

The path forward is about execution. Retailers who act decisively will move beyond fragmented journeys and deliver the unified, AI-powered experiences that customers now expect.

PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS

While the strategic imperatives are clear, leaders often struggle with where to begin. Translating vision into execution requires breaking the journey into manageable steps that teams can act on today.

The following checklist provides a practical roadmap to move from aspiration to activation.

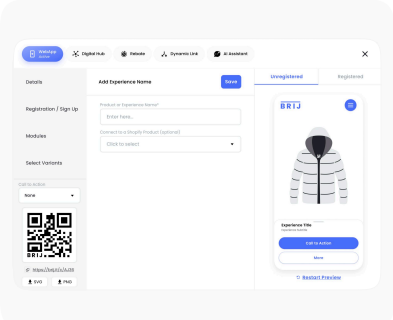
- **Audit:** Assess where offline signals live today.
- **Connect:** Identify top gaps in integrations (where MCP or Brij can help).
- **Pilot:** Start with one workflow (e.g., QR scans for warranty registration or sweepstakes).
- **Scale:** Expand to unify all offline signals into a single customer profile.

THE BRIJ PERSPECTIVE

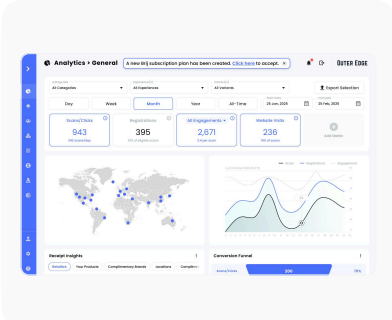
At Brij, we see offline-to-online engagement as the retail frontier. The survey confirms what we hear daily. Brands aren't missing signals, they're lacking unification.

THE BRIJ PLATFORM

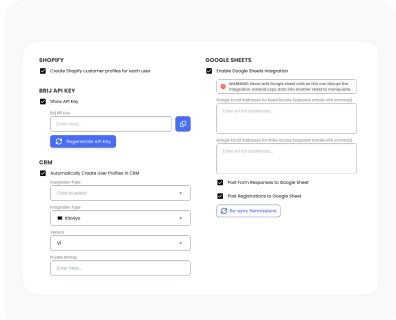
AQUIRE



ANALYZE



ACTIVATE



AI-powered, on-brand experiences to capture customer data

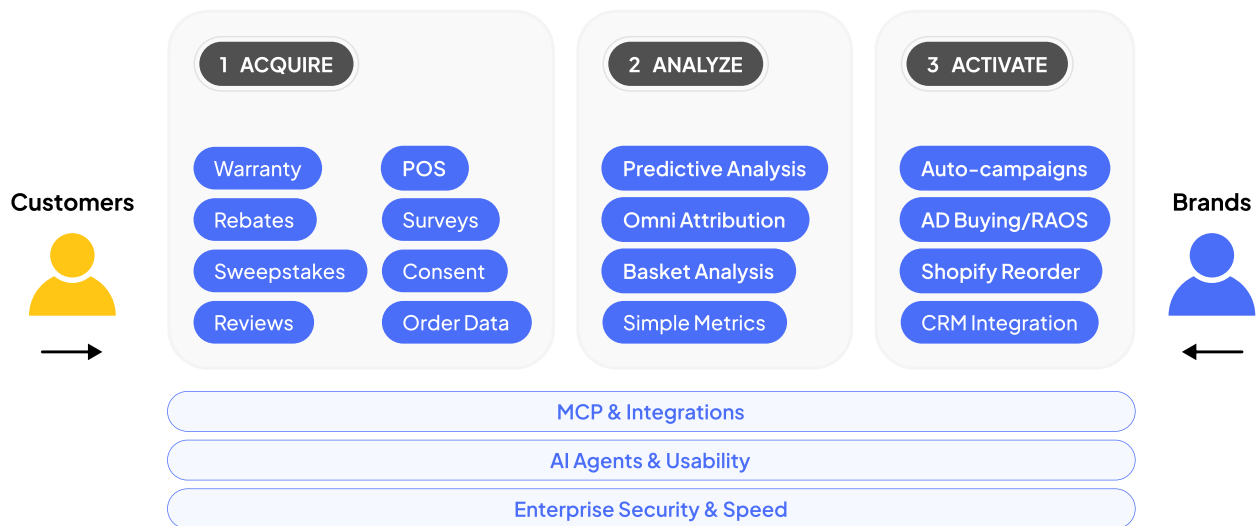
Turn touchpoints into data with clear AI insights

Don't just collect data: put it to work

That's why we built Brij to be the bridge:

- **Acquire:** QR, loyalty, product registrations, and more — all connected.
- **Analyze:** Query your data in plain language for direct & actionable insights
- **Activate:** Offline data is mapped to digital customer records, in real time & flowsflow directly into personalization engines and marketing workflows.

The result is that fragmented engagement becomes a single, measurable system— empowering brands to acquire data, analyze it in context, and activate with precision.



AI at Brij isn't just a feature layered on top. It's the infrastructure layer that powers everything we do. By leveraging MCP and deep integrations, Brij connects seamlessly with the platforms brands already use. This makes it possible to unify signals, eliminate silos, and action on data directly in plain language. Instead of juggling fragmented tools, marketers can simply ask questions and receive structured, actionable insights, turning AI from an abstract concept into the backbone of everyday execution.

CASE STUDY: SKULLCANDY



BEFORE BRIJ

Skullcandy sold mainly through retail and marketplaces, leaving them disconnected from end customers. While they used QR codes on packaging, the experience was fragmented—some led to videos, others to app stores—without capturing first-party data or fueling personalization.

AFTER BRIJ

In 2025, Skullcandy rolled out Brij-powered QR codes across packaging, unifying the post-purchase journey into a single branded flow. Now every unboxing begins with “Scan me to start,” leading to localized, product-specific landing pages that capture registrations, app downloads, and customer insights.

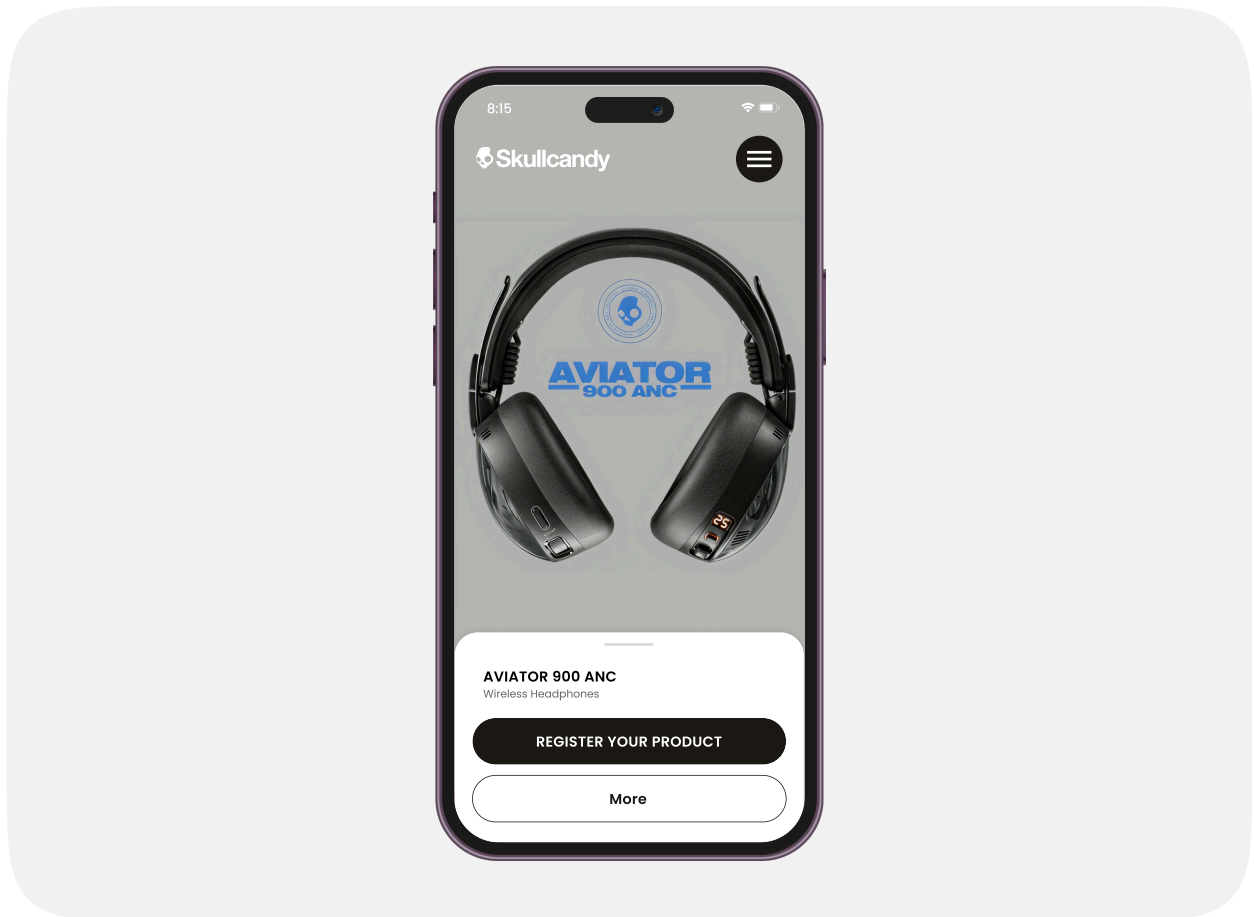
“This is not data retailers were sharing with us, and for us it’s a huge unlock. We can now see marketplace and offline purchase behavior—and build lasting customer relationships well beyond the first sale.” — Evin Catlett, Global VP at Skullcandy

IMPACT (FIRST 6 MONTHS)

- 60,000+ offline customers identified
- 1.75M customer engagements
- 20% scan-to-registration rate (above industry benchmarks)
- Significant lift in app conversions, loyalty adoption, and first-party email capture

TAKEAWAY

By replacing fragmented QR code experiences with Brij, Skullcandy unlocked direct relationships with retail customers, gained visibility into offline purchases, and turned packaging into a powerful engine for loyalty and insights.



NEXT STEP: IT'S TIME TO MEET YOUR “OFFLINE” CUSTOMERS.

Bridge the offline and online with AI-powered experiences that turn anonymous omnichannel shoppers into loyal customers, even in unowned channels.

The future of retail isn't online or offline. It's unified. Brij exists to make that future a reality.

[BOOK A DEMO](#)