AGENTIC COMMERCE

THE FUTURE OF AI SEARCH

FIND CHANGE GROW

JAN 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Search is predictive, generative and now agentic. Users can discover, compare and purchase brands without ever visiting a website. As agentic search behaviours and capabilities develop at a rapid rate, Search strategies need to evolve alongside.

Recent product announcements from both Microsoft and Google signal a sharp acceleration in the agentic commerce landscape:

From Search to Action: AI agents now autonomously handle the entire journey from product research to final payment.

The UCP Standard: A new "common language" (UCP) enables seamless transactions between any AI platform and major retailers like Shopify and Target.

Merchant Toolkit: New Merchant Centre attributes are designed for conversational commerce and AI-driven product discovery.

We're in a moment of rapid expansion for search and commerce, and winning in this landscape requires leveraging AI agents as ad platforms, as well as discovery channels.

At Assembly, we've been preparing for this shift and embedding agentic tools and capabilities into the core of our model for search. Our playbook is built for an agentic future – engaging and converting high value shoppers with AI-powered campaigns, leveraging first-party data, supercharging AI learning with strong SEO content and creative assets and ensuring product feeds have rich data and differentiating attributes.

Agentic commerce is here, and we are building for it.

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AGENTIC COMMERCE HAS EVOLVED FROM A CONCEPT TO A REALITY

With Google and Microsoft announcing shopping updates for AI surfaces and brand agents over the past week, the era of agentic shopping is accelerating. We breakdown what this means for users and advertisers here.

Copilot Checkout & Google UCP-Powered Checkout

Effective 11th January 2026, users will be able to buy from eligible retailers in the US, directly on Google's AI Mode and the Gemini App, with Shopify merchants also being automatically enrolled into Copilot Checkout:

- **Frictionless Shopping:** Users can checkout directly using saved payment and shipping details.

- **Retailer Control:** Retailers remain the record of sale and can customize integrations to specific needs, while maintaining brand experience.

- **Future Expansion:** While currently only available in the US, it will be rolled out globally in the coming months, along with additional features including related product discovery, loyalty rewards, and personalized shopping experiences.

Tracking UCP performance versus other channels will sit primarily with advertisers, as all interactions are passed through UCP's API framework. As Google notes, the system *"exchanges checkout, order, and transaction lifecycle events using the API contracts established in our specifications. This lets you clearly differentiate traffic and payments flowing through our AI surfaces versus your own website or app."* As more platforms adopt UCP, attribution may become more complex, but each API endpoint will still include source-level metadata. Brands will need to capture, identify, and map this information into their analytics or backend systems to maintain clear channel-level visibility and performance reporting.

Direct Offers in AI Mode

As an evolution to ads in AI Mode, Google is now piloting Direct Offers, allowing advertisers to present exclusive discounts specifically to shoppers who show a higher purchase intent:

- **AI-Driven Value Proposition**: Advertisers can set up discounts (e.g., 20% off) to display to shoppers who express strong purchase intent in natural language queries.

- **Value-based Offers:** Currently discount offers can be layered in campaign settings, with plans to expand to additional value-based attributes in future (e.g. bundles and free shipping).

User flow of Direct Offers pilot in AI Mode, labeled "Sponsored deal."

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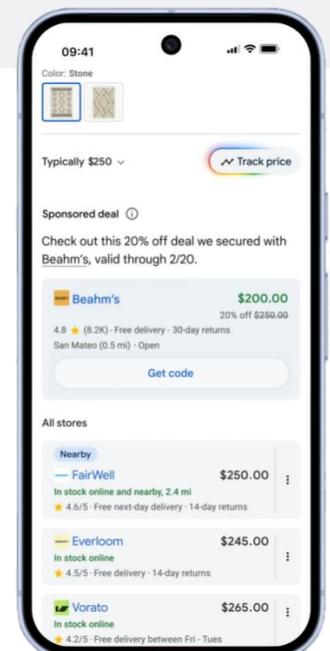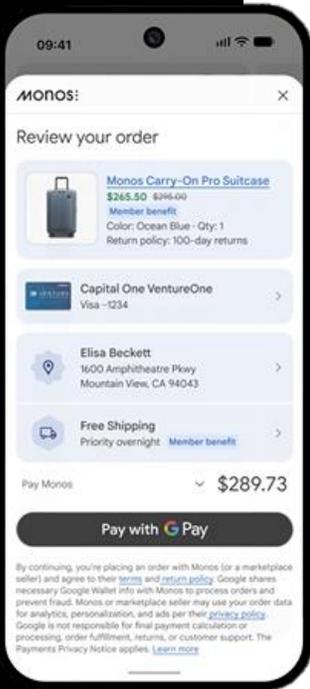
AGENTIC COMMERCE HAS EVOLVED FROM A CONCEPT TO A REALITY
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Brand Agents

Users can now connect with brands using customised AI agents, directly on Search:

- **Virtual Shopping Assistant:** Google's Business Agent and Microsoft's Brand Agent will act as conversational interfaces in search platforms, answering questions in your brands voice, removing friction and guiding purchase decisions.

- **Brand Customization**: Today, eligible U.S. advertisers can activate and tailor brand agents on Google via Merchant Centre. Customisable assets include; welcome message, conversation starter prompts, brand-specific headers and backgrounds and customer support handoff.

- **Future Expansion:** Future capabilities will allow customisation based on brand data, related product offers and new customer insights. Agentic checkout will also be added to Business Agents in the coming months.
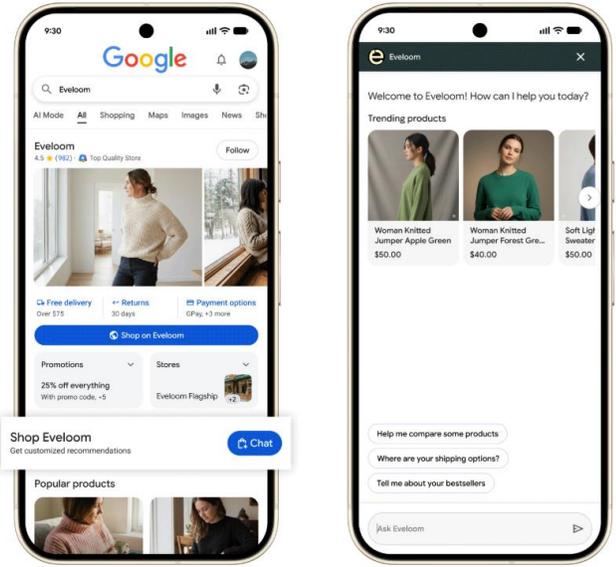
Shoppers can chat with eligible retailers directly on Search.

Conversational Attributes
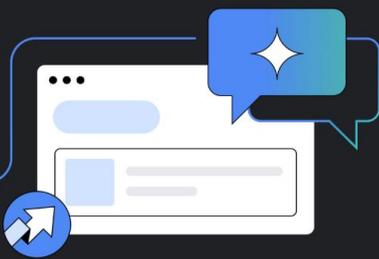
Google have launched a closed pilot in the US, with new Merchant Centre attributes designed to improve product discovery in conversational commerce across AI Mode, Gemini, and Business Agent.

- **Attributes include;** answers to common product questions, highly descriptive text attributes (product specifications, Q&A lists, feature lists), important product details (shapes, flavours, themes), and compatibility information (accessories, spare parts, substitutes).

- **These attributes** will help AI agents surface richer, more relevant results for users, and align product feeds to conversational shopping behaviours resulting in stronger performance for advertisers.

HOW WE ARE HELPING BRANDS ADAPT FOR AN AGENTIC FUTURE

Consumers will increasingly interact with AI agents that handle discovery, comparison, and now purchase. Your brand's visibility and success in AI-driven commerce depends on how easily AI assistants can find, understand, and trust your product data. The higher the AI's confidence in your data, the more likely your products will be featured.

At Assembly, we've been future-proofing for this reality and focusing on a shift toward structured, AI-ready product data. The recent updates reinforce our strategic approach for this year to focus on using schema markup to convey deeper product qualities and organization information that convey details beyond facets, like audience and connected entities.

Our global search model encompasses the tools you need to leverage for success in agentic commerce and AI search:

Maximise Discoverability

- As retailers adopt UCP and Business Agents in the US, expect intensified bidding for paid ads in AI-driven contexts.

  — Shift budget into AI-ready formats and Dynamic Product Ads tailored for conversational search queries.

- In EMEA, leverage AI powered campaigns (Performance Max, Demand Gen, AI Max) to ensure you're in a strong position to maximise visibility when paid ads launch on AI-surfaces like AI Mode and AI Overviews.

Build Websites for Both Humans and Agents

- Agentic commerce is going to look for customer service/trustworthiness signals, just like people do. Ensure you are setting up return, refund, privacy, shipping and other policies so that they're machine-readable.

- Site speed and UX are still critical - AI agents will prioritize retailers offering seamless, reliable experiences.

HOW WE ARE HELPING BRANDS ADAPT FOR AN AGENTIC FUTURE
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Align Merchant Centre Optimizations to AI Surfaces

- **Use rich data** for product-surfacing in agentic commerce, as shopping feed dynamics shift further towards AI-discoverable relevance rather than traditional performance-based product visibility (CPC, ROAS etc).

- **Enhance Product Pages:** Go beyond basic descriptions to clearly articulate product, audience, benefits, and features.

- **Implement Robust Product Schema**: Use comprehensive Schema to explicitly define all attributes, variants, pricing, and availability.

- **Unify Data at the Source (PIM):** Evolve the role SEO plays in the larger data strategy for your PIM/e-comm platform. Optimize the foundation to help ensure it can feed rich, consistent data to all endpoints, including pages, Schema, and feeds.

- **Maximize Product Feeds:** Leverage all available fields in Google Merchant Centre to provide rich, detailed data.

- **Prepare for New AI Features:** Be ready to adopt new data fields for upcoming AI features like "Deals" or "Best Offer."

Give AI Assistants a VIP Technical Experience

- **Reinforce Schema for AI Retrieval:** Double-down on schema integrations to improve how efficiently AI bots can retrieve and understand your data.

- **Prioritize Server-Side Rendering:** Avoid relying on JavaScript to show key content, as many bots cannot process it correctly.

- **Demand Lightning-Fast Page Speed**: Ensure your site is as fast as possible, since AI prioritizes speed and efficiency.

Implement UCP-ready Checkout Flows for Interoperability with AI Agents

- UCP acts like a "manifest" for AI agents, enabling them to discover, evaluate, and complete transactions directly. Without it, your products may be skipped.

CONCLUSION

Agentic commerce is no longer a concept, it's a reality. Recent product announcements signal a future where AI agents drive discovery, comparison, and purchase in a frictionless, conversational experience. Success will hinge on how well your product data is structured, trusted, and optimized for AI surfaces. Brands that embrace UCP-ready checkout, conversational attributes, and schema-driven feeds will dominate visibility and conversion.

At Assembly, we're already building for this shift; future-proofing our Search strategy across AI surfaces and regions, enhancing SEO technical foundations, and leveraging AI-native paid ad formats to keep our partners ahead. The era of agentic shopping is here, and our solution, Search+ is coming...

Together, we are finding the change that fuels growth for our clients.

THANK YOU!

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