

BJ's shares its approach to targeting

Article

Membership-based retailers might have an edge in retail media. While most retail media networks tout first-party data and closeness to purchase as benefits of this burgeoning channel, membership stores like Sam's Club, BJ's Wholesale Club, and more have rich troves of historical data on its members.

"We have a massive amount of data, captured in a privacy-compliant way, that we captured regarding your sales, your interests, and your behavior. And really, we do that so we can make your experience better," Frank Ogura, director of product management and user experience for BJ's, said at last week's eTail event in Boston.

But since BJ's only [launched its retail media network, BJ's Media Edge, in December 2022](#), it's had to move pretty quickly to catch up to established networks.

Here are three ways Ogura said BJ's got up to speed and is prepping for the future.

1. Relying on a customer data platform (CDP)

With all of that data, BJ's needed a system to manage it and understand the individual preferences of its customers. Of course, the CDP supports BJ's beyond retail media for things like marketing membership renewals. But it's also playing a key role for BJ's Media Edge.

"Take the customer, the member, and what brand matters to them, and then [we have] brands invest in that type of connection, instead of putting a brand out there hoping people see it," said Ogura.

2. Investing in a ready-made platform

Rather than build its own infrastructure, BJ's partnered with Microsoft for its retail media network.

"It really helps us pull the driver using the data from our CDP to understand what brand we connect it with based on the individual," said Ogura.

3. Building a platform for generative AI

With a CDP and a nimble platform, BJ's is preparing to speed up its personalization practices with the help of generative AI.

"We are defining generative AI as going from action-based responses to now based on a person, looking at [a] profile and saying, 'Who [is] similar to [them]?' And then based on the population, based on those interests, [we] target ads to those individuals."