

GenAI-influenced reviews, research, and recommendations craft a new era for shoppers

Article

Generative AI (genAI) is fundamentally changing how consumers shop online, potentially eliminating the "treasure hunt" experience that drives impulse purchases and changing how

marketers push products.

"AI is just making the customer journey more efficient for consumers so that they get to the product that they think they want or that they were actually looking for faster," our analyst Suzy Davidkhanian said on a recent episode of the "[Behind the Numbers](#)" podcast. "But I think it comes at a price in terms of losing the treasure hunt and losing the impulse purchases."

From AI-powered review summaries to shopping agents making purchase decisions, here's how genAI is transforming commerce.

The three Rs: reviews, research, and recommendations

GenAI has most influenced "reviews, research, and recommendations" in shopping, according to Todd Hassenfelt, global director of commerce at Colgate-Palmolive.

- **Reviews:** [Amazon](#) and other sites offer AI-summarized reviews so consumers don't have to parse through them.
- **Research:** AI summaries on [ChatGPT](#) and [Google](#) are helping consumers get results faster.
- **Recommendations:** Product recommendations are becoming more targeted and accurate via AI.

While these tools make shopping more efficient, they also create new challenges for brands trying to get their products discovered. Brands need to optimize their product content not just for human shoppers but also for AI systems that are increasingly mediating the shopping experience.

AI shopping agents: The next frontier

Shopping agents like Perplexity's "Shop Like a Pro" represent the next evolution in AI-assisted commerce—tools that can autonomously complete shopping tasks based on user preferences, past behavior, and contextual information.

These agents could eventually handle routine purchases automatically, presenting a challenge to traditional [retail](#) websites that have been the primary digital interface for consumer engagement. The result, a new era of "machine-to-machine" or M2M marketing, may include things like "sponsored bots" or "sponsored choice," where brands pay for preferential treatment by AI shopping agents.

For retailers, this shift could potentially reduce opportunities for upselling, cross-selling, and data collection. That's not an entirely new issue for retailers. "It's kind of like subscribe-and-save or auto-ship, just accelerated now," said Hassenfelt.

Trust and privacy concerns remain significant barriers

Despite the potential convenience, consumers are hesitant about AI shopping assistants. Seven in 10 consumers feel emotionally manipulated by AI shopping assistants, according to Chadix.

"Part of the issue is that there's a lot of risk. There's heightened risk with these agents in terms of digital privacy and cybersecurity," said our analyst Jacob Bourne.

For AI shopping agents to gain widespread adoption, providers will need to address these trust issues while ensuring the technology delivers accurate, helpful results. "If consumers are not 100% comfortable with the recommendation being organic, they will have a bad experience and not come back," Davidkhanian said.

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