Agentic AI Will Optimize the Future of Commerce

This post was created in partnership with PayPal

Key takeaways

- Many consumers are ready to embrace new tech tools like smart wallets, auto checkout, and AI companions.
- There’s a huge potential for brands that adapt AI into their technology solutions.
- Businesses are turning to AI for content consumption and personalization.

Consumer adoption of smart wallets, AI companions, and auto-checkout is rapidly transforming the commerce landscape. Brands must adapt as shopping becomes more AI-driven, seamles,s and accessible.

During an ADWEEK House Miami Group Chat co-hosted with PayPal, a panel of industry leaders explored how transactions, data, and agentic AI can meet consumer demands and unlock new opportunities.

A partnership for convenient payment options

(L-R) MAKERS AI’s Celeny Da Silva, Molson Coors’ Erin Vitellaro, PayPal Ads’ Mark Grether

Mark Grether, SVP and general manager at PayPal Ads, and Matt Rubin, chief digital officer at Popeyes, began the conversation by discussing their partnership. Popeyes has integrated PayPal and Venmo as payment options in its app to make group ordering and payment splitting easier.

Grether emphasized that the Popeyes partnership helps make the app payment process as frictionless as possible. “The consumer doesn’t need to go where the merchant is, but a merchant actually comes to where the consumer is,” he explained. “I think that is a big mind shift and change in our industry, and it’s a mutual opportunity for us to enable the merchants to be where the consumers are, as opposed to vice versa.”

Rubin agreed about the need for payment convenience. “We’re trying to think of ways that we can engage our group audiences through Venmo and grow a big opportunity segment for the business,” he shared.

The implications of agentic commerce

(L-R) Molson Coors’ Erin Vitellaro, PayPal Ads’ Mark Grether, Popeyes’ Matt Rubin

The panelists agreed that agentic AI will play a role in consumer purchase interactions, although there is still some uncertainty about what it will look like.

Grether said a good commerce agent has two key components: relevant, personalized recommendations and a secure, trusted payment process for purchases. “We have a transaction graph, and in the context of agentic commerce, that helps us because we have a much broader perspective from the consumer as we see everything across the merchants,” he explained.

Allison Lambroza, Tripadvisor’s head of travel and growth in the Americas, expanded on Grether’s points in relation to the travel industry. The company has turned to AI for content consumption and personalization as search marketing in travel planning becomes more fragmented.

“From a payment perspective, travel is the most expensive thing that you typically buy before you’ve tried it,” she said. “So, understanding that trust, understanding where reviews play in the agentic experience, and that human element of it, will be really interesting.”

Discoverability and AI in the commerce funnel

(L-R) Tripadvisor’s Allison Lambroza, MAKERS AI’s Celeny Da Silva, Molson Coors’ Erin Vitellaro

Erin Vitellaro, senior director of media at Molson Coors, shared that the traditional ways people discover and try brands will change with AI, so it’s important to keep data clean. “We clean up our content that is out there and ensure our pricing data is very clear. So, when you’re in AI environments, it’s readable, and can then suggest our product.”

Molson Coors is accommodating new ways of discovery by generating insights into the context of how people use its products and aligning them with those moments. Vitellaro gave grilling as an example.

“If you were asking AI, ‘give me a beer that has a crisp

flavor that will be perfect for grilling,' we need to make sure we have a good understanding of the moments that we can intercept and have the content and context around that," she said.

Popeyes is also focusing on improving discoverability. "We're going through the exercise of cleaning up all our underlying data systems and making sure we can bring in the right information into those systems," Rubin added.

What the future of commerce will bring

Grether believes that the agentic environment will evolve into a more horizontal model. He explained that right now, consumers shop at various independent retailers, but this will change in the future. "You'll have an agent who's basically looking across all the merchants in a horizontal way and coming up with a recommendation on behalf of the consumer across all the different options," he said.

Celeny Da Silva, founder and CEO at MAKERS AI, supported this approach. "Think of the world of possibilities if you're training AI to agentically shop for you—all the requisites that you can establish and train for, like fabric and sustainability," she said. "There are so many different ideas and segments you can focus on, but it comes down to the data."

As the purchasing decision process becomes more seamless, agents will create a new middle layer between brands and consumers, Grether said. "We optimized for search in the past. Now we're optimizing for agents."

Featured Conversation Leaders

- Mark Grether, SVP and General Manager,PayPal Ads
- Celeny Da Silva, Founder and CEO,MAKERS AI

- Allison Lambroza, Head of Travel and Growth, AMER,Tripadvisor
- Ryan Joe, Editor in Chief, ADWEEK
- Matt Rubin, Chief Digital Officer,Popeyes
- Erin Vitellaro, Senior Director of Media,Molson Coors

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