Streaming Is Becoming a Storefront

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Connected TV is evolving into more than a viewing platform—it is becoming a dynamic bridge between storytelling, commerce, and consumer action.

During an ADWEEK House Cannes Lion fireside chat co-hosted with Paramount Advertising, Mark Stenberg, senior media reporter, ADWEEK, sat down with industry leaders to analyze how modern streaming networks and interactive ad formats change consumer habits and retail choices.

Viewer adoption of interactive video formats

TV advertising is evolving, as networks can now pair on-screen items with product inventory codes. Marika Roque, chief strategy officer at KERV Interactive, explained that viewer engagement rises when technology respects the audience’s immediate desires.

“We are always partnering with our publisher partners to make sure that we’re innovating at the speed of the viewer and giving them what they want—giving them the moments they want

to help them shop in the most relevant way," Roque explained.

Publishers can change their software layouts to support these tools. Dan Reich, EVP, streaming product and global head of product at Paramount+ and Pluto TV at Paramount, explained, "On the Paramount+ side, we're really focused on content discovery. How do we get users to engage more and more?"

To drive engagement, Paramount is using AI for poster art optimization—continuously testing to see what's driving the biggest clickthrough rate and the biggest engagement—and has rolled out context-rich interactive features. For example, the network recently debuted Inside Peek on Roku for the new season of The Agency—a feature reminiscent of VH1's classic Pop-Up Video—to give viewers real-time insights into production and the actors on screen.

Paramount also adjusts ad placements based on what happens in a scene rather than relying on fixed commercial breaks. "We want to have flexible ad breaks and flexible ad loads, so that we can place the ad break in the right spot for the right user," Reich said.

Automation and industry standards across networks

While some view shoppable TV as a novelty, KERV Interactive's data proves consumer adoption is real. In a joint study, Paramount and KERV Interactive found that over 60% of viewers who engaged with a "pause-to-shop" feature enjoyed the experience, resulting in a pause rate 7X higher than standard benchmarks.

Scaling this ecosystem requires long-term industry standards. Roque emphasized that sharing consistent data across entertainment platforms improves programmatic performance. "Brands and agencies really push the technology partners like us to create a standard, so that you can have the same data across the ecosystem," Roque stated.

Roque also discussed how broad compatibility enables automated systems to manage complex retail environments. That opens the door to scene-level targeting, in which major retailers like Wayfair, Walmart, and Target can bid on specific product moments.

Roque noted that advanced tools will help navigate this environment: “Agentic AI is going to help us a ton to normalize this and allow the demand side to understand what signals match their demand.”

Success relies on constant optimization. Paramount relentlessly A/B tests features to protect the viewer experience and provides concrete sales metrics. “Every time you iterate, you test, you learn, you evolve, and that’s really been the core for us.” Reich explained.

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