



Epsilon[®]

2026 TRENDS SNAPSHOT





OVERVIEW

**RETAIL MEDIA AT
A CROSSROADS**

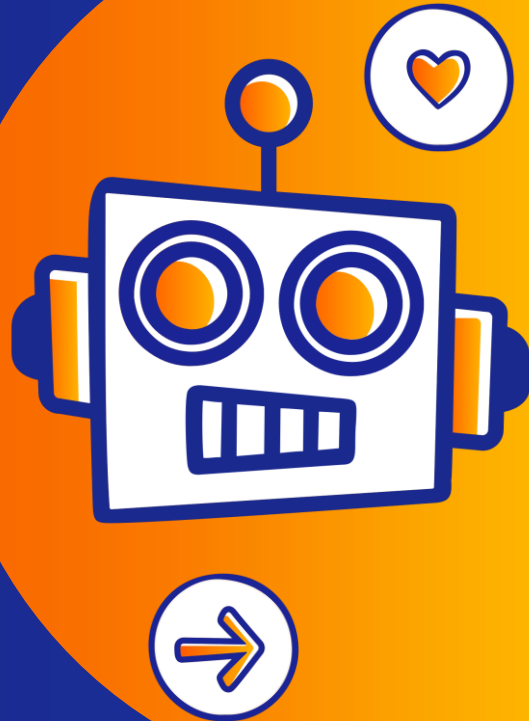
**THE END OF THE
WASTED HALF**

**CHANGING THE
LOYALTY GAME**

**LOOK MMM,
NO HANDS!**

**DISCOVERY IN
AN AI WORLD**

RECOMMENDATIONS



RETAIL MEDIA AT A CROSSROADS

Only 25% of retailers have achieved full-funnel maturity due to budget constraints and integration issues*

While many retail media networks still struggle with the fundamentals, a handful of leaders are now pushing into richer offsite environments like connected TV and online video, proving that retail media can operate as a full-funnel growth engine with outcomes measured online and in-store.

How to be ready

Focus on creating a coherent shopper view that lets you link digital exposure to physical sales and connect discovery and loyalty moments across apps, email, streaming and audio. Those who can will know which touchpoints inspire action and which drive repeat purchase.



THE END OF THE WASTED HALF OF ADVERTISING

**“Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted;
the trouble is I don’t know which half”**

For years, marketers have struggled with survivorship bias – the habit of counting only what’s easy to see. Dashboards capture clicks and online conversions but miss the quieter influences that happen in real life, so channels that drive store visits or offline sales are undervalued.

As more retailers connect loyalty data and in-store purchases to digital exposure, those blind spots are shrinking, and the full chain of influence is finally visible.

How to be ready

Use measurement systems that follow real shoppers across formats, not just last-touch events. When outcomes are tied to identifiable behaviour, investment decisions move from guesswork to proof.



CHANGING THE LOYALTY GAME

Only 60% of consumers are satisfied with loyalty program experiences currently offered by brands*

Gamification is quickly becoming a standout driver of customer engagement. Instant incentives tied to specific products can spark discovery and lift incremental spend, and AI is accelerating the shift.

How to be ready

Focus on interactions that feel meaningful rather than mechanical. Use purchase and loyalty data to understand what motivates different customers, then build challenges that adapt as behaviour changes. When everyday transactions become small moments of progress or reward, shoppers stay invested and loyalty becomes something they actively enjoy.



LOOK MMM, NO HANDS!

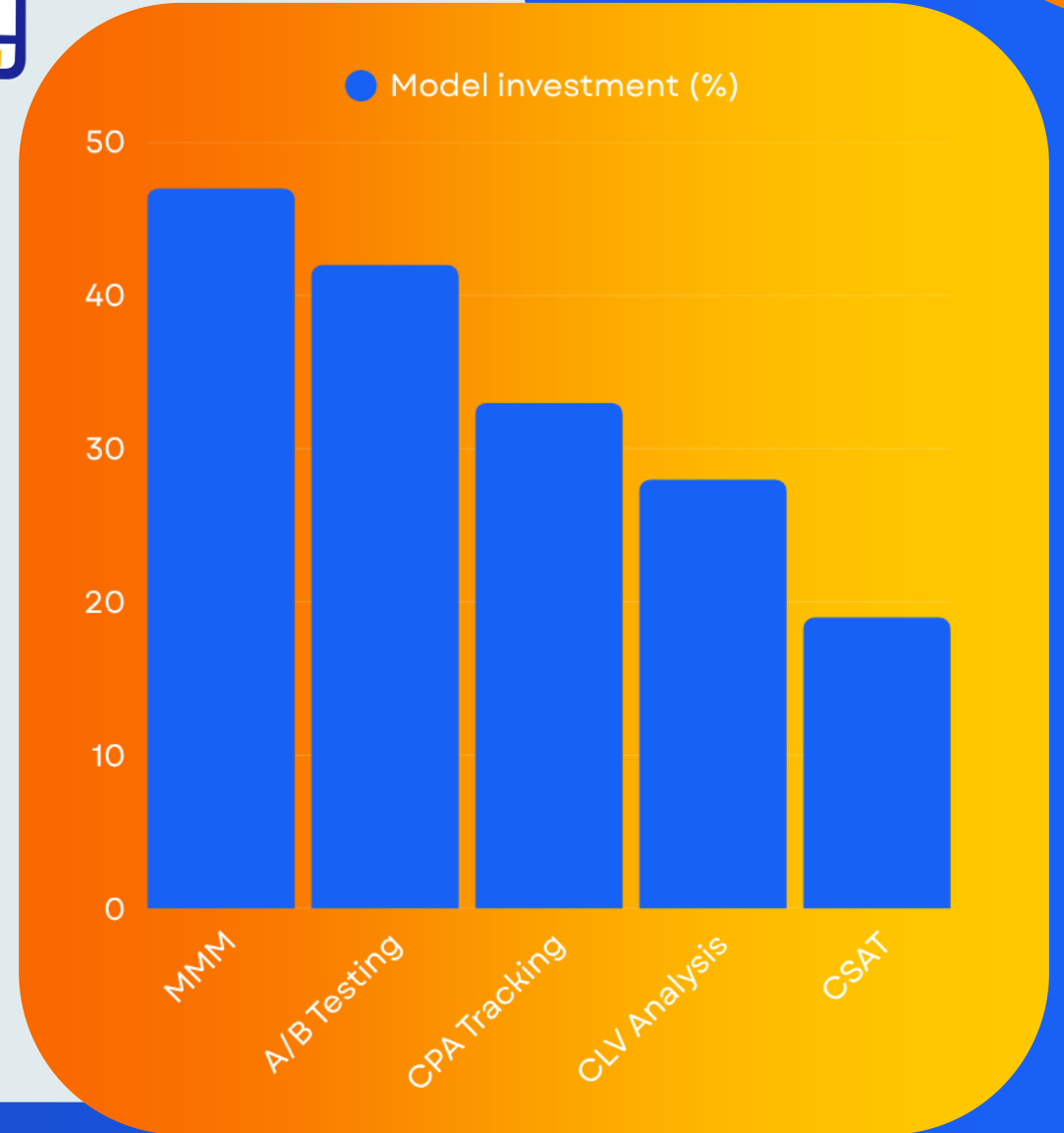


MMM tops the charts as the number one measurement method marketers plan to invest in

Despite its popularity, models still struggle to separate correlation from genuine impact unless they are anchored in real testing, and too many marketers assume outputs are reliable before they have been proven.

How to be ready

MMM first needs calibrating before it can reliably offer insight. Start by running controlled tests using high quality, people-based truth sets tied to actual transactions that can stabilise the signal and reveal how channels really work together.



DISCOVERY IN AN AI WORLD

AI-driven search is reshaping how people find information, with 72% already using AI tools alongside traditional methods*

As instant answers replace exploratory search, SEO delivers fewer openings for brands to reach new audiences. Immersive environments such as CTV, audio and social stand apart, offering space for discovery where attention is high but creative relevance has so far been low.

How to be ready

Shift the focus from keywords to people. Use transactional and loyalty signals to understand what individuals actually care about, then place creative where they're most receptive. A food brand reaching recent pasta buyers during a cooking show can measure whether that moment translates into a lift at checkout. In a world where AI narrows the routes in, the brands that succeed are those who invest in understanding real behaviour and build discovery around it.



RECOMMENDATIONS



Build a single view of real outcomes

As measurement evolves beyond clicks, anchor decisions in transaction-level truth that reflects how shoppers move between digital discovery and in-store purchase.



Design activation around identifiable people, not proxies

Use consistent person-level signals to connect CTV, audio, social and onsite activity so campaigns reach shoppers when they're genuinely receptive.



Test before trusting any model

Whether calibrating MMM or tuning media plans, run controlled tests that reveal what actually drives incremental growth and use those results to guide automation.

ABOUT EPSILON EMEA

Epsilon is a data and technology leader helping marketers drive real business outcomes. Our platform is built on [COREid](#), the industry's most accurate and stable deterministic identity graph. It turns fragmented signals and channels into real people and complete shopper journeys so brands can act at moments of genuine intent, reach their highest-value audiences and cut duplication. No guesswork. No wasted spend. Just results.

For more information, visit www.epsilon.com/emea