feedonomics

How AI is redefining product discovery

A guide for ecommerce and marketing teams
navigating the new era of AI-driven discovery.

AI search is replacing traditional search. Is your data ready?

Online shopping used to start with a search. Today, it starts with a conversation.

In fact, **eMarketer found that 86% of global consumers want AI to assist with product research**. And tools like ChatGPT and Perplexity are becoming the go-to starting point for many.

This shift signals a major change in how product discovery happens, moving from keyword-based search to conversational, **AI-driven experiences**. These agents summarize, compare, and increasingly enable shoppers to complete a purchase without ever visiting a brand's website.

Now brands must ensure their products are discoverable not only to people, but also to AI across marketplaces, ad platforms, and owned channels. If your data isn't structured for AI, your products may not appear in the results, and your visibility, traffic, and sales will suffer.

Agentic commerce is here — and product data is now your most important competitive advantage.

"AI-powered search is redefining how consumers discover and engage with products online. For consumer brands, this represents a pivotal moment to lead with innovation. Ensuring quality data feeds are structured and accessible to AI search channels is a strategic imperative for driving relevance, loyalty and growth in a competitive digital landscape."

SHARON GEE, SVP PRODUCT, AI, BIGCOMMERCE AND FEEDONOMICS

The model we know: shopper to merchant

More than half of product searches start on Amazon, but approximately **42% of searches begin on search engines**, per eMarketer. Due to the rapid adoption of AI by consumers, the latter search-engine-based discovery model is changing and brands must adapt their content for **SEO as well as GEO** (generative engine optimization).

In the traditional search model, product discovery happens through search engines and social networks—maybe a Google Shopping ad or a TikTok video. The shopper clicks through to a direct-to-consumer site or a marketplace listing. There, they browse product detail pages, read reviews, and ultimately make a purchase.
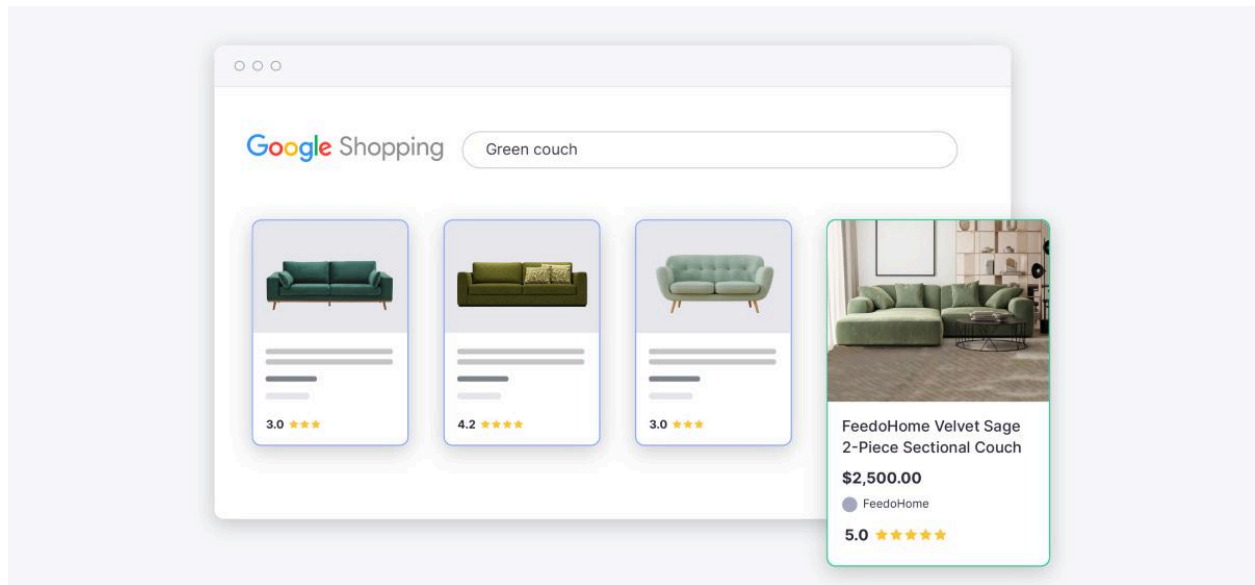
When customers aren't shopping through a marketplace, checkout happens on the merchant's site. The brand owns the experience end to end, from the moment a shopper lands to the final confirmation email. Loyalty and returns? Also owned. Everything runs through the merchant's ecosystem.

This model gave brands control. Control over how their products are presented. Control over the path to purchase. Control over the customer relationship.

When selling through marketplaces, merchants have less control over the customer experience, but they can still control whether their products appear on a marketplace's listings at all.

Now control is shifting. It all comes down to how AI-driven search results are packaged.

Traditional search results produce a series of pages ranked by how relevant they are to a user's query. AI search produces a direct response to a more conversational query, and it scours the web to try to create a comprehensive answer.

That means a brand's entire web presence—from its own website, to third-party blogger reviews, to product listings on social media and marketplaces—is taken into account. Brands and merchants have the responsibility of helping AI determine what's important and ensuring their web presence is consistent.

The bridge we're on: agent to merchant

In today's AI-assisted world, shoppers are increasingly starting their journeys with a question, but not on Google. They're asking AI tools for help:

- What's the best hiking boot under $150?

- Which water bottle keeps drinks cold the longest?

AI agents answer by pulling from what they've learned, which means the product data they can access becomes the foundation of every recommendation.
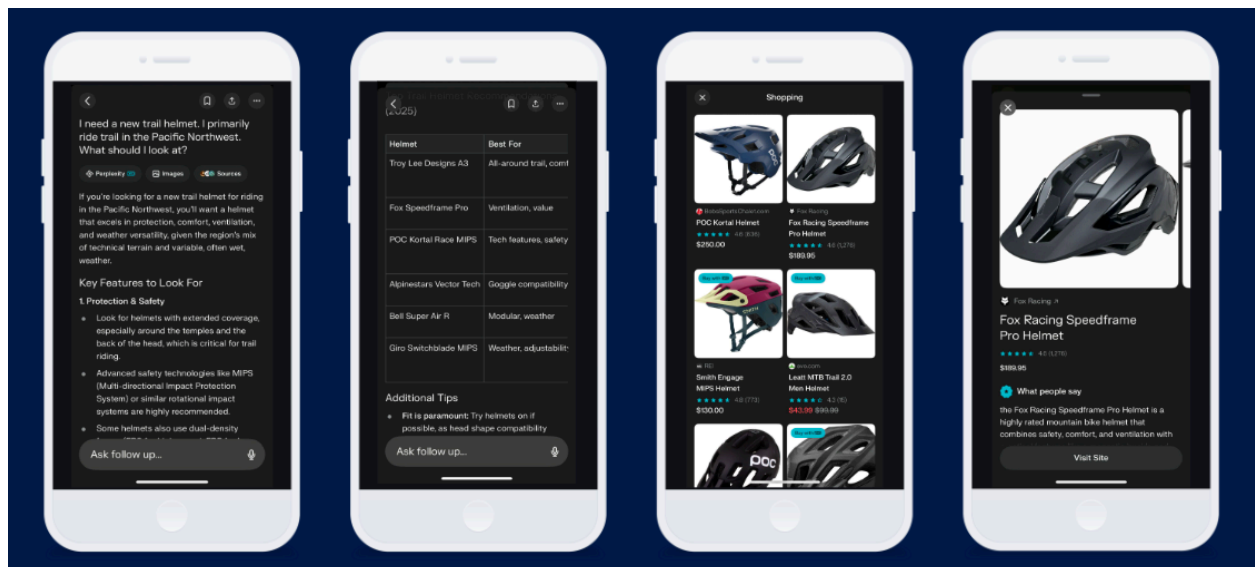
But the quality of that experience depends entirely on the quality of your product data. In fact, **50% of consumers cite inaccurate product information and errors as the top reason for a poor shopping experience**. If your content is incomplete, unstructured, or inconsistent, AI tools can't represent your products accurately, and may not recommend them at all.

Including FAQs, bullet points, and defined use cases on your product detail pages can provide AI with the structured information it needs to recommend your products.

When AI tools do recommend a product, they may offer two checkout options:

- Link the shopper out to the brand's website.

- Trigger a guest checkout experience directly within the AI interface, using a browser agent.

Either way, the brand still owns the transaction. You're still the merchant of record. Post-purchase emails, return policies, loyalty, all still flow through your systems.

But discovery? That's happening somewhere else. **And you don't control the interface anymore, your data does.**

What's next: agent to agent

In the near future, shoppers won't just rely on AI tools to help them decide. They'll rely on them to do everything, from asking questions to placing the order to handling follow-ups.

This next evolution is called agent-to-agent commerce.

In this model, a shopping agent engages directly with a brand's digital infrastructure. It can pull real-time inventory, verify shipping timelines, and even negotiate pricing or bundling options, all without human involvement. Checkout happens within the AI experience, powered by tokenized integrations with the merchant's ecommerce and payment systems.

The shopper never lands on your site. And they don't need to.

Instead, your systems talk directly to theirs, and your product data becomes the language they use.

Returns, order updates, and loyalty touchpoints are still yours to own, but they're surfaced within the AI experience through secure data handshakes.

This isn't science fiction. It's already being piloted, and even major companies like Walmart are **investing in the infrastructure** to support this shift in consumer behavior. Agent-to-agent commerce will redefine what it means to be discoverable, competitive, and shoppable.

For this reason, having well-structured data is critical. Imagine an agent-to-agent experience that's built on inaccurate or out-of-sync data. It has the snowballing potential to produce a negative customer experience, harm your reputation, and get factored into an AI's decision-making for future recommendations. As AI speeds up the rate of commerce, it also speeds up the effect of errors.

Customers will come to expect seamless and consistent experiences with AI, just as they've come to expect fast shipping or connected touchpoints across digital surfaces.

A brand already building toward the future

Some brands aren't waiting for the AI future, they're building for it now.

Revelyst, the parent company behind Bell, Bushnell, CamelBak, **Fox Racing**, and other leading adventure brands, is actively preparing for a world where shopping journeys begin, and often end, inside AI-powered platforms.

They've begun **optimizing their product data** not just for Google, but for AI-native tools like Perplexity. Their team is shifting from a product-first approach to a customer-first data strategy, ensuring the catalog content powering discovery is complete, contextual, and consistent across every channel.

"With Feedonomics powering our product data, we have confidence that our catalog is being presented accurately and optimally to drive results with AI search platforms."

OWEN SPENCER, DIRECTOR OF ENTERPRISE APPLICATIONS, REVELYST

Conclusion: AI isn't just a tool, it's a channel

The next wave of ecommerce won't be powered by pixels. It'll be powered by product data that's structured, enriched, and ready to be interpreted by intelligent agents.

You don't need to overhaul your business overnight. But you do need to start asking the right questions:

- Can AI agents understand your product catalog today?

- Are your feeds optimized for both people and machines?

- What happens when discovery, and checkout, no longer start on your site?

Feedonomics helps brands bridge the gap between where ecommerce is and where it's going. We structure your product data, enrich it for every channel, and get it AI-ready, so when shoppers ask, your products are the answer.

Ready to get your data ready for AI? **Request a Feedonomics demo today**.