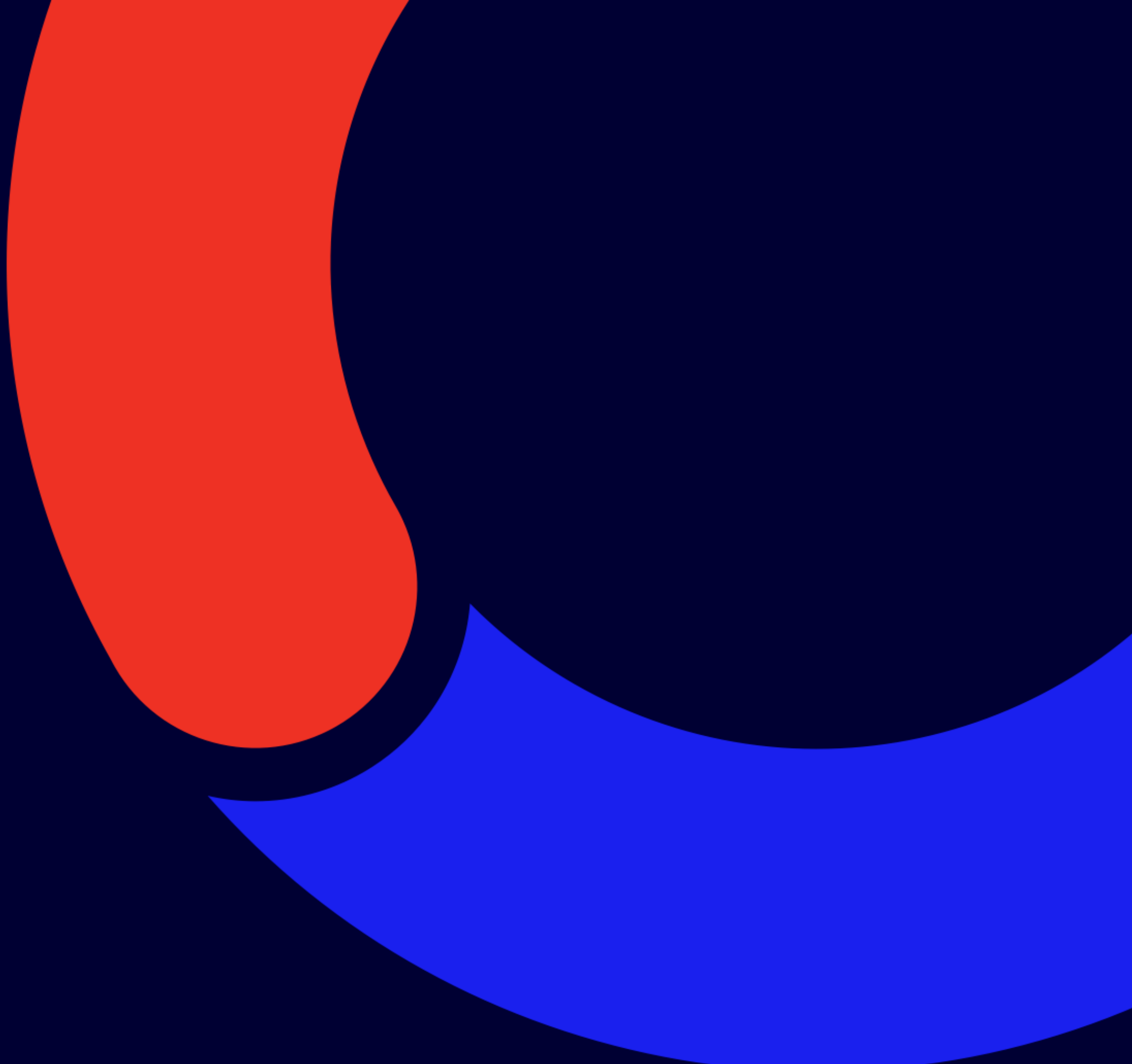




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Agentic Advertising and Commerce

Understanding new protocols to drive adoption
and trust

Updated: January 16th, 2026

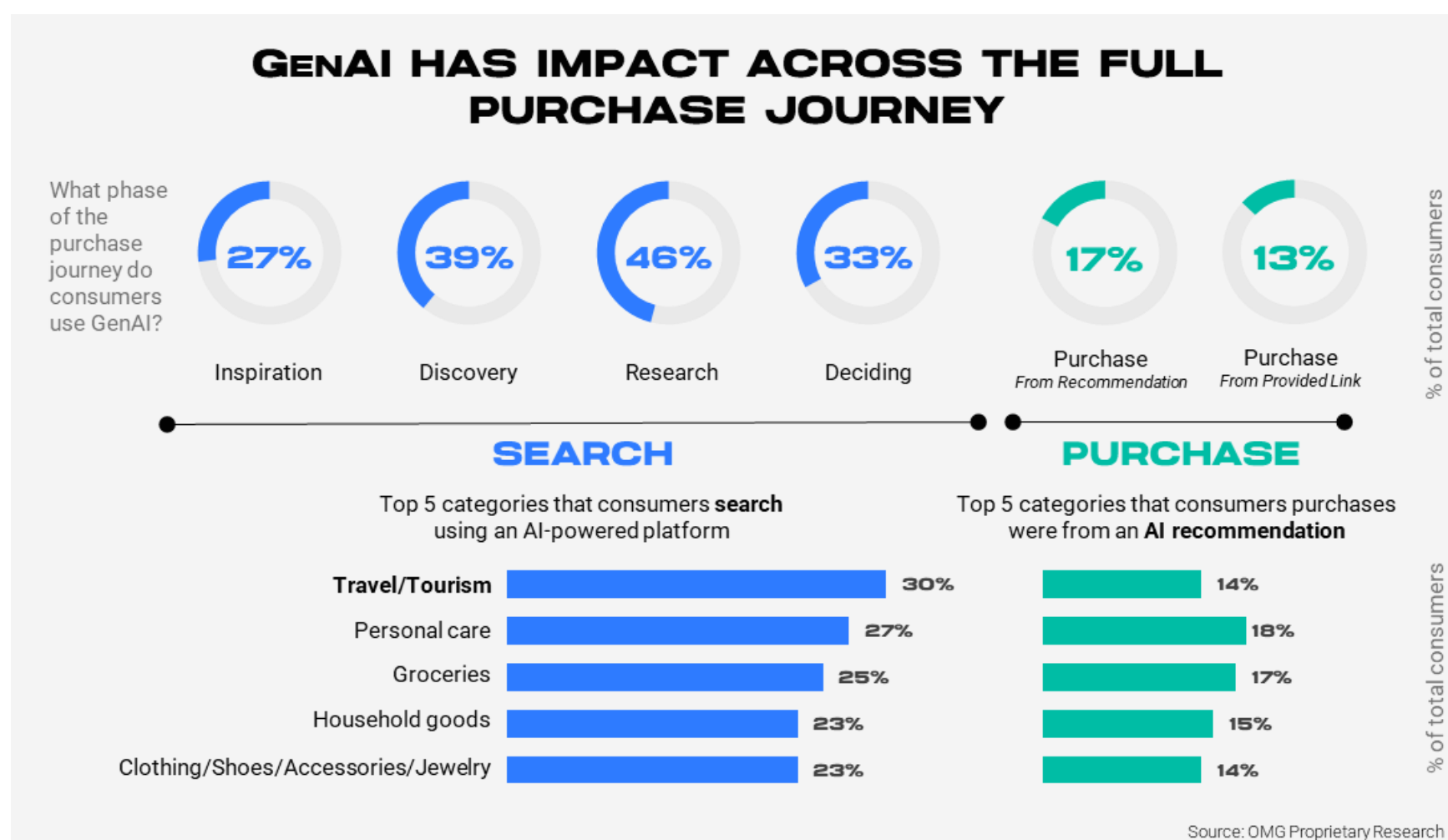


WE *Create* WHAT'S NEXT

Agentic advertising and commerce are maturing quickly

Agentic Infrastructure to drive growth

The Omnicom Media NA [Generative Engine Optimisation Study](#) from Sep 2025 illustrated that while [4 in 10 had shifted most of their searches](#) to AI, purchase behaviours were still niche.



The [utility of AI in commerce is agentic](#): when machines make purchase decisions and complete transactions on behalf of people. We recently reported that agentic commerce has been held back by a [lack of protocols and standards](#) to knit together the various aspects of commerce to make it trustworthy for consumers.

Agentic AI only scales when it can efficiently operate across surfaces connecting business consumers, models, and platforms. Without common languages for discovery, permissions, transactions, and measurement platforms splinter and consumers get lost in complexity.

Protocols define what an agent can ask for, what it can do, what it must prove (authorization, consent, provenance), and how success is measured.

In advertising, that means machine-readable intent, deterministic execution, and measurement that delivers trusted automation.

[AdCP](#) was launched last year to enable buying media and activate audiences on [any platform](#).

IAB Tech Lab this week announced an [agentic roadmap](#) to co-ordinate proven standards such as Open RTB and VAST with modern agentic tech such as [Model Context Protocol \(MCP\)](#), [Agent2Agent \(A2A\)](#), and [gRPC](#).

These capabilities are coming to the largest channels as NBCUniversal/FreeWheel demonstrated [cross-platform agentic buying](#) spanning linear + streaming leveraging Model Context Protocol for agent collaboration.

OpenX launched [buyer-control APIs](#) (in identity, bid stream, auction insights) to let buyers deploy proprietary logic in real-time rather than post-auction optimisation.

In commerce, the requirement is even clearer.

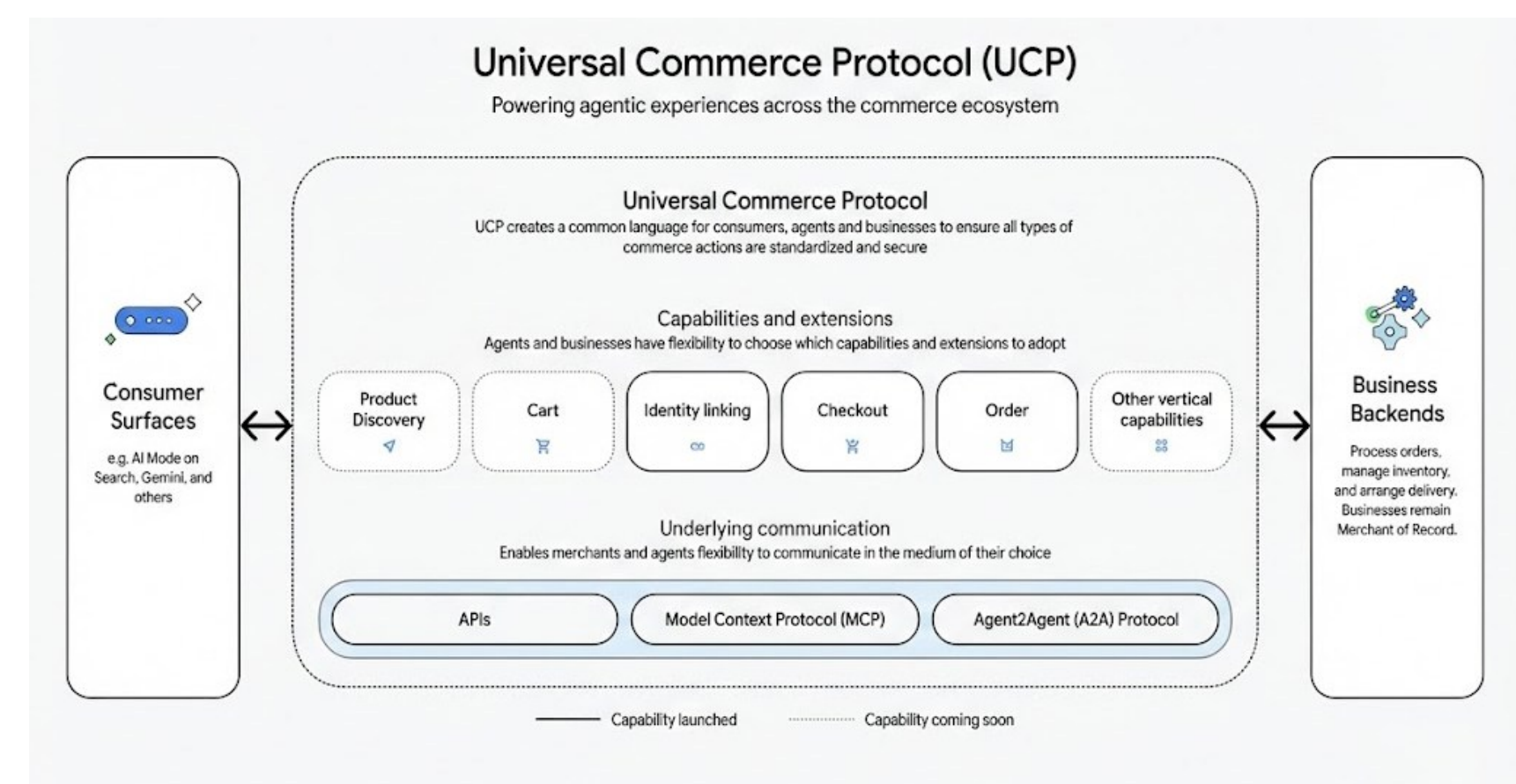
Universal Commerce Protocol

In 2025, OpenAI released the [Agentic Commerce Protocol](#) to embed commerce in ChatGPT, whilst Google launched the more narrowly defined [Agent Payments Protocol](#) to manage payments across platforms.

Google this week launched the [Universal Commerce Protocol](#) (UCP), an open-source standard that establishes a “[common language and functional primitives](#)” for agentic commerce across consumer surfaces, businesses, and payment providers. It delivers reliable inventory, pricing, checkout, payment authorization, and post-purchase support.

If commerce increasingly occurs inside AI interfaces, businesses will wish to participate across those interfaces without bespoke engineering for each. UCP’s promise is to collapse that complexity into a single integration point, with a [shared language and extensible architecture](#) that covers the full commerce lifecycle; discovery, consideration, checkout, and order management.

All while remaining compatible with existing retail infrastructure.



Architecturally, UCP is designed around capabilities and discovery. Businesses publish a [standard manifest at /.well-known/ucp](#), enabling agents to discover services, endpoints, and payment configuration without hard-coded integrations. Brands retain their business logic and remain the merchant of record.

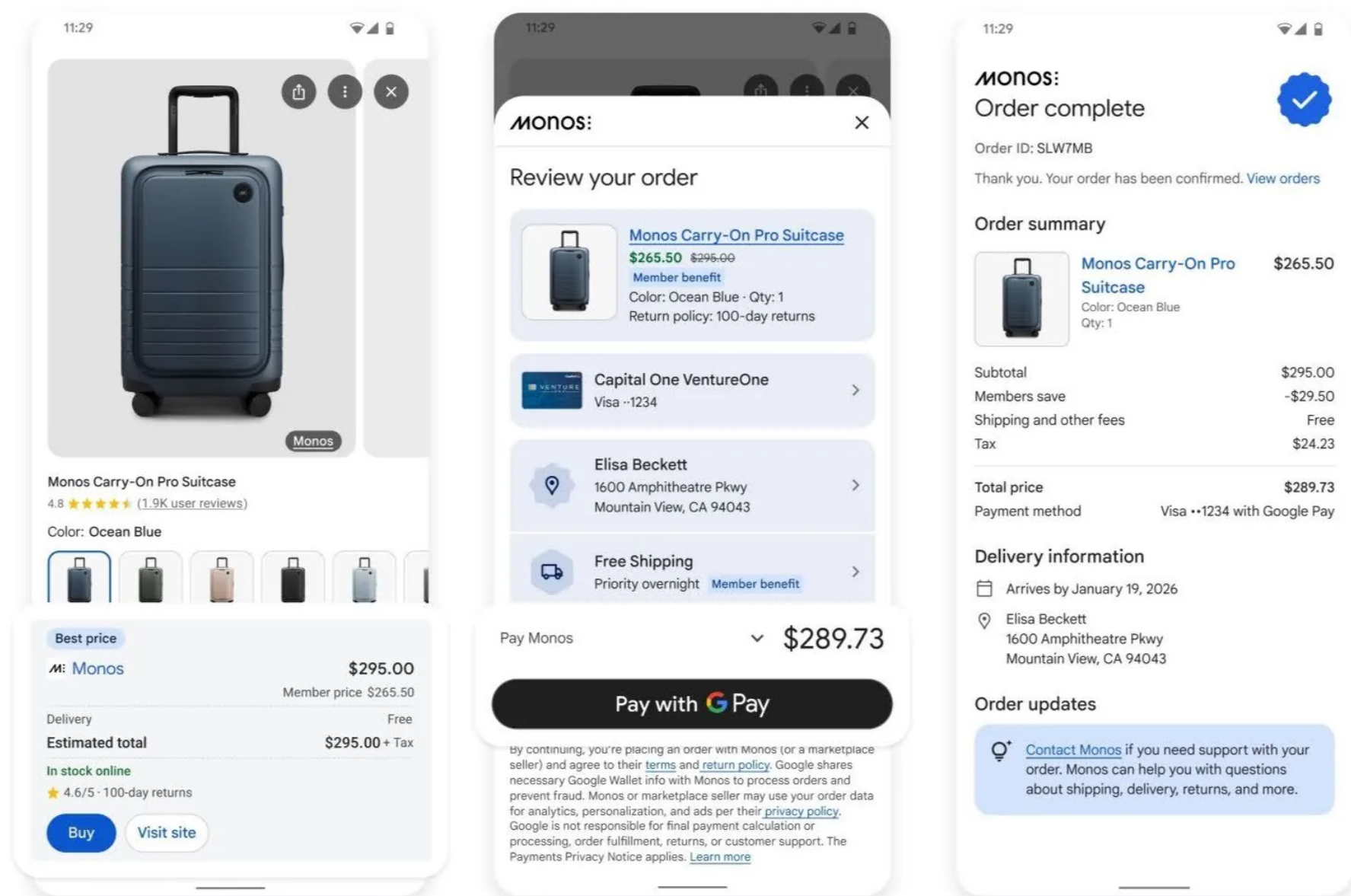
Capabilities such as [checkout or product discovery can be extended](#) to include, for example, local or time-sensitive discounts. UCP supports multiple transport options, including APIs, MCP and A2A. This effectively meets enterprises wherever they are on the agent maturity curve.

Consumers have shown high acceptance and trust in AI recommendations, but delegating payments requires far more robust security.

UCP separates payment instruments from payment handlers and emphasizes “provable” authorizations backed by cryptographic proof of user consent.

Ads and Commerce

Google is moving fast to place UCP inside high-traffic consumer experiences. UCP [was unveiled with partners](#) including Shopify and major retailers. Distribution will scale quickly as Google is planning [support inside AI Mode in Search](#) and the Gemini app.



[Gemini Enterprise for Customer Experience](#) is another piece of the emerging agentic commerce landscape to allow brands and retail media networks to offer agentic capability, like Amazon's Rufus, directly to their customers. While [Business Agent enables conversational](#) features in Google Search.

Agentic capability is coming full circle back to ads as Google this week announced plans to deliver personalized offers/ads within its AI shopping tools with a [direct offers](#) pilot, moving beyond classic search ads toward context-triggered incentives inside AI experiences.

This development illustrates AI-native advertising whereby new value mechanisms that are reliant on the technology become core to the advertising proposition, in this case, offers tied to the [intent](#) and needs of the individual user.

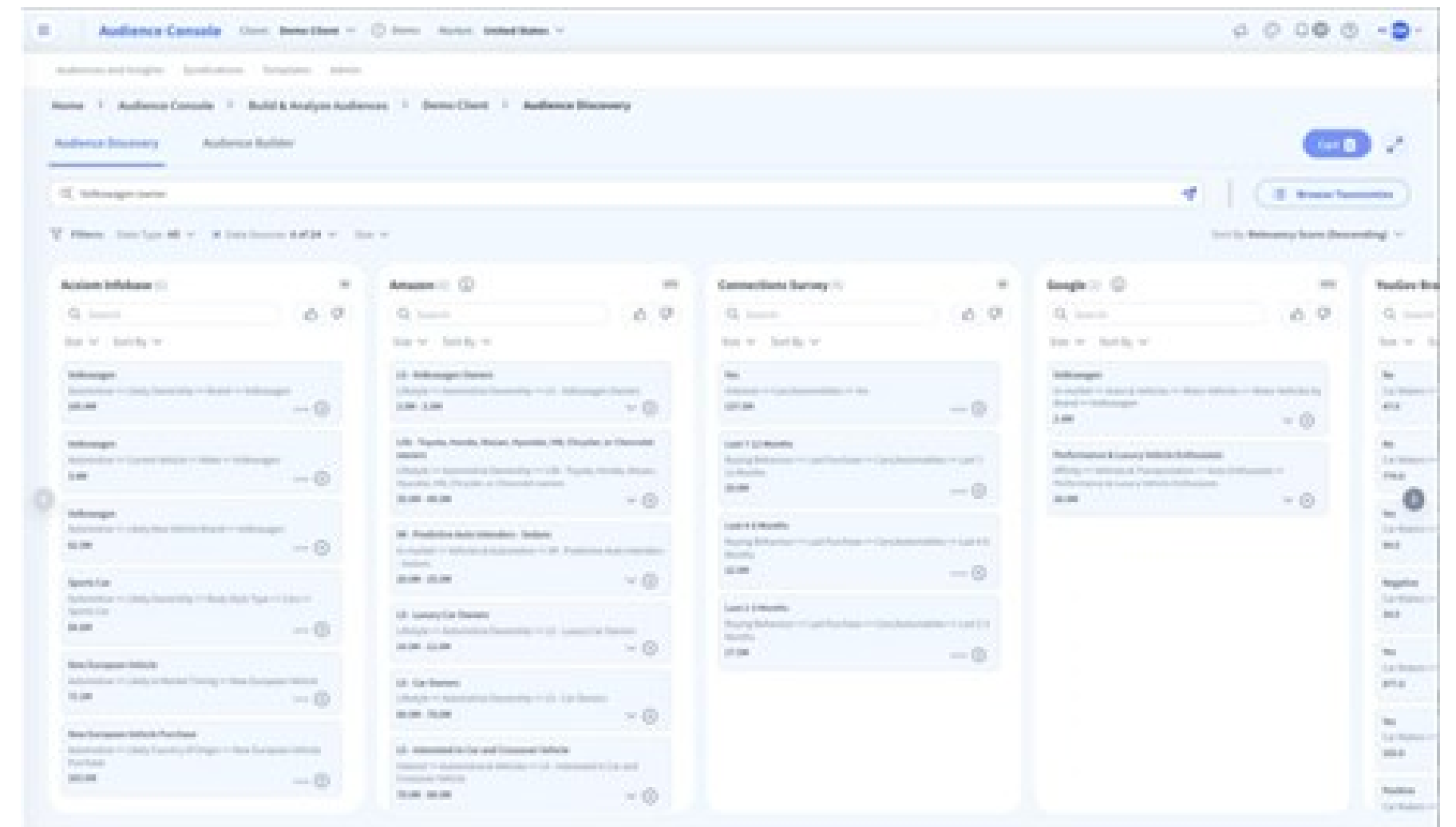
Increasingly, brands will need to align product truth data, promotion logic, loyalty benefits, and offer eligibility that can be reasoned over by machines, not just displayed to humans. So, media strategy and pricing strategy will be more closely aligned.

This is especially true as interactions become ever more personalized. This week, Google quietly launched [Personal Intelligence in Gemini](#) and other AI surfaces, enabling access to deep personal data such as mail and YouTube watch histories.

This is a tangible example of the emerging Agentic Experience Optimization paradigm that builds on today's Generative Engine Optimization. This matters to advertisers because 'agentic commerce' changes the funnel: discovery, persuasion, and transaction compress into a single conversational flow, all mediated by brand and consumer data.

The New Omni

From an Omnicom Media perspective, these protocol moves reinforce a central idea: the next advantage is not just having AI, it is in efficiently operationalizing AI to address [clients' specific business challenges](#).



At CES last week, Omnicom unveiled the [next generation of Omni](#), positioning it as an AI-driven marketing intelligence platform built on the world's largest consumer data and commerce assets, including Acxiom identity infrastructure and Flywheel commerce capability and an expanded agentic AI framework. Omni therefore addresses;

- Policy-as-code becomes brand safety at scale. In an agent-to-agent world, governance can't be a human checklist. Brands need constraints encoded into buying and selling instructions before execution. We can define "guardrails" once and let agentic workflows enforce them everywhere.
- Measurement needs a reconciliation layer. When buying, selling, and outcomes are increasingly automated, the key is consistent joins: identity, exposure, commerce outcomes, incrementality, and clean-room compatible workflows.
- Commerce and media will converge further. Google's move toward in-chat offers and checkout suggests the ["moment of intent"](#) will be negotiated in a conversational thread with an agent evaluating price, fulfilment, trust, and incentives. Brands should be preparing for a world where competitive advantage is determined by [machine-readable desirability](#): data quality, credibility, and responsiveness.

Brands will need expert guidance to navigate the shift from AI-enabled marketing to agentic, protocol-driven execution, where the winners are those who can combine creativity and strategy with the operational discipline of standards, structured data, and governed automation.



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