

VOLUME 1

NOW

THAT'S WHAT I CALL RETAIL MEDIA

25



FOREWORD



Gemma Goldfingle
Editor
MAD//Fest

The unstoppable growth of retail media shows no signs of slowing, with the global spend forecast to reach \$177.1bn in 2025, surpassing total TV revenue (including streaming) for the first time.

While much is written about the sector's growth, the amazing campaigns, innovations and partnerships coming out of retail media get far fewer column inches.

Now That's What I Call Retail Media aims to change that. This compilation of the best of retail media over the past year will shine a light on the amazing work and

innovation happening in the industry, and show why so many brands are opting to spend their marketing budget in this area.

To ensure this report features the best of the best we've built a panel of experts across the industry to select the campaigns, innovations, partnerships and firms that have impressed over the past year and are helping drive forward this sector.

We hope you take inspiration from this compilation, and the great work happening in this fast-evolving space.



Sam Knights
CEO
SMG

Retail media is no longer the future - it's the now. As global spending soars, brands and retailers are redefining how they connect with consumers.

Now That's What I Call Retail Media celebrates the creative campaigns, partnerships, and data-driven strategies that go beyond transactions to create impactful brand experiences.

From innovative in-store activations to personalised digital engagement, these carefully critiqued campaigns and initiatives demonstrate the power of blending creativity with performance.

At SMG, we've always proudly taken an agnostic approach, collaborating with a diverse range of businesses across the retail media landscape.

As part of our mission to unite the industry, we invited leaders across the UK to define and showcase what brilliance looks like - driving progress and innovation across the sector.

*I hope you enjoy reading this report and that you **Don't Stop Believing**, to quote Journey, in the power of this record-breaking category.*

MEET THE JUDGES

Introducing our expert panel that helped select the 'best of' retail media.



Nick Ashley
Client Development Director
**Tesco Media and
Insight Platform**

Favourite song: If I Had a Gun,
Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds



Michele Dainty
Shopper Marketing Director
pladis Global

Favourite song: Islands in
the Stream, Dolly Parton and
Kenny Rogers



Jon Beill
Chief Growth Officer
**LS Eleven Media Services
Asda**

Favourite song: Let's Stay
Together, Al Green



Emma Dean
Chief Operations Officer
SMG

Favourite song: Songbird,
Eva Cassidy



James Chandler
Chief Marketing Officer
IAB

Favourite song: Starz In
Their Eyes, Just Jack



Rachel Halter
Director of Membership
and CRM
Co-op

Favourite song: Take It to
the Limit, Eagles



Jill Orr
Managing Director
Enterprise
Criteo



Amir Rasekh
Managing Director
Nectar360

Favourite song: Feeling
For You, Cassius



Jacqui Parr
Editor
TheGrocer.co.uk

Favourite song: Dead
Leaves and the Dirty
Ground, The White Stripes



Oliver Shayer
Omni-Media Director
Boots

Favourite song: Go Your
Own Way, Fleetwood Mac

NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL RETAIL MEDIA



CREATIVE GENIUS



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CREATIVE GENIUS

The vast treasure troves of first-party data may be the big driver for many to invest in retail media, however, brands cannot capitalise on this without creative and compelling campaigns.

All too often retail media is seen as simply transactional - however, the medium can help build a brand story, drive excitement and create moments.

It can also encourage shoppers both in-store and online to explore products they never knew they needed. In fact, according to IPG and Magna Global's 'Creative, The Performance Powerhouse' report, creative drives **79%** of top-of-mind ad recall and **56%** of purchase intent.

That is why **Now That's What I Call Retail Media** is shining a light on the industry's creative genius - the inventive ways to reach and resonate with consumers.

Judges were looking for innovative ideas, impressive execution, and demonstrable results.

The campaigns they picked out showcase more than just eye-catching and emotive content.

They also highlight inventive concepts and ways to target and appeal to customers, and exciting competitions and promotions that have proven effective at driving engagement and sales.

What's the next big creative trend in retail media?

Michele Dainty, Shopper Marketing Director, pladis Global: "I think it will become even more and more personalised with more opportunities to dynamically change message and creative."

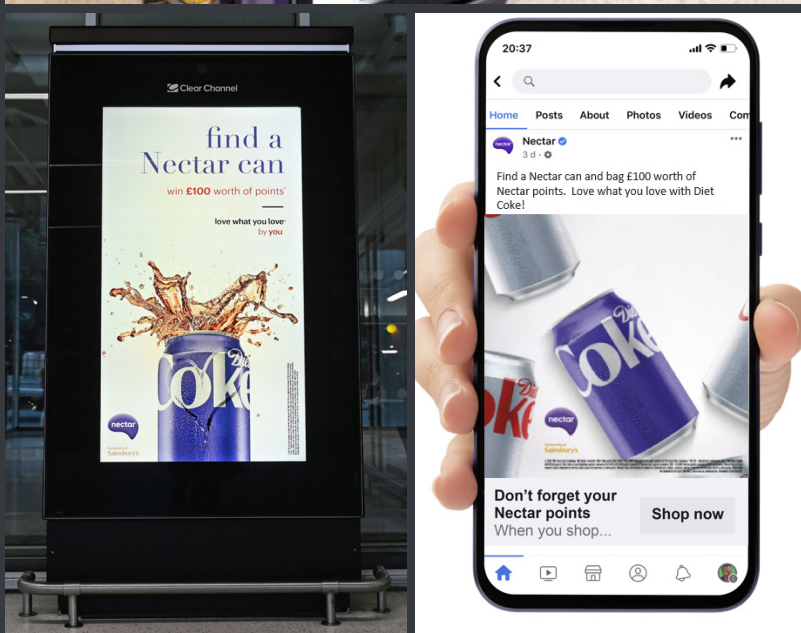
Marcus Ingleby, Strategy and Creative Director, SMG: "Measured creative effectiveness, powered by real-time performance data and dynamic optimisation."

Nick Ashley, Client Development Director, Tesco Media and Insight Platform: "Creative execution and insight derived from advanced data science, fuelled by AI, will become more inextricably linked. Brands' messaging will become more personalised and more bespoke dependent upon a customer's relationship with the brand at that moment in time."

CREATIVE GENIUS



PURPLE CAN DIET COKE FT NECTAR360



Diet Coke fans were given the chance to secure one of 100 limited edition purple cans as part of a fully integrated campaign that spanned multiple touchpoints.

With more than a whiff of Willy Wonka, the hand-painted 'Nectar Purple' cans were hidden inside of 24-can packs across Sainsbury's stores.

The lucky customers who found the cans were awarded £100 worth of Nectar points to spend online or in-store at Argos and Sainsbury's or to convert into Avios Points.

The campaign, which was live for three weeks last summer, ran across all channels with eye-catching in-store activations supplemented by off-site media and a prominent online and social push.

It became a viral hit as Diet Coke fans went wild for the hunt for the purple can.

It attracted **3.5 million** impressions and spurred an impressive sales boost. In fact, all campaign units were sold out within the first four days.

The campaign drove almost **50%** incremental sales with **25%** of customers either lapsed or new to Diet Coke.

The judges said: "Sometimes the simple ideas are the most effective. This is a great collaboration between Diet Coke, Sainsbury's and Nectar360 that resonated with customers and created a real moment."

Purple Can was a memorable campaign that showed how a creative customer-first idea can create waves through the medium of retail media.



ELECTRIC STREETS VAUXHALL FT TESCO MEDIA AND INSIGHT PLATFORM

Is a new car on anyone's weekly shopping list? Obviously not - but that doesn't mean that retail media can't be used to engage with potential buyers.

Vauxhall, its media agency Starcom and Tesco Media and Insight Platform developed a campaign to target the **19 million** shoppers that drive to the supermarket giant's stores to promote electrical vehicles (EVs) and the car giant's products.

The highly visible campaign saw **2,700** charge points operated in car parks at Tesco stores covered in Vauxhall branding.

It also utilised creative strategies like awarding the highest-ever **50,000** Clubcard points and a year of free EV charging at Tesco for those buying a new Vauxhall electric vehicle, with impactful media channels such as car park wraps and bespoke digital targeting.

Vauxhall branding was showcased on the integrated media screens of **619** charging units with creative and messaging adapted each month tailored to Tesco customers.

The campaign spanned all of Tesco Media and Insight Platform's channels including social, digital, and connected TV, as well as in-store radio

and the Tesco Magazine.

The campaign not only boosted EV awareness but also set a new benchmark for retail media as a force for sustainable change.

The judges said: "This is a great way for brands that can't be snapped up in the supermarket to access the networks.

"It was a great idea and put Vauxhall in the minds of supermarket shoppers."

THE GOLD STANDARD



GET COMFORTABLE ANDREX FT PHD



Andrex embraced retail media in its Get Comfortable campaign, which aimed to challenge the taboos around going to the toilet.

The campaign was designed to modernise the Andrex brand whose household penetration had been on a downturn for a number of years as shoppers opted for cheaper own-brand alternatives.

Media planning and buying agency PHD identified audiences that were prepared to pay extra for a premium product, analysing grocery purchase data and behavioural insights.

Andrex partnered with Tesco Media and Insight Platform, Ocado, Nectar360, and Amazon to identify and target five target audience types.

These were new customers, disloyal and lapsed customers, shoppers of other premium brands, those with similar baskets to Andrex customers

and those that put its products in their basket but did not purchase. The ads used humour and relatable toilet scenarios to engage shoppers.

Relevant messages were then served to these audiences. The team also optimised towards conversions and best-performing creatives in real time.

The retailers involved reported soaring success from the campaign. Tesco Media and Insight said it brought more than **400,000** new shoppers to the brand while Ocado revealed that Andrex saw a return on ad spend of more than five times better than expectations.

The judges said: "Andrex truly harnessed the power of retail media in identifying key audience segments. Combining this insight with powerful creative and targeted messaging drove impressive results."



FOLD STREET SAMSUNG FT NECTAR360

Nectar360 transformed the Argos Old Street store into Fold Street to create additional buzz and awareness over the launch of the Samsung Galaxy Z Fold6 and Z Flip6.

Drawing inspiration from the phones' innovative foldable designs, the activation featured unique installations, including a single-decker London bus folded at a 90-degree angle, as well as folded telephone boxes, park benches, and lampposts.

The entire Old Street Argos store was rebranded as Fold Street with window wraps, digital screens, and a sign takeover, a world-first.

Samsung also temporarily took over the iconic Old Street roundabout digital site, worked with TfL to rename the tube station to Fold Street, and rebranded around half of the signage in the station.

With **15,000** people using Old Street station each day, the attention-grabbing activity helped to drive awareness.

The campaign also included online activity such as Argos homepage takeovers, search banners, email, digital screens, display and social media across YouTube, TikTok and Meta.

Across all media channels, the campaign achieved **250 million** impressions and saw a massive **206K** people engage with the on-site content. This helped drive sales growth **30%** higher than similar mobile model launches.

The judges said: "This bold, eye-catching, comprehensive campaign showed what retail media can do in the physical world. It certainly grabbed attention and created a memorable launch for Samsung."





WHICH WITCH ARE YOU? BRITVIC



To tie in with the much-anticipated cinema release of *Wicked*, Robinsons launched two limited-edition flavours - Amazafying Citrus Twist and Outstandful Berry - designed to represent the two lead characters, Elphaba and Glinda.

To drive awareness and sales, Robinsons launched a campaign designed to get customers to try both products and choose their favourite flavour.

Working with multiple retailers including Tesco and Waitrose, Britvic-owned Robinsons sought out some standout activations.

It took over Waitrose owner John Lewis' iconic Oxford Street window and launched an experiential event encouraging shoppers to 'follow the Yellow Brick Road' to sample the flavours in a fully branded station and vote 'Which Witch!'

Customers were given a giant token relating to that flavour, which they took to a large voting station. This was amplified with in store point-of-sale in around **250 Waitrose stores**, alongside sampling and social media.

Meanwhile, Robinsons rolled out AR magic mirrors in Tesco stores to promote the new flavours.

Shoppers were given free samples of each flavour and could choose which character to become - 'bad' witch Elphaba or 'good' Glinda - based on the flavour they preferred.

The AR mirrors then "transformed" the shopper into the witch in real time. AR firm Aircards, field marketing firm Savvy, Snap Inc and Verizon Business collaborated on the promotion.

By combining a smart idea, creative marketing and immersive technology, Robinsons created some retail theatre that really drove engagement.

The judges said: "This was a fun, imaginative campaign that engaged shoppers and got into the cultural zeitgeist."

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PARTNERSHIP PIONEERS



PARTNERSHIP PIONEERS

The retail media industry has become a hotbed of partnerships and collaborations as firms across the marketing ecosystem work together to help drive growth in this burgeoning media channel.

This next section will highlight some of the most important and effective tie-ups.

The judges were looking for cross-industry partnerships that had improved the performance or reach of retail media, and had a wide-reaching impact.

By its very nature, the industry is built on partnerships. Brands work with retailers to better understand what and how their customers buy. However, a new array of partners are playing an increasingly important role.

Tech firms are working with retail media networks to unify their customer data, personalise their offering, unlock new capabilities and improve their measurement and customer experience.

The big advertising agency groups are also trying to get in on the game, joining more experienced outfits like SMG that help retailers strategically build and improve their networks. These firms are helping to support retailers' product roadmaps, drive best practice and standardise measurement.

Where will the next wave of retail media partnerships take place?

Paul Smith, Senior Innovation Director, SMG:

"I expect financial services and payment providers to use transaction data for personalised offers, with telecoms and streaming platforms potentially activating media through browsing and viewing insights."

Nick Ashley, Client Development Director, Tesco Media and Insight Platform:

"Omnichannel retailer data will increasingly be baked into the planning and measurement tools that agency planners and activation teams use every day - I expect to see more partnerships in this area."

Michele Dainty, Shopper Marketing Director, pladis Global: *"Where is the next place shoppers are at scale? I think within the entertainment industry, such as music and concert venues."*

PARTNERSHIP PIONEERS



DIET COKE + No7 + BOOTS MEDIA GROUP



Diet Coke and Boots' exclusive No7 makeup brand may sit in different categories, however, the soft drink brand saw an opportunity to target its customers with a bespoke beauty-focused campaign.

BMG's shopper behaviour insights highlighted synergies between the two brands, in regards to both customer demographics and key passion points. This sparked a unique partnership designed to target the Diet Coke loyalist customers, and increase their frequency of purchase.

To do so, both brands launched a compelling cross-promotion, in which shoppers were treated to **50% off** a No7 mascara with every Diet Coke purchase across all **700** Boots stores and online through a bold co-branded creative.

BMG used a variety of channels, including app pushes - perfect for targeting specific customer segments - in-store digital screen advertising, and immersive store takeovers in "high-performing" locations for Diet Coke purchases.

The results were exceptional, with Diet Coke sales soaring during the campaign, while No7 also saw a boost in mascara purchases, underscoring the cross-category appeal of the two brands.

The judges said: "It was a smart idea to bring together two brands from different worlds and one that benefitted both brands. It was brilliantly executed, and drove an impressive sales uplift."



TECH HUNTERS CURRYS + EPSILON + SAMSUNG

Samsung's high-end TVs involve a longer, complex customer journey, with purchase decisions often taking place over weeks or even months.

Currys saw an opportunity to expand its Tech Hunters off-site advertising proposition, which had traditionally focused on the bottom of the funnel.

Working alongside Publicis Commerce and Epsilon, Currys' retail media division, Currys Connected Media, targeted high-end TV shoppers who had browsed relevant products but not yet made a purchase.

It used display, online video, and connected TV together for the first time in a single campaign.

The results were impressive. The campaign delivered a remarkable **3:1 return** on investment. In-store sales saw a **20% boost**, and footfall soared with around **56,000** individuals visiting after engaging with the digital ads.

The judges said: "This partnership has not just helped Samsung, it's really improved Currys' retail media offer."



TESCO MEDIA AND INSIGHT PLATFORM + GROUPM

Tesco Media and Insight Platform.

» Powered by dunnhumby

group^m

Tesco Media and Insight Platform struck a partnership with GroupM, the world's largest media investment group, last year as it aimed to "drive best-in-class delivery of data-led solutions, education, and innovation across all facets of retail media."

The media group now works with Tesco across on-site, off-site, and connected store advertising in a tie-up the retailer said was "the most significant single agreement" for its retail media business.

GroupM and its vast roster of clients benefit from Tesco's data,

insights and strategic planning thanks to the partnership.

The pair also established an in-store screen partnership - an agency first - and GroupM secured early access to innovations within Tesco's Media and Insight Platform and a direct feedback loop to help mould future offerings.

The judges said: "This partnership is win-win. Tesco gets to work with GroupM's sizeable client base, and they benefit from Tesco's data and expertise. Together, they are improving retail media."



NECTAR360 + OMNICOM MEDIA GROUP UK

Tesco is not the only retail media network that has formed a strategic partnership with an advertising agency.

Last year, Nectar360 expanded its own multi-year tie-up with Omnicom Media Group (OMG) to open up a deeper level of insights, training and exclusivity for the advertising giant.

Nectar360 has said the OMG tie-up has been "fundamental to driving growth" in its retail media division. The partnership provides enhanced access to Nectar360's insight to give OMG's clients a richer understanding of the impact of retail media.

Access to this insight has helped to create a blueprint for best practice around omnichannel planning and has built robust sales effectiveness and measurement.

OMG now acts as a strategic beta partner, working with Nectar360 to provide testing and feedback that helps to shape its future product roadmap and capabilities.

The judges said: "Expect more agency and retailer partnerships as both groups look to capitalise on the growth of retail media."

N E C
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OMG
OmnicomMediaGroup

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OMNICHANNEL EXPERTS



OMNICHANNEL EXPERTS

Driven by Amazon, retail media may have started off as a digital advertising initiative, however, retailers are now harnessing the power of multiple channels - particularly the store.

In the Omnichannel Experts section, judges were looking for campaigns that employed innovative ideas that seamlessly extended across multiple channels and importantly, drove tangible results.

The campaigns selected showcase some jaw-dropping store takeovers. However, the smartest marketers don't just focus on one channel but instead use all routes to market to create an integrated and impactful campaign.

The chosen campaigns have all used multiple channels to amplify their message and reach their target customer, be it through attention-grabbing out-of-home to online takeovers - including of third-party sites like Deliveroo - and targeted social media pushes.

Omnichannel opportunities continue to grow as retailers add more advertising options for brands. Tesco enhanced its retail media offer last year to allow store wrap advertising at up to 50 locations, along with video advertising online.

Boots, meanwhile, has integrated first-party data into on-site inventory, enabling brands to use this to activate across the whole funnel - from connected TV, to social media, to on-site sponsored products.

Where is the next area of omnichannel innovation in retail media?

Jon Beill, Chief Growth Officer, LS Eleven Media Services at Asda:

"Connecting the in-store shop more to shoppers' out of store experience whether through scan-and-go or the use of mobile devices in store."

Amir Rasekh, Managing Director, Nectar360: *"The integration of in-store experiences with digital platforms is the next frontier of omnichannel innovation. By digitising the in-store environment - through programmatic digital radio and dynamic digital displays - we can offer real-time, personalised content to shoppers across the store, creating a seamless and engaging customer journey."*

Georgina Holledge, Business Director, SMG: *"The future of omnichannel retail media lies in true cross-platform integration and standardised measurement. As the ecosystem evolves, brands will demand more transparent measurement and attribution models, ensuring omnichannel campaigns drive real-world sales while maintaining consumer trust."*

OMNICHANNEL EXPERTS



PERFECT SERVE STELLA ARTOIS FT CO-OP MEDIA NETWORK



Stella Artois signed up to be a major sponsor of Wimbledon in 2024 and wanted to make the most of its partnership.

The AB InBev brand teamed up with Co-op to create an engaging campaign to capture shoppers' attention, support sales, and raise awareness of the Wimbledon sponsorship.

It identified three stores in the Wimbledon area which underwent a store takeover, building on the excitement of the tournament, and taking advantage of the additional footfall.

For the first time, Co-op carried out lenticular window displays, which gradually change images as pedestrians walk past them.

Ads at till points, floor vinyls, pennants, shelf stripping, banners, and digital screens complete the full store takeover effect.

The three stores alone attracted **122k** impressions, however the campaign extended across a further **1,400** Co-op stores and was elevated through online activity across social, the Co-op website and a category takeover on Deliveroo.

This resulted in a hugely successful campaign, which saw the brand secure a **25.4%** uplift in participating stores and a **30.4%** uplift online.

The judges said: "An eye-catching campaign that really shouted about Stella's big sporting sponsorship on a local level. The campaign was just as prominent online as it was in stores, leaving shoppers in no doubt that Stella was the drink of choice for tennis lovers."



PUTTING U INTO BEAUTY ESTÉE LAUDER COMPANIES FT BOOTS MEDIA GROUP

In response to the rise of “dupe” culture in the beauty world, Boots and Estée Lauder Companies (ELC) joined forces to deliver a bold, insight-driven campaign to reignite brand loyalty.

Insights revealed that shoppers were trading down from premium products to value alternatives. However, glowing 5-star reviews on boots.com suggested that many shoppers would then return to ELC brands for their unmatched quality.

ELC worked with Boots Media Group (BMG) to remind shoppers they don't need to trade down. Targeting both lapsed and new customers, the 'BeaUty days' campaign, designed to put 'U' back in beauty, aimed at boosting loyalty and reaffirm ELC's superior quality and value to consumers.

The full omnichannel campaign left no stone unturned with a whopping **95** bespoke creative

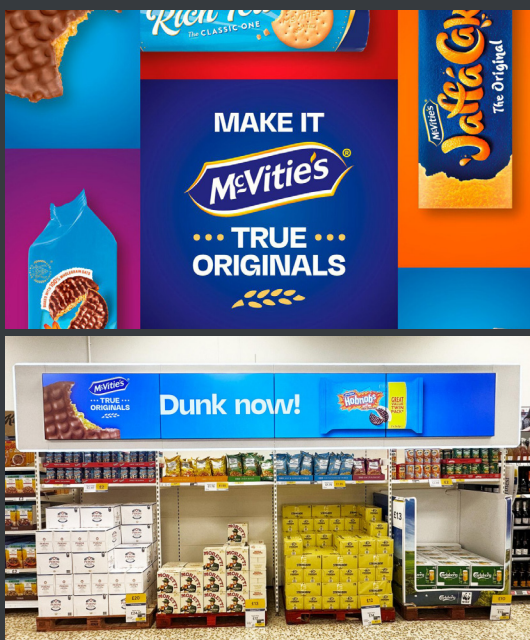
assets going live across **26** BMG touchpoints.

This included a digital store takeover at Boots Beauty Store, its first stand-alone beauty store in London's Battersea, and a strategic influencer push featuring bespoke beauty boxes.

The campaign delivered a phenomenal **50 million** impressions and overachieved its targets across increasing sales and recruiting consumers.



MCVITIE'S TRUE ORIGINALS PLADIS + CAPTURE



McVitie's launched the True Originals campaign amid the cost-of-living crisis to reignite interest from lapsed and light shoppers.

The campaign engaged value-conscious audiences with tailored promotions and used proximity targeting, digital re-engagement and Meta retargeting to drive both brand awareness and repeat purchases.

Working with commerce media agency, Capture, shopper insights from Sainsbury's Nectar Card and Tesco Clubcard were used to identify the key audience. Media spend was optimised to align with peak shopping moments like Fridays and Saturdays, when shoppers tend to do the big shop, to maximise engagement and sales.

McVitie's executed tailored activations in more than **500** stores to capture key

moments both pre-shop and in-store. High-impact touchpoints, including proximity-targeted out-of-home ads with dynamic or emotive call to actions like “Dunk Now!” and “It's not just your favourite, it's the nation's favourite” worked seamlessly with social media.

The social campaign, devised with Tesco, targeted both high-intent families living or working near stores, and lapsed and light shoppers.

The campaign delivered almost 11 million impressions across digital, out-of-home and social channels, with a unique reach of more than **500,000**.

The judges said: “These integrated strategies ensured McVitie's stayed top-of-mind for shoppers and drove sales across both Tesco and Sainsbury's.”

THE GOLD STANDARD



CADBURY, YOURS FOR 200 YEARS MONDELEZ

Cadbury celebrated its 200 year anniversary in 2024 and worked with a range of retail media networks to ensure that it shone in its special year.

The campaign highlighted the chocolate brand's heritage and its long-standing relationship with the British public. Cadbury owner Mondelez worked with retailers including Asda, Tesco and Sainsbury's for the big budget campaign, which ran across the entire year.

Stores were turned purple, with branded welcome walls, large Cadbury's front-of-store units, exterior store projection and aisle takeovers.

Tesco carried out store wraps and experiential 'store within stores', while Asda also launched exterior store projections and online takeovers.

Customer competitions were a big focal point of the campaign in retail stores. At Asda, LS Eleven Media Services took engagement to the next level via an instant win competition for its Rewards members, offering them a chance to win £200 in their cashpot by scanning a QR code.

Asda said this was its most successful competition on record with more than **2.3 million** entries.

Meanwhile, Cadbury and Tesco created several Santa's Grottos in stores, helping to reinforce the brand's emotional connection with shoppers.

The judges said: "No expense was spared in this omnichannel and omni-retailer campaign and it got results. The metrics driven were industry beating, and made Cadbury unmissable during its 200th year."



META QUEST 3S LAUNCH META FT NECTAR360



Meta's new mixed reality headset, the Quest 3S, which blends virtual objects with physical spaces, launched with a bang at Argos.

Taking an omnichannel approach, Nectar360 helped to launch the first ever Argos online homepage takeover, which achieved just over **1.1m** impressions and a dwell time of 8 seconds more than average.

Out-of-home was used to drive further awareness including Clear Channel screens, TV advertising during Christmas peak, and social and display media that accrued over **100m** impressions.

However, ground-breaking tech like the Quest 3S needs to be experienced for shoppers to consider

buying, making in-store activations in Argos stores pivotal.

Eye-catching product showcases that encouraged shoppers to try the Meta Quest 3S were introduced and created real retail theatre in stores.

More than **2,000** engagements were made with the product in stores with Meta Quest showcases, which helped deliver a sales uplift of over **90%** against the control store.

The judges said: "This campaign harnessed the power of the store, which is crucial for big-ticket tech.

"The product showcases were critical to persuade shoppers to buy and also created a compelling customer experience."



OUT OF THIS LEAGUE, BUDWEISER AT THE EUROS ABINBEV FT LS ELEVEN MEDIA SERVICES



England football team sponsor Budweiser went all out with Asda to make sure it was the drink of choice during last year's Euros.

No channel was forgotten in the omnichannel extravaganza with a website takeover, in-store point-of-sale branding, drinks aisle takeovers, LED welcome screens, front-of-store units, and more.

The most high-profile element of the campaign came in the form of exterior store projections and innovative holograms, a first-in-market activation that gave the impression of a full store takeover. As a *pièce de résistance*, England World Cup winner Sir Geoff Hurst made a store visit.

This omnichannel campaign resulted in soaring sales across stores and online, with a **29%** brand

uplift in shops and a **45%** surge on products featured within the promotion.

Online also rocketed with sales achieving **500%** over the category benchmark, as well as an ROI of **178%** over benchmarks. Back of the net!

The judges said: "This was a big budget campaign that grabbed attention across all channels."

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TECHNOLOGY TRAILBLAZERS



TECHNOLOGY TRAILBLAZERS

Technology is the key enabler of retail media. Retailers work with supply-side and demand-side platforms as well as other ad tech providers to create, sell and serve ads.

The tech trailblazers section showcases four of the most exciting tech innovations over the past year that have transformed the sector.

The judges were looking for smart use of new or emerging technology, which has the potential to expand the reach and performance of retail media.

The initiatives selected cover the full gambit of the sector. Some of this technology opens up the world of retail media for smaller retailers, while some of the other trailblazing tech profiled in the report creates new channels for established retailers and brands to pursue.

We also shine a spotlight on the players solving some of the industry's core problems, such as connecting online and offline data, as well as initiatives that make analysis and measurement easier than ever for brands.

AI, of course, gets a mention in some groundbreaking initiatives that power both real-time personalisation and evaluation.

Which emerging tech will have the biggest impact on retail media in the year ahead?

Jon Beill, Chief Growth Officer, LS Eleven Media Services at Asda: "It has to be AI, but probably where it will have the biggest impact is on making processes simpler/faster."

Sali Davies, Product Director, Plan-Apps: "AI will continue to be the biggest disruptor in retail media. From dynamically tweaking ad creatives for individual shoppers, automating campaign management across different channels, and analysing shopper data for ultra-personalised targeting and product recommendations. It'll be a real game-changer."

Oliver Shayer, Omni-Media Director, Boots: "With its ability to process vast datasets, AI will streamline time-consuming tasks and provide deeper insights into the impact of marketing activations, enabling faster and more informed decision-making."

TECHNOLOGY TRAILBLAZERS



SCAN AS YOU SHOP MEDIA TESCO



Tesco became the first retailer to launch dynamic ads on its in-store Scan As You Shop devices last year.

Scan As You Shop is an increasingly popular shopping method for Tesco customers looking to save time at the checkout and keep an eye on their spending.

*More than **10 million** transactions are carried out this way every month.*

Tesco can now serve these customers brand adverts on their handset based on their location within its supermarkets, ensuring they see relevant advertisements and promotions for the aisle or even shelf they're browsing.

Brand advertisers also benefit from a wealth of data. As Scan As You Shop users need to scan their Tesco Clubcard before they activate a handset, the performance of the campaign can be measured in a fully closed loop.

Brands can see whether the customers they reached with their ads bought the featured items, both in-store and online, and whether someone is a new or repeat buyer.

The judges said: "Tesco has opened up a new channel of advertising that other retail media networks will follow. It's a compelling offer for brands and Tesco is benefitting from being first in this space."



PLAN-APPS

Plan-Apps, SMG's proprietary cloud-based SAAS tech platform, became an even more powerful tool for brands with the launch of its AI Commentary tool in late 2024.

The industry-first AI feature helps brands make faster and smarter decisions on media investments by providing them with fully automated analysis on their campaign in record time.

Enormous amounts of performance data can be turned into clear, actionable insights with trends and patterns speedily identified and relevant recommendations made that align with existing media plans. This allows marketers to focus on making strategic decisions rather than report writing.

It aims to tackle the inconsistency in campaign evaluation, ensuring that standardised high quality insights are delivered regardless of who is handling an account. The AI tool bolsters Plan-Apps, which is already the most widely used operating system powering retail media and commerce marketing in the UK.

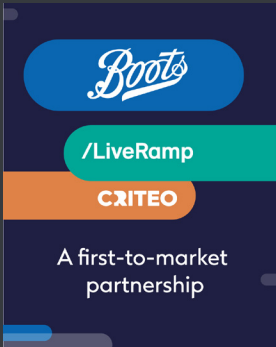
*The platform, has **95** out of the top 100 CPG brands registered, including Coca Cola, Mondelez, Diageo, and Kelloggs, alongside retailers including Boots, Morrisons, Co-op and The Very Group.*

The judges said: "This is a very useful planning tool for brand marketers."

Plan-Apps



BOOTS MEDIA GROUP + LIVERAMP + CRITEO



Last year, Boots unveiled a first-to-market partnership with data collaboration platform LiveRamp and global commerce media company Criteo, to seamlessly connect online and in-store data.

Shoppers rarely follow a straight path to purchase with some doing research online before heading to the store, while others do their browsing in shops before making their purchase from the comfort of their sofa.

The inability to connect these journeys means retailers and brands have limited insight into the omnichannel shopper.

The collaboration combines LiveRamp's Data Collaboration Platform and Criteo's Commerce Yield monetisation solution with Boots' extensive first-party data.

The judges said: "They have connected the dots between customers online and offline to give an accurate picture of the shopping journey so brands can uncover what truly drives a sale, whether it happens online or in-store."

This tie-up offers three major benefits to brands: better ad targeting, more accurate measurement, and improved return on ad spend.



AMAZON RETAIL AD SERVICE

Amazon has long been the model that retail media networks have looked to emulate and now it is giving retailers the tech needed to thrive.

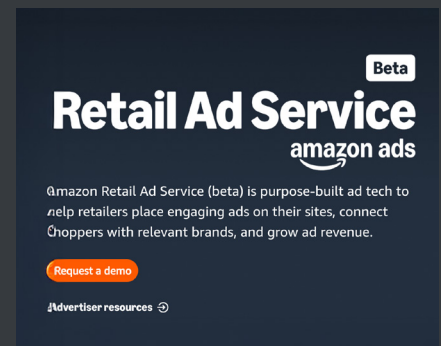
In January 2025, the ecommerce giant unveiled Amazon Retail Ad Service that lets other retailers manage contextually relevant campaigns on their own websites with the help of its ad tech.

It helps retailers to run ads on their search, browse and product pages and controls campaign functions like creative, ad placement and ad volume.

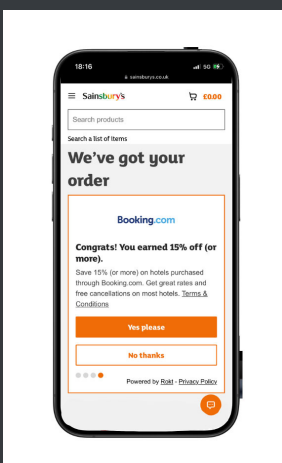
Ads incorporate availability and price, in addition to contextual information such as shopper search query, to ensure customers see ads for desired and available products.

Retailers will also be able to determine what a customer sees after clicking an ad.

The judges said: "This could democratise the world of retail media and help retailers get a foothold into the sector without a huge outlay."



ROKT



Retail media generally helps brands influence customers before they checkout, however the post-purchase experience has largely been left untapped.

That's where ROKT comes in. Its AI technology serves relevant, real-time ads during and after checkout to help upsell complementary items.

The firm argues introducing targeted ads seamlessly at the end of the shopping journey can be less disruptive and yields higher customer satisfaction and stronger brand loyalty.

The US-based tech firm already works with some big American retailers including Best Buy and Macy's, however, is starting to make waves in the UK.

Last year, it partnered with Nectar360 to present targeted third-party ads and offers to Sainsbury's and Argos customers at the checkout, and with Just Eat to launch retail media on the order confirmation page.

Advertisers in the ROKT Ads network can now offer tailored messages on Just Eat's order confirmation and order tracking pages in the app and website, when customers are highly-engaged and most likely to convert.

The judges said: "This tech has opened up advertising post-checkout and has made the non-endemic route available for retail media networks. The potential is huge."

Investors clearly agree as ROKT was valued at a whopping **\$3.5bn** earlier this year.

NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL RETAIL MEDIA



NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL RETAIL MEDIA

GLOBAL LEADERS



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GLOBAL LEADERS

Although Now That's What I Call Retail Media focuses on the best campaigns and initiatives in the UK market, retail media is very much a global phenomenon.

The UK market is advanced, but there are many global players, particularly in the US, that are pushing new boundaries and that all in the industry should be watching.

The judges were looking for global companies - those that do the majority of their business outside of the UK - that had an innovative approach or output and were setting the standard for others worldwide.

The panel selected retailers that have created sophisticated self-serve platforms for brands to optimise their campaigns and offer not only precise targeting and full-funnel measurement, but creative expertise too.

Global players that are pushing retail media in new directions, including beyond the realms of just retail, were also chosen. This shows retail media's potential to expand into areas such as financial services, travel and more.

The judges also wanted to shine a light on some of the global brands that have embraced retail media and have made it an increasingly important part of their marketing mix.

Which global leader is the one to watch in retail media in the year ahead?

Amir Rasekh, Managing Director, Nectar360: "There is innovation worldwide, with different countries excelling in various areas. The US leads in data and offsite innovation, while Canada excels in the marketing mix. Latin America is growing rapidly with consumers researching on websites, and Southeast Asia pioneers in social commerce and digitised store environments."

Claire Trbovic, Group Business Director, SMG: "PayPal's entry into first-party data with PayPal Ads signals a major shift, paving the way for financial institutions to leverage advertising with advanced targeting."

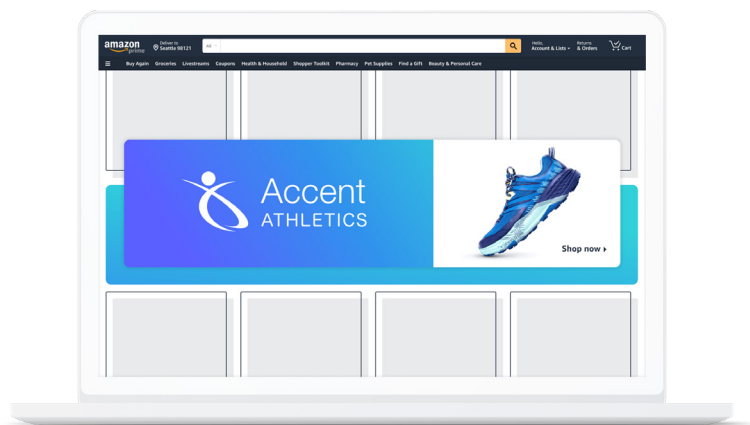
This move could significantly impact both audience engagement and measurement, marking an exciting evolution in the retail media landscape."

Oliver Shayer, Omni-Media Director, Boots: "Walmart's innovative approach in the US continues to be the one to watch. It is pushing the boundaries of its retail media offering, thinking like a media owner while acting like a retailer, setting new standards for the industry."

GLOBAL LEADERS



AMAZON



amazon



Sponsored Display

It would be impossible to miss Amazon off a list of global retail media leaders. In fact, it is the online giant's enduring success in this area that has enticed other retailers to step into retail media.

*WARC Media estimated that Amazon held a whopping **87.8%** of worldwide retail media investment, excluding China, in 2023.*

*In 2024, the online giant's advertising revenue hit **\$56.2bn (£44.9m)** and continued to grow at **18%** a year.*

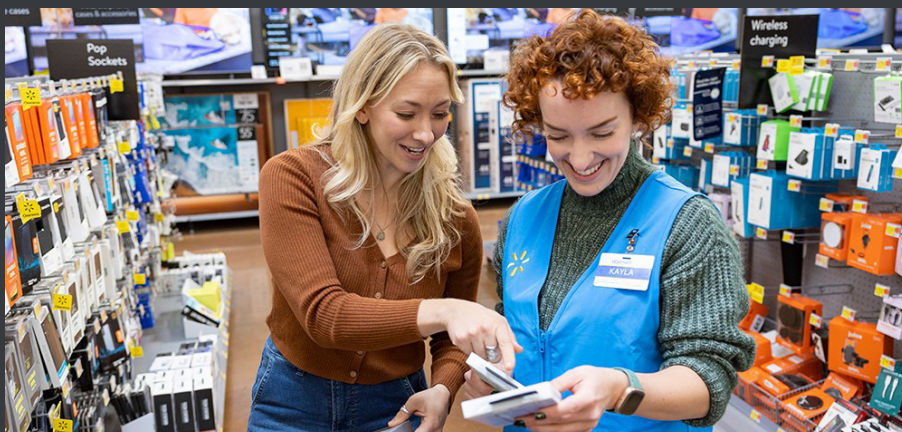
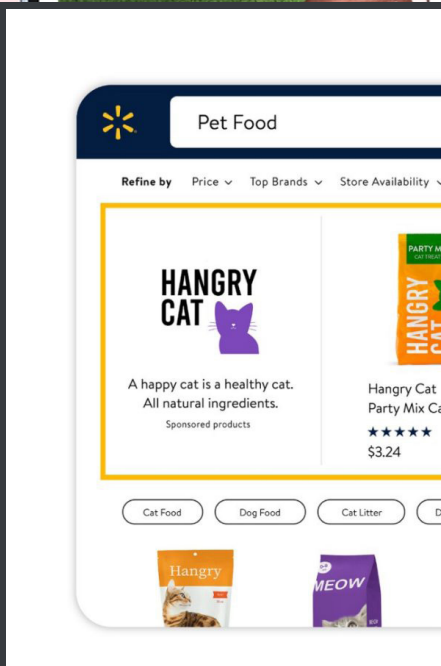
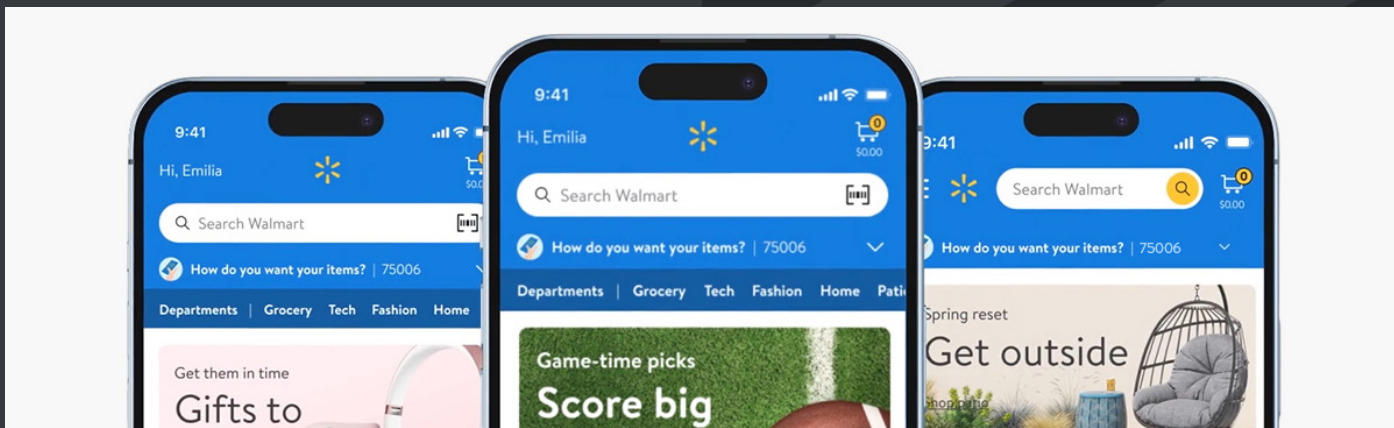
Amazon's ecommerce dominance not only offers unrivalled scale to advertisers but its ease of use is also compelling. Similar to Google Ads, Amazon's self-service ads allow brands to bid on keywords and pay every time it is clicked.

However, Amazon has expanded beyond sponsored product ads into on-site display, video, and off-site ads, and even launched Prime Video ads over the past year.

The judges said: "Although new and growing retail media networks will see Amazon's market share nudge down in the years to come, its position as the most dominant global platform is not under threat."



WALMART



Walmart's retail media arm Walmart Connect continues to grow at pace. In its 2023-24 financial year, retail media accounted for **\$3.4bn**, and it is currently growing at almost **30%**.

The retail giant holds **6.8%** of the US retail media market, according to Emarketer. More than **10,000** global stores and a fast-growing online arm makes Walmart a powerful partner.

It vies to make it easy for brands of any size to access Walmart Connect and has been automating and scaling its advertising suite to appeal more to sellers.

The retailer has expanded on-site display access, making it primarily programmatic and auction based through its self-service platform.

Walmart is also investing to provide brands with improved targeting and full-funnel measurement and has expanded its offer to help advertisers with their creative capabilities.

Off-site opportunities such as demo stations helps to set Walmart apart from online rivals.

It has also ventured into the world of TV advertising. Walmart acquired smart TV manufacturer Vizio last year to bring new and differentiated ways for advertisers to connect with customers at scale and boost product discovery.

The judges said: "Walmart's vast store network is a powerful pull for brand advertisers."

THE GOLD STANDARD



L'OREAL

Global beauty giant L'Oreal has identified retail media as a strategic priority to better understand and serve a customer base that is more diverse, more informed, and more digitally influenced than ever before.

The brand's mission statement to "elevate consumer engagement through the science of data-driven, personalised media at scale" makes clear its aim to win in this space - and it has been putting its money where its mouth is.

In 2024, the beauty giant extended its dedicated retail media team, enabling it to activate across the full-funnel with its strategic retail partners.

L'Oreal's priorities for retail media are recruitment, retention and loyalty, as it looks to maximise its short term marketing efficiency as well as long term effectiveness measured through customer lifetime value.

Stand out campaigns over the past year include 'You look good for your age' for L'Oreal Paris Age Perfect serum.

It worked with Tesco Media and Insight Platform and leveraged its rich data and inventory options to target 50 year old plus consumers with bespoke creative and claims to address their specific skincare concerns.

The beauty behemoth also teamed up with Boots Media Group to create the European 'Better Together' events franchise that promotes the best product pairings across skincare and makeup.

L'Oreal has also built and scaled its 'Viral Beauty' initiative across Europe.

It brings together the top trending influencers, viral content and the hottest products to make the latest beauty trends accessible for all.

The judges said: "L'Oreal is using retail media to ensure it is where its customer is.

"The strategy is paying off in terms of sales growth and loyalty. It has emerged as the European brand leader."

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Page 7

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WOMAN



UNILEVER

CPG giant Unilever has embraced retail media, which brings it closer to its consumers' point of purchase and drives invaluable insights, as well as sales.

Retail media is therefore becoming an increasingly important part of its marketing mix. In the US alone, it works with more than 100 retail media networks, Jen Bryce, Unilever's head of retail media partnerships and investment told the CPG Scoop podcast at the end of 2023.

Unilever is not just using retail media to drive sales, it is helping to shape the industry and drive sophistication in its retail partners' capabilities.

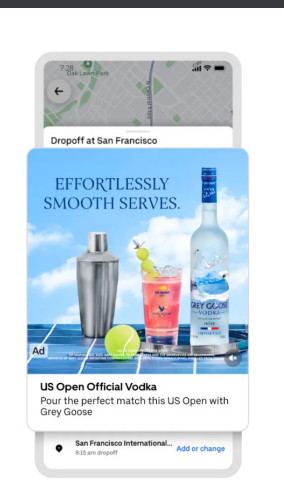
The CPG giant has been an early partner for many retail media innovations such as ITV's retail media solution Matchmaker in the UK.

Earlier this year, Unilever became a tester for its longtime partner Walmart's beta self-serve Digital Landscape offer, which allows it to capture enhanced information about where shoppers discover and purchase their products.

The judges said: "Unilever jumped on retail media and is benefitting from being an early adopter."



UBER



Retailers may have led the charge, however retail media is fast becoming commerce media as operators in sectors from travel to hospitality to banks look to capitalise on the advertising goldrush.

Front of the pack is Uber, which has grown its advertising business to more than a billion dollars in just two years.

Uber offers advertising across its taxi business and food delivery service Uber Eats.

It has now rolled out advertising to more than 40 countries and has more than 200,000 advertisers worldwide.

Journey ads both in-app and on screen in the vehicle can help brands target customers en route to specific locations such as the movies or to airports.

Meanwhile, Uber Eats allows advertisers to connect with a high purchase intent audience.

Brands can opt from sponsored listings and items, display and video ads, and post-checkout ads.

The judges said: "Uber has already built an impressive advertising business, but the potential is huge as it appeals to a vast array of non-endemic brands."

Uber has hired Kristi Argyilan, the key architect of US retailers Albertsons and Target's retail media networks, to lead its advertising business.

She has grand plans to scale its existing ad products, introduce new formats, and expand Uber Advertising to more countries. Watch this space.

LESSONS FROM THE BEST

Now That's What I Call Retail Media has hopefully given you a healthy dose of inspiration for your latest projects. Here are some key takeaways to consider:

1. LET YOUR CREATIVE JUICES FLOW



Retail media is not just a transactional channel, shoppers should be wowed by the advertising they see as creative drives recall and purchase intent.

Creative campaigns like Britvic's Witch Which?, which used magic mirrors to transform people into their favourite Wicked witch, or Samsung's Fold Street, featuring a tube station and store takeover with foldable buses and lampposts, are great examples of how brands can capture attention, strengthen affinity, and boost sales.

3. EMBRACE EVERY CHANNEL



The strength of retail media over digital advertising is not just the deep understanding of the customer, but the multiple channels in which shoppers connect with retailers.

Brand advertisers should take advantage of this and devise integrated campaigns that resonate with customers through all of those channels, from stores to online to social media and beyond.

5. TAKE INSPIRATION FROM OVERSEAS



The UK may be making waves in retail media, however, this is a global trend.

Ensure you're watching what brands and retail media networks are doing overseas. The strategies, technologies and creative they're employing could help shape your own approach.

2. FIND THE RIGHT PARTNERS



There are a plethora of potential partners in the world of retail media. The retailers, brands, and tech firms you work with can create magic and make the impossible possible.

The right partner can help brands to find new audiences, retailers unlock new capabilities and provide a greater level of measurement and insight.

4. FIND TECH SOLUTIONS TO YOUR PROBLEMS



Technology is the lifeblood of retail media and is helping to enhance measurement, optimise campaigns and make planning easier.

Players in this industry - from retailers to agencies and AdTech firms - are eager to work with one another to find technology solutions to your problems.

Take the tie-up between Boots Media Group, Criteo and LiveRamp over the past year to solve one of retail's perennial problems: linking online and offline customer data.

If you have a retail media headache, reach out to leaders across the industry - including at SMG. A solution might be in sight.

ABOUT



{Capture}

The Commerce Media Agency

**Plan
Apps**

We're the original pioneers in connected commerce marketing.

For more than 16 years, we've been partnering with major retailers, powering global brands, and building meaningful connections with shoppers.

We simplify the mind-boggling complexity of today's retail media landscape. We deliver impactful campaigns that connect with people where it matters.

We create seamless and personalised shopping experiences. Above all, we deliver amazing results for our partners, driven by our unshakeable desire for growth.

Time after time, we change the game. SMG is home to a world-class suite of commerce advertising capabilities powered by data and cutting-edge technology. We constantly push ourselves, our tech and our industry to discover innovative new ways to connect, sell and grow.

Our brilliant people are the ones who make change happen. Straight-talking, fiercely driven and with a thirst for challenging the status quo, we're united in spirit and culture.

Positively disrupting retail and creating campaigns with impact, we're taking everyone with us on extraordinary adventures in connected commerce.

FIND OUT MORE



