

Preparing for Agentic Commerce

A Guide for Retailers

May 2026 | By Brian Tarbell

01 / INTRODUCTION

The next disruption is already here

This guide is for ecommerce retailers who want to understand what agentic commerce is, why it matters, and what practical steps they can take now to ensure their products are visible to AI-powered shoppers.

Agentic shopping is about to become the most disruptive innovation facing retailers since the invention of the internet and ecommerce. Shoppers will no longer need to visit your website and browse your catalog. Instead, they will ask questions to find what they want to purchase.

No browsing category pages. No search bar. Just a question and exact results. Shoppers can discover, configure, and even buy your products without ever visiting your website. The question for retailers is no longer whether this shift will happen: it is already underway. The question is whether your store will show up when it does.




“Show me waterproof hiking boots under \$200 arriving by Friday.”

INTENT PARSED


Product Type	hiking boots
Feature	waterproof
Max Price	under \$200
Delivery Date	arriving by Friday
Availability	in stock

EXACT MATCHES

Structured Results



Red Van Summit Waterproof Boot
\$189.00
In Stock
Arrives Fri, May 16



Peak Trail Hiker GTX
\$179.00
In Stock
Arrives Fri, May 16



Canyon Pro Hiking Boot
\$199.00
In Stock
Arrives Fri, May 16


02 / STRUCTURED DATA

AI reads your code, not your design

Customers who visit your page are drawn to beautiful product images, compelling descriptions, and a well-placed Add to Cart button. AI doesn't care about any of that. It only reads your page's code. **Your site needs to contain information in the format AI understands, not just the format humans enjoy.**

AI agents rely heavily on structured data (typically JSON-LD) to understand exactly what is on the page. They look for specific information: price, availability, material, sizing, reviews, and delivery dates. If this data is buried in raw HTML paragraphs rather than cleanly structured schema, the AI will likely skip your product in favor of a competitor's.

WHAT HUMANS SEE
Beautiful. Inspiring. Shoppable.



Summit Waterproof Boot
★★★★★ (246)
\$189.00
Waterproof • Durable • All-Terrain
Color: Black
Size: 7 8 9 10 11
Add to Cart
Free Shipping • Free Returns
Arrives by Fri, May 16
4.8 ★★★★★ 5★ 85%
248 Reviews 4★ 10% 3★ 3% 2★ 1% 1★ 1%

WHAT AI SEES
Structured. Accurate. Actionable.

```
<script type="application/ld+json">
{
  "@context": "https://schema.org",
  "@type": "Product",
  "name": "Summit Waterproof Boot",
  "image": "https://example.com/images/summit-waterproof-boot.jpg",
  "description": "Waterproof hiking boot built for all-terrain performance.",
  "sku": "SWB-001-BLK-09",
  "brand": {
    "@type": "Brand",
    "name": "Red Van"
  },
  "material": "full-grain leather",
  "upperMaterial": "leather",
  "category": "boots",
  "gender": "unisex",
  "offers": {
    "@type": "Offer",
    "url": "https://example.com/products/summit-waterproof-boot",
    "priceCurrency": "USD",
    "price": "189.00",
    "availability": "https://schema.org/InStock"
  }
}
</script>
```

Schema Detected (Product)
Data Parsed 24 attributes
Confidence Score 97%
Schema Validated No Errors

03 / SEMANTIC SEARCH

Intent, not keywords

Before agentic commerce, shoppers relied on search engines and your store needed to be search engine optimized. Search engines use exact keyword matching. AI engines use vector embeddings, which convert text, images, and other content into a numerical representation based on semantic meaning.

When a customer searches for hiking boots, the AI model doesn't just look for those exact words. It calculates the mathematical distance between the shopper's intent and your product's vector. To be a match, your product detail page data must be accurately tagged and contextually complete. **A product described vaguely will lose to a competitor's product described precisely, even if yours is objectively a better fit.**



04 / DATA GRANULARITY

Granularity is your competitive edge

AI agents rely on granularity. Simply listing variant colors and sizes is not enough. Your products need to highlight material composition, care instructions, availability, fit details: anything a customer might ask an agent about your product.

AI agents also require consistent data across your code and your visible page layout. For example, if your brand is "Acme Co." in your JSON-LD schema, "Acme" in your Open Graph schema, and "Acme Company" displayed to the customer, the AI agent will penalize your product for the inconsistency.

Your product pages also need natural language descriptions that reflect how shoppers actually talk: "vegan leather," "fragrance-free," "trail-ready." AI agents extract these attributes to match shoppers' natural-language queries. If your data doesn't speak that language, your products won't surface in the results.

Every product attribute is a potential match signal. More granularity means more chances to win the recommendation.

WHAT GRANULARITY LOOKS LIKE

Material	Full-grain leather, eVent membrane
Waterproof	Yes
Use Case	Hiking, Backpacking, All-Terrain
Fit Profile	Wide fit available
Weight	1.2 lbs per boot
Sustainability	LWG Certified Leather
Color	Char with Olive drab
Availability	In Stock
Delivery	Arrives by Fri, May 16

05 / KEY TAKEAWAYS



AI agents read your code, not your page design. Structured data (JSON-LD) is the foundation.



Semantic search means context and completeness matter more than keywords. Stay data focused.



Granularity wins. Material, care, fit, delivery, natural language – every attribute is a potential match signal.



Consistency across schema, Open Graph, and visible content = non-negotiable.



The shopper who uses an AI agent to buy is already here. Getting your store ready now is a competitive advantage.



The best understood product wins.

Ready to dive in?

Red Van works with ecommerce retailers to evaluate exactly how AI agents see their product pages, and to fix the gaps.

If you want to know whether your store is ready for the shopper who's already asking an AI agent to do their browsing for them, get in touch and we'll set up a walkthrough of your site. We'll show you what the agents see, what they're guessing at, and what it would take to move your products into the future of commerce.



Get in touch: redvanworkshop.com


RED VAN

Commerce without compromise.