



Google UCP, AI Checkout, and the New Question for Retailers: Who Owns the Customer?

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With Google’s Universal Commerce Protocol and the rise of AI agents that can search, decide, and checkout on a customer’s behalf, retail is entering a new phase of platform-mediated commerce.

The promise is clear: less friction, faster transactions, more conversion.

The risk is quieter: losing the customer context that powers differentiation, personalization, and long-term growth.

The most advanced retailers aren’t rejecting AI agents. They’re adopting them intentionally—capturing the upside without giving up customer ownership. Here’s how.

01

They Build Personalized AI Agents on Owned Properties

Leading brands are investing in agents that live inside their own apps and sites—stylists, shopping assistants, concierges—powered by first-party data and governed by brand standards.

These agents understand customer history, preferences, and expectations, and they get smarter with every interaction.

Why it matters:

Owned agents compound value. Each interaction strengthens the relationship instead of outsourcing it.

Conviva POV:

Conviva shows how customers actually experience and engage with these agents in real time.

02

They Power Agent Decisions With First-Party Behavioral Signals

Top retailers ensure AI agents don’t just complete transactions—they learn from behavior.

Searches, comparisons, hesitation, frustration, and abandonment all inform recommendations and substitutions. This keeps personalization adaptive instead of static.

Why it matters:

Personalization breaks when the feedback loop disappears.

Conviva POV:

Experience intelligence captures the signals that explain *why* customers choose—not just *what* they buy.

They Put Guardrails Around Third-Party Agents to Protect Customer Insight

This is where many retailers underestimate the risk.

When checkout or discovery happens through third-party agents, brands often see only the transaction outcome—not the intent behind it. That missing context directly impacts product, pricing, and merchandising decisions.

Fashion example:

Imagine an American heritage brand that sees **white women's polos in size small sell 5× faster than medium size**. On the surface, that looks like a clear signal.

But without journey context, the insight is incomplete.

What if:

- A large share of shoppers originally searched for **light grey polos**
- No results were returned, or white was surfaced instead
- Shoppers bought white because it was “close enough,” not because it was preferred

From transaction data alone, a brand might double down on white polos. With visibility into **search intent and experience friction**, they might instead design and stock a light grey polo—meeting true demand, not a forced compromise.

Why it matters:

Transactions show outcomes. Experience data reveals intent.

Conviva POV:

Conviva preserves behavioral signals—searches, errors, substitutions, frustration—that disappear when 3rd-party agents abstract the journey.

04

They Clearly Identify and Measure Agent-Driven Sessions

Advanced teams distinguish between human-driven and agent-driven journeys. They know when an AI agent is interacting on a customer's behalf—and they analyze those sessions differently.

Why it matters:

You can't manage agent behavior if you can't see it.

Conviva POV:

Conviva enables visibility and attribution across both human and AI agent sessions.

05

They Monitor Experience to Detect Brand Drift Early

AI agents move fast. Small misalignments—wrong substitutions, performance issues, unexpected friction—can quietly erode trust.

Leading retailers monitor experience signals in real time to catch problems before they impact loyalty or lifetime value.

Why it matters:

A successful transaction isn't the same as a successful relationship.

Conviva POV:

Real-time experience analytics helps brands detect drift before it damages customer experiences.

The Takeaway

AI agents and protocols like Google UCP aren't just checkout innovations. They're decisions about **who owns customer insight**.

Retailers that adopt agents deliberately—investing in owned experiences, protecting behavioral signals, and maintaining visibility—can scale AI without repeating the platform-dependency mistakes of the past.

**Want to see how optimal agent-driven experiences actually work?
Let us show you. [Learn more](#) or [book a demo](#).**



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