

FIVE SHIFTS SHAPING GROWTH FOR BRANDS IN 2026

What's changing in media,
discovery and attention



BRAND IS BACK BUT IT MUST PROVE VALUE

Rebalance toward brand building, but with clearer roles, sharper measurement and accountability to growth – not just ‘upper funnel’ reach.

Brand doesn’t have to equal vague. It should be disciplined investment with a job to do (on a different time scale to ‘performance’ media)

DISCOVERY IS BECOMING MORE THAN A SIMPLE SEARCH

Brands must be legible to AI – with clear signals of what they stand for, when they're relevant, and why they should recommend.

Brands needs to think about authority, structure, consistency across media, content and PR.

TRUST IS NOW A PERFORMANCE VARIABLE

Media environments that build trust and attention drive stronger memory, effectiveness and long-term returns.

Optimising for attention quality – not just cheap reach or short-term CPM wins.



COMMERCE MEDIA IS NOW CORE INFASTRUCTURE

Retail media needs to connect to brand strategy, category growth and commercial outcomes – not sit in isolation. Integration across brand, retail partners and performance teams is critical to success.



ATTENTION IS INTENTIONAL

Consumers are increasingly curating what they engage with – making relevance, usefulness and timing more powerful. Increasingly important to design media around real moments that matter, not simply forced interruptions.





GROWTH REWARDS FOCUS.

Don't mistake expansion for progress.

Adding more channels, more formats and more activity feels like momentum – but often it's just noise.

The next phase of growth can be decided by what not to do, and then get sharper, clearer and more consistent at the few things that genuinely grow the business.