



IAB EUROPE'S BITESIZE GUIDE TO CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN RETAIL MEDIA SERIES:

ENABLING CHANGE THROUGH PEOPLE AND STRUCTURE

Purpose and Scope

This guide is the third instalment in IAB Europe's Bitesize Guide to Change Management in Retail Media. It focuses on the human and organisational foundations required to build scalable, future-ready Retail Media Networks (RMNs). As Retail Media evolves into a strategic growth engine, retailers must rethink how they structure teams, develop talent, and embed new capabilities across the organisation.

The guide outlines the multidisciplinary talent model required for modern RMNs, explores the emerging roles shaping the industry, and provides practical approaches to upskilling and reskilling. It also highlights how organisational design, leadership behaviours, and cross-functional collaboration enable sustainable transformation.

This content complements IAB Europe's broader work on the **convergence of trade and media**, helping retailers navigate the operational and cultural shifts at the intersection of commerce, data, and advertising.

1. STRATEGIC SHIFTS: BUILDING MULTIDISCIPLINARY RETAIL MEDIA TALENT

Retail Media Networks operate at the intersection of retail, media, and data. As the channel expands across on-site, off-site, and in-store environments, retailers must build hybrid teams that combine deep retail knowledge with digital marketing, analytics, and technology expertise.

Core Functional Pillars

Retail Media organisations typically centre around five core functions:

- **Sales and Marketing:** translating retailer-owned media assets into brand-ready solutions and driving revenue growth. Sales teams must understand media performance, brand objectives, and how Retail Media integrates into the wider media mix.
- **Operations:** ensuring seamless campaign execution across digital and in-store environments, optimising inventory, and scaling high-performing formats.
- **Data Insights & Analytics:** generating actionable insights from sales, loyalty, and behavioural data; enabling segmentation, modelling, and closed-loop measurement.
- **Ad Tech & Technology:** managing platforms, integrations, and measurement systems to enable automation, accurate targeting, and scalable activation.
- **Retail Media Finance:** overseeing pricing, revenue recognition, profitability, and forecasting to ensure sustainable growth.

These functions must operate as a unified ecosystem, supported by shared KPIs, cross-functional governance, and a clear commercial strategy.

2. OPERATIONAL SHIFTS: EVOLVING ROLES AND ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN

As Retail Media matures, retailers are introducing new, specialised roles that did not previously exist within traditional retail or marketing teams. These roles bridge commercial objectives, media execution, and data value creation.

Emerging Specialist Roles

- **Retail Media Strategist:** aligns brand objectives with retailer capabilities, shaping full-funnel media plans.
- **Data Monetisation Lead:** develops data products, manages partnerships, and drives value creation from first-party data.
- **Audience Product Manager:** oversees audience segmentation, data governance, and activation frameworks.
- **Media Measurement Specialist:** ensures robust incrementality, attribution, and closed-loop reporting.

These roles reflect the increasing sophistication of Retail Media and the need for deeper expertise in analytics, product management, and media effectiveness.

Hybrid Organisational Models

To scale effectively, retailers are shifting from siloed structures to cross-functional operating models that integrate merchandising, CRM, IT, finance, and store operations. This includes:

- Shared KPIs across commercial and media teams
- Joint planning cycles with brand partners
- Integrated campaign workflows
- Clear ownership of data, technology, and measurement

Retailers that adopt hybrid structures accelerate decision-making, reduce friction, and improve consistency across channels.

3. CULTURAL SHIFTS: UPSKILLING, LEADERSHIP AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Transformation in Retail Media is driven as much by people and culture as by technology. Retailers should cultivate a mindset that embraces experimentation, data-driven decision-making, and continuous capability building.

Upskilling as a Strategic Imperative

Given the scarcity of Retail Media expertise, retailers increasingly rely on upskilling and reskilling rather than external hiring alone. Effective programmes include:

- Structured onboarding into Retail Media fundamentals
- Cross-functional rotations between commercial, CRM, and media teams
- Joint projects with agencies and technology partners
- Hands-on training with ad tech platforms and analytics tools

Leadership plays a critical role by reinforcing a culture of learning, supporting test-and-learn behaviours, and investing in capability-building at all levels.

Building an Agile, Future-Ready Workforce

Retail Media organisations that systematically invest in people development can:

- Close talent gaps faster
- Improve collaboration across teams
- Increase organisational agility
- Adapt more quickly to new formats, regulations, and advertiser expectations

This cultural foundation is essential for long-term competitiveness.

4. ASSESSING ORGANISATIONAL READINESS: PEOPLE, STRUCTURE & CAPABILITY GAPS

Before scaling Retail Media, organisations must assess whether their people and structures are ready to support growth. A structured readiness assessment helps identify gaps and prioritise investment.

People & Structure Readiness Audit

Key components include:

- **Talent readiness:** availability of hybrid skills across media, data, retail operations, and product management
- **Role clarity:** clear ownership across sales, operations, analytics, and technology
- **Capability depth:** maturity of specialist roles such as measurement, audience management, and data monetisation
- **Training readiness:** availability of structured learning pathways and cross-functional development
- **Leadership alignment:** clarity of vision, sponsorship, and decision-making frameworks

Barriers and Enablers

Common barriers include:

- Siloed teams and unclear ownership
- Limited media literacy across commercial functions
- Talent shortages in analytics and ad tech
- Slow decision-making and legacy organisational structures

Key enablers include:

- Executive sponsorship and a clear Retail Media vision
- Enterprise-wide capability-building programmes
- Cross-functional governance with shared KPIs
- Investment in specialist roles and hybrid talent models

5. MATURITY MODELS: BENCHMARKING PEOPLE & STRUCTURAL CAPABILITY

Maturity models help organisations benchmark their talent and structural readiness.

A typical people-focused maturity model spans four stages:

| <u>STAGE</u> | <u>CHARACTERISTICS</u> |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. FOUNDATIONAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Limited Retail Media expertisesiloes teamsbasic sales and operations functions |
| 2. DEVELOPING | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Early specialist rolesemerging cross-functional workflowsgrowing media literacy |
| 3. ADVANCED | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Mature hybrid teamsstrong analytics and measurement capabilitiesintegrated governance |
| 4. LEADING | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Fully developed specialist rolesenterprise-wide media fluencyagile, data-driven culture |


Using a maturity model helps retailers define a roadmap, communicate progress, and align investment with long-term ambition.

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