



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

DRIVERS AND READINESS FOR TRANSFORMATION

Purpose and Scope

This guide is the second instalment in our Bitesize Guide to Change Management in Retail Media series. It explores the key forces reshaping Retail Media organisations as the channel expands across on-site, off-site and in-store environments. The guide provides a concise overview of the strategic, operational and cultural shifts required for retailers to build scalable, future-ready Retail Media capabilities. It also outlines how organisations can assess their readiness for transformation, including practical approaches to capability audits, identifying barriers and enablers, and applying maturity models to benchmark progress and define a clear roadmap.

This content is complemented by IAB Europe's Convergence and Coexistence of Trade and Media series, which examines the structural and operational challenges that arise where trade and media functions intersect.

1. STRATEGIC SHIFTS: MONETISATION, DATA AND PARTNERSHIPS

Retail Media has moved from a trade-driven add-on to a strategic growth engine. As monetisation expands across on-site, off-site and in-store formats, organisations must redefine their commercial strategy and value proposition.

Evolving monetisation models include:

- **On-site:** sponsored products, display, video
- **Off-site:** programmatic display, video, CTV, social, audio
- **In-store:** digital screens, connected shopping, audio, experiential formats, OOH

First-party data now underpins the ecosystem, enabling:

- Custom audiences and insights
- Data collaboration for privacy-safe targeting and closed-loop measurement
- Cross-channel activation at scale

As third-party identifiers decline, data becomes an enterprise asset. Retailers are investing in customer data platforms (CDPs), data clean rooms (DCRs) and secure collaboration frameworks, while partnerships with demand side platforms (DSPs), agencies and Retail Media Networks (RMNs) enablers expand reach and sophistication.

2. OPERATIONAL SHIFTS: TECHNOLOGY, PROCESSES AND TALENT

Delivering omnichannel Retail Media requires modernised infrastructure, integrated workflows and new skill sets.

Key technology upgrades include:

- Customer Data Platform (CDP) and Data Clean Room (DCR) CDPs and DCRs
- Personalisation engines
- Analytics and attribution platforms
- Retail-specific ad servers
- In-store digital networks integrated with data and content systems

Process redesign is essential, breaking down silos across merchandising, CRM, IT, finance and store operations. Retail Media demands shared KPIs, cross-functional governance and streamlined workflows to ensure consistency and scalability.

Talent gaps remain a major barrier. Retailers need hybrid expertise across digital advertising, data analytics, product management, retail operations and privacy. Upskilling, recruitment and external support accelerate capability building.

3. CULTURAL SHIFTS: MINDSET, LEADERSHIP AND AGILITY

Retail Media transformation is as much cultural as it is technical. Retailers must shift from a product-centric, trade-focused mindset to one that treats advertisers as customers and media performance as a measurable business outcome.

Leadership is critical, setting a vision that positions Retail Media as a core pillar of digital transformation. Successful organisations foster:

- Transparency and cross-team collaboration
- Data-driven decision-making
- Experimentation and test-and-learn behaviours

As AI accelerates automation and optimisation, organisational agility becomes non-negotiable. Continuous learning, rapid iteration and collaborative innovation are now foundational to competitive advantage.

4. ASSESSING ORGANISATIONAL READINESS: AUDITS, BARRIERS & ENABLERS, MATURITY MODELS

Before scaling Retail Media, organisations need a clear view of their current capabilities, gaps and enablers. A structured readiness assessment helps prioritise investment, align stakeholders and set realistic transformation timelines.

Readiness Audits

Typical components of readiness audits include:

- **Commercial readiness:** clarity of monetisation strategy, pricing, value proposition, yield
- **Technology readiness:** suitability of current stack for ad delivery, measurement, personalisation and in-store activation
- **Data readiness:** quality, accessibility and governance of first-party data; clean room and CDP maturity
- **Process readiness:** cross-functional workflows, governance, SLAs, campaign operations
- **Talent readiness:** availability of ad-tech, analytics, product and retail media expertise
- **Measurement readiness:** ability to deliver closed-loop reporting, meet industry measurement standards, incrementality and unified attribution
- **Infrastructure readiness:** develop robust business cases evaluating build, buy, or lease options for dedicated retail media in-store inventory, including assets such as in-store digital screens (if brick and mortar retailer).

These audits provide a baseline for prioritising quick wins versus long-term transformation.

Barriers and Enablers

Retail Media transformation typically encounters predictable friction points — and equally predictable accelerators.

Common barriers include:

- Siloed teams and conflicting KPIs
- Legacy systems not built for advertising
- Limited data governance or fragmented data assets
- Talent shortages in ad-tech and analytics
- Slow decision-making or unclear ownership

Key enablers include:

- Executive sponsorship and a clear Retail Media vision
- Enterprise-wide data strategy and governance
- Cross-functional operating models with shared KPIs
- Investment in scalable, interoperable technology
- Training programmes that build literacy across commercial, marketing, CRM and operations

Understanding these dynamics helps organisations anticipate challenges and design interventions that stick.

Maturity Models

Maturity models offer a structured way to benchmark progress and define the path forward. Most Retail Media maturity frameworks span four stages:



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

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