



In Store

AI Travel Agents

CH.1

For you as an end user, these steps all feel seamless, but they are actually the result of complex, AI-driven integrations. Agentic-enabled travel is the next phase of the hospitality industry, and an emerging sales frontier that affords retailers opportunities to access new audiences and customers. Where shelf space was once king, in the not-so-distant future, screen space on AI-powered apps and within AI search functions will be critical to getting products and services noticed by potential customers.

**Listen to our 60-second Retail podcast:
Autonomous AI (Part 1): Unleashing Agentic AI
in Retail today. ►**



From Reels to Real Life Experiences

CH.2

Consumers have been acting as their own travel agents for years, comparing flight and hotel prices on their personal devices. Because booking travel has become so convenient, and airlines have ceased to pay commissions based on tickets sold, human travel agents are now largely obsolete. Looking ahead, AI travel agents are emerging as experience curators, shaping the next levels of omnichannel retail, known as “agentic commerce” — a sophisticated term for shopping powered by artificial intelligence.

Current consumer behavior entails saving enticing videos on social media platforms that can help shape an itinerary, only to lose track of them when it's time to plan a trip. However, with an AI travel agent, those reels can more easily become real life experiences, since AI will be able to incorporate these destination spots into travel recommendations. Some travel websites are already working on this concept, focused on real-time, AI-powered travel planning directly into social media, catering to consumers' mobile and social-first behaviors, reports [TravelAge West magazine](#). In 2025, the majority of U.S. travelers also indicated that they would be comfortable using AI for trip planning according to [YouGov data](#).

Since AI capabilities are maturing to support fully agentic behavior with less need for human input, AI travel agents are on the brink of independent operation. As they gain prominence, they will force retailers to strengthen their omnichannel marketing strategies.

Specifically, retailers of the future will need to expand their marketing, publicity, and technology efforts to prioritize getting noticed by AI. This shift necessitates a corresponding change to operations, from hashtags and search engine optimization (SEO) to advanced product tagging and generative engine optimization (GEO). GEO means looking beyond traditional search engine algorithms to verify that product data is structured, current, and offered in an accessible, universally readable format conducive to AI-driven searches.

To maintain a competitive edge, retailers should proactively develop partnerships with the travel providers, hotels, and entertainment venues that will all become part of these new multi-vendor, AI-curated experiences. Retailers who invest in these relationships early will boost their chances of getting noticed by AI agents, which may prioritize brands with strong hospitality affiliations.

For retailers to get ahead, they should begin to think about how their products fit into the broader travel experience — and integrate their product marketing accordingly.

FROM SOCIAL REELS TO REAL-LIFE ADVENTURES—
OMNICHANNEL INTEGRATION IS KEY.

For insights on how ERP systems help retailers thrive in the age of AI travel agents, listen to our 60-second Retail podcast: “Connected Commerce: Integrating Omnichannel Solutions with ERP.” ▶



The Race for Space: A Retail-AI Travel Agent Collab

CH.3

To stand out in the age of AI travel agents, retailers must make social media content their strategic front line. AI agents will crawl social media for relevant recommendations and popular videos with high user engagement, making it a crucial pillar of GEO strategy. To create engaging content, retailers need to align their social strategy with both consumer preferences and potential AI queries, especially related to travel experiences.

To futureproof their e-commerce business further, retailers will also need to become familiar with the programming that enables AI agents to function, including Model Context Protocol (MCP) technology. Like a universal power adapter, MCP works to enable seamless integration and standardized data sharing across platforms, creating the infrastructure that allows AI agents to communicate with each other. Retailers should integrate their products into this ecosystem, tagging them in ways that let AI travel agents display actionable and context-appropriate recommendations to customers.

Understanding MCP and defining social media strategies are both important first steps, but they're just the beginning of retailers immersing themselves in an agentic AI ecosystem. The following is a sampling of actions retailers can take to successfully align their data and offerings with the needs of agentic-enabled travel.

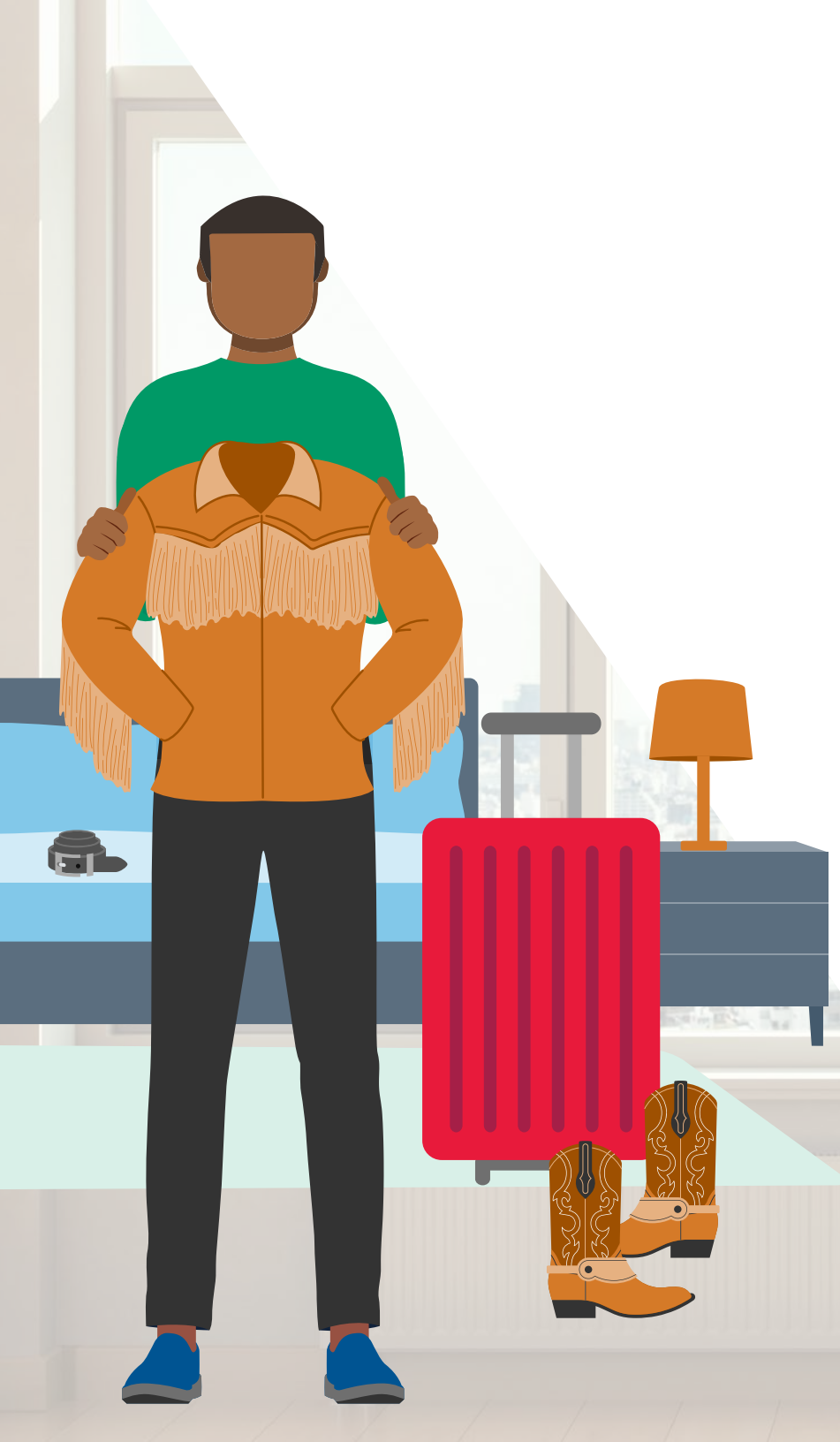
1. Identify targets for AI travel agent screen space. Retailers should identify the products and SKUs that are most important for AI travel agents to find and recommend. At the same time, they should be monitoring competitors to see how they are capitalizing on opportunities in the agentic commerce space, tracking what has and has not been effective for other organizations.

2. Optimize data for searchability. Integration within MCP channels requires clean, accessible, standardized data. Retailers should proactively enrich their product catalog with accurate and descriptive information that an AI agent can read, while simultaneously cleaning up their customer data. A strong, searchable dataset allows retailers to evaluate their inventory to anticipate changes in customer preferences and bake relevant GEO into product descriptions.

Items added to suitcase

SHIP TO HOTEL





3. Invest in data governance. A strong data governance framework that enforces customer data protection and ethical AI use is a mandatory prerequisite for successful entrance into agentic commerce. AI travel agents will have access to copious amounts of customer data. Retailers must be able to track and manage what data they make available, as they risk potential regulatory action or a loss of customer loyalty if personal information is exposed.

4. Prepare employees. As with any significant organizational shift, executives should craft comprehensive communication strategies and proactively address employee concerns. Discussions should focus on upskilling the marketing function, and establishing seamless workflows with the technology teams working on back-end AI changes.

5. Test, launch, and scale. With the foundational work in place, retailers can pilot test programs in controlled environments, measuring performance against predefined key performance indicators (KPIs). Retail leaders should adjust their future strategies based on the result of this first phase, incorporating real-world feedback via consumer reviews and sales numbers.

DON'T JUST KEEP UP—TAKE THE LEAD.

Download our whitepaper **A Retailer's Guide to Agentic AI** and unlock the strategies to thrive in tomorrow's AI-powered retail universe. ►



Plugging Into the Agentic Matrix: How BDO Can Help Retailers Get Noticed in an AI-powered Ecosystem

CH.4

The rise of AI travel agents presents a unique challenge—and opportunity—for retailers, who will need to learn to integrate themselves into the existing, external ecosystem of agentic commerce. BDO Digital can help future proof your business. We understand the back-end changes and behind-the-scenes risks that can make or break success in the world of GEO, from foundational elements like robust [data governance](#) and data privacy to the most sophisticated components of AI integration.

If your data is already prepared for integration, our [AI-enabled applications services](#) can help you turn AI investment into valuable returns, uncovering hidden opportunities, mitigating risks, and protecting your business while driving competitive advantage. Within your existing applications, we can empower users to leverage natural language to navigate features and access dynamic, continuously updated information. By finetuning AI searchability and improving AI capabilities in your own applications, you will be better positioned to leverage AI travel agents and other “experience curators” as the retail and hospitality industries increasingly intersect.



Your products deserve a first-class ticket into consumers' hands.

Ready to plug into the AI travel ecosystem and watch your products go places you've never imagined?

CONTACT US TO GET STARTED ►

ABOUT BDO'S RETAIL & CONSUMER PRODUCTS PRACTICE

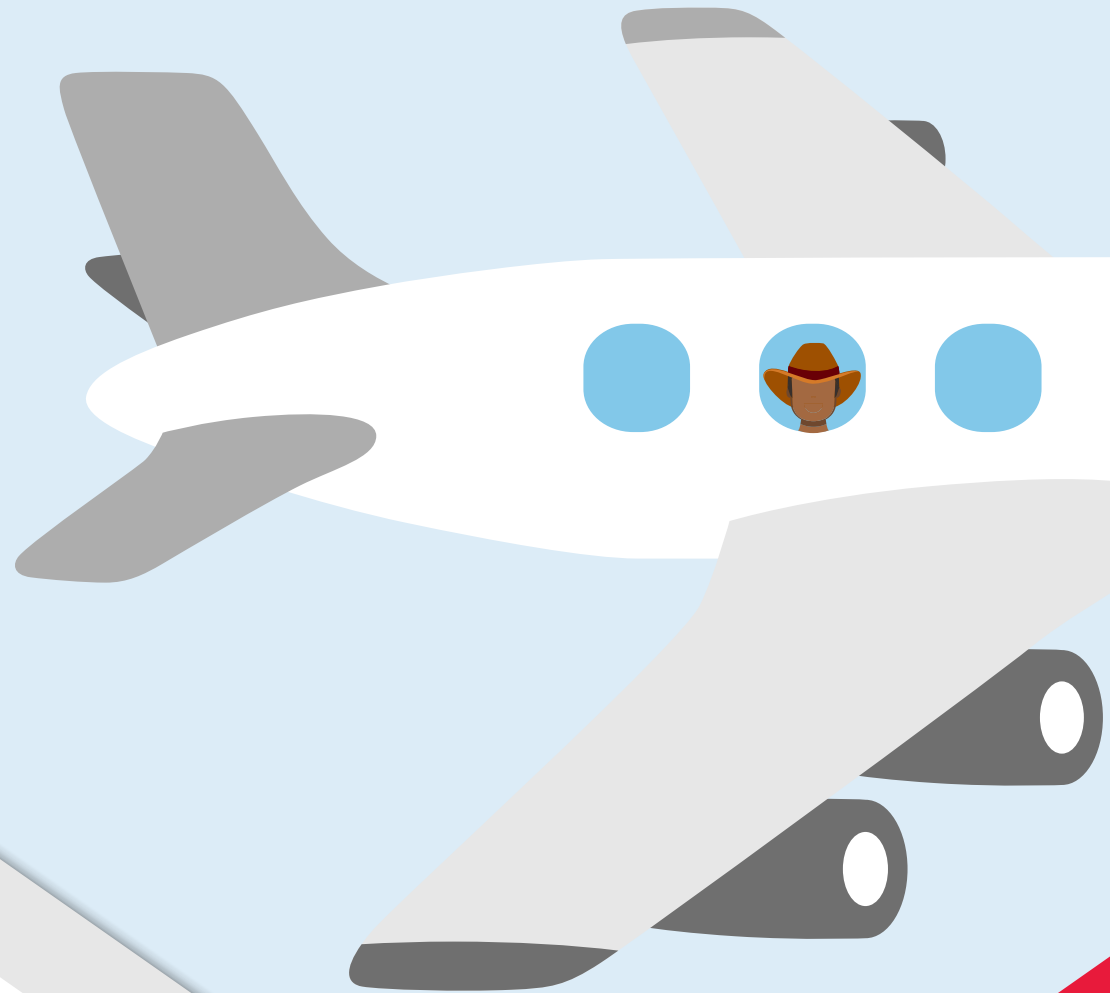
BDO has been a valued business advisor to retail and consumer products companies for more than 100 years. The firm works with a wide variety of clients across the traditional retail, consumer product and ecommerce sectors, ranging from multinational Fortune 500 corporations to emerging businesses, on myriad accounting, tax and advisory issues.

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