



2026 Guide to Retail Media

What you need to know to turn your webshop into a profitable media platform

Introduction

E-commerce professionals like you face intense competition, with rising costs and inflation adding even more pressure.

Retail media is a powerful solution to these challenges.

Effectively turning your webshop into a media platform can enhance the shopping experience through highly relevant product placements while generating a high-margin revenue stream for your business.

In this whitepaper, we'll explore how multi-brand retailers can begin to monetize their digital assets and give suppliers premium visibility - right when shoppers are actively searching for their products.

Finally, we'll show you how Relewise Retail Media makes implementation seamless, requiring minimal resources to get started.

I hope you enjoy your read!

Approved by



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**What is the hype
around retail media?**

A saturated market makes it increasingly difficult for e-commerce businesses to capture and retain customer attention, often leading to shrinking margins.

At the same time, privacy changes, consent requirements, and less reliable third-party data are making it harder to understand intent across the open web.

That makes first-party data more valuable. Multi-brand retailers, both B2B and B2C, already have high-intent traffic, product discovery behavior, and purchase signals inside their own webshop.

Retail media gives them a way to use that data responsibly: improving the shopping experience while creating new commercial value from the traffic they already own.

This comes down to two key needs:



For the retailer, a need to create meaningful experience for customers that increases conversions



For the supplier, a need to optimize marketing efforts in a way that isn't too resource intensive

Relewise Retail Media gives you, as a multi-brand retailer, the opportunity to offer your suppliers premium placements in search results and product listing pages (PLPs) through a bidding framework.

Findability is critical for **e-commerce** conversion rates

Having relevant items easy to find for users when they need it will make them much more likely to complete a purchase *Baymard Institute

The result is a highly relevant, conversion-driven marketing strategy that increases sales while allowing retailers to generate additional revenue on products they might have sold anyway.

In the past, retail media was largely reserved for the biggest players—companies with the resources to manage complexity, hire tech talent, and implement structural changes.

Relewise Retail Media changes that. Now, multi-brand retailers of all sizes can access and implement retail media without the need for a massive in-house team or enterprise-level infrastructure.



One to remember

What's the difference between retail media and regular merchandising?

While retail media focuses on advertising within the site itself, merchandising deals with the strategic planning and presentation of products to better the shopping experience. Merchandising is very valuable but it doesn't offer the same precision, flexibility, or data-driven optimization as retail media.

Ideally, both should be working together on your site. They complement each other, ensuring a personalized experience throughout the shopping experience. The table below summarizes the key differences between retail media and merchandising for you, as a multi-brand retailer.

TERM	RETAIL MEDIA	MERCHANDISING
Definition	Monetizing your data and digital shelf by selling ad space to brands and suppliers	Planning and optimizing your product presentation and placement
Focus	Creating targeted advertising	Focus on product display, arrangement, promotion etc.
Goal	Monetize visibility and drive sales	Optimize baseline product visibility that aligns with retailer strategy
Strategy	Having personalized, dynamic advertising based on behavioural insights	Preset, "static" merchandising rules that apply across all users
Key players	External stakeholders, i.e., your suppliers, decide what they wish to be advertised	Your internal stakeholders decide what is promoted according to business needs
Metrics	Direct by turning placements into supplier-funded, competitive strategy	Indirect through impacting product prioritization and placement

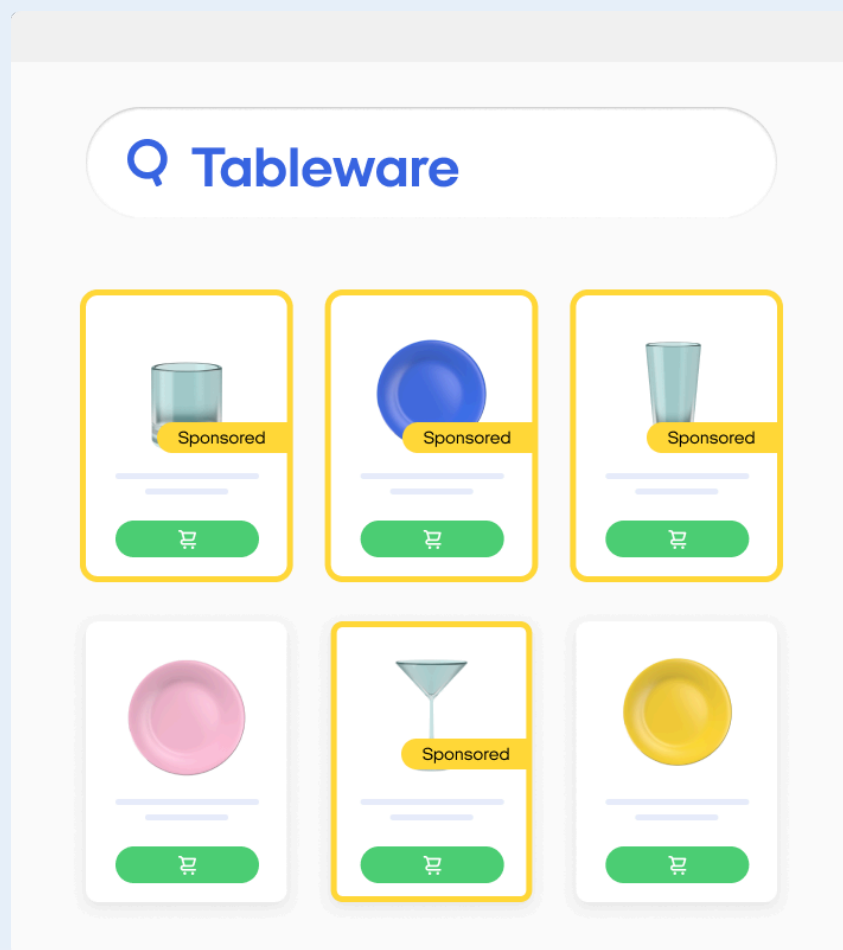
**How will it work
on my site?**

An important aspect of Relewise Retail Media is relevance.

The ads shown to users must match their behavior and intent. If sponsored placements are driven only by the highest bid, they quickly become noise and weaken the search experience.

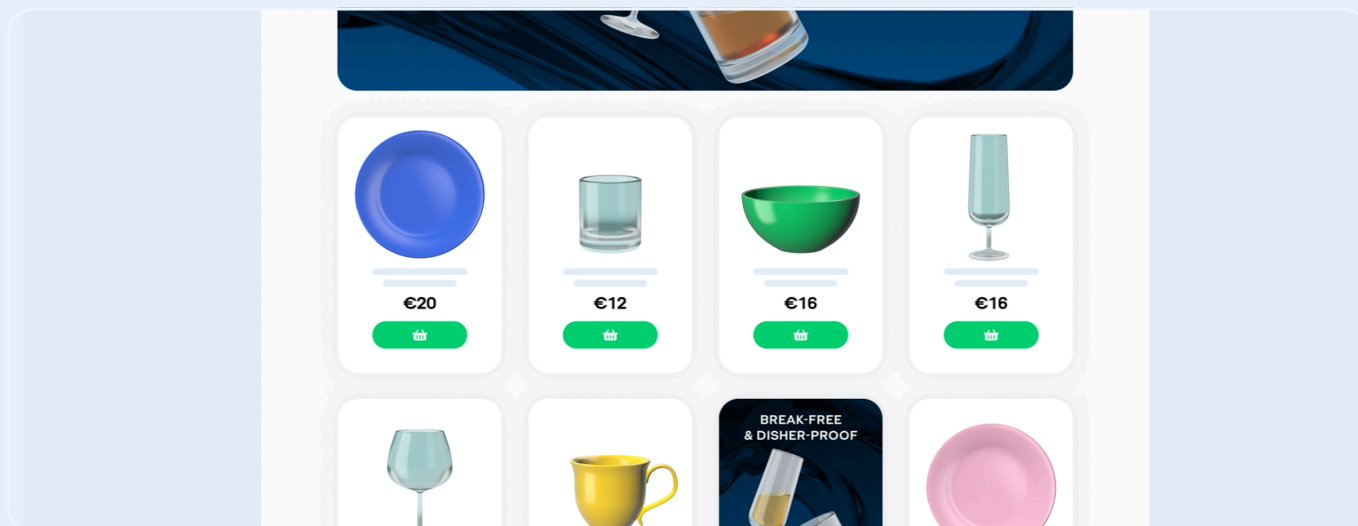
The Omnichannel Index 2026 shows that behavior-based search and personalized recommendations are still underused, even though they are key to better product discovery.

That is why retail media works best when it is built on personalized search. Suppliers get visibility, while customers still get relevant results that feel helpful instead of disruptive.



Defining the placements

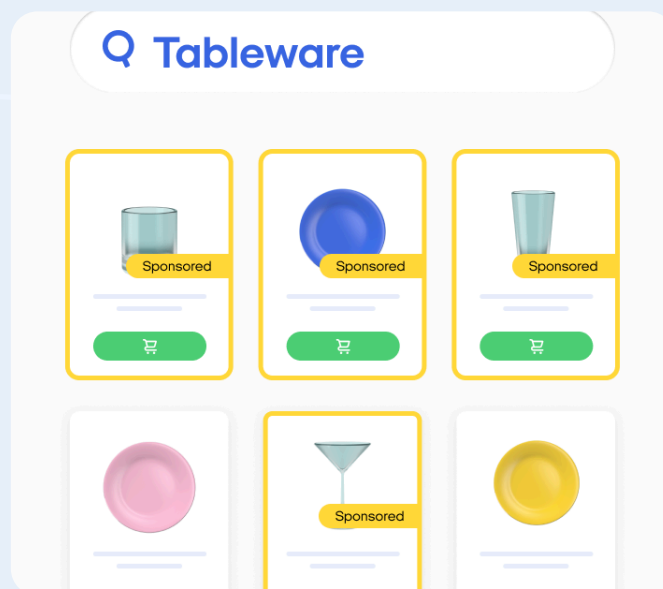
Before getting started, you need to decide where you want the sponsored product placements to appear and how many you wish to make available. Typically, placements will be on PLPs or search results but can also be in an app, e-mails, and more.



You also need to make sure that your retail media content displays correctly on the chosen placements on your different channels.

Typically, this is a task for your agency or solution provider. They'll only need to develop it once, and it shouldn't be too time-consuming.

We highly recommend limiting the amount of sponsored placements available for mobile, so that it won't occupy the entire screen. This is also important to avoid ad fatigue or banner blindness.



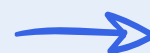
Collaborate with your advertisers to create strong campaigns

One strength of Relewise Retail Media, and retail media in general, is that it becomes a gateway to foster more strategic partnerships with your suppliers.

Working closely with your suppliers when creating campaigns is the best way to ensure that all parties involved gain exceptional value - you, your suppliers, and the customers.

Since working with retail media is still uncharted territory for many, the way you present and position it to stakeholders is crucial.

To ensure a strong partnership and maximize success, here are key challenges and misconceptions suppliers may have, along with strategies to overcome them.



Concern no. 1

"We already have fixed annual marketing budgets."

Many suppliers and purchasing managers, accustomed to traditional marketing deals, may resist retail media, even when its advantages are clear.

Position retail media as a way to optimize existing marketing budgets - not an additional cost.

How to address it



Unlike traditional marketing budgets that allocate spend upfront with uncertain returns, retail media operates on a performance-based model.



Retail media is a smarter way to spend existing budgets on high-intent placements that drive direct sales, not just awareness.



Retail media delivers instant impact and measurable ROI, which is different from traditional deals that wait for year-end evaluations.

Tip: Involve your purchasing teams early, as they often work directly with your suppliers. Make education a core part of your pitch.

Concern no. 2

"Retail media is just another form of paid ads."

Retail media without personalization is just noise - it can even hurt the search experience.

The real value comes when retail media is powered by a personalization engine, ensuring search results and PLPs are enriched by behavioral data.

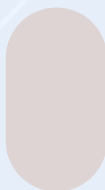
How to address it



Retail media uses first-party behavioral data, which traditional ads don't. This means ads are shown only to shoppers actively searching for relevant products.



Ads become helpful recommendations instead of disruptive promotions, which enhances the customer experience rather than compromising it.



Concern no. 3

"Will only the highest bidder get visibility?"

When multiple suppliers bid for the same ad placement, Relewise Retail Media doesn't simply award the spot to the highest bidder. Instead, it evaluates each campaign's cost per mille [CPM, cost per thousand impressions] and assigns a relative weight to ensure fair distribution.

How to address it



Relewise ensures placements aren't dominated by a single advertiser unless their bid is significantly higher.



Because revenue and relevance are optimized, multiple suppliers will gain visibility, which benefits both retailers [higher revenue] and shoppers [more relevant results].



This list doesn't cover everything, but we hope it gives you a good starting point for understanding common misconceptions and how to address them.

Make sure your campaigns are fully set up before flipping the switch on retail media. To avoid unexpected costs, ensure that campaigns are pre-sold and funds are in place before you go live.

Another way to start the dialogue is by asking the following questions:

- 1** **Pricing model:** Does the advertiser want to pay per click or per 1,000 impressions? That is, a CPC or CPM model?
- 2** **Budget:** How much are they willing to spend overall?
- 3** **Duration of the campaign:** For how long should the campaign be active? When should it start and end?



Pricing models for visibility vary widely across retailers, with different products carrying different margins.

As a result, pricing always depends on the industry and product.



Targeting with keywords

There's also the option of keyword targeting. Suppliers can specify one or more keywords that must be included or excluded from a user's search query for the campaign to be activated.

Benefits of keyword targeting



Precision: Allows for more precise targeting of ads based on user intent.



Relevance: Ensures that ads are shown to users who are more likely to be interested in the product, improving the overall shopping experience.



Efficiency: Helps in optimizing ad spend by reducing irrelevant impressions and clicks.

Lastly, there isn't any limit to how many advertisers (i.e., your suppliers) and campaigns you can set up in Relewise Retail Media.

In the case of significant interest in sponsored placements from your suppliers, you can always choose to create additional sponsored placements further down the PLP or search results page at a later time.

Summing up...



Stronger negotiations

Offering Relewise Retail Media adds more than sponsored placements to your platform. It gives you a stronger position in supplier negotiations.



Unique collaborations

Like fingerprints, no two collaborations with your suppliers will be the same. What constitutes a mutually advantageous agreement with one may differ from another.



Flexible agreements

A supplier may want to promote a high-margin product by offering discounts for bulk purchases. To support the supplier's products and boost your sales, you might include sponsored placements in the agreement.

So, what happens when we're live?

Every time one of your users visits your site or app, whether they're making a search or browsing a PLP, Relewise will check if there are any active campaigns that match the user's behavior.

If there are one or more active campaigns with products highly relevant to the user, Relewise evaluates each campaign's cost per mille [CPM] and assigns a relative weight to determine which products are shown in the configured sponsored placements - all in real-time when searched for.

This ensures placements aren't dominated by a single advertiser unless their bid is significantly higher, so multiple suppliers can gain visibility based on both relevance and bid competitiveness. No two campaign agreements between you and your suppliers will be the same. Billing is not set to automatically occur at, say, a fixed monthly schedule, but depends on the specific agreement.

Relewise Retail Media calculates the actual ad spend on an ongoing basis, allowing you and your suppliers to agree on the terms of billing.



You also have the option to pull a report on performance before, during, and after the campaign.

In the MyRelewise dashboard, you can get a full overview of all your campaigns.

Relewise Retail Media reports on key metrics depending on campaign type:

1

Sales volume: The number of units sold during the campaign period. This data comes through standard order updates, specifically via line items.

2

Impressions: The total number of times the sponsored product or Display Ad was shown during the campaign window.

3

Revenue tracking: The revenue generated from sponsored products during and before the campaign. To capture this, line totals need to be submitted through order updates.

For Display Ads, Relewise also reports clicks, but revenue is not attributed directly because Display Ads are not tied to SKUs.





**Why should I
get it?**

The main reason for you, as a multi-brand retailer, to get retail media on your site is the adoption of a new revenue stream with an exceptionally high margin – 70 to 90%, according to a commerce media survey by Boston Consulting Group. It allows you to take advantage of digital real estate that otherwise isn't fully exploited.

70 - 90%

margins are what you can obtain as a
multi-brand store adopting retail media

Monetize your data

Retail media offers a new revenue stream by monetizing your data, allowing advertisers to access valuable insights, while simultaneously driving more sales.

Due to the flexibility with which you can create agreements that make the most sense for both you and your suppliers, Relewise Retail Media not only becomes an appealing revenue source for you, but also becomes a valuable tool for your suppliers.

The strong focus on mutual commercial benefits and shared values enhances the appeal for both suppliers and brands. Ultimately, this boosts your revenue potential.

Win-win-win: Creating a better customer experience

Relevant ads have the power to introduce products to customers they might not have discovered otherwise.

When ads are carefully curated and targeted with the right timing, they improve the overall shopping experience and satisfaction.



CASES: How to create growth with retail media in B2C and B2B

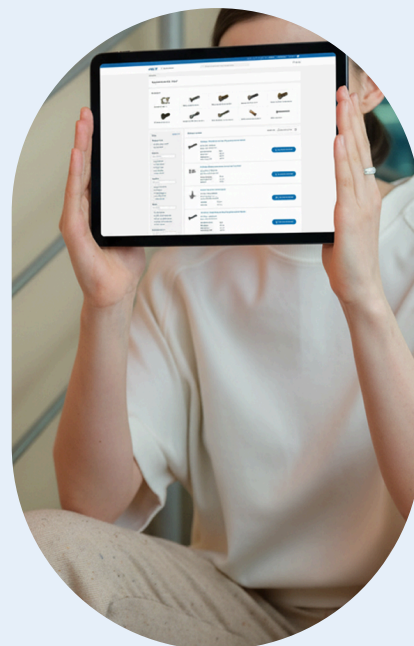
ahlsell + Kop&Kande

Turning supplier marketing into measurable retail media growth

Ahlsell and Kop & Kande already had strong supplier relationships and high-intent ecommerce traffic.

What they lacked was a clear way to connect supplier marketing to measurable sales impact.

With Relewise Retail Media, they brought sponsored placements into search results and product listings, where customers were already primed to buy.



From supplier marketing to sales-driven collaboration

The implementation made supplier campaigns more relevant for shoppers, easier for retailers to evaluate, and more valuable for suppliers.

Both companies started with trusted suppliers and simple processes. As campaigns ran, they gained clearer performance data and a stronger commercial case for retail media.

Results:

Supplier campaigns
became easier to
measure

Sponsored products
appeared where they
were relevant

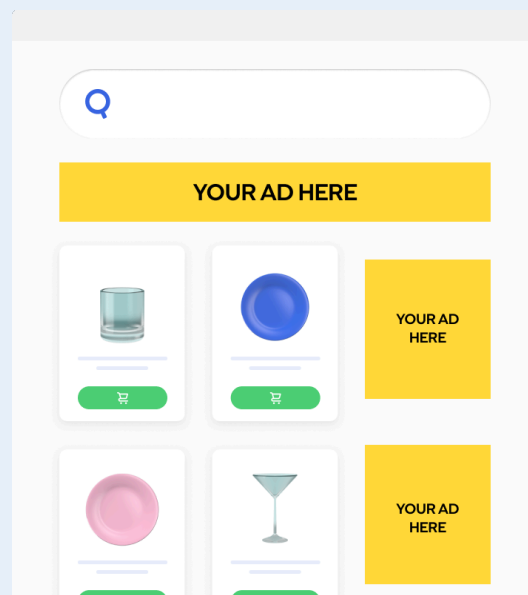
Ahlsell saw up to 20%
organic lift in rankings
after campaigns

**Display Ads that fit
naturally into the
buying journey**

What is it?

Display Ads are a new addition to Relewise Retail Media, expanding beyond sponsored product placements to include rich visual advertising formats such as image banners and video banners. These ads can appear contextually across search results, product listings, or defined placements throughout the site, powered by Relewise's personalization and targeting logic.

Display Ads share the same underlying ad infrastructure as sponsored products - complete with filtering, tracking, and reporting - but extend visibility to brand-level and awareness-driven campaigns, not just product promotions.



Key value proposition

Display Ads turn your commerce site into a complete retail media platform, blending sponsored products and visual advertising into a single, coherent experience.



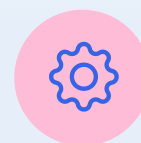
New revenue streams enabled by first-party data that advertisers can activate across high-value retail audiences



Highly relevant exposure for advertisers driven by behavior, search intent, and category context



Ad placements appear where users expect them, enhancing journeys with value rather than interrupting the experience



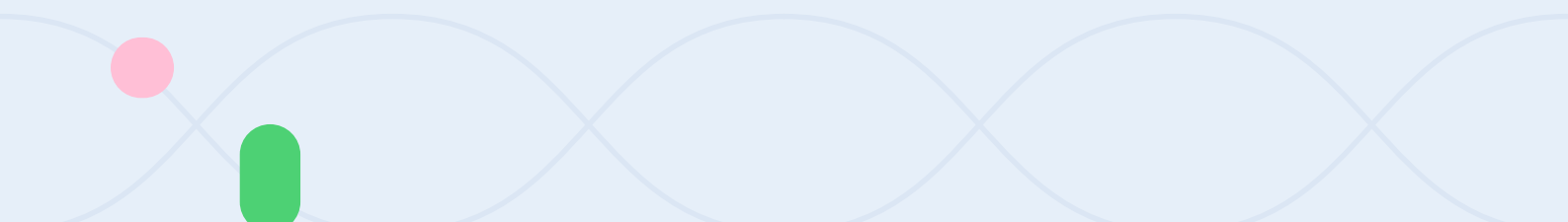
Shared ad infrastructure ensures fast deployment and unified control across filtering, analytics, and personalization

Who is it for?

Display Ads are designed for multi-brand retailers and their suppliers or advertisers who want to combine performance and brand marketing within the same personalized commerce experience.

- Retailers can offer premium on-site placements for advertisers to reach shoppers at high-intent moments, generating new non-margin revenue
- Suppliers/brands can highlight campaigns, seasonal launches, or hero products, reaching the right shoppers in the right context, supported by Relewise's personalization engine

This makes Display Ads relevant across both B2C and B2B contexts - highlighting key suppliers, promotions, or campaigns.



How are we doing it?

Display Ads are introduced as a new entity type in Relewise's data model, supporting advertisers, banner formats, and multilingual naming.

They use Relewise's existing filtering and placement logic, allowing banners to appear based on search terms, categories, or product relevance - just like sponsored products.

Full CRUD management and event tracking ensure reliable setup, measurement, and optimization.

This architecture makes Display Ads a natural part of Relewise's Retail Media, Search, and Personalization layers, ensuring consistency, performance, and transparency for retailers and partners.

**From knowledge
to action**

Book a strategy meeting

You've reached the end – thank you for reading along!

This white paper has covered the key benefits of Relewise Retail Media for multi-brand stores like yours. It's an effective way to increase revenue by giving your brands and suppliers the opportunity to gain more product visibility at the exact time customers are looking for it.

But what would it look like for you?

I'd like to invite you to an online retail media strategy meeting with our experts – completely non-binding.

During the meeting, we will:



Assess your current setup and identify personalization opportunities



Evaluate how Relewise Retail Media could look on your site and its potential for success



Give you **tailored recommendations** based on our insights and best practices



Answer any questions you may have about Relewise Retail Media

*Book a free consultation
with our head of sales*



Harry van Rossum

Head of Sales, Relewise

[Book a consultation](#)



About

Relewise is a personalization and search platform designed to process large-scale, complex data efficiently, handling the unique demands of B2B e-commerce.

Founded in 2020, Relewise has grown quickly, and we're proud to work with a diverse range of large and influential clients today.

Our founders



Integrations

Born headless and API-first, Relewise is built to integrate with any platform to create outstanding customer experiences. We have your back, no matter the platform you are on or the technology stack you use.

[Learn more](#) 

Partners

We have a diverse portfolio of implementation partners, each specializing in distinct fields and delivering robust, comprehensive business solutions.

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