

Four large, solid blue curved shapes are positioned on the left side of the page. They are arranged in a way that suggests they are parts of a larger circular pattern, with one shape at the top left, one at the bottom left, and two in the center.

chair &

NC Specialty Foods

Summer Conference

June 2026



chair 8

Hi, we're Chair 8 🖐️

Chair 8 is an award-winning full-service creative marketing agency based in Raleigh, NC. We started in 2015, named for our favorite ski lift in Telluride, Colorado. Chair 8 was our vessel for exploring new territory, and building anticipation for what's ahead. It was here that our passion for capturing and marketing these experiences was born.

We're a passionate team of ten who are continually after the best ways to speak your brand and tell your story. We know our clients hustle—that they bring their best every day to see their businesses succeed—and that drives us to bring ours: to bring ingenuity, strategy, and creativity every day.

We believe stories are the best way to get to know each other, whether that's two people pulling up chairs at a table or a one-of-a-kind destination speaking to its following.

chair8media.com

@chair8media

Business Profile + Company Background

BIG SPOON
— ROASTERS —


Murphy's
NATURALS

COOK'S MILL
AMERICAN STRAIGHT
BOURBON WHISKEY
FROM THE HILLS, FIELDS, AND MILLS OF
North Carolina



WILDERS



**RUBBER
DUCKY**
SUNSCREEN

**ripe
revival**

happy + hale

Braswell
FAMILY FARMS

kickdry

SANTA'S NATURALS
CHRISTMAS CANDLES

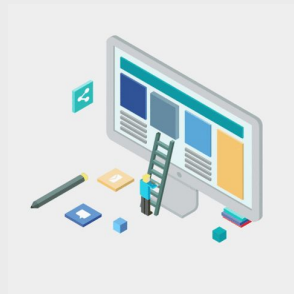
NC Specialty Foods Association

What's New in Ecommerce 2026:

The Specialty Food Playbook

Core Idea

Ecommerce in 2026 is no longer just having a website. It is about making your product **discoverable, shoppable, believable, and reorderable.**



Ecommerce is Not a Channel Anymore

Ecommerce Is Not a Channel Anymore



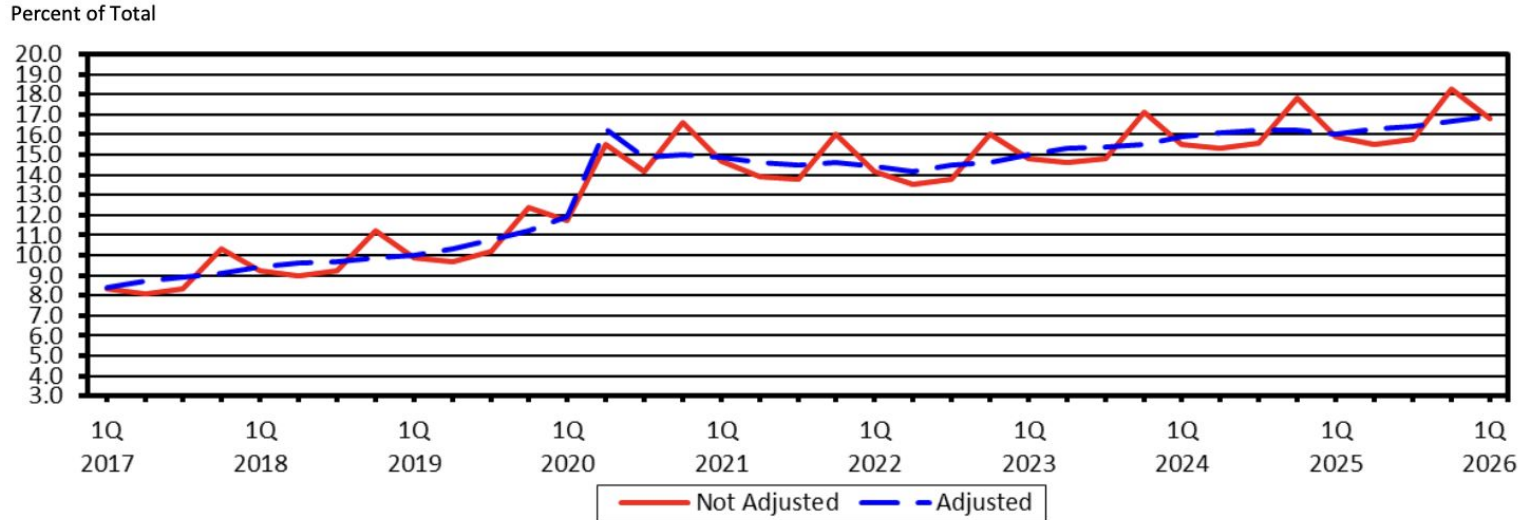
Ecommerce Is Not a Channel Anymore



Ecommerce is now
THE connective
tissue between
awareness, DTC
sales, wholesale, and
repeat purchase

Ecommerce Is Not a Channel Anymore

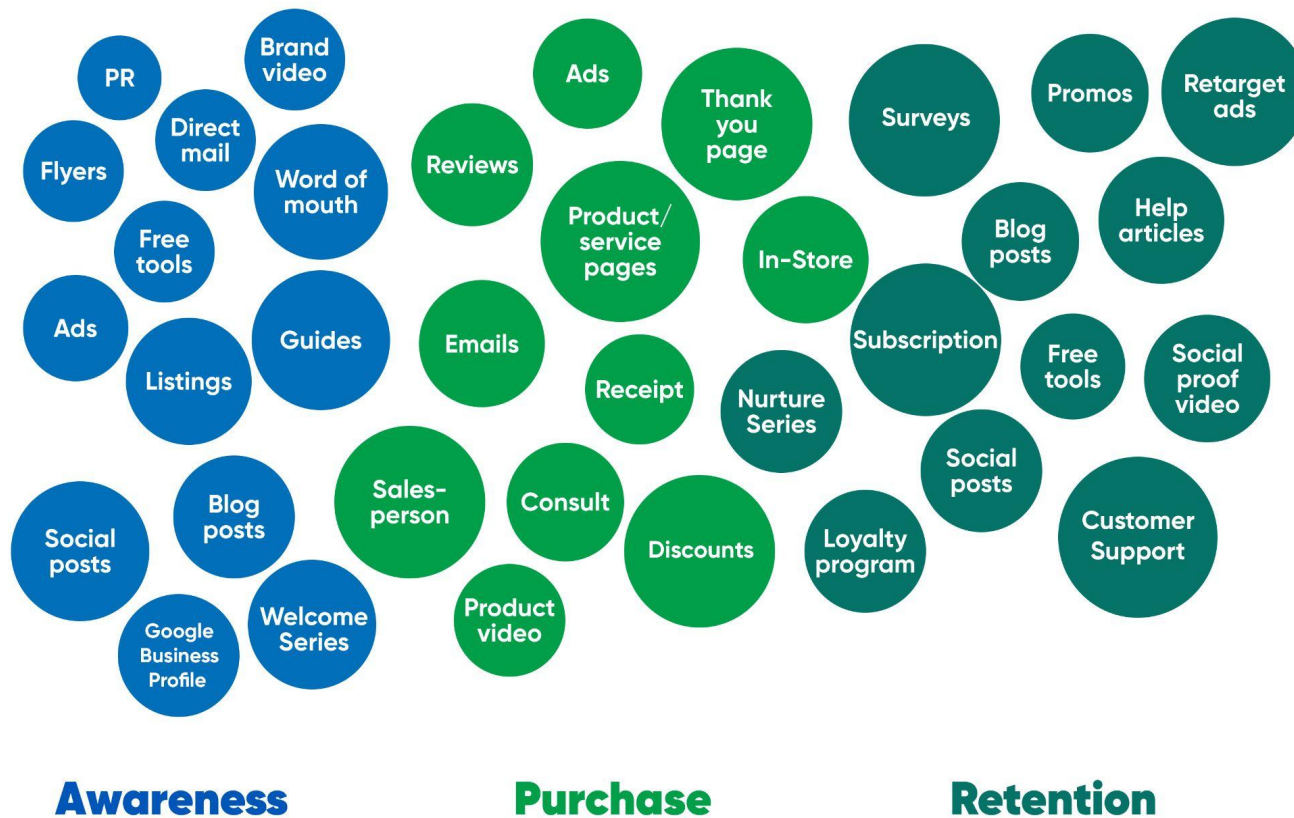
**Estimated Quarterly U.S. Retail E-commerce Sales as a Percent of Total Quarterly Retail Sales:
1st Quarter 2017 – 1st Quarter 2026**

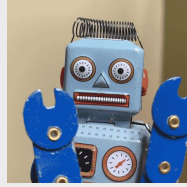


https://www.census.gov/retail/mrts/www/data/pdf/ec_current.pdf



Customer Journey Touchpoints





Your Next Customer May Ask AI First

Your Next Customer May Ask AI First

GOOGLE ADS

New tech and tools for retailers to succeed in an agentic shopping era

Jan 11, 2026
5 min read

We're announcing a new open standard for agentic commerce and AI tools to help retailers connect with high-intent shoppers and drive sales.

<https://blog.google/products/ads-commerce/agentic-commerce-ai-tools-protocol-retailers-platforms/>



All news Company Product POV Insights Press releases About us

PRODUCT

The agentic commerce platform: Shopify connects any merchant to every AI conversation

January 11, 2026

<https://www.shopify.com/news/ai-commerce-at-scale>

Your Next Customer May Ask AI First

- **Today, someone might ask AI:**

“What is the best locally made hot sauce for a gift?”

- **In the (near) future, AI could:**
 - Find relevant products
 - Compare ingredients and reviews
 - Check price and availability
 - Apply an offer
 - Add the product to a cart
 - Help complete the purchase

Your Next Customer May Ask AI First



Key Takeaway



The brands with the clearest, most complete, and most accurate product data will have the best opportunity to be discovered and recommended

Your Next Customer May Ask AI First

- **What Food Brands Should Do Now:**

- Clean up product titles, descriptions, ingredients, FAQs, and structured product data
- Add “best for” language: gifting, weeknight dinners, tailgates, hostess gifts, corporate gifts, etc.
- Make shipping, shelf life, allergens, storage, and serving ideas easy to find
- Add reviews and recipe/use-case content
- Keep [Google Merchant Center](#) and product feeds accurate

“Agentic-Friendly Brand”

- **Clear product language**
 - Cut the brand-speak.
 - i. “Your daily ritual,” “crafted for every occasion,” etc.
 - AI doesn’t reward vibes, it rewards clarity
 - Tell the reader what it is, who it’s for, when to use it, how it compares
- **Claims and proof on the page**
 - Ingredients, certifications, allergens, substantiated claims, regulatory-safe language.
 - The product page should be an evidence page, not just a sales page
- **Retail routing**
 - Store locator, retailer links, Amazon paths where they apply.
 - If the site creates demand but doesn’t rout it, the brand leaks value
 - Your brick & mortar location should have it’s own landing page

“Agentic-Friendly Brand”

- **FAQs written the way people actually ask**
 - “Is this spicy?” “Does this contain peanuts?” “Can I buy this at [insert retail store]?” “How does this compare to X?”
 - FAQs are answer-engine inputs
- **Consistency across the open internet**
 - AI doesn’t only read your website. It reads Amazon listing, your reviews, Reddit threads, YouTube videos, press, Google Merchant Center feed.
- **Structured data and clean HTML**
 - Product schema. FAQ schema. Organization schema. Markup matters.
 - Download an app to submit schema (ex: [Smart SEO](#) on Shopify)

Your Next Customer May Ask AI First



PDP

DESCRIPTION

*Gluten Free, Soy Free, No Palm Oil, Bee Friendly
Almonds, Vegan*

Your favorite childhood treat got a magnificently crunchy makeover for our spring Limited Batch, Pistachio Brownie Almond Butter. A smooth, naturally sweet heirloom *Mission* almond base meets swirls of rich Organic cocoa & coconut nectar, Fair Trade dark chocolate chips, roasted pistachio pieces, and balancing touches of real vanilla beans and Jacobsen sea salt. Together, they combine to create nostalgic, straight-from-the-oven goodness in every chocolatey spoonful.

We love Pistachio Brownie spooned over vanilla ice cream, filling fresh crepes, spread onto warm croissants, or right off the spoon. If you crave bold crunch and deep, velvety chocolate, Pistachio Brownie Almond Butter is your perfect match.

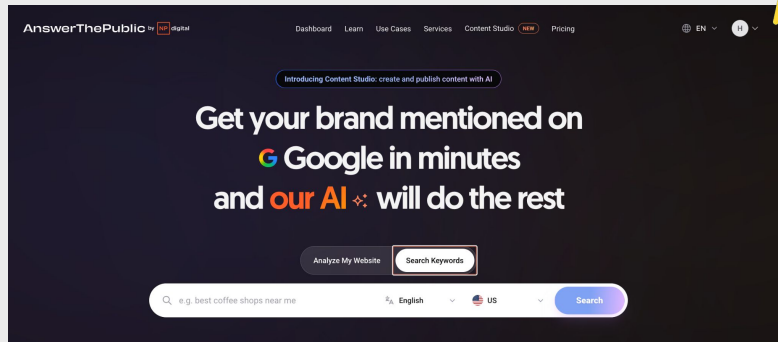
NUTRITION



SHIPPING



Answer The Public



<https://answerthepublic.com/>



Google Merchant Center

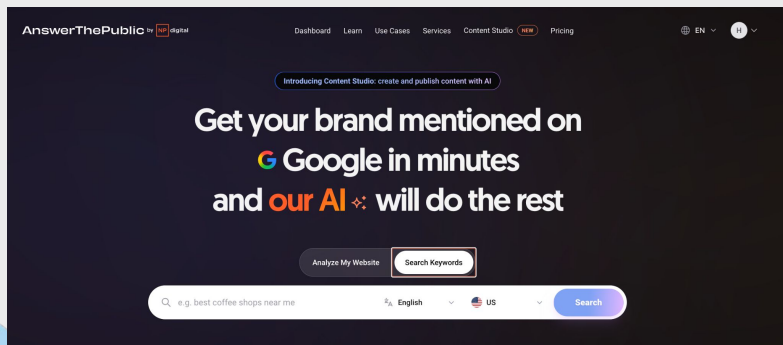


Put your products
in front of millions
with Google

<https://business.google.com/us/merchant-center/>

Your Next Customer May Ask AI First

Answer The Public



<https://answerthepublic.com/>



Your Next Customer May Ask AI First



Sales channels >

 Online Store

 Google & YouTube

 Facebook & Instagram

 Shop

 Point of Sale

 Inbox

 Pinterest

 Agentic



Google Merchant
Center
Active

Total
238

Approved
223

Limited
0

Not Approved
15

Under Review
0

...

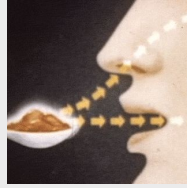
shop

\$1,600.70 earned from over **10** Agentic Storefronts visits in the last 30 days.



Ask anything...





Specialty Food Content Should Feel More Sensory

Ecommerce Has to Make People Hungry



Specialty Food Association Announces SenseMaxxing as Trend of the Year Alongside Five Other Key Trends for 2026 at Winter FancyFaire*

TRENDS AND STATISTICS | JANUARY 12, 2026

SenseMaxxing: *describing a consumers' desire for intense sensory experiences across taste, texture, aroma, and visual impact.*

Ecommerce Has to Make People Hungry

- **A Product Page Should Answer:**
 - What does it taste like?
 - What is the texture?
 - What does it pair with?
 - Who is it for?
 - When would I use it?
 - Is it giftable?
 - How long does it last?
 - What makes it different from grocery-store alternatives?

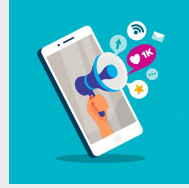
Ecommerce Has to Make People Hungry

- **Before:**

- “Small-batch pepper jelly made in North Carolina.”

- **After:**

- “Sweet heat with a bright pepper finish–made for cream cheese boards, grilled chicken, biscuits, and holiday gifting.



Social Commerce Is Now A Real Sales Channel

The New Shelf is the Feed

- **TikTok Shop**

- 67% of consumers go to TikTok Shop to discover new products and brands
- 58% of consumers who discovered a small brand later bought from that brand on the platform

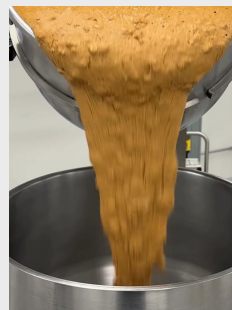
- **Instagram Shop**

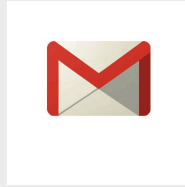
- 47% of users are expected to shop on IG in 2026
- 90% of Gen Z say social content has influenced a purchase

The New Shelf is the Feed

- In speciality food, your product has to be tasted through a screen before it gets tasted in real life

- Founder Story
- “How we make it”
- Taste test
- Recipe demo
- Unboxing
- Farmers market booth recap
- Retailer shoutout
- “3 ways to use this product”
- Holiday/gifting bundle
- Customer reaction





Retention Is The Profit Engine

The Money Is In The Second Order

Klaviyo's 2026 benchmark report says automated email flows generate nearly **41% of total email revenue from only 5.3% of sends**, with revenue per recipient nearly **18x higher** than campaigns.

klaviyo[™]

<https://www.klaviyo.com/products/email-marketing/benchmarks>

The Money Is In The Second Order

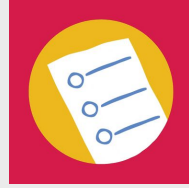
For food brands, recommend these must-have flows:

1. Welcome series
2. Abandoned cart
3. Post-purchase education
4. Review request
5. Replenishment reminder
6. Winback
7. Holiday/gifting early access



Essential Retention Flow Setup:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Mvkrwrvwz9659MXk6y-HNvXnjTnyu88aCkUYyuNIIA/edit?usp=sharing>



The Practical 2026 Ecommerce Checklist

What To Work On First

- **30-day plan:**
 - **Week 1: Product page cleanup**
 - i. Improve titles, descriptions, photography, ingredients, allergens, shipping info, FAQs, and reviews
 - **Week 2: Discovery setup**
 - i. Check Google Merchant Center, product feeds, SEO titles, schema, image alt text, and “best use” content
 - **Week 3: Retention setup**
 - i. Build or improve welcome, cart, post-purchase, replenishment, and winback flows
 - **Week 4: Social commerce test**
 - i. Create 10 short videos, test one creator/affiliate partnership, build one bundle, and track sales



Customer Journey Touchpoints



Awareness

Purchase

Retention

The 2026 Ecommerce Rule

**Be Easy to Find.
Easy to Buy.
Easy to Buy Again.**

Thank you!

chair8media.com/nc-specialty-foods



@chair8media