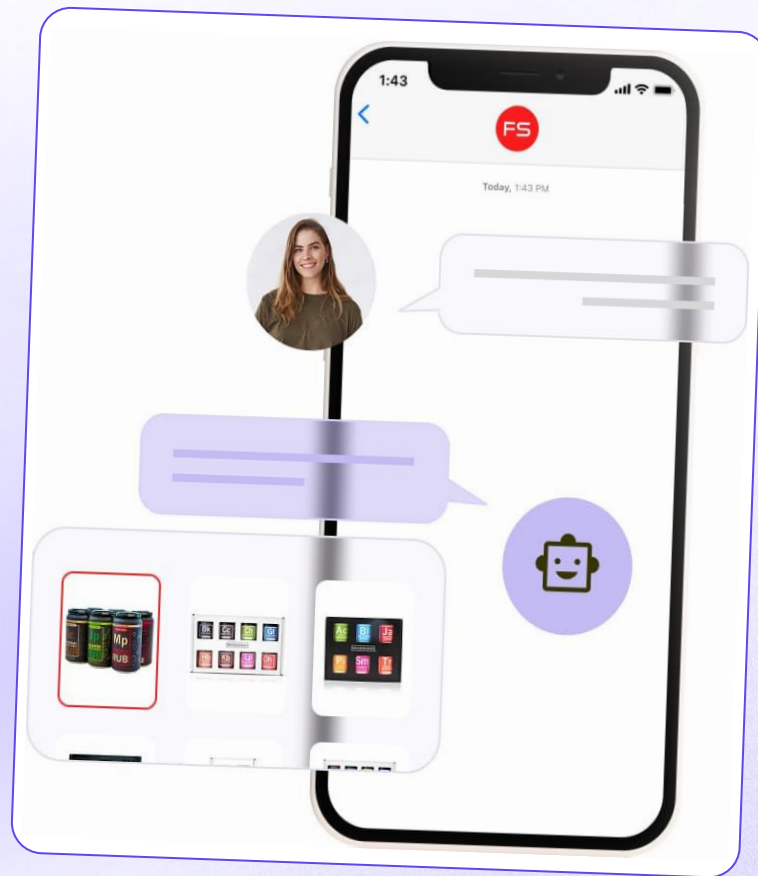




The 2026 Conversational Commerce Report

Why AI Shopper Agents Are the
New Standard for High-Growth Brands
Q1, 2026



2026 Conversational Commerce Report

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What is "Conversational Commerce"?

Simply put, Conversational Commerce is the intersection of messaging and shopping. It's the shift from a "search-and-click" experience to a "dialogue-driven" experience.

Instead of forcing a shopper to act like a computer (using specific keywords and filters), Conversational Commerce enables the computer to act like a human store associate, understanding nuance, style, and intent. Shoppers find what they want by simply asking for it in their own words.

Report Methodology

This analysis draws on 48,000 Fast Simon client shopper-assistant conversations from 29 sites between January and March 2026. Nearly half are conversations of four or more messages between a shopper and the AI Agent.

Executive Summary: AI Goes Beyond the Search Bar

For years, ecommerce was a solo sport. A shopper arrived, typed a keyword into a bar, and hoped the algorithm understood their intent. If they couldn't find it in two clicks, they left. Today, that "search and hope" model is officially dead.

This report analyzes data from over 48,000 real-world conversations captured between January and March 2026.

The findings are clear: AI Shopper Agents have moved from being a "support chatbot" to a "revenue engine" (although support is still an important use case).

For high-GMV brands in the Apparel, Footwear, and Accessories space, the AI agent is now the most effective tool for capturing high-intent shoppers and inspiring low-intent browsers.

Key Findings At-A-Glance

- **High Engagement:** Nearly 50% of shoppers engage in multi-turn conversations, signaling a desire for a guided shopping experience.
- **Elite Conversion Rates:** In the fashion and specialty verticals, AI conversations yield conversion rates between 15% and 22%.
- **Semantic Mastery:** AI agents don't just "search," they "interpret." A single query is enriched into multiple variants, increasing product recall and relevance.
- **"Human" Touch at Scale:** AI handles 25% of support inquiries and 15% of post-purchase tasks, enabling human agents to focus on high-value escalations.

The Science of Discovery: Turning Queries into Inspiration

Traditional search engines are literal. If shoppers type "wedding guest dress," they get a list of dresses tagged with that keyword.

Fast Simon's 2026 data shows that AI agents are breaking this barrier through query enrichment.

How Query Enrichment Drives Revenue

When a shopper asks for a "Wedding guest dress in Lisbon," the AI doesn't just look for those four words.

The AI agent semantically expands the search to include, for example:

1. "Floral maxi dresses"
2. "Summer midi dresses"
3. "Lightweight cocktail attire"

By understanding the context (Lisbon = warm, stylish, European) and the occasion, the agent mimics a high-end boutique associate.

The Power of Session Context

Our data highlights that personalization isn't just about showing "Recommended for You" blocks. It's about real-time adaptation.

- **The Vague Query Win:** When a user asks, "Help me find the perfect product," the AI agent uses browsing history to deliver results. If the user was just looking at kids' sports gear, the agent proactively suggests Cubs kids' hats, resulting in a seamless transition from browsing to carting.

According to a 2025 McKinsey report, 71% of consumers expect personalized interactions, and 76% are frustrated when it doesn't happen.

[Unlocking the Next Frontier of Personalized Marketing](#)

Vertical Intelligence: Fashion Brands are Winning

Not all ecommerce sites use AI agents in the same way. Our analysis illustrates a "Vertical Intent Distribution."

For example, shoppers in the Apparel, Footwear, and Accessories space, are overwhelmingly using AI agents for product discovery, while electronics shoppers are using AI agents for post-purchase inquiries.

Intent Distribution by Vertical

Vertical	Dominant Intent	Conversion Rate
Fashion	70% Product Discovery	15% – 22%
Electronics	70% Support & Post-Purchase	N/A (Intent is "support" not shopper "conversion")

The "Shopping Companion" Effect

In the Apparel, Footwear, and Accessories space, AI agents act as a stylist. Shoppers are using AI agents for a variety of product discovery applications:

- **Outfit Completion:** "Do you have matching shoes for dress #3?"
- **Fabric/Size Education:** Comparing rayon blends vs. linen to understand drape and fit.
- **Occasion-Based Search:** Finding outfits for specific travel destinations or events.

For these brands, AI agents aren't a cost-center; they are sales associates that never sleep, speak multiple languages, and know the entire inventory by heart.

Operational Excellence: Support that Actually Supports

While discovery is the "glamorous" side of AI, the operational impact on the post-purchase phase is where ROI becomes undeniable for the C-Suite.

Automating WISMO

Post-purchase inquiries, (a.k.a. "Where is my order?" [WISMO] - order tracking, returns, address changes, etc.) account for 15% of all multi-turn conversations.

- **The Data:** In electronics and high-volume general stores, AI tools for "get order status" provide real-time delivery estimates and courier status.
- **The Result:** By resolving these queries through AI, brands are seeing a 25% full resolution rate within the chat interface, removing the load from human CS teams.

Domain Knowledge and "Zero-Gaps"

The 2026 AI isn't just a generalist; it's a specialist.

- **Riding Gear:** Explaining the intricacies of "lariats" and "ropes" to ranching professionals.
- **Baby Safety:** Correcting interpreting a "0" as a Thermal Overall Grade rating for infant sleepwear.
- **Size Logic:** Proactively mapping a "Size 2" to a "US 25" in denim.

Gartner predicts that by the end of 2026, conversational AI will reduce contact center labor costs by \$80B.

[Market Trend: Conversational AI for Agent Automation Delivers an Efficient Customer Contact Center Experience](#)

Conclusion: The End of the Keyword-Only Search Era

The divide between high-growth brands and the rest of the market is clear: it is defined by context.

Traditional search and static navigation aren't enough to meet the expectations of AI-literate consumers.

The data confirms that when shoppers are met with "conversation" rather than a list, conversion rates move from single digits to double digits. Whether it's guiding a parent through baby safety ratings or styling an outfit for a trip to Lisbon, Conversational Commerce is the new baseline for ecommerce excellence.

The future of commerce isn't just about showing the right product. The future is about understanding the "why" behind the search. Brands that bridge this gap will thrive in this next era of digital retail.

Understanding the Interactions

To get the most out of this data, it helps to know how we categorize the ways shoppers "talk" to our AI.

- **Multi-Turn Conversations:** These are the deep dives. When a shopper sends four or more messages, they are highly engaged—refining their search, comparing fabrics, or asking about specific policies. This is where the "magic" of conversion happens.
- **Single-Turn Conversations:** Think of these as the "quick clicks." Often, a user will click a suggested "chip" (like "Show me new arrivals") to see what happens, then continue browsing visually. While these show initial interest, the Multi-Turn data provides the real insight into shopper intent.

Fast Simon redefines ecommerce product discovery by combining AI with merchant insight to inspire shoppers.

Merchandising, personalization, search, and AI agents operate together, adapting to every shopper interaction, delivering sustained increases in conversion, AOV, and revenue.

Thousands of fast-growing merchants and sophisticated brands — including Steve Madden, White Fox Boutique and many others — integrate Fast Simon seamlessly with leading commerce platforms including Shopify Plus, BigCommerce, and Magento.

For more information, visit fastsimon.com, follow the company on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and X, or [schedule a demo](#).

