

MENA Retail Media Roundtable

What the industry said — 11 June 2026, Atlantis The Palm, Dubai

More than **100 senior marketing and commercial leaders** gathered across **10 closed-door roundtables** to tackle the questions retail media needs answered. Here is what emerged.



100+

SENIOR LEADERS IN THE ROOM

10

CLOSED-DOOR ROUNDTABLES

65

COMPANIES REPRESENTED



Theme 01 | Measurement, Transparency and Trust

"The industry is not short of metrics. It is short of metrics that everyone measures the same way."



ROAS is one input, not the answer

Profitable, scalable ROAS matters. Using it as a pass-fail test actively misleads. Build investment decisions around a broader business growth framework.



Incrementality must mean business growth

A 7-14 day attribution window is not business incrementality. The measure that matters: category share shift, new demand creation, and customer lifetime value.



Standardization before consolidation

Centralizing data without agreed standards produces more sophisticated confusion. Define shared metrics first, then build consolidated infrastructure on top.



Data ownership is unresolved

Brand or retailer - who owns the customer? This drives mutual skepticism on both sides. A neutral body setting baseline minimum metrics is the path forward.



Theme 02 | Partnership and Collaboration

"Brands are not asking for everything. They are asking for enough to make informed decisions. That should not be a difficult ask."



The biggest barrier is internal

Retail media needs trade marketing, e-commerce, governance and tech in the room from the start. Brands are paying the price when governance says no at contract stage.



Ownership without clarity is a growth ceiling

Retail media needs a named owner with a defined P&L. Without it, short-term decisions dominate and partnerships stay transactional.



Two years to sign is too long

The path from first conversation to signed agreement can take close to two years. Simpler commercial frameworks and earlier governance involvement are the fix.



Shared outcomes, not shared objectives

Market share gain benefits both brand and platform. Build commercial models around market share, customer acquisition, and lifetime value.



Theme 03 | Building the Future Ecosystem in MENA

"The opportunity is not in question. The question is who builds the foundation, and how fast."



Social commerce at scale is no longer out of reach

Group buying mechanics and AI-powered brand agents are the blueprint. MENA has the infrastructure and data. Tool readiness was what was missing. The tools are ready now.



The capability gap is closing - but risks fragmenting

Retailers, brands and agencies are all investing in capability. The risk: closing the gap in ten directions at once without shared standards.



A shared baseline beats ten parallel ecosystems

MENA's retail landscape is highly fragmented. The antidote is a shared floor of minimum standards on top of which every player differentiates. That baseline does not yet exist.



Agentic commerce will change the rules

AI agents could make the walled garden model obsolete. Strategies built on the assumption that today's fragmented data environment is permanent are built on the wrong foundation.



What Comes Next | ABG's Role

The ABG Retail Media Committee is building the foundation the market needs

- ✓ A baseline measurement framework with shared metrics and common methodologies
- ✓ Data transparency guidelines that resolve ownership through agreed commercial frameworks
- ✓ An education programme spanning executives, legal teams, and trade marketing functions
- ✓ A neutral, ongoing forum for cross-industry dialogue - starting now