

Consumer search behavior in fashion ecommerce

The agentic commerce revolution
and Gen Z's visual-first discovery



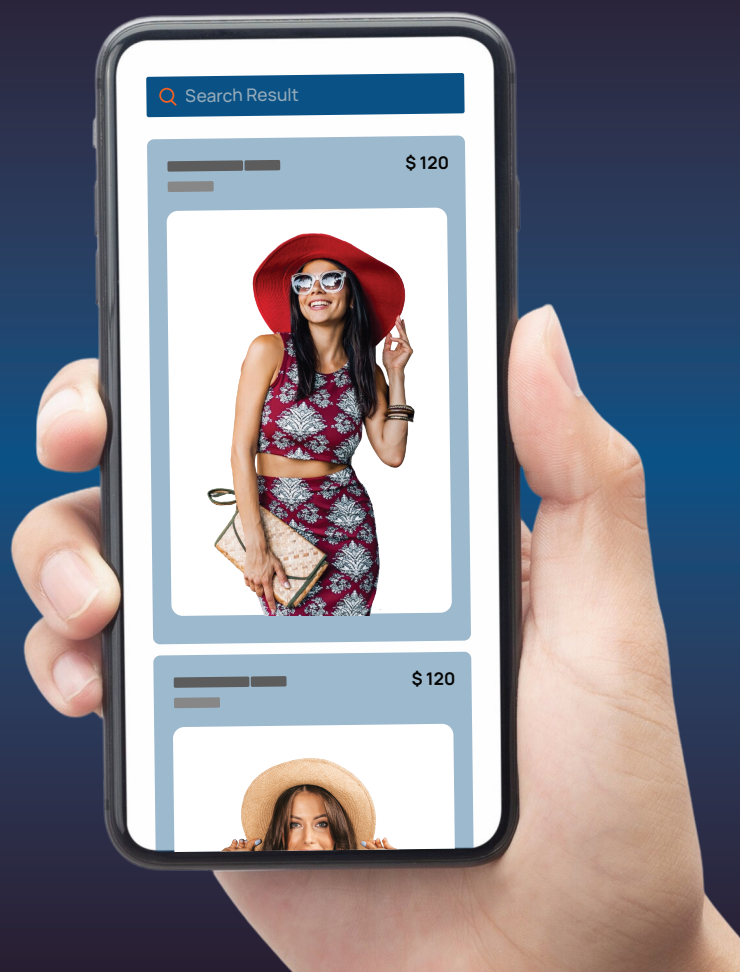
Introduction

The fashion ecommerce landscape in 2025

Fashion ecommerce has entered a transformative era where artificial intelligence isn't just assisting shoppers; it's shopping for them. The convergence of agentic AI, visual discovery, and instant gratification has fundamentally reshaped how consumers find and purchase fashion online.



Today's fashion consumers, particularly GenZ, who now represent **40% of global consumers**, have abandoned traditional text-based search in favor of visual-first discovery methods. They shop across multiple channels simultaneously, expect AI agents to curate their wardrobes, and demand personalized interactions that feel effortless and intuitive.



The rise of agentic commerce has introduced autonomous AI shopping assistants that don't just respond to queries—they anticipate needs, negotiate prices, coordinate outfits, and complete purchases on behalf of users. Meanwhile, Gen Z's visual-native behavior has made image-based search the default discovery method, with 62% of Gen Z shoppers preferring visual search over traditional keyword entry.

Adding to this shift, quick commerce has reshaped expectations around speed, with consumers demanding not just relevant results, but the ability to discover, decide, and receive products within hours.

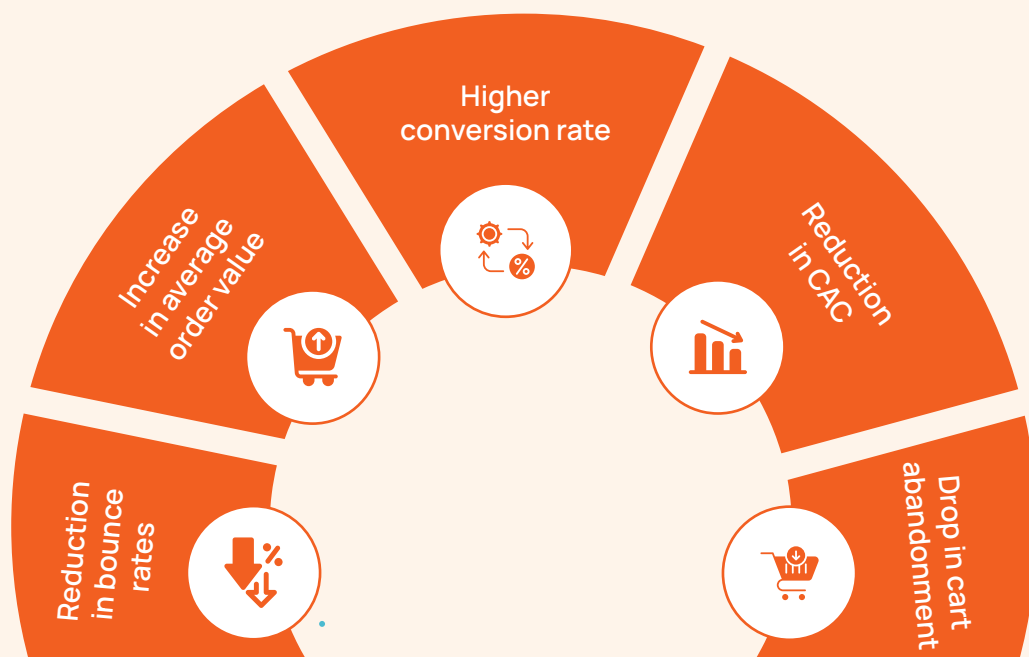
The stakes have never been higher.

Website visitors increasingly rely on search as their first step, while younger audiences prefer more visual and intuitive ways to explore products. As shoppers move toward AI-driven visual discovery, their intent becomes clearer and their path to purchase becomes faster. For fashion brands, adopting an intelligent, visual-first, agent-enabled search experience strengthens conversion, supports deeper engagement, and builds long-term loyalty.

The business impact of agentic and visual search

For fashion retailers, embracing agentic commerce and visual search optimization delivers measurable business results:

Use Agentic Commerce and Visual Search for Ecommerce Growth



	Visual search leads to a 27% higher conversion rate on ecommerce platforms
	AI shopping agents increase average order value by 32% through intelligent bundling and cross-selling
	64% of consumers now turn to AI tools when exploring or evaluating products, a pattern that is especially strong among younger shoppers.
	Agentic commerce can lift conversion rates by 25% by delivering the next best action automatically for every shopper.
	Cart abandonment drops by 30% when AI agents guide the entire purchase journey

As fashion catalogs expand and Gen Z purchasing power grows (expected to reach **\$12 trillion by 2030**), retailers must prioritize visual-first, agent-enabled experiences to stay competitive.

Real-world impact:

- **30% to 45%** of US consumers use Generative AI for product research and comparison
- A survey indicates that **35%** of respondents express some level of openness to letting AI handle autonomous purchasing decisions.
- **Companies using agent-driven systems** are seeing conversion lifts of 20-40%, cart abandonment drops of 30-50%, and customer lifetime value gains of 25-35%.

The evolution of search in fashion ecommerce

Modern fashion search has evolved through **distinct phases**:

Phase 1: Keyword Search: Basic text queries like "red dress" or "men's shoes"

Phase 2: Attribute-Based Search Detailed filters: "midi floral dress, size M, cotton, under ₹2000"

Phase 3: Visual Search: Image uploads, screenshot shopping, and camera-based discovery

Phase 4: Agentic Commerce: Autonomous AI agents that anticipate, curate, and purchase without explicit searches

Phase 5: Multimodal Fusion: Combining visual input, natural language, voice, and behavioral data for holistic discovery

Key patterns in Gen Z fashion search behavior

Analysis of shopping patterns reveals how Gen Z searches differently:

Visual-first behaviors:

- **Outfit capture:** Photographing or screenshotting complete looks from social media, then using visual search to identify individual pieces
- **Vibe-based search:** Using abstract visual queries like "dark academia aesthetic" with accompanying mood boards
- **Influencer replication:** Uploading influencer photos and asking "find this exact outfit" or "find affordable alternatives"
- **Mixed-media queries:** Combining text descriptions with images ("show me this dress in green")



Agentic preferences:

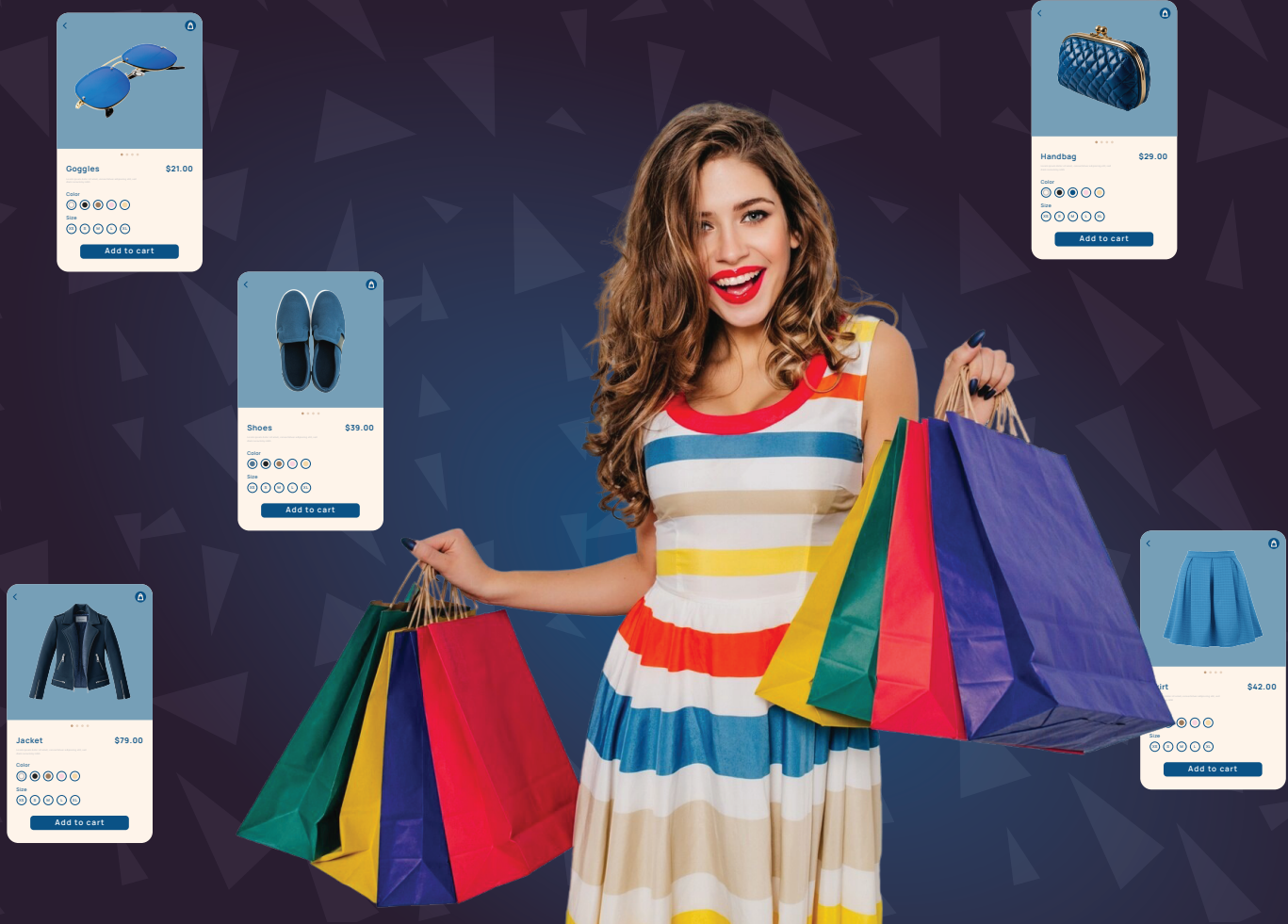
- **Style quizzing:** Engaging with AI agents through visual preference tests (showing images and selecting favorites)
- **Autonomous alerts:** Setting agents to notify them when items matching their aesthetic arrive or go on sale
- **Social proof integration:** Trusting AI recommendations that incorporate what their peers are buying
- **Sustainability filters:** Directing agents to prioritize eco-friendly or ethical brands

Traditional patterns (still relevant):

- **Trend-oriented searches:** "Bloke core fashion," "clean girl aesthetic," "indie sleaze revival"
 - **Event-based searches:** "Coachella outfits," "wedding guest dresses," "holiday party looks"
 - **Brand loyalty:** Direct searches for specific designers or collaborations
 - **Budget constraints:** "Trending items under ₹1500," "luxury dupes"
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Challenges in modern fashion ecommerce search

Despite technological advances, brands face unique challenges in the agentic, visual-first era:



Visual search challenges

Image quality and context: Users upload low-resolution screenshots, photos with multiple items, or images with poor lighting. Visual search engines must extract relevant fashion items despite these limitations.

Style interpretation: A photo of a "casual outfit" could mean streetwear, bohemian, minimalist, or athleisure. Context-aware systems must understand nuanced style differences.

Exact match vs. similar style: Users sometimes want exact replicas, other times "inspired by" alternatives. Search systems must clarify intent.

Real-time catalog matching: Visual searches must scan millions of SKUs in milliseconds while accounting for color variations, fabric textures, and silhouette similarities.

Agentic commerce challenges

Shift from search to conversation

Traditional keyword-based SEO and on-site search optimization become less relevant when users ask AI agents open-ended questions like "Find me a sustainable white sneaker under \$100." Retailers must ensure their product data is structured for conversational retrieval rather than keyword matching.

Dependence on external AI ecosystems

As discovery moves to AI interfaces (ChatGPT, Google's Gemini, or Amazon's Rufus), brands lose control over how and when their products appear. Visibility depends on how well product data integrates with these models' knowledge graphs and APIs.

Data completeness and enrichment

AI agents prioritize products with rich, accurate, and semantically tagged metadata—descriptions, attributes, materials, use-cases, and lifestyle context. Many retailers lack the depth or consistency in their catalogs needed for agents to surface their products confidently.

Traditional challenges (still relevant)

- **Synonym and variant handling:** "Joggers" vs. "track pants," "sneakers" vs. "kicks," "crop top" vs. "cropped tee"
- **Typo tolerance:** "Lehnga" for "lehenga," "sneekers" for "sneakers," "boho" for "bohemian"
- **Inventory synchronization:** Real-time updates to prevent showing out-of-stock items
- **Speed requirements:** Gen Z expects results in under 1 second; delays cause immediate abandonment



The future of fashion search: 2026 and beyond

Visual-first behaviors:

- **Multimodal search fusion:** Combining voice, text, images, and video in single queries—"Show me outfits like this [image] but in warmer tones, available for delivery today"
- **Emotional AI:** Agents that detect mood through interaction patterns and suggest outfits accordingly—"comfort fashion" during stressful periods, "confidence boosters" before important events
- **Virtual closet integration:** AI agents managing entire digital wardrobes, preventing duplicate purchases and maximizing outfit combinations
- **Predictive shopping:** Agents that purchase before users even ask, based on predictive behavior models and upcoming needs
- **Collaborative agents:** Multiple users' agents communicating to coordinate group shopping (buying matching outfits for events) or sharing style insights

Preparing for the Agentic Future

Fashion brands must strengthen their data foundations first, then layer intelligence and experiences on top:



Establish a unified data layer that consolidates product attributes, customer behavior, **content metadata**, and inventory signals to power downstream decisions.



Invest in visual search infrastructure that can map product data and images into a coherent discovery framework.



Develop or integrate autonomous shopping agents that rely on clean structured data to reason across catalog, preferences, and context.



Optimize for Gen Z preferences through enriched product attributes, visual storytelling, and adaptive content generation.



Strengthen trust by increasing transparency in how recommendations and decisions are made using your data layer.

Netcore Unbx: fueling visual and agentic discovery

Agentic commerce relies on machine-readable fashion intelligence. When users upload a photo of an outfit, the AI must interpret fabric, silhouette, aesthetic, and intent—all of which depend on structured attributes in the retailer’s database. Similarly, AI shopping agents need rich metadata to decide which items fit a user’s style, sustainability preferences, or upcoming events.

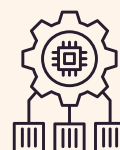
Incomplete or inconsistent product data breaks this chain. A missing “fit type” tag can cause irrelevant visual matches; a misclassified “occasion” attribute can make an agent suggest beachwear for a formal event. Enrichment ensures that every product is context-aware, visually recognizable, and agent-actionable.

Netcore Unbx’s AI-powered catalog enrichment solution

Netcore Unbx’s **enrichment engine** transforms unstructured product data into a deeply intelligent, AI-ready catalog that strengthens both visual search and agentic discovery.

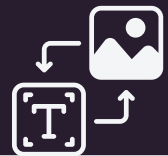
Automated attribute extraction and standardization

AI models analyze product titles, descriptions, and images to detect missing attributes—fabric, pattern, neckline, hemline, sleeve type, or occasion—and automatically standardize them across SKUs.



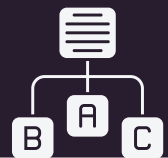
Visual-textual fusion for image understanding

Using computer vision, Netcore Unbx tags product images with cues such as draped silhouette, structured fit, and streetwear aesthetic. These visual signals help the engine match screenshots and social photos with high accuracy.



Semantic and synonym mapping

The enrichment engine broadens vocabulary by linking colloquial and regional terms, such as sneakers and kicks, to the correct catalog entries. This linguistic mapping keeps both visual and text queries aligned with consistent results.



Agentic-ready metadata layer

Netcore Unbx's newest enrichment layer adds structured data tailored for agentic commerce. Each product gets machine-readable signals like occasion, usage context, and sustainability score, giving AI agents the clarity needed to evaluate options and complete decisions with confidence.



Continuous learning loop

User behavior, agent recommendations, and visual search results feed back into the enrichment engine, allowing the system to refine tagging accuracy and semantic understanding over time.



Netcore Unbx Visual Search: Turning Every Image into a Shopping Journey

Whether it's a screenshot of a TikTok outfit, a saved Instagram look, or a street-style photo, GenZ's discovery starts with visuals. Netcore Unbx's **Visual Search** bridges this gap between inspiration and purchase by letting shoppers use any image as the starting point for product discovery.

Powered by **advanced computer vision and multimodal AI**, Netcore Unbx analyzes visual patterns, styles, colors, and attributes within an image to instantly surface matching or complementary products from your catalog.

Key capabilities:

Image-to-product discovery: Shoppers can upload or snap an image, and Netcore Unbx identifies visually similar products—no keywords required.

Contextual understanding: Goes beyond exact matches to capture the broader aesthetic, like “boho summer” or “streetwear minimalist.”

Cross-category detection: Recognizes multiple items within a single image (like a jacket, bag, and shoes) and recommends each individually.

Mobile-optimized experience: Built for the visual-first, mobile-native Gen Z shopper.

By transforming static catalogs into visually searchable experiences, Netcore Unbx helps retailers meet shoppers where their inspiration begins—within their camera rolls and social feeds. A single image becomes the new search bar, creating faster, frictionless discovery that feels as natural as taking a photo.

Conclusion

The fashion ecommerce landscape has fundamentally transformed. Gen Z's visual-first approach and the emergence of agentic commerce represent not incremental changes, but a complete paradigm shift in how consumers discover and purchase fashion. Fashion brands face a critical decision: adapt to visual-first, agent-enabled commerce or risk becoming irrelevant to the next generation of shoppers. The opportunity is immense—early adopters of these technologies are seeing conversion rate increases of 200-300% among Gen Z consumers.



Netcore Unbx's specialized solutions provide fashion retailers with the complete toolkit needed to thrive in this new era—from advanced visual search that understands Gen Z's screenshot culture to autonomous AI agents that act as personal stylists. Our ongoing investment in computer vision, agentic AI, and Gen Z behavioral research ensures our clients stay at the forefront of fashion commerce innovation.

The future of fashion search isn't about better keyword matching—it's about eliminating search entirely through intelligent, visual-first, agent-powered discovery.

Explore how Netcore Unbx can transform your business.

About Netcore Unbx

Netcore Unbx is an AI-powered product discovery platform consistently recognized as a leader by independent analysts. Named a Leader in Gartner's 2025 Magic Quadrant™ for Commerce Search and Product Discovery for the second consecutive year and earning the highest score in Current Offering & In-Session Personalization in The Forrester Wave™: Commerce Search and Product Discovery Solutions, Q3 2025, Netcore Unbx stands at the forefront of the category. Powered by advanced search, merchandising, personalization, and Agentic ecommerce, Netcore Unbx ensures shoppers find the right products faster, leading to higher conversions, order values, and customer satisfaction.



205 W 37th St,
New York, NY 10018



sales@unbx.com
support@unbx.com



+1 (650) 282-5788
