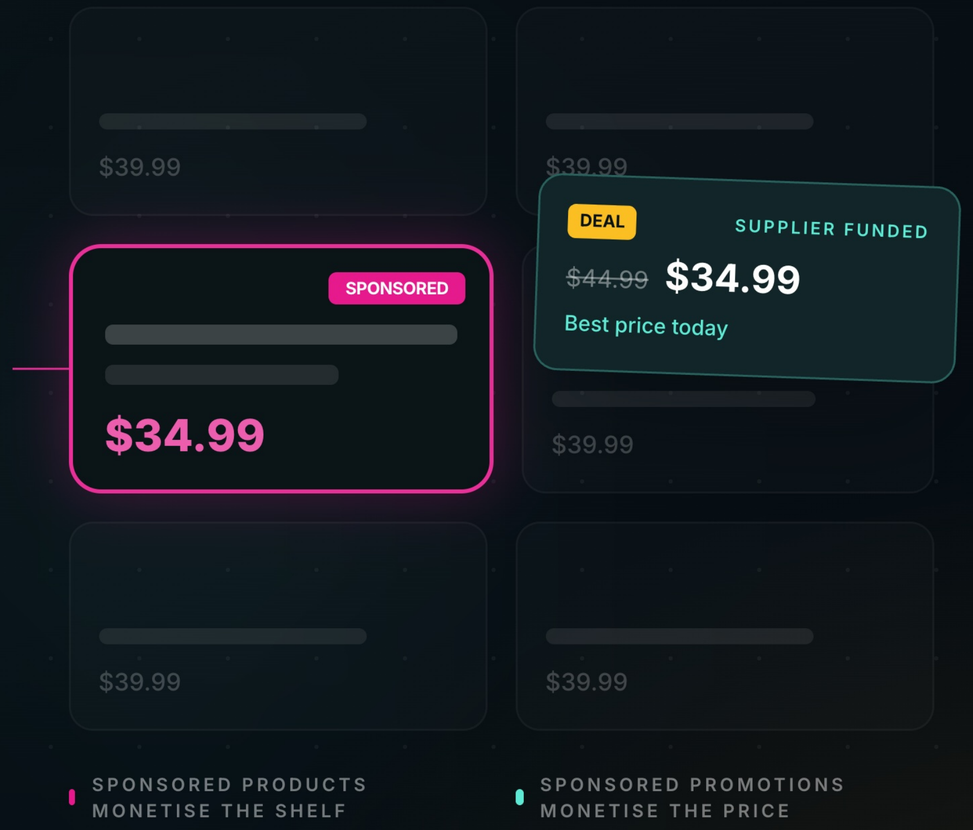
ParticularAudience

Retail Media is Eating Trade

Where the money came from — and where it goes next.

James Taylor · Founder & CEO, Particular Audience

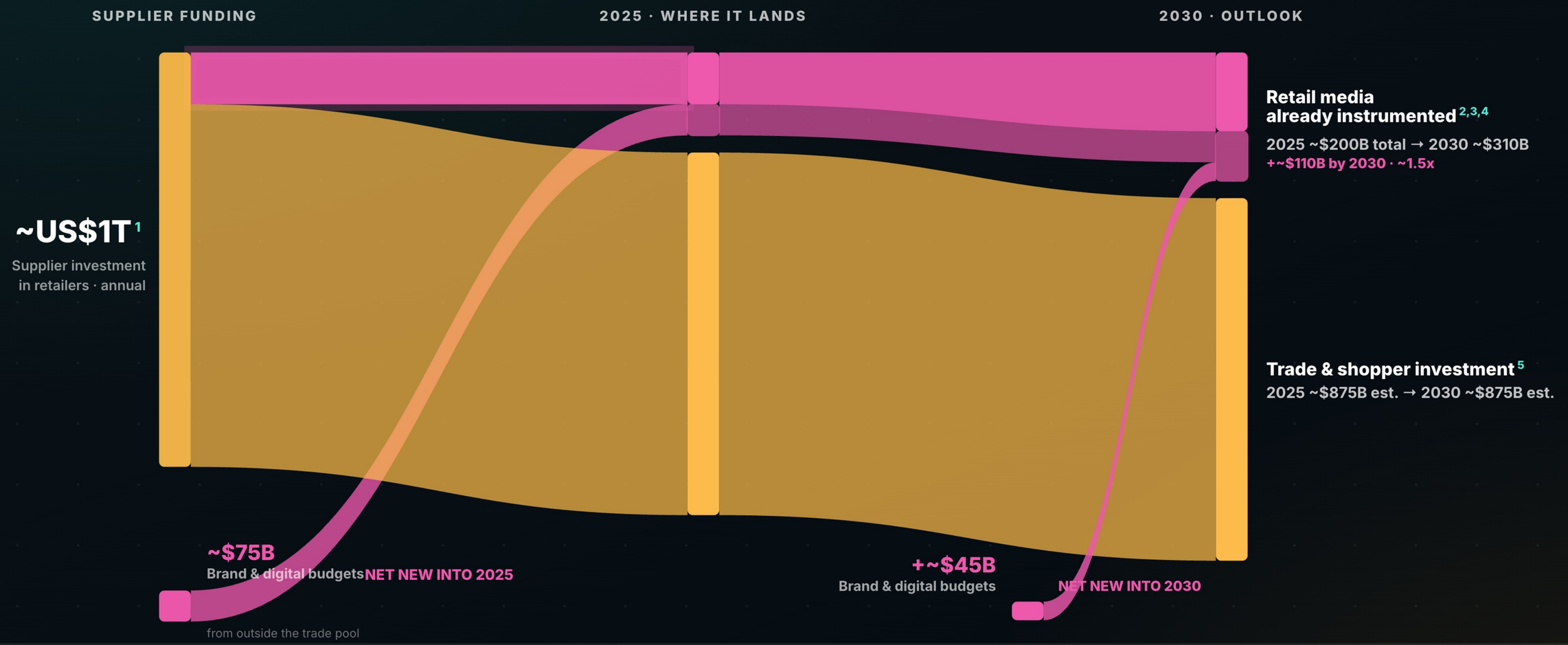


WHERE SUPPLIER MONEY GOES

Retail Media grew by modernising shopper access.

TRADE MONEY · RETAIL MEDIA · TRADE MEDIA

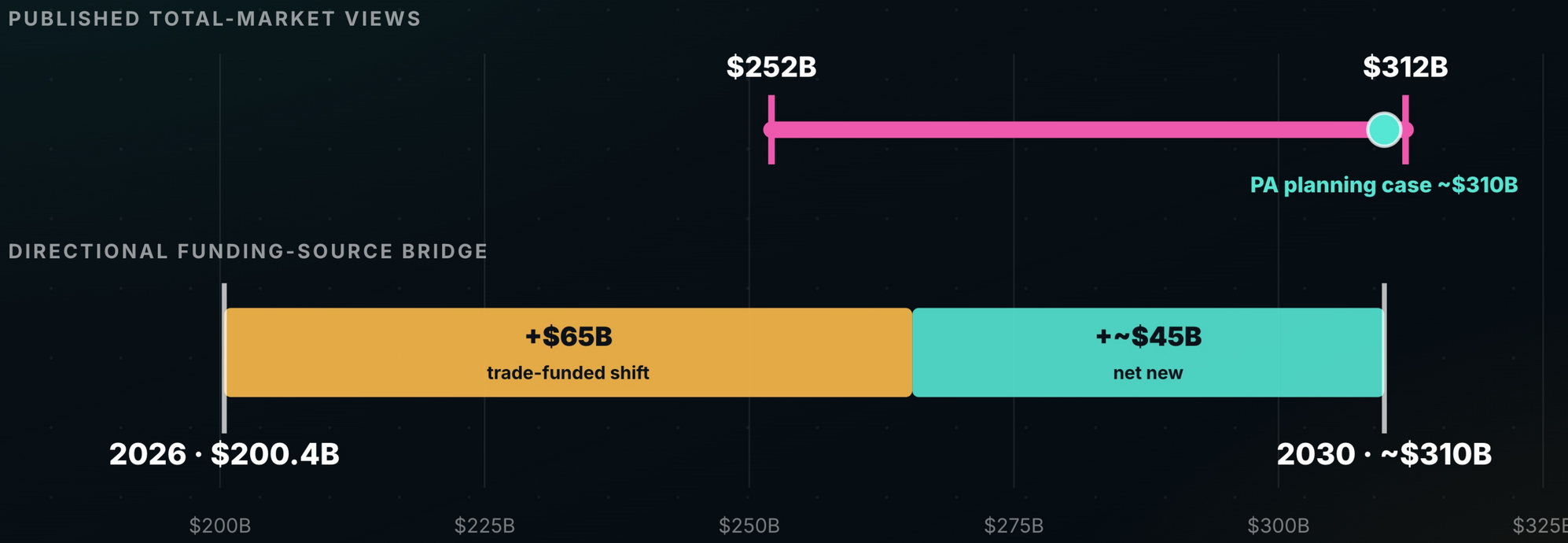
One opaque block of trade and shopper investment, and one instrumented destination. 62% of retail-media funding came out of that block, alongside net-new brand money — and the block itself cannot be sized precisely because of rebates, contra, discounts and exclusives.



SOURCES: **1** Pool ~US$1T — Forrester / Lawrie citing Rob Hand, Dec 2021 | **2** Retail media 2026 US$200.4B — WARC, Aug 2026 | **3** 62% of retail-media funding from trade + shopper budgets — Forrester via Digiday, Mar 2025 | **4** 2030 ~$310B — Forrester, Oct 2025 ($312B); range $252–312B, WPP / Forrester / Omdia | **5** Category split and 2030 re-split — Particular Audience structural amalgamation, not a published figure. Trade lines are held flat to 2030: trade's size is obscured by rebates, contra, discounts and exclusives, so we make no claim it falls in dollars — retail media taking share of the money is the point | **6** Line classification — IAB US / Europe, 2026 | **7** Net-new inflow ~$75B — residual of the 62% share against the WARC total; 2030 split is a PA directional case — *Trade-funded retail media sits inside the ~US$1T (not additive); net-new money is additive on top. Trade is hard to estimate — rebates, contra, discounts, exclusives and claim-backs obscure its true size — so trade lines are held flat to 2030 rather than shown falling; retail media growing to take share of the money is the point, not a shrinking trade base. Category splits and the 2030 column are a PA amalgamation and directional case, not a forecast.*

Retail Media is heading toward US$300B. The route there is not one forecast.

Published total-market views on top; a directional funding-source scenario underneath.



SOURCES: WARC — Aug 2026 | WPP — Jun 2025 | Forrester — Oct 2025 | Omdia — Sep 2025 | PA directional planning bridge

The US$252–312B whisker is the spread between published 2030 provider views, not a confidence interval. The +US$65B trade-funded shift and +US$45B net-new bridge is a PA directional scenario to the ~US$310B planning case, not a forecast decomposition.

Brands didn't move for the ad format. They moved for outcomes and control.

What trade money can't do, next to what buying it like media does.

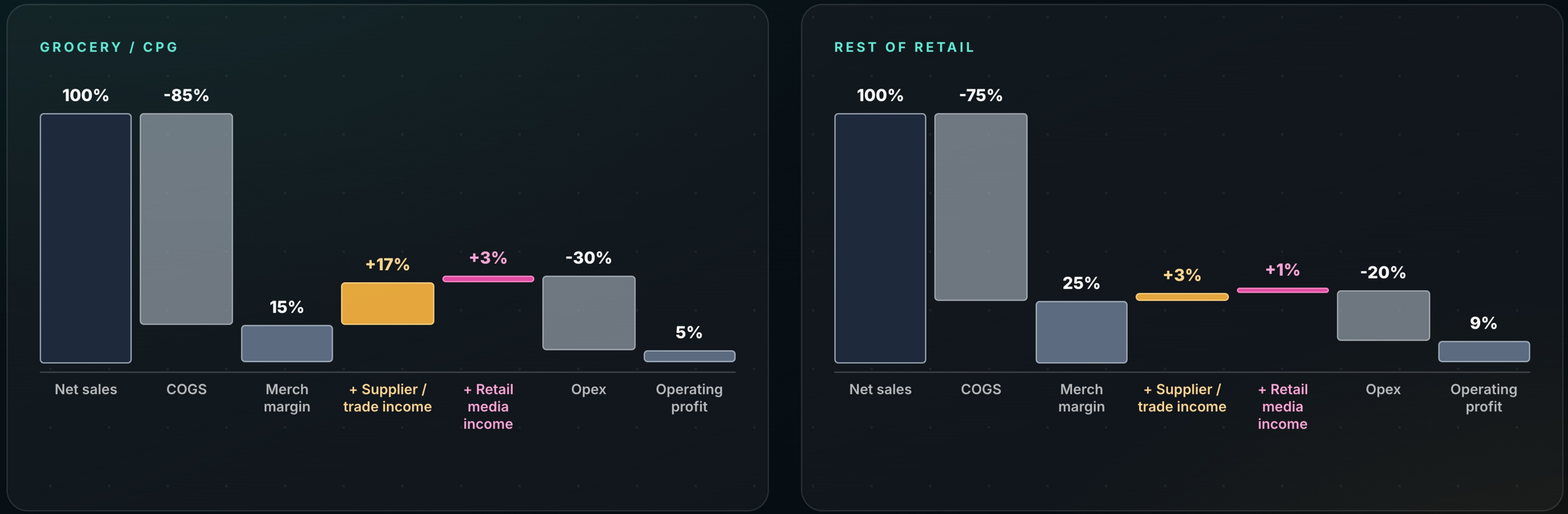
Transparency ~~Lump-sum allowance, reconciled by claim-back~~ See funded units, fees and reconciliation	**Targeting** ~~Applies to every shopper equally~~ Eligible SKU, retailer and price context	**Measurement** ~~Measured against a plan, not an outcome~~ Connect offers to sales; test incremental effect	**Smaller commitments** ~~Annual negotiation, whole-year commitment~~ Cap funding and units before wider activation
Agility ~~Locked months before demand is visible~~ React to a live gap, stock or launch window	**Optimisation** ~~Set once, run to term~~ Choose no action, match, beat or other value	**Outcomes** ~~Volume bought at whatever the discount costs~~ Buy profitable response, not blanket subsidy	**Self-service** ~~A meeting, a spreadsheet and a signature~~ Configure, cap and launch without a negotiation

SOURCES: Forrester — Oct 2025 forecast | Forrester Consulting / Mastercard — Mar 2024 | IAB US / Europe — Trade & Media one-pager, 2026

Strategic synthesis, not a causal survey of why each budget moved. Smaller tests depend on contract terms; measurement capability is not proof of incrementality.

In grocery, supplier-funded income is the P&L.

Two structures, % of net sales. Trade income is larger than the merchandise margin's contribution to profit in grocery — and far thinner everywhere else.



~17% of net sales is supplier / trade income against **~3%** from retail media: on the P&L, roughly six dollars of supplier trade money for every one dollar of retail media — and the six dollars settle without bidding, targeting, pacing or attribution.

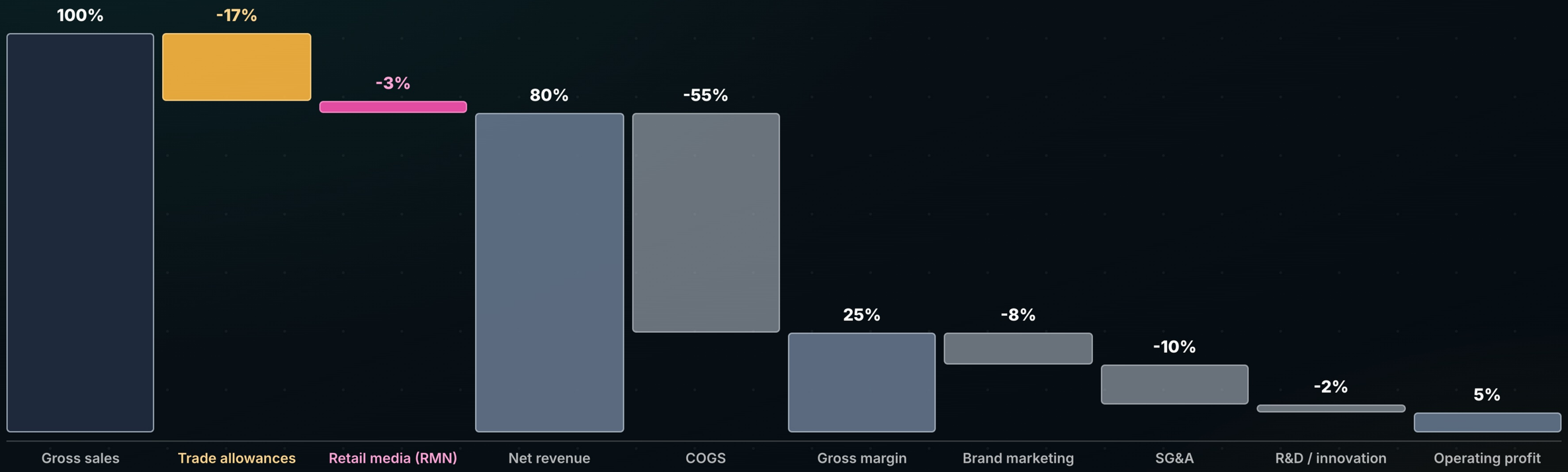
SOURCES: PwC Strategy& — trade-term strategy | IAB Europe / Mediasense — accounting, Mar 2026, p2 | IFRS 15 paragraphs 70–72 | PA analytical model

Illustrative structural model of a CPG cohort, not audited accounts. Contra-revenue treatment follows IFRS 15; local GAAP may differ.

THE SUPPLIER P&L

Trade is the supplier's largest discretionary line.

CPG manufacturer P&L, % of gross sales. Trade allowances run at roughly five times the retail-media line.



Moving a budget between the two accounting lines does not create a second dollar of profit — it changes what the dollar can prove.

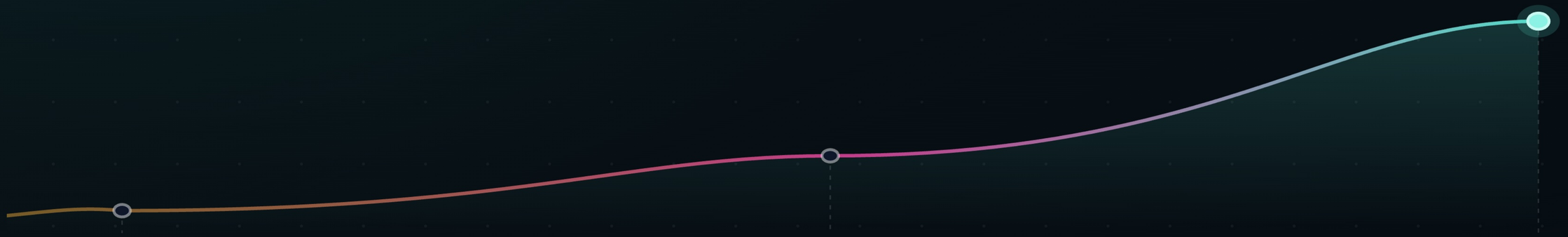
SOURCES: PwC Strategy& — trade-term strategy | IAB Europe / Mediasense — accounting, Mar 2026, p2 | IFRS 15 paragraphs 70–72 | PA analytical model

Illustrative structural model of a CPG cohort, not audited accounts. Contra-revenue treatment follows IFRS 15; local GAAP may differ.

THE PATTERN

Each budget that became measurable moved. Each move was faster than the last.

Three different pools of money, one pattern: a handshake commitment swapped for something you buy in units and can measure. The curve is the pace quickening, not one pool growing.



2005–2015

Shopper marketing goes digital

In-store activation moved toward planned, measurable programmes.

2012–2025

Trade budgets → Retail Media

36% of reported retail-media funding came from trade, 26% from shopper budgets.

2026 ONWARD

Pricing and promotions → Trade Media

The biggest pool left, and the only one still bought without a unit of delivery.

Pricing and promotions is the last large pool that has not made the trip.

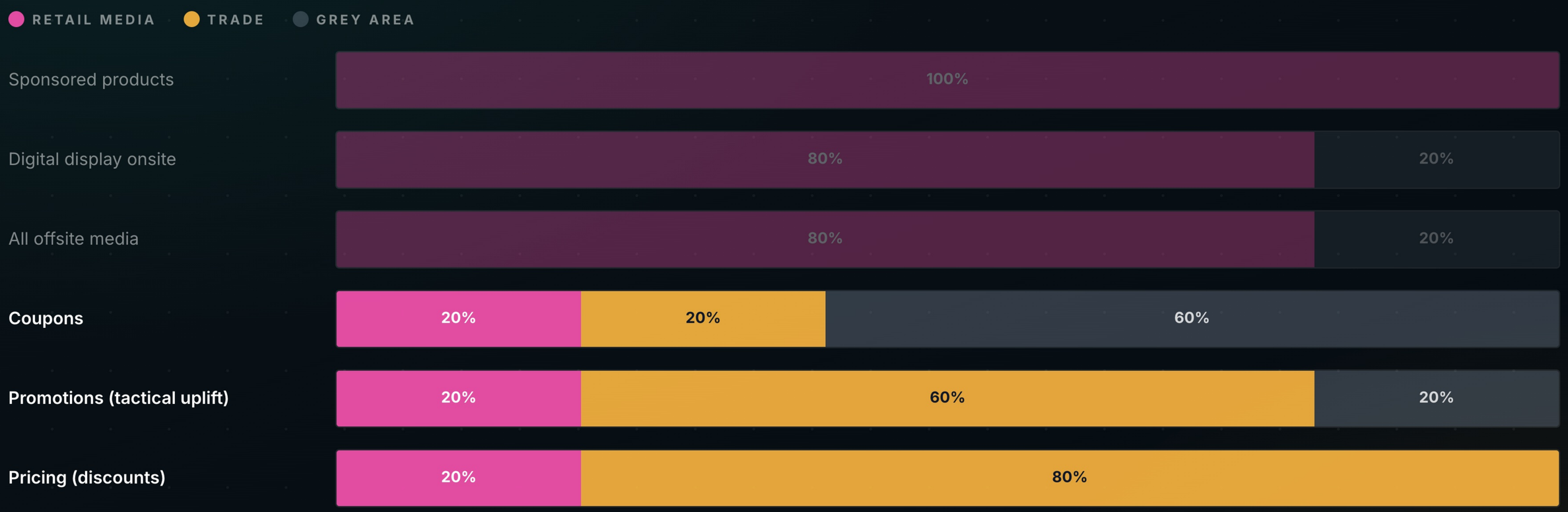
SOURCES: Forrester US survey reported by Digiday — Mar 2025 for the 36% / 26% split

The eras are distinct budgets, not one continuous spend line — the curve shows migrations accelerating, not a single pool growing. The framing is Particular Audience's; only the 36% / 26% funding split is a published figure, and the final era is a thesis, not a forecast.

THE INDUSTRY HAS ALREADY DRAWN THE LINE

Sponsored products are unambiguously media. Price is not — yet.

Share of practitioners classifying each supplier-funded line as retail media or as trade.



The three lines with the most money in them are the three the industry cannot place.

SOURCES: IAB US / Europe — Trade & Media one-pager, 2026

Qualitative industry classification exercise; respondent count not disclosed. Remainder of each bar is the grey area owned by neither operating model.

THE NEAREST THING THAT EXISTS

Brands already pay to shift units. Retailers can own more of the economics.

Ibotta shows the commercial model at national scale: supplier-funded offers in, revenue earned on each redemption out.

SUPPLIER-FUNDED OFFERS · IBOTTA ESTIMATE

$10–15B

Annual direct-offer exposure

300M+
annualised redemptions

20.9M
active redeemers

ESTIMATED REVENUE YIELD

2.5–3.5%

% of promotion value inferred · PA calculation

PLATFORM ECONOMICS · ANNUALISED

~$355M

Revenue from redeemed outcomes

~78%
reported gross margin

~$0.88
revenue per redemption · CPA/CPR

THE RETAILER INSIGHT

Own the CPA moment.

Brands already pay when a unit moves, but lack efficiency. Trade Media brings that funded action into the retailer's own P&L — with the retailer setting the SKU, margin and budget rules.

Comparable media economics: average discount plus funnel volumes can translate this into equivalent CPM, CPC and CPA benchmarks.

Reported and company-estimated figures · annualised where stated

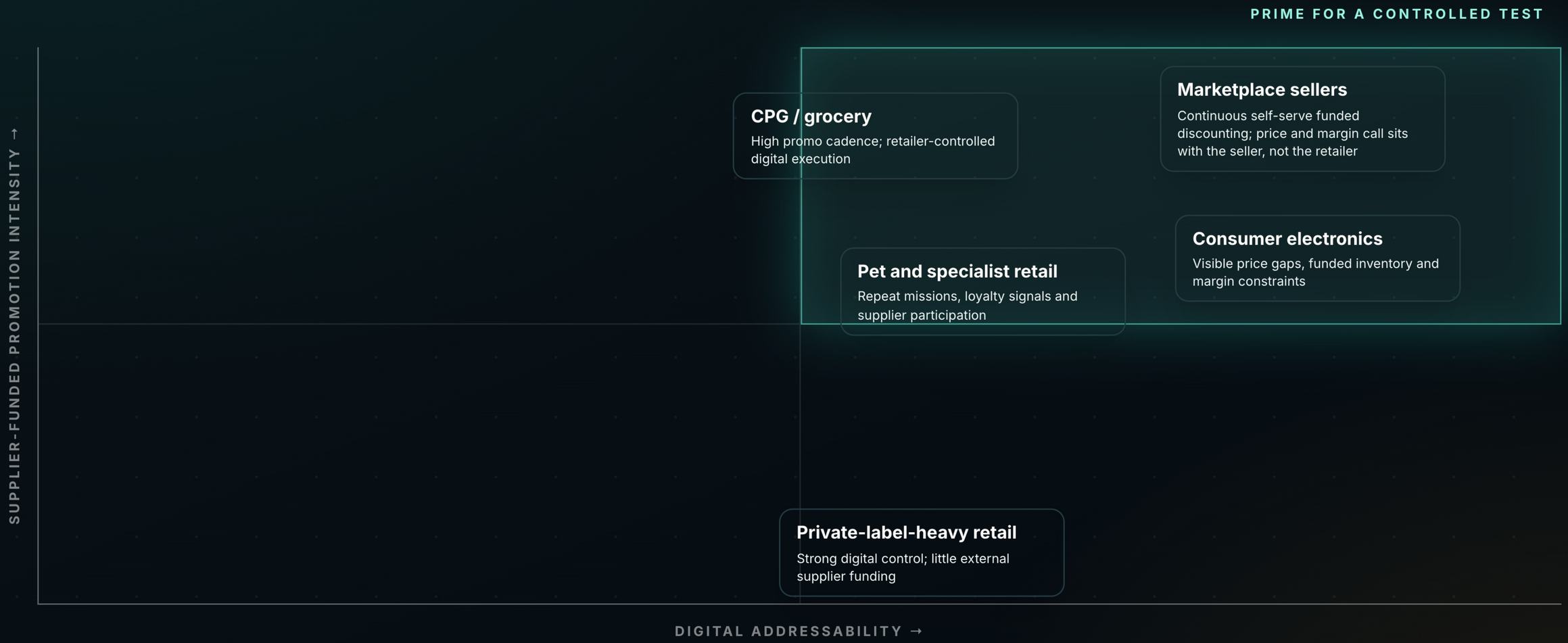
SOURCES: Ibotta Q2 2026 results and Form 10-Q (Aug 2026; ~78% gross margin); direct offer exposure estimated | Ibotta Performance Network materials | Fetch founder statement (Jul 2026) and company-reported figures | ASC 606 / IFRS 15 contra-revenue treatment

Annualised figures are Q2 2026 quarterly results multiplied by four and assume run-rate holds. The $10–15B direct offer exposure is an estimate, not audited revenue. Fetch GMV visibility, receipt volumes and run-rate are company-reported and unaudited; GMV visibility is basket volume, not spend, and platform revenue is not the funded discount value flowing through these networks. P&L classification varies by brand, contract structure and accounting policy; contra-revenue treatment is the general rule. Equivalent CPM, CPC and CPA figures require explicit assumptions for average discount and funnel volumes; they are not disclosed Ibotta metrics.

WHERE ADOPTION CAN START

The mechanics of a good starting category.

The strongest starting points combine addressable digital moments with frequent supplier-funded promotion.



SOURCES: PA retailer P&L archetypes | Anonymised practitioner interviews: global food and beverage, US mass retail, UK electricals, electronics brand | PA strategic interpretation

Readiness hypothesis, not measured category adoption or market sizing. Positions express relative fit against two named criteria: digital addressability and supplier-funded promotion intensity.

TRANSFORMATION

Every unlock has an enterprise constraint on the other side.

Six paired decisions that determine whether funded value becomes operable.

WHAT STOPS IT		WHAT UNLOCKS IT
Blanket markdowns can consume margin	**Price**	Bound the intervention to a valid gap
Trade, contra and media sit on different lines	**Accounting**	Split value, fee and settlement explicitly
Supplier influence can cross pricing boundaries	**Regulation**	Retailer owns price, rules and audit trail
Redemption is mistaken for incrementality	**Measurement**	Hold out eligible shoppers and measure contribution
Store systems and shelf labels lag	**In-store**	Start digital; extend only where execution is reliable
Trade, media, pricing and finance optimise separately	**Ownership**	Shared decision rights and one outcome ledger

SOURCES: IAB US / Europe — 2026 | IAB Australia — Jun 2026 | ACCC / CMA / FTC guidance | Anonymised practitioner interviews | PA strategic interpretation

Qualitative decision framework. Row lengths are visually equal and do not imply measured magnitude, ranking or probability.

WE'RE CALLING IT

Trade Media.

Supplier-funded or co-funded pricing and promotions, bought and operated with the control and accountability of media.

RETAIL MEDIA

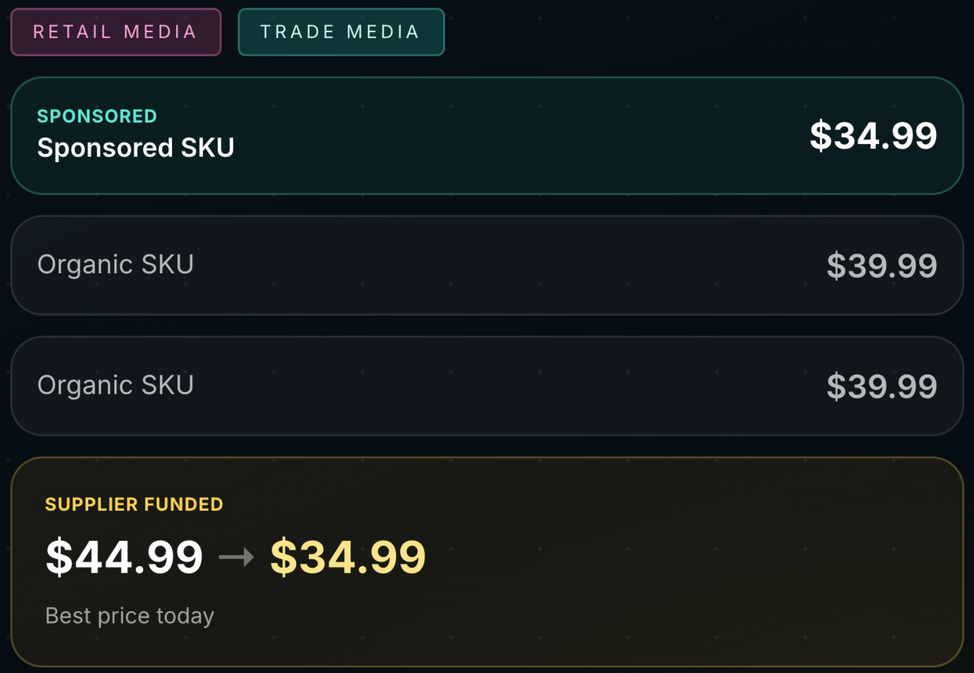
Sponsored products monetise the shelf.

Bidding, targeting, pacing, budget caps and closed-loop attribution. Self-service. The operating system supplier money already got.

TRADE MEDIA

Sponsored promotions monetise the price.

The larger pool. Negotiated annually, executed as blanket markdown, reconciled by claim-back weeks later. No measure, no pacing, no feedback loop.



SOURCES: PA strategic interpretation | IAB US / Europe — definitions, Feb 2026

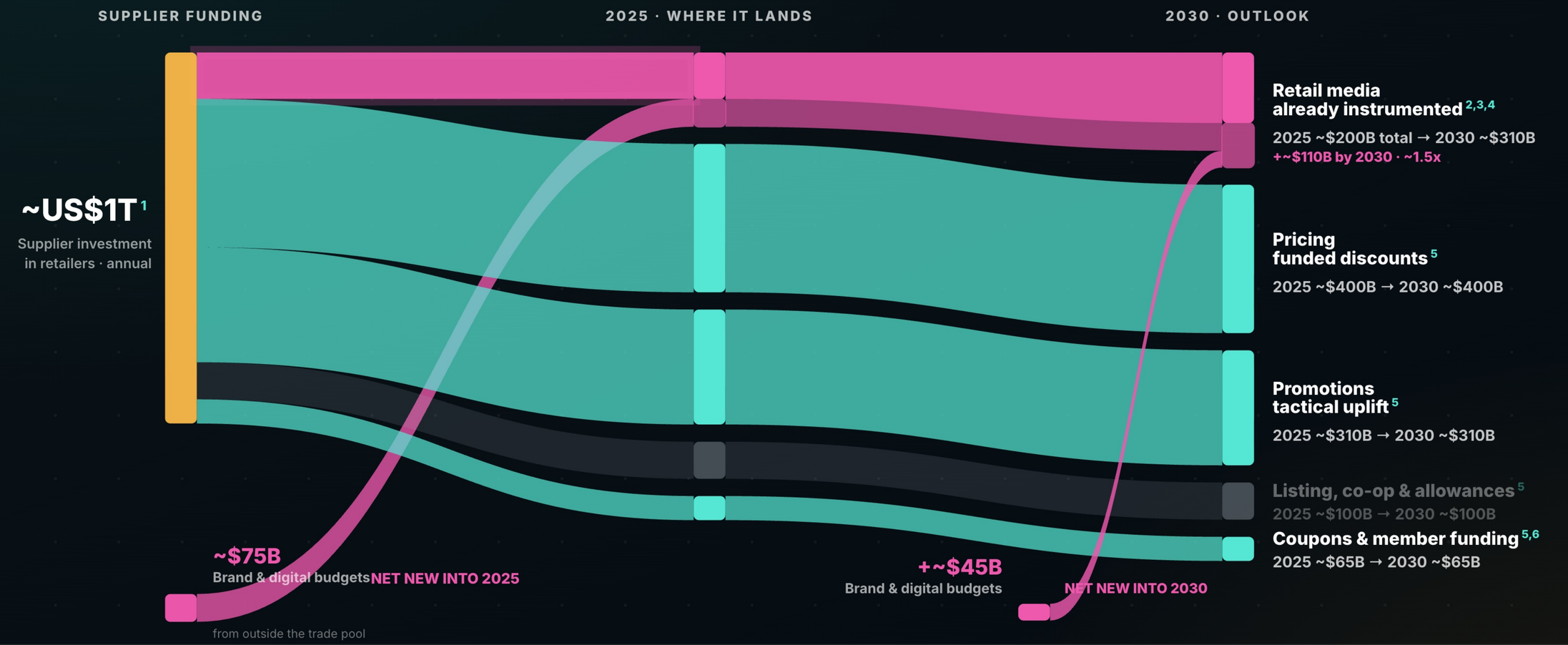
A PA category thesis — not an IAB-defined market, and not a prediction that every trade term becomes advertising revenue.

THE MONEY IS ALREADY THERE

Brands already fund price. Innovators can win investment dollars from laggards and incumbents.

TRADE MONEY · RETAIL MEDIA · TRADE MEDIA

Where the money is not net new at a macro level, innovator retailers can attract it from laggards and offer more than the incumbents. Pricing, promotions and coupons are existing supplier-funded commercial spend — Trade Media changes how that money is deployed: scoped, capped, live and measured.



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THE BUDGET IS ALREADY THERE

Brands already fund discounts. They do it to solve commercial jobs.

Launches, inventory, competitive gaps and shopper recruitment already pull supplier money into price every week.

Launch & trial

Give a new SKU a reason to be chosen now.

Inventory sell-through

Move excess or ageing units before value is lost.

Price defence

Close a live competitive gap at the decision point.

Shopper recruitment

Make value relevant to an eligible new or lapsed buyer.

Retailer growth

Drive units without funding every shopper equally.

> “I would argue that the industry that I work in... 90% of the laptops that we sell... are discounted in some way.”
>
> Head of eCommerce, leading electronics and computers brand

> “We are doing promotions with [a top-3 UK electricals specialist] every single week.”
>
> Head of eCommerce, leading electronics and computers brand

> “If [a major PC manufacturer] have got three months of inventory sat in their warehouses... they want to fund sell through.”
>
> Retail eCommerce and pricing leader

SOURCES: PA practitioner interviews — 2026 | Verbatim quotes, company names anonymised

Practitioner accounts describe category practice and commercial motivations; they are not audited market-wide incidence or spend estimates.

SAME MONEY · DIFFERENT OPERATING MODEL

The change is not the discount. It is the control and measurement.

Trade Media gives existing supplier funding the operating discipline retail media brought to advertising.

ALREADY FUNDED TODAY		TRADE MEDIA
01 Annual / quarterly allocation	→	✓ Live need or opportunity
02 Manual retailer negotiation	→	✓ SKU-level eligibility rules
03 Blanket or fixed-depth discount	→	✓ Fund only the required price gap
04 Delayed proof and claim-back	→	✓ Budget cap + transaction-level ledger

The brand is not being asked to fund discounting for the first time. It is being offered control over where each funded dollar lands—and proof of what it changed.

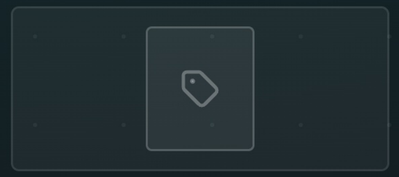
SOURCES: IAB US / Europe — Trade & Media one-pager, 2026 | PA practitioner synthesis

Operating-model comparison, not a claim that all current trade programmes share every limitation or that measurement alone proves incrementality.

Case: Why give away 10% when the market gap only costs 2.7%?

A live market scan finds the valid competitor, checks the SKU and stock state, then funds only the gap required to grant the best market price.

RETAILER PDP · LIVE SKU



HERO PRODUCT · SKU 1042

Our shelf price

$100.00 IN STOCK

BLANKET ANSWER

Give away $10.00

10%

LIVE COMPETITIVE PRICE SCAN

LIKE-FOR-LIKE · STOCK VALIDATED

RETAILER 01.COM

$97.30 LOWEST IN-STOCK

RETAILER 02.COM

$101.20 WE'RE ALREADY BETTER

RETAILER 03.COM

$99.40 $0.60 GAP

RETAILER 04.COM

$96.90 OUT OF STOCK

Match the lowest valid price

Ignore out-of-stock offers · stop when parity is reached

~~$100.00~~

$97.30

PRECISION ANSWER

2.7%

Fund the $2.70 SKU gap—not a $10 blanket discount.

BEST MARKET PRICE GRANTED

Capped · attributable · stops with budget

OBSERVED RESPONSE

~344% conversion uplift where applied

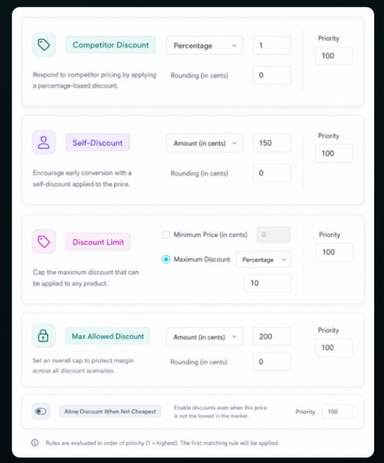
SOURCES: PA — anonymised private commercial case; cross-retailer case-study design language

Observed cohort result supplied by PA; not audited or randomised causal evidence. The 2.7% and ~344% figures are separately supplied private case data. Eligibility, competitor gaps, category mix and measurement design affect outcomes.

THIS IS BUILT, NOT THEORETICAL

Every funded dollar gets a rule — and a record.

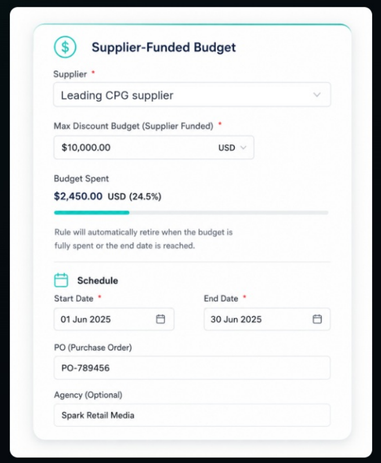
Working platform screens: scope and guardrails are set before launch, supplier funding is capped and paced while live, and the shopper simply gets the best market price.



01 · RULES

Set the rules, not a blanket promo

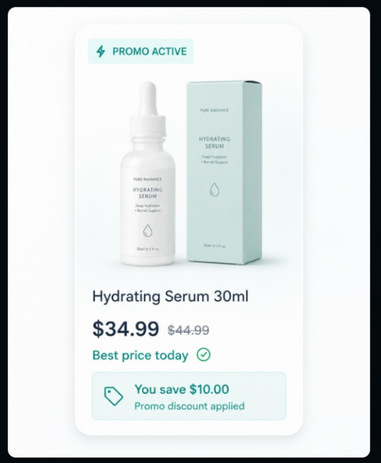
Competitor gap, self-discount, maximum discount and price floor — evaluated by priority at request time.



02 · FUNDING

Supplier funding with a hard cap

Named funder, capped budget, live spend, dates, PO and agency. It stops itself when the money is gone.



03 · SHOPPER

The shopper just sees the best price

Applied at the price moment, with every funded unit recorded for settlement.

Eligible scope

Retailer, SKU, period, permitted intervention.

Margin guardrail

Maximum discount and price floor stay explicit.

Budget cap

Rule retires when funding or the end date is reached.

Live pacing

Funded spend and remaining budget visible while live.

SOURCES: Particular Audience platform screens (supplier-funded discount rules, budget and shopper price display) | PA operating-model design

Screens show product functionality with illustrative values; supplier name, budgets and products are anonymised or sample data. Controls shown are product capability, not a claim about any named retailer deployment.

THE FIRST-MOVER UPSIDE

Can retailers win more supplier money, and drive net-new growth? Money follows money.

Coupon networks already turn supplier-funded value into addressable, measurable offers. The retailer opportunity is to bring that value into the price moment —and compound the result.



RUN ONE CONTROLLED TEST

01 One commercial problem the retailer can solve for a brand

02 One category and authorised funding source

03 One agreed set of price, margin and stock guardrails

04 One measurement design and shared outcome ledger

Retail media · ecommerce/pricing · merchandising · finance/trade

SOURCES: Ibotta public filings and brand materials | Fetch published company materials | PA strategic interpretation

The flywheel is a strategic hypothesis, not a quantified forecast. Existing coupon platforms demonstrate supplier-funded offer demand; this does not imply funding is diverted from retailers.

Retail Media Is Eating Trade.

Are pricing and promotions next?

TODAY

Sponsored Products monetise the shelf.

NEXT?

Sponsored Promotions monetise the price.

Not a new reason for brands to fund discounts—a more controlled, measurable way to deploy the funding they already use.

> *"At some point, this becomes kind of an industry expectation."*
>
> FORMER HEAD OF OMNI-CHANNEL STRATEGY, TOP-3 US MASS RETAILER



James Taylor
CEO & Founder, Particular Audience
james@particularaudience.com
particularaudience.com

SOURCES: PA strategic interpretation | PA — Trade Media proposition

Trade Media is a proposed category for accountable supplier-funded interventions—not a claim that every trade term becomes advertising revenue.