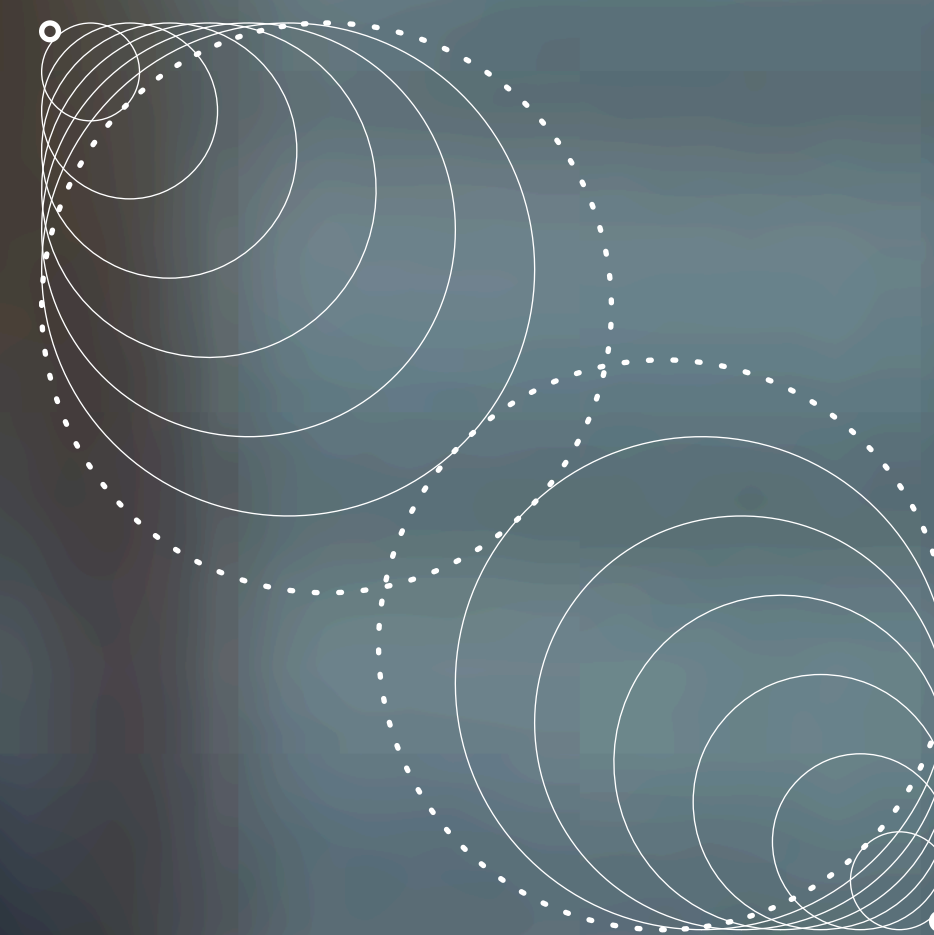
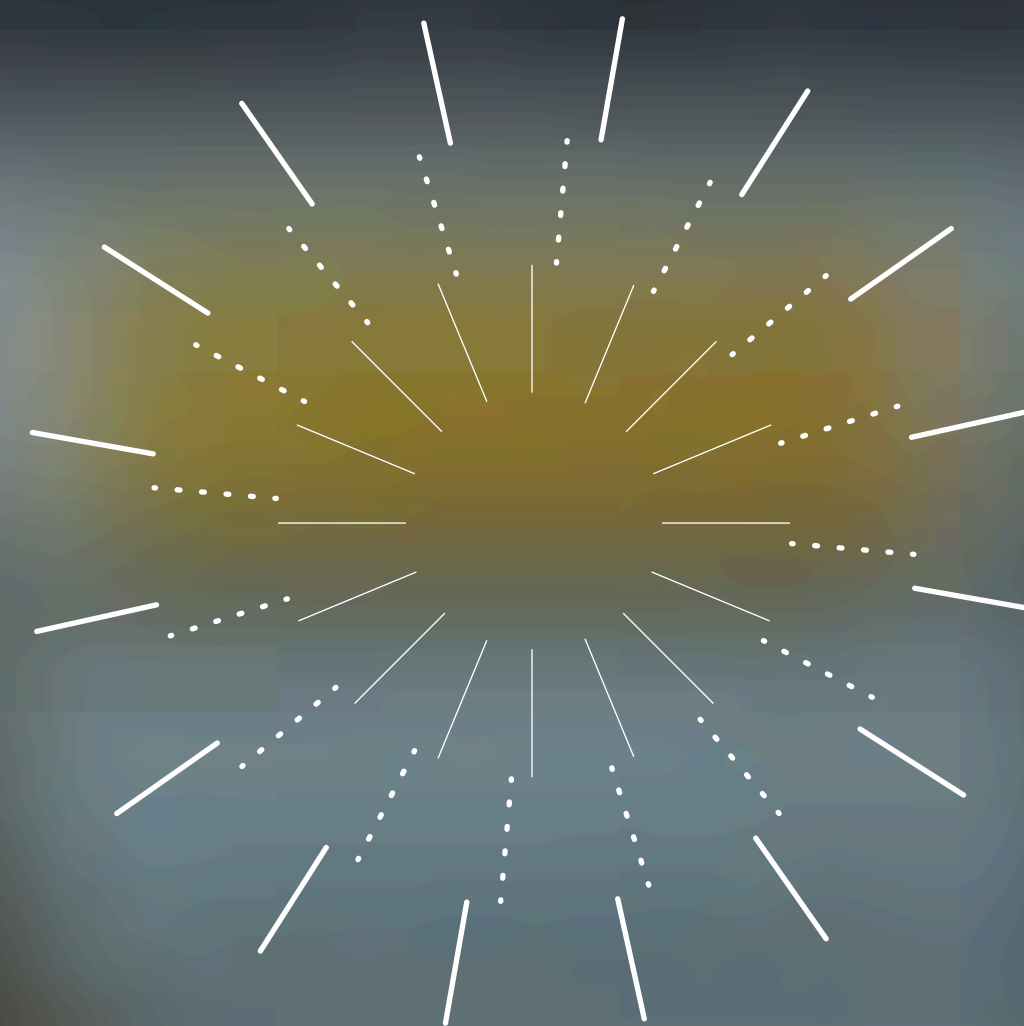


• Essential guide

# The retailer's guide to building a retail media network

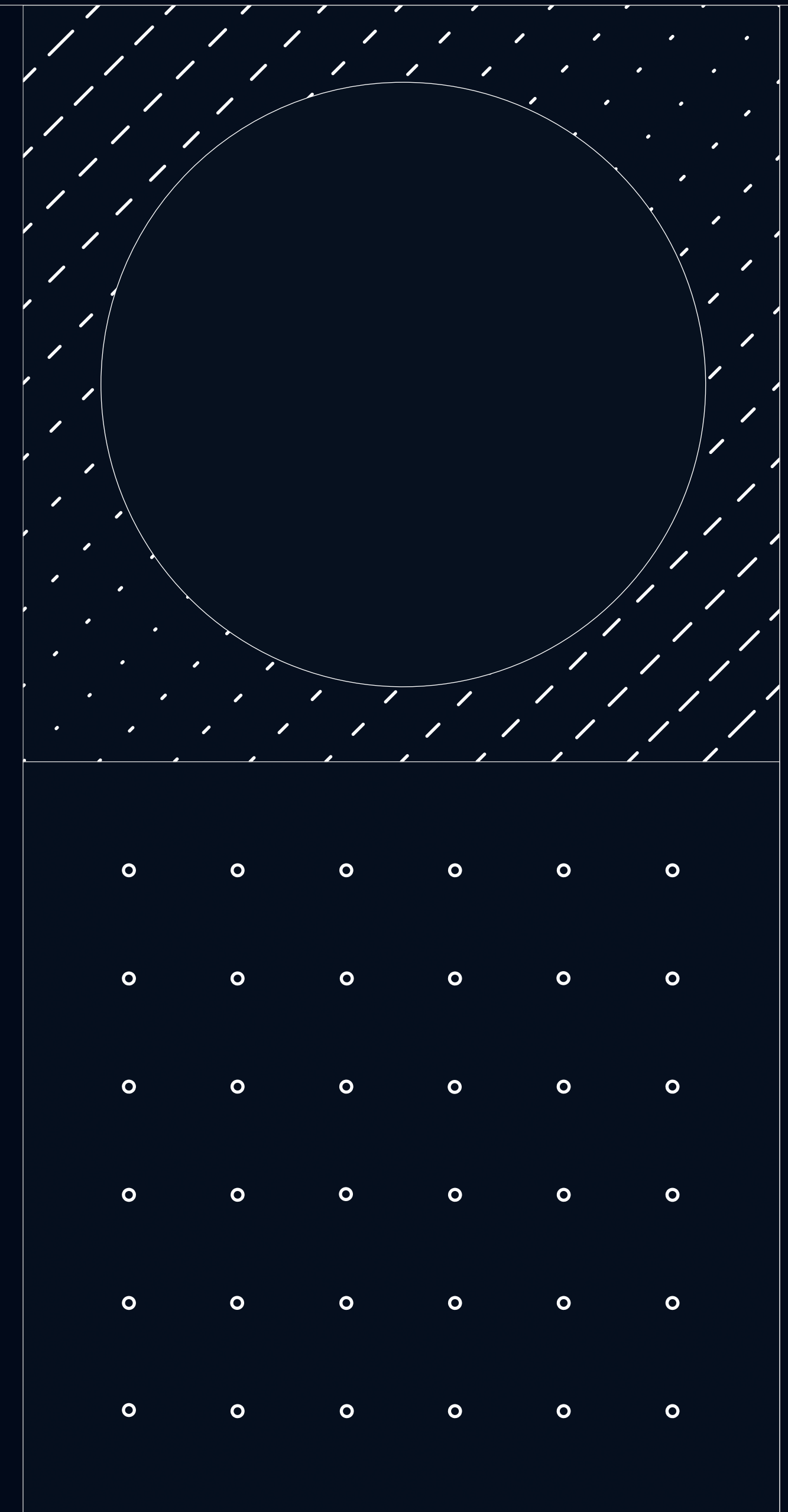




# Table of contents

## Introduction: The opportunity ahead

1. Build vs. buy
2. Where the money is: Onsite vs. offsite ads
3. Data essentials for offsite monetization
4. Don't let measurement be an afterthought
5. The necessary infrastructure
6. Final take: Go bigger than onsite — and don't go it alone







# Introduction: The opportunity ahead

Retailers are sitting on one of the most valuable assets in advertising today: **first-party data tied to real purchase behavior**. That data has the power to drive an entirely new revenue stream.

Retail media isn't new, but it's evolving — fast. What started as banner ads on e-commerce sites has grown into a full-fledged advertising channel. The next wave? **Retailers launching their media businesses**. That means building ad products offering both onsite and offsite targeting, full-funnel attribution, and scalable campaign execution.

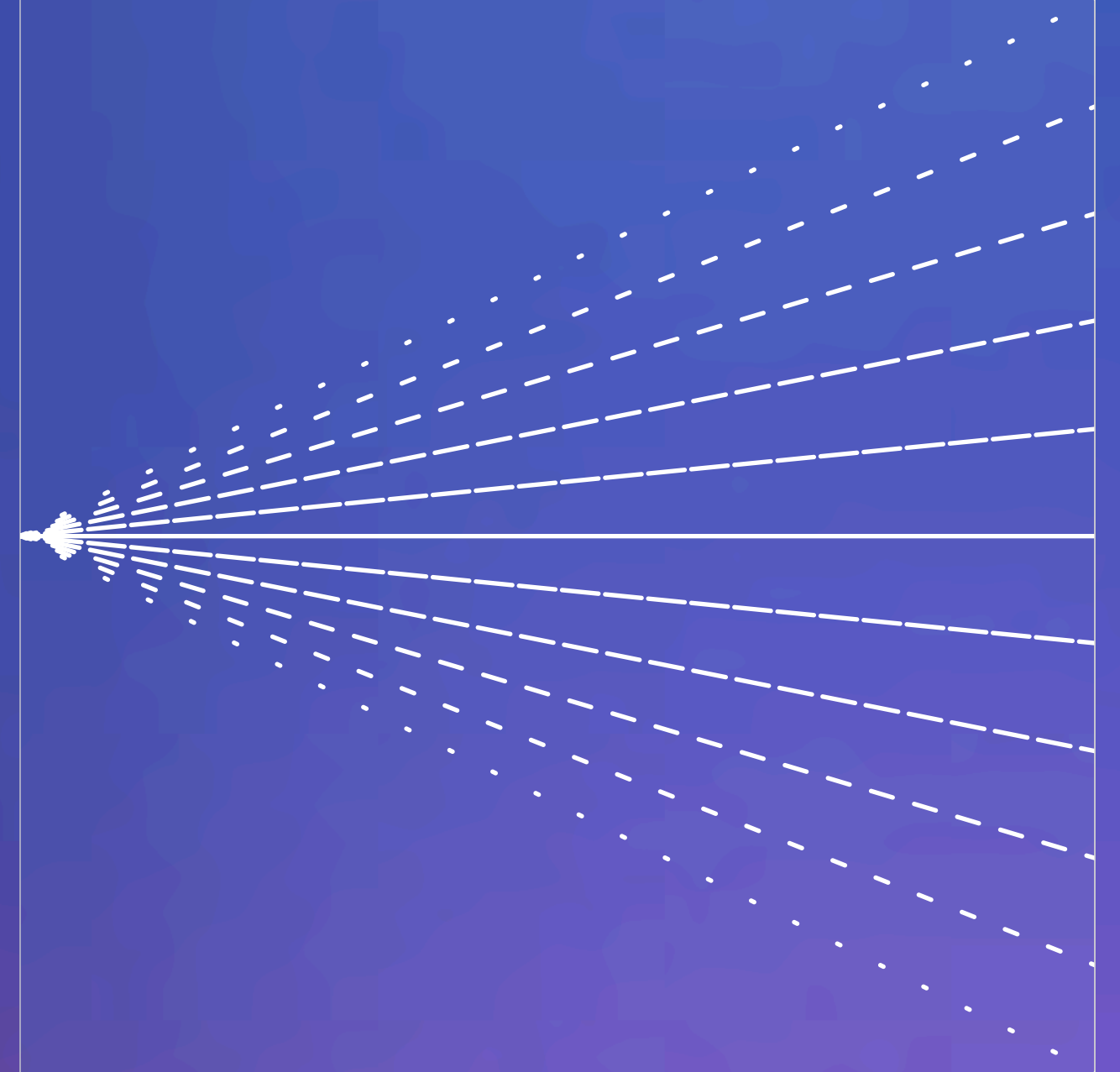
This guide is for retailers who are ready to level up. You've got the audience. You've got the data. Now it's time to ask the right questions and build the right foundations. In this guide, we'll seek to help you with both.





# Build vs. buy

- Build vs. buy
- RMN operating models
- The key



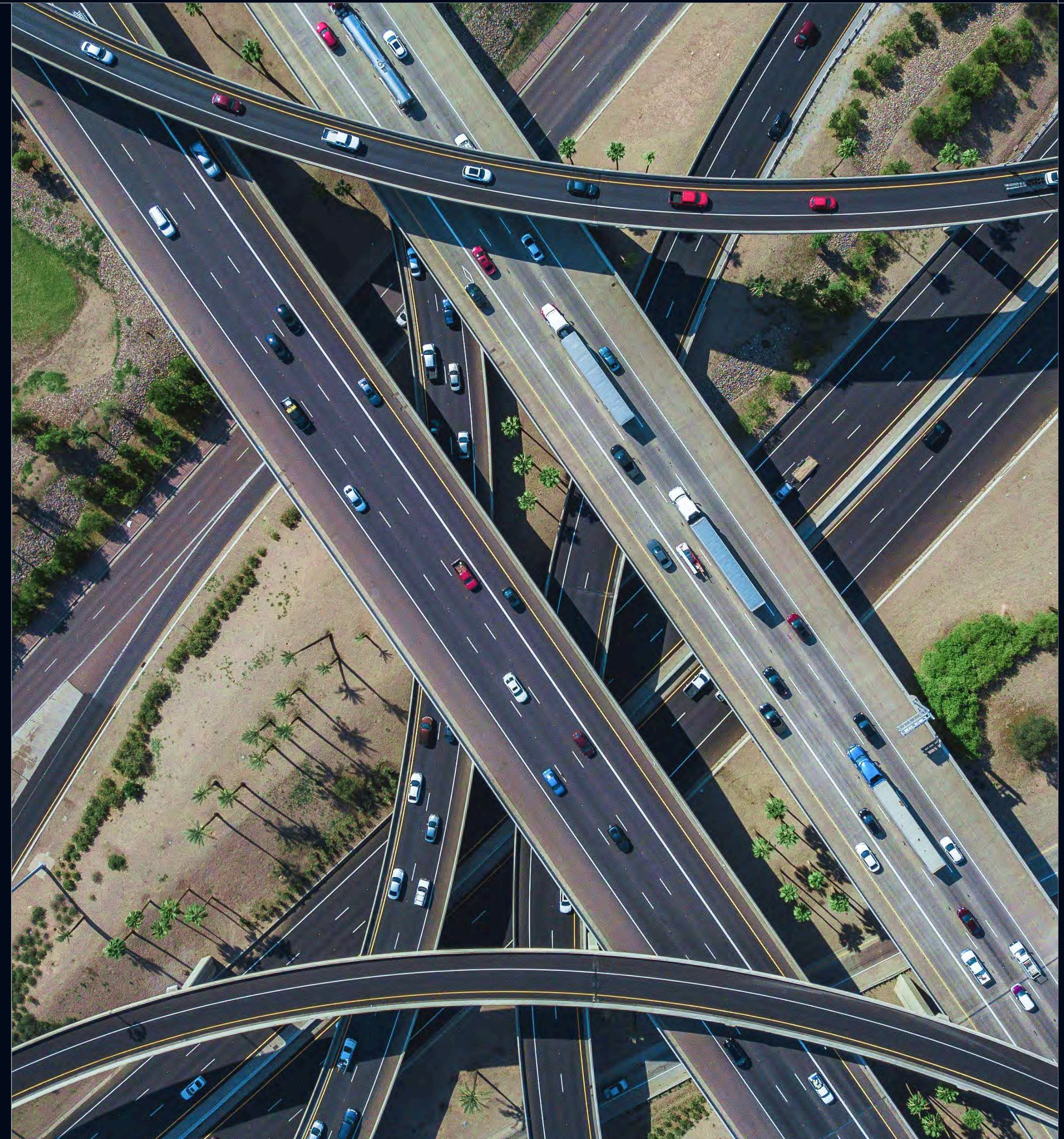


## Build vs. buy

One of the first decisions you'll need to make: **How much of your retail media network (RMN) are you going to run yourself?**

You don't have to build everything in-house, although you could. As an example, Walmart is a poster child for internalized RMN operations. They've built their own tech stack, hired their own ad ops teams, and control nearly every piece of the puzzle.

But here's the catch: **Walmart-scale isn't realistic for the majority of retailers.** Internalizing everything means high fixed costs, deep technical investment, and a long time-to-market. Most retailers don't have that luxury.





## RMN operating models

There are two main RMN operating models:

### 1. Fully internalized (like Walmart in our previous example)

You own the tech, the teams, and the media sales.

✓ Full control

✗ High cost and long ramp-up

### 2. Partner-led

You own the strategy, partner on execution and tech.

✓ Speed: Fast access to advertiser demand

✗ Reduced margins



**The key is this:**

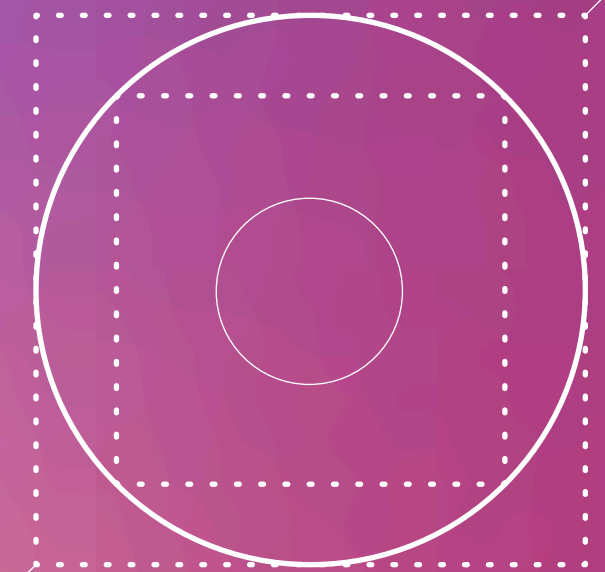
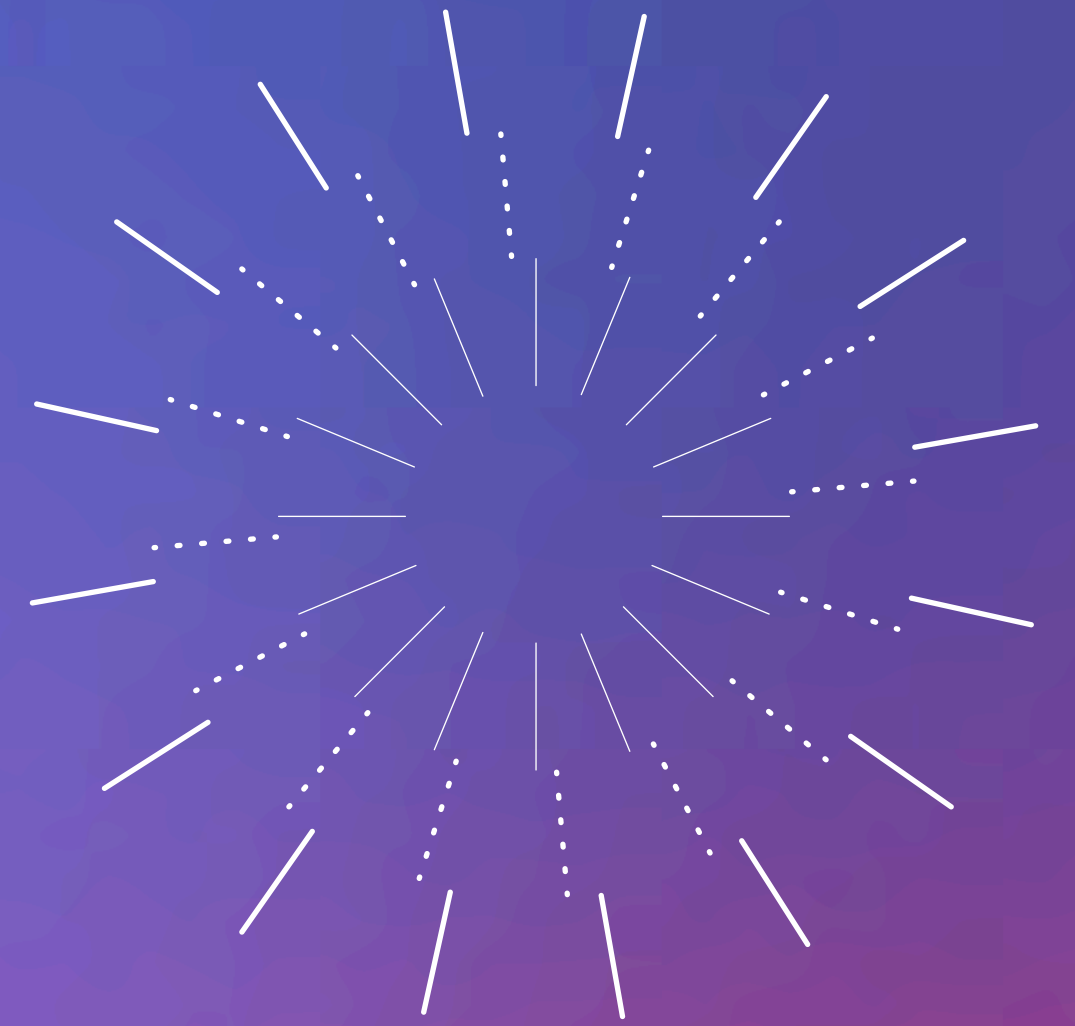
**You need help, but it should be help that keeps you in the driver's seat.** On the other hand, tech partners bring neutrality — and that means you're free to work with any advertiser, regardless of their media agency. Our tip? Choose partners that let you collaborate across the ecosystem without locking you in.





## Where the money is: Onsite vs. offsite ads

- Where the money is
- Onsite ads
- Offsite ads

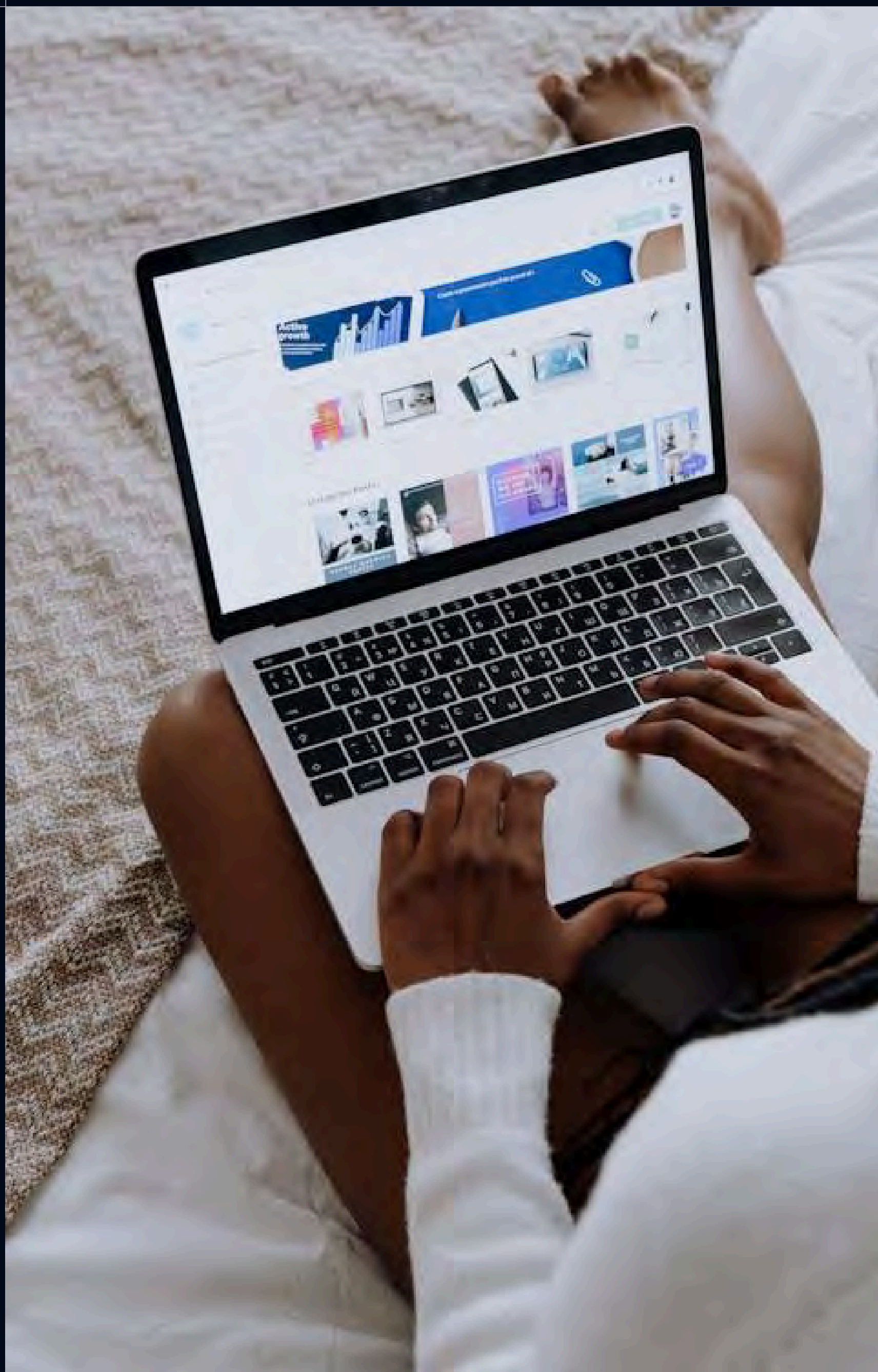




## Where the money is

Retail media networks have two primary revenue engines: onsite ads and offsite ads. Understanding the differences between these streams is critical to building a profitable RMN. Let's start with the onsite variation.





## Onsite ads

These are ads placed directly on your owned properties like your website, app, or other digital real estate. The benefits are clear:

- You control the entire experience and collect **100% of the revenue** — both from media buying and your own data.
- Onsite ads are relatively straightforward to implement if you invest in the right ad tech platforms.

But there's a hard limit: **your site traffic**. The supply of ad impressions is capped by the number of visitors to your properties. As your network matures, onsite ad revenue tends to plateau. You're essentially selling a finite number of eyeballs.



## Offsite ads

Most retailers begin with onsite ads to capture immediate revenue and control. But if you want to grow, diversify, and future-proof your RMN, **offsite ads are essential**.

Offsite ads use your audience data to target customers on external channels — CTV, social platforms, open web, and more. Here's where the opportunity scales:

- Unlike onsite ads, offsite ads are **not limited by your traffic**. Your data can fuel many campaigns simultaneously across multiple platforms.
- While you only receive the **data revenue share** (the media revenue goes to third-party publishers), this revenue can be substantial and often grows faster than onsite ads.
- This unlocks **demand for your data**, turning your audience into a scalable asset.

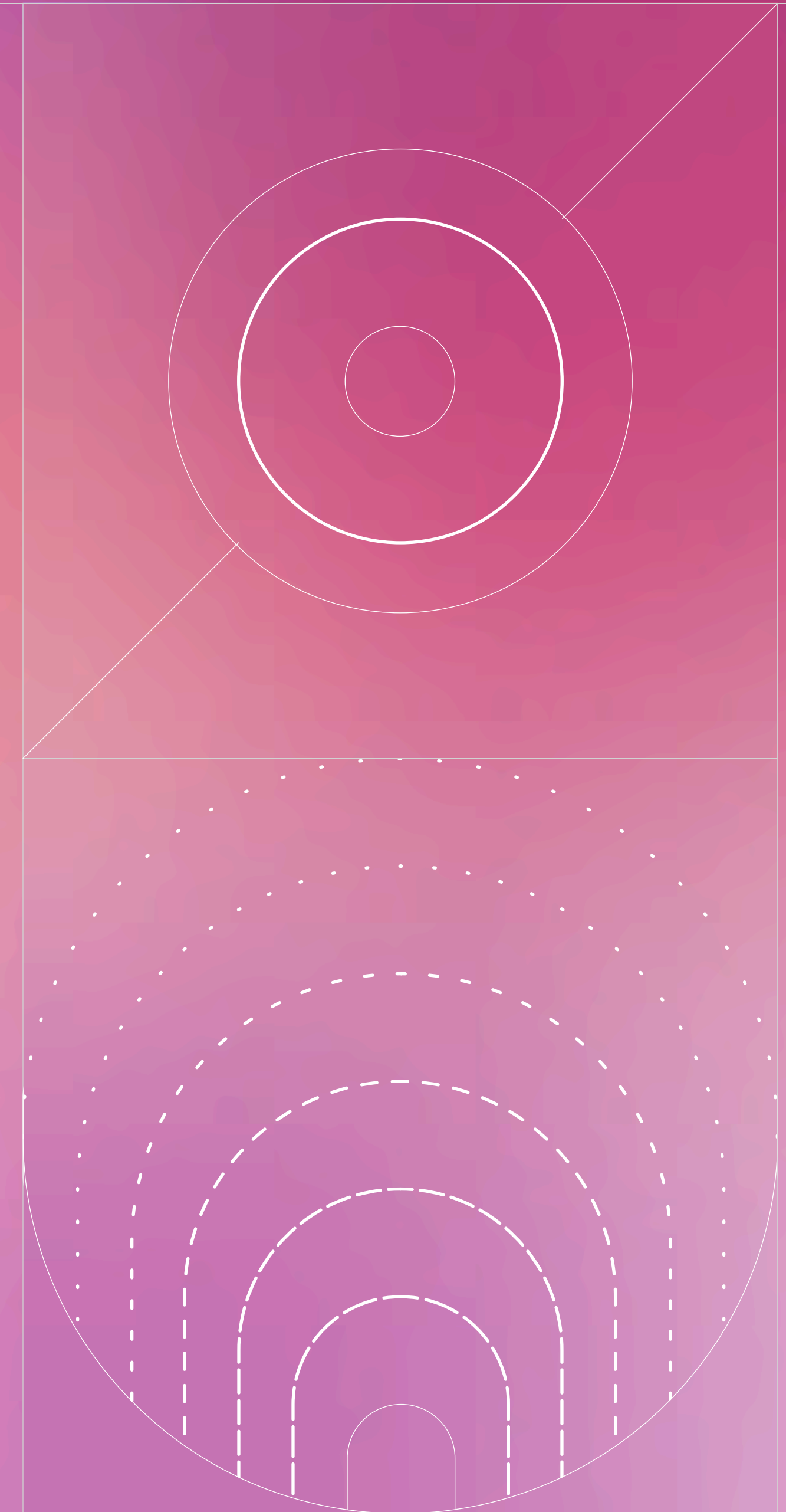
However, to capitalize on offsite ads, you need **technology and infrastructure** capable of securely collaborating on data and activating campaigns beyond your own sites. More on this in the next section.





# Data essentials for offsite monetization

- Data essentials for offsite monetization
  - Do you have proper consent to activate offsite?
  - Do you collect emails (or universal IDs)?
  - Can you build segments based on actual purchase behavior?
- The bottom line





## **Data essentials for offsite monetization**

If you want to monetize your audience offsite, you need more than just a strong brand or high-intent shoppers. You need clean, connected, and consented data. Advertisers will expect you to meet a certain baseline before they're willing to spend.

The rest of this section outlines three questions you need to be able to answer to determine what that baseline looks like.



## 1. Do you have proper consent to activate offsite?

It's not just about what data you have, but rather what you're **allowed** to do with it.

- Are your users opting into offsite marketing or data collaboration?
- Are you transparent about how their data will be used across media channels?
- Are you ready to handle evolving privacy frameworks (GDPR, CCPA, etc.)?

Without clear, enforceable consent, you're not just risking fines — you're risking long-term advertiser relationships. Brands increasingly vet their partners for privacy compliance, as no brand wants negative headlines.



## 2. Do you collect emails (or universal IDs)?

Offsite monetization starts with **identity resolution** — linking your customer data with the ad ecosystem.

- Today, that usually means **email addresses**. They're the connective tissue that let you match your customers with audiences on Meta, Google, CTV platforms, etc.
- In the future, we'll likely see **email alternatives** or other universal identifiers used for these purposes as well.

If you're not capturing emails or equivalent IDs at checkout, via loyalty programs, or through account creation, you're lacking the data required for offsite. No ID = no match = no monetization.

**Tip:** Prioritize logged-in experiences and opt-in programs. The more identifiers you collect (ethically and transparently), the more matchable your audience becomes.



### 3. Can you build segments based on actual purchase behavior?

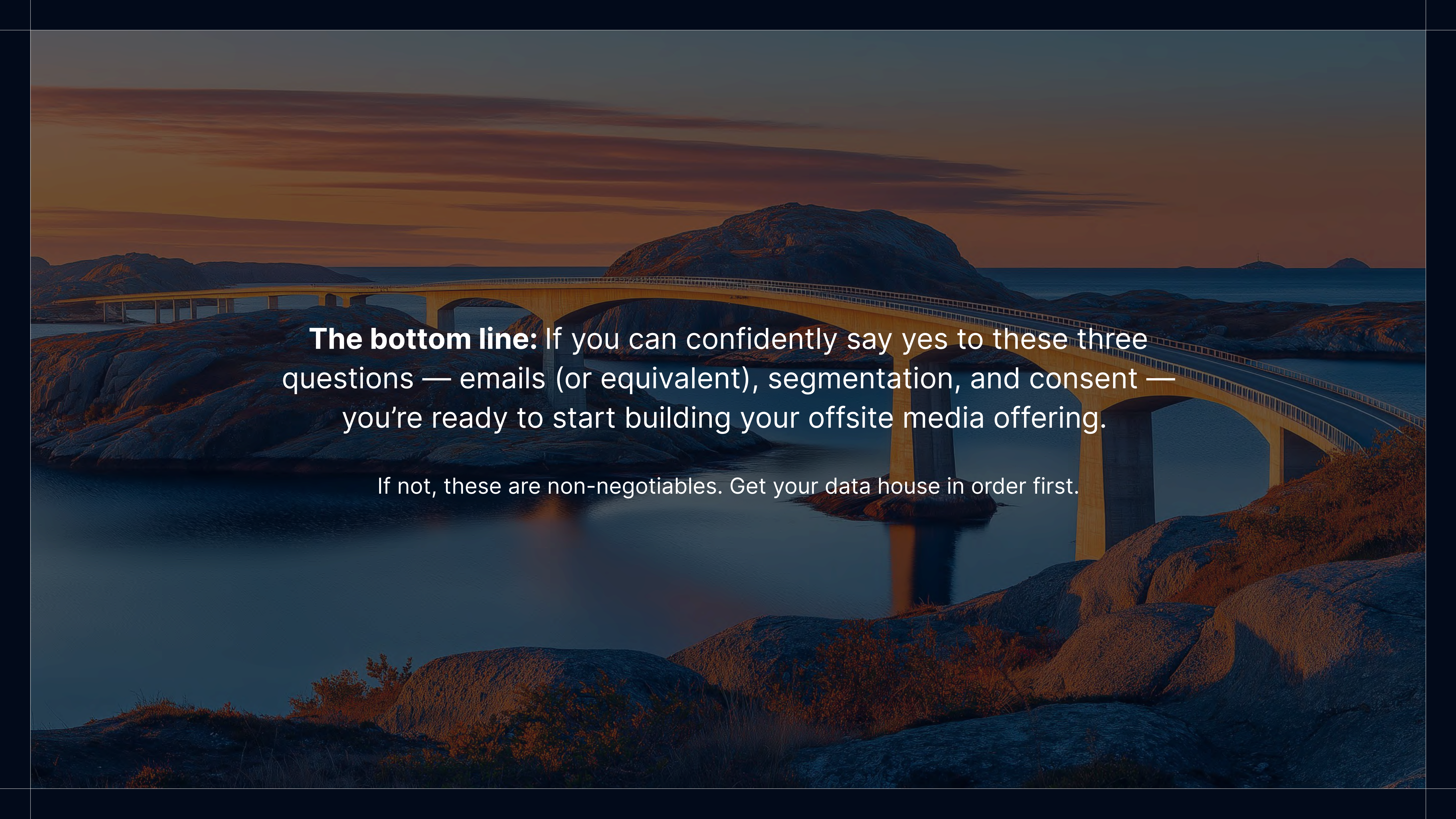
Advertisers don't just want raw email lists — they want **precision targeting**. That means you need to turn your customer data into meaningful segments:

- “People who bought Plant-Based Milk in the last 90 days”
- “High-frequency snack buyers who haven't purchased in 30 days”
- “Parents shopping for school supplies”

This is what brands will pay for, especially when you can prove it's based on **real-world transactions**, not vague intent signals like clicks or views.

If you can't segment yet, fix that first. Segmentation is the foundation of your offsite media product.





**The bottom line:** If you can confidently say yes to these three questions — emails (or equivalent), segmentation, and consent — you're ready to start building your offsite media offering.

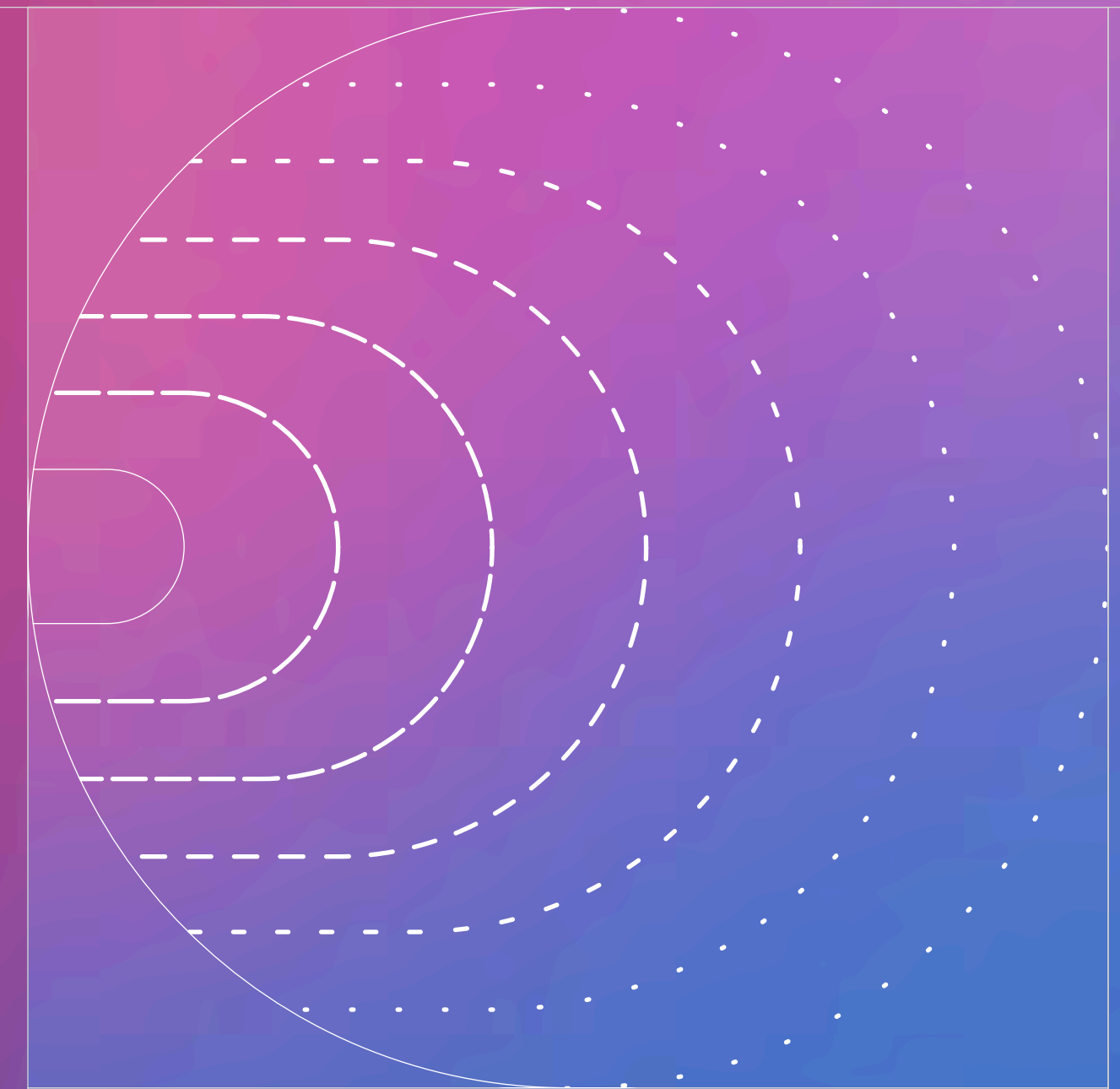
If not, these are non-negotiables. Get your data house in order first.



## 4

# Don't let measurement be an afterthought

- Measurement for your RMN
- Why measurement matters — fast
- What good measurement looks like
- The last word on measurement





## Measurement for your RMN

Advertisers don't just want targeting — they want proof that it worked. And if you can't deliver that, your retail media network won't scale.

Yet many retailers focus all their energy on getting ads live, and treat measurement like something they'll figure out “later.” That's a mistake.

Measurement isn't a bonus feature. It's a core product in your RMN offering.



## Why measurement matters — fast

Let's say you're working with a CPG brand to target snack buyers across social and CTV. If you can't show whether those ads drove actual purchases (either online or in-store) what reason do they have to come back?

Measurement is how you:

- **Win the first campaign**
- **Secure repeat investment**
- **Grow budgets quarter over quarter**

Advertisers are shifting spend toward partners who can **close the loop** between media spend and sales outcomes. If that's not you, it'll be someone else.



## What good measurement looks like

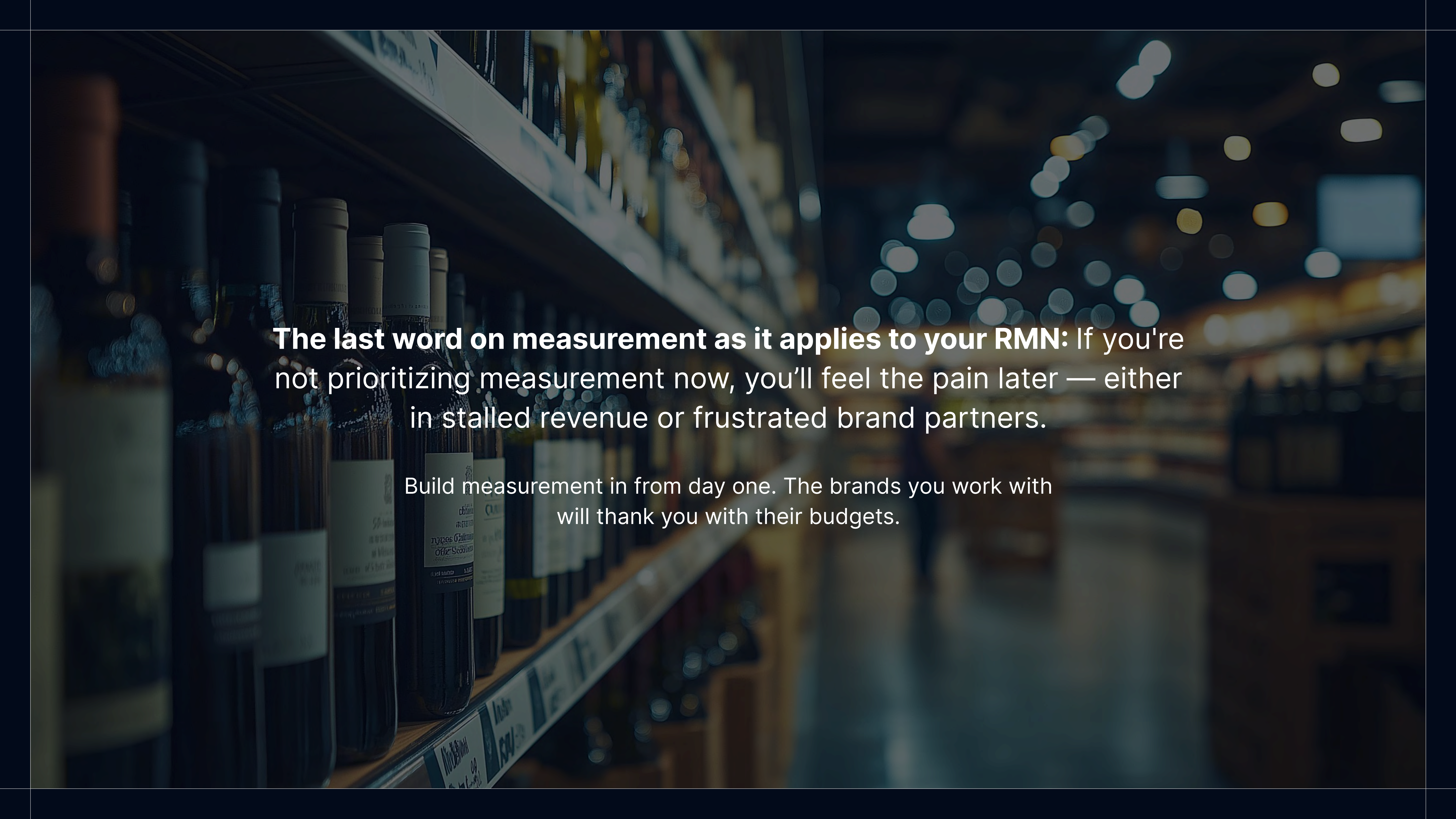
You should be able to answer:

- **Who converted?**
- **Did it lift in-store or online sales?**
- **How did this campaign perform compared to others?**

This requires tight integration between your **transactional data** and the **media exposure data** across every channel you're activating: CTV, programmatic, social, and beyond.

That's where clean rooms become a key differentiator again. The best ones let you match and measure outcomes **automatically**, often out of the box.





**The last word on measurement as it applies to your RMN:** If you're not prioritizing measurement now, you'll feel the pain later — either in stalled revenue or frustrated brand partners.

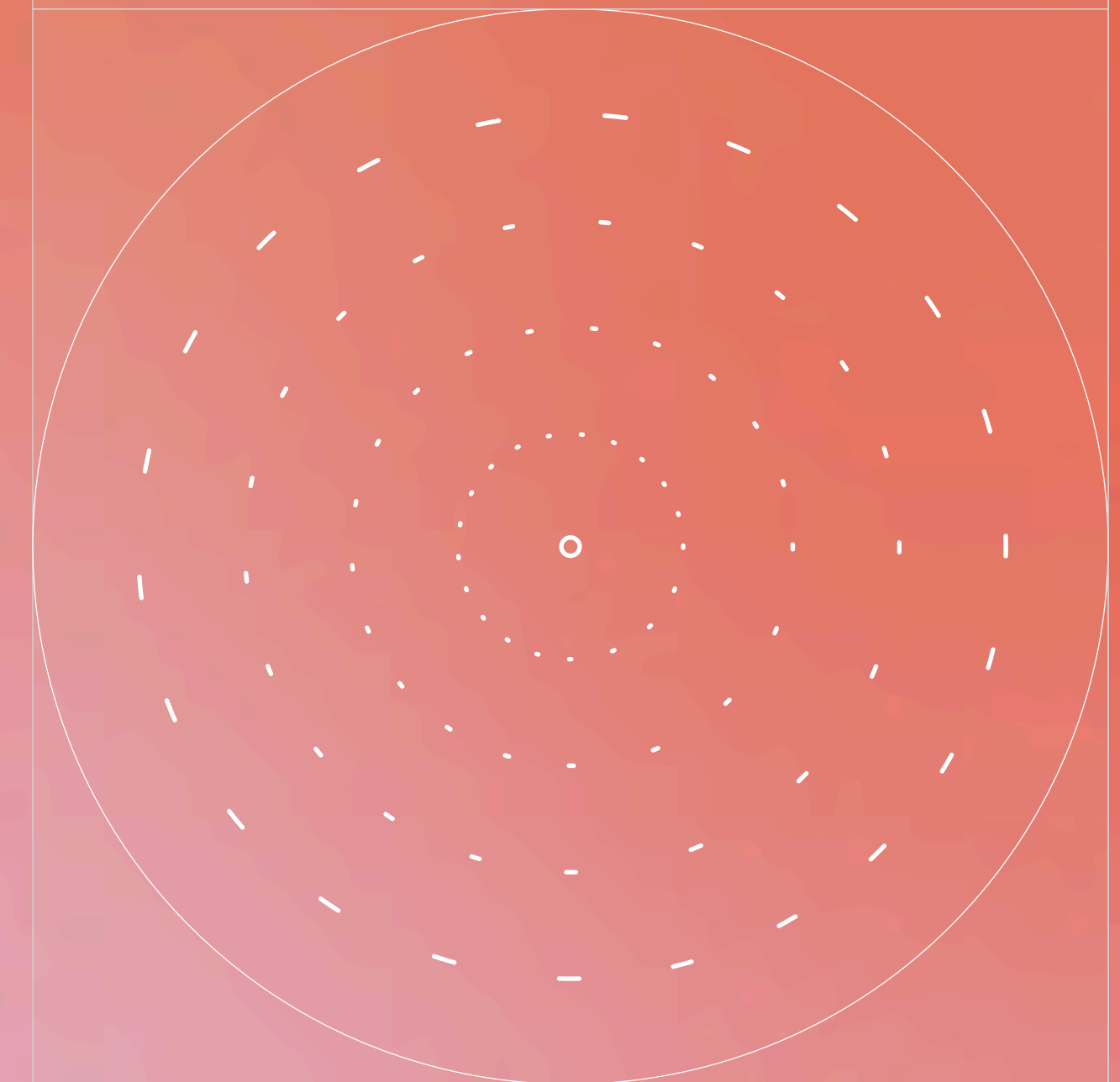
Build measurement in from day one. The brands you work with will thank you with their budgets.



# 5

## The necessary infrastructure

- What's changed in the landscape
- What a data clean room actually does
- What a data clean room unlocks
- A word of caution





## What's changed in the landscape

Let's be honest: early offsite campaigns didn't need a data clean room.

Retailers would upload hashed emails directly into global platforms. Done. No collaboration needed. You sent your data, ran the ads, and reported back results from platform dashboards. And this worked well (for a while).

But today, offsite advertising is moving beyond walled gardens. The moment you want to:

- **Run campaigns on CTV or streaming platforms**
- **Activate across the open web and go beyond authenticated users only**
- **Collaborate with a non-endemic brand**

...you hit a wall. These use cases demand **secure, privacy-safe data matching** — and that's where data clean rooms (DCRs) become essential.



## What a data clean room actually does

Think of it as a neutral space where:

- You contribute your customer data (emails, purchase behavior, segments)
- Your partner (e.g., a CTV network or brand advertiser) contributes theirs
- The clean room performs a secure match without either party seeing each other's raw data

You can then activate audiences directly from the clean room into media channels like:

- CTV platforms
- Programmatic direct with open web publishers
- Social platforms

And just as importantly, you can **measure** what happened — who saw the ad, who converted, and how it impacted sales.



# What this unlocks

Data clean rooms are the foundation for:

- **Full-funnel measurement (not just impressions, but actual purchases)**
- **Audience activation across fragmented media**
- **Collaborations with both endemic and non-endemic advertisers**
- **Compliance with privacy regulations at every step**

They aren't optional anymore — they're how you keep up.





## A word of caution

Not all clean rooms are created equal.

Some are media-owned (and come with built-in bias). Others are too narrow — built for one channel or use case.

If you're serious about offsite, choose a clean room partner that:

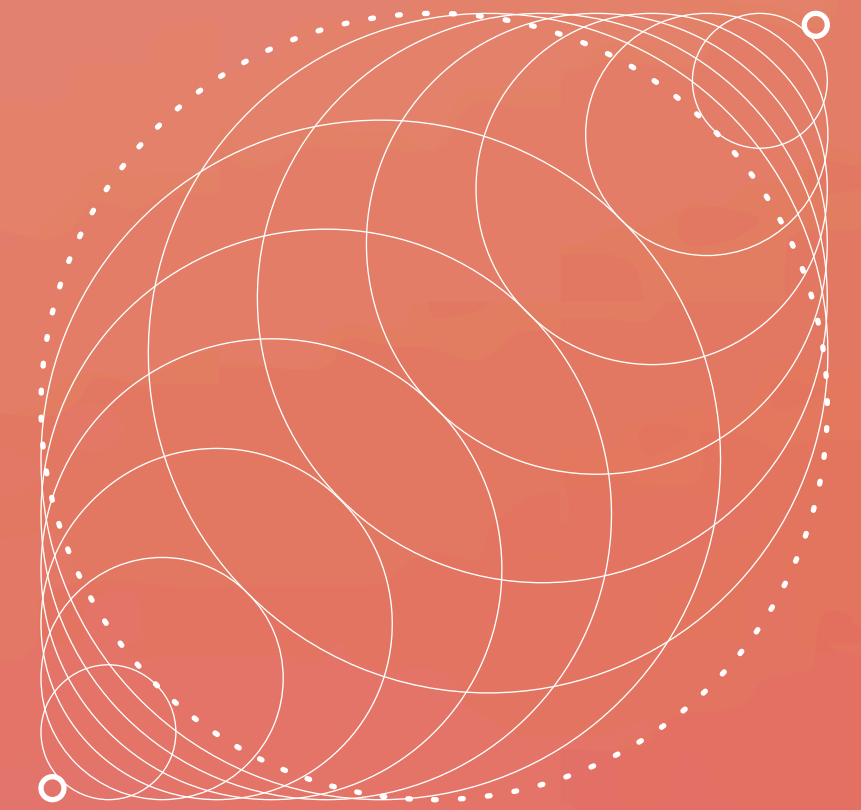
- Is **channel-agnostic**
- Can plug into **CTV, social, and open web**
- Supports **activation and measurement**
- Respects **your data ownership**





## Final take: Go bigger than onsite — and don't go it alone

- Go bigger than onsite — and don't go it alone
- Next steps





## Go bigger than onsite — and don't go it alone

Retail media is moving fast. The early game was all about onsite ads: easy to implement, controlled internally, good margins. But if that's all you're doing, you're already behind.

The retailers building serious media businesses today are thinking much bigger:

- Onsite + offsite as a **blended strategy**
- **Tech partnerships + smart agency partnerships**
- **Data + measurement** baked in from day one

They're not trying to build everything from scratch.



## Next steps

If you're a retailer with valuable audience data, you're in a prime position. But unlocking that value — especially offsite — means making a few key choices:

- Don't limit yourself to your own properties
- Don't try to build it all internally
- Don't wait to get measurement right

Instead, partner with neutral, tech-forward collaborators who can help you scale across platforms, prove ROI, and stay privacy-compliant without getting locked into someone else's ecosystem.

This is an opportunity with huge growth potential. But it's growing fastest for those who **invest in the infrastructure** — and act now. Contact us at Decentriq to get started.



# Unlock new revenue streams

Contact us to learn more about how  
to monetize your data and  
activate it — all in one platform.

**GET IN TOUCH →**