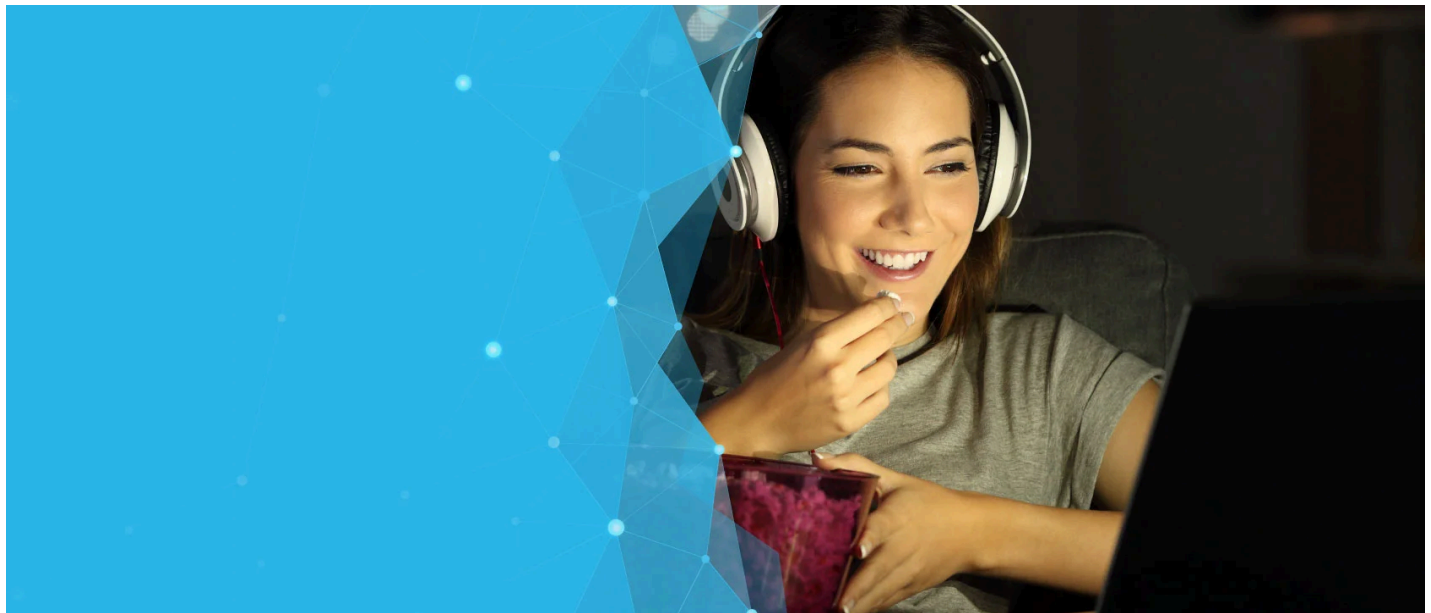


Agentic AI, Composability and Market Reorganization: What 2026 Means for Advertising, Media and Entertainment



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Advertising, media and entertainment enter 2026 at a moment of real inflection. Audience fragmentation continues to accelerate, content costs remain under pressure, and monetization models are being reshaped by streaming, commerce and changing consumer expectations, as well as AI chat as a new media engagement channel. At the same time, artificial intelligence has crossed a critical threshold — it is increasingly a business-critical tool, reshaping how audiences discover content, how brands influence decisions and where value is ultimately captured. What began as experimentation has moved into operational execution, forcing organizations to rethink not only their technology stacks but how work itself gets done.

These dynamics were front and center in Snowflake's [2026 Forecast for Data and AI](#) webinar with Adweek, featuring Dennis Buchheim, Snowflake's Global Head of Media, Marketing & Entertainment Technology, alongside Erin Foxworthy, Snowflake's Go-to-Market Lead for Marketers and Advertisers. In that conversation, they outlined three forces reshaping the ecosystem at once: the rise of agentic AI, the growing necessity of composable technology architectures and a period of market chaos defined by consolidation, reinvention and shifting power dynamics.

As part of Snowflake's [2026 AI + Data Predictions](#), here's what those forces mean specifically for media and entertainment leaders. The question heading into the year ahead isn't simply what AI can do, or which platforms will win. It's how organizations build the flexibility, trust and data foundations required to operate in an environment where autonomy increases and change is constant.

Prediction #1: As “the orchestration layer,” agentic AI moves from insight to execution across the media value chain

In 2026, agentic AI will no longer be confined to analysis and recommendation. Instead, autonomous systems capable of planning, executing and iterating will take on meaningful operational responsibility across the media and entertainment ecosystem — increasingly acting as the orchestration

layer across the marketing stack. “Agencies are now asking: am I marketing to a human, or am I marketing to an agent?” Foxworthy said.

This shift marks a fundamental change in how work gets done, not by removing humans from the process but by redefining their role.

“Agents become the orchestration layer across the ecosystem,” Buccheim said. That shift is already visible in how programmatic infrastructure is evolving — not just to surface insights but to support autonomous optimization and, over time, agent-to-agent workflows that change how planning, execution and measurement happen.

Rather than responding to isolated prompts, agents can now manage multistep workflows and adapt continuously. For media organizations, that evolution unlocks new levels of speed and scale, but it also raises new questions around trust, oversight and accountability.

On the buy side, agencies and brand teams are already beginning to see how agentic systems could automate core functions such as media planning, audience creation, creative testing and optimization. Tasks that once required constant manual intervention can increasingly be handled by AI agents operating under human supervision. As a result, teams shift their focus away from manual execution and toward strategy, governance and performance evaluation — deciding not only what outcomes matter but how much autonomy to grant the systems delivering them.

For publishers and platforms, agentic AI introduces similar opportunities and pressures. Autonomous yield and content- and audience-packaging agents can identify and dynamically price inventory and ad products, and provide personalized consumer experiences in real time based on demand, audience behavior and supply constraints. For example, [NBCU is testing agentic systems](#) that can automatically execute buys to activate campaigns across its entire portfolio, according to AdExchanger. This shift comes as publishers face shrinking direct audiences and growing dependence on AI-driven intermediaries, increasing pressure to rethink monetization models and distribution strategies. Rather than making periodic adjustments, publishers can operate in a continuous optimization loop — responding instantly to market conditions while preserving control over brand safety, pricing strategy and user experience.

However, the rise of agentic AI also makes clear that autonomy without discipline quickly becomes a risk. As [Snowflake's 2026 Data & AI Predictions](#) report emphasizes, the effectiveness of agents depends less on the models themselves and more on the data foundations that support them. Agents require consistent semantics, governed access to sensitive data and clear rules around where human oversight begins and ends. Without centralized data strategy and observability, organizations risk creating systems that move fast but operate blindly. And as agents increasingly interact with one another, transparency and auditability become essential to maintaining trust at scale.

By the end of 2026, the differentiator in media and entertainment won't be whether organizations deploy AI agents — it will be whether they can deploy them responsibly. Leaders who treat agentic AI as an operating model shift, rather than a point solution, will be best positioned to capture its value while maintaining trust, control and strategic clarity.

Prediction #2: Composability becomes the foundation of the media stack

As agentic AI takes on more operational responsibility, media and entertainment organizations are discovering that autonomy depends on flexibility. Rigid, monolithic technology stacks struggle to keep pace with shifting privacy rules, evolving identity standards and rapidly changing channels. In 2026, composability will move from an architectural preference to a practical necessity. It is no longer a differentiator — it is the baseline requirement for operating in an environment where channels, standards and AI capabilities continue to shift.

In the webinar, Buchheim summarized the change succinctly: “Composable architecture has become the expectation — not the novelty, but the expectation. It's the composability of the data you have, the applications that act on that data and the workflows that connect them — that's what enables everything else.”

Across the industry, companies are rethinking how their stacks are assembled, particularly when it comes to identity. “Rather than relying on sprawling ‘Frankenstacks’ or betting on a single platform to solve every use case, organizations are increasingly defining a strategic core and surrounding it with modular, interoperable services,” Buccheim said in 2025. This approach allows teams to consolidate where it makes sense while preserving the ability to adapt as requirements change.

That shift is already visible in how identity infrastructure is evaluated. [Coverage is an important starting point](#) when consolidating identity infrastructure, but it isn't enough on its own. As requirements shift, organizations increasingly need identity capabilities that integrate cleanly into a broader system and can evolve without rebuilding the stack.

For publishers, composability enables identity services, clean rooms and forecasting and measurement services to function as discrete components rather than tightly coupled systems. This makes it possible to respond to regulatory changes, support new monetization models and collaborate with partners without rebuilding core infrastructure. In an environment where authenticated audiences and data collaboration are increasingly critical, modular design becomes a competitive advantage.

Agencies face similar pressures. As standards shift and client needs diversify, composable, API-first operating models allow agencies to mix best-of-breed tools while avoiding long-term lock-in. Planning, activation, measurement and creative systems can interoperate through shared data foundations, making it easier to swap components as the market evolves.

Ultimately, composability is about risk reduction as much as innovation. A modular stack gives organizations the freedom to evolve without starting over — supporting both near-term execution and long-term resilience. In 2026, media and entertainment leaders that invest in composable architectures will

be better positioned to absorb change, scale agentic systems and operate confidently amid ongoing uncertainty.

Prediction #3: Shifting market dynamics reconfigure the media ecosystem

While agentic AI and composability redefine how media organizations operate, ever-changing market dynamics will determine who ultimately gains — and who must adapt — in 2026. Across adtech, martech, publishing and the buy side, long-standing assumptions are breaking down as privacy expectations shift, platforms consolidate and operating models are forced to evolve.

A major driver of that instability is how rapidly AI is changing content discovery and distribution. As Dennis Buchheim warned in the webinar, “This is challenging everything from how [publishers] manage their revenue and yield to how they collect data, because their first-party data is compromised when there aren’t click-throughs from searches that they’ve been so dependent upon for years.” In other words, publishers are feeling pressure simultaneously on monetization, audience relationships and the data they rely on to compete.

In adtech and martech, uncertainty around privacy remains a defining feature of the landscape. With Google no longer moving forward with [third-party cookie deprecation](#) and revisiting its stance on [fingerprinting](#), the industry finds itself in a state of prolonged ambiguity. Regulations continue to evolve, enforcement varies by region, and identity strategies that once seemed definitive now require constant reassessment. In this environment, adaptability (and composability!) matter more than any single technical approach.

In the agency world, scale is increasingly viewed as a competitive advantage as AI investment, data infrastructure and commerce capabilities become more expensive and more central to performance. “Everything from content creation to packaging to selling is being rethought,” Buccheim said, and that’s driving consolidation across the ecosystem.”

One of the clearest signals of this shift is the recent megamerger between Omnicom Group and Interpublic Group (IPG), which has created the world’s largest advertising holding company and set a new benchmark for scale. As reported by Business Insider, [Omnicom leadership positioned the deal](#) as a way to gain scale, improve efficiency and strengthen its ability to compete in an AI-driven advertising market — even as the combined company moves to eliminate thousands of overlapping roles as part of the integration.

“Agencies are moving faster because they have to — brands are asking immediate questions about how they’re responding to this shift,” Foxworthy said.

This shift — consolidating legacy brands and flattening agency networks — reflects the broader reconfiguration in how media work gets sourced, executed and evaluated. Data collaboration becomes a survival skill, not a differentiator.

Publishers face parallel pressures. Competition for audiences and ad dollars remains intensely fragmented across streaming, connected TV and digital platforms, driving smaller players into strategic alliances or data partnerships that can deliver scale and authenticated audiences. In this environment, consolidation isn’t just about operational cost — it’s about access to data, identity infrastructure and interoperable measurement frameworks that underpin future monetization.

On the agency and buy side, market chaos is also reshaping the business model itself. Mergers, restructures and platform consolidation are forcing agencies to evolve beyond traditional services into AI-enabled commerce, analytics and technology-driven solutions. Many are acquiring tech capabilities or reorienting around outcome-based performance models to stay competitive as automation accelerates and manual workflows diminish.

These forces converge in a clear market prediction: Consolidation will accelerate as AI and retail media scale. Platforms will merge capabilities across identity, measurement and commerce to deliver integrated solutions. Agencies and publishers will reorganize around fewer, more strategic relationships. “The technology is moving fast, but what really determines success is whether you can control, govern and audit what’s happening,” Buccheim said.

What media and entertainment leaders should prioritize in 2026

Media and entertainment leaders are now facing an increasingly narrower margin for error. The question is no longer whether change is coming but whether organizations are structurally prepared to absorb it.

As teams plan for 2026, a few priorities rise to the top:

- **Are your AI initiatives designed for greater autonomy — without losing human oversight?** As agentic systems take on more responsibility, leaders must define where oversight begins and ends, and ensure accountability scales alongside automation.
- **Can your technology stack reconfigure without replatforming?**
In an environment shaped by shifting identity standards, privacy uncertainty and platform consolidation, composability determines how quickly organizations can adapt without starting over.
- **Do you have a collaboration strategy that extends beyond your own walls?**
Deeper partnerships — across publishers, platforms, retail media networks and clean rooms — are becoming essential as scale and authenticated audiences drive value.
- **Are you building for optional futures, or betting on a single outcome?**
The market rewards organizations that plan for multiple scenarios rather than locking into rigid assumptions about identity, regulation or channel dominance.

These are not technology questions alone. They are operating model decisions that shape resilience, trust and long-term competitiveness.

From prediction to preparation

These themes are central to the [Snowflake AI + Data Predictions 2026](#) report and the broader conversation unfolding across the industry. As the ecosystem continues to evolve, the organizations that move from prediction to preparation will be best positioned to turn disruption into durable advantage.

Webinar

Media and Advertising AI + Data Predictions 2026

See the full discussion with Snowflake's Dennis Buchheim and Erin Foxworthy in our webinar with Adweek, and learn more about how to turn these challenges into business opportunities.

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Learn more about the author



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