Most video plans start with a demo: Adults 25 to 54. Agentic audience discovery starts with a goal.

What is it: A planner tells an audience agent what the campaign has to do. For example: reach the homes our linear TV ads are missing, no more than three times a week. This only works if the agent can see which homes saw the ads delivered to linear TV which means giving it ACR or set-top box data and a household identity graph. Sharing that data raises questions about consent and the accuracy of probabilistic identity graphs. The agent reads what sellers are offering and compares the options against that goal. It comes back with a ranked shortlist and the reasoning behind each pick. The planner questions it, pushes back, and makes the final call.



The agent does the searching and sorting. A person decides.

These agents are showing up inside DSPs, SSPs, CDPs, the self-serve ad managers of big social and commerce platforms, and agency holding company planning systems. Social platforms run their audience tools inside their own ad managers, so planners use those alongside everything else. Unless the social platforms publish their offers in IAB Tech Lab's OpenProposal as part of AAMP, an agent's consideration set includes only the sellers who publish in OpenProposal and can't deduplicate reach across the entire plan, so it needs to be considered a partial view.

Why video needs it: Video is spread across communal viewing, personal screens, and ambient viewing. A buying team realistically reviews proposals from an agreed-upon consideration set, while many potential partners go unevaluated. Without a view of reach across all video services being purchased, demo targeting risks overdelivering to some and missing others entirely because while an agent can widen the view, de-duplication still needs all publishers and platforms to expose their inventory..

Buyers want sharper targeting. According to IAB's 2026 Outlook Report: September Update, 53% of buyers plan to focus more on audience based ads, up from 35% in January. The same study shows the growing importance of setting goals at the beginning of planning, while acquiring new customers is buyers' top media investment priority at 63%, up nine points since January.

An agent can only compare what sellers describe. IAB Tech Lab's AAMP 3.0 OpenProposal gives sellers a common way to write up their offers, so every proposal reads the same way and an agent can line them up side by side.

How agentic audience discovery can improve the process

Advertisers: Brief agents the way you'd brief a sharp new hire: the outcome you want, how you'll measure it, the limits, and which decisions stay with a person.

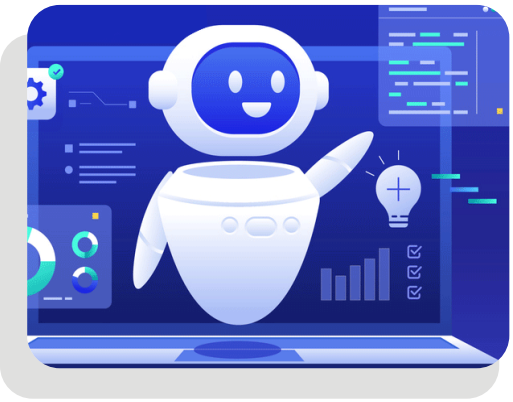
Agencies: Less time gathering offers, more time challenging the agent's picks and weighing reach, frequency and cost. Agree with clients on how much weight an agent's recommendations carry.

Publishers and streamers: Smaller streaming services and FAST channels get a new way to be discovered by buyers who have never heard of them. The catch is that agents tend to favor sellers with rich data, scale and clean measurement which could tilt the rankings towards larger players unless the smaller publishers describe their inventory better. Better means that the audience needs to be described down to the show level and say where the audience data comes from. This doesn't

guarantee that a buyer's agent will necessarily see it because sometimes aggregators or resellers' details could get lost or stripped before the offer reaches the buyer. IAB's 2026 Outlook Report points sellers the same way, identifying that buyers are keen on first-party data, contextual signals, and cohort audience packages.

Ad tech platforms: Carry richer audience and content descriptions, connect to agents on both sides and support OpenProposal.

Measurement companies Agents comparing offers side by side need reach numbers that line up across streaming video, OLV and FAST.



What an agent-ready brief can look like:

Brief today		Brief for an audience agent
Goal	Streaming video campaign	Reach homes our TV ads are missing
Audience	Adults 25 to 54	Audience is determined by the goal; the agent proposes audiences to consider

Things to keep in mind

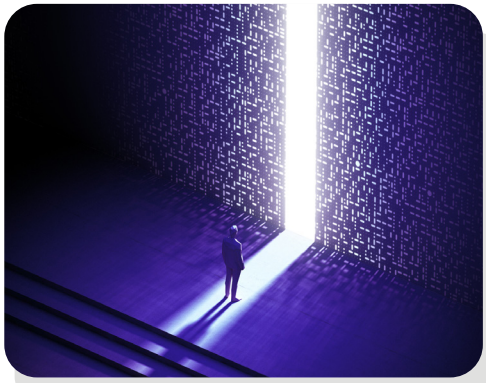
Audience agents are most useful when the inputs are strong. Buyers are also clear about what they need before they rely on them. Also, in IAB's 2026 State of Data Report, 60% of US ad industry professionals cite a lack of transparency in AI decision-making and 62% cite data security as barriers to adoption. Both are worth planning around.



- **Descriptions drive discovery.** An agent can only recommend what it can see, so clear, specific offer descriptions put a seller in the running.
- **Household-level reach.** Reach is easier to trust when it's deduplicated at the right level. On shared screens, several devices within a home can count as separate viewers; totals can skew higher so household measurement is important, but on personal screens, individual reach matters.
- **Placement detail helps every seller.** The more clearly a seller documents where ads run, the more easily buyers and independent verification partners can confirm it.
- **The goal sets the direction.** An agent works toward whatever it's asked to find. For example, a brief built around lowest cost will surface different options than one built around incremental reach.

When to expect it

Discovery is arriving now. Audience planning agents already exist in some commerce media and social platforms, including tools that turn a written brief into a recommended audience. Adoption is still early. Expect these agents to start serving as a planner's assistant, surfacing options and the reasoning behind them.



The bottom line

Agentic audience discovery puts the outcome of the campaign at the beginning of the planning process. The agent's job is to find the viewers most likely to deliver on that outcome. That only works if sellers describe what they have in a format agents can read.

Buyers should start by briefing agents on outcomes. Sellers should start by describing audiences with transparency. Both should test in planning, with people making the final calls.