CARPET INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED



Associates Advisory Note

Industry News | November 2026

From prompt to product: Standing out in AI-powered search

The Carpet Institute of Australia Ltd

From AI recommendations to AI purchases

Based on McKinsey & Company's "From prompt to purchase", published 5 November 2026.

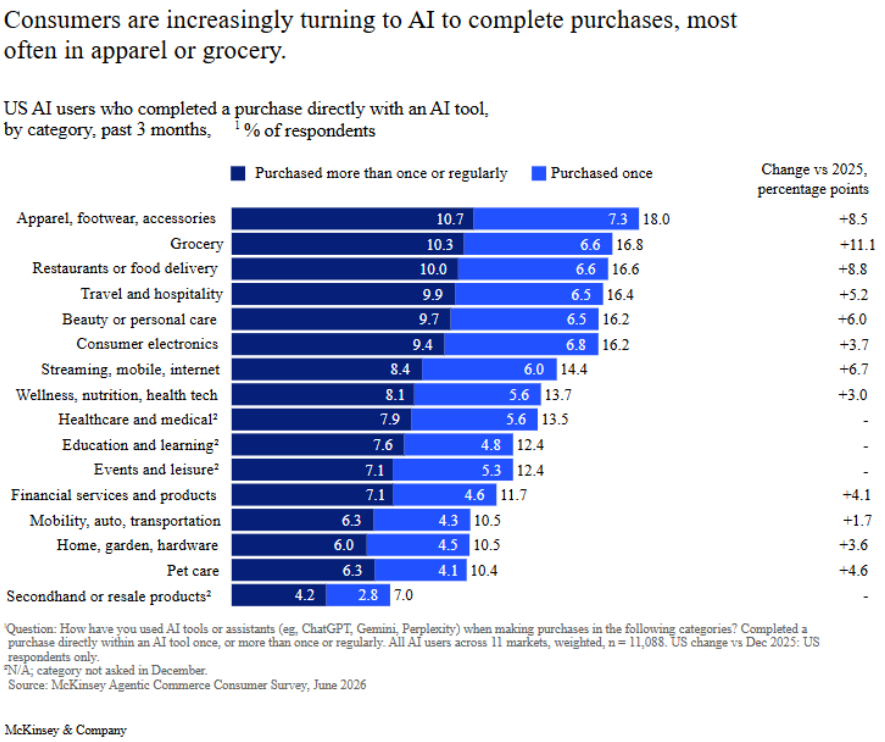
Why does this matter for Associates?

AI is becoming another starting point for shoppers looking for product ideas, comparisons and recommendations. For carpet manufacturers, retailers and importers, the opportunity is to not simply to appear online, but to give potential customers useful, visual examples of the products they sell. A strong website, an active social media presence and clear, consistent product information can help make a range easier to find, understand and consider when buyers use AI tools to explore their options.

What the McKinsey findings show

McKinsey's Agentic Commerce Consumer Survey found that 7% to 18% of surveyed US AI users had completed a purchase directly through an AI tool in the previous three months, depending on category. Apparel, footwear and accessories led at 18.0%, followed by grocery (16.8%) and restaurants or food delivery (16.6%). Home, garden and hardware recorded 10.5%, a category closer to flooring-related purchases.

Compared with 2025, apparel increased by 8.5 percentage points and grocery by 11.1 points, whereas home, garden and hardware roses by 3.6 points. The chart distinguishes one-off purchases from repeat or regular AI purchases.



Source: McKinsey & Company, "From prompt to purchase", 5 November 2026; McKinsey Agentic Commerce Consumer Survey, June 2026. US category results; percentages of AI users surveyed.

What is changing?

The development of "agentic commerce" means AI tools may increasingly help shoppers move through multiple stages of a purchase, from identifying suitable products to initiating or completing a transaction. McKinsey notes that retailers are moving to develop these capabilities, although the operational changes required may limit their near-term adoption.

Implications for the Australian Market

These results relate to US AI users across consumer categories so they don't specifically measure Australian carpet purchases. Nevertheless, they provide an early indication of how digital purchasing behaviour may evolve since AI developments is growing quicker than ever. Carpet is a more considered purchase than many categories in the chart, often requiring samples, measurement, installation advice and checks on product suitability.

Being discoverable may no longer be enough

If an AI tool progresses from recommending products to helping arrange a purchase, a supplier's online information needs to be sufficiently clear and consistent to support the next step. Associates should ensure current product names, specifications, availability, relevant contacts and enquiry or sample-request pathways are easy to locate.

Make your products visible beyond the showroom

Imagine a homeowner asking an AI assistant for "warm, neutral carpet ideas for a family living room". They may want photos, not just a list of suppliers. Manufacturers, retailers and importers can respond by publishing clearly labelled room images, project examples and product pages showing the same ranges. In doing this this will move the buyer from inspiration to an enquiry into your product.

Build a stronger social media presence

Regular posting gives customers more ways to encounter your products before visiting a showroom.

Include the following:

- Feature completed installations, close-up texture shots, colour comparisons, sample videos and room transformations on platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest and Facebook.
- Write specific captions that name the carpet range, colour, intended room and relevant benefits
- Tag brands and partners where appropriate.
- Link posts back to informative product pages.

Social posts can improve awareness and supply useful visual examples, but no single platform or posting frequency guarantees that an AI tool will feature a business.

Turn inspiration into a useful product example

A beautiful image alone is not enough. Pair real room photography with accessible details about durability, fibre, construction, colours, care and sample availability. Importers should make the Australian supplier, local availability and contact details clear, and Retailers can show how a product looks in different lighting or room styles and invite customers to request a sample. This helps customers assess an option even when AI is only the beginning of their search.

What Associates can do now

A practical first step is to choose three to five important carpet ranges and improve how they appear across your website and social channels. The following actions are especially relevant to retailers, importers and distributors:

- Show real products in real spaces. Post quality installation photos, room settings, short videos and close-up images. Name the range and colour so buyers can identify the exact product featured.
- Post consistently and make captions useful. Share new arrivals, styling ideas, project highlights and practical product advice. Include descriptive terms a customer might use when searching.
- Connect social content to your website. Give featured ranges their own searchable pages with product photos, specifications, Australian availability and a clear sample or enquiry option.
- Keep names and details consistent. Match product names, colour codes, images and descriptions across your website, social accounts and manufacturer or importer listings. Avoid outdated ranges.
- Try realistic AI searches. Ask for carpet recommendations for common rooms or needs, and review which brands, images and sources are mentioned. Use the results to identify information gaps, not as a guarantee of placement.

Important context

McKinsey's figures represent reported purchases by US AI users in surveyed categories over the preceding three months. They are not shares of all US consumers, Australian consumers or carpet customers. The percentage-point changes are comparisons with 2025, not percentage growth rates. The implications in this note are considerations for Associates, not forecasts of carpet industry adoption or sales.

Further information

Article text and chart shown in this note be found here:

McKinsey & Company, "From prompt to purchase", 5 November 2026

Related McKinsey research: "Who wins when AI does the shopping? New evidence on agentic commerce", 28 October 2026.

Coming up at CIAL

The Annual Golf Day is on the 4th of December! Click here to obtain your free ticket!

THE ANNUAL GOLF MATCH – GET YOU TICKETS!

Have something to share?

We would welcome news, project examples or questions from associates for future advisory notes, and the questions raised at our associate meetings will also help us to identify the topics where further guidance would be most useful, so please complete this form if you have anything you would like to share.

Carpet Institute of Australia – Associate Member Experience & Feedback Survey – Fill out form