

Criteo Deep Dive: From Retargeting to Commerce Media

Criteo is not just retargeting. It connects products, shopping intent and media inventory into a measurable commerce path. This report explains where it fits, what it demands and where the limits are.

HiSpark Research Team · **October 2026** · Retail & Commerce Media

One-line conclusion: Criteo sells shopping intent and product discovery, not generic reach.



Criteo

Retail & Commerce Media · Commerce media and shopping intent



Commerce



Intent



Product feed



Retail media



Offsite



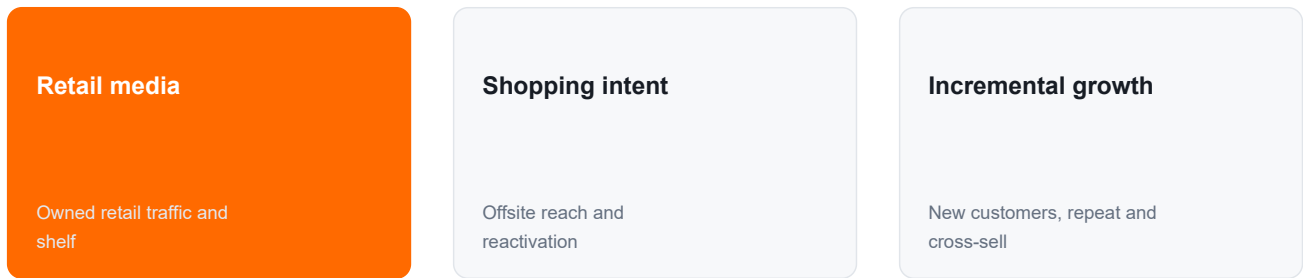
Measurement

Criteo is often described as a retargeting vendor, but that only captures its earliest product form. Its more accurate role today is a commerce media platform connecting brands, retailers, product feeds and media inventory.

The value is not one ad placement. It is whether product data, audience signals, onsite retail environments and offsite media can form a measurable growth system. Results vary sharply by basket size, repeat frequency and catalogue depth.

Criteo: commerce media is more than retargeting

Product data, shopping intent and media context must form a measurable growth path.



HiSpark Research · 12-platform advertising series

Criteo commerce media use cases: retail media, shopping intent and omnichannel growth

平台只占链路的一环，价值取决于整条路径

Criteo 的商业角色不是替代整条链路，而是把相邻环节连接得更高效。



火焰广告传媒 · 12平台广告专题

The role of Criteo in the advertising chain

1. Where Criteo sits in the ad chain

Traditional display media starts with audience segments. Criteo starts closer to products and shopping behaviour, linking product catalogues, user-product interactions, retail media inventory and offsite placements.

It is therefore neither a pure DSP nor a classic ad network. Criteo sits between retail media and performance advertising: catalogue quality on one side, media scale and optimisation on the other.

2. Data, products and context

The first layer is product data: SKU, price, availability, creative assets and taxonomy determine whether the ad can describe the offer accurately. The second is intent: browsing, search, add-to-cart, purchase cadence and cross-category interest. The third is media context.

Remove one layer and performance becomes distorted. A weak catalogue turns the system into broad audience buying; without retail signals, intent decays; without frequency control and measurement, reports may reward clicks rather than incremental sales.

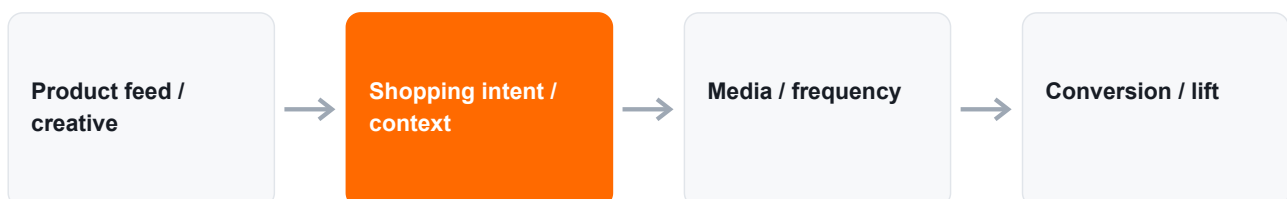
3. Which businesses fit

Criteo is most useful for businesses with broad catalogues, comparable purchase decisions and meaningful repeat or cross-sell potential: fashion, beauty, consumer electronics, home, baby and selected FMCG categories.

Where the product feed is unstable, landing pages are weak or conversion data cannot be returned, fixing the foundation matters more than adding another platform. Criteo is not an automatic order machine; it is a system that depends on product and data operations.

Criteo: product data to incremental outcomes

Validate the path before scaling budget.



HiSpark Research · measurement path

From product data to measured advertising outcomes

判断一个平台，至少看四个维度

Criteo · 角色、优势、前提与边界

角色

它站在需求侧、供给侧，还是交易中枢？

优势

独特库存、数据、场景或交易能力是什么？

前提

接入前必须具备哪些数据与运营基础？

边界

哪些目标不该由这个平台承担？

先判断是否适配，再讨论接入与优化

Evaluate role, readiness and boundaries, not reach alone

4. Measuring true incrementality

Retargeting is where Criteo can look most obviously effective. The harder question is how many of those orders would have happened anyway. If budget only rewards recent site visitors, reports can look strong while incrementality stays limited.

A better framework compares new-customer acquisition, reactivation, category expansion and onsite/offsite media inside one test design. Track incremental orders, contribution margin, acquisition cost, retention and frequency rather than ROAS alone.

5. Put it back into the value chain: five roles are not interchangeable

Criteo belongs to Retail & Commerce Media. A common mistake is to judge it with metrics owned by another role: demanding DSP-style ROAS from an SSP, or judging an ad server by network fill, produces distorted conclusions.

The better question is which core resource it controls, and whether that resource converts into a verifiable business outcome. For Commerce media and shopping intent, scale is not the only answer; transaction quality, data availability and governance matter equally.

Establish the business type and readiness conditions before discussing integration or optimisation. Applying one KPI across every role often turns an organisational issue into a false platform issue.

Industry role	Core resource controlled	Question to validate
DSP / demand platform	Budget, audiences and optimisation goals	Can it buy the right audience at a controllable cost?
Commerce media THIS PLATFORM	Product data, shopping intent and retail/offsite context	Do product, data and media create incrementality?
Native / discovery network	Publisher context, content consumption and next-click attention	Can content turn clicks into valuable actions?
SSP / sell-side platform	Inventory, auction paths, signals and deal rules	Can it improve net yield while protecting experience?
Omnichannel ad platform	Identity, content context, DSP and multi-screen supply	Can it unify identity, frequency, creative and measurement?

Quick fit check: who is ready and who should build foundations first

Business type	Best-fit context	Readiness required	Avoid when
Established ecommerce	Stable catalogue, clean conversion data and offsite growth goals	Product feed, events and audience permissions	Treating it only as a cheap retargeting line
Retail media partner	Owns onsite traffic and commerce data	Inventory integration, ad governance and brand sales	Opening inventory without supply operations
Early-stage brand	Run a controlled pilot to validate fit	Comparable landing pages, budget and incrementality rules	Using one platform as a substitute for product validation

Key takeaway: Criteo can turn shopping intent into measurable growth when products, data and context work together. It cannot compensate for weak inventory, landing pages or

measurement foundations.

Commerce media and shopping intent

Role

Europe-origin, global reach

Key market

Demand-side commerce media

Model

Retail & Commerce Media

Decision lens

Platform reference: [Criteo](#)

官方参考

本文关于平台产品与业务边界的事实以 [Criteo 官方网站](#) 的公开信息为参考，检索与整理日期为 2026-10-24。文章为独立行业分析，不构成平台承诺或投资建议。

Need a project-specific recommendation?

Start with the platform checklist. For integration, acquisition, monetisation, compliance, app publishing, web systems or operations, contact HiSpark with your product, market and current stage.

Shenzhen HiSpark Ad Media Co., Ltd. · Overseas ad monetisation & traffic · App development · Web systems · [hi-spark.com](#)