



2026 Consumer Research

REPORT

What Makes Shopping Experiences Matter?





Meet Shoppers With Consistency, Dependability, Sensibility — and Yes, Maybe a Little AI

How can you make modern shoppers feel like they matter? Meet them with shopping experiences that matter. But what makes shopping experiences matter?

Salsify's annual consumer research survey reached nearly 3,000 shoppers across the U.S., U.K., and Canada to find out what makes shoppers tick across their buying journeys. (Or catch the ick. Hint: It's inconsistent product content.) It starts with where shoppers like to discover and purchase new products — they're on a walkabout, craving more face time with brands in physical retail stores (but maybe not sans smartphone, if their curiosity arises).

Don't be misled, though: Shoppers across generation groups, gender, and geographic markets still love to spend time online, with some entrusting product research to AI — though, the AI trust gap is looming. Meanwhile, shoppers might be spending less in other ways, unless they trust a brand. In that case, nearly 70% of shoppers will pay more.

Regardless, brands have their work cut out for them to both attract and retain modern shoppers: They expect more from products, product detail pages (PDPs), and their shopping experiences across both digital and physical shelves. Find out what this means and how to make these insights matter.

Icon Key

Keep an eye out for these icons throughout the report to get actionable insights that can help you guide your brand strategy.

DATA SPOTLIGHT

This icon highlights a more detailed view of our data, so you can understand shopper habits and anticipate their needs with more confidence.

GROWTH HACK

This icon highlights helpful data-based tips, helping you build a strategy that drives customer acquisition, conversion rates, and revenue growth.

TREND WATCH

This icon highlights emerging trends still in their infancy, allowing you to get ahead of the competition.

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01 *Awareness*

How Shoppers Discover New Products and Brands

Despite the predicted rise in 2026 ecommerce sales, shoppers are spending online less frequently, which should come as no surprise considering the economic shifts affecting price and product availability. Perhaps more unexpectedly is where the majority of shoppers find new products and brands. Physical retail stores are the top discovery channel, which reinforces the need for brands to fine-tune their omnichannel strategies.



Ecommerce Market Trends

Get your first glimpse at the global ecommerce market in 2026 and see how the positive trends there compare to shoppers' evolving online spending habits.

Global Ecommerce Sales Expected To Increase After Brief Downswing

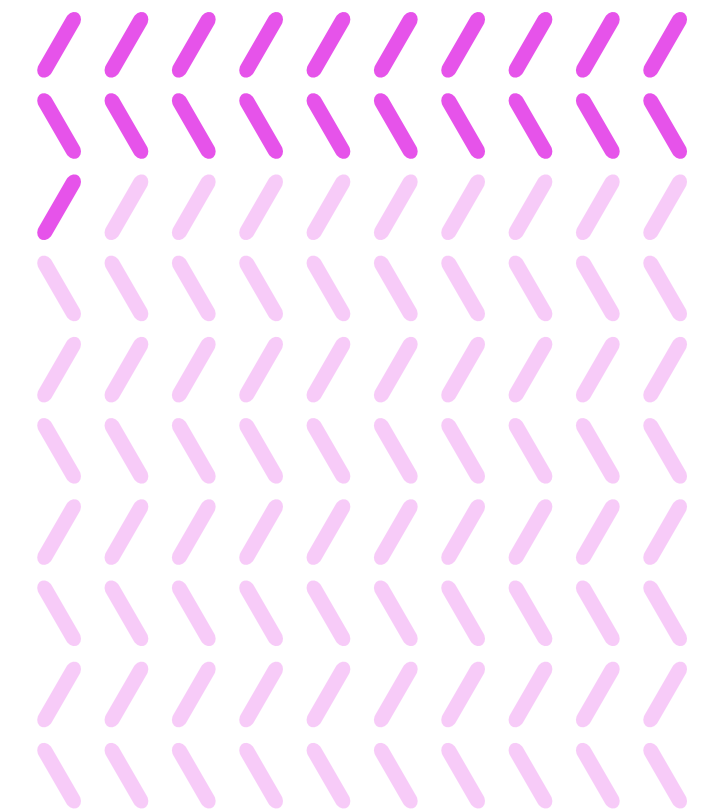
After a downward swing in ecommerce growth in 2025 — which [eMarketer](#) attributes to China's economy and trade-war-induced stresses on North America — global ecommerce sales are expected to account for 21.1% of total retail sales in 2026, according to the "Worldwide Retail Ecommerce Forecast 2025."

eMarketer also predicts a positive rate of change (7.2%) in 2026 after consecutive years of decline. This, along with the \$6.88 trillion dollars in forecasted retail ecommerce sales worldwide, provides a more positive outlook on a market that appears poised to stabilize in the coming years.



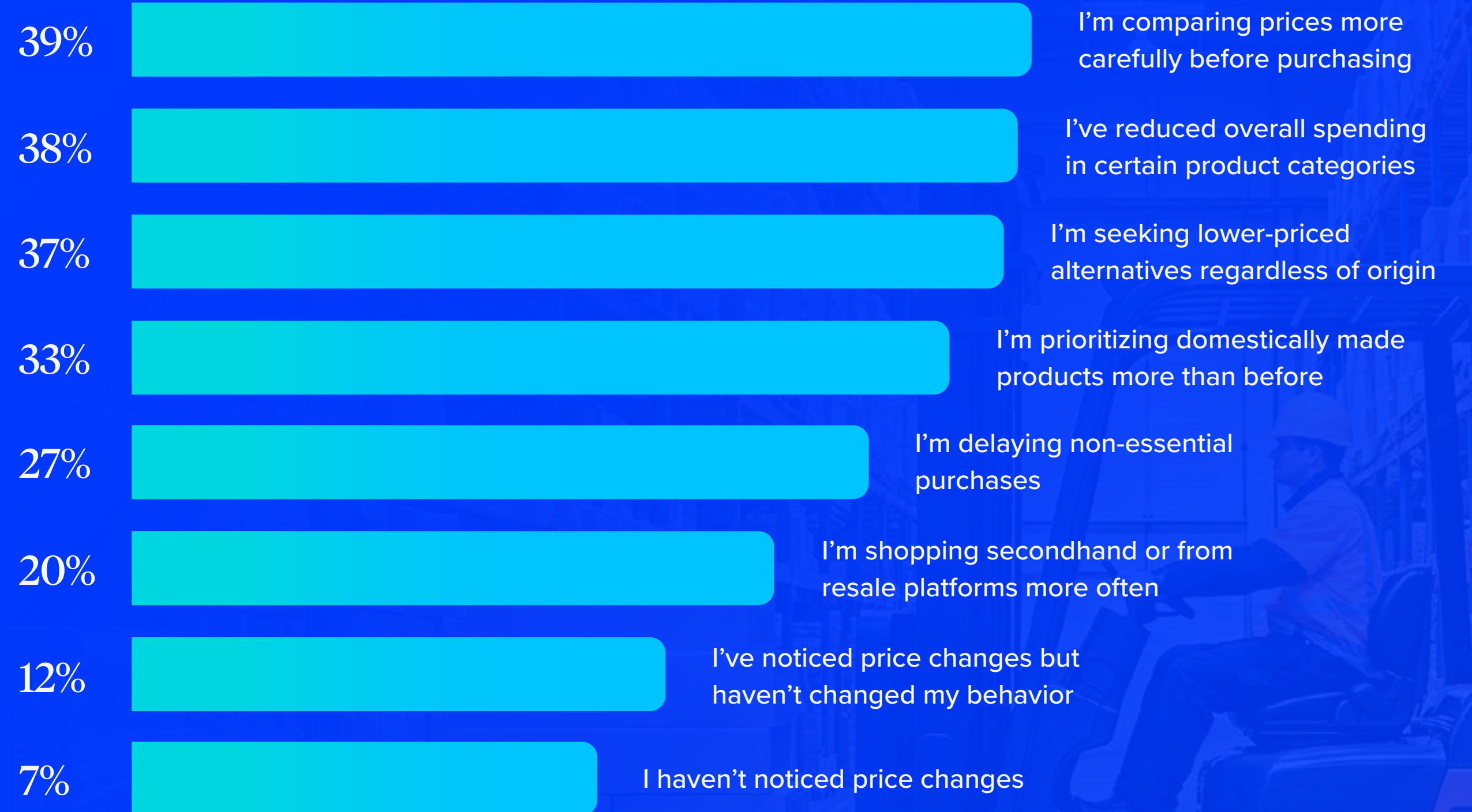
21%

of Total Global Retail Sales Will Come From Ecommerce in 2026



DATA SOURCE: [EMARKETER](#)

What Is the Impact of Global Trade Policies on Spending?



QUESTION: OVER THE PAST YEAR, GLOBAL TRADE POLICIES AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS HAVE AFFECTED PRODUCT PRICING. HOW HAVE PRICE CHANGES INFLUENCED YOUR PURCHASING BEHAVIOR? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.
BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

Impact of Global Trade Policies: Shoppers Reduce Spending and Seek Lower-Priced Options

With an influx of global trade policies in flux, shoppers often face higher prices, fewer options, different options, or some amalgamation of the three. Their response includes price and product origin consciousness in varying degrees. Shoppers are cautious, but not overly selective, comparing prices more carefully, reducing spending in certain product categories, and seeking lower-priced alternatives regardless of their country of origin.

However, global trade policies may have made one in three shoppers prioritize purchasing products that are domestically made. In a win for the environment, one in five shoppers buys secondhand or from resale platforms more often.

 TREND WATCH

Is Secondhand Fashion and Luxury’s Rise a Silver Lining of Turbulent Global Trade?

According to Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and Vestiaire Collective, “The secondhand fashion and luxury market is growing three times faster than the first-hand market.”

The global resale market is expected to grow at a rate of 10% annually, reaching up to \$360 billion by 2030. The market sits at \$210 to \$220 billion presently, and “resale already accounts for 28% of the wardrobes of those surveyed.”

The top reason shoppers choose secondhand fashion and luxury? Affordability, according to 80% of those surveyed.



DATA SOURCE: BCG

A Sharp Decline in Daily Spending

Tariffs, consumer confidence, and other economic factors impacted online buying behavior this year, with notable declines in the number of daily and weekly shoppers. Daily online shopping is down 12% year-over-year, dropping from 21% to 9%. That figure is fairly consistent among the younger generations, hovering between 10% and 12% for Gen Zers, millennials, and Gen Xers. Baby boomers shop online the least often, with only 2% buying something daily.

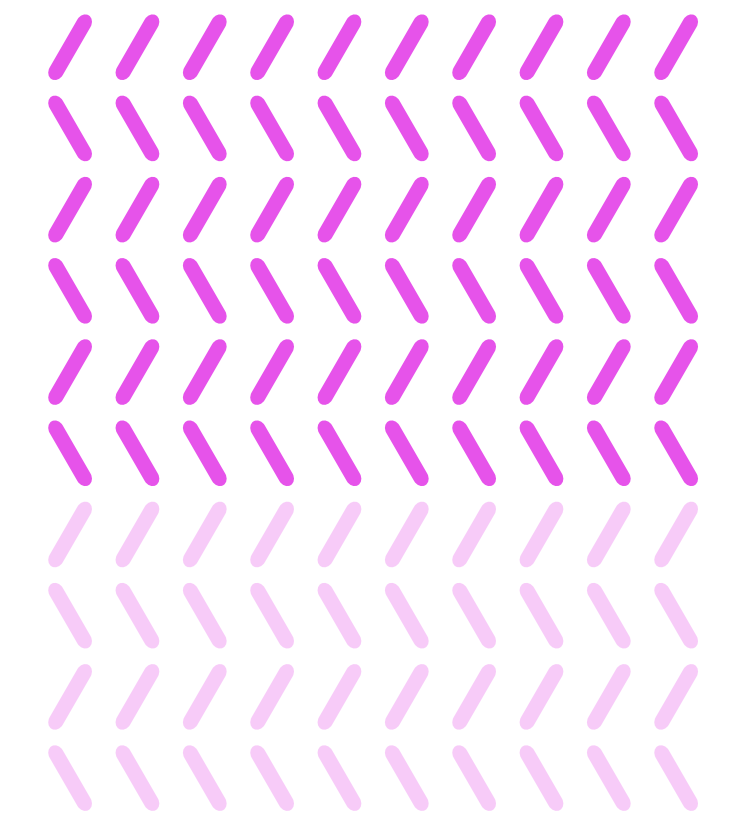
The dip in weekly shoppers is less significant, but nevertheless emphasizes their newfound commitment to selectivity. Many are now choosing to buy online products less frequently, evidenced by the increases in once-per-month and several-times-per-year shoppers.

 TREND WATCH

60%

Millennials Lead the Way

Millennials are the most frequent online shoppers, with more than 60% purchasing something at least once per week.



How Frequently Do Shoppers Spend Online?

RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE	CHANGE FROM 2025
Once per week	21%	1% ▼
Once per month	21%	8% ▲
Several times per week	21%	2% ▼
Several times per month	14%	NO CHANGE
Several times per year	11%	6% ▲
Daily	9%	12% ▼

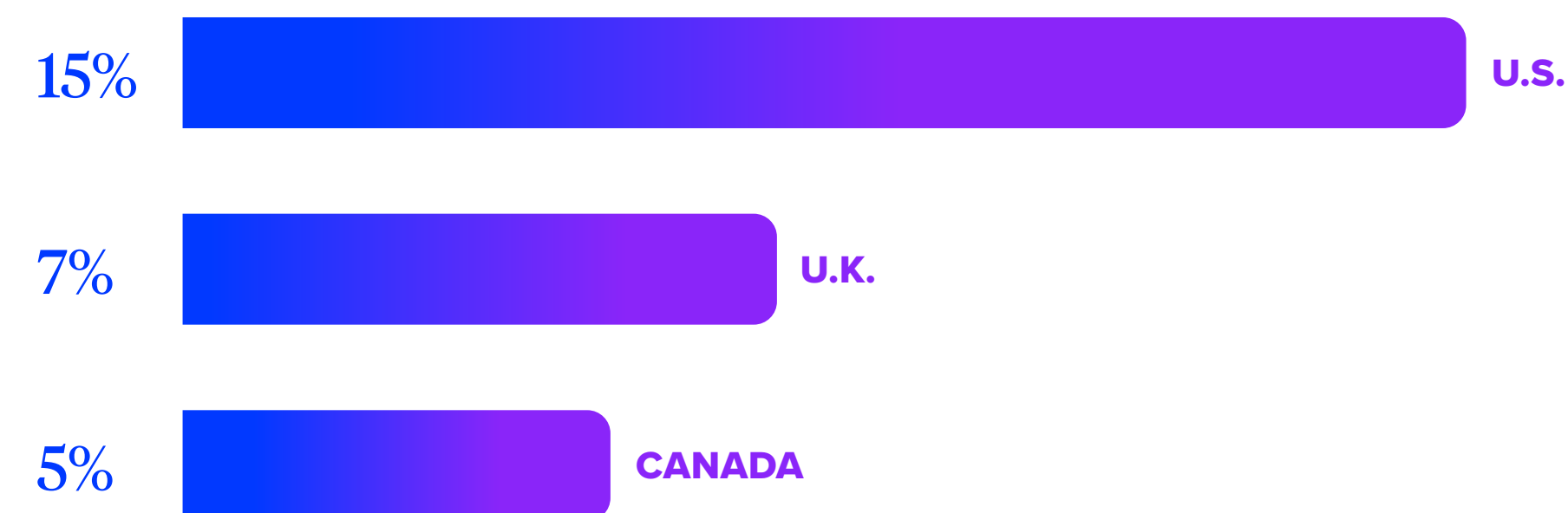
QUESTION: ON AVERAGE, HOW OFTEN DO YOU SHOP ONLINE? (N=2,712)

DATA SPOTLIGHT

15%

U.S. Shoppers Still Checking Out

The 15% of U.S. shoppers who shop online daily more than double the amount of U.K. (7%) and Canadian (5%) shoppers who buy products that frequently.



Brand and Product Discovery Channel Trends

Despite the range of online discovery options — including AI shopping tools — available, shoppers still like finding new products and brands in-store.

A Tried-and-True Preference for the Physical — Coupled With a Social Surge

Across all generations, physical retail stores (60%) are where shoppers primarily discover new products and brands, followed by online marketplaces (57%), and social media (52%). Retail stores were the third-most-popular discovery channel last year, when marketplaces took the top spot. The individual generation breakdowns follow a similar pattern.

TREND WATCH

Keep an Eye on AI

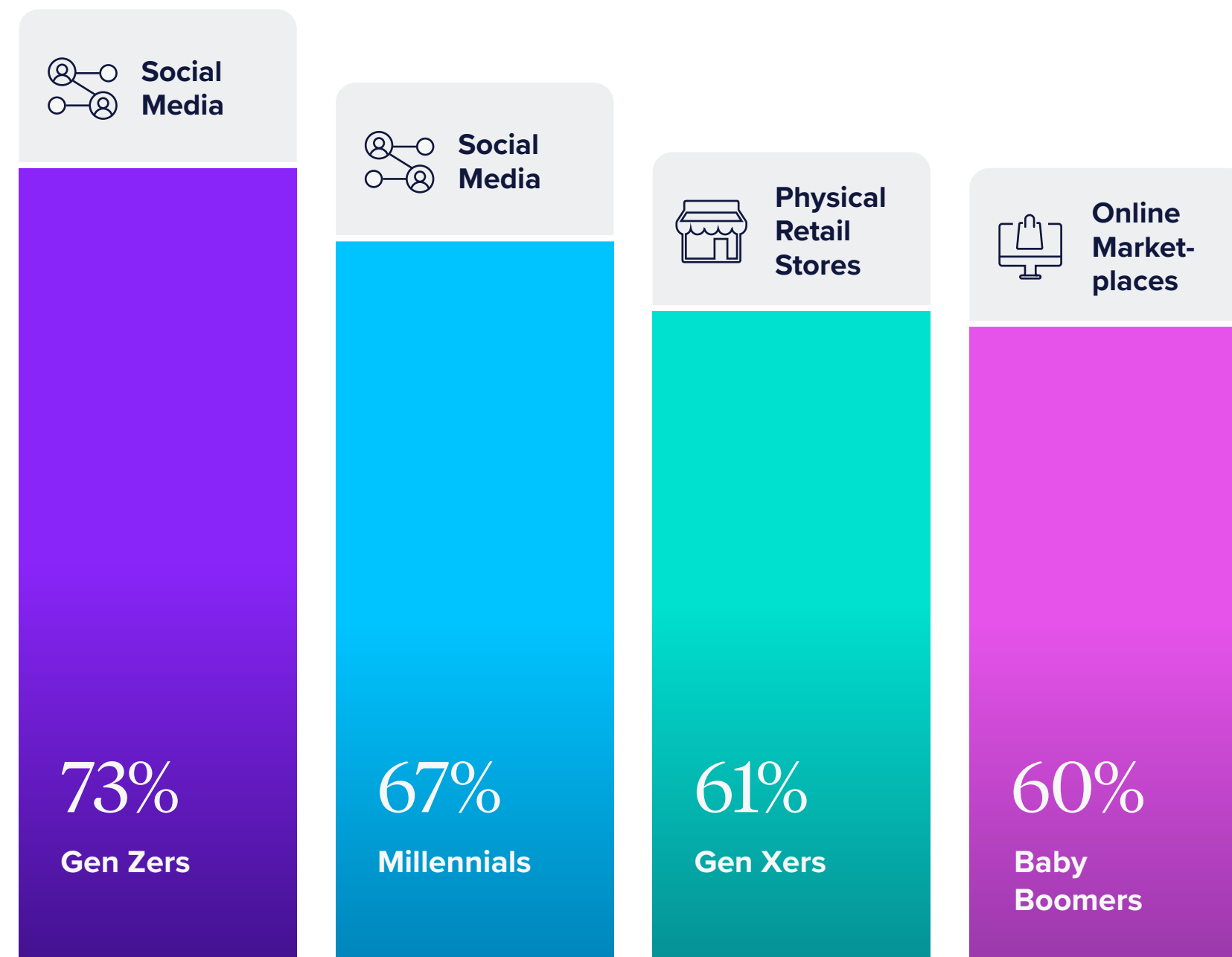
Nearly one in five shoppers discover new products and brands on AI search tools, such as ChatGPT and Gemini. Among U.S. shoppers, that number jumps to one in four.

What Are the Top 10 Discovery Channels?

RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE	CHANGE FROM 2025
Physical retail stores	60%	3% ▲
Online marketplaces (e.g., Amazon)	57%	NO CHANGE
Social media (e.g., TikTok, Instagram)	52%	1% ▲
Recommendations from friends and family	46%	5% ▼
Retail websites (e.g., Target)	31%	3% ▲
Brand websites (e.g., Nike, Warby Parker)	24%	NO CHANGE
Video ads (e.g., TV, Hulu)	19%	1% ▼
AI search tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini)	19%	NEW DISCOVERY CHANNEL ✦
Print ads (e.g., magazines)	14%	NO CHANGE
Online forums (e.g., Reddit)	12%	1% ▼

QUESTION: WHERE DO YOU PRIMARILY DISCOVER NEW PRODUCTS AND BRANDS? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. (N=2,712)

What's the Top Discovery Channel for Each Generation Group?



QUESTION: WHERE DO YOU PRIMARILY DISCOVER NEW PRODUCTS AND BRANDS?
PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. (N=2,712)

Webrooming and Showrooming Show Why Omnichannel Matters

Establishing a unified brand presence across every touchpoint is the foundation of omnichannel commerce, and webrooming and showrooming are two of the best examples of why this strategy is nonnegotiable for businesses. More than two-thirds (67%) of shoppers webroom — researching a product online before purchasing it in-store — and 53% showroom — checking out a product in-store before buying it online — illustrating how valuable connected shopping experiences are to customers.

GROWTH HACK

Get Creative With Your Omnichannel Strategies

Buy online, pick up in-store (BOPIS) and curbside pickup emerged out of necessity during the pandemic, but these fulfillment options still hold tremendous value for brands looking to increase foot traffic and sales.

Want to drive awareness for in-store releases in a nontraditional way? Consider rewarding BOPIS customers with bundle discounts on additional items they pick up during their visit. Incentivize them to peruse the aisles and discover the latest from your brand.

Another emerging strategy: using geolocation to target curbside pickup customers with personalized ads as they arrive for their items. A well-timed offer or promotion can easily lead to a higher order volume from an already interested customer.

02 *Consideration*

How Shoppers Research New Products and Brands

Shoppers primarily use online marketplaces and social media to research products, but these are by no means the only channels they scour for information, especially when it comes to big-ticket purchases. AI shopping tools continue to gain steam, and some shoppers have shown interest in autonomous agents that can complete the entire buying journey for them.



Brand and Product Research Channel Trends

An increase in shopper selectivity explains why they seek out product content across a variety of channels, starting with online marketplaces. And when it's time for a big-ticket purchase, shoppers really do their homework.

Shoppers Look to Online Marketplaces Like Amazon for Information

Online marketplaces are consumers' primary research channel overall, with Gen Xers and baby boomers citing them as their top destination. Gen Zers and millennials prefer to use social media to look for information on new products and brands, which is a notable change from last year, when platforms like Instagram and TikTok were the fifth-most popular research channel among millennials.

What Are the Primary Research Channels?

RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE	CHANGE FROM 2025
Online marketplaces (e.g., Amazon)	51%	4% ▼
Physical retail stores	44%	7% ▼
Social media (e.g., TikTok, Instagram)	42%	2% ▲
Conversations with friends and family	38%	8% ▼
Retail websites (e.g., Target)	30%	4% ▲
Brand websites (e.g., Nike, Warby Parker)	27%	NO CHANGE
AI search tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini)	22%	NEW RESEARCH CHANNEL ✦
Product review websites (e.g., Wirecutter)	19%	1% ▲
Online forums (e.g., Reddit)	14%	2% ▼
Delivery apps (e.g., Instacart)	9%	1% ▼

QUESTION: WHERE DO YOU PRIMARILY RESEARCH NEW PRODUCTS AND BRANDS? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. (N=2,712)



DATA SPOTLIGHT

AI Search Tools Growing in Popularity

More shoppers (22%) use AI search tools than product review websites (19%) or online forums (14%) like Reddit to research new products and brands.

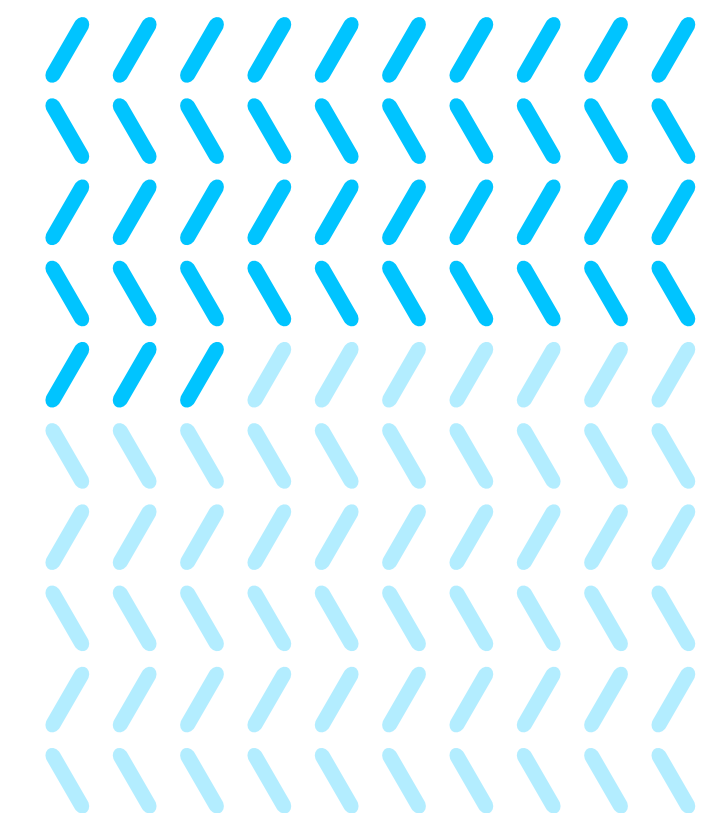


GROWTH HACK

Provide Robust Product Content Wherever — and Whenever — Possible

A good chunk of shoppers (43%) use their smartphone to search for more information about a product while shopping in-store. This serves as a reminder for brands to ensure their product content is up to date and comprehensive everywhere people look, including physical displays and across the digital shelf.

Your product detail pages (PDPs) shouldn't only include detailed descriptions, engaging visuals, and customer reviews — they also must be written with the why in mind. AI shopping tools favor context, so provide real-world examples, enhanced content, and answers to commonly asked questions.

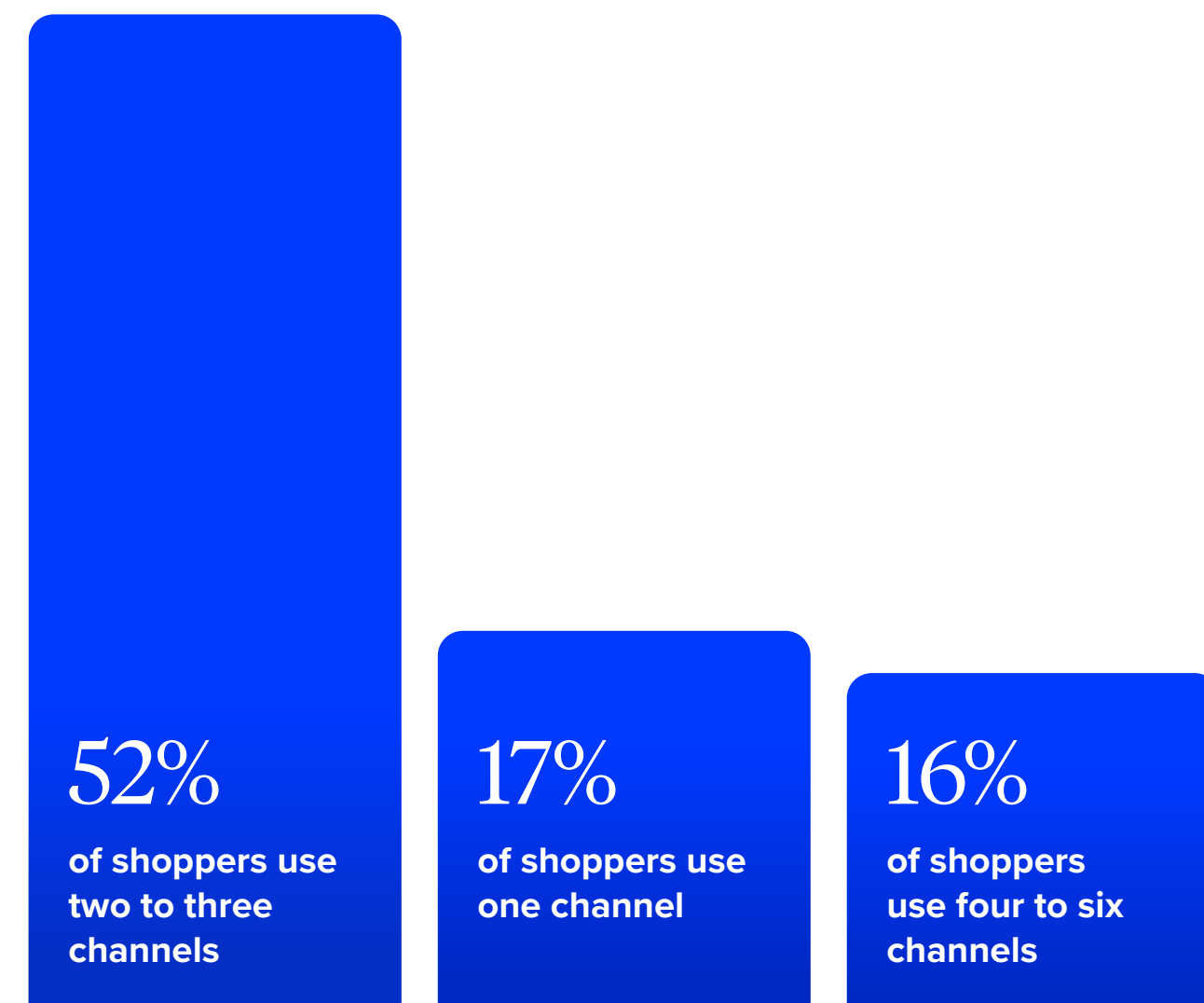


Cross-Channel Research Is Now Standard, Even for Everyday Items

Shoppers are taking more time and reviewing more channels before purchasing expensive products. These findings illustrate global shoppers' increasingly considerate buying patterns. Here's a top-three breakdown based on product type.

How Many Channels Do Shoppers Review Before Buying Everyday Essentials?

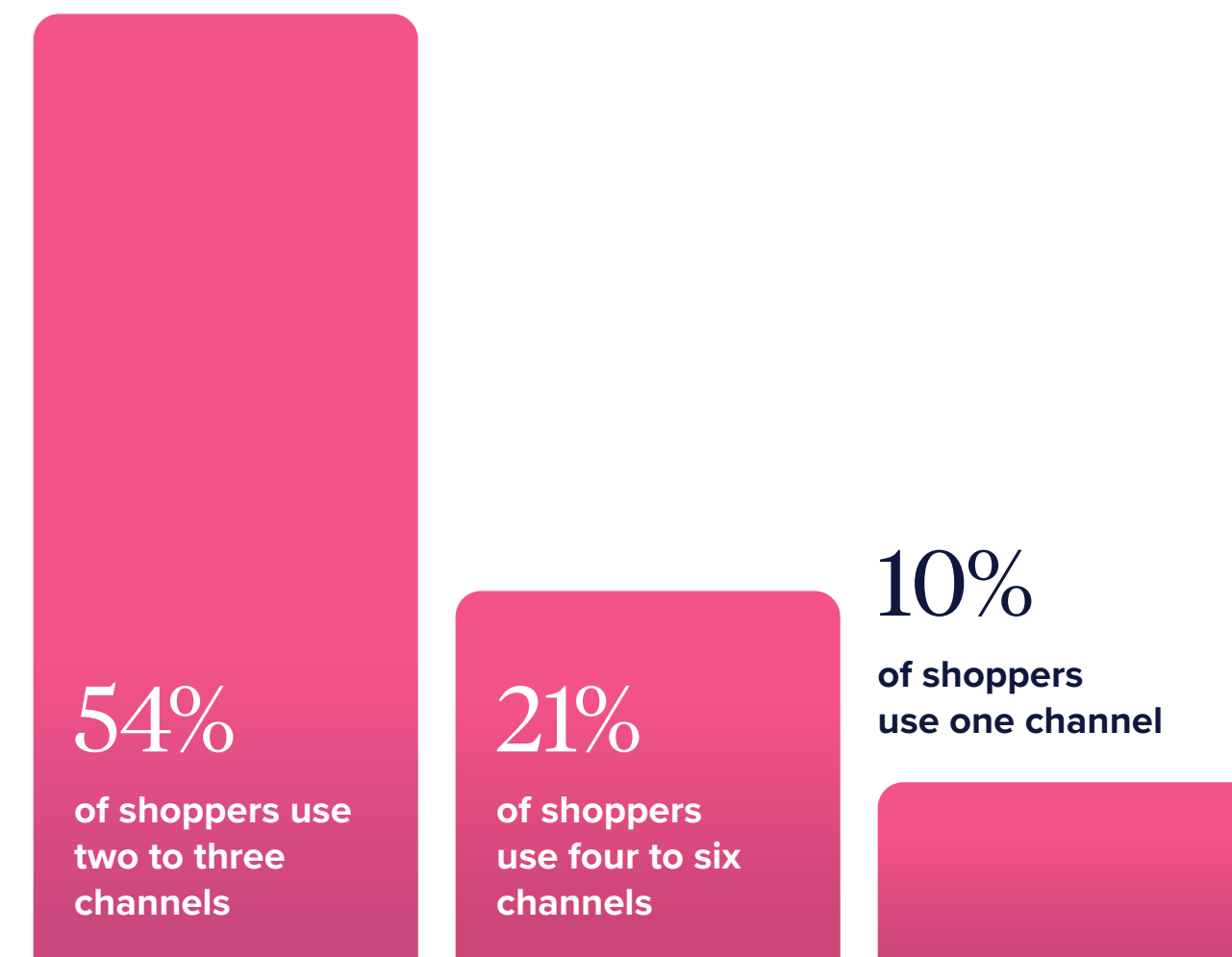
(Food and Beverage, Household Supplies, Etc.)



QUESTION: WHEN SHOPPING ONLINE, HOW MANY DIFFERENT CHANNELS (E.G., RETAIL WEBSITES, SOCIAL MEDIA, ETC.) DO YOU TYPICALLY REVIEW BEFORE BUYING AN EVERYDAY ESSENTIAL? (N=2,712)

How Many Channels Do Shoppers Review Before Buying Mid-Range Items?

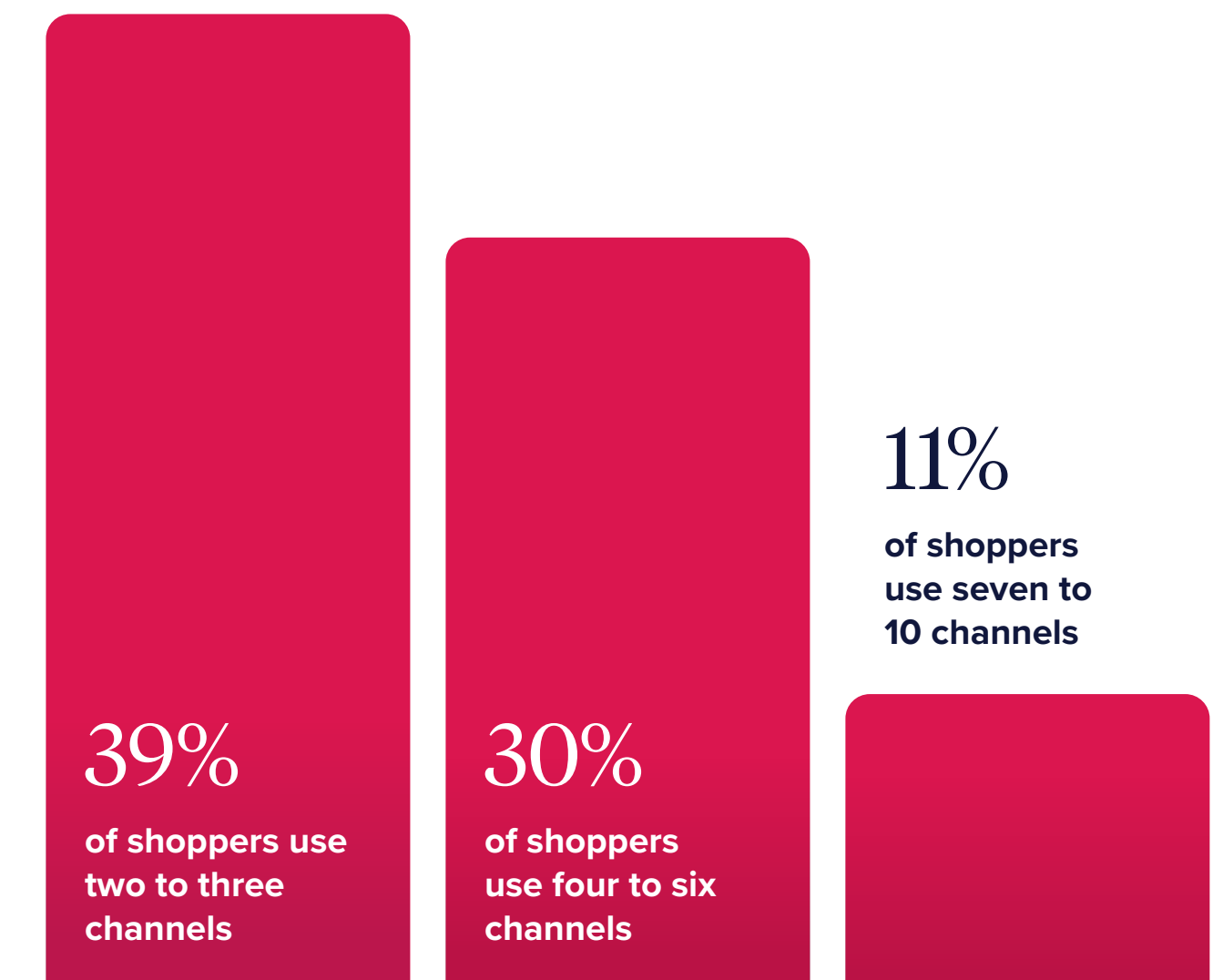
(Fashion and Apparel, Personal Care and Beauty, Sports and Outdoor, Etc.)



QUESTION: WHEN SHOPPING ONLINE, HOW MANY DIFFERENT CHANNELS (E.G., RETAIL WEBSITES, SOCIAL MEDIA, ETC.) DO YOU TYPICALLY REVIEW BEFORE BUYING A MID-RANGE ITEM? (N=2,712)

How Many Channels Do Shoppers Review Before Buying Big-Ticket Items?

(Furniture and Home, Electronics, Etc.)

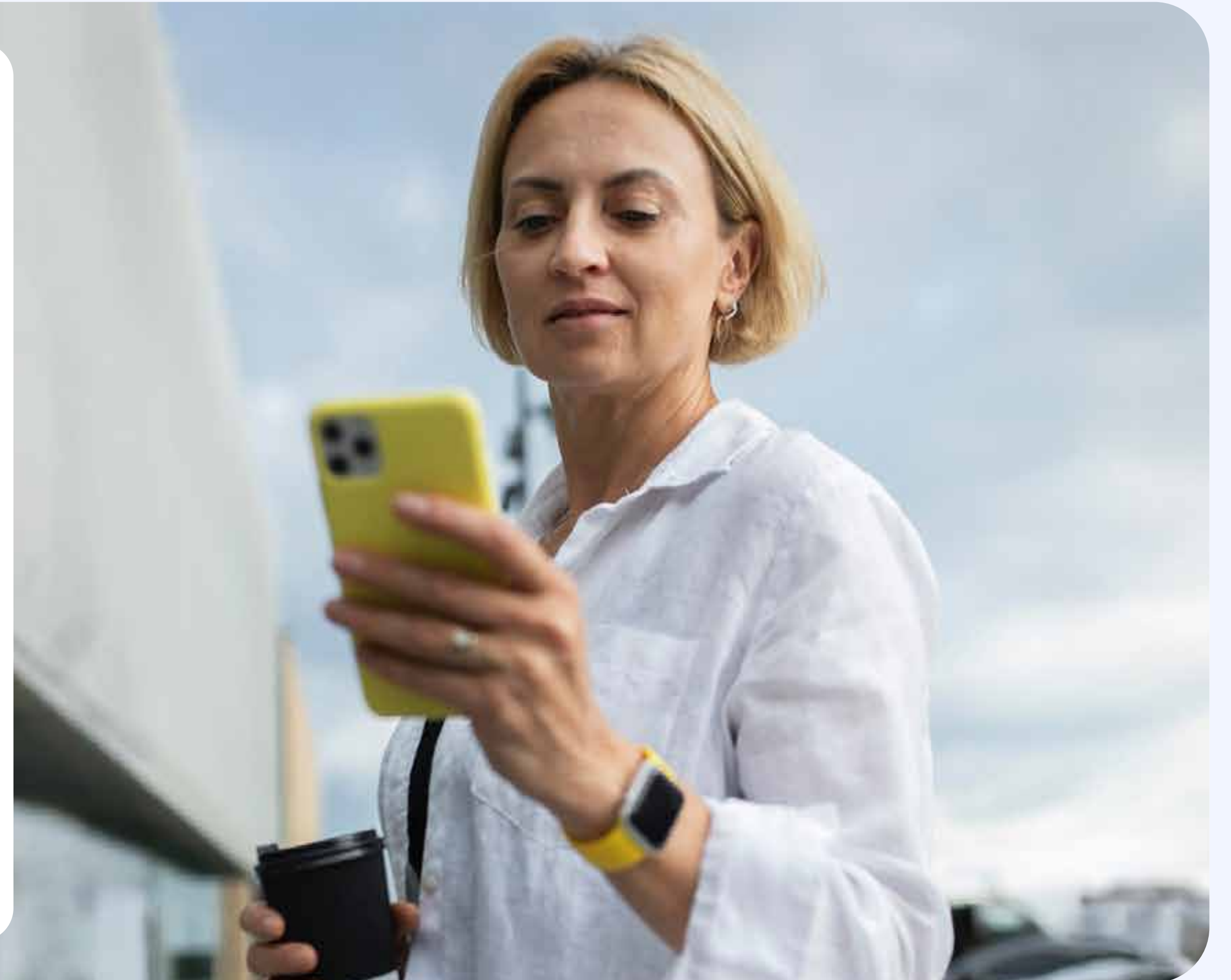


QUESTION: WHEN SHOPPING ONLINE, HOW MANY DIFFERENT CHANNELS (E.G., RETAIL WEBSITES, SOCIAL MEDIA, ETC.) DO YOU TYPICALLY REVIEW BEFORE BUYING A BIG-TICKET ITEM? (N=2,712)

 DATA SPOTLIGHT

56% US Shoppers Are Thorough

More than half (56%) of U.S. shoppers review four or more channels before making a big-ticket purchase, a significantly higher amount than U.K. (45%) and Canadian (33%) shoppers.



AI's Impact on the Buying Journey

AI has changed online shopping for good, yet widespread consumer adoption hasn't been immediate, and trust in these tools has come along even slower. As the next era of shopping begins, consumers seem hesitant — to say the least — about turning the full buying journey over to autonomous agents.

The AI Trust Gap: AI Shopping Tools Face Cautious Adoption and Conditional Trust

We're seeing a new phenomenon reshape the buying journey: Shoppers are turning to AI tools for product discovery and research, but they refuse to act on AI recommendations alone. This is the AI trust gap. While 22% of shoppers use AI tools like ChatGPT to shop, only 14% trust these recommendations enough to actually make a purchase — forcing the rest to verify across marketplaces, reviews, and social media before buying.

Shoppers' view of AI is fairly nuanced; those who use it, trust it (albeit to varying degrees). For brands, the stakes are clear: Winning the AI recommendation is worthless if your product content doesn't hold up everywhere shoppers go to confirm it. It's still a new technology, and the results — including product recommendations — should only improve as the algorithms get stronger and humans develop better ways to inform and interact with them. More widespread adoption is likely as enhancements roll out.

Do Shoppers Trust AI Shopping Tools?



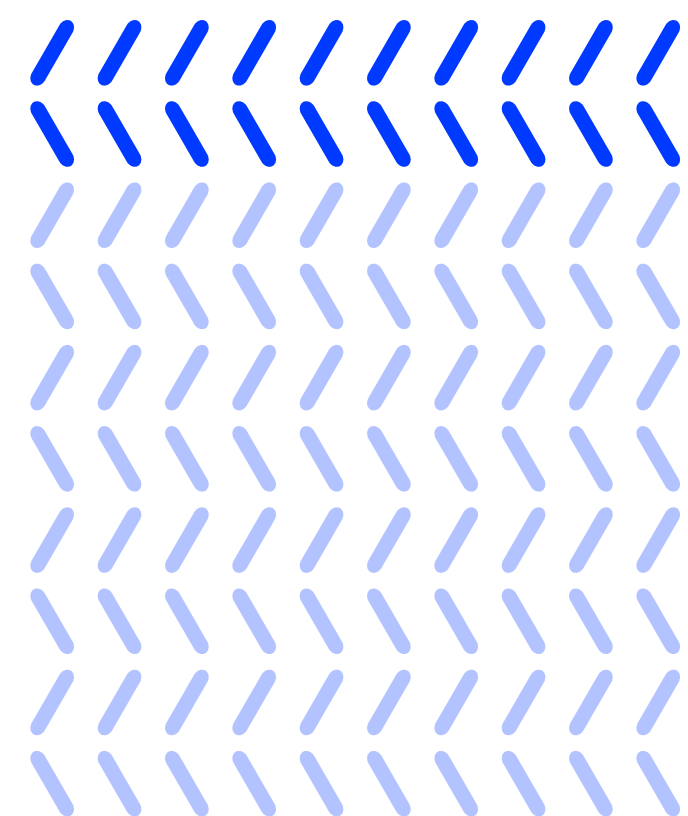
QUESTION: WHEN USING AI TOOLS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING, HOW MUCH DO YOU TRUST PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS OR RESULTS? (N=2,712)

 DATA SPOTLIGHT

A Generational Divide

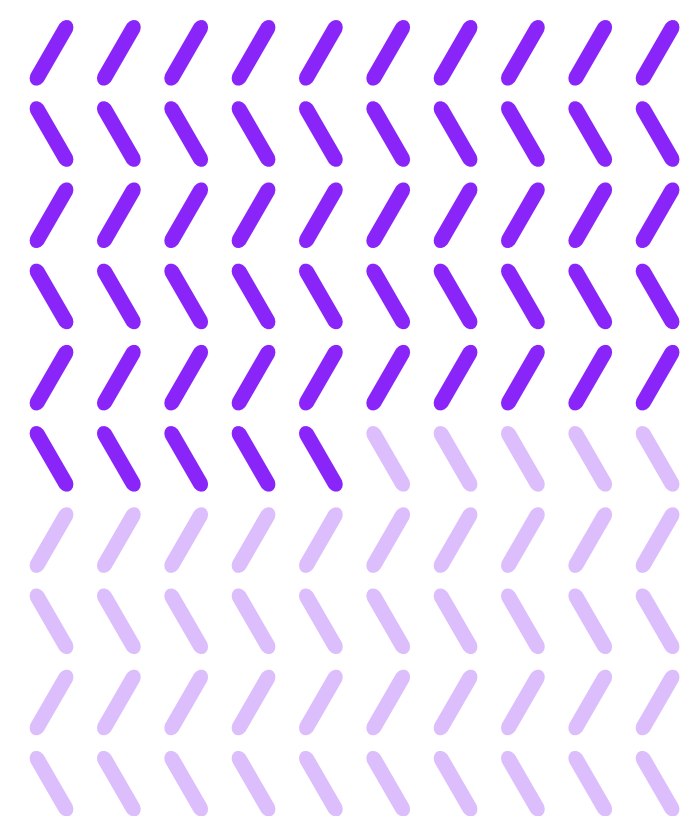
20%

Millennials are the biggest believers, with more than 20% saying they trust and use AI shopping tools regularly.



55%

55% of baby boomers don't use AI shopping tools at all.



 GROWTH HACK

Meeting the AI Revolution Head on

Virtual shopping tools may not be the primary discovery or research channel (yet), but 54% of shoppers have used them in this capacity, according to Salsify's "Ecommerce Pulse Report: Q4 2025."

Brands don't have the luxury of ignoring AI's influence, so it's crucial to incorporate generative engine optimization (GEO) strategies into your content plan, assuming you haven't already. Here's what to focus on.

- ✓ Digestible content that's easy for humans to read and machines to analyze.
- ✓ Reviews, FAQs, and description-rich videos fuel GenAI algorithms, so include these elements whenever possible.
- ✓ Accurate information, confident language, and reliable sources amount to authoritative pages in the eyes of AI.

DATA SOURCE: SALSIFY

Detailed Product Information Drives Trust in AI Recommendations

Here's some good news for brands that have implemented GEO strategies: The same information that AI feeds on — accurate product data, useful context, and authentic conversations — makes shoppers trust auto-generated product recommendations enough to complete a purchase.

Detailed product descriptions and specifications (31%) sway shoppers the most, while personalized explanations for why products fit their needs (25%) and customer reviews and ratings (25%) also help them feel confident enough to buy.

What Makes Shoppers Trust AI Product Recommendations Enough To Buy?



QUESTION: WHEN AN AI SEARCH TOOL RECOMMENDS A PRODUCT, WHAT MAKES YOU TRUST THAT RECOMMENDATION ENOUGH TO MAKE A PURCHASE? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. (N=2,712)

GROWTH HACK

Make Your Presence Known

Seeing brands they recognize (27%) in product recommendations is another impactful trust-building factor for shoppers, especially among younger generations.

If Gen Z and millennial shoppers are your target market, consider integrated campaigns that help you build a unified presence across platforms.

Think paid ads on marketplaces, emails that incentivize customer reviews, product placements in-store, and user-generated content (UGC) on social media — the primary discovery and research channel for these groups.

By the time shoppers come across one of your products in AI-generated results, they should understand your brand story and the level of customer experience to expect, giving them enough confidence to pull the trigger.

Agentic Commerce Sparks Divided Shopper Interest

AI impacts the buying journey to a certain extent whether shoppers use virtual shopping tools or not, but, as of now, that influence stops at product consideration. However, many believe that the next era of shopping revolves around agentic commerce, a process where autonomous agents search, compare, and purchase products based on your personal preferences, with little to no human involvement. This idea excites some shoppers, while others are less enthused about more machine intervention.

What's the Interest Level in Agentic Commerce by Generation?

	INTERESTED	SOMEWHAT INTERESTED	NOT INTERESTED
Gen Zers	26%	49%	24%
Millenials	30%	45%	24%
Gen Xers	21%	39%	40%
Baby Boomers	5%	33%	62%

QUESTION: HOW INTERESTED WOULD YOU BE IN USING AN AI SHOPPING AGENT THAT COULD AUTOMATICALLY DISCOVER, RESEARCH, AND PURCHASE PRODUCTS FOR YOU BASED ON YOUR GOALS AND PREFERENCES (I.E., AGENTIC COMMERCE)? (N=2,712)

Lack of Trust and Involvement Are the Biggest Obstacles for Agentic Commerce

Shoppers' concerns about autonomous agents mirror their feelings about AI shopping tools in general: Trust in the information they provide — and, in this case, the decisions they would make — is lacking for many (35%). Time-savings (32%) and convenience (32%) are the top reasons why shoppers are interested in agents handling the entire buying journey, while not being in control of their shopping (31%) is another issue for some.

What Are Generational Reasons for Interest in AI Shopping Agents?

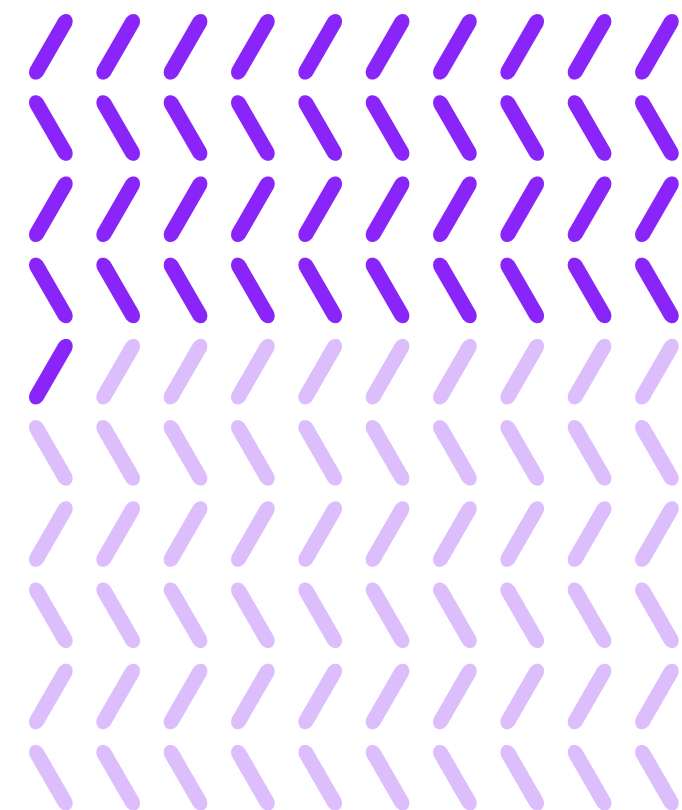
	Gen Zers	Millenials	Gen Xers	Baby Boomers
Convenience: I could shop any time	36%	40%	35%	15%
Trust: These tools know more than I do and are impartial	34%	41%	30%	11%
Time savings: I could get my shopping done more quickly	37%	38%	33%	20%
Satisfaction: These tools could help me find the best/better options	33%	31%	22%	15%
Lack of trust: I wouldn't trust their information or decision-making	32%	27%	34%	48%
Lack of involvement: I like being in control of my shopping	26%	20%	33%	48%

QUESTION: WHAT ARE YOUR REASONS FOR BEING INTERESTED OR NOT INTERESTED IN USING AN AI SHOPPING AGENT (I.E., AGENTIC COMMERCE)? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. (N=2,712)

 DATA SPOTLIGHT

41% **Some Shoppers Trust Machines More Than Themselves**

Even though lack of trust is the biggest obstacle to overcome for agentic-forward companies, some millennials (41%) believe autonomous agents know more than them and are impartial.



Decision

What Drives Final Buying Decisions

Eventually, shoppers reach the point of decision in their buying journey: purchase. Sometimes, the road to this destination is an easy one, and sometimes, it's rather bumpy, with lots of twists and turns and touchpoints in between. Explore online shopping verticals and popular shopping channels, the battle (and associated trends) of online versus in-store spending, the impact of global trade policies, and Gen Alpha's influence on household spending.



Online Shopping Verticals and Shopping Channels

Brands from every vertical, unite! Online shopping again proves gargantuan across categories. That said, many shoppers are heading to physical stores and channel-surfing for purchases.

Shoppers Head Online for Outfits, Food, and Tech

U.S. shoppers reported buying an average of 13% more online across verticals than shoppers in Canada. The U.K. consistently falls in the middle, except for the sports and outdoor vertical, where it ties the U.S., with 32% of shoppers making a purchase.

One exception is alcohol, however, where U.K. shoppers take the cake (or keg) for most purchases: 49% have made an online alcohol purchase within the last year, just 29% in the U.S. and Canada have done the same. Millennials are the most frequent purchasers of all product verticals except for food and beverage, where Gen Zers buy more, and electronics, where Gen Zers and millennials reported the same.

What Types of Products Have Shoppers Bought Online?

VERTICAL	PERCENTAGE	CHANGE FROM 2025
Fashion and apparel	65%	6% ▼
Food and beverage	60%	3% ▼
Electronics	59%	9% ▼
Personal care and beauty	54%	NO CHANGE
Household supplies	51%	NO CHANGE
Health and wellness	47%	5% ▼
Furniture and home goods	41%	3% ▼
Home improvement	34%	2% ▼
Alcohol	36%	8% ▲
Sports and outdoor	30%	2% ▲
Toy and baby	26%	1% ▼

QUESTION: WITHIN THE LAST YEAR, HAVE YOU PURCHASED A PRODUCT ONLINE FROM ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

2025 DATA SOURCE: SALSIFY "2025 CONSUMER RESEARCH" REPORT



DATA SPOTLIGHT

Who's Buying the Most Across Verticals?

Across each of these verticals, here's a closer look at who's buying the most online in each gender group.

- ✓ **Alcohol:** Men (+7% over women)
- ✓ **Fashion and apparel:** Women (+13% over men)
- ✓ **Food and beverage:** Women (+2% over men)
- ✓ **Electronics:** Men (+18% over women)
- ✓ **Furniture and home goods:** Women (+5% over men)
- ✓ **Health and wellness:** Women (+7% over men)
- ✓ **Home improvement:** Men (+5% over women)
- ✓ **Household supplies:** Women (+6% over men)
- ✓ **Personal care and beauty:** Women (+21% over men)
- ✓ **Sports and outdoor:** Men (+10% over women)
- ✓ **Toy and baby:** Women (+5% over men)



Where Do Shoppers Purchase Products?

RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE	CHANGE FROM 2025
Physical retail stores	69%	11% ▲
Online marketplaces (e.g., Amazon)	68%	2% ▲
Retail websites (e.g., Target, Canadian Tire, John Lewis)	35%	3% ▲
Brand websites (e.g., Nike, Warby Parker)	29%	2% ▲
Social media shops (e.g., TikTok Shop, Instagram Shopping)	22%	12% ▼
Delivery apps (e.g., Instacart, Deliveroo)	13%	2% ▲
Voice shopping (e.g., Amazon Alexa, Google Home)	7%	1% ▼

QUESTION: WHERE DO YOU PRIMARILY PURCHASE NEW PRODUCTS? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

2025 DATA SOURCE: SALSIFY "2025 CONSUMER RESEARCH" REPORT

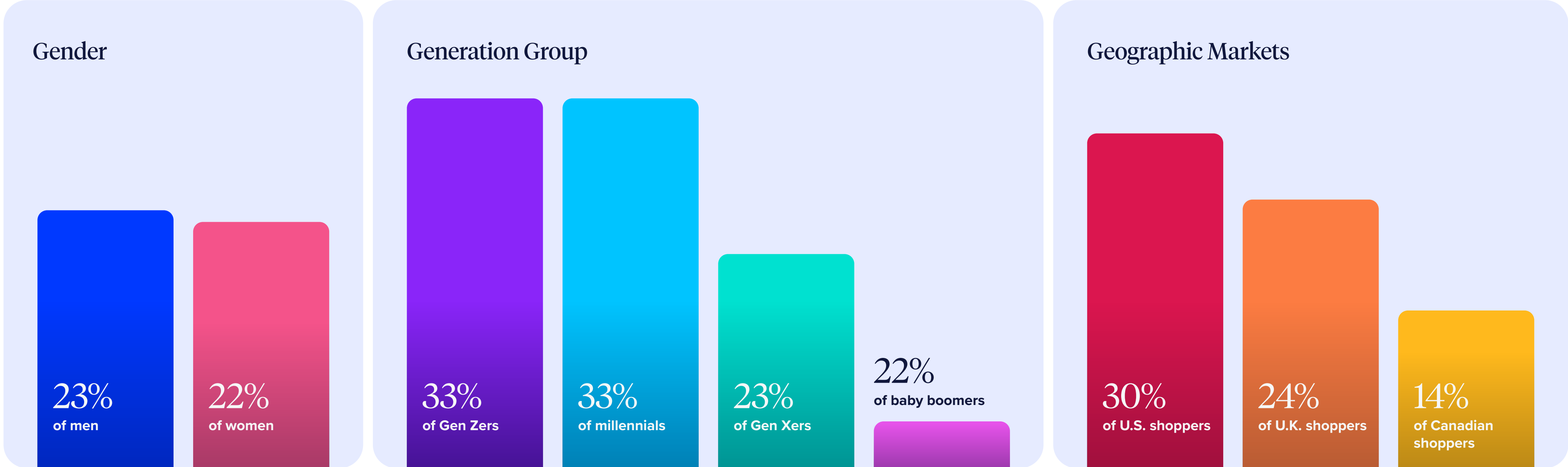
Shoppers Flock to Physical Retail Stores, Online Marketplaces To Make Purchases

This must be the place: Physical retail stores received a lot more love than last year, becoming the top-reported spot for where shoppers purchase new products. Online marketplaces like Amazon settled in the number two spot. Though favoritism is spread across age groups, older generations have a higher preference for both of these channels.

Interestingly, social media shops saw a significant dip. Perhaps these shoppers are closing their apps and heading out to touch grass (or physical retail store floors). Other sites also saw small gains, such as retail websites, brand websites, and delivery apps.

Who Still Shops Socially?

Though down from last year and up 4% from Salsify's 2024 survey, social media shopping still attracts plenty of buyers — but who are they?



Online vs In-Store Shopping

There's no denying that compelling product pages win over shoppers; however, the true power of online experiences lies in their ability to connect shoppers to the right product, at the right price, at the right time (which can be tricky).

Better Pricing and Convenience Reign Once More as the Top Reasons for Shopping Online

Better pricing overtook convenience compared to Salsify's 2025 survey — but they're still the top two contenders. Shoppers also continue to enjoy the 24/7 shopping availability and wider product selection that online offers as well.

Millennials (37%) and Gen Zers (35%) are also drawn to online shopping for better product content more than Gen Xers (26%) and baby boomers (14%). Gen Zers (36%) and baby boomers (34%) are the most enthusiastic about customer ratings and reviews, with 31% of Gen Xers and 30% of millennials also checking out online chatter before purchasing.

Why Do Shoppers Purchase Online Instead of In-Store?

RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE	CHANGE FROM 2025
Better pricing	65%	8% ▲
Convenience	64%	7% ▼
24/7 shopping availability	39%	5% ▼
Wider product selection	36%	7% ▼
Customer ratings and reviews	33%	2% ▼
Easy product comparison	30%	5% ▼
Avoiding crowds	29%	5% ▼
Better product content	28%	9% ▼
Personalized product recommendations	12%	1% ▼
Privacy	9%	3% ▼

QUESTION: WITHIN THE LAST YEAR, WHICH FACTORS HAVE INFLUENCED YOUR DECISION TO MAKE A PURCHASE ONLINE INSTEAD OF AT A PHYSICAL RETAIL STORE? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

2025 DATA SOURCE: SALSIFY "2025 CONSUMER RESEARCH" REPORT

 GROWTH HACK

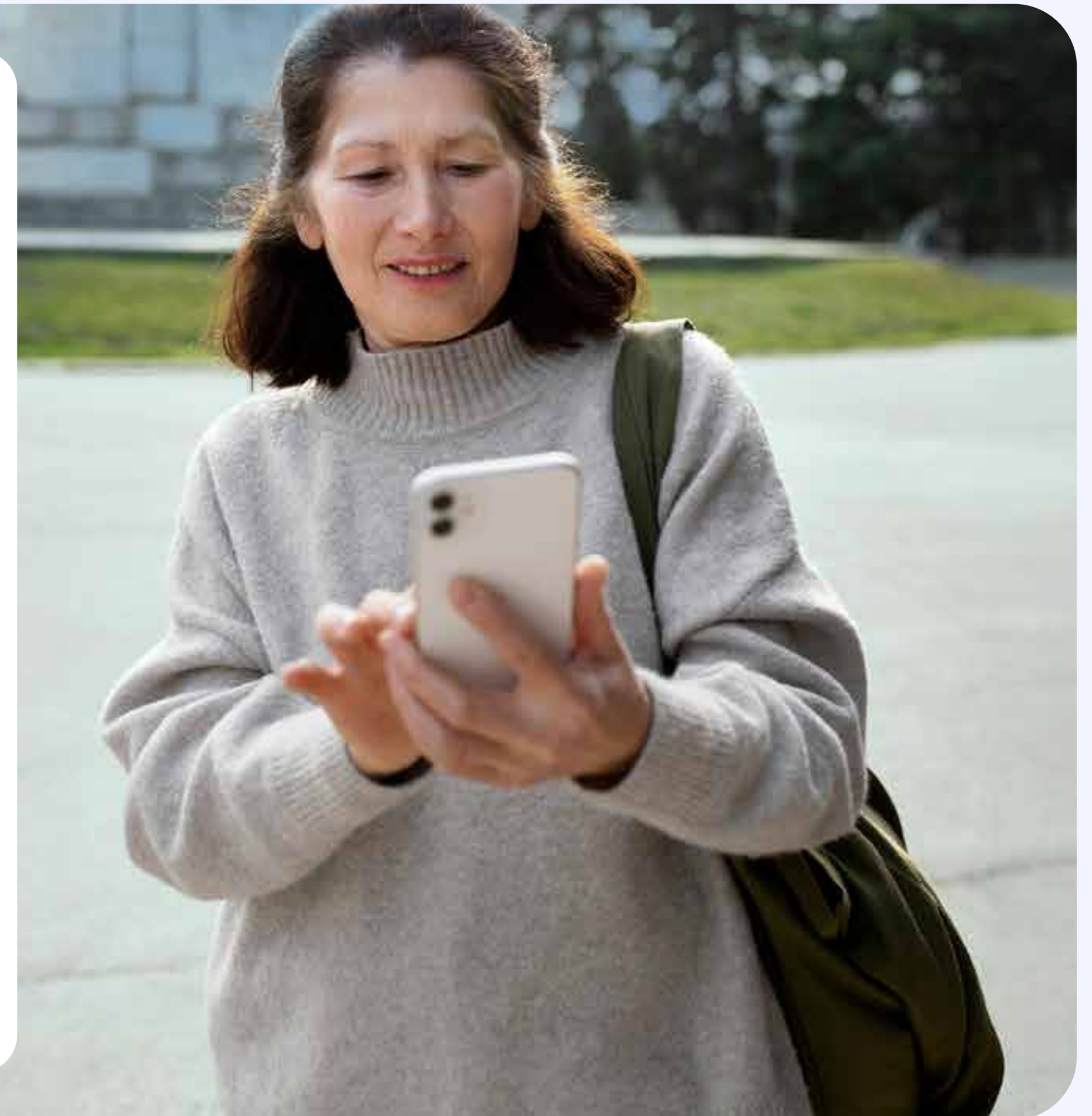
Sway Shoppers With Personalized Product Recommendations

It might not be the biggest draw for why shoppers prefer shopping online over in-store, but personalization still packs a powerful punch. According to Salsify’s “Ecommerce Pulse Report: Q4 2024,” 37% of shoppers buy more often due to personalized product recommendations, including about half or more of Gen Zers and millennials, and more than a third of Gen Xers.

Furthermore, 39% of shoppers are driven to purchase due to personalized discounts (i.e., based on past browsing behavior). And if tracking causes worry, you can also gather data directly from shoppers through quizzes or polls. Want to elevate the wow factor even further? Tailor each PDP for specific personas — it’s possible with new AI-powered product experience management (PXM) tools.

It’s easy — infuse more personalization, rack up more revenue. Companies that succeed in personalization efforts generate 40% more revenue, according to McKinsey & Company.

DATA SOURCE: SALSIFY MCKINSEY & COMPANY

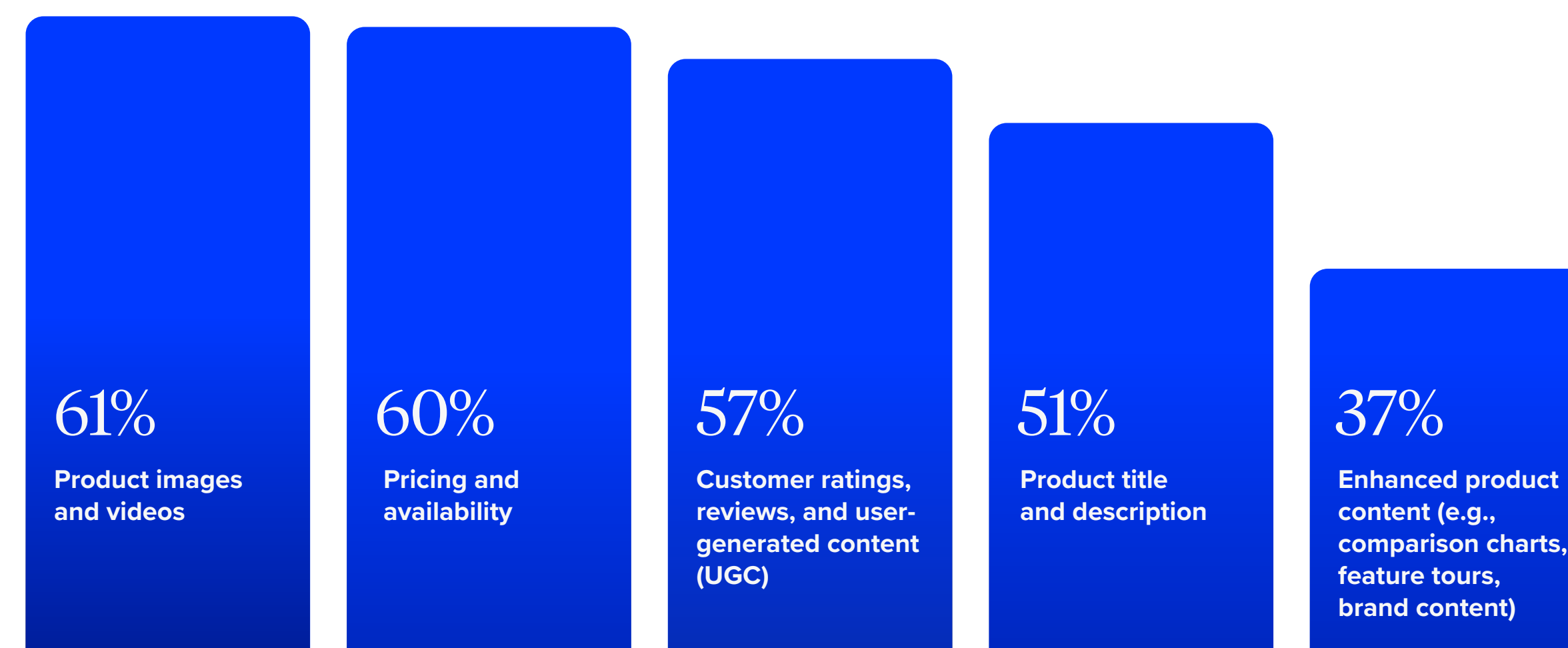


Product Images and Videos Voted Most Important Product Page Element

A more apt statement, however, is that product images and videos, pricing and availability, and customer ratings, reviews, and UGC should all be prioritized by brands on their PDPs. Though they might sound like simple details, there's a lot on the backend that needs to go well for this information to come across clearly to shoppers. Brands need compelling libraries of visuals, up-to-date pricing and inventory tools, and not just content from customers, but pages that illustrate strong connections and authentic conversations around their products.

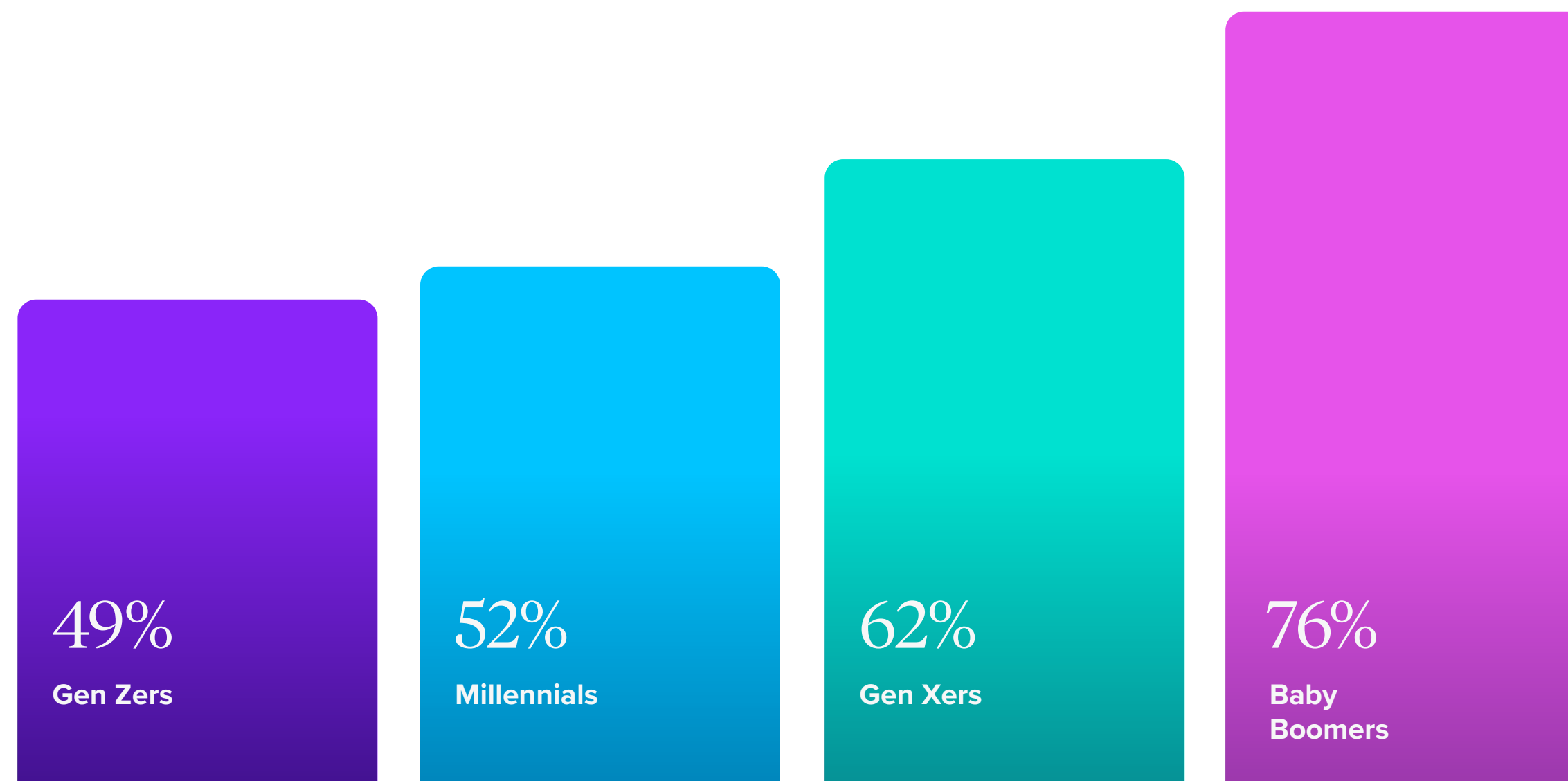
Call it sticker shock, or sticker fixation — but the majority of baby boomers can't take their eyes off of pricing and availability on product pages, and half or more of other generation groups also take note. It can also be a matter of time-saving: Shoppers don't want to take a trip to the store or waste time trying to order online only to be met with an unavailable or out-of-stock product.

What Are the Most Important Product Page Elements for Completing a Purchase?



QUESTION: WHEN SHOPPING ONLINE, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PRODUCT PAGE ELEMENTS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT FOR HELPING YOU DECIDE TO COMPLETE A PURCHASE? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

Which Generation Groups Consider Pricing and Availability the Most Important Product Page Element?



QUESTION: WHEN SHOPPING ONLINE, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PRODUCT PAGE ELEMENTS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT FOR HELPING YOU DECIDE TO COMPLETE A PURCHASE? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.
BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

GROWTH HACK

How Enhanced Content Elevates All PDPs

Beyond being voted the most important product page element by 37% of shoppers in this round of research, 87% of shoppers consider enhanced content helpful, according to Salsify's "Ecommerce Pulse Report: Q4 2024."

Enhanced content, also called below-the-fold content or A+ content on Amazon, includes product content that goes beyond the basic parts of a product page. This can include comparison charts, feature tours, extensive image galleries, downloadable materials, videos, and longer, more customized product descriptions.

Since so many shoppers consider images and videos as the most important product page element, it's a great reason to double (or triple) down on creative ways to infuse them. Visually striking product pages help bridge the gap between online and in-store, and make it easier for shoppers to picture incorporating your products into their lives.

DATA SOURCE: SALSIFY

Social Commerce Wanes While AI-Influenced Purchases Climb

U.S. shoppers have a 23% average participation rate for the following trends, nearly double the average participation rate of shoppers in Canada (13%), with the U.K.'s average participation rate (14%) falling in the middle. The inclusion of Canadian shoppers in this survey and their lower participation also pulls the change from 2025 down further when considering shoppers' propensity for buying viral products and listening to social media influencers.

What Are the Biggest Trends for Online Shopping Purchases?

RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE	CHANGE FROM 2025
Purchased a product online because a social media influencer recommended it	23%	16% ▼
Purchased a product from a live stream shopping event (e.g., TikTok LIVE, Instagram Live Shopping)	23%	12% ▼
Purchased a product because it was recommended by an AI search tool or shopping assistant	22%	5% ▲
Purchased a product online because it went viral on social media	17%	17% ▼
Purchased a “dupe” (i.e., cheaper alternative) of a luxury or viral product after seeing it on social media	16%	NEW SHOPPING TREND ↗
Purchased something you didn't need because the algorithm kept showing it to you until you caved	10%	NEW SHOPPING TREND ↗
Purchased a product online after using a virtual try-on or placement preview tool	8%	9% ▼

QUESTION: WITHIN THE LAST YEAR, DID YOU PURCHASE A PRODUCT UNDER ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES?
PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

2025 DATA SOURCE: SALSIFY “2025 CONSUMER RESEARCH” REPORT

 DATA SPOTLIGHT

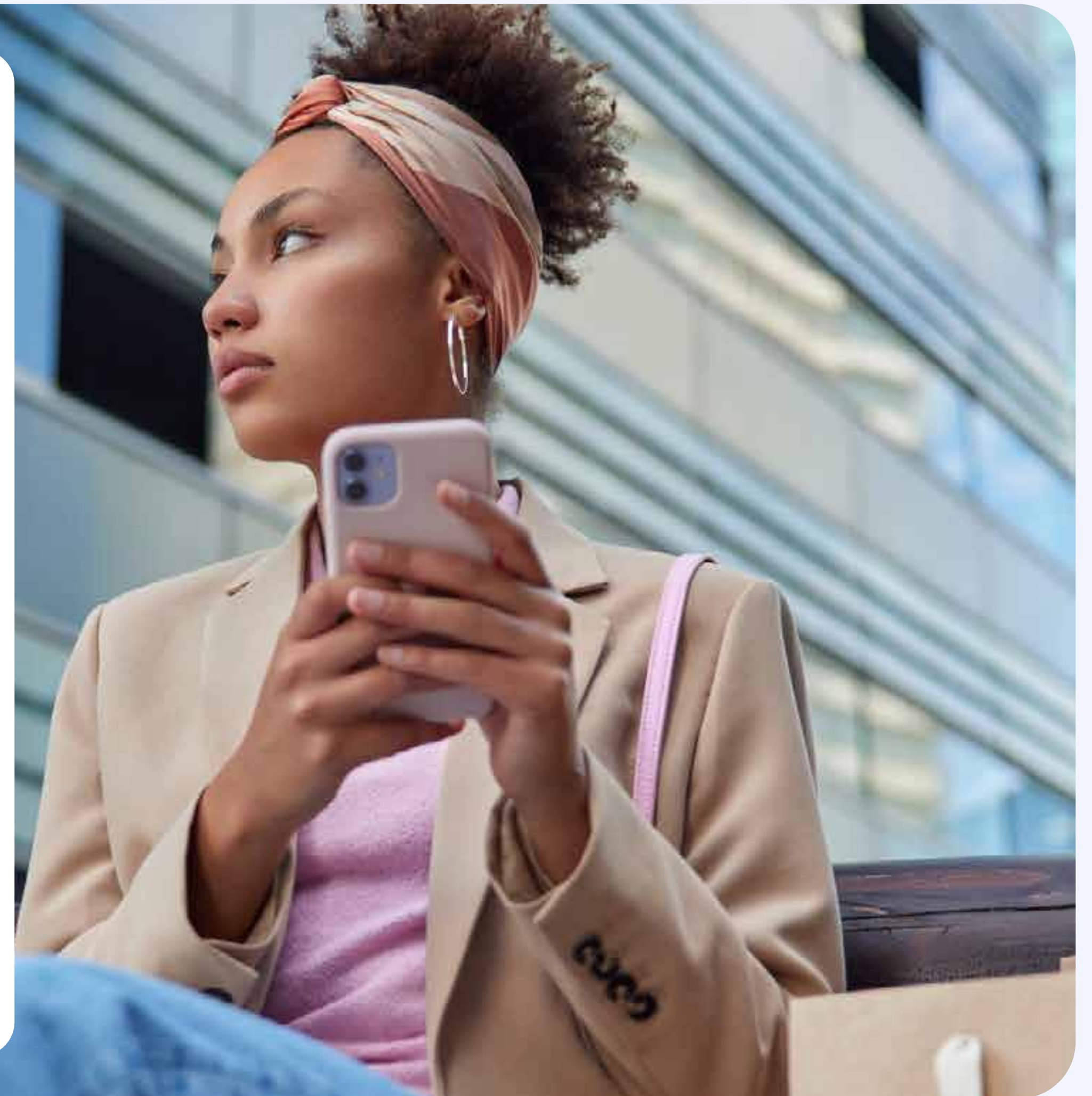
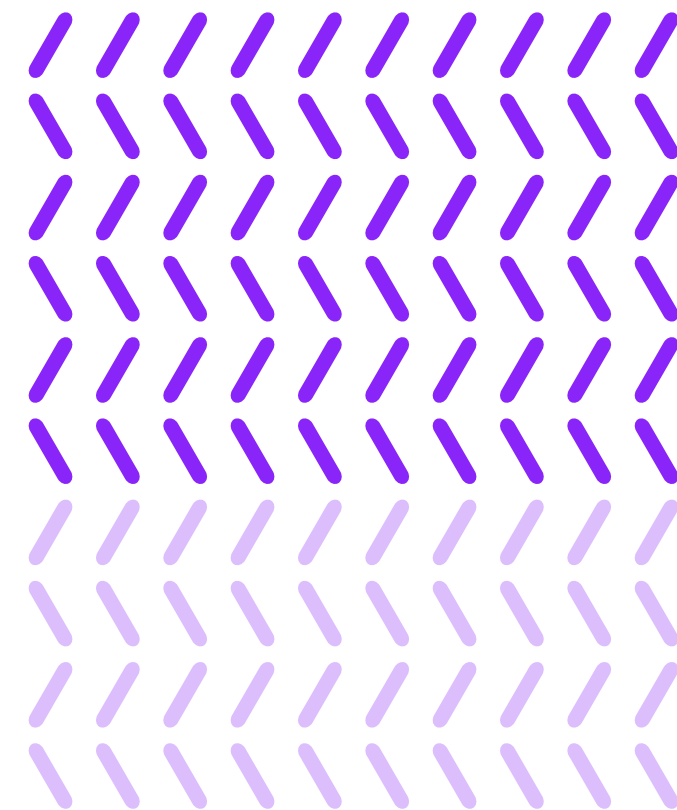
60%

AI Search and Shopping Tools Influencing More Purchases

More than 60% of shoppers use AI search tools like ChatGPT to discover and research new products, according to Salsify's "Ecommerce Pulse Report: Q4 2025." These same tools have already influenced more purchases than last year (up 5% from Salsify's 2025 survey).

More men (26%) than women (17%) have purchased a product because an AI search tool or shopping assistant recommended it, and, unsurprisingly, these purchases are more common among millennials (32%) and Gen Zers (31%), followed by Gen Xers (20%), and just a few baby boomers (3%).

DATA SOURCE: SALSIFY



Gen Alpha and Household Spending

They may not be part of today’s main pool of spenders — but Gen Alpha (born between 2010 and 2024) already influences household spending. Their parents and guardians shared that their pull on purchases ranges from no to high influence.

Gen Alpha Regularly Influences Household Spending

Try to resist the urge to say, “Back in my day ...”: A notable number (43%) of parents and guardians say their Gen Alpha children (ages 1–15) influence spending in some way, with 9% influencing most purchases. Though parents and guardians conceded the youngest generation definitely has a say in the purchase of everyday essentials like food and beverages, their influence is more pervasive than just a sweetened breakfast cereal as a once-in-a-while treat. (And you likely couldn’t catch kids dead these days sprinkling dry cereal with sugar themselves.)

In fact, Gen Alpha’s preferences are a primary factor in most household purchase decisions more frequently in the U.S. (13%) than in the U.K. (8%) and Canada (6%).

What Influence Does Gen Alpha Have on Household Spending?



QUESTION: IF YOU ARE THE PARENT/GUARDIAN OF A GEN ALPHA CHILD/CHILDREN (AGES 1–15), HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DO THEY HAVE ON HOUSEHOLD PURCHASE DECISIONS? BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

 **GROWTH HACK**

Parents and Guardians Are Under Pressure — Lend a Hand

In the timbre of Freddie Mercury and David Bowie: Pressure! The understatement of the century is that parents and guardians of all ages are stretched thin, with all kinds of pressure pushing down on them, especially economic.

Parents' and guardians' time and attention are precious — it takes a lot to ensure their family is stocked with the essentials, let alone bigger purchases.

Offering services like subscriptions and autoship (with a discount) or accommodations like curbside pickup can go a long way to help them out.

Parents and guardians are often on the go, too, making mobile- and user-friendly designs, communications, and checkout experiences crucial.

You can even get more specific and cater to the preferences of parents and guardians of different ages. Millennials make up 79% of parents and guardians who shared that they have a Gen Alpha child or children who influence purchases, followed by 61% of Gen Zers, 54% of Gen Xers, and 17% of baby boomers.

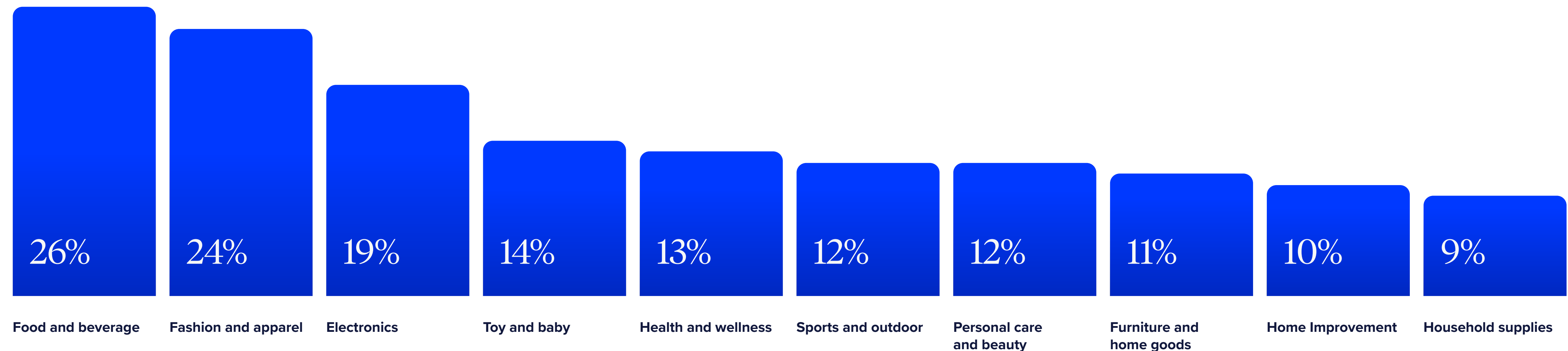
For example, Gen Zers (63%) and millennials (55%) do more product research on social media than other sites; this makes your social presence and proof important for younger parents.

On the other hand, Gen Xers (55%) and baby boomers (58%) complete more product research on online marketplaces like Amazon. Ensure these PDPs are fully flushed out and family oriented, when applicable.

Gen Alpha Influences on Purchases Spreads Across Categories

From everyday essentials, like PB&Js or ham and cheese toasties in the food and beverage space, to big-ticket items like home entertainment systems in electronics, Gen Alpha's influence on purchases can't be ignored. Gen Alphas in the U.S. have more influence on an average of 12% fashion and apparel purchases; 10% electronics purchases; 9% health and wellness purchases; and 9% furniture and home goods purchases than their counterparts in the U.K. and Canada.

What Influence Does Gen Alpha Have on Household Spending Across Categories?



QUESTION: IF YOU ARE THE PARENT/GUARDIAN OF A GEN ALPHA CHILD/CHILDREN (AGES 1-15) THAT INFLUENCES YOUR HOUSEHOLD PURCHASE DECISIONS, WHICH PRODUCT CATEGORIES DO THEY INFLUENCE MOST?
PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

 **GROWTH HACK**

How To Cater to Kids (and Kids at Heart) Across Top Verticals

Since Gen Alpha influences at least 43% of purchases in their households — especially in food and beverage, fashion and apparel, and electronics categories — brands must have content and messaging that appeals to families as a whole.

Here are three tips for how to cater to kids and kids at heart of all ages.



1. Use Language That Appeals to Parents

No, you don't have to learn the latest Gen Alpha lingo. Instead, you can tailor product content to share how your snack item is “great for school lunches and hungry teens.”

Or highlight how your product sizing is “adjustable, and grows with them.” Parents worry about enough: Give them peace of mind up front.

2. Leverage Family-Friendly UGC

You can say your products are fun all you want — but showing real customers interacting with them (or sharing, or wearing them) in authentic ways speaks louder across your digital shelf presence.

Partnering with influencers is another great way to gain exposure, and sharing more ratings and reviews builds trust.

3. When in Doubt, Play Up Nostalgia

If you're unsure how to come off as hip and modern, head back in time instead. Think of Snoopy, LEGO, Beanie Babies — they're all timeless. (We have bad news about your Neopets, however.) There's a reason why nostalgia and unique product collabs work — they get younger generations excited and parents and guardians misty-eyed.

Consider a campaign that combines old and new, and pull from what your team knows and loves well to ensure the enthusiasm is authentic.

04 *Loyalty*

What Breeds Brand Champions (or Brand Abandonment)

What makes a brand champion in an era of brand agnosticism? It's a cocktail of brand trust and loyalty, blended with high-quality and high-value products. Shoppers' palates are particular, though. Get the mix wrong and you've got cart abandonment and returns at higher rates than ever before. Explore what shoppers shared about how they determine brand trust, product quality and value, and what causes cart abandonment and returns.



How Shoppers Determine Brand Trust

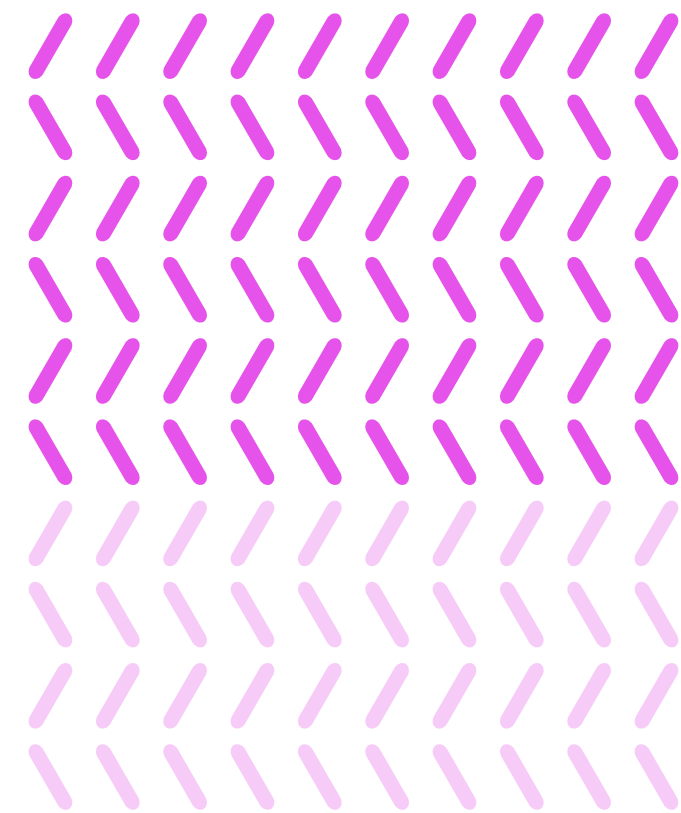
Brands have their work cut out for them to both attract and retain trust from modern shoppers, who expect more from products and their shopping experiences across digital and physical shelves. Here's how shoppers treat brands they trust (and how they determine which ones to trust in the first place).

TREND WATCH

68%

of Shoppers Have Paid More for a Product in the Past Year Because They Trust the Brand

QUESTION: WITHIN THE PAST YEAR, HAVE YOU PAID MORE FOR A PRODUCT BECAUSE YOU TRUSTED THE BRAND? BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)



Shoppers Are Still Willing To Pay More for a Brand They Trust

In the past year, 82% of U.S. shoppers have paid more for a brand they trust; however, 61% of shoppers in the U.K. and 60% in Canada have done the same. This disparity — along with higher prices — likely factor into this response being almost 20% less than last year, according to Salsify's 2025 data.

GROWTH HACK

Consumer Concerns Over Prices Surge, But Not at Splurging's Expense

Rising prices remain the top concern among consumers across 18 markets surveyed by McKinsey & Company. However, more than a third of these shoppers still plan to splurge over the next three months.

Brands worth splurging on are those that have PDPs with correct, compelling, and creative content across multiple channels — not solely direct-to-consumer (D2C) sites, or Amazon, or social, but a mix. High-quality content builds trust: 43% of shoppers agree, as do 50% of Gen Zers and 49% of millennials.

DATA SOURCE: MCKINSEY & COMPANY

For Gen Zers and Millennials, Brand Trust More Than Compensates for Price

Any economic woes aside, Gen Zers and millennials have laid down extra dollars and pounds for a product in the past year because they trust the brand. Even among more price-conscious Gen Xers and baby boomers, high prices won't always scare them away from a product they can depend on. Wallets of millennials, Gen Xers, and baby boomers may be growing haggard, however, as this year's data shows that these groups are as much as 40% less inclined to pay more for a brand they trust.

TREND WATCH

Share Brand Values, Gain Value — It's That Simple

According to Salsify's "2025 Holiday Pulse Report," 61% of shoppers prioritize personal values over price when choosing holiday gifts.

But how can your brand be one of the lucky recipients of this loyalty if you don't share your values?

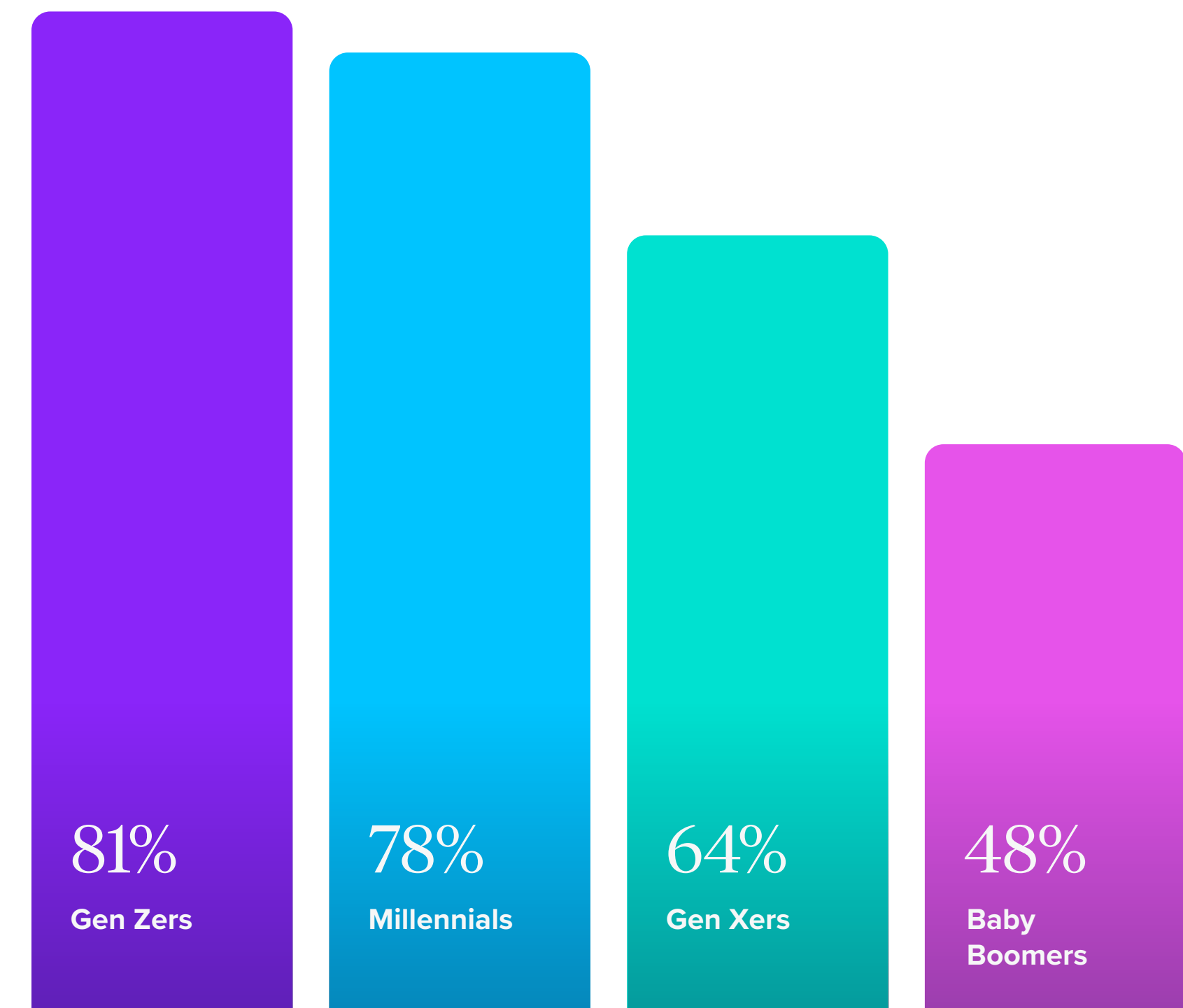
Brand values can focus on your work itself, such as customer-centrism or honesty, or they can speak to social causes you care about, such as rights for marginalized populations or sustainability.

Brands that infuse their values into their operations, community engagements, and charitable donations often win customer loyalty. They also build brand awareness among increasingly socially minded customers.

Sharing a blurb on product packaging or a full-on series on D2C or social sites that digs into your brand's values can attract like-minded consumers and keep them coming back.

DATA SOURCE: SALSIFY

Which Generation Groups Will Pay More for a Product Because They Trust the Brand?



QUESTION: WITHIN THE PAST YEAR, HAVE YOU PAID MORE FOR A PRODUCT BECAUSE YOU TRUSTED THE BRAND? BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

Product Quality and Value Weigh Heavily on Brand Trust Scoring

Product quality and value again impact brand trust the most, followed closely by brand reputation. Of course, brand reputation can encompass many factors in itself, especially for legacy brands. New brands on the block can build their reputation (and every brand can boost their reputation) by emphasizing customer service and experiences.

Which Factors Influence Brand Trust?

RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE	CHANGE FROM 2025
Product quality and value	67%	2% ▼
Brand reputation	63%	6% ▼
Customer service and experience	54%	7% ▼
Positive customer ratings and reviews	48%	NO CHANGE
High-quality product content (e.g., product images and descriptions)	43%	1% ▼

QUESTION: WHICH FACTORS MAKE YOU TRUST A BRAND? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.
BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

2025 DATA SOURCE: SALSIFY "2025 CONSUMER RESEARCH" REPORT

GROWTH HACK

Importance of Reviews Holds Steady (or Rises)

About half of shoppers see positive customer ratings and reviews as a factor that influences brand trust, holding steady from last year.

And brands looking for positive reviews are in luck.

According to Salsify's "Ecommerce Pulse Report: Q4 2025," more than 60% of shoppers left a rating or review in the last year, with nearly twice as many motivated to leave a positive review rather than a negative one.

And this feedback matters: Shoppers previously cited customer ratings and reviews as the most helpful product page element for making final buying decisions online, with enthusiasm up 7% from Salsify's 2024 data.

Adding more reviews to your PDPs can encourage conversions.

Offering incentives to customers to leave a review is a great way to reward them for their time; however, shoppers' top motivation to do so is simply to help other shoppers make informed decisions, according to Salsify data.

DATA SOURCE: SALSIFY

How High-Quality Product Content Earns Brand Trust Across Generations

Brand trust is hard-fought, as is the next stage (brand loyalty) and the next (brand championship and advocacy). For Gen Zers and millennials, fostering trust comes down to your product content. Product content (e.g., product images and descriptions) can always be optimized, even localized or personalized, depending on your audience demographic, for extra brownie points.

GROWTH HACK

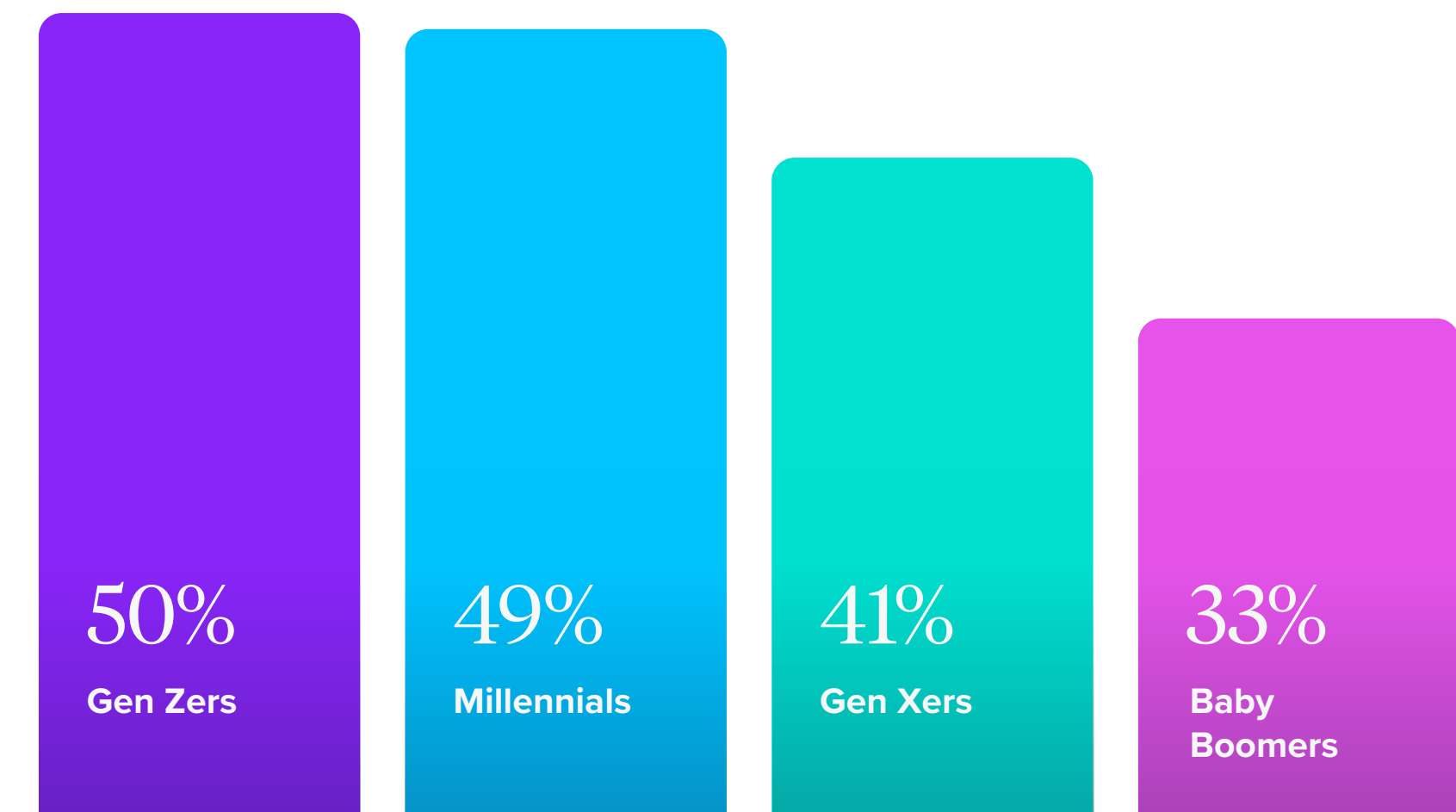
Product Content Quality Is Always Controllable

For choosy modern shoppers, there's no excuse for incomplete or inconsistent product content across channels.

Having your product content (including copy, specs, images, videos, etc.) in one central source of truth — that can be easily and seamlessly updated — is the only way to keep up with ever-changing shopper demands and retailer requirements.

Consider automated solutions that remove manual, time-consuming tasks. For example, a PXM solution intelligent enough to find and replace content details, even if you have thousands of SKUs.

Which Generation Groups Trust Brands Because of High-Quality Product Content?



QUESTION: WHICH FACTORS MAKE YOU TRUST A BRAND? PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.
BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

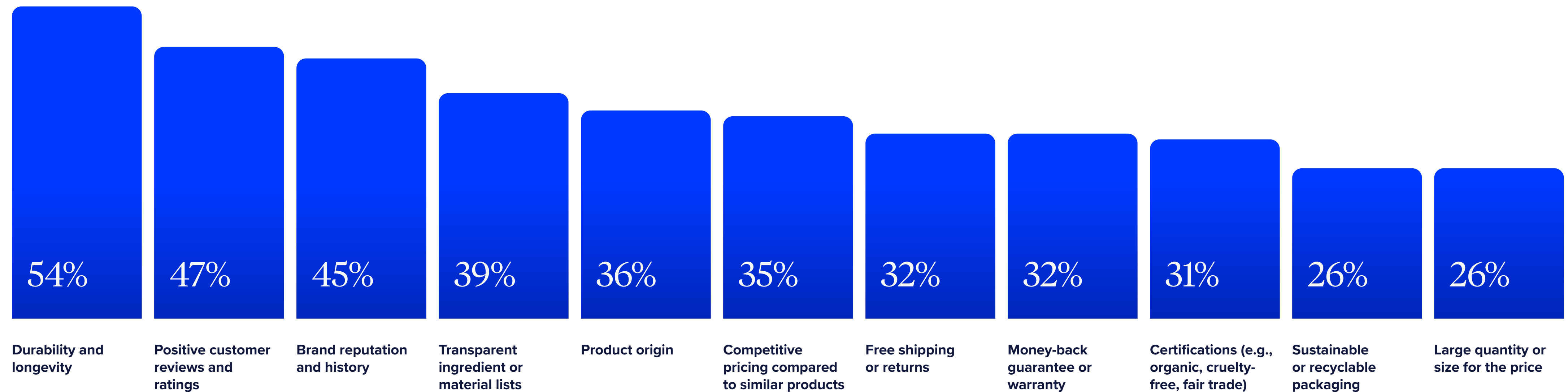
How Shoppers Determine Product Quality and Value

Shoppers have presented a united front for what distinguishes products as having high quality and value. They're looking for dependable products from brands that customers can't help but brag about.

Durability and Longevity, Reviews Best Exhibit High Product Quality and Value

What makes a product come across as high-quality and high-value? From person to person, the answer may vary. However, more than half of shoppers shared that the top reason for this perception is durability and longevity. They're looking for products that'll be with them long term, making ratings and reviews a close second choice — shoppers care about others' experiences.

What Factors Highlight Product Quality and Value for Shoppers?

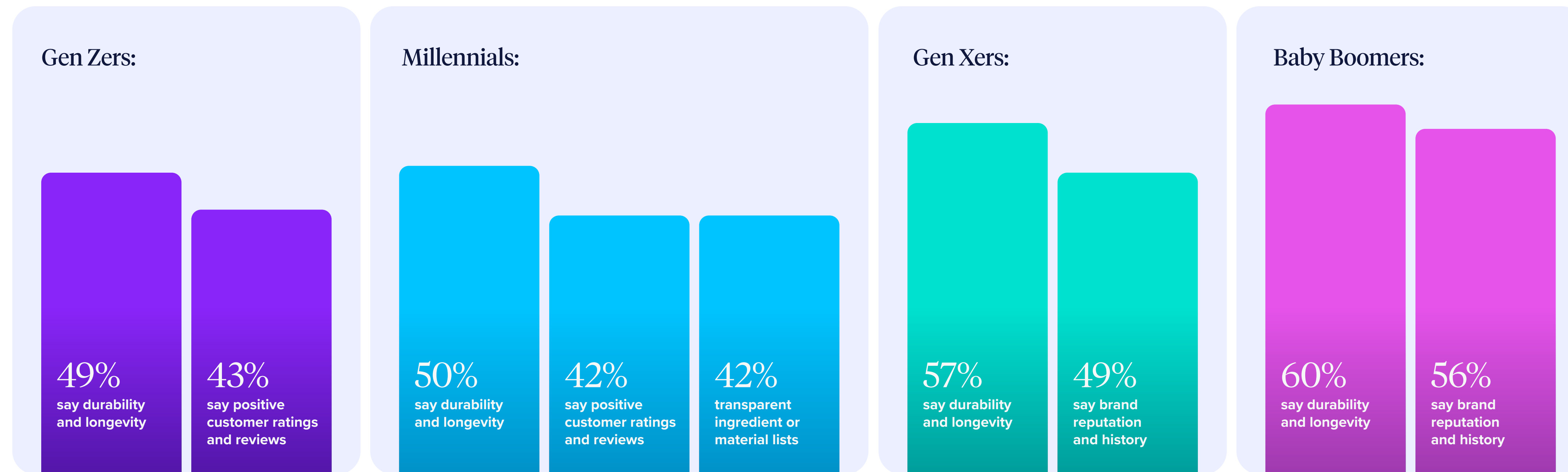


QUESTION: WHICH FACTORS MAKE YOU CONSIDER A PRODUCT TO HAVE HIGH QUALITY AND VALUE? BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

Top Factors That Highlight Product Quality and Value

How can you hit close to home with shoppers across generation groups when it comes to product quality and value? Explore this shopper matrix that shares the top factors that make them perceive a product as having high quality and value.

What's next? Adjust your product content to ensure you illustrate points accordingly for each audience.



QUESTION: WHICH FACTORS MAKE YOU CONSIDER A PRODUCT TO HAVE HIGH QUALITY AND VALUE? BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

Shopping Cart Abandonment and Returns

In a digital sea of stimulation, getting shoppers to view your product is more than half the battle. But what turns them off or away from a purchase? And if they do buy, what's causing returns these days? (We have the receipts.)

High Prices, No or Low Customer Ratings Drive Cart Abandonment

It's no surprise that perceived high prices cause consumers to run the other way, but other reasons for abandoning a product purchase are ranked higher this year, including no or low customer ratings and negative reviews. Women are 10% more likely than men to abandon a purchase for this reason. And overall, shoppers say that ratings and reviews are the most helpful part of a product page when making final buying decisions online, according to Salsify's "Ecommerce Pulse Report: Q4 2025."

Which Factors Make Shoppers Abandon a Sale?

RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE	CHANGE FROM 2025
High price	46%	2% ▼
No or low customer ratings or negative reviews	42%	6% ▼
Inconsistent product information across different websites	38%	16% ▼
Incomplete or poorly written product titles or descriptions	34%	19% ▼
No or low-quality product images or videos	33%	9% ▼
Lack of brand trust	32%	13% ▼
Out-of-stock product	29%	NO CHANGE
Slow delivery speeds	25%	4% ▼
No user-generated content (UGC) (e.g., customer images and videos)	12%	5% ▼
No product comparison charts	10%	2% ▼

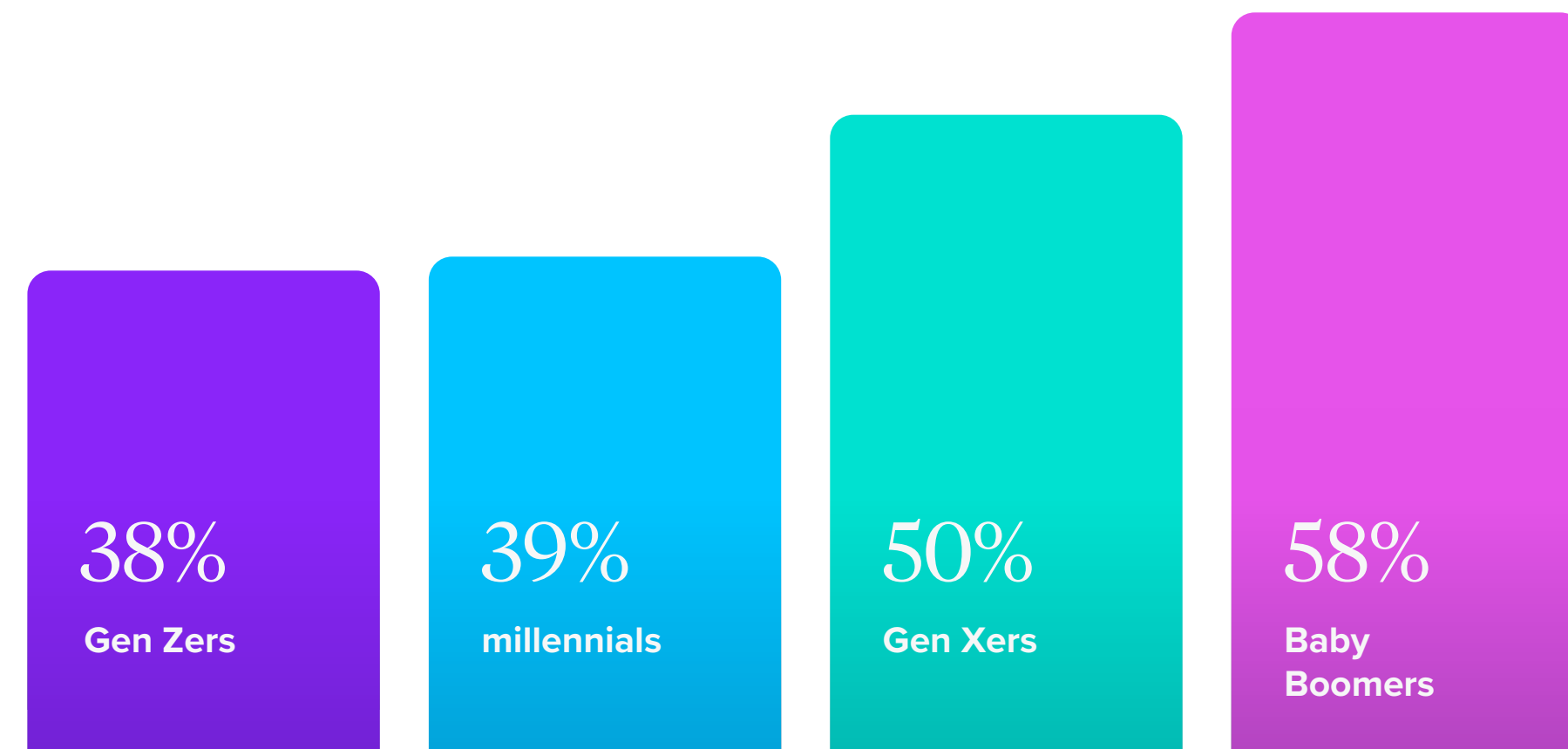
QUESTION: WHEN SHOPPING ONLINE, WHICH CHALLENGES HAVE MADE YOU ABANDON A PURCHASE?
BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

2025 DATA SOURCE: SALSIFY "2025 CONSUMER RESEARCH" REPORT

 GROWTH HACK

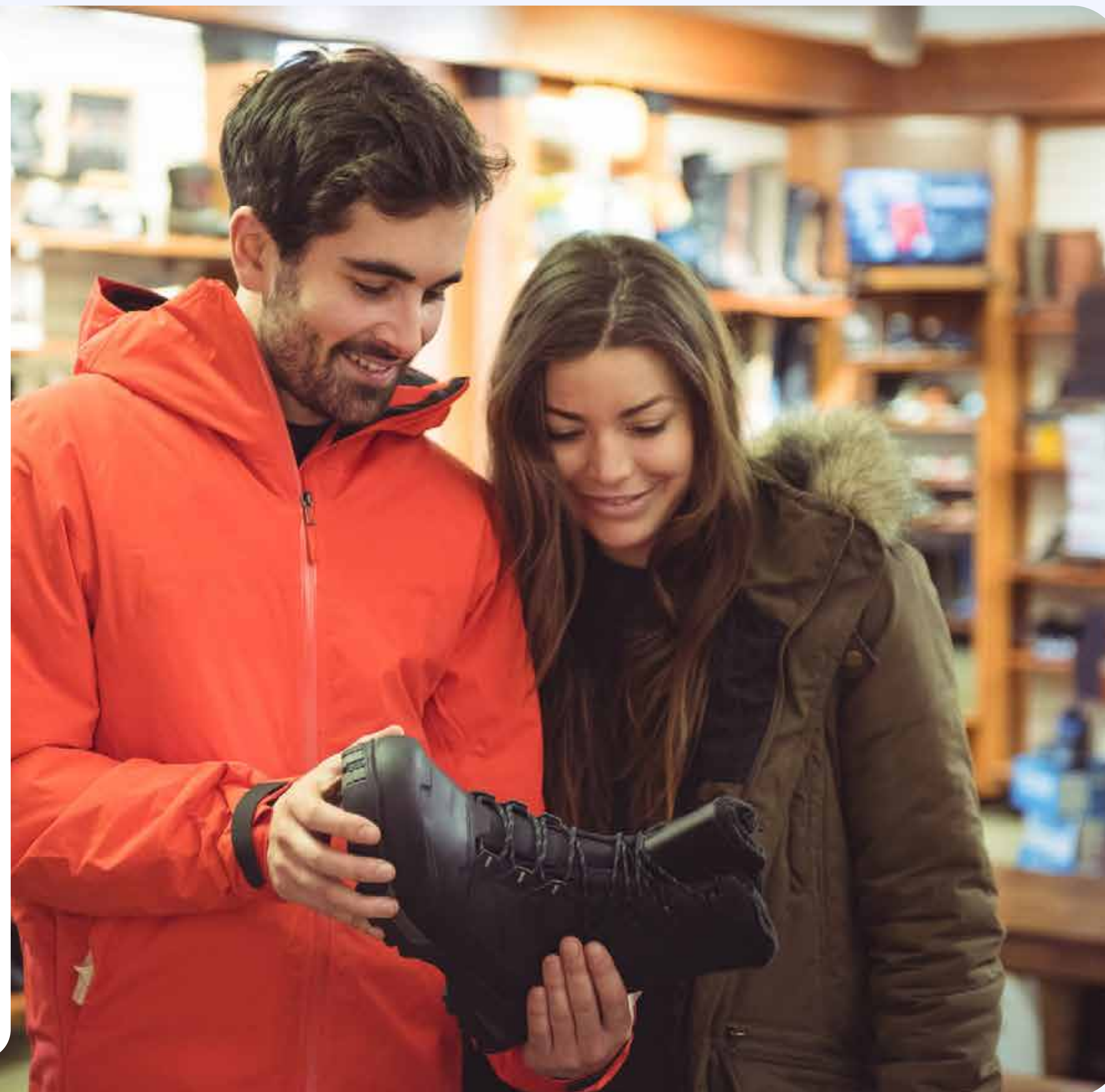
Who Abandons Cart the Most Due to High Prices?

Prices can't always be controlled, but being mindful of who your shoppers are can help. Shoppers who abandon their cart due to prices include:



If you know your shopper demographic leans older, try reengagement campaigns with a discount, a risk-free trial, or another offer.

It doesn't have to be lavish, but a little something can go a long way to encourage a purchase and show your commitment to the customer.



Purchase Abandonment Due to Inconsistent Information Across Channels Still Pervasive

Inconsistent product information across different websites was the top reason shoppers abandoned a purchase, according to Salsify's 2025 survey. Though down 16% this year, it's still wreaking havoc on Gen Z and millennial buyers, followed by Gen Xers and baby boomers.

GROWTH HACK

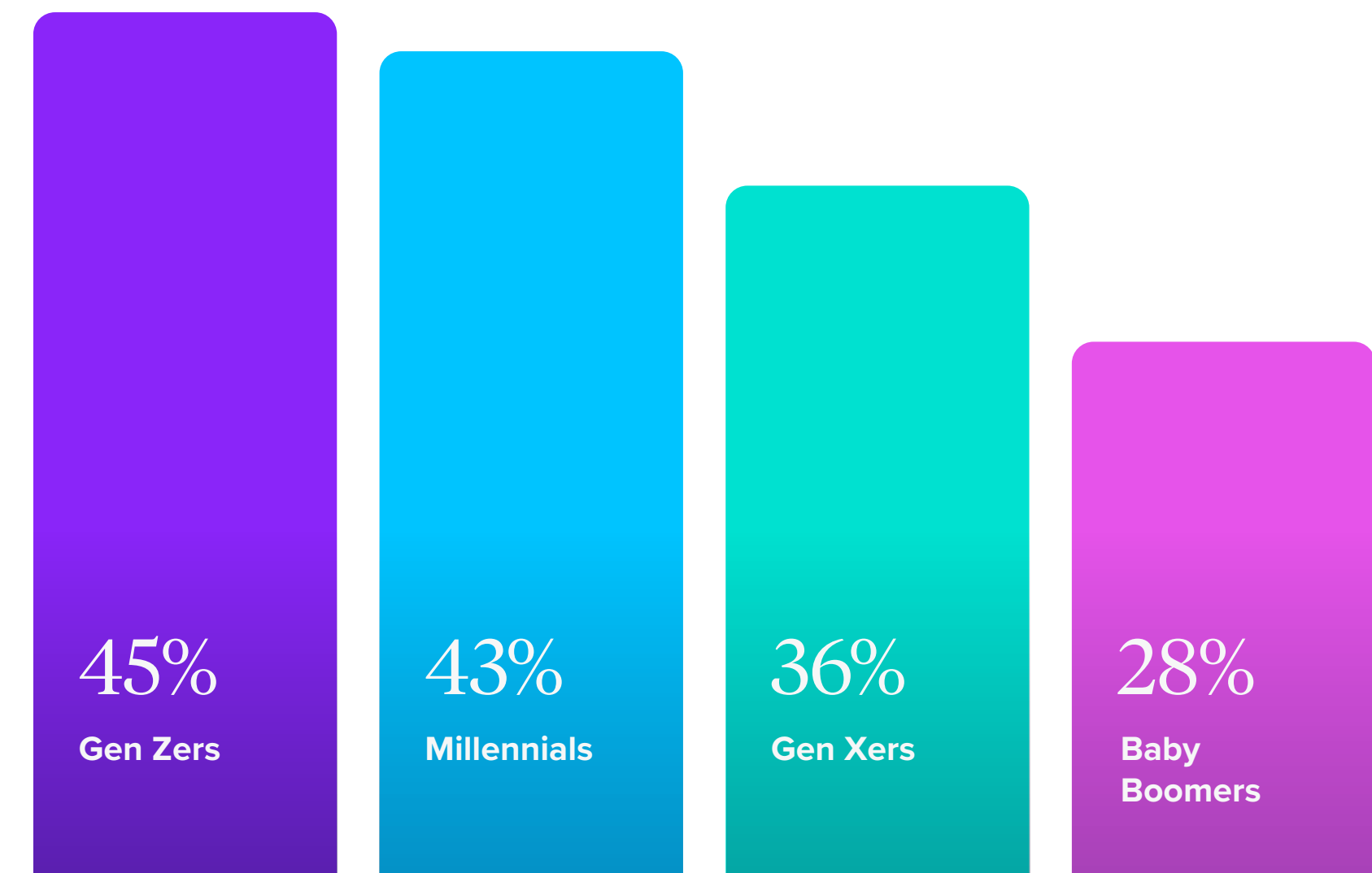
Shoppers Are Savvy, Syndicate Accordingly

Modern shoppers know what's up: If you have inconsistent product information across channels, they'll notice. After all, the majority of shoppers use multiple channels for research before they make a purchase, from everyday essentials to big-ticket items.

Though incomplete or poorly written product titles and descriptions are also trending downward from 2025 (-19%), this doesn't excuse inconsistent product information across different websites — it's a big red flag.

Product content must be syndicated across channels from a central source of truth (and hopefully one that doesn't involve spreadsheets) so that shoppers' experiences are consistent, and, thus, their carts won't be abandoned.

Which Generation Groups Will Abandon a Sale Due to Inconsistent Product Information Across Different Websites?



QUESTION: WHEN SHOPPING ONLINE, WHICH CHALLENGES HAVE MADE YOU ABANDON A PURCHASE? BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

More Than Half of Returns Are Still Influenced by Incorrect Product Content

Incorrect product content (e.g., images didn't match the product, out-of-date product descriptions) can haunt you even after you complete a sales cycle. U.S. shoppers are nearly twice as likely (63%) to return an item they purchased online due to incorrect product content than shoppers in the U.K. (36%) and Canada (36%).

That doesn't mean product content in the U.S. is worse — rather, return convenience and policies can vary across regions, as can attitudes toward purchase dissatisfaction. But overall, 71% of consumers say they're less likely to shop with a retailer again after a poor return experience, according to the [National Retail Federation \(NRF\)](#).

TREND WATCH

45%

of Shoppers Have Returned an Item
in the Last Year That They Purchased
Online Due to Incorrect Product Content



QUESTION: WITHIN THE LAST YEAR, HAVE YOU RETURNED AN ITEM YOU PURCHASED ONLINE BECAUSE OF INCORRECT PRODUCT CONTENT (E.G., IMAGES DIDN'T MATCH PRODUCT, OUT-OF-DATE PRODUCT DESCRIPTION)?
BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

GROWTH HACK

What Is Bracketing? (And Tips To Combat It)

Most shoppers need to see and feel a product in real life to feel confident in their purchase — online shopping presents a natural barrier to this experience, posing a challenge for ecommerce brands and retailers.

Many shoppers resort to bracketing: when shoppers buy multiple versions of an item (i.e., different colors, sizes) with the intent to return less favorable options.

While bracketing can be beneficial for consumers, it can present many logistical challenges for businesses, such as fulfilling larger orders and fielding large amounts of product returns. This can make forecasting budgets or streamlining operations difficult.

To reduce bracketing, consider augmented reality (AR) like virtual try-on or view-in-room to give shoppers a more hands-on (albeit virtual) experience.

For fashion and apparel and personal care and beauty products, including more diverse product images and videos featuring different body types, skin tones, and age groups gives shoppers a better view of how your product will work for them.

Millennials, Gen Zers Return at Higher Rates Due to Incorrect Product Content

Though Salsify's survey echoes NRF data that younger generations make returns at higher rates, shoppers aren't always culpable. Incorrect product content causes returns for nearly 60% of millennials, about half of Gen Zers and Gen Xers, and nearly a quarter of baby boomers.

GROWTH HACK

Returns Turning Into a Recurring Nightmare?

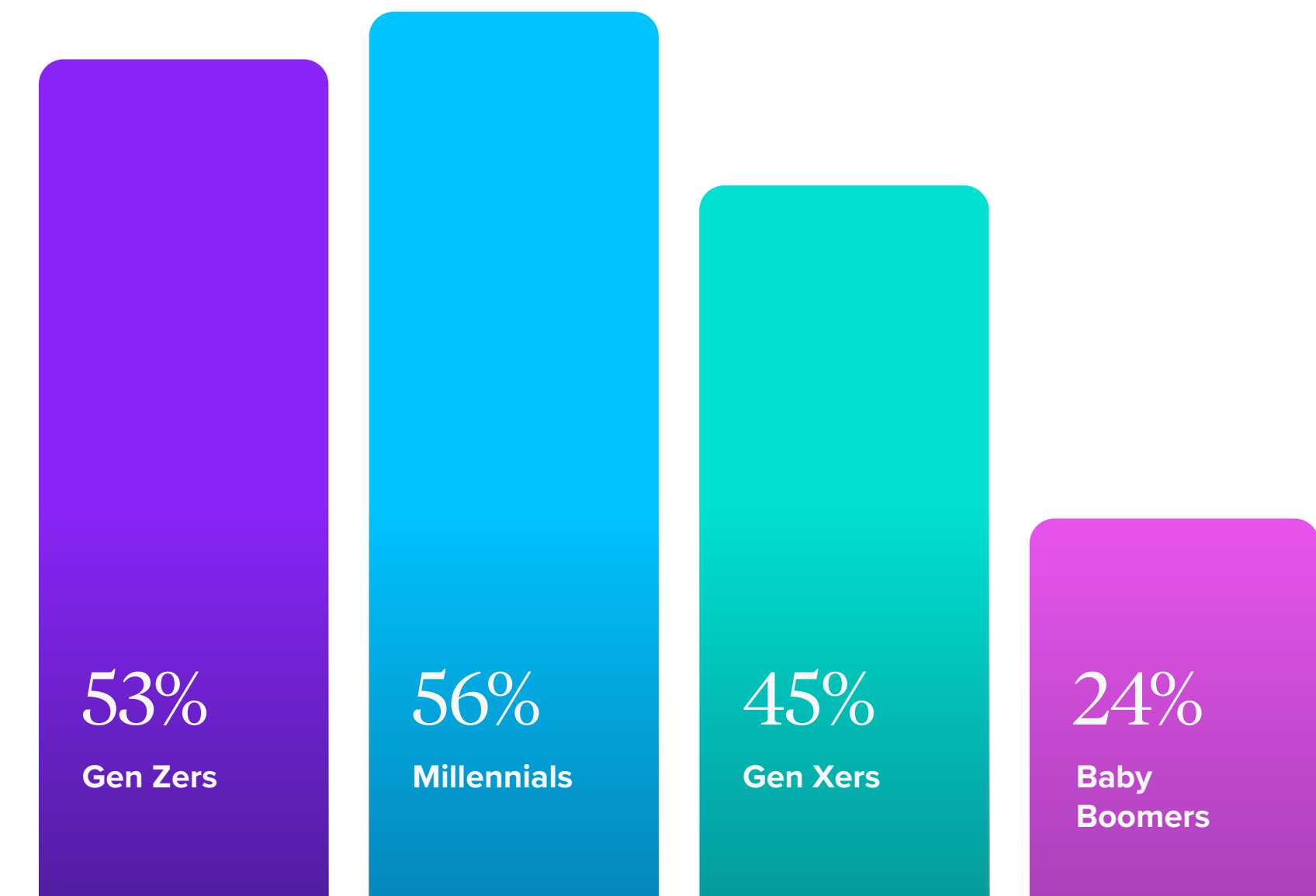
Returns are down 16% from results in Salsify's "2025 Consumer Research" survey; however, returns still bring big costs for brands and retailers in the form of fraud, as well as the environment via waste.

According to the NRF, retailers estimated the value of returned merchandise to reach \$850 billion in 2025, with Gen Z making nearly eight times as many returns as other generations.

"To stay competitive amid rising return rates and behaviors like bracketing, retailers must modernize their reverse logistics to enhance customer satisfaction, reduce fraud, and safeguard their operations in today's high-pressure retail landscape," David Sobie, co-founder and CEO of Happy Returns, says.

DATA SOURCE: SALSIFY "2025 CONSUMER RESEARCH" REPORT, NRF

Shoppers Who Have Returned an Item in the Last Year Due to Incorrect Product Content



QUESTION: WITHIN THE LAST YEAR, HAVE YOU RETURNED AN ITEM YOU PURCHASED ONLINE BECAUSE OF INCORRECT PRODUCT CONTENT (E.G., IMAGES DIDN'T MATCH PRODUCT, OUT-OF-DATE PRODUCT DESCRIPTION)? BASE: ALL COMPLETE RESPONSES (N=2,712)

Each Shopper, Most Channels, and Every Moment Matters

Digital shelf, physical shelf, ecommerce, commerce — it all changes every year, melding together and evolving into fleeting moments of potential to connect with shoppers.

Discovery, research, and purchase channels shift, too, and the battle of online versus in-store rages on in perpetuity.

Trends come and go, and shoppers across demographics assert their influence and preferences in new ways — and they all matter.

The guiding light to help shoppers through their buying journey, and make them feel like it was a journey worthwhile, remains the same, however: product content that's consistent, products that are dependable, brands that are sensible, and yes, maybe even a little AI.

AI recommendations are worth it for brands to want to win, but with the AI trust gap, they're worthless to shoppers without compelling product content to back them up.

About SALSIFY

Salsify helps thousands of brand manufacturers, distributors, and retailers in over 140 countries collaborate to win on the digital shelf. The Salsify Product Experience Management (PXM) platform enables organizations to centralize all of their product content, connect to the commerce ecosystem, and automate business processes to deliver the best possible product experiences across every selling destination.

Learn how the world's largest brands, including Mars, L'Oréal, Coca-Cola, Bosch, and ASICS, as well as retailers and distributors, such as DoorDash, E.Leclerc, Carrefour, Metro, and Intermarché, use Salsify every day to drive efficiency, power growth, and lead the digital shelf.

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Methodology

Salsify surveyed 2,712 participants, comprising 908 shoppers from the U.S., 902 from the U.K., and 902 from Canada. The research excluded incomplete or partially filled surveys to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data.

Salsify administered the survey using SurveyMonkey and collected data on October 24 and 25, 2025.

The research employed a stratified sampling method to encourage balanced, comprehensive, and diverse representation, including a goal of 25% of survey respondents for each age group (ages 18–28, 29–44, 45–60, 61–79), a balanced gender ratio, and a balanced division between the U.S., U.K., and Canada.

- U.S. Margin of Error: +/- 3.319%
- U.K. Margin of Error: +/- 3.331%
- Canada Margin of Error: +/- 3.33%

Our objective for this report was to obtain a comprehensive understanding of consumer preferences, behaviors, and attitudes within the buying journey, as well as insight into trends that most influence shoppers.

U.S. Consumer Survey 908 Participants	U.K. Consumer Survey 902 Participants	Canada Consumer Survey 902 Participants
<i>Age</i>		
18–28: 202 (22.25%)	18–28: 195 (21.62%)	18–28: 197 (21.84%)
29–44: 255 (28.08%)	29–44: 256 (28.38%)	29–44: 257 (28.49%)
45–60: 233 (25.66%)	45–60: 228 (25.28%)	45–60: 227 (25.17%)
61–79: 218 (24.01%)	61–79: 223 (24.72%)	61–79: 221 (24.50%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Female: 449 (49.45%)	Female: 450 (49.89%)	Female: 451 (50%)
Male: 459 (50.55%)	Male: 450 (49.89%)	Male: 451 (50%)
Nonbinary: 0	Nonbinary: 0	Nonbinary: 0
A gender not listed here: 0	A gender not listed here: 0	A gender not listed here: 0
Prefer not to answer: 0	Prefer not to answer: 2 (0.11%)	Prefer not to answer: 0