

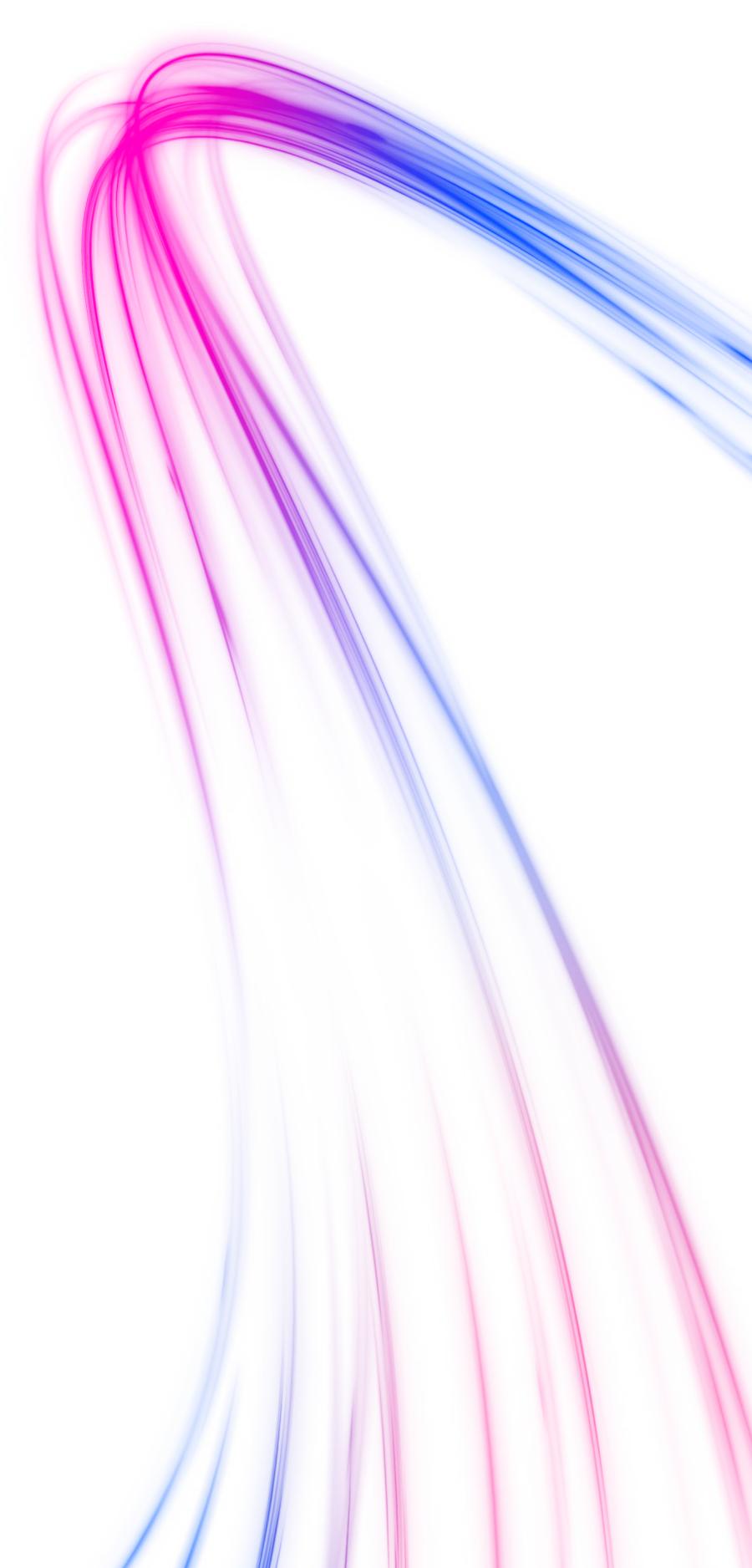
ACXIOM

2025 CX Predictions: A Human Centered Approach to Customer Experience

ACXIOM'S ANNUAL CX TRENDS REPORT

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FOREWORD

Future CX: The Intersection of AI and Humanity

AI is certainly the star of today's marketing show—and rightfully so. That said, so far, its primary marketing use cases have been increasing speeds and cutting costs. But I believe in the future, the real promise of AI lies in experience.

AI allows us – somewhat ironically – to create more human experiences for our customers. First and foremost, to treat somebody as a human, you have to recognize who they are, acknowledge who they are, and interact with them in the way they want.

With advances in AI, we now know precisely who we're talking to, across a variety of channels. AI can quickly and instantly access vast stores of data to create insights to inform how we speak to them and what we offer. We can treat them as real people, with unique ideas, needs, and preferences.

Understanding the individual, and engaging in a relevant way, is the essence of effective customer experience. It establishes respect and trust. This might mean offering personalized rewards as part of a loyalty program or curating tailored experiences within a digital community.

It might mean developing inclusive products and services or providing real value in exchange for their customer data. It can also be all of the above. Whatever form customer experiences take (and you'll read about all of the aforementioned experiences in this report), the individual should always be at their core.

Finding a balance between technology and human interaction is key to getting the customer experience right, and it won't be a one-size-fits-all approach. Some customers value the always-on efficiency of AI and automation, while others prefer the touch of human service. Striking the right blend of technology and people in any given situation will depend not just on the individual's preferences but also on their context and what they're trying to achieve.

It will always be a combination of humans and tech. People must always be in the loop, teaching the technology how to interact in a human way, and AI is needed to provide the insight required to delight customers during in-person interactions.

Getting started is often the difficult part, but it doesn't have to be. You don't need to do everything all at once. The best and easiest place to start is identifying your best customers – the 20% that drive 80% of your business – understanding their needs and offering differentiated experiences that will not just make them loyal, but transform them into brand advocates. And you don't need to deliver the most sophisticated AI use cases right away. There are easy wins that will delight your customers while you're developing your longer-term strategy.

As you read our CX predictions for 2025 – and discover how consumers and brands view five experiences that sit at the intersection of people and technology – don't forget that all this is only possible if you have an accurate and sound data foundation. The best AI and best CX intentions will fail without the right data to yield accurate insights, ultimately producing the best actions to retain your customers, acquire new customers, and grow your business.



Tate Olinghouse

Chief Client Officer



INTRODUCTION

Acxiom 2025 CX trends

Customer experience (CX) is undergoing a radical transformation, driven by rapid advances in artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and data analytics.

We spoke to brands and consumers – from the US and UK – about their perceptions of this transformation, and two strong narratives emerged.

The first is both brands and consumers are getting more comfortable with using AI, and are benefiting from its deployment. The second is both groups still value the personal touch, and are keen to maintain human interaction.

AI proves effective in enhancing CX

Brands are increasingly using AI to support different areas of CX, with customer service providing a great example. Over two-thirds (69%) of the businesses we surveyed say they're already using AI in customer service¹, with their top three use cases identified as:

- Personalizing interactions
- Generating recommendations
- Analyzing customer sentiment

For those using AI in customer service the results are promising. Almost three-quarters (72%) report an increase in positive customer feedback, indicating a significant improvement in CX. Over half (59%) say they're seeing improvement in internal efficiencies and almost as many (55%) say they're reducing overheads in the CX function.²

Brands using AI in customer service are seeing positive impacts



72%

Increased levels of positive customer feedback



59%

Improved internal efficiencies



55%

Reduced overheads for the CX function

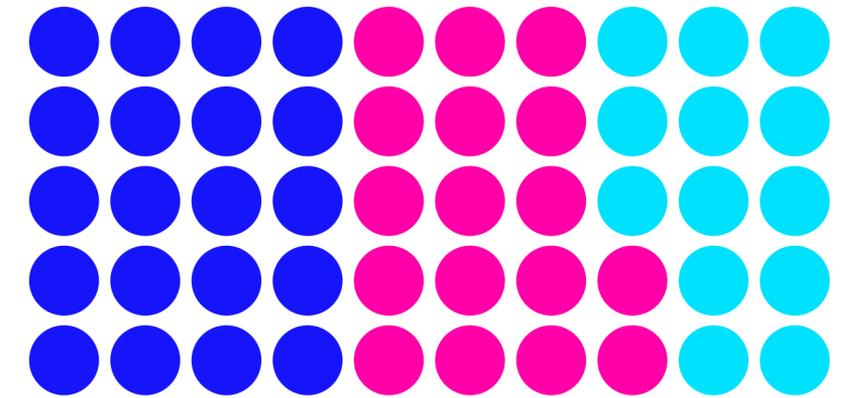
“AI speeds up decision-making, like personalizing promotions for customers. Instead of giving everyone the same discount, we can target the right offers, which improves both customer satisfaction and how we manage profits.”

Director of Customer Marketing, Retail

At the same time, consumers are becoming more aware of AI's role in their daily lives. Three-quarters (75%) report having at least a basic understanding of AI. Although only 23% say they have a solid grasp of how it works, this does rise to 45% in the 16-34 age group which indicates understanding will grow moving forward.³

Consumers are also getting more accustomed to interacting with AI, with over two-thirds (67%) saying they've knowingly used some type of chatbot or AI-based chat service. What's more, the 41% who say they are entirely comfortable with AI handling their customer service needs now outpace the 35% who still feel a little uneasy.⁴

Consumers are more comfortable with AI handling their needs



41%

Agree

35%

Disagree

25%

Neither agree nor disagree

“From a customer perspective, AI is still in its early stages within our app. Right now, it's mostly used for simple financial advice, like helping customers manage their spending or plan savings. But there's a lot of potential for further AI integration in the future.”

VP of Marketing Strategy, Financial Services

Why brands don't use AI

% brand (net agree)⁵



We prefer to deliver human-led customer service



We lack the internal expertise to implement AI



Our tech stack is not yet prepared for AI integration



We cannot justify the investment



We do not see the benefit

But the human element is valued by all

Despite the buzz, most brands don't foresee a full-scale AI takeover. In fact, 62% of businesses still have some reservations about the efficacy of AI in customer service functions, and 71% agree that human representatives will remain a crucial part of their CX strategies.⁶

We asked the 31% of brands that aren't yet using AI for customer service what's holding them back, and the top answer – given by 62% – is that they prefer to deliver human-led customer support. Half (51%) say they lack the internal expertise to implement AI, and 40% say their tech stack isn't ready for AI integration. But interestingly only 14% say they don't see the benefit of AI.

Consumers are equally unprepared to hand over complete control to the machines. They still want to feel a human presence behind the technology, and 78% say some form of human interaction is essential for a good customer service experience.⁷

Two-thirds (65%) believe AI-powered customer service can sometimes feel a little impersonal, and over half (54%) express concerns about AI reinforcing biases from its source data. The majority (59%) are uncomfortable with AI making critical decisions, such as determining loan eligibility.⁸

People and tech can work in harmony

These two stories may appear to be in conflict. On the one hand AI is gaining traction while on the other both brands and consumers are reluctant to forgo human interaction and embrace full automation. But the reality is brands can take a human-centric approach to customer experience while at the same time benefiting from emerging technologies.

Rather than simply leveraging technology to maximize efficiency, they should strike a thoughtful balance between AI and human-driven activities, understanding when AI is appropriate and when a personal touch is irreplaceable. Knowing their customers – their preferences and how they like to engage – is crucial.

The real power lies in combining the innate strengths of people and AI.

AI-powered analytics can offer deep insights into customer behavior, and make precise predictions, enabling more personalized and informed human interactions. Meanwhile, human empathy and expertise can take AI to new heights. By embracing a human-in-the-loop approach, where technology and people work in synergy and learn from one another, businesses can put customer needs at the heart of every interaction and foster meaningful, lasting relationships.

“We’re on a cultural journey of getting our customers to appreciate the role of AI – our content might be AI generated, but we’re human moderated.”

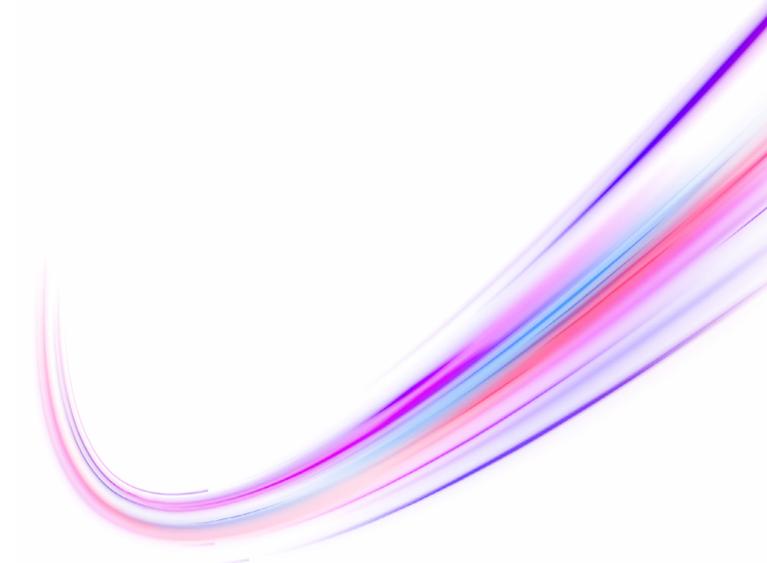
VP Marketing, Retail

Moving forward, brands should find a way to integrate AI-driven automation with the expertise that only humans can provide.

And potentially adapt experiences for those (often different aged) consumer groups that are more or less comfortable using AI. As we’ll explore in this report, the future lies in seamlessly blending people and technology for an optimal customer experience.

“The future is about how we use people to enhance our tech-based brand experience. The challenge is figuring out how to do this across all our stores in a consistent way, but it’s definitely something we’re exploring.”

Director Customer Marketing, Retail



Introducing the CX trends for 2025

In this report – our CX trends predictions for 2025 – we'll dive into five key trends that we expect to shape the future of customer experience. With a focus on human connections at the core of the customer journey, these trends sit at the intersection of people and technology. They emphasize the importance of brands adopting a combined approach to create meaningful, lasting experiences.

01

Balancing Technology with a Human Touch

With people craving less tech-dependent lives, a digital-only approach can dehumanize brands. We explore how technology can best serve customers without replacing personal interactions.

02

Fandoms and Communities

Brands that foster communities create a sense of belonging that transcends simple transactions. We investigate how both brands and consumers benefit from fandoms and communities.

03

Loyalty Lessons Learned from Luxury

Creating welcoming experiences for all, while offering unique value for loyal customers, is a balancing act. We delve into effective loyalty and membership models, including key lessons from luxury brands.

04

Inclusive Product and Service Design

Diversity, equity, and inclusion commitments should extend to the design of products and services. We take a closer look at both customer expectations and brand strategies for inclusivity.

05

Transparent Data Exchange

Consumers want control over how brands use their data. We discover how transparent data exchange empowers people, while providing valuable insights that allow brands to deliver exceptional CX.

TREND 01

Balancing Technology with a Human Touch

The rapid rise of AI – particularly generative AI – combined with the continued growth of advanced analytics, big data, and automation have transformed the way businesses approach customer experience.

These technologies offer numerous benefits, including more personalized, streamlined, and efficient experiences

However, relying too heavily on a tech-driven approach risks losing sight of something consumers still deeply value: authentic human connection.

A [2024 Forrester report](#)⁹ reveals CX quality sits at an all-time low for US brands, with one of the factors contributing to the decline cited as “underwhelming digital experiences using chatbots.” This is a clear signal brands can’t afford to ignore. While technology undoubtedly boosts efficiency, it can’t necessarily replicate the trust and emotional connection that genuine human interaction fosters.

The challenge businesses face is striking the right balance. Not every customer interaction needs a personal touch—routine tasks often benefit from quick, tech-driven solutions. But when it comes to more complex inquiries or moments that build lasting loyalty, human involvement is irreplaceable.

The future lies in blending the best of both worlds: cutting edge technology and authentic human interaction.

Sephora – Balancing AI-powered customer experience with human support

Sephora, a global beauty giant, has mastered the art of blending AI with personalized human support, creating a customer experience that is both innovative and personal.

AI enhances the customer experience

Sephora has adopted several AI-powered tools to personalize and streamline the customer experience, including:

Virtual try-on: Through the Sephora Virtual Artist, powered by AR and AI, customers can try makeup virtually. This improves online shopping confidence by allowing shoppers to see how products look on their face without physically applying them.

AI-based product recommendations: Sephora uses AI to power the **Color IQ tool**, which matches customers with the right foundation shade based on a skin tone scan. Additionally, AI chatbots help recommend products based on browsing and purchase history.

Data-driven personalization: Sephora uses customer data from its loyalty program to provide tailored product suggestions, beauty tips, and promotions, making each customer's experience more personalized.

But humans still have a role to play

While AI delivers convenience, Sephora ensures human support is always available to those who want or need it:

Beauty advisors: In-store, Sephora's beauty advisors provide expert product recommendations, makeup tutorials, and skincare consultations, offering customers hands-on help that AI can't fully replicate.

Live chat: Online, customers can engage with live beauty experts who offer real-time product advice, troubleshooting, and personalized recommendations.

Workshops and classes: Sephora offers both in-store and virtual workshops, where beauty professionals teach makeup techniques and skincare routines, giving customers a deeper, more personal learning experience.

The result?

Sephora's smart balance of AI-driven tools and personalized human interaction has boosted customer engagement, sales, and loyalty, with the beauty brand achieving an impressive **4 x increase in online sales**¹⁰ over six years. By seamlessly combining AI with human expertise, Sephora shows how brands can harness the best of both worlds, meeting diverse customer needs and elevating the overall shopping experience.

Consumer perspective

Consumers want technology to enhance, not replace, human interaction

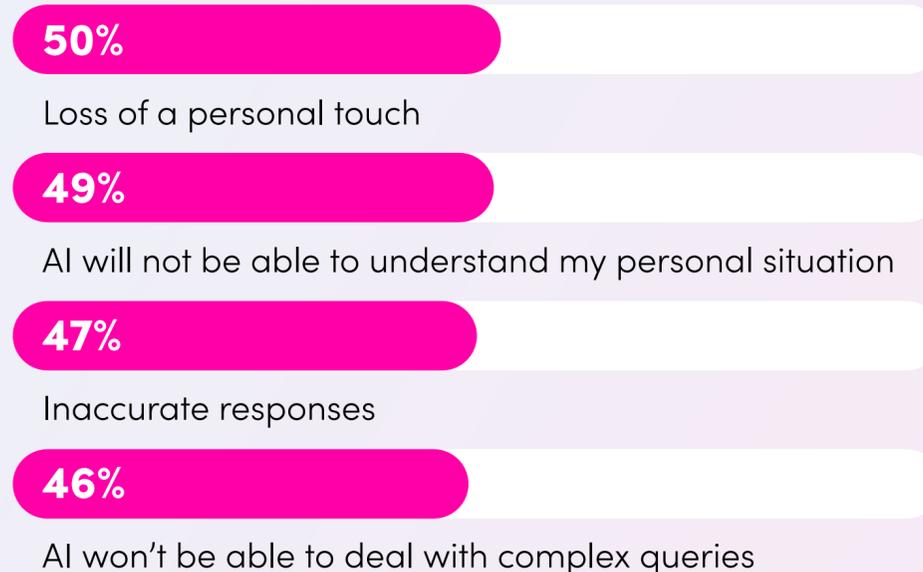
When it comes to customer support, a significant majority (77%) of consumers say they still prefer to speak to a human customer service agent than to a chatbot or virtual assistant.¹¹ But within this general trend there are a number of different factors at play. Willingness to engage with AI and other technologies varies greatly between different generations, for example, and can also be influenced by what the customer is trying to achieve.

Concerns around AI in customer service

We asked consumers how the use of AI for customer service impacts their perception of a brand, and the results are mixed. Almost a quarter (24%) say they have a positive view of brands that use AI, while 37% say it doesn't sway their opinion at all.¹² Around a third (31%) say they are more likely to have a negative perception.

When asked about their concerns around using AI in customer service, the top answer (given by 50% of consumers) is they fear losing the personal touch. Almost the same proportion say they worry AI won't fully understand their specific needs (49%), that it will give inaccurate responses (47%), or that it won't be able to handle complex queries (46%).¹³ Other factors such as job displacement, service quality, and increasing dependence on technology all come lower down the list, but are still concerning for over 30% of consumers.

Concerns with AI



“Whether people care if they’re interacting with a real person or not might depend on the quality of the answers they get. Right now, some of our chatbots are pretty basic, with pre-written questions and answers, and we manually add new ones when customers ask something different. We’re working on AI-driven solutions that will improve this, making it more like how Google searches the web for the best answer.”

Director Digital Marketing, Retail Bank, UK

Consumer preferences vary by context

Consumer preferences for tech-led versus human interaction appear to shift depending on the context, and what they're trying to achieve. We presented consumers with a variety of scenarios and asked how they prefer to be served.

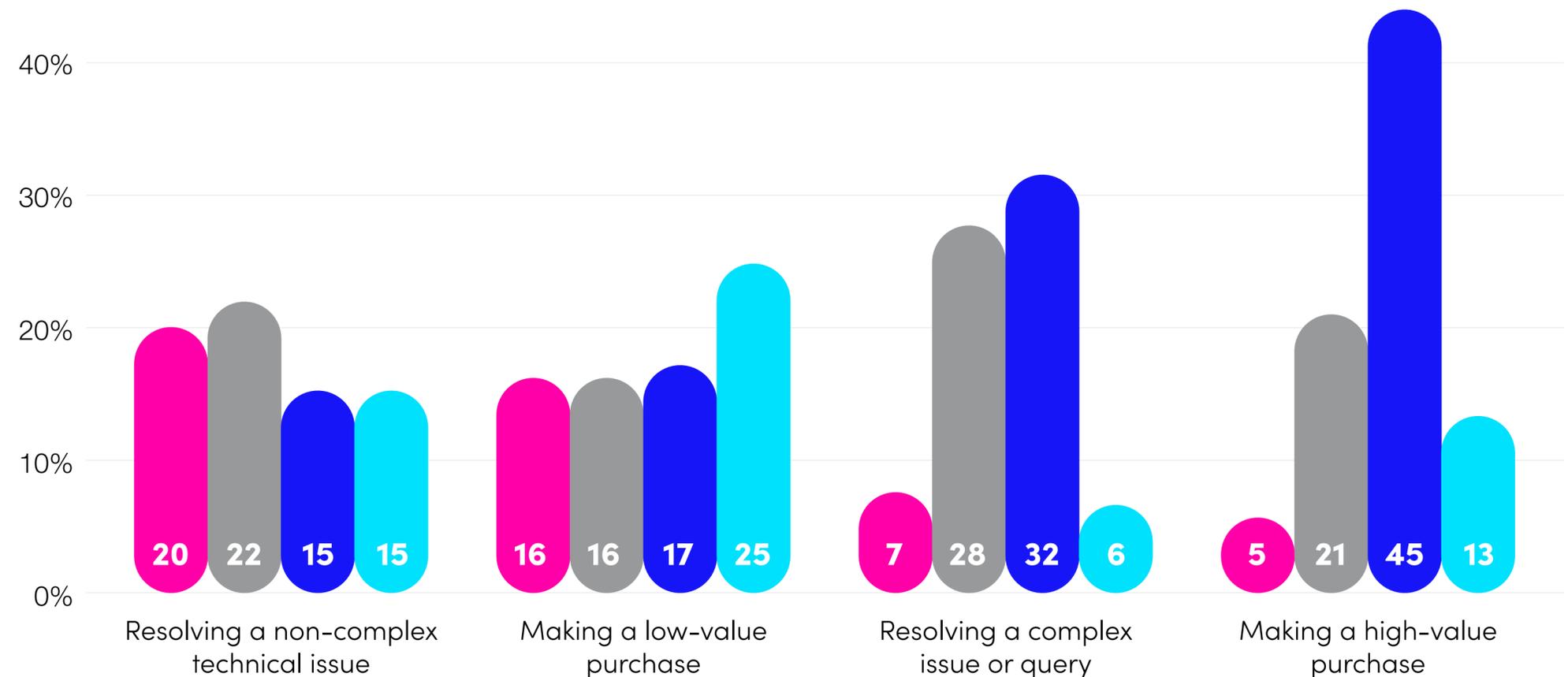
For simple, transactional tasks—like making a low value purchase or resolving a straightforward technical issue— online, self-service or AI options are often favored. But when it comes to more complex issues or trust-building moments, like resolving a major problem or making a big purchase, consumers overwhelmingly prefer interacting with real people.¹⁴

The difference between grocery shopping and buying a car is a great example of this contextual variation. For groceries, convenience is everything, so tech-driven solutions like self-scan or self-checkout are a hit. But for a big investment like purchasing a car, people want personalized advice, face-to-face consultations, and the chance to test-drive before committing.

“Older customers, who have relied on branches for years, sometimes struggle with the shift to digital, especially after branch closures. On the other hand, younger, more digital-savvy customers prefer to do everything through an app and don't really want to talk to anyone. That said, there are still certain financial services, like mortgages or wealth management, where people want more personalized help.”

Director Digital Marketing, Retail Bank, UK

- Online via AI-powered customer support
- Online via human support
- In-person via human support
- Self-service online or in-person

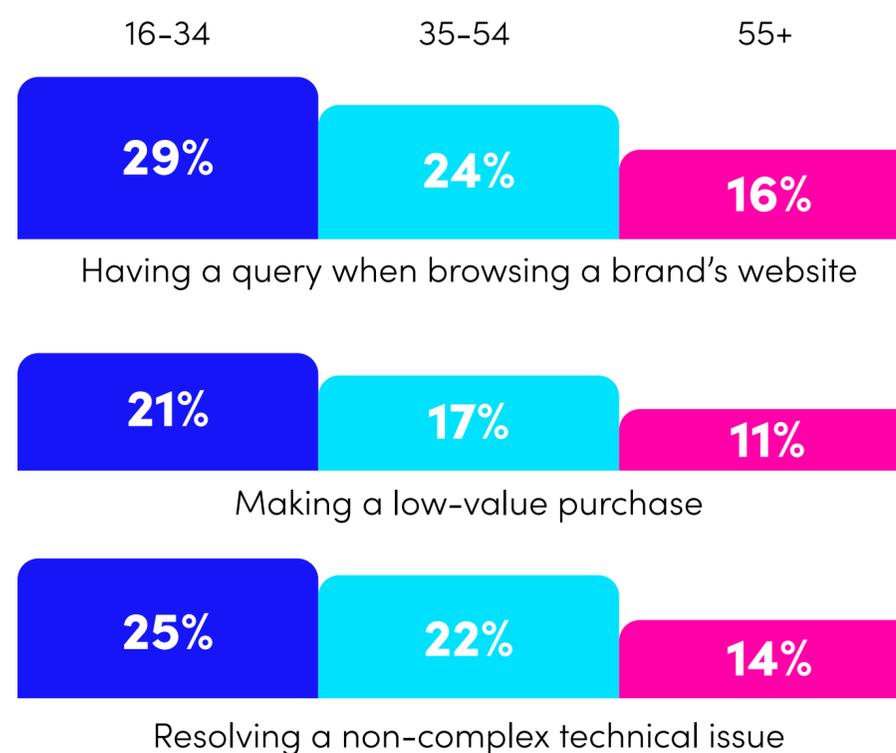


Generational preferences shape the human-technology balance

Generational differences appear to combine with context to further impact consumer preferences for AI or human interactions.

When resolving a simple technical issue for example, or looking for the answer to a query on a brand's website, consumers between the ages of 16 and 54 seem happy to use either AI-powered or human support online. But those over 55 are far more likely to want to interact with a real person. When it comes to low-value purchases, consumers of all ages tend to prefer self-service options. However, those aged 16-34 are more likely to favor AI-powered customer support when compared with those over 35.¹⁵

Age-based preferences for AI-powered support in various consumer scenarios



For brands with multi-generational audiences, this means adaptability is key. They must adjust their use of AI, self-service, and human support across different touchpoints to meet the unique needs of each age group. By doing this, brands can create seamless, personalized experiences that feel relevant and engaging for every customer, no matter their age.

“Right now, we have a chatbot that lets customers have a more casual, back-and-forth conversation. Some customers are using it and feel comfortable, while others aren't as keen. Younger customers find chatbots intuitive, while others, particularly older customers, get frustrated and prefer to search themselves if the bot doesn't do exactly what they want it to.”

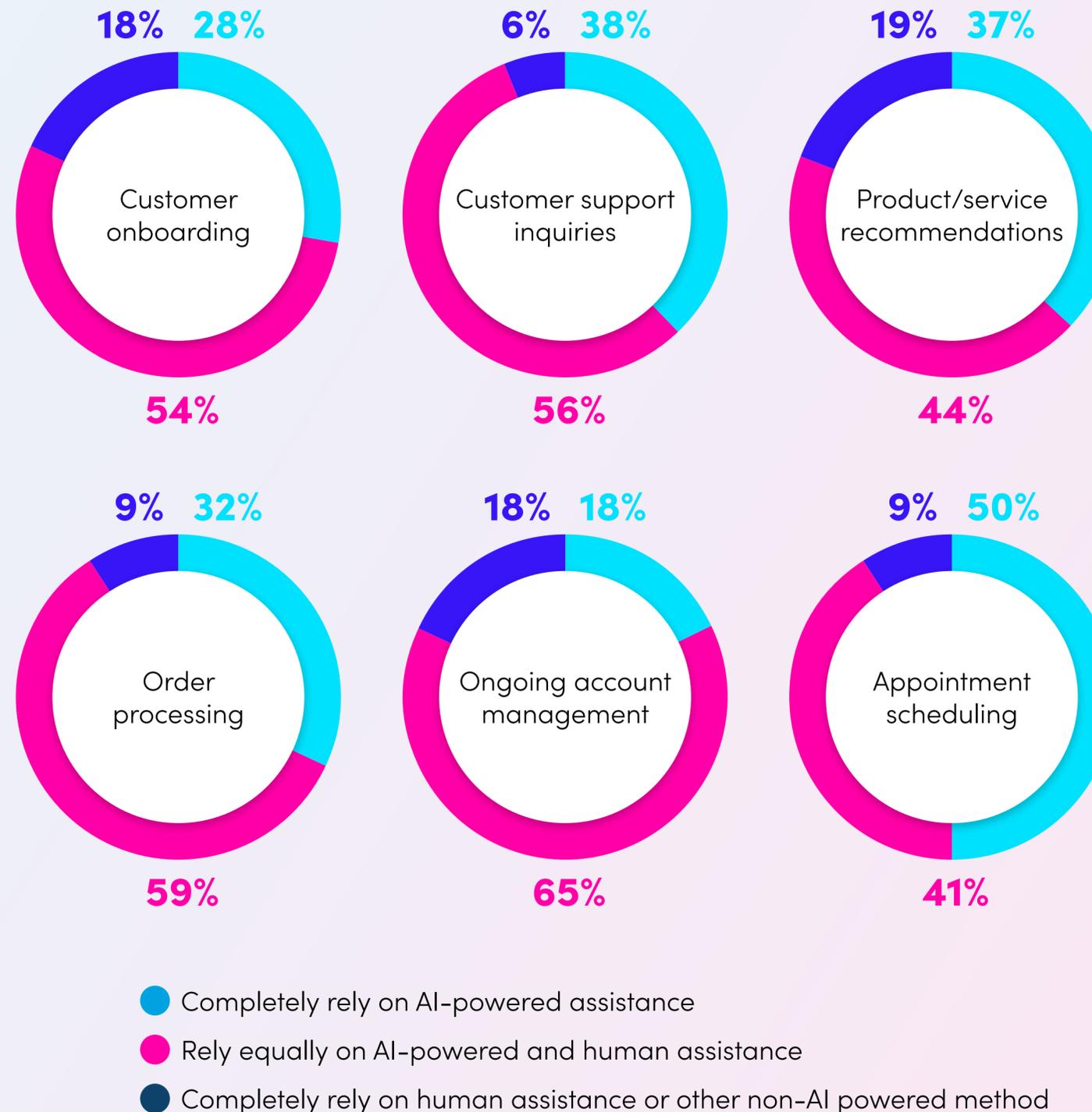
Director Customer Marketing, Retail, UK

Business perspective

Brands risk alienating consumers with too much tech

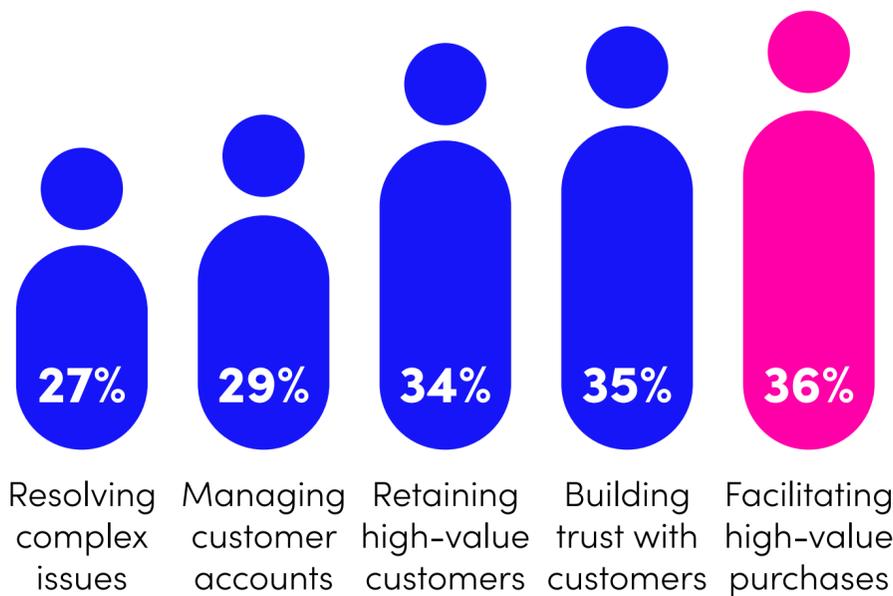
Brands are naturally attracted to AI for its ability to streamline operations, increase efficiency, and reduce costs. In fact, 66% of the companies that say they utilize AI-powered customer support also say it has helped lower their customer service expenses.¹⁶

To find out how brands are currently using AI, we asked about the extent to which they use AI-powered chatbots to support the customer experience in a variety of areas. The responses indicate a blend of AI-powered and human assistance is already the norm in customer onboarding, order processing, customer support, and account management. And brands rely more heavily on completely AI-powered assistance in areas like product recommendations and appointment scheduling.¹⁷



Brands do appear to understand that the option to engage with a real person is still important to their customers. When we asked them to identify the top three areas where they believe human interaction is essential for customer satisfaction, the most common answers are retaining high-value customers, facilitating high-value purchases, and building trust. Human interaction is seen to be least important for scheduling appointments or placing and tracking orders.¹⁸

Where is human interaction most essential for customer satisfaction?



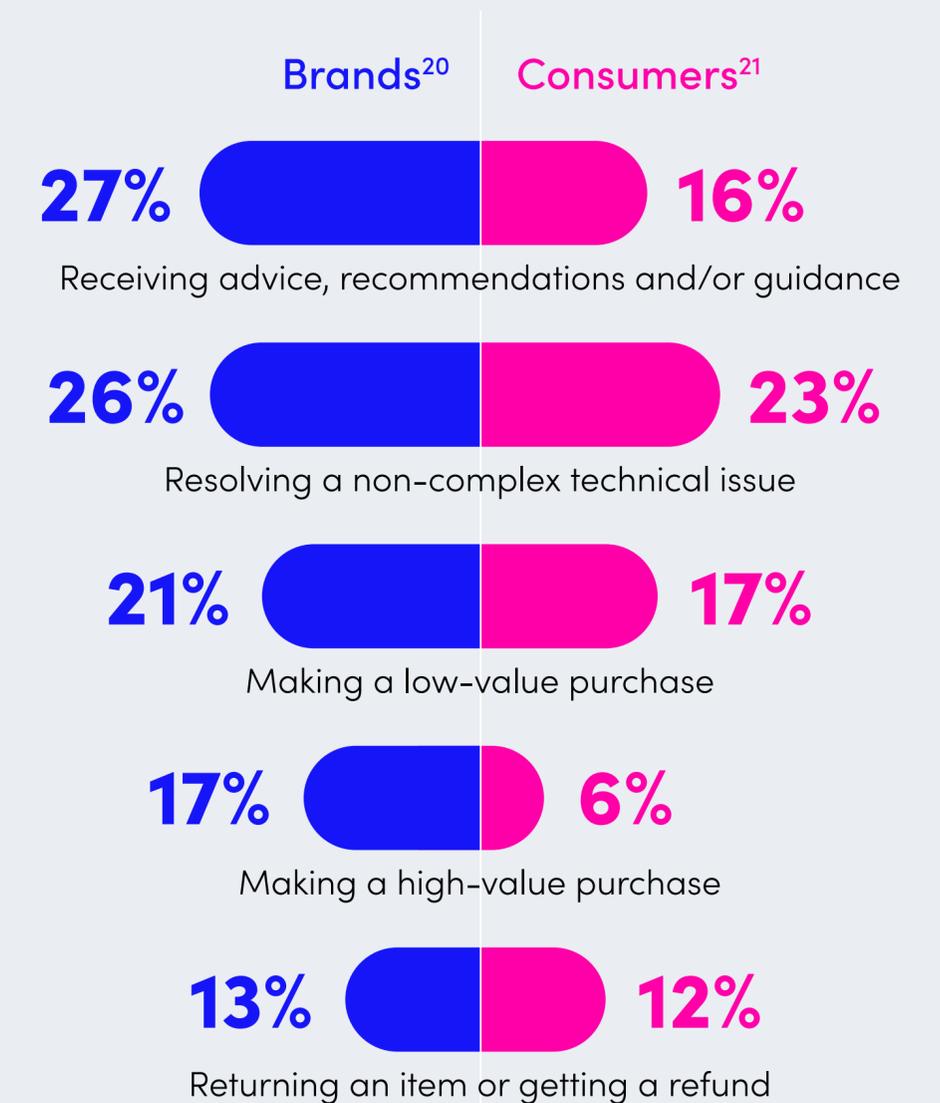
Finding the right balance is a challenge

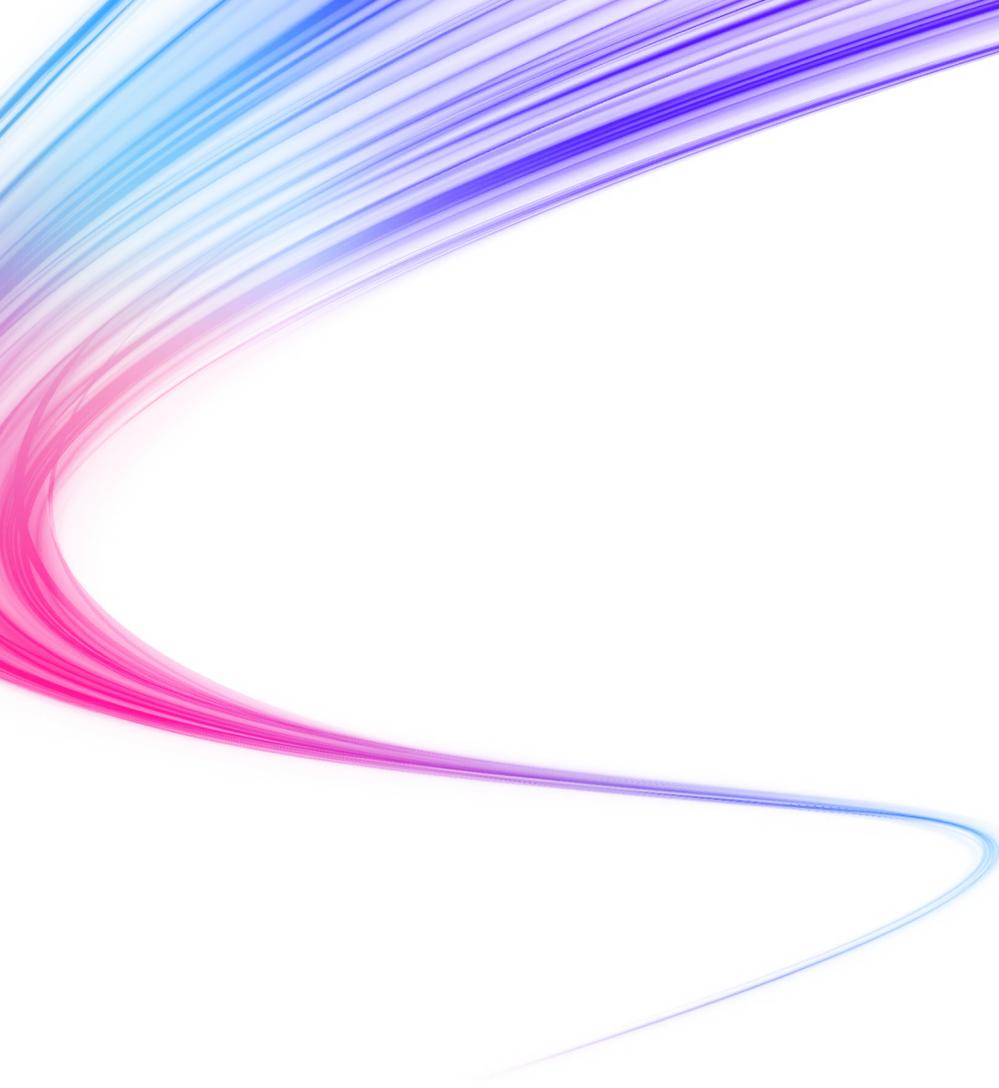
Well over half of brands (55%) acknowledge that balancing tech-driven and human-led customer support is a significant challenge.¹⁹ Brands must take into account their product offerings, customer demographics, and what best aligns with their brand image. There's no one-size-fits-all solution.

Having already asked consumers how they prefer to be served in a variety of scenarios, we then asked brands what they think their customers' preferences are in those same scenarios. The results indicate that, while brands and consumers are largely aligned in understanding customer preferences, businesses often overestimate how much consumers want AI-powered interactions.

For example, 27% of brands think their customers want to receive advice and guidance from AI-powered customer support.²⁰ But only 16% of consumers say this is the case.²¹

Consumer preferences for AI-powered support vs. brand perceptions: A comparison across different contexts





Human-in-the-loop systems offer a solution

Human-in-the-loop systems, where AI and automation are guided by human oversight, offer a way forward. These systems allow brands to harness AI's efficiency while ensuring that humans can step in when necessary, especially in complex or nuanced situations.

Social media content moderation is an example of a human-in-the-loop system. AI algorithms are used to monitor posts and flag potentially harmful content, but human moderators review the flagged items and make final decisions. This model ensures AI is used efficiently without sacrificing human judgment.

Brands can apply the same model in customer service, where AI handles routine tasks and humans step in for more complex or high-stakes issues. In fact, 57% of brands believe human-in-the-loop systems are essential for maximizing the benefits of AI and machine learning.¹⁹

“AI has really sped up our creative process, helping us generate ideas and come up with new angles we might not have thought of on our own. It’s also given the team a sense of working in a more modern environment, where they’re not just using AI to save time but actually learning from it—figuring out how to prompt it better and get more refined results. Humans and AI really can work together for better, it’s just how you approach that and your mindset towards it as well.”

VP of Marketing, Retail Bank, UK

Brands can use AI to strike the right balance

AI isn't just about automating tasks—it's also a powerful tool for knowing what customers want. By using AI for sentiment analysis, brands can understand when customers prefer human interaction versus technology. This helps tailor experiences based on individual needs.

“In situations where we suspect someone doesn't have access to their finances due to manipulation, we will always intervene directly. You need a person on the other end of the phone in those situations. There's no way AI can understand how someone suffering might feel.”

Director Digital Marketing, Retail Bank, UK

Brands recognize this advantage, with 67% agreeing that using AI and machine learning to identify customer preferences will significantly improve their customer experience strategy.¹⁹

How can businesses balance technology and human interaction?

To strike the right balance between tech-driven efficiency and human-led interactions, brands must tap into their first-party data and advanced analytics. By analyzing customer preferences and interaction patterns, businesses can determine where technology is working well and where human input is crucial. Advanced modeling tools allow for continuous monitoring of customer behavior, enabling brands to create personalized journeys that adapt in real-time.

But it all starts with the data. If they haven't already, brands should invest in building robust first-party data strategies, including implementing mechanisms for consumer consent. Brands also need to bolster their analytics capabilities so they can keep abreast of evolving customer preferences in real time.

When brands lack experience in data management or AI, they shouldn't hesitate to seek expert guidance. Trusted partners can offer valuable insights on best practices for advanced analytics, AI, and machine learning. They can also help implement effective human-in-the-loop strategies, ensuring that human judgment is applied where it matters most.

“AI is becoming crucial for marketing, helping automate insights, customer journeys, and quickly identifying unmet needs in specific disease areas. However, the role of marketers has become more complex. They need to ensure the accuracy of AI-generated content, use the right prompts, and identify potential bias in the system. In short, the skill level for marketers needs to rise, as they now need to be both tech-savvy and critical thinkers to fully leverage AI.”

Senior Director Marketing, Pharmaceuticals, UK

Where next?

In the future, AI will be more than just an efficiency tool — it will be a key partner in enhancing the human touch.

Hybrid customer service will become the norm. AI will handle routine tasks and pass over to human agents for deeper, more meaningful conversations, while still supporting those agents with pertinent information and recommendations based on real-time data. This human-in-the-loop approach ensures that people and technology work together, preserving the personal touch while enjoying all the benefits of AI and automation.

The same model will shape marketing and content creation, with generative AI delivering highly-personalized creative variations based on data-driven insights, while humans bring the ideas and emotion that turn campaigns into compelling stories.

“Instead of having separate teams for content, digital, and loyalty marketing, we’ll need people who can handle all those areas as AI powers a lot of the work in the background. Customer service will change too. It’ll be less about fixing problems and more about adding a personal touch when it matters. AI will handle the routine stuff, but when something goes wrong or there’s a chance to make a customer’s day, having a human step in can make a big impact.”

Director Customer Marketing, Retail, UK

The brands that succeed will be those that seamlessly blend AI with human interaction. They’ll use AI not just to streamline operations but to enhance the human side of their business, ensuring customers feel valued and understood. Personalization will be at the heart of this approach, delivering tailored experiences that feel unique to each individual.

As AI continues to advance, the real challenge will be staying flexible—constantly adapting to ensure technology and human connection work together to create exceptional customer experiences.

TREND 02

Fandoms and Communities

Despite the always-on connectivity of the digital era, a recent Gallup survey shows that [almost a quarter of the world feels lonely](#),²² so the need for human interaction has never been greater.

For centuries, communities have been a cornerstone of how we connect and build relationships. Being part of a group that shares passions or interests is key to feeling socially connected and finding purpose.

As brands are deeply embedded in our daily lives and identities—through the products we use, the clothes we wear, and the content we consume— it’s natural for a sense of community to form around them. People are increasingly seeking out communities where they can connect with others who share their enthusiasm for specific products or brands.

Fandoms and communities are quickly becoming the heartbeat of the customer experience, offering a sense of belonging among those with shared interests. For brands, this presents an incredible opportunity—not just to sell, but to cultivate relationships that go far beyond the transaction.

Through vibrant online spaces, social media groups, or real-world events, brands can create powerful hubs of connection. These communities become much more than a marketing strategy—they become a driving force for loyalty, advocacy, and organic growth. Brands that embrace and actively cultivate these fandoms can unlock a whole new level of customer devotion, turning fans into champions and amplifying their impact in ways traditional marketing never could.

“We’ve definitely seen a shift towards more community-focused marketing, and ways in which we can evolve a business to translate into that kind of funnel. The way you root yourself in something that feels relevant to the consumer, and translate that across customer touchpoints, is both a huge challenge and opportunity for us.”

VP Marketing, Retail, UK



Go Pro – From selling products to building a community of creators

GoPro, a leader in action cameras, has expanded its business model from simply selling products to building a thriving community of content creators. By leveraging its online platform, GoPro empowers users to share their adventures, which strengthens loyalty and enhances the brand's global image.

GoPro uses community to differentiate its brand

As competition in the action camera market intensified, GoPro needed to stand out for something beyond its hardware. The challenge was to deepen brand loyalty and boost user engagement while positioning its cameras as must-have tools for capturing dynamic experiences. GoPro's solution was to focus on community, turning users into creators and advocates.

A multi-faceted community strategy

GoPro focuses community-building efforts in four areas:

User-generated content platform: GoPro's online platform is a hub for user-generated content (UGC), where users can upload videos and photos shot with GoPro cameras. The platform promotes authentic, real-world use of GoPro products, creating a steady flow of engaging content.

GoPro Awards: To further incentivize content creation, GoPro launched the GoPro Awards. This program rewards users with cash, cameras, and global recognition for sharing their best GoPro footage. The awards maintain motivation for users to contribute high-quality content, driving excitement and fostering a sense of achievement within the community.

Social media: GoPro uses its strong social media presence to amplify UGC. The brand reposts and promotes top content from users on Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook, making users feel like an integral part of the brand. This amplification not only engages the existing community but also attracts new customers by showcasing the endless creative possibilities with GoPro cameras.

GoPro app integration: The GoPro Quik app seamlessly connects users with the brand's online platform, enabling easy editing, sharing, and uploading of content. It also enhances the community experience by simplifying the process of contributing to the GoPro ecosystem, ensuring that both casual and serious creators can engage without technical barriers.

The result?

GoPro has evolved beyond being just a camera manufacturer and, by building and leveraging a thriving online community, has also become a creative hub. By encouraging and rewarding user-generated content, GoPro fosters strong brand loyalty and keeps its audience engaged well beyond the initial purchase. This community-driven approach not only strengthens GoPro's market presence but also turns customers into passionate advocates, demonstrating the powerful impact of community in the digital age.

Consumer perspective

Consumers engage with brands that foster a sense of community

Communities are becoming an increasingly important part of the overall brand experience. Over half (53%) of the consumers we surveyed are involved in fandoms or online communities related to their personal interests or a brand, with 42% engaging in these spaces at least once a month.²³

Of those who do participate in communities, **a significant 85% specifically engage with brand-related communities**, and 66% do so on a monthly basis or more frequently.²⁴

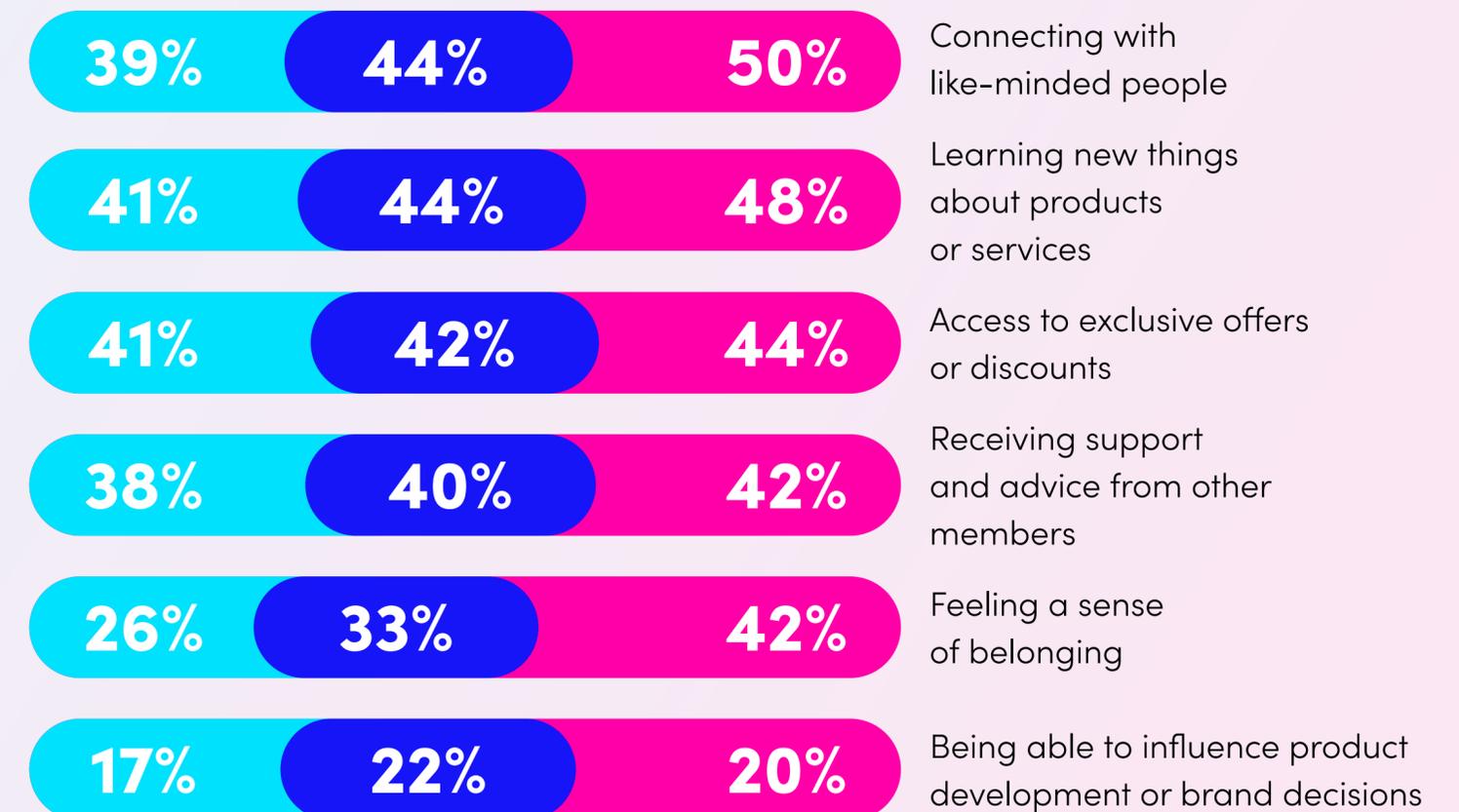
When we asked consumers to identify the most appealing benefits of being part of an online community, the most popular answers were connecting with like-minded people and learning more about products or services.

Other appealing benefits were gaining access to exclusive discounts and receiving support from other members.^{25,26}

A closer look at this data reveals an intriguing pattern: brand-affiliated communities have a stronger impact on their members than non-brand related communities.

For example, individuals engaged in a brand community are much more likely to report a sense of belonging as a key benefit of community membership than those in non-brand-related groups. They're also more likely to cite connecting with like-minded individuals as a benefit.

What are the most appealing benefits of participating in a fandom or community?



- % of those who have participated in non-brand community
- % all respondents
- % those who have participated in a brand community

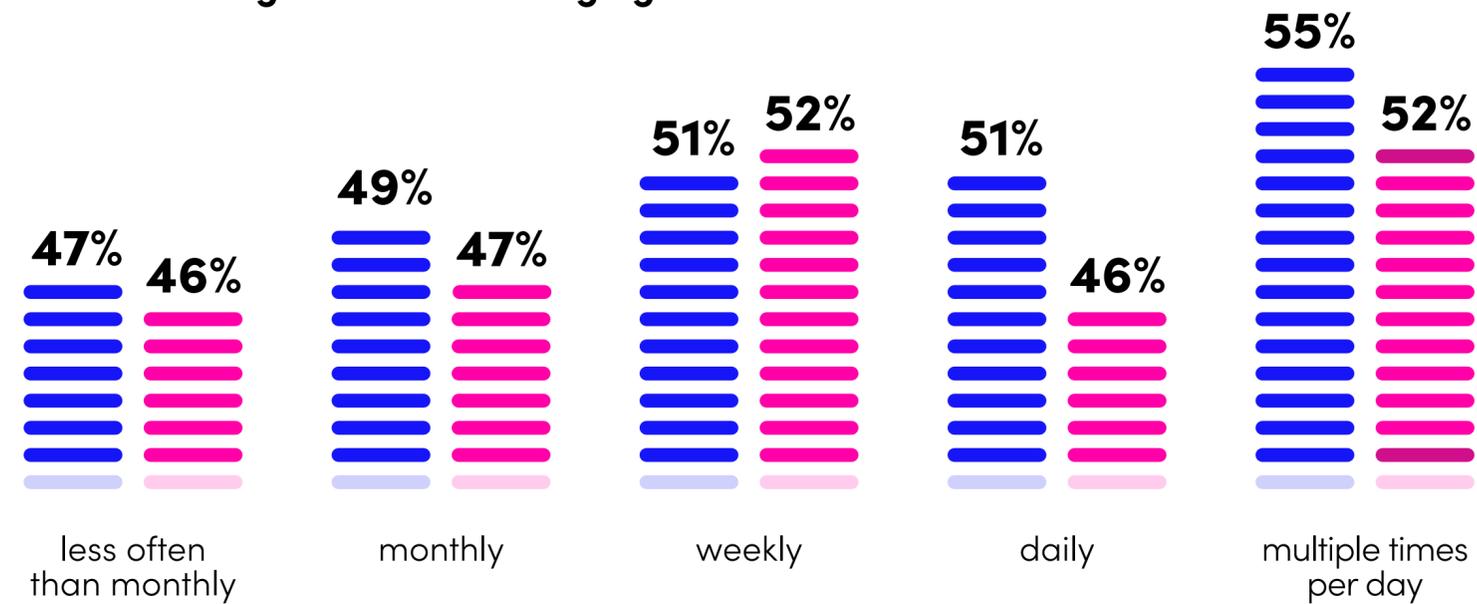
On top of that, members who interact with brand communities daily or more frequently are more likely to say they've experienced these benefits compared to those who engage only monthly or less often.²⁷

This underscores the pivotal role brands play as a cornerstone of personal perception, serving as a foundation for fostering connections among consumers. These connections, in turn, become part of the collective brand identity, creating a continuous and reinforcing cycle.

What are the most appealing benefits of participating in a fandom or community?

% of people participating in brand community:

- Connecting with like-minded people
- Feeling a sense of belonging



Communities enhance the brand experience

Brand communities are more than just social groups—they amplify the brand experience by providing a space for users to connect, share knowledge, and celebrate their enthusiasm for the product or service. These interactions foster a deeper connection to the brand and enhance the overall customer experience.

For those who are part of these communities, there's a noticeable "halo effect" that positively influences their perception of the brand. The vast majority **(86%) of the consumers that told us they do participate in brand-specific communities believe that being part of that community plays at least some role in shaping their overall experience with the brand.**²⁸ Around a third (34%) say it's an important part of that experience, with importance growing as engagement with the community increases.²⁹

What's more, a significant **63% of consumers who have engaged with a brand community say their perception of the brand improves when the brand actively supports or interacts with its community,**³⁰ with this figure rising to 71% for those who engage with a brand community multiple times per day. In comparison, only 28% of those outside these communities feel the same.³¹

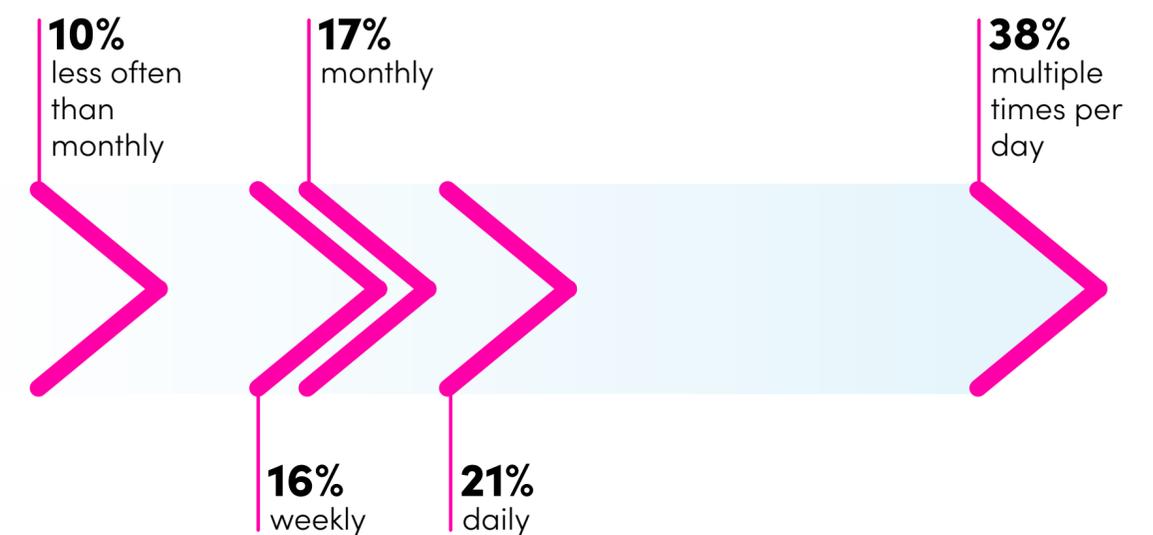
How important is being part of a brand community to your overall customer experience with a brand?

% (net important). People participating in brand community:

Multiple times per day	58%
Participate in brand community daily	40%
Participate in brand community weekly	37%
Participate in brand community monthly	31%
Less often than monthly	15%

If a brand actively creates or engages with its fandom or community what impact does this have on your perception of the brand?

Those with a **very positive** response from participating in brand community:



“Our stores have their own communities, and social media is a huge vehicle for us – our customers are vocal and really highly engaged. We also have a specific Facebook group for our most loyal customers and when we announce community events, they sell out instantly. We don’t have one hub for community—it spans across channels. Social media has become our mouthpiece, driving engagement and connecting with our loyal base.”

VP Marketing, Retail, UK

Communities can influence consumer decisions

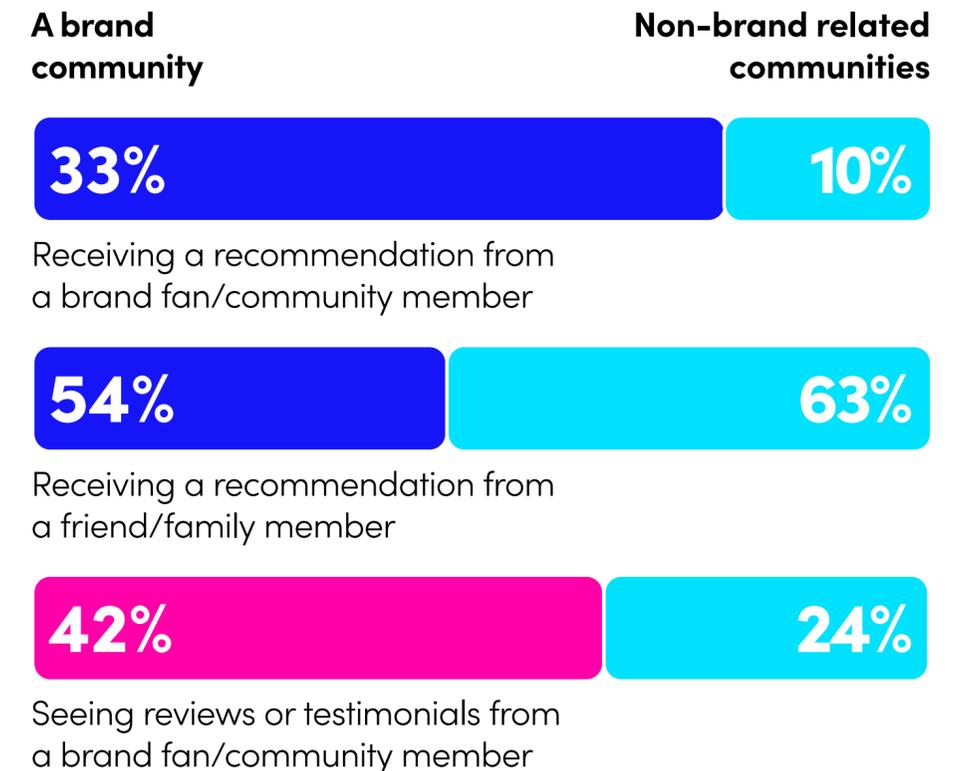
The impact of communities extends far beyond brand engagement. Word-of-mouth recommendations and authentic reviews from fellow community members are powerful trust-builders.

Consumers who participate in brand communities often view reviews or testimonials from fellow members as a key source of recommendations, second only to those from close friends and family.

In fact, nearly half (42%) of brand community participants say they would take action based on a review or testimonial from a fellow brand fan or community member, compared to just 24% of those who are not part of a brand-related community.³²

What would make you more likely to act on a recommendation of a product or service?

% of those who have participated in:



Business perspective

Building and sustaining a community seems challenging, and businesses have work to do

Building a brand community isn't easy—it requires thoughtful planning, significant resources, and a commitment to invest in something that may not show immediate results.

Only 37% of the brands we surveyed currently have a fandom or community.³³ When we asked the 63% of brands that don't have one what the barriers are to managing a fandom or community, the most cited answer is the perceived cost, followed by the ability to keep members engaged long term and to moderate responses.³⁴

What are the barriers to managing a fandom or community?

63%

High ongoing costs to maintain

48%

Potential legal risks

58%

Ability to keep members engaged long term

56%

Ability to moderate and monitor responses

37%

Unclear success metrics

34%

Choosing the right platform to host a fandom / community

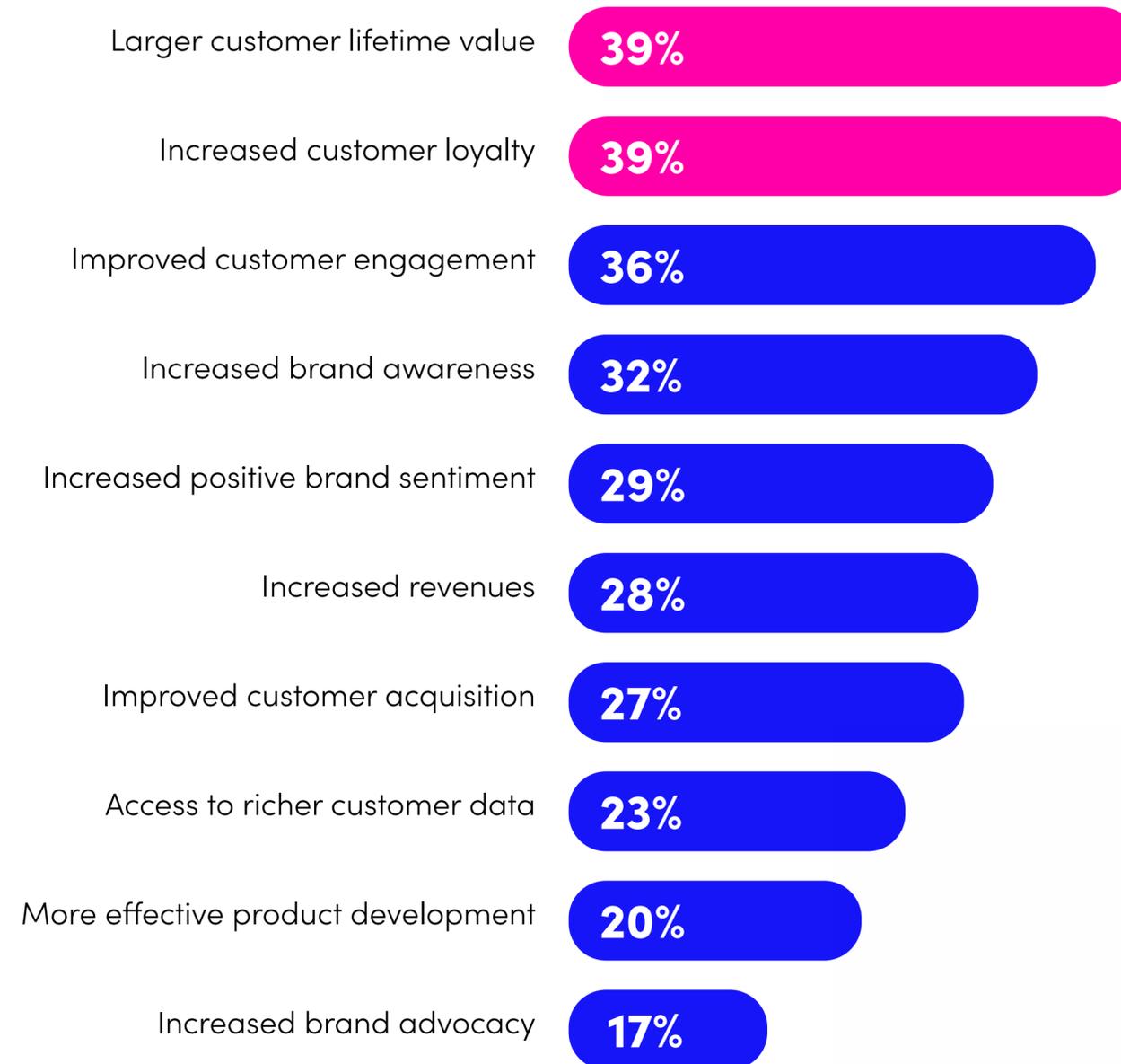
The brands that do invest in communities are already enjoying some long-term rewards. When we asked the brands that have fandoms about the benefits they see, almost 40% report that engaged community members are more loyal and tend to spend more over time.³⁵

But overall, these relatively low figures indicate that brands aren't yet making best use of their fandoms. For example, only 17% cite increased customer advocacy as a benefit. If managed effectively, these communities should turn members into passionate brand champions.

“Community has been a big area of growth for us over the last 18 months, especially in terms of investment. Our social team has grown a lot—we’ve brought it in-house, and it’s now four times bigger so we can stay on top of trends on platforms like TikTok. That’s really important, not just for reaching Gen Z, but also for some of our older customers who are active on these platforms too.”

Director Customer Marketing, Retail, UK

Benefits of investing in a brand community or fandom, according to those who have one



Communities provide valuable customer feedback and insights

Communities aren't just for engagement—they're also a powerful source of customer feedback. By actively listening and engaging with community members, brands can gain deep insights into their customers' needs, preferences, and pain points. With the help of AI, brands can gather and analyze this feedback, allowing them to incorporate valuable insights directly into their product development and marketing workflows.

Despite only 23% of brands that have a fandom saying access to richer customer data is a benefit,³⁵ over three-quarters (76%) say they are already using data generated by their fandom or community to shape their marketing and customer experience strategies.³⁶

This disparity suggests that while brands are utilizing fandom-generated data, the methods they use to collect it—and the data itself—may not provide the most valuable or actionable insights. In fact, only around half (49%) are using AI to support their community strategy.³⁶

This mixed picture suggests there is significant room for improvement, and brands may need external support in how they use data, AI and other technologies to get maximum value from their fandoms and communities.

What will businesses need to build effective fandoms?

Building and managing successful communities requires a thoughtful, strategic approach, with businesses focusing on a few key areas:

Enterprise identity solutions: To truly connect with their audience, brands need a robust identity solution to unify interactions across all touchpoints—whether online via social media and email, or offline at in-store events. This enables a holistic view of each customer to support seamless, personalized engagement, and strengthen connections within the community.

Strong data management: Effective community management relies on accurate data. Brands can unify data from various sources, employ data hygiene to make sure that information is accurate and up to date, and enrich that data with insights from other trusted sources.

Advanced analytics: Using the latest AI-driven technologies, brands can analyze community behavior, spot trends, and create targeted segments for more personalized interactions. This ensures every community member feels valued, driving higher engagement.

AI-powered social listening and sentiment analysis: AI tools give brands the ability to monitor real-time conversations, uncover trending topics, and identify key influencers within the community. With AI-powered analytics they can identify specific segments within their fandom and offer them tailored experiences. Through sentiment analysis, brands can respond swiftly to feedback, adjusting their strategies to maintain meaningful and ongoing engagement.

Where next?

The role of technology in community building is set to expand, offering new opportunities for brands to foster deeper connections. Here's where the trend is heading:

AI and data analytics at scale:

With advances in AI and data analytics, brands will have even greater power to scale community engagement. AI will enable deeper insights into customer behavior, preferences, and sentiment, allowing brands to create hyper-personalized experiences across large and diverse communities. Automation will help brands to reduce costs by managing real-time monitoring and moderation. As these tools become more advanced, brands will be able to anticipate community needs, customize content, and drive engagement more effectively. However, the human element will remain essential, as creativity, empathy, and strategic thinking will be key to ensuring AI-driven interactions feel authentic and meaningful.

The growth of micro-communities:

As the digital space becomes more fragmented, brands will find new opportunities in micro-communities and niche interest groups. These smaller, focused communities offer a unique chance for brands to connect with highly targeted customer segments that might have been overlooked by broader marketing strategies. AI will be used to create bespoke experiences for these niche communities, and to moderate their interactions, which will reduce costs for brands. But people will always be required to give these communities a personal touch.

TREND 03

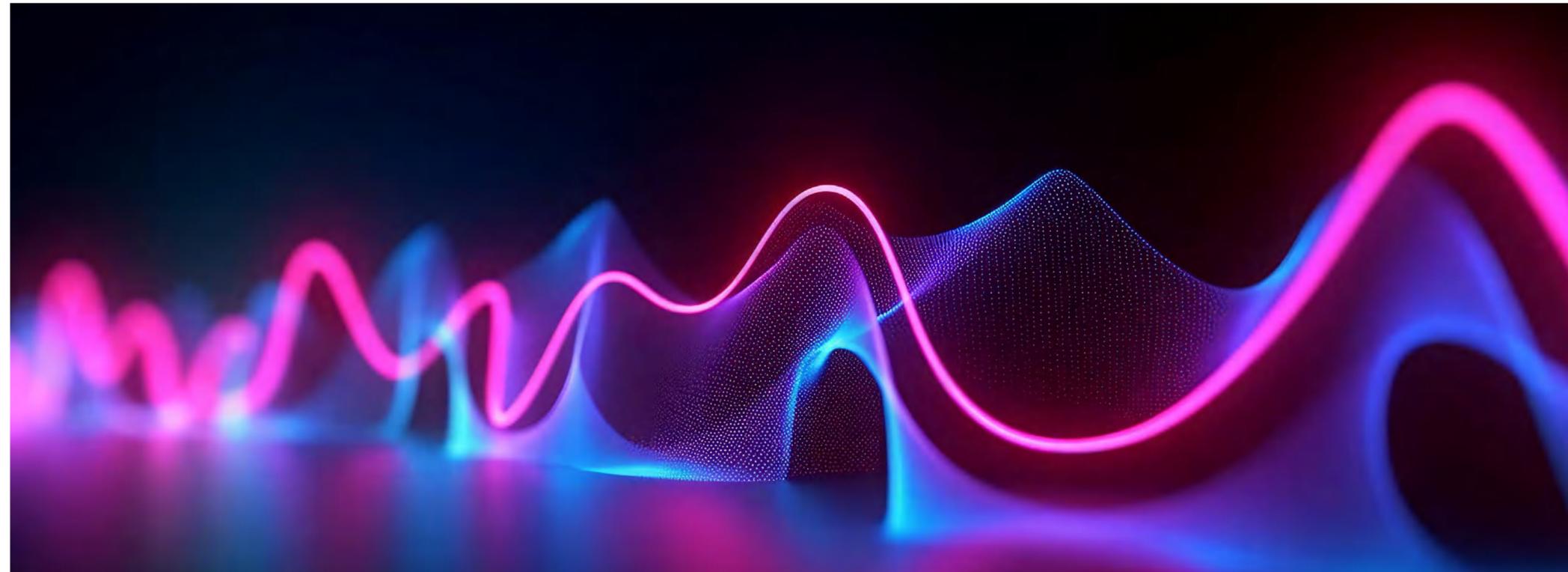
Loyalty Lessons Learned from Luxury

In a world where consumers are inundated with options, brands must find new ways to rise above the rest and foster loyalty.

The key to retaining customers is making them feel special, recognized, and valued

The challenge for businesses is to strike the right balance: creating a welcoming environment for all while fostering a sense of exclusivity and belonging for those who invest their loyalty in the brand.

Subscriptions, memberships, and loyalty programs are key to providing curated, exclusive experiences that make customers feel understood and appreciated. By offering unique experiences, exclusive access, and personalized rewards, these models allow brands to cater to a wide audience while making their most valuable customers feel like insiders.



Marriott Bonvoy's tiered perks create elite customer experiences

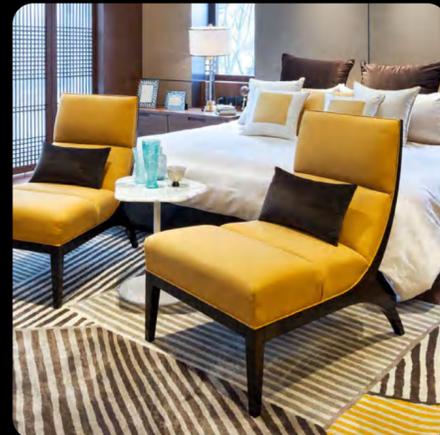
Marriott Bonvoy's loyalty program offers a tiered structure where members can advance through levels such as Silver, Gold, Platinum, Titanium, and Ambassador, based on their stay frequency and spend. Members' access to these tiers is contingent on staying at a Marriott hotel within the past 12 months.

New customers can achieve 'Member' status when joining the program, and receive rewards in return. But these are initially limited to complimentary Wi-Fi, member rates, and mobile check-in. The benefits then become increasingly impressive as members graduate through the tiers.

At the Ambassador level, customers unlock luxury perks like personal concierges, flexible check-in and check-out times, and suite upgrades. The program creates a sense of exclusivity and caters to high-value customers, ensuring they feel recognized and rewarded with luxurious experiences.

The result?

Marriott Bonvoy's tiered program doesn't just hand out points – it turns loyalty into luxury. Making customers feel like insiders not only boosts customer satisfaction but also strengthens long-term loyalty. The program drives repeat stays and keeps high-value members coming back for more, while creating an exclusive club for the most dedicated travelers.





Consumer perspective

The power of perks in driving consumer commitment

Today's consumer has an almost unlimited choice of brands to buy from. Our research shows that 60% of consumers would choose a brand that offers a loyalty scheme over one that does not, which demonstrates the power of these programs as a differentiator.³⁷

This finding also signals the increasing savviness – and expectations – of consumers, who recognize the importance of their continued patronage. While 59% believe they should receive benefits (like discounts or rewards) as a new customer, a significantly greater 78% believe they deserve rewards for being a loyal customer. Furthermore, 78% are more likely to stay loyal to a brand if they receive rewards in return for their continued investment.³⁷

“We made rewarding new customers a key part of our acquisition strategy. We offered cashback and favorable interest rates to incentivize them. While that gets people in, the key challenge is building loyalty and driving long-term use of the products we offer, but this is a great gateway.”

VP Marketing Strategy, Retail and Investment Bank, UK

Benefits impact brand consideration

When we asked consumers to identify the top three loyalty or membership benefits that would make them more likely to consider a brand for their next purchase, the most popular responses were exclusive discounts or rewards, offers tailored to individual preferences, and early access to sales.³⁸

% of consumers that selected this benefit in their top 3



In fact, consumers are attracted to subscriptions, memberships, and loyalty programs for a variety of reasons:

Status and recognition: Beyond the tangible benefits, consumers are drawn to subscription and membership models because being part of an exclusive club can confer status and recognition. For example, American Express' Centurion Card, popularly known as the "Black Card," is coveted not just for its benefits but also for the status it symbolizes.

Curation and discovery: In a world of overwhelming choice, consumers value curated experiences that save them time and introduce them to new products or services they might not otherwise discover. Subscription boxes like HelloFresh, for example, provide a convenient and personalized way to explore new culinary options.

Early access and VIP treatment: Consumers are drawn to exclusive offers and early access to products or services, which make them feel like trendsetters. This sense of VIP treatment can create a strong emotional connection with the brand and drive long-term loyalty.

Community and belonging: Membership programs often foster a sense of community and belonging among like-minded individuals. This shared identity can create a deeper connection with the brand and encourage ongoing engagement.

Loyalty, however, is fragile. When customers don't receive what they expect, they quickly disengage. In fact, 40% of consumers report canceling a membership or subscription due to a lack of value for money,³⁹ 31% because the rewards felt inadequate, and 29% due to poor customer service. These insights underscore the importance of consistently evaluating and improving loyalty and membership programs.

Business perspective

Unlocking value: loyalty programs power engagement and customer insights

According to our research, 91% of organizations offer some form of rewards to their customers.⁴⁰ When we asked those brands to identify the two most significant benefits of customer rewards, increased customer referrals through brand advocates and enhanced customer lifetime value came out on top.

Rewards programs can also unlock valuable customer data, provided brands offer the right incentive in exchange. According to our survey, 44% of consumers are willing to share personal data with a brand in return for additional loyalty rewards.⁴¹

However, 36% were unwilling, and 20% were unsure, indicating that brands either need to offer more enticing rewards or build greater trust around data privacy.

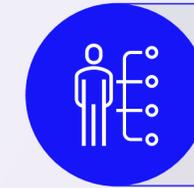
Although developing and implementing a data exchange that works for both the business and its customers may seem like a challenging task, it pays off in the long run. When consumers do share their data, it creates a virtuous cycle: deeper customer insights lead to more personalized experiences, which, in turn, foster stronger and more lasting loyalty.

Ranked benefits for rewarding loyalty



46%

More customer referrals through brand advocates



44%

Enhanced customer lifetime value



42%

Increased customer retention



37%

Access to valuable customer data



31%

More informed decision-making

And as many brands already know, these loyal customers are incredibly valuable. Among the 91% of brands offering rewards or benefits, 56% place a strong emphasis on their most loyal customers.⁴² This strategic approach highlights the recognition that fostering long-term relationships is just as important, if not more so, than solely focusing on acquiring new customers.



“We know who our high value customers are, so to target them we think specifically about which products they might need, how we should best serve them, what would most appeal to them, and which elements of the product would specifically hook them in. We want to serve them as best we possibly can.”

Director of Digital Marketing, Retail Bank, UK

Most brands offering rewards and benefits do so via structured programs that require customers to sign up.⁴³ This approach enables brands to gather valuable data on customer behavior, preferences, and interactions across various touchpoints. With this information, businesses can deliver highly personalized experiences that strengthen relationships and - ultimately - give them a competitive edge.

Of brands that offer rewards and benefits:



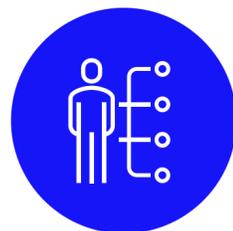
Loyalty can be defined in many ways

We asked brands how they define a customer's level of loyalty, and discovered a wide range of metrics are used. Customer lifetime value and customer engagement scores are the most common, followed by the range and frequency of purchase.

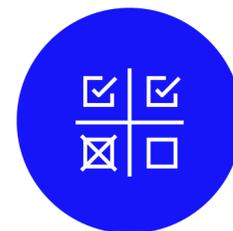
Only a third (33%) of brands say they use advocacy or referrals to measure loyalty, which is surprising when referrals through brand advocates were identified as one of the top benefits of reward programs. It seems brands may be missing a trick there, and advocacy could be more routinely used to measure loyalty.

It's also interesting to note that only 6% of brands use the net promoter score (NPS) which has been the standard measurement of customer satisfaction and loyalty for the last 20 years.⁴⁴

Loyalty definitions



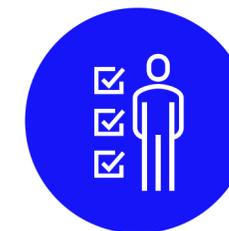
62%
Customer lifetime value



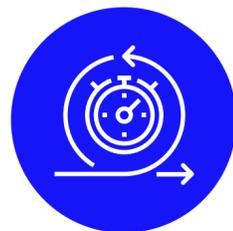
55%
Customer engagement score



52%
Range of purchases



47%
Frequency they purchase



44%
Repeat purchase rate



38%
Length of time they have been a customer



33%
Advocacy or referrals to our products



33%
Level of spend



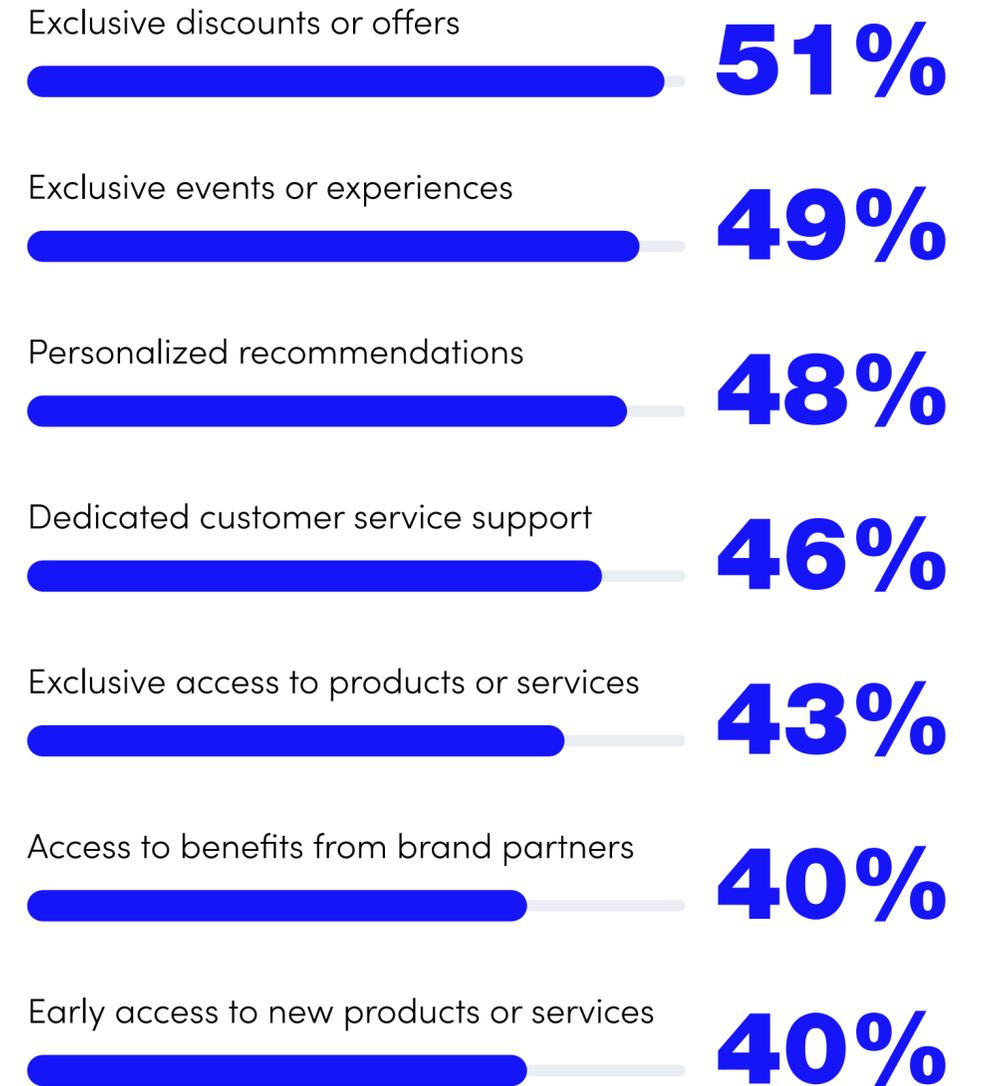
Luxury-inspired loyalty programs can drive deeper customer engagement

We asked the brands that do reward customer loyalty, what types of benefits and rewards they offer. Their responses show they provide a range of benefits, many of which emphasize exclusivity and personalization.

In fact, brands are increasingly recognizing that rewarding customers goes beyond simply offering discounts. Exclusive events and personalized recommendations can also play a significant role in building lasting loyalty.⁴⁵

Brands are increasingly using data-driven approaches when rewarding loyalty, and some are supercharging these with the use of AI and machine learning. Our survey found that 67% of the organizations that reward their customers are leveraging customer data to personalize benefits.⁴⁶ And 49% of these are using AI or machine learning to do so.⁴⁷

How brands reward loyalty



“AI is helping us to accelerate decision making, both in terms of deciding which promotions we should give to each customer, and ensuring this is more personalized for every individual. Whereas previously you might have given a promotion to lots of people all at the same rate, we can now use AI to distinguish which customers should get which promotion. This helps us manage the margin across the different areas.”

Director of Customer Marketing, Retail, UK

Taking cues from luxury brands, some businesses seek to elevate their loyalty programs by cultivating an aura of exclusivity around their products or services, thus enhancing their appeal and perceived value. For example, luxury brand Hermès has mastered the art of exclusivity with its iconic Birkin bag.

It's notoriously difficult to obtain, with only the most loyal customers being invited to purchase a bag, and the highest tier of customers invited to create their own custom version. This extreme exclusivity is key to the success of Hermès, which [outperformed the broader luxury market in 2023](#).

“We have a loyalty program, and we're really trying to focus on what our loyalty proposition is and how that ties into the value we offer customers and the layer of community that involves. There are lots of ways we can look to the luxury sector to bring in that sense of personalization to make our long-time customers feel valued. It's important to evolve the meaning of loyalty schemes beyond just a discount proposition.”

VP Marketing, Retail, UK

However, overextending exclusivity can have drawbacks, as (not so) exclusive private member's club Soho House learned when overcrowding diluted its members-only allure. Brands need to strike a careful balance between exclusivity and accessibility, ensuring their most loyal customers feel rewarded while maintaining broad appeal.

While exclusivity may not be appropriate for all brands, it's an important tactic in designing effective reward programs. **Almost three-quarters (72%) of brands feel it would be beneficial to create a sense of exclusivity around their loyalty schemes.**⁴⁹

Beyond luxury, brands across sectors recognize the value of tiered loyalty programs, which offer varying levels of rewards based on customer value. By segmenting their customer base, brands can ensure that their most valuable patrons receive the highest level of recognition and personalization. Seven in ten (70%) of the brands that reward customers offer tiered benefits⁴⁶ and, of these, 42% are using AI or machine learning to support a tiered system and deliver customized experiences.⁵⁰

What do brands need for effective loyalty programs?

Despite the benefits of rewarding loyal customers, many organizations face significant challenges when running loyalty programs. According to the brands that reward their customers, the two biggest challenges are measuring success and maintaining customer rewards over the long term.⁵¹

Biggest challenges when running loyalty programs

46%

Difficulty measuring program success

28%

Lack of clear business benefits / objectives

44%

Difficulty to maintain long term

26%

Internal resistance

43%

Data privacy and protection concerns

25%

Integrating loyalty platform with existing systems

38%

Difficulty getting customers to redeem points

19%

Integrating customer data across different systems

35%

Perceived complexity to set up

9%

Unclear ROI

Intriguingly, only a fifth (21%) of the brands that say they reward customers have a dedicated loyalty platform or software system to manage their loyalty program.⁴³ Implementing a loyalty platform could help address some of these challenges, as long as it is fully integrated with existing systems. This is something that 45% of those using loyalty platforms say they struggle with, and that a service partner can help with.⁵¹

To run effective loyalty programs, brands can benefit from partnering with industry experts to support:

Effective use of AI for customer segmentation to identify high-value customers and build tiered loyalty programs.

Sophisticated measurement capabilities to monitor the success of loyalty programs on an ongoing basis.

Seamless data integration to unify data across platforms, understand customers' differing needs, and drive personalized interactions.

Strengthened data privacy and security measures, such as cybersecurity protocols, to protect customer information, maintain trust, and ensure that exclusivity doesn't come at the cost of privacy.

Where next?

Looking ahead, brands must continue learning lessons from the luxury sector by creating exclusivity within loyalty programs while balancing accessibility.

By cultivating exclusive rewards for top-tier members and integrating advanced data analytics, businesses can offer a more personalized, engaging experience.

Embracing AI to segment customers effectively and build tiered loyalty programs that offer personalized rewards based on customer value will be key to the success of these programs.

Businesses that master this approach—building deep connections with high-value customers—will differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive marketplace.



TREND 04

Inclusive Product and Service Design

The topic of inclusivity has gained significant traction in recent years as brands are increasingly conscious of treating diverse customer groups with sensitivity. Over half of the brands we surveyed (59%) acknowledge it has become an increasingly important issue over the last five years.⁵²

Customers, too, are demanding greater inclusivity and accountability from the brands they engage with

Overall, almost two-thirds (64%) say it is important for brands to demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity through their products and services,⁵³ and this is even more important for younger age groups.

The definition of inclusivity is becoming increasingly nuanced, going beyond gender and ethnicity to encompass a wider range of consumer groups.

Brands and consumers aren't necessarily aligned on which aspects of inclusivity should be catered to. For example, the three types of inclusivity brands are most likely to cater to are financial literacy, age-related issues, and technological fluency.

On the other hand the three aspects consumers think are most important for brands to design their offerings for are age-related issues, disabilities, and cultural background.^{54,55}

Addressing inclusivity isn't just about ticking boxes; it requires thoughtful, genuine effort to create meaningful change. Brands must prioritize inclusivity across all touchpoints in the customer journey, moving beyond surface-level actions to ensure they're meeting the real needs of diverse groups. Authenticity is key—consumers are quick to detect insincerity, and half-hearted efforts can do more harm than good. But when done right, inclusivity offers a competitive edge, strengthening brand loyalty in an increasingly discerning market.

Brands: Which aspects of inclusivity does your organization cater to?

Top 3 selections



45%

Financial literacy



45%

Age-related



42%

Technological fluency

Consumers: Which aspects of inclusivity are most important for a brand to cater to?

Top 3 selections



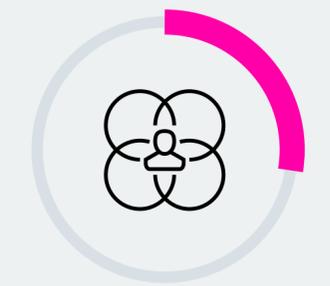
49%

Age-related



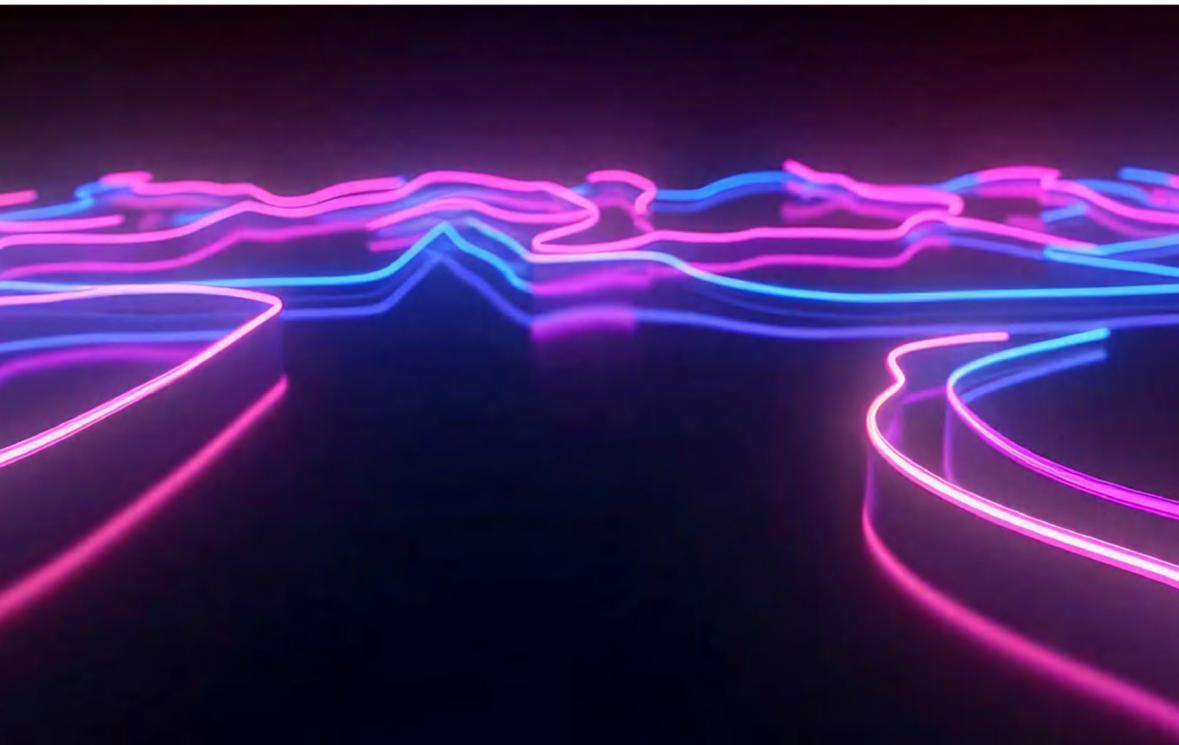
43%

Disabilities (e.g. physical, visual or hearing impairments)



27%

Cultural background



“We have a whole UX team focused on inclusivity, and within this we have champions of different areas of inclusivity, whether it’s visual, sensory, accessibility, all to make sure the digital products and in-store products are accessible to every type of customer. We changed our whole website to make sure that a screen reader can actually use it. Two years ago, that wasn’t the case.”

Director of Customer Marketing, Retail, UK

But translating principles into tangible actions throughout the customer experience journey can be challenging, as brands grapple with understanding, and catering to, the nuanced needs of diverse user groups. Among the brands we surveyed, 44% have not yet taken any steps to ensure their products and services are inclusive for all audience groups.⁵⁶

The challenges of ensuring inclusivity can be further complicated with increasing use of AI, which can be influenced by biases in training data. Without careful oversight of these systems, organizations risk perpetuating exclusionary practices.

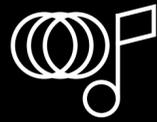
Apple's accessibility features are supercharged by AI

Earlier this year, Apple announced new accessibility features for its iPhones and iPads. These upcoming accessibility features introduce a range of innovations for users with disabilities. They include:



Eye tracking

for controlling iPads and iPhones with just the eyes.



Music haptics

for enhancing the experience of music through vibrations for deaf and hard-of-hearing users.



Vocal shortcuts

that allow tasks to be triggered via custom sounds.

These features are supercharged by AI and machine learning, using technologies like on-device processing to ensure privacy, precision, and adaptability.

Eye tracking leverages AI to instantly calibrate, while music haptics and vocal shortcuts use machine learning to personalize user interactions based on individual needs and behaviors. These AI-driven tools enhance accessibility, ensuring that devices are intuitive and inclusive for a wider group of users.

By securely harnessing customer data, Apple can continuously refine these features and develop new ones, making its devices more accessible and inclusive for all.

The result?

The true impact remains to be seen but, with Apple's reputation for cutting-edge innovation, these new accessibility features are elevating the brand's commitment to inclusivity. By harnessing AI to enhance the customer experience, Apple reinforces its leadership in making technology more intuitive, accessible, and adaptive for users with diverse needs.

Consumer perspective

Younger generations prioritize brands that commit to inclusivity

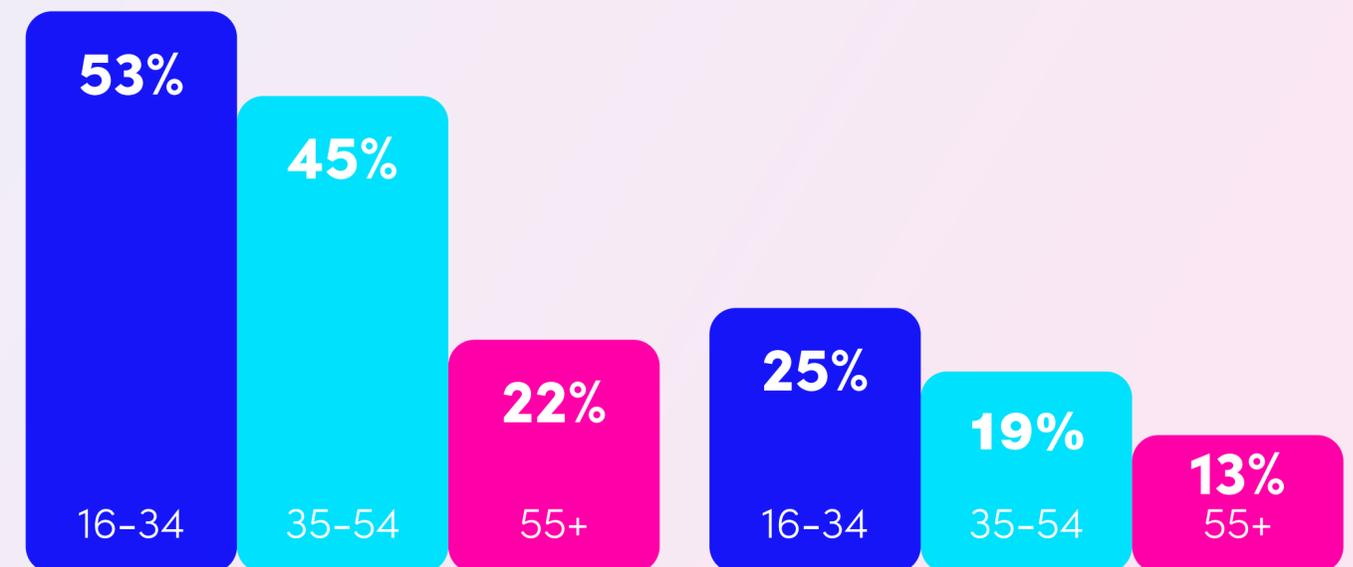
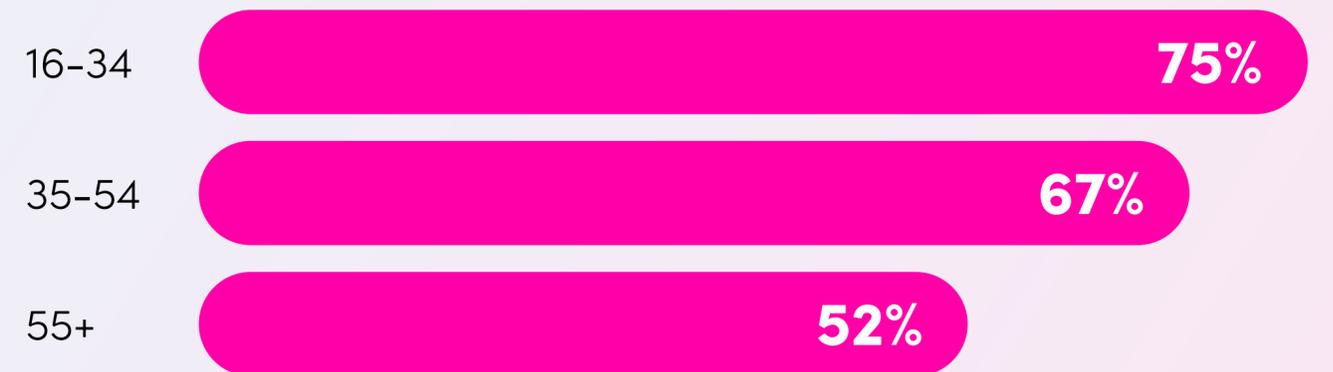
Consumers want to feel seen, heard, and valued by the brands they interact with, regardless of their background or abilities. They seek products, services, and experiences that cater to their unique needs and preferences.

Our consumer survey findings indicate that, while a brand's commitment to inclusivity is important to all consumers, it's particularly important for young people aged between 16 and 34. Three quarters (75%) say it's important for brands to demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity, compared to just over half (52%) of those aged over 55.

As these younger consumers grow with the brands and represent an increasing share of the customer base, this issue will become even more critical for businesses to get right.⁵⁷

Consumer views on inclusivity have implications for the brands they choose to buy from – and those they choose to avoid. Overall, 37% of consumers say they've chosen to purchase from a brand specifically because of its commitment to inclusivity.⁵⁸ This behavior is especially pronounced among younger people (56% of those aged 16-34).⁵⁹

How important is it to you that brands demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity through their products and services?



Purchased a product/service from a brand due to its inclusivity commitments

Avoided purchasing from a brand due to concerns over inclusivity

How do consumers want brands to convey their commitment to inclusivity?

While only one in five consumers (20%) personally have additional needs or requirements when accessing products or services,⁶⁰ there are several ways in which broader consumer groups feel it's important for brands to convey their commitment to inclusivity. In order of perceived importance these include.⁶¹

Inclusive customer service. Over half (53%) of consumers think brands should provide inclusive customer service. This could mean offering customer support through multiple channels, offering multilingual support, or providing alternative formats for content (such as audio descriptions for videos), to make the customer experience more inclusive.

Employee training and development. Two in five (42%) consumers believe employees should be trained in delivering a respectful and inclusive experience, for instance by completing unconscious bias training.

Maintaining up-to-date customer data.

Over a third (37%) of consumers say brands should maintain up-to-date data to ensure customers' latest preferences are respected. Brands have an obligation to use the most up-to-date data to avoid decisions that could misrepresent or exclude customers, especially when assessing sensitive aspects like customer vulnerability or product eligibility.

“We really need to ensure we’re using the most recent customer data. For example, if you’re assessing whether a customer is vulnerable or not, or whether they’re eligible for a certain product, we have an obligation to make sure the data is up to date or we risk inadvertently excluding them – you have to be so careful.”

Director of Digital Marketing, Retail Bank, UK

Product design and development.

Over a third (36%) of consumers think brands should develop products that are suitable for customers with specific needs, such as those with disabilities. By considering the needs of diverse users, brands can create products and services that foster a sense of belonging and empowerment, particularly for historically marginalized groups.

Marketing and communications. A third (34%) of consumers say a brand's marketing and communications should be inclusive, for example by ensuring they can be accessed in multiple languages. US-based jewelry company, Kinn, demonstrates this understanding by offering customers an opt-out for Mother's Day emails, acknowledging that this occasion may not resonate with everyone.

Digital experiences. A third (33%) of consumers believe digital experiences should be inclusive. As an example, customizable interfaces with adjustable font sizes, color contrasts, and

screen reader compatibility, ensure accessibility for individuals with visual impairments.

Ethical use of AI. Almost a third (32%) of consumers say brands should ensure unbiased and ethical use of AI. As awareness of AI's capabilities grows, consumers want assurances that brands are using AI responsibly and avoiding exclusionary practices, for example by taking steps to ensure there is no bias in AI training data.

Ultimately, products and services that cater to diverse needs and preferences demonstrate a brand's genuine commitment to inclusivity. This can significantly enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, as consumers feel understood and valued by the brands they choose to engage with.

Business perspective

Brands must evolve to meet consumer expectations

For brands, embracing inclusivity is not only a moral obligation but can also be a strategic advantage that can enrich reputation and fuel growth.

While 80% of brands recognize that demonstrating a commitment to inclusivity is important to their customers,⁶² there remains a gap between awareness and action. Only 55% have taken steps to ensure products or services are inclusive.⁵⁶ Even for brands that have taken these initial steps, the focus of these efforts tends to be across the lower hanging fruit rather than actions that require more investment. Over half (55%) say they have invested in internal employee training for example, but only 32% are designing inclusive products and just 29% are offering inclusive digital experiences.⁶³

True inclusivity weaves these values throughout the entire customer journey, from initial awareness,

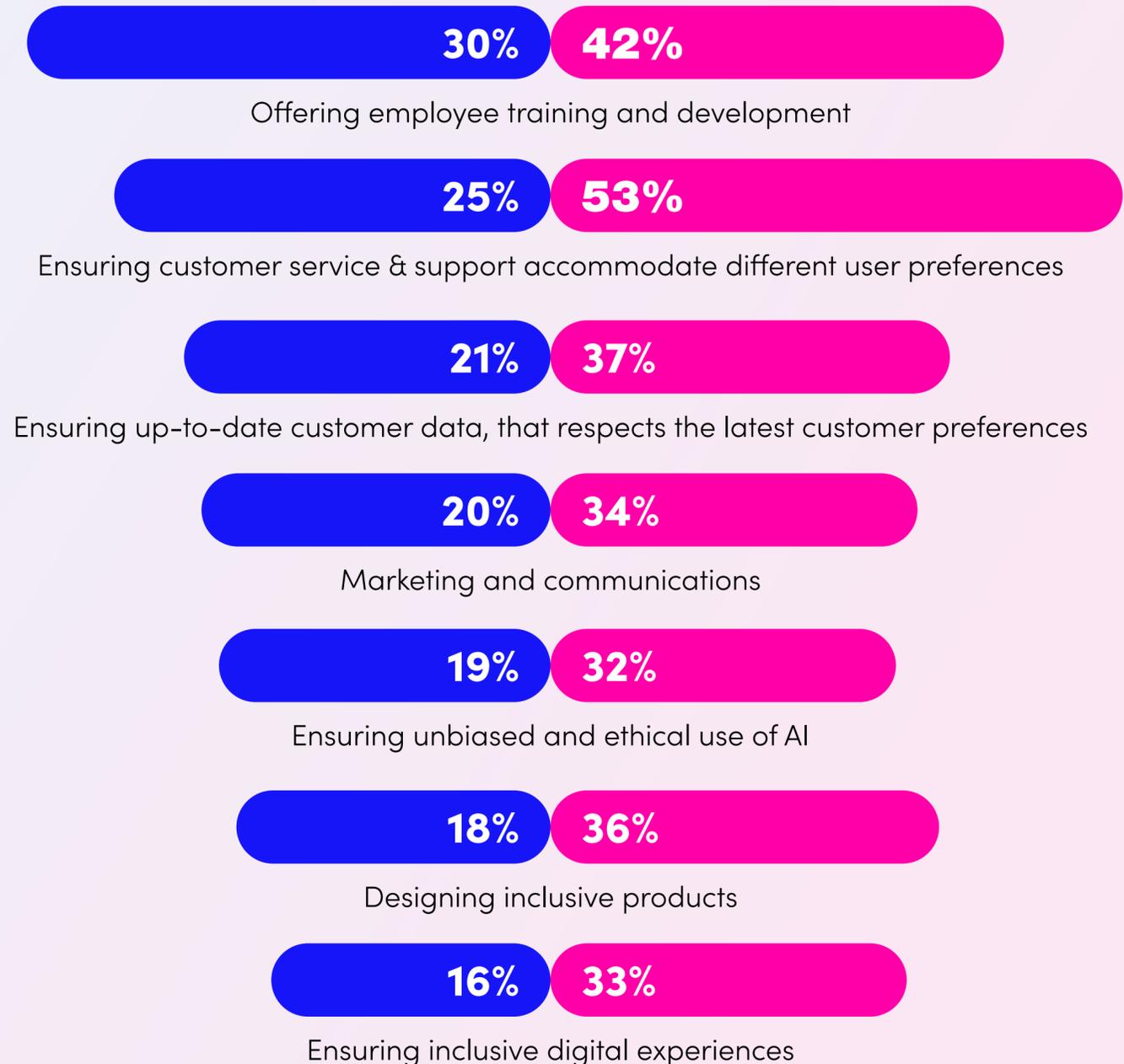
to product and service design, to post-purchase engagement. Every touchpoint, including marketing communications, should reflect a deep understanding of diverse customer needs and preferences.

Brands recognize this – 66% of organizations surveyed say ensuring their entire customer experience journey is inclusive is a key priority. But again, there is a chasm between priorities and progress, with only 24% of brands taking action to accommodate different user preferences in their customer service and support functions, and just 16% offering inclusive digital experiences.⁶³

Overall, the progress that brands have made towards inclusivity falls short of consumer expectations, signaling a clear need for organizations to up their inclusivity game.

% of all brands that have taken steps towards this form of inclusivity

% of consumers that think brands should convey their commitment to inclusivity in the following ways

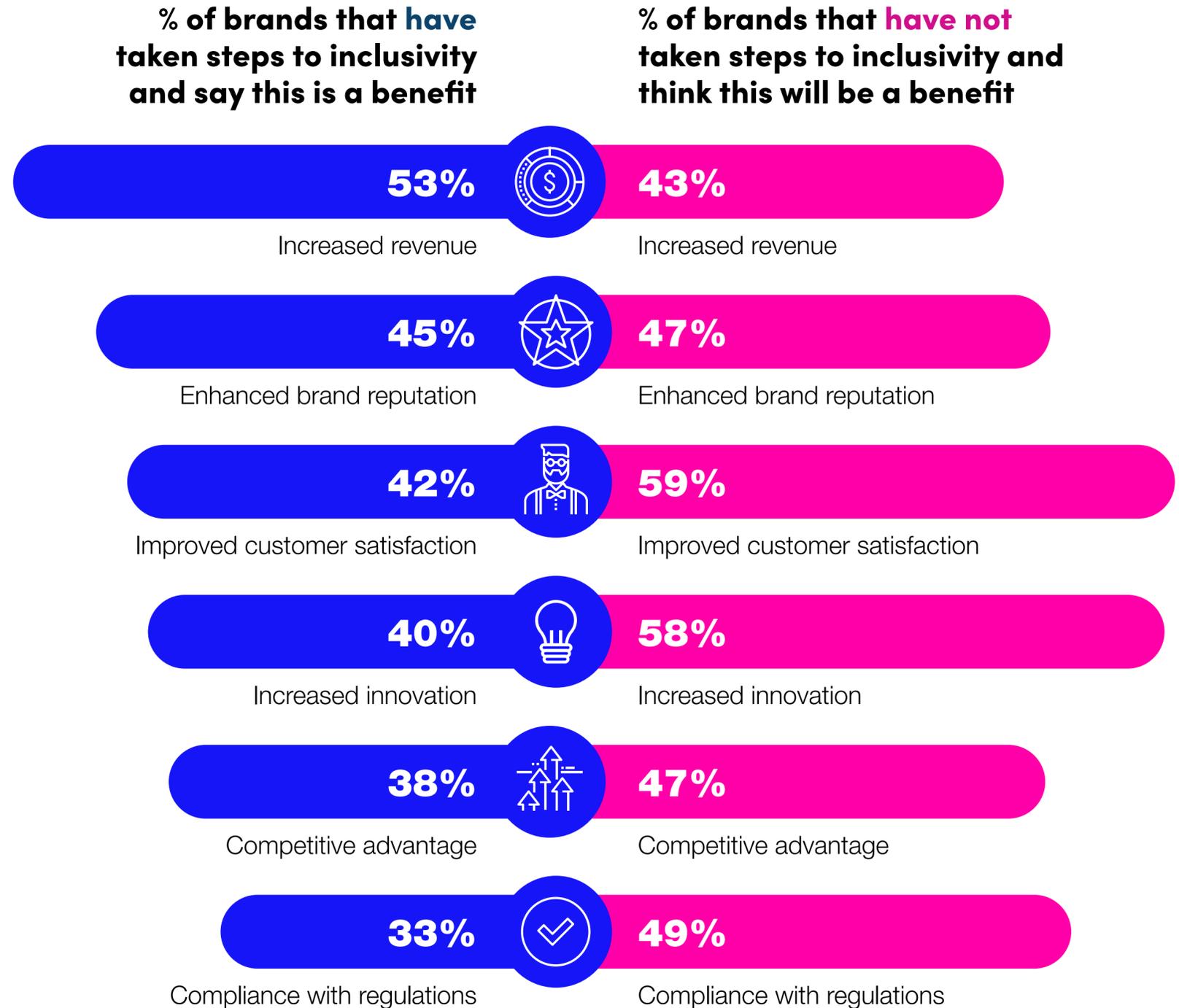


Building an inclusive brand is an ongoing journey, requiring continuous effort and adaptation. While it may take time to get it right, the rewards can be substantial. It's interesting to note the differences between the brands that have taken steps toward inclusivity and those that haven't, when it comes to realized and perceived benefits.

Brands that are already on their inclusivity journey are more likely to report the benefits they receive are increased revenue, enhanced brand reputation, and improved customer satisfaction. On the other hand, brands that haven't yet taken action on inclusivity are more likely to expect the benefits to be customer satisfaction, increased innovation, and compliance with regulations.^{65,66}

“We developed a product for a set of our customers that are historically underserved by banks. This was a result of us really listening to our customers – we have amazing software that flagged this from recorded calls and other customer service interactions. It was a risky product for us to build, but it was worth it to help people out. Not only has it made a huge difference to our customers, but it led to a lot of buzz and ultimately changed perceptions around our brand.”

Director of Digital Marketing, Retail Bank, UK



What can brands do to improve their approach to inclusivity?

Effective inclusivity strategies rely on brands using their first-party data – enriched with other trusted data sources – to gain a unified view. This will give them a deep understanding of their customers, including their preferences and unique needs, which is critical for providing inclusive experiences. Promisingly, 76% of the brands that are taking steps to improve inclusivity say they are already using customer data to identify improvement opportunities.⁶⁷

Advanced analytics enabled by AI can be incredibly beneficial to this process. But with over half (54%) of the brands we surveyed saying they are concerned about the impact of biases,⁶⁴ businesses must be vigilant to ensure AI-powered tools enhance inclusivity rather than perpetuating exclusion. This is especially relevant when AI is used to create its own automations through AI agents.

To navigate the complexities of data and AI, working with an experienced partner can be invaluable. A trusted partner with expertise in AI can guide businesses in using technology responsibly to enhance inclusivity rather than undermine it. This partnership ensures that AI models are rigorously audited for biases and continuously trained on clean data sets that reflect the varied needs of different customer groups.

“We use tools to make sure our adverts are representative of the society that we live in. Whether that’s disability, ethnicity, gender, we want to make sure it’s all representative, but more importantly that it’s done authentically and it’s not just checking a box.”

Director of Digital Marketing, Retail Bank, UK

Where next?

Inclusivity is an ongoing journey that requires businesses to continuously evolve their strategies.

Leveraging data and technology will be essential in understanding and meeting the diverse needs of their customer base. Furthermore, as inclusivity becomes a higher priority for consumers, brands will be expected to back their commitments with visible, tangible actions. Demonstrating inclusivity through every aspect of the customer experience will become a key market differentiator.

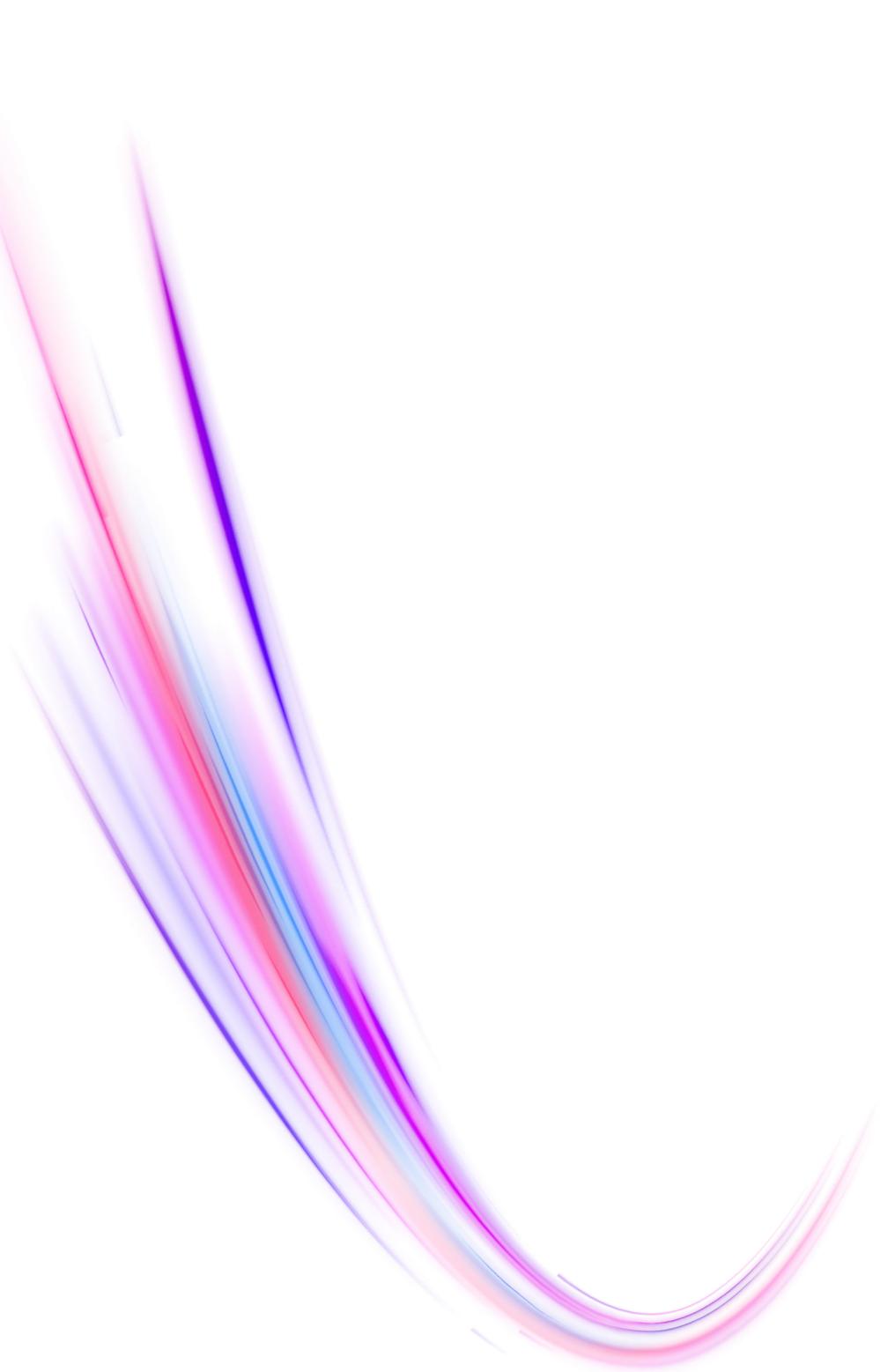
AI will increasingly be central in identifying customer patterns and preferences, driving more advanced personalization and inclusive solutions that reflect the unique needs of all segments. But care must be taken to ensure it promotes rather than inhibits inclusivity.

Ultimately, inclusivity is not just a box to check—it is a long-term commitment that builds deeper customer relationships and delivers tangible business benefits for brands that get it right.

TREND 05

Transparent Data Exchange

At a time when everything we do generates data, consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the digital footprints they leave behind.



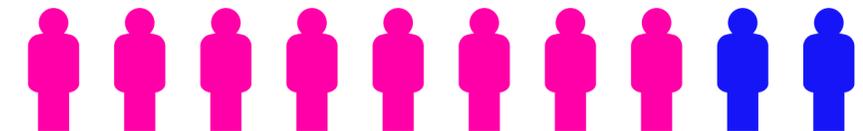
From fitness trackers monitoring heart rates to smart home devices recording daily routines, personal data generation is massive

For example, a smartwatch typically gathers between 2 to 5GB of data⁶⁹ per day about a wearer's activities, meaning that daily wear over the course of a year will generate 1.8 TB of data from a single person. But with rising awareness of how brands use this data, consumers demand transparency, control, and tangible value in return for sharing it.

A resounding 98% of the consumers we surveyed are aware that their data is being used to tailor marketing and advertising.⁶⁹ Yet only 57% feel they have a reasonable understanding of how their data is being used.⁶⁹

This creates an opportunity for businesses. By fostering a transparent data exchange that offers clear value, brands can build trust and loyalty while gaining access to valuable insights that fuel personalized and engaging experiences.

However, achieving this transparent value exchange requires a delicate balance. Companies must clearly communicate their data collection practices, explain what will happen to that data, and offer easy-to-understand privacy policies. When customers feel informed and in control of their data, they are more likely to trust the brand and share their information.



Over three quarters (78%) of the consumers we surveyed say they are more likely to trust a brand if it's transparent about the personal data it's collecting.⁷⁰

Philips – Enhancing patient outcomes through personalized healthcare

Philips HealthSuite is a cloud-based platform that enables hospitals and healthcare providers to securely leverage patient data for improved outcomes. Through wearable devices, electronic health records, and real-time monitoring tools, the platform collects and analyzes vast amounts of health data.

Care providers can remotely monitor a patient's condition and adjust their care as needed. In return for sharing their data, patients receive personalized care plans to manage chronic conditions and improve overall wellness.



Benefits for Patients

Personalized healthcare: Patients can receive tailored care plans from the comfort of their own homes. Their vital signs are monitored through connected devices, the data is sent to the platform, and the patient can access their care plan via a mobile app.

Improved health outcomes: Data-driven recommendations help patients manage chronic diseases, stay on track with treatments, and proactively manage potential health risks.

Informed support: Both patients and healthcare providers can choose to share information with third-parties, such as family members. This helps patients better manage their overall health both in a clinical setting and at home.

Benefits for Providers

Data-driven precision: Healthcare providers can access real-time data, allowing for more accurate diagnosis and treatment. They can analyze the data to show trends and identify warning signs.

Patient trust and engagement: By offering transparency about data usage and sharing personalized recommendations, healthcare providers foster trust and increase patient loyalty.

Innovative care models: Continuous data collection enables healthcare providers to innovate, delivering more personalized, preventive care that improves patient outcomes.

Consumer perspective

Empowering customers to control their data builds brand trust

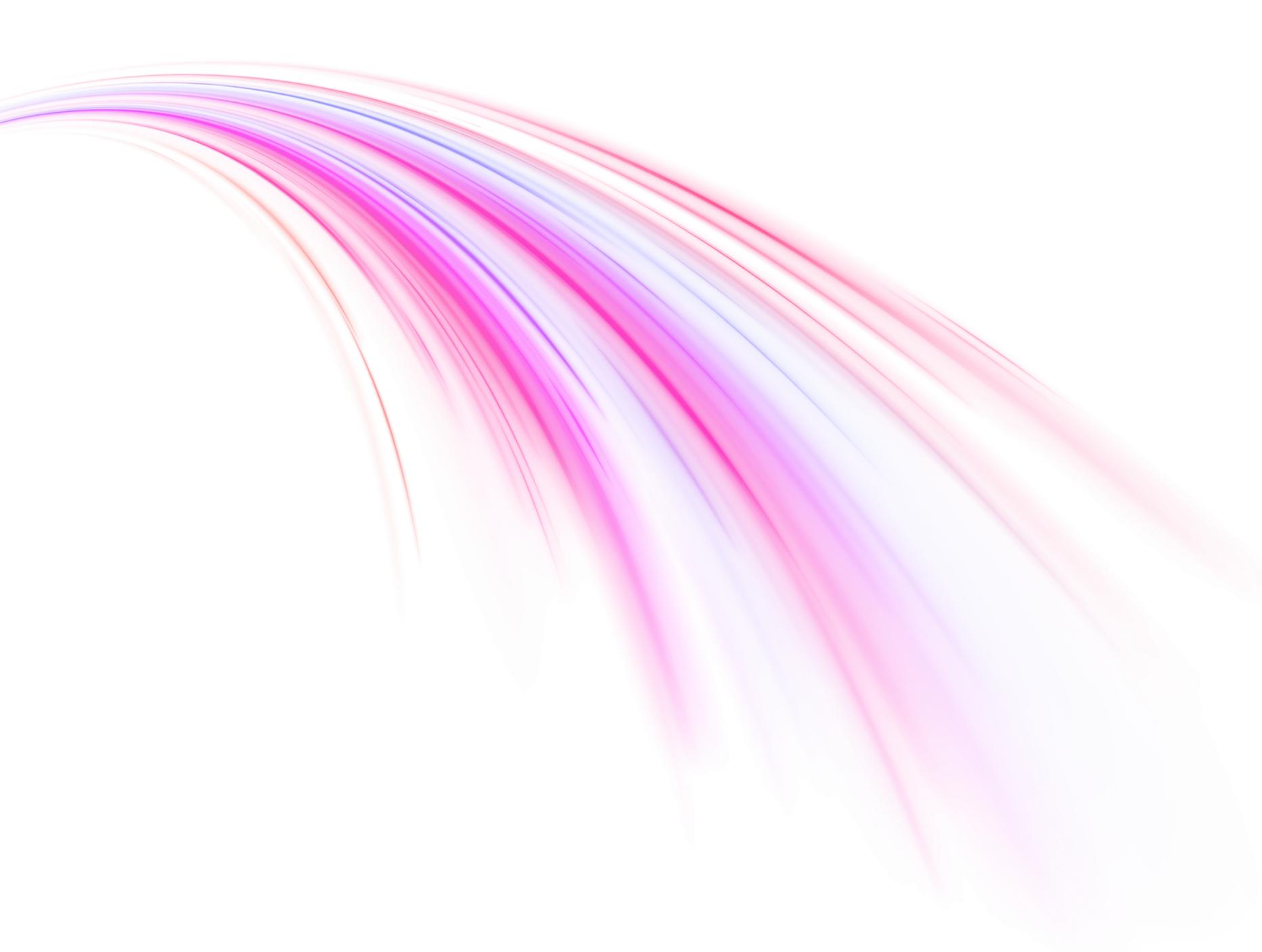
Consumers are starting to understand the value of their personal data and how it can be used as currency for personalized experiences, tailored recommendations, and exclusive offers. For example, a customer may be willing to share their health data with a fitness app in exchange for personalized workout plans and progress tracking, or even to receive discounted health insurance by showing evidence of healthy habits.

But there's still some way to go as only a slight majority (55%) of the consumers we surveyed feel they can benefit from sharing their data with organizations online.⁷¹

We asked consumers whether they would find having their online information used by brands in specific ways useful. Overall, they are most likely to find having their data used for targeted discounts beneficial, with 58% saying this is useful.⁷² Over half also say they would find it useful to have their information used for relevant ads, reminders of products they've shown an interest in, and new product recommendations. They're least likely to think sharing their data with approved partners is beneficial.

Perceived customer benefits of sharing data

	Overall	16-34	35-54	55+
Receive targeted discounts on products or services	58%	62%	62%	52%
Present you with more relevant product or services advertisements	54%	64%	59%	44%
Receive reminders of products or services you've shown interest in purchasing	52%	59%	57%	42%
Recommend new products or services within websites you're browsing	52%	63%	56%	39%
Automatically populate forms with your personal information	50%	56%	56%	40%



Across the board, younger people find these uses of their data more helpful than older consumers. This indicates growing understanding and appreciation of the benefits of data sharing among younger generations.⁷³

While consumers are starting to appreciate the benefits of data sharing, they also value their privacy

A third (33%) of consumers say they've stopped using a service due to concerns about data transparency and the use of their data.⁷⁴ And privacy concerns are also significantly higher among younger people, with 45% in the 16-34 age groups saying they no longer use a service for this reason.⁷⁵

To allay these privacy concerns, brands need to focus on transparency around data capture and usage, giving consumers control over how they share their data, and a tangible value proposition in exchange.

Business perspective

Businesses have an opportunity to provide greater transparency

Data is the fuel that powers personalized experiences, relevant marketing, and innovative solutions. Around two-thirds of the brands we surveyed are already collecting personal data (68%), engagement data (65%), and behavioral data (65%) to sharpen their marketing strategies.⁷⁶ Fewer are gathering attitudinal data, at 56%.

Overall, brands appear to be confident about how they collect and use customer data. The majority (68%) believe they offer a clear value exchange for capturing their customers' information.⁷⁷ This might include providing personalized experiences, tailored offers, or relevant content in return for customer data.

“Without customers opting to share their data with us, we can’t personalize the experience. We’re changing the way customers sign up so that, whether you have a loyalty card or not, you will automatically be given a loyalty account. While they can still opt out very easily, this reduces the number of steps that the customer needs to make to receive promotions”.

Director of Customer Marketing, Retail, UK

They also feel confident in using data ethically and responsibly, with 79% believing their organization has a good understanding of all data privacy rules.⁷⁰ Most (63%) say they only collect customer data that will actually be used,⁷⁷ which will help them to avoid crossing the line into “creepy” territory by collecting data that is excessive, irrelevant, or overly personal.

“We try to be as transparent as possible, telling our customers about the personalized benefits that help them manage, save and grow their money. But to offer those benefits, we have to know things about our customers – if we’re helping them save for a holiday, we have to know what their budget is. So we have to be very clear with our T&Cs during the onboarding process.”

VP Marketing Strategy, Retail and Investment Bank, UK

But there does appear to be a sizable gap between brand perceptions about their data collection practices and what their customers think. For example:



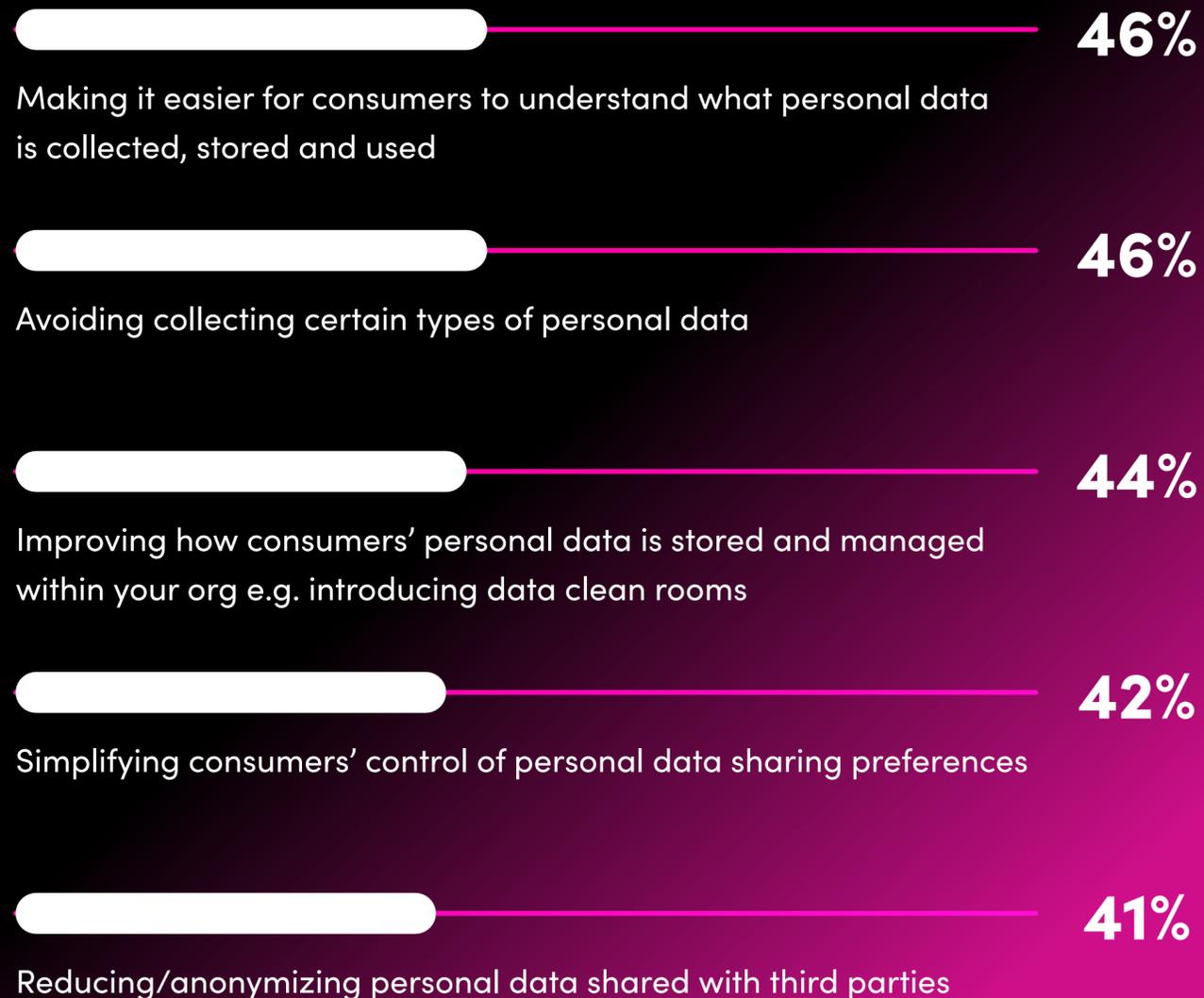
It seems brand confidence may be misplaced. Clearly, there is an opportunity for brands to improve communication and transparency around their capture and use of customer data. Those that do will gain customer trust, which can go a long way towards increasing loyalty and advocacy.

What can brands do to increase transparency in the data exchange?

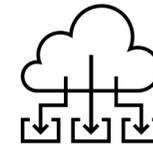
So how can brands close this gap and meet (or ideally exceed) customer expectations for a transparent data exchange? We asked them to rank the top three ways they expect their data collection and management practices to change in the coming years.

It's positive to see that the top two answers are making it easier for consumers to understand how their data is used, and avoiding gathering certain types of data while only collecting what is necessary. Many brands also expect to improve how data is stored and managed, for example by introducing data clean room technology.

Top five ways brands expect their data collection and management to change most in the next three years⁷⁹



Three ways brands can enable a transparent data exchange are:



Invest in robust data infrastructure that is capable of securely storing and managing vast volumes of consumer data. Cloud-based solutions, advanced data management platforms, and enterprise identity capabilities are critical for ensuring scalability, security, and integration from various sources, creating a unified view of the customer.



Articulate a clear and compelling value exchange, encouraging customers to willingly share their data. This involves offering tangible benefits, such as exclusive discounts, early access to products, personalized recommendations, or other rewards that resonate with individuals.



Implement easy-to-understand privacy policies that clearly communicate how customer data will be used. Empower consumers to easily control the types of data they share with organizations, and update their data-sharing preferences as needed. When customers feel informed and in control, trust is built—an essential ingredient in fostering long-term relationships.

By focusing on these key areas—data infrastructure, value exchange, transparency, and consumer control—brands can navigate the complexities of data exchange while building strong, trust-based relationships with their customers.

Where next?

As data privacy regulations continue to evolve in the direction of consent, businesses will need to be agile to stay compliant, adapting their data practices to meet new legal standards while maintaining consumer trust.

The future of data exchange will be centered around the consumer. Brands must place the customer at the heart of their data strategies, prioritizing transparency and clearly communicating the value of data sharing in every interaction.

To foster long-term engagement, businesses should focus on creating a balanced approach—using data responsibly and ethically to enhance personalization without overstepping boundaries. Clear value exchanges, such as discounts or personalized experiences, should be the norm.

Brands that navigate these complexities effectively, continuously refining their practices, will differentiate themselves in an increasingly data-conscious market. Those that succeed in striking the right balance between data collection, transparency, and personalization will not only gain trust but also position themselves as leaders in ethical data practices.



Conclusion

By leveraging AI, companies can scale faster, make smarter decisions, and increase efficiency. However, it's critical that brands don't lose sight of the human element that drives their success.

A brand is more than a product or logo—it's a community of people. A brand's identity is built on human connections, from its founders who shape its vision to employees who live its values and customers who support it. These relationships stem from trust and shared values and can't be replaced by algorithms alone.

The challenge is to strike a balance: using AI to enhance operations without losing the personal touch that makes a brand relatable. Brands have to connect the disconnected, bringing strategy, technology, and data together with the knowledge and expertise of real people.

Finding the perfect balance between automation and human interaction in customer experience means using AI and data to:

01

Put the customer at the center:

By leveraging AI to analyze vast volumes of data, brands can identify trends and patterns that inform truly inclusive products and offerings. Additionally, rewards and loyalty programs should be entirely customer-centric. Using AI-generated insights, brands can tailor loyalty rewards and offers to ensure the customer feels seen and valued.

02

Identify where AI can automate routine tasks:

This may be answering frequently asked questions, checking order statuses, or resetting passwords. By automating these routine interactions, companies can boost efficiency and are more likely to enhance customer convenience and satisfaction than detract from it.

03

Gather and act on evolving customer feedback:

Collecting feedback is essential to understand how customers perceive the balance between AI and human interaction. Brands can gather insights through surveys, social media listening, and direct feedback channels; fandoms and communities also provide rich sources of information. AI can be employed to gather, unify, and analyze this data, so brands can identify where automation is effective and where it may be falling short.

04

Ensure transparency and build trust:

Brands should clearly communicate when customers are interacting with an AI system versus a human representative. They should also inform customers when their data will be used to train AI models or for personalization purposes, explaining the benefits they will receive in return. This openness prevents confusion and can increase customer satisfaction.

05

Use AI and data analytics to tailor experiences:

Analytics enable brands to understand customer behaviors, preferences, and purchase histories, and then use this information to tailor their approach to customer interaction. For example, they might guide tech-savvy customers toward AI-powered digital self-service options, while offering less tech-savvy customers the opportunity to speak directly with a human representative.

06

Lean on experts where there are gaps in capabilities:

Recognizing and addressing internal limitations is crucial for the successful integration of AI and data analytics. Brands should consider partnering with external experts, consultants, or specialized vendors to fill any gaps in knowledge or technology and ensure that both automation and human interactions are optimized within the customer experience strategy.

Here are four steps brands can take today, potentially with the help of an experienced partner, to get their data ready for AI.



Step 1

Use trustworthy data sources

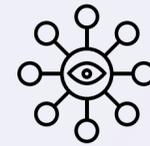
Collect first-party data signals across all channels – in an ethical way – and ensure that data is unified and accessible. Enrich that first-party data with trustworthy third-party demographic, propensity, and life stage insights.



Step 2

Perform regular data hygiene

Even the best customer data decays, with around 30% becoming obsolete every year. By eliminating gaps, errors, and inconsistencies in your data, you can make sure the decisions your AI makes are based on solid, reliable truths.



Step 3

Establish a robust identity foundation

By creating a private identity graph for your brand, you can give your marketing AI the full story – a unified customer view across all channels, at individual and household levels.



Step 4

Make consent consistent

Consent is critical to ensuring the use of technologies such as AI is fair and respectful. More than just legality, it is an agreement that makes sure AI uses your customer's information the way they want.

To find out more, check out [Overcoming AI's Pinocchio Paradox](#), our practical, tactical guide to fueling your marketing AI with the right data.

Acxiom:

Acxiom® is the global leader in customer intelligence and stands at the forefront of AI-enabled, data-driven marketing.

As part of the Interpublic Group of Companies, Inc. (IPG), we specialize in high-performance solutions that boost customer acquisition and retention while fueling growth for the world's biggest brands and agencies. We transform omnichannel marketing strategies and execution using our AI-powered data and identity foundation, cloud-based data management, and martech and analytics services.

For over 55 years, our teams across the US, UK, Germany, China, Poland, and Mexico have helped businesses optimize their marketing and advertising investments while prioritizing customer privacy.

Discover more at [acxiom.com](https://www.acxiom.com)

MTM:

MTM is the trusted insight and strategy partner tackling the biggest challenges for the world's biggest brands, including Google, Meta, Amazon, Spotify, Sky, the BBC, Channel 4 and Disney.

We live and breathe media, entertainment, tech and telco and have been powering the decision making of the world's biggest brands for nearly two decades, by answering their toughest questions, getting to the moments of truth.

Because we focus on getting to the truth of the matter from different perspectives, we see what others miss, taking clients directly from insight to informed decisions to action. Our services include commercial strategy consultancy, trends and cultural insights, qualitative and quantitative market research, data science and UXR. Our size and agility mean we can take on significant client challenges across global geographies. We are a three-time recipient of the Market Research Society's (MRS) Agency of the Year award and winners of the 2023 MediaTel Effectiveness of Research award, the 2022 MRS Best New Consumer Insight award, and the 2021 MRS B2B Research award.

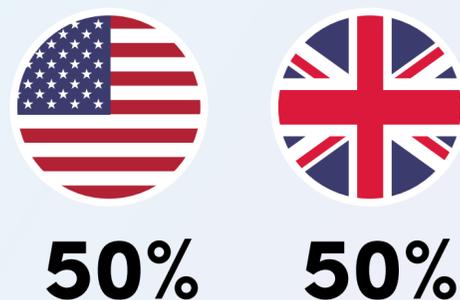
For more information, visit [wearemtm.com](https://www.wearemtm.com)

Methodology and sample breakdown

Business survey

Acxiom partnered with research and strategy agency MTM to survey 200 decision-makers who work in customer data and analytics from brands across the UK and the US to gain insights. Survey data is supplemented by six, 60-minute, in-depth interviews with heads of customer intelligence, CMOs, and equivalent.

Which country do you work in?



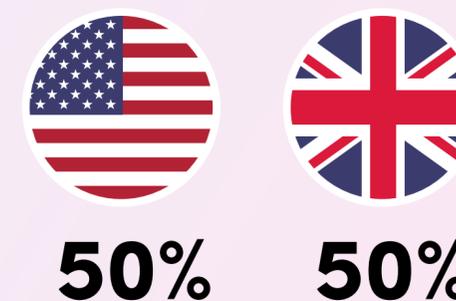
Approximately, what was the annual revenue of your business in the last full financial year?



Consumer survey

Acxiom partnered with research and strategy agency MTM to conduct a nationally representative survey with quotas on age, gender, income/ social grade and region across 2,051 consumers in the UK and the US to gain insights.

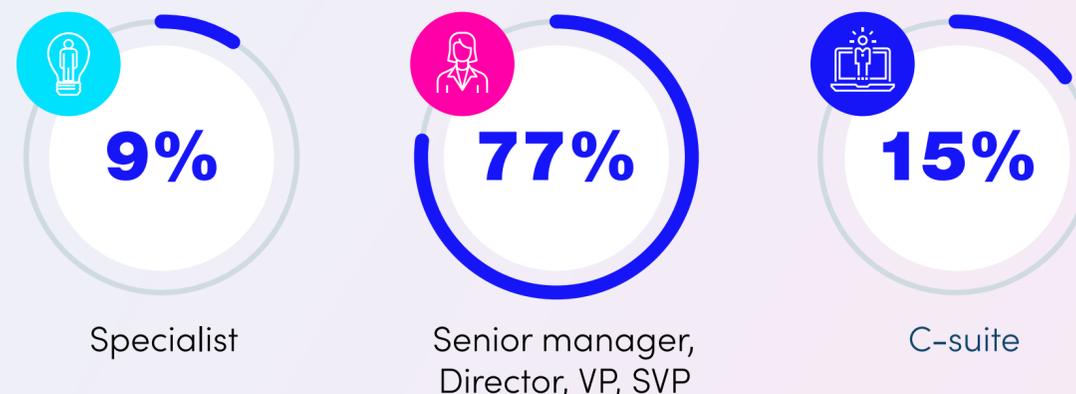
Which country do you live in?



Which of the following best describes your organization?



Which best describes your role?



Bibliography

Introduction

- 1 Does your business currently use AI (artificial intelligence) in the following parts of its customer service? Base Those that use online chatbots to provide support for customer enquiries: 73
- 2 What of the following, if any, has your organization experienced from its use of AI in its customer service? Please select all that apply. Base Those that use AI: 138
- 3 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: Were you aware of AI before today? Base All: 2094
- 4 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: Have you ever knowingly used a chatbot or AI based chat service (not operated by a human) when interacting with a company? Base All: 2094
- 5 Which, if any, of the following are reason(s) why your organization does not use an AI (artificial intelligence) system for customer service? Base Those that do not use AI: 63
- 6 How far do you agree with each of the following statements on the impact of AI? Base All: 201
- 7 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: How far do you agree with the following statement about the future of AI in customer service? Base All: 2094
- 8 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: How far do you agree with the following statement about the future of AI in customer service? Base All: 2094

Trend 1

- 9 [Forrester's 2024 US Customer Experience Index: Brands' CX Quality Is At An All-Time Low](#), Forrester, June 2024
- 10 Beauty and the Bot: How Sephora Reimagined Customer Experience with AI, Cut the Saas, February 2024
- 11 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about customer support delivery? Base: 2094 adults
- 12 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: If you are aware that an organisation uses AI to help deliver its customer service (e.g. AI powered chatbots), how does that impact your perception of the brand? Base: 2094 adults
- 13 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: Which, if any, of the following represent your concerns about the use of AI in customer service? Base: 2094 adults
- 14 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: When interacting with a brand, in which of the following scenarios would you most like to interact with a human customer support representative, if any? Please rank your top three in order of most importance? Base: 2094 adults
- 15 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: When interacting with brands, how do you prefer to be serviced across each of the following scenarios? Base: 16-34: 612, 35-54: 678, 55+: 804
- 16 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) in customer service? Base: Those who use AI as part of their customer service: 138

17 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: To what extent do you rely on AI-powered chatbots to support your customer experience in each of the following areas? Base those who use AI chatbots: 68

18 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: In which of the following areas of your customer experience do you believe that human interaction is most essential for customer satisfaction? Base all: 201

19 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) in customer service? Base AI users: 138

20 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: Thinking about your customers, how do you think they prefer to be serviced across each of the following scenarios? Base all: 201

21 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: When interacting with brands, how do you prefer to be serviced across each of the following scenarios? Rebased to remove telephone preference. Base: All: 2094 adults

Trend 2

22 <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/512618/almost-quarter-world-feels-lonely.aspx>, Gallup, October 2023

23 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: How frequently do you participate in any fandoms or online communities (such as social media groups or organized meetups) related to your personal interests or a brand? Base All: 2094

24 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: How frequently do you participate in any fandoms or online communities (such as social media groups or organized meetups) related to a specific brand? Base Those who take part in any fandom or online community: 1124

25 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: Below are a list of benefits that someone might feel that they get from being part of an online community. Which, if any, of the following benefits are most appealing to you? Base All: 2094

26 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: Below are a list of benefits that someone might feel that they get from being part of an online community. Which, if any, of the following benefits are most appealing to you? Base Those who participated in a brand community: 960, Those who have participated in non-brand related communities: 1134.

27 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: Below are a list of benefits that someone might feel that they get from being part of an online community. Which, if any, of the following benefits are most appealing to you? Base Those who participate multiple times per day: 104, Daily: 221, Weekly: 275, Monthly: 150, Less often than monthly: 210, Never: 140, Don't know: 24

28 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: How important is being part of a brand community to your overall customer experience with a brand? Base Those who participate in a brand community: 960

Bibliography

29 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: How important is being part of a brand community to your overall customer experience with a brand? Base Those who participate multiple times per day: 104, Daily: 221, Weekly: 275, Monthly: 150, Less often than monthly: 210, Never: 140, Don't know: 24

30 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: If a brand actively creates or engages with its fandom or community (e.g. collaborates with fans to create content / products), what impact does that have on your perception of the brand, if any? Base: Those who participate in a brand community: 960

31 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: If a brand actively creates or engages with its fandom or community (e.g. collaborates with fans to create content / products), what impact does that have on your perception of the brand, if any? Base: Those who participate multiple times per day: 104, Daily: 221, Weekly: 275, Monthly: 150, Less often than monthly: 210, Never: 140, Don't know: 24

32 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: Which of the following, if any, would make you more likely to act on a recommendation of a product or service? Select all that apply? Base: Those who participate in a brand community: 960, Those who have participated in non-brand related communities: 1134.

33 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: Does your organization have a fandom or community for its brand? Base all: 201

34 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: What are the barriers to managing a fandom or community around your organization's products or services? Base Those who do not have a fandom/community: 126

35 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: What benefits, if any, have you derived from managing a fandom or community around your brand? Base Those who have a fandom/community: 75

36 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: Do any of the following statements about fandoms and communities apply to your organization? Base Those who have a fandom/community: 75

Trend 3

37 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about brand benefits (e.g. discounts and rewards?) Base All: 2094

38 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: Which of the following subscriptions, memberships or loyalty schemes benefits would make you most likely to consider a brand for your next purchase? Base All: 2094

39 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: Which, if any, of the following reasons have ever led you to cancel or stop using a subscription or membership? Select all that apply? Base All: 2094

40 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: Do you offer any rewards or benefits to the following customer types? (E.g. through offering benefits or discounts)? Base all: 201

41 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: If given the option, would you be willing to allow a brand to use your personal data (such as your contact details, purchase history, or browsing habits) in exchange for additional rewards? Base All: 2094

42 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: Which of the following do you prioritize offering any rewards or benefits to? Base Those who offer rewards/benefits: 181

43 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: Which, if any, of the following apply to your organization? Base: Those who offer rewards/benefits: 181

44 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: Which of the following does your organization use to define a customer's level of loyalty? Base All: 201

45 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: What benefits do you offer to reward customer loyalty? Base: Those who offer rewards/benefits: 181

46 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: Do the following statements apply to your organization's approach to rewarding customers? Base: Those who offer rewards/benefits: 181

47 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: Does your organization utilize AI/ML to help analyze your customer data for each of the following purposes? Base: Those who leverage data to personalize benefits/rewards: 121

48 <https://www.voguebusiness.com/story/companies/continued-brand-heat-drives-growth-at-hermes>, Vogue, February 2024

49 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: To what extent do you think that creating a sense of 'exclusivity' around your brand loyalty scheme would be beneficial to your organization? Where 1 is not at all beneficial and 5 is highly beneficial. Base All: 201

50 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: Does your organization utilize AI/ML to help analyze your customer data for each of the following purposes? Base: Those who leverage data to personalize benefits/rewards: 126

51 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: What are the biggest challenges, if any, to rewarding customer loyalty? Base: Those who offer rewards/benefits: 181

Trend 4

52 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about inclusive product and service design? Base All: 201

53 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: How important is it to you that brands demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity through their products and services? Base All: 2094

54 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: Which of the following types of inclusivity requirements does your organization cater to? Base All: 2094

55 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: Which of the following aspects of inclusivity do you consider most important for a brand to design its offerings to cater for? Base All: 201

Bibliography

56 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: Has your organization taken steps to ensure its products or services are inclusive for all audiences and groups (e.g. those with disabilities)? Base All: 201

57 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: How important is it to you that brands demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity through their products and services? Base: 16-34: 612, 35-54: 678, 55+: 804

58 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: What impact, if any, does a brand's commitment to inclusivity have on your purchasing behavior? Base All: 2094

59 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: What impact, if any, does a brand's commitment to inclusivity have on your purchasing behavior? Base: 16-34: 612, 35-54: 678, 55+: 804

60 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: Do you, or someone you know well have any additional needs or requirements when accessing products or services? Base All: 2094

61 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: How should brands best convey their commitment to inclusivity? Base All: 2094

62 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: How important do you think it is for your customers to see that your organization is demonstrating its commitment to inclusivity through its products, services, stores or websites? Base All: 201

63 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: In which of the following areas has your organization taken steps towards ensuring inclusivity? Base All: 201

64 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about inclusive product and service design? Base All: 201

65 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: What do you see as the organizational benefits of focusing on inclusivity? Select all that apply. Base Those that have taken steps to ensure inclusivity: 110

66 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: What do you see as the organizational benefits of focusing on inclusivity? Select all that apply. Base Those that have not taken steps to ensure inclusivity: 91

67 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: Does your organization use customer data to identify ways to ensure inclusivity? Base Those that have taken steps to ensure inclusivity: 110

Trend 5

68 <https://medium.com/xnewdata/data-generated-by-wearables-48da42a88263#> Medium, May 2020

69 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: How well do you understand the way in which your information is collected and used to tailor marketing and advertising? Base All: 2094

70 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the data brands capture from their customers? Base All: 2094

71 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: To what extent do you think it can benefit you directly to share your data with organizations online? I think there are... Base All: 2094

72 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: How useful would it be if an organization were to use your online information e.g. browsing history, in each of the following ways? Base All: 2094

73 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: How useful would it be if an organization were to use your online information e.g. browsing history, in each of the following ways? Base: 16-34: 612, 35-54: 678, 55+: 804

74 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: Have you ever stopped using a service due to concerns about data transparency or how they are using your data? Base All: 2094

75 Acxiom B2C Survey September 2024, Question: Have you ever stopped using a service due to concerns about data transparency or how they are using your data? Base: 16-34: 612, 35-54: 678, 55+: 804

76 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: What kind of customer data does your organization collect? Base All: 201

77 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about customer data capture and usage? Base All: 201

78 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: How well do you understand the way in which your information is collected and used to tailor marketing and advertising? Base All: 2094

79 Acxiom B2B Survey September 2024, Question: Which aspects of how your organization collects and manages customer personal data do you expect to change the most in the next three years? Base All: 201

The background features a dark, gradient field of glowing, wavy lines in shades of pink, magenta, and light blue. These lines flow across the frame, creating a sense of motion and depth. The lines are thicker in some areas and thinner in others, giving them a ribbon-like appearance. The overall effect is futuristic and dynamic.

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