



Retail Rewired Report

The Era of the AI Influencer

AI isn't just evolving retail—it's causing a full-scale transformation.

Artificial intelligence (AI) isn't just evolving retail, it's completely transforming it. This year, our Retail Rewired Report explored trends related to AI's impact on retail, particularly around agentic AI.

In fact, trust in AI-based recommendations is now on par with consumers' trust in influencer endorsements for shopping recommendations, signaling a fundamental shift in who they look to for guidance.

At the same time, the era of omnichannel convenience is giving way to something more intelligent: AI-powered experiences that are predictive, personal and responsive in real-time.

Key trends

①

Cautious Acceleration
of Adoption

②

People-Led AI

③

The Fine Line
of Personalization

④

Trust is Built on Privacy,
Security and Control

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Cautious Acceleration of Adoption

The embracing of AI reveals a major shift in consumer expectations. AI is quickly losing its novelty and fast becoming a core utility.

Consumers are growing increasingly comfortable with digital assistants guiding their shopping journeys. In fact, **47%** say they would trust a digital assistant or agent to choose and purchase household essentials for them within a set budget, while **69%** claim speed of the entire shopping journey is at least somewhat important when deciding where to shop, a core promise of AI.

In short, shoppers are embracing AI—but only when it delivers tangible value and when a focus on trust, privacy and security is clearly demonstrated.

Individuals are split
when it comes to
who to trust

27%

Trust AI-based
recommendations

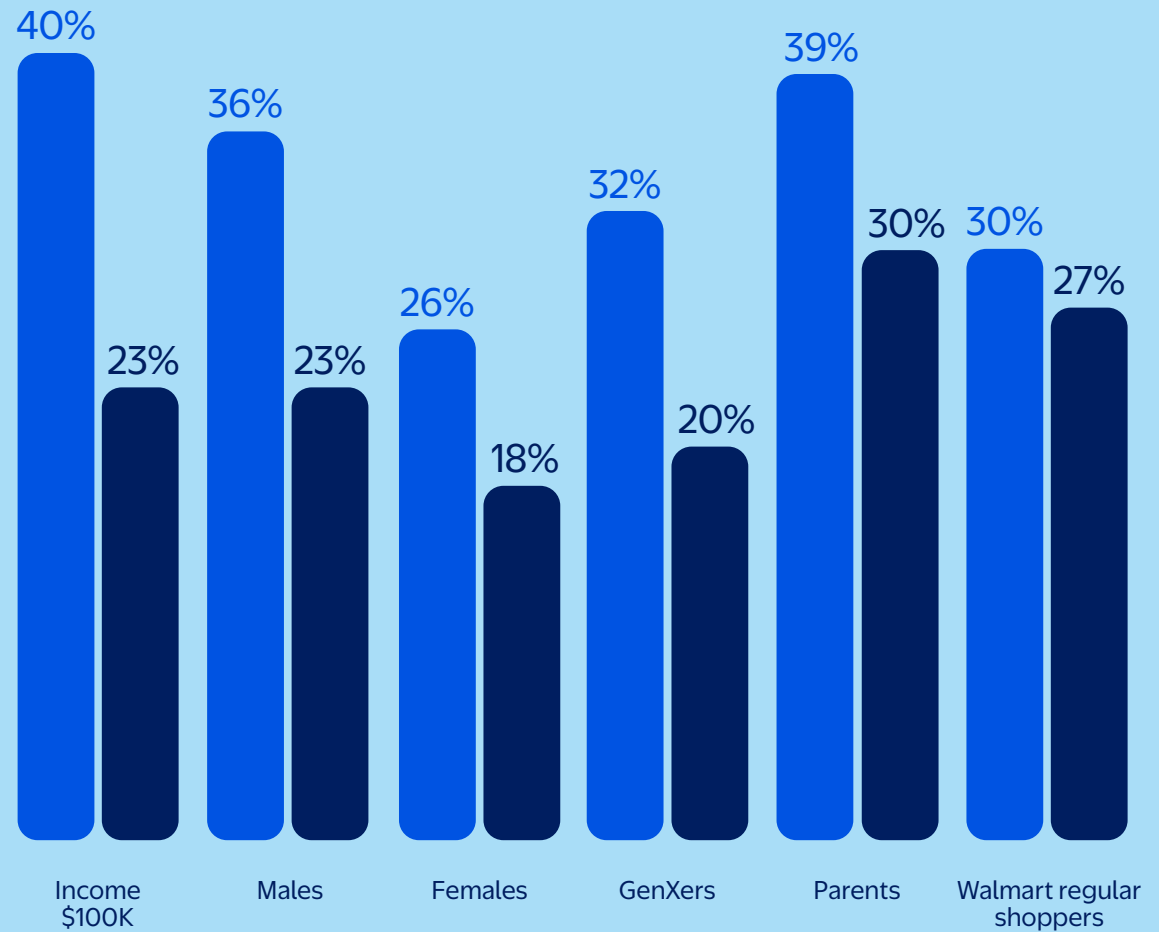
Trust social media influencers

24%

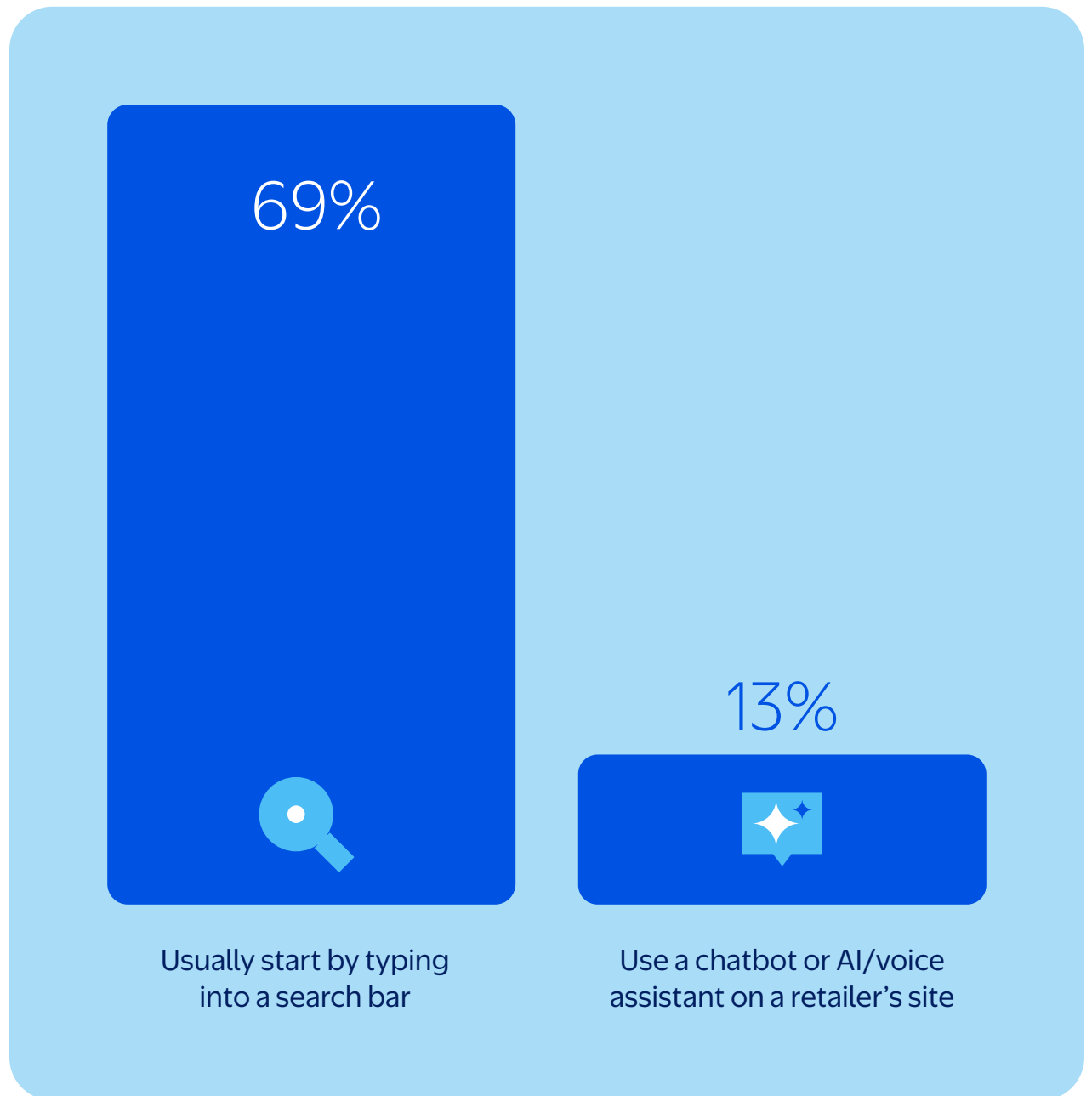
Don't know

49%

Trust AI-based recommendations
vs social media influencer recommendations



Traditional search is still king, but the adoption of chatbots or AI/voice assistants for search is growing



At least **1 in 5 adults** claim that they would want digital assistants to support their experience

Supporting their experience in each of the following ways



48%

Feel digital assistants **improve** the retail experience

26%

Feel digital assistants **detract from** the retail experience

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People-Led AI

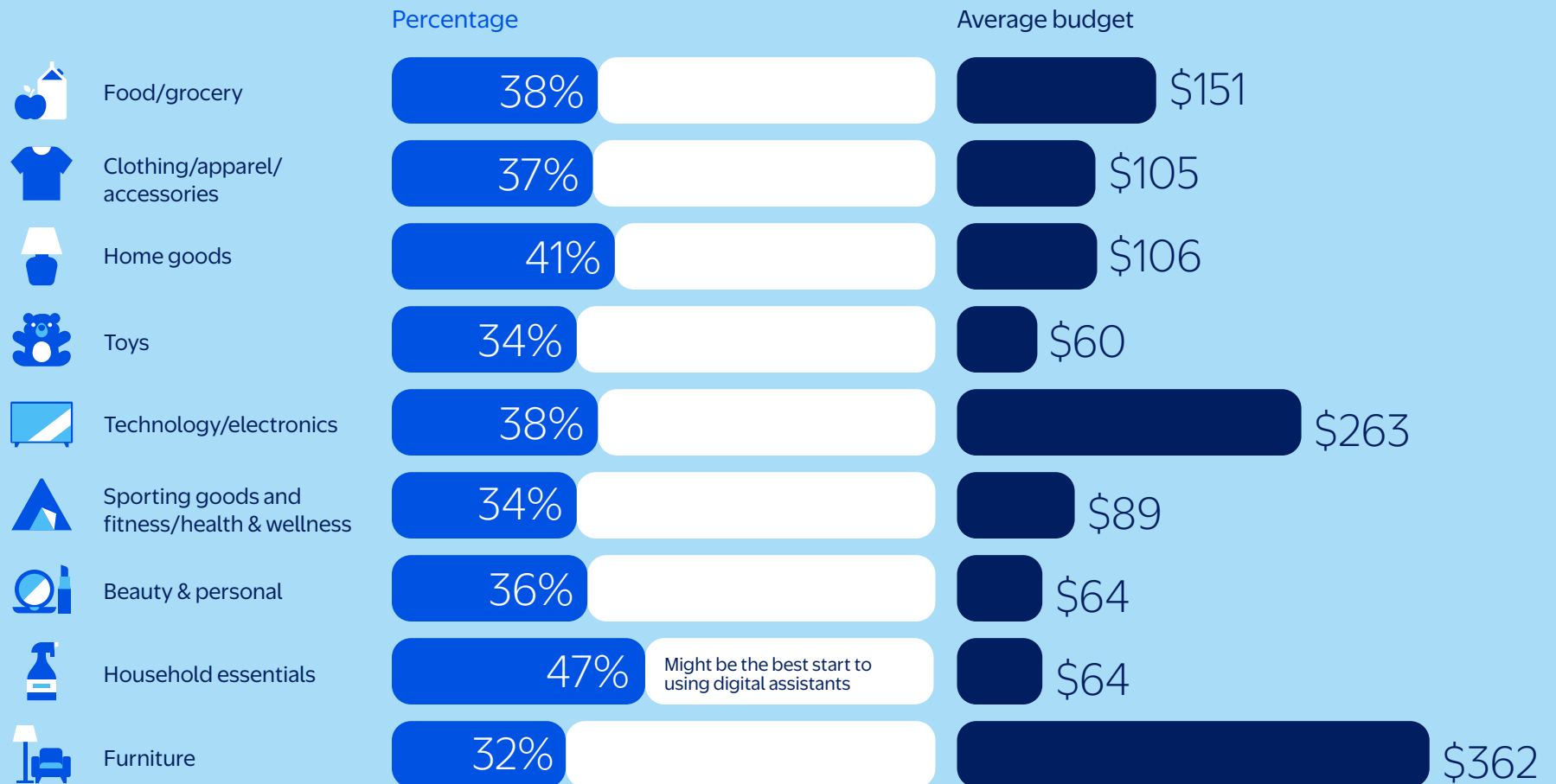
While comfort in AI grows, there's still a strong desire for a “human in the loop.” **24%** of respondents stated that the option to review or approve all suggestions before purchase (to feel in control) would make them more likely to use digital assistants to speed up their shopping experience.

Interestingly, respondents' comfort with digital assistants or agents handling their shopping tasks varies depending on the task and/or category. This comfort was highest when asked about shopping for seasonal décor (**52%** at least somewhat comfortable) and lowest when asked about wardrobe selection (**40%** at least somewhat comfortable).

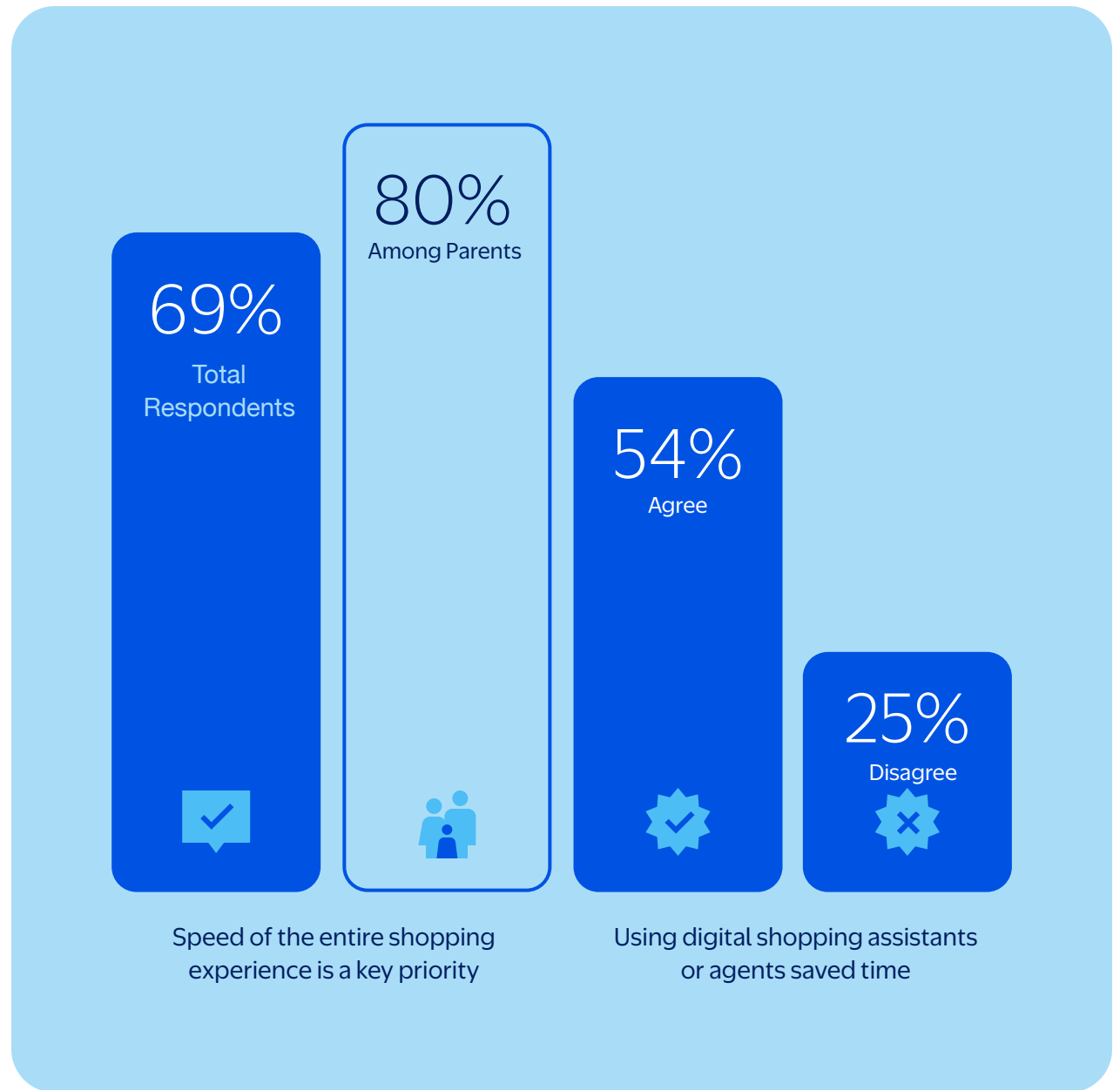
Ultimately, AI is shifting expectations to go beyond just convenience.

It's about creating intelligent systems that move with the customer—contextual, predictive and responsive to their needs in real-time. From syncing with calendars to navigating product drops autonomously, consumers are beginning to leverage AI—on one condition: it has to remain on their terms.

Those willing to trust a digital assistant or agent to choose and purchase items within a set budget



Speed is still a key competitive advantage and differentiator



Ethical tech use
and consideration
for social beliefs
are critical



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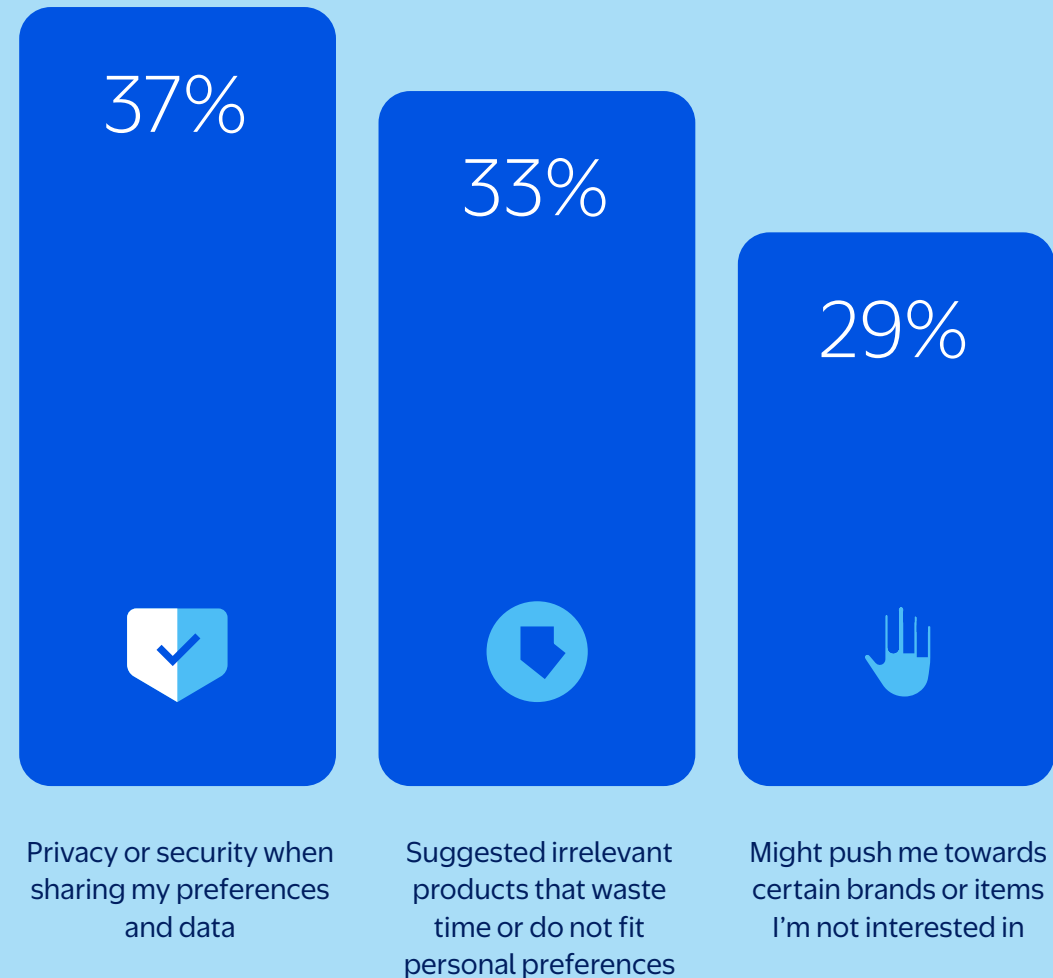
The Fine Line of Personalization

This new shopping experience must also be seamless. Shoppers are quick to disengage when relevance or simplicity falters. Too many steps or poorly targeted suggestions can undermine the very speed AI promises.

Personalization, too, is walking a fine line. While some consumers welcome recommendations aligned with their preferences and values, others view hyper-tailored content as intrusive. Specifically, we found that while half of our respondents feel positively about a digital assistant or agent knowing their preferences so well it suggests purchases before they consider them, over a third feel negatively.

Privacy, security and relevance are the recipe to agentic AI success

Top three concerns with digital assistants or agents slowing down their shopping experience



1 in 3 adults would use digital assistants or agents to recommend and buy products trending on social media



When asked if a digital assistant could anticipate their needs—such as making personalized recommendations or planning activities—using information from their calendar, social media and purchase history, **45%** state they are at least somewhat likely to opt in to this services.



A similar proportion agree that they are likely to use a digital assistant if it could handle an entire shopping trip for them—from selecting items to purchasing items to organizing delivery. This jumps to **62%** among parents.



More than half would prefer discovering trends on their own based on what's trending on social media (e.g., TikTok, Instagram).

Balancing personalization with transparency, privacy and security is crucial for agentic AI adoption



50%

Feel positively about a digital assistant or agent knowing their preferences so well it suggests purchases before they consider them.



27%

Likely to use digital assistants or agents to speed up the shopping experience, with clear transparency on how my data is being used and protected.

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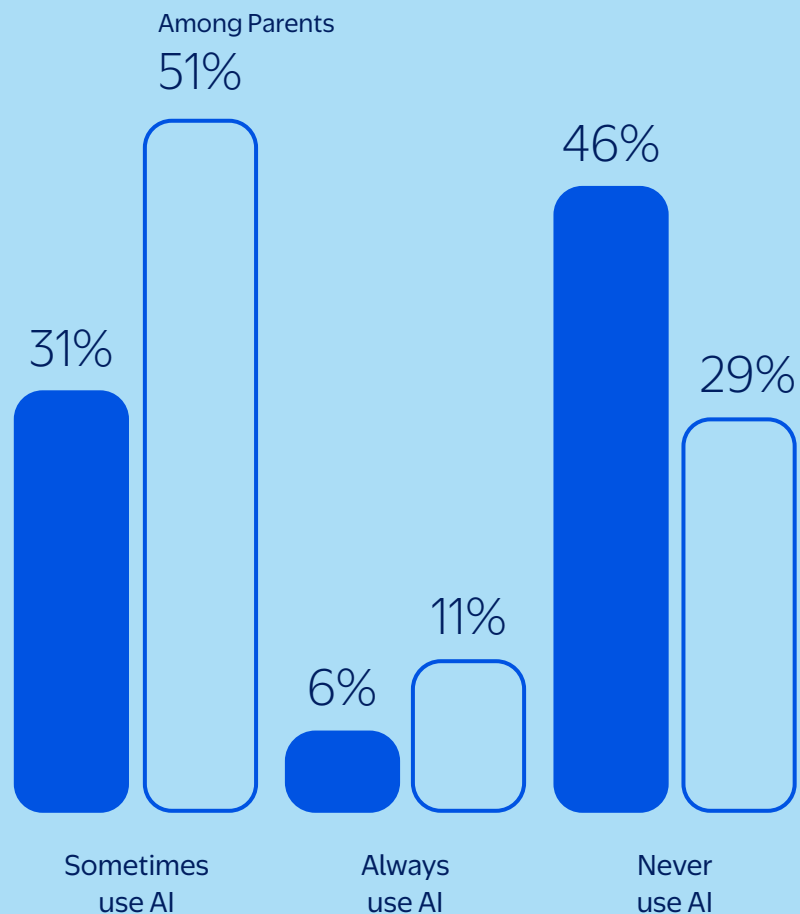
Trust is Built on Privacy, Security and Control

Many respondents consider themselves part of the “late majority” when it comes to adopting new tech—often citing privacy, security and relevance among their top concerns for digital assistants and agents specifically—demonstrating that technological capabilities are not enough to bridge the adoption gap.

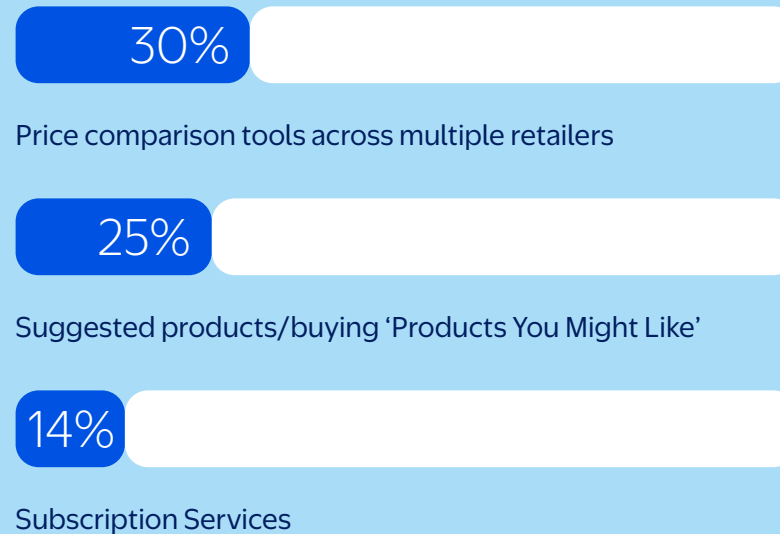
Customers want to ensure they can trust these technologies to maintain their privacy and security. Retailers can build trust by positioning AI not as something new and intimidating, but as a familiar ally that quietly enhances everyday life.

Despite skepticism and caution, a quarter of respondents expect digital assistants and agents to anticipate their needs in the next five years. This shift in consumer behavior isn’t just noteworthy, it’s defining the future of commerce.

Use AI to help with their shopping decisions



Most common tools used to speed up shopping



27%

Claim digital assistant or agents helped them discover the perfect product faster than traditional shopping. Increasing to **48%** among parents.

Customers want a central point of search and comparison

How respondents would want digital tools such as shopping assistants or agents help them search for products

To summarize product reviews and comparisons

35%

Search across all retailers and categories in one place

33%

More agreement than disagreement that digital assistants or agents improve the retail experience

Agree

48%

Agree: Among parents

67%

Agree: Early adopters

75%

Disagree

26%

Top actions for digital assistants to make shopping faster over next 5 years

34%



Instantly compare prices, shipping times and availability across all major retailers

29%



Provide instant alerts for price drops on items I've viewed or added to a wish list

25%



Handling returns and exchanges autonomously, scheduling pickups, printing labels, and even negotiating better returns policies for me

25%



Understand my preferences well enough to skip browsing and just show me the top 3 best options specifically for me



Retail Rewired
Report



This isn't just a new chapter in retail—it's the blueprint for what comes next.