



Personalisation in 2025:

Expectations, Frustrations, and What Consumers Really Want

Contents

Meet the experts	4
Methodology	5
Introduction	6
Consumers perceptions on personalisation in 2025	7
Personalisation likes and dislikes	7
The personalisation offered by retailers	10
The type of personalisation consumers most want	11
Optimising channels with personalisation	13
Where personalisation is most effective	13
Future personalised communications that consumers find most valuable	16
Are consumers willing work with retailers to improve personalisation?	17
Perspectives on personalisation ratings and feedback	17
Consumers comfort levels with sharing personal information	18
Do consumers want a summary of how personal data will be used?	19
Will consumers share personal information for immediate rewards?	20

Contents – *continued*

Consumer purchasing behaviour trends	21
How consumers start their search	21
Search and price preferences around Black Friday	22
Does personalisation = loyalty?	24
Consumers say what could sway them to choose one retailer over another	26
Retailers reveal their top challenges with implementing personalisation	27
Conclusion	28
Contact	31

Meet the experts



"We're excited to share our latest report, 'Personalisation in 2025: Expectations, Frustrations, and What Consumers Really Want', created in collaboration with Bloomreach. While many of us know how personalisation can be used, this report reveals what consumers actually want from it. We hope you find it an insightful and valuable read."

About

We help our members understand and improve their online retail performance through a busy programme of performance benchmarking, data analysis, insight, best practice-sharing, and events. We have been tracking online sales since 2000 – and now measure over 120 individual metrics in a series of indexes, providing in-depth intelligence on online and mobile sales, delivery trends, marketing ROI and channel performance.

Editorial



Ellie-Rose Davies, Content Executive at **IMRG**



Andy Mulcahy, Strategy and Insight Director at **IMRG**



"As personalisation becomes more central to the online shopping experience, it's vital that businesses understand not just the technology, but the people behind the data. This research highlights the importance of relevance, transparency, and trust—three pillars that we believe should underpin any personalisation strategy. By tuning into what consumers truly value, brands can create experiences that feel less like marketing and more like meaningful engagement."

About

Bloomreach is the agentic platform for personalisation. Powering **autonomous search**, **conversational shopping**, and **autonomous marketing**, Bloomreach personalises the entire customer experience. From retail to financial services, hospitality to gaming, businesses create experiences that drive higher growth and lasting loyalty. Bloomreach drives personalisation for 1,400+ brands around the world, including American Eagle, Sonapar, and Pandora.

Editorial



Amanda Cole, Chief Marketing Officer at **Bloomreach**

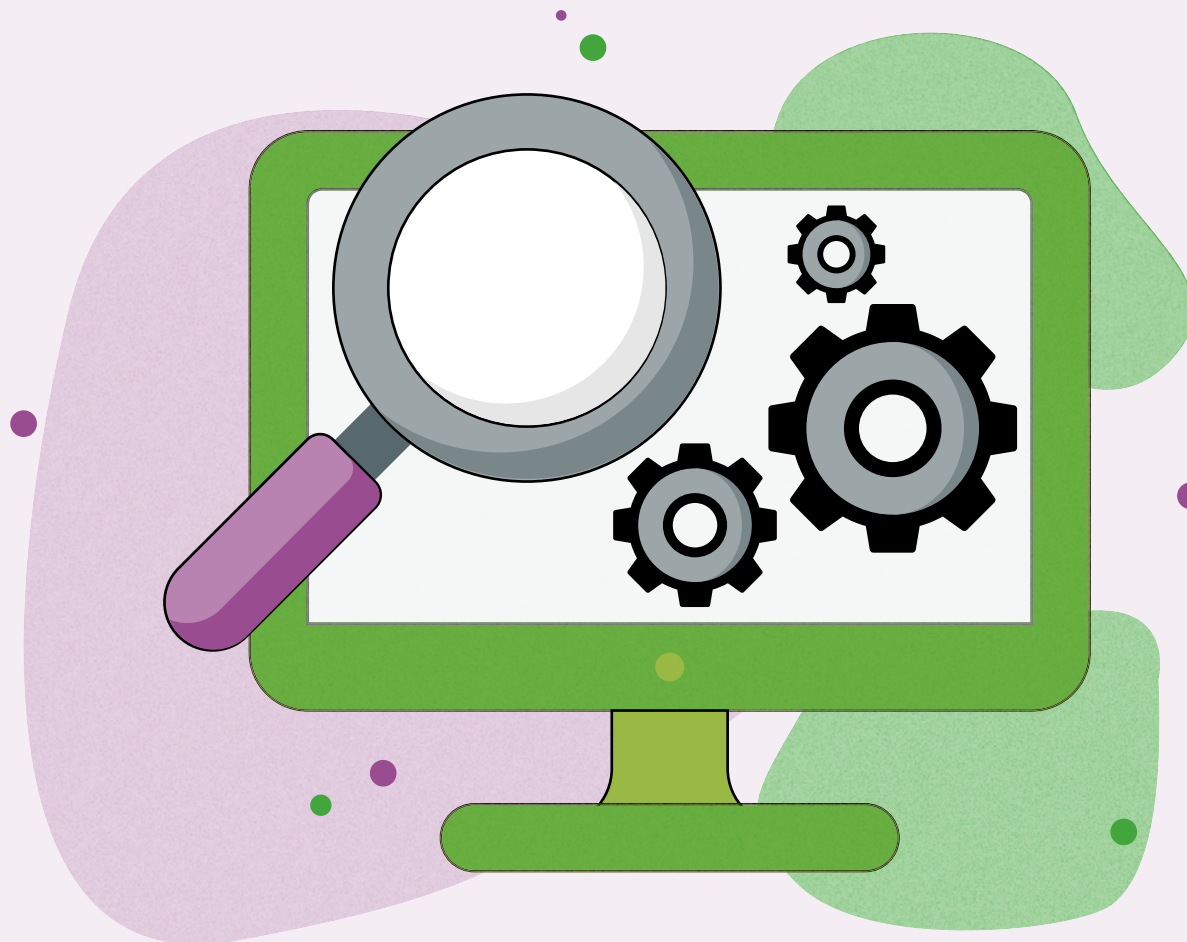
Methodology

We surveyed 1,000 UK consumers, aged 18 to 95 and over, to understand their thoughts and feelings around personalisation in eCommerce. Respondents were asked 20 questions, covering a mix of single- and multiple-choice formats, with all answers represented as percentages.

All participants had purchased from an online retailer in the past.

Complimentary to the research, we asked retailers who attended our Weekly Data Show to tell us their experiences with using personalisation. The findings are demonstrated throughout the report.

The survey was conducted in March 2025.



Introduction

Personalisation has become a key focus for online retailers, but how do consumers actually feel about it? With changing expectations and growing concerns around privacy, getting personalisation right is more important than ever.

In this report, we share what 1,000 UK consumers told us about their experiences with personalisation: what they like, what puts them off, and what they'd find more useful. We look at the types of personalisation they value most, where it works best, and how it affects things like loyalty and buying decisions.

You'll find insights on:

- What shoppers say makes personalisation helpful
- How it can build trust and long-term loyalty
- What kind of personal data people are happy to share, and why
- Where in the customer journey personalisation can make the biggest difference

The findings from this report can help you shape a personalisation strategy that feels genuinely useful to you and your customers.



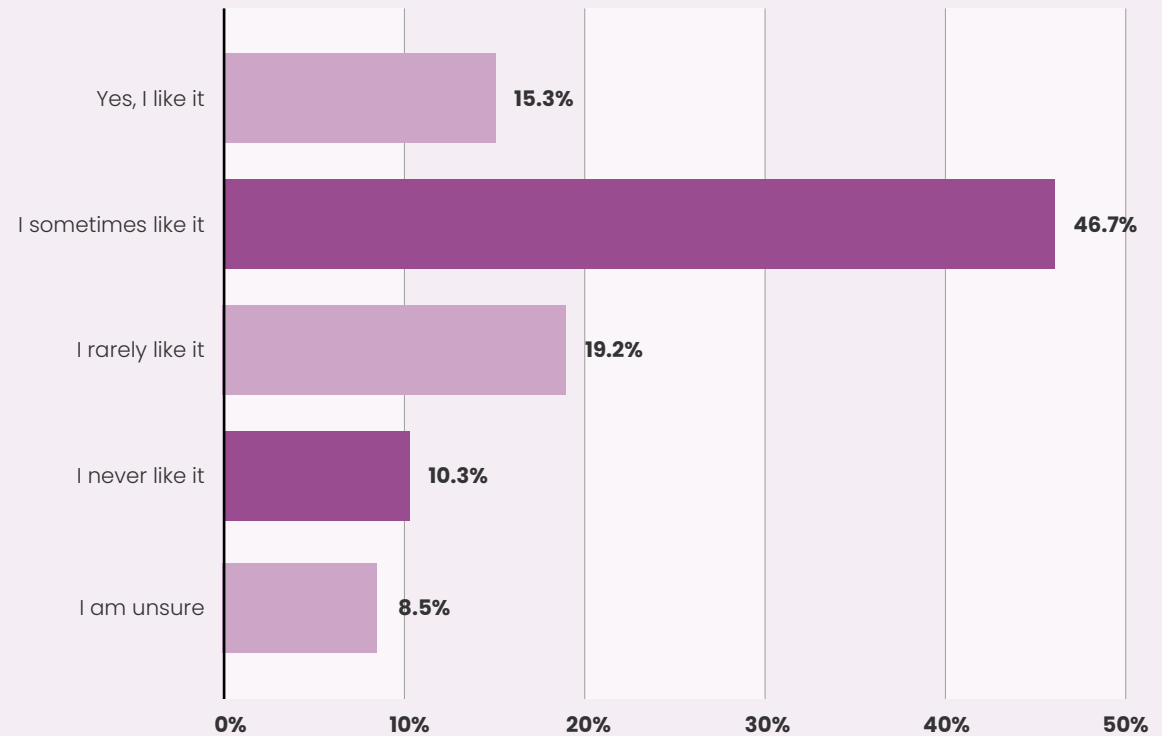
Consumers perceptions on personalisation in 2025

Personalisation likes and dislikes

We asked consumers whether they like it when an online retailer uses personalisation and the overwhelming majority said, 'I sometimes like it' (46.7%). 15.3% said 'Yes, I like it' and just shy of 30% 'rarely' or 'never' like it signalling a need to refine and optimise approaches to personalisation in 2025.



Do you like it when an online retailer uses personalisation?



8 Personalisation in 2025: Expectations, Frustrations, and What Consumers Really Want

[Back To Contents](#)

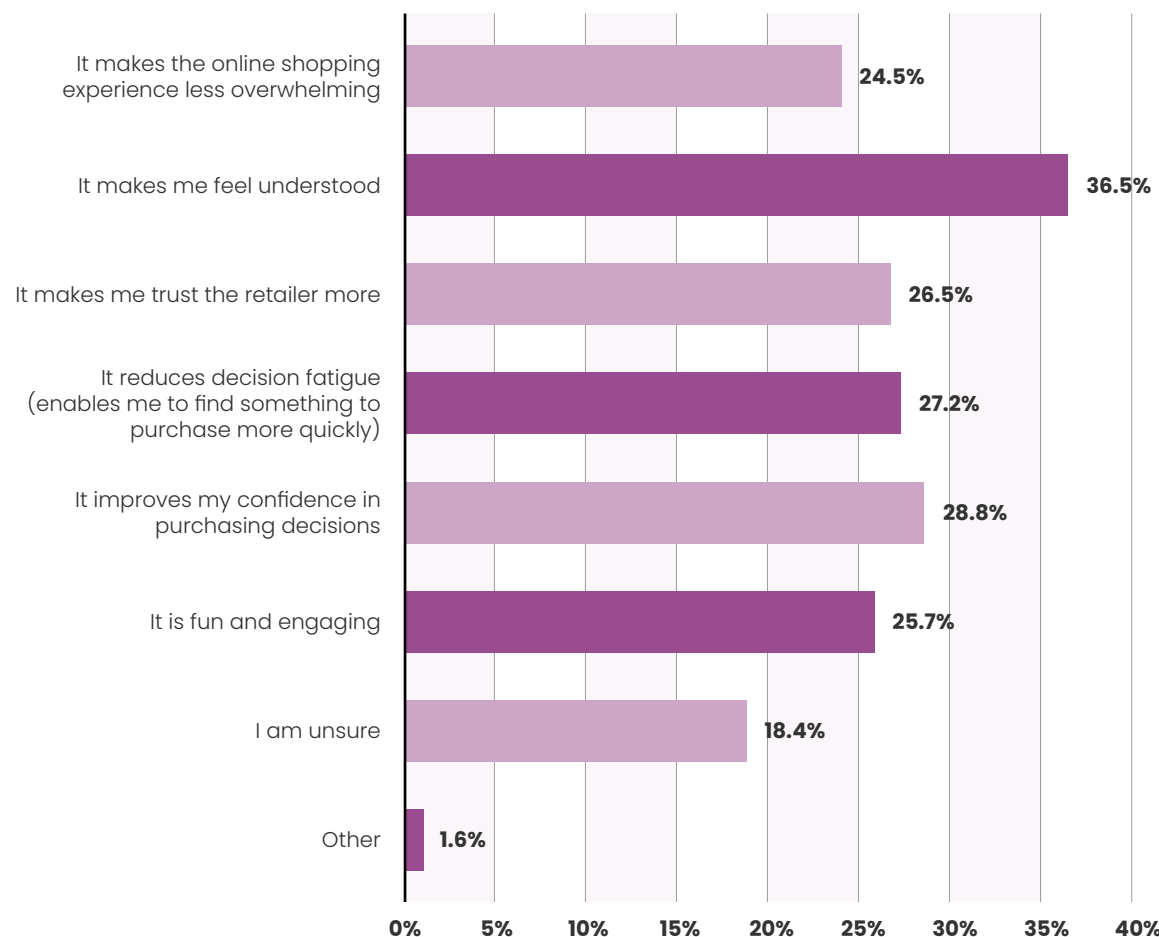
For those who like it, we asked them what they tend to most like about personalised online shopping experiences and the top answer was that it makes them 'feel understood' (36.5%).

There is almost an even split between consumers who selected the other answer options, with the top ones being 'it improves my confidence in purchasing decisions' (28.8%), 'it reduces decision fatigue' (27.2%), and 'it's fun and engaging' (26.7%).

Interestingly, the top reason why consumers rarely or never like it when online retailers use personalisation is 'privacy and security concerns', selected by over 63% of respondents.

The second most common reason people gave was receiving irrelevant recommendations, chosen by over half of the respondents. This often happens when someone buys a product for someone else—like a gift for a friend. Since that purchase doesn't reflect their own preferences, the system may use it to suggest similar items that don't match what they're interested in, making future recommendations feel off.

What do you tend to most like about personalised online shopping experiences? (Please select up to 3 answers)

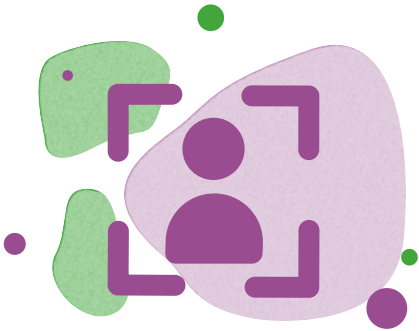


9 Personalisation in 2025: Expectations, Frustrations, and What Consumers Really Want

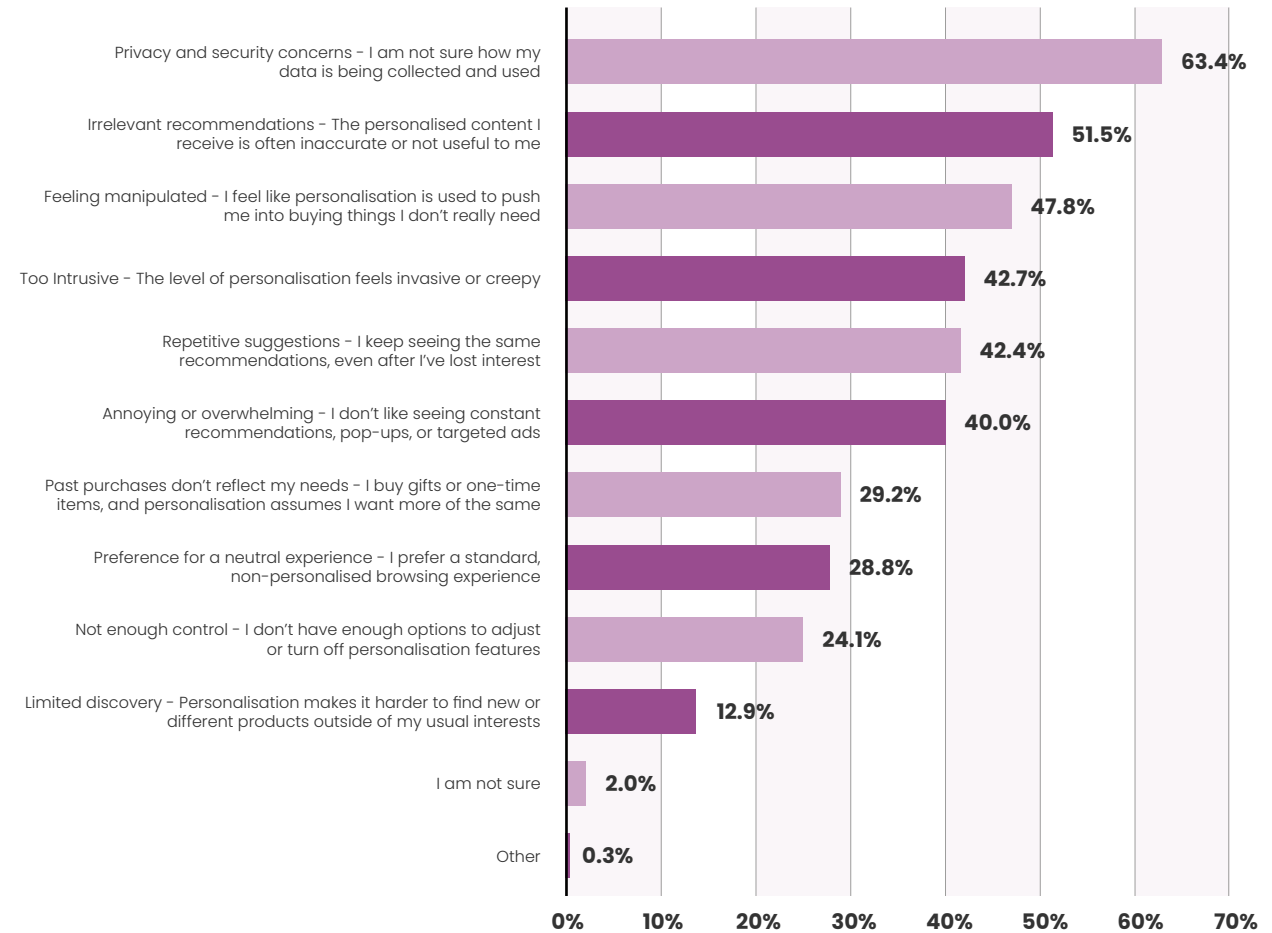
[Back To Contents](#)

A significant portion of consumers (47.8%) feel manipulated by personalisation. It makes them feel pushed into buying items they don't need, which can be particularly challenging during trying times.

Other popular answers include 'Too intrusive' (42.7%), 'repetitive suggestions' (42.4%), and 'annoying or overwhelming' (40%).



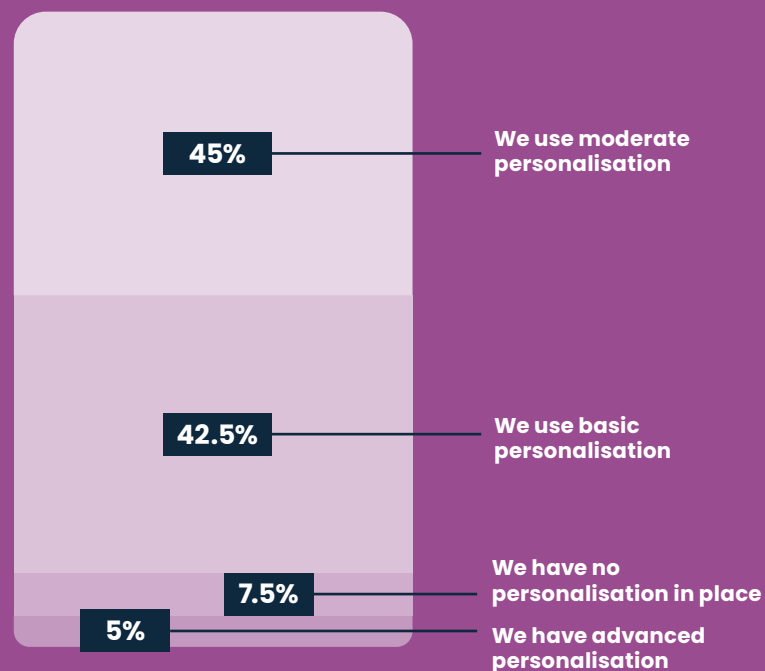
Why do you rarely or never like it when online retailers use personalisation? (Please select all that apply)



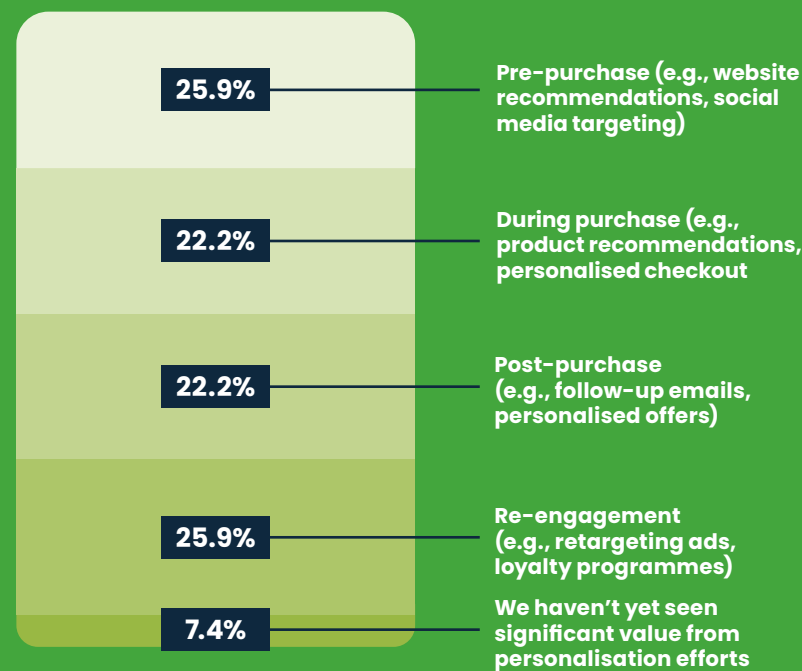
The personalisation offered by retailers

Does this reflect the level of personalisation consumers would like to receive?

We asked 40 retailers to describe the current state of personalisation in their online strategy, and the vast majority use moderate or basic personalisation:



28 retailers who use personalisation told us where they see the most value, and this was at the pre-purchase and during purchase stage:

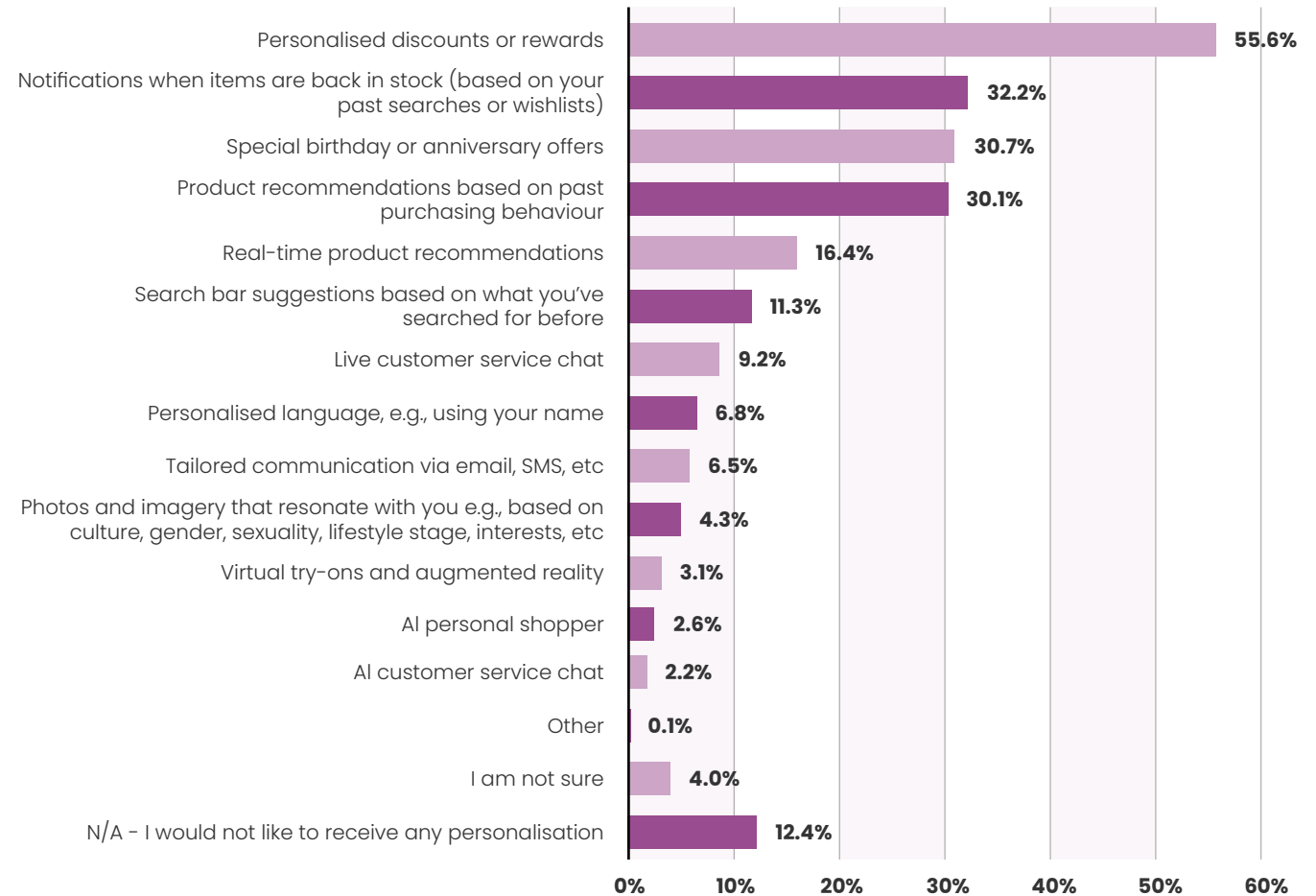


The type of personalisation consumers most want

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the top personalisation consumers would most like to receive is 'personalised discounts or rewards' (55.6%). More surprisingly is that the second most popular answer was 'notifications when items are back in stock' based on past searches or wish lists (32.2%). Almost equally as popular are 'special birthday or anniversary offers' and 'product recommendations based on past purchasing behaviour'.

When it comes to product recommendations, more consumers would want this based on past purchasing behaviour rather than in real-time (30.1% compared to 16.4%).

What type of personalisation would you like to receive the most? (Please select up to 3 answers)



12 Personalisation in 2025: Expectations, Frustrations, and What Consumers Really Want

[Back To Contents](#)

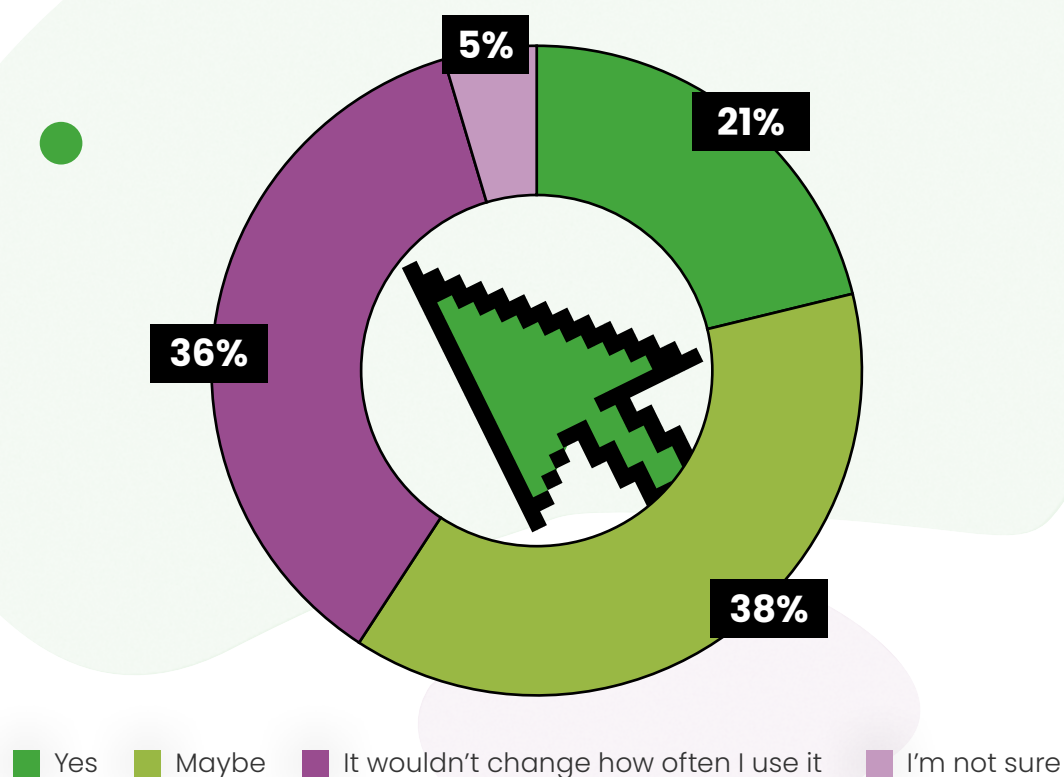
Personalised search bars are worth exploring, especially since 36% of consumers said they'd be more likely to use this feature if it offered personalisation, and another 38% said they might be more likely to use it.

Encouraging more shoppers to use the search bar is valuable, as previous IMRG research* has shown that people who use the search function tend to convert at higher rates.

43% of consumers say they feel more loyal to brands that offer personalisation based on their interests. Another 34% say they feel somewhat more loyal. Combined, this means that 77% of consumers show increased loyalty when personalisation is part of the experience.

*The State of Site Search in eCommerce 2024, IMRG, Klevu, and Monetate

If a retailer's search bar has personalisation (e.g., suggested search terms based on your behaviour or what similar shoppers searched for), would you be more likely to use it?



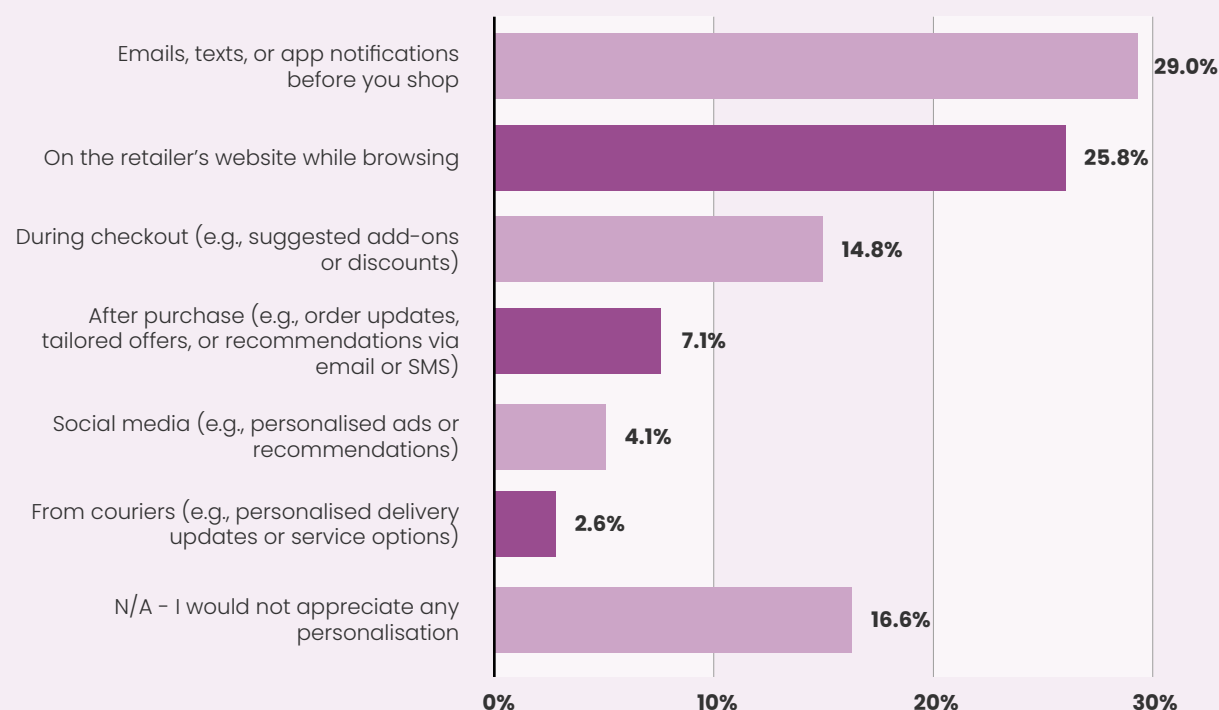
Optimising channels with personalisation

Where personalisation is most effective

Our research shows that the best places to implement personalisation is through 'emails, texts, or app notifications' before consumers shop (29%) and on the website while consumers are browsing (25.8%).

The checkout is another smart place to use personalisation e.g., using suggested add-ons or providing personalised discounts to increase basket sizes. But it might be worth keeping this simple as IMRG's 'eCommerce checkouts' report shows that faster checkouts can improve conversions. Too many choices can overwhelm shoppers, so test different placements and designs to see what works best.

At which stage of your shopping journey would you most appreciate personalisation?



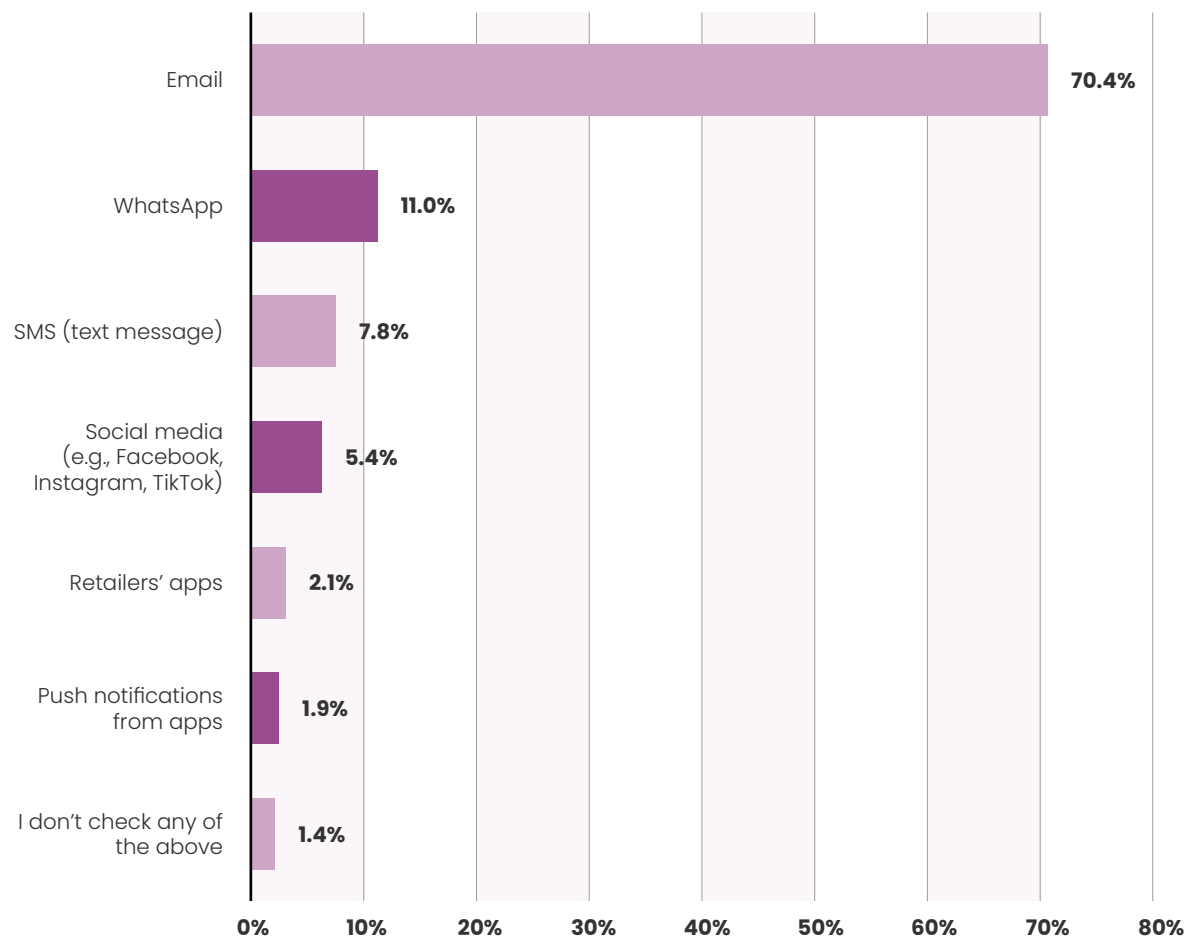
14 Personalisation in 2025: Expectations, Frustrations, and What Consumers Really Want

[Back To Contents](#)

The chart on the previous page shows that personalisation is most appreciated through emails, texts, and app notifications. When we asked which channels consumers check most often (shown on this page), email came out on top at 70.4%, well ahead of SMS (7.8%) and retailers' apps (2.1%). WhatsApp followed as the second most-checked channel at 11%, and some retailers are already using it to connect with their customers.



Which of the following communication channels do you check the most?



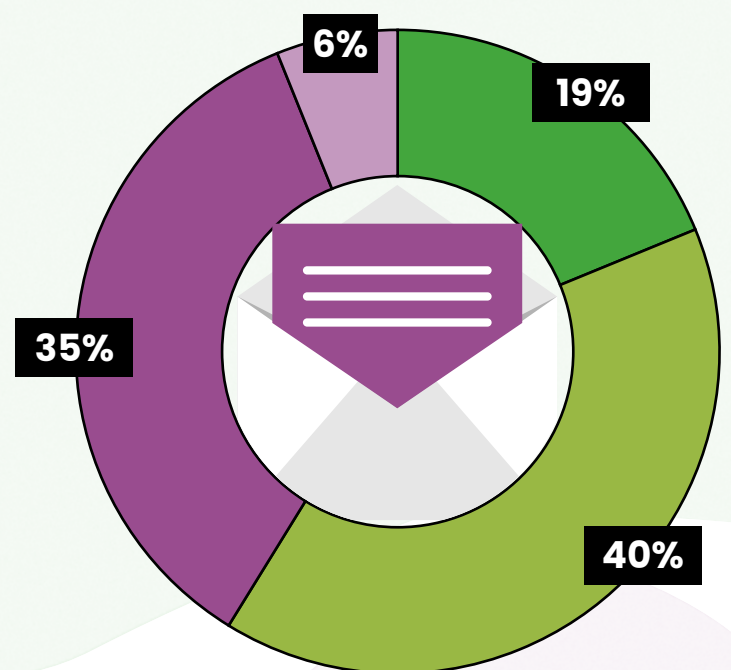
15 Personalisation in 2025: Expectations, Frustrations, and What Consumers Really Want

[Back To Contents](#)

The data here indicates that personalisation has a notable impact on consumer engagement with email content. While 19% of respondents reported that they spend more time reading emails that feel personalised, an additional 40% stated that they sometimes do, bringing the total to nearly 60% who are at least partially influenced by personalisation.

In contrast, 35% said personalisation does not affect the time they spend reading emails, and 6% were unsure. These findings suggest that personalised content can be a valuable tool for increasing engagement in email marketing.

Do you spend more time opening and reading emails from retailers that feel more personalised?

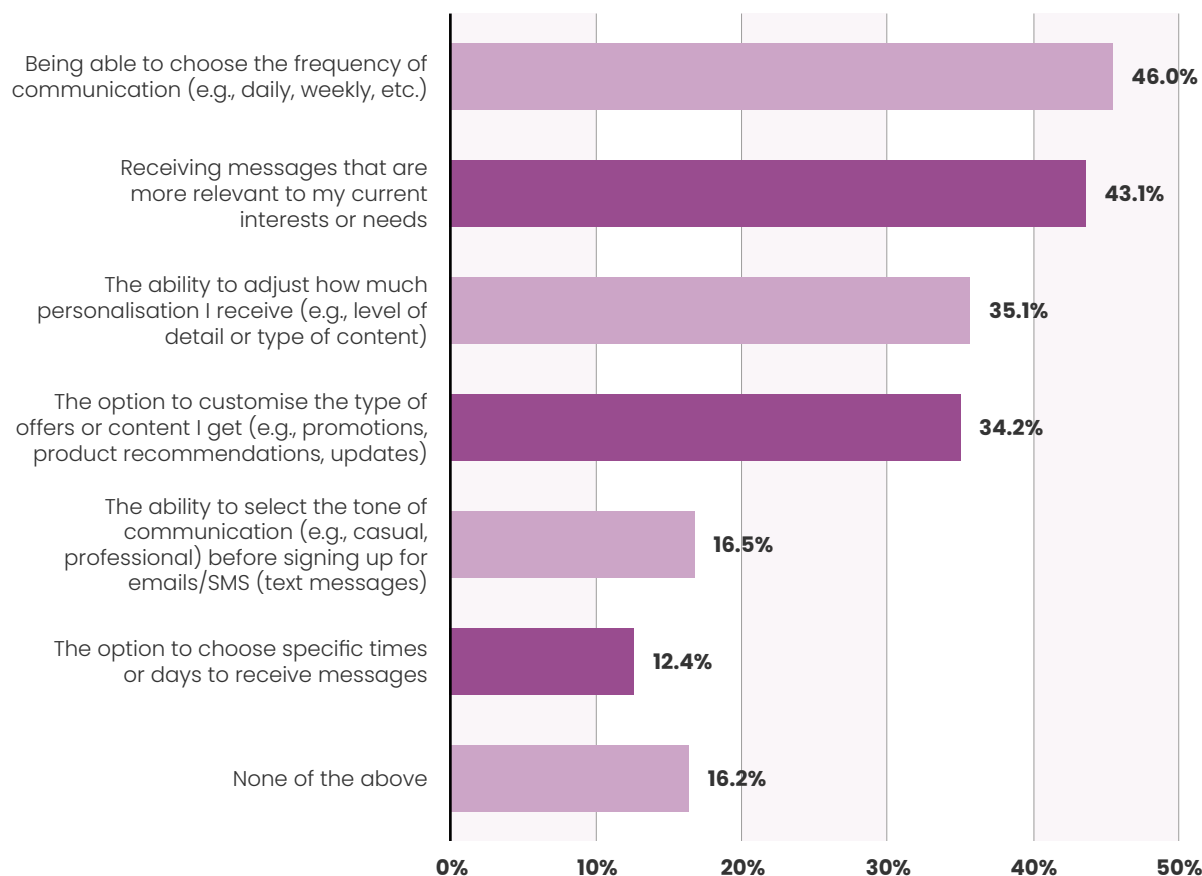


■ Yes ■ Sometimes ■ No ■ I am unsure

Future personalised communications that consumers find most valuable

We asked consumers to think about the future of personalised communications via email, SMS and other channels, and tell us what they would find most valuable. The number one thing, chosen by 46% of consumers, is they want to be 'able to choose the frequency of communication (e.g., daily, weekly, etc).'

Looking ahead to the future of personalised communication via email, SMS (text messages), and other channels, which of the following would you find most valuable? (Please select up to 3 answers)



Are consumers willing work with retailers to improve personalisation?

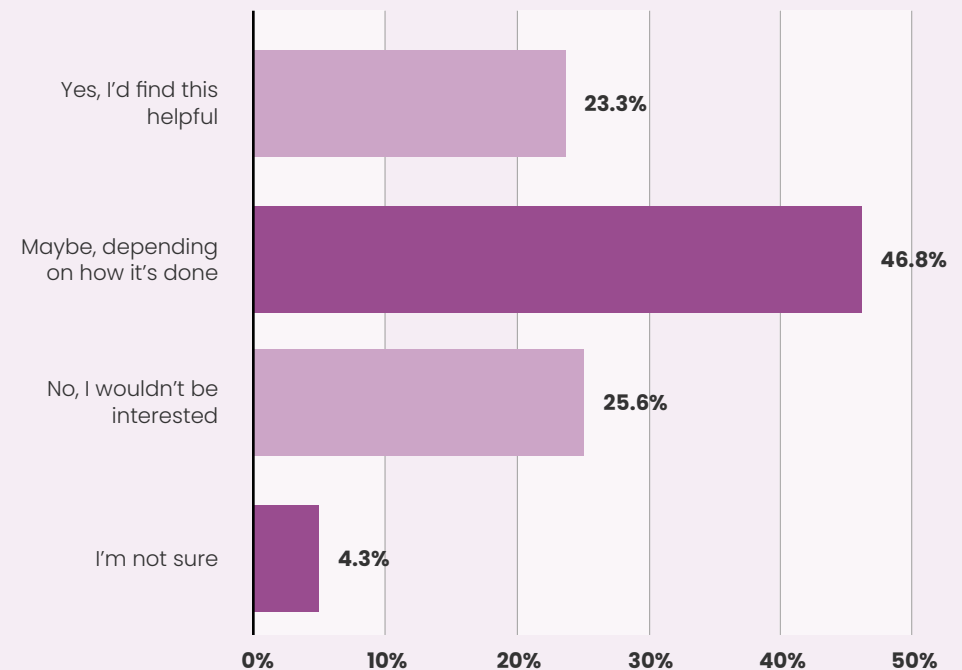
Perspectives on personalisation ratings and feedback

Personalisation can be hard to get right, so what if consumers could give feedback on it to help retailers make it more relevant for them on their next visits?

Over 23% of consumers revealed that yes, they'd find it helpful to give retailers feedback on personalisation. Plus, just shy of 47% said they might do this depending on how it's done. That shows over 70% of consumers are at least somewhat willing to help retailers improve personalisation, but more so will if the process is easy, respectful, and clearly beneficial.

Retailers can experiment with options like adding thumbs up or down buttons, star ratings, or a simple question asking if something was helpful on product pages. They might also try this at the checkout stage by using tick boxes or sliders to understand how much the suggestions influenced the purchase. Other good moments include the order confirmation page or in post-purchase communication, which can be especially useful for gathering more in-depth feedback, such as through short surveys.

Would you like the option to rate or give feedback on a retailer's personalisation (e.g., rating product recommendations) to help make it more relevant for you?

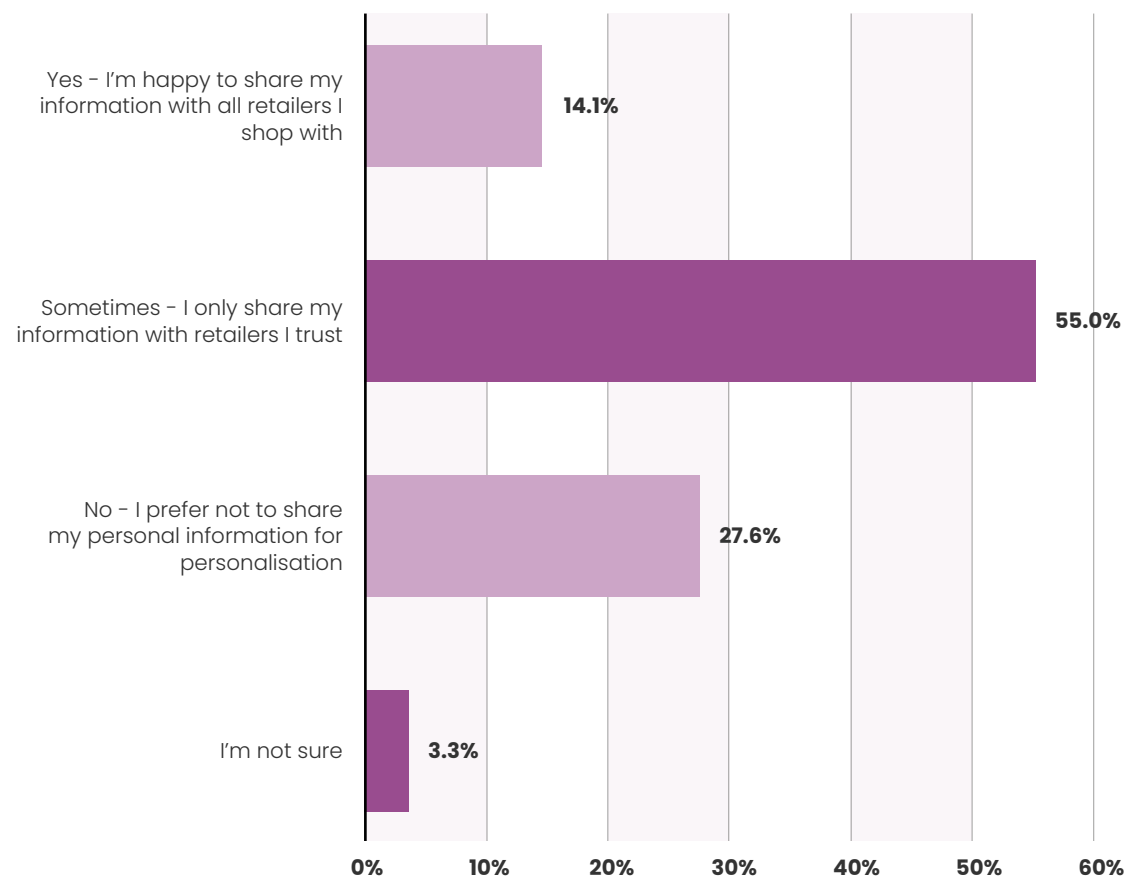


Consumers comfort levels with sharing personal information

Building trust is essential, not only for maintaining a strong brand reputation, but also for forming a two-way relationship with consumers. They want to purchase something from you, and in return, you're looking to gain insights that help support and complete that purchase. Over half of consumers (55%) say they are willing to share personal information with retailers they trust, compared to just 14.1% who would share their information with any retailer they shop with.

27.6% said they would not want to share their personal information to receive a more personalised experience.

Are you comfortable sharing your personal information with retailers to receive a more personalised experience? (e.g., name, age, gender, interests, browsing behaviour, etc.)



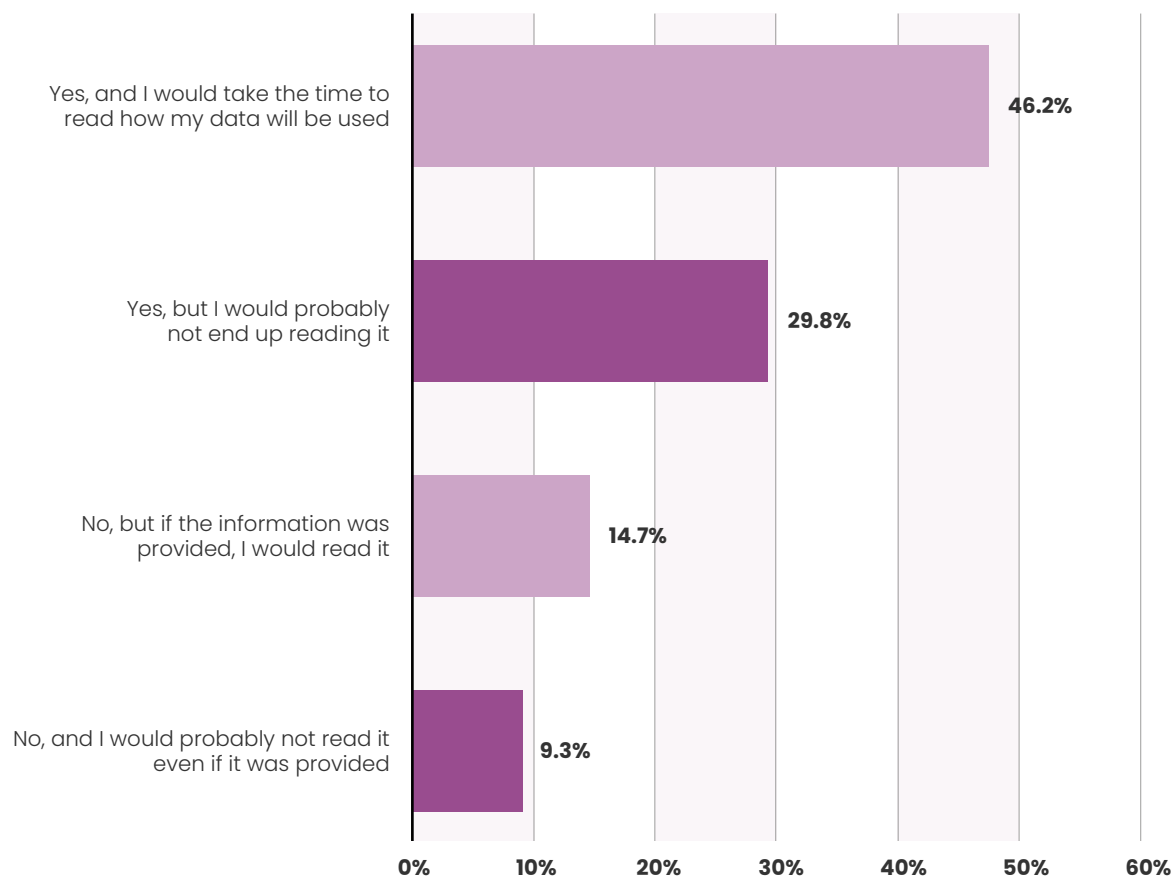
Do consumers want a summary of how personal data will be used?

One way to build trust is being transparent with how you intend to use consumers' personal information. A substantial 46.2% of consumers said yes, they want a simple summary of how their information will be used before they share it with a retailer, and they would take the time to read it.

Close to 30% of consumers want retailers to provide this summary but would probably not end up reading it. Simply seeing that there is a list of intended use cases can instil confidence and trust in a retailer.

24% of consumers would not want a simple summary, but more than not they would read it if it was provided.

If you shared your personal information with a retailer for personalisation, would you want a simple summary of how it will be used beforehand? And would you read it?



Will consumers share personal information for immediate rewards?

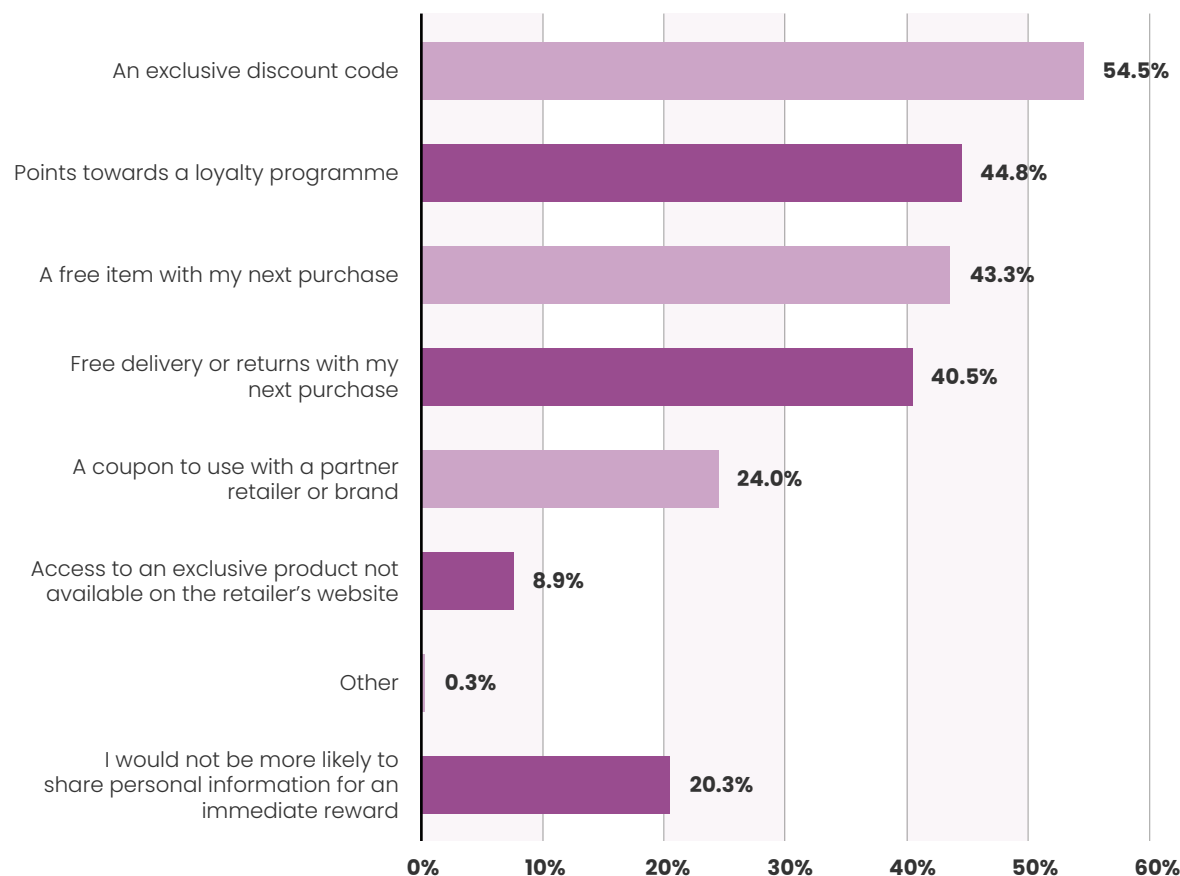
Close to 80% of consumers would be more likely to share personal information if it meant they would receive an immediate reward. The top reward that would motivate them is 'an exclusive discount code' (54.5%).

Almost equal in popularity are 'points towards a loyalty programme' (44.8%), 'a free item with my next purchase' (40.3%), and 'free delivery or returns with my next purchase' (40.5%).

Less consumers would be influenced by 'a coupon to use with a partner retailer or brand' (24%) and even fewer by 'access to an exclusive product not available on the retailer's website' (8.9%).

20.3% of consumers revealed that immediate rewards would not make them more likely to share their personal information.

Would you be more likely to share personal information if you received an immediate reward? If yes, what kind of reward would most motivate you? (Please select all that apply)



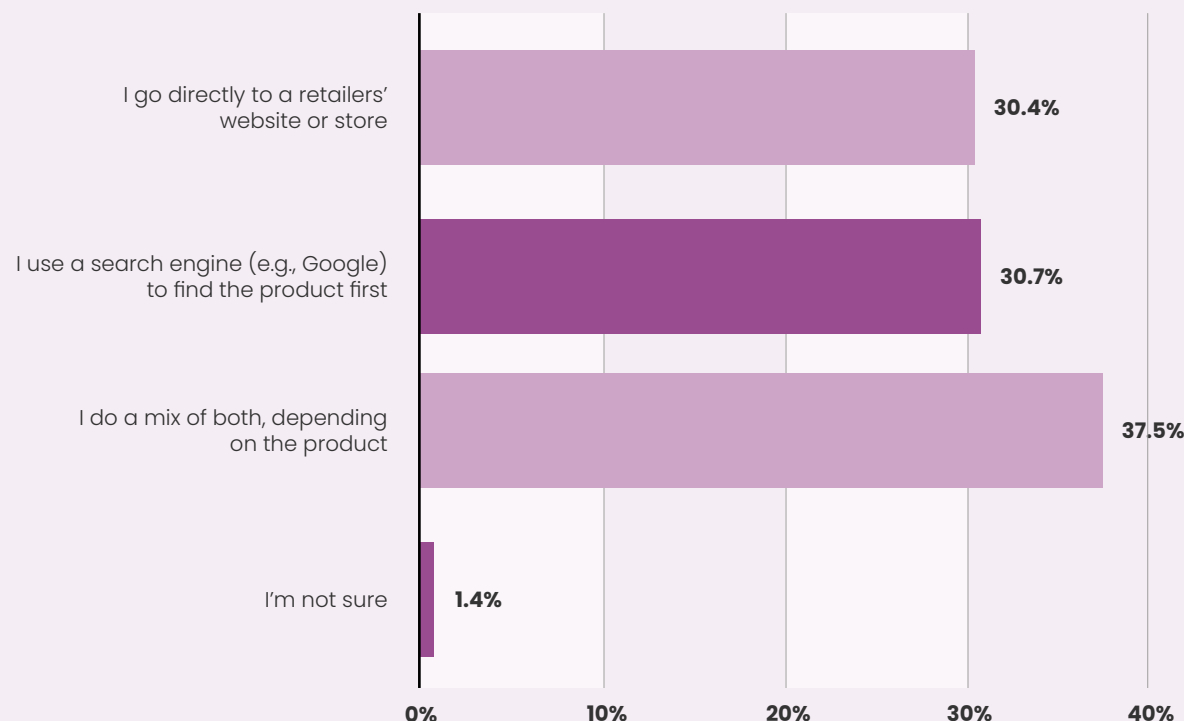
Consumer purchasing behaviour trends

How consumers start their search

The data shows that consumers are quite split in how they begin their product searches. Most revealed that they do a mix of both, depending on the product.

Consumers who go directly to a retailer's site may do so because they expect a more tailored experience, including relevant products and personalised content. In contrast, those arriving via a search engine might be less familiar with the brand, which is where personalisation can work well. Offering immediate, meaningful recommendations such as popular items or suggestions based on browsing behaviour can create a positive impression.

When looking for a product, how do you usually start your search?

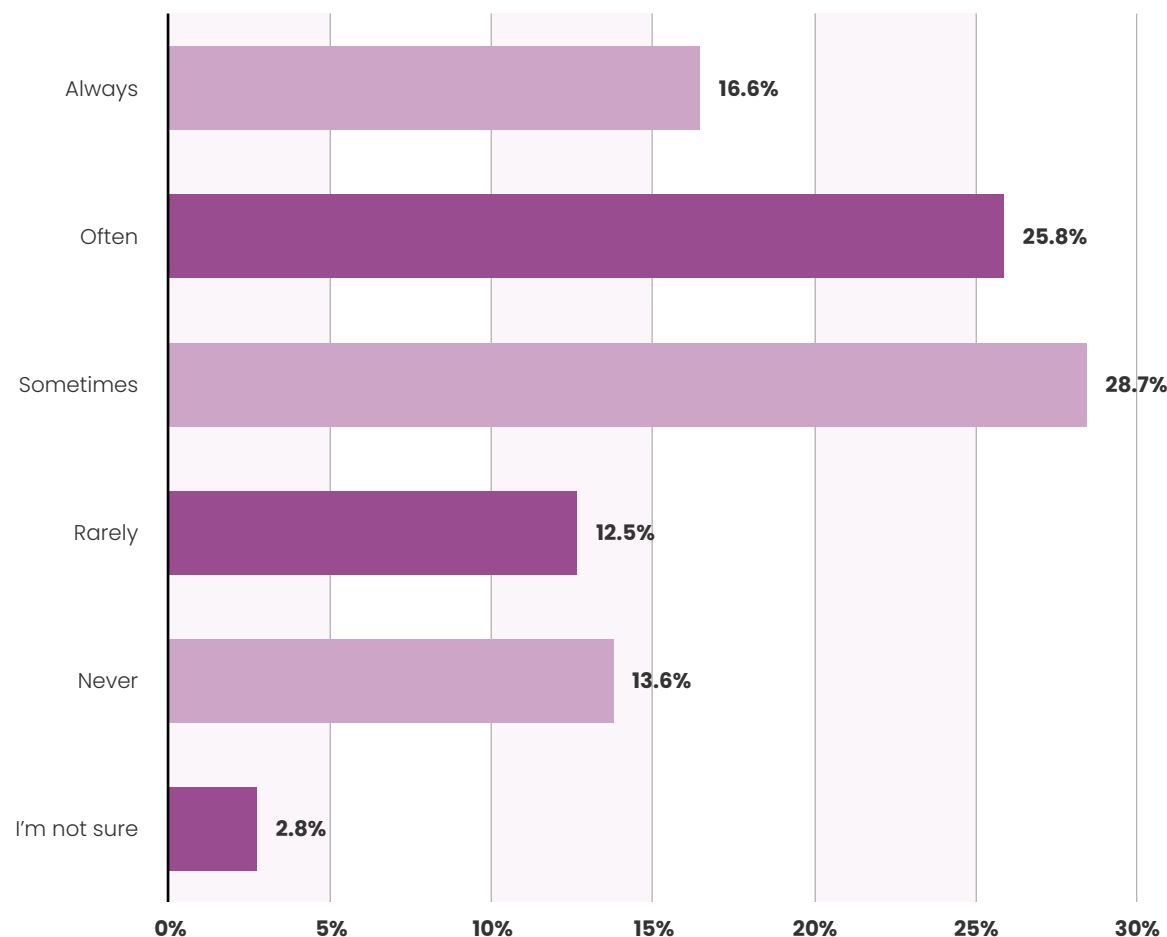


Search and price preferences around Black Friday

Consumers tend to rely more on search engines when price takes priority over brand loyalty, and this is more likely around big retail events such as Black Friday. They know retailers will be competing for conversion, so they're more inclined to see what else is out there, beyond the brands they'd usually stick with.

42.4% of consumers said they 'often' or 'always' use search engines to compare prices before purchasing during these major sales, and another 28.7% said they 'sometimes' do.

During big sale events (e.g., Black Friday), how often do you use search engines to compare prices before purchasing?



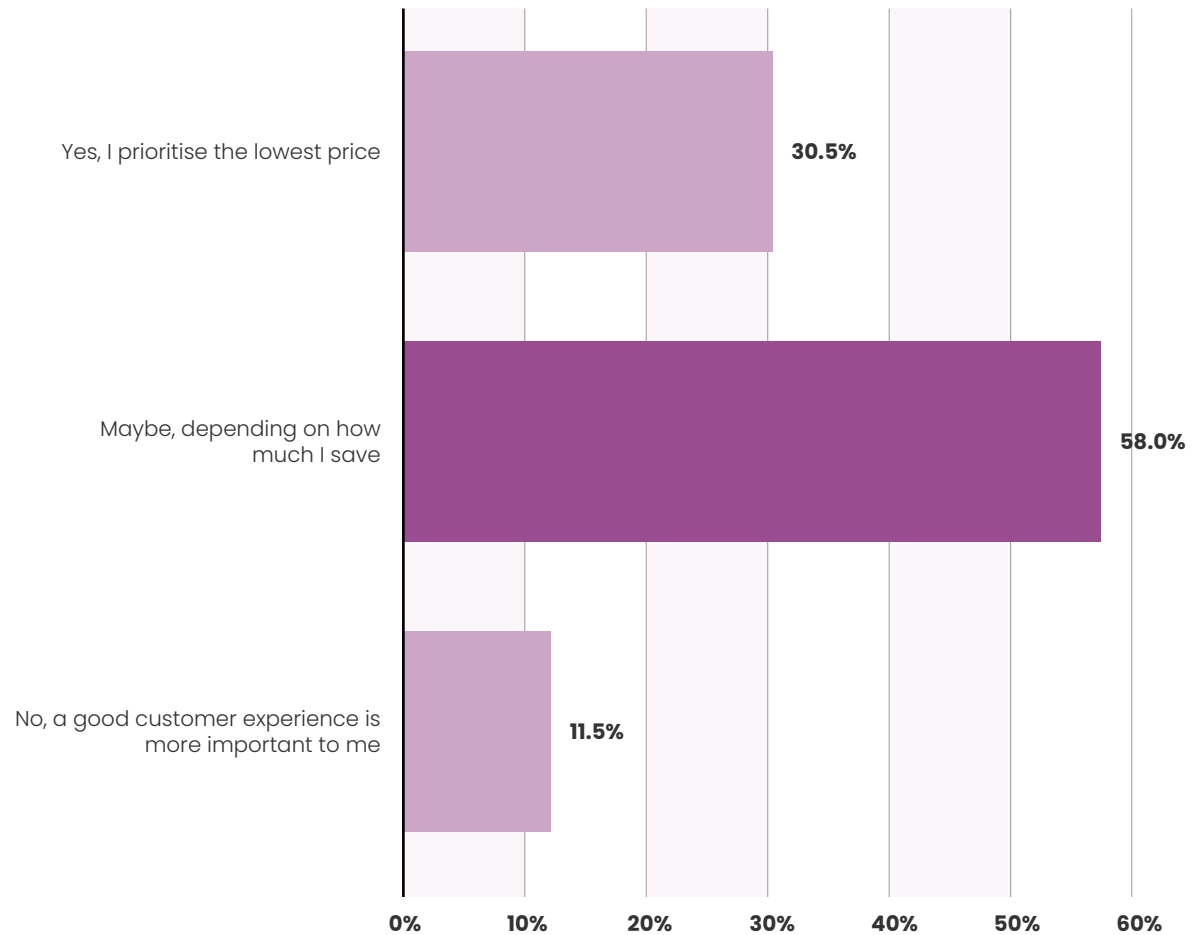
23 Personalisation in 2025: Expectations, Frustrations, and What Consumers Really Want

[Back To Contents](#)

During major sale events most consumers (58%) are on the fence about whether they would compromise customer experience for a lower price, revealing that it depends on how much they save.

30.5% are confident that they would prioritise the lower price retailer, whereas 11.5% are confident that they would prioritise the customer experience.

During major sale events (e.g., Black Friday), would you be willing to compromise on customer experience for a lower price?



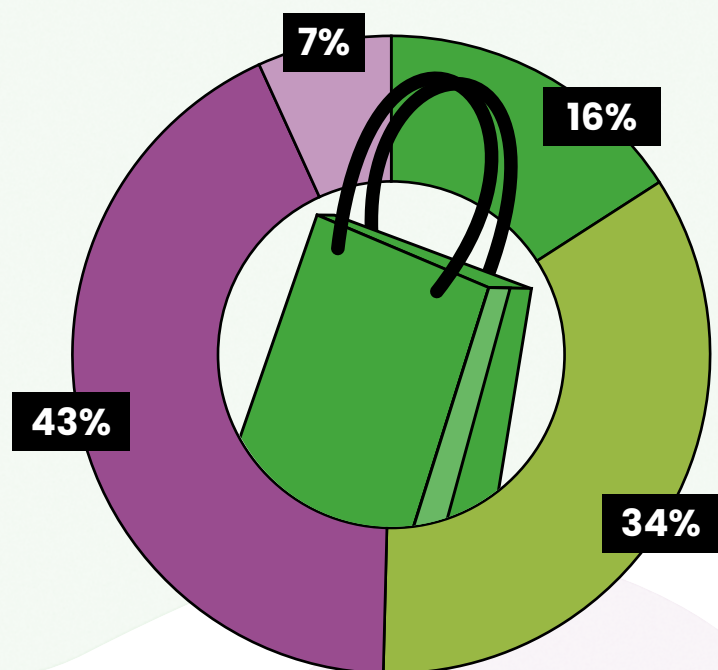
Does personalisation = loyalty?

34% of consumers said that they are 'somewhat' more loyal to brands that are personalised to them and their interests. A further 16% said 'yes,' they are more loyal.

On the following chart, the top thing that makes consumers (47.6%) feel more loyal or connected to their favourite retail brands is that 'their prices are more reasonable than similar retailers.'

The second most common reason, chosen by 44.4% of consumers, is that the retailer offers free delivery. Previous IMRG research* has shown that consumers typically expect free delivery once they've spent over a certain amount, e.g., 'free delivery over a £30 spend,' so there's no need for retailers to feel pressured into offering free shipping on all orders at the expense of their margins. Setting a threshold can be a smart way to encourage higher basket values while still meeting customer expectations.

Do you feel more loyal to brands that are strongly personalised to you and your interests?



Yes Somewhat No I am unsure

25 Personalisation in 2025: Expectations, Frustrations, and What Consumers Really Want

[Back To Contents](#)

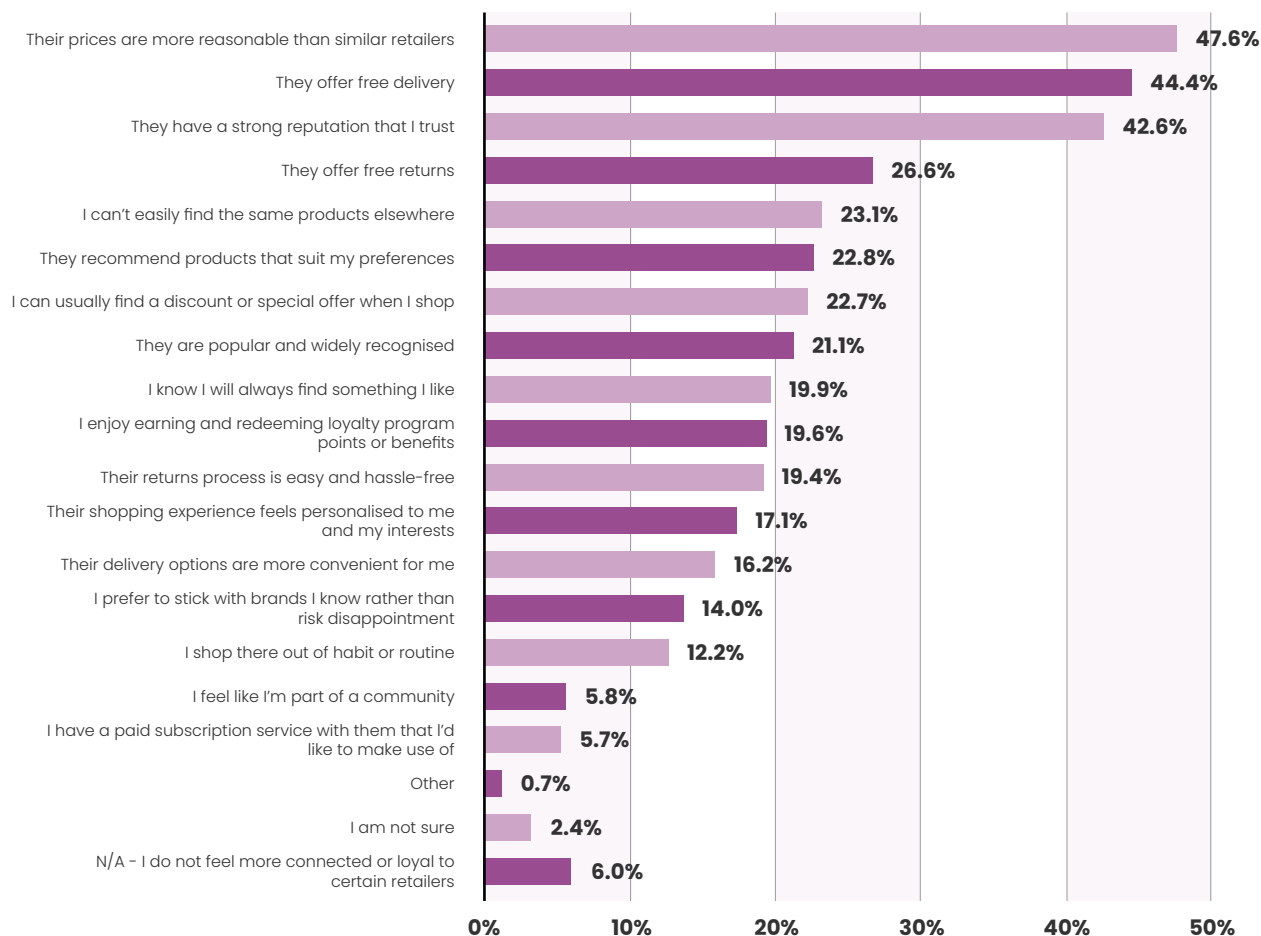
Trust proves to be pivotal again, and this time it has a direct correlation with brand reputation. 42.6% of consumers that they feel more connected to brands that 'have a strong reputation that [they] can trust.'

'They recommend products that suit my preferences' ranked sixth among the top ten reasons, chosen by 22.8% of consumers. Interestingly, this places it slightly ahead of 'I can usually find a discount or special offer when I shop,' which came in at 22.7%.

*Transforming E-commerce Delivery: Key Insights for Meeting Customer Demands Report, IMRG & Ingrid, 2024



Think about your favourite retail brands. What makes you feel more connected or loyal to them compared to other retailers? (Select all that apply)



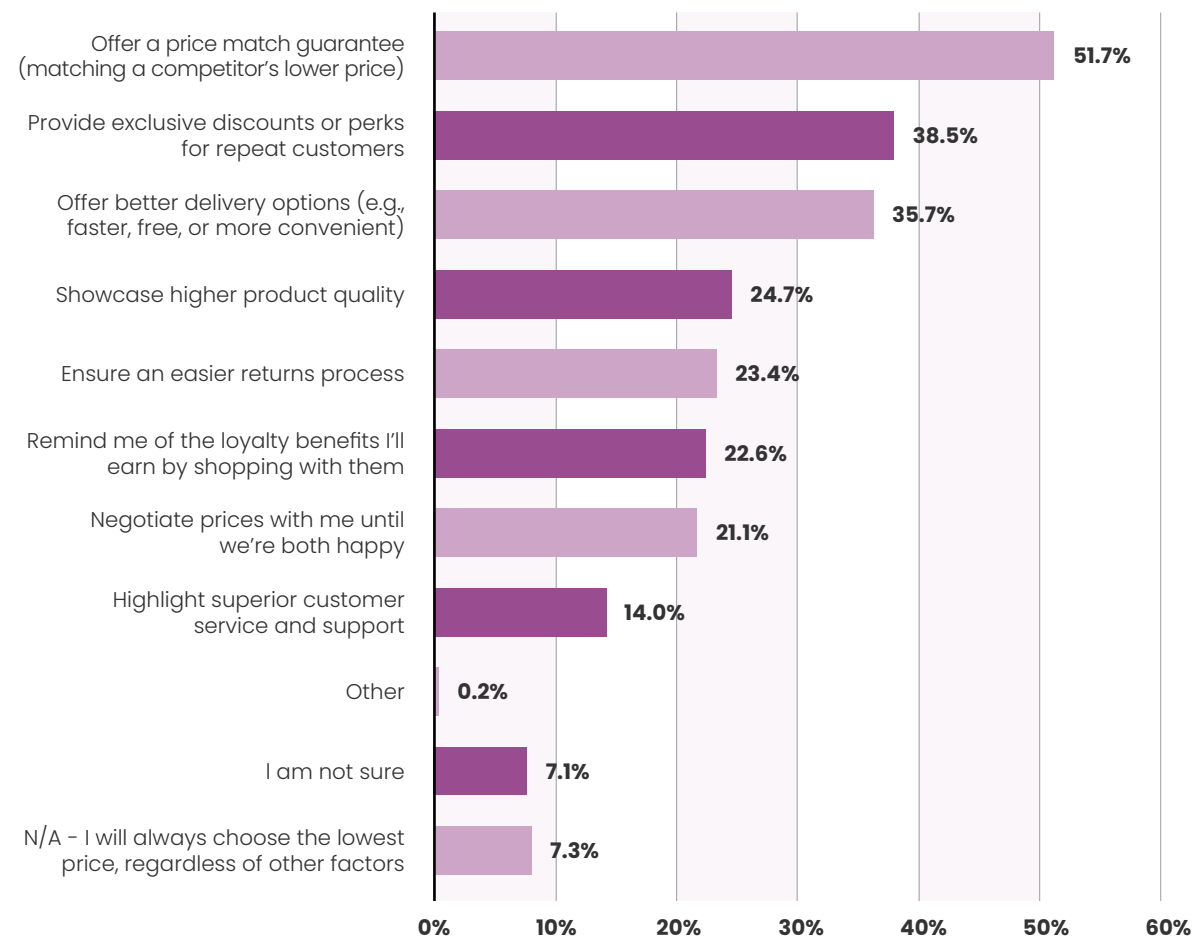
Consumers say what could sway them to choose one retailer over another

Unsurprisingly, the top factor that would encourage consumers (51.7%) to choose the more expensive retailer is the offer of a price match guarantee, essentially lowering the price to stay competitive.

Other ways are if the retailer provides 'exclusive discounts or perks for repeat customers' (38.5%) or through offering 'better delivery options' (35.7%) e.g., free delivery, faster delivery, or more convenient delivery options.

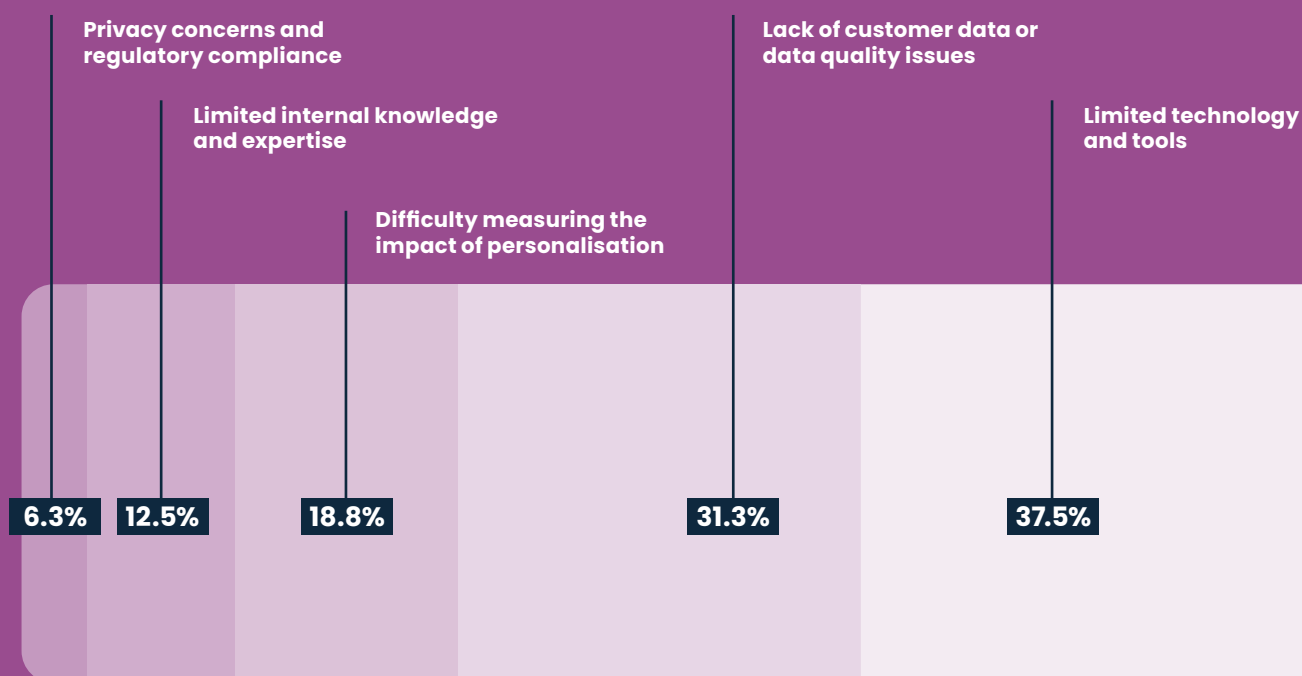
Promisingly, only 7.3% of consumers would always choose the lowest price, regardless of other factors.

What could a retailer do to encourage you to shop with them instead of choosing a lower-priced competitor? (Please select all that apply)



Retailers reveal their top challenges with implementing personalisation

Among 33 retailers, the biggest challenges to implementing personalisation are 'limited technology and tools' (37.5%) and 'Lack of customer data or data quality issues' (31.3%):



Conclusion

Personalisation proves to be a valuable strategy in eCommerce, helping to grow trust, increase feelings of being understood, and ultimately helping to improve conversions.

Below IMRG and Bloomreach reveal their key takeaways from the report.



IMRG's 5 key takeaways:

1

Consumers want to feel understood: While just 15.3% of consumers say they always like personalisation, nearly half (46.7%) say they sometimes like it, suggesting the approach matters. The top reason people enjoy personalised experiences is that it makes them 'feel understood' (36.5%). When refining your personalisation strategy, focus on demonstrating that you recognise your customers and their preferences.

2

Transparency builds trust: The biggest reason why customers (63.9%) may dislike personalisation is concerns around privacy and security. Additionally, 76% say they want a simple summary of how their personal information will be used. Providing this level of clarity can go a long way in reducing hesitation and building trust.

3

Email is a strong channel: Personalisation is most appreciated through email before a customer shops or while browsing on-site. Email also remains the most-checked communication channel, beating SMS, WhatsApp, retailer apps, and social media. In terms of future communications, consumers would value being able to choose how often they hear from a retailer (46%), or to receive messages more aligned with their current needs (43.1%).

4

Incentives can encourage data sharing: While personalisation helps consumers feel more recognised, it's not always enough on its own. Most people (54.4%) say they'd be more likely to share personal information in exchange for an exclusive discount code. Others are motivated by loyalty points, free gifts, or free delivery. Testing different incentives can help you encourage data sharing in ways that protect your margins.

5

Price wins, but the customer experience can influence: Nearly half of consumers (47.6%) say they feel most connected to retailers with more reasonable prices, even above personalised experiences. That said, 58% say they would consider prioritising a better customer experience depending on the level of savings elsewhere. If you're slightly more expensive (e.g., by 5–10%) but offer a trustworthy, well-personalised journey, you may still win the sale.

Bloomreach's 5 tips for steps ahead:

1

Personalisation is a priority within search: Consumers are clear: 36% are more likely to use a personalised search bar, and another 38% are open to it. With IMRG data confirming that search users convert at higher rates, the opportunity is clear. Ecommerce leaders who invest in AI-powered, personalised search make it easier for shoppers to find exactly what they want, increasing conversions and directly impacting revenue.

2

Put customers in control of communication: Nearly half (46%) of all consumers want to choose how often brands communicate with them. At Bloomreach, we believe in putting the power back in the customer's hands. It's important to let shoppers manage their own communication preferences, reducing the risk of message fatigue and fostering loyalty—helping brands build stronger, more respectful relationships.

3

Drive data sharing through real-time engagement: Nearly 80% of consumers are willing to share more personal data for an immediate reward, with exclusive discounts acting as the top motivator (54.5%). Building smart reward programs that drive both data sharing and conversion is one way to build loyalty. Utilising AI-powered platforms to motivate and reward shoppers in real time, e-commerce leaders gather the insights they need to personalise effectively, while also driving immediate sales.

4

Listen and adapt with continuous feedback: More than 70% of consumers are open to sharing feedback on their personalisation experiences. For brands, this is a clear invitation: keep listening. It is vital for brands to collect, manage, and integrate feedback into their personalisation strategies, ensuring experiences are always relevant and demonstrating a genuine commitment to customer-centricity.

5

Boost engagement with truly personalised emails: Email remains a cornerstone of digital communication, with 70.4% of consumers checking it most frequently out of any other channel. Nearly 60% spend more time with emails that feel tailored to them. It's important for brands to move beyond basic segmentation and deliver messages shaped by real-time behaviours and preferences, dramatically increasing both open and click-through rates, and ultimately driving growth.



The UK
eCommerce
Association

Contact

IMRG

Tel: **0203 696 0980**

Email: **membership@imrg.org**

www.imrg.org

Bloomreach

Email: **info@bloomreach.com**

www.bloomreach.com/en

