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Insights

AI-Driven Shopping Evolves



Study Objective

- To understand shopper awareness, interest, trust, and current habits related to AI use and AI enabled shopping assistants across products and services.
- To understand changes in AI shopping data vs. 2025 AI Shopping study

**Shopper research
conducted through
Acosta Group's
proprietary Shopper
Community**

*May 15 - 21, 2026
N = 1,271 U.S. Shoppers of least 1
retail channel in the last 3 months*

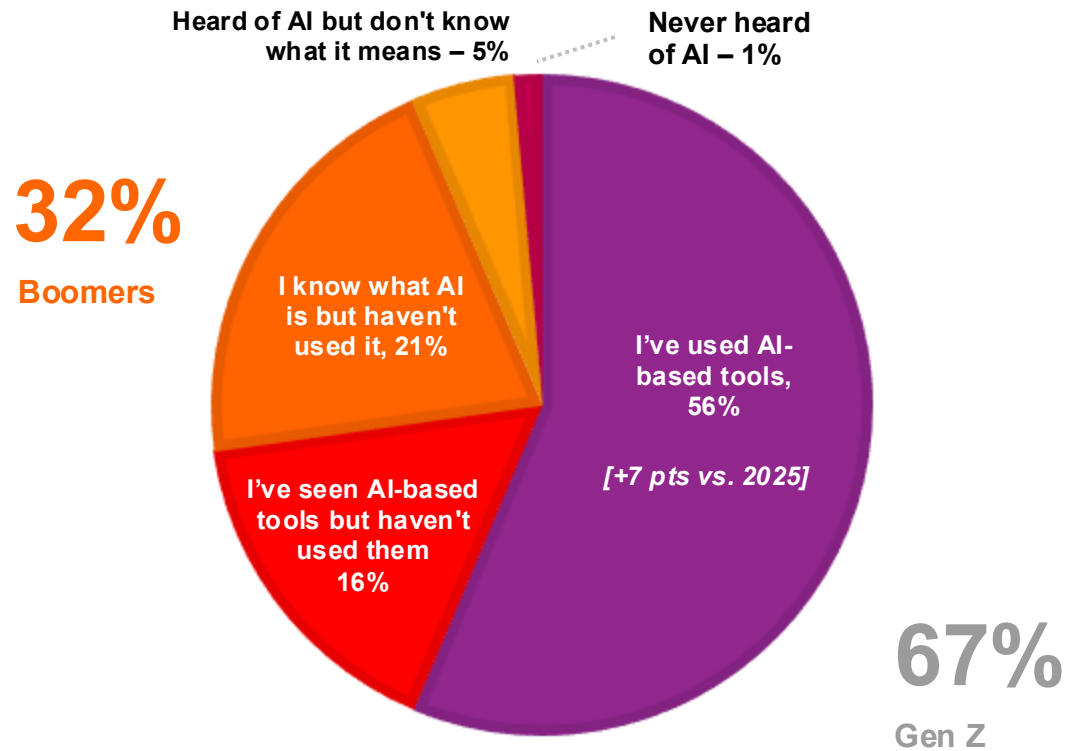
*Compared to Phase 1 AI
study June 2025*

AI Awareness & Attitudes

99% of shoppers are aware of AI, and over half have used it

Artificial Intelligence Awareness

(% of Total U.S. Shoppers)



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Source: Acosta Group Shopper
Community AI Enabled Shopping
survey - May 2026

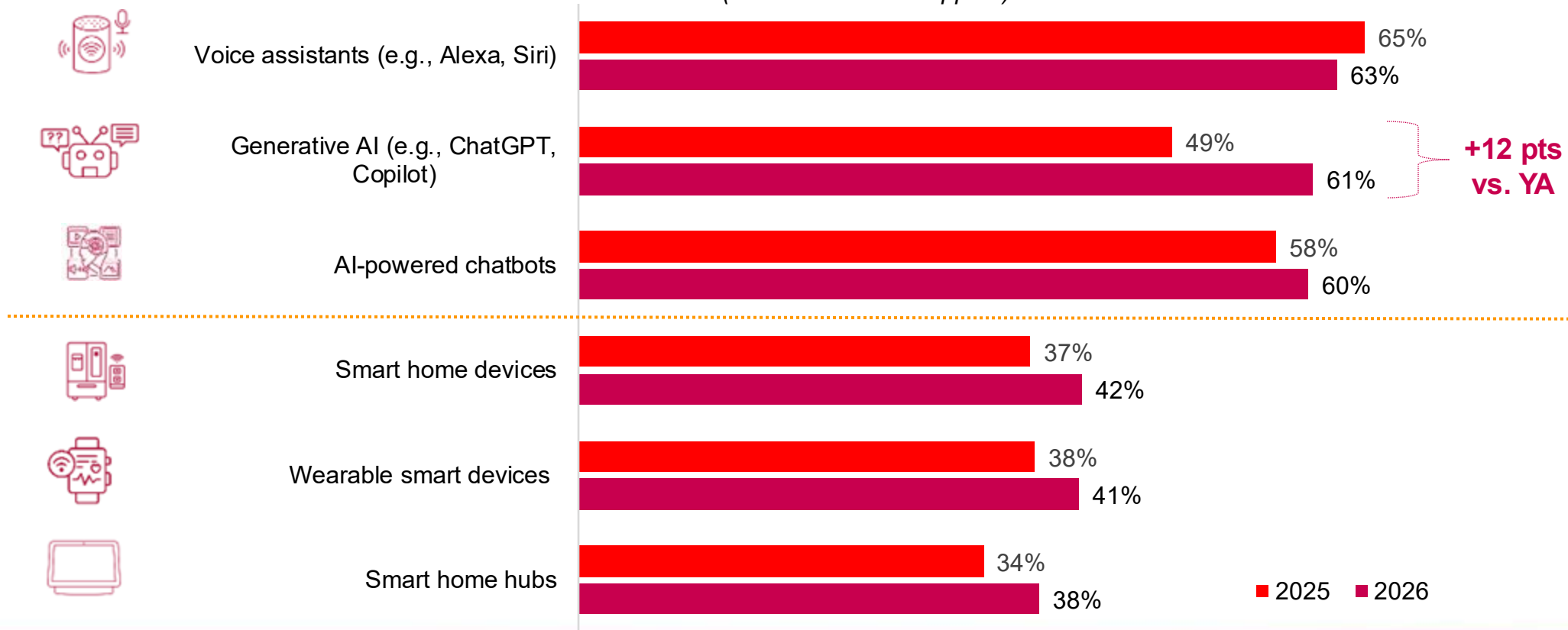


Are you familiar with the term "Artificial Intelligence" often abbreviated as "AI"?

Shoppers' usage for most AI devices is stable, but Gen AI use has become mainstream from 74% of Gen Z and Millennials to a fast-rising 45% of Boomers

AI Products and Services Used

(% of Total U.S. Shoppers)

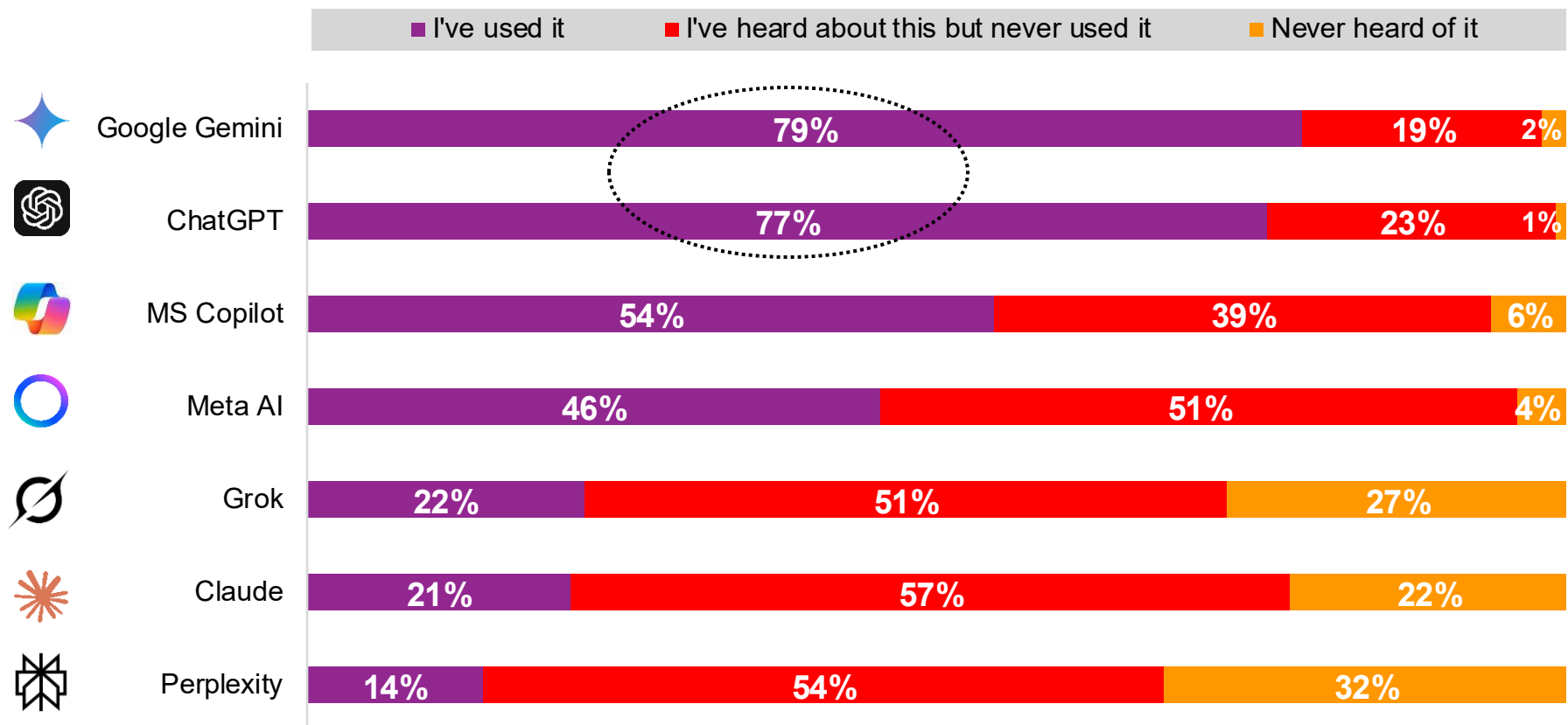


Google Gemini and ChatGPT are the most used Gen AI tools by a wide margin, with Gemini AI Mode at an advantage since it appears in the Google search bar



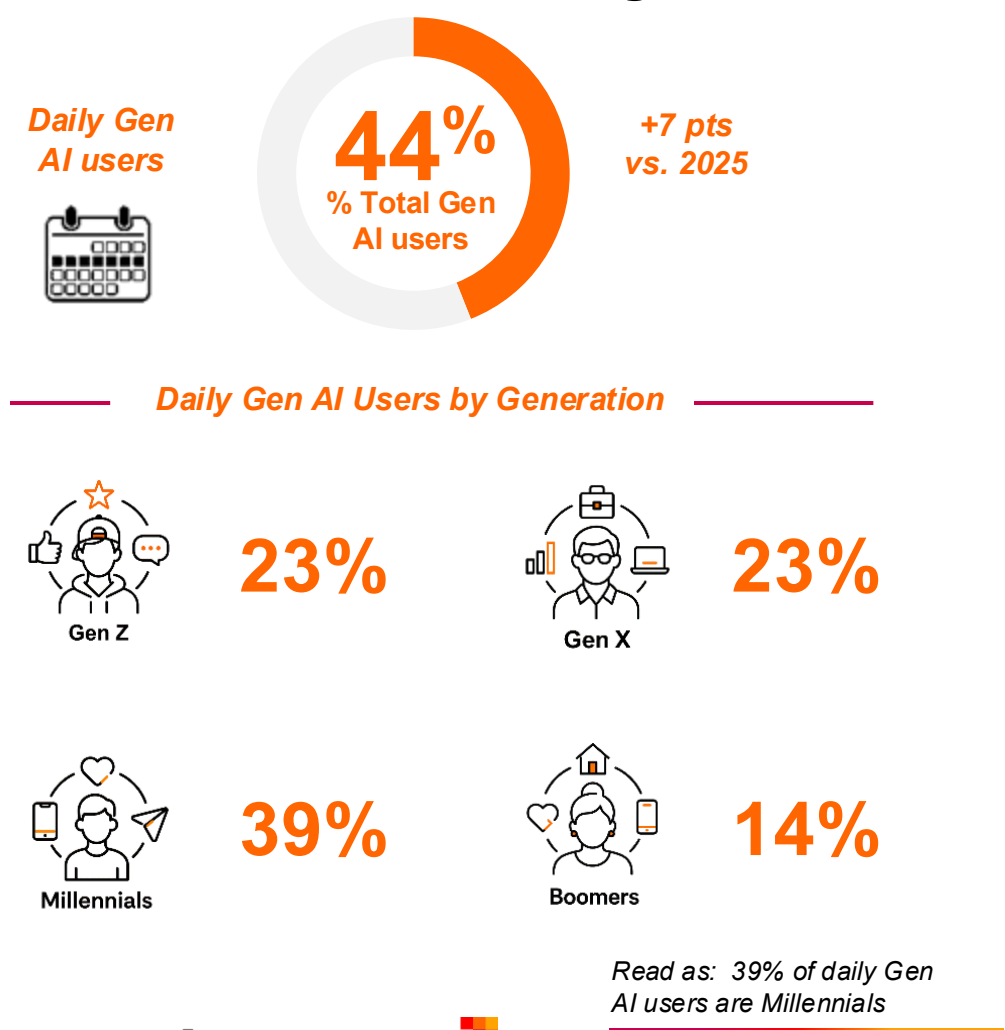
GENERATIVE AI TOOLS – AWARENESS & USAGE

(% of Total Gen AI Users)



You mentioned that you have used Generative AI tools (“Gen AI”). How familiar are you with these specific Gen AI tools?

Gen AI has become a daily habit for nearly half of users

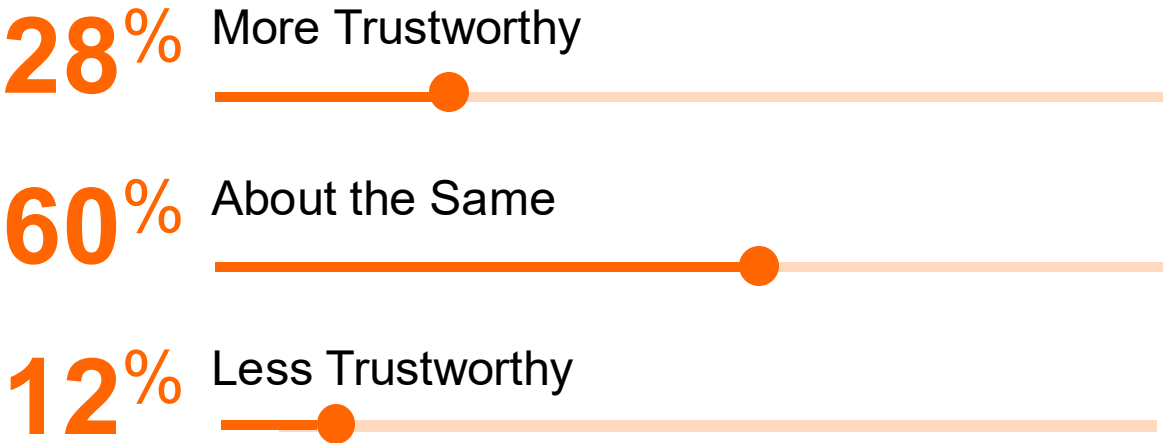


Daily users of at least 1 of these Gen AI tools: ChatGPT, Claude, Google, Gemini, Grok, Meta AI, Microsoft, Copilot, and / or Perplexity

Source: Acosta Group Shopper Community AI Enabled Shopping survey – May 2026

Consistent with 2025, most Gen AI users find it as trustworthy as other sources with trust highest among younger shoppers

Gen AI Trustworthiness vs. Other Sources*



44% of **Gen Z**
say information from Gen AI is **more trustworthy** than other sources



17% of **Boomers**
say information from Gen AI is **more trustworthy** than other sources

How trustworthy do you find the information you've received from Gen AI tools compared to other sources?

AI Shopping Tools

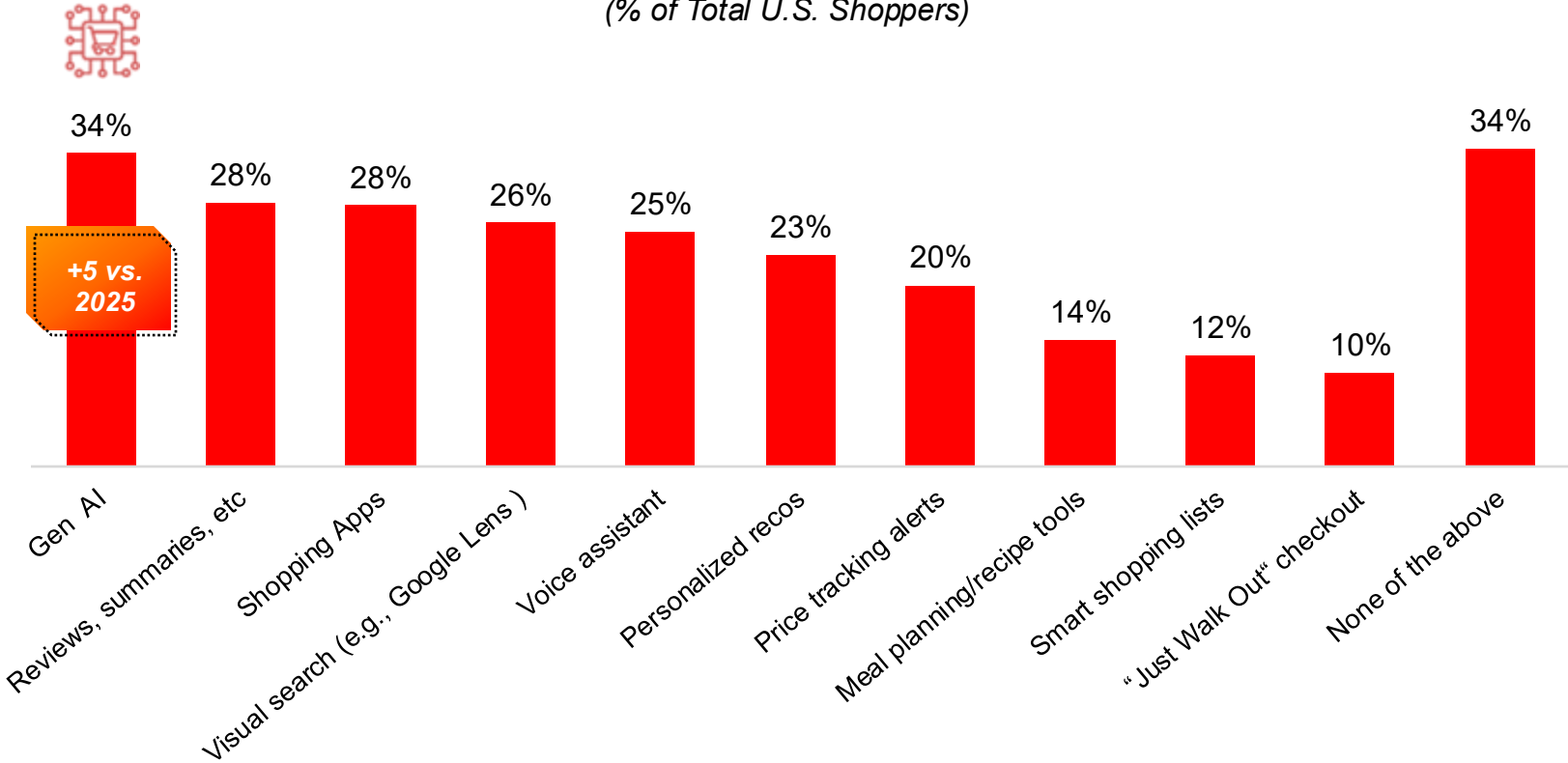
While 66% of shoppers use AI tools for shopping, Gen AI is the only one with usage gains vs. 2025



Used Gen AI for Shopping

AI Tools / Features Used for Shopping

(% of Total U.S. Shoppers)



Gen Z



Hispanics



Households with Kids



Which, if any, of the following AI tools/features have you used to help you shop?

Source: Acosta Group Shopper Community AI Enabled Shopping survey - May 2026

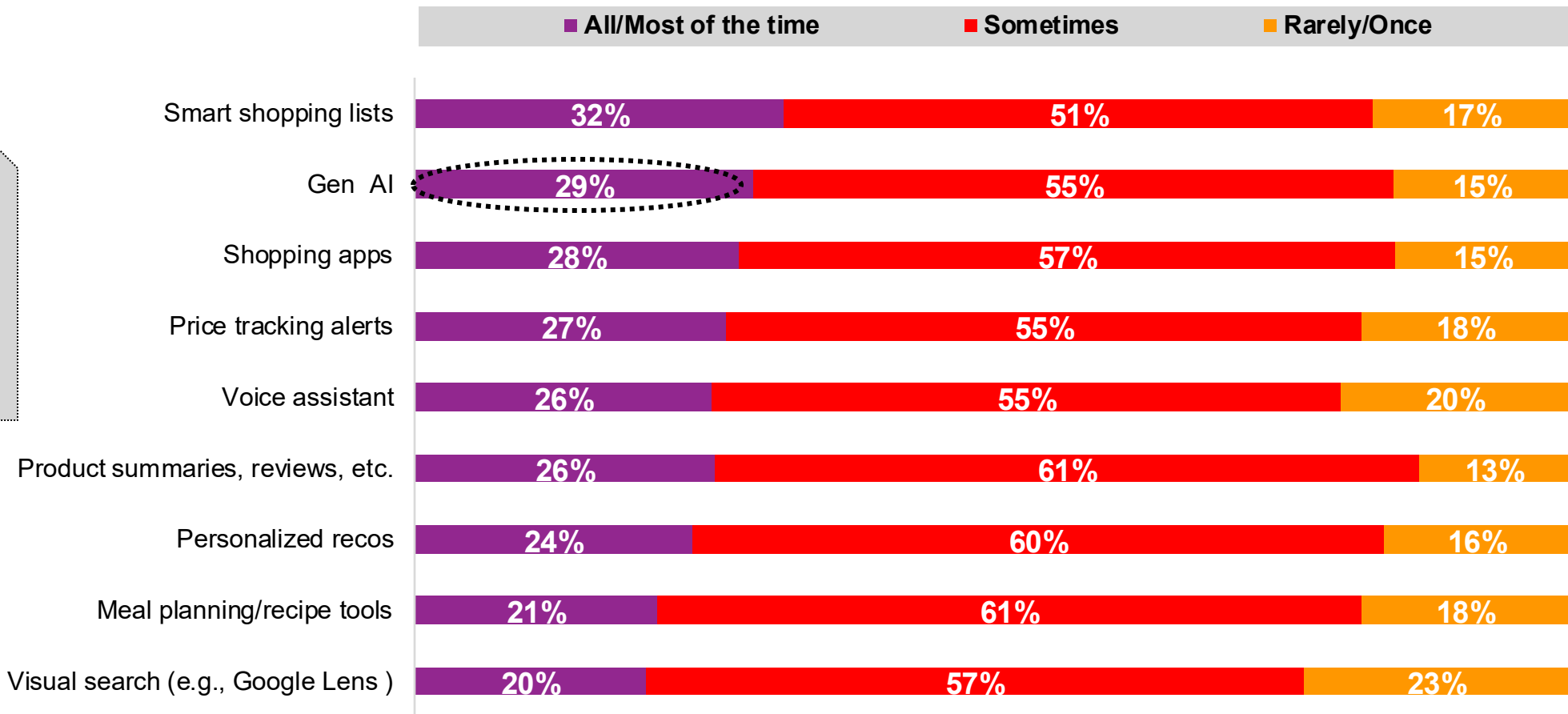
Gen AI plays a role in most or every shopping task for nearly one-third of those who use Gen AI for shopping



Compared to 2025, all of these AI tools, except voice assistants and shopping apps, saw a shift to more frequent use in 2026

FREQUENCY OF AI TOOLS / FEATURES USED FOR SHOPPING TASKS

(% Shoppers who use the specified AI Tool for Shopping)



How often do you use each of these while doing any aspect of shopping (researching, browsing, buying)?

Shoppers look to AI based tools to save money, time, and to help select the best products to fit their needs

TOP BENEFITS FROM AI TOOLS FOR SHOPPING

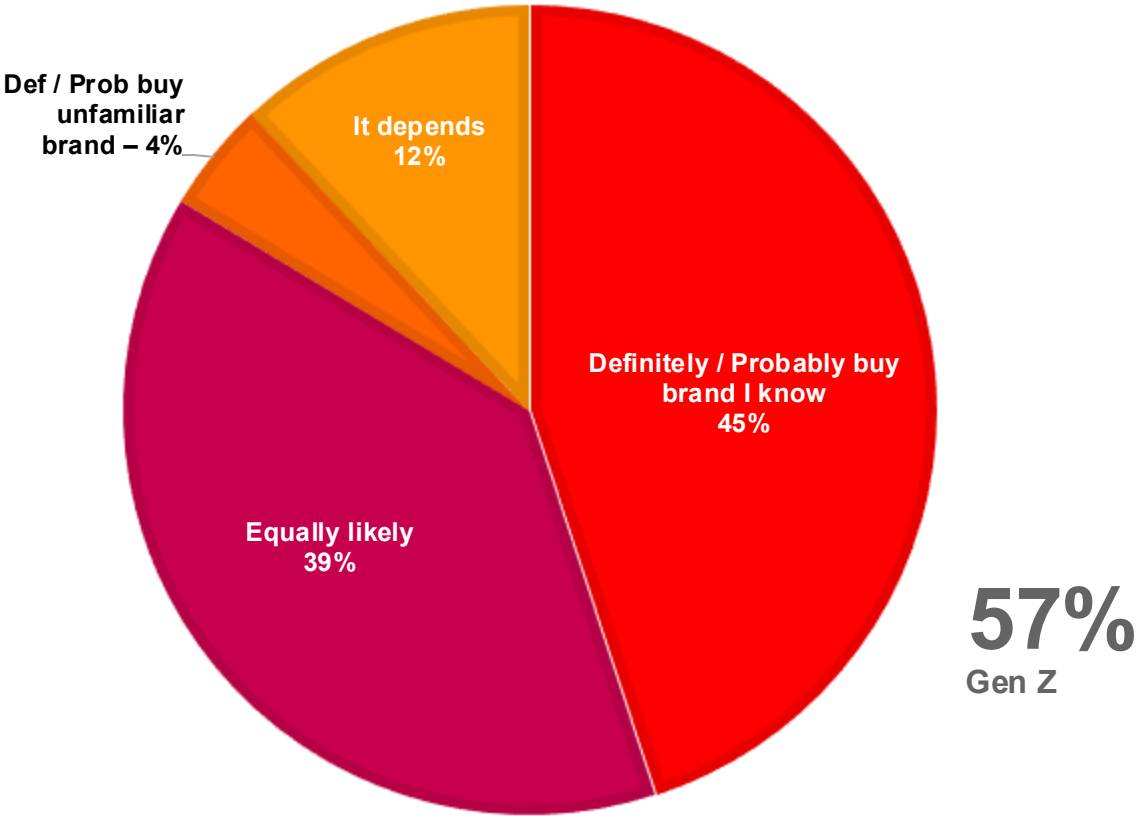
(% of AI Tool / Feature Users – Top 3 Benefits)



Shoppers leveraging AI tools are more likely to stick to a familiar brand than to buy a new brand that AI recommends

AI RECOMMENDATIONS & BRAND LOYALTY

(% of AI Tool / Feature users)



However, certain circumstances show the usefulness of AI’s recommending new items:

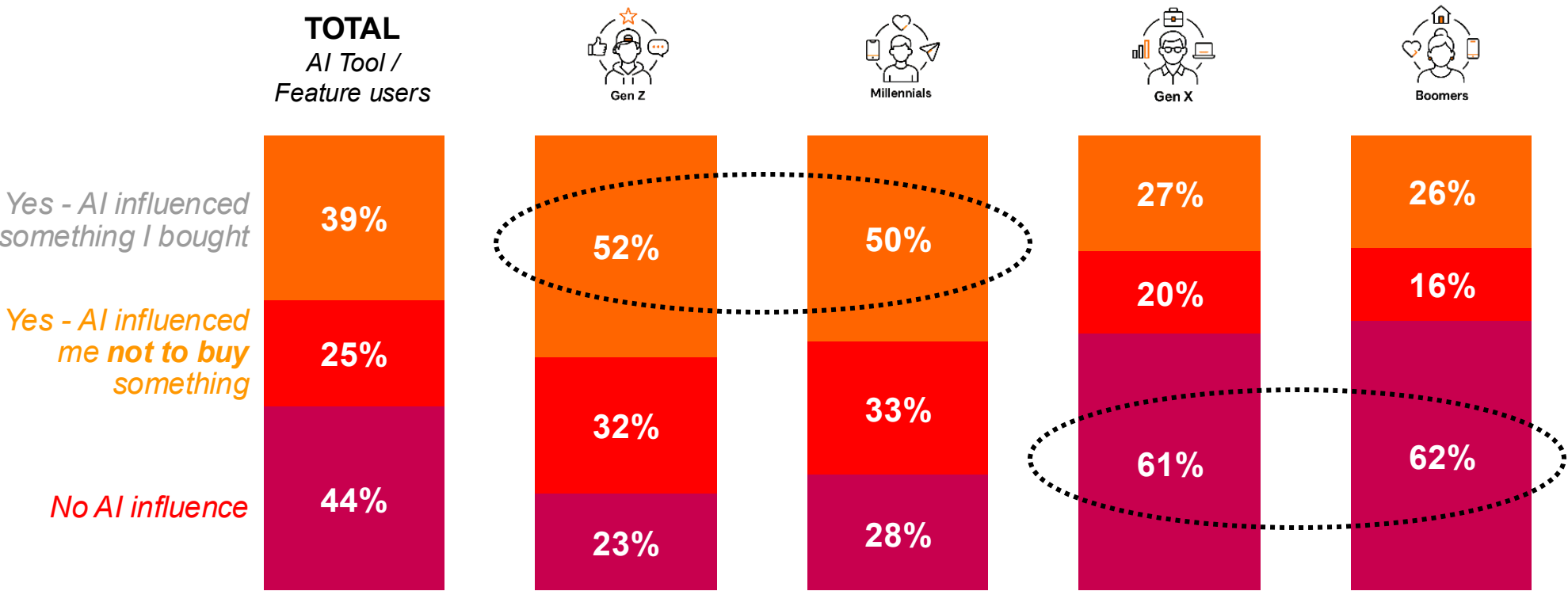
“ Gen AI helped me find a good quality food for one of my animals with health issues and locate a store in my area that carried it. There are so many options, it’s almost impossible to compare on your own to find a product to fit exactly what you need. I ended up with a brand I’d never heard of that just worked wonders. Without Gen AI, I would never have found this brand at all. ”



AI is more influential for buying decisions among younger shoppers, while AI has no influence on most older shoppers

AI's Influence on Purchase Decisions – Last 3 months

(% of AI Tool / Feature users)



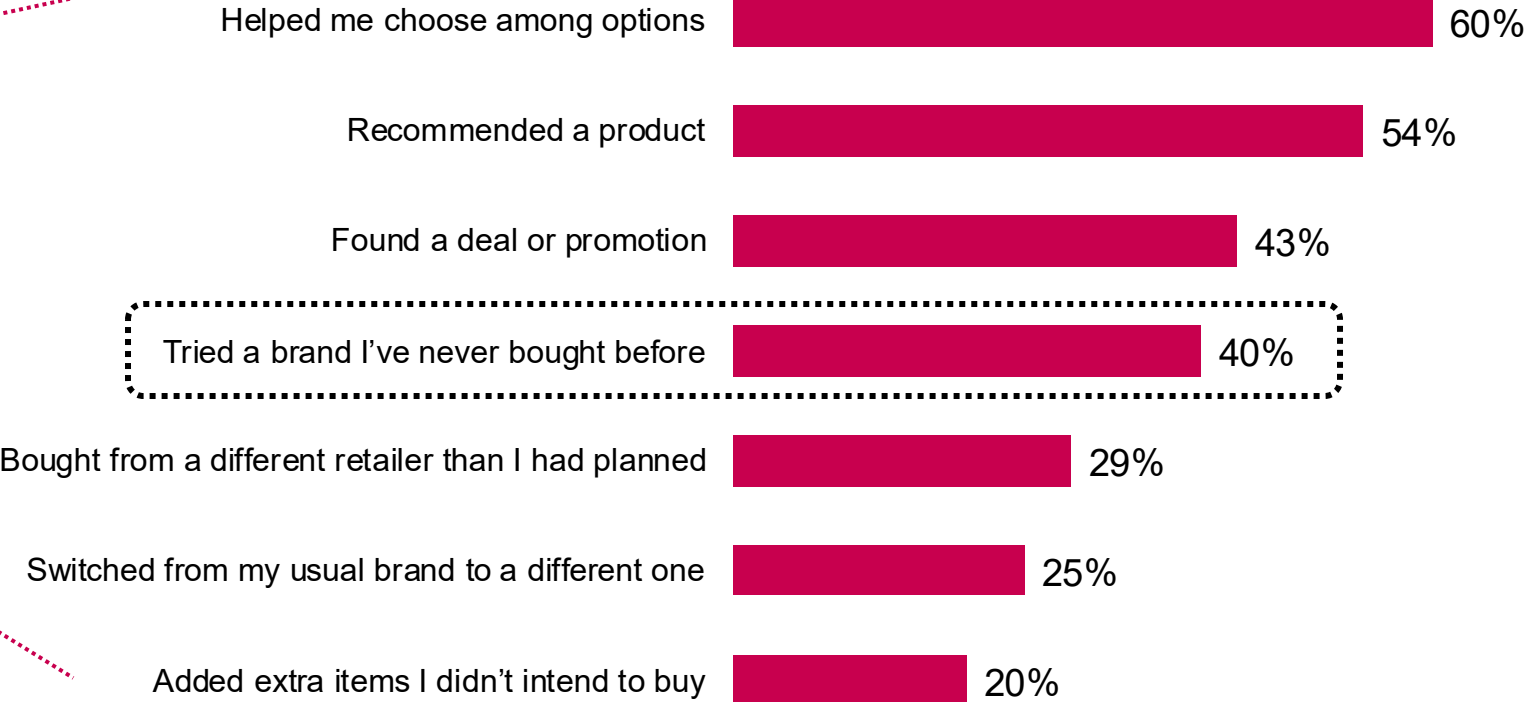
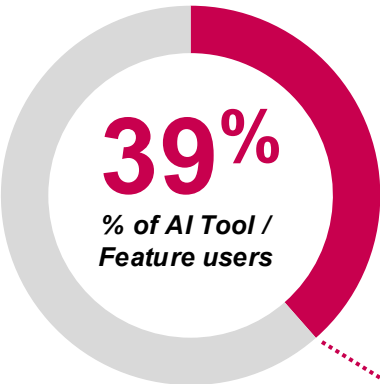
In the past 3 months, has an AI tool directly influenced whether or not you bought something?

Among shoppers influenced by AI in recent purchase decisions, a majority felt it helped in selecting among options, and a notable amount bought a new brand

HOW AI INFLUENCED PURCHASE DECISIONS

(% of AI Tool / Feature users)

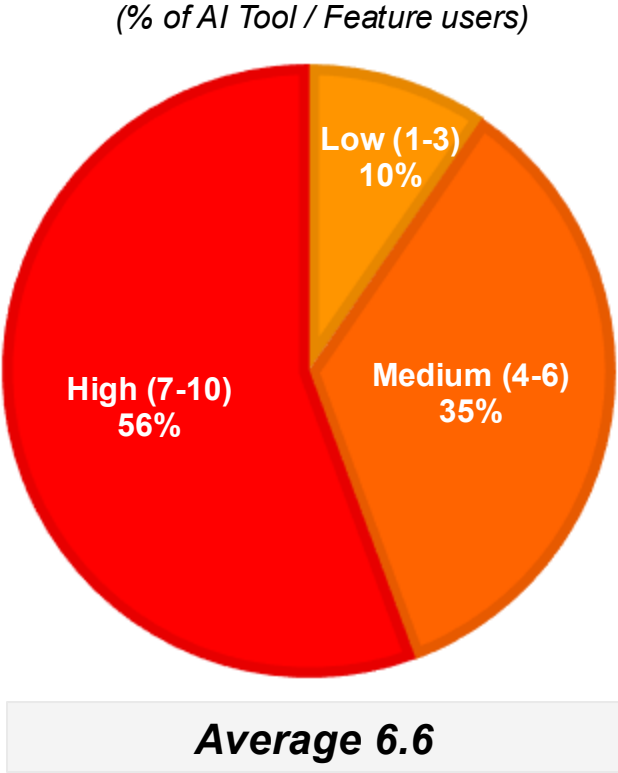
Yes - AI influenced something I bought



In the past 3 months, has an AI tool directly influenced whether or not you bought something?
How did AI influence your purchase? (Select all that apply)

Most shoppers who use AI tools are concerned that AI recommendations are biased by ads that hurt shopper trust

CONCERN OVER AI RECOMMENDATIONS BEING INFLUENCED BY ADS



How concerned are you that AI recommendations may be influenced by ads or sponsorships? Scale: 1 = Not at all concerned and 10 = Extremely concerned



*Do AI recommendations ever seem influenced by ads...?
If you were to see ads in AI recommendations, how would it influence how much you would trust the suggestions?*

"It would **influence me quite well**, and I would look into AI suggestions. I think they can be reliable and helpful."
Female Millennial

"Seeing ads **wouldn't change my opinion** one bit. These days there are ads **everywhere**, no matter how much you try to get rid of them, they persist to pop up. It's **easy enough to get around it** ... by just **asking for other options**."
Male Gen X

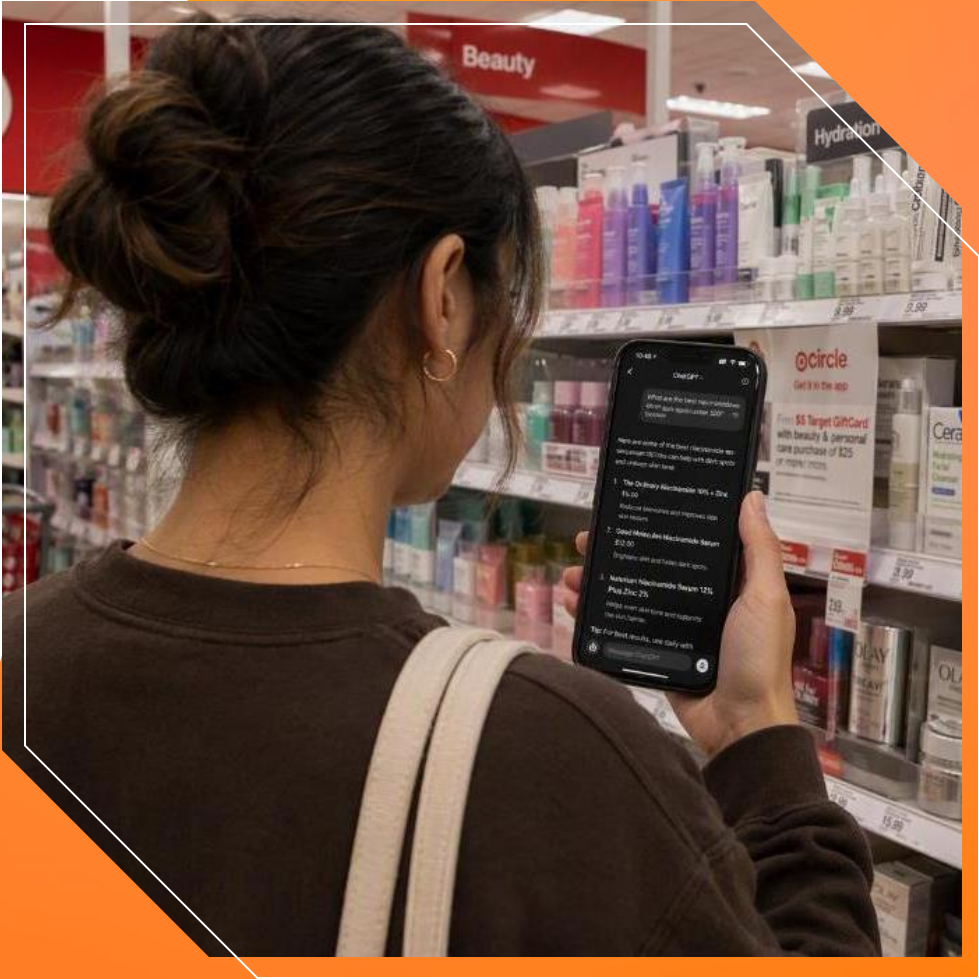
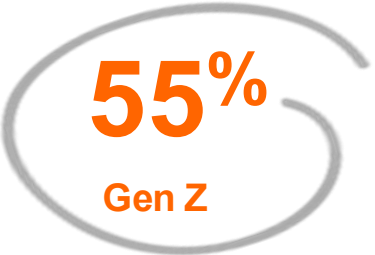
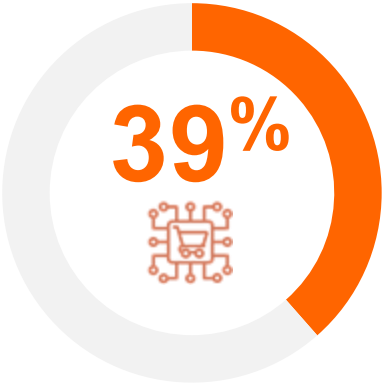
"**AI ads need a disclaimer** that they don't influence the responses you get. That'd certainly be a step to building trust. ... When asking for GenAI to recommend what to purchase, I'd be **concerned the responses won't be as accurate** because the primary goal is to promote a good or service."
Female Gen Z

"If ads were **mixed into AI recommendations**, it would make me **more cautious** about relying on them. I would start separating 'suggestions based on my needs' from 'items being promoted,' and I would probably **double check everything**."
Male Millennial

"I **do not yet trust ads** in AI recommendations because I feel they can be biased or misleading, but I know **in the future it will be the way to shop**."
Female Boomer

Younger shoppers are more likely than older shoppers to use AI in stores

Using AI Tools / Features while Shopping in a Store
(% of AI Tool / Feature users)



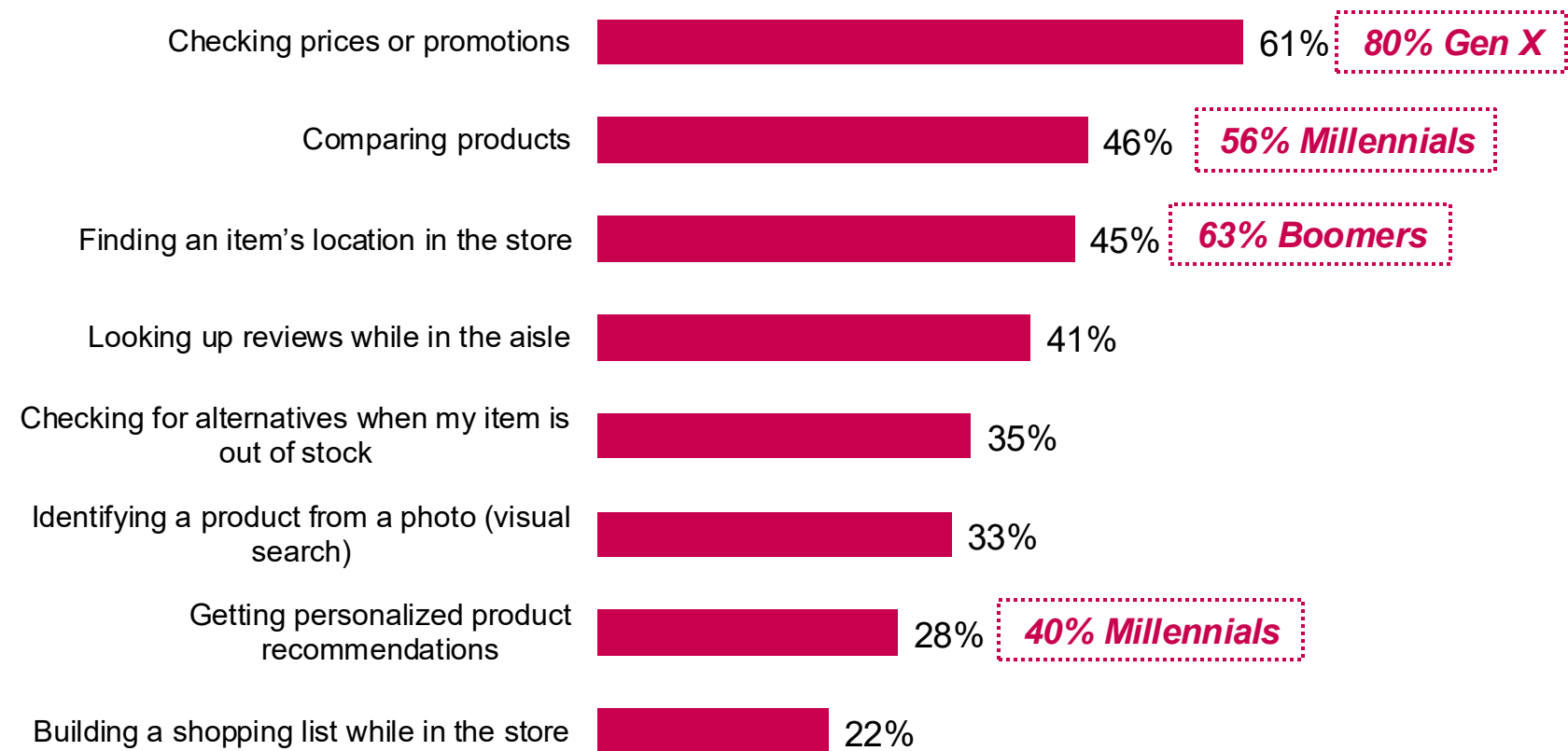
Have you ever used any AI tools/features while you were shopping in a store (e.g., to compare options, find items, check prices, etc.)?

Most use AI based tools in stores to save money and to help select the best products for their needs



AI Tools/Features Used in Stores

(% of AI Tool / Feature users who use AI tools in stores)

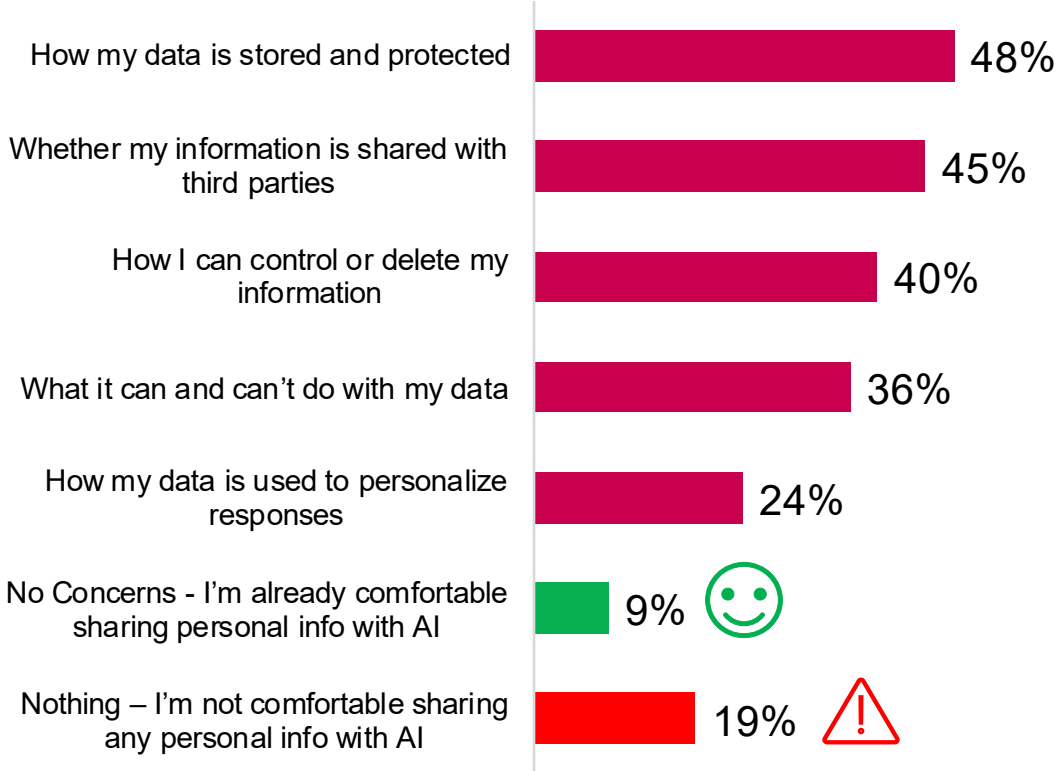


Gen AI – Trust and Information Sharing

Consistent with 2025, shoppers still want transparency on how their data is stored and used

What Shoppers Need To Alleviate Concerns Over Sharing Information with AI

(% Total U.S. Shoppers)



Source: Acosta Group Shopper Community AI Enabled Shopping survey – May 2026



What would you need to know about how AI handles your information to make you more comfortable sharing personal information with it to get the best results tailored to your needs? Select up to your top 3.

Younger shoppers willing to share information with Gen AI are more likely to share personal details such as medical history or a photo to aid personalization

(% Total U.S. Shoppers OK Sharing Information with AI)

Personal Information		Shopping Preferences	
Gender	70%	Favorite retailers or stores	53%
Age	67%	Preferred brands	47%
City or zip code	60%	Spending persona (bargain hunter to big spender)	44%
Household size and structure (e.g., kids, pets)	45%	Maximum price I'd pay for a specific product	44% -10 vs. 2025
Occupation or industry	36%	Typical budget range by category	42%
Typical daily routine (e.g., work from home, parenting)	27%	How I make purchase decisions (e.g., reviews, price, brand loyalty)	36%
Medical history (e.g., for useful health information)	19%	Brands I WON'T buy	36%
MILLENNIALS My photo (e.g., for clothes/makeup/hair products)	27%	How often I shop	32%
GEN Z	29%	GEN Z	44%

Specifically for Gen AI, few shoppers who use Gen AI trust an agent to *buy* items for them, while issues include lack of fit, missing items, or bias

(% of Gen AI Users for Shopping)

Tasks Shoppers Trust Gen AI Agent to Handle

Finding the best deal on a product	71%
Comparing product reviews	70%
Product recommendations	69%
Making gift suggestions	41%
Reordering groceries/household essentials	24%
Making purchases using my account/card	22%★
None of the above	2%

★ 35% of Millennial Gen AI shoppers trust it to make purchases

Issues with Gen AI Shopping

Recommended items that were not a good fit	21%
Missed a cheaper option	21%
Seemed biased toward certain products	20%
Left out important details	19%
Gave contradictory or inconsistent answers	19%
Made up/incorrect information	19%
Nothing has gone wrong	46%

Assuming it follows your criteria, what tasks would you trust a Gen AI assistant/agent to handle? - Select all that apply
What, if anything, has gone wrong when you used Gen AI while shopping? - Select all that apply

Source: Acosta Group Shopper Community AI Enabled Shopping survey – May 2026

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Acosta Group owns and maintains a proprietary Shopper Community of over 40,000 U.S. household shoppers who provide feedback on what drives their shopping and consumption behaviors – insights which brands and customers need to solve critical business issues.

For further information, please contact: [acosta.group/contact](https://www.acosta.group/contact)



Retailer-aligned
sales agency



Technical operational
experts



Costco-focused
sales agency



North America's leading agency
away from home



Category-aligned
sales agency



Industry-leading retail and
field marketing (UK)



Integrated marketing and
creative powerhouse



Tailored merchandising and
assisted sales solutions



Experts in customer
engagement programs



Data-driven field sales +
brand advocacy (UK)