

# Merchants vs. Shoppers: Different Views on Ecommerce Features and Personalization





What drives shoppers to make purchases? What functionality do they prefer on ecommerce websites? What do they feel about personalisation? What are merchants prioritizing that they shouldn't be? What important features are they ignoring? How can we make commerce better for professionals and shoppers alike?

Dive into this research to discover something you didn't already know about ecommerce, and opportunities to improve your own online store.

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# Methodology

## 2024 Shopper Survey

# 2.5million

Insights from UK Adults

## 2024 Merchant Survey

# 485

E-commerce Insights from  
Industry Leaders

### Introduction

This study aims to compare the perspectives of two key groups in the e-commerce ecosystem: merchants and shoppers. By examining both sides, we aim to uncover the differing and sometimes overlapping viewpoints regarding online store features and personalization. Understanding these perspectives is crucial for bridging the gap between user experience and store management, ultimately leading to better-aligned e-commerce strategies. **The main goal of this research is to improve online shopping experiences** by understanding customer needs more deeply.

### Shopper Survey

The shopper survey was conducted by YouGov on behalf of Klevu. The fieldwork was carried out from 7th to 8th May 2024, utilizing an online interview administered to members of the YouGov Plc UK panel, which consists of over 2.5 million individuals. The total sample size was 2016 adults, aged 18 and above.

### Merchant Survey

The merchant survey was conducted by BigCommerce on behalf of Klevu, with fieldwork conducted from 27th May to 15th June 2024. The survey targeted individuals holding significant roles within e-commerce businesses, such as owners, C-level executives, managers, and digital directors. The survey gathered responses from 485 individuals in total.

01

# Usage of Search Bar Functionality on Ecommerce Stores

Merchants and shoppers have similar assumptions and behaviors regarding the usage of **search functionality**.

### Merchants

68% of merchants believe their shoppers use the search functionality often.

### Shoppers

65% of those who have shopped online in the last six months use the search functionality often.

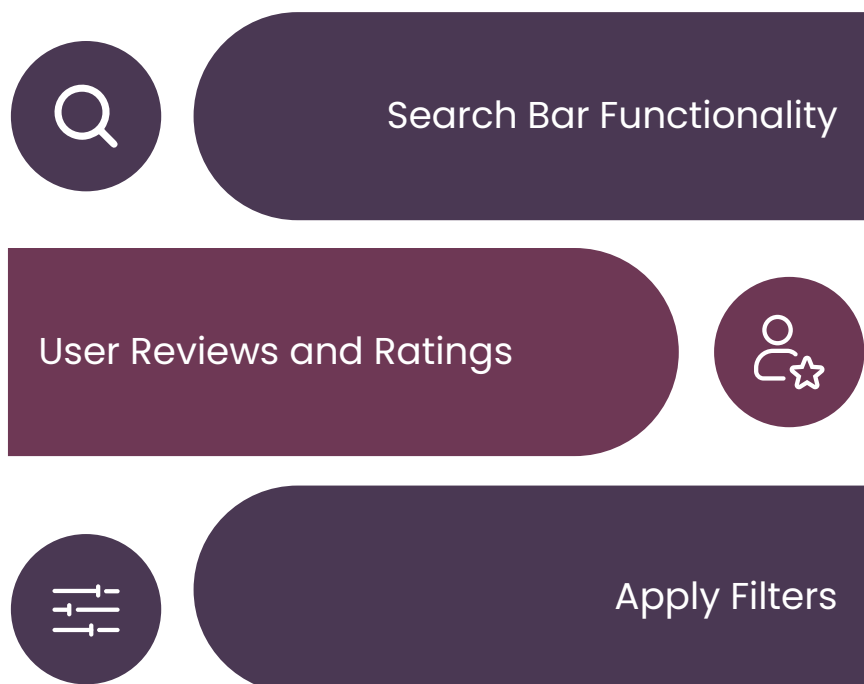
68%

65%

# Most Important Ecommerce Store Features: Shoppers vs. Merchants



Ability to apply filters,  
user reviews and ratings,  
and search bar functionality  
are the top 3 features of an  
online store which shoppers  
found most useful.



## Merchant Survey

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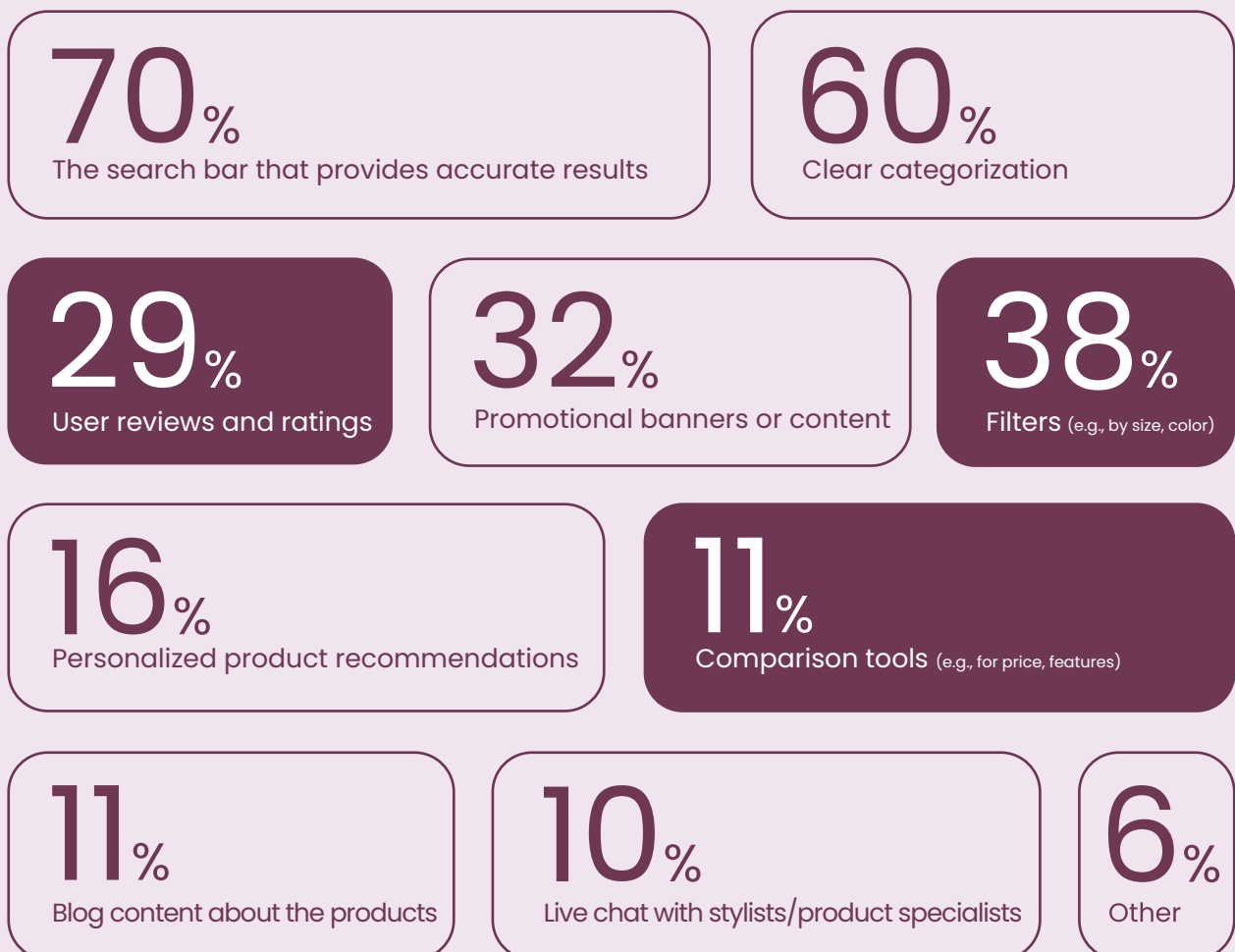
### Question

Which feature of your online store do you believe is the most valuable to your customers?

(Select all that apply)

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### Results



## Shopper Survey

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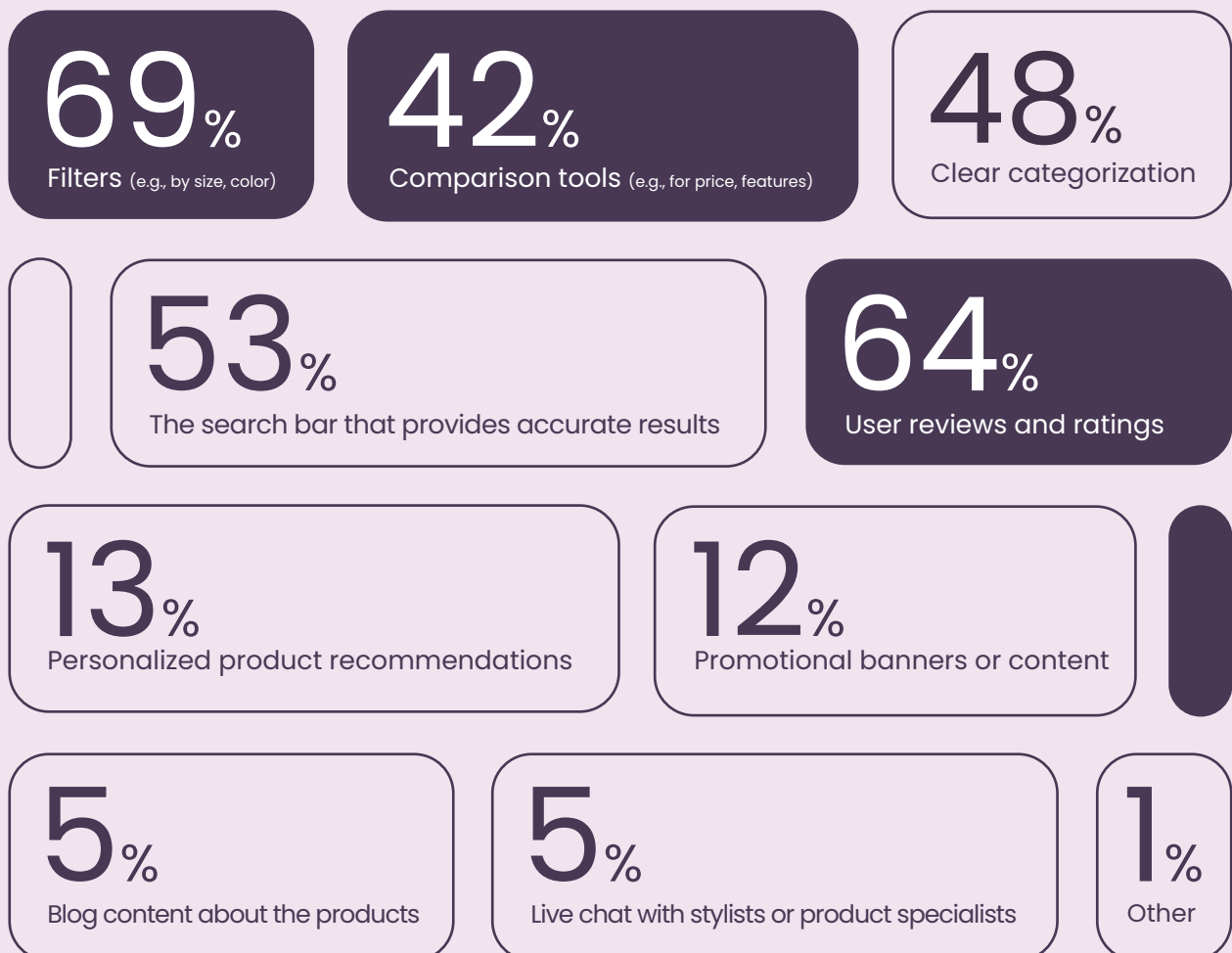
### Question

Which, if any, of the following features of an online store do you find useful?

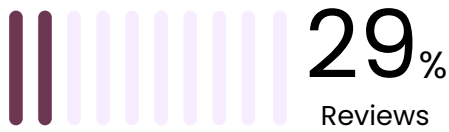
(Select all that apply)

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### Results



## Merchants



Merchants place less value on reviews (29%) and comparison tools (11%) than shoppers do (64% and 42%, respectively). Though filtering is considered the third most valuable feature to merchants, it's significantly more important to shoppers, as their top choice for website tools.

### Why is this happening?

The market is saturated with products, and shoppers are seeking reviews as a source of authority and trust. Shoppers may be buying from retailers who offer lower-priced products, where the quality could be questionable, prompting them to check reviews more thoroughly. Additionally, with advertising reaching customers more easily, shoppers may not be familiar with the brands they are purchasing from, making reviews even more critical.

The abundance of products leads to an overwhelming amount of choice for shoppers. This is why they heavily rely on comparison tools, reviews, and filters to navigate through the vast options available.

## Shoppers



Shoppers are overwhelmed with advertising and new information, making these tools essential for making informed purchasing decisions.

On the other hand, the features that merchants find valuable, such as managing the search bar, clear categorization, filters, and promotional banners, are generally time-consuming tasks. These features help merchants manage a large number of products efficiently. While customers are trying to solve the problem of finding the right products (with filters and reviews), merchants are trying to solve the same problem by organizing and presenting their vast inventories effectively (categorization, promotions) – Both doing things as a response to market saturation.

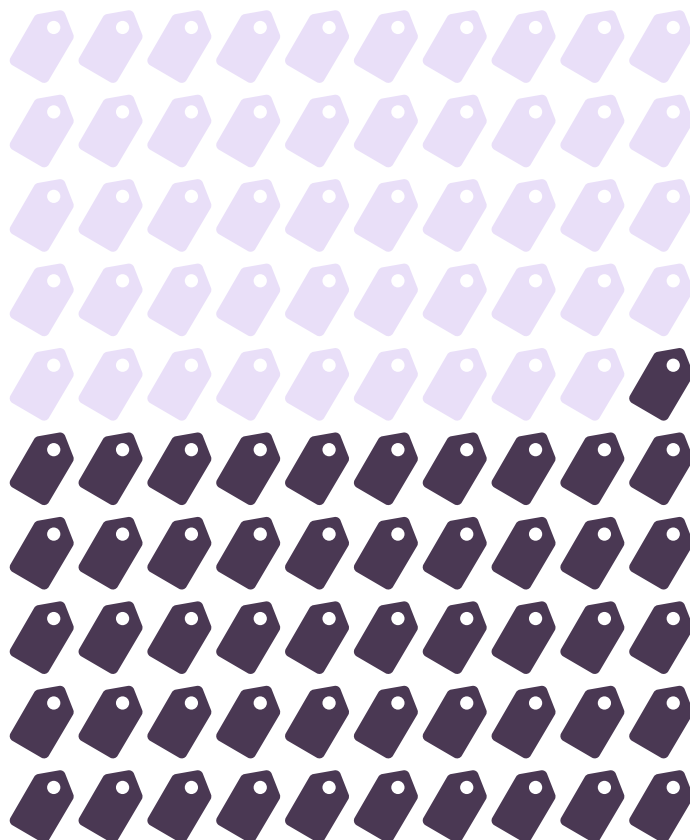
Surprisingly, neither merchants nor shoppers appreciate blog content as valuable. However this doesn't mean that content isn't important for brand authority and SEO.

03

# Influence of Product Recommendations

Over half (51%) of adults who shopped online in the last 6 months were never or only rarely influenced by product recommendations.

51%  
of online shoppers rarely or  
never influenced by product  
recommendations



## Merchant Survey

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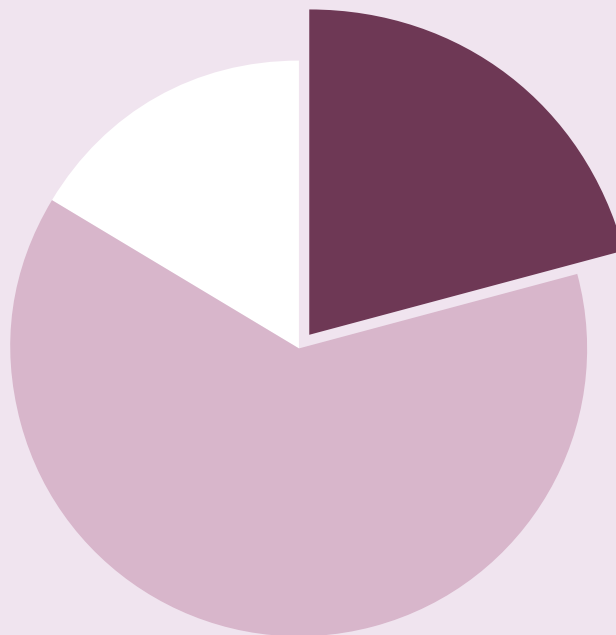
### Question

How often do you believe your customers are influenced by product recommendations?

(e.g., 'users also bought', 'style with', 'similar products')?

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### Results



21%

Strongly influenced

63%

Somewhat influenced

16%

Not influenced

## Shopper Survey

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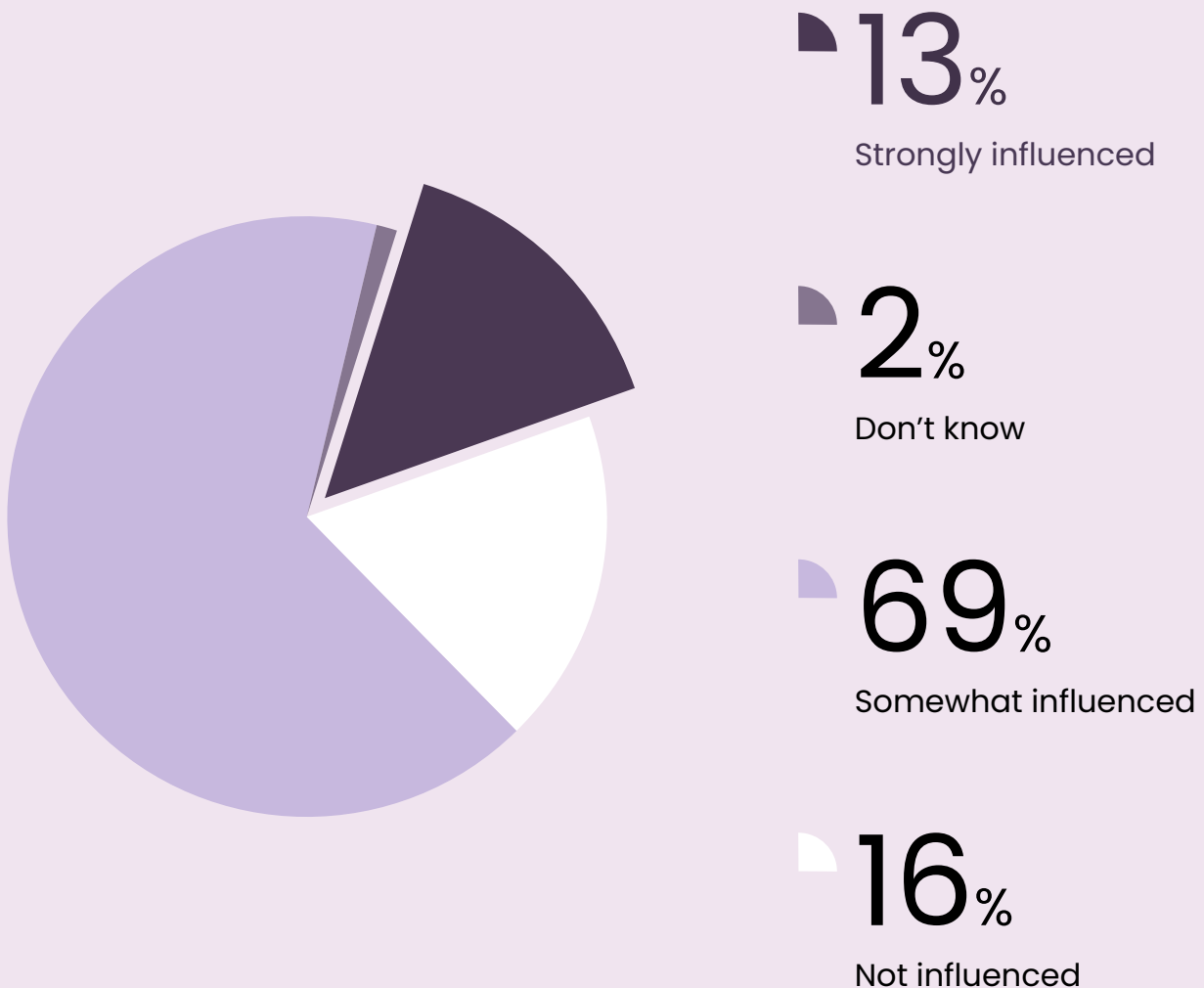
### Question

How often, if at all, are you influenced by product recommendations?

(e.g., 'users also bought', 'style with', 'similar products')

---

### Results





## Product Recommendations

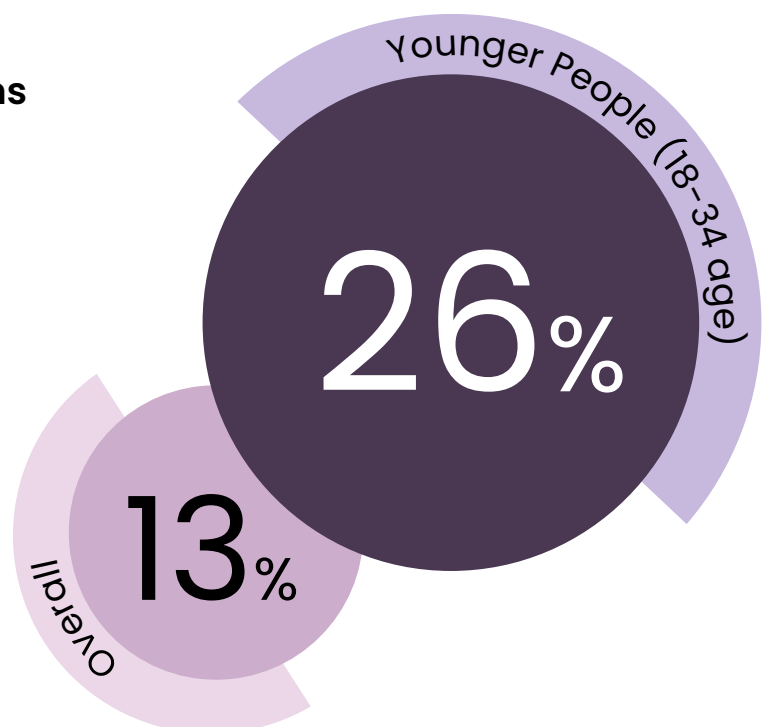
63% of their customers are sometimes or rarely influenced by product recommendations, while 69% of shoppers stated the same.

The results show a similar trend between how merchants view product recommendations and how shoppers receive them. Merchants reported that 62.7% of their customers are sometimes or rarely influenced by product recommendations, while 69.03% of shoppers stated the same.

Interestingly, younger people (aged 18-34) are more influenced by product recommendations, with 26% being influenced either always or often, compared to 13% overall.

It seems that product recommendations are not a crucial part of the website, given the high percentage of both merchants and shoppers indicating they are only sometimes or rarely influenced by them. However, this is likely because **the influence of product recommendations is more subconscious, with shoppers are not realizing they are influenced by them.**

## People Influenced by Product Recommendations



04

# Virtual Shopping Assistant

Many merchants are still in the consideration or planning stages of integrating virtual shopping assistants, which explains why a significant percentage of merchants (76%) are interested in or possibly considering it, but the actual implementation is still low.

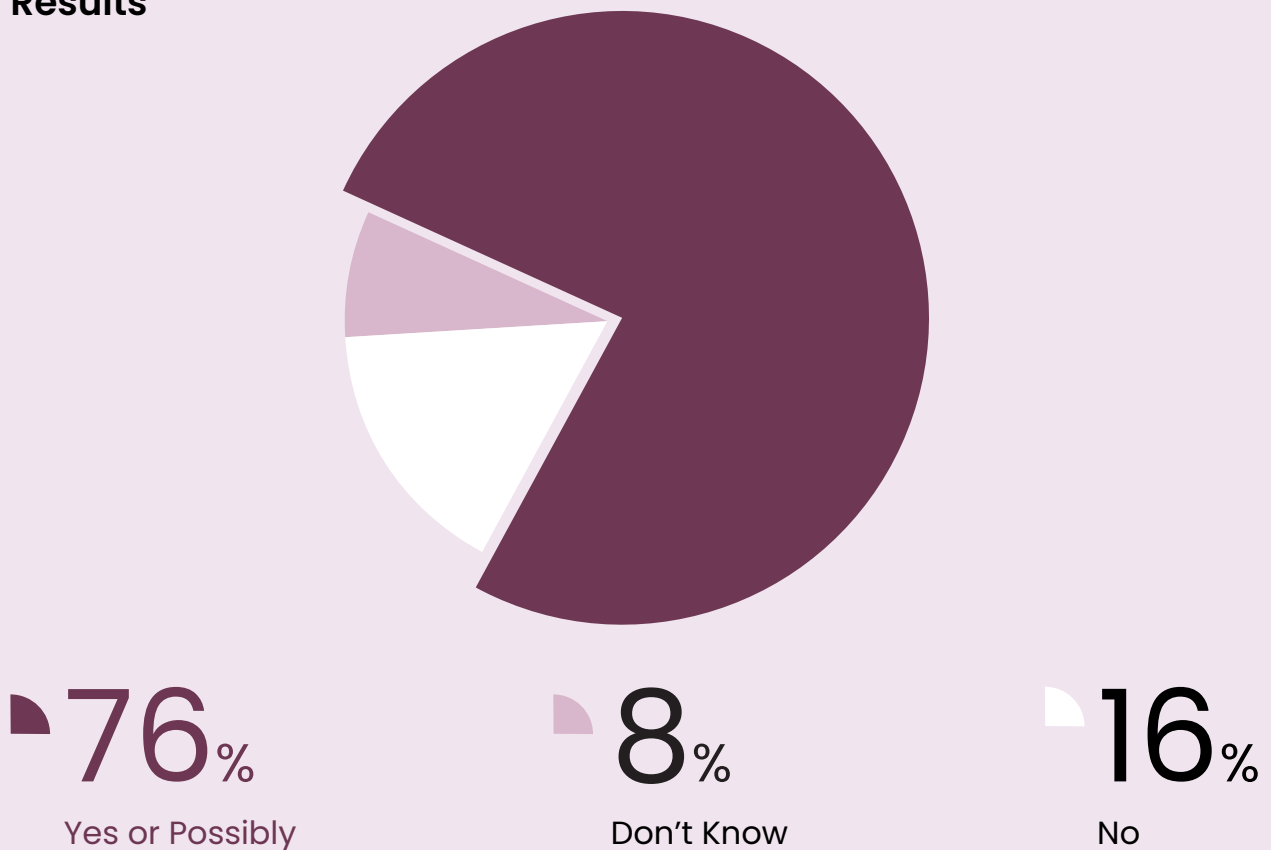
61% of adults who have shopped online in the last 6 months have never used a virtual shopping assistant, while only 2% always use it. The primary reason for the low usage among shoppers is the limited availability of virtual shopping assistants on e-commerce platforms. Many online stores have yet to adopt this technology, so shoppers haven't had the opportunity to use it extensively.

### Question

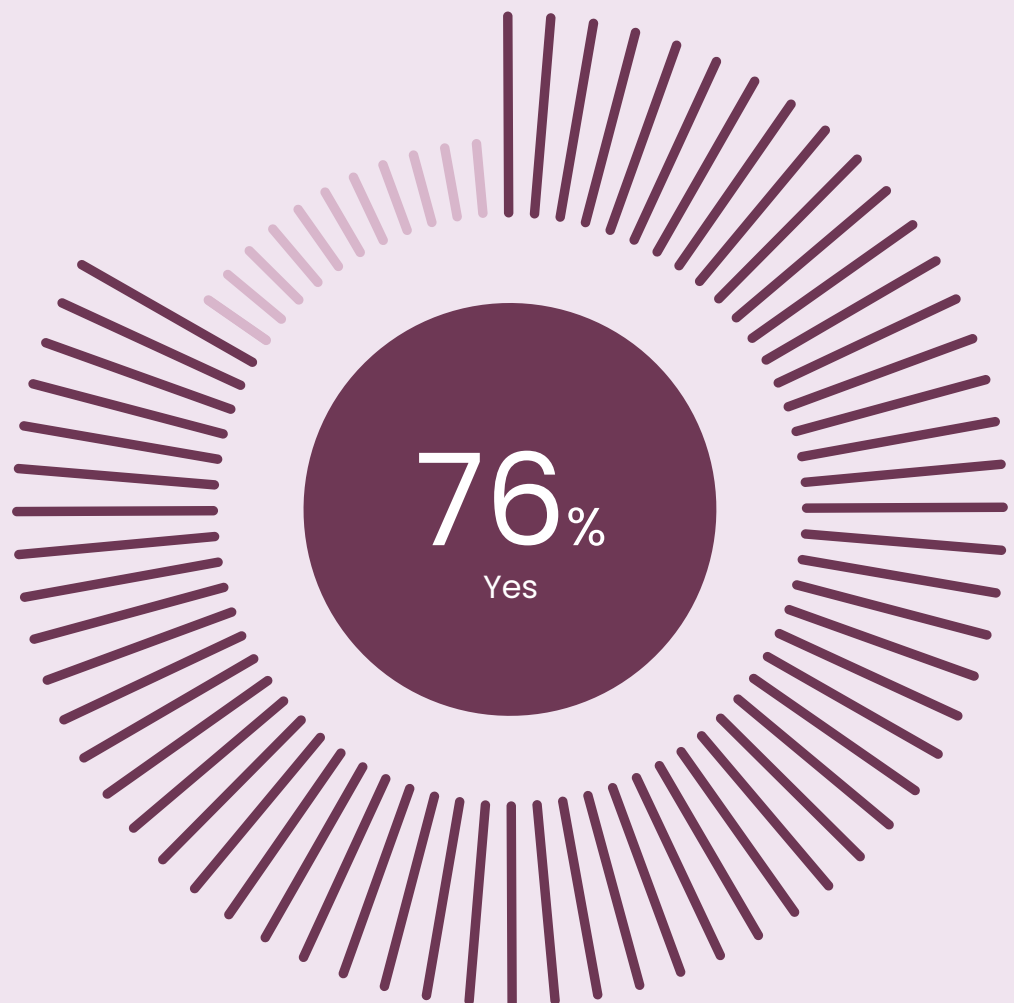
Would you consider integrating a virtual shopping assistant in your online store to help customers make purchase decisions based on their questions and preferences?

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### Results



In the merchant survey, a total of 76% responded “Yes” or “Possibly,” indicating a strong interest in integrating virtual shopping assistants. Only 16% answered “No.”



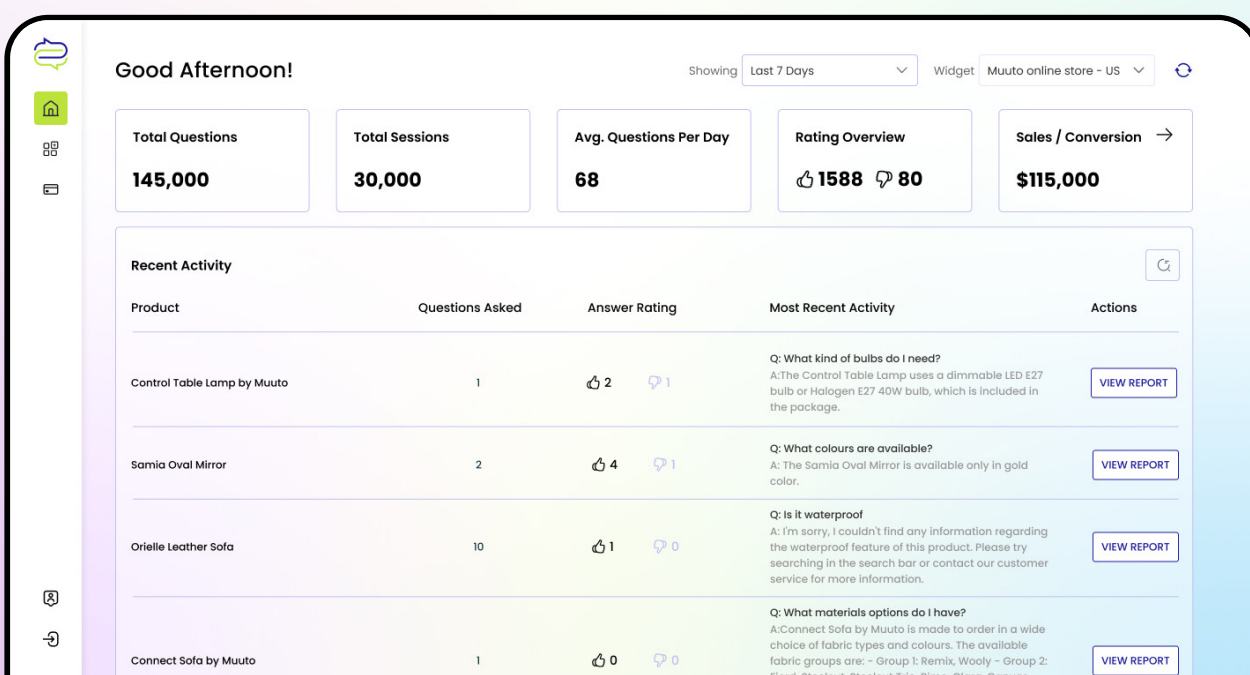
# Have You Heard About Asklo?



# Turn visitors into shoppers with **Asklo AI assistant**

Asklo.ai is an AI-powered assistant designed to enhance eCommerce websites by answering customer queries directly on product pages. It helps engage and convert shoppers by providing instant responses about products, shipping, and more, reducing the burden on support channels.

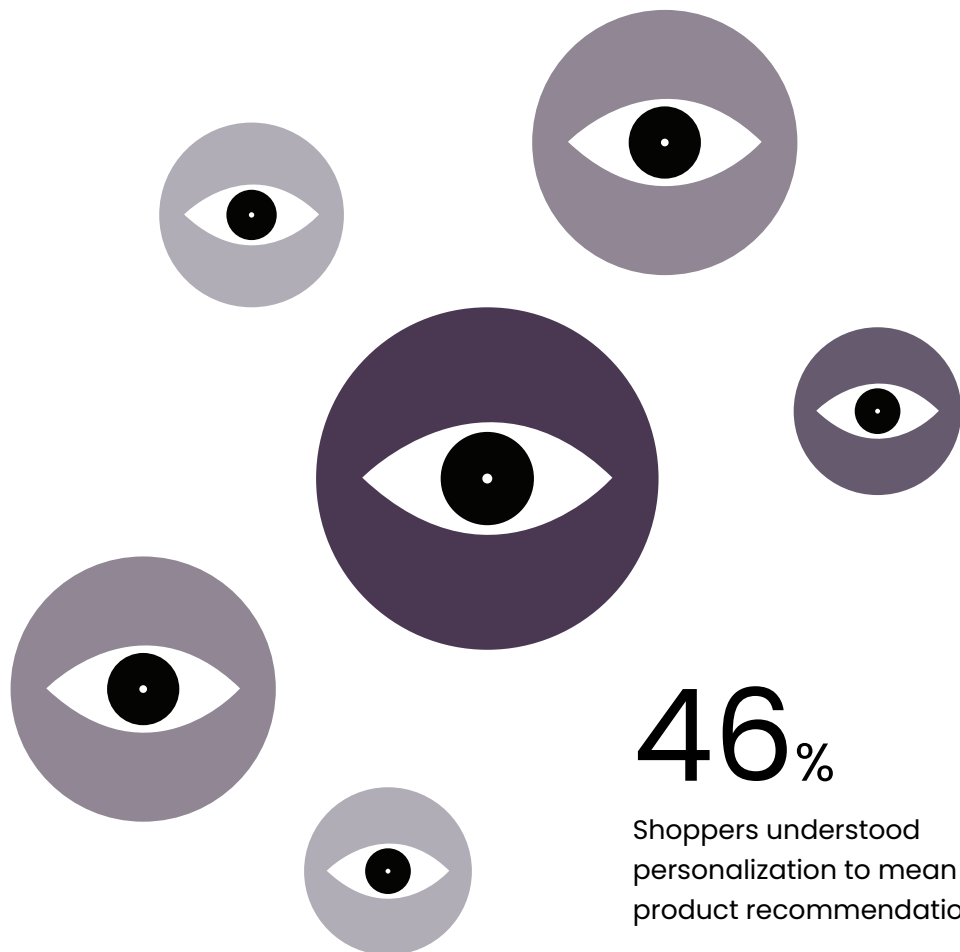
Key features include **AI-generated Q&A, intent-driven conversational AI, customizable widgets, and multilingual support**. It integrates with any e-commerce platform and offers real-time analytics to optimize product listings. Pricing plans range from free to enterprise levels, based on usage needs.



# Personalization in the Online Store



Almost half of shoppers (46%) understood personalization to mean product recommendations based on previous purchases, with some expressing discomfort, describing it as “creepy spying on my browsing”.



## Merchant Survey

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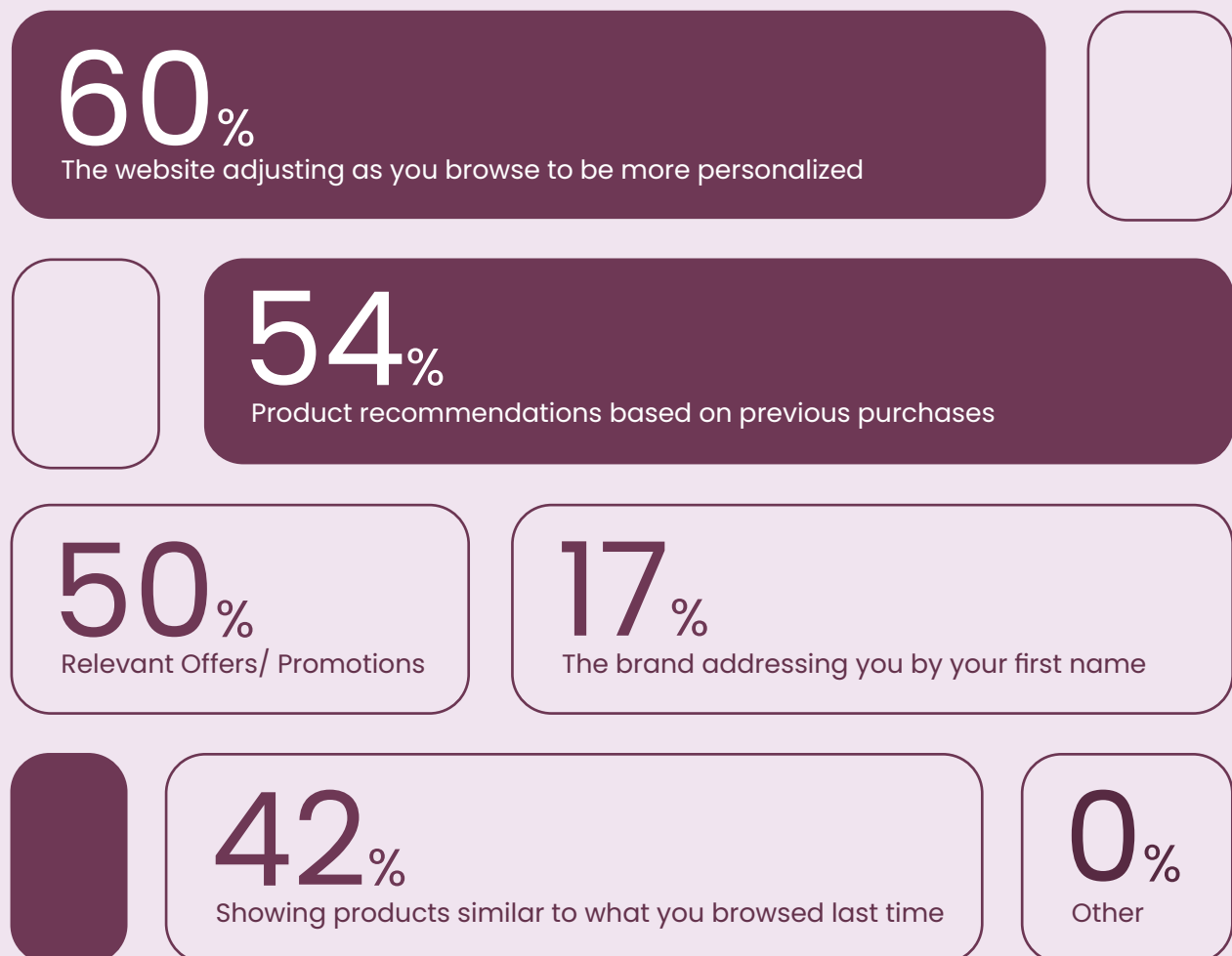
### Question

What does personalization on an online store mean to you?

(Select all that apply)

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### Results



## Shoppers Survey

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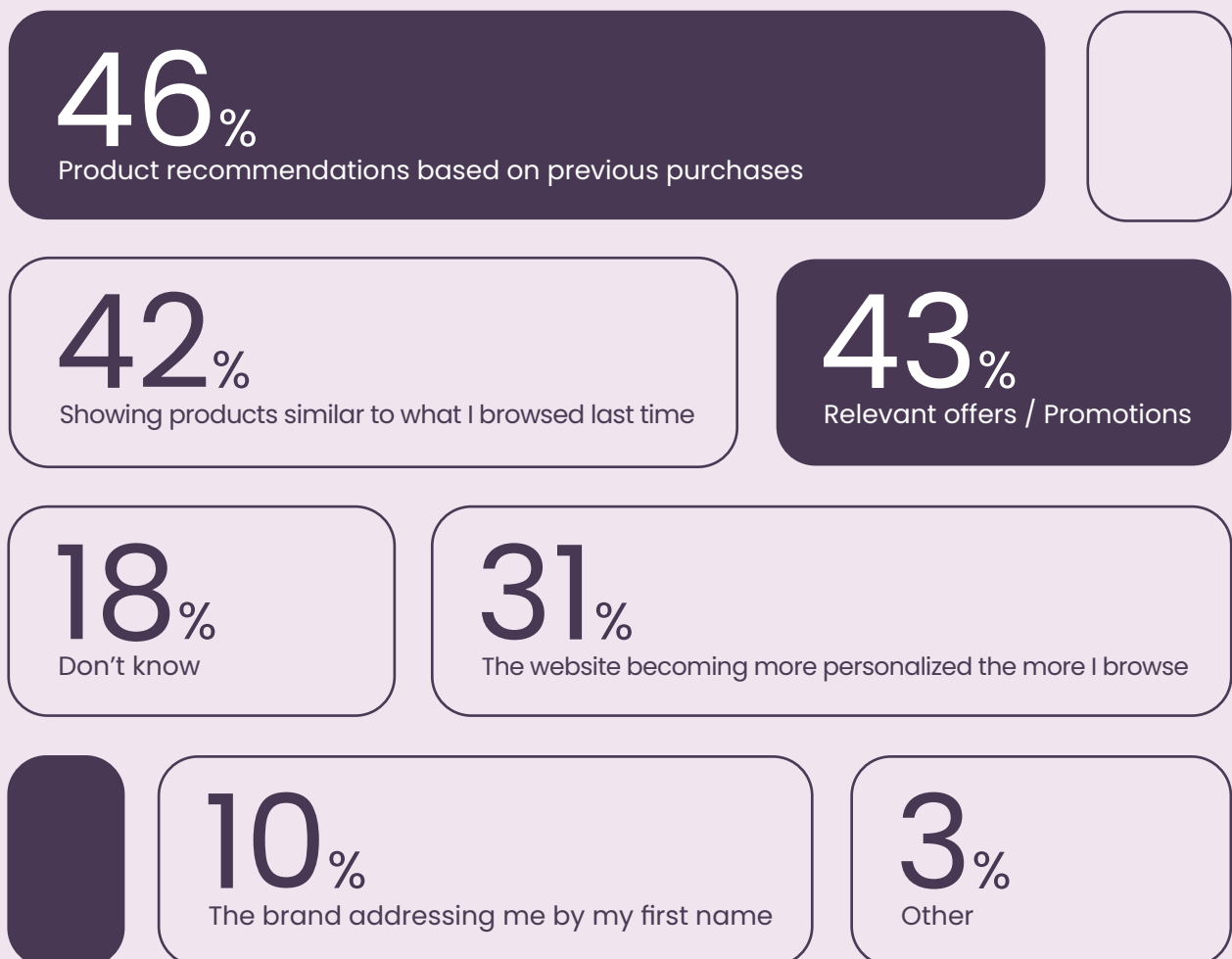
### Question

What does personalization on an online store mean to you?

(Select all that apply)

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### Results



## Personalized features, often perceived as intrusive and manipulative

I find personalization creepy and disengaging,  
“An infringement of my privacy,” and “Creepy spying on my browsing” reflect a strong sentiment of discomfort.

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The survey results reveal differing interpretations of personalization on e-commerce platforms between merchants and shoppers. While merchants largely view personalization as dynamic website adjustments and targeted recommendations, shoppers also include these features but emphasize practical elements like relevant offers and showing similar products.

The open-ended responses from shoppers indicate a considerable amount of discomfort and dissatisfaction with personalized features, often perceived as intrusive and manipulative. Quotes like “I find personalization creepy and disengaging,” “An infringement of my privacy,” and “Creepy spying on my browsing” reflect a strong sentiment of discomfort.

# Impact of Personalized Product Recommendations

Almost 3 in 10 people  
(29%) who have shopped  
online in the last 6 months  
like receiving product  
recommendations based on  
their behavior (e.g., searching, product views).

Those in the younger age  
groups like receiving product  
recommendations more vs  
older age groups.

**29%**  
of recent online shoppers  
like behavior-based product  
recommendations

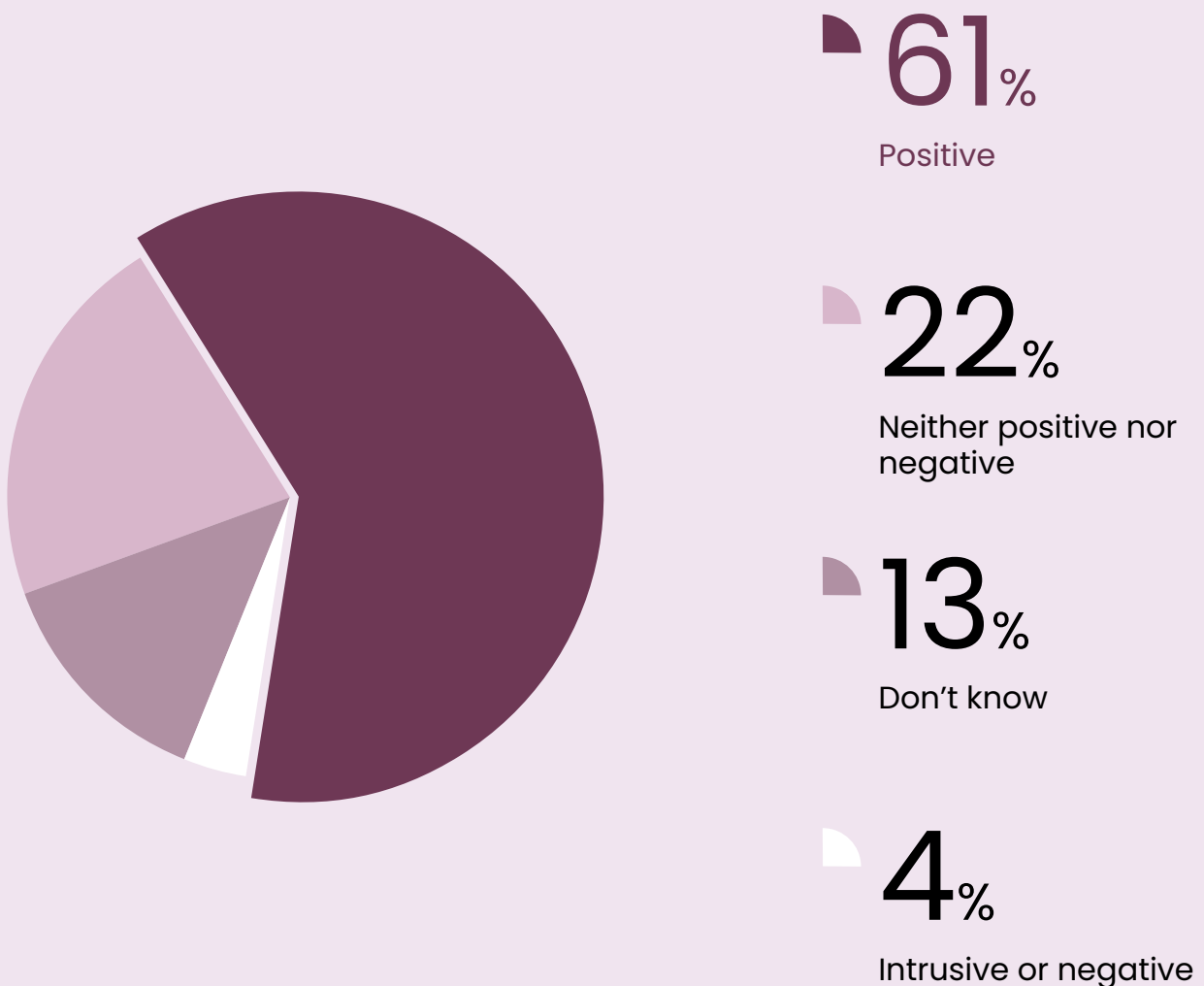


### Question

How do you perceive the impact of personalized product recommendations on customer engagement?

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### Results



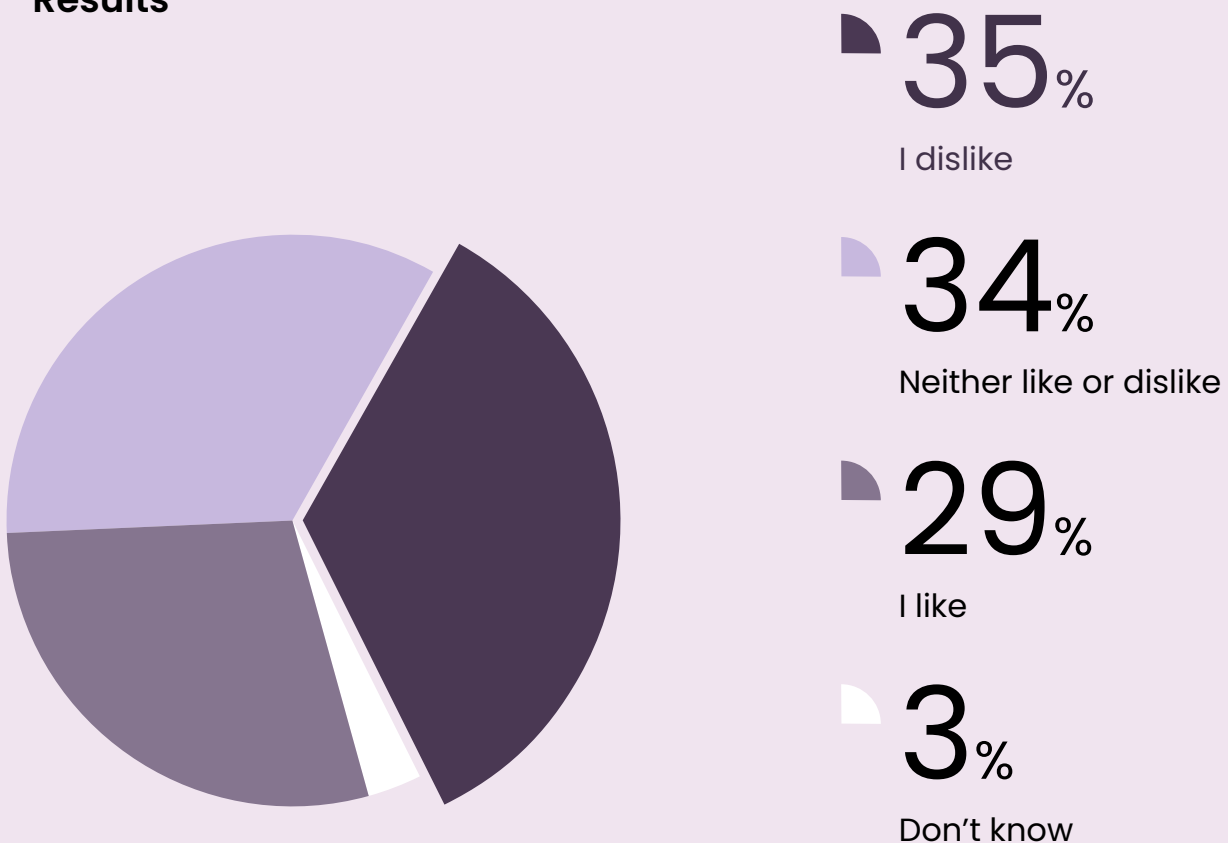
### Question

To what extent do you like or dislike receiving personalized product recommendations based on your behavior on the online store?

(e.g., searching, product views)

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### Results





Always ensuring the personalization engine resets after a period of time to avoid shoppers getting stuck in a filter bubble.



Retailers approaching personalization strategies should consider a subtle but effective approach, mixing behavioral clickstream personalization with segmentation tactics, always ensuring the personalization engine resets after a period of time to avoid shoppers getting stuck in a filter bubble.

# Features That Adjust Store Layout Based on Past Behavior

4 people out of 10 (42%) who have shopped online in the last 6 months were interested in a feature that adjusts an online store's layout and content based on their interests and past behaviors.

Yes

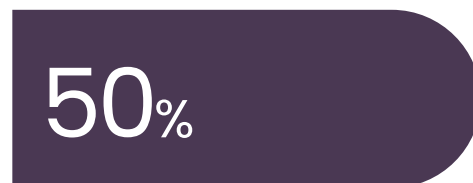
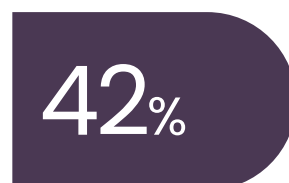


No

### Merchants

In contrast, 80% of merchants are either interested or might be interested in such a feature, with only 13% saying "no" to this feature.

Yes



No

### Shoppers

This creates a significant gap in thinking between shoppers and merchants. While 42% of shoppers are interested, 50% of shoppers are not interested in this feature.

## Shoppers Survey

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### Question

How interested, if at all are you in a feature that adjusts an online store's layout and content based on your interests and past behaviors?

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### Results



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# Why do shoppers not favor the website adjusting as they browse to be more personalized?

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## Shoppers already know what they want:

Many shoppers have a clear idea of what they are looking for and may find personalized adjustments intrusive, thinking, “I don’t trust the engine, leave me alone.”

## Privacy concerns:

It is likely that many shoppers do not fully understand what personalization means and may assume that privacy issues are involved, leading to a lack of interest in such features.

Retailers considering dynamically personalizing the website should consider where this happens, keep it subtle and relevant to their current buying journey.

# Privacy Concerns in Personalization: Shoppers' Fears and Merchants' Dilemmas

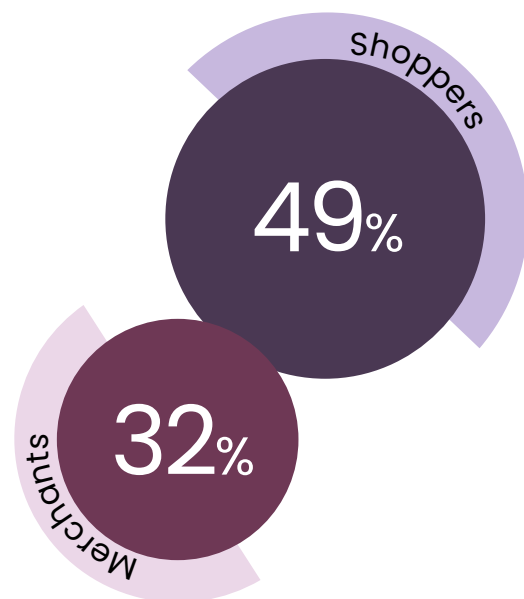
# Half of online shoppers felt that personalisation on an online store was infringing on their privacy.

Half of online shoppers felt that personalization on an online store was infringing on their privacy. The percentage of “yes” was mainly driven by the 55+ age group, with over half (55%) feeling that personalization infringed on their privacy.

A significantly higher percentage of shoppers (49%) feel that stores are infringing on their privacy compared to merchants (32%) who feel privacy concerns affect their decision to implement personalization features. This indicates that privacy is a more pressing concern for shoppers than it is perceived by merchants.

Additionally, a larger proportion of merchants (31%) are uncertain about privacy concerns compared to shoppers (12%). **This suggests that merchants might be less clear about the impact of privacy issues or more hesitant in their responses.**

## Privacy is a Concern for



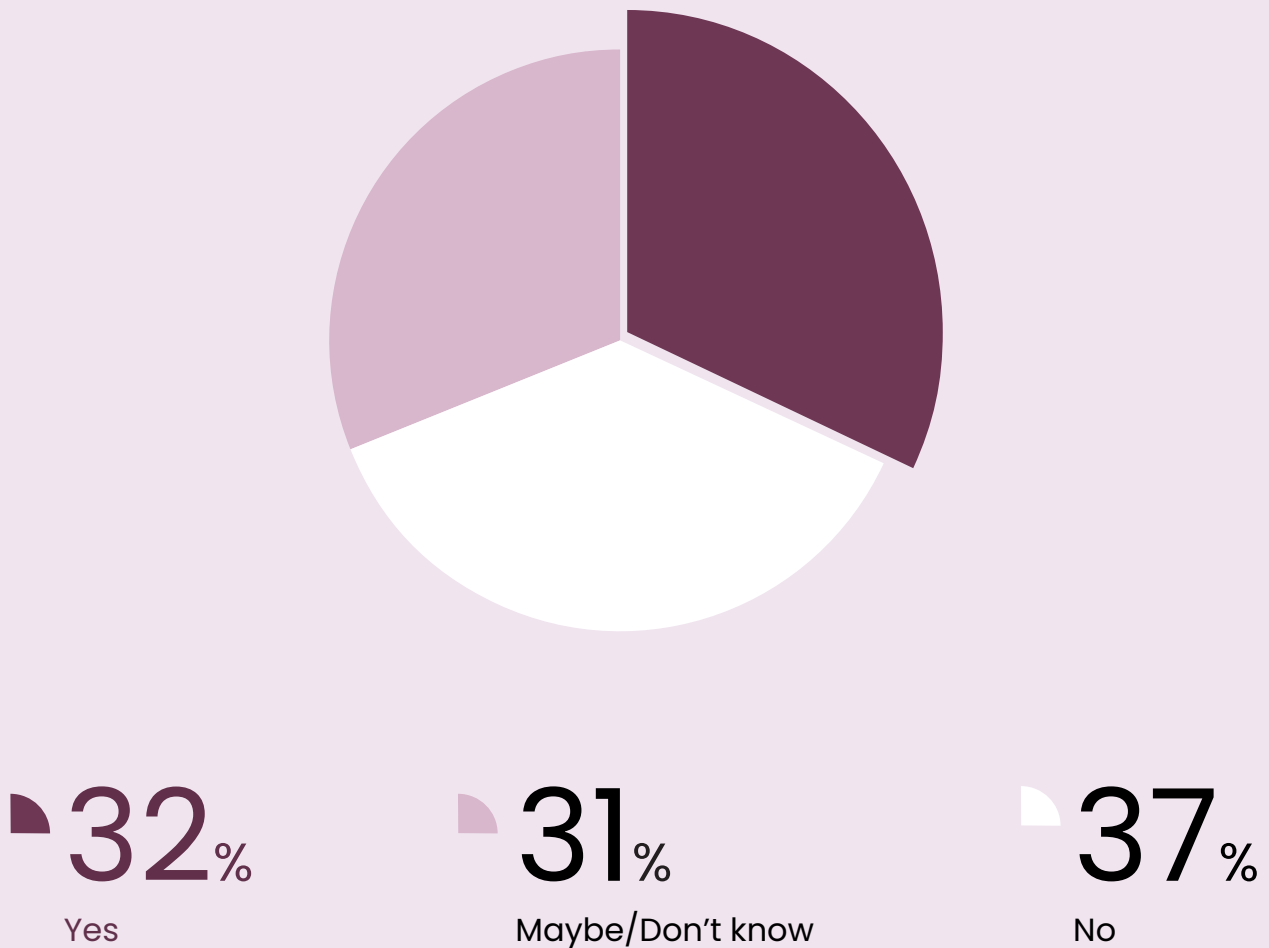
Retailers must approach personalization with care, and develop strategies that will be highly effective, potentially without the shopper even noticing there is personalization happening.

### Question

Have concerns about privacy ever affected your decision to implement personalization features?

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### Results





## Shoppers Survey

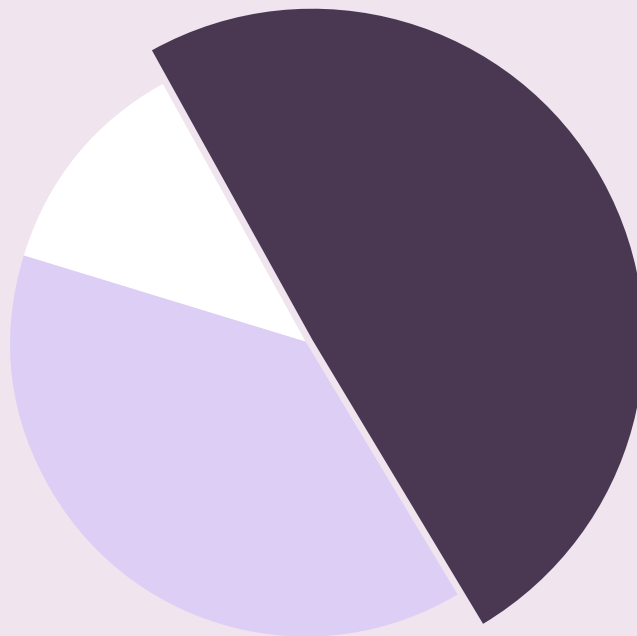
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### Question

Have you ever felt that personalization on an online store was infringing on your privacy?

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### Results



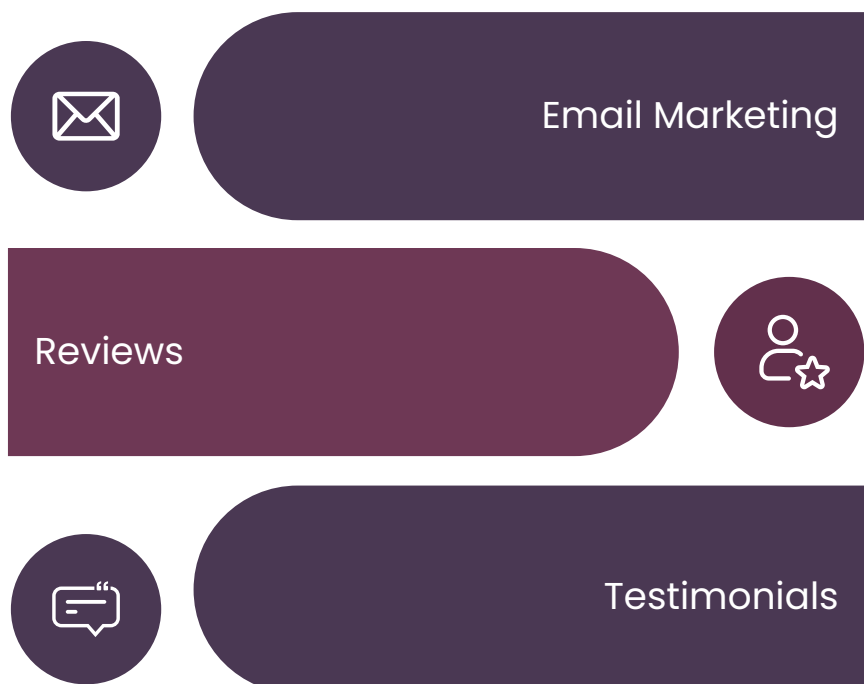
50%  
Yes

38%  
No

12%  
Don't Know

# Communication from a Brand Influencing Shoppers to Make a Purchase

Email marketing, and reviews and testimonials are most popular forms of communication which influences online shoppers to make a purchase.



## Merchant Survey

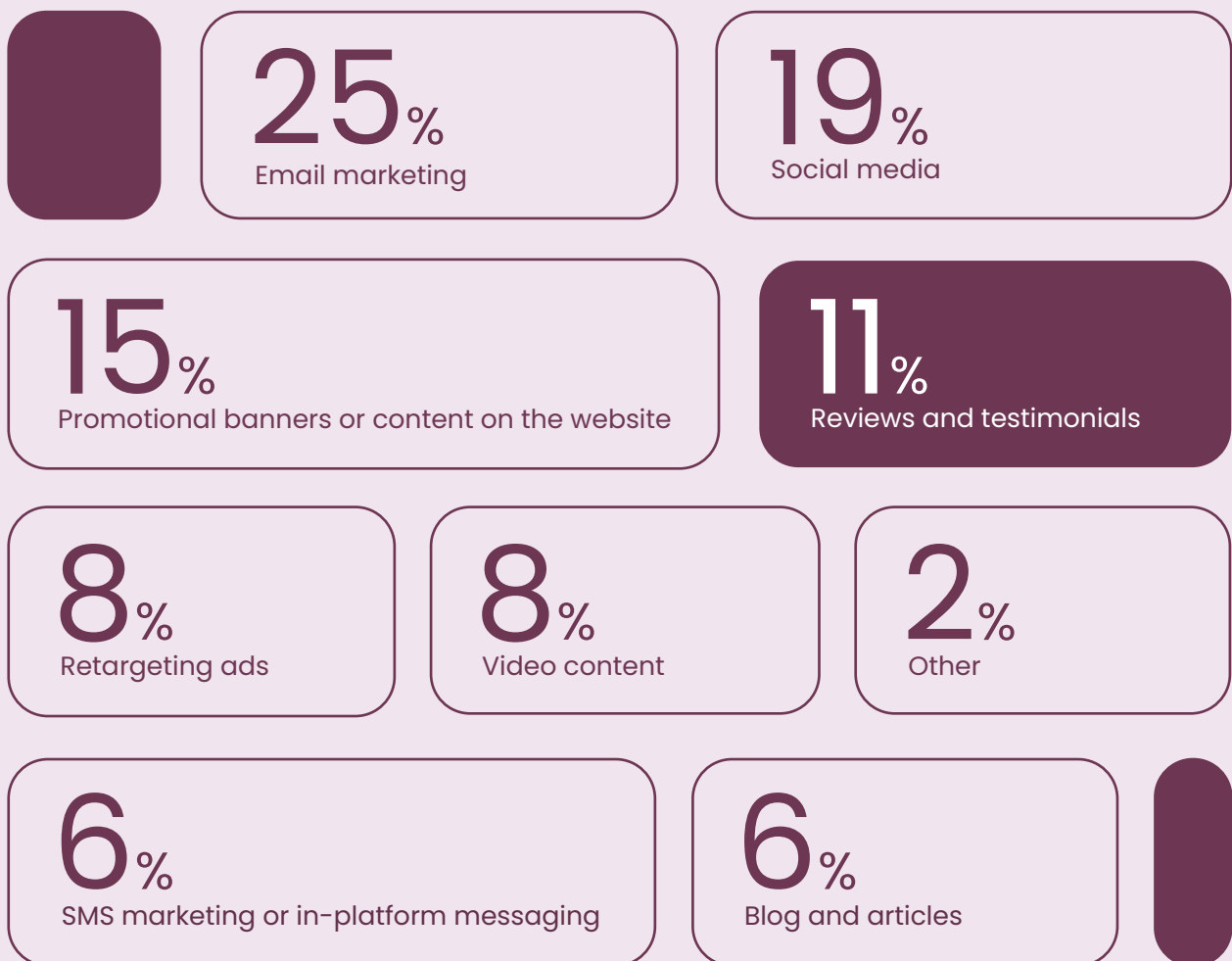
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### Question

Which marketing communications are most effective in driving engagement and sales?

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### Results



## Shopper Survey

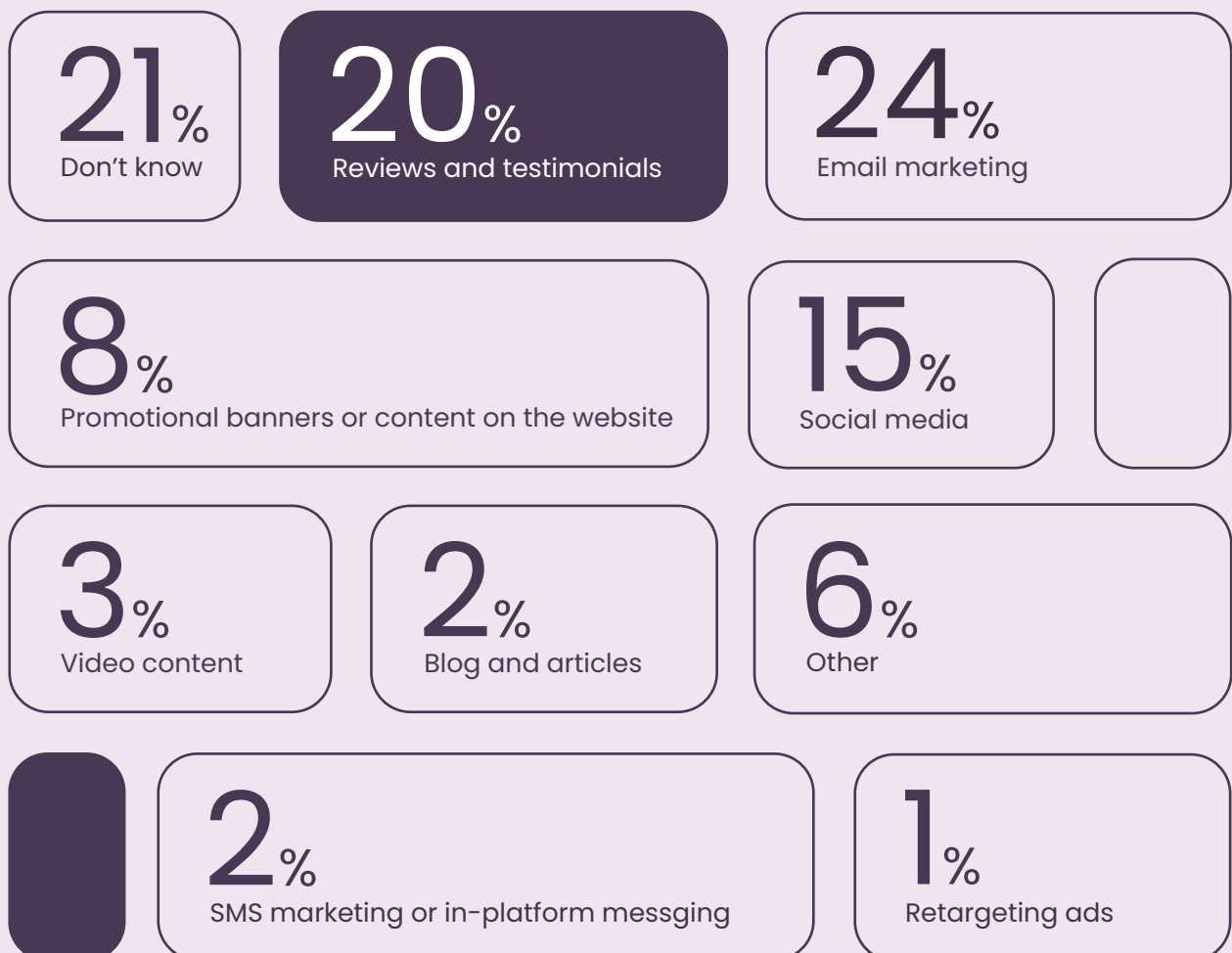
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### Question

Which ONE, if any, of the following types of communication from a brand influences you the most to make a purchase? (Please select the option that best applies)

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### Results



Merchants and Shoppers both have a similar view on the effectiveness of email marketing. Shoppers value reviews and testimonials more highly compared to merchants.

According to the surveys, both groups have a similar view on the effectiveness of email marketing. Shoppers value reviews and testimonials more highly compared to merchants with almost 20%, compared to merchants with 11%.

While 34% of those who have shopped online in the last 6 months find it helpful for online stores to schedule communications to align with times when users are most likely to engage.

While email marketing is valued similarly by both groups, merchants tend to overestimate the effectiveness of most other communication types, especially social media, promotional banners, video content and retargeting ads.

Merchants should consider these insights to align their marketing strategies with shopper preferences better, potentially focusing more on reviews and testimonials and understanding why a significant portion of shoppers are uncertain about the most influential communication types.

## Conclusion

The study “Merchants vs. Shoppers: Different Views on Ecommerce Features and Personalization” reveals insightful differences and similarities between merchants and shoppers regarding the value of various e-commerce features and personalization efforts.

Both groups agree on the frequent use of search functionality, with 65% of shoppers and 68% of merchants acknowledging its importance. However, shoppers prioritize filters (68.85%), user reviews (63.90%), and accurate search results (53.3%) more than merchants, who focus on clear categorization (59.6%) and promotional content (31.8%).

Over half of the shoppers (51%) are rarely influenced by product recommendations, yet younger shoppers (26%) show more receptiveness. Despite 76.3% of merchants expressing interest in virtual shopping assistants, their limited availability leads to low usage among shoppers (61% have never used them).

A notable gap exists in the perception of personalization, with 45.96% of shoppers emphasizing practical elements like relevant offers, while 60.4% of merchants focus on dynamic website adjustments. Privacy concerns are significant for shoppers, particularly among the 55+ age group, with 49% feeling personalization infringes on their privacy, whereas only 32% of merchants consider this a deterrent.

While both groups value email marketing (24% for shoppers and 25.22% for merchants), shoppers place higher importance on reviews and testimonials (19.73%) compared to merchants (11.48%), who favor the impact of social media (18.45%) and retargeting ads (7.85%).

## Top Tips

# Reconsider Focus Areas

Merchants who spend a lot of manual effort refining categories, building promotional content, and manually merchandising; but don't have strategies in place to optimize search and filter or gather and feature product reviews and comparisons may want to reconsider their focus.

that you are personalizing may alienate your audience. Aim for subtle relevance, which can be achieved by utilizing real-time data from their current session, and lightly using data from within your CRM.

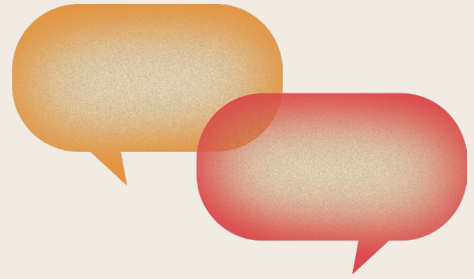
# Subtle and Relevant Personalization

Personalization should be subtle and relevant to the current session - over personalizing or letting the customers know

# Gather and Feature Product Reviews

Prioritize collecting and displaying product reviews and testimonials, as shoppers find them highly influential in making purchase decisions. Ensure that reviews are easily accessible and integrated into the shopping experience.





## Optimize Email Marketing

Both shoppers and merchants agree on the effectiveness of email marketing. Ensure your email channels are optimized and sending communications at the times that customers expect to see them.

## Enhance Comparison Tools

Shoppers value comparison tools, adding or enhancing these tools can help them make informed decisions and increase the likelihood of purchase.

## Optimize Search and Filter Functions

Ensure your search engine works! Shoppers are using the search bar – are they getting relevant results? Make sure that rating and reviews are part of the search and category filtering experience.

## Respect Privacy

Be cautious and respectful of privacy. Offer clear opt-in choices for personalization and safeguard user data. Shoppers are concerned about privacy, so transparency and respect for their data are essential.

