The State of Direct Mail

CONSUMER INSIGHTS

Lob | COMPEREMEDIA A MINTEL COMPANY

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Introduction

For this State of Direct Mail Consumer Insights Report, we partnered with Comperemedia to interview **2,111 US consumers** age 18+ to understand their usage of, attitudes toward, and preferences around direct mail. These insights are invaluable for marketers looking to breakthrough the digital marketing noise and engage customers with intelligent direct mail to drive revenue and ROI.

Read on to get all the key findings and actionable insights in this groundbreaking report.

62%

of consumers say direct mail has inspired them to take action

Methodology

2,111

US consumers age 18+ were interviewed.

Respondents were nationally representative of age, gender, income, ethnicity and region.

Respondents answered a 15-minute online survey with **~50 questions** and open-ended follow-ups.

Among other questions, respondents were asked a series of questions around their preferences and satisfaction related to direct mail and within four specific sectors:

Financial Services
Healthcare
Retail
Local Business

Key findings & actionable insights

01

72% of consumers read direct mail **immediately** or the same day they bring it inside their residence

02

For brands consumers do not know, **direct mail is the preferred channel of communication** with 44% of respondents selecting this channel

03

62% of consumers say **direct mail has inspired them to take action**

04

Half of consumers sometimes or often **share direct mail with friends and family**

05

Offers and promotions are key motivators for existing customers to take action

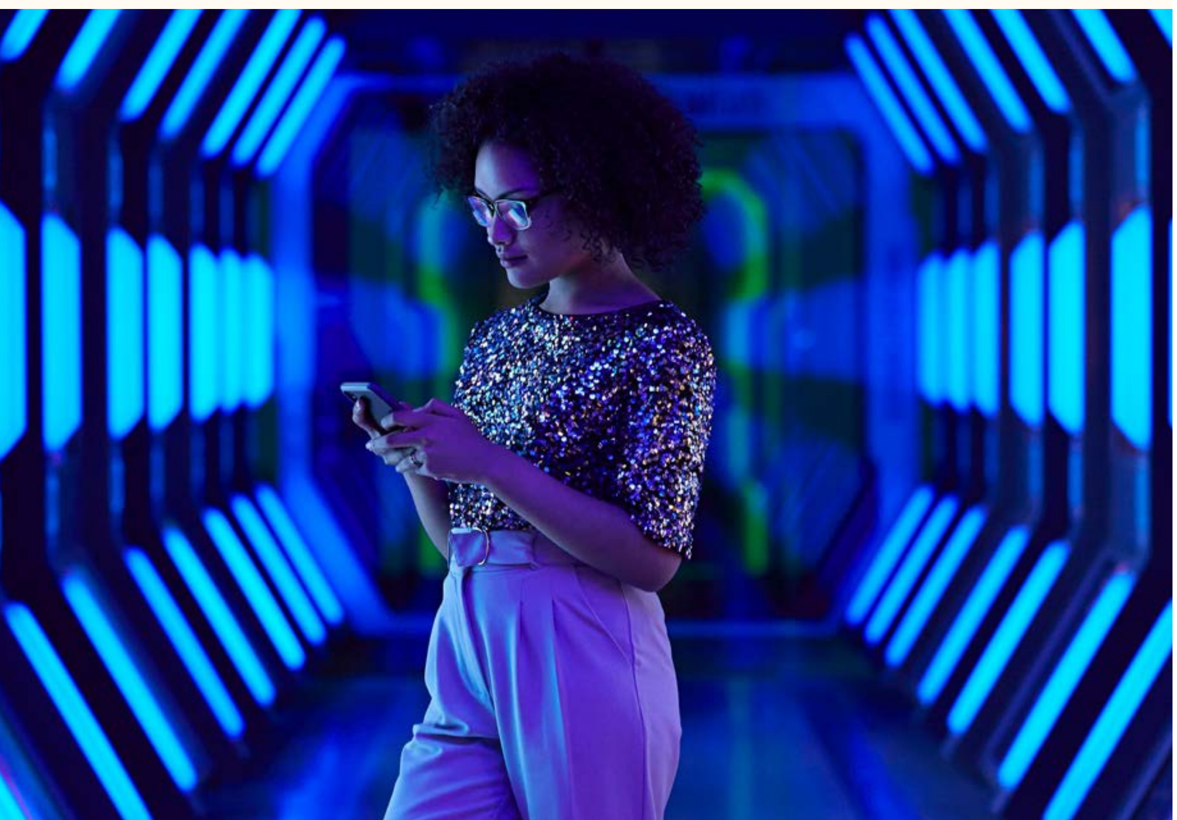
06

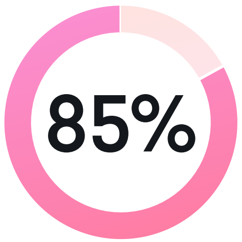
The majority of consumers **still opt to receive some paper statements** from brands

KEY FINDING 1

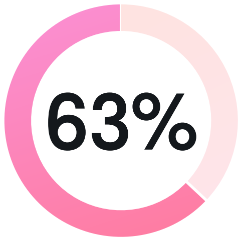
72%

of consumers read direct mail immediately or the same day they bring it inside their residence





Regularly read direct mail either **immediately**, the same day or at a later time



Keep direct mail for less than two days

* ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

With the majority of consumers opening direct mail immediately, you should invest in triggered omnichannel campaigns based on mail delivery date. Coordinate emails to go out the day after the direct mail arrives or an email to look out for a promotion that's on the way.

Base: Total n=2,111
Q: What do you typically do with direct mail you receive from any brand? (Select one response.) / How long do you typically keep direct mail from any brand? (Select one response.)

KEY FINDING 2

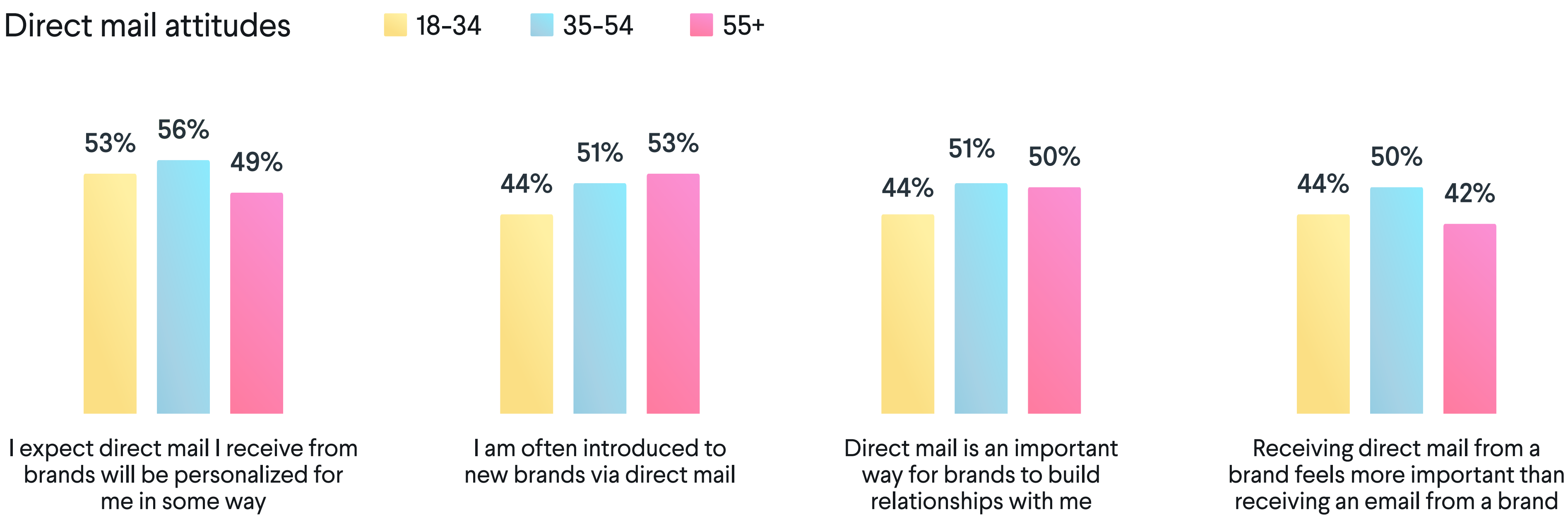
44%

of respondents aged 18-34 agree direct mail is an important way for brands to build relationships with them

* ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

Direct mail is an excellent channel for new customer acquisition to build awareness and loyalty. Invest in new customer acquisition campaigns and ongoing retention campaigns to grow CLTV and ROI.

Direct mail attitudes



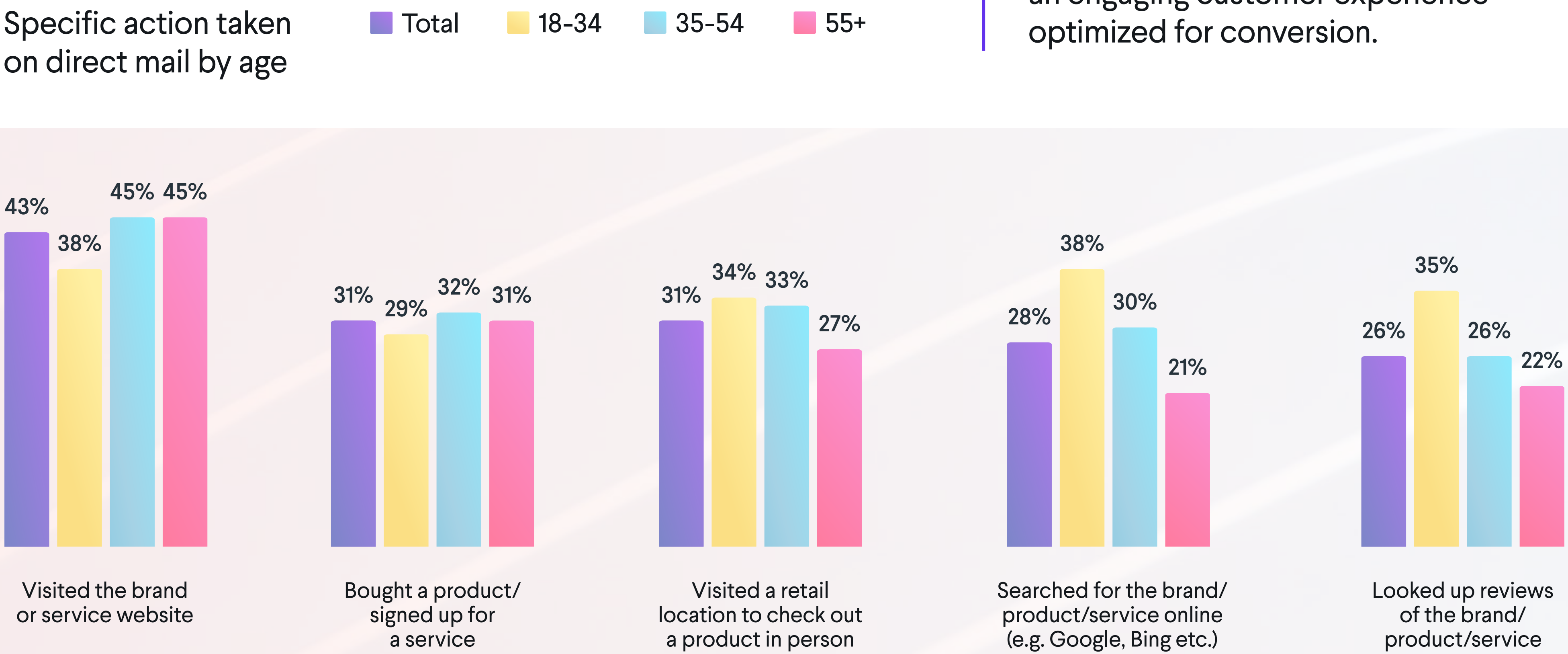
Base: n by Age = 545 | 684 | 845
Q: Take a moment to consider the statements listed below. Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with each. (Select one per row.)

KEY FINDING 3

62%

of consumers say direct mail has inspired them to take action

Specific action taken on direct mail by age



Base: Total n= 1,300; n by age = 302 | 451 | 547
Q: Now, which of the following best describes the action you took after receiving this specific piece of direct mail? (Select all that apply.)

*** ACTIONABLE INSIGHT**

Because consumers most often visit a brand website after receiving a direct mailpiece, ensure every touchpoint in your campaign has consistent visuals and message match to create an engaging customer experience optimized for conversion.

KEY FINDING 4

Offers and promotions are key motivators for all customers

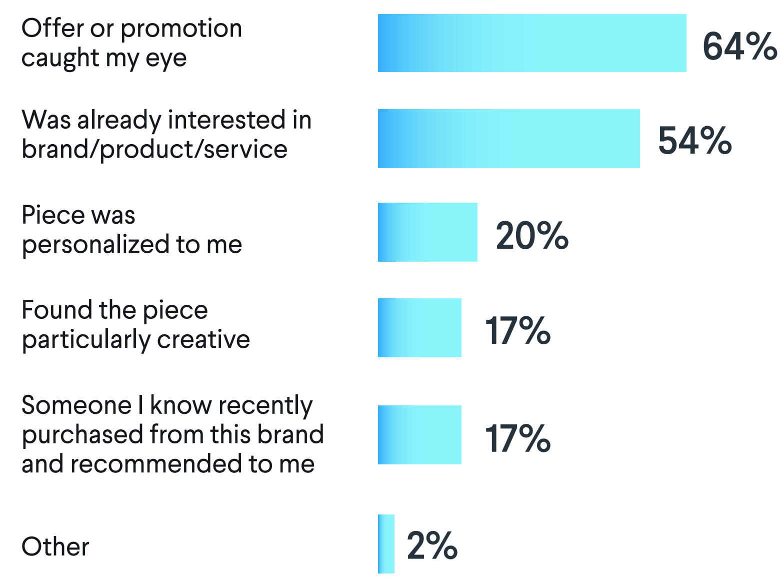
64%

of consumers report they took action on a direct mailpiece due to an offer or promotion

✱ ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

Create personalized offers based on purchase history to stand out from digital noise and motivate consumers to convert.

What part/aspect made you take action?



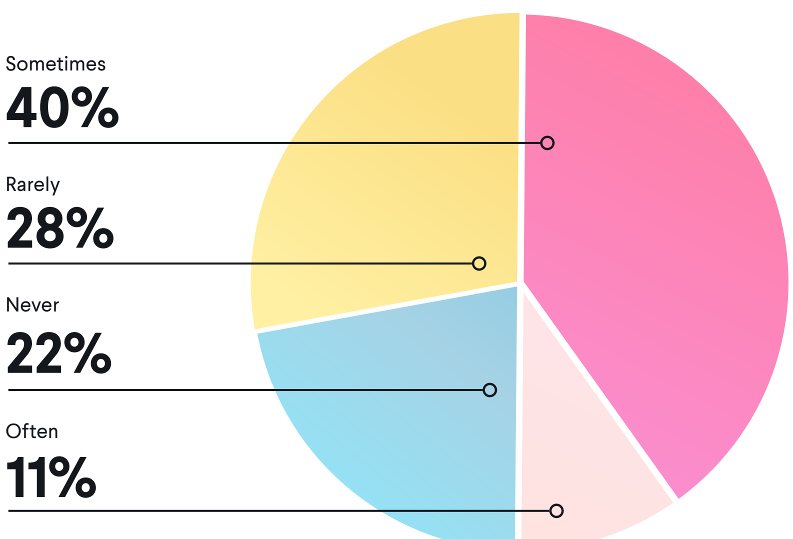
Base: Total n= 1,300;
Q: Now, which of the following best describes the action you took after receiving this specific piece of direct mail? (Select all that apply.)

KEY FINDING 5

51% of consumers sometimes or often share direct mail with friends and family

30% of consumers say they would take action on a direct mailpiece if someone I know had recently purchased from this brand and recommended them to me.

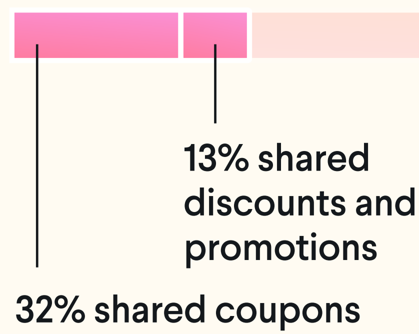
Frequency of sharing direct mail with friends and family



✱ ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

Leverage the shareability and virality of direct mail by including additional promo codes or offers to share.

Of the 78% who reported sharing direct mail with friends and family:

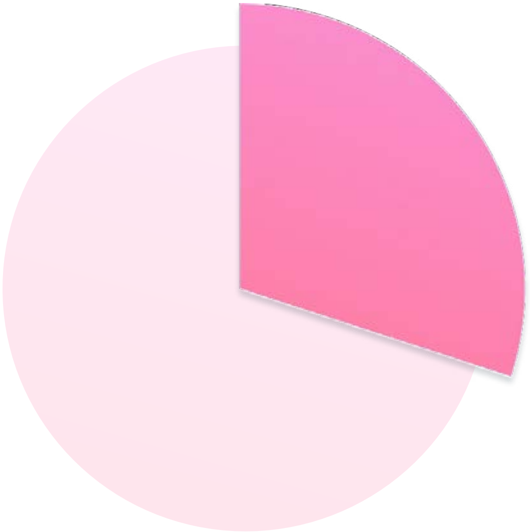


Base: Total n=2,111 Q: How often do you share direct mail pieces or offers with your friends or family? (Select one response.)
Base: Total N=1,655 Q: You mentioned you share direct mail pieces or offers with your friends and family. What specific direct mail pieces or offers have you shared in the past? Please use specific examples when possible. (Please briefly describe.)
Base: Total n=2,111 Q: Imagine you were bringing in a piece of direct mail into your residence. Which of the following elements of a direct mail piece would inspire you to take action? (Select all that apply.)

KEY FINDING 6

70%

of consumers opt to receive at least some paper statements from brands



30%

have opted into paperless statements for every brand that offers it.

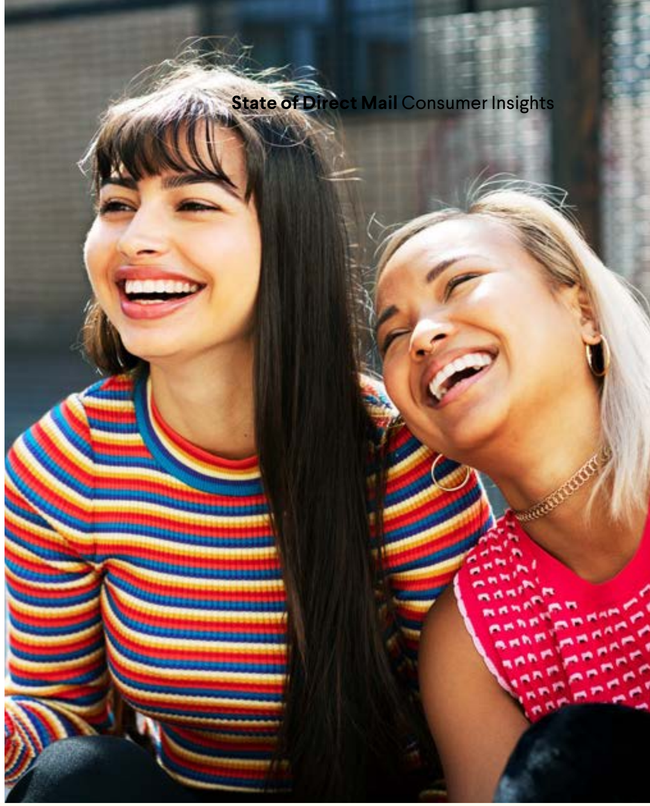
Base: Total n=2,111
Q: Which of the following statements best describes your relationship with paperless statements? (Select one response.)

ACTIONABLE INSIGHT

Offer the option to go paperless to support sustainability initiatives and be eco-conscious but give consumers options to provide the best customer experience.

Nearly three-fourths (72%) of 18-24 year olds report they still receive at least some paper statements from brands, with 17% reporting they have not opted in to paperless for any brand.

Demographic insights



AGES 18-34

Consumers ages 18-34 are significantly more likely to prefer to receive letters and envelopes than those 35+

Those 18-34 are significantly more likely to prefer letters and envelopes than those 35+, potentially due to the information typically found in this format matching their life stage (e.g. credit card approvals, education information, etc.)

For consumers 18-34 design and copy are important elements of a direct mailpiece

Factors that inspire consumer action

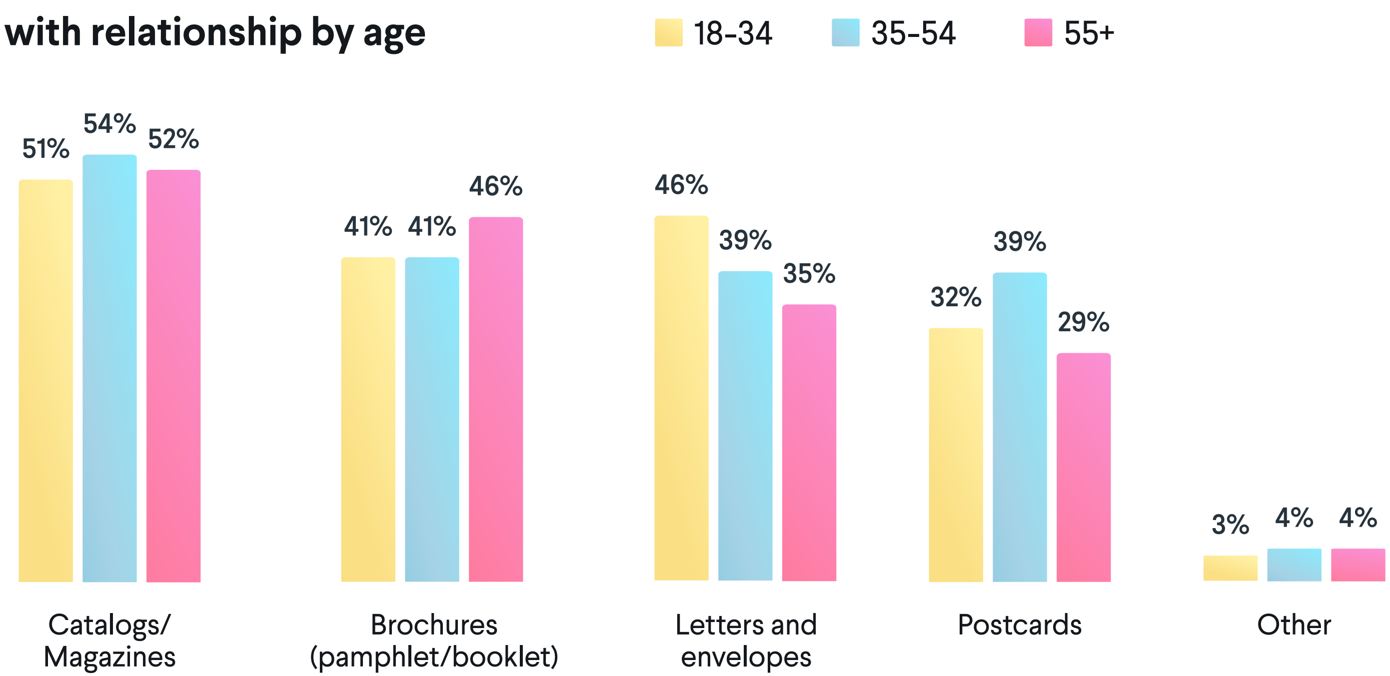
Base: n by Age = 565 | 696 | 850 | Q: Which of the following direct mail formats do you prefer to receive from brands you already have a relationship with? (Select all that apply.)
Base: Total n=2,111 | Q: Imagine you were brining in a piece of direct mail into your residence. Which of the following elements of a direct mail piece would inspire you to take action?

AGES 35-54

Those aged 35-54 are more interested in postcards than other age groups, likely due to being time-starved

Catalogs and magazines are of top interest among all age groups.

Direct mail formats from brands with relationship by age



Base: Total n= 565 | 696 | 850
Q: Which of the following direct mail formats do you prefer to receive from brands you already have a relationship with? (Select all that apply.)

AGES 35+

Consumers 35+ are more likely to engage with direct mailpieces from brands they have a relationship with than their younger counterparts

Consumers 35+ are significantly more likely to report that they are very or somewhat likely to engage with direct mailpieces from brands they have a relationship with compared to 18 – 34 year old consumers.

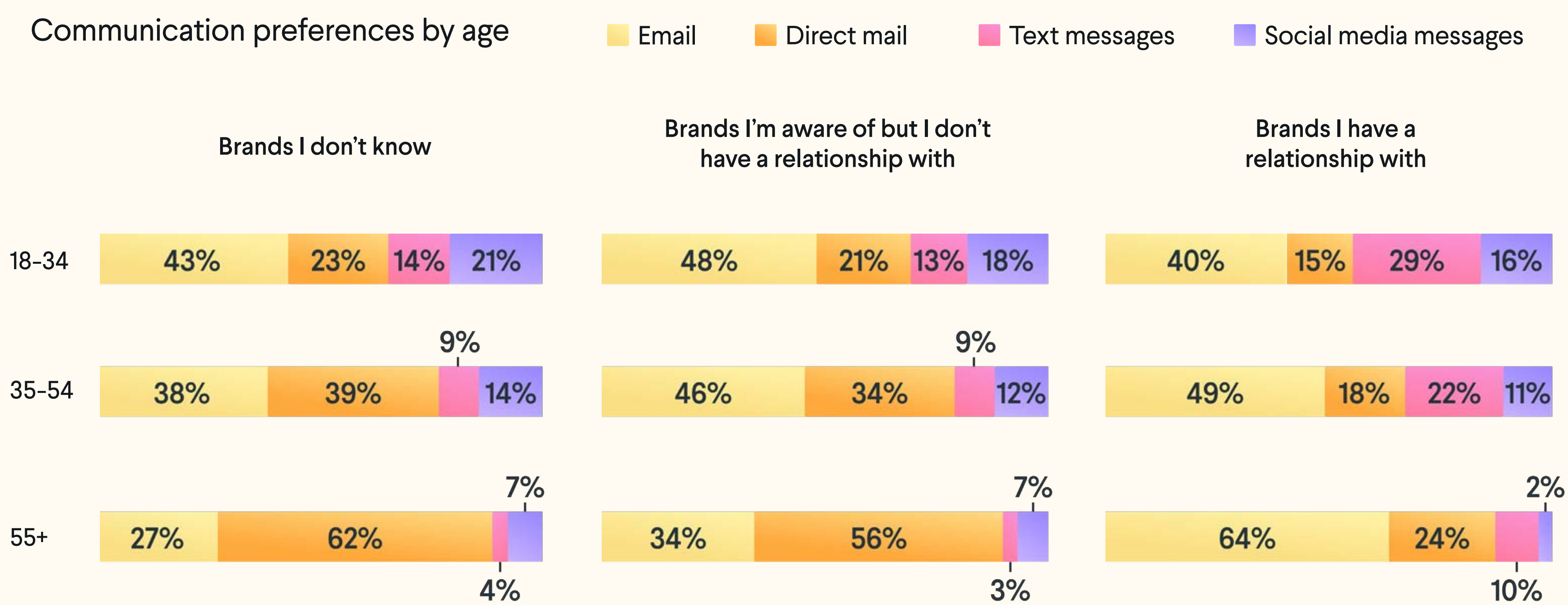
50%

of consumers age 35-54 agree that receiving direct mail from a brand feels more important than receiving an email from a brand.

Base: n by Age = 545 | 684 | 845 | Q: Take a moment to consider the statements listed below. Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with each. (Select one per row.)
Base: n by Age = 565 | 696 | 850 | Q: Please indicate how likely you are to engage with direct mail pieces from the following. (Select one for each row.)

AGES 55+

Older consumers (55+) are significantly more likely to prefer communications via direct mail from all brand types compared to younger consumers

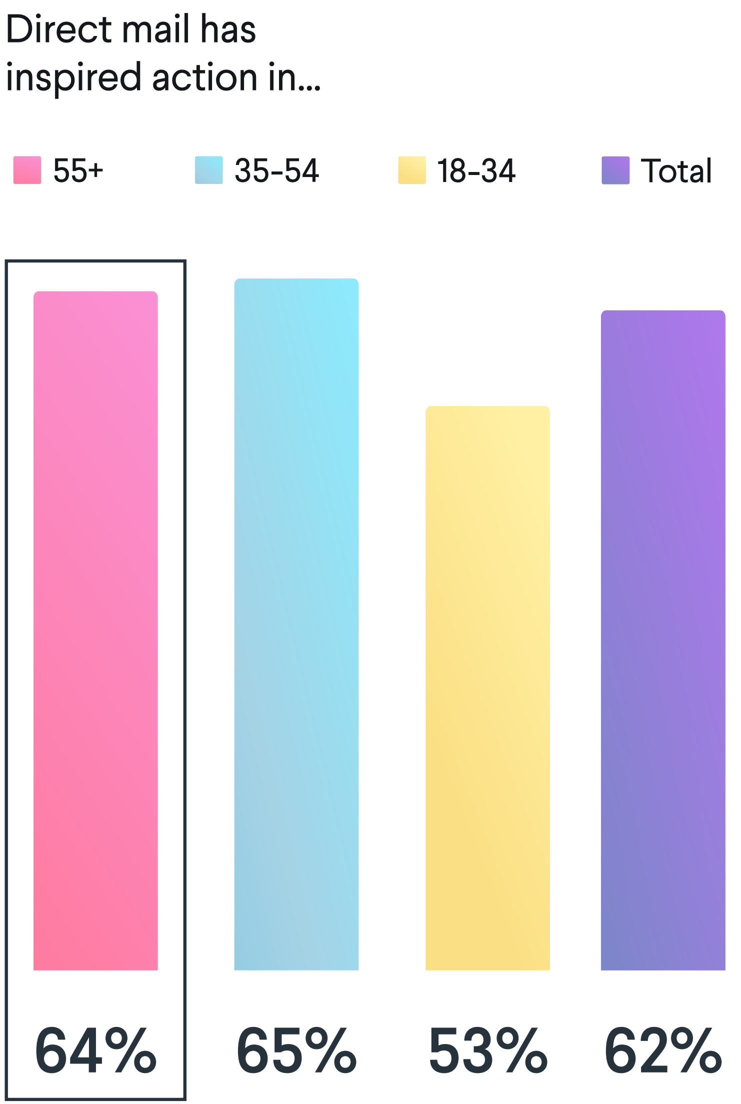


Base: n by Age = 565 | 696 | 850
Q: Which of the following types of communication do you most prefer to receive from brands you don't know/brands you know, but don't have a relationship with/brands you have a relationship with? (Select one response.)

AGES 55+

64%

of those 55+ report direct mail overall has inspired them to take action, with offers and promotions most important to this age segment



Base: Total n = 2,111; n by Age = 565 | 696 | 850
Q: Has any piece of direct mail ever inspired you to take some kind of action? Action can include searching for the brand online, visiting a brand website, checking the brand's social media, looking up reviews of the brand/product, buying a product, or visiting a brand location. (Select one response.)

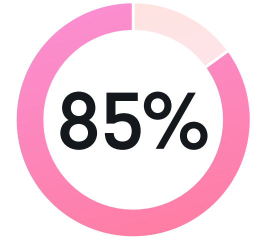
How consumers act on direct mail

62%

of consumers report direct mail has inspired them to take action

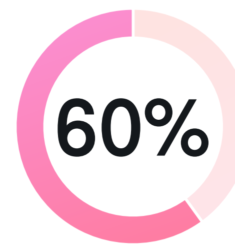
A majority of consumers visit the brand or service website directly and **50%** search for the brand/product/service online. This is true across the four sectors analyzed, with most consumers likely to visit the brand or service website.

Base: Total n=2,111
Q: Has any piece of direct mail ever inspired you to take some kind of action? (Select one response.) / What do you typically do with direct mail you receive from any brand? (Select one response.) / How long do you typically keep direct mail from any brand? (Select one response.) / Q: Imagine you were bringing in a piece of direct mail into your residence. Which of the following elements of a direct mail piece would inspire you to take action?(Select all that apply.)



Regularly read their direct mail either immediately, the same day or at a later time

Only 15% of consumers rarely read direct mail and typically recycle or throw it away.



of consumers overall would be inspired by offers or promotions that catch their eye

Consumers are also inspired if they are already interested in a product/service. Images of an item/brand/service that consumers have previously purchased are most appealing, suggesting that while direct mail can be used at the beginning of the marketing funnel, it can also be used as a tool for re-contacting or re-engaging consumers.

Direct mail drives store visits when consumers are looking to learn more about brands

Method to learn more about a brand from direct mail

24%
Visit store, if they have one

27%
Use a search engine

16%
Generic URL

14%
Personalized URL

9%
Phone number

9%
QR code

Base: Total n = 2,111
Q: Imagine you received a piece of direct mail from a brand you are interested in and want to learn more. Which of the following methods would you be most likely to use to get more information? (Select one response.)

Offers are the most important factor in consumers reading a direct mailpiece

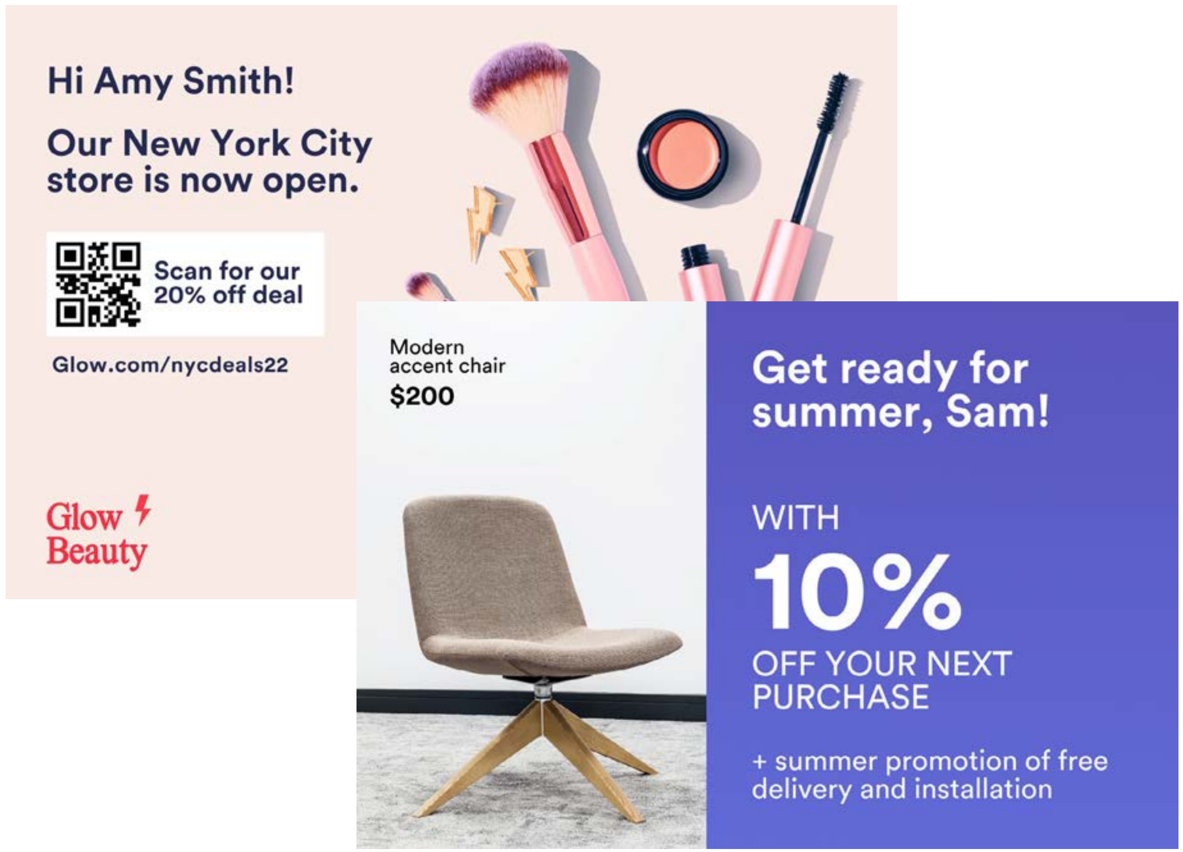
Likelihood to open/read from brand interested if...

Your first and last name
51%

A local event or location
60%

Name of an item you recently purchased or viewed online
58%

Image of an item you recently purchased or viewed online
59%



Single offer or promotion
72%

QR code
37%

Personalized URL
42%

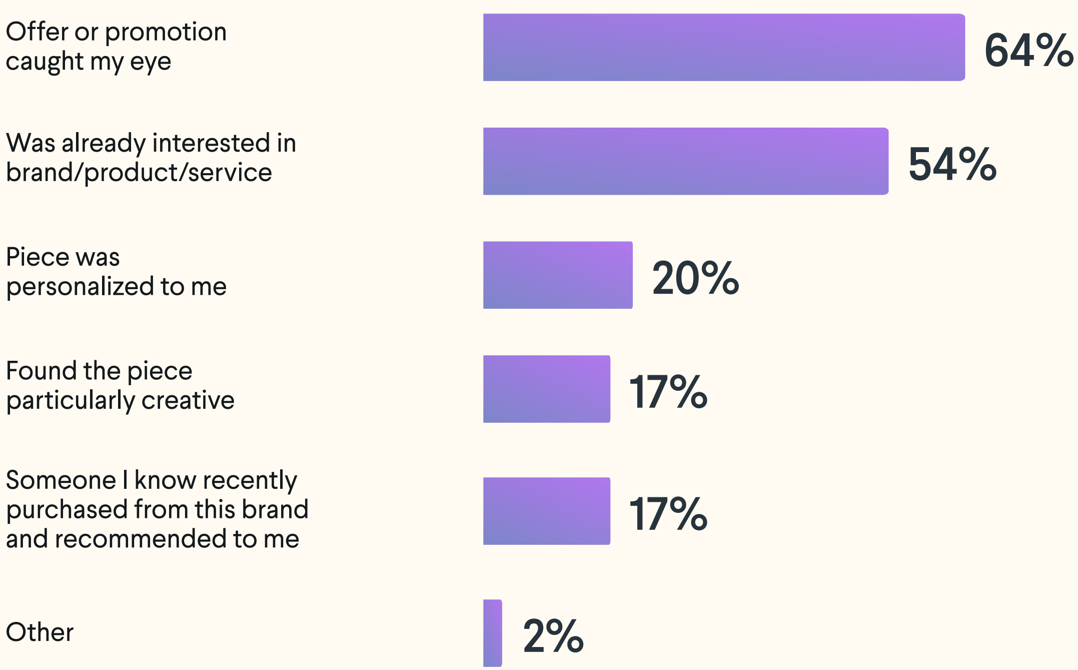
Your first name
48%

Multiple offers or promotions
73%

Base: Total n=2,111
Q: Imagine you receive a piece of direct mail from a brand you are particularly interested in. How likely are you to open/read this piece of mail if it had the following included?

Offers & promotions are also key motivators for consumers to take action on a direct mailpiece

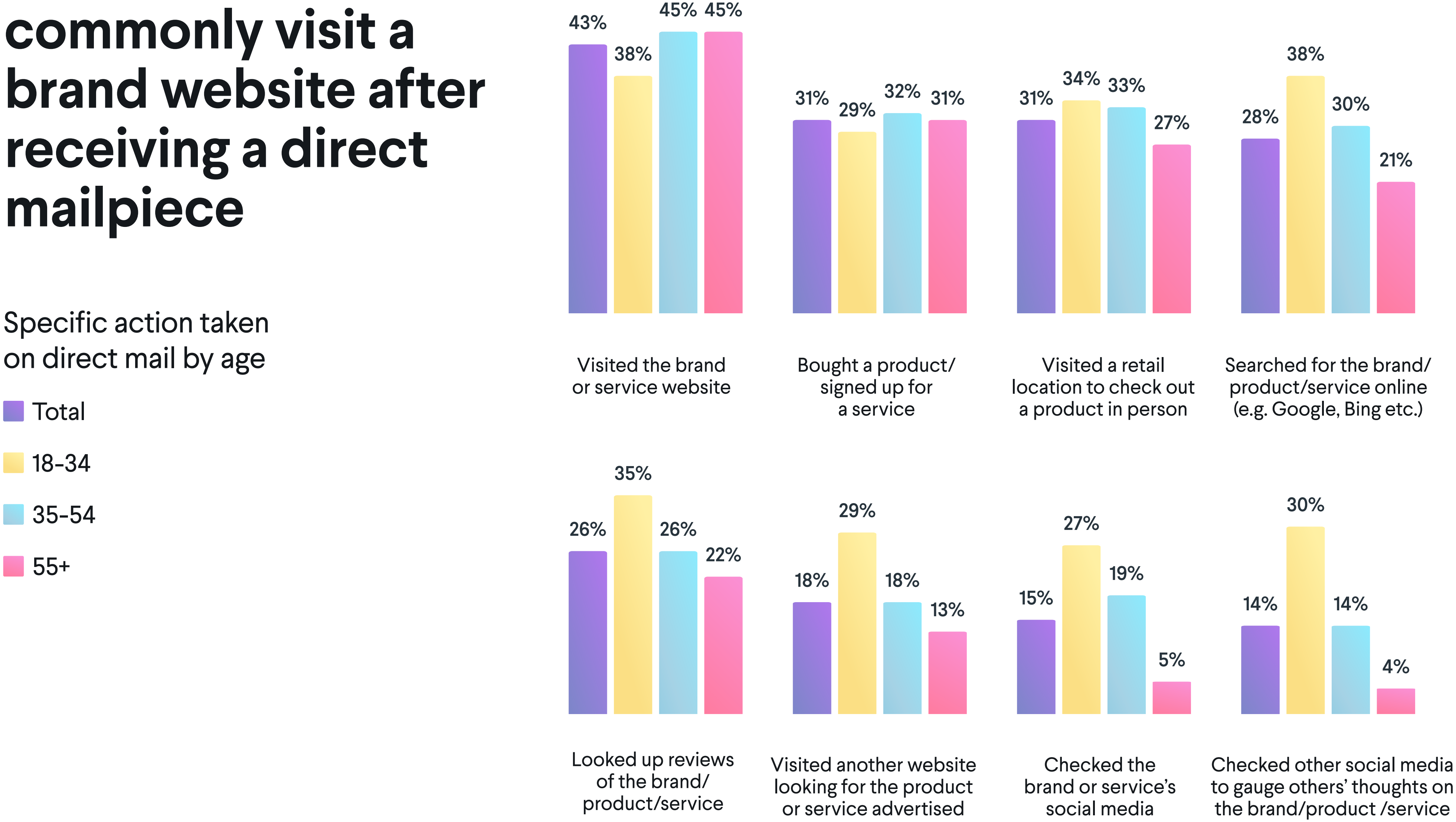
What part/aspect made you take action?



Base: Total n= 1,300
Q: Which of the following describes why this particular piece of mail inspired you to take action? (Select all that apply.)

Consumers most commonly visit a brand website after receiving a direct mailpiece

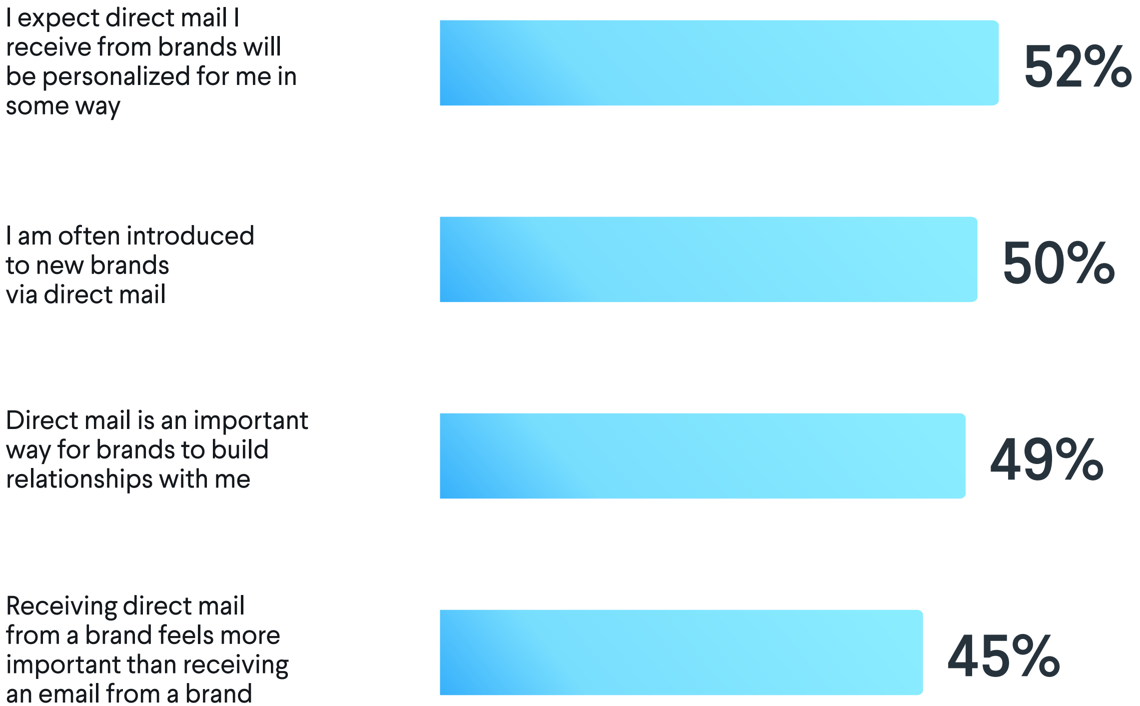
Specific action taken on direct mail by age



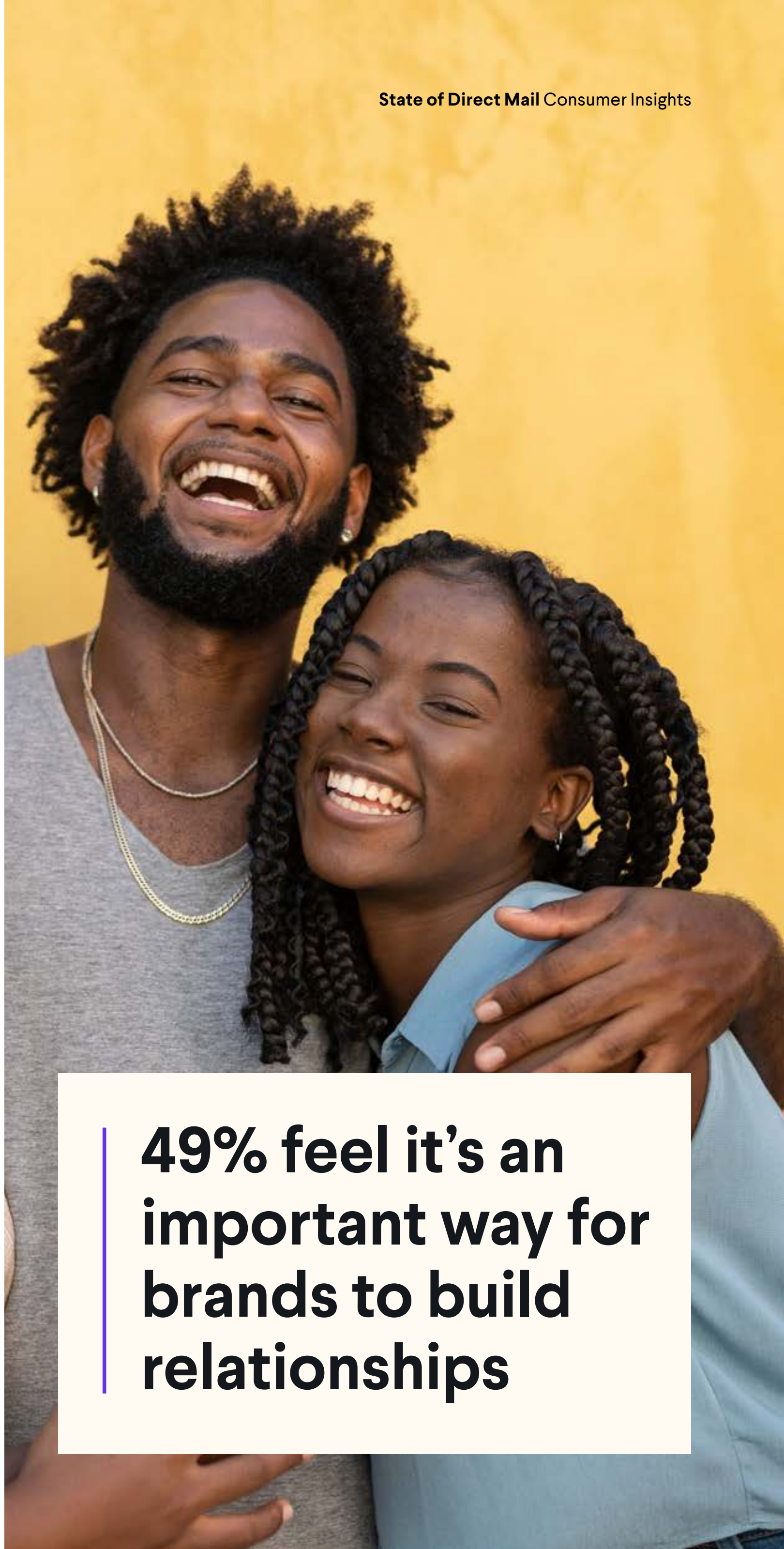
Base: Total n = 1,300; n by Age = 302 | 451 | 547
Q: Now, which of the following best describes the action you took after receiving this specific piece of direct mail? (Select all that apply.)

Half (52%) of consumers expect direct mail to be personalized

Direct mail attitudes

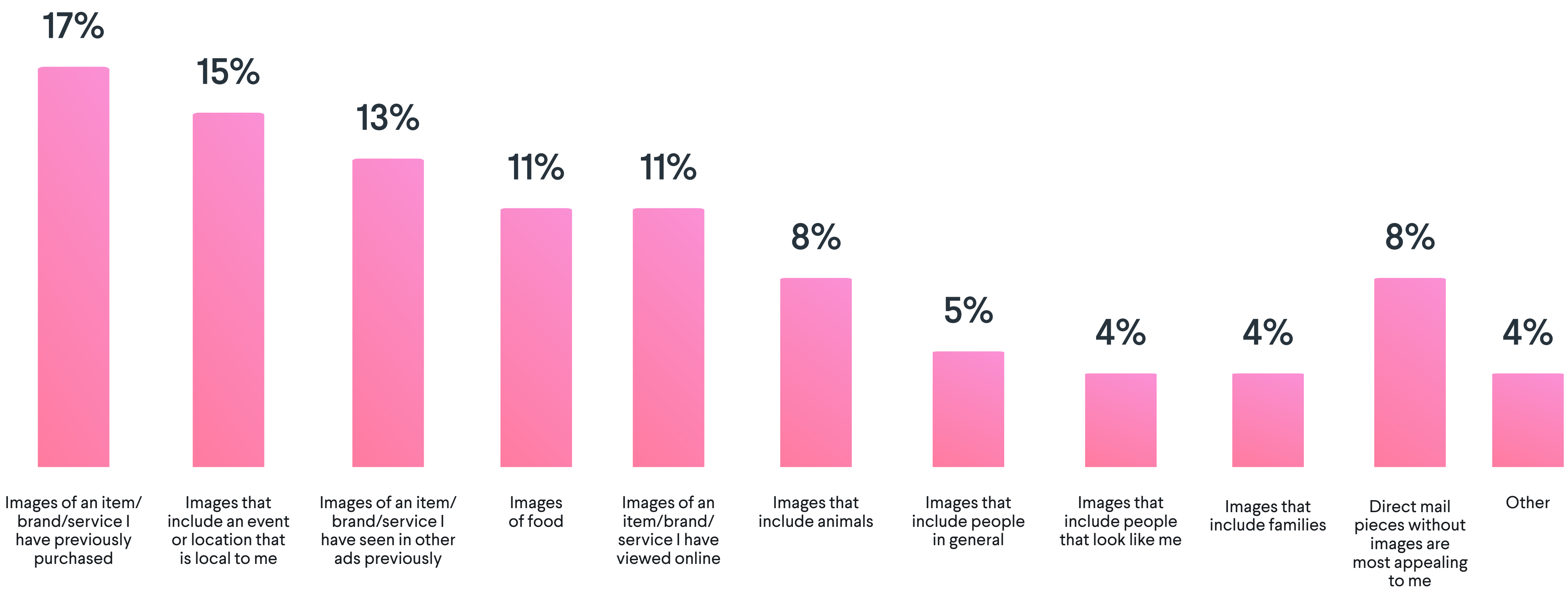


Base: Total n = 2,111
Q: Take a moment to consider the statements listed below. Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with each. (Select one per row.)



49% feel it’s an important way for brands to build relationships

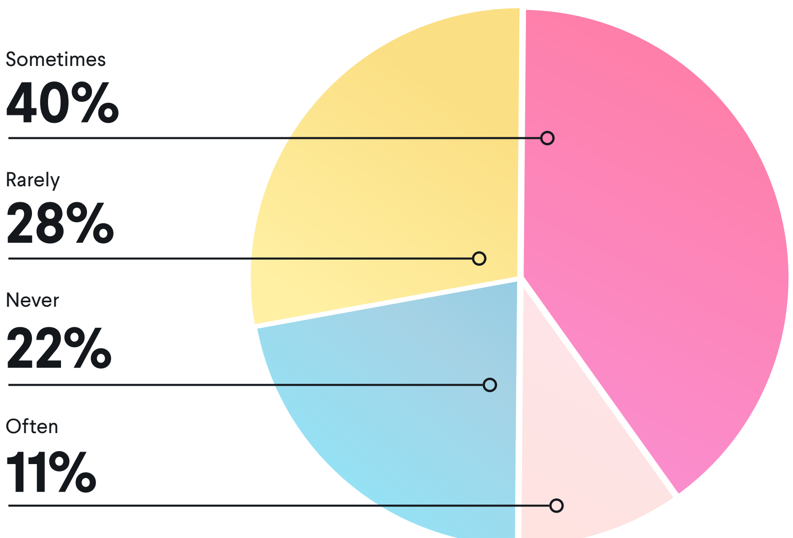
Images of previously purchased items or local events or locations are most appealing to consumers



Base: Total n =2,111
Q: Which of the following types of images make a direct mail piece most appealing to you? (Select one response.)

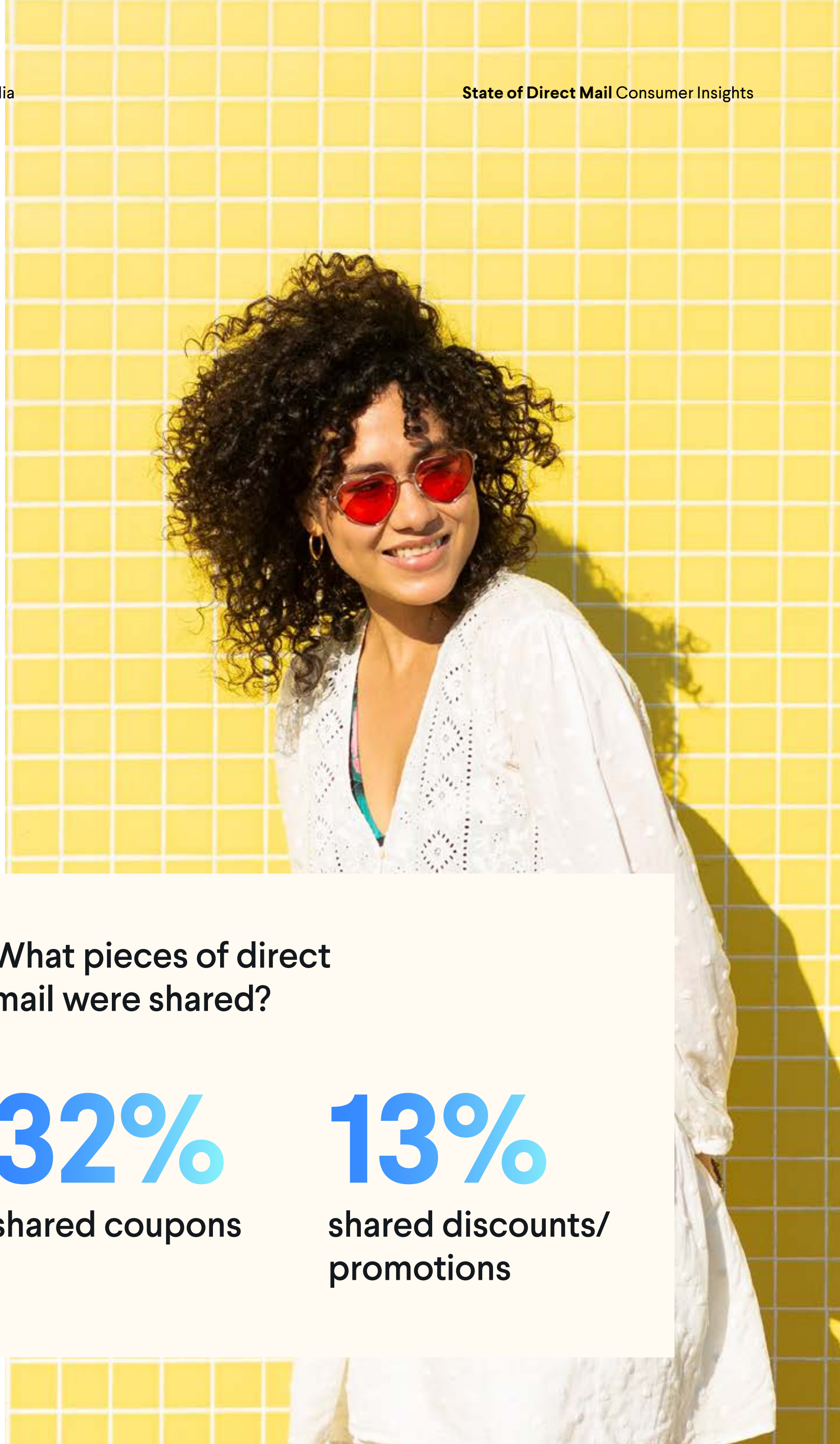
Half of consumers sometimes or often share direct mail with friends and family

Frequency of sharing direct mail with friends and family



Base: Total n=2,111
Q: How often do you share direct mail pieces or offers with your friends or family? (Select one response.)

Base: Total N=1,655
Q: You mentioned you share direct mail pieces or offers with your friends and family. What specific direct mail pieces or offers have you shared in the past? Please use specific examples when possible. (Please briefly describe.)



What pieces of direct mail were shared?

32% shared coupons

13% shared discounts/ promotions

The majority of consumers read direct mail the same day they bring it inside their residence, deciding whether or not to keep the piece fairly immediately

Almost one in five (16%) of respondents aged 18-24 keep direct mail more than 5 days but less than week, significantly more than those 25+.

72%

read direct mail the same day they bring it inside their residence

63%

keep direct mail for less than two days

Base: Total n=2,111
Q: What do you typically do with direct mail you receive from any brand? (Select one response.) / How long do you typically keep direct mail from any brand? (Select one response.)

Paperless statements are more popular among younger consumers, but the majority of consumers still opt to receive at least some paper statements

70%

report they still opt to receive at least some paper statements from brands

Paperless statements are more common among younger consumers, however three-fourths (72%) of those 18-24 report they still receive at least some paper statements from brands, with 17% reporting they have not opted in to paperless for any brand.

Base: Total n= 2,111; n by Age = 565 | 696 | 850
Q: Which of the following statements best describes your relationship with paperless statements? (Select one response.)

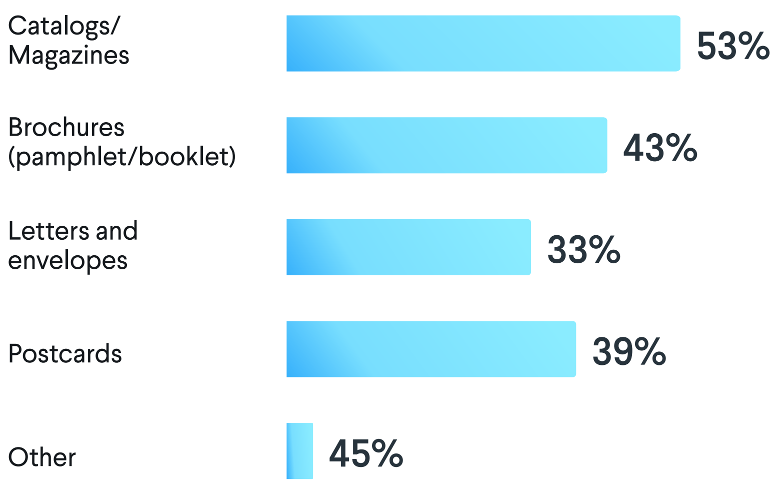
Direct mail format preferences & by industry

DIRECT MAIL FORMAT

Catalogs and magazines are the most popular format. Those 35-54 are more likely to prefer postcards than other age groups

Respondents **18-34 are significantly more likely to prefer to receive letters** and envelopes than those 35+, while those 35-54 are more likely to be interested in postcards than their older or younger counterparts.

Direct mail formats from brands they know

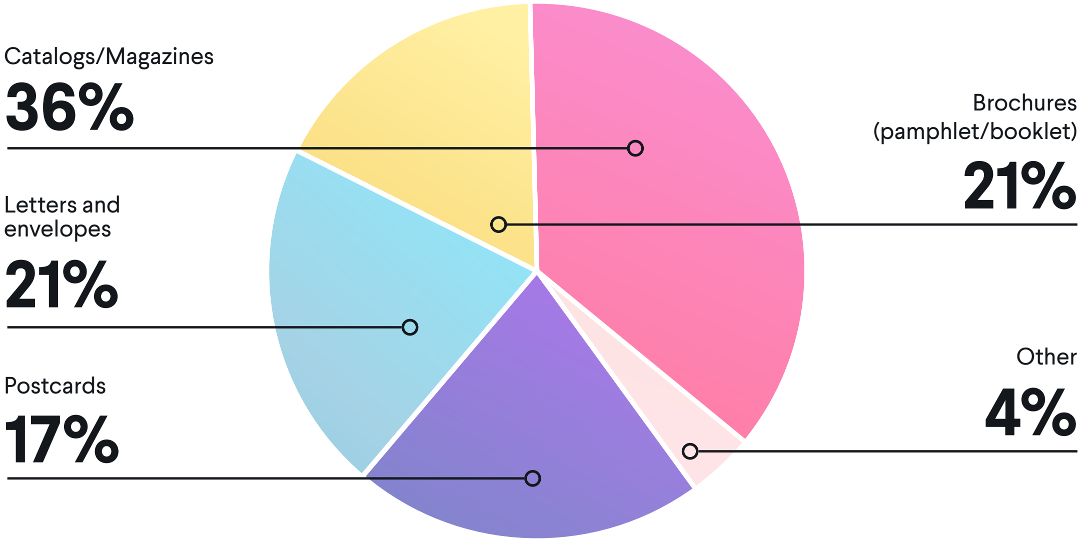


Base: Total n=2,111
Q: Which of the following direct mail formats do you prefer to receive from brands you already have a relationship with? (Select all that apply.)

DIRECT MAIL FORMAT

Catalogs & magazines are most likely to be read from brands that consumers have a relationship with

Direct mail formats from brands with relationships: Most likely to read



Base: Total n= 2,111; n by Age = 565 | 696 | 850
Q: You mentioned you prefer to receive the following direct mail formats from brands you already have a relationship with. Which of the following are you most likely to read? (Select one response.)

Those **18-34 are significantly more likely to read letters and envelopes than those 35+**, potentially due to the information typically found in this format matching their life stage (e.g. credit card approvals, education information, etc.)

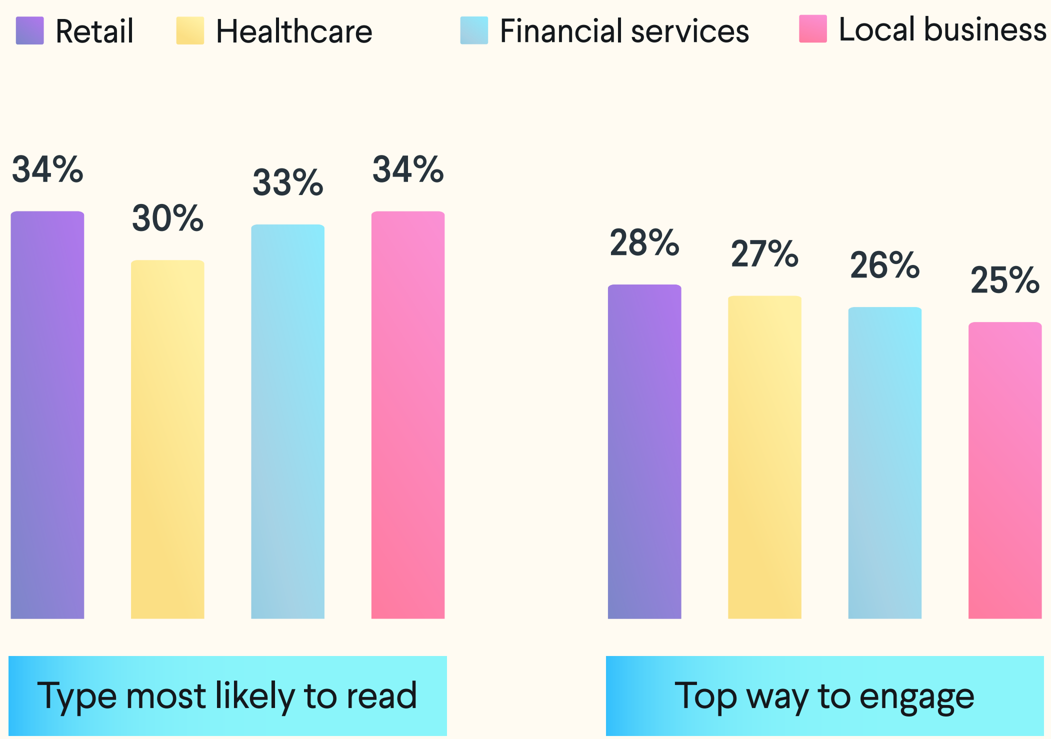
DIRECT MAIL FORMAT

Most direct mail preferences are consistent across industries, but format preferences vary

Consumers are most likely to read **promotions from products/services** owned and are most likely to engage by **visiting a brand or service website across sectors.**

Top format most likely to read

Retail	**53%**	Catalogs/magazines
Healthcare	**45%**	Letters and envelopes
Financial services	**48%**	Letters and envelopes
Local business	**46%**	Brochures



Promotions from products/services owned

Visiting a brand or service website

Retail
Catalogs & magazine are preferred with promotions driving the most engagement

Top format most likely to read

Catalogs/Magazines	53%
Brochures	41%
Letters and envelopes	34%
Postcards	32%

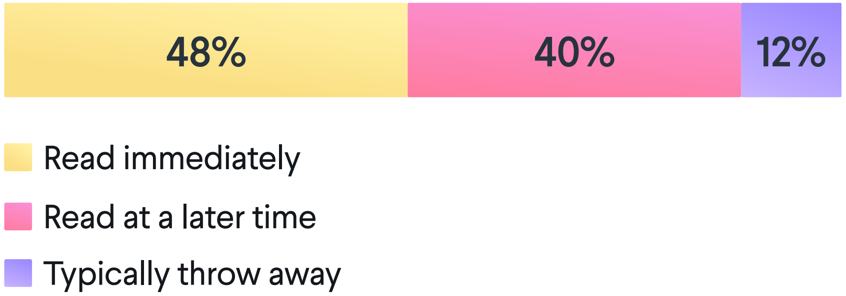
Top ways consumers engage

Visit brand or service website	28%
Search for it online using search engine	23%
Visit a retail location	14%
Look up reviews	10%

Type most likely to read

Promotions from products/services owned	34%
Promotions from new products/services	33%
Catalog showcasing products/services	17%
Announcement of a new product/service	8%
Newsletters or letters	8%

Typical action when receiving



Base: Total n=1,025
Q: Which of the following direct mail formats are you most likely to read from [INDUSTRY] brands? (Select all that apply.) / What do you typically do with direct mail you receive from brands in the [INDUSTRY] industry? (Select all that apply.) / If you receive direct mail from a [INDUSTRY] company and want to learn more, which of the following ways are you most likely to do that? (Select one response.) / Of the following that you may receive via direct mail, which are you most likely to read if you received it from a brand you currently do business with in the [INDUSTRY] industry? (Select one response.)

Healthcare
Consumers prefer letters and envelopes

Top format most likely to read

Letters and envelopes	45%
Brochures	38%
Postcards	30%
Catalogs/Magazines	26%

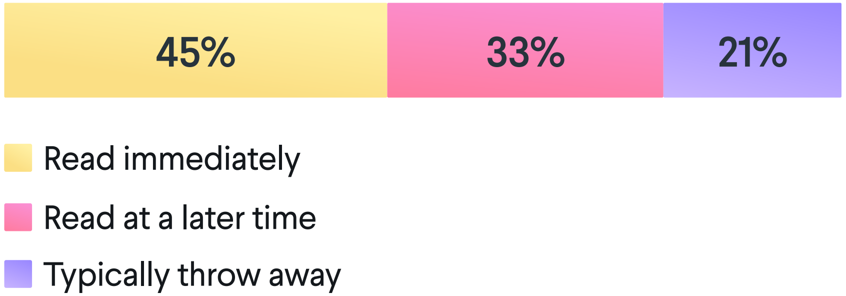
Top ways consumers engage

Visit brand or service website	27%
Search for it online using search engine	23%
Look up reviews	10%
Visit a retail location	7%

Type most likely to read

Promotions from products/services owned	30%
Promotions from new products/services	24%
Newsletters or letters	21%
Announcement of a new product/service	16%
Catalog showcasing products/services	9%

Typical action when receiving



Base: Total n=1,061
Q: Which of the following direct mail formats are you most likely to read from [INDUSTRY] brands?
(Select all that apply.) / What do you typically do with direct mail you receive from brands in the [INDUSTRY] industry? (Select all that apply.) / If you receive direct mail from a [INDUSTRY] company and want to learn more, which of the following ways are you most likely to do that? (Select one response.) / Of the following that you may receive via direct mail, which are you most likely to read if you received it from a brand you currently do business with in the [INDUSTRY] industry? (Select one response.)

Financial services/banking
Consumers prefer letters and envelopes

Top format most likely to read

Letters and envelopes	48%
Brochures	31%
Postcards	31%
Catalogs/Magazines	24%

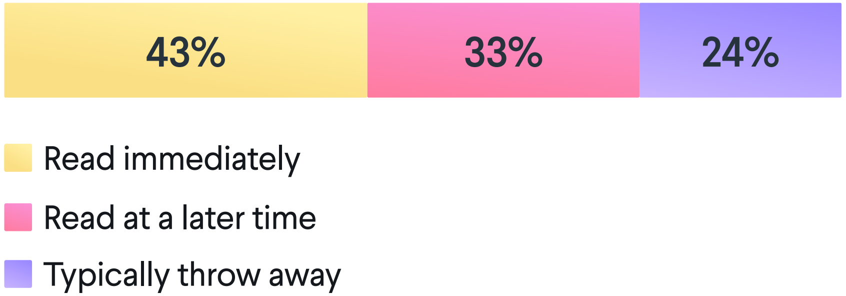
Top ways consumers engage

Visit brand or service website	26%
Search for it online using search engine	21%
Look up reviews	10%
Visit a retail location	7%

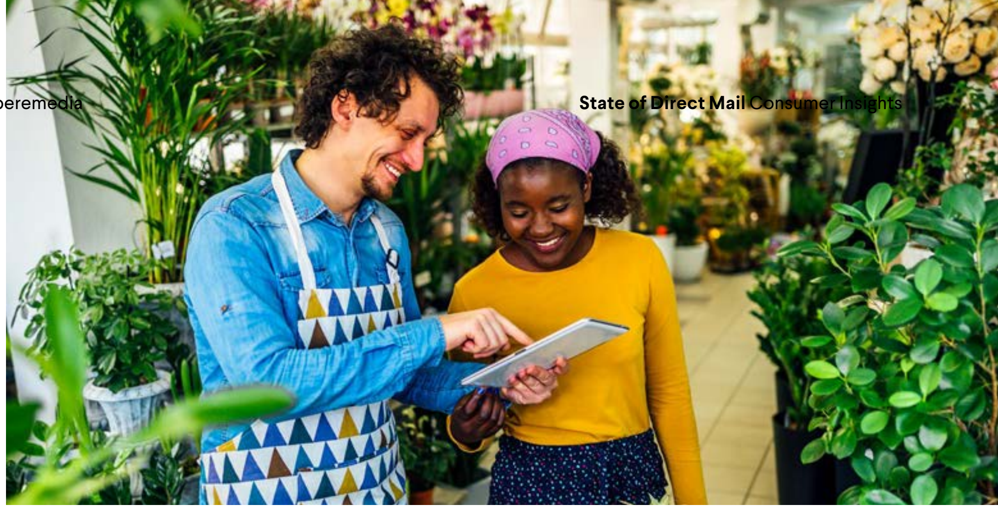
Type most likely to read

Promotions from products/services owned	33%
Promotions from new products/services	33%
Announcement of a new product/service	14%
Newsletters or letters	13%
Catalog showcasing products/services	8%

Typical action when receiving



Base: Total n=1,088
Q: Which of the following direct mail formats are you most likely to read from [INDUSTRY] brands?
(Select all that apply.) / What do you typically do with direct mail you receive from brands in the [INDUSTRY] industry? (Select all that apply.) / If you receive direct mail from a [INDUSTRY] company and want to learn more, which of the following ways are you most likely to do that? (Select one response.) / Of the following that you may receive via direct mail, which are you most likely to read if you received it from a brand you currently do business with in the [INDUSTRY] industry? (Select one response.)



Local business

Consumers prefer brochures from local businesses

Top format most likely to read

Brochures	46%
Catalogs/Magazines	43%
Letters and envelopes	39%
Postcards	38%

Top ways consumers engage

Visit brand or service website	25%
Search for it online using search engine	20%
Visit a retail location	17%
Look up reviews	11%

Type most likely to read

Promotions from products/services owned	34%
Promotions from new products/services	33%
Catalog showcasing products/services	14%
Announcement of a new product/service	10%
Newsletters or letters	8%

Typical action when receiving

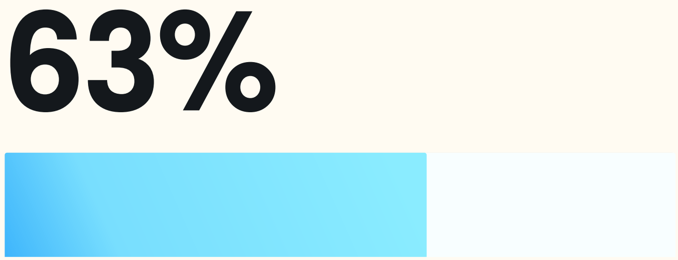
Base: Total n=1,048
Q: Which of the following direct mail formats are you most likely to read from [INDUSTRY] brands?
(Select all that apply.) / What do you typically do with direct mail you receive from brands in the [INDUSTRY] industry? (Select all that apply.) / If you receive direct mail from a [INDUSTRY] company and want to learn more, which of the following ways are you most likely to do that? (Select one response.) / Of the following that you may receive via direct mail, which are you most likely to read if you received it from a brand you currently do business with in the [INDUSTRY] industry? (Select one response.)

Consumer satisfaction with brand communications & frequency

Consumer satisfaction with brands is driven by their preference of frequency

Consumers aged **35+** are significantly more likely to be dissatisfied when reporting that brand communications are 'too frequent' compared to consumers aged 18-34.

> **Dissatisfaction increases among those who believe they do not receive the right amount, with stronger dissatisfaction among those who receive too much.**



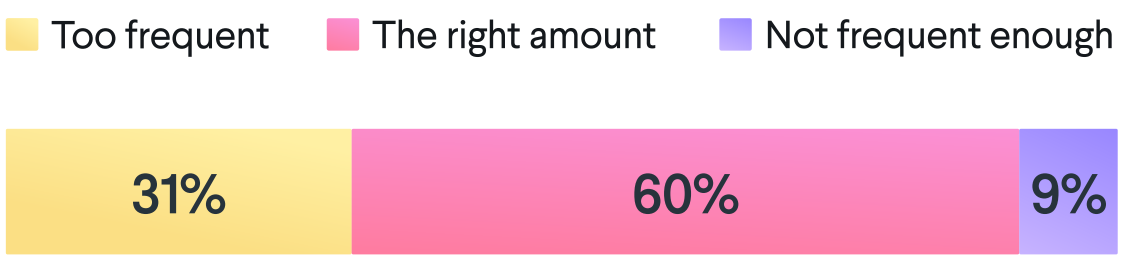
of those who receive the 'right amount' of communication from brands are satisfied with the amount

Base: Total n = 2,111
Q: How would you describe the frequency of communications you receive from brands overall? (Select one response.) / How satisfied are you with the amount of communications you receive from brands? (Select one response.)

The majority of consumers are satisfied with the amount of direct mail they receive

66% of those who receive the 'right amount' of **direct mail** from brands are satisfied with the amount.

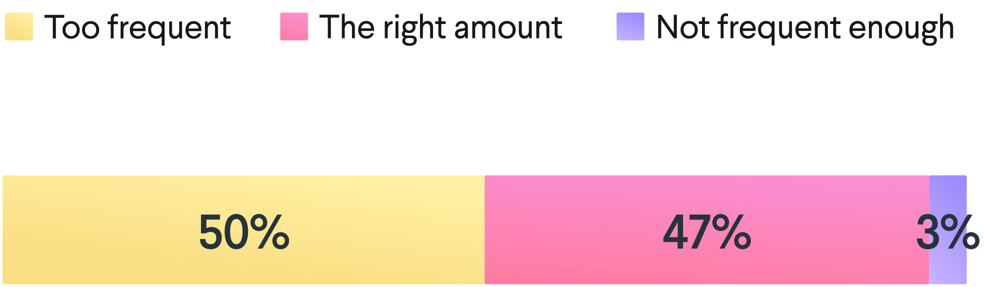
Direct mail frequency perception



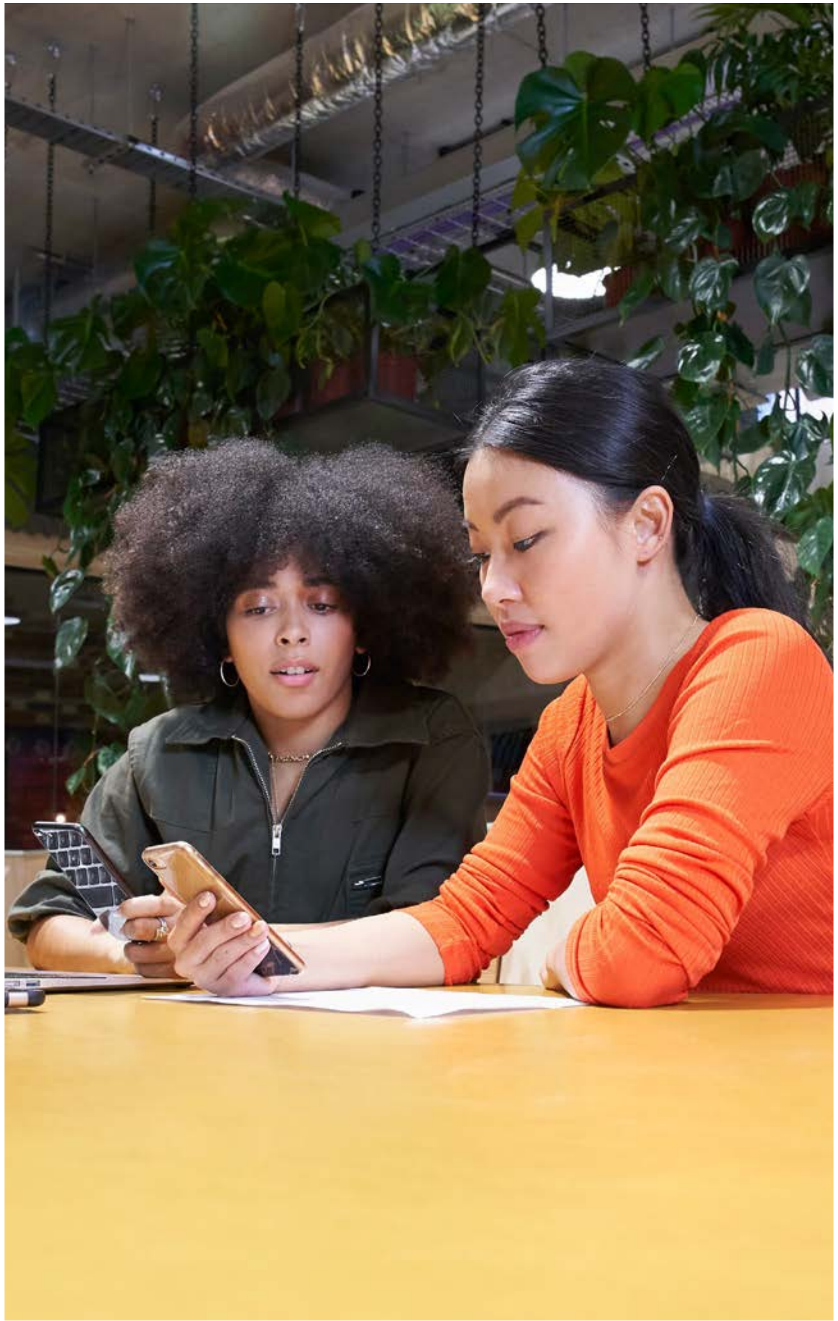
Base: Total n=2,111
Q: How would you describe the frequency of [brand communications overall/direct mail pieces/emails] you receive from brands overall? (Select one response.) / How satisfied are you with the amount of [brand communications overall/direct mail pieces/emails] you receive from brands? (Select one response.)

Email is the new junk mail: Half of respondents believe they receive too many emails

Email communication frequency

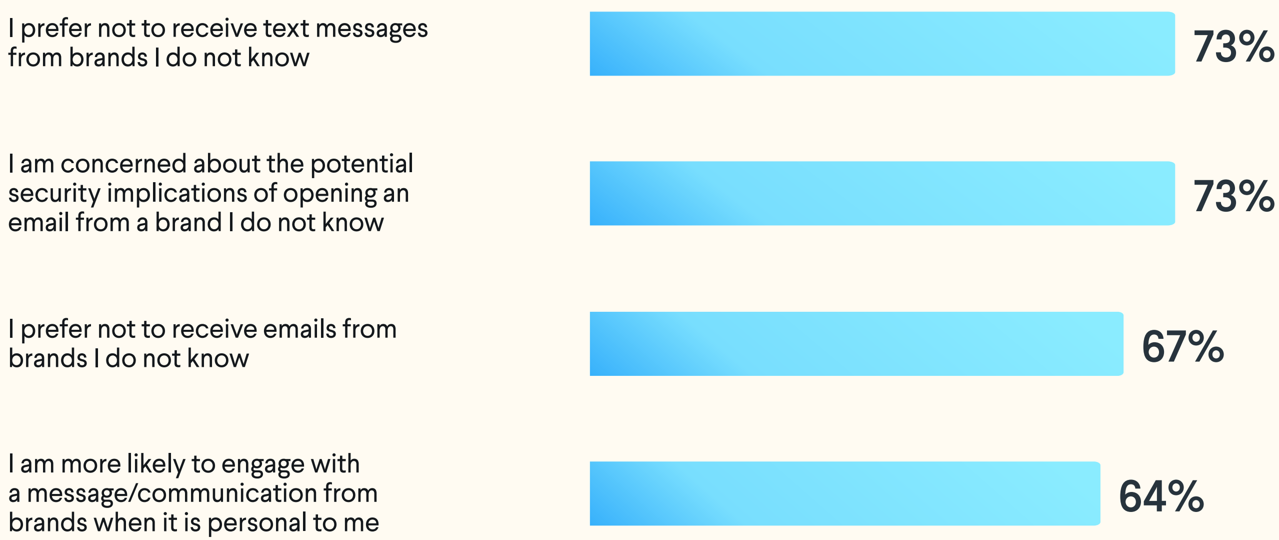


Base: Total n=2,111
Q: How would you describe the frequency of emails you receive from brands overall? (Select one response.)

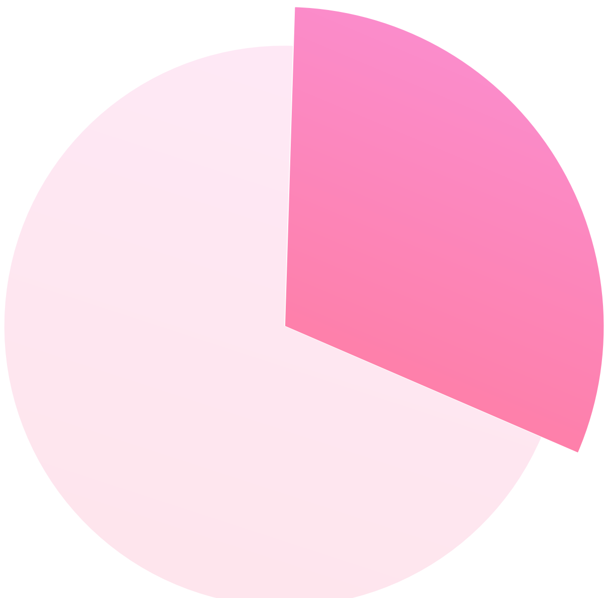


73%
of respondents have security concerns around opening emails from brands they don’t know

Communication attitudes



Base: Total n = 2,074
Q: Take a moment to consider the statements listed below. Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with each. (Select one per row.)



31%

are more likely to engage with a brand when they receive multiple types of communication

Base: Total n =2,074
Q: Take a moment to consider the statements listed below. Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with each. (Select one per row.)

Conclusion

The findings in this State of Direct Mail Consumer Insights Report prove intelligent direct mail that is connected, personalized, and measurable resonates with consumers. Today's savvy consumers value direct mail and find it an effective way to get to know, build relationships, and engage with brands. Intelligent direct mail that is customized, based on consumer behaviors and preferences, and contains relevant offers and promotions motivates consumers to immediately read and take action, most often by visiting a brand's website or physical store location.

In a noisy, digital world, direct mail breaks through and gets results like no other channel. That's why 67% of marketers say direct mail has the best ROI of any channel they use. To combat digital fatigue and email overwhelm, marketers have evolved their customer acquisition and retention strategies from disconnected tactics to a fine-tuned omnichannel approach that engages consumers at every stage of their journey with relevant content and offers.

Brands across various industries are using intelligent direct mail to satisfy consumer needs and drive business results. To learn more, see the 2022 State of Direct Mail.

Join the 10,000 brands using intelligent direct mail from Lob.

About Lob

Lob is the only direct mail automation platform for the digital age. Lob's platform automates the direct mail execution process for enterprises at any scale - from creation, printing, postage, delivery, and sustainability with end-to-end analytics and campaign attribution. Over 11,000 businesses trust Lob to transform their direct mail into intelligent mail.

Founded in 2013 and based in San Francisco, Lob is venture-backed by Y Combinator, Polaris Partners, Floodgate, and First Round Capital.

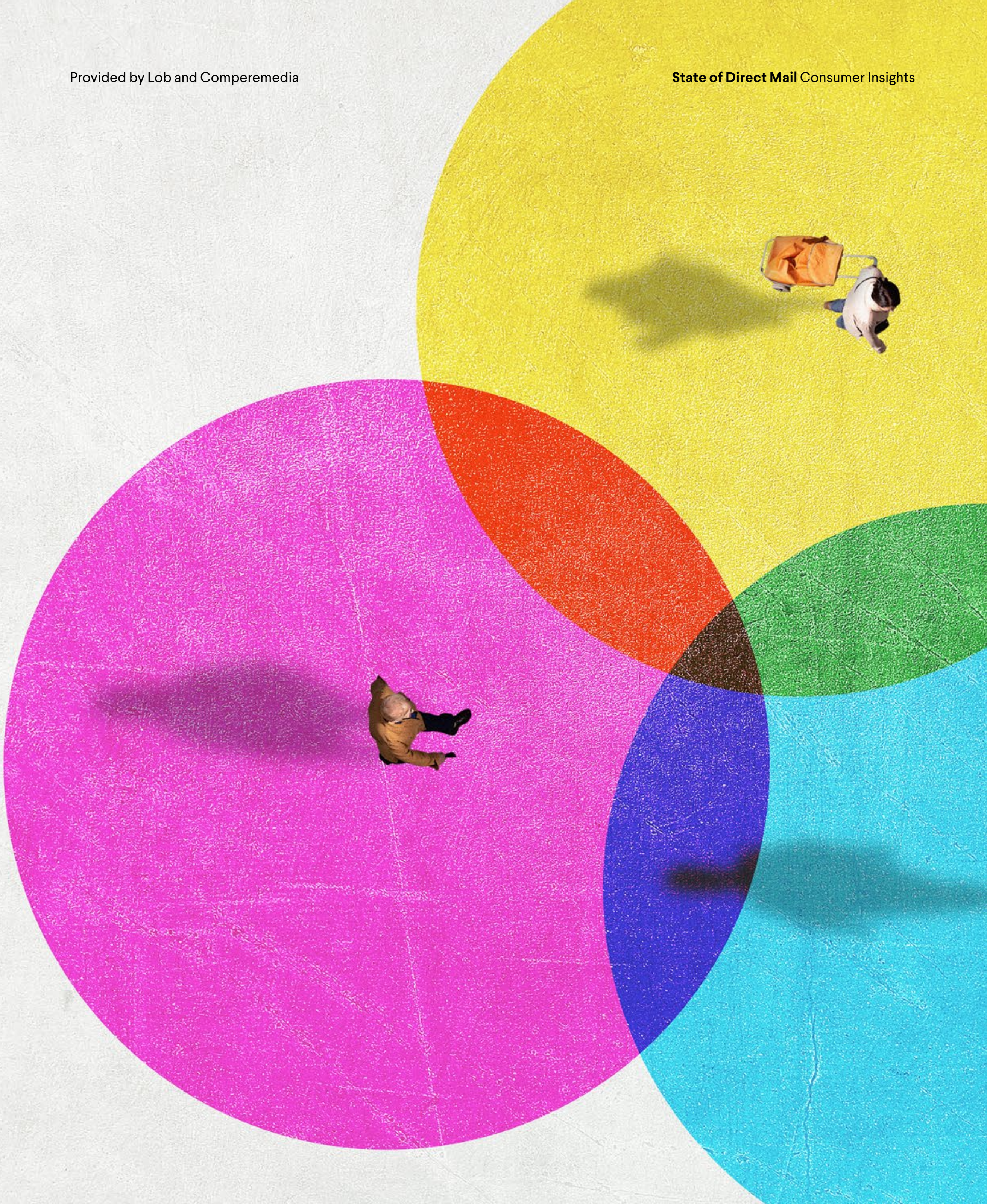
Find out more about Lob on our website: **Lob.com**

> Get our 2022 State of Direct Maill for more direct mail industry stats and insights.

About Comperemedia

Comperemedia is an industry-leading competitive marketing intelligence agency serving the United States and Canada. A Mintel Company, Comperemedia provides solutions for decision-makers in the marketing industry with world-class marketing intelligence technology, expert insights and custom consulting services. Visit **comperemedia.com** for more information.

Get a demo
Lob.com/sales



Appendix

Demographics | Total Sample = 2,111

Gender

56%	43%
Female	Male

Age

18-24	25-35	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
11%	16%	17%	16%	17%	23%

Income level

Less than $25k	$25k-$49k	$50k-$74k	$75k-$100k	$100k+
18%	23%	18%	12%	26%

Race

White	80%
Black	12%
Asian	6%
Other	5%

Children in home

1	3	5+
14%	5%	2%
2	**4**	**No children**
12%	2%	66%

Region

South	Midwest
39%	21%
West	**Northeast**
22%	18%

Marital status

Married	46%
Single	27%
Divorced/separated	13%
Domestic partnership	8%
Widowed	5%

Education

Less than high school	2%
High school grad	23%
Some college, no degree	24%
Associate degree	12%
Bachelor's degree	23%
Master's degree	12%
Doctoral or professional degree	3%

Hispanic

Hispanic
Non-hispanic

Urbanicity

Rural
Suburban
Urban