

State of Direct Mail: *Consumer Insights Edition*



Letter from the CEO

Every year, our State of Direct Mail: Consumer Insights report looks at how people engage with direct mail and what that means for marketers.

This year, economic pressure is changing how consumers shop and use mail. People are comparing options more carefully, looking harder for value, and holding onto information longer as they make decisions.

At the same time, expectations for relevance are rising. Personalization works, but what feels personal varies by generation. And as AI fills more of the digital experience, consumers are placing greater value on marketing that feels credible, useful, and authentic.

The opportunity is clear: create direct mail that earns attention, delivers real value, and helps consumers make confident decisions.

Ryan Ferrier
CEO, Lob

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Lob conducted this study in partnership with Kirin Analytics and PureSpectrum. The online survey was completed in July 2026 by 2,000 U.S. adults, nationally representative of age, gender, income, and region.

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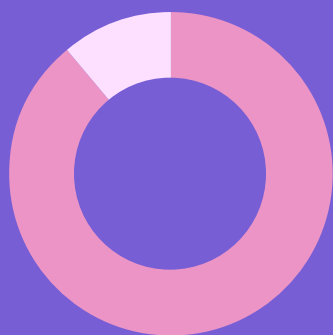
Key findings



In a tight economy, consumers are leaning on direct mail.
68% of consumers say economic conditions have changed what they pay attention to in direct mail.

Direct mail drives conversion across channels.
79% have taken a digital action after receiving direct mail, and 65% have made a purchase, signed up, or become a customer because of it.

Trust in direct mail is growing.
34% say direct mail feels more trustworthy than digital communication, a nine-point increase from 2025.



Relevance drives action.
89% say personalized, relevant direct mail influenced them to take action on a campaign.



The mailbox is still a daily habit.
82% collect their mail daily or nearly every day, and 87% read direct mail the same day.

AI is raising the bar for authenticity.
62% say AI has made them more skeptical of digital ads, while 82% are comfortable with or neutral toward AI being used for direct mail personalization.

The economy is reshaping how *consumers use direct mail*

Rising prices are making consumers more deliberate. Eighty-four percent say prices have changed how they shop, with consumers questioning purchases, waiting for sales, comparing options, and spending more time researching.

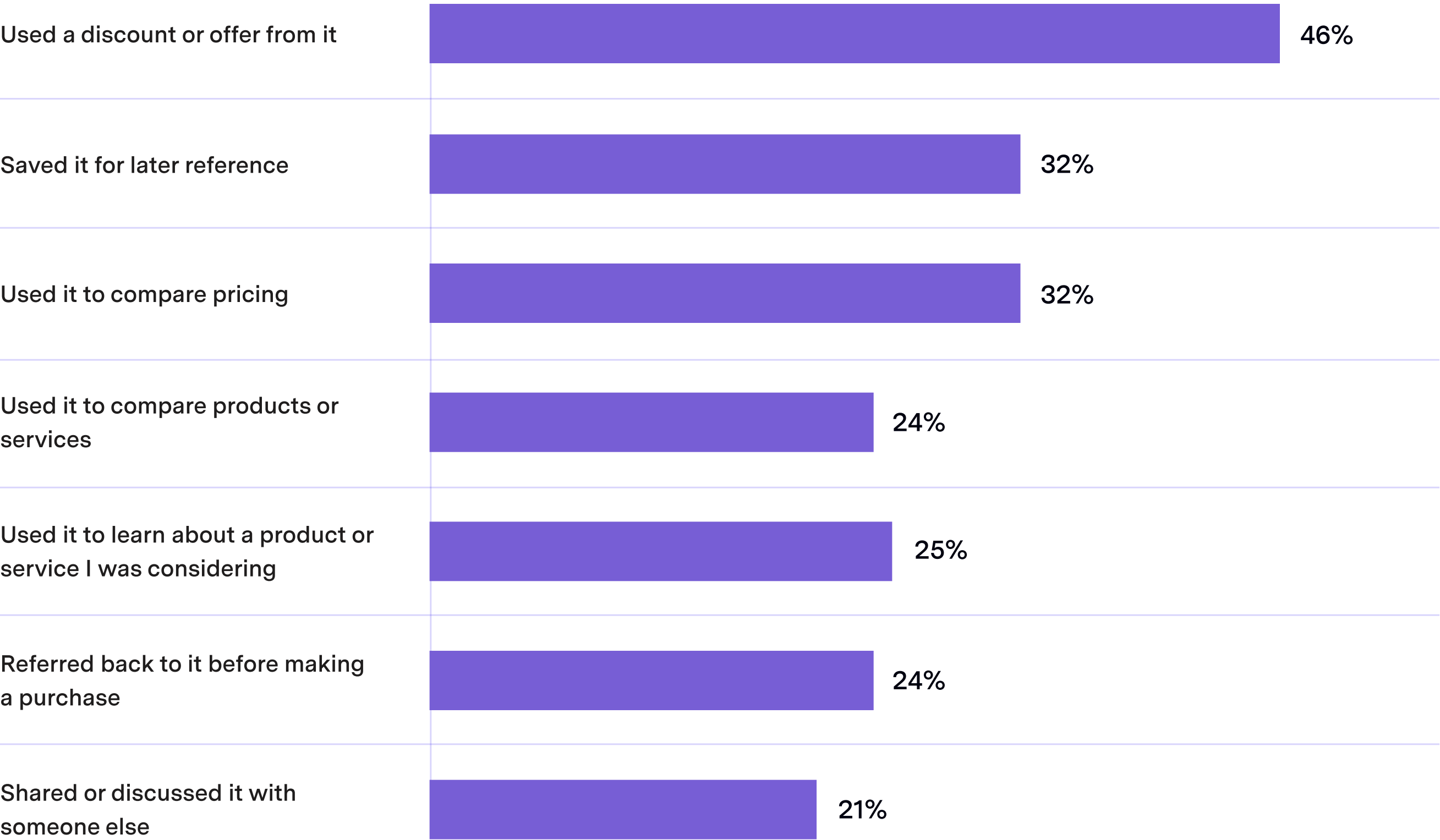
That mindset carries into the mailbox. Sixty-eight percent say economic conditions have changed what they pay attention to in direct mail, increasing the importance of value, affordability, and useful information.

✦ **84%** of consumers say rising prices have changed how they shop.

Design for the second read.

Give consumers something worth returning to: clear offers, useful product information, comparisons, or an easy way to pick up where they left off.

Over the past year, have you used direct mail for any of the following when making a purchase decision?



(Base: Economically strained consumers, n=690)

The rules of personalization *change by generation*

Personalization remains one of direct mail’s strongest conversion drivers: 89% of consumers say relevance has influenced them to take action.

But “personal” doesn’t mean the same thing to everyone. Boomers respond more strongly to offers, timing, and information related to something they’re actively considering. Gen Z places more weight on names, life stage, and physical elements that make the piece feel individually relevant.

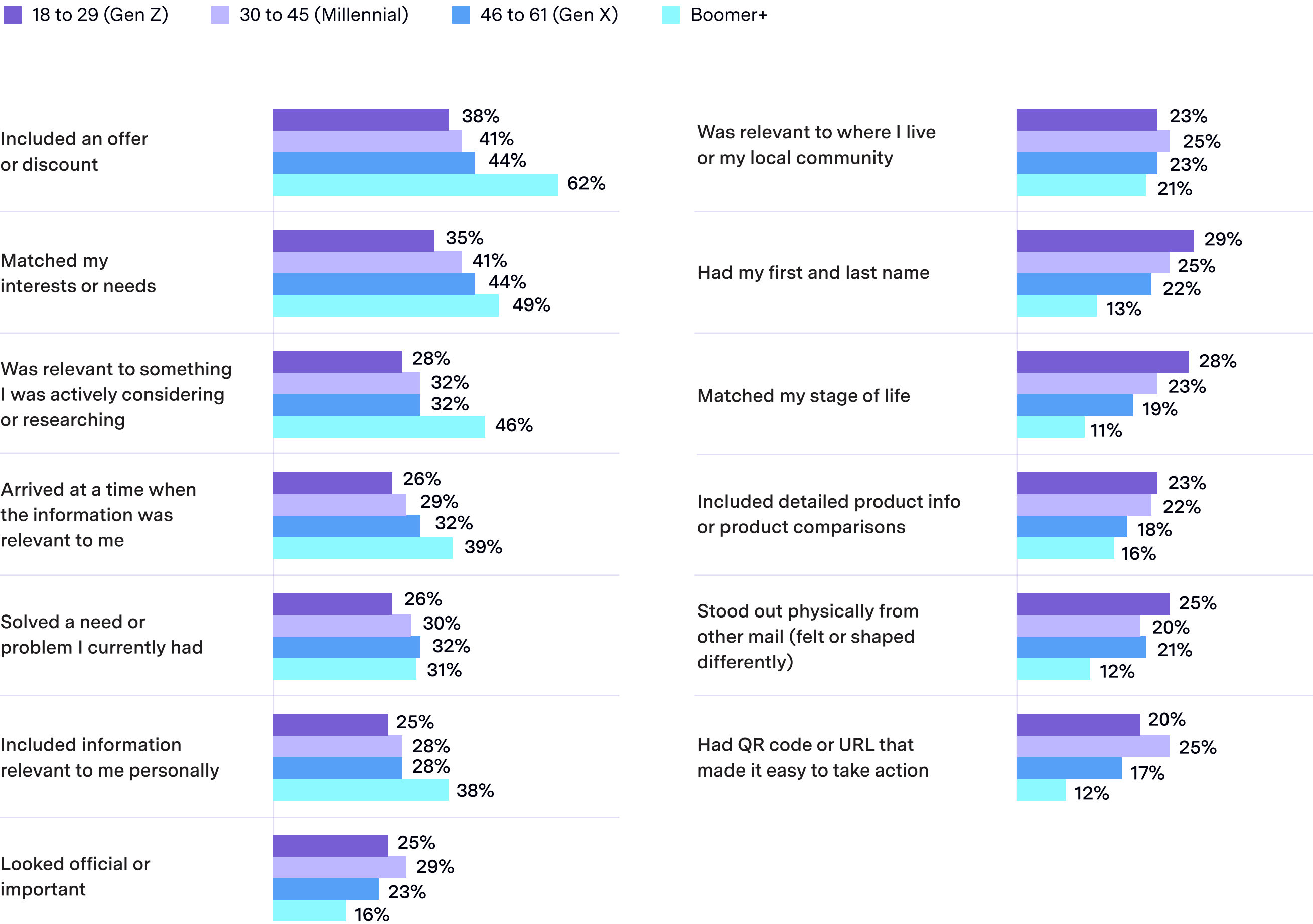
♦ *2× more likely*

Gen Z is more than twice as likely as Boomers to respond to life-stage personalization and seeing their full name.

Layer your personalization.

Start with identity, then add the offer, product, timing, or message that reflects what matters to that audience.

What influenced you to take action after receiving direct mail?



(Base: Total respondents, n=2,000)

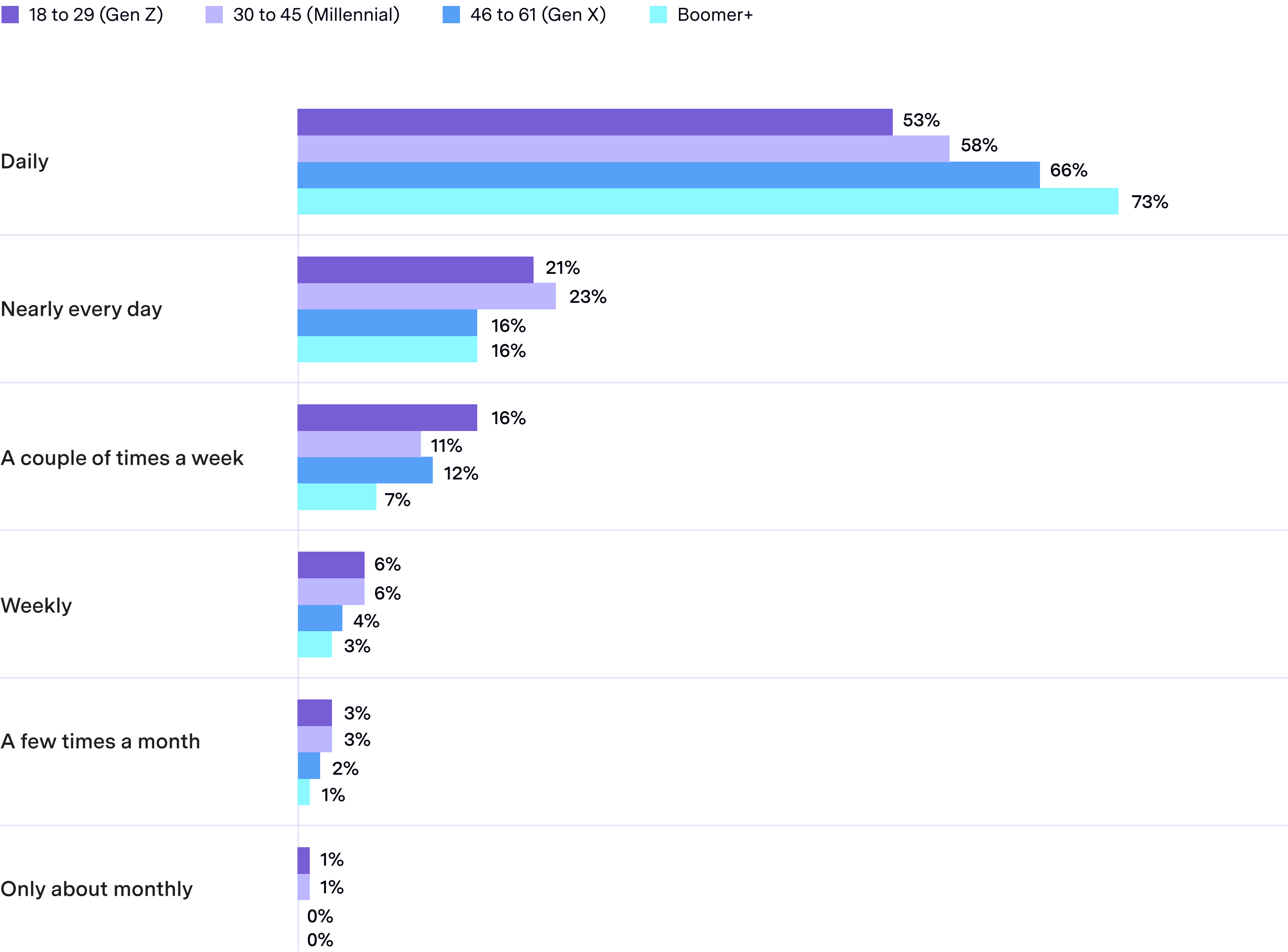
The mailbox still *commands attention*

The mailbox is one of the few marketing touchpoints already built into consumers’ routines. More than 80% collect their mail daily or nearly every day, and 87% read direct mail the same day. That creates a consistent moment of attention and mail has staying power after that first interaction, too.

✦ **53%** value direct mail because it’s easy to remember or return to later.

Make the mailbox moment count.
Lead with clear value, distinctive creative, and information people will want to keep or revisit.

How often do you typically collect your mail?



(Base: Total respondents, n=2,000)

Trust in direct mail is growing, *even in the age of AI.*

As digital channels become more crowded with AI-generated content, consumers are paying closer attention to whether marketing feels authentic and trustworthy.

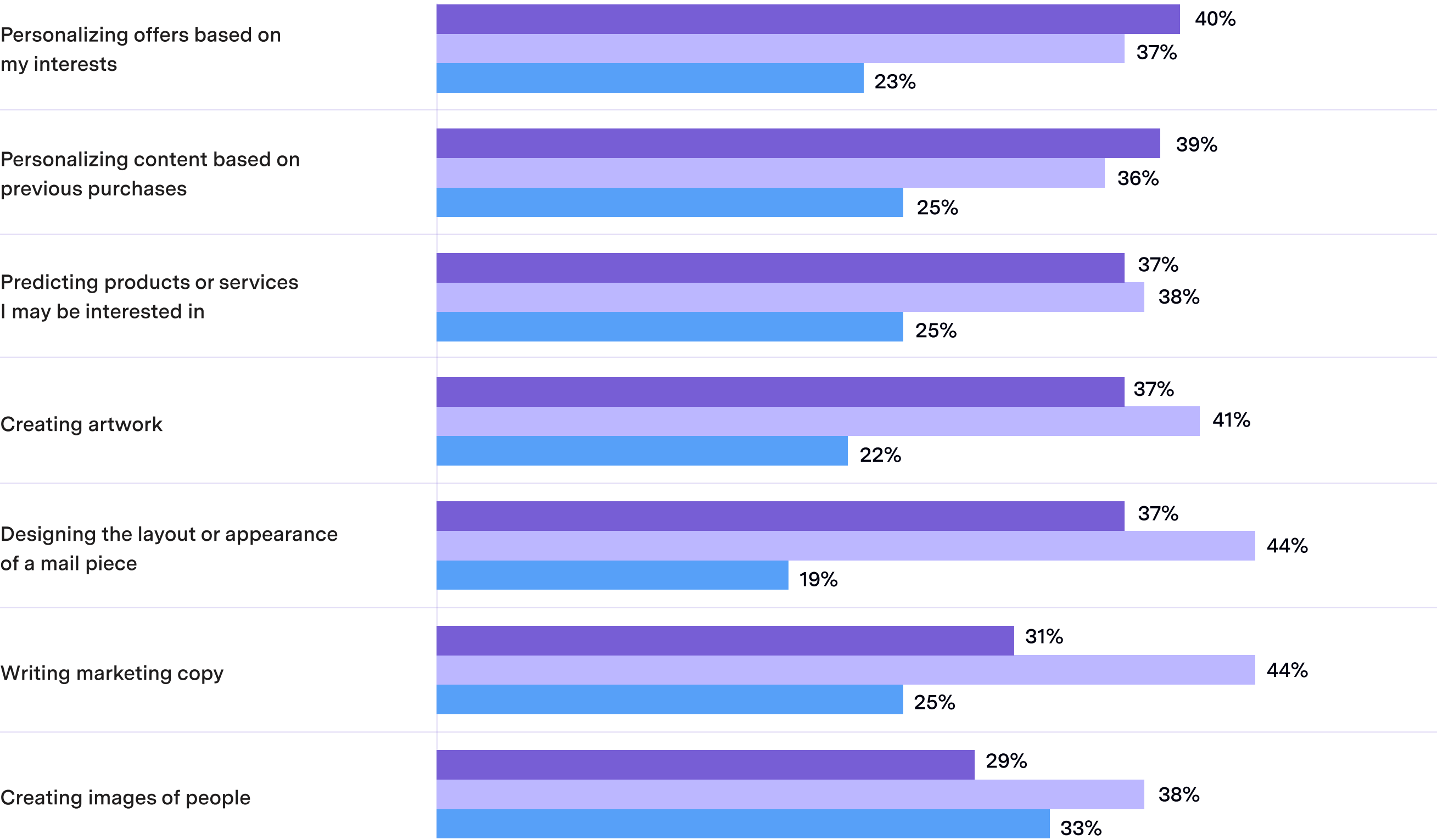
Thirty-four percent say direct mail feels more trustworthy than digital communication, up nine points year over year, and 50% say brands that send direct mail seem more credible than those that operate only in digital channels. Consumers aren’t necessarily opposed to AI. They’re comfortable with brands using it to improve relevance, but they respond poorly when the result feels generic, artificial, or untrustworthy.

✦ **62%** say the growth of AI has made them more skeptical of digital ads.

✦ **50%** say brands that send direct mail seem more credible than brands that do everything digitally.

How comfortable are you with brands using AI for each of the following when creating direct mail?

Comfortable Don't Care Not comfortable



(Base: Total respondents, n=2,000)

Build mail for *the way* consumers make decisions today

1

Design for the decision.

Give consumers useful information, offers, and next steps they can return to as they evaluate a purchase.

2

Personalize beyond the name.

Use needs, intent, life stage, timing, and offers to make personalization genuinely relevant.

3

Match the mailbox moment.

Create mail that rewards attention with clear value, recognizable branding, and a reason to keep reading.

4

Use AI with a human filter.

Let AI improve relevance and efficiency, then make sure the final experience still feels credible, thoughtful, and human.

Interested in more insights?

Explore the full 2026 State of Direct Mail
Consumer Insights report →