ReturnPro

SURVEY REPORT
JUNE 2026

Consumer Behavior Study

# The GLP-1 Effect

How weight loss drugs are reshaping consumer shopping behavior.


Insights from 500 U.S. consumers on shopping behavior, apparel spending, and returns.

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A note from the CEO

# Something significant is happening in retail, and most merchants are not seeing it yet

GLP-1 medications, Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro, Zepbound, are changing bodies at a scale and speed that retail infrastructure was not designed to absorb. Millions of consumers are moving through multiple clothing sizes in a matter of months, replacing full wardrobes, returning items that no longer fit, and buying multiples of the same item with the explicit intention of returning what does not work. The downstream effects on return volume, return timing, inventory planning, and reverse logistics cost are real, measurable, and building.

We commissioned this research because retailers were asking us questions we could not answer from operational data alone. Now we can answer them.

What follows is not a speculative forecast. It is a direct account of what 500 GLP-1 users told us about how their shopping behavior has changed: what they are buying, what they are returning, what they are holding onto, and what they wish retailers would do differently.

**Sender Shamiss**
CEO, ReturnPro

# Methodology

500

U.S. adults surveyed

SHOPPING BEHAVIOR · APPAREL SPENDING · RETURNS

| | |
|---|---|
| CONSUMERS SURVEYED | 500 U.S. adults |
| ELIGIBILITY | Currently taking, or taken within the past 12 months: Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro, or Zepbound |
| METHOD | Online survey via Pollfish |
| FIELDING PERIOD | June 2026 |
| WEIGHTING | Post-stratified by age, GLP-1 journey stage, and weight loss progress |

# 65%

Buy multiple sizes intending to return what doesn’t fit

- More than double the rate of general retail consumers*

*ReturnPro, 2026, The Consumer Trust Gap Retailers Can't Ignore

# 69%

More likely to shop in-store due to sizing uncertainty

# 83%

of meaningful premium spenders are more likely to shop in-store

The signals beneath the headline

# Six findings that turn a trend into a forecast

Around the three headline numbers, the same behavior shows up across spending and returns, and points in one direction.

## The same consumer is buying more, holding longer, and returning more, all at the same time.

**Premium In-store**

**91%**

who increased premium spending significantly are more likely to shop in-store

**Spending**

**71%**

are actively buying more clothing because their size is changing

**Delaying**

**61%**

are holding multiple sizes, waiting to lose more weight

**Premium Spending**

**58%**

have increased spending on premium or higher-end apparel

**Returns**

**48%**

have already returned items that became too large after purchase

**Return Frequency**

**43%**

say their apparel return frequency has increased since starting treatment

# The surprising gender split

For decades, apparel retailers have designed merchandising, marketing and returns strategies around one assumption: women generate the majority of apparel returns. Our research suggests GLP-1 medications may be rewriting that playbook.

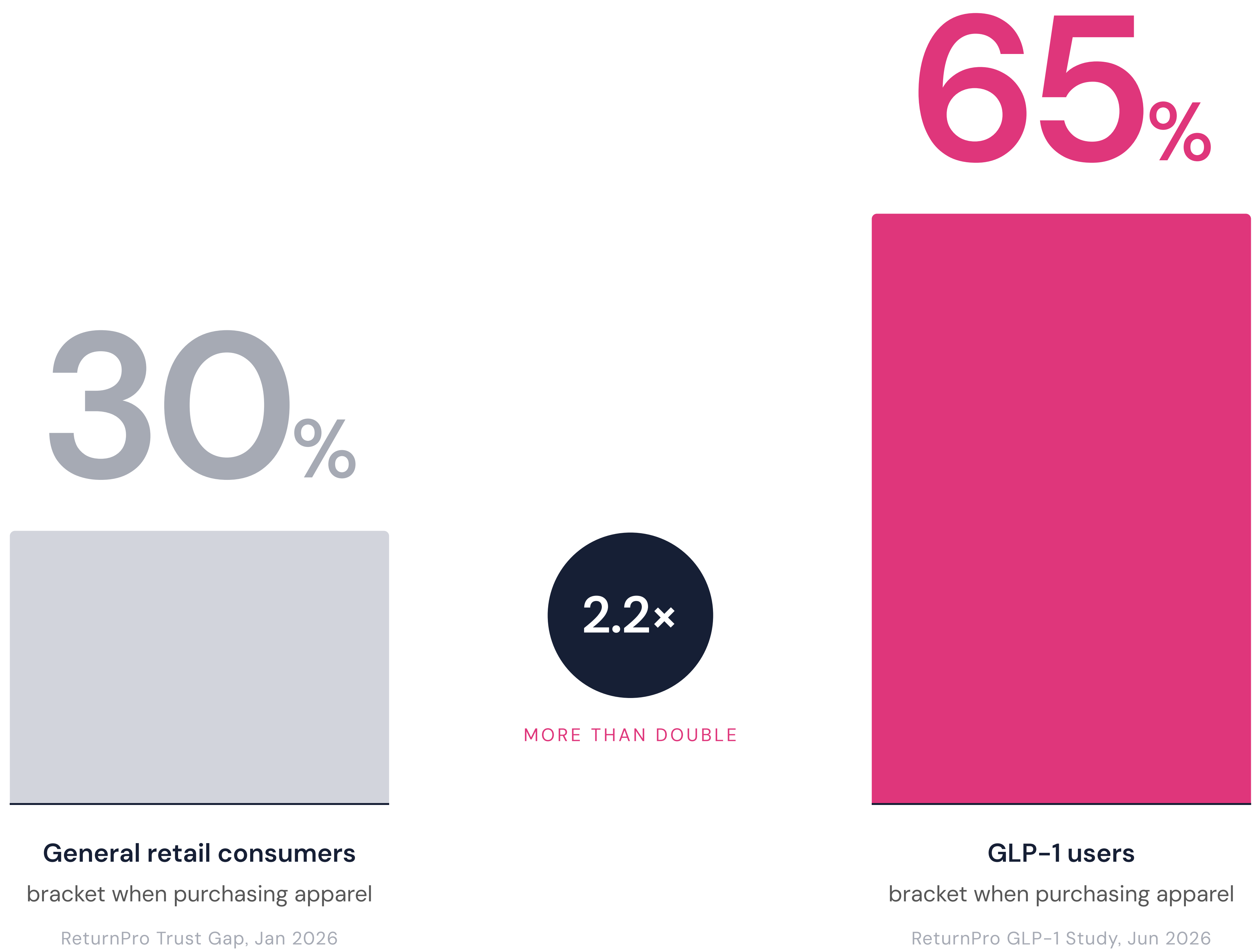
Among GLP-1 users, men report higher rates of apparel bracketing, higher increases in return frequency, and greater increases in premium apparel spending than women. Rather than simply changing what consumers buy, GLP-1s appear to be changing who behaves like the traditional high-return apparel shopper.

| MEN | APPAREL SIZING BEHAVIOR BY GENDER | WOMEN |
|---|---|---|
| 20% | Frequently bracket sizes | 12% |
| 49% | Return apparel more often | 37% |
| 18% | Significantly increased premium apparel purchases | 13% |
| 64% | Would enroll in a paid size exchange program | 53% |

## Among GLP-1 users, men have become the unexpected driver of apparel returns

# More than double the rate of general consumers

65% of GLP-1 users purchase multiple sizes of the same item with the explicit intention of returning what does not fit. 16% do this frequently. 49% do so occasionally. The figure warrants context.



The behaviors compound

# 83%

of those holding multiple sizes are also actively bracketing new purchases.

Among those who have kept multiple sizes expecting to keep losing weight, 83% are also actively bracketing new purchases. The two behaviors stack: deferred returns from past purchases accumulate on top of ongoing bracketing from new ones.

Deferred returns from past purchases

+

Ongoing bracketing from new purchases

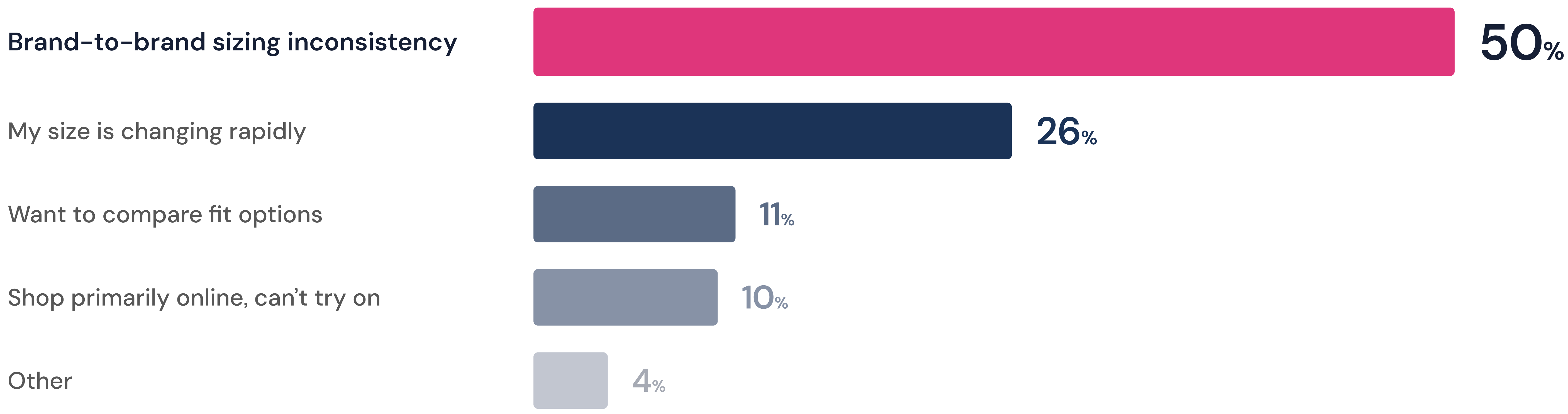
**A return pipeline forecasting cannot see**

> Bracketing and deferred returns are not the same event. Together, they create a return pipeline that current forecasting models cannot see.

# The return to stores

The most revealing question in this study asked why GLP-1 users buy multiple sizes. Inconsistency, not weight loss, is the primary driver.

PRIMARY REASON FOR BUYING MULTIPLE SIZES




## GLP-1 weight loss has not created a new problem. It has exposed and amplified one that has always existed.

Sizing uncertainty is pulling consumers back

# 69%

are more likely to shop in-store for apparel because of sizing uncertainty.

**9%**
less likely

**22%**
no change

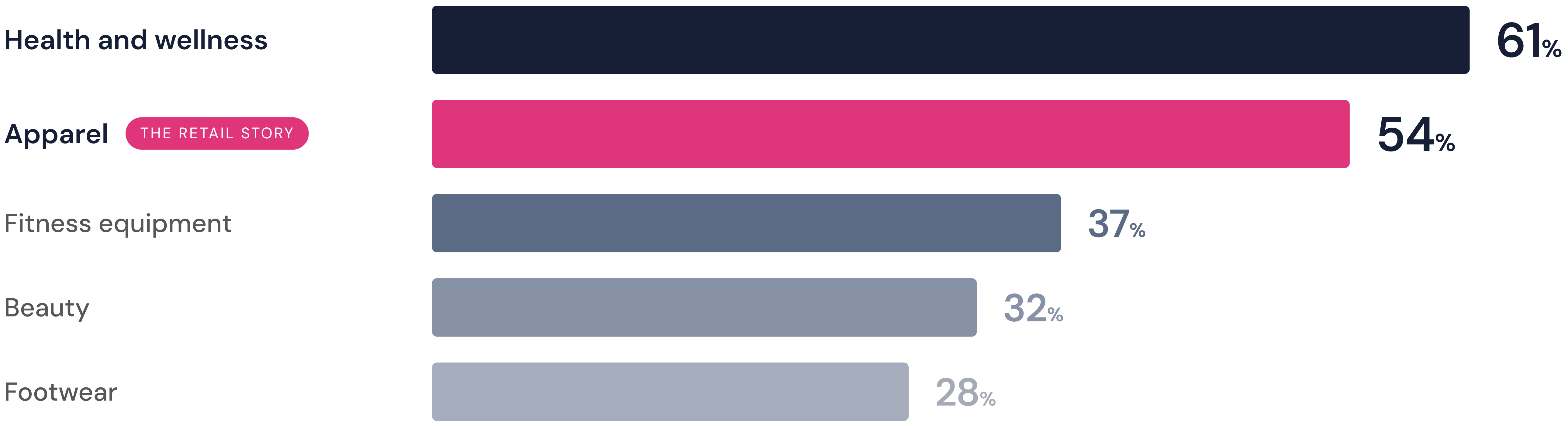
This finding runs counter to the dominant narrative in retail about the inexorable shift to e-commerce. When confidence in sizing is disrupted, the friction of in-store shopping becomes worthwhile. The fitting room becomes a service, not an inconvenience.

The corollary for e-commerce is equally clear: accurate sizing tools, detailed fit descriptions, and AI-powered fit recommendations are not nice-to-have features. They are the difference between a purchase that sticks and a bracketed order that generates two return shipments.

# The premium investment

71% are actively buying more clothing because their size is changing. Only 6% are delaying purchases until their weight stabilizes. The dominant behavior is purchase now, return as needed.

SHARE SPENDING MORE, BY CATEGORY




Health and wellness leads overall, but apparel ranks second by individual category. That is the retail story: the GLP-1 consumer is not retreating from spending, they are redirecting it.

# 58%

have increased spending on premium or higher-end apparel since starting treatment.

This is not a consumer replacing a wardrobe at the lowest acceptable price point. This is a consumer investing in their new body, and spending accordingly. 15% have increased premium spending significantly.

**52%**

expect apparel purchases to increase once weight stabilizes

**63%**

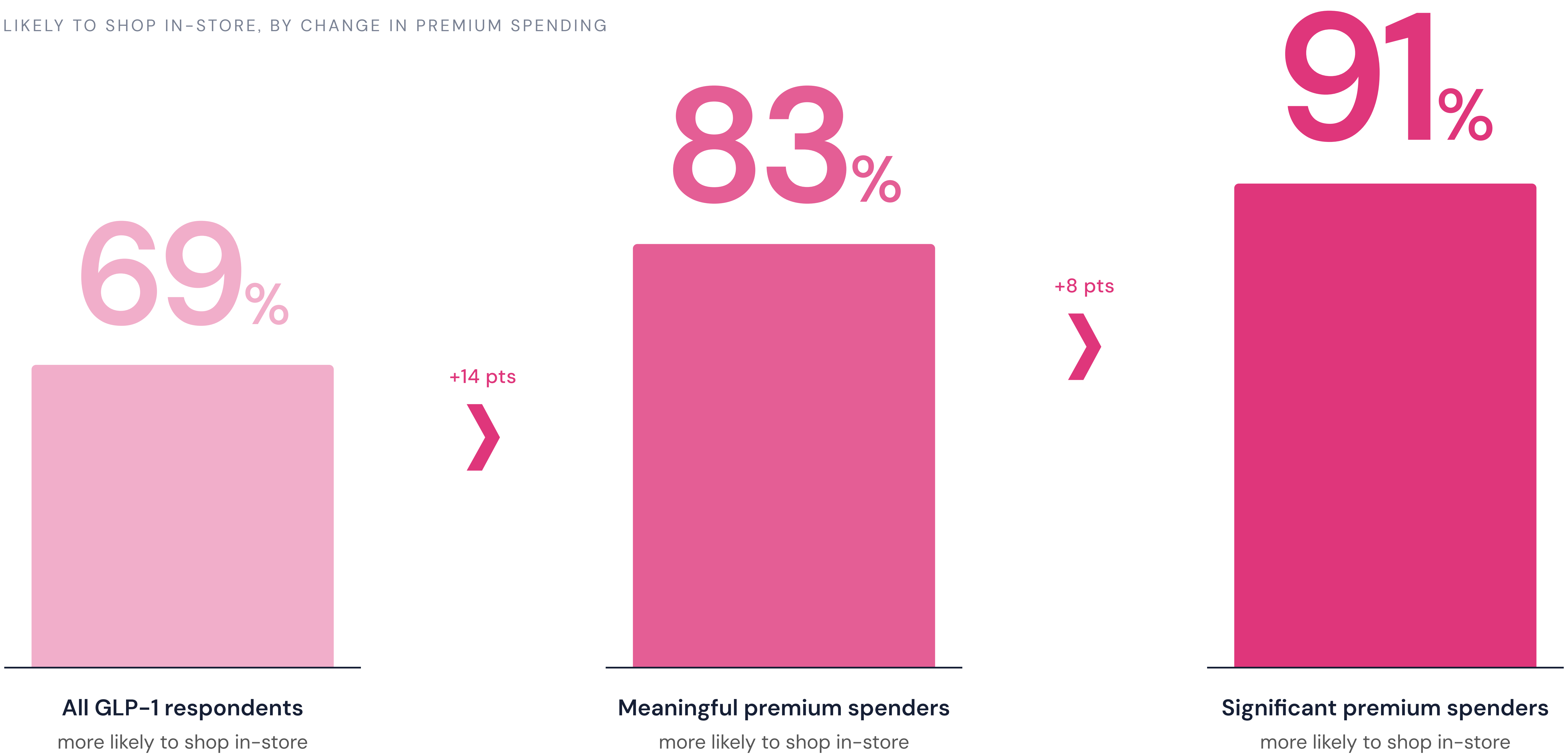
report greater confidence selecting their size

## The GLP-1 consumer is not retreating from retail. They are upgrading their relationship with it.

# Where in-store and premium spending intersect

The in-store shift is not uniform. The more a consumer's premium spending has risen, the more likely they are to shop in-store. The relationship is linear, and it is strong.

SHARE MORE LIKELY TO SHOP IN-STORE, BY CHANGE IN PREMIUM SPENDING



Why this matters more than the topline stat

# The GLP-1 consumer most worth keeping in-store is also the one spending the most.

The in-store shift is not evenly distributed across all GLP-1 consumers. It is most concentrated among the customers who generate the highest apparel revenue per visit.

Store experience investment should be read as premium revenue protection, not generic customer service. And because this customer buys premium, their returns carry more recovery value too, a thread that pays off in Section 6.

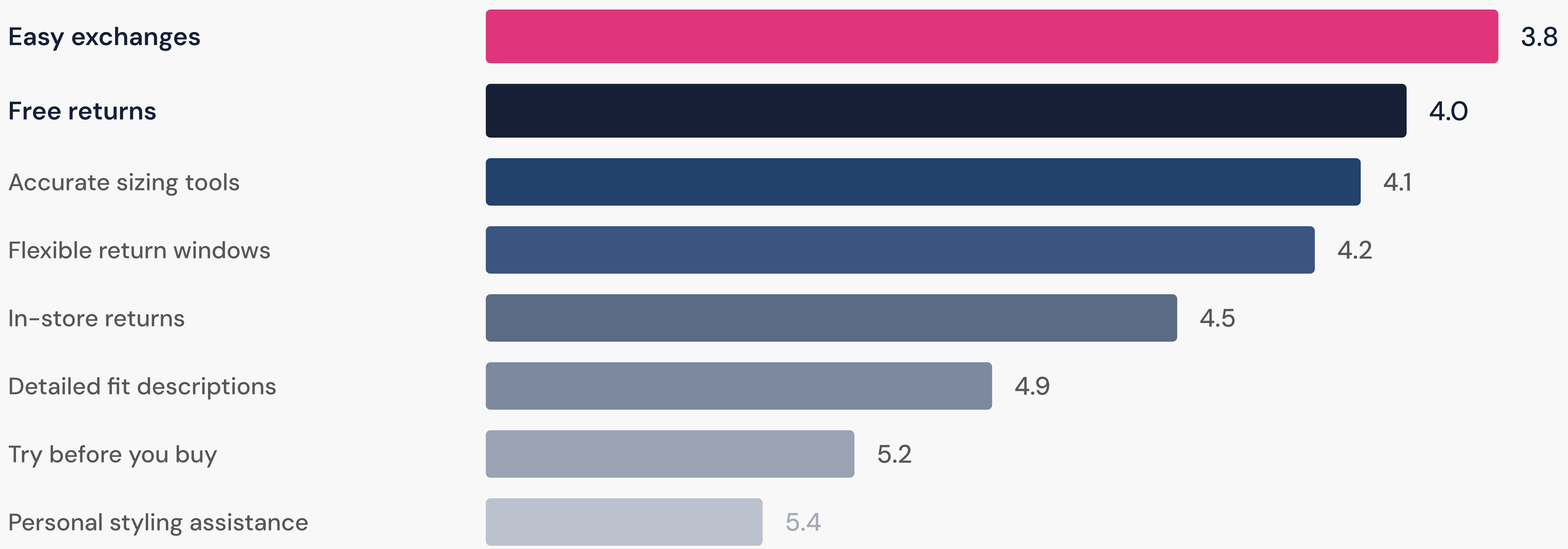
05

# What consumers want from retailers

Respondents ranked eight retailer features by importance. Easy exchanges and free returns top the list. The fixes consumers want most are operational, not promotional.

RETAILER FEATURE, BY MEAN RANK SCORE

1 = most important · 8 = least important



# 74%

addressable market for a paid size exchange program.

58% yes + 16% unsure

58% of respondents said they would enroll in a paid program that guarantees one free size exchange within six months of purchase, for a small fee. Only 26% said no.


## A paid size exchange program converts a returns liability into recurring revenue. Up to 74% of GLP-1 users are already willing to fund it.

06

# The return story

43% of GLP-1 users say their apparel return frequency has increased since starting treatment. 44% report no change, 13% a decrease. Nearly half of this cohort is already returning more, and that is before the deferred volume arrives.

## Today’s return rate is not the ceiling. It is the floor.

# 48%

have already returned items that became too large after purchase.

# 61%

are holding multiple sizes, waiting to keep losing weight before returning.

## The recommerce opportunity hiding inside the returns wave

The GLP-1 effect is generating a parallel secondary market event. Users are feeding resale platforms from both sides at once: selling clothing that no longer fits and buying transitional pieces while still losing weight.

Items graded accurately and routed to recommerce rather than liquidation recover significantly more value. Retailers with the reverse logistics infrastructure to capture that routing decision turn the GLP-1 returns surge into a margin recovery opportunity. Those without it send the same inventory to liquidation at pennies on the dollar.

The opportunity is not evenly distributed across the returns wave. Premium apparel, where 58% of this cohort is already spending more and where in-store concentration is highest, is also where recommerce recovery rate opportunity is greatest. Infrastructure built to grade and route premium items well, rather than push them through the same path as everything else, is where the GLP-1 returns wave converts most directly into margin.

**+103%**

Poshmark plus-size clothing listings[1]

**+78%**

listings mentioning weight loss[1]

1. Poshmark data via Vogue Business, Aug 2024. ThredUp CEO James Reinhart via CNBC, Apr 9 2026.

# What this means for your operations

## 01 Supply chain & returns

Return volume forecasting models need to account for the GLP-1 deferred return pattern. Current inbound volume does not reflect the inventory sitting in consumers' homes awaiting return. Scenario planning should include a 10 to 15% incremental increase in apparel return volume with an elongated return-date-to-purchase-date gap.

Disposition strategy matters more here than for average returns. 58% of this cohort is buying premium, and premium items recover significantly more value when graded accurately and routed to recommerce rather than processed through the standard liquidation path. Retailers who build grading and routing capacity for higher-value GLP-1 returns now will capture that recovery as volume builds. Those who treat it as standard-issue processing capacity will leave that margin on the table.

## 02 Merchandising & inventory

The bracketing behavior creates a temporary demand signal that overstates true size demand. A retailer who sees strong sell-through on multiple sizes of the same SKU should confirm whether the pattern reflects genuine size diversity or bracketing behavior before restocking to that distribution.

The wardrobe replacement scope creates a planning opportunity. GLP-1 users who purchased in one category this quarter will likely need to repurchase in adjacent categories over the next two to four quarters. Category cross-sell sequencing for this cohort can be data-driven.

# Where the highest-return investments sit

## 03 Customer experience

69% of GLP-1 users are coming back to stores because sizing uncertainty has made online shopping unreliable for them. The in-store visit is a high-intent moment, and what this consumer needs is consistent: fast refunds, free returns, and easy exchanges that do not require a full return cycle. Easy exchanges ranked the single most important retailer feature in this study, ahead of free returns and accurate sizing tools, and that should drive store-level service design, not just policy language on a returns page.

Floor staff matter more for this customer than for the average shopper. A consumer navigating active size change needs genuine fit assistance and inventory across the full size range they are moving through, not just their starting size. This experience determines whether a visit ends in a sale or a walkout. A retailer that also lets them sell what no longer fits and buy transitional pieces in the same place keeps the entire wardrobe transition inside one relationship, instead of losing it to a third-party resale platform.

## 04 E-commerce & digital

Sizing accuracy is the highest-leverage intervention to reduce bracketing-driven return volume. Accurate size guides built from customer return data, AI-powered fit recommendations, and detailed fit descriptions all address the 50% of multi-size purchasers whose primary driver is brand-to-brand inconsistency. The 69% in-store shift is not an indictment of digital commerce, it is a signal of what digital is failing to provide: sizing confidence, and the highest-spending customers are the least willing to gamble on it online.

Reducing return volume is not the only opportunity. 74% of GLP-1 users are an addressable market for a paid size exchange program, 58% would enroll and another 16% are unsure. That is a new digital revenue line built directly into checkout or account settings, not a discount or a retention gimmick. It can be built and sold now, on top of the current returns experience, converting a cohort that already brackets and exchanges at high rates into a funded, predictable revenue stream instead of an unmonetized cost center.

# GLP-1 isn't a returns trend

**It's an evolutionary event for retail — and apparel is where it's happening first.**

Bodies are changing at a pace retail was never built to track, and the industry's response to that will separate the businesses that adapt from the businesses that don't. The signs show up in sales data first — bracketing, exchanges, cancellations — but reverse logistics is where the shift becomes definitive. It's the data-proven record of a change that was already underway.

This new reality is forcing a choice. Retailers can keep watching the data, or they can change how they size, source, merchandise, and recirculate inventory. Only one of those is truly a strategy.

## The next phase of retail is not simply e-commerce versus physical, or premium versus value. It is adaptive versus static.

Where ReturnPro comes in

ReturnPro helps retailers meet this moment with the technology, supply chain services, recommerce infrastructure, and operational scale to transform returns from a cost center into a source of margin, building customer loyalty and competitive advantage.

Take the next step

## Is your returns infrastructure ready for what's coming?

Book a returns assessment →

Get in touch

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solutions@returnpro.com

Survey conducted June 2026. N=500 U.S. adults currently taking or having taken a GLP-1 medication within the past 12 months. Post-stratified by age, GLP-1 journey stage, and weight loss progress. Bracketing comparison references the ReturnPro Consumer Trust Gap Report, January 2026, N=1,000 general U.S. retail consumers. In-store and premium spending cross-tabulation based on Q6 and Q10.