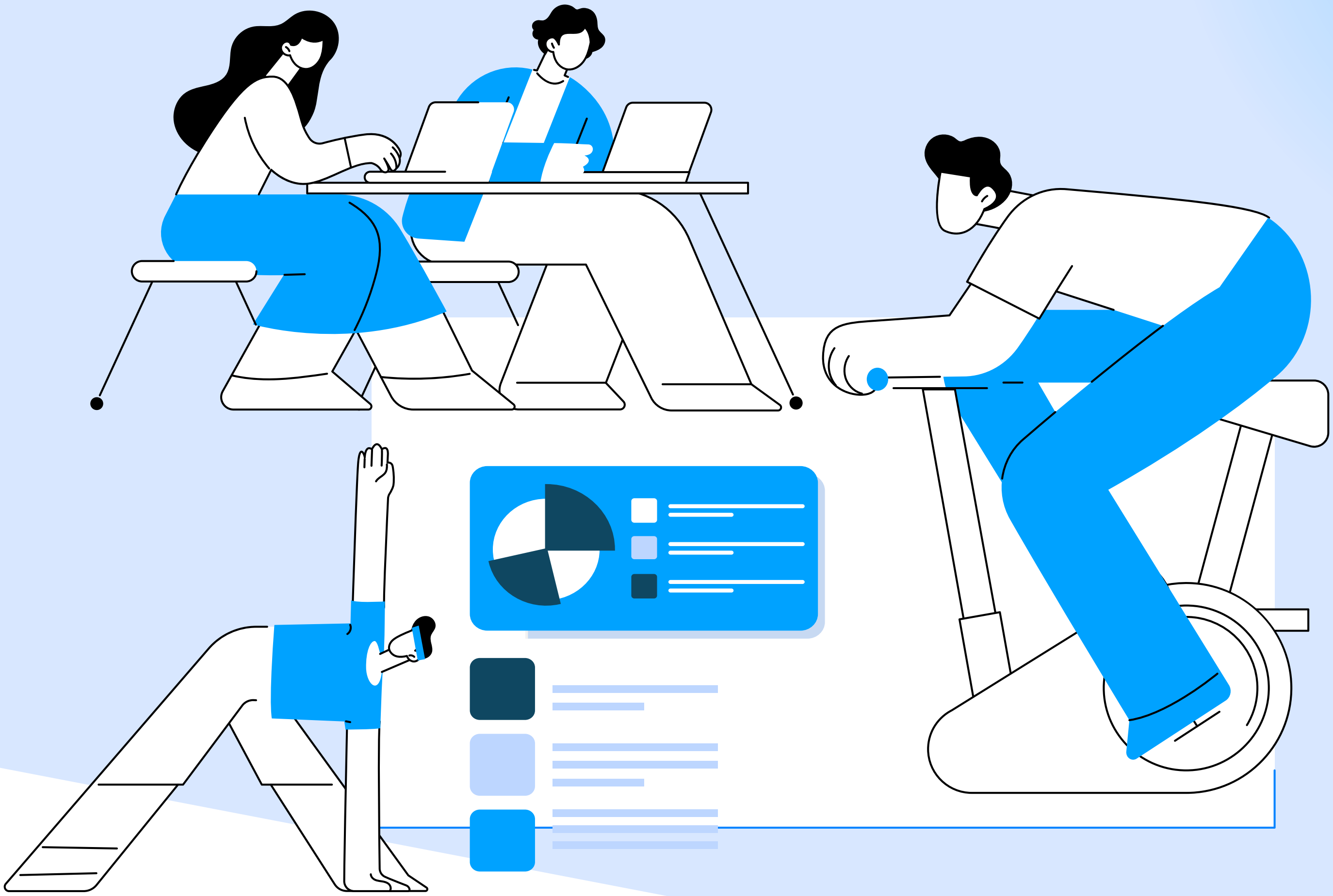


GetResponse

The 2026 Customer Loyalty Report

Findings from 2,400 Shoppers and 600 Brands

Brands across the health, wellness and fitness industry

www.getresponse.com

Michał Leszczyński
Head of Content and SEO
at GetResponse

2025 witnessed big shifts and changes in marketing and AI, starting from the introduction of AI overviews to the AI-powered browsers like Atlas and Perplexity's Comet. The latter two examples can navigate a website, reject cookies, and click around with minimal intervention from the user. Bot traffic also has reached 51% of all internet traffic for the first time in a decade.

Discovery for consumers has changed, and with it, the traditional acquisition methods are starting to underperform. Now when writing ad copy, a product description or even designing the interface of your website, you'll have to worry whether a bot or an AI agent is doing the reading and the clicking instead of a human.

All of this is added on top of a pile of issues and challenges that have made customer acquisition harder over the years. And while a clear and unified solution for gaining control over customer acquisition seems out of reach currently, many brands are using retention and loyalty as a way to recover and mitigate the risks.

This customer loyalty research combines data from two surveys run in October 2025: 2,400 consumers who buy health, beauty, and wellness products, and 600 brands that sell directly to consumers in these categories.

Together, they provide 3,000 voices across both sides of the relationship. The consumer sample shows frequent buyers (most buy monthly), so the category is well suited to loyalty programs. The brand sample includes marketing, CX, ecommerce/digital, and CRM/loyalty roles, with a strong mid-market presence.

The aim is simple: show where consumers and brands agree, where they disagree, and what actions lead to stronger loyalty and retention in 2026. Throughout the report we highlight the most important numbers, but we focus on what they mean in practical terms; how to communicate, what to fix in your program, and how to prove value to the business.

Table of Contents

Executive **Summary**

Who we surveyed (method & sample)

1

2,400 consumers in health, beauty, and wellness across six markets – the **USA, UK, Germany, Spain, Italy, and Romania**. Most buy at least monthly (64% monthly; 36% weekly). They most often purchase vitamins/supplements (33%), skincare/cosmetics (31%), then haircare (17%); and 91% make the purchase decision themselves.

2

600 brands (all selling direct-to-consumer / ecommerce) across health (40%), beauty (32%), and wellness (28%), operating in the same six markets. Roughly one in five are smaller brands (under $5M annual revenue), three in five are mid size ($5–50M), and one in five are larger brands (over $50M). Respondents span Marketing (~31%), Customer Experience (~30%), Ecommerce/Digital (~27%), and CRM/Loyalty (~13%).

Net: 3,000 total voices across six markets; two sides of the same relationship in high frequency, loyalty-friendly categories.

On the brand side, maturity also varies by company size. Larger brands are more likely to treat retention as their main growth engine, to tilt budget towards existing customers, and to have dedicated loyalty owners running automated programs. Smaller brands tend to keep their loyalty programs simpler and more campaign-driven, which makes execution lighter but can limit how far they scale.

The Top 10 Findings

1. **Email is the loyalty channel for consumers.** It's their #1 way to hear from their favorite brands, accounting for 21.76% of channel mentions, ahead of social media (16.94%) and mobile app notifications (15.71%). Meanwhile, brands rate social as the most effective loyalty channel (20.37% of mentions), with email second (15.47%) – a clear but subtle mismatch between what consumers want and what brands prioritize.

2. **Most participants (34.36%) value product quality more than discounts and promotions (21.15%) as a driver of customer loyalty.** The latter can be as valuable as product quality when combined with personalized offers and recommendations, where 32% believe both are valuable for loyalty together.

3. **Recognition matters.** Feeling recognized/rewarded is important to 89%+, and 91% value being treated as a loyal customer, not just a buyer. Make loyalty benefits obvious.

4. **Most consumers are active in multiple loyalty programs: 31.54%** belong to **1–2** programs, **57.87%** are in **3 or more**, only **7.79%** are in **none**, and **2.79%** are unsure.

5 **Consumers think new customers get more attention.** 67% agree brands favor acquisition over retaining existing customers, and that feeling is strongest among the customers who buy most often: around 70% of monthly repurchasers agree, compared with 47% of people who only repurchase a few times per year. Even though most brands report a 50/50 budget split, perception is the problem to solve.

6 **Larger brands lean more into retention and invest more behind it.** Among brands with over 50 million dollars in revenue, 40% rank customer retention as their top growth priority, compared with 29% of brands under 5 million. Bigger brands are also more likely to devote the majority of their budget, a dedicated team, and regularly running automations to loyalty.

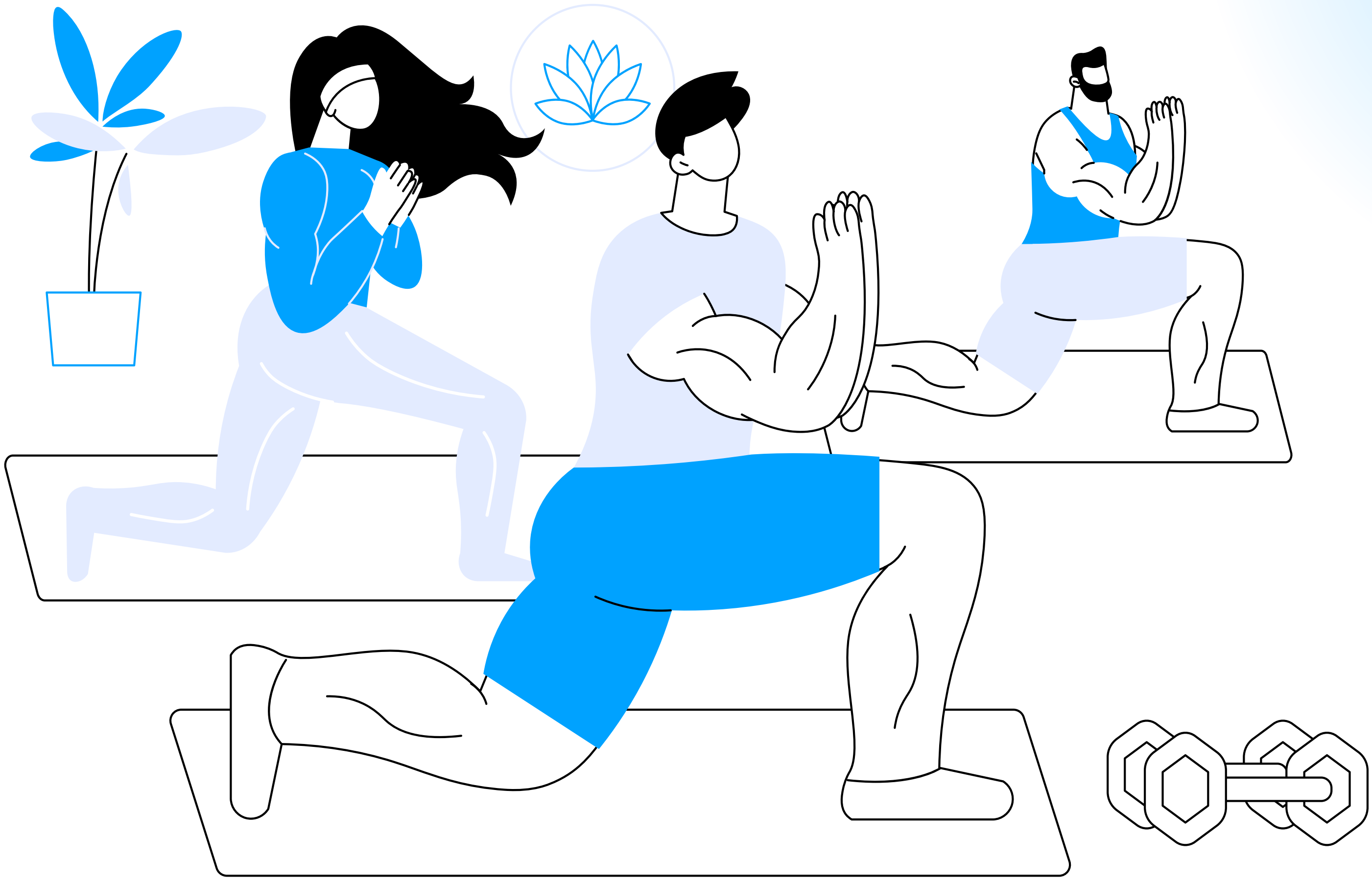
7 **Loyalty means monthly revenue.** 64% of shoppers repurchase from a favorite brand every month. Which is ideal for replenishment flows and habit-building.

8 **VIP and exclusive experiences are underused.** 93% of consumers would likely join exclusive/VIP experiences, yet only ~12% of brands use these programs today.

9 **Customers are willing to share personal preferences.** ~91% would provide data regarding skin type and health goals for better rewards. While 30% of brands still cite lack of data as a top challenge in building loyalty.

10 **Friction kills loyalty programs.** The top customer frustrations are slow earn/redeem (24%), points expiring (19.4%), generic offers (16.6%), and too many promos (15.8%), and these pains are sharpest among monthly buyers, where about 44% say rewards take too long and 31% say expiry rules are too strict.

11 **Loyalty is a near-universal strategy, but execution lags.** 99% say loyalty will be important over the next 2–3 years, yet the top blockers are budget (28%), limited tools/tech (24%), proving ROI (16.7%), and data gaps (14.8%).



What this means

Customers are ready to be loyal: they buy often, especially monthly from their favorite brands, share preferences and data when there's value, and prefer email for brand contact.

This is especially true for high-frequency buyers, who are both more likely to feel under recognized and more sensitive to slow rewards and expiring points.

Make loyalty benefits obvious and frictionless

Use email and data-driven automations as the backbone of their strategy

Prove retention ROI with the same rigor they use for acquisition

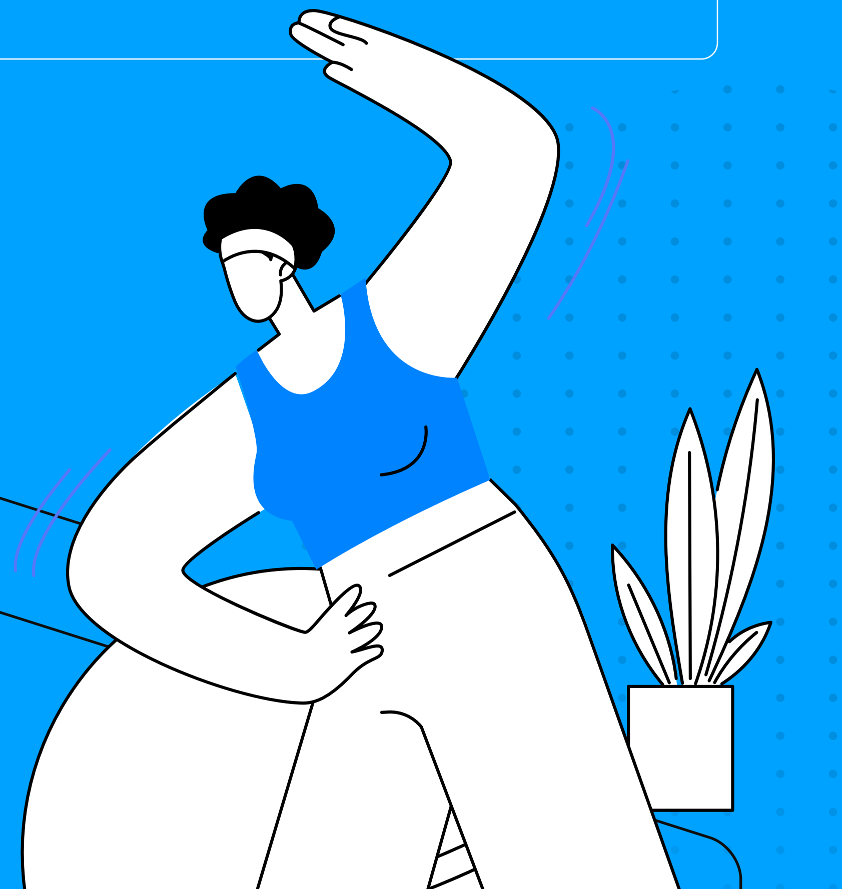
What to do about it

1. **Start by using email as your main channel for loyalty messages.** It is the channel customers prefer most for hearing from their favorite brands, while many brands still believe social media drives loyalty best. Rebalancing your plan towards email and then supporting it with app notifications and social will match how people actually want to engage.

2. **Put product quality at the center of your communication, not only discounts.** Consumers say the number one reason they stay loyal is product quality and consistent results, with value and service next. Show routines, how-to guides, proof from customers, and simple guarantees.

3. **Make benefits for existing customers clear.** Many shoppers still feel new customers get better treatment. Visible perks, early access, member pricing, and “you’re close to your next reward” progress help correct that perception and make loyalty feel concrete.

4. **Remove friction from your program. People are most frustrated by slow earning, points expiring, generic offers, and too many promotions.** Shorten the time to the first reward, simplify redemption, remind customers before points expire, and reduce broadcast emails in favor of targeted ones.

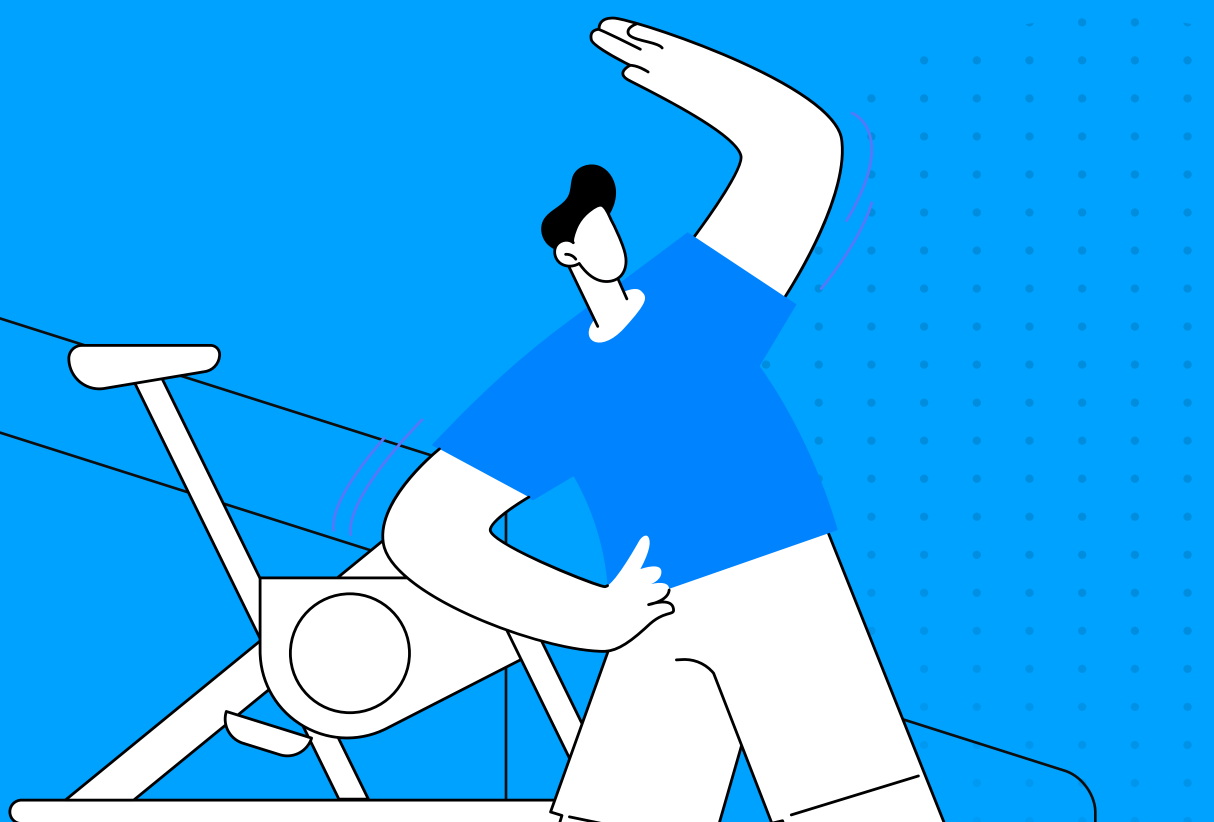


5 Turn customer **willingness to share preferences** into useful data, and use it quickly. Most consumers will share information like skin type or health goals if it leads to better rewards or offers. Collect this simply (a short quiz or preference center) and incorporate it into your email and marketing automation.

6 **Measure retention with the same care as acquisition.** Many brands already automate loyalty campaigns, but fewer compare the return on investment between retention and acquisition.

7 Add a regular view of repeat-purchase rate, time to second purchase, lifetime value, and a simple ROI comparison to your monthly report.

8 For smaller and mid-size brands, the priority is to assign clear ownership and build a simple, valuable program with a few automated journeys anchored in email. For larger brands, the priority is to simplify overly complex programs, close the measurement gap, and make sure the channel mix and rewards match what customers actually say they want.

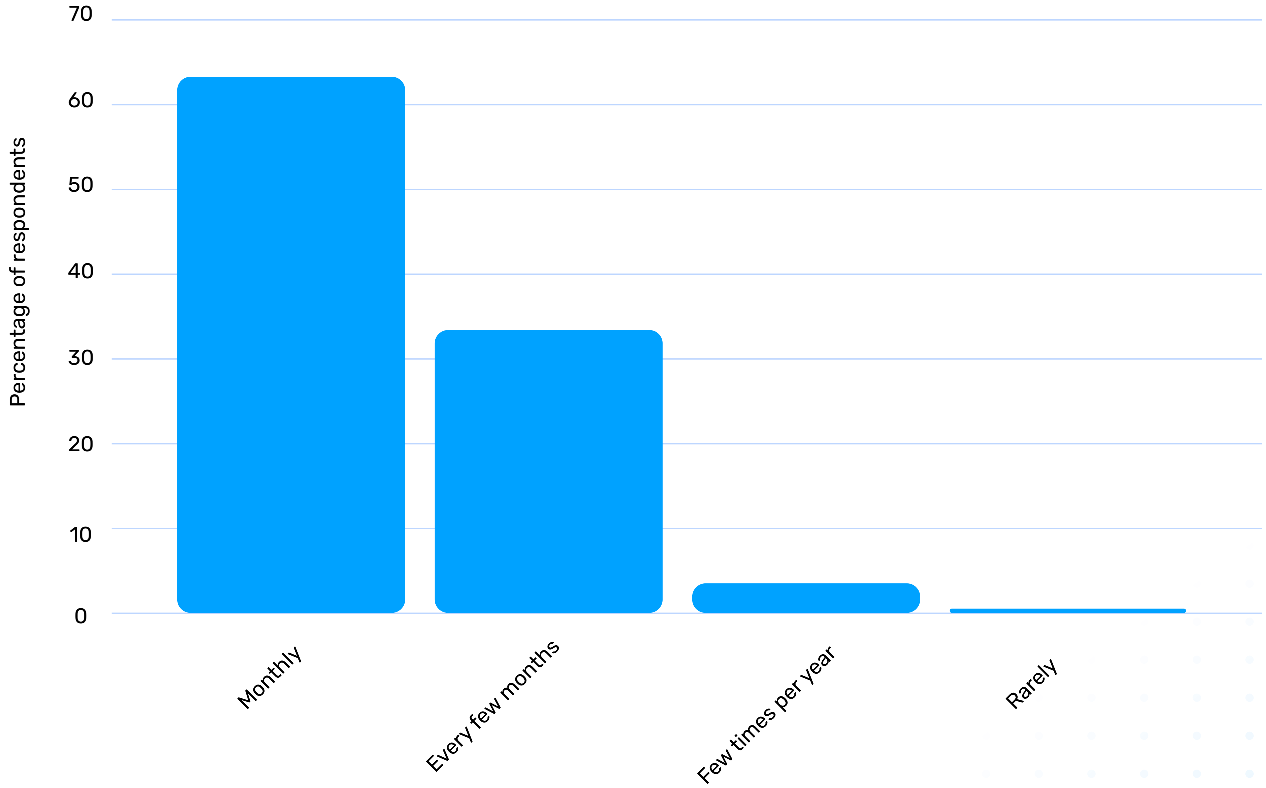


Chapter 1

Why Loyalty Matters Now

Loyalty means revenue. 64% of loyal customers buy from their favorite health, beauty or wellness brand every month. That natural rhythm makes it easier to create useful reminders, replenishment offers, and product-care content that customers actually want.

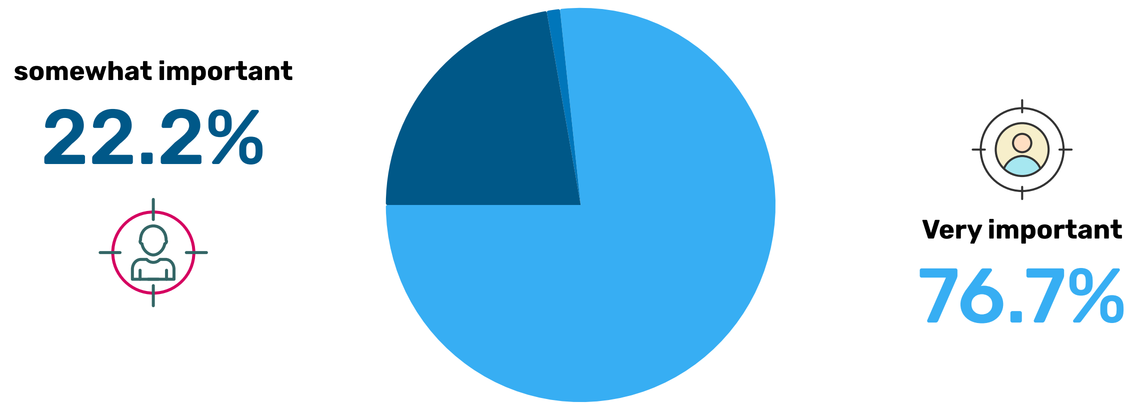
How often customers purchase from their favorite brands



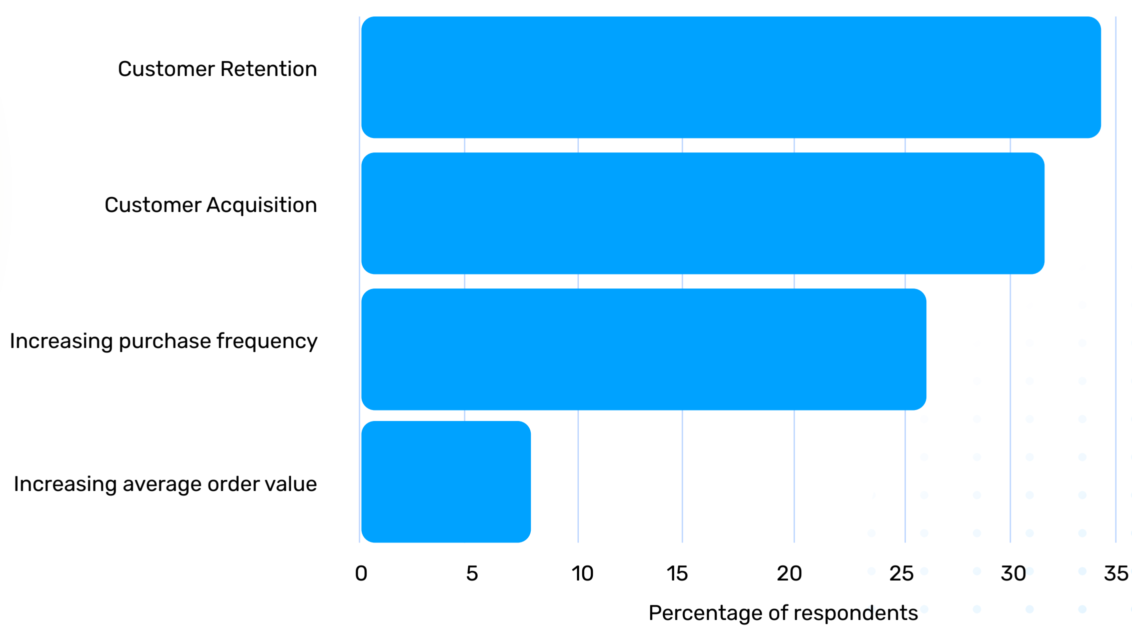
How important is loyalty for brands?

Brands say loyalty is important almost universally. In our brand survey, 99% call loyalty important over the next two to three years. Retention also ranks slightly ahead of acquisition as a growth priority. This means leadership attention is already there; the task now is to convert intent into execution.

How important is customer loyalty to your success



What is your brand's top growth priority?

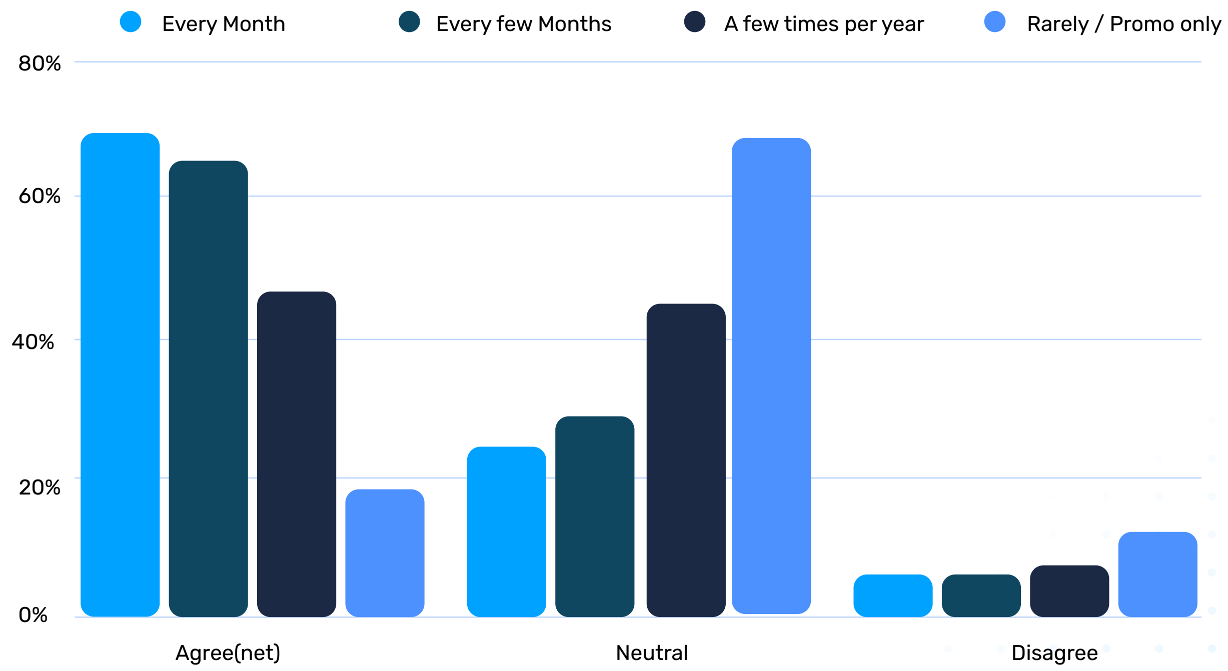


Do loyal customers feel that they're appreciated and rewarded?

Even though brands state that customer retention is among their top growth priorities, consumers do not feel it. Which indicates a gap between priorities and implementation. While brands claim that retention and loyalty are highly important and among the top priorities, two-thirds of consumers believe brands value new customers more than existing ones.

Frequent buyers feel this even more strongly. Among shoppers who repurchase from a favorite health, beauty, or wellness brand every month, 70.03% agree or strongly agree that brands value new customers more than existing ones, 24.37% are neutral, and only 5.60% disagree.

Recognition feeling by purchase frequency: Do existing customers feel that brands value new customers more



For people who buy every few months, 65.61% agree, 28.82% are neutral, and 5.57% disagree. Among those who only repurchase a few times per year, agreement drops to 47.37% and neutrality rises to 45.26%. This means the customers who show up most often are also the most likely to feel that brands favor acquisition, which makes visible recognition and loyalty perks even more critical for the high-frequency group.

At the same time, most brands say their budget is balanced 50/50 between acquisition and retention. The numbers suggest investment is there, but it is not visible enough to the customer. Perception becomes a risk to loyalty.

Key numbers

67.3%

67.3% of consumers feel that most brands **value new customers more than existing ones**

69% of brands say that their budget is **evenly split between retention and acquisition**

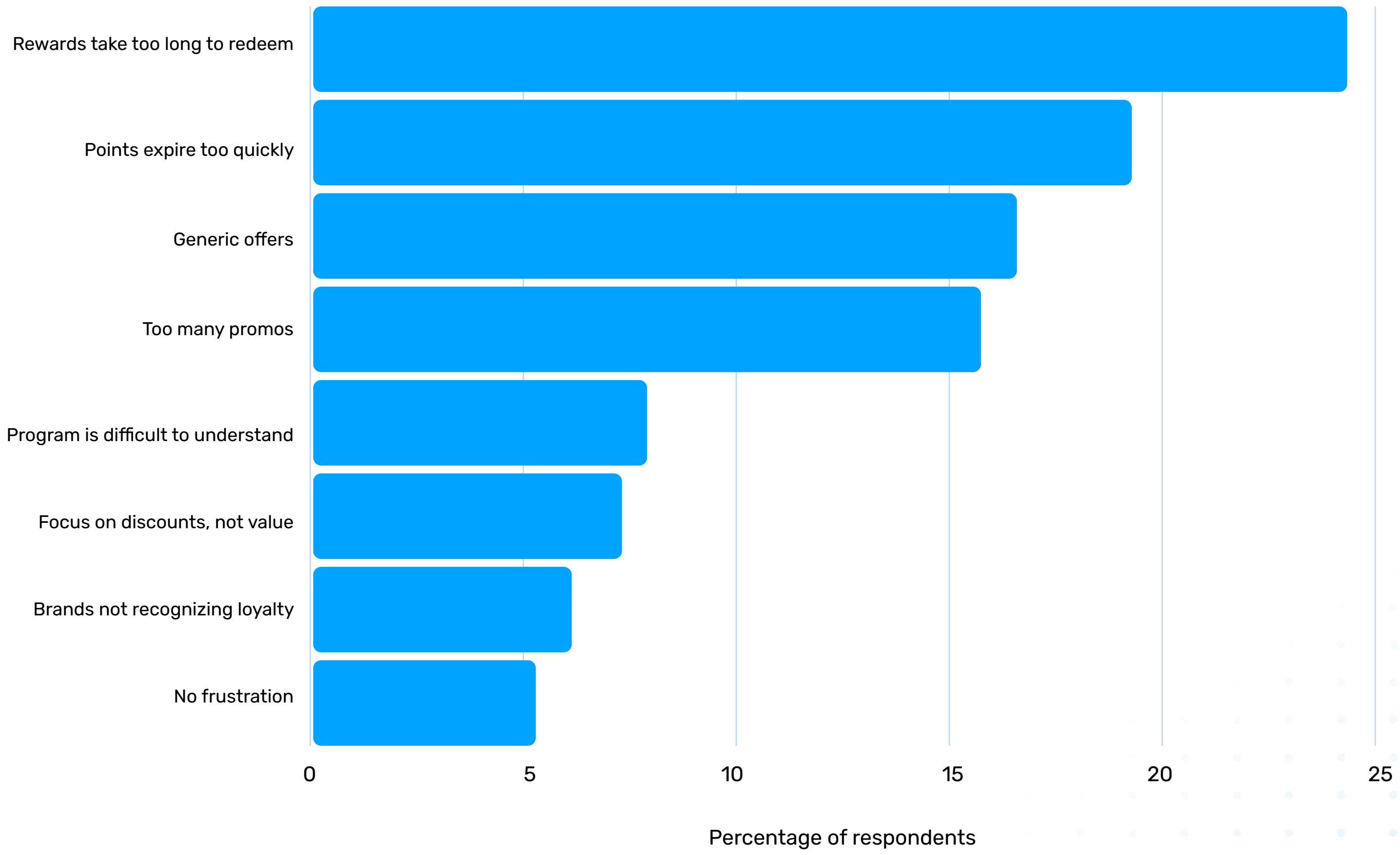
69%

There is also a channel gap. Consumers say email is the channel they prefer most for hearing from favorite brands, while many brands rate social media as the most effective driver of loyalty. It is sensible to use multiple channels, but making email the main route for loyalty messages will better match customer preference and lower noise. Social and app notifications can then support or remind.

What are the consumers top frustrations about loyalty programs?

The barriers are also clear and fixable. Customers tell us exactly what breaks their experience: slow earning, points that expire, generic offers, and too many promotions. On the brand side, teams point to budget limits, technology gaps, and the difficulty of proving ROI. Shorter paths to the first reward, simpler rules, and more targeted messages address the customer side; better measurement helps unlock the brand side.

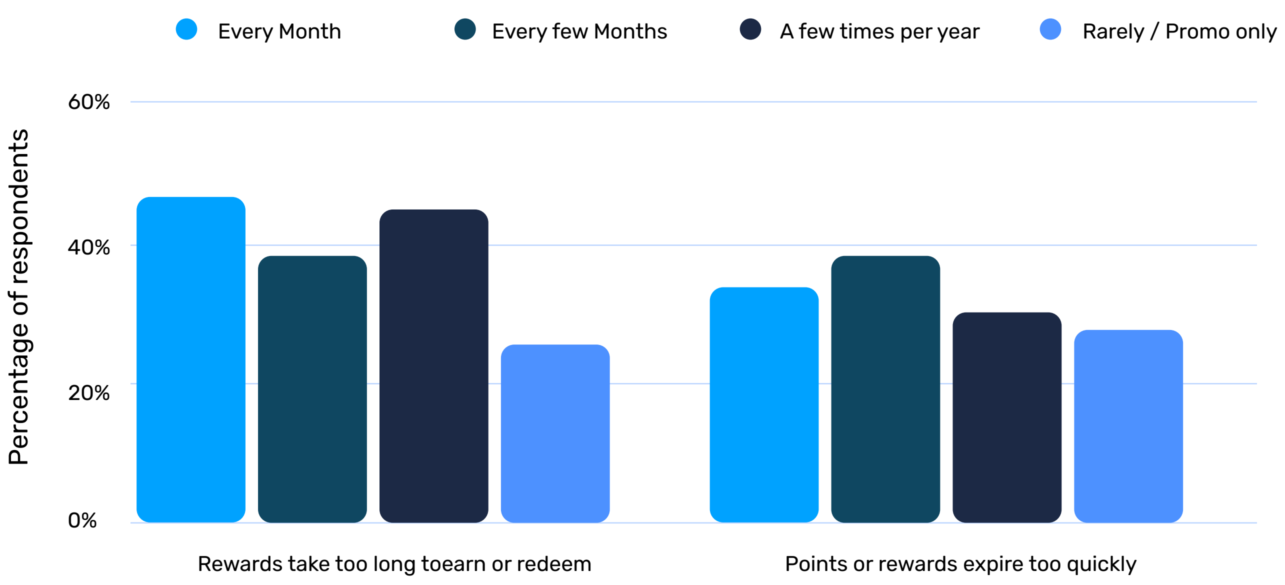
What frustrates customers about loyalty programs



How frequent buyers are affected by these frustrations

These pains get sharper as people buy more often. For shoppers who repurchase every month from a favorite brand, 43.72% say rewards take too long to earn or redeem and 31.31% say points or rewards expire too quickly. Among those who buy every few months, 37.93% name slow earning or redemption and the same 37.93% point to expiry rules.

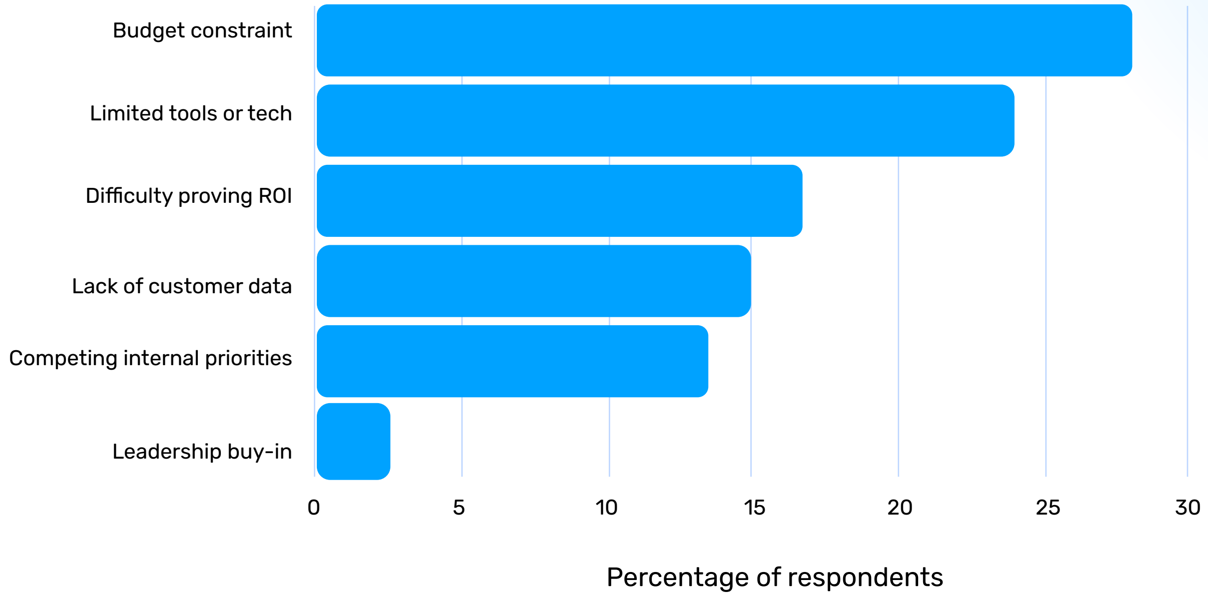
Frustrations and reward expiries based on purchase frequency



People who only repurchase a few times per year are less likely to mention either issue, at 42.11% and 26.32%, and those who rarely buy or only buy during promotions are at 25.00% for both. The more often someone comes back, the more sensitive they are to slow progress and expiring rewards, which means expiry rules and earning speed matter most for the very customers programs are trying hardest to keep.

Also, almost 15% of brands mention lack of customer data as one of the challenges in building loyalty.

What are your biggest challenges in building loyalty



Are consumers willing to share data and preferences?

Data on the consumers side shows that most consumers will share preferences, such as skin type or health goals, if it leads to better rewards and more relevant offers.

Many brands still report data gaps, so creating simple, trustworthy ways to collect and immediately use preferences can close this gap fast.

In short, the market is friendly to loyalty: people buy often, they will tell you what they want, and they prefer clear, and data-driven communication. The work ahead is to make benefits visible, fix the basics that annoy customers, communicate through the channel they prefer, and measure retention in a way finance leaders trust.

Key numbers

Data exchange in loyalty programs

90.96%

of consumers are willing to share personal preferences (e.g., skin type, health goals) with a brand to receive more rewards or offers

14.91%

of brands mention lack of customer data as a challenge in building loyalty programs

What experts say

At Alekseon, we approach loyalty in 2025 as **a relationship, not a points-based mechanism.** Not as a discount program, but as a genuine recognition of the customer throughout the entire shopping journey.

What matters to us is that ecommerce systems know whether a customer is returning, how much they have already invested in the brand, and what their history looks like even before they reach checkout, customer service, or order fulfillment.

We treat loyal customers differently: they receive tailored communication, a more personalized experience, and **an element of surprise that builds an emotional connection with the brand.** In the luxury segment, it is precisely this **feeling of being recognized and not yet another promotion, that drives repeat purchases.**

In a world increasingly dominated by marketplaces, **loyalty becomes a competitive advantage** that must be deliberately designed both technologically and operationally.

Łukasz Linczewski
CEO at Alekseon
www.alekseon.com

Chapter 2

Customer trends and expectations

Shoppers want to feel seen by the brands they choose. Recognition and simple rewards signal respect for their repeat business, and most people value being treated as loyal rather than as a one-off buyer.

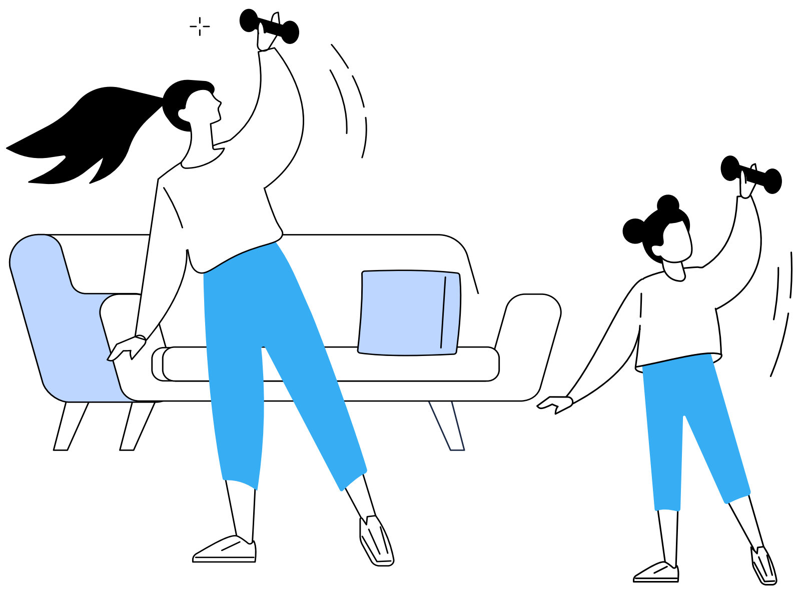
Key numbers

89.7%

89.7% of consumers say that it's important for them to feel recognized or **rewarded by the brands they buy from.**

90.90% of consumers value being treated **as a loyal customer rather than just a buyer.**

90.9%

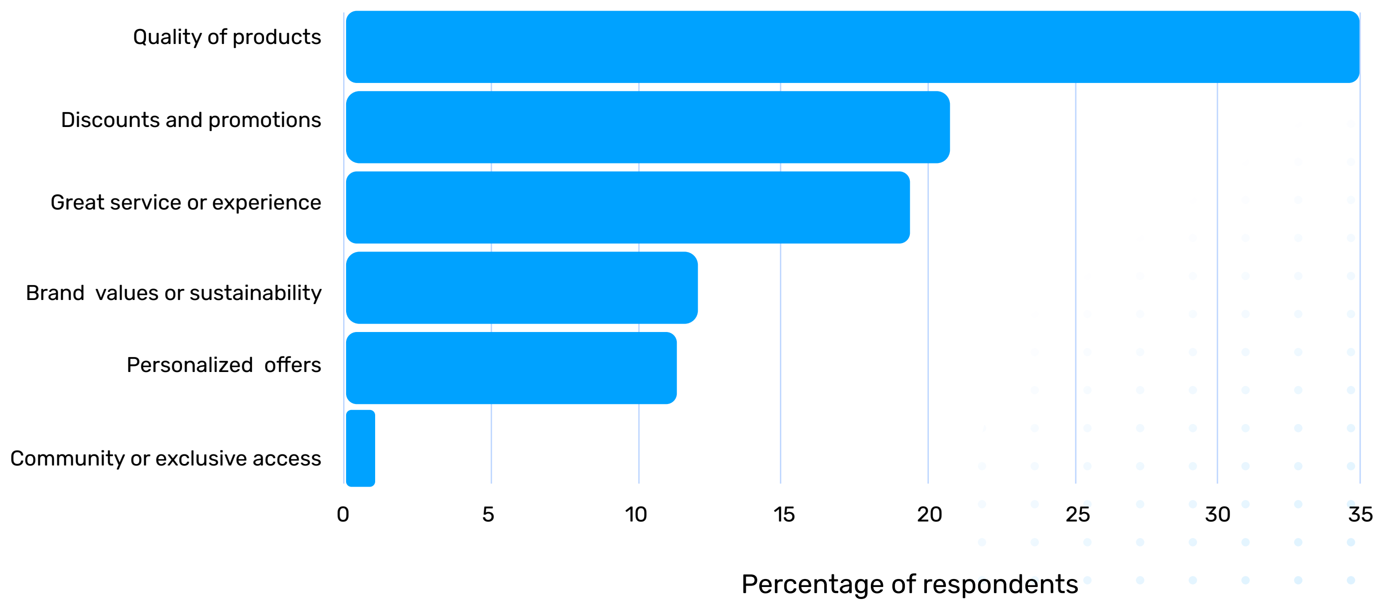


Quality first, then value and service.

People stay loyal when the product is of high quality and works consistently. Price and promotions help, and good service can secure the tie. Personalized offers or recommendations matters, but it is not the main reason people return.

From a marketing perspective, because teams often have limited control over product or service quality, the best approach is to combine strong trust indicators with personalized, data-driven discounts and promotions. Highlighting your brand values and sustainability also helps.

What makes consumers stay loyal to a brand

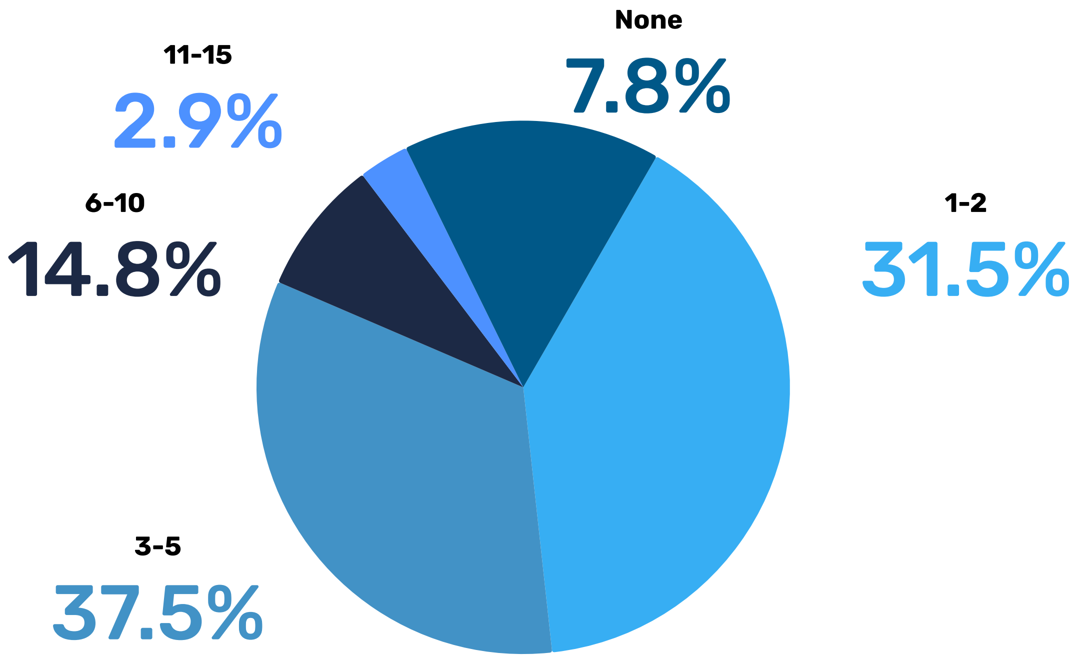


Customers juggle many programs.

Most consumers belong to several loyalty programs. This means brands compete for attention inside a crowded inbox and app environment. Clear rules and quick early wins help a program stand out.

Key number; 31.54% of consumers are in 1 to 2 loyalty programs, 55.59% are in 3 to 15 programs, while 2.79% are in more than 15 programs.

How many loyalty programs are consumers part of

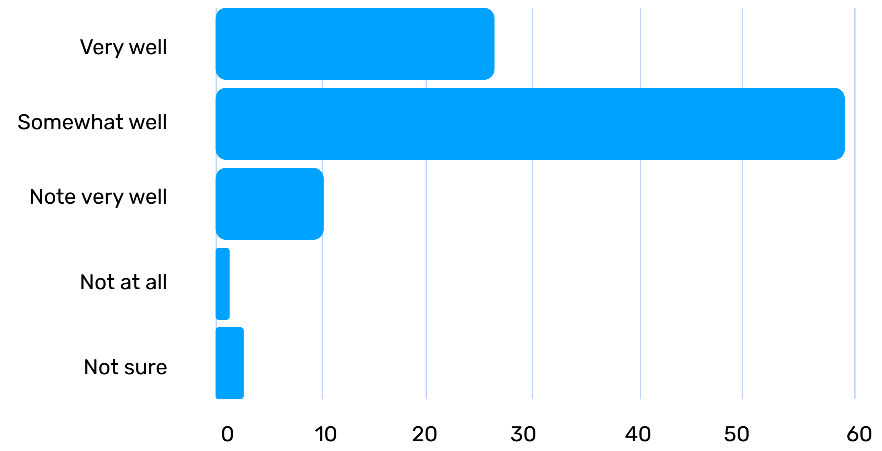


How well brands understand them

Most shoppers feel their favorite brands understand them at least “somewhat well,” but only about one in four feel “very well” understood. This leaves room for smarter use of preference data that consumers are willing to provide in exchange for rewards.

Key numbers: 26.46% of consumers think their favorite brands understand them very well. While 59.46% feel that they’re somewhat well understood. On the other hand, around 14% feel that they’re not well understood.

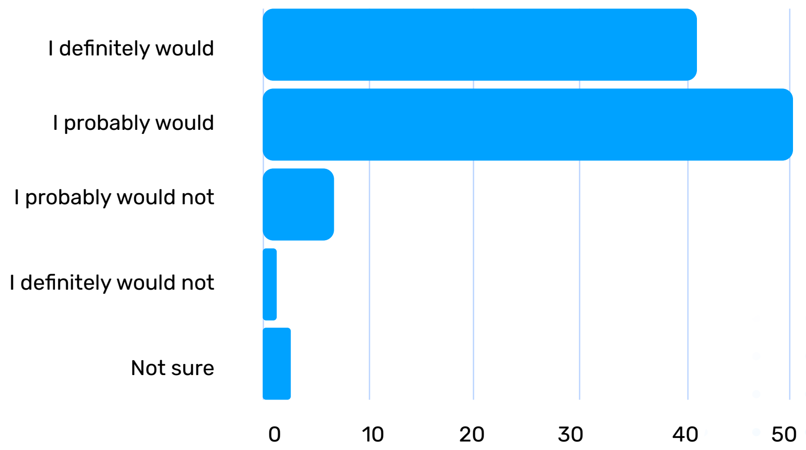
How well do you think your favorite brands understand you and your preferences



The percentage of consumers who think brands don't know them well is relatively small. Moreover, people are ready to share preferences for better rewards.

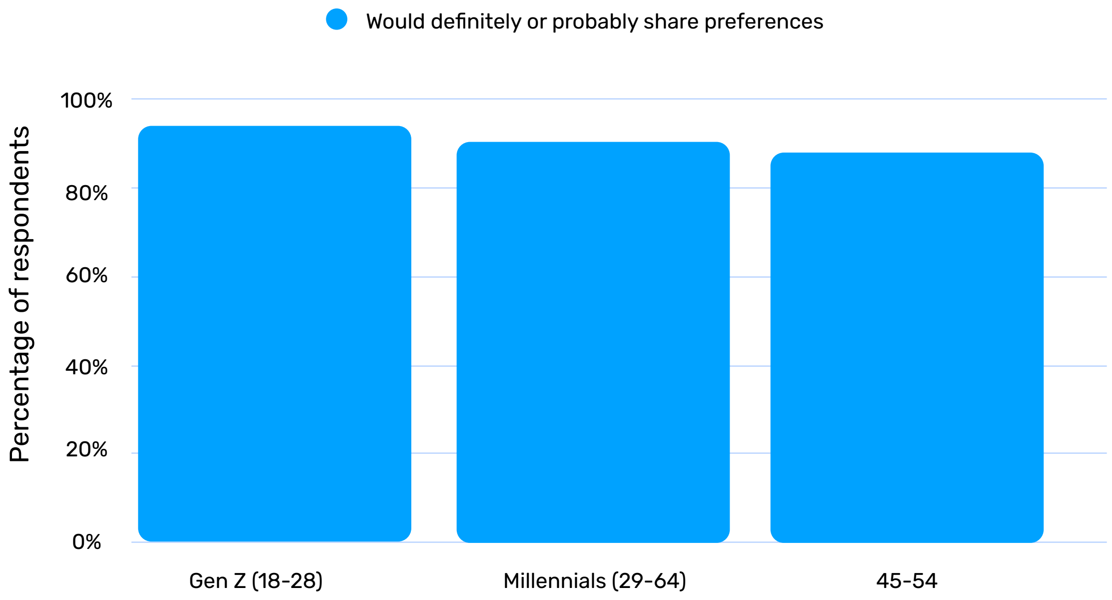
If sharing a bit of information leads to more relevant offers or rewards, around 91% of consumers are comfortable doing it. The value exchange is clear to them.

Would consumers share personal preferences with a brand to receive more relevant loyalty rewards or offers?



Openness to sharing preferences is high across age groups, with only small differences. Among Gen Z shoppers aged 18 to 28, 92.77% say they definitely or probably would share personal preferences like skin type or health goals if it leads to more relevant rewards. Among Millennials aged 29 to 44, the figure is 90.92%, and among shoppers aged 45 to 54, it is 89.74%. This reinforces that a clear value exchange matters more than age alone.

Customers willing to share data or preferences with brands based on age groups



High interest in VIP and special access

Exclusive experiences and recognition appeal to most people. This is a chance to diversify beyond discounts and give members special moments.

Key number: 93.46% of customers are likely to join an exclusive experience or recognition for loyal customers if their favorite brand offers it.

The biggest frustrations are about time, expiry, and relevance.

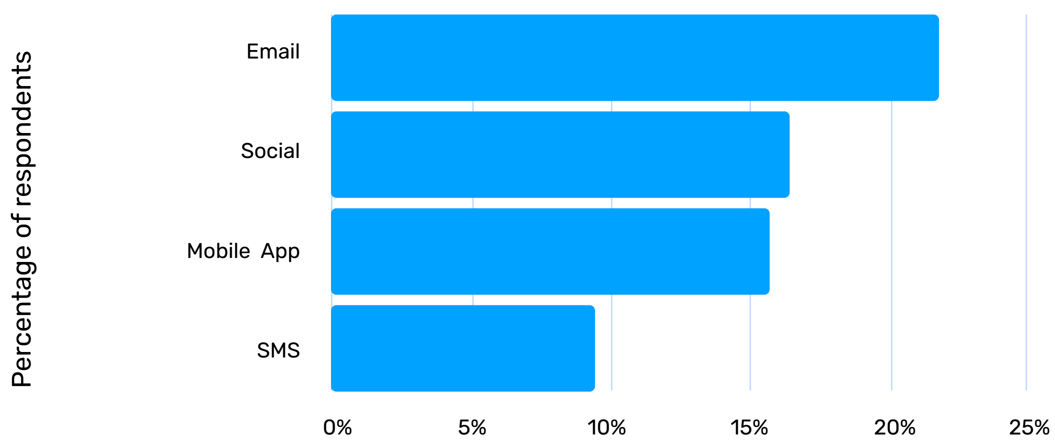
People do not like waiting a long time to earn or redeem, or seeing points vanish. They also react poorly to generic offers and a flood of promotions. Fixing these basics improves sentiment quickly.

Reminder of the top frustrations discussed in chapter 1:

- Rewards take too long 24.40%
- Points or rewards expire too quickly 19.49%
- Too many generic offers / not personalized 16.66%
- Too many promotional emails 15.88%
- The program is difficult to use or understand 7.89%.

Email is the preferred channel for loyalty communication. When customers choose how they want to hear from favorite brands, email comes first. Mobile app notifications and social media follow. SMS plays a secondary role.

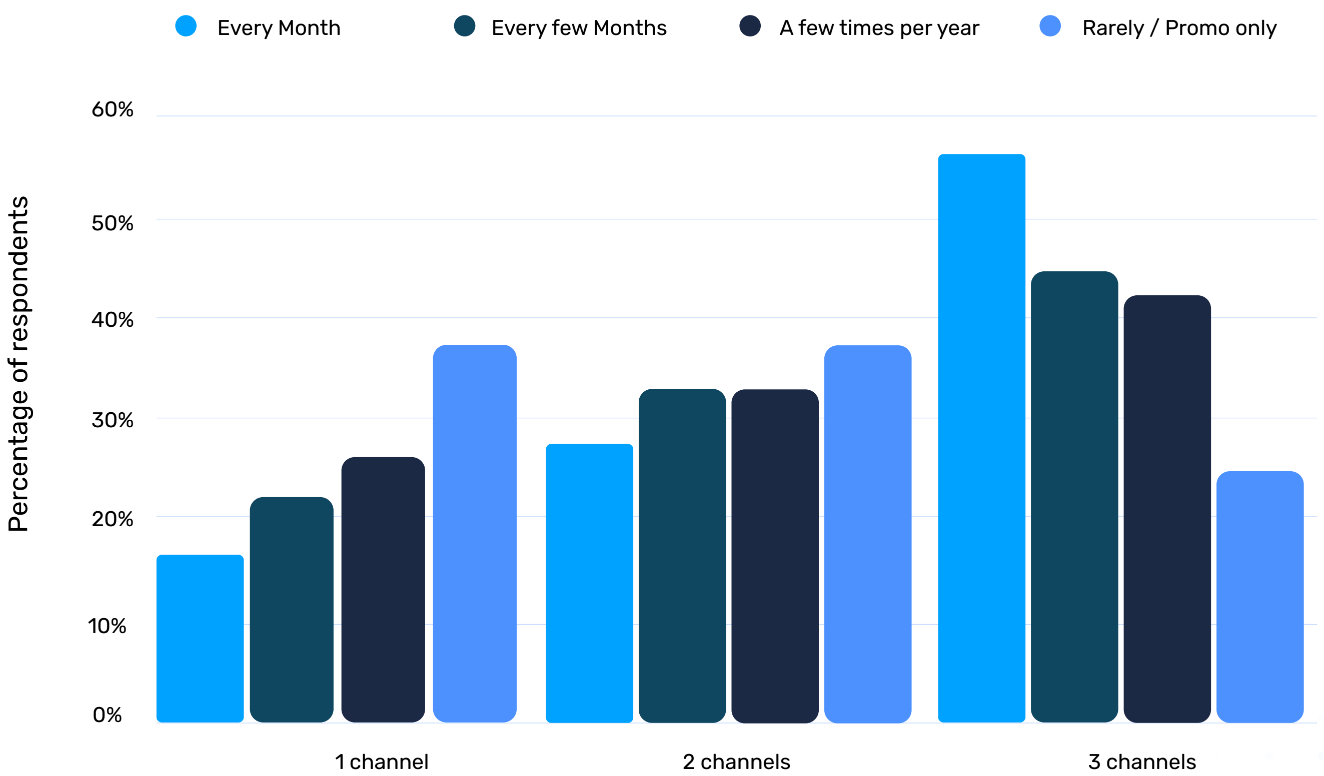
Customer channel preferences



How many marketing channels do loyal buyers use?

Frequent buyers do not narrow down to a single channel. They actually spread across more of them. Among shoppers who repurchase every month, 56.14% say they prefer to hear from their favorite brands through three channels, 27.50% choose two channels, and only 16.36% stick to one. For those who buy every few months, 44.76% prefer three channels and 33.12% use two.

Frequent buyers and numbers of loyalty channels they use

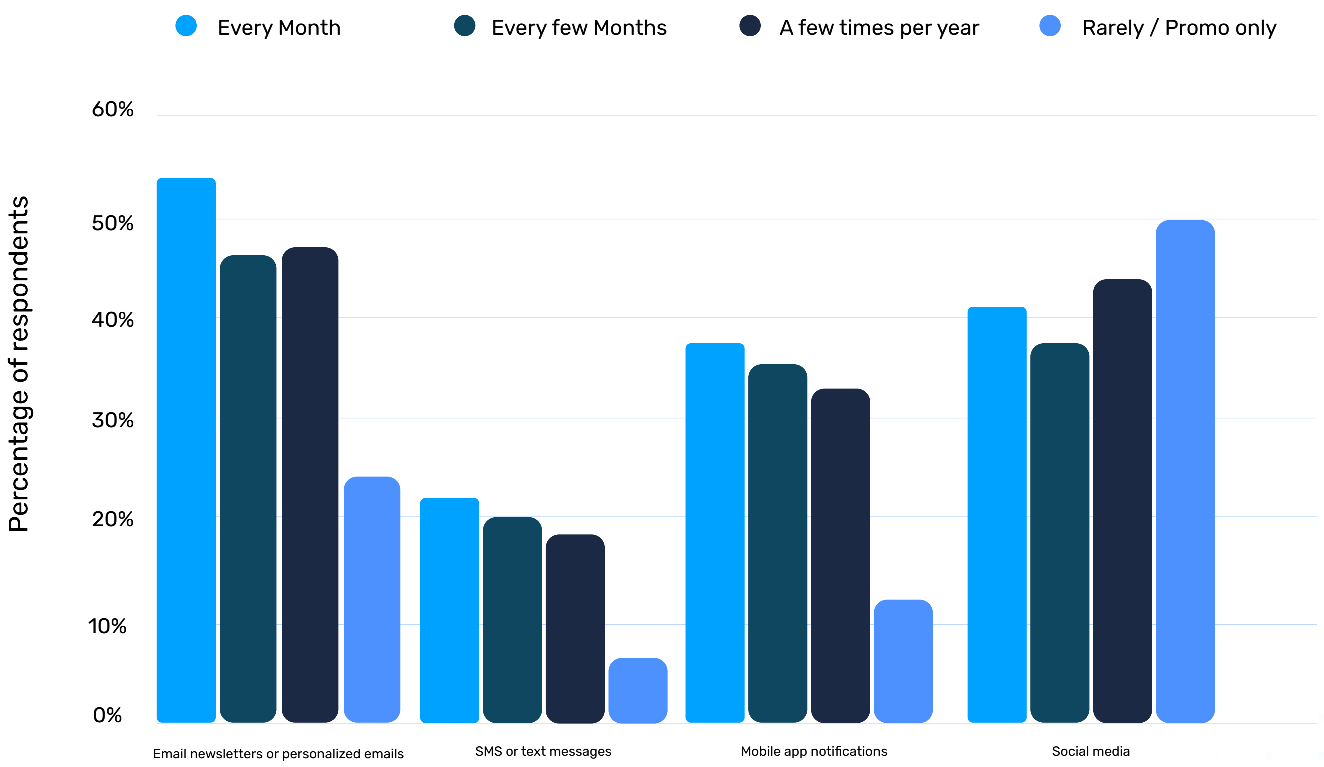


People who only repurchase a few times per year are more likely to limit themselves, with 26.32% picking a single channel and 30.53% picking two. So heavy buyers are not asking brands to be present in fewer places. They expect the mix of channels to feel coordinated and useful rather than repetitive.

Which channels do frequent buyers lean into?

Looking at specific channels, heavy buyers lean into higher-attention touchpoints as long as they feel useful. Among monthly repurchasers, 53.60% choose email newsletters or personalized emails as a preferred way to hear from their favorite brands, 40.59% choose social media, 37.72% pick mobile app notifications, and 23.03% pick SMS or text messages.

Favourite marketing channels for frequent buyers



For shoppers who buy every few months, each of these percentages is a few points lower, and they are lower again for those who rarely buy or only buy during promotions. Frequent buyers are not asking for fewer touchpoints. They want those touchpoints to carry clear value, like order updates, replenishment reminders, and progress toward rewards.

What **experts** say

Discovery is changing fast: consumers increasingly look for information in AI chats, not search engines. Language model providers want to own this stage of the customer journey and challenge Google. Some, like ChatGPT, already let users buy products directly in-chat, and the next shift is coming. Autonomous AI agents are becoming personal shopping assistants, handling product search and completing transactions. Retailers should prepare for “agentic commerce” and make sure they’re visible in AI chat answers.

For loyalty, though, the priority is still owned channels—especially mobile apps with engagement features. A strong example is Biedronka, a Future Mind client. Its app includes “Shake-o-mat,” a simple game where users unlock personalized discounts by shaking their phone. Biedronka also adapts in real time: in December, it renamed the feature “Christmas-o-mat” and added holiday-themed elements. This makes brand interactions part of customers’ daily routine, boosting loyalty and retention.

Emil Waszkowski
VP of Commercial Development at Future Mind
www.futuremind.com

Service isn’t just about closing tickets — it’s a flowing dialogue. When brands listen, respond in real time, and keep pace with customers’ needs, every interaction becomes a loyalty builder. Miss a detail, send a generic reply, or trap someone in a chatbot loop, and trust starts to slip. Great service feels like a good conversation: attentive, thoughtful, and effortlessly engaging.

Kacper Wiącek
Head of Customer Success at Text
www.text.com

Chapter 3

Gen Z vs. Millennials: What changes with age

Both Gen Z and Millennials are loyal, but they engage through slightly different channels and react differently to friction or challenges. Use this chapter to adjust tone, channel mix, and timing without rebuilding your entire program.

At a glance

Gen Z choose social more often, **Millennials choose email more often.**

Both buy monthly, both are **highly willing to share preferences, and both are very likely to join VIP.**

Gen Z complain more about generic offers and too many promos, **Millennials cite slow earning and expiring points a bit more.**

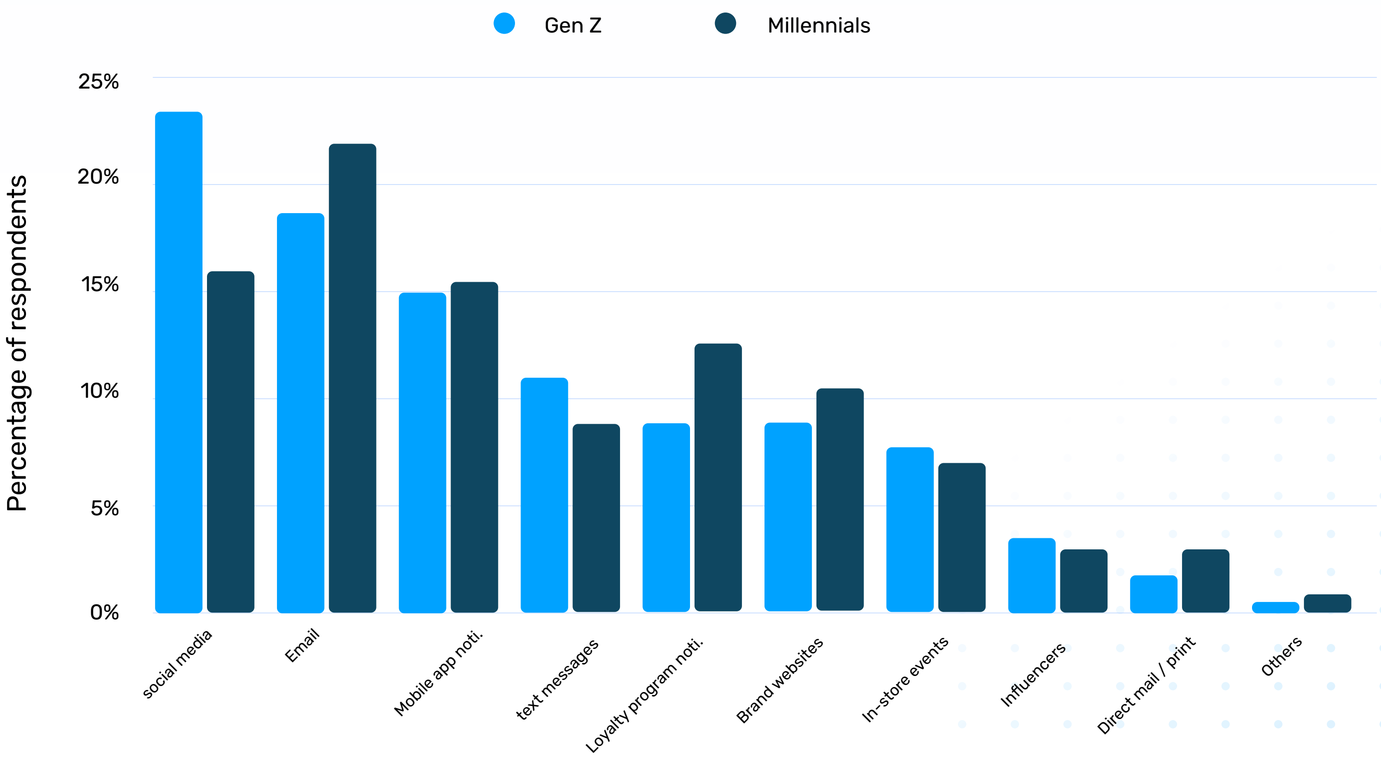
How they want to hear from you

Email works for everyone, with a small tilt toward Millennials. In the multi-select data, email accounts for **≈21.8%** of Millennial channel selections, compared with **≈19.06%** for Gen Z. Treat email as the default place to deliver loyalty updates, status changes, and rewards for both groups, and make sure the value is easy to see in the subject line and first screen.

Gen Z lean more into social than Millennials. Social media collects **≈23.94%** of Gen Z selections versus **≈16.6%** for Millennials. Use social to spark interest and carry short reminders for Gen Z, then point them to email for the full benefit or code. For Millennials, keep social lighter and let email do the heavier lifting when you need to explain value or next steps.

Mobile app and SMS are best for service moments and ad hoc pushes. Mobile app notifications are similar across cohorts at roughly **15%** of selections each (Gen Z ≈15%, Millennials ≈15.39%), so use them for service moments such as points updates, delivery status, and **ad hoc promotional pushes**. SMS is lowest for both groups (Gen Z ≈10.75%, Millennials ≈9.1%), so reserve it for genuinely time-sensitive alerts like last day redemptions, flash promos, or delivery changes rather than routine promotions.

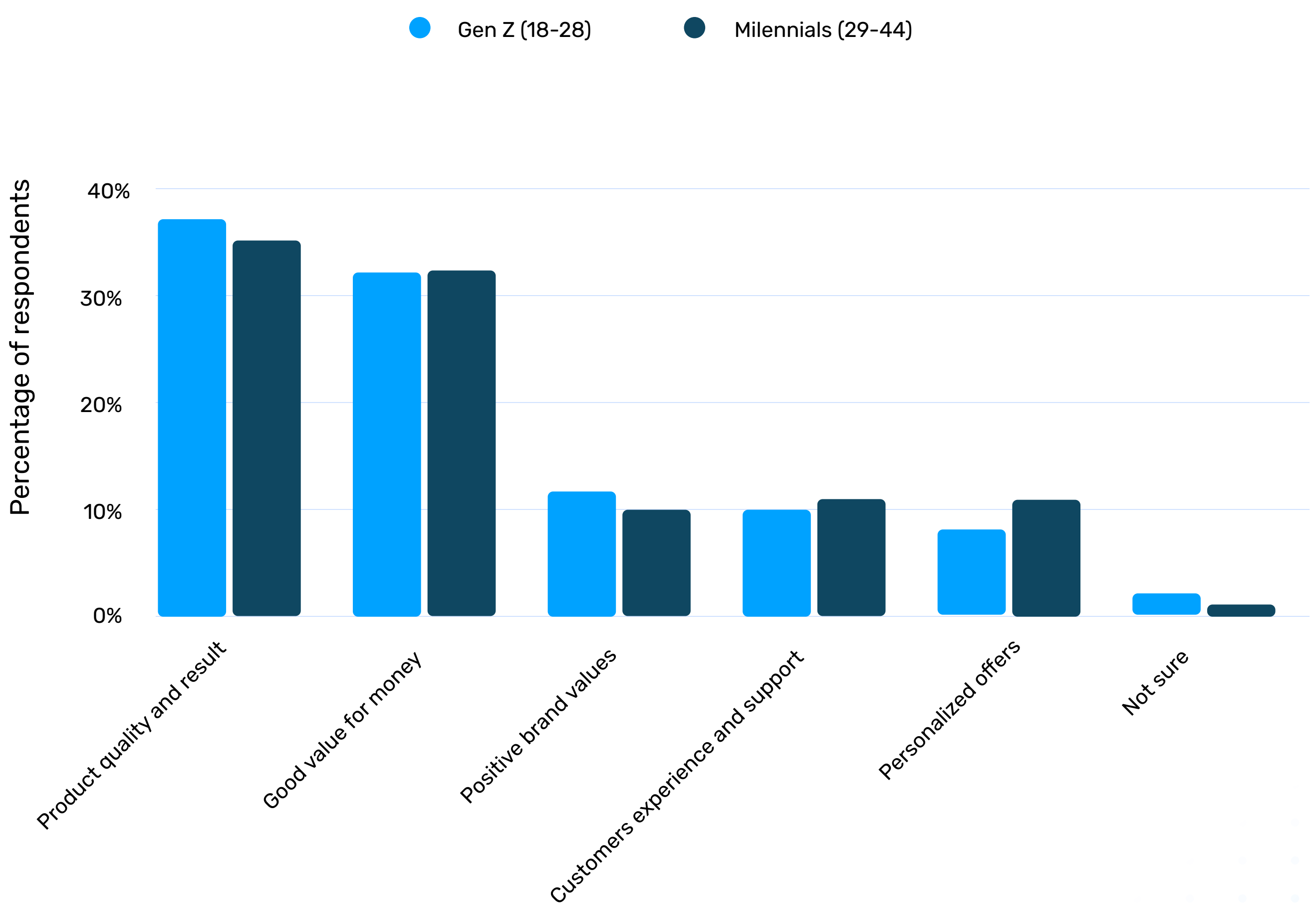
Preferred channel - Gen z vs Millennials



Why they stay loyal

The ranking is the same across ages, quality first, then value, then service. Subtle differences: Millennials lean a bit more to service, Gen Z lean a bit more to brand values and personalized offers.

Loyalty drivers - Gen Z vs Millennials

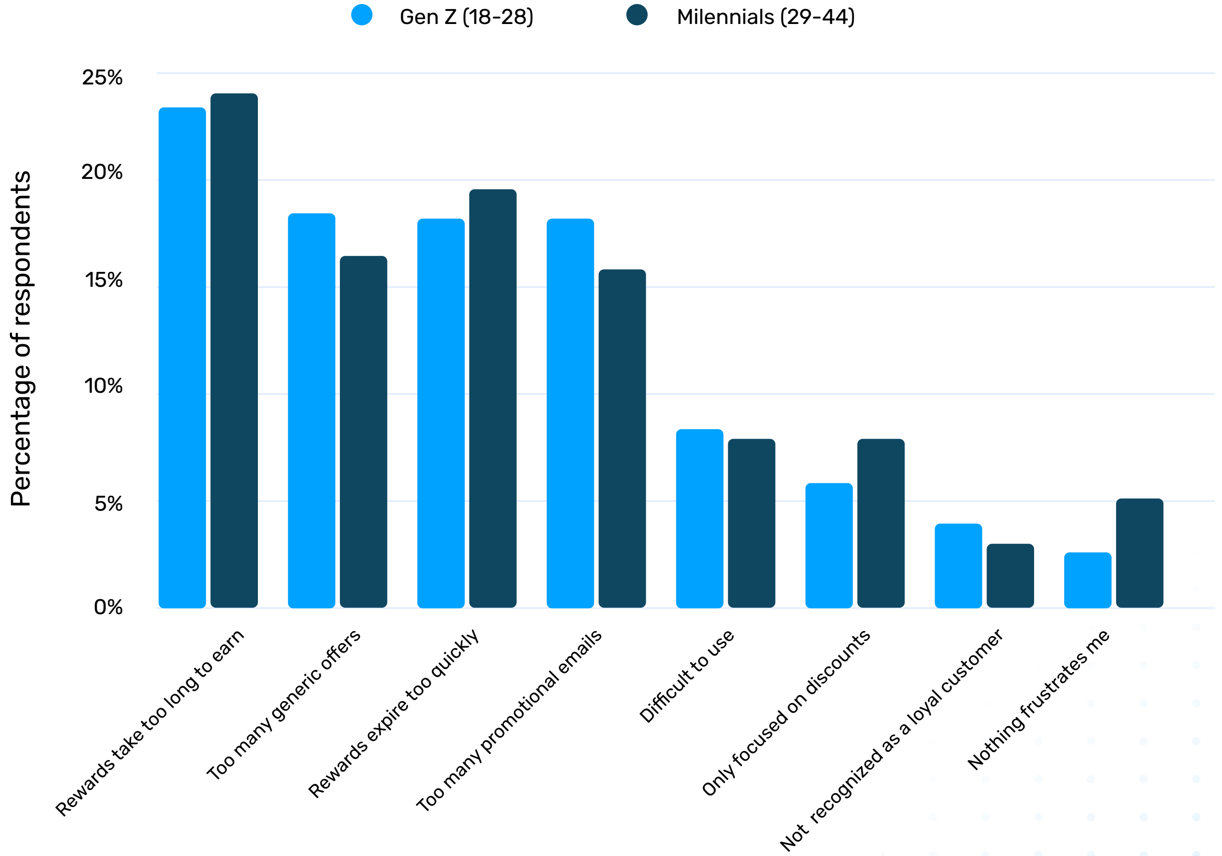


The biggest frustrations

Time and expiry are the biggest pain points for both cohorts. About one in four say rewards take too long to earn or redeem (Gen Z 23.43%, Millennials 23.99%). Nearly one in five call out points expiring too quickly (Gen Z 18.25%, Millennials 19.69%). The fix is to shorten the time to the first reward, simplify the rules, show visible progress, and send clear reminders before expiry.

Relevance and volume come next. Generic offers irritate many shoppers (Gen Z 18.62%, Millennials 16.53%), and so do too many promotional emails (Gen Z 18.00%, Millennials 16.03%). Gen Z are a touch more sensitive here, so keep frequency tight and target based on stated preferences and recent behavior. Fewer, smarter messages that reflect what people actually buy will remove most of the remaining friction.

Biggest frustrations - Gen Z vs Millennials

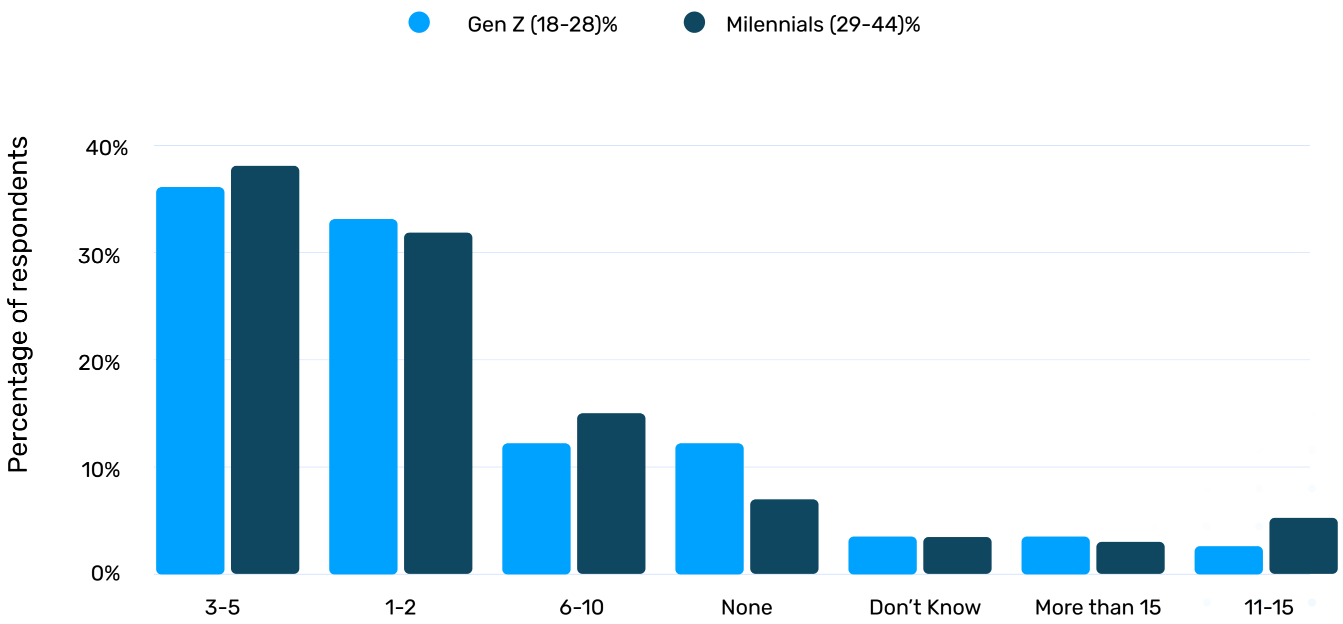


How many programs they belong to

The small generational differences point to two jobs. Gen Z are more likely to be in no program at all than Millennials (about 12% vs. 7%), so the on-ramp matters: a simple value promise, a fast first reward, and clear “what changes after you join.” Millennials are slightly deeper into multiple programs (for example, 6–10 programs is ~15% for Millennials vs. ~12% for Gen Z), so you are competing against habits they already have. Here the lever is differentiation, not sign-up volume: easier redemption, recognition they can feel, and non-discount perks like early access or priority support that does not blend into the noise.

The strategic line to draw is this: design one core program that assumes saturation. Make benefits concrete, shorten the time to first reward, and keep communication focused on progress rather than promotions. Use the Gen Z insight to tighten onboarding and the Millennial insight to sharpen differentiation.

How many loyalty programs they belong to - Gen Z vs Millennials

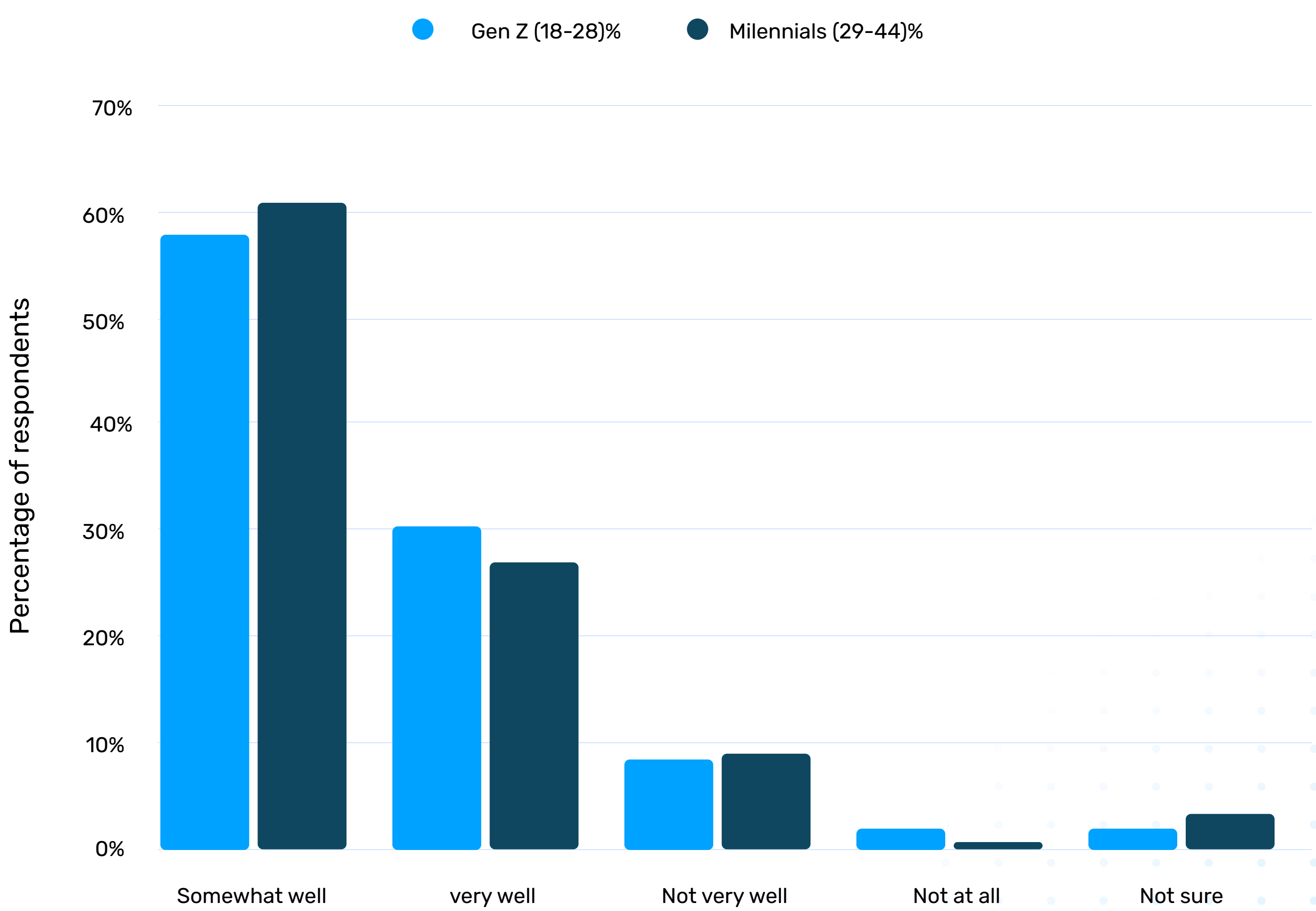


How well they feel understood

Gen Z are slightly more likely to say brands understand them very well (30.21% vs. 26.39% for Millennials). Millennials are more likely to sit at somewhat well (60.53% vs. 57.45% for Gen Z). In plain terms, Gen Z give higher top-box scores when brands feel truly personal, while Millennials more often stop short of that top tier.

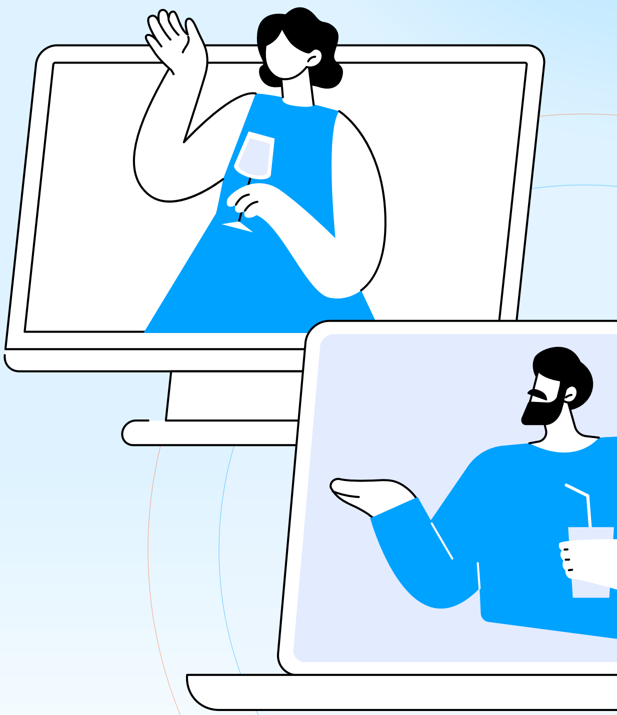
What to take from this: push personalization further for Millennials to move more of them from “somewhat” to “very well.” For Gen Z, maintain the higher bar with timely use of preferences, clear value from shared data, and content that reflects identity and routines. In both cases, make the next message change immediately after a preference is shared so people can feel the difference.

How well brands understand you - Gen Z vs Millennials



Commonalities between the two

Gen Z and Millennials behave similarly on the basics of loyalty. Most are comfortable sharing simple preferences when the value is clear: Gen Z 92.77%, Millennials 90.91%. This signals a healthy trust-for-value exchange. If you explain what changes after someone shares a preference and show the effect quickly, both groups respond.



Interest in recognition is also high for both. Willingness to join a VIP or recognition program is 92.98% for Gen Z and 94.12% for Millennials. This shows clear demand for non-discount benefits. A light VIP layer with early access, member pricing, or first-to know drops would be noticed by both cohorts.

Buying rhythm is almost identical. Monthly repurchase is the norm (Gen Z 62.55%, Millennials 62.18%), followed by every few months (Gen Z 32.34%, Millennials 34.06%). Only small shares buy a few times per year (Gen Z 4.68%, Millennials 3.05%) or rarely (Gen Z 0.43%, Millennials 0.70%). These patterns support a standard monthly cadence for reminders and care content, with only minor SKU-level adjustments.

How to act on this

Make email the primary channel for both cohorts, then layer support where it fits best. For Gen Z, add stronger social reinforcement, for example short social teasers that drive to an email with the full benefit or code. For Millennials, keep email as the main place where value is explained and confirmed, then use light app or SMS nudges close to key moments such as a shipment update or a replenishment reminder. Control frequency, especially for Gen Z, since they react more to generic offers and too many promos.

Lead with product outcomes, then tailor the emphasis by cohort. Both groups stay loyal when the product works. Prove quality with short how-to content, review highlights, and simple guarantees. Tilt the creative slightly: service clarity and reliability for Millennials, brand values and personal fit for Gen Z. When someone shares a preference, show what changes in the very next message, for example, “You told us [skin type], here is your routine.”

Remove friction that each cohort notices first. Shorten the time to the first reward and make progress visible with a simple status bar. Add expiry reminders so points are not lost. For Gen Z, reduce generic offers and tighten targeting so messages feel earned, not broad. For Millennials, make redemption fast and predictable, and keep the rules in plain language.

Add a light VIP or recognition layer for both groups. Interest is very high in each cohort, so start with benefits that are easy to ship and easy to see: early access, member pricing on a rotating set, first-to-know drops, or priority support. Put the VIP signal in email subject lines and account pages so recognition is visible without hunting. Keep the first step small so people can join fast and feel the difference quickly.

Design around the monthly rhythm. Most shoppers in both cohorts buy monthly, so run a standing replenishment journey: predicted run-out date, reminder a few days before, a follow-up after expected run-out, and a quick-add path that does not require browsing. Keep the cadence steady and adjust timing by SKU where usage varies.

Collect two or three preferences early and use them immediately. A short quiz or preference center works for both cohorts because the value exchange is clear. Tell people what will change after they answer, apply it in the next message, and let them update it easily. This keeps communications relevant without increasing volume.

What **experts** say

In the health, beauty and wellness industry, customer returns and trust are largely driven by a **consistent, ongoing brand presence in the customer's everyday life.** Regular communication — based on personalized newsletters, reminders, educational content and special offers — helps brands stay top of mind even when clients are not ready to book their next visit immediately. This continuous touchpoint builds familiarity and long-term trust.

Another crucial factor in this category is **real, visible treatment results.** Properly selected procedures, modern technologies and treatment packages built around regularity and a holistic approach allow brands to deliver stronger, longer-lasting outcomes, which naturally reinforce customer confidence and loyalty.

Equally important is the **ongoing analysis of trends and customer behavior,** grounded in data and real user needs. This is a highly dynamic market where expectations evolve quickly, so brands that can respond to emerging trends and personalize their communication based on insights gain a clear competitive advantage and build lasting customer relationships.

Iwona Gorbacz
& Karolina Ścieszko
Co-founders at Maxi Media
www.maximedia.net.pl

Chapter 4

What brands are doing

98.84% of brands say loyalty is important to their success over the next 2 to 3 years. Retention slightly leads as the top growth priority, with 34.33% ranking it ahead of

acquisition, while 31.50% put acquisition first. This tells us leaders already see loyalty as a core growth driver and are preparing for it.

Retention and acquisition do not look the same across every brand though. When we segment by revenue, retention becomes a clearer headline the bigger the company gets. Among startups under 5 million dollars in revenue, 29% say customer retention is their top growth priority, while 34% still put new customer acquisition first and 27% focus on increasing purchase frequency.

Mid-size brands between 5 and 50 million dollars are more evenly split, with 34% leading with retention and 33% with acquisition, and roughly 27% prioritizing purchase frequency.

Top growth priority by brand size

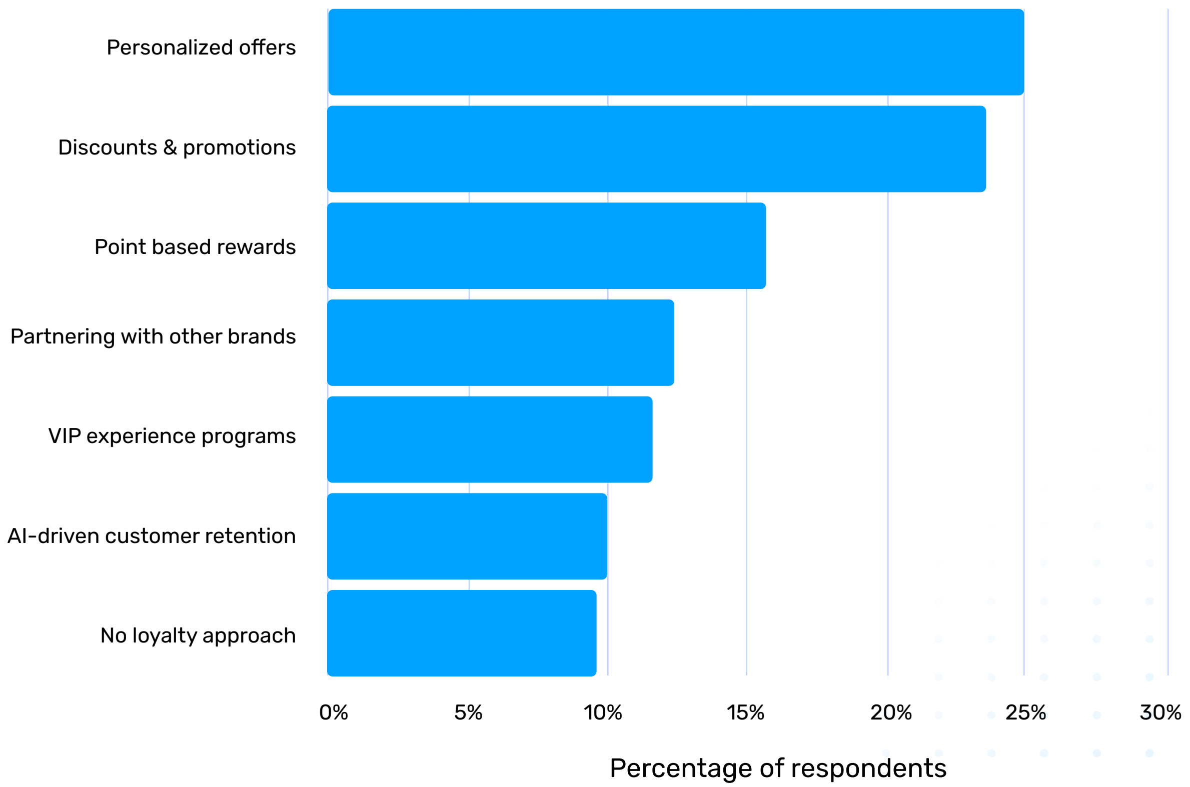
For established brands above 50 million dollars, retention pulls ahead. Here, 40% choose customer retention as their number one growth goal, compared with 26% who still lead with new customer acquisition and 23% who focus on frequency. Average order value remains a secondary priority across all three groups, sitting around 7% to 10%.

In other words, the more mature the brand, the more likely it is to treat loyalty and retention as the main engine of growth rather than a supporting KPI next to acquisition.

How brands try to build loyalty today.

Most brands (48%) lean on discounts and personalized offers, with a solid share (15.89%) also using points-based rewards or tiers. Fewer brands run VIP or experiential programs, and about one in ten are testing AI tools for retention.

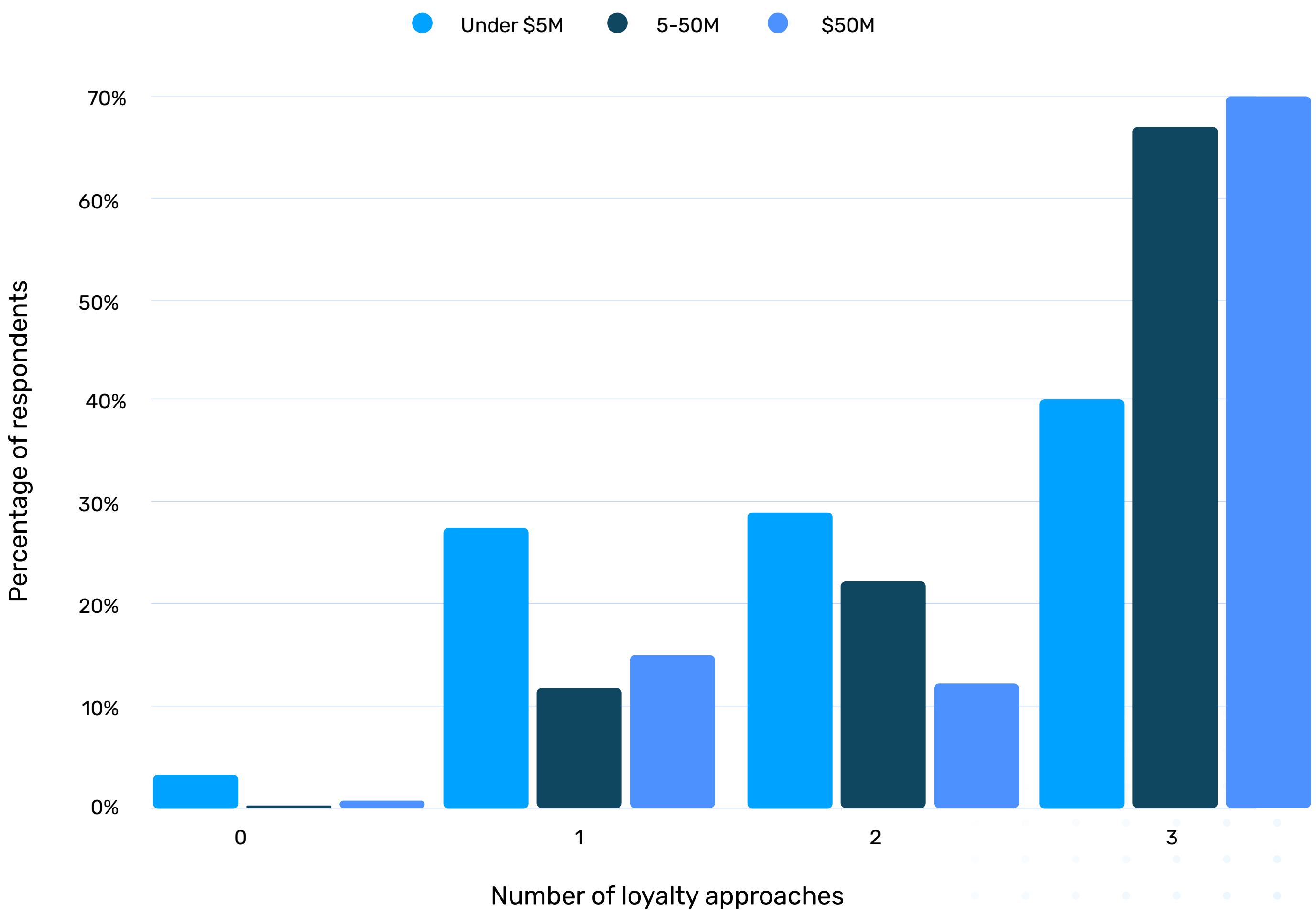
Loyalty approaches brands use or plan to use



Under the surface, loyalty programs get more layered as brands grow. To keep the comparison simple, we counted how many different loyalty approaches each brand uses or plans to use from the list in this survey: discounts and promotions, points or tiers, personalized offers, VIP or experiential programs, partner rewards, and AI-driven retention tools.

Among startups under 5 million dollars, programs are noticeably simpler. Only 4 brands in this group use none of these approaches at all. Around 28% rely on a single tactic, another 29% combine two, and 40% report using three of the approaches listed. For mid-size brands between 5 and 50 million dollars, complexity ramps up. Only 1 brand reports using none, 12% use a single approach, 21% use two, and fully 67% say they layer three approaches at once. Established brands above 50 million dollars show a similar pattern, with roughly 70% also combining three different loyalty mechanics.

Number of loyalty approaches used, by brand size (counts)

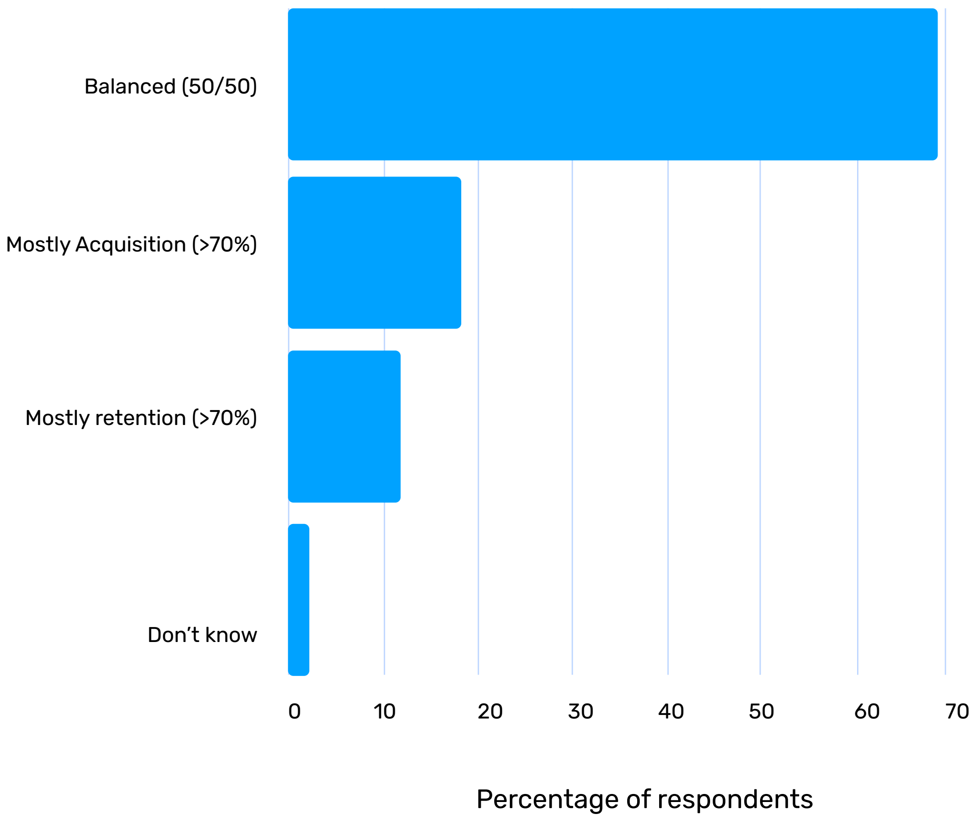


This confirms the intuition that bigger organizations stack more mechanics on top of each other. Smaller brands tend to keep things leaner, while mid-size and large brands are more likely to run programs that combine discounts, points, personalization, and community or partner elements at the same time.

Budget split + drill-down by company size

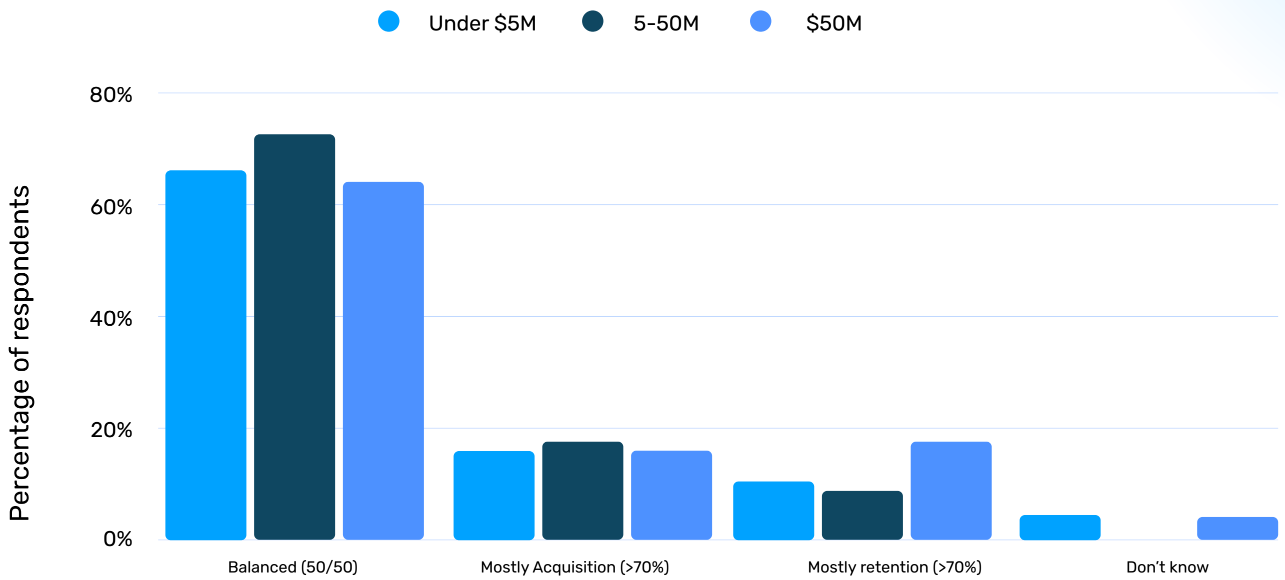
69% of companies split spend evenly between retention and acquisition. 17.67% spend the majority of their budget on acquiring new clients, while only a minority (11.67%) invest mostly in retaining existing customers.

How brands allocate their budgets (Acquisition vs Retention)



The 50/50 budget split is the norm overall, but it hides meaningful differences by company size. Among startups under 5 million dollars in revenue, 67% keep their budgets roughly balanced between acquisition and retention. Around 17% skew heavily towards acquiring new customers, and just 11% devote more than 70% of their budget to retention.

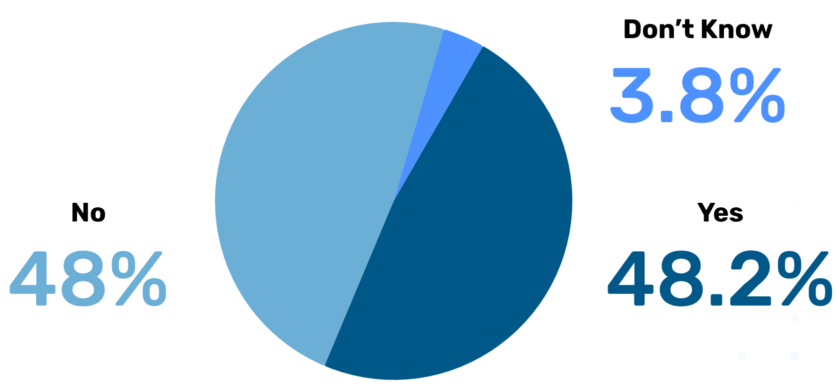
Budget split by brand size



Mid-size brands between 5 and 50 million dollars look similar on the surface, but with a slightly stronger tilt towards equilibrium. Around 72% report a balanced budget, 18% invest mostly in acquisition, and 10% invest mostly in retention.

The picture shifts for established brands above 50 million dollars. Here, only 63% keep a strict 50/50 split. The share that spends heavily on retention rises to 17%, almost double the retention-heavy share of smaller and mid-size brands. The proportion of brands that go hard on acquisition stays almost identical across sizes, at about 17% to 18%.

As brands grow, they do not abandon acquisition, but they become more comfortable tipping the scales towards their existing customers and letting retention carry a bigger share of the growth burden. Also, about half the brands say that their investment ratio changed in the past year.

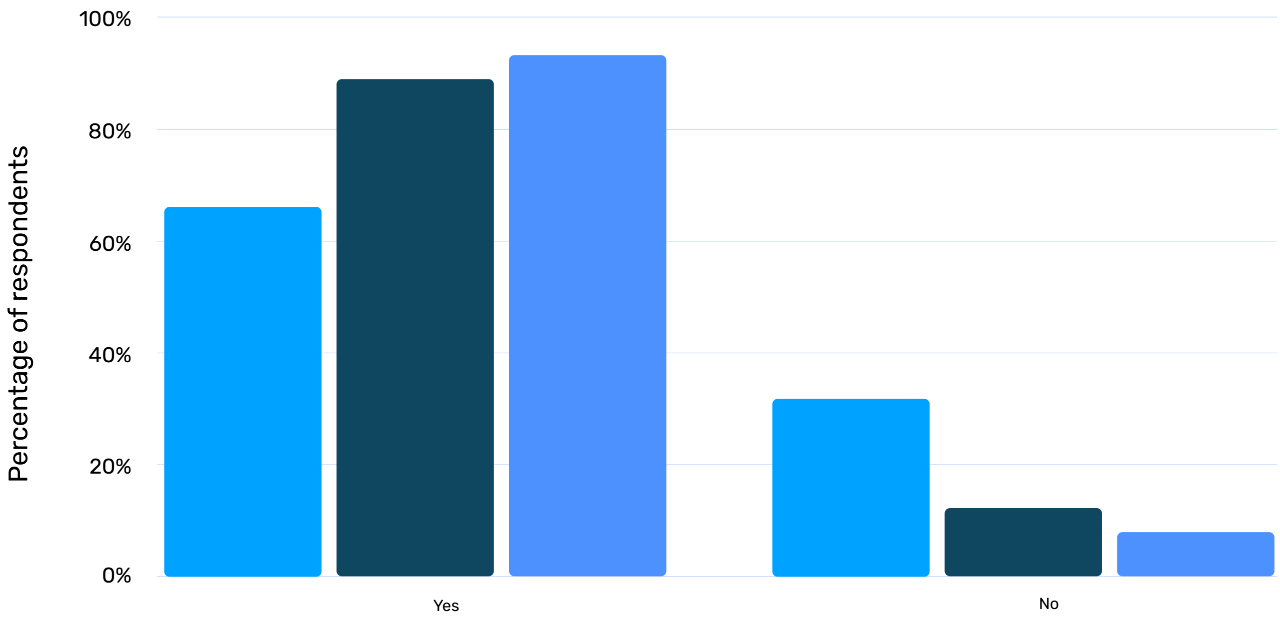


It is safe to assume that brands have been paying more attention to retention and even shifting their budgets to ensure that more is invested in retention.

People, automation and personalization maturity by size

The headline numbers are strong. Overall, 86.67% of brands say they have a dedicated person or team for lifecycle or loyalty, and 97% feel satisfied with their loyalty performance. When we look at this by revenue band, the gaps become clearer.

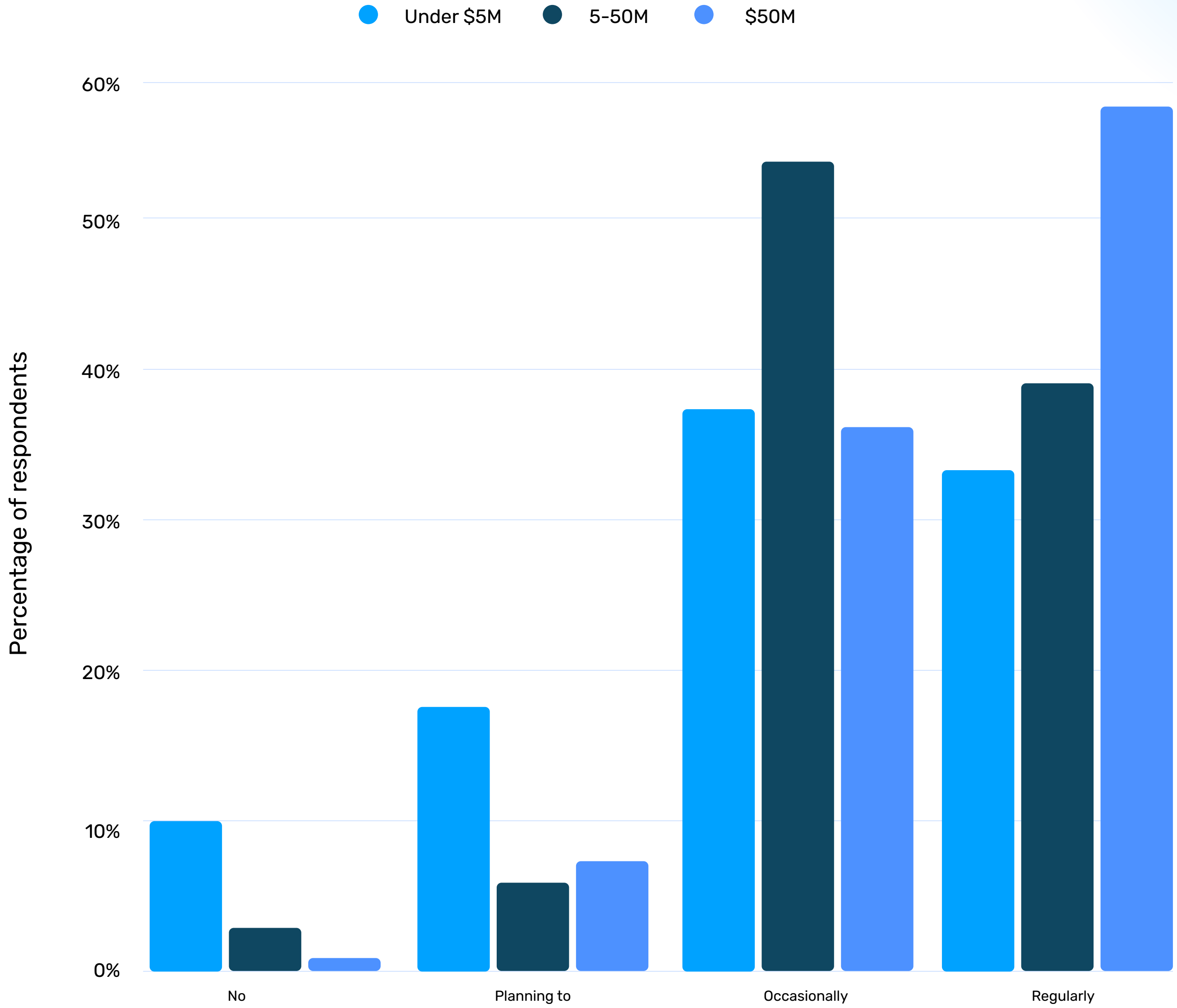
Dedicated team and automation by brand size



Among startups under 5 million dollars, 69% report having a dedicated lifecycle or loyalty owner, which means almost one in three still manage retention off the side of someone's desk. In the mid-size segment this jumps to 91%, and among established brands above 50 million dollars it rises further to 92%. The bigger the business, the more likely loyalty has its own seat at the table rather than being a side project.

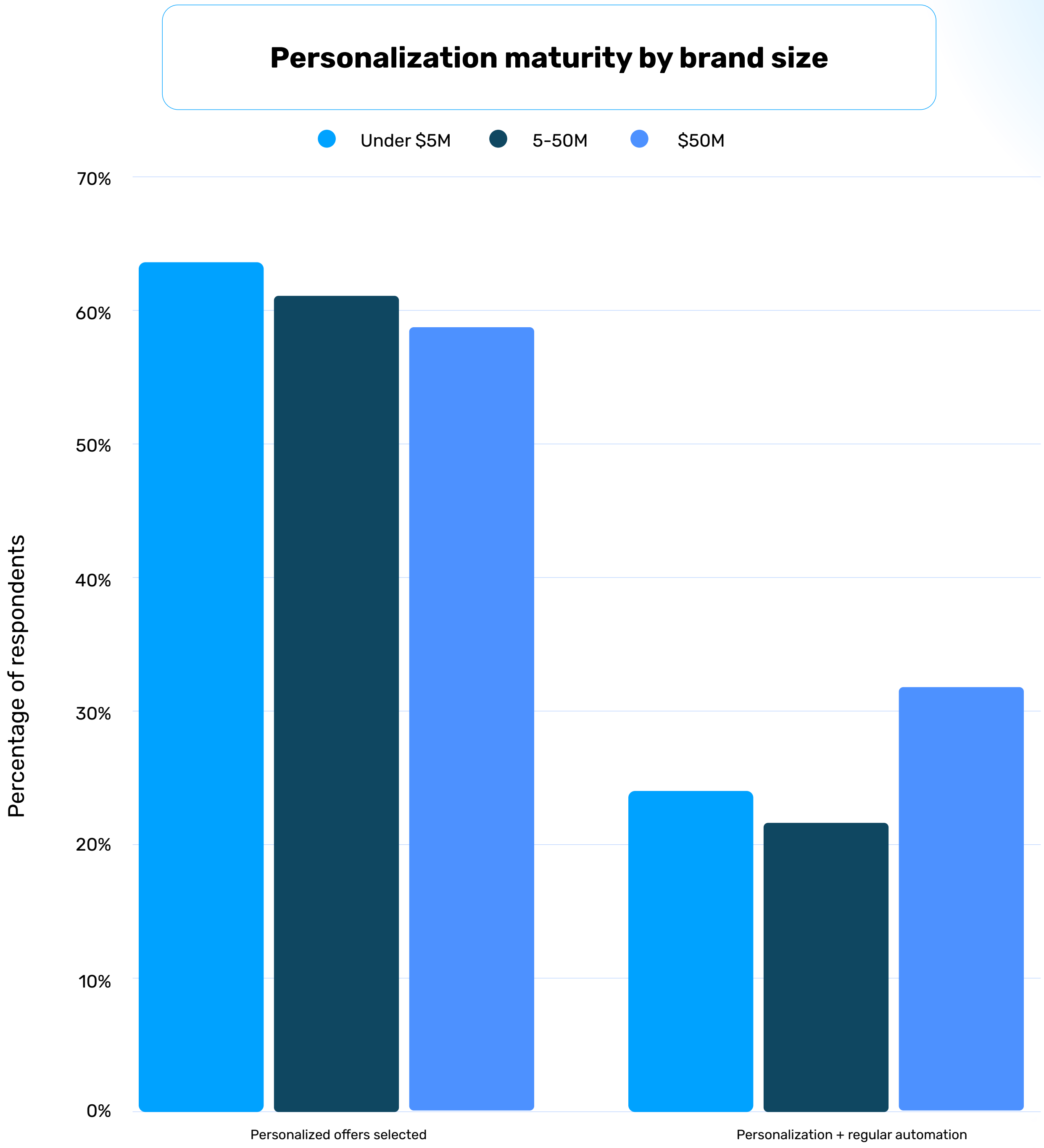
Automation follows the same curve. For small brands, 34% say they run automated retention or loyalty campaigns regularly, 38% use them occasionally, and 27% either do not use automation or are only planning to.

Use of automation retention or loyalty campaigns by brand size



In the 5 to 50 million dollar segment, 39% run automated flows regularly and 54% at least occasionally, with very few brands left in the "no automation" bucket. Among the largest brands, 57% run automated campaigns regularly and 37% do so occasionally, while almost nobody says they do not use automation at all.

Personalization is where digital maturity really shows. On paper, personalized offers are popular across all sizes, with 59% to 64% of brands in each revenue band saying they use or plan to use them.



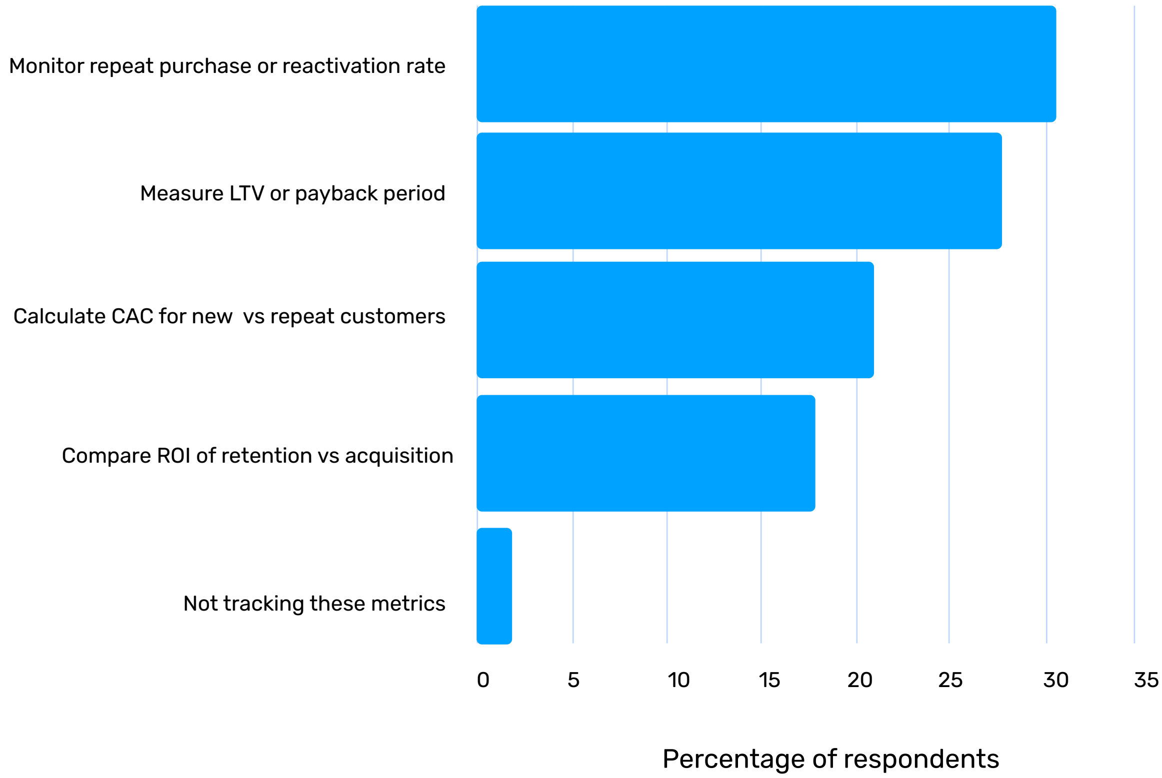
The difference appears when we combine personalization with automation. Among small brands, around 24% both use personalized offers and run automated retention campaigns regularly. The share is similar for mid-size brands at 22%, but climbs to 33% among large brands.

So while most brands talk about personalization, larger companies are more likely to industrialize it, with dedicated teams and regularly running journeys rather than one-off campaigns.

How performance is measured

Most brands track the key building blocks; 30.68% track repeat purchase rate and reactivation rate, and 28.16% track lifetime value. Fewer teams compare the return on investment of retention versus acquisition.

How brands track the impact of acquiring vs retaining customers



Limited measurement is the missing link between intent and investment. Only 17.96% of brands compare the ROI of retention with acquisition, while many stick to activity metrics like repeat or reactivation rate (30.68%) and LTV or payback (28.16%). Which is useful, but they do not answer the budget question.

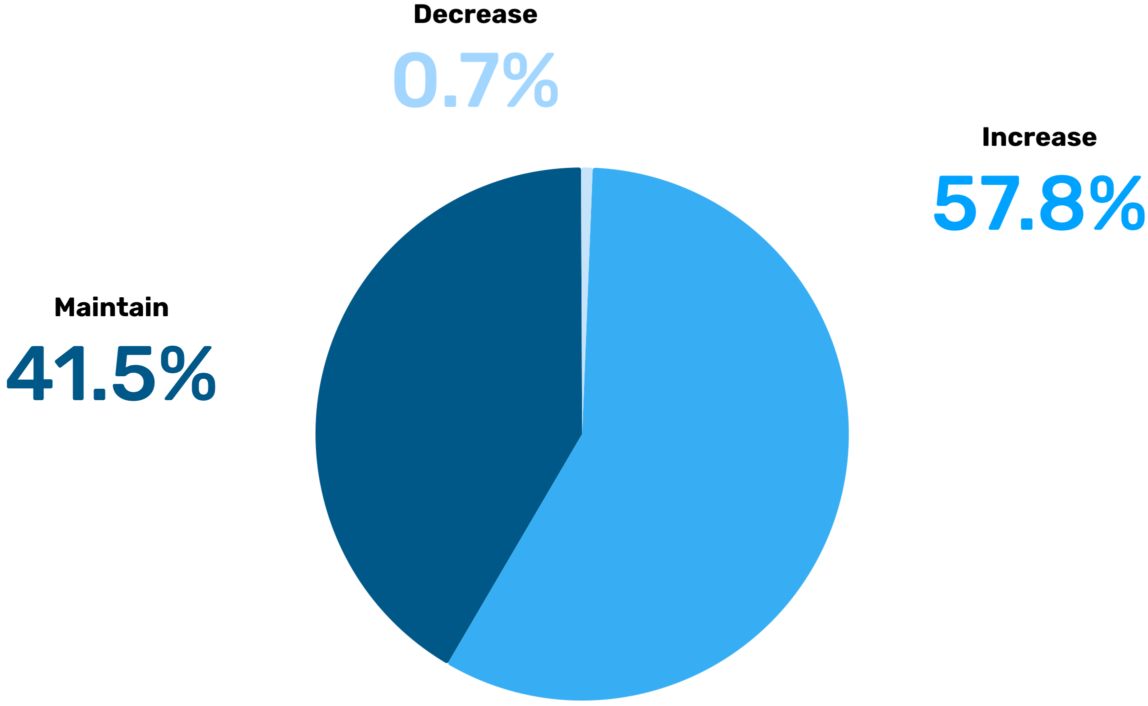
As noted in Chapter 1, the biggest obstacles are budget constraints (28.01%), limited tools or technology (24.16%), difficulty proving ROI (16.79%), lack of customer data (14.91%), and competing internal priorities (13.60%).

The practical path forward is to make ROI visible and routine: publish a simple retention report, show payback and reactivation lift by cohort, and include a monthly ROI comparison of retention versus acquisition. This evidence helps unlock budget, prioritize the right tools, and resolve internal priority debates.

Where brands plan to spend next

57.83% expect to increase loyalty investment over the next 12 months and 41.50% plan to maintain the same budget. Only a tiny share (0.67%) plan to decrease.

How brands plan to modify their loyalty investment of the next 12 months

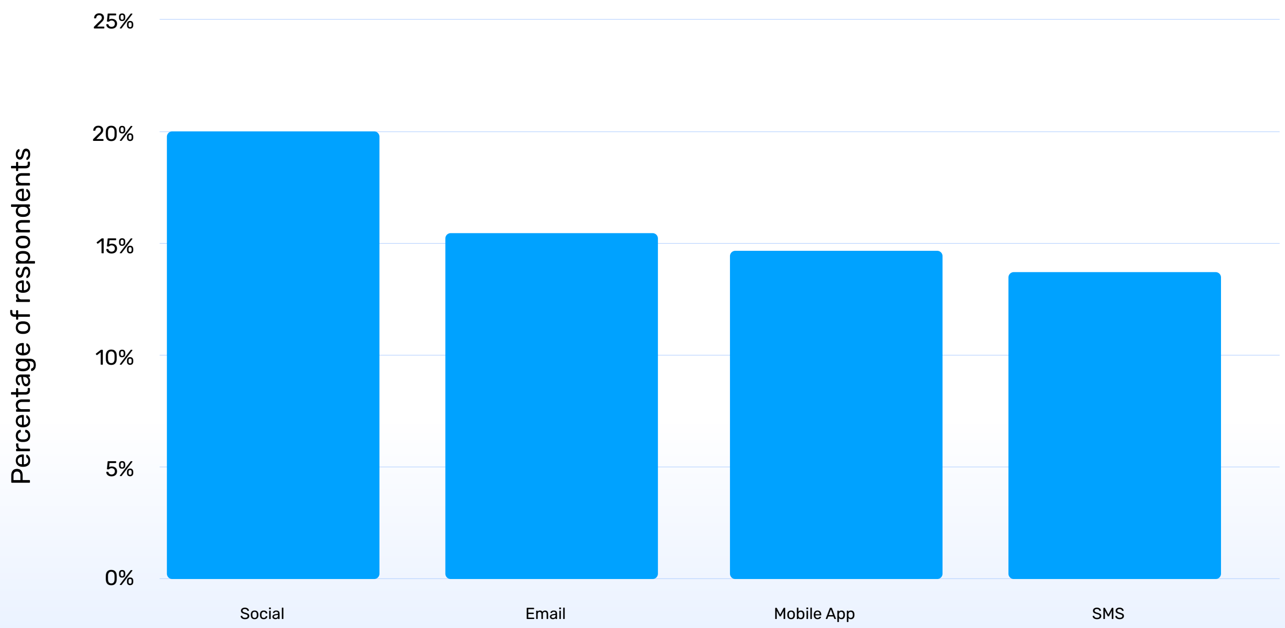


This shows that almost 100% of brands recognize the value of loyalty programs, yet many lack the data to assess their impact on retention or to compare retention ROI with acquisition.

Which channels brands believe drive loyalty.

Social media tops the list for effectiveness according to 20.37% of brand teams, with email next (15.47%), followed by mobile app notifications (14.83%) and SMS (14.13%). This view helps explain why many brands still prioritize social in their plans.

Brand channel preferences



How widely automation is used.

Automation is mainstream. 89.16% of brands run automated retention or loyalty campaigns at least occasionally, and a large share (41.33%) do so regularly.

Brands are investing in loyalty, and some moves already line up with what customers want. Discounts and personalized offers are common on the brand side, and customers do value a good deal. Automation is also widespread, which helps with timely communication.

The gaps appear in two places. First, the channel choice: people prefer email for loyalty messages, while many teams still believe social media is most effective. Second, the experience design: customers say quality and quick, simple rewards keep them loyal, yet many programs focus on offers, points, and tiers, and fewer brands run VIP or experiential benefits that customers say they want.

What experts say

We interviewed over 200 loyalty leaders about their key goals and critical areas of investment for 2025. The most important goals have remained unchanged over the past four years and are strongly ROI-oriented: **improving customer lifetime value (CLV), reducing customer churn, and increasing purchase frequency.**

To achieve these goals, most leaders plan to invest in gamification (including game-based mechanics), automated marketing communications, and experience-based rewards.

And this is the right direction. **Gamification enables brands to enhance loyalty program design** by introducing non-transactional elements and engaging customers without giving away profit margin. Discounts will, of course, remain an important driver in the wellness industry, but **gamification allows companies to be more strategic** with discounts and to find smarter, more meaningful ways to connect with their customers.

Karol Bzik
Co-founder and CMO at Open Loyalty
www.openloyalty.io

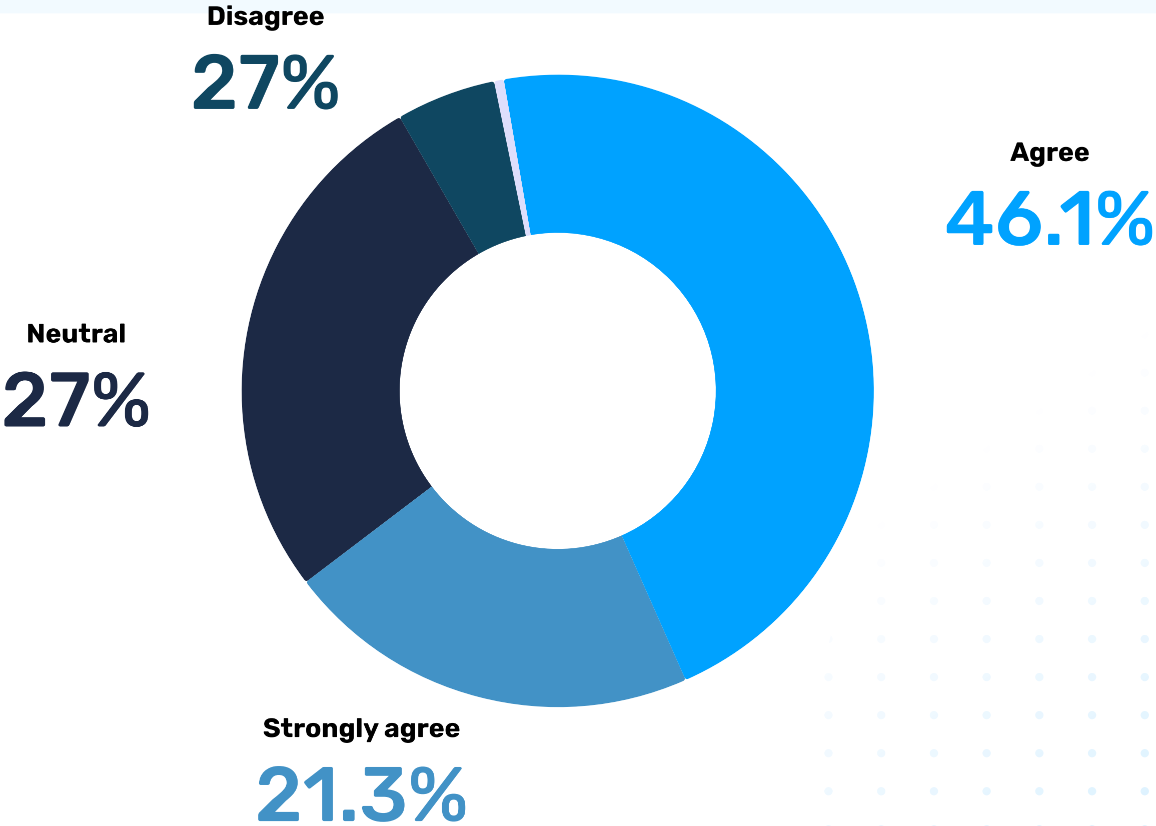
Chapter 5

Identifying the gap; Where customers and brands align, and where they do not

67.33% of customers feel new shoppers get better treatment – 46.08% agree and 21.25% strongly agree that brands value new customers more than existing ones. While 69% of brands say they split budget evenly between acquisition and retention. The spend may

be balanced, but the benefits customers see are not always clear.

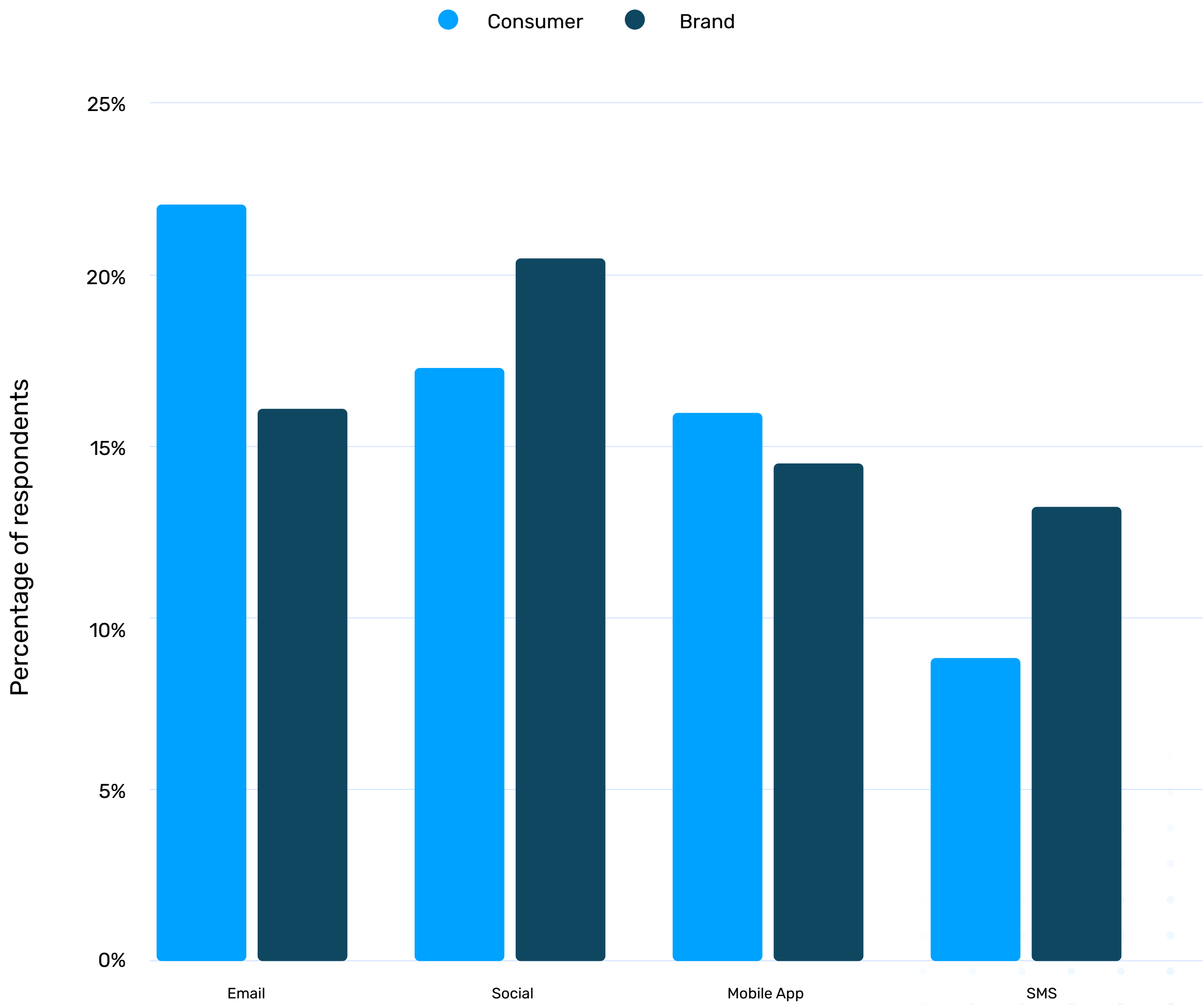
Do consumers think brands value new customers more than existing ones?



Channel mismatch.

People prefer to receive loyalty messages by email. Many brands still see social media as the most effective driver of loyalty. Using email as the main route, then supporting with social and app notifications, will better match customer preference.

Consumer channel preferences vs. brand effectiveness rating

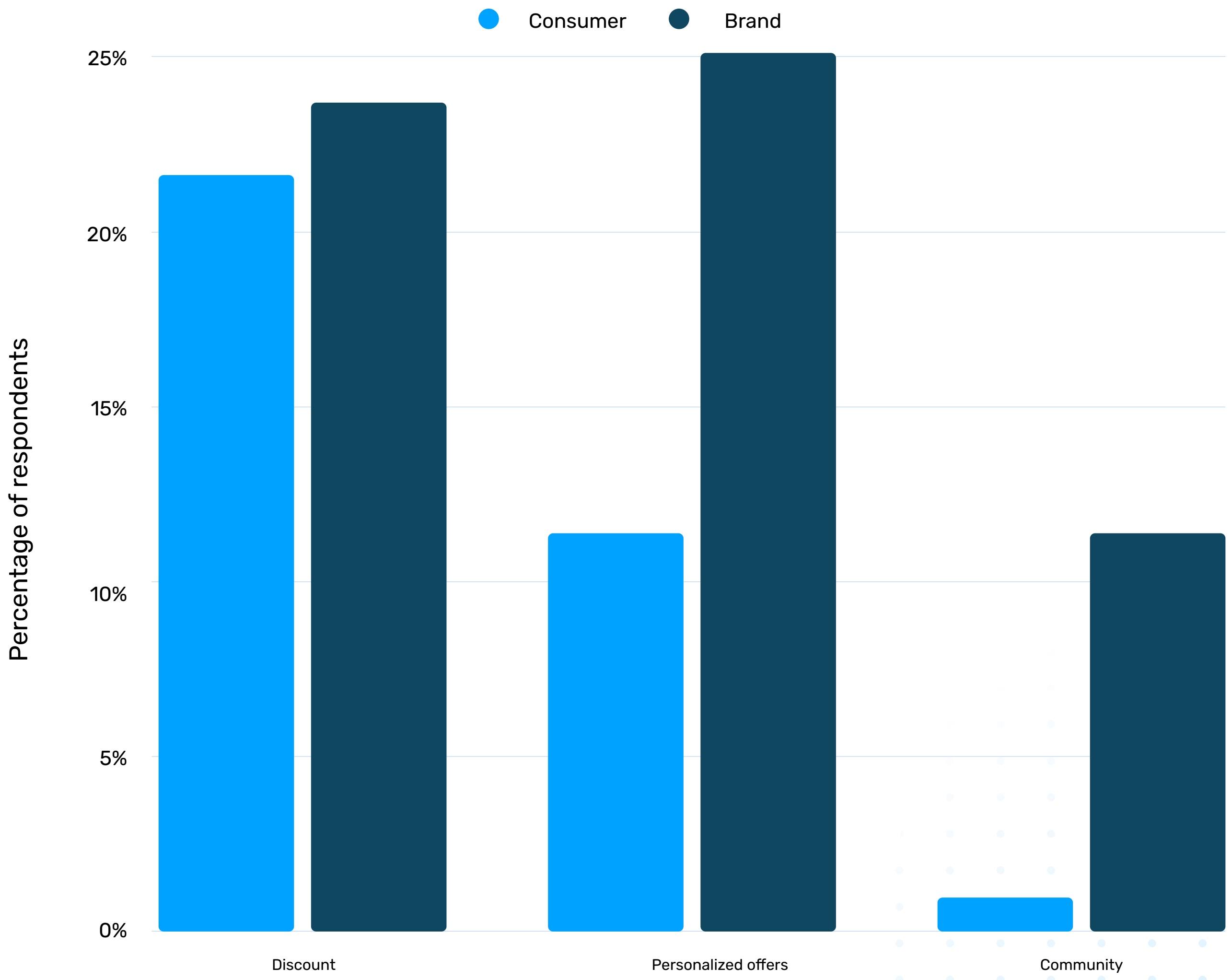


What keeps people loyal vs. what brands emphasize.

Consumers say product quality is the main reason they stay loyal, followed by value and service. In our data, quality accounts for 34.36% of answers, discounts and promotions 21.15%, service or experience 19.13%, brand values 12.49%, and personalized offers 11.26%.

Brands, however, emphasize different levers: personalized offers make up 25.03% of their selections, discounts 23.53%, points or tiers 15.89%, and VIP or experiential programs 12.07%. Quality proof in communications can close this gap.

Loyalty drivers gap - consumer vs brand



There is partial alignment on discounts, but the center of gravity differs. Shoppers anchor loyalty in product quality and experience, while many teams lead with personalization mechanics (offers, points, VIP). When quality proof is thin, personalization risks feeling like a price or segmentation tactic rather than a reason to stay.

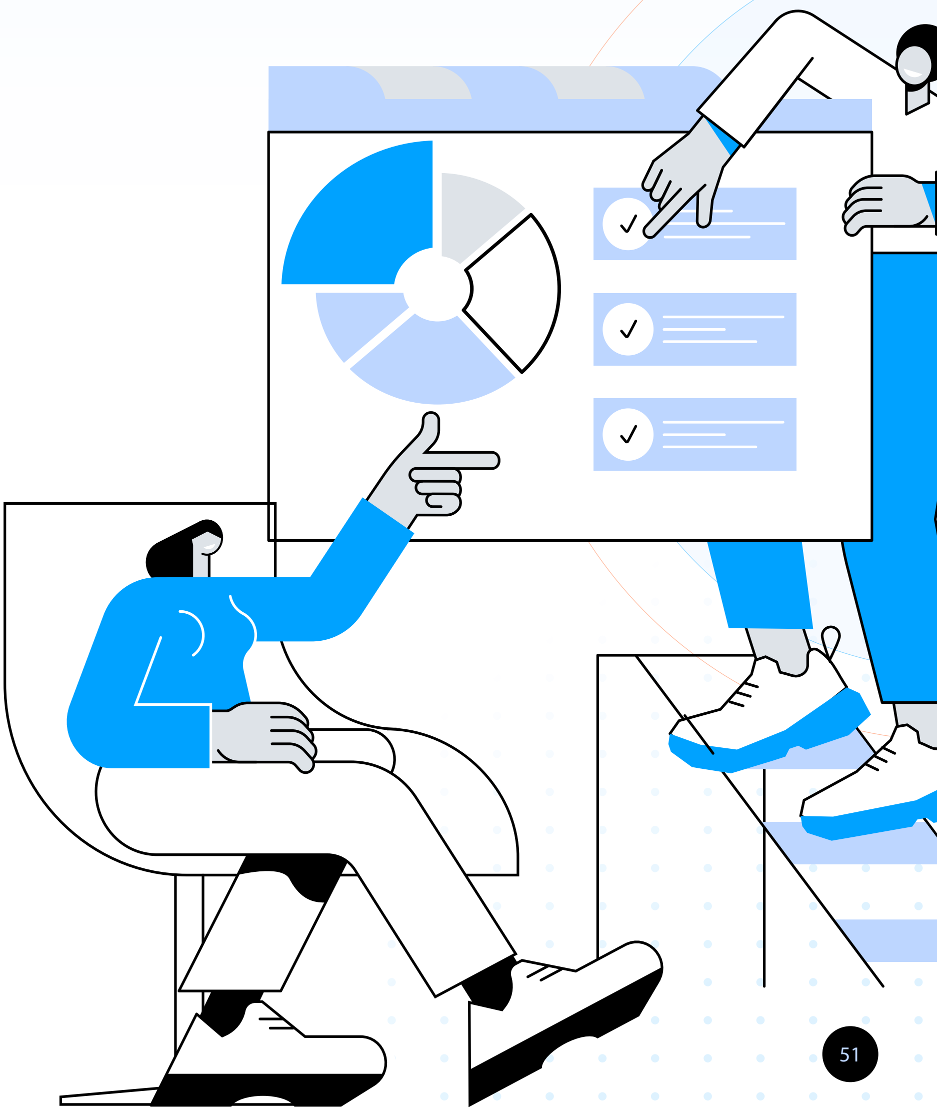
The practical move is to make quality visible through continuous education, routines, reviews, and guarantees – and then use personalization to steer customers toward the right product outcomes, not just promotions.

Points, tiers, and communities should support that story, not substitute for it. Use them to speed the first reward and recognize milestones, while content and email show why the product works. If you align personalization with quality proof, you meet the top consumer driver without abandoning effective brand tactics, and your discount spend carries more weight because it is tied to confidence in the product rather than to price alone.

VIP appetite vs. adoption.

93.46% of customers are willing to join VIP or recognition programs. However, only 12.07% of brands run VIP or experiential initiatives for loyal customers. There is room to expand non-discount benefits.

Start small and measurable. Pilot a light VIP layer with benefits people notice early: early access, member pricing on rotating products, priority support, limited drops, or simple community moments. Make progress visible with a first reward that arrives quickly.



Data sharing vs. data gaps.

91% of consumers are open to sharing simple preferences if it improves rewards and relevance. However, 14.91% of brands report a lack of customer data as one of the biggest challenges in building loyalty. Quick, transparent data collection can unlock better personalization and reap better results.

91% would share preferences

30% of brands still lack data.

Sources: Consumer Q9, Brand Q10.

Customer friction vs. brand constraints.

Shoppers' top loyalty frustrations are clear: rewards take too long to earn or redeem (24.40%), points expire too quickly (19.49%), offers feel generic (16.66%), and there are too many promotions (15.88%).

On the brand side, the main hurdles are budget constraints (28.01%), limited tools or technology (24.16%), difficulty proving ROI (16.79%), and gaps in customer data (14.91%). The path forward is to simplify program rules and speed up rewards for customers, then improve targeting and reporting to prove impact and unlock investment.

Customers are telling you exactly where the experience breaks: rewards feel slow, points disappear, offers look generic, and inboxes get crowded. These are practical problems, not mystery gaps. They show that time to value is too long, value is hard to see, and messaging is not targeted enough. On the company side, teams cite tight budgets, tool limitations, weak ROI proof, and data gaps. In other words, even when intentions are right, it is hard to justify bigger bets without clearer evidence.

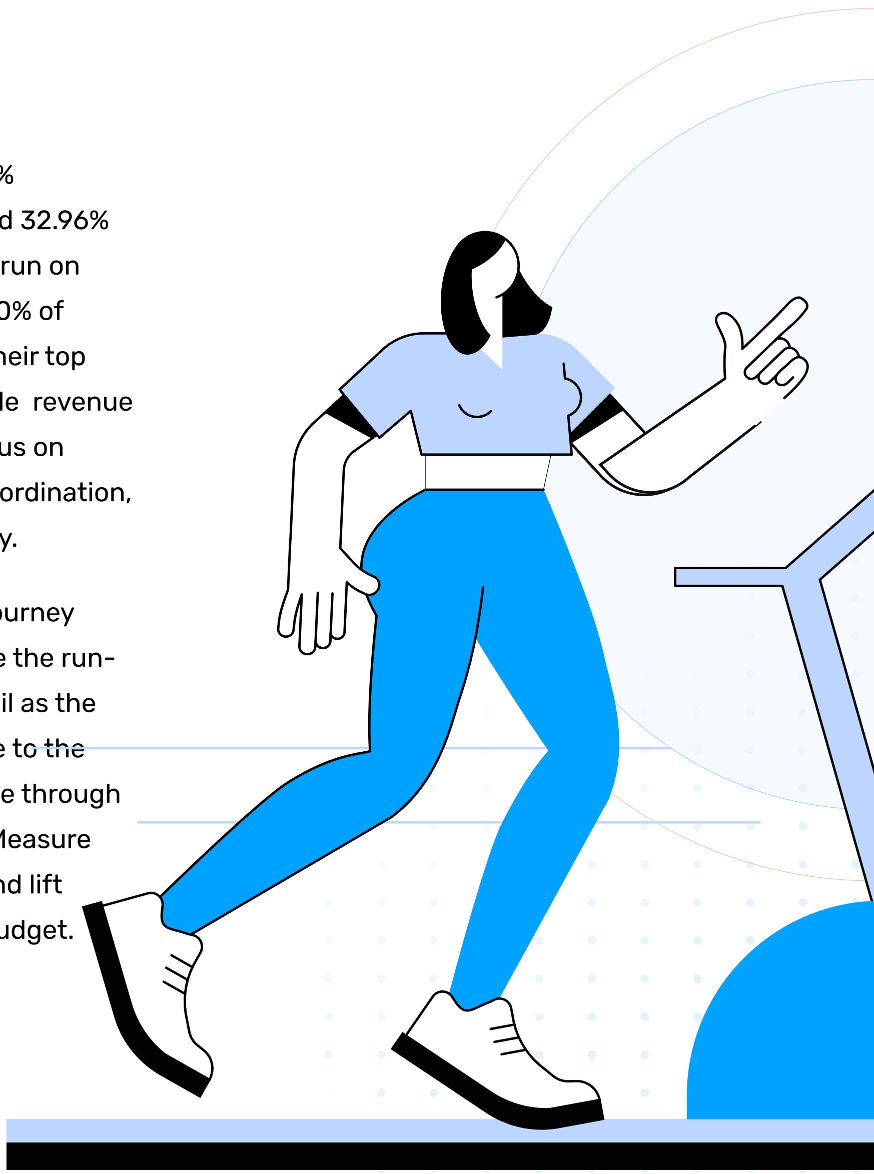
The fix is to shorten the time to the first reward and make progress obvious, simplify earning and redemption, and send fewer but smarter messages based on clear preferences. Add expiry reminders and product-use tips so rewards are actually used. In parallel, tighten measurement: put a simple retention P&L in your monthly report, show payback and lift versus a holdout group, and track repeat and reactivation rates.

This combination eases customer pain while giving leaders the proof they need to fund better tools and bigger loyalty wins.

Purchase rhythm vs. program design.

Most customers already buy on a schedule. 62.42% repurchase from a favorite brand every month and 32.96% every few months, which means many categories run on habits rather than one-off impulses. Yet only 26.00% of brands name “increase purchase frequency” as their top growth priority. This gap suggests easy, predictable revenue is being left on the table, likely because teams focus on acquisition, frequency work needs cross-team coordination, and the impact of retention is reported less clearly.

The fix is straightforward. Build a replenishment journey around expected usage, with one reminder before the run-out date and a simple one-click reorder. Keep email as the primary channel and add app or SMS nudges close to the expected reorder moment. Make the benefit visible through small loyalty milestones or subscribe-and-save. Measure time to second purchase, repeat purchase rate, and lift versus a holdout group to show ROI and secure budget.



What experts say

In 2025, based on our observations and research with DP Media's clients, we see both B2C and personal brands increasingly prioritizing **direct relationships with their audiences** to drive repeat purchases and reduce reliance on paid campaigns to reacquire the same customers. In purchase decisions, **18.29% of consumers cite brand credibility** as a key factor and **16.30% point to offer personalization**, reinforcing the importance of trust and well-matched communication. At the same time, **email marketing is growing as a stable,** relationship-driven channel, alongside greater use of LinkedIn and Meta tools that replicate newsletter or broadcast-channel models to support long-term audience loyalty.

Piotr Pliszka
Owner at DP Media
www.dpmedia.fr

By monitoring customer sentiment, opinions, and online conversations, we can quickly spot **dissatisfaction or brand indifference.** This visibility lets us react and make improvements immediately. For example, one client saw a **20% drop in positive sentiment just one week** after a software update. Topic analysis revealed the update was driving the negative reactions. After introducing social monitoring, proactive moderation, and an influencer marketing campaign, the trend reversed. Within three months, the brand recorded a **19% increase in positive mentions** related to customer service and software, along with a **25% increase in high-reach positive mentions.**

Today, **AI makes it possible to detect these shifts almost in real time.** This matters because if you do not react, you miss the opportunity to build relationships. Effective communication is about responding to the actual needs of your audience.

Justyna Dzikowska
Head of Marketing at Brand24
www.brand24.com

Chapter 6

Retention checklist: How to build stronger loyalty

1 Use email as the main route for loyalty communication.

Email is the top way customers want to hear from favorite brands. 21.76% choose email, ahead of social at 16.94%, mobile app notifications at 15.71%, and SMS at 9.38%. Brand teams most often point to social as the most effective channel at 20.37%, with email next at 15.47%.

Frequent buyers are open to several touchpoints as long as they feel coordinated and useful. Among monthly repurchasers, most prefer to hear from brands through two or three channels rather than just one, which makes email the backbone and app notifications, SMS, or social the supporting cast for clear, utility-focused messages.

Make email the home for loyalty updates, points status, rewards, and VIP news. Use social and app notifications to extend reach or nudge at key moments without increasing noise.

2 Design around the monthly buying rhythm.

Buying is habit-driven. 62.42% repurchase from a favorite brand every month, and 32.96% do so every few months.

Build a standing replenishment track: a reminder a few days before expected run-out, a quick-add path that skips browsing, and SKU-specific timing where usage varies. Add short product-care notes so the journey feels helpful, not just promotional.

The same customers who buy most often are also the ones most likely to feel underrecognized. Among shoppers who repurchase every month from a favorite brand, 70.03% agree brands value new customers more than existing ones. Designing your replenishment journeys with these high-frequency buyers in mind means making the loyalty benefits and recognition they receive as visible as the reminder itself.

3 Turn willingness to share preferences into useful data.

People will share simple preferences when the value is clear. 41.00% say they definitely would, and 49.96% say they probably would. Ask for two or three items you will actually use.

Tell customers what will change after they answer, then reflect it in the very next message. Immediate payoff keeps trust high and reduces the need for broad promotions.

4 Remove friction from the program quickly.

The biggest customer pains are practical. Rewards take too long to earn or redeem for 24.40% of respondents. Points expire too quickly for 19.49%. Offers feel generic for 16.66%, and there are too many promos for 15.88%.

Shorten time to first reward, simplify earn and redeem rules, warn before expiry, and replace mass promotions with targeted messages based on stated preferences and recent behavior.

These fixes should start with your most engaged customers. When you shorten time to first reward and soften expiry rules for this group first, you remove friction exactly where the impact on loyalty and revenue is highest.

5 Add a VIP or recognition layer that is more than discounts.

Interest in recognition is very high. 47.96% of consumers are very likely to participate in VIP or recognition, and 45.50% are somewhat likely. On the brand side, only 12.07% report running VIP or experiential initiatives.

Start with benefits people notice quickly: early access, member pricing on a rotating set, first-to-know drops, or priority support. Make progress obvious with a simple status bar so the value is clear without deeper discounts.

6 Use automation for core journeys and improve them each month.

Automation is already common. 41.33% of brands run automated loyalty or retention campaigns regularly, and 47.83% do so occasionally.

Keep the fundamentals live, including welcome, post-purchase, replenishment, win back, and VIP recognition. Each month, test small changes to timing, subject lines, proof of quality, and the next best offer. Track lift against a small holdout, so wins are unmistakable.

7 Measure retention with the same care as acquisition.

Measurement is the missing link between intent and budget. 17.96% of brands report comparing retention ROI with acquisition ROI, while 30.68% track repeat or reactivation, 28.16% track lifetime value or payback period, and 21.42% look at CAC differences for new vs. repeat buyers.

Add a simple retention Profit & Loss to your monthly report: revenue from retained and reactivated customers, program costs and rewards, net impact, payback, a short note on the test you ran, and a clear retention-vs.-acquisition ROI view. This turns good work into budget and momentum.

8 Match your retention plan to your brand size and maturity.

Smaller and mid-size brands can get the biggest lift by assigning clear ownership and focusing on a simple, valuable program anchored in email. Start with a handful of core journeys, like welcome, post-purchase, replenishment, and win-back, and make sure each one uses the preferences customers have already shared. Keep the rules easy to explain and reward progress quickly.

Larger brands often already have complex stacks in place, with multiple mechanics and channels. Here the priority is to simplify the program so customers can see the value at a glance, close the measurement gap between retention and acquisition, and make sure your channel mix and VIP or experiential benefits match what customers actually say they want from loyalty.

What **experts** say

Customer loyalty is not only about a great shopping experience and a high-quality product. Today, more is needed - at IdoSell, we see that brands increasingly succeed when they are able to **sustain loyalty over time.**

Subscriptions are a simple way to leverage a natural purchase rhythm and turn it into real, consistent value. Customers don't have to remember to reorder (for example, their pet's favorite food), while the store gains more predictable sales.

Additional subscriber benefits (such as exclusive discounts or small gifts) make loyalty feel here and now - especially for high-frequency buyers. **It's a win-win solution: more convenience and satisfaction for customers,** and steadier revenue with lower customer retention costs for merchants.

Importantly, this is also an advantage of **owning your e-commerce channel over marketplaces,** where product subscriptions are typically unavailable.

Katarzyna Sienkiewicz
UX designer and content manager
at IdoSell
www.idosell.com

Most loyalty programs end up as points, so it can feel transactional. What I hear from merchants is that what sticks is **word of mouth, because trust is what brings people back.**

When brands say loyalty isn't working, referrals are usually the exception.
They're the loyalty mechanic customers actually use.

Raúl Galera
Growth Lead
at Referral Candy
www.referralcandy.com

About GetResponse

GetResponse is the email, automation, and AI platform trusted by 350,000+ businesses in 183 countries. For more than 25 years, we've helped entrepreneurs, ecommerce shops, and global enterprises grow with marketing built on the most powerful channel they own: **email.**

With GetResponse, you can launch campaign in minutes - **from welcome emails to loyalty flows - using AI-powered copy, prebuilt automation templates, and seamless integrations** with shopify, Woocommerce, Salesforce, and more. Our platform scales with you at every stage; unlimited sends on every plan, transparent pricing without hidden fees, and 24/7 support from real marketing experts.

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