NIQ

Canada Consumer Outlook

[November 2025]

Welcome to your strategic guide to 20**26**

Caution is the *new normal*

The Canadian outlook for 2025 saw an improvement in consumer sentiment but lags global levels, with consumers still exercising caution. **For 2026, continued volatility has deeply ingrained a lingering caution into consumer psychology, which is impacting spending.**

Still, areas of opportunity and growth remain amid this emotional battleground. In this analytical assessment of the state of consumers, we'll help equip you to win with cautious yet hopeful consumers over the next 12 to 18 months—and beyond.

As always, NIQ's *Consumer Outlook* report marries survey *and* purchase data to deliver the most comprehensive outlook possible. We uncover the divide between what consumers say and what they do, along with disruptions impacting the retail industry.

Caution may be the new normal, but our *Consumer Outlook: Guide to 2026* gives manufacturers and retailers the insights and takeaways they need to not just keep pace with—but stay ahead of—whatever comes our way in the year ahead.

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Consumer Outlook: *Key takeaways*

1 Cautious Optimism Amid Economic Shifts

Inflation is cooling, but uncertainty lingers - consumers seek financial "insurance" through secondary income streams. Core expenses remain prioritized, while discretionary spend shows selective recovery, led by Health & Beauty (+6.7%) and Food & Beverage (+2.6%). Looking ahead, growth will shift from price-led to **volume and occasion-led**, with affordability and control remaining critical.

2 Values Drive Choice & Loyalty

Shoppers balance practicality with trust-building values: simplicity, health, and local products. They remain open to alternatives if another brand better aligns with their priorities or offers competitive pricing. Brands that demonstrate **quality, value, and transparency** will win loyalty through product claims, assortment, and clear communication.

3 Commerce is Fragmented, Journeys Are Fluid

Discovery and purchase now span social platforms, search engines, RMNs, and stores—yet **83.5% of FMCG sales remain offline**. Success requires consistency across channels, expanding shopping occasions, and reinforcing affordability. The winners will deliver simplicity and control in a fragmented world.

4 Health, Cost & Tech Disruptions Reshape Growth

Demand accelerates for wellness-oriented, portion-controlled solutions, with consumers willing to pay premiums for "clean" and healthy options. Commodity volatility and AI-driven discovery raise stakes for innovation and trust. Companies that anticipate these disruptions—health shifts, cost shocks, private label competition, and AI—will turn them into engines of growth.

Winning Formula: Brands and retailers that **adapt to evolving habits**, **prove alignment with consumer priorities**, and **deliver simplicity and control across fragmented journeys** will earn loyalty and unlock growth.

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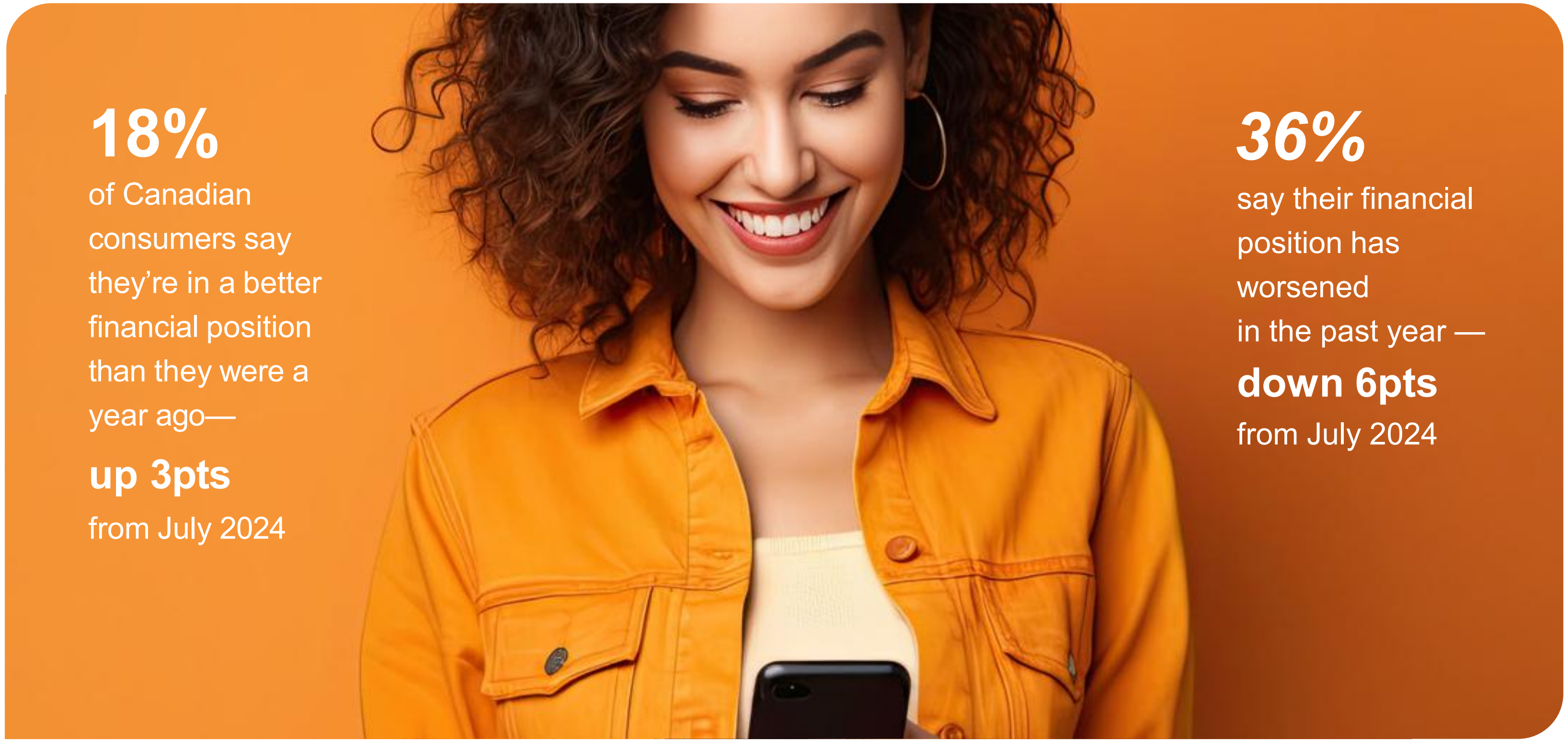
1 State of consumers and economic uncertainty

Spending caution is now baked into household economics

- Inflation-driven austerity is fading, but consumers are wary of another "rebalancing."
- Across income brackets and geographies, economic and political volatility are driving caution among consumers.
- With trust in long-term stability low, consumers are adapting to volatility as the new normal. They are looking to brands for emotional reassurance as much as they are for affordability.
- Canadian consumers are slightly better off in their financial position than they were last year

Canadian consumer sentiment has *improved year over year*



- Consumers who said in 2025 that they were ”better off” than a year ago has improved v 2024's mid-year survey results. There was a reduction (**-6pts**) of Canadian consumers reporting they were ”worse off” this year.
- Even Canada —a market that has shown lagging optimism—the number of respondents who said they were ”much worse off than a year ago” dropped by **3pts** between July 2024 and today.
- This shift in positivity in the Canada has resulted in a **4.8%** increase in average spending on FMCG products. However, the average number of units per trip declined **3.2%**.

Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey. NIQ Omnishopper, 52W PE June 14th, 2025, v YA

Perceptions around cost of living, economy, and jobs improve

But consumers in Canada reported to be worse off compared to global average

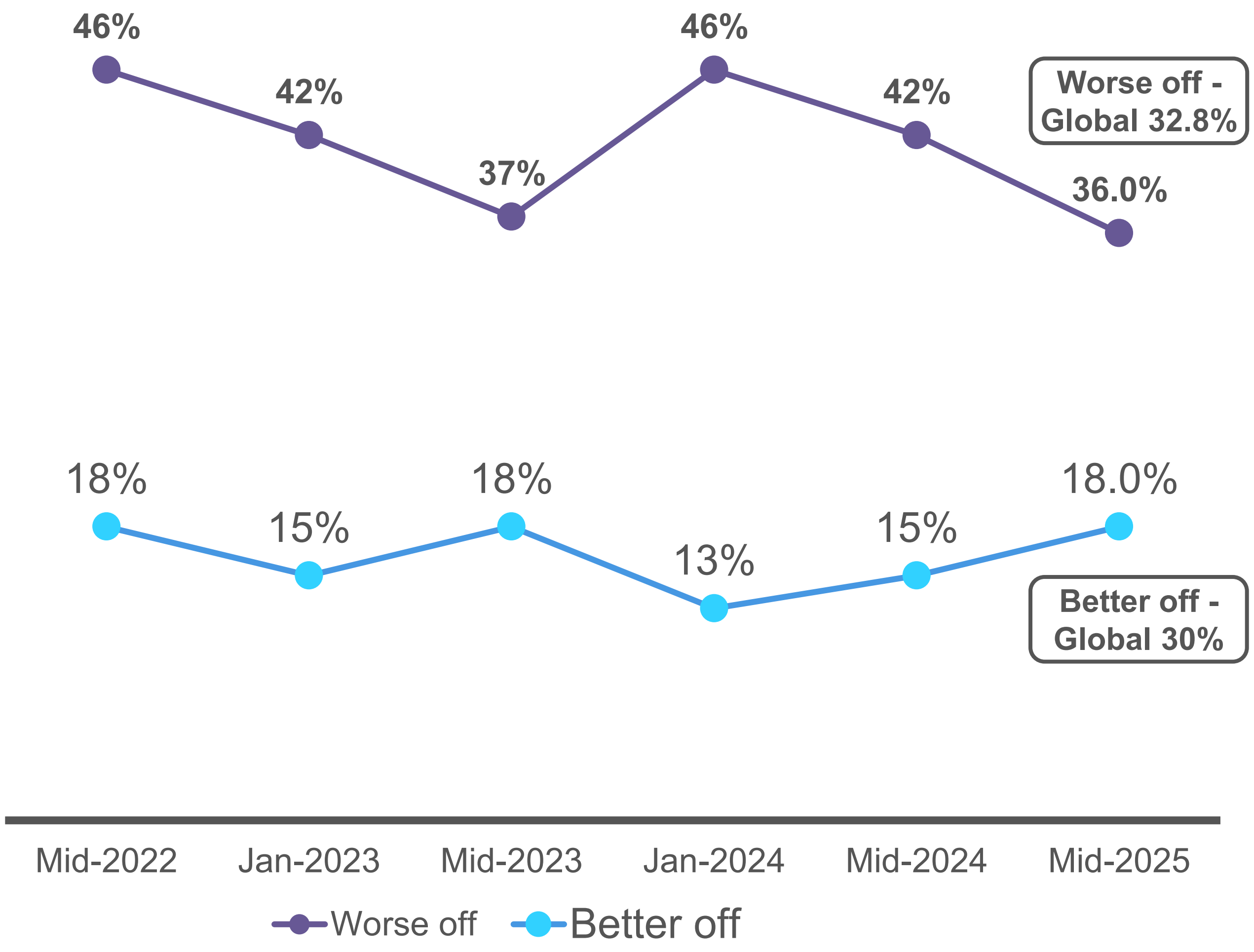
Among consumers who reported feeling "worse off":

83% **due to *increased costs of living*** (down from 84% in July 2024)

39% **due to *economic slowdown*** (up from 31% in July 2024)

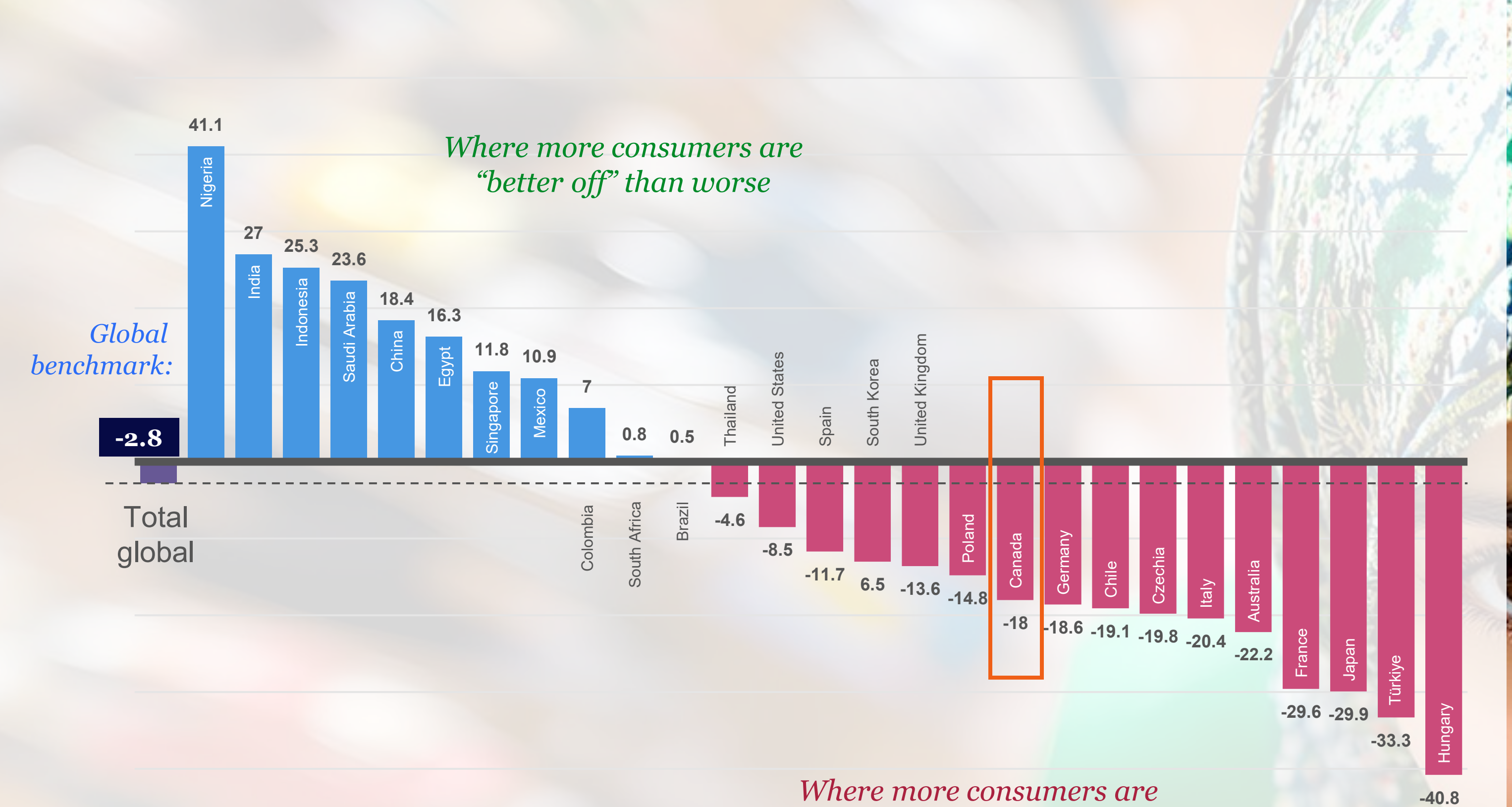
28% **due to *job insecurity/loss*** (down from 31% in July 2024)

Consumer financial position, sentiment year over year (% respondents)



Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook, Canada & Global, vs. previous studies. Q: Compared to a year ago, is your household better off or worse off financially? Note: In China, verbiage reflects change in "management of spending."

Optimism around financial situation *varies widely by region and country*



Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey.
Q: Compared to a year ago, is your household better off or worse off financially? Note: In China, verbiage reflects change in "management of spending."

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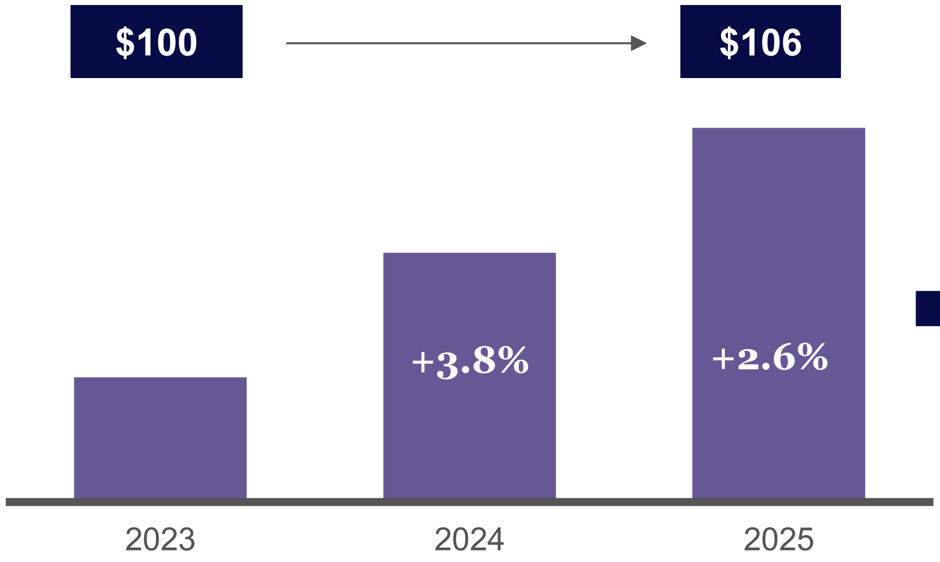
Top concerns setting the spending tone for 2026

Rank		Concern	July 2025	point change vs. year ago
1		Increasing food prices	46%	0.6 pts
2	⬆	Global conflict/Escalation of crisis/War	21%	8.5 pts
3	⬆	Economic Downturn *(was #8 in Mid. 2024)*	20%	9.1 pts
4	⬇	Increased housing costs *(was #2 in Mid 2024)*	17%	-1.7 pts
5	⬇	Increasing utility bills	11%	-2.7 pts
6	⬆	Immigration *(was #12 in Mid. 2024)*	9%	0.5 pts
7	⬆	Political Unrest *(was #13 in Mid. 2024)*	8%	3.2 pts
8	⬆	Job Security	8%	3.1 pts
9	⬇	**Ability** to **provide basics (food/ shelter) for myself/family**	8%	-3.9 pts
10	⬇	Global warming/Climate change/ Environment *(was #3 in Mid. 2024)*	8%	-4.7 pts

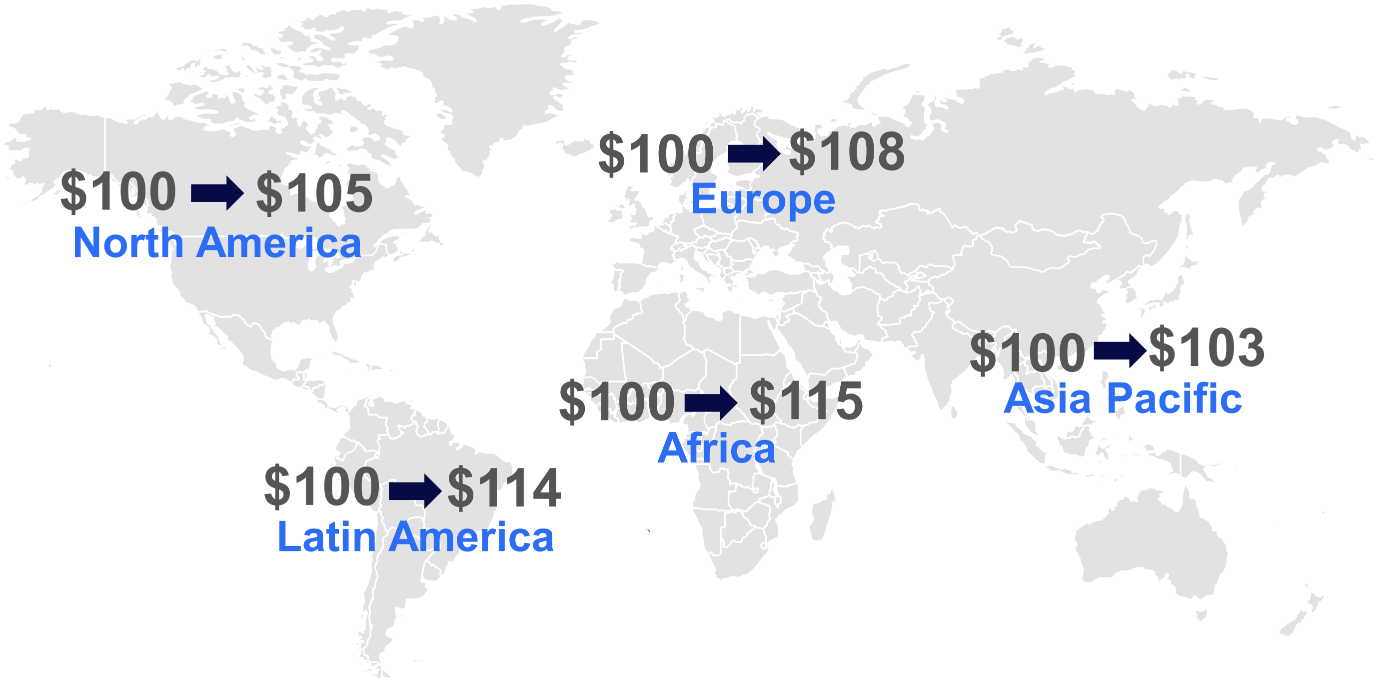
Uncertainty continues to impact Canadian spending, forecast show slower growth rates in 2026

Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey



Consumers are still spending **6% more vs. 2023.**

Regionally CPG inflation is also trending down *but is still higher than average in Latin America and Africa*



Source: NIQ Global Strategic Planner, 54 markets, Eq Vol Price % Change, Latest 52 weeks ended June 15, 2025, vs. previous periods. Reflected in US dollars.

In recent months, Canada's inflation rate is lower than the global average

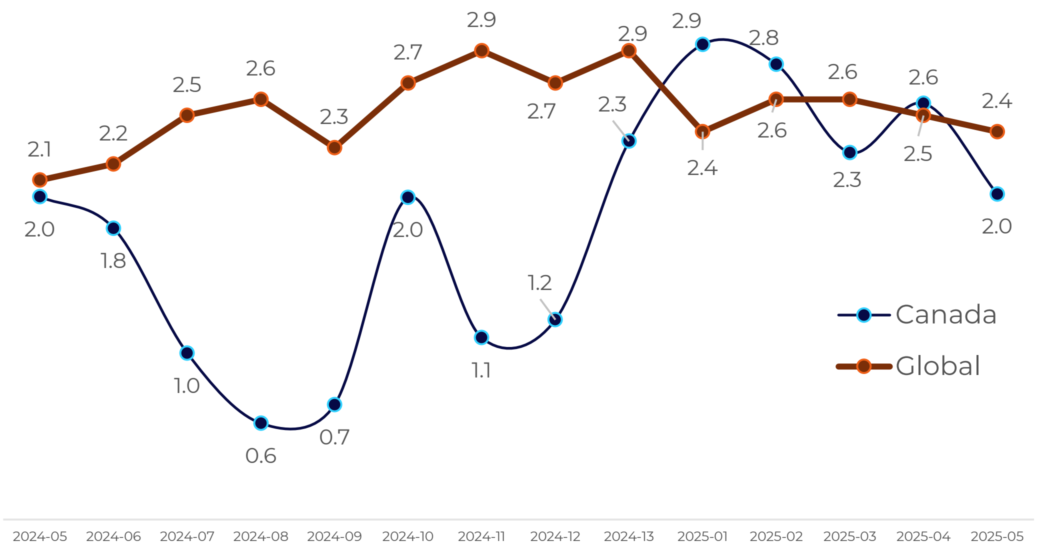
Inflation rates continue to vary across the globe

Global Inflation:

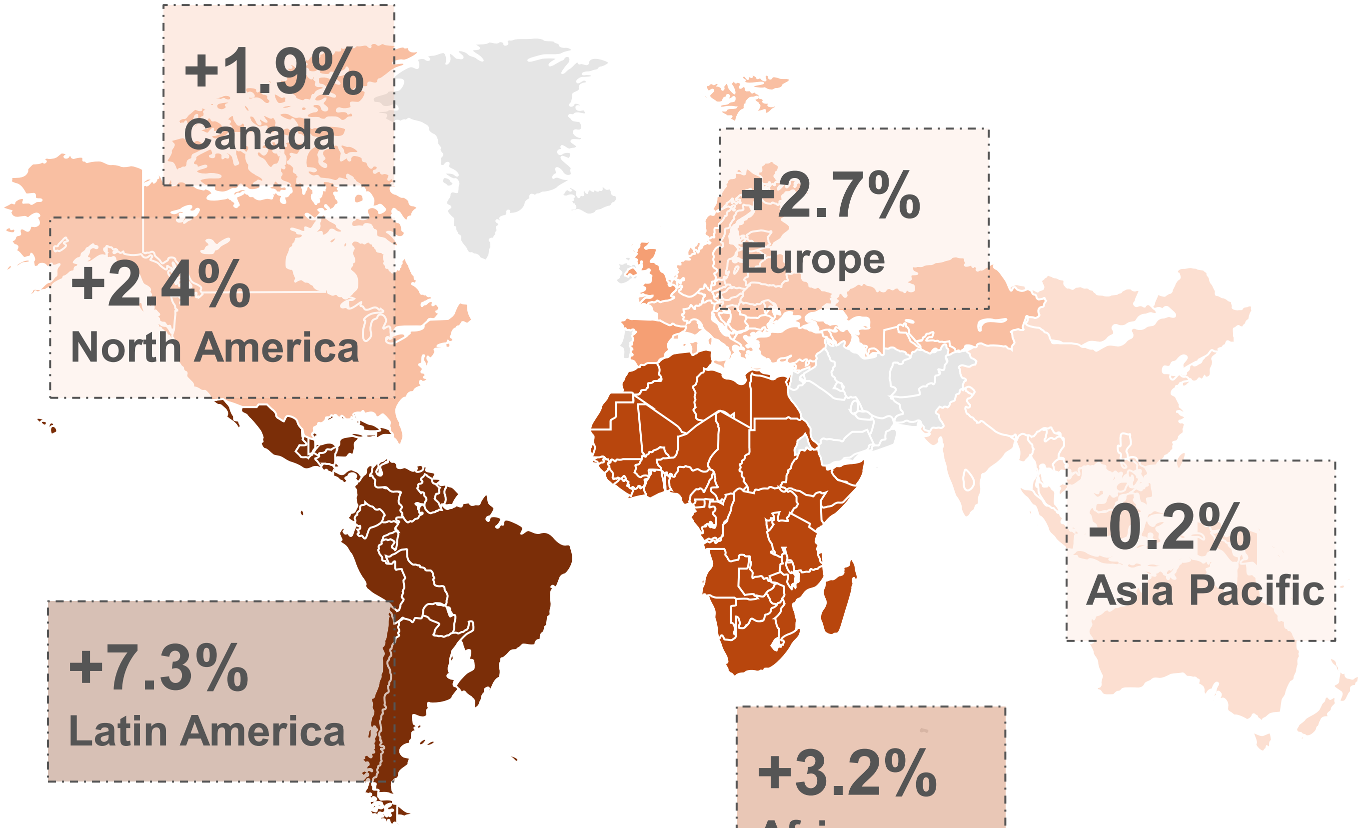
+2.6%

LOW HIGH

% change in average CPG price, Canda vs Global monthly trend



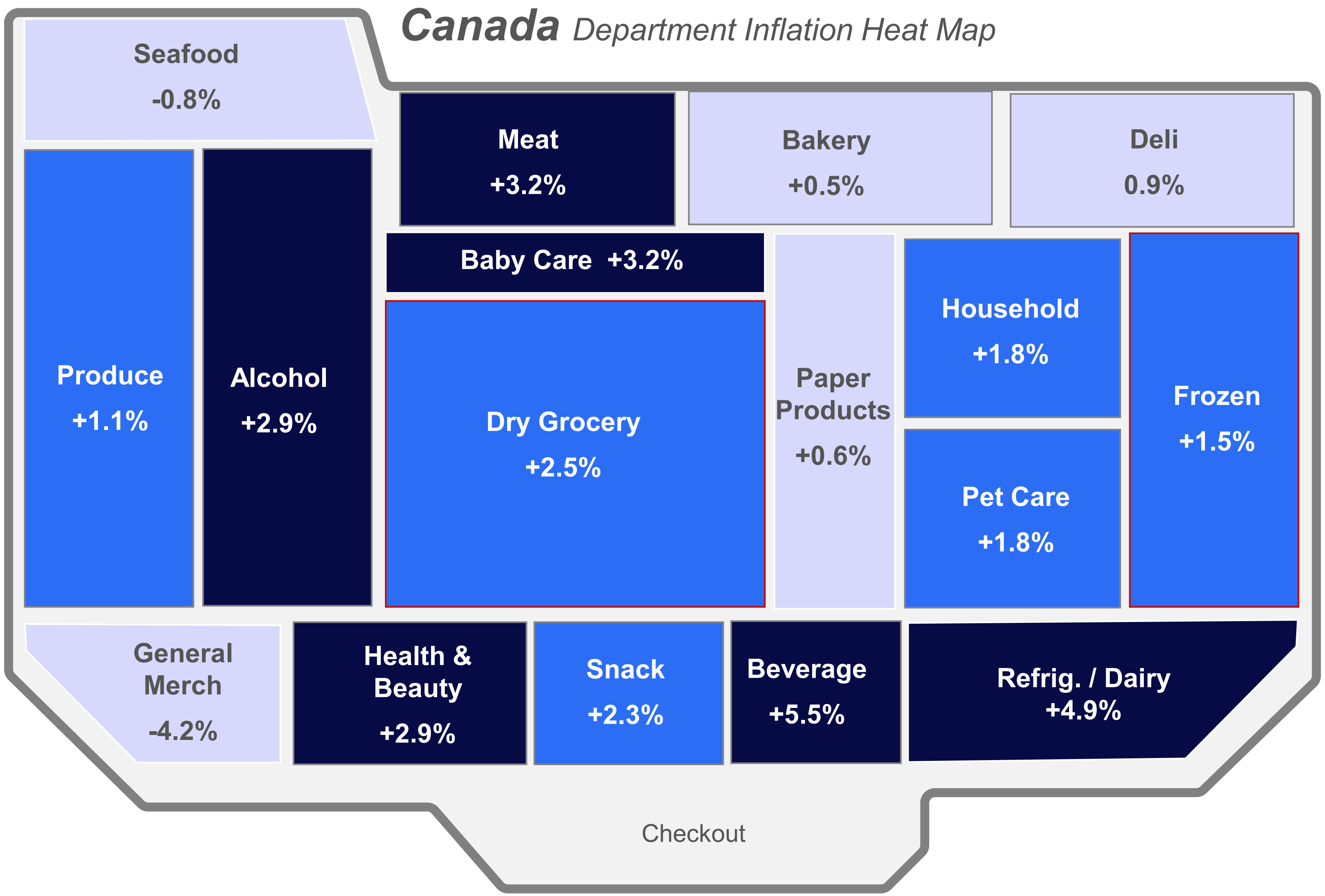
Regional heat map of monthly economies in the world



Regionally CPG inflation is also trending down, but still higher than average in Latin America and Africa.

Source: NIQ Global Inflation Tracker, Measure of Eq Vol % Price Change, monthly measure of June 2025 vs. previous year. CPG total measured across a closed group of 225 consistent categories across 58 countries. Reflected in U.S. dollars.

Despite overall price increases slowing down, several key departments are still increasing more than average



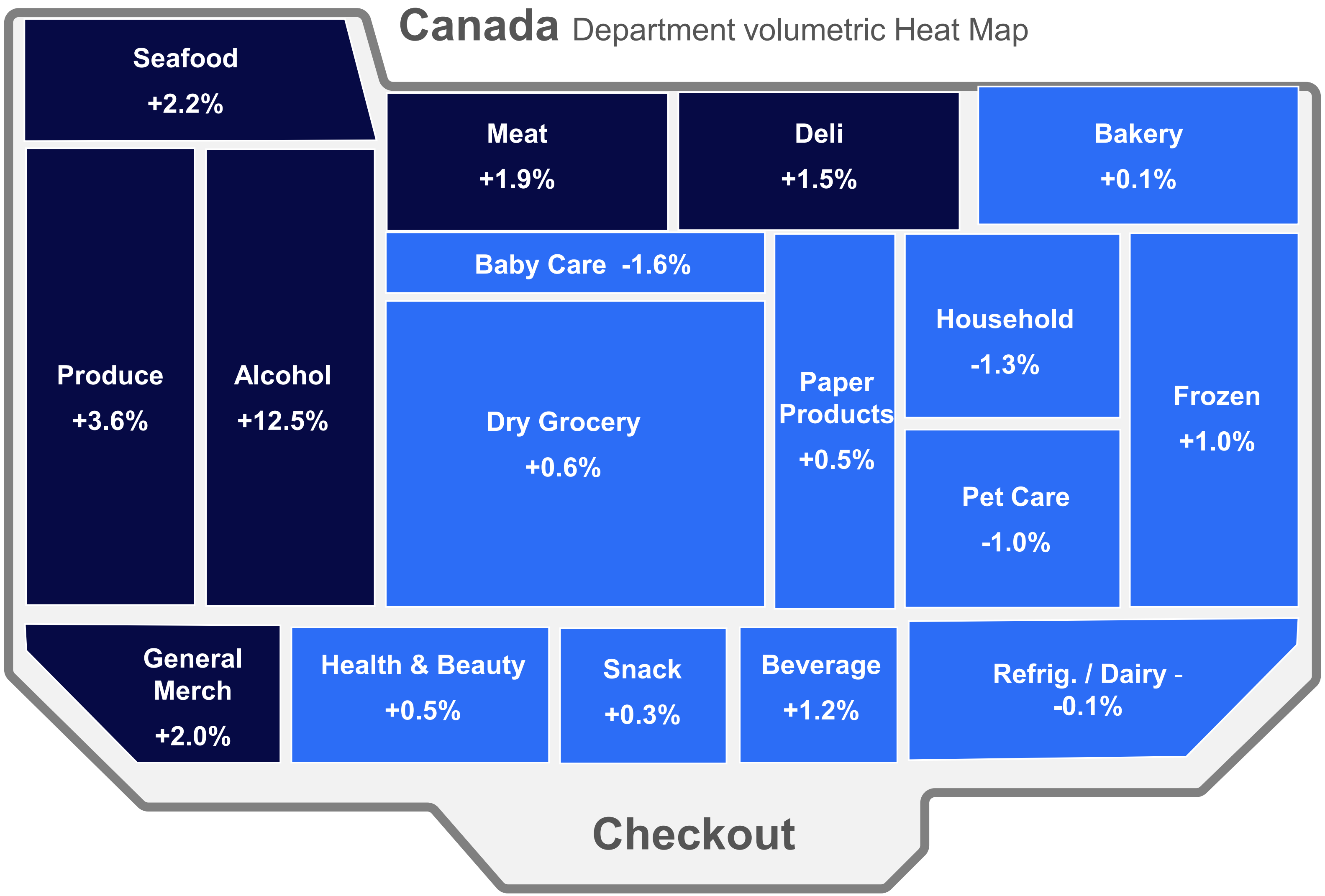
Price % Change*

Total CPG: +1.9%

- >2.9% Higher than average
- 0.9% - 2.9% Average
- <0.9% Below Average

NIQ Source: NIQ RMS, Canada All Channels, 52W PE June 14th, 2025 v YA *Inflation: $ % Chg. less EQ Vol % Chg.

Consumer tonnage consumption is prioritizing the perimeter of the store



EQ volume % change

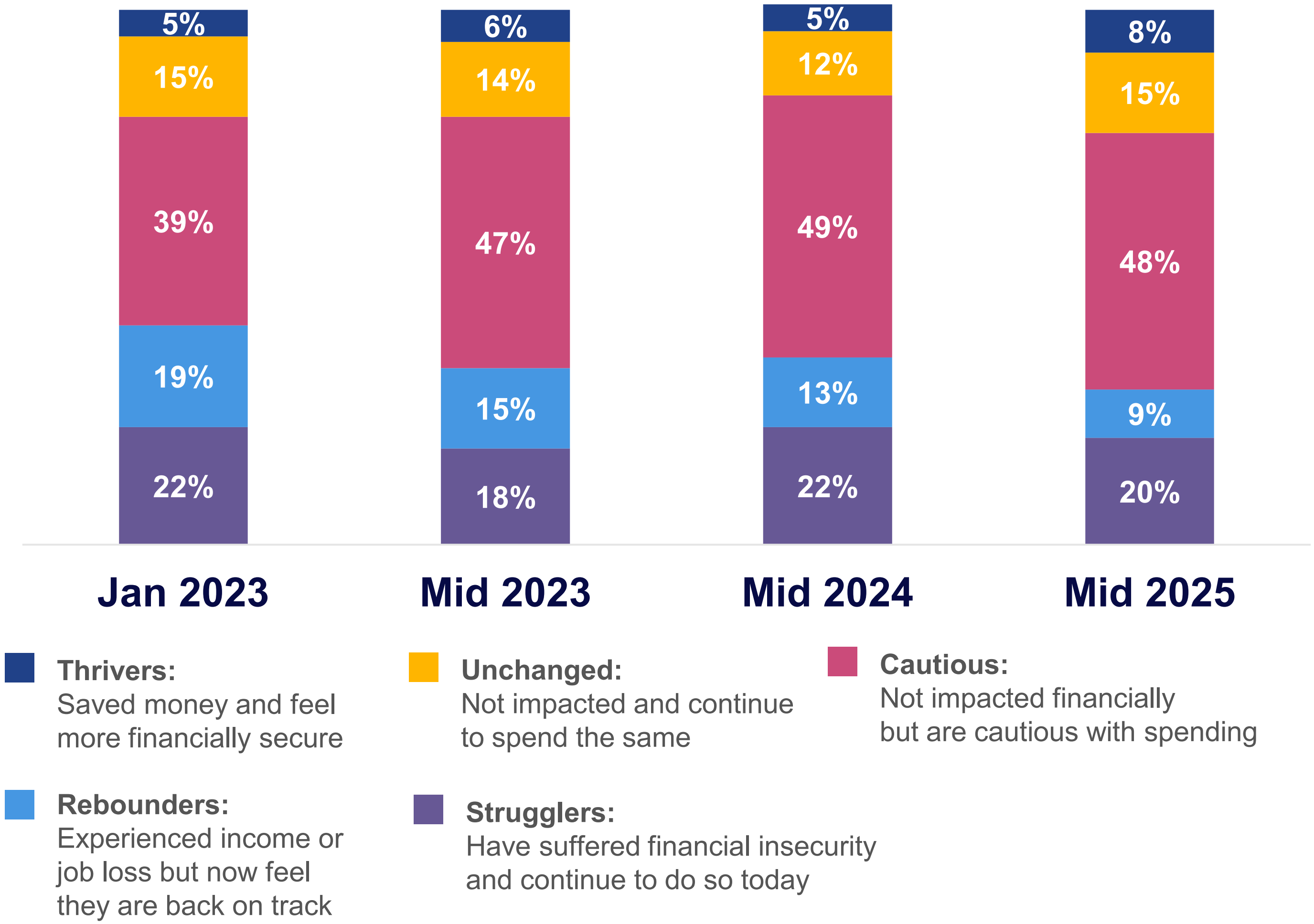
Total CPG: +1.3%

- Growing more than CPG
- Growing/Declining Less than CPG

Source: NIQ RMS, Canada All Channels, 52W PE June 14th, 2025 v YA, EQ Vol % Chg.

The 2025 economic divide

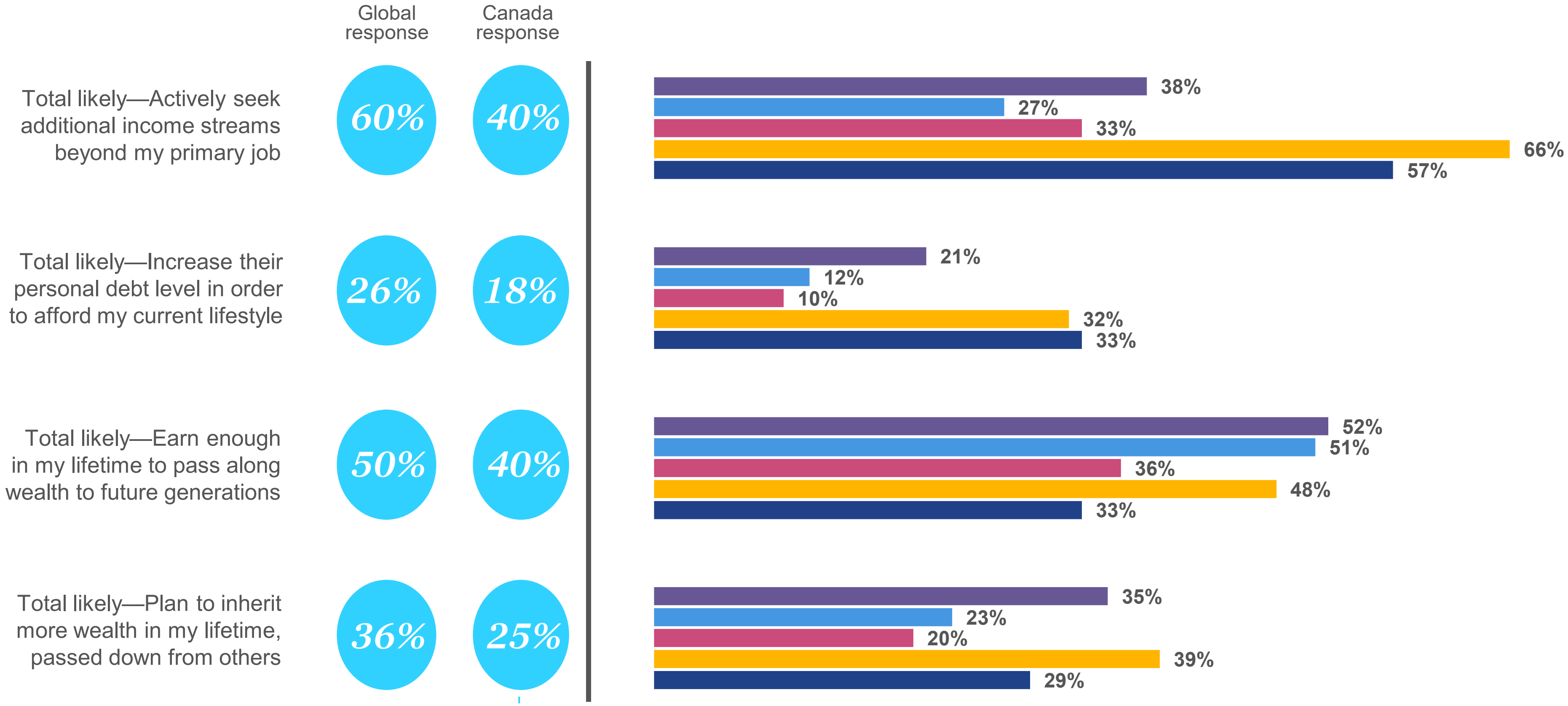
Consumers continue to be more cautious



Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey vs. 2022, 2023, and 2024 Mid-Year Consumer Outlook studies (excludes China).
Q: Which of the following best describes how current events of the last few years have impacted your overall household financial situation?

Canadian consumers lead with cautious optimistic outlook

Consumers continue to hedge their bets with additional streams of income.



- Thrivers
- Unchanged
- Cautious
- Rebounders
- Strugglers

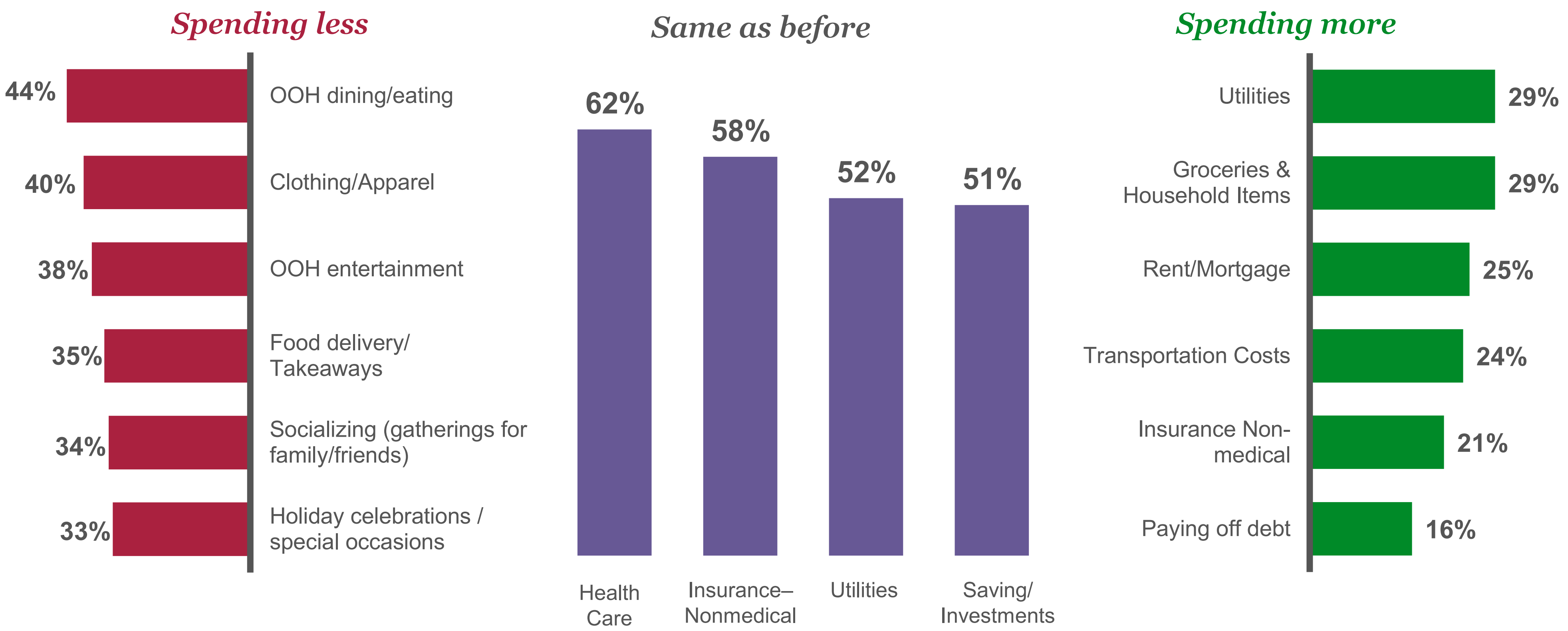
	Canada	Boomers (61+)	Gen X (45-60)	Millennials (29-44)	Gen Z (18-28)
Unlikely	14	10	17	11	17
Neutral	23	20	22	28	22
Likely	15	5	14	21	21

Generational breakdown of survey respondents: *"How likely or unlikely are you to inherit more wealth (passed down from others) in your lifetime?"*

Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey

Consumers to prioritize core expenses including groceries

Spending intentions for the next 12 months

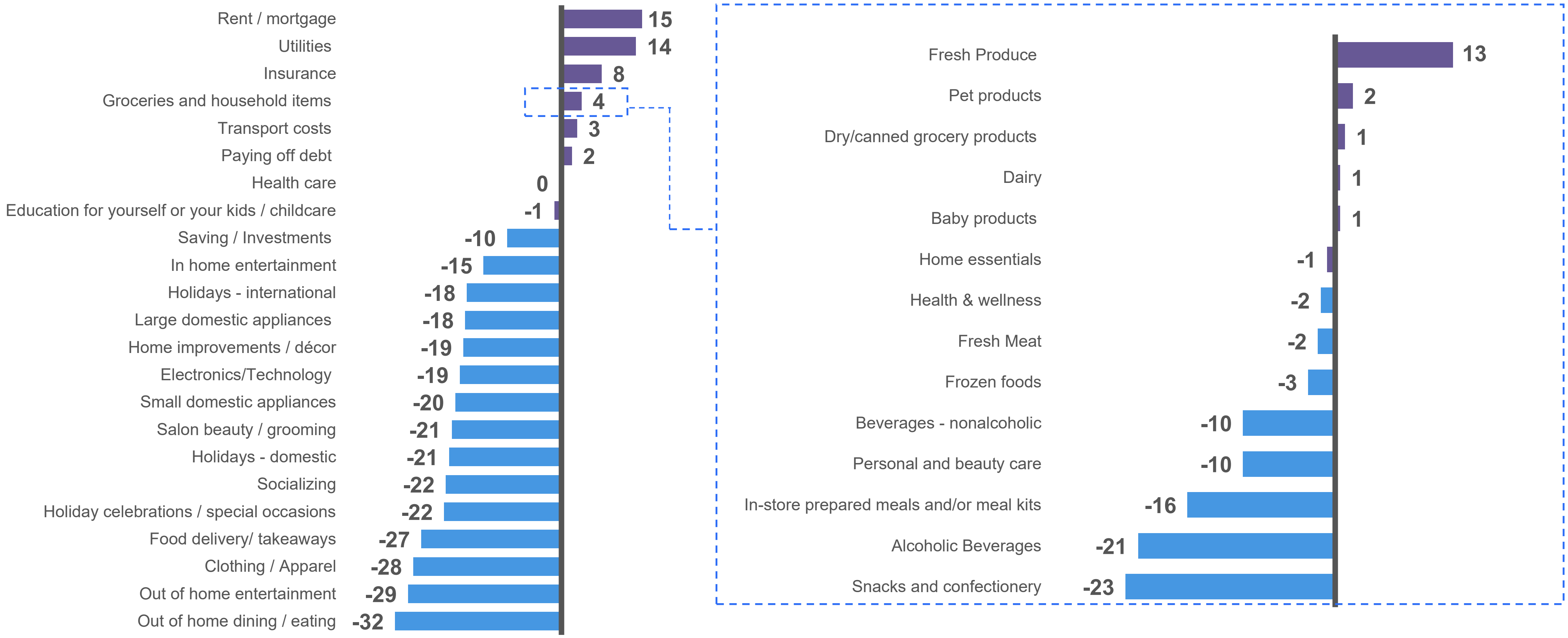


Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey

In 2026, consumers plan to continue prioritizing "non-negotiable" essential expenses

These essentials include Rent/Mortgage, Utilities, Insurance and Groceries.

Change in Spending Intentions: % of respondents intending to spend more net of % of respondents intending to spend less



Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey. Change in spending calculated by subtracting % of respondents who are spending less from % of respondents who are spending more.

Omnishopper data insights *reveal areas of growth*

- In Canada, NIQ's Expanded Omnishopper data proves that **this positive consumer sentiment for Groceries and Household items is impacting spending.** The dollar spend per household per year is up for Health & Beauty products **(+6.7%),** Food **(+2.6%)**, Beverages **(+2.7%)** and Homecare **(+1.9%).**

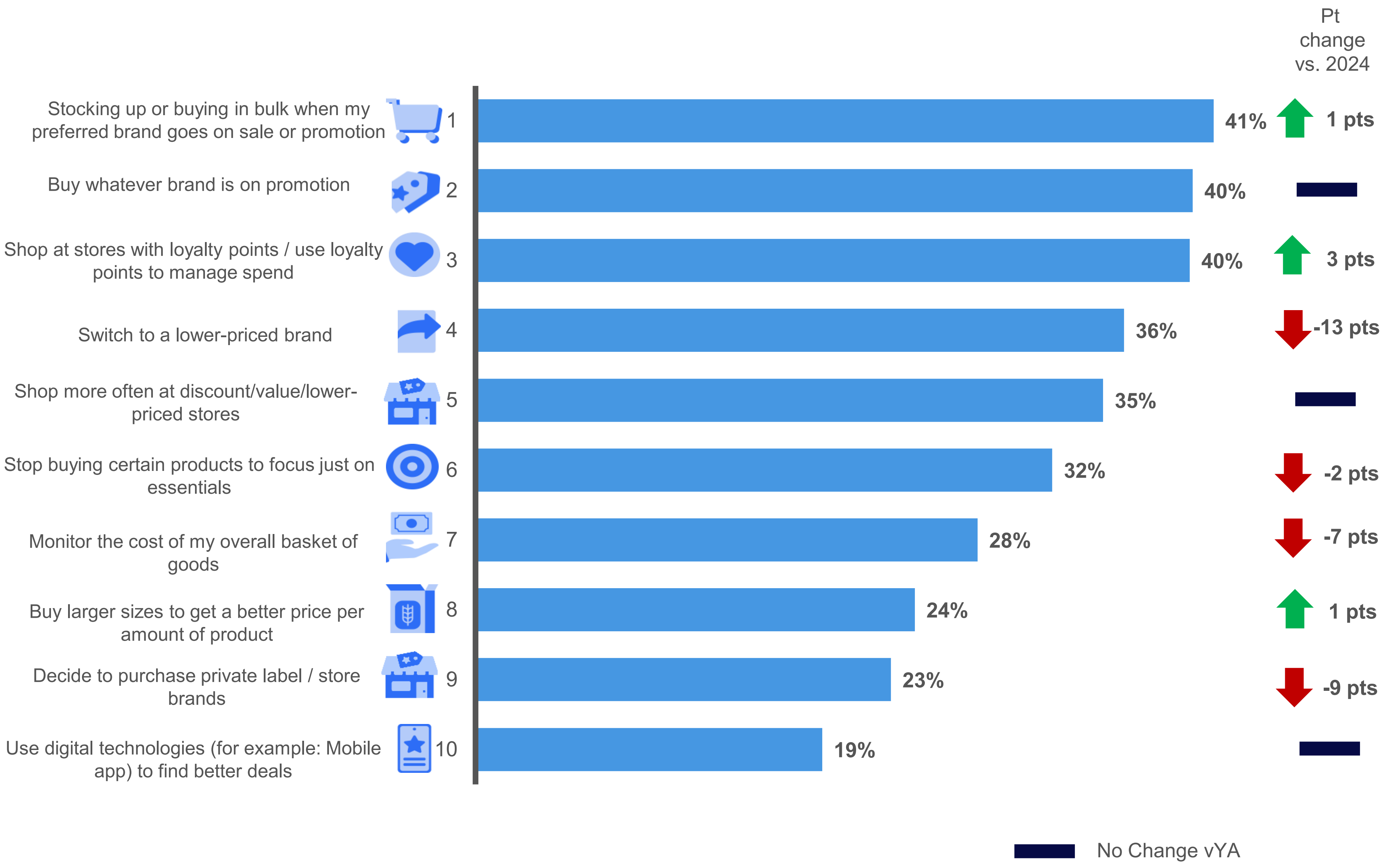
- Health & Beauty products are being purchased more frequently, with shopping occasions per buyer up **4.6%** vs. last year. Food shopping occasions per buyer are up **1.3%.**

- We continue to see an impact of rising prices with spend per trip growing across most major departments, noticeably for Beverages **(+2.4%)**, Health & Beauty **(+2.0%)** and Food **(+1.3%)**, while units per trip decline across all the departments. Units per Trip decline for Food **(-2.4%)**, Health & Beauty **(-2.3%)** and Beverages **(-1.3%).**

- Baby Care remains the lowest spending per household amongst the major departments with buy rate **$216** followed by Pet Care **$479**

Providing value is critical

Top 10 consumer saving strategies for CPG/FMCG: Canadian

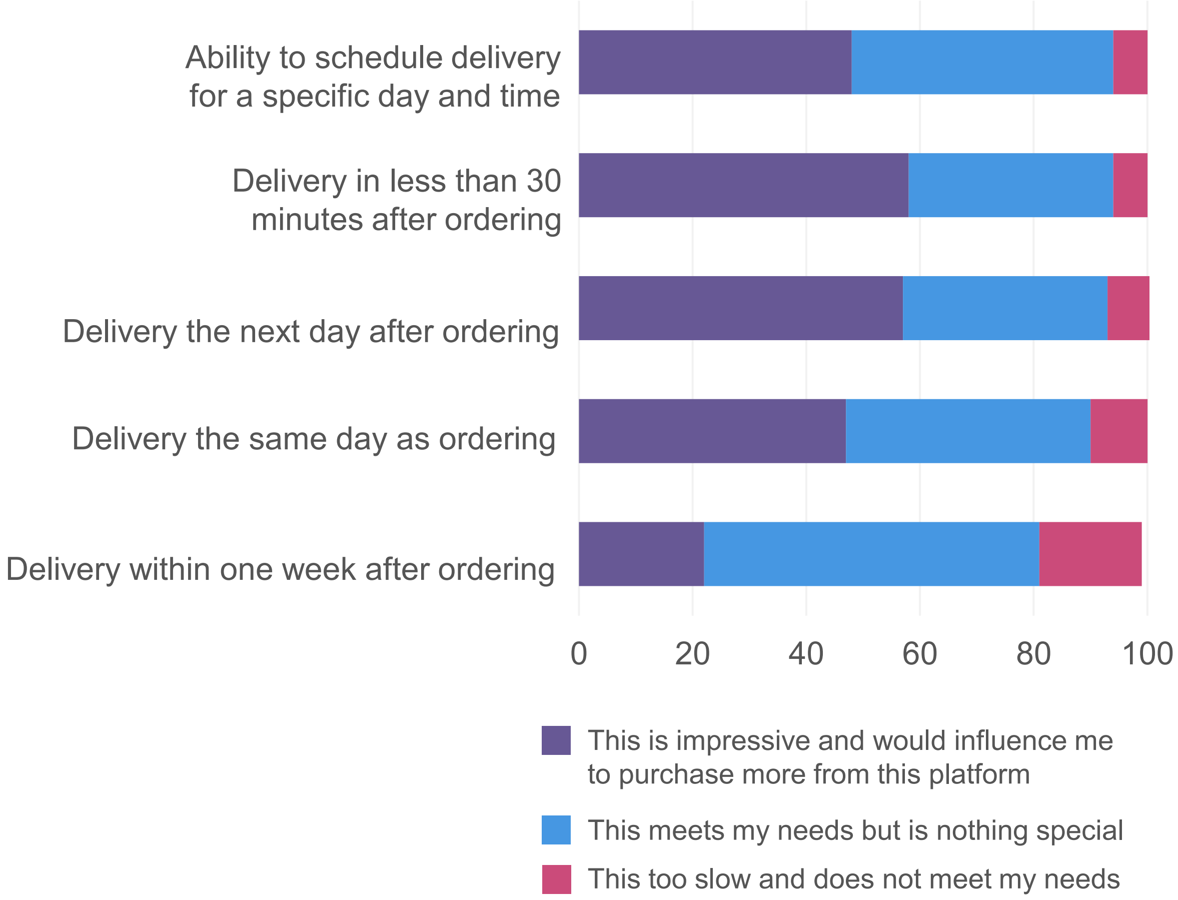


Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey

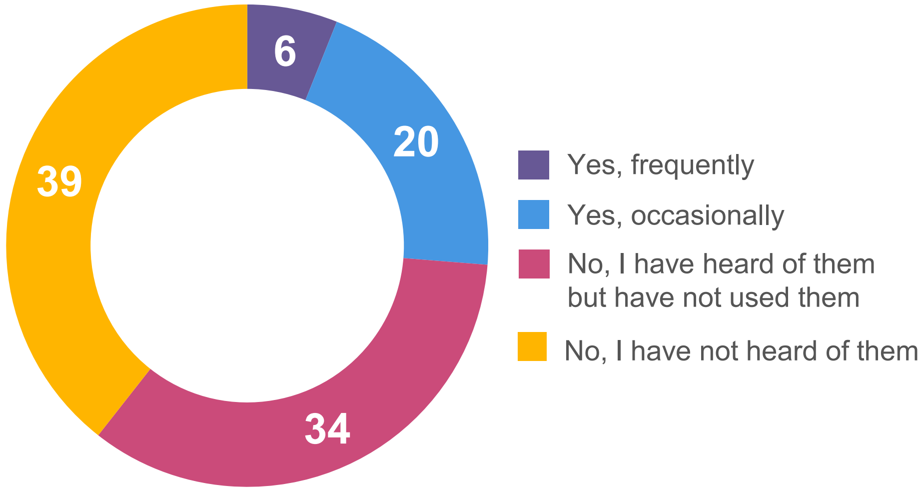
Like global trends delivery time is the new luxury

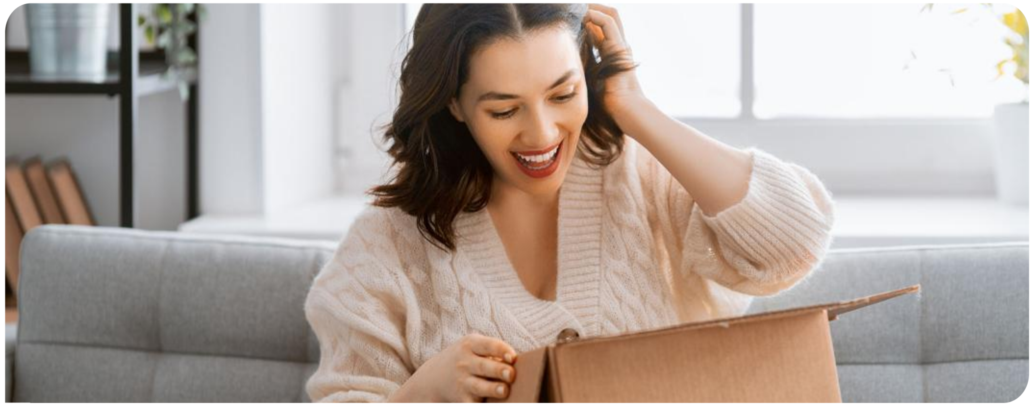
Consumer expectations for delivery times are rapidly evolving. **Anything slower than "next day" delivery would not motivate consumers to purchase**, but there's not much difference in purchase influence between "next day," "same day," or even "30-minute" delivery options.

When purchasing on a digital platform, what are your expectations regarding delivery timing?



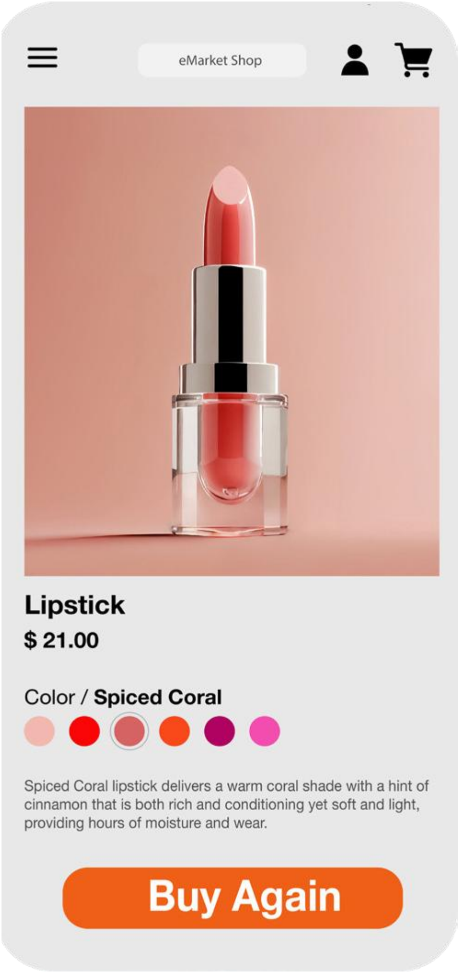
Have you used quick delivery (30 minutes or less) apps?



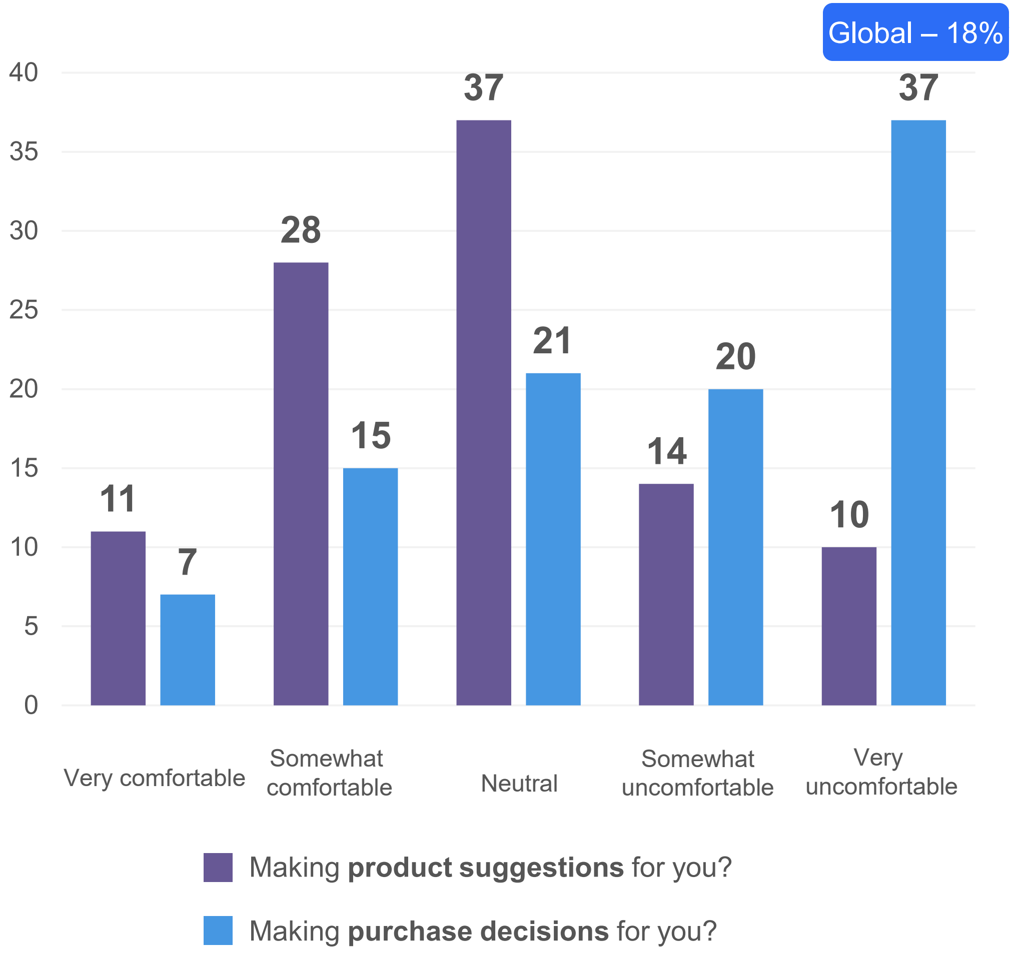


Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey

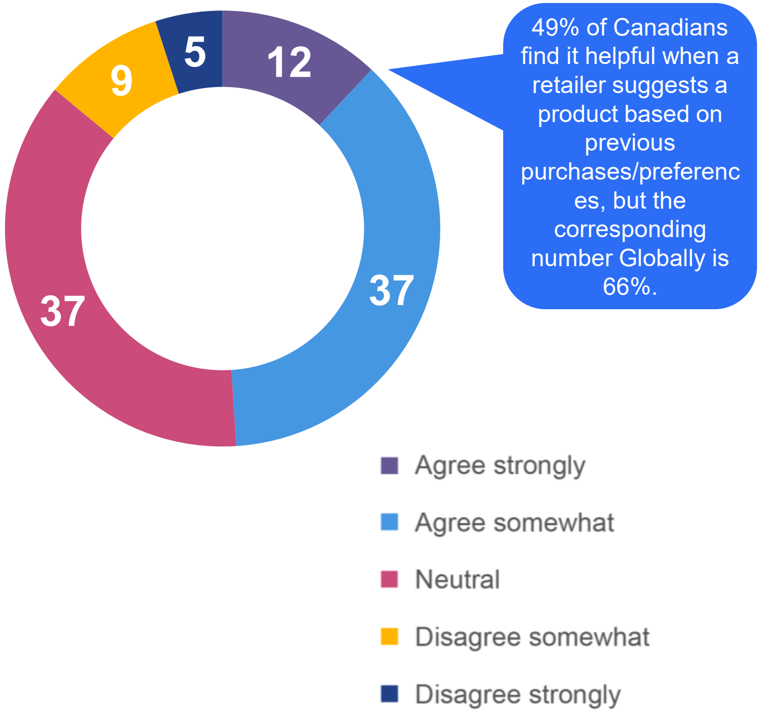
Canadian consumers desire greater autonomy over their purchasing decisions



How comfortable are you with a digital shopping platform doing the following?

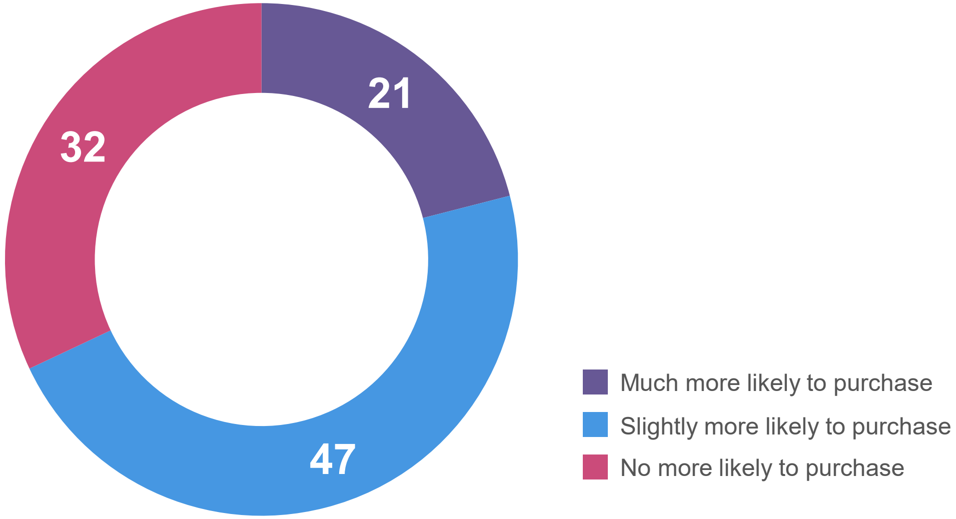


I find it helpful when a retailer suggests products to me based on my previous purchases/preferences



Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey

How much more likely would you be to purchase a product if the retailer made it easy to compare key product attributes?



Key takeaways

- **Despite cooling inflation, consumers remain cautious.** Even households that are financially thriving are seeking "insurance" through secondary income streams, reflecting lingering uncertainty about future stability.
- While mandatory expenses like utilities are no longer expected to keep rising sharply, this is more a sign of consumer fatigue than true relief. **Core expenses remain protected and prioritized.**
- Within CPG, the mood has turned constructive particularly for Health & Beauty and Food & Beverage. NIQ's Expanded Omnishopper data proves that this positive sentiment is lifting household spend across major categories noticeably for Health & Beauty products **(+6.7%),** Food **(+2.6%),** Beverages **(+2.7%)** and Homecare **(+1.9%)**. Health & Beauty products are seeing stronger engagement with more trips. We continue to see an impact of rising prices with spend per trip growing across most major departments while units per trip decline
- Looking forward, the opportunity shifts from price-led growth to volume and occasion-led growth. **Retailers and manufacturers will need to focus on increasing shopping occasions and unit volumes.** Affordability remains critical with consumers looking for promotion and cheaper alternatives: **Consumers want to feel firmly in the driver's seat of their spending decisions**.

Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey

2 Brand trust

95%

of consumers say trusting the brand they are buying from is very or somewhat important

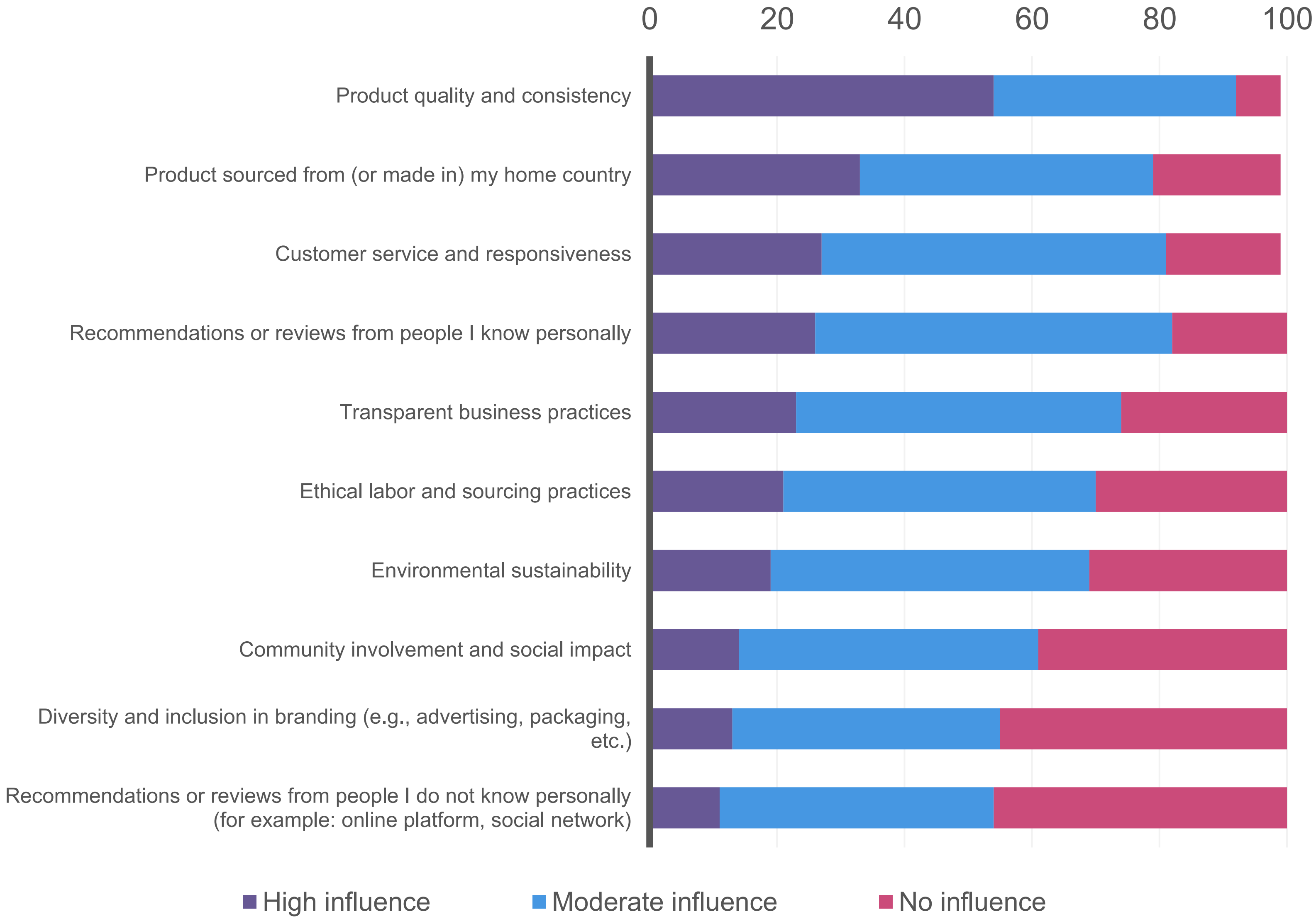
Relevance is valued above rhetoric

- In recent years, consumers demanded brands share their values when it comes to attributes like ethical sourcing and sustainable packaging.
- For 2026, **these values are table stakes**—baseline expectations brands must fulfill to compete—**but they won't win the game**.

To what degree do the following factors influence your trust in a brand?

Today's consumers are seeking lived alignment where **performance earns trust. Functional quality is the biggest factor influencing trust** in Canada. Better-for-you claims, ingredient simplicity, and clean formulations are important, but the product must also meet consumer expectations for quality and consistency.

For the Canadian consumer, Product sourced and made in Canada is the second most influential factor for building trust, trumping diversity and social impact as each of which skewed toward "nice to haves" in our survey.



Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey

Brands must align with consumer values

After the past few years of disruption, there are a few common lifestyle factors, shopping habits, and consumption patterns that can help retailers and manufacturers deliver on what matters most to their consumers.

34%

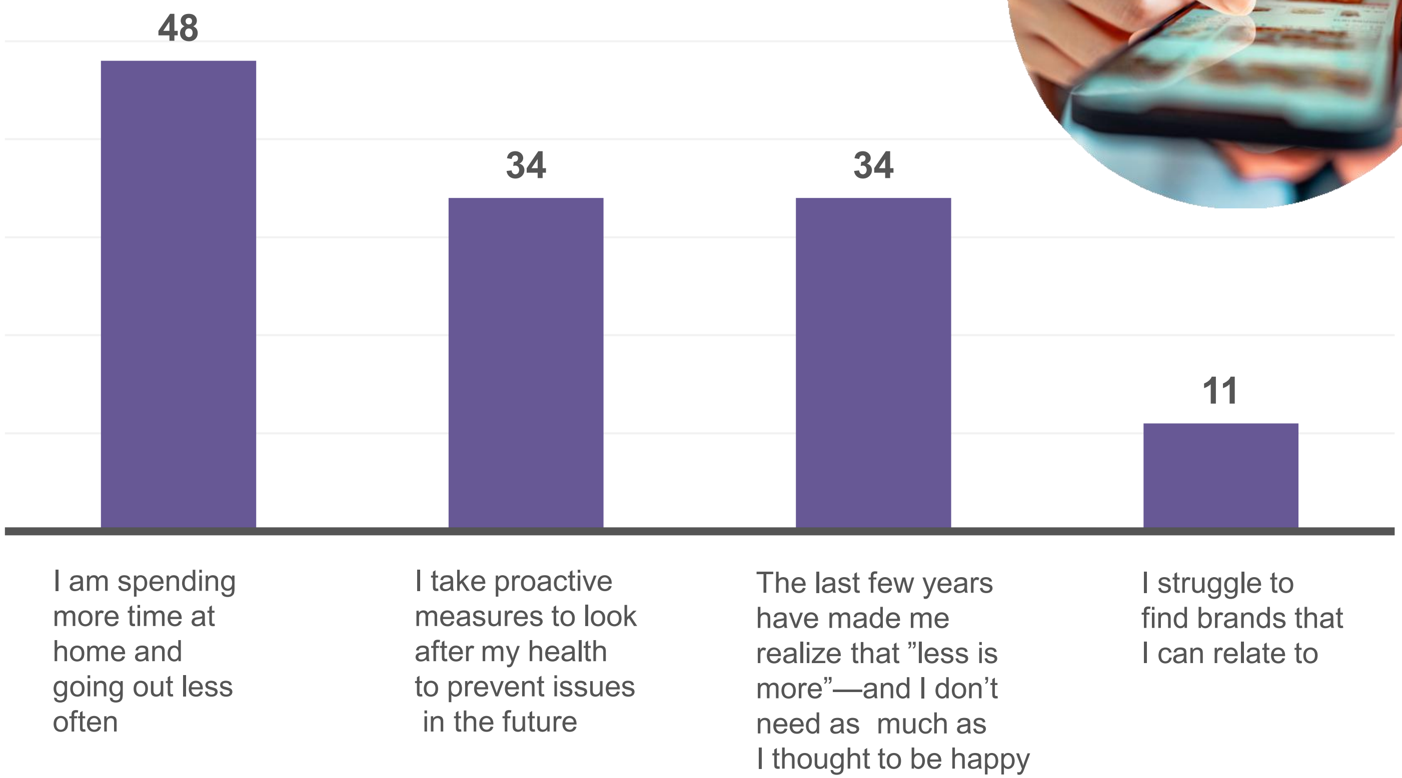
of Canadian consumers say the last few years have made them realize that “less is more”—and that they don’t need as much as they thought to be happy

33%

of global consumers say the last few years have made them realize that “less is more”—and that they don’t need as much as they thought to be happy

Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey

Consumers’ spending intentions are being shaped by shifting lifestyle traits



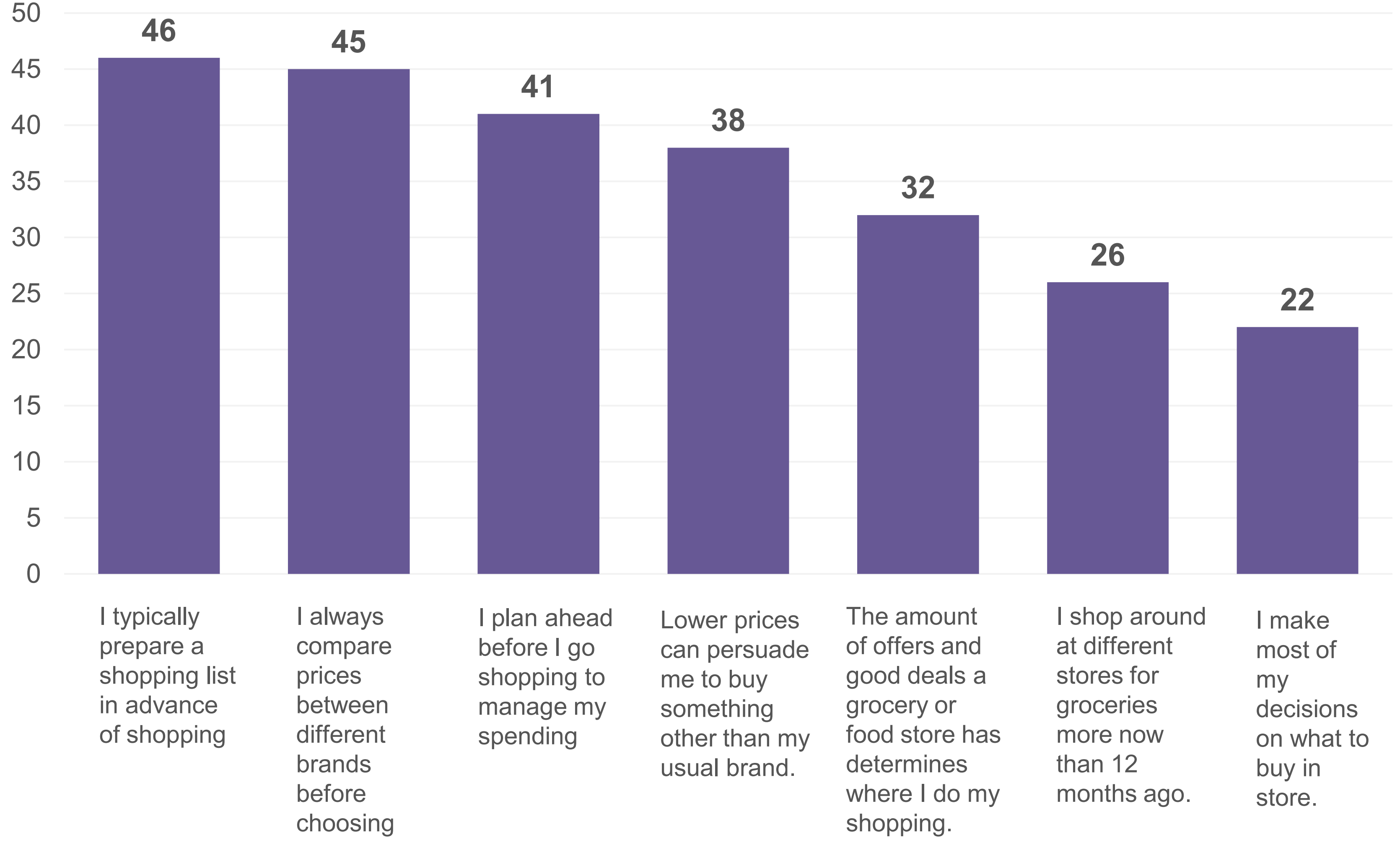
Our survey revealed that Canadian respondents say their lifestyles and priorities have shifted after the events of the last few years, and their mindsets are focused on spending more time at home/going out less (**48%**) and taking proactive measures to prevent health issues (**34%**).

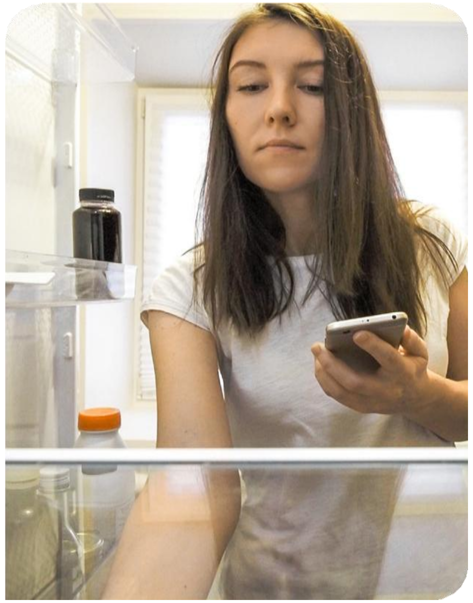
In addition to feeling like less is more, today’s consumer values simplicity, as only **11%** of those surveyed said they struggle to find brands that they can relate to.

Differentiating your brand from the abundance of options on the shelf will be determined by those who find ways to align their products to this new thoughtful outlook.

Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey

Shoppers are likely to know what they're shopping for but are open to multiple brand or store options

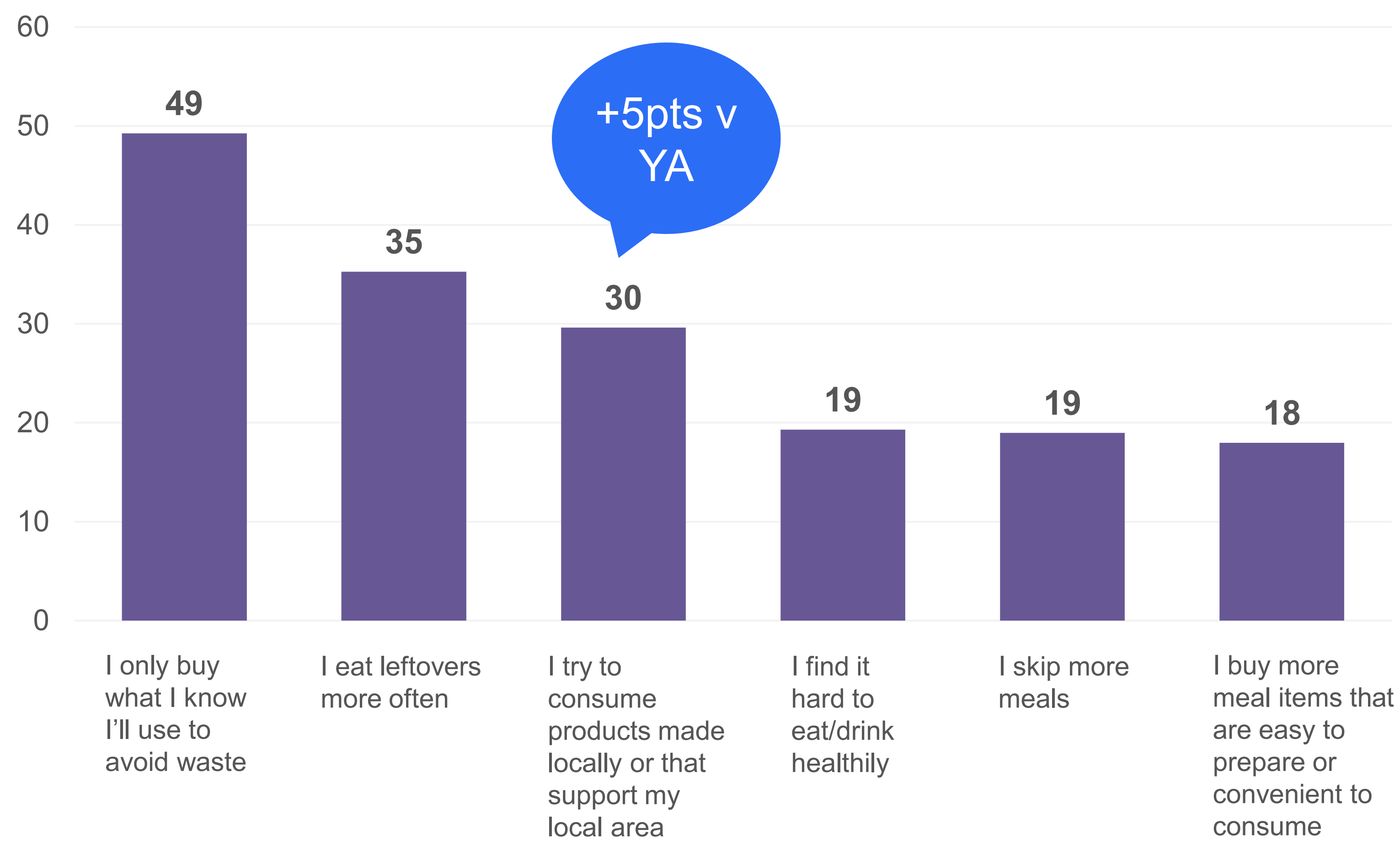


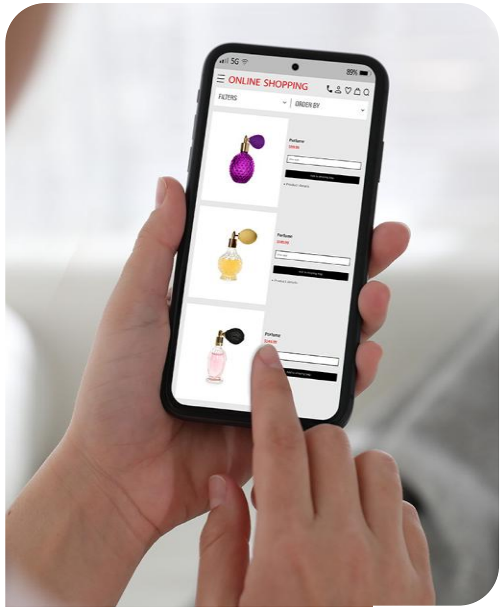


While regular shopping trips aren't immune to impulse purchases, our data shows that many Canadian shoppers at least have a plan in place when they go into a store.

Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey

Consumers are focused on eliminating waste and supporting products made locally





Today's shoppers are more cognizant to their purchasing behaviour and the impact it can have on their communities.

Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey

FMCG product claims impact growth

Product labeling has become essential relative to earning trust and aligning with consumer values.

Canadian shoppers are paying closer attention to what's on the label. Claims like *Natural Ingredients*, *Organic*, *Fat-Free*, and *High in Protein* are seeing strong growth, as consumers seek healthier, more transparent choices.

Labels such as *Made in Canada* are also gaining momentum, reflecting a desire to support local. For brands, this means clear, credible labeling isn't just a nice-to-have—it's a must to earn loyalty in today's market.

Growing Vs YA	
Natural Ingredients	Organic
Natural Positioning	Made in Canada
Fat Free	Contains Protein
Preservative Free	No Added Sugar

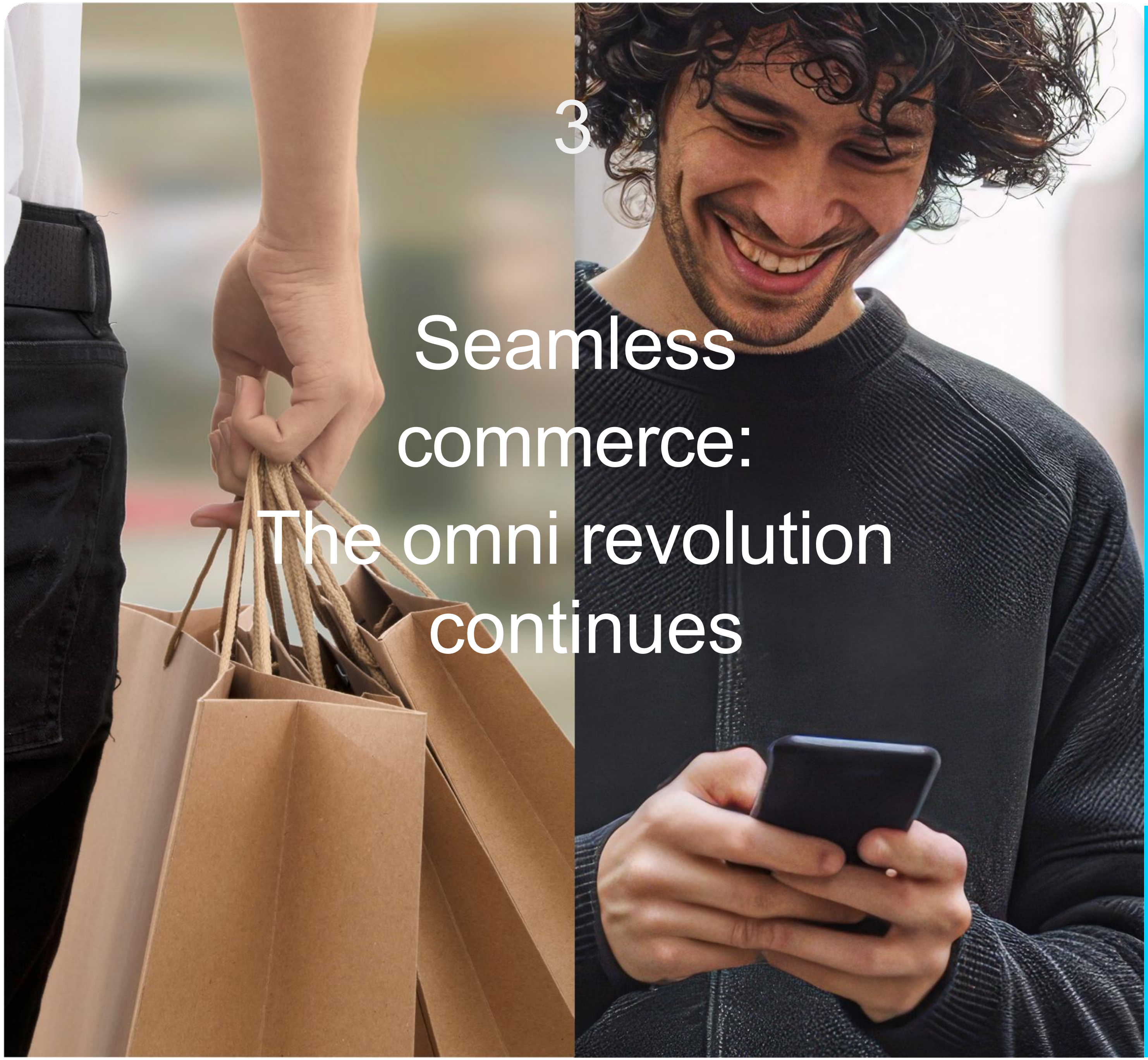
Source: NIQ Omnishopper including NIQ Product Insights product attributes | Year ending June 14th 2025 Vs YA

Key takeaways

- **Canadian Shoppers today are balancing practical needs with values that build trust.**
  The last few years have shifted priorities: Shoppers are prioritizing simplicity, health, and locally made products. That mindset influences how they plan trips, what they put in their baskets, and which brands they purchase for the first time—and which brands they stay loyal to.

- At the same time, shoppers are approaching purchases with more intention. They remain **open to alternatives** if another brand more closely aligns with their values or **offers competitive prices**. This creates opportunity for manufacturers and retailers who can clearly demonstrate quality, value, and alignment with consumer priorities—whether that's via product claims, the right assortment, deal/ promotions or transparent labels.

- Looking ahead, building trust will depend on striking the right balance: matching scale paired with cultural fluency, technology that delivers both efficiency and empathy, and brand promises that map to continually evolving lifestyles. **The companies that earn loyalty will be those that not only adapt to shoppers' changing habits but are also able to prove that they understand what matters most to consumers**.



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Seamless commerce: The omni revolution continues

Digital integration and accessibility

Commerce is undergoing a transformation: **Consumers no longer shop channels; they move across platforms, touchpoints, and moments.** Around the globe, digital tools are revolutionizing CPG baskets. In Canada, we see a growth in social shopping, driven by Facebook shops, but the adaption is slower than Global

Amid this transformation, a new reality is beginning to surface. **Let's look at several critical changes brands must make to compete.**

The transformational power and potential of retail media networks

Brand visibility—and in-store distribution—now depends on paid access and data fluency. Retailers that leverage retail media networks (RMNs), creator commerce, or platform-exclusive SKUs can monetize attention and real estate, in addition to the product.

As retail media investments reach record levels, **retailers and brands will need to focus on not only competitive, but also *collaborative* shopping experiences**. This approach will elevate overall categories and drive incremental revenue for all parties.

+$1.3T
of enterprise value from retail media in US by 2026

for retailers

Boost overall growth potential

Retailers can monetize their platforms by offering premium placements to branded products.

Retailers can simultaneously integrate their private label offerings via RMN promotional campaigns.

Dual promotion of both branded and private label offerings can enhance total category engagement, brand learnings, and growth potential.

for consumers

Personalize shopping experiences and seamless product discovery

Consumers can benefit from tailored recommendations and promotions. Consumers' product discovery process can be enhanced toward both premium and value-driven options.

Optimal conversion on consumer interests is driven by shopping experiences tailored to unique preferences.

for manufacturers

Leverage new data for precision targeting

Consumers can benefit from tailored recommendations and promotions. Consumers' product discovery process can be enhanced toward both premium and value-driven options.

RMNs enable brands to tell their stories and provide exclusive offers, helping to defend market share.

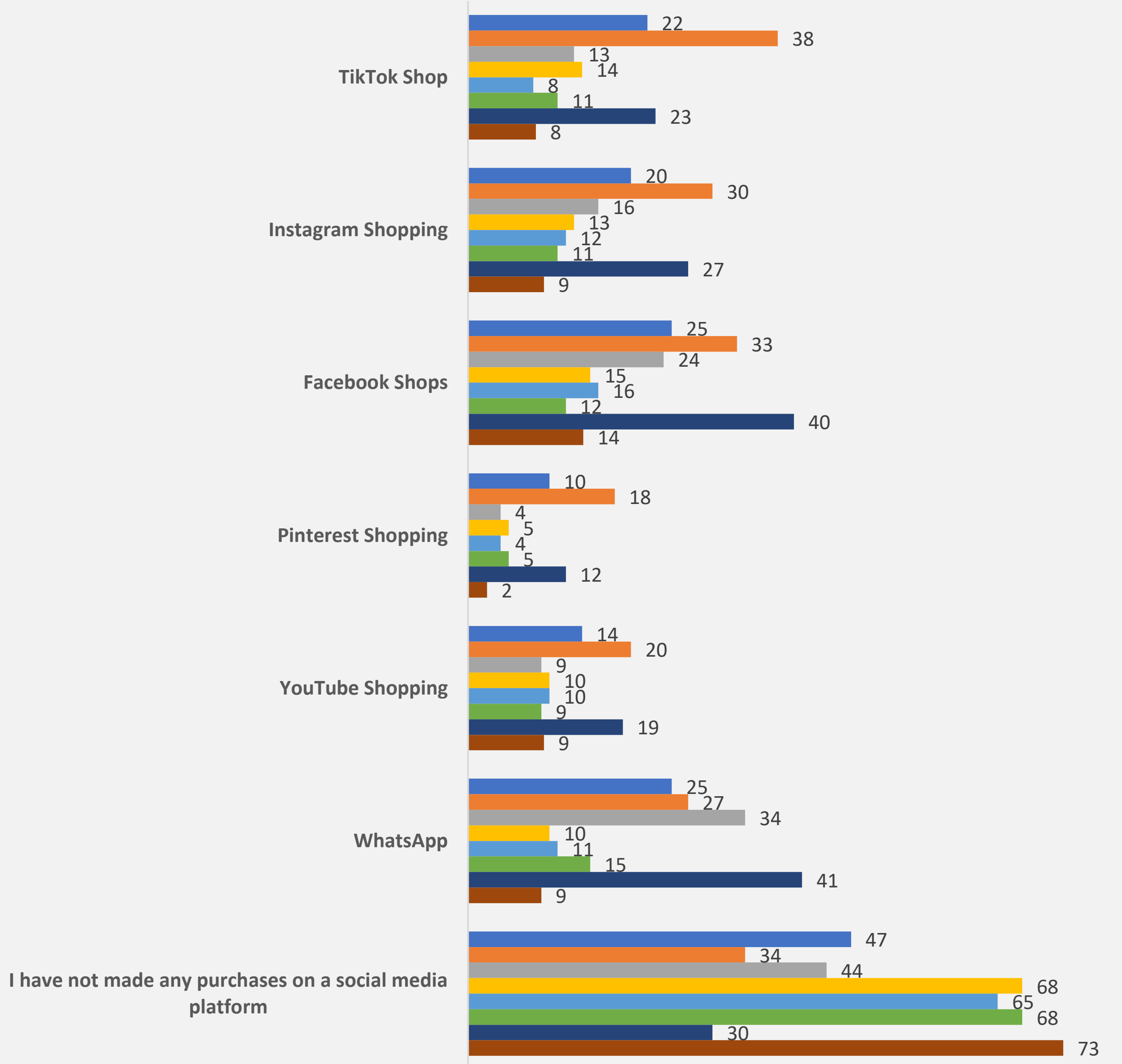
Social shopping is gaining steam but slower in Canada

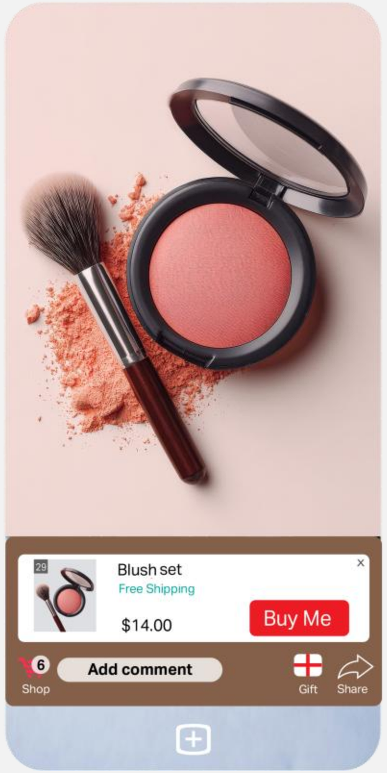
While social shopping adoption is growing globally, led by Asia Pacific (APAC) and Middle East & Africa (MEA), Canada lags other regions with 73% of consumers not having made any purchases on a social media platform.

Facebook Shops is driving social shopping growth in Canada.

A lack of trust in the security of payment information is what typically holds consumers back.

Have you ever purchased a product directly through any of these social media platforms?





Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey

Seamless doesn't mean digital-only

E-commerce may be the fastest growing channel globally, but that's not the full story. For example, in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, growth is accelerating via the integration of local store networks (e.g., Kirana, Spaza shops) with digital platforms.

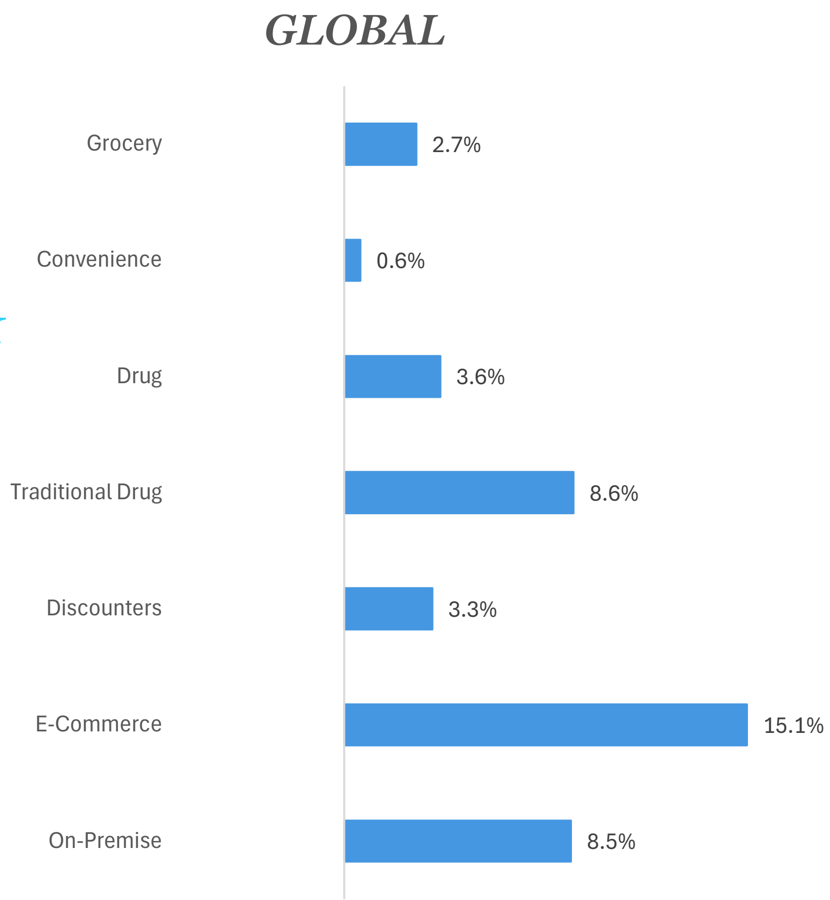
In Canada, Expanded Omnishopper data insights reflect this trend, as online purchases grew at a faster rate than in-store purchases (+11.6% v +7.0%) when compared with last year, but in-store purchases still make up around **83.5%** of FMCG sales.

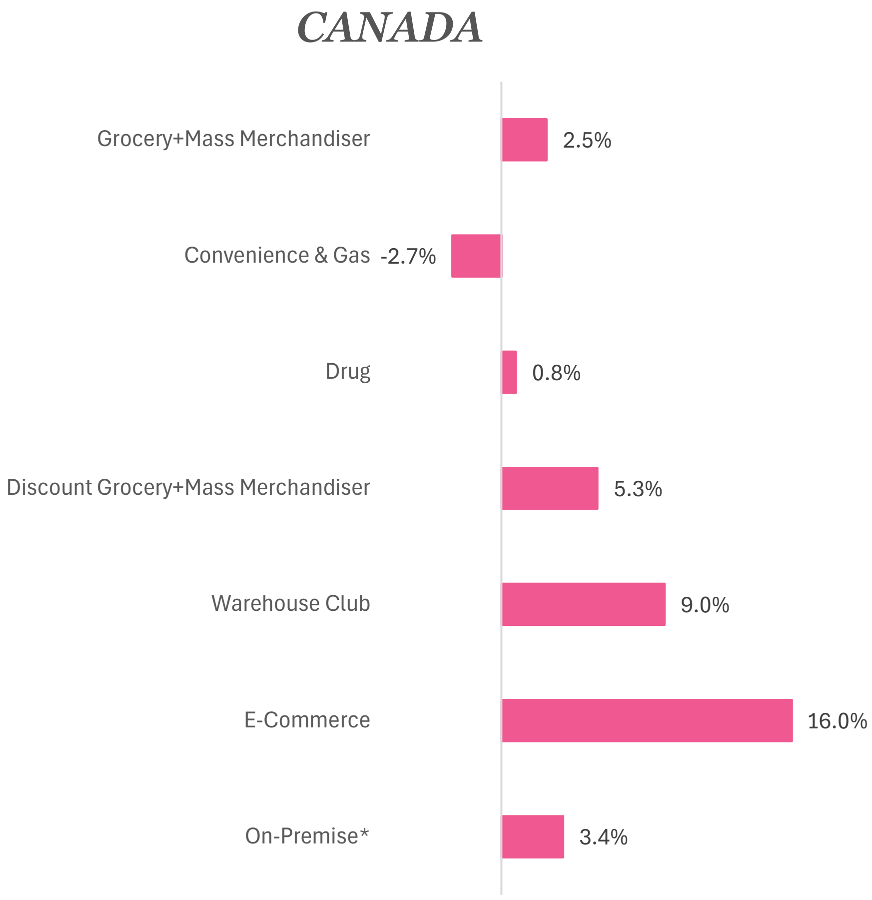
- Source: NIQ Omnishopper, 52W PE June 14h, 2025 v YA

FMCG Channel Value performance

% growth MAT TY v MAT YA

E-commerce is the fastest-growing channel Globally & in Canada, *increasing +15.1% & +16% respectively*





*On-premise Total Beer & Spirits

Source: NielsenIQ RMS FMCG data up to Q1 2025, Modern trade: 35 markets, Hypermarkets: 28 markets, Supermarkets: 34 markets, Small superettes: 25 markets, Convenience: 36 markets, Drug: 47 markets, Traditional trade: 47 markets, Discounters: 15 markets, E-commerce: 30 markets, On-premise: 18 markets, Cash & Carry: 3 markets. New: UK had a market enhancement from Q3 2024 release; Ecuador included from Q3 2024 release; Poland had a market enhancement from Q1 2025.

Key takeaways

- **Commerce continues to shift from structured channels toward seamless journeys**. Shoppers are no longer bound to one path. They move fluidly between social platforms, search engines, messaging apps, RMNs, and stores. Discovery and purchase are increasingly disconnected, which changes how brands must think about visibility and conversion. Retailers themselves are evolving into media platforms, using retail media networks and exclusive digital offerings to monetize both data and shelf space.

- The rise of social commerce adds another layer of change. Platforms like TikTok and WhatsApp are fueling rapid adoption across APAC and LATAM, while Europe and North America follow at a slower but steady pace.

- Yet, despite the growth of digital, in-store remains dominant— **83.5% of FMCG sales still occur offline in Canada, with household spend more than three times higher in physical retail than online**. This balance underscores the importance of scale and presence across formats.

- Looking forward, success will not come from digital acceleration alone. Manufacturers and retailers must capture growth by expanding occasions and building volume both online and in-store, while giving consumers confidence, control, and a sense of simplicity across the journey. **The winners will be those who deliver consistency in a fragmented world, meeting shoppers wherever they choose to engage.**

Lifestyle changes, supply chain volatility, and consumer trust will lead the way to 2026

- The most disruptive signals of change are no longer on the periphery.
- Global brands need to monitor early-adopter shifts that promise to redefine category norms and rewire value perception—particularly across health, climate, and technology.

Trends to watch

The shift to healthier alternatives

- **43%** of Canadian consumers say they're willing to pay more to use healthier options such as low/no sugar, salt, carb, fat, caffeine, and alcohol.
- **>50%** of Canadian consumers are willing to pay more for:
  - *Fresh products without preservatives, and GMO-free/Organic/Natural products*
- **31%** of Canadian consumers are willing to pay more for specific added nutrients (added or fortified with a vitamin, mineral or supplement)

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- Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey

Trends to watch

Commodity volatility *is the new constant*

- In this environment, companies must consider both short-term options—like reducing pack size or raising prices—and longer-term reformulations that reduce ingredient dependency while balancing cost, transparency, and sensory expectations consumers demand.
- Each strategy comes with its own challenges.
- Our tools can help you explore innovation and pricing scenarios to maximize revenue.

Commodity	Price % change July 2023 vs. July 2024	Price % change 2024 vs. 2025
Cocoa	+127.85%	+.067%
Milk	+43.84%	-14.46%
Coffee	+42.71%	+26.88%
Wheat	-26.66%	-3.94%
Soybeans	-26.28%	-7.26%
Sugar	-24.42%	-9.83%

Trends to watch

Private label is *no longer a trade-down*

- With innovation, clean ingredients, and localized trust, private label brands are now competing as first-choice options across North America ***(+13 pts)***, Europe, and LATAM. In fact, private labels are now delivering value growth in most regions—with Western Europe leading the way.
- Private labels grew **+2.9%** in value growth in the MAT in Canada
- Consumers are showing an increase in buying premium store brands as well.
  - *High numbers of respondents in the Poland (**+13** pts), France(**+12** pts), Germany (**+11** pts) and UK (**+10** pts), **Canada (+10 pts)** say they're purchasing more premium store brands than they used to.*
- Real-world examples of large retailers that are doubling down on private label offerings include:
  - *Walmart's "Great Value" brand, Loblaw's "President's Choice & No Name" brands*

- Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey. NIQ RMS, Canada All Channel, 52W PE June 14th, 2025 v YA.

Trends to watch

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is *rewriting discovery and search*

- AI-powered product discovery is becoming the go-to for consumers, though distrust persists in the AI/agentic shopping space.
- As the technology continues to advance, retailers simply can't afford to not properly leverage AI as they attempt to attract, convert, and build lasting brand loyalty with today's global consumer.
- In a consumer-driven environment where values are paramount, generative AI is enabling brands and retailers to build more authentic and enduring customer relationships.

The *stakes are rising* for brands and retailers to *adapt quickly*:

- *Inflated ad costs from AI scrapers and bots cost businesses* **$238.7B** in 2024.
- *Almost* **50%** *of internet traffic is non-human, with "bad bots" comprising nearly one-third of all traffic.*

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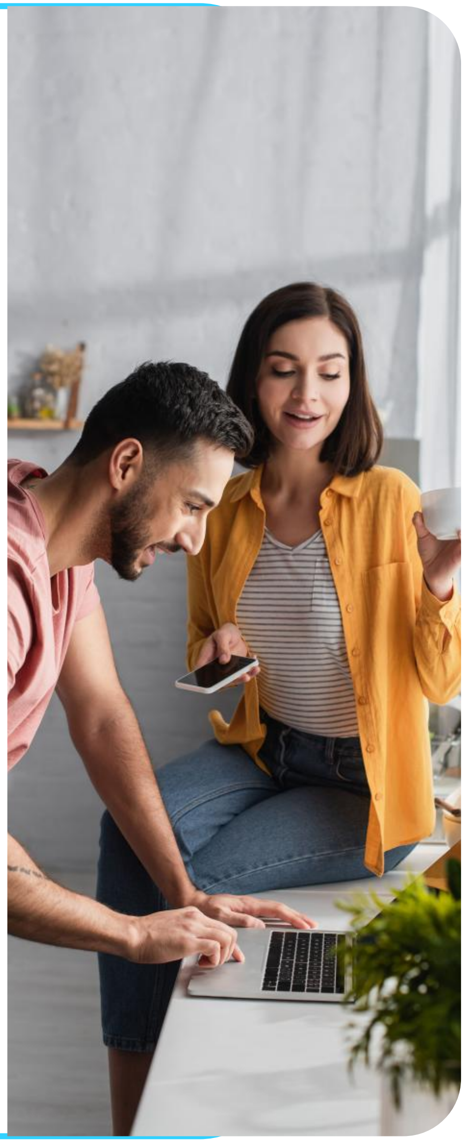
Key takeaways

- **The shift to healthier alternatives is altering not just individual behavior but entire categories**, reducing calorie intake, pulling spend from indulgent and excess-driven products, and creating new demand for functional, portion-controlled, and wellness-oriented solutions. More than half of consumers say they'll pay a premium for fresh, clean, and healthier options, amplifying the effect and accelerating opportunities for brands that can credibly deliver on claims tied to health, naturalness, and metabolic support.

- **Commodity volatility is now an ongoing reality**. Cocoa and coffee prices have surged, while grains and proteins remain unstable, setting higher long-term price floors. This turbulence forces companies to juggle immediate tactics—like pack size changes or price adjustments—while also considering deeper reformulations and innovation to protect margins without eroding consumer trust.

- **Technology is rewriting the path to discovery.** AI-driven search and shopping are upending how products are found and how ads are measured, even as trust in agent-led purchasing remains low. With almost half of internet traffic now non-human and ad spend distorted by bots, the stakes are rising for brands and retailers to adapt quickly.

- **The companies that will win are those that anticipate these disruptions—health shifts, cost shocks, private label competition, and AI disruption—and turn them into engines of innovation, trust, and growth.**



Key takeaways for manufacturers and retailers

- We've covered a lot of ground in this report. Now, it's time to turn insights into action.
- **Here's a quick summary of the key takeaways your brand should focus on to win with consumers in 2026.**

Strategically separate myths *from realities with our key takeaways*

Myth	Reality	Your next steps for 2026
Improved consumer confidence reflects an automatic willingness to spend.	Shoppers' financial realities haven't changed drastically in the last year. Their confidence instead reflects an acceptance of the volatile retail reality.	Brands and retailers must work to understand the product traits desired by consumers and deliver the tangible benefits that simplify shoppers' lives to earn purchases.
Continued growth in private label products proves consumers are still shopping the cheapest option.	Many private label offerings have closed the quality gap and leaned into product innovation to earn a spot within a narrow range of products being considered by consumers.	Brands and private labels should lean on each other to expand the size of the prize and unlock incremental consumer spending with products that offer price, quality, and values in one aligned proposition.
Brands and retailers need to go all-in on e-commerce.	E-commerce is just one piece of the puzzle. Social commerce, quick commerce, retail media networks, e-commerce, and brick-and-mortar shopping are all converging into one ecosystem.	Retailers and manufacturers must be prepared to deliver frictionless, personalized shopping pathways across all channels, rather than putting all their eggs in one basket.
Constant disruption in retail has lowered consumer expectations.	The opposite is true! Consumers are demanding that manufacturers and retailers lean into innovation and technology to solve disruption before it affects them.	What does this look like in action? Think manufacturers who can quickly pivot when commodity prices force reformulation, retailers who can utilize AI to optimize customer service and personalization, and brands that highlight product labeling to serve shoppers on anti-obesity medications. Companies that can find—and capitalize on—opportunities to solve for volatility before it inconveniences their consumers will win.

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Bridging insight to action with NIQ: *The Full View*

State of consumers and economic uncertainty

As opportunity in 2026 shifts from price-led growth to volume and occasion-led growth, retailers and manufacturers will need to focus on increasing shopping occasions and unit volumes while giving consumers emotional reassurance.

Brands and retailers need solutions that allow them to offer fewer, clearer choices that deliver price, quality, and values in one aligned proposition.

Solutions:

- Market Measurement (NIQ MarketTrack)
- Consumer Analytics (CPS OMNI)
- NIQ Syndicated Studies

Brand trust

Today's consumers are seeking lived alignment where performance earns trust. Functional quality is the biggest factor influencing trust in both high-growth and mature markets.

While quality and consistency are the foundation of consumer trust, brands have to dig deeper to connect with the unique shopper values and traits that define that trust from person to person.

Solutions:

- Consumer Analytics (CPS OMNI)
- Brand Equity (CMI)
- Category Shopping Fundamentals (CSF)

NIQ

Bridging insight to action with NIQ: *The Full View*

Seamless commerce

Consumers move across platforms, touchpoints, and moments. Discovery and purchase are increasingly disconnected, which changes how brands must think about visibility and conversion.

Manufacturers and retailers must capture growth by expanding occasions and building volume both online and in-store, while giving consumers confidence, control, and a sense of simplicity across the journey.

Solutions:

- Omnishopper Panel
- Market Measurement (NIQ MarketTrack)
- Amazon S&S
- Digital Shelf

Trends to watch

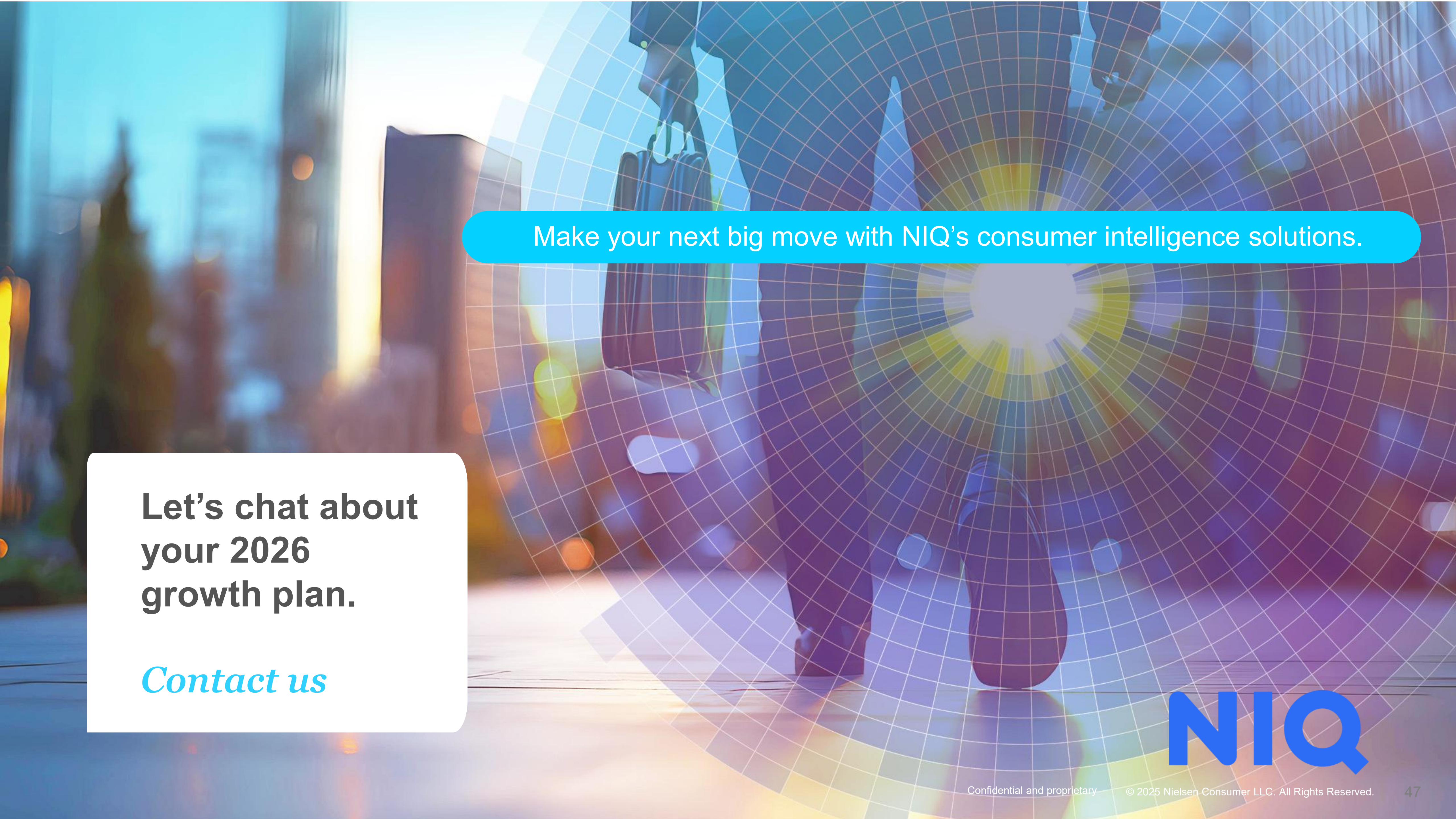
Signals once seen as outliers are quickly becoming mainstream forces reshaping global consumption.

The companies that will win are those that anticipate these disruptions—health shifts, cost shocks, private label competition, and AI disruption—and turn them into engines of innovation, trust, and growth.

Solutions:

- NPI (NielsenIQ Product Insights)
- NIQ Syndicated Studies

NIQ



Make your next big move with NIQ's consumer intelligence solutions.

Let's chat about your 2026 growth plan.

Contact us

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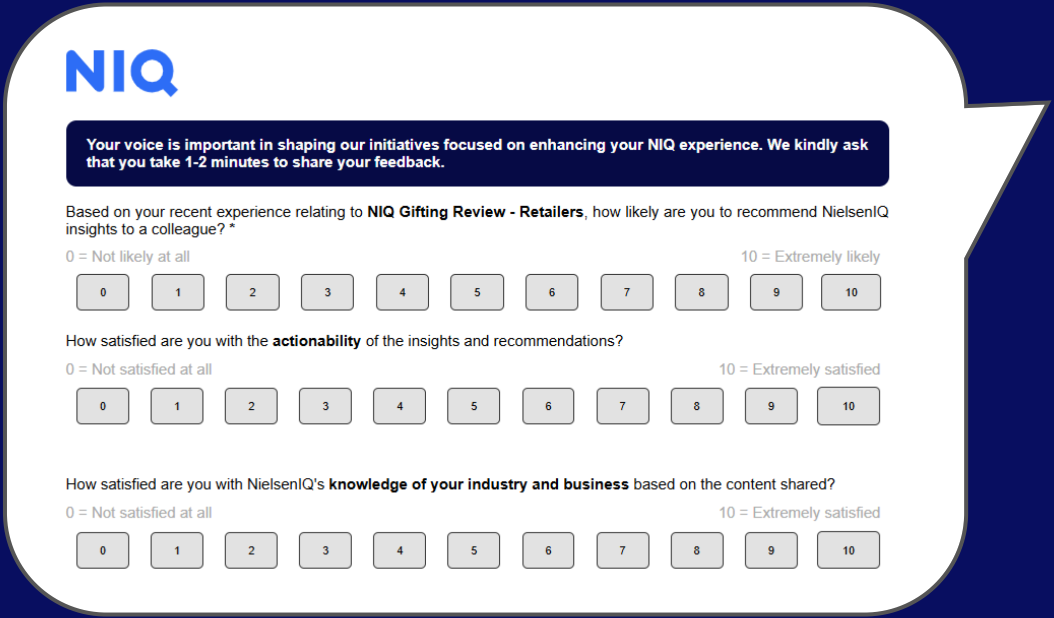
Give us a ***shout-out*** if you like our work!

New format but still easy

*Won't take you more than **1 minute**!*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Your voice is important in shaping our initiatives focused on enhancing your NIQ experience. We kindly ask that you take 1-2 minutes to share your feedback.

Based on your recent experience relating to **NIQ Gifting Review - Retailers**, how likely are you to recommend NielsenIQ insights to a colleague? *

0 = Not likely at all — 10 = Extremely likely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How satisfied are you with the **actionability** of the insights and recommendations?

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0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How satisfied are you with NielsenIQ's **knowledge of your industry and business** based on the content shared?

0 = Not satisfied at all — 10 = Extremely satisfied

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Or click the Survey Link

P.S. How the score is calculated:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6	7 8	9 10
Not Satisfied	**Neutral**	**Satisfied**

Easy tip:

If you like it, give us a 9 or 10!