YouGov

GREAT BRITAIN

The bots and the basket:

AI's role in Black Friday and Cyber Monday 2026

How British shoppers plan to spend, and how AI is changing the way they find a deal.

/Research Reality

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Foreword

Black Friday and Cyber Monday don't reach as many people in Britain as they do in the US – Only 23% of adults say they are likely to shop the sales, and 14% say they are not likely to participate in the sales at all, and those who do plan to shop are cautious about spending. Two in five expect to spend about the same as last year, and almost twice as many expect to spend less (17%) vs. more (9%).

What shoppers find hardest is not the volume of offers but knowing which ones to trust. Working out whether a discount is genuine is the single biggest difficulty shoppers cite, at 47%, ahead of finding the best deal at 38%. Among Gen X and Baby Boomers+, that rises to 58%

AI is starting to play a role here, although Britain sits second from bottom of the 19 markets surveyed for AI shopping use, at 15% of adults. But intent is a different story: 34% of likely BFCM shoppers say they are likely to use an AI tool to navigate this year's sales, up from 19% last year. Shoppers see AI's role in helping them find best prices, compare offers or check whether a discount is genuine, but not to complete the purchase on their behalf.

For retailers and brands, that's where the real opportunity sits, not in letting AI make the purchase, but in giving shoppers something they can actually verify, from accurate product details and honest pricing to recommendations they can trust, while keeping the final decision in their hands.

Sarika Rana
Head of UK Consumer Insights, YouGov

Run a survey Talk to a researcher

Key takeaways

01

Fewer than one in four Britons will shop the sales

Intent skews young: 31% of Gen Z and Millennials expect to shop, against 16% of Gen X and Baby Boomers+. Among those who will shop, nearly twice as many expect to spend less than last year as more.

02

Spotting a genuine discount is the hardest part

Nearly half of likely shoppers (47%) cite it, ahead of finding the best deal (38%), rising to 58% of Gen X and Baby Boomers+. It is also the third most welcome AI task (30%).

03

Britain lags on AI shopping, but intent is rising

One in seven British adults (15%) have used AI to shop, rising to 28% among likely BFCM shoppers. Planned use for this year's sales stands at 34%, up from 19% in last year's survey.

04

AI is trusted to find a deal, not to close one

Two in five (40%) would let AI find the best price; 5% would let it complete a purchase. As a deal finder AI trails every other channel at 47%, against 82% for checking retailer sites.

Why YouGov?

YouGov is a market research and analytics company powered by reality: insight from real people, captured in real time, built to hold up when decisions matter. Because quality is easy to claim and hard to prove, we don't just publish data, we stand behind it: an owned, highly engaged panel, rigorous quality controls, and technology that strengthens the human response instead of distorting it.

Real people

Highly engaged panel members share true reflections of their reality rooted in an ongoing relationship, not one-off transactions.

Accurate data

Data you can trust with confidence. Designed for representativeness, integrity and accuracy, and backed by a system built to prove it.

Pioneering tech & AI

Always-on technology that strengthens real-world insight keeping the data clean, scaling analysis, and avoiding the distortions that come from weak inputs.

Award-winning experts

Research experts who turn robust data into usable decisions tailoring delivery, interpreting change, and making insights actionable in the real world.

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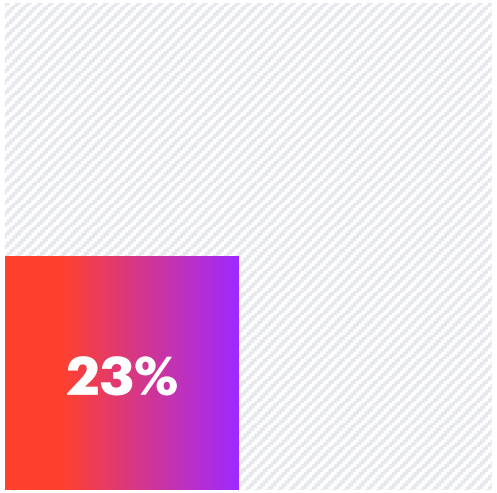
Assessing the appetite for Black Friday and Cyber Monday in 2026

Younger Britons lead BFCM shopping intent

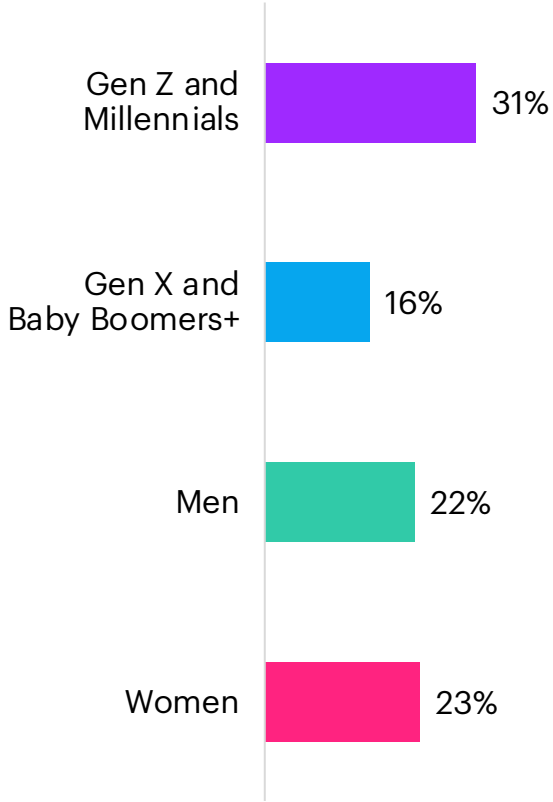
Just under a quarter of British adults (23%) say they are likely to shop during Black Friday or Cyber Monday. Intent is concentrated among younger consumers: 31% of Gen Z and Millennials, against 16% of Gen X and Baby Boomers+.

Men and women are equally likely to expect to shop (22% and 23%).

How likely are you to make purchases during Black Friday or Cyber Monday? Answered "very likely" or "somewhat likely" (British adults)



of **British adults** is likely to shop during Black Friday or Cyber Monday



YouGov Surveys, July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026. British adults n> 2,000, Gen Z and Millennials n> 900, Gen X and Baby Boomers+ n> 1,100, men n> 950, women n> 1,000.

Who are Britain's BFCM shoppers?

Male: 48%
Female: 52%

Same as 48% male, 52% female of all adults

28%
are Gen Z

Compared with 16% of all adults

28%
have used AI tools for shopping (e.g. research or completing a purchase)

Compared with 15% of all adults

23%
of British adults are BFCM shoppers

£208
Expected mean spend

YouGov Surveys, July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026. BFCM shoppers n> 450. British adults n> 2,000.
Spend was collected in bands; expected mean spend are estimated using band midpoints (closed bands = midpoint, "Less than £50" = 0.75 × upper bound, "£2,500 or more" = 1.25 × lower bound).
Mean= £208, median= £175.

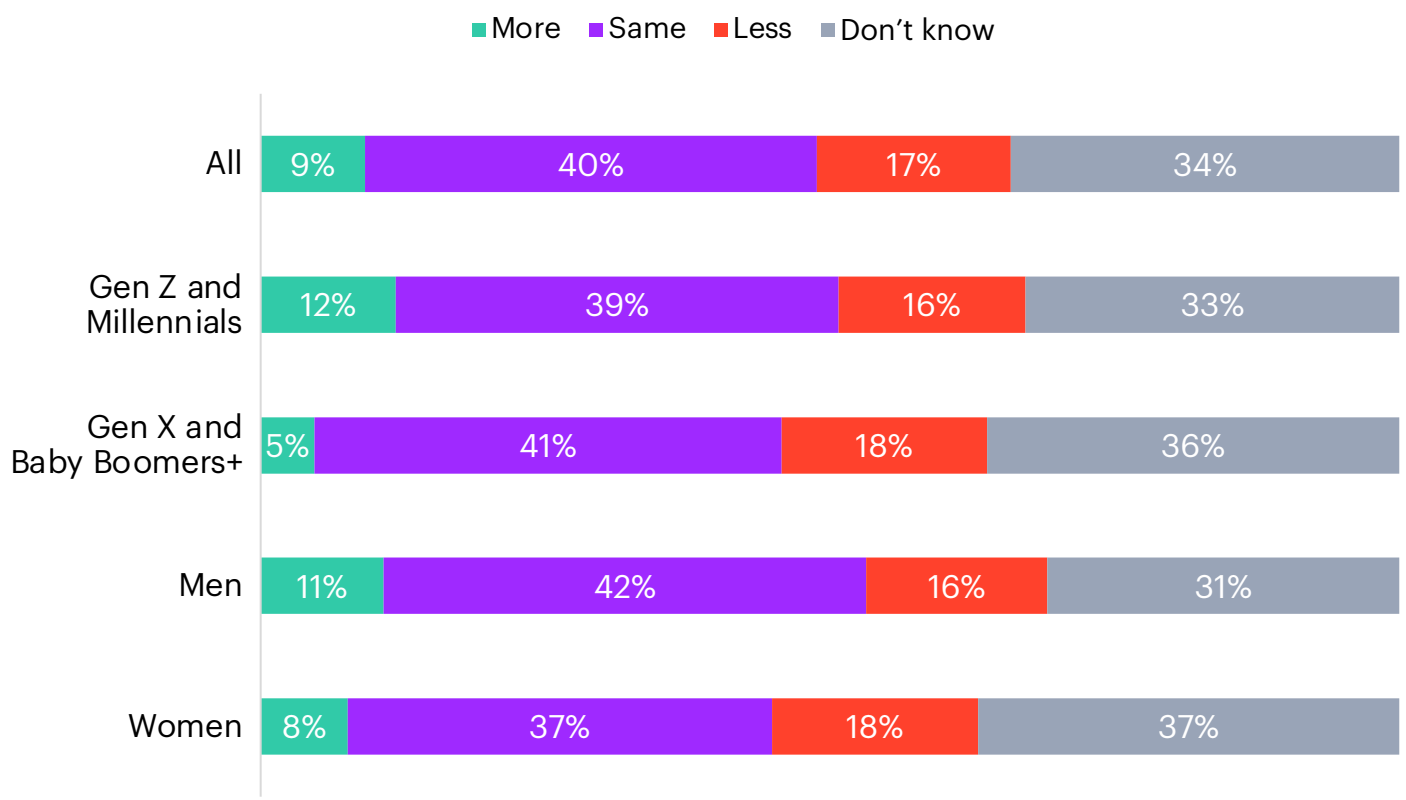
Spending is most likely to hold at last year's levels, with more shoppers cutting back than increasing

Two in five likely shoppers (40%) expect to spend about the same as last year. More expect to spend less (17%) than more (9%).

Gen Z and Millennials are more likely than Gen X and Baby Boomers+ to expect to spend more (12% vs. 5%).

About a third of likely shoppers (34%) don't yet know how much they'll spend.

Compared with last year, how much do you expect to spend during BFCM? (likely BFCM shoppers)



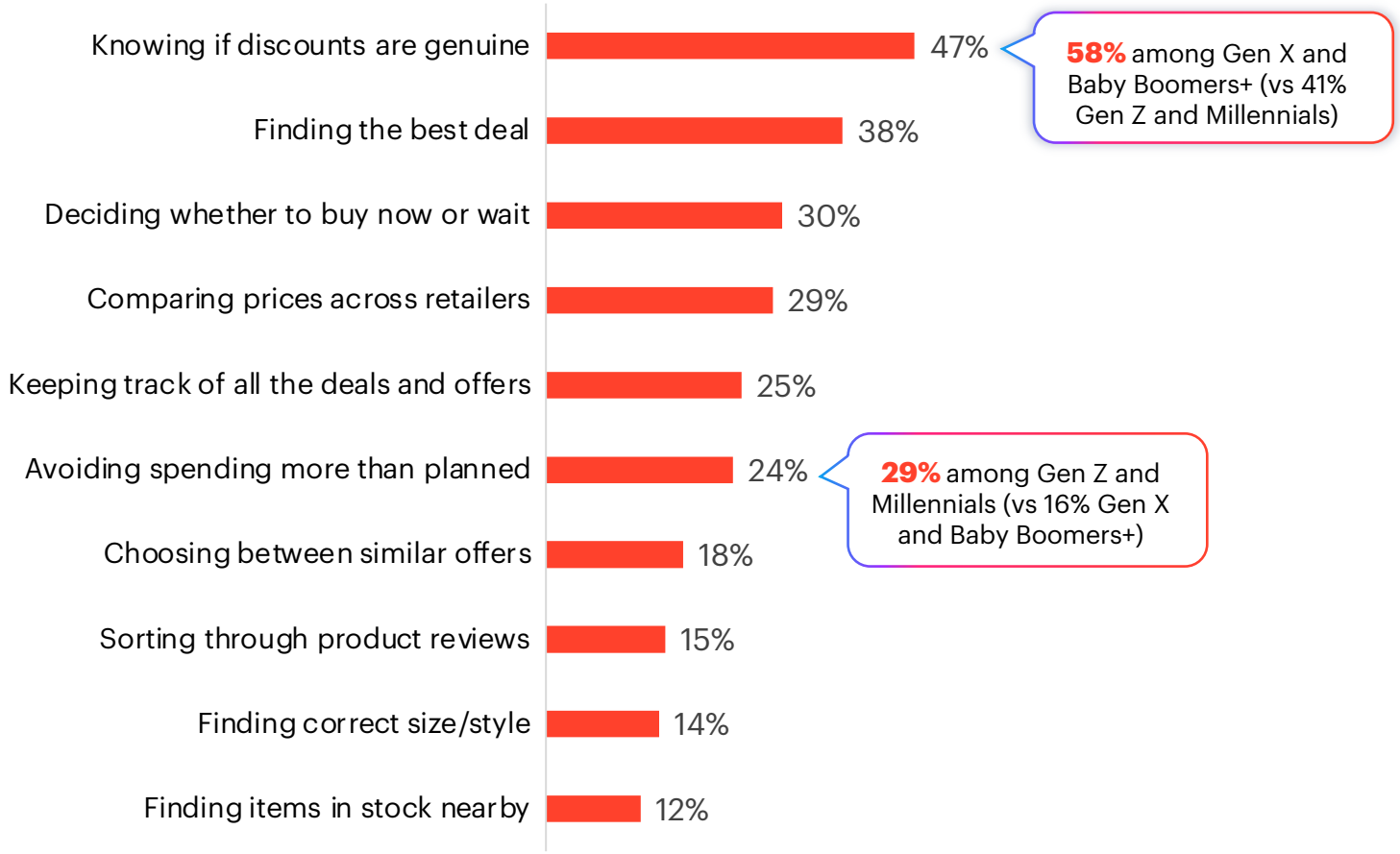
YouGov Surveys, July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026. BFCM shoppers n> 450, Gen Z and Millennials n> 250, Gen X and Baby Boomers+ n> 150, men n> 200, women n> 200. Responses rebased by excluding "Not applicable" option.

For British shoppers the problem is credibility, not choice

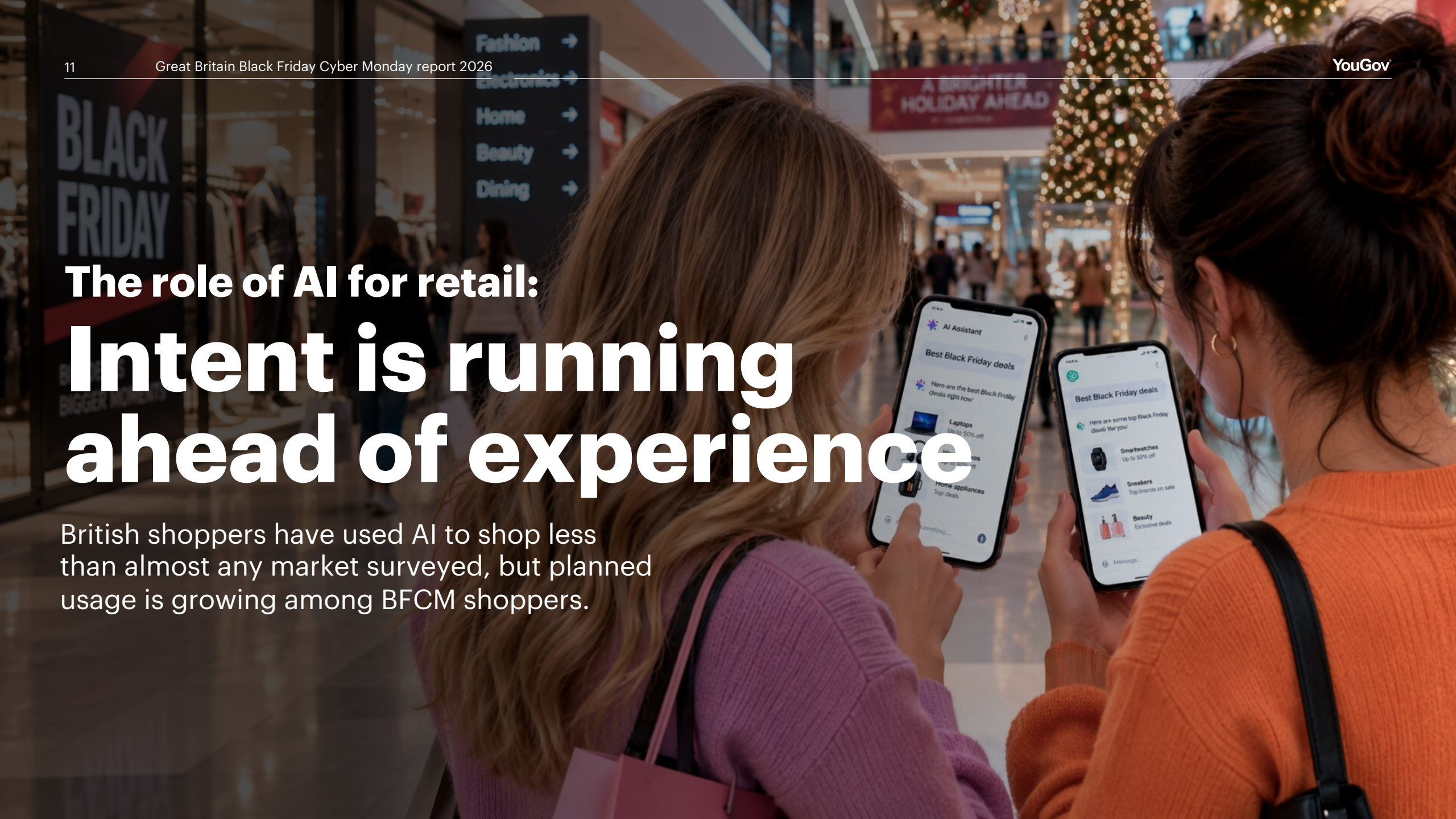
Knowing whether a discount is genuine is the most commonly cited difficulty among likely BFCM shoppers, at 47%, which is nine points clear of finding the best deal (38%). Deciding whether to buy now or wait (30%) and comparing prices across retailers (29%) follow.

Scepticism rises with age: 58% of Gen X and Baby Boomers+ find it hard to tell whether a discount is genuine, against 41% of Gen Z and Millennials. Younger shoppers are more likely to see avoiding overspending (29% vs. 16%) as a challenge.

Which aspects of shopping during BFCM do you find difficult? (likely BFCM shoppers)



YouGov Surveys, July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026. BFCM shoppers n> 450, Gen Z and Millennials n> 250, Gen X and Baby Boomers+ n> 150. “None of these” and “Don’t know” responses not shown.



The role of AI for retail:

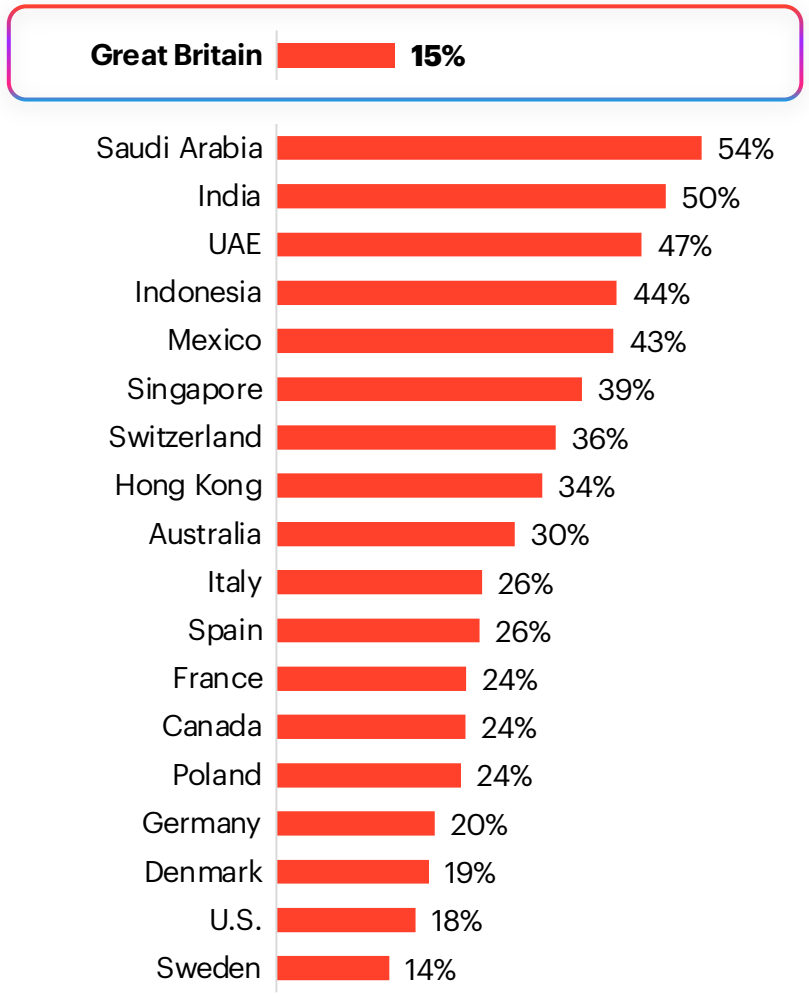
Intent is running ahead of experience

British shoppers have used AI to shop less than almost any market surveyed, but planned usage is growing among BFCM shoppers.

AI tools and shopping: Great Britain lags (15%)

AI tool usage for shopping splits sharply by market: around half of adults in Saudi Arabia and India have used AI to shop. Great Britain, at 15%, is second from bottom of the 19 markets surveyed, ahead only of Sweden.

Which, if any, of the following best describes your experience using AI tools when shopping? Answered "I have used AI tools to help me shop" (adults)

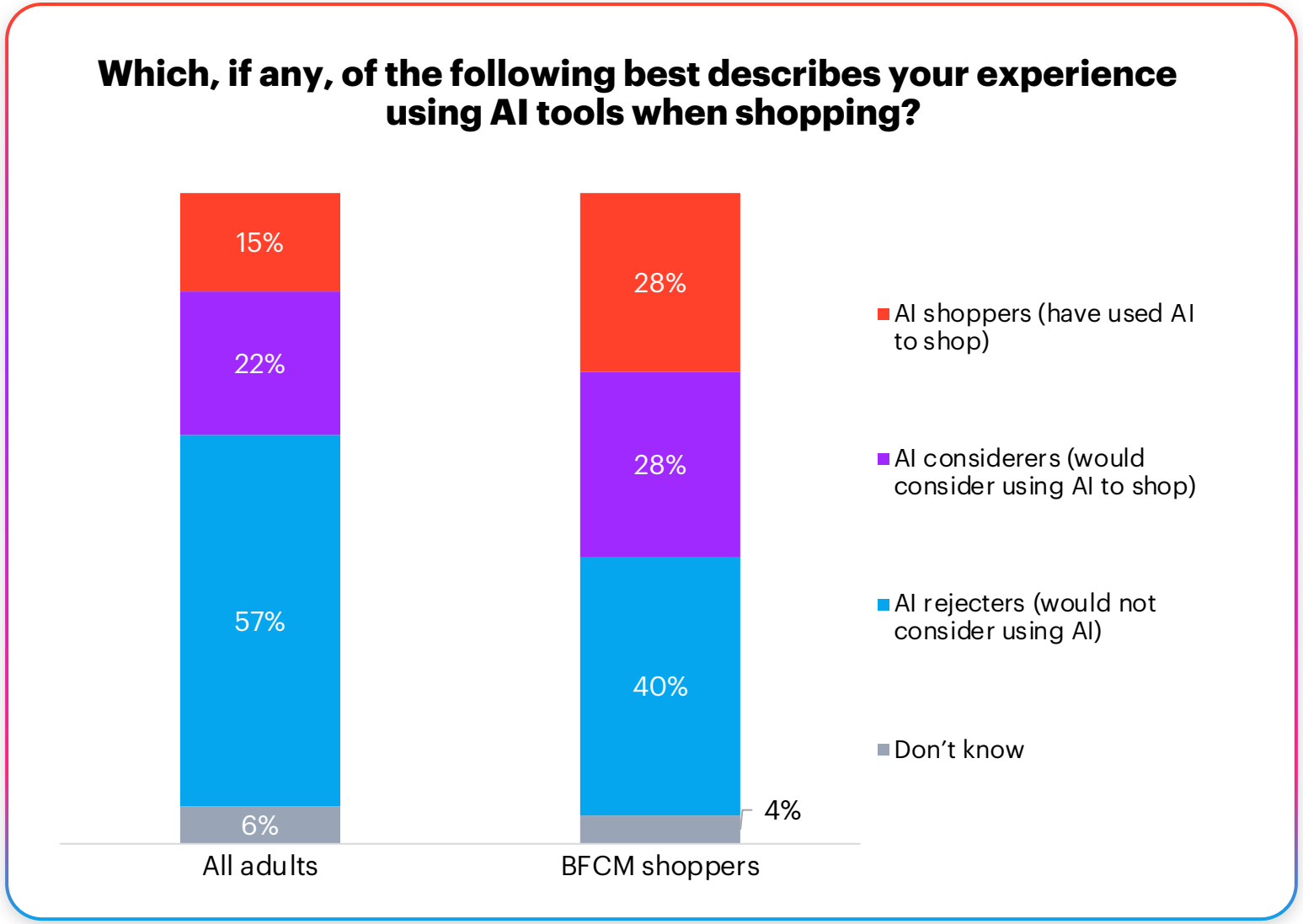


YouGov Surveys, July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026. Great Britain n> 2,000, Hong Kong n> 450, U.S. n> 1,400, rest of the markets n> 950 each. % respondents selecting "I have used AI tools to help me shop, including anything from telling me about products to completing a purchase" to question: Which, if any, of the following best describes your experience using AI tools when shopping?

More than a third of Britons are open to AI shopping and BFCM shoppers more so

More than a third of British adults are already using AI to shop or open to it: 15% already use AI to shop, and another 22% haven't yet but would consider it.

That openness runs even higher among likely BFCM shoppers: 28% already use AI to shop and a further 28% would consider it, so more than half are already in or open to it. Four in 10 wouldn't consider it at all.



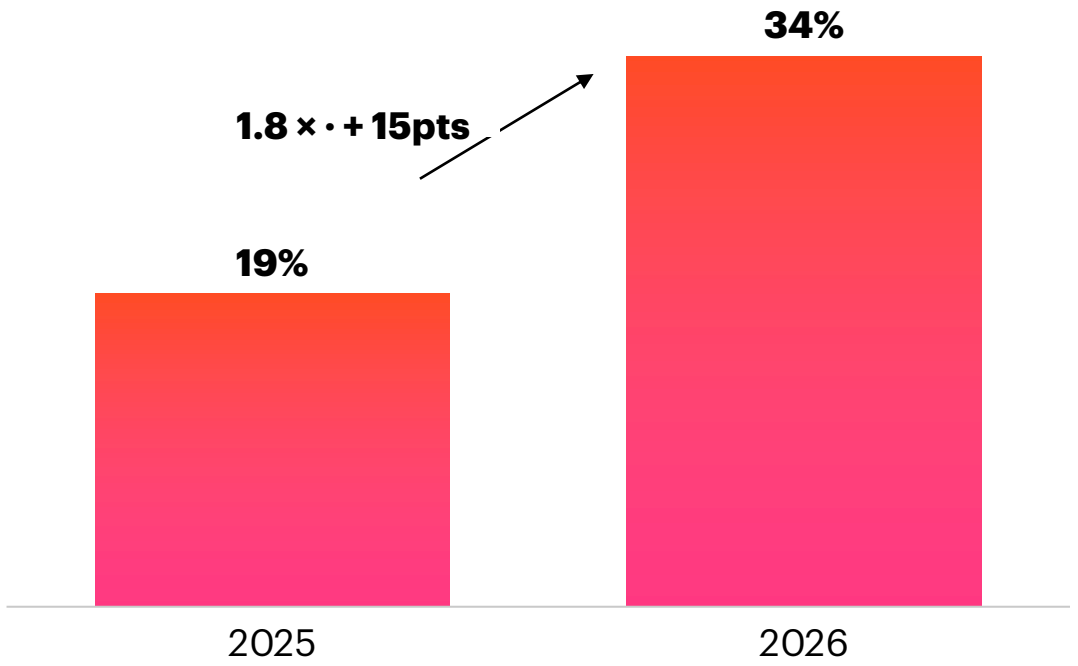
YouGov Surveys, July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026. British adults n> 2,000, BFCM shoppers n> 450.
AI shoppers: "I have used AI tools to help me shop, including anything from telling me about products to completing a purchase". AI considerers: "I have not used AI tools to help me shop, but I would consider doing so". AI rejecters: "I have not used AI tools to help me shop, and I would not consider doing so".

Planned AI use for BFCM has climbed from 19% to 34%

This year, 34% of likely BFCM shoppers say they are likely to use AI to help navigate the sales. In last year's survey, 19% said they were likely to use AI to help navigate mega sales events.

Talk to a researcher

How likely or unlikely are you to use an AI tool to help make the BFCM easier to navigate this year? Answered "very likely" or "somewhat likely" (likely BFCM shoppers)



YouGov Surveys, July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026. 2026 BFCM shoppers n> 450, 2025 BFCM shoppers n> 700 (2025 survey fielded from August 8 – August 18, 2025). Question wording changed between surveys: 2025 referred to major sales events and 2026 to BFCM. 2025 question: "How likely or unlikely are you to use an AI (Artificial Intelligence) tool (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Amazon Alexa, Siri, etc.) to help make the mega sales events easier to navigate this year?"

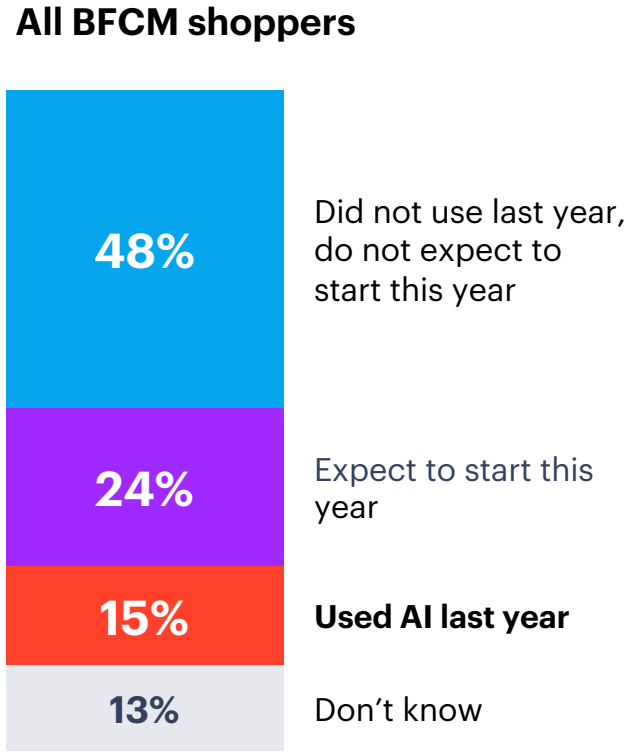
One in four BFCM shoppers expect to start using AI this year

15% of likely BFCM shoppers used standalone AI tools during last year's sales.

A further 24% expect to start this year, making new users the larger group.

Around half (48%) did not use them last year and do not expect to use them this year, and 13% are undecided.

Compared with last year's BFCM sales, how do you expect your use of standalone AI tools to change? (likely BFCM shoppers)



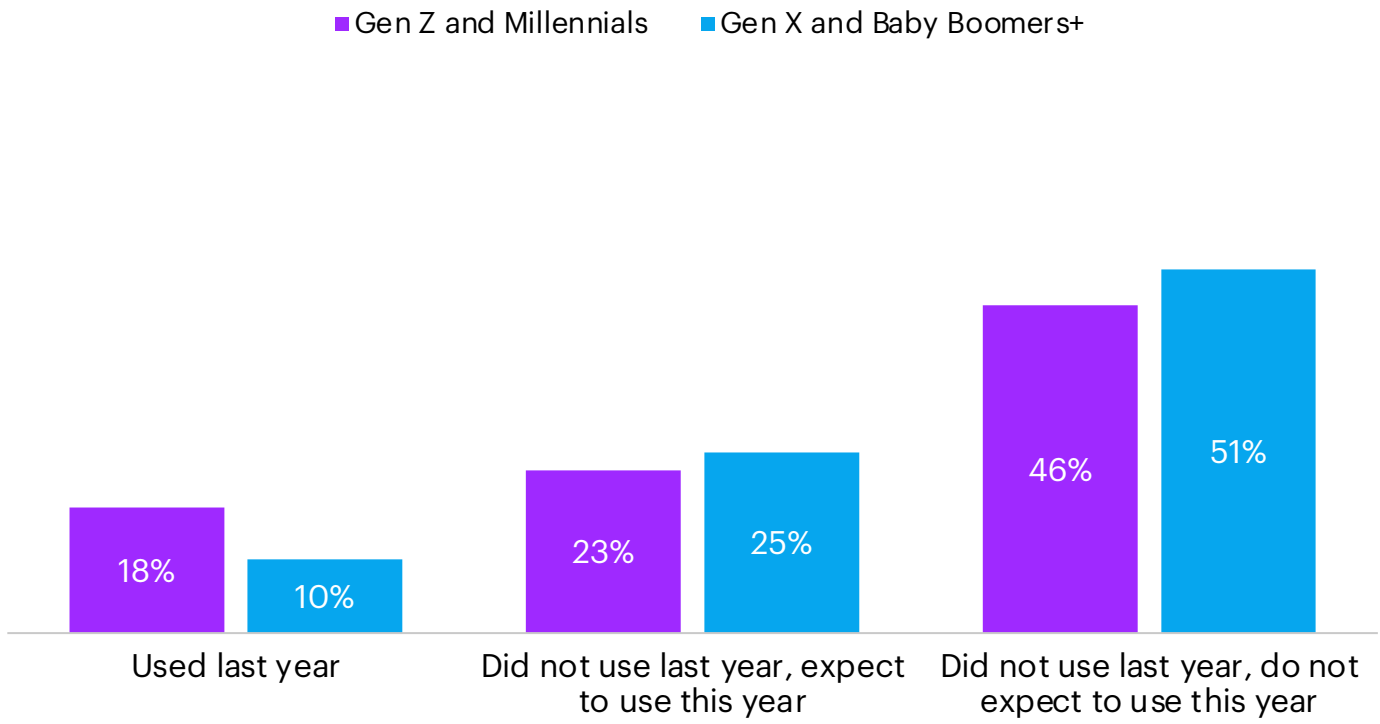
YouGov Surveys, July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026. 2026 BFCM shoppers n> 450.

Younger shoppers adopted AI faster, but openness to try it is now similar across ages

Around a quarter of Gen Z and Millennials and of Gen X and Baby Boomers+ expect to start using AI for the sales this year. Rejection is similarly close, at 46% and 51%.

Prior use is where the generations diverge: 18% of Gen Z and Millennials used AI during last year's sales, against 10% of Gen X and Baby Boomers+.

Compared with last year's BFCM sales, how do you expect your use of standalone AI tools to change? (likely BFCM shoppers by generation)



YouGov Surveys, July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026. BFCM shoppers: Gen Z and Millennials n> 250, Gen X and Baby Boomers+ n> 150. "Don't know" responses not shown.

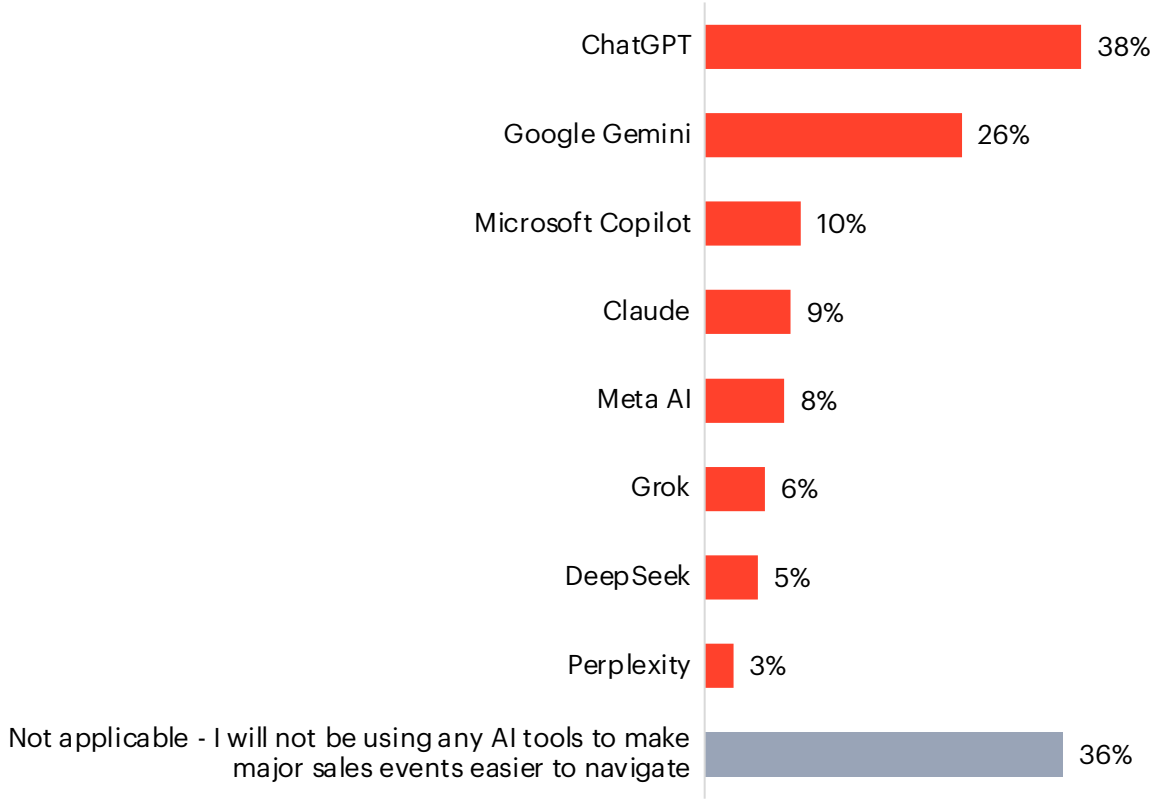
ChatGPT leads planned AI-tool use among likely BFCM shoppers by a wide margin

Among likely BFCM shoppers, ChatGPT is the most commonly selected AI tool for use during major sales events, at 38%, with Google Gemini second at 26%. Microsoft Copilot (10%), Claude (9%) and Meta AI (8%) follow.

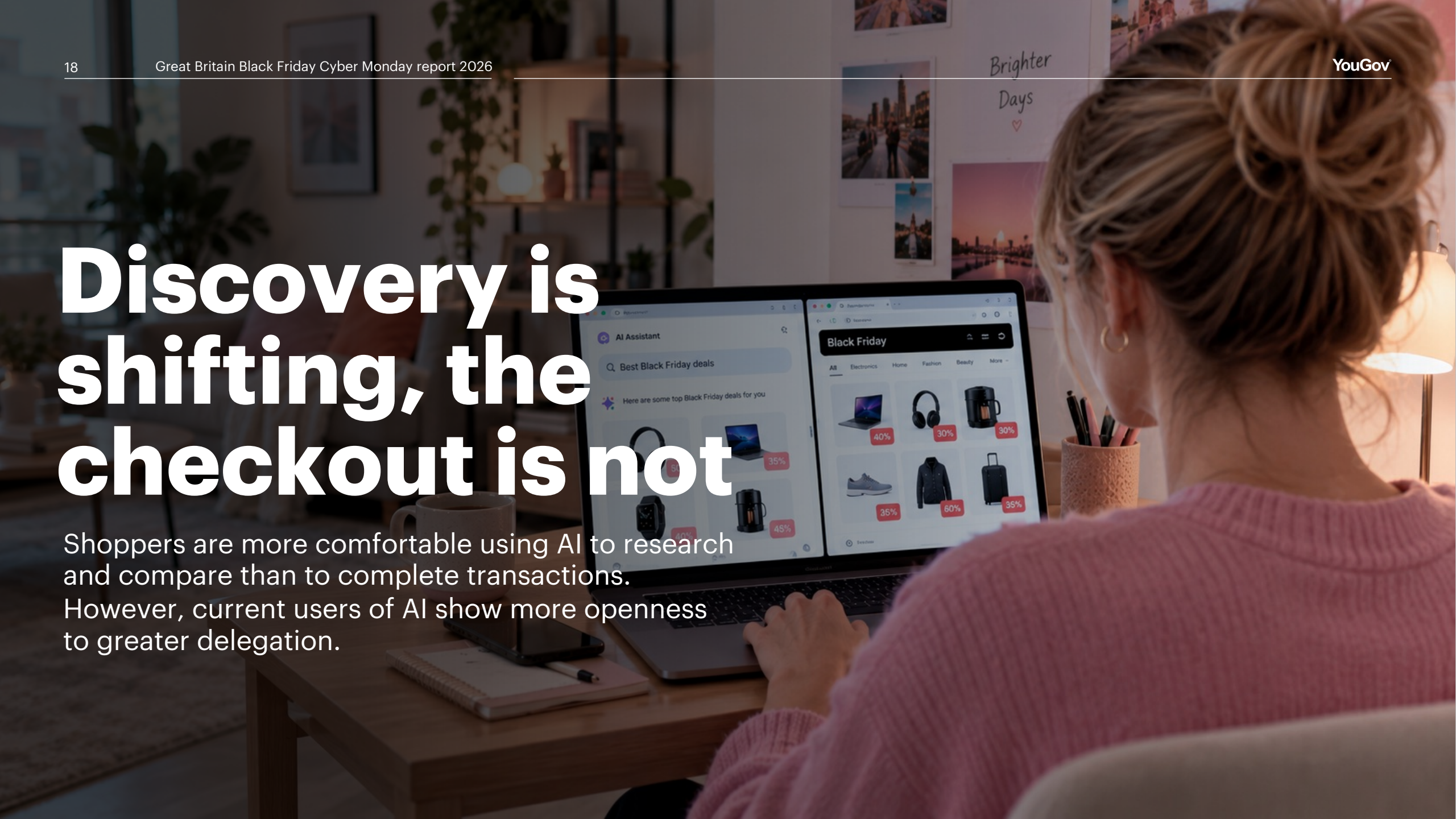
Over a third (36%) say they will not use any AI tool.

Talk to a researcher

Which AI tools, if any, would you be likely to use when shopping during major sales events? (likely BFCM shoppers)



YouGov Surveys, July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026. BFCM shoppers n> 450. “Don’t know” and “Other AI tool” options not shown.



Discovery is shifting, the checkout is not

Shoppers are more comfortable using AI to research and compare than to complete transactions. However, current users of AI show more openness to greater delegation.

Shoppers want AI to assist, not to decide

Likely BFCM shoppers are most comfortable using AI for research and deal-finding. Two in five (40%) would be comfortable using it to find the best price, 32% with comparing similar products or offers and 30% with checking whether a discount is genuine.

Comfort falls away as AI moves closer to the transaction. Only 7% would be comfortable with AI adding items to their basket, 5% with completing a purchase after approval and 5% with letting it purchase without asking first. A quarter (26%) would not be comfortable with any of these tasks.

Talk to a researcher

Which, if any, of the following would you be comfortable using an AI tool to help with during Black Friday/Cyber Monday? (likely BFCM shoppers)

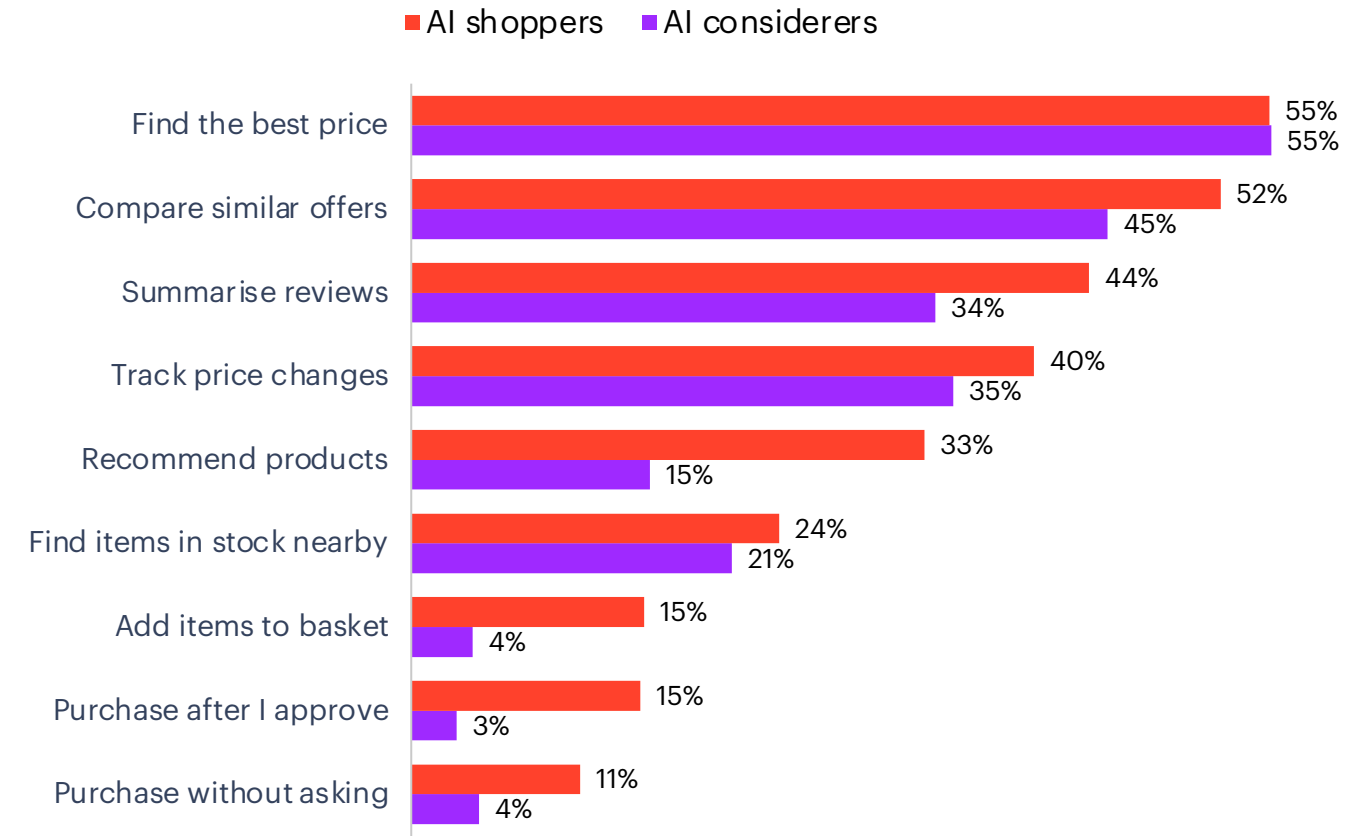
YouGov Surveys, July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026. BFCM shoppers n> 450. “Don’t know” option not shown.

AI shoppers delegate more, but not the purchase

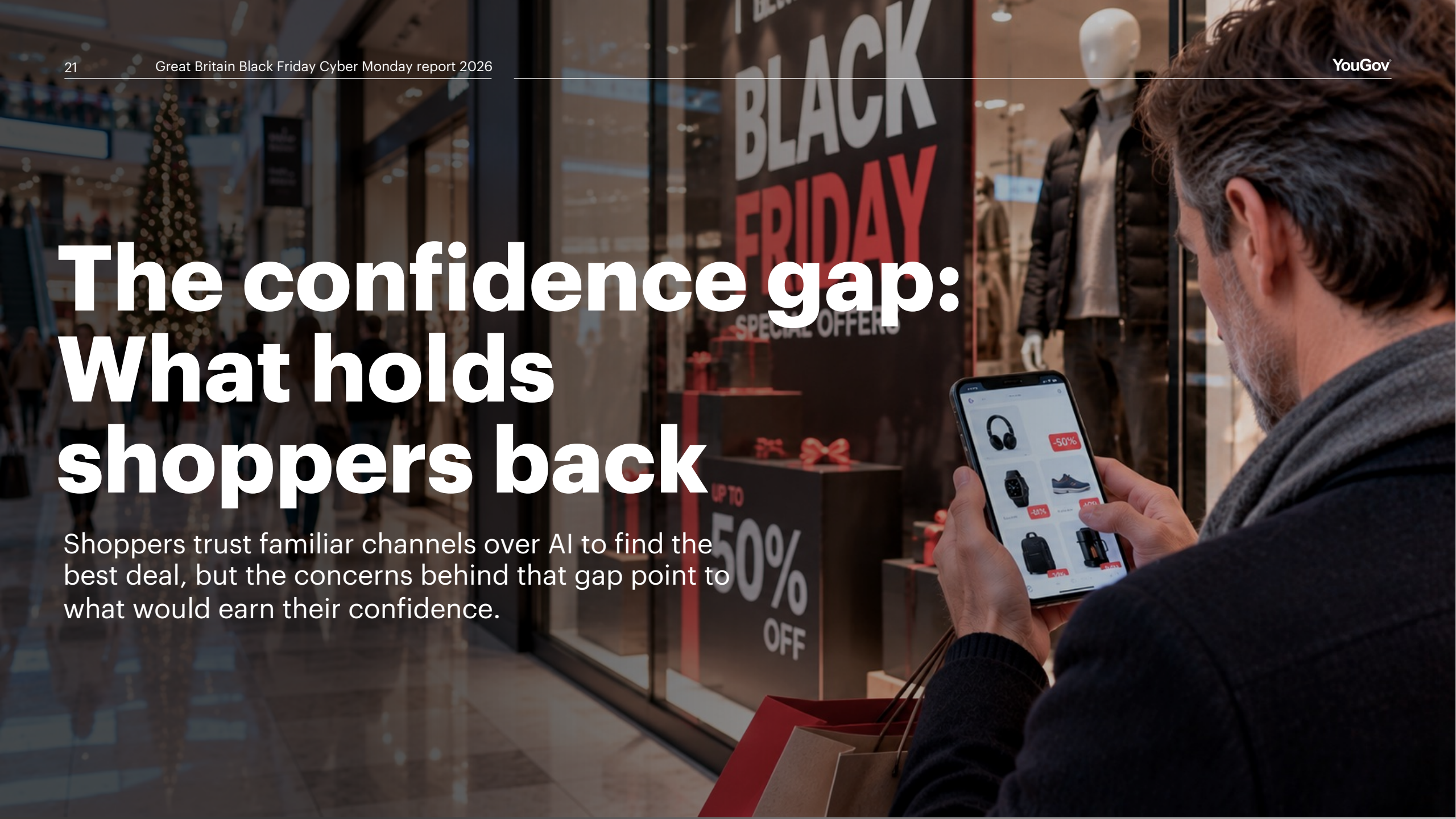
Shoppers who have used AI are more comfortable than considerers on almost every task: recommending products (33% vs. 15%) and adding items to a basket (15% vs. 4%).

Comfort with completing a purchase stays low in both groups (15% and 3% after approval). Finding the best price is the exception, at 55% in both.

Which, if any, of the following would you be comfortable using an AI tool to help with during Black Friday/Cyber Monday? (likely BFCM shoppers)



YouGov Surveys, July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026. BFCM shoppers: AI shoppers n> 100, AI considerers n> 100. AI rejecters not shown. Selected tasks shown.



The confidence gap: What holds shoppers back

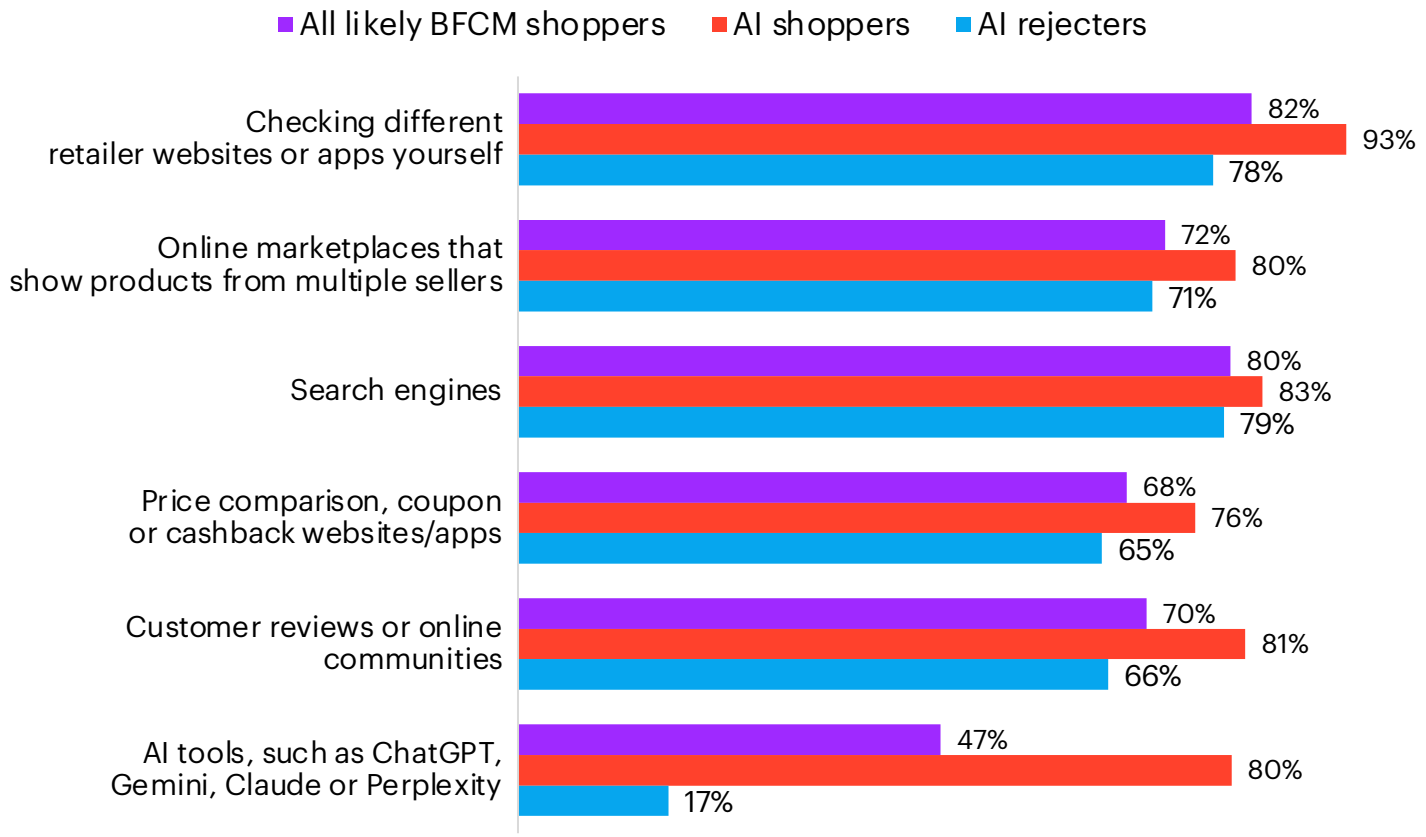
Shoppers trust familiar channels over AI to find the best deal, but the concerns behind that gap point to what would earn their confidence.

Confidence in AI depends on having used it

Shoppers remain more confident in familiar ways of finding bargains than in AI. Among likely BFCM shoppers, 82% are confident that checking retailer websites or apps themselves will help them find the best deal. AI tools trail every other channel at 47%.

That average hides a split: 80% of shoppers who have used AI are confident in it, against 17% of those who reject it - a doubt specific to AI, not to deal-finding in general.

How confident are you that each of the following would help you find the best BFCM deal? Answered "very confident" or "fairly confident" (likely BFCM shoppers by AI usage)



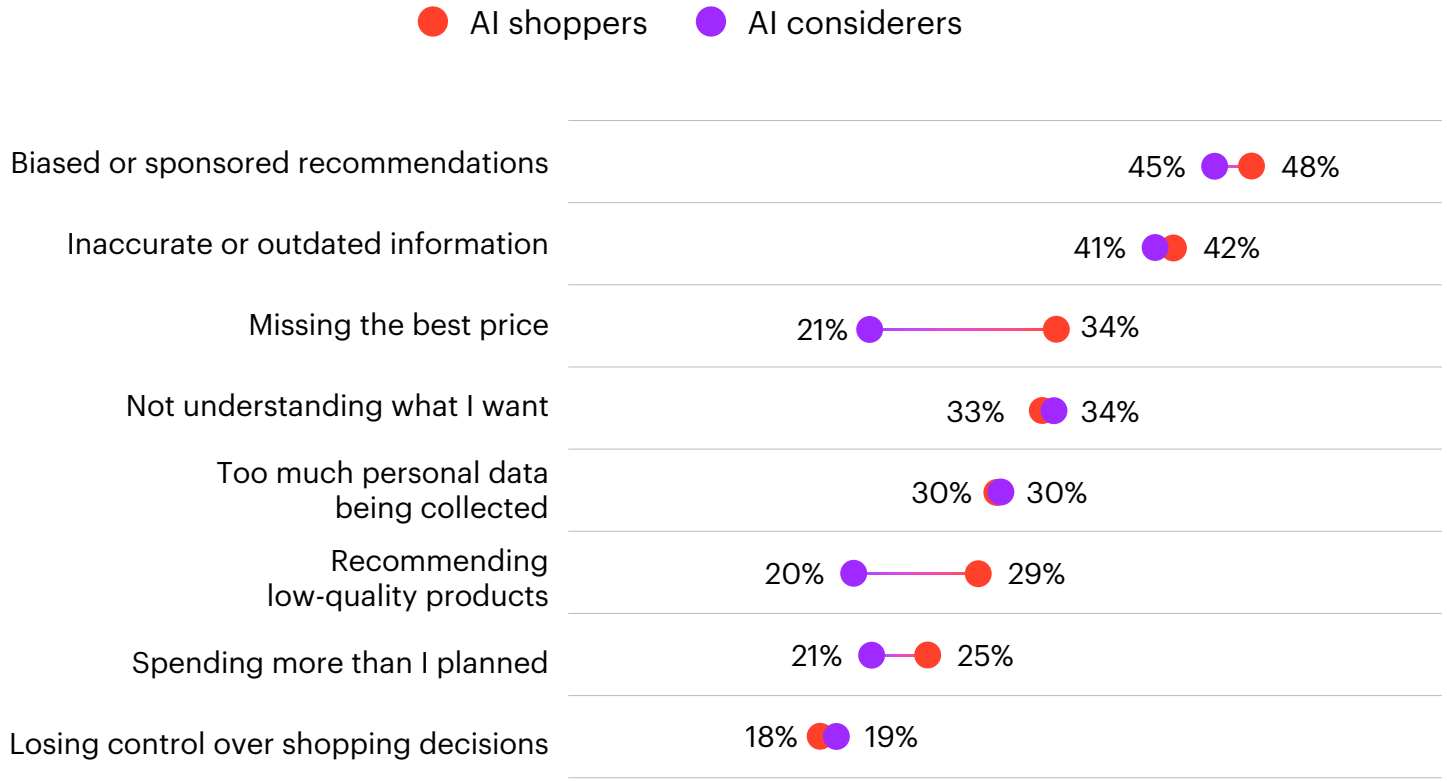
YouGov Surveys, July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026. BFCM shoppers: All likely shoppers n> 450, AI shoppers n> 100, AI rejecters n> 150. AI considerers not shown.

Bias concerns both groups; users also fear a worse deal

Biased or sponsored recommendations is the most cited concern in both groups (48% among AI shoppers and 45% among considerers) followed by inaccurate or outdated information (42% and 41%). The groups separate on outcomes rather than technology: 34% of AI shoppers worry about missing the best price, against 21% of considerers.

Talk to a researcher

Which, if any, of the following would concern you about using AI to help shop during BFCM? (likely BFCM shoppers)



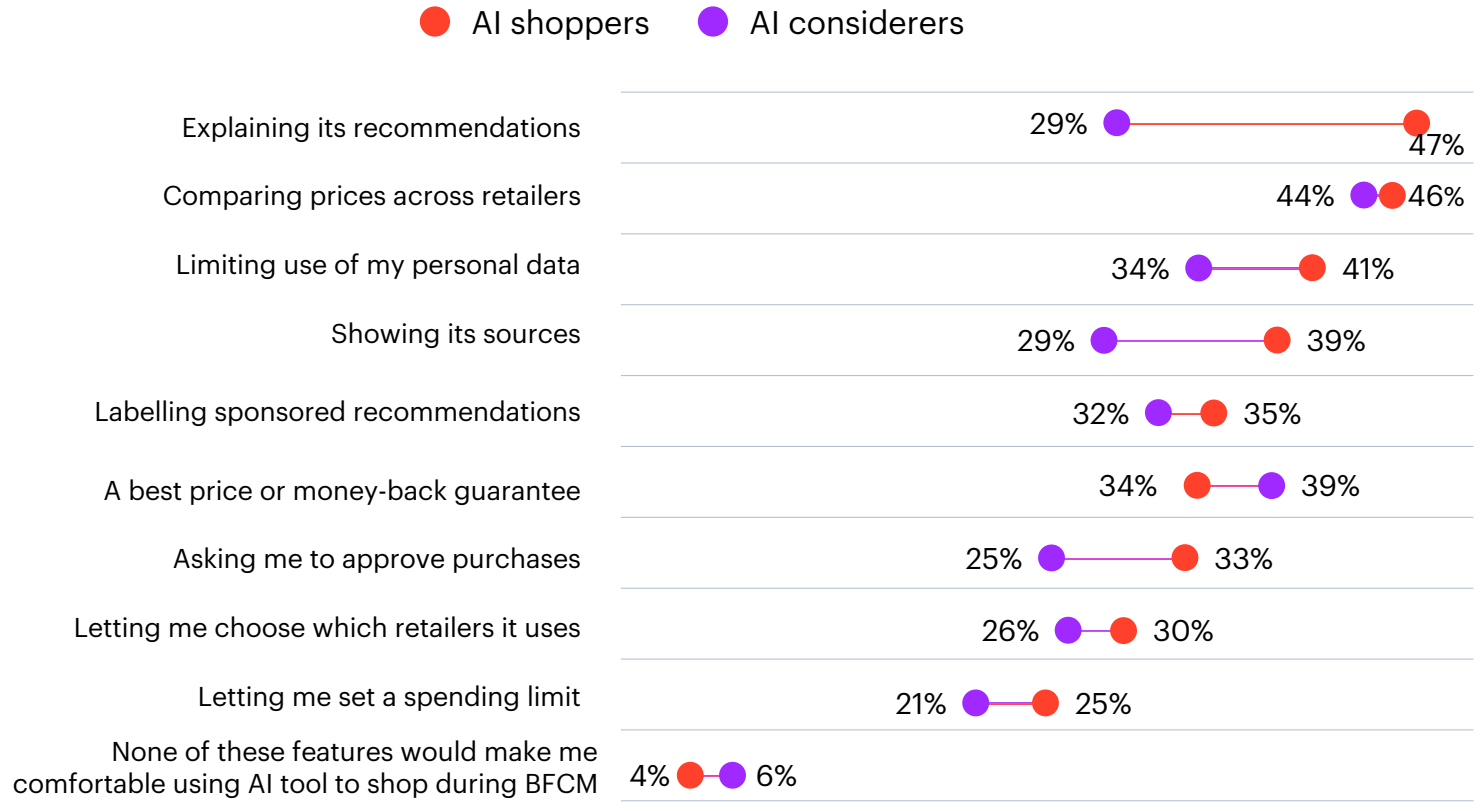
YouGov Surveys, July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026. BFCM shoppers: AI shoppers n> 100, AI considerers n> 100. "Others", "Don't know", and "Not applicable" responses not shown. AI rejecters not shown.

Shoppers want the same reassurances, used AI or not

Among shoppers who already use AI, the most wanted features are explanations of its recommendations (47%), comparing prices across retailers (46%) and limits on the use of personal data (41%). Considerers want much the same, led by comparing prices (44%).

The one real difference is explaining its recommendations: 47% among current AI shoppers against 29% among considerers who have not yet tried it.

Which features, if any, would make you more comfortable using AI tools while shopping? (likely BFCM shoppers)



YouGov Surveys, July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026. BFCM shoppers: AI shoppers n> 100, AI considerers n> 100. "Don't know" responses not shown. AI rejecters not shown.

Methodology

The insights in this report have been sourced via YouGov Surveys: Serviced – providing rapid answers from the right audience.

- All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. The multi-region survey was conducted online from July 13, 2026 – August 11, 2026.
- Australia n= 956, Canada n= 993, Denmark n= 1006, France n= 977, Germany n= 1014, Great Britain n= 2039 (likely BFCM shoppers n= 457), Hong Kong n= 498, India n= 988, Indonesia n= 989, Italy n= 1034, Mexico n= 978, Poland n= 986, Saudi Arabia n= 987, Singapore n= 1016, Spain n= 996, Sweden n= 1001, Switzerland n= 989, U.S. n= 1495, UAE n= 976. The figures have been weighted to be representative of adults aged 18+ in each market's respective target population.
- Audiences are nationally representative in Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the U.S., and the UAE. Audiences in India and Mexico are representative of the urban population and those in Hong Kong and Indonesia are representative of the online population.
- Throughout the report, each generation is defined as: Gen Z (1997 or later), Millennial (1981-1996), Gen X (1965-1980) and Baby Boomers+ (Pre-1964).
- BFCM shoppers are respondents who answered "Somewhat likely" or "Very likely" when asked how likely they are to make purchases during Black Friday or Cyber Monday.
- AI shopping segments are based on the question, "Which, if any, of the following best describes your experience using AI tools when shopping?".
  - 'AI shoppers' are those who selected "I have used AI tools to help me shop, including anything from telling me about products to completing a purchase"
  - 'AI shopping considerers' are those who selected "I have not used AI tools to help me shop, but I would consider doing so"
  - 'AI shopping rejecters' are those who selected "I have not used AI tools to help me shop, and I would not consider doing so"

Powered by the YouGov panel

The insights in this report are fuelled by YouGov's consumer research panel, which has 34 million registered members from 55+ markets.

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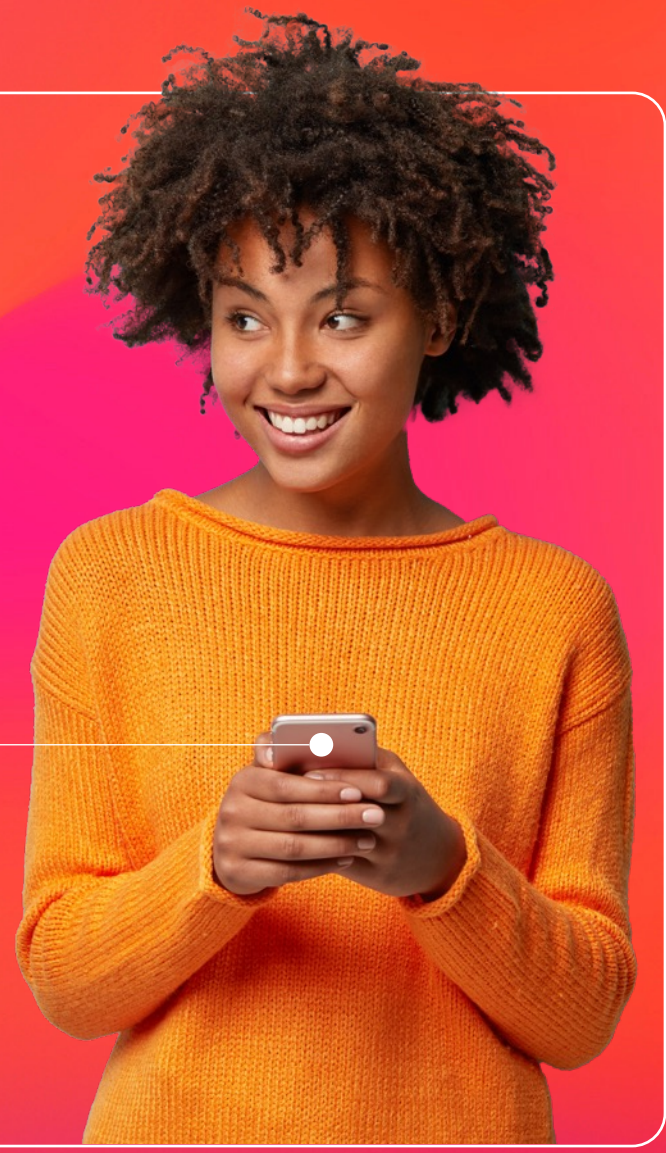
Inclusion is essential for our members, our clients, and our mission. We invest millions each year to ensure we can create truly nationally representative online samples and access hard-to-reach groups.

This dedication to reflecting reality means we're cited as the most accurate online pollster regularly.

Talk to a researcher

34m
registered panel members

55+
markets



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Thank you

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