

SHESPEAKS CONSUMER PULSE™

The Resilient Holiday Shopper

How consumers will adapt, spend and celebrate in 2026

Insights from 1,000+ U.S. consumers on the priorities, value decisions and behaviors shaping the 2026 holiday season.

shespeaks



Making memories bright
this holiday season
#ad

Holiday demand remains resilient as shoppers become more intentional

Despite economic concerns shoppers plan to spend this holiday season. Here is what brands need to know.

45%

plan to spend less BUT fewer than 2025

Down slightly from 47% in 2025 despite greater economic concern.

4.62

categories planned on average

Down from 5.84, while holiday food and family gifts remain priorities.

27%

had already started shopping

Demand is spreading across a longer season as tentpole days lose share.

71%

rank price as a top factor

Shipping, promotions and quality show that value extends beyond price.

THE BIG IMPLICATION

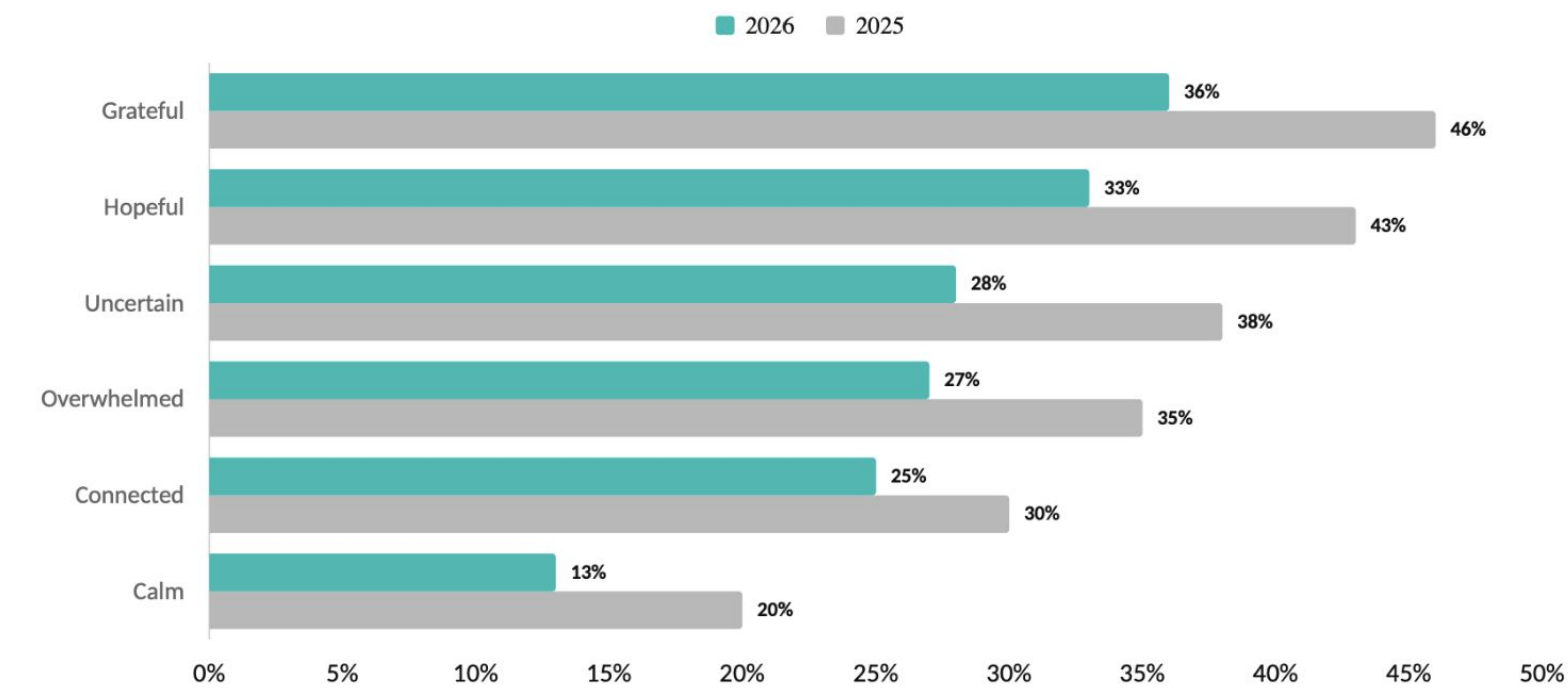
Resilient demand.
Intentional choices.

Brands can win by making value, relevance
and the path to purchase easy to see.

Source: SheSpeaks 2026 Holiday Shopping Survey, n=1,012. Percentages rounded.

Gratitude still leads, even as financial stress rises

Consumers are entering the season with mixed emotions, creating room for messages grounded in connection and practical value.



35%
feel financially stressed

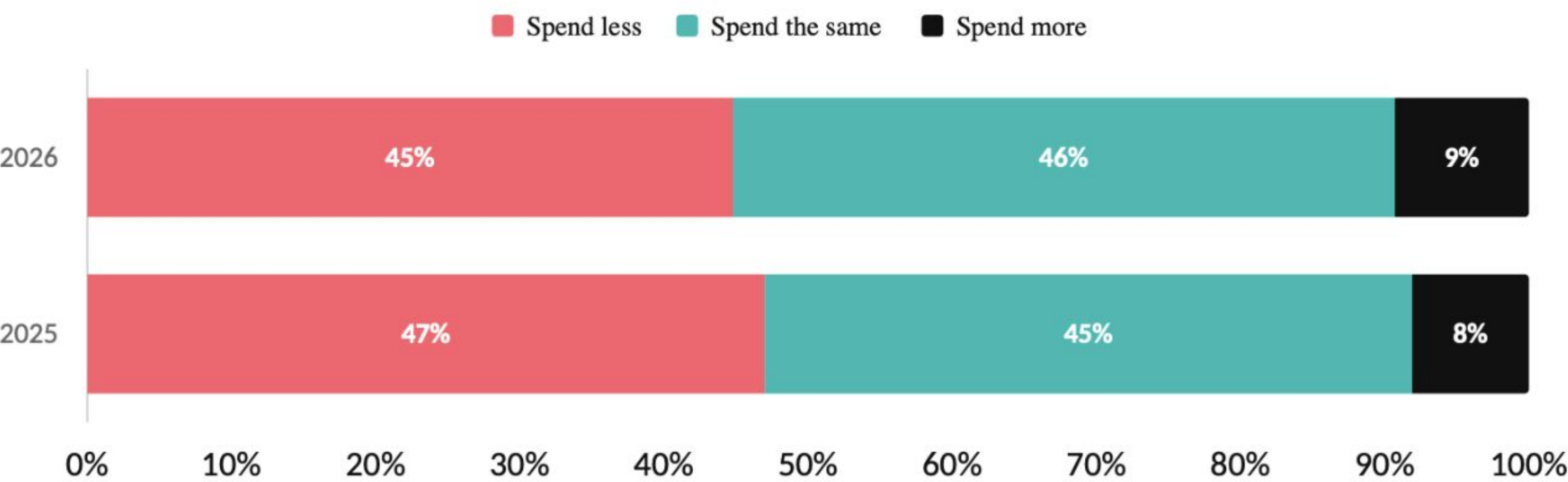
It ranks just behind gratitude and ahead of hopefulness.

QUESTION: Which of the following best describe how you are feeling as you head into the holiday season? Select up to four.

Source: SheSpeaks Holiday Shopping Surveys, 2025 n=1,330; 2026 n=1,012. Question wording and answer list changed slightly; comparisons are directional.

Spending intentions remain remarkably stable despite economic concern

The share planning to spend less declined slightly, even as more shoppers expressed concern about the economy and household finances.



67%
say the U.S. economy is declining

Up from 64% in 2025

44%
are concerned about their household finances

Up from 41% in 2025

QUESTION: Do you think you'll spend more, less or the same on shopping this upcoming holiday season, compared with last year?

Source: SheSpeaks Holiday Shopping Surveys, 2025 n=1,330; 2026 n=1,012. Percentages rounded.

Family gifts and holiday food remain the season's strongest priorities

Shoppers are protecting the purchases most closely tied to celebration and connection.

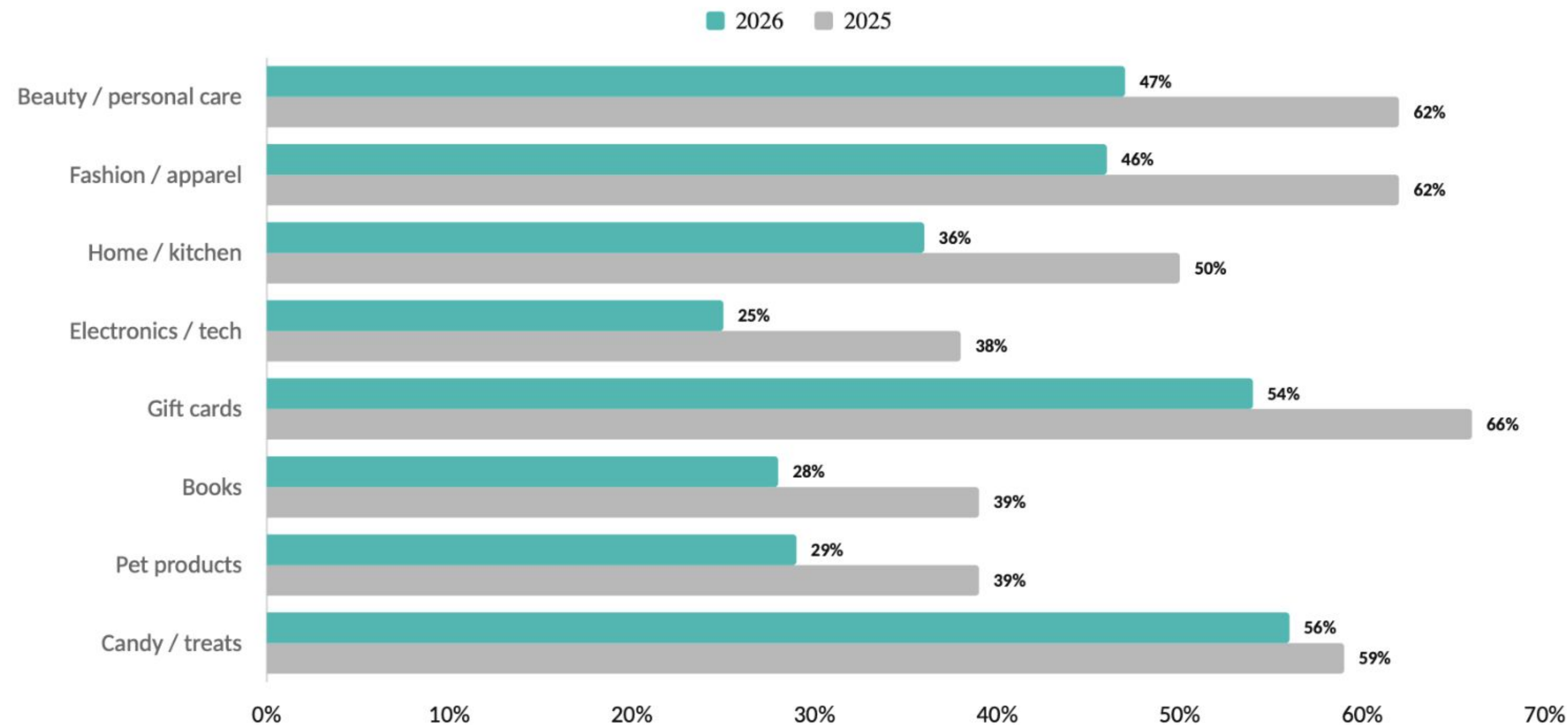


QUESTION: Compared with last year, how do you expect your spending in each of the following areas to change?

Source: SheSpeaks 2026 Holiday Shopping Survey, n=1,012. Percentages rounded.

Shoppers are concentrating spending on fewer categories

Across 12 comparable categories, the average selected fell from 5.84 to 4.62, while food-oriented categories held up better.



21%

**fewer categories
selected**

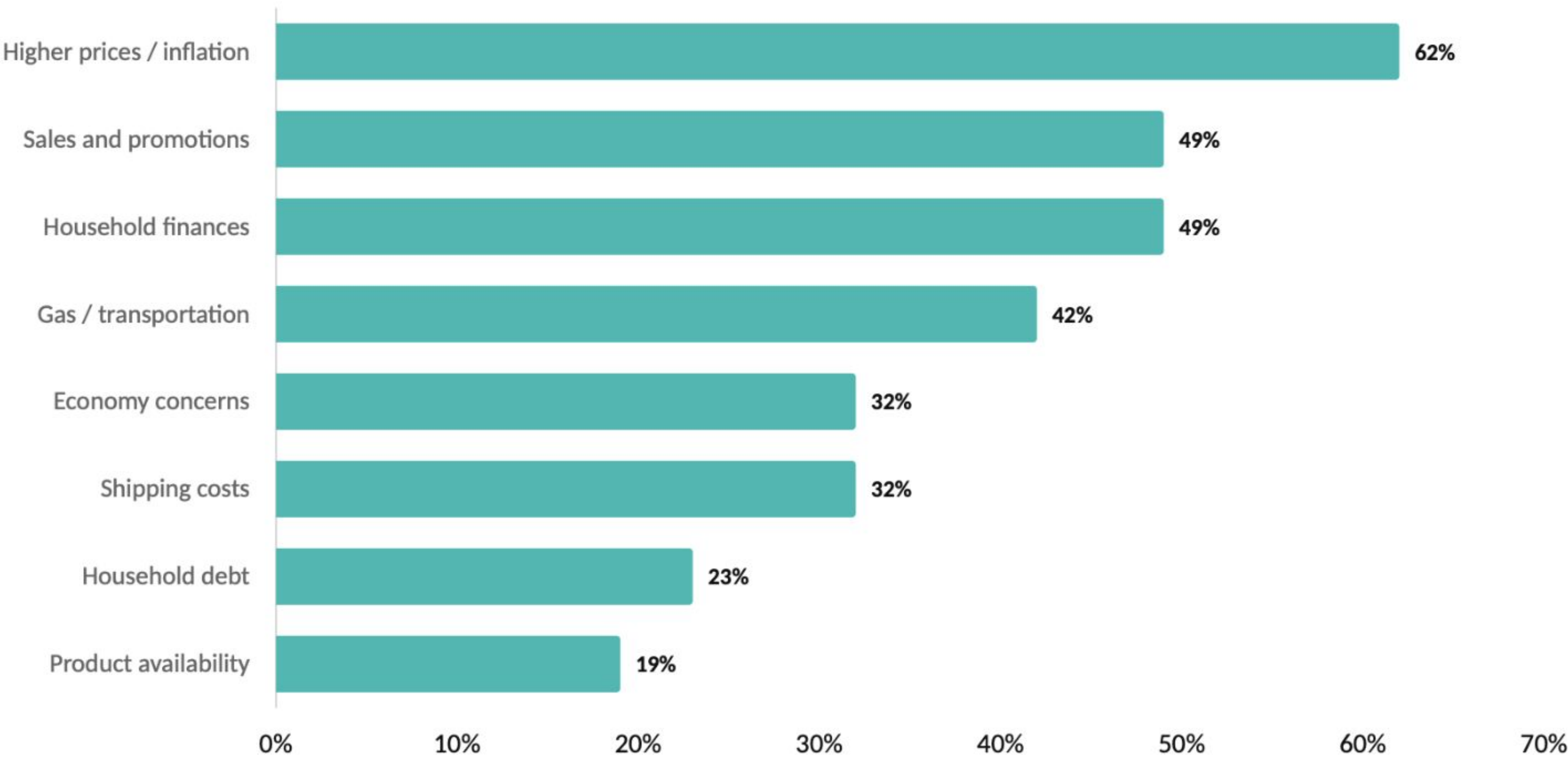
Candy and treats
declined only 3 points,
the smallest shift
among comparable
categories.

QUESTION: Which categories do you expect to purchase this holiday season? Select all that apply.

Source: SheSpeaks Holiday Shopping Surveys, 2025 n=1,330; 2026 n=1,012. Twelve closely matched categories used for the average.

Economic pressures are shaping allocation, not erasing holiday demand

Gas prices will influence 42% of shoppers, adding urgency to convenience, value and efficient shopping trips.



42%
say gas prices will
affect holiday
spending

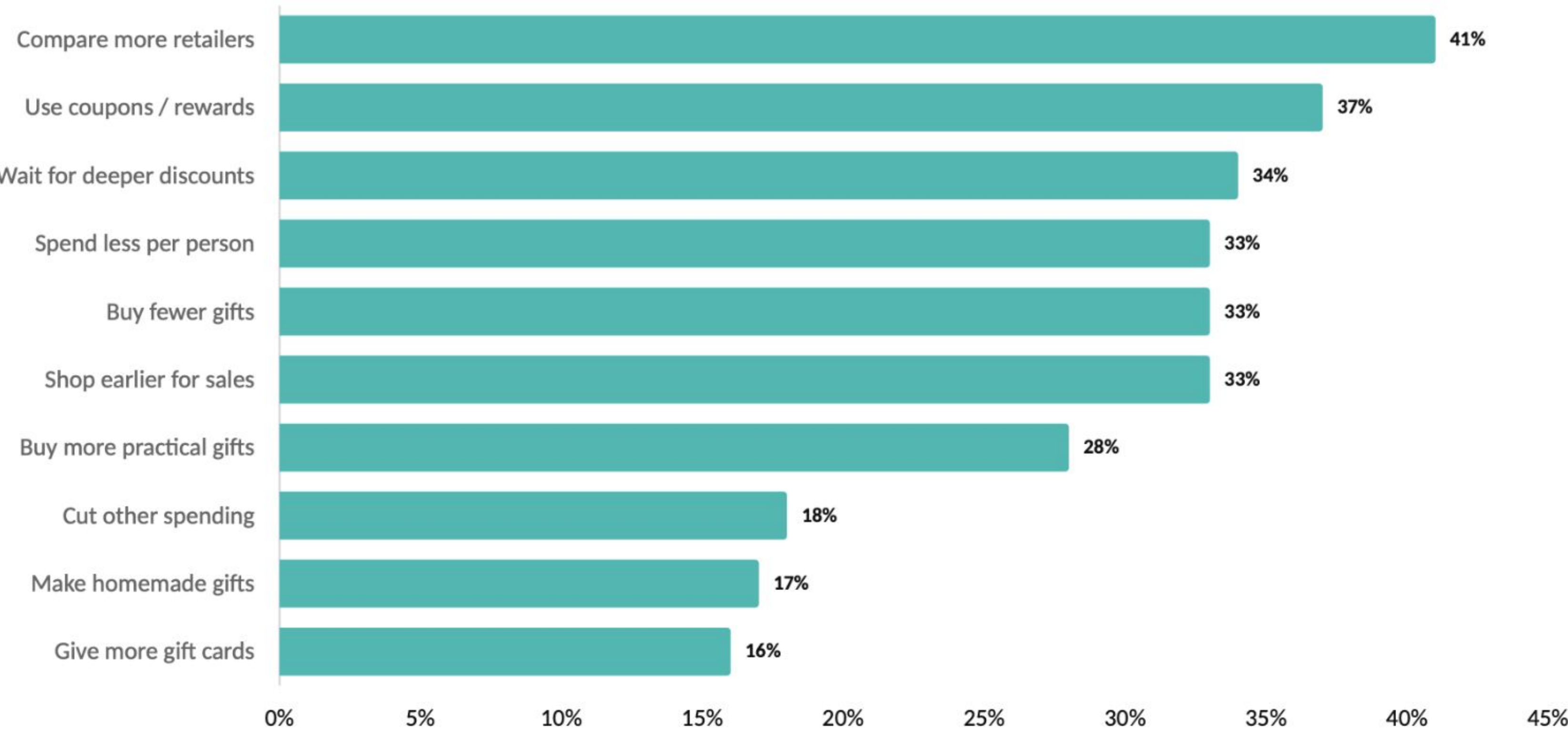
The result is directionally
highest in the South and
Midwest.

QUESTION: Which of the following will affect how much you spend this holiday season? Select all that apply.

Source: SheSpeaks 2026 Holiday Shopping Survey, n=1,012. Percentages rounded.

Shoppers plan to stretch their budgets and stay in the season

Comparison shopping, rewards and deeper discounts will help consumers preserve holiday participation.



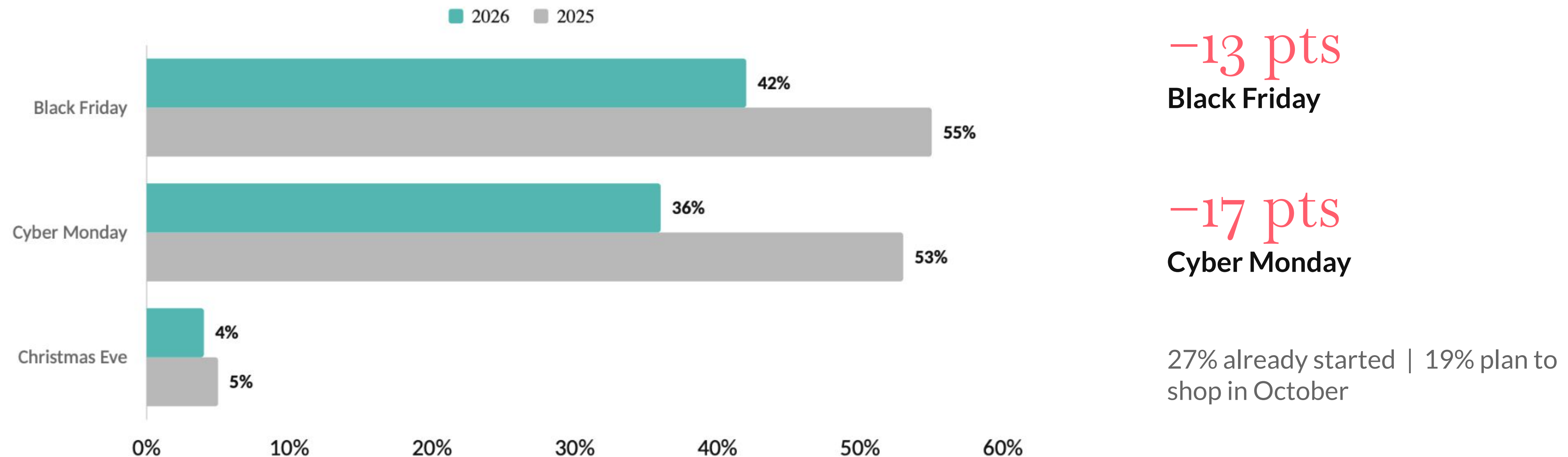
15%
do not expect
to make
changes

QUESTION: Which of the following are you likely to do to manage your holiday budget this year? Select all that apply.

Source: SheSpeaks 2026 Holiday Shopping Survey, n=1,012. Percentages rounded.

Shopping is spreading across a longer holiday window

More than one-quarter had already started, giving brands more opportunities before and beyond the traditional tentpole days.

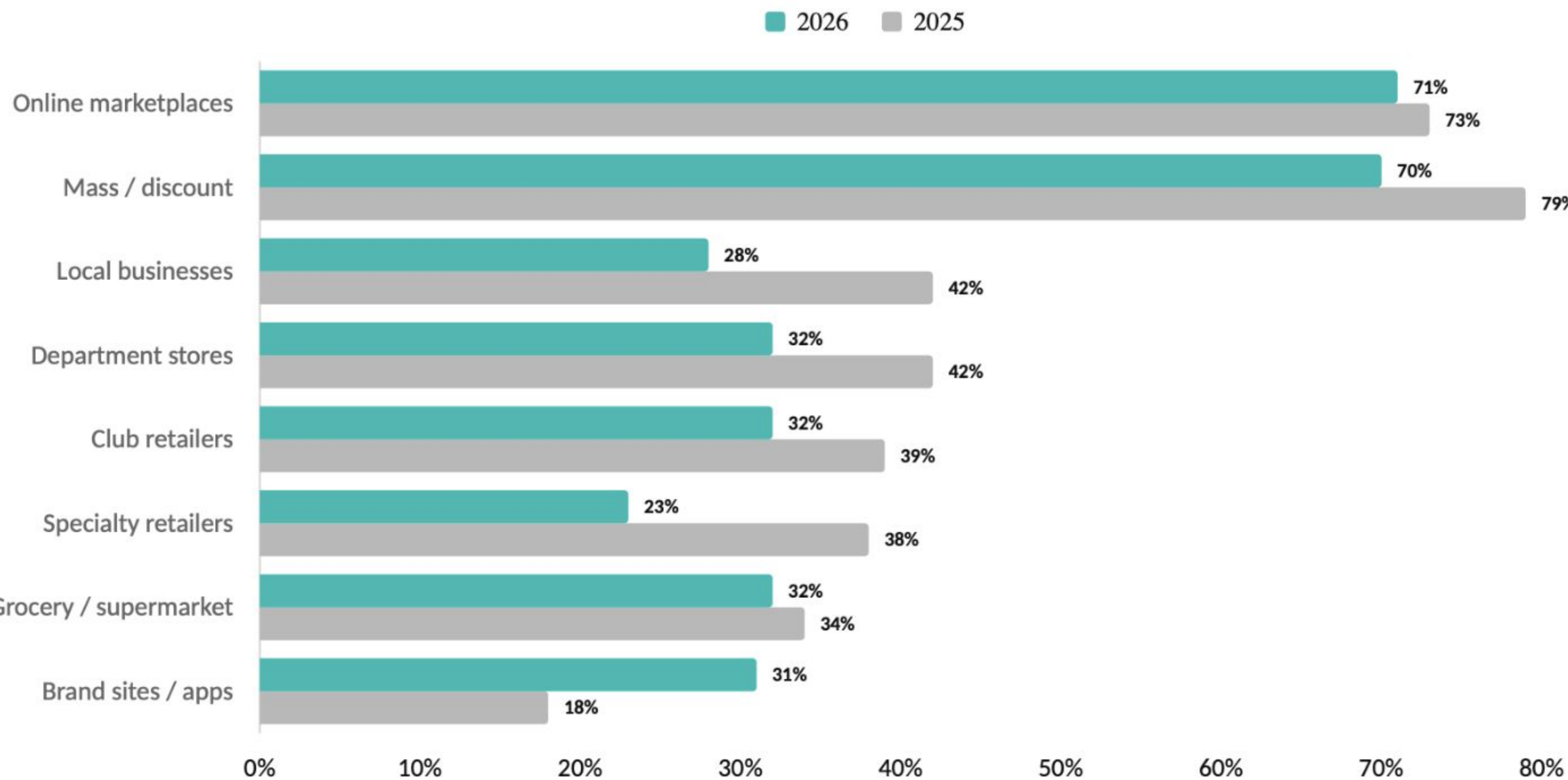


QUESTION: On which of the following days or periods do you plan to do holiday shopping this year? Select all that apply.

Source: SheSpeaks Holiday Shopping Surveys, 2025 n=1,330; 2026 n=1,012. Early-shopping answer options changed in 2026.

Marketplaces retain their reach as shoppers focus retailer choices

The average shopper expects to use fewer destination types, increasing the value of strong placement and clear conversion paths.



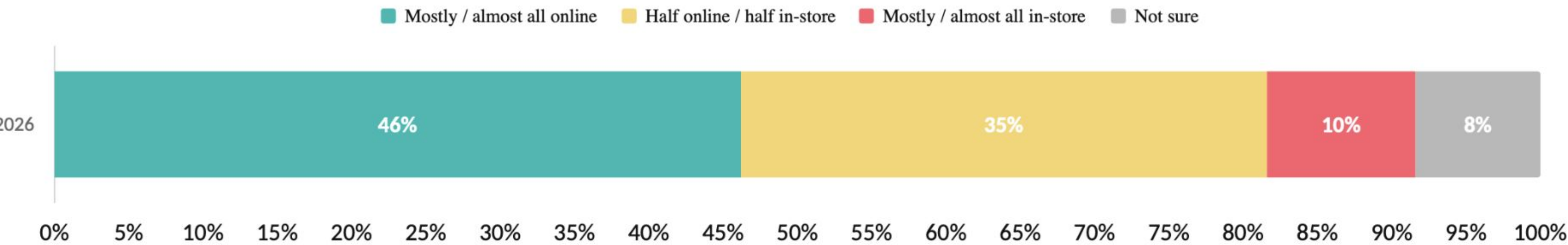
3.55
destination
types selected
in 2026

Down from 4.19

Source: SheSpeaks Holiday Shopping Surveys, 2025 n=1,330; 2026 n=1,012.

Online remains central, but more than one-third expect an even split

Only 10% expect to do most or nearly all holiday shopping in physical stores.



46%
online-heavy

35%
even split

10%
store-heavy

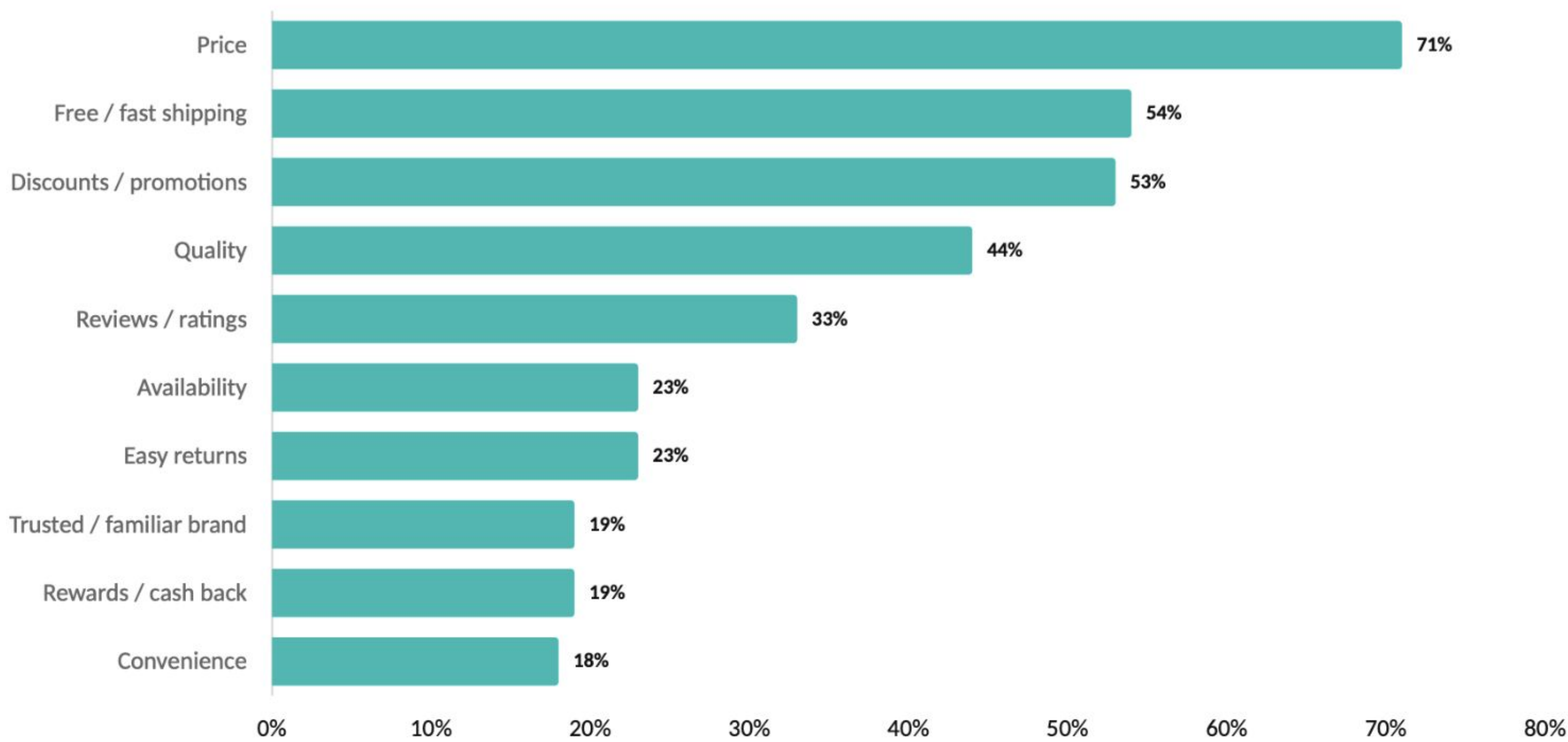
8%
not sure

QUESTION: Approximately how much of your holiday shopping do you expect to do online versus in physical stores?

Source: SheSpeaks 2026 Holiday Shopping Survey, n=1,012. Percentages rounded.

Price leads, but shoppers define value more broadly

Shipping, promotions and quality create additional ways for brands to earn the purchase.



71%

name price
among their five
most important
factors

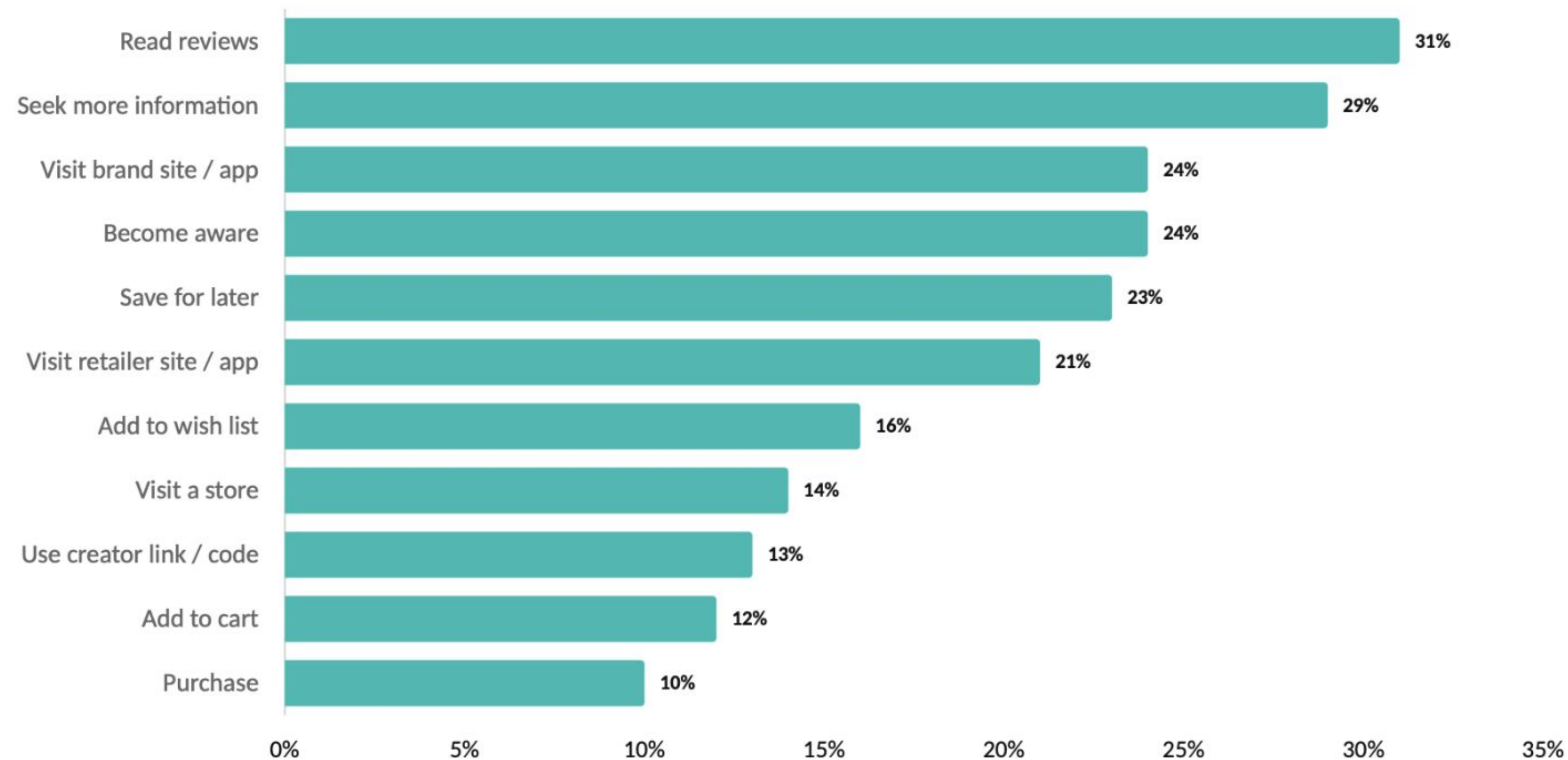
Quality still matters to
44%.

QUESTION: When deciding which product or brand to purchase, which factors will matter most? Select up to five.

Source: SheSpeaks 2026 Holiday Shopping Survey, n=1,012. Percentages rounded.

Social content often leads to research before purchase

The strongest reported actions sit in the middle of the path to purchase.



SOCIAL CONTENT

Discovery
leads
to research

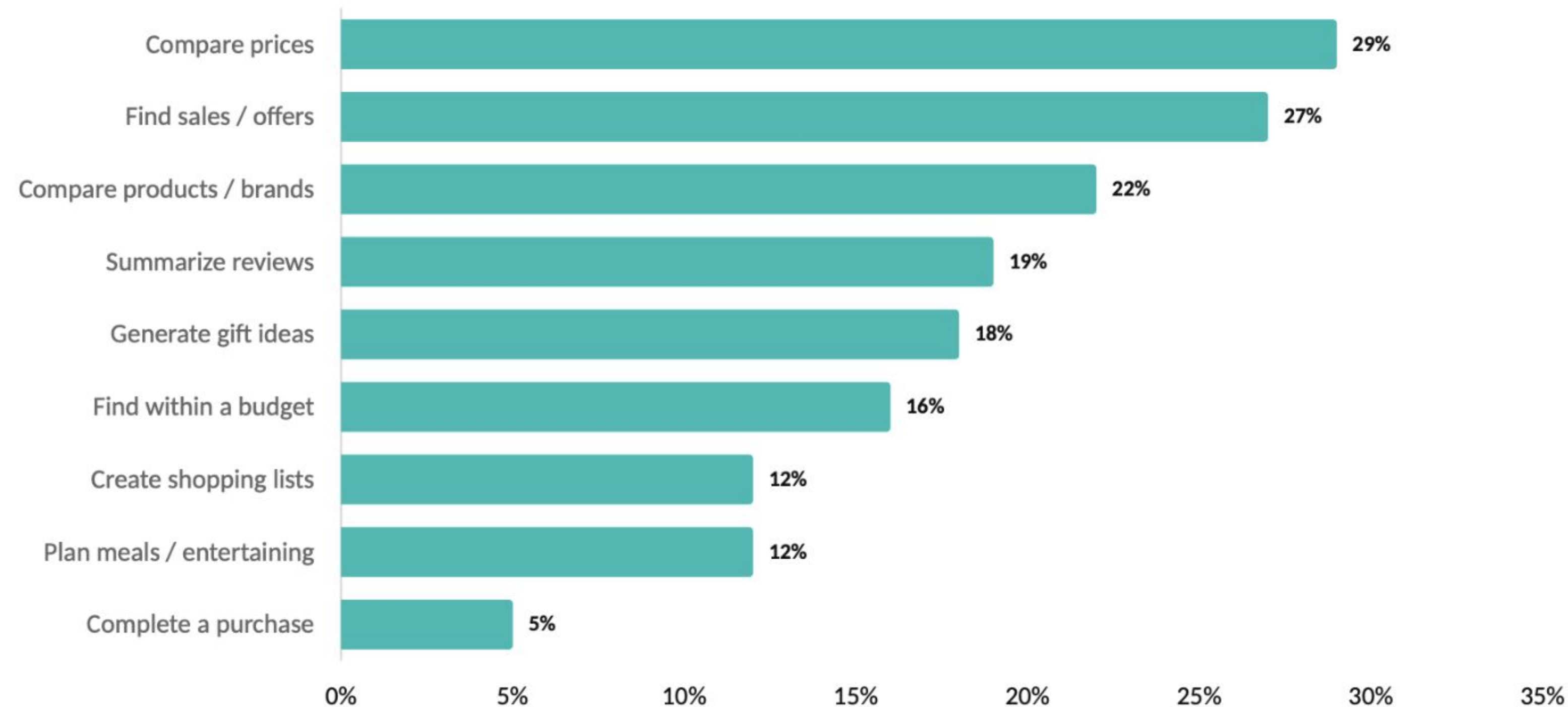
24% visit a brand site
21% visit a retailer site
12% add to cart
10% purchase

QUESTION: When you see holiday-related content from someone on social media, which actions are you likely to take? Select all that apply.

Source: SheSpeaks 2026 Holiday Shopping Survey, n=1,012. Percentages rounded.

Holiday AI use starts with price comparison and deal finding

Consumers show more interest in practical shopping help than in automated purchasing.



55%

identified at least
one potential use
for AI

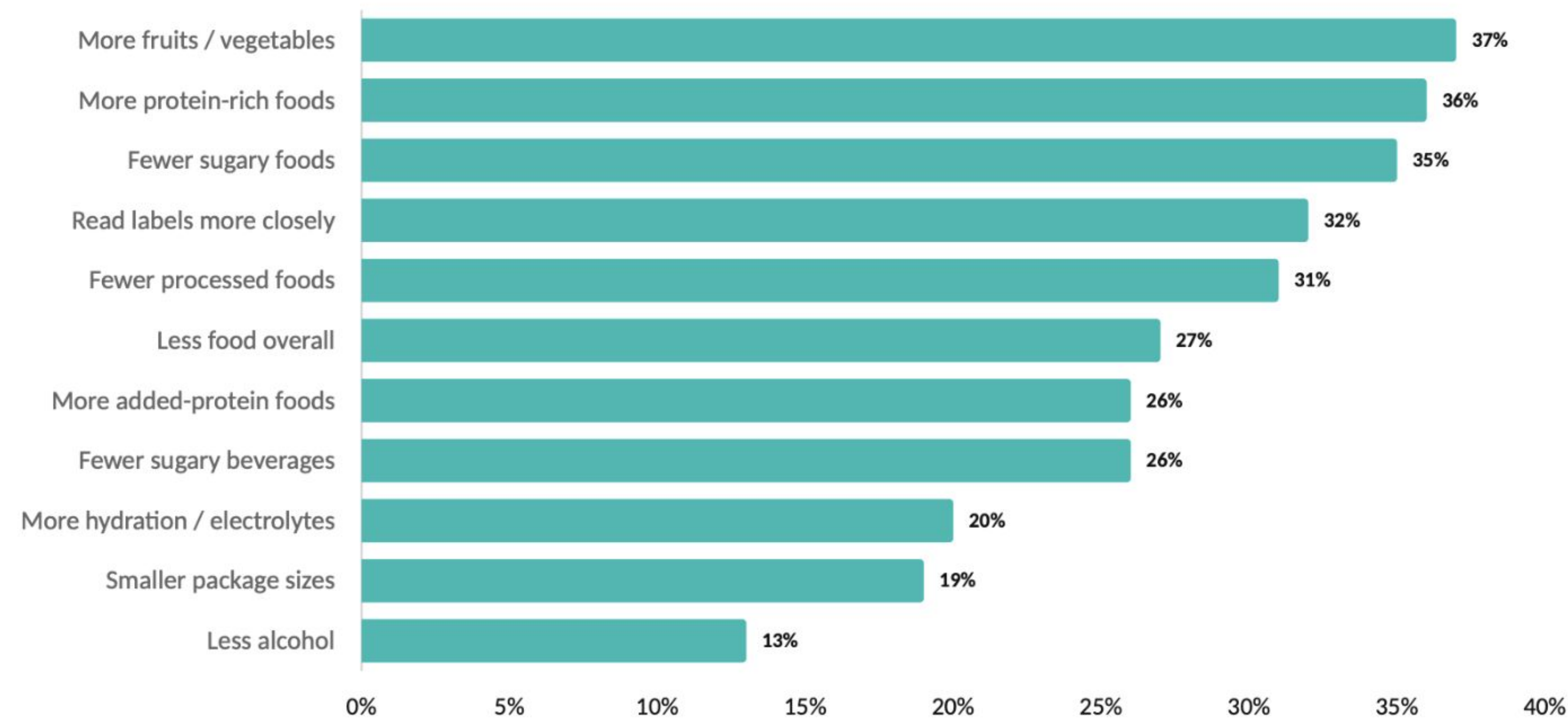
45% say they would not
use AI for holiday
shopping.

QUESTION: How might you use an AI-powered tool or assistant? Select all that apply.

Source: SheSpeaks 2026 Holiday Shopping Survey, n=1,012. Percentages rounded.

GLP-1 use is shifting grocery baskets toward protein and produce

The changes extend beyond eating less to ingredients, package sizes and beverage choices.



27%

indicate that they or someone they shop for uses a GLP-1

Estimated GLP-1 household base: n≈266

QUESTION: If you or anyone you buy groceries for uses a GLP-1, how has it affected household food and beverage purchases?

Source: SheSpeaks 2026 Holiday Shopping Survey, n=1,012. Effects rebased to the inferred GLP-1 household subgroup; percentages rounded.

Intentional shoppers still offer brands meaningful paths to growth

Resilient priority categories, a longer shopping window and active deal seeking create multiple ways to win.

- 1

Make value visible early

Lead with the product benefit and proof that justify the purchase. Price opens consideration, while quality and reviews help close the sale.
- 2

Plan for a longer promotion season

Holiday shopping starts earlier and relies less on two tentpole days. Build creative and retail media sequencing across October, November and December.
- 3

Connect social discovery to retail

Creator content can generate awareness, research and site visits. Link content to retailer destinations and measure clicks, add-to-cart and sales.
- 4

Adapt food and beverage strategy

Protect holiday occasions while addressing GLP-1-driven interest in protein, produce, smaller sizes, hydration and lower-sugar choices.

MEASURE WHAT CHANGES

Track awareness, engagement, clicks, add-to-cart, sales lift and iROAS across the full path from creator content to commerce.

Source: SheSpeaks 2026 Holiday Shopping Survey, n=1,012. Percentages rounded.

The Resilient Holiday Shopper

2026 Holiday Shopping Survey

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

SheSpeaks surveyed 1,012 U.S. community members about their holiday mindset, spending plans and shopping behaviors. Results are shown as descriptive findings. Comparisons with 2025 use closely matched questions and are labeled when wording changed. Percentages are rounded.

Questions?

Reach out to
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