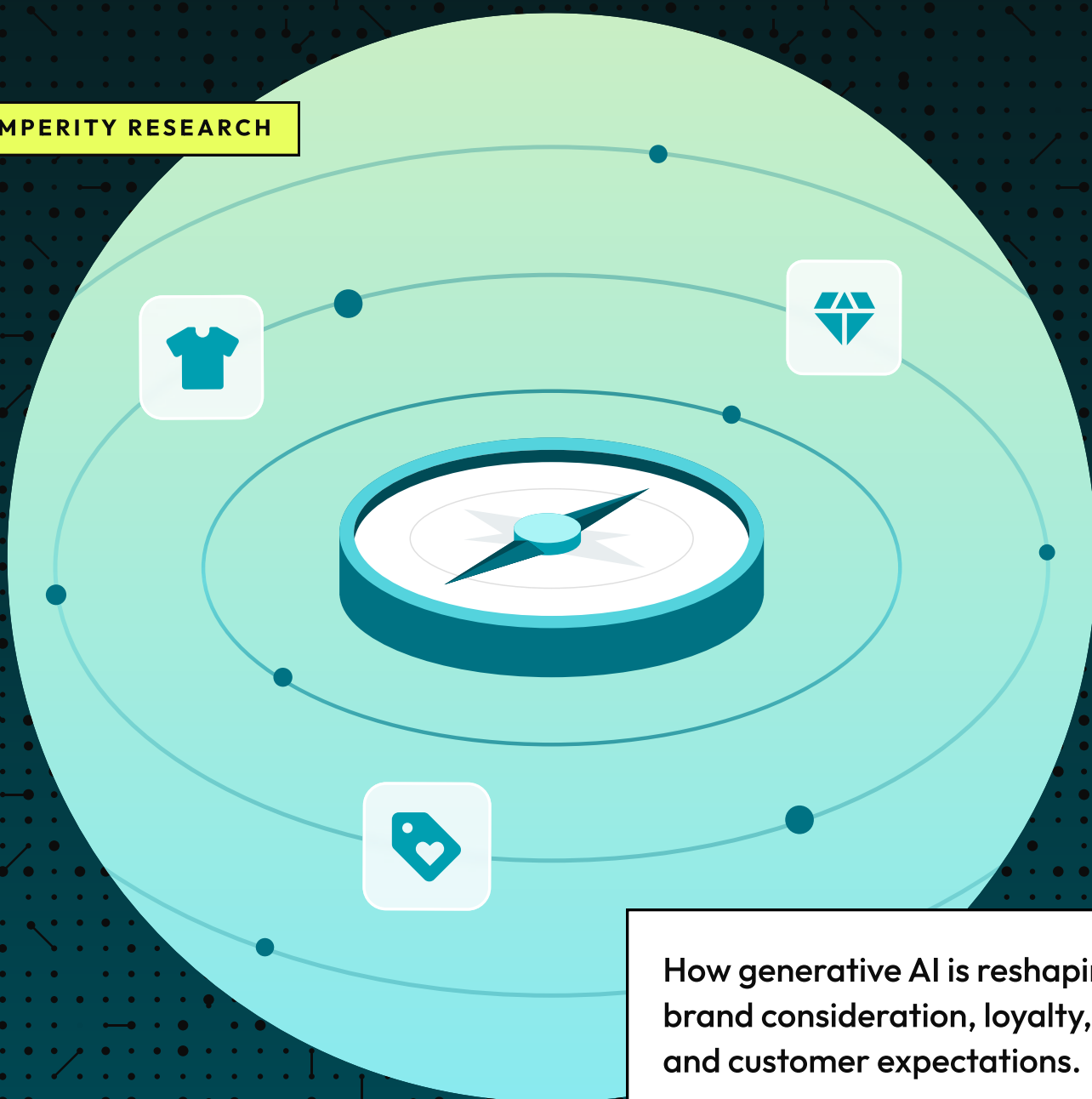


The 2026 Consumer Priorities Report: The New Rules of Loyalty in the Age of AI

AMPERITY RESEARCH



How generative AI is reshaping brand consideration, loyalty, and customer expectations.

AI is changing how consumers find and compare brands, replacing traditional internet searches with quick, concise summaries and direct links to recommended vendors.

This transformation is beginning to level the playing field — allowing smaller competitors to challenge established brands who previously relied on rankings and reputation to stay ahead.

AI-powered shopping is also reshaping traditional brand loyalty. Instead of sticking with preferred brands, consumers are placing their trust in tools that treat every purchase as a fresh calculation. To keep customers coming back, brands need to build relationships that override AI recommendations and offer rewards that encourage loyalty.

Despite the evolving consumer environment, one thing hasn't changed. **Personalization remains as important as ever when it comes to building trust and deeper customer relationships.** If anything, AI has raised the bar even higher. Buyers now expect highly relevant recommendations delivered at the right moment, all while maintaining data transparency. When brands fail to meet these standards, personalization can do more harm than good.

For today's brands, AI presents a challenge but also an opportunity. The 2026 Consumer Priorities Report, a survey of 1,000 U.S. consumers, shows how organizations that adapt to shifting consumer behavior and deliver **personalized experiences** can ride ahead of the competition. With insights into how real consumers think about loyalty, the report empowers leaders to take bold action that will set their brand up for success.

Tony Alike Owens
CEO, Amperity

KEY FINDINGS

Nearly half (45%) of retailers are using AI daily or several times per week. Only 16% are not currently using the technology at all. Sales, marketing, and customer support are the business areas most likely to use AI.

AI is influencing purchase decisions.

80% of AI users said they used tools including ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini to research products, plan travel, and compare services. 80% act on recommendations provided by generative AI by clicking links or making purchases and bookings.

Brand matters, but it isn't enough.

Fewer than 23% of consumers now go directly to brands they know without considering AI recommendations. 60% said that AI had led them to choose a brand they hadn't heard of or wouldn't have considered. Brands can no longer rely on name recognition alone to keep customers coming back.

Consumers want to be rewarded for their loyalty.

Loyalty strategies, such as memberships and points programs, are the single most important factor driving customer loyalty. Brands can also increase loyalty by delivering consistent customer experiences and offers in real-time.

There's a right way to personalize.

Personalization is likely to backfire if brands overstep the mark. 58% of survey respondents said "creepy" personalization makes them less likely to choose a brand. Notably, only 4% of consumers report never receiving mistimed, irrelevant, or invasive recommendations. Brands that get personalization right will stand out from the crowd.

Transparency and trust drive engagement.

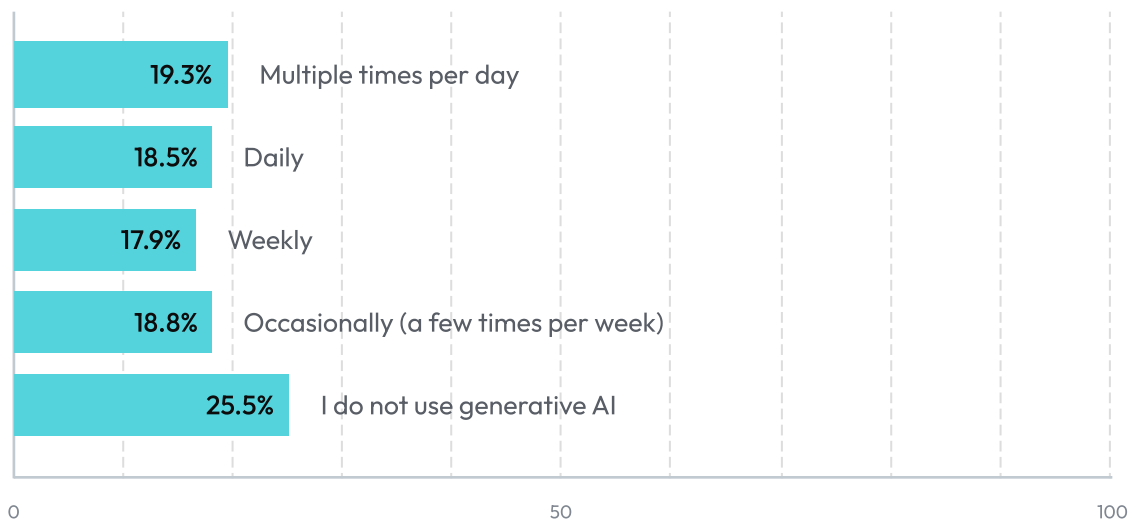
78% of respondents said they were somewhat or much more likely to engage with personalized experiences if they trusted how the retailer used their data. A similar proportion (75%) are somewhat or much more loyal to brands if they're transparent about how they use customer data.

AI Is Changing How People Choose

Three-quarters (74.5%) of consumers use GenAI tools to some extent, with 18.5% using them daily and 19.3% multiple times per day.

For many, GenAI has entirely replaced traditional internet searches when researching products or comparing services. For everyone else, the influence AI has on purchase decisions is growing.

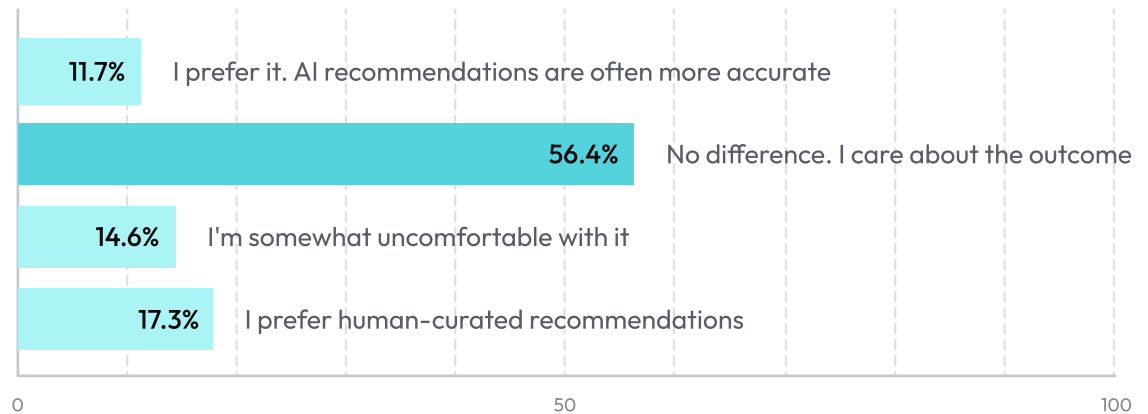
- How frequently do you use generative AI (i.e., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini)?



Of the survey respondents who use GenAI, 79.9% turn to the tools when comparing products, planning travel, and choosing service providers. Consumers aren't just using AI to gather information; they're also acting on its recommendations. 80% said they sometimes or often click links or make purchases and bookings based on AI-generated research.

Brands that use AI to generate recommendations don't need to worry about damaging trust. Over half (56.4%) of survey respondents said it made no difference to them whether a brand used AI to personalize experiences if it improved outcomes.

- If a brand's personalized recommendations are generated by AI, how does that affect your experience?

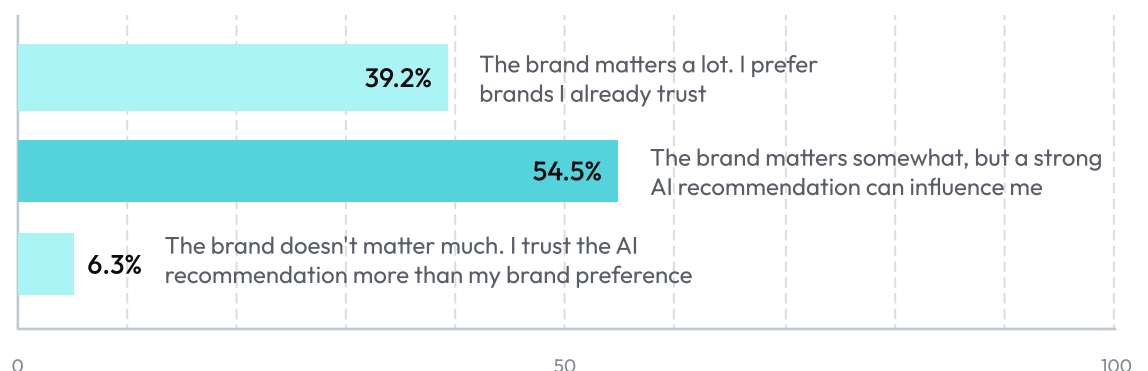


Speed and ease of use are the main reasons why consumers like using generative AI to research or make decisions. *"It can compare prices and find the best deals fast."* said one survey respondent. *"It's fast and convenient, helping me compare options quickly and giving clear summaries that make decision-making easier,"* said another.

AI is incredibly important at the discovery phase, but brand still matters when it's time to make a purchase. Only 6.3% said that they trust AI recommendations more than their brand preferences.

However, AI does put brand loyalty to the test: 54.5% of consumers said a strong AI recommendation could influence them when choosing a product or service.

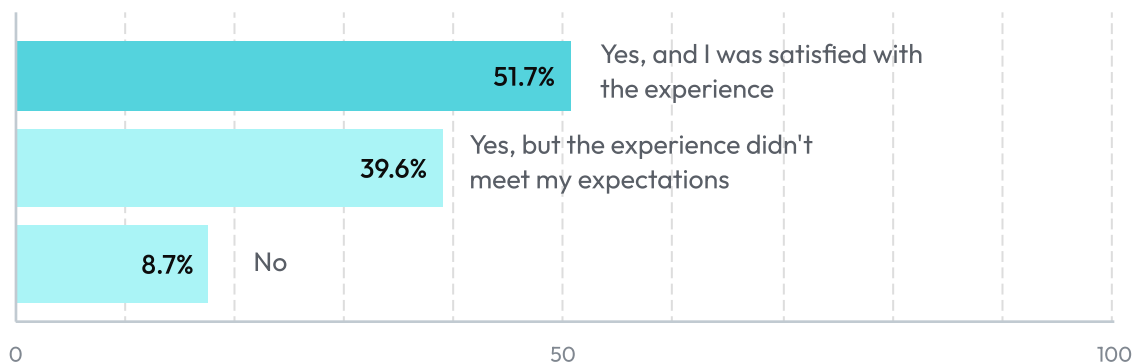
- When a generative AI tool recommends a product or service, how much does the brand matter to you?



Most customers are willing to try something new, even if it means moving away from a trusted brand. *"It gives me additional ideas to research when comparing options that I might not have thought about,"* shared one survey respondent. *"It provides an in-depth description and explanation that helps me make an informed decision,"* said another.

AI isn't letting consumers down. Over half (51.7%) said that GenAI had led them to choose a brand they hadn't heard of or wouldn't have considered before, and that they were satisfied with the experience. This is reflected in the proportion of consumers who now rely on AI when choosing a brand. Just 23% said they go directly to a brand they already know without taking AI recommendations into account.

- Has generative AI ever led you to choose a brand you hadn't heard of or wouldn't have considered before?



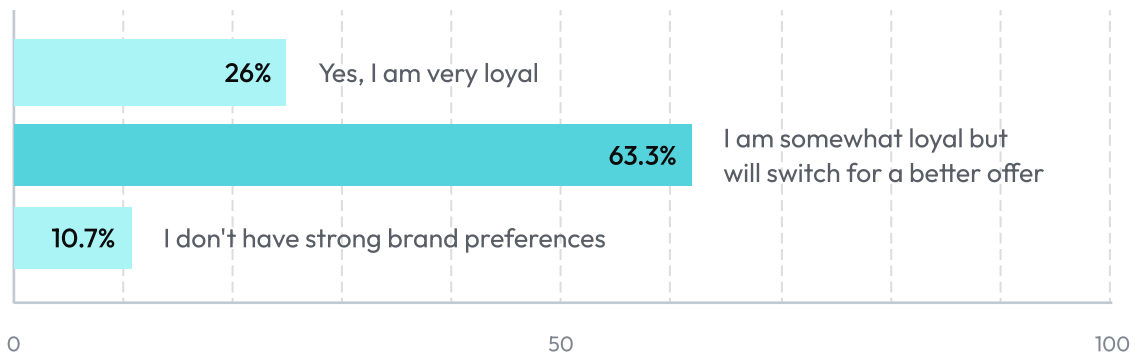
AI has moved from influencing decisions to driving behavior change. The implication is clear: **if AI doesn't recommend a brand, consumers won't consider it.**

Loyalty Is Increasingly Conditional

Shoppers still have preferred brands, but retailers can no longer rely on loyalty alone. While around a quarter (26%) of respondents described themselves as being "very loyal" to brands, 63.3% said they would switch for a better offer.

There's a strong incentive for brands to serve personalized experiences to their biggest fans. Half (50%) of "very loyal" consumers said personalized experiences were very important when choosing a brand, compared to 17% of shoppers at lower loyalty levels.

- Do you consider yourself loyal to your favorite brands and service providers (e.g., retailers, airlines, hotels)?



Competition for loyalty is fierce. In a typical category, like [retail](#) or [travel](#), most respondents (64.1%) said they were truly loyal to just two or three brands. Fewer than one in five (19.4%) are loyal to four brands or more. This creates a "winner-takes-all" environment where brands must compete for the top spot or miss out entirely.

Consumers stay loyal to their preferred brands when they offer quality, value, and positive customer experiences. *"The brands I stay loyal to have proven to be my favorite choices that meet all my standards,"* one person said. Another explained their loyalty was based on *"proven experiences of reliability and good value."*

Loyalty programs came out on top when consumers asked which factors kept them loyal to a brand. While influencers and celebrity endorsements help customers discover brands, they don't appear to keep people coming back.

● Which of the following factors most increases your likelihood to choose or stay loyal to a brand?

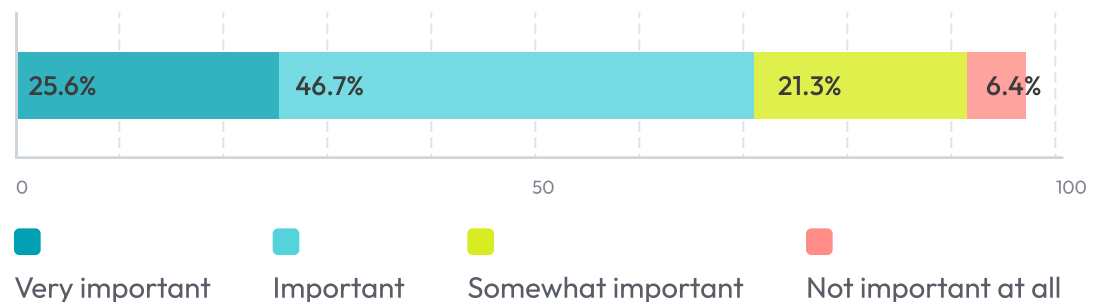
- 1 Loyalty programs (points/rewards) (3.48)
- 2 Consistent experience across channels (app, web, store) (3.58)
- 3 Confidence that my data is used responsibly (3.87)
- 4 Real-time offers while I'm browsing or shopping (3.99)
- 5 Recognition of my past purchases or history (4.16)
- 6 Personalized offers based on my behavior (4.38)
- 7 AI-powered recommendations (5.94)
- 8 Influencer or celebrity endorsements (6.6)

With loyalty in short supply, brands must focus on what matters most: **rewards schemes and relevant, real-time offers and recommendations.**

Personalization Matters for Loyalty, But Brands Often Get it Wrong

Nearly **three-quarters (72.3%)** of survey respondents said that **personalized experiences were somewhat or very important** when choosing a brand. Just 6.4% said they were not important at all.

- How important are personalized experiences (recommendations, offers tailored to you) when choosing a brand?

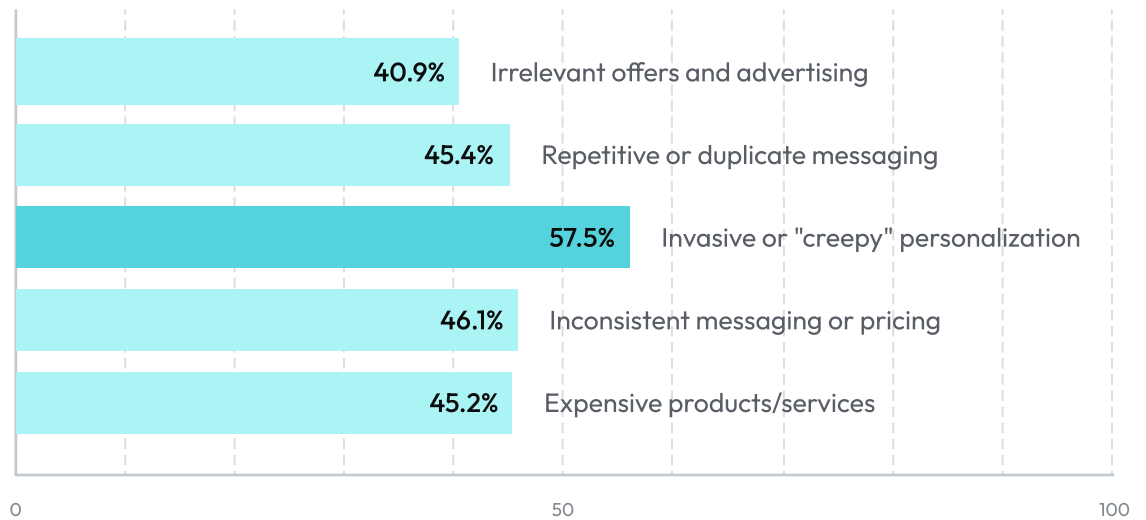


Brands need to move beyond lightly tailored product recommendations. 56% of consumers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I prefer brands to remember me, my preferences, and past purchases," while half (50.1%) said they were more loyal to brands that demonstrate they know them through personalized experiences.

Personalization is important, but many brands are still getting it wrong. Only 15% of survey respondents said the offers and recommendations they receive are often genuinely relevant. Almost a quarter (23.3%) said they were rarely or never relevant.

While shoppers want tailored experiences, brands are walking a fine line: 57.5% of respondents said that invasive personalization would make them less likely to choose a brand.

- Which of the following make you less likely to choose a brand?
(Select all that apply)



Balancing personalization with privacy should also be top of mind. 78% of consumers said they were somewhat or much more likely to engage with personalized experiences if they trusted how their data was being used. That increased engagement appears to increase loyalty: 74.9% of respondents said they were somewhat or much more loyal to brands that are transparent about how they use customer data.

- Would you be more likely to engage with personalized experiences if you trusted how your data was being used?



- If a brand is transparent about how they use your data, how does that impact your loyalty?



Adapting to the New Normal

To gain attention and build loyalty, emerging brands must be able to reach consumers empowered by AI. Even market leaders need to adapt to the new normal in order to maintain their position in 2026 and beyond. Amperity offers a way forward.

With Amperity, brands can build unified customer profiles and deliver the relevant, real-time recommendations consumers are calling for. Amperity's identity resolution also helps brands find the right balance between personalization and privacy. Consent decisions link to the right customer profiles across channels, every time.

The results of this survey confirm that reward schemes drive consumer loyalty. By building a strong data foundation with Amperity, brands can gain a better understanding of their customers and make their [loyalty programs](#) more rewarding. Amperity also helps brands determine which perks lead to repeat customers and fine-tune offers that drive revenue.

Starting today, leaders need to focus on what matters most to consumers. Elevating rewards schemes and improving personalization are the first steps towards building loyalty in the age of AI. The brands winning in 2026 won't be the ones with the most data. They'll be the ones who can act on it the moment it matters.

Methodology and Demographics

Amperity asked 1,000 American consumers aged 18–65 how AI is shaping the way they shop and what they expect from brands in 2026. All 50 U.S. states were represented in the pool of respondents.

The survey was conducted in April 2026 via Pollfish.



Amperity's Customer Data Cloud empowers brands to transform raw customer data into strategic business assets with unprecedented speed and accuracy.

Through AI-powered identity resolution, customizable data models, and intelligent automation, Amperity helps technologists eliminate data bottlenecks and accelerate business impact.

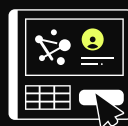
More than 400 leading brands worldwide—across industries including retail, travel and hospitality, restaurants, and financial services—rely on Amperity to drive customer insights and revenue growth.

Founded in 2016, Amperity operates globally with offices in Seattle, New York City, London, and Melbourne.



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