

THE RISE OF SOCIAL COMMERCE:

TURNING TECH-DRIVEN BROWSERS
INTO INFLUENCED BUYERS



WELCOME NOTE

Over the past five years, SOTI has researched the retail sector to uncover how the sector is transforming and adopting technology both in-store and online, as well as the key drivers influencing these decisions. Our 2022 report, *From Clicks to Ships: Navigating the Global Supply Chain Crisis*, identified how buyer behaviors have shifted based on key global events that altered how, where and when people shop. By 2023, evidence suggested 46% of shoppers would rather shop online than in-store. This trend emphasized the growing strength of e-commerce and confirmed that the hybrid shopping model—combining in-store and online experiences, also known as omnichannel—was here to stay.

Fast forward to 2025, this year's retail report reveals that today's consumers are leveraging emerging technologies and new purchasing channels more than ever, expecting retailers to step up their game on data privacy and security. An underlying theme is that consumers want more than just a transactional relationship, they crave transparency and personalization. They expect clear insights into their orders and personal data, along with support that is readily available, regardless of the channel used.



Stephanie Lopinski, VP, Global Marketing

This report also highlights the growing popularity of social commerce as a retail channel, where brands harness the power of social media and influencers to showcase their products on a variety of social platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok, to reach their audiences 24/7. However, this trend is not without its own unique set of challenges that retailers must tackle head-on.

For the first time, Japan is included in our retail research as we explore the three key themes shaping retail in 2025: the rise of social commerce, the growing demand for AI-driven personalization and the need for retailers to adopt a security-first approach—particularly with payments across social platforms. The data suggests retailers should look at all the technology gaps, both in-store and online, to better guide and support consumers. By doing so, innovative retailers can foster loyalty regardless of where and how their prospective consumers shop.

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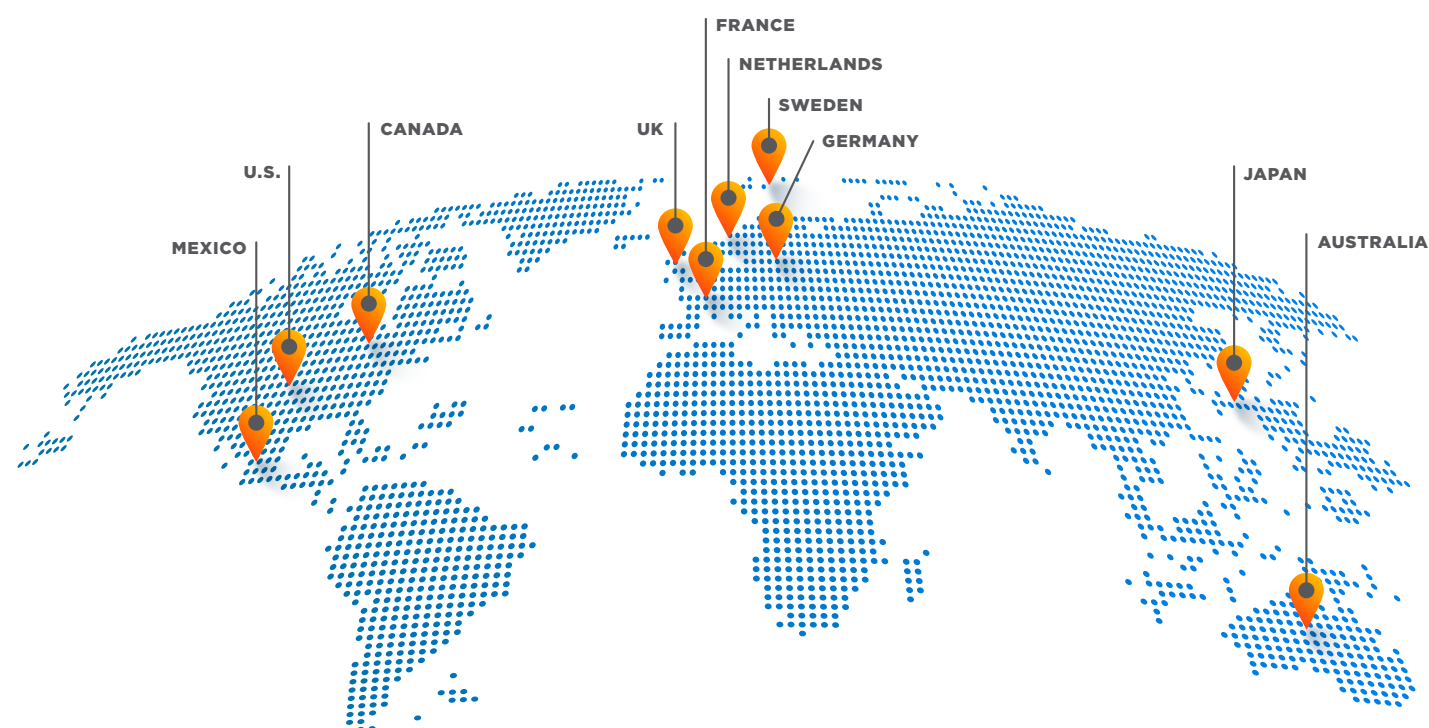
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METHODOLOGY

SOTI's 2025 retail report surveyed 12,000 consumers, aged 18 to 65, across 10 countries to uncover key insights into the evolving retail landscape. The core markets included 2,000 respondents in the U.S. and the UK, and 1,000 respondents in Canada, Mexico, Germany, France, Sweden, the Netherlands, Australia and Japan.



KEY FINDINGS



62%

of Gen Z respondents say purchasing items advertised on social media is a great way of keeping up with the latest trends.

82%

of consumers have at least one concern about **entering personal details online** or into **in-store devices**.

73%

of those shopping via social commerce say they **experienced at least one** issue, such as **long delivery times** and **poor communication**.

67%

of consumers **worry about data security** when shopping on social media.

64%

of consumers prefer **personalized recommendations** from retailers **based on past purchases**, a significant increase from 30% last year.

60%

of consumers **prefer shopping** with retailers that provide a **personalized service**.

52%

of consumers prefer to shop with online retailers that use **technology to personalize** their shopping experience.

50%

of consumers will not mind if **retailers use AI** to deliver a more **personalized shopping experience**.

47%

of consumers **support using AI** for better in-store product recommendations.



THE RISE OF SOCIAL COMMERCE: SHOPPING MEETS SOCIAL MEDIA

With rapid advancements in technology and smartphones, convenience has become a major driver of consumer behavior. Today, more consumers than ever are using their phones to shop, with **65%** of consumers globally saying it is the most convenient way to make purchases. This shift is fueling the rise of new trends like social commerce: **49%** of consumers say buying products through social media is a quick and easy way to stay up to date with the latest styles. Consumers also indicated they are influenced by retailer recommendations or by seeing items pushed to their personalized channels on social media.

Scrolling through social feeds, swiping image carousels and watching short videos are now popular ways for consumers to discover and purchase products. These experiences are often fueled by targeted promotions or influencers and tailored to individual interests based on browsing history, algorithms and past purchases. Social platforms like Instagram and TikTok have embraced this shift, enabling seamless in-app shopping and transforming social media into a crucial e-commerce hub for retailers.

This growing trend of social commerce is particularly evident across different generations. For example, **26%** of Gen Z respondents have already embraced social commerce, compared to **6%** of Baby Boomers. As younger generations lead the charge, the rise of on-device mobile payment solutions from Apple, Google, Samsung and others amplifies this shift, positioning social media platforms as a considerable growth channel for retailers. To maintain brand loyalty and meet evolving consumer expectations, retailers must optimize their operations and fulfillment channels and keep up with the rapidly changing landscape.

However, as social commerce rises, it also brings several challenges. Here are the key issues consumers face with social commerce:

Consumers purchased something through a social media site (i.e. TikTok or Instagram) in the past six months:

Item took a long time to be delivered	🌐 35%	🇩🇪 42%	🇮🇹 38%	🇨🇦 37%	🇺🇸 35%
Item received looked very different from the one I ordered	🌐 25%	🇩🇪 38%	🇺🇸 29%	🇸🇪 27%	🇮🇹 26%
I received little or no communication about where my item was	🌐 25%	🇸🇪 29%	🇺🇸 28%	🇺🇸 27%	
I asked to be told when the product was available but never heard from the retailer again	🌐 21%	🇩🇪 32%	🇩🇪 30%	🇨🇦 23%	
I could not get anyone at the retailer to help me while I struggled with the tech	🌐 17%	🇩🇪 24%	🇨🇦 20%	🇺🇸 19%	
Website or app kept crashing	🌐 17%	🇺🇸 22%	🇩🇪 18%	🇮🇹 17%	
Item was never delivered	🌐 14%	🇺🇸 19%	🇩🇪 16%	🇮🇹 15%	

Predicting supply and demand in social retail can be challenging. The demand can be immediate, placing significant strain on the technology infrastructure used. This makes it difficult for retailers to provide accurate, up-to-date inventory in real-time across retail channels. Website and app crashes can lead to major disruptions in order placement and fulfillment. In fact, **22%** of consumers in the U.S., and **18%** of consumers in the Netherlands, experienced a website or app crash when trying to make a social commerce purchase, both countries exceeded the global average of **17%**.

From websites to apps, even basic technology components need essential management to create a smooth and accurate social commerce experience. Establishing a robust infrastructure capable of handling anticipated demand is imperative for retail success.

SOCIAL COMMERCE IS FAILING IN FULFILLMENT & SECURITY

The convenience of social commerce is on the rise, and retailers are capitalizing on growing trends and the demand for immediate purchase gratification. However, they must find a balance between offering a seamless 'instant' shopping experience and implementing robust security measures. Globally, **25%** of consumers have expressed security concerns when following purchase links from social media, with Gen Z (**28%**) and Millennials (**26%**) being the most concerned. While **67%** of global consumers say they are completely comfortable using third-party payment services such as PayPal, **67%** of respondents worry about purchasing through social media services.

Retailers that use mobility management solutions to enhance online experiences for consumer devices while tightening retailer app security will empower early adopters to shop confidently through social commerce. As consumers build their confidence, it is essential to innovate and experiment, especially since **51%** of consumers expressed interest in technologies that allow them to upload photos to virtually try on glasses and clothes or visualize how furniture would look in their homes. This eagerness for immersive shopping experiences presents a valuable opportunity for retailers to engage consumers and drive sales.

While social commerce offers numerous conveniences, fulfillment and security issues remain significant barriers. The fear of shopping via social media is particularly pronounced, with **84%** of consumers in Mexico expressing concern, followed by **74%** in Canada and **73%** in Australia. Retailers advertising products through social media must recognize that effective targeting should be combined with robust security measures that protect consumers and instill confidence in their shopping experience.

By addressing the concerns of social commerce and continuing to innovate with immersive technologies such as virtual try-ons, retailers can effectively tap into this growing retail channel and meet evolving consumer expectations.

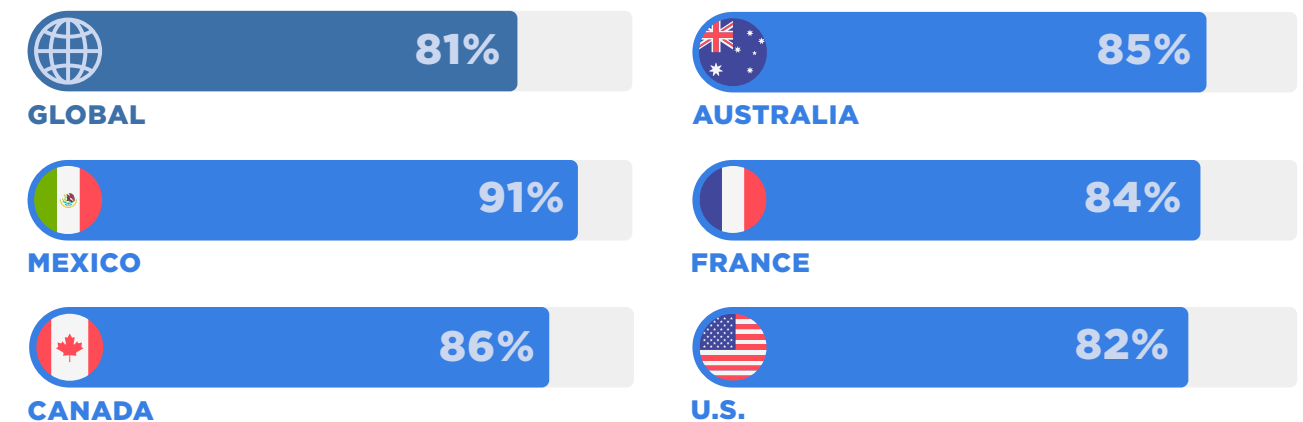


THE BUYING JOURNEY: PERSONALIZATION AT A CROSSROADS

Today's consumers no longer follow a linear path from online research to purchase; they explore every option—shopping in-store, online, through mobile apps and social platforms. The modern consumer expects a unique experience from each touchpoint. This fluid, hybrid shopping behavior has transformed omnichannel retail from merely being present at every touchpoint to creating a connected, seamless experience throughout the entire consumer journey. Retailers must adapt to ensure that no matter how or where a consumer engages, their experience remains consistent, cohesive and aligned with their preferences. For instance, failing to deliver products on time without strong and constant communication throughout the journey could mean losing loyal consumers to competitors.

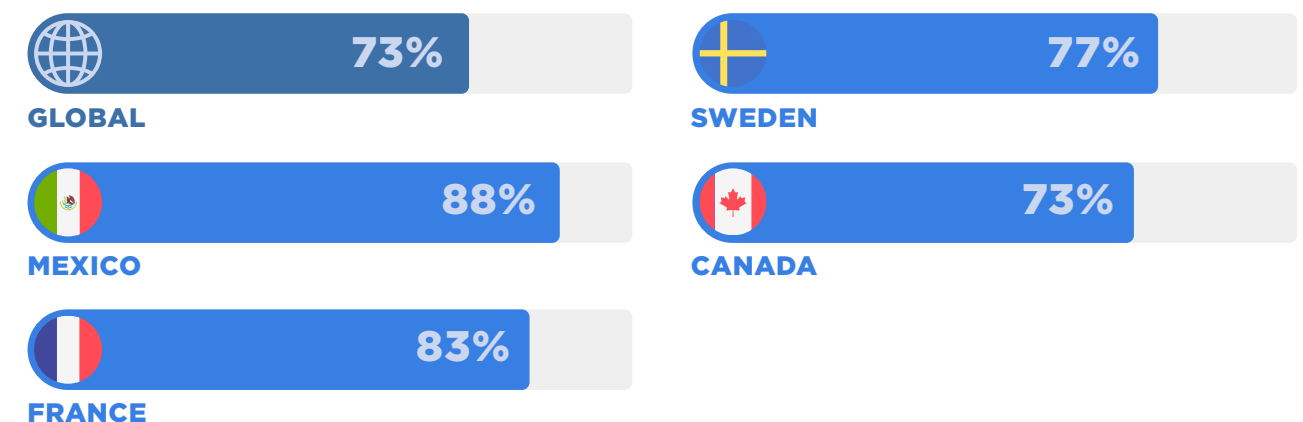
In-store shopping is driven by speed:

When deciding when and how to shop in-store, how important is it for you to find the product and make a quick purchase?



In-store shopping is driven by convenience:

When deciding when and how to shop in-store, how important is the following choice of delivery options (i.e., home delivery, in-store collection, locker collection, etc.)?



Similarly, consumers purchasing online expect more than just convenience. They demand both speed and complete visibility throughout the delivery process. Knowing exactly when packages will arrive and being able to track them in real-time are critical factors in their choice of retailer. To stay competitive, retailers must meet these expectations and improve their communication throughout the process.

Online consumers want fast and efficient delivery:



80%

globally said speed of delivery times is an important factor when considering where to shop online.



AUSTRALIA
85%



FRANCE
85%



CANADA
84%



MEXICO
84%



UK
83%

Online consumers want visibility into order processing:



79%

globally want to track their purchase as it is being delivered.



MEXICO
88%



AUSTRALIA
86%



CANADA
84%



FRANCE
83%



UK
82%

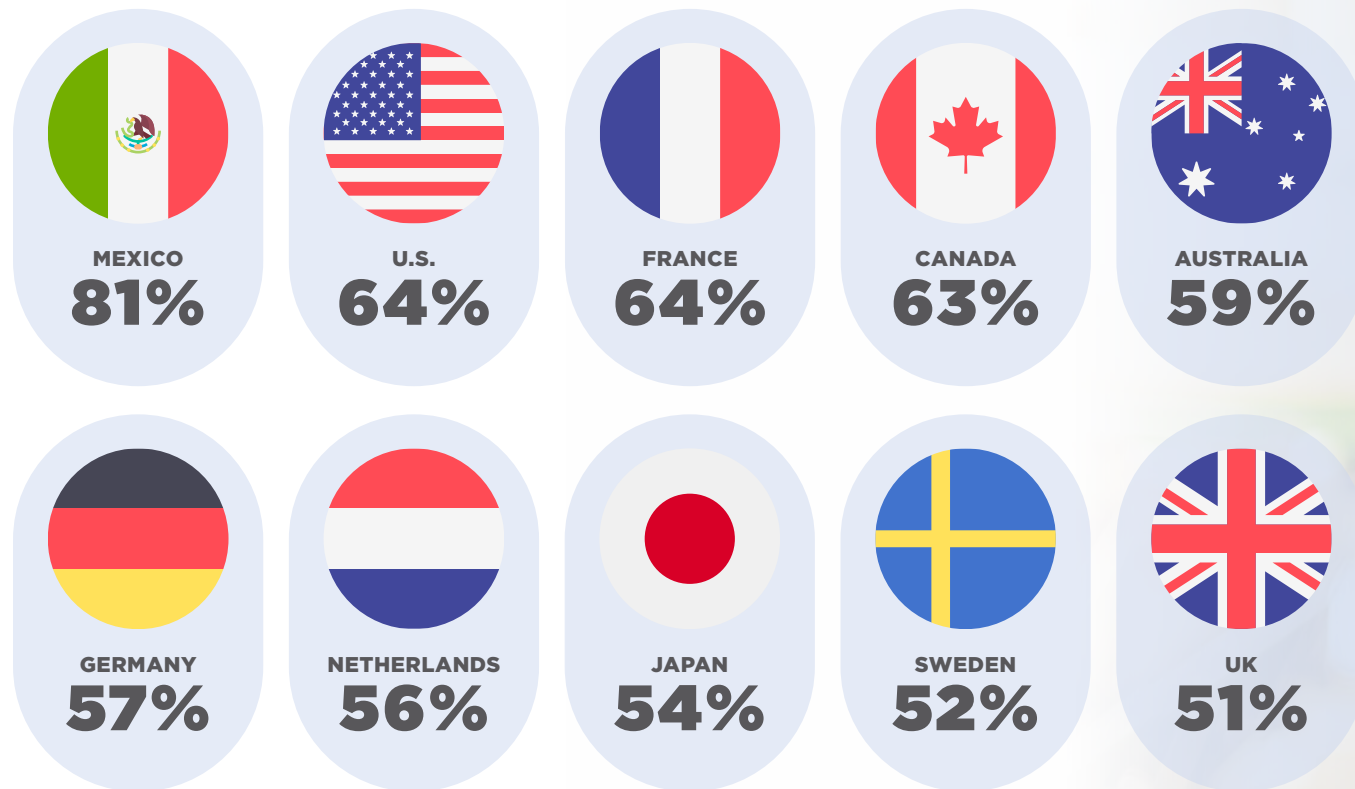


U.S.
82%

Whether in-store or online, **60%** of global consumers prefer shopping with retailers that provide a personalized shopping experience, favoring retailers that deliver tailored interactions. Globally, **53%** of consumers are more inclined to shop with stores that use technology to enhance in-person shopping experiences. This was highest in Mexico at **68%** and the lowest in the Netherlands at **44%**.

Consumers shop with retailers that provide a personalized shopping experience, whether online or in-store.

 **60%**

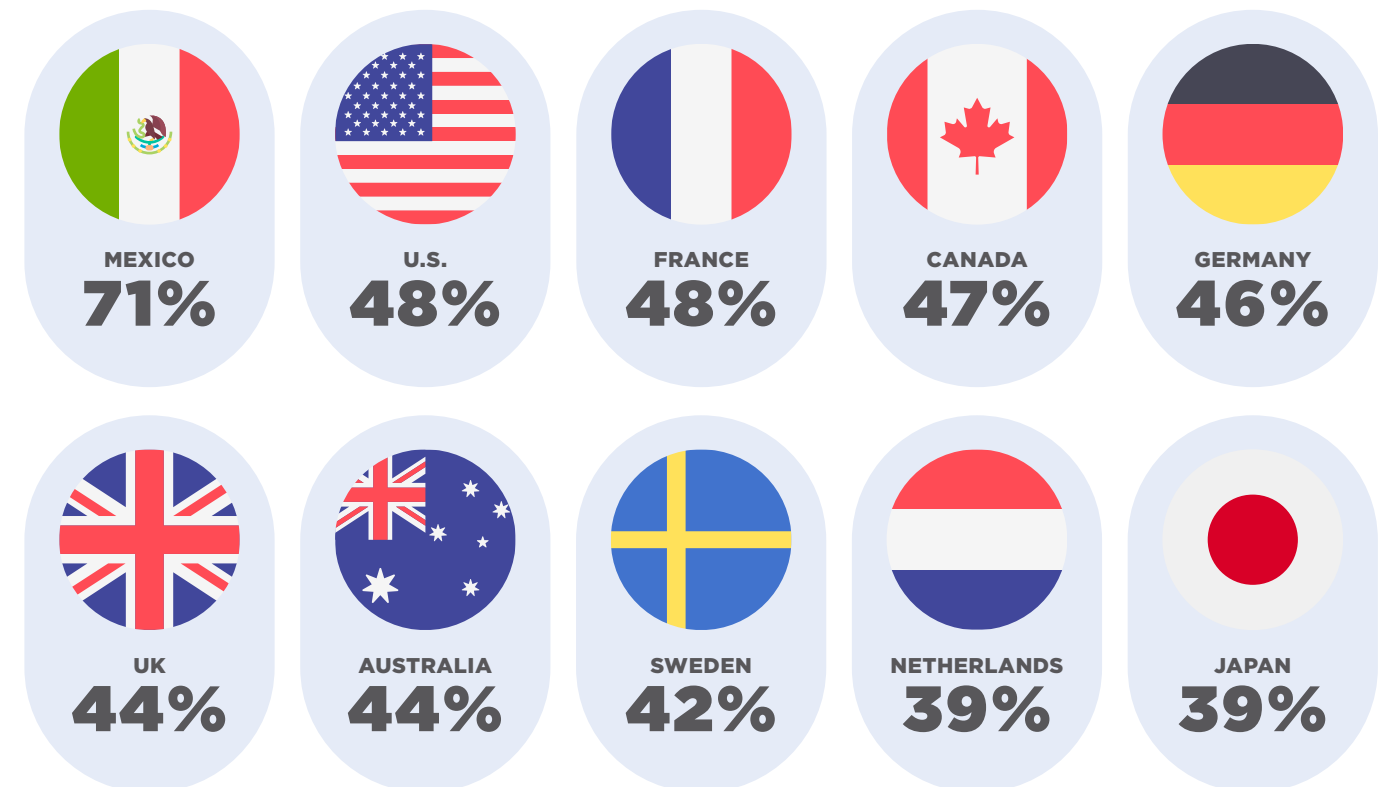


BALANCING PERSONALIZATION & AI: BUILDING LOYALTY

While consumers crave tailored experiences, many feel retailers are not delivering on this promise—personalization is falling short. If a retailer notices high return rates due to sizing issues or discrepancies between online images and the actual product, addressing these areas becomes crucial for consumer satisfaction and building trust.

Consumers believe retailers should leverage AI to improve the way items are recommended to them.

 **47%**



The data demonstrates that consumers are comfortable with retailers leveraging new technologies such as AI. For instance, **49%** of global consumers would like retailers to use AI to allow them to search for items in-store using images. Additionally, **43%** of global consumers believe retailers should use AI to deliver personalized marketing and tailored offers.

As retailers rapidly adopt technologies that enhance personalization, prioritizing security is crucial. Safeguarding consumer data and ensuring the secure use of technology for everyday services—such as product searches on mobile devices and facilitating mobile payments—should remain a top priority in this fast-evolving landscape. Instead of waiting for the technology to reach maturity, retailers should iterate and adapt to keep pace with advancements, ensuring they are putting the right guardrails in place to protect consumers.

Personalization can be as simple as offering recommendations based on past purchases, a practice now welcomed by nearly two-thirds (**64%**) of consumers globally online—a remarkable increase from **35%** since the 2024 retail report. Consumers are becoming more comfortable with smart, real-time advice that guides their purchasing decisions. Retailers can further enhance the shopping experience by anticipating consumer needs. For instance, **62%** of consumers appreciate being notified when they are about to run out of a favorite product, a significant increase from **24%** in the 2024 retail report.

Beyond traditional loyalty programs focused on point collection, personalization can reshape how retailers approach consumer loyalty. Globally, **65%** of consumers express interest in a membership that offers tailored deals based on their individual interests and needs. This could be further enhanced through personalized text notifications and alerts sent directly to consumers' mobile devices, giving them an exclusive first look at new products. By harnessing AI, retailers can bridge the gap and improve product recommendations based on past purchases and preferences, ensuring a more personalized and relevant shopping journey. This can involve recommending complementary items to enhance a purchase, providing detailed information on size and fit, or offering a clearer color description.



Globally, 65% of consumers express interest in a membership that offers tailored deals based on their individual interests and needs.

PROTECTING CONSUMER DATA: A NON-NEGOTIABLE FOR RETAILERS

As the digital shopping landscape continues to adapt to meet consumer expectations, retailers must prioritize instilling confidence in consumers when it comes to the protection of their data throughout the purchasing journey. Consumers are showing signs of reduced confidence when making payments via smartphones and in-store "tapping." Similarly, entering personal details into an in-store retail device raises significant security concerns.



Globally, **82%** had at least one concern about entering personal details online or into an in-store device.



Globally, **61%** are nervous about small retailers being able to keep their personal and payment data secure.

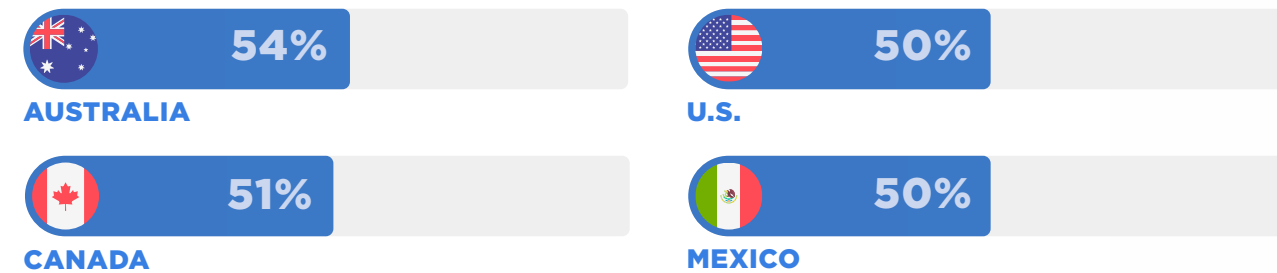
Half of global consumers worry about the security measures retailers have in place to protect their online transactions. This fear is particularly pronounced in Australia (**59%**), Mexico (**56%**) and Canada (**55%**), while fewer—but still a significant amount—also share this concern in France and Sweden (**41%**) and the Netherlands (**40%**).

Such perceptions heighten fears as consumers weigh the risks of sharing their information against the convenience offered by online shopping. Despite the desire for personalized shopping, **71%** of global consumers have concerns about the security of their personal details when shopping online. They seek the convenience and tailored offerings personalization provides, yet continue to remain cautious about the potential repercussions of sharing their information. Bridging this gap between personalization and security is fundamental in fostering consumer trust.

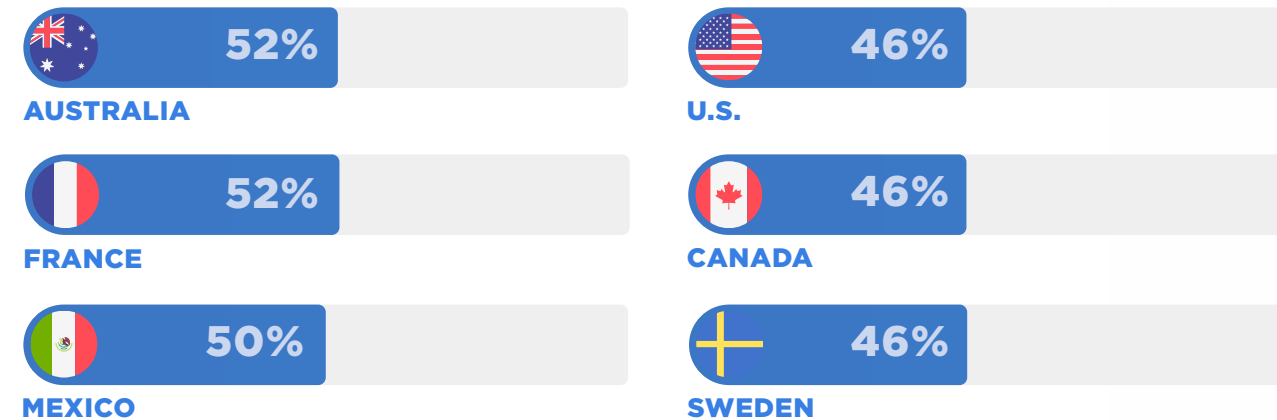
DATA SECURITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

As consumers grow more familiar with how technology works, they recognize that the risks extend beyond the initial purchase. Nearly half (45%) of global consumers worry about how retailers store their data when they buy and return items or save details for repeat purchases.

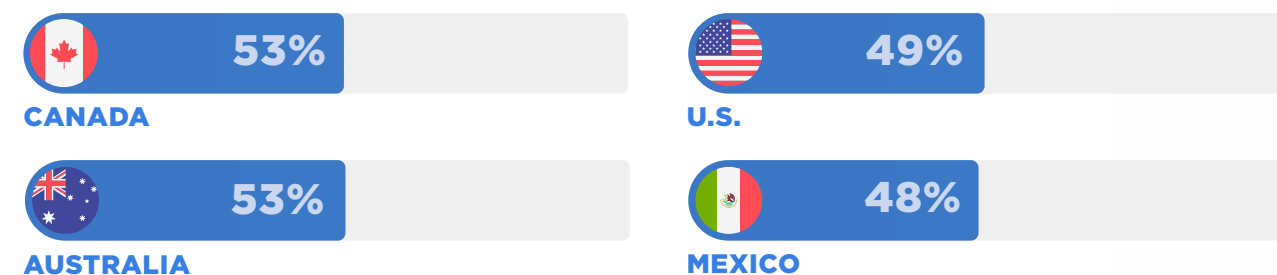
Regionally, consumers are more concerned about how retailers store their data when they buy and return items:



Regionally, consumers show greater concerns than global averages about how their data is handled when a retailer saves details for repeat purchases:



Furthermore, 44% globally are concerned about who is responsible for protecting their data when using third-party payment providers:



THE FEAR OF FRAUD

When credit cards or other personally identifiable information falls into the wrong hands, consumers understand the risks of identity theft and fraudulent transactions. While **71%** globally have never experienced online fraud when shopping, a concerning **29%** of consumers have fallen victim to fraud.

The fear of fraud is prevalent among regional consumers, as more than one-quarter (**28%**) of consumers in France and Mexico worry about fraud every time they make an online payment, followed closely by Australia at **27%** and the U.S. at **23%**.

For many consumers, trust plays a significant role in their online shopping decisions, particularly when dealing with unfamiliar retailers. The data reveals that **32%** of global consumers express concern about fraud when making purchases from retailers they have not used before.

The size of a retailer is also a factor when it comes to consumer trust.

Globally,

61%

of consumers are concerned about small retailers' ability to keep their personal and payment data secure.

Globally,

20%

of consumers worry about fraud when making online payments to independent retailers, while only **11%** worry when shopping online with retail chains.

To address consumer concerns and create a more secure shopping environment, retailers should clearly communicate security practices, such as encryption and secure payment methods. They should also educate consumers about phishing scams, strong passwords and other ways to stay safe online.



THE BUSINESS IMPACT OF RETAIL SECURITY CONCERNS

When shopping in-store, consumers face cybersecurity risks that can deter them from even entering the store. More than three-quarters (**76%**) of consumers globally say reassurances that a retailer provides about data protection significantly influence their decision to visit the store physically.

As consumers scrutinize shopping channels and payment processes more carefully, their actions can have a direct impact on the retailers' bottom line. For instance, **60%** abandoned an online purchase due to distrust of payment systems.

This adds a critical dimension to the notion of consumer centricity. Beyond making consumers feel that everything they see and do while shopping is designed with their interests in mind, retailers need to bring that same level of obsession to the management of consumer data.



WHAT RETAILERS CAN DO TO ENHANCE SECURITY?

As more information about consumer accounts and orders is managed and shared across devices, there are several steps retailers can take to safeguard consumer data:



Locking down mobile devices, apps and content to prevent unauthorized access to store systems and data.



Implementing multi-factor authentication (MFA) to ensure only specific users can log in.



Enhancing security by applying certificates on devices that require renewal upon expiration. This approach works for both mobile devices and in-store printers.

While it may seem complicated, the right technology can automate this process, simplifying authentication and maintaining security. These measures are not just good business practices but align with the expectations of increasingly security-conscious consumers.



CONCLUSION

The retail landscape is undergoing a transformation driven by the rise of social commerce, AI-powered personalization and an increasing demand for robust data security. Social commerce is no longer a niche; it has become a mainstream retail channel. It presents retailers with an opportunity to engage growing audiences and capitalize on the latest trends in a dynamic mobile shopping environment. However, the rapid adoption of social commerce has exposed weaknesses in fulfillment processes and technology infrastructures that retailers must address to maintain consumer trust and loyalty.

To thrive in this dynamic environment, retailers must deliver secure, seamless and personalized experiences across all touchpoints. Consumers expect consistency, whether shopping in-store, online or via social media—with accurate stock information, reliable delivery and exceptional service. Personalized shopping experiences have emerged as a key differentiator, with **60%** of consumers globally favoring tailored interactions. Retailers that fail to meet these expectations risk losing market share to more agile competitors.

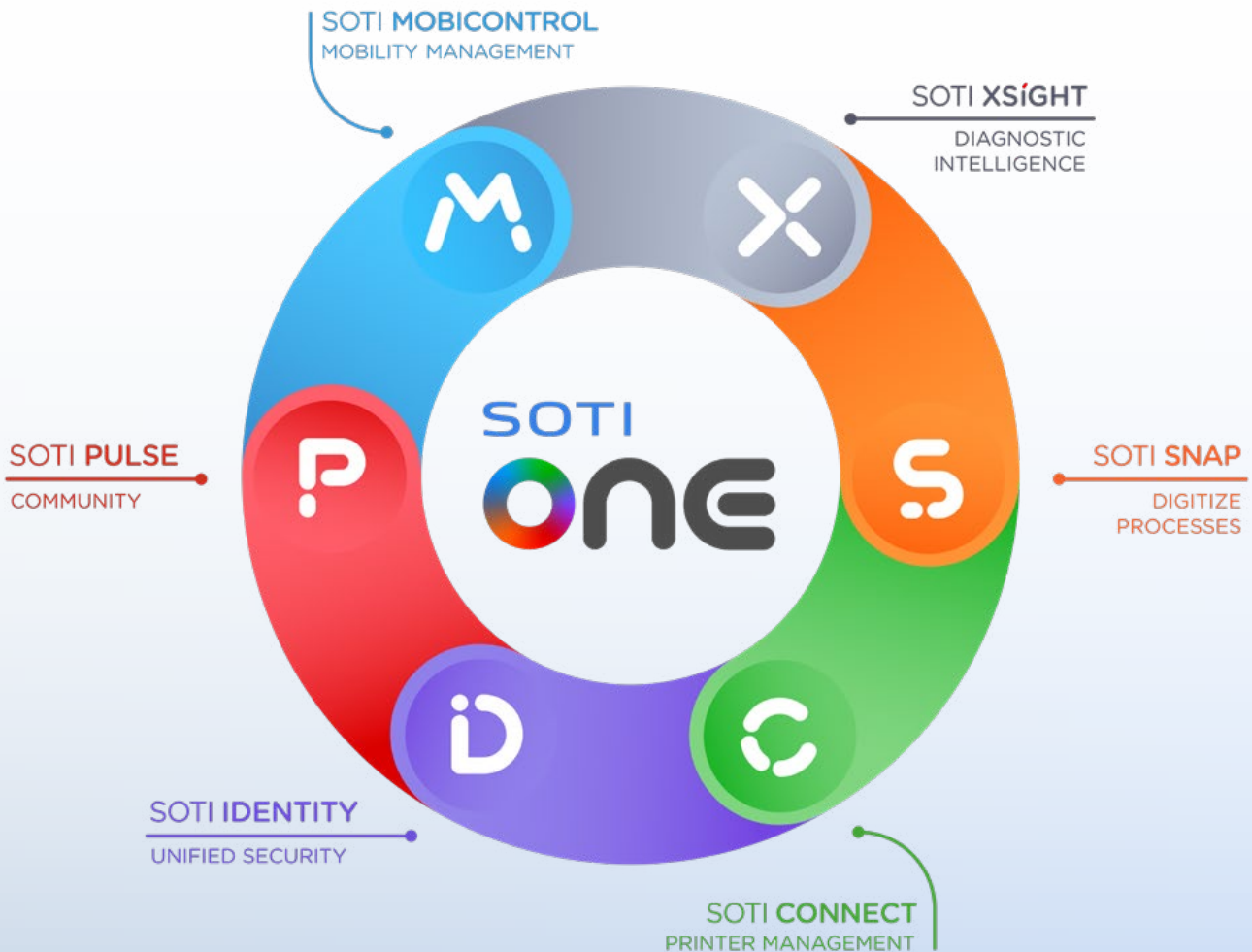
At the same time, the rise of social commerce, particularly among younger, tech-savvy generations like Gen Z, has brought mobile payment solutions and e-commerce within social platforms to the forefront. Yet, with this rapid digital shift comes the challenge of heightened security concerns.

As consumers become increasingly cautious about how retailers manage security risks, the adoption of a security-first mindset is essential. While personalization enhances the shopping journey, consumers are increasingly concerned about the safety of their payment information, particularly when using third-party payment providers or shopping with smaller, lesser-known retailers. This influences consumer behavior, with many abandoning their carts if they feel uncertain about a retailer's secure payment options. To foster trust, retailers must not only invest in mobile management solutions that safeguard customer data but also communicate transparently about their security practices to reassure consumers and prevent abandoned purchases.

In this evolving landscape, the winners will be the retailers that can strike a balance between innovation and security, personalization and privacy. By addressing fulfillment and data protection challenges head-on, and by embracing emerging technologies like AI and mobile payments, forward-thinking brands can create personalized, secure and engaging shopping experiences. Ultimately, future success in retail will require adopting new technologies and thoughtfully integrating them into every touchpoint of the consumer journey, ensuring loyalty, trust and sustained growth in an increasingly competitive market.

ABOUT SOTI

SOTI is a proven innovator and industry leader for simplifying business mobility solutions by making them smarter, faster and more reliable. With SOTI's [innovative portfolio of solutions](#), organizations can trust SOTI to elevate and streamline their mobile operations, maximize their ROI and reduce device downtime. Globally, with over 17,000 customers, SOTI has proven itself to be the go-to mobile platform provider to manage, secure and support business-critical devices. With SOTI's world-class support, enterprises can take mobility to endless possibilities.



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To learn more about the SOTI ONE Platform, [click here](#).

To find out how SOTI can help with your mobile investments, contact us today at sales@soti.net.

SOTI is a proven innovator and industry leader for simplifying business mobility solutions by making them smarter, faster and more reliable. SOTI helps businesses around the world take mobility to endless possibilities.

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