



Shopper
behavior is
moving faster
than retail
readiness



Your customers trust AI more than your website. Here's what that costs you.



Shoppers hold brands accountable for what AI tells them, whether the brand provided the information or not. 58% say their trust drops when an LLM gives them incorrect product information and 16% abandon the purchase entirely.

And 95% never visit a retailer or brand site to check. They turn to search engines, online reviews, friends, and family. Among shoppers aged 18 to 27, 64% are likely to buy based on an AI recommendation without checking it anywhere else.

Retailers and brands built their operations around a shopping journey where the customer would eventually land on a product page and decide on-site. That step barely exists anymore. Shoppers now get their answers from AI before they ever reach a retailer or brand, and they act on those answers quickly.

The data behind these findings comes from **The new discovery engine: How consumers are using AI to find, trust, and choose brands, and what's at risk for those they never see**, a joint research report from Rithum and Retail Dive, surveying 1,046 online shoppers across the U.S. and U.K.

AI shopping is not one behavior

Teams tend to talk about AI-assisted shopping as a single trend. Look closer and two distinct behaviors emerge.

Lower-income shoppers gravitate toward AI as a price tool. Among households earning under \$30,000, 43% say finding the best price is their top priority when using an LLM. They want the deal, fast.

Higher-income shoppers want speed of a different kind. Among households earning \$150,000 or more, 20% say the biggest draw is skipping the need to browse multiple sites. They trust the recommendation and move straight to purchase. Adoption peaks at 84% among households earning \$100,000 to \$150,000, and 80% of the highest earners say they are confident AI gets it right.

Price-focused shoppers will spot a pricing error immediately and leave. Convenience-focused shoppers won't catch it at all. Both paths lead back to the same place: product data accuracy.

What shoppers say is MOST important when using an LLM for shopping



Households <\$30K



Households >\$150K



Not having to browse multiple sites

11%

20%



Finding the best price

43%

36%

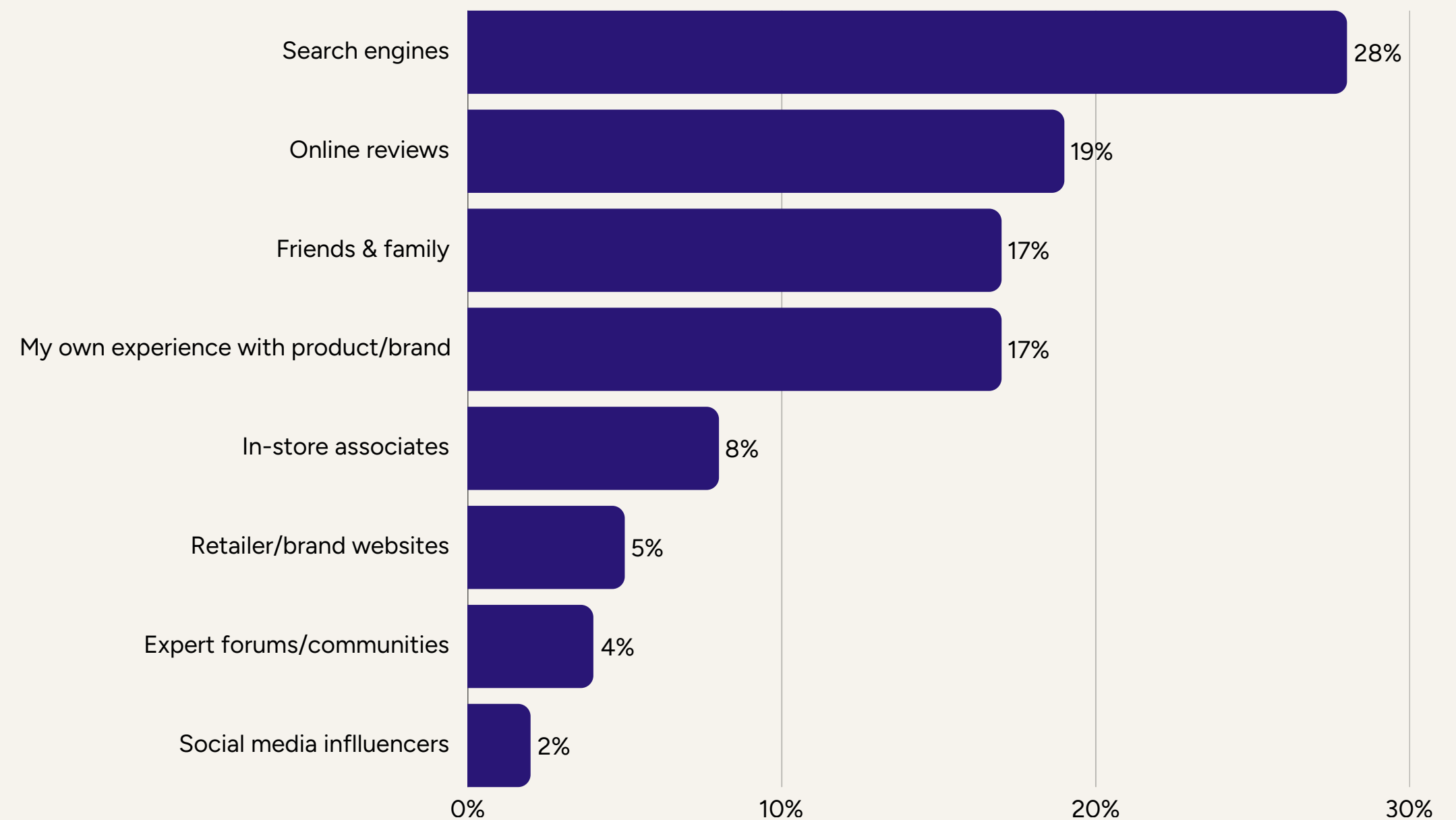
Shoppers want to know why, not just what

When shoppers evaluate an AI recommendation, the single biggest trust-builder is understanding why a specific product or brand was chosen.

49% ranked that above always-accurate information and above the ability to cross-check on a retailer's site. Shoppers who prioritize that understanding are nearly twice as likely to buy without verifying at all.

Only 1 in 3 say accurate information alone is enough to build their trust.

Where do consumers turn first to verify LLM shopping info?





AI is making it easier for brands to get noticed

AI is introducing shoppers to brands they would never have found on their own. 19% have already bought from one they had never heard of because AI recommended it. 13% say they are more likely to switch retailers or products based on what an LLM told them.

For brands with strong product data, that is genuine new distribution into audiences traditional marketing may never have reached. Smaller and mid-market brands now have a real path to compete with established names, as long as the product information behind the recommendation can back it up.

Pricing accuracy is the clearest starting point

Ask shoppers what they need AI to get right above all else, and the answer is consistent: price.

67% say pricing is the most important thing in a shopping recommendation. That is nearly double the next most-cited factor. Even among high-income shoppers who prioritize convenience over cost, nearly half still say pricing accuracy is non-negotiable.

Price inconsistencies across feeds, marketplaces, and product pages spread fast once AI picks them up. Keeping pricing consistent across every source AI pulls from, and auditing for drift regularly, catches errors before they reach shoppers.

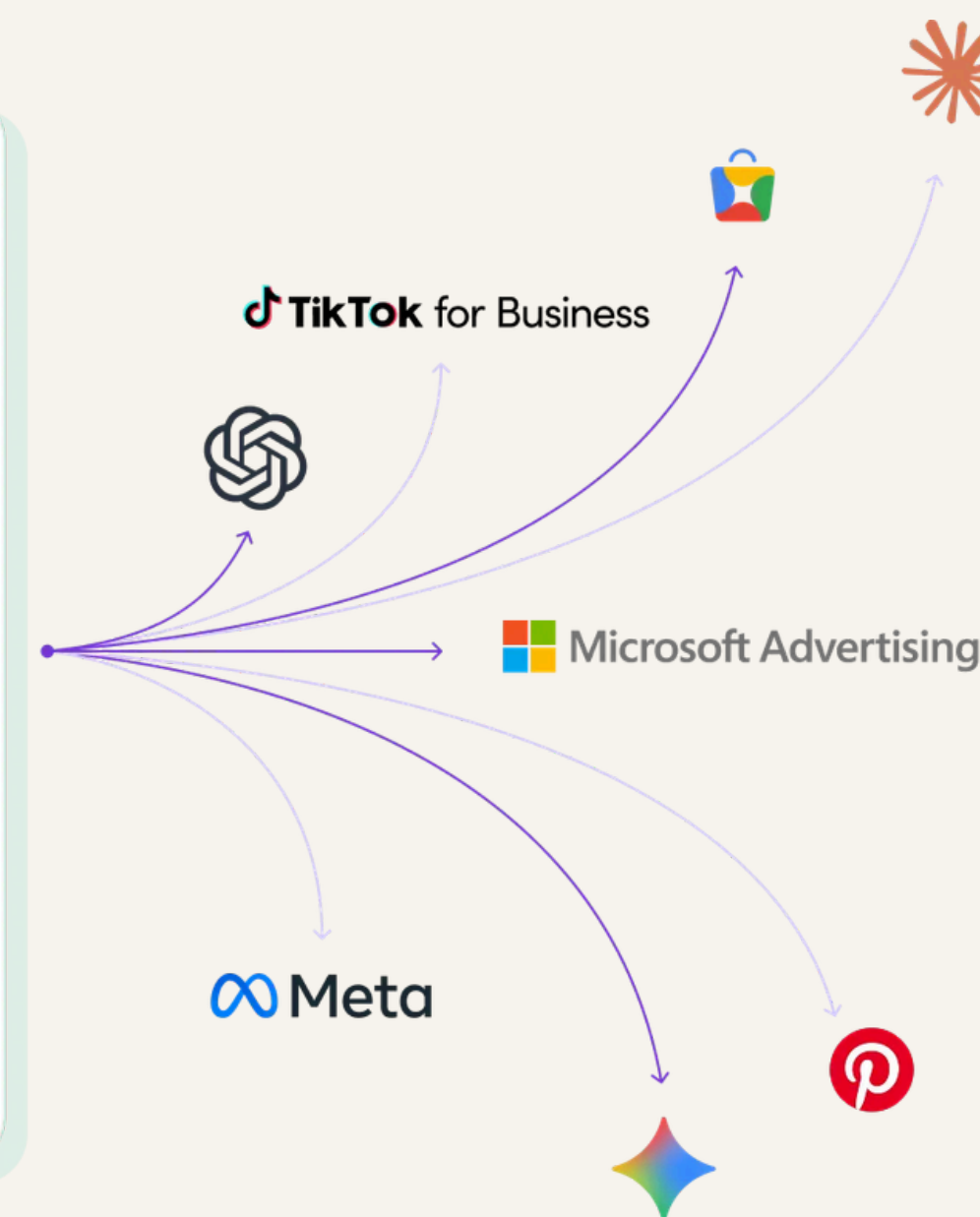
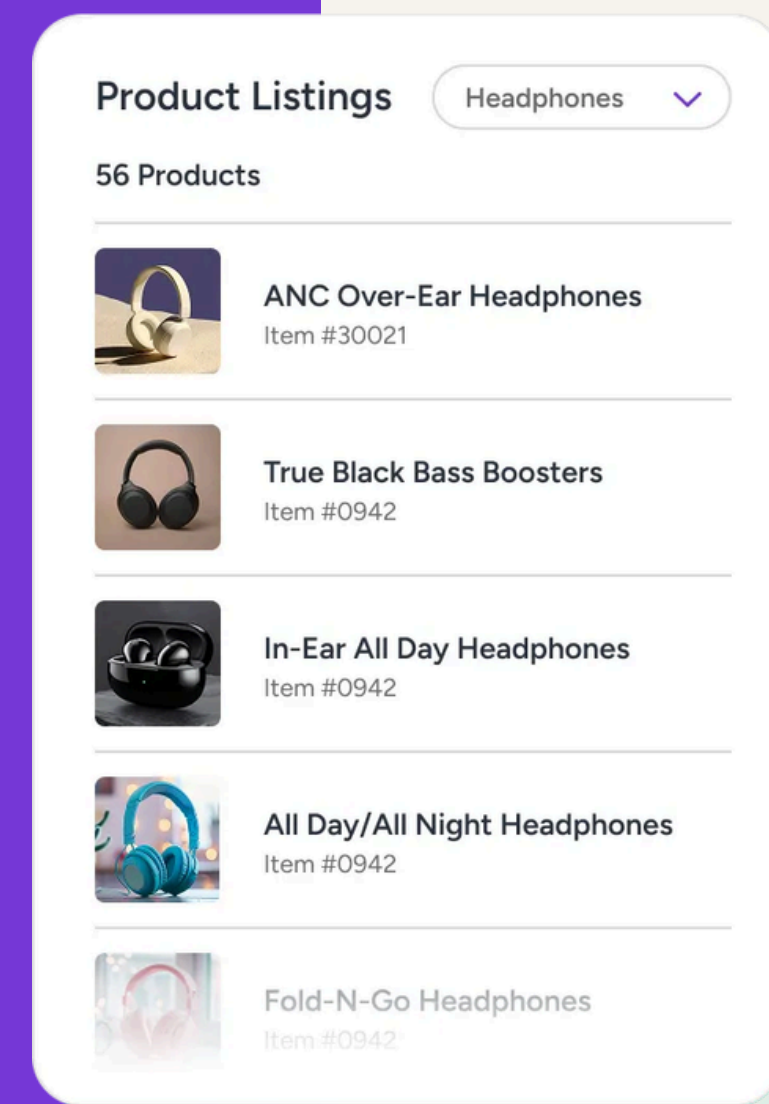


What strongest product content looks like in practice

Accurate product content has always mattered to shoppers. The difference now is that AI reads those details across channels, listings, and indexed pages, then assembles them into the explanation a shopper reads. Titles, attributes, specifications, and use cases need to be structured enough for AI to build a compelling, accurate answer from them.

What weakens a product's position in a recommendation:

- Vague or generic descriptions that don't give AI enough detail to build a specific answer
- Missing attributes or inconsistent details across channels that create conflicting versions of the same product



Closing the gap

Every finding in this survey, the trust gaps, the blame, the verification habits, traces back to two things: pricing consistency and product content quality. Rithum has the deepest bench in both.

Rithum connects brands and retailers to 900+ global channels, keeping product data, pricing, and availability accurate and in sync wherever shoppers and AI encounter them. That's the whole job: making sure the information is right at the source so it's still right when it reaches the shopper. Top global brands and retailers, including Adidas, Best Buy, The Home Depot, and B&Q, already run their commerce operations through Rithum.

Every brand and retailer in this survey's dataset is already being represented by AI, whether they planned for it or not. The ones who get ahead of that will be the ones AI recommends next.

Read the full findings in [The new discovery engine: How consumers are using AI to find, trust, and choose brands, and what's at risk for those they never see](#)

