The age of online trust:

Digital experiences that build & break trust

A Queue-it consumer survey

Queue·it

The trust factor

Consumer trust has long been central to the success of both businesses and governments.

But as more of our life moves online, the building blocks of trust are shifting. In a digital world flooded with notifications, offers, advertising, influencers, and AI-generated content, trust has become harder to win, and easier to lose.

We surveyed over 1,000 consumers from across the globe to better understand how trust is evolving online. This report explores what builds trust, what breaks it, and what today's consumers expect from digital experiences.

The findings show

- Customers are expecting more and forgiving less
- Online trust is earned with consistently reliable and transparent digital experiences
- Trust has the biggest influence on Gen Z behavior
- Businesses must prioritize trust to succeed in today's digital landscape

> **When it comes to online experiences, consumers are expecting more and forgiving less**

Queue·it

Key takeaways on trust & online experiences

Ensure reliable experiences

74%

of consumers say a reliable website or app increases their trust in an online business

Prioritize consistency

2x

it takes twice as many good online experiences to build trust as it takes bad ones to break it

Smooth beats speedy

87%

would prefer a short wait for a website that works than immediate access to a slow or buggy website

Lead with trust

88%

are willing to spend more to purchase from a trustworthy online business

Block bots & scalpers

68%

are more likely to trust a business that blocks bad bots & scalpers

Methodology

This survey was conducted in May 2025. It includes responses from 1050 respondents aged 18-65, with an equal split between the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Respondents were screened to ensure they had all shopped or registered for services online in the past year. The survey was conducted via a third-party survey platform.

Gen Z is defined as respondents aged 18-28, Millennials are 29-44, and Gen X is 45-65.

1. The state of online trust

“
It’s harder than ever to gain trust online. But it’s impossible to succeed without it

Trust is becoming harder to win

The online world has never been bigger and busier, and the noisier it becomes, the greater the need for trust.

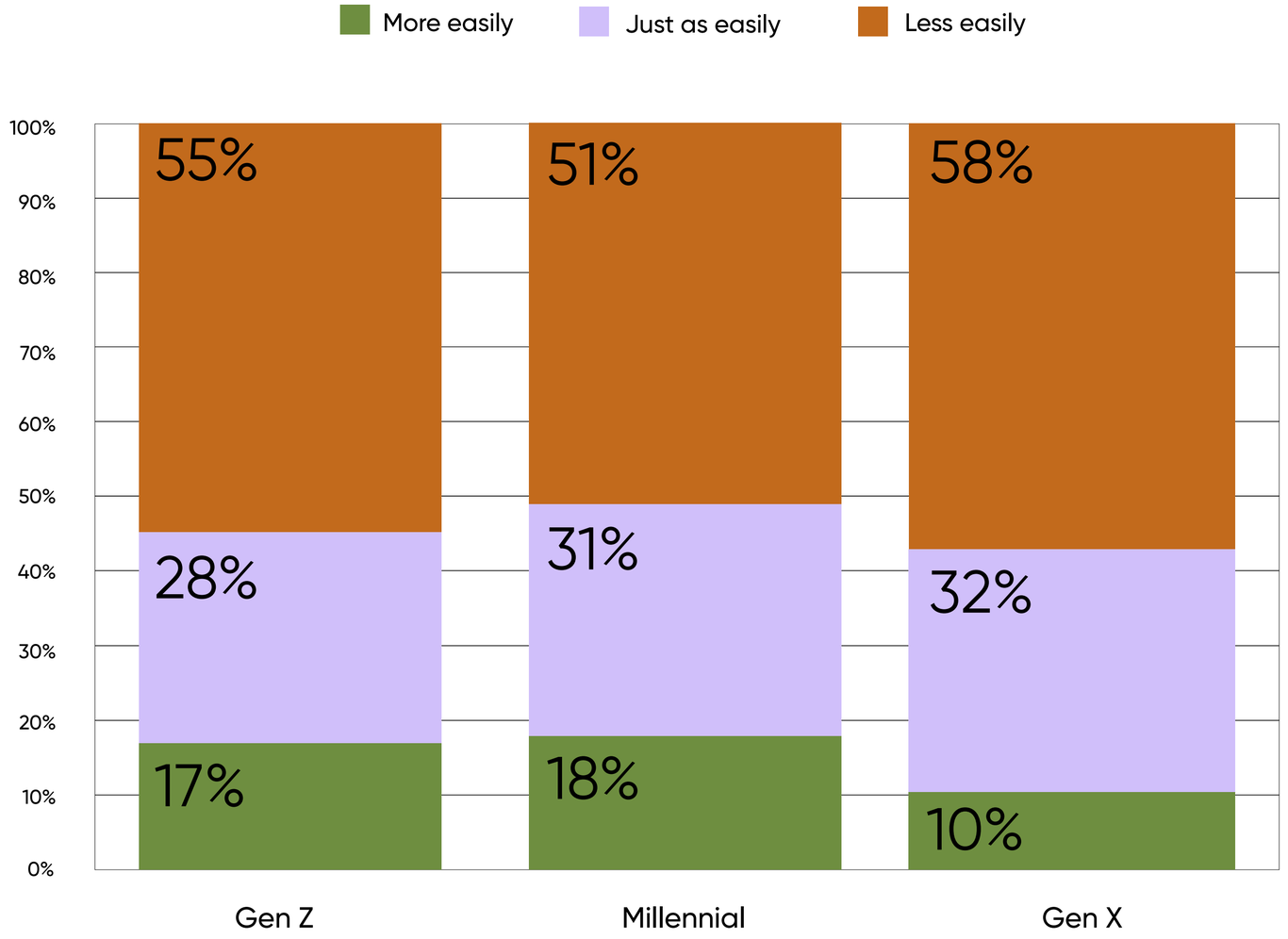
There's an unending stream of notifications, sales offers, influencers, and AI-generated content, all fighting for our attention. Competition is fierce, and brands and services are constantly raising the bar for digital experiences.

54%

say they place trust less easily in online businesses due to the rise of digital noise.

The digital noise has more influence on Gen X consumers, who appear to have an increasingly hard time trusting the businesses they encounter online.

Given the rise in digital noise (scams, ads, artificial intelligence, etc) do you place trust in online businesses:



Expectations for online experiences are growing

To build and nurture trust, you must meet (or better yet, exceed) your customers' expectations. But in a fast-changing and competitive landscape, the bar for the quality of online experiences is always moving.

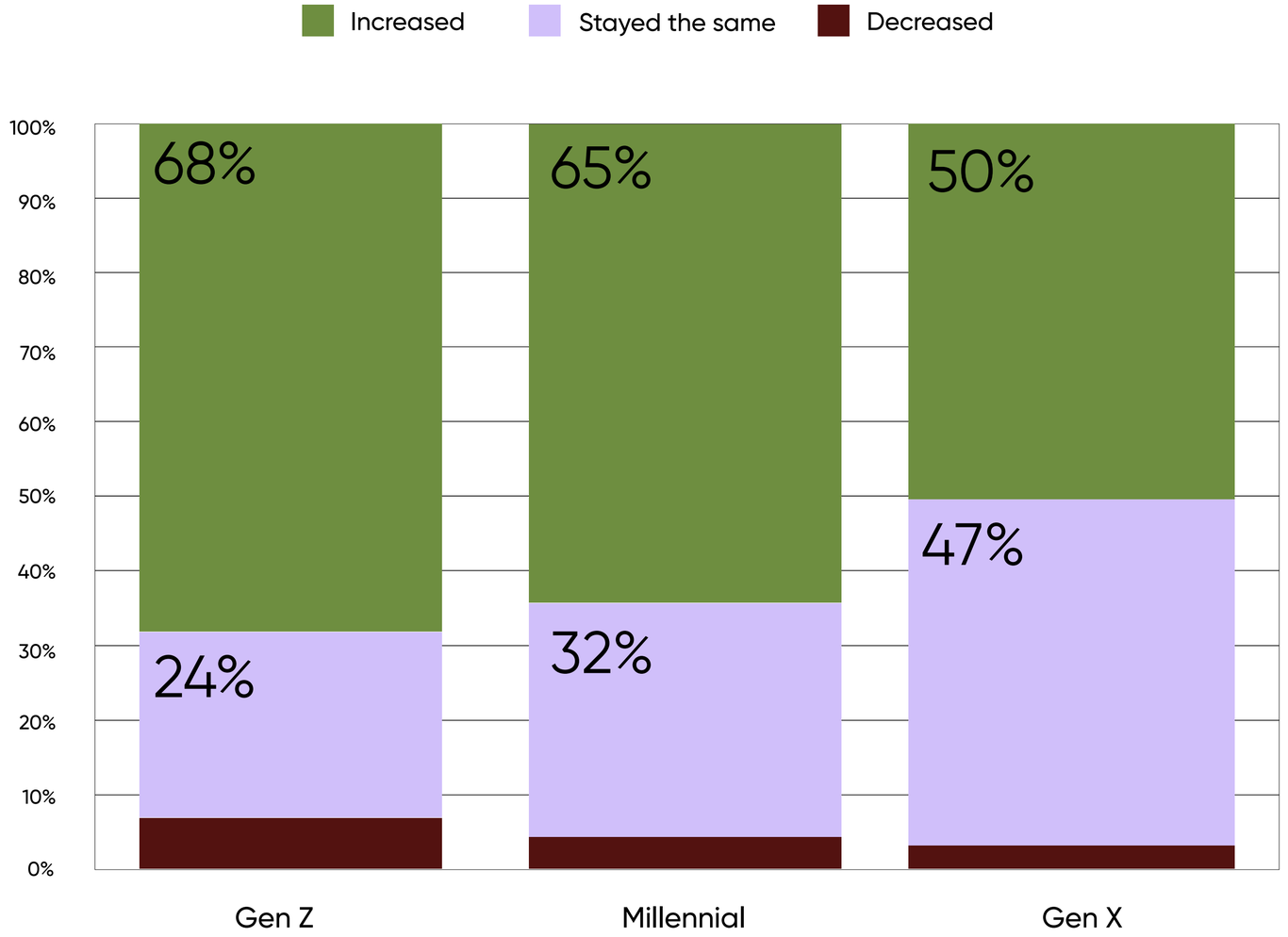
Trust is destroyed when brands and organizations fail to meet expectations, and it's built when they exceed them.

60%

of consumers say their expectations for the quality of online experiences has increased in the past year.

This increase in expectations is highest amongst Gen Z consumers, who spend more time online, and declines with age.

How have your expectations for the quality of online experiences changed compared to a year ago?



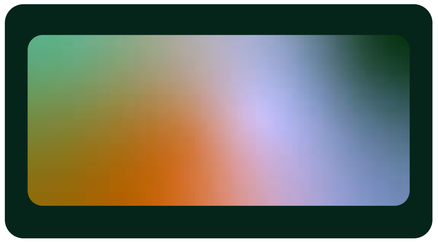
Reliable online experiences are crucial to driving trust

When asked which aspects of online experiences are most important to driving trust, the majority of respondents chose reliability and transparency.

A reliable website or app is one visitors can count on to consistently achieve their goals. It's a website or app free from errors, crashes, or issues that harm the user experience.

Transparency is about being clear, honest, and upfront with consumers about what's happening and why—whether that's about pricing, delays, use of data or policies. It helps consumers feel informed and in control.

When asked what aspects of online experiences are most important to driving their trust:



74%
say a reliable website or app

73%
say transparent policies information & processes

47%
say fair access to websites & apps

34%
say personalized experiences

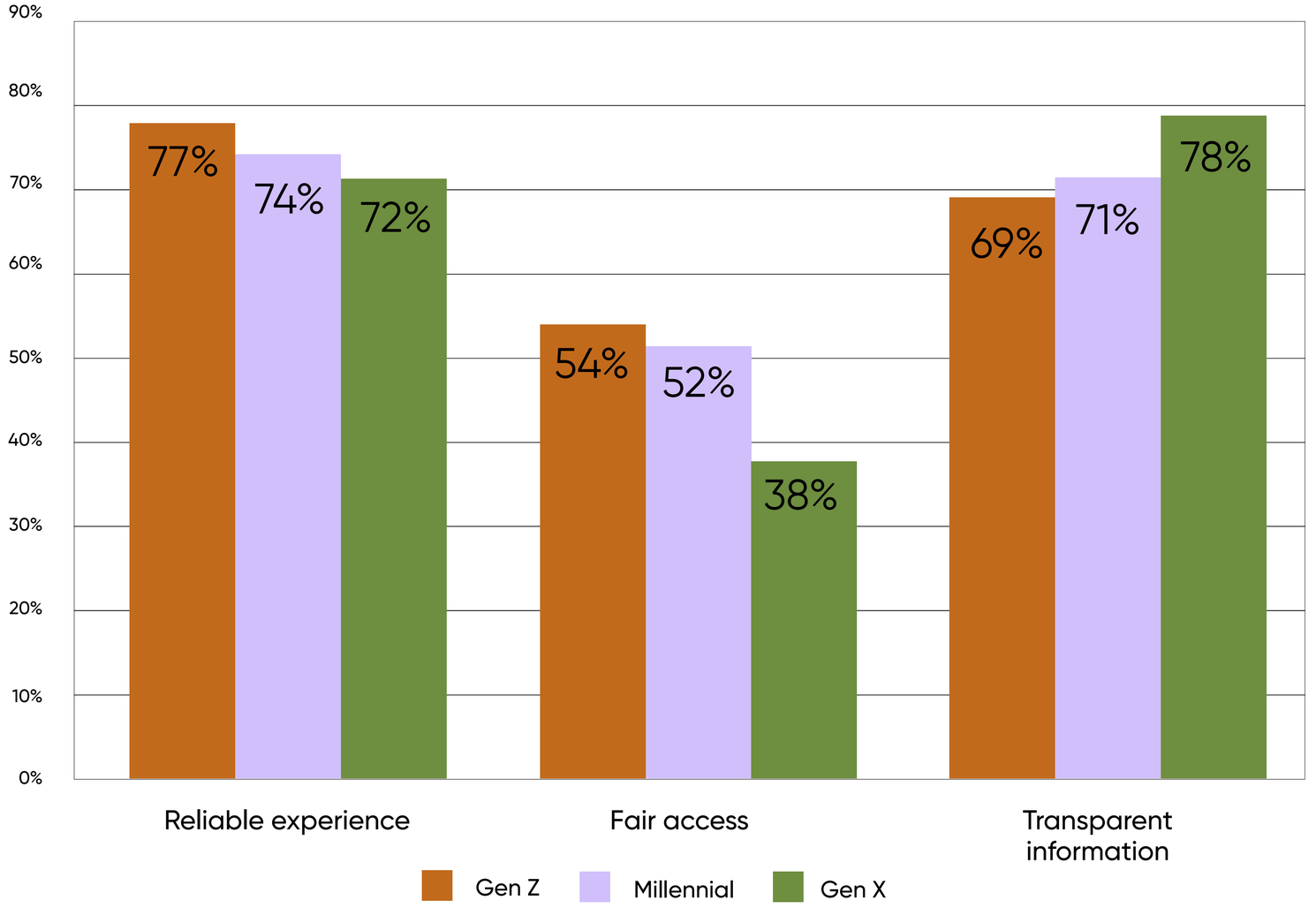
The drivers of trust across demographics

Gen Z consumers were most concerned about reliability, with 77% citing it as an important trust driver.

Among Gen X, transparency became the leading trust driver, with 78% citing it as a key aspect of trust-driving experiences.

The importance of fairness was also more pronounced among younger generations, which aligns with results later in the survey, where Gen Z expressed concern about bots and fair access, while Gen X found these issues less important.

Which of the following aspects of a website or app increases your trust in an online business?



2. The value of online trust

“We see a generational shift towards trust as the new currency in the online world

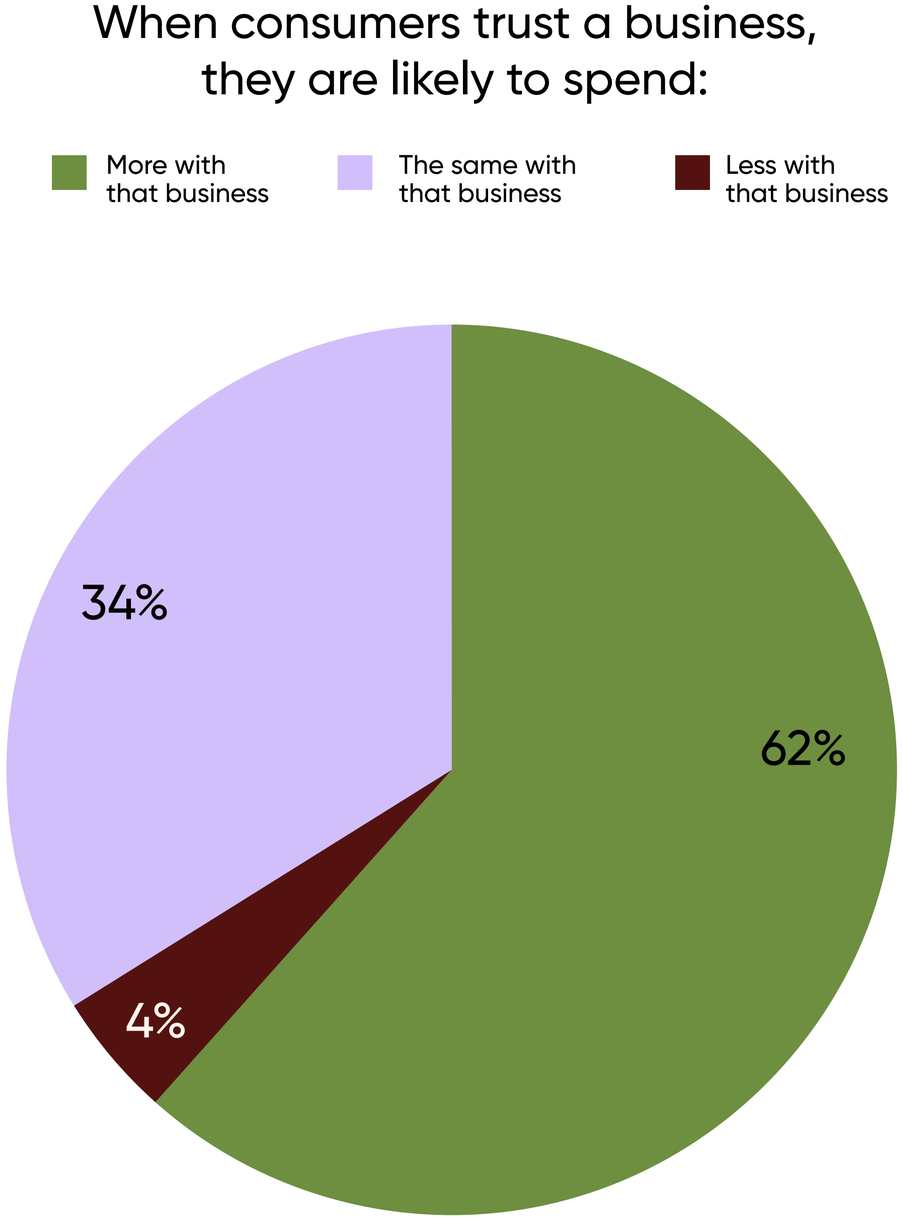
Trust is the new currency in the online world

Expectations are increasing, and trust has become harder to win. But does online trust really matter? Does it impact your bottom line?

All responses from consumers point to the pivotal importance of online trust on key business outcomes like loyalty, word-of-mouth marketing, willingness to join membership programs, and spending habits.

Perhaps surprisingly, the positive impact of trust on these behaviors was most pronounced among Gen Z consumers.

The consistency of these results signal a generational shift towards trust as the new currency in the online world.



Queue·it

Trust boosts your brand & bottom line

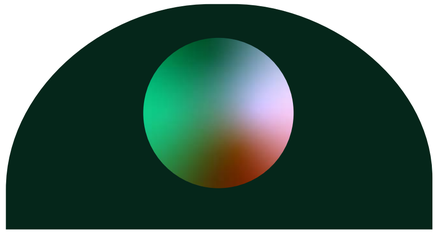
When a customer trusts your business, they become more loyal, more likely to recommend it, more likely to join your loyalty program, and more likely to spend more.

9 in 10 consumers were even willing to spend 10% more to purchase a product from a trustworthy website.

This makes delivering trustworthy digital experiences essential to success in the new digital landscape. It means that even if you can't win on price, you can still win on trust.

“

Even if you can't win on price, you can still win on trust

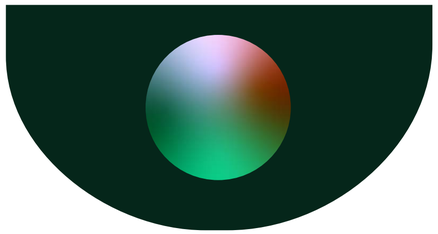


64%

are more likely to be loyal to businesses they trust

72%

are more likely to recommend businesses they trust



65%

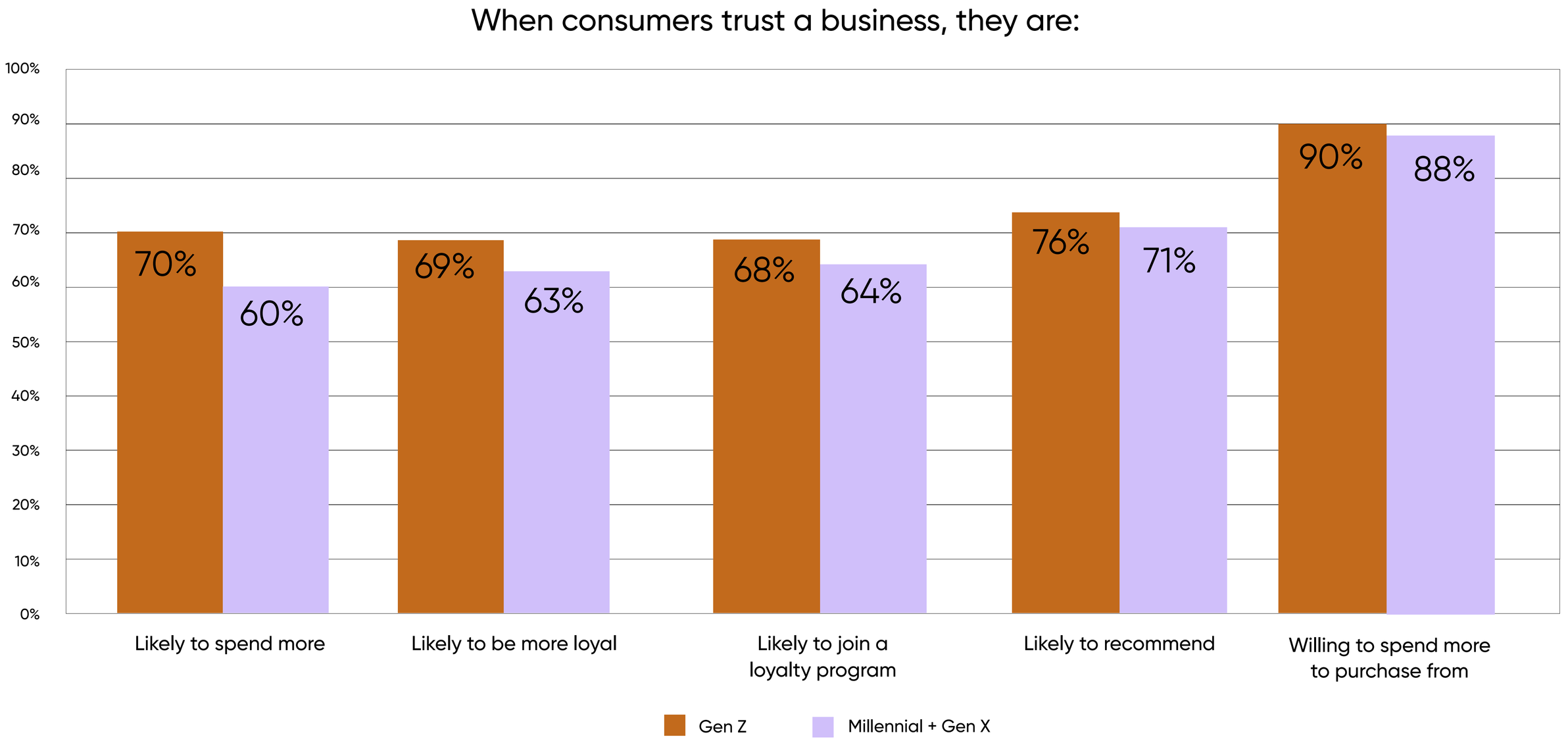
are more likely to join the loyalty program of a business they trust

88%

would be willing to spend more to purchase a product from a trustworthy website vs. one they don't trust

Queue·it

Online trust matters most to Gen Z consumers



3. Threats to online trust

“

Consumers lose trust after just two bad online experiences

Poor online experiences are a threat to trust

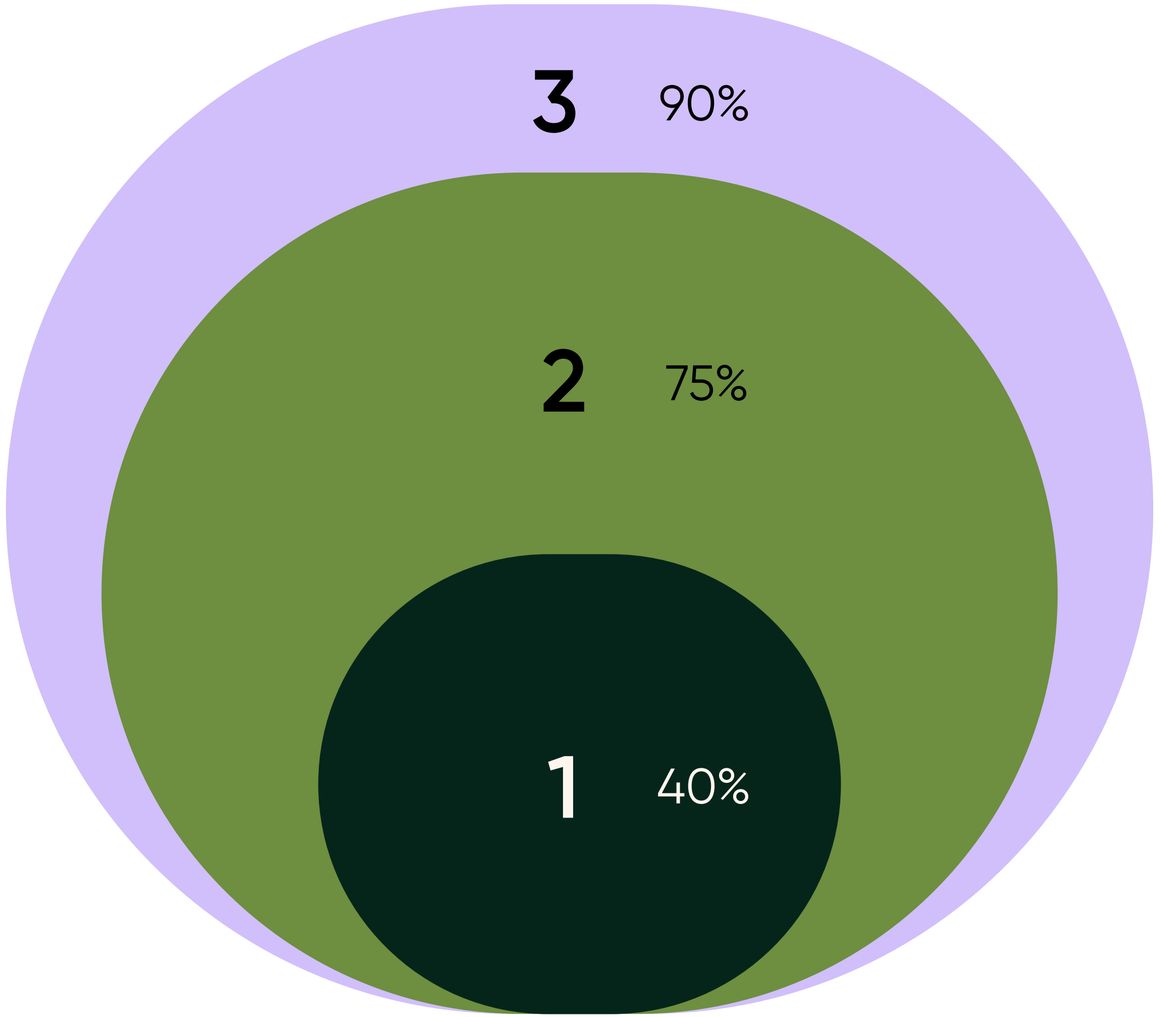
How is trust won and lost online?

On average, it takes just 2 bad experiences for a consumer to lose trust in a business. After 3 bad experiences, 90% of consumers lose trust.

Poor online experiences can be driven by many factors. But they're most likely to occur and affect the most customers during high-profile, high-traffic sales and registrations—such as a product drop, the launch of a public service, or a large concert ticket sale.

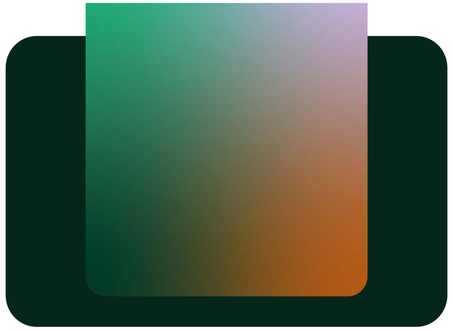
We asked consumers how the load-induced issues that occur on these big days, such as website crashes, overselling, and slowdowns, impact their trust in online businesses.

How many bad experiences does it take for you to lose trust in a business?



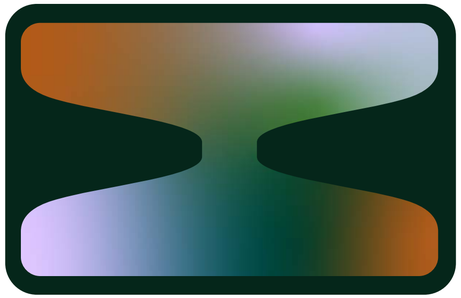
Website issues are a critical threat to trust

When traffic to websites or apps spikes suddenly, the load of visitors often harms the quality of the online experience with crashes, slowdowns, and errors. Of these “bad” experiences, overselling posed the biggest threat to trust, followed by website crashes, then slowdowns.



66%
are less likely to trust a business after experiencing overselling

64%
are less likely to trust a website after experiencing it crashing



50%
are less likely to trust a slow website

4. Building online trust

“

To earn consumer trust, you have to consistently deliver outstanding digital experiences

Trust is won in drops and lost in buckets

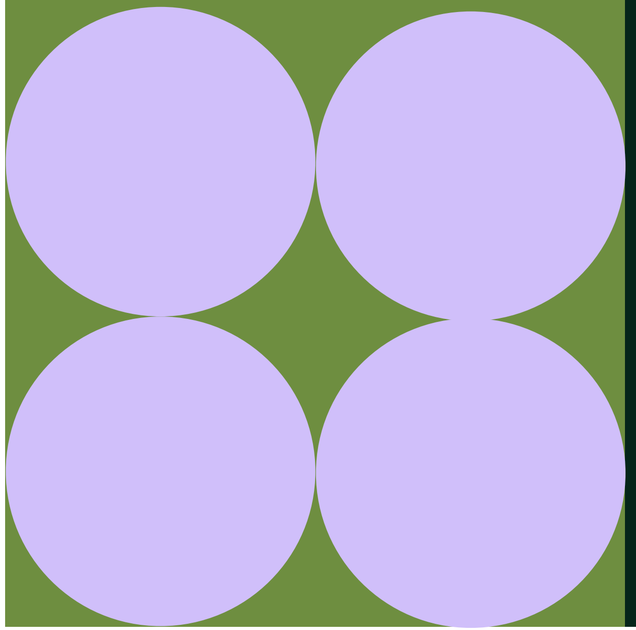
On average, it takes 4 good online experiences for a consumer to say they trust a business—double the 2 bad experiences it takes for them to lose trust.

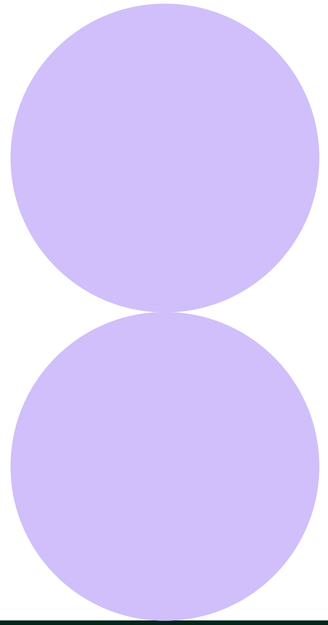
This aligns with results earlier in the survey, where consumers chose reliability as the most important factor in driving their trust.

It shows that building trust is not about delivering one exceptional experience, it's about consistently delivering solid digital experiences free from issues like errors, bugs, or crashes.

4

the average number of good online experiences it takes for customers to gain trust in an online business





2

the average number of bad online experiences it takes for trust to be lost

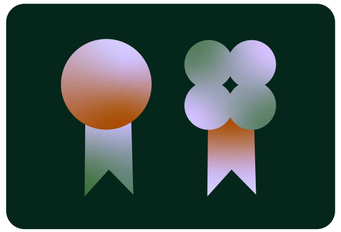
Fair & transparent access drives trust

Online organizations are at their most visible when they run high-profile events like product launches, concert ticket sales, or public sector registrations.

But these peak traffic scenarios present unique challenges that can make or break the trust-building potential of such sales and registrations.

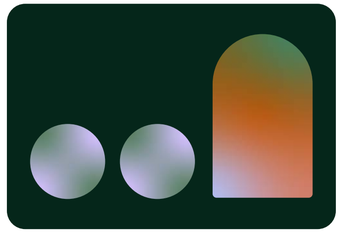
Consumers reiterated the importance of reliability to their trust, with 9 in 10 saying they'd choose to wait if it gave them a smoother online experience. They also revealed that transparency is crucial during peak demand, saying practices like blocking bots and ensuring fair access make them more likely to trust businesses.

When asked how fairness initiatives influence their trust in online businesses:



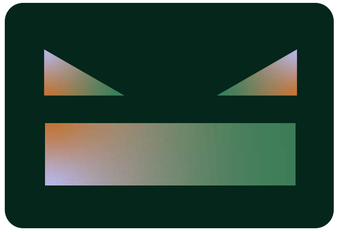
45%

are more likely to trust businesses that prioritize access for loyal customers via exclusive sales



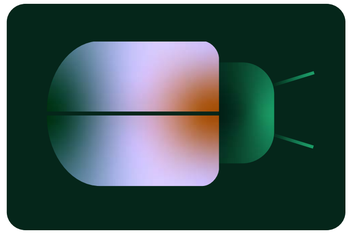
56%

are more likely to trust businesses that ensure fair access to limited-inventory sales or registrations



68%

are more likely to trust a business that blocks bad bots and scalpers



87%

would prefer a short wait to a website that works than immediate access to a slow or buggy website

Queue·it

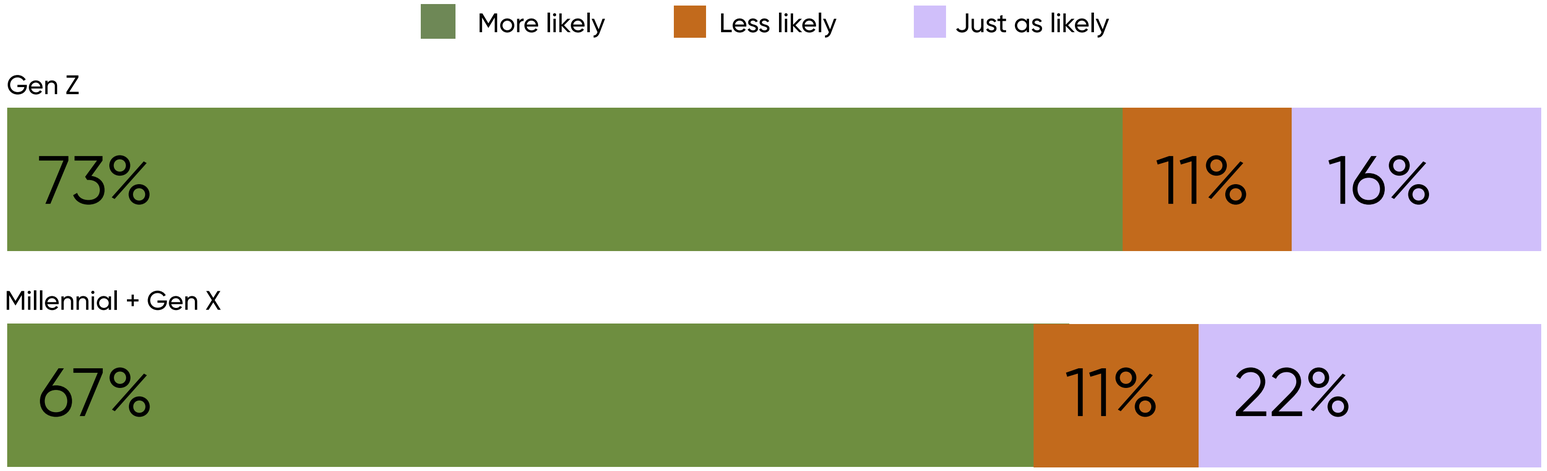
Blocking bad bots and prioritizing fairness matters most to Gen Z

The impact of bot mitigation on trust is highest among Gen Z (73%), who are most familiar with bots, and declines with age.

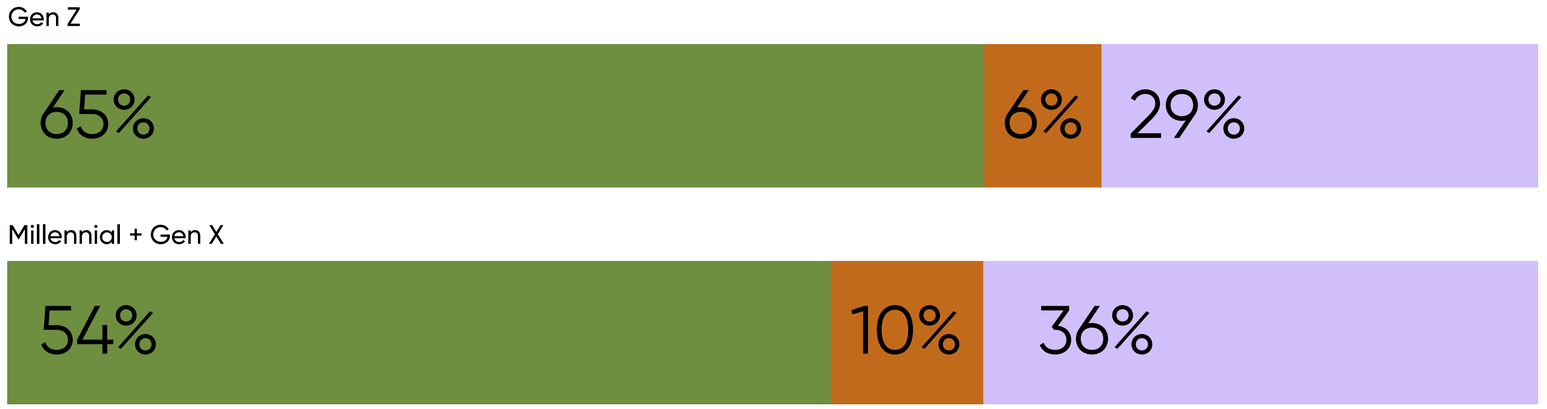
Similarly, fair access via randomization or first-in-first-out mechanisms was most important to Gen Z consumers, with 65% saying they're more likely to trust businesses who ensure fair access.

Among the broader sample, this drops to 54%—with the oldest generation having the least concern for fair access.

Are you more or less likely to trust a business if it blocks bad bots?



Are you more or less likely to trust a business if they are providing fair access during a limited-inventory sale?



5. How to succeed in the age of online trust

“
Big brand moments are key opportunities to drive sales and nurture trust

Building online trust, one high-traffic event at a time

The consumers surveyed for this report make it clear that trust is crucial to key business outcomes like customer retention, word-of-mouth marketing, loyalty program sign-ups, and willingness to buy.

They told us their trust is hard to win, but easy to lose. That it's earned through consistency, reliability, and smooth online experiences. And that trust is lost by just a couple deviations from these high standards and expectations.

Big brand moments, such as Black Friday sales, concert ticket sales, major registrations, and product launches, are key opportunities to drive sales and nurture trust. But they're also the moments where it's most difficult to ensure reliability and fairness. They're the moments where errors and bad experiences impact the largest number of consumers.

Across generations and regions, the key challenges involved in managing high-traffic sales and registrations emerged as make-or-break for winning the trust of consumers. Their responses provide a playbook for what to strive for, and what to avoid, during your big brand moments.

> **Trust is hard to win, but easy to lose**

Queue·it

To build trust with your customers: Deliver reliability & consistency

The key takeaway from this report should be the strong connection between reliable online experiences and trust in organizations.

Trust is hard to win and easy to lose, which means you need to focus on preventing issues like website crashes, overselling, and other errors that negatively impact the customer experience.

74%
of consumers say a reliable website or app is important to driving trust

Prevent slowdowns

50%
say they trust slow websites less

Prevent website crashes

64%
trust a business less after a crash

Prevent overselling

66%
trust a business less after overselling

Queue·it

To build trust with your customers: Deliver transparency & fairness

After the reliability of online experiences, transparency and fairness lead as the key drivers of trust online.

This means prioritizing honesty around your use of data, efforts to improve fairness and block bots, and communication during sales and registrations.

73%
of consumers say that transparency is important to driving trust

Ensure fair access

56%
trust a business more if it ensures fair site access

Block bots & scalpers

68%
trust a business more that blocks bad bots and scalpers

Ensure transparency

70%
say wait information improves their online experience

Queue·it

Consumers prefer reliable experiences provided by virtual waiting rooms

Virtual waiting rooms not only ensure reliability by preventing website issues like crashes and overselling, they also come with a range of features that improve the customer experience:

- **Detailed and transparent wait information**
- **Fairness mechanisms like first-in-first-out access**
- **Sophisticated bot mitigation**
- **Real-time communication directly through the waiting room**
- **The ability to transfer queue position across devices**
- **Email notifications for when it's the visitor's turn**

84%
prefer an online queue with wait information to a website crash or error page

70%
say wait information improves their online queuing experience

53 minutes
is the average amount of time consumers would wait in an online queue

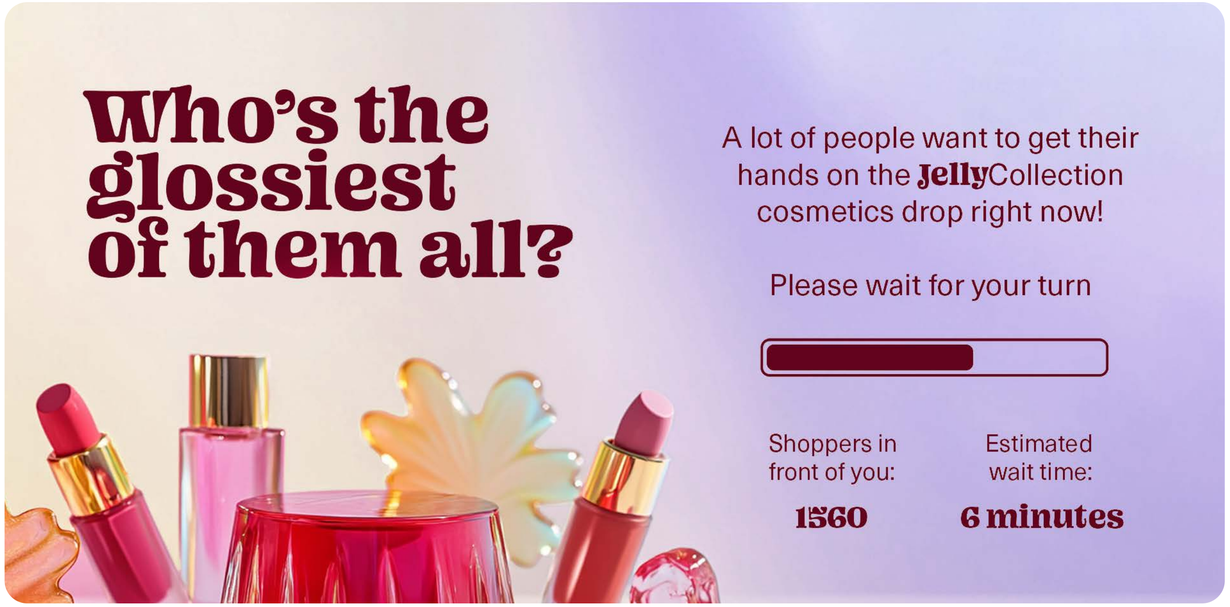
Deliver reliable online experiences, no matter the demand

A virtual waiting room is a traffic management tool designed specifically to ensure reliable, fair, and transparent online experiences during peak traffic.

87%

would prefer a short wait to a website that works over immediate access to a buggy website

Virtual waiting rooms direct visitors to an online queue when they exceed the capacity of your site or app. Visitors get sent to a fully customizable waiting room page with detailed wait information, bot mitigation, and fairness mechanisms. When it's their turn, they're sent back to your site in first-in, first-out order at the rate it performs best —preventing overselling and crashing.



How organizations build trust with Queue-it

SIDESHOW

"Now, when our customers access our launches, they can trust us to handle the traffic. They can trust our site to be fast. They can trust our launches to be fair. Queue-it creates an overall professional experience that works exactly as advertised"

CHRIS PIRROTTA,
VP OF DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

Bend Park & Recreation

"I think everyone was a little skeptical about the waiting room at first. But once they realized how good the experience was, we got an overwhelming amount of positive feedback. I wanted to print the comments out and make them my wallpaper, because it so rarely happens"

JUT MCDANIELS,
REGISTRATION SOFTWARE COORDINATOR

84%
of Queue-it customers say their sales & registrations are fairer

84%
say their customers' online experience has improved

81%
say their site performance has improved

69%
see fewer customer complaints for sales & registrations

Source: Queue-it customer survey 2024

Deliver online experiences that drive trust

At Queue-it, our mission is to shape an online future anchored in trust and outstanding experiences.

We help some of the world's biggest businesses drive trust through delivering reliable, fair, transparent online experiences, no matter the demand.

To find out how Queue-it's virtual waiting room can help you build and nurture your customers' trust, get in touch or learn more about Queue-it below.

Chat with Queue-it

Explore product

Visit queue-it.com | For press inquiries contact: marketing@queue-it.com

ticketmaster IKEA Home Office

zalando LSE The London School of Economics and Political Science ANA