

2026 AI CONSUMER TRENDS

AI Customer Service Playbook

Explore new research on the 4 AI consumer personas and learn how to engage each one



What's in the report

Introduction

The AI Engagement Map

The 4 Personas

- ✦ The AI Enthusiast
- ✦ The AI Evaluator
- ✦ The AI Skeptic
- ✦ The AI Holdout

How to use this playbook

AI doesn't only make you more efficient. It transforms how customers experience your brand.

AI has fundamentally changed how shoppers research and evaluate purchases. But not all shoppers have evolved the same way. Some completely trust AI, use it multiple times a week, and depend on it for planning and decision-making. Others use AI a few times a month to find information or answer questions. On the other end of the spectrum are those who never use AI, or say they've never found the technology helpful.

We surveyed 8,000 global consumers and categorized them into 4 distinct personas, reflecting how they feel about and interact with AI. These personas are the AI Enthusiast, the AI Evaluator, the AI Skeptic, and the AI Holdout. Each persona has different expectations for trust, speed, and personalization in their shopping experiences. And each responds differently to how brands use AI.

If you treat AI as a blunt instrument, you'll lose relevance. This thinking can be applied across all places where shoppers experience your brand - whether you're using AI to generate marketing materials, personalize outreach, make product recommendations, or provide on-site assistance.

In this playbook, you'll learn:



Practical methods to identify AI personas in your customer base



Tactics to activate those strategies with Klaviyo, without adding more tools



Clear guidance on what actually drives conversion for each persona

“The brands that adapt experiences to how consumers feel about AI will drive more revenue in 2026.”

Emily McEvilly,
Chief customer officer, Klaviyo



THE AI ENGAGEMENT MAP

How consumers engage with and perceive AI

Consumers fall into 4 distinct personas based on their level of trust in AI and how frequently they use it:



AI Enthusiasts trust AI for customer service and want fast resolution.

AI is already part of the Enthusiast's routine, and they appreciate the speed and accuracy of AI support.

Who they are

AI Enthusiasts highly trust AI and use it at least weekly.

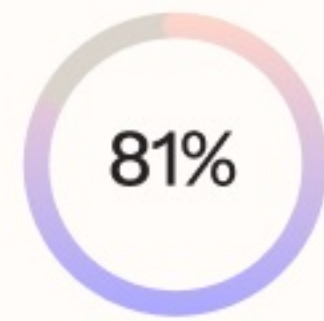
- ✦ 63% Men
- ✦ 20% Gen Z
- ✦ 30% earn \$100K annually



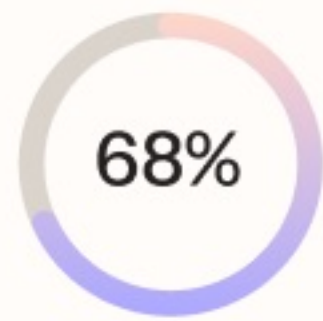
THE AI ENTHUSIAST

How they feel about AI

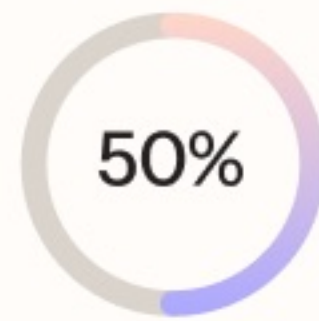
AI Enthusiasts overwhelmingly agree that AI has improved the quality of customer service they receive from brands (74%), and they experience the benefits across their shopping and post-purchase journeys.



credit AI with enhancing the quality of the personalized product recommendations



credit AI with enhancing the quality of the order updates they receive

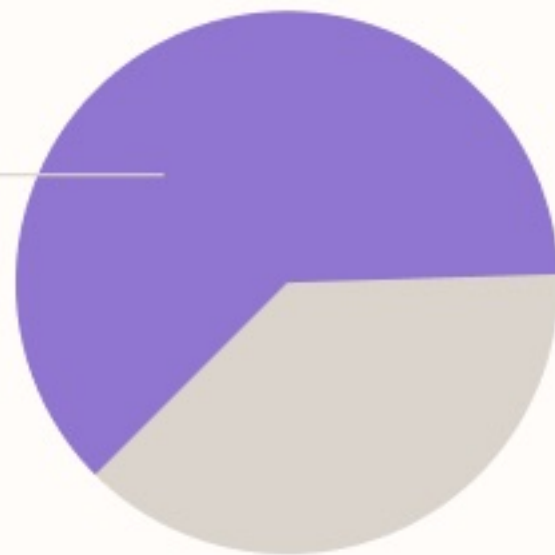


credit AI with delivering multiple "aha" moments due to the technology's accuracy

They're comfortable interacting with AI in real time to get the information they need, rather than defaulting to a live agent. For these consumers, AI is not a detriment but a differentiator.

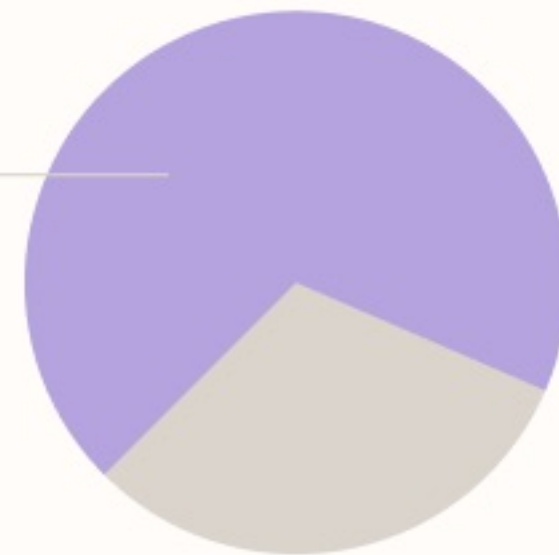
62%

completely trust AI to provide satisfactory customer service through chatbots, 5x more than consumers overall.



69%

say when a brand uses AI, it increases their loyalty.



What turns them off

Generic messaging:

One-size-fits-all messaging won't land with AI Enthusiasts.

39%

say a brand experience feels "too automated" if the company sends generic and repetitive marketing messages

38%

say product recommendations miss the mark

34%

customer service chats that don't feel human

38%

notice AI slop multiple times per week, more than twice as much as consumers overall

Slow or irrelevant messages:

AI Enthusiasts want relevant answers, fast. They'll be frustrated with slow response times, or tools that make them work hard to get what they need.

30%

of all AI Enthusiasts say their "aha" moment from using AI was when it solved a problem faster than expected, or anticipated what they needed next

Inaccurate messages or responses:

Even as power users, AI Enthusiasts acknowledge that the technology isn't foolproof. Inaccurate, misleading, or low-quality responses are their top discomfort when interacting with AI.

AI Enthusiasts expect AI support, but need the experience to make sense.

To reach AI Enthusiasts, get ahead of their next move.

Lean into “surprise and delight”

Traditional customer service interactions don't usually spark joy for consumers who just want to know where their order is or how to return sneakers that don't fit. Since AI Enthusiasts already trust AI for support, invite these consumers to use AI in ways that deliver more of those “aha” moments. For example, send [personalized messages](#) via conversational channels like WhatsApp about new, relevant product drops based on a shopper's profile and past orders. From there, encourage a two-way dialogue to answer specific questions and share tailored recommendations.

Optimize for speed and specificity

Customer service speed and personalization aren't mutually exclusive for AI Enthusiasts. They won't settle for quick, generic responses, but they also won't settle for tailored responses that take too long to receive. Use AI to deliver the best of all worlds, offering [24/7 support](#) that adapts to each customer's profile, communication channel, and conversational cues.

How to reach AI Enthusiasts with Klaviyo



Bring the 1:1 touch to every chat and quickly answer customer questions with [K:AI Customer Agent](#). Trained on your storefront and all your customer data, Customer Agent offers instant, personalized support no matter where your customers reach out for help.



Use [customer profile enrichment](#) to continuously learn about every customer's preferences during support conversations with both AI and humans, and apply those details to future interactions across both marketing and customer service.



Include [personalized product feeds](#) in emails and [Klaviyo Customer Hub](#), a signed-in account experience for customers, to surface relevant products.

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

“Customer Agent has been a seamless addition to our customer service team, responding quickly and efficiently while maintaining the personal touch our customers expect.”

Hayley Scott,
Ecommerce coordinator, Folk Clothing



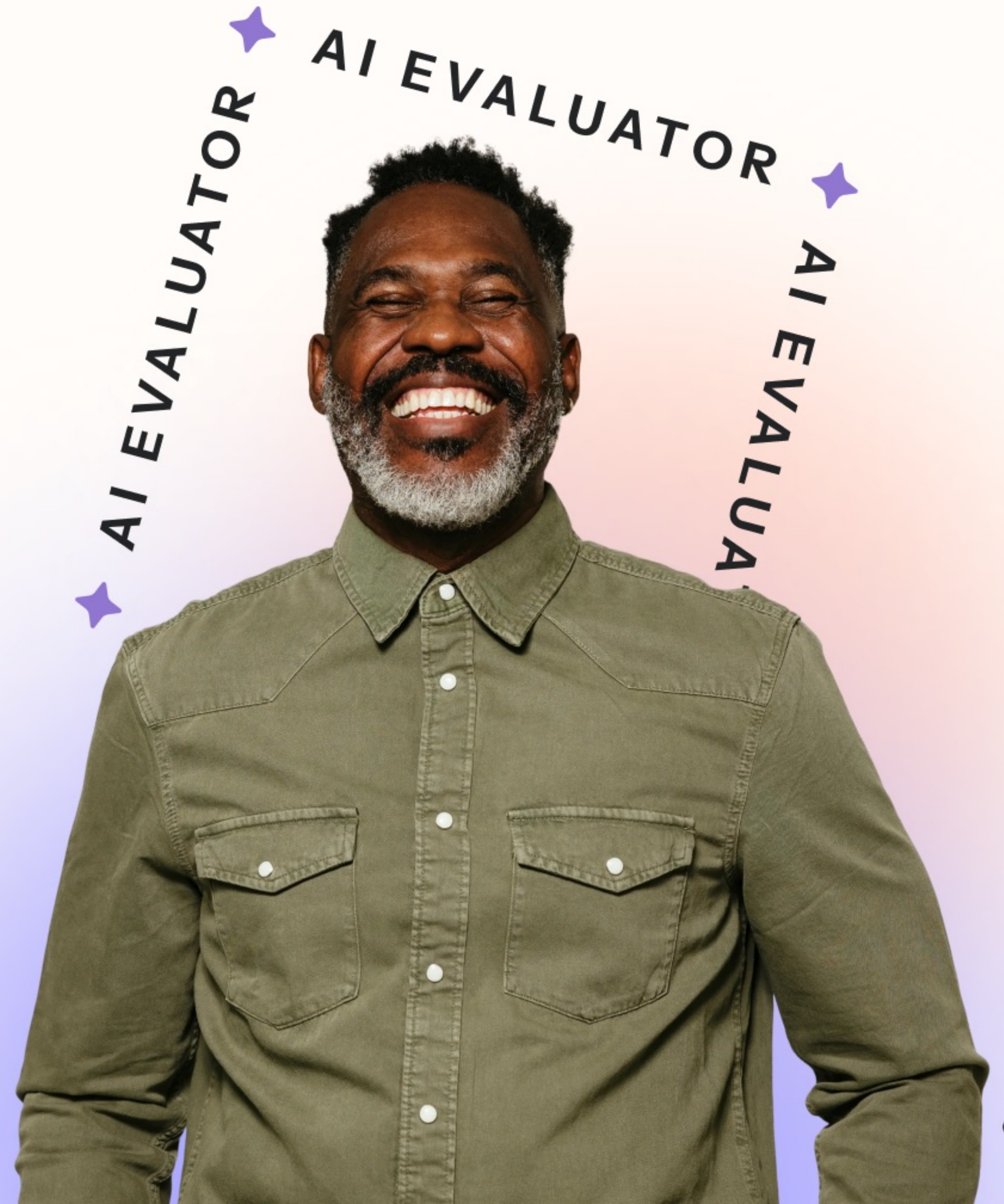
AI Evaluators don't rely on AI, but they're open to it.

AI Evaluators believe in AI's potential, but they're still deciding where it fits. They're not relying on it for everything, but when they use it, they use it intentionally.

Who they are

AI Evaluators somewhat trust AI and use it at least monthly.

- ✦ 54% Women
- ✦ 40% Gen X
- ✦ 65% earn <\$75K annually



THE AI EVALUATOR

How they feel about AI

AI Evaluators aren't fully sold on the power of AI for customer service—yet. 49% are neutral about their trust in AI for customer service, indicating that these consumers are still waiting

to be convinced one way or the other about the technology. Part of their hesitation could stem from AI Evaluators' lack of confidence in their own AI detection skills: 42% are neutral about their ability to determine if they're interacting with AI vs. a human.

AI Evaluators look to AI as a way to help them do research and understand their options. One in 4 Evaluators had an “aha” moment with AI when it compared options or summarized information in a way that saved them time.

37% of AI Evaluators say AI has improved the overall quality of customer service they receive from brands, but their optimism rises when it comes to one aspect of the shopping journey

65% say they somewhat trust AI for providing accurate and personalized recommendations.



More than 1 in 10 AI Evaluators feel most uncomfortable with AI that feels like it's trying to influence or pressure their decisions. That means they need data to back up recommendations.

What turns them off



Customer service that lacks the human touch:

AI Evaluators aren't ready to give up the human element of customer service. The top reason messaging feels “too automated” is customer service chats that don't feel human (38%). Cold or robotic support messages will only increase these consumers' skepticism.



Low-quality personalization:

When AI Evaluators receive poorly personalized content, they're the persona most likely to stop opening or reading future messages from a brand (26%). That means ensuring your data is accurate and up to date is paramount. Simply using the wrong name or suggesting products that don't align with someone's shopping history can fracture this persona's long-term loyalty.



Pushiness:

Because AI Evaluators' shopping habits suggest that they direct their own research and verify recommendations on their own, messages that try to get them to buy, without including seriously compelling reasons to do so, probably won't be effective.

AI Evaluators respond to service that helps them help themselves.

To speak to AI Evaluators, tell them what they need to know and let them decide.

Emphasize AI's educational potential

We all know what it's like to be on the receiving end of a customer service interaction that leaves you more confused than you were before you reached out for help. Among AI Evaluators who have been impressed by an AI tool's accuracy or personalization, 51% attribute their "aha" moment to AI explaining complex topics clearly. Rather than only surfacing AI-powered recommendations, use AI customer assistants to follow up with additional product information that helps shoppers buy with confidence.

Read the room

AI Evaluators have low tolerance for sub-par personalization tactics, so it's on you to demonstrate what quality looks like. Align your customer service and marketing teams around the same data to send more relevant messages and avoid poorly timed interactions, like sending a promotional campaign email to a frustrated customer who has an open support issue. And use service interactions to enrich shared customer profiles, improving personalization over time.

How to reach AI Evaluators with Klaviyo



Centralize self-service information. Give these consumers clarity with FAQs and centralized order management tools in [Klaviyo Customer Hub](#).



During human support interactions, use [Klaviyo Helpdesk](#) to share thoughtful recommendations and solve problems using the full context of each customer's previous interactions.



Embed personalized product recommendation blocks in flows that use "picked for you" logic to explain how recommended items complement someone's previous purchases.

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

“We see Klaviyo Customer Hub becoming what we think of as the future of shopping—a very curated one-to-one experience, unlike traditional ecomm, which is one to many.”

Aman Advani,
CEO, Ministry of Supply



Ministry of Supply^o



AI Skeptics are AI-literate and highly discerning.

AI Skeptics don't think that AI has improved their overall experiences with brands, and many lose trust in brands that use it.

Who they are

AI Skeptics feel neutral about or somewhat distrustful of AI, but they use it at least monthly.

- ◆ 61% Women
- ◆ 39% Gen X
- ◆ 68% earn <\$75K annually



THE AI SKEPTIC

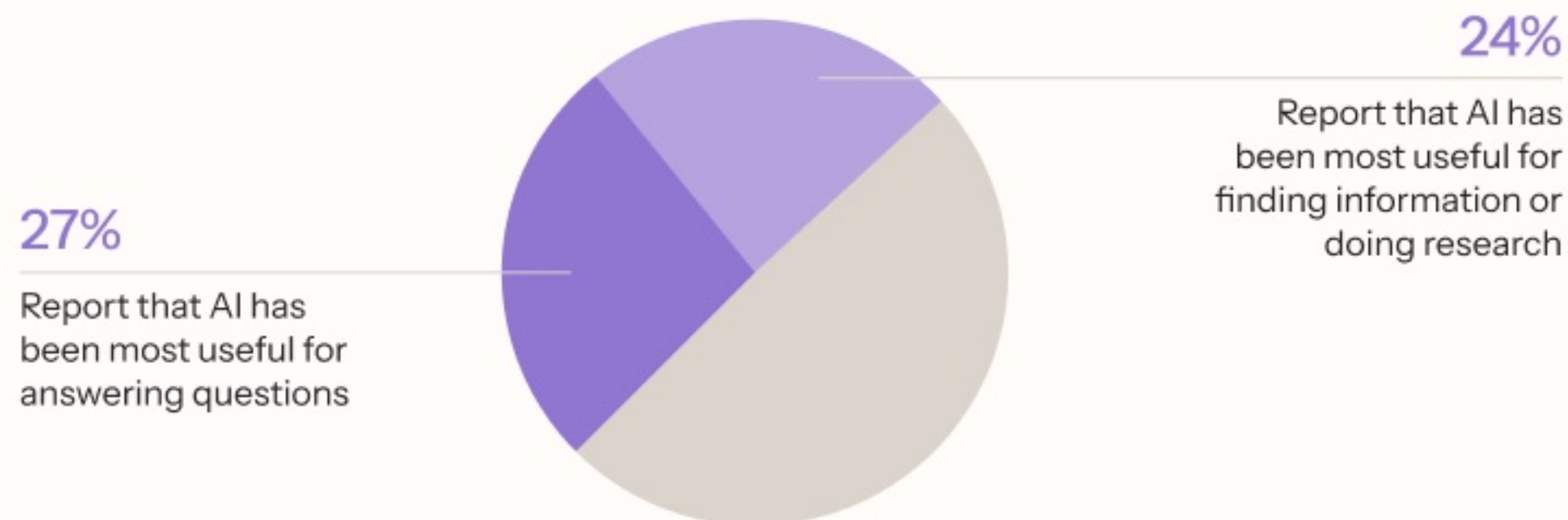
How they feel about AI

AI Skeptics are still most likely to lean on traditional search engines, social media, or their personal networks (including family, friends, or colleagues) for most day-to-day activities. Only 5% turn to AI when navigating personal decisions, like financial choices or career changes. They're also most likely to say that their loyalty won't increase when a brand uses AI.

As their preference for peer-sourced information shows, AI Skeptics put a premium on the human touch.



But even AI Skeptics have their moments of optimism.



While this persona may be open to using AI for research or to get help, the responses need to feel human and be accurate.

What turns them off

Over-automation:

AI Skeptics don't want to feel like they're interacting with a robot. They're particularly sensitive to customer service chats that don't feel human:

45% say these make a brand experience feel too automated

Unnatural tone:

All consumers are becoming wary of AI slop, but this persona is more concerned about an awkward voice than overly formal or unusually fast responses.

60% An unnatural writing style is AI Skeptics' main giveaway for identifying AI interactions, which cited as the "AI tell."

Low-quality responses:

This group's top discomfort when interacting with AI is receiving inaccurate or misleading information, highlighting the importance of a tech stack that unifies data from marketing and customer service.

AI Skeptics appreciate a “human-in-the-loop” approach to service.

To connect with AI Skeptics, be careful when using AI.

Train AI agents on your brand’s voice and tone

When you’re using an AI customer agent or shopping assistant/concierge, train it on your brand voice and tone so that customers feel like they’re talking to a representative of your brand. Overall, your customer service personality should align with your brand identity across your website, marketing messages, and all customer communications.

Prioritize AI for service moments that remove friction

Overly automated customer service won’t land with AI Skeptics. But those who do use AI have found it useful for getting the answers they need. Strike a balance by using an AI customer agent that can help answer simple questions and act on a strategy that a human sets, recognize when a conversation needs a human touch, and easily hand off the interaction to a human agent without losing any context.

How to reach AI Skeptics with Klaviyo



Train your AI customer agents, shopping assistants, and concierges on your brand voice and tone.



Use Klaviyo Helpdesk to give human support agents access to complete customer history before 1:1 interactions.



Use [analytics](#) to understand why customers reach out to support in the first place, then update your AI and human agent training to align with top issues and customer concerns.

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

“Taking care of customers that have been close to us for so long is why we’re still in business. We need to communicate meaningfully and reward our customers that keep coming back.”

Emeric Harney,
Director of marketing, Harney & Sons



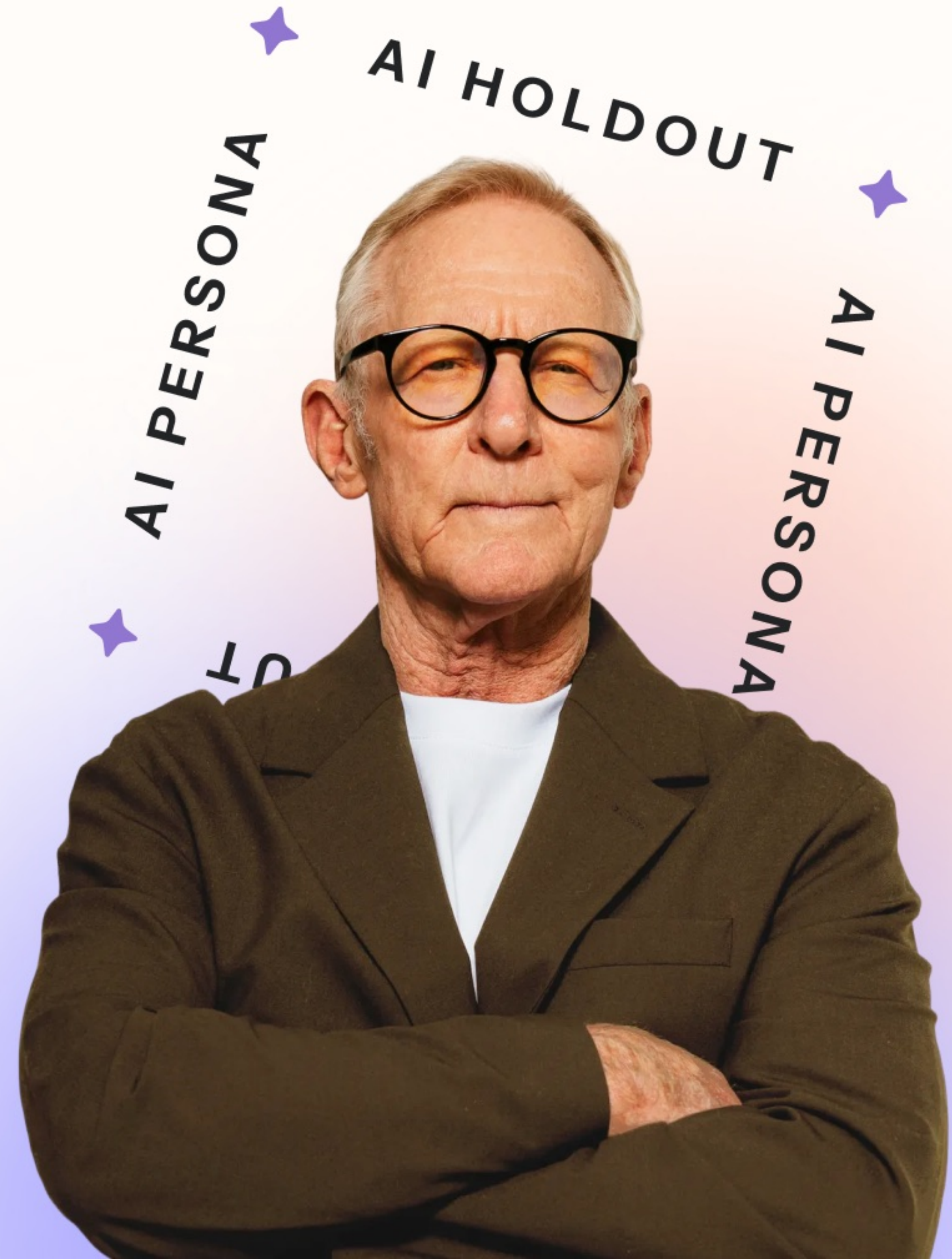
AI Holdouts prioritize reliability over novelty.

AI Holdouts aren't sold on AI yet, and they may never be. They think it's unreliable or overhyped.

Who they are

AI Holdouts distrust AI and use it less than once a month, or not at all.

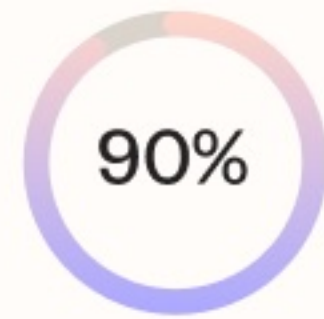
- ✦ 60% Women
- ✦ 45% Gen X
- ✦ 80% earn <\$75K annually



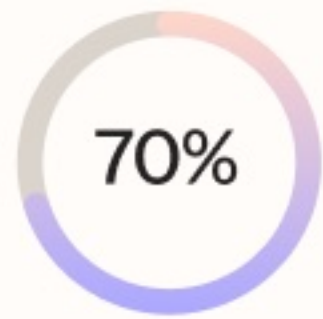
THE AI HOLDOUT

How they feel about AI

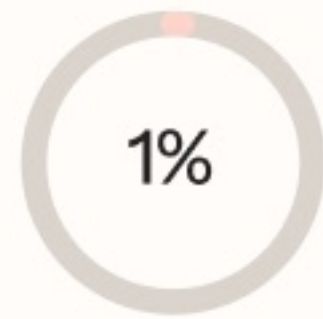
AI Holdouts aren't into using AI.



do not use AI for product discovery



completely distrust AI to provide satisfactory customer service



believe AI has improved the quality of support or order updates they receive from brands

These consumers feel most commonly uncomfortable with AI when it gives inaccurate, misleading, or low-quality responses. In their view, the gap between human and machine is too vast to bridge:

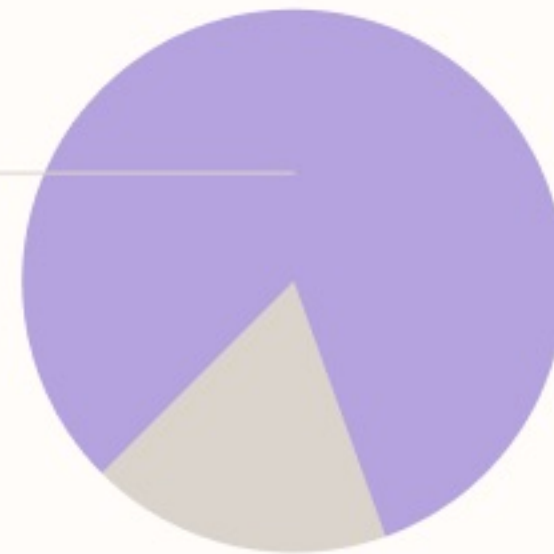
77%

say "nothing in particular" makes them feel understood by AI



82%

never expect to have an "aha" moment with AI



What turns them off



AI-only customer service options:

Don't force AI onto an already unwilling audience. Make sure there's always a clear option for AI Holdouts to reach a human agent, whether that's while they're browsing or post-purchase.



Robotic interactions:

AI Holdouts are the most likely to distinguish AI by its "formal or robotic" sound (66%). Using a cold or distant tone in customer service messages (whether they're AI generated or not) will only reinforce their distrust.



Invasive personalization:

These consumers are significantly more likely than average to feel that AI is too personal or intrusive (22% vs. 14% overall). Hyper-personalized interactions without context (e.g., details explaining how product recommendations are selected) will put AI Holdouts on alert rather than encourage a purchase.

AI Holdouts prefer a human touch for customer service.

AI Holdouts trust what they know. They aren't open to AI being the only option for support.

Use human-forward service

AI Holdouts may not be as comfortable as some of your other customers interacting with AI customer agents, or self-serving when they need help. Adapt to their preferences by building a human option into every touchpoint across channels, and bolstering those human interactions with AI-powered helpdesks on the back end. Always include a “Talk to a human” option in support interfaces, and explain upfront how you'll use any information collected by an AI agent, especially if it's to give human representatives a complete picture of the customer's situation.

Make the post-purchase experience more helpful

Help customers get the most out of their purchases and understand the value of your products and services using personalized post-purchase follow-ups. Share [user-generated content \(UGC\)](#), reviews, and educational materials, and check in after they've had their products for a bit to see how things are going. Offer self-service order tracking and management in a customer portal to keep customers in the loop.

Use Klaviyo Helpdesk to offer human support while still delivering fast, accurate responses to customer service questions.



Use Klaviyo Helpdesk to offer human support while still delivering fast, accurate responses to customer service questions.



Share [automated follow-up flows](#) to keep them informed every step of the way.



Use Klaviyo Customer Hub to give customers a signed-in portal where they can track their orders, see previous orders, and get help.

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

“Klaviyo Customer Hub definitely was a level up for us. We want to make sure that customers feel comfortable coming back and continuing to buy with Half Magic, and Customer Hub has become this strategic lever for loyalty, engagement, and self-service support from Customer Agent.”

Kristine Cruz,
VP of DTC and ecommerce, Half Magic



HALF MAGIC

The best AI experiences start with customer comfort, not capability

Your customers and potential customers are at different points in their AI journeys, and it's influencing how they perceive your brand and make decisions. As you adopt AI into your internal operations and customer-facing channels, it can help and hurt your business, depending on how you use it and the tools you trust.

Leaders who act with a customer-first mindset will create experiences that make all shoppers feel supported. This means respecting your audience's different levels of AI trust, and maintaining a human element throughout your processes.

Klaviyo is the autonomous B2C CRM brands need to connect with AI Enthusiasts and Evaluators with high-tech personalization, while reassuring Skeptics and Holdouts with high-touch accuracy.

[Sign up](#)

[Get a demo](#)

With Klaviyo, customer service teams can access:



A specialized AI agent that resolves issues end-to-end

K:AI Customer Agent guides shoppers with tailored recommendations, fast answers, and quick resolutions—all trained on your brand and powered by full customer context.



Faster, consistent support across channels

Klaviyo Helpdesk equips your human agents with the complete customer story they need to anticipate needs, personalize every exchange, and deliver the kind of elevated service only humans can provide.



Service interactions that improve personalization

Connect service and marketing on one platform to offer smarter personalization, deepen loyalty, and drive more revenue across the customer journey.



Methodology

To gather the data for this research, Klaviyo surveyed 8,000+ consumers in the US, the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Australia, and Singapore in November 30 to December 22, 2025.

Report created in collaboration with Datalily

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