

 **REPORT**

The Lowdown on Local Search

What Really Drives Customers to Your Doors (or Keeps Them Away)?

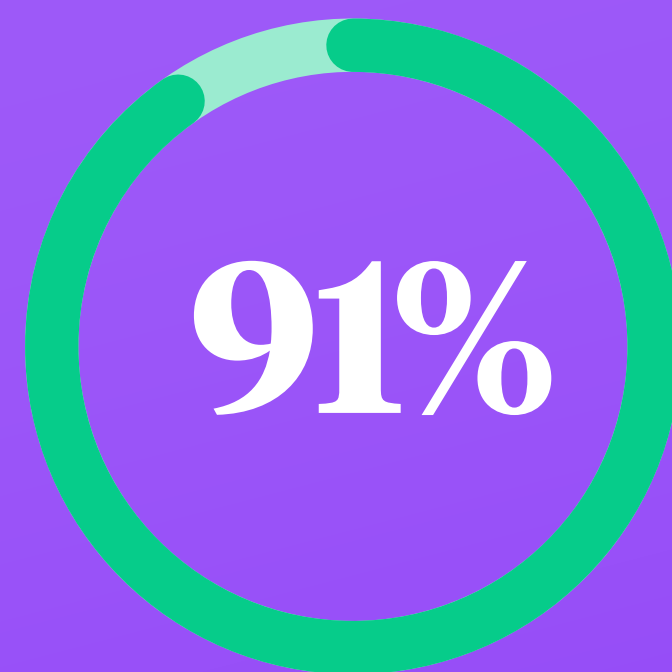




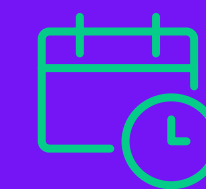
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Top 5 Stats



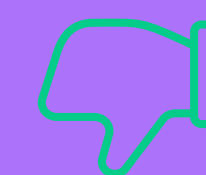
of consumers search
online before visiting a
local business



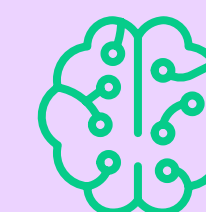
85%
visit within a week of that search



60%
are likely to make a purchase after
visiting a business they discovered
online



1/2
Almost half of consumers were put
off visiting a local business by unclear
or high prices (48%) and bad reviews
(46%) online



4th
AI tools are now the fourth most-used
method for local search



Executive Summary

Consumers don't just search online—they act quickly, compare thoroughly, and walk away fast if something doesn't feel right. **Here's what 2,000+ consumers** across the US, UK, France, and Germany told us about how they search and what drives them through the door of local businesses or keeps them away.

1 Every Visit Starts Online

91% of consumers search before visiting a business.

They'll likely use Google to do it. If your listings aren't clear, accurate, and up to date, you're invisible. Your visibility in local search is your front door.

2 AI is Rising, but Trust Isn't There Yet

AI tools are already the 4th most-used method to find local businesses.

Get your business ready now for AI, but double down on conventional trust signals like reviews and clarity.

3 Speed and Relevance Drive Action

85% of consumers visit within a week of discovering a business online.

Local marketing must be built for immediacy. What customers find must match what they expect, right now.

4 Poor Signals Cost You Sales

48% walked away because prices were unclear or too high; **46%** were deterred by bad reviews.

Clear and consistent information, competitive pricing, and reputation management are critical when it comes to driving conversions.



This report reveals the digital determinants that truly drive consumer decisions, and the ones that don't. Use it to discover what works and drop what doesn't.

As always, we're on hand to offer advice and guidance about how you can best take control of consumer behaviour and your digital presence like never before.

How People Search— and Why Digital Presence Still Wins



TL;DR:

Every Visit Starts with a Search and Most Visits Happen Fast

- Consumers will search online before visiting a business.
- Google dominates local discovery.
- 59% search “in the moment they need something,” and most visits happen within a week of online discovery.

19% of consumers are using AI tools like ChatGPT and Gemini to find local businesses.

Everyone's Searching for Local Businesses. Here's How Often.

No surprise: People search before visiting. The real story is how often, why, and what it means for your bottom line.

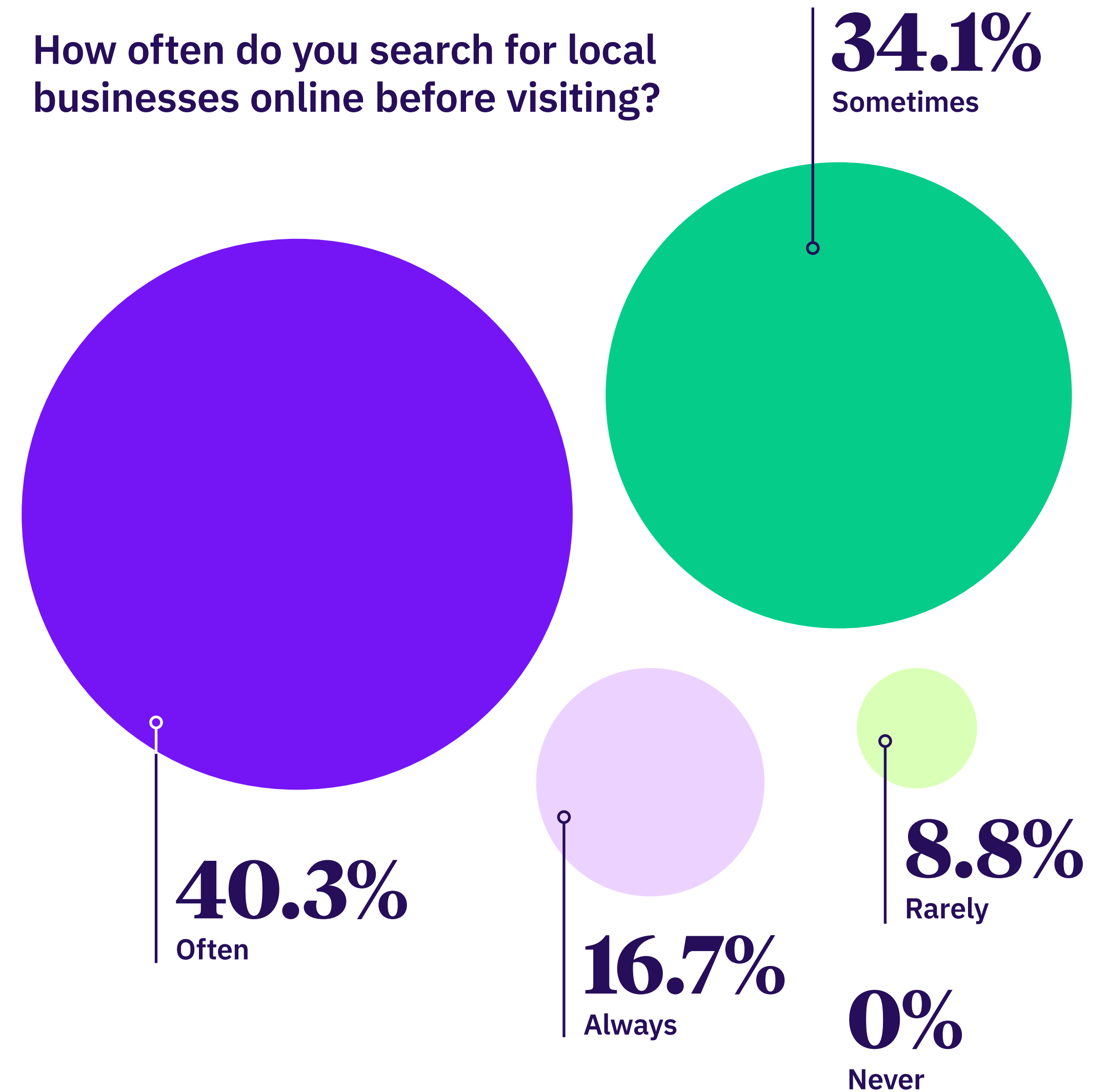
- **91%** search for local businesses “always”, “often”, or “sometimes.”
- **0%** said “never.”

Every visit starts with a search.

Some businesses assume their physical location is enough to guarantee foot traffic. But without accurate listings, locator pages, and a strong online presence, they're missing digital intent, and they're invisible where it matters most—online.

That mindset leaves money on the table. While you may get walk-ins, you're missing the high-intent consumers who search first, looking for the top-rated restaurant or checking store opening hours before they even arrive.

How often do you search for local businesses online before visiting?

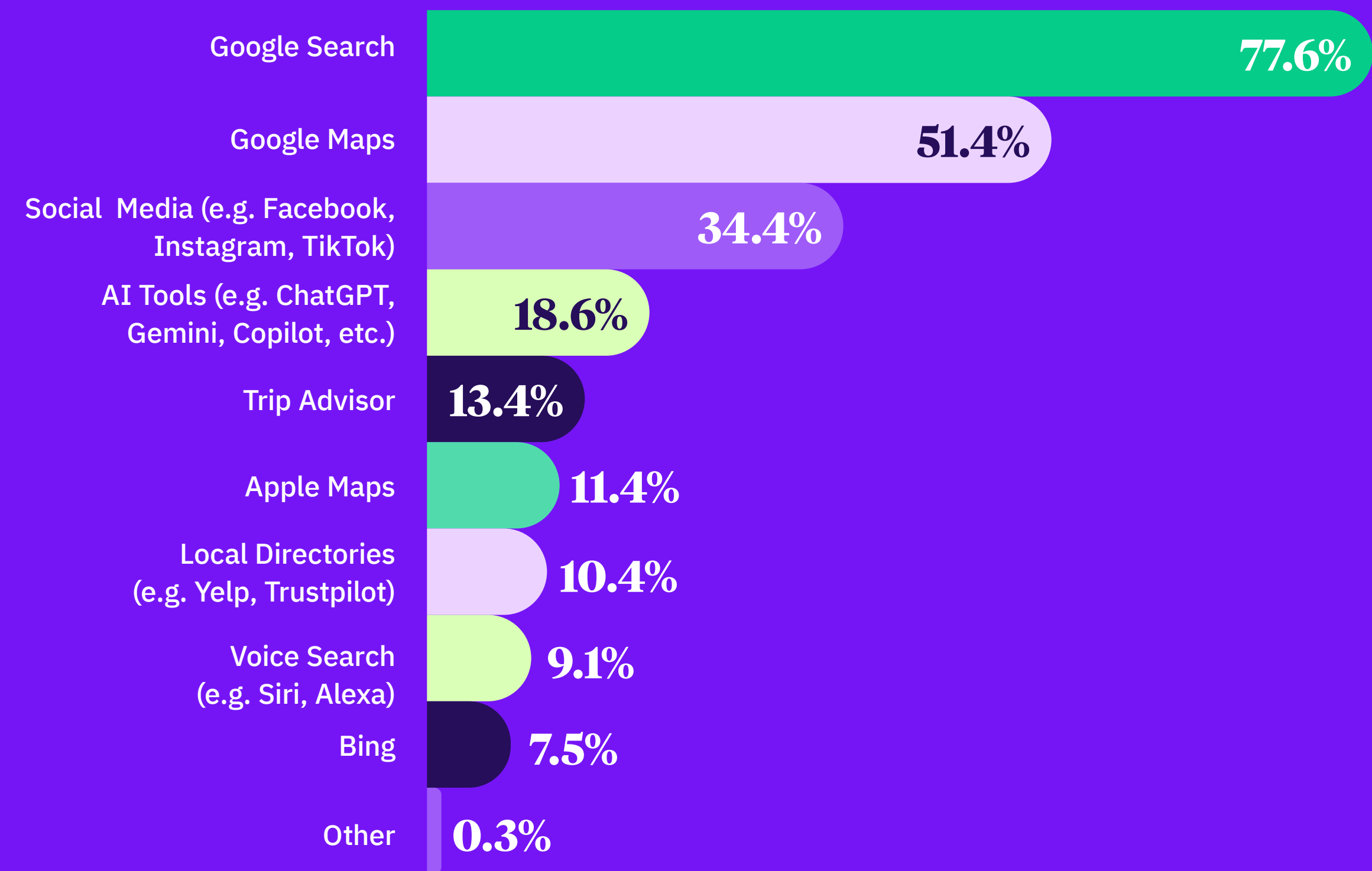


Google Still Rules

- Google dominates local discovery (78% Search, 51% Maps).
- Consumers in France are most likely to use social media for local search (36%)
- Voice search hasn't really lived up to the hype but with the AI that powers it getting smarter, it might still take off.



Which platforms do you mainly use to search for local / near me businesses? Please select up to 3.

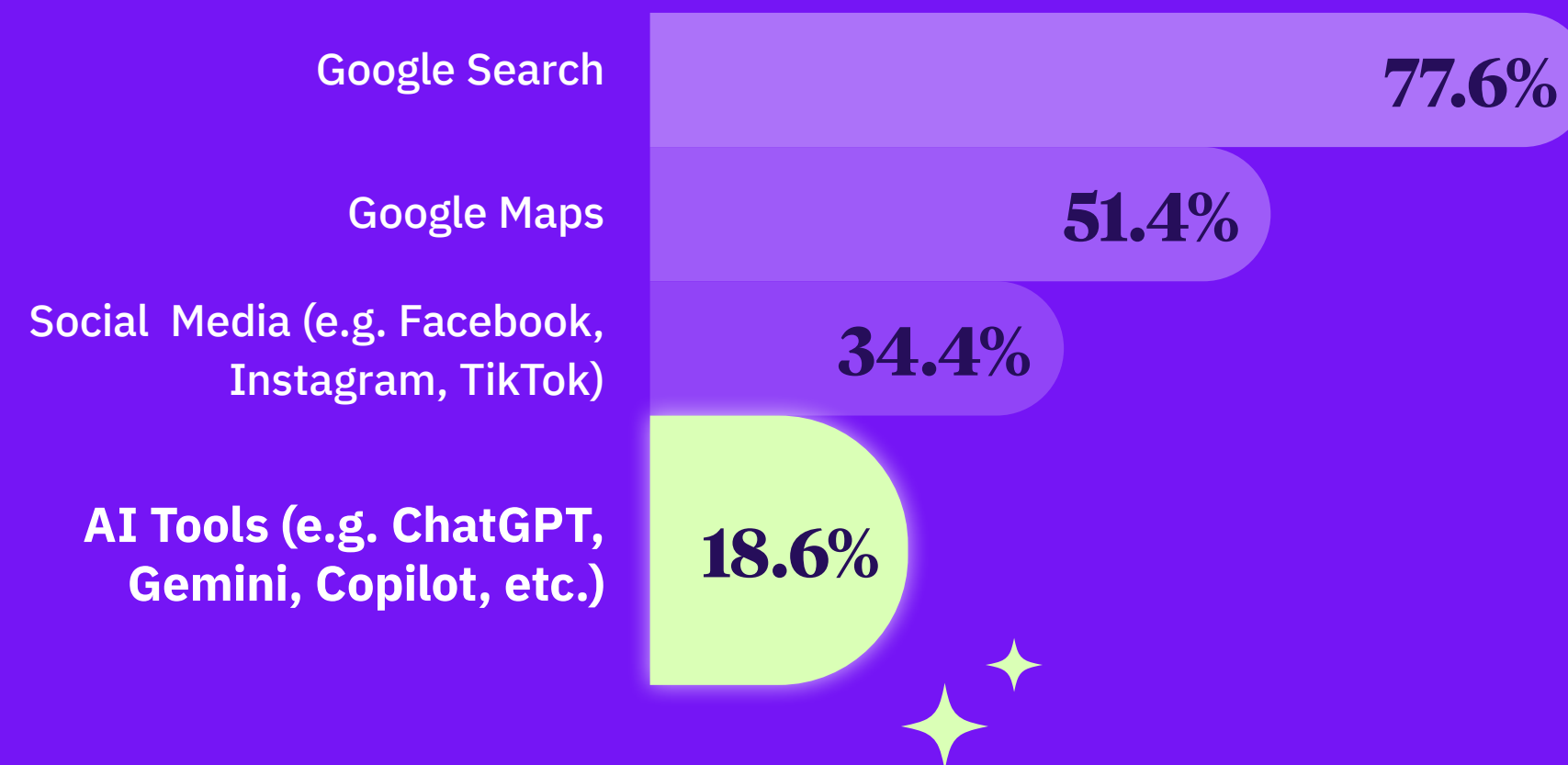


AI: Emerging Fast, Trusted Slowly

AI Tools are already the fourth most popular choice for local search and discovery. 19% are already using ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, or a similar technology to find local businesses.



Which platforms do you mainly use to search for local / near me businesses? Please select up to 3.

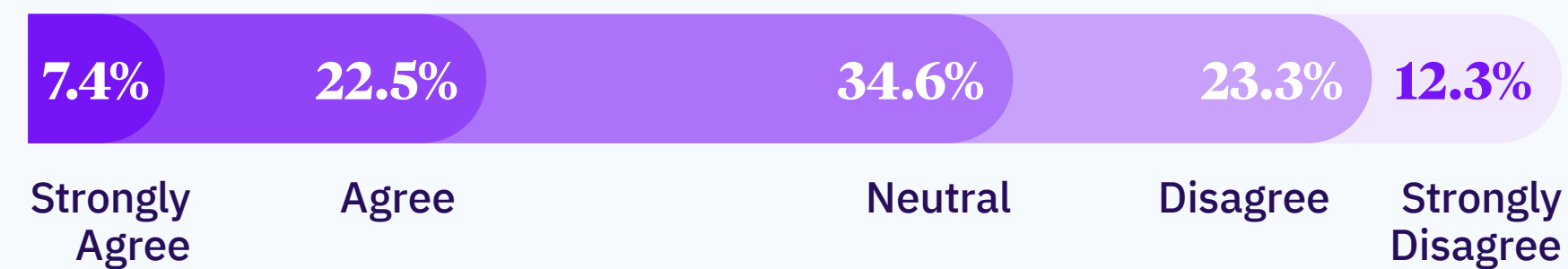


But only 9% of consumers said an AI-powered recommendation **influenced their visit decision** last time they ventured to a local business.

When asked about preferring AI-powered search results to visiting business websites or calling businesses, **30%** agreed, **36%** disagreed, and the remainder were neutral.

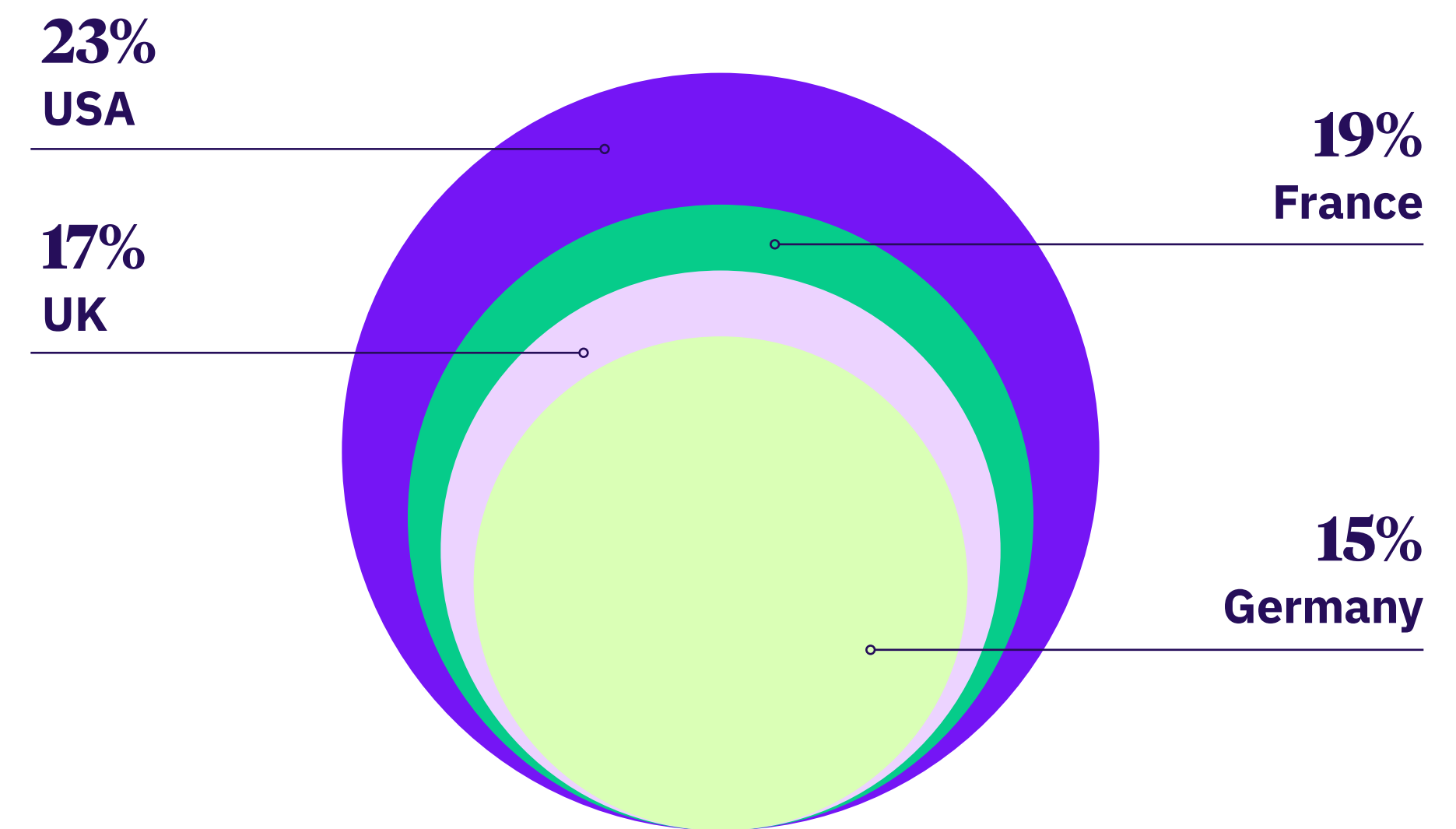
To what extent do you agree with the following statements about visiting businesses based on online information?

“I prefer AI-powered search results over visiting...”



Usage is notably higher in the **United States** than in other markets. 23% of American consumers said they prefer AI tools to search for local businesses compared to the 19% average for all the countries we surveyed.

AI Tools usage by country



Consumers are curious about AI, but curiosity doesn't equal trust. While usage is growing, far fewer say it has influenced their decision to visit a local business. For now, conventional trust signals like online reviews and accurate, detailed listings carry more weight.

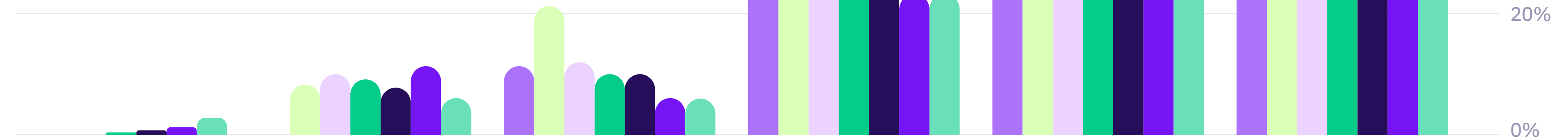
While AI may not be a leading driver of real-world visits yet, it's becoming

embedded in more parts of the search experience. Google's [rollout of AI Overviews in Europe](#) and the rise of voice assistants mean AI is becoming an intrinsic part of how consumers search. Brands that prepare now will be ready when AI plays a bigger role in shaping real-world visits.

How Age Shapes Where People Search

Which platforms do you mainly use to search for local / near me businesses?

Age groups: 14-17 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-99



Other
Some in the older age groups specified Yelp as their preferred search platform for local businesses.

Voice Search (e.g. Alexa, Siri)
Apple Maps and Voice Search see relatively low usage across all age groups.

Apple Maps

Social Media (e.g. Facebook, TikTok)
Social media is dominant among younger users, with nearly half of 18–24-year-olds using it to find local businesses.

Google Maps
Google Maps is most popular with younger consumers, used by 81% of 14–17s—but just 41% of those aged 65–99.

Google Search
Google Search use increases with age, peaking at 88% among those aged 65–99, compared to 67% in the 14–17 age group.

27% of 18–24-year-olds use AI tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, or Copilot, the highest usage of any age group.

Right Place, Right Time

Why Timing is Everything in Local Search

The majority of consumers search for local businesses at the exact moment they need something, underscoring the importance of being visible and accurate in real time.

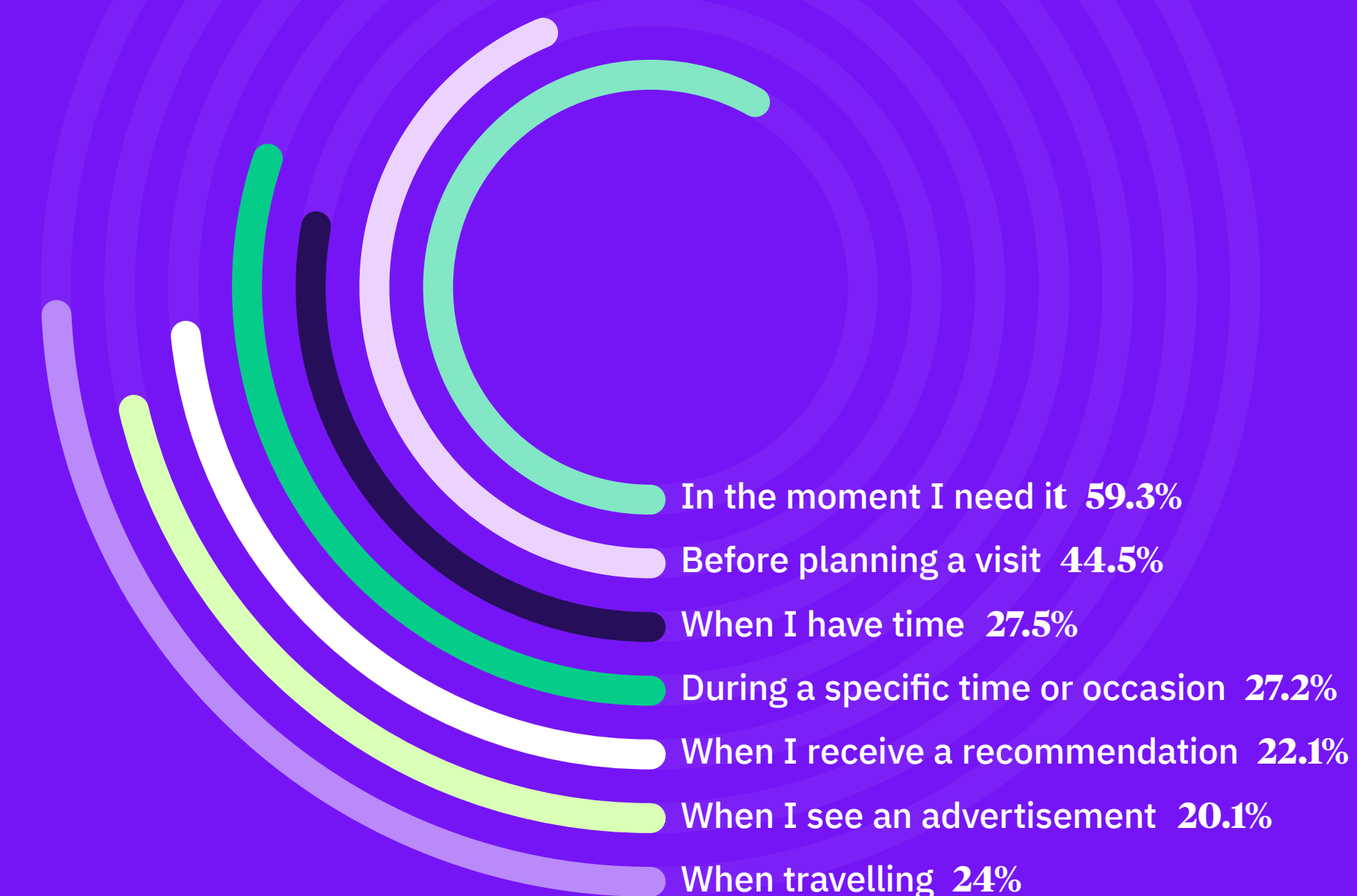
However, patterns vary by market. UK consumers are more likely to plan ahead, while German and US consumers show a stronger link between local search and specific occasions or free time.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- French consumers were more likely than the other nationalities to search “In the moment I need it” (69%)
- At 31%, US consumers specified ‘when I have free time’ more than consumers in other countries.
- British consumers (54%) perform local searches before planning visits more often than those in France, Germany, and the USA.
- In Germany, searching for local businesses “during a specific event or occasion” is much more common (43%).

Searching is just the beginning. What consumers see next—and how your business shows up—determines whether they choose you or move on.

When do you typically search for a local / near me business?



From Click to Customer

The Online Signals That Drive Conversions and Sales



TL;DR:

How Consumers Choose and Why Your Digital Presence Needs to Work Overtime

- After the initial search, 98% take further digital action and 77% compare multiple options.
 - Reviews (45%), service details (42%), and location (39%) drive most decisions.
- 60% are likely to buy in person after finding a business online; 80% say they'd return.

1. Before the Visit

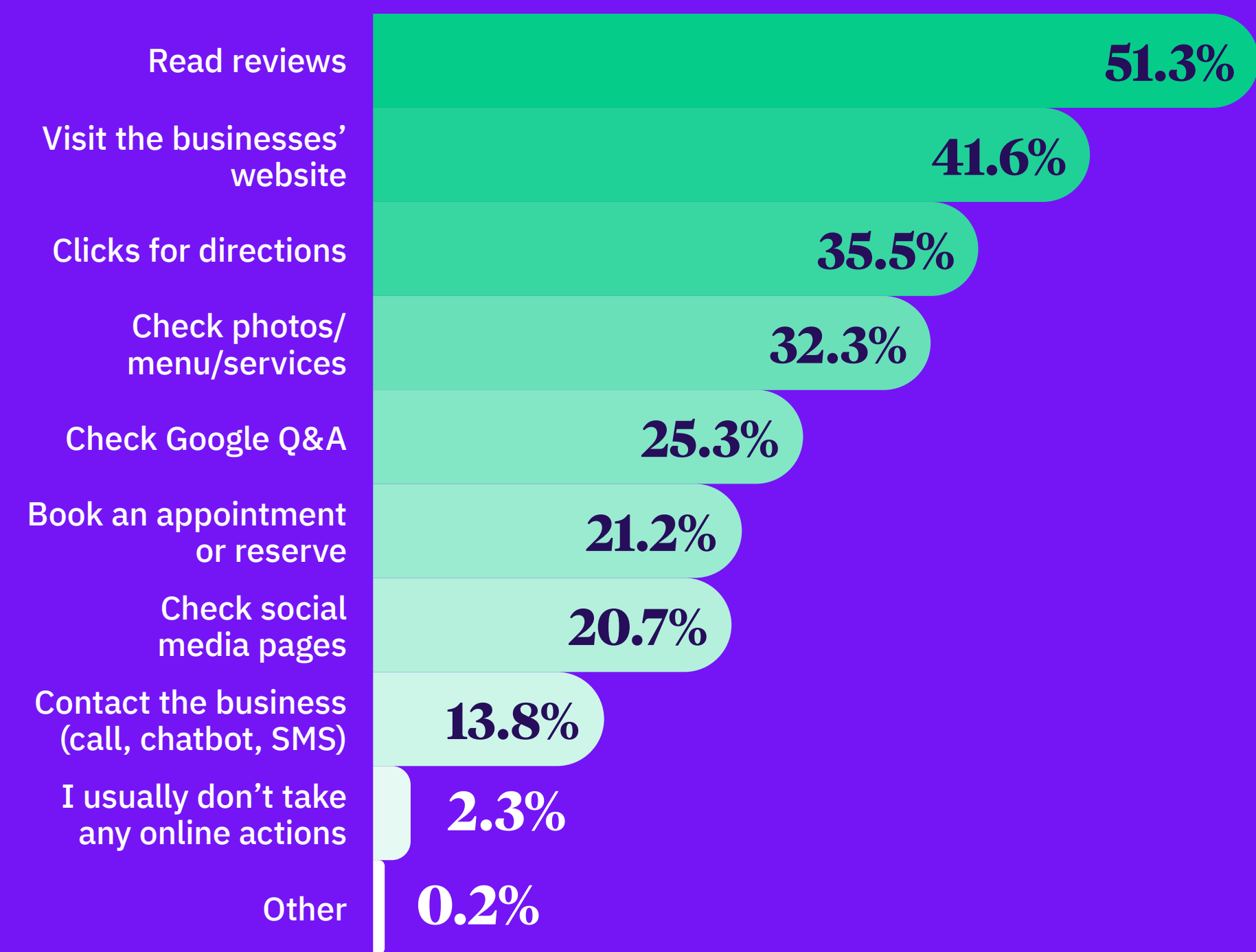
How Consumers Search and Compare

Before anyone walks through the door, they're checking you out online, and two things matter most: your reviews and your website.

51% of consumers say reading reviews is the first thing they do, followed by 42% who visit a business's website. Both are critical trust signals that shape perception and influence intent.

If your site is outdated and lacks certain information, or if your reviews go unanswered, you've lost the chance to make a positive first impression.

Before visiting a business, what action(s) are you most likely to take online?



KEY TAKEOUTS

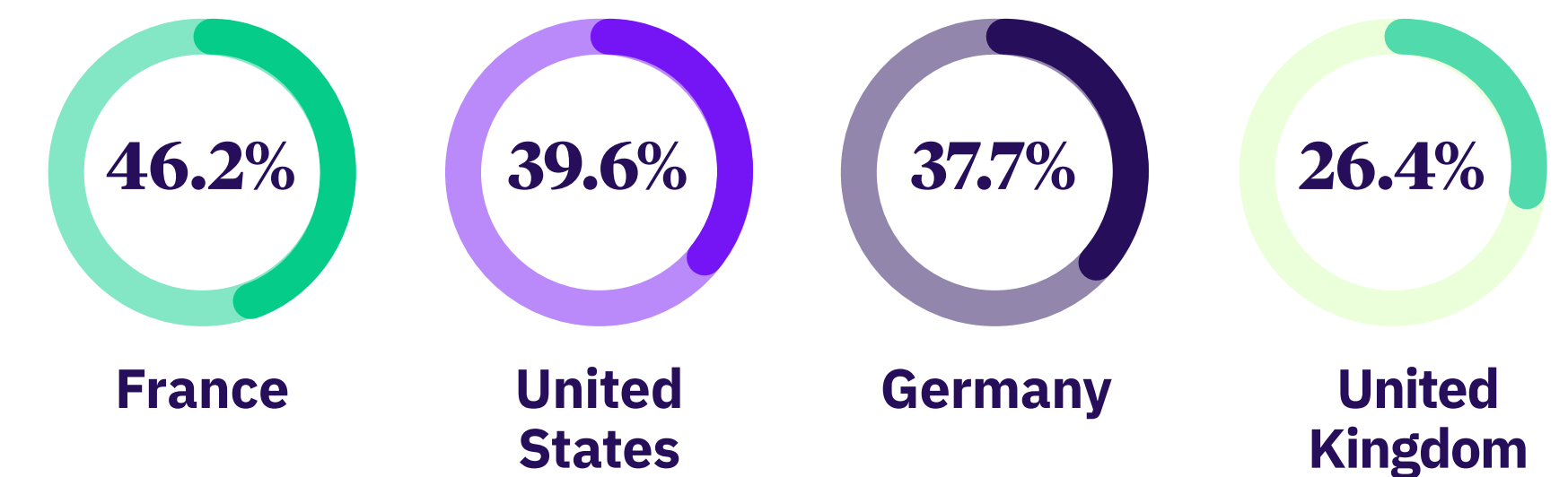
- Since ‘Clicks for Directions’ is a top consumer online action, accurate location pins and addresses on your business profiles and directories are crucial.
- The #1 answer in Germany is “Check Google Q&A” selected by 47% of Germans while the global average is 25% (ranking only #5), closely followed by “read reviews”.
- Germans tend to book appointments or make reservations more than consumers in the UK, US or France.
- Very few consumers “don’t take any online action” contradicting the idea that many searches are “zero click”.
- Only 2% don’t take any online action.
- Gen Z (14–17) is more likely to check social, while older consumers (65–99) are more likely to book, 35%, the highest of any group.

If your digital presence isn’t ready, you’re not even in the race. Prioritize review management and accurate, up-to-date local pages or websites. They’re what consumers trust most when deciding where to go.

Preferred Contact Method by Country

Despite the rise of digital tools, pre-visit phone contact remains a strong preference in many markets. Perhaps phone calls deliver answers more quickly when a business’s online presence isn’t enough.

Prefer phone contact:



Make sure your contact info is up to date and you’ve got someone to answer the phone when customers do call.

As a pre-visit contact method, British consumers preferred social media at a much high rate (18%) than their American, French and German counterparts.

2. Making the Decision

What Drives Selection and Persuades Them to Visit

Top search rankings alone aren't enough for consumers.

They scroll, compare, and ultimately decide based on trust. They seek out human signals like reviews and social proof to validate businesses.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about visiting businesses based on online information?

I typically choose the first business in the search

6%

21%

27.6%

35.6%

9.7%

I prefer AI-powered search results over visiting a store

7.4%

22.2%

34.6%

23.2%

12.3%

I prioritize the number of reviews

14.4%

43.9%

27.6%

11.7%

I prefer businesses that respond to reviews

17.3%

43.9%

30.4%

6.5%

I prioritize higher ratings

23.2%

49.1%

20.6%

5.6%

I scroll through most options before making a decision

23.1%

54.1%

17.4%

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

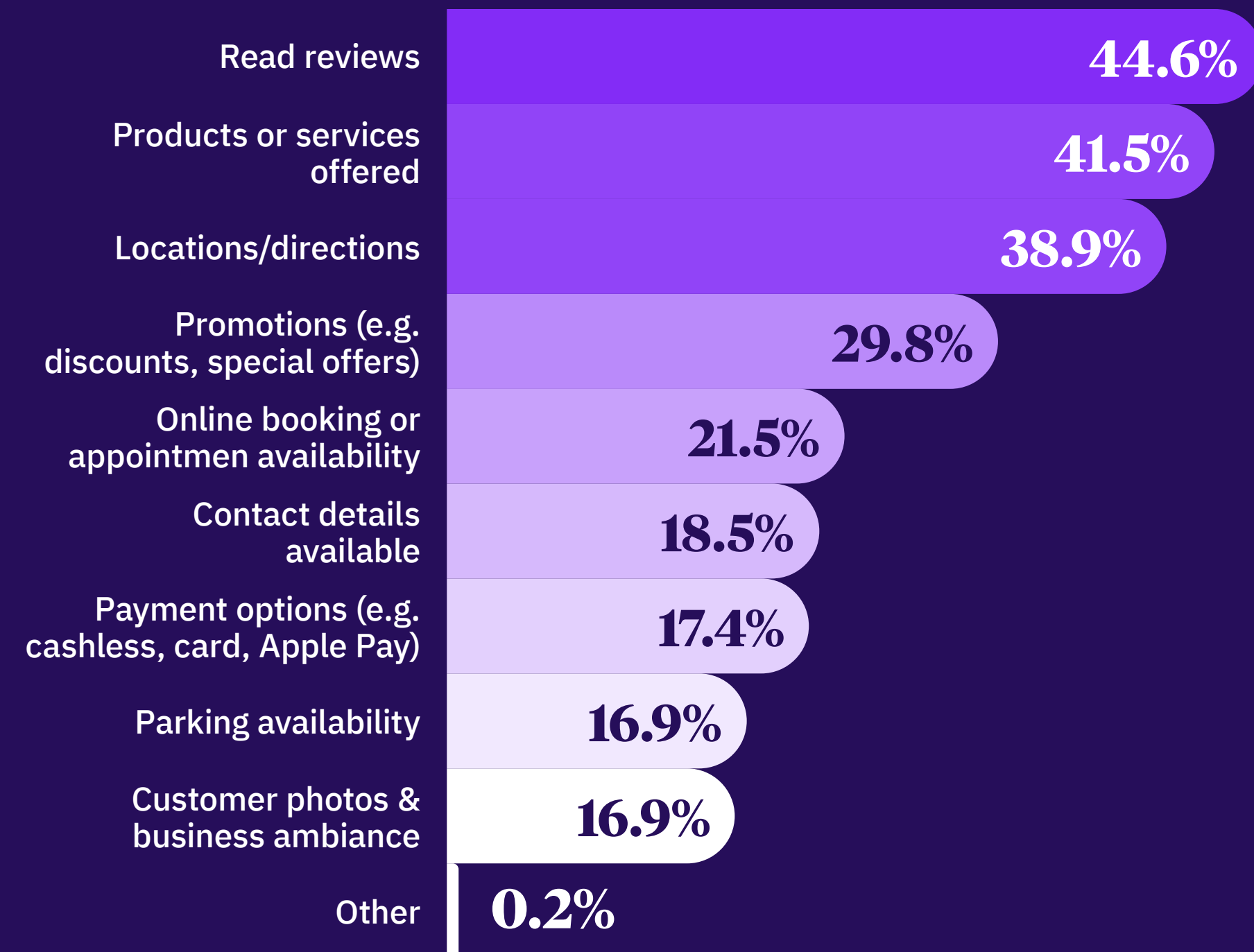


Consumers prefer businesses that reply to reviews.

You're being judged on your ratings and on how you engage. Review responses are more important than review volume.

When asked to specify the 3 online factors that help them to decide which businesses to visit, ratings and reviews came out on top.

What online information helps you to decide which business to visit? Select the 3 most important.



When asked what influenced their most recent visit to a local business:



43% said online reputation (positive reviews, high ratings)

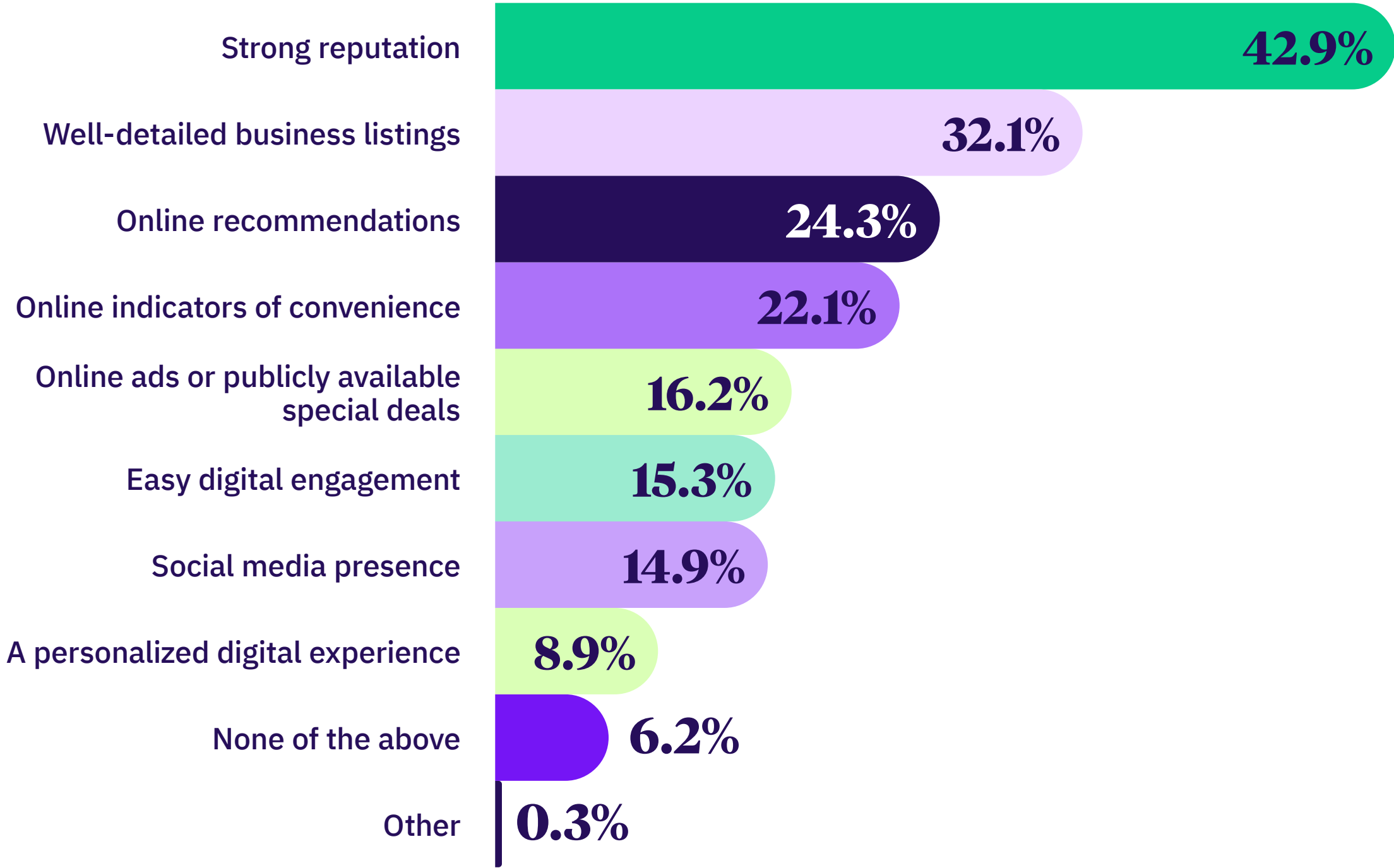


32% pointed to a detailed business listing



Only 22% were influenced by search ranking, highlighting that ranking alone is not enough

What online factors most influenced your decision to visit a local business last time?





Clarity, reputation, and convenience are the factors most likely to turn consumer interest into action.



For most consumers, a strong online reputation was the deciding factor in their most recent choice of local business.



A detailed and accurate business listing was the second most influential factor in driving real-world visits.



FROM OUR FRIENDS AT GOOGLE:

“At Google, we see 5x more views for regularly updated Business Profiles, so we recommend not only filling out your listing, but also updating it to share what makes you unique.”

Lisa Landsman
Global Business Development

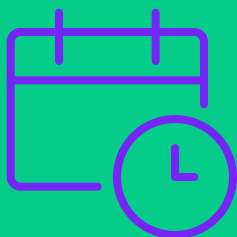
Google



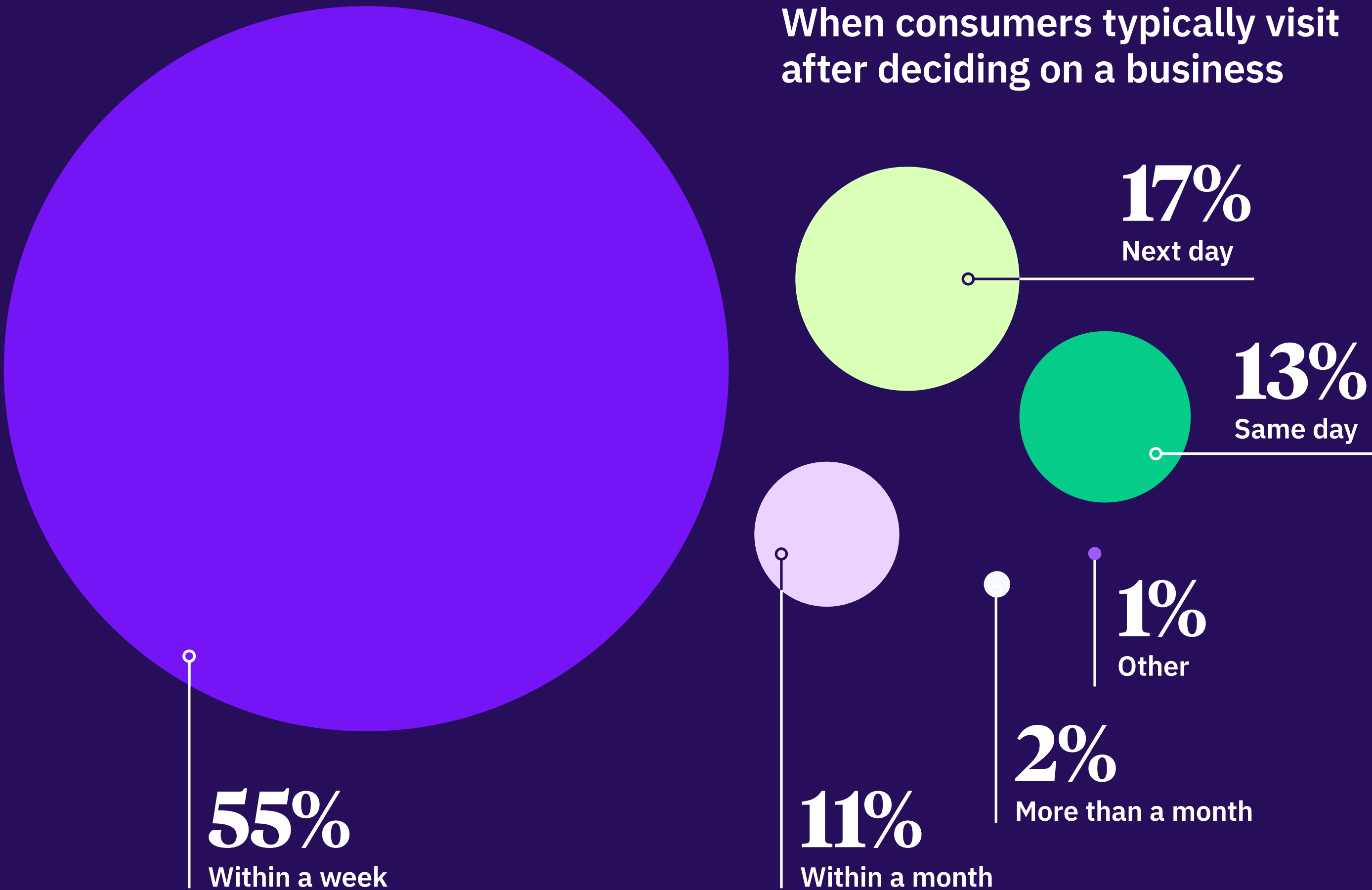
3. Acting Fast

What Happens After Consumers Choose You

Once a decision is made, the clock starts ticking. Most consumers don't wait around, so your online presence must be accurate and ready, especially for **unbranded, local searches**. Outdated hours or missing info? You just lost a customer.



85% of consumers will visit your business within a week of finding you online.





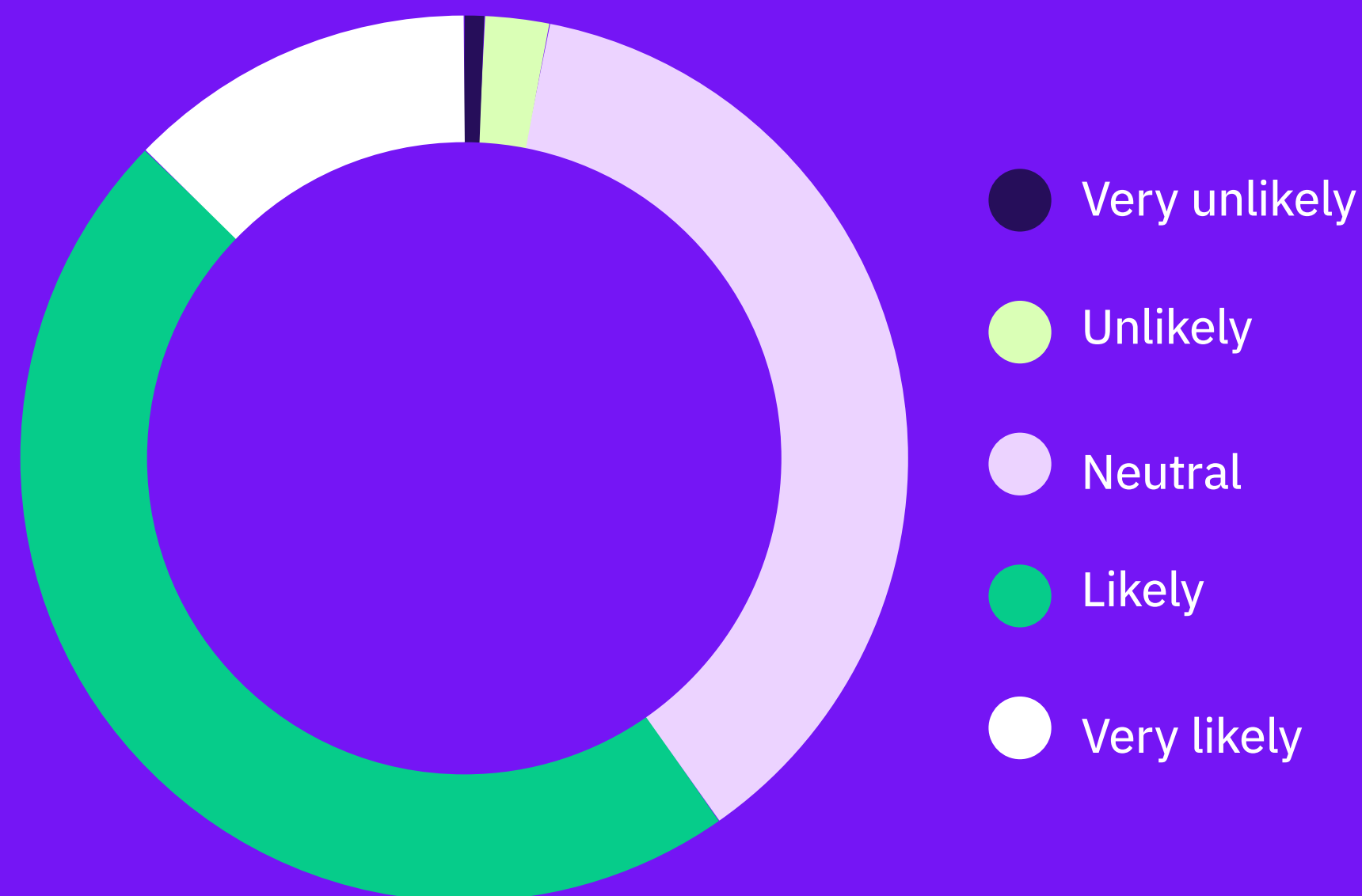
KEY TAKEOUTS

After online discovery and selection, consumers arrive at your door quickly.

- 55% visit within a week
- 17% go the very next day
- 13% visit the same day—a number that climbs higher among the 45–54 and 65+ age groups.

For multi-location businesses, visibility is about discovery and availability. Consumers are looking in the moment and acting fast. If your listings, reputation, and digital storefront aren't up to scratch, they'll move on in seconds to your competitor who is.

4. Purchase Likelihood After Online Discovery



KEY TAKEOUTS

After discovering a business online:

- 60% of consumers say they are likely or very likely to purchase in person. This is even higher for German consumers (68%).
- Only 3% are unlikely to purchase.

The strong correlation between online discovery and consumer purchase intent presents a significant opportunity. If your digital presence delivers clarity, trust, and relevance, consumers are empowered to act.

What's more, intent tends to be immediate. Nearly 60% of consumers say they search at the moment they

need something, and 85% visit a business within a week of finding it online. Many act even faster, with 13% visiting the same day and 17% the following day. The likelihood of purchase increases the sooner the visit happens after discovery.

To support that intent, your digital presence should provide the essentials. Consumers want clear, accessible information—like reviews, correct details, transparent pricing, helpful visuals, and accurate directions. When those basics are in place, it becomes easier for someone to move from finding your business to walking through the door and making a purchase.

Earning the first visit is critical, but long-term value comes from what happens after. So, what online factors drive loyalty and repeat visits?

5. What Drives Loyalty and Repeat Visits

After a positive experience at a local, brick-and-mortar business:

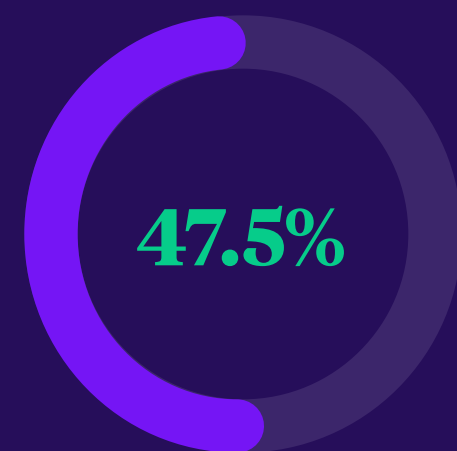
- 80% are likely or very likely to return
- Just 2% say they're unlikely

Loyalty is even stronger than initial purchase intent!

Get found and chosen online once, and you've likely got yourself a loyal customer.

Top reasons for revisiting

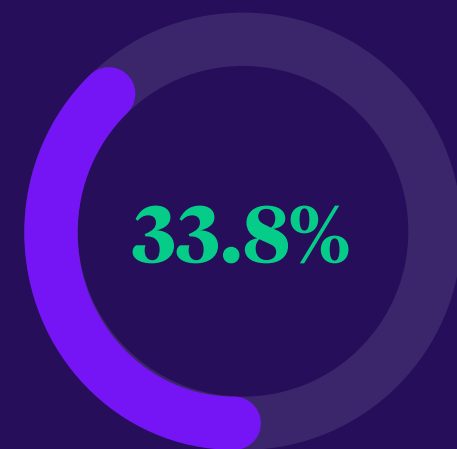




47.5%

Special offers or discounts

No need for expensive advertising campaigns when you can leverage your business profiles to run special offers!



33.8%

Easy online booking or purchasing process

Make sure that your profiles are optimized for booking intent (e.g. “Available now”)

Just as the right online signals can drive a visit and win a loyal customer, the wrong ones can stop it in its tracks.

FROM OUR FRIENDS AT GOOGLE:

“Just the facts’ about your business aren’t enough to get you noticed anymore. But what’s happening there today – like events, deals, and specials? Those are the real ways to grab people’s attention and show them what makes you different. At Google, we want to make it super easy for customers to see exactly what’s cool and unique about your business.”

Rick Borovoy
Product Manage

Google

Red Flags & Roadblocks

What Stops Consumers in Their Tracks



TL;DR:

What Drives Consumers Away

- Consumers look to your competitors when your online presence raises red flags.
- Top dealbreakers include bad reviews, unclear or high pricing, missing business info, and poor customer service signals.
- If your competitors are clearer, closer, or better rated, you're out of the running.

Why Consumers Choose Not to Visit

Our research shows that consumers are quick to walk away if they spot red flags during their online search, especially high or unclear pricing, which was the top reason cited.

For some businesses, a premium positioning may warrant higher prices, but setting clearer expectations or offering an affordable entry point can help broaden appeal and reduce negative reviews.

Poor or inconsistent reviews were the second most mentioned factor, reinforcing the importance of visible, consistent, and credible customer feedback.

A lack of basic business information or poor customer service signals also frequently led consumers to choose competitors.

Consumers are comparing your business to other nearby options, often in real time. If your online presence creates doubt, they're gone.

What were the main reasons you chose not to visit a local business after finding it online?



When asked to describe a specific time they chose not to visit a business, certain themes came up again and again:



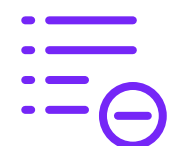
Bad reviews

Negative or inconsistent feedback was the biggest dealbreaker



High or unclear pricing

Especially when compared to similar businesses



Missing or outdated information

Such as opening hours, contact details, or services



Location issues

If the business seemed hard to find or reach



Customer service warnings

Some avoided businesses based on how the owners replied to reviews or not.

These common issues directly impact whether a customer visits a business or goes elsewhere.



What Real Consumers Say...

The insights are clear. Now it's time to turn them into action. Here's your playbook for driving real-world results.

About Missing or Unclear Information

- “The company didn't have a homepage where you could get an overview of the services, rough price information or more contact options than just a phone number. That's not magic—it's basic.
- “There was a mix of glowing five-star reviews and one-star complaints about poor hygiene. Their website didn't list prices or hours clearly. When I called, no one answered. I chose a different bakery instead.

About Poor Communication or Responsiveness

- “I was interested in visiting a dental clinic. Their reviews were unclear, so I called to ask more. They never replied. That lack of response made my decision for me.
- “I searched for a local garage, arranged a price and time online. Before I left, I called to confirm and was told the price was wrong, and the person on the phone was rude. So I went elsewhere.

About Bad Reviews or Reputation

- “I checked it online and found out management had changed and it had gotten bad in terms of food quality and customer service. I asked on Facebook and got a lot of feedback about how badly run it was. I looked for another restaurant instead.

About High or Inconsistent Pricing

- “I found a cute café, but the prices were absolutely crazy—almost \$10 for a medium coffee and \$15 for a large. That was a dealbreaker.

Stop Guessing. Start Winning.

Your Playbook for Impact

You've seen the data. Now it's time to act.

Consumers are searching, comparing, and deciding fast. The question is, will they find you? And will they choose you?

Here, we distill everything we learned from over 2,000 consumers into focused, high-impact actions that help you win attention, drive visits, and keep customers coming back.



Be Visible Where It Counts

Optimize Your Business Profiles

Your business listings are one of your most powerful visibility tools for “near me” searches.



Keep your core details up to date

Make sure your hours, location, services, and images are accurate across Google and Apple. Descriptions in your Google Business Profile Services are a must. Outdated or inconsistent information is one of the fastest ways to lose a potential visit.



Use trusted directories

Depending on your industry, platforms like Yelp, Zocdoc, Angi, or Avvo can drive targeted discovery. Be where your customers are already looking.



Pin your location properly

On platforms like Apple Business Connect and Google Business Profiles, double-check that your map pin is correct. This is especially important for locations inside shopping centres or shared buildings.



Add high-quality visuals

Include clear, up-to-date photos that reflect what customers can expect. Visual cues build trust and help your listing stand out.



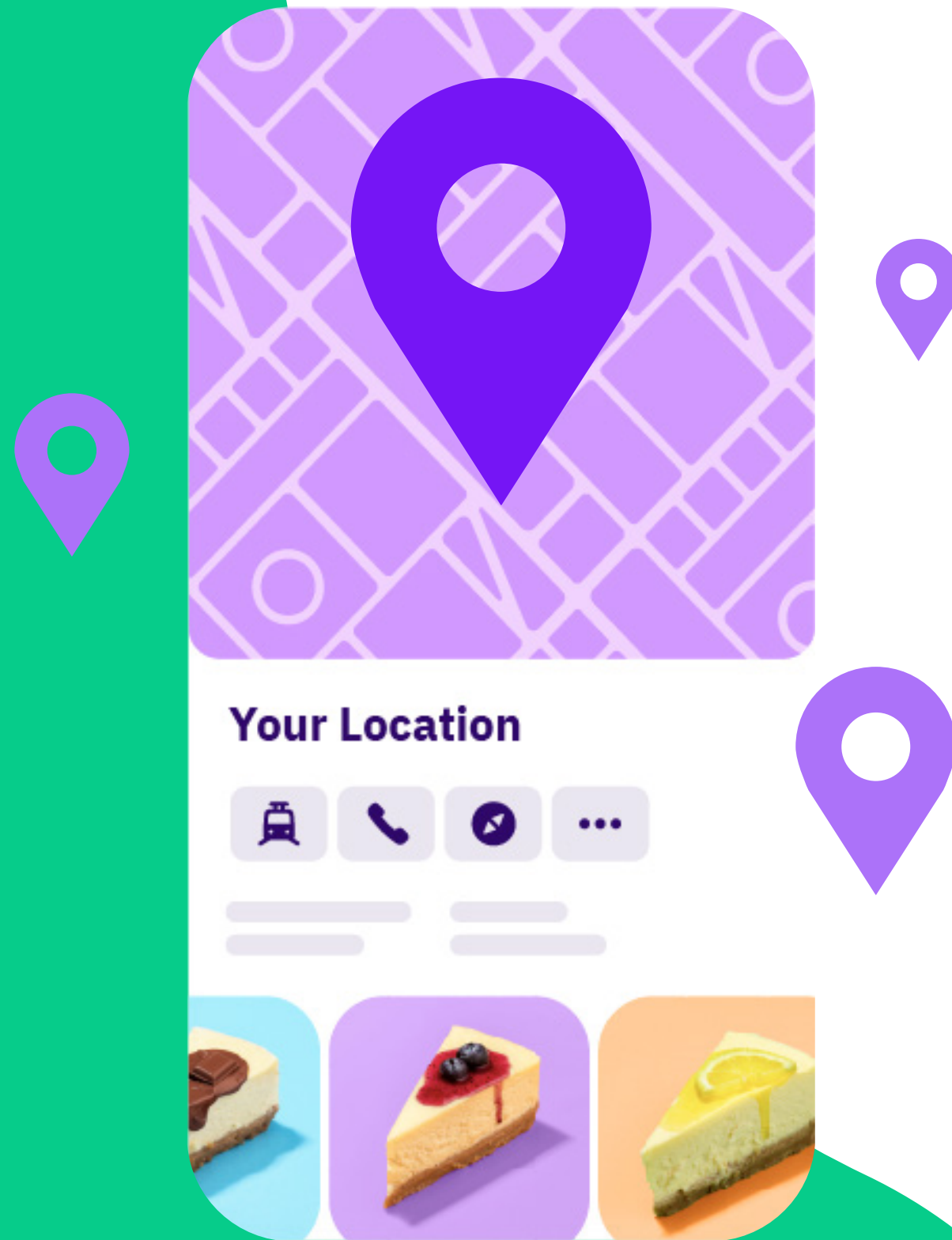
Add direct action buttons

Make it easy for customers to call, book, or get directions with one tap.



Prepare for AI and voice search

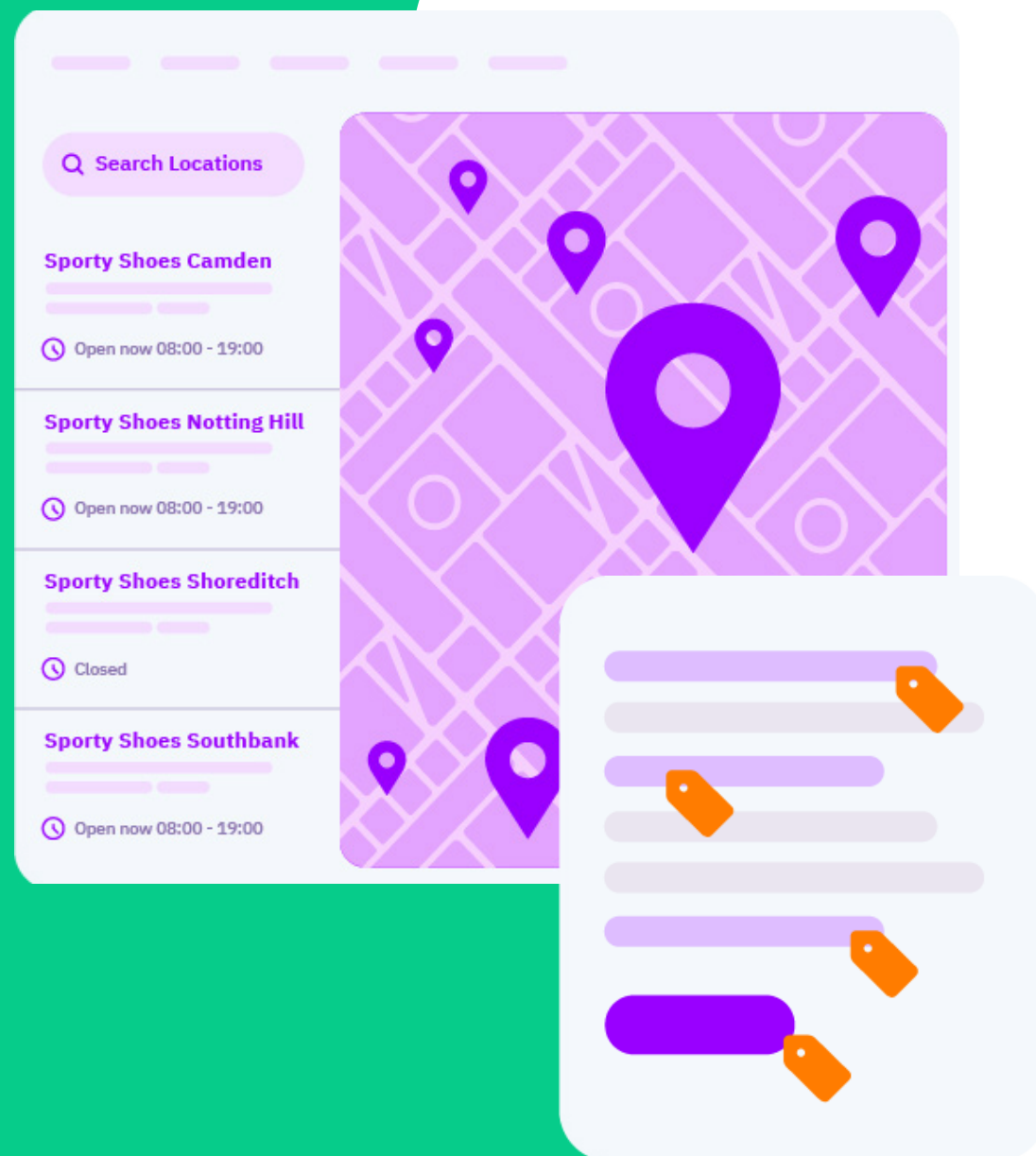
Get ready for emerging discovery paths by using conversational, FAQ-style content. Get featured in “best of” lists to boost your chances of surfacing in these newer interfaces.



Enhance Your Website for Local Visibility

To maximize visibility in local search results and win consumer trust, your website needs to be fast, locally relevant, and built with SEO in mind. What consumers see on your website must reinforce what they saw in search engine results.

- ✓ **Prioritize speed and performance**
Slow websites push people (and search engines) away. Compress images, enable caching, and make sure your site loads quickly on mobile.
- ✓ **Make it mobile-friendly**
Many local searches happen on phones. Ensure your site looks and performs well on all devices.
- ✓ **Embed Maps**
Add an interactive map to your contact or locator pages so customers can easily find you and get directions.
- ✓ **Optimize for local search**
Use city, region, or “near me” keywords naturally throughout your site, especially on landing pages and in headings.
- ✓ **Use internal links**
Guide visitors and search engines to key pages like store locations, services, or FAQs using simple internal links.
- ✓ **Keep it clean for SEO**
Fix broken links, update old pages, and include structured data (like LocalBusiness schema) to help search engines understand your content.
- ✓ **Be AI-Ready, Not Just Search-Ready**
AI is reshaping local discovery. Optimize your website and pages with structured data, FAQs, and natural language so tools like ChatGPT and Google AI can easily understand and promote your business.



Win Trust Before They Walk In

Actively manage your reputation

Reviews remain the top factor influencing consumer decisions. Enable customers to leave feedback easily by placing QR codes in-store or on receipts. After a visit or transaction, send review requests via email or SMS to drive higher response rates.

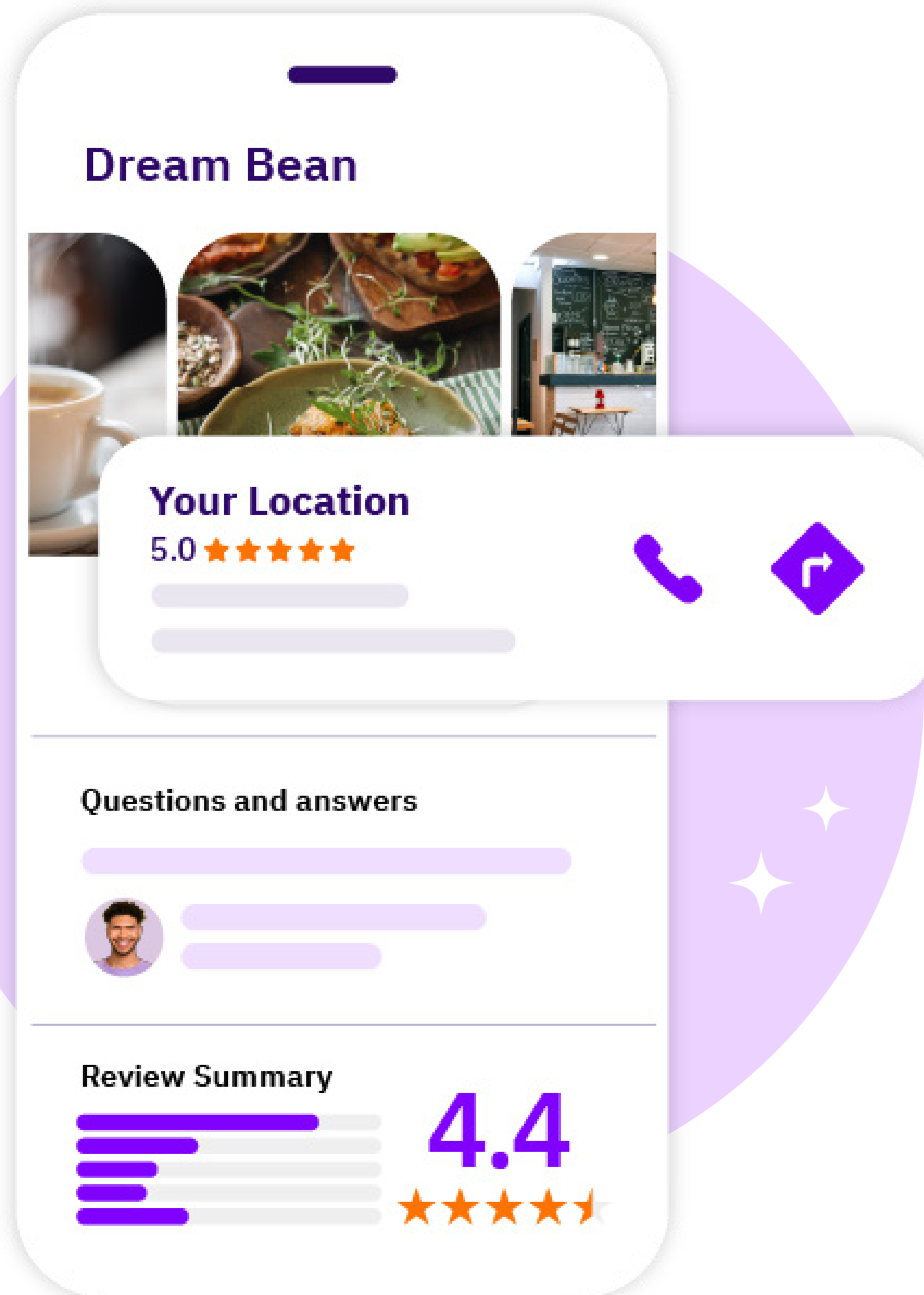
Highlight your best reviews on your website, business profiles, and social channels to build trust where people see or engage with your business.

Prioritize responding to reviews, as 61% of consumers said they prefer businesses that reply to reviews. Your response says as much about your business as the review itself. Use AI tools to scale your responses while maintaining a consistent tone.

Apply [sentiment analysis](#) to understand the reasons behind your ratings and turn that insight into meaningful operational improvements.

Make core information impossible to miss

Unclear pricing or vague service descriptions cause consumers to walk away. Present key details, including what you offer, how much it costs, and who it's for, across your digital channels.



Engage Like It Matters (Because It Does)

Make it easy to book or contact you

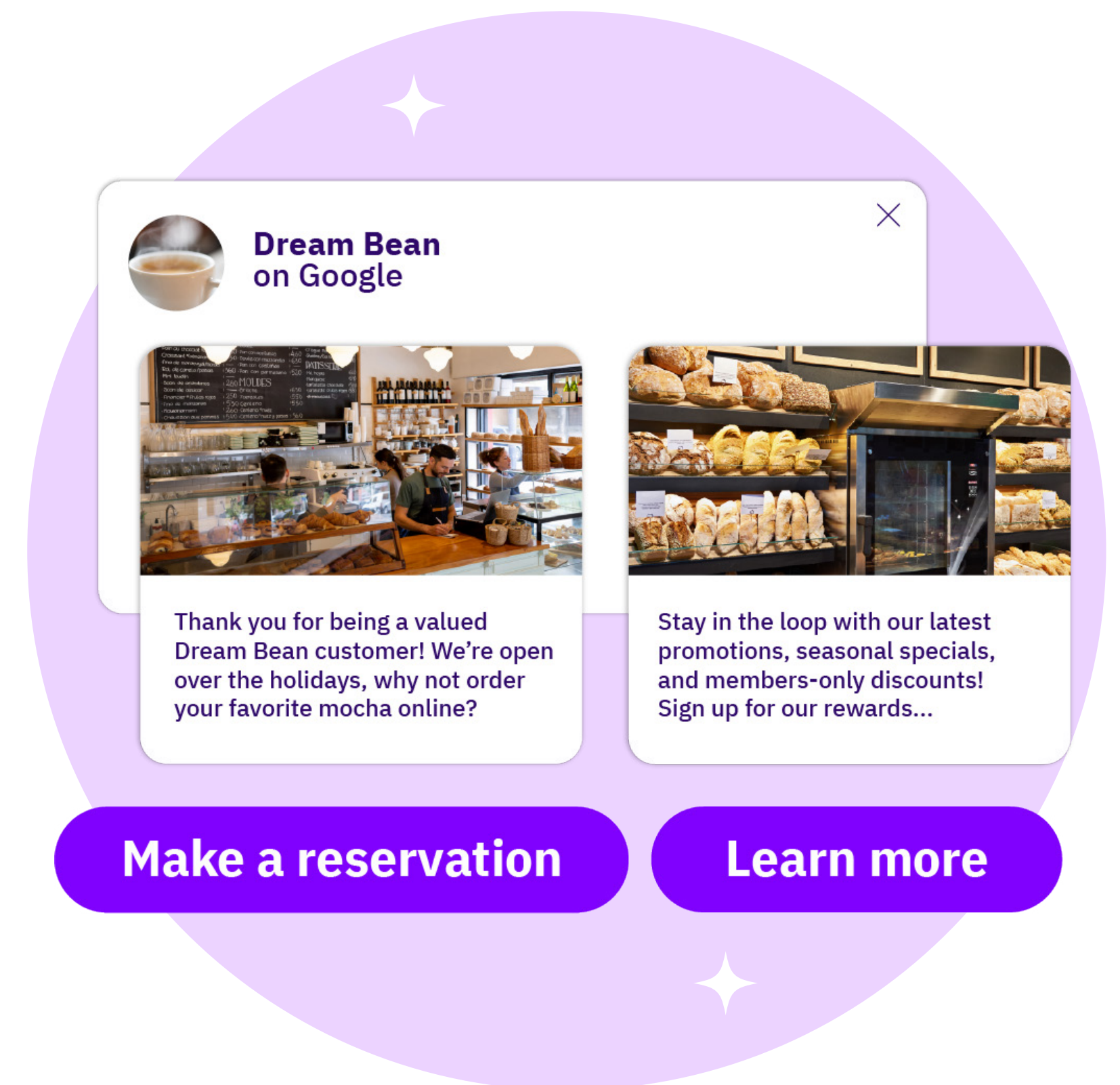
A clunky contact form or broken link might be all it takes to lose the lead. Add clear Call-to-action (CTA) buttons —like “Book Now” or “Call Today”—on local pages and profiles. If customers can’t reach you easily, they’ll move on.

Use Google Posts and Apple Showcases

Highlight location-specific offers, events, or seasonal updates to keep your listings fresh and locally relevant.

Link your social media profiles to your location profile

Linking social media to your location profile boosts customer engagement by offering more ways to connect and stay informed.



Turn Visitors into Regulars

Use offers to bring people back

48% of consumers said a special offer would motivate them to revisit. Use promotions that reward loyalty.

Simplify rebooking and repeat visits

Make it easy for customers to come back without starting from scratch.



Make Sense of It All

We know it's not easy. Today's consumer journey is fast, fragmented, and constantly changing. Marketers are under pressure to maximize visibility, earn trust, and prove impact, often with limited tools and disconnected metrics.

That's why we created **Location Performance Optimization (LPO)**. It's a new approach designed to help you connect your digital presence to real-world revenue. By unifying visibility, engagement, reputation, and conversions, LPO empowers you to drive measurable revenue impact at every location.

It's about mindset. Embracing a revenue-first approach means shifting from chasing clicks to building meaningful performance strategies that tie local marketing activity to business outcomes.

Utilize LPO to attract customers, increase in-store visits, foster loyalty, and boost revenue for your multi-location brand across its locations amid the new AI-driven search era.

“Our goal has always been to put every business on the map. Location Performance Optimization (LPO) is the next step in our clients’ journey to attribute revenue and performance to every dollar spent.

We achieve this by connecting digital presence directly to revenue. We’re leading the way with this new approach and co-developing the next stage with key clients. I’m incredibly excited about the advancements we’re making and the new standard we’re setting in the industry.”

Anthony Foy
CEO of Uberall

Become an LPO Pioneer

Final Word

Your next customer is already searching.

They're comparing your business to others nearby. What they find online will shape their decision long before they reach your door.

Make that decision easy. Show up. Stand out. And earn their trust from the very first click.



About Uberall

Uberall is a Location Performance Optimization platform that helps multi-location brands connect their digital presence into real-world results. It provides a powerful suite of tools to manage location data, listings, store locators, messaging, and local social media—ensuring businesses show up when and where it matters most. With integrated review management

capabilities, Uberall also enables brands to monitor, respond to, and improve their online reputation at scale. The result: stronger visibility, more consumer trust, and increased foot traffic and sales.

For further information

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