

# E-commerce Belgium 2019

comeos



InSites Consulting





# Introduction



Consumers are more and more aware of the impact of e-commerce on the environment and are considering doing something about it. An example? More than half of the Belgian online population is willing to wait longer for their package if the delivery can happen more ecologically.

How can we push e-commerce towards higher ecological standards? This is one of our challenges in the coming years.

Dominique Michel  
CEO Comeos



# Table of contents

**Key findings**

**Objectives & methodology**

**E-commerce experience**

**Devices**

**Online purchases**

**Sector focus**

**E-commerce trust**

**Trends and attitude**

## Colophon

Editing : Hans Cardyn, Fanny Ide & Elisabeth Ruelens

Responsible editor : Dominique Michel

Graphic Design : Elma

Comeos – E.Van Nieuwenhuyselaan 8 – 1160 Brussel

T: 02 788 05 00 – [info@comeos.be](mailto:info@comeos.be) – [www.comeos.be](http://www.comeos.be)

## Prepared by :

Pieter De Vuyst, Business Director, InSites Consulting

Leen Boels, Sr. Research Consultant, InSites Consulting

Isabelle Peeters, Jr. Research Consultant, InSites Consulting



# KEY FINDINGS

# Key findings

- **7 out of 10 Belgians** bought something online last year, which is an increase of 17% compared to 5 years ago.
- **Rise of mobile devices for e-commerce purchases**
  - 58% of online buyers paid with mobile device.
  - 39% of those mobile payments are done with the Bancontact app.
  - The willingness to buy online via a mobile device reaches 58% of the online population, that's an evolution of 15% compared to last year.
- **Strong trust in e-commerce**
  - Lack of trust in e-commerce decreased over the years and remains the same as last year (16%).
  - The barrier of sharing personal information dropped to 13%.
- **Gradual increase among convinced e-commerce shoppers**
  - 48% of online buyers buy at least monthly, an increase of 71% compared to 5 years ago.
  - The average number of subcategories bought increases from 4,7 items in 2018 to 5,4 items in 2019.
  - 45% of the online population spends more than € 150 per month, which is an increase of 36% compared to 5 years ago.
- **E-groceries:** 30% of the online population buys food online, which is an increase of 50% compared to last year.
- **More than 1 out of 2** online buyers order **after working hours**



# Key findings

- **Fashion (61%), Travel (50%) and Leisure (49%)** still the favourite 3 categories.
- **Glasses and vehicles do not appeal the online buyer**
  - Among those who never purchased something online, **46%** would **never buy vehicles** while **42%** of them would **never buy glasses** online. However, among those who already purchased the category online, only 14% would never buy glasses (again). This is due to the need of seeing and trying it before purchasing (42%) and the fact the glasses can't be fit to people's face when ordering online (42%).
- **Decreasing returning rates**
  - The returning rate dropped from 89% in 2018 to **85% in 2019** showing the impact of retailers asking a reimbursement for sending products back.
- While price is still the main driver (22%) for website choice, **trust & safety in a certain website increased as driver (+2%)**.
- **Home delivery (63%)** still the most important delivery method followed by an independent or in-store pick-up point (8%).
- **E-commerce trends**
  - **More and more consumers are aware of the impact of e-commerce** and are considering to do something about it. **55%** of the Belgian online population is **willing to wait longer** for their package if the delivery can happen **more ecologically**: a day later, another mode of transportation, etc.
  - **Rise of s-commerce** as 26% of the Belgian online population already bought something online via an ad they saw in their social media stream, e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat etc. or via online influencers (14%).



# **OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY**



# Objectives & Methodology

## Background

Comeos represents **Belgian trade & services**. Its members are active in 18 sectors and sell to companies or straight to the end-user. Together they represent 11,2% of gdp and employ 400.000 people, which makes them the biggest employer in the private sector. Comeos provides tailor-made services to its members and seeks to serve as a knowledge- and networking-platform to stimulate trade dynamics

## Marketing objectives

To get **more insights** in Belgium's e-commerce market and to generate PR-input

## Research questions

What is the online buyer's profile?  
Which products are bought online?  
Which sectors have the highest potential?

## Method

**Method:** Online survey  
**Recruitment:** Online research panel  
**Fieldwork period:** 22/03-08/04  
**Interview length:** 20 minutes  
**Country:** Belgium

## Sample

n = 2.062

## Sample screening

Age: 15-70  
Online purchases experience in last 12 months (both products / services)

## Sample quota

Representative for Belgian population on gender, age, and region

## Used symbols

★ Sign. Different from at least one other target group (95% confidence level)      ▲▼ Meaningful difference compared with total

## Error margin

n=100	10%	n=600	4%	n=1000	3%
n=400	5%	n=800	3%	n=1500	1%

## Notes

Period of fieldwork and sample composition are identical over the past years to optimize comparability.

In the report we refer to 'gross' sample. This sample is national representative (age, gender, region) for 15-70 yo, **before** screening on online purchases. This sample is only used to calculate penetration. The core of the report is the 'net sample', meaning the filter 'purchases online' is applied (not mentioned explicitly on the slide).

Since 2011 we measure e-commerce trends within Belgium. Given the strong growth of the sector, the questionnaire has been actualized over the years, while respecting the structure to safeguard comparability.

Broadening scope: in 2018 we detailed 76 subcategories, and specified 15 main categories. In 2019 we defined 3 new main categories by splitting the category 'Travel & Leisure' into 2 categories and adding 'Glasses' to the mix. Furthermore the category 'Food' was expanded into 'Food & Drinks' by adding 3 subcategories (among them 'Pralines').

Keep core structure, add relevant questions (e.g. offline penetration vs online penetration, adding statements) and remove old ones (e.g. impact on offline experience, etc.)

If a change in questionnaire had a noticeable impact on the results, it's explicitly mentioned in the report.



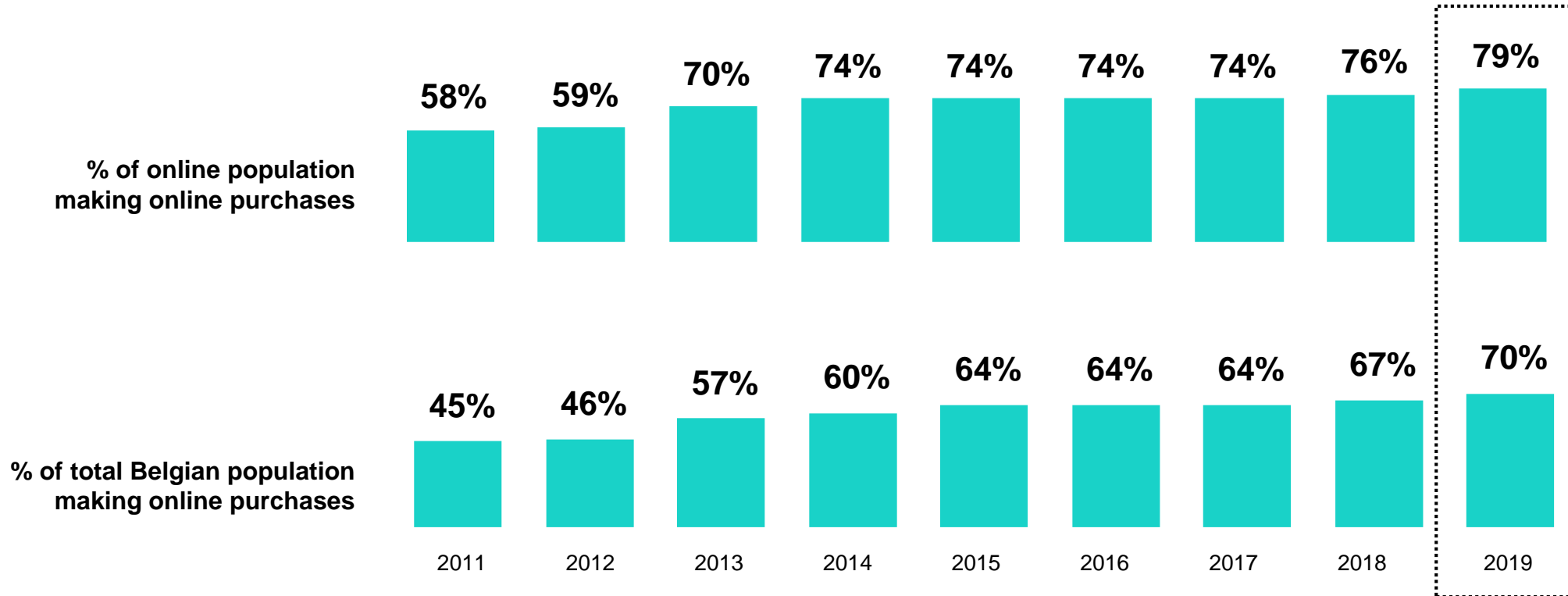
# **E-COMMERCE EXPERIENCE**

# E-commerce experience

## Penetration last year

Q: Did you buy new -non-secondhand - products or services via the Internet in the past 12 months?

7 out of 10 Belgians buy online



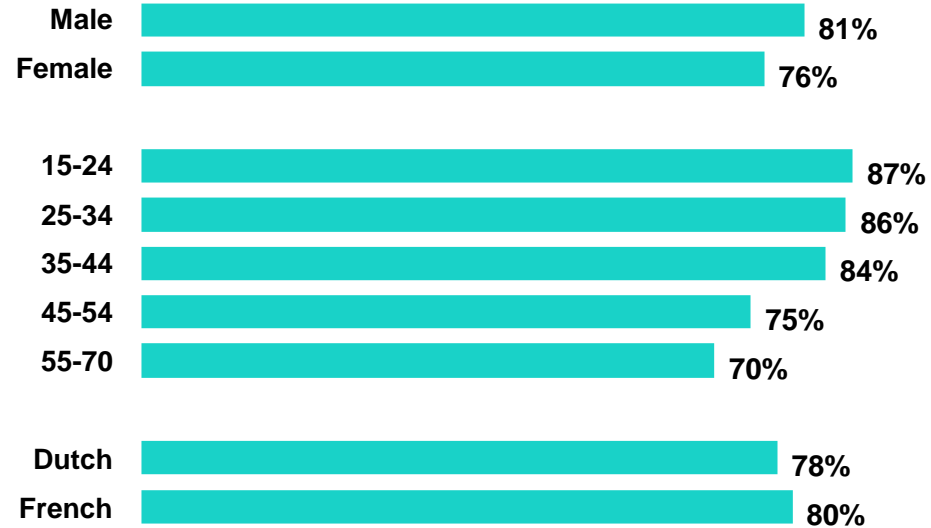


# E-commerce experience

## Penetration profile

**Millennials: heaviest online buyers**

*% of consumers bought via Internet in the past 12 months*



*Household's net monthly income*

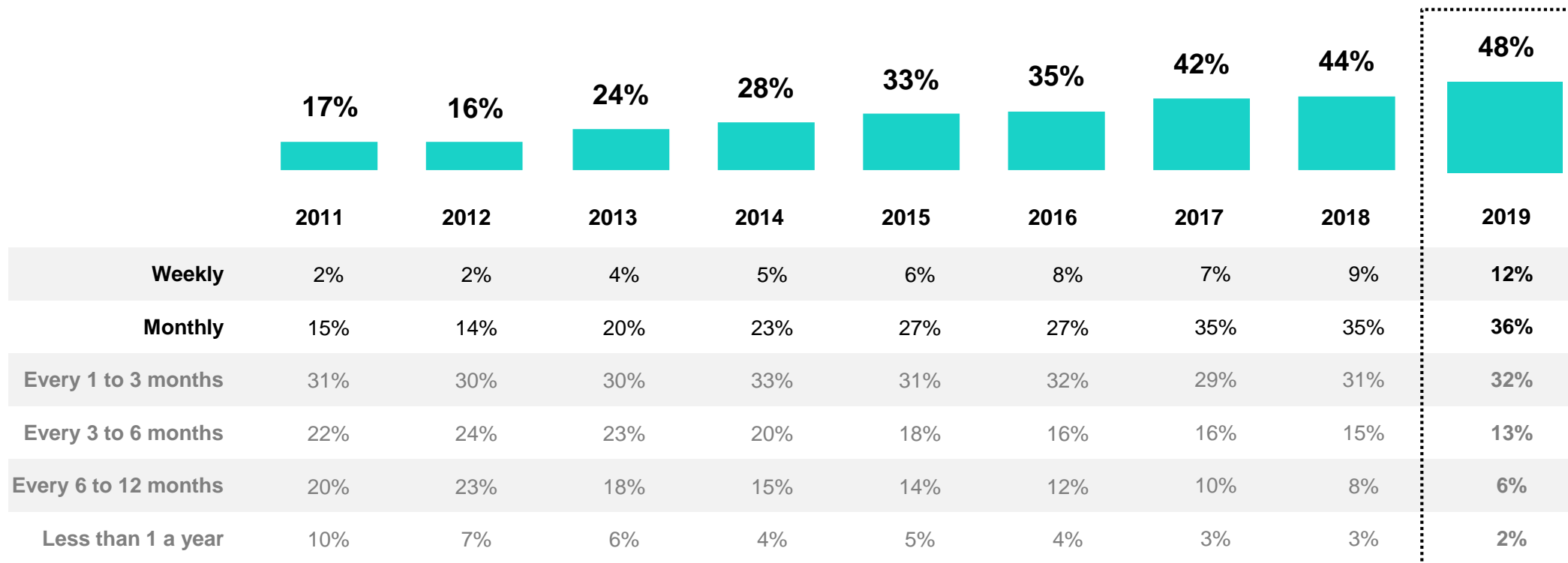


# E-commerce experience

## At least monthly purchases

Q: How frequently do you buy something via the Internet?

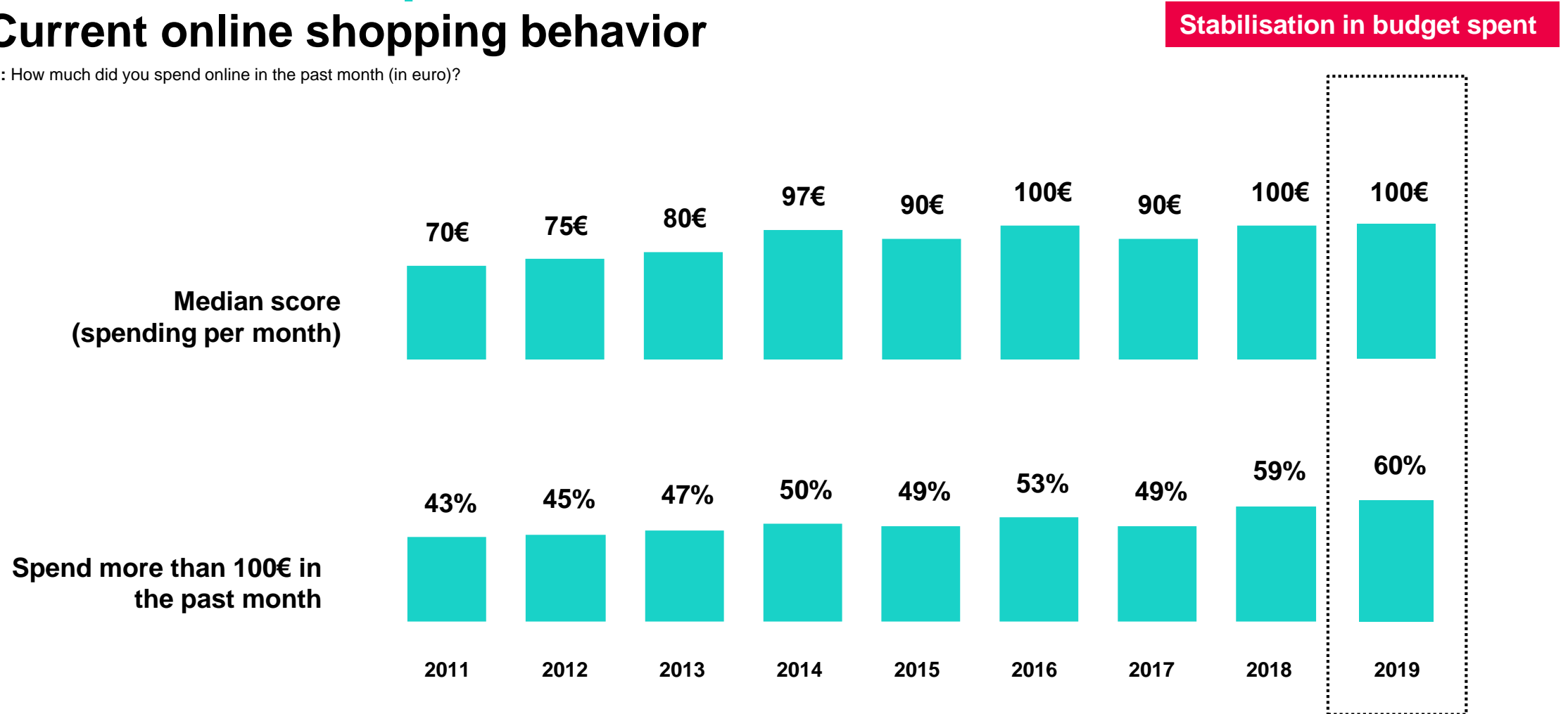
1 out of 8 buys weekly



# E-commerce experience

## Current online shopping behavior

Q: How much did you spend online in the past month (in euro)?

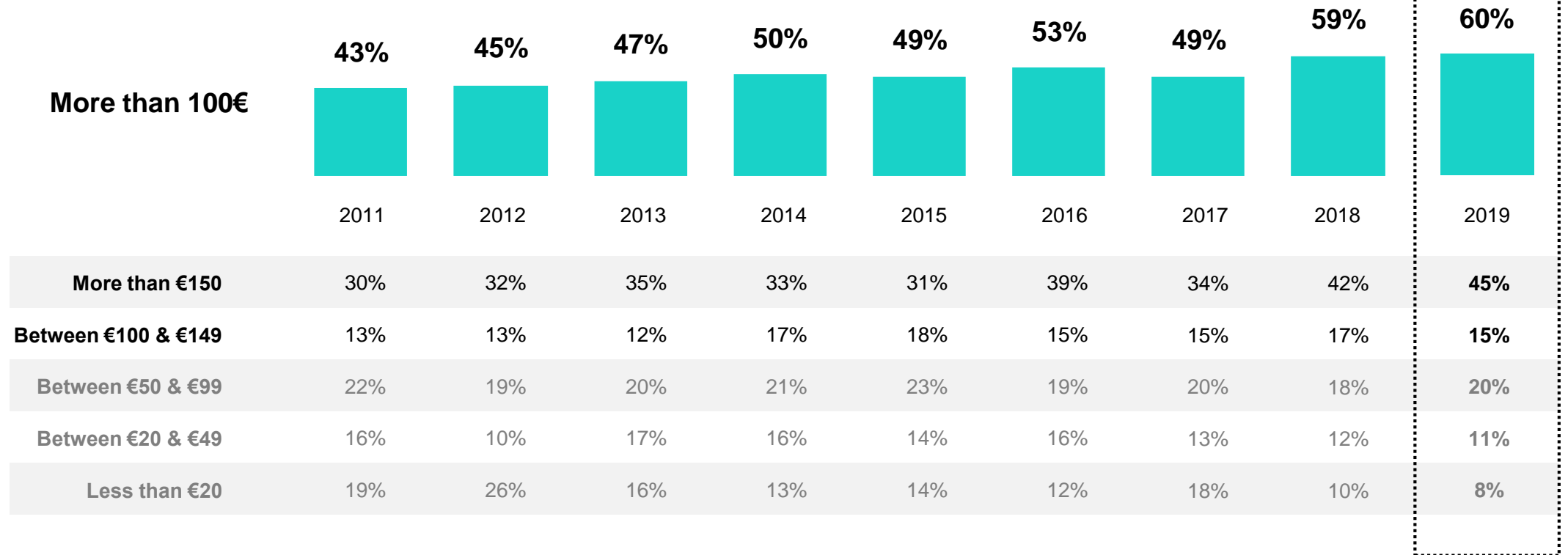


# E-commerce experience

## Current online shopping behavior

Q: How much did you spend online in the past month (in euro)?

Online buyers not afraid  
of expensive purchases

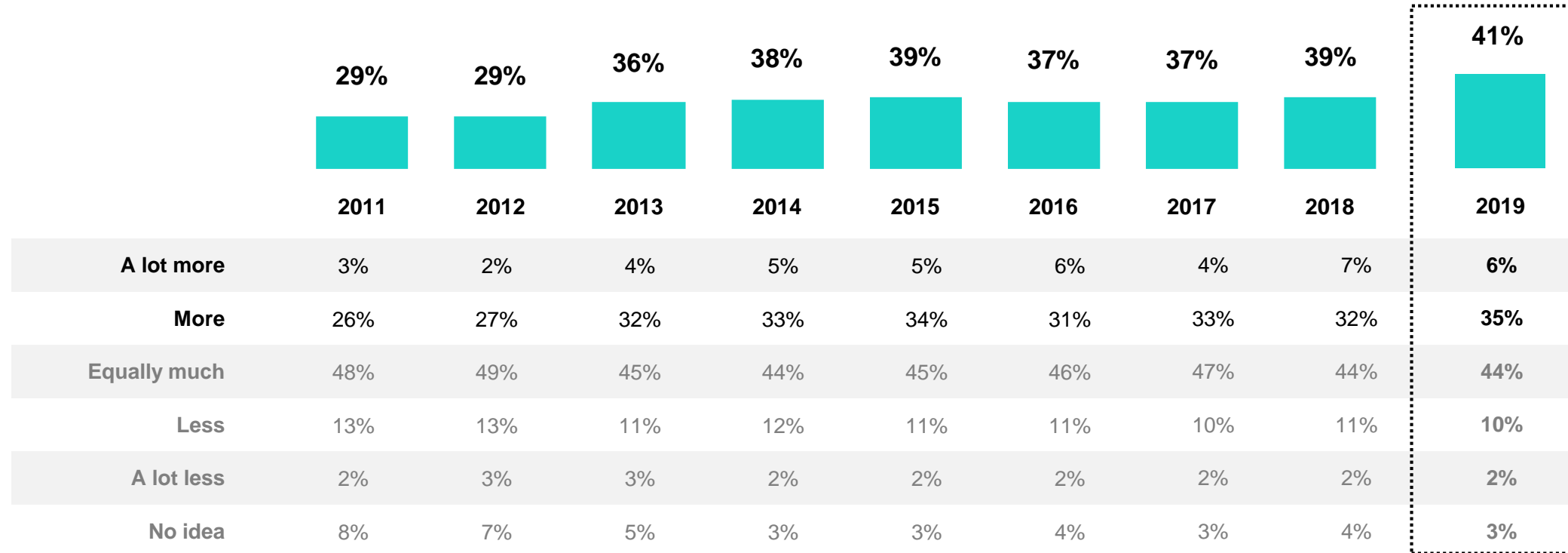


# E-commerce experience

## Evolution budget – spend more

Q: Do you spend less or more now than you did 1 year ago?

Self-declared spending  
behaviour increases

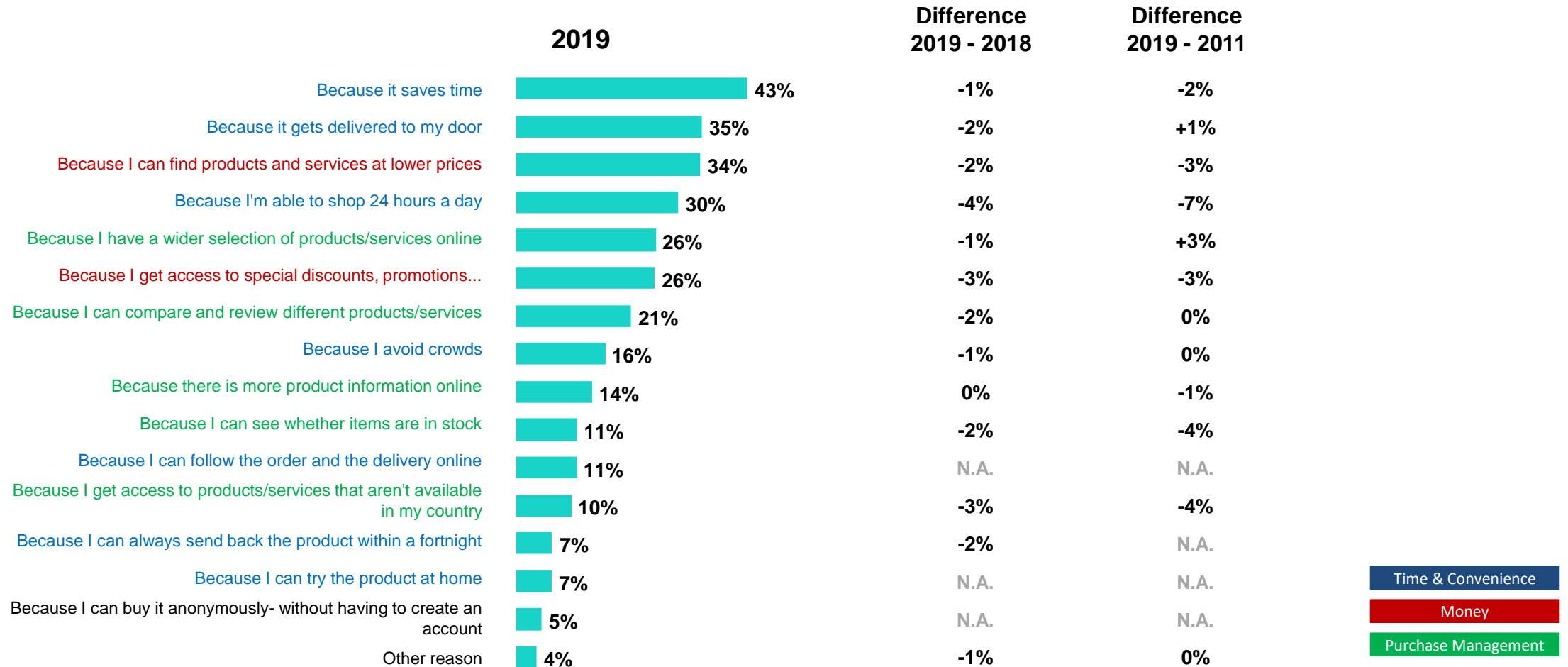


# E-commerce experience

## Drivers for E-commerce - Difference

Q: What are the 3 main reasons why you bought <this product> online?

Decreasing importance  
of money-related drivers

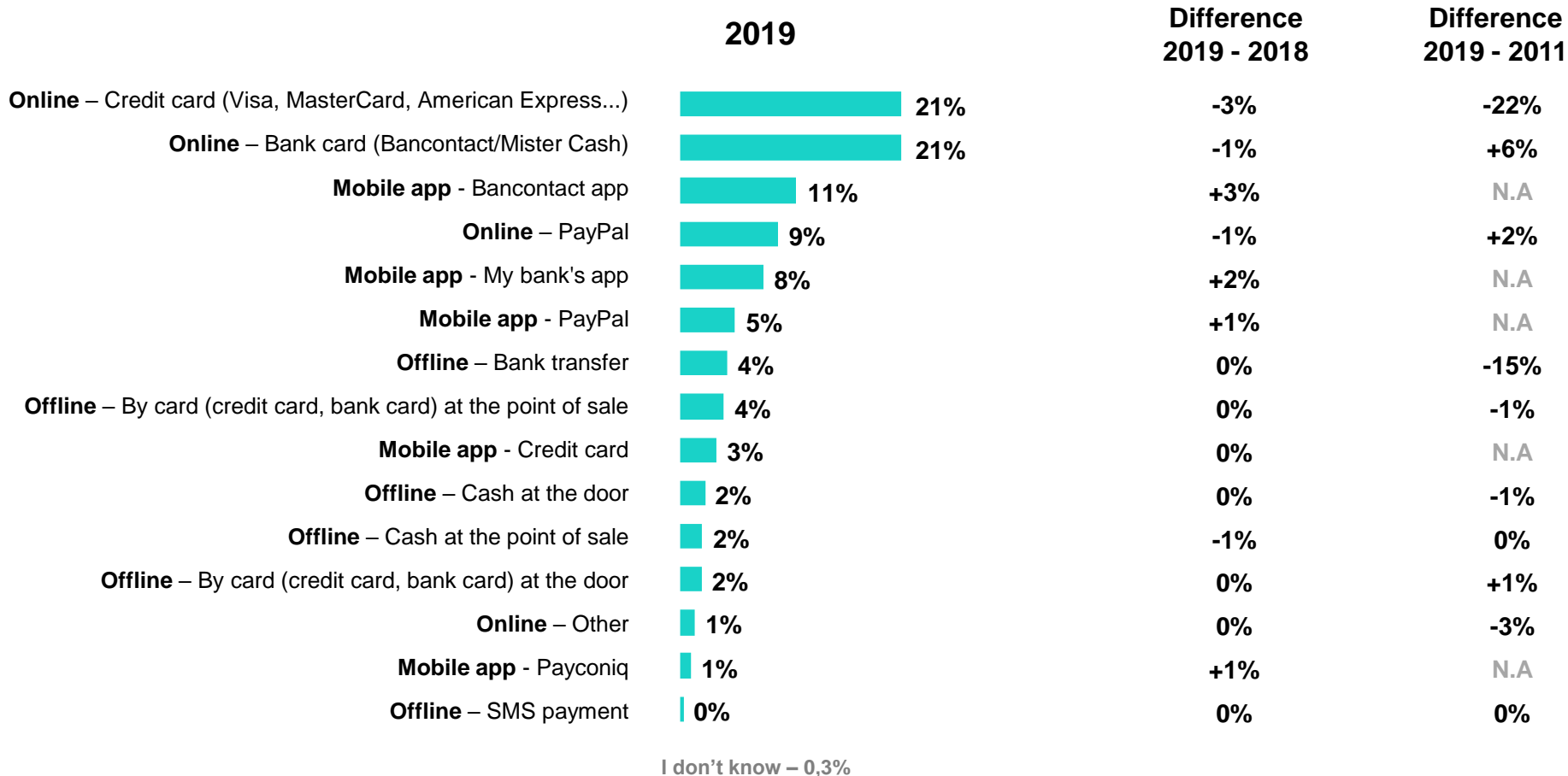


# E-commerce experience

## Ways of payments

Q: How did you pay for it?

Credit cards must make room for debit cards

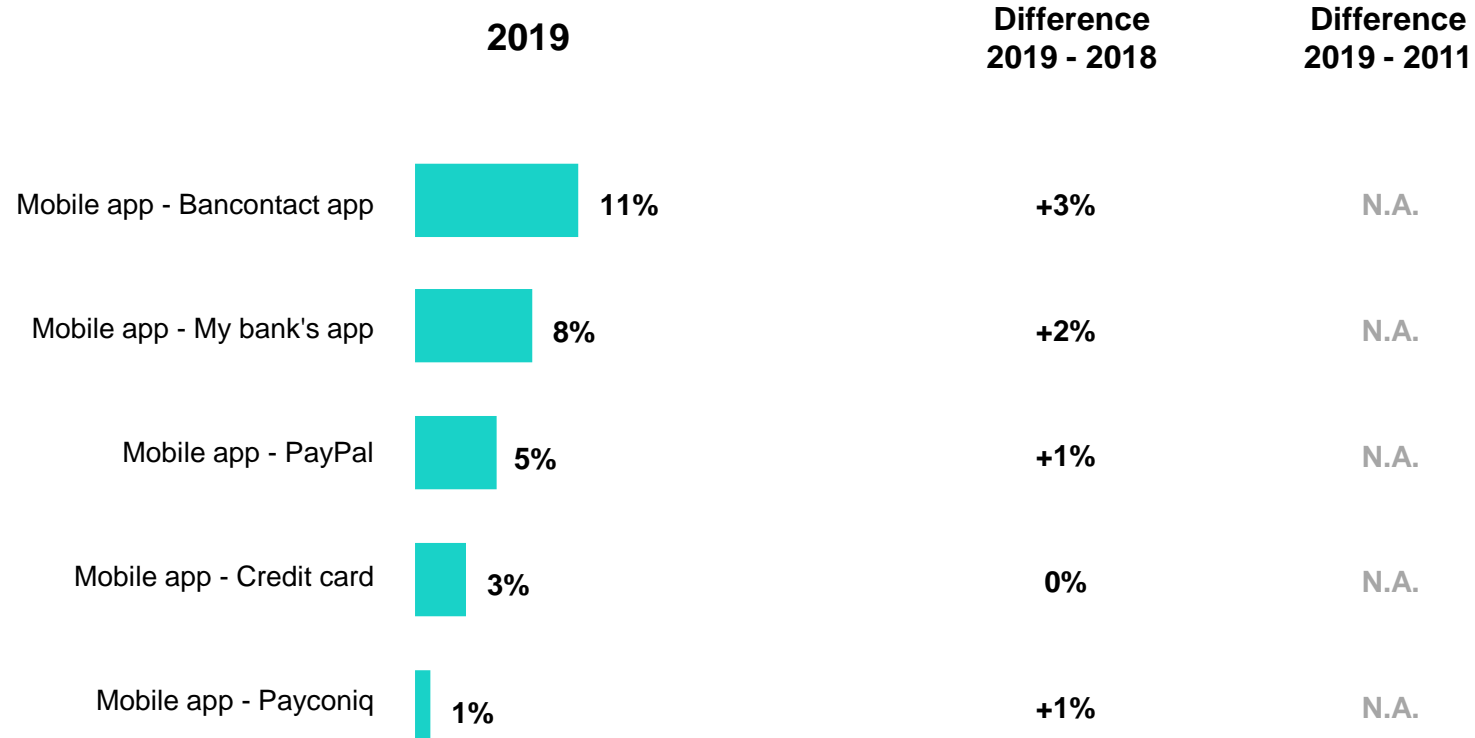


# E-commerce experience

## Ways of payments – mobile payment method

Q: How did you pay for it?

Note: Bancontact app and Payconiq merged right before the survey was conducted in 2019. As the question was asked via a single response, 12% payed via the new app.



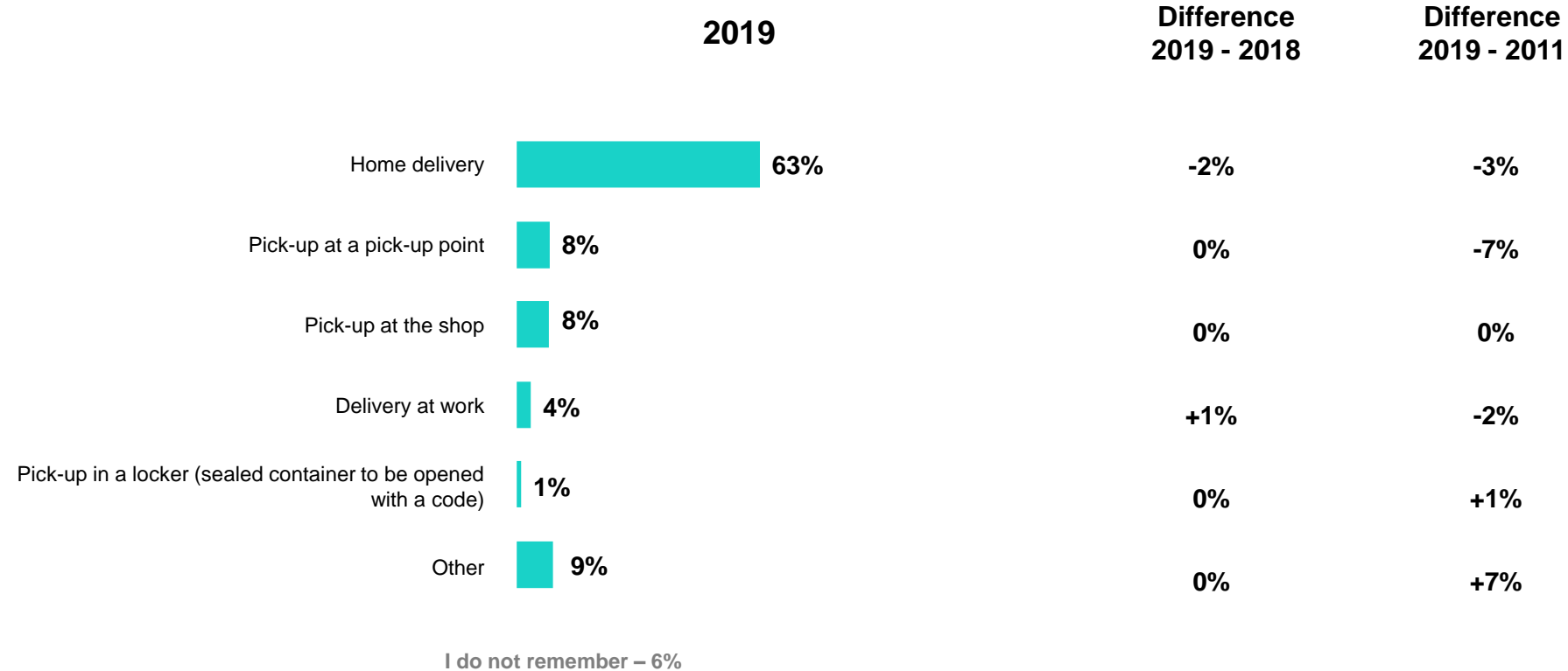


# E-commerce experience

## Delivery method - Difference

Q: How was <PRODUCT> delivered?

Pick-up in a locker  
remains marginal



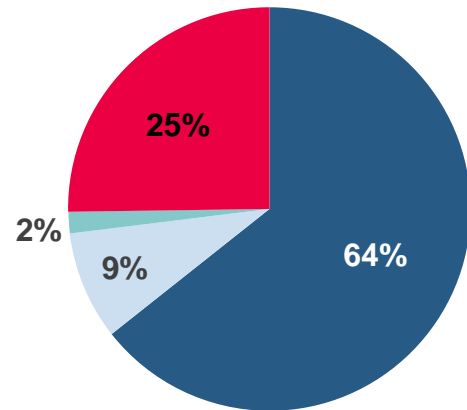
# E-commerce experience

## Delivery time / Time of purchase

Q: What day was your online purchase delivered? / At what time was your online purchase delivered? / At what time of the day do you do your purchase?

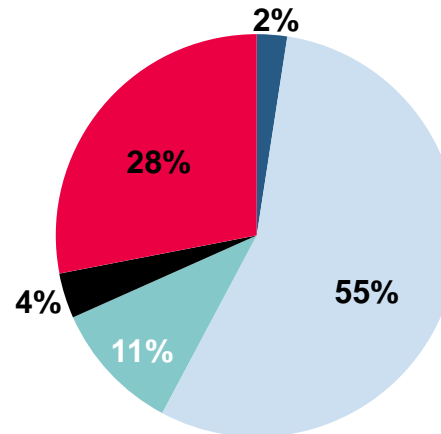
More than half of purchases after working hours

Day of delivery



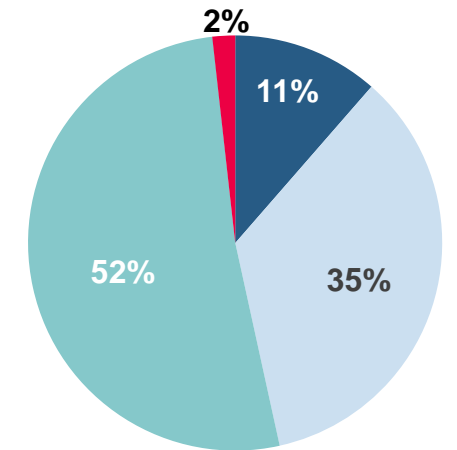
- During the week
- A Saturday
- A Sunday
- I do not remember

Hour of delivery



- Before 09:00
- Between 09:00 and 17:00
- Between 17:00 and 20:00
- After 20:00
- I do not remember

Time of purchase



- Mornings (6:00 – 11:59)
- During the day (12:00 – 17:59)
- Evenings (18:00 – 23:59)
- Nights (00:00 – 05:59)

# E-commerce experience

## Website Drivers - Difference

Q: Why did you use <website> for your online purchase? Please indicate the 3 main factors.

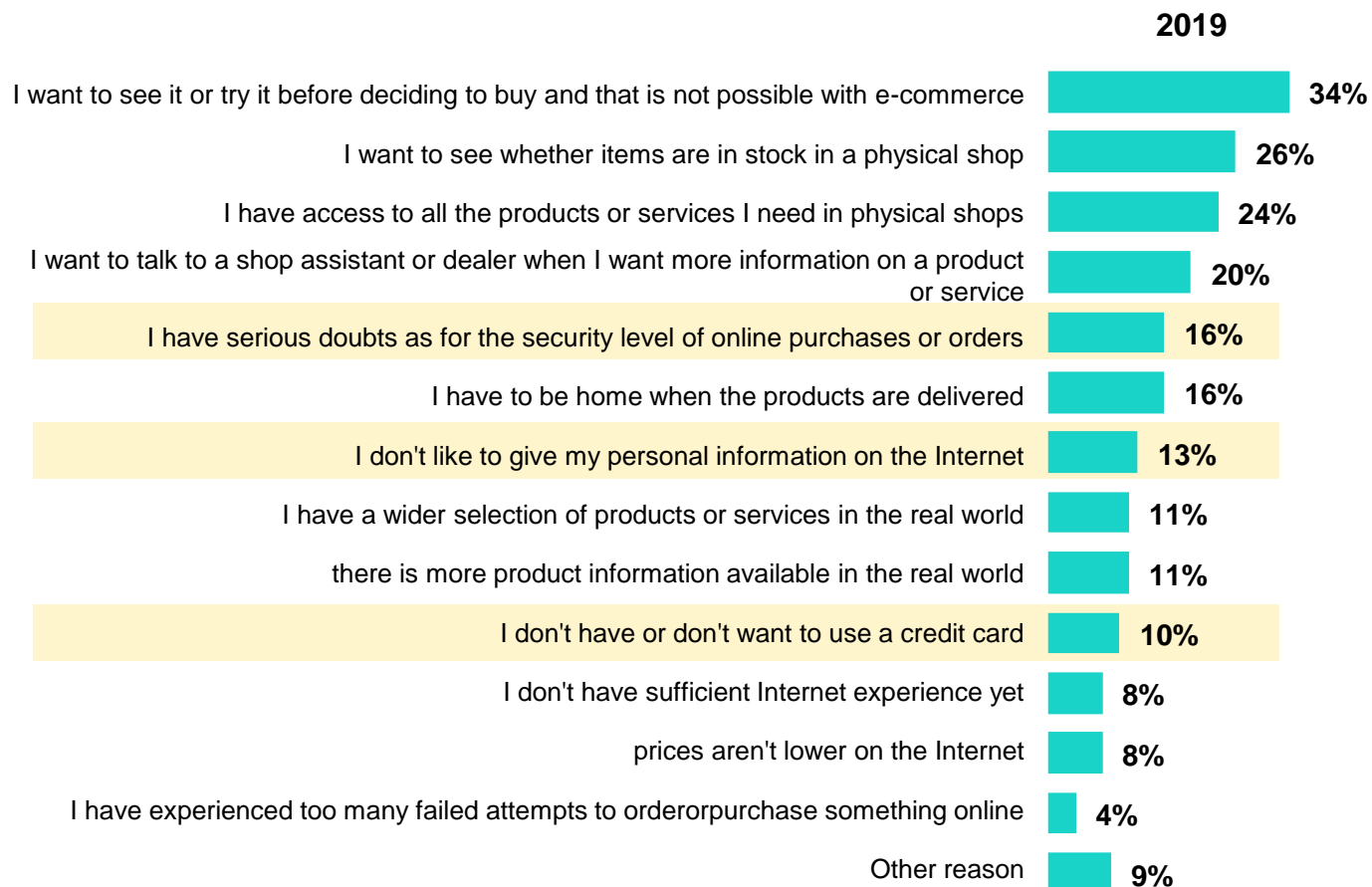
Website satisfaction driven  
by price, trust & safety

% indicated as the <u>main</u> factor of using <website>		Difference 2019 - 2018	Difference 2019 - 2011
Price	22%	+1%	-9%
Satisfaction with previous experiences	9%	+1%	-3%
Quick delivery	6%	-1%	-4%
Out of habit	6%	+1%	-2%
Trust and safety	5%	+2%	+2%
Product selection and availability	5%	-1%	-8%
User-friendliness of the website	4%	0%	-2%
Low shipment costs	3%	0%	-3%
Accidental - just where I found it	3%	+1%	0%
Recommended by a friend	2%	+1%	0%
Return or guaranty policy	1%	-1%	-2%
Completeness of the product information	1%	+1%	-9%
Because I can always send back the product within a fortnight	1%	+1%	-3%
Other reason	2%	0%	-2%

# E-commerce experience

## Barriers

Q: Please tick the 3 main reasons for you for not yet having bought new products or services online?



**Major improvements over the years in terms of payment and security**

2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
30%	37%	36%	38%	31%	37%	41%	37%
21%	18%	21%	22%	17%	19%	15%	15%
23%	22%	26%	26%	19%	17%	23%	23%
19%	22%	22%	25%	19%	20%	23%	22%
16%	19%	22%	24%	25%	31%	30%	36%
16%	18%	14%	13%	14%	19%	16%	16%
15%	19%	24%	24%	25%	22%	32%	31%
13%	13%	14%	12%	11%	10%	9%	7%
8%	8%	8%	8%	6%	6%	9%	7%
17%	18%	18%	20%	24%	24%	29%	27%
9%	10%	8%	10%	11%	11%	11%	8%
7%	6%	7%	6%	10%	8%	7%	7%
4%	4%	3%	3%	5%	5%	3%	5%
7%	8%	3%	5%	5%	3%	3%	4%

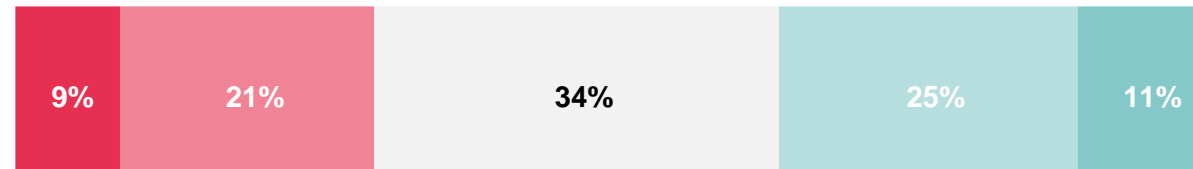
# E-commerce experience

## Future interest

Q: Would you consider buying new products/services on the Internet in the future?  
How likely are you to purchase other new products or services on the Internet in the future?

Once experienced,  
forever convinced

Among consumers who  
never purchased online



Among consumers  
who buy online



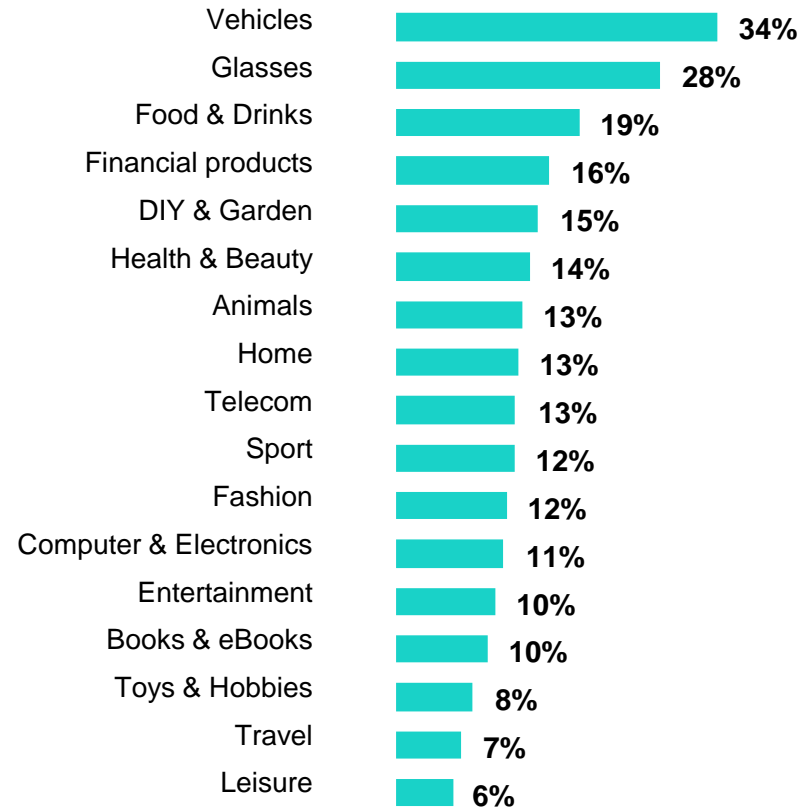
■ Certainly not   ■ Probably not   ■ Neutral   ■ Probably   ■ Certainly

# E-commerce experience

## Rejection to buy online (non buyers included)

Q: Which of the following products/ services would you **never (again)** purchase online?

Higher rejection rate for  
non-recurrent purchases

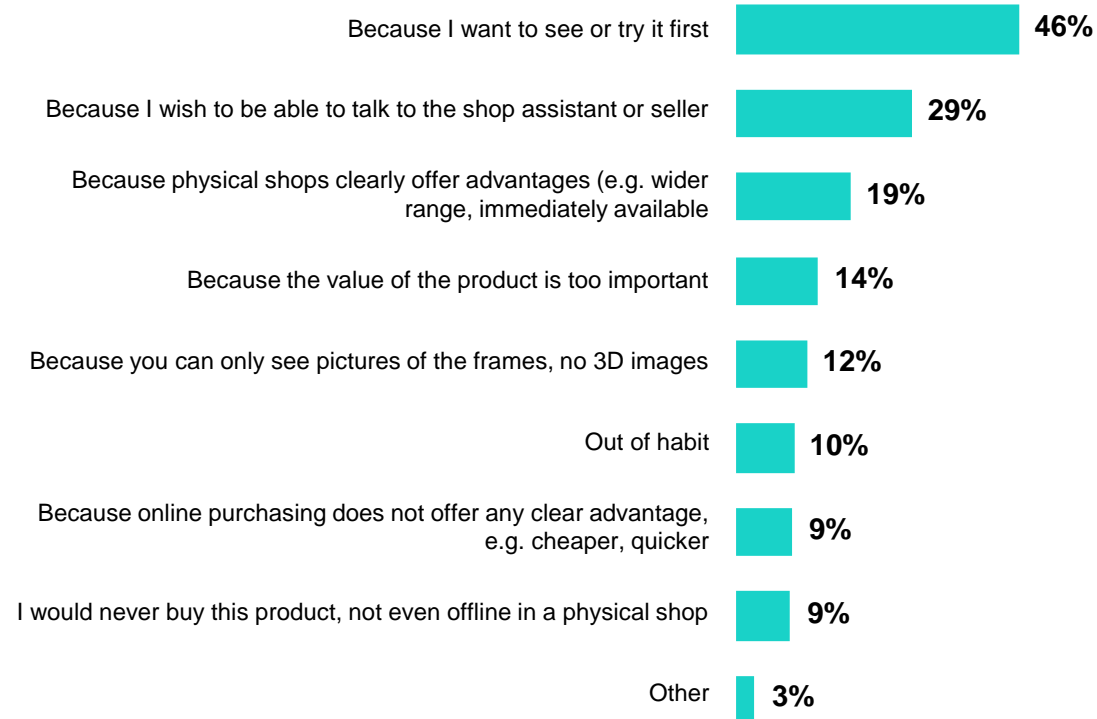


# E-commerce experience

## Reasons of rejection to buy online (non buyers included)

Q: Why would you never buy the following three products online (again)?

Some people need to see in order to believe it



**DEVICES**



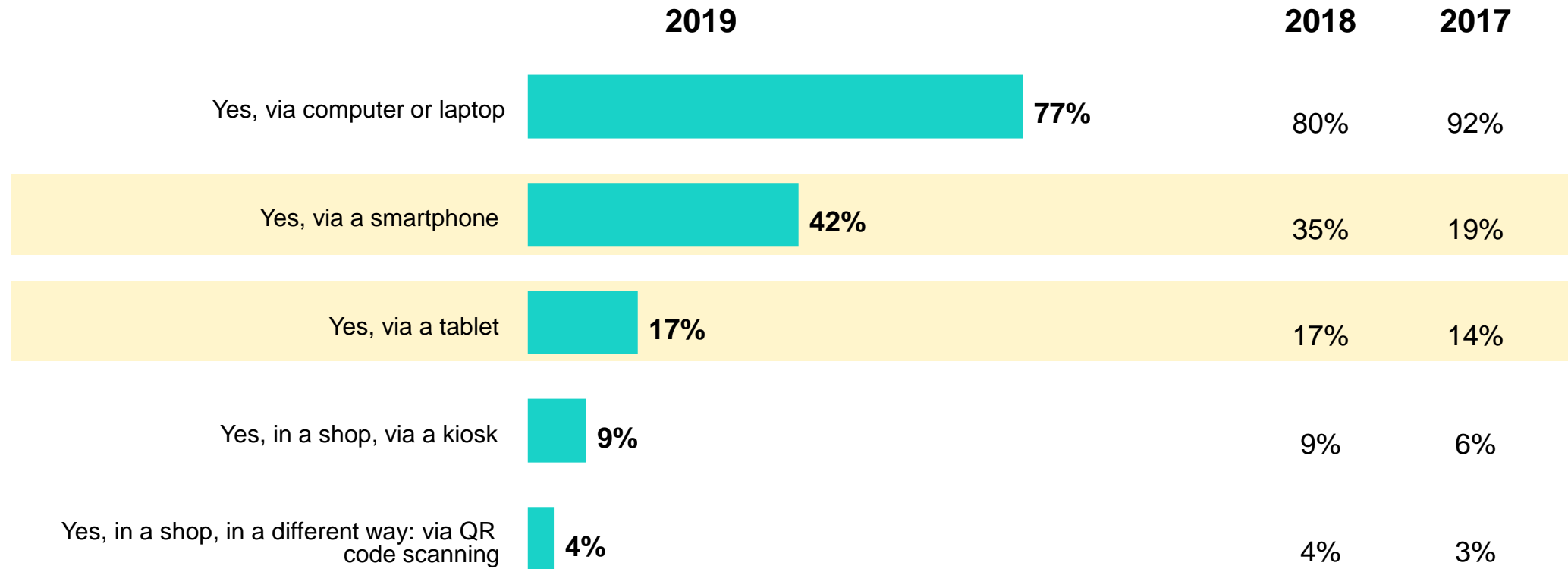


# Devices

## Penetration

6 out of 10 buys mobile

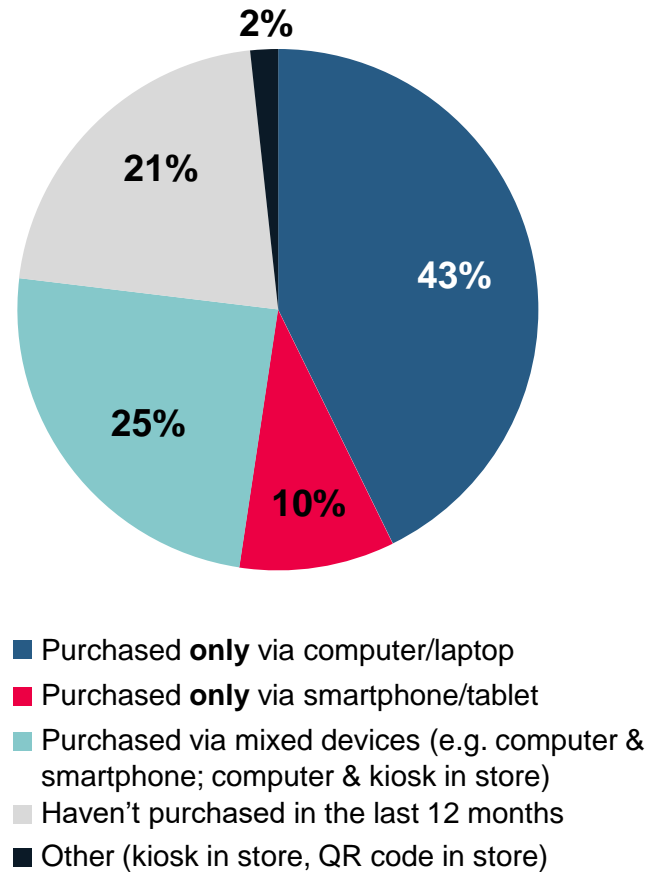
Q: Did you buy new -non-secondhand - products or services via the Internet in the past 12 months?



# Devices

## Devices used for purchasing

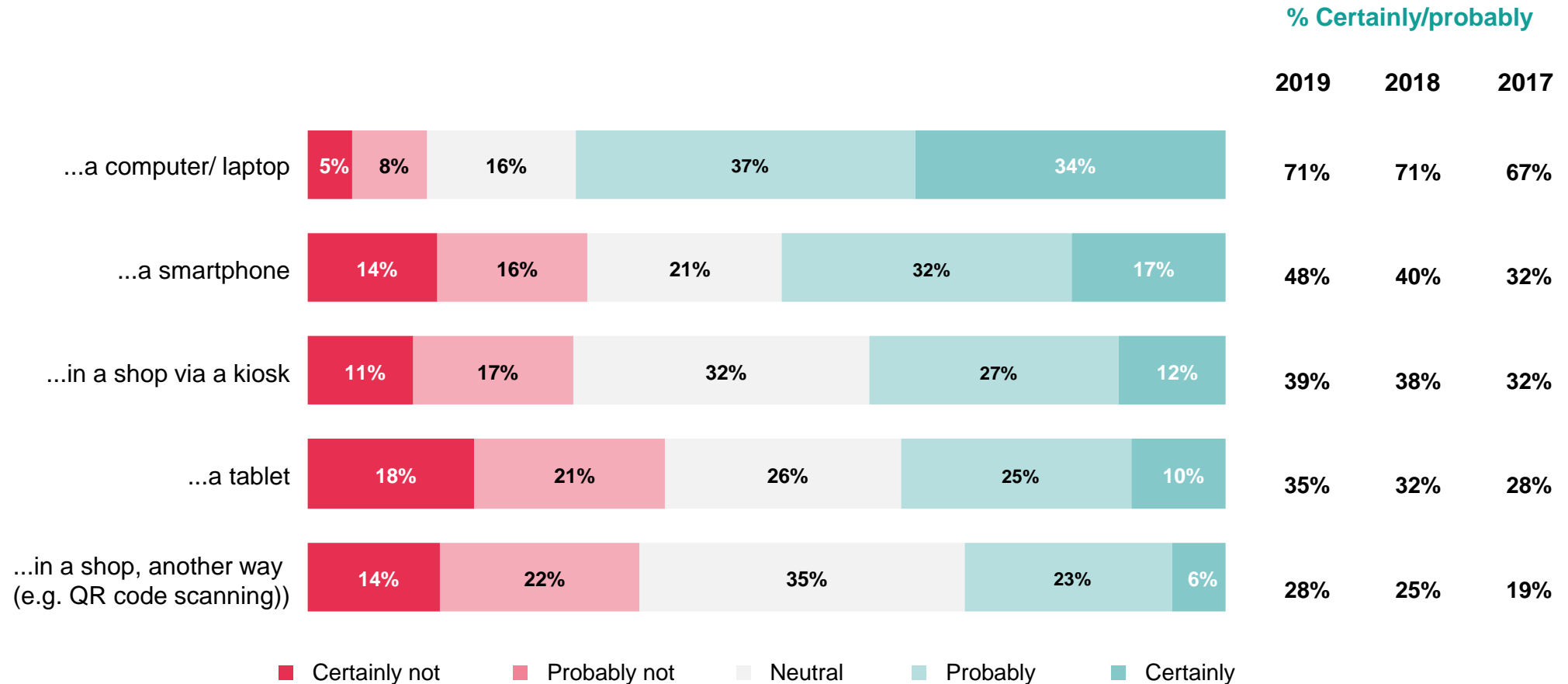
Q: Did you buy new -non-secondhand - products or services via the Internet in the past 12 months?



# Devices

## Future intention to buy

Q: Do you consider buying new products/ services via the internet in the future, via...?

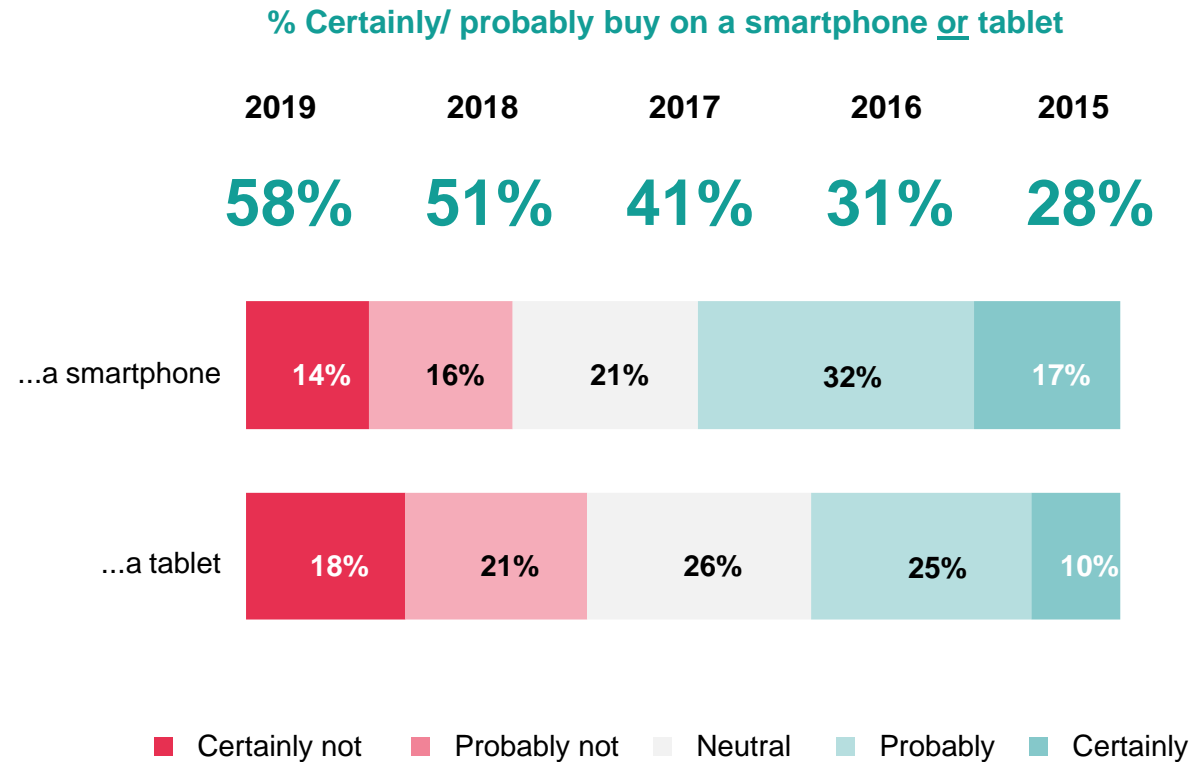


# Devices

## Future intention to buy on mobile device

Q: Do you consider buying new products/ services via the internet in the future, via...?

Mobile aficionados doubled  
in 5 years time

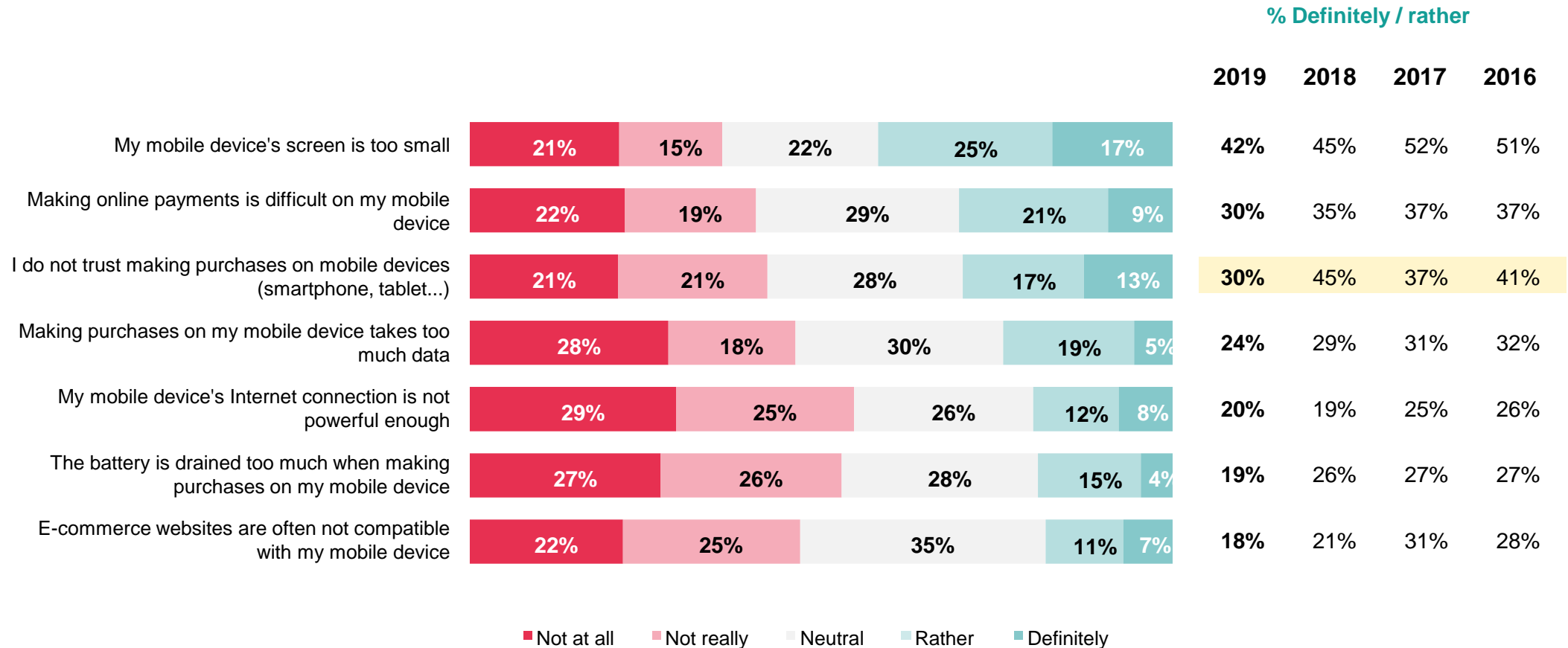


# Devices

## Barriers for making mobile purchases

Q: To what extent does each of the following aspects stop you from making purchases through a mobile device?

Trust no longer an issue when making mobile purchases





**ONLINE PURCHASES**



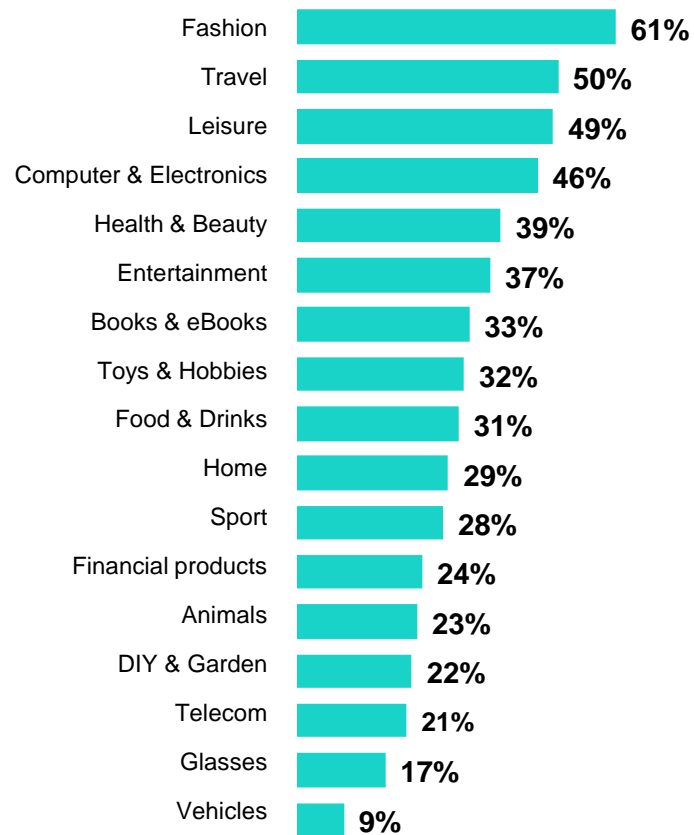


# Online purchases

## Current purchase new products

Q: Below we have listed all new products and services which you have bought in the past 12 months.  
Please indicate for each product/ service via which channel you bought it.

Nothing beats fashion, travel  
and leisure

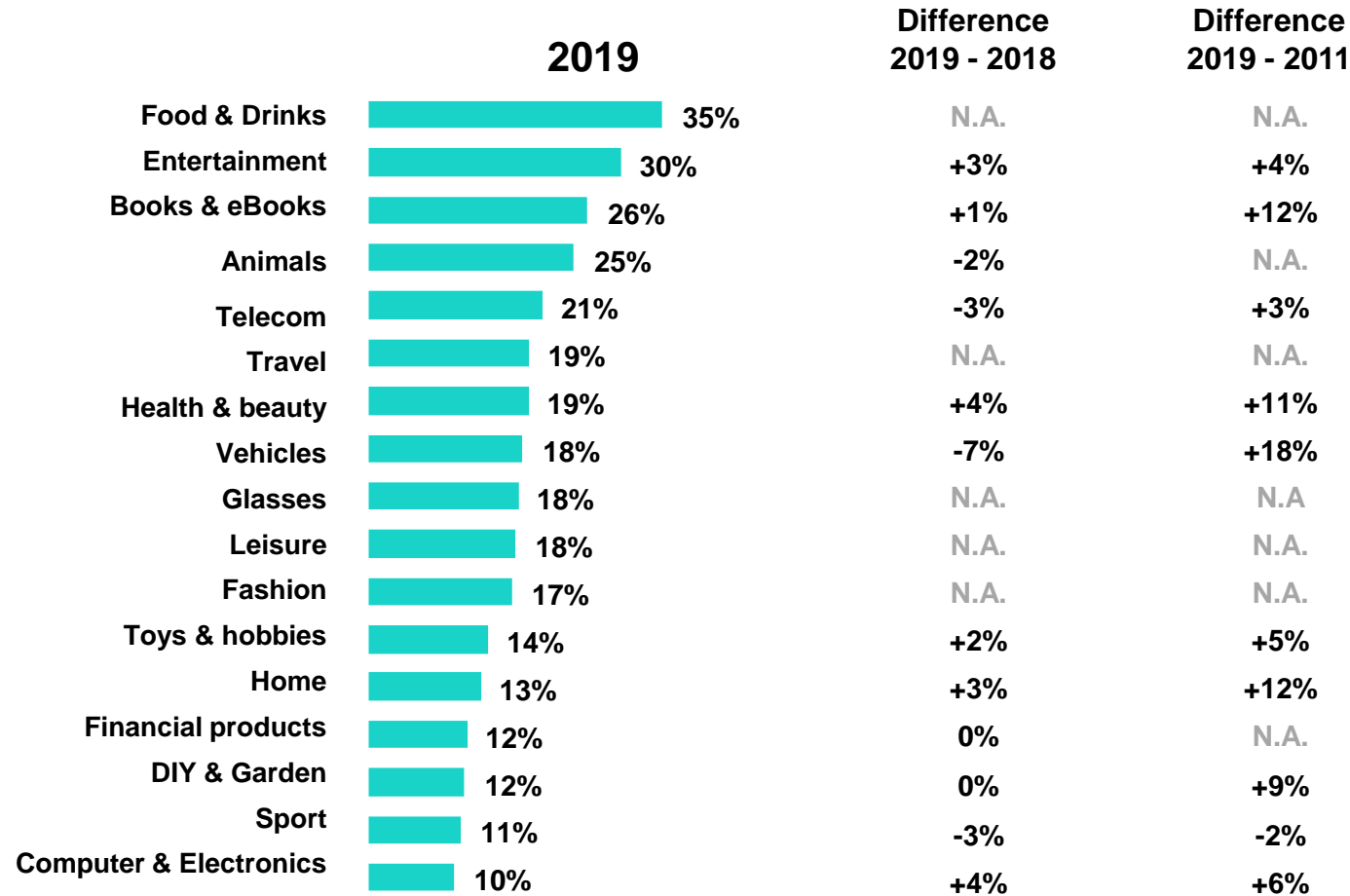


# Online purchases

## Buying frequency - more than 5 times

Q: Please indicate how often you bought the following new products and services via the Internet in the past 12 months?

**Food and Drinks: most recurrent purchase**



Note:

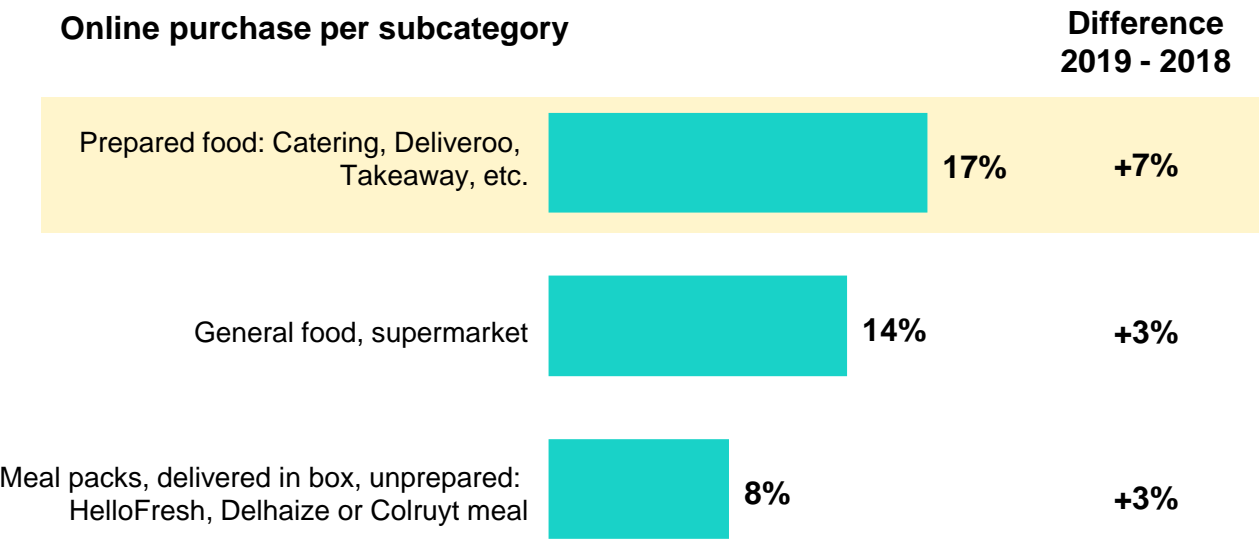
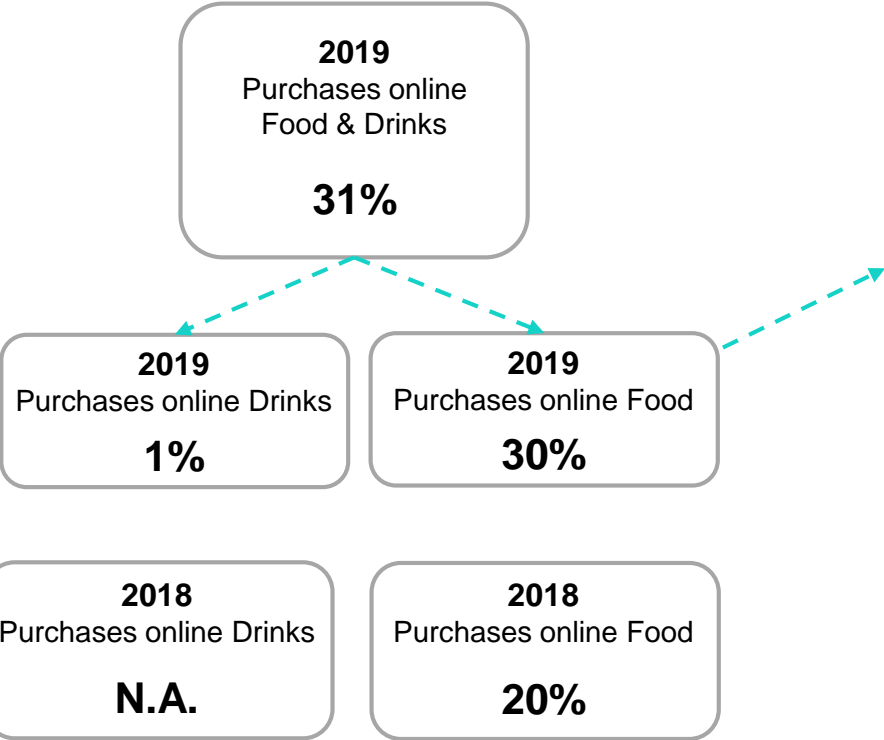
- The category 'Food' includes now 'Pralines and sweets', 'Drinks (wine, liqueur, beer, non-alcoholic)' and 'Nutritional supplements'.
- The category Travel & Leisure was split up and the category 'Glasses' was removed from the Fashion category and added as a stand-alone category in 2019.

# Online purchases

## Current purchase new products

Q: Below we have listed all new products and services which you have bought in the past 12 months.  
Please indicate for each product/ service via which channel you bought it.

1 out of 7 buys groceries online



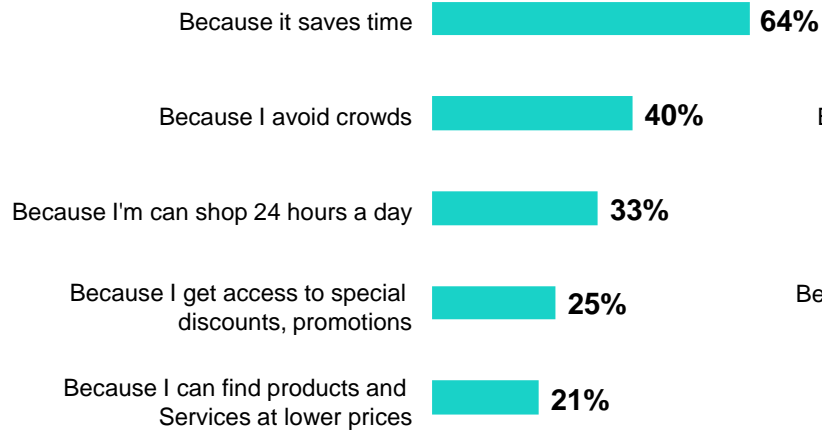
# Online purchases

## Drivers for buying food online

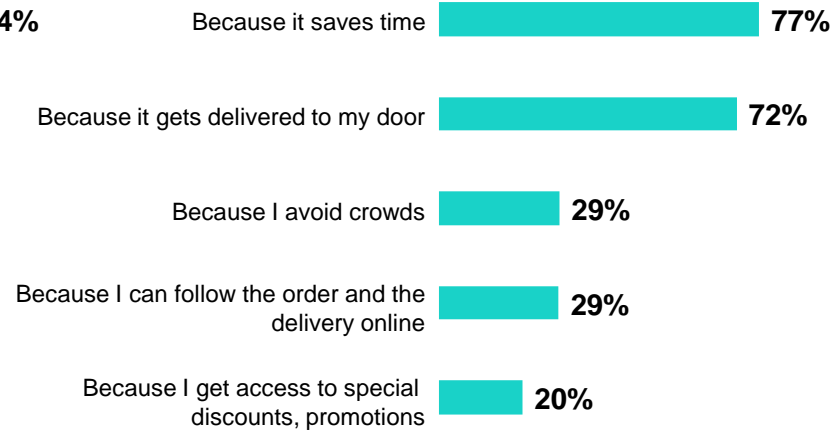
Q: What are the 3 main reasons why you bought <this product> online?

E-grocery buyer wants convenience

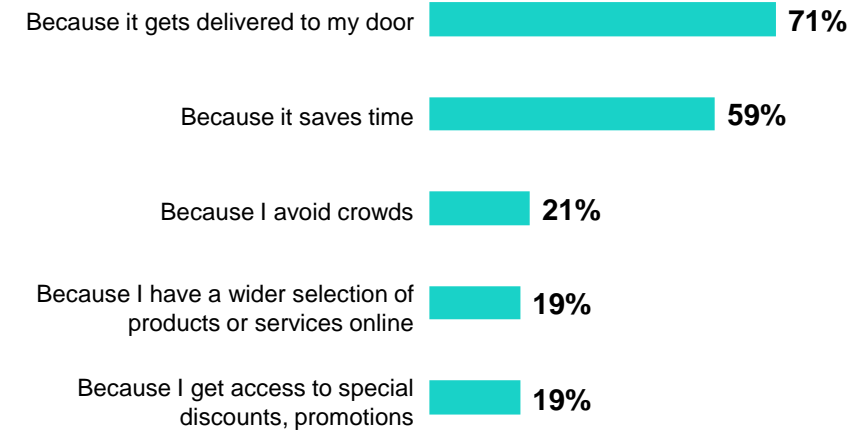
### General Food (Supermarket)



### Prepared food

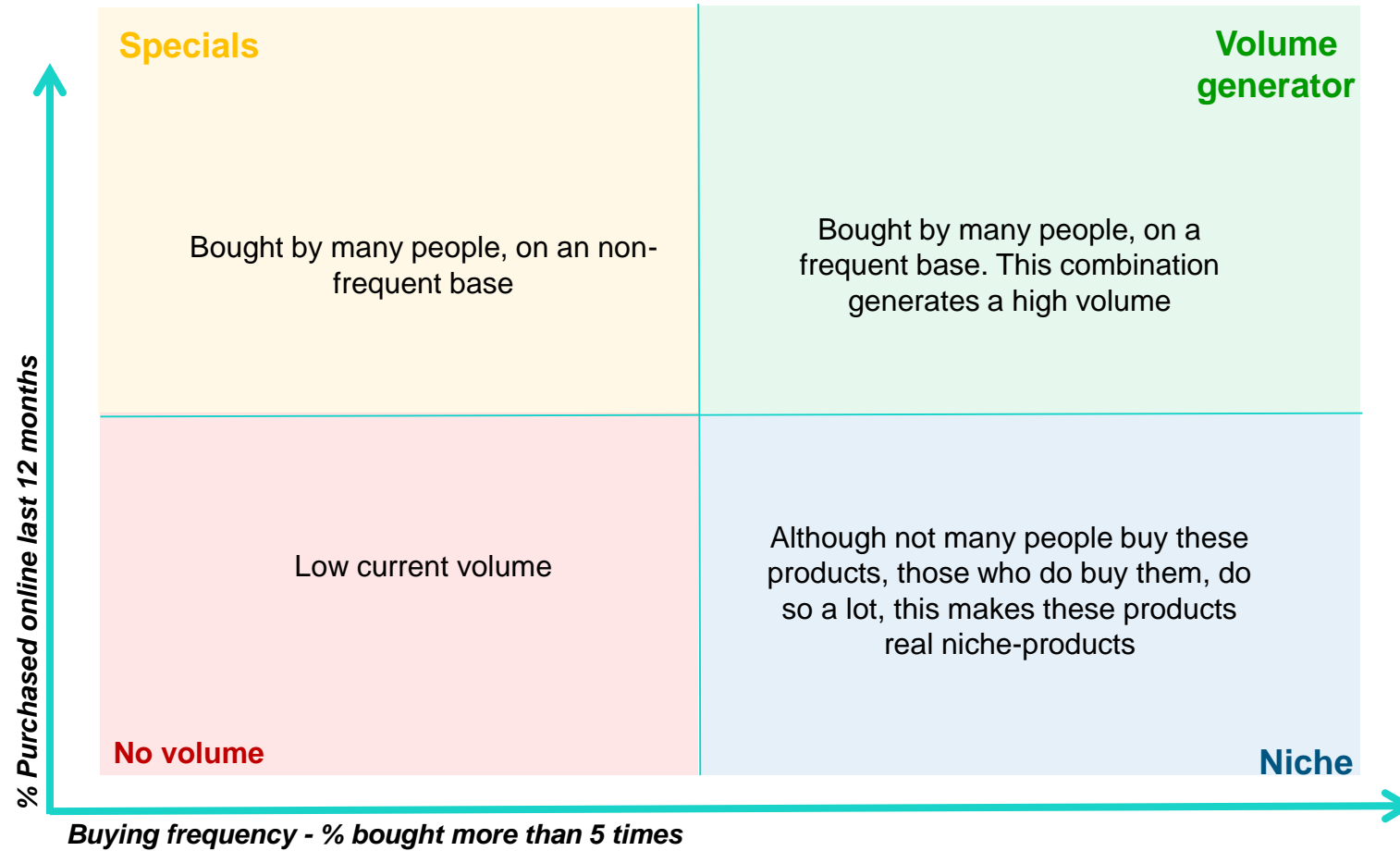


### Meal packs, delivered in box (unprepared)



# Online purchases

## Quadrant explanation

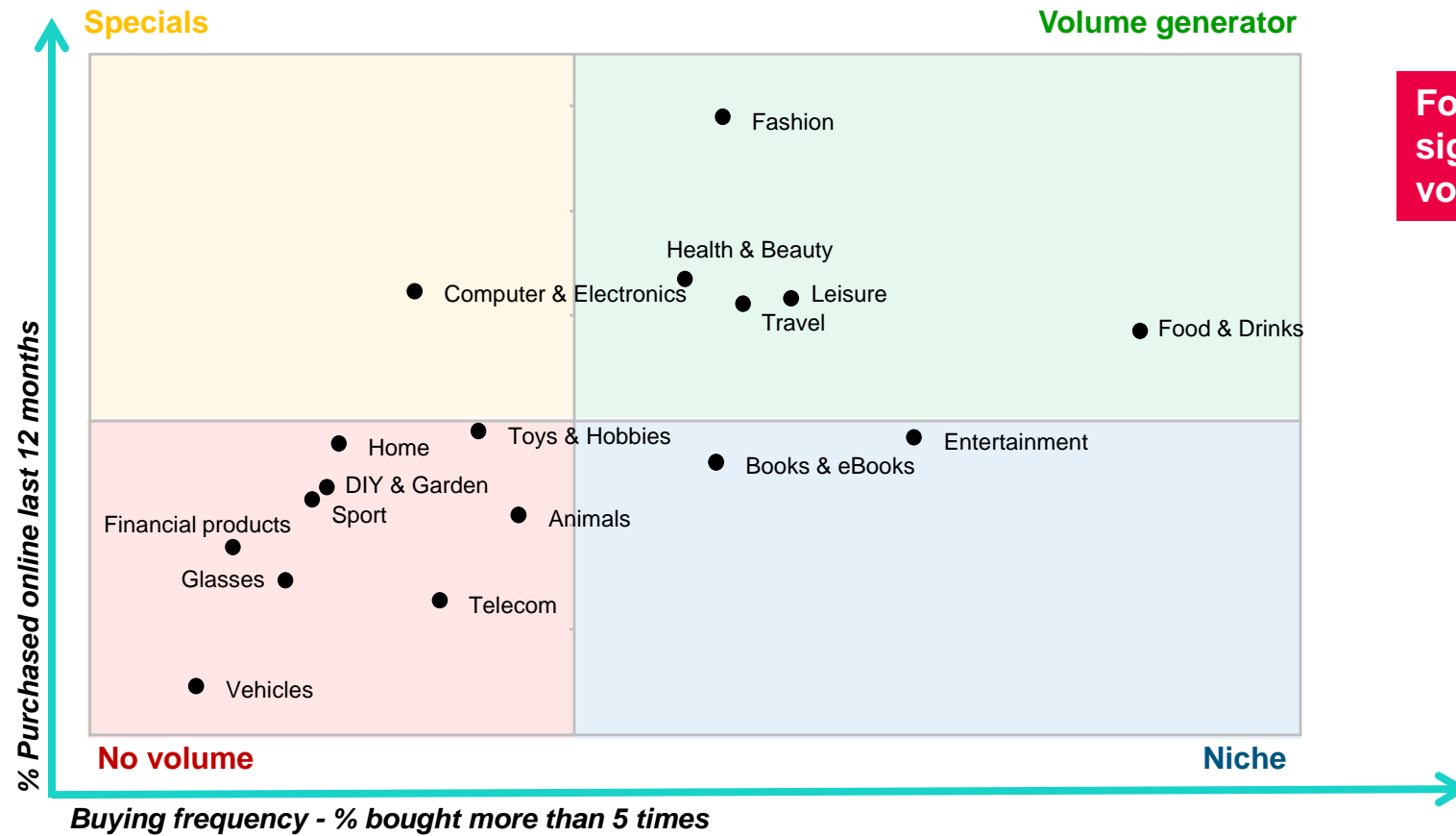


# Online purchases

## Quadrant 2019

Q: Below we have listed all new products and services which you have bought in the past 12 months. Please indicate for each product/ service via which channel you bought it?

Please indicate how often you bought the following new products via the Internet (for personal purposes) in the past 12 months?



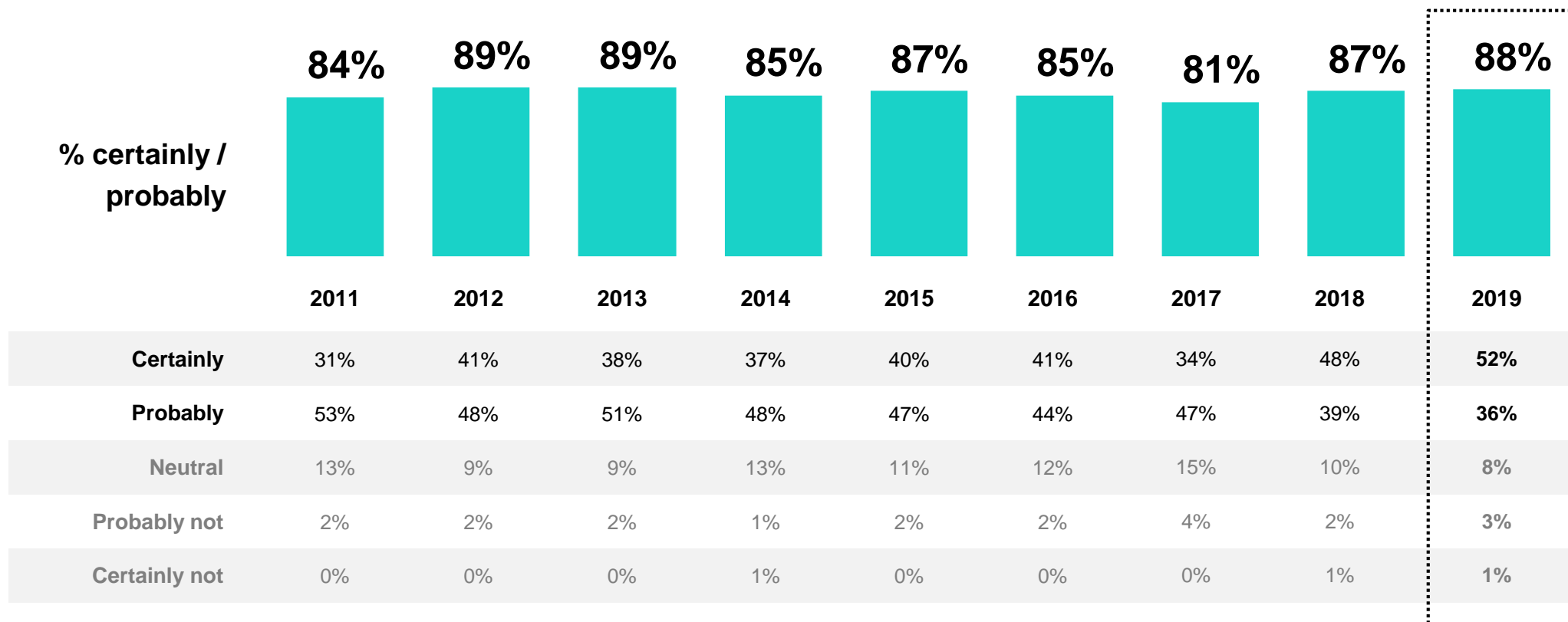
**Food and Drinks:**  
significant increase in  
volume and penetration

# Online purchases

## Future intention to buy

Q: Would you consider buying new products/services on the Internet in the future?

Vast majority convinced,  
only 1 out of 25 reluctant

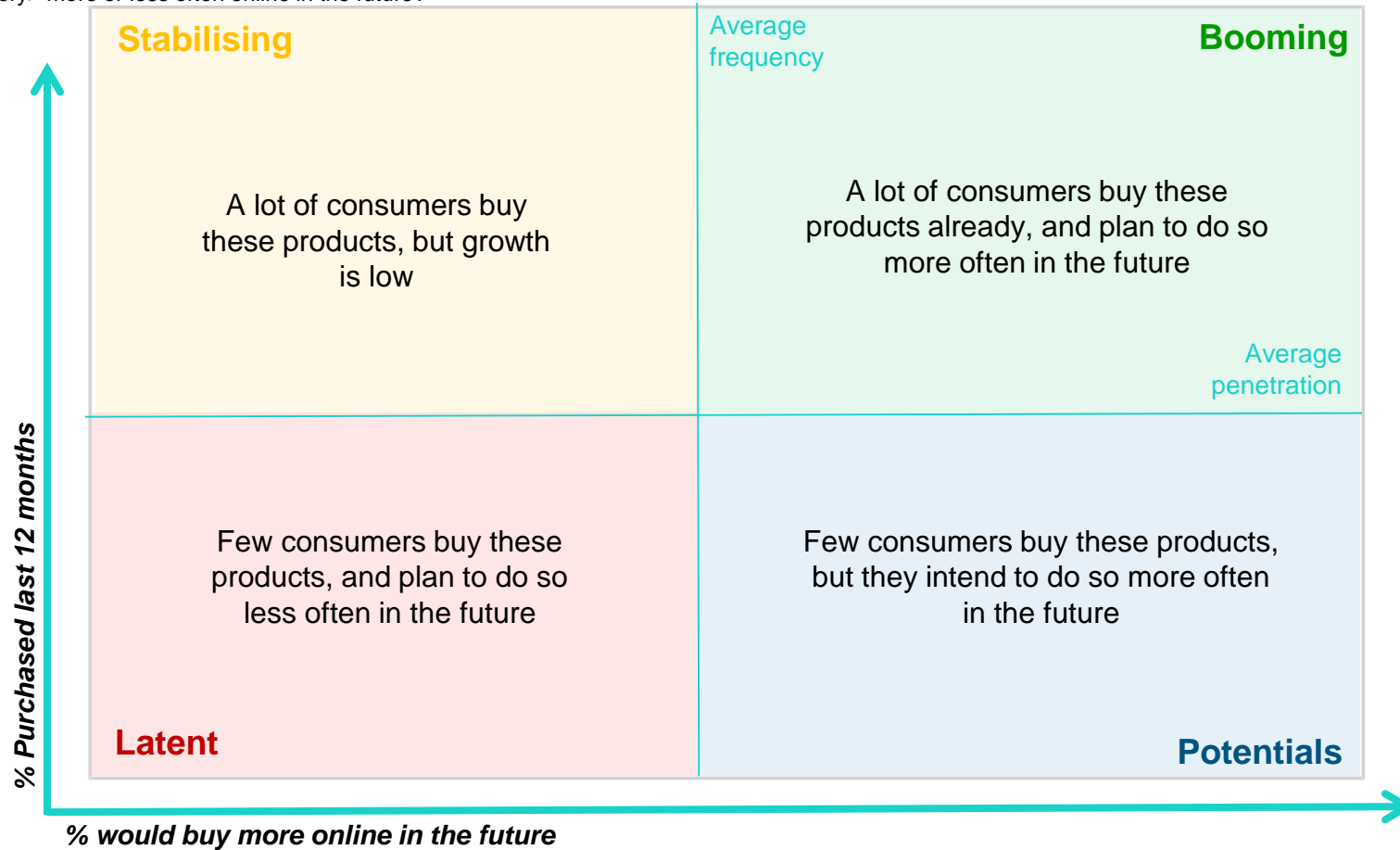




# Online purchases

## Quadrant methodology

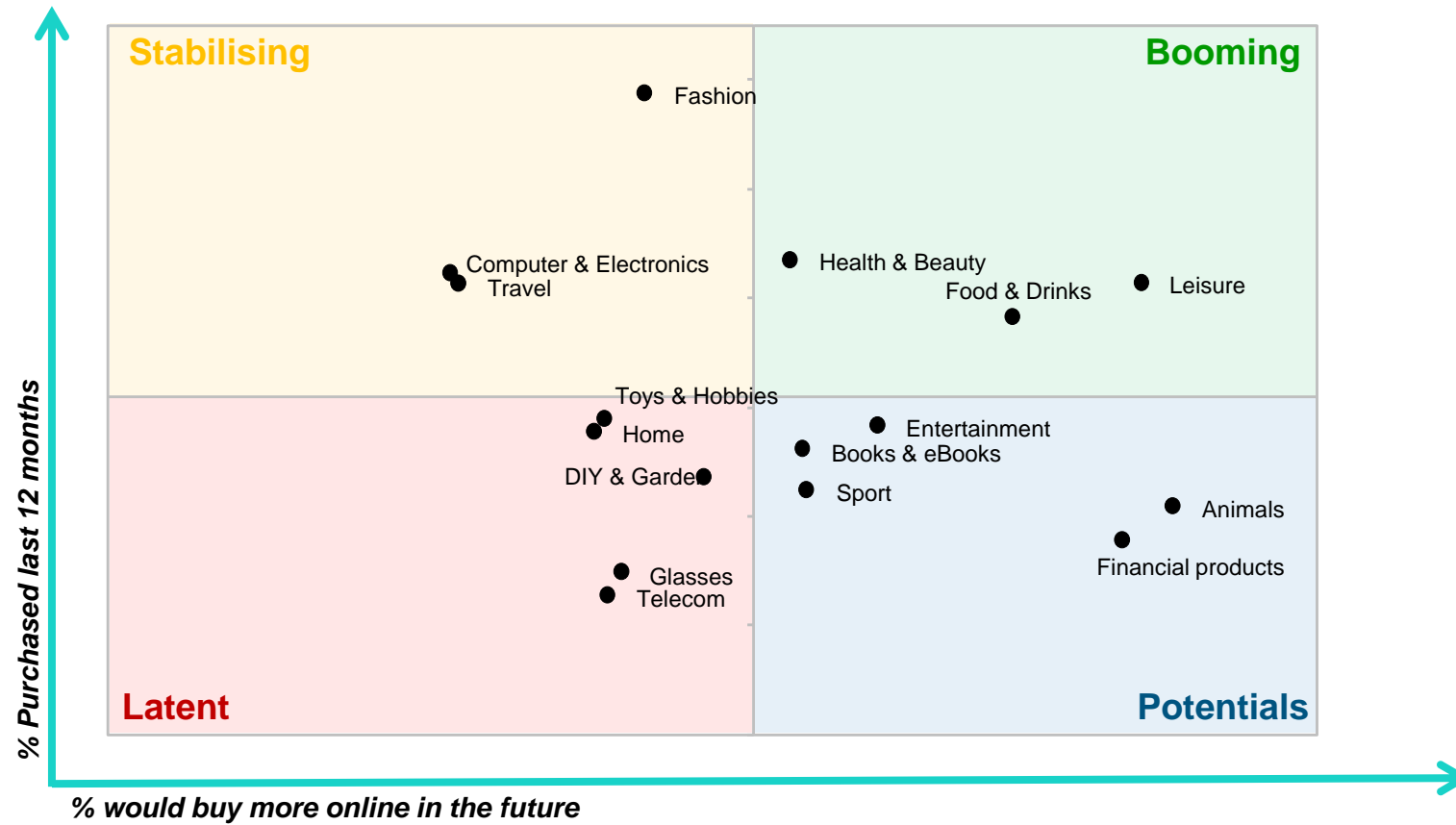
Q: Below we have listed all new products and services which you have bought in the past 12 months. Please indicate for each product/ service via which channel you bought it?  
Do you expect to buy <category> more or less often online in the future?



# Online purchases

## Quadrant 2019

Q: Below we have listed all new products and services which you have bought in the past 12 months. Please indicate for each product/ service via which channel you bought it?  
Do you expect to buy <category> more or less often online in the future?







# **SECTOR FOCUS**

# Sector focus

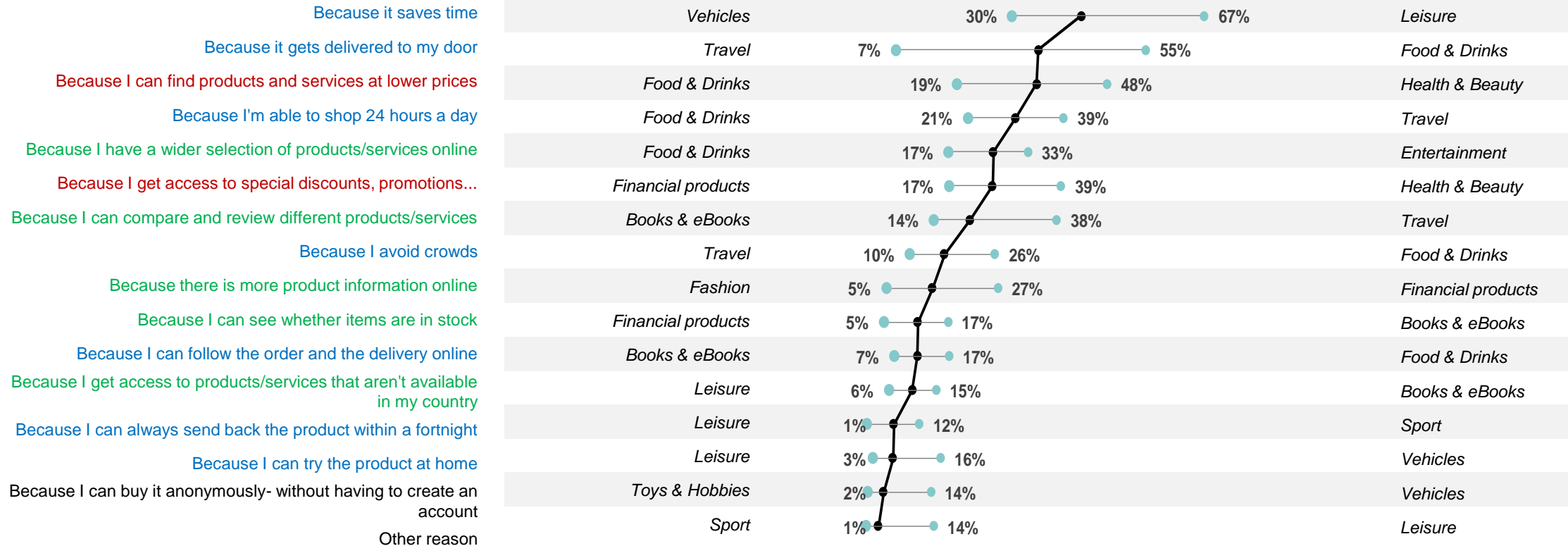
## Drivers for E-commerce – per category

Q: What are the 3 main reasons why you bought <this product> online?

Time & Convenience

Money

Purchase Management



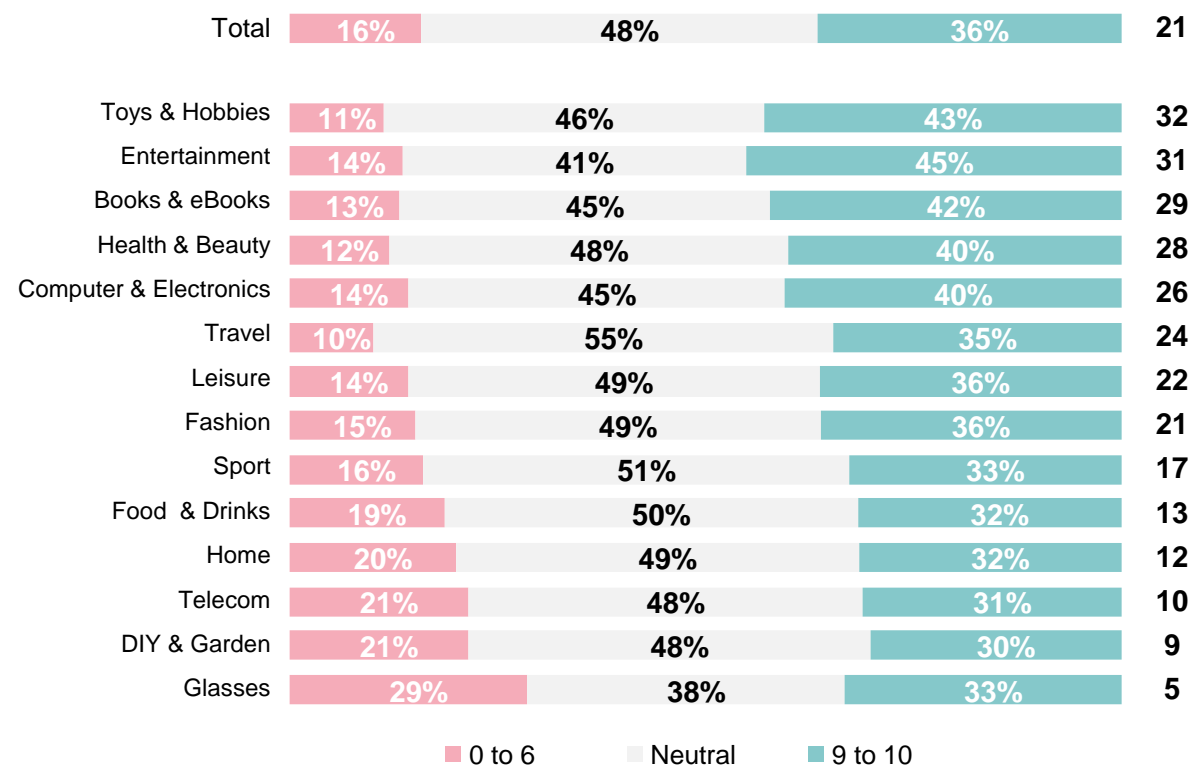
# Sector focus

## Website Recommendation

Q: Please think back to the entire process of your online purchase of PRODUCT.  
How likely are you to recommend WEBSITE to a friend, on a scale from 0 to 10?

Special treats purchases most likely to be recommended

NPS (Top 2 – Bottom 6)

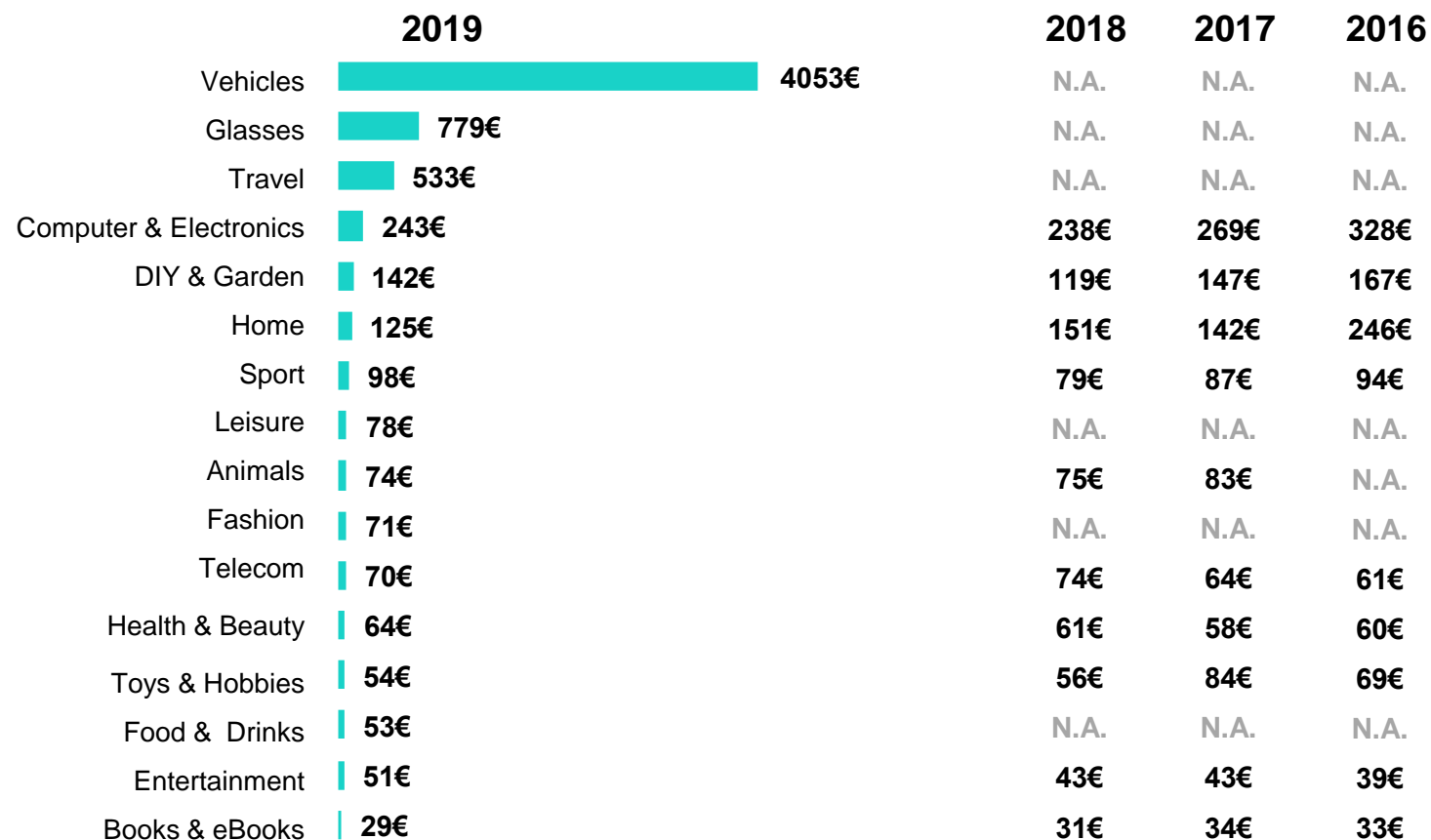


2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
22	25	30	27	27	22	34	21
26	37	35	28	28	30	40	N.A.
26	34	34	31	27	26	42	24
36	28	37	33	34	34	39	24
29	27	44	33	26	12	39	37
25	28	36	29	26	18	37	25
N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
21	33	32	23	32	25	52	2
N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
18	17	18	15	2	10	5	6
8	6	7	13	13	11	9	3
13	24	24	12	7	0	41	9
N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

# Sector focus

## Purchase amount

Q: How much money did you spend at your most recent online purchase?

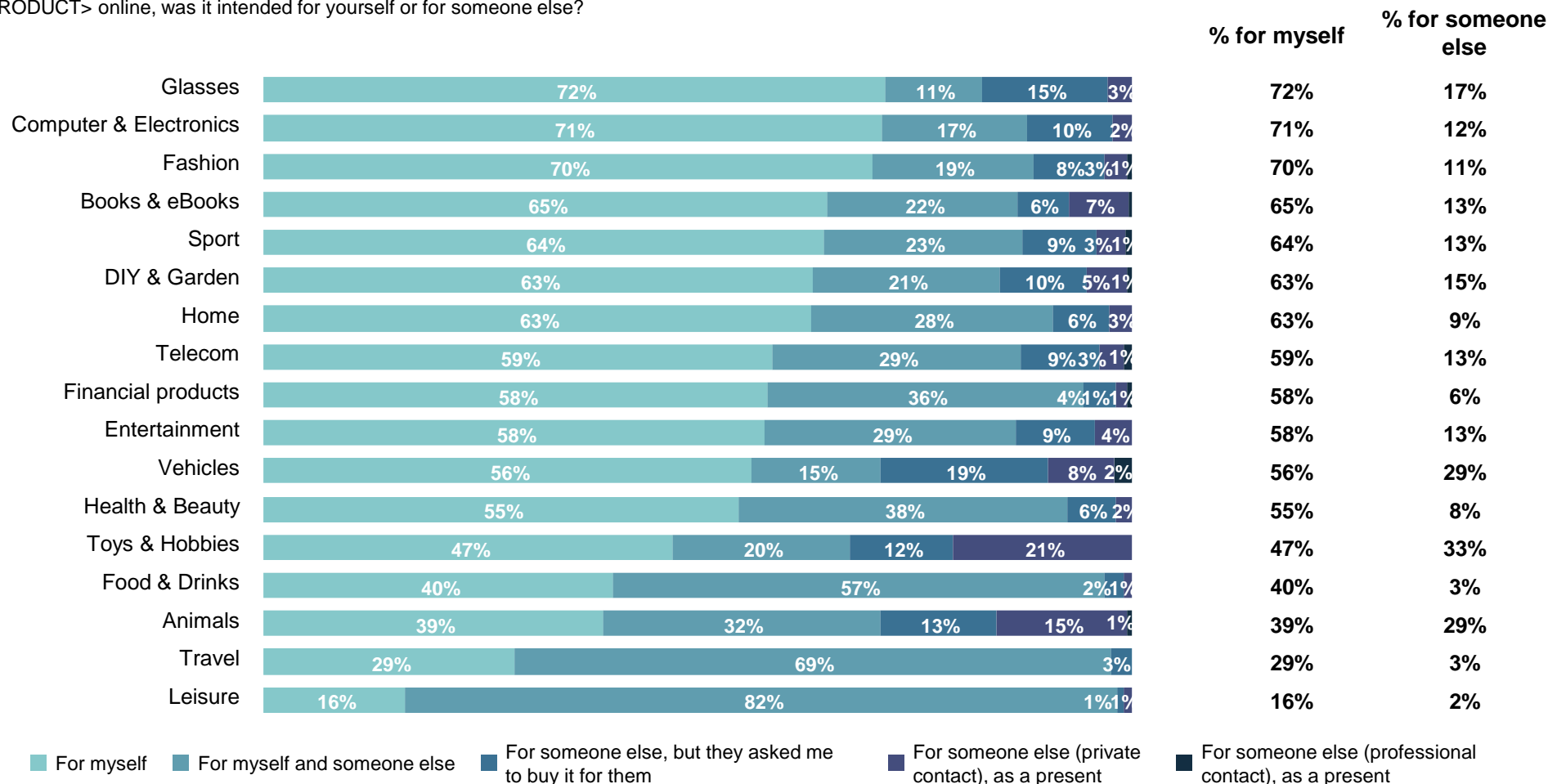




# Sector focus

## Who are you buying for

Q: When you bought <PRODUCT> online, was it intended for yourself or for someone else?



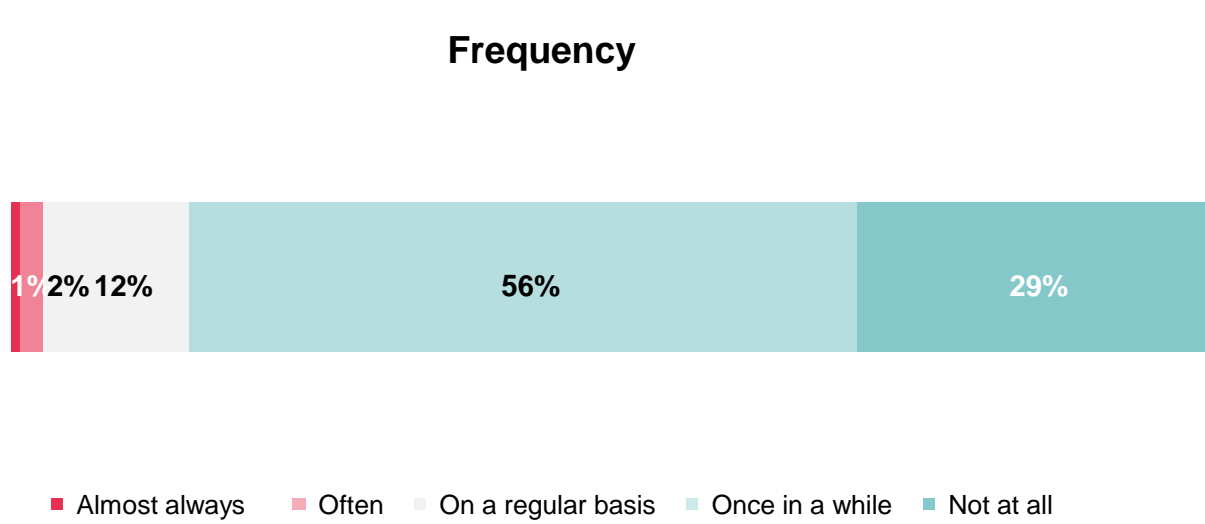
# **E-COMMERCE TRUST**



# E-commerce trust

## Frequency of returning products

Q: How often do you send back products which you bought via the Internet?



Decrease in returning products

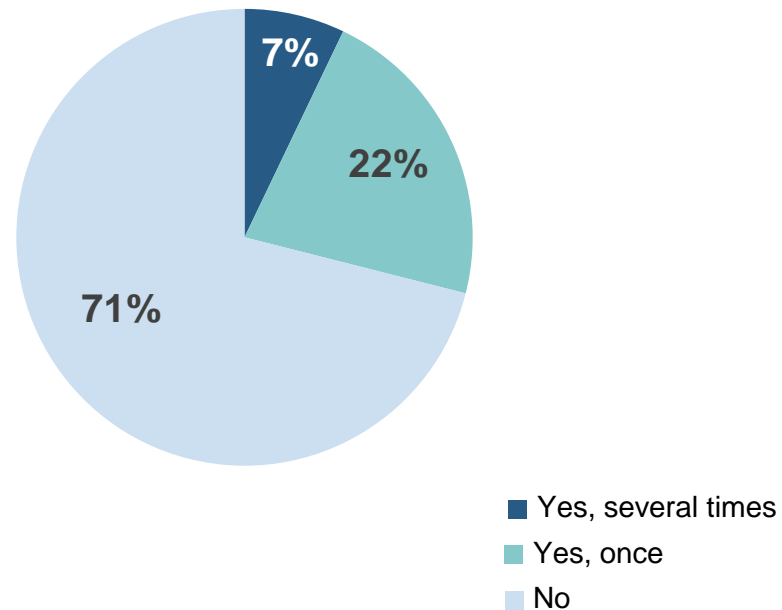
% Once in a while/ not at all		
2019	2018	2017
85%	89%	87%

# E-commerce trust

## Encountered problem (purchase)

Q: Did you encounter any issues at your purchase of new products or services on the internet, in the past 12 months?

% encountered problem 2019



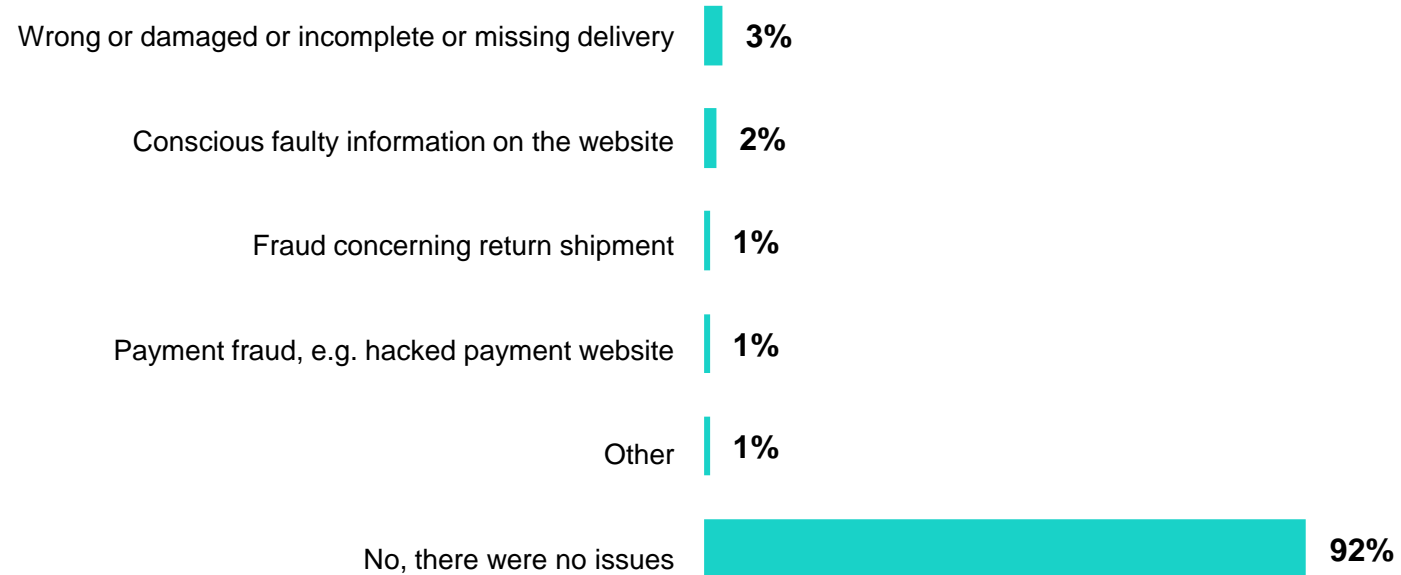
	2018	2017
Yes, several times	8%	6%
Yes, once	19%	17%
No	73%	77%

# E-commerce trust

## Encountered problem (delivery)

Q: Have you experienced problems with your delivery? If yes, which ones?

Delivery process nearly flawless









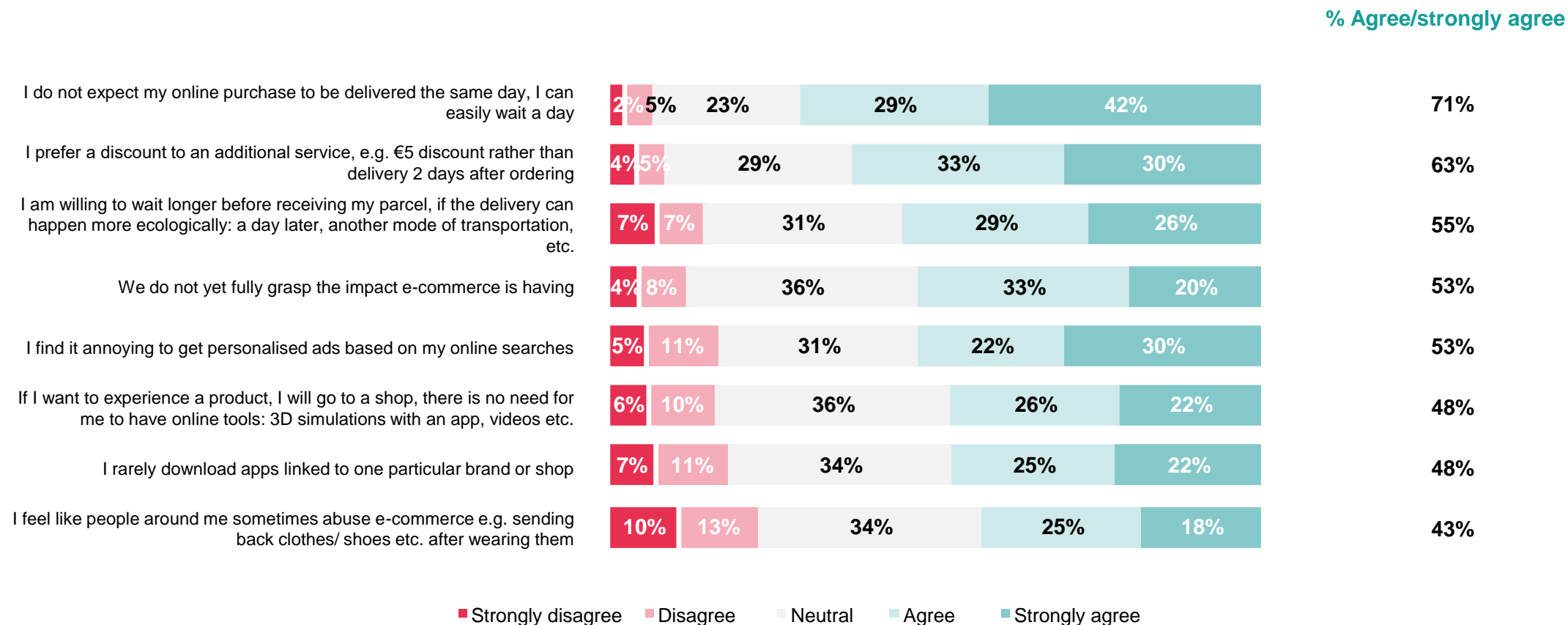
# **TRENDS & ATTITUDE**

# Trends & attitude

## Details

Brand apps are not a must have

Q: To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements?



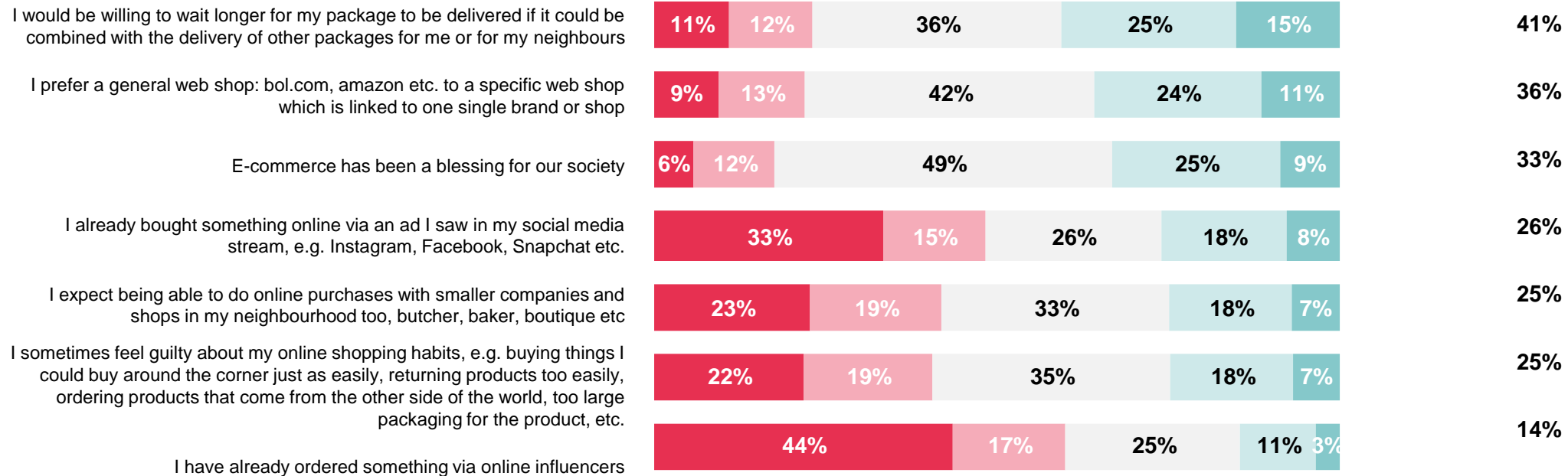
# Trends & attitude

## Details

Q: To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements?

**Be sure to consider online influencers**

% Agree/strongly agree



■ Strongly disagree 
 ■ Disagree 
 ■ Neutral 
 ■ Agree 
 ■ Strongly agree

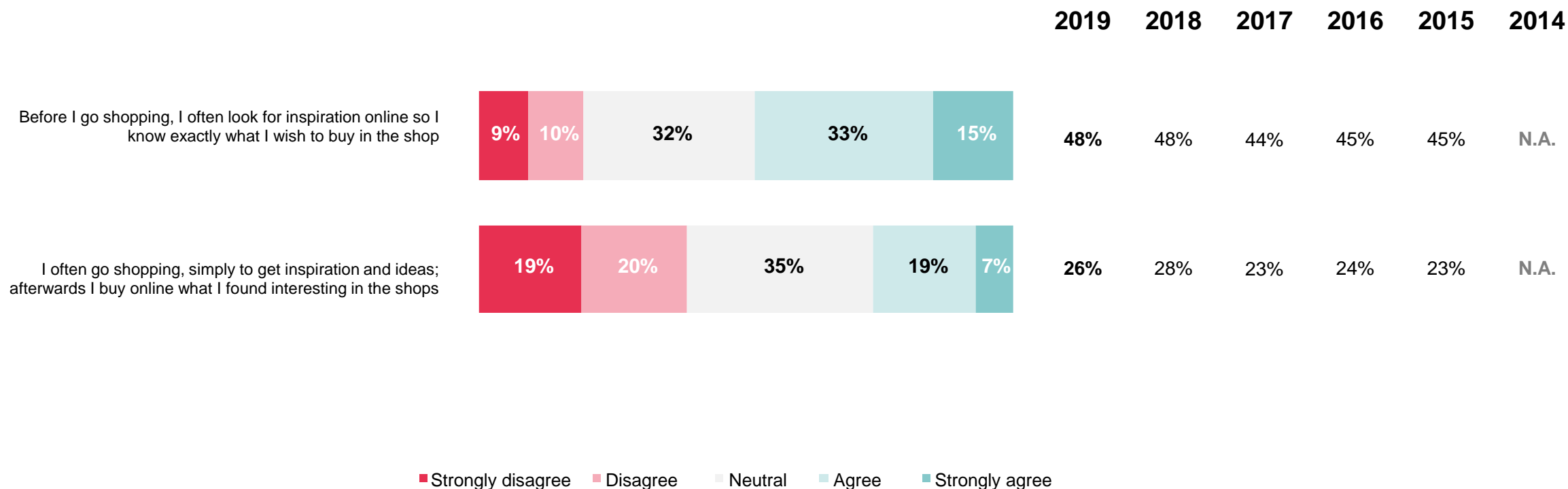
# Trends & attitude

## Difference

Q: To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the online website and the offline shop of the same chain?

**Omnichannel  
remains essential**

% Agree/strongly agree



**comeos**

# ADDENDUM

**for commerce  
and services**

# List of categories (1)

Note: in the survey we refer to 'products & services' of these categories. For some categories this is made explicit (eg music streaming service), for others not (eg car rental services). The list of (sub)categories is revised every year.

## Books & eBooks

- Books
- eBooks

## Entertainment

- Music on external carrier -e.g. CD, DVD, Blu-ray, etc.
- Digital music -e.g. mp3, etc.
- Music via online streaming services -e.g. Spotify, etc.
- Video -e.g. film, series, etc. on external carrier -e.g. CD, DVD, Blu-ray, etc.
- Digital video -e.g. film, series, etc.
- Video -e.g. film, series, etc. via online streaming services -e.g. Netflix, Stieve, etc.
- Games on external carrier -e.g. games for console, computer, etc.
- Digital games -e.g. paying games on smartphone, etc.
- Games via online streaming services
- Game consoles and accessories

## Computers & Electronics

- Computer / laptop
- Computer hardware -e.g. printer, external hard drive, etc.
- Computer software
- Television
- Photo cameras and video recorders
- Household appliances -e.g. iron, Hoover, microwave oven, etc.
- Electronics for personal care -e.g. electric toothbrush, razor, etc.
- Tablet
- Smartphone
- Tablet or smartphone accessories -e.g. charger, cover, etc.
- Other 'smart devices' -e.g. activity tracker, smart watch, e-reader, etc.

## Telecom

- Telecom services -e.g. internet connection, prepaid card, etc.

## Fashion

- Clothing
- Shoes
- Jewellery
- Leathers and bags -e.g. handbag, suitcase, sports bag, etc.
- Other fashion accessories -e.g. watches, belts, scarves, etc.

## Glasses (NEW)

- Glasses (NEW)
- Reading glasses (NEW)
- Multifocal glasses (NEW)
- Sunglasses (NEW)
- Lenses (NEW)

## Toys & Hobbies

- Toys -inside and outside
- Dress-up clothes and party articles -e.g. carnival
- Hobby materials -e.g. painting, etc.
- Office supplier -e.g. paper, office material, etc.

## Home

- Large pieces of furniture -e.g. sofa, bed, etc.
- Small pieces of furniture -e.g. side table, small cupboard, etc.
- Home decoration -e.g. candles, textiles, etc.
- Cooking material -e.g. pots, pans, etc.

# List of categories (2)

Note: in the survey we refer to 'products & services' of these categories. For some categories this is made explicit (eg music streaming service), for others not (eg car rental services). The list of (sub)categories is revised every year.

## DIY & Garden

- Tools -e.g. sawing machine, hammer, etc.
- Other DIY materials -e.g. wood, electrical cables, etc.
- Garden decoration -e.g. garden furniture, decoration articles, etc.
- Garden maintenance -e.g. lawn mower, maintenance products, etc.
- Flowers, plants, etc.

## Food & Drinks

- General food -supermarket
- Prepared food -e.g. takeaway, catering, etc.
- Meal packs, delivered in box –unprepared
- Pralines and sweets (NEW)
- Drinks –wine, liqueur, beer, non-alcoholic (NEW)
- Nutritional supplements (NEW)

## Health & Beauty

- Personal care products -e.g. hair products, creams, etc.
- Make-up and perfume
- Health products -e.g. food supplements, lenses, etc.
- Pharmaceutical products -not on prescription
- Pharmaceutical products – on prescription (NEW)

## Sport

- Sports clothing
- Sports shoes
- Sports accessories -e.g. halters, swimming floaters, etc.
- Sports Electronics

## Animals

- Food products
- Toys and accessories

## Travel (NEW)

- Travel tickets -e.g. airplane, boat, train, bus, etc.
- Taxi and other transport services -e.g. taxi, car sharing, etc.
- Hotel/ overnighther bookings

## Leisure (NEW)

- Restaurant bookings
- Tickets to events -e.g. festival, concerts, etc.
- Tickets to leisure time centers -e.g. cinema, fun fair, museum, etc.

## Vehicles

- Car
- Motorbike
- Bicycle

## Financial products

- Bank products -e.g. current account, savings account, investment product...
- Travel assistance or cancellation insurance
- Other insurances -e.g. fire, vehicle, life, pension scheme...



[www.comeos.be](http://www.comeos.be)