AI in the shopping experience

What consumers want

An exclusive Attest report,
with data from eight key markets

Attest

Introduction

In 2024, Artificial Intelligence has truly reached a tipping point. Everyone seems to be getting on board (whether a little too hastily or not). And those who aren't, risk being left behind.

As this mass adoption occurs, we wanted to take a moment to explore the impact of AI technology on consumers. How receptive are they to AI, what excites them about it, and what concerns them? Since AI is having an impact globally, we decided to conduct research across the top eight of Attest's 59 markets.

In total, we surveyed 9,500 working-age consumers in the US, Canada, Mexico, Australia, UK, Germany, France and The Netherlands. Thanks to our new multi-language studies feature, we were able to analyze the results side-by-side in the Attest platform.

The outcome is a unique consumers' eye view of AI in the shopping experience. One thing the report highlights is the mistrust that brands will need to overcome as they expand their use of AI. From the uncertainty consumers feel about sharing their data to feed AI systems, through to the difficulty they face in identifying AI-generated imagery.

But, despite these reservations, we're already seeing AI technology changing the way consumers shop. Our data suggests AI-powered search is on track to be the next frontier in marketing, presenting challenge and opportunity in equal measure.

**Jeremy King**
Attest CEO and Founder

Consumers unsure AI will improve the customer experience

Transforming the fields of medicine and science, AI innovations are in the headlines daily, yet consumers remain skeptical about the use of AI technology in retail. Only 27.3% think AI has the potential to improve the customer experience, while just 26.0% believe it will lead to a more personalized experience.

These perceptions could change, though, as more brands integrate AI tools like chatbots and shopping assistants. Consumers are broadly open to using AI chatbots on brands' websites; nearly 52% of survey respondents said they'd be likely to use one to get information, with Millennials aged 25-34 most keen (60.2%).

AI chatbots can understand customer queries and mimic human conversation, so they can provide an extension to staffed customer support. Amazon's recently unveiled shopping assistant Rufus, for example, uses information from the web, product listings, customer reviews, and community Q&As to answer questions and help shoppers compare products.
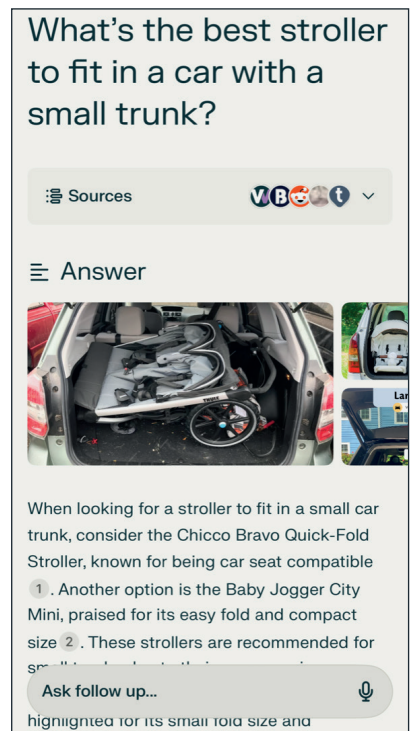
Likelihood to use a chatbot on a brand's website by age

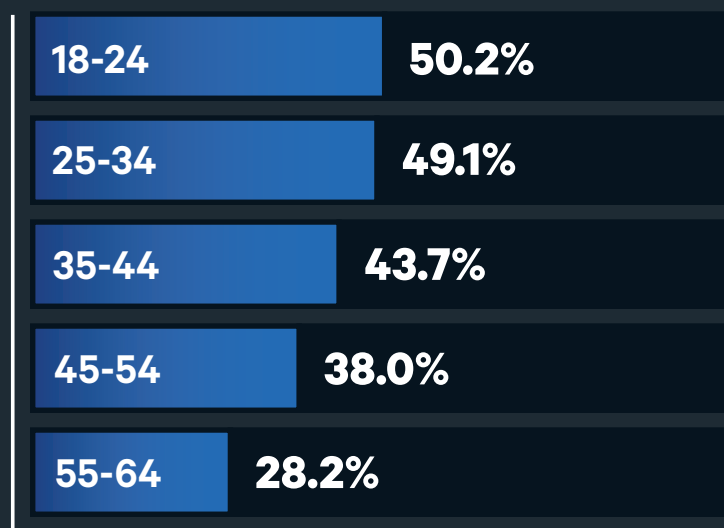| Age	%
18-24	53.4%
25-34	60.2%
35-44	55.9%
45-54	48.5%
55-64	40.4%
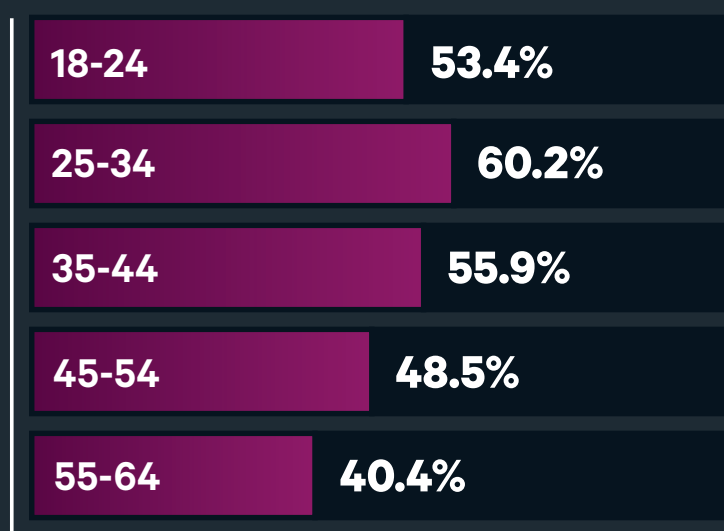
Growing adoption of AI-powered search

Despite consumers' lack of faith in AI to improve the customer experience, our data shows they're increasingly turning to it to research purchases. Over 41% of consumers say they're likely to use an AI tool like ChatGPT to research potential purchases (rising to 50.1% of Gen Z). And they're likely to place trust in the results: 39.9% of consumers say they would trust information given to them by an AI tool, versus 28.8% who would distrust it.

According to the NY Times, AI-powered search is the next big thing, with AI search engine Perplexity slated to replace Google. The shift to AI-powered search effectively means the opening up of a new marketing channel. But while you might be able to dial back your Google Ads spend, brands will now need to invest in seeding the web with high quality materials for the AI to crawl. Ensuring potential customers receive the right messaging is going to be a key focus for marketers going forwards.

What's the best stroller to fit in a car with a small trunk?

Sources

Answer

When looking for a stroller to fit in a small car trunk, consider the Chicco Bravo Quick-Fold Stroller, known for being car seat compatible 1 . Another option is the Baby Jogger City Mini, praised for its easy fold and compact size 2 . These strollers are recommended for small trunks due to their compressive highlighted for its small fold size and

Ask follow up...

Likelihood of using an AI tool like ChatGPT to research purchases by age

Age	Percentage
18-24	50.2%
25-34	49.1%
35-44	43.7%
45-54	38.0%
55-64	28.2%

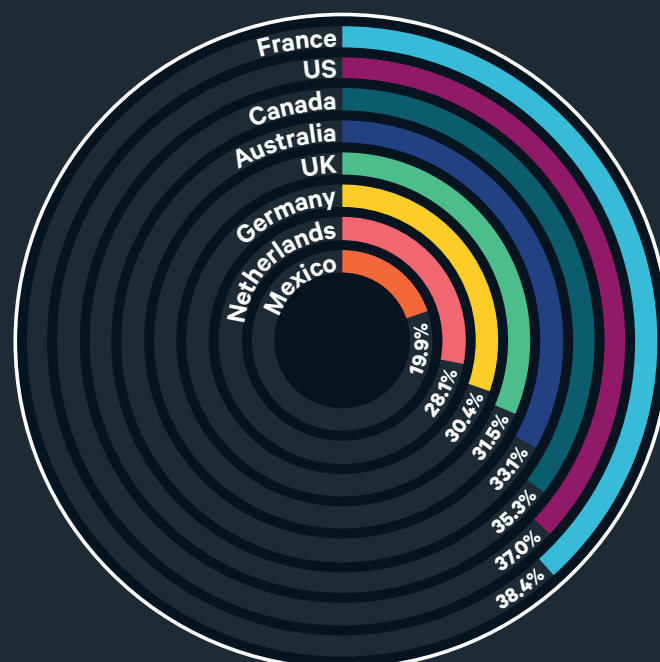# Consumers don't trust brands with AI data

As AI search takes off, brands will not only have to place a much greater focus on data output – if they want to launch proprietary AI widgets, they'll also need to secure vast amounts of data input. Collecting the data required to train AI tools represents another big challenge for brands to get to grips with.

In our last report we looked at how a lack of trust around data privacy has made consumers less likely to opt-in to cookies. Because consumers don't trust websites to protect their data – and they don't want to be targeted with advertising – they are becoming less willing to share it.

We see similar concerns when it comes to AI. Nearly 43% of consumers say they worry about privacy or security weaknesses when it comes to brands using AI. And 35.0% say they distrust companies with the data they collect through AI tools (while only 29.4% trust them).

The lack of regulation in this area is fuelling the concern, with a huge 79.1% of consumers agreeing that there needs to be laws to control the use of consumer data to train AI. Until the law has caught up, companies will need to work hard to overcome consumers' misgivings. Transparency over what data is collected, how it is used, and how it is protected will be key to building trust.

Consumer distrust of companies collecting data via AI by country

France
US
Canada
Australia
UK
Germany
Netherlands
Mexico

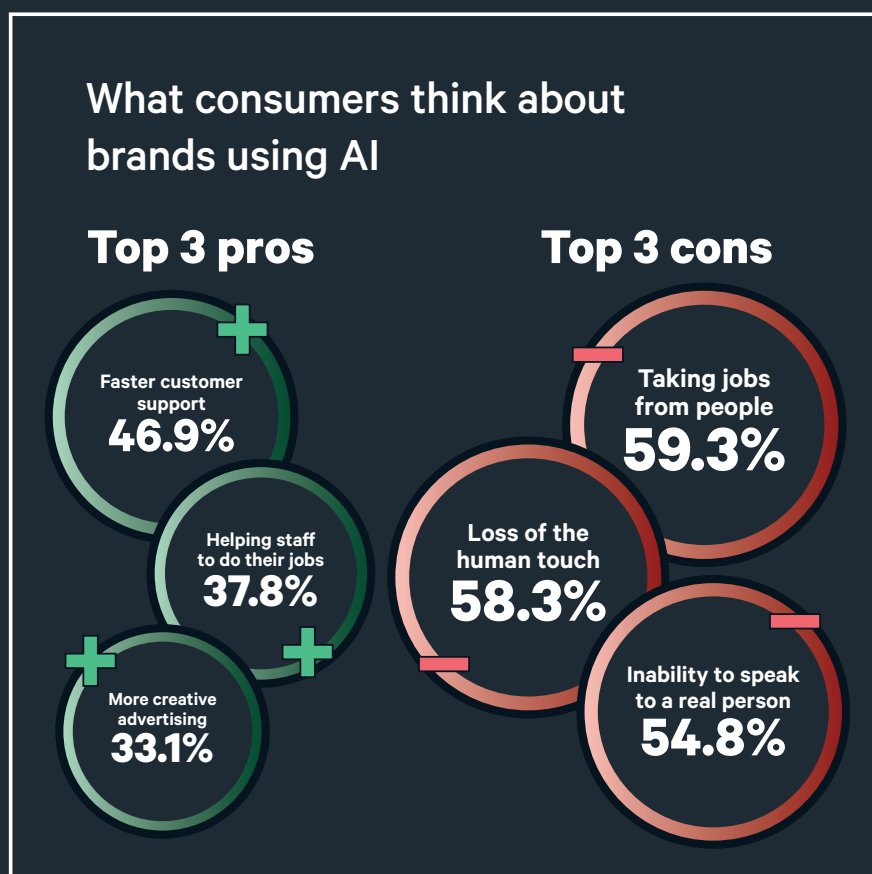19.9%
28.1%
30.4%
31.5%
33.1%
35.3%
37.0%
38.4%

The importance of the human touch

When it comes to consumer perceptions of brands using AI, the biggest negatives are related to the impact it will have on people. Over 59% of consumers fear AI is going to take jobs. It's not an unfounded worry; according to the International Monetary Fund, AI will affect 40% of jobs around the world, with advanced economies at greater risk of disruption.

Consumers don't want employees replaced with machines; 58.3% believe brands introducing AI technology could lead to the loss of the human touch. Nearly 55% can foresee a future where they can't speak to a real person when interacting with businesses.

On the flip side of the coin, survey respondents do recognise the potential of AI to complement the work of humans. When we asked what benefits they thought there would be to a brand using AI, the top answer was 'faster customer support' (46.9%). Nearly 38% also thought that AI technology would help staff to do their jobs. Key to getting consumer buy-in will be using AI as an enhancement to existing operations and not a replacement.

What consumers think about brands using AI

Top 3 pros

Faster customer support
46.9%

Helping staff to do their jobs
37.8%

More creative advertising
33.1%

Top 3 cons

Taking jobs from people
59.3%

Loss of the human touch
**58.3%**

Inability to speak to a real person
54.8%

Consumers can no longer trust what they see or hear

Another big theme to emerge from our research was the importance of maintaining authenticity in marketing. With the rise of AI image generators and strikingly realistic "deepfakes", it's becoming increasingly harder for consumers to differentiate fact from fiction. More than 71% of survey respondents admitted that they worry about being able to trust what they see or hear because of AI.

We carried out a test by using an AI image generator to create the type of image you might see in a Nike marketing campaign. We then showed it alongside three genuine Nike ads and asked respondents to tell us which they thought was the fake.

Only a quarter of consumers could correctly identify the AI image. While younger consumers are more savvy when it comes to AI imagery (39.1% of Gen Z could spot the fake), the ability to tell the difference diminishes considerably among people aged 40+.
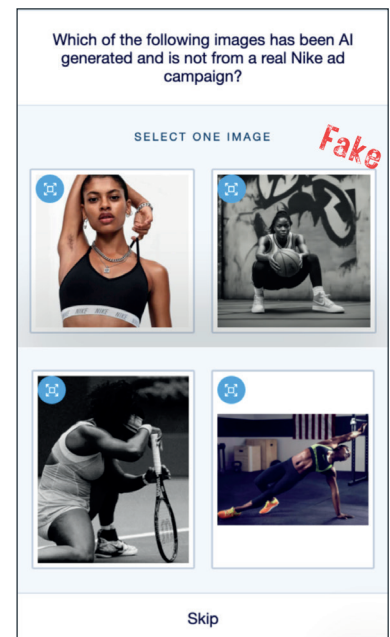
Ability to spot AI-generated imagery by age

| Age	Percentage
18-24	39.1%
25-34	31.1%
35-44	23.7%
45-54	17.3%
55-64	15.0%

Calls for law changes

This inability to discern what's real and what's not is such an issue that consumers want governments to take action. Nearly 83% of consumers say it should be required by law to label AI-generated content, while 74.8% believe it should be illegal to create deepfakes.

It's not just about celebrities being misrepresented, AI also has the potential to mislead when used in marketing. Although a third of survey respondents think brands will be able to produce more creative advertising using AI, nearly 40% are worried about the possibility of being misled or misinformed by brands using AI.

A perfect example of how expectations can be falsely inflated by AI is a recently held Willy Wonka-inspired event. It was promoted with AI-generated images of a magical candy-filled world, but event goers were left sorely disappointed by the reality – a mostly-empty warehouse, half a glass of lemonade and three jelly beans per child.

How consumers want the law changed

Mandatory labeling of AI-generated content
82.6%

Make "deepfakes" illegal
74.8%
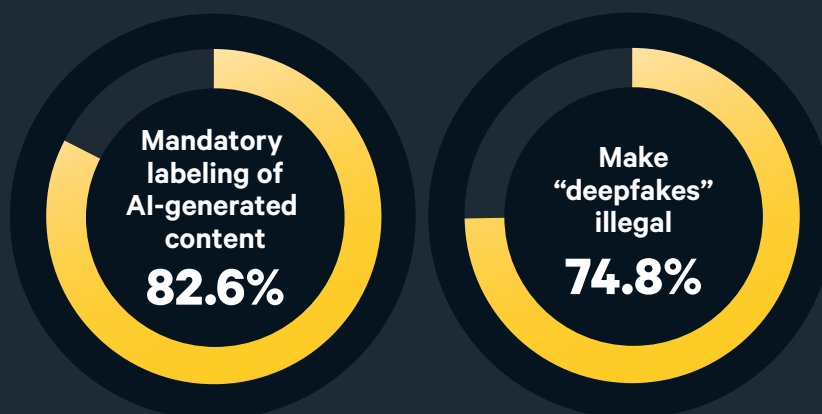
Putting real people at the heart of marketing

When it comes to marketing, it seems consumers are much more likely to respond to real people.

We found that only 18.6% of survey respondents are likely to follow a computer-generated influencer online (and even Gen Z show little interest at 22.5%), while almost half state they don't want to see AI-generated models in ads.

The main reasons consumers are opposed to AI-generated models is that they think it will take jobs from people (70.4%) and that it is inauthentic (53.0%). But another concern is that it could lead to unrealistic beauty standards (43.7%).

It's an important consideration. Will AI value characteristics like stretch marks, cellulite and gappy teeth, or will it lean towards airbrushed perfection? Consumers feel strongly about keeping it real; nearly 70% say it's important to them to see models that haven't been digitally altered.

With this in mind, as brands embrace the creative possibilities of AI, they must take care not to undo the progress that's been made in increasing the diversity of models and promoting a wider view of beauty.

Desire to see non digitally-altered models in marketing by age

Age	%
18-24	69.8%
25-34	71.5%
35-44	71.2%
45-54	67.2%
55-64	68.3%
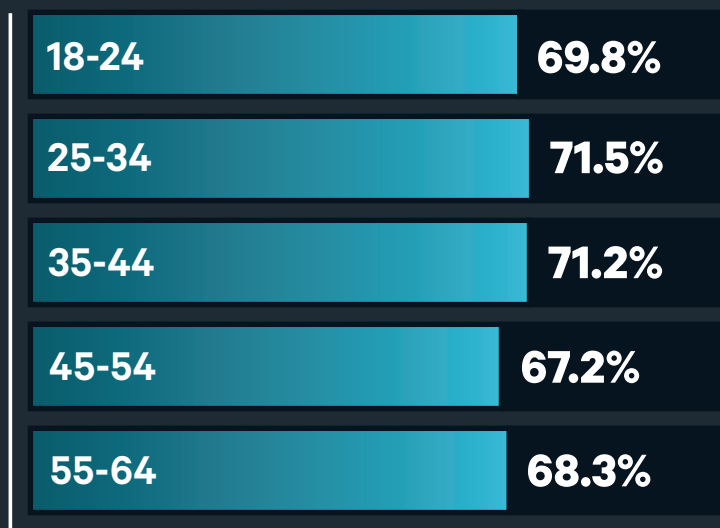
Next steps for brands

As this data shows, consumers still need convincing about the benefits of AI as part of the shopping experience. Therefore, before jumping in with both feet, it makes sense to speak to your target audience about what would improve customer enjoyment and satisfaction.

What do your consumers feel is lacking currently? Is AI the best solution? What AI tools could add the most value? And in what ways would customers use them?

If you already have AI tools available, what would increase their usage? And how can you reassure your consumers when sharing their data with you? These are all questions that consumer research can answer.

Consumer research will also be vital in understanding how your customers are starting to use AI for search. What queries are they likely to make about your sector or products? And how will their behavior differ using these tools compared with Google? By gaining insight on long-tail keywords, you'll be able to adjust your strategies for content marketing and SEO.

Taking a longer term view, as AI usage ramps up in society and life becomes increasingly automated, regularly staying in touch with consumers will be essential for maintaining the human touch. Thankfully, Attest makes it easy to keep the voice of the customer heard within your business – especially with our new Video Responses feature. If you want to start talking to your consumers about AI (and much more), get in touch.

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