



The UK  
eCommerce  
Association



eCommerce Growth Report 2025:

# Retailers' insights, expected trends, and winning strategies



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# Meet the experts



*"We're excited to share our 'eCommerce Growth Report 2025' supported by industry expert Shopify. This report reveals retailers' expectations for online trading in 2025, as well as their top priorities to achieve growth. In 2024 the sector saw growth, and we aim to help retailers build on this in 2025. Read on and benefit from strategies to optimise channel growth, improve social media strategies, and accelerate Black Friday performance (and more!)"*

## About

We help our members understand and improve their online retail performance through a busy programme of performance benchmarking, data analysis, insight, best practice-sharing, and events. We have been tracking online sales since 2000 – and now measure over 120 individual metrics in a series of indexes, providing in-depth intelligence on online and mobile sales, delivery trends, marketing ROI and channel performance.

## Editorial



Ellie-Rose Davies, Content Executive at **IMRG**



Andy Mulcahy, Strategy and Insight Director at **IMRG**



*"Delving into the findings outlined in this report has provided valuable insight as we head into a new year of opportunities and challenges in the ecommerce industry. It's been especially interesting to investigate the parallels—and the discrepancies—between this piece of research and our recently launched **Ecommerce Growth Guide**, containing insights from over 875 million shoppers. We're confident there will be value in this report for all types of retailers in IMRG's community of retailers."*

## About

Shopify is the leading global commerce platform that keeps enterprises ahead, providing a unified solution to power DTC, B2B, and retail operations seamlessly. Built to enhance speed, customisation, reliability, and innovation, Shopify enables European brands like Gymshark, World of Books, Dermalogica, and Sennheiser to deliver exceptional shopping experiences wherever their customers are. Learn how Shopify can unlock unprecedented growth at [shopify.com/enterprise](https://shopify.com/enterprise)

## Editorial



Ross Pounds, Content, Europe at **Shopify**



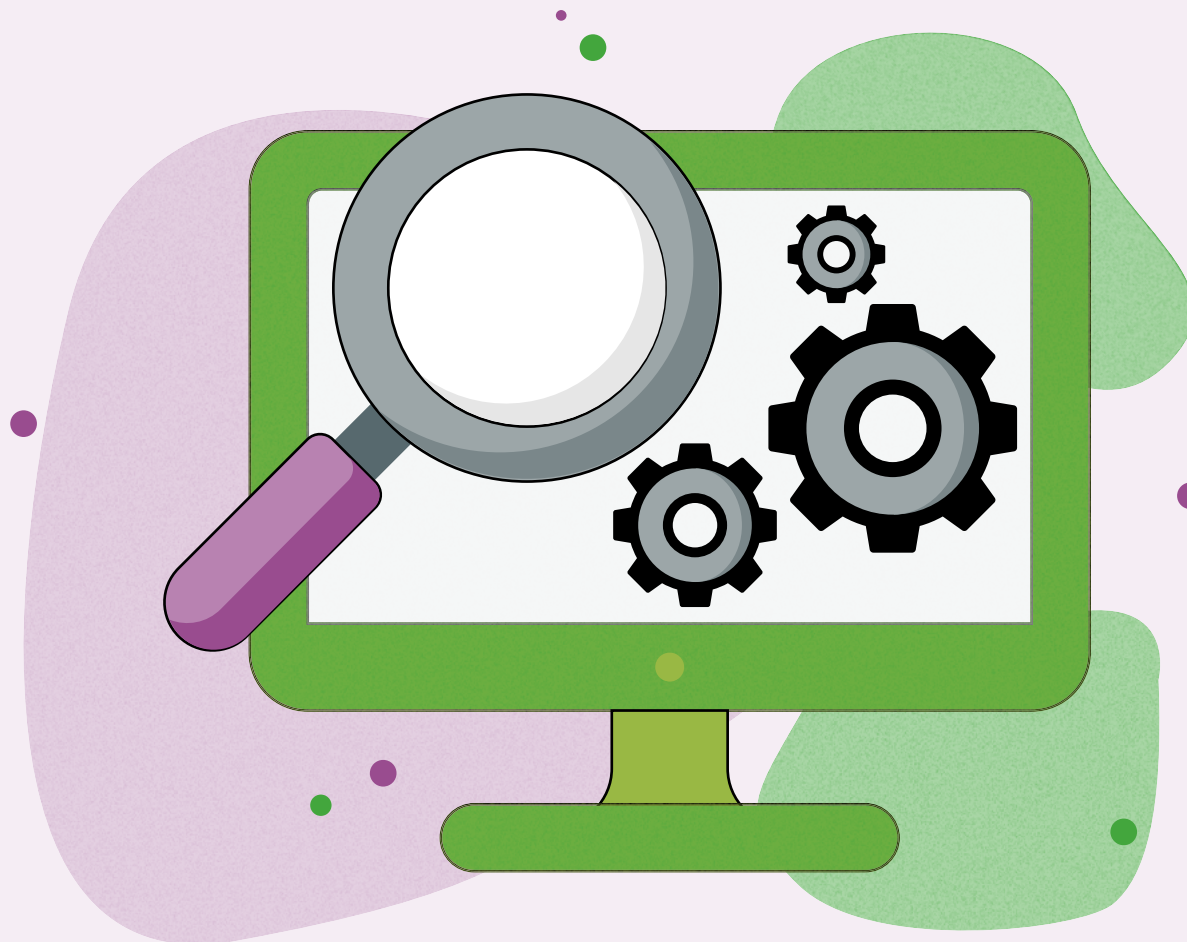
Deann Evans, Managing Director, Europe at **Shopify**

# Methodology

IMRG and Shopify surveyed 130+ retailers on their thoughts and plans for growth in 2025. The retailers represent a broad range of product sectors, market tiers, and job titles.

The research was carried out between December 2024 – January 2025. We surveyed retailers across two IMRG virtual webinar conferences (on 19th Dec and 9th Jan) and one physical IMRG event (Christmas Connect, 12th Dec). Each chart in this report represents all retailers who gave us a response for that question, in percentage format.

This report is also supported by other IMRG and Shopify research to provide extra depth to analysis.



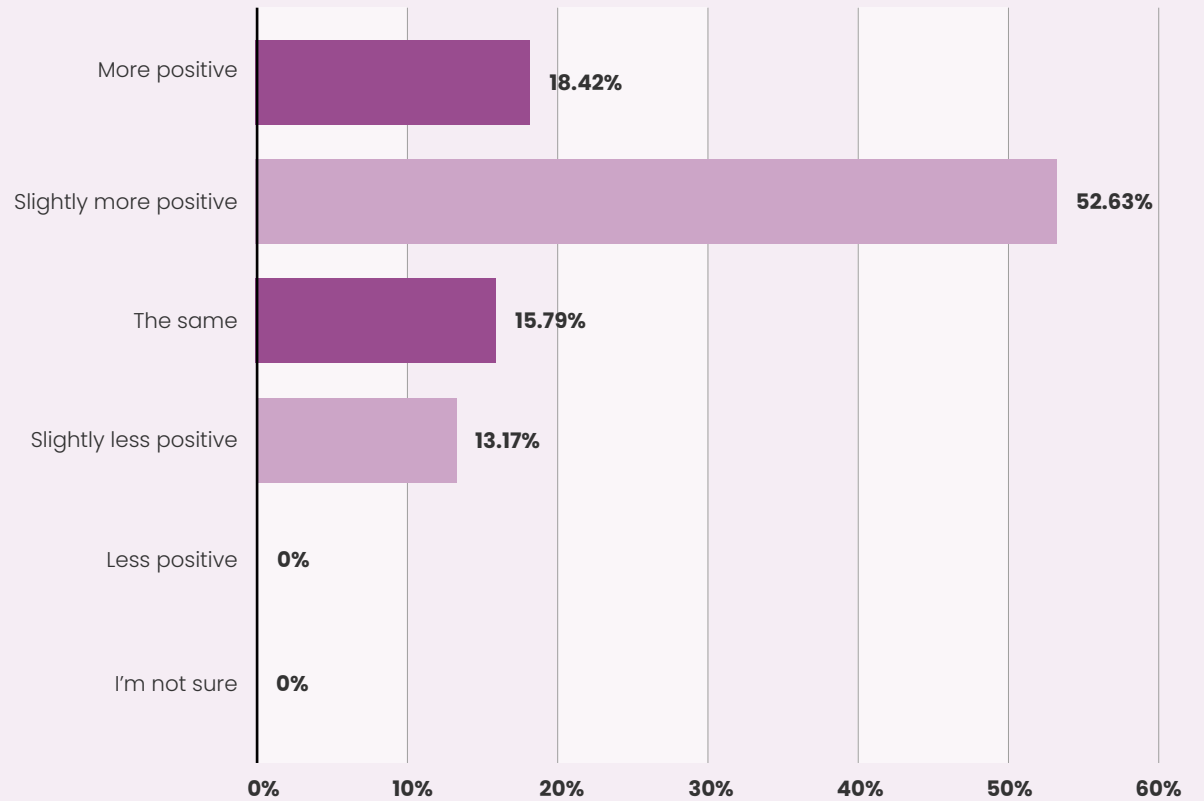
# Retailers' feelings heading into 2025

## An air of positivity around customer demand

Over half (52.63%) retailers reported feeling 'slightly more positive' about customer demand in 2025, with an additional 18.42% retailers expressing that they are 'more positive.'



Heading into 2025, are you feeling more or less positive about customer demand?



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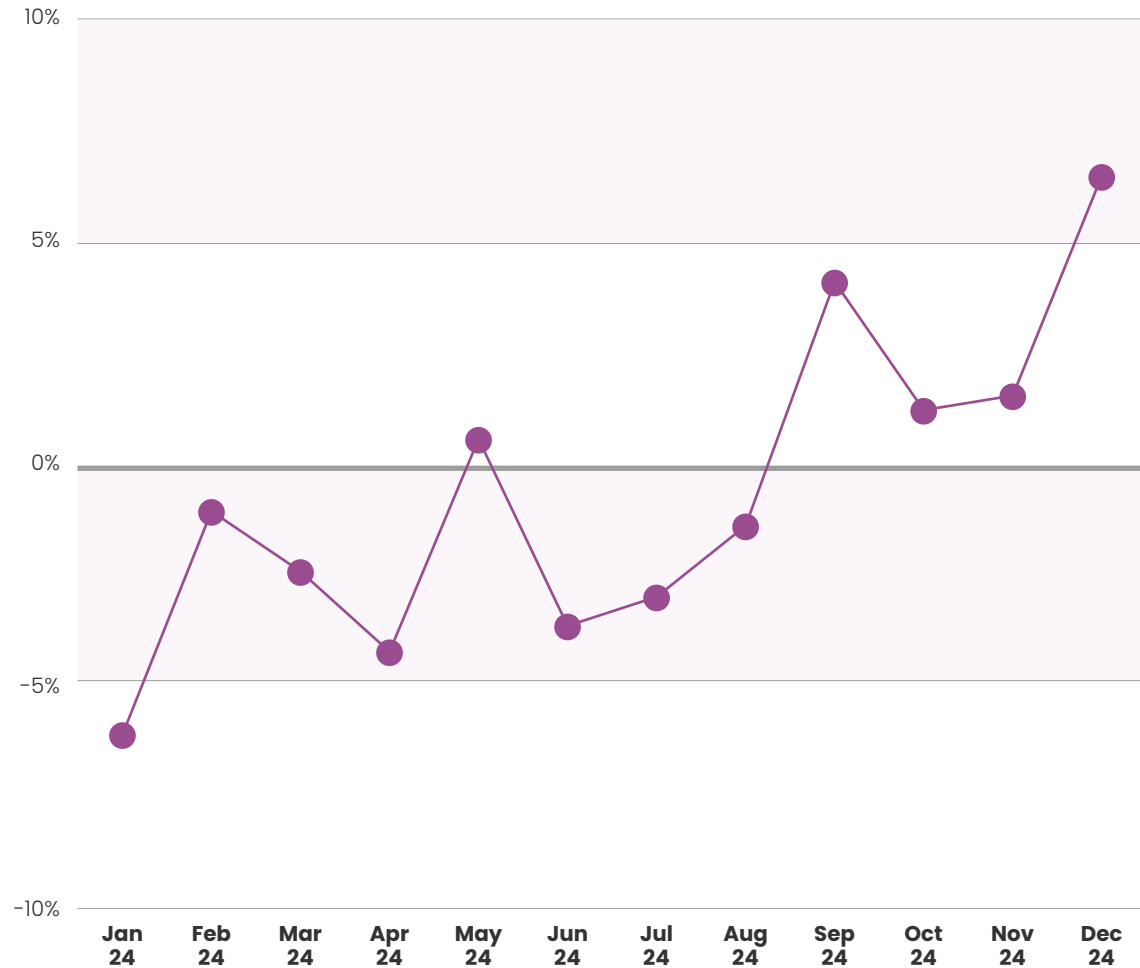
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At IMRG, we've observed a notable shift in customer demand. While total market online retail revenue was down in the first half of 2024 according to our Online Retail Index, the latter part of the year marked a turning point. In September, the market grew by +4.1% Year-on-Year (YoY), and this positive momentum continued into December, which recorded a +6.4% YoY increase. This marks the first period of consecutive growth in our Index since April 2021.

With this upward trend, retailers are heading into 2025 with renewed optimism. Notably, none of the respondents indicated feeling 'less positive' about customer demand for the coming year.



YoY Percentage Change for Revenue - Total Market



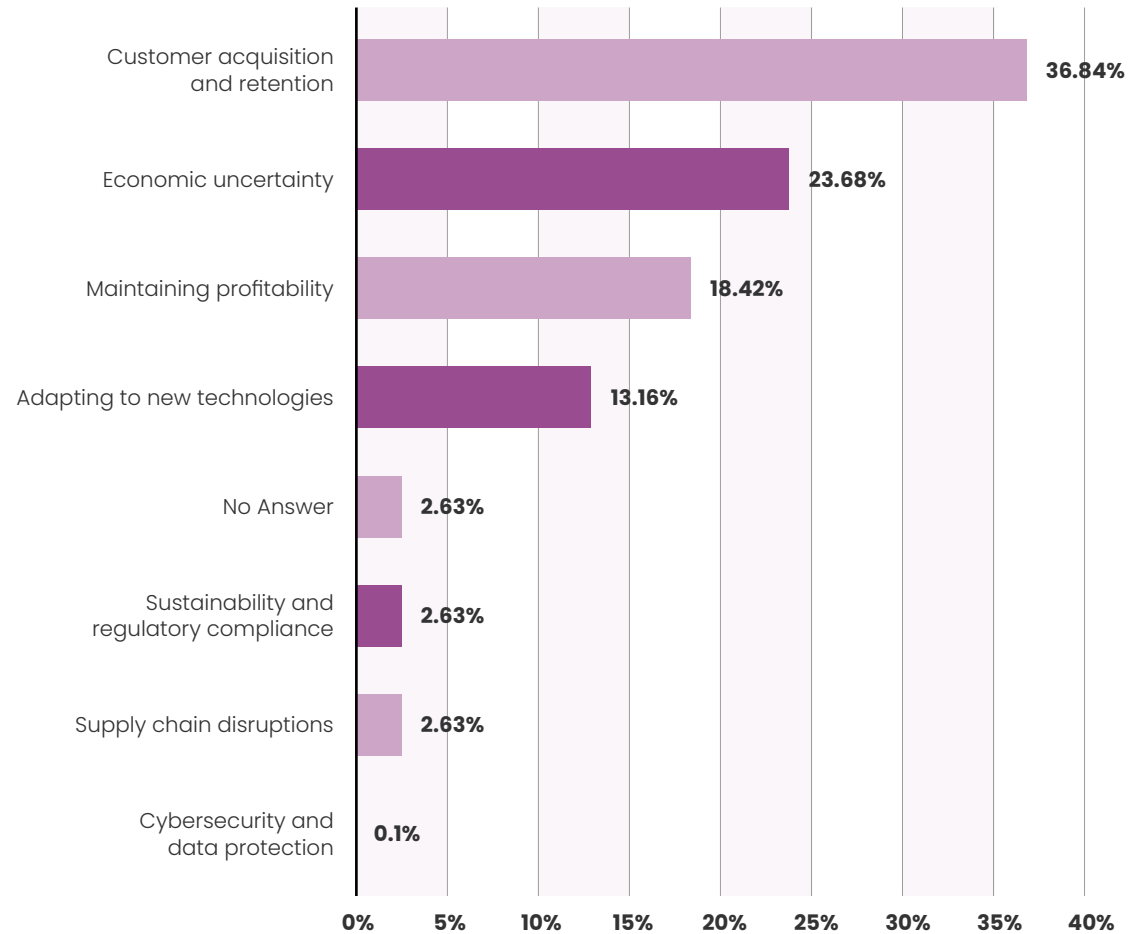
## The anticipated challenges for eCommerce in 2025

When asked about the biggest challenge for eCommerce in 2025, the majority of retailers (36.84%) identified 'customer acquisition and retention' as their primary concern. Interestingly, the second most common response was 'economic uncertainty,' which is one key driver behind difficulties in attracting and retaining customers.

A considerable number of retailers (18.42%) highlighted 'maintaining profitability' as a challenge they expect to face.

'Adapting to new technologies' is another significant hurdle. The rapid rate of technological advancements can make it challenging for retailers to stay ahead of trends and ensure they are meeting evolving customer needs and expectations.

Out of the following, what do you think will be the biggest challenge for eCommerce in 2025? (Please select one answer)



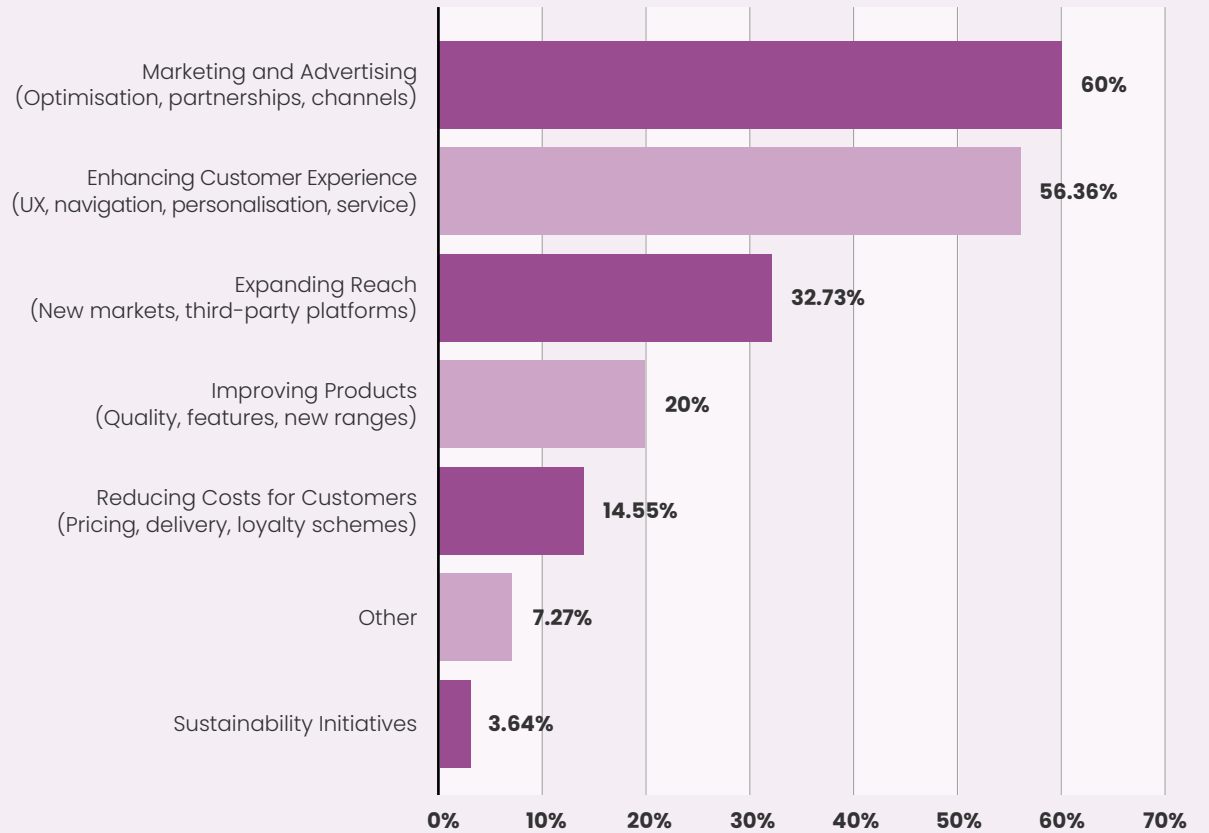
# Plans for growth

## Uncovering the top priorities to boost performance

In the face of rising pressure to boost growth amid anticipated difficulties in growing customer acquisition and retention rates, most retailers (60%) are prioritising 'marketing and advertising' to boost performance in 2025. We will see more retailers seek brand partnerships with complimentary rather than competitive brands and leaders, and we can expect more strategies around improving output across various marketing/advertising channels.

Not far behind are the number of retailers (56.36%) who will prioritise 'enhancing customer experience,' for example, looking at the user experience, site navigation, and the types of personalisation and services offered.

What are your top two priorities to boost performance in 2025?

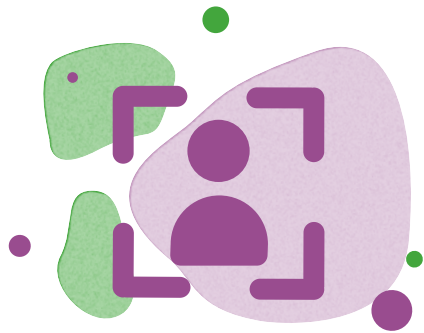




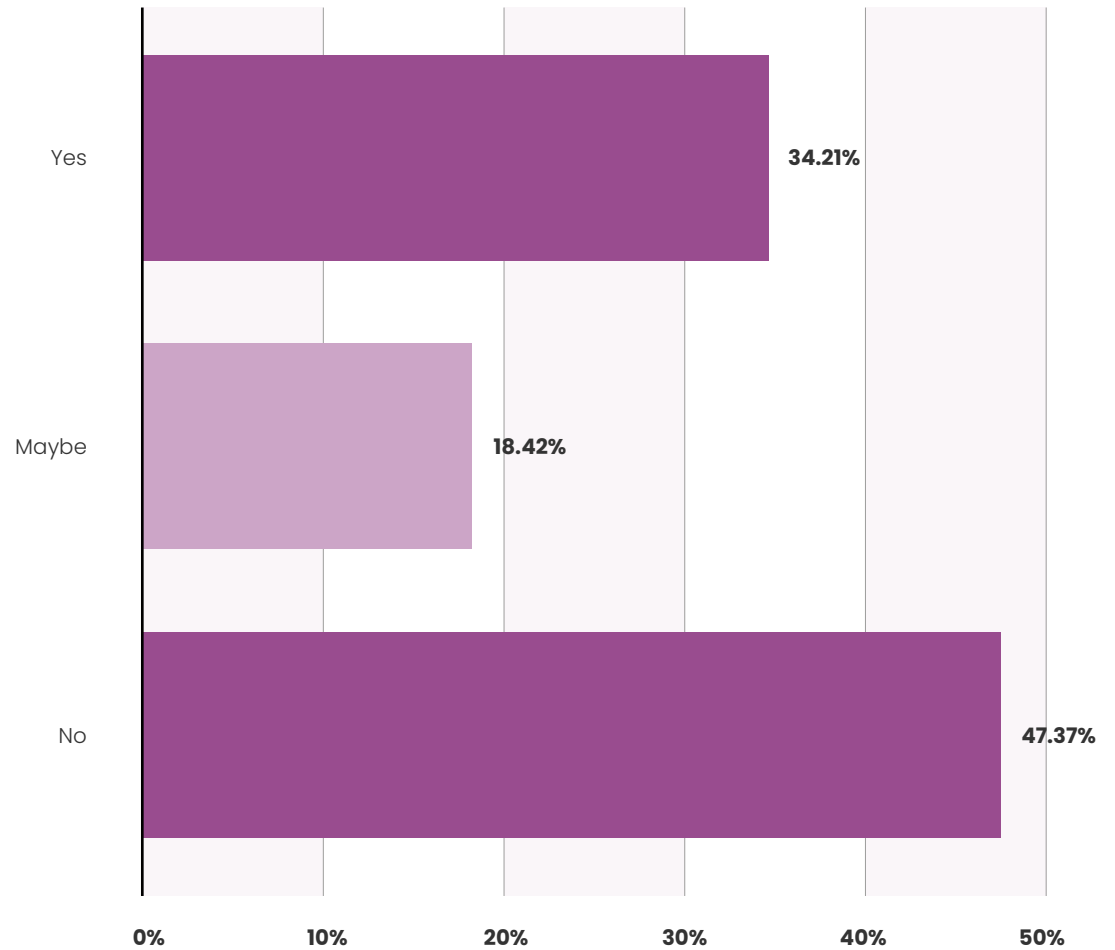
## The number of retailers embracing new markets

As seen in the previous chart, expanding reach is within the top 3 priorities for retailers. For many, this strategy will entail attracting and retaining customers within new markets.

Interestingly, over 34% of retailers said 'yes,' they do plan to enter new markets in 2025 and more than 18% said 'maybe,' revealing over 50% of retailers who are at the very least considering the idea.



Do you plan to enter any new markets in 2025?



# Website performance and capabilities

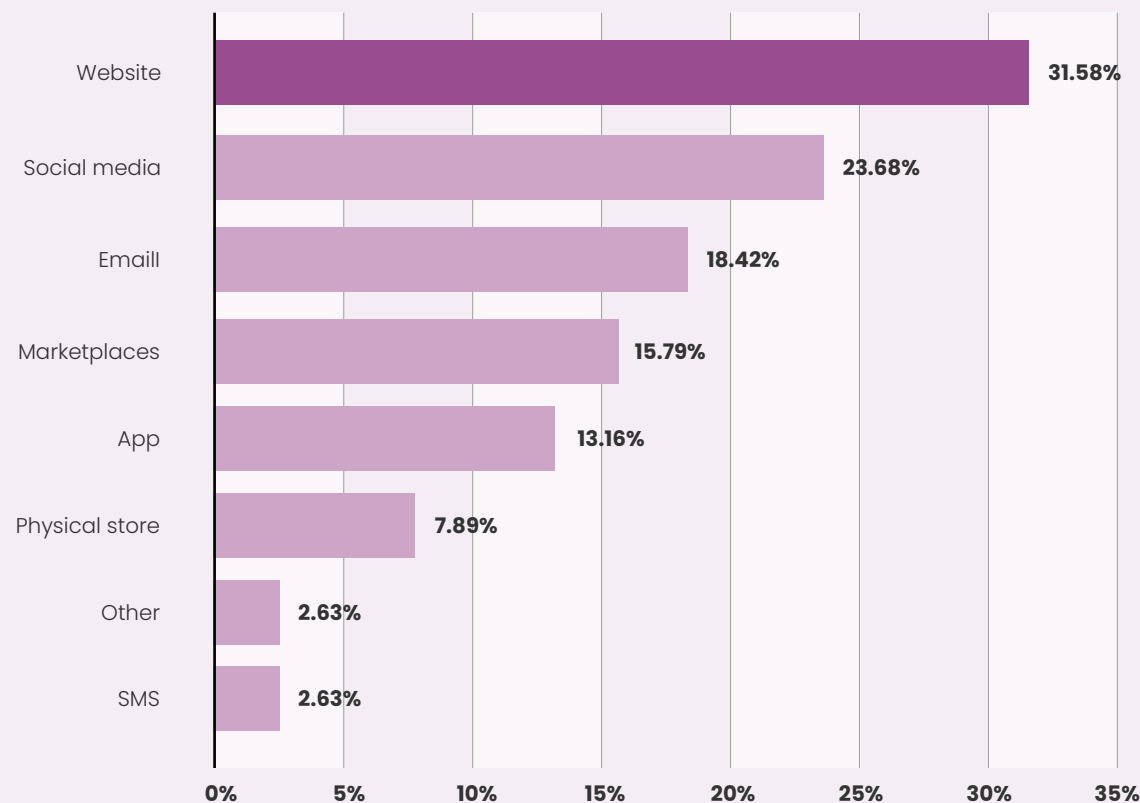
## The channels that are expected to drive growth

Looking at the channels that retailers expect to drive the most growth in 2025, 'website' came out on top (31.58%). This suggests that retailers may already be seeing higher demand or have greater confidence in this channel as their virtual storefront.

Given the growing popularity of social commerce, it is perhaps no wonder that 'social media' was the second most popular answer (23.68%) – even more popular than email (18.42%) or physical stores (7.89%)!

The channel that is least expected to drive growth for retailers is 'SMS' (2.63%).

Which channel do you expect will drive the most growth for your eCommerce business in 2025? (Multichoice)



## Improving the online checkout experience

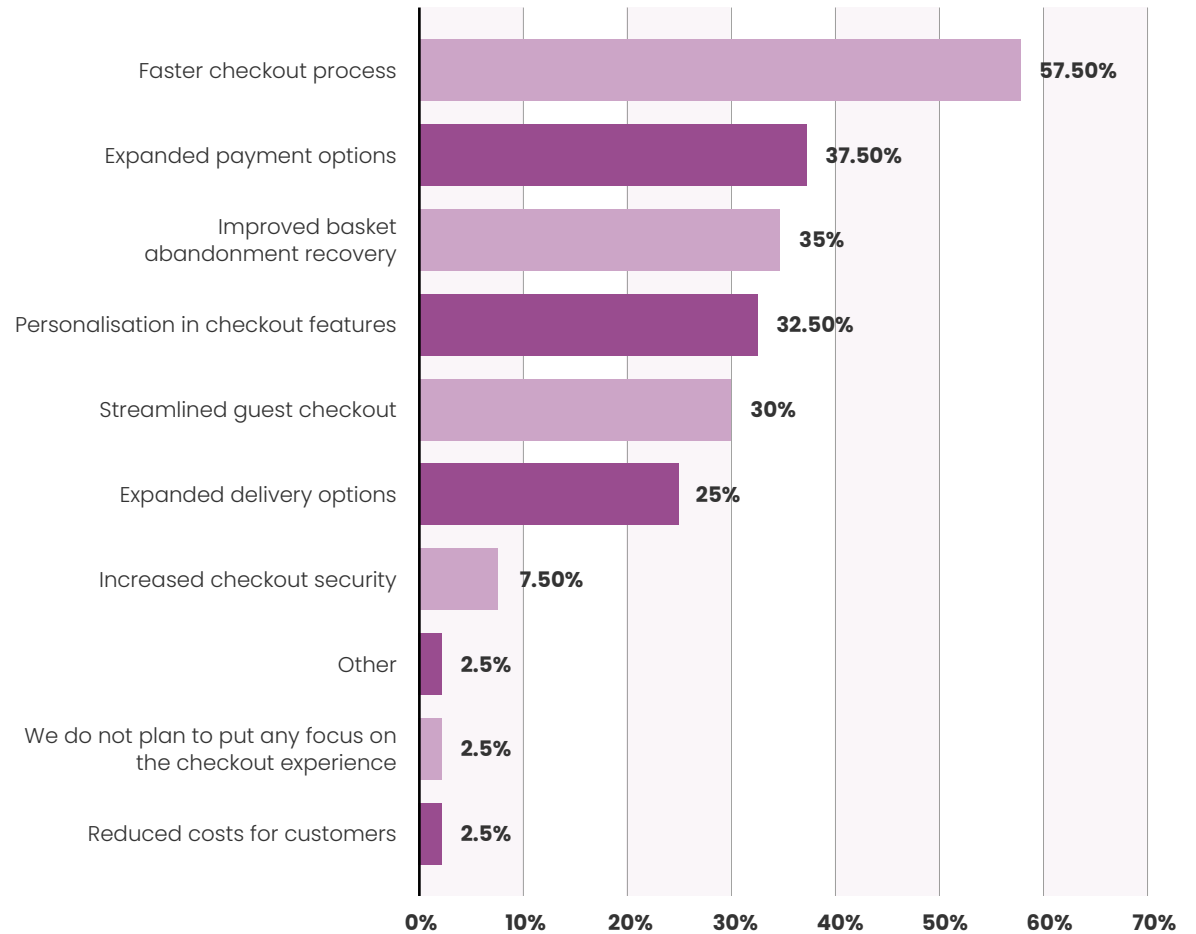
When considering the entire customer journey on eCommerce websites, one of the top areas to optimise is the checkout – when done well, checkout experiences can substantially increase conversion rates.

In 2025 retailers (57.5%) are planning to focus on a 'faster checkout process' the most. IMRG research\* has shown that the average seconds spent in the checkout (both single and multi-page checkouts) for customers who do convert is 154 seconds. The shorter the time it takes to complete steps at checkout means a shorter consideration period, reducing the likelihood for high checkout abandonment rates. This is why many customers choose single page checkouts, which have an average checkout duration of 125 seconds.

'Expanded payment options' is also high in focus for 37.5% of retailers, followed closely by 'improved basket abandonment recovery,' chosen by 35% of retailers – IMRG data reveals that the UK industry average basket abandonment rate sits around 60%.

*\*eCommerce checkouts: UK retailers reveal their checkout strategy and performance, IMRG and Ecommpay*

Thinking about the checkout experience, which of the following are you planning to focus on the most in 2025? (Please select up to three answers)



# Elevating social commerce content

## Why does social commerce matter?

When looking at the traffic split by marketing channel via smartphone devices, paid social represented 11.67% and organic social is 4.61% in Q3 2024 (IMRG GA4 Last Click Attribution data). This shows that social commerce matters and is a growing channel for marketers.

Also, though paid social and organic social only accounted for 7% of the marketing revenue split (an average taken from all devices), this data is based on a Last Click Attribution model and does not portray the full extent of social commerce's influence on customers' purchasing decisions. Social commerce has strong capacity to grow brand awareness, boost chances for viral products, and create a strong community.



## Optimising content > frequency

In 2025 we expect to see more retailers elevate their social media content, where all par 2 retailers surveyed plan to optimise it.

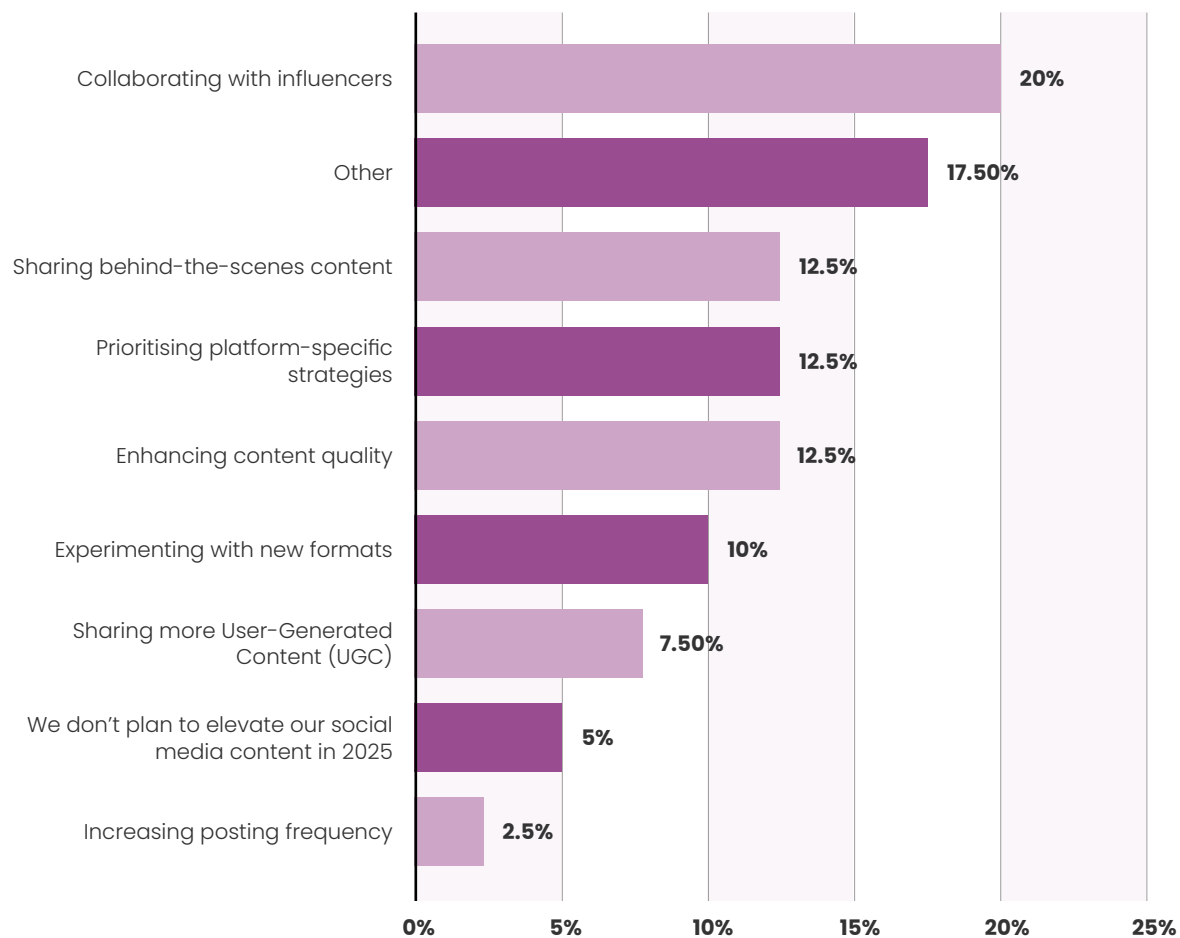
The number one strategy that retailers are prioritising is 'collaborating with influencers.' This indicates a strong recognition of the value influencers bring in amplifying brand visibility, engagement, and social proof.

Other focusses include 'Sharing behind the scenes content,' 'prioritising platform-specific strategies,' and 'enhancing content quality.' These are all equal in priority to retailers and emphasise the value of storytelling, customisation on platforms, and well-curated posts.

When prioritising platform-specific strategies, it is worth noting that young people tend to buy from Instagram (59%) and TikTok (62%), and not so much Facebook (26%) – that is according to Shopify research\*.

*\*Shopify Research: How British consumers are approaching peak season this year, 2024*

**What will you be focussing on the most to elevate your social media content in 2025? (Please select one answer)**



# Black Friday 2025

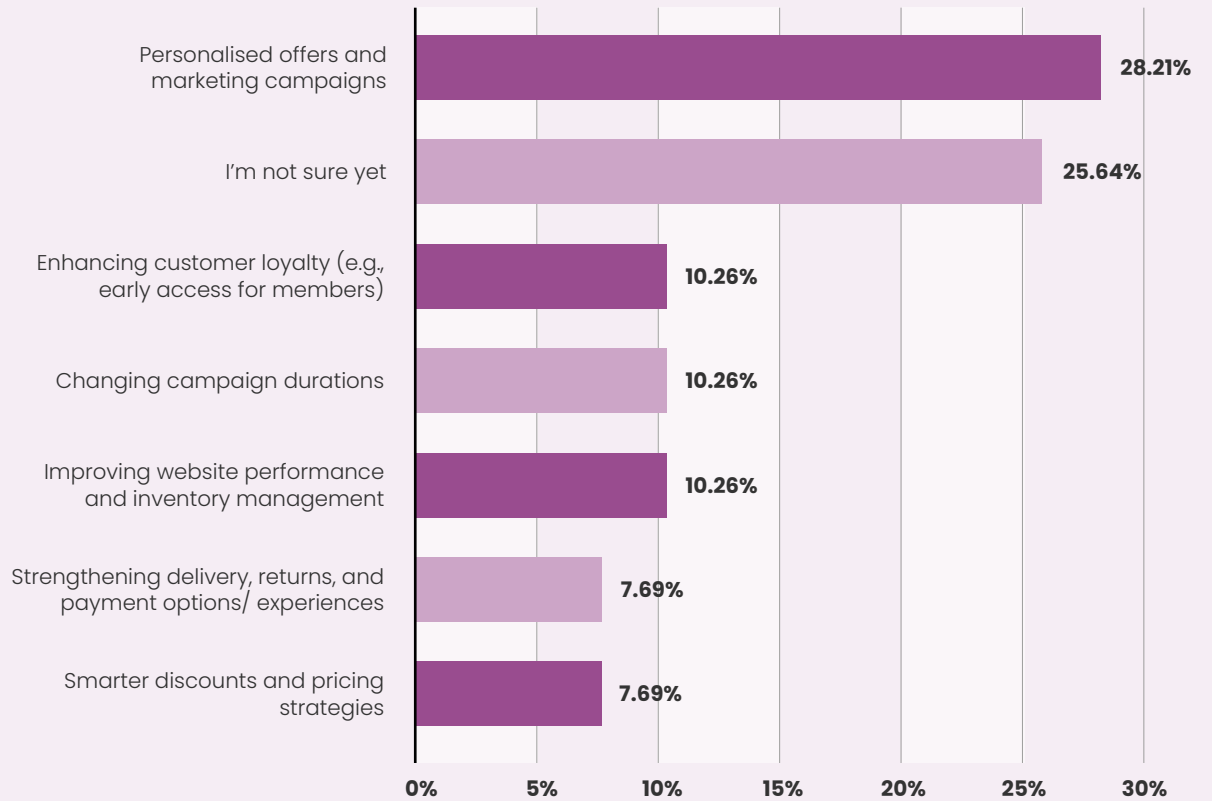
## The main focusses to improve performance

'Personalised offers and marketing campaigns' are the main focus to improve Black Friday performance in 2025. Personalisation proves to be top of mind for retailers – beyond marketing campaigns, a significant portion of retailers noted that they plan to implement personalisation at the checkout.

Shopify research\* tells us that 57% of customers prioritise a personal shopping experience, and 36% expect AI to improve online and in-store experiences. A significant 79% of customers aged 24-34 look for buying suggestions.

One issue with personalisation, noted by other Shopify's research\*, is that on average marketers use between 7 and 10 different technologies to execute personalisation strategies. This may mean that personalisation efforts may not always be executed seamlessly, especially during busy sale periods, leading to negative customer experiences. Shopify have shown the value in prioritising first-party, real-time data that retailers can keep on top of.

**What will be your main focus to improve Black Friday performance in 2025? (Please select one answer)**



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The second most popular response to this survey question was 'I'm not sure yet' (25.64%), revealing that retailers are still taking the time to digest their performance and learn about the opportunities ahead. Retailers can compare their figures to industry averages to gain an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses but also look at their historic Black Friday data to understand the trend lines and see what areas of the business require more attention.

A few retailers noted that they intend to change their Black Friday campaign duration. IMRG's Black Friday tracker revealed that in 2024 63% of retailers extended their campaign, with an average increase of 6+ days. Historic data has shown that longer campaigns tend to correlate with increased revenue. When retailers adapt their campaign length (shorter or longer) it generally doesn't change by more than one week.

*\*Shopify Research: How British consumers are approaching peak season this year, 2024*

*\*Shopify Whitepaper: The Future of Personalisation and Security in Ecommerce*





## Conclusion

To conclude, over 70% of retailers feel more positive about customer demand in 2025 and are seeking ways to improve on performance metrics such as revenue and traffic, and more widely, customer engagement. Below you will find IMRG's top 5 takeaways from this research, as well as Shopify's 5 tips for steps ahead.





### IMRG's 5 key takeaways:

1

**The current market signals positive change:** IMRG's Online Retail Index data has shown that eCommerce has experienced consecutive months of growth since September 2024, which is the first time this has happened since 2021. Things are looking more positive!

2

**Customer acquisition and retention challenges:** Though retailers expect greater customer demand in 2025, they simultaneously believe the top challenge will be customer acquisition and retention.

3

**Loyalty comes through a variety of means:** There are numerous approaches to retain customers and grow this year, with the top two focus areas being marketing and advertising (60%) and enhancing the customer experience (56.36%).

4

**Website champions all:** The top channel that is expected to drive growth in 2025 is eCommerce websites – though a lot of faith is also held in social media (confidence for this channel even outperforms email!). The quality of content shared is also more of a focus than the frequency of posts.

5

**Personalisation is top of mind:** Personalisation seems to be a key strategy for retailers this year, with new technologies enabling curated shopping experiences. For Black Friday 2025, personalised marketing and advertising is a top priority.

## Shopify's 5 tips for steps ahead:

1

**Focus on profitability by optimising customer acquisition:** With customer acquisition and retention one of the biggest challenges for 2025, retailers need to make the absolute most of their marketing spend. Shifting focus to first-party data, refining audience targeting, and leveraging AI-driven insights can help reach the right customers more efficiently. Tools that improve customer segmentation and campaign measurement will be key to lowering acquisition costs while increasing long-term customer value.

2

**Improve website performance for higher conversions:** With online sales continuing to be a primary driver of growth in 2025, outstanding site performance remains a crucial priority. Fast load times, intuitive navigation, and a seamless mobile experience can significantly impact conversion rates. With more consumers expecting smooth cross-channel experiences, investing in a well-integrated commerce platform that supports omnichannel shopping will be essential.

3

**Streamline checkout to reduce abandonment:** A long or complicated checkout process is one of the biggest conversion killers. In 2025, retailers should be focusing on reducing friction at checkout—whether that's by speeding up transaction times, offering a range of payment methods, or simplifying the checkout flow. Single-page checkouts and one-click payment options can make a significant difference in lowering abandonment rates.

4

**Expand into new markets strategically:** With expansion into new markets becoming a reality for a significant proportion of retailers, a thoughtful approach to international growth is critical. Localised shopping experiences, multiple currency and payment options, and region-specific marketing strategies can help brands succeed in new territories. Understanding regional shopping behaviours and ensuring back-end systems are set up for cross-border commerce will help businesses scale more effectively.

5

**Leverage data to drive smarter growth:** Growth in 2025 won't just come from more traffic—it will come from better insights. Real-time analytics help retailers understand customer behavior, optimise marketing spend, and improve operations. Businesses that actively track performance across channels, test new strategies, and use data-driven decision-making will be in the best position to scale efficiently.

Want to take these strategies further? Learn how to optimise your website, checkout, and drive data-driven growth in [Shopify's eCommerce Growth Guide](#).



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