



2025 Digital Marketing & Customer Experience Survey Report



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Introduction

2122

Participants Have
Entered the 2025 Digital
Marketing & Customer
Experience Survey

76%

Participants were
Female

4th

Edition of the Digital
Marketing &
Customer Experience
Report

Social Places is proud to present the fourth edition of its Digital Marketing and Customer Experience Report, offering fresh insights from over **2000 marketing decision-makers** from **3 different parts of the world.**

Get ready to dive in.



South Africa



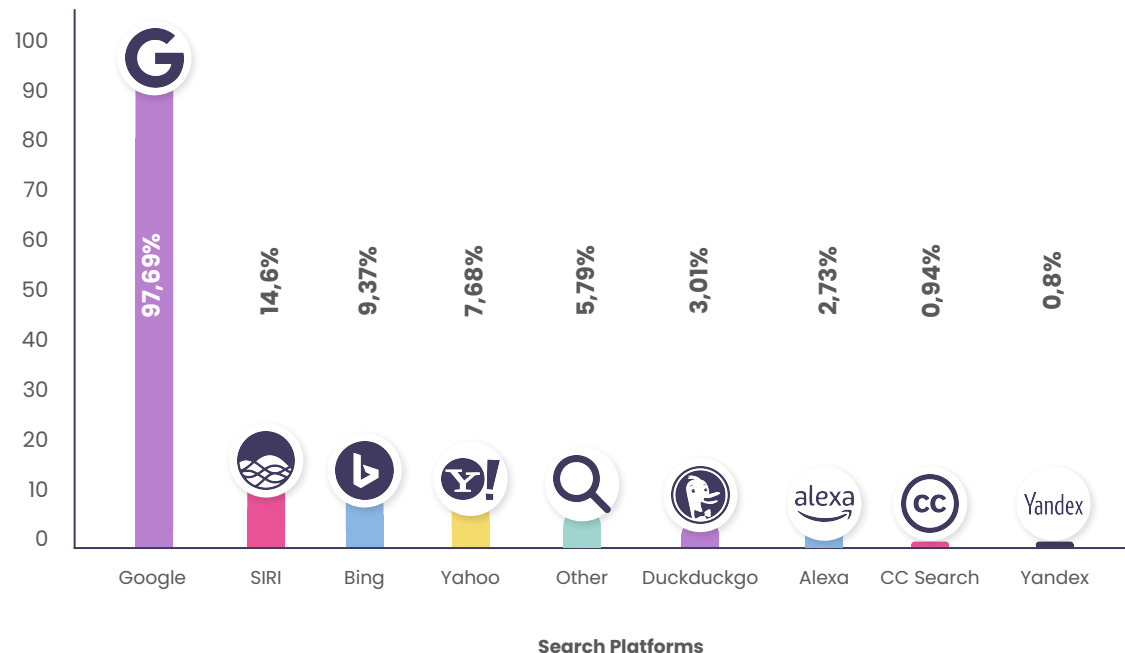
USA



Australia

97,69% of Customers preferred Google as their search method.

Multiple fields selected



Summary

In 2025, **Google** continues to dominate as the preferred search method, capturing 97.69% of customer preferences.

SIRI has gained traction with **14.6%**, reflecting the growing use of voice search.

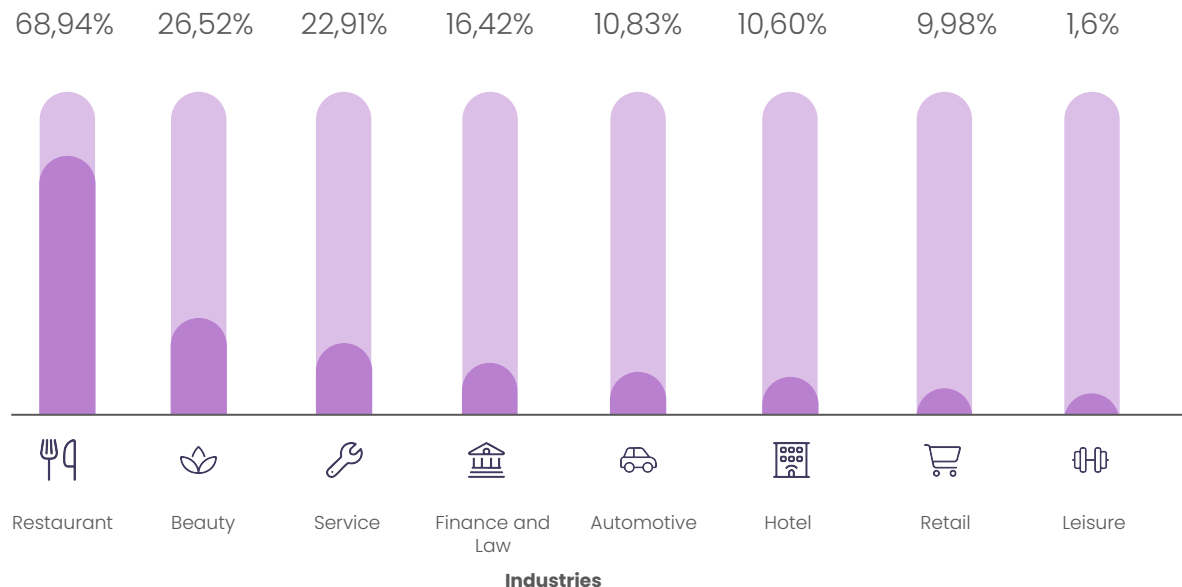
Bing (9.37%) and **Yahoo** (7.68%) maintain steady user bases, while alternative search engines like **DuckDuckGo** (3.01%) and **CC Search** (0.94%) cater to niche audiences.

Alexa usage remains low at **2.73%**, and **Yandex** holds a minimal share at **0.8%**.

The data highlights **Google's** continued supremacy, the rise of voice-assisted searches, and a diversified but limited presence of alternative search platforms.

68,94% of Customers regularly search for Restaurants.

Multiple fields selected



Summary

When searching for businesses online, **restaurants** dominate as the top choice, with 68.94% of respondents looking them up.

Hotels (10.60%) and **electricians** (13.29%) also rank high, followed by **car services** (8.48%), **retail** (8.71%), and **hair services** (7.82%).

Other commonly searched businesses include **attorneys** (6.03%), **medical services** (4.52%), and **accountants** (3.3%).

In contrast, industries like **insurance** (0.32%), **petrol stations** (0.75%), and **pest control** (1.2%) see the least online searches.

Service Industry Stats Breakdown

Multiple fields selected



Restaurant

Restaurant - 68%



Hotel

Hotel - 10,60%



Retail

Retail - 8,71%;
Grocery Store - 1,27%



Leisure

Fitness - 1,6%



Spa

Spa - 2,07%; Hair - 7,82%;
Beauty - 16,63%;



Automotive

Automotive - 1,6%; Petrol
stations - 0,75%; Car
services - 8,48%;



Finance & Law

Banking - 1,55%;
Accountants - 3,3%; Estate
Agents - 3,29%; Insurance -
0,32%; Attorneys - 6,03%;
Finance - 1,93%



Service

Medical - 4,52%; Pest
Control - 1,2%; Plumbing -
1,17%; Childcare Services -
3,29%; Pool Services - 7,11%;
Gardening - 1,93%;
Electrician - 3,29%

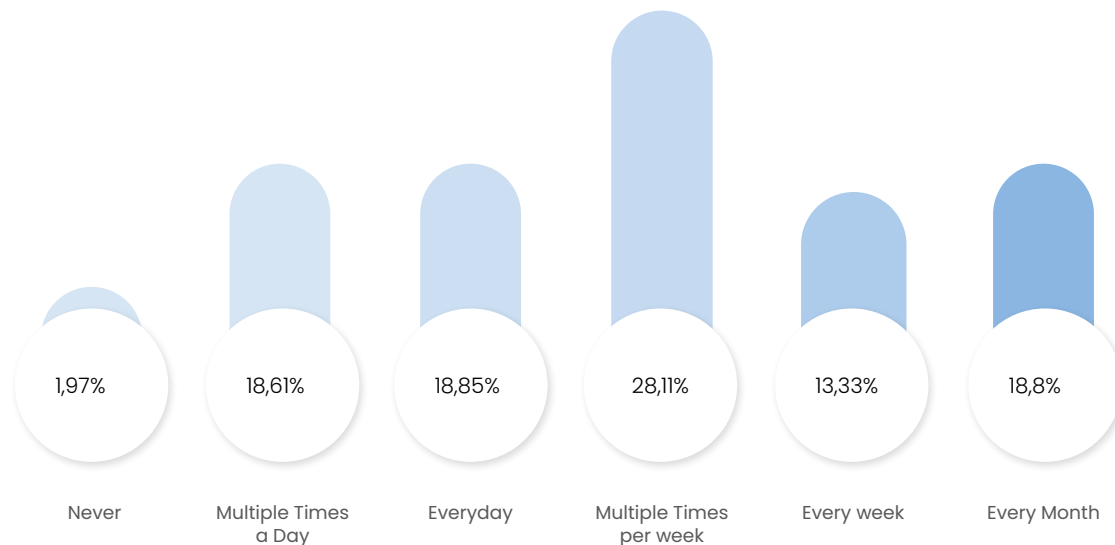
Summary

Restaurants dominate online searches because they are a frequent and essential part of daily life, with people constantly looking for new dining options, menus, reviews, and locations.

The rise of food delivery services and reservations further fuels online searches, as customers seek convenience and real-time availability. Unlike other industries, restaurants often require immediate decisions, making online visibility crucial for attracting customers.

Additionally, the highly competitive nature of the food industry drives businesses to maintain a strong digital presence through websites, social media, and review platforms, further increasing search volume in this category.

37,46% of Customers search for a local business daily.



Summary

Online searches for local businesses are a regular habit for most people, with **28.41% searching multiple times per week** and **18.61% doing so multiple times a day**.

Additionally, **18.85% search daily**, while **18.8% conduct searches monthly**.

Weekly searches account for 13.33%, showing that local business discovery is an ongoing need.

Notably, **only 1.97% of respondents reported never searching for a local business online**, highlighting the internet's crucial role in connecting consumers with businesses in their area.

91,32% of Customers preferred navigational app was Google Maps.

Select Multiple



Google Maps

91,32%



Waze

16,54%



Store Locator

12,91%



Apple Maps

10,6%



Garmin

4,05%



Car/ SatNav

2,12%



TomTom

2,02%

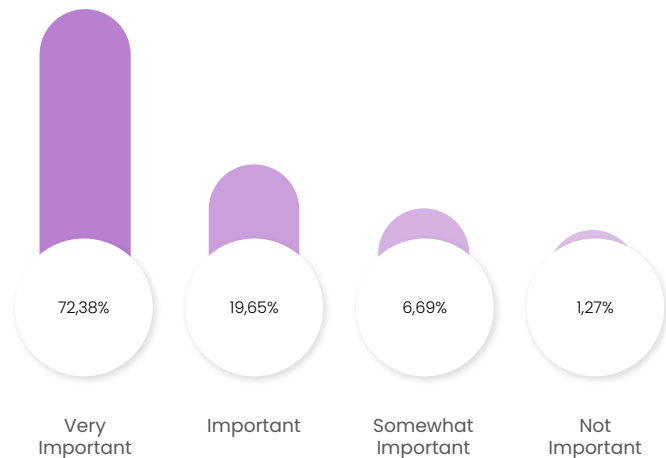
Summary

Google Maps is the overwhelming favorite for navigation, with **91.32%** of users relying on it for directions and local searches.

Waze follows at **16.54%**, popular for its real-time traffic updates, while **Apple Maps** holds a smaller share at **10.6%**.

Store locators (12.91%) also play a role in guiding shoppers, while traditional GPS devices like **Garmin (4.05%)**, **TomTom (2.02%)**, and **in-car navigation systems (2.12%)** see significantly lower usage, reflecting the dominance of mobile-based navigation solutions.

92,55% of Customers see a store locator as an important addition to a brand website.



Finding a store locator on a brand's website is highly valued by consumers, with **72.38% considering it very important** and **19.65% rating it as important**.

Only a small percentage (**6.69%**) find it **somewhat important**, while just **1.27% deem it unnecessary**.

This highlights the need for brands to provide easy-to-access location information, as customers rely on it for convenience, directions, and planning their visits.

92,55% of Customers would rather interact with a brand that has a store locator.

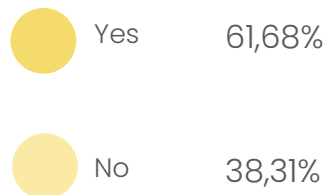
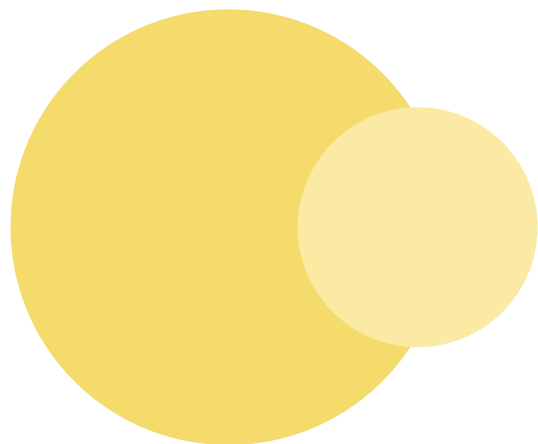


The **majority of consumers (92.55%) prefer interacting with brands that offer a up to date store locator**, demonstrating the high demand for easy access to correct location information.

A store locator enhances convenience and helps customers quickly find nearby stores, making it a valuable tool for brands looking to improve customer experience.

Only **7.44% of users do not prioritize this feature**, indicating that providing a store locator is an essential service for most consumers.

61,68% of Customers suggest Google Business Profile changes, to correct business listings information.



Summary

The majority of users (**61.68%**) **actively contribute to keeping business listings accurate** by suggesting updates such as operating hours, categories, and location pins on platforms like Facebook and Google Maps.

This engagement highlights the importance of up-to-date online information for both businesses and consumers.

However, **38.31% do not participate in making these changes**, emphasizing the need for businesses to proactively manage their own listings to ensure accuracy and accessibility.

71,58% of Customers utilize Google Maps to get updated information on a business

Multiple fields selected



Google

71,58%



Business
Website

47,26%



Facebook

34,16%



Other
Directories

4,24%

Summary

Google is considered the most reliable source for up-to-date business information, with **71.58%** of users trusting it for the latest details.

Business websites come second at 47.26%, as they provide direct information but may not always be as frequently updated.

Facebook holds a smaller share at 34.16%, while other directories account for just 4.24%. This highlights Google's dominant role in ensuring consumers have access to accurate, current business data.

75,07% of Customers preferred making an online booking vs telephone or other sources.



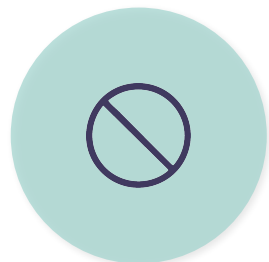
Online

75,07%



Telephone

21,63%



Not
Applicable

1,69%



Other

1,13%

Summary

The preferred method for making bookings or reservations is online, with **75.07%** of users opting for the convenience and ease of digital platforms.

Telephone reservations are the second choice, at 21.63%, while a small percentage (1.69%) find the option not applicable. Only 1.13% prefer other methods, further emphasizing the growing trend of online booking as the most efficient and preferred way to secure reservations.

97,12% of Customers read online reviews for businesses.



A vast majority of consumers (97.12%) regularly read online reviews before engaging with a business, highlighting the importance of customer feedback in decision-making.

These reviews provide valuable insights into the quality and reliability of a business, influencing potential customers. **Only a small percentage (2.87%) do not read reviews**, suggesting that online reputation plays a critical role in shaping consumer trust and purchasing decisions.

93,26% of Customers read local business responses to customers reviews.

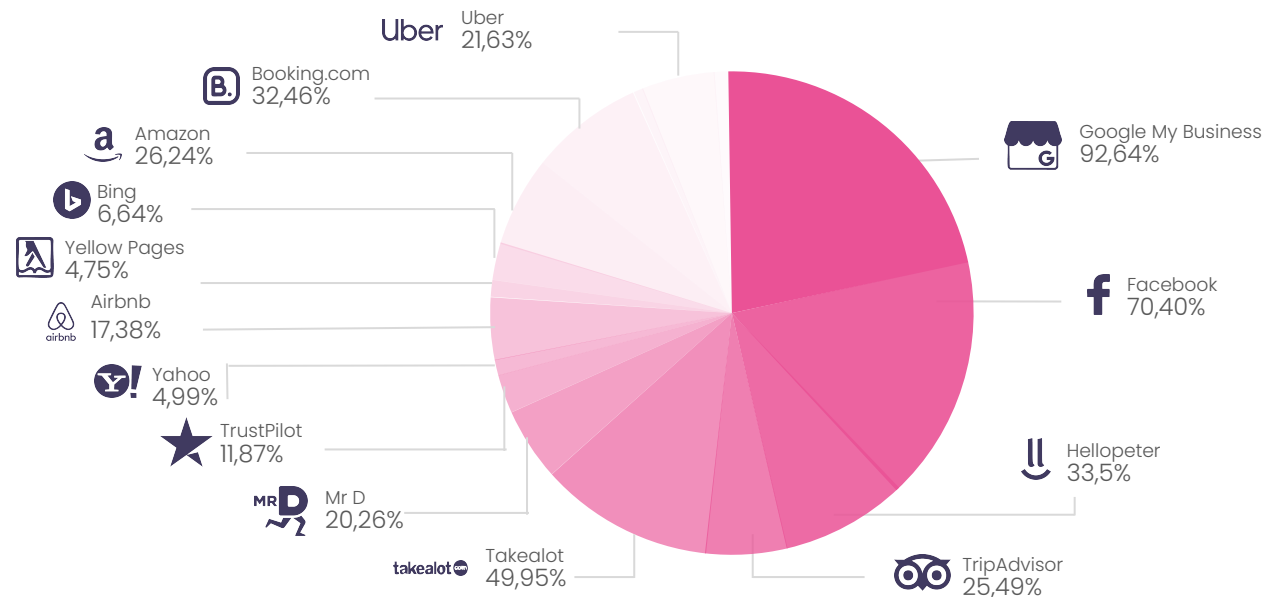


A significant 93.26% of consumers pay attention to a business's responses to customer reviews when searching for local businesses, indicating that how a company engages with feedback is highly valued.

These responses can demonstrate a brand's commitment to customer service, transparency, and willingness to address concerns. **Only 6.73% of users do not consider a business's responses**, underscoring the importance of maintaining an active and positive dialogue with customers online.

92,64% of Customers preferred platform to read online reviews is Google My Business.

Multiple fields selected



Top 5 platforms

Google My Business
92,64%

Facebook
70,40%

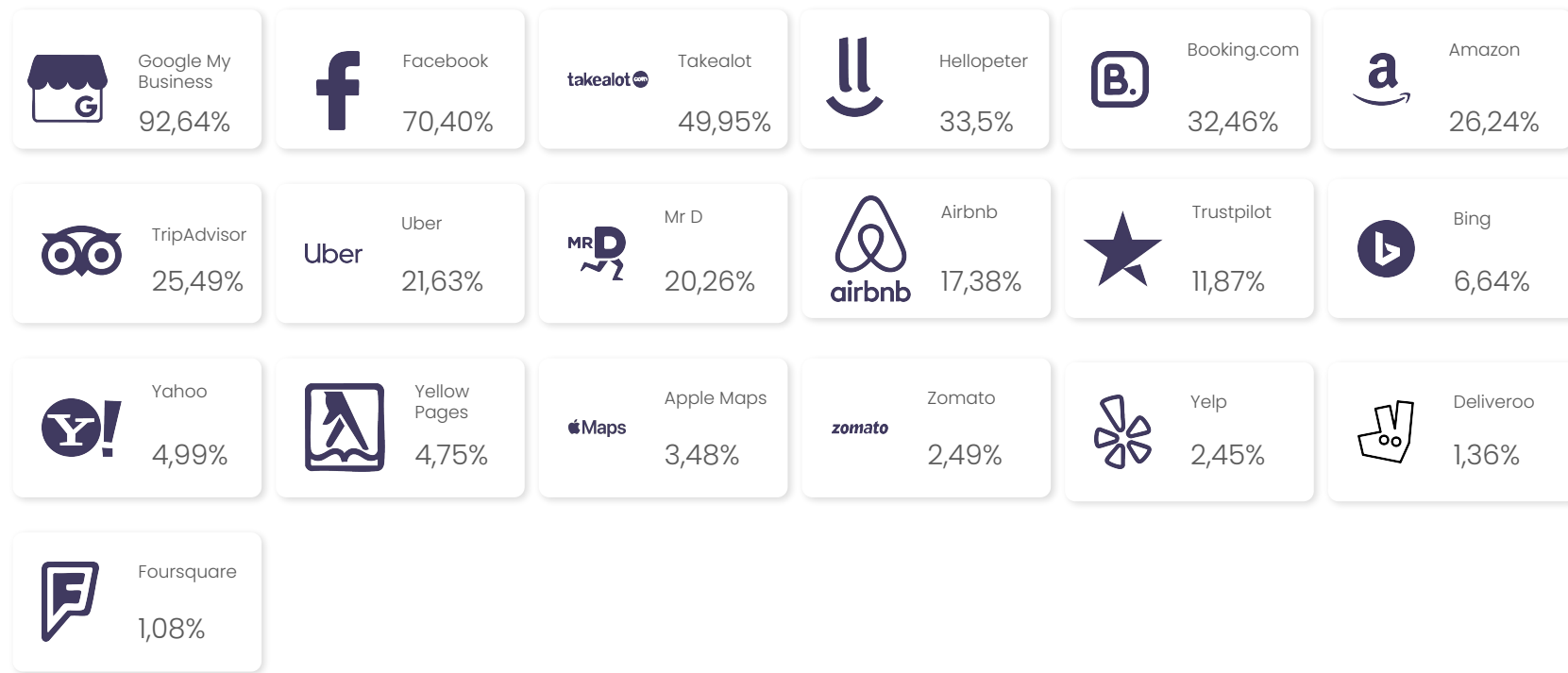
Takealot
49,95%

Helopeter
33,5%

Booking.com
32,46%

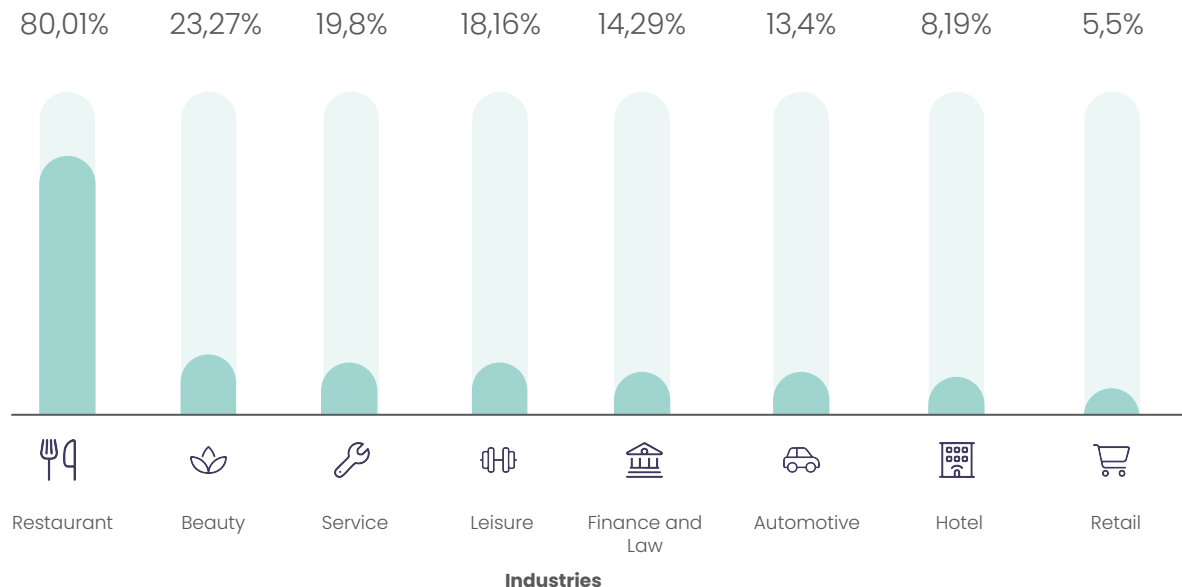
92,64% of Customers preferred platform to read online reviews is Google My Business.

Multiple fields selected



80,01% of Customers prefer to read reviews for restaurants.

Multiple fields selected



Summary

Restaurants are by far the most common business for which consumers read online reviews, with **80.01%** of respondents seeking feedback before making a decision.

Other industries with notable review activity include **beauty services (23.27%)**, **leisure businesses (18.16%)**, and the **service industry (19.8%)**. **Automotive (13.4%)** and **finance and law (14.29%)** also see considerable review engagement, while **hotels (8.19%)** and **retail (5.5%)** attract less attention in comparison.

This highlights the significant role that reviews play, especially in sectors where consumer experiences can directly impact satisfaction and decision-making.

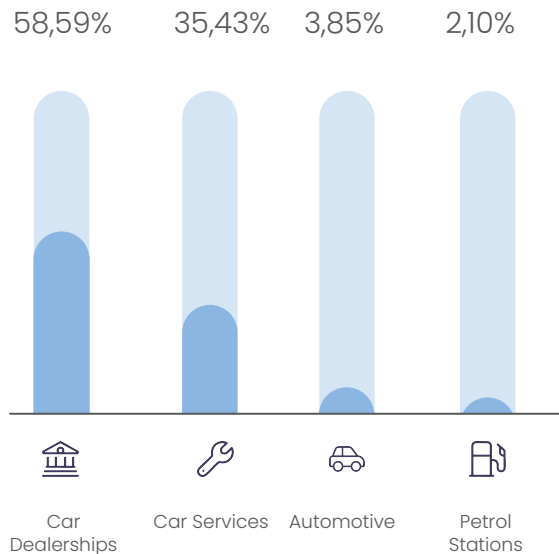


Service Industry
Stats Breakdown

Automotive Industry Breakdown



Further Investigated from the Overall Survey



Summary

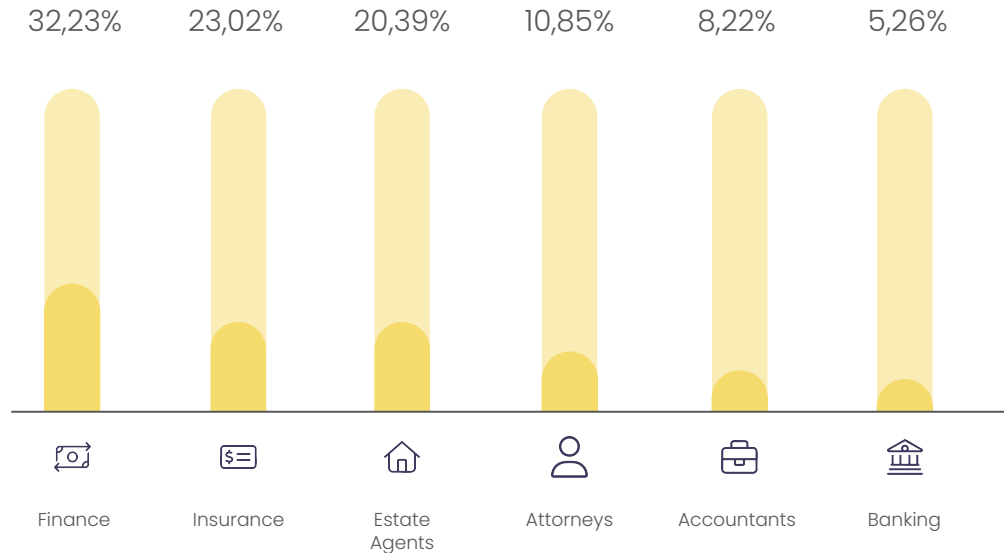
At first glance, the initial figures—**Automotive at 0.51%**, **Petrol Stations at 0.28%**, **Car Service at 4.75%**, and **Car Dealerships at 7.86%**—suggested minimal traction in the 2025 Digital Marketing and Customer Experience Survey, potentially signaling a low-priority audience.

However, **when isolated and analyzed as a standalone category**, the drastic increases—**Automotive climbing to 3.85%**, **Petrol Stations to 2.10%**, **Car Service to 35.43%**, and **Car Dealerships to an impressive 58.59%**—highlight a highly engaged and receptive market.

This demonstrates the importance of niche targeting, as broader data may dilute the real potential of specific industries. For marketers, this reinforces the value of tailored strategies and messaging, showing that with the right focus, even seemingly small segments can unlock significant returns and become key drivers of campaign performance.

Finance and Law Industry Breakdown

Further Investigated from the Overall Survey



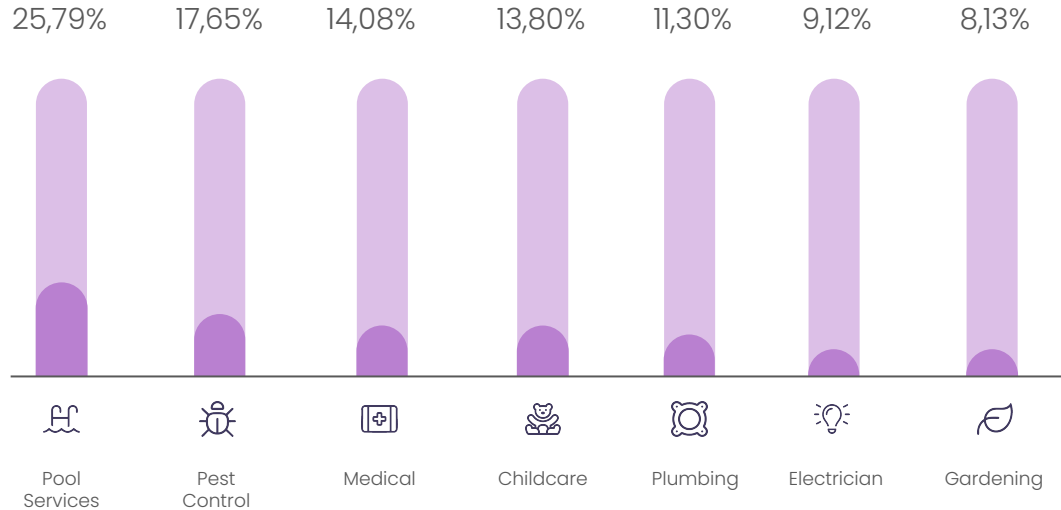
Summary

The Finance and Law industry initially presented modest engagement, with **Accountants at 1.17%, Banking at 0.75%, Estate Agents at 2.92%, Insurance at 3.29%, Attorneys at 1.55%, and Finance at 4.61%**. At face value, these figures may have suggested limited potential within this sector.

However, when examined in isolation, the numbers tell a very different story—**Accountants** rose to 8.22%, **Banking** to 5.26%, **Estate Agents** to 20.39%, **Insurance** to 23.02%, **Attorneys** to 10.85%, and Finance to an impressive 32.23%.

Service Industry Breakdown

Further Investigated from the Overall Survey



Summary

The Service industry initially reflected moderate engagement, with Medical at 3.34%, Childcare at 3.29%, Pest Control at 4.19%, Plumbing at 2.68%, Pool Services at 6.12%, Electricians at 2.16%, and Gardening at 1.93%.

On the surface, these figures might appear steady but unremarkable. However, when analyzed as a focused category, the growth is substantial—Medical increased to 14.08%, Childcare to 13.80%, Pest Control to 17.56%, Plumbing to 11.30%, Pool Services to an impressive 24.79%, Electricians to 9.12%, and Gardening to 8.13%.

75,07% of Customers visit the business' website, while 21,63% visit the business after reading reviews.

Multiple fields selected



Visit the
website

75,07%



Visit the
business

21,63%



Look for more
reviews

21,63%



Contact
business

1,69%



Continue
Looking for
other business

1,13%

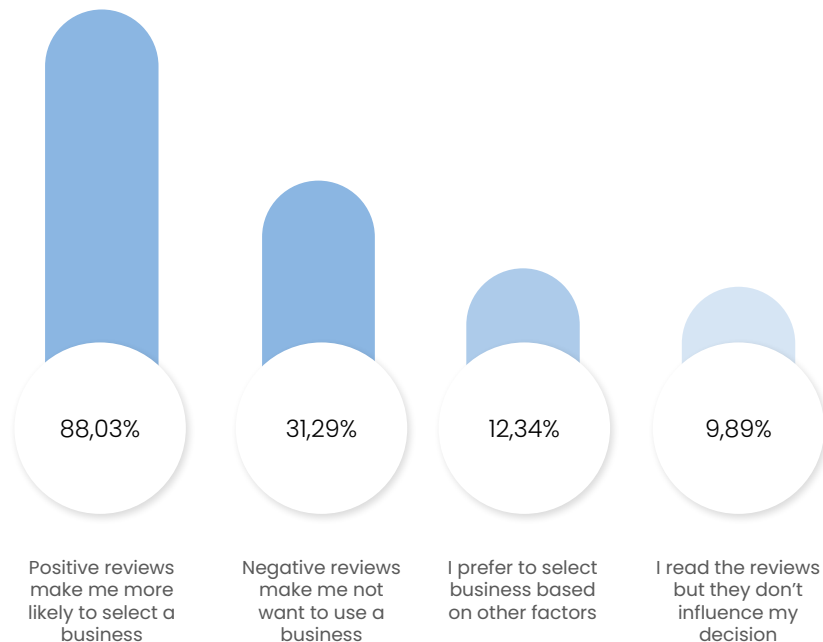
Summary

After reading a positive review, the majority of consumers take action by visiting the **business's website (67.71%)** or looking for additional reviews to further validate their choice (47.17%).

A notable portion (34.02%) will visit the business in person, while **23.46% may contact the business directly** for more information. However, a small percentage (10.55%) continue searching for other businesses, indicating that a positive review can significantly influence the decision-making process but might not always be the final step.

88,03% of Customers say that positive online reviews make them more likely to select a business.

Multiple fields selected



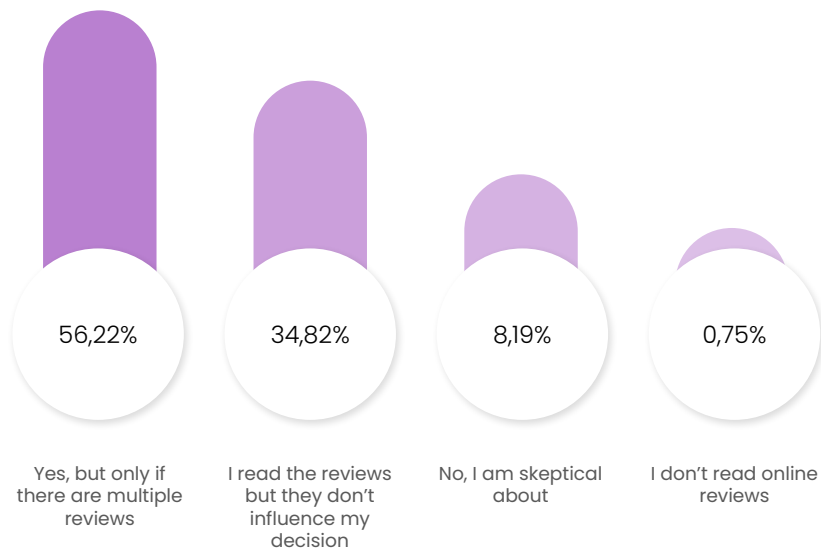
Summary

Online reviews play a significant role in influencing consumer decisions, with **88.03% of respondents more likely to choose a business after reading positive reviews.**

While **9.89% read reviews without letting them influence their choice**, 12.34% prefer to rely on other factors when selecting a business.

Negative reviews also have a strong impact, as **31.29% of consumers are discouraged from using a business based on poor feedback**, highlighting the crucial role that online reputation plays in attracting and retaining customers.

56,22% of Customers said they trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation if there are multiple reviews.



Summary

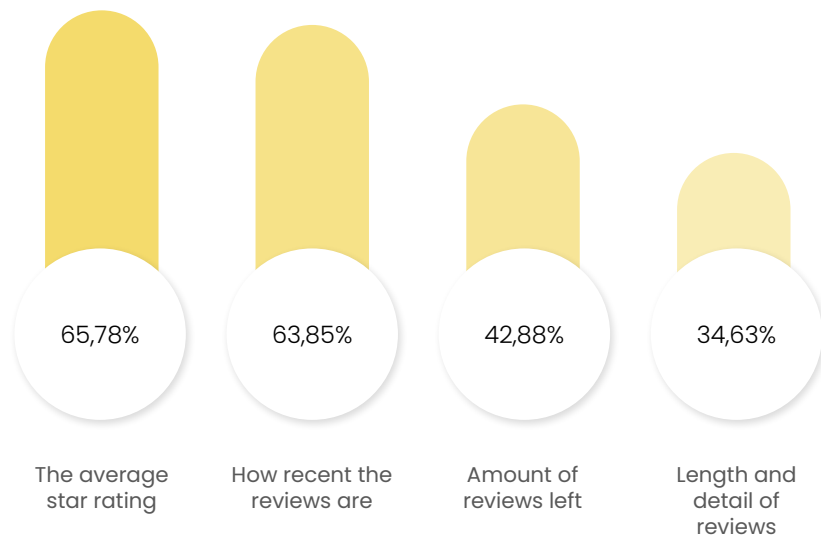
A majority of consumers (**56.22%**) **trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations**, but only if there are multiple reviews to provide a broader perspective.

For **34.82%**, **reading reviews is part of their decision-making process**, but they aren't heavily influenced by them.

A small percentage (**8.19%**) **remain skeptical about online reviews**, while just 0.75% do not read them at all. This suggests that while online reviews are a trusted source of information, their impact depends on the volume and perceived credibility of the feedback.

65,78% of Customers said the star rating is the most important factor when judging a local business.

Multiple fields selected



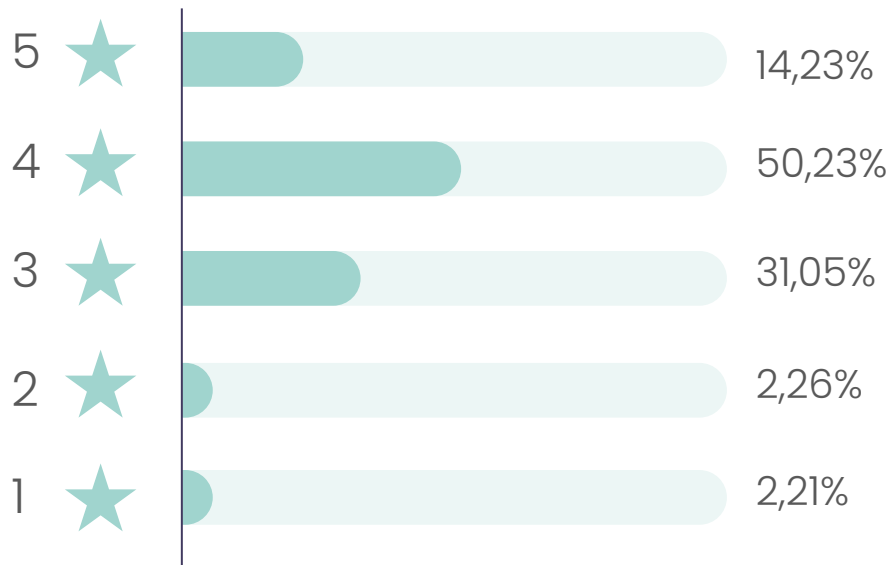
Summary

When judging a local business based on reviews, **the majority of consumers focus on the average star rating (65.78%)** and how recent the reviews are (63.85%), as these factors give them a quick sense of the business's overall reputation and current performance.

The amount of reviews left (42.88%) also plays a role, with more reviews providing a more reliable picture of the business.

Additionally, **34.63% of consumers value the length and detail of reviews**, as these can provide deeper insights into the customer experience and service quality.

64,46% of Customers prefer a minimum star rating of 4/5 stars.



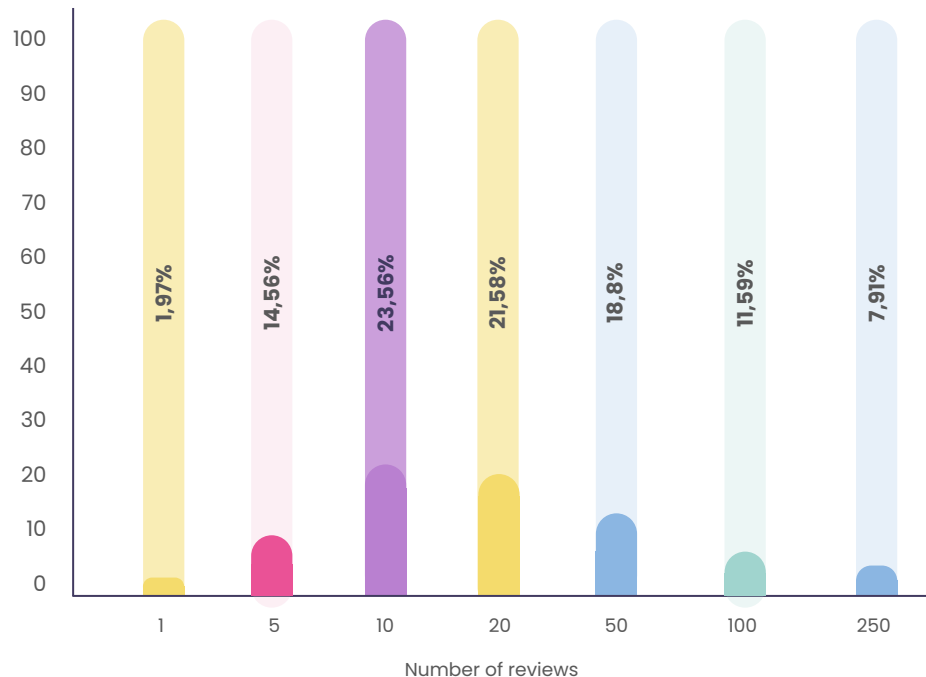
Summary

For most consumers, a business must have a minimum rating of **4/5 stars (50.23%)** to be considered trustworthy and worth using.

A significant portion (**31.05%**) is still willing to consider businesses with a **3/5 star rating**, while a smaller group (**14.23%**) prefers businesses with a perfect **5/5 rating**.

Only a very small percentage would use a business with a **2/5 (2.26%)** or **1/5 star rating (2.21%)**, highlighting that while some flexibility exists, most consumers expect a strong positive reputation before making a decision.

38,29% of Customers prefer 50 reviews or more, before they believe its average star ratings.



Summary

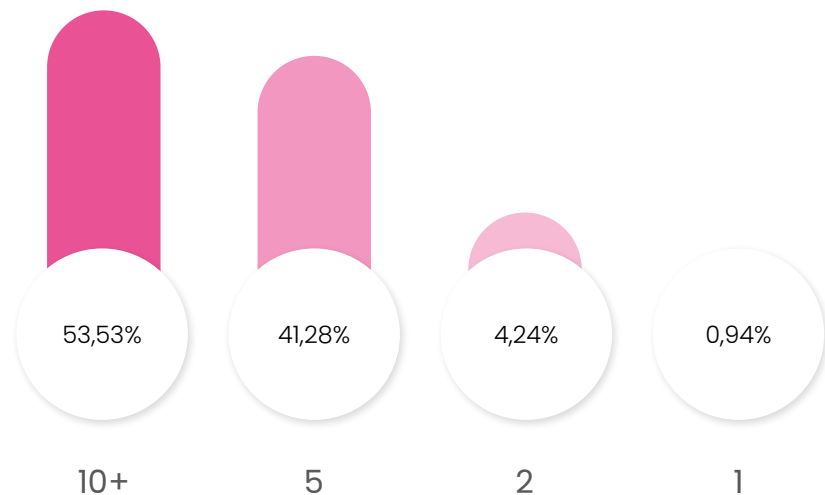
The majority of consumers believe a business's average star rating is reliable after it has accumulated at least **10 reviews, with 23.56%** citing this as the threshold.

Many feel more confident with **20 reviews (21.58%)** or 50 reviews (18.8%), while **14.56%** trust businesses with just 5 reviews.

Fewer consumers rely on ratings from businesses with **100 (11.59%)** or **250 reviews (7.91%)**, and only a small percentage (**1.97%**) would trust a business with just a single review.

This shows that while a few reviews are helpful, a larger volume is generally needed to ensure credibility.

94,81% of Customers prefer to read more than 5 reviews before considering a business trustworthy.



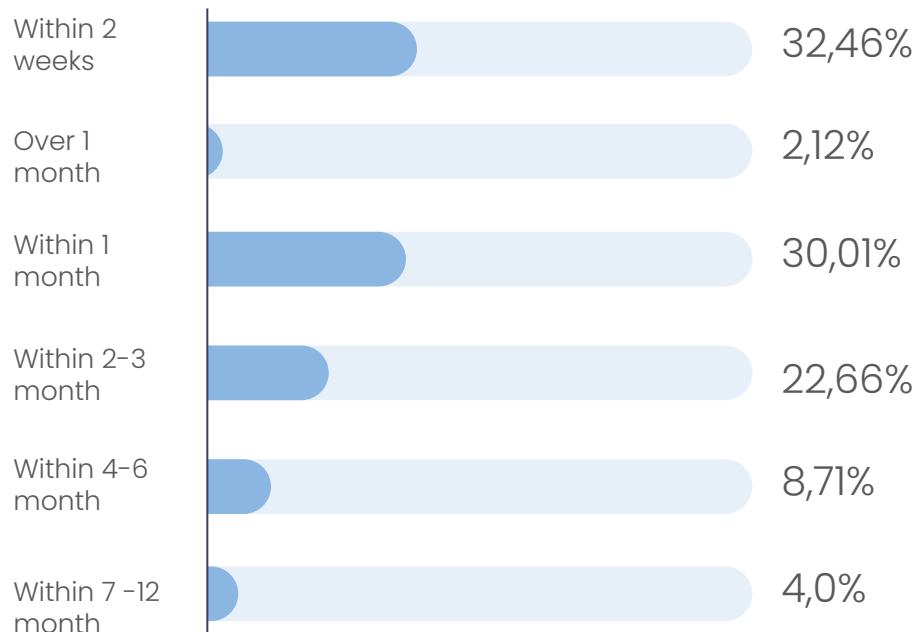
Summary

To consider a business trustworthy, most consumers (**53.53%**) **prefer to read at least 10 reviews**, ensuring a broader and more reliable perspective.

A significant portion (**41.28%**) **finds 5 reviews sufficient to make a judgment**, while only a small percentage (**4.24%**) **would consider a business trustworthy with just 2 reviews**.

A minimal **0.94%** **would trust a business after reading only 1 review**, highlighting the importance of multiple customer experiences to establish credibility.

62% of Customers prefer a review to be written within the past 1 month to impact their decision.



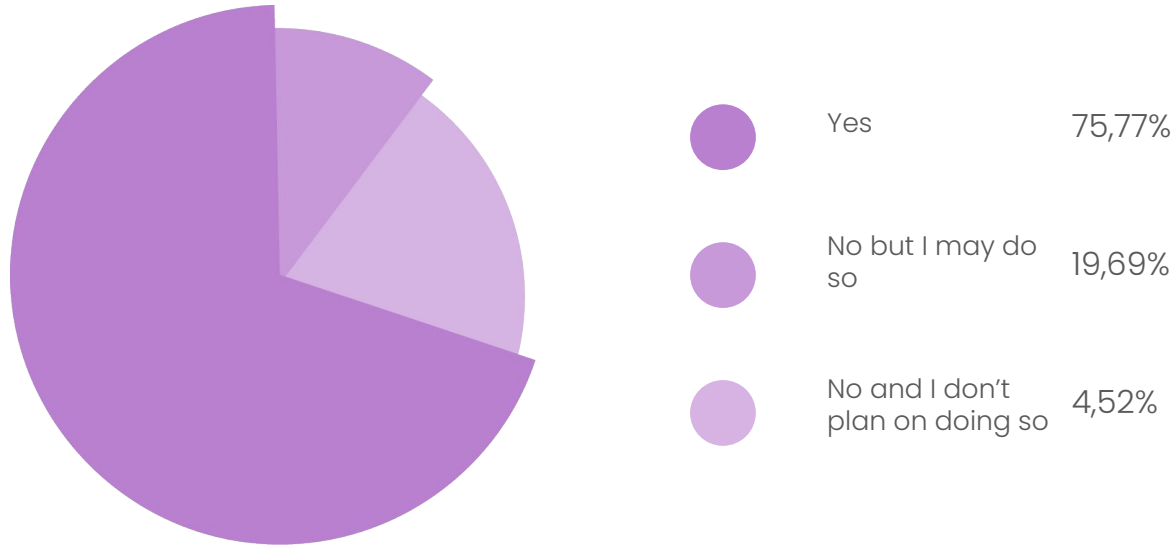
Summary

The recency of online reviews plays a key role in influencing consumer decisions. A majority of respondents (**32.46%**) prefer reviews that are within the last 2 weeks, while **30.01%** look for feedback within the past month.

Reviews within **2-3 months** still have an impact for **22.66%** of consumers.

Fewer are influenced by older reviews, with only **8.71% considering feedback from 4-6 months ago**, and even fewer (**4.0%**) are swayed by reviews that are **7-12 months old**. Reviews older than a month are only impactful for **2.12%** of users, emphasizing the importance of up-to-date feedback.

75,77% of Customers have left an online review for a local business.



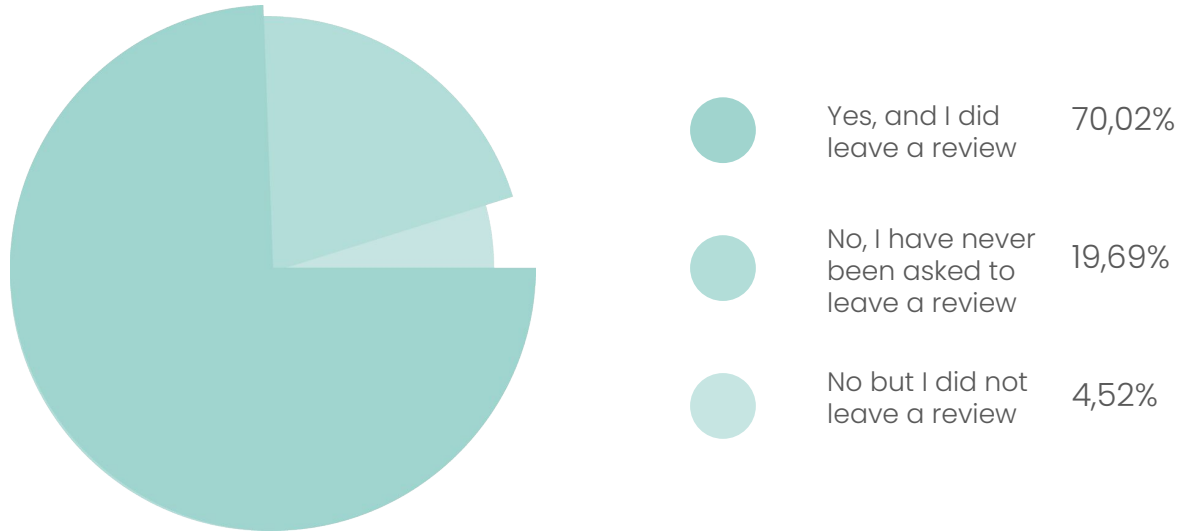
Summary

A majority of consumers **(75.77%) have left an online review for a local business**, reflecting a strong willingness to share their experiences.

Additionally, **19.69% have not yet left a review but may do so in the future**, indicating potential for more feedback.

However, a small percentage **(4.52%) have no intention of leaving reviews**, suggesting that while most people contribute to online feedback, some prefer not to participate in the process.

70,02% of Customers have been asked, and then did leave an online review.



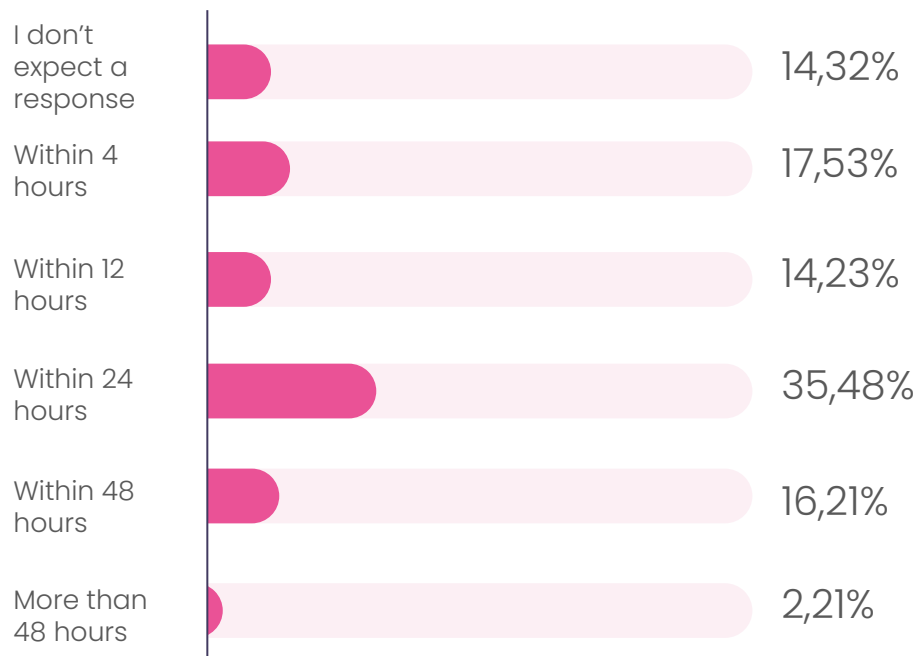
Summary

A significant portion of consumers **(70.02%) have been asked by a business or its employees to leave an online review**, and they followed through by leaving feedback.

However, **19.74% have never been asked to leave a review**, while **10.22% were asked but chose not to leave one**.

This suggests that businesses actively encouraging reviews can have a notable impact on the volume of feedback they receive, though not everyone may be motivated to share their experience.

67,33% of Customers expect a response within 24 hours after leaving a negative review.



Summary

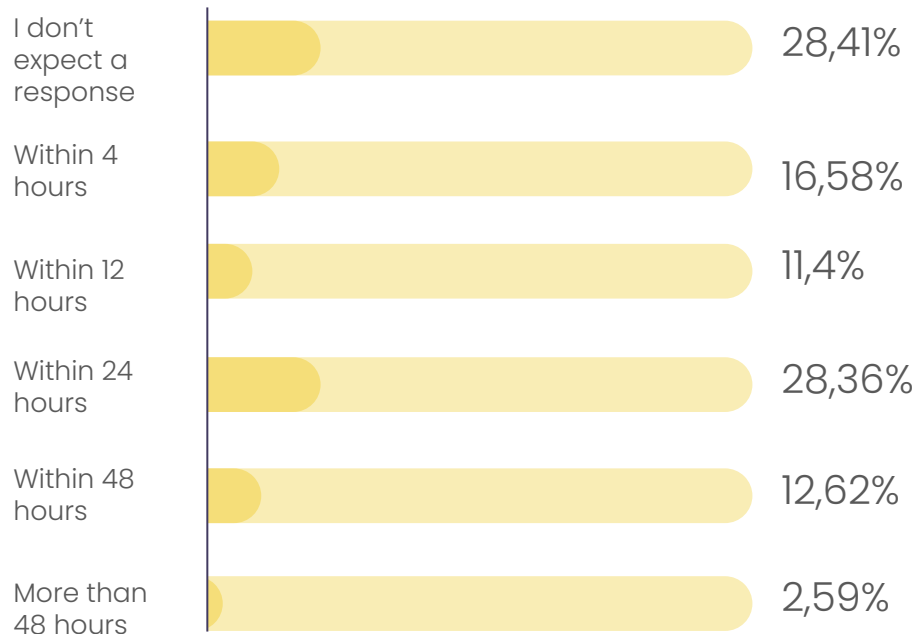
When leaving a negative review online, most consumers expect a response relatively quickly. A large portion (**35.48%**) **expects a reply within 24 hours**, while **17.53%** hope for a **response within 4 hours**.

Some (**16.21%**) **expect a reply within 48 hours**, and a smaller group (**14.23%**) **anticipates a response within 12 hours**.

However, **14.32% of consumers don't expect a response at all**, and just **2.21% are willing to wait more than 48 hours for a reply**.

This highlights the importance of timely responses to maintain customer satisfaction and show attentiveness.

56,34% of Customers expect a response within 24 hours after leaving a positive review.



Summary

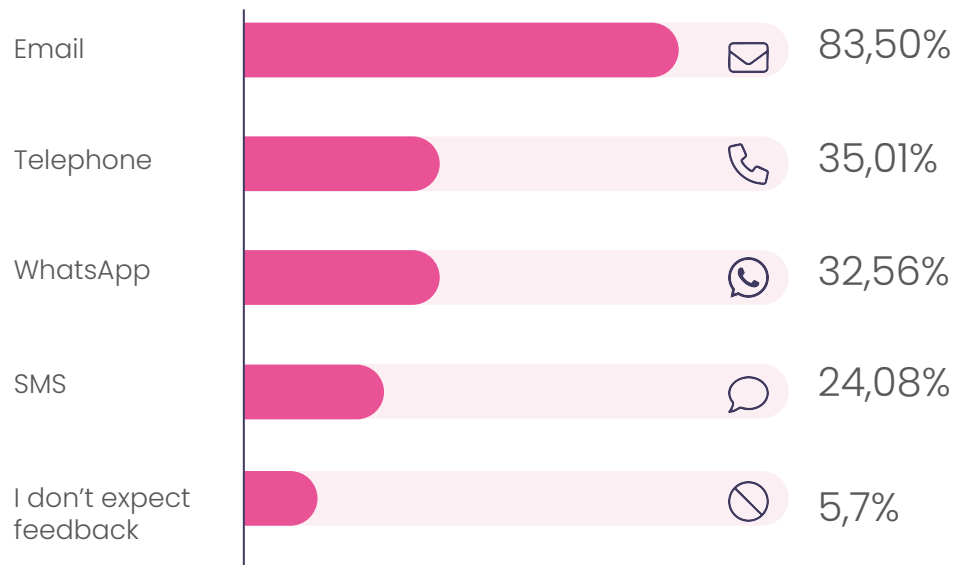
When leaving a positive review online, nearly **28.41% of consumers don't expect a response**, indicating that some people are simply sharing their experience without seeking further engagement. However, many still appreciate acknowledgment, with 28.36% expecting a response within **24 hours** and **16.58% hoping for one within 4 hours**.

A smaller portion (**12.62%**) anticipates a reply **within 48 hours**, and **11.4% expect a response within 12 hours**.

Only **2.59% are willing to wait more than 48 hours for a reply**, showing that timely acknowledgment is appreciated but not always necessary for positive reviews.

83,50% of Customers prefer feedback via Email.

Multiple fields selected



Summary

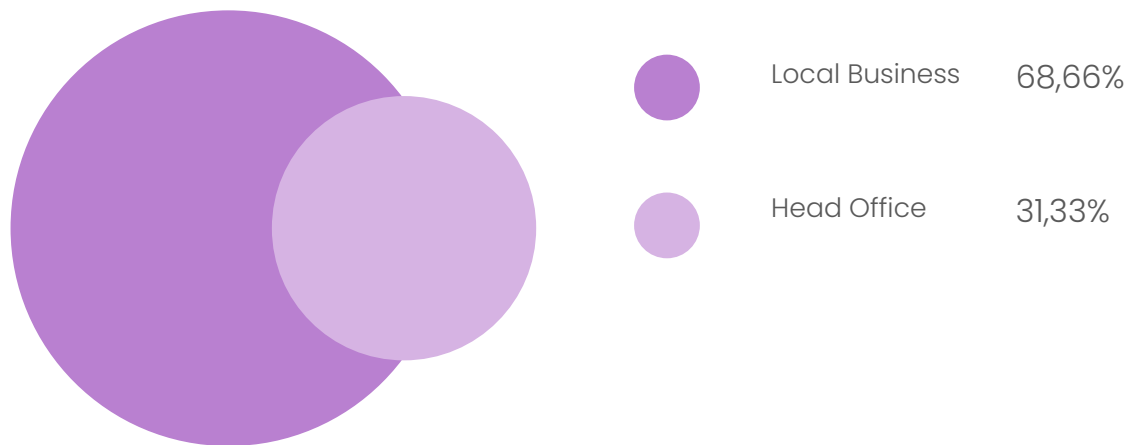
The majority of consumers **(83.50%) prefer receiving feedback on their complaints via email**, valuing its convenience and documentation.

Telephone responses come second, with **35.01% preferring this method** for more direct communication.

Some **(32.56%) would like feedback through WhatsApp**, while **24.08% prefer SMS** for quick, brief responses.

A small percentage **(5.7%) don't expect feedback** at all, suggesting that most customers still value follow-up after expressing concerns, with email being the clear preferred method.

68,66% of Customers prefer interacting with a local business instead of the brands head office.



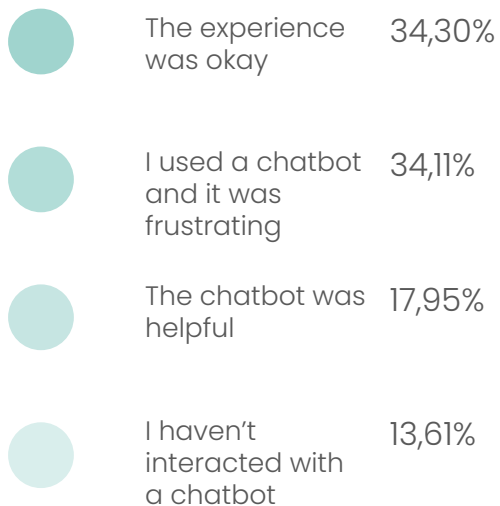
Summary

A significant majority of consumers (**68.66%**) **prefer to interact online with local businesses rather than brand head offices.**

This preference suggests that customers value more personalized, localized service and the convenience of directly connecting with businesses in their area.

In contrast, 31.33% are open to interacting with brand head offices, highlighting that while local engagement is favored, some customers are still willing to communicate with larger corporate entities for certain needs.

86,36% of Customers have interacted with a chatbot, however only 17,95% found it helpful.



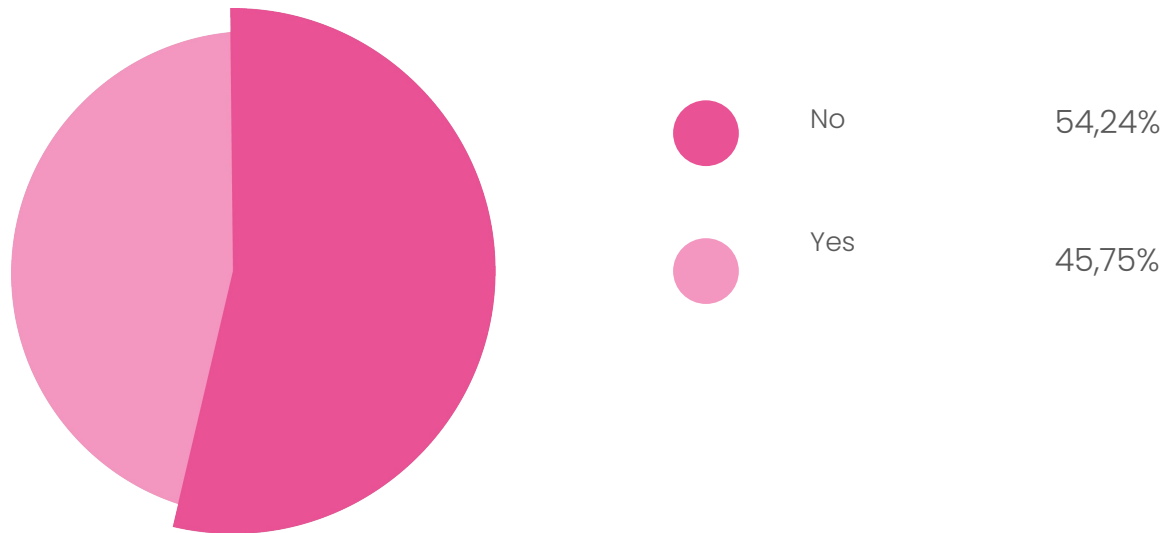
Summary

Many consumers have interacted with chatbots, with **34.30% finding the experience "okay"** and **34.11% feeling frustrated by the interaction.**

A smaller portion (**17.95%**) **found the chatbot helpful, while 13.61% have not yet used a chatbot.**

This shows that while chatbots can be useful for some, they still have room for improvement in terms of user satisfaction, as many users report mixed or negative experiences.

54,24% of Customers prefer would to not interact with a chatbot over a human even if it gave helpful immediate feedback.



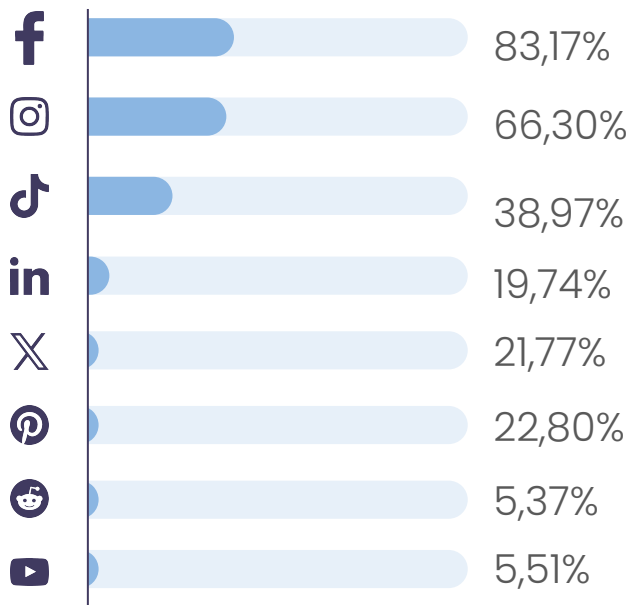
Summary

A majority of consumers (**54.24%**) would still **prefer to interact with a human** or call center agent rather than a chatbot, even if the chatbot provided helpful and immediate feedback.

However, **45.75% are open to interacting with a chatbot** under these conditions, indicating that while many value the personal touch of human interaction, a significant portion of consumers would embrace the convenience and speed that chatbots can offer if they provide effective solutions.

83,17% of Customers prefer Facebook as their go-to social media platform.

Multiple fields selected



Summary

Facebook remains the dominant social media platform, with 83.17% of consumers preferring it, followed by Instagram at 66.30%.

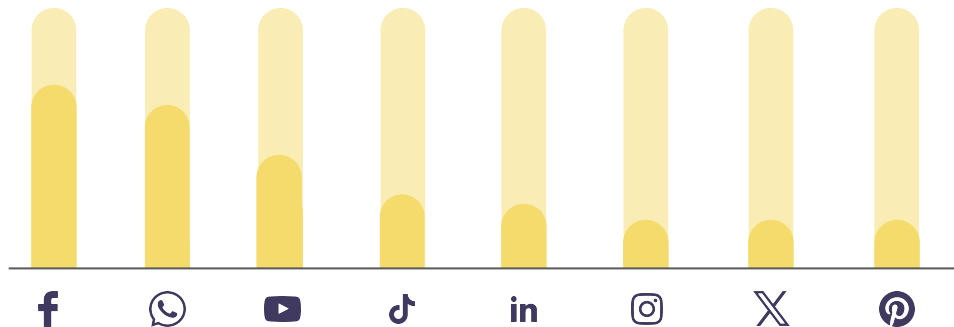
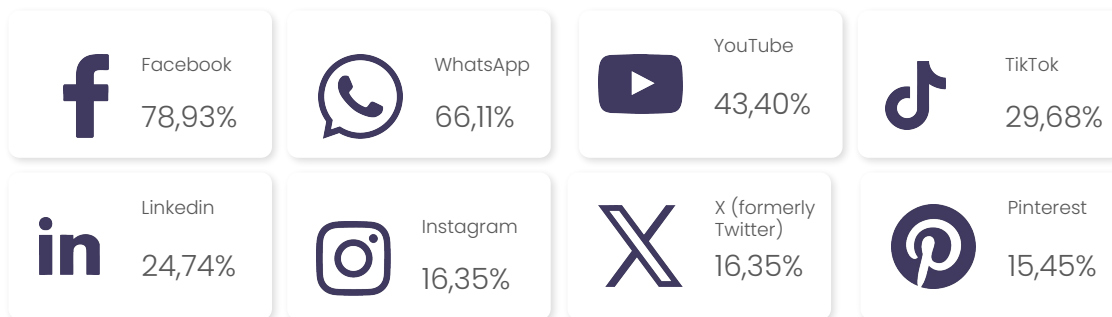
YouTube also holds a strong position at 50.51%, showcasing the popularity of video content.

TikTok (38.97%) and LinkedIn (19.74%) also have substantial followings, while X (formerly Twitter) and Pinterest attract 21.77% and 22.80%, respectively.

Reddit is less popular, with only 5.37% of users favoring it. These preferences highlight the varying appeal of different platforms, with Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube leading the pack in user engagement.

78,93% of Customers enjoy spending time on Facebook;
66,11% enjoy Whatsapp and 43,50% enjoy Youtube.

Multiple fields selected



Platforms

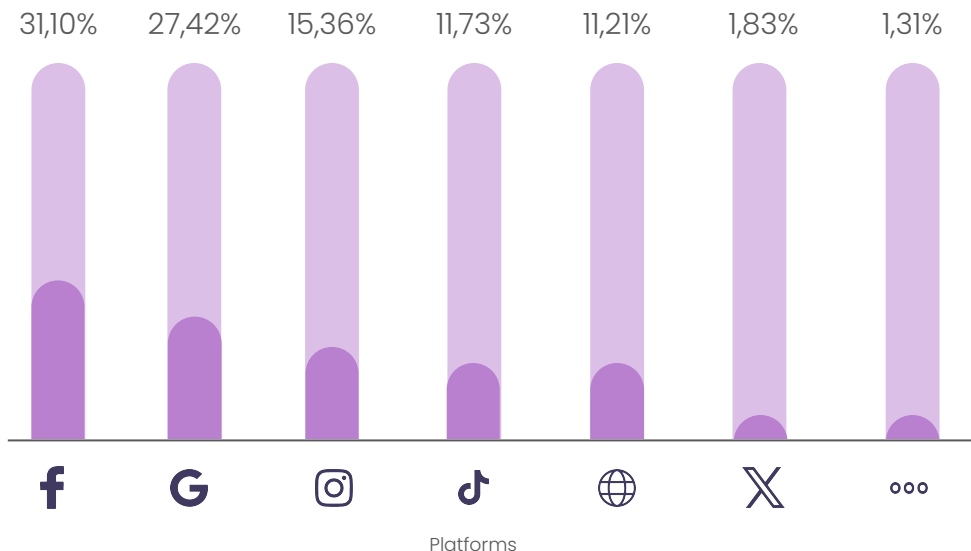
Summary

The majority of consumers spend the most time on **Facebook (78.93%)**, followed by **WhatsApp (66.11%)** and **YouTube (43.40%)**.

TikTok also captures a significant portion of time (**29.68%**), while **Instagram (16.35%)**, **Pinterest (15.45%)**, and **X (formerly Twitter) (16.35%)** attract more niche followings. **LinkedIn is used by 24.74%** of consumers, indicating a focus on professional networking.

These results reflect a clear preference for platforms that cater to both social interaction and content consumption, with **Facebook and WhatsApp leading the way**.

31,10% of Customers find the latest content for a business on Facebook.



Summary

When looking for the latest content or promotions from a business, the majority of consumers turn to **Facebook (31.10%)** and **Google (27.42%)**, showing their preference for easily accessible platforms with up-to-date information.

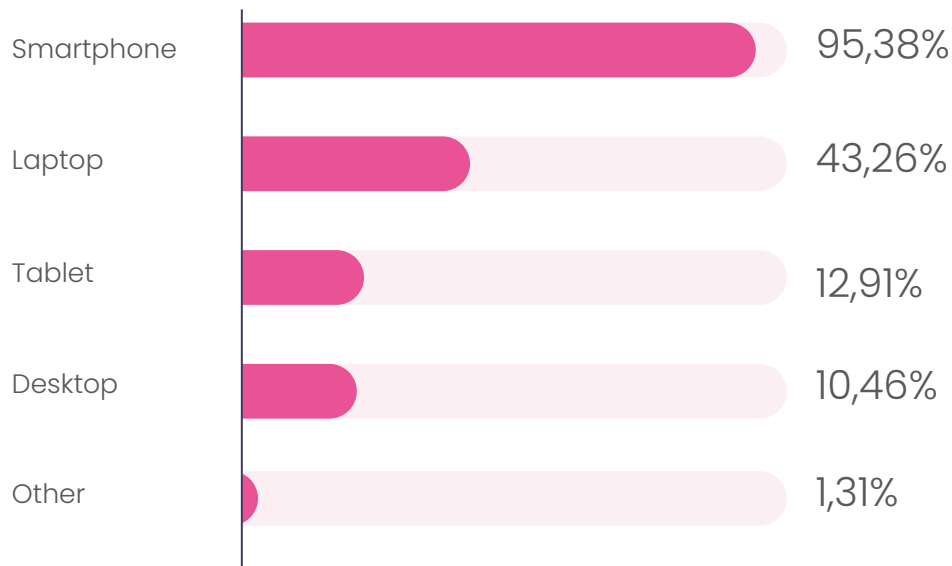
Instagram (15.36%) and **TikTok (11.73%)** also serve as popular sources for discovering new content, particularly for businesses that focus on visual marketing.

A smaller portion **(11.21%)** checks the **business's website** directly, while very few rely on **X (formerly Twitter) (1.83%)** or **other sources (1.31%)**.

This indicates that social media and search engines are the primary channels for staying informed about promotions.

95,38% of Customers use their smartphones for online activities with laptop usage at 43,26%

Multiple fields selected



Summary

The majority of consumers primarily use their **smartphones for online activities, with 95.38%** choosing this device due to its convenience and portability.

Laptops are the second most popular choice, with **43.26%** of users relying on them for online tasks.

Tablets (12.91%) and **desktops (10.46%)** are less frequently used, while a small percentage **(1.31%) use other devices.**

This highlights the dominance of mobile devices in online engagement, with smartphones leading the way as the go-to tool for digital activities.

Thank You



Social Places

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