

Artificial Intelligence at the Consumer Inflection Point

2026 AI Insights Report

Rising Adoption, Conditional Trust and the Future of Human-Led, AI-Enhanced Banking

Executive Summary

Artificial intelligence (AI) has reached a consumer inflection point. More than 78% of Americans now report using AI-powered tools in their daily lives, and a majority (67%) say their AI proficiency increased over the past year. AI adoption has accelerated from early experimentation to everyday use, creating behavioral changes in consumers at a quicker pace than institutions traditionally adopt new technology. This shift is reshaping what consumers expect from technology, employers and financial institutions.

Trust in AI has grown more gradually compared to its adoption, particularly when decisions involve personal finances. While many consumers (62%) believe AI can provide reliable information, very few (18%) are comfortable allowing it to make important financial decisions independently. When it comes to financial recommendations, consumers increasingly prefer experiences where AI improves speed and convenience, while humans maintain oversight.

The second annual TD AI Insights Report explores what that shift means. The nationwide survey of more than 2,500 Americans revealed consumers are not only using AI more frequently, but they are becoming more proficient and more selective about where they want it applied.

The findings point to three defining realities for the next phase of AI:

AI is quickly becoming an expectation.

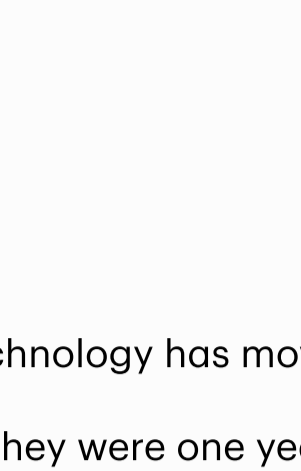
Trust is situational and must be earned.

The preferred model is human-led, AI-enhanced.

This pattern of rapid adoption paired with conditional trust signals a structural change. AI is no longer a novelty — it's becoming an expected part of everyday experiences.

This represents both an opportunity and responsibility for financial institutions. Organizations that understand this shift, and balance innovation with responsible implementation, will be best positioned to meet evolving client expectations and maintain the trust that underpins those relationships.

"AI is no longer a future concept — it's already part of how people live, work and make decisions. What our latest research makes clear is that adoption alone isn't enough. Trust is earned when AI is accurate, transparent and guided by human judgment, especially in moments that matter most, like financial decisions."



Ted Paris
Head of Analytics, Intelligence & AI, TD Bank U.S.

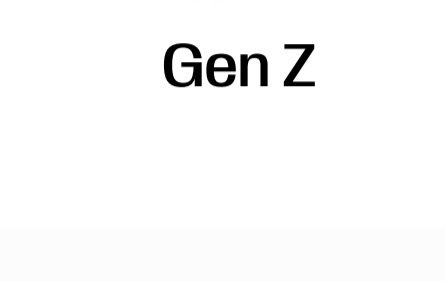
01. AI is quickly becoming an expectation

AI adoption is evolving from novelty to normalcy for everyday tasks.

Consumers noted they're using AI significantly more when compared with 2025, confirming that the technology has moved beyond early adopters and into the mainstream.

In 2026, 78% of Americans reported using AI-powered tools, and 67% said they're more proficient than they were one year ago. Consumers are no longer deciding whether to use AI; they are setting expectations for where it should add value to their lives and under what conditions it earns their confidence.

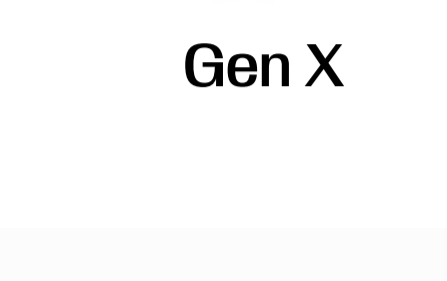
Growth is visible across generations. While Gen Z (90%) and Millennials (89%) reported the highest usage, a majority of Gen X (76%) and Baby Boomers (63%) also said they use AI tools, reflecting broader normalization of the technology.



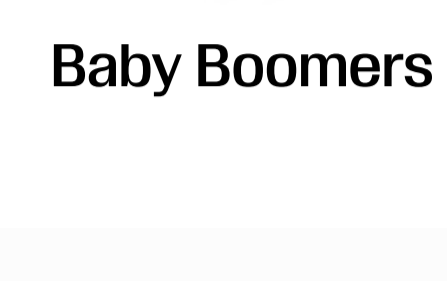
Gen Z



Millennials



Gen X



Baby Boomers

As adoption increases, expectations are rising. Consumers increasingly assume that digital experiences will be faster, more personalized, more predictive and always available. What's emerging is tension between capability and confidence, with technology advancing faster than organizational readiness. To meet this demand, it's imperative that responsible AI deployment, clarity and trust aren't sacrificed in the name of speed.

AI is reshaping expectations in financial services

This shift is influencing financial services. More than half of survey respondents said they use AI to help manage their finances (55%), a significant increase from last year when only 10% of consumers reported using AI for financial management. At the same time, many consumers (62%) believe AI can help them make better decisions. Comfort with AI-assisted financial decision making is growing, although most Americans (55%) prefer recommendations with greater human input even if they are slower. Just 30% of respondents said they would choose faster, AI-powered recommendations even if it meant less human interaction.

Americans are no longer questioning whether AI should be a part of their everyday lives; instead, they're deciding how and under what conditions it should show up. Companies that listen closely and build trust where it matters will be best positioned to lead.

The same inflection point is happening in the workplace

The shift in consumer behavior around AI is also happening within their workplaces. The 2026 data shows that AI use at work is now widespread, with more than four in five (83%) employed respondents indicating they use AI-powered tools or applications to support their work, a 20% increase over last year. Adoption of both employer-provided tools (75%, up from 63%) and independently accessed tools (78%, up from 66%) rose year over year.

This level of adoption signals a shift in expectations about how work should happen. The result is that AI is no longer only a technology initiative — it's becoming a core component of workforce strategy and productivity.

Employees who use AI reported it helps them work faster, generate ideas more easily and make decisions more efficiently, with 71% saying AI gives them an advantage over others in similar roles. This suggests a shift from viewing AI as a threat to viewing it as a tool for performance.

Despite widespread use of AI at work, the data shows that employees don't want fully automated decision-making. As within their personal lives, most respondents prefer models where AI contributes to recommendations, but humans remain responsible for final decisions.

In fact, 66% of survey respondents who use AI to assist with work stated they are less worried about AI taking their job than they were a year ago, and 91% of consumers believe that AI should be used in the workplace.

The implication is clear: Organizations that adapt to this model will be better positioned to scale expertise, improve decision quality and respond more quickly to change.



"AI is more than a workplace tool — it's a reflection of how people already live and work, and employees are asking their employers to meet them there. As AI adoption grows, the way employees work will transform — human skills will remain essential, but how they're applied will evolve. Leaders must ensure their teams have access to the right resources, models and opportunities to build proficiency in both AI and uniquely human skills like judgement and creativity. The organizations that get that balance right will be the ones that thrive."



Tara John
Head of Human Resources, TD Bank U.S.

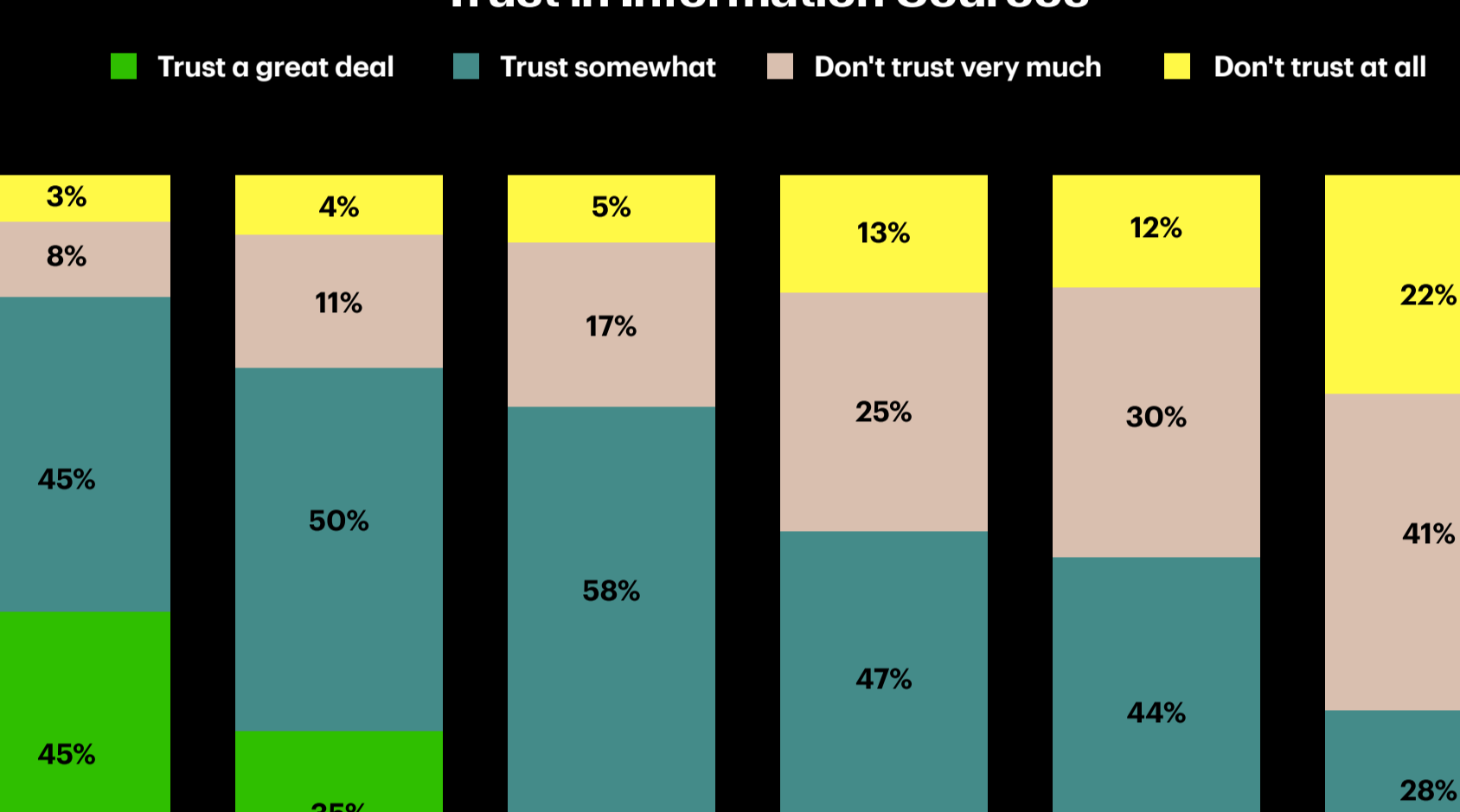
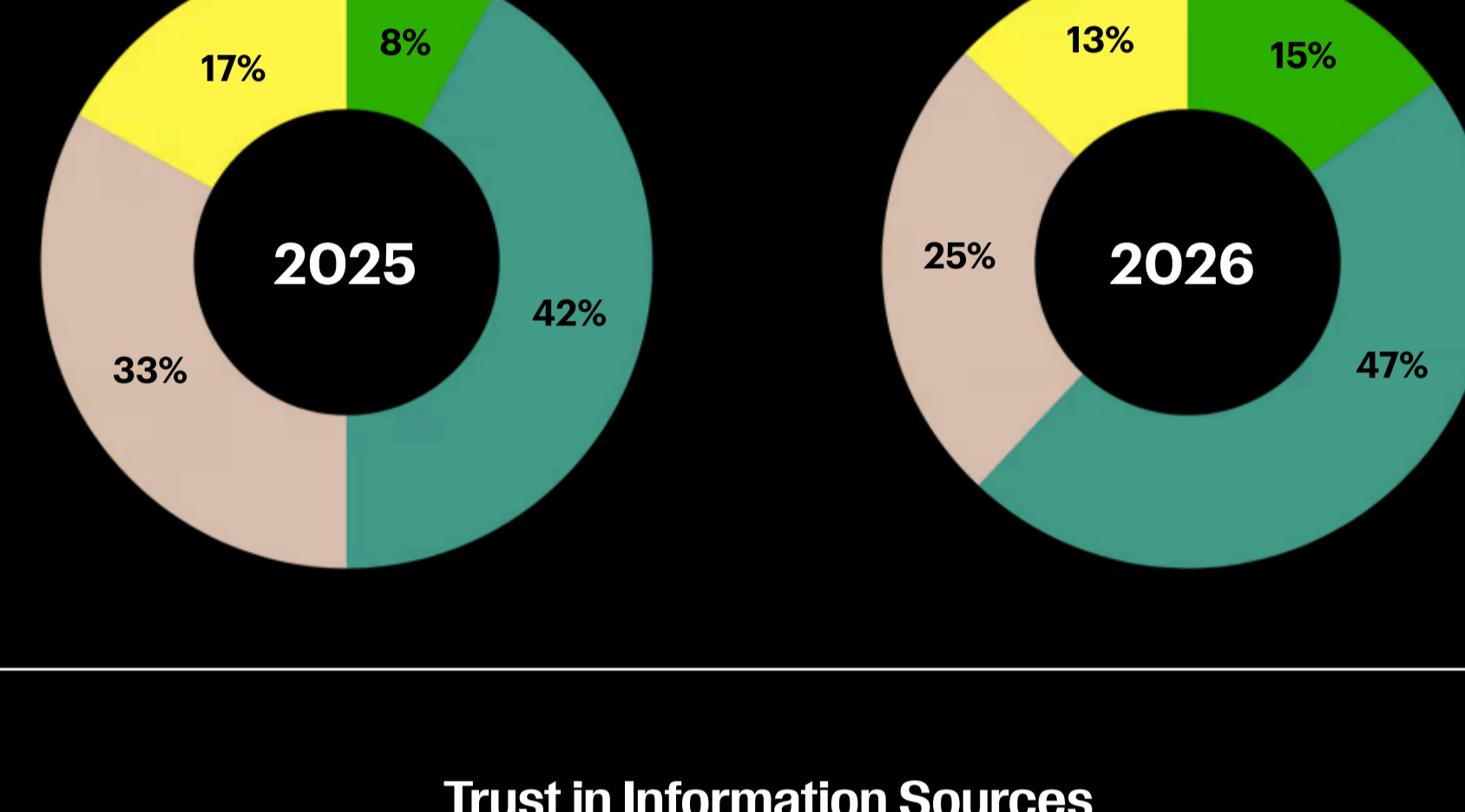
02. Trust is situational and must be earned

Consumers trust AI in low-risk environments but expect human oversight when stakes are high.

Adoption has outpaced trust and the gap matters

While AI use has increased sharply year-over-year, trust has grown at a more gradual pace and remains highly context dependent.

In 2026, 62% of Americans said they trust AI to provide honest and reliable information, up from roughly half in 2025. The share of respondents who said they trust AI "a great deal" nearly doubled between 2025 (8%) and 2026 (15%).



Despite this increase, trust in AI remains lower than trust in personal relationships (90%) or financial institutions (85%).

Consumers are increasingly comfortable letting AI take the lead in low-stakes, everyday decisions such as entertainment recommendations, meal planning, fitness routines and learning where the cost of error is low.

That comfort doesn't automatically transfer to more consequential decisions. Confidence develops first where risk is limited and increases only when guardrails are visible.

"The opportunity isn't just deploying AI — it's earning confidence as we do it. When AI helps our teams spend less time navigating information and more time focused on people, it strengthens the human connection that matters most, especially in complex financial decisions where trust must be earned every step of the way."



Allison Robinson
Head of Retail Distribution, TD Bank U.S.

Where trust grows first and where it stops

Survey respondents stated they have higher expectations of financial services than any other industry.

Still, they draw a firm line around autonomy. Whether planning for retirement, receiving financial advice or resolving customer service issues, people want AI to enhance human involvement. When provided with the scenario of calling the bank for support by phone, 81% of consumers would prefer some level of human involvement, either with AI gathering information first, then connecting the caller to a human (42%), or connecting immediately to a human who uses AI tools to find the right solution quickly (39%).

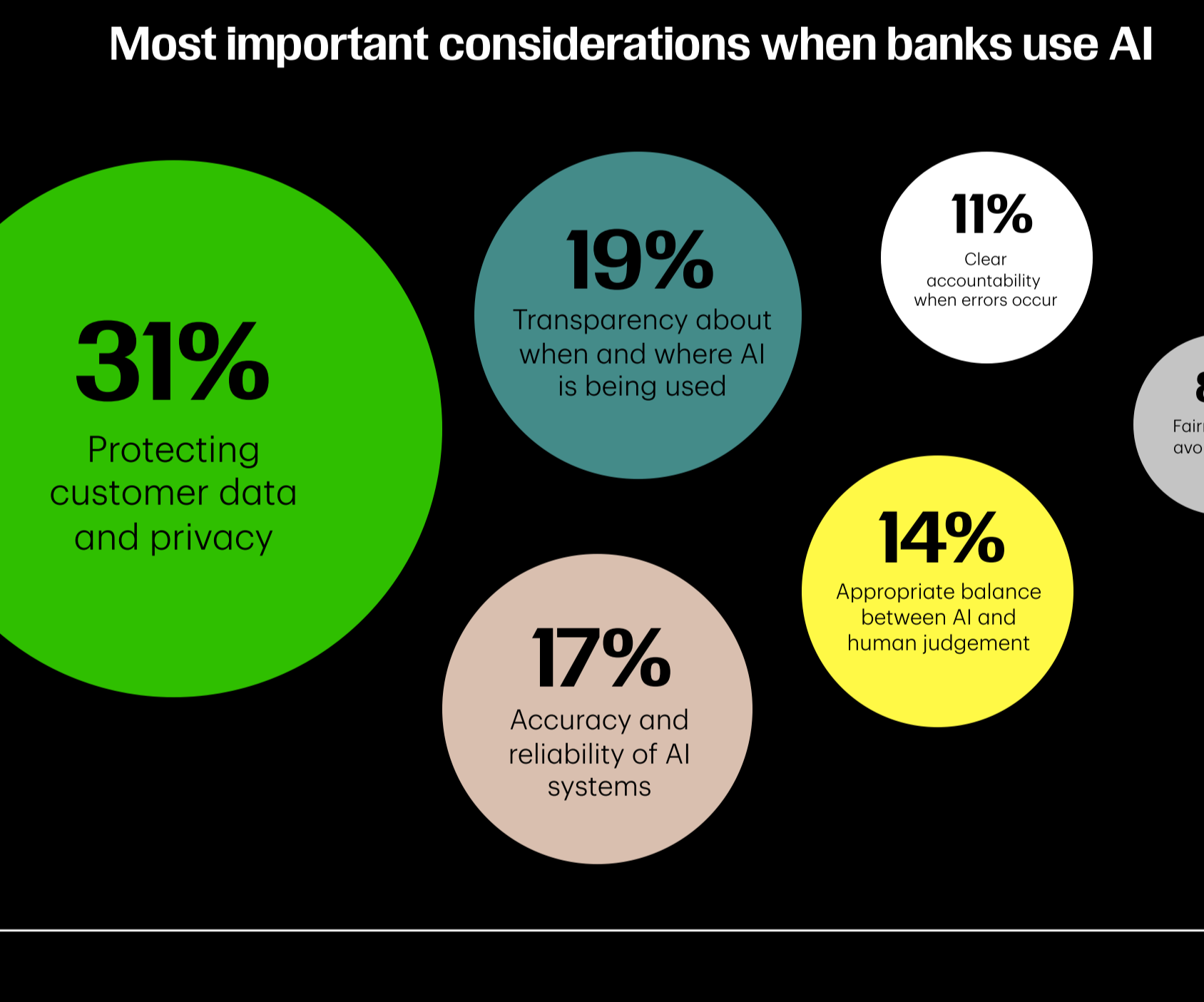
Consumers are comfortable with AI where it improves clarity, accuracy or efficiency, such as fraud detection, transaction monitoring, alerts and routine self-service. But when it comes to advice, judgment or problem resolution, they overwhelmingly want a person involved.

In finance, consumers are embracing AI for efficiency but are doubling down on accountability when decisions carry real consequences.

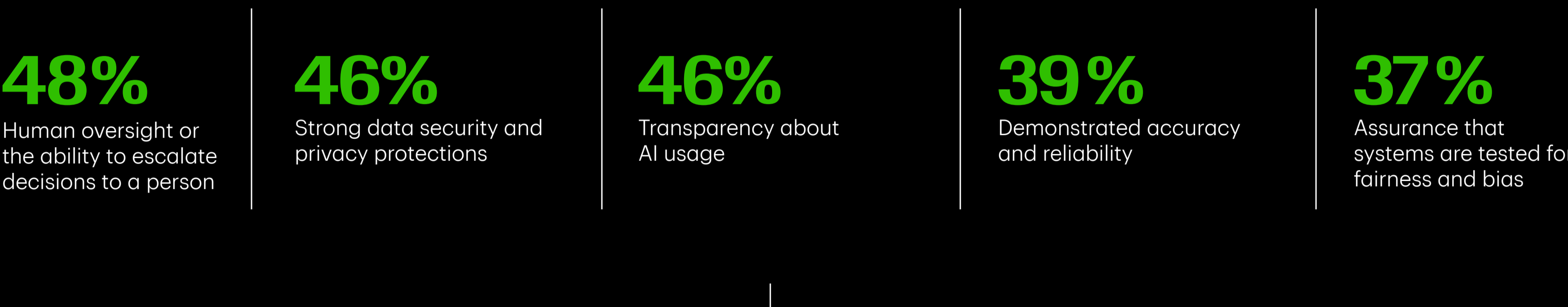
The blueprint for trust

Banks start with a trust advantage compared to many other industries, and this credibility creates a foundation for the assumption of responsible AI adoption if certain conditions are met. The opportunity is clear for financial institutions, but success hinges on meeting consumers where they are in their AI journeys and by aligning to their expectations.

When asked what matters most in how banks use AI, respondents prioritized protection of customer data and privacy (31%), transparency about when and how AI is used (19%), and accuracy, accuracy and reliability of AI systems (17%).



Consumers say their confidence in banks using AI increases when they see:



Only a small minority (15%) said that none of these factors would influence their trust, reinforcing that most consumers are open to AI when it's implemented responsibly.

Hesitation around AI reflects a desire for reassurance, not rejection. For financial institutions, this represents a pivotal opportunity to earn confidence by pairing innovation with accountability.

"Trust is the price of entry for AI in financial services. Transparency, strong security and human accountability aren't optional — they're foundational."



Kiran Yoppu
Chief Information Officer, TD

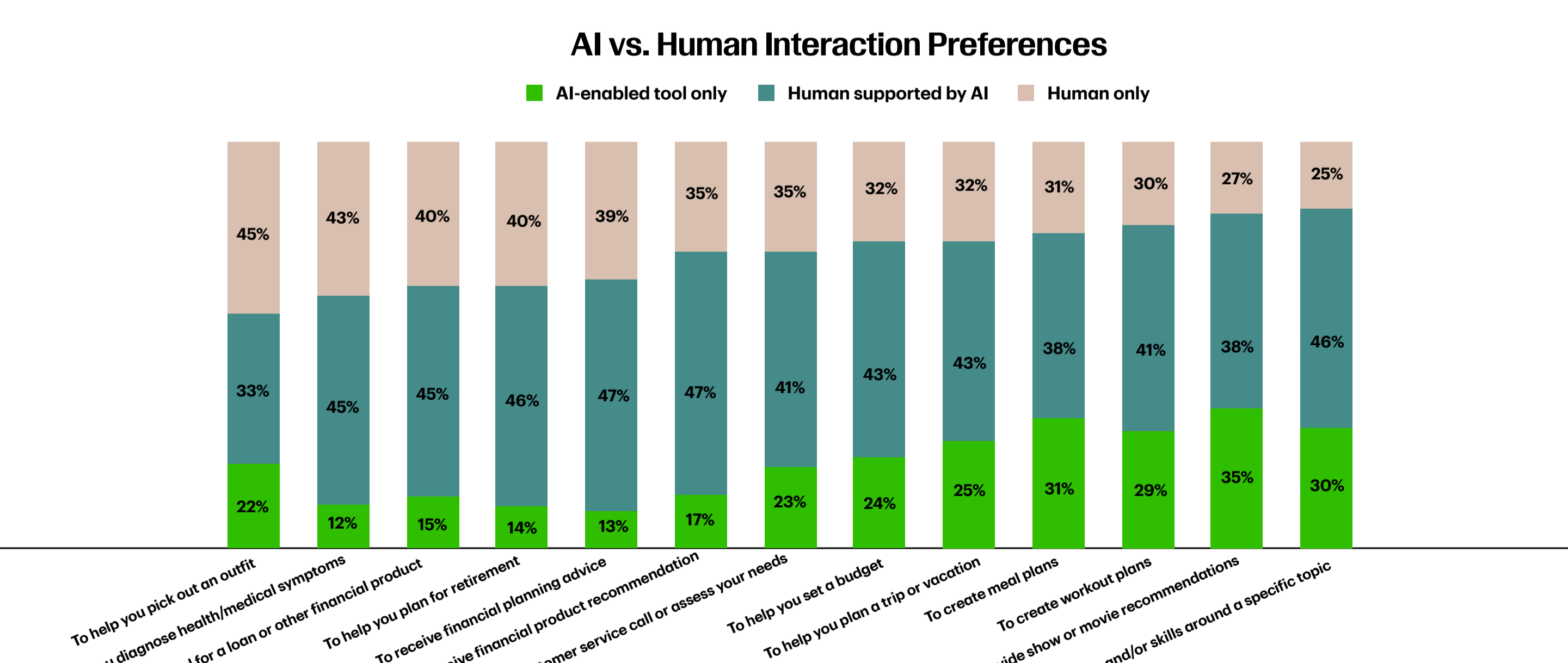
03. The preferred model is human-led, AI-enhanced

Consumers are signaling a clear preference for AI that improves efficiency while keeping humans accountable at critical moments.

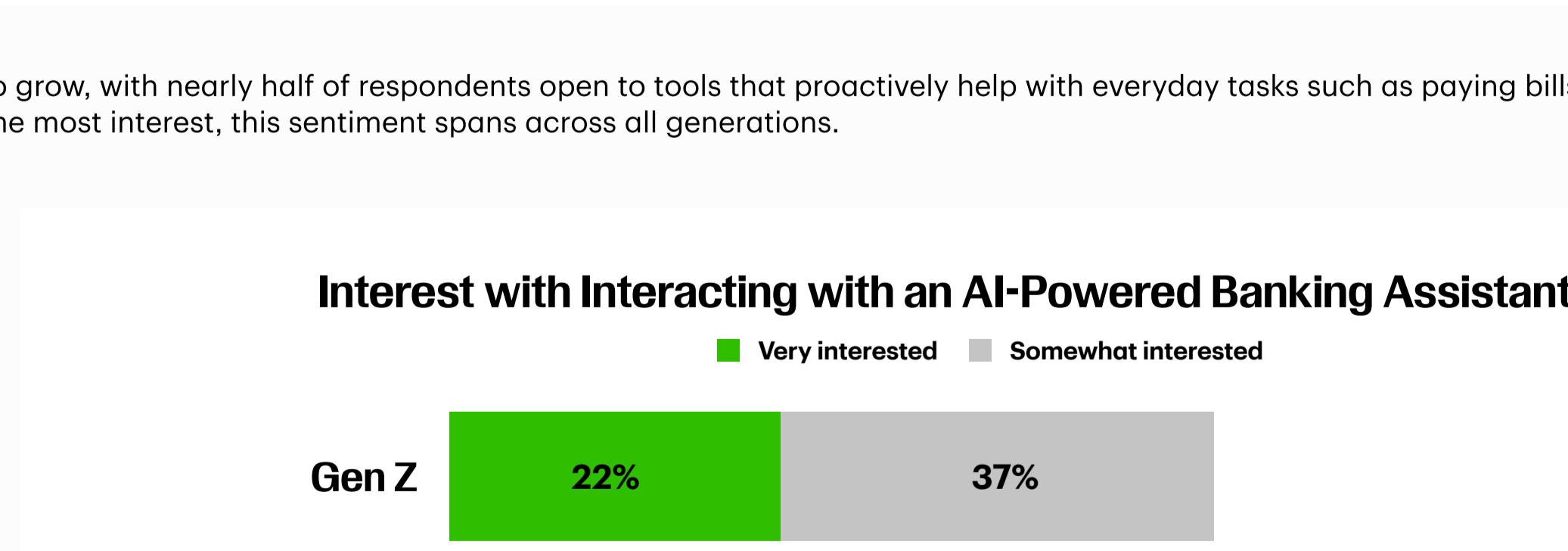
Consumer preferences are shifting toward human-AI collaboration

Consumers showed the highest comfort levels when AI supports behind-the-scenes functions such as product or service recommendations (68%), fraud detection (67%), tracking spending (66%) and calculating credit scores (66%).

Compared with last year, fewer consumers said they prefer human-only interactions, and more agreed they're comfortable with AI playing a supporting role. In some cases, preference for AI-enabled tools alone has increased, particularly for recommendations and planning tasks.



Interest in AI-powered banking continues to grow, with nearly half of respondents open to tools that proactively help with everyday tasks such as paying bills, setting alerts and transferring funds. While younger generations show the most interest, this sentiment spans across all generations.

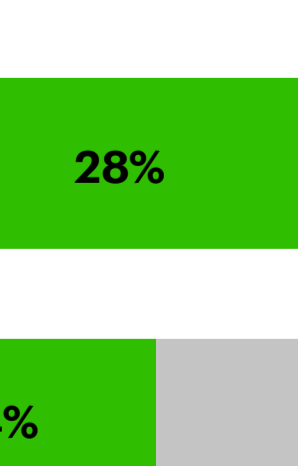


Human judgement remains essential

Trust drops sharply when AI is positioned as an autonomous decision maker for complex or high-stakes financial choices.

In high-stakes situations, especially financial decisions, most still prefer human involvement. When provided with the scenario of calling the bank for support by phone, 81% of consumers would prefer some level of human involvement, either with AI gathering information first, then connecting the caller to a human (42%), or connecting immediately to a human who uses AI tools to find the right solution quickly (39%).

As artificial intelligence continues to evolve, the organizations that lead will earn confidence at the same pace they build capability, invest in their people as much as their platforms, and recognize innovation and trust must move forward together.



Jo Jagadish
Head of Digital Banking, Payments & Contact Centers, TD Bank U.S.

04. The path forward

Responsible AI is emerging as a competitive advantage.

Artificial intelligence has entered a new phase. What began as a technology story has become a consumer story and a workforce story, with trust as the common theme year over year. The 2026 TD AI Insights research shows that adoption has accelerated faster than many expected. Consumers are using it in everyday tasks, employees are using it at work, and their expectations are evolving accordingly. What comes next will be defined by how organizations choose to lead.

For financial institutions in particular, this moment carries both opportunity and responsibility. Banking has always depended on trust, and the introduction of AI doesn't change that foundation — it raises the standard. The TD survey showed consumers want the speed and insight that technology can provide, but they also want the reassurance that their financial decisions are guided by human expertise and accountability.

The impact of AI extends well beyond consumer experience. As AI becomes more common, it becomes part of what people expect from the institutions they rely on, including their employers and banks.

This convergence is creating a new competitive reality. Companies are likely no longer evaluated only on the products they offer, but on how intelligently, responsibly and transparently those products are delivered.

The future that emerges is unlikely to be defined by fully automated experiences or by purely human ones.

As AI becomes embedded in financial services, trust — earned through strong guardrails, clear communication and visible human involvement — will define the institutions that succeed.

Survey Methodology

Findings are a result of an Online CARAVAN® survey conducted by Big Village Feb. 18-25, 2026, on behalf of TD. Survey sample comprised of 2,504 Americans, 18 years of age and older conducted. Respondents were members of an online panel and had agreed to participate in online surveys and polls. Sampled interviews are weighted by five variables — age, gender, geographic region, race, education and income — using data from the U.S. Census Bureau to help ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total U.S. population, 18 years of age and older. Throughout this report, results are analyzed in total as well as by generation where statistically significant differences exist at a 95% confidence level. Generations are defined as Gen Z, ages 18-29 (N=470); Millennials, ages 30-45 (N=698); Gen X, ages 46-61 (N=629); and Baby Boomers, ages 62-90 (N=648).

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