

FESTIVE FORECAST

Holiday Insights Unwrapped

Consider this your seasonal playbook: A guide to this year's consumer sentiment, spending intentions and expectations. Plus, the strategies that will keep your brand relevant, visible and chosen, when it matters most.

2025



SEASONAL SNAPSHOT

The numbers that count

A strong finish to the year isn't just about pushing harder, it's about tuning into what customers want most. Reading the signals that others miss. This season, the winners will be the brands that understand the customer mindset, cut through the noise and act early.

Here are the top insights set to shape the season:

1 in 3 

New Zealanders (35%) are stressed about upcoming holiday expenses

46% plan to spend less than last year

44% plan to start shopping earlier



Self-gifting and self-care are likely to dominate wishlists



Black Friday Cyber Monday (BFCM) is a battleground:

48% of shoppers will hold out for sales before making big ticket buys



Insight: Shoppers are stressed, and many are getting strategic – shopping earlier, spending less and making the most of sales. Savvy businesses will preserve the festive spirit by crafting compelling offers, preparing early, and easing friction at the checkout.

Holiday stress is real, be the one to bring the magic.

The 2025 holiday season is unfolding against a tough economic backdrop. Rising costs. Unexpected expenses. Financial uncertainty. It's influencing how, and when, shoppers spend.

2 in 5 
plan to set a budget and start saving (now)

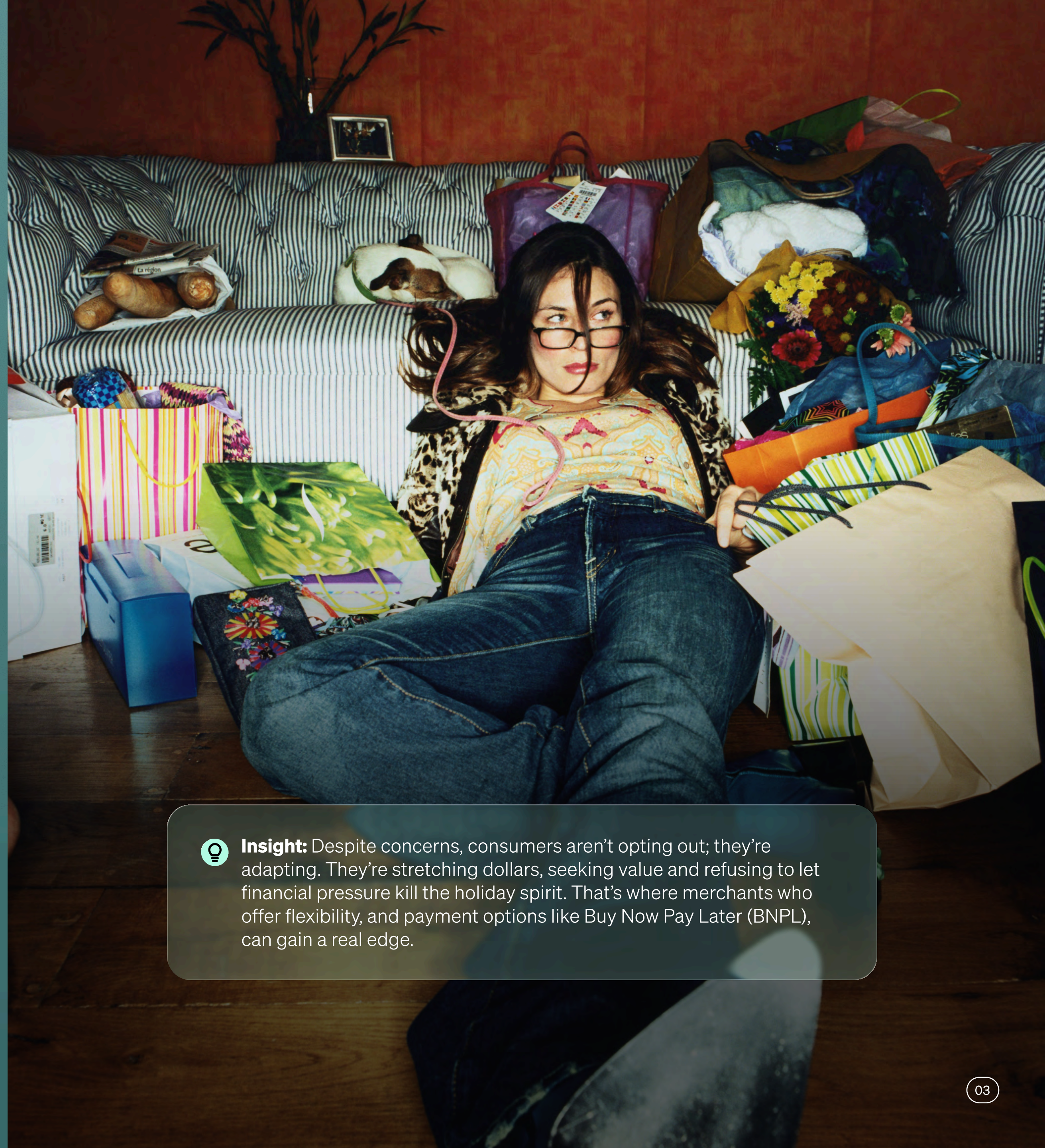
46%

Nearly half plan to spend less than last year

44% 
will start shopping early



Insight: Despite concerns, consumers aren't opting out; they're adapting. They're stretching dollars, seeking value and refusing to let financial pressure kill the holiday spirit. That's where merchants who offer flexibility, and payment options like Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL), can gain a real edge.



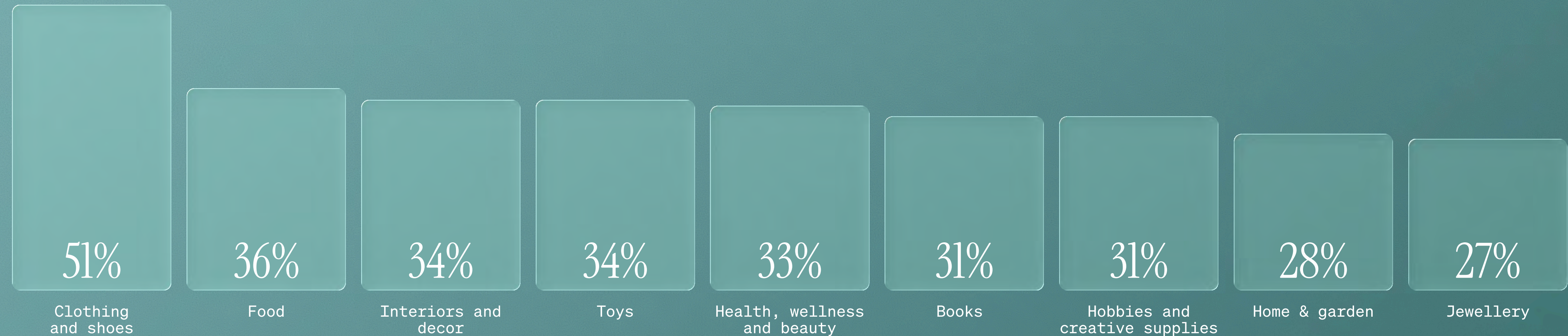
All they want for Christmas

Discover what Kiwis plan to buy this season – because knowing the wishlist means owning the basket.



Insight: Value matters, but so does emotional connection. These categories speak to comfort, small luxuries and personal reward. Combine compelling offers, like gift cards or curated bundles, with payment flexibility to make gift giving feel frictionless.

TOP CATEGORIES NEW ZEALANDERS WILL BUY:



What do they want under the tree?

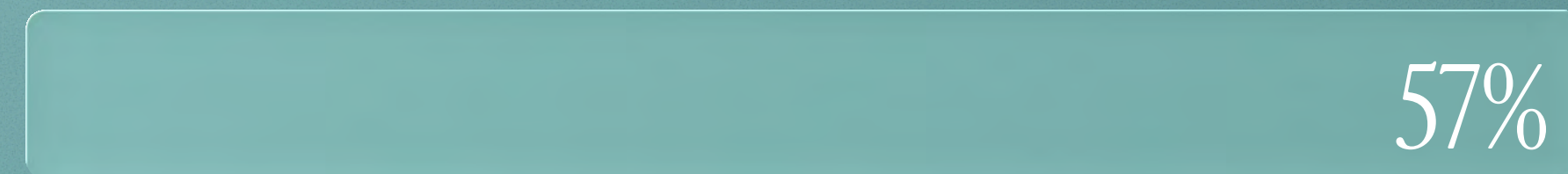
New Zealanders most want to receive clothing and shoes (35%). Other items they're wishing for include food (28%) and jewellery (24%).



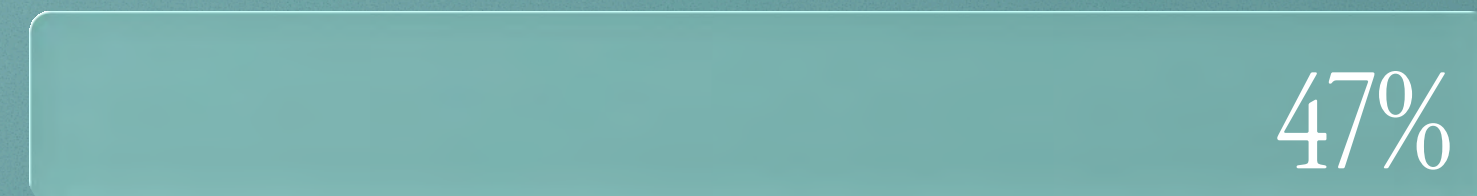
A gift for them. A gift for me.

New Zealanders are generous.
But they're not forgetting themselves.

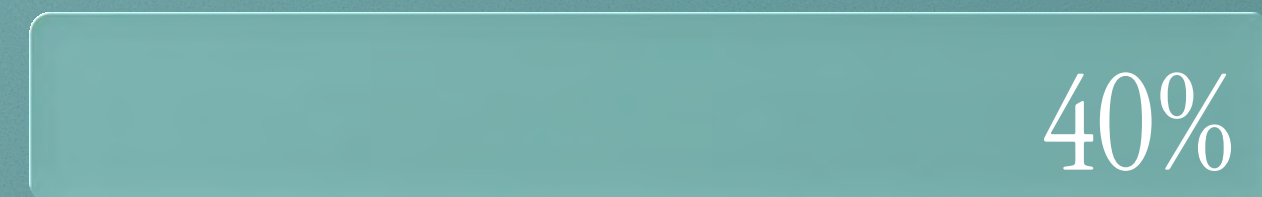
WHO AUSSIES ARE BUYING FOR:



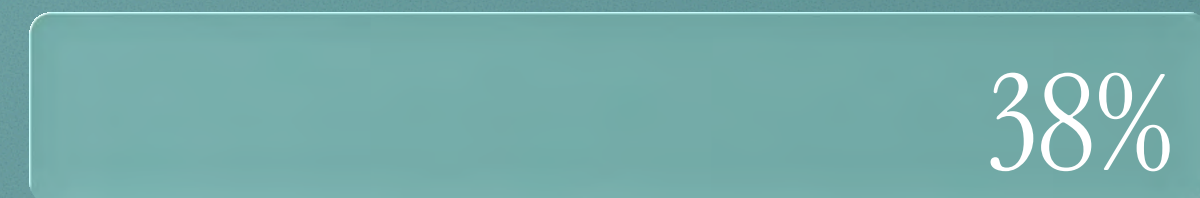
Partner/spouse



Themselves



Parents



Friends

Self-care is having a moment

Even in a cautious climate, shoppers are making space for personal wellbeing.

Nearly three-quarters (74%) plan to purchase self-care items this season (for others or themselves), and two-fifths (39%) say they're more likely to indulge in these kinds of products than last year.

WHAT'S BEHIND THE TREND?

More than half (52%) say they want to prioritise health and wellbeing, while nearly two in five (38%) are seeking "something uplifting or stress-relieving".



52% prioritise health
and wellbeing



38% seeking "something
uplifting or stress-relieving"

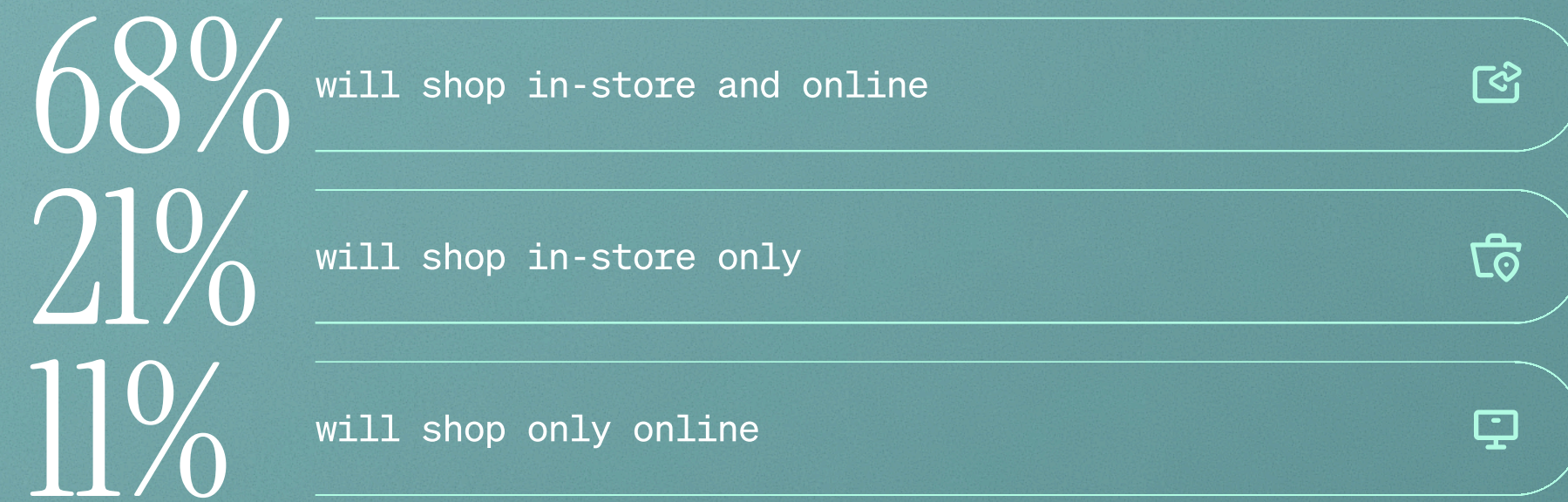


Tip: This isn't reckless spending, it's selective splurging. Shoppers want purchases that feel worth it. So position your products as small luxuries with big emotional payoffs, and consider positioning self-care items close to checkout.

Omnichannel cheer

Consumers will shop both aisles: in-store and online. If your experience doesn't shine across both, you're leaving opportunity on the table.

WHERE KIWIS WILL SHOP:



WHERE THEY'LL GO ONLINE:





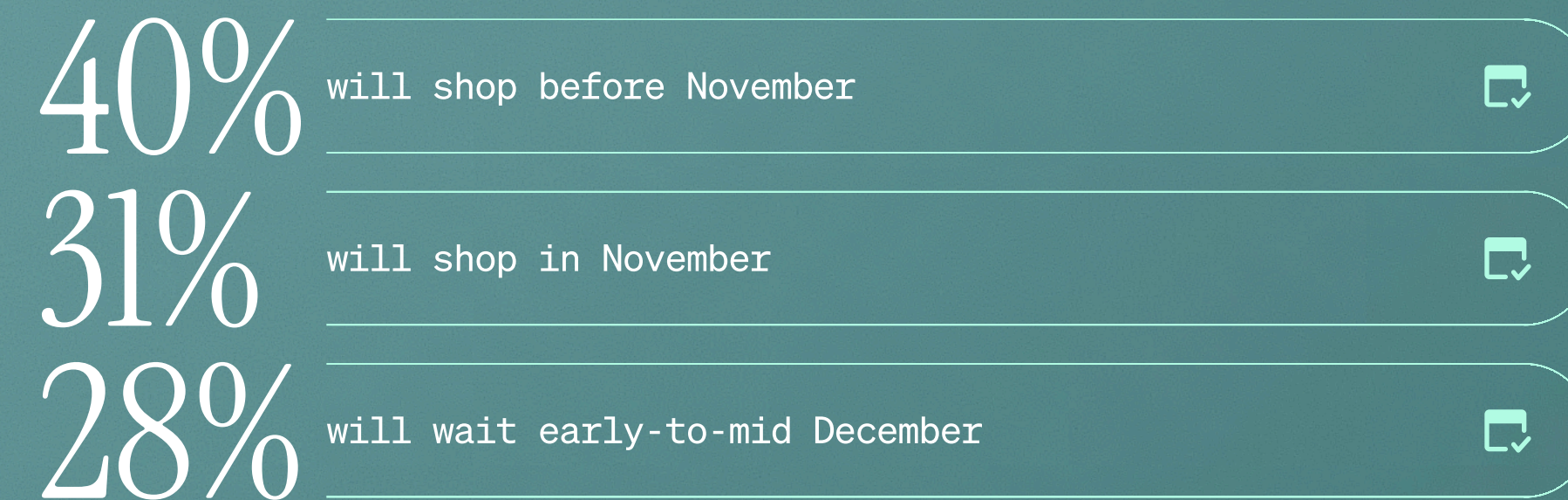
Tip: Help shoppers spread the cost of the holidays without time pressure. Payment options like BNPL allow consumers to make payments across multiple weeks - and paycheques - to lighten the load.



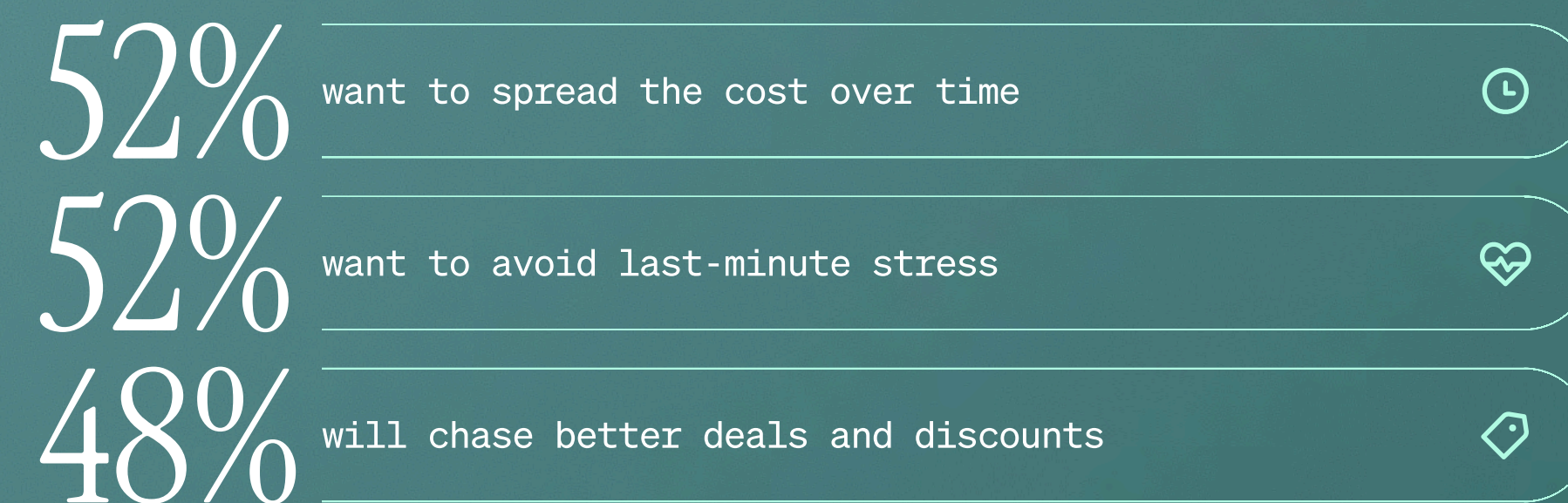
Tip: BFCM may be the headline act, but it's far from the only shopping moment. With Kiwis spending steadily from September through December, smart retailers will spread their promotions across the season to keep customers engaged.

WHEN THEY'LL SHOP:

Earlier than ever. New Zealanders will hit the shops in a steady stream this festive season, with 64% planning to do most of their buying between September and November, while 28% will wait until early December.

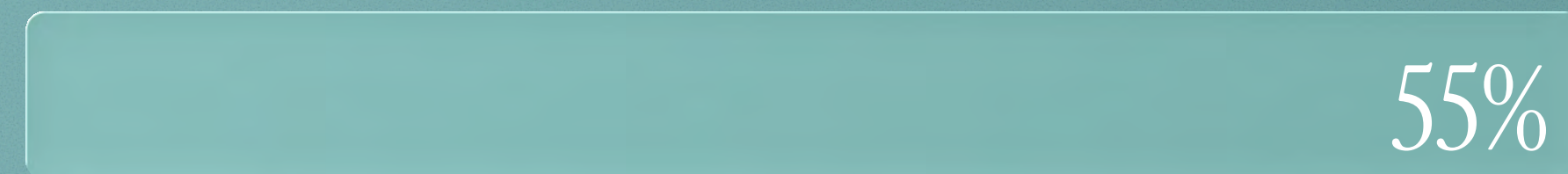


WHY ARE CONSUMERS SHOPPING EARLIER?

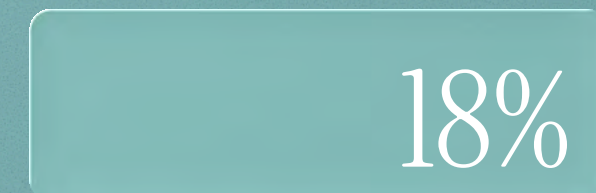


'Tis the season to budget

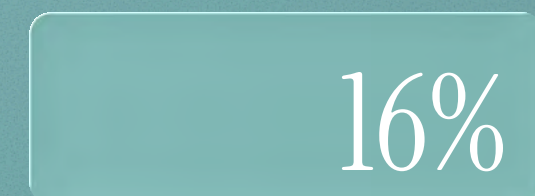
Holiday budgets vary, but big spenders are still in the game.



plan to spend less than \$850



plan to spend between \$800 and \$1,600



plan to spend \$1,500 to \$3,200



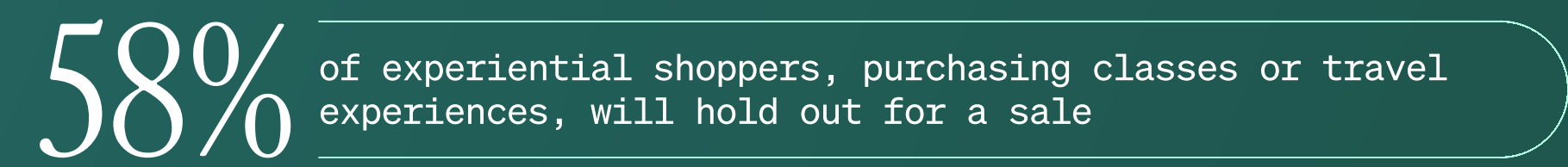
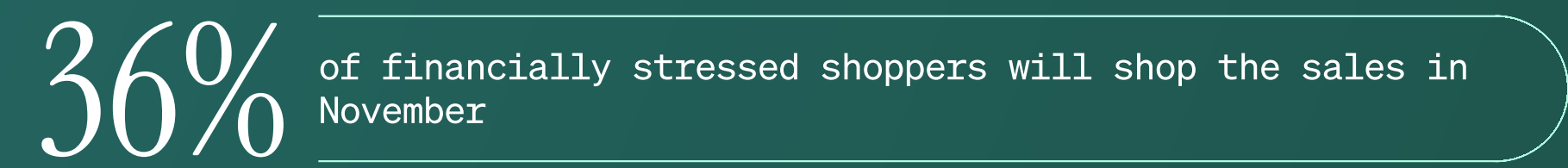
will spend over \$3,200

Key takeaway:

High spenders are few, but they matter. They're strategic, value-driven and they love a sale.

Sales are when the season starts

Shoppers are willing to wait for the right price, especially on high-ticket items. This patient, strategic mindset signals a value-conscious shopper who still intends to spend, but only when the perceived value is high.



WHAT KIND OF OFFER WILL WORK BEST?

Nearly a third (30%) expect at least half off, and this expectation is even higher among those under financial pressure, with 36% of these shoppers expecting at least half off.



Tip: The holiday season isn't shrinking, it's shifting. A dual-track approach will win: one for the budget-conscious, another for premium buyers looking for value. Both groups will be active this season; the challenge is earning their trust early.

Afterpay's edge

Less stress for them. More sales for you.

A massive 95% of businesses offering BNPL as a payment solution say it's vital to success during peak season. And shoppers agree. At least 44% are at least somewhat likely to use BNPL this holiday season, rising to 59% among Millennials and 52% among Gen Xers.

WHY AFTERPAY LEADS:

54%

Convenience

47%

Flexibility

43%

Reliability

40%

Speed

41%

No interest fees



Among all BNPL providers in New Zealand, Afterpay ranks highest thanks to its convenience, flexibility and reliability.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Holidays are about connection, not chaos. The brands that understand this will sleigh the season.

Brands that make shopping stress free, gifting joyful and payments flexible, will lead the season. Deliver value without friction, and you'll do more than win sales. You'll win trust, loyalty and the next year ahead.

METHODOLOGY:

Morning Consult's Afterpay Global Holiday Shopping Survey (July 2025) was conducted between July 17th – 31st, 2025 among n2,205 Adults aged 18-65 and n258 Retail Business Decision Makers in New Zealand. All interviews were conducted online. The margin of error was +/- 2% for Adults, +/- 6% for Retail Business Decision Makers, and varied among subgroups. All subgroups highlighted in reporting have a base N size of 100 or more unless otherwise stated.

Late fees, eligibility criteria and T&Cs apply. See afterpay.com for terms. Credit checks apply