

Market Lab.

Sustainability in Belgian E-commerce
Insights from Consumers and Merchants

October 2, 2025



✔ Introduction

✔ BOSS 2025

✔ BOSB 2025

✔ Upcoming

Results of the BOSS 2025.

Belgian Online Shopper Survey

Sustainability.

How important is sustainability to consumers & what role do companies have in this?

Commissioned by  **becom.**

Performed by **NielsenIQ**

Insights are (mainly) part of the BOSS report

Insights on the online behaviours and attitudes of Belgians aged between 18 and 64 (making online purchases)



Online shopping popularity



E-commerce trust & security

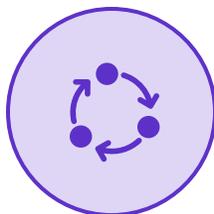


Online marketplaces



Technology

Online shopping process



Priorities & ideals of an online store



Sustainability



Content



Sustainability

1



& the consumer

incl. deep-dive on second-hand

2



& the companies





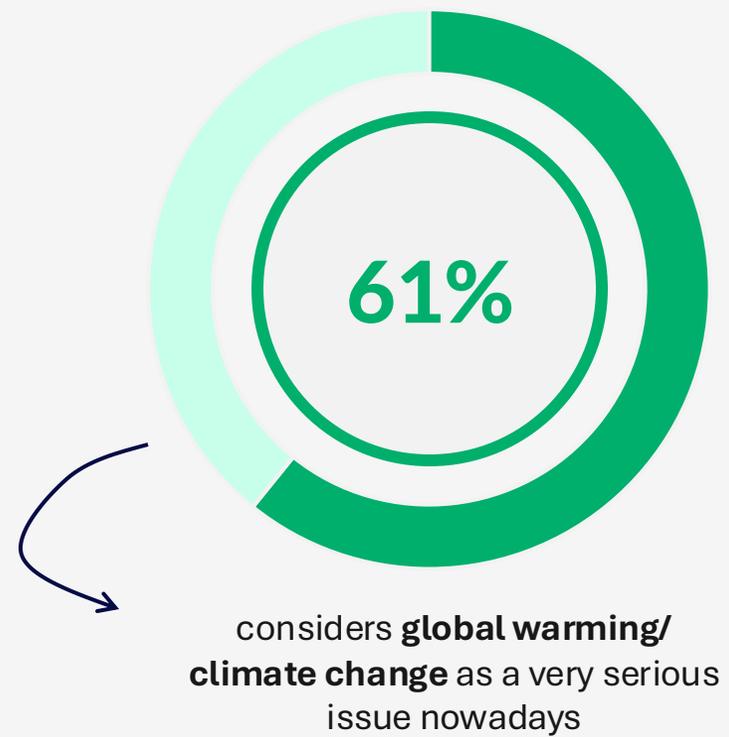
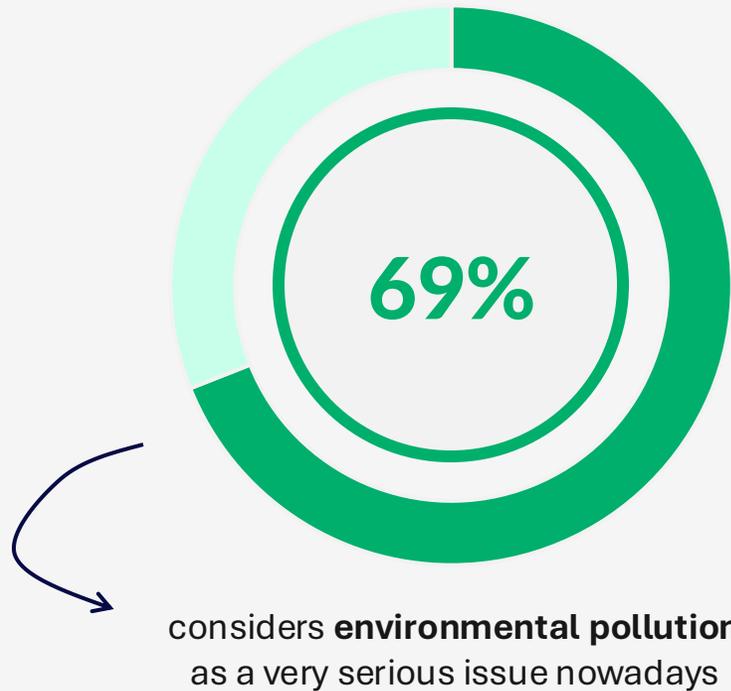
Consumers & Sustainability.

Do consumers care about sustainability & take it into account when shopping online?

Sustainability is definitely present in Belgians' minds

NIQ Consumer Life

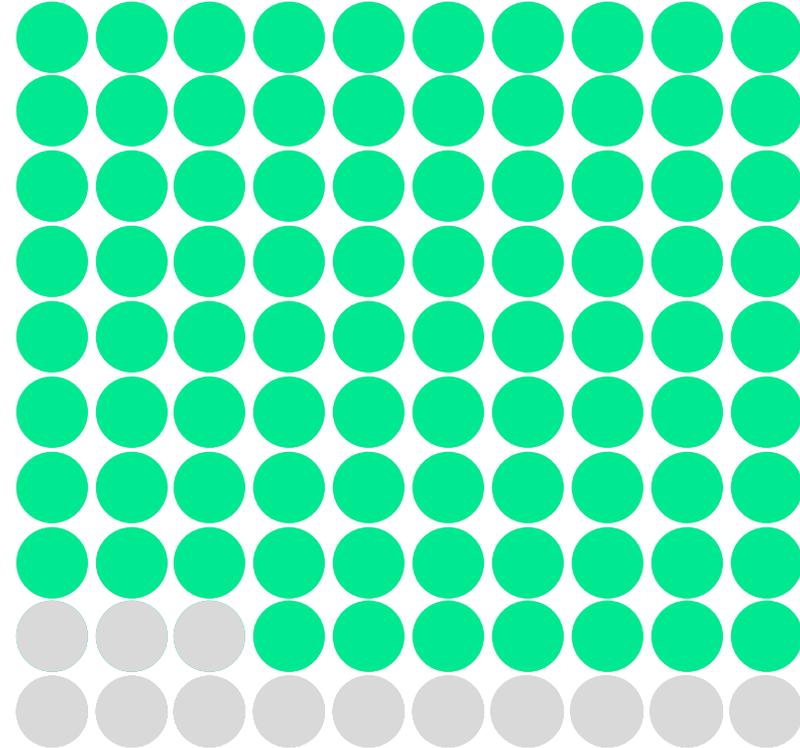
Importance of Sustainability



And most Belgian adults say that they are willing to take action

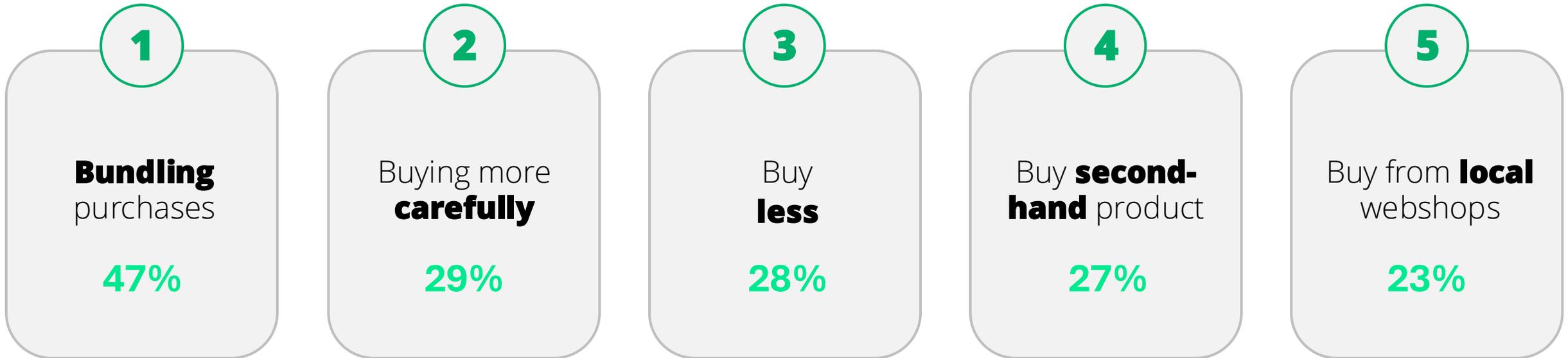
87%

say they are willing to take action to be more sustainable when shopping online



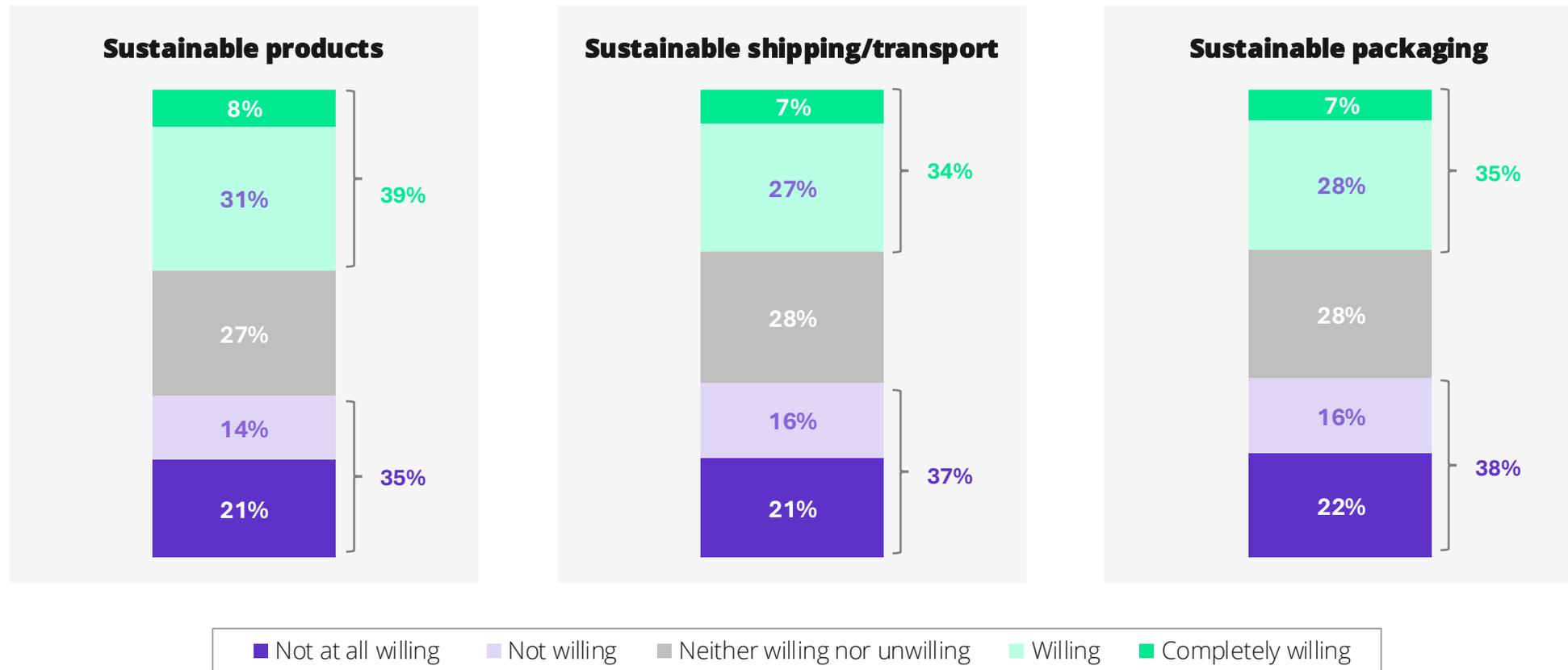
What actions are they willing to take?

Top 5 actions to be **more sustainable** when shopping online



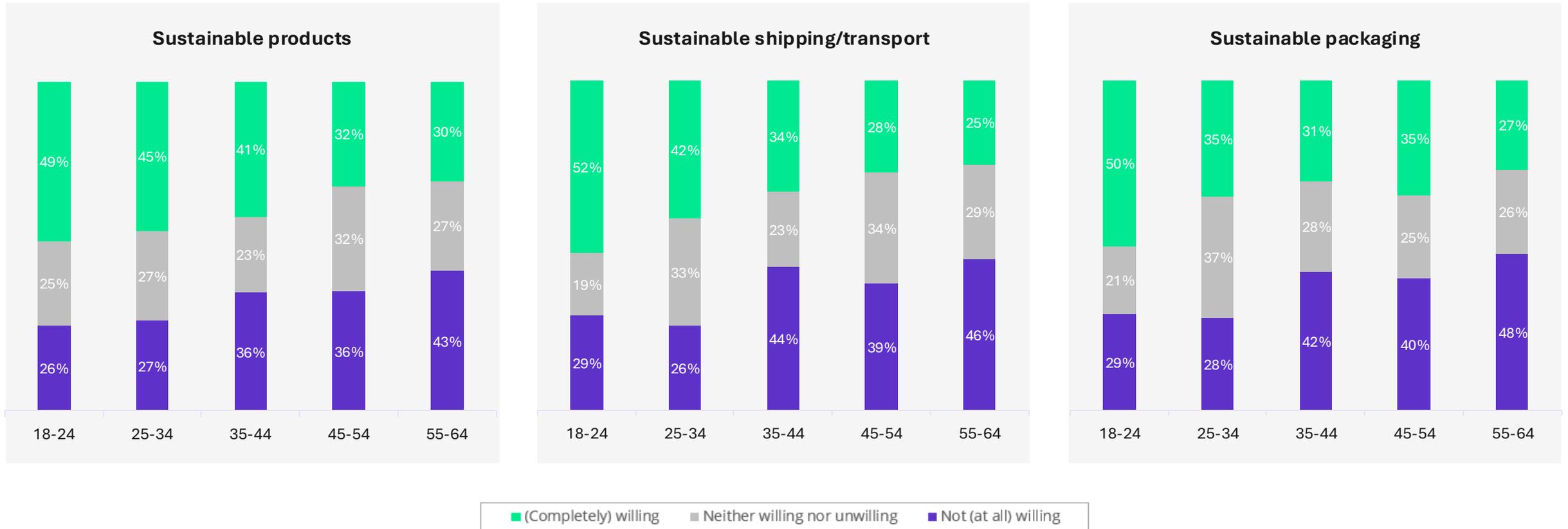
A significant part of Belgians even says that they are willing to pay!

Willingness to **pay more** for sustainable actions when shopping online



Younger generations are overall more willing to pay for sustainability

Willingness to pay more for sustainable actions when shopping online



Q: Please indicate to what extent you are willing to pay more during online shopping for ...
Base: Belgians aged between 18-24 (n=31), 25-34 (n=103), 35-44 (n=125), 45-54 (n=126), 55-64 (n=133)

The highest social class, however, states significantly more often that they are not willing to pay more for sustainable product and shipping/transport

Willingness to **pay more** for sustainable actions when shopping online



Q: Please indicate to what extent you are willing to pay more during online shopping for ...

Base: Belgians aged between upper class (n=123), upper middle class (n=136), lower middle class (n=120), lower class (n=139)

While sustainability is gaining traction, it is not yet a primary concern for all Belgians

The growing popularity of Chinese marketplaces, often criticized for their lack of sustainable practices, illustrates that affordability and convenience still outweigh environmental considerations for many.

Chinese marketplaces are popular in Belgium



% of Belgian shoppers who made a purchase on these marketplaces

SHEIN



40%

39%

36%



Chinese platforms are taking Europe by storm



Source: Digital Purchase data

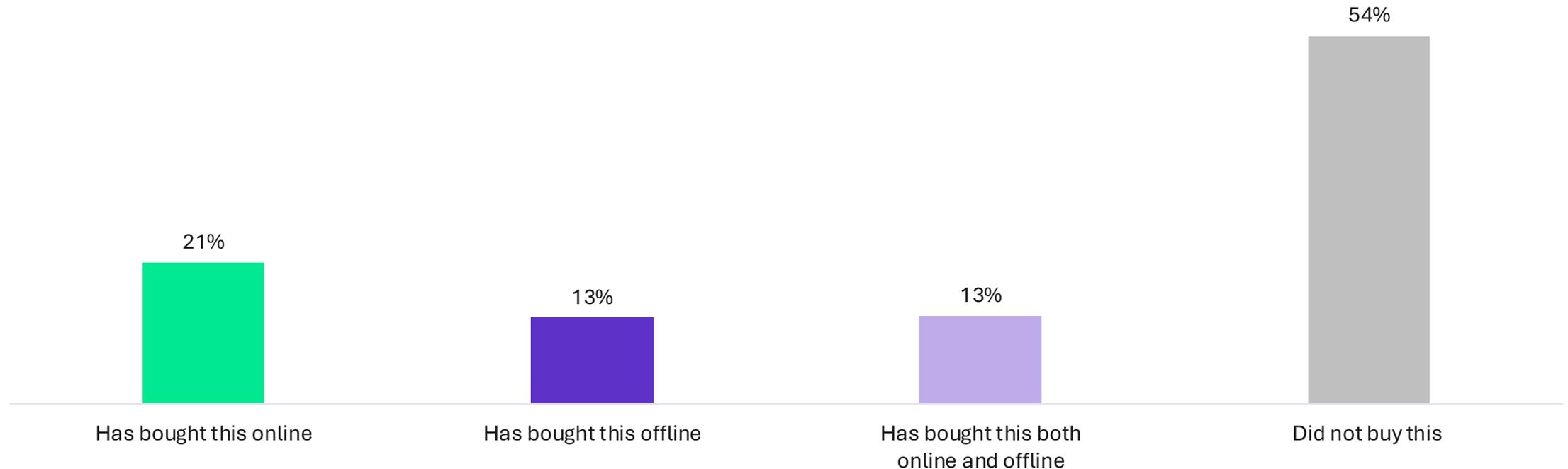
Deepdive:

What is the potential of second-hand?



Among those who purchased second-hand items, most did so either online or through a combination of online and offline channels over the past year

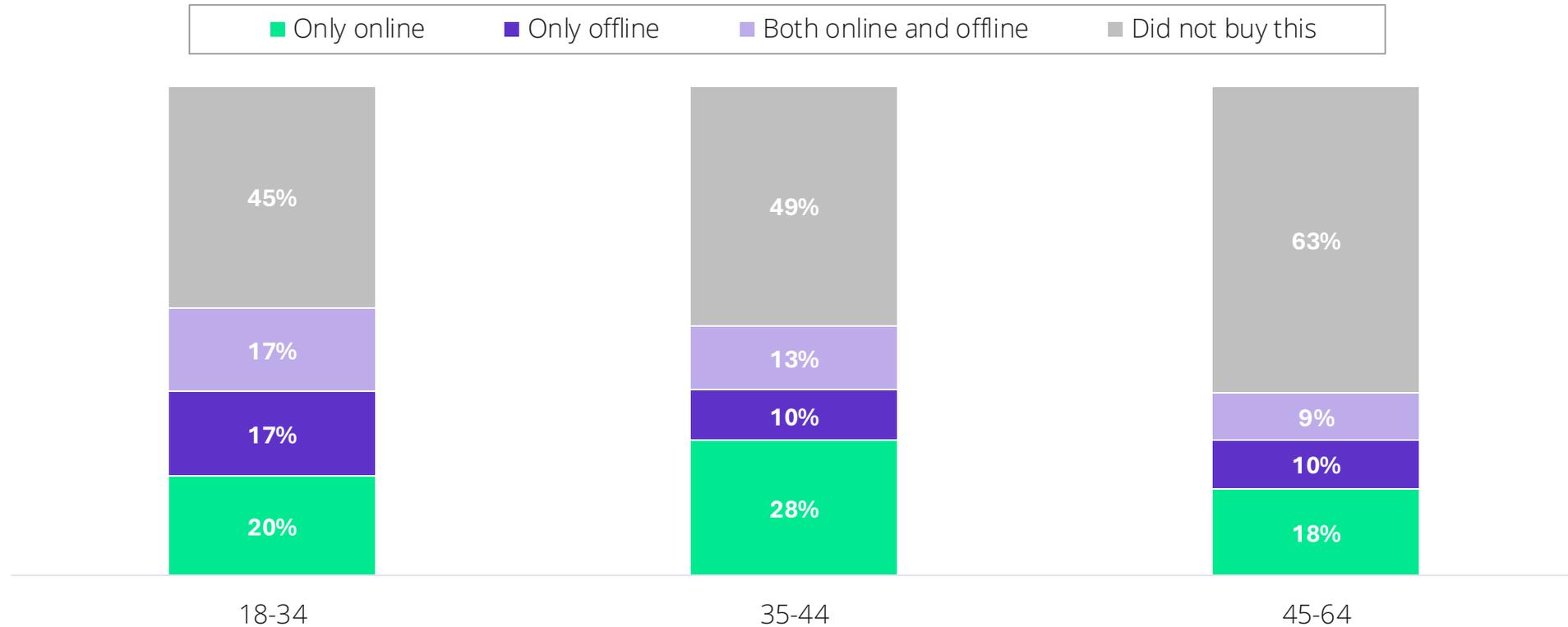
% of consumers who have bought **second-hand products** in the last 12 months



Buying second hand is more popular among younger generations

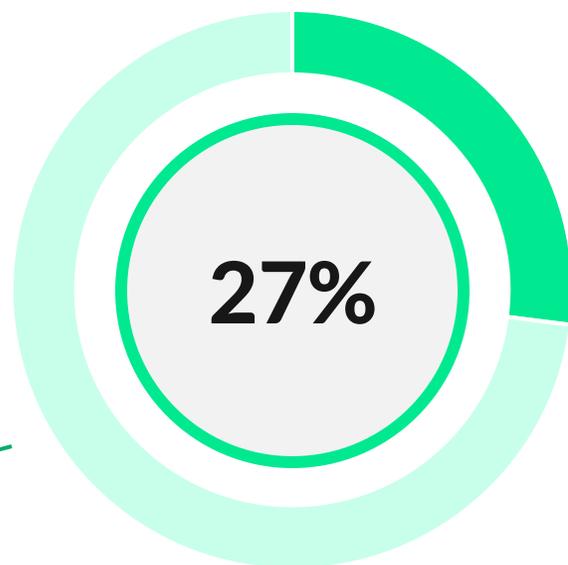
18–34-year-olds are more likely to purchase second-hand items exclusively offline.

% of consumers who have bought **second-hand products** in the last 12 months



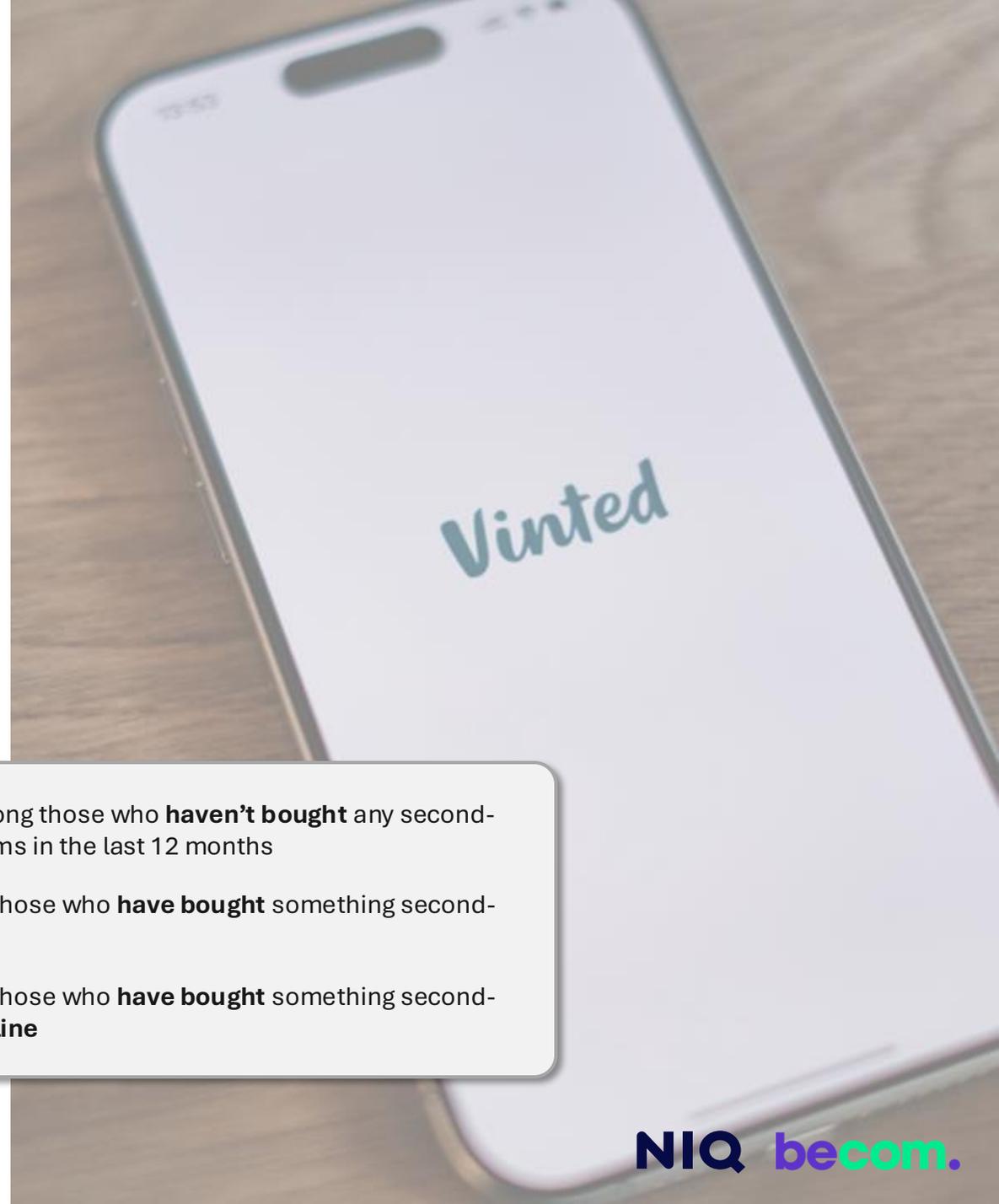
More than one in four Belgians express an intention to buy second-hand items instead of new ones as a way to be more sustainable

Second-Hand Popularity



of Belgians is **willing to buy second-hand** items in order to be more sustainable

- **12%** among those who **haven't bought** any second-hand items in the last 12 months
- **39%** for those who **have bought** something second-hand
- **43%** for those who **have bought** something second-hand **online**





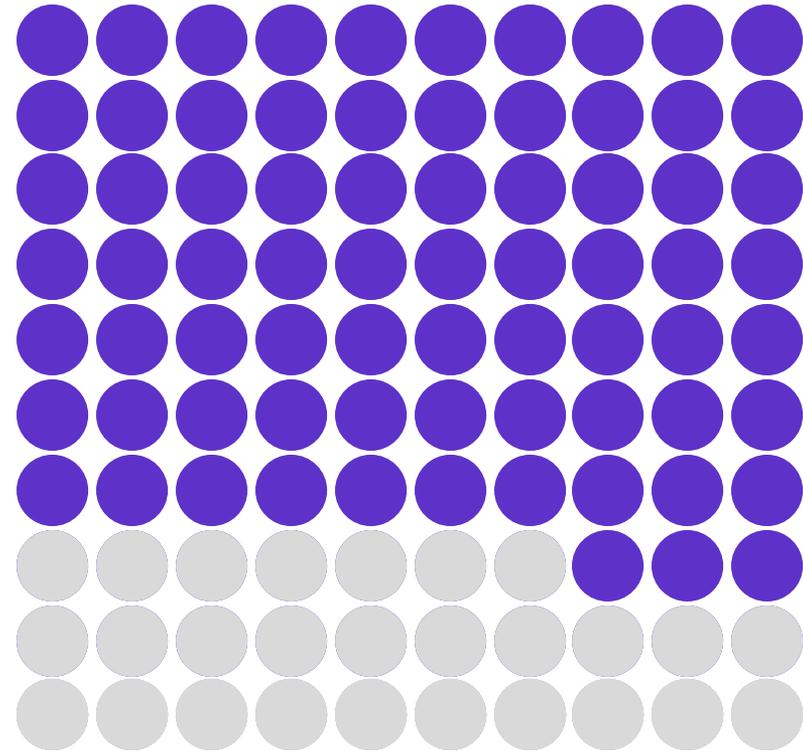
Companies & Sustainability.

What role do companies have when it comes to sustainability (according to consumers)?

Most online shoppers believe that the responsibility for sustainable practices shouldn't rest solely on their shoulders

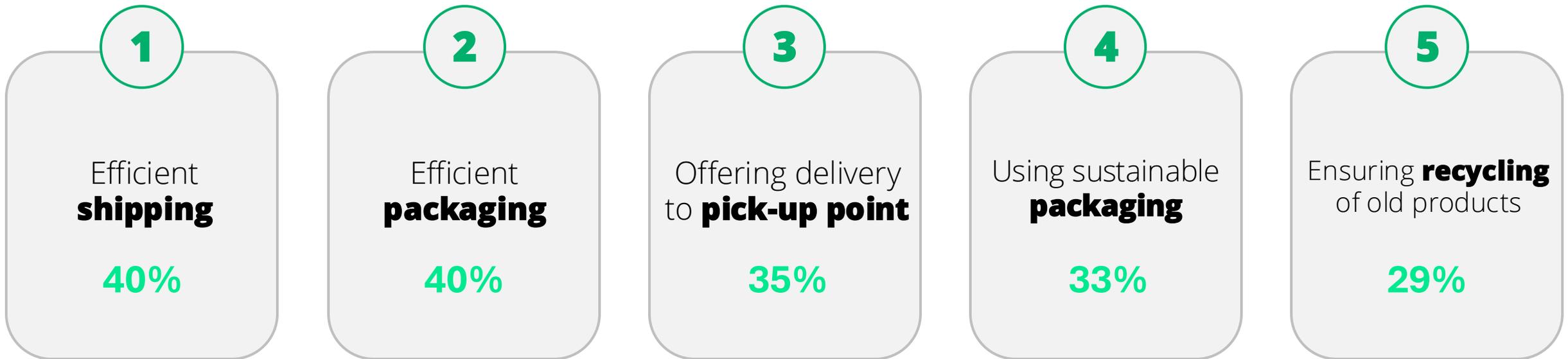
73%

thinks it is important that companies take environmentally responsible actions



So, what should online stores focus on to become more sustainable?

Top 5 focus points to be more sustainable for companies



Companies are taking action already ...



ACT FOR FOOD
WE LEBBEN ALLEMAAL RECHT OP HET BESTE
VOOR DE BESTE PRIJS

HET GOEDKOOPSTE BIOMERK VAN BELGIË

De heerlijke smaak van bio voor elke dag

Carrefour **BIO**

Met respect voor de producenten. Want je koopt goede koopjes, dan betaalt Carrefour je het verschil terug. Zie voorwaarden in de winkel.

Samen naar uitstootvrije leveringen



Een beter klimaat begint bij elk van ons. Kies jij bewust voor duurzame leveringen? Dan zetten wij jouw keuze om in daadkracht: we verminderen de uitstoot van jouw zendingen, stimuleren de circulaire economie en bieden steeds duurzamere diensten aan. Zo bouwen we samen, stap voor stap, aan een emissievrije toekomst.



#samensterk

Duurzaamheid bij Torfs

- 50%** minder uitstoot sinds 2009
- €230.000** aan goede doelen in 2024
- 11** keer Beste Werkgever



CoolblueBezorgt

We verminderen de uitstoot van uitlaatgassen door onze bezorgroutes zo slim mogelijk te plannen, met onze eigen software. Zo verlagen we onze CO₂-uitstoot en is het pakketje sneller bij de klant. Een andere manier waarop we onze uitstoot verminderen is elektrisch rijden. Daarom rijden we steeds meer met elektrische bezorgbussen en optimaliseren we de laadcapaciteit van onze depots.

Onze duurzaamheidsstrategie

#GeefHetDoor met JBC

Je familie, die wil je zien stralen van geluk. Wat voor jou belangrijk, mooi of waardevol is, wil je graag aan hen doorgeven. Dat is ook wat wij als familiebedrijf al generaties lang doen: we geven niet alleen waarden door, zoals **respect voor wie met ons werkt** en voor onze **goede doelen**. Maar ook **ideeën over het doorgeven en hergebruiken van kleding**, en binnenkort ook onze **kennis over stoffen**; dat is voor ons 'duurzaamheid'.

Door families, voor families. We goten alles wat we al jarenlang doen en alles wat we nog van plan zijn in onze heldere **duurzaamheidsstrategie #GeefHetDoor**. Zo kan elke familie nog generaties lang stralen in een JBC-outfit. Zo weet jouw familie wat ze draagt, weet jij dat je goed bezig bent, en geven we samen onze liefde en passie voor Belgische mode door aan de families die na je komen.

Bol breidt aanbod van refurbished producten verder uit

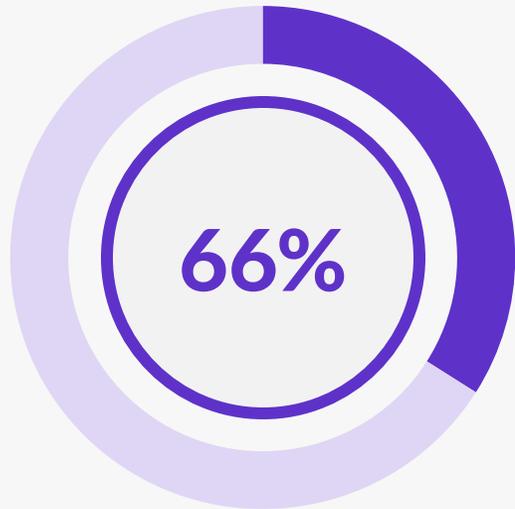
Twee op de drie consumenten overweegt refurbished elektronica



Onze duurzame initiatieven

Binnen onze duurzaamheidsstrategie formuleren we heel wat ambitieuze doelstellingen op lange termijn. Om die te realiseren, zetten we meer dan 150 concrete projecten op: onze duurzaamheidsinitiatieven.

However, the majority of Belgians is not able to associate an online store to sustainability



cannot spontaneously name an online store they associate with sustainability

Even among the 34% who can, the stores mentioned tend to be those with strong overall brand awareness, and the references also remain low for each company.

This indicates that most online companies are failing to clearly communicate or differentiate their sustainability efforts.





Key Take-Aways.

Key Take-Aways



Consumer do care about sustainability

Consumers indicate they're willing to take action (e.g., by bundling purchases, buying more carefully, and even buying less). Moreover, a significant portion is open to paying extra! Unfortunately, we still observe that sustainability is not consistently taken into account in actual purchasing behavior.

Buying second-hand is not uncommon in Belgium

A considerable number of Belgians report having purchased second-hand items in the past 12 months, most often through online platforms. Additionally, about 1 in 4 indicate they would consider buying second-hand more often in the future as a more sustainable choice.



Consumer want companies to be sustainable as well

Around three in four Belgians believe that the responsibility for sustainable practices shouldn't lie solely with consumers. According to them, sustainable packaging and shipping are the most important focus points. While many businesses are already making efforts in sustainability, these initiatives often go unnoticed, possibly due to a lack of clear communication towards customers.





Thank you!

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Results of the BOSB 2025.

Belgian Online Sustainability Barometer

Sustainability in E-commerce.

Charlotte Douchy
Bram Leerkes
Adam Oujani

Academiejaar 2024-2025



be
com.

BELGIAN E-BUSINESS FEDERATION



Methodology.

Research KUL

- To what extent do Belgian online companies and SMEs implement sustainable practices in their business management?
- Objectives:
 - New insights in sustainable e-commerce
 - Comparison with the study from 2021
- What?
 1. Literature Study
 2. Quantitative study
 - 153 respondents from various sectors



Analysis.

A close-up photograph of dragonfly wings, showing the intricate network of veins and the fine, hexagonal cells of the membrane. The wings are positioned horizontally, with one pair in the foreground and another pair slightly behind it. The background is a solid, vibrant purple color.

In general.

General Characteristics

141 Dutch, 12 French

62.5%: only products or a mix of products & services

Sectors: diverse

- ✓ Most represented: clothing & fashion, food & beverages

Majority: external logistics partners

- ✓ 16%: in-house logistics

General assessment of sustainability

Importance of sustainability

- ✓ Large companies > SMEs

Implementation of sustainability measures

- ✓ Large companies > SMEs

Main drivers

- ✓ Regulations and customer expectations
- ✓ Internal motivation

Barriers

- ✓ High costs

A close-up photograph of dragonfly wings, showing the intricate network of veins. The wings are positioned diagonally across the frame, with the top wing in the upper right and the bottom wing in the lower left. The background is a solid, light purple color.

Product offering.

Product offering.

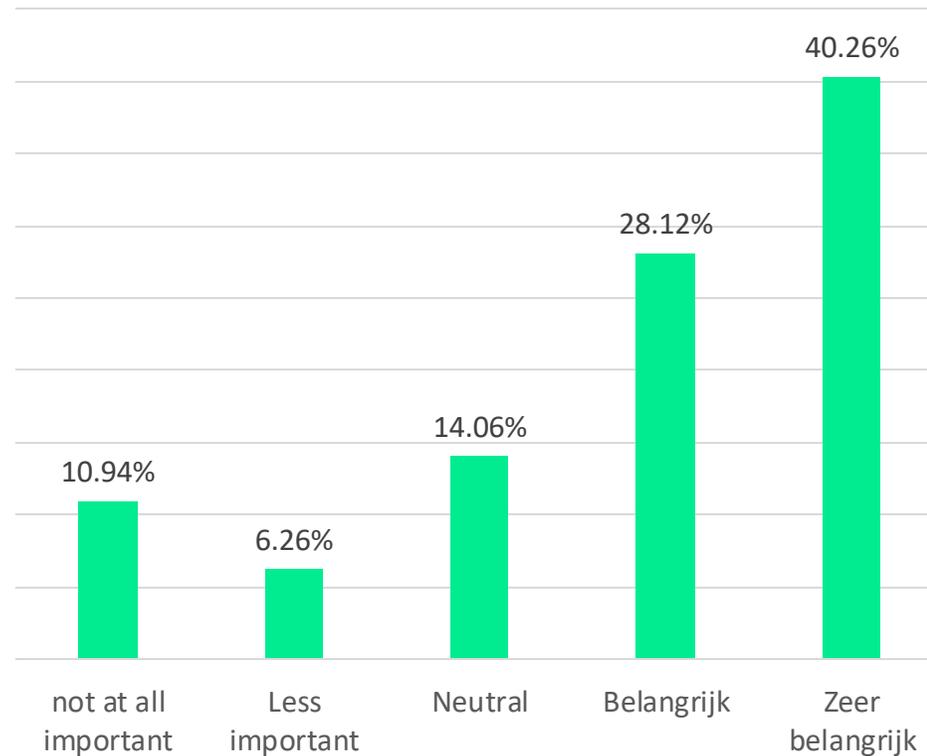
Answer	Count	Percentage
Collaborating with sustainable suppliers	50	66,7%
Developing own sustainable products	24	32,0%
Adjusting existing products	17	22,7%
Phasing out non-sustainable products	17	22,7%
Investing in research	11	14,7%
Avoiding product destruction	39	52%
Promoting circularity	33	44%
Offering second-hand products	13	17,3%
No specific measures taken	7	9,3%
Other answers	5	6,67%
Developing a new reuse business model		
Sustainable options in the loyalty card, workshops		

A close-up photograph of dragonfly wings, showing the intricate network of veins and the delicate, mesh-like structure of the wing membrane. The wings are positioned diagonally across the frame, with the top wing in the upper right and the bottom wing in the lower left. The background is a solid, light purple color.

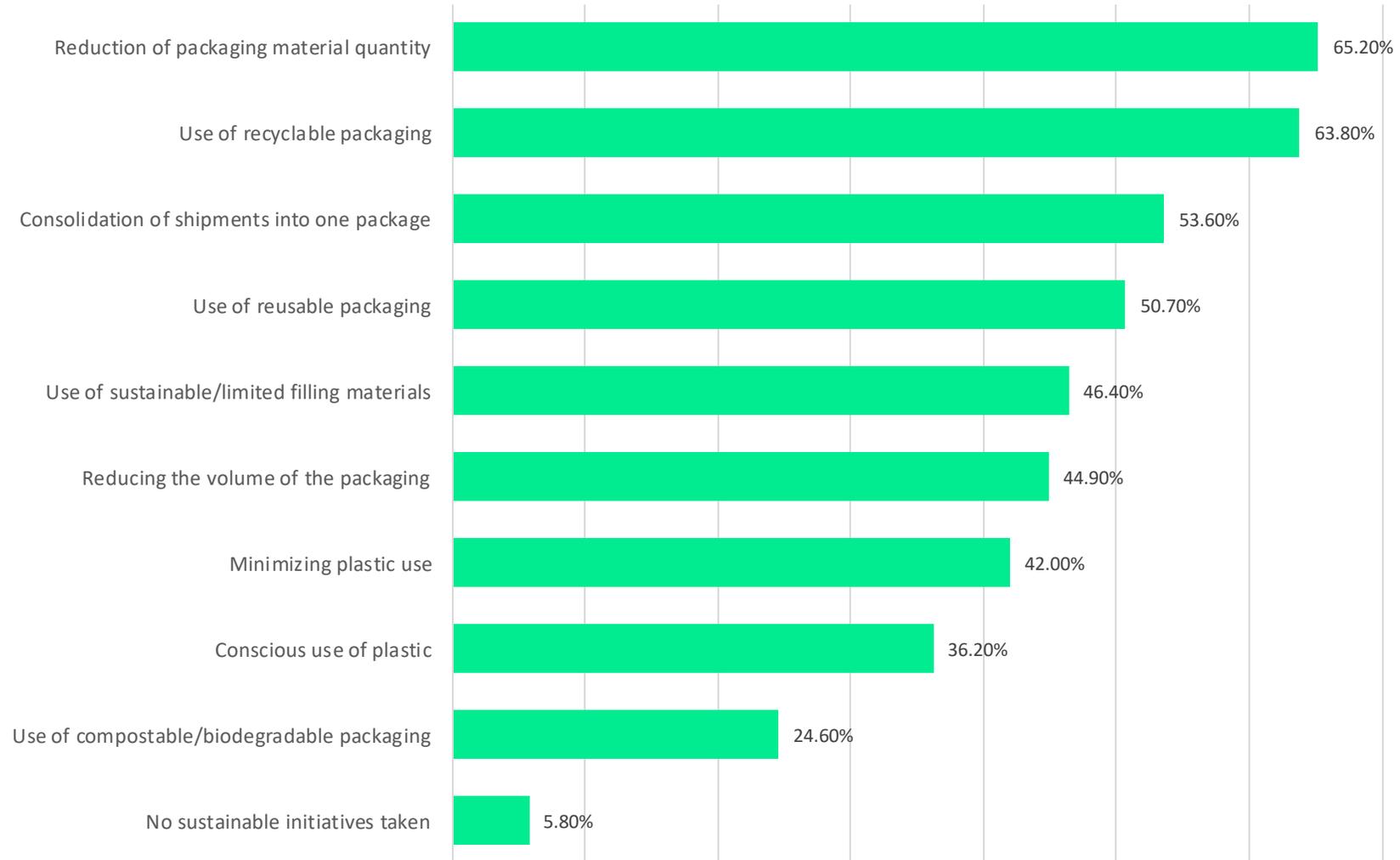
Packaging.

Importance

Importance of sustainable packaging
for business operations

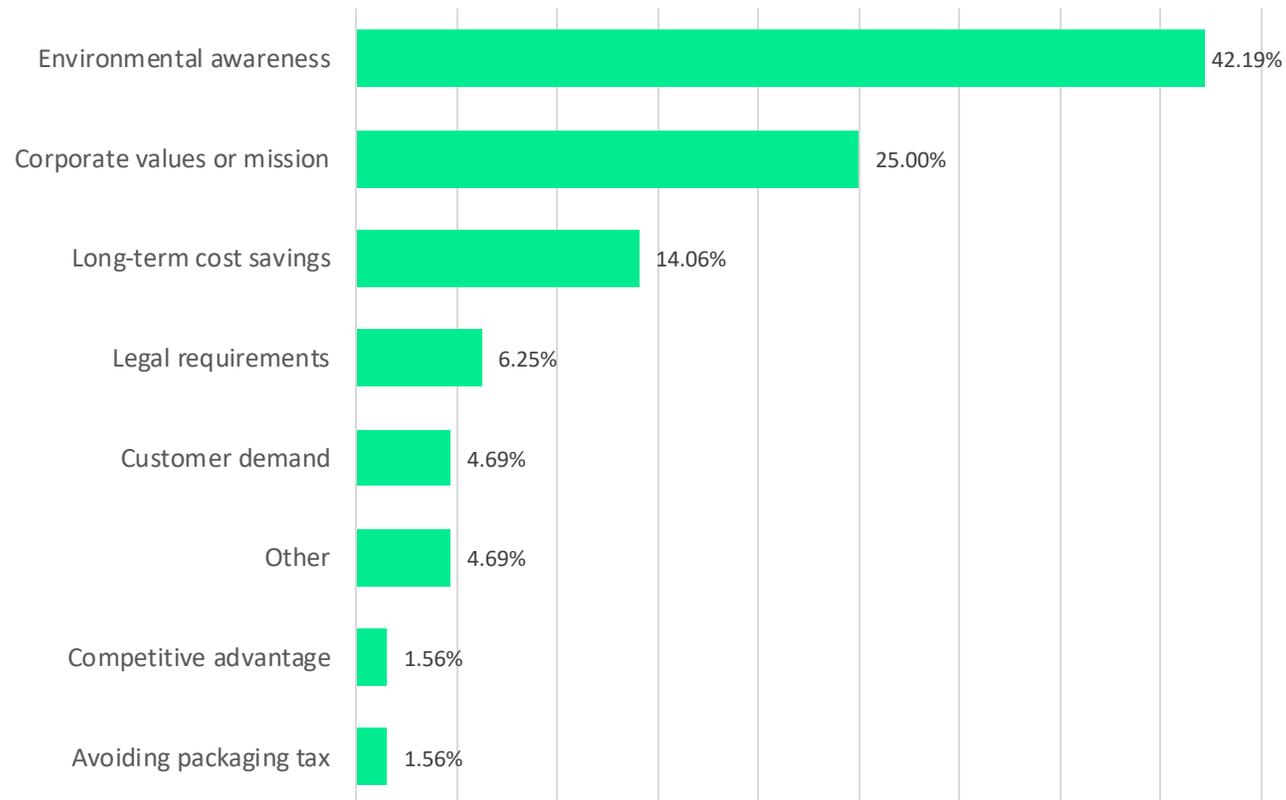


Already implemented sustainable packaging initiatives



Motivation

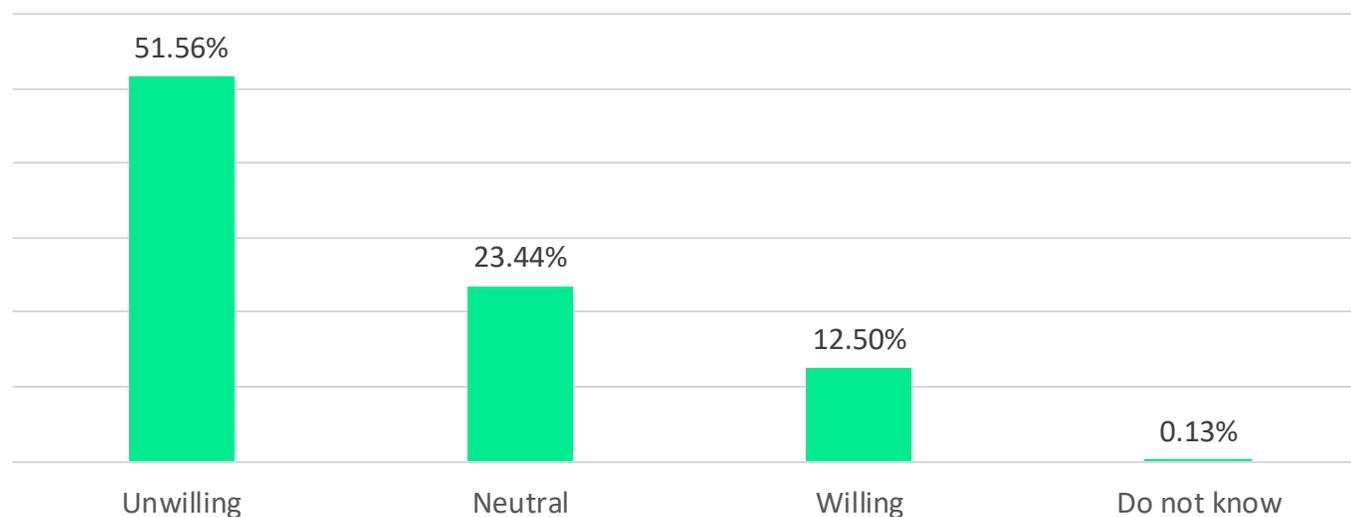
The main reason for implementing sustainable packaging



- Environmental awareness= most important
- Intrinsic > Extrinsic motivation

Estimation of willingness to pay

Estimating customer willingness to pay more for sustainable packaging



Transport & logistics.

Transport & logistics

Monitoring

- 66,7% monitors informally
- 0% without monitoring plans improvement
- 10,2% has formal monitoring

Sustainable Delivery Options

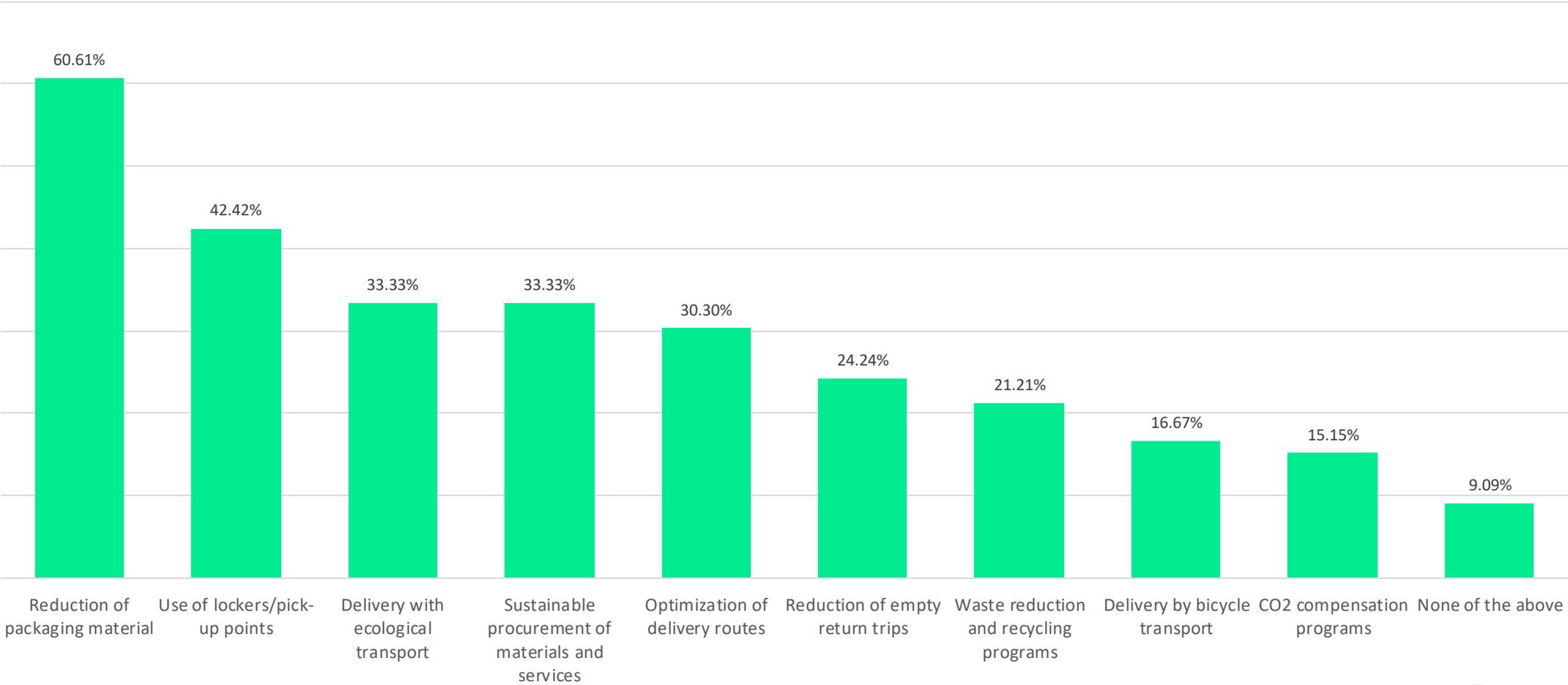
- 59,7% finds this important
- 3,2% doesn't think it's important

Expectations of Partners

- 63,6% expects green vehicles
- 47% CO₂-neutral shipping
- 50% sufficient pickup points

Transport & logistics

Implemented sustainable logistics practices

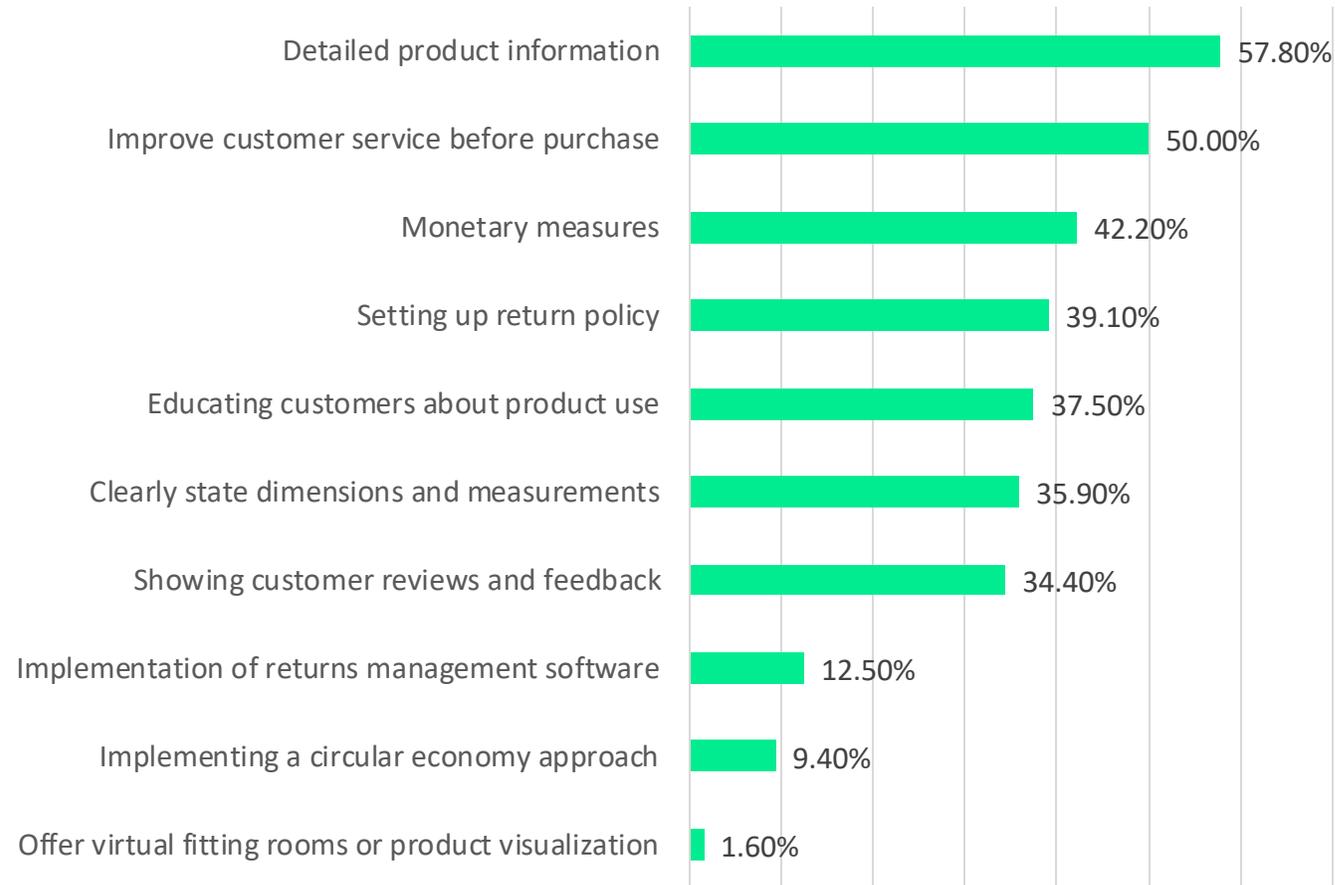


A close-up photograph of dragonfly wings, showing the intricate network of veins and the delicate, mesh-like structure of the wing membrane. The wings are positioned diagonally across the frame, with the top wing in the upper right and the bottom wing in the lower left. The background is a solid, vibrant purple color.

Returns.

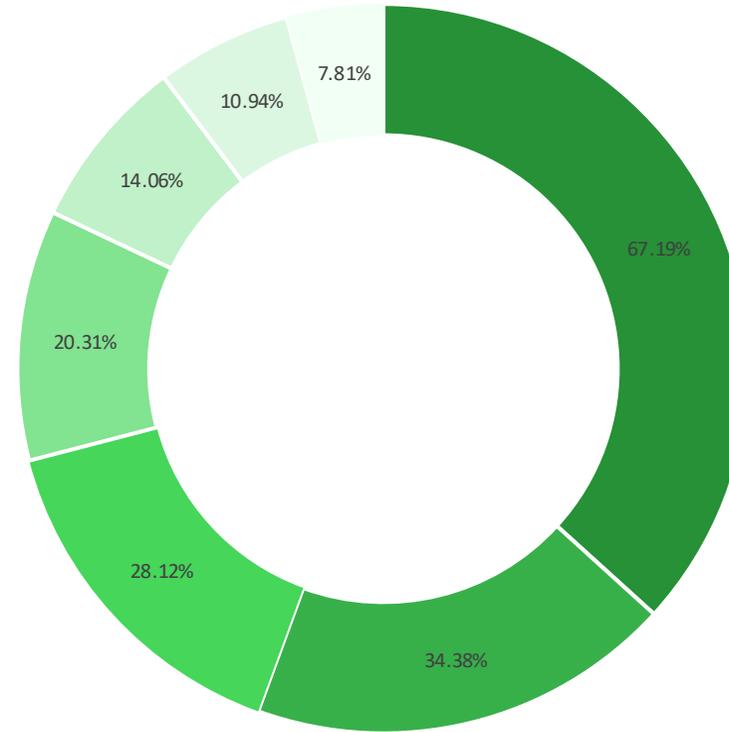
Returns

Measures implemented to reduce returns



Returns

Handling of returned products



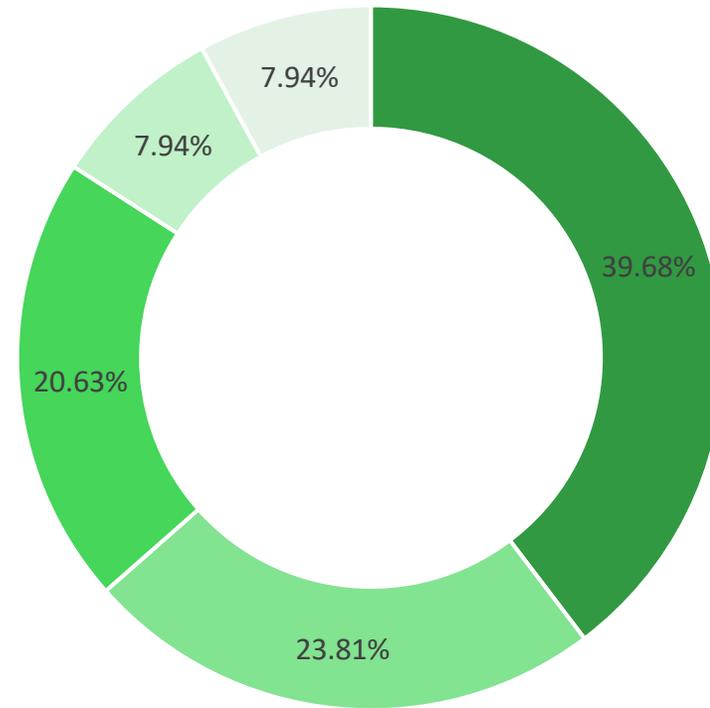
- Are re-sold as new
- Are sold as secondhand or outlet products
- Are donated to charities
- Are repaired or refurbished
- Are destroyed or discarded
- Are recycled
- Other

A close-up photograph of dragonfly wings, showing the intricate network of veins and the fine, hexagonal cells of the membrane. The wings are positioned horizontally, with one pair in the foreground and another pair slightly behind it. The background is a solid, vibrant purple color.

Communication.

Frequency

Communication of Sustainability Initiatives to Customers



- Seldom or never
- Only for specific campaigns
- No answer
- Regularly (e.g., via newsletters)
- With every sale

Communication to consumers.

Encouraging sustainable choices

✓ 55,56%

Communication about efforts

✓ 46,03%

Use of certificates

✓ 32% for complete offer

✓ 20% for specific products

Positive relationship between use of certification and communication

Legal Framework.

Legal framework.

Legislative knowledge

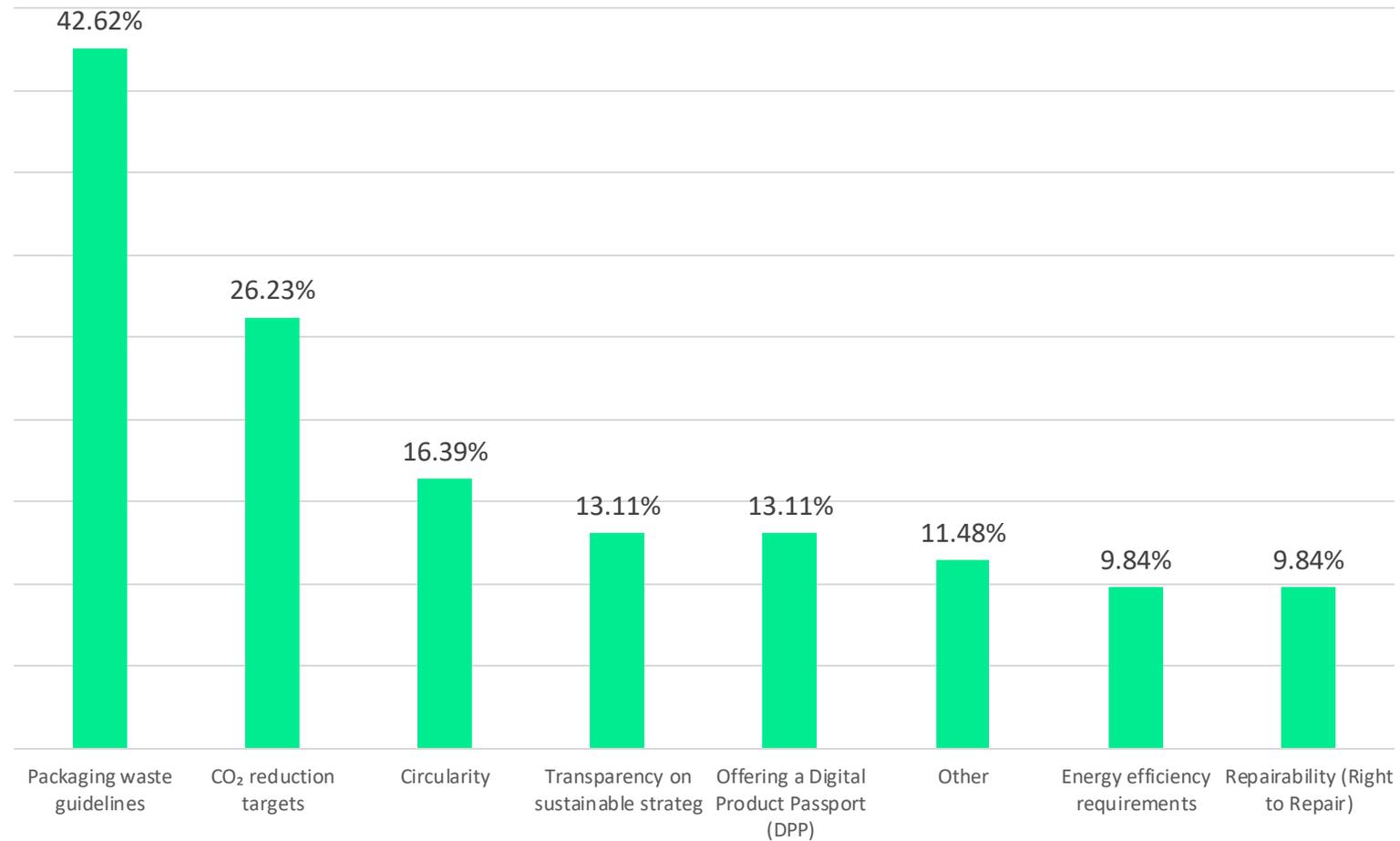
- 50,10% somewhat familiar
- 31,15% unfamiliar
- 6,65% very well known

Use of subsidies

- 4,92% do
- 77,05% unaware

Legal impact

Regulations with the Greatest Impact on Webshop Activities (perceived)



Recommendations.

Recommendations

- Structural integration
- Bridging knowledge gap between big & small
- Encourage alternative or no-packaging
- Optimize return management
- Systematize communication
- Increase legislative knowledge



wiki.
our knowledge center



Questions.

Upcoming.

Next Market Lab.

November 20, 2025

- ✔ Market Monitor, S1 2025
- ✔ EBM, S1 2025

Interesting reads.

- ✔ [Ecommerce Europe report](#)
- ✔ [Digital Trust Index](#)

6 NOVEMBER 2025 @ THE EVENT LOUNGE

BECOM AWARDS

35

DAYS

02

HOURS

38

MINUTES

17

SECONDS



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