



eCommerce Research

Preparing for
Peak Trading 2024

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A world closer

At An Post we carry out extensive market research so that we can better understand and meet the needs of our customers while also gaining insights into changes in consumer behaviours and expectations when shopping online. Over the past year we have invested in our eCommerce Index with our research partners IPSOS/ Behaviours & Attitudes.



This research provides insight on where Irish consumers are spending online, the products they are purchasing, how much they are spending and how often, the channels they are using and their expectations on eCommerce vendors in relation to delivery times and returns policies.

A staggering 95% of Irish adults shopped online in 2023 illustrating the potential for Irish businesses to bolster and expand their eCommerce offering. The index is a tool for all Irish businesses to use, demonstrating how they can prepare for eCommerce trading and where they should be investing time in their service offering to grow their business.

The period from October to December, now commonly known as 'Peak' in the eCommerce world, is the most important trading time for many businesses. We know from our research that this is when customers are shopping and spending more online. Planning now for that important sales period is crucial for every business.

We want to share our research and learnings with businesses so that they can make any necessary plans now to have a fantastic peak 2024.

The eCommerce Team at An Post will always be on hand to support eCommerce retailers and can provide a number of supports to ensure the growth of your online business offering. Get in touch with us at experts@anpost.ie

Garrett Bridgeman

Managing Director

COO Mails & Parcels, An Post

Background to An Post's eCommerce Index

An Post has conducted eCommerce research with IPSOS/ Behaviour & Attitudes across 2023 and 2024

Research Methodology

Ipsos B&A have conducted four waves of consumer studies with a sample of 1,500 Adults 16+ per wave. All data are controlled & weighted in terms of age, gender, socio-economic class and region to be representative of the adult population of the Republic of Ireland.

Waves were conducted on the following dates:

- W1 2024 - 11-28 March 24
- W3 2023 - 21 Nov-12 Dec 23
- W2 2023 - 10-27 Aug 23
- W1 2023 - 17 Apr-2 May 23




An Post is sharing salient points for Irish businesses to use to enhance and bolster their eCommerce strategies and peak trading preparations.

Online shopping frequency continues to grow, especially amongst younger customers



Over the last year, on average, **33%** of 16-24 year olds **shop online weekly**, **29%** of 25-34 year olds.



Waves 2 & 3 of the research were conducted in the 2nd half of 2023, showing the frequency for shopping increases during this timeframe.

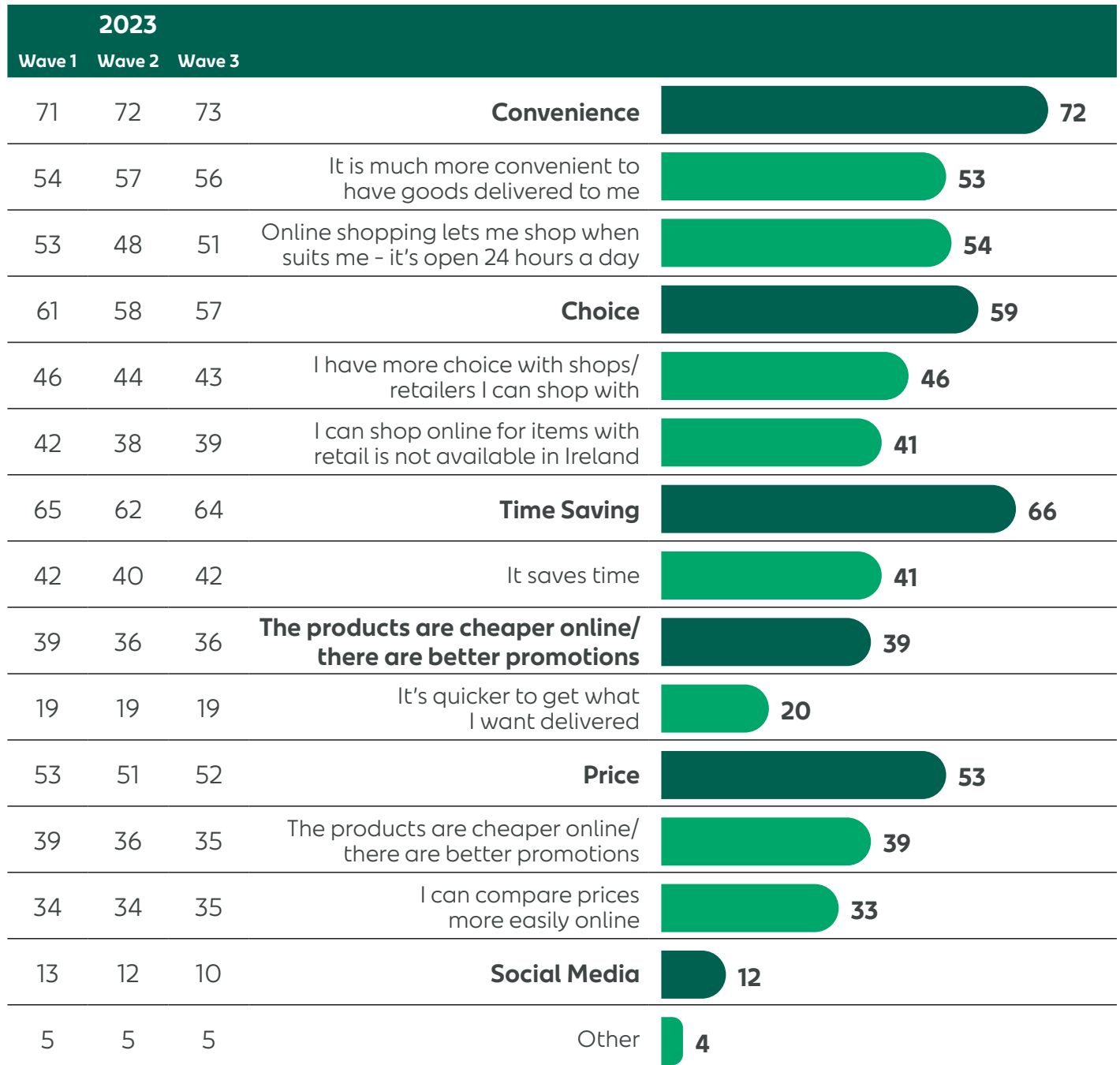


Irish businesses should prepare for **increased demand for online shopping in the 2nd half** of 2024.

Weekly %	2023			Monthly %	2023		
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3		Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
16-24's 26%	29	38	37	16-24's 49%	55	46	45
25-34's 22%	28	33	34	25-34's 59%	47	49	48
35-44's 22%	20	26	23	35-44's 53%	56	53	56
45-54's 14%	14	17	20	45-54's 54%	49	50	48
55-64's 10%	9	10	8	55-64's 43%	37	41	39
65+ 4%	7	7	3	65+ 31%	35	35	32

Q.1 Over the past 12 months, on average how often have you purchased physical goods online (excluding groceries)?

What is driving customers to shop online and what should businesses promote/be aware of?



Irish businesses should promote the **convenience** of using their website, the choice they offer to consumers and their **delivery times**, demonstrating how customers can **save time** by shopping online with them

Retailer Websites, App's or Marketplace are the main outlets where consumers are buying their goods. There is a small rise in the use of social media amongst younger customers.



19% of online ordering for beauty products & clothing by 16-24 year-olds was through **social media** profiles (14% W1, 17% W2)



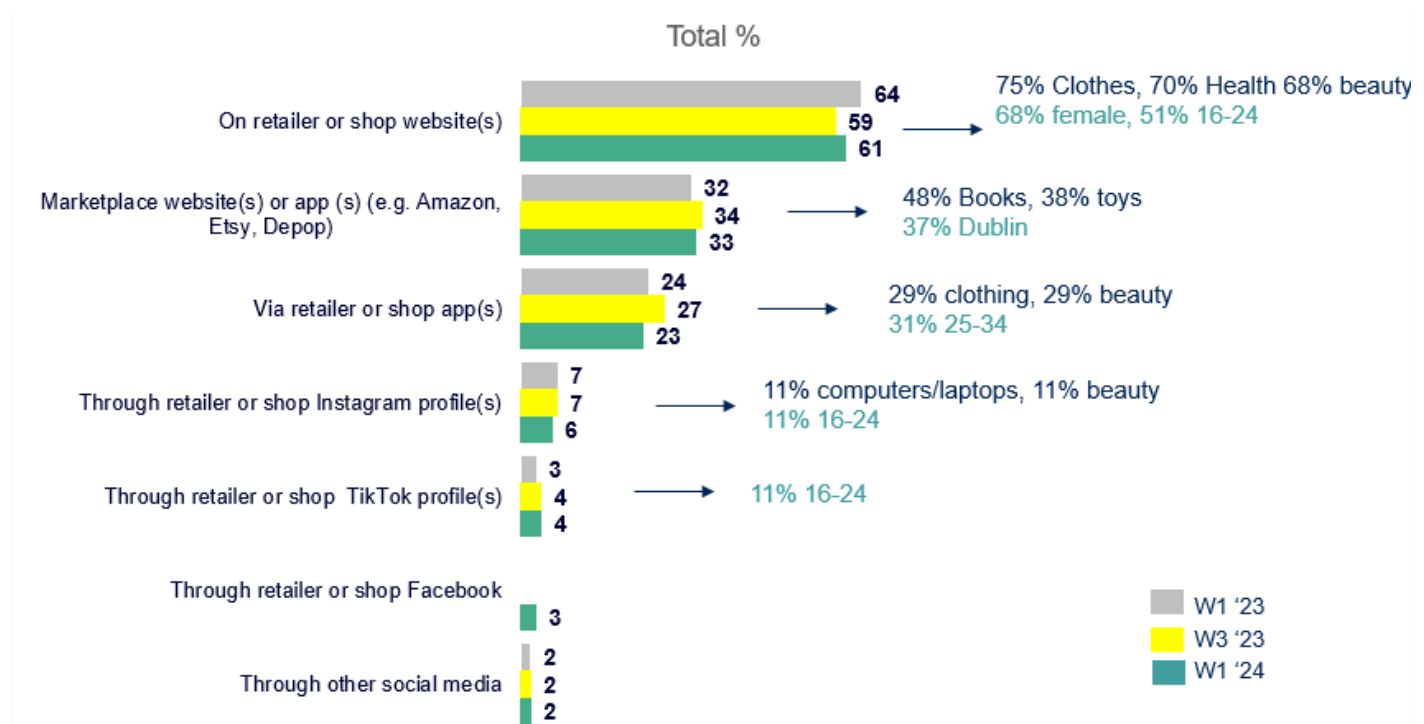
Apps are being used by **1 in 4** while **retailer social media** (Instagram/TikTok/other) is at 12%.



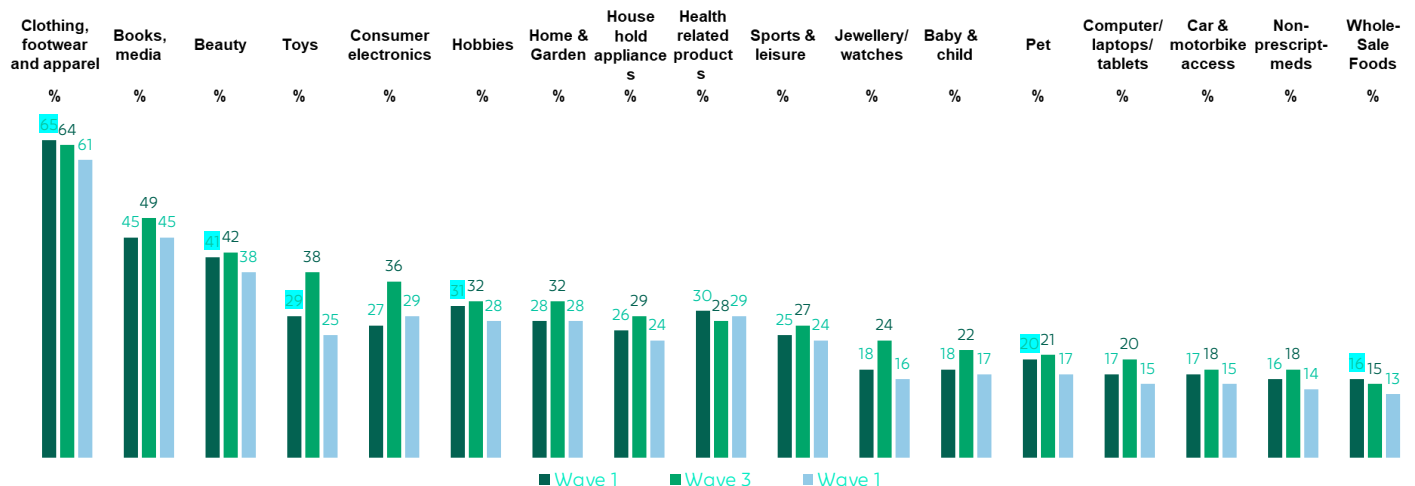
Age influencing social use: For the under 35s Instagram used by **11%** while TikTok is at **7%**. 35-44s prefer to use apps and websites



Retailer Websites, App's or Marketplace are the main outlets where consumers are buying their goods. There is a small rise in the use of social media amongst younger customers



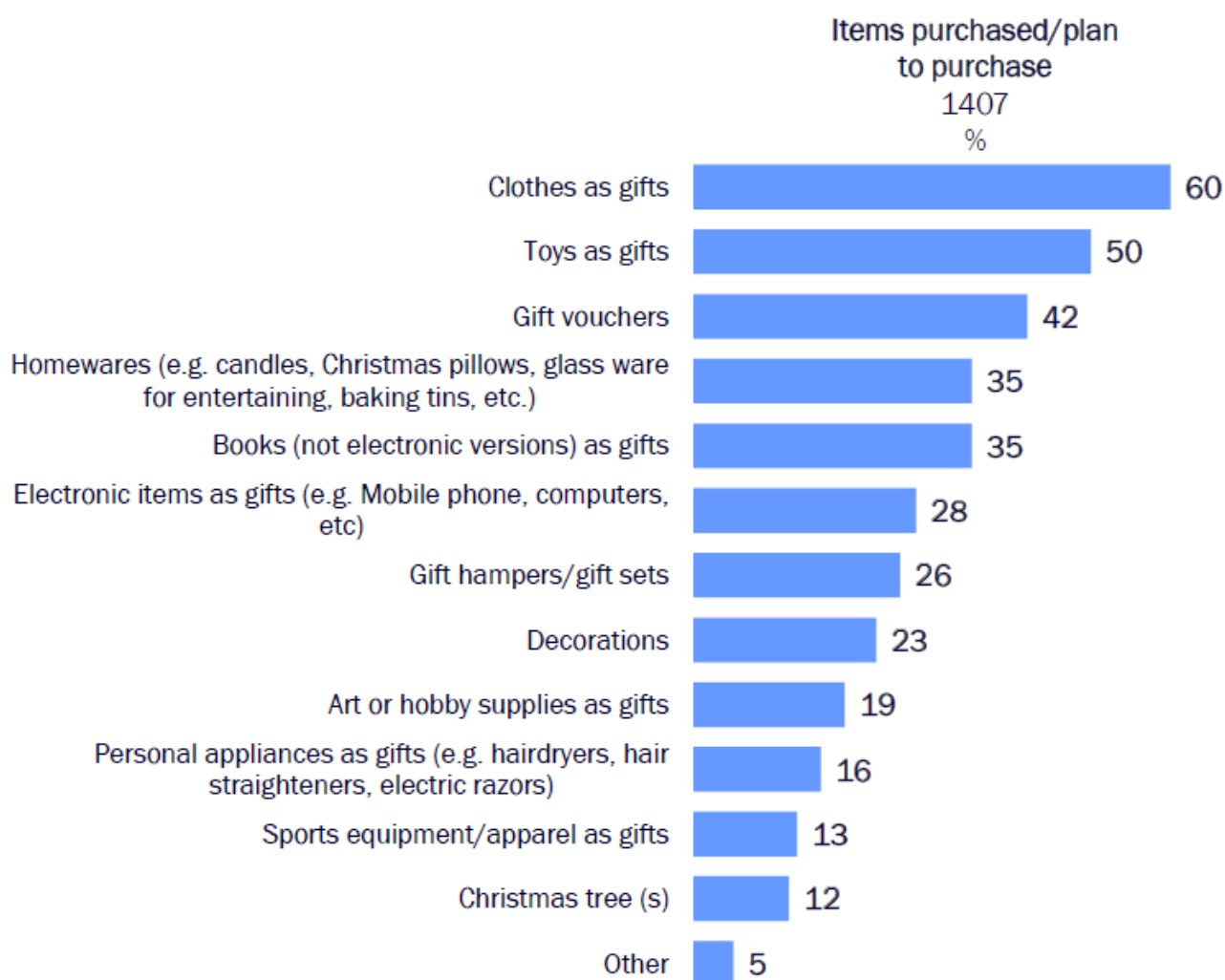
Clothing remains the top category online but growth is evident in other categories such as toys, electronics and jewellery, particularly at Christmas



Q.3 Over the past 3 months, thinking of the following categories of goods, which if any, did you buy online only, in-store only, both in-store and online or didn't buy at all.

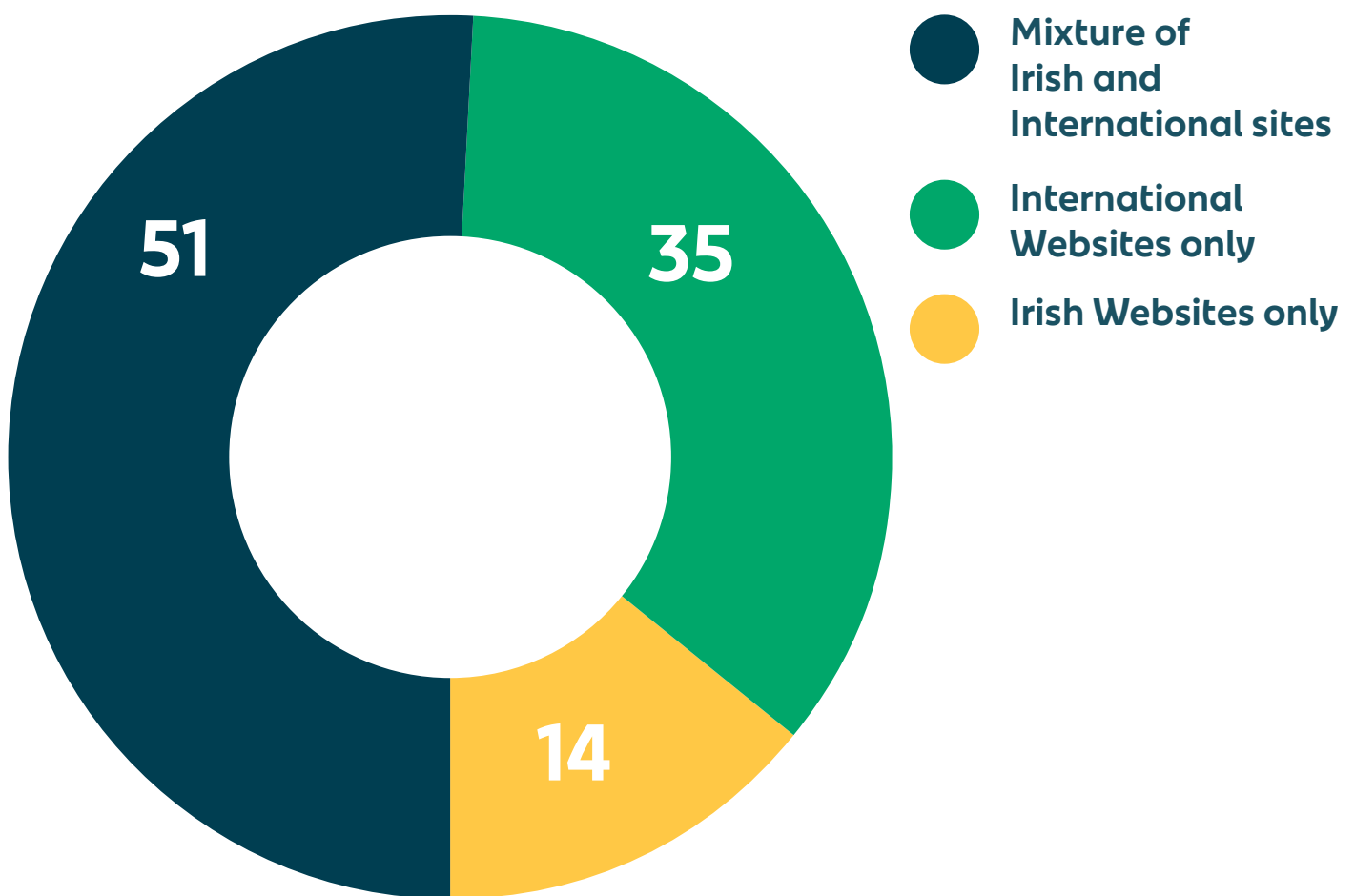
October – December are peak trading times for ecommerce retailers

94% of Adults plan to shop over the Christmas period



Over a third of Irish customers are only shopping on Irish websites

More than 8 in 10 shopping on Irish websites



Of the items you are purchasing online, are you buying from Irish-based websites or international sites?

October – December are peak trading times for ecommerce retailers



81% of customers claimed to be using Irish websites for Christmas gift shopping



Black Friday deals kick start to the peak trading - **56%** of customers were influenced by deals around this time



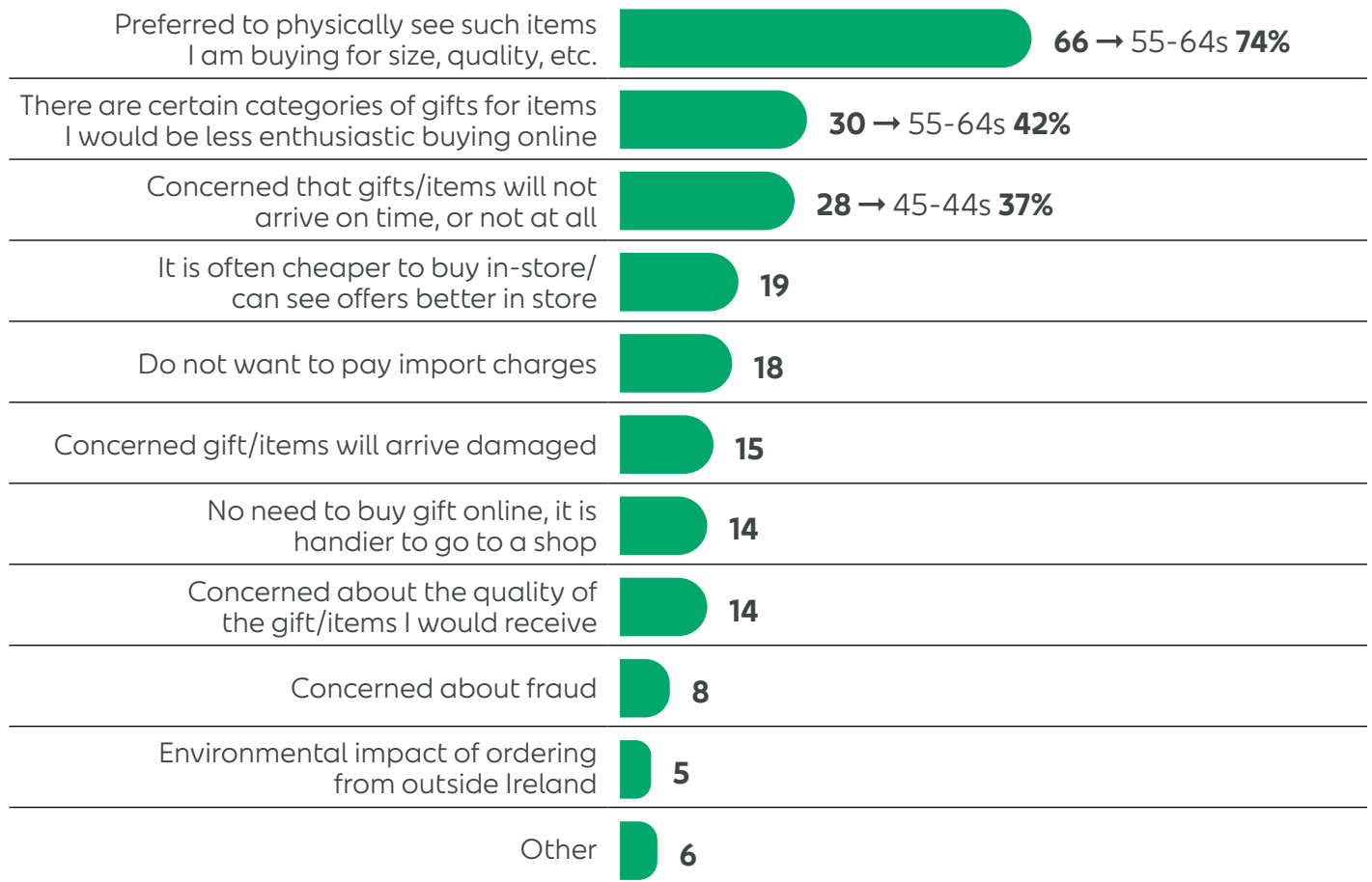
Top 2 categories for using any Irish websites were **toys 90%** and **gift vouchers 93%**.



Nearly **half (44%)** who use Irish websites did so for **faster delivery**.

Q.21b Thinking about the following Christmas gift items, which, if any, are you planning to buy or have you bought?

Customers are looking for more information when buying online to give them confidence in their ecommerce purchase



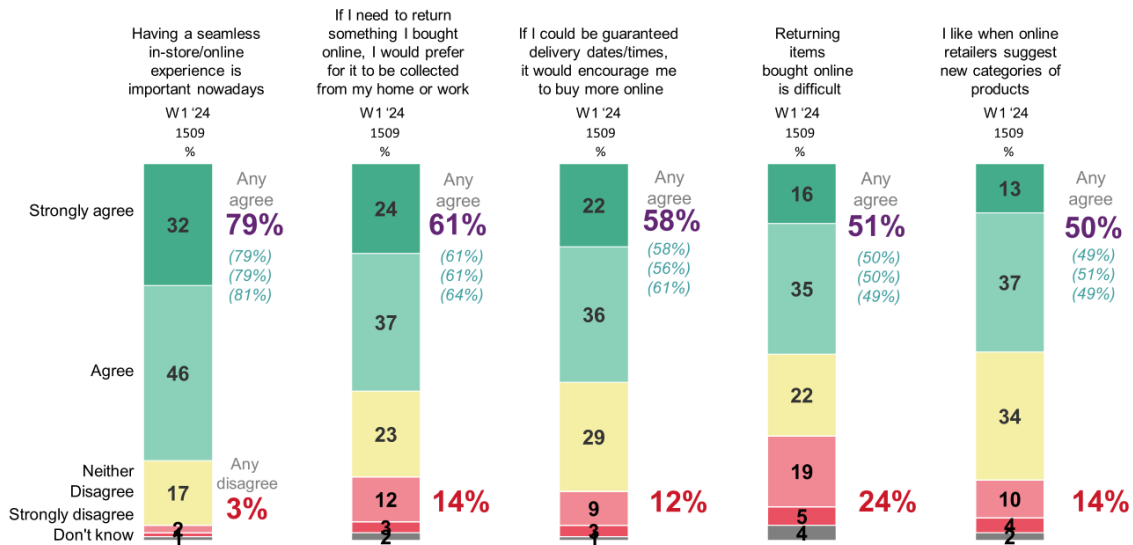
An Post suggests that Irish businesses **provide delivery timelines and size guides** on their websites, and should **promote no hidden fees - as has potential to** happen when buying internationally

Customers are looking for a mix of online and in store experiences

Consumers continue to want a seamless online/in-store experience and returns collected



Base: All Adults 16+ 1,509/4,125,000



**Guaranteed delivery dates/times influencing increasing online shopping highest for 16-34s at 72%
1 in 5 16-34s strongly agree returning items bought online is difficult**

Q.14 Please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following?

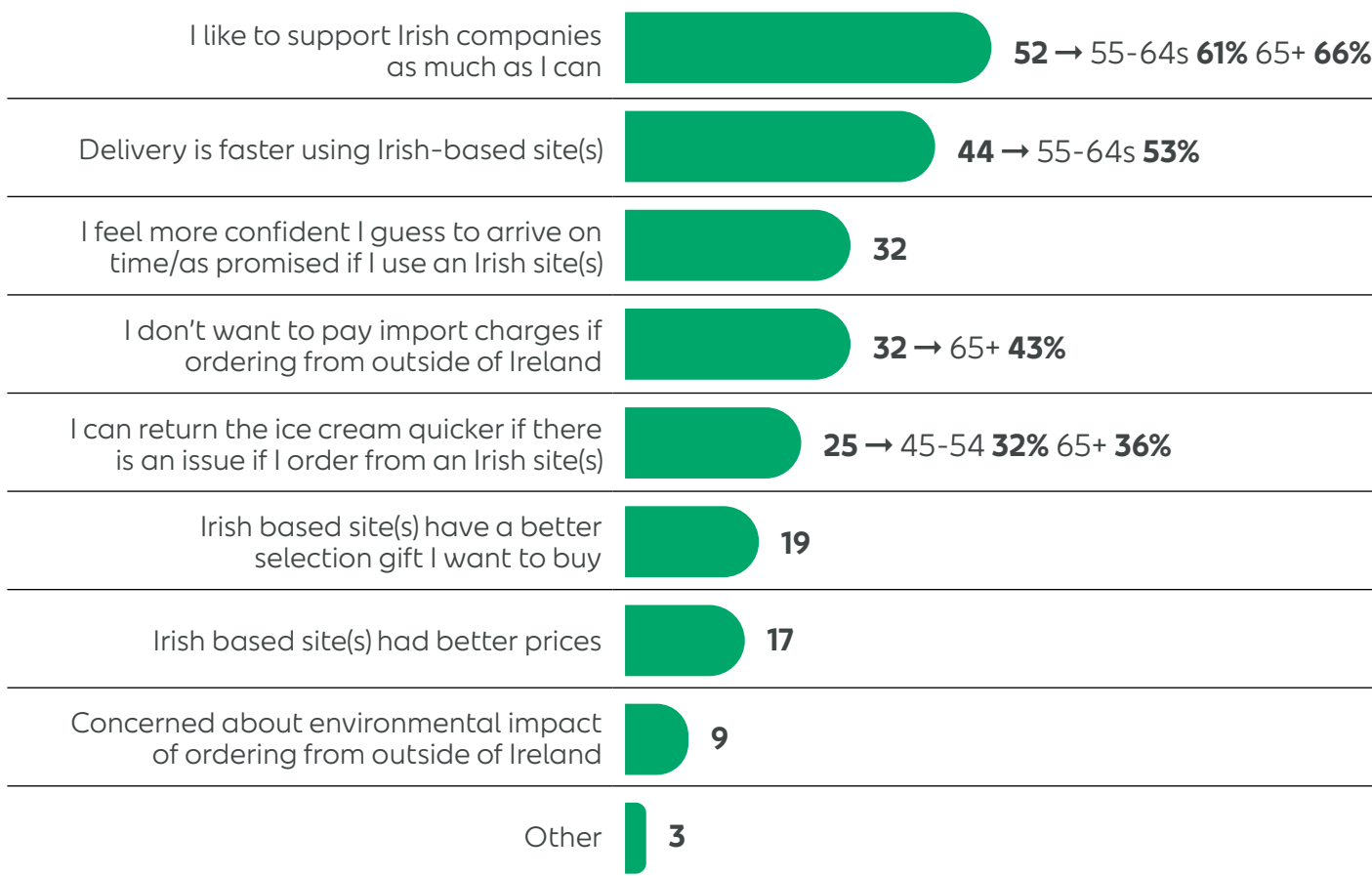
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Stores that can offer seamless experience between online and in-store, such as the ability to order products or sizes not in store for home delivery, will result in a **differentiated and positive customer experience**

Irish eCommerce retailers should promote:

1. Their Irish-ness or presence in Ireland
2. No import charges
3. Speed of delivery to grow sales



Q.21f For the gifts you are purchasing online with Irish based sites, why are you purchasing with these sites?

Price & Promotion are important for Irish customers

Online deals, and social media influencers are important for all customers, but particularly if Irish business are targeting a younger audience



79% of all purchases are **under €100** with the sweet spot being pricing **between €25-49**



56% of respondents said **exclusive online deals** or discount codes influenced their online purchase, with a higher incidence 16-24 year olds at **73%** and 25-44 year olds at **64%**



29% were influenced by social media or online ads



30% were influenced by a recommendation, content or ad from an influencer or celebrity followed on Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, etc. This was higher for 16-24 year olds at **73%**

Irish ecommerce retailers should explain delivery times and returns policies on main pages on their websites

Giving customers certainty will help increase sales



58% of customers agree that if they could be guaranteed delivery dates/times, it would encourage them to buy more online

50% of customers believe that returning items bought online is difficult


Customers are looking for a seamless experience and are really open to new product suggestions



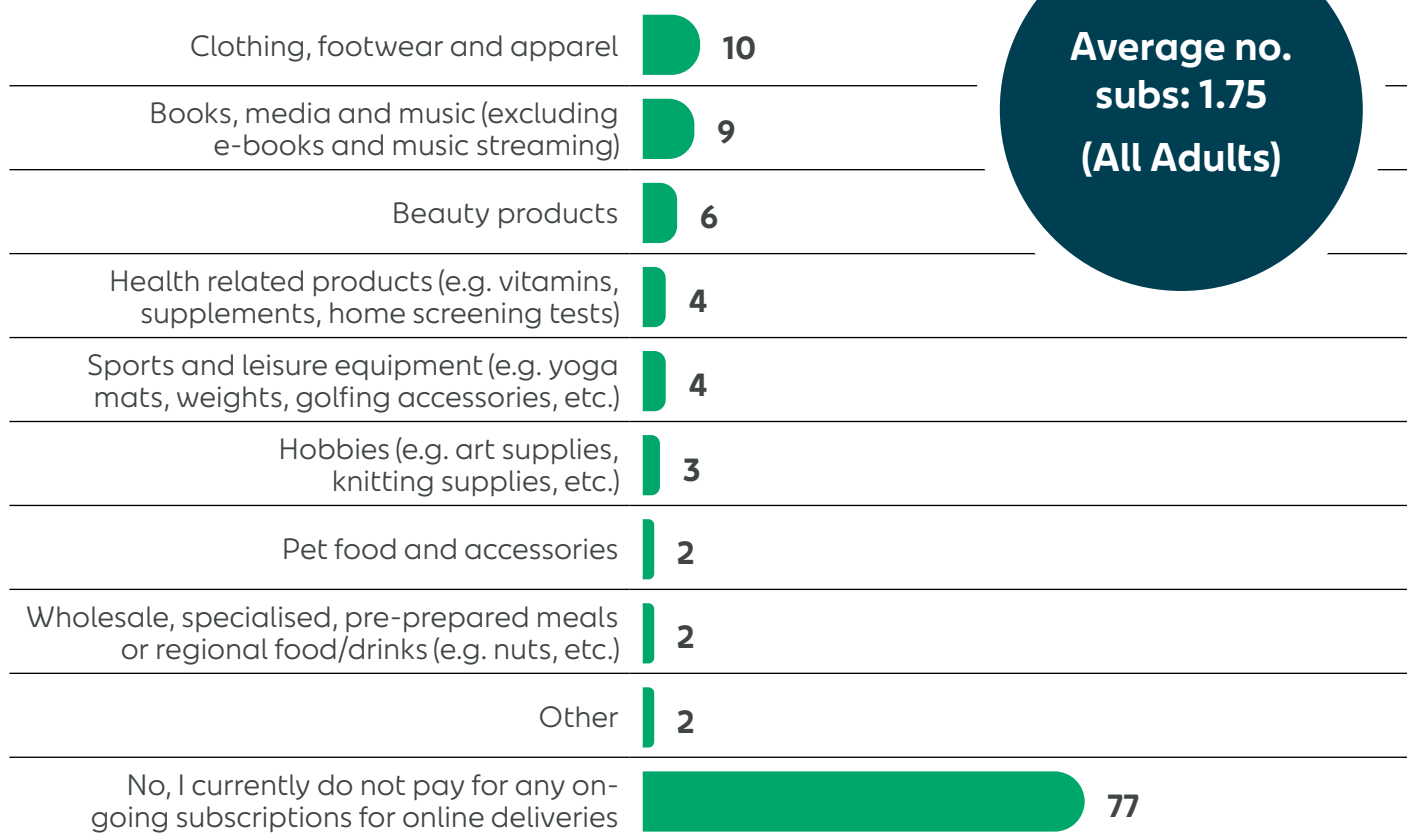
79% of customers are looking for a seamless online and in store experience

49% of customers like when online retailers suggest new categories of products

42% of 16-24 year olds now have a subscription service



Subscription services continue to grow & are a great way to satisfy customers and **create customer loyalty**



Average no. subs: 1.75 (All Adults)

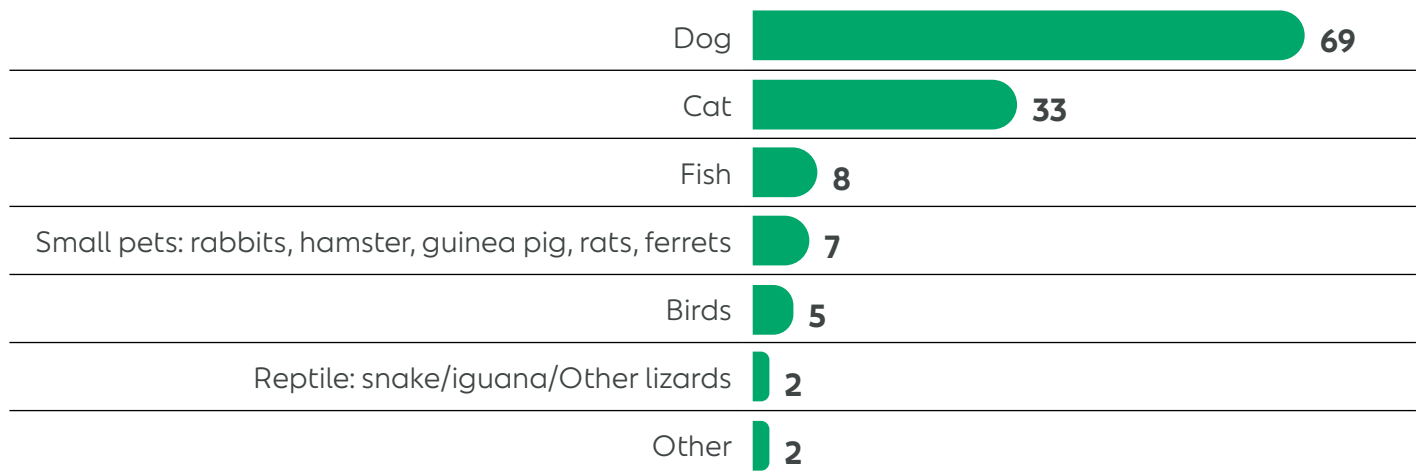
19 Do you currently pay an ongoing subscription service for any of the following types of products that you get delivered

When it comes to Pets, 52% Adults bought pet supplies overall with 21% purchasing online.

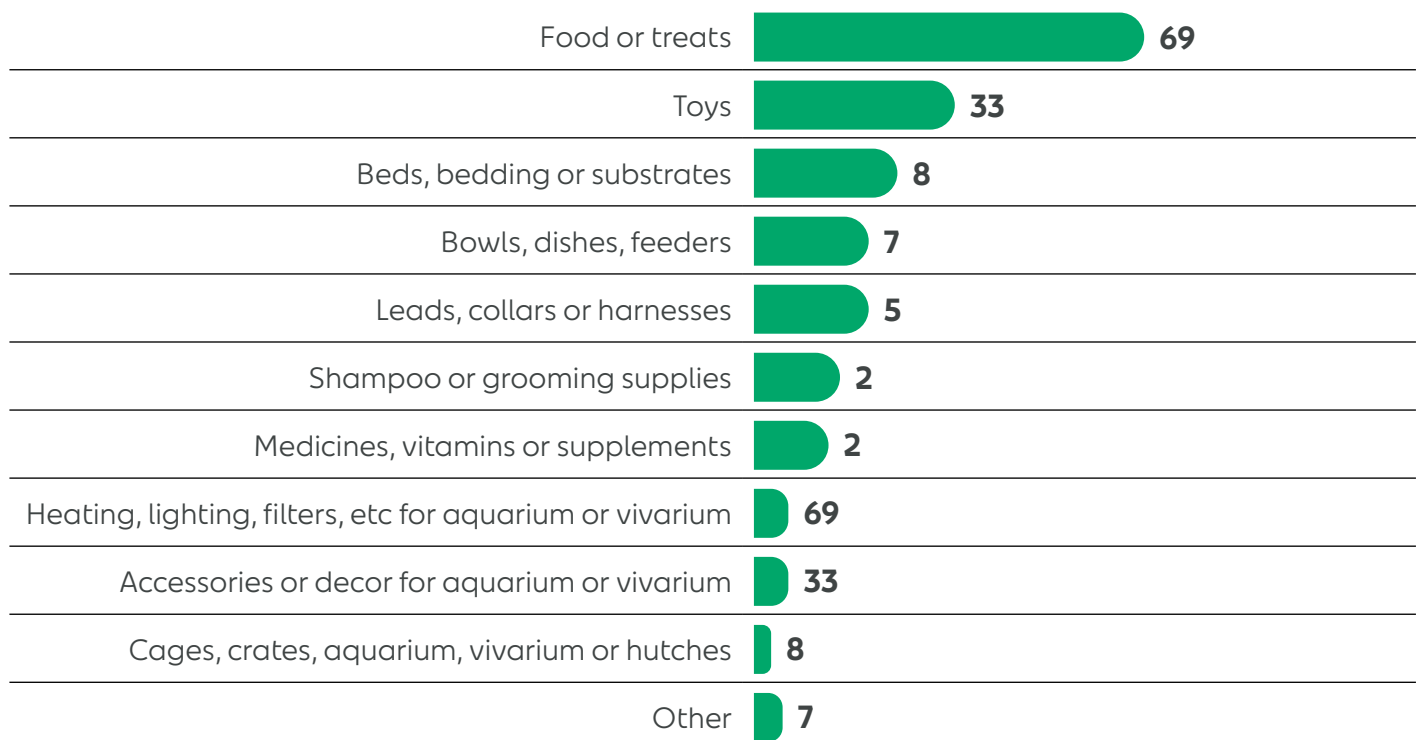


Dogs & Cats are the main pets bought for with food, treats, bedding and toys being the main item

What type of items have your purchased ONLINE for your pet(s) in the past 3 months



What type of items have your purchased ONLINE for your pet(s) in the past 3 months



Ethical & Sustainability Credentials are important to Irish customers



61% agree 'The ethical credentials of online retailers is important'



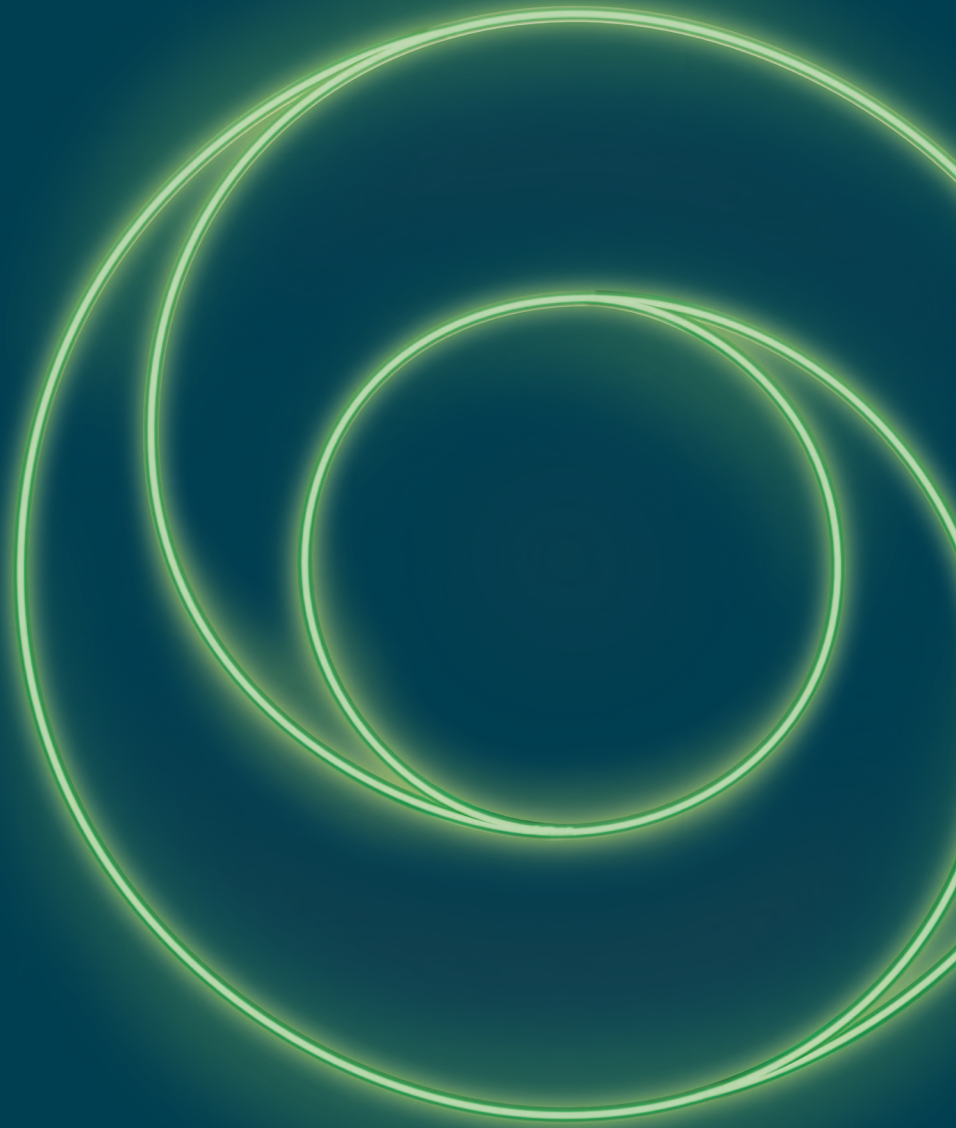
52% agree that sustainability and environmental credentials of retailers is important to them

Q.21f For the gifts you are purchasing online with Irish based sites, why are you purchasing with these sites?

An Post's Top Tips to get ready for October -December Peak Trading 2024

- Irish customers are looking for both **in-store and online experiences**, and for any retailer or new company starting out we would recommend **having an online store** or presence to promote and sell your products.
- Businesses can easily set up a website their **Local Enterprise Office can offer online trading vouchers of up to €2,500**. There are multiple platforms out there that offer website and payment solutions, such as Shopify and Square, but there are many more.
- Irish eCommerce businesses should **promote that they are Irish**, this is really important to Irish customers, and also highlight there are **no additional import fees** and **Irish delivery is the fastest** going.
- **Convenience, Speed and time saving** are really important factors to Irish customers.
- eCommerce businesses should **consider appropriate influencers** to help promote their brand and products. Exclusive online deals and codes are having an impact and are one of the main drivers to buying online.
- Being **upfront with delivery timelines and returns policies** on ecommerce websites will help with customers confidence to buy online.
- **Shortening your eCommerce pick & pack times** will shorten overall lead times and lead to more purchases, we recommend where possible picking and packing on the same day and sending to customers.

Thank you!



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