



# FedEx Returns Research

January 2024

# KEY FINDINGS: CONSUMERS

Consumers lack confidence in shipping items from their homes or from a location different from where purchased the item; they prefer returning items in the store or taking them to a shipping store. Overall, no-label/no-box return shipping is considered more convenient, straightforward, easier, and less stressful than other return options.

- 1 Nearly half of consumers expected to return more or the same amount of items in the 2023 holiday season as they did in previous years.** They largely expected to purchase the same amount of everyday things for themselves and send the same amount of packages or letters.
- 2 Consumers are more confident returning items to the store where they purchased them or taking them to a shipping store for returns than they are returning the item to a different location or shipping them from their homes.** Consumers are twice as likely to say they have taken an item to a shipping store for returns than shipped it from their home.
- 3 A majority of consumers report being familiar with no-label/no-box shipping and consider it more convenient, straightforward, easier, and less stressful than other return options.** Young or affluent consumers are the most likely to be familiar with it, and those with incomes of over \$50k have the highest usage levels.
- 4 Sustainability in shipping is important to consumers.** Sustainability and minimizing waste is particularly important to the younger generations.

# KEY FINDINGS: BUSINESS SHIPPERS

FedEx is one of the most commonly used return shipping partners by business shippers, particularly those in large organizations. There is near universal familiarity of no-label/no-box shipping among business shippers and most have used it. Business shippers consider no-label/no-box shipping to be more convenient, straightforward, easier, and less stressful than other return options and a majority are willing to pay more for a partner that offers this shipping method.

- 1 A similar proportion of businesses say they offer return shipping with multiple partners as say have a primary partner, with FedEx and UPS being the most commonly used companies for return shipping.** The most widely used return shipping method is having a customer bring the item to a carrier's retail location to be shipped back, followed by picking up the item from the customer's home or mailbox.
- 2 For the 2023 holiday season, business shippers expected largely about the same amount of returned items as previous years.** However, they also anticipated more purchases from their business compared to previous years.
- 3 Business shippers agree that return management for businesses and returns for consumers have gotten easier over time.** Business shippers also report being satisfied with all options for returns, their shipping partners, and transit time for returned items.
- 4 Nearly all are familiar with no-label/no-box shipping and a majority have used it, finding the option to be more convenient, straightforward, easier, and less stressful.** Most business shippers across organization size, particularly among large and medium-sized businesses, are willing to pay at least somewhat more for a partner that offers this method of shipping.
- 5 Sustainability in shipping is important to business shippers.** Sustainability and minimizing waste is more important to the larger businesses.

# Audience Definitions

Audience	N	MOE	Definition
Adults	1100	+/-3%	Respondents ages 18+ who have returned an item in the past 12 months
Gen-Zers	92	+/-10%	Respondents born between 1997-2012
Millennials	339	+/-5%	Respondents born between 1981-1996
Gen-Xers	309	+/-6%	Respondents born between 1965-1980
Baby Boomers	334	+/-5%	Respondents born between 1946-1964
Business Shippers	500	+/-4%	Respondents with considerable influence on decision making in their business and spends \$1,000+ a year on shipping on average.
Micro or Small Business	181	+/-7%	Businesses with an annual revenue of up to \$5M
Medium Business	210	+/-7%	Businesses with an annual revenue of up to \$100M
Large Business	109	+/-9%	Businesses with an annual revenue of \$100M+

This poll was conducted between **December 21 – December 26, 2023.**

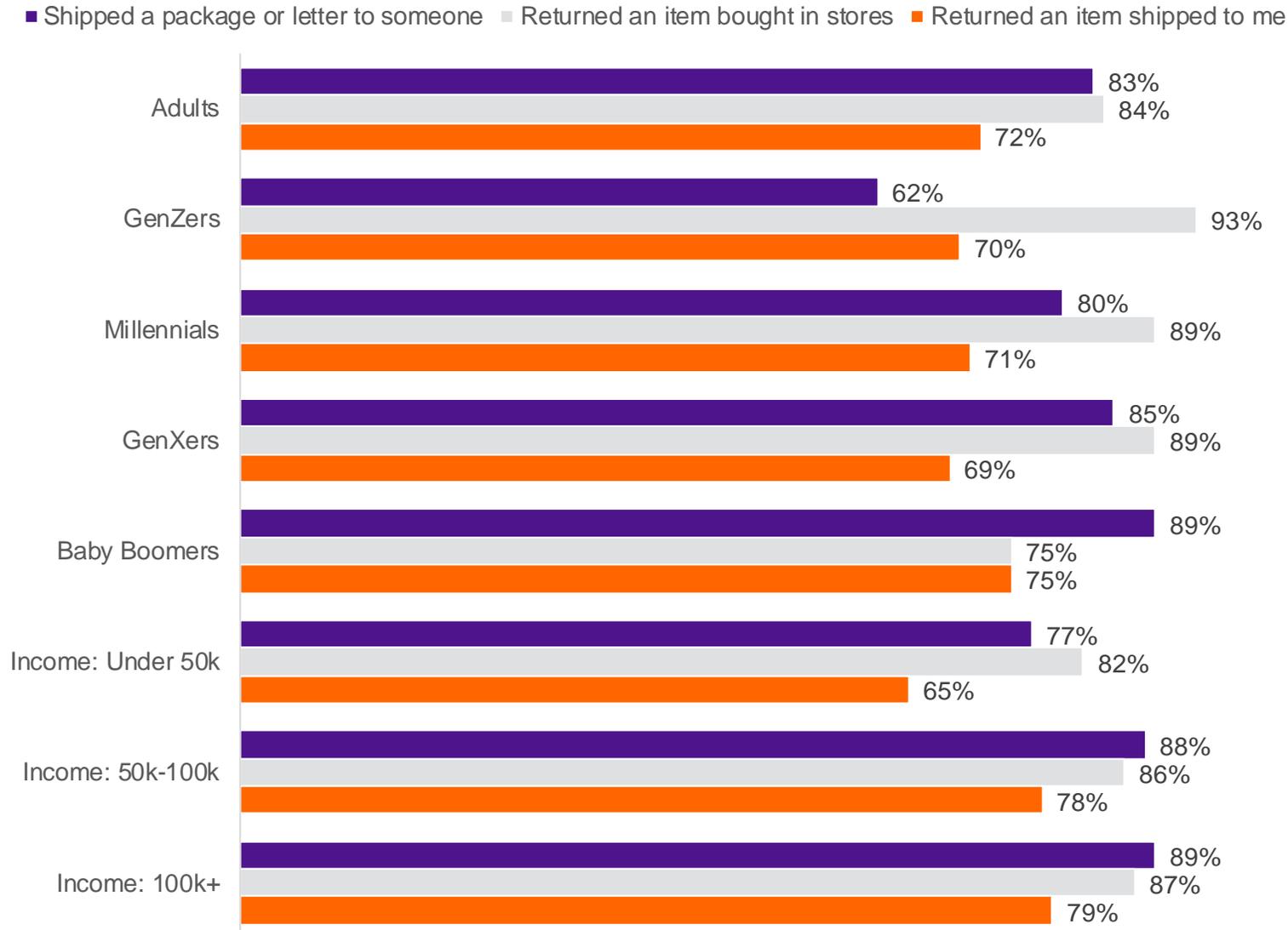
# Consumers

# Shipping and Returning

A majority of consumers report returning an item bought in stores or one shipped to them in the past 12 months.

Younger generations are more likely than their counterparts to report returning an item in the past year.

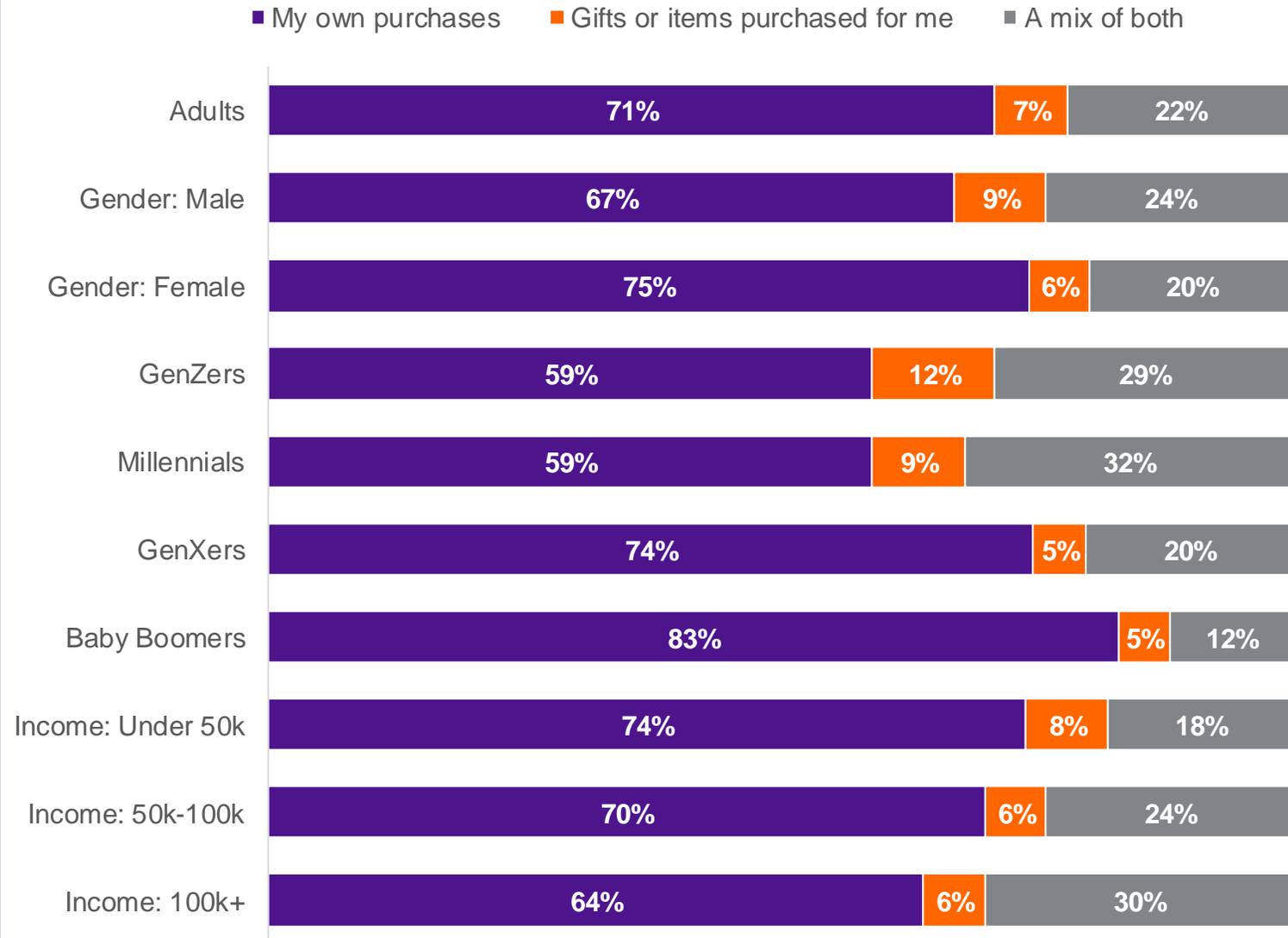
*In the past 12 months, have you done any of the following?  
(Showing Yes)*



# Returned Items

A majority of consumers across all demographic groups say the items they returned in the past year are mostly their own purchases.

*For the items you have returned in the past 12 months, were they mostly your own purchases, mostly gifts or items purchased for me, or a mix of both?*



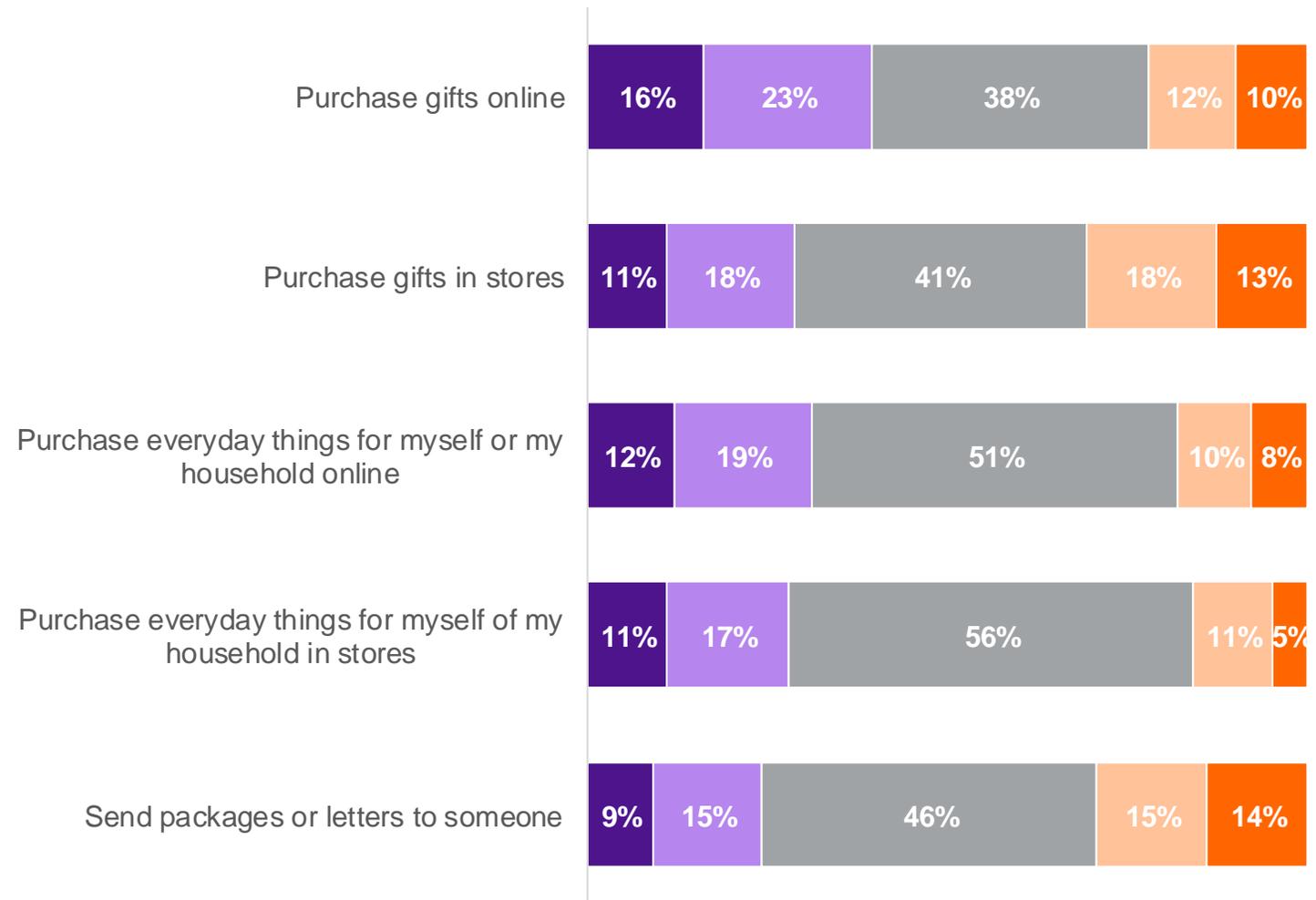
# 2023 Holiday Season Compared to Previous Years

For the 2023 holiday season, approximately half expected to send the same number of packages or letters, and purchase everyday things in stores or online as they did in 2022.

The same proportion of consumers expected to purchase more or about the same gifts online as they did in 2022.

*This holiday season, from now until mid-January, do you expect to do each of the following more often, less often or about the same amount as previous years  
(Showing Adults)*

■ A lot more often ■ Somewhat more often ■ About the same ■ Somewhat less often ■ A lot less often

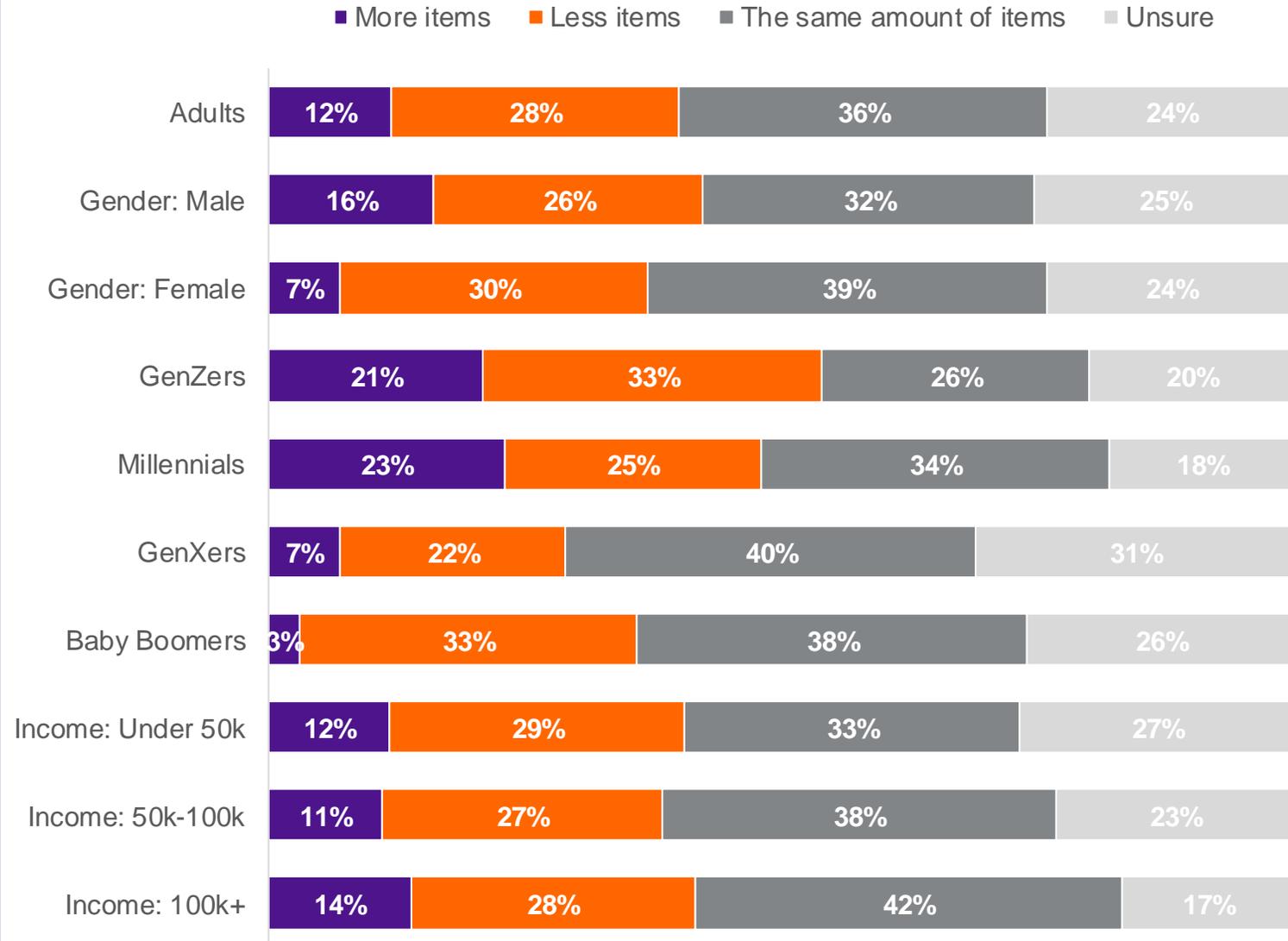


# 2023 Holiday Season Returns Compared to Previous Years

A plurality of consumers expected to return the same amount of items in the 2023 holiday season as they did in previous years. Approximately 3-in-10 expect to return less items.

Gen-Zers and Millennials are the most likely to say they expected to return more items during the 2023 holiday season.

*During the holiday season, do you expect to return more items than in past years, less items or about the same amount of items?*

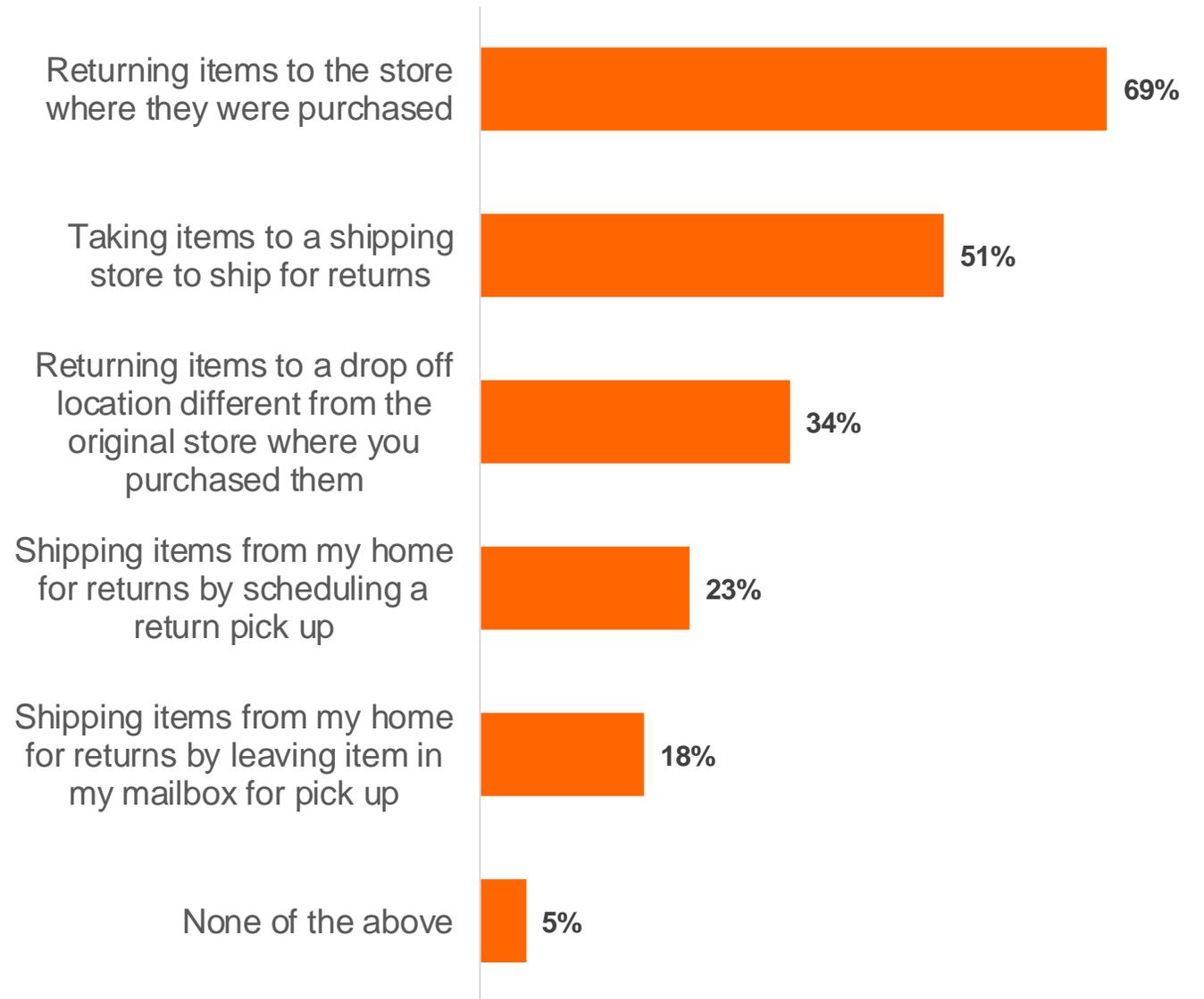


# Options Selected for Returning Purchases

A majority of consumers have returned items to the store where they were purchased or taken items to a shipping store for returns.

Consumers are over twice as likely to say they have taken an item to a shipping store to ship the return than shipped an item from their home for returns.

*Please select all of the options for returning purchases that you have used.  
(Showing Selected)*



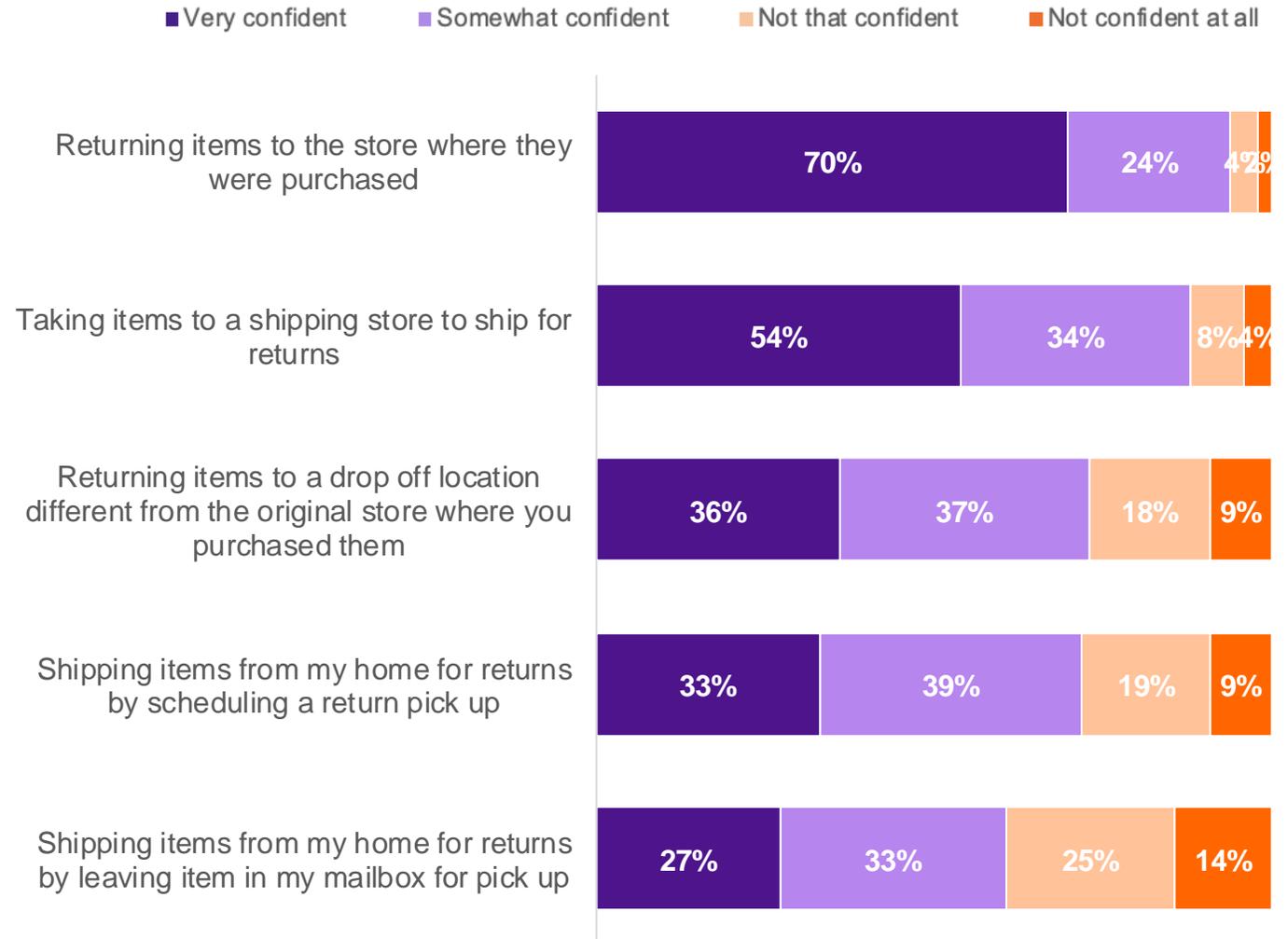
# Confidence

Consumers are most confident returning items to the store where they purchased them or taking them to a shipping store for returns.

However, they are less confident in other options such as returning the item to a different location from the store where they bought it from or shipping the items from their home.

*How confident do you feel when doing each of the following...*

## Confidence in Purchasing and Shipping



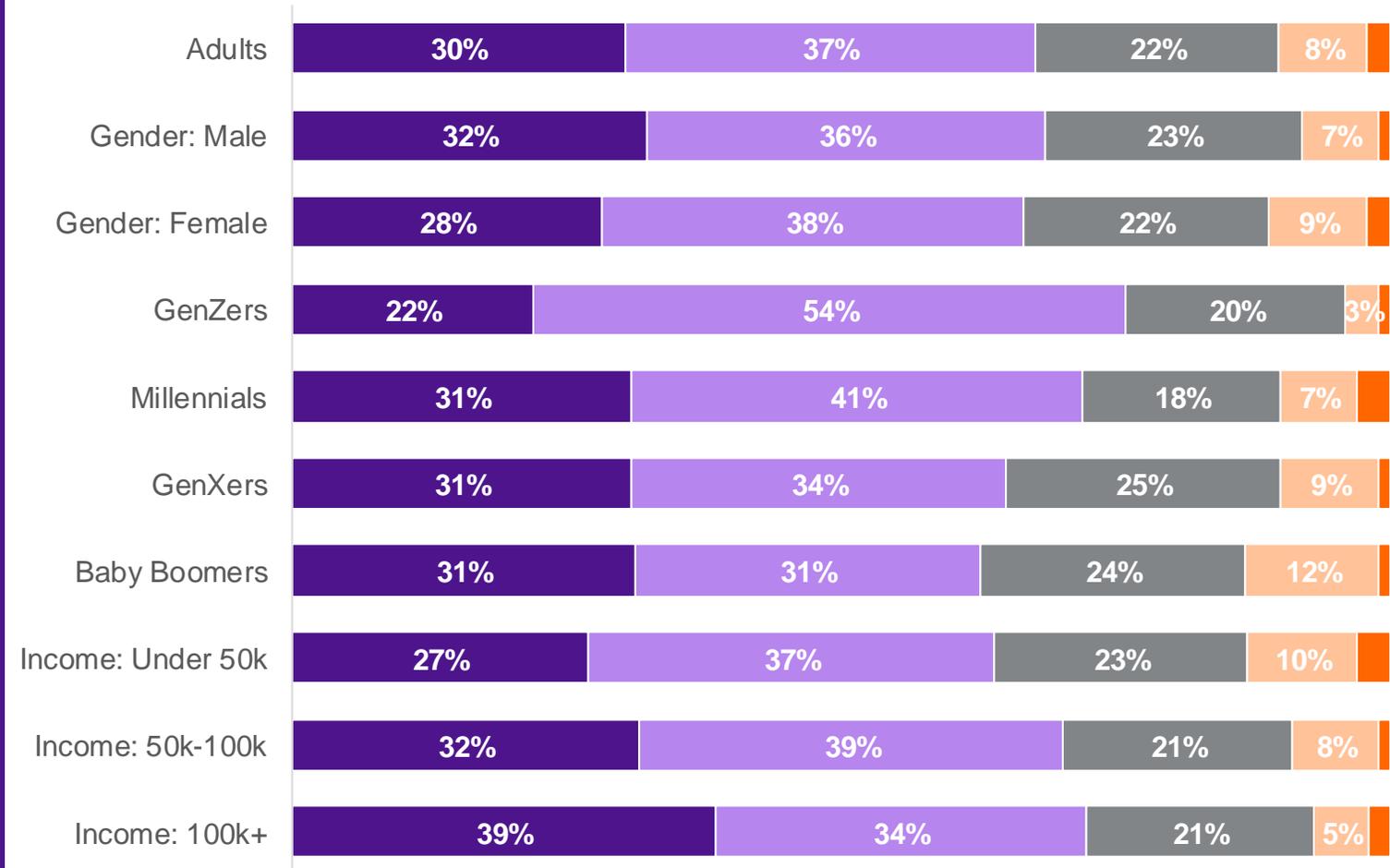
# Ease of Returns Over Time

Consumers across all demographic groups agree that returning purchases has gotten easier for customers in recent years.

*Generally, do you think returning purchases has gotten easier for customers or harder in recent years?*

## Ease of Returns

■ Much easier ■ Somewhat easier ■ Neither easier nor harder ■ Somewhat harder ■ Much harder

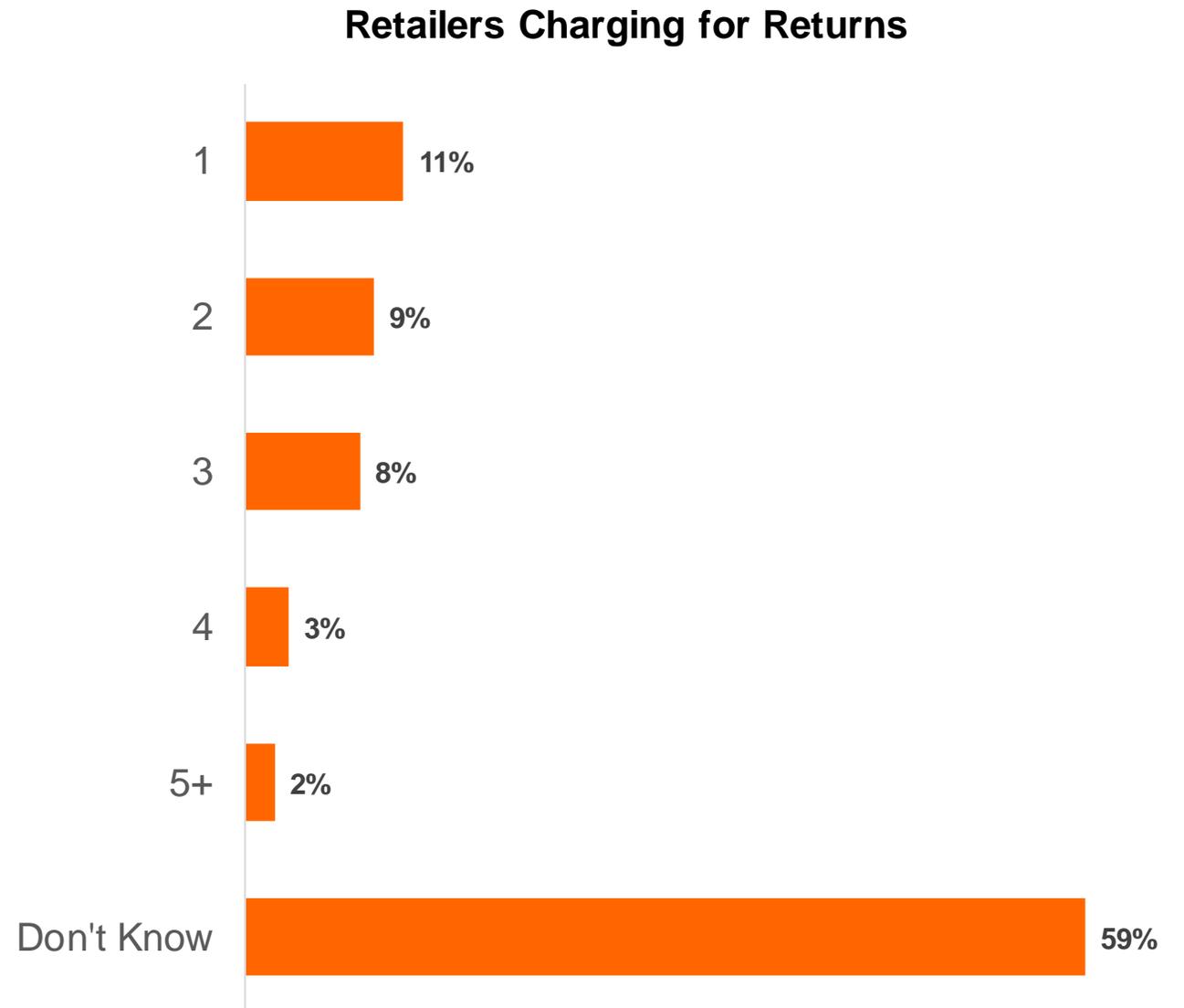


# Number of Retailers Charging for Returns

A majority of consumers report not knowing how many retailers are charging for returns this holiday season.

Approximately 3-in-10 say up to 3 retailers are charging for them.

*Thinking about the holiday shopping you have done, approximately how many retailers are charging for returns?*



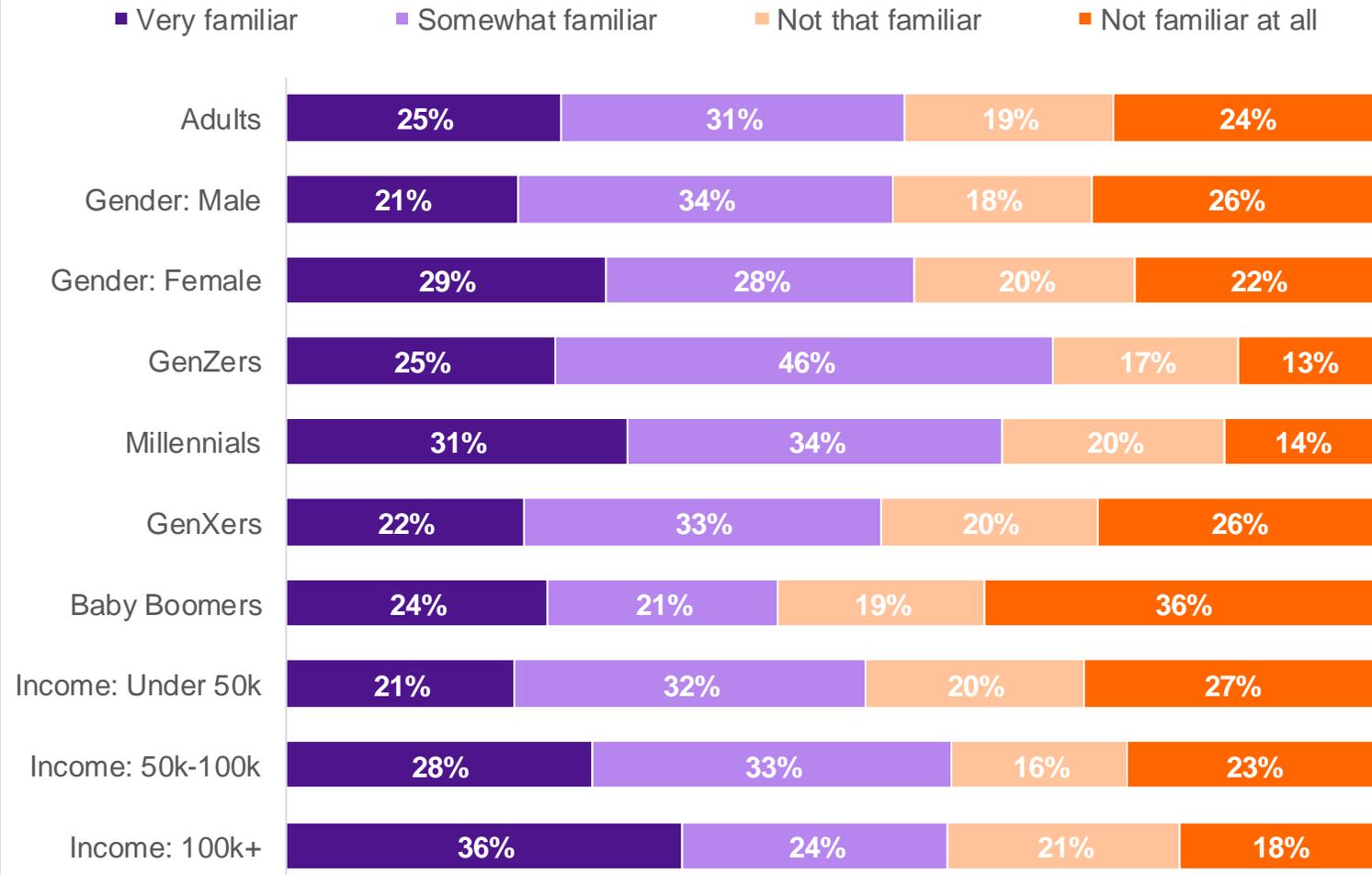
# Familiarity with No-Label/No-Box Return Shipping Options

Nearly 6-in-10 say they are at least somewhat familiar with no-label/no-box shipping, with a quarter saying they are very familiar with it.

Young and affluent consumers are more likely than their counterparts to be familiar with no-label/no-box shipping.

*How familiar are you with no-label / no-box return shipping options? No-label and no-box return shipping allows customers to take items for return to specified drop off locations and leave them with a staff member who will package and ship the returned item with no extra work or hassle for the customer.*

## Familiarity with No-Label / No-Box Shipping



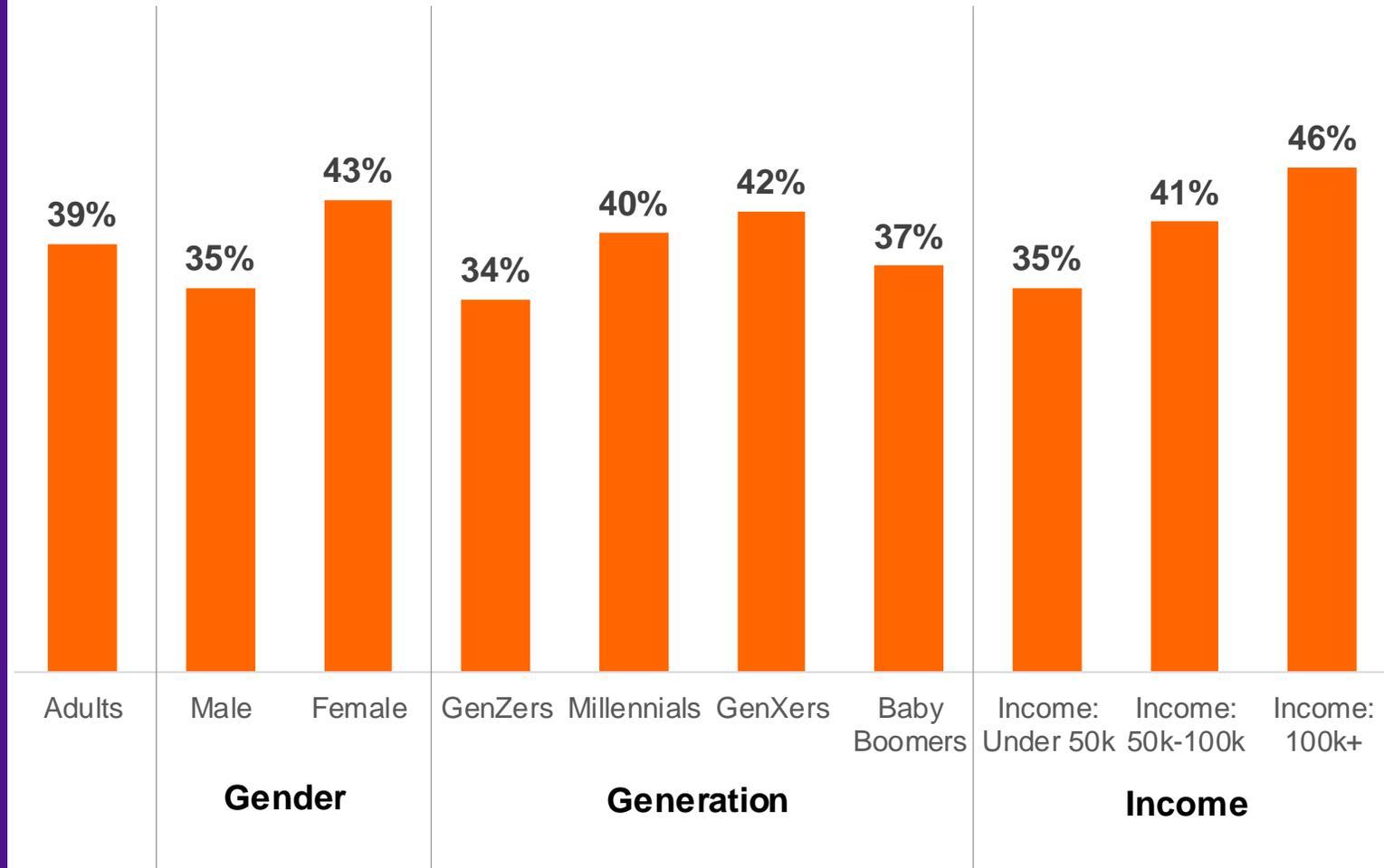
# No-Label/No-Box Return Shipping Option Usage

Approximately 4-in-10 say they have used no-label/no-box shipping, with those with a household income of \$100k+ being the most likely to say they have used it.

While Gen-Zers are some of the most familiar with no-label/no-box shipping, they report using it the least.

*Have you ever used a no-label / no-box return shipping option?  
(Showing Yes)*

## Usage of No-Label / No-Box Shipping



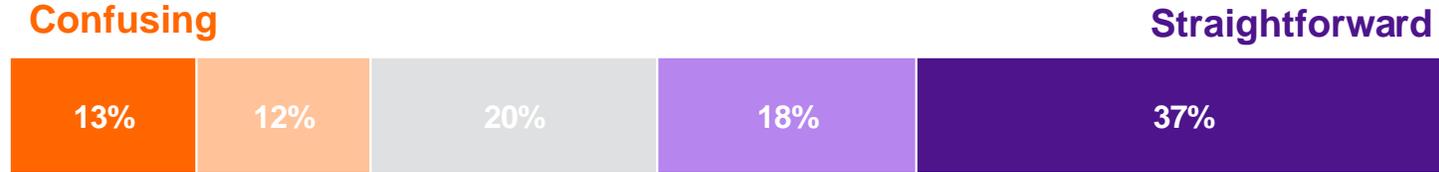
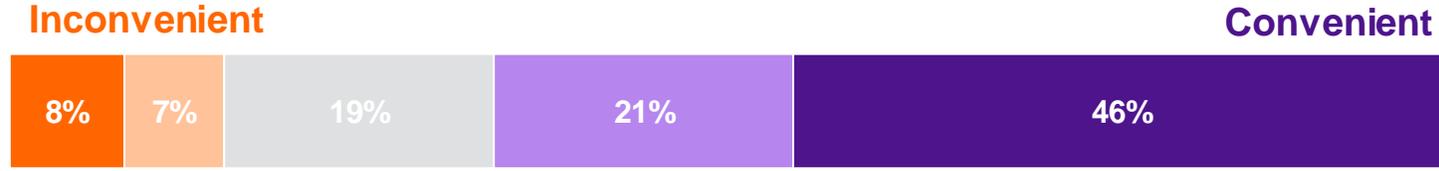
# No-Label / No-Box Return Shipping

Over two-thirds of consumers find no-label/no-box shipping to be convenient.

Overall, this method of shipping is considered convenient, straightforward, easy, and stress-free by a majority of consumers.

Please select which of the following words best describes no-label / no-box return shipping in your opinion.

## No-Label / No-Box Shipping Descriptions

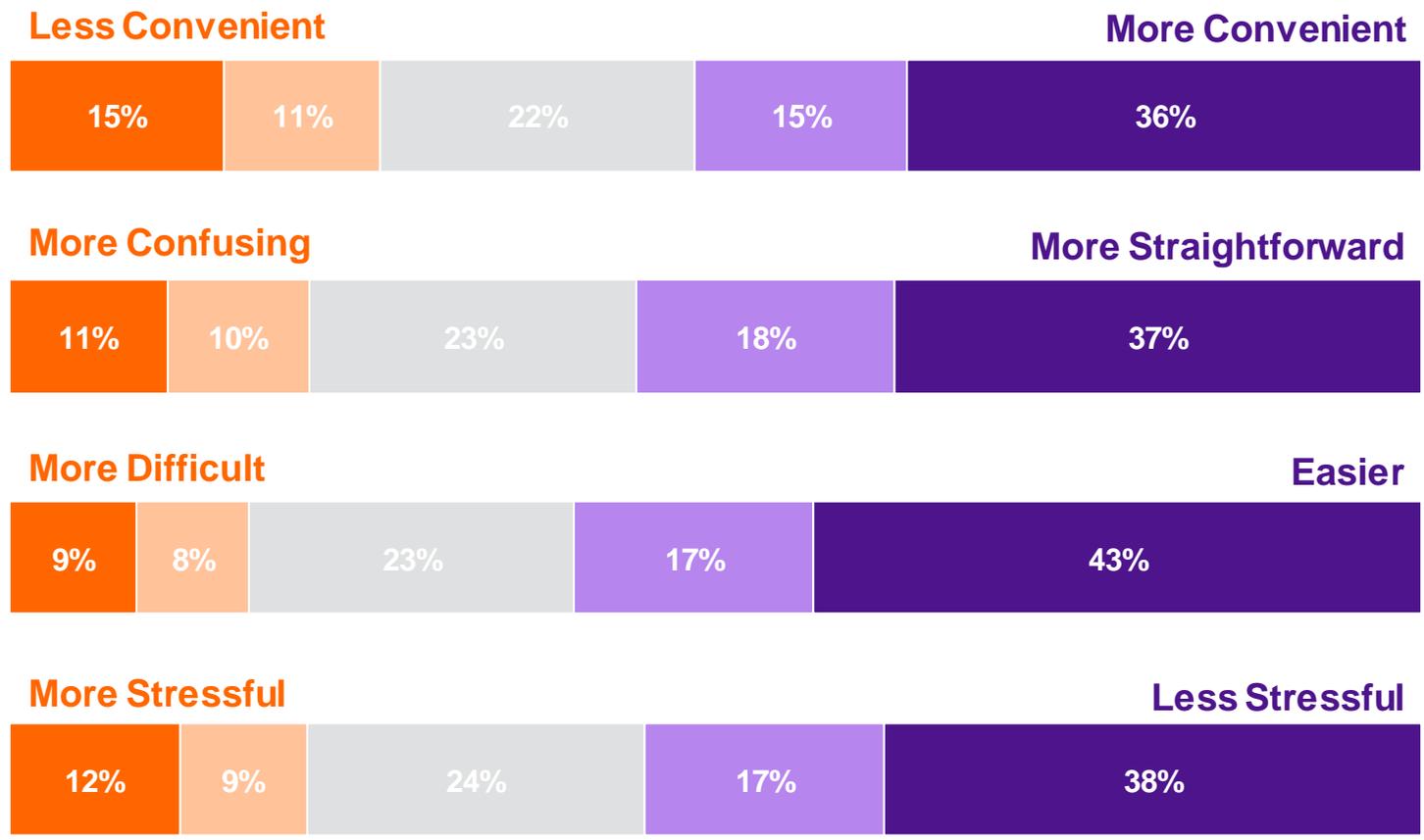


# No-Label / No-Box Return Shipping

Overall, no-label/no-box return shipping is considered more convenient, straightforward, easier, and less stressful than other return options.

*Compared to other return options, would you say that no-label / no-box return shipping is?*

## No-Label / No-Box Shipping Compared to Other Options



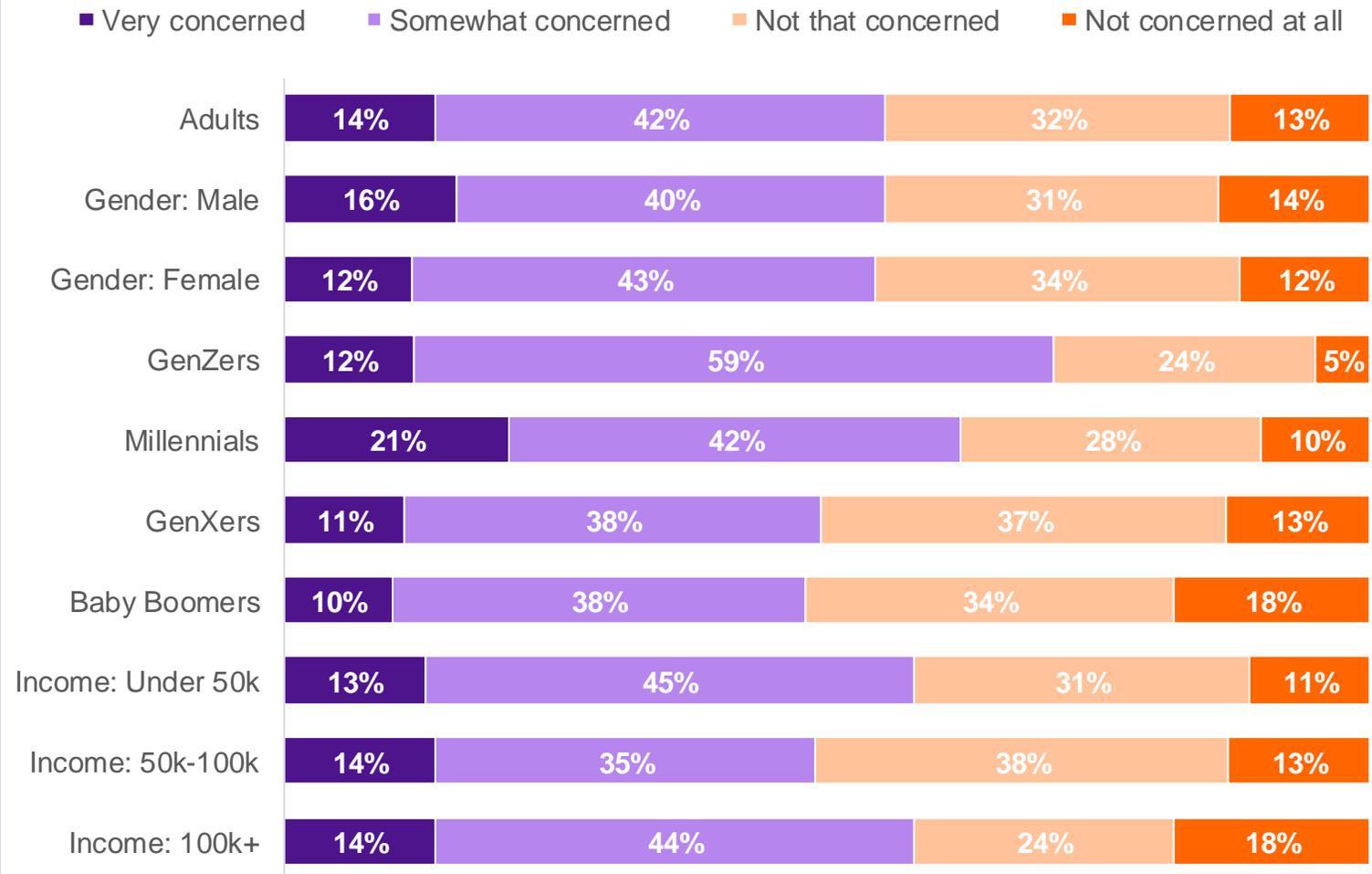
# Sustainability

Nearly 6-in-10 are at least somewhat concerned with sustainable packing and excess packing waste.

Gen-Zers and Millennials are much more likely than their counterparts to be concerned with this.

*When it comes to shipping items, how concerned are you with sustainable packaging and excess packaging waste?*

## Concern with Sustainable Packing

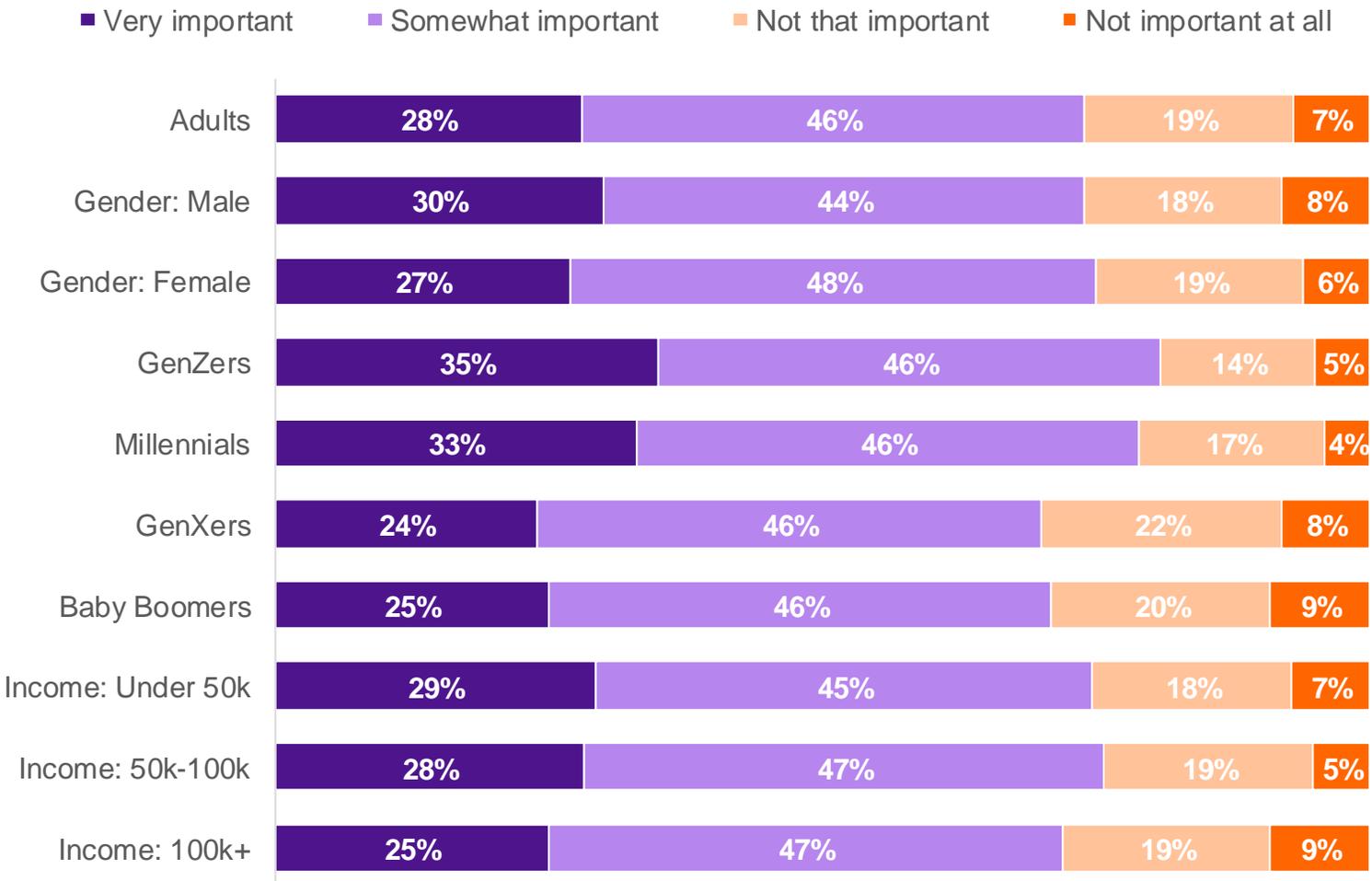


# Sustainability

Similarly, younger generations consider it more important that return shipping uses as little waste as possible and prioritizes sustainability, in comparison to their older counterparts.

*How important is it to you that return shipping uses as little waste as possible and prioritizes sustainability?*

## Importance of Sustainability in Return Shipping



# Business Shippers

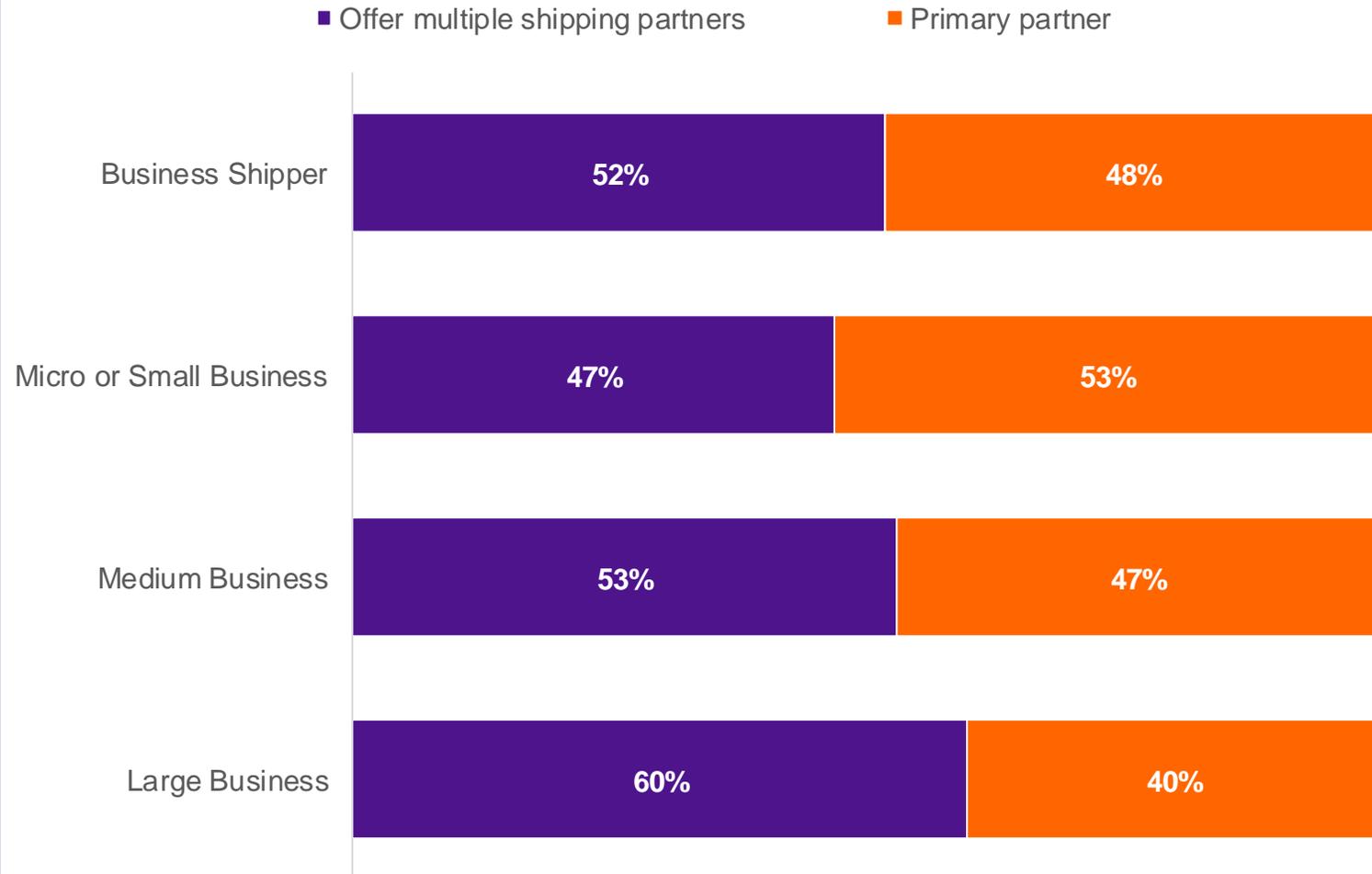
# Return Shipping Partner

Large businesses are more likely than small businesses to say they offer return shipping with multiple partners.

Overall, a similar proportion of businesses say they offer return shipping with multiple partners as say have a primary partner.

*Does your business offer return shipping with multiple shipping partners or do you have a primary partner for return shipping?*

## Return Shipping Partner



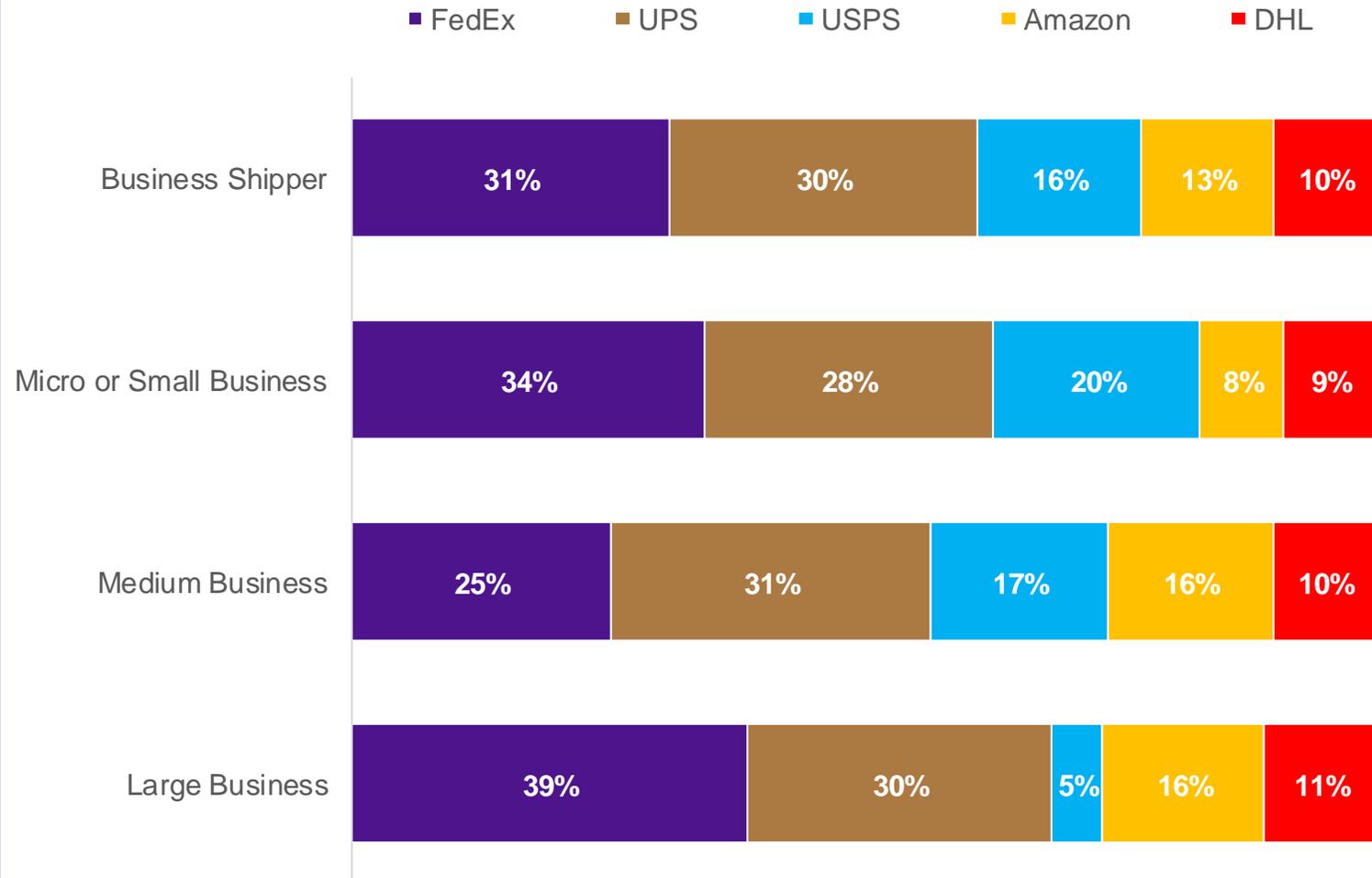
# Return Shipping Partner

FedEx and UPS are the two most commonly used companies for return shipping.

For small and large businesses, FedEx is more often named as the primary return shipping partner.

*Which of the following companies does your organization primarily use for return shipping?*

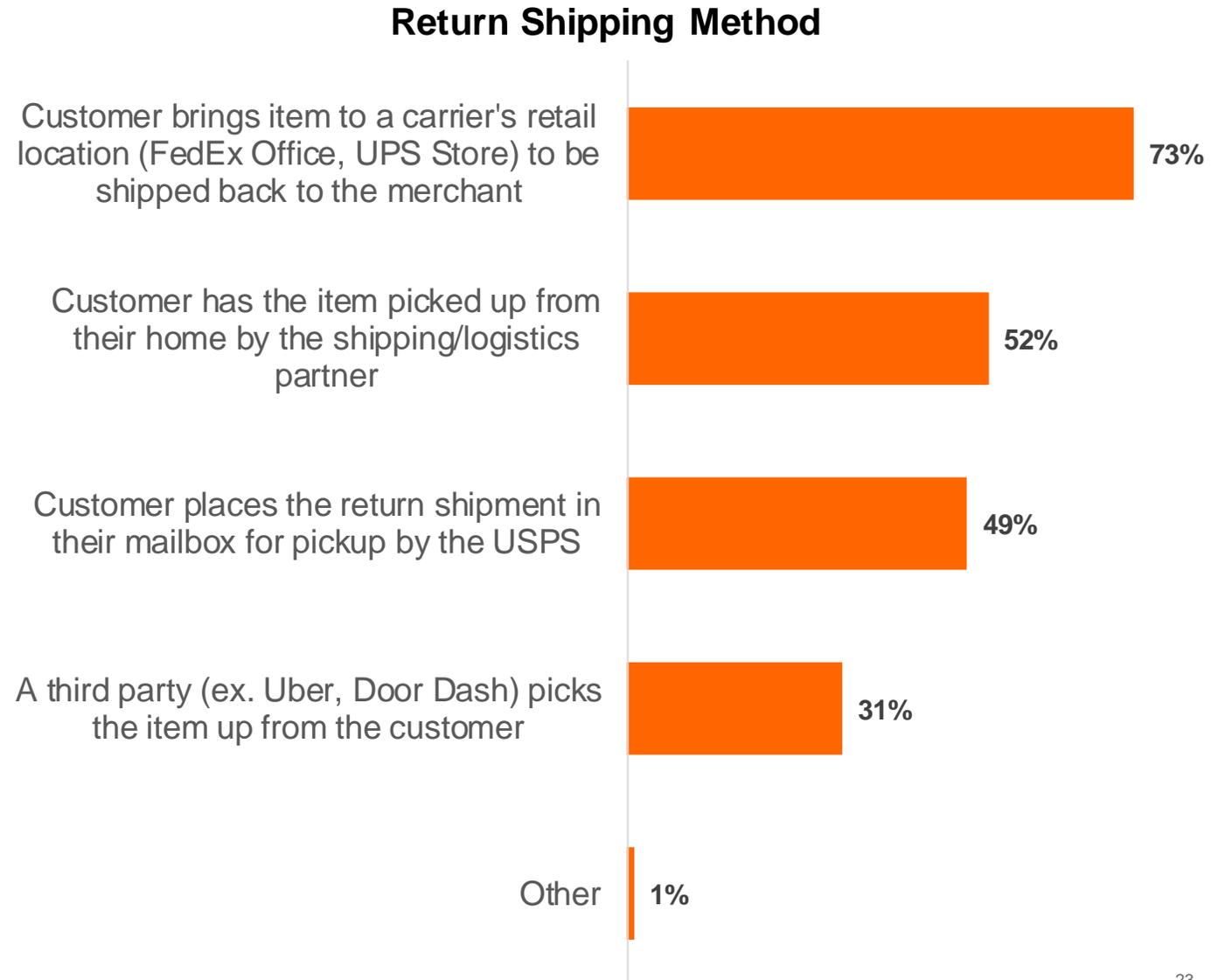
## Return Shipping Partner



# Options Selected for Returning Purchases

The most used return shipping method is having a customer bring the item to a carrier's retail location to be shipped back, followed by picking up the item from the customer's home or mailbox.

For return shipments, which of the following methods do you use:  
(Showing Selected)



# Factor Importance

Reliability, convenience for customers, and trustworthiness—followed closely by price and transit times—are the most important factors when choosing a shipping or logistics partner for returns.

*When choosing a shipping or logistics partner for returns, how important are each of the following factors in making your decision?*

## Importance of Factors for Returns Partner



# Factor Importance

The most important factor for business shippers is the reliability of shipment and care for items, followed by the partner being a trusted brand.

Please select the most important factor in choosing your shipping or logistics partner for returns.  
(Showing Selected)

## Importance of Factors for Returns Partner



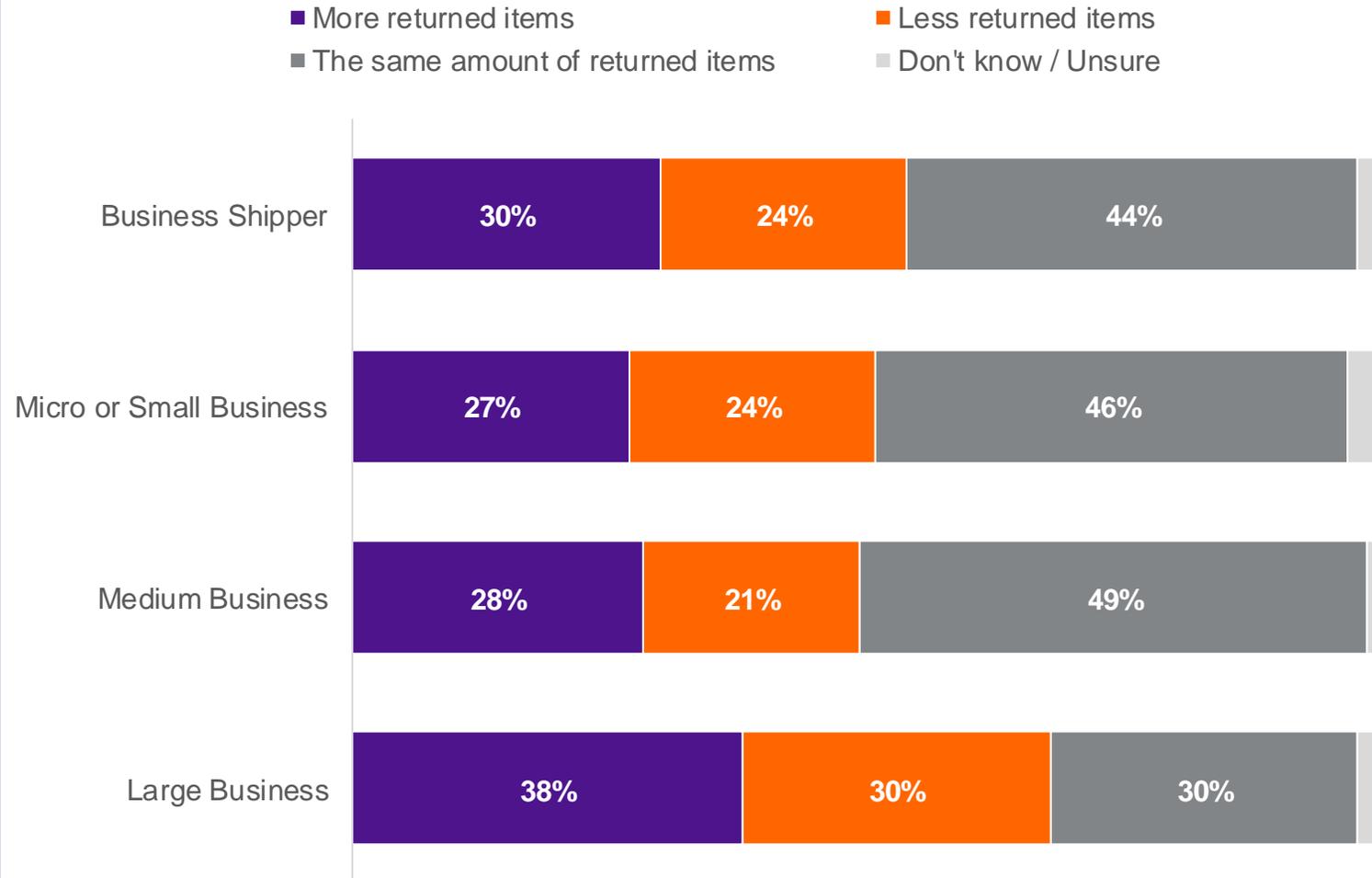
# Return Expectations

A plurality is expecting about the same amount of returned items this holiday season as previous years.

Large businesses are more likely than their counterparts to expect more returns this year.

*This holiday season, from now until mid-January, do you expect there to be more returned items to your business than in past years, less returned items or about the same amount of returned items?*

## Return Expectations



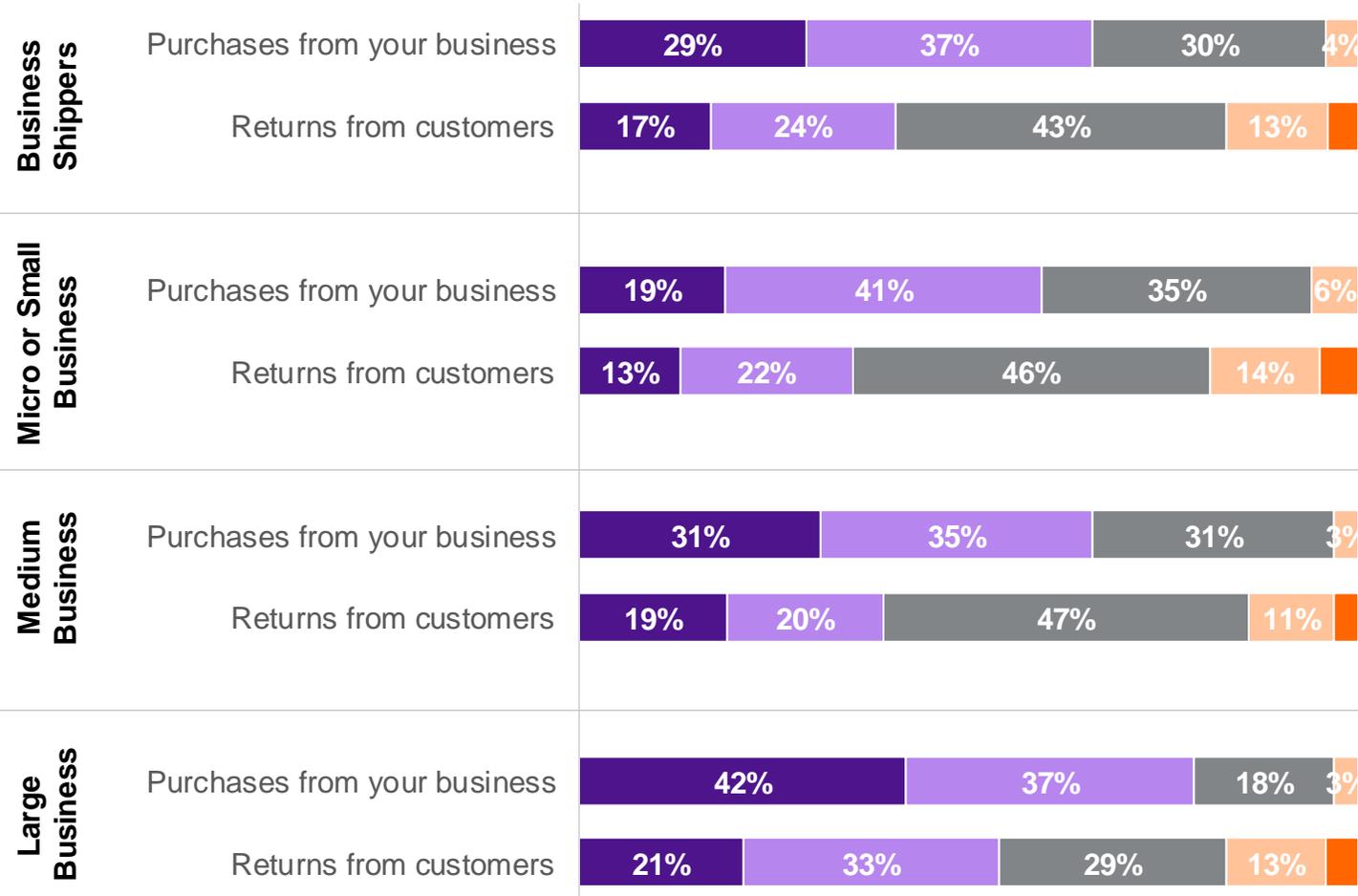
# Return Expectations

While businesses are expecting more purchases this holiday season compared to previous years, they are largely expecting the same amount of returns as previous years.

*Do you anticipate more or less or about the same number of the following during this holiday season compared to previous years?*

## Return Expectations

■ A lot more ■ Somewhat more ■ About the same ■ Somewhat less ■ A lot less

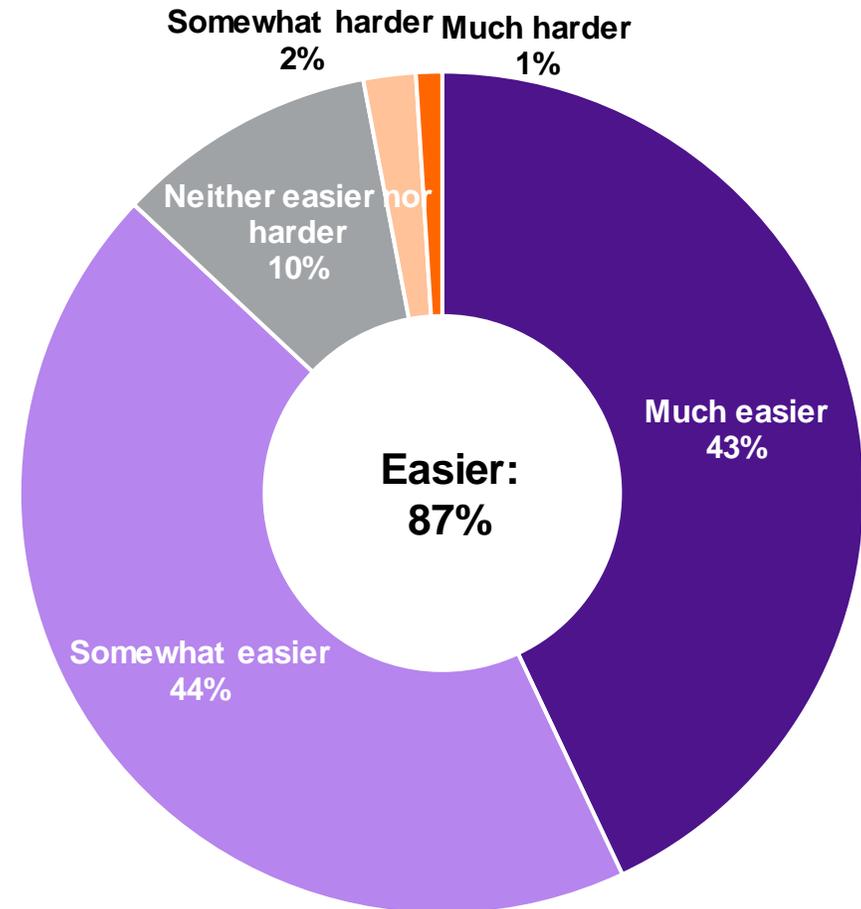


# Ease of Returns Over Time

Nearly all business shippers say that returning purchases has gotten easier for customers over time, with approximately 4-in-10 saying it has gotten much easier.

*Generally, do you think returning purchases has gotten easier for customers or harder in recent years?*

## Ease of Returns Over Time



# Ease of Returns Over Time

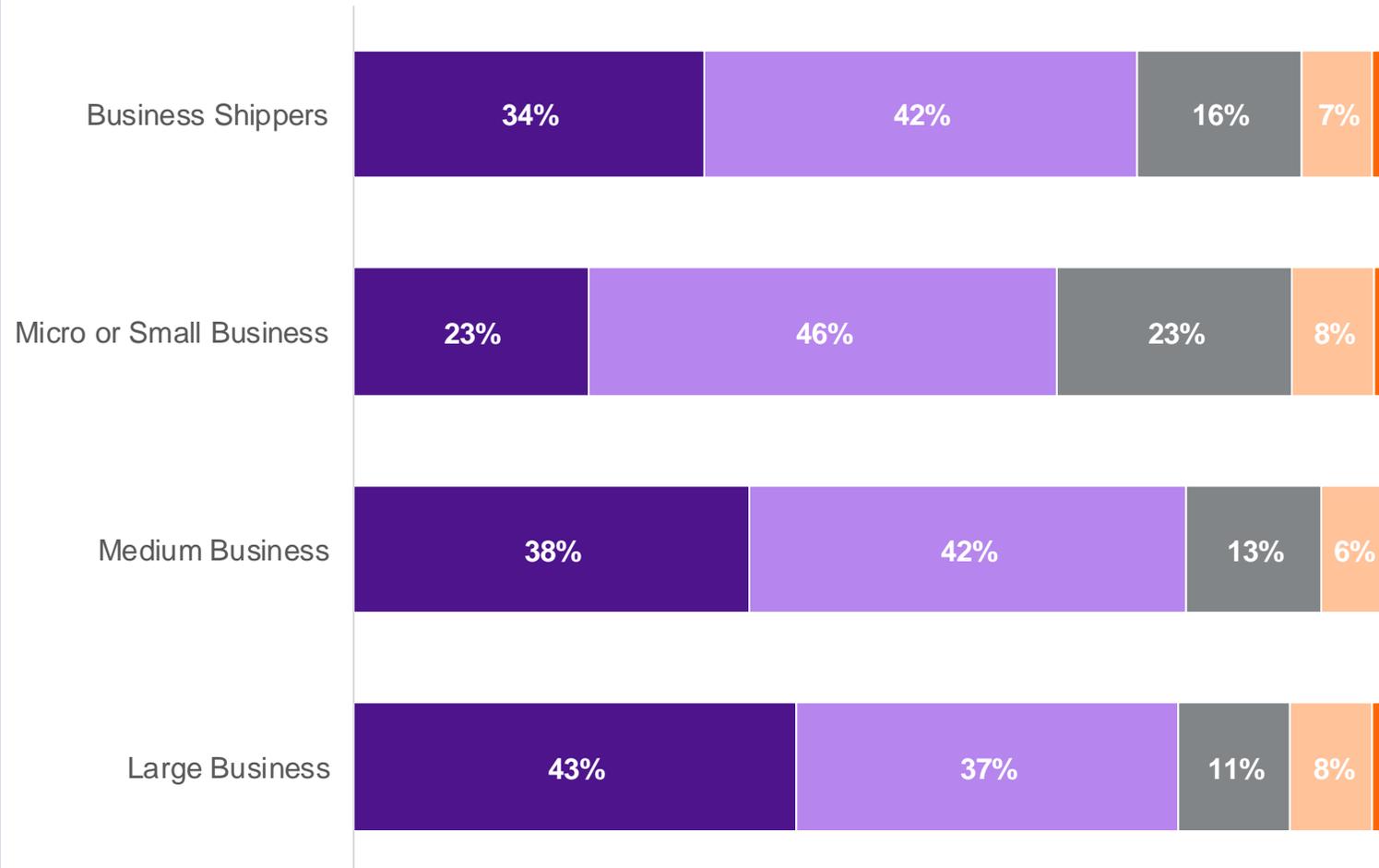
Business returns management has also gotten easier over the years.

While a majority across all organization sizes say returns management has gotten easier, larger businesses are more likely than small or micro businesses to say this.

*Do you think managing returns has gotten easier or harder for your business in recent years?*

## Ease of Managing Returns Over Time

■ Much easier ■ Somewhat easier ■ Neither easier nor harder ■ Somewhat harder ■ Much harder



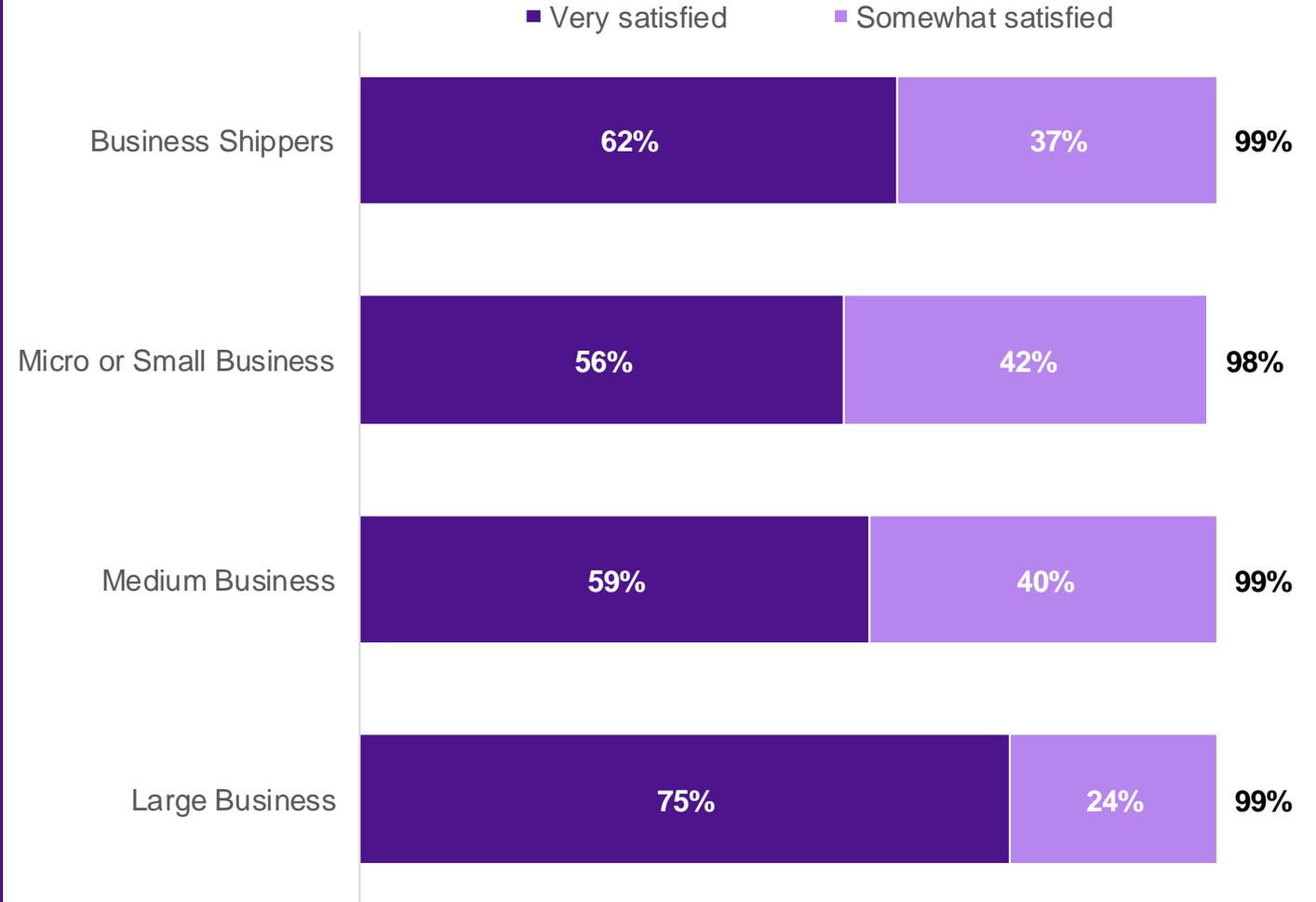
# Satisfaction with Return Options

Nearly all business shippers say their customers are satisfied with return options.

Large businesses are the most likely to say that customers are very satisfied with their options for returning items.

*In your experience, how satisfied are your customers with their options for returning items?*

## Customer Satisfaction with Options for Returns



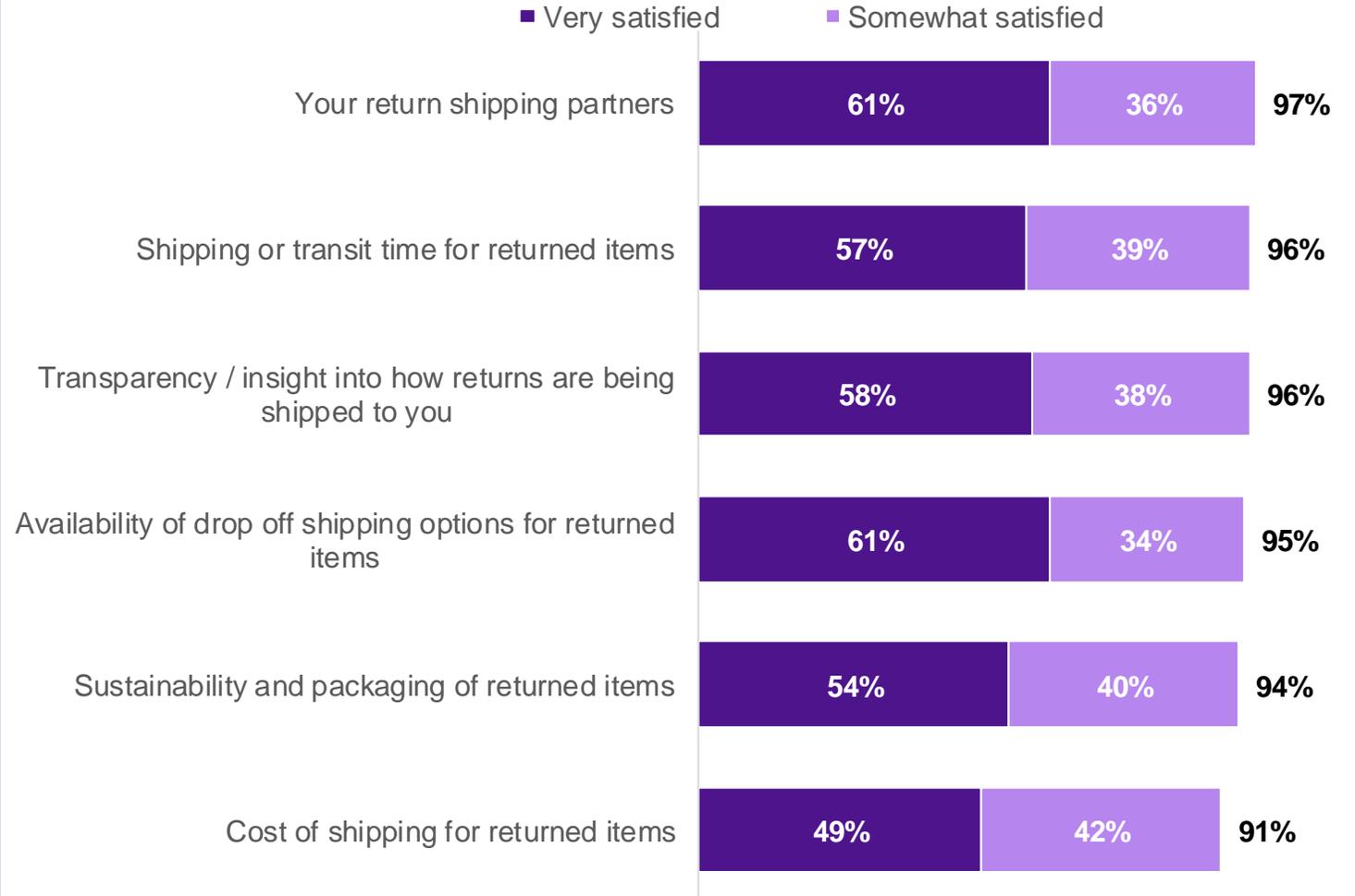
# Satisfaction with Return Options

Nearly all businesses are satisfied with all options for returns.

Approximately 6-in-10 are very satisfied with their shipping partners, availability of drop off shipping options, transparency, and transit time for returned items.

And, as a business owner, how satisfied are you with the following items related to returns for your business?

## Business Satisfaction with Options for Returns

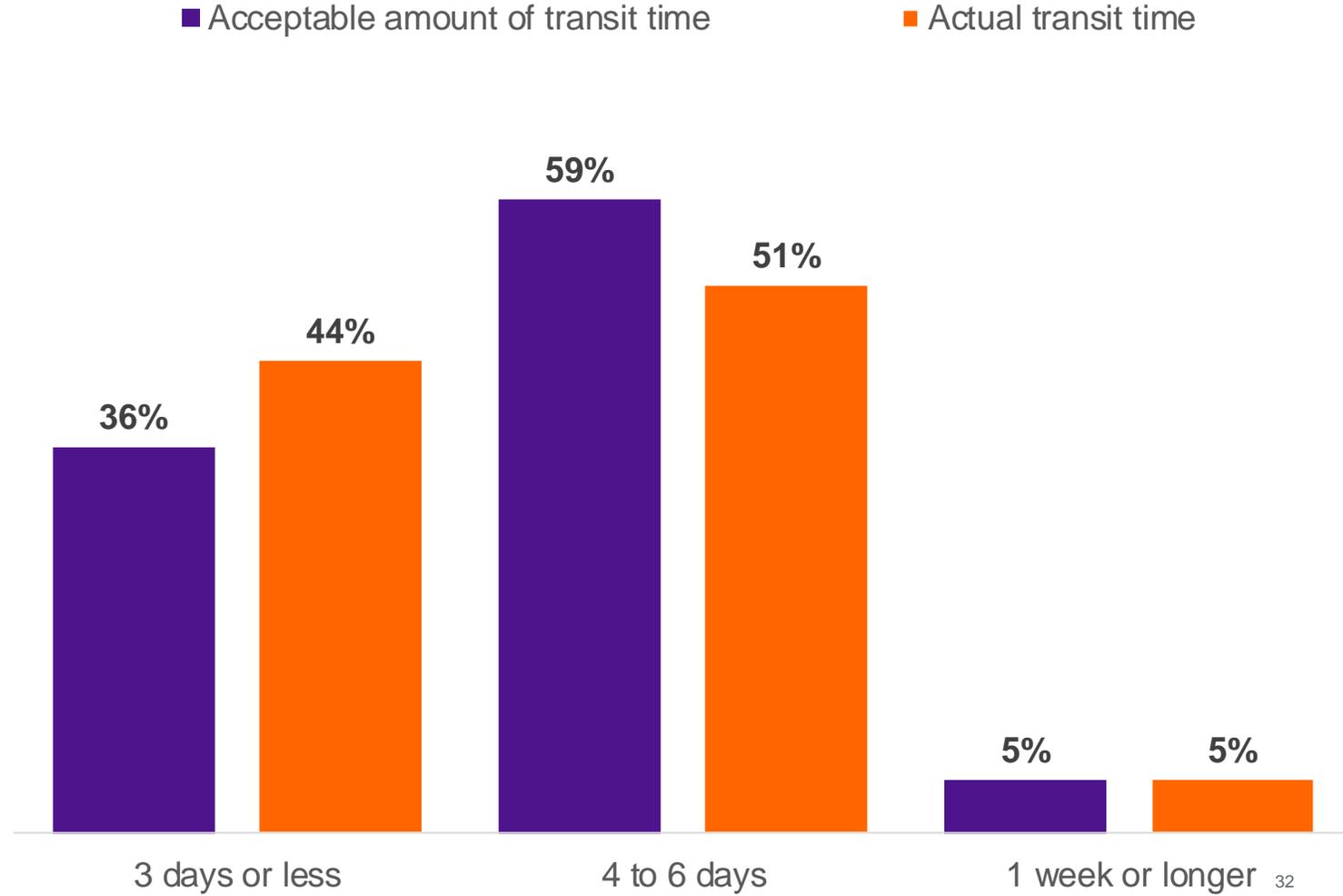


# Transit Time

Nearly all business agree that the acceptable transit time on a return package is up to 6 days. Experience matches these expectations with a majority saying that transit time is typically up to 6 days.

*In general, what is an acceptable amount of transit time on a customer return package for your business?/ And, how long does transit time typically take for your business's returned packages?*

### Transit Time on a Customer Return Package



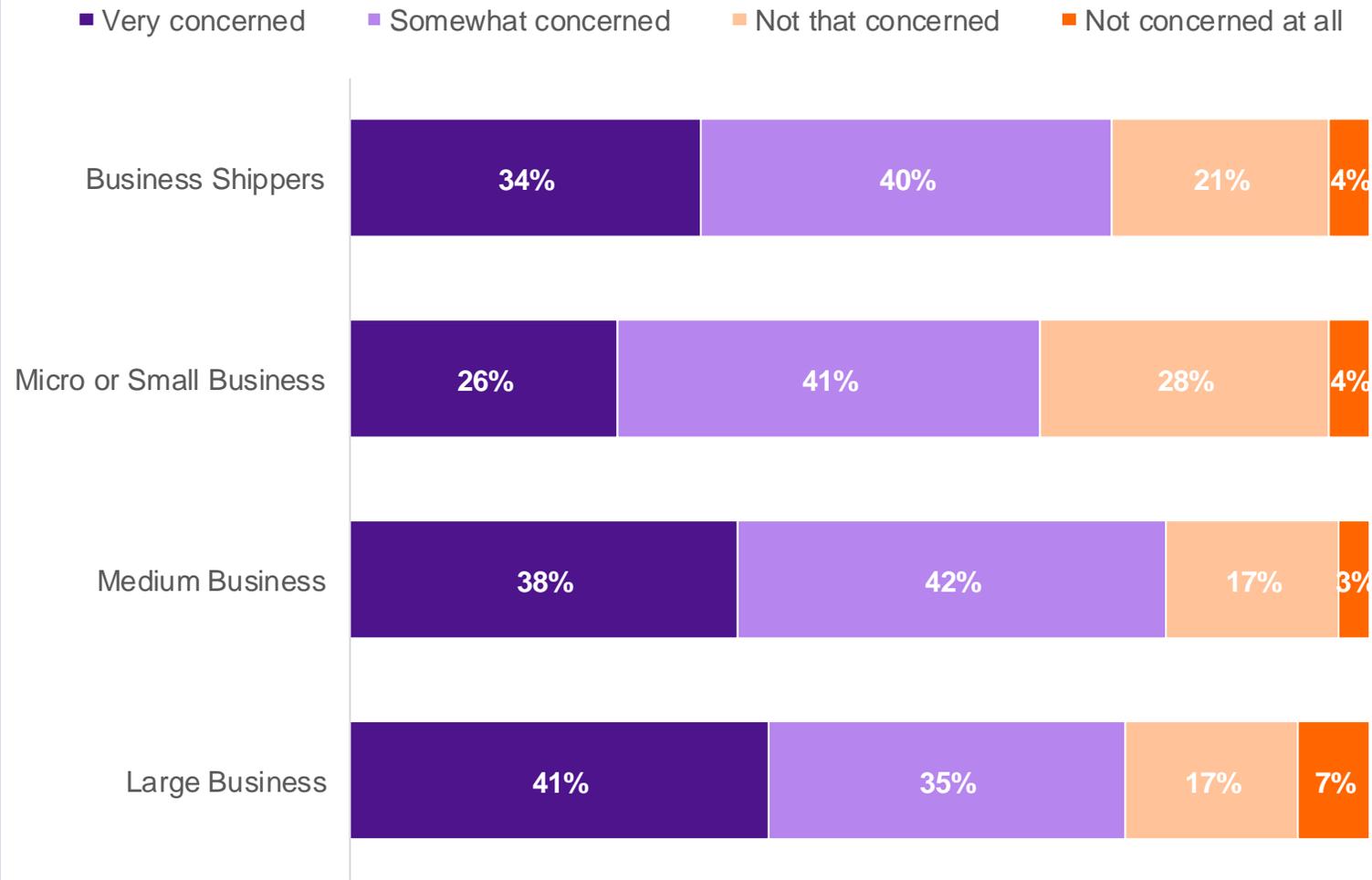
# Sustainability

Nearly three-quarters of business shippers are concerned with sustainable packaging and excess packing waste.

Larger businesses are more likely than smaller businesses to be very concerned about this.

*When it comes to shipping items, how concerned are you with sustainable packaging and excess packaging waste?*

## Concern with Sustainable Packing



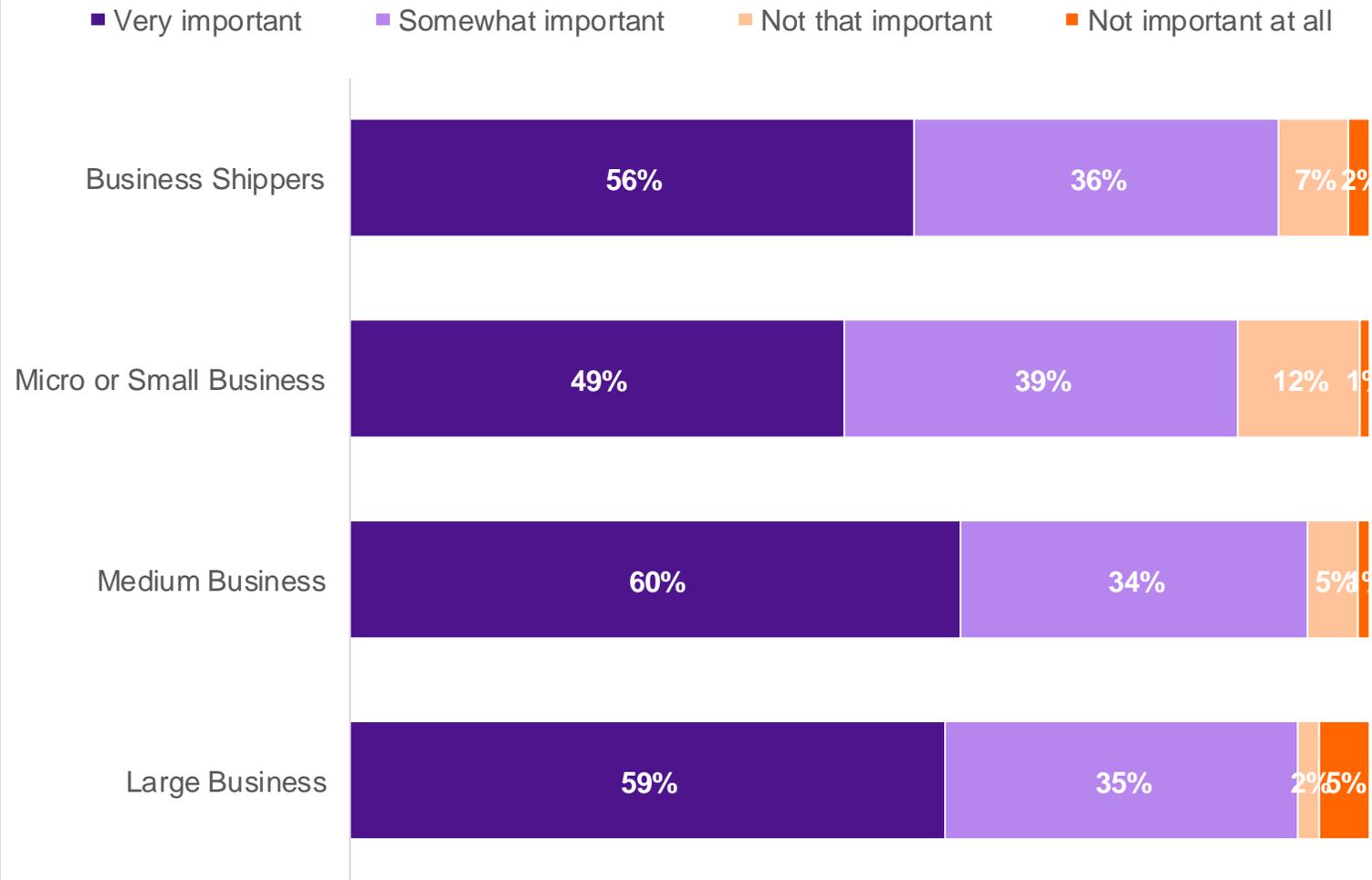
# Sustainability

Nearly all businesses say it is important that return shipping uses as little waste as possible and prioritizes sustainability.

Larger businesses are more likely than smaller businesses to consider this important.

*How important is it to you that return shipping uses as little waste as possible and prioritizes sustainability?*

## Importance of Sustainability in Return Shipping



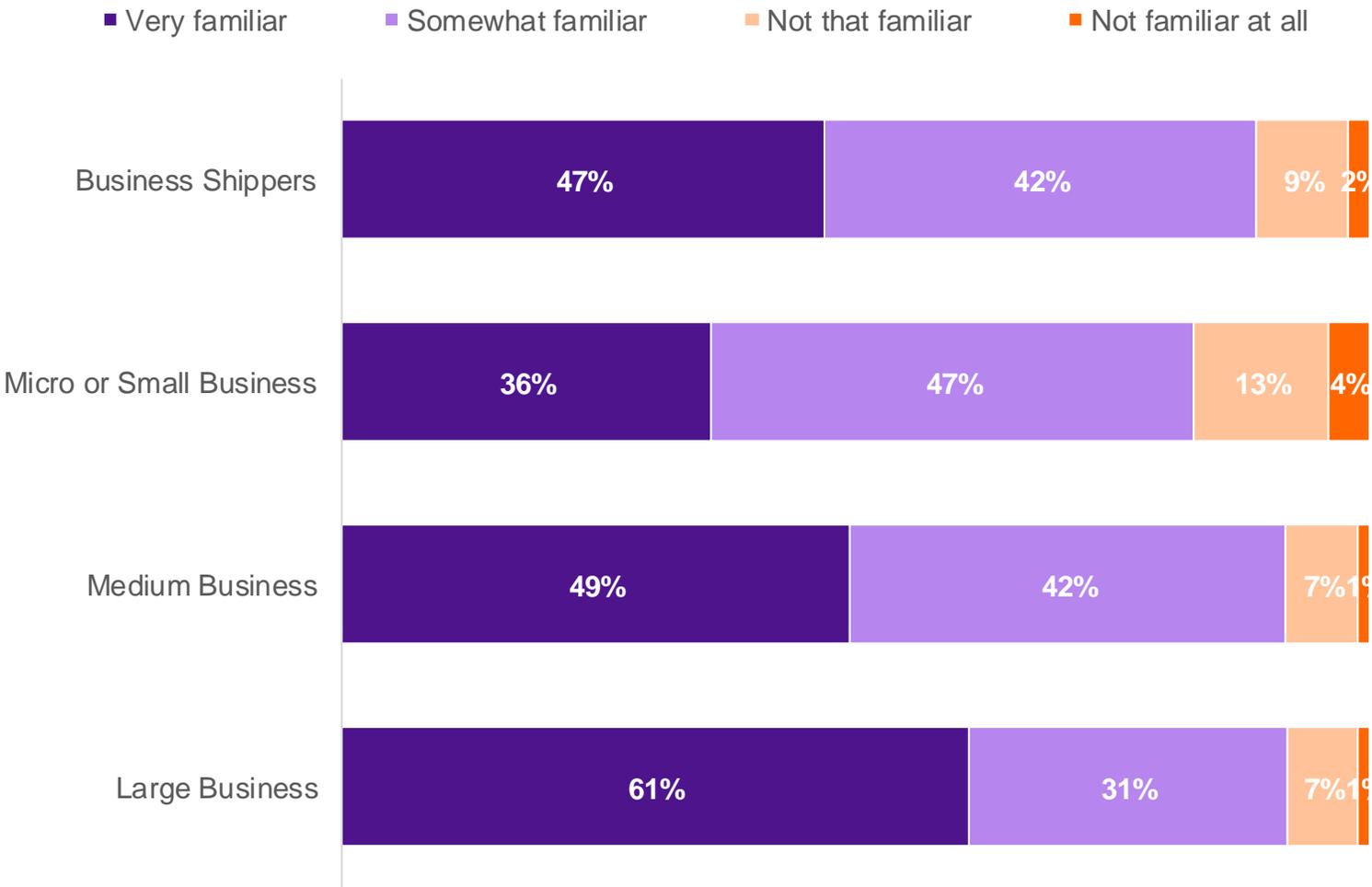
# Familiarity with No-Label/No-Box Return Shipping Options

Nearly 9-in-10 business shippers are familiar with no-label/no-box shipping.

A majority of large businesses say they are very familiar with this method of shipping, while just over a third of micro or small businesses say the same.

*How familiar are you with no-label / no-box return shipping options? No-label and no-box return shipping allows customers to take items for return to specified drop off locations and leave them with a staff member who will package and ship the returned item with no extra work or hassle for the customer.*

**Familiarity with No-Label / No-Box Shipping**



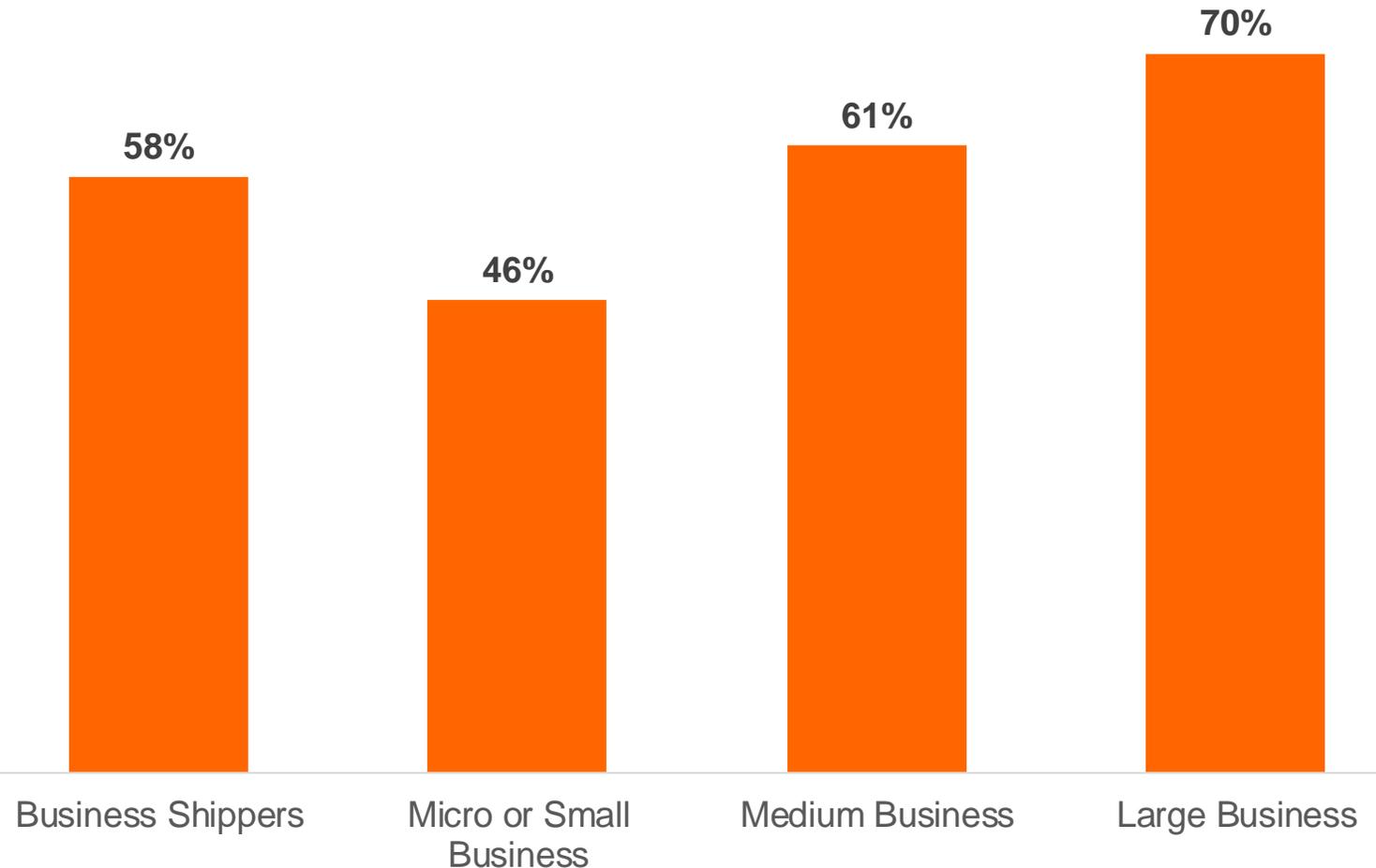
# No-Label/No-Box Return Shipping Option Usage

Similarly, large businesses are much more likely than small businesses to say they have offered no-label/no-box shipping

Nearly 6-in-10 Business Shippers say that have offered this method of shipping for returns.

*Has your business ever used or offered a no-label / no-box return shipping option?  
(Showing Yes)*

## Usage of No-Label / No-Box Shipping



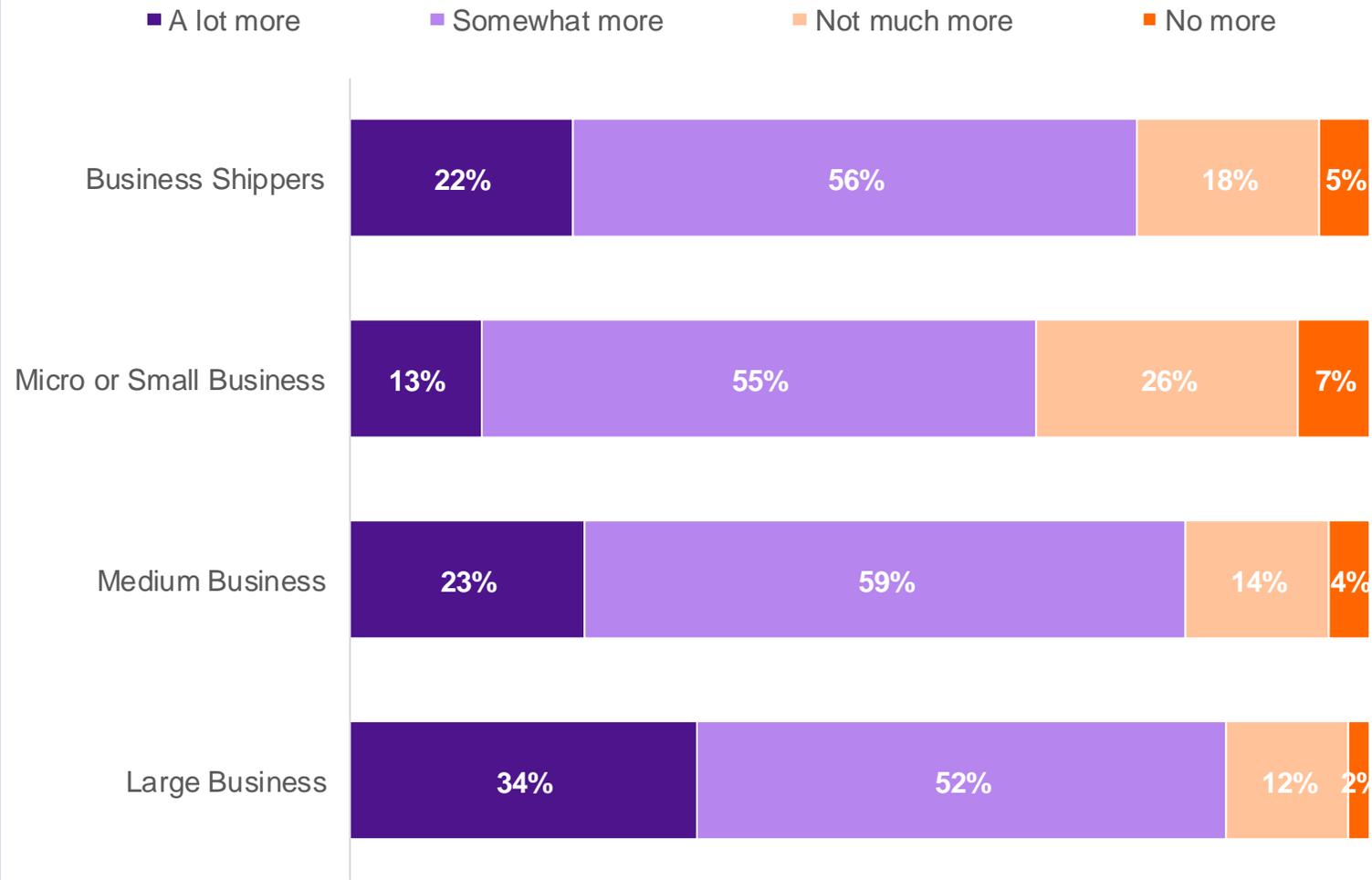
# No-Label/No-Box Return Shipping Options

A majority of business shippers across organization size are willing to pay somewhat more for a partner that offers no-label/no-box shipping.

Large businesses are more likely than smaller businesses to be willing to pay more for this.

*How much more would you be willing to pay for a return shipping partner that offers no-label / no-box return shipping over other partners?*

**Willingness to Pay More for a Partner that Offers No-Label / No-Box Shipping**

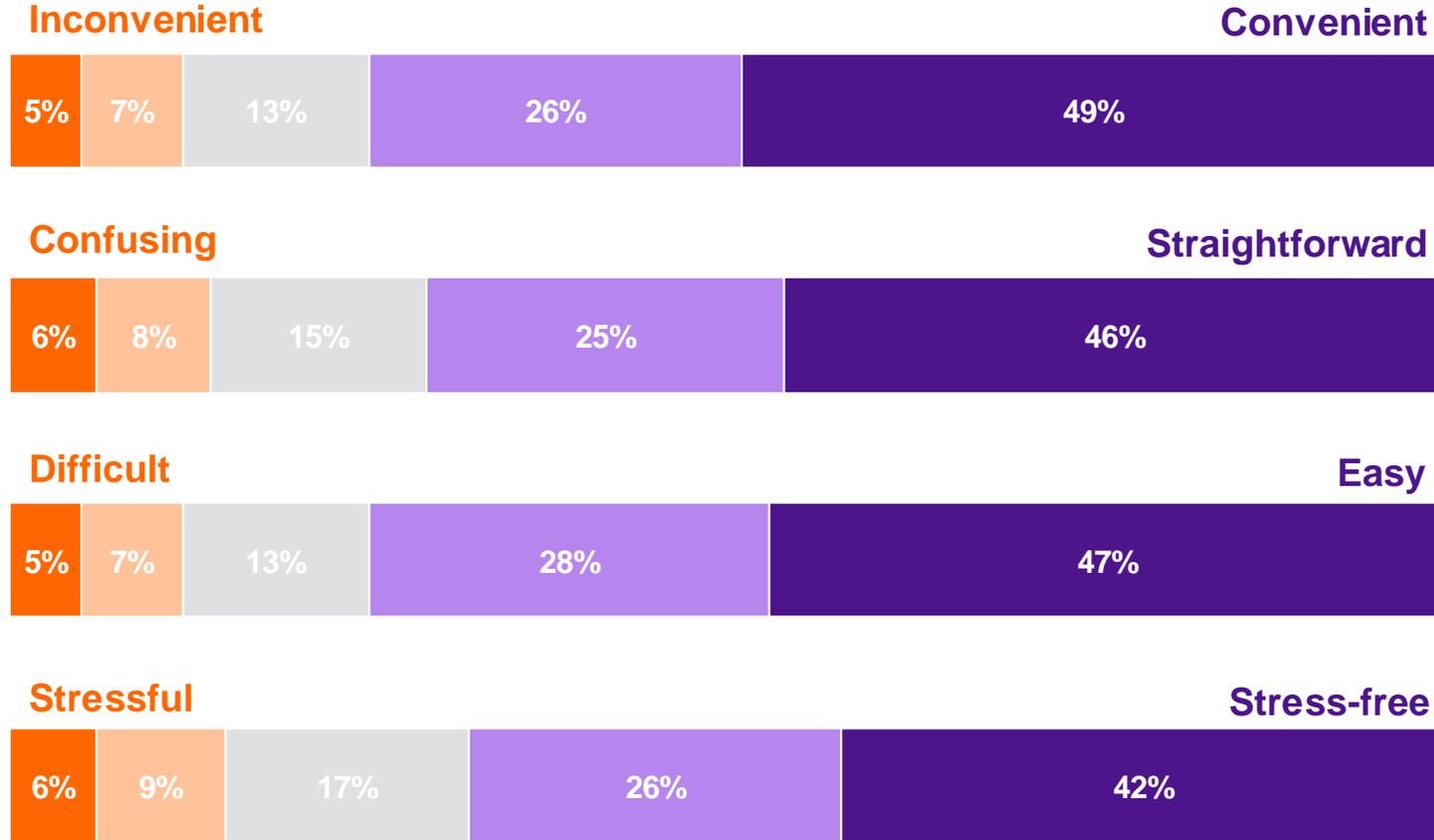


# No-Label / No-Box Return Shipping

At least two-thirds of business shippers say no-label/no-box shipping options are convenient, straightforward, easy, and stress-free.

Please select which of the following words best describes no-label / no-box return shipping in your opinion.

## No-Label / No-Box Shipping Descriptions

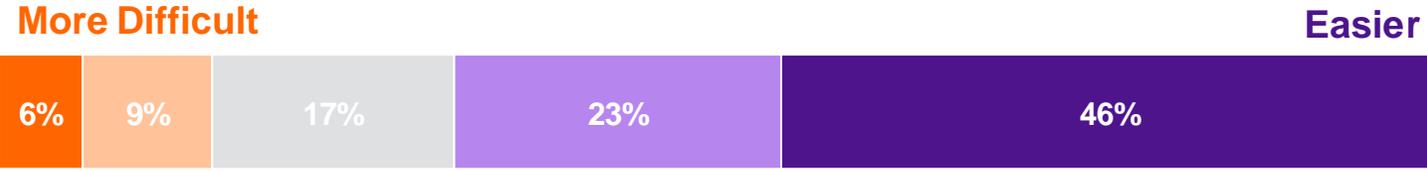
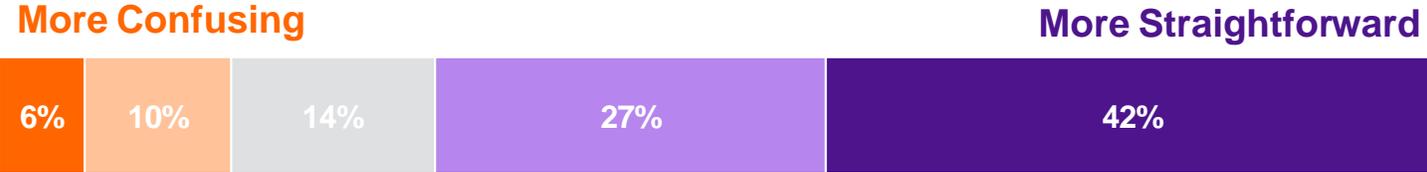


# No-Label / No-Box Return Shipping

Business Shippers consider no-label/no-box shipping is to be more convenient, straightforward, easier, and less stressful than other return options.

*Compared to other return options, would you say that no-label / no-box return shipping is?*

## No-Label / No-Box Shipping Compared to Other Options



# Cost versus Convenience

Business shippers are almost twice as likely to say that they are willing to pay more for a return shipping option for their business if it is easier for their customer and provides more transparency on returns.

*Which of the following is closer to your opinion even if neither is exactly right?*

## Business Shipping Cost v Customer Convenience

