Wunderkind

U.S. Tariffs: Consumer Impact Survey Series

A special report following consumer purchase intent and behaviors

July 2025

Market Alert:

Tariffs Are Reshaping Consumer Sentiment

In July 2025, continued tariff pressures and inflation are prompting notable shifts in how U.S. consumers shop. This report explores shopper attitudes and behaviors across age and gender groups, uncovering trends in spending caution, deal-seeking, and brand loyalty.

Drawing from the latest survey data, we examine how rising prices are shaping everyday purchase decisions—from the channels consumers trust for offers to the tactics they use to save. Marketers and brands will find actionable insights and strategies for adapting to this rapidly evolving environment and building lasting connections with today's value-driven shoppers.

This mini-report equips brand marketers with the insights they need to align messaging and promotional strategies to evolving consumer expectations.

It is based on survey data collected between July 11 & 14, 2025, from 303 U.S. consumers, evenly split across genders and adult age groups.

Inside, we outline the new rules of engagement for brands navigating economic turbulence and planning for revenue resilience in the months ahead.

We plan to continue to poll U.S. consumer sentiment and behavior as long as tariffs persist in 2025.

Economic Sentiment:
Caution and Worry Prevails

Consumer confidence in July 2025 shows an environment still marked by caution and lingering economic uncertainty. Just 23% of respondents feel more secure than they did in January, while a much larger share describe themselves as cautious, pessimistic or even panicked (62% combined). Only 14% feel unchanged, highlighting that the vast majority have been impacted by recent price increases and tariff developments.

Demographic splits are significant. Men (31%), Boomers (28%) and Millennials (28%) are the most optimistic about the economy, versus just 16% of women and 15% of Gen Z. These two cohorts are also the most likely to feel panicked at 22%.

This landscape underscores the need for brands to lean into value-driven, empathetic messaging. Marketers should offer reassurance and budget-friendly options for women and Gen Z, while aspirational and forward-focused narratives can engage more optimistic segments, particularly men and Boomers.

62%

Almost two-third of consumers feel either cautious, pessimistic or panicked about the economy.

Price Pressures:
Consumers Adapt Habits as Tariff Concerns Grow

Mid-2025 finds U.S. shoppers responding in tangible ways to continued price increases and tariff-related pressures. The majority have made noticeable changes to their purchasing habits, with the largest share of respondents (32%) saying they are more aggressively looking for discounts, closely followed by 31% reporting they are buying fewer non-essential items. Only a small fraction, of 12% have yet to adjust their behavior, signaling that rising costs are shaping the vast majority of consumer routines.

Gender and age differences are clear. Men (38%) and Millennials (39%) are leading the move to cut non-essential purchases, while women (43%) are deal seeking. Additionally, women (25%) check product origins far more than men at just (9%), highlighting a higher awareness of how tariffs affect specific goods. Gen Z remains the least likely to change habits dramatically, though even in this group, deal-seeking and careful spending are on the rise.

For marketers, this shift underscores the urgency of meeting consumers where they are. Brands should emphasize value, clearly communicate deals, and offer flexible promotions. Special attention to women and Millennials, who are most responsive to savings, will yield the greatest engagement.

Online Shopping Habits:
Deal-Seeking and Research Surges Amid Rising Costs

Consumers are adapting quickly to economic pressures, with 37% reporting that they now visit more websites to compare prices—a trend especially strong among Gen X (47%). Usage of browser extensions and coupon apps is at 18% overall, predictably following a generational pattern: the younger the consumer, the more likely they are to be driven toward tech-based savings. Meanwhile, a third of consumers (32%) say their online habits remain unchanged, with this figure peaking at a striking 56% among Boomers.

Women (35%) are just as likely as men (39%) to ramp up deal-hunting, but men are more inclined to read reviews or blogs (24%). Subscribing to brand newsletters or deal alerts has a foothold, particularly among younger consumers.

These shifts underscore a need for brands to optimize digital touchpoints, offer visible deals, and enable easy price comparisons to retain price-sensitive shoppers.

37%

of consumers are visiting brand websites directly in the search for better deals.

Support for the Tariffs:
Support and Skepticism Split by Demographic

Consumer attitudes toward tariffs as a means to protect American jobs and industries remain sharply divided. Only **19% fully support tariffs despite higher prices**, with support highest among men (26%) and Boomers (23%). In contrast, **Gen X shows the most skepticism, with 46% saying they don't believe tariffs protect jobs or industries or are worth it at all**—a sentiment also strong among women (49%).

Financial impact is a key sticking point: nearly one in five say they understand the intent but are torn because of increased costs, reflecting deep concern about the promised benefits.

For marketers, these divisions suggest an opportunity to tailor messaging, emphasizing economic security for older and male shoppers while addressing financial concerns and value for younger and female audiences.

19%

Less than a fifth of consumers fully support the tariffs to protect American jobs.

Consumers Shoulder the Burden:

Most See Themselves Bearing Tariff Costs

There is broad consensus among shoppers that the financial burden of U.S. tariffs ultimately lands with consumers themselves. Over half (54%) say they personally pay the largest share of tariff-related costs, with the perception even stronger among Boomers (64%) and Gen X (61%). Men and women are closely aligned on this view, suggesting a universal recognition that higher prices are felt at the checkout. Gen Z, in contrast, are less likely to feel personally impacted, with only 39% pointing to consumers..

Other answers trail far behind—**just 8% think retailers absorb the cost and 11% believe it's brands or manufacturers**. Notably, a significant number of Millennials (21%) and Gen Z (19%) point to exporting countries, showing some confusion or optimism about the true source of price increases.

For brands and marketers, this sentiment underscores the need for clear communication about pricing, as well as transparent justification for increases. Offering visible value, loyalty rewards, or relief promotions may help retain trust among price-sensitive consumers.

54%

Well over half of consumers believe it's U.S. consumers paying the financial costs for imported goods.

Price Worries:

Consumers Name Cost as Top Shopping Concern

For shoppers in July 2025, rising prices remain the overwhelming concern. When asked about their biggest shopping worries, almost two-thirds 64% cite "higher prices" as their top issue, a sentiment even more pronounced among women (70%) and Gen X (68%). Unpredictable price increases follow closely, with nearly half (47%) of respondents listing this as a major challenge. Price anxiety is most acute among women and Boomers, underlining the cross-generational impact of ongoing inflation and tariffs.

Other worries are notable but less dominant. Out-of-stock products trouble 21% of consumers, with men (23%) feeling this pinch more than women (19%). Shipping delays and return restrictions are lesser but growing issues, especially for Gen X and Millennials—groups more likely to be active online shoppers and sensitive to logistical hiccups. A small but vocal segment points to a lack of promotions (9%) as a current frustration, highlighting the need for visible deals and offers.

Demographic differences are key: women consistently report more concern about rising and unpredictable prices, while men are slightly more affected by stockouts. Gen Z is somewhat less anxious overall but still engaged.

For marketers, the message is clear—price transparency and regular promotional activity will be crucial. Brands that proactively address pricing fears, and ensure availability and smooth fulfillment, will build trust and encourage conversion in a price-conscious market.

Transparency and Loyalty:
Clear Communication Earns Consumer Trust

Transparent communication is a decisive loyalty driver in 2025, with nearly half (48%) of shoppers saying they are more likely to stay loyal to brands that provide clear updates on pricing, product availability, and exclusive offers. This sentiment is especially high among Millennials (54%) and Gen Z (55%), as well as men (53%), signaling the value of proactive engagement for younger and male audiences. Women are also strongly motivated by transparency (42%), but more likely than men to fall into the "maybe, if helpful" group (36%).

Just 13% say they still shop around regardless, and only 8% remain unsure. These numbers highlight a broad consumer preference for honest, timely communication, especially during periods of economic uncertainty.

For brands, the takeaway is simple: regular, clear updates and exclusive offers aren't just appreciated—they are expected, and can be the foundation for long-term loyalty and stronger customer relationships.

48%

Almost half of consumers say transparent communication on price rises increases brand loyalty.

Amazon Prime Day 2025:
Fewer Spenders, More Caution

Spending behavior during Prime Day and similar events shifted noticeably this year, with only of 28% consumers reporting they spent more, while a much larger 39% said they spent less than in the past. The pullback was especially significant among Gen X (49%) and women (48%), reflecting heightened price sensitivity and budget constraints. In contrast, Millennials (39%) and Gen Z (39%) were most likely to increase their spending, often driven by perceived deals or limited-time offers.

Notably, 34% of respondents said the event was not applicable to them, pointing to either non-participation or indifference—particularly common among Boomers (60%). The combined data signals a climate where consumers are more selective, weighing purchases carefully amid ongoing inflation and tariff uncertainty.

For brands, targeted promotions and personalized incentives will be crucial to re-engage hesitant shoppers during key sales events.

39%

of consumers spent less on Amazon Prime Day than in previous years.

What Drove Amazon Prime Day Behavior:
Motivators and Barriers Reveal a Cautious Shopper

Prime Day 2025 data paints a nuanced picture of shopper motivations and barriers. Among those who spent more than usual, almost a third (32%) cited finding better deals or limited-time offers. Stocking up on essentials (25%) and finishing holiday or back-to-school shopping early (17%) were also popular, particularly among Millennials and Gen Z. Marketing and promotions played a noticeable role, influencing 23% of shoppers, especially younger consumers. Notably, concern about future price increases spurred 21% to act, a sentiment strongest among Boomers (45%).

Conversely, the largest reason for spending less was budget constraints, reported by 35%—with Gen X (46%) and Boomers (33%) leading this group. High prices deterred 28%, and 21% found fewer desirable deals compared to previous years. Economic or job insecurity (21%) and a wait-and-see approach for future sales (9%) also factored in. Among Gen Z, disappointment with deal quality and higher prices stood out.

For marketers, the message is clear: compelling, time-limited offers and robust discounts are still key motivators, but budget fatigue and deal skepticism are real barriers. Addressing these with clear communication, early-bird incentives, and reassurance about future pricing will help brands stand out and drive engagement—especially for shoppers feeling the pinch.

Holiday Shopping Plans:
Most Shoppers Delay, but Early Birds Remain

The 2025 holiday shopping season is expected to start later for many Americans. Only 11% plan to begin before September, while 15% will start in September and 23% in October. The largest group (24%) is waiting for Black Friday or Cyber Monday, with this tendency most pronounced among Gen Z (30%) and men (25%). This group is holding out for major discounts and is likely to respond best to time-limited, high-impact holiday promotions.

Notably, Boomers (26%) are the most likely to skip holiday shopping altogether, compared to just 5% of Millennials.

Gen Z (36%) are more likely to shop early, in September or before, but overall, economic uncertainty and ongoing price pressures are encouraging shoppers to hold out for the best deals. Brands should anticipate a surge in bargain-hunting closer to traditional sales events, and plan campaigns to capture both early planners and late deal-seekers.

24%

A quarter of consumers will conduct holiday shopping during Black Friday/Cyber Monday.

BFCM 2025 Forecast:
Savings and Constricted Spending

Consumers are planning strategic changes for Black Friday and Cyber Monday 2025. The most common adjustment is to spend less, cited by 30% overall and peaking at 41% among Gen X and 36% of women. A further 29% plan to focus more on discounts, with Gen Z (42%) and men (31%) leading this trend—suggesting younger shoppers and males remain highly motivated by promotional opportunities.

Spreading costs is gaining traction: 11% say they will stretch their holiday spending over several months, a behavior most common among Gen Z (19%). Meanwhile, only 10% anticipate spending more, primarily men (15%) and Gen Z (16%), reflecting pockets of confidence or planned "catch-up" purchases. Prioritizing essentials is on the rise, especially among Millennials (27%) and men (19%), highlighting a continued shift toward practical, needs-based shopping.

Some are choosing to delay or avoid big-ticket items entirely (14%), with Gen Z (22%) and men (19%) most likely to take a wait-and-see approach. Notably, just 23% report no expected change in their habits, emphasizing the broad impact of economic uncertainty.

For brands and marketers, the message is clear: deep, clear discounts and flexible payment options will resonate, while messaging should balance value with urgency. Campaigns that reward early deal-seekers and address budget concerns directly will be best positioned to convert cautious shoppers.

Savvy Shopping Tactics on the Rise:

Consumers Get Creative to Unlock Better Deals

Shoppers in 2025 are increasingly turning to creative tactics to maximize savings amid ongoing price and tariff pressures. Among those actively seeking better deals, adding items to online carts and leaving them there is the top strategy (24%), particularly for Millennials (30%) and Gen Z (31%). Subscribing to email or text alerts in exchange for a discount is growing too, with Gen X (22%) and Gen Z (31%) leading the way, signaling that direct digital engagement is especially effective with younger shoppers.

Creating or signing into accounts for special offers (16%) and clicking through emails or texts to signal interest (13%) are also popular, especially among men (19%). Notably, 12% admit to using multiple emails or identities to access first-time buyer incentives—rising to 20% for Millennials.

Demographic splits are telling: Women (28%) are more likely to abandon carts for deals, while men (20%) are more responsive to direct click-through offers. Boomers are the least likely to change tactics, with 60% saying they do nothing new.

For marketers, this shift highlights the need for responsive, personalized deal triggers and seamless digital journeys. Abandoned cart strategies, exclusive signup offers, and loyalty-driven incentives will be key to converting these savvy, deal-focused shoppers—especially Millennials and Gen Z, who are most likely to test and reward such efforts.

Preferred Channels for Personalized Offers: *Email Dominates*

When it comes to receiving personalized deals, **email remains the top channel, preferred by 56% of all consumers—especially women (62%), Gen X (67%), and Boomers (59%)**. This enduring preference underscores email's strength as the backbone of retention and offer strategies, particularly for older and female audiences who value direct, reliable communication.

Text (20%) is rapidly gaining ground, especially among younger shoppers, reflecting the growing importance of mobile-first marketing. In-app notifications (16%) and website pop-ups (14%) appeal most to digital-native consumers, while mobile wallet (10%) and phone calls (7%) lag behind.

Notably, just 13% of consumers say they don't want marketing offers at all. The takeaway for brands is to prioritize a multichannel approach—lead with personalized email, but ramp up text and app engagement for younger segments seeking timely, direct communication.

56%

Over half of consumers prefer to receive personalized offers from brands via email.

Closing Insight:

Tariffs and rising prices are reshaping how, when, and why Americans shop. Brands must recognize these new realities and respond with clarity, value, and adaptability to stay relevant.

Value and Price Sensitivity Define Today's Shopper

Across all ages and genders, shoppers are cautious and price-focused—cutting back on non-essentials, seeking deals, and comparing prices. Women, Millennials, and Gen Z are most cost-sensitive. Brands that emphasize savings, value, and loyalty will win trust and sales.

Winning Requires a Multichannel, Truly Personalized Approach

Email remains the foundation for reaching most shoppers, but digital tactics must now span text, push, and in-app offers. With the majority checking more sites and leveraging digital tools to hunt for deals, personalization is essential for engagement.

Consumers Expect Brands to Evolve Alongside Them

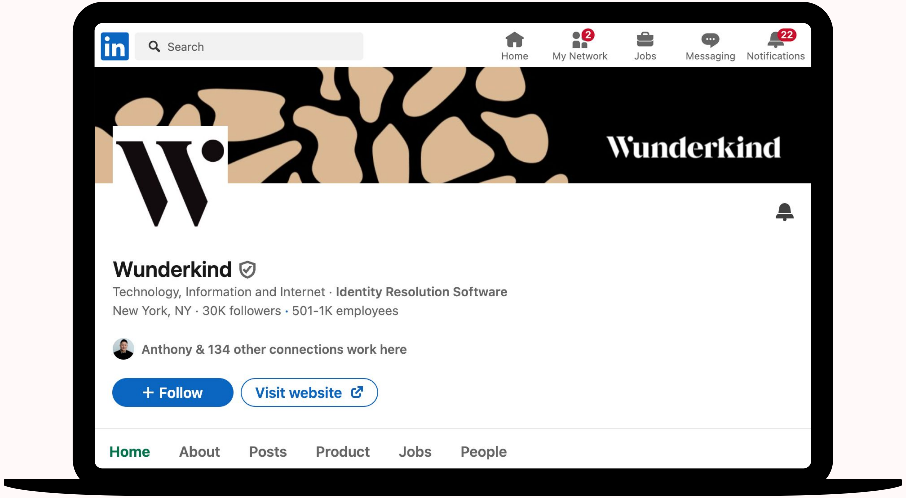
Today's consumers are proactive and expect brands to adapt. By subscribing to alerts, abandoning carts, and timing purchases, shoppers signal a demand for transparency, flexibility, and savings. Brands that respond with empathy and agility will earn lasting loyalty.

This isn't just a challenge—it's a chance to lead. Brands that adapt with speed, empathy, and strategy will emerge stronger, earning loyalty not through legacy, but through relevance.

Stay in the Know

Get All of Our Future Survey Reports

Follow us on LinkedIn



Follow us on LinkedIn

Visit our Insights Hub

Wunderkind

Wunderkind is the leading AI-driven performance marketing solution that collects consent-based, first-party data and identifies anonymous traffic for brands in order to scale hyper-personalized one-to-one messages. Brands lean on the Wunderkind Identity Network, a proprietary database recognizing 9 billion devices and 1 billion consumers, and observes 2 trillion digital transactions every year, to trigger the most impactful offers to their target audience at the right moment and in the right channel. This proprietary data is accessed by Wunderkind's Autonomous Marketing Platform, an AI engine that integrates seamlessly into a brands' existing ESP to boost performance across email, text and advertising channels.

Wunderkind is the only performance solution that guarantees a lift in revenue for its clients and delivers over $5 billion in directly attributable revenue annually for brands across a number of industries, often ranking as a top 3 revenue channel in clients' own analytics platforms. Brands such as Harley-Davidson, Perry Ellis International and Wolverine Worldwide partner with Wunderkind to drive top-line revenue through its guaranteed results.

MOTOR HARLEY-DAVIDSON CYCLES

PERRY ELLIS

WOLVERINE WORLDWIDE