

CONSUMER TRENDS 2026

Decoding AI Consumers

statista 



Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly reshaping how consumers interact, shop, and make decisions in 2026. For brands, understanding not only what AI does, but also how people feel about it, is now essential.

Foreword

Drawing on extensive survey data, this whitepaper introduces four distinct consumer AI typologies: the excited AI Enthusiast, the cautious AI Skeptic, the suspicious AI Avoider, and the practical AI-Assisted Shopper, an emerging trend we [highlighted in last year's whitepaper](#). Each group holds unique attitudes and expectations, impacting their buying behavior and relationships with brands.

By decoding these AI-era segments, businesses can craft targeted strategies to connect authentically, build trust, and drive success in a landscape where digital intelligence and human experience intersect. This whitepaper investigates these consumer trends across the U.S., Germany, and the UK.

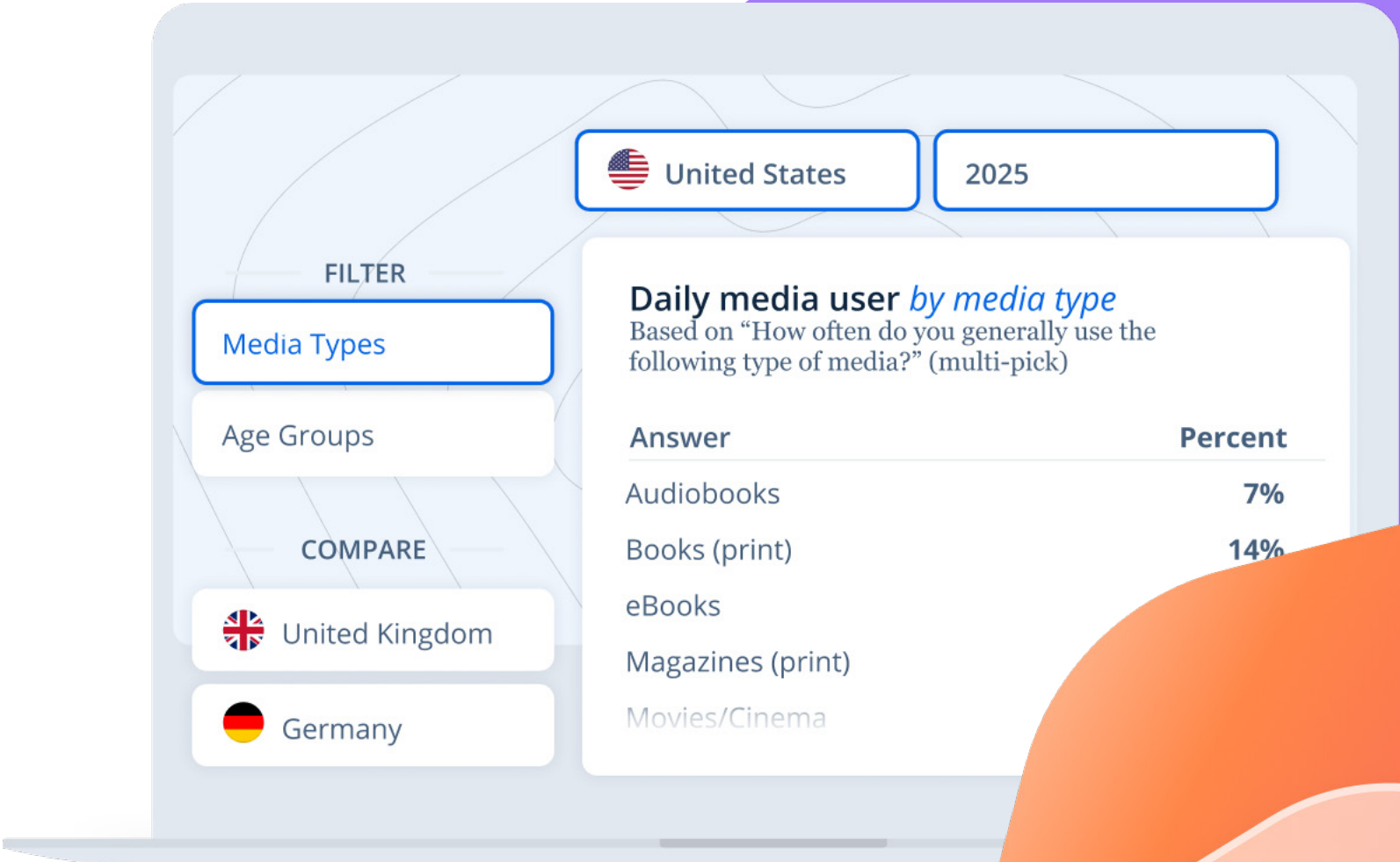
Ready to dive in? **Let's explore the AI trends.**



Statista data **methodology**

Curious about how these insights come to life? Here's how we ensure robust, reliable data you can trust:

- **Countries covered:** United States, United Kingdom, Germany
- **Sample size:** Over 12,000 respondents (4,000+ per country)
- **Age of respondents:** 18 to 64 years
- **Respondent type:** Internet users
- **Survey time period:** June & July 2025
- **AI personas were created from the survey question:** "Which of the following statements best describe how you feel about or use AI in your daily life?"



NEW

These findings were powered by Statista's new monthly [Media and Pulse survey](#), conducted within our Consumer Insights platform. Our research team ensures every survey is robust, credible, and representative. That's how we deliver insights you can act on with confidence.





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23-27



PERSONA 1

AI Enthusiast



AI Enthusiast
AI Skeptic
AI Avider
AI-Assisted Shopper

21%

of German AI Enthusiasts
feel hopeful about
the world right now.

Why it's important to **understand** **AI Enthusiasts**

AI Enthusiasts represent a forward-looking consumer group that is both optimistic and influential. Unlike average consumers, they are far more confident about their personal, national, and financial futures. They are more willing to make major purchases, less constrained by price, and more trusting of the information provided to them. As early adopters of innovation, they serve as a bellwether for wider consumer shifts, displaying loyalty, openness, and creativity.

For brands and companies, this makes them an essential audience to understand; successfully engaging with them can unlock enduring brand advocacy and provide momentum in markets that reward trust, optimism, and innovation.



The **data** behind it

Young, male, and **future-focused**

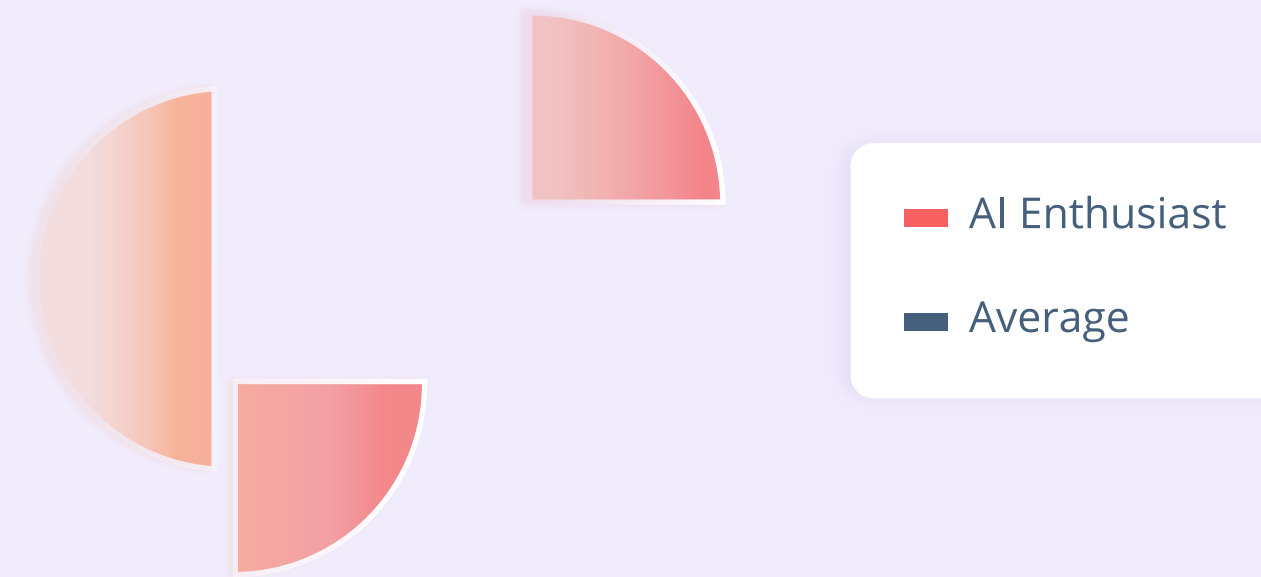
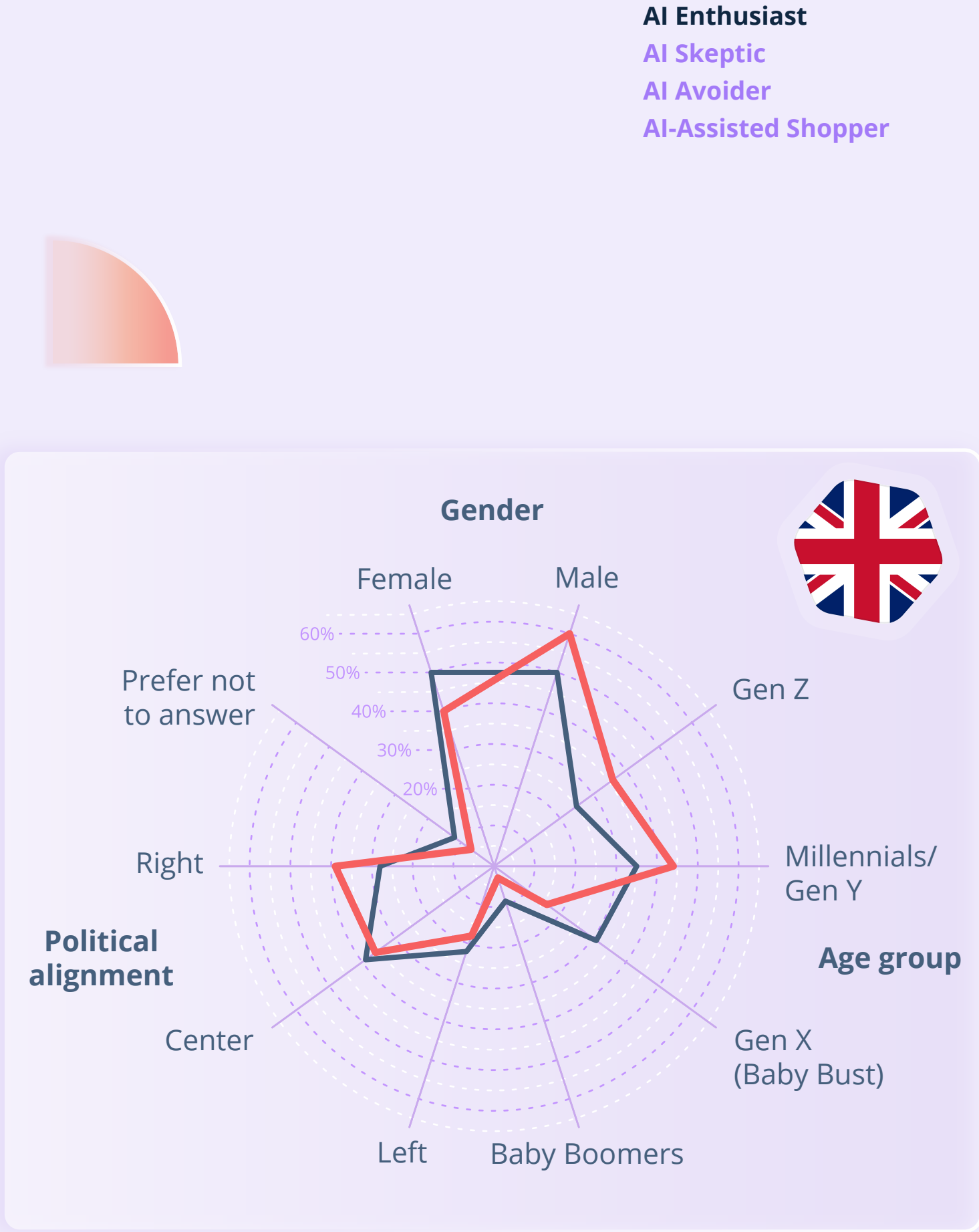
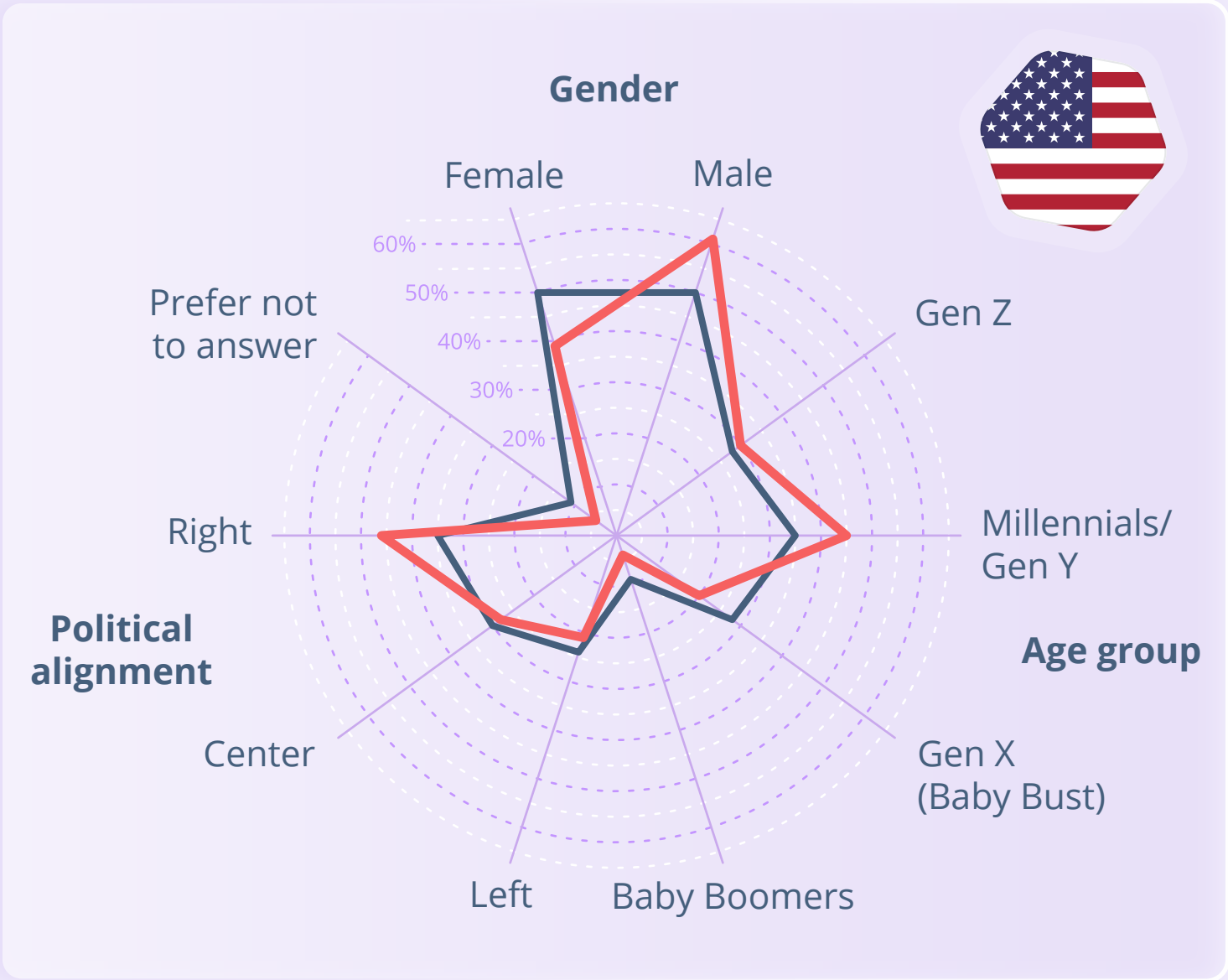
Mostly young men, Millennials and Gen Z, make up the bulk of AI Enthusiasts. Their enthusiasm leans right of the political spectrum, where optimism about technology often aligns with pro-growth politics.

The **optimists** of the marketplace

Compared to the average consumer, AI Enthusiasts display a markedly positive outlook on their personal situation, national economy, and future opportunities. These consumers expect to make major purchases and embrace a hopeful vision of tomorrow. In Germany, however, societal fatigue tempers this optimism.

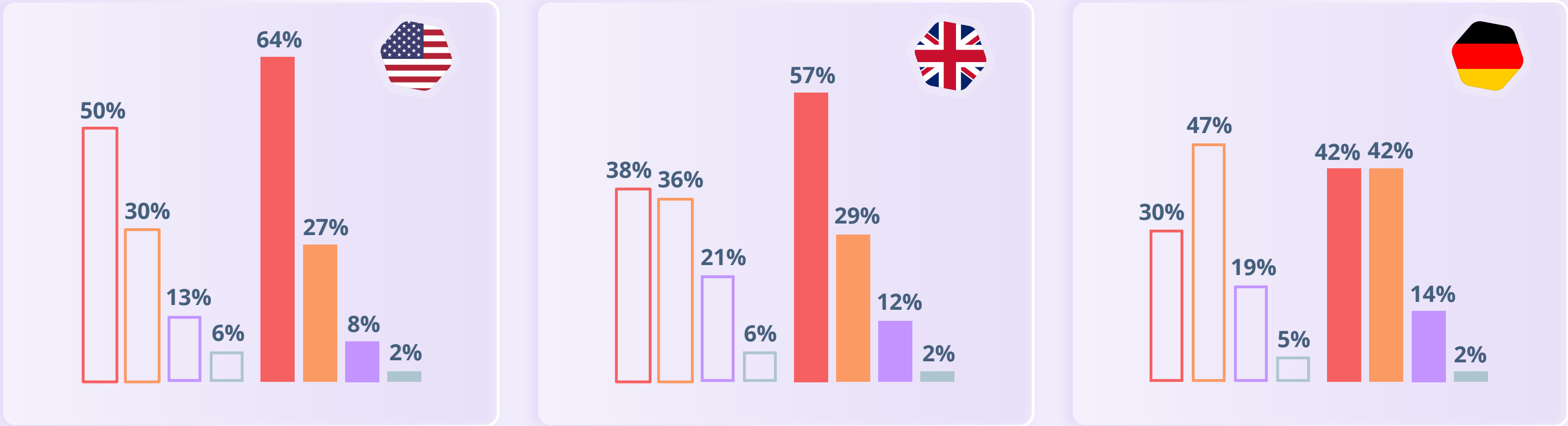
Growth in life and wealth

Health and family sit at the core of their values, alongside personal growth, financial success, and strong relationships. While cost-consciousness is on the rise, AI Enthusiasts are slightly less price-driven than the average consumer.

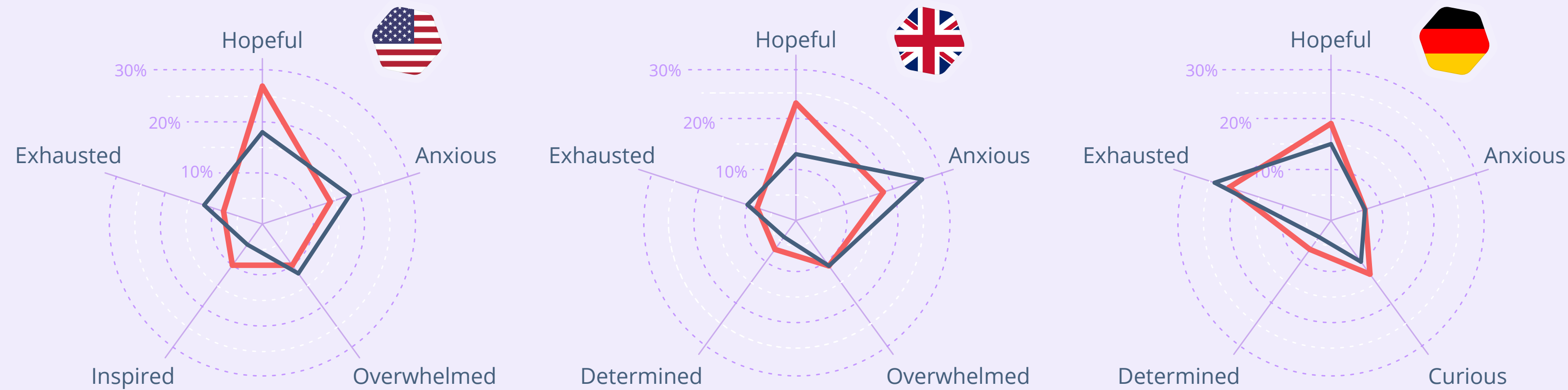


Do you think you will be better off or worse off financially, in a year from now? (single-pick)

Average AI Enthusiast Better off About the same Worse off Don't know



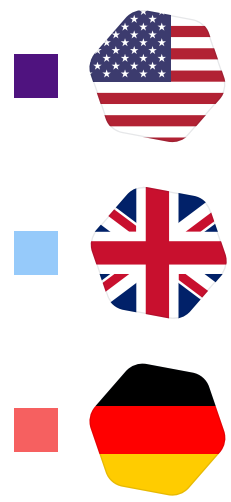
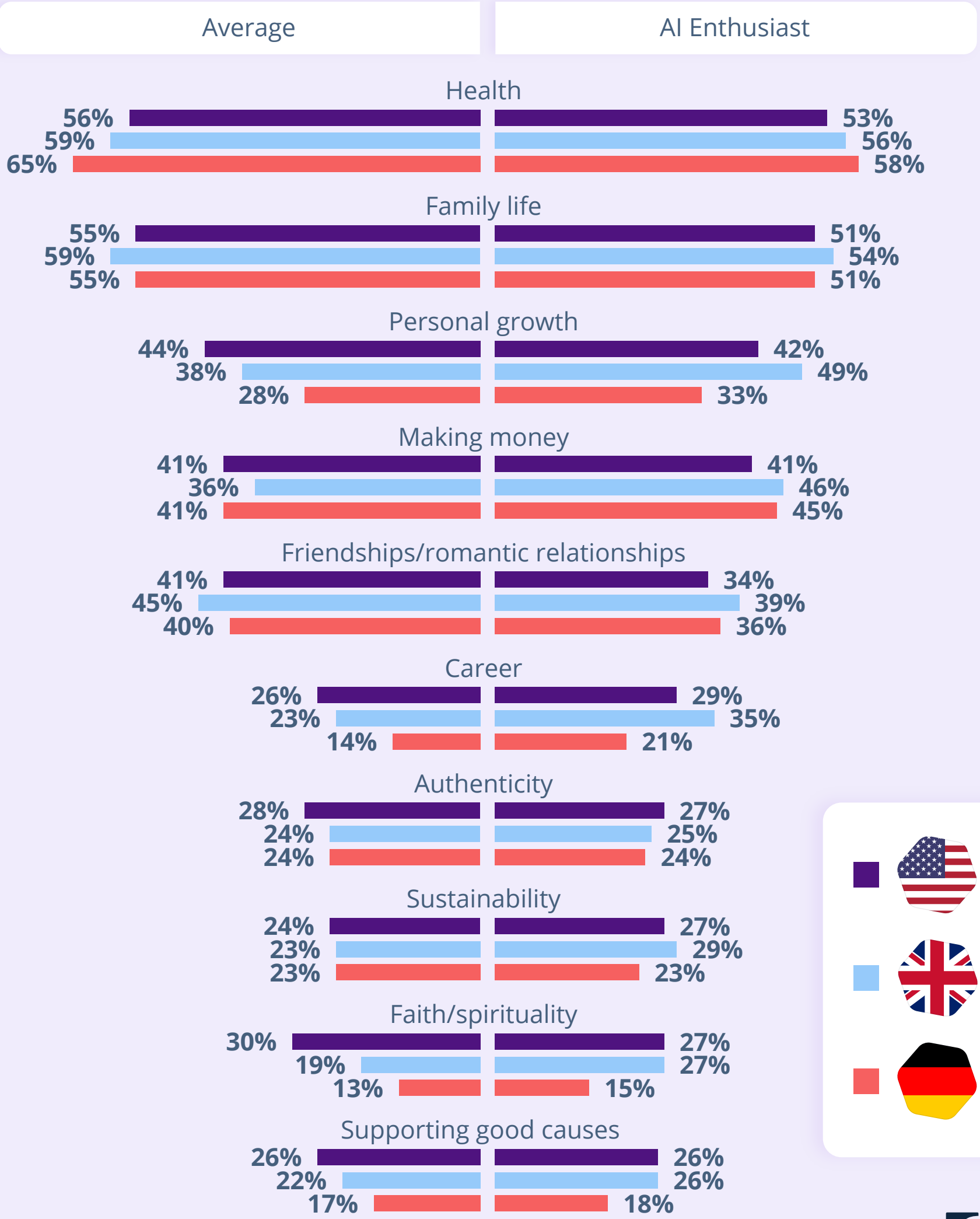
Which of the following best describes how you feel about the world right now? (single-pick)



Sources: Personal economic outlook, Societal sentiment, Personal values

AI Enthusiast Average

Which of the following are the most important to you? (multi-pick)



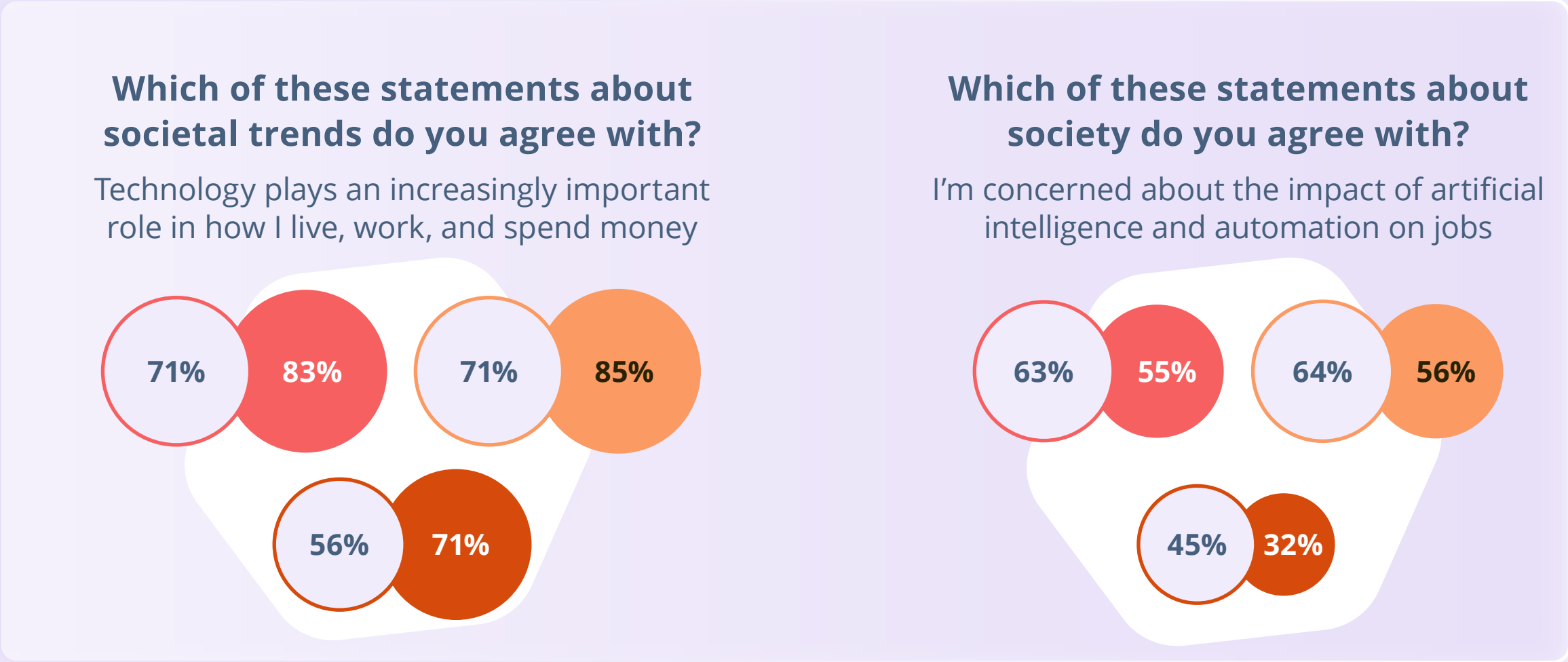
Average

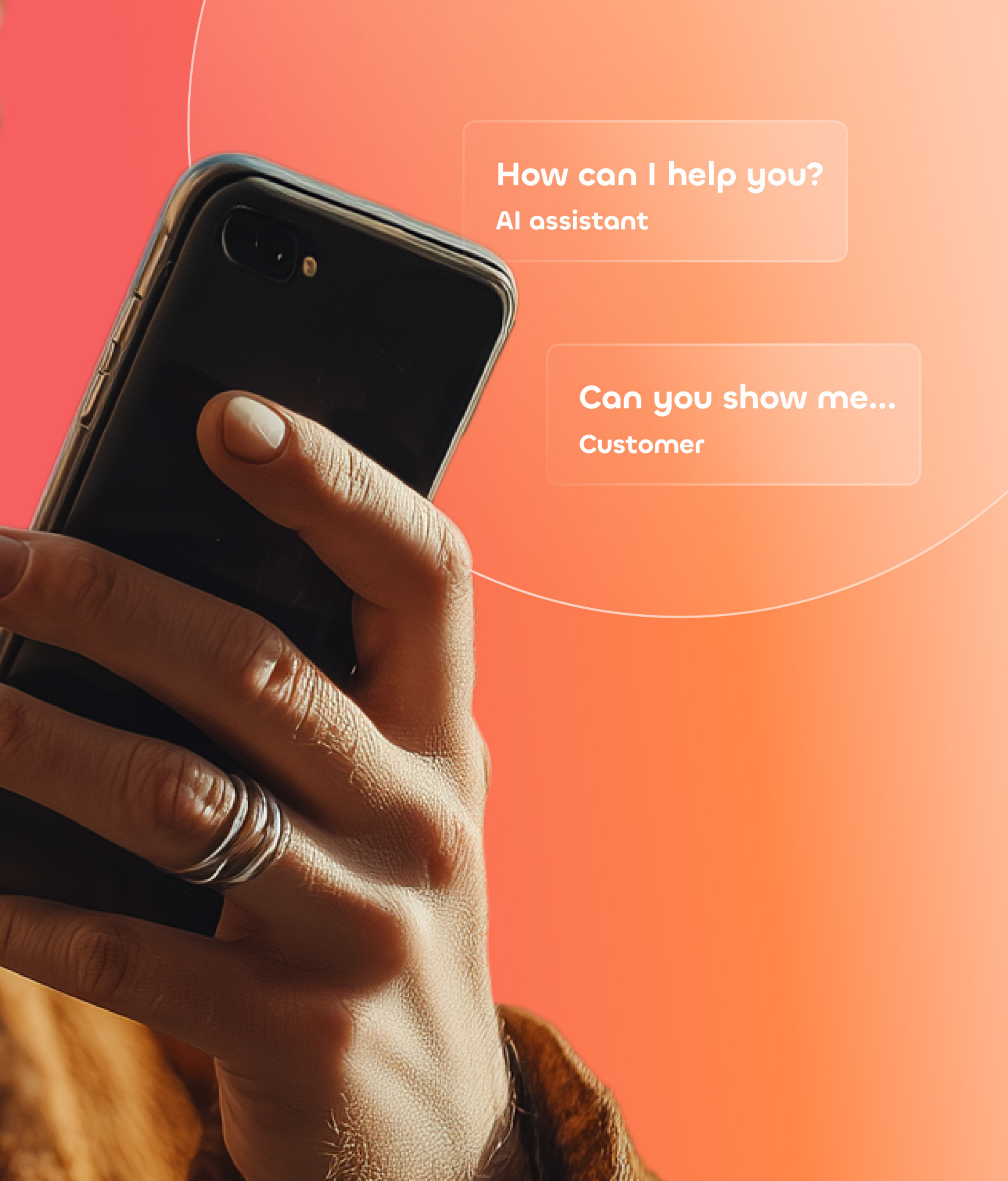
AI Enthusiast

United States

United Kingdom

Germany





How can I help you?

AI assistant

Can you show me...

Customer

AI Enthusiast

AI Skeptic

AI Avider

AI-Assisted Shopper

Strategies for success

To engage AI Enthusiasts effectively, brands must focus on four key strategies:

1. Lead with innovation

Highlight new ideas, creativity, and technological progress rather than competing on price. These consumers value forward-thinking solutions and are eager to embrace change.

2. Appeal to optimism and growth

Position offerings as enablers of personal growth, health, relationships, and financial success, tapping into their future-focused mindset.

3. Build trust by sharing knowledge

Communicate with authority and authenticity. As information-trusting consumers, AI Enthusiasts respond well to clear, confident, and insightful messaging.

4. Adapt to local nuance

In the U.S. and the UK, connect through aspirational and entrepreneurial narratives. For Germany, emphasize dependability, thoughtfulness, and stability.



PERSONA 2

AI Skeptic

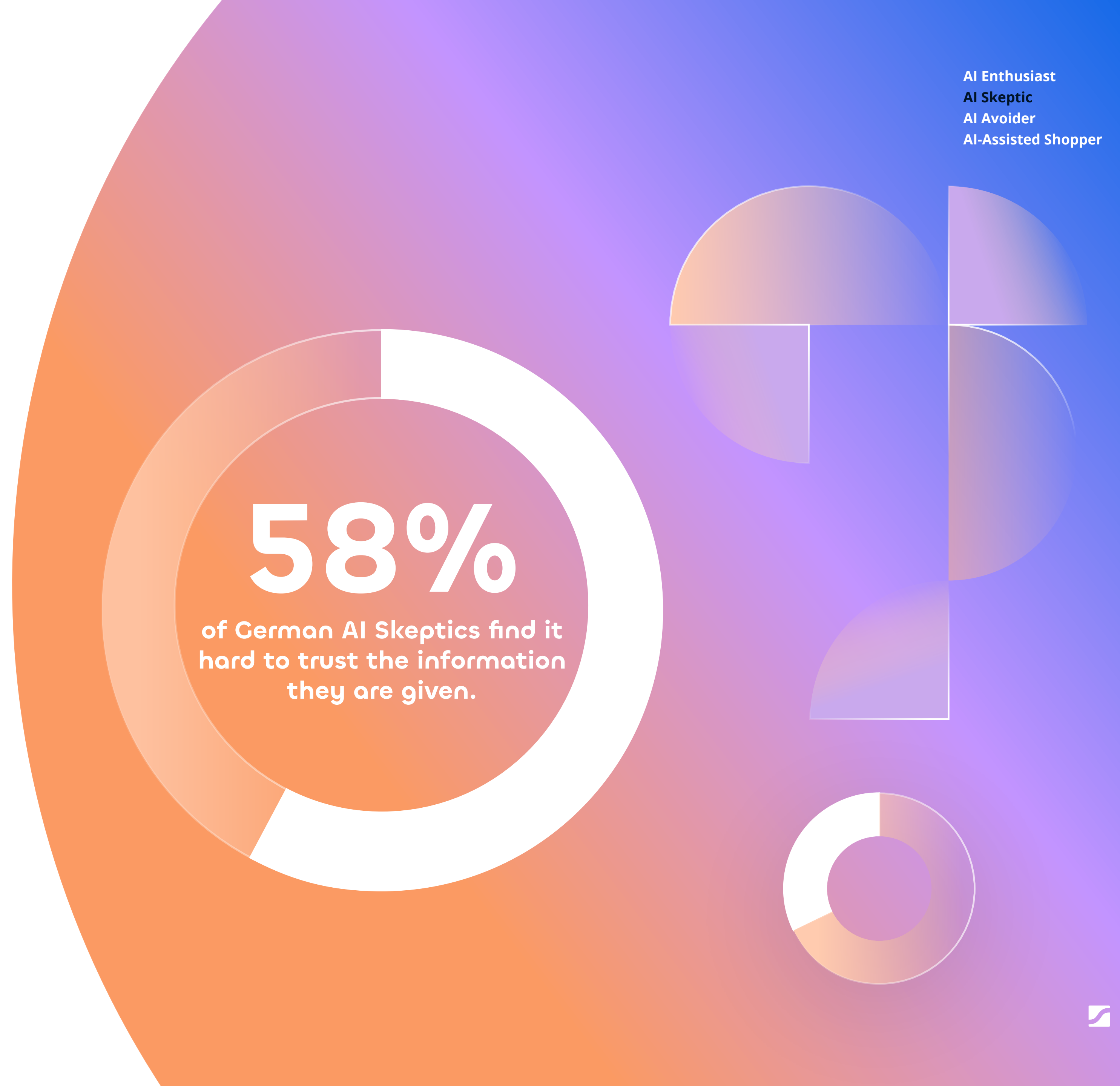


Why it's important to **understand AI Skeptics**

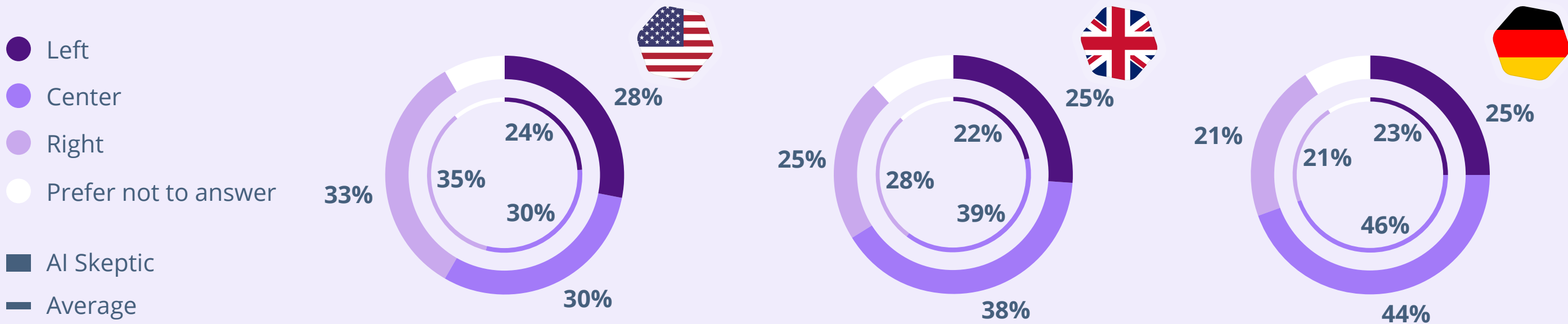
The wary **majority**

AI Skeptics represent the cautious baseline of consumers—neither highly resistant nor enthusiastic. Rather, they tend to mirror the average shopper. Compared with enthusiasts, AI Skeptics are more anxious, less trusting, and generally pessimistic about their country's future. They hesitate over major purchases and scrutinize information carefully. With skepticism spread evenly across gender and age, this outlook reflects a broad, default stance in the market.

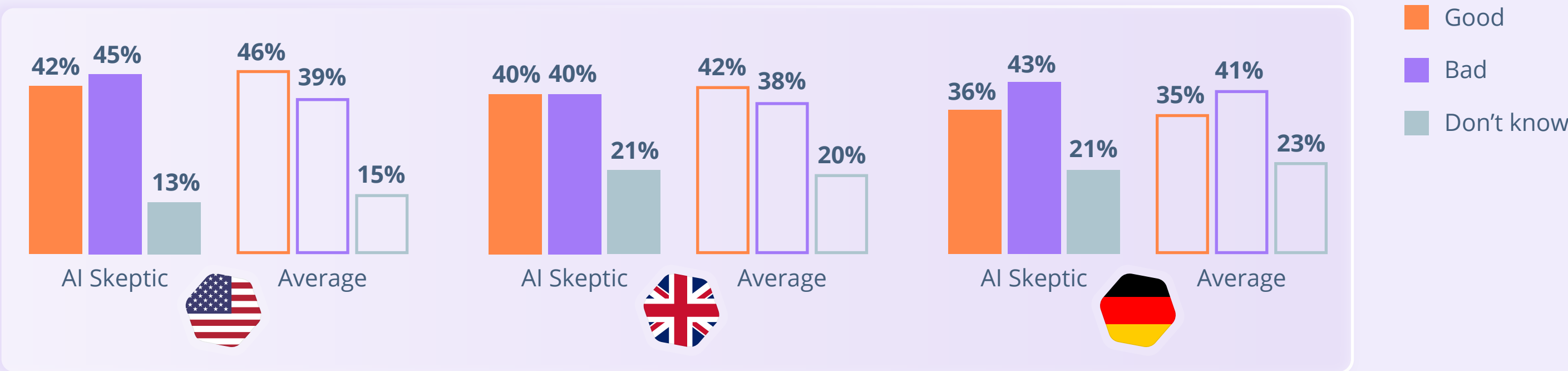
For brands, understanding AI Skeptics is vital. Assuming universal enthusiasm for AI can trigger resistance, so messaging should be measured and sensitive to consumer anxieties. Winning over skeptics isn't just about selling AI—it's about responding thoughtfully to anxieties and actively building trust.



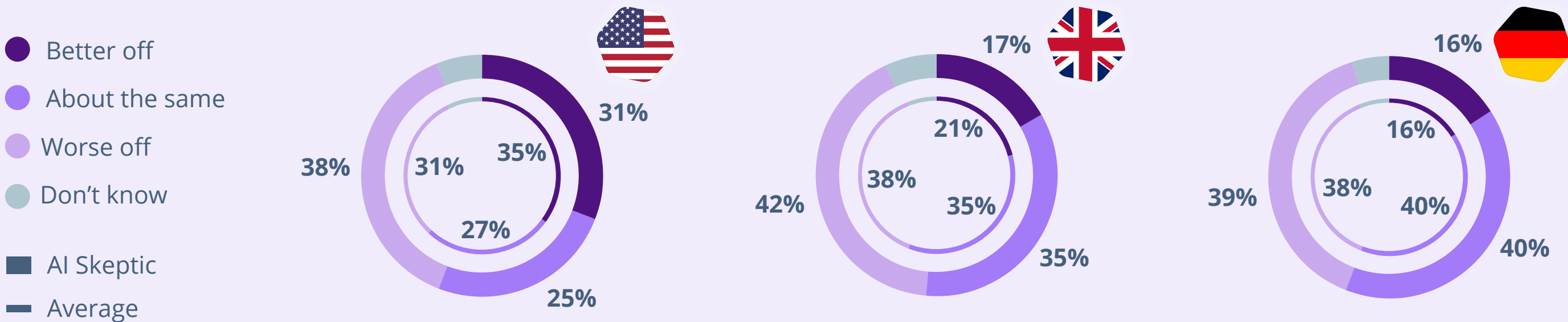
Many people use the terms 'left' and 'right' when they want to describe political views. Where would you place yourself on a scale from left to right? (single-pick)



Is now a good or bad time to make any major household purchase? (single-pick)



How do you think your country's economy will be in a year from now? (single-pick)



AI Enthusiast
AI Skeptic
AI Avider
AI-Assisted Shopper

The **data** behind it

Broadly **skeptical**

AI skepticism shows no strong differences by gender or age. Men and women, young and older consumers alike share this stance. AI Skeptics lean slightly more left politically compared to the average consumer.

Glass half **empty**

AI Skeptics generally share the average consumer's views on today's economy but are notably more doubtful about the future. They're less likely to believe they'll be better off next year, and particularly in the U.S. they tend to view the present as an inopportune time for major purchases. Their skepticism stretches beyond personal finance—most are more negative than positive about their country's current and future prospects.

Sources: [Political spectrum summarized](#), [Major purchase intentions](#), [Country's economic outlook](#)



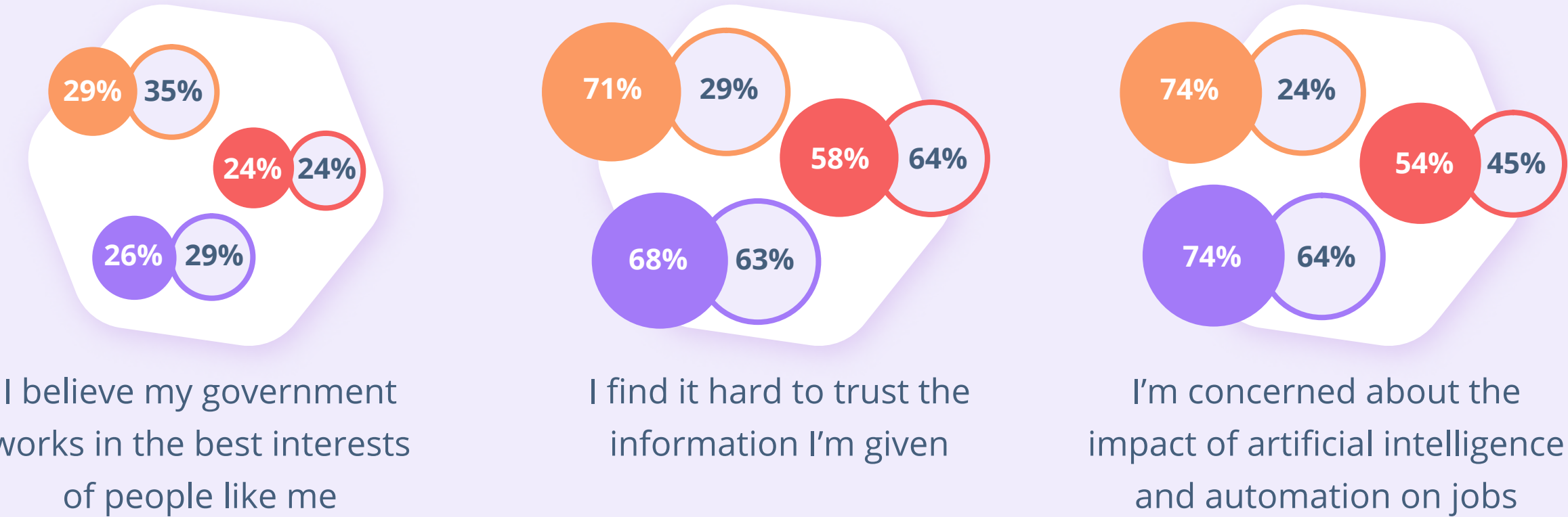
Careful, considered, **committed**

Top qualities shared by these consumers across markets include loyalty, dependability, open mindedness, thoughtfulness, organization, knowledgeability, and authenticity. These traits define a consumer group that deliberates carefully before embracing change, emphasizing a thoughtful approach to adoption.

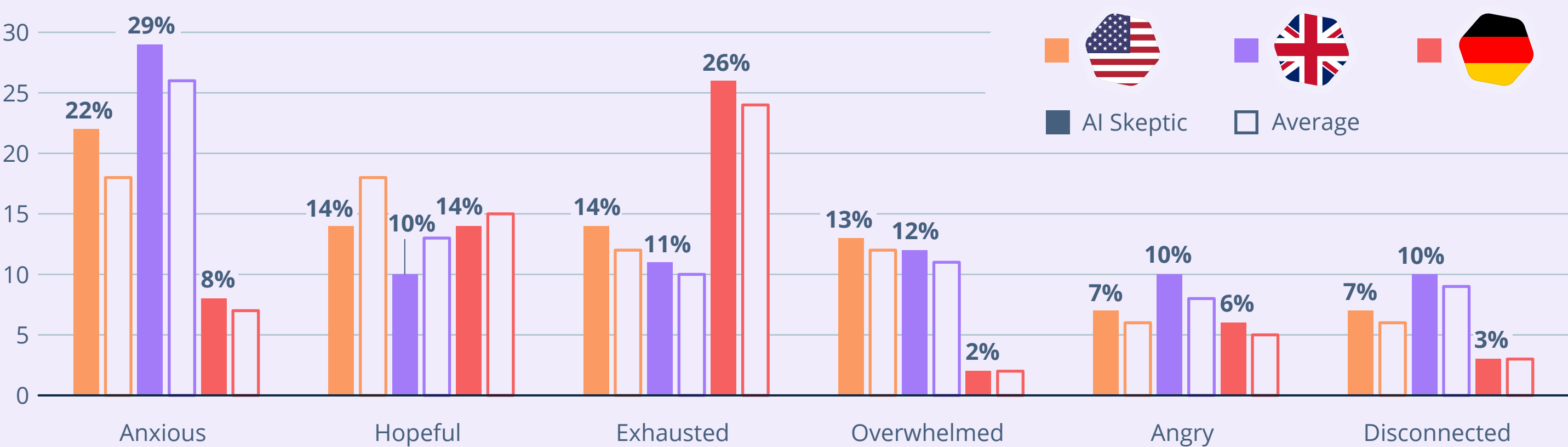
Guarded with a dose of **anxiety**

AI Skeptics struggle to trust institutions and information. They are concerned about government representation, wary of technology’s role in automation, and much more anxious about the potential loss of jobs. While U.S. and UK Skeptics report anxiety, German Skeptics tend to feel more drained and exhausted by the state of society.

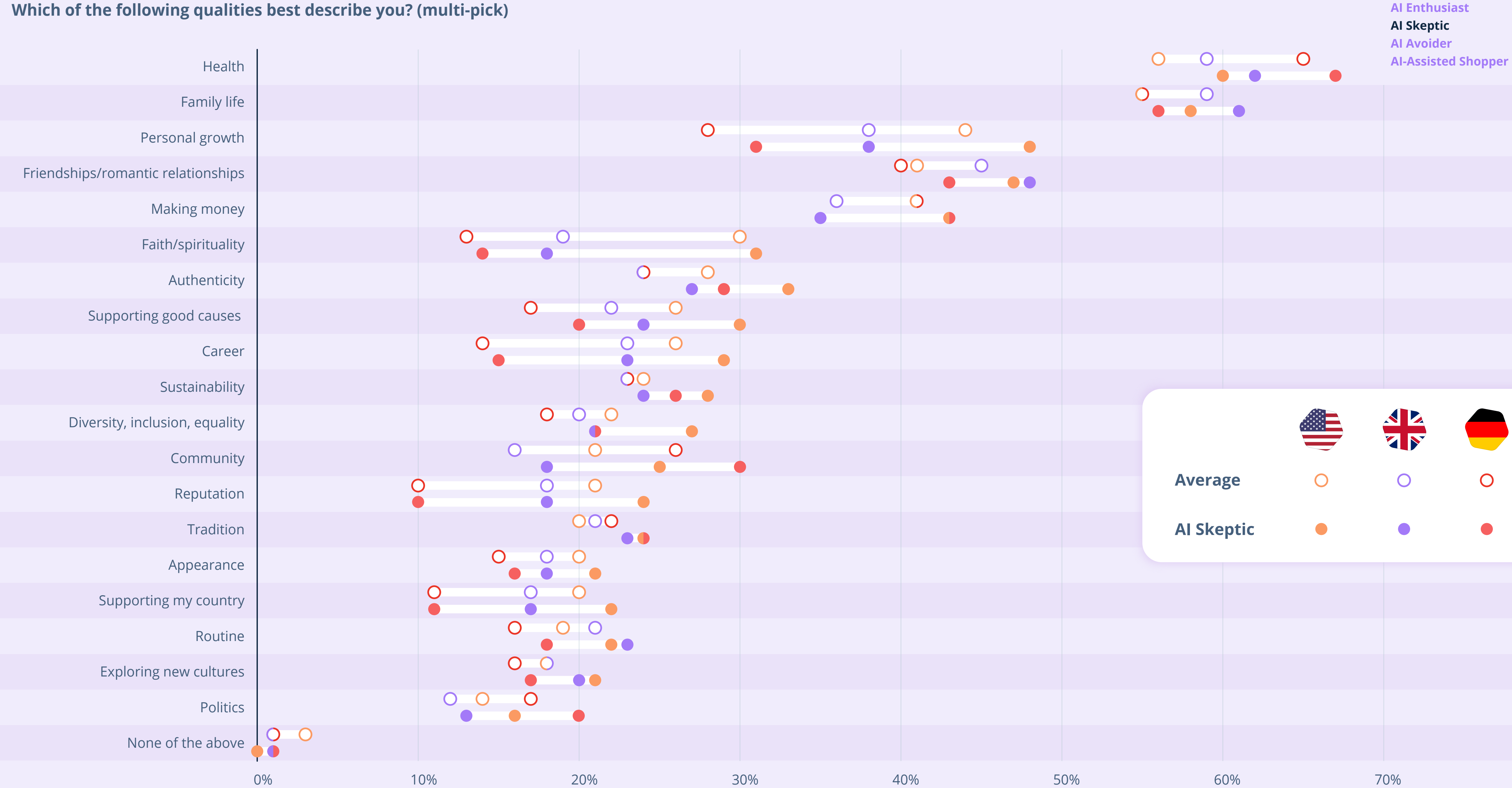
Which of these statements about society do you agree with?



Which of the following best describes how you feel about the world right now?



Which of the following qualities best describe you? (multi-pick)





AI Enthusiast
AI Skeptic
AI Avider
AI-Assisted Shopper

Strategies for success

To win over AI Skeptics, brands must focus on addressing fears while building trust and reassurance:

1. Build confidence through transparency

Skeptics don't take information at face value. Companies must offer clarity, openness, and honesty to foster credibility.

2. Prioritize security and stability

Positioning should highlight safety, dependability, and protection rather than disruption to appeal to the cautious mindset of this consumer. Messaging that highlights reliability will resonate most. Demonstrate ROI, long-term savings, and practical benefits over flashy innovation.

3. Balance value with affordability

Pricing is key for this audience. Clear value communication, offers that emphasize efficiency, and practical messaging resonate strongly with AI Skeptics.

4. Reduce the anxiety gap

Provide reassurance when you can about automation, job impacts, and government alignment. Framing AI as a supportive tool rather than a threat can ease fears and open doors to gradual acceptance.





PERSONA 3



AI Avoider

AI Enthusiast
AI Skeptic
AI Avoider
AI-Assisted Shopper

Why it's important to **understand** **AI Avoiders**

Not all consumers are as eager to jump on the AI bandwagon. While a certain degree of skepticism about AI and new technology exists in virtually all shoppers, there is also a distinct group that avoids AI altogether. These consumers have been watching the AI hype with suspicion and are unimpressed—or even frightened—by what they've seen so far.

While this persona is expected to decrease in numbers in the years to come, they currently represent a significant consumer demographic that cannot be reached with the same marketing strategies that are used for AI-positive consumers.



80% of U.S. and UK AI Avoiders are
concerned about the impact of AI
and automation on jobs.



The **data** behind it

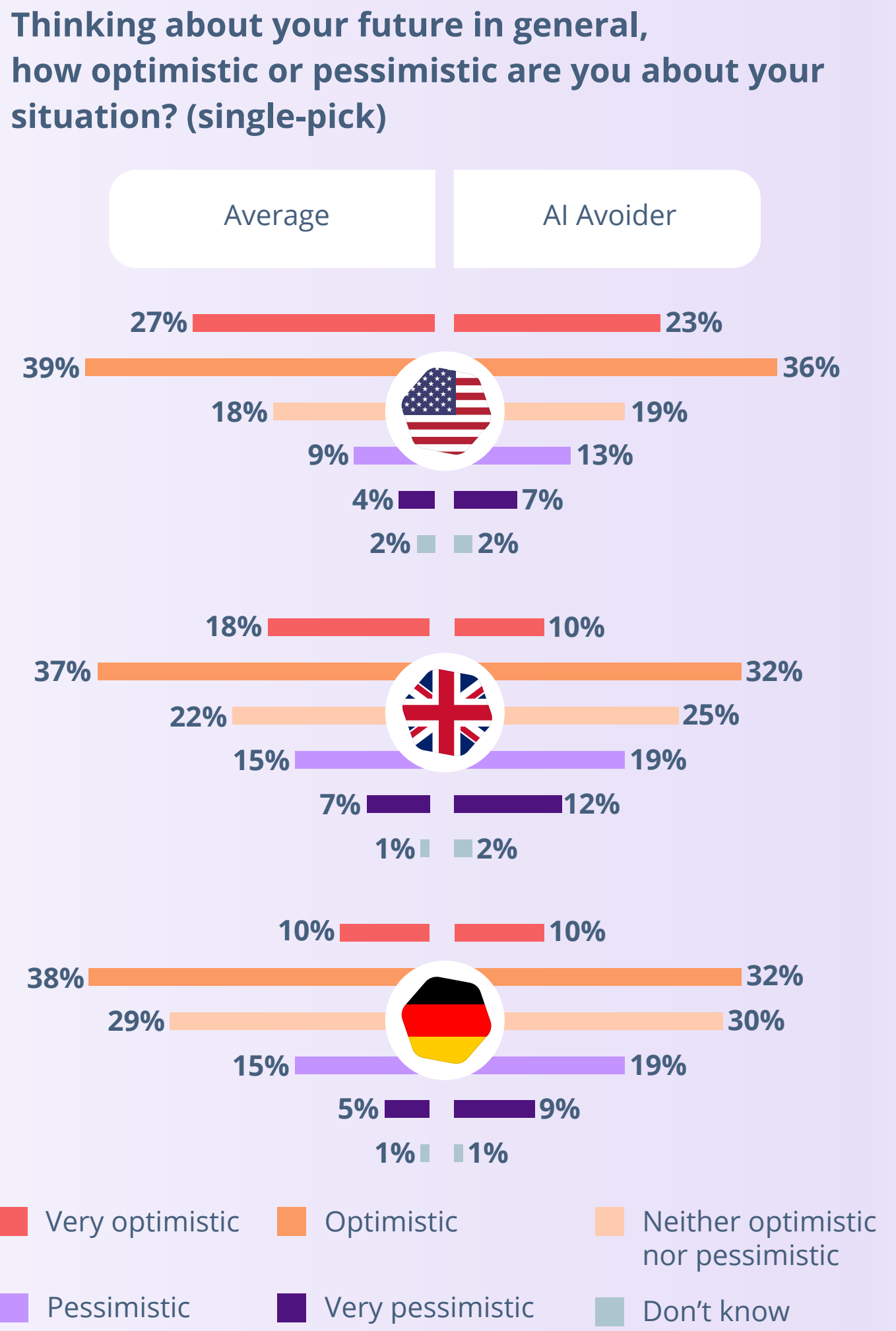
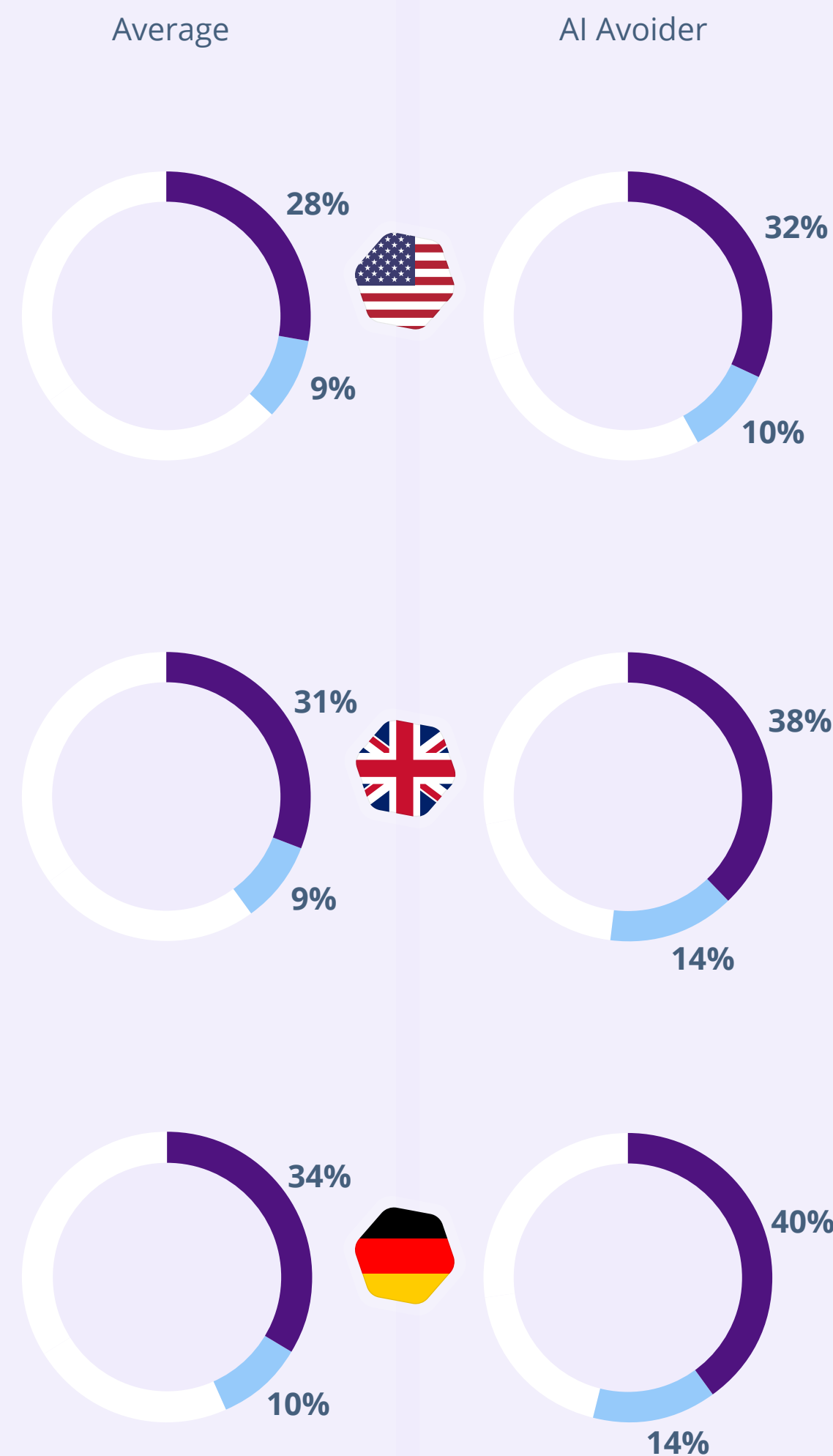
A **cautious** consumer

The AI Avider is a thoughtful, deliberate shopper who keeps their distance from AI in everyday life. Often belonging to Generation X or the Baby Boomer cohort, they typically live in below-average income households and lean politically left. Their choices are shaped as much by personal values as by wider social anxieties. They see themselves as dependable and loyal, yet often burdened by pessimism about the future, both personally and nationally.

Financial **guardrails**

Financial caution is a defining trait of the AI Avider. They believe now is not the time for big purchases; saving money is a priority over spending. While they don't avoid spending altogether, they prioritize experiences that strengthen personal connections rather than material goods. Social and economic shifts have guided them toward wellness-focused products and services that support both physical and mental health.

● Generation X (Baby Bust)
● Baby Boomer

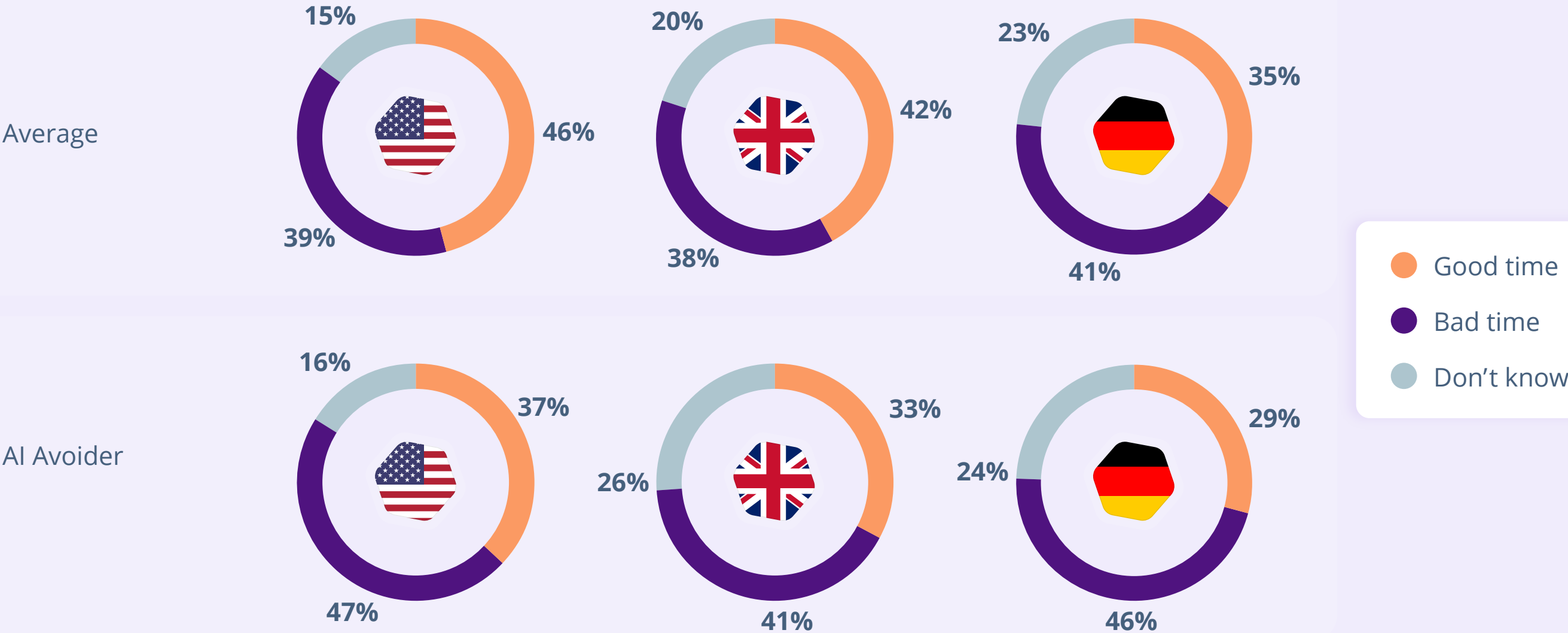


AI Enthusiast
AI Skeptic
AI Avider
AI-Assisted Shopper



Is now a good or bad time to make any major household purchase? (e.g. furniture, refrigerator, TV)
(single-pick)

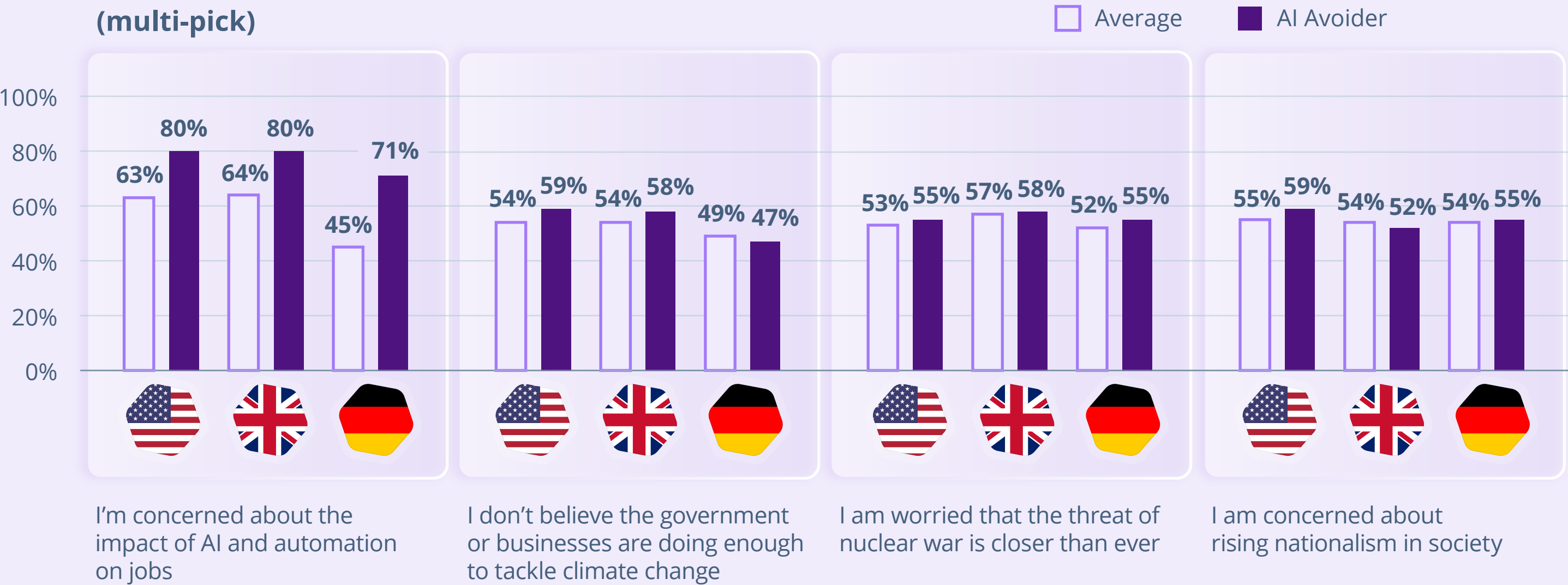
AI Enthusiast
AI Skeptic
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Trust in people, not in tech

Shopping decisions are rarely made alone. The AI Avider is an advice seeker: they turn first to family and friends for guidance, reflecting both caution and a preference for human connection. Their distrust extends to technology itself, especially AI and automation. They often view these innovations as greater threats to jobs and society than climate change or war.

Which of these statements about society do you agree with?
(multi-pick)



Reliability over innovation

Unlike younger, tech-driven consumers, AI Aviders are unmoved by brand activism and innovation-centered marketing. They value reliability, fairness, and affordability, choosing trusted, human-centered experiences rather than digital novelty.



Strategies for success

To engage and earn the trust of AI Avoiders, brands must adopt an empathetic, transparent, and human-centered approach that respects their reluctance toward AI and automation:

1. Communicate simply

Use clear language, avoiding technical jargon or gimmicky AI references. Highlight tangible, human benefits like cost savings, ease, and wellness, rather than AI capabilities.

3. Enable human interaction

Provide human phone support, live chat, and in-store assistance. Never make AI the only option.

2. Leverage social proof

Showcase customer recommendations and testimonials from relatable groups to foster credibility and trust.

4. Prioritize reliability over novelty

Promote dependability and stability while avoiding trend-driven or overly innovation-heavy campaigns.

AI Enthusiast
AI Skeptic
AI Avoider
AI-Assisted Shopper



PERSONA 4

The AI-Assisted Shopper



57%

of U.S. AI-Assisted Shoppers
used AI platforms to search
for products when shopping online
in the past 12 months.

Why it's important to **understand** **AI shoppers**

Similar to the AI Enthusiast, this 'shopper of the future' fully embraces AI and understands how it can make their lives easier, specifically when making purchases. The AI-Assisted Shopper recognizes the time-saving potential that AI has for their shopping experience. They are not afraid to let AI shopping assistants such as Amazon Rufus or the Zalando Assistant recommend items for them—in fact, they prefer it over having to scroll through product listings themselves. They prioritize convenience and value, making them more likely to use price comparison tools than their AI Enthusiast counterpart. This persona will increase its presence in 2026, making them a vital target group for future-oriented brands.

The **data** behind it

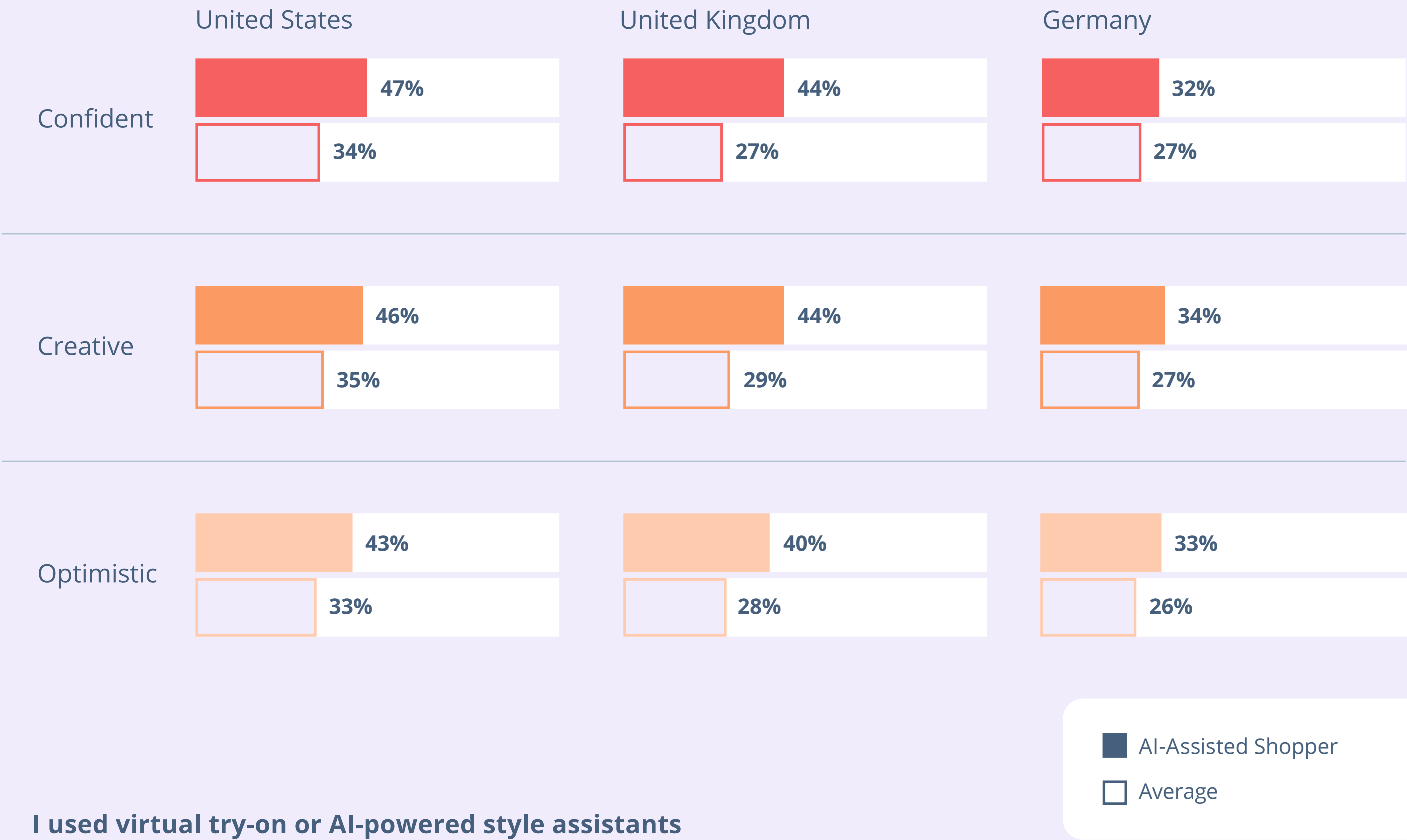
Digital-first and **confident**

The AI-Assisted Shopper represents a new breed of digital consumer, typically a younger male, Millennial or Gen Z, who eagerly embraces innovation and technology. This group skews politically right and ranges in income level by region—lower in the U.S., average in Germany, and higher in the UK. Defined by above-average confidence, ambition, creativity, and optimism, these shoppers are energized about the future. They view the present as the perfect time to invest in major purchases.

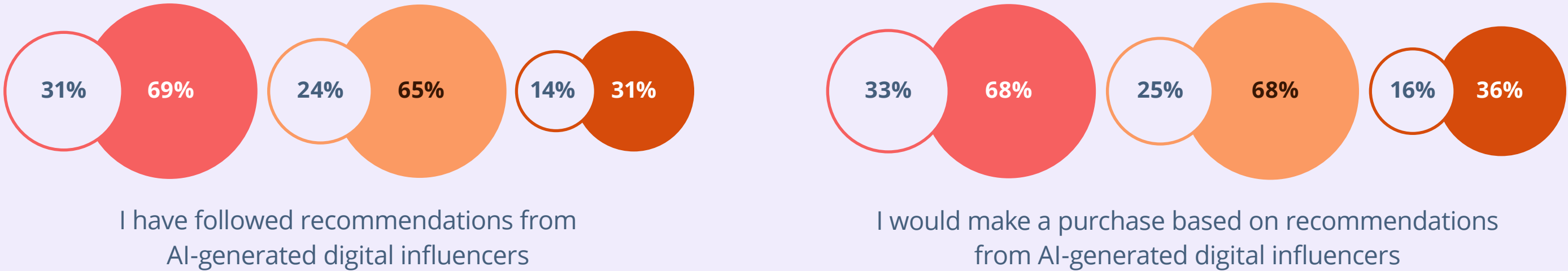
Embracing AI everywhere

Early adoption is a hallmark of this persona. They seek out new features and adapt quickly to evolving shopping trends. Convenience, personalization, and speed matter most: fast delivery, curated recommendations, and seamless shopping experiences are highly valued. These shoppers also show an above-average interest in novelty features like virtual clothing try-ons.

Which of the following qualities best describe you?



Which of the following statements regarding AI-powered or AI-generated digital influencers do you agree or disagree with?



What are the reasons you purchased products online recently?



What have you done when shopping online in the past 12 months?



Influenced and socially connected

Social and AI-generated influencer content drives nearly half to buy through social media, making these shoppers highly receptive to integrated digital marketing. Social commerce is second nature and platforms that streamline both discovery and purchase have lasting appeal.

Value-driven and analytical

Value-conscious yet excited by new experiences, AI-Assisted Shoppers regularly use AI-powered price comparison tools, loyalty programs, and wish lists to navigate the online marketplace intelligently. They use AI to weigh options to get the best deals, turning to digital resources that simplify decision-making and make each purchase fulfilling. While they enjoy discovering new products and offers, they remain watchful. Shipping costs, negative reviews, and slow delivery continue to be major barriers.

Health-focused and tech-savvy

Curiosity about well-being strongly influences their choices in food and beverages. Reading nutrition labels and switching brands—often based on influencer or AI-driven input—is a common habit. For example, nearly half shop for beauty products online or test AI-powered beauty recommendations, seeking new ways to personalize their routines. Tech-savvy and adaptable, this segment expects every digital shopping experience to offer efficiency, tailored options, and the latest digital innovations.

AI Enthusiast
AI Skeptic
AI Avoider
AI-Assisted Shopper





AI Enthusiast
AI Skeptic
AI Avider
AI-Assisted Shopper

Strategies for success

AI-Assisted Shoppers crave convenience, innovation, and curated experiences. To connect with them, brands must embrace personalization, social integration, and seamless digital journeys:

1. Harness AI personalization

Deliver adaptive recommendations, tailored search, and virtual style or beauty assistants to spark curiosity and create unique value.

3. Maximize ease and flexibility

Emphasize fast and free shipping, simple returns, transparent pricing, and low-friction onboarding.

2. Engage through social commerce

Blend shopping with entertainment via influencers, interactive platforms, and even AI-generated personalities.

4. Sustain excitement with innovation

Highlight new features, gamify loyalty programs, and frame AI as an empowering tool that supports consumer choice and ambition.



Conclusion

As AI continues to reshape the consumer landscape, leading with insight has never been more vital. The trends uncovered in this whitepaper help brands connect authentically, anticipate shifts, and build meaningful relationships with customers in 2026.

By harnessing a data-driven understanding of today's diverse AI personas, your brand is ready to go beyond expectations, foster trust, and drive growth in an era defined by both digital innovation and human experience.

If you're ready to see how these AI personas will shape and respond to the Consumer Trends 2026 revealed by Statista, don't miss our full in-depth report, launching end of November 2025.

“At Statista, we put the power of trusted data at your fingertips.

Thanks to our expert analysts and network of industry partners, every insight is delivered with confidence—ready for you to leverage through our platform or integrated APIs.

Wherever decisions happen, our insights help propel your business forward.”

Ann-Kristin Hamke,
Chief Product Officer at Statista



Human-crafted content, AI-powered visuals



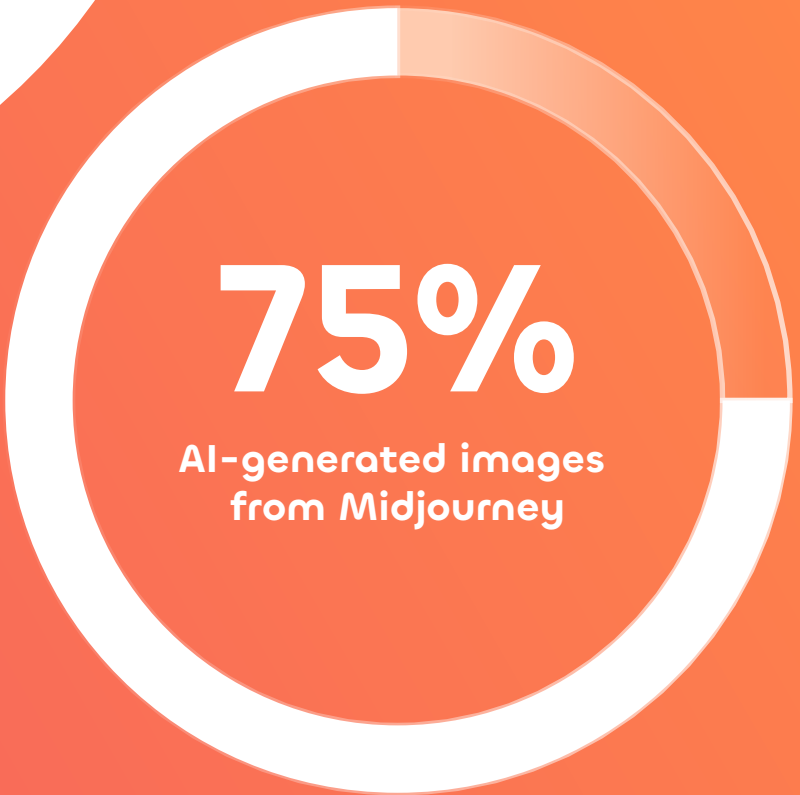
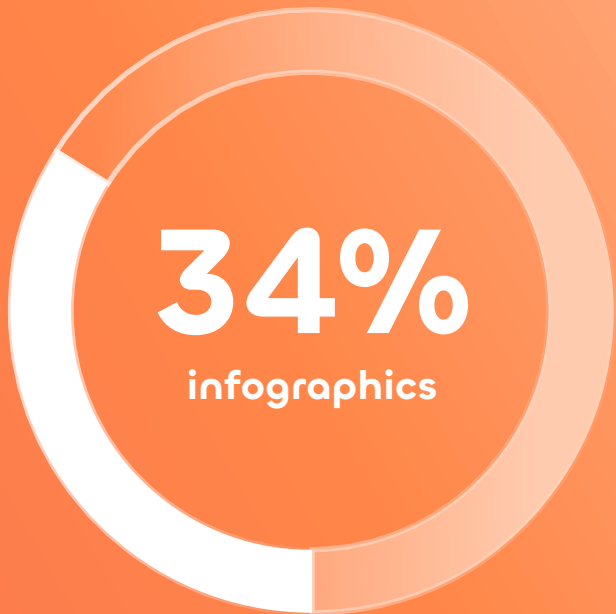
Jack Spearman, began his market research career in the UK, specializing in client and stakeholder management, survey design, and conceptualizing reports across a variety of industries in both consumer and B2B markets. After moving to Hamburg and joining Statista in 2018, he currently serves as the Team Lead for Consumer Insights and their report offerings.



Koen van Gelder leads the e-commerce research team at Statista. Since joining the company in 2020, his work has covered the full spectrum of e-commerce from market KPIs to consumer behavior, with a focus on the European and American markets. As an industry expert, he has delivered several keynote speeches on emerging trends and recently explored topics such as AI, tariffs, and social commerce in leading markets.



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