

The *Fee Effect* on Online Grocery Value

We surveyed 966 grocery shoppers about online pricing, value, and substitutions. Two in three had ordered groceries online in the past three months, but for most of them, added fees are quietly undoing the value of that convenience. Nearly three in four say service, delivery, or pickup fees make online grocery a worse deal, or not worth it at all.



Why is this *important*?

For CX leaders at grocery retailers, price perception is now a bigger battleground than price accuracy alone. Most online grocery shoppers already trust that their checkout total will match what they saw while shopping: 83% are at least moderately confident of it. What they trust far less is everything stacked on top of that total.

Nearly three in four online grocery shoppers say added fees make the channel a worse deal, or not worth it altogether, and that perception spills into how they judge online grocery overall: most still say they get better value in-store. Add in substitution moments that don't go their way, and every fee and every unapproved swap chips away at the value case for shopping online.

For CX leaders, the opportunity isn't just about accurate receipts. It's about fee transparency and giving shoppers real control when an order doesn't go exactly as planned.

Online grocery has gone *mainstream*, which raises the stakes on value.

In the past 3 months, have you ordered groceries online?

n=966

67%

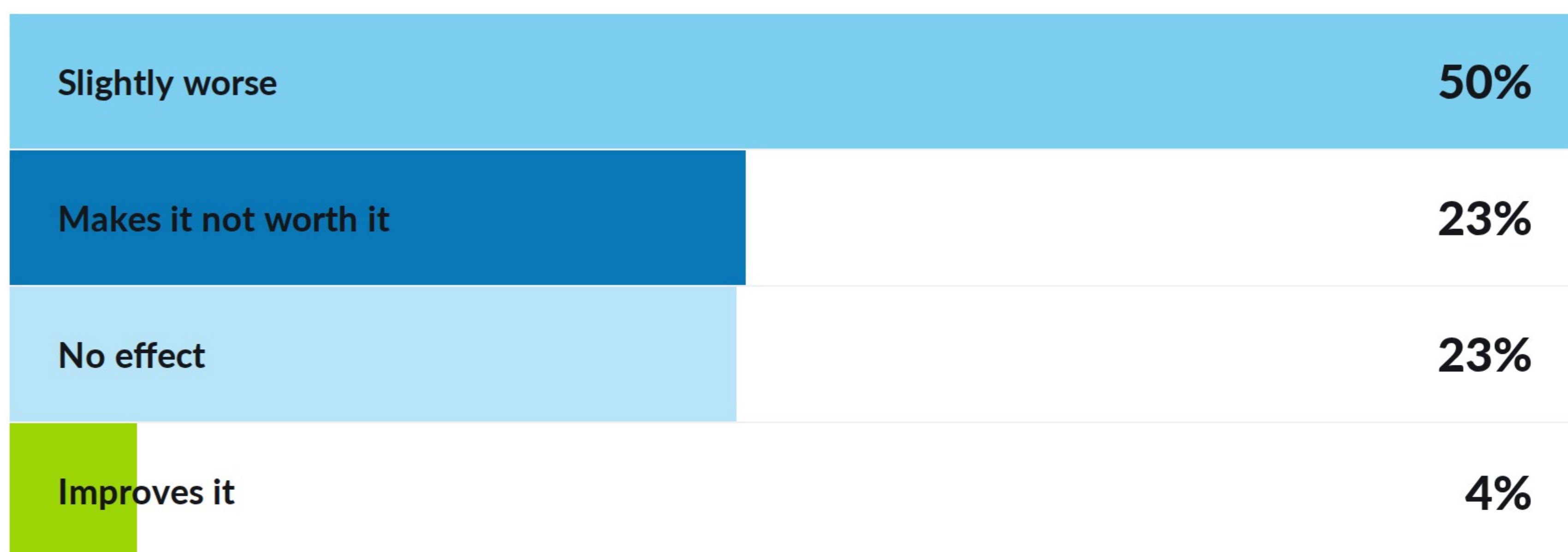
of grocery shoppers have ordered groceries online in the **past three months**, a channel that is now firmly part of the mainstream shopping mix.

Among those online shoppers: 35% used pickup only, 31% used delivery only, and 34% used both. The rest of this report focuses on this group of online grocery shoppers.

Added fees are the biggest hit to *perceived value*.

How do added fees (pickup, delivery, service) change your sense of whether online grocery is a good value?

n=644, among online grocery shoppers

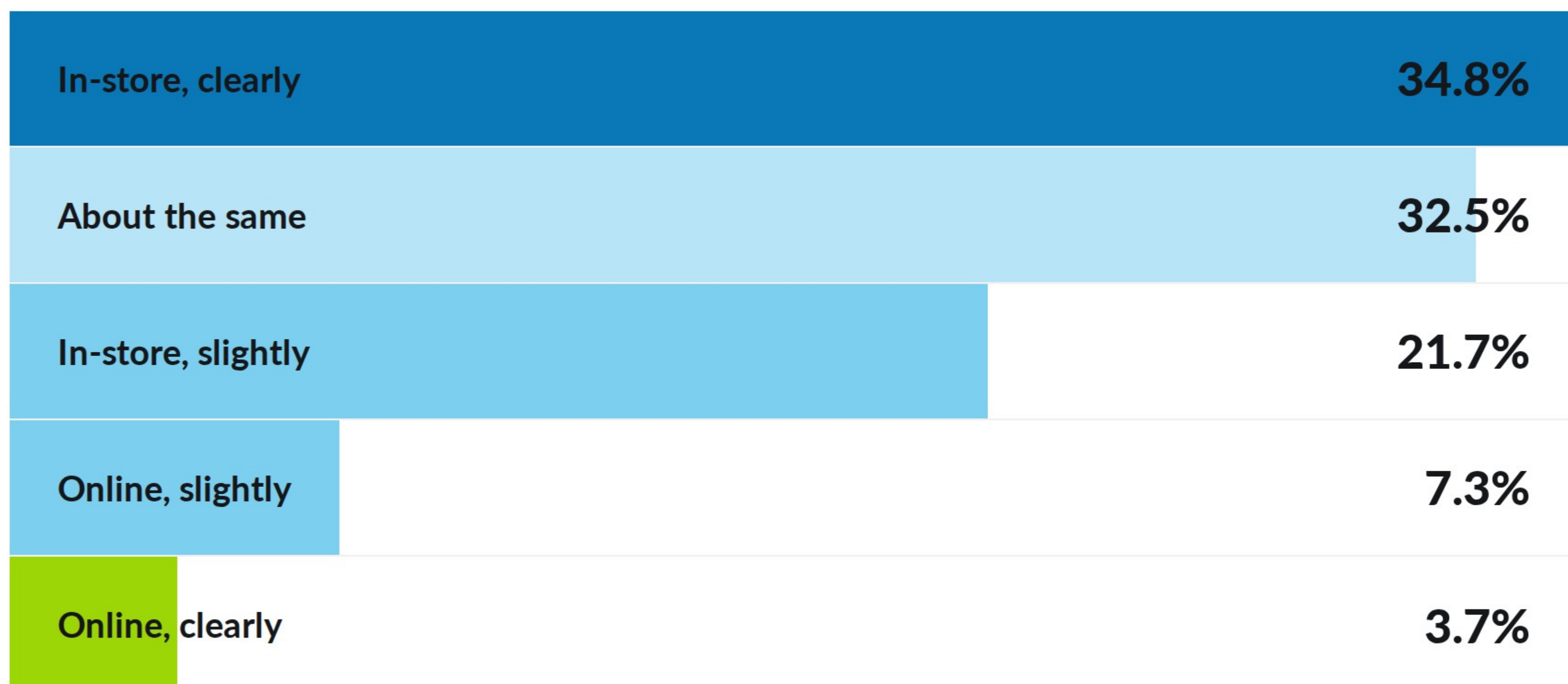


73% of online grocery shoppers say added pickup, delivery, or service fees make online grocery a **worse deal or not worth it at all**, versus just 4% who say fees improve the value.

Fee frustration shows up in the value *scoreboard*.

Where do you feel you get better grocery value overall?

n=644, among online grocery shoppers

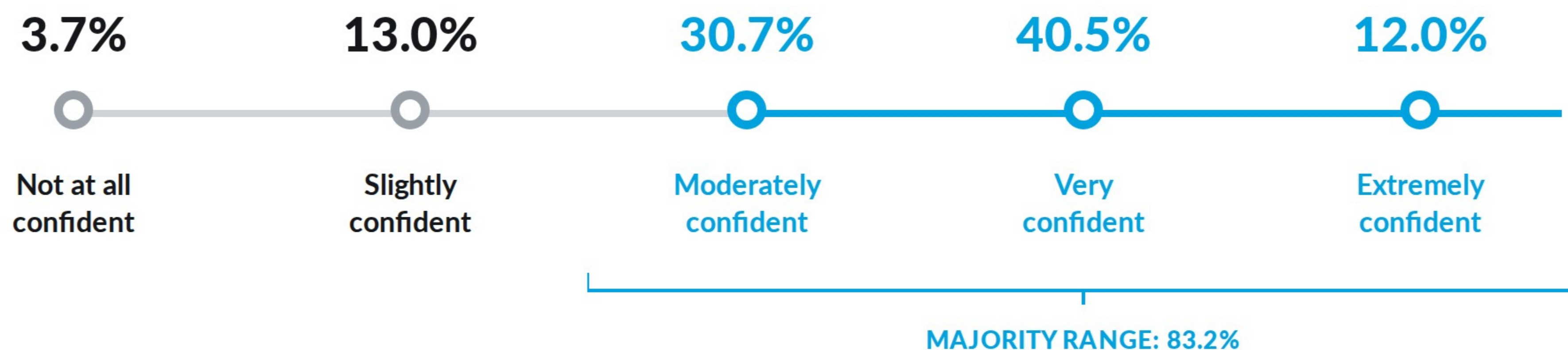


56% of online grocery shoppers still say **in-store** wins on value (clearly or slightly), while only 11% say **online** does.

Shoppers trust the *receipt*. They just don't like what's on it.

When ordering groceries online, how confident are you that the final charge will match the total you saw at checkout?

n=644, among online grocery shoppers



It's not the checkout math shoppers distrust. It's the fees layered on top of it.

When items are out of stock, shoppers want *control*, not a coin flip.

When an item you ordered is out of stock, what do you most want the store to do?

n=644, among online grocery shoppers

The *top 3 things* shoppers want the store to do:

1. Let me pre-set my preference: 42%

2. Contact me to approve first: 38%

3. Just refund it: 13%

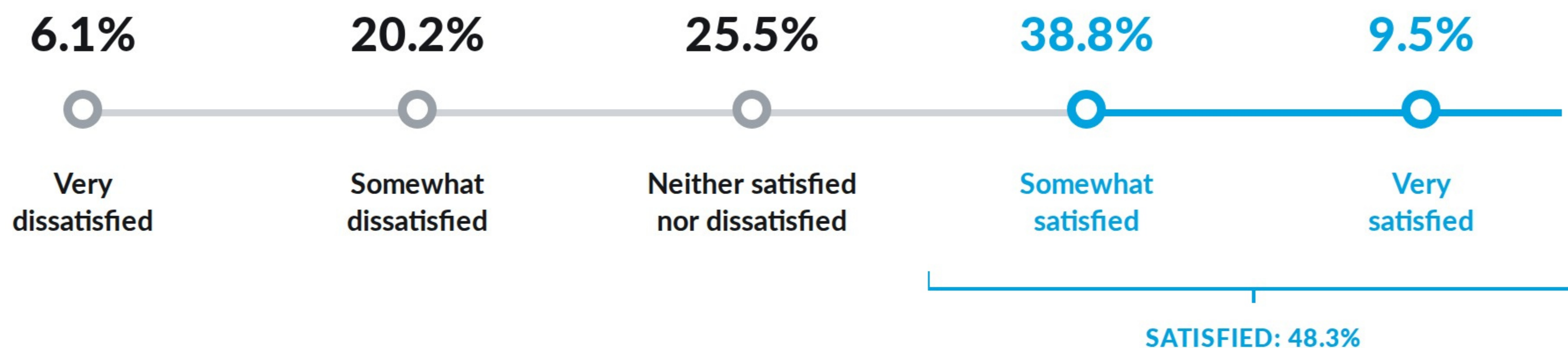
The remaining 7% would rather the store pick a substitute automatically.

80% of shoppers want some form of control (setting a preference in advance or approving the swap themselves) rather than an automatic pick or a blanket refund.

Substitutions themselves are a *mixed bag*.

In general, how satisfied are you with the substitutions stores choose for you?

n=644, among online grocery shoppers



Substitution satisfaction is unsettled: barely half of shoppers are satisfied with the swaps they've received, and one in four are dissatisfied.

What this means for *CX leaders*.

1 Lead with fee transparency, not just receipt accuracy.

Shoppers already trust the checkout math: 83% are at least moderately confident it will match. The value hit comes from what's added on top. Show fees clearly and early, and be ready to explain what they cover.

2 Convenience alone won't win back the value narrative.

Only 11% of online grocery shoppers say online offers better value than in-store. Closing that gap will take visible cost transparency and pricing or loyalty offers, not just faster delivery.

3 Give shoppers the wheel on substitutions.

80% want to pre-set a preference or approve swaps themselves. Self-service substitution controls turn a common friction point into a low-cost trust builder, rather than leaving it to an automatic pick or a refund.

About *Intouch Insight*

At Intouch Insight, we specialize in helping multi-location brands achieve operational excellence, exceed customer expectations, and build long-term customer loyalty, and we are proud to deliver growth solutions to over 300 of the world's most beloved brands.

Our solutions are designed to streamline operations, maintain brand standards, and provide actionable insights to help our clients enhance their CX. With over 40 years of CX expertise, we excel in providing our clients with top-notch CX, customer surveys, mobile forms, mystery shopping, as well as operational and compliance audit solutions.

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