

# THE STATE OF THE 2020 HOLIDAY SHOPPER

November 2020

SPECIAL REPORT





## ABOUT US

Morning Consult is a global data intelligence company delivering insights on what people think in real time. By surveying tens of thousands across the globe every day, Morning Consult is unmatched in scale and speed: It determines the true measure of what people think and how their decisions impact business, politics and the economy.

Industry leaders rely on Morning Consult's proprietary technology and analysis for real-time intelligence to transform information into a competitive advantage.

Learn more at [morningconsult.com](https://morningconsult.com).



## BACKGROUND

In addition to the global pandemic, a dwindling economy, significant social unrest around racial injustice, and a tumultuous election season have contributed to a quickly-changing consumer environment throughout 2020.

With 73% of Americans expecting their holiday traditions to change this year – up 12 points since early August – these events are also dramatically reshaping the way Americans will celebrate and shop this holiday season. In short, the final stretch of the year will present yet another moving target for brands.

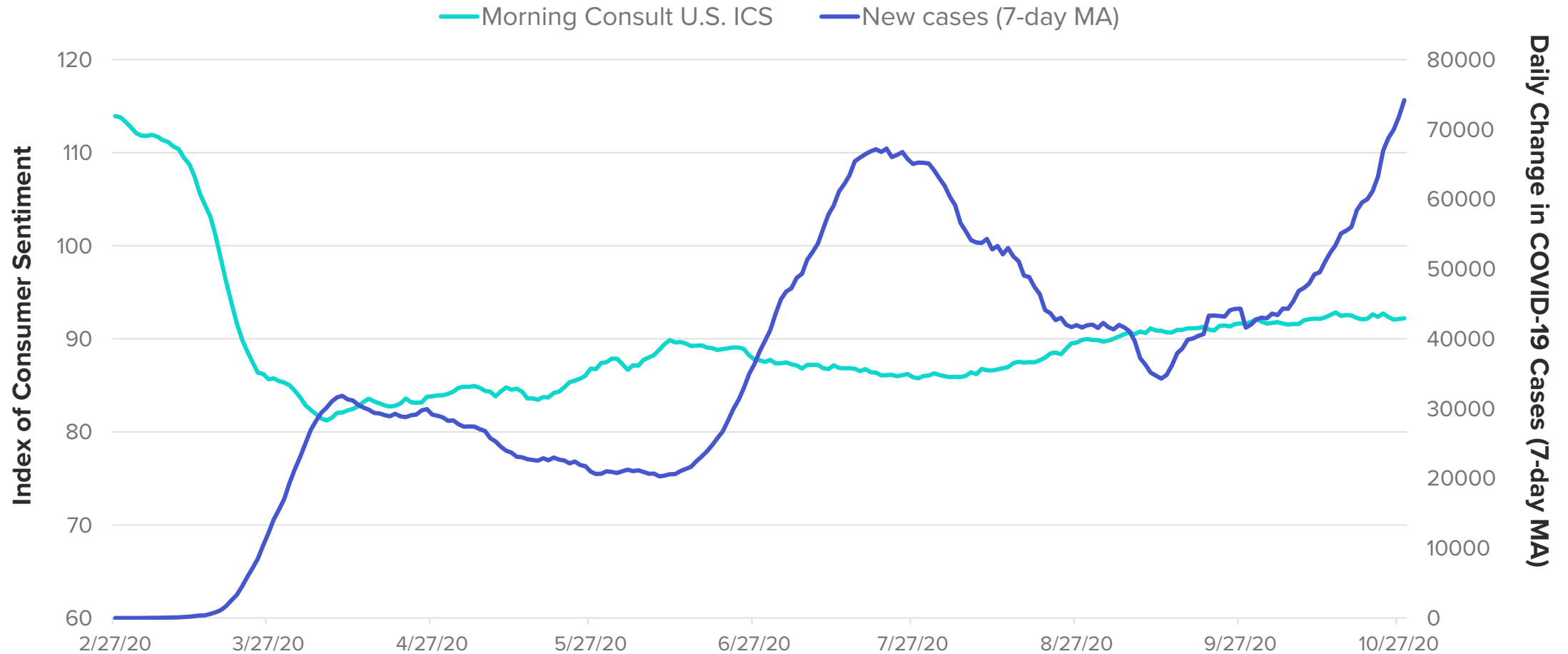
From the way consumers plan to celebrate, travel, spend, and shop, these changes will have dramatic consequences for brands. Morning Consult has been closely monitoring how consumer spending and shopping needs and habits change this holiday season, and what brands can do to navigate this landscape as it evolves. This brings together key highlights to help brands assess their efforts and plan for a critical close to a challenging year.

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# SETTING THE SCENE

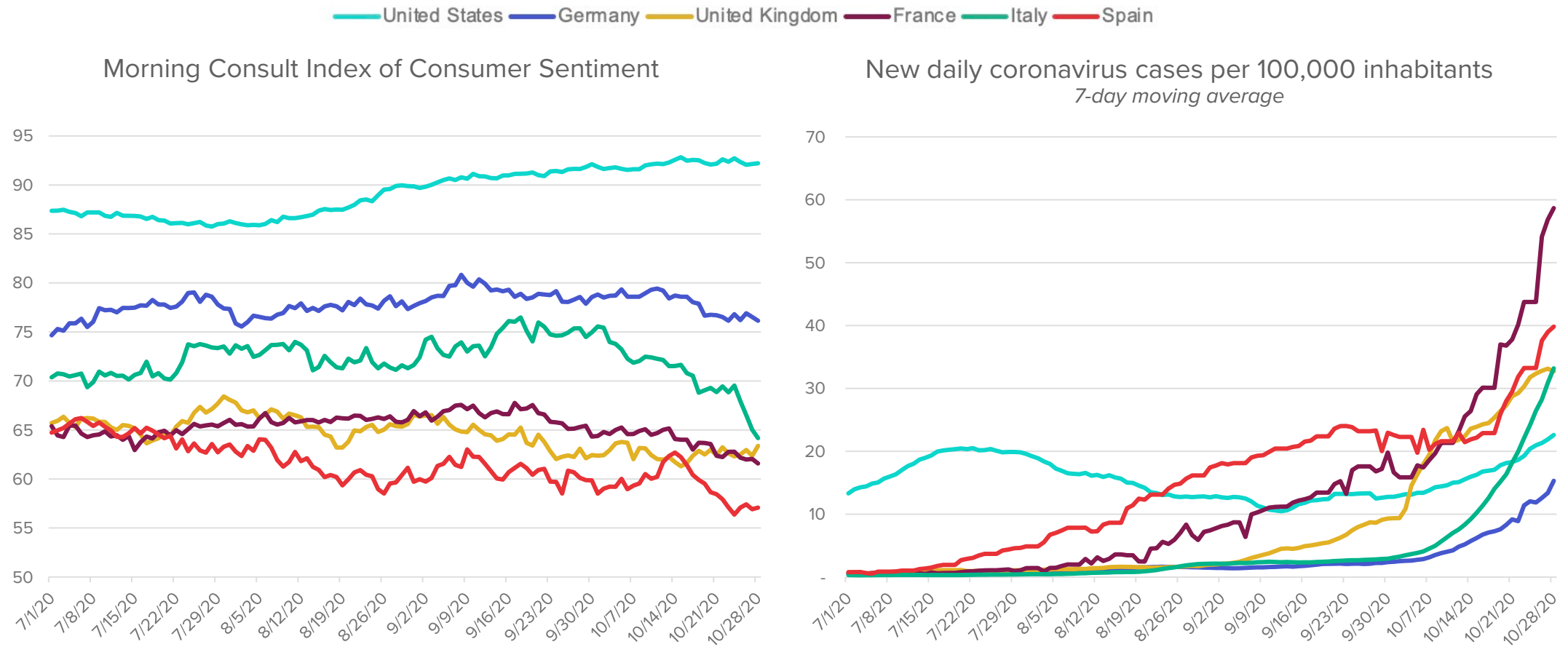


The path of the economy is a function of the spread of the virus



# The spread of coronavirus is souring consumer confidence across the U.S. and Europe

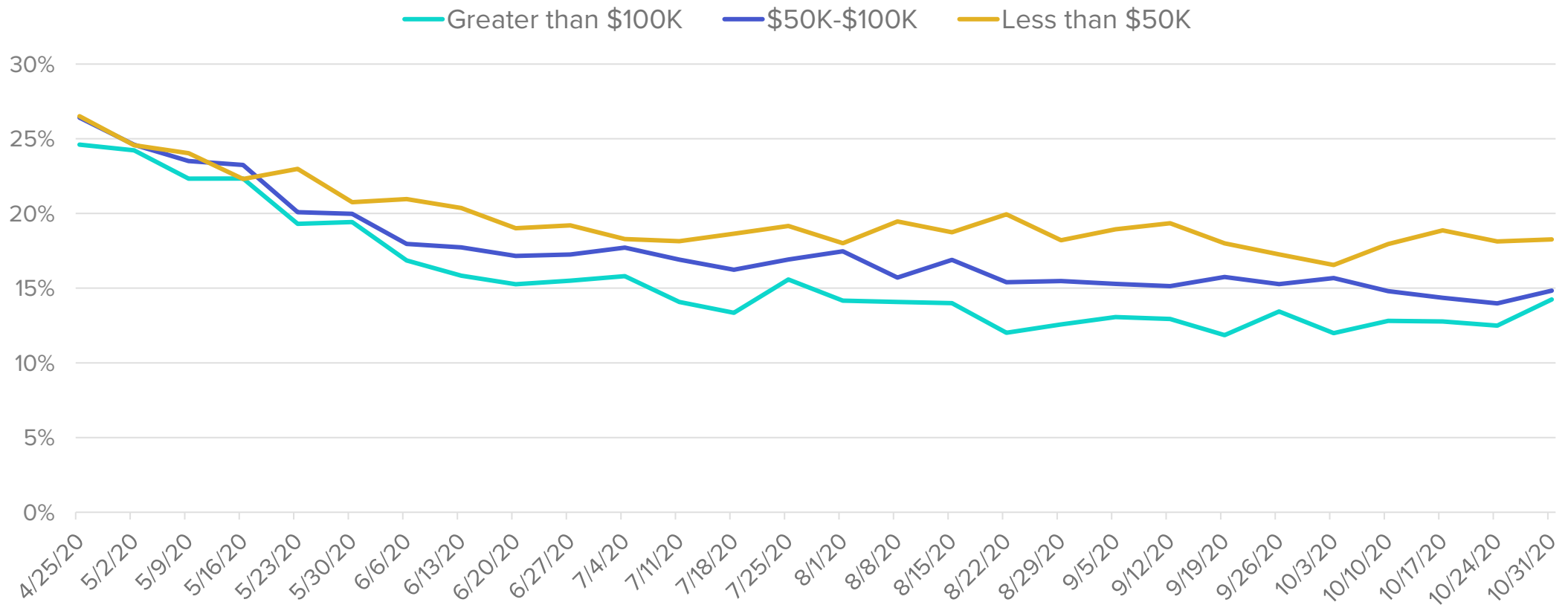
U.S. consumer confidence stalled when cases began increasing



Source: COVID-19 Data Repository by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University; World Bank; Morning Consult Economic Intelligence  
 For more, download the full report: [The Effect of the 2020 Election on the Economy in 2021](#)

## High-income households are recovering faster, driving a gap across income cohorts

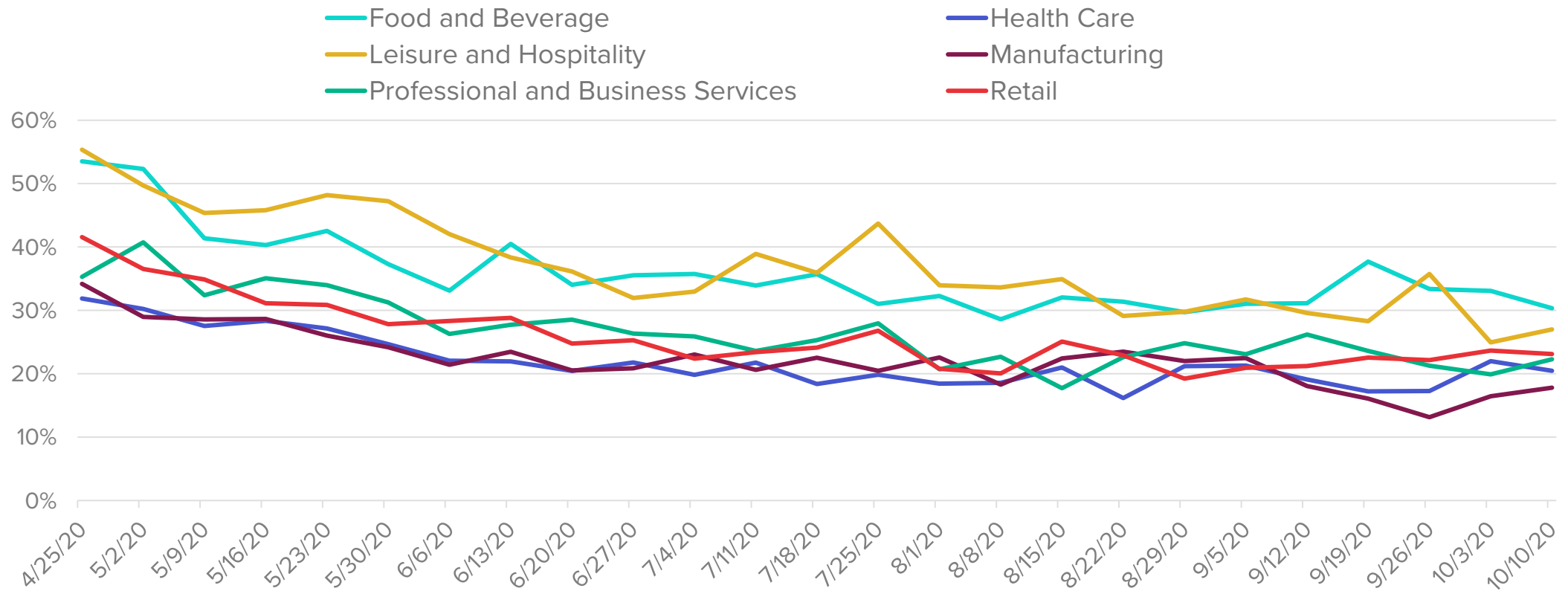
**U.S. adults who lost pay in past week by annual income (%)**



Weekly polls conducted among roughly 15,000 U.S. adults, with margins of error of +/-1%.  
For more, download the full report: [The Effect of the 2020 Election on the Economy in 2021](#)

The share of retail workers suffering pay cuts has increased for the past 6 weeks – not a good sign for holiday sales

### U.S. adults who lost of pay in past week by industry (%)

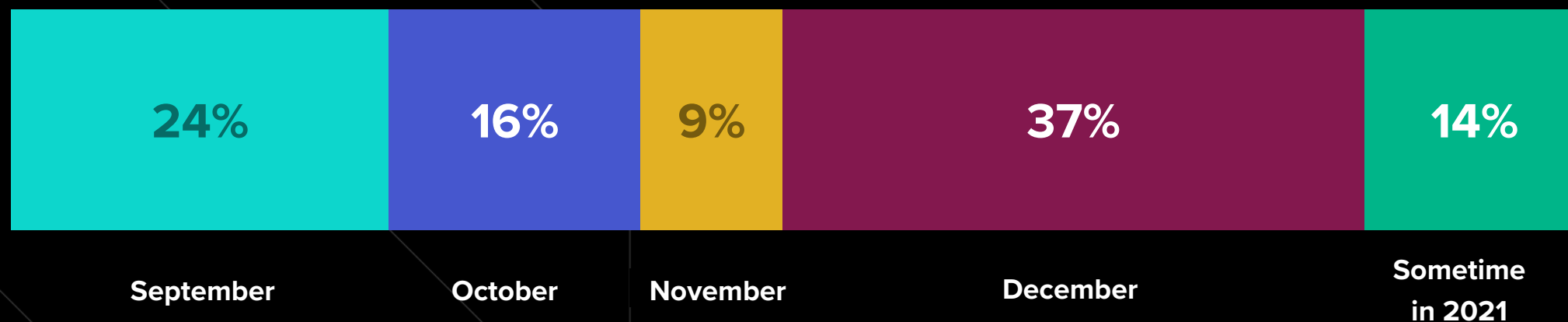


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## SETTING THE SCENE

Unemployment benefits are already expiring, but December is the true cliff

Expiration dates for unemployment benefits among US adults receiving benefits in September



Poll conducted among 200 U.S. adults, with margin of error of +/-10%.  
For more, download the full report: [The Effect of the 2020 Election on the Economy in 2021](#)

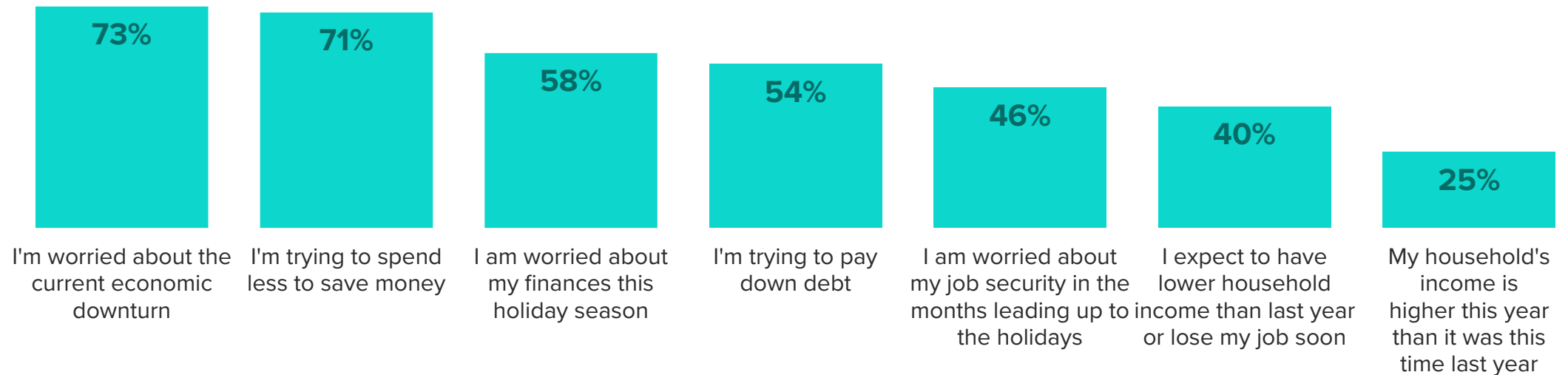
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# TEN THINGS TO KNOW



The majority of Americans are worried about the economy, driving concerns around their personal financial situation this holiday season as well

Consumers were asked to choose as many of the following statements that describe their situation this upcoming holiday season:



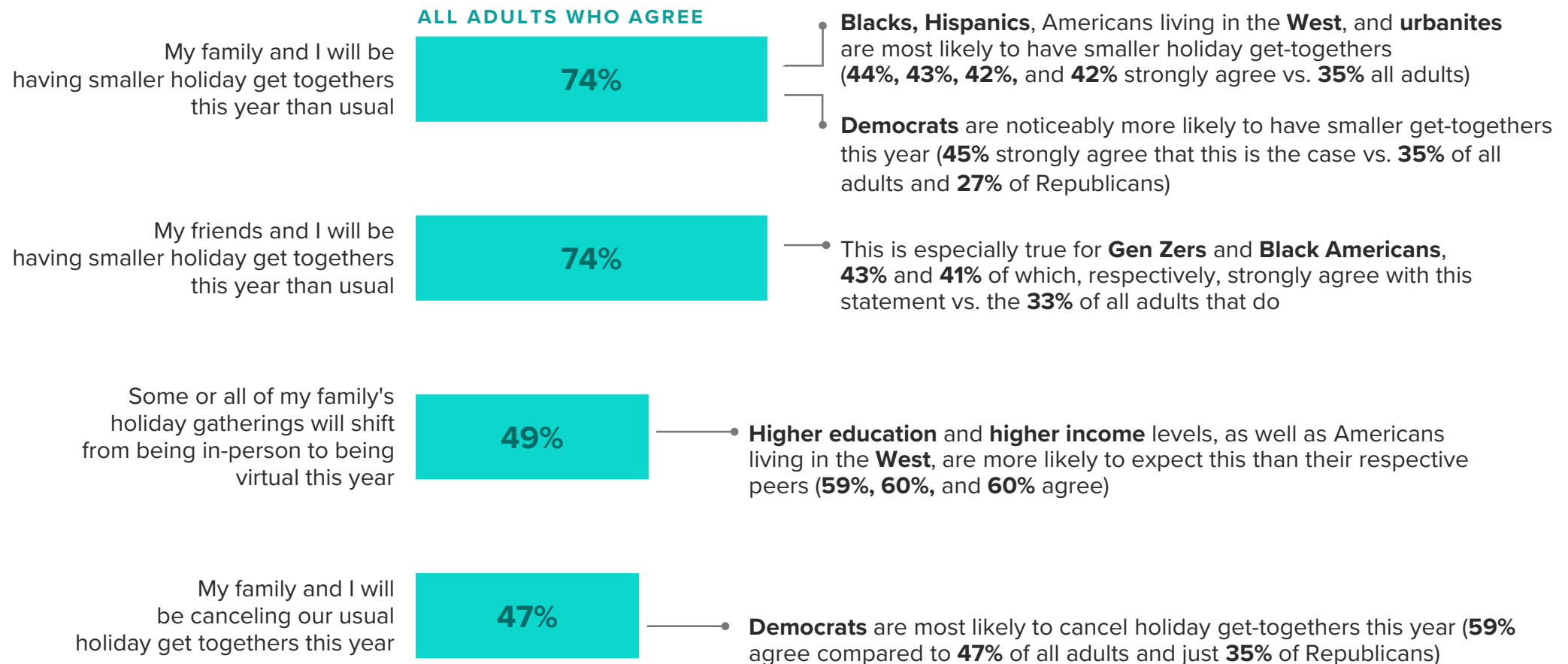
A strong majority of Americans also express health- and safety-related concerns around this year's holiday shopping season

**U.S. adults concerned about each of the following in light of the upcoming holiday season**

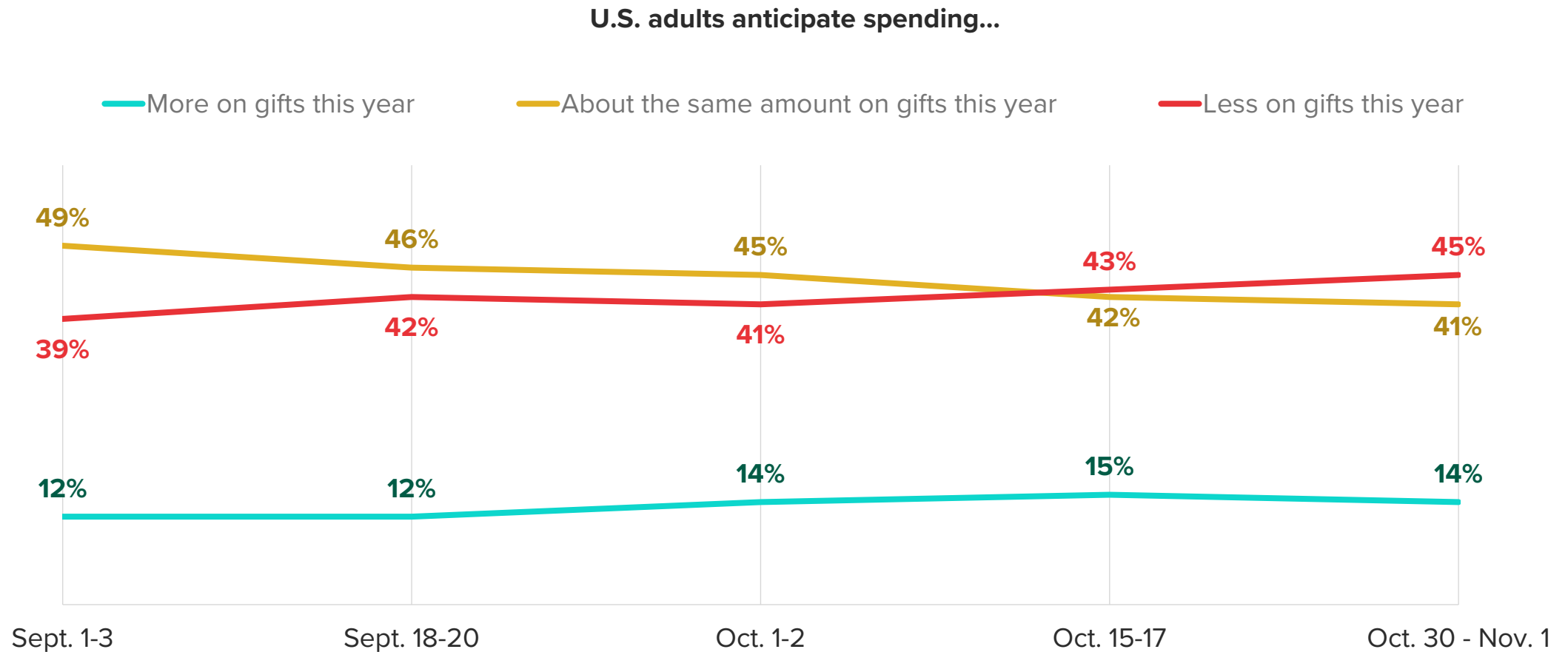


## Most holiday get-togethers will see downsizing; nearly half will be canceled altogether

Thinking of this holiday season, do you agree or disagree with each of the following?

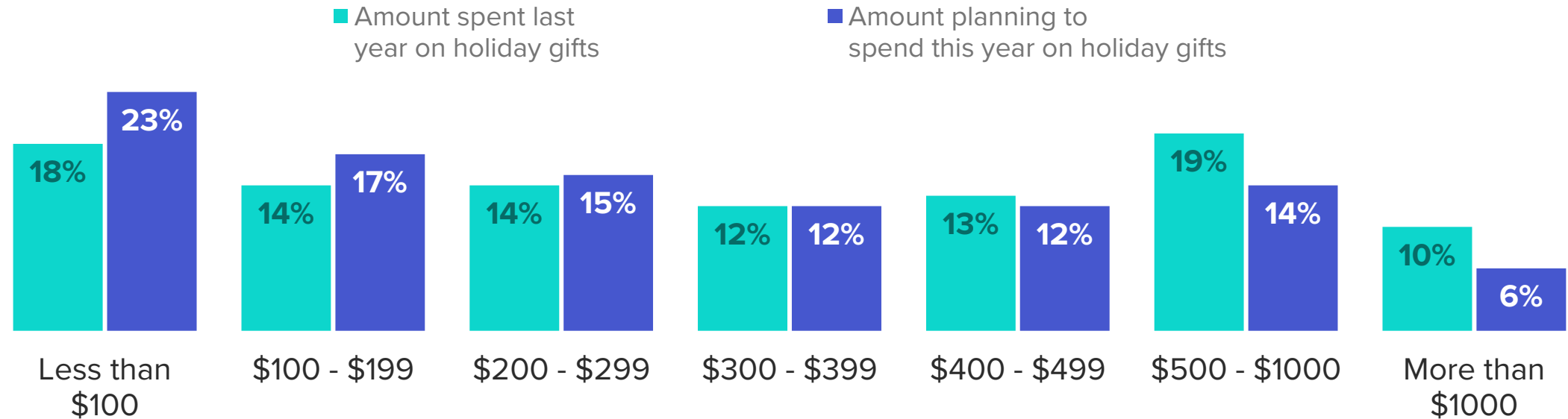


## Americans increasingly anticipate spending less on holiday gifts this year



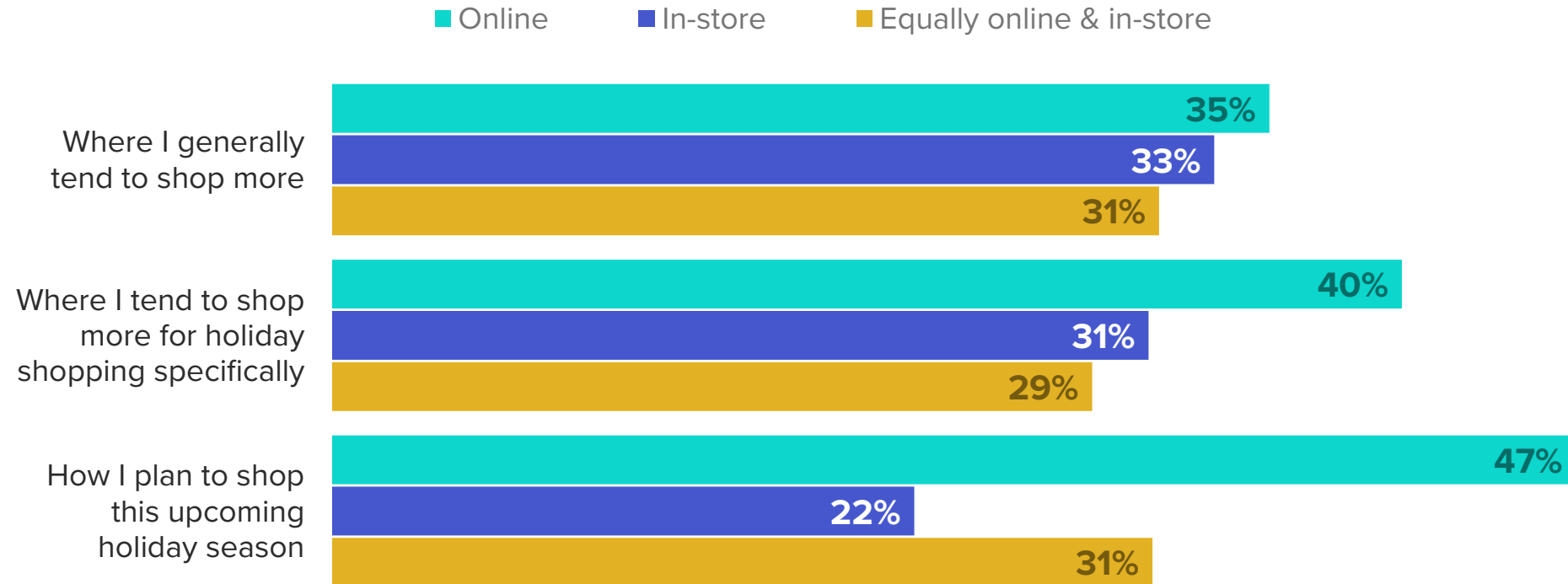
55% of Americans plan to spend less than \$300 on holiday gifts this year, 9 points more than last year; 20% plan to spend \$500 or more, 9 points lower than in 2019

Share of U.S. adults who said they spent or plan to spend each amount on gifts



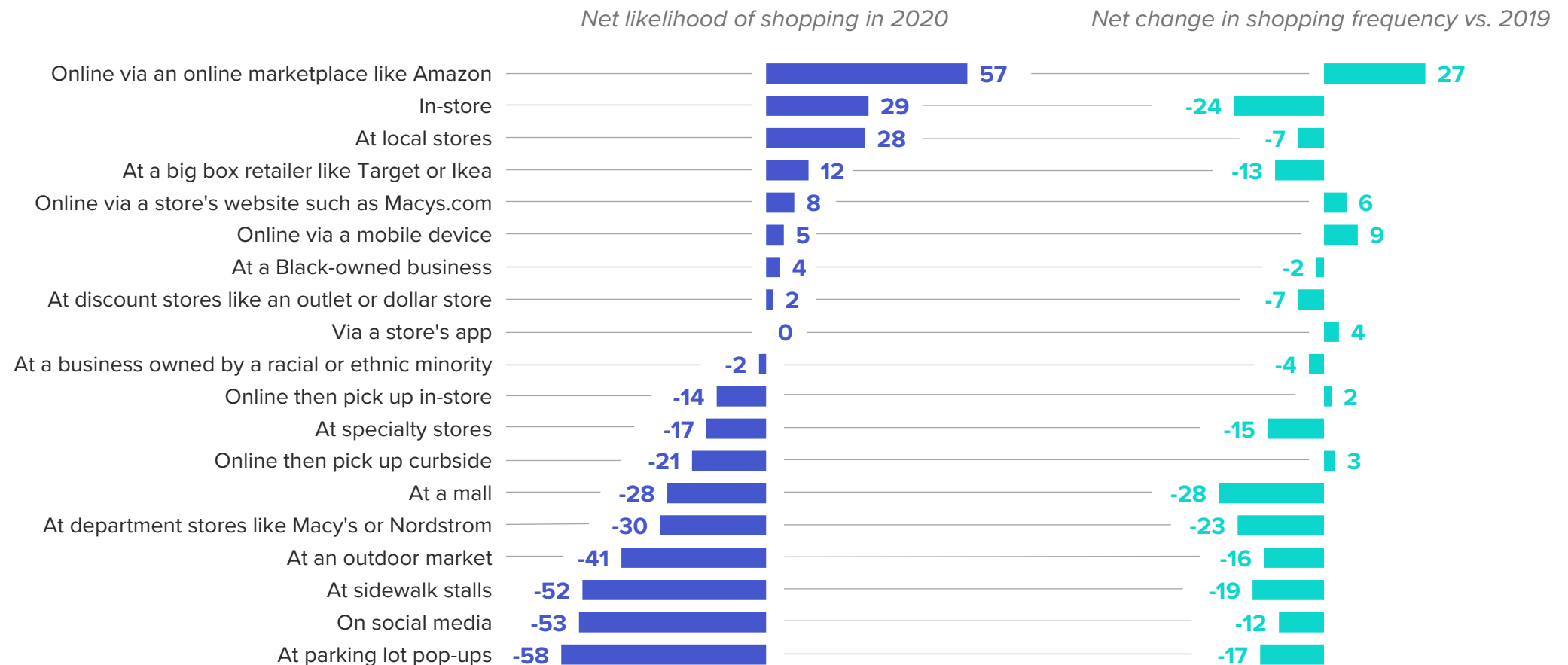
## Nearly half of shoppers plan to shop online this holiday season

U.S. adults' shopping habits and how they plan to shop during the holidays



# Online marketplaces will benefit most this holiday season, while malls, department stores and other in-store options can expect significant declines in traffic

Net share of U.S. adults likely to shop via each method in 2020 and net share planning to shop more via each method this year vs. 2019



Americans' go-to brands are likely to benefit from familiarity and preference, though more than half plan to explore new brands more than usual as they search for gifts

71%

plan to buy mostly from their **go-to brands** or those they frequently buy from this year

66%

will give **fewer gifts in person** and rely more on delivery and/or mailing gifts instead

54%

will **explore new brands more** than usual when shopping for holiday gifts

30%

will buy **more specialty goods** than usual

20%

will buy **more store brand/discount items** than usual

15%

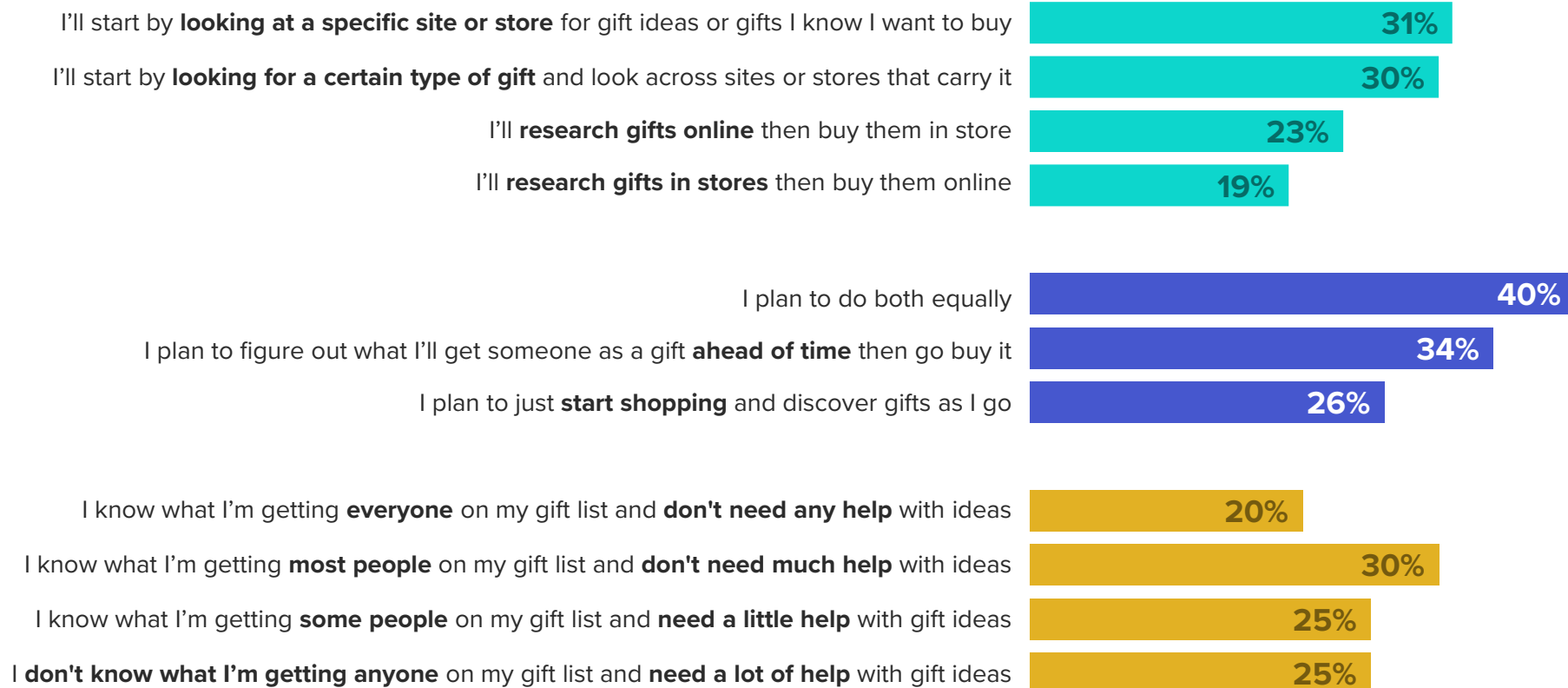
plan to buy mostly from **big/well-known brands**

8%

will buy **more brand name items** than usual

## Half of shoppers could use help with gift ideas, though most plan to take a retailer- or item-first approach to gift shopping

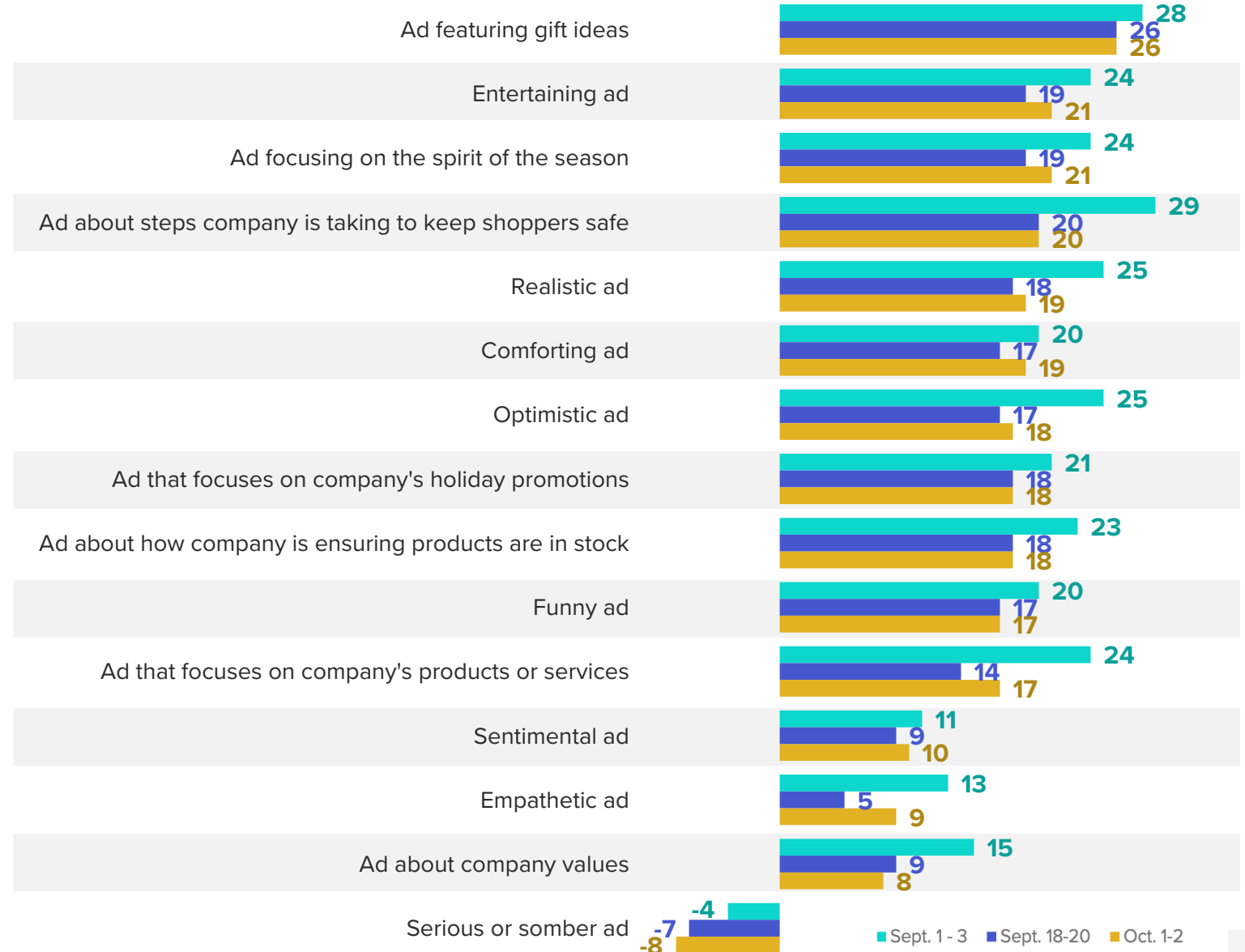
### This holiday season...



## SEEKING INSPIRATION & EDUCATION FROM BRANDS

# Useful and entertaining ads are most likely to inspire purchases this holiday season

Net share of U.S. adults likely to purchase a product or service from a company with each ad type this holiday season



# TRACKING THE 2020 HOLIDAY SHOPPING SEASON

As the holidays approach, Morning Consult's **State of the 2020 Holiday Shopper** series is closely monitoring shifting changes in the way consumers plan to [celebrate, travel, spend and shop](#) this holiday season as well as how [consumer spending](#) and [shopping needs, preferences, expectations and habits](#) are changing to help brands and retailers navigate the holiday shopping landscape as it evolves.

Sign up to get our latest holiday data and shopper insights.

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# TRACKING THE 2020 HOLIDAY SHOPPING SEASON

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