THE DTC DELIVERY FILES

COFFEE EDITION

What happens when you order from 43 ecommerce coffee brands?

A whole lot of caffeine – and a clear look at what separates a good customer experience from a great one.

WHY WE DID THIS

Getting someone interested in your coffee is job one. But getting that order across the finish line – on time, well-packed, and worth repeating the process – is where a lot of DTC companies fall short.

That's why we set out to examine the full customer experience to see where coffee brands are thriving – or losing customers – between the moment they hit "buy" and the first sip. **→ Because the truth is, even the best beans and strongest ad strategy won't matter if the experience breaks down during checkout, fulfillment, or delivery.** 👎🏻

At Shipfusion, we wanted to see where the real friction points were. So we placed orders from 43 different ecommerce coffee brands across the U.S. and tracked everything: checkout flow, shipping options, communication, packaging quality, and the final unboxing moment.

This report shows what today's coffee brands are getting right, where they're losing trust (and potential repeat purchases), and what opportunities they're missing to drive long-term loyalty.

→ Whether you're trying to improve retention or make sure your shipping experience isn't quietly turning customers away, this is your benchmark – and your cheat sheet. ✅

Key Findings — What Stood Out

65% had cross-sells in the cart, but only **21%** included them at checkout

$50 was the median threshold most brands set for free shipping

Nearly half of brands used custom boxes, but only **1 in 4** extended that branding to the inside

Over half of brands **did not** provide a delivery timeline in their confirmation email

21% of brands offered free shipping with no minimum spend

3PLs were **40%** **more successful** at fulfilling orders in 1 day

40% are only shipping within the US, missing out on global growth

35% of orders had an extra item (sample, insert, or freebie)

Nearly **1 in 5** packages arrived in less-than-ideal condition, and **1 in 10** arrived late

→ Keep reading to dive deep into what these numbers mean in the larger DTC coffee landscape. Falling on the wrong side of these numbers? We can help.

Checkout Experience

The **customer experience** kicks off the moment someone decides to buy.

How much they spend – and whether they complete the purchase at all – comes down to how simple and enticing that final checkout step feels. → **With cart abandonment rates** <u>as high as 63.6%</u> **for coffee brands**, we're taking a look at the checkout tactics they're using to make shoppers feel **good** about placing an order. ☻

Cross-Sell at Checkout: Are You Leaving $$$ on the Table?

65% of brands had cross-sells in the **cart**

21% of brands had cross-sells at **checkout**

This gap suggests a major missed opportunity. Cross-sells – especially low-friction, single-click upsells – can **lift AOV by 10-30%** without slowing down your checkout flow.

Growth Gap 🌱

Nearly **80%** of coffee brands are missing a last-minute chance to **lift AOV**. Customers at checkout have already committed to buying; a subtle prompt (e.g., filters, samplers, mugs) on the checkout screen can easily add incremental revenue.

Few Brands Use Social Proof at Checkout — But it Works

12%
of brands
provided
social proof
at checkout

92%
of consumers
feel **hesitant**
without reviews

We know social proof can have a big impact on conversion rates – just ask **the 92% of consumers** who feel hesitant to go through with purchasing when there are no customer reviews available! 👎

But some brands seem to forget that social proof can be a powerful psychological tool after items have been added to cart, too. Even modest indicators like "5,000+ five-star reviews" or "featured in top coffee blogs" can give online shoppers that extra boost they need to hit "buy".

MISSING ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Most Brands Skip Co-Marketing:
Here's Why You Shouldn't

Less than

1 in 10

brands include other content at checkout

Whether it's a donation prompt or a bundled offer with another DTC brand, this is a high-attention moment most coffee brands aren't using. Co-branding can strengthen identity, expand reach through partner audiences, and create a more memorable experience. Cause marketing, meanwhile, drives results – **66% of consumers say they're willing to pay more** for brands that support a social cause.

How Brands Are Co-Branding

- Donation prompts at checkout
- Co-branded offers with other DTC brands
- Eco-packaging or sustainability callouts
- Certifications (Fair Trade, B Corp, etc.)
- Brand storytelling banners highlighting causes

Shipping Selection

The top two reasons shoppers abandon their carts?

The costs that feel too high and delivery that feels too slow.*

If you're not addressing those friction points, you're leaving money behind. A smart shipping setup with clear options, realistic timelines, and thresholds that make sense can turn more browsers into buyers. **→ And with the right fulfillment partner, it's a lot easier to strike that balance without killing your margins.** ☑

Shipping at a Glance: What Options Coffee Brands Are Offering

There's more than one way to serve up shipping options. From free shipping for everyone to simply offering more than one option, learn what the coffee industry is doing to get orders out the door.

21% — Free standard shipping, no minimum spend

84% — Free shipping after a threshold

30% — Dynamic rate calculations for non-standard shipping

70% — More than one shipping option

Buyers Love Free Shipping — But Brands Need To Make It Count

21%

offered free standard shipping with no minimum spend

Unconditional free shipping is attractive to consumers, but hard to sustain for heavier, lower-margin items like coffee. Most brands only offer it when strong repeat purchase behavior or subscription models help absorb the cost.

→ **If you're offering free shipping, make sure it's working hard for you**. Feature it prominently in your marketing, or tie it to specific actions like starting a subscription, joining a loyalty program, or signing up for a membership (think Amazon Prime). If margins are tight, test limited-time offers or lower free shipping thresholds to increase conversion without eroding profitability.

Airline/Agent

4 9 4 0 9 7 7 3 7 0 1 0 1 0 0 0

Air Waybill No.

FREE SHIPPING

NHH-9633 8262   12

Tie Free Shipping to:

- Subscriptions
- Loyalty Programs
- Memberships

$$$$

Where Brands Are Setting the Free Shipping Bar

84%

offered free shipping after a threshold

→ **Higher thresholds may protect margins, but setting it too high ($100+) can negatively affect conversions.**

Align thresholds closely to your average order values, and bundle products to encourage larger carts just above your threshold.

Free Shipping Thresholds Range

$50
[Median]

$25

$100

$175

⚠ CAUTION ⚠

Lowest

Highest
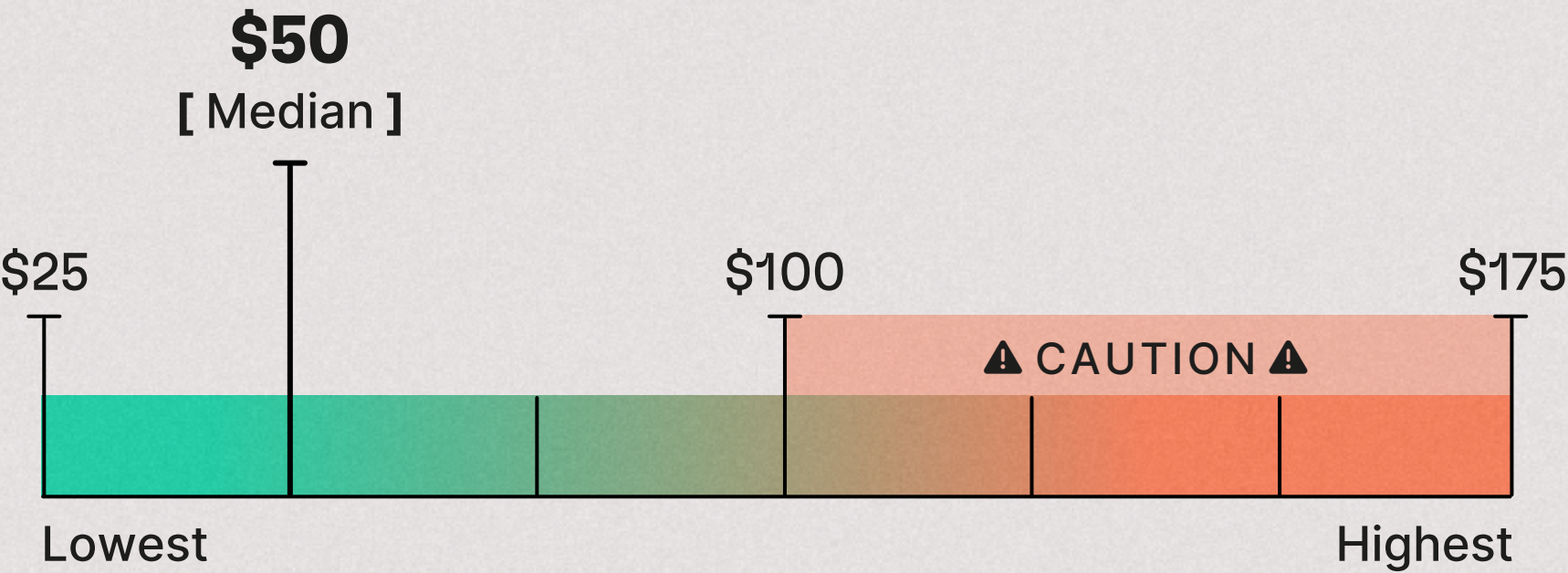
Growth Gap 🌱

The median threshold for free shipping was $50, with extremes from $25 to $175.

1 in 10 brands we ordered from had a threshold of **$75** or **higher.**

Dynamic Shipping Rates

30%

dynamically
calculated
shipping rates for
non-standard
shipping options

→ **Dynamic pricing is helpful for heavier or bulk orders –** especially in a weight-sensitive category like coffee.
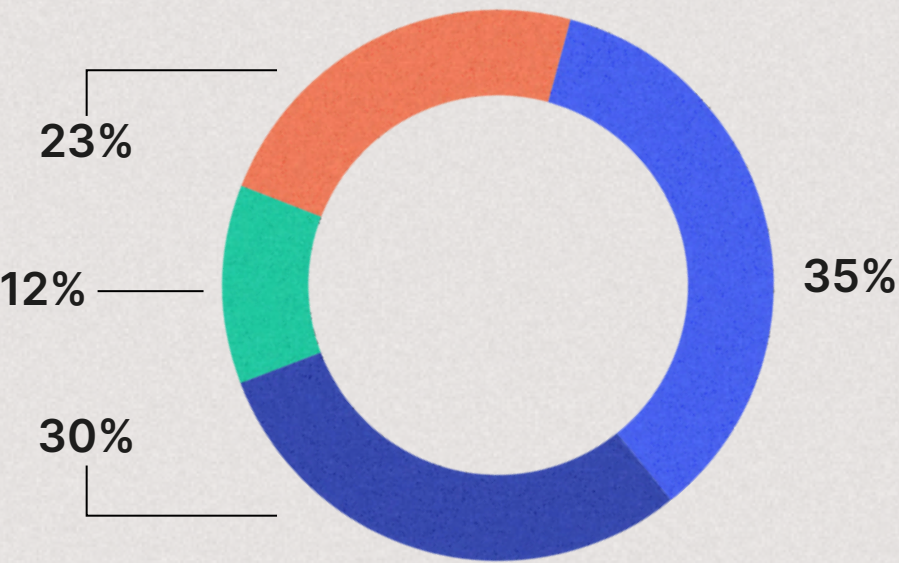
Shipping Options

70%

offered more
than one
shipping option

→ **Customers expect choice;** some prioritize speed, others cost. The sweet spot is typically two or three clearly labeled shipping speeds, each with an estimated timeline clearly communicated upfront.
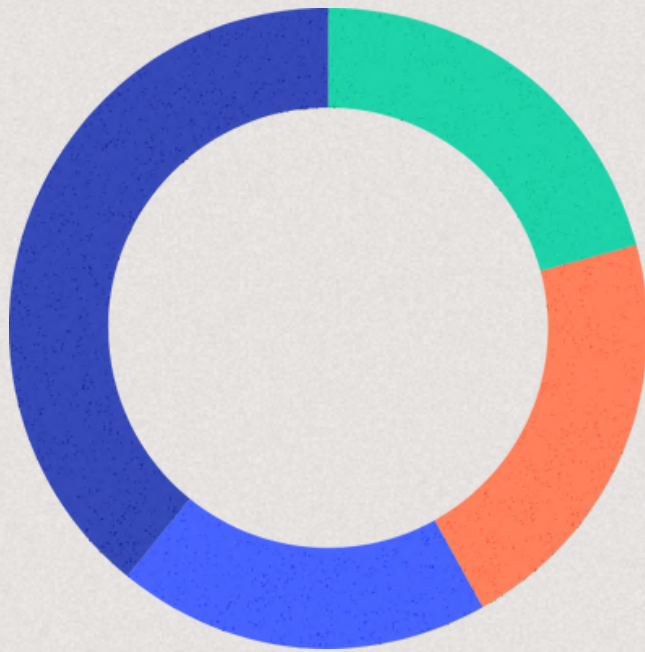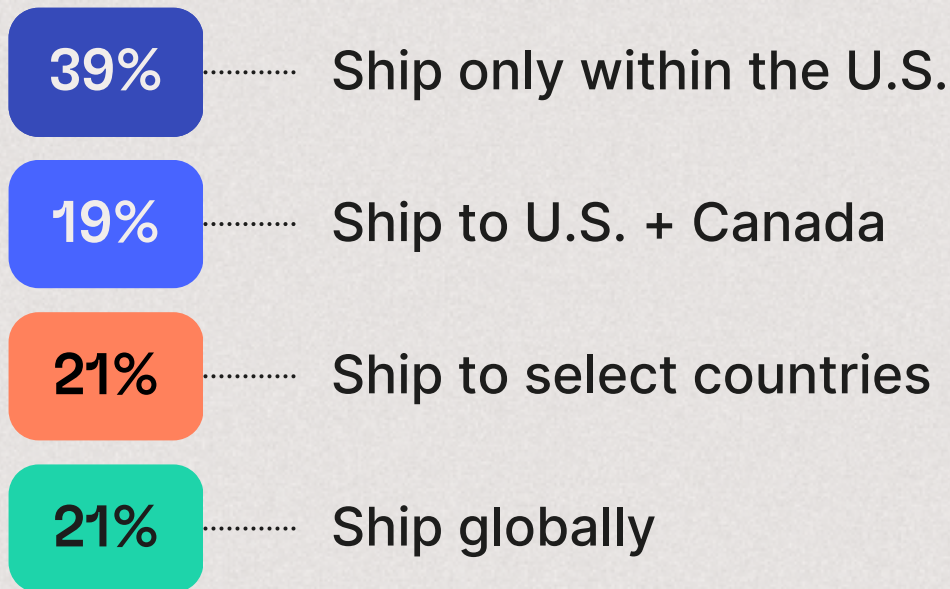
Breakdown

1 Opt.

2 Opts.

3 Opts.

4+ Opts.

23%

12%

30%

35%

→ Majority of coffee brands are **missing out on the opportunity to go global** ⊕

Of the brands we ordered:

39% ········ Ship only within the U.S.

19% ········ Ship to U.S. + Canada

21% ········ Ship to select countries

21% ········ Ship globally

Growth Gap 🌱

Most brands are leaving global sales opportunities on the table. A reliable 3PL can simplify international logistics, making global expansion painless and scalable.

Post-Purchase
Communication

# You've got someone in the door – now how can you reinforce their trust and get them hyped for their order?

→ **The answer is effective post-purchase communication.** We took a look at how many brands provided tailored messaging, including for first-time customers, as well as functional updates related to fulfilling, shipping, and delivering orders.

More than **50**% are **missing key moments** after **checkout**

Most customers don't expect perfection, but they do expect clear communication. Yet, many brands go quiet after checkout.

Which Email Notifications Are Sent Post-Purchase?

NO **YES**

	Order	Shipping	Out for delivery	Delivered
NO	7%	33%	56%	35%
YES	93%	67%	44%	65%
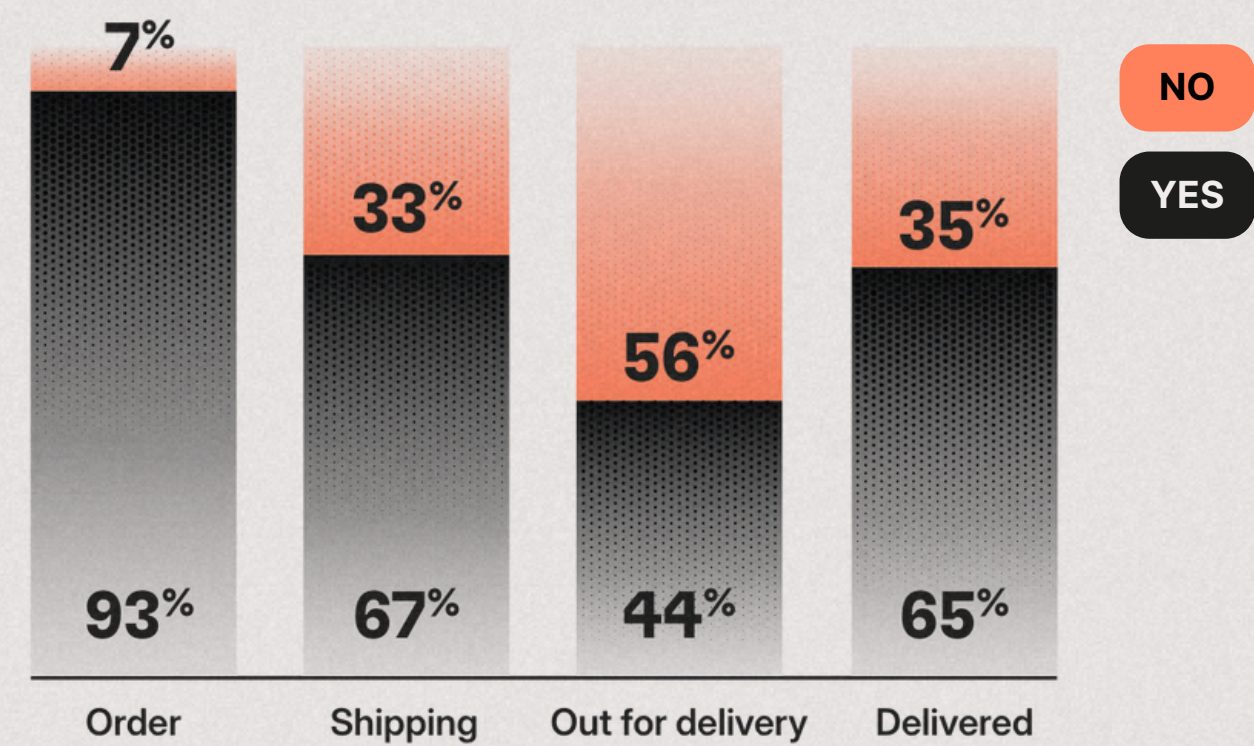
Only **28**% completed the **full post-purchase** email flow

It's not just about sending some updates – it's about sending the right ones, consistently.

We looked at how many brands actually delivered the full four-part sequence from purchase to delivery:

All 4 emails	3/4 emails	2/4 emails	Only 1 email
28%	35%	23%	14%
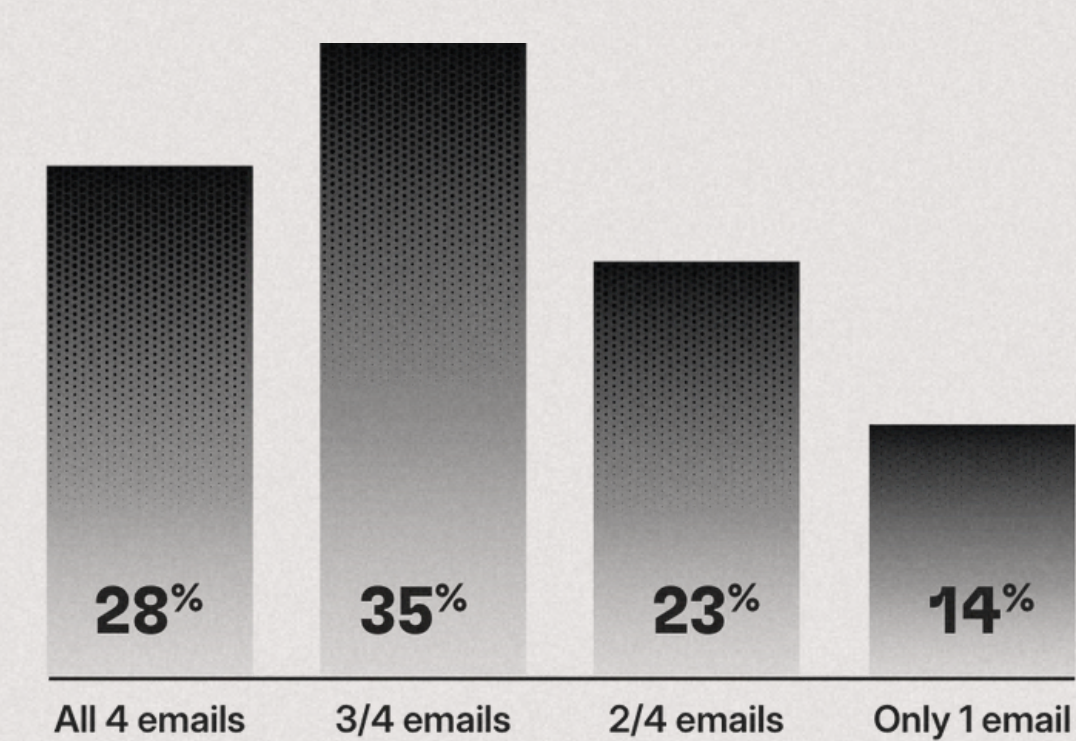
The most commonly skipped touchpoint? The **"out for delivery"** email. While 93% sent a confirmation, **just 48% of the brands that actually followed up** included this update.

Growth Gap 🌱

If you're only sending an order confirmation, you're missing multiple moments to build trust. Out-for-delivery updates in particular are a small lift with big payoff – they reduce missed deliveries and keep anticipation high at the last mile.

Where's My Coffee?: Why It's Important to Set Expectations Early

58%

of brands did not include a delivery timeline in the confirmation email

Without an estimated timeline, customers frequently reach out with "Where Is My Order?" (WISMO) tickets, comprising about **18% of all ecommerce customer service inquiries**. A simple timeline like "3-5 business days" reduces tickets and builds customer trust.

Estimated delivery timeline provided

58% ---- Not stated

12% ---- Less than 7 days

7% ---- More than 7 days

5% ---- Will ship in x days

14% ---- Will send shipping notification

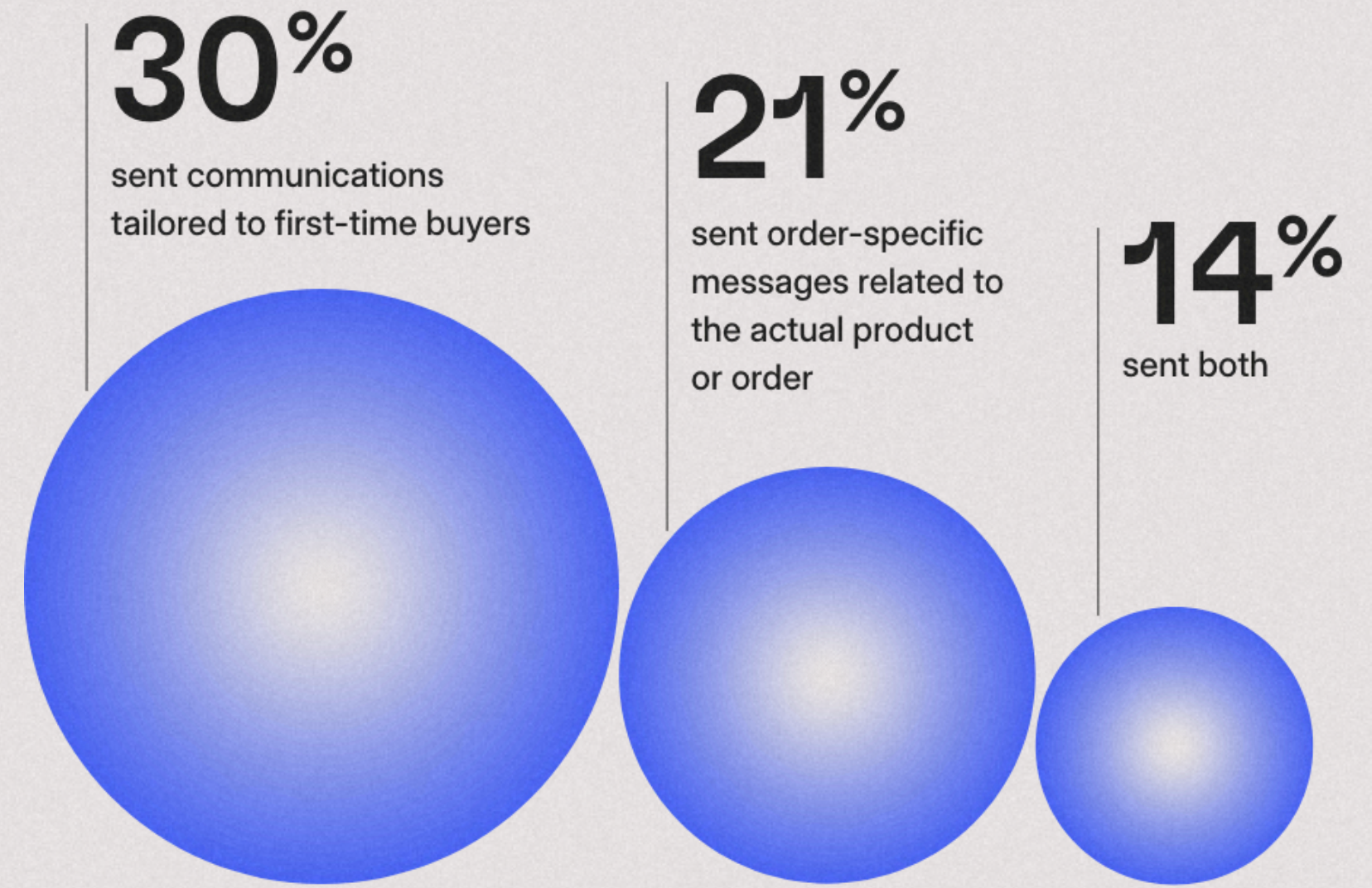**5%** ---- Specific date estimate
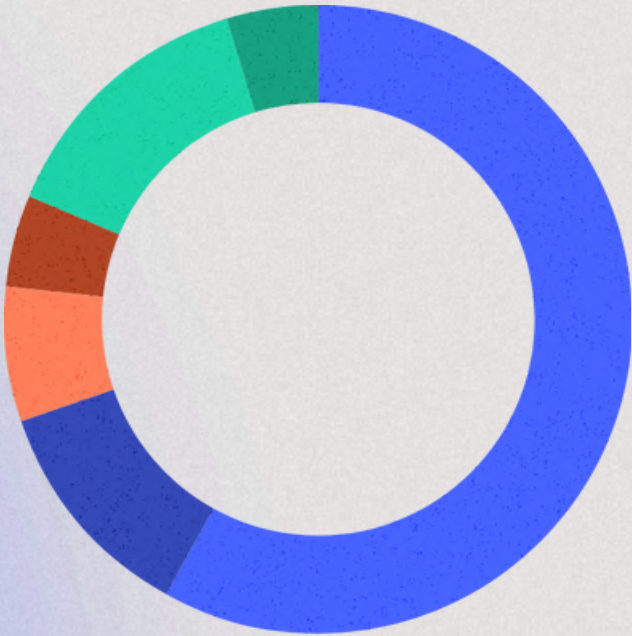
Growth Gap 🌱

If you're not providing timelines, is it because of a visibility issue with your fulfillment? → **Ensure your warehouse or 3PL offers real-time order tracking integrations.**

And in terms of **personalized post-purchase, pre-delivered** marketing emails?

30%
sent communications
tailored to first-time buyers

21%
sent order-specific
messages related to
the actual product
or order

14%
sent both

Growth Gap 🌱

→ **Most post-purchase emails stop at the receipt** – and that's a missed opportunity, especially in a category like coffee where education, experimentation, and personal connection go a long way. A simple recipe email for your coffee concentrate, a founder note welcoming new customers, or even a "next best product" suggestion based on their order can turn a one-time buyer into a subscriber.

Fulfillment + Shipping

Shipping speed doesn't mean much if your order sits in a warehouse for three days.

We tracked both fulfillment time and transit speed—because to your customers, the clock starts ticking right away.

Fulfillment Speed:
Are You Keeping Up?

**Average
fulfillment time:**
[in days, including
weekends]

2

Breakdown

12%
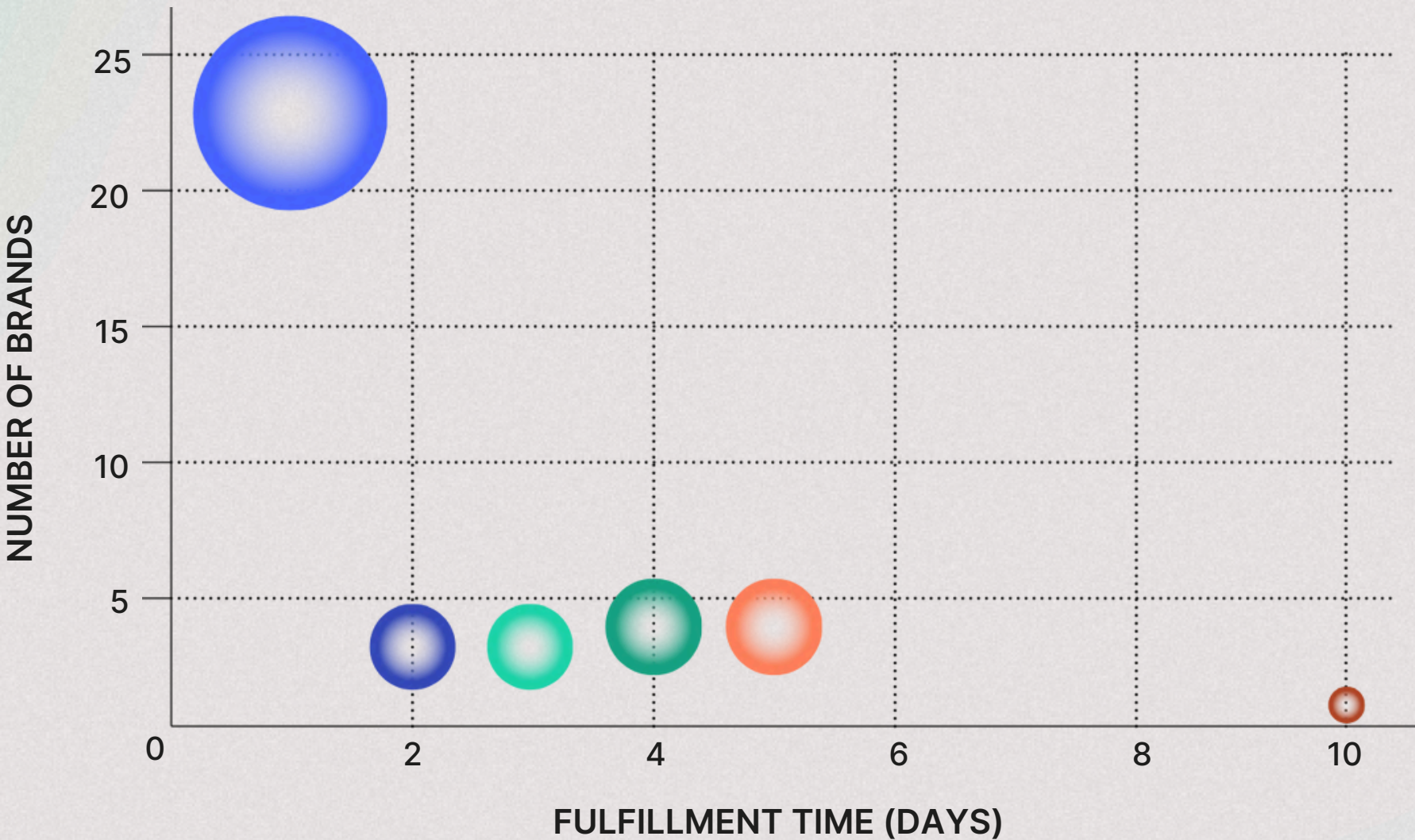Fulfilled same-day

53%
Within 1 day

25%
Longer than 2 days

9%
Took 5+ days

⚠ Longest: 10 days ⚠

Growth Gap 🌱

Even if you offer fast shipping options, slow fulfillment times
degrade the overall customer experience and harm retention rates.
Use this 2-day benchmark to evaluate your fulfillment efficiency.
If you're consistently over it, tech-driven fulfillment or partnering
with a reliable 3PL can immediately improve your performance.

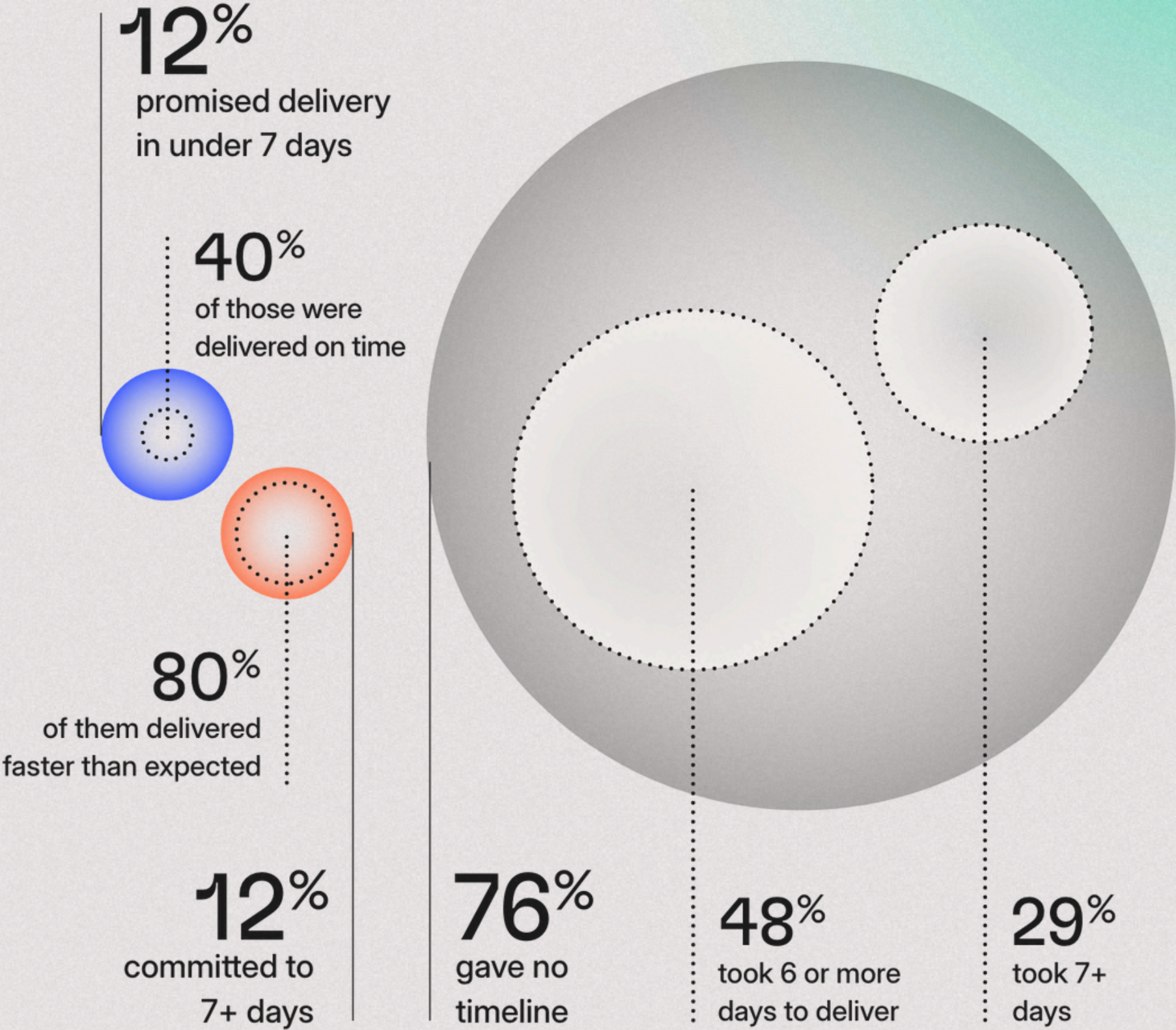# From Beans to Brewed: How Long it Took to Deliver the Goods

Average shipping time:
[in days, including weekends]

4

Only **1** in **4** brands gave customers an estimated **delivery window**

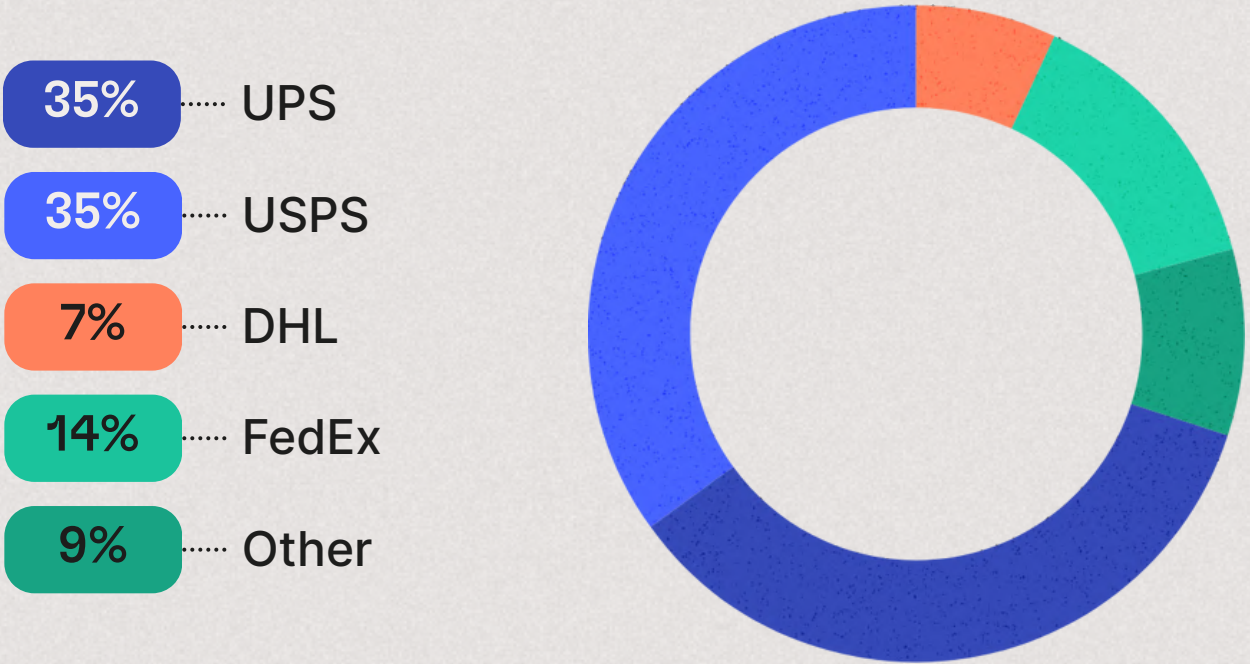**1 in 10 packages arrived late**

→ **Late deliveries directly damage trust and future purchases.** 😟 Most customers will give you one chance, not two.

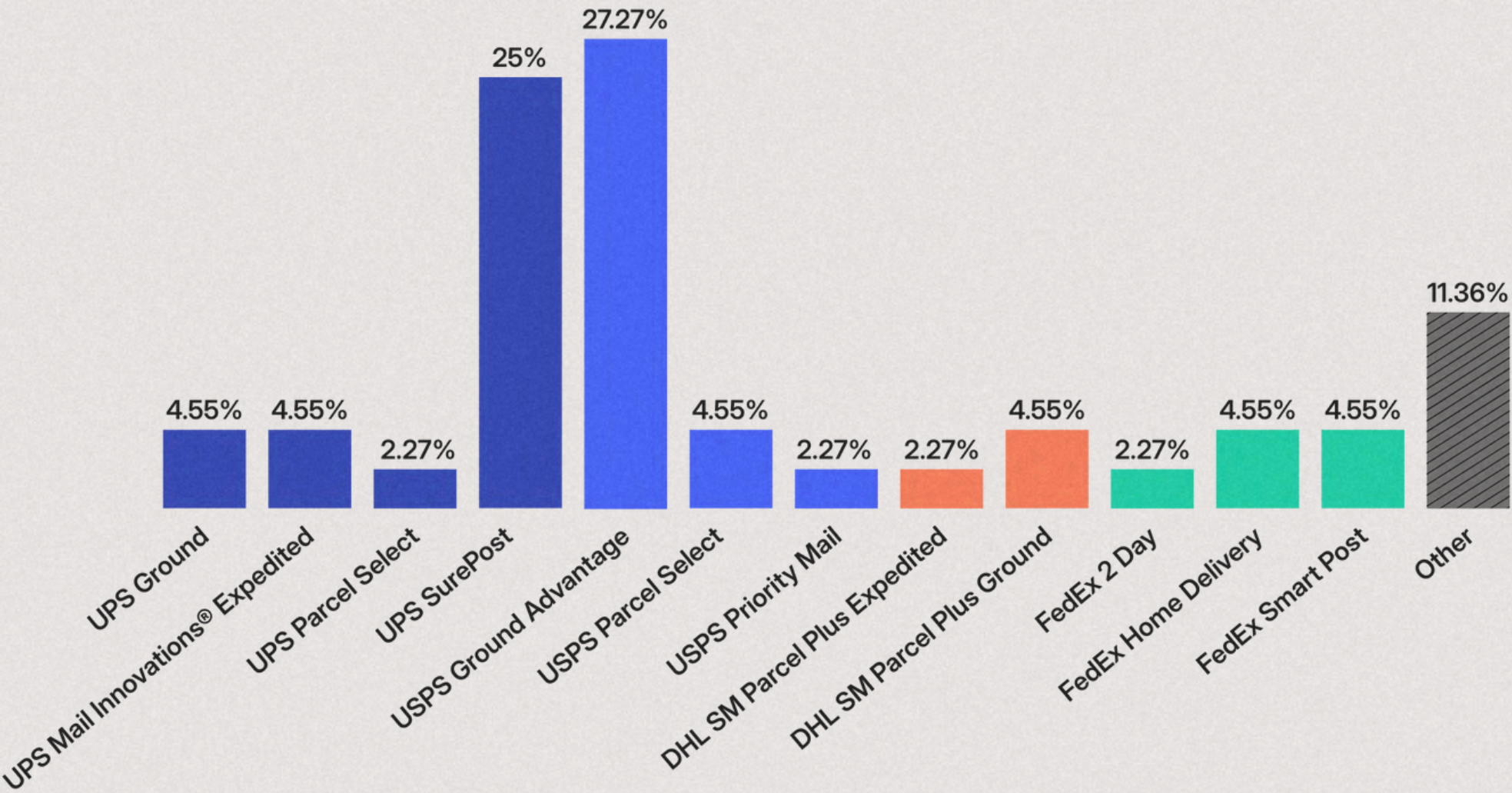**12%**
promised delivery in under 7 days

40%
of those were delivered on time

80%
of them delivered faster than expected

12%
committed to 7+ days

76%
gave no timeline

48%
took 6 or more days to deliver

29%
took 7+ days

The Carrier Breakdown:
Are You With the Majority?

Services Used by Each Carrier

35%	UPS
35%	USPS
7%	DHL
14%	FedEx
9%	Other

Bar chart values:
- UPS Ground: 4.55%
- UPS Mail Innovations® Expedited: 4.55%
- UPS Parcel Select: 2.27%
- UPS SurePost: 25%
- USPS Ground Advantage: 27.27%
- USPS Parcel Select: 4.55%
- USPS Priority Mail: 2.27%
- DHL SM Parcel Plus Expedited: 2.27%
- DHL SM Parcel Plus Ground: 4.55%
- FedEx 2 Day: 2.27%
- FedEx Home Delivery: 4.55%
- FedEx Smart Post: 4.55%
- Other: 11.36%

Growth Gap 🌱

→ **Customers don't distinguish between fulfillment and shipping delays – they just remember when it shows up.** Consider whether your carrier mix or warehouse locations are holding you back from delivering packages to customers on the timeline they expect.
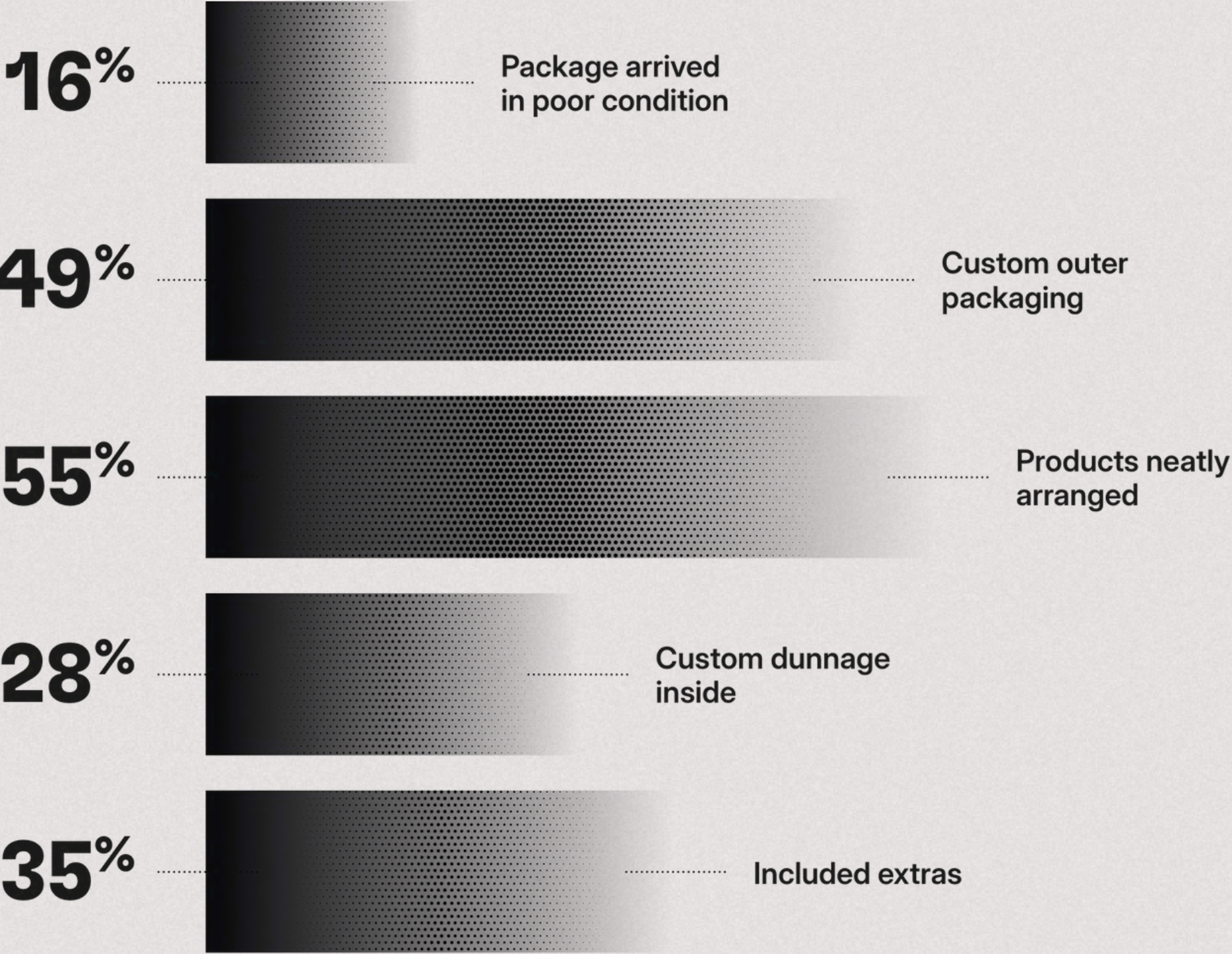
Receipt
+ Unboxing

The unboxing moment is your **first in-person impression.**

Whether a package shows up beautifully presented or scuffed and underwhelming shapes how customers feel about the entire experience. We looked at everything from packaging quality to product arrangement to those little extras that make people want to share their unboxing online (or reorder). ☻

Inside the Box: the Unboxing Experience — At a Glance

Exhibit A-023

16% .... Package arrived in poor condition

49% .... Custom outer packaging

55% .... Products neatly arranged

28% .... Custom dunnage inside

35% .... Included extras

Unboxing the Good, the Bad, & the Beat-Up

16%

of packages
arrived in poor
condition

→ **Nearly 1 in 5 packages arriving damaged** seriously undermines customer satisfaction and brand reputation. Professional packaging and reliable logistics can significantly lower this rate.

Damaged Box

Exhibit D-004

Did Brands Nail the First Impression?

49%

of brands used
custom **outer
packaging**

28%

of orders had
custom dunnage

→ **If your coffee's high quality, your presentation should be, too.**
A beautifully branded box packed with generic bubble wrap creates a disconnect. Custom dunnage, like branded tissue paper or crinkle fill, is inexpensive, but elevates the unboxing moment and shows you've thought through every detail.

Unboxing Energy: Who Took it Seriously?

55%

of brands neatly
arranged products
in the box

→ **A messy box says, "We didn't think this through." A carefully packed one says, "We've got you – and we care."** Product arrangement might seem minor, but it influences how polished, premium, and trustworthy your brand feels when it finally lands your customer's hands.
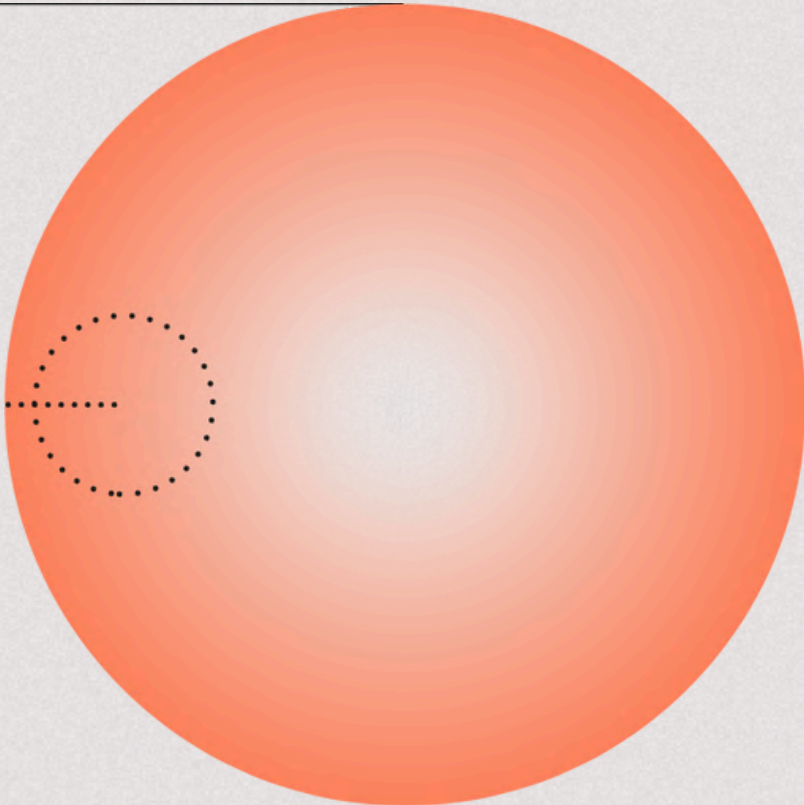
Why a Little Something Extra Goes a Long Way

Just over **1** in **3** brands include **additional items** in the orders.

35%
Include additional items

23%
were marketing inserts

→ **Surprise extras –** like a sample, sticker, or thank-you card – turn a transaction into an experience. But only 23% included a marketing insert aimed at retention. That means 77% missed a low-cost chance to drive a second purchase or earn a referral.

Growth Gap

Most coffee brands miss the opportunity to drive repeat revenue at the point of unboxing. A well-placed insert can turn a one-time buyer into a subscriber, a referrer, or a return customer. These don't have to be big or flashy; they just have to be intentional.

Retention-driving insert ideas:

- Coupon codes for the next purchase
- Referral program QR code
- Brewing guides or recipe cards
- Exclusive subscription or bundle offers

3PL vs. In-House Fulfillment

Behind every great customer experience is a **strong fulfillment setup.**

When we compared brands using 3PLs to those fulfilling in-house, **→ the differences showed up everywhere: Speed, delivery condition, shipping reach, and consistency.** Here's what the data revealed about who's delivering – and who's falling behind.

→ **Brands using a 3PL consistently outperformed** in-house operations across four areas

	3PL	In-House
Checkout Optimization	**24**% used checkout cross-sells	**9**%
Fulfillment Speed	**40**% **more likely** to fulfill orders within 1 day	
Delivery Condition	**92**% arrived in great shape	**80**%
Global Shipping	**50**% shipped internationally	**30**%

Growth Gap

Outsourcing logistics lets your internal team focus more effectively on brand experience, customer retention, and growth strategies – while your 3PL ensures faster fulfillment, fewer damages, and broader global reach. 🌐

Conclusion: The **Experience** is the **Product**

The brands that stood out weren't always the biggest. They were the brands that consistently nailed the details:

- Rapid, reliable fulfillment
- Clear, proactive customer communication
- Intentional, thoughtful packaging
- Smart, simple tactics to encourage repeat purchases

If you're serious about scaling, the key question isn't only "Is my product good enough?" but also "Is my entire customer experience fueling growth?"

Shipfusion

Let's Talk Fulfillment that Fuels Growth 🌱

→ **At Shipfusion, we help ambitious DTC brands turn fulfillment into their competitive edge.** If you're looking to cut delivery times, manage complex inventory seamlessly, or craft an unforgettable unboxing experience, we're here to help.

Ready to create experiences that keep customers coming back? **Connect with one of our fulfillment experts today.**