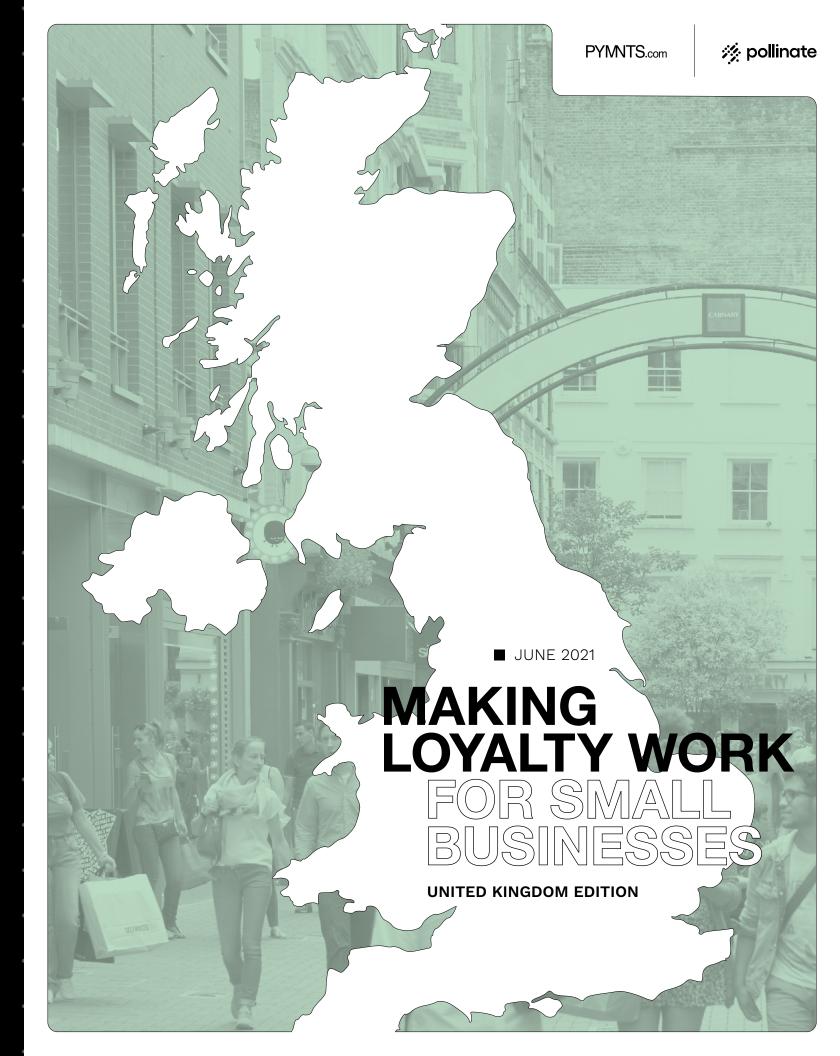
# Making Loyalty Work For Small Businesses: United Kingdom Edition, a PYMNTS and Pollinate collaboration, analyzes survey responses from a census-balanced panel of 1,115 U.K. consumers as part of our broader study into the shopping habits of 4,519 consumers across Australia, Brazil, the U.K. and the U.S. to assess their desires to shop with local merchants, their appetites for the loyalty programs these merchants may offer and which types of institutions they would trust to administer and manage such programs. The Playbook examines why customization is appealing for these loyalty offerings and why banks appear particularly well-placed to deliver these programs.





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	0
The footfall deficit	0
Thinking green	13
The potential for high street loyalty	2 <sup>.</sup>
The trust factor	27
Conclusion	3

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Making Loyalty Work For Small Businesses was done in collaboration with Pollinate, and PYMNTS is grateful for the company's support and insight.

PYMNTS.com retains full editorial control over the following findings, methodology and data analysis.

# INTRODUCTION

ora and Nalan Kirgiz opened the Bona Couple Cafe&Lounge in Denton, England, shortly after the United Kingdom's first shutdown in March 2020 resulted in Bora losing his job. The couple had long dreamed of opening their own cafe, but it was not until they lost their jobs during the beginning of the pandemic that they decided to make this dream a reality. They obtained a lease for a small property in Denton soon thereafter and have been happily running the company of their dreams ever since.1

The Kirgizes are part of a growing cohort of entrepreneurs across the U.K. who have felt inspired to open high street businesses of their own. Many of these new

business owners hail from industries that incurred heavy losses and have found themselves out of work or falling short of their incomes. The result has been an unexpected surge in small-town entrepreneurship across the U.K. and a growing public awareness about these business owners' central role in communities — on top of ongoing concerns about the decline of local economies. PYMNTS' research shows that 39 percent of consumers in the U.K. now believe it is critical to support the roughly 6 million small and mid-sized businesses that employ 60 percent of the U.K.'s workforce, and 46 percent - 24 million individuals — say it is even more important to do so now than it was before March 2020.2



The Making Loyalty Work For Small Businesses Playbook: United Kingdom Edition, a PYMNTS and Pollinate collaboration, analyzes how the small enterprises that make up communities across the U.K. can leverage loyalty and other discount programs to better meet their customers' needs and expectations and boost conversion. We surveyed a census-balanced panel of 1,115 U.K. consumers between Feb. 25 and March 5 about where they shopped most, whether they used or would like to use services that allowed them to earn rewards and receive special offers from the small businesses in their communities and what they want those services to deliver to find out just how many new customers high street businesses might attract by delivering the loyalty experiences their communities want.

This is what we learned.

Bounds, A.; Romei, V. Pandemic ignites UK's strongest start-up boom in a decade. The Financial Times. 2021. https://www.ft.com/content/19662d16-a318-4799-9b48-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Calling all small businesses to lead the charge to net zero. The Department for Businesses, Energy and Industrial Strategy. 2021. https://www.gov.uk/gove

03 | Making Loyalty Work For Small Businesses



# The U.K. is home to a massive untapped market for local commerce.

Twenty-four million U.K. consumers see local commerce as critical as restrictions ease, but only 17 million shop with businesses in their communities.

U.K. consumers are growing more aware of the important role that small and mid-sized businesses on the high street play in their local communities as the pandemic drags on. Our data shows that 39 percent of them — roughly 20 million consumers — consider it "very" or "extremely" important to shop with such businesses, yet 46 percent say it is even more important to do so now than it was before March 2020. This means 24 million consumers believe that the pandemic has heightened the importance of supporting local businesses.

Many high street businesses are struggling to attract this massive market of would-be local shoppers, however. Our research shows that only 32 percent of all U.K. consumers — roughly 17 million individuals — made at least one purchase from a local business in the past month, and only 13 percent shop with local businesses more than any other type of retailer. This highlights a massive growth opportunity for the small and mid-sized businesses in towns across the nation that can only be taken if they can find a way to incentivize these potential customers to bring their business to the high street.



Economic and environmental concerns are key drivers of high street commerce.

Seventy-one percent of all U.K. consumers see local shops as critical to keeping money in the community, investing in the economy or protecting the environment.

Consumers in the U.K. see local businesses as an integral part of their communities' economic well-being. Economic concerns are therefore at the top of their minds when it comes to shopping on the high street. Forty-two percent of the U.K. consumers who believe that it is important to shop local say their belief is because doing so keeps money in their communities, and 38 percent say it is important because it allows them to reinvest in their local economies.

The U.K. is also the only national market in our study in which consumers see environmental conservation as one of the primary reasons to shop with local businesses rather than larger mass merchants, online-only businesses or chain retailers. Thirty-seven percent of U.K. consumers believe it is important to shop with local businesses for conservation, in fact, making the environment the third-most commonly cited reason for shopping close to home. Fifteen percent of consumers in the U.K. who consider local commerce to be an imperative even go so far as to say the environment is the chief reason why — more than the share who cite any other factor, save for keeping money in their local communities.



# Forty million high street shoppers are sold on loyalty programs and are eager to sign up for more.

Loyalty programs and other special offerings are popular in the U.K., where 76 percent of all consumers receive regular rewards or discounts from at least one of the businesses with which they shop. This means that there are roughly 40 million active loyalty program users throughout the nation — and most of them are eager to sign up for more. Fifty-two percent of U.K. consumers who already use loyalty programs say they would be "very" or "extremely" interested in signing up for services that would allow them to receive rewards and other offerings when shopping with the businesses in their communities.

Not just any program will do, however. One of the reasons why these loyalty program users are on the lookout for new offerings might be because they are unhappy with the ones they currently use. Seventy-six percent of U.K. consumers use at least one loyalty program, but only 34 percent of them are satisfied with their local merchants' loyalty and discount offerings. Local businesses will need to step up their rewards offerings if they hope to win over these new potential customers.



Fifty-two percent of U.K. consumers would be interested in receiving local loyalty offerings.



Forty-four percent of U.K. consumers would trust banks with their personal data — six times more than would trust small businesses.

Banks are in a better position to deliver the loyalty programs that U.K. consumers want than local businesses, in no small part because consumers trust them more with their personal data. Only 7 percent of U.K. consumers say they would trust the businesses in their areas with their personal data, but as many as 44 percent would trust banks to do so. These numbers imply that partnering with banks could help high street businesses draw six times as many potential shoppers as they can on their own. Using loyalty services that tap banks' trusted position in communities throughout the U.K. can therefore help local businesses maximize the returns on their loyalty offerings.



SIX TIMES MORE U.K. CONSUMERS

TRUST BANKS TO MANAGE

THEIR PERSONAL DATA THAN

TRUST LOCAL BUSINESSES.



onsumers in the U.K. see local shopping as essential, but they also appreciate the convenience of being able to get their shopping done expediently. They are much like their American counterparts in showing a strong affinity for large, national mass merchants, like Sainsbury's and Tesco, that can help them do so. Sixty-five percent of consumers in the U.K. shop with mass merchants that sell everything from food to clothing to healthcare products, and 52 percent say they shop with these merchants more than any other type of business.

# The types of merchants with which UK consumers shop most

Portion of consumers who report shopping with select types of merchants in the last month and as their primary merchants, by country

			( <u>[</u>		
	_	National chain	Online-only	Local retail store	National mass merchant
SHOPP	ING IN THE LAST MONTH				
	United Kingdom	31.1%	43.1%	31.5%	64.6%
	United States	45.4%	42.3%	41.2%	75.2%
*	Australia	40.1%	38.2%	55.4%	61.7%
	Brazil	44.0%	49.4%	54.8%	54.8%
SELECT	T AS PRIMARY MERCHANTS				
	United Kingdom	9.9%	22.3%	13.0%	52.4%
	United States	12.3%	13.8%	13.3%	58.0%
<b>*</b> .	Australia	14.9%	12.7%	22.4%	46.5%
	Brazil	13.5%	28.3%	27.7%	28.1%

Source: PYMNTS | Pollinate Making Loyalty Work For Small Busine

46%

# OF U.K. CONSUMERS BELIEVE IT IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO SHOP LOCALLY NOW THAN IT WAS PRIOR TO MARCH 2020.

This demand for easy, convenient shopping experiences also helps shape U.K. consumers' online shopping habits. Fortythree percent of U.K. consumers report having shopped with a merchant with products that are only accessible online in the past month, making online retailers the second-most common type of business with which they shop. This means that U.K. shoppers have a stronger appetite for the ease and convenience of shopping online than consumers in either the United States or Australia.

Local businesses are less central to many U.K. consumers' lives, by comparison. Shoppers in the U.K. are less likely to purchase from the small and mid-sized

businesses in their communities than consumers in either Australia, Brazil or the U.S. Thirty-two percent of U.K. consumers say they have shopped at one such business in the past month, and only 13 percent say they shop with high street businesses more than any other type of merchant.

Local businesses do have an opportunity to boost their footfall, however. Our research suggests that many U.K. consumers might like to visit the shops in their communities but do not due to extraneous factors, such as a lack of convenience or access. Thirty-nine percent of consumers in the U.K. consider it either "very" or "extremely" important to shop

with local businesses, and 46 percent of them also believe it is more important to do so now than it was before March 2020. when brick-and-mortar shops across the globe began closing their doors. This works out to roughly 24 million consumers across the U.K. who feel a certain sense of duty to purchase from the businesses in their area in the post-pandemic economy and who said they were open to businesses winning them over with the right incentives.

Even more striking is how common this belief is among U.K. consumers of different age groups. Baby boomers, seniors, millennials and bridge millennials rarely see eye-to-eye on any matter of finance or commerce, but those in the U.K. are almost uniformly certain of the importance of shopping with local businesses. Forty percent of millennials and bridge millennials and 39 percent of baby boomers and seniors say they believe that shopping with local businesses is an



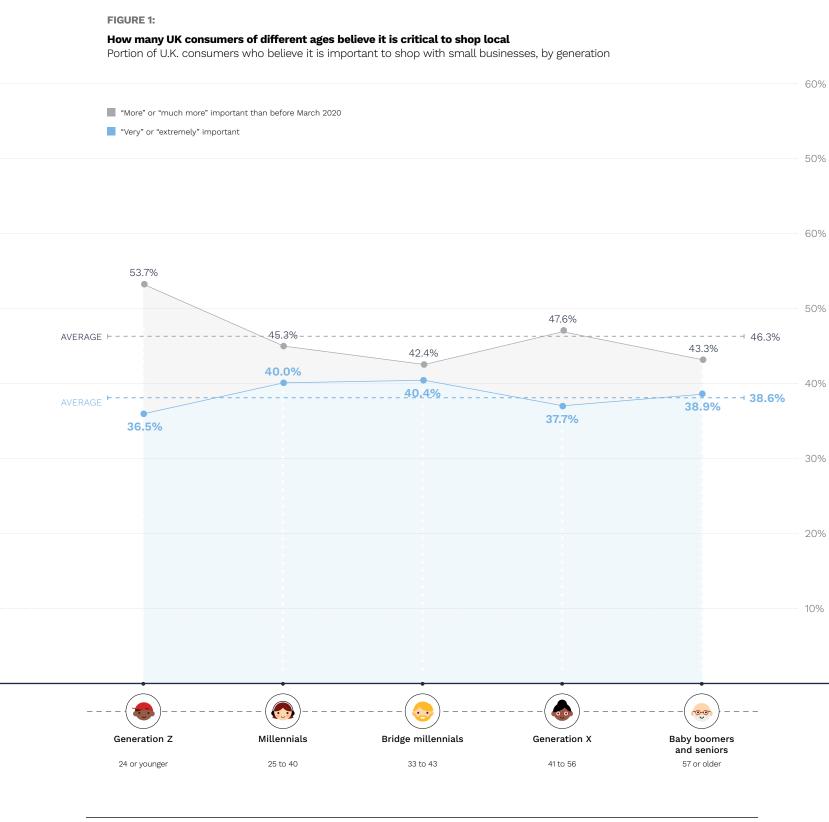
11 | Making Loyalty Work For Small Businesses

imperative. U.K. consumers in Generations X and Z are less certain of this imperative but only slightly so. Thirty-eight percent of Gen X and 37 percent of Gen Z consumers in the U.K. see local commerce as crucial.

These age cohorts differ a bit more when it comes to the importance they place on local shopping considering the pandemic's impact, but even then, there is not a single age group with less variability than is typically seen among consumers from different age groups. Gen Z and Gen X are the two most likely groups to see shopping local as more important now than it was prior to March 2020, with 54 percent and 48 percent saying so, respectively. Forty-two percent of bridge millennials in the U.K. say the same.

# **BRIDGE MILLENNIALS**

ridge millennial consumers were born between 1978 and 1988, representing both younger members of Generation X and older millennials. They came of age having access to desktop and laptop computers in addition to smartphones and are comfortable using any of them to browse, shop and pay for products and services. Bridge millennials also tend to be farther along in their professional careers than other millennials and have the spending power that comes with higher incomes as a result. This makes them a powerful and important consumer segment that small and mid-sized merchants must consider when designing their loyalty program engagement strategies.



Source: PYMNTS | Pollinate Making Loyalty Work For Small Businesse



37%

OF U.K. **CONSUMERS** BELIEVE SHOPPING ON THE HIGH STREET IS **IMPORTANT** 

**BECAUSE IT IS BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT.** 

he economic well-being of U.K. consumers' communities is first in their minds when they think of local businesses. Forty-two percent of those who consider shopping local an imperative say they place importance on it because doing so can help keep money in their local communities, and 38 percent say it is important because it presents a way for them to reinvest in their local economies.

There is another motivator driving U.K. consumers to the high street, however — one that stands out as uniquely common in the U.K.: the environment. U.K. consumers are far more environmentally conscious than their counterparts in Australia, Brazil and the U.S., with greater shares believing that it is better for the environment to shop with businesses on the high street than it is to purchase from any other type of retailer. Thirty-seven percent of U.K. consumers cite the environment as one reason they believe it important to shop with local businesses, and 15 percent cite it as the single most important reason for doing so.

15 | Making Loyalty Work For Small Businesses Thinking green | 16

I WANT...



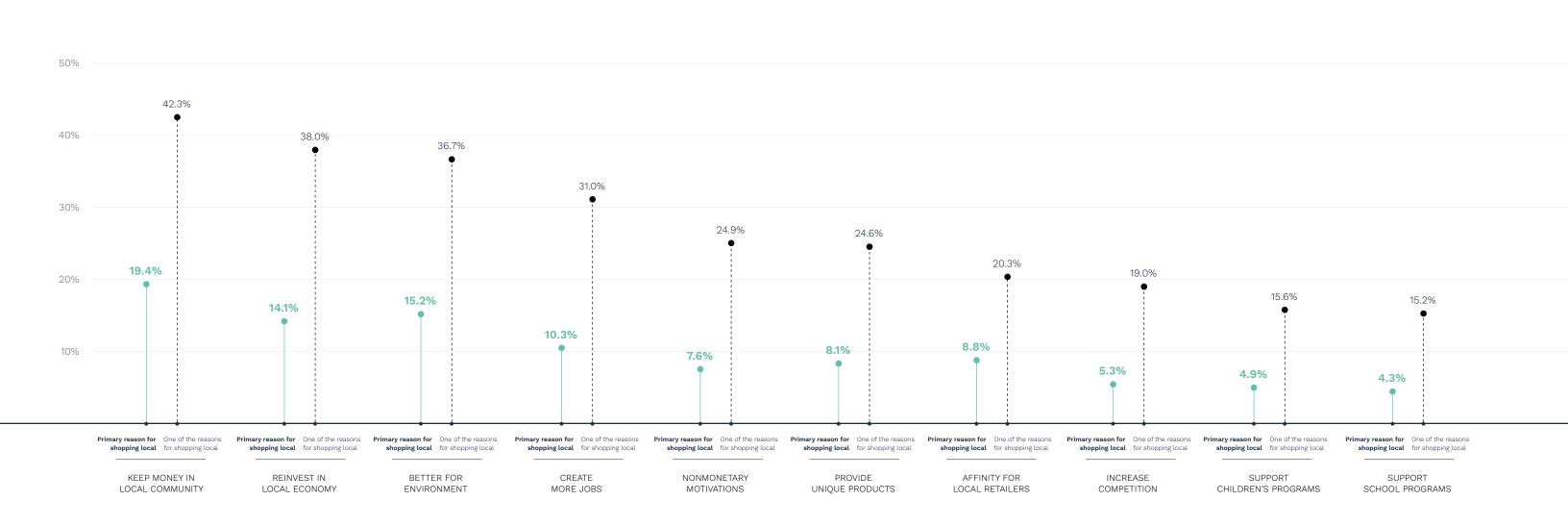
"Discounts and offers [that] are appealing to me personally. [These] would be based on my previous purchases." The importance that high street shoppers place on being environmentally friendly also varies with their geographic locations, generational backgrounds and education levels. U.K. consumers living in rural or farming areas are the most likely to consider environmental conservation an imperative, for example, as 49 percent of them cite it as a reason why they believe it is critical to shop with local businesses. Those living in metropolitan areas are a distant second at 36 percent.

### FIGURE 2:

60%

# Why UK consumers believe in the importance of shopping local

Portion of U.K. consumers citing select reasons for believing it is important to shop with small businesses



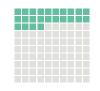
Source: PYMNTS | Pollinate Making Loyalty Work For Small Businesses

# How many UK consumers consider the environment when deciding to shop local

Portion of consumers who consider it critical to shop with local businesses for environmental reasons, by country and segment

#### TOTAL RESPONDENTS FOR EACH COUNTRY























	*		
United Kingdom	Australia	United States	Brazil

#### **GENERATION**

• Generation Z	30.0%	17.4%	34.8%	24.2%
Millennials	31.4%	27.4%	25.1%	10.5%
Bridge millennials	29.9%	24.6%	19.6%	10.8%
Generation X	36.3%	24.5%	20.0%	16.8%
Baby boomers and seniors	44.6%	23.6%	14.1%	9.3%

# LIVING AREA

Metropolitan area	35.8%	24.1%	27.1%	13.0%
• City	33.5%	22.1%	23.7%	14.9%
• Town	34.1%	28.9%	20.3%	14.2%
Rural or farming area	49.4%	23.7%	12.1%	17.5%

Source: PYMNTS | Pollinate Making Loyalty Work For Small Busines

This conviction in the environmental importance of shopping local is also particularly high among the U.K.'s baby boomers and seniors. Forty-five percent of baby boomers and seniors in the U.K. say that it is critical to shop with local businesses for environmental reasons, making them the most likely age groups to hold this belief. The U.K.'s bridge millennials are the least likely to cite the environment as a reason why it is critical to shop local, by contrast. Thirty percent of U.K. consumers born between 1978 and 1988 who shop with local businesses say they shop close to home because doing so is better for the environment.

These demographic trends are even more striking when compared to those seen in the U.S. and Brazil, where they are essentially reversed. Rural U.S. consumers are the least likely of any geographic area to cite the environment as a reason for shopping with local businesses, and the U.S. and Brazil's baby boomers and seniors are the least likely of any age cohort to share that view. This sharp contrast between consumers goes to show just how drastically a nation's geopolitical landscape can shape its consumers' beliefs and shopping preferences.

OF U.K. **CONSUMERS** LIVING IN RURAL OR FARMING AREAS WHO SEE SHOPPING LOCAL AS CRITICAL CITE **CONSERVATION** AS A KEY REASON.

# GOING

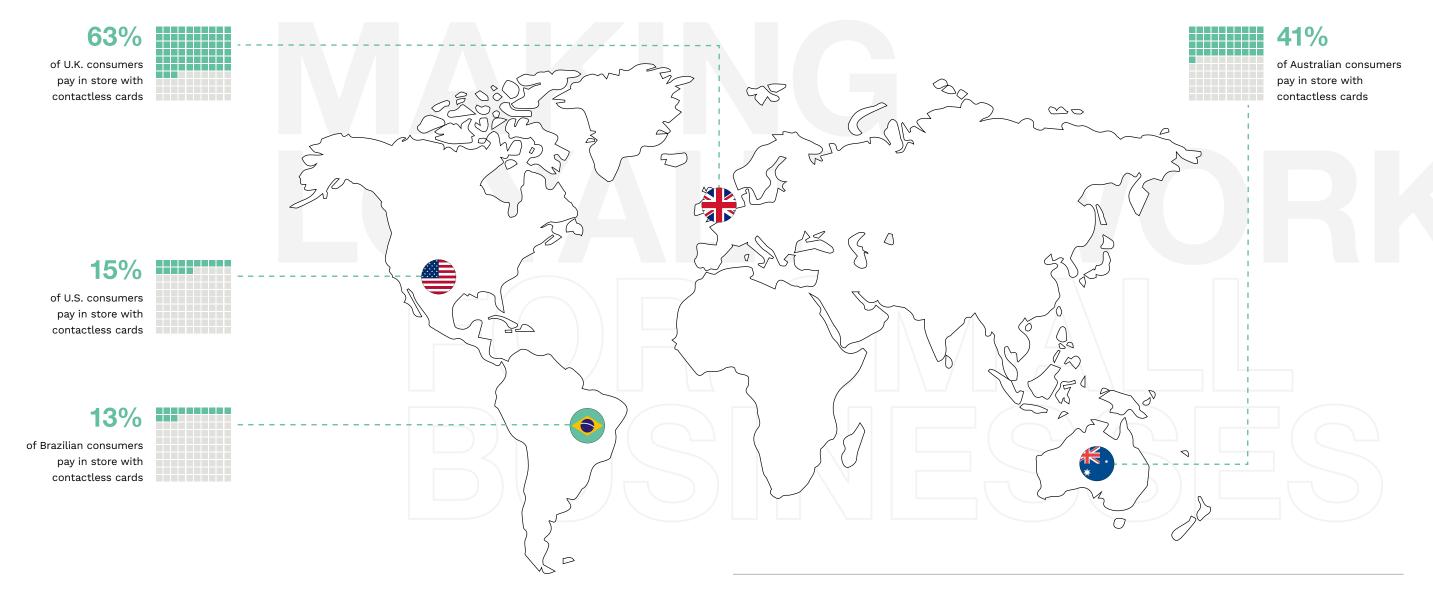
# **CONTACTLESS**

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ne of the distinguishing features that separates U.K. consumers from their counterparts in Australia, Brazil and the U.S. is their use of contactless cards at the brick-and-mortar point of sale. Contactless in-store payments are more common in the U.K. than in any other national market in our study, as 63 percent of all U.K. consumers — roughly 33 million individuals — use them to transact on-site.

The U.K. has long been a world leader in terms of contactless card adoption, and regulations adopted in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic have only accelerated that lead. The Financial Conduct Authority of the U.K. increased the spending limit for contactless transactions from £45 (\$62 USD) to £100 (\$139 USD) in April 2020 to reflect local consumers' increased demand for touchless transactions, and it is poised to increase the spending limit for multiple transactions in the near future.<sup>3</sup> Small and mid-sized businesses in communities across the U.K. therefore need to be conscious of their customers' strong preferences for contactless transactions and ensure that they are providing loyalty and rewards programs with which consumers can engage via their contactless cards.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Author unknown. FCA confirms the increase in thresholds for contactless payments. The Financial Conduct Authority. 2021. https://www.fca.org.uk/news/press-releases/fca-confirms-increase-thresholds-contactless-payments. Accessed June 2021.

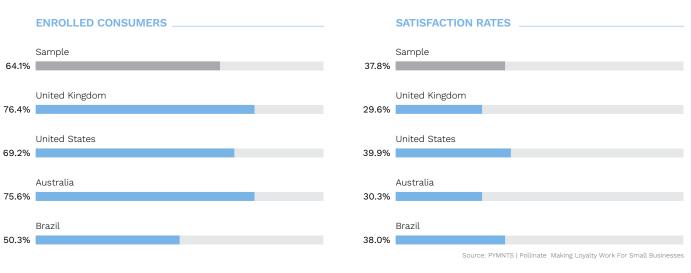


roviding the right loyalty programs can help high street businesses overcome their footfall deficit. The trouble is that many high street businesses' loyalty programs are not up to par with U.K. shoppers' needs and expectations. U.K. consumers are more likely than those in Australia, Brazil and the U.S. to already be enrolled in a loyalty program with at least one of the businesses with which they shop, but they are also the least likely to be satisfied with those programs. Seventy-six percent of all U.K. consumers are enrolled in at least one business's loyalty program, but just 30 percent of them report feeling "very" or "extremely" satisfied with the loyalty and discount offerings of their local high street businesses.

# How satisfied UK consumers are with local businesses' loyalty offerings

FIGURE 3:

Portion of consumers who are "very" or "extremely" satisfied with local businesses' discount and loyalty offerings, by country



U.K. consumers' dissatisfaction with their current loyalty programs may be a blessing in disguise, however. Consumers who are already enrolled in loyalty programs may not be satisfied with the ones they use, but they are far more eager than others to sign up for programs that might be able to deliver the rewards they believe can help encourage them to visit high street shops more often.

I WANT...



"An app rather than a card, special offers for loyalty members [and] points that actually add up to money to spend."

Fifty-two percent of U.K. consumers who use at least one loyalty program say they would be "very" or "extremely" interested in signing up for services that would allow them to receive rewards from their local businesses, as did just 24 percent of those who are not yet enrolled in such a program. Fifty-three percent of U.K. consumers who currently receive special offers from at least one business say they would be "very" or "extremely" interested in receiving rewards and special offers from local businesses. This means that high street shops have a built-in customer base that is on the hunt for optimized loyalty and discount program experiences. It also signals an opportunity for local businesses to capture more consumer spend by improving the loyalty and rewards programs they already have in place.



# How many UK consumers would like to use small businesses' loyalty programs Portion of U.K. consumers who are "very" or "extremely" interested in using loyalty programs and services that provide special offers from small businesses 45.5% Already enrolled 52.3% 53.0% Not enrolled 23.5% Loyalty programs

FIGURE 4:

Special offers

46%

OF U.K. **CONSUMERS** WOULD BE "VERY" **OR "EXTREMELY"** INTERESTED IN USING LOCAL **BUSINESSES'** LOYALTY PROGRAMS.

Capitalizing on this opportunity will require high street businesses to improve their loyalty programs' user experiences by alleviating the frictions that are driving their shoppers away from such programs in the first place.

The two most pressing of these frictions are concerns about not receiving enough value from businesses' rewards programs and worries about the security of consumers' sensitive personal data. Twenty-six percent of U.K. shoppers who express no interest in using local businesses' loyalty and rewards programs say they have no interest primarily because they do not expect the value of such programs to be worth the trouble, and 14 percent say it is primarily because they worry about the security of the data they must share. This is less than what is seen among consumers in Australia, Brazil and the U.S., but is still a greater share than any other factor that U.K. consumers cited.

# Why some UK consumers are uninterested in loyalty and rewards programs

Portion of consumers who cite select factors as their primary reason for lacking interest in using loyalty programs and services that provide special offers from small businesses

# **AVERAGE OF 4 COUNTRIES**



			***	
	United Kingdom	United States	Australia	Brazil
Insufficient size of rewards	26.3%	23.9%	27.9%	26.9%
Security and personal data concerns	14.1%	17.3%	14.8%	30.2%
• Inconvenience of physical loyalty cards	9.6%	15.5%	12.7%	9.0%
• Too complicated to use	13.1%	9.1%	10.5%	11.3%
Avoid tracking purchases	8.9%	11.5%	12.5%	7.6%
• Inconvenient to apply discounts at POS	10.6%	10.0%	8.9%	10.0%
Shop local stores infrequently	11.8%	7.4%	7.3%	2.5%
• Other	5.5%	5.3%	5.3%	2.4%

U.K. businesses will need to simplify the user interfaces of their rewards programs to capitalize on this opportunity. Their customers are more likely than consumers in other nations to not be interested in local loyalty programs because they worry that the programs might be too complicated or because they do not want to have to present paper coupons to earn discounts at the brick-and-mortar point of sale (POS). Thirteen percent and 11 percent of U.K. consumers who are not interested in such programs cite these reasons, respectively. Ten percent say they do not want to carry around paper coupons or cards in their wallets. Providing a digital rewards program can therefore help alleviate two of these common points of concern — but only if its user interface is intuitive enough for consumers to use without needing additional instruction.

I WANT...



"[Programs that are] easy to use. [It] needs to be an app that works everywhere."

14%

OF CONSUMERS WHO ARE NOT INTERESTED IN LOYALTY PROGRAMS SAY IT IS BECAUSE THEY HAVE **CONCERNS ABOUT** THFIR PERSONAL **DATA SECURITY.** 

Source: PYMNTS | Pollinate Making Loyalty Work For Small Busines:

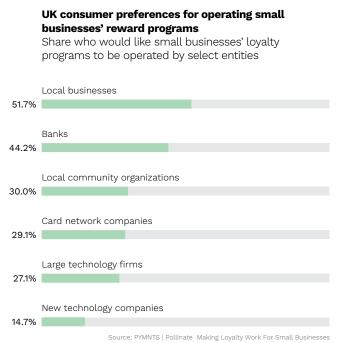


he small and mid-sized high street businesses throughout the U.K. can benefit from adopting digital-first, easy-to-use loyalty and discount offerings, but they are often ill-equipped to provide the loyalty and discount programs that their customers want. Many lack the technological and financial resources needed to build such systems from scratch, and their customers rarely trust them to collect and use their transactional data even if they do.

FIGURE 5:



I am actually interested in purchasing."



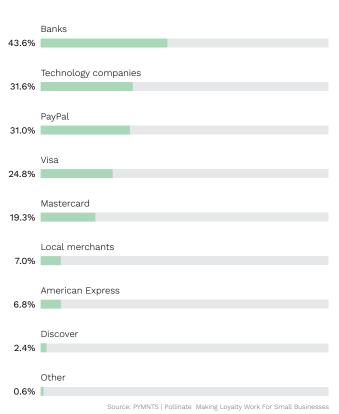
U.K. consumers like the idea of having local businesses operate their own loyalty and rewards programs in theory. Fifty-two percent cite local businesses as the entities they would prefer to operate local loyalty and rewards programs. This is more than the share that say they would like any other entity to operate such programs, including banks, card networks, large technology companies and other organizations.

As appealing as it may sound to have local businesses operate their own loyalty and discount programs, the strong majority of U.K. consumers simply do not trust high street businesses with their personal data. Consumers in the U.K. are even less likely than those in Australia, Brazil and the U.S. to trust local businesses with their personal data. Only 7 percent of all U.K. consumers say they would trust the businesses in their local commercial districts to manage their transactional data. Closing this so-called "trust gap" is therefore essential for local businesses across the U.K. looking to boost their footfall.

#### FIGURE 6:

# Which entities consumers would trust to manage their transactional data

Portion of consumers who would trust select institutions with their transactional data



44%

OF U.K.
CONSUMERS
TRUST BANKS TO
MANAGE THEIR
PERSONAL DATA —
MORE THAN
THEY TRUST ANY
OTHER TYPE OF
ORGANIZATION.



Small and mid-sized U.K. businesses would have more success engaging consumers using rewards programs that the financial institutions in Canary Wharf operate than they would using programs operated from the high street. U.K. consumers trust banks more than they trust any other type of institution to handle their transactional data, with 44 percent — roughly 23 million individuals — saying they would trust banks with their transactional data. This means that local businesses can potentially attract more than six times as many potential customers by offering bank-enabled loyalty programs than by offering programs they own and operate themselves.

# CONGLUSION

# MAKING LOYALTY WORK FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

onsumers in the U.K. are on a mission. They want to support the businesses they see not only as central to their communities' economic well-beings but also as critical to the broader goal of environmental conservation. High street businesses therefore have a massive pool of consumers from which to draw new potential customers, and providing incentives in the form of digital loyalty programs and discount offerings can help. The trick is implementing loyalty and rewards programs that speak to U.K. shoppers' demands for convenient usage while also tapping the banks and card networks they trust to help them feel confident in their data security.

# METHODOLOGY

YMNTS conducted a survey of a census-balanced panel of 1,115 U.K. consumers between Feb. 25 and March 5 to learn about their enrollment and interest in using loyalty programs while shopping with the small and mid-sized retailers in their communities. Respondents were 47 years old on average, 51 percent were female, 29 percent had obtained at least a bachelor's degree and 11 percent earned more than £55,000 (\$76,365 USD) in annual income. This data was collected as part of our larger, 4,519-consumer study into individuals' interest in and usage of loyalty and discount programs across Australia, Brazil, the U.K. and the U.S. The Making Loyalty Work For Small Businesses Playbook: United Kingdom Edition details the results of our research.

**PYMNTS.com** is where the best minds and the best content meet on the web to learn about "What's Next" in payments and commerce. Our interactive platform is reinventing the way in which companies in payments share relevant information about the initiatives that shape the future of this dynamic sector and make news. Our data and analytics team includes economists, data scientists and industry analysts who work with companies to measure and quantify the innovation that is at the cutting edge of this new world.

# % pollinate

Founded in 2017, Pollinate is a global business headquartered in London. It works with leading banks around the world, including NatWest Group (powering Tyl by NatWest) and National Australia Bank, offering a modern, cloud-based toolkit for SMBs. Agnostic to underlying infrastructure, the platform takes data feeds from any bank and from third-party systems. It gives merchants a single place to understand, manage and grow their businesses and is built with bank-grade privacy and security at its heart.

We are interested in your feedback on this report. If you have questions, comments or would like to subscribe, please email us at feedback@pymnts.com.

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