

How Consumers Want to Live In the Voice Economy, a PYMNTS publication, examines consumers' views and attitudes toward voice technology. We surveyed 2,939 consumers in the United States to learn how they use voice today, the friction they face and what they expect from voice technology in the future. The survey was conducted from March 6 to March 30.



PYMNTS

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HOW CONSUMERS WANT TO LIVE IN THE **VOICE ECONOMY**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	03
PART I: The Potential of Voice	06
PART II: How Consumers Use Voice Today	14
PART III: The Future of Voice	18
Conclusion	22
Methodology	24

INTRODUCTION

Smart and mobile devices have defined this era of consumer technology, but touchscreen interfaces generally limit these tools. Using such a device often takes up both hands and necessitates keeping the device close at all times, which can be inconvenient or even dangerous in some circumstances, as any driver knows.

The next frontier is approaching, however, and nearly two-thirds of Americans have already used this up-and-coming technology in the past year. This advancement, of course, is voice technology.

Consumers want to make everyday routines smart, simple and more connected, and hands-free voice technologies can fit the bill. Consumers can already use voice technology to find information, identify themselves via voice assistant or find and book airline tickets, among other possibilities. Consumers performed an average of six tasks via voice in the last 12 months.

The main drivers behind voice technology adoption are speed and convenience. While 63% of consumers say they would use voice if it were as capable as a person, 58% would use voice because it is easier and more convenient and 54% because it is faster than typing or using a touchscreen. These considerations are not trifling, either: Nearly half of consumers would use reliable voice technology to assist in case of an emergency

or unexpected event, for instance. More than 60% of consumers say voice assistants will be as smart and reliable as real people, and close to half say this vision is less than five years away, with many willing to pay for such a service.

Despite this rosy outlook, our research also finds that United States consumers are selective about the role voice technology plays in their lives. We discerned four distinct types of consumers based on their relationship to voice technology. Voice evaders have not used voice for any task in the past year; voice beginners have performed an average of three tasks using voice in that span; voice adapters average approximately eight; and voice pioneers used the nascent technology for an average of 22 tasks in the last year.

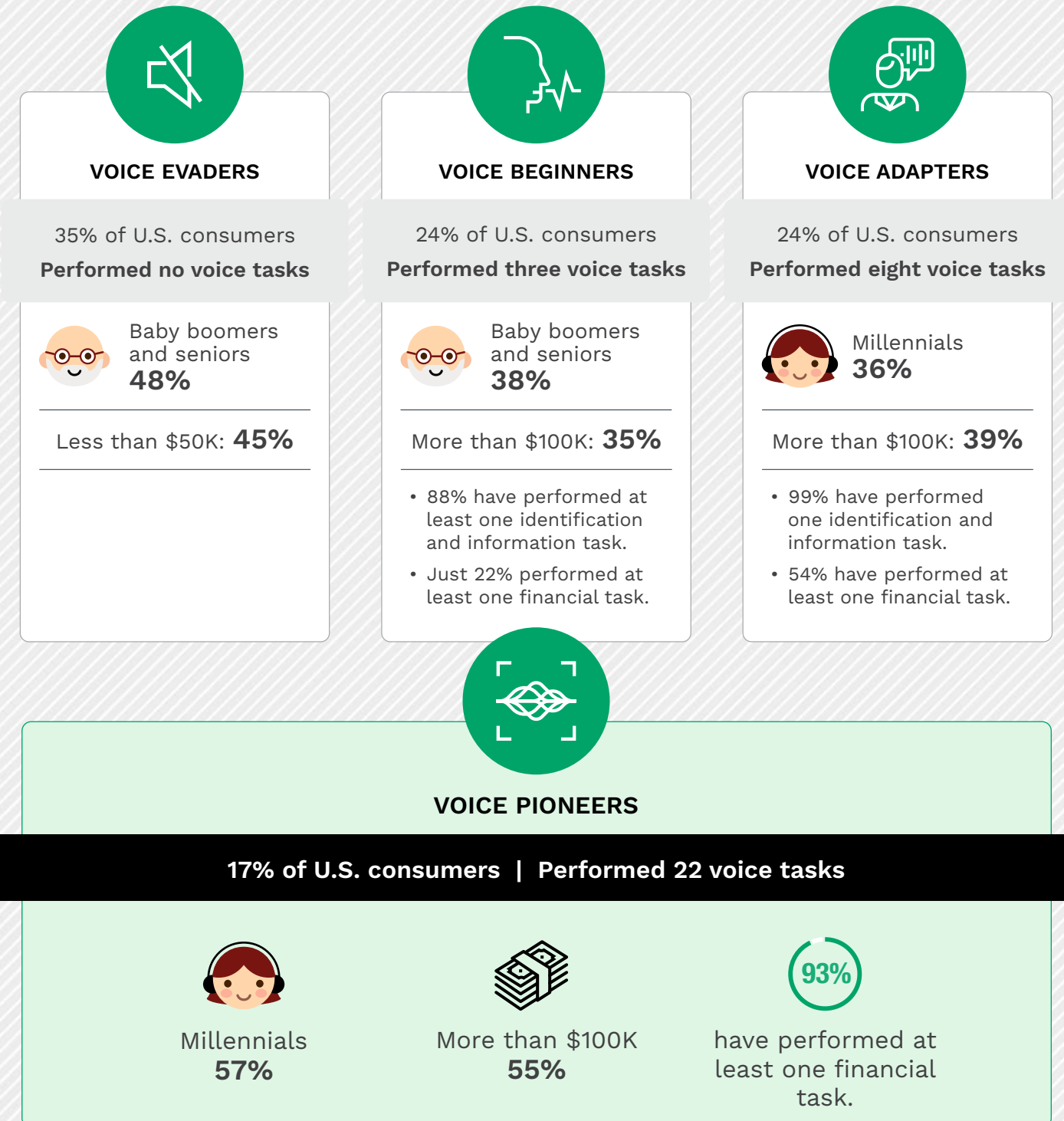
Most consumers are not ready to adopt voice just yet, as barely one in 10 consumers believe voice technology is as smart and reliable as a human today. Voice is still device-driven and used mainly for simple tasks, a reality that suggests building trust in the accuracy and security of voice-assisted transactions remains a key challenge to driving voice adoption and making it ubiquitous across all commerce channels.

How Consumers Want to Live In the Voice Economy, a PYMNTS publication, explores consumers' views and attitudes toward voice technology. We surveyed 2,939 U.S. consumers to learn how they use voice today, the friction they face and what they expect from voice technology in the future. The survey was conducted from March 6 to March 30.

This is what we learned.

VOICE USER PERSONAS

PYMNTS' research classified U.S. consumers into four personas based on their comfort level with and use of voice technology in the last year.



PART I: THE POTENTIAL OF VOICE

More than 60% of Americans trust that voice assistants will one day be as smart and reliable as real people.

Consumers say this vision is less than five years away — and many will pay subscription fees for services of this caliber.

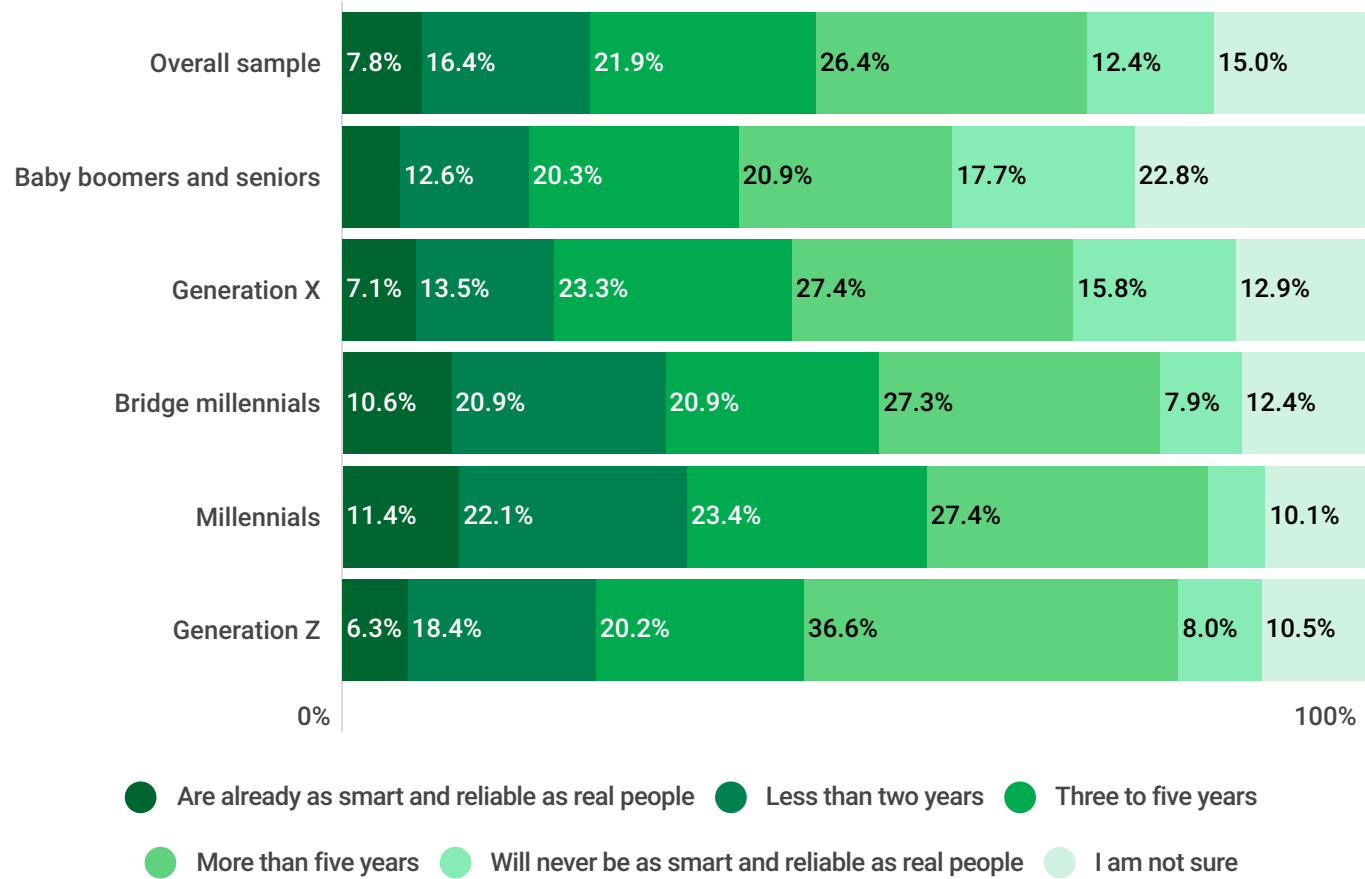
Consumers are not just interested in voice assistants as a shortcut for speed and convenience. In a development similar to consumers' fascination with the “humanness” of ChatGPT and other AI technologies, many believe that voice technology will become as smart and reliable as real people — sooner rather than later. According to PYMNTS' data, 61% of U.S. consumers say that voice assistants will become as smart and reliable as human assistants, with 46% of all consumers believing it will happen within five years.

Millennials are the most optimistic, with 57% saying voice technology will be as smart and reliable as real people in less than five years and 11% believe this technology is already there. Baby boomers and seniors are more skeptical, with 18% thinking it will never get there.

Optimism for a technology is one thing; being willing to pay for the privilege of using it is another. Because of this, it is significant that more than one-quarter, or 28%, of Americans are very or extremely willing to pay a monthly fee for a reliable and smart voice assistant. Among millennials, 43% are very or extremely willing to pay more than \$10 a month, compared to just 5.8% of baby boomers and seniors. Thirty-one percent of high-income consumers are very or extremely willing to pay more than \$10 a month. As expected, consumers with less income are less willing to commit to such an expense, with 19% of middle-income consumers and 14% of those in the lowest income bracket willing to do so.

Figure 1
When will voice technology be as good as speaking to a human?

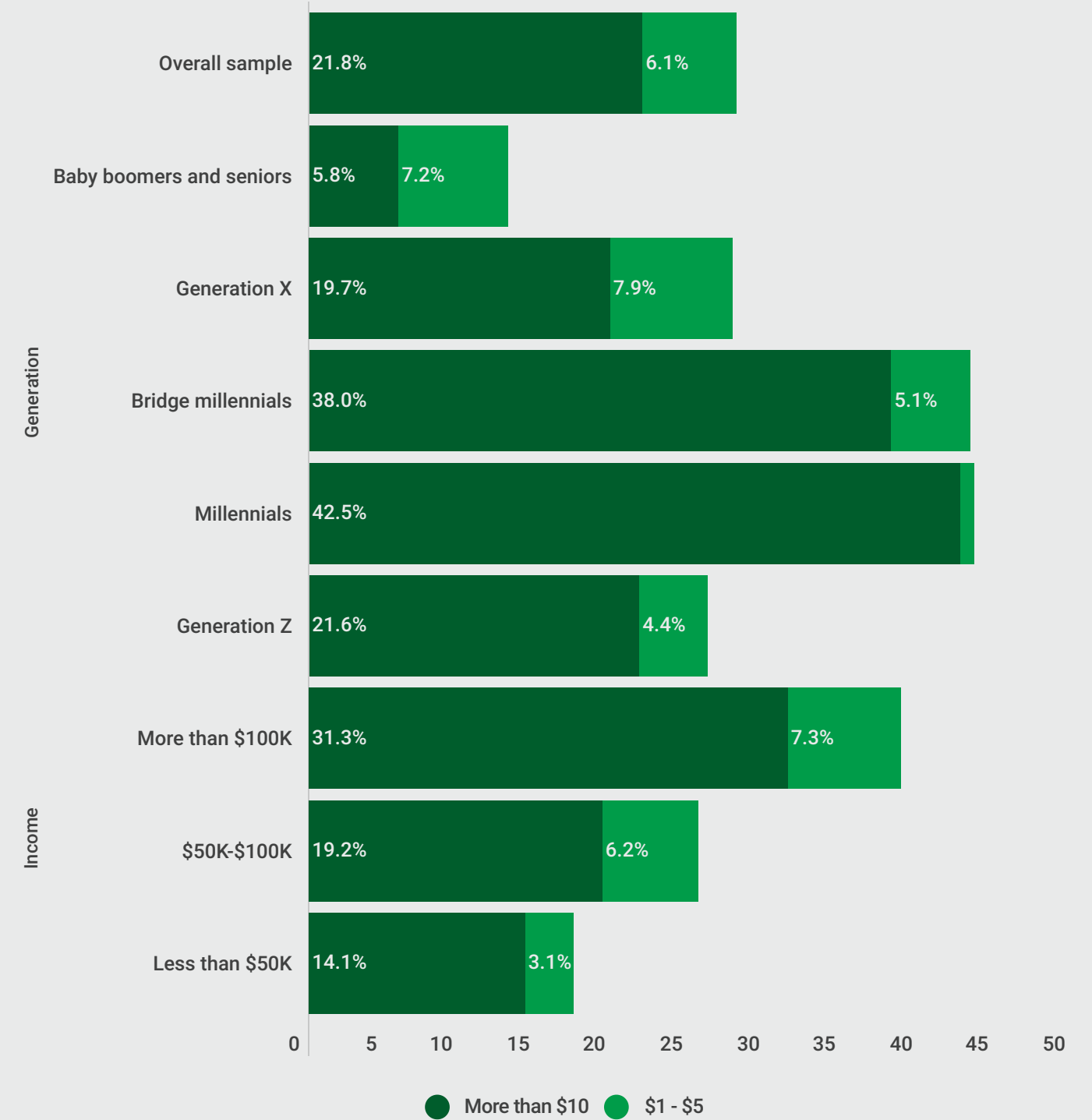
Share of consumers who believe it will take a select amount of time before voice technology reaches the point that voice assistants are as smart and reliable as real people and can assist with daily tasks and activities



Source: PYMNTS
 How Consumers Want to Live in the Voice Economy, April 2023
 N = 2,939: Complete responses, fielded March 6, 2023 – March 30, 2023

Figure 2
Consumers' interest in paying for voice tech

Share of consumers who would be very or extremely willing to pay select monthly fees to use a voice assistant that is as smart and reliable as a real person



Source: PYMNTS
 How Consumers Want to Live in the Voice Economy, April 2023
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PART I: THE POTENTIAL OF VOICE

Consumers think using voice technology will save them time and be more convenient.

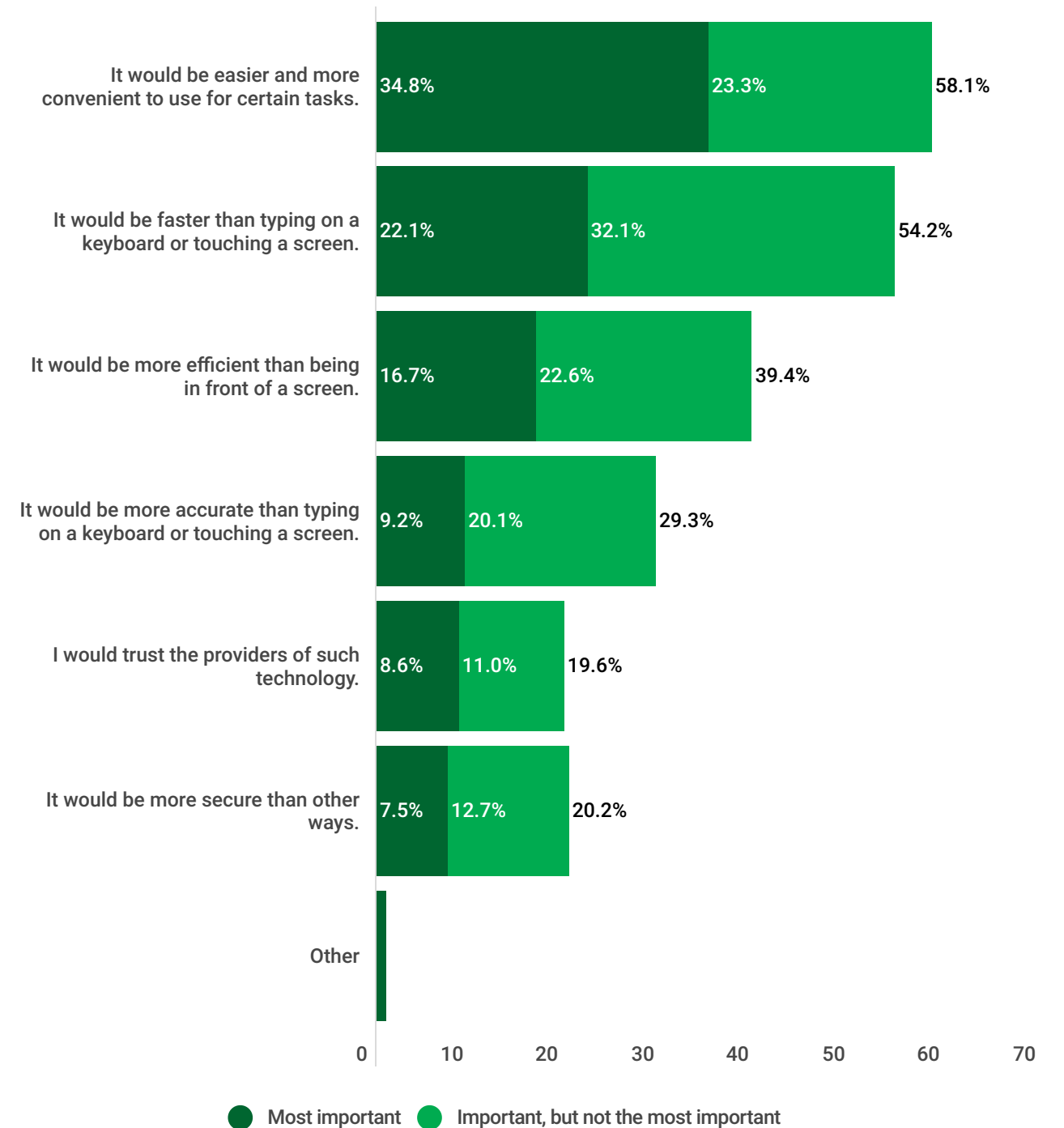
Consumers' lead reasons for preferring voice technology instead of other methods were the ability to complete tasks faster, easier and more efficiently. Among all consumers, 58% would use voice because it is easier and more convenient, while 54% would use it because it is faster than typing or using a touchscreen. Twenty percent of consumers say they would prefer voice mainly because it is more secure.

Because convenience and time savings are so crucial to the value-add for consumers, a key aspect of voice technology is its accuracy and sophistication. Data suggests that consumers will likely get on board once using voice technology feels less like talking to a computer and more like naturally conversing with a person. Our data finds that 63% of consumers would prefer voice technology as smart and reliable as a person to perform select tasks instead of other methods of using a connected device. Voice technology is more likely to entice critical consumer demographics: 73% of millennial consumers and 68% of those with high incomes would prefer voice technology as smart and reliable as a person to perform select tasks instead of other methods of using a connected device.

Figure 3

Voice technology's benefits

Share of consumers who would prefer voice technology in the future, assuming it is as smart and reliable as a person, for select reasons



Source: PYMNTS

How Consumers Want to Live in the Voice Economy, April 2023

N = 1,772: Consumers who are at least somewhat likely to prefer smart and reliable voice technology to perform certain tasks over other methods of using a connected device, fielded March 6, 2023 – March 30, 2023

PART I: THE POTENTIAL OF VOICE

Consumers believe voice can make everyday routines and emergencies or unexpected events smart, simple and more connected.

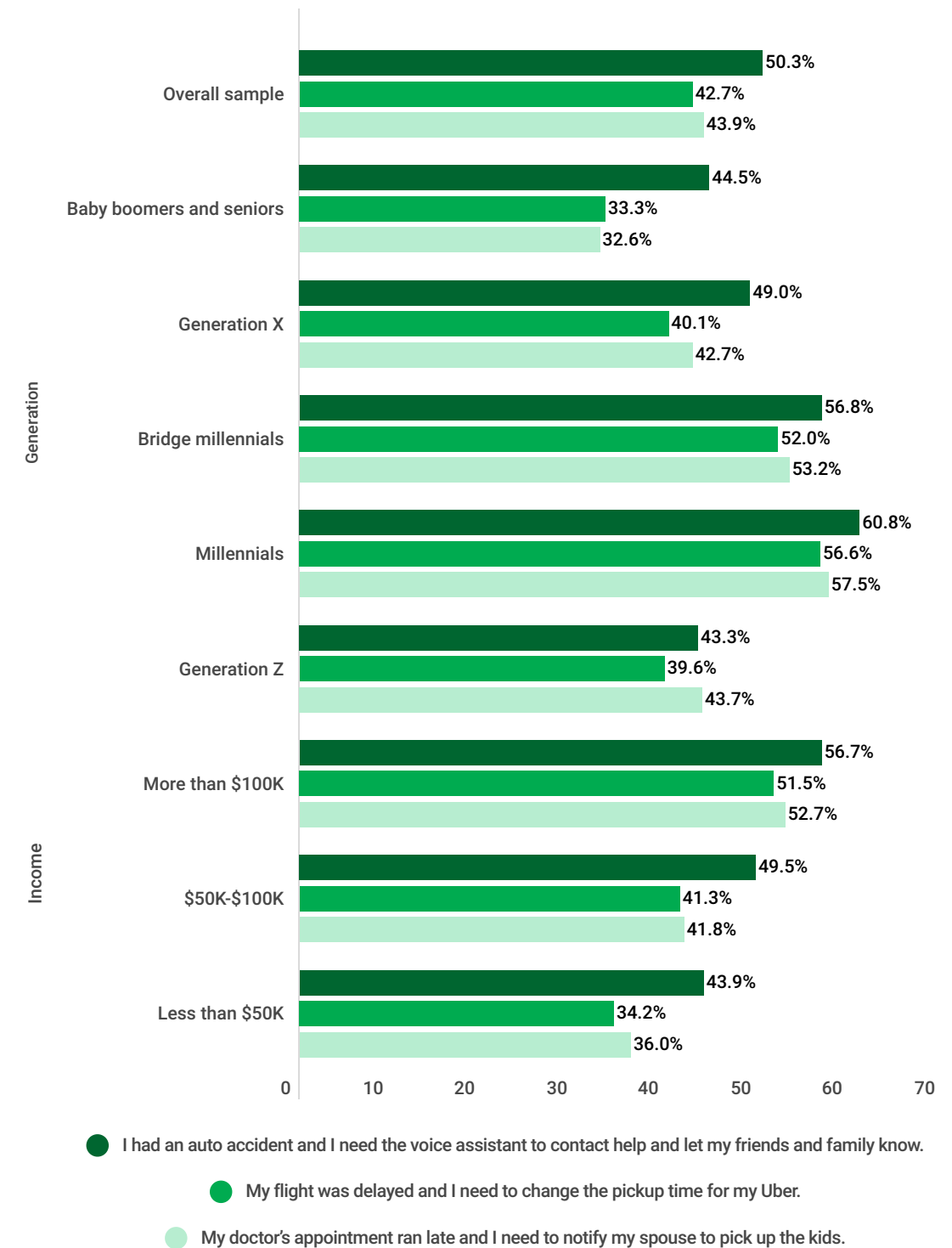
If PYMNTS' research is any indication, smart and reliable voice technology has the potential to assist throughout consumers' everyday lives — even in the case of emergencies and unexpected events. More than 46% of consumers would use reliable voice technology to manage the ripple effects of such an instance.

For instance, half of consumers would use voice if they had an auto accident and needed to call for help. Another 43% would use it if their flight was delayed and they needed to change their Uber pickup time.

Again, millennials are the most likely to say they would rely on a voice assistant to assist in these unexpected situations. Most high-income consumers said they would use voice if they had an auto accident, at 57%, or if their flight was delayed, at 52%.

Figure 4
Voice technologies and unexpected events

Share of consumers who are likely to have smart and reliable voice technology assist in adjusting to the following unexpected events



Source: PYMNTS
How Consumers Want to Live in the Voice Economy, April 2023
N = 2,939: Complete responses, fielded March 6, 2023 – March 30, 2023

PART II: HOW CONSUMERS USE VOICE TODAY

Two-thirds of consumers already use voice; they perform an average of six different tasks with the technology — and millennials complete nearly twice as many.

Voice technology is predominantly device-based at this point. Still, some consumers exclusively use a voice command system when prompted by a call center or bank. Our data finds that in the last 12 months, 65% of all consumers used voice technology.

Bridge millennials are the most likely generation to have used voice technology on their devices, with 74% doing so in the past year and just 3.3% using a voice command system when prompted by a call center or bank. In contrast, 43% of baby boomers and seniors used voice technology on their devices, whereas 9.9% used a voice command system when prompted by a call center or bank.

PYMNTS' research also finds that 39% of consumers have used voice technology built into their smartphones, 25% have used a voice-enabled app on a mobile device and 15% have used the voice capabilities built into their cars. Twenty-seven percent of consumers have used a voice-activated device, such as a speaker.

On average, Americans have performed six out of 35 different tasks we tested using voice technology in the last 12 months. Millennials have completed 11, nearly twice as many as the average and four times more than baby boomers and seniors.

Across the board, consumers are most likely to have completed identification and informational tasks, such as asking for directions via a map app. On average, consumers have completed three identification and informational tasks in the last 12 months, while millennials completed four and baby boomers and seniors completed just one. Millennials are also the most likely to complete tasks in the financial, shopping/paying and around the house realms, while baby boomers and seniors are the least likely.

COMMON VOICE TASKS

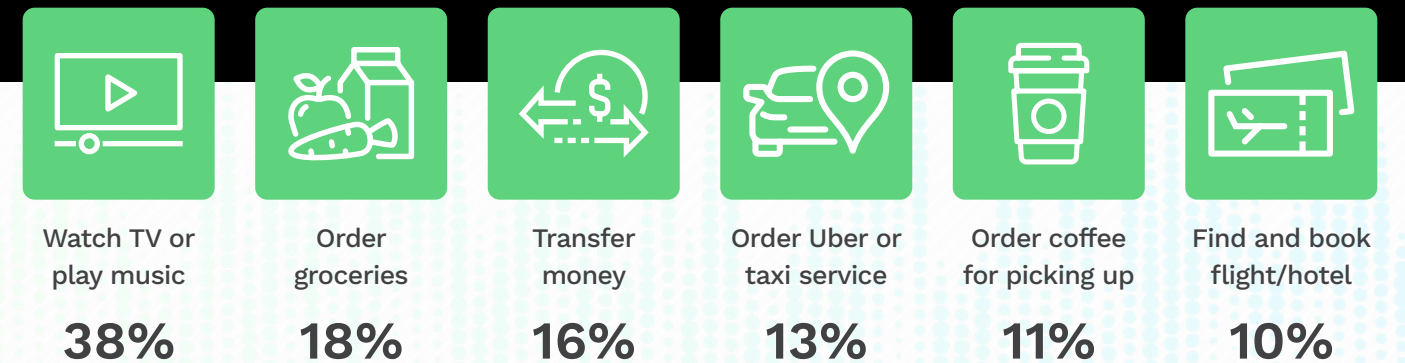
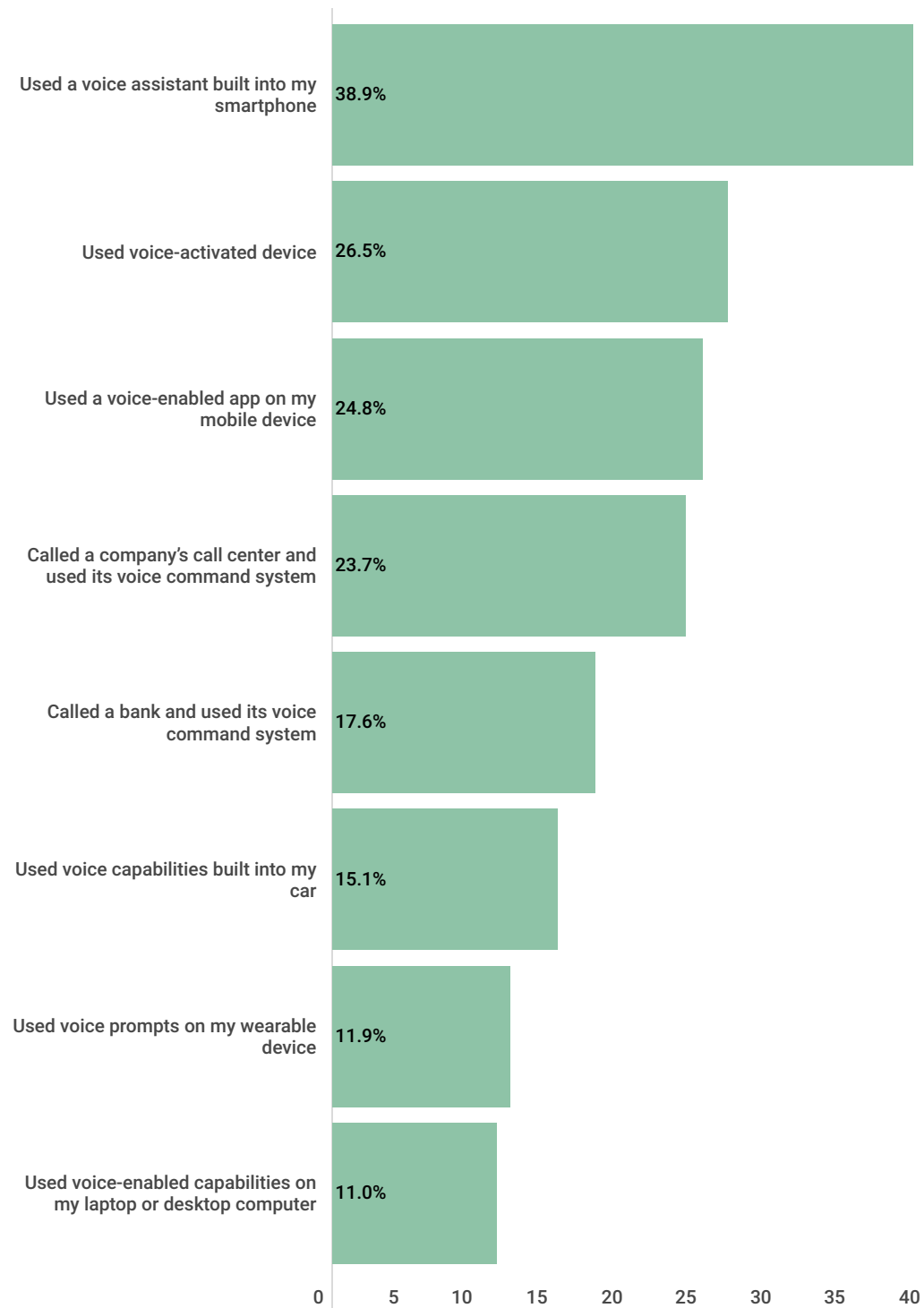


Figure 5
How consumers have already used voice technology

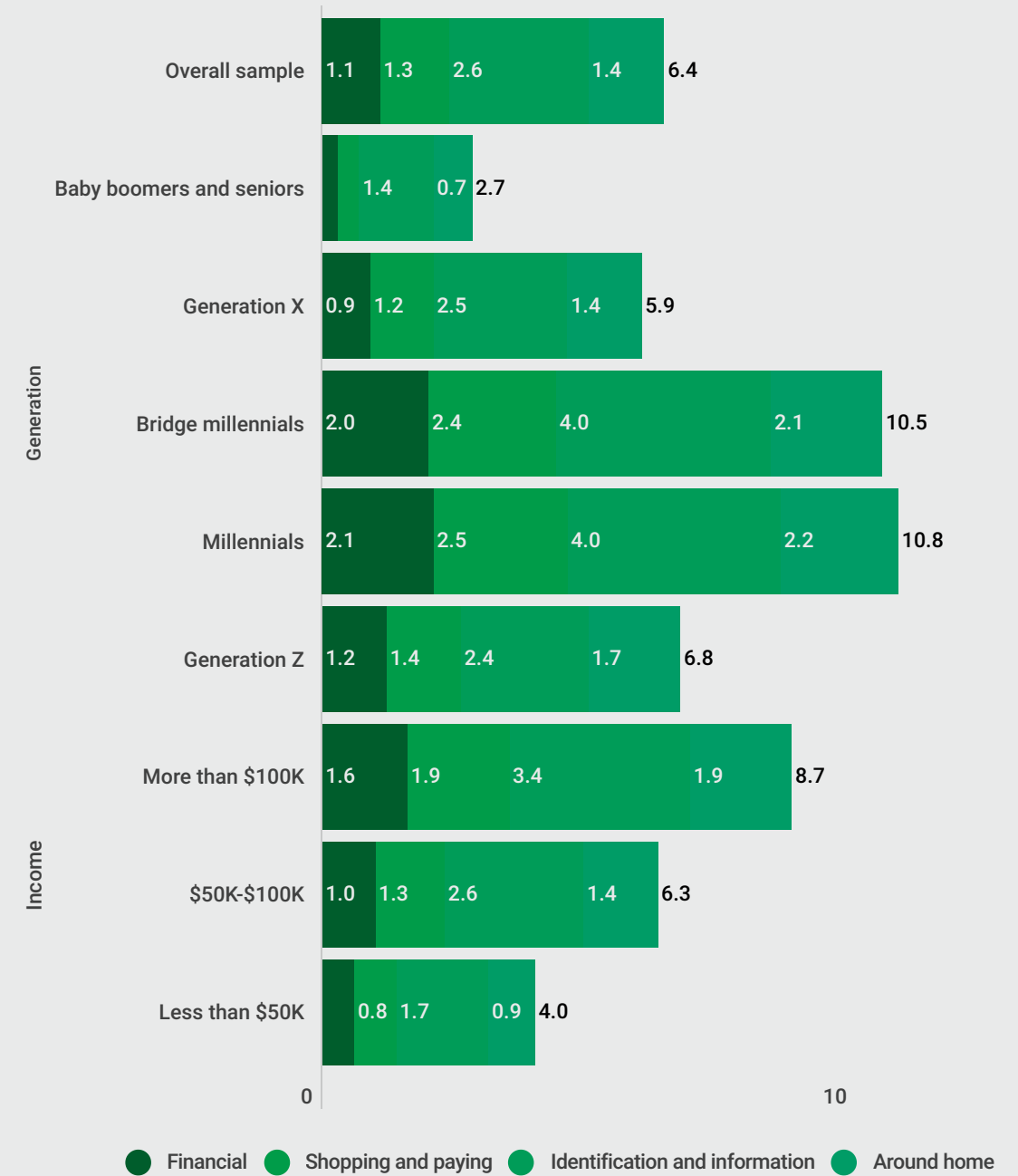
Share of consumers who have used voice technology in select ways over the last 12 months



Source: PYMNTS
 How Consumers Want to Live in the Voice Economy, April 2023
 N = 2,939: Complete responses, fielded March 6, 2023 – March 30, 2023

Figure 6
Tasks consumers are performing with voice

Average number of tasks consumers have performed using voice technology over the last 12 months, by demographic



Source: PYMNTS
 How Consumers Want to Live in the Voice Economy, April 2023
 N = 2,939: Complete responses, fielded March 6, 2023 – March 30, 2023

PART III: THE FUTURE OF VOICE

Consumers do not have a great experience with voice today: Barely one in 10 consumers believe voice technology is as reliable as a human.

Despite consumers' belief in voice technologies' potential, PYMNTS' research finds that just 7.8% of consumers believe voice technology is as smart and reliable as a real person today. This can also be seen in the reality that voice is currently device-driven and used mainly for simple tasks. For instance, 52% of consumers have used voice to identify and purchase airline tickets and accommodations on their mobile devices and did so by using a voice prompt to make a call. Just 44% completed the purchase using voice prompts.

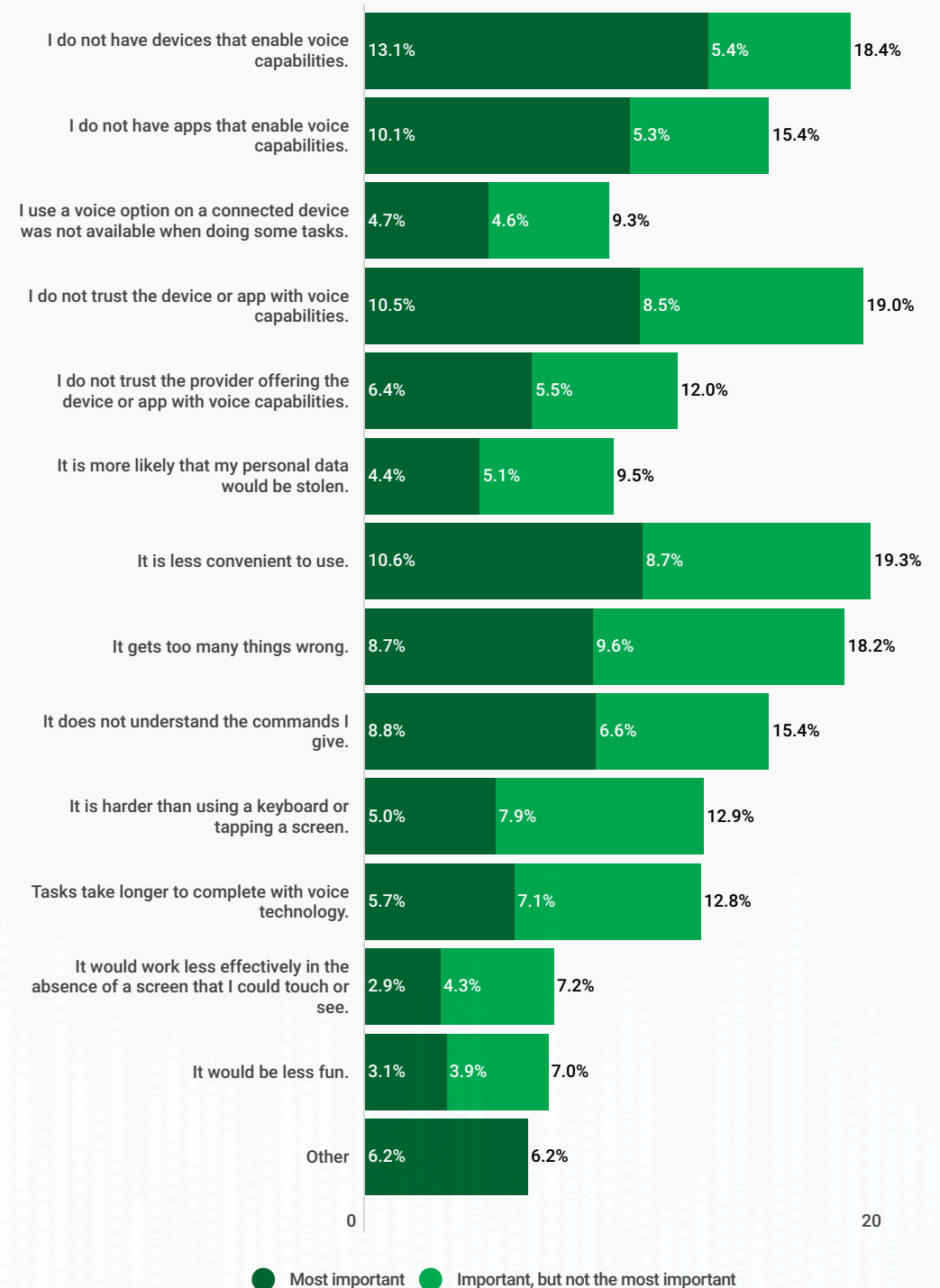
Our data finds that voice evaders perceive a variety of deterrents to using voice. In particular, a lack of ease of use and convenience prevent half of these consumers from using voice technology. The top claimed issues among voice evaders are that voice technology is less convenient to use and that voice-assisted devices get things wrong, cited by 19% and 18%, respectively.

Other issues include a lack of accessibility and a lack of trust. Approximately 18% of voice evaders said that the lack of availability of voice-enabled devices and applications keeps them from using voice technology. Another 19% consider security issues the most important reason for not using voice. For instance, 19% of these consumers say lack of trust in their device or application is an important reason, with 11% saying it is the most important reason.

Figure 7

Reasons voice evaders do not use voice technology

Share of voice evaders who did not use voice technology on connected devices over the last 12 months for select reasons



Source: PYMNTS

How Consumers Want to Live in the Voice Economy, April 2023

N = 1,195: Consumers who have not used voice technology or only used a voice command system over the last 12 months, fielded March 6, 2023 - March 30, 2023

PART III: THE FUTURE OF VOICE

Voice adoption hinges on trust and consumers' comfort in navigating the voice risk/complexity continuum.

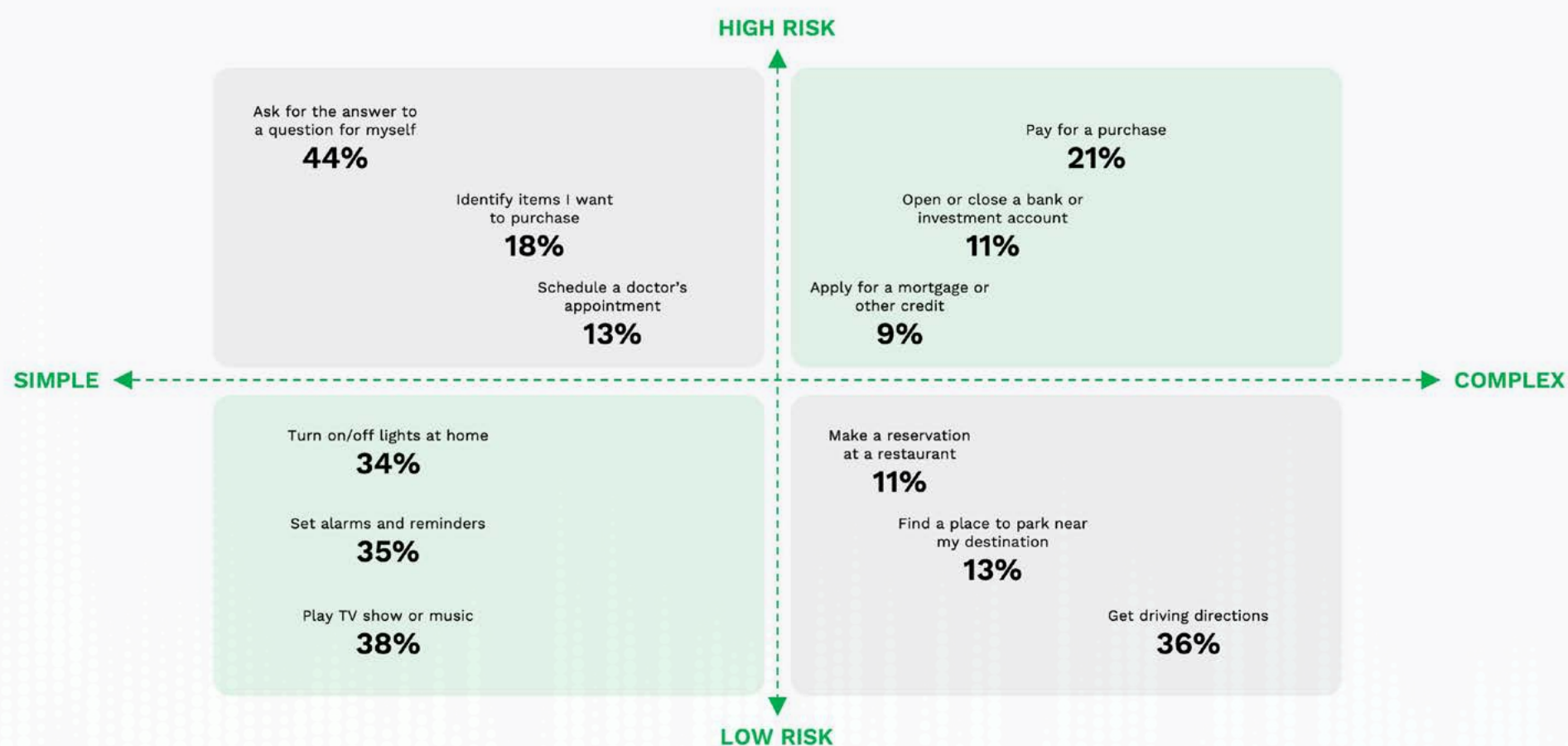
Unsurprisingly, the adoption of voice technology is uneven as consumers aim to balance convenience with trust, especially as more complex tasks often require providing personal and financial information.

For instance, our data finds that consumers are more familiar with using voice for simpler and low-risk tasks such as playing music, at 38%, setting alarms, at 35%, and asking for directions, at 36%. Consumers are less comfortable with riskier, if not necessarily more complex tasks, where they may be exposed to particularly damaging data errors and security breaches, such as opening a bank account, at 11%, or scheduling a doctor's appointment, at 13%. In the long term, the expectation is that as voice technology advances, consumers will trust it to complete more complex tasks with less risk.

Figure 8

The voice risk/complexity continuum

Share of consumers who complete various voice tasks, by risk and complexity



Source: PYMNTS

How Consumers Want to Live in the Voice Economy, April 2023

N = 2,939: Complete responses, fielded March 6, 2023 - March 30, 2023

CONCLUSION

With the ubiquity of mobile devices, many consumers currently use voice technology primarily for simple tasks such as getting information, while more sophisticated consumers use voice to set up medical appointments or engage in financial transactions. Trust in the accuracy and security of doing such tasks with voice remains a barrier for many to use voice technology. Even so, consumers expect voice assistants to be on par with humans in less than five years — especially millennials and high-income consumers who tend to set technological trends. As voice can be significantly faster and more convenient than manual transactions, its technologies also have the potential to streamline communications, especially in the case of emergencies and unplanned events in which time is of the essence. Such intelligence and functionality will continue to improve, and consumers will pay for it once it hits a threshold of reliability. Businesses that keep abreast of these developments and invest right as voice technology reaches that level of quality will be best positioned to succeed in the future, where voice technology may become as common as the smartphone touchscreen.

METHODOLOGY



How Consumers Want to Live In the Voice Economy, a PYMNTS publication, examines consumers' views and attitudes toward voice technology. We surveyed 2,939 consumers in the United States to learn how they use voice today, the friction they face and what they expect from voice technology in the future. The survey was conducted from March 6 to March 30. Our sample was balanced to match the U.S. adult population in a set of key demographic variables: 51% of respondents identified as female, 32% were college-educated and 37% declared incomes of more than \$100,000 per year.

HOW CONSUMERS WANT TO LIVE IN THE VOICE ECONOMY

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