The Harris Poll TIAA Institute

From curiosity to action:

Who uses and trusts AI for retirement planning and what happens next?

Quirk’s NYC – July 2026

AI has reached consumers faster than any prior mass technology. That creates a new challenge for retirement brands:

People are **using it before they fully understand the financial decisions they're asking it to support.**

Technology	Era	Time to reach consumers
Telephone	1870s-1880s	50 years
Radio	1920s	10 years
Television	Late 1940s	9 years
Computer	Early 1980s	18 years
Internet	Mid 1990s	9 years
Smartphone	2007	8 years
Generative AI	2022	3 years

What we'll explore

About this research

- An online survey of 1,000 U.S. residents who are not yet fully retired
- Conducted February 12th-27th 2026
- 15-minute questionnaire
- Respondents were nationally representative of the pre-retirement adult population

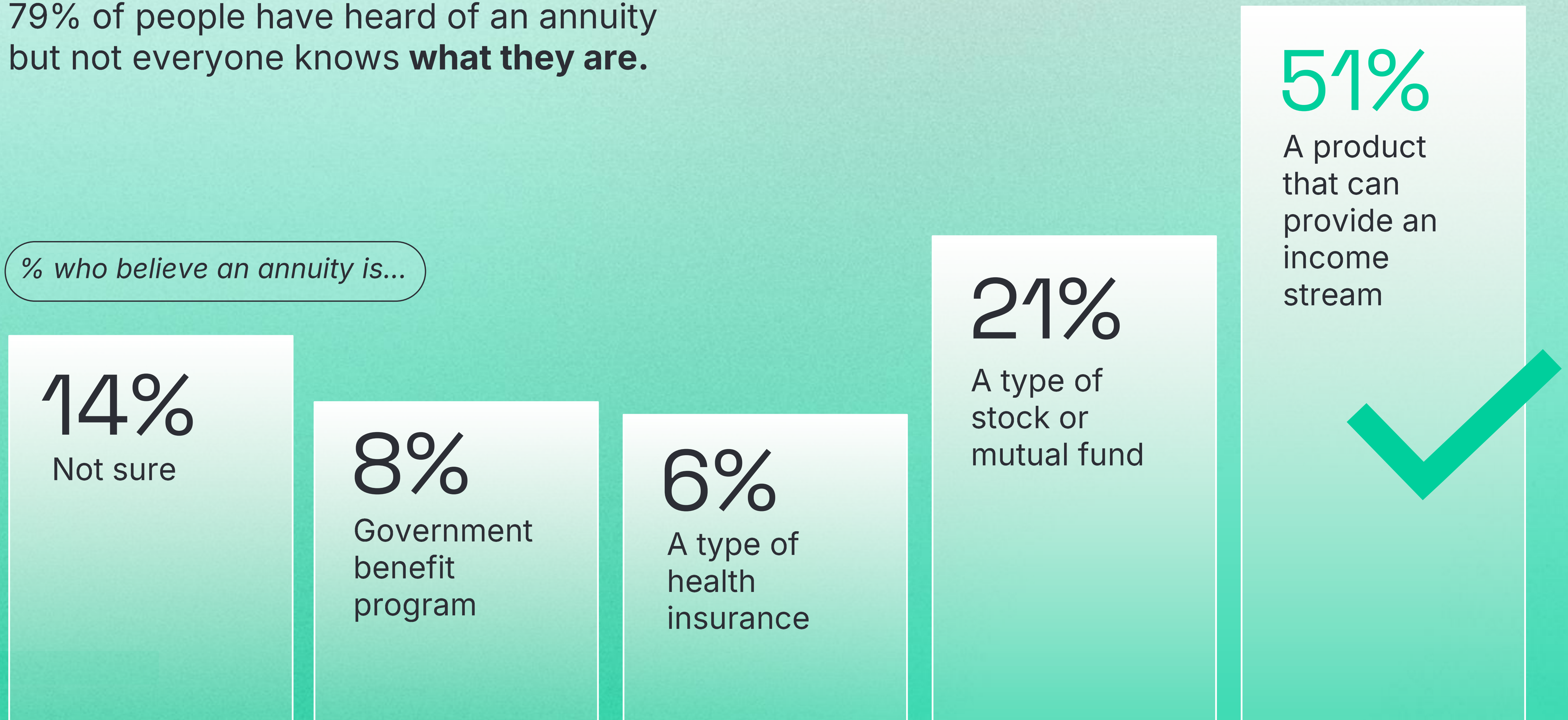
169	Boomers +
307	Gen X
369	Millennials
155	Gen Z

01

Retirement Knowledge Gaps

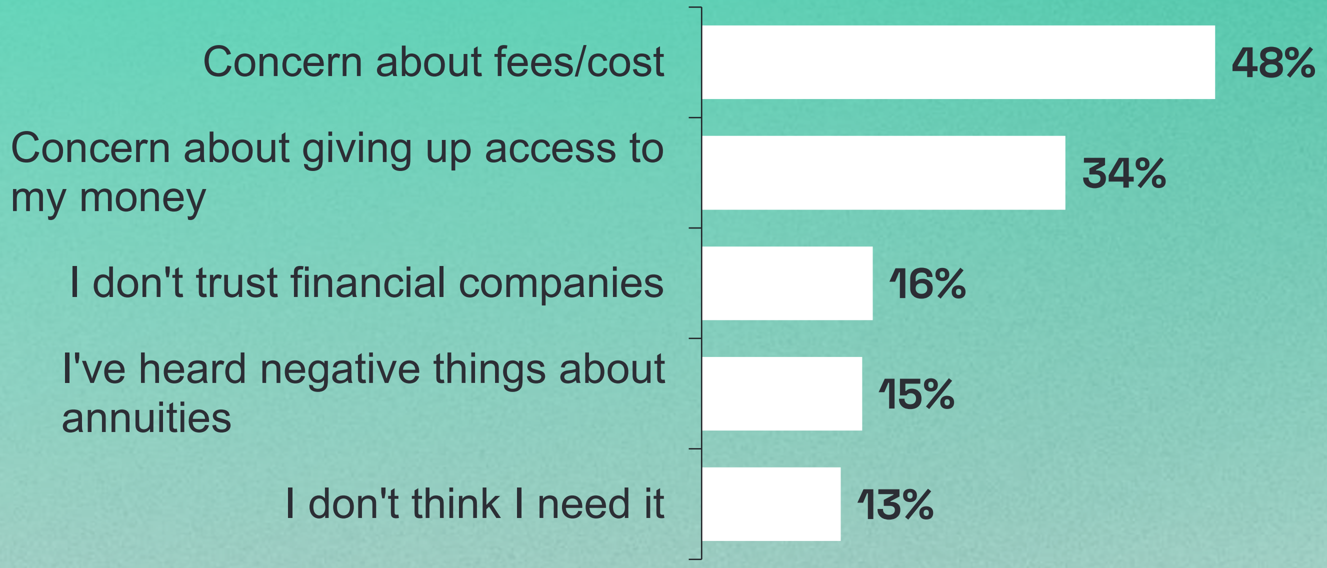
Annuities are familiar, but not fully understood

79% of people have heard of an annuity but not everyone knows **what they are.**



32% Don’t understand how guaranteed income works

The Concerns:



Trade-offs for income security need to be made clear.

Base: Total (n=1,000)

Target date funds represent another investor education opportunity.

% who think a target date fund is…

33%
Is identical to one another if they have the same target year.

39%
Guarantees that you won't lose money

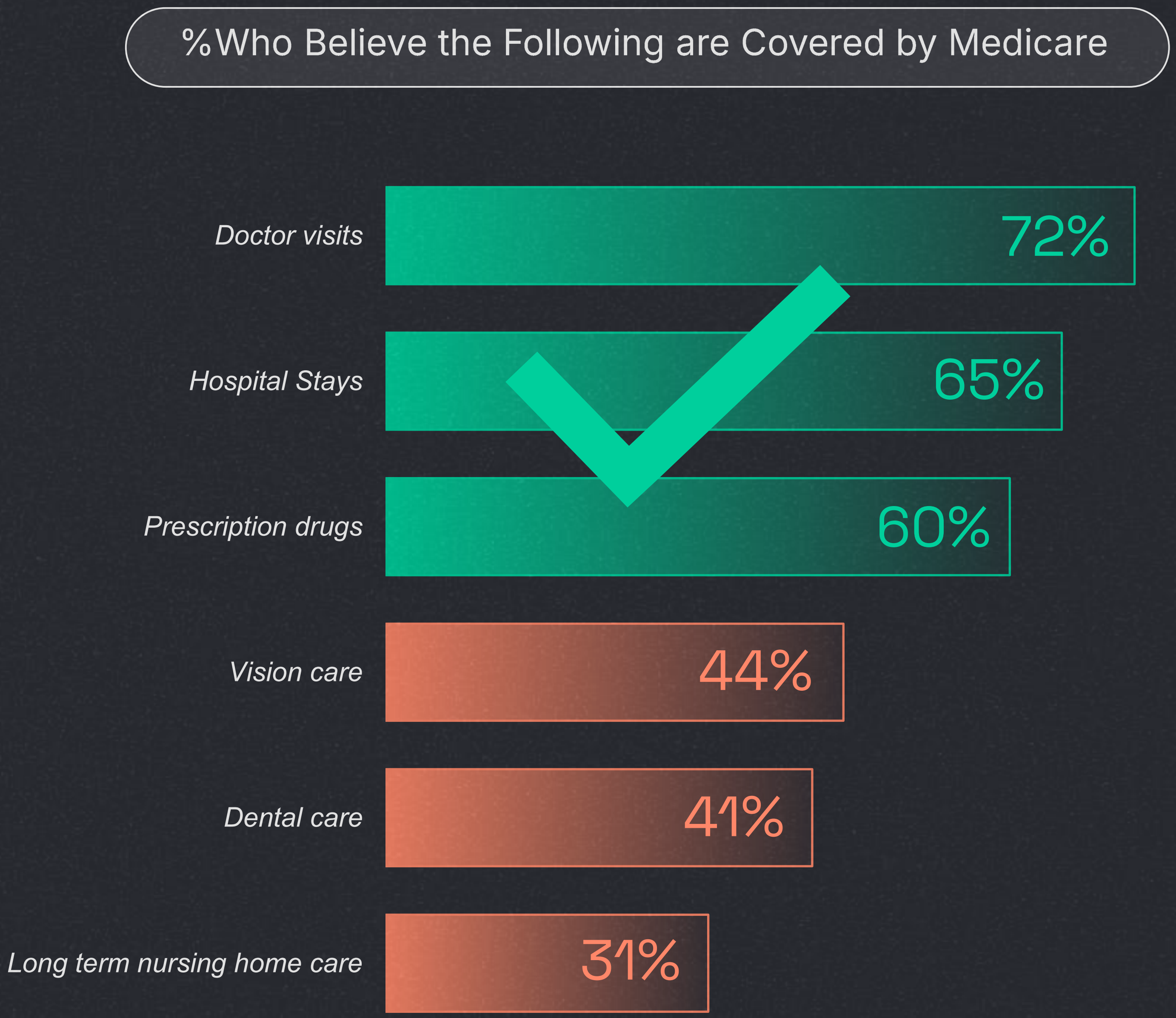
62%
Provides a minimum level of income when you retire

72%
Involves a target year based on when an investor expects to retire

73%
Adjusts the mix of investments over time as the target year approaches

Confidence outpaces accuracy on retirement healthcare costs.

66% of people are **confident** they understand what Medicare covers.



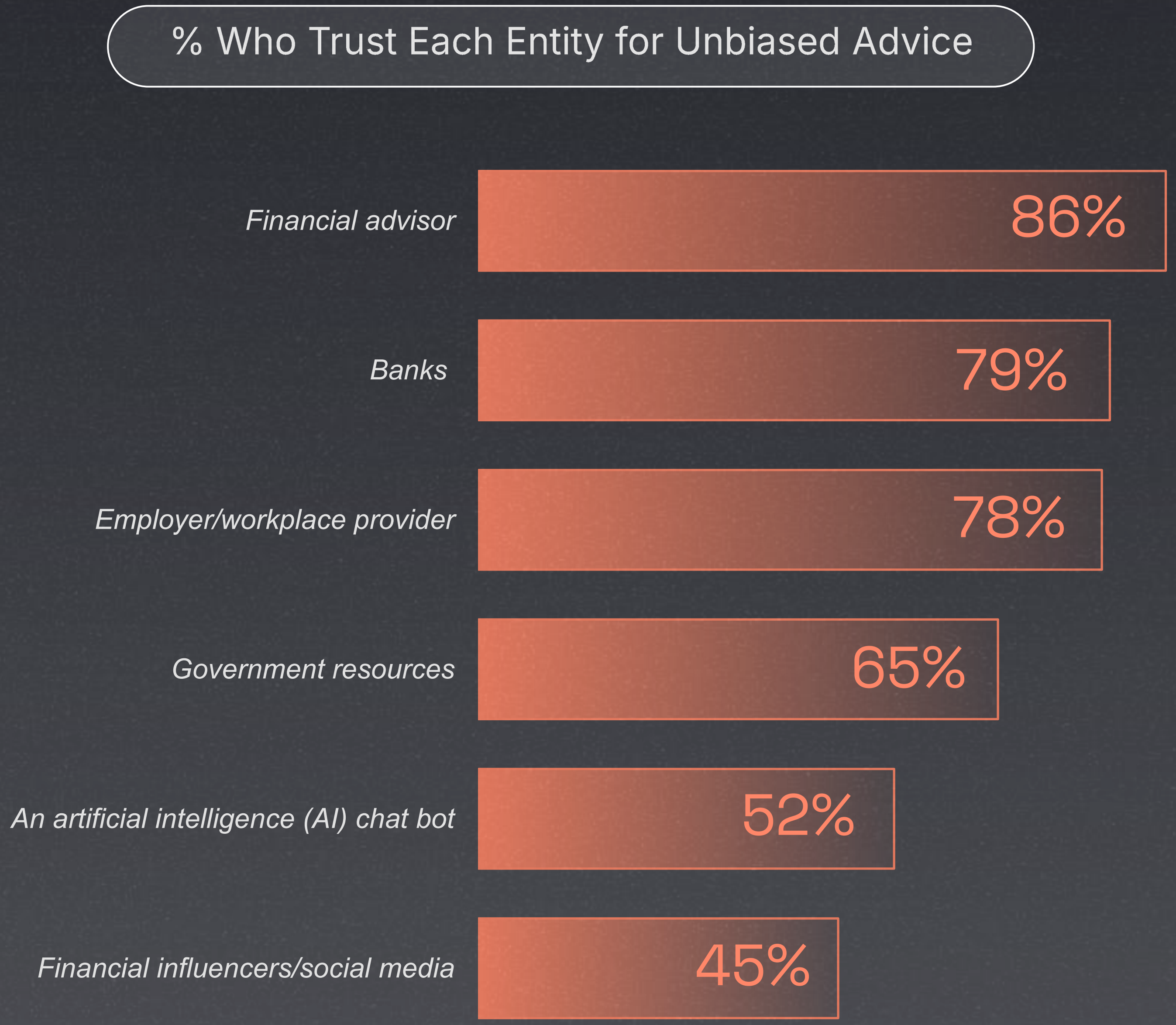
02

How AI is Bridging the Gap

Financial advisors are **nearly universally trusted** for unbiased financial advice

Sources of Unbiased Guidance

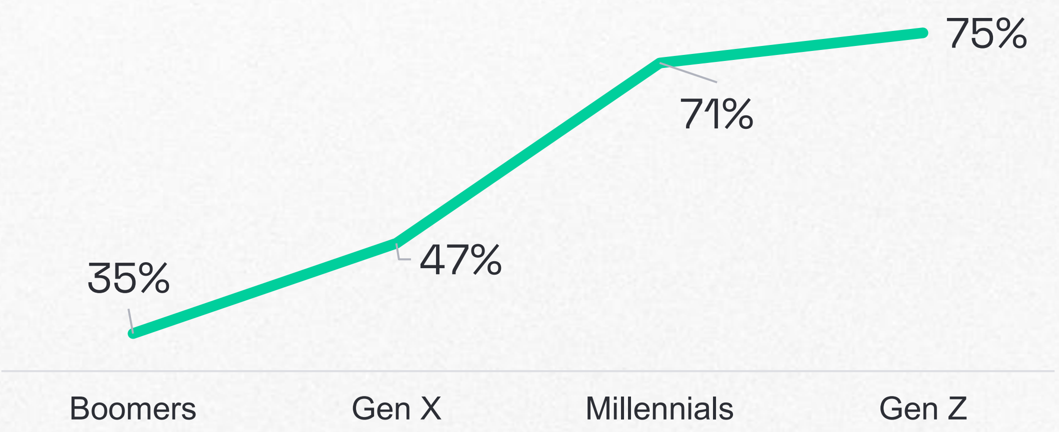
Both Millennials and Gen Z trust AI chat bots significantly more for unbiased retirement income guidance compared to both Gen X and Boomers.



AI Usage for Financial Tasks

21%	Tax preparation or planning
19%	Financial and retirement planning
20%	Budgeting or managing spending/debt
18%	Determining how much to save for retirement
19%	Understanding investment products (ex. annuities)

Use AI For At Least One Financial Task



60% already use AI for at least one **financial** task.

Base: Total (n=1,000), Q510 AI users (n=721)

Most **prefer** AI involvement in retirement planning.

This is especially true for younger generations, with 92% of Gen Z and 84% of Millennials preferring some form of AI involvement.

**4% are not sure*

73%

would prefer retirement planning with **at least some AI involvement**

23%

would prefer retirement planning with **no AI involvement**

Base: Respondents with a retirement plan (n=565)

03

Attitudinal Segments

Segment breakdown

In order of AI engagement:

15%
Non Users

12%
Basic Users

13%
AI All In

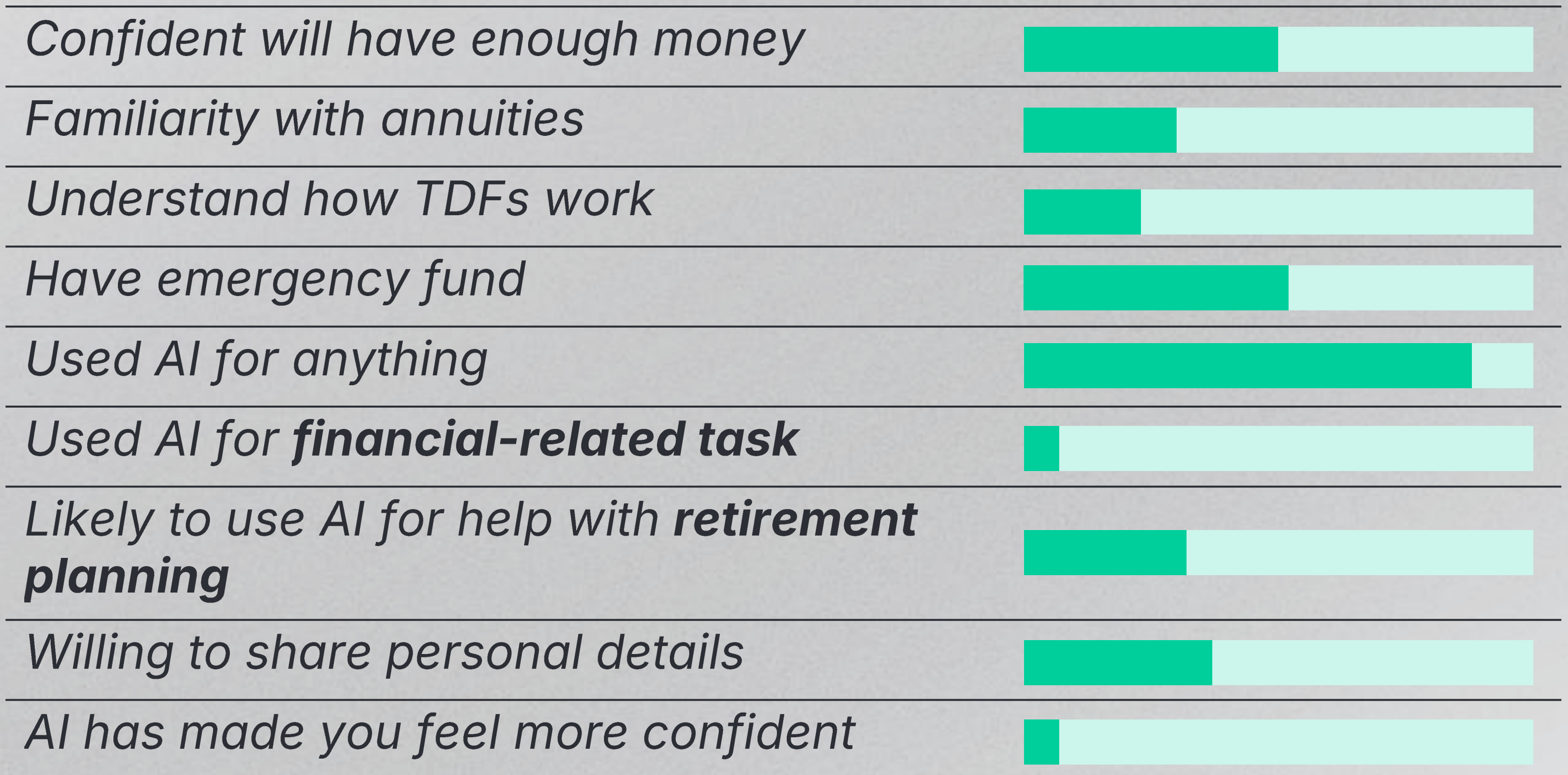
31%
AI Skeptics

30%
Personalized Users

Non-Users (15% of Total)

Reach them through reassurance, not AI features

Attitudes and Behaviors



AI Skeptics (31% of Total)

They may use AI, but trust remains the barrier

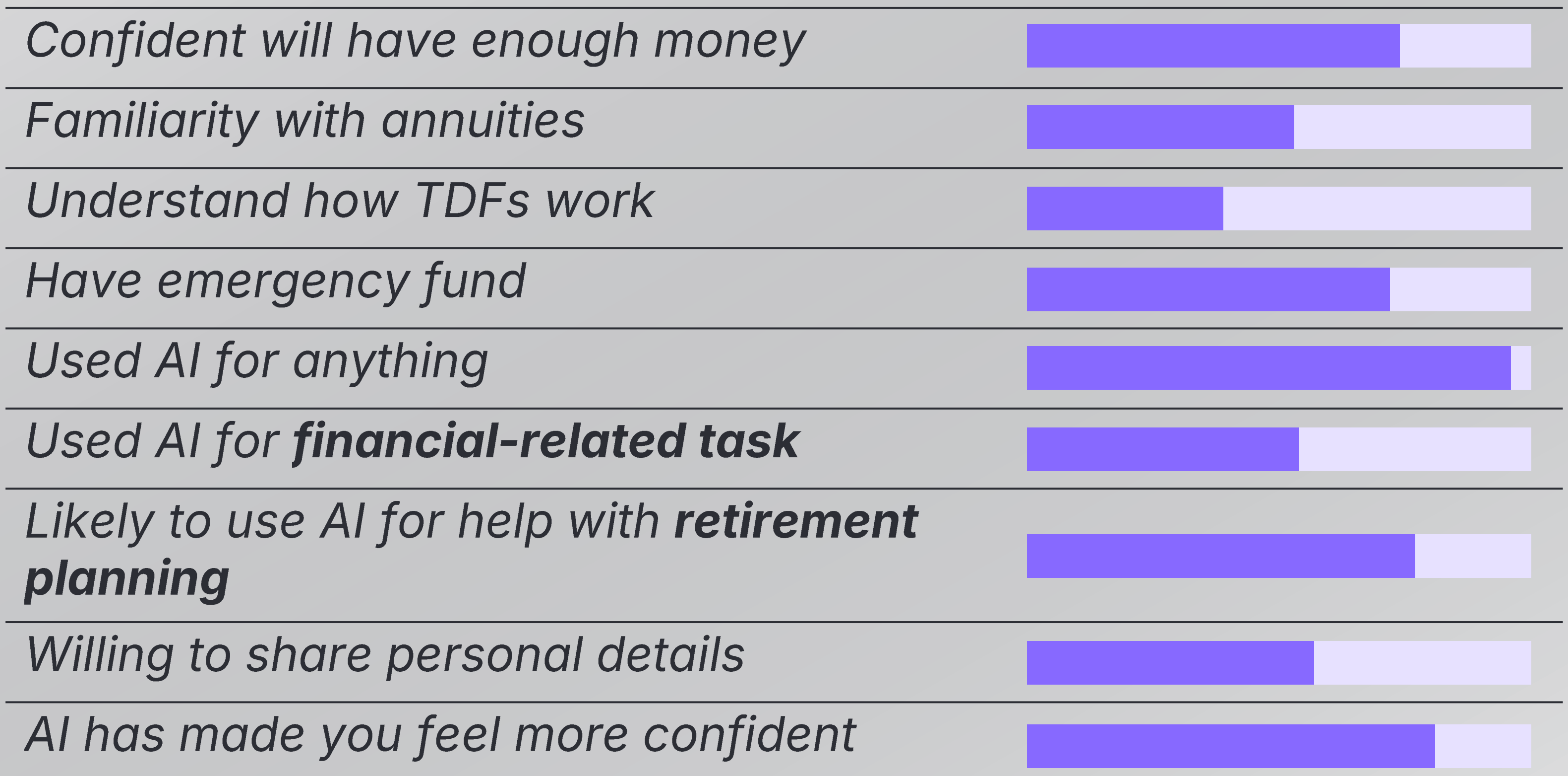
Attitudes and Behaviors

The Harris Poll TIAA Institute

Basic Users (12% of Total)

Confidence is high, but personalization is limited

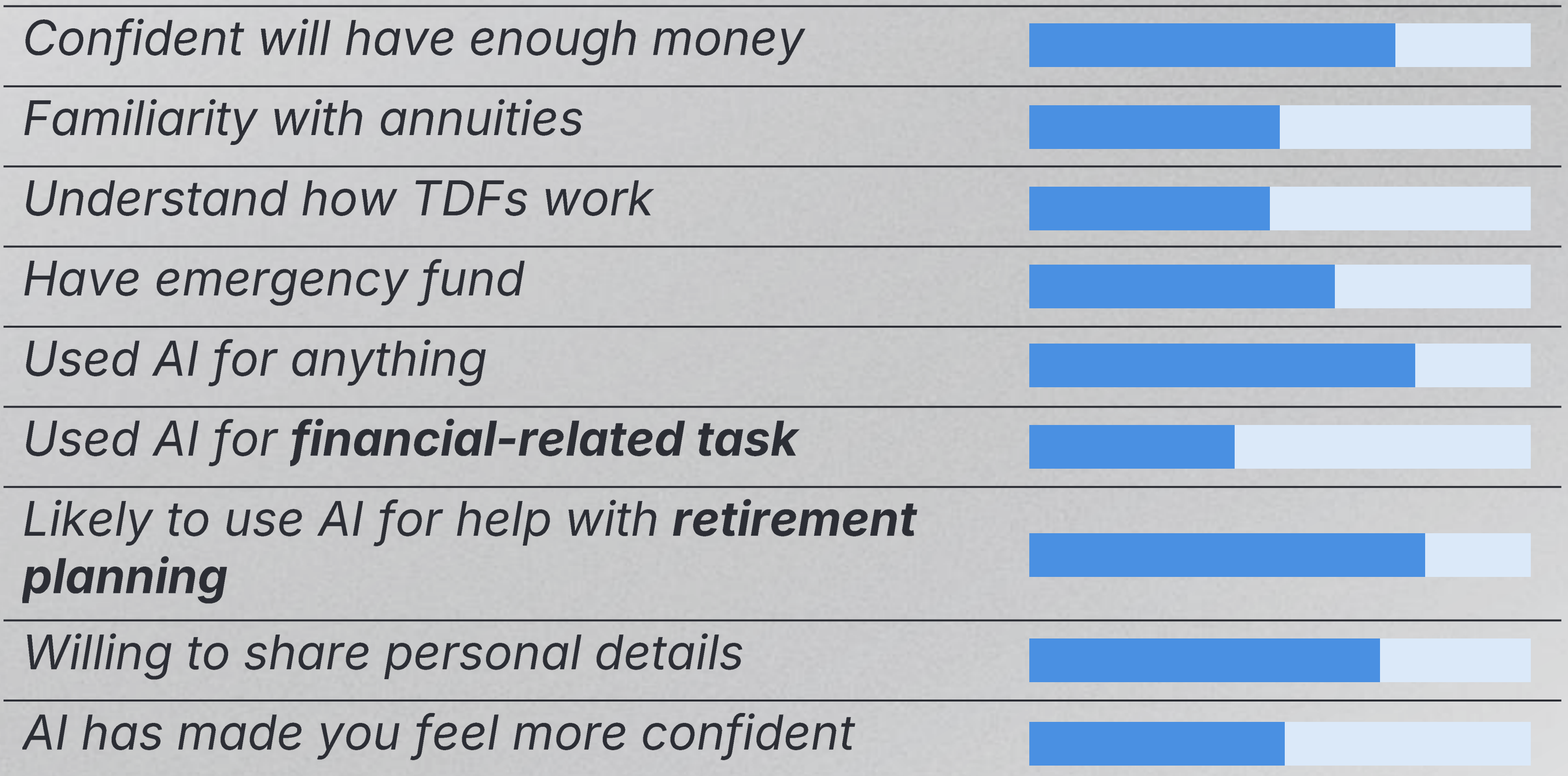
Attitudes and Behaviors



Personalized Users (30% of Total)

AI is useful, but advisor connection is critical

Attitudes and Behaviors

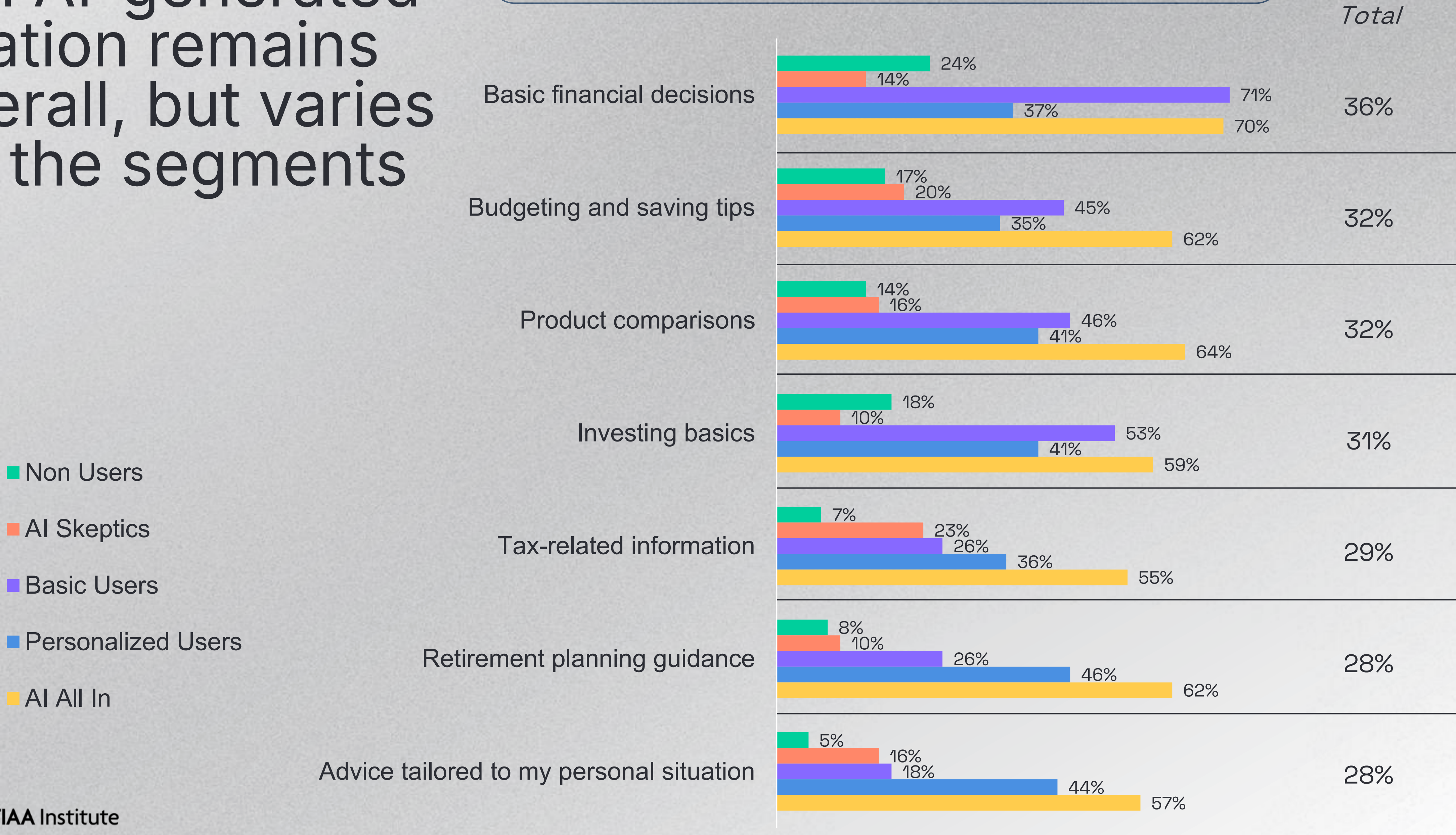


AI All In (13% of Total)

High engagement does not always mean high accuracy

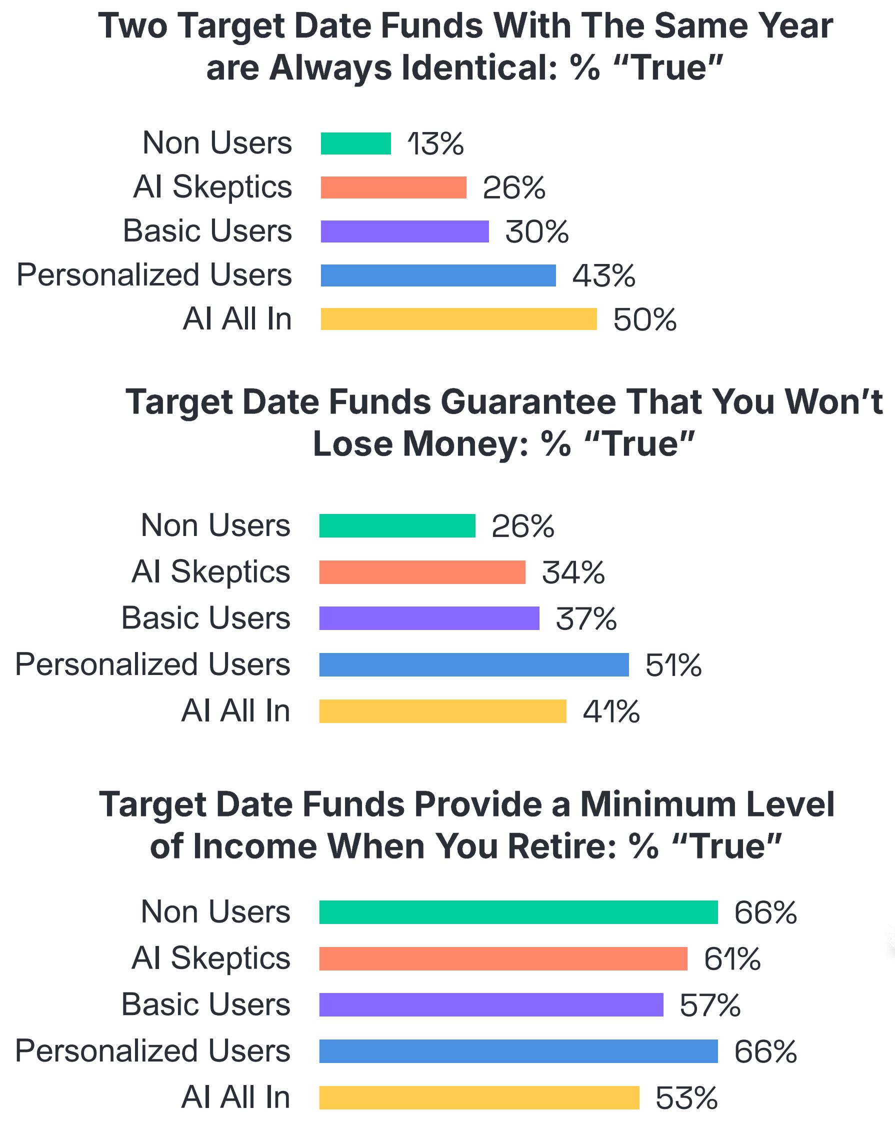
Trust in AI-generated information remains low overall, but varies across the segments

How much do you trust AI-generated information? (Top 2 Box)

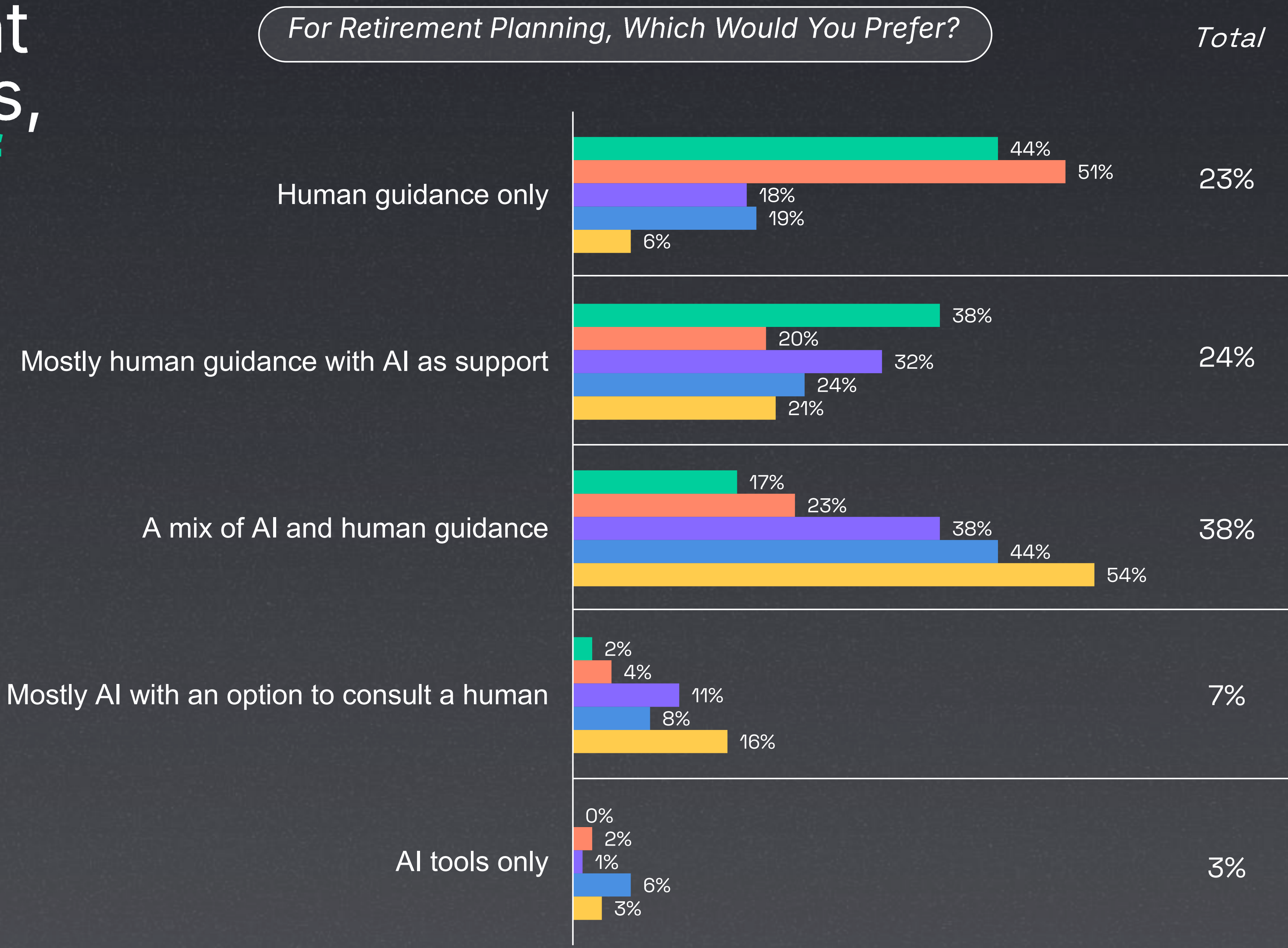


The Harris Poll TIAA Institute

AI engagement can build confidence **faster than correctness**



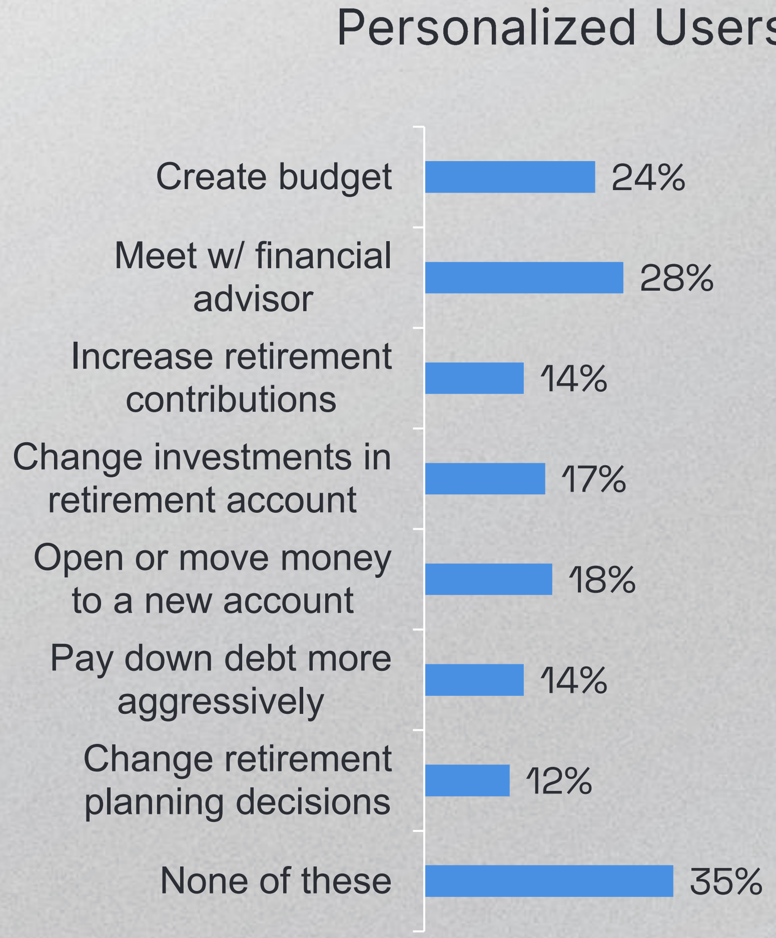
Consumers want AI in the process, **not in charge of the process.**

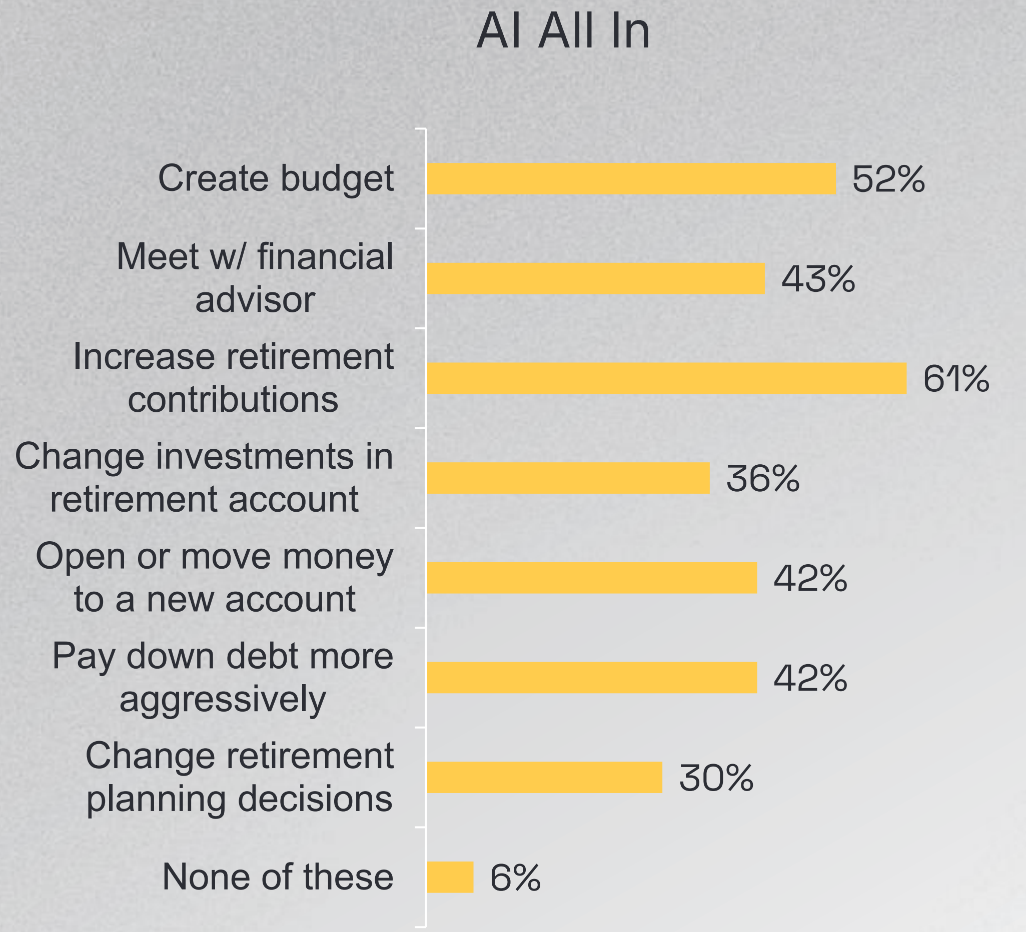


The Harris Poll TIAA Institute

Has Using AI for Financial Questions Led You to do Any of the Following?	Total
Create a budget or savings plan	21%
Meet with a financial advisor	20%
Start or increase retirement contributions	16%
Change investments in a retirement account	15%
Open or move money to a new account	15%
Pay down debt more aggressively	14%
Delay or accelerate retirement planning decisions	11%
None of these	**50%**

The more AI-engaged segments are more likely to **take action** after consulting AI for financial information





The Opportunities

Employees are taking retirement planning into their own hands via technology, but knowledge gaps persist.

AI can bridge this gap, if positioned correctly.

3 in 5 — are likely to use AI to help with retirement planning.

1 in 5 — cite using AI for financial questions as a reason for meeting with a financial advisor.

Gen Z — Gen Z and Millennials are more likely to use AI to prepare for a conversation with a professional.

AI can unlock engagement via conscious customization

Base: Total (n=1,000)

04

How Brands Should Activate Responsibly

Final Takeaways

What Retirement Providers Should Do	What Advisors Should Do
1. Use AI for education, not high-stakes decisions.	1. Focus on interpretation, not information delivery.
2. Make transparency non-negotiable.	2. Correct misconceptions before discussing products.
3. Design clear handoffs to human guidance	3. Use AI as a conversation starter, not a competitor.
4. Personalize experiences based on readiness and trust.	4. Meet clients where they are in their AI journey.