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The Banking Expectation Gap: Global Consumer Edition

From customer expectations to competitive advantage: Why intelligent engagement depends on modern banking foundations.

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From customer expectations to competitive advantage: Why intelligent engagement depends on modern banking foundations

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This report was commissioned by Temenos at whose request Celent developed this research. The analysis, conclusions, and opinions are Celent's alone, and Temenos had no editorial control over the contents.

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Globally, retail banks have a clear opportunity to win market share: Nearly three-quarters of global consumers are only moderately satisfied or less with their primary financial institution, according to Celent's recent consumer survey. Many say that important features are lacking—from personalization and fraud protection to better financial guidance and overall digital experience. A large percentage of customers have considered switching banks for better features and services. Winning banks will be those that meet the emerging customer expectations. To do so, banks must modernize their legacy systems and leverage trusted AI to help customers feel more secure, recognized, and financially in control.

To understand this opportunity more deeply, Celent has analyzed both demand and supply. On the demand side, we surveyed consumer banking customers from all global regions about factors that drive satisfaction/dissatisfaction, bank switching attitudes, personalization, and expectations for AI. On the supply side, we examine our Celent 2026 Dimensions Survey of bank technology priorities and draw from our recent interviews with bank leadership in each region about customer engagement and technology strategy. See the Appendix for survey demographic details

This report includes findings from all global regions, including North America. In our companion report, *The Banking Expectation Gap, US Consumer Edition*, we examine findings specifically within the US market.

We have divided our analysis into "Understand" and "Act" (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Report TakeAways

1 Understand Consumers	2 Act: Harness AI while Building Trust	3 Act: Break Legacy Constraints to Deliver on Customer Expectations
• Globally, consumers view their banks as adequate, not exceptional. • Payments, fraud protection, value, and digital experience emerge as weak spots. • A "Switchable Middle" exists. A majority of consumers are willing to consider switching banks to receive better value.	• Customer preferences for AI in banking are higher for informational assistance, including financial wellness and conversational banking. • But consumers have reasonable security and privacy concerns regarding AI-powered engagement and tools. • Banks that can build trust in AI-powered engagement will outperform.	• Banks must align their "supply" with customer "demand"—not only on the top of the tech stack but also within the core foundation. • Banks' ability to close the gap between their offerings and evolving customer expectations for product and service personalization is impeded by legacy systems and other factors. • Banks who respond will capture the "switchable middle."

Source: Celent 2026 Global Consumer Survey June-July 2026; Celent Dimensions Banker Survey and interviews

The “Understand” section examines general and product-specific satisfaction among banking consumers. The “Act” sections articulate two strategic responses for banks: Harnessing AI while building trust, and delivering more personalized experiences at scale by innovating from within a modern core.

1

Understand Consumers

Traditionally banks have focused on customer retention factors such as fees, loan pricing, and competitive deposit rates, but Celent finds that making products and services more personalized to recognize the customer’s loyalty (type and length of relationship, specific needs), and trust (hard-to-build, easy-to-lose) are also very important to winning market share and retention. Payment features and fraud protection lead the list of customer needs today.

2

Act: Harness AI While Building Trust

Banks have an opportunity to compete for the “switchable” customers by differentiating themselves in customer engagement and effectively harnessing AI on multiple fronts: consumer messaging, conversational interfaces, and financial wellness. Banks must deliver explainable AI-powered communications and tools that consumers want while avoiding the specific pitfalls that can undermine trust such as misused customer data and errors or inaccuracies in AI content.

3

Act: Break Legacy Constraints to Deliver on Customer Expectations

Financial institutions must build foundations for next-generation banking. Those saddled with legacy core systems will be hard-pressed to meet customer expectations for more personalized and intelligent services and products. Limited product flexibility and personalization is already affecting customer satisfaction, with personalized digital products and financial guidance emerging as key priorities for consumers. Celent finds that core dependent innovation is slipping further down the agenda within a majority of banks, suggesting the customer expectation gap will widen.

Banks must respond to a new era of customer engagement, shaped by AI, agentic capabilities, and rising expectations for faster, more advisory, more personalized service. At the same time, “trust” is highly impactful on a consumer’s decision to stay or switch banks. The challenge is not simply to modernize digital apps or to automate existing processes; it is to combine human support with technology to make banking feel more relevant, responsive, and trustworthy.

Celent compares the consumer survey findings against the annual Celent Dimensions Survey of 216 retail banks globally and finds an important disconnect between customer demand and current bank technology priorities. Most relevant is that 56% of retail banks say it has become more challenging to win and retain customers in the past year (including 62% within the US. In that context, we find evidence of specific disconnects between what consumers are asking for and what banks are focused on delivering, around security features and personalized experience to name two.

Within geographical regions, banks are not always prioritizing the services that are most important to those customers. Celent finds in this study that customers expect to have *more* personalized experiences. More than half say their bank is not tailoring products and services well enough for their needs. Further, fraud protection and better digital experiences rank high on the list of factors that drive customers to switch banks.

Banks report that customer experience is getting some investment this year and next, but it is not a Top 3 priority in most regions. Likewise, personalization of customer experience and core platform modernization are getting attention in North America, Europe, and Latin America but are not among the Top 3 priorities for banks in other regions.

Personalization of products and services will need to become more commonplace in short order, which must drive new thinking inside banks about core and legacy platform modernization, product design, and traditional bank organizational structures. Structuring products, services, and experiences around real emerging customer expectations rather than the constraints of internal silos has become increasingly important.

Celent Proprietary Research Database

To help bankers excel at delighting their consumer and small business customers, Celent has undertaken a two-part analysis. First, we have surveyed bank customers to provide a strong understanding of their expectations and concerns. Second, we have analyzed our proprietary banker survey (Celent Dimensions Survey) and interviews with bank leaders to provide recommendations on actions banks should use to differentiate and win market share.

Consumer survey

Celent surveyed 2,515 global consumer banking customers aged 18-65+ in June, July, and August 2026. Respondents were invited to answer questions related to satisfaction with their current primary banking institution, their expectations for services, features, and costs, their branch needs, and their attitudes toward AI-powered assistance in banking. The study included respondents from North America, Europe, Latin America (LATAM), Asia Pacific (APAC), and the Middle East and Africa (MEA).

Celent Dimensions Survey

Celent's annual survey of 216 global banking leaders provides insights on product, business, and technology priorities, including strategy and spending forecasts by area. We provide these insights to our clients in a suite of reports for tracking financial institution IT priorities and spending. The reports examine and benchmark the drivers for spending by business lines and regions. Celent clients can access the full report here: *Celent Dimensions: Retail Banking IT Pressures & Priorities 2026; North America*

Bank Leadership interviews

Celent analysts conducted in-depth 1:1 interviews with select banking leaders, concentrated among banks with $10 billion–$500 billion in assets across all geographic regions. The conversations explored core modernization plans, customer engagement, AI in banking, and the general topic of consumer trust in banking.

For further details see the **Appendix**.

Understand Consumers

A sizeable group of consumer banking customers are willing to switch to another primary bank. Celent refers to this group as the “switchable middle”—the nearly three-quarters of our respondents who are only moderately- or less-than-satisfied with their current primary financial institution. Their decision will be driven by the quality of fraud protection, payments, and personalization of products and services, and the value they receive for their relationship. Banks that understand these customers and value their loyalty can capture this switchable middle, while those that fall short risk losing market share.

Banks have always focused on customer retention factors such as fees and competitive rates. Celent finds that today, digital reliability, human support, and trust (hard-to-build, easy-to-lose) are also very important for retention. More specifically, payment features, fraud protection, rates, and fees are major pain points. Banks have an opportunity to win those customers willing to switch.

Consumers View Their Banks as Adequate, Not Exceptional

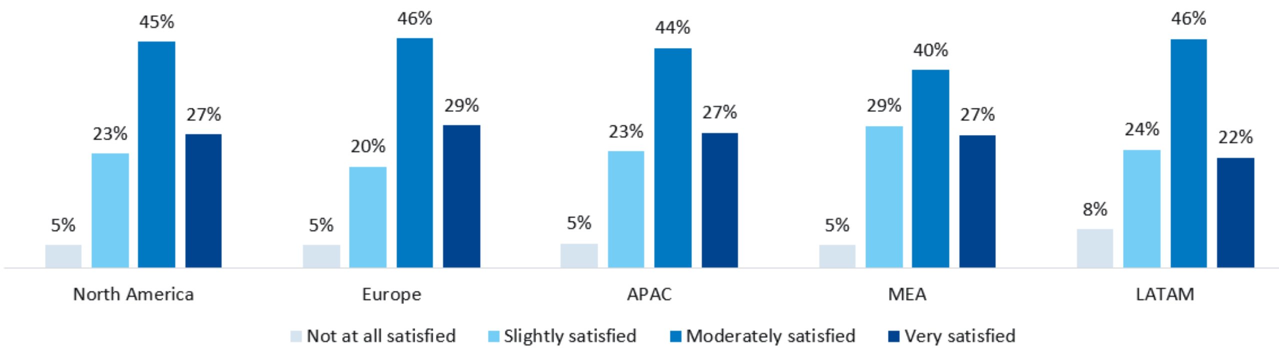
Globally, consumer sentiment toward bank performance is middling—not exceptionally positive or outright negative. Celent finds a retention risk exists for banks across global regions, with a need for global banks to address this “switchable middle”—customers neither highly satisfied or unsatisfied—before it’s too late.

Overall, **28%** of global banking customers report being **“not at all satisfied”** or **“only slightly satisfied.”**

An additional **45%** are only **moderately satisfied,** suggesting that nearly half of customers see their bank as adequate but not especially differentiated.

No individual region stands out clearly as significantly more or less satisfied, but the Middle East and Africa (MEA) and Latin America (LATAM) customers report less satisfaction than Europe and Asia-Pacific customers (Figure 2, below). Europe customers tend to be most satisfied—a full 75% are moderately or very satisfied. LATAM and MEA stand out slightly—both have less than 70% of customers reporting moderate or very satisfied.

Figure 2: Customer Satisfaction by Region



Source: Celent 2026 Global Consumer Survey June-July 2026; All global respondents

Within these regions, Celent finds clear variations across countries.

- **Europe:** Customers in the UK and the Nordic countries are most satisfied—36% in each report being "very satisfied" vs. the regional average of 29%. Czech Republic and Switzerland are least satisfied. UK and the Nordic countries have higher concentrations of digital customers and a more competitive banking environment among trad banks and digital challengers. Both were also ahead of the curve with open banking capabilities and regulation, allowing better cross-bank customer experiences. Both have somewhat less banking regulation than other areas of Europe, possibly resulting in smoother customer service interactions.

- **LATAM:** Argentina customers are by far more satisfied than regional peers. Fully a third are very satisfied and only a quarter are slightly or less satisfied. Customers in Colombia are the least satisfied. Forty-three percent (43%) are slightly or less satisfied, vs. the regional average of 34%.

- **Middle East and Africa:** Nigeria and South Africa customers are more satisfied than Gulf Region countries. Countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have rapidly digitized their banking infrastructure. There has been a large expansion of digital-only banks in recent years and that may be contributing to relatively higher dissatisfaction vs. continental African countries like Nigeria and South Africa.

- **Asia Pacific (APAC):** Hong Kong and Singapore lead the way in satisfaction, far outpacing other countries. India, Indonesia, and Japan trail all others. Japan has the lowest level of satisfaction despite boasting one of the largest economies in the region.

Dimensions Survey and Bank Leadership Interviews

The Celent Dimensions Survey makes clear that competition to win and retain new customers is high and increasing. Half or more banks in each of these regions report that competitive intensity increased for 2026, led by banks in LATAM (where 58% said so) and the Middle East (56%). Strong majorities in most regions also say that the specific threats from fintechs and other digital-only challengers are rising. LATAM is an outlier on the fintech threat—only 46% of banks in that region agree.

Qualitative insights from Celent interviews of bank leaders echo our Celent Dimensions findings. Leaders from APAC, LATAM, and Europe express a strong focus on acquiring and retaining customers in the face of shifting demand. Leaders specifically emphasize the competitive threat from digital-only banks. In some regions such as the Middle East, digital-only banks have become widespread very quickly, enjoying high adoption among young professionals and families. In others, a recent history of rapid digital access expansion has created a segment of customers who leapfrogged traditional banking all-together, seeking digital payment providers as their first foray into financial services. Traditional banks in these regions are pressed to provide and market comparable services or risk never capturing these consumer segments.

Weak Spots: Payments, Fraud Protection, Value, and Digital

From the Celent 2026 Global Consumer Survey, we find that bank customers are dissatisfied because banks are underperforming in several areas that matter directly to their everyday experience: payments, security and fraud protection, and value for money (including useful offerings).

Over half (53%) of global consumers are dissatisfied with their **payment services,** including fast, reliable real-time capability.

39% cite dissatisfaction with **security and fraud protection.**

One third or more are least satisfied with **value-based offerings** (fees, available rates, and pricing of products, useful offerings, products available in a timely manner).

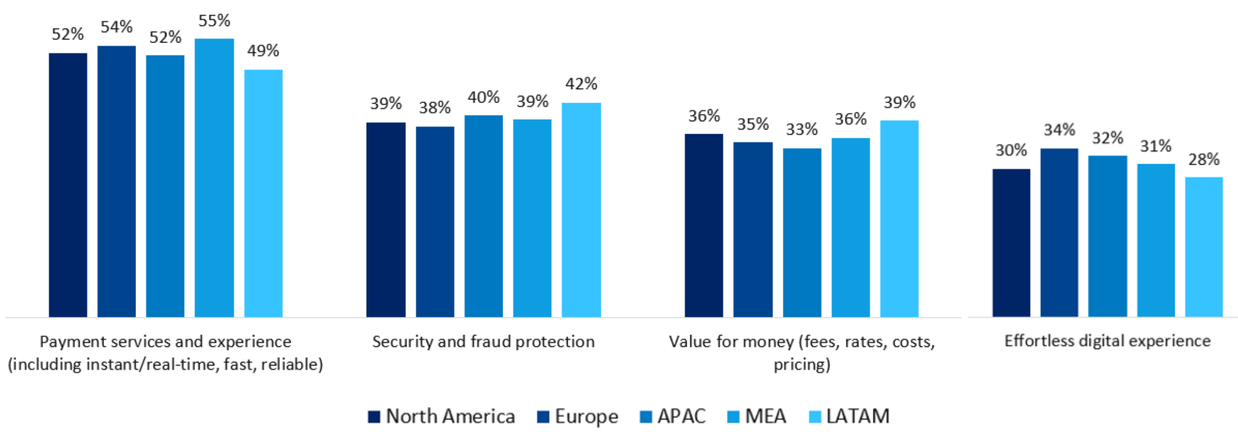
Regionally, Celent finds slight variations (Figure 3, below).

In Latin America, customers were slightly more satisfied with payment experiences and the overall digital banking experience compared to other regions, but less satisfied with security and fraud protections. LATAM customers were also more likely to cite the value drivers as an area of dissatisfaction.

In Europe, customers report higher dissatisfaction with their digital experience and payment services.

Figure 3: Areas of Consumer Dissatisfaction by Region

Q: What are the top items you are least satisfied with? (showing the four highest responses)



Source: Celent 2026 Global Consumer Survey June-July 2026; All global respondents

Within countries, there are specific variations and challenges related to reliability and customer support.

In the MEA region, where payments dissatisfaction is highest, there is evidence that system outages, delays in supposedly instant payments, and a surge in digital payment fraud are three major factors. Another factor is extremely poor digital customer service, with difficulty reaching a human to help resolve a complaint being cited in many cases. Both are noted in the 2025 edition of PwC's *GCC Banking Sentiment Index* report.

In LATAM, digital payment networks have evolved and been adopted rapidly. However, this adoption has also ushered in large amounts of fraud and cybercrime. This has prompted banks to adopt stricter controls, resulting in higher decline rates for suspected fraud, likely causing significant friction for customers. In Brazil, the Pix payment network has been highly adopted but has attracted large amounts of fraud and other criminal activity. A slow dispute resolution process has caused frustration for customers. In Argentina, high (daily) inflation volatility has caused a desire for faster real time payments that can better preserve purchasing power.

These two regions highlight the importance of payments services. In both regions, large percentages of consumers have used digital banking for the first time with one of the digital payment services. To these customers, immediate digital payments is the most basic service a bank can provide. There are very high expectations on payment services, and poor execution or inadequate safety from fraud will have an outsized impact on customer satisfaction going forward.

Capturing The Switchable Middle

Global consumer banking customers are willing to switch banks for clearer financial value and stronger digital capabilities. Celent finds that four out of the top six switch drivers are related to value or trust. The bottom line here is that consumers want banks to reward them for their business and are seeking superior digital features.

25% of all global consumer customers have recently considered **switching their primary bank**.

Half (49%) would consider **switching for better rates and fees** on credit products.

40% say **fee structure or rewards** that **better reflect the size or length of their relationship** would attract them to another bank, underscoring the link between personalization and the switchable middle.

40% also cite **better online and mobile banking features** as a reason to switch.

38% say simply having a **higher interest rate for savings** accounts is enough to switch.

Regional Variation in the "Switch Factors"

All regions placed roughly equal importance on value-for-relationship benefits. However, Celent finds important variation regionally on other switch factors (Figure 4 below).

Within the **LATAM** region, the **older** the customer cohort, the more importance is placed on **relationship-based pricing and benefits**.

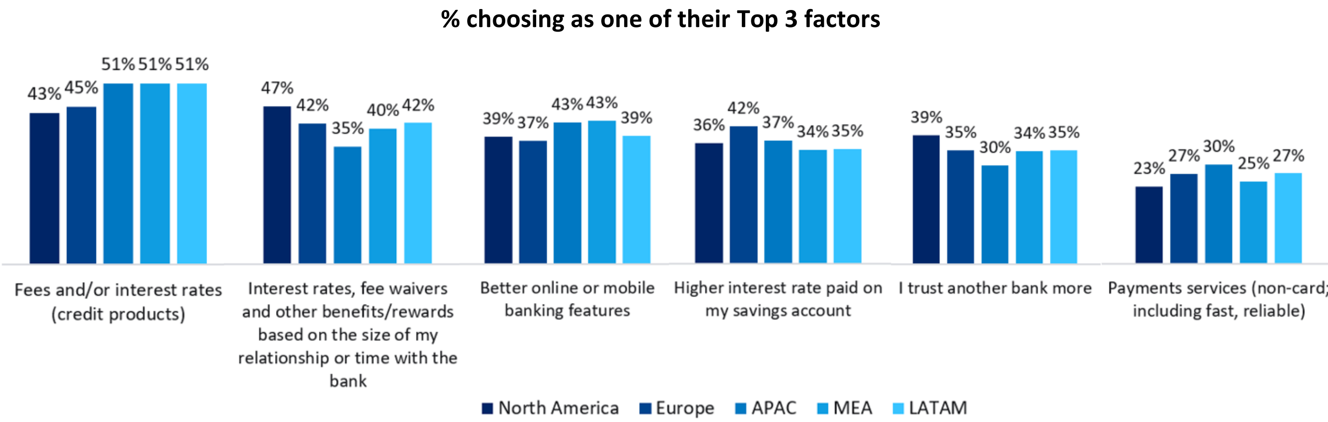
APAC and MEA customers were much more likely to seek **better digital banking features** than Europe and LATAM-based customers.

Better digital features are most important to **younger** age groups in the **MEA region** and to **older** age groups in **LATAM**.

Europe customers are by far most likely to cite **higher interest on savings accounts** as a switch factor; in fact, placing higher weight on savings interest and fees and rates for credit products than any other factor.

Figure 4: Value, Digital Experience, and Personalization Drive Switching Across Regions

What would be most important factors in your decision to select a different primary provider?



Source: Celent 2026 Global Consumer Survey June-July 2026; All global respondents

Interestingly, "Payments services", included above, was a relatively lower switch factor than many other features, despite being such a high area of dissatisfaction (Figure 3, previous page). For Europe and the MEA region, where dissatisfaction with payments was highest, payment services were less of a switch factor than other regions. This is again likely caused by customer inertia—the tendency of customers to want to stay with their current bank despite some areas of dissatisfaction. Here, improvements in a service like payments would build loyalty with existing customers, rather than relying on inertia for retention.

Payments appear to be more important to some age groups than others.

In Europe, payments are a high switch factor largely with the retirement-age cohort: **39% of 50–64-year-olds** say they'd switch banks for better payment services.

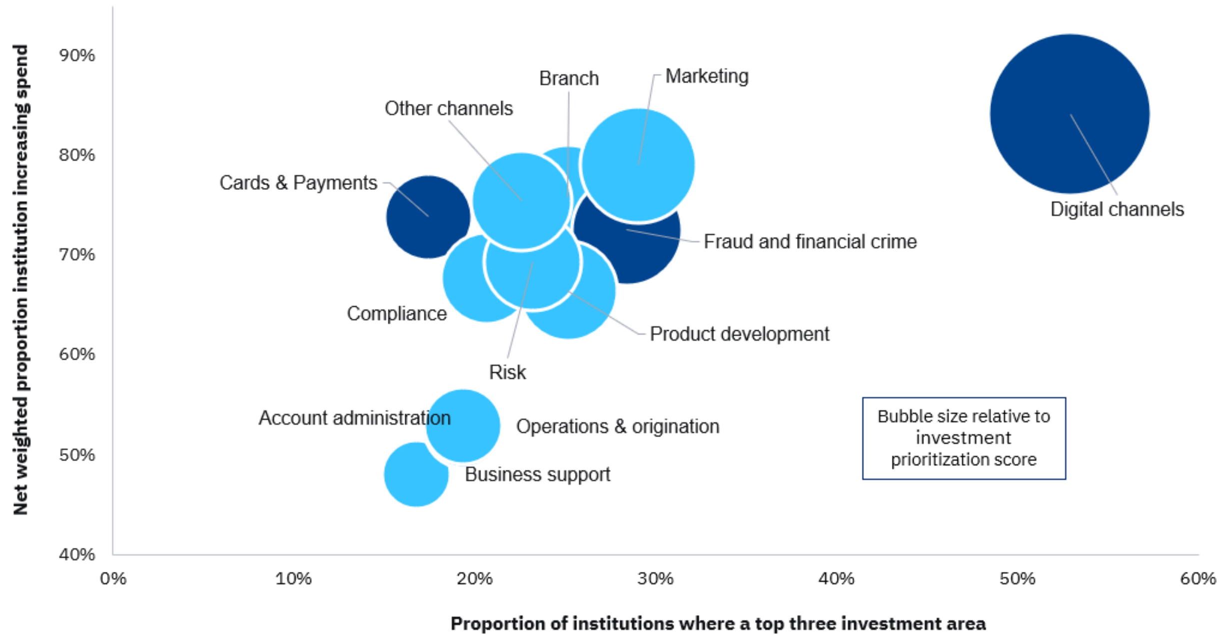
In MEA, the thirty-somethings place an outsized importance on payments as a switch factor: **34% of 30-39-year-olds** would switch.

Trusting another bank is not among the Top 4 switch factors globally, but it is fifth overall, and a factor for fully one-third of global respondents. Examined by region, Celent finds few differences: APAC customers slightly lower at 30%, and all other regions at 34–35%.

Celent Dimensions Survey and Bank Leader Interviews

Banks are investing heavily in **digital channels** and **fraud mitigation capabilities**. The importance of digital and, to a lesser extent, fraud protection as top areas for product/service enhancement are clearly reflected in prioritization of IT investment by global retail banks, with digital channels dominant as both top investment areas and as a strong spend growth areas (Figure 5). **Payment capabilities** are receiving somewhat less priority. While spend is increasing at over 70% of banks in payments and cards, less than 20% of banks have placed payments as a Top 3 investment area.

Figure 5: Banks Are Prioritizing and Increasing Spending on Digital Channels Far More Than Any Other Area (Dark blue bubbles are specifically discussed above)



Base: Retail banking respondents (sample: 216)
Questions: Where are your largest technology investment projects for 2026? (X-axis); Please indicate the percentage change in IT spend expected in 2026 (vs. 2025) for the following categories (Y-axis)
Source: Celent Dimensions Survey 2026

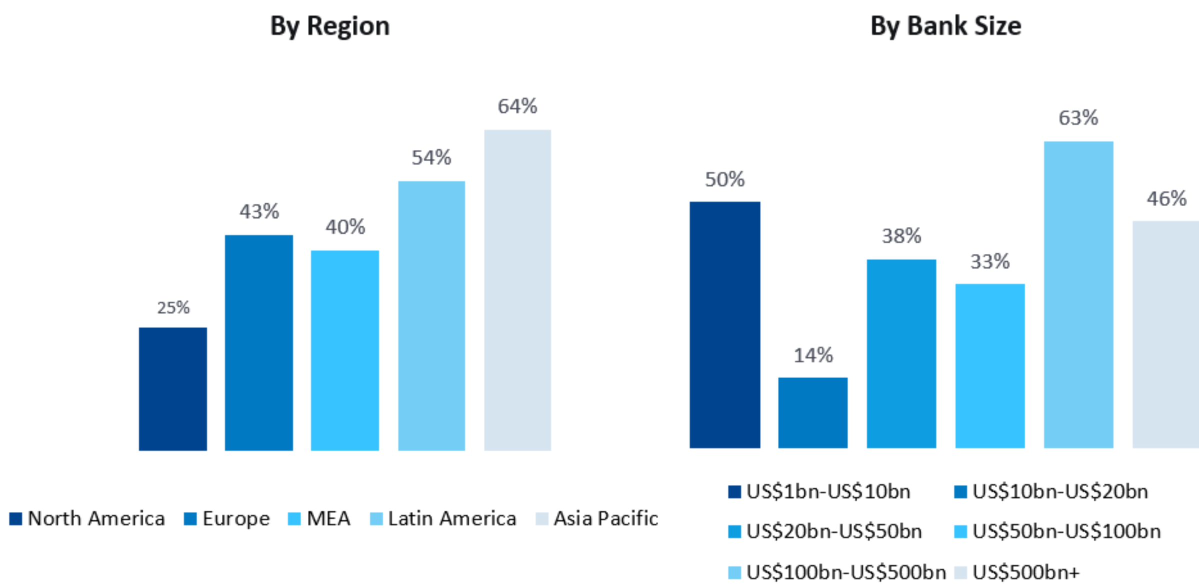
Within the findings above, we discover significant variations by bank sizes across regions. In general, across bank sizes, digital channel and fraud investment are highest. However, smaller banks tend to plan less investment in cards and payment capabilities than larger bank peers in most regions.

Looking at **product development**, an important area to address given the high desire for more personalized products and services indicated by customers, we see wide variation of planned investment across bank sizes and regions (Figure 6, below). Banks in APAC have put the highest priority on this area, but other regions lag far behind. We also note that medium-sized banks are lagging both small and large banks in prioritizing product innovation across these regions in general.

In Europe, for example, only 29% of banks sized $1 billion–$100 billion (the community- and regional-sized institutions) place product innovation within their Top 3 technology investment priorities. This is compared to 63% of larger banks and 50% of the smallest institutions in the region.

Clearly, mid-sized banks are challenged to prioritize many of the features customers say are factors in choosing a primary bank.

Figure 6: Banks Naming Product 'Proposition Innovation or Enhancements' Within Top 3 Technology Investment Priorities



Base: Retail banking respondents (sample: 216)
Source: Celent Dimensions Survey 2026

Celent's recent bank leadership interviews found that banks have differing concerns across regions. Our conversation with an APAC bank leader revealed a strong effort to catch up to and meet rapidly evolving customer expectations in Southeast Asia. A European bank leader stresses the balance between scaling innovation and reducing costs to appease the market. This puts a priority on core and payments modernization—unlocking scaled innovation while also reducing technical debt. A Middle East banking leader tells us that the bank is focused on leveraging AI for product agility, development acceleration, and cost reductions. At the same time, the importance of fraud protection is well-understood.

> "Customers have high expectations that the bank will protect them against fraud, placing this first and above helping forecast expenses or categorize transactions."
>
> -- Head of Digitization, an international bank in MEA

Implications for Banks

The switchable middle provides both a threat and an opportunity for banks. Consumer demand is shifting from access and convenience toward personalization, security, and financial guidance. Banks that can combine modern digital experiences with relationship-aware personalization and solid payments and fraud protection will be best-positioned to retain customers and win share from both traditional competitors and digital-only challengers.

Celent recommends:

- **Treat dissatisfaction as a market share opportunity.** Customers are potentially winnable if banks address the gaps that matter most.
- **Learn from digital-only challengers.** Improve digital ease, speed, and usability while preserving the trust and support advantages of traditional banking, which digital-only banks appear to be lacking in many regions.
- **Accelerate personalization.** Use data and AI readiness to deliver tailored products, pricing, guidance, and experiences based on life stage, goals, relationship size, and loyalty.
- **Compete on trust and advice.** Position strong fraud protection alongside human support as a differentiator for complex needs such as home lending, financial planning, and major life events.
- **Connect digital convenience with relationship banking.** Deliver more personalized experiences not just in digital but in the human-assisted channels where customers are least satisfied with offerings today.

Act: Harness AI While Building Trust

As banks strive to close the gap between their offerings and the emerging customer expectations, AI will play an important role in not only delivering on personalization but also in transforming customer engagement overall. Bankers recognize this, with over half expecting GenAI—of all technological advances—to have the most impact on their business over the next five years, according to the 2026 Celent Dimensions Survey of bank technology leaders. Competitive differentiation will depend on a bank's ability to deliver trusted AI-powered customer engagement and tools. The critical element is "trust" because while a majority of consumers would welcome certain AI-powered capabilities, many have concerns about banks implementing too much automation without human oversight.

Bankers Enthusiastic About the AI Opportunity

During Celent's bank leadership interviews, bankers provided insights on AI in banking, both from a customer-facing perspective and a bank operations viewpoint. Generally, there is more excitement than concern about the potential of large language models (LLMs) and related AI tools, while emphasizing that human oversight remains a prerequisite for responsible adoption.

Areas of excitement included more intelligent marketing, informing customers of the right product at the right time to increase cross-selling effectiveness and provide better customer outcomes, lowering churn. Bankers see the largest promise in customer self-service. For example, the ability to get smart answers in a more advisory, conversational interface in the mobile app. A European bank, while only in the experimentation stage with internal LLM usage, sees huge promise in advisor productivity, as client meeting prep and follow-up gets smarter and faster. This will unlock the bottleneck of advisor time and allow for servicing a wider set of clients with the same expert workforce.

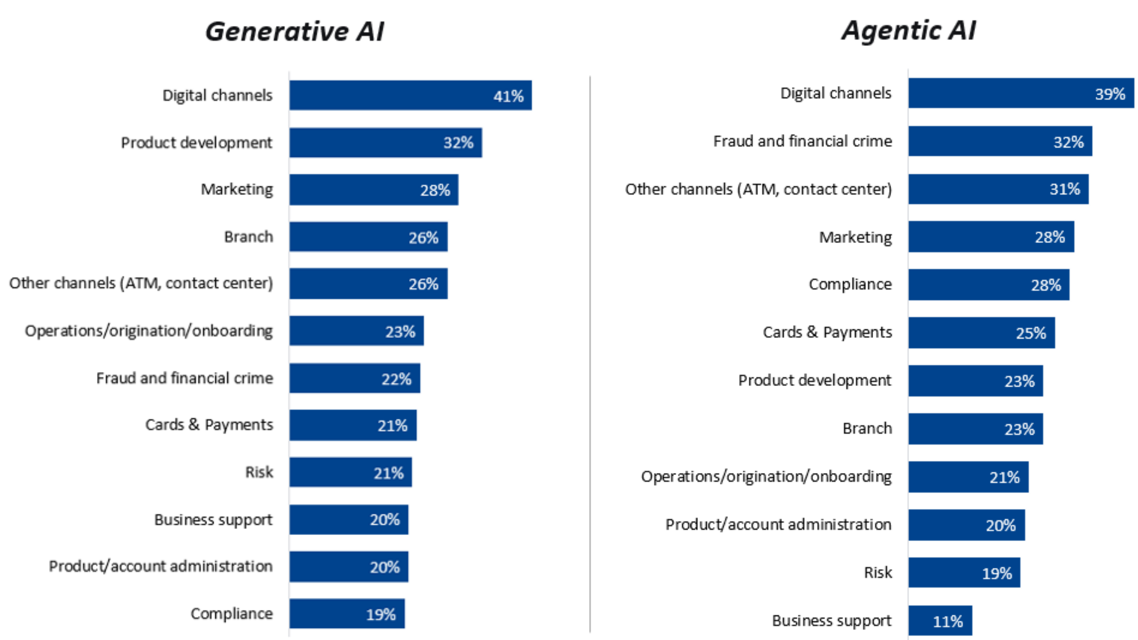
While bankers' overall tone is positive, several areas of caution remain. One of these is concern around the emerging public perception of AI in general—ranging from optimism to extreme pessimism. Banks express a need to assess current job functions, to redesign them for automation, and to evaluate the proper migration of employees from current jobs to new ones and the changed career growth paths that are now available. In certain regions, the concept of "sovereign AI," where language models are walled to within a certain geography and centrally maintained, draw concerns around equal and reliable access to the models by all customers.

Bankers note a three-step approach to AI implementation that generally holds across several interviews. First, demonstrate value with single use cases (such as the advisor productivity example above). Second, the transformation of processes with business area level automation (lending middle office was mentioned as an example). Third, in the longer term, more autonomous banking experiences for customers, using fully AI-powered assistive chat, and agentic capabilities to enable multi-step workflows, permissioned by the customer.

> AI helps the human banker provide better service—and that is how (AI) will help banks improve both engagement and loyalty."
>
> --Chief Technology Officer at a regional APAC bank

The Celent Dimensions Survey reveals how bankers' enthusiasm about the AI potential is translating into strategic investment. We find that for AI deployment, bankers are prioritizing middle office areas, specifically fraud/compliance risk mitigation and operational areas like onboarding (over a third of respondents; Figure 7). Front-office areas fall closely behind with channels and product development being cited by around a third of respondents.

Figure 7: Percentage of Banks Planning Deployment of GenAI and Agentic AI in Each Area



*Includes account, loan origination and customer onboarding.
Base: Retail banking respondents outside of North America (sample: 155)
Source: Celent Dimensions Survey 2026.

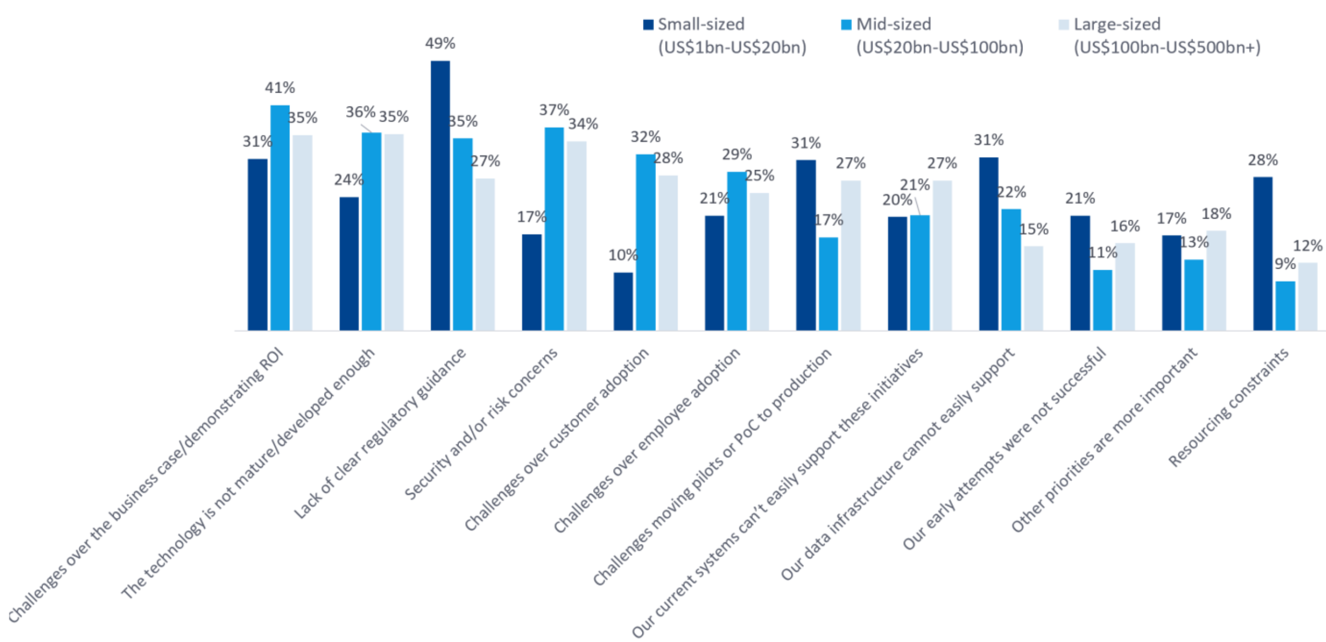
These findings from Dimensions were consistent with Celent's bank leadership interviews. Per Figure 7 above, bankers tend to cite internal employee-facing use cases that can improve efficiency. Several describe looking across internal processes to identify workflows where AI can reduce manual effort, accelerate task completion, and improve employee effectiveness.

Two key takeaways emerge: One, that AI is not substituting human interaction but rather is a foundation for enabling humans to deliver more personalized and effective customer engagement. And two, that a large percentage of banks (over 20%) expect to expand AI initiatives beyond internal operations and into direct customer-facing use cases—including agentic automation of multi-step customer tasks.

Challenges to Realizing AI Ambitions

The Celent Dimensions Survey finds that banks identify myriad barriers to deploying AI (Figure 8) with the top barriers being risk-related (lack of clear regulatory guidelines, security concerns) or related to return-on-investment. We were surprised by the relatively high share of large banks (27%) saying that current systems are a constraint. We discuss further the implications of this constraint in the following section (Act: Break Legacy Constraints).

Figure 8: Barriers to Deploying Generative AI, by Bank Size



Source: Celent Dimensions Survey 2026; Base: Retail banking respondents (sample: 216).

Smaller institutions were far more likely to cite a lack of regulatory guidance, data infrastructure limitations, and resourcing constraints as the barriers to deploying generative AI (GenAI) effectively. Banks in this group are more likely to require knowledgeable outside partners to help with data infrastructure transformation and to augment existing staff with capacity and knowledge.

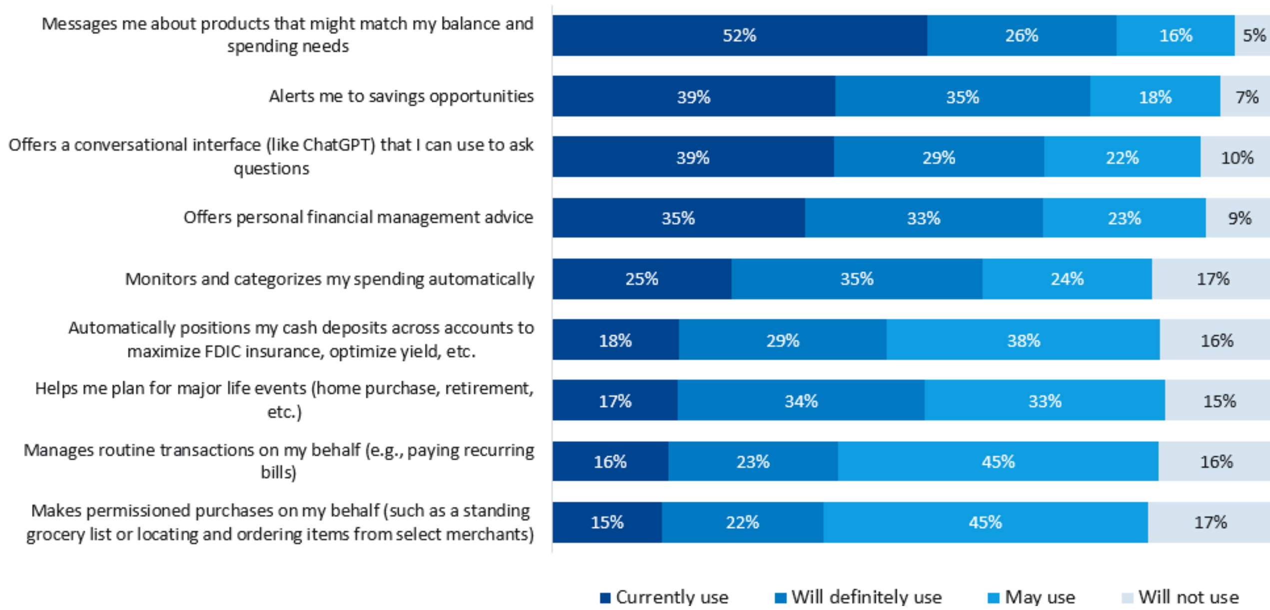
Lack of regulatory guidance among smaller banks has increased significantly as a concern since the 2025 Celent Dimensions Survey, and in fact is the only barrier listed above that has increased in that time. This concern is high across all regions for smaller banks. Rather than a concern isolated to regions where regulatory regimes for AI in financial services might be lagging innovation, this barrier more likely reflects smaller banks' hesitance to risk a bad deployment on what may be only one or a small number of AI deployments. Here again, these banks will rely on outside partnerships to help navigate regulatory, risk, and quality during initial deployments of AI in the enterprise.

Customers Want Information and Advice More than Automated Actions

Celent finds that globally, consumers express enthusiasm for informational AI-driven features that notify and explain, but not nearly as much for AI features that take automated actions. Alerts to savings opportunities, timely messages about products that can help, and personalized financial advice are either already being used or would definitely be used by well over two-thirds of customers globally. Conversely, there is far less enthusiasm for AI-driven automation of money movement, including transactions, bill payment, and purchases. Half or less of global consumers say they would definitely use such features (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Consumers Are Very Willing to Use Certain AI-Driven Features in Banking

Q: Choose your willingness to use each AI-powered service if offered in the next 12 months



Source: Celent 2026 Global Consumer Survey June-July 2026; All global respondents outside North America

Among the informational AI features that consumers are most enthusiastic about, there is plenty of room for banks to capitalize. From Figure 9 above, it's clear that a quarter to a third of customers are not yet using but "will definitely use" more AI-driven informational features, if offered. Further, additional informational features appear further down the list, but indicate high propensity for adoption, if offered. These include categorization of spending and planning for life events (perhaps delivered through a conversational interface that supports advisory exploration of options).

68% of global consumers say they would **use a conversational interface** for open-ended questions, while only 10% say they would not and 22% are uncertain.

Younger cohorts (under age 50) are the most enthusiastic about personal financial advice, with **over 70%** (average) stating they would use it.

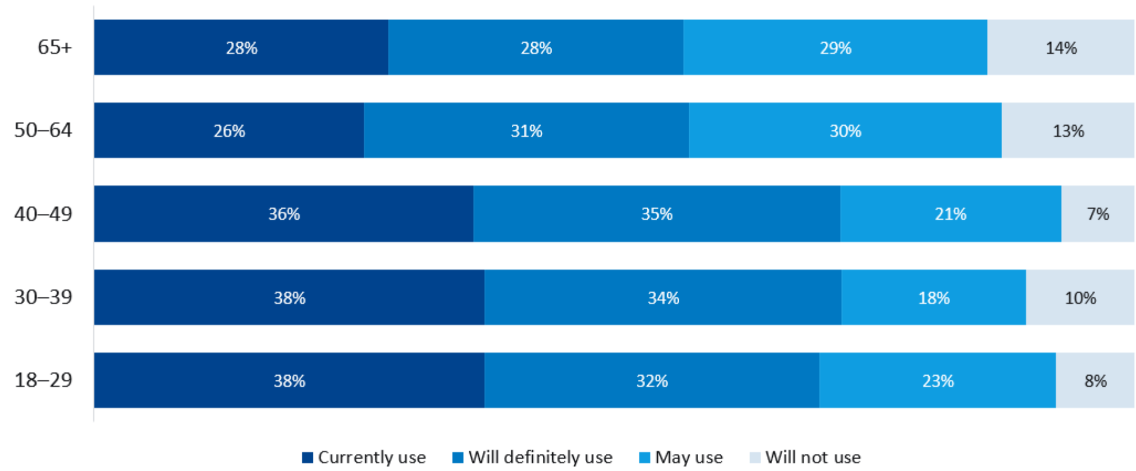
Less than half of global consumers would "definitely use" AI features that **manage purchases** on their behalf or perform **routine transactions** such as bill payment.

Conversational Interfaces Will be Popular with Customers

Celent finds that conversational interfaces will be a differentiating feature for banks in the short term. Banking customers indicate a high level of comfort with a conversational AI banking interface. Use cases for this type of interaction would include personal financial guidance, product discovery, informational support, and advisory self-service for common issues. Customer expectations are evolving here—a large number are arriving in the banking interface with experience in using public chat-based answer engines such as Open AI's ChatGPT and Google's Gemini. The enthusiasm extends across age groups, with well over half of all cohorts willing to use such a feature if offered by their bank. This interest is not restricted to the 'digital-native' younger generations.

Perhaps the most promising use case for conversational AI is the delivery of personalized financial advice, which our survey found to be much more popular with younger cohorts (< age 50) than with older groups (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Personalized Financial Advice More Important to Younger Age Groups

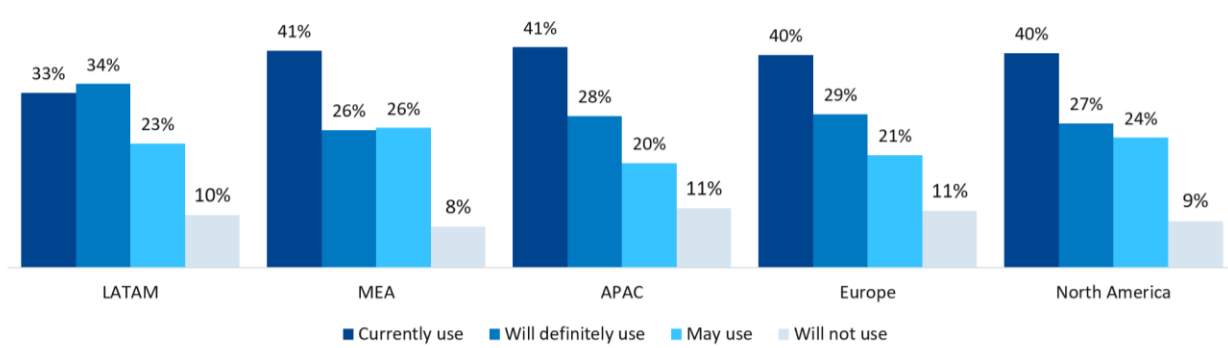


Source: Celent 2026 Global Consumer Survey June-July 2026; All global respondents outside North America

Regionally, there is little difference in willingness to use conversational interfaces. Over two-thirds of consumers in each region indicated a willingness to use or say they are already using such a feature (Figure 11**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Figure 11: Consumer Willingness to Use Conversational Interfaces, by region

Q: Would you trust an AI-powered banking service that offers a conversational interface?



Source: Celent 2026 Global Consumer Survey June-July 2026; All global respondents

The Imperative: Earning Trust

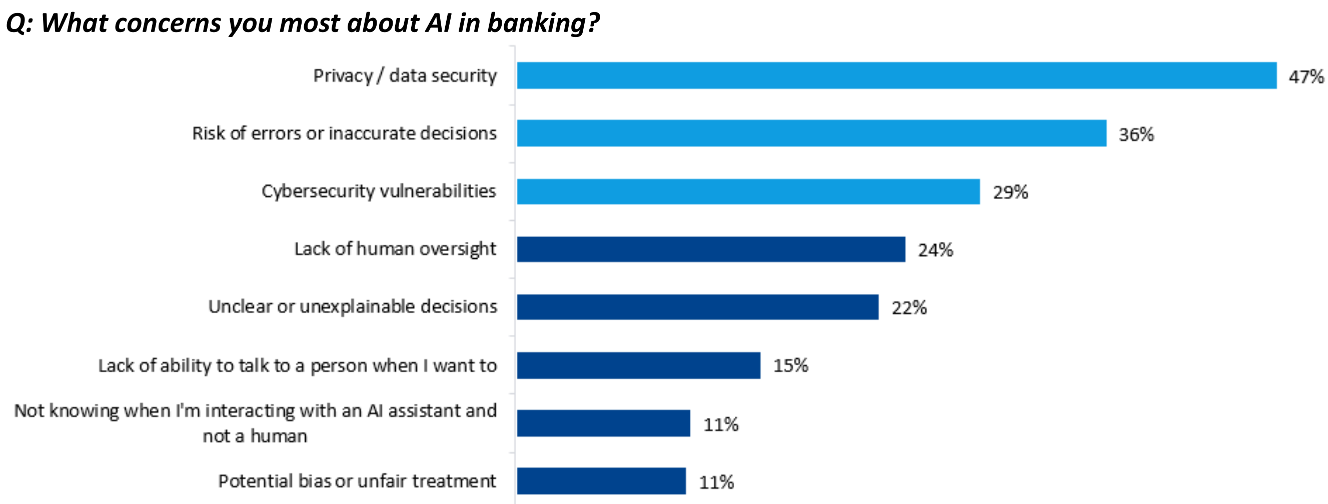
Critical to the success of banks' AI initiatives is building both employee and customer trust. Celent finds that consumers have pragmatic concerns about AI in banking: privacy/data security, errors/inaccuracies, and cybersecurity (Figure 12). In response, banks will need to address these areas through robust AI governance and transparency regarding their use of customer data.

Privacy and data security is by far number one concern related to AI, cited by **47%.**

Errors and inaccuracies (including unclear or unexplainable decisions) follows at **36%**.

Cybersecurity vulnerabilities are cited by **nearly three-in-ten (29%)**.

Figure 12: Globally, Consumers Have Pragmatic Concerns About Bank AI Usage



Source: Celent 2026 Global Consumer Survey June-July 2026; All global respondents outside North America.

Regionally, Celent finds important variation in concerns about AI in banking (Figure 13 below).

Europe consumers have distinctly higher concerns about **privacy and data security (49%),** and the **risk of errors or inaccuracies (40%)**.

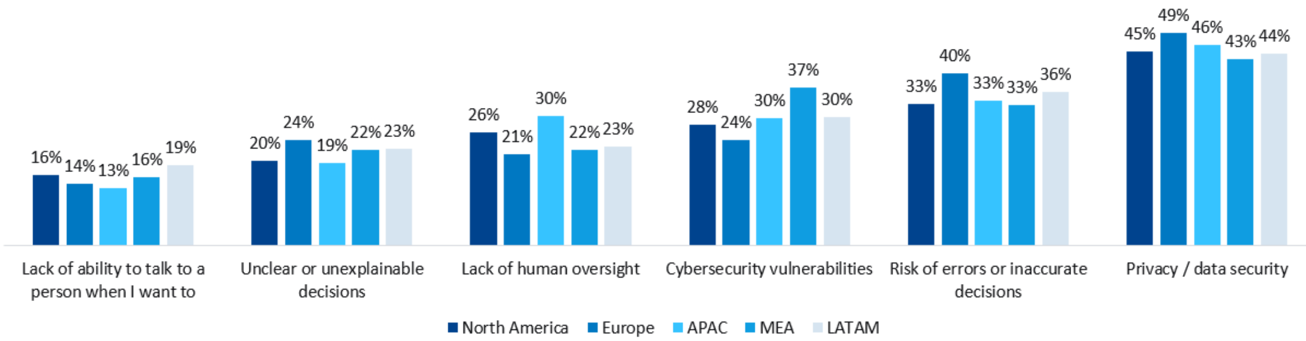
MEA customers have relatively higher concerns about **cybersecurity vulnerabilities** than other regions.

APAC and North America customers are relatively more concerned about **a lack of human oversight** than customers in other regions.

North America customers in general are middle-of-the-pack on most concerns relative to other regions.

Figure 13: Trust in AI Capabilities Varies by Region

Q: What concerns you most about AI in banking?



Source: Celent 2026 Global Consumer Survey June-July 2026; All global respondents

Exploring Europe a bit further, concerns about privacy and security are the highest in Switzerland (58%), Germany (57%), and the Czech Republic (56%), while remaining relatively low across the Nordics (42%), Spain (44%), and the UK (45%), as examples.

Bankers Are Investing in Trust Building

As we see in the Celent Dimensions Survey results, the good news is that banks are already investing in AI to deliver better security and protection for customers. Fraud and financial crime detection/mitigation functions are seeing significant IT prioritization this year and next, behind only digital channels and marketing as the top business areas of investment. However, they are not the largest area of AI investment.

Our interviews with bank leaders include explorations of customer trust, how to build and maintain it, and where it can be lost. A leader in Southeast Asia summed it up: "Protection of personal financial data is the most important responsibility for a bank." Next is being available when and where the bank is needed. Regarding the deployment of customer-facing AI, this leader noted that a human must be in the loop to retain the customer's trust.

Strategic Guidance

Banks should not let AI remain only an internal productivity story. The strategic opportunity is to turn AI into a trusted conversational layer for customer engagement—one that improves guidance, strengthens security, and preserves human support when it matters most.

Celent's Recommended Strategic Priorities

- **Balance internal AI with customer-facing AI.** Continue investing in fraud, risk, efficiency, and banker support, but begin translating AI into customer-visible improvements.
- **Deploy conversational interfaces for complex needs.** Prioritize use cases such as financial guidance, product comparison, payments support, and issue resolution.
- **Design for "tell me," not "do it for me."** Use AI to explain, guide, and recommend — not to take consequential actions without customer understanding and customer consent.

- **Keep humans in the loop for high-trust moments**. Escalation to bankers or specialists should be built into AI journeys for advice, lending, fraud, exceptions, and emotionally sensitive interactions.
- **Understand that expectations are reset by large nationals and external AI tools.** Customers will not wait for every bank to be ready; their expectations will be shaped by the best digital and AI experiences they encounter.
- **Make trust and governance visible**. Customer-facing AI should be transparent, permissioned, auditable, and clearly bounded in what it can and cannot do.
- **Use AI to strengthen security and fraud prevention**. Fraud protection is a high-value use case where AI can improve customer confidence if alerts, explanations, and resolution paths are clear.

Act: Break Legacy Constraints to Deliver on Customer Expectations

Banks must build the foundations for next-generation banking. A bank's ability to align its "supply" with customer "demand" rests not only on the top of its tech stack but also its core foundation. Celent's study finds that customer demand is based on a broad definition of "personalization" in products and services. Banks saddled with legacy core systems could be hard-pressed to meet customer expectations for more intuitive and intelligent products and services, no matter how much they invest in the digital channels.

Defining "Personalization" in Banking: Intelligent Products and Services

Personalization enables the delivery of a unique and valuable experience to each customer at every interaction. Important information, insights, actions, and options are brought front and center. The customer is provided with what is most important to them at that moment.

New technologies and ever-increasing customer expectations should prompt financial institutions to rethink how they approach product and customer experience design. The traditional offerings of banks (e.g., checking/savings accounts, debit/credit cards, loans) are beginning to blur as retail banking is moving toward offerings aimed at meeting specific customer needs at different points in time.

Examples include:

- Accounts with features tailored to specific customer segments (e.g., families, frequent travelers, freelancers, underserved communities)
- Instant credit at the time of purchase, decisioned based on whole relationship and outside data
- Individualized pricing (e.g., interest rate dependent on number of transactions or products held)
- Non-traditional retail banking propositions in financial services (e.g., crypto-trading, investing) and beyond (e.g., booking accommodation)
- Products designed for open distribution through embedded finance partnerships

Together, this and more is what personalized banking looks like.

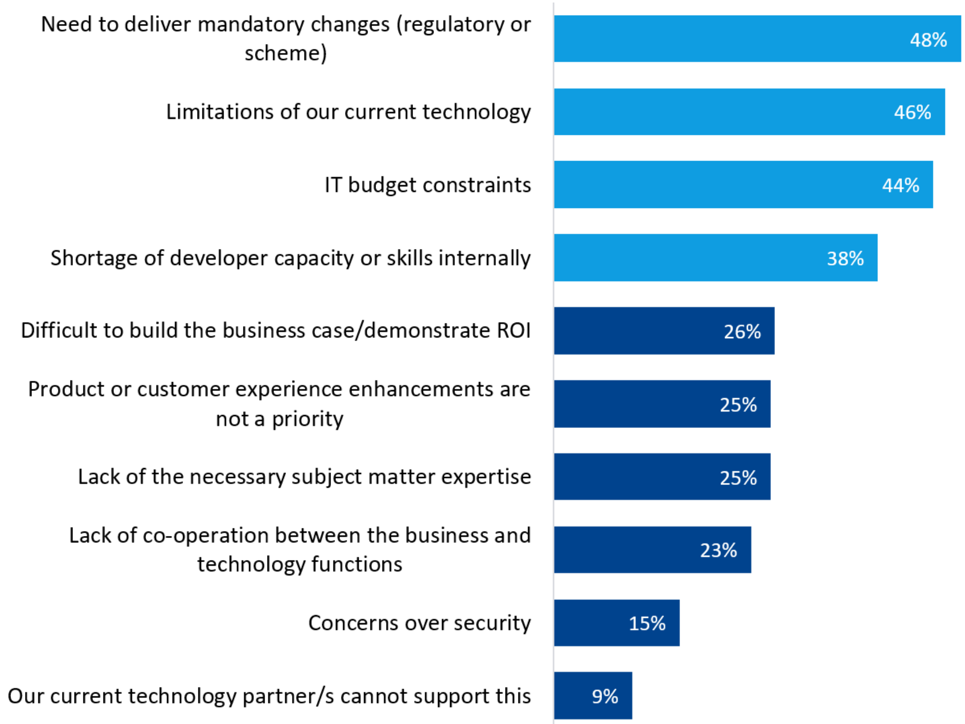
Celent strongly believes that banks can accelerate a reframing of product and service innovation around the customer, rather than traditional product templates and silos, to create competitive differentiation. To do so, financial institutions must proactively draw from the customer's past behavior, transaction history, product mix, known goals, life stage, and any number of other attributes that combine to deliver ongoing engagement-based value. Proactive engagement, respecting pre-set communication preferences, delivers value whenever the bank discovers an opportunity.

Core Modernization Challenges for Banks, Globally

Nearly half of banks acknowledge that mandatory changes (48%) or the limitations of their current technology and legacy platforms (46%), are barriers to innovation. Overall IT budget constraints, and shortage of developer capacity or skills round out the Top 4 barriers (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Limitations of Current Technology is the Top Barrier to Innovation

Q: Which are the biggest barriers to delivering enhancements to your products and customer experiences?



Base: Retail banking respondents (sample: 216)
Source: Celent Dimensions Survey 2026.

It is worth noting here that fully one-quarter (26%) of banks say that product or customer experience enhancements are not a priority within the institution, a surprising response rate for what our study reveals to be the main area of customer dissatisfaction.

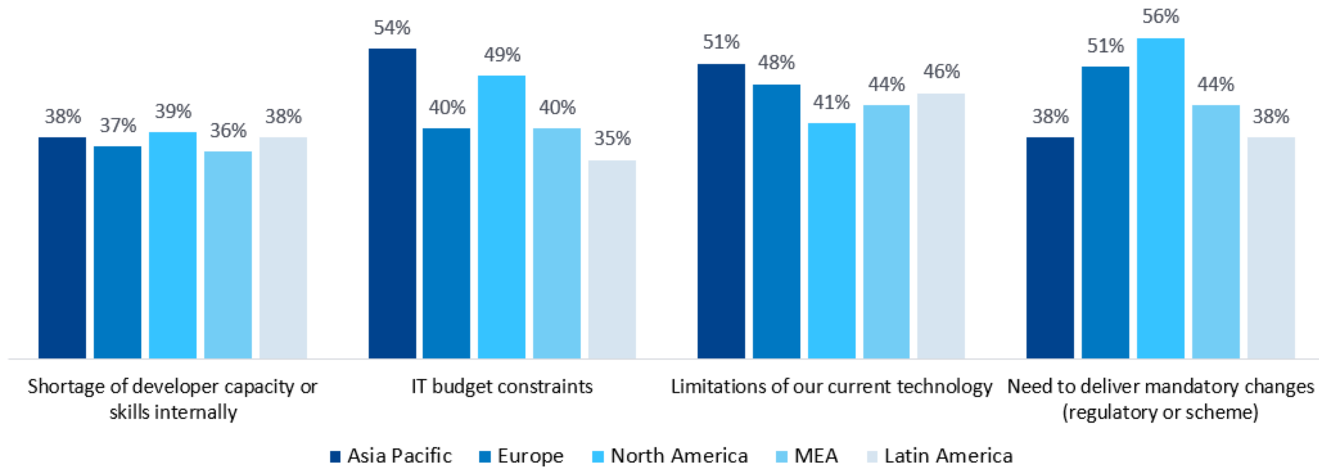
Legacy platforms at many banks restrict the ability to enhance product and service experiences quickly and cost effectively. The shortage of developer capacity has also become a significant issue in recent years. Both are driving an imperative for legacy modernization and platform replacement to reduce long-term spend on maintenance and to increase innovation agility in the future.

Regionally, the top barriers to innovation are not consistent (Figure 15). Limitations to current technology, the most significant barrier globally, is slightly elevated for APAC and European banks especially. APAC banks see a significantly higher barrier from IT budget constraints than other regions, and mandatory changes related to regulation are the highest barrier cited by European banks.

While fourth overall globally, shortage of developer capacity is very much the same across regions, with between 36% and 38% of banks citing this barrier.

North America stands out for a relatively high emphasis on budget constraints and the need to deliver mandatory (regulatory or other) changes. APAC leads the way in budgetary constraints as a barrier.

Figure 15: Barriers Vary in Importance by Region



Base: Retail banking respondents (sample: 216)
Source: Celent Dimensions Survey 2026.

A good number of banks are focused on core banking and non-card payments investments (two areas tied closely to customer dissatisfaction).

46% of banks plan either major changes or full system replacement of their **core banking system** in 2027.

44% of banks plan major enhancements or full system replacements for their **non-card payments platforms**.

But core modernization is a bit uneven as an investment priority across regions (Figure 16). While modernizing platforms (including core) is a Top 1 or 2 priority for Europe and LATAM banks, it is only a third priority for North American banks and is not in the Top 3 for APAC and MEA.

At the same time, product innovation and enhancements rank quite highly across the board, landing within the Top 3 priorities in all regions except North America. This is a very positive signal that banks are planning to improve product experience, in contrast to US banks that have let this slide down the priority list in recent years.

Figure 16: Investment Priorities Are Uneven Across Global Regions

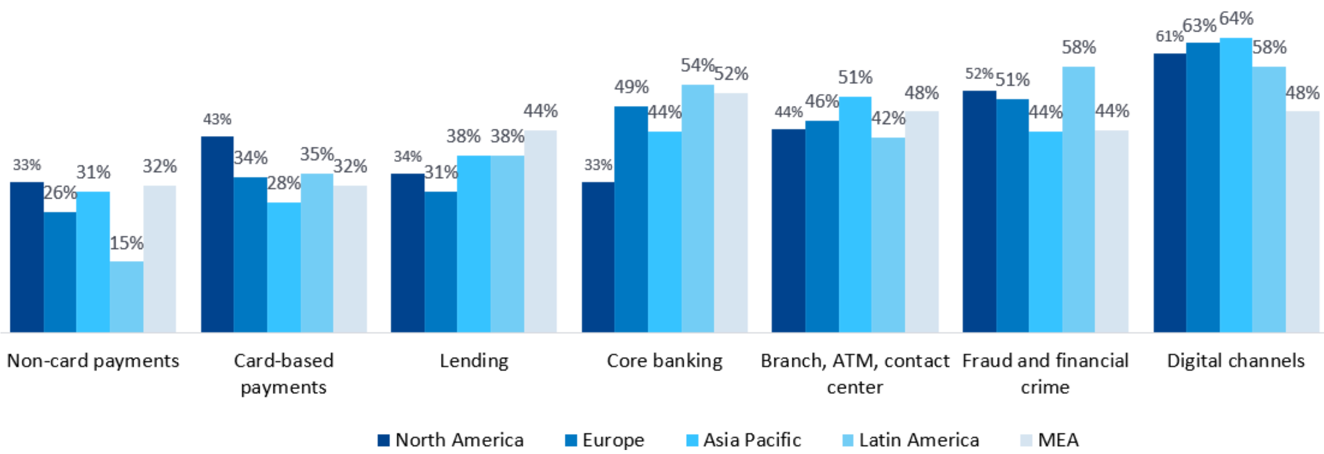
	Global Total	North America	Europe	APAC	LATAM	MEA
Improving IT security and operational resilience	51%	64%	46%	54%	42%	40%
Product innovation or enhancements	43%	25%	43%	64%	54%	40%
Enhancing the customer experience	43%	61%	35%	33%	31%	44%
Replacing or modernizing end-of-life systems and platforms	43%	43%	51%	31%	46%	40%
Meeting compliance and regulatory requirements	38%	33%	40%	44%	38%	40%
Gaining speed and agility as an organization	38%	36%	38%	36%	42%	44%
Reducing expenses and improving operational efficiency	27%	30%	26%	15%	35%	32%
Exploring new business and operating models	17%	10%	20%	23%	12%	20%

Top Priority | Second Priority | Third Priority

Based on % top three priority; where tied based on % ranked first
Question: What are the priorities driving your IT strategy for the next 18 months?
Source: Celent Dimensions Survey 2026. Base: Retail banking respondents (sample: 216)

Banks are including core banking within their plans to migrate platforms to SaaS or public cloud architectures this year or next, with LATAM being a standout at 54% of banks noting plans to do so (Figure 17).

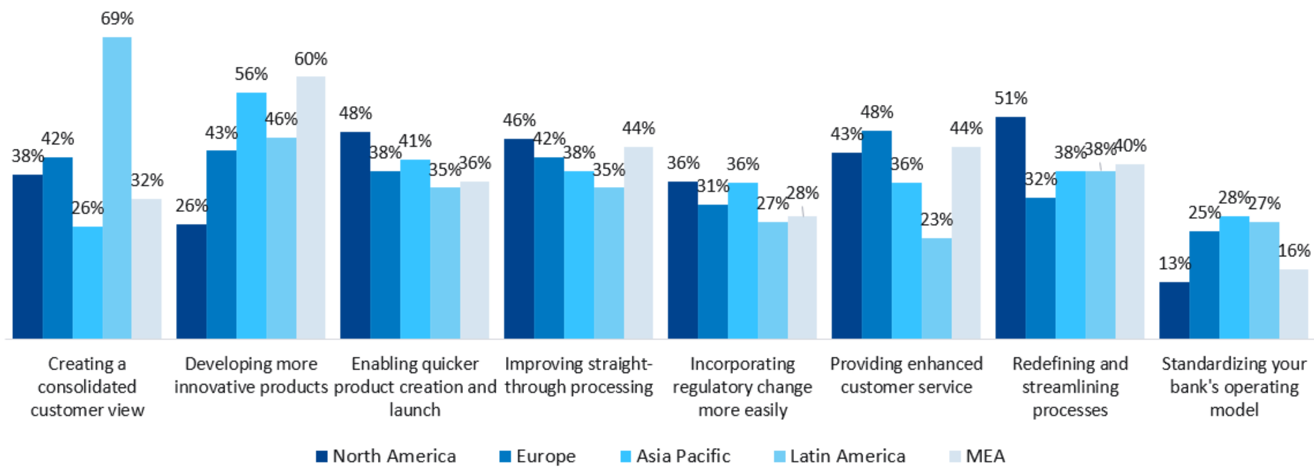
Figure 17: Bank Plans for SaaS Migration by Business Platform, regionally



Base: Retail banking respondents (sample: 216)
Question: Which of the following areas will see the greatest shift to SaaS or public cloud technologies at your institution in the coming 18 months?
Source: Celent Dimensions Survey 2026

Of those banks who are planning an investment in core banking, the strategic drivers vary by region (Figure 18) and size. For banks in MEA and APAC, product innovation is a significantly higher driver than for other regions. Europe and MEA are both more highly focused on providing enhanced customer experience, while LATAM is by far most highly driven by creating a consolidated customer view. These last two drivers can largely be grouped together into the effort of servicing customers more intelligently.

Figure 18: Core Banking Investment Drivers Differ Across Regions



Base: Retail banking respondents (sample: 216)
Question: What are your top three drivers for investment in core banking systems in your institution? US respondents. Sample: 50
Source: Celent Dimensions Survey 2026

Examining some of these results by bank size, Celent finds that drivers for regional sized banks differ from smaller and larger bank sizes.

In MEA, the larger the bank, the less emphasis was put on product innovation, despite the relatively high overall response rate for that driver. **Only 50% of large banks** cited product innovation, while banks sized up to $100 billion are more focused on product innovation (above 75%).

In APAC, the opposite is true. Regional-sized banks are less likely to focus on product innovation. **Only 45%** of banks sized $10 billion–$50 billion say product innovation is a driver of core banking investment.

Taken together, these trends indicate that not all banks are prioritizing the specific strategic product enhancements that customers say are most important to them and that they would switch banks to get.

Call to Action: Consumers Feel Banks Are Falling Short on Personalization

Our study reveals another important disconnect: Banks are prioritizing highly visible digital channel capabilities, while core-dependent capabilities such as product innovation and new business model exploration are further down the agenda. The risk is that near-term channel enhancements will outpace the underlying platform flexibility needed to sustain personalization, faster product innovation, and long-term competitive differentiation.

Consumers want a more personally tailored banking experience than they currently receive. Half rate their bank's personalization as no better than moderate (Figure 19), pointing to a clear gap between expectation and delivery.

Just under half of global consumers say their banks are doing "very" or "extremely well" at personalizing products and services to their needs.

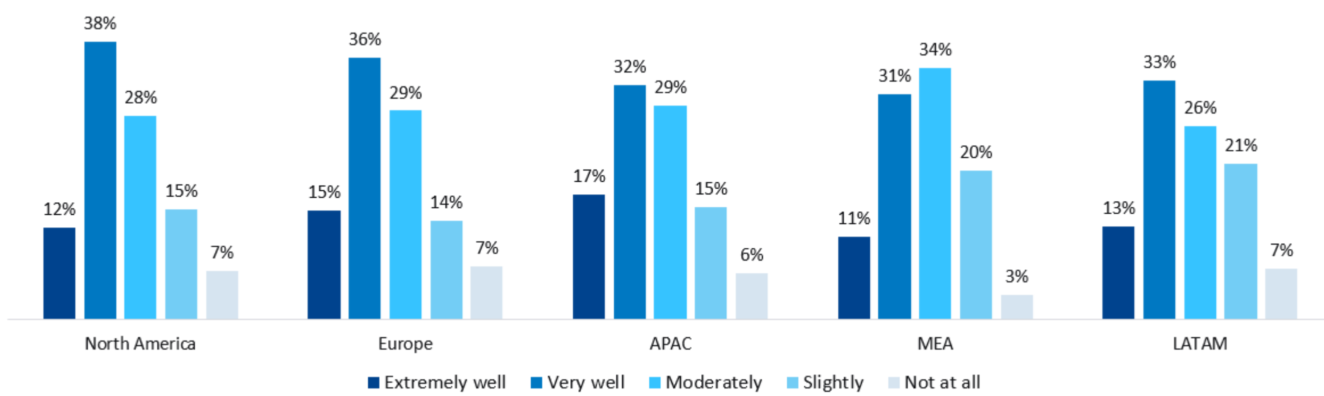
High digital-use customers feel their banks are doing a **better job at personalization** than those who prefer branch or telephone banking, with fully 57% of the latter group responding with "moderately" or worse, vs. only 48% of the highly digital customers.

Globally, older customers (50 and above) are least likely to agree that the bank is tailoring products and services well enough for them, and younger consumers have about the same level of dissatisfaction as middle-aged customers.

Regionally, Celent finds that customers in MEA and LATAM are more likely to say their bank isn't doing as well with personalizing products and services (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Customer Attitudes on Bank Personalization, by region

Q: How well does your bank tailor its products and services to your needs?



Source: Celent 2026 Global Consumer Survey June-July 2026; All global respondents

Within **LATAM**, we find that customers of specific bank types are far more likely to report a lack of personalization.

Private national bank customers report the **highest** amount of personalization: **56% say "very" or "extremely well"**.

Digital-only bank customers say their banks are doing well at personalization, with **87%** saying the bank is personalizing **at least "moderately" or better**.

Credit cooperative customers were most likely to say their bank tailors products and **services only slightly or not at all** (**54%** combined total).

Likewise, in **MEA**, important and different variations emerge.

Large national bank customers reported **the highest** level of personalization, with **90%** reporting their bank is personalizing at least "moderately" or better.

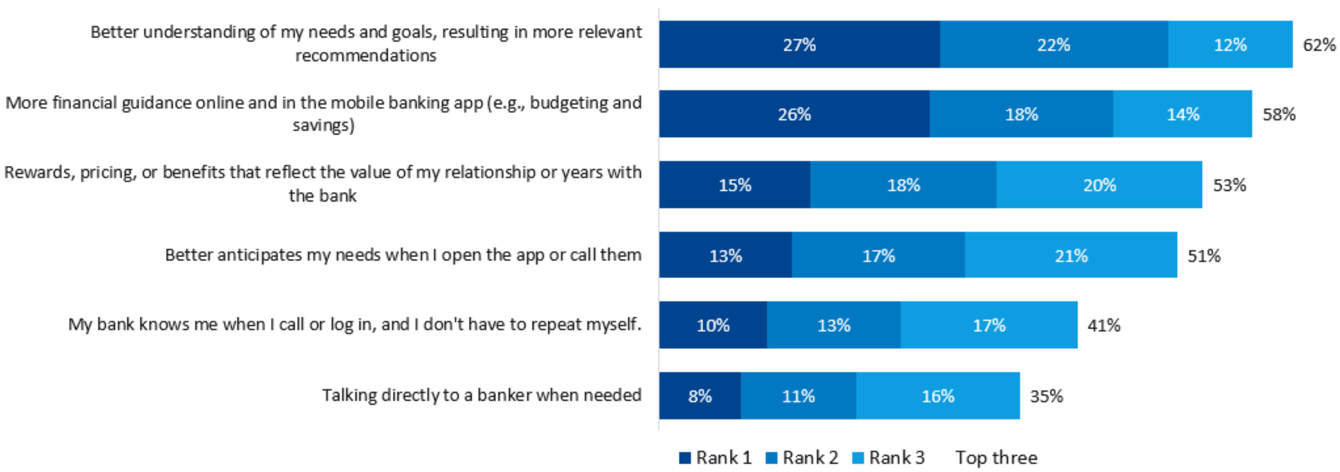
Digital-only banks fared the **worst** in MEA, with **only 41%** of customers saying that products and services are personalized "very" or "extremely well."

An important distinction from digital-only banks are the Digital Wallet providers, where fully 25% of customers say the service personalizes "extremely well." Celent observes that the MEA region has seen a tremendous increase in all-digital banks and financial service providers in the past five years. Adoption of all-digital banking in this region has been quite high by global standards.

Globally, consumers want their bank to demonstrate a better understanding of their needs and goals and provide digital financial guidance to match, and over half want benefits that reflect the size or length of their relationship with the bank (Figure 20 below). Consumers also indicate that personalization is desired in both digital and human-assisted channels (51% say their bank should anticipate needs when they open the app *or* call). Banks must figure out how to deliver personalization digitally, in-person, and at scale.

Figure 20: Globally, Customers Want Personalized Experience and Products

Q: How can your primary bank deliver a more personalized experience?



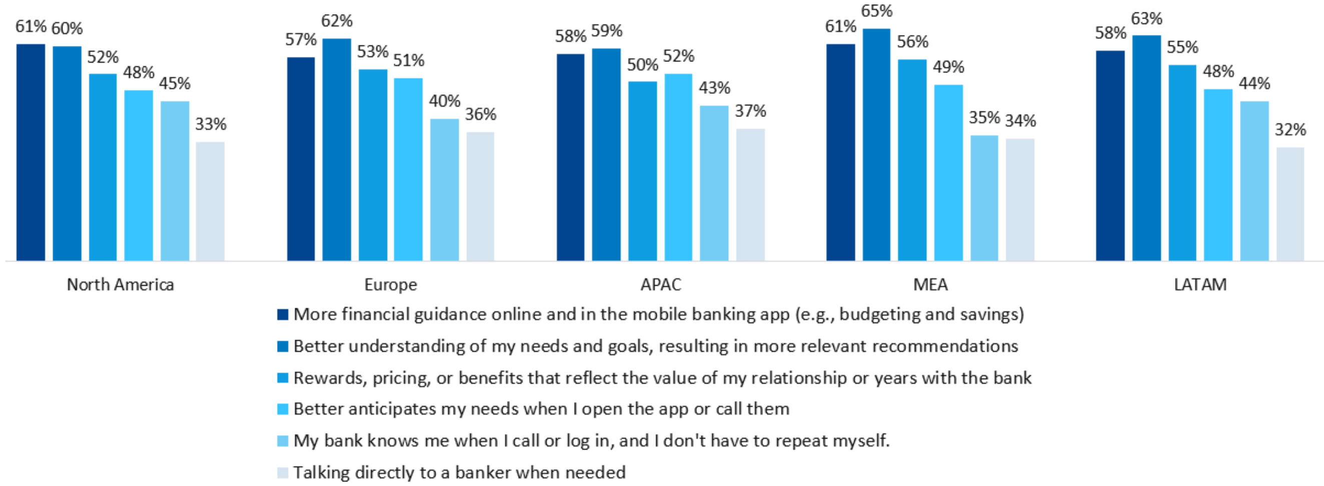
Source: Celent 2026 Global Consumer Survey June-July 2026; All global respondents outside North America

Celent examined the four most requested personalization areas by region (Figure 21). A key point stands out in LATAM and APAC.

In both LATAM and APAC vs. other regions, customers place relatively higher emphasis on the bank knowing them when they call or log in, without having to repeat information already provided. In APAC, more than other regions, customers say their bank should better anticipate their needs when they log in or call.

Both of these findings indicate a stronger desire in LATAM and APAC for stronger relationship demonstration by the bank, crucially, in all channels.

Figure 21: Customers Want a Personalized Experience, by region



Source: Celent 2026 Global Consumer Survey June-July 2026; All global respondents

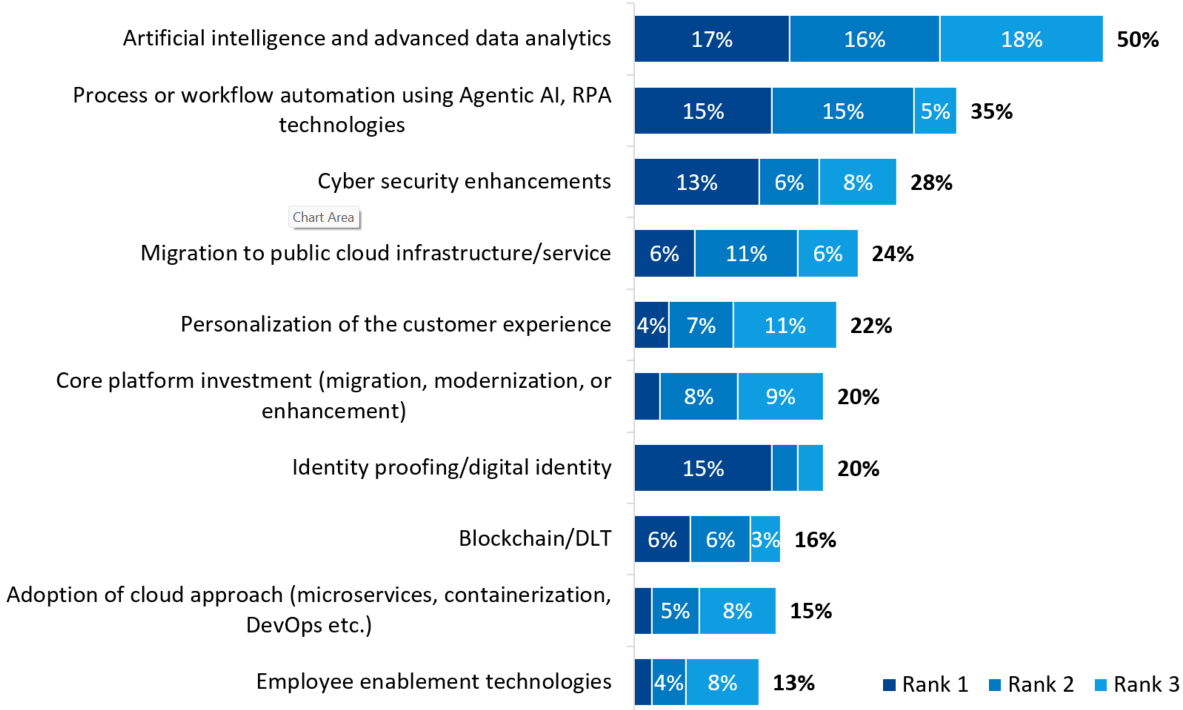
Bank "Supply" Disconnect with Consumer Demand

While personalization expectations vary by region, the underlying message is consistent: Customers want banking relationships that feel more relevant, supportive, and responsive.

The Celent Dimensions Survey suggests that personalization of customer experience is the third highest technology priority for retail banks outside of North America in 2026 and 2027. However, only 4% of banks rank "personalization of the customer experience" as their top priority, and fewer than one in four rank it at all (Figure 22, next page). This particular investment has declined in priority from 2025 and has been crowded out by heavy recent priority on AI-related investment.

Figure 22: Technology Investments Planned by Banks, Globally, next 18 months

Q: Which of the following are your leading technology/process investment priorities in the next 18 months?



Source: Celent Dimensions Survey 2026. Base: Retail banking respondents (sample: 216)

Regionally, we find only LATAM banks naming personalization of customer experience as a Top3 priority (Figure 23, next page). But there are important standout areas by bank size within regions where banks are more highly focused on personalization of customer experience as a technology investment priority.

In **Europe**, smaller-sized banks ($10 billion–$20 billion) rank personalization most highly; **43% rank it in their Top 3**. Likewise, 33% of banks sized $50 billion–$100 billion name it as a Top 3 priority.

In **LATAM**, most of the priority is within the largest regional sized banks ($50 billion–$100 billion) where a full **75%** of those banks name personalization as a priority.

Figure 23: Personalization Is a Much Higher Priority for Banks in LATAM, Core Modernization in Europe

	Global Total	North America	Europe	APAC	LATAM	MEA
Artificial intelligence and advanced data analytics	50%	57%	48%	56%	50%	32%
Process or workflow automation using Agentic AI, RPA technologies	35%	20%	38%	54%	31%	36%
Cyber security enhancements	28%	52%	8%	28%	12%	8%
Migration to public cloud infrastructure/service	24%	34%	24%	10%	23%	24%
Personalization of the customer experience	22%	18%	25%	10%	38%	24%
Core platform investment (migration, modernization, or enhancement)	20%	20%	29%	13%	12%	20%
Identity proofing/digital identity	20%	21%	12%	26%	27%	24%
Blockchain/DLT	16%	5%	18%	13%	31%	24%

Top Priority | Second Priority | Third Priority

Based on % top three priority; where tied based on % ranked first
Question: Which of the following are your leading technology/process investment priorities in the next 18 months?
Source: Celent Dimensions Survey 2026. Base: Retail banking respondents (sample: 216)

Celent's bank leadership interviews reveal that while banks recognize the value of improving customer engagement through personalization, they acknowledge that personalization is hard to achieve. One leader in Europe, citing regulatory constraints on customer data protection, note that this also puts an emphasis on suitability of products offered—the bank needs to be right with the offer. Customer consent to share data also restrains the bank's ability to broaden the offerings or data that can be used for analysis (as in credit decisioning). Another leader noted that regulations requiring banks to carefully check payee information can add friction to real time payment experiences.

Strategic Guidance

Banks should view core modernization and personalization of customer experience as strategic responses to changing customer demand. The institutions most likely to benefit will be those that modernize with a clear commercial purpose: simpler operations, lower run costs, stronger resilience, faster product development, better data access, and more personalized customer engagement. The risk for banks that defer too long is that digital and AI initiatives will outpace the platforms needed to support them — leaving competitors better positioned to convert customer dissatisfaction into switching.

"Future-proofing" core banking includes modernizing and architecting core banking systems so they can adapt continuously to new products, digital channels, regulatory requirements, AI-enabled workflows, ecosystem integrations, and customer expectations without requiring repeated large-scale replacement or disruptive re-platforming. The core then changes from a constraint into a platform for continuous change.

For retail banks, the benefits are strongest where modernization directly supports digital customer satisfaction, deposit retention, faster innovation, regulatory resilience, and more intelligent customer engagement.

Full core replacement is not the only path. Celent's research suggests that the winning approach is not necessarily wholesale replacement, but building an architecture that allows banks to modernize legacy estates, preserve governance, adopt AI, improve engagement, and respond faster to customers, competitors, and regulators.

Many banks will continue to modernize progressively, using APIs, integration layers, component replacement, cloud migration, and data modernization to reduce constraints while managing cost and risk. The key is to avoid creating another layer of temporary workarounds that limits future flexibility. Banks should prioritize architectures that are API-native, modular, cloud-ready where appropriate, and are able to support microservices, real-time data access, and faster product configuration.

- **Use core modernization to strengthen personalization.** Customers increasingly expect products, pricing, and service experiences that reflect their needs, life stage, relationship value, and loyalty. Banks should ensure modernization programs accomplish personalization as an end state across digital and human channels.
- **Restore product development as a strategic priority.** Declining priority for product development is a warning sign. If banks want to meet rising expectations for personalization, pricing flexibility, and tailored offers, they need platforms and operating models that support rapid product creation and modification.
- **Use modernization to reduce the tax of legacy systems.** Legacy platforms consume budget, developer capacity, and management attention. Banks should quantify how much innovation is being delayed or abandoned because of maintenance burden, technical debt, and integration complexity.
- **Prioritize modular, API-native, and microservices-enabled platforms.** Banks should favor solutions that provide native extensibility rather than bolt-on capabilities. This will be critical as product innovation, AI, data integration, and digital engagement requirements continue to evolve.
- **Treat resilience and security as modernization accelerators.** Banks already agree on the need for resilience and security as platform priorities. These should be used to justify broader modernization, especially where legacy systems increase operational, cyber, fraud, or compliance risk.

Banks should not think of personalization as simply better targeting, adjustable dashboards, or more refined marketing. The strategic opportunity is to build banking experiences that recognize the customer's relationship, anticipate their needs, and deliver relevant support across digital and human channels. Regional banks, in particular, have a strong opportunity to win if they can pair trust and advice with digital experiences that meet rising customer expectations.

- **Make personalization a growth priority.** Treat personalized products, pricing, guidance, and fee structures as drivers of acquisition, retention, and relationship depth.
- **Use digital-only banks' gaps as an opening.** High demand for financial guidance among digital-only customers gives traditional banks a chance to differentiate through advice, trust, and support.
- **Align digital investment with switching triggers.** If banks expect digital channels to attract new customers, investment should prioritize the features customers say would make them switch.
- **Build for specific customer outcomes.** Data and AI readiness should result in visible improvements such as tailored offers, relationship-aware pricing, proactive guidance, and faster servicing.

- **Keep human support available and make it purposeful.** Access to a banker may not be the most requested improvement overall, but it remains relevant, especially for complex needs and higher-value relationships, and banks need to improve personalization for their in-person customers as much as in digital channels.

Concluding Thoughts

Banks must respond to a new era of customer expectations for faster, more advisory, personalized service, shaped by AI, agentic capabilities, and mobile engagement. The challenge is not simply to modernize digital apps or to automate existing processes; it is to combine human support with technology to make banking feel more relevant, responsive, and trustworthy.

But the formula only works when grounded with human assistance as needed. Customers may welcome proactive outreach, tailored guidance, and faster digital service, but they still want access to a person when the issue is complex, sensitive, or high stakes. “Human assisted” ensures that AI and other technology layers don’t replace the relationship; they strengthen it.

The same principle applies inside the bank. Employees need to be empowered with the right AI tools, agentic partners, training, and governance so they can deliver better engagement experiences with confidence. When employees understand how AI is being used, have easy access to tools, and operate within explainable governance frameworks, they become better-equipped to support customers and build trust.

The goal for banks is to abstract all the complexity into the background. AI, automation, data, and agentic capabilities should not “fog up the glass” for customers or employees. Instead, they should make banking feel intuitive, simpler, more responsive, and more human. In this model, technology becomes a force multiplier for trust — not by removing people from banking, but by delivering the experiences that customers expect, and helping bankers show up at the moments that matter most.

Customers have made their needs and expectations clear: a balance of more personalized banking and self-service. They want their banks to make them feel more financially secure and protect them from ever-present fraud. To respond, banks need to have a strong core foundation on top of which they overlay superior digital banking and trusted AI capabilities.

Retaining Trust Is an Everyday Challenge

Customer trust is hard to build and can be lost in a single moment.

Bank leaders say trust is built when customers understand how the bank uses their information, believe their privacy is being protected, and feel confident that the institution will not exploit the relationship for short-term gain. Fraud protection was also viewed as central to trust: Customers expect their bank to safeguard their money, detect suspicious activity, and respond quickly when something goes wrong.

Trust can be damaged quickly when banks fail in moments that matter. An undetected fraud event, data breach, or privacy incident can immediately undermine confidence. Emerging AI-enabled interactions introduce another risk: inaccurate, incoherent, or “hallucinated” advice can erode trust if customers believe the bank’s digital tools are unreliable or unsafe. Availability is equally important: If digital channels, payment services, or human support are unavailable during a critical customer moment, the bank risks being seen as unreliable.

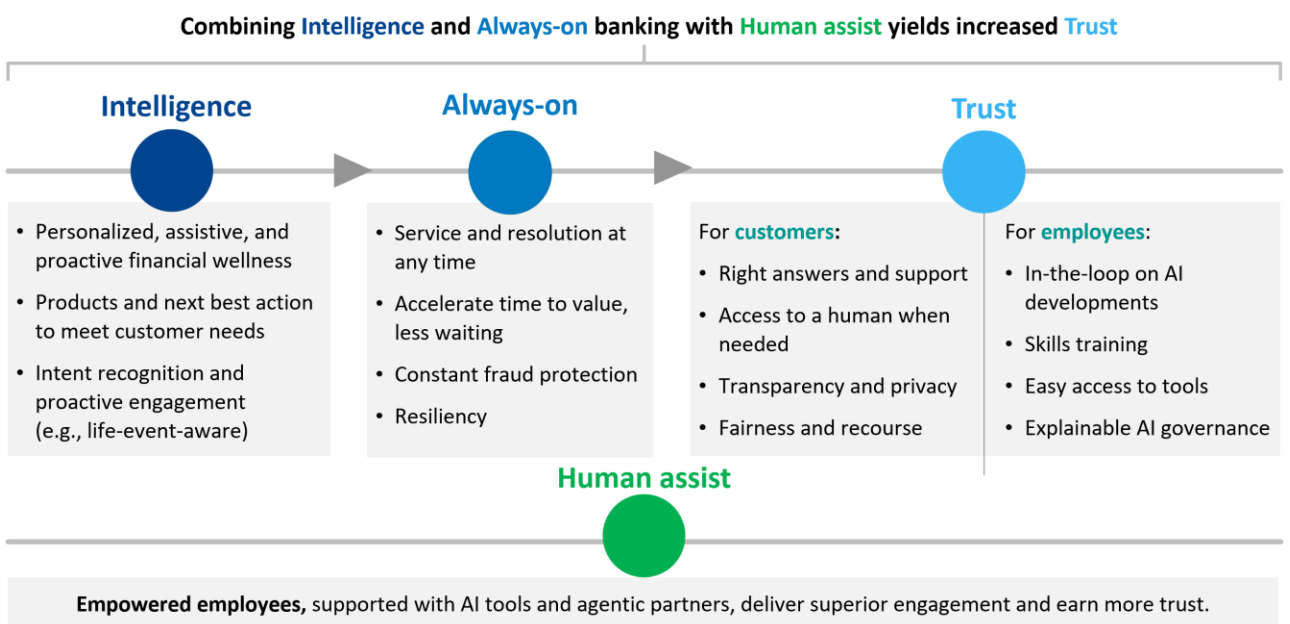
Leaders also highlighted the everyday trust risks, including failing to recognize the value of a long-standing relationship, offering generic treatment where personalization is expected, or creating unnecessary friction through low limits, cumbersome processes, or poorly designed digital journeys. In this sense, trust is not only a matter of brand reputation or security controls; it is reinforced—or weakened—through every interaction where the customer expects the bank to be secure, transparent, responsive, resilient, and fair.

A Framework for Delivering Trust in Banking

Celent research has led us to develop a simple framework for customer engagement today (Figure 24). Banks can use this model as a guide for meeting the changing expectations of consumers. This framework includes a new central formula: ***Intelligence + Always-on Banking + Human Assist = Trust***

Intelligence enables banks to better understand customer intent, anticipate needs, recommend next-best actions, and support proactive financial wellness. Always-on banking ensures customers can receive service, resolution, fraud protection, and support whenever they need it, with less waiting and faster time to value.

Figure 24: The New Banking Engagement Formula Is a Force Multiplier



Source: Celent Research

Celent has worked directly with major banks from around the world to understand how this framework comes together, producing real bank benefits and exceptional customer outcomes. Two of those banks were recognized as Celent Model Banks for 2026, Banco do Brasil and Techcombank of Vietnam. These financial institutions have deployed technology as a means, with customer-centricity as the end. We invite clients to read both case studies at celent.com.

For questions or to continue the conversation from this report, please contact us:

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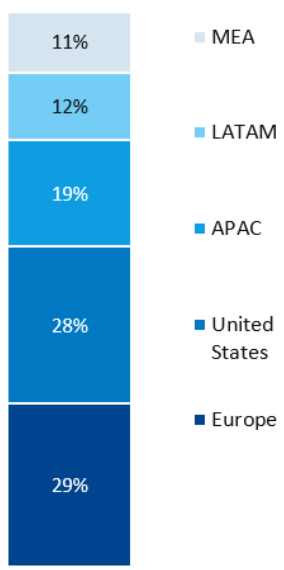
Appendix

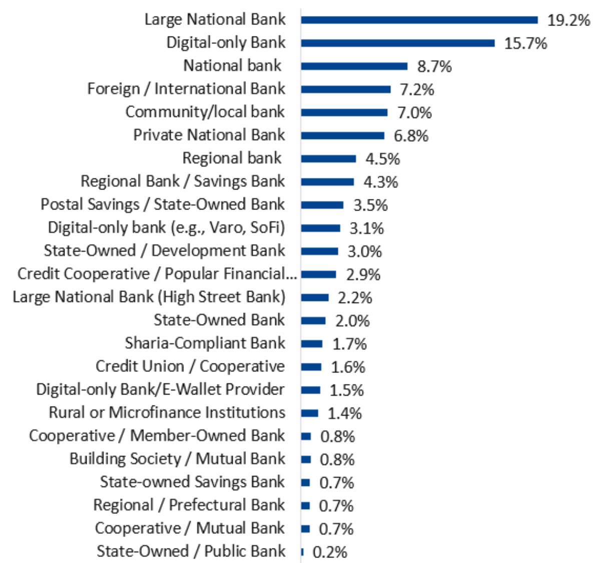
Findings in this report are drawn from a consumer banking customer survey conducted globally from June-July 2026. **Total consumer respondents were 2,515**.

Figure 25: Global Consumer Survey Demographics

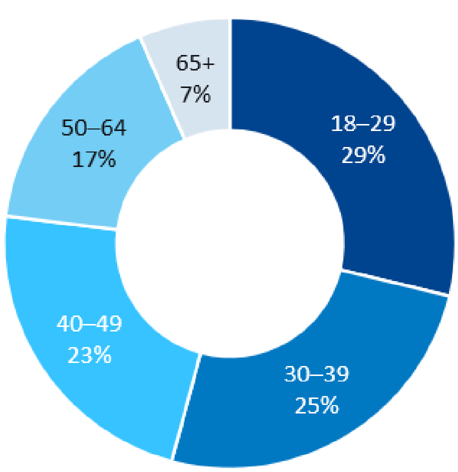
By region:



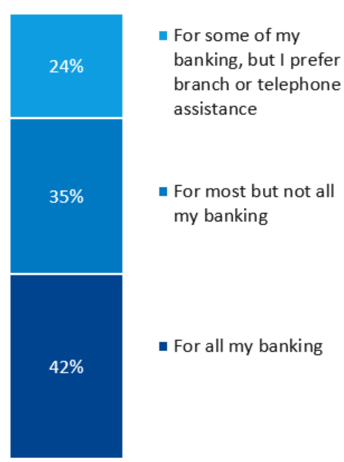
By primary institution type:



By age range:



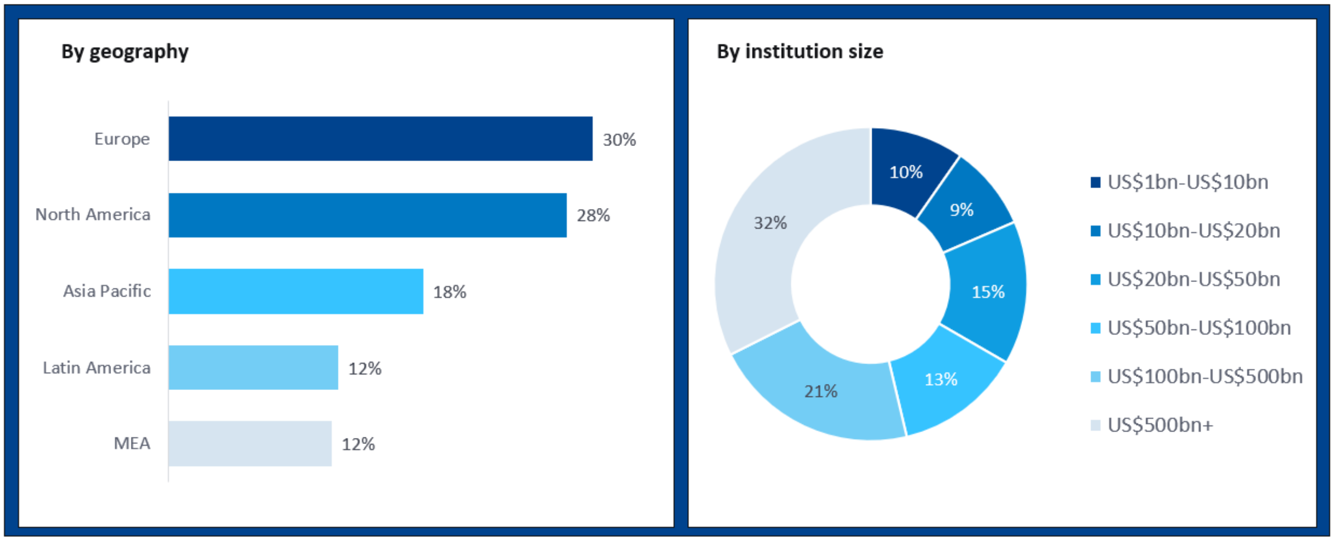
By channel preference:



Source: Celent 2026 Global Consumer Survey June-July 2026

Additional insights in this report are drawn from the Celent Dimensions Survey of retail banking leaders. **Total respondents to the Dimensions Survey were 216**.

Figure 26: Demographics for Celent Dimensions IT Pressures and Priorities Survey, 2026



Source: Celent Dimensions Survey 2026

Institutions from the following countries participated in the survey:

Europe
Austria
Belgium
France
Germany
Hungary
Italy
Netherlands
Nordics
Poland
Spain
Switzerland
UK
Czech Republic

Asia Pacific
Australia
Hong Kong
India
Indonesia
Japan
New Zealand
Singapore

Latin America
Argentina
Brazil
Chile
Mexico
Columbia

MEA
Egypt
Nigeria
South Africa
UAE
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

North America
Canada
United States

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Business practice evaluations. We spend time evaluating your business processes and requirements. Based on our knowledge of the market, we identify potential process or technology constraints and provide clear insights that will help you implement industry best practices.

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Transform progressively, reduce complexity and support faster, intelligent change across products, services and operations.

Drive growth through digital

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Accelerate payments at scale

Support growing volumes, expand services with new rails and manage risks with built-in real-time protection.

Run smarter with AI

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