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2012 Global Consumer Pulse Research

Key Findings

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Contents

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

- The Accenture Global Consumer Survey is an annual research project that assesses consumer attitudes toward marketing, sales and customer service practices. The 2012 survey includes online responses from more than 12,000 consumers in 32 countries about their experiences with providers in ten industries.
- One in five consumers switched providers in 2012, up five percent from 2011.
- However, the majority (85 percent) of consumers say their service provider could have done something differently to prevent them from switching.
- Among those who would have stayed if their service provider had acted differently, two-thirds (67 percent) pointed to having their customer service issue resolved during their first contact as a factor; 54 percent might have remained loyal if they had been rewarded for doing more business with their provider.
- Of the ten industries covered, among the largest rises in switching were wireless phone providers (26 percent of consumers switched in 2012, up from 21 percent in 2011); internet service providers (23 percent switched, up from 19 percent in 2011) and retailers (22 percent switched, up from 16 percent in 2011).
- Broken promises are a top area of frustration for consumers: nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of respondents indicate it's extremely frustrating when a company delivers a different service experience from what it promised upfront. Seventy eight percent of consumers say they are likely to switch providers when they encounter such broken promises.
- Other frustrations that make consumers more likely to switch include: Having to contact customer service multiple times for the same reason (selected by 65 percent of consumers); dealing with unfriendly customer service agents (65 percent) and being on hold for a long time when contacting customer service (61 percent).

Executive Summary

- A tailored experience is critical to a strong customer relationship. Nearly half (48 percent) of respondents say that, compared to 12 months ago, they have higher expectations of getting specialized treatment for being a "good" customer. A similar proportion (50 percent) say it is extremely important for customer service people to know their history so they don't have to repeat themselves each time they call.
- Nearly a third (31 percent) of respondents prefer companies that use information about them to make their experience more efficient from one step to the next. However, only a quarter (24 percent) said their providers deliver tailored experiences.
- Among the ten industries included in the survey, providers in the travel and tourism, retail banking and life insurance industries earn the highest marks for providing tailored experiences: 32 percent of respondents say travel and tourism providers offer tailored experiences, followed by 27 percent who say the same about retail banks and 25 percent about life insurance providers.
- As technology provides an ever-growing number of channels for consumers to interact with companies, the Accenture survey found that on average, consumers use five to six channels to learn about and select providers, including:
  - Word of mouth, relied upon by 79 percent of consumers to get information about providers
  - Corporate websites, used by nearly three-quarters (71 percent) of consumers
  - Online sources such as expert review sites, news sites and product comparison sites, used by nearly two-thirds (63 percent)
  - Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, used by 47 percent of consumers
- Nearly a third, (31 percent) of consumers say they trust comments posted by people they know, echoing the importance of word of mouth. More than a quarter (28 percent) say positive comments in social media affect purchasing decisions and 28 percent say negative comments do so.

Executive Summary

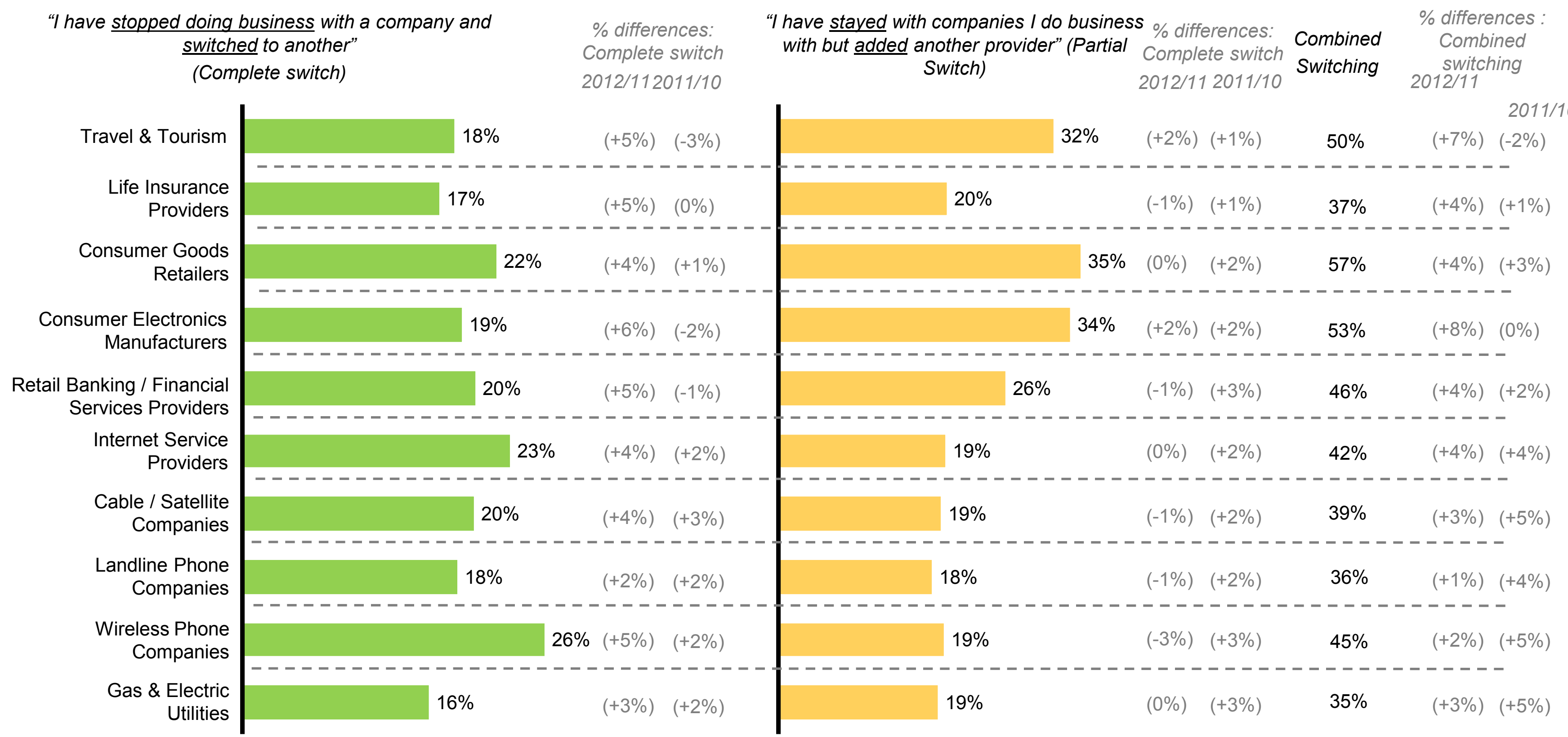
- Tried and true strategies for customer acquisition, loyalty and retention are struggling to keep pace with consumers who are perpetually in motion, more technologically savvy than ever, and increasingly unpredictable. The news in this year's research is that customers want to be loyal but customer service often fails to meet their expectations.
- In the digital marketplace, companies can improve social listening capabilities and apply predictive analytics to quickly identify and respond to potential customer issues before problems arise.
- To convince consumers to stay – and spend more—many companies also will need to develop more tailored offers and interactions that connect with consumers' specific needs. Taking such proactive steps to keep customers requires companies to use analytics to mine the vast stores of data they possess to gain greater insight into customers' desires and intentions and behave in the ways that customers want them to. Failing to use that data equates to not listening and can result in customers searching for someone who will.
- Consumers appear to be migrating to increasingly polarized camps: one group that prefers traditional interactions, such as telephone, and one tech-savvy group that demands seamless interactions across all digital platforms. Many companies, however, approach their customers with a decades-old, 'one size fits all' sales and service model that they must evolve to satisfy the different ways consumers want to interact with the companies they buy from.

Key Findings

On average, one in five consumers switched providers in 2012, up five percent from 2011.

Percent of consumers who made a complete or partial provider switch during last six to 12 months

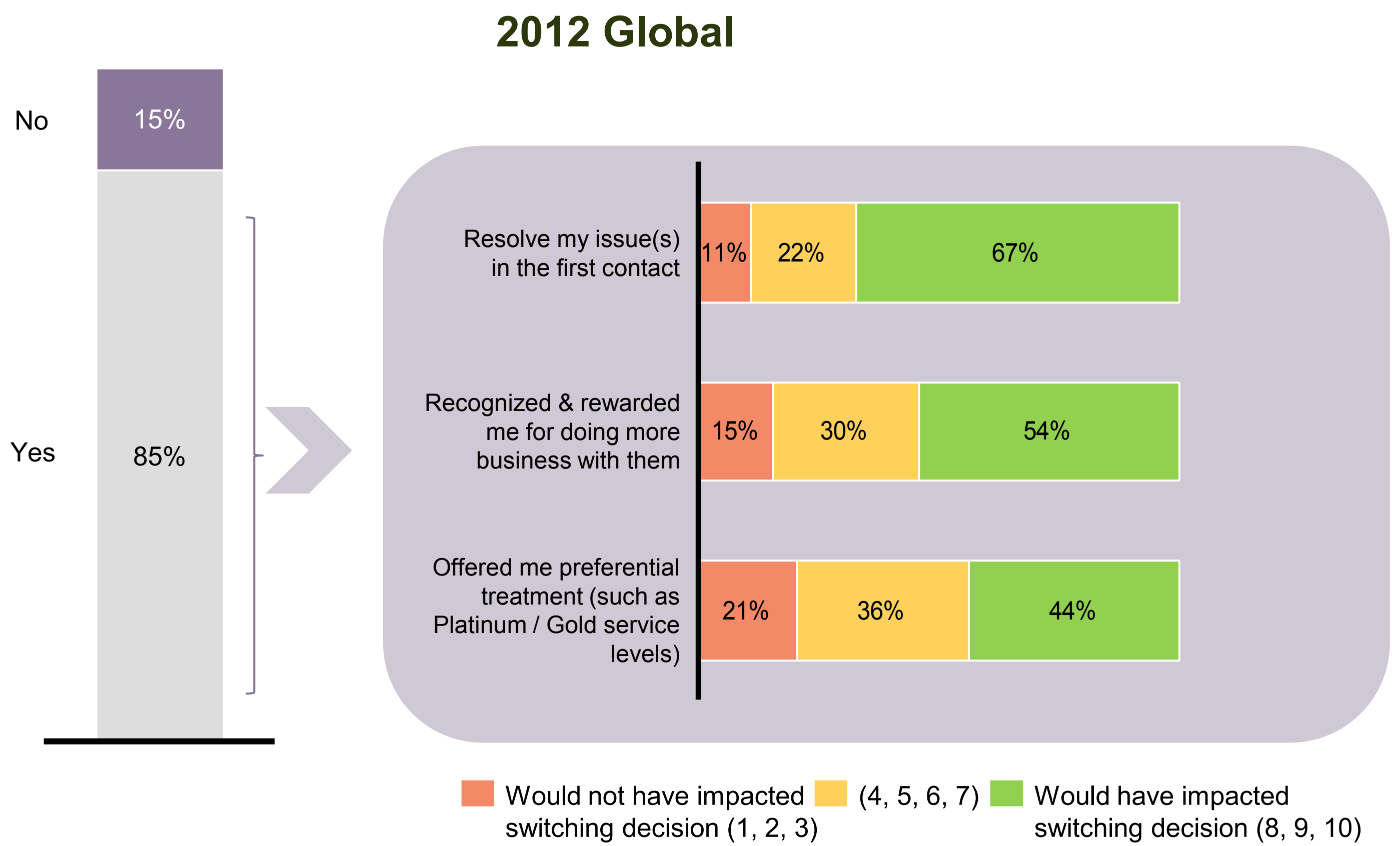
2010 Global



NOTE: Percentage values indicated in "( )" represent differences between 2010 & 2011 and 2011 & 2012 data.

The majority—85 percent—of consumers say their service provider could have done something differently to prevent them from switching, including resolving their customer service issue during their first contact, and rewarding them for their business.

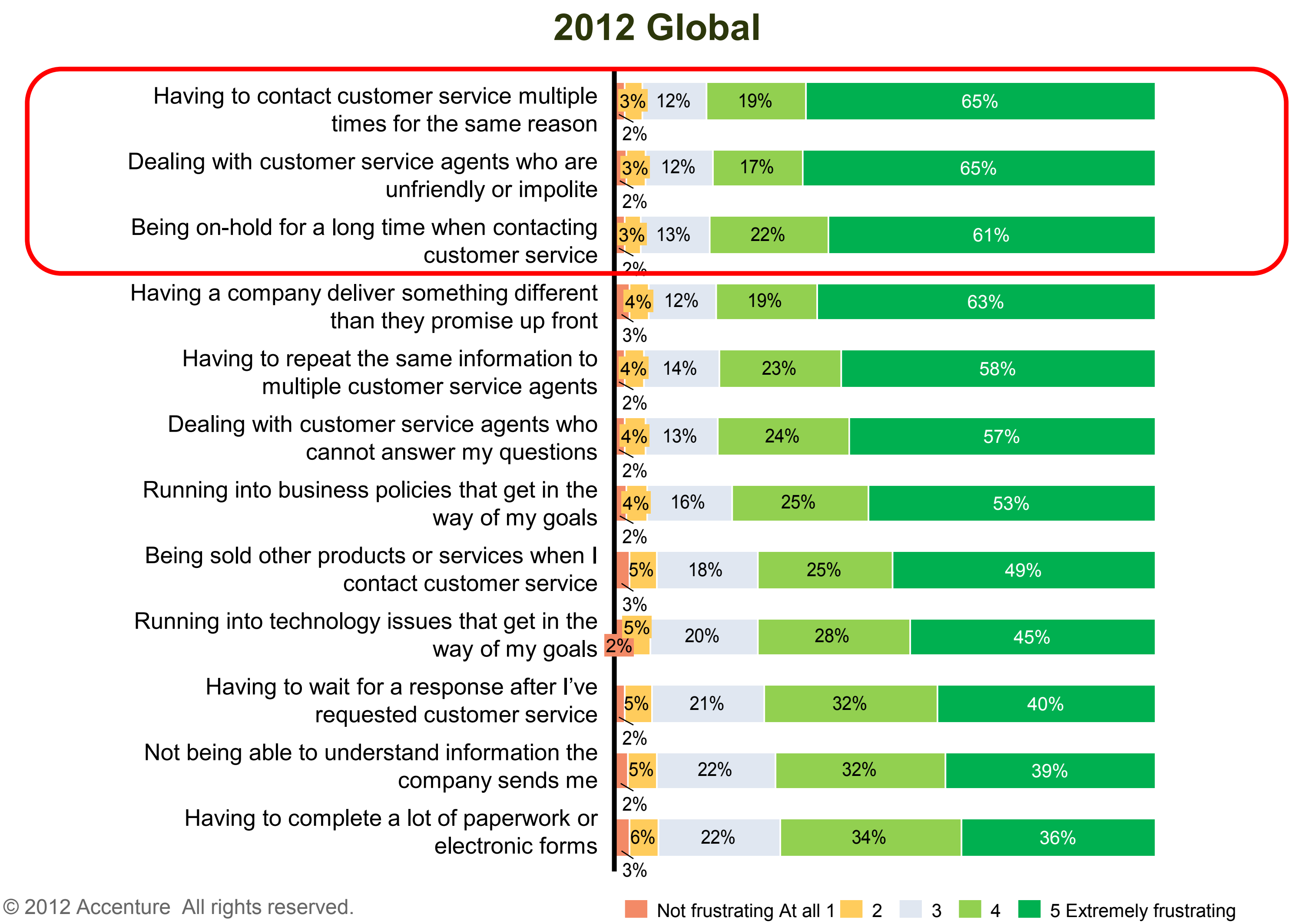
Could your service provider have done something differently to prevent you from switching?



Base size: respondents who agreed that their service provider could have done something differently in order to have kept them (n=6676)
* New question included in 2012

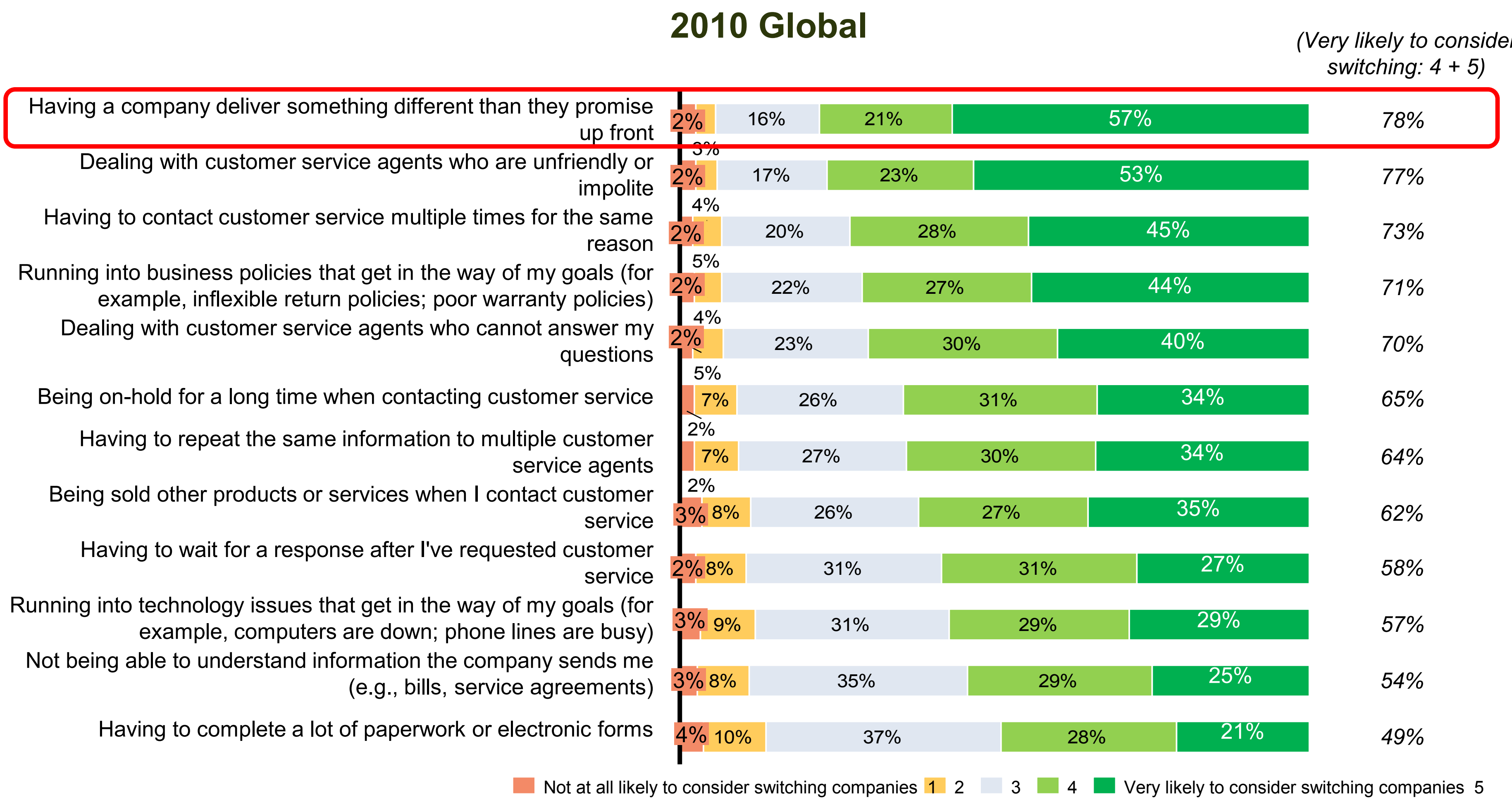
The top frustrations consumers have with customer service are having to contact customer service multiple times for the same reason, dealing with impolite service agents and being put on hold for a long time.

Frustrations with customer service practices



More than three-quarters (78 percent) of global consumers indicate they are likely to switch providers when they encounter broken promises from the provider.

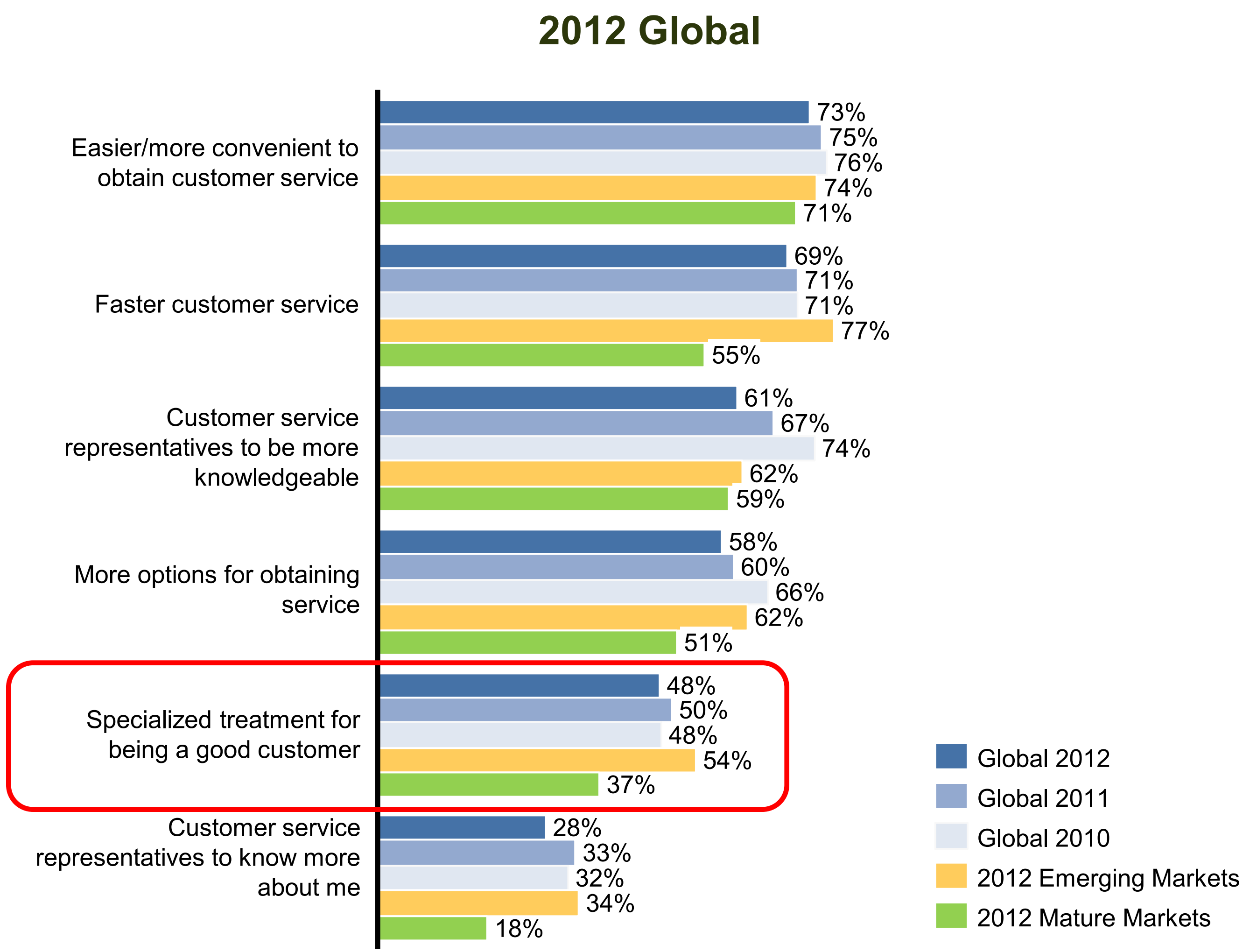
Likelihood to consider switching based on frustration experienced by customer service encountered



Base size: respondents who are frustrated with customer service encountered (3, 4, 5)
* New question included in 2012

Nearly half (48 percent) of global consumers say they have higher expectations of getting specialized treatment for being a "good" customer

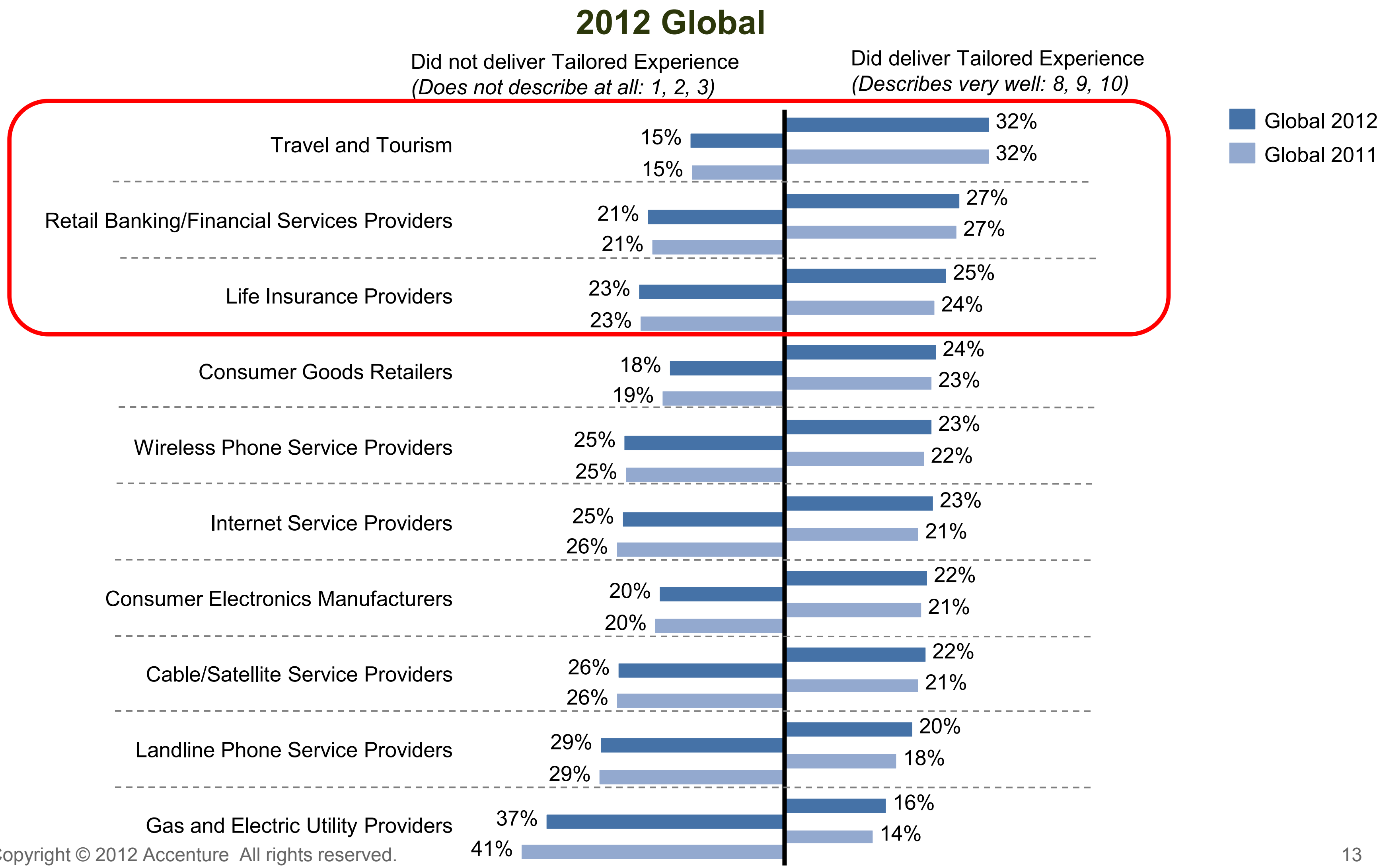
Customer service factors for which expectations have increased



Base size: respondents whose customer service expectations are higher when compared to 12 months ago.

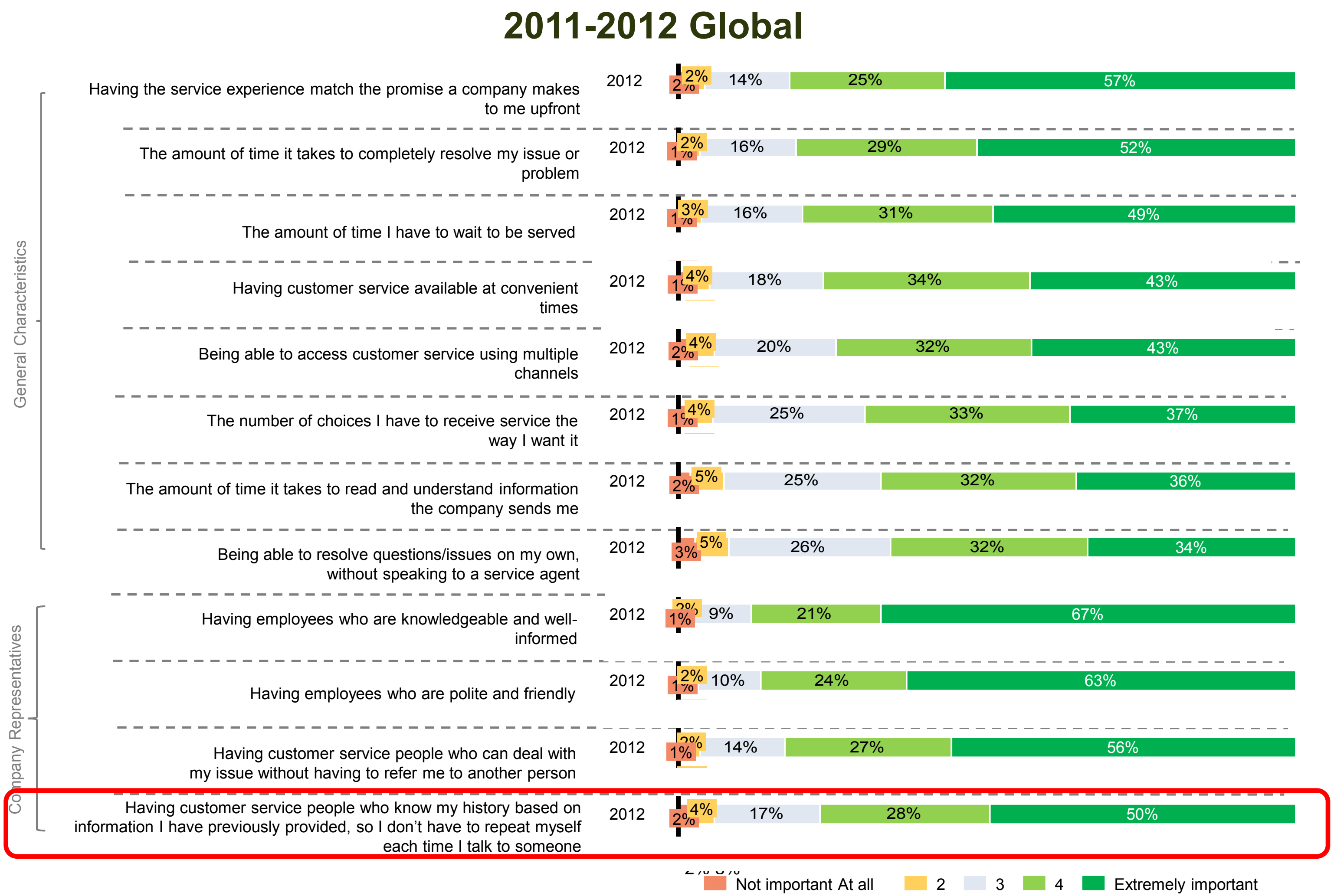
Among the ten industries included in the survey, providers in the travel and tourism, retail banking and life insurance providers earn the highest marks from global consumers for providing tailored experiences.

Consumers agreeing/disagreeing their provider delivers tailored experience



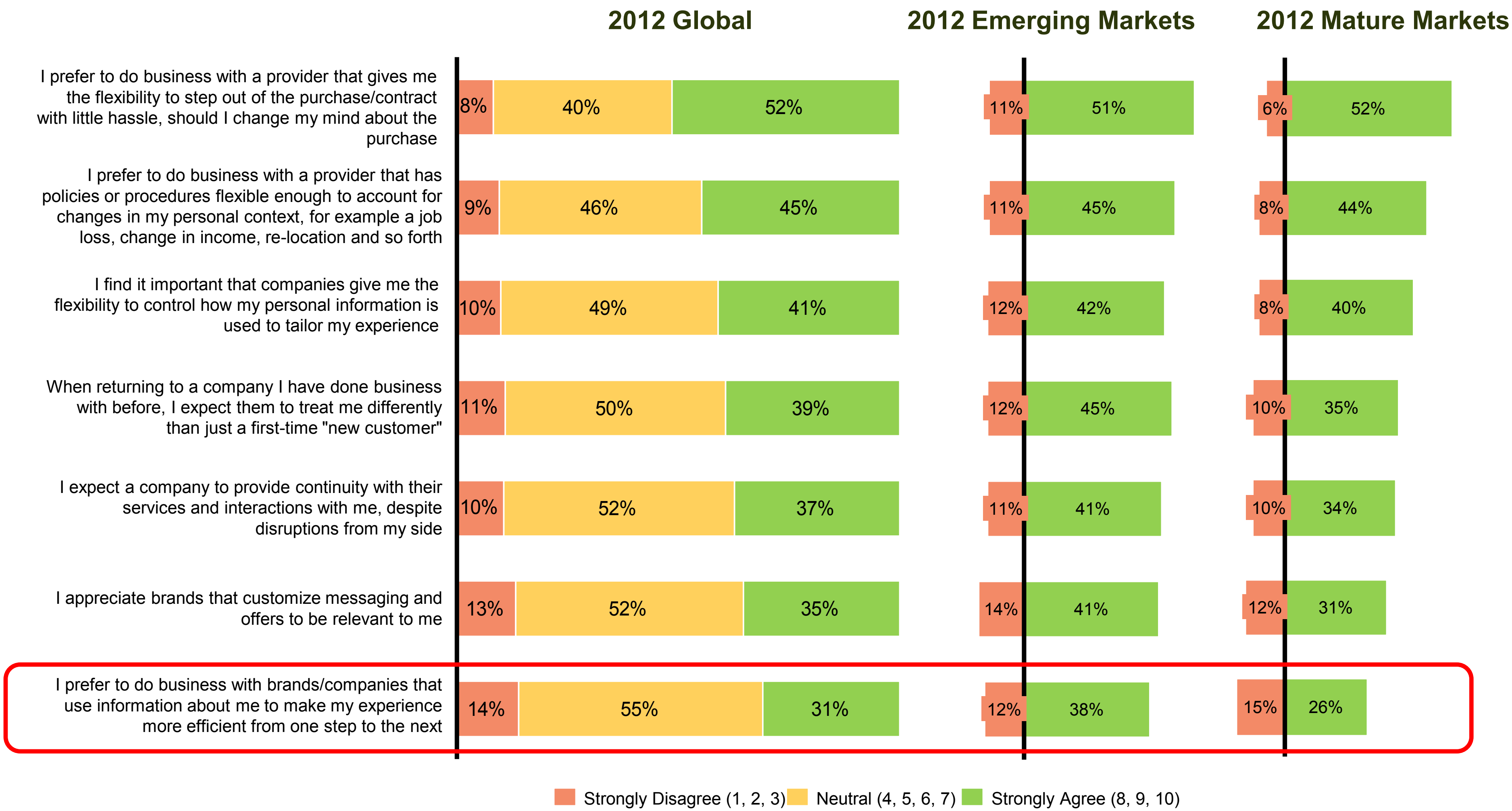
One half of global consumers indicate it is extremely important for companies to have customer service people who know their history so they don't have to repeat themselves each time they talk to someone.

Importance of customer service characteristics



Nearly a third (31 percent) of global consumers prefer companies that use information about them to make their experience more efficient from one step to the next.

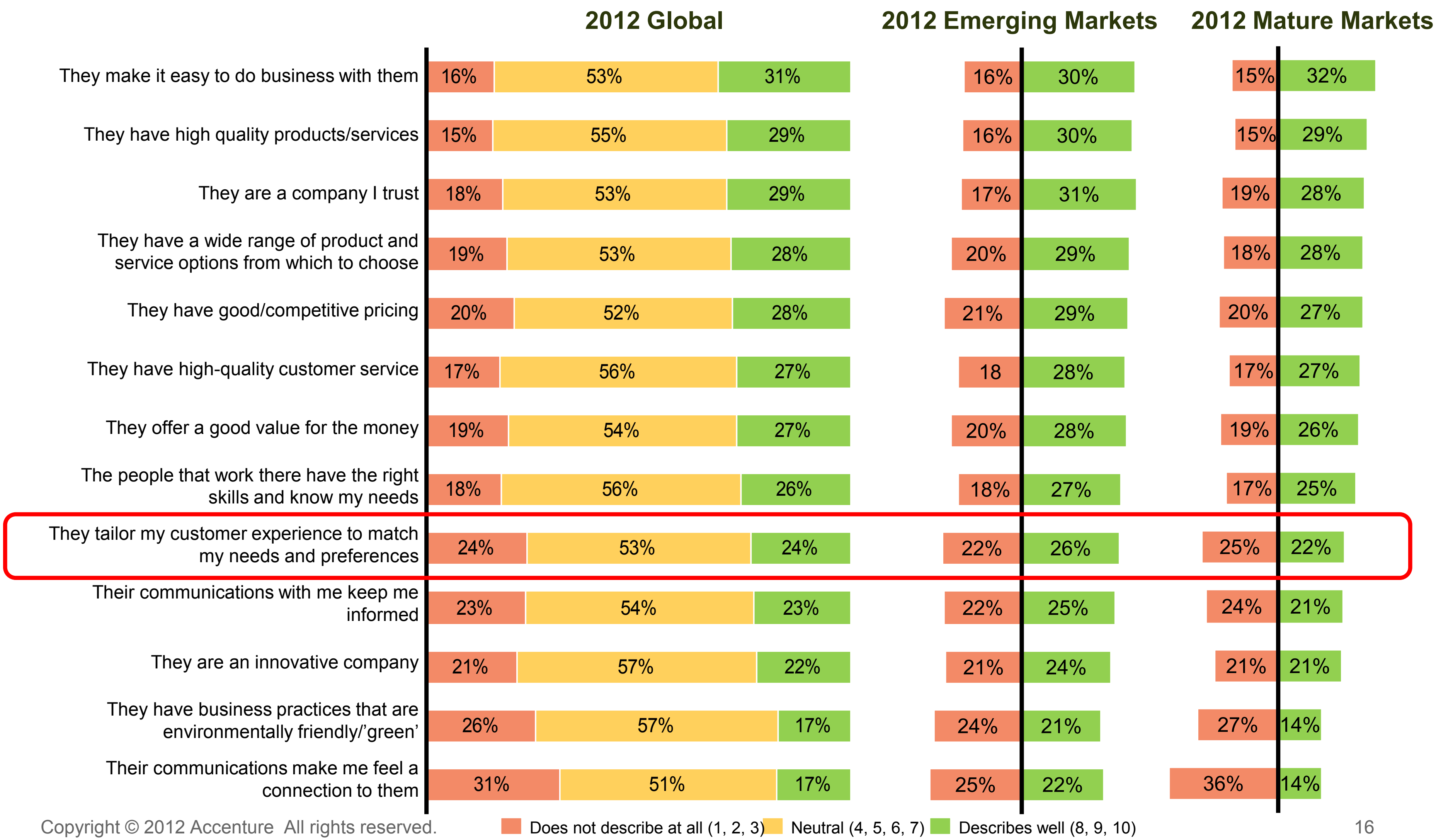
Agreement with statements



** New question included in 2012*

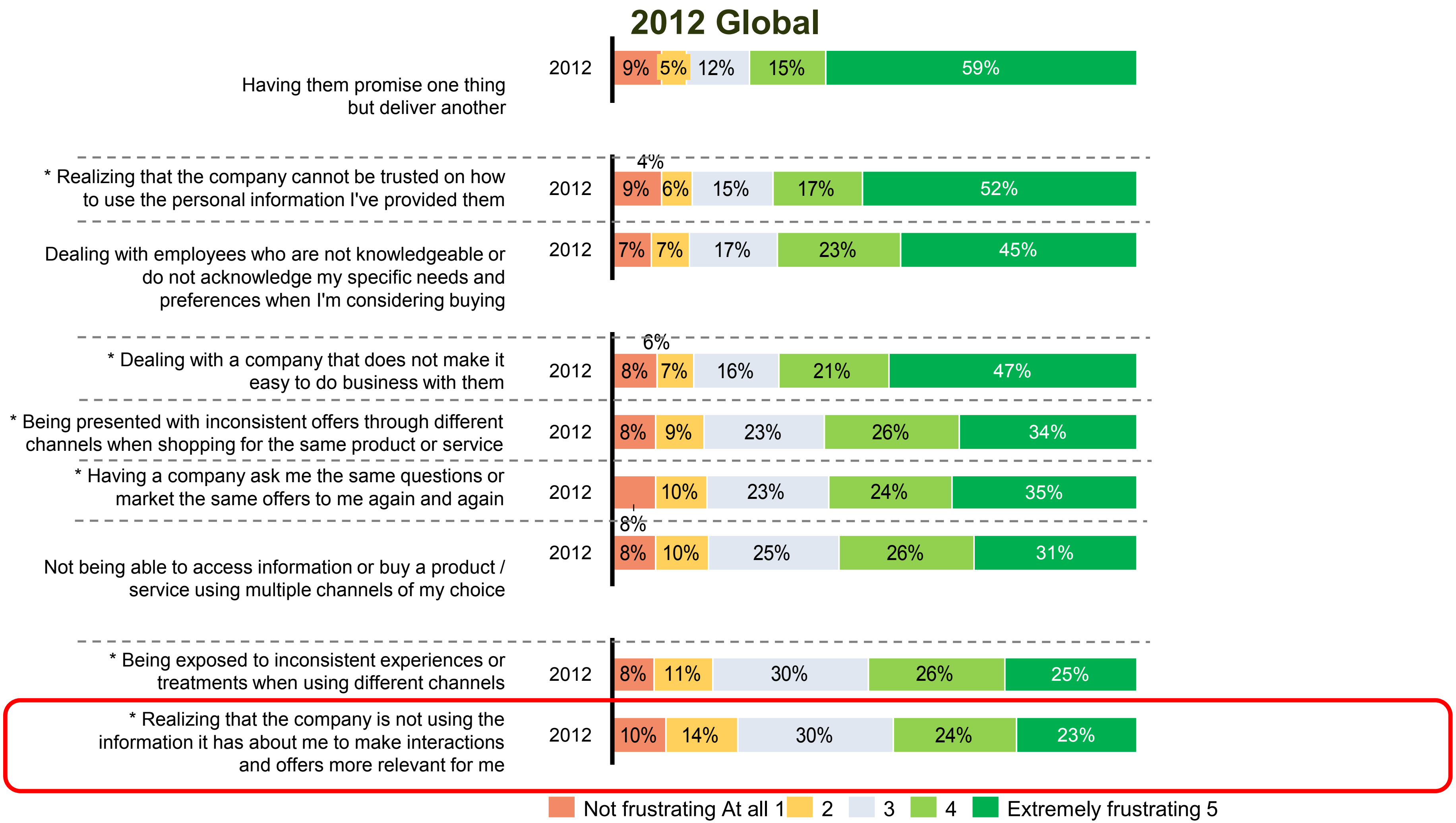
Only 24 percent of global consumers say their providers deliver tailored experiences.

Satisfaction with companies business is conducted with—agreement with statements



Nearly half (47 percent) of global consumers are frustrated when companies don’t use the information they have to make interactions and offers more relevant.

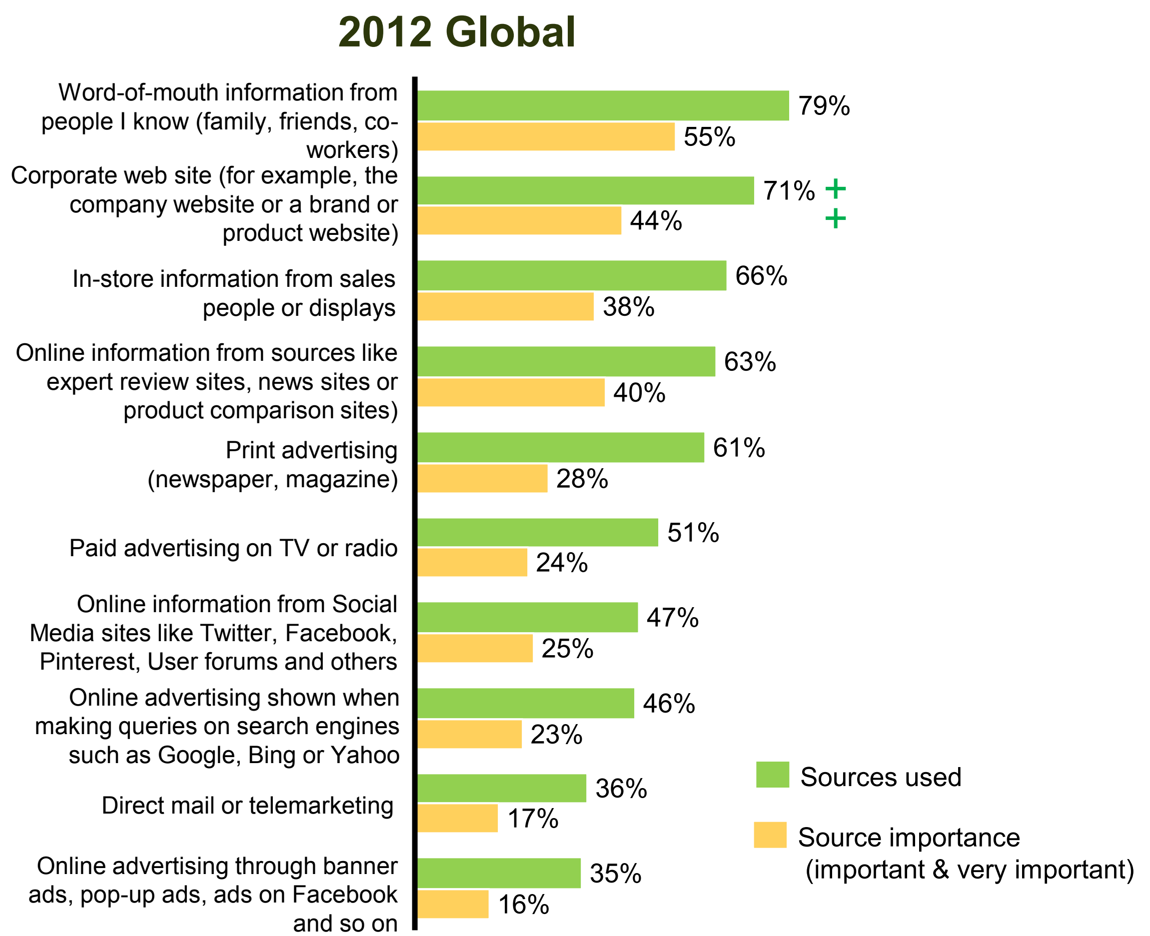
Frustrations with marketing & sales practices



** New items included in 2012*

On average, global consumers use five to six channels to learn about and select providers. Word of mouth continues to be the most influential, followed by company websites and in-store information.

Use/importance of information channels & social media in a consumer-to-company context—Information sources/channel

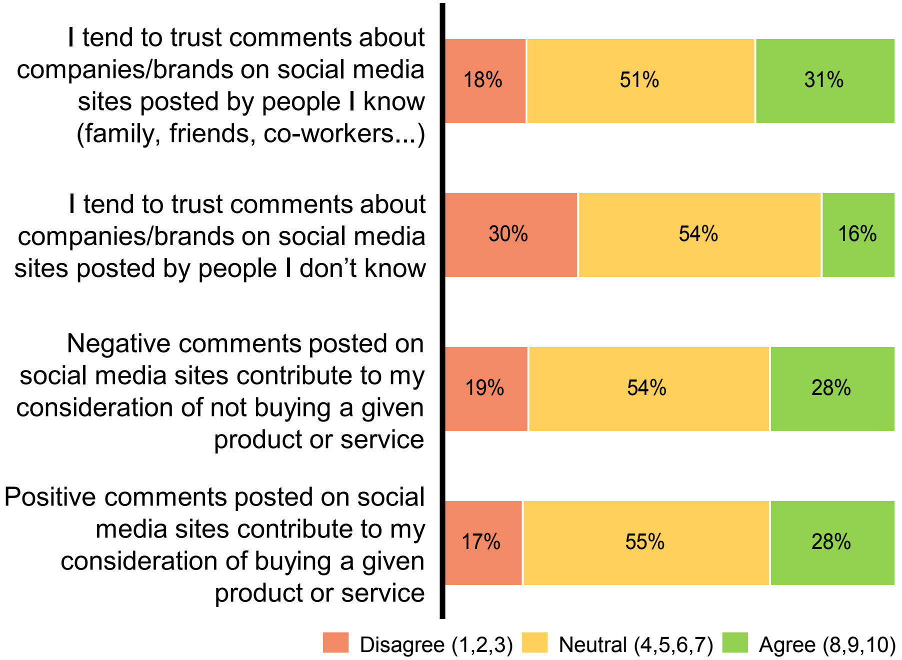


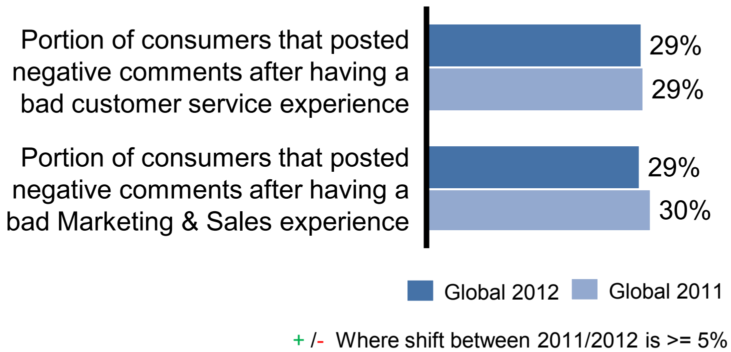
** Slight adjustments carried out to information sources in 2012 survey*

More than a quarter (28 percent) of global consumers say positive comments in social media affect purchasing decisions and 28 percent say negative comments affect purchasing decisions

Use / importance of information channels & social media in a consumer-to-company context—Trust, Influence and Use

2012 Global



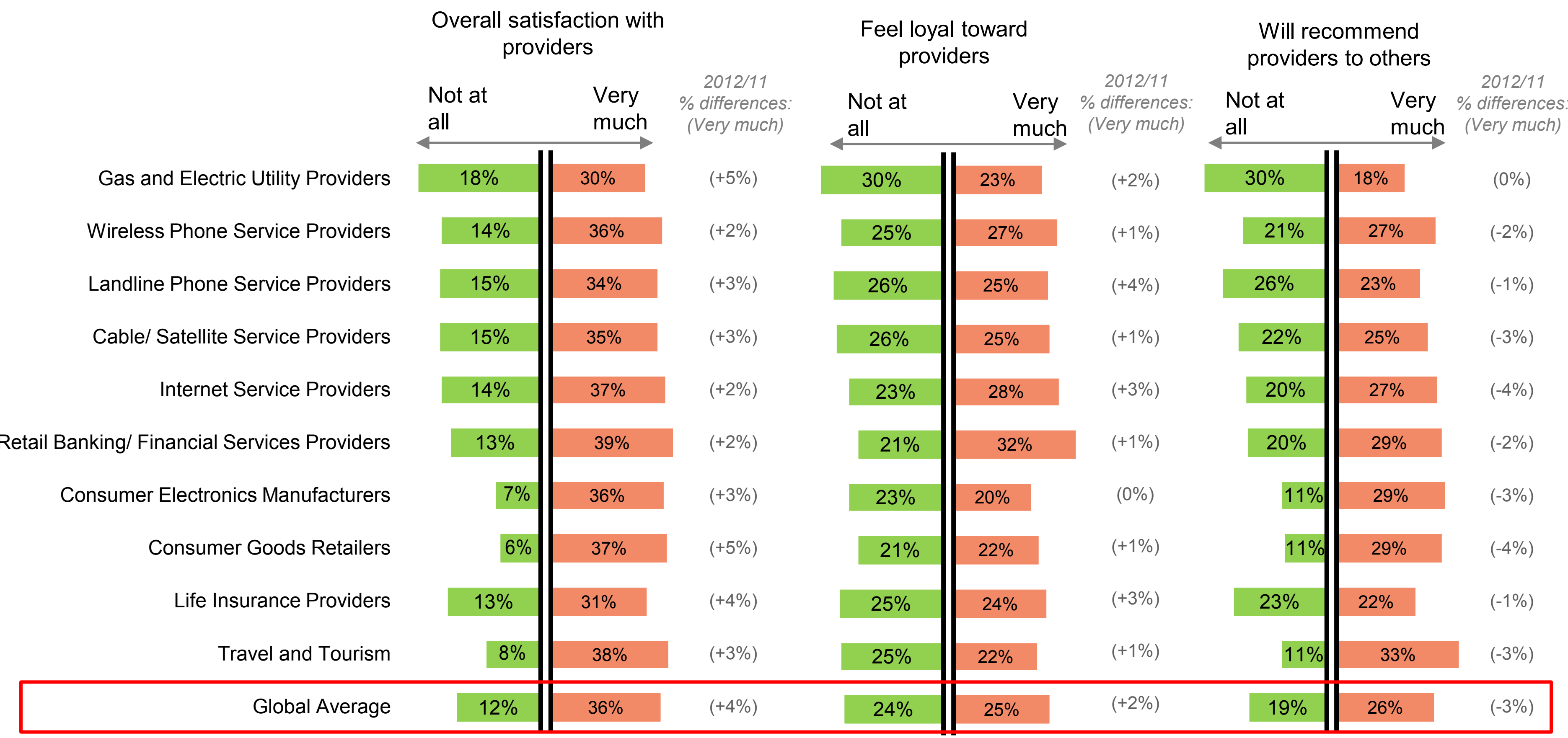


** Slight adjustments carried out to information sources in 2012 survey*

Only a quarter of global consumers indicate they feel loyal towards their providers.

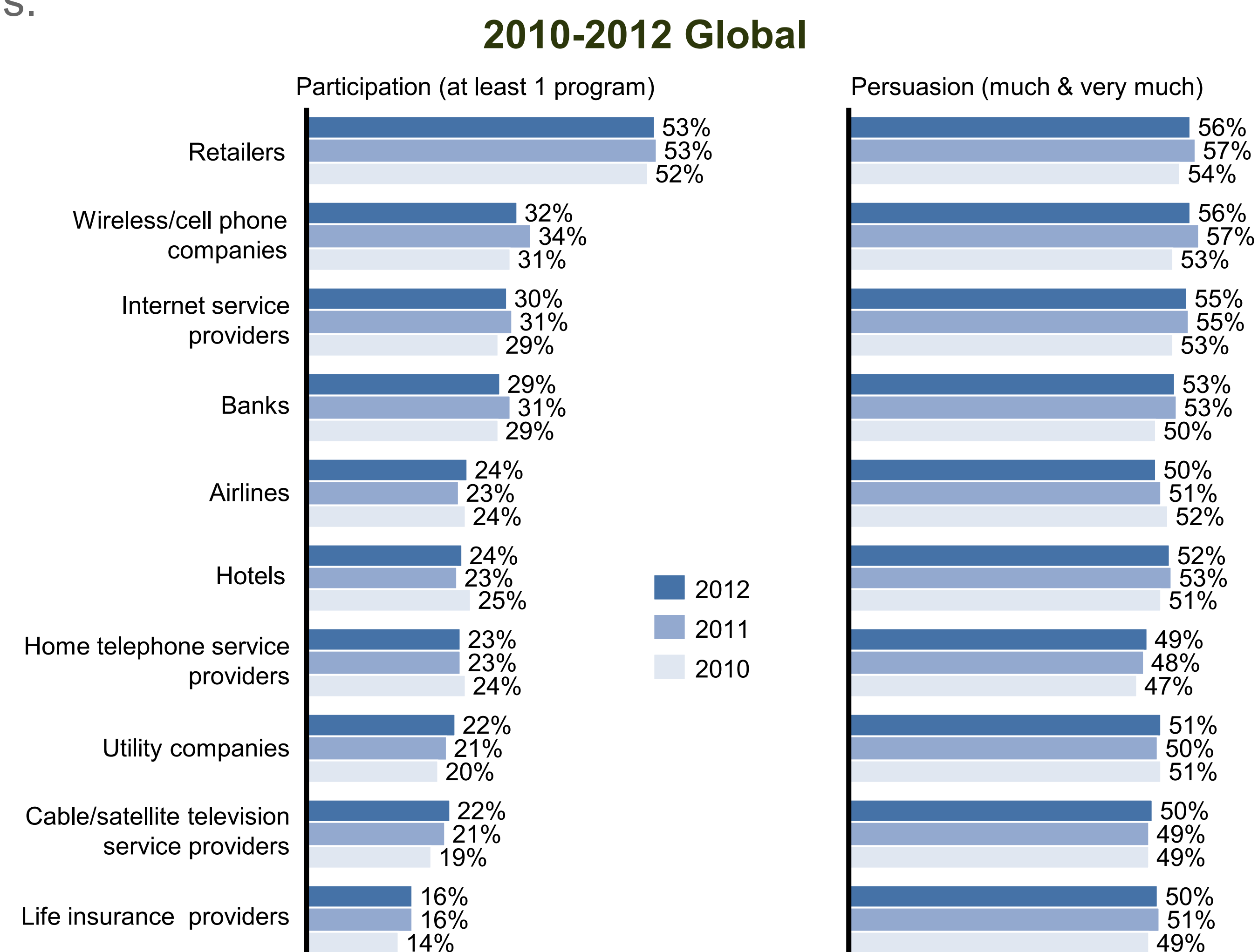
Level of “feeling loyal” towards and willingness to recommend current providers.

2012 Global



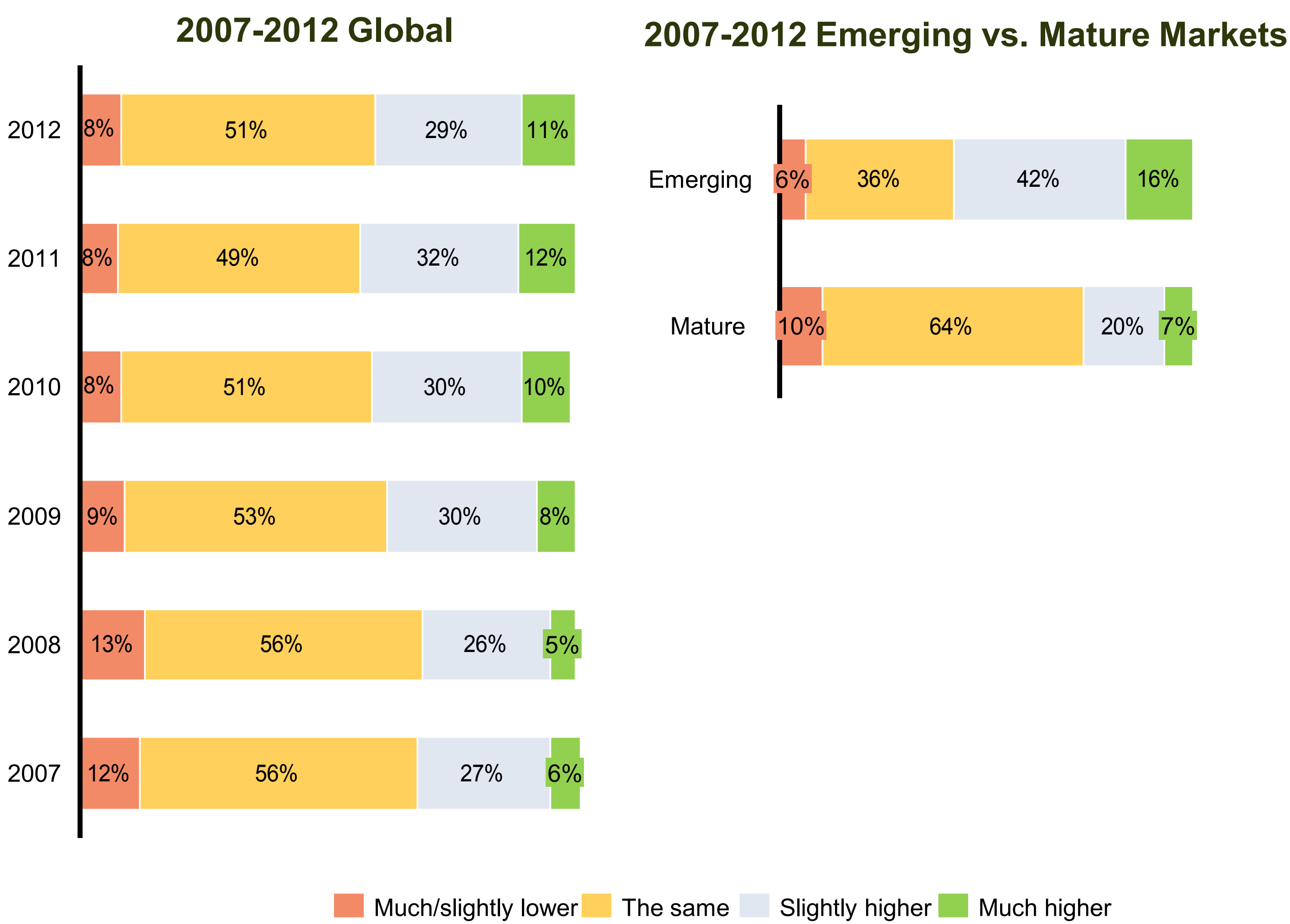
Despite the rise in switching, consumers are just as likely this year as in past years to participate in companies' loyalty programs. And they generally see just as much positive influence in participation, as well.

Adoption of one or more loyalty program and persuasion of programs to stick with providers.



Although customer service expectations rise every year, the level of increased expectations this year is not quite as high as last year and is more in line with 2010. As in past years, it is notable that expectations are rising more dramatically in emerging markets, indeed at about the same rate as a year ago.

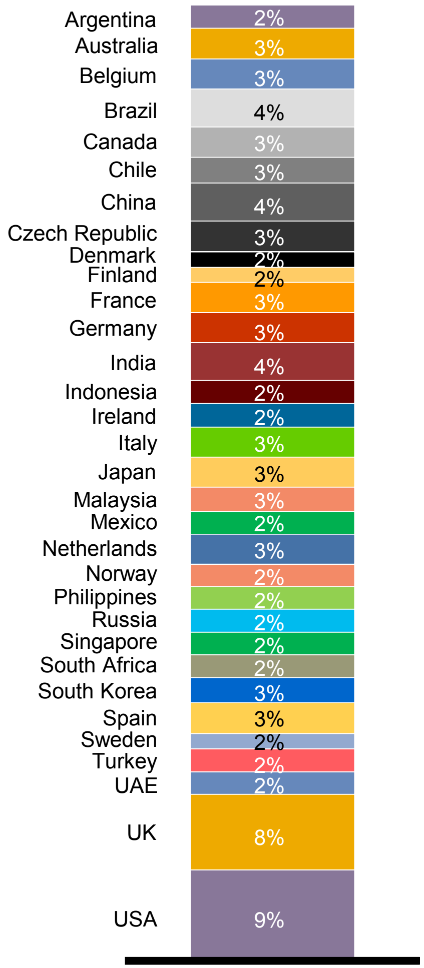
Change in customer service expectations as compared to 12 months ago

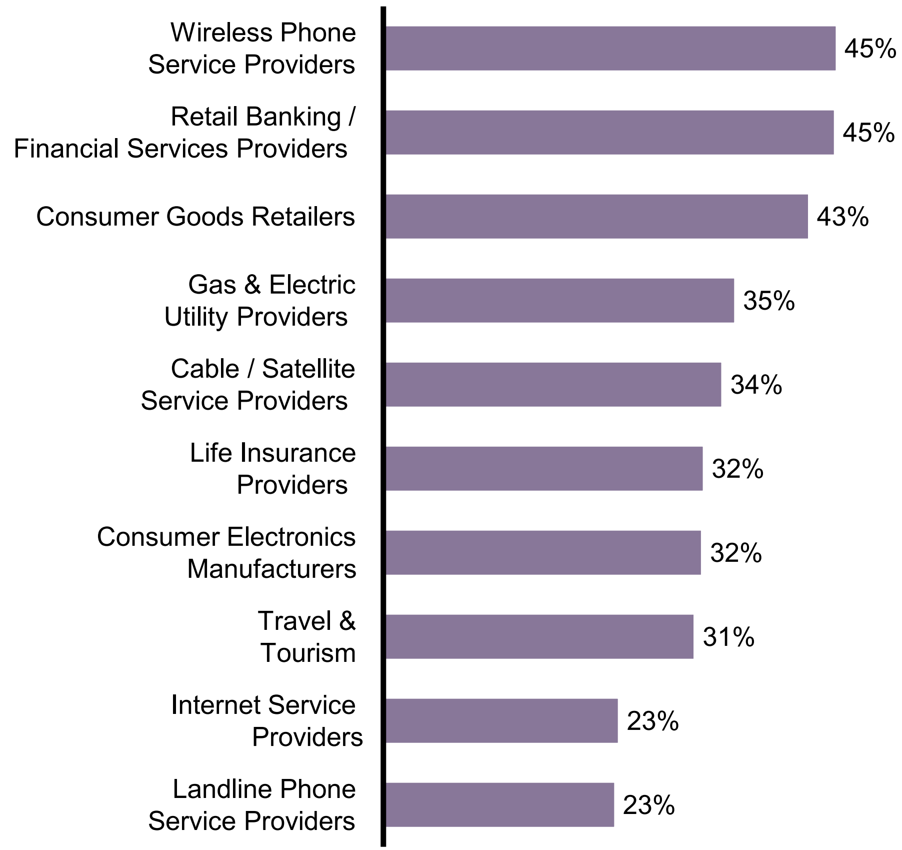


Methodology and Survey Sample

Methodology and Survey Sample

Accenture surveyed 12,662 end consumers in 32 different countries via the Internet between July 2nd and August 9th, 2012. Respondents were asked to evaluate 10 industry sectors (up to four industries per respondent). Margin of error is +/- 4% at 95% confidence level.





Respondent Sample Size Breakdown: Countries & Number of Respondents

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	
Argentina						(303)	308	304
Australia			300	303	302	375	400	403
Belgium					304	331	401	400
Brazil			311	314	316	345	302	504
Canada			300	302	306	354	404	405
Chile								339
China			320	325	302	303	332	504
Czech Republic							303	410
Denmark								201
Finland								201
France			321	328	300	377	405	401
Germany				307	302	355	408	401
India				303	304	300	326	500
Indonesia						(309)	329	301
Ireland						306	301	314
Italy						359	405	400
Japan						349	418	400
Malaysia						(311)	314	322
Mexico						354	308	300
Netherlands							302	401
Norway								293
Philippines							305	302
Russia							303	304
Singapore					300	302	320	301
South Africa					305	326	314	301
South Korea						(319)	317	330
Spain						348	409	414
Sweden								203
Turkey							306	300
UAE						(300)	328	300
United Kingdom	1003	1007	1000	1003	1003	317	801	1003
United States of America	1006	1018	1000	1004	1006	440	804	1200
Total	2009	2025	3552	4189	5050	7383	10173	12662

2012 Mature Markets (n=7040)

2012 Emerging Markets (n= 5622)

NOTE: Samples indicated within "( )" were surveyed in 2010 but not included in 2010 Global figures. 2010 analysis was based on the sample n=5841.