


The state of Self-Service Checkouts



[2021]



Raydiant



Much of life has conformed to pandemic conditions in the past year, and shopping has as well. One preference that shoppers have shown in the past year, and also embraced pre-pandemic, is self-checkout.



Self-service checkout kiosks meet several criteria of safety-conscious shoppers. These machines allow shoppers to complete their in-store visit without a single direct human interaction. Self-checkout kiosks are also an alternative to waiting in line for a cashier, and may cap off a seamless shopping experience.

Even with these benefits, it's worth asking what role should self-checkout play within your point-of-sale operations?

Human cashiers provide a friendly interaction and full-service experience that a self-checkout kiosk simply can't. A completely cashier-less store, à la Amazon Go grocery stores, may not work for your business. You may not want to let your cashiers go, either.

Even so, providing self-checkout kiosks can regulate crowdfow, move customers through your location more efficiently, and increase revenue. Every business must determine where their ideal split of human cashiers and self-checkout kiosks lies.

To help, we wanted to provide you feedback from shoppers themselves. Our "2021 State of Self-Checkout Experiences" report investigates the experiences of 1,000 American consumers, asking them everything you need to know about self-checkout experiences.



Key Findings

Self-service checkout usage has dramatically increased. 36% had a major increase in using self-checkout, while 23% had a minor increase.



Most expect their usage to increase in the upcoming 12 months. 34% expect a major increase in using self-checkout, while 18% expect a minor increase.



Self-service checkout kiosks have stopped working for many consumers. 67% have had one fail when using it.



Bad experiences are why consumers choose not to use self-service checkouts. 25% said they would choose not to use self-checkout because they've had bad experiences with it, while 21% said in the past self-checkouts were slow.



Most believe self-service checkouts are faster than waiting in line. 85% believe strongly that they are typically faster.



Consumers would prefer to use their smartphone to checkout and pay. 65% strongly agree that their self-checkout usage would increase if smartphone scanning integration was available.



Consumers worry about the cleanliness of self-service options. 65% strongly agree with this concern.



Consumers prefer self-checkouts over store associates if given an option. 60% of consumers would choose self-checkout each time.

PART 1

Self-Service Checkout Usage

Any location manager evaluating self-service checkout kiosks must ask: Do customers actually use these kiosks? To what degree do they prefer self-checkout over having a cashier scan and bag their items?

Our data suggests that customers utilize self-checkout frequently, and that usage of self-service kiosks may continue to increase.

Consumers are using self-service checkouts a lot, and usage has dramatically increased.

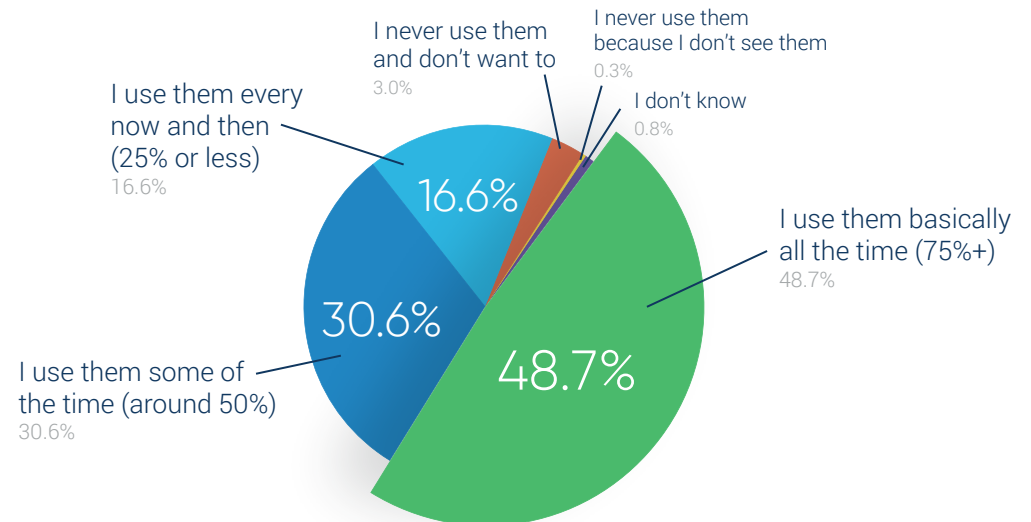
Our findings suggest that almost half of the shopping-population use self-checkout exclusively. When asked how often they use a self-service checkout kiosk when it is available, 48.7% of respondents said “basically all the time.”

30.6% of respondents said that they use self-service checkout kiosks “some of the time.” These respondents adjusted their checkout habits based on the length of

cashier lines, the nature of the items they are purchasing, or other personal preferences. These shoppers demonstrate the need to have both self-checkout kiosks and live cashiers in a store.

Only 3% of respondents said they “don’t use [self-checkout] and don’t want to.” These findings show that having self-checkout options is not a competitive advantage, but a competitive requirement.

? How often would you say you use self-service checkout options when you are shopping at stores?



PART 1

Self-Service Checkout Usage

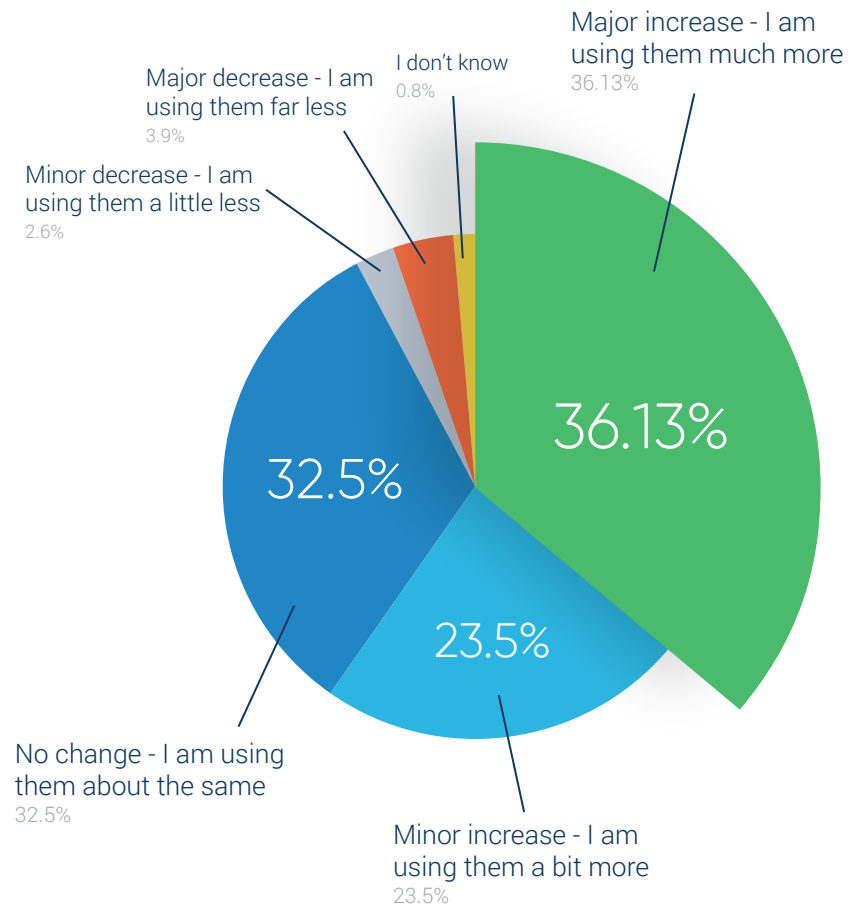
We also found that the pandemic has accelerated the use of self-service checkout kiosks.

A significant segment of shoppers don't want a cashier potentially touching their credit card for manual entry, handing them change, handling their goods, or interacting with them in other ways.

These are realities of shopping today, and may help explain why 36.3% of respondents had a "major increase" in their use of self-service checkout kiosks in the past year. Another 23.5% of shoppers had a "minor increase" in their self-checkout habits.

While many respondents didn't have a change in their use of self-checkout kiosks over the past year, there has been a clear uptick in self-checkout kiosk usage.

? How has your frequency of using self-service checkouts changed over the past 12 months?



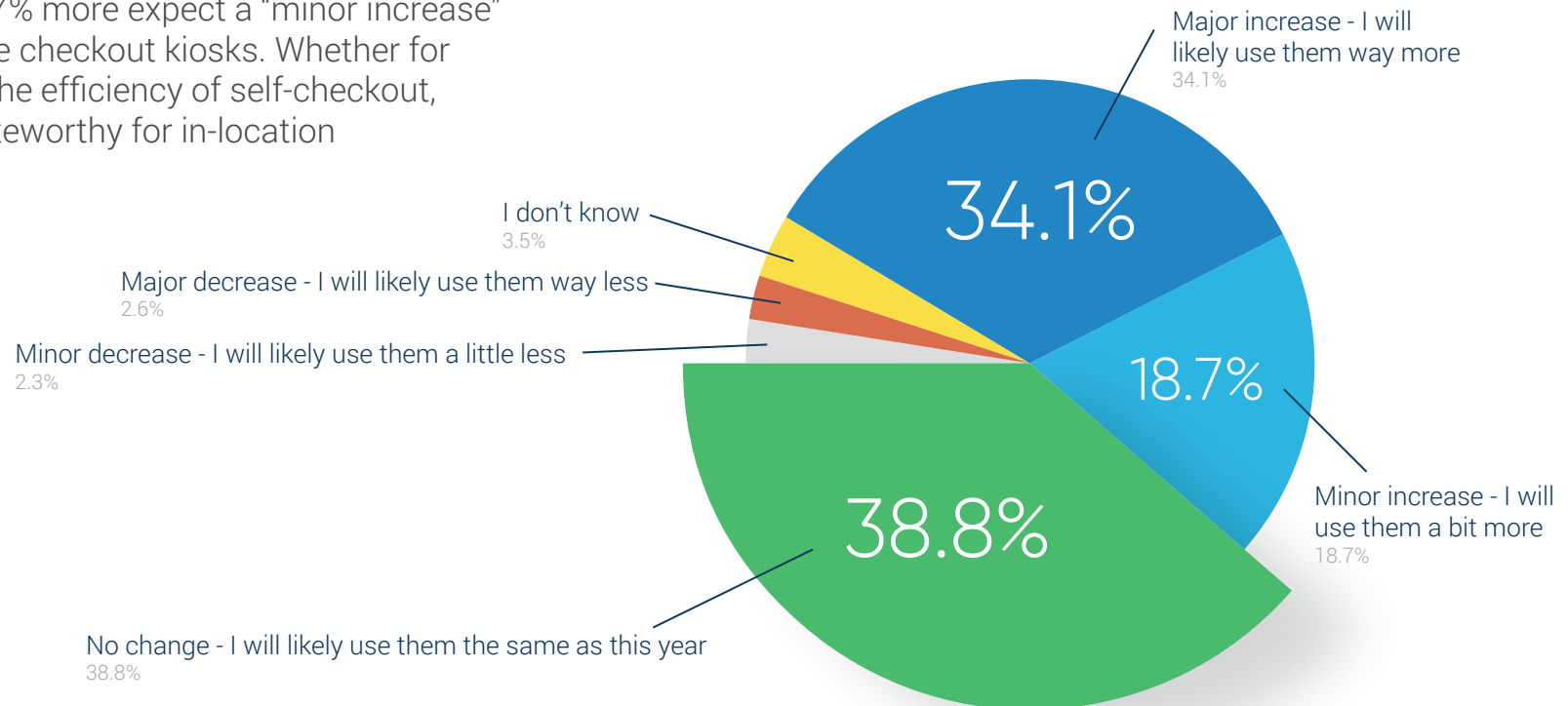
PART 1

Self-Service Checkout Usage

Most shoppers expect their usage of self-service checkout kiosks to increase in the upcoming 12 months.

Increased usage of self-service checkout kiosks does not appear to be a fad. 34.1% of shoppers said they anticipate a “major increase” in their usage of self-checkout options in the following year. 18.7% more expect a “minor increase” in their use of self-service checkout kiosks. Whether for fear of germs or love of the efficiency of self-checkout, these sentiments are noteworthy for in-location experience managers.

? *How has your frequency of using self-service checkouts will change in the next 12 months?*



PART 1

Self-Service Checkout Usage

Summary

It is clear to see that self-service checkout kiosks are now a must-have option for more than half of shoppers. As usage increases, shoppers may gravitate (consciously or not) towards retailers who allow them the option of checking out on their own.

But what about those respondents who do not utilize self-service checkout kiosks? What are their complaints, and are their gripes with self-checkout ones that can be addressed?



PART 2

Why Shoppers Do (or Don't) Use Self-Service Checkout Kiosks

It turns out that having a self-checkout option for customers is not nearly as important as having a good self-checkout option for customers.

Poor interactions with self-service checkout kiosks have shaped the opinions of many who prefer to rely on cashiers. So what exactly turned these customers off of self-checkout kiosks?

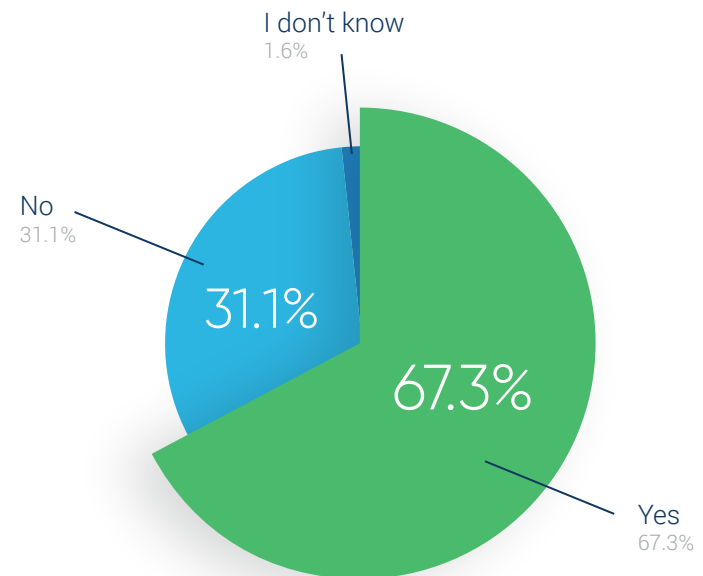
As a store manager, knowing the specific likes and dislikes of the shopping public could be a significant advantage when crafting your self-checkout experiences.

Self-service checkouts have failed for many consumers.

Perfection is a high standard for anything, including self-checkout kiosks. Still, reliability is key if any technology is to achieve widespread adoption. Yet 67.3% of respondents to our survey said that they have had a self-service checkout kiosk “not work” for them when they tried to use it.

The precise nature of what “not working” meant for these customers could shed light on the reasons that some shoppers shun self-checkout experiences.

? *Have you ever tried to use a self-service checkout and had it not work for you?*



PART 2

Why Shoppers Do (or Don't) Use Self-Service Checkout Kiosks

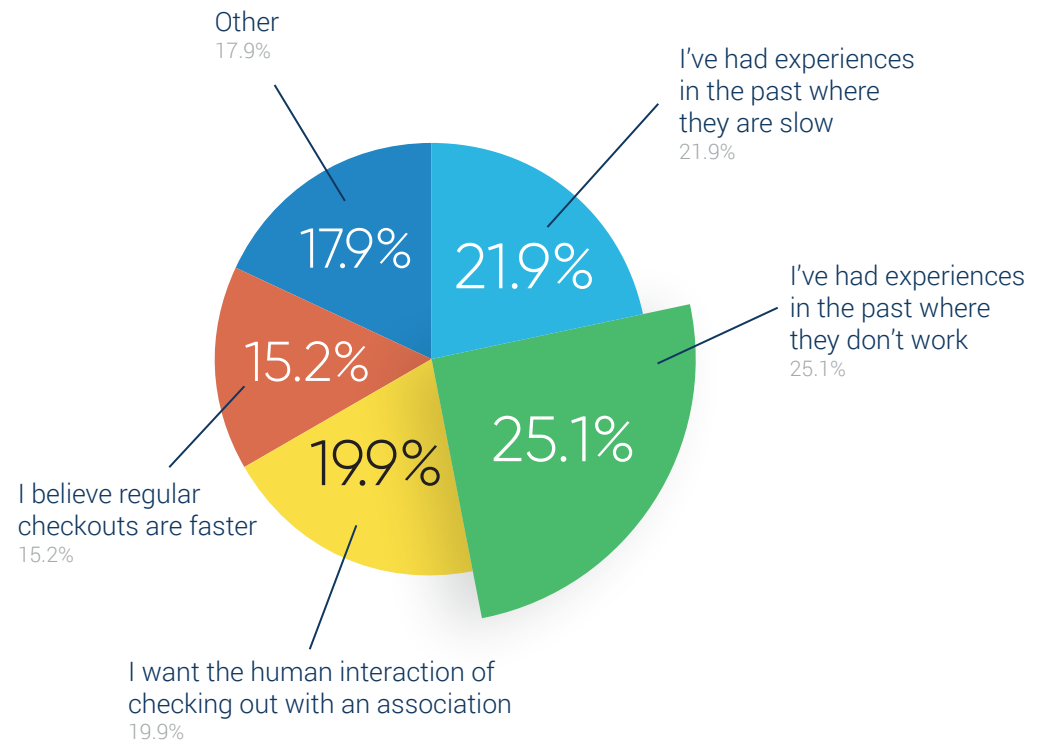
Slow and ineffective kiosks drive customers away.

As an in-location experience manager, you want to know how to improve what is in your control. When it comes to customers utilizing your self-checkout experiences more frequently, you must ensure that your machines are not excessively slow, and that they work.

25.1% of respondents said they're most likely to avoid a self-service checkout kiosk where it hasn't worked for them in the past. An additional 21.9% of shoppers will not use a self-checkout option that is slower than they deem reasonable.

Some customers may avoid self-checkout no matter the quality of the experience. 19.9% of respondents simply desire the human interaction that a cashier provides, and for this reason may never use a self-checkout kiosk.

? *If a self-service checkout option is available, what is the most common reason why you would not use it?*



PART 2

Why Shoppers Do (or Don't) Use Self-Service Checkout Kiosks

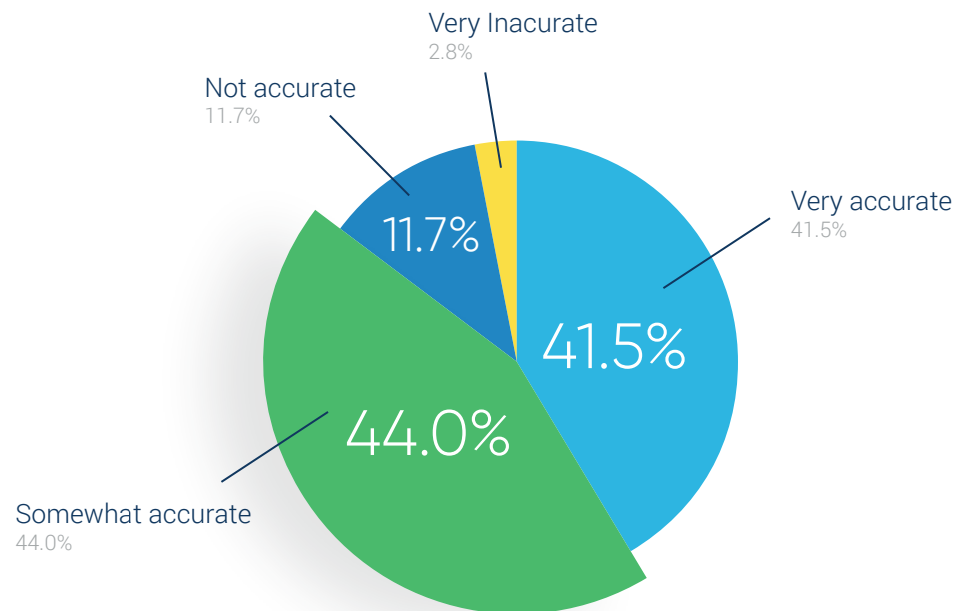
Most shoppers see self-service checkout as faster than waiting in line for a cashier.

Though safety has become increasingly relevant, many consumers see a clear benefit in checking themselves out: speed. Scanning, swiping, and bagging on one's own means expending extra effort, but many are willing to do it so that they do not have to wait in line for a cashier.

41.5% of respondents to our "2021 State of Self-Checkout Experiences" report said that "self-service checkouts are typically faster than waiting in line [for a cashier]" is a "very accurate" statement. An additional 44% of respondents said that the statement is somewhat accurate.

This shows an overwhelming shopper sentiment that self-checkout is a more efficient checkout option than the traditional cashier. So, again, why would a shopper avoid your self-checkout kiosk?

? *How do you feel about the following statement: self-service checkouts are typically faster than waiting in line.*



PART 2

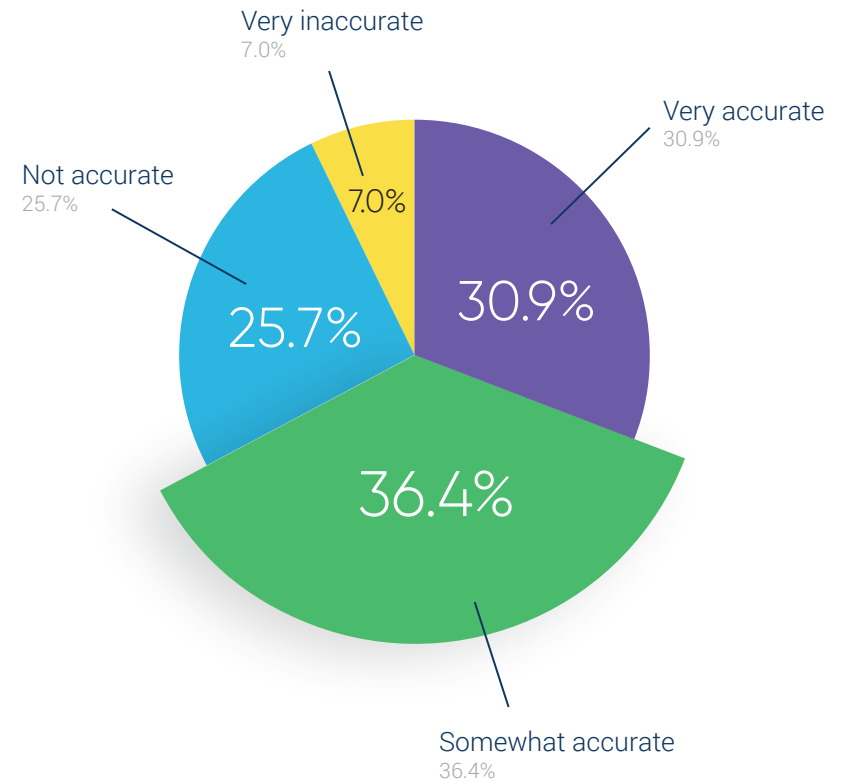
Why Shoppers Do (or Don't) Use Self-Service Checkout Kiosks

Consumers worry about the cleanliness of self-service options.

Along with malfunctioning or slow machines, your customer might avoid using your self-service checkout kiosk because they fear it is unclean. 30.9% of survey respondents found the statement "I worry about the cleanliness of self-service checkout screens" to be "very accurate." An additional 36.4% of respondents said that the statement was "somewhat accurate."

Shoppers' confidence in the cleanliness of self-checkout kiosk screens may vary from one location to another. You may inform shoppers of your sanitizing practices to ease their concerns, or you may offer self-checkout processes that allow the shopper to use their own mobile phone as a scanner.

? How do you feel about the following statement: *I worry about the cleanliness of self-service checkout screens*



PART 3

Self-Checkout Is an Integral Part of Retail's Future

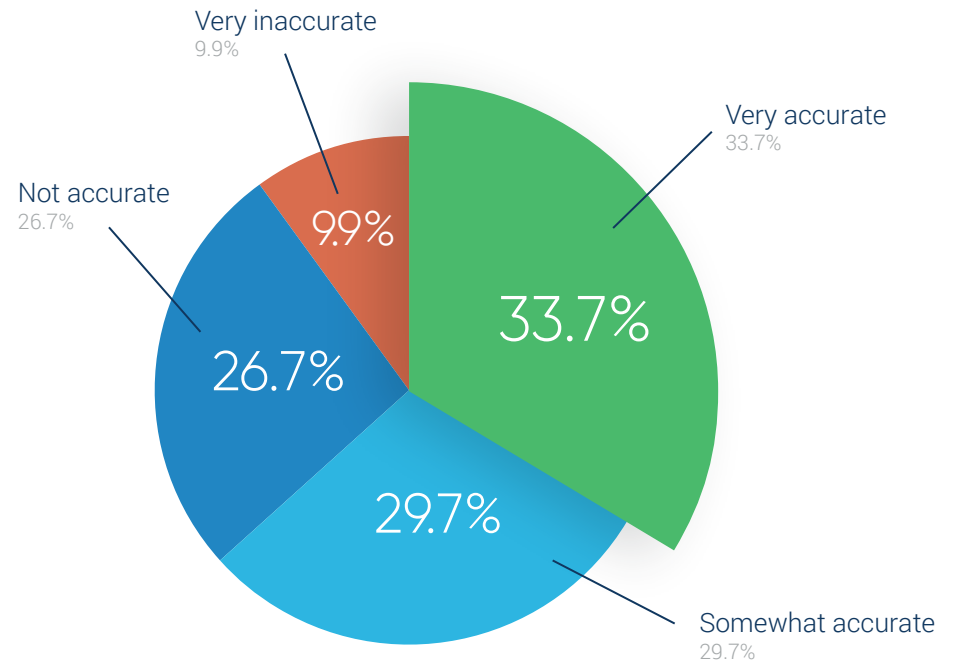
? *How do you feel about the following statement: I would use self-service checkouts more if I could scan the items with my smartphone; then use the phone to pay*

Customers are comfortable checking out with their own phone.

Self-checkout cuts down on human interactions and does not require another person to interact with your items, but customers remain hung-up on the cleanliness of stationary self-checkout screens.

33.7% said it was "very accurate" to say that they would use self-service checkout options more often if they could scan their goods with their phone. Another 29.7% of respondents found this statement to be somewhat accurate

Equipped with this insight, you might consider whether phone-checkout integration is worth the investment.



PART 2

Why Shoppers Do (or Don't) Use Self-Service Checkout Kiosks

Summary

We now know that customers overwhelmingly perceive self-service checkout kiosks (and other self-checkout options) as faster than waiting in line for a cashier. We may intuit that these respondents view human cashiers as synonymous with lines, while they generally do not associate self-checkout with waiting.

We also know that some shoppers still avoid self-checkout despite the greater efficiency. The data tells us that their avoidance stems from slow, broken, or unclean self-checkout options.

Ensuring the functionality, speed, and cleanliness of self-service checkout kiosks may therefore be a top priority of managers who want to increase usage of their self-checkout options, not to mention the revenues that can come from more efficient checkouts.



PART 3

Self-Checkout Is an Integral Part of Retail's Future

All of our data tells us that self-checkout experiences are critical to the retail experience of 2021. Customers now demand these options, and may shop elsewhere if you do not provide them.

This demand for self-service checkout kiosks and other types of self-checkout makes cashier-less checkout an integral feature of retail's future.

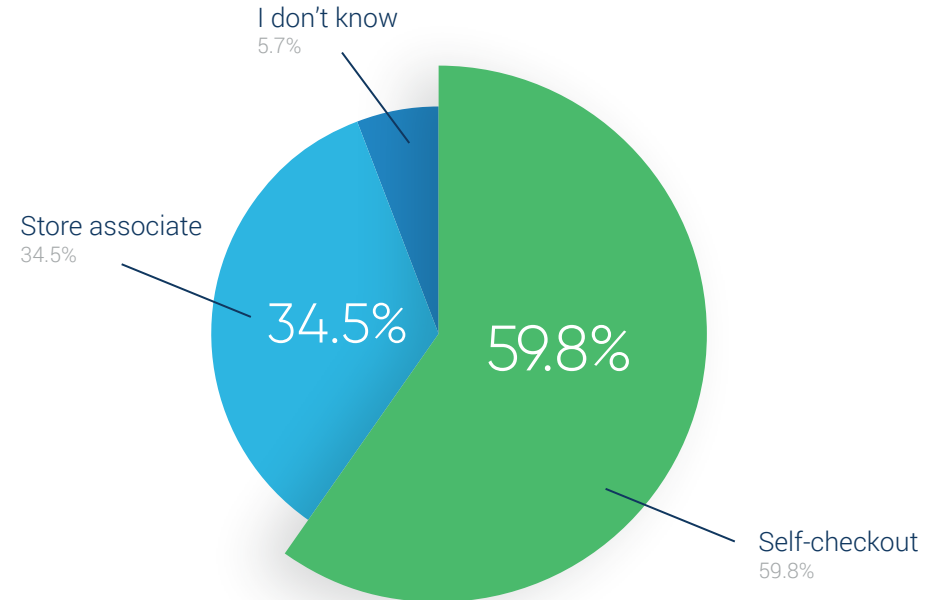
Consumers prefer self-checkouts over store associates if given an option.

Circumstances like line lengths and items being purchased will vary. But if all things were equal, we wanted to know whether customers preferred checking out with a cashier or on their own.

59.8% of respondents said that they would still prefer self-checkout, even if it took the same amount of time, while only 34.5% of them said that they prefer a cashier-assisted checkout.

It's not only clear that the majority of customers today prefer checking themselves out, but self-checkout has become the default.

? *Today, if you had a choice and both lines took the same amount of time, which would you choose?*



PART 3

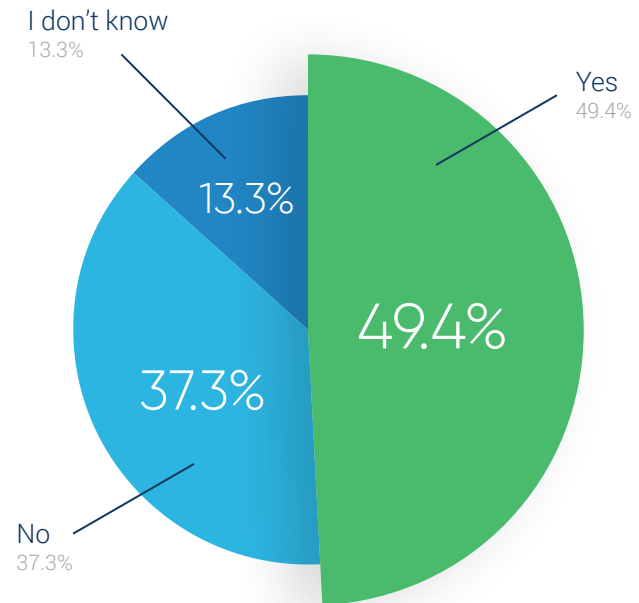
Self-Checkout Is an Integral Part of Retail's Future

Customers are deciding where to shop based on self-checkout options.

No longer does a shopper judge your store's checkout processes solely on convenience. As health has become a foremost concern to shoppers, your ability to provide strong self-checkout options could directly affect how many customers visit your locations.

49.4% of respondents said that they are more likely to visit a store with a self-checkout option over one that does not, with all other things being equal. To repeat: *Half of consumers will visit your competitor's store if they have self-checkout and you do not.*

? *If one store has self-checkout and the other does not but they have the same items, are you more likely to visit the self-checkout store?*



Conclusion

Wanton spending is not a luxury that any physical retailer can afford right now. Investment in your business must be shrewd, forward-looking, and data-based. At Raydiant, we see first-hand how businesses have exercised ingenuity and invested where it most counts to get through lean times.

The findings of our **"2021 State of Self-Checkout Experiences"** report suggest that investment in self-service checkout kiosks is one of the soundest you can make. Whether you do not have any self-checkout options or you are considering upgrading or expanding your fleet, consumer-derived data shows great demand for quality self-checkout experiences.

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