



Built for What's Next:

How Solopreneurs Are Redefining Modern Work



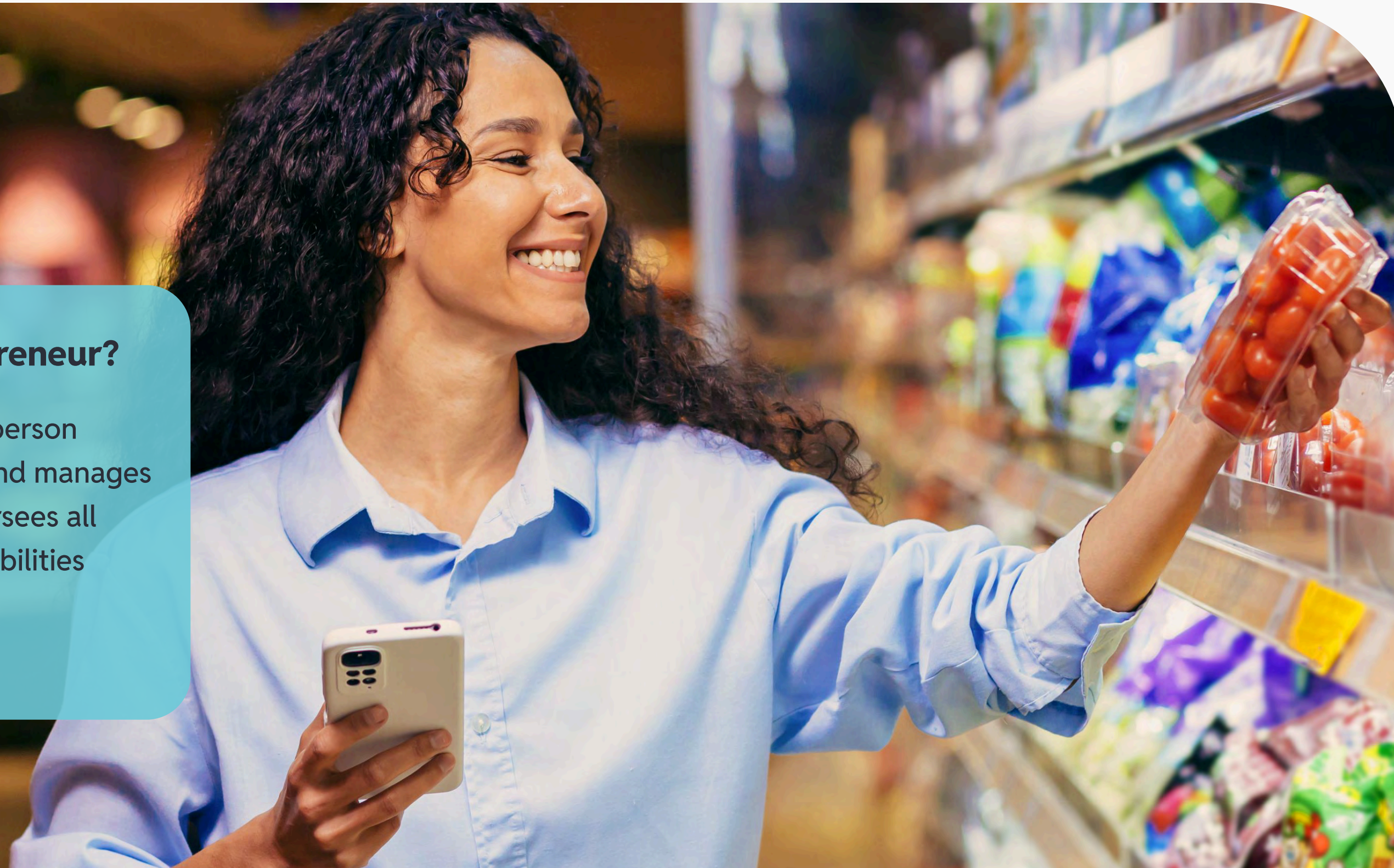
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INTRODUCTION

What is a solopreneur?

A solopreneur is a person who builds, owns and manages a business and oversees all associated responsibilities with no employees.

[Source: [Indeed](#)]



The Branch x Mastercard Solopreneur Report spotlights the rise of self-made businesses and **how technology is empowering individuals to embrace new opportunities.**

Background

A new era of work is taking shape—one where individuals are choosing **autonomy, flexibility, and ownership over traditional career paths.** Solopreneurs—from creators and consultants to independent service providers—are rapidly becoming one of the fastest-growing segments of the workforce.

Advances in AI, creator tools, digital platforms, and modern fintech have not only transformed traditional employment, but also dramatically lowered the barriers to starting and scaling a one-person business. These tools, combined with expanding opportunities across gig marketplaces and consulting platforms, **enable individuals to build independent careers with the reach and efficiency of a small team.** What once required an entire organization can now be achieved by a single professional with the right technology stack.

As the number of solopreneurs expands, so do their needs. Many operate without the financial infrastructure of larger organizations: no dedicated CFO, no deep credit history, and no built-in safety nets. Real-time payments, accessible credit, and digital-first banking solutions are becoming essential tools for how they run, manage, and grow their businesses.

This moment represents a major opportunity for fintech innovation to support a generation of entrepreneurs who are building the future of work on their own terms.

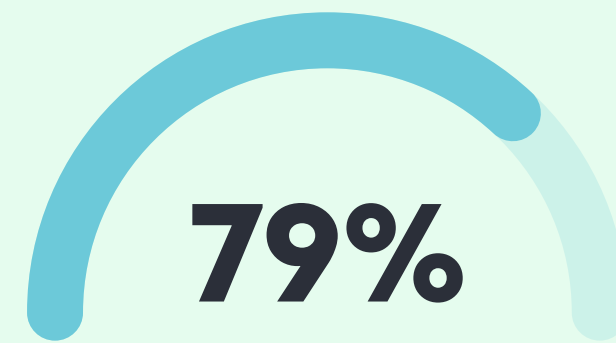
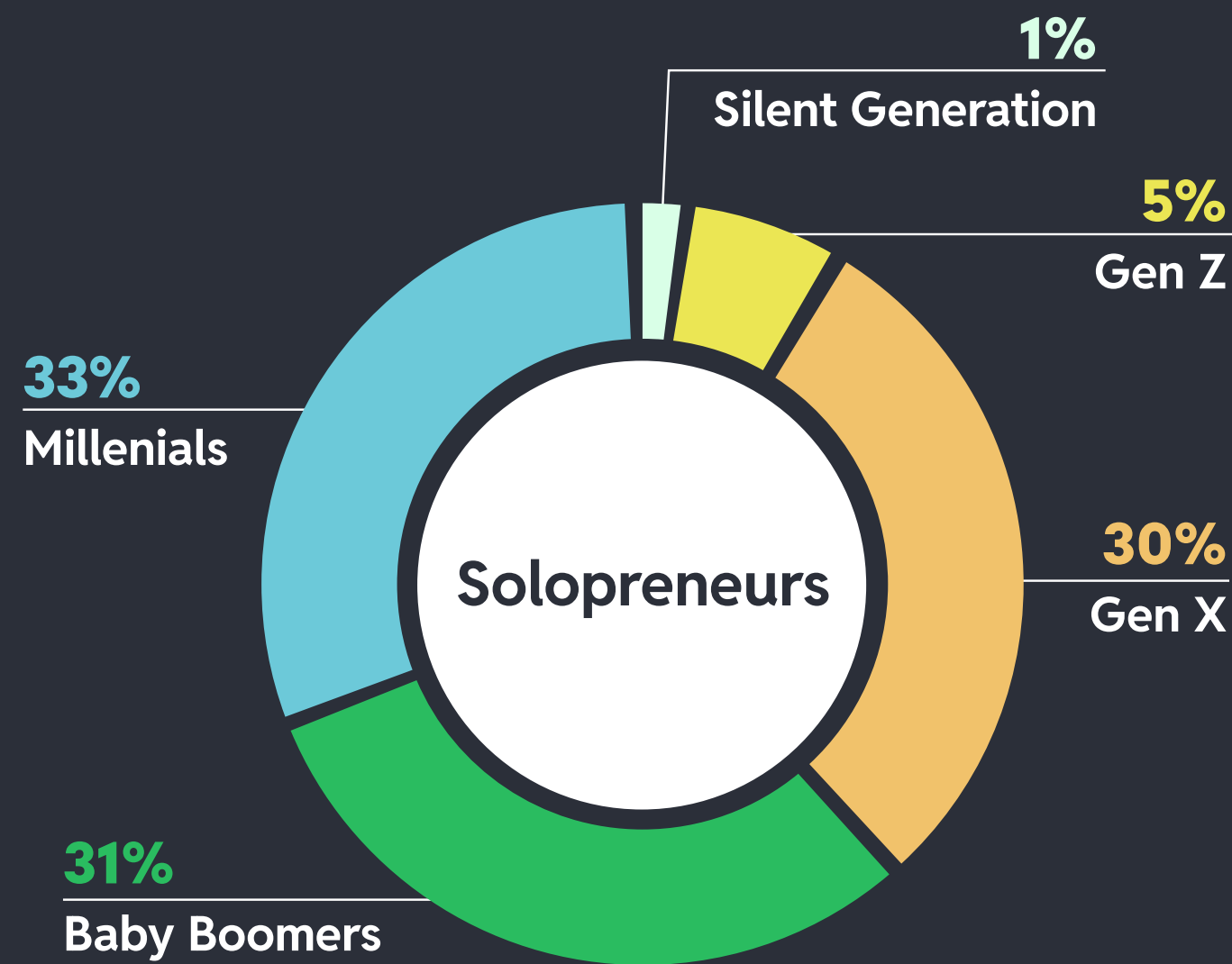
About the Report

The Branch x Mastercard Solopreneur Report is a collaborative white paper co-produced by Branch and Mastercard. The report **surveyed more than 1,400 solopreneurs across North America to understand their demographics, motivations, challenges, and financial behaviors.** The report offers insights into how fintech innovation can better serve this dynamic, expanding segment of the workforce. The survey was conducted by Mastercard in partnership with Branch; results reflect respondents' self-reported data.

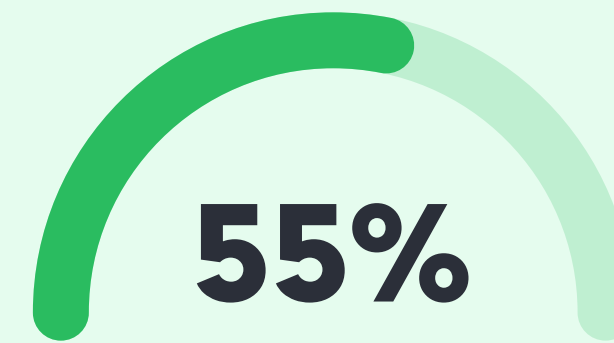
KEY FINDINGS ABOUT SOLOPRENEURS

Seasoned Professionals

Solopreneurs tend to come from previous careers rather than entering entrepreneurship early in their careers.



Under \$100K annually



Under \$50K annually

Income Realities

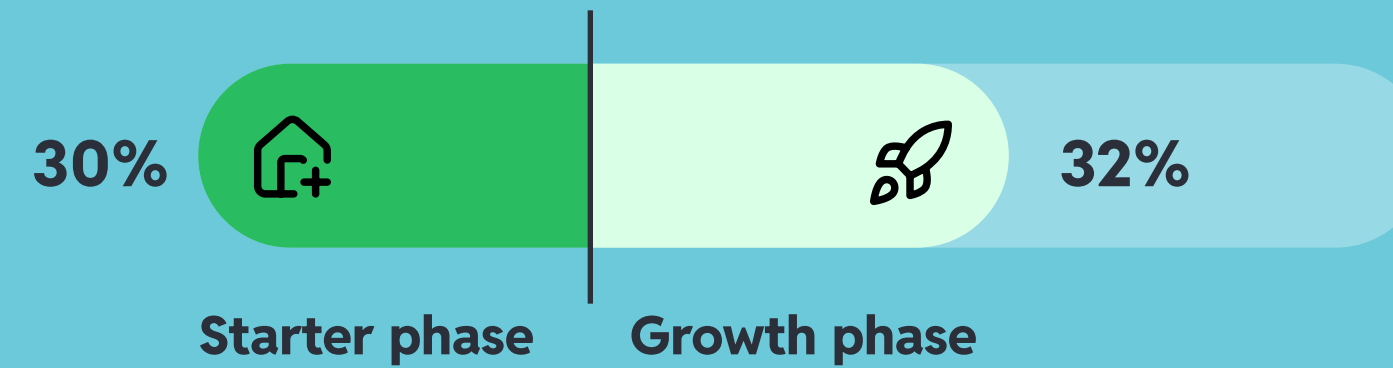
Most are still creating their financial foundations rather than scaling rapidly.

Urban Roots



Live in metro areas or suburbs near major urban centers

Builders in Progress



Nearly two-thirds of solopreneurs are in the starter or growth phases.

Cash Flow Is Imperative



Cite speed and reliability of payments directly affect their ability to grow.



Self-fund their business through personal savings.



Stability Over Hype

About 7 in 10 say they prefer to adopt new technologies only after they've been proven reliable.

Optimistic Under Pressure

Struggle to make ends meet

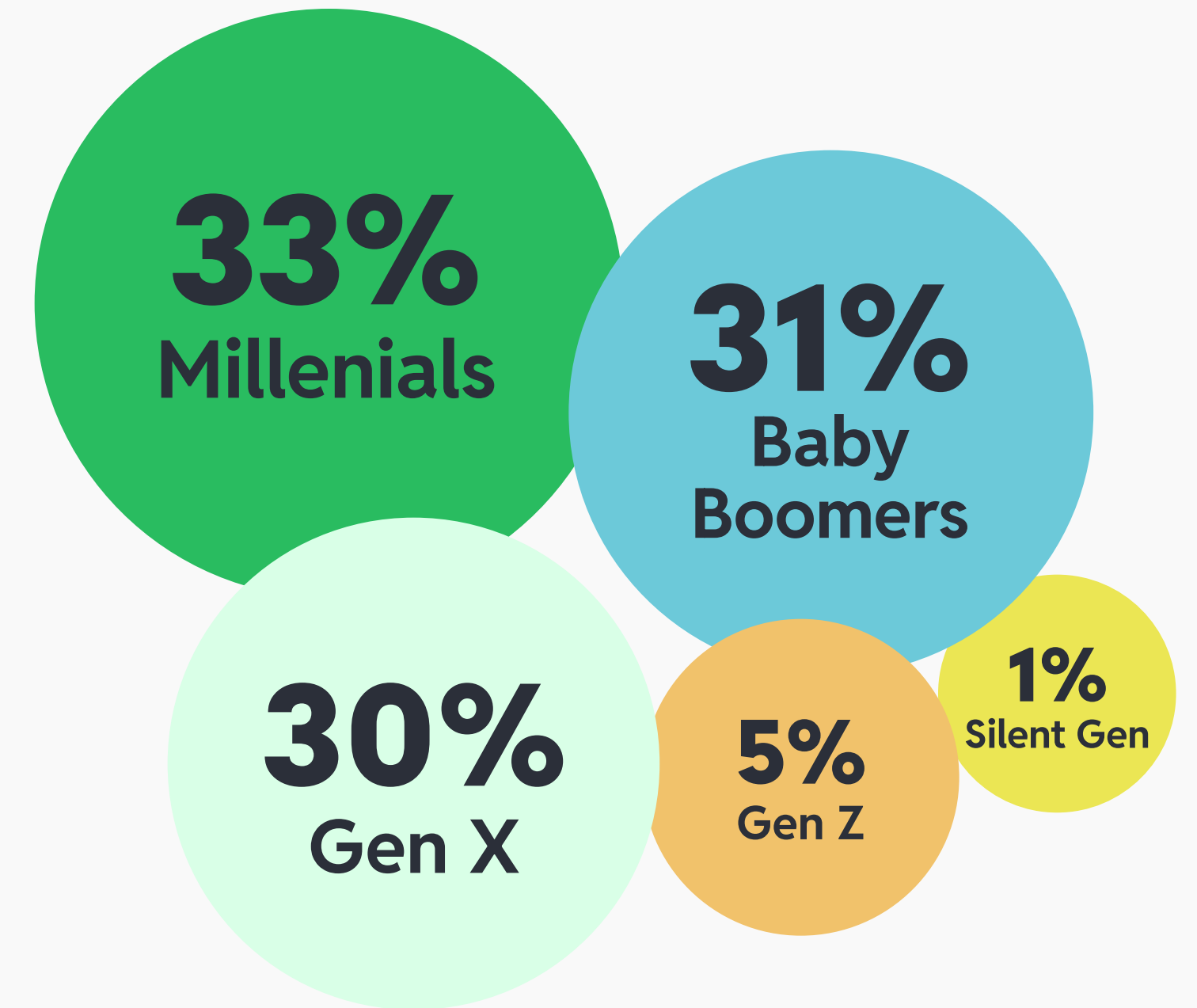
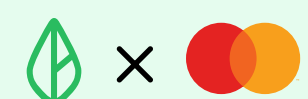


Believe their future is bright!



Solopreneurs Skew Older, Bringing Years of Professional Experience

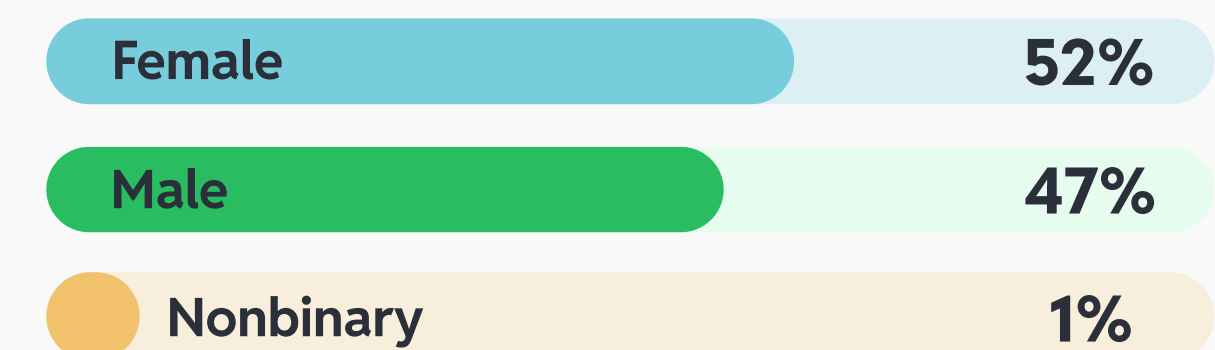
Solopreneurs tend to be seasoned professionals rather than early-career entrants, bringing a sense of industry know-how and professionalism that differentiates them from newer entrants to the freelance economy.



Near Gender Balance—with Slight Female Majority

Solopreneurship shows near gender parity, with 52% identifying as female, 47% as male, and 1% as nonbinary.

This split distinguishes solopreneurs from many traditional business ownership categories, which still tend to skew male.



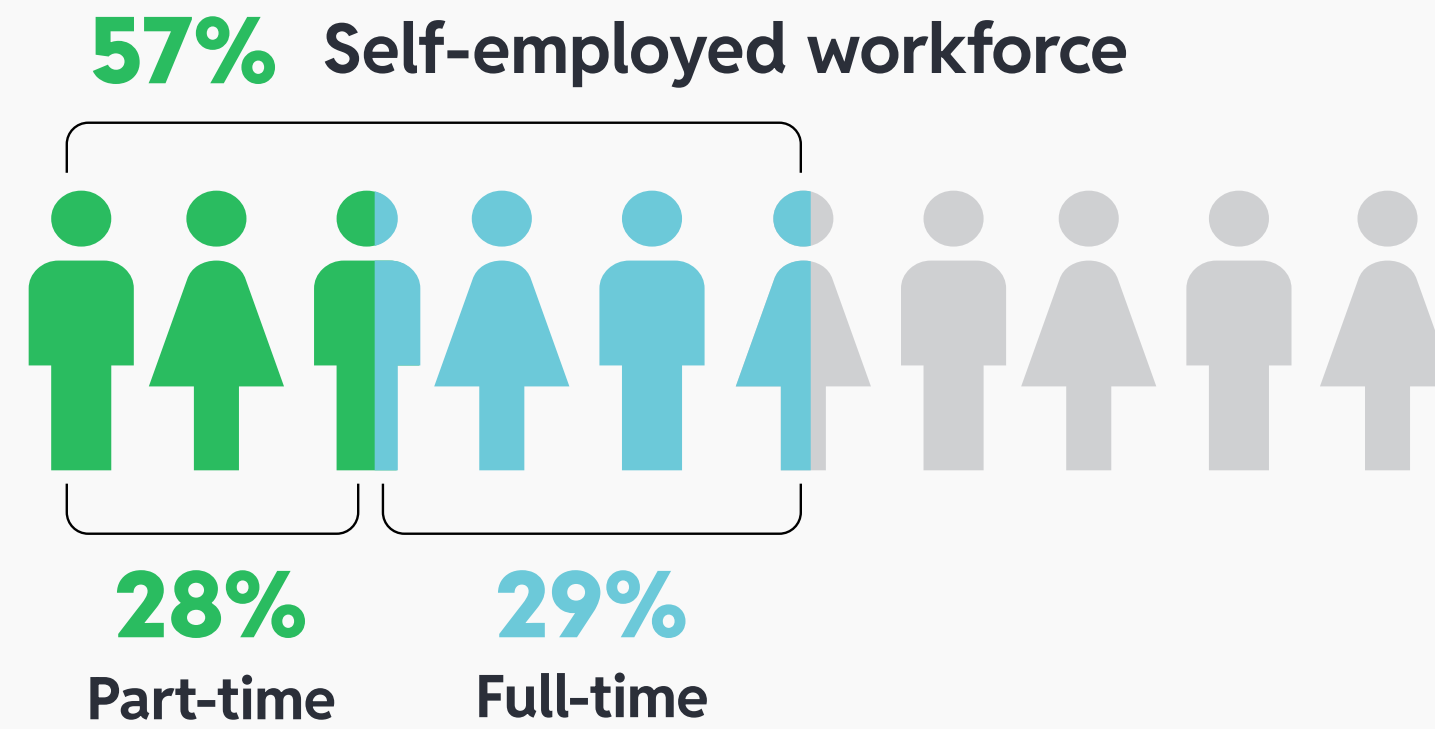
SOLOPRENEURS: A GROWING WORKFORCE SEGMENT



Solopreneurs are Still Shedding the Employee Mindset

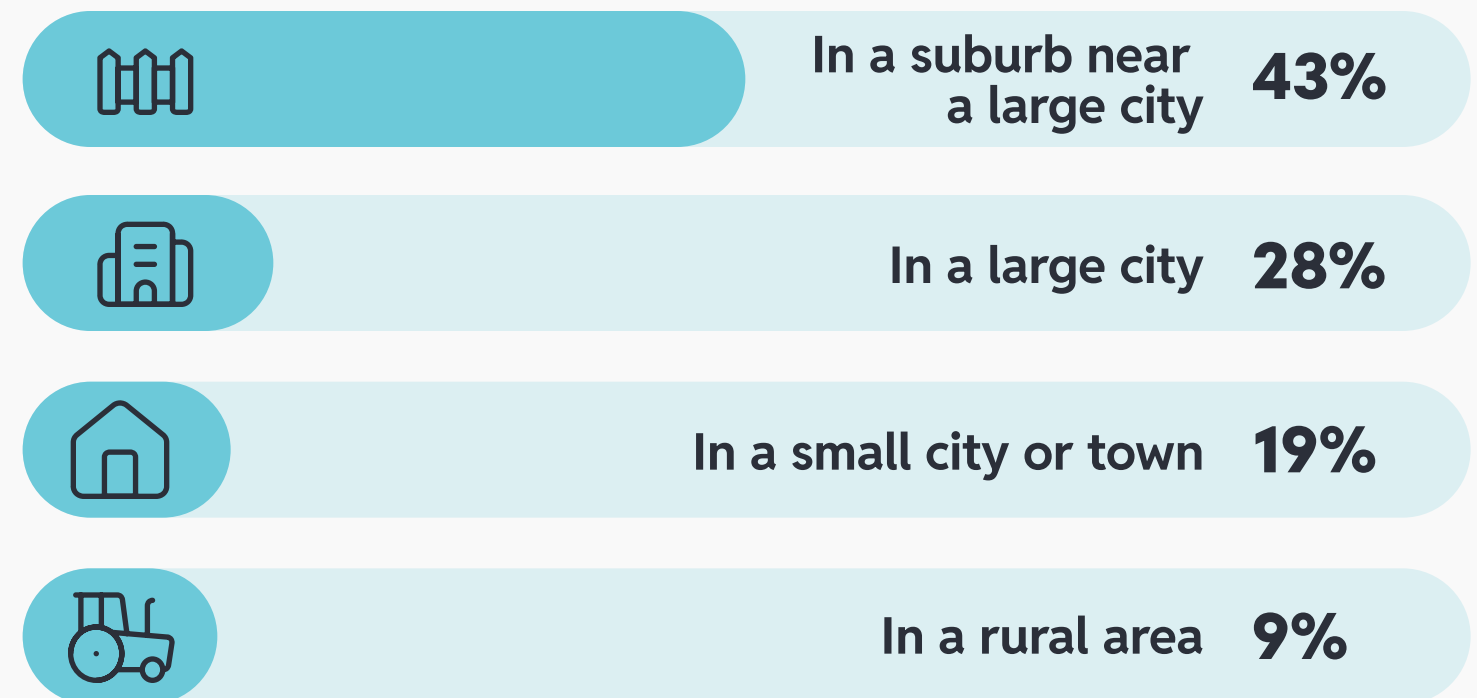
While all participants operate independently, **only 57% identified as self-employed**. The remaining 43% described themselves as traditionally employed.

Many solopreneurs appear to be former employees who have yet to fully shift their professional identity from working for an organization to running one. Their experience shows how deeply traditional employment has shaped the way people define “work,” even as they build businesses on their own terms.



From Office Hubs to Independent Hubs

71% of solopreneurs live in metro or suburban areas near major cities, showing that while work is changing, it remains rooted where many built their careers.



The Mindset Powering Today’s Solopreneurs

Solopreneurs are driven by curiosity and independence, yet deliberate in how they manage risk and define success—a mindset rooted in exploration but tempered by experience.



Curious and confident

61% describe themselves as naturally curious, and 70% say they find it easy to talk to others.



Independent by nature

56% feel most energized working alone, underscoring a self-directed drive that defines their approach to business and decision-making.



Financially pragmatic

59% define wealth through money and stability rather than freedom or risk-taking.

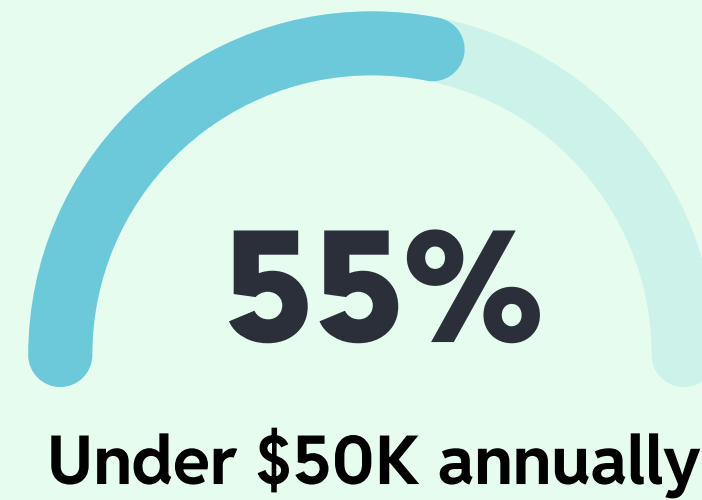


Building From the Ground Up

Most solopreneurs are still in the early stages of growth, with **79%** earning under \$100,000 and more than half (55%) earning below \$50,000 annually.

These income levels reflect the realities of building independent ventures where autonomy often comes before scale.

Solopreneur Earnings



TAKEAWAY 1

Embed, Don't Bolt On

With innovative tools such as open financing, fintech can help eliminate these barriers by providing seamless access to credit, capital, and payment solutions.

Solopreneurs want tools that integrate seamlessly into how they already work—from invoicing and banking to payments and tax prep. They don't have time to juggle multiple platforms or reenter data across systems. This creates a strong opportunity for banks and fintechs to partner with payment providers that deliver end-to-end financial management solutions, simplifying operations and improving the overall experience.

OPPORTUNITY →

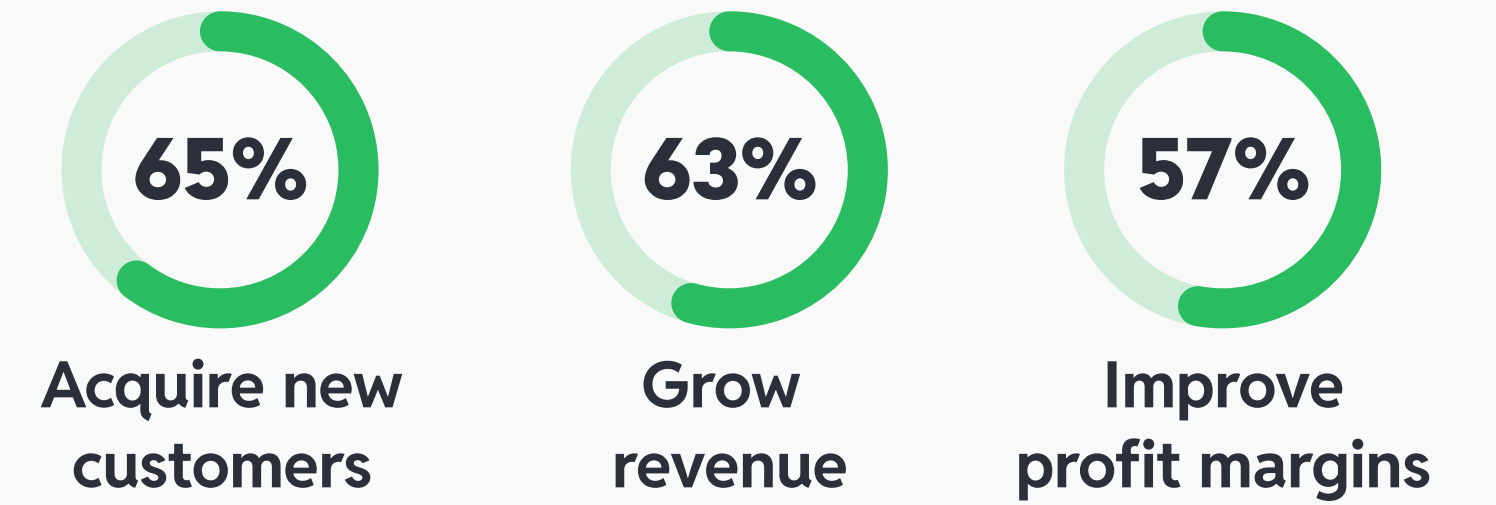
Build connected, embedded solutions that automate what solopreneurs already do—**not add new steps**. Unified ecosystems that sync banking, accounting, and payments can help them work smarter and scale faster.



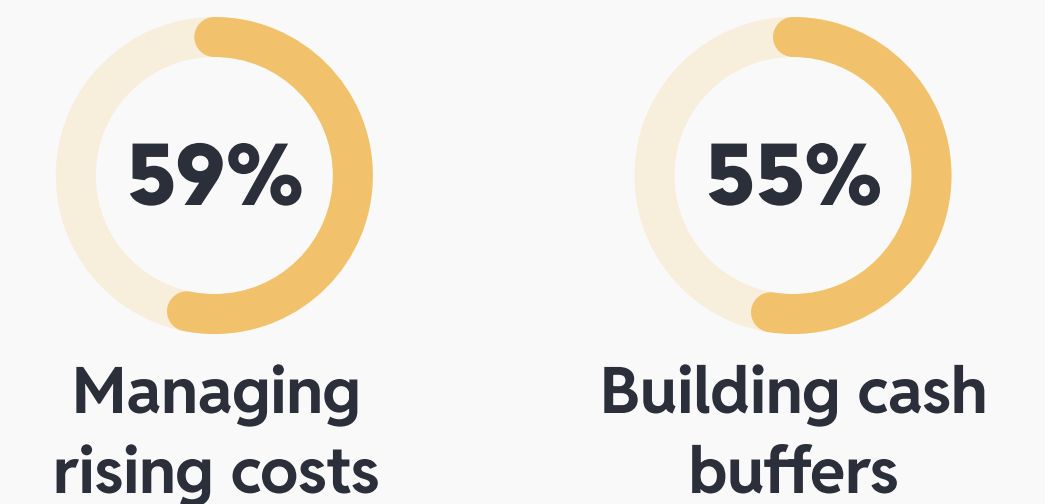
Stability as the New Success

Solopreneurs are redefining prosperity as something far more grounded than wealth or status: the ability to build a stable, sustainable future on their own terms.

Top Goals of Solopreneurs



Market Volatility



92%

Of solopreneurs aim to strengthen their financial footing or improve access to capital

Purpose, Identity, and Connection at the Core

Solopreneurs are building businesses that mirror their values and identities: **78% emphasize community and customer connection**, and **63% consider environmental impact central to their work**.

Half say their cultural background shapes how they communicate, illustrating how heritage and authenticity have become strategic advantages in a marketplace that values trust and transparency.



Self-Reliant but Underserved

Solopreneurs wear every hat including marketer, accountant, strategist, and customer service rep, and it takes a toll. Nine in ten say operations are a constant challenge.

Still, their resilience stands out. Nearly half admit they're barely making ends meet, but three in four (75%) remain optimistic about the road ahead—a testament to their confidence and conviction even when resources are scarce.



9 in 10 Say operations are a constant challenge



50% Admit they are barely making ends meet



78% Emphasize community and customer connection

36% Consider environmental impact central to their work



✦ **75%** Of solopreneurs feel optimistic about the road ahead

Early Builders Laying the Foundation for Growth

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of solopreneurs are in the starter (30%) or growth (32%) phases, focused on stabilizing revenue, building processes, and gaining confidence as business owners.

By business stage:



TAKEAWAY 2

Design for Their Pace

These founders are **quick, creative, and constantly multitasking**. They need financial tools that are intuitive, contextual, and mobile-friendly—solutions that help them make decisions in seconds, not hours.

OPPORTUNITY →

Deliver **speed, simplicity, and real-time visibility**—instant approvals, one-tap payments, clear dashboards—so solopreneurs can keep momentum without sacrificing control.



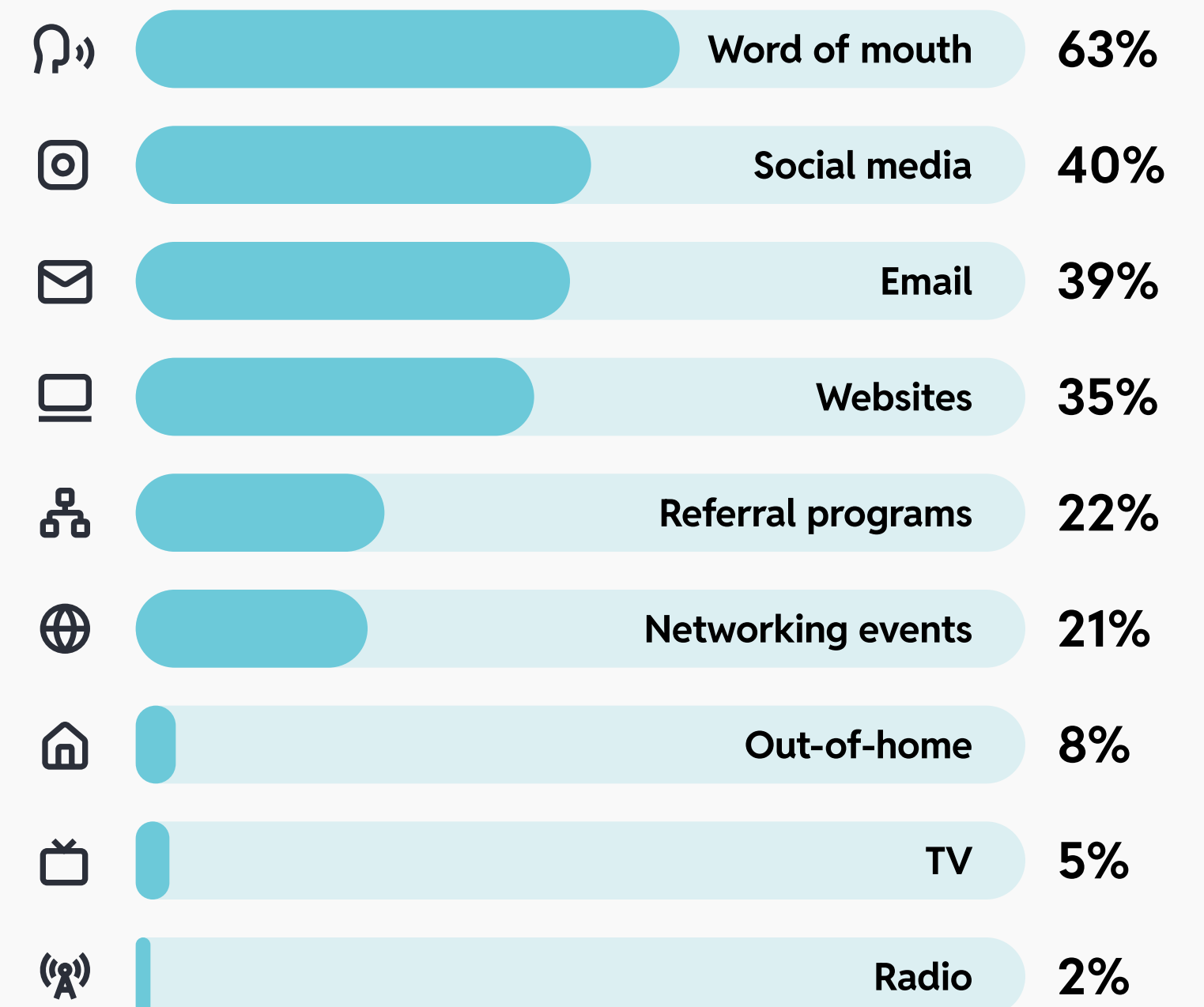
How Solopreneurs Are Making and Managing Money

Customer Acquisition:

Growth Through Connection, Not Campaigns

Most solopreneurs grow their businesses through authentic relationships rather than traditional advertising, emphasizing the importance of trust, reputation, and personal networks over paid spend.

Their marketing reflects their mindset: low cost, high authenticity, and deeply personal connection.



HOW SOLOPRENEURS ARE MAKING AND MANAGING MONEY

Financial Management:

Doing More With Less

Independent earners have built a reputation for doing more with less and doing it on their own terms. But even the most resourceful solopreneurs face challenges when income fluctuates and payments are delayed.

There's a widening gap between what traditional financial systems offer and what solopreneurs actually need to stay afloat and grow:

48% Believe the financial system works against them

52% Feel traditional financial institutions don't meet their needs

62% Report having to fight for every bit of financial progress

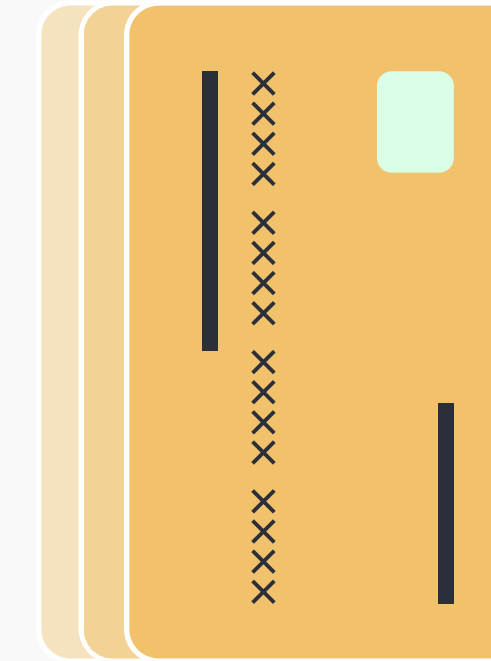
Inconsistent cash flow and delayed payments can stifle growth, restrict reinvestment, and heighten financial stress. With **89%** citing financial management or access to capital as major pain points, fast, reliable payments become more important than ever

For solopreneurs, faster access to earnings isn't a perk—it's a lifeline.

Access to Capital:

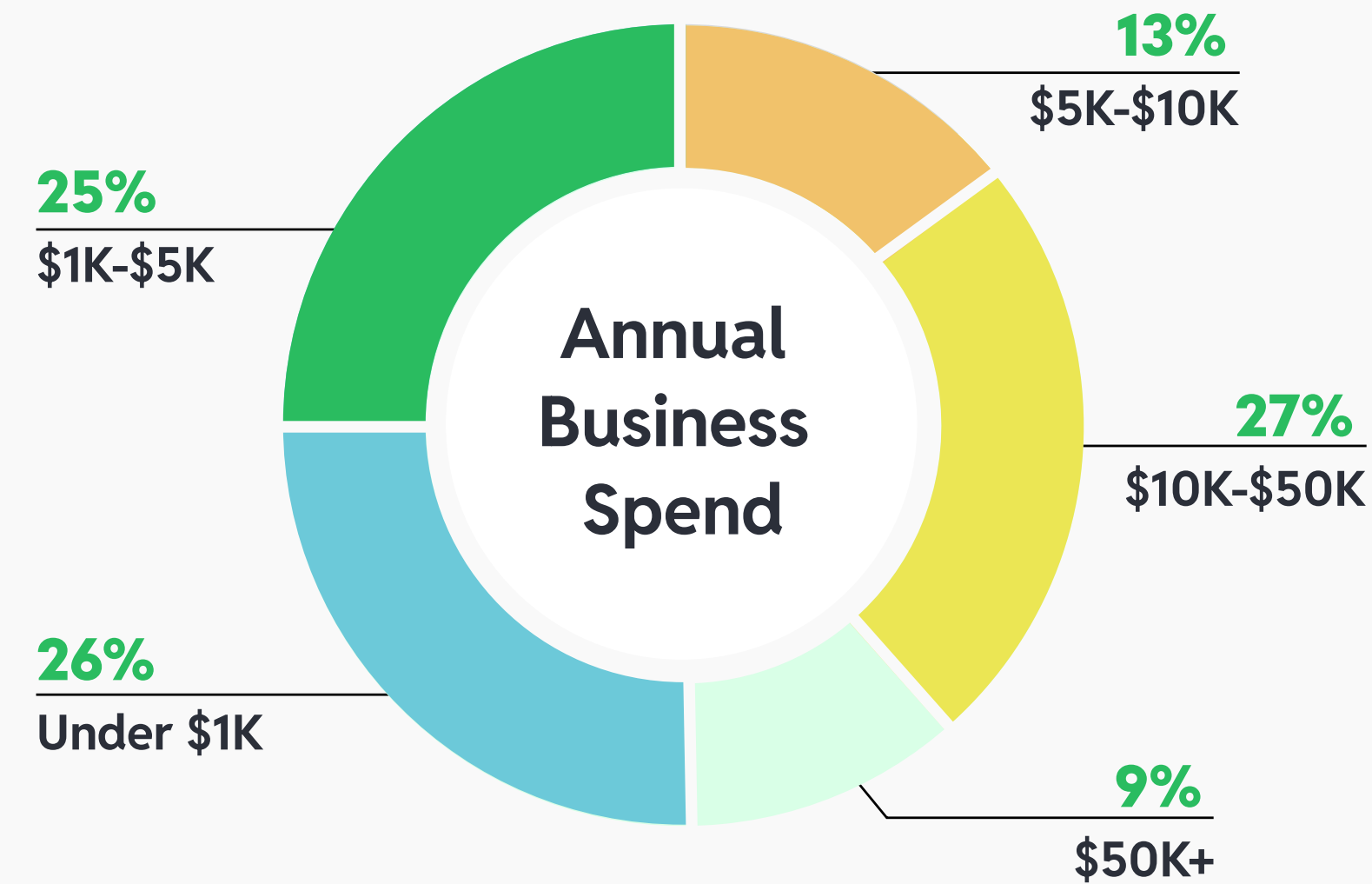
Credit-Visible, But Underserved

Solopreneurs are disciplined borrowers—**56%** pay balances in full each month. Yet, **35%** rely on credit cards for business funding, since just **11%** have access to traditional loans. Most finance their operations through personal capital (**66%**), underscoring the gap in accessible small-business lending.



35% Rely on credit cards for business funding

56% Pay balances in full each month



66% Finance their operations through personal capital

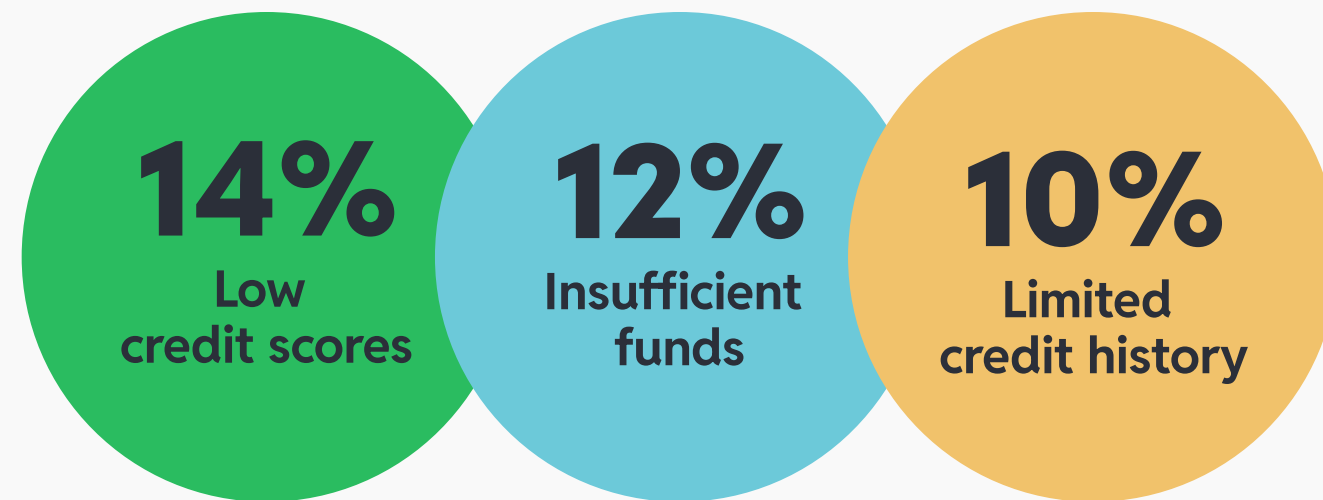


HOW SOLOPRENEURS ARE MAKING AND MANAGING MONEY



Only 11% of solopreneurs have access to traditional loans

Leading reasons for denied loans



51% Spend \$5,000 or less annually

36% Spend more than \$10,000 annually



Technology as a Growth Engine —but Only When It Works

Because they juggle so many roles, solopreneurs are cautious innovators—viewing technology as a path to efficiency, not experimentation. Seventy-one percent prefer to wait until new tools have proven reliable before adopting them—not out of resistance, but practicality.

Even so, most feel confident in their digital skills with **77% actively seeking out digital tools to improve their business.**



TAKEAWAY 3

Reward Resilience

Many solopreneurs are **credit invisible but financially resilient**—they self-fund, pay on time, and manage cash conservatively. Yet traditional credit systems overlook them.

OPPORTUNITY →

Use **alternative data sources** like transaction history, platform sales, and payment consistency to build **new credit models** that reward responsible behavior and unlock fair access to capital.



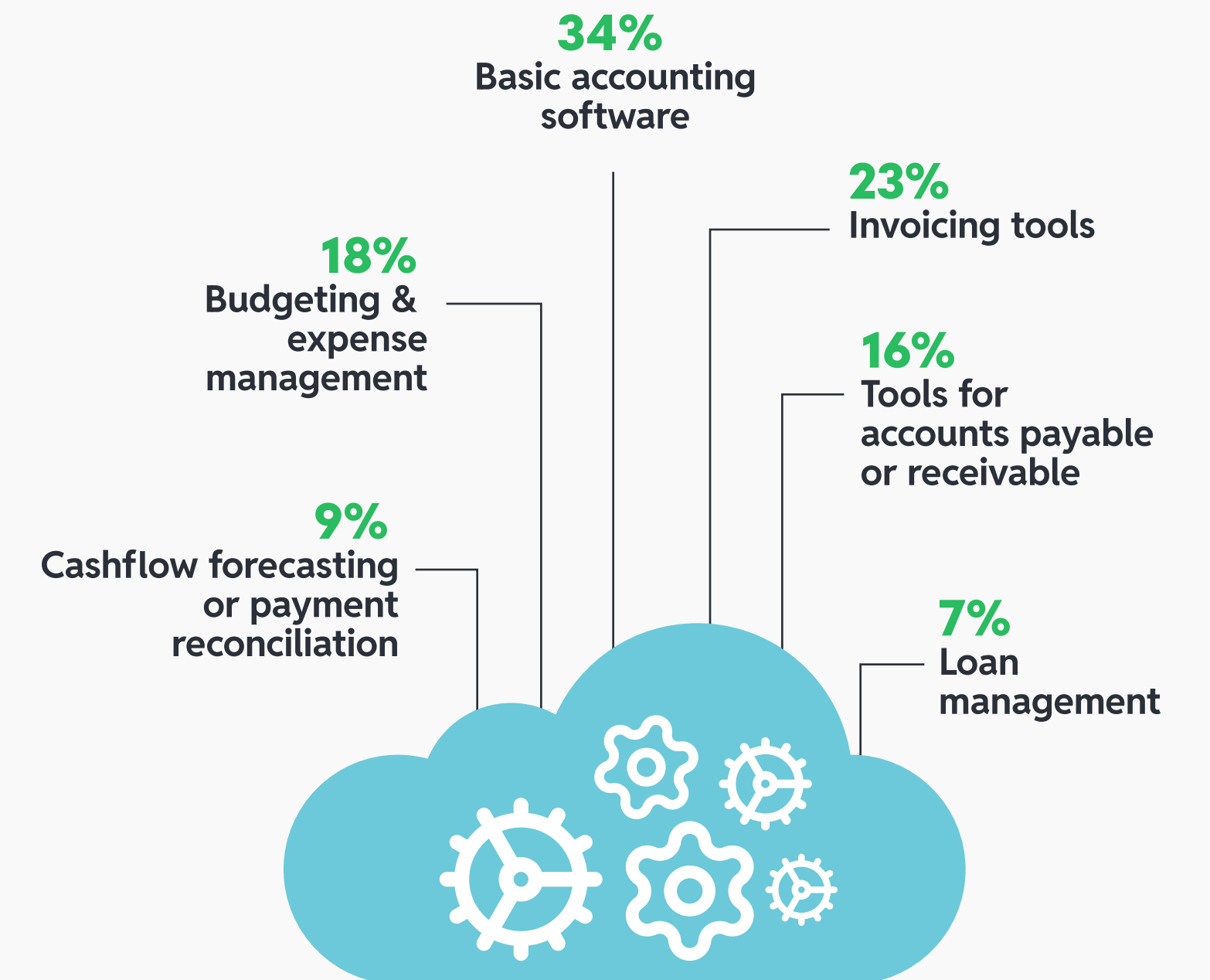
33%
Report not using any financial tools

Solopreneurs are digital-first by necessity—but their current fintech stack is patchy, and traditional providers often miss the mark. They want instant payouts, low/transparent fees, integrated tax & accounting, and credit they can actually access.

The Current Stack: Limited Tools, Expanding Needs

Most solopreneurs run lean financial operations with minimal tool adoption beyond the basics. Only one-third (34%) use basic accounting software, and fewer than one in four use invoicing tools (23%).

Meanwhile, a third (33%) report using none of these tools at all, underscoring how many solopreneurs still rely on manual processes or basic banking apps to manage their finances.



Debit as the Hub and Gateway to Future Financial Services

Debit cards serve as a financial hub for solopreneurs and are central to how they spend, manage, and build trust with financial institutions. This underscores debit's role as the entry point to broader financial relationships.

80%

Say they would first look to the company that issues their business debit card for additional financial products

Debit cards are central to both business operations and personal finances. They're most commonly used for:

 Bills and office supplies **45%**

 Gas **40%**

 Groceries **34%**

 Vendor payments **23%**



31%

Prefer to manage their business finances directly from checking

Personal spending



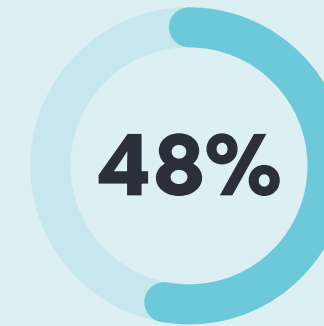
62%

Debit



59%

Credit cards



48%

Digital wallets

Seeking Financial Providers That Are Simple and Trustworthy

Solopreneurs are looking for financial partners that make money management simple, affordable, and secure. Their top priorities include:



56%

Low or no fees



45%

Easy-to-use digital experience



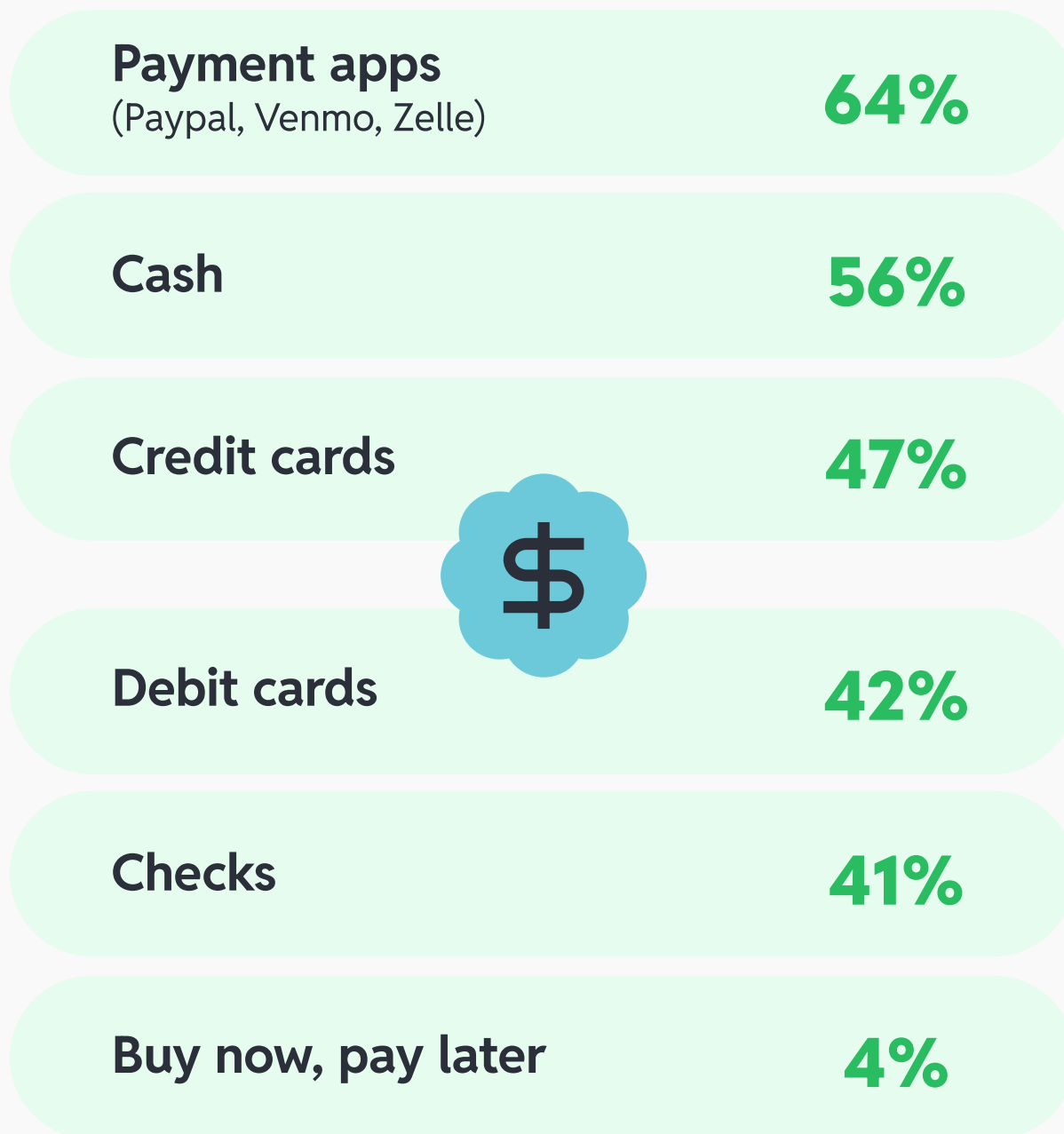
40%

Responsive customer service

This reflects a clear preference for convenience and transparency over complex product features.

Payment Acceptance: Digital Tools Lead, But Cash Persists

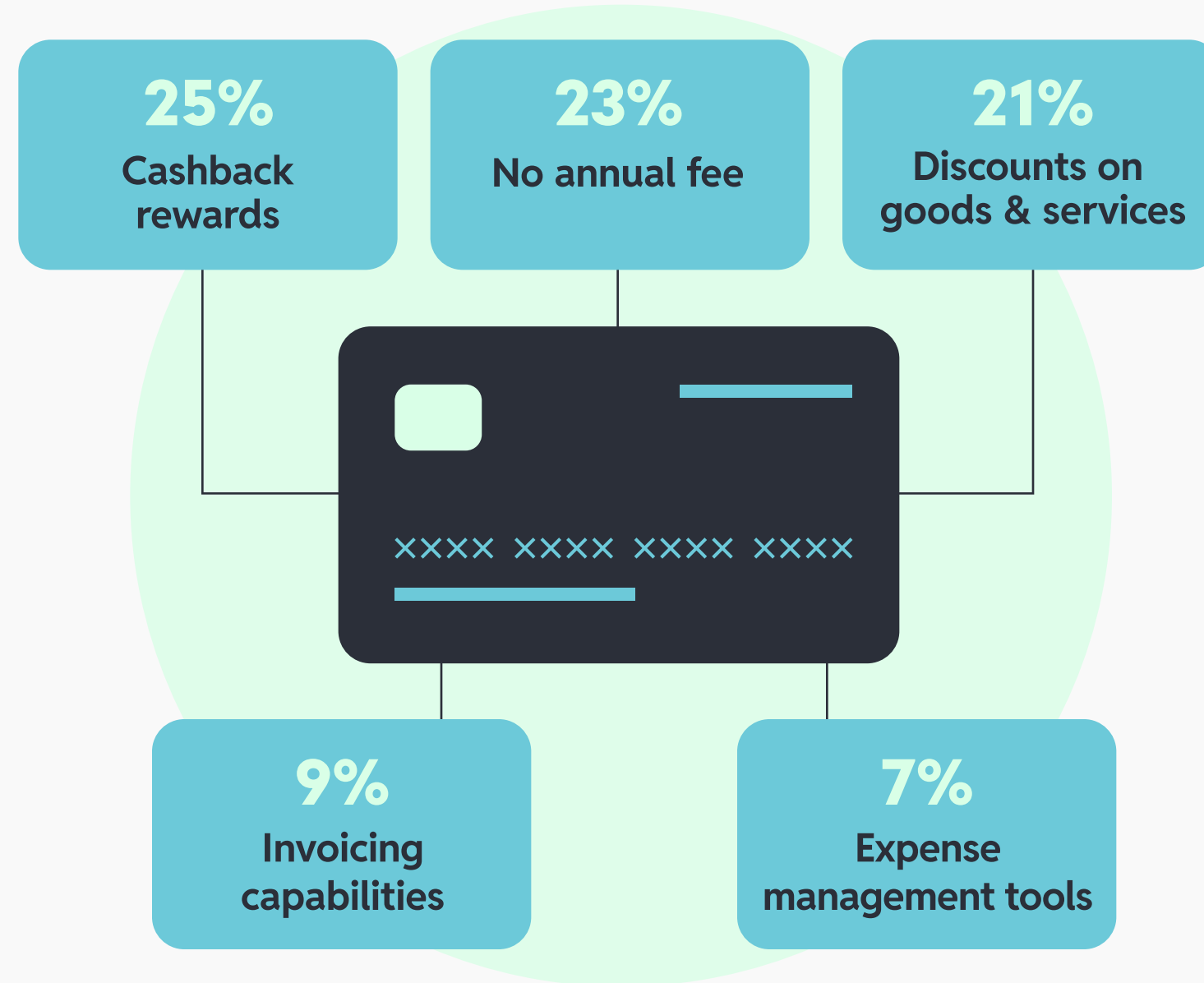
Solopreneurs manage payments and finances with a blend of digital convenience and financial caution. **Most solopreneurs offer multiple payment options to meet customer preferences:**



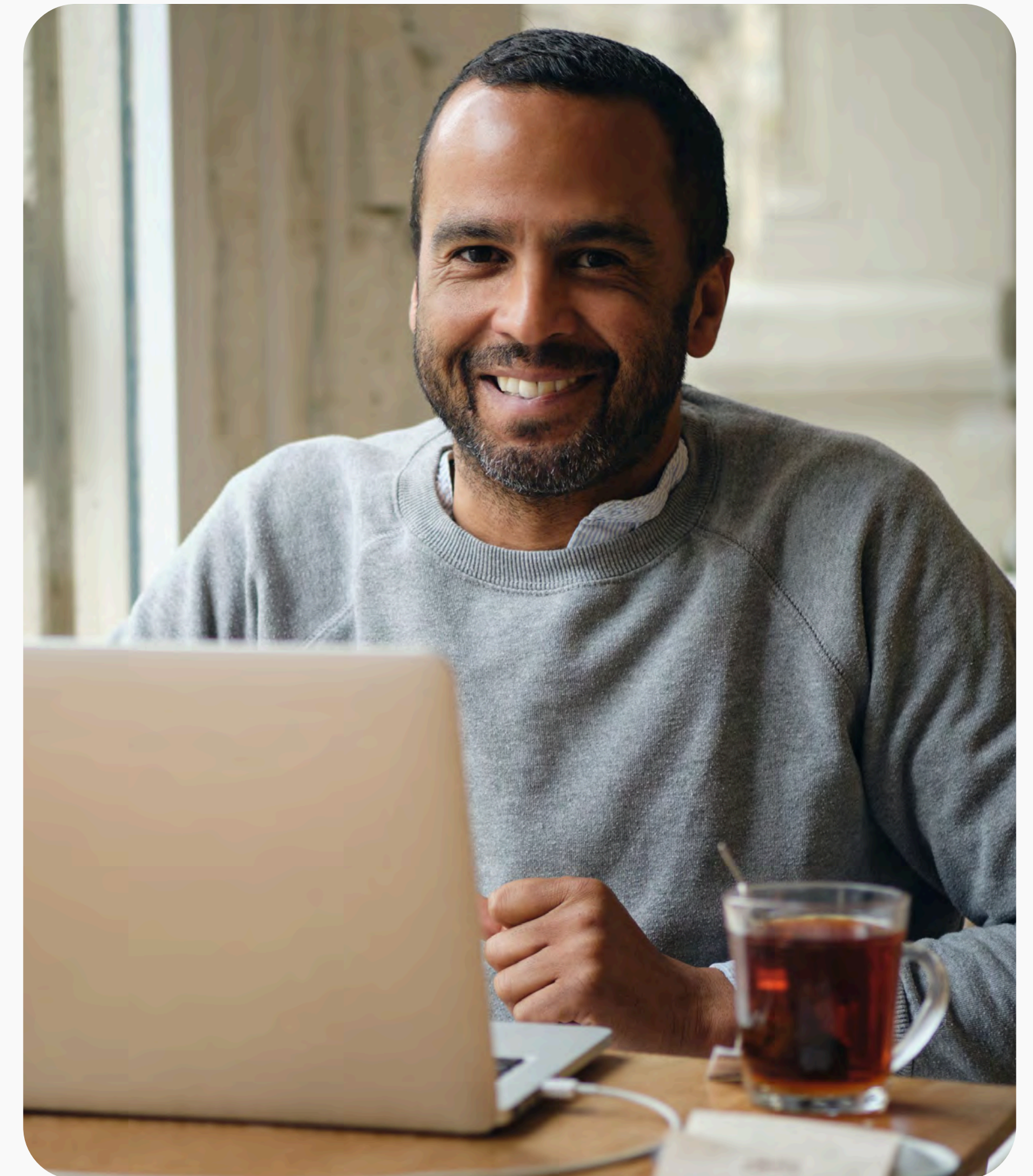
However, friction remains. Payment delays (34%), high processing fees (27%), and technical issues (18%) top their pain points. These frustrations highlight **the need for simpler, faster, and lower-cost payment rails** that integrate seamlessly with existing business tools.

Card Preferences: Rewards, Value, and Flexibility Drive Usage

Solopreneurs want credit and debit cards that offer real-world value—not prestige perks. Their most requested features include:



Nearly half (45%) say rewards significantly influence how often they use their card, confirming that incentive structures remain a powerful driver of engagement.



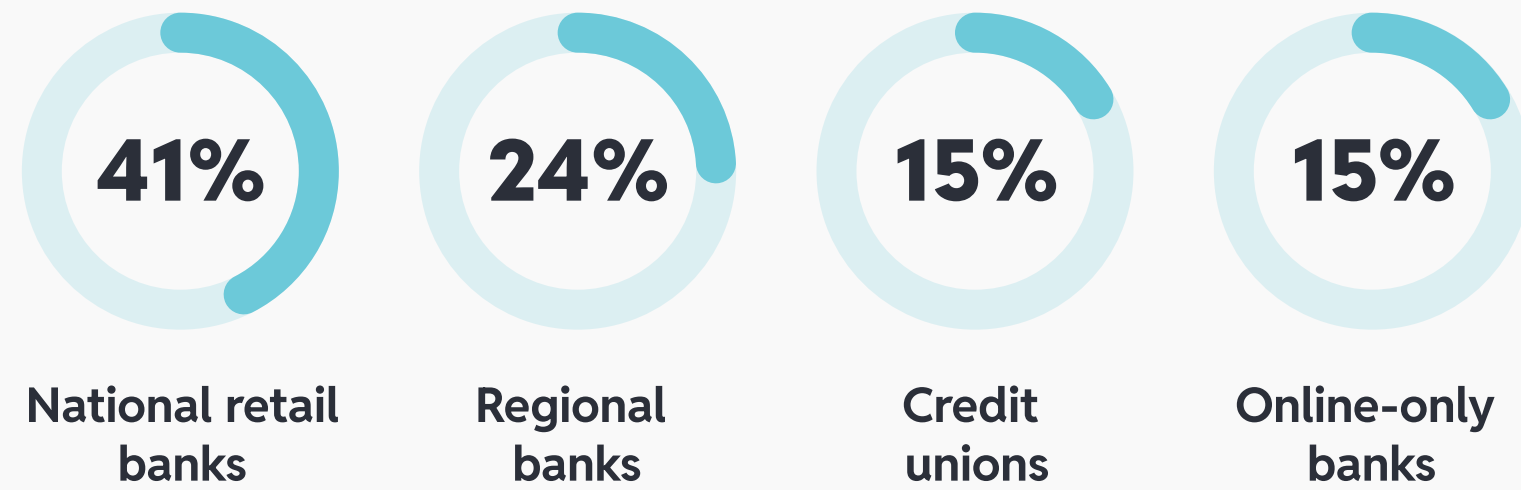
47% prefer to keep business and personal deposits at the same institution

WHAT FINANCIAL TOOLS THEY USE: LEAN & DIGITAL

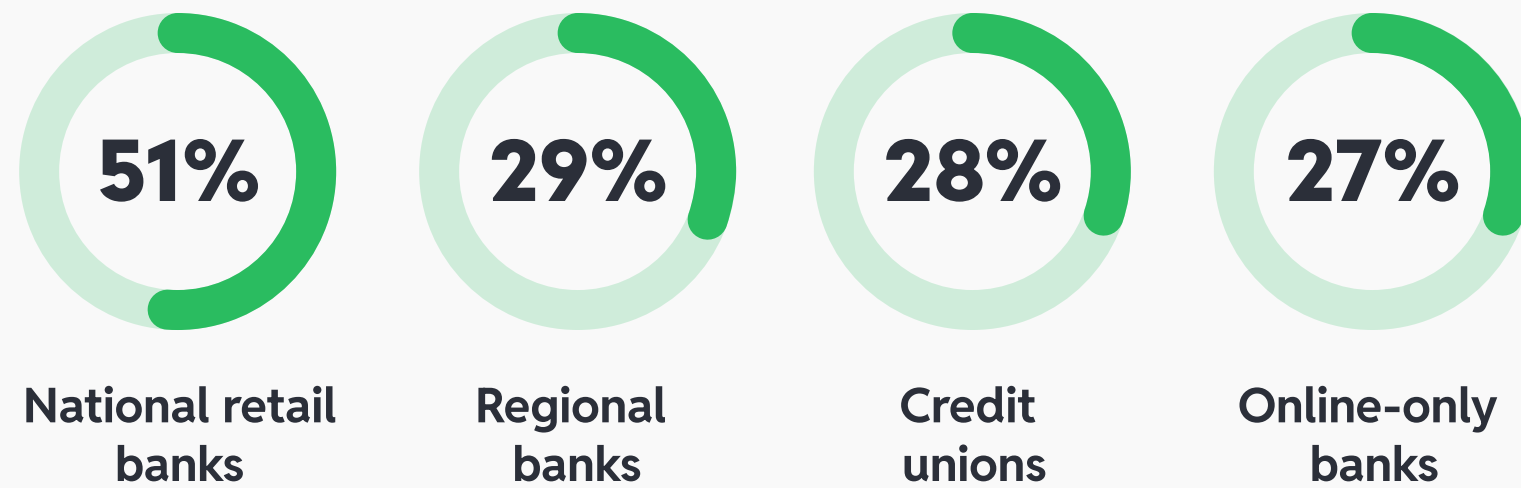
Banking Relationships: Traditional Roots, Service-Driven Choices

Solopreneurs overwhelmingly bank with traditional institutions, showing strong ties to established financial providers.

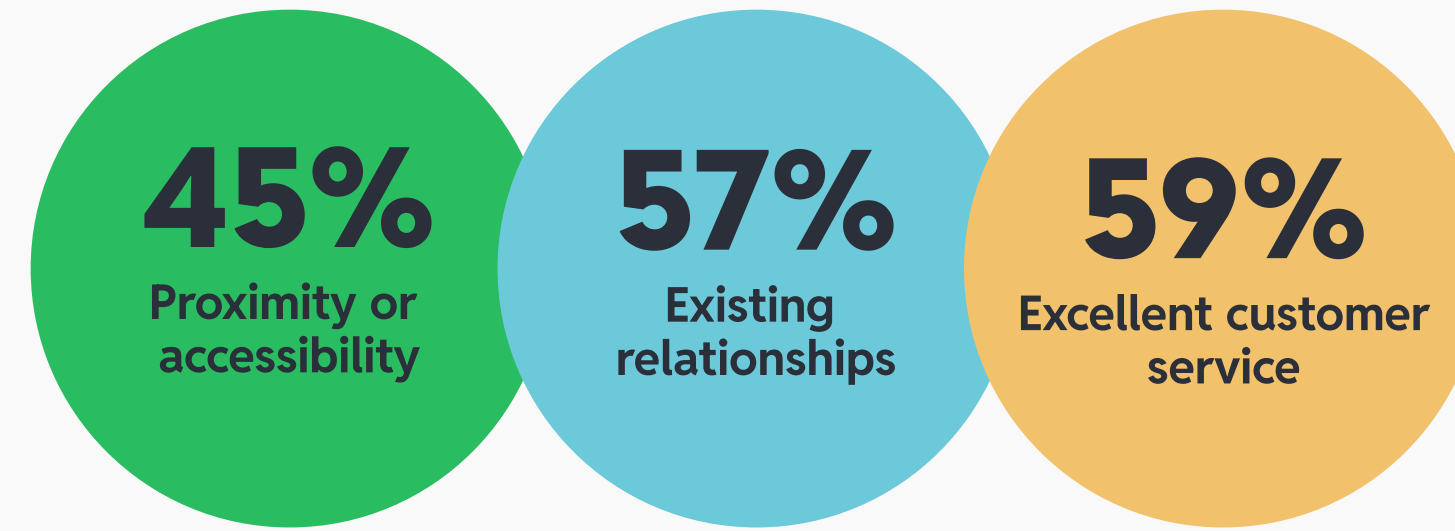
Business Accounts



Personal Accounts

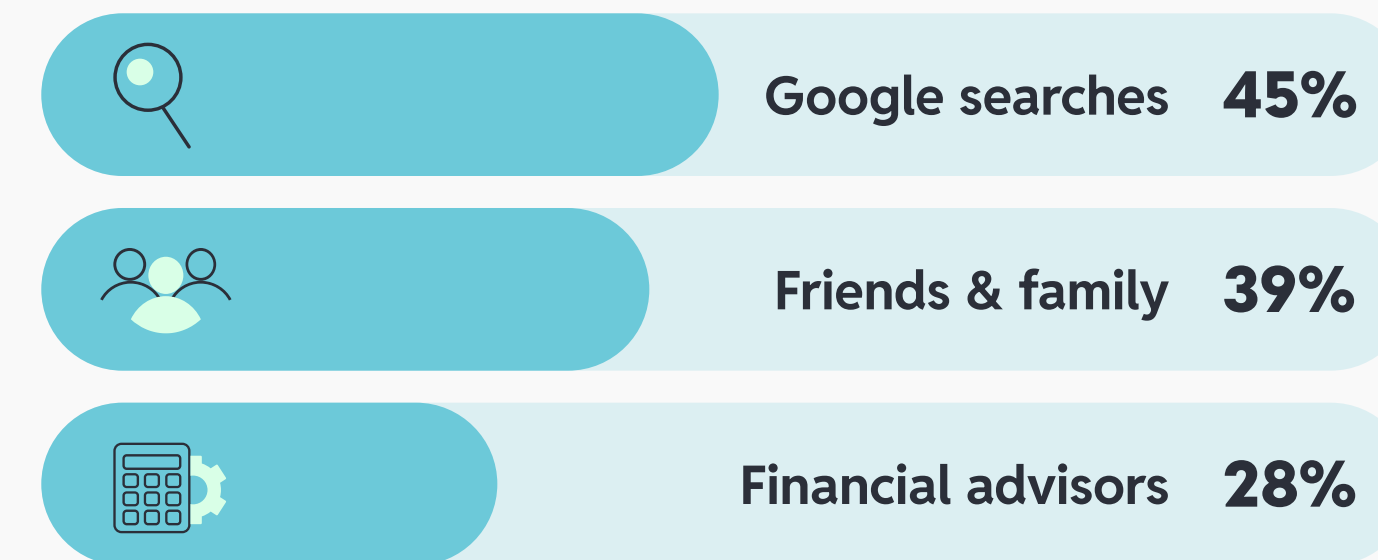


When selecting a business bank, solopreneurs value trust, convenience, and service over rates or rewards. The top criteria are:

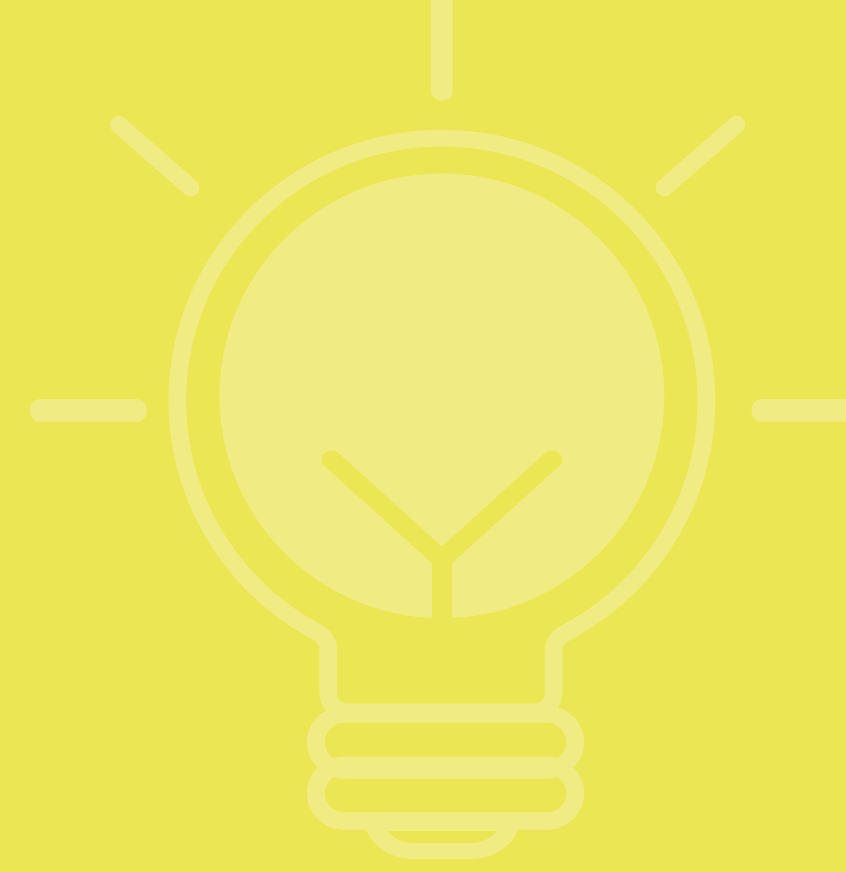


Financial Education and Behavior: DIY and Peer-Driven

Solopreneurs are self-taught, peer-guided learners when it comes to managing money. Their top sources for financial guidance are:



Only 26% turn to financial institutions for education—highlighting a major opportunity for banks and fintechs to embed AI-powered tools and structured learning programs directly into their digital platforms.



TAKEAWAY 4

Help Them Get Paid Faster

Solopreneurs' top pain points—cash flow management, admin overload, and disconnected systems—slow growth and drain focus.

OPPORTUNITY →

Create a **connected financial hub** that manages their needs in real time. Empower them to **get paid faster, forecast confidently, and reinvest with less friction.**

How Fintech Can Help Solopreneurs Scale

Solopreneurs are driving the future of independent work, yet they continue to face systemic financial friction. With innovative tools such as open financing, fintech can help eliminate these barriers by providing seamless access to credit, capital, and payment solutions. By leveraging connected and transparent ecosystems, fintech can build a bridge between their potential and their next stage of growth.

1

Embed, Don't Bolt On

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Opportunity →

Build connected, embedded solutions that automate what solopreneurs already do—**not add new steps**. Unified ecosystems that sync banking, accounting, and payments can help them work smarter and scale faster.

2

Design for Their Pace

These founders are **quick, creative, and constantly multitasking**. They need financial tools that are intuitive, contextual, and mobile-friendly—solutions that help them make decisions in seconds, not hours.

Opportunity →

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Reward Resilience

Many solopreneurs are **credit invisible but financially resilient**—they self-fund, pay on time, and manage cash conservatively. Yet traditional credit systems overlook them.

Opportunity →

Use **alternative data sources** like transaction history, platform sales, and payment consistency to build **new credit models** that reward responsible behavior and unlock fair access to capital.

TAKEAWAYS

Fintech has a chance to do more than serve solopreneurs—it can champion them. By embedding seamlessly, designing for speed, recognizing financial resilience, earning trust through transparency, and simplifying every transaction, fintech can fuel the next generation of independent business growth.

4

Help Them Get Paid Faster

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Opportunity →

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5

Build Trust Through Transparency

Without a finance team to guide them, solopreneurs value **clarity, fairness, and support** over complexity. Confusing terms, hidden fees, or impersonal service erode trust quickly.

Opportunity →

Lead with **transparent pricing, proactive communication, and accessible human support.** A trustworthy experience turns financial tools into long-term partnerships.





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[View the Appendix](#)

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