INNOVATING TO IMPACT

dentsu

US EDITION

COLLECTIBLE TOY CULTURE: FANDOMS OVER TRENDS

SEPTEMBER 2025

PART OF THE DENTSU CONSUMER NAVIGATOR SERIES

METHODOLOGY

ABOUT THIS STUDY

Survey Methodology

- The survey was conducted by dentsu via Toluna, an online research panel.
- Administered on September 3, 2025.
- Distributed among a random sample of 400 U.S. respondents who had purchased at least one collectible toy in the past 3 years and considers themselves "a collector."
- How we defined "collectible toy" in the survey: *Physical toys or model items that are collected for personal interest or hobby purposes. These can include figures, building sets, model vehicles, dolls, or other items made for enjoyment, display, or gifting — often sold as limited editions, part of a series, "blind boxes", or themed collections.*

AGENDA

CONTENTS

SECTION 01

TOP CONSUMER INSIGHTS

EMOTIONAL EQUITY DRIVES TOY COLLECTING

Despite a prominent investment narrative, collectors of collectible toys rank "emotional or personal connection" as the #1 aspect that drives value while "monetary cost or resale value" ranks #3.

THE PROXY ECONOMY IS REAL FOR COLLECTIBLE TOYS

24% of collectors are "frequently buying collectible toys for a friend/family member who collects," creating a shadow market where purchases aren't driven by personal preference but by social relationships.

POP CULTURE FANDOM TRUMPS SOCIAL PROOF

28% of collectors completely ignore trends in favor of personal taste, and 41% say new trends are only worth joining when they "connect to existing interests that I have"—with 77% influenced by movies/TV, 74% by video games, and 73% by music, proving collectors buy into existing obsessions rather than trend-cycles.

GOOD FRICTION CREATES INTRIGUE

76% of collectors will follow or subscribe to accounts for early access, 72% will trade with others, 69% will attend conventions, and 67% will pay premium resale prices in order to obtain collectible toys they really want—proving effort-based exclusivity enhances rather than diminishes perceived value.

BRAND COLLABS HOLD BOTH PROMISE AND RISK

Collaborations with collectible toys offer a reputational lift for partner brands, as 36% of collectors report an improved perception. For collectible toys, the same percentage express concern, as authenticity matters. This reflects a passionate audience that rewards thoughtful, well-matched partnerships with deeper trust and engagement.

COLLECTIBLE TOYS ARE ACCESS KEYS, NOT END PRODUCTS

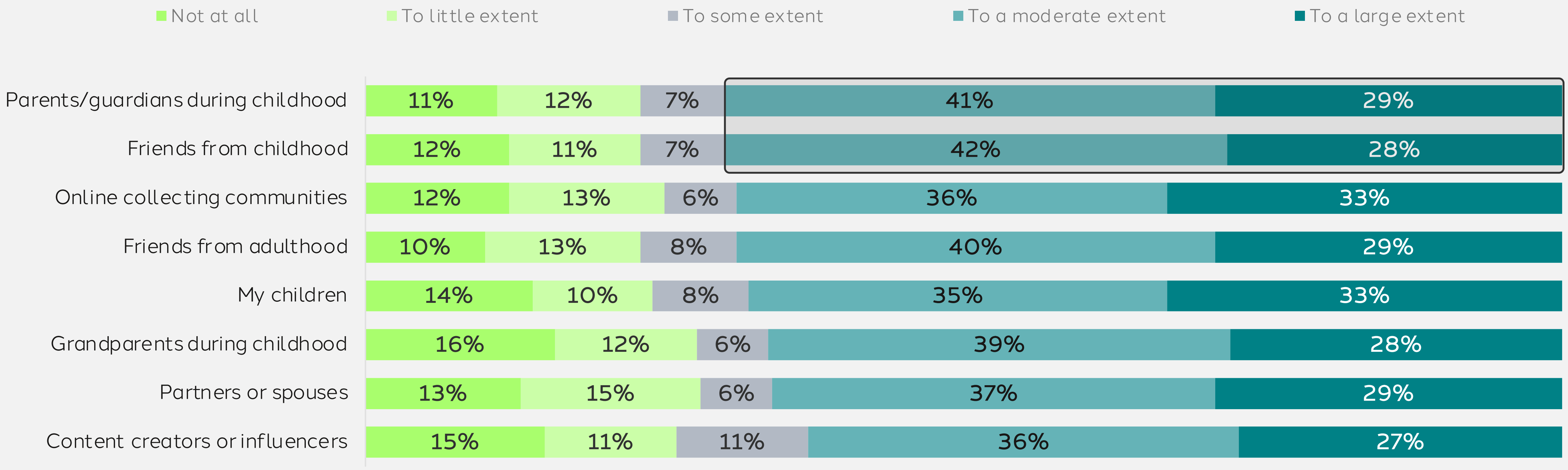
When partner brands collaborate with collectible toy franchises, collectors want more than physical items. 43% of want exclusive events, 41% want behind-the-scenes content, and over 60% seek digital add-ons like virtual galleries and certificates of authenticity.

THE COLLECTOR MINDSET

COLLECTOR DNA IS SHAPED BY CHILDHOOD RELATIONSHIPS.

Collectible culture is fueled by relational nostalgia, with childhood connections motivating a significant share of collectors to get their start. At the same time, online collecting communities are highly influential, indicating intimate relationships can be both IRL and digital.

INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS ON STARTING A COLLECTIBLE COLLECTION



CHILDHOOD FRANCHISES DOMINATE ADULT COLLECTOR WALLETS.

The tight clustering of top franchises suggests the collectibles market is driven by nostalgic touchstones. Legacy brands like Pokémon and Hot Wheels thrive not just by selling products, but by reactivating personal histories through play, trade, and shared stories. Regarding category nuances, anime wins the action figure war, outpacing Western figures by 5% in purchases.

WHAT MAKES COLLECTIBLES VALUABLE? EMOTIONAL EQUITY WINS.

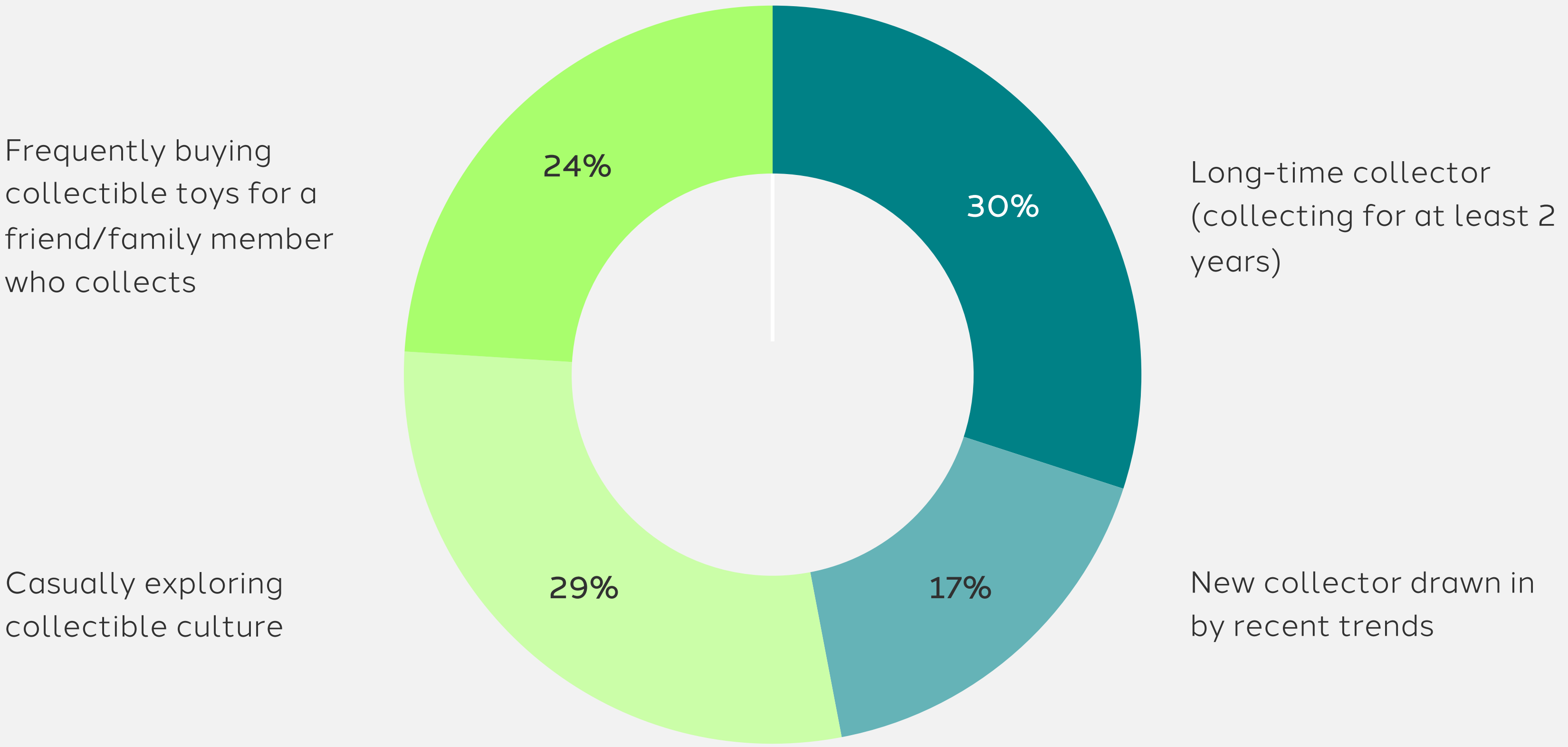
While monetary value is still important to collectors, personal meaning triumphs as the top aspect of value. Connecting to nostalgic drivers, collectors choose items that reflect identity, memory, and personal narrative. Craftsmanship matters, but only after the emotional bond is formed.

ASPECTS OF VALUE FOR COLLECTIBLE TOYS	RANKING
Emotional or personal connection	1
Quality of craftsmanship or design	2
Monetary cost or resale value	3
Brand or franchise association	4
Rarity or limited availability	5
Social status or admiration among other collectors	6
Cultural/Pop-culture significance	7
Completeness (part of a set or series I'm building)	8

THE PROXY COLLECTOR: 1 IN 4 AREN'T COLLECTING FOR THEMSELVES.

This 'supportive collector' suggests brands should think beyond the core collector to the collector's circle. Parents collecting with their children, partners supporting obsessions, friends participating in shared mythologies—there's a whole network of vicarious collecting happening.

COLLECTOR'S RELATIONSHIP TO COLLECTIBLE TOYS



SIX COLLECTOR ARCHETYPES:
UNITED BY COLLECTING, DIVIDED BY MOTIVATION

While our overall findings reveal shared patterns—childhood influence, emotional value hierarchies, relationship-driven discovery—they also expose a fundamental tension: collectors may buy the same products, but for completely different reasons.

A Hot Wheels car can simultaneously be a childhood memory trigger, an investment asset, a missing puzzle piece, an aesthetic object, or a social conversation starter.

Our six archetypes represent distinct ways of expression through collection, each with their own value system, discovery patterns, and brand relationship needs: **The Hunter, The Investor, The Storyteller, The Completionist, The Artist, and The Socializer.**

HUNTER

INVESTOR

STORYTELLER

COMPLETIONIST

ARTIST

SOCIALIZER

THE HUNTER

THRILL-SEEKING COLLECTOR MOTIVATED BY THE CHASE OF RARE OR DESIRED ITEMS.

- Plan, save, and track releases — driven by nostalgia, taste, and the thrill of discovery
- Tend to be long-time collectors (32%) or those casually exploring collectible culture (27%)
- Influenced by childhood experiences and parents' passion
- 36% purchased 3-7 collectibles and 16% purchased 16+ collectibles in the past 3 years

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERSHIP

Position your brand as part of the hunt — the thrill, the exclusivity, crowd-led discovery.

Most open to collaborations with Entertainment, Food and beverage, and Luxury or fashion brands.

WHO THEY ARE

55% Male, 45% Female

46% Millennials, 26% Gen Z

70% White, 16% Black

24% Hispanic

57% non-Parents, 31% Parents of Young Kids

HOW THEY COLLECT

Purists at Heart: 51% display collectibles as decor, 49% preserve in original packaging

Taste over Trends: Prioritize personal taste over hype or IP collabs

Intentional Buyers: Plan and save for specific drops—not impulsive

Trendsetters: Adopt early, before mainstream traction

WHAT THEY COLLECT

Anime action figures

Die-cast vehicles

Collectible trading cards

Pop culture figures

Stuffed toys

WHAT DRIVES DISCOVERY

Most discoveries made through online browsing

Online forums and creators influence decisions

Key Community Platforms: Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram

THE INVESTOR

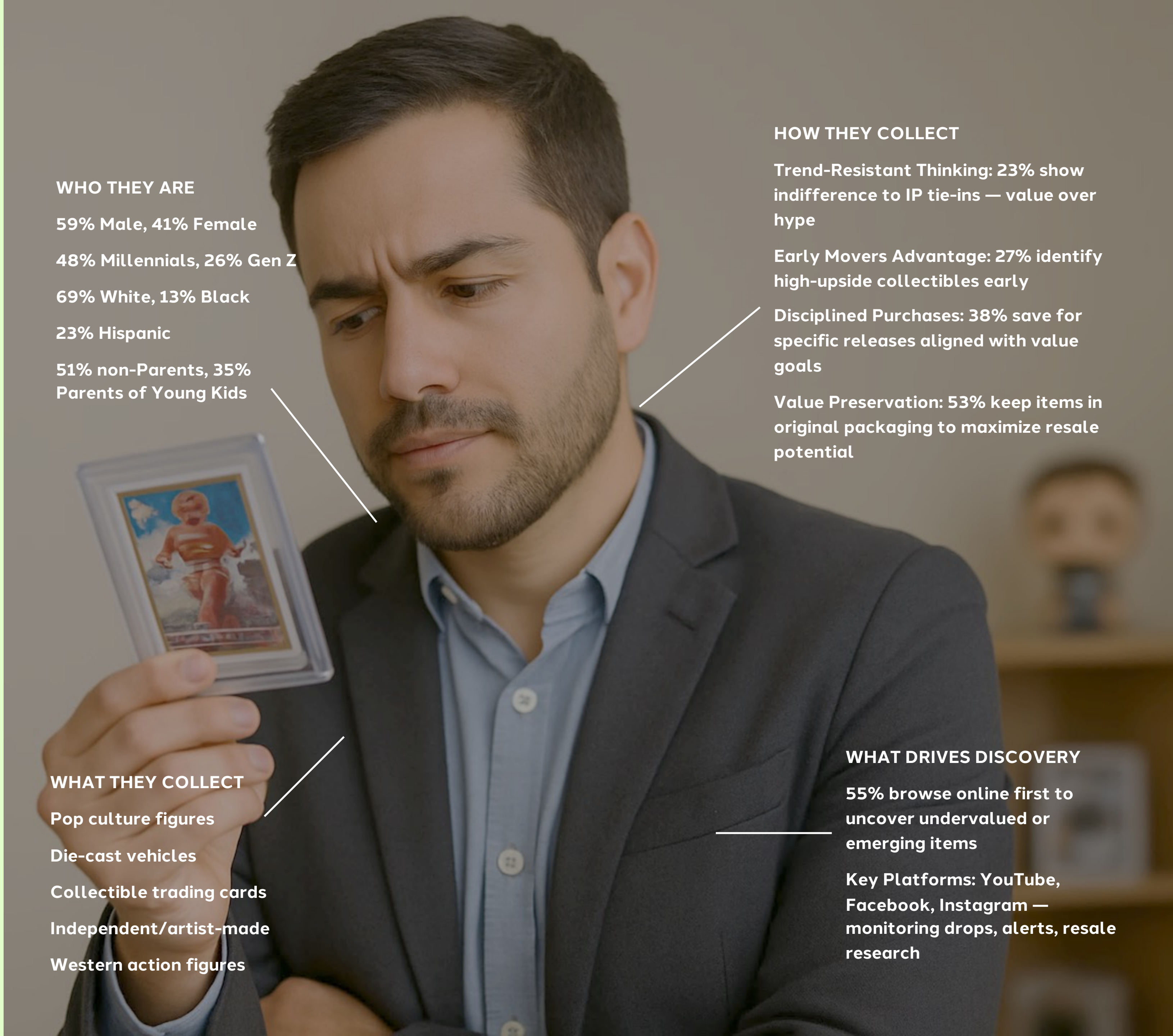
MONETARY VALUE-DRIVEN COLLECTOR PRIMARILY MOTIVATED BY FUTURE FINANCIAL RETURN.

- Treat collectibles as assets — focused on preservation and resale potential
- Less swayed by hype or IP tie-ins; value is driven by rarity and condition
- Draw satisfaction from spotting opportunities early
- Preservation is less about sentiment and more about protecting value
- 39% purchased 3–7 collectibles in the past 3 years

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERSHIP

Position your brand as part of the investment ecosystem — credibility, resale value, and early access.

Most open to collaborations with Entertainment, Sports, and Food and beverage brands, and Online marketplaces.



WHO THEY ARE

59% Male, 41% Female

48% Millennials, 26% Gen Z

69% White, 13% Black

23% Hispanic

51% non-Parents, 35% Parents of Young Kids

WHAT THEY COLLECT

Pop culture figures

Die-cast vehicles

Collectible trading cards

Independent/artist-made

Western action figures

HOW THEY COLLECT

Trend-Resistant Thinking: 23% show indifference to IP tie-ins — value over hype

Early Movers Advantage: 27% identify high-upside collectibles early

Disciplined Purchases: 38% save for specific releases aligned with value goals

Value Preservation: 53% keep items in original packaging to maximize resale potential

WHAT DRIVES DISCOVERY

55% browse online first to uncover undervalued or emerging items

Key Platforms: YouTube, Facebook, Instagram — monitoring drops, alerts, resale research

THE STORYTELLER

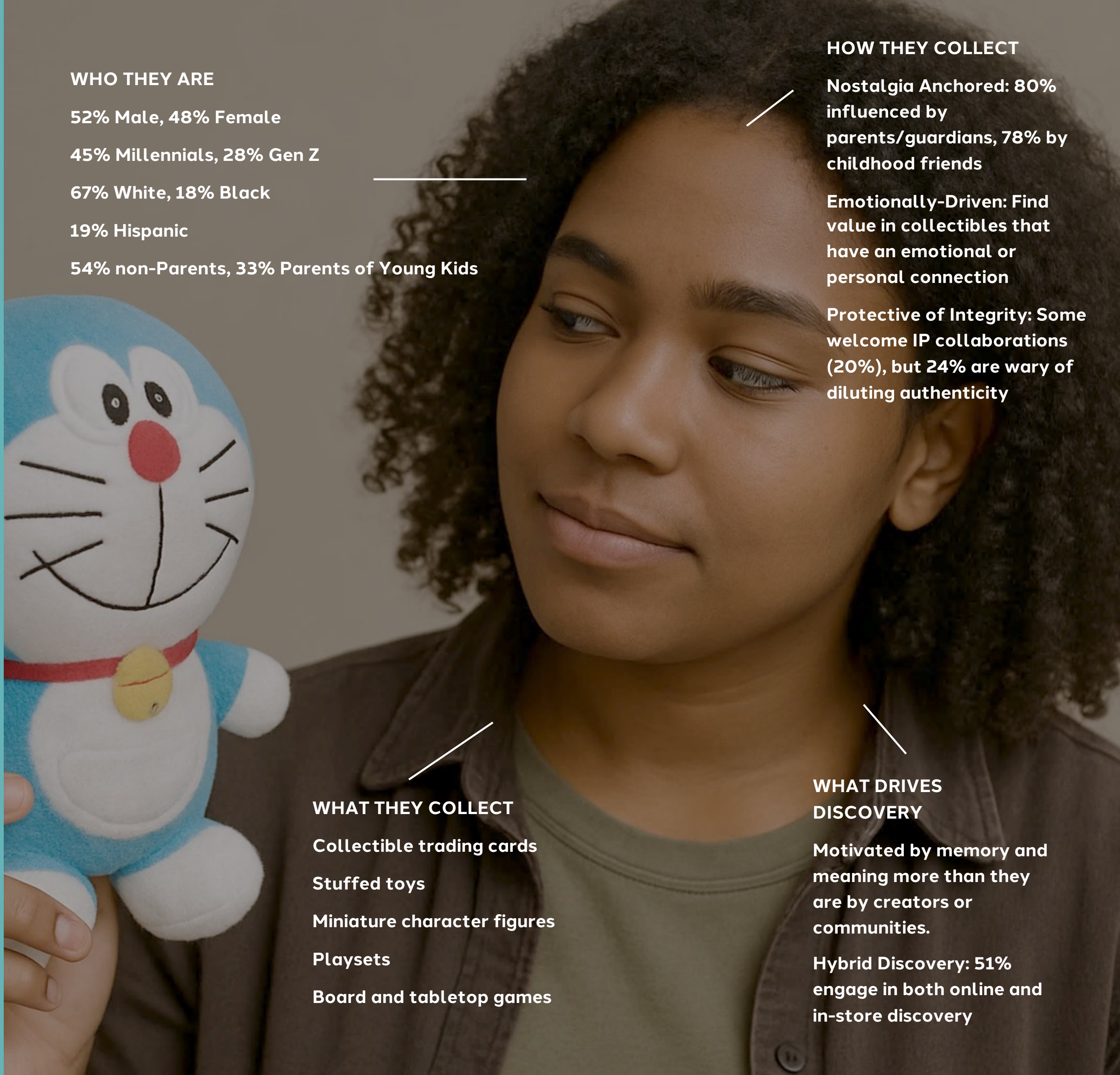
EMOTIONALLY-DRIVEN COLLECTOR SEEKING PIECES WITH BACKSTORIES OR PERSONAL CONNECTION.

- Collections often echo childhood experiences and narratives they grew up with
- More independent in their journey — less swayed by community hype or creator influence
- More likely to be casually exploring collectible culture (29%) or a new collector (19%)
- 39% purchased 1-2 collectibles in the past 3 years

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERSHIP

Position your brand as part of the story — tap into nostalgia, authenticity, and identity expression rather than hype

While wary of collabs, show the strongest alignment with Entertainment, Food & Beverage, and Online Marketplaces.



WHO THEY ARE

52% Male, 48% Female

45% Millennials, 28% Gen Z

67% White, 18% Black

19% Hispanic

54% non-Parents, 33% Parents of Young Kids

HOW THEY COLLECT

Nostalgia Anchored: 80% influenced by parents/guardians, 78% by childhood friends

Emotionally-Driven: Find value in collectibles that have an emotional or personal connection

Protective of Integrity: Some welcome IP collaborations (20%), but 24% are wary of diluting authenticity

WHAT THEY COLLECT

Collectible trading cards

Stuffed toys

Miniature character figures

Playsets

Board and tabletop games

WHAT DRIVES DISCOVERY

Motivated by memory and meaning more than they are by creators or communities.

Hybrid Discovery: 51% engage in both online and in-store discovery

THE COMPLETIONIST

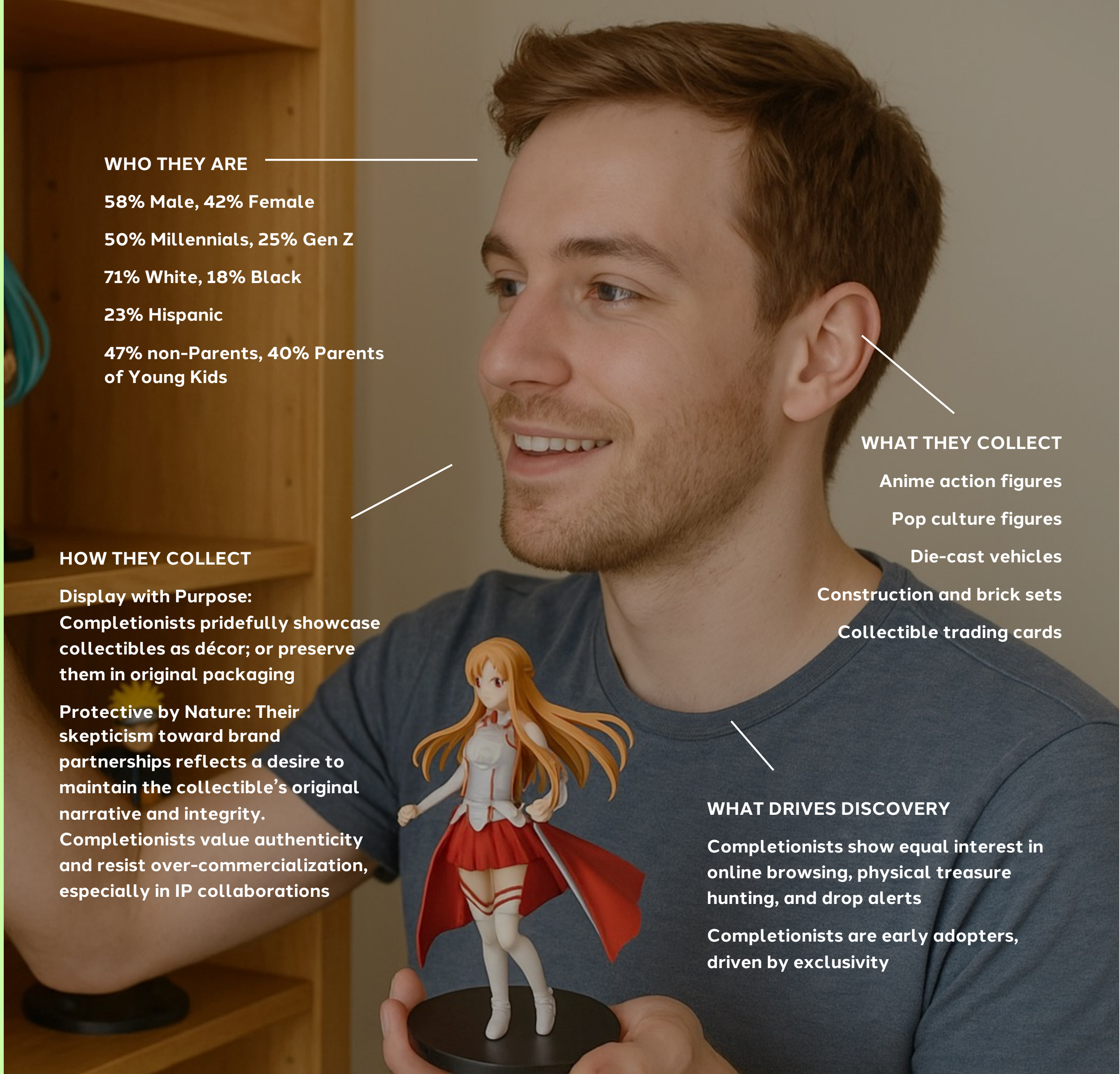
COMPLETION-DRIVEN COLLECTOR SEEKIG RARE PIECES THAT COMPLETES THEIR COLLECTION

- 34% collectors save up for drops they care about, proving it's not just impulse, it's investment.
- Navigates both digital and physical collector ecosystems
- 36% purchased 1-2 collectibles in the past 3 years
- Influenced by childhood friendships and parents' passion

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERSHIP

Position your brand as part of the journey — delve into drops, exclusivity, and ritual

While skeptical, most completionists are open to collaborations with Entertainment brands, Luxury or fashion brands, and Food and beverage brands



WHO THEY ARE

58% Male, 42% Female

50% Millennials, 25% Gen Z

71% White, 18% Black

23% Hispanic

47% non-Parents, 40% Parents of Young Kids

WHAT THEY COLLECT

Anime action figures

Pop culture figures

Die-cast vehicles

Construction and brick sets

Collectible trading cards

HOW THEY COLLECT

Display with Purpose: Completionists pridefully showcase collectibles as décor; or preserve them in original packaging

Protective by Nature: Their skepticism toward brand partnerships reflects a desire to maintain the collectible's original narrative and integrity. Completionists value authenticity and resist over-commercialization, especially in IP collaborations

WHAT DRIVES DISCOVERY

Completionists show equal interest in online browsing, physical treasure hunting, and drop alerts

Completionists are early adopters, driven by exclusivity

THE ARTIST

AESTHETIC-DRIVEN COLLECTOR LOOKING FOR THEIR NEXT ART PIECE

- Discover across channels: 49% browse online, 47% hunt in stores, 41% use pre-orders, and 41% join online drops
- Online communities are the engine of collecting: 78% of collectors are influenced by digital peer groups, and the most impactful discovery happens where artists are most active—YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram
- 42% purchased 1-2 collectibles in the past 3 years

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERSHIP

Position your brand as part of their aesthetic — tap into originality, emotional alignment, and storytelling

While wary of collabs, show strongest alignment with Entertainment brands, Food and beverage brands, Online marketplaces

HOW THEY COLLECT

Purchasing with collections in mind: 37% Save up for specific releases, likely for years

Beauty of the collectible: 49% Keep them safely stored in original packaging, 49% Display them prominently in my home/work as décor

Guided by Taste: 27% of Artist collectors seek out pieces before they become popular

WHAT DRIVES DISCOVERY

22% of collectors discover new items based on visual and emotional appeal rather than brand connections, prioritizing what resonates personally over logos

WHAT THEY COLLECT

Pop culture figures

Die-cast vehicles

Anime action figures

Construction and brick sets

Collectible trading cards

WHO THEY ARE

58% Male, 42% Female

46% Millennials, 30% Gen Z

66% White, 16% Black

24% Hispanic

58% non-Parents, 32% Parents of Young Kids

THE SOCIALIZER

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN COLLECTOR WHOSE PASSION IS TO CONNECT OVER COLLECTIBLES

- From pre-orders with guaranteed fulfillment to real-time drops, Socializers expect brands to deliver both certainty and surprise.
- 39% purchased 3-7 collectibles in the past 3 years
- 43% of Socializers turn items into social signals and conversation starters, fueling community, connection, and the culture of trading

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERSHIP

Position your brand as a vehicle for community— prioritize social media, interaction, and customization

Most open to collaborations with Entertainment brands, Food and beverage brands, Online marketplaces

WHO THEY ARE

56% Male, 44% Female

45% Millennials, 30% Gen Z

67% White, 19% Black

19% Hispanic

50% non-Parents, 36% Parents of Young Kids

WHAT DRIVES DISCOVERY

Socializers enjoy the hunt, engaging equally across online browsing, in-store searches, and drop alerts

27% identify as early adopters, seeking collectibles before they go mainstream

HOW THEY COLLECT

Collecting is a Generational Ritual: Most Socializers were introduced to collecting by parents and now pass it on to their own children

Friends Fuel the Hobby: Adult friendships and online communities are key influencers in socializers' decision-making

Key Platforms: Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are major connection points for Socializers

WHAT THEY COLLECT

Anime action figures

Pop culture figures

Die-cast vehicles

Construction and brick sets

Collectible trading cards

IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETERS

SEGMENT BY OBSESSION, NOT DEMOGRAPHICS

A 35-year-old Millennial Hunter needs completely different messaging than a 35-year-old Millennial Storyteller, despite identical demographic profiles. The same Pokémon card should be positioned as an 'investment opportunity' to Investors and 'childhood memory portal' to Storytellers.

SPARK NOSTALGIA FROM THE FIRST COLLECTIBLE

Collectors prioritize emotional connection over monetary value, but legacy brands have decades of embedded memory. New collectible toys or partner brands entering the space can't wait 20 years—they must manufacture immediate emotional equity through personalized onboarding, community rituals, and storytelling that helps first-time buyers embed personal meaning.

MARKET TO THE NETWORK, NOT JUST THE INDIVIDUAL

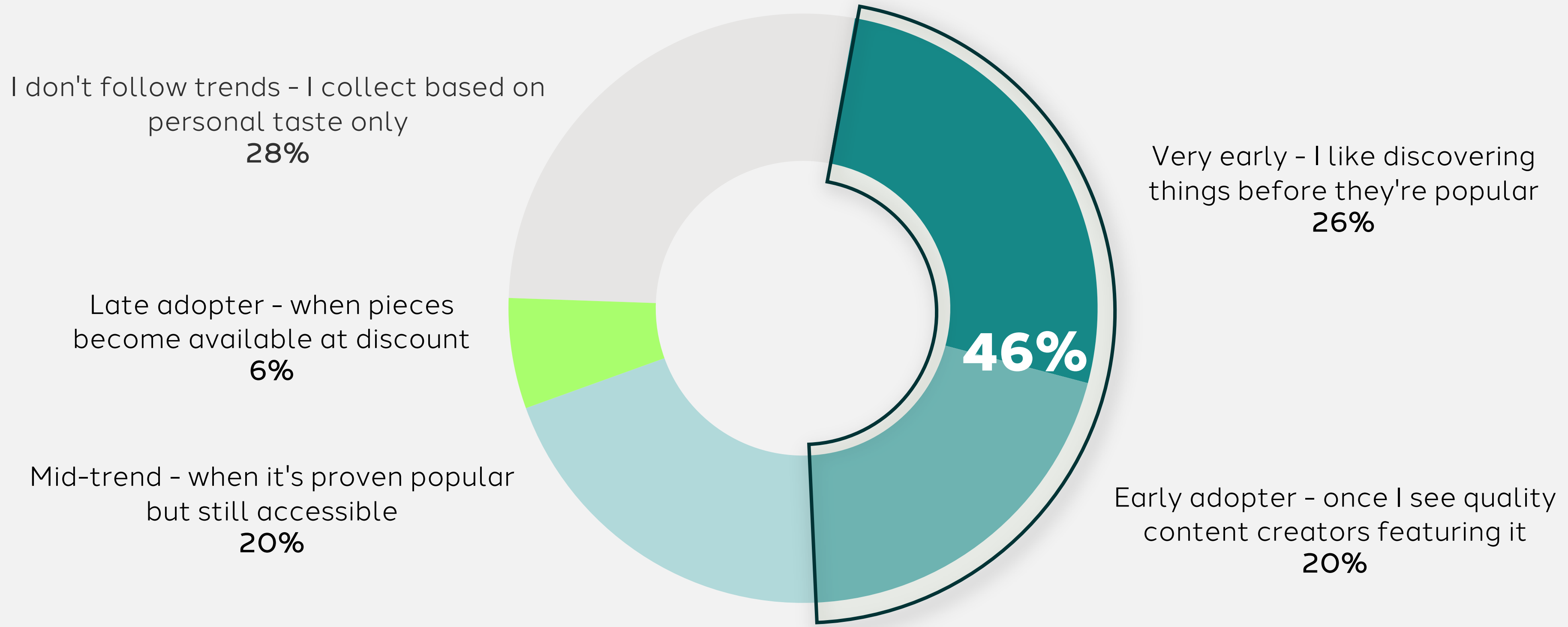
One in four collectors buys for someone else, and family influence dominates discovery. Marketer's true customer may be a parent funding their child's passion or a partner who has come to terms with collectibles taking over their home. Instead of exclusively targeting collectors, brands can also focus on these enablers—like how LEGO markets to parents as developmental tools while kids drive demand.

THE HUNT FOR WHAT'S NEXT

TRENDY, TIMELY, OR TOTALLY OUT – WHERE COLLECTORS STAND.

When asked at what point they typically join a new collectible trend, the majority of collectors jump in early, or not at all. Nearly half (46%) of collectors prefer to join trends early, while only 26% prefer to join proven trends. But most strikingly, the largest single segment (28%) opt out of trends entirely.

TIMING OF JOINING A NEW COLLECTIBLE TOY TREND



IN THE AGE OF INFLUENCE, IDENTITY STILL DRIVES CHOICE.

When it comes to what trends are worth joining, collectors tend to go for what resonates with them over social proof. 41% say a collectible trend is only worth joining when it connects to their existing interests vs. just 29% who follow what others are posting about. The top 3 influences of personal interest are Movies/TV shows, video games, and music artists/genres, showing that collectors are buying into fandom universes.

WHEN A COLLECTIBLE TREND IS WORTH JOINING

41%

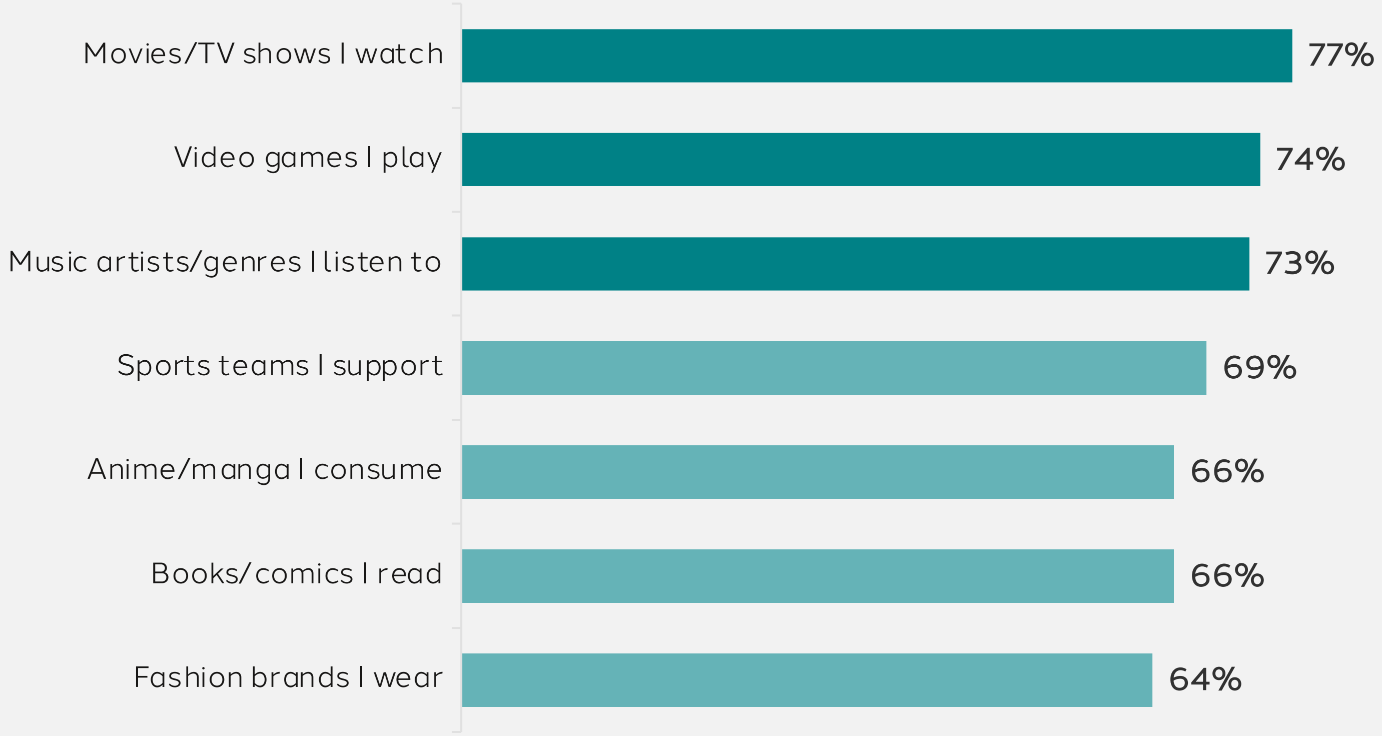
Of collectors join a trend when it **connects to other interests they have**

V.S.

29%

Join a trend when they see multiple **people posting about it**

% OF COLLECTORS WHOSE COLLECTING DECISIONS ARE ALWAYS/OFTEN INFLUENCED BY THE FOLLOWING INTERESTS



WORD OF MOUTH FUELS DISCOVERY, EVEN ONLINE.

When collectors are asked where they typically hear about new collectible toy trends, 47% say they hear it from their friends or family. Gen Z and Millennials, especially, discover new trends online, from blogs, influencers, or directly from brands. But collectors who are 45 and older preferred retail displays in stores the most. Collectors also mentioned second-hand platform, eBay, for example, as a source of discovery.

TOP SOURCES FOR DISCOVERING NEW COLLECTIBLE TOYS

#1 Choice #2 Choice #3 Choice

	Total	Gen Z	Millennials	Adults 45+
Friends or family recommendations	47%	50%	44%	49%
Retail displays in stores	46%	43%	40%	59%
Collectible websites or blogs	45%	42%	46%	46%
Brand announcements or advertising	43%	44%	39%	46%
Influencers or content creators	42%	48%	46%	29%
Collector community forums	39%	32%	43%	40%
Conventions or events	37%	39%	43%	27%
Other, please specify	2%	3%	0%	3%

DIGITAL NATIVES SWIPE INTO DROPS AND BIDDING WARS.

While browsing online and shopping in-store still define collecting, Digital Natives like Gen Z and Millennials are expanding into event-based, competitive shopping experiences — from secondhand bidding to the thrill of online drops and push notifications. Many new formats are digital; however, the appeal of physical drops and browsing prove that brick-and-mortar retail is far from obsolete.

PREFERRED SHOPPING EXPERIENCES FOR COLLECTIBLE TOYS

#1 Choice #2 Choice #3 Choice

When shopping for collectible toys, which experiences do you prefer? Please select your top 3 choices.	Total	Gen Z	Millennials	Adults 45+
Browsing online for discoveries	55%	46%	54%	64%
Physical store treasure hunting	53%	52%	48%	63%
Physical drops at major retailers	43%	48%	35%	49%
Online drops with notifications/alerts	40%	27%	53%	36%
Pre-orders with guaranteed fulfillment	38%	41%	38%	35%
Secondary market bidding	38%	48%	32%	35%
Convention exclusives	33%	37%	41%	17%

‘THRILLING’ FEATURES KEEP COLLECTORS HOOKED ONLINE.

It’s always a struggle to bring the magic of serendipitous discovery to online shopping. While rewards, random drops, and discovering what others are shopping top the list for making online and mobile shopping more exciting across generations, Millennials showed higher interest in location-based exclusive releases (44%) and gamified browsing (43%).

WHAT FEATURE MAKES SHOPPING FOR COLLECTIBLE TOYS ONLINE/MOBILE MORE EXCITING

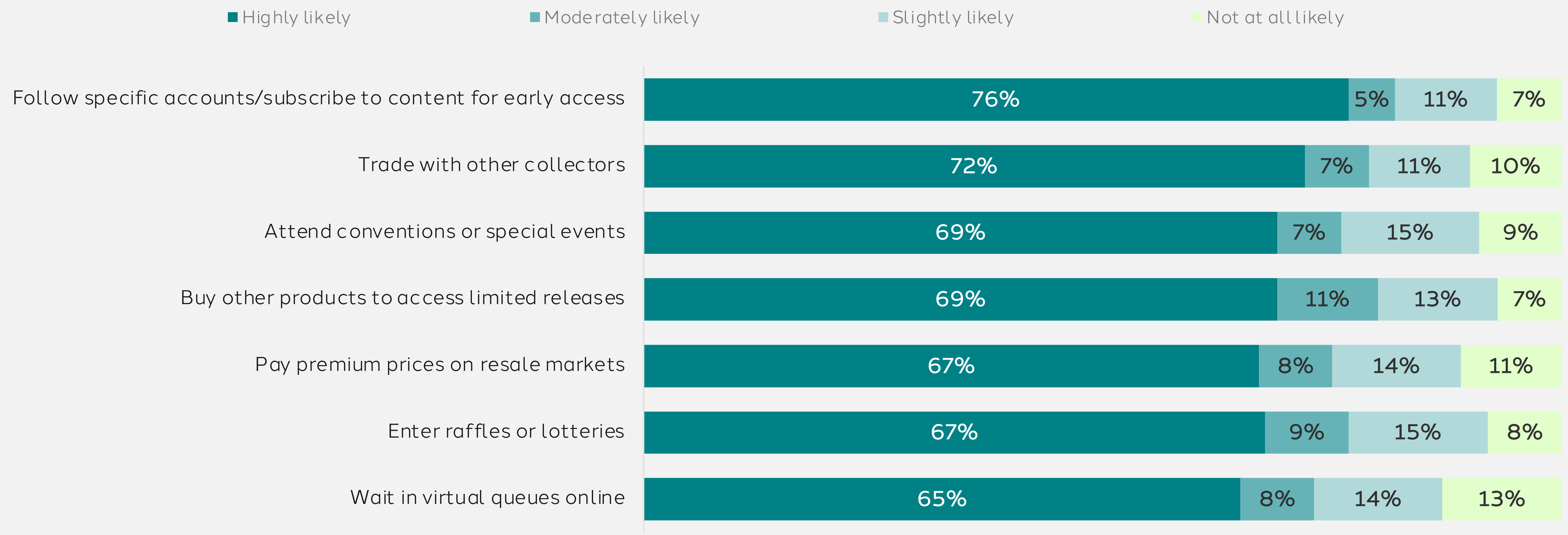
#1 Choice | #2 Choice | #3 Choice

What would make online or mobile shopping for collectible toys feel more exciting? Please select your top 3 choices.	Total	Gen Z	Millennials	Adults 45+
Collection completion challenges with rewards	42%	48%	42%	36%
Social features showing what others recently found	41%	45%	40%	40%
Surprise daily drops at random times	39%	38%	41%	37%
Location-based exclusive releases	38%	35%	44%	31%
Gamified browsing (spin wheels, scratch-offs, etc.)	36%	36%	43%	27%
Virtual blind boxes where you don't see the item until "unboxing"	33%	30%	37%	27%
Augmented reality previews of items	29%	35%	30%	23%

FOR COLLECTORS, DIFFICULTY MAY BE PART OF THE APPEAL.

When asked what they would do to acquire a collectible toy they really want, there was little collectors wouldn't do. 76% are highly likely to follow specific accounts or subscribe to content for early access. They are also likely to trade with other collectors (72%) and attend conventions or special events (69%).

LIKELIHOOD OF COLLECTORS TO DO THE FOLLOWING TO AQUIRE A SPECIFIC COLLECTIBLE TOY



IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETERS

CONNECT WITH FANDOMS, NOT TRENDS.

Most collecting decisions tie to existing fandoms (movies, games, music)—meaning the real opportunity isn't chasing viral collectibles like Labubus, it's targeting cultural obsessions. Marketers' collectible collaboration strategy should amplify cultural obsessions customers already have rather than trying to manufacture new ones.

EMBRACE 'GOOD FRICTION' TO ENHANCE THE HUNT.

76% of collectors will follow or subscribe to accounts for early access, and 73% will wait in virtual queues. The chase is part of the fun. 'Frictionless' shopping optimizations miss the point: friction can create value when it feels like a ritual or earned exclusivity. Build anticipation with account-following, lottery systems, and community challenges.

MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE.

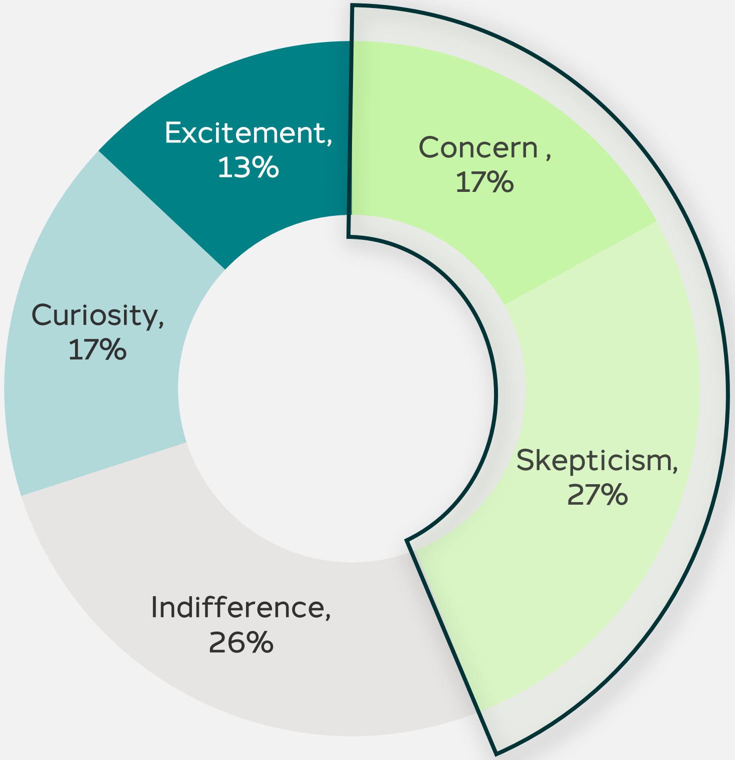
Collectors bounce between digital and physical, primary and secondary markets. Gen Z/Millennials gravitate towards drops and bidding, but physical treasure hunting still dominates across all ages. The future isn't online vs. offline—it's creating multi-channel hunt experiences that meet collectors where they are.

WHEN BRANDS COLLIDE: COLLECTIBLE TOY PARTNERSHIPS

COLLABORATIONS ARE ADVANTAGEOUS FOR PARTNERING BRANDS.

When asked their immediate reaction to collaborations between collectible toys and partnering brands, more collectors express hesitation than enthusiasm. This is reflected in how their perception changes: collectible toy franchises are more likely to suffer perception damage due to authenticity concerns, while major brands are more likely to be rewarded for the same partnerships because they're seen as culturally relevant.

REACTION TO COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN COLLECTIBLE TOYS AND PARTNER BRANDS



PERCEPTION CHANGE TO COLLECTIBLE TOY FRANCHISE

36%

Collectors say collaborations **worsen** their perception of the **collectible toy franchise.**

vs. 30% say the same about the major brand

PERCEPTION CHANGE TO PARTNERING BRAND

36%

Collectors say collaborations **improve** their perception of the **partnering brand.**

vs. 33% say the same for collectible toy brand

THE RIGHT PARTNER BRAND IS NOT 'ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL'.

Generational preferences reveal distinct collaboration opportunities for collectible toy franchises. While entertainment and food & beverage brand partnerships resonate broadly across age groups, Millennials show a marked interest in tech-driven brand collaborations, whereas adults 45+ are more drawn to sports brand tie-ins.

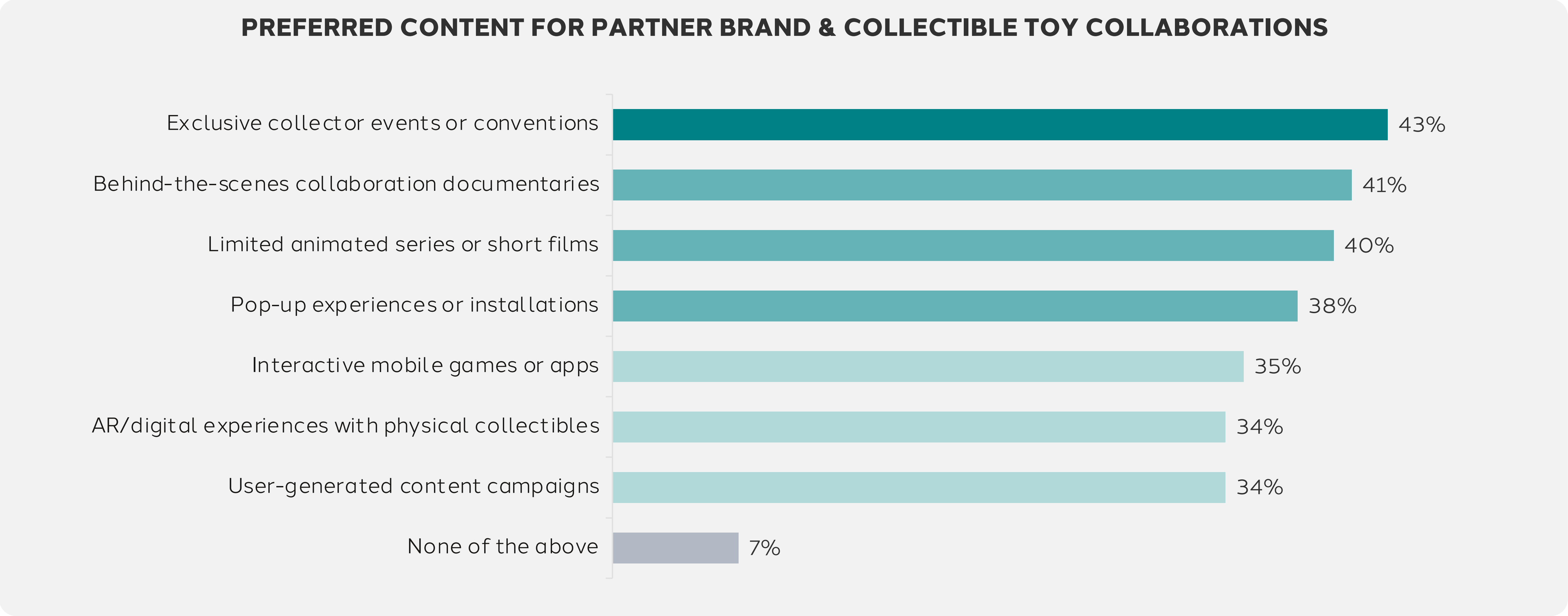
BRAND COLLABORATIONS THAT INCREASE COLLECTOR INTEREST IN COLLECTIBLE TOYS

#1 Choice #2 Choice #3 Choice

Collaborations with which types of partnering brands would increase your interest in a collectible toy? Please select your top 3 choices.	Overall	Gen Z	Millennials	Adults 45+
Entertainment brands (movies/TV, music, gaming)	51%	56%	43%	58%
Food and beverage brands	37%	35%	37%	39%
Online marketplaces	37%	36%	37%	38%
Sports brands	36%	29%	37%	41%
Luxury or fashion brands	33%	29%	36%	31%
Tech companies	33%	30%	38%	27%
QSR or fast-food restaurants	26%	31%	22%	29%
Alcohol brands	23%	27%	22%	22%
Financial service companies	23%	27%	26%	15%

BEYOND THE SHELF: PARTNER BRANDS MUST CREATE EXPERIENCES.

The demand for exclusive events, behind-the-scenes content, and limited-edition films reveals that collectibles are no longer just products—they're access points to branded worlds. For marketers, this means the collectible itself is just the key—the real value lies in the insider world it unlocks to keep engaging consumers.



TAILORING THE EXPERIENCE ACROSS GENERATIONS:

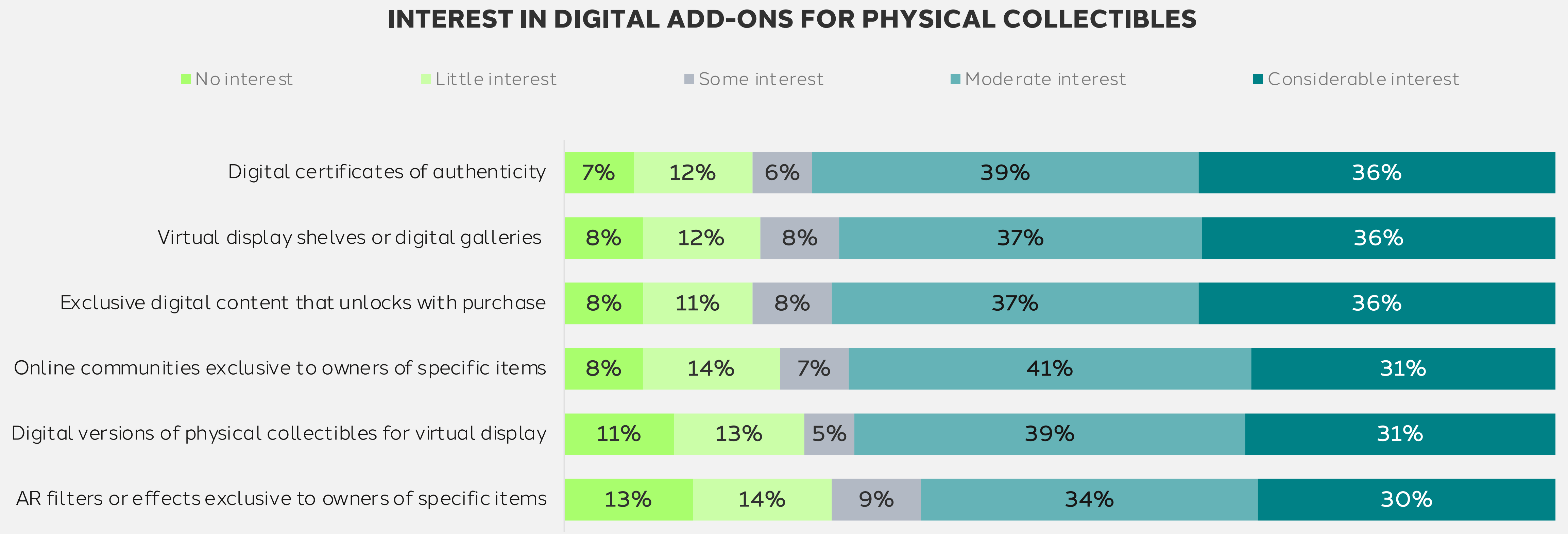
While there are common content formats that appeal across generations, there are also nuances in how each cohort wants to engage with branded collaborations: Gen-Z seeks immersive, IRL experiences, Millennials respond to gamified engagement, and adults 45+ value narrative-rich video.

PREFERRED CONTENT FORMATS FOR COLLECTIBLE TOY AND MAJOR BRAND COLLABORATIONS

Gen-Z		Millennials		Adults 45+	
Behind-the-scenes collaboration documentaries	44%	Exclusive collector events or conventions	45%	Exclusive collector events or conventions	40%
Pop-up experiences or installations	44%	Interactive mobile games or apps	44%	Limited animated series or short films	40%
Exclusive collector events or conventions	41%	Behind-the-scenes collaboration documentaries	42%	Behind-the-scenes collaboration documentaries	38%

THE FUTURE OF COLLECTIBLES IS TECH-ENHANCED.

With over 60% of collectors seeking digital add-ons and virtual shelves, the desire to showcase and share collections online is redefining value, moving from private ownership to a public, tech-enabled community. Collectors increasingly want digital ways to showcase their taste and connect with other collectors around what they've found.



SECTION 04

IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETERS

QUIET PARTNERSHIPS, LOUD IMPACT.

To build credibility around collectible toy and partner brand collaborations, marketers should prioritize storytelling that clearly articulates *why* the brand has earned the right to participate in the collectible space. Rather than relying on overt co-branding, the focus should be on authentic, narrative-driven integration. Think “Nike helped bring this designer’s vision to life” rather than “Nike x Designer.”

THINK OF COLLECTIBLE TOYS AS ACCESS KEYS.

Marketers should position collectible toys as gateways to exclusive digital and real-world experiences, transforming ownership into social capital and deepening brand loyalty within communities. Transform each collaboration into a tiered access system where the physical collectible unlocks exclusive content, events, and community spaces for owners.

DIGITAL AMPLIFIES PHYSICAL VALUE.

The 60%+ demand for digital certificates, virtual galleries, and exclusive online content reveals that collectors increasingly value provenance and shareability as much as the physical object. Partner brands should bundle digital authentication and social display tools with every collaboration—think blockchain certificates, Instagram-ready unboxing experiences, and collector portfolio apps.

MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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DIRK HERBERT

Global Head of Thought Leadership

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VP, Content

NAVEED SHAKOOR

Strategy Intern

JOANN SHIN

Strategy Intern

THANK YOU

INNOVATING TO IMPACT

dentsu

ABOUT DENTSU

Dentsu is an integrated growth and transformation partner to the world's leading organizations. Founded in 1901 in Tokyo, Japan, and now present in over 145 countries and regions, it has a proven track record of nurturing and developing innovations, combining the talents of its global network of leadership brands to develop impactful and integrated growth solutions for clients. Dentsu delivers end-to-end experience transformation (EX) by integrating its services across Media, CXM and Creative, while its business transformation (BX) mindset pushes the boundaries of transformation and sustainable growth for brands, people and society.

Dentsu, innovating to impact.

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