Why do shoppers abandon their carts? Method note

Study by Mat Stawczyk, Waverunner, published 24 November 2026, data as of 20 November 2026: https://waverunner.ai/blog/cart-abandonment-reasons/

The study compares 26 published surveys, from 2016 to 2026 and in any language, that ask shoppers why they left an online cart. For each survey it takes the full list of answers, with their percentages, from the original report. The rules below are written so that a reader can apply them to the study's register, which lists each figure used with its source.

Which surveys are included

A survey is included when all three of these hold:

- **One question asks about abandoning a cart in general**, not about one part of the purchase only, such as delivery, and not about shopping online at all.
- **The question prints three or more answers, each with a percentage.**
- **At least one answer is a cost**: shipping or delivery cost, taxes, duties, fees, surcharges, or "extra" or "hidden" costs. Where a list has several cost answers, the highest counts as the survey's figure for extra costs.

How the middle survey and the rank are read

- **The middle survey is the median.** Half of the surveys report a higher share, half a lower one. The surveys differ in wording, country, year and sample, so their figures are not averaged. Across the 26, the share naming extra costs runs from 20% to 92%, and the middle survey says 46%. For slow delivery the median is taken over the surveys that list it, and is 34%.
- **The rank is read among the answers printed**, leaving out answers that mean the shopper was not ready to buy ("just browsing", "comparing", "changed my mind"), and "other" and "don't know". These describe the visit, not a problem with the shop. Extra costs "come first" when the highest cost answer is above every other answer that remains. On this rule they come first in 21 of the 26. With the not-ready answers ranked as well, extra costs lead or tie for the lead in 20 of the 26.

Surveys run in several countries, and surveys with two questions

- **A survey run in several countries counts once.** Its pooled list is used. Where it prints only country lists, the country in the middle by cost share is used, and the other countries stay in the register.
- **Where a survey asks two questions, the first list that includes a cost answer is used.** For PayPal's 2022 surveys in the United Kingdom and Germany and its 2025 survey in Australia, that is the question about what would make shoppers less likely to buy, because their list of what made shoppers leave has no cost answer.
- **The two kinds of question are kept apart in the figures.** Nineteen of the 26 ask what made shoppers leave; five of those do not print the question, and the register marks them "Question not printed". Seven ask what would make shoppers leave. These run higher: their middle figure is 58%, against 41% for the nineteen, and the two highest figures, 83% and 92%, are both of that kind.

What the figures show

- **Figure 1** groups each survey's answers by reason and shows a reason when four or more of the 26 surveys print it. Answers that mix two reasons are left out. Each dot is one survey; the mark is the median.
- **Figure 2** takes the 18 surveys that list both an extra cost and a payment problem (a declined card, a payment error or a missing payment method) and sets the two shares side by side. Extra costs are higher in 15.
- **Figure 3 adds the time dimension.** It draws the Baymard Institute's US series (55% in 2018, 48% in 2022 and 2024, 39% in 2025, 40% in 2026) with the other surveys of each year, and adds six single published figures on extra costs to show the spread within a year. The six are not among the 26, and some ask a narrower question (one reason only, or the last three months). A survey with no printed survey year sits at its publication year. Two of the 26 are not in Figure 3: Tidio prints no year, and Rathinam College's paper appeared on 1 January 2026,

so its survey was run earlier. Baymard does not print how each year's list is counted, so the series cannot be confirmed as computed the same way each year.

Judgement calls, and the count without them

Call	Count with it	Count without it
Three PayPal surveys are read on the question about what would make shoppers leave	21 of 26	18 of 23
Nets words its answer as "the price including shipping was too high", which mixes product price with shipping	21 of 26	20 of 25
Not-ready answers are left out of the rank	21 of 26	lead or tie in 20 of 26

One lead is by a hair: 19.6% against 19.5%, in the commercetools survey. Counted by publisher, extra costs lead for 17 of the 22 publishers and trail for 3, and the surveys of DHL and PayPal are split. Nets is part of Nexi; counted as one publisher, it is 16 of 21.

What the study does not show

- **Fifteen of the 26 lists show only their top answers.** The publisher may have asked about more.
- **It is not every survey ever published.** Some reports sit behind a form or would not open, among them UPS's United States editions, PostNord's 2017 and 2018 reports and most country editions of Nexi's 2025 report.
- **The highest of the 26 leaves out some respondents.** Tidio's 92% is its result without its youngest respondents; no total is printed.
- **Baymard's earlier figures are less certain than its latest.** The 2026 figure is from Baymard's own page; the 2018, 2022 and 2025 figures are from Baymard's articles, and the 2024 figure only from pages that reprint its list.
- **It says nothing about how much extra cost is too much.** No survey here asks that.
- **Twenty-six surveys is a modest set.** PayPal ran four of them, and three are university surveys of 108 to 295 people.

What was left out, and why

- **Reprints of Baymard's list** on other sites: they repeat one survey, which is counted once, as Baymard.
- **Single statistics with no list behind them**: one percentage is not a ranking. Six of them appear in Figure 3 only, marked as single figures.
- **Figures that are not reasons for abandoning a cart**, such as barriers to shopping online at all, and **figures that name no survey**.
- **Lists that ask about one part of the purchase only**, such as delivery.
- **Fourteen lists that print no cost answer.** They say nothing either way. Most show only their top answers, so a cost answer may exist unprinted. Most come from payment companies.
- **Reports behind a form or that would not open**, named above.
- **Within the 26**: the not-ready answers, "other" and "don't know" are not ranked; country lists other than the one used are in the register but not counted; in Figure 1, reasons printed by fewer than four surveys and answers that mix two reasons are not shown.

Disclosure

This study was produced and published by Waverunner, which sells ecommerce CRM and payment orchestration to online shops. Waverunner has a commercial interest in how merchants read payments research. It did not commission or fund any of the surveys.