2nd Annual

Tulip Clienteling Benchmark Report

FOREWORD

In 2025, the retail industry is navigating a pivotal transition. Years of engagement automation tools – from corporate-driven mass marketing to more recent forms of more "personalized" but yet largely still impersonal communication – have contributed to a growing sense of customer fatigue. Click through rates and conversion have continued to decline. What many consumers increasingly seek is more authenticity: Thoughtful, personal human-centric engagement that builds trust and adds value beyond the transaction.

And now while agentic AI technologies promise to improve scalability and add improved relevance, the question is, can they fully replicate the human element? Particularly in moments that matter? This report underscores why modern clienteling has become a vital strategy for retailers seeking to build stronger relationships, foster loyalty, and drive sustainable revenue growth.

Drawing from millions of interactions captured through the Tulip Clienteling platform, we analyzed usage patterns, conversion performance, and communication effectiveness across a broad spectrum of retailers. The insights are compelling: Proactive, 1:1 associate communication has a meaningful and lasting impact that far surpasses impersonal methods. Customers who receive direct, relevant communications from retail associates are not only more likely to make more purchases in the near term, they also become more valuable over time.

The data also highlights important shifts in channel performance. While email remains the most commonly used medium, it consistently underperforms in terms of conversion. In contrast, more personal channels such as text, WhatsApp, and especially phone calls are proving to be significantly more effective at deepening engagement. The frequency and intimacy of interactions are strong indicators of overall business impact.

And what sets the leading retailers apart is a consistent commitment to execution. They empower their store associates with intuitive tools, invest in training, and continuously refine their approach based on data and results. This kind of disciplined, hands-on strategy is not only effective, it is also replicable across formats and segments.

Ultimately, clienteling is one of the most powerful levers available to retailers today. It is relevant not only to luxury and premium brands, but increasingly to broader market segments as well. This report offers an overview of the current outcomes associated with clienteling tools and serves as a practical resource for clienteling execution. By adopting proven best practices and committing to personalized, human-centric engagement, brands can unlock meaningful growth and build deeper, longer-lasting, and more profitable customer relationships.

Ian Rawlins

By **Ian Rawlins,**
CEO, Tulip

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ABOUT US

About Tulip

Tulip revolutionizes retail by putting powerful loyalty-enhancing technology in the hands of sales associates and retail operations teams. Founded in 2013, we've built the world's most comprehensive retail customer engagement platform featuring best-in-class Clienteling and Online Assisted Selling, targeted outreach, and mobile POS, infused with productivity-enhancing AI to build and sustain greater customer lifetime value. The world's most iconic retailers like Versace, COACH, Pandora, Jimmy Choo, Mulberry, Saks Fifth Avenue, Ferragamo, David Yurman, and Michael Kors choose Tulip to deliver exceptional shopping experiences that strengthen customer bonds and accelerate sales growth.

What is clienteling?

Clienteling is a personalized approach to a retailer's customer engagement strategy. It involves building long-term relationships with customers through proactive tailored communications sent directly from the associate to the customer, on a regular basis. It often uses data from past interactions, conversations, purchases, their preferences and tastes, and important customer milestones like birthdays or anniversaries.

Store managers can also utilize clienteling solutions to promote exclusive products, invite VIPs to events, and tailor localized communication with specific messages to their audience.

The practice of clienteling can be traced back centuries even before sophisticated technology, and has since been associated primarily with luxury brands, but has evolved to become more accessible to retailers across various sizes and price points.

DEFINITIONS & TERMINOLOGY

What are “clienteling communications”?

The term "clienteling communications" in this report refers to proactive communications sent directly from store associates or managers to individual customers via the Tulip Clienteling app.

These communications are tailored to individual customer's preferences and shopping history. Once customers select their preferred communication channel, such as email, text, phone, or social media platforms like WhatsApp, associates interact with them accordingly. Communications may be inbound from the customer or outbound through a 1-to-1 or group messaging format. Inbound messages are particularly valuable as they often indicate a strong connection between customers and retail associates.

Through the Tulip Clienteling app, associates can track a customer’s preferences, wish list and shopping history, and may proactively reach out when new inventory arrives that aligns with their interests, or to inform them about upcoming store events, promotions, etc. These communications can also be designed by corporate HQ but are always delivered through the store associate or manager via the Tulip Clienteling app.

What qualifies as a conversion?

A conversion is qualified as a clienteling communication that results in a transaction and occurs within a period defined by the retailer after a store associate's communication to a customer through phone calls, emails, text messages, or social media.

These transactions, known as “Tulip Influenced Sales”, can also be attributed to the specific associate's communication, and can be used to track and reward their performance.

Tulip Influenced Sales is the most important metric for tracking the effectiveness of clienteling communication efforts. Tulip’s unique attribution model is based on a number of factors, many of which are configurable by the retailer.

Tracking influenced sales also provides retailers with insights into how different forms of communication, messages, templates, store associates, and communication channels, etc. perform within their customer base.

METHODOLOGY

This report is based on aggregated and anonymized data collected from the Tulip Clienteling app primarily between June 2024 and June 2025, in some cases as far back as June 2023 to look at year over year comparisons. The dataset includes retailers with physical locations in 46 countries, ranging from boutique chains to multinational brands.

The analysis focuses on unique communications initiated by store associates and their resulting influenced sales. To ensure a fair comparison across brands of varying sizes and average order values (AOV), all performance metrics are presented in relative terms rather than absolute dollar values.

To maintain consistency across the data set, the analysis of the data has accounted for fluctuations in the Tulip base. Any performance spikes are reflective of genuine operational improvements rather than changes in the number of retail brands in the Tulip customer base, or the number of locations using Tulip solutions.

To measure the impact on customer behavior before and after clienteling communications, we conducted a cohort analysis comparing customer purchasing behavior for 12 months prior to any clienteling communication to the 6 months following. These customers received between 1-20 communications in that time. We then compared this group to a control group that received no communications in the same 6-month period, and we excluded outliers to isolate trends. Our customer cohort has a lifespan and average monthly transactions above the 40th percentile, an average monthly spend in the 40th to 95th percentile, and a minimum of two purchases in both the before and after periods. This approach measures the true impact of clienteling across a broad segment of customers, not just the most valuable ones.

STATE OF TULIP CLIENTELING

Brands are leaning into clienteing more

11%

Increase in total clienteling communications per total active stores* from 2024 - 2025

*An active store is any location actively utilizing Tulip products, with an average of seven associates using the Tulip app per store.

Usage of more intimate channels is on the rise

7%

Increase in text & iMessage usage

2%

Increase in WhatsApp usage

24%

High conversion with Tulip Clienteling*

*From top 25% of clienteling brands on average

11%

Average conversion with Tulip Clienteling

2-5%

Industry average* without Tulip Clienteling

*Average company to consumer mass communication

Before & after Tulip Clienteling*

Customers make **49%** more purchases

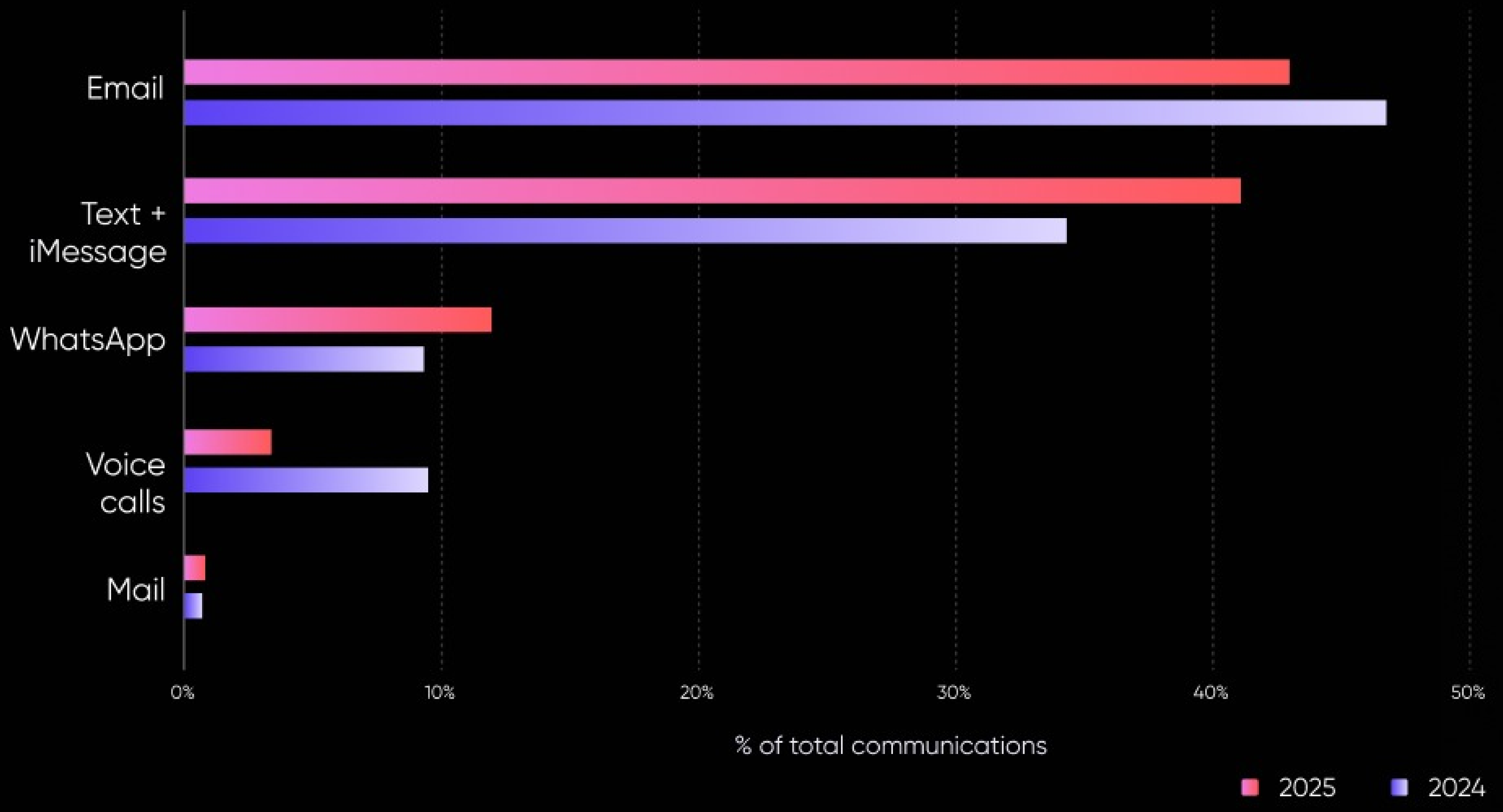
Customers are **29%** faster to purchase

Customers spend **63%** more per month

*In a 6-month period

CLIENTELING USAGE

Clienteling by channel



While email remains a prevalent channel, its usage has dropped by over 3% from last year to this year. In contrast, 1:1 messaging platforms have surged. Text & iMessage usage increased by 7%, while WhatsApp grew over 2%.

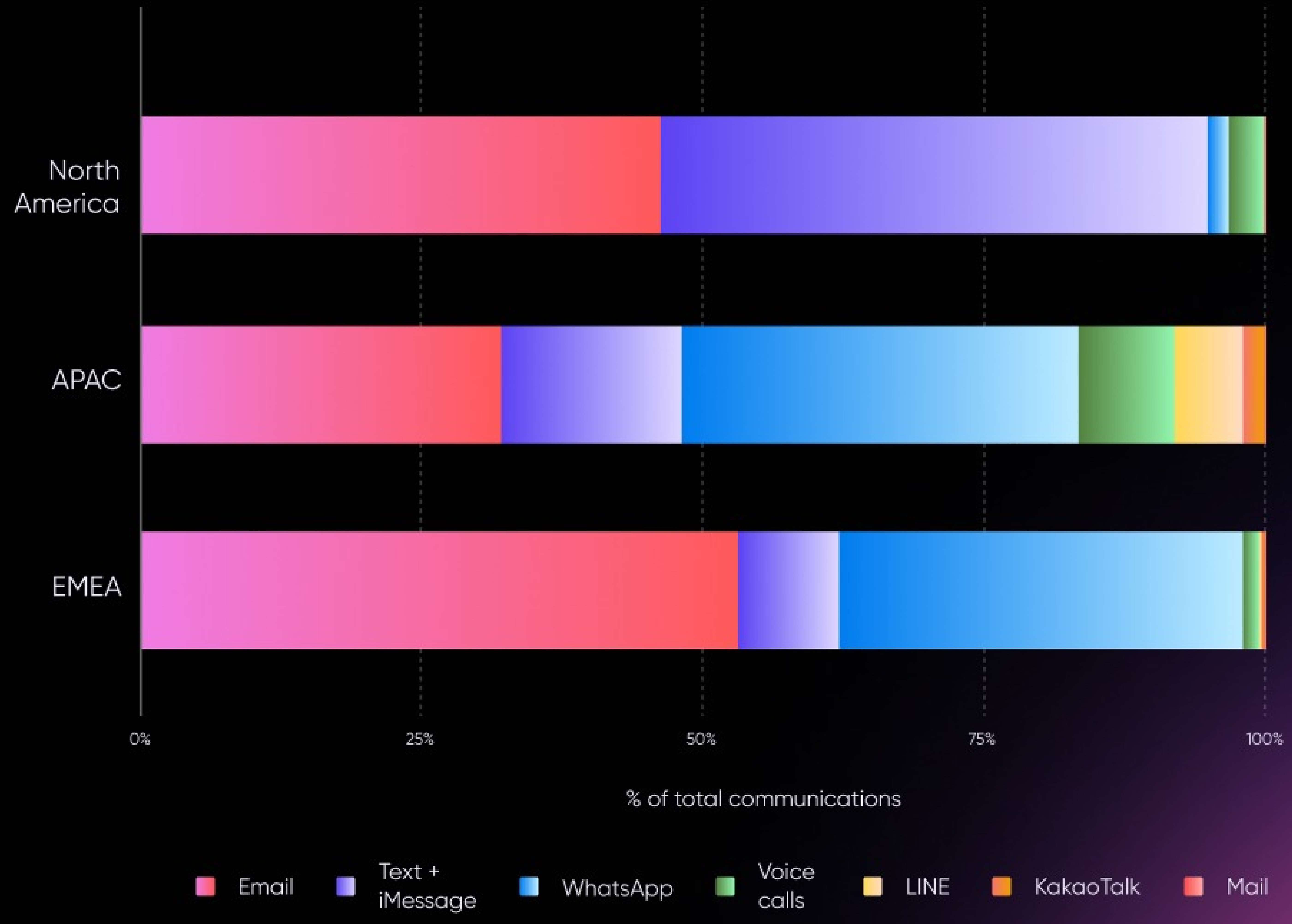
Given that clienteling communications often happen through a customer's preferred communication channel, we're seeing customer **preference shift to more personal channels like text, iMessage, and WhatsApp**. These channels are where a customer would likely interact with friends and family, whereas email is typically used more for transactional or business-related messages.

Retailers are actively moving away from email to meet this demand. However, there are some exceptions, as email remains a better choice for international customers where texting might be unreliable or expensive.

Retailers must regularly look at what channels their customers prefer and use those channels to communicate in order to foster deeper personal relationships and drive more sales, which we will explore later in this report.

CLIENTELING USAGE

Clienteling channel usage by region



Channel usage varies significantly around the world.

In the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region, WhatsApp is the most used channel, followed by email.

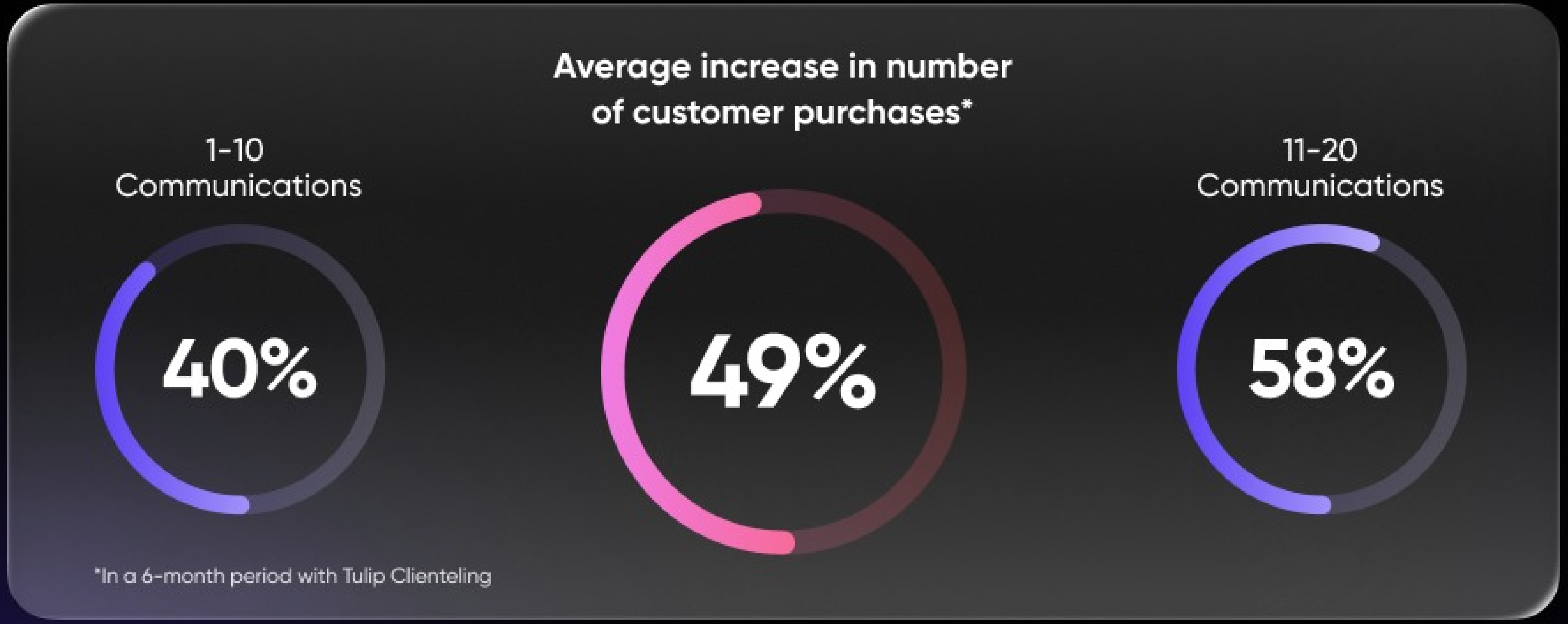
In the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region, email remains dominant, though WhatsApp is a close second.

For North America, email and text & iMessage are almost equal in usage.

Contrary to trends from the previous page, year over year email usage has almost doubled in APAC, seen a smaller increase in North America, but decreased in EMEA. Messaging app usage has grown everywhere year over year: WhatsApp communications have increased by 9% in EMEA, while text & iMessage grew by 6% in EMEA and 4% in North America.

BEFORE & AFTER CLIENTELING

Increase in number of customer purchases



29%

Faster to purchase on average with Tulip Clienteling

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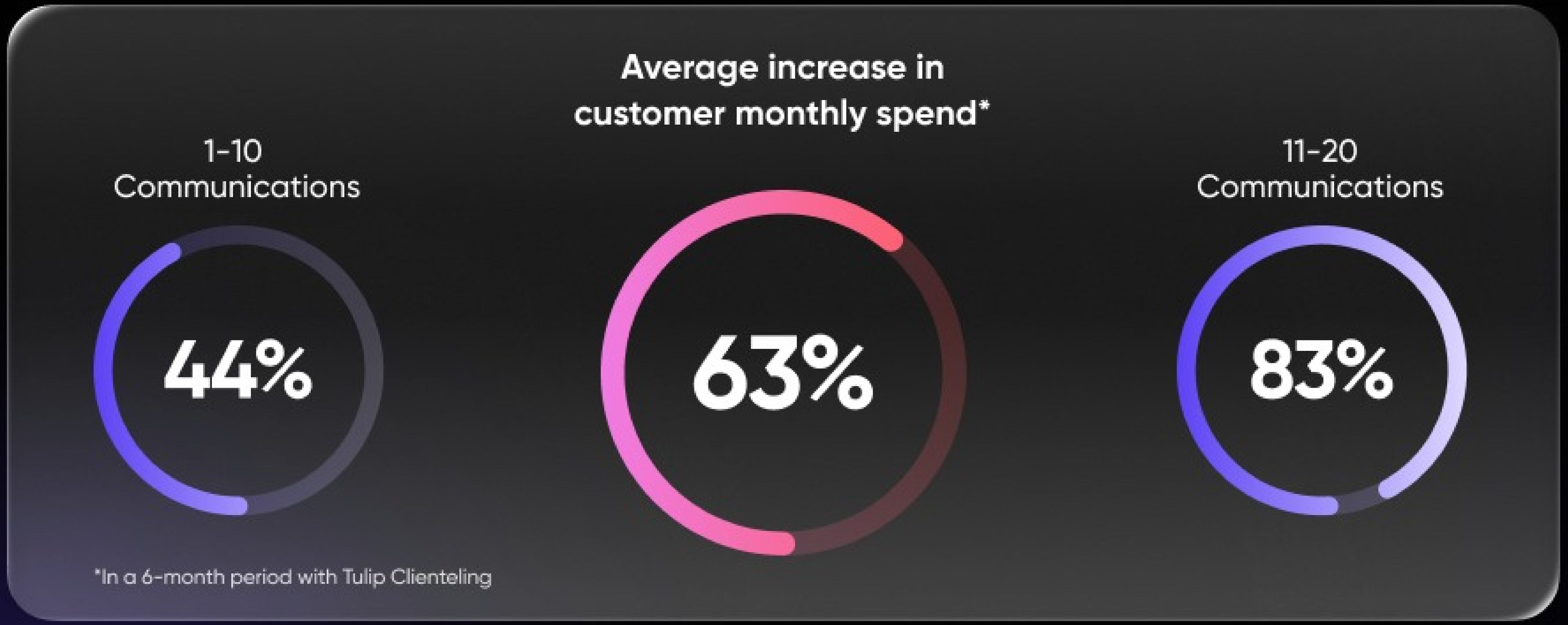
The full clienteled cohort make **49% more purchases** on average in the 6-month period compared to those who do not receive clienteling communications. This effect is even more pronounced with a higher volume of communications. Customers who receive 11-20 clienteling communications make 58% more purchases in the 6 months following the first clienteling communication compared to those who did not.

And with more purchases in the 6-month period, customers are faster to purchase again. The full clienteled cohort **purchase 29% faster** on average ain the 6-month period compared to those who do not receive clienteling communications.

BEFORE & AFTER CLIENTELING

Increase in customer monthly spend



The data also shows a strong correlation between clienteling communications and customer monthly spend. The full clienteled cohort **spend 63% more per month** in the 6-month period compared to those who do not receive clienteling communications.

Customers who receive a higher volume of communications have an even higher monthly spend. Customers who receive 11-20 communications spend 83% more per month.

BEFORE & AFTER CLIENTELING

Increase in 6-month customer value

53%

Higher 6-month customer value on average with Tulip Clienteling

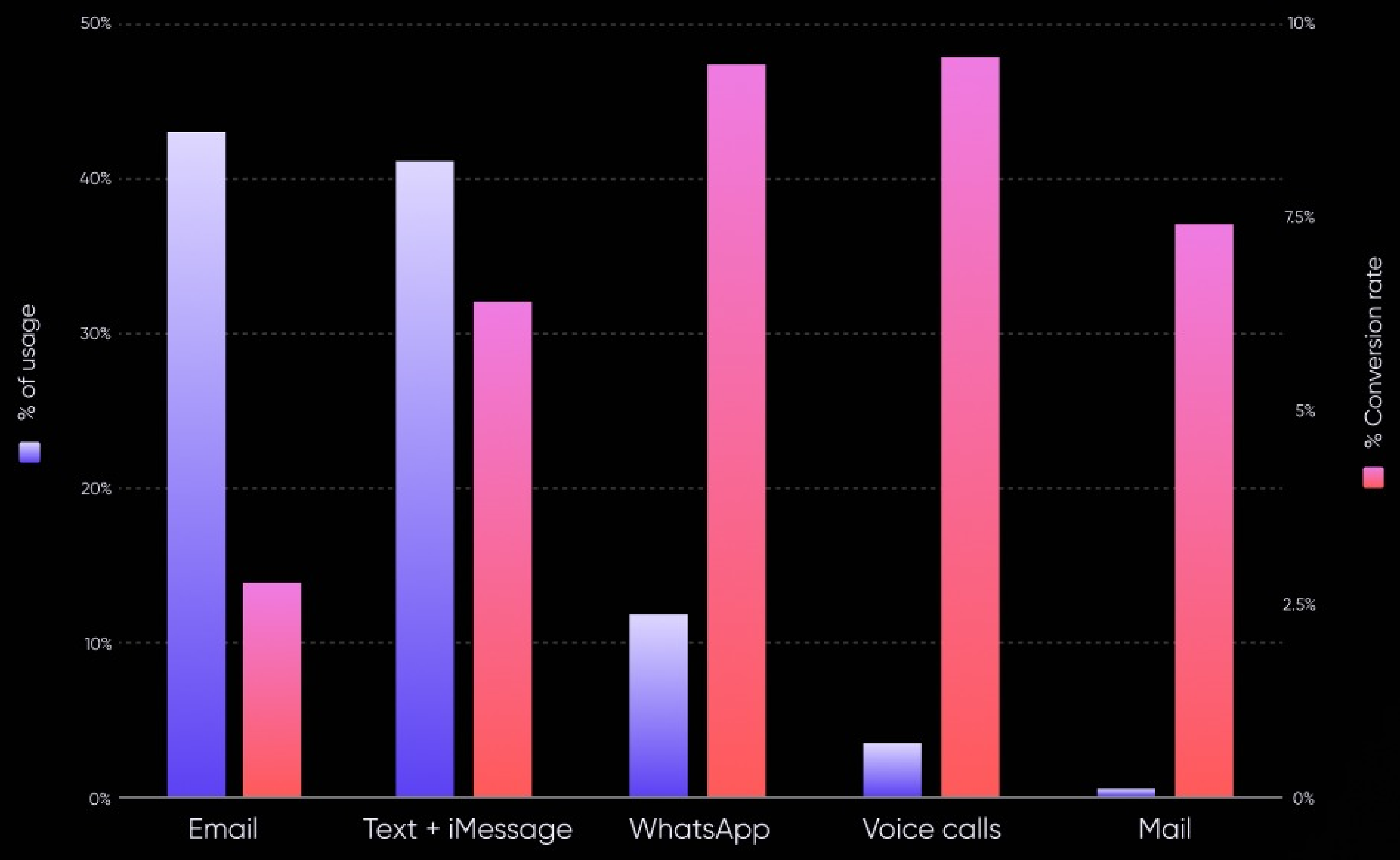
We see that customers who received 1-10 clienteling communications have a 37% higher 6-month customer value than those who received no clienteling communications.

Again, the impact is greater with a higher volume of clienteling communications. Customers who received 11-20 communications have a 69% higher 6-month customer value.

When measuring the behavior of similar customers before and after receiving clienteling communications (between 1-20 in 6 months), and comparing that to a control group with no clienteling communications, the data is clear. **When a customer is clienteled, they make more purchases, are faster to purchase again, and have a higher overall spend** in 6 months.

CLIENTELING CONVERSION & AOV

Clienteling channel usage vs. conversion



For retailers, the most effective clienteling strategy isn't just about the most widely used channels, but also the ones that drive the most sales. There's a clear opportunity to optimize communications since many still rely heavily on lower converting channels.

The top-converting channels are voice calls and WhatsApp, but they are among the least used. In contrast, email is the most frequently used channel, yet its conversion rate is low. This could be because of the effort and cost of each channel; email is cheap and easy, while voice calls and mail require more effort and aren't scalable. It should be noted that voice calls are also used by customers to give credit card information to complete a purchase, so the conversion rate may be skewed higher.

Retailers will get a better return on their communication spend by prioritizing personal, high-converting channels— like text & iMessage and WhatsApp— over high-volume, low-converting ones. This communication is best done by sales associates, who would have an easier time making personal connections than marketing teams or store managers.

CLIENTELING CONVERSION & AOV

Clienteling AOV by channel

Beyond boosting conversion, **clienteling significantly increases AOV** by as much as 194% when compared to the total AOV without Tulip Clienteling.

The trends we see in AOV mirror those in conversion by channel, with more personal channels like voice calls and 1:1 messaging apps like text, iMessage and WhatsApp driving higher AOV. The AOV from email is lower; however, sales from clienteling are still double what they would be without it.

We can infer that if a sales associate communicates with a customer on a more personal channel like text, iMessage and WhatsApp, that they may have more of a personal connection with the customer.

Not only do these more personal channels, and likely, more personal connections, convert better, but they also result in higher AOV.

194%

Higher AOV through Tulip Clienteling

129%	163%	362%	463%
Higher AOV on email	Higher AOV on text + iMessage	Higher AOV on messaging apps (WhatsApp, KakaoTalk, LINE)	Higher AOV on voice calls

APPOINTMENTS

Appointments are a high-value clienteling activity with a strong track record. Over half of all appointments convert to a sale. This high conversion rate can be attributed to the customer's strong purchase intent, as scheduling an appointment shows a clear interest and readiness to buy. Additionally, appointments bring customers into the store, creating an opportunity for impulse buys and up-selling.

Appointments yield an AOV that is 20% higher than clienteling communications. **Appointments are a reliable way to drive store revenue** because they are, by their nature, highly personalized and focused.

51%

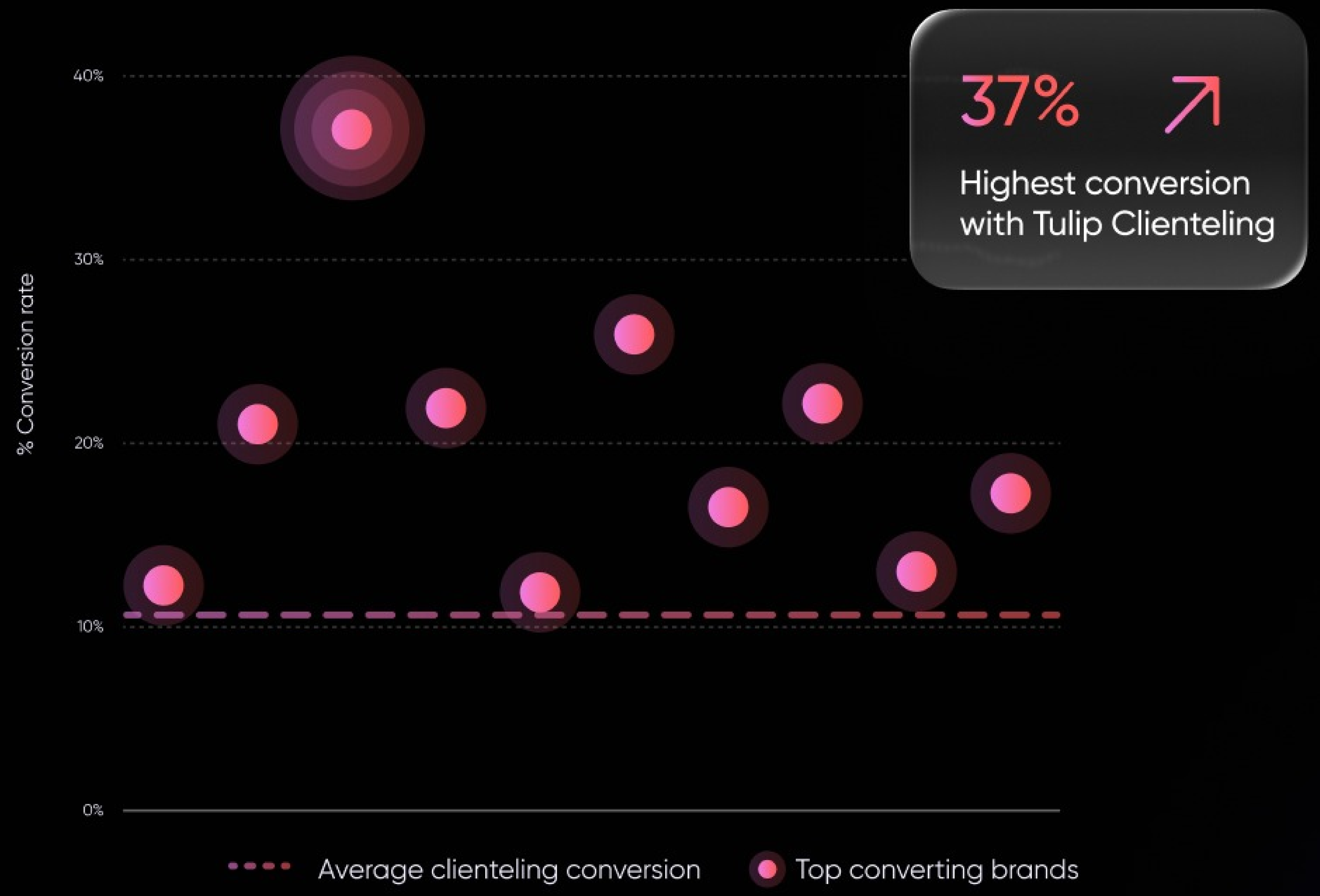
Conversion on appointments

20%

Higher AOV on appointments compared to Tulip Clienteling AOV

CLIENTELING LEADERS

Top converting brands



While the average conversion rate for clienteling through Tulip is 11%, leading brands are seeing conversions as high as 37%. These top performers don't achieve this by chance; they've implemented focused strategies that set them apart.

Here's what these brands are doing:

- They develop focused clienteling communication plans that monitor associates against specific goals.
- They use the tool for proactive 1:1 communication to build authentic customer relationships, and not just to drive sales.
- They dedicate more time and resources to properly training associates.
- They regularly audit their processes, analyze communication templates, and optimize their clienteling strategy.

To put these practices into action, these brands partner with the Tulip Retail Excellence team who uses their retail experience to conduct onsite training sessions with store teams, customized app configuration, and more.

The more a retailer invests in a clienteling strategy—with the right tools, proper training, and clear usage policies—the more it will yield.

CLIENTELING LEADERS

Clienteling success stories

We saw a few brands make remarkable strides in in their clienteling conversion, by tripling their conversion rates in just one year. Their success can be attributed to several key strategies:

Over the past year, these brands assessed their clienteling results, and updated their Tulip app to fit their needs. For instance, updating their KPIs to measure conversions rather than simply measuring volume of communications sent. They ran regular app assessments to update their messaging templates based on what worked, remove what they no longer needed, and made adjustments to their numerical targets as their clienteling efforts improved and they surpasses old goals.

They also recognized that clienteling's power lies in the hands of the associate, and as a result, they empowered their teams by giving associates, not just store managers, direct access to the Tulip app. This provided a higher level of ownership and streamlined the communication process by allowing associate to send and respond to messages as they come in instead of having managers distribute tasks.

These brands all worked with the Tulip Retail Excellence team in the past year. The team provided onsite training on using Tulip Clienteling, assisted in a personalized configuration of the tool for their unique needs and taught them clienteling best practices.

2.5x

Average increase in conversion rate from 2024-2025

REPORT RECAP

The impact of Tulip Clienteling

When measuring the behavior of similar customers before and after receiving clienteling communications (between 1-20 in 6 months), and comparing that to a control group with no clienteling communications, the data is clear. **When a customer is clienteled, they make more purchases, are faster to purchase again, and have a higher overall spend** in a 6-month period.

Lessons from the leaders

The most successful brands are not just using clienteling; they are mastering it. Their high conversion rates—some reaching as high as 37%—are a direct result of disciplined, data-driven strategies.

They recognize that the power of clienteling lies with the associate. They empower their teams by giving associates, not just managers, direct access to the tool, which provides a higher level of ownership and streamlines the communication process.

They dedicate more time and resources to properly training their associates through on-site training with Tulip Retail Excellence. They also continuously assess their performance, using data to fine-tune their strategy. They audit processes, analyze communication templates, and update their messaging based on what works.

Channel performance & strategy

While email is still the most-used channel for clienteling, it is also one of the least effective in terms of conversion. However, the AOV is still double what it would be without clienteling.

There's a clear **shift toward more personal channels like text, iMessage, and WhatsApp** which drive the highest conversion and AOV among clienteling channels.

The world's most iconic retailers differentiate themselves by establishing highly personal connections between their associates and customers through clienteling.

The data from this report shows that clienteling communications lead customers to convert more, buy more often, and spend more per transaction.

Given its high conversion and high value, it's no surprise that Tulip retailers leverage clienteling to maximize their sales.

Learn more

Want to learn more about Tulip Clienteling? Book a demo today.