

TREND REPORT

May 2025

cohereOne + J.SCHMID

We compiled these trends from over 100 brands, comparing year-over-year data for the date range April 1, 2025, to April 30, 2025.

This industry update is brought to you by:

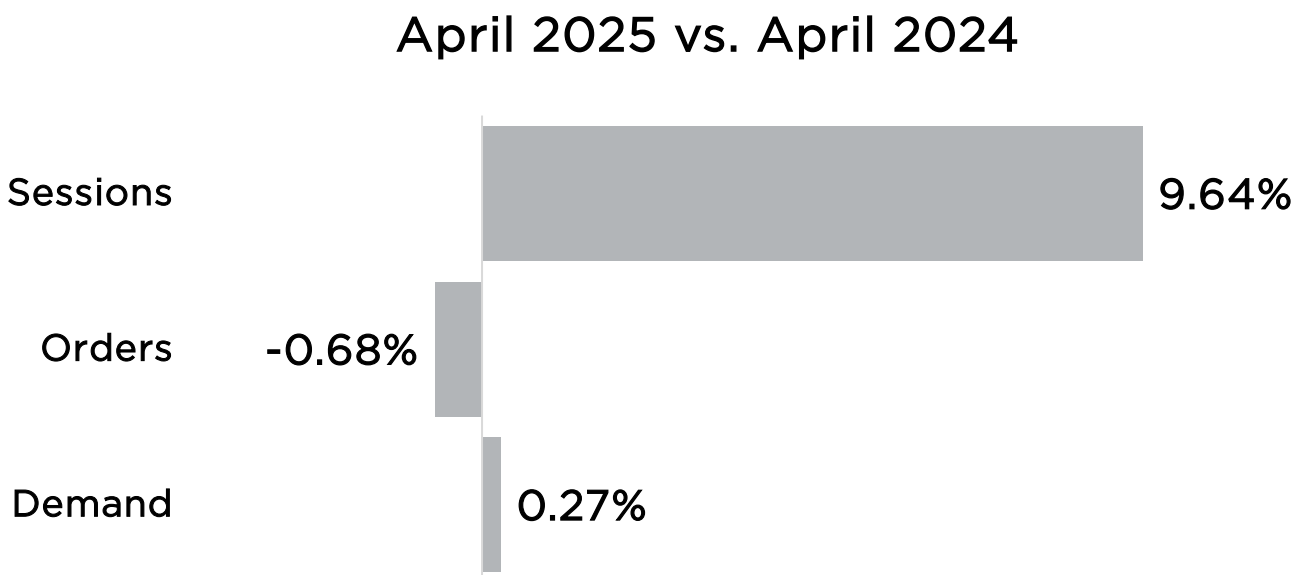
cohereOne

As the premier direct-to-consumer marketing partner serving Retail Brands, CohereOne's insights and experience grant us an unrivaled depth of visibility into the industry's performance. Our team of marketing professionals has broad experience and a track record of successfully launching or growing consumer-facing brands.

J.SCHMID

J.Schmid is a creative and branding agency that helps brands harness the power of human emotion. We're not just designers. Our team of direct marketing experts understands the nuances of selling. We don't view any single channel as a stand-alone piece, but rather part of a brand's integrated, cohesive marketing mix.

April 2025: Rising Traffic, Cautious Spending



April’s data reflects a cautious consumer mindset. Although browsing activity has increased, signaling continued interest in products and services, consumers are carefully evaluating their options.

Sessions were up 9.64% year-over-year, indicating heightened consumer interest or browsing activity across retail websites. However, despite the traffic growth, orders were down -0.68%, suggesting that while more consumers are browsing, many are hesitant to follow through with purchases.

A significant influence was the ongoing impact of tariffs introduced earlier this year, which led to higher prices on select categories, particularly electronics, home goods, and apparel. Price-sensitive consumers may have deferred purchases or shifted to lower-cost alternatives, contributing to the flat demand growth of just 0.27% year-over-year.

Another contributing factor to this pattern may be the timing of Easter, which fell later in April this year. This likely pushed some seasonal demand into May, disrupting typical purchase patterns and potentially skewing month-over-month comparisons. Retailers that rely on Easter-related categories, such as apparel, gifts, and seasonal décor, may have experienced weaker April conversions despite high site visits, with demand possibly spilling into the first weeks of May.

While interest remains strong, the combination of economic uncertainty, inflationary pressure from tariffs, and calendar shifts appears to have tempered actual spending.



TREND #1

Transparency Builds Trust And Loyalty Among Shoppers

As shoppers grow more conscious about the ethics and sustainability behind their purchases, they're increasingly demanding to know where products come from and how they're made. In response, forward-thinking brands are using transparency not just as a compliance measure, but as a competitive edge.

Sharing details about sourcing, labor practices, and environmental impact helps build trust, which in turn strengthens brand loyalty. Tools like digital product passports (DPPs)—mandated in the EU by 2030—make it easy for customers to access this information via QR codes. Fashion brands like MCQ (from Alexander McQueen) are already ahead of the curve, using DPPs and blockchain tech to offer traceability and proof of authenticity.

In the home goods sector, consumers are drawn to brands that disclose material origins and ethical manufacturing standards. This level of transparency helps differentiate products in crowded marketplaces and contributes to a more responsible, values-aligned customer experience.

Ultimately, supply chain transparency isn't just a nice-to-have—it's becoming a must-have for modern retail brands looking to earn trust, drive preference, and stand apart from competitors.

[Read more.](#)



TREND #2

David Steiner Named 76th Postmaster General of the United States

The United States Postal Service has announced the appointment of David Steiner as the 76th Postmaster General, with his term set to begin in July 2025. The decision was made by the USPS Board of Governors, chaired by Amber McReynolds, following a national search for a candidate with strong leadership experience and a track record of operational excellence.

Steiner brings more than two decades of executive leadership to the role. He previously served as Chief Executive Officer of Waste Management, where he guided the company through a successful period of strategic growth and innovation. Most recently, he served on the board of FedEx and has announced plans to step down from that position to focus fully on his new responsibilities at USPS.

His appointment comes at a time of transformation for the Postal Service, which is midway through implementing its 10-year Delivering for America plan. This initiative is focused on enhancing service reliability, modernizing operations, and securing long-term financial sustainability.

In initial remarks, Steiner emphasized his commitment to the Postal Service's public mission and the importance of collaboration with employees, customers, and partners. "It is an honor to serve an institution so vital to American communities and commerce," he stated. "I look forward to working together to ensure a strong, innovative, and customer-focused future for USPS."



TREND #3

Trade Spotlight: Understanding Tariffs

As global trade dynamics continue to shift, understanding the role and history of tariffs is essential for businesses navigating international markets.

What Is a Tariff?

A tariff is a tax placed on imported goods by a government. While it's the importer who pays the tariff at the border, the cost is often passed on to consumers through higher prices. Tariffs are used to protect domestic industries, retaliate against unfair trade practices, or generate government revenue.

Economic Pros and Cons

Pros:

- Protects domestic industries and jobs
- Reduces trade deficits
- Can be used strategically in trade negotiations

Cons:

- Raises consumer prices
- Reduces product variety
- May trigger retaliatory tariffs, hurting exporters
- Can lead to inefficiencies by sheltering non-competitive industries

Historical Perspective on U.S. Tariff Rates

- 1800s: Tariffs were a major revenue source. Rates often exceeded 40%, especially with acts like the Morrill Tariff (1861)
- 1930s: The Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act raised tariffs on 20,000+ items, contributing to global trade decline during the Great Depression
- Post-WWII: The U.S. shifted toward liberalization, joining GATT in 1947. Average tariffs fell from 22% to under 2% by the 2000s
- 2018–Present: The Trump administration reintroduced targeted tariffs on steel, aluminum, and Chinese goods, raising effective rates in those sectors

What This Means for Your Business

While tariffs can shield local industries, they also increase supply chain costs and global uncertainty. Staying informed about policy changes and evaluating alternative sourcing strategies can help mitigate tariff-related risks.



TREND #4

The Power of Pricing

Pricing psychology is crucial for businesses seeking to optimize sales in competitive markets. Drawing from behavioral economics strategies like charm pricing, price anchoring, and value framing can improve sales, while maintaining customer trust.

1. Charm Pricing: The Power of .99

Charm pricing, such as \$9.99 instead of \$10, leverages left-digit bias, where consumers focus on the first digit, making prices like \$9.99 seem significantly lower. Research shows that prices ending in .99 increase sales by over 24%.

2. Perception-Based Pricing

Consumers evaluate prices relative to reference points, not in absolute terms. Prospect Theory explains that people's decisions are influenced by how prices are framed. Anchoring, where an initial price biases perception, can effectively lead consumers to view subsequent prices as more attractive.

3. Framing and Mental Accounting

Consumers mentally categorize expenditures, influencing their price sensitivity. Thaler's Mental Accounting theory suggests that breaking prices into smaller increments, such as framing a \$1000 product as "\$2.74 per day," can increase perceived affordability. Bundling and tiered pricing exploit this tendency.

4. The Decoy Effect

Introducing a decoy option can guide consumers toward a more expensive choice. Research has demonstrated that adding an inferior option makes a higher-priced one more attractive. This strategy enhances the perceived value of target products, nudging consumers towards them.

5. Fairness and Trust

While psychological pricing drives short-term success, overuse can harm brand trust. Perceived pricing fairness is vital for long-term customer loyalty. Transparency and ethical communication are key to maintaining consumer confidence.

By integrating insights from behavioral economics, with strategies such as anchoring, charm pricing, and decoy effects, brands can improve conversion rates and sales performance.



TREND #5

Smarter Style: AI in Fashion and Décor

Artificial Intelligence is redefining the design landscape in fashion and home décor, enabling brands to merge creativity with computational precision. AI-driven tools are streamlining processes from concept to production, allowing for rapid prototyping, personalized designs, and sustainable practices.

In fashion, platforms like [Vstitcher](#) and [CLO 3D](#) facilitate the creation of virtual garments, reducing the need for physical samples and minimizing waste. Generative AI models assist designers in forecasting trends and generating innovative patterns, enhancing the creative process.

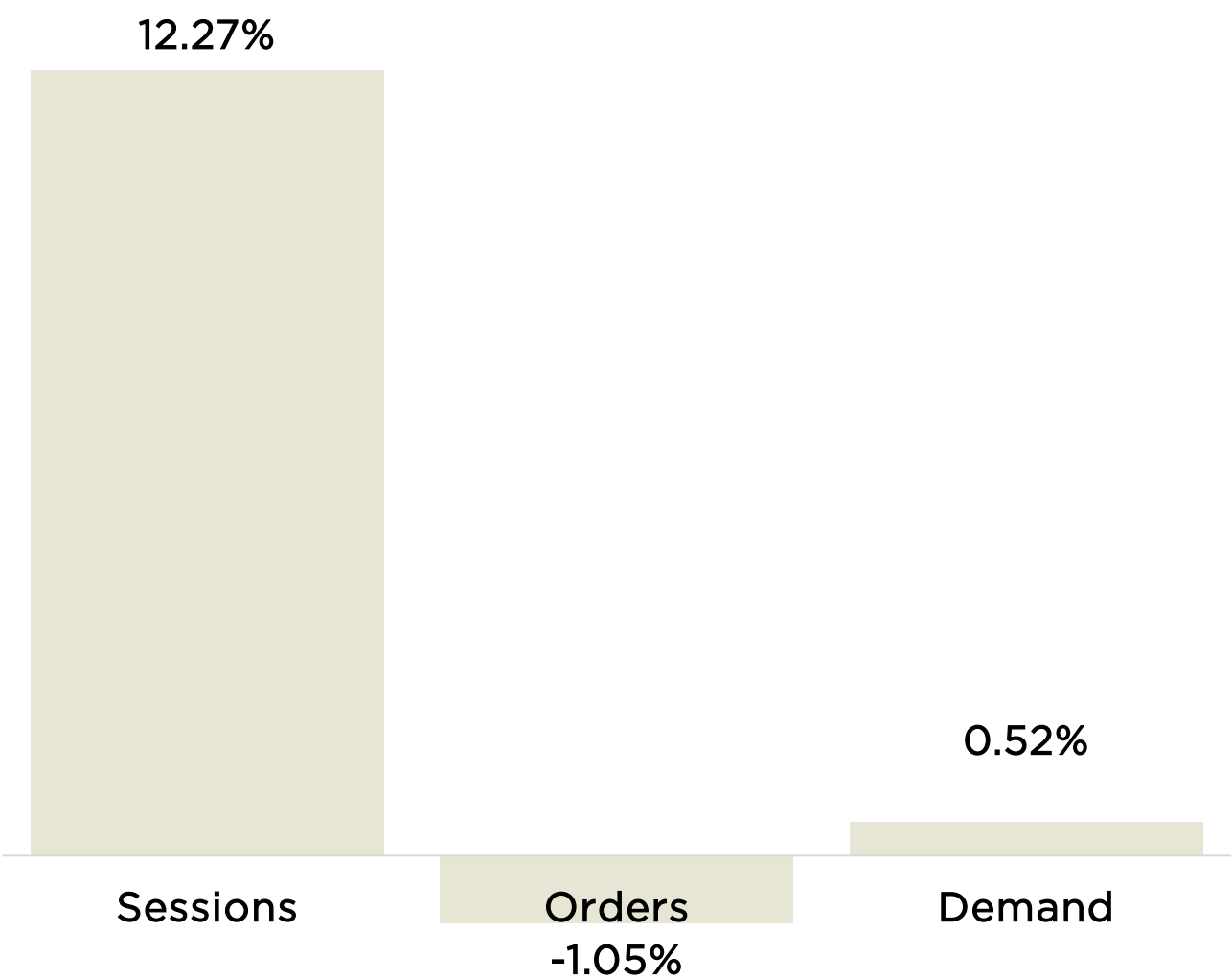
Brands such as Nike and Levi Strauss & Co. are integrating AI to personalize customer experiences and optimize inventory management.

Home décor is experiencing similar advancements. AI tools are enabling the design of customizable furniture and interiors, tailored to individual preferences and spatial requirements. This personalization enhances customer satisfaction and streamlines the design process. Moreover, AI is democratizing design by providing emerging designers and small businesses access to sophisticated tools previously available only to large corporations. This shift is fostering innovation and diversity within the industry. As AI continues to evolve, its integration into design processes is expected to deepen, offering brands opportunities to enhance creativity, efficiency, and customer engagement. Embracing AI-powered design is becoming essential for staying competitive in the rapidly changing landscape of fashion and home décor.

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BY INDUSTRY

APPAREL

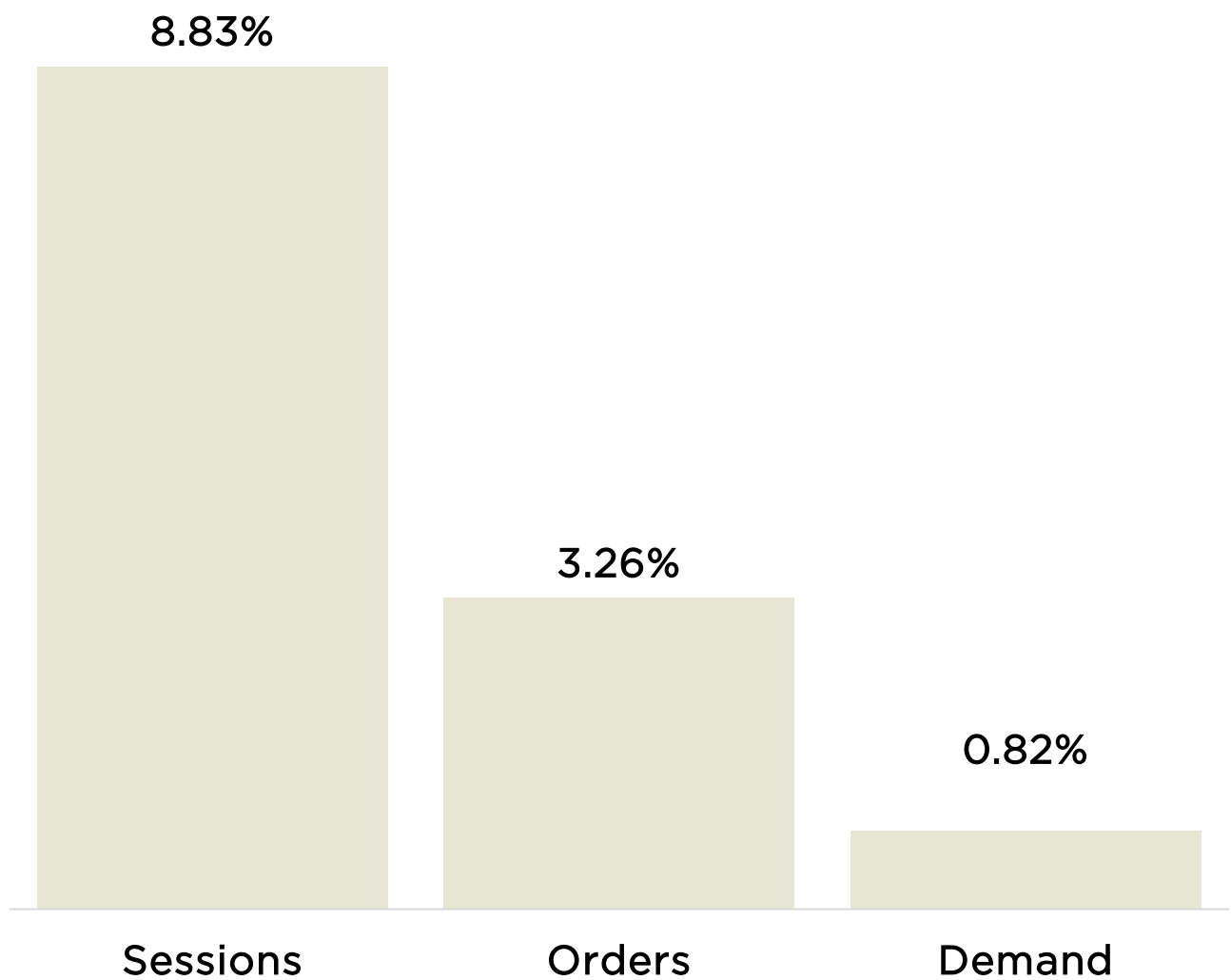


Apparel Industry



In April 2025, apparel and fashion brands experienced a significant year-over-year increase in web traffic, with sessions rising by 12.27%. Despite this heightened interest, conversion rates declined modestly, as transactions fell by 1.05%. Overall demand showed minimal growth at just 0.52%.

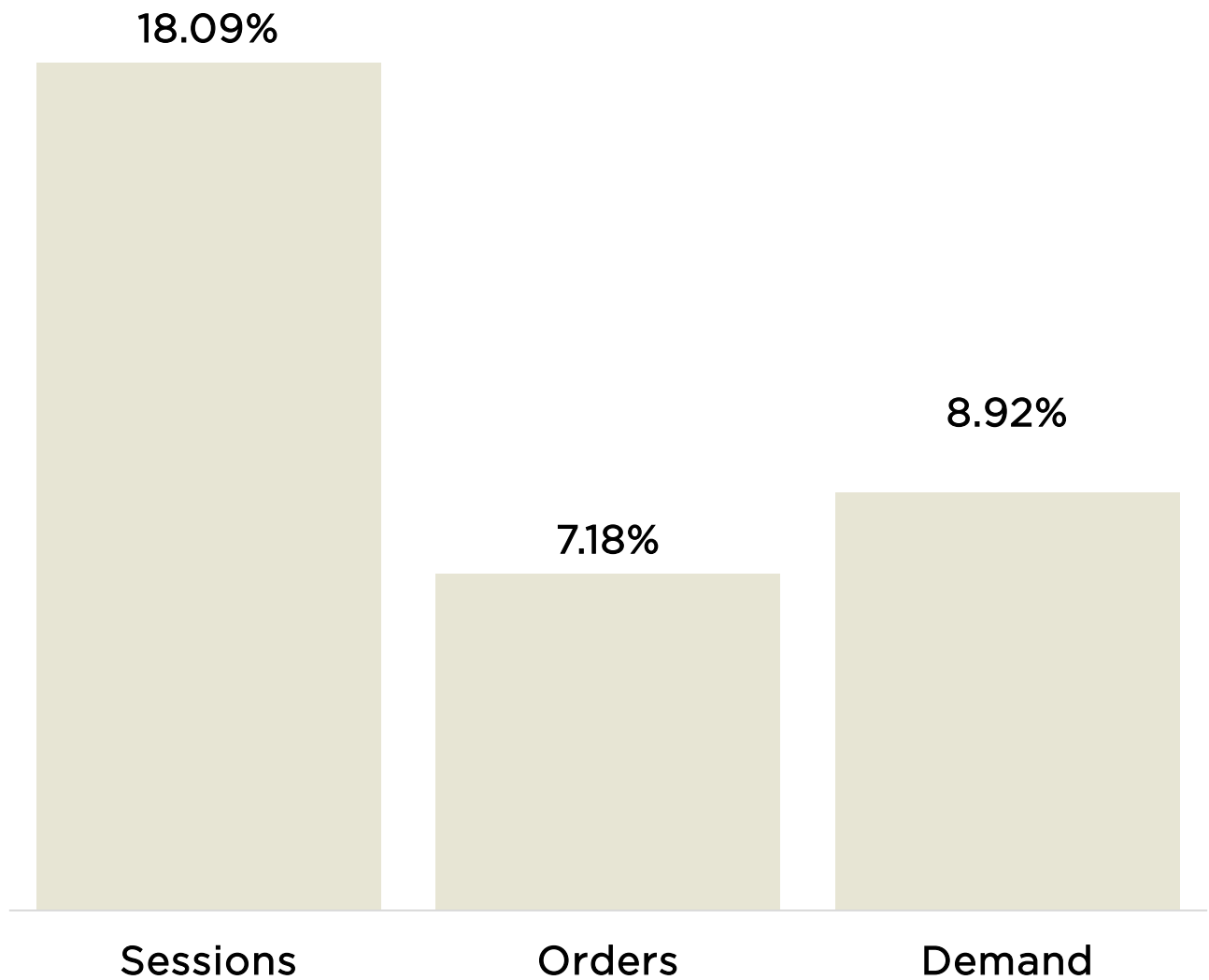
Home



Home Industry

Home brands showed positive year-over-year growth. Sessions rose by 8.83%, indicating successful efforts in driving web traffic. Orders increased by 3.26%, though the smaller gain relative to sessions suggests an opportunity to enhance the conversion journey. Demand edged up by 0.82%, pointing to stable purchasing intent.

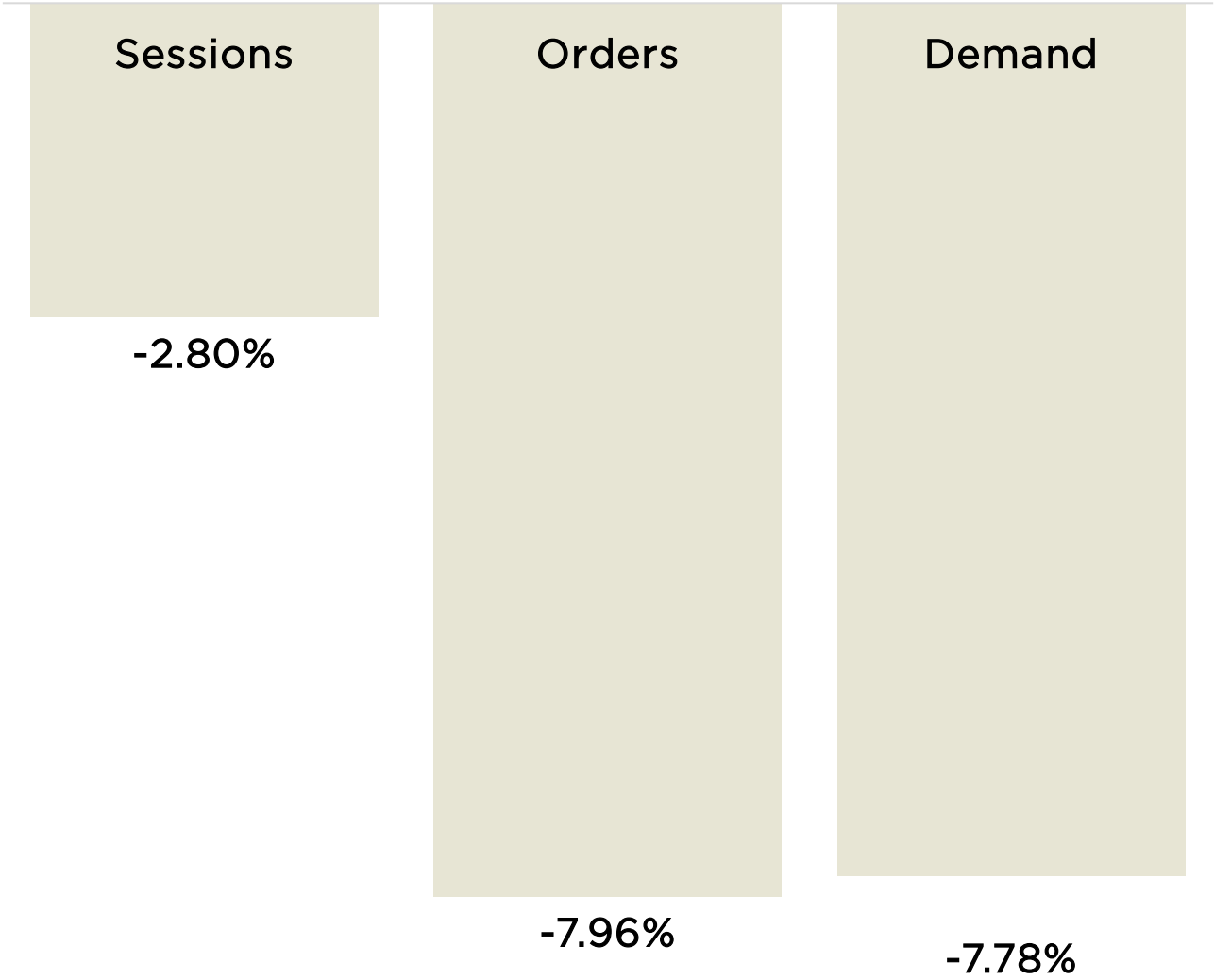
OUTDOOR



Outdoor Industry

Outdoor brands saw strong growth compared to last April. An 18.09% rise in sessions highlights effective awareness and acquisition efforts, with outdoor retailers drawing significantly more visitors. Orders grew by 7.18%, though the disparity with session growth suggests opportunities to improve conversions. Demand climbed 8.92%, indicating strong interest in outdoor products.

SPECIALTY



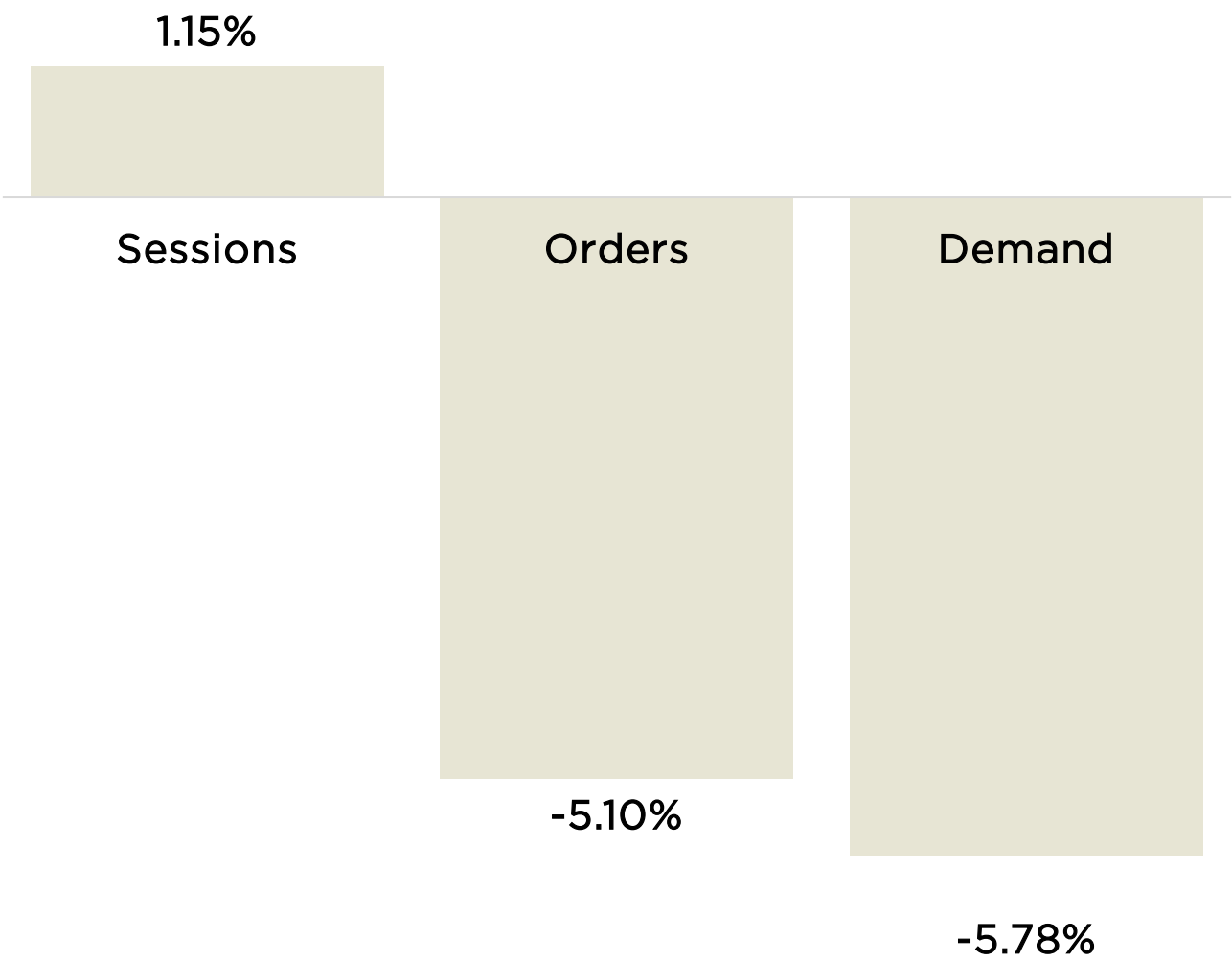
Specialty Brands

Specialty brands saw a downturn in performance year-over-year, with sessions decreasing by -2.80%. Transactions were down -7.96%, outpacing the decline in traffic and pointing to weaker conversion. Demand also fell by 7.78%, signaling reduced consumer spending in the category. As consumers reduce discretionary purchases, specialty retailers have seen the greatest impact.

May 2025 TREND REPORT

BY REVENUE

TIER 1 BRANDS / \$100M+

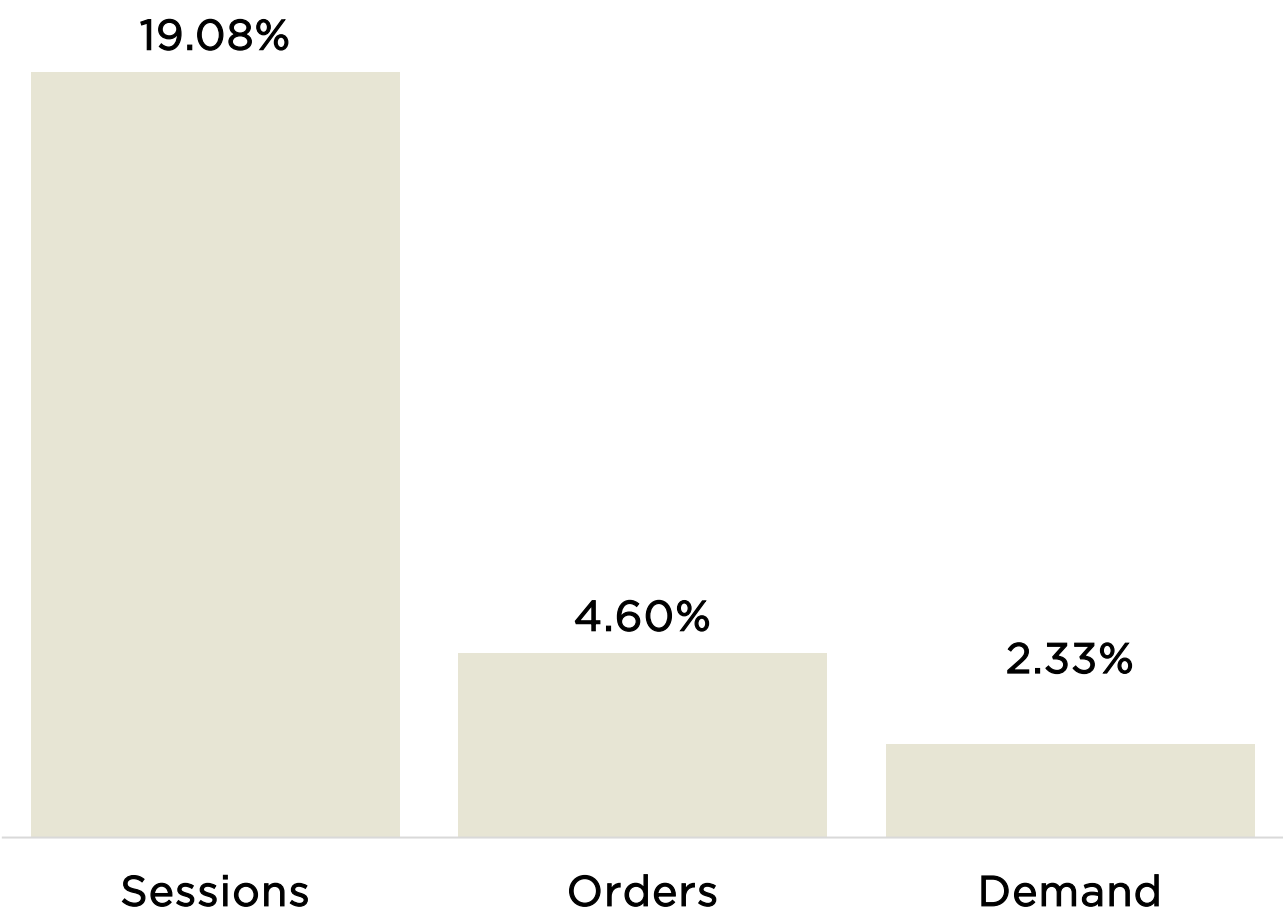


Tier 1 Brands

April sessions were up slightly, +1.15% compared to last month's +5.56%, but orders (-5.10%) and demand (-5.78%) declined significantly this month.

Demand falling more than orders signals AOV pressure, which could mean weakening buyer quality or intent. This may be due to the continued economic uncertainty and buyers looking for discounts and shifting from “name-brands” to lower-priced items.

TIER 2 BRANDS / \$15-\$100M

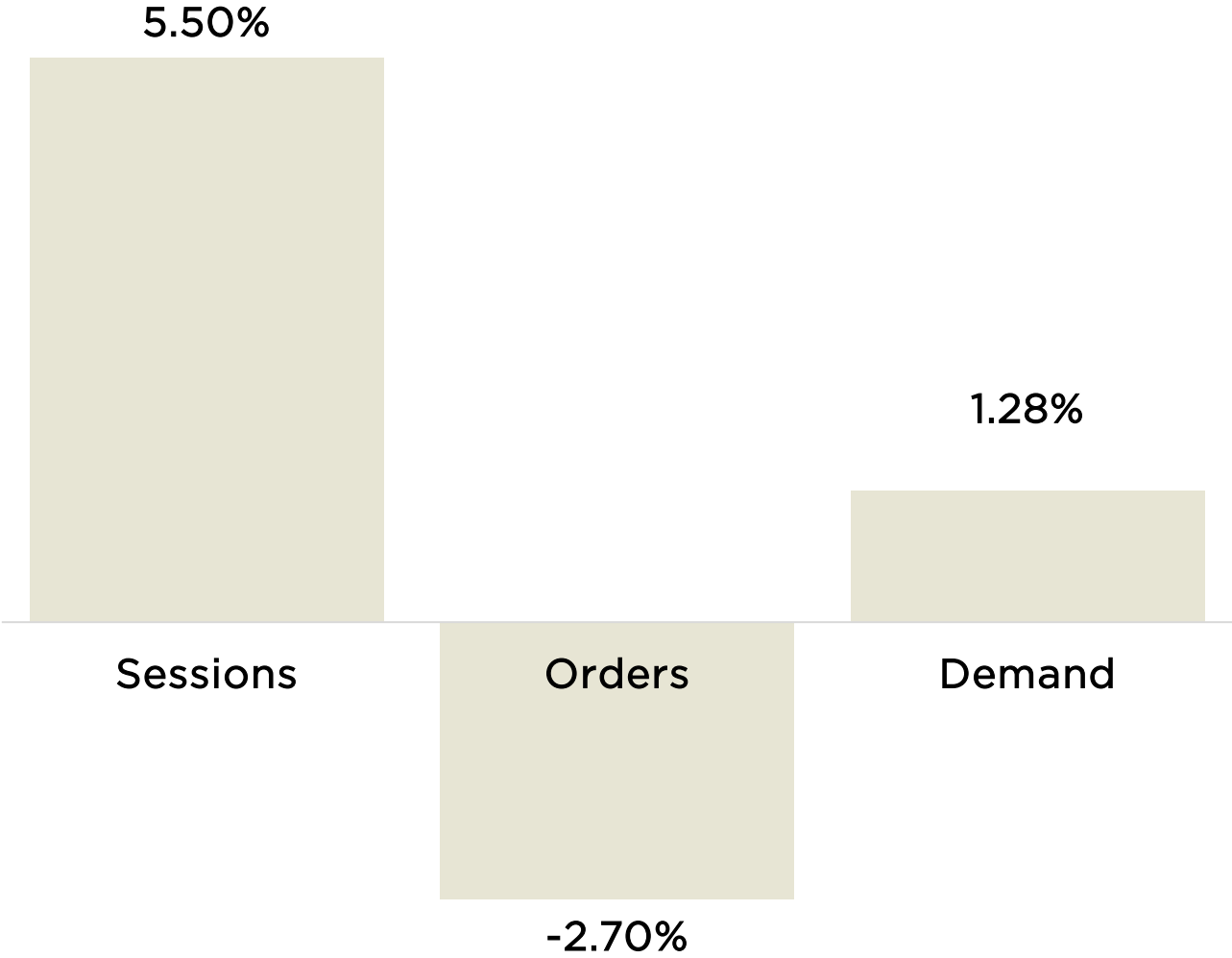


Tier 2 Brands

We continue to see strong interest in Spring for Tier 2 brands, with +19.08% in Sessions compared to last month’s +13.27%. We also see conversion improvements compared to last month, flipping from -3.18% last month to +4.60% this month.

We also saw meaningful demand growth from last month, reflecting improved consumer confidence and needs. April performance reflects more than seasonal interest but also successful improved marketing efficiency.

TIER 3 BRANDS / \$15M or Less



Tier 3 Brands

Tier 3 brands saw healthy session growth of +5.50%, a positive sign for smaller brands. Orders down 2.70% may be due to conversion friction. This could be due to shifts in consumer priorities or less compelling offers in April. Similar demand percentages in March, +1.72%, and April, +1.28%, show demand is still trending positive, but the rate of increase is flattening.

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IN THE NEWS

IN THE NEWS



HUMANITY MARKETING

Empathy is Your Brand's Secret Weapon

The most powerful marketing tool you have isn't your budget, media mix, or even your data, but your ability to be human. In a world that's louder, faster, and more automated than ever, brands that practice empathy connect more deeply.

[Read More →](#)



U.S. and China agree to slash tariffs for 90 days

The U.S. and China have agreed to temporarily suspend most tariffs on each other's goods in a move that shows a major thawing of trade tensions between the world's two largest economies.

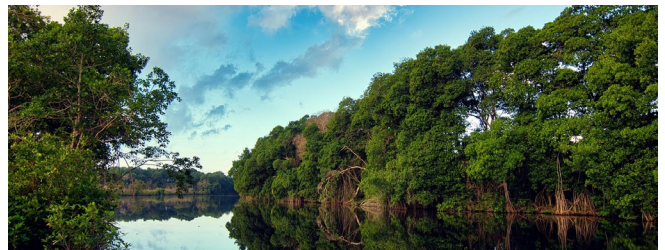
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U.S. Postal Service July Price Increase

The USPS plans to increase postage rates, effective July 13, 2025. If approved by the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC), this increase will be part of a broad 7.4% adjustment to mailing service prices.

[Read More →](#)



How the World Land Trust Protects Biodiversity Hotspots

World Land Trust's efforts have been significant in conserving biodiversity hotspots around the world, and its history is deeply rooted in Belize. Conservation initiatives, supported through carbon-balanced paper, have protected 75,000 acres of land worldwide.

[Read More →](#)