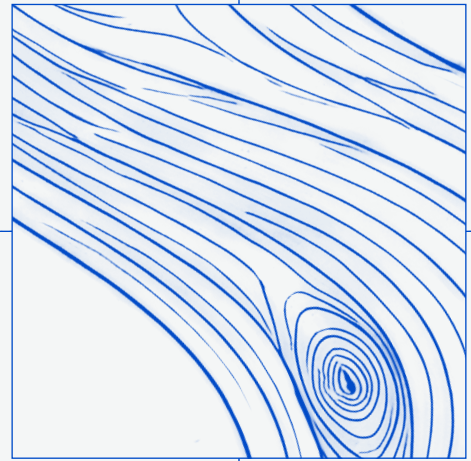
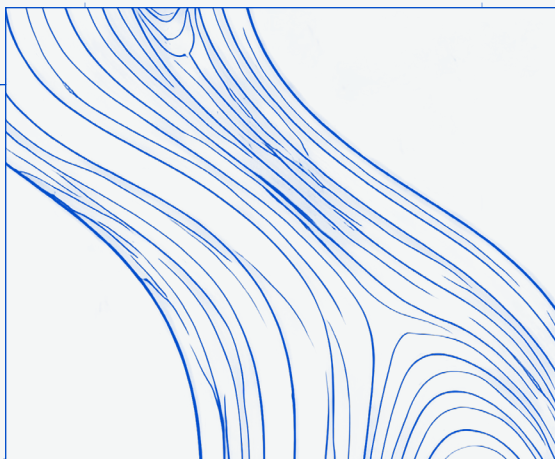
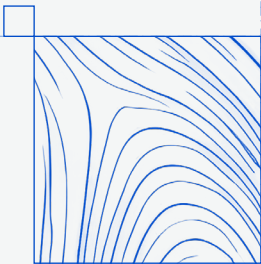




ROOT CAUSE

State of Payments Intelligence: **APAC 2026**



elevate
by  helloclever

Most merchants run their payments on gut feel.

A transaction fails, and it gets chalked up to bad luck. Checkout runs slow, and nobody thinks twice about it. Cashback goes out, and it's assumed to be building loyalty. None of that holds up once you look at the data.

This report draws on 7.42 million payin records across 208 Australian merchants, alongside platform-wide transaction data from Hello Clever's broader merchant base. We looked at how payments succeed and fail, what happens in the hours after a failed transaction, what cashback is really doing, and what separates the merchants pulling ahead from everyone else.

Merchants are losing money to problems they've never measured, because those problems are invisible without the right data. The merchants already ahead are operating with intelligence the rest of the market doesn't have yet.



Executive Summary



A fix to how one market routed payments recovered an estimated \$232M AUD in extra sales, around \$29M a month, revenue that was always there, just failing to land.



Merchants made 19% fewer payment attempts, yet the average value of a successful payment rose 3%, and total successful payment value grew 17% to \$9.52M. Fewer attempts didn't mean less money moving, it meant fewer wasted tries and more value landing per transaction.



Payments completing within 2 minutes succeed 95% of the time. Past that, success drops to 52%. The drop isn't gradual. It's a cliff edge.



98.8% of cashback recipients had no earlier successful payment with that merchant. Right now, cashback is doing more of the heavy lifting on acquisition, with plenty of room to grow into the loyalty driver it can become.



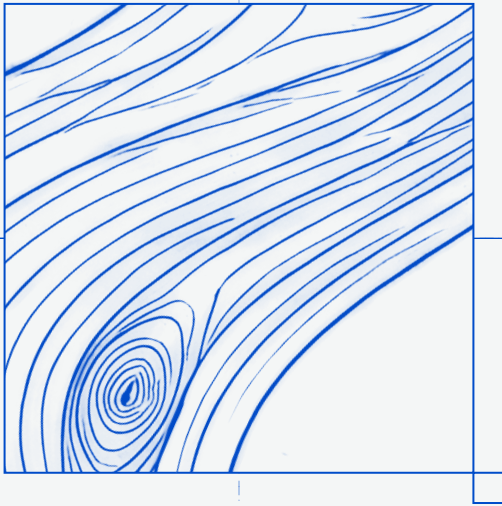
The top 25% of merchants get 51.7% of customers back within 90 days, versus 20.4% for everyone else. The gap holds because they combine loyalty, basket size, and steady volume together.



Of customers who eventually recover from a failed payment, 56% do so within an hour, 87% within a week. The first day after a failure is when most recoverable customers come back, though a meaningful share still return later in the week.



For merchants with enough history, a 1% change in GMV tends to correspond to a similar change in transaction fees, a useful guide for forecasting, though fees are set per contract rather than adjusted automatically.

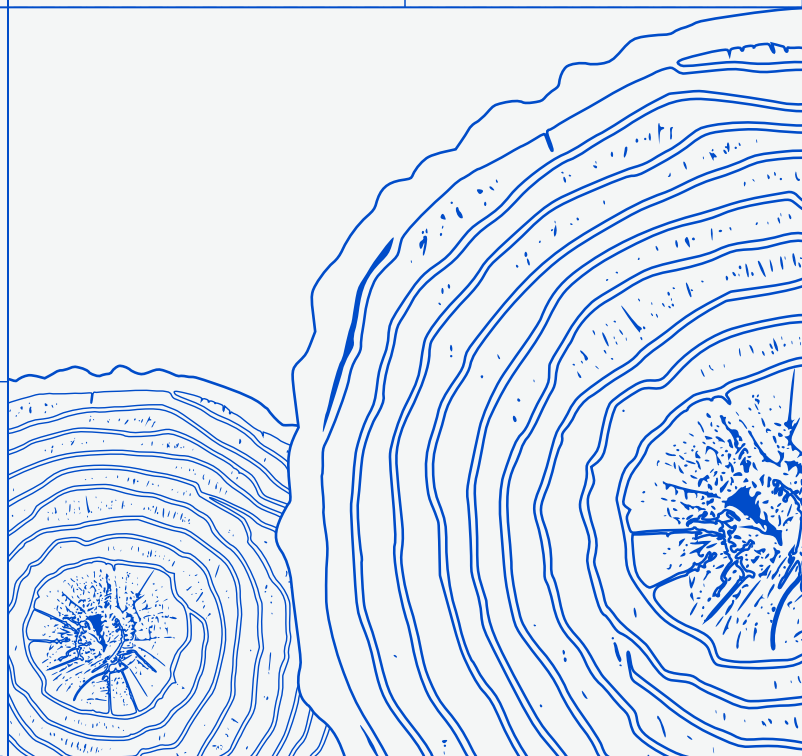


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Warning: treating the symptom instead of the root has been shown to quietly cost merchants real revenue.

elevate .

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Part 1

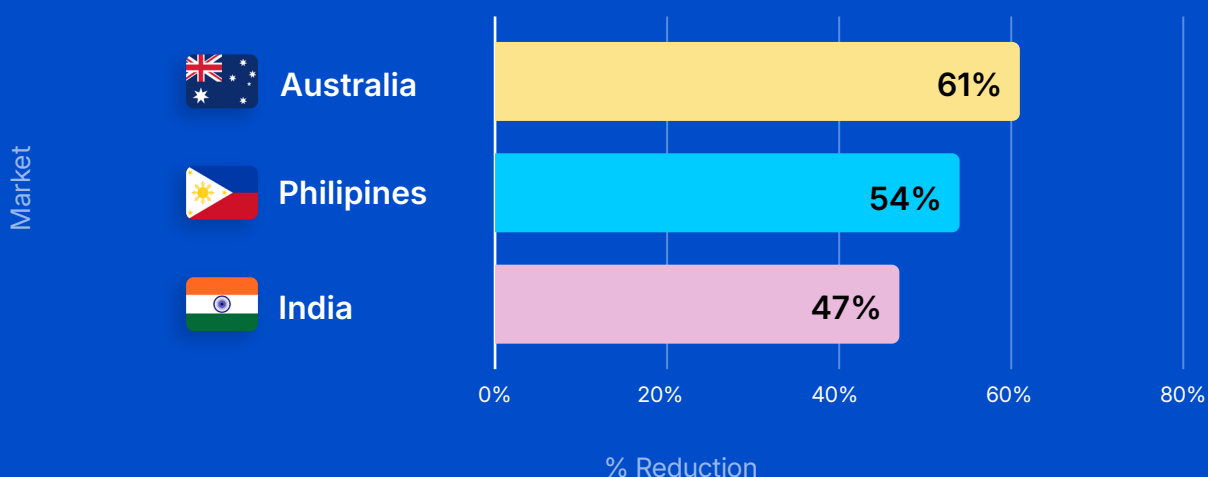
A failed payment is a sale that already happened and then disappeared

In December 2025, our Vietnam market (VND) improved how it routes payments behind the scenes. Failed and stuck transactions dropped, and completed sales rose by almost the same amount, revenue that had been sitting there all along, held up by fixable routing problems. Since then, an estimated \$232M AUD in extra sales has gone through that otherwise wouldn't have, around \$29M a month.

Other markets show the same pattern. Failure rates dropped 61% in Australia, 54% in the Philippines, and 47% in India over the past year. Fixing failures pays off in real dollars.

A separate look at 7.42 million payin records across 208 Australia-registered merchants backs this up. Between H1 2025 and H1 2026, merchants made 19% fewer payment attempts, yet the average value of a successful payment rose 3%, and total successful payment value grew 17% to \$9.52 million. Fewer tries, more landing.

Failure rate reduction by market



Slow payments fail more often

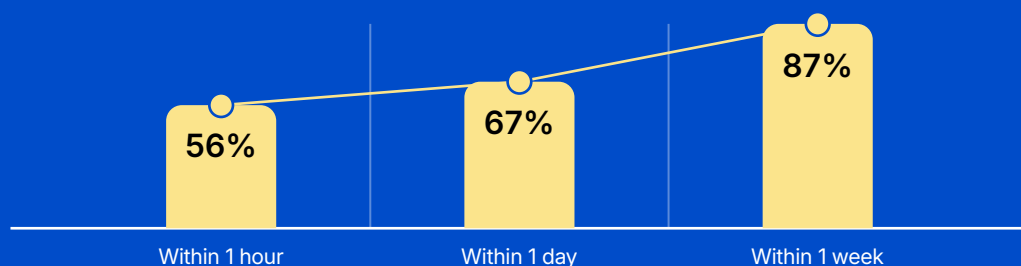
Payments completing within 10-120 seconds succeed 95% of the time. Once a payment takes longer than 2 minutes, that success rate drops to 52%. The delay makes customers nervous, and it raises the real odds of failure. For merchants, speed at checkout affects how many sales actually go through.

The first day after a failed payment is the best chance to recover it

When a payment fails, most merchants have no clear picture of whether the customer will come back, or when. The data shows they come back fast: 56% within an hour, 67% within a day, 87% within a week. The first day after a failed payment is the window that matters most. A retry prompt, follow-up email, or saved cart nudge lands best within that first day, while the customer is still paying attention. Wait a week, and most recoverable customers have already come back or moved on.

Customer return rate after payment failure

Cumulative %



Failed payments aren't the only thing merchants are running on assumption. The same blind spot shows up in loyalty.

Part 2 What Instant Cashback is actually doing, and what separates the merchants pulling ahead

If merchants haven't measured something as basic as payment failure, it's no surprise the same blind spot extends to loyalty spend.

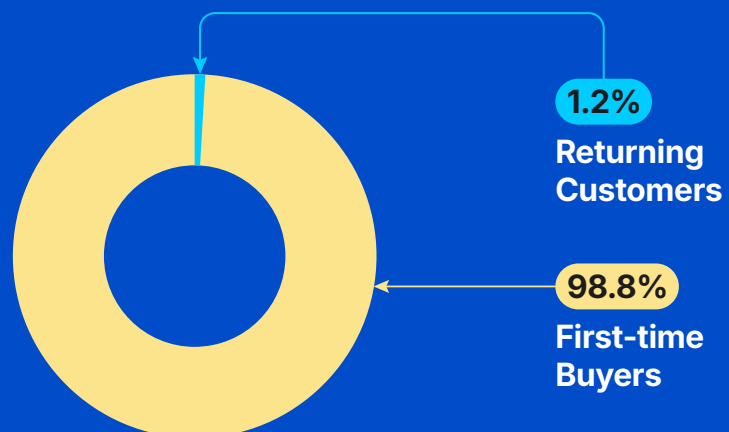
98.8% of Instant Cashback recipients had no earlier successful payment with that merchant. Cashback is currently reaching people almost entirely on or around their first purchase, rather than existing customers.

That points to an opportunity. Cashback already works well at bringing in first-time buyers. The real opportunity is extending the same approach to a customer's second or third purchase, once the goal shifts from acquiring a customer to keeping one.

Once a merchant starts measuring what's actually happening in these first two blind spots, a third pattern becomes visible, one usually dismissed as unpredictable.

Cashback Recipient Mix - Acquisition vs. Loyalty Opportunity

98.8% of Instant Cashback recipients had no earlier successful payment with that merchant.



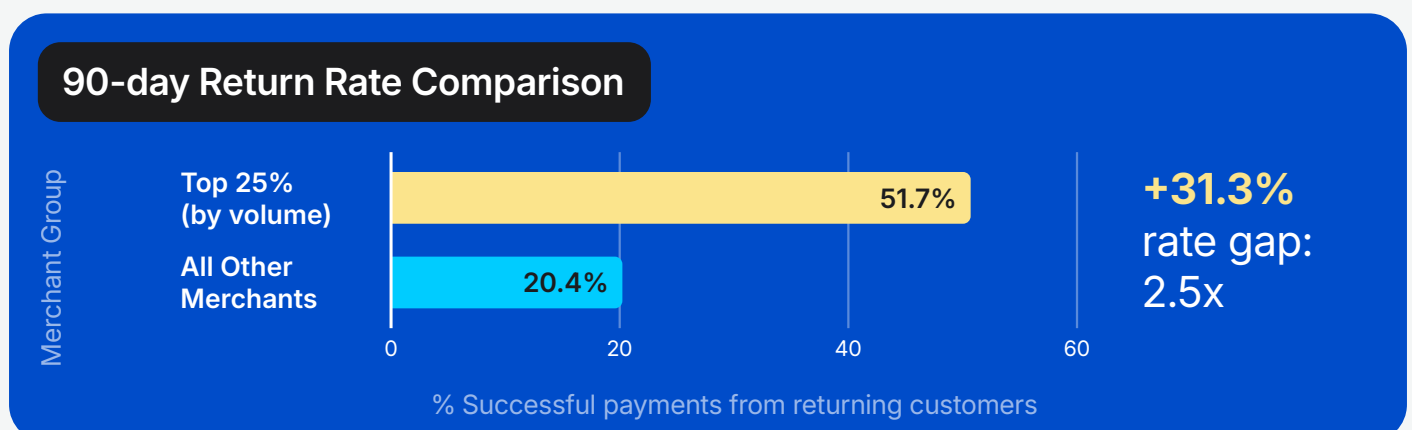
■ First-time ■ Returning

What separates top merchants from the rest is loyalty, basket size, and steadier volume, together

When looking at the top 25% of Hello Clever merchants by transaction volume compared to everyone else, the top merchants get 51.7% of their customers to come back within 90 days. Everyone else only gets 20.4%, less than half the top group's rate. That gap held up even after removing merchants that skew the numbers and categories where customers rarely come back.

A separate, smaller comparison of 30 merchants adds more texture to this. Splitting that group into higher and lower converting halves, the higher-converting half had a 38% larger share of returning customers, a 92% bigger average basket, and 21% steadier month-to-month GMV. The merchants pulling ahead are combining several advantages at once. With most merchants already running on solid payment infrastructure, the next real advantage appears to come from these three things together, and cashback is one of the clearest levers for building loyalty, the first of the three.

Once a merchant starts measuring what's actually happening in these first two blind spots, a third pattern becomes visible, one usually dismissed as unpredictable.



Part 3 Payment costs are more predictable than merchants think

Costs are the third place most merchants are guessing instead of measuring.

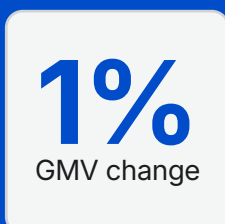
On paper, most merchant costs are set by contract rather than shifting automatically with volume. Look closer at merchants with enough monthly history, though, and a more useful pattern appears.

For merchants with sufficient monthly history, a 1% change in GMV corresponds to approximately a similar change in recorded transaction fees. This is a general pattern rather than a fixed ratio, fee configurations are still set manually per contract, but it's a reasonable guide for merchants trying to forecast costs as they scale.

For a merchant, this means payment costs don't creep up unexpectedly as the business grows. Whatever share of revenue goes to payment fees today is a reasonable early guide to costs at scale, though this should be validated for your specific business rather than assumed to hold automatically at double or triple size.

Merchant insight: Payment costs scaling with GMV (H1 2026)

Predictable cost scaling (n > sufficient history)



Approx. →



A general pattern, not a fixed ratio, for forecasting cost structure as business scales.

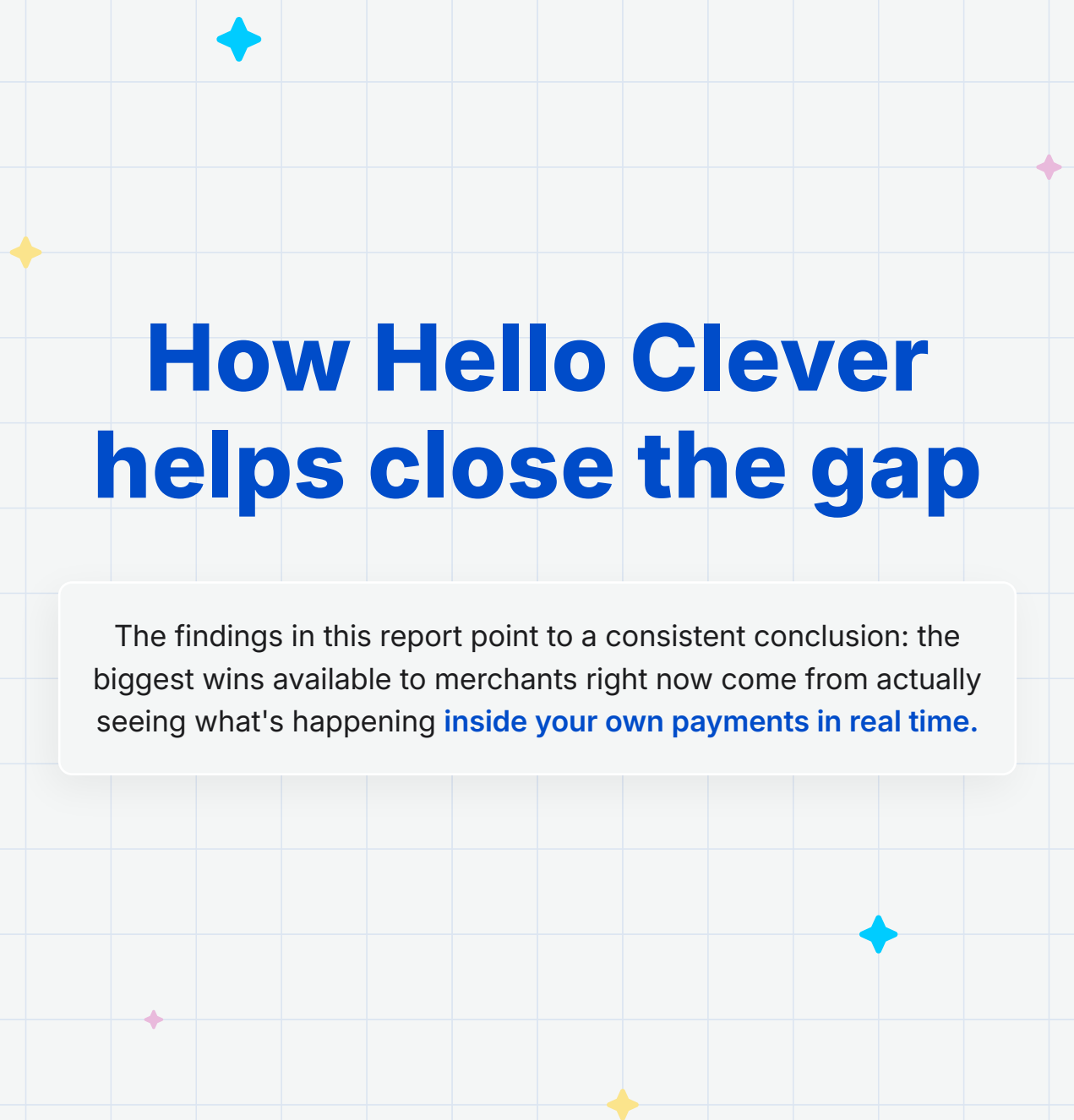
What this means for merchants?

First, find out where your payments are failing, and why. Most merchants have never measured their real payment success rate, let alone tracked it by transaction speed. If you don't know your failure rate, you don't know how much revenue is sitting there, recoverable, waiting on a fix.

Second, treat the first 24 hours after a failed payment as the moment that matters. A retry prompt or follow-up sent within a day works with your customer's actual behaviour. Waiting a week means the opportunity is already gone for most of them.

Third, build on what cashback is already doing well. It's driving acquisition today, with room to grow into loyalty by extending the same approach into a customer's second and third purchase.

The leading merchants know exactly where their money is going, and act on it before anyone else does.



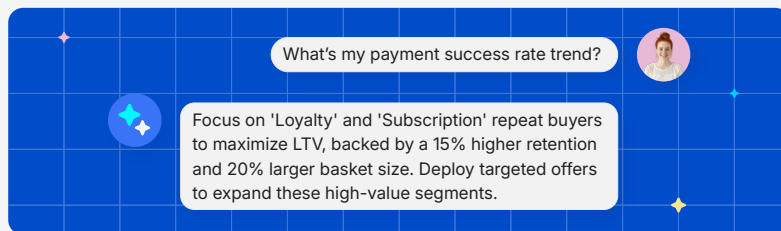
How Hello Clever helps close the gap

The findings in this report point to a consistent conclusion: the biggest wins available to merchants right now come from actually seeing what's happening **inside your own payments in real time.**

01

Clever AI

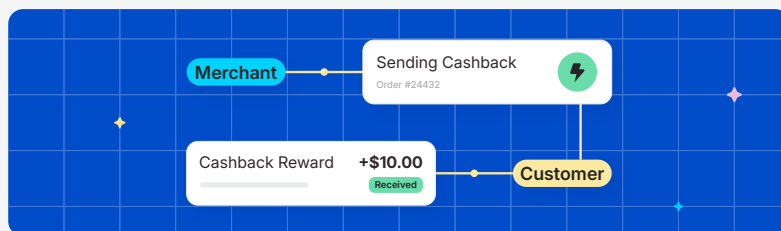
Clever AI turns this kind of data, failure patterns, recovery windows, cost trends, into a plain-language answer merchants can act on immediately, no data analyst required.



02

Instant Cashback

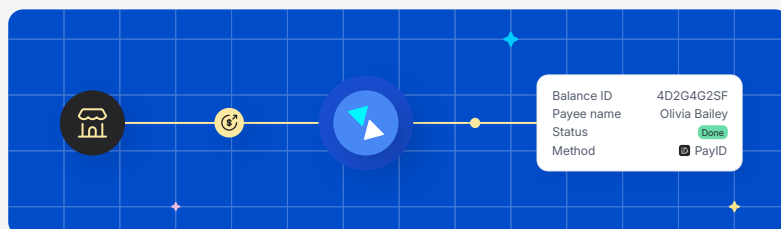
Instant Cashback gives merchants the infrastructure to extend cashback beyond first-purchase acquisition into repeat-purchase loyalty, closing the gap this report identifies directly.



03

Real-time payments

Real-time payments infrastructure, PayID and PayTo, are built for exactly the speed threshold this report identifies as the difference between a payment succeeding and failing.



Any merchant can do this with the team and budget they already have, by finding the root cause instead of guessing at the symptoms. The merchants already ahead got there by finding the root cause before anyone else did.



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