Getting paid shouldn't be this hard

An Ezidebit report into the hidden cost of payment complexity for Australian businesses

ezidebit®
A **Global Payments** Company

2025 AUSTRALIAN SMB PAYMENT PULSE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Ezidebit acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

ABOUT EZIDEBIT

Ezidebit is a trusted payments provider that's helped over 60,000 businesses across Australia and New Zealand manage payments. Powered by Global Payments since 2014, its secure Level 1 Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS) compliant platform supports direct debit, BPAY, PayTo, phone, online and in-person payments. Serving a diverse range of industries including health, fitness, education, childcare and real estate, Ezidebit has delivered over 110 software integrations that enable merchants to improve cash flow, reduce administration, and deliver better customer experiences.

ABOUT GLOBAL PAYMENTS

Global Payments Inc. (NYSE: GPN) is a leading payments technology company delivering innovative software and services to our customers globally. Our technologies, services and team member expertise allow us to provide a broad range of solutions that enable our customers to operate their businesses more efficiently across a variety of channels around the world.

Headquartered in Georgia with approximately 27,000 team members worldwide, Global Payments is a Fortune 500® company and a member of the S&P 500 with worldwide reach spanning North America, Europe, Asia Pacific and Latin America.

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MASSEH HAIDARY
Oceania CEO at Global Payments Inc

From our CEO

The bedrock of the Australian economy - Small to Medium Businesses (SMBs) - are having to navigate considerable fragmentation to run their businesses and serve their customers.

With cash flow being the lifeblood of SMBs, payment processes increasingly sit at the centre of their business operations. Put simply, if you can't pay or get paid on time, your profitability is impacted.

And yet, a large number of Australian SMBs are losing an entire day every week managing multiple systems to balance their books and chase late or missing payments.

This impacts customer trust, productivity, data security, growth and the bottom line - not to mention wellbeing.

At Ezidebit, we understand that managing multiple providers places a heavy burden on business owners and that's why we're focused on helping SMBs simplify such critical processes through one platform that takes the legwork out of payments.

We've seen firsthand through our valued partners that consolidation through one payment provider unlocks incredible business value.

Businesses who unify the back end of their operations into one payment platform can deliver seamless and secure experiences regardless of where their customers start or end their purchase journey.

Our 2025 Payment Pulse, conducted in partnership with Honeycomb Strategy, uncovers the most frequent payment pinch points facing business today and offers practical steps Australian SMBs can take to alleviate those pressures and come out on top.

With the ground shifting underneath SMBs thanks to ever-changing customer expectations, unifying the back end of payments enables businesses to meet those needs and power sustainable, secure growth.

Executive summary

Payment complexity is quietly undermining the productivity, cash flow, and growth of Australian Small and Medium Businesses (SMBs). According to our latest research, most businesses are juggling multiple systems to meet rising customer expectations for digital, flexible payment options. But the result isn't always positive – fragmented payment setups are eroding productivity, delaying revenue and impacting customer experience.

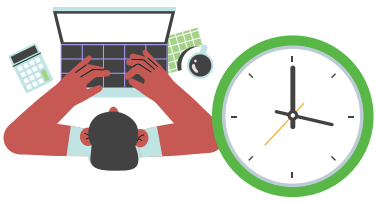
On average, SMBs spend more than 22 hours each week managing payment tasks – from reconciling across platforms to chasing late invoices. This burden scales with business size and impacts service delivery. Meanwhile, 54% report regular late or missing payments.

27% list security concerns as an organisational pain point, and 17% list it as a customer pain point.

Yet 93% of businesses who use multiple payment providers say they're open to consolidating payment providers. The issue isn't awareness, it's execution. The perceived risks of change hold many SMBs back.

This report unpacks the current state of SMB payments in Australia and highlights five key shifts shaping the future of payments. From operational time savings to automation, trust, and strategic consolidation, each section offers insights to help businesses turn pain points into a competitive advantage.

THE COST OF GETTING PAID



22.6 hours/week
lost to payment admin

1 in 6 payments
arrive late

93% are open
to consolidating payment providers

1 in 4 SMBs
feel they're losing customers
due to not offering the right payment options

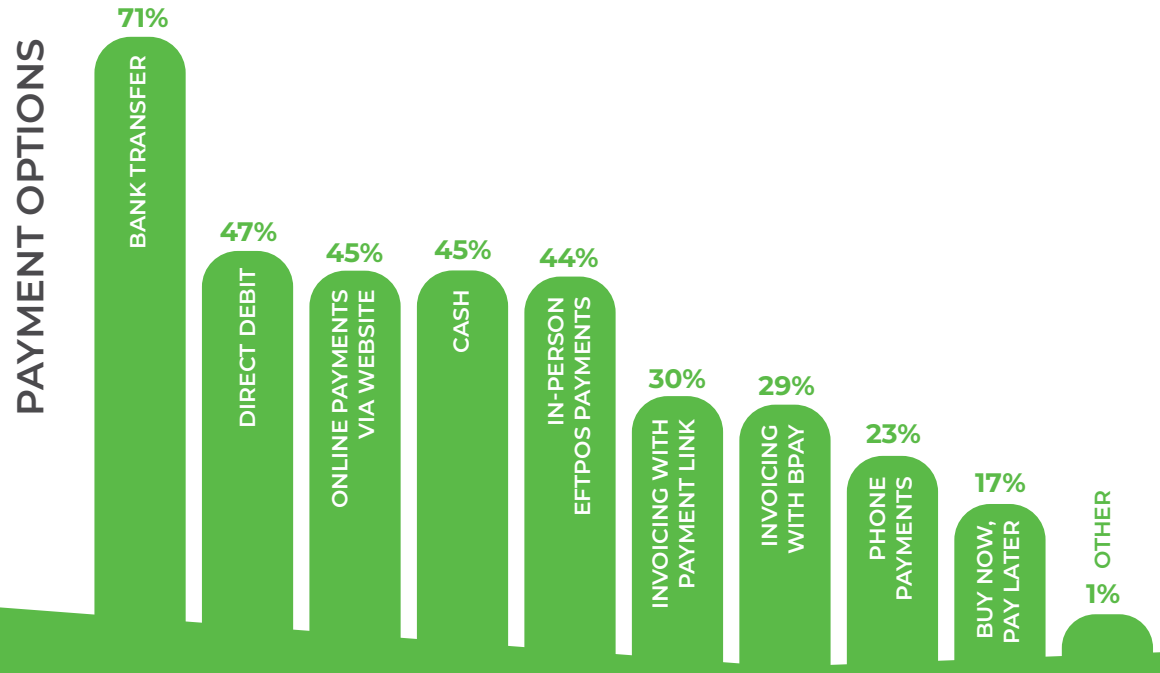
1 The state of SMB payments in 2025

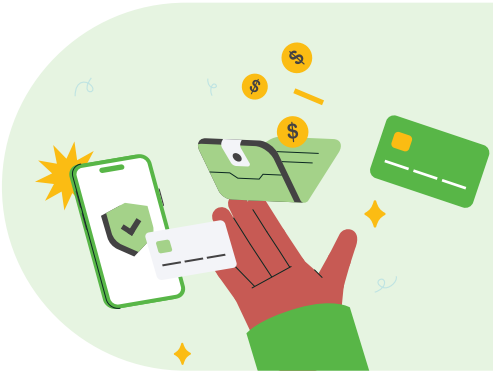
Australian SMBs are at a tipping point when it comes to payments. Customer expectations have shifted. Digital-first experiences, flexible payment options, and seamless transactions are now standard. But many SMBs are still operating with systems that don't match this reality.

Our research shows SMBs manage an average of 3.5 payment methods across 2.1 providers. Larger businesses can juggle up to 4.4 payment methods. This breadth of choice is valuable, with one in four SMBs saying their limited payment options have cost them customers. However, offering choice also introduces complexity behind the scenes, making admin more time-consuming and prone to error.

The result? Businesses are losing on average 22.6 hours per week on payment tasks - nearly three days spent reconciling, chasing payments, and fixing issues instead of focusing on growth. Chasing payments is a task of particular concern, with more than half of SMBs regularly facing late or missing payments.

The takeaway is clear: payments are no longer a back-office task. They're a strategic function tied to competitiveness, trust, and growth. Businesses that simplify their payments now will be better positioned to scale, respond to customer needs, and stay ahead.





SMEs use 3 to 4 payment methods on average

KEY TREND:

Payments are evolving into customer experience infrastructure

Payments are no longer just about getting paid – they're part of how customers perceive and engage with a business. As customers demand seamless, secure, and flexible options, businesses are rethinking their payment systems not as cost centres, but as experience enablers.

Integrated platforms allow SMBs to offer frictionless transactions, reduce sale abandonment, and build trust from the first interaction. And increasingly, customers expect that consistency across every channel. According to AusPayNet, the line between online and offline payments is disappearing, with mobile and digital wallets now central to a unified customer experience across physical and digital touchpoints.

Just as importantly, integrated payment systems give SMBs the visibility and control to act with confidence. Real-time insights and reduced manual efforts free up time and headspace, allowing businesses to respond fast to shifting customer needs, expand into new channels, and deliver a more consistent, trustworthy experience at every touchpoint.

> The biggest change we have seen is payments moving from cash-heavy, upfront transactions to digital-first experiences, especially direct debit. For the organisations we work with, their customers being able to sign up online, manage payments flexibly, and do it securely within a PCI framework has been transformative.
>
> Customers no longer want to feel locked into rigid contracts - they expect to pause, restart, or change payment details with ease. That flexibility builds trust and keeps them engaged longer. At one site, uptake of direct debit jumped from 65% to 97% once the benefits were promoted. Payments have become about more than collecting money - they're tied to customer experience and retention.
>
> **- DUSHAYANT DHAR, HEAD OF SALES & CUSTOMER SUCCESS, JONAS LEISURE**

2 Time is money: The productivity drain

Time is one of the most precious resources for SMBs, but payment admin is consuming far too much of it.

Our research shows SMBs lose over 22 hours each week managing payment tasks. This includes reconciling across systems, chasing overdue payments, and resolving disputes. The burden grows with business size and the number of payment providers in use. Larger SMBs with complex, disconnected systems suffer the highest time losses, pulling focus from growth-driving activities.

For SMBs, reducing admin isn't just a matter of efficiency - it's a strategic necessity. Every hour saved on payments is time that can be redirected to growth activities like customer service, marketing, and product development.

Simplified, integrated payment systems can immediately reduce this time drain. With fewer platforms to manage, businesses can streamline operations, reduce errors, and improve cash flow clarity.

> We used to lose several hours each week just managing payments - reconciling systems, chasing overdue invoices, and resolving disputes. It was a constant time drain that pulled us away from actually running the business.
>
> Automating our recurring billing and integrating payments into our workflow has freed up our team to focus on clients and growth instead of admin work. We've even been able to scale without adding more back-office headcount.
>
> Billing is now consistent and accurate, with far fewer mistakes or delays. It's improved customer satisfaction and made payments a non-issue - which is exactly how it should be.
>
> **- JAMES HUTTON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, HSJ HOST PTY LTD**

22.6 hours

per week spent on payment tasks

KEY TREND:

Payment complexity is draining productivity

As SMBs grow, their operations become more complex, but their systems don't always keep up. It's common for businesses to add new payment tools or platforms in response to customer needs or internal gaps. Over time, this can lead to a patchwork of providers, logins, and processes that create more problems than they solve.

Without simplification, growth amplifies inefficiency. Admin hours can balloon. Reconciliation gets harder. Teams are forced to spend valuable time switching between systems, double-handling data, and chasing down errors. It's not just frustrating – it's costly.

Our research shows that SMBs lose over 22.6 hours per week to payment-related tasks. That's nearly three full workdays diverted from high-value activity like service delivery, innovation, or customer engagement. And the burden is heavier for larger, multi-channel businesses with disconnected systems.

Simplifying payments isn't just about saving time – it's about protecting capacity.

3 Late payments and the revenue risk

Late payments remain one of the most common challenges for SMBs. Our research shows 54% of businesses report regular late missing payments, with one in six payments arriving late on average. In categories like home services and subscriptions, this can affect up to 20% of payments.

The consequences are tangible. Late payments disrupt cash flow, complicate financial planning, and can strain supplier and customer relationships.

Automated systems such as recurring billing, direct debits, and payment reminders help reduce late payments, providing businesses with more predictable revenue and less financial stress.

PREVALANCE OF CUSTOMERS NOT PAYING ON TIME

KEY TREND:

Automation is becoming the cornerstone of cash flow stability

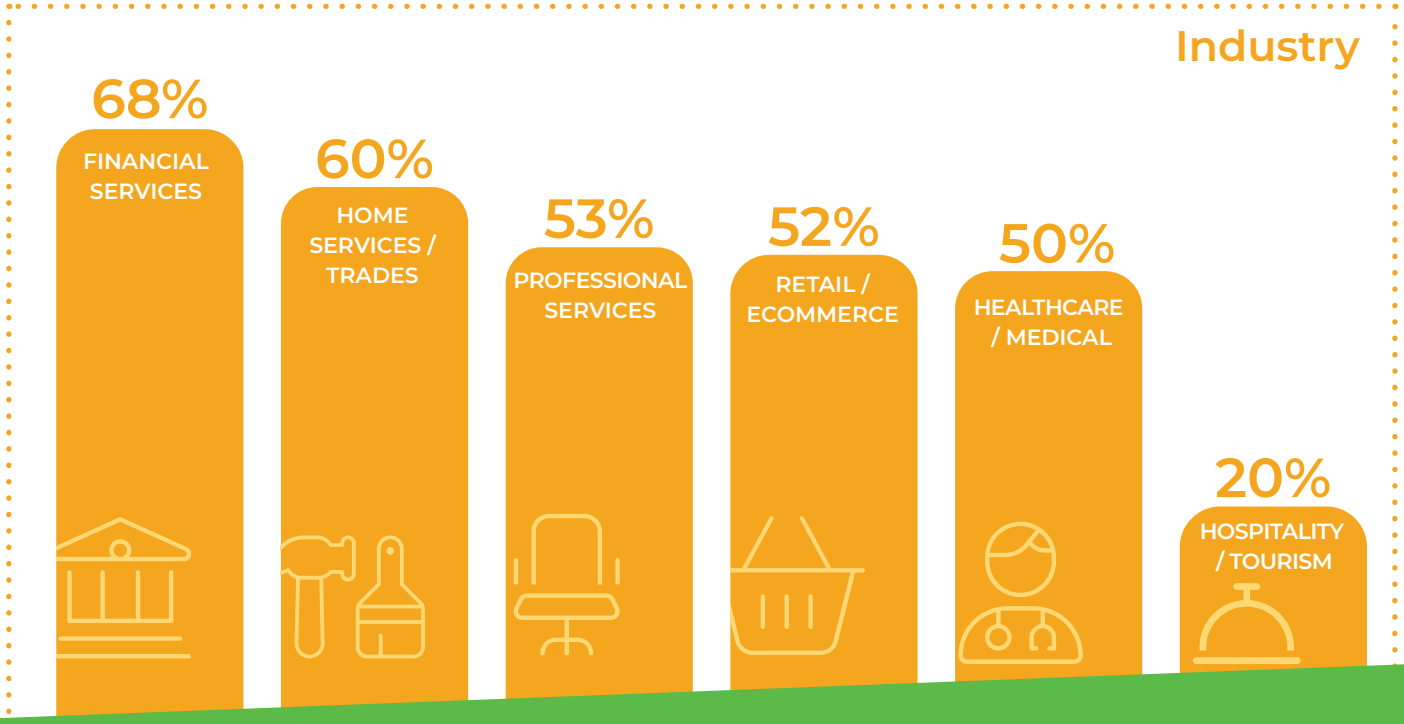
Late payments remain a chronic issue. But the solution isn't more follow ups - it's smarter systems. Businesses using automated features like recurring billing, reminders, and direct debits report faster, more reliable cash flow and few disputes.

A 2024 FinTech Australia report found that Australian small businesses gained a collective $9 billion in net benefits from adopting fintech payment solutions, with more than 30% reporting revenue growth of over 2.5%.

Automation is moving from a nice-to-have to essential infrastructure for businesses looking to plan, hire, and invest with confidence.

1 in 6
payments arrive late

PREVALANCE OF CUSTOMERS NOT PAYING ON TIME

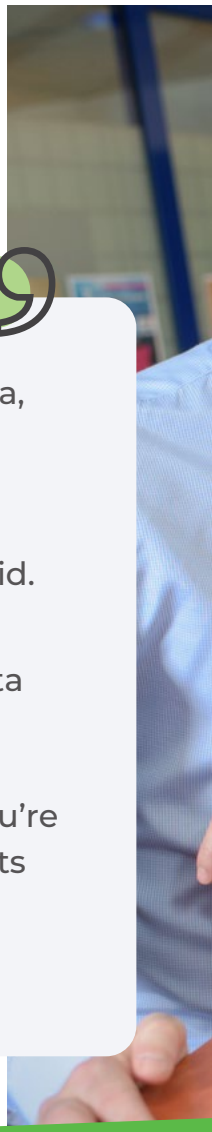


4 The trust factor: Security and compliance concerns

Trust is integral to every payment interaction. Yet 17% of SMBs report customers experience security concerns when making payments. Larger, more complex businesses also feel less confident in their compliance and security posture.

Our research also shows that 75% of SMBs believe their customers encounter some form of friction in the payment process, whether that's related to security, method availability, or processing delays.

Embedding robust security and compliance into payment systems including Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) 4.0 is essential for protecting customer trust and supporting growth. Secure, compliant payments aren't just a back-end safeguard - they're a business necessity.



In healthcare, how payments are handled matters. Like patient data, they come with clear expectations around privacy and security. A lot of our practices still rely on bank transfers or manual processes, but when you're dealing with patients, there are better and non-negotiable ways of how to receive those payments and get paid.

Security and compliance are at the core of what we're focused on, and partnering with a provider we trust allows us to meet strict data and regulatory obligations like encryption and audit trails. It also improves efficiency by automating billing, reducing reconciliation errors, and helping practices get paid faster. That's critical when you're supporting healthcare practices that need reliable, secure payments built into their platform.

- SHAUN LYONS, GM SALES, MAGENTUS PRACTICE PAYMENTS

KEY TREND:

Secure payments are now an assumed standard

Customers expect more than convenience – they expect security. With digital fraud and scams on the rise, one in six SMBs say customers experience security concerns during payment.

From 31 March 2025, all Australian businesses that store, process, or transmit cardholder data must comply with the global standard, PCI DSS 4.0. The tightened standards reflect changing cyber risks – and for SMBs, visible compliance isn't just regulatory compliance, but a valuable trust signal to customers.

Some of Australia's largest companies including those across aviation, telecommunications, and healthcare, have suffered major data breaches. These incidents have exposed sensitive customer details ranging from contact information to account details - highlighting how no sector is immune and reinforcing why secure practices are now a baseline expectation.

SMBs that integrate visible, secure payment options and maintain strong compliance gain a clear edge in building long term trust. Security is no longer just back-end hygiene – it's part of the entire brand experience.

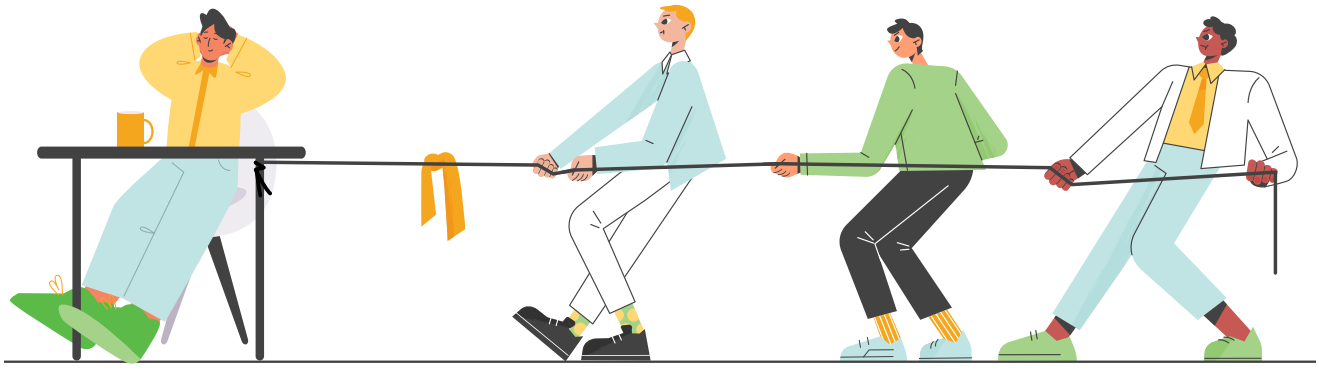
5 Between appetite and action: The consolidation challenge

Despite clear benefits, most SMBs have not consolidated their payment systems. While only 20% of SMBs have done so, 93% of those with multiple providers are open to the idea.

Why? Many cite concerns about migration complexity, potential downtime, and integration with existing systems. For businesses in highly regulated sectors or with legacy tech, these barriers feel even higher.

But sticking with fragmented systems brings its own risks: higher admin costs, security vulnerabilities, and poor customer experience.

Consolidation is a strategic move. Businesses that streamline their payments gain efficiency, better financial insight, and improved decision-making agility.



KEY TREND:

SMBs are stuck between the idea of simplification and the fear of disruption

Simplifying payments make sense on paper – fewer systems, less admin, better customer experiences. But for many SMBs, the thought of disrupting what they have been 'working' with (even if imperfectly) is enough to stall progress.

That hesitation is understandable. Change can feel risky. But increasingly, the greater risk is standing still.

As business pressures mount – from compliance to customer expectations – fragmentation is no longer sustainable. SMBs that have embraced consolidation are seeing beyond efficiency. They're gaining clearer cash flow visibility, improved data security, and the agility to adapt faster.

We're seeing this shift happen across the broader ecosystem too. With the launch of PayTo, part of Australia's New Payments Platform (NPP), some businesses have already embraced real-time, consumer-authorised payments.

This reinforces that simplification at scale isn't just possible – it's happening now. For SMBs, the path forward is clear: streamlined systems offer not just operational relief, but strategic advantage.

And the next wave of SMB growth might not come from doing more, but come from doing less, better. Consolidated, intelligent payment systems are how modern businesses stay resilient, not just operational.

6 What SMBs need now: A clear path forward

Our research shows that SMBs aren't just looking for new payment technology - they're looking for solutions that reduce complexity, earn trust, and support customer experience.

Businesses want fewer logins and platforms to manage, with clear processes that reduce admin and error. The need payment systems that protect customer data and meet evolving compliance standards. And they want options that match how the customers prefer to pay, whether online, on a schedule, or in person.

The most effective payment systems unify all three, so SMBs can spend less time on admin, reduce payment related friction, and deliver a seamless experience that builds trust and loyalty over time.

SEAMLESS, SECURE PAYMENTS FOR BUSINESSES AND THEIR CUSTOMERS

SIMPLICITY

Fewer systems, fewer logins, clearer processes.

Why it matters

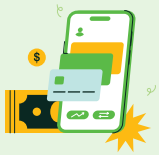
Less admin, reduced errors, and better visibility

SECURITY

Built-in compliance and fraud protection.

Why it matters

Trust, peace of mind, and reduced risk



FLEXIBILITY

Payment options that match customer preferences.

Why it matters

Convenience = faster payments and happier customers

BUILT ON INTEGRATED TOOLS AND PROCESSES THAT SIMPLIFY RATHER THAN COMPLICATE

7 Conclusion: Solving the payment puzzle

Our research shows that SMBs aren't just looking for new technology. They're looking for solutions that reduce complexity, earn trust, and support a great customer experience.

Fewer systems and platforms to manage

Many businesses are juggling multiple providers and systems, which increases the risk of error and admin overhead. SMBs want to simplify their tech stack and reduce the need for manual work.

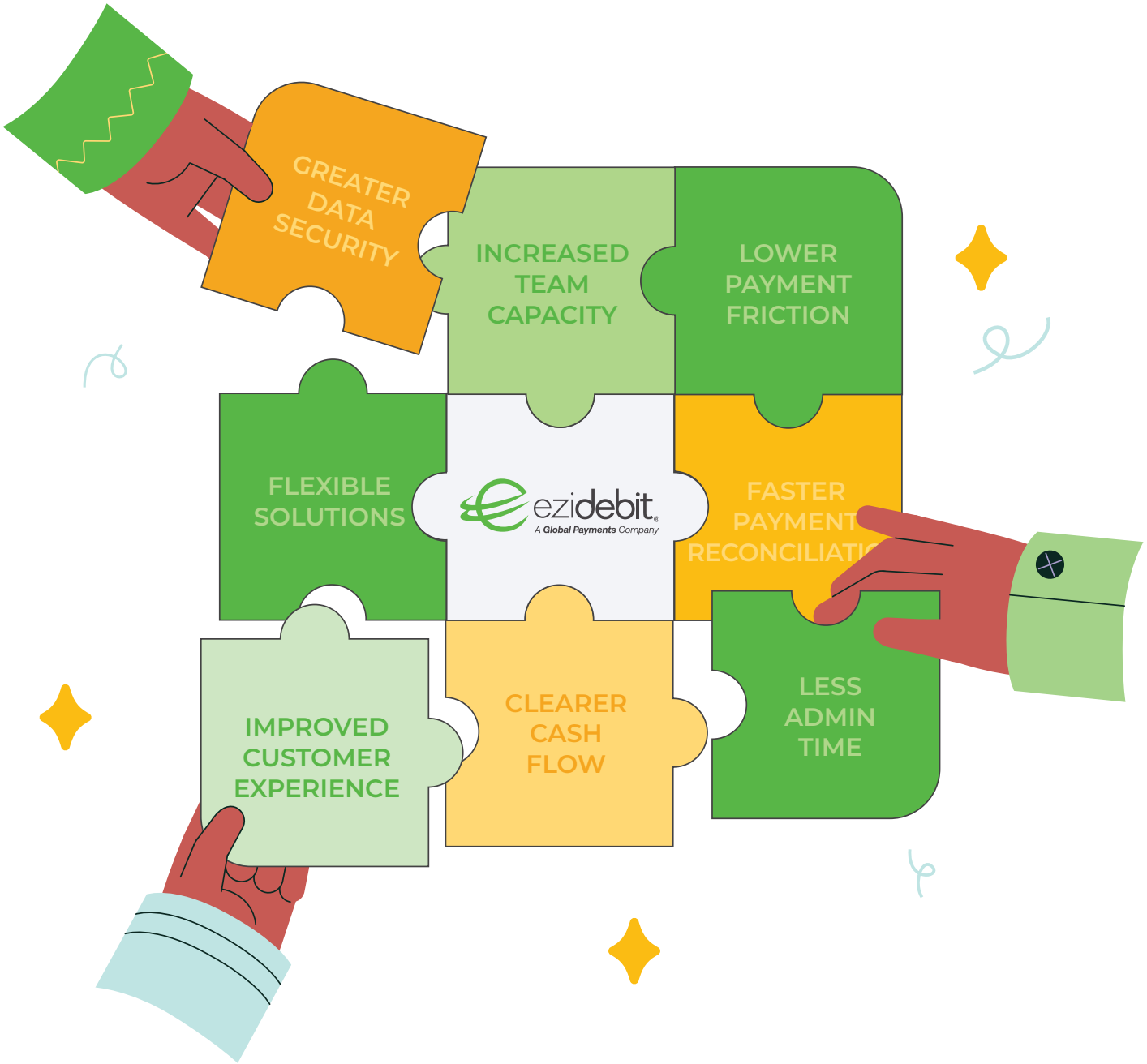
Built-in security, fraud protection and compliance

With ever-increasing risk of cyber threats and scams, compliance can't be an afterthought. Businesses need payment systems that protect customer data and meet modern security requirements, with features like encryption, audit trails, tokenisation, and fraud detection built in.

Payment options that suit their customers

Whether their customers prefer to pay online, in person, or on a recurring schedule, SMBs want to offer flexible, convenient ways to pay - making it easier to get paid on time and improving customer satisfaction.

The most effective payment systems unify all three, helping SMBs reduce administrative burden, remove payment friction, and deliver seamless experiences that build trust and loyalty over time.



How Ezidebit helps

Ezidebit brings clarity to payment complexity, helping businesses reduce admin, improve cash flow, and deliver a better customer experience.

With one secure platform, businesses can accept a wide range of payment types - including direct debit for dependable, recurring payments - and streamline billing and reconciliation across channels that previously relied on manual work or multiple providers.

Behind the scenes, our built-in security and compliance tools provide the trust and protection businesses and their customers expect.

By consolidating systems and reducing friction, we help businesses find more time, more certainty, and more capacity to grow.

Simple. Secure. Seamless.
That's Ezidebit.

METHODOLOGY / NOTES

This white paper is based on proprietary research commissioned by Ezidebit and conducted by Honeycomb Strategy in May 2025.

Additional insights were gathered through market analysis, customer interviews, and industry trend reviews.

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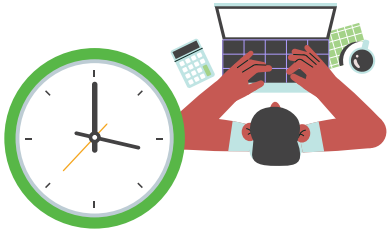
8 By the numbers: Key takeaways

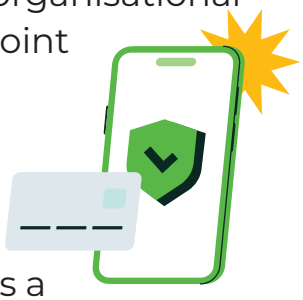
22.6 hours per week
lost to payment admin on average



1 in 4 SMBs
say they're losing customers due to payment friction
due to not offering the right payment options

54% of SMBs
face regular late or missing payments

27% of SMBs
list security concerns as an organisational pain point



93% are open
to consolidating providers – but only **20%** have done so

17%
list it as a customer pain point

These numbers illustrate the hidden costs of payment complexity - and the scale of the opportunity for SMBs to simplify and streamline.

ezidebit®
A **Global Payments** Company

Let's simplify payments, together.

Ezidebit is committed to helping Australian SMBs streamline their payments, reduce admin, and build better businesses. With integrated solutions, robust security, and local support, we're here to help you solve the payment puzzle.

Visit Ezidebit to learn more and take the next step toward smarter payments.