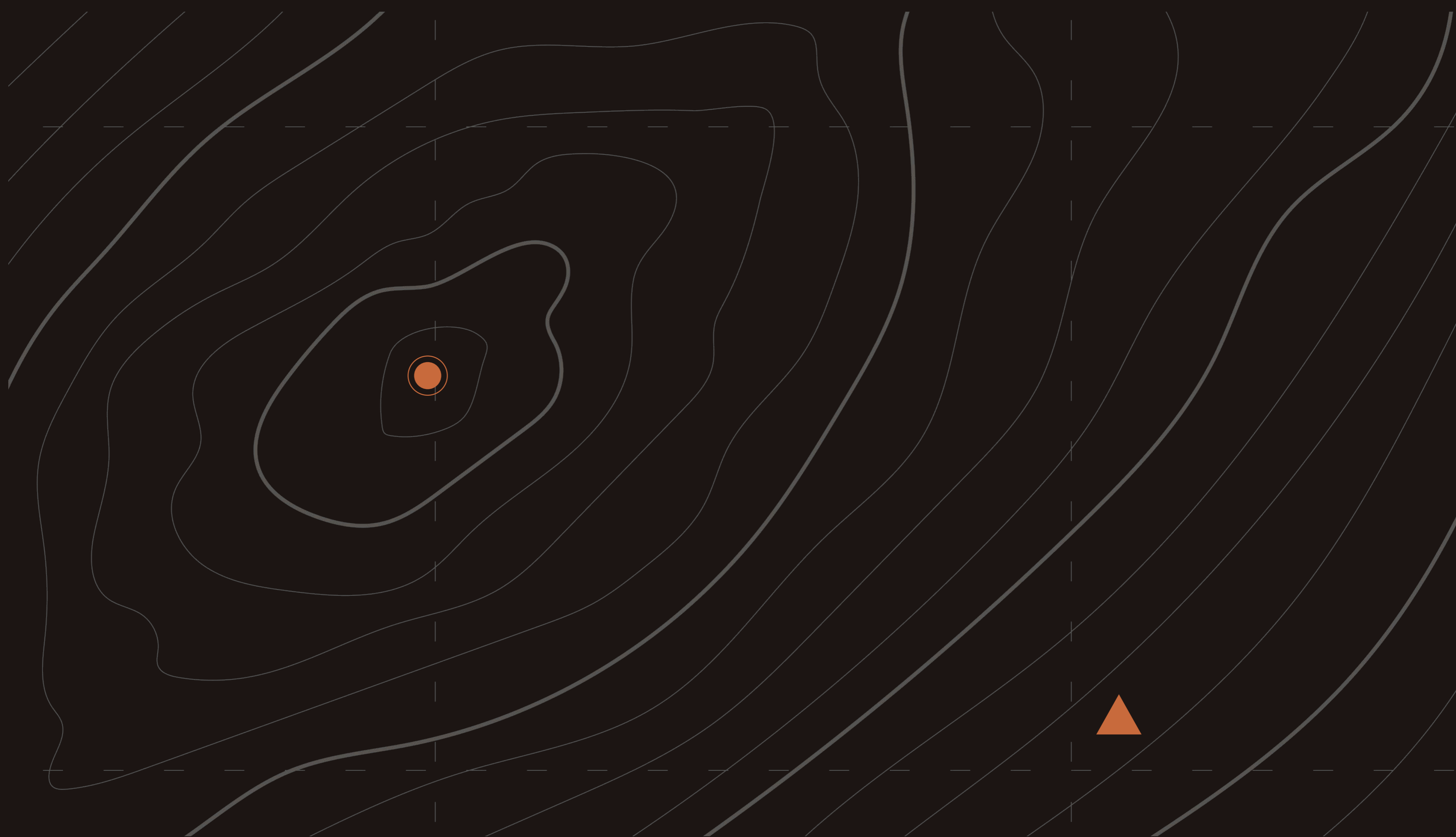


2026

The Payments Report

Scaling Europe

How multi-market businesses
turn transactions into
commercial intelligence.



mollie

The European paradox



Right now, we see a new paradox defining Europe. On one side, regulators are pushing for a unified, instant infrastructure. On the other, consumers stick to the habits and payment methods they trust.

And we love it.

Because this paradox is Europe. It's the defining feature of our market, reflecting a place that's proudly and steadfastly local, yet at the same time, a single, ambitious economic bloc.

At Mollie, we were born from European commerce. And we've been solving payments for businesses for more than two decades. The truth: There's no 'silver bullet' that solves this, no single technology that brings it all together.

Instead, it demands a model that merges AI and automation with a truly human understanding of how to win in the markets you operate, whether that's one country or twenty.

We created this report for the leaders who want to do just that. The leaders who are ready to embrace a new model and a new way of thinking. And ready to put payments at the heart of their growth.

Koen Köppen
CEO, Mollie

From utility to intelligence

For decades, businesses treated payments as a simple utility. It was a back-office cost centre, optimised purely for price.

But in a fragmented, real-time Europe, that model is a cap on your growth.

Treating payments as a passive utility is a risk that will leave your teams buried in manual work and your data trapped in silos. Instead, payments should now sit at the heart of your commercial intelligence – powering customer interactions and turning data signals into revenue.

This report introduces a new, pragmatic model that delivers that: The Signal & Strategy Model.

It shows how you can use the power of AI alongside deep human expertise to navigate Europe's technical and deeply nuanced landscape.

We tackle this in three parts

01

The operational reality created by Europe's developing rails, rules, and consumer demands.

02

The strategic pivot to the Signal & Strategy Model (and the AI that powers it).

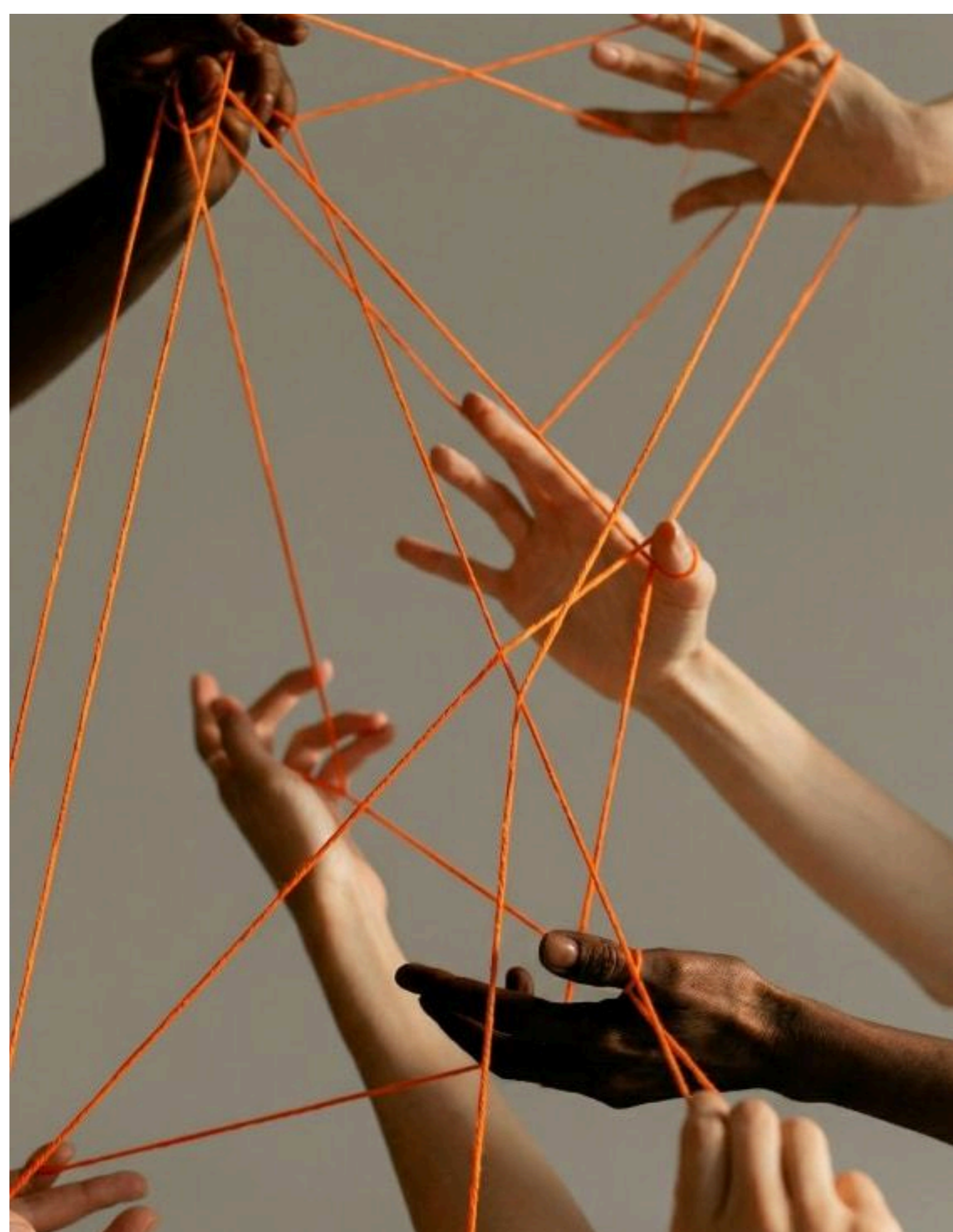
03

The actionable playbook to start adopting the model and using it to drive growth.

The new operational reality

The new operational reality

Ever feel like the ground your payments are built on is moving beneath your feet?



That's because right now we're seeing a convergence of trends – from generational shifts in how people buy to Europe's economic push for sovereignty.

If you're operating across multiple markets, you're likely experiencing three distinct forces.

The European rewiring

New regulations and updated rails (like SEPA Instant) are unifying the bloc and finally giving Europe's legacy systems the speed they need to compete.

The digital wallet demand

The frictionless wallets your customers love, but where thin data risks false declines and reconciliation drag – unless your infrastructure is built to adapt.

The local realities

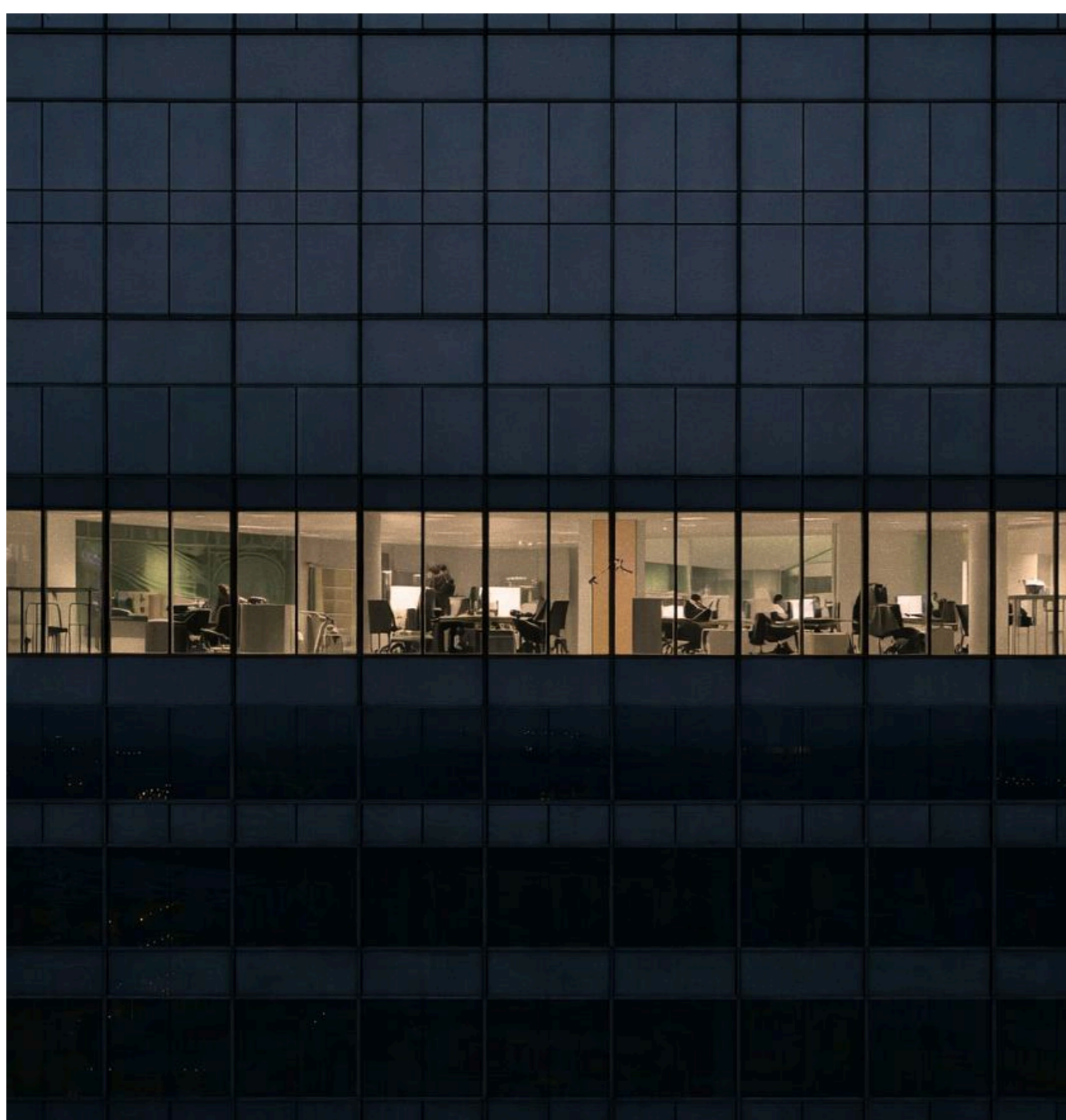
The local payment methods you need to offer to win, but that create integration and reconciliation chaos.

The market is starting to move in real-time, consumer demand never sits still. The result? Your best engineers are stuck in API firefights and your finance team is buried in spreadsheets. There are opportunities in this new landscape, but you don't have the time – or the structure – to look for them.

Let's look at the three forces creating this complexity.

The new rails: Your 24/7 Treasury

We start with one key shift in Europe's payment infrastructure: The SEPA Instant Payments Regulation.



It mandates that 10-second transfers are the new standard. And it also pushes for Verification of Payee (VoP) – a check to ensure the beneficiary's name and IBAN match – to counter the risk of instant, irrevocable losses.

This is a fundamental shift in how you manage cash flow – making your 9-to-5 finance department a 24/7 treasury.

The good news:

You just gained more control of your cash

The old €100k limit and cut-off times are history. You can pay suppliers on a Sunday night and hold onto working capital until the last possible second.

You can also build more trust

You can process a refund and have the money back in your customer's account in 10 seconds – that speed can be a true loyalty driver.

Does your finance team now need to work weekends? No – but your systems might. If you rely on legacy bank integrations or 'end-of-day' batch files, this new 24/7 reality could break your reconciliation. But for most, it should simply be a feature that's developed and handled automatically by your payment and banking partners.

The new rulebook: PSD3 & PSR

Next is PSD3 (the Third Payment Services Directive) and the Payment Services Regulation (PSR), which are both coming into force this year (with an 18-month implementation period).

Do you remember the complexity of the PSD2 and SCA rollouts? The sudden friction at checkout, the dip in conversion, the spike in support tickets from customers wondering why their payments weren't 'working'.

Well, the good news first: the next stage isn't another revolution, it's an evolution.

It's best to think of PSD3 and PSR as an 'upgrade' to fix the bugs from last time. We're going to get clearer rules, strengthened Open Banking, and more predictable compliance across the EU.

And the new rulebook is mostly focused on one thing: more sophisticated scammers.

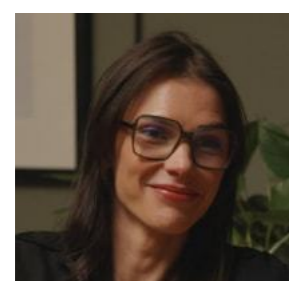
Why? Because of the new rail we just discussed. As instant, account-to-account payments offer a new, faster standard, they also become a major new target for fraudsters. An instant bank transfer is irrevocable – there's no chargeback. The money is just... gone.

This is why PSD3 and PSR are introducing new tools (like mandatory IBAN-name matching for credit transfers) and new liability rules. It's a direct response to the rise of 'authorised push payment' (APP) scams. What does that actually mean? Your fraud management has to be a proactive, real-time function built directly into your checkout. If your partner relies on legacy batch checks, they will fail this standard.

The new challenger: Wero

Expert view

“By acquiring local champions like Payconiq, Wero inherited a whole ecosystem. This means you're not waiting for adoption – the audience already exists. But whether customers want to use it over other methods? That remains to be seen.”



Iryna Agieieva
Director of Product
Management, Mollie

While regulators are tightening the rules on fraud, European banks are attempting to redraw the map entirely to challenge US dominance.

Enter Wero.

For years, card payments in Europe have been defined by a split reality: you either used fragmented local champions (Bancontact in Belgium, Cartes Bancaires in France) or the global US-backed card schemes. Now, the European Payments Initiative (EPI) has built a solution that bridges that gap: Wero. It's a digital wallet running on SEPA Instant rails, designed to be as seamless as a global scheme but with the local trust of a bank transfer method.

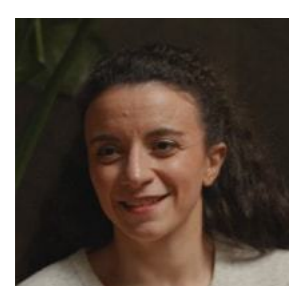
Wero is executing a roll-up strategy, migrating users from existing national champions (Paylib in France, Payconiq in Belgium, etc.). This basically gave it instant scale, and it onboarded over 43 million users in its first year.

Because it runs on bank rails, it bypasses traditional card interchange fees. While it may not be cheaper than every local legacy method, its proposed 'capped fee' model makes it a powerful strategic lever – especially for high-value transactions where percentage-based card fees sting the most.

The nuance behind the new standard

Expert view

“Wero is a unified standard, but we expect to see local nuances in how disputes are handled. Businesses shouldn't have to manage this manually – their payment partner should act as a buffer, absorbing complexity so their cash flow remains as predictable as possible.”



Diane Albouy
Principal Product
Manager, Mollie

Wero is a major step forward – a pan-European A2A payment method designed for mass adoption.

But for your finance and ops teams, it also introduces a new operational dynamic.

If you trade in the Netherlands, Austria, or Poland, you love local champions like iDEAL (now officially iDEAL | Wero), EPS, and Przelewy24 most for one specific reason: certainty. They are guaranteed payments. As soon as the transaction is confirmed, the money is yours.

Wero evolves the model.

To compete with cards and protect consumers, it introduces a dispute mechanism, making it a non-guaranteed payment method.

This introduces two new operational considerations:

The cash flow management

You're moving from a world of instant final settlement to one where you must manage a new chargeback flow.

The operational nuance

This is a new scheme across 16+ major European banks. While the rules are unified, we may see slight variations in how disputes are raised across borders.

It's a layer of operational sophistication – managing disputes on bank transfers – that didn't exist before.

The forces rewiring 2026



Paul Koetsier
Director, KPMG

Wero: the 'crystal ball' moment

Functionally, Wero is an account-to-account method with card-scheme features. It's starting to look more like a traditional card product, just running on different rails. So, the migration from iDEAL to Wero is a crystal ball moment. The big question is will 100% of that current iDEAL volume move seamlessly to Wero? Or does this change create a gap for other methods to step in and pick up market share? As the migration pans out, European PSPs are, by definition, better placed to help you navigate this than global giants. They have a better feeling for the marketplace dynamics and the deep-rooted local cultures that define European commerce.

Fraud: the liability is widening

The 'cat and mouse' game of fraud is ongoing: as soon as we close a door, fraudsters find a window. The real shift for 2026 is that liability is expanding to cover impersonation fraud involving social engineering, where fraudsters pose as trusted entities to trick customers. The regulations now put the onus on PSPs to detect and reimburse these cases, with potential liability passing to platforms that enable them. If I am a finance director, I see the risk of doing business increasing – you need tools that look at intent, not just the data point.

Verification of Payee as data hygiene

Operational changes are hitting the roadmap, specifically the mandatory IBAN name check (Verification of Payee). While this changes checkout, you should view it as a data hygiene exercise rather than a conversion killer. If I were a business, I would look to a partner like Mollie to solve it for me. It's a technical operational item that shouldn't be a burden if data is set up properly. And when implemented correctly via a partner's API, the check happens in the background, flagging only the mismatches.

How to turn complexity into control



Paul Koetsier
Director, KPMG

Strategise around the Wero migration

Too many businesses are treating the Wero rollout as a compliance box-ticking exercise. This is a mistake. Don't just let the switch to Wero happen to you; strategise for it by asking yourself: 'What do I want to offer? What creates the best journey?' The migration creates a gap – use it to reassess your mix of wallets and other bank transfer methods. If you don't have the expertise in-house, lean on your payment partner for support.

Invest in control

As you expand into new markets, you accumulate new providers, new logins, and new reconciliations. This complexity creep is the silent killer of efficiency, and can turn your payment stack into a fragmented mess that's hard to manage and impossible to optimise. To help, invest in optimising your payment operations – especially if you work across multiple countries and sales channels. Eight out of ten times, there's an immediate impact when consolidating partners or using payment orchestration.

Let technology handle the noise

If your finance team is still manually matching batch files to order numbers in 2026, you're leaking resources. Reassess where your processes are lacking efficiency. We've seen examples where moving to a modern payment method made a whole manual reconciliation team obsolete. Plan for those efficiency gains – technology should handle the noise so your people can handle the strategy.

The local reality

In Poland, BLIK isn't an 'alternative payment' – it's the primary one. That goes for iDEAL | Wero in the Netherlands or Bizum in Spain.



Of course, offering the right local payment mix is one of the most powerful levers you have to build trust and capture revenue. You likely have a PSP that aggregates all these methods via one API. But while the technical integration is solved, the financial integration often isn't.

Is your finance team still drowning? Does your month-end reconciliation feel less like finance and more like a forensic investigation?

If so, then perhaps you're still thinking of payments as a simple utility, you're still just aggregating transactions. And perhaps you're not fully aware of the high-volume, low-value operational post-purchase work that can be tough to measure:

- The reconciliation chaos of matching one payout against eight different reports.
- The impossible fragmentation of trying to build a single customer view from five different data streams.
- The cash flow mystery of trying to predict settlements from a dozen different time-tables.

This is the central paradox of European expansion: The payment methods you add to unlock conversion are often the very things that break your back-office.

The European symphony of local habits

Our data shows the share of volume processed by businesses in major European markets. Even when you factor in international sales, the local favourite still commands the majority of every Euro processed.

Market	Local hero	Volume	Why it matters
Netherlands	iDEAL Wero	60%	It's simple: no iDEAL Wero, no sale. It's a cultural habit and an intrinsic part of banking apps and checkouts.
Belgium	Bancontact	62%	The absolute standard. Belgian shoppers look for the Bancontact logo before anything else. It builds instant trust in a way that foreign card brands can't.
Germany	PayPal & Klarna	59% (Combined)	Not local, but German shoppers are cautious – so the buyer protection of PayPal or the 'try now, pay later' security of invoice makes them the true trust heroes.
France	Cartes Bancaires	56%	The French love cards – but usually choose their own cards. While global schemes work, ensuring you process via the local 'Cartes Bancaires' rail as well is paramount.
UK	Card & Wallet	~90%	It's all about speed. Brits have zero patience for friction. They stick to cards, but they increasingly want to pay with a single tap of a digital wallet.

Meet your payment orchestra

Denmark
MobilePay

UK
Cards

Ireland
Cards

Netherlands
iDEAL | Wero

Belgium
Bancontact

Luxembourg
Wero

Switzerland
TWINT

France
Cartes Bancaires

Portugal
Multibanco

Spain
Bizum

Finland
MobilePay

Sweden
Swish

Norway
Vipps

Poland
Blik

Germany
Girocard

Austria
EPS

Italy
PostePay

Greece
Iris

The frictionless favourites

For years, card payments were data-heavy: a primary account number (PAN), a name, often a billing address.

But as card payments in Europe shift towards one-click checkouts and digital wallets, that traditional data stream is drying up. Instead, you're increasingly processing sales through tokenised credentials where the PAN is hidden and context is missing.

Digital wallets are the prime example. They can boost conversion by removing the friction of manual entry, but they also change what your system sees: a token instead of a card number, and in many flows no manually entered billing address at all.

If your infrastructure isn't built for this, it creates two specific operational challenges.

The false decline risk

When a transaction carries only limited data – a token, an amount, and little else – legacy fraud engines are forced to guess. They look for data that isn't there. If your provider doesn't enrich that thinner signal with network reputation, token assurance, or device history, you risk blocking valid, high-intent shoppers simply because your risk engine treated a secure wallet payment like a suspicious, low-data card entry.

The split 'identity'

The complexity deepens in your back office. Wallets use a device-specific token (DPAN) rather than the underlying card number (FPAN). If your integration isn't structured to map these – for example, through network tokenisation services – you can get lost in translation. A loyal VIP buying on their iPhone looks like a complete stranger compared to when they use their physical card on desktop. Worse, if you display the token's last four digits on a receipt, you confuse the shopper – and leave your finance team manually stitching together transactions just to prove who paid for what.

From card to wallet

An analysis of tens of millions of online card transactions across Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK shows that Apple Pay and Google Pay are rapidly gaining on standard card flows – whether that's manual entry or using a saved card.

24% of card payments
used a digital wallet
in 2025.



Growth in wallet use since 2023

57%

**Stop managing
noise. Start
mining signals.**

Stop managing noise. Start mining signals.

Facing this complexity, the worst thing you can do is continue to treat your payment system as a cost centre – a digital utility that moves money and sends you an invoice.

Because that leaves your teams buried in manual work and your data trapped in silos. It's a cap on your growth.

To win in 2026, you need a smarter plan. To move from processing transactions to actively mining intelligence from them.

The answer? An architectural shift that extracts the signal from your data through two core actions:

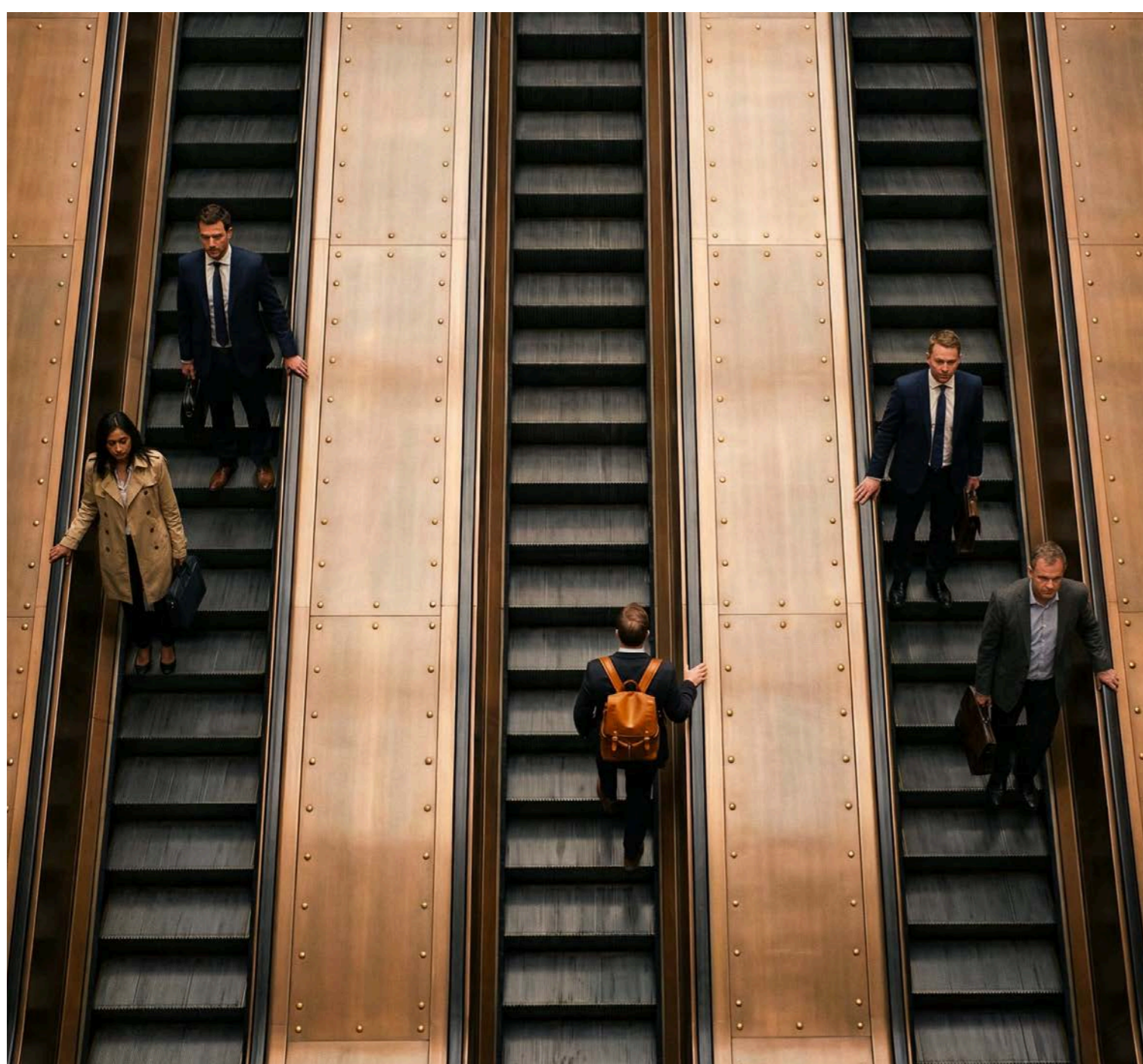
Centralisation

You break down the walls between your online and in-store data to create a single source of truth.

Automation

You use technology to handle the high-volume, low-value 'noise' – reconciling transactions, routing payments, blocking bots.

Now, your best people – and your payment partner's experts – are free to do the one thing software can't: find the signals in your data and use them to create the high-value strategies that win markets and drive revenue. We call this The Signal & Strategy Model.



Why this is now possible

(and wasn't 5 years ago)

When you hear things like 'automating the noise' and 'mining intelligence', you might be thinking: "Sounds great, but I don't have a massive engineering team."

Five years ago, that would have been a dealbreaker. To get real-time reconciliation or dynamic routing, you had to be an enterprise giant building your own tech stack. Everyone else just had to accept the friction – and the lost revenue that came with it.

But today, the barrier to entry has collapsed. You don't need to build the engine yourself, you just need to connect to it. Think of it as three crucial components clicking into place:

The feed

The new instant rails mean you finally have access to a granular, real-time data stream. You aren't waiting for a CSV file at the end of the day – you're seeing your cash flow to the second.

The brain

You no longer need to manually configure every rule. AI can now master the 'messy' decisions – whether that's spotting a 'card testing' bot or knowing the best time to retry a failed payment.

The architecture

API-first technology means you don't need to stitch together ten different legacy systems. Instead, modern partners centralise all your in-store and online payment data into a single source of truth.

The raw materials are there, the tools are affordable – the only thing missing is the model to use them. But first, let's look at the engine that drives this: Automation.

Automating the noise



Earlier, we created a to-do list that, quite frankly, you don't want: reconciling a 24/7 treasury, managing disputes on bank transfers, checking IBANs in real-time. We could go on.

It's a flood of high-volume, low-value operational work that no business in the world has the right amount of people to do. The scale is too vast, the speed is too fast.

Some of these things are likely already burying your teams in work, dragging even your best specialists down into those death-grip operational weeds that never let go.

The solution is practical automation. In 2026, the only technology capable of handling this velocity is AI – not as a buzzword, but as a functional utility.

But let's get specific.

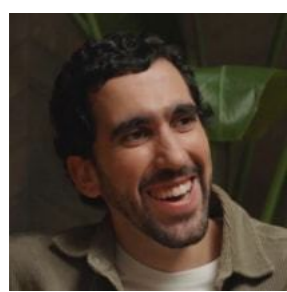
In the next section our Director of Data and AI Bernardo Caldas breaks down the two distinct roles AI plays in your payment stack: as the fixer you need today, and the agent you need to build for tomorrow.

From static rules to adaptive context

Bernardo Caldas

Director of Data and AI, Mollie

From static rules to adaptive context



Bernardo Caldas

Director of Data and AI, Mollie

The real revolution of AI in payments is its ability to give your infrastructure a general understanding of the world.

A classic rules-based engine looks at a transaction and checks it against a rigid list of criteria – pass or fail. An AI model looks at the same purchase with context – it understands that an IP mismatch is perfectly normal for a loyal customer booking a hotel while travelling, but highly suspicious for a new user buying instant-delivery digital gift cards in bulk.

Today, AI and automation are practical tools for solving the two most expensive payment problems.

Turning a no into a yes

When a payment fails, the old way was to accept the no. The AI way is to ask 'why?' and then adapt in milliseconds. It predicts which route – which acquirer, which protocol – will get a yes from that specific bank, for that specific shopper, at that specific second. That means more authorised payments and more revenue.

Spotting anti-patterns in fraud

Fraudsters know your rulebook. If you block after three failed attempts, they stop at two. While static rules remain essential for blocking blunt attacks, they struggle against behaviour designed to mimic a human. This is where machine learning can act as an adaptive layer on top of your standard defence, analysing the intent behind the pattern to catch the subtle anomalies that a rigid checklist would miss.

What's on the horizon?

AI that recognises the commercial identity of your customers. It uses payment recognition to build a robust customer profile across all your channels. It knows a customer's behaviour intimately enough to tailor everything from loyalty rewards, currency, and the triggered post-purchase flow to their specific history.

Revenue recovery in action

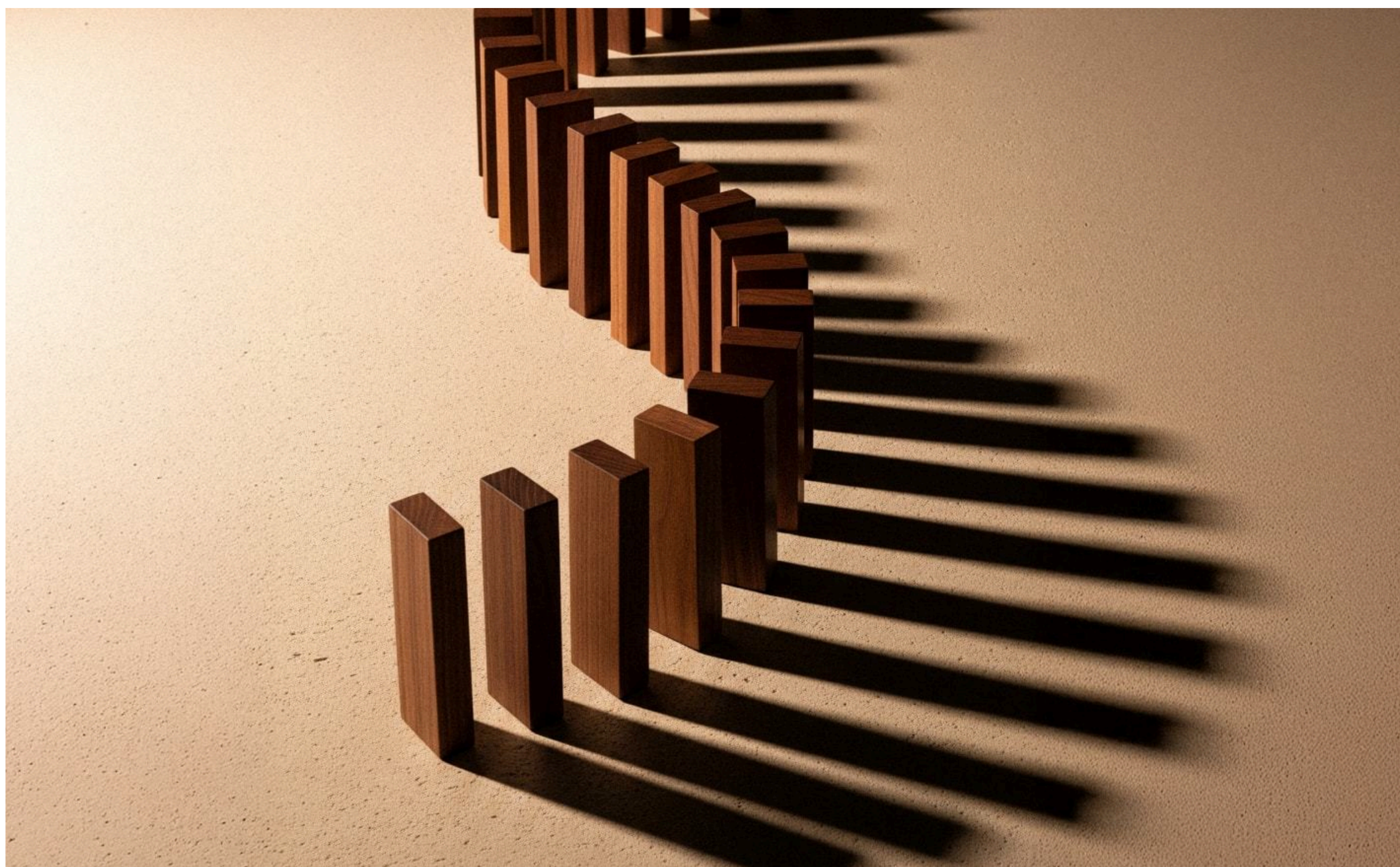
Standard retry logic is blunt – it tries again at set intervals. But intelligent logic is surgical, learning the exact millisecond an issuer is likely to accept a previously declined card.

We analysed a specific cohort of card transactions where Mollie's 'smart retry' logic was active. It shows that across tens of millions of transactions, our optimisation engine has quietly recovered hundred of millions in revenue that would otherwise have been lost to rigid rules.

Revenue boost generated by intelligent optimisation

> 3%

Hundreds of millions in revenue saved for European businesses.



Designing for machines

If AI can already solve the problems you face today, what about those you'll face tomorrow?



After all, we're now entering the era of agentic commerce, which flips the traditional customer journey on its head.

We operate in a 'pull' economy

You invest in brand, ads, SEO, etc. to pull potential customers to your website and/or stores.

We now also have a 'push' economy

The customer pushes an AI to browse and buy – an agent executes it.

But let's be pragmatic. People will always want to browse for a holiday or try a jumper on in a store. So, your honed UI, your store experience, your brand story – they'll all still matter.

The challenge is that you now have a second customer type: the consumer who simply tells an AI to "find a waterproof jacket under €200 from a sustainable brand with free shipping." And the agent only cares about your data, it only needs to find products, list them, and facilitate the payment – often without the customer ever visiting your site.

You have to design for both.

Can an AI agent read your return policy programmatically via API? Can it verify your stock levels in real-time? Because if not, you're invisible to this new generation of buyers.

We're moving to a world where you must also design for algorithms – is your infrastructure ready to sell to a machine?

The Signal & Strategy Model

We just looked at how AI automates the 'noise'. But that isn't the end goal. The goal of silencing the noise is to help you hear the signals buried in it – and then create strategies around them.

To do that, your technology needs to deliver insights your humans can actually use.

The Signal

When your infrastructure filters out the noise of millions of low-value data points, high-definition intelligence remains.

The identity signal

Instead of treating them as a stranger, your system connects payment tokens to reveal the loyal customer behind a transaction.

The operational signal

Instead of thousands of fragmented settlement lines, you get a single, reconciled stream of cash flow data.

The context signal

Instead of a generic code, you know the specific reason a payment was declined so you can fix the root cause.

Automated volume

90%

The Strategy

Now, your best people aren't trapped in admin but ready to strategise around those signals.

Loyalty

Your marketing team uses the identity signal to trigger a 'welcome back' flow for a VIP – even if they're using a new device.

Optimisation

Your finance lead uses the operational signal to instantly spot which markets are dragging down your margins (and why).

Recovery

Your product lead uses the context signal to fix a broken checkout flow blocking legitimate sales.

Human vision

10%

Technology handles
the volume, humans
handle the vision.
Your best people
aren't managing
the mess but
actively growing
your business.

Finding the signal in the noise

Victor Mortreu

Co-founder, Just Russel

Finding the signal in the noise



Victor Mortreu
Co-founder, Just Russel

In the early days of Just Russel, we treated payments as a utility. Our philosophy was simple: minimise the fee.

If a method like PayPal or Amex cost too much, we blocked it. We thought we were protecting our margin.

We were wrong. By optimising for cost, we were creating operational debt.

As a subscription-based business, we relied on SEPA Direct Debit. It is cheap, but it created a dangerous data gap: we had to wait up to nine days to know if a payment had failed.

The result? We inadvertently built a 'cash collection agency' inside a pet food company. We had three full-time employees doing nothing but chasing failed payments, sending WhatsApps, emails, and ultimately calling customers.

Our payment failure rate was over 5%. We were burning time on low-value admin. That was the 'signal' we finally heard through the noise: our cost-saving setup was actually the most expensive thing in our business.

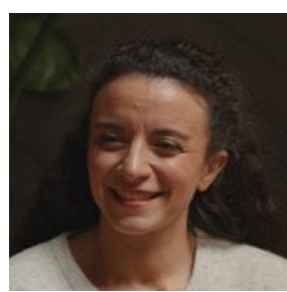
We needed a partner to help us architect a way out of the noise.

The strategy in the signal

Diane Albouy

Principal Product Manager, Mollie

The strategy in the signal



Diane Albouy
Principal Product Manager, Mollie

When Victor shared the scale of their manual work, we went to work on a fix. They were stuck in a reactive loop – chasing debt instead of preventing failure.

But together we came up with a strategy: moving their Belgian subscription volume to Bancontact Wallet Initiated Payments, which allows for recurring payments on Belgium's favourite rail – with instant confirmation.

The impact was fantastic:

Silencing the noise

They reduced costly chargebacks and technical errors immediately.

The operational signal

Their payment failure rate dropped from 5% to 0.03%.

The strategic payback

They reduced the cash collection team from 3 FTEs to zero.

Those employees were redeployed to growth roles, and Victor now spends one hour a month on payment operations. Our strategy helped automate the noise so they could get back to building the business.

Paving the way to Europe



Victor Mortreu

Co-founder, Just Russel

Once we fixed the challenges we faced in our core markets, the nature of our partnership with Mollie evolved. Our conversations moved onto optimising conversion and fuelling European expansion.

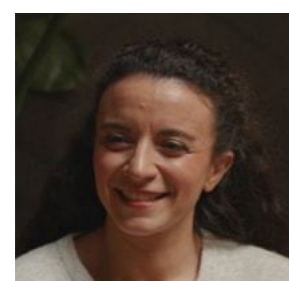
When we decided to launch in Germany, Mollie went above and beyond – basically handing over the market playbook. They advised us on the exact mix of local trust marks and consumer preferences we needed, including the affiliate platforms that work, what media to prioritise, and the logistics partners German consumers respect.

That allowed us to launch not as a 'foreign' outsider, but as a native brand that earned trust instantly.

That's the difference between a vendor and a partner: A vendor processes your volume; a partner paves the road ahead of you. They are already established in the countries we are targeting. So whether it's Italy, Spain, or new products, Mollie is clearing the path before we even get there.

We're no longer stuck managing payment complexity, but focusing on the strategies that drive growth.

How the 'R' in your ROI comes from your payments



Diane Albouy
Principal Product Manager, Mollie

I was at a conference recently where a giant global company shared a story that perfectly captures the shift we're seeing across Europe.

For years, their payments team reported to the CFO, and their mandate was to manage the noise: minimising fees, reducing fraud, keeping the lights on.

Then, they made a radical change: They moved the payments team into the product department. Suddenly, they started using payments to power growth. We just saw the exact same evolution with Just Russel.

Whether you're a global tech giant or a scaling pet food brand, the Signal & Strategy model delivers the same thing:

The Signal

Transactions aren't just money; they are high-fidelity data points about customer intent.

The Strategy

Your experts should be using that data to revamp the customer experience and optimise performance.

The strategic payback

We reduced Just Russel's cash collection team from 3 FTEs to zero.

And next? You'll realise something fundamental: the 'R' in ROI can come from payment processing.

Cost-cutting has a ceiling, performance doesn't. While fee negotiation protects your margin, optimisation captures the revenue you're currently losing. And you shouldn't do this alone. This model creates space for a true partnership, where your internal experts work directly with your provider's experts to navigate the local nuances – those little quirks that make Europe, well, Europe – that algorithms can't understand.

After this shift, payments stop being a utility. They become the architect of your P&L. In the next part, we give you the playbook to start making it.

Adopting the model

Adopting the model

Now we've defined the Signal & Strategy Model, it's time to start using it.

But let's be honest – this won't happen overnight. We aren't promising a 'holistic AI profile' by next Tuesday. That's the destination.

This playbook isn't about a massive, multi-year digital transformation project that freezes your roadmap. It's about starting that journey – sharing ideas and actions that plug the revenue leaks in your current stack while you work to build for tomorrow. This is a journey you shouldn't take alone.

-
- 1 Unifying the foundation**
How to break down the border that exists between your data.

 - 2 The conversion audit**
Why checkout should be a function – not a place.

 - 3 The trust signal**
Using data hygiene to stop false declines today, and start building the 'trust score' for the future.

 - 4 The net yield**
How to stop calculating 'cost of acceptance' and start measuring true profitability.

Unifying the foundation



You can't mine signals from a fractured landscape. So, the first step is breaking down your data silos.

Let's say one of your most loyal customer shops with you today – using a different device, a new payment method, or walking into a physical store – would you know exactly who they were?

For most businesses, the answer is no. They are strangers. Why? Because your data is fragmented.

For retailers

Your online and store data sit in silos.

For digital leaders

Your app data, guest checkouts, and even your regional accounts might not talk to each other.

The fix: The unified data layer.

Your payment partner needs to act as the connector. They should ingest data from every endpoint (mobile, web, terminal) and link it using the specific digital fingerprints of European payments.

For cards & wallets

Digital wallets like Apple Pay tokenise data. Your partner must use PAR (payment account reference) to link the physical card and the digital token to the same shopper.

For local champions

Your app data, guest checkouts, and even your regional accounts might not talk to each other.

What happens next? Your partner handles the complexity of matching these fragmented tokens. You just get a single, unified profile.



Your store as a digital endpoint

To recognise your customer in the real world, you must break the most stubborn silo of all: the physical store.

For decades, in-person payments were trapped in expensive, proprietary hardware that didn't talk to the rest of your business. That era is over.

The catalyst is the software-driven POS revolution. By moving to API-driven terminals, your store becomes a live digital endpoint. Crucially, these terminals capture the same payment tokens (like PAR) as your website, allowing you to link the physical shopper to their digital profile instantly.

You can deploy a checkout anywhere – on a shop floor tablet, at a pop-up, or in a fitting room – all using the same API you use online. And with the right integrations, your payment partner also acts as the bridge that syncs these terminals directly to your other systems in real time.

This unlocks two massive efficiencies:

A single view of your inventory

Because every sale syncs to your central ERP instantly, you can finally trust your stock levels. You can turn on 'Ship-from-Store' or 'Endless Aisle' without constantly worrying that you're going to sell out (or annoy customers).

Unified refunds

When all your data is connected, a customer can buy online and return in-store instantly. Your staff can scan the item, then let the system match the original web order via the payment token. The refund is processed and logged instantly, the friction you're used to is gone.

Turning identity into revenue

Building the unified layer is step one. Step two is putting it to work.

Your payment partner shouldn't just hold your data – they should push it to the other parts of your stack. This is where the signal (identity) meets strategy (retention). Let's see how it can work.

The 'invisible loyalty' play:

The scenario

A customer buys a jacket in one of your stores with a tap of their phone.

The connection

Your partner matches the PAR/BAR token and instantly pushes the transaction and customer info to your CRM.

The trigger

The CRM recognises the customer as the same person who bought trousers online last month. A few minutes later, it triggers a 'Finish the look' email suggesting just the right shoes to go with the other items.

Now, you turn fragmented, anonymous checkouts into a single, high-definition customer profile. Whether they switch devices, markets, or channels, the data follows them.

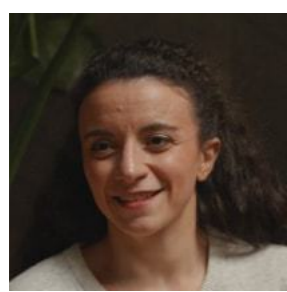
Scale this, and your payment flow becomes your most efficient customer retention channel. You're automatically building a rich, high-intent audience from every sale.

The conversion audit

Diane Albouy

Principal Product Manager, Mollie

The conversion audit



Diane Albouy

Principal Product Manager, Mollie

OK, so I want to start this section about conversion with something that's simple, but vitally important.

So, you probably have heatmaps and session replay tools running on your site. But sifting through hours of recordings is time-consuming, and your product team designed the happy path to a purchase. They know that if you click X, then Y happens. But your customer doesn't.

To help, I swear by a simple, non-technical checkout check: the snappily named 'ask mum test'.

I send checkout flows to my mum all the time. Then she breaks them, saying things like: "I can't click the button, it's grey." or "Why is it asking for my phone number twice?" It doesn't have to be a parent – it just has to be someone who didn't build the product, who isn't super technical.

Once a week, ask them to try to buy something from your site. Don't help – just watch. Log every pause, every hesitation, every moment of confusion. Because that's where you're losing revenue. You'll be amazed at the blockers you find.

P.S. While you're at it, audit your checkout on the hardware your customers actually use. You might use the latest iPhone or MacBook, but your customers might be using a 4-year-old Android device. If your checkout lags on a budget device, you're blocking a massive segment of customers from your products.

Check out is a verb, not a noun

We need to end the idea that 'The Checkout' is a specific URL on your website.

Checkout is a function, not a place.

While the traditional Add to cart > View cart > Checkout flow works for browsing, it creates unnecessary friction for a high-intent customer who knows what they want. You're effectively building barriers between your business and their money.

How to solve this? Decouple the payment. Stop waiting for them to come to the counter – bring it to them.

The 'shoppable email'

Don't send an abandoned cart email that links back to a login page. Embed a secure, tokenised payment link. Then, a single click takes them straight to a pre-filled payment screen – no login or friction.

The product page 'express lane'

Why force returning customers to a cart? Just add a 'Buy now' wallet button directly on a product page. They want to buy, they tap, they're done.

The 'endless aisle'

Place QR codes on out-of-stock items around your store. A customer scans it and triggers an instant digital checkout for home delivery. You save the sale without moving the stock.

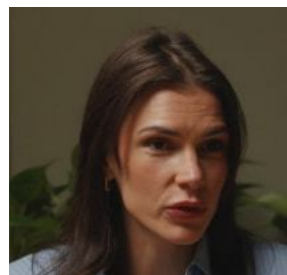
This is also future proof. Because if your checkout is locked inside a visual interface, an AI agent can't use it. By decoupling it, you're building the API infrastructure for the machine buyers of tomorrow.

How Otrium found €100k in the noise

Iryna Agieieva

Director of Product Management, Mollie

How Otrium found €100k in the noise



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Director of Product Management, Mollie

A couple of years ago Otrium were in a critical phase.

As a high-growth marketplace operating across key European hubs – France, Germany, the UK, Benelux – the complexity of managing that footprint was hiding inefficiencies. Rutger van Boxtel came in as COO and started to build a highly efficient operating model that could scale across European markets.

Together, Mollie and Otrium conducted a granular audit of their payment mix in every market. That showed us that in some key markets they were paying for payment methods that looked good on a feature list but weren't driving incremental sales – and came with higher fees.

We advised how to optimise their payment mix, removing operational drag and unlocking €100,000 in annual savings – with no drop in conversion.

This is what the Signal & Strategy Model is all about. It also means knowing when to accept higher costs for growth. Take the Netherlands, where Otrium re-introduced Klarna, which can be expensive. But the customer demand was undeniable – it immediately captured 30-35% of their checkout share. They traded margin for acquisition.

Then, something interesting happened. When they shifted that volume to Klarna in Germany, another payment method provider came to the table with an offer of lower pricing.

That's the definition of commercial intelligence: You use data to cut the waste, and use your volume to make others compete for your business.

Why we chose a partner, not a platform

Rutger van Boxtel
COO, Otrium

trium

Otrium

Why we chose a partner, not a platform



Rutger van Boxtel
COO, Otrium

When I took over operations at Otrium, my mandate was to build a highly efficient operating model to scale across Europe.

We're a lean team fighting in a competitive market, so simplicity is a financial metric. We are selective about our partners, and we expect the ones we work with to operate as an extension of our team. Someone who understands that if we grow, they grow too.

That's our experience with Mollie.

We've worked with very large global providers before, but at that scale you're inevitably one of many customers. What stands out with Mollie is the level of attention and partnership that we receive as we actively evolve our payment strategy.

Like them, we're focused on Europe, and it helps to work with a partner who treats the continent as their primary focus, not a satellite office.

Now, we treat payments as a lever for our P&L. We're willing to take risks – like beta-testing new features – because it means we're an active part of Mollie's roadmap. And their team is also always there for the candid conversations about pricing, fraud thresholds, and expansion.

That's the difference between a vendor who sends an invoice and a partner who improves your business. And seeing payments as a true part of your growth rather than just a cost.

The trust signal

You've optimised your payment flow, the customer has clicked buy. Then, the transaction fails.

Sometimes, they simply didn't have the funds. But often, it's a 'false decline' – that painful moment when you block a legitimate shopper.

If we're being honest about these errors: You're the one likely causing them. How? By keeping your data a secret. If you send the absolute minimum required to move money – a card number, an amount – you force your payment partner's fraud engine to guess. And when a risk engine has to guess, it can default to 'No' to protect you.

For cards

You give the engine less signal, so it must be more conservative.

For buy now, pay later payments

These providers often require line-item data to generate an invoice and underwrite goods. If you don't send the basket details, the transaction might be rejected.

For bank transfers

You process the payment, but you miss that this 'customer' has used five different shipping addresses this week and it's likely an account takeover.

What to do about this? Ensure you share Level 3 data with your partner. This arms their fraud defences with the signals they need to verify context and identity, not just funds.

Basket context

Are they buying 50 of the same item (fraud) or a matching jacket and trousers (fashion)?

Shipping logic

Is the delivery address a known residence or a drop-shipping warehouse?

History

Is this a guest, or a logged-in VIP with a three-year history?

When you share the full picture, you stop playing fraud 'whack-a-mole'. You reduce false declines, boost acceptance, and start creating Dynamic Trust Scores. And as we'll see next, that score will be key to unlocking post-purchase profit.

Trust beyond the transaction

Is your 'buy button' actually the finish line? Not always.

Because revenue isn't actually revenue until the chance of chargebacks or refunds is gone. And in markets where serial returners and 'friendly fraudsters' are rife, sometimes it's the post-purchase period when you actually secure profit.

This is the second half of the Dynamic Trust Score. You use the score to verify identity at checkout, and then to automate the lifecycle after the sale.

The silent treatment

If a new customer pays via a high-risk method or shows a low trust score, don't trigger your standard welcome flow. Instead, hold off on the marketing emails and let the relationship settle.

Why?

Over-engaging a low-trust customer immediately often triggers buyer's remorse or reminds them to initiate a dispute. Silence can actually protect your revenue.

The automated refund

A returning VIP wants to return a €200 coat. Usually, they wait five days for your warehouse to check the return, call support asking what's happening, and help you burn cash on tickets. Instead, now you trigger the refund the second the carrier scans the return package.

Why?

Their high trust score proves their worth. You turn a potential negative into a moment of 'wow' loyalty.

Are you going to turn this on for every customer tomorrow? Probably not. This requires high-fidelity data and a lot of confidence in your signal. But you can't build this future if your payment partner is still only giving you a 'Transaction ID'. You need the infrastructure today to build the logic for tomorrow.

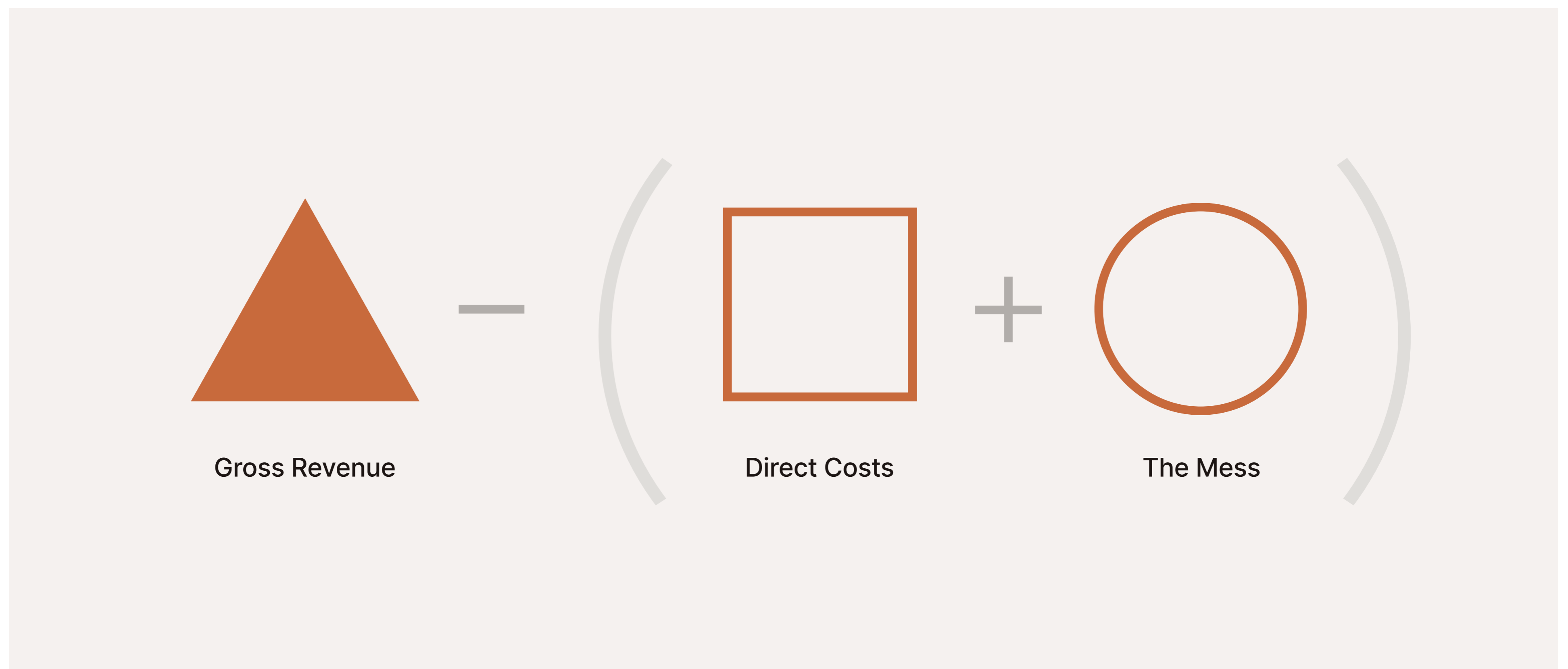
The operational net yield

Let's have a hard conversation about your P&L, as there can be a dangerous blind spot here when you measure payment efficiency only by cost of acceptance.

If a provider knocks 10 basis points off your rate, it's a win on the spreadsheet. But in a fragmented Europe, the best provider is usually the one that offers good rates and rescues your finance team from time-sapping manual work.

We propose a different metric to measure true profitability. We call it **Operational Net Yield**. Unlike standard financial yield, this number is designed to expose the 'complexity tax' you are currently paying but failing to measure.

The Operational Net Yield calculation:



Direct Costs

Scheme fees, interchange, acquirer margin, FX spreads.

The Mess (operational drag)

- **The reconciliation black hole:** Hours a week spent matching settlement files.
- **Tech debt:** Engineering hours spent patching brittle integrations and fixing bugs.
- **Blocked payments:** The revenue lost to false declines.

When you do this, you might discover an uncomfortable truth: your highest revenue market might be your lowest yielding one. Minimising fees is always savvy, but eliminating complexity is where real margin lies. Don't just ask your provider for a lower rate – ask them how they automate the fragmentation of European settlement.

The partner test

Do you have a vendor or a partner?

A vendor processes your volume and sends an invoice. A partner processes your data and sends you insights. These questions can help you know.

01 The (internal) reality check

Before you speak to your provider, ask yourself what sort of relationship you have.

1

If we switched 50% of our volume to a competitor tomorrow morning, how long would it take our account manager to call us?

2

When was the last time our provider contacted us to suggest an optimisation that saved money (without us asking first)?

3

Are we sending rich Level 3 data to our provider, or are we forcing their risk engine to guess based on 'Card + Amount'?

4

Can we instantly report on the true cost of our operations per market (including FX, reconciliation time, etc.), or do we only track the transaction fee?

02 The partner questions

If the answers above made you pause, ask your current provider these questions.

1

Can you give me specific, data-backed advice on the cultural nuances of checkout conversion in [X market], beyond just the API documentation?

2

What's your specific strategy for handling disputes on non-guaranteed rails like Wero?

3

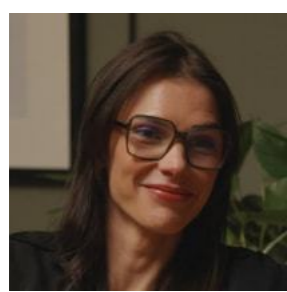
Can you show me my authorisation rates compared to my direct peers in this industry, so I know if I'm winning or losing?

The mandate for 2026

Iryna Agieieva

Director of Product Management, Mollie

The mandate for 2026



Iryna Agieieva

Director of Product Management, Mollie

We've looked at the forces rewiring Europe: the new rails, the new rules, the new reality.

The complexity isn't going away.

But you shouldn't have to choose between low cost and high performance. You need both.

The winners of 2026 (and beyond) will be the leaders who pivot to the Signal & Strategy Model. That lay the architecture where technology drives down the operational cost of the noise – routing, reconciliation, risk – so that human experts are free to optimise (and execute) the strategy.

Mollie was born in Europe, for Europe. We know that in a low-margin world, the basics need to work flawlessly and the price needs to be right. But we also know that pricing alone doesn't build a business.

We're the partner that blends competitive efficiency with the deep, pragmatic human expertise this complex market demands.

Ready to turn payments into your intelligence engine?
Get in touch with our team today.

[Speak to a strategist](#)

The bigger picture

From new rails to the rise of machine buyers, explore our deep-dive guides on the forces reshaping the market.

Wero: the complete guide

We break down the fees, the rollout timeline, and the migration strategy.

[Explore Wero](#)

Agentic commerce: Your European strategy

This FAQ explains how machine buyers behave and what technical changes your checkout needs to accept them.

[Read the FAQ](#)

PSD3 & PSR explained

Regulation is tightening, but it's also opening doors. A clear-eyed look at how new open banking rules will shift liability and impact your fraud strategy.

[Go to the guide](#)

Explore SEPA instant

Real-time settlement is becoming the European baseline. Understand the liquidity implications of 10-second transfers.

[Explore the guide](#)

Source data and methodology

Wallet adoption

17-19

Analysis of anonymised, aggregated transaction data processed on the Mollie platform between 1 Jan 2023 and 31 Dec 2025 across the UK, Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium. 'Wallet adoption' measures the % of card-based transactions processed via Apple Pay or Google Pay.

Payment method share

14

Analysis of aggregated transaction volume processed on the Mollie platform in 2025 for merchants domiciled in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, France, and the UK. 'Share of volume' represents the % of total processing value attributed to specific payment methods. Data reflects the total payment mix for merchants in that market, inclusive of cross-border sales, to demonstrate the operational reality of payment acceptance in each territory.

Intelligent optimisation

26-28

Analysis of payment volume processed on the Mollie platform between August 2023 and January 2026. The study tracks the performance of transactions routed through Mollie's intelligent optimisation engine, covering a sample size of tens of millions of payments.

mollie