



# Insights and analytics capabilities a key focus for businesses in 2021

**Sydney, Australia - 9 February 2021:** According to [Adobe's 2021 Digital Trends Report](#), the speed and action of insights will be an overriding focus and key investment area for many Asia Pacific (APAC) businesses in 2021.

Conducted in partnership with Econsultancy, the report surveyed 13,000 marketing, advertising, e-commerce, creative, and IT professionals, working for both brands and agencies across the world, including Australia and New Zealand (ANZ), India and Asia<sup>[1]</sup>. This 11<sup>th</sup> edition by Adobe is a departure from previous editions and delves into new areas brought on by the pandemic, including the impact of a distributed workforce, privacy and consent fundamentals, and empathy as a driver of experience.

Digital disruption in 2020 led businesses to realize they need to understand and act on data faster. Only one third (35%) of ANZ leaders believe their organization has strong capabilities in accuracy, actionability, speed and access of insights, while Asian leaders are far more pessimistic at around 9%. However, respondents across Asia (49%) and ANZ (40%) are planning to invest resources in improving insights and analytics capabilities to achieve their top marketing goals in 2021. For leaders in ANZ this is a focus on personalized customer experience (33%), while Asian leaders are committed to enabling digital customer acquisition (35%).

**Duncan Egan, Vice President of DX Marketing, APAC and Japan at Adobe** said organizations with better access to insights are more likely to say their customers are positive about their digital experience compared to their peers with lower levels of insight.

"For brands across every sector, 2020 brought a loss of predictability. Organizations of all kinds were driven online at an accelerated rate, creating a wave of new digital customers with increasing expectations. Customers now have the upper hand in the 'digital relationship', with more than half of marketing respondents across APAC reporting unusual changes in customer behaviours and journeys in 2020.

"A company with a strong customer experience (CX) strategy is more likely to achieve long-term growth than its competitors, as they are better positioned to adapt to changeable customer behaviours and markets. This report highlights that organizations need to accelerate their insight and action capabilities by moving to more flexible technologies and cloud-based platforms, as well as a unified and real-time view of the customer journey," said Egan.

Interestingly, respondents who are confident about their company's customer experience feel optimistic about their corporate strategy (63% in ANZ vs 73% in India vs 56% in Asia) and their own prospects for career growth (61% in ANZ vs 70% in India vs 57% in Asia).

## Barriers to a great digital experience

Speed to insight and action is critical in a changeable business environment and a core driver for customer experience and growth. However, organizations across APAC report three significant barriers that are hampering marketing and experience: legacy technology and systems (51% in ANZ, 37% in India and Asia), workflow issues (38% in ANZ, 33% in India and 48% in Asia), and a lack of digital skills and capabilities (34% in ANZ, 24% in India and 43% in Asia).

Duncan Egan said, "The shift to remote work will have a significant and enduring impact on businesses moving forward, requiring new marketing strategies for reaching and keeping customers. The most progressive

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<sup>[1]</sup> Asia is defined as Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and Japan.

companies are looking ahead and investing in hybrid workplace approaches for improved productivity and as a hiring differentiator for the best digital and CX talent.

"Companies have never been more interested in being agile and adding new capabilities for seamless digital execution, with one third (34%) saying they've been unusually agile and able to take quick decisions. A hybrid approach to technology - comprising of cloud and other data management systems - allows organizations to be flexible and collaborative, letting them work better with existing solutions and quickly integrate new ones. The effects of such an approach within these organizations can be seen in the improved capability in key areas of analytics and insights."

Many organizations across APAC have already taken a hybrid approach, with 43% executives in ANZ and 26% in both India and Asia reporting they use a cloud-based platform in concert with other marketing data management systems.

### **Privacy and consent fundamental for effective CX**

With a surge in digital customers, businesses are prioritizing data privacy. A sizable respondent cohort across the region say that customer privacy and consent are key factors in planning (56% in ANZ, 41% in Asia).

However, transparency is still lacking with only a small number of leaders (13% in ANZ, 12% in Asia) claiming their organization is effective at communicating how data is collected and used. Also, only 10% in ANZ and 13% in Asia believe they are highly effective at communicating the value offered in exchange for customers' consent when they first encounter the brand.

### **Empathy is the future of experience**

As digital convenience becomes a commodity, empathy by brands will be a key differentiator for customer experience. Analyzing and adapting to a customer's emotional journey in this new world will be the next evolution of experience management.

However, most organizations are still a long way from authentically displaying digital empathy. Just over a third (37%) of Indian executives have significant insights into customer mindset, followed by 27% in ANZ and 19% in Asia. Drivers of purchase, friction points and attribution of how marketing actions relate to customer behaviour fare only marginally better.

### **The CIO and CMO partnership**

Only a third (32%) of IT executives in ANZ claim to maintain cross-functional teams to support their company's marketing technology needs, indicating a need for more alignment between IT and other business functions. However, IT leaders are quick to claim ownership of new digital technology (77%), digital transformation strategy (70%), and digital usability (66%) over their product and marketing colleagues.

When it comes to their approach towards marketing technology, 19% agree that they want to integrate multiple systems/data sources. A sizable number of respondents believes that using technologies like predictive analytics (39%), customer data platforms (31%), and chatbots (30%) have a greater positive impact on customer experience.

"To deeply understand the customer and deliver strategically crafted experiences, marketers must have a comprehensive picture of the buying journey. Organizations where marketing and tech teams take joint ownership of their functions will emerge stronger in 2021, driving digital transformation strategies that enable more meaningful customer engagement," said Mr Egan.

For more insights on 2021 Digital Trends, see the full report [here](#).

### **About the Adobe and Econsultancy Digital Trends Report**

This is the 11th annual Digital Trends Report from Adobe and Econsultancy, for which more than 13,000 marketing, ecommerce, creative and technology professionals around the world were surveyed.

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