

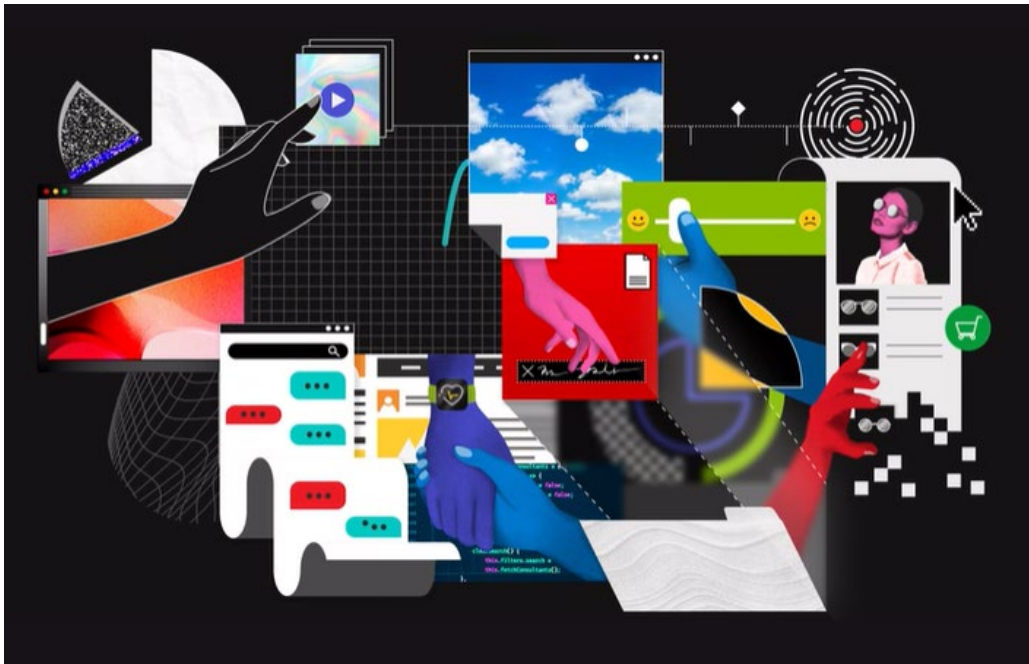


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Pandemic-induced surge in digital consumers sees APAC businesses lead the world in customer experience investment



Hong Kong – February 22, 2022 – Asia Pacific businesses are set to outstrip other global regions in customer experience investment in 2022 in response to a pandemic-induced surge in new digital consumers and online behaviours. However, APAC businesses recognise that critical skills and capability gaps may be holding them back as they seek to maximise this world-leading commitment to serving digital-first consumers.

“The digital rewiring of consumer mindsets in Asia Pacific has been of high benefit to those businesses who have embraced an agile digital mindset, purposeful collaboration and sped up their time-to-value ratio,” said Duncan Egan, Vice President Digital Experience Marketing, Adobe Asia Pacific & Japan.

"Companies that overcame organisational and technology silos to work cross-functionally, were able to drive meaningful customer experiences that are personalised, real-time, relevant and connected across all channels."

Gaining visibility of new digital and mobile-first consumers

According to Adobe's new *2022 Digital Trends: APAC in Focus* report, 77% of APAC businesses experienced a surge in new customers through digital channels over the past 18 months, and 77% saw new customer journeys. Meanwhile, just 25% of businesses believe they have significant insight into this new wave of digital-first customers.

Contributing to these new online behaviours is the 130 million new APAC mobile subscribers that became first-time internet users in 2021¹. These new mobile-first users in emerging APAC economies are 'leapfrogging' consumers in more mature digital markets, rapidly adopting advanced digital behaviours such as mobile payments usage.

In a bid to meet new customer expectations, the majority of APAC businesses are stepping up investment in customer experience management (59%), edging ahead of North America (57%) and Europe (53%). Most APAC businesses also expect to accelerate investment in customer data technology (60%).

"Understanding and serving a new breed of online consumers, many with mobile-first preferences, has become the new competitive battleground for APAC businesses. While many organisations are responding decisively by fast-tracking investment in improving the digital experience, spend alone is unlikely to set the leaders apart," said Scott Rigby, Chief Technology Advisor, Adobe Asia Pacific and Japan.

Building capability by overcoming legacy constraints

APAC's pursuit of global leadership in digital customer experience and ensuring a return on elevated investment relies on the skills and agility to deliver. Yet the report shows that, on average, APAC businesses lag their global counterparts in these crucial operational capabilities.

According to the report, 83% of APAC businesses leaders are worried that their organisation doesn't have the necessary skills they need, compared to 79% in Europe and 73% in North America. In addition, digital skills rank as the joint top barrier to digital experience delivery together with poor integration between tech systems.

APAC businesses may also be leaving viable talent attraction and retention opportunities on the table. In a world where remote and flexible working is commonplace, Forrester outlines that only 40% of business leaders intend to make remote work permanent compared to 70% globally². Similarly, the Adobe report shows that the majority (55%) of APAC leaders expect hybrid working to return to pre-pandemic levels or lower, while just 36% plan to hire remote workers at levels higher than before the pandemic. With a global constraint on the availability of digital talent, not embracing remote working is going to further constrict supply and further delay businesses digital transformation goals.

While 92% of APAC leaders 'agree' that their ability to be agile will decide their success as a marketing organisation, just 25% of practitioners rate their organisation's agility in responding to opportunities and disruptions as positive (8 or more out of 10).

¹ GSMA, *Digital societies in Asia Pacific: Accelerating progress through collaboration*, 2021

² Forrester (2021), *Predictions 2022: Edition APAC*

"Given that 83% of APAC organisations expect the rate of technological and social change to continue at the same or higher levels, developing the skills, agility and innovation required to keep pace should remain a top strategic priority," said Rigby.

The advantages and disadvantages of digital maturity

The closer examination of businesses in Australia and New Zealand, Asia and India shows unique opportunities and challenges.

Asian businesses rate a lack of skills as their top barrier and are prioritising development as a result. Compared with practitioners from Australia and New Zealand and India, substantially more Asian respondents see room for improvement in innovation capabilities and gaining customer insights.

Key Data Points – Asia

1. 45% of Asian interviewees said that their digital experience lags customer expectations (45% said it kept pace)
2. 51% of Asian businesses said they either kept pace or slightly/significantly underperformed their sector
3. 50% of brands feel that the biggest obstacle holding them back was digital skills and capabilities
4. 55% thought that investing in work & project management would be key to drive productivity
5. Asia's ability to obtain customer insights is well behind ANZ & India, with only 18% on average admitting to having customer insights across new customer journeys, friction points, loyalty and drivers of purchase

You can download the full *2022 Digital Trends: APAC in Focus* report [here](#).

About the research

The 2022 Digital Trends: APAC in Focus report is derived from Adobe's annual global Digital Trends Report, highlighting the most powerful forces shaping the digital landscape and the strategic imperatives for marketing organisations. The report is based on a survey of more than 943 senior executives, IT professionals and marketing practitioners, conducted between November 2021 and January 2022.

About Adobe

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