Adobe × Econsultancy

2024

# Digital Trends

## Asia Pacific and Japan

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# Foreword

Business leaders across the dynamic Asia Pacific and Japan (APJ) region continue to set the global pace of customer experience innovation, and for good reason. Not only are APJ customer expectations rising more sharply than in other regions, but there is mounting evidence that exceptional digital experiences ultimately drive business performance.

**Duncan Egan**
*Vice President of DX Marketing, Asia Pacific and Japan*

Even so, *Adobe's 2024 Digital Trends — Asia Pacific and Japan* report shows that few brands across the region claim their customer experiences live up to expectations. Our annual landmark study into the forces reshaping the digital customer experience landscape also reveals – for brands embracing best-of-breed technology – that's about to change.

In 2024, the stage is set for more brands to join the customer experience leadership ranks in the race for high-value consumer loyalty, conversion, and trust. Thanks to evolving digital tools and the potential for generative AI to transform every part of the enterprise, brands have a clearer path to unify data, predict customer needs, and deliver more relevant and time-critical content and customer journeys.

These are the capabilities that, if acquired, can help overcome remaining obstacles to achieving personalisation at scale. However, while innovations in AI present a game-changing opportunity to transform customer experience delivery, capturing it will remain elusive without the fundamentals in place.

It begins with customer data management, where technology investment intentions are strongest for the year ahead, particularly in India and Japan. Experience leaders across the APJ region also prioritise enterprise-safe AI usage, data privacy and security.

The report also reveals that APJ brands with more advanced data strategies are outpacing competitors as early adopters of generative AI. In turn, they are more likely to be delivering exceptional customer experiences. And globally, APJ is leading North America and Europe in implementing generative AI solutions and pilot programs.

However, while the potential of generative AI to transform workflows, content creation and customer journeys is broadly recognised, not all APJ brands are prepared for deployment. Around half are yet to develop the upskilling programs, governance guardrails, and integrated processes that enable effective and responsible implementation.

The research also reveals that far more executives than practitioners believe their organisation has a formal generative AI adoption strategy. Many leaders are signalling a commitment to equipping day-to-day users with the skills and frameworks required to reconcile these views in 2024.

These are encouraging signs that APJ brands are poised to continue moving up the AI maturity curve and hold their global leadership position. Those that do will be best placed to meet the exponential growth in content demand and scale up personalisation capabilities. As leading brands will attest, this can unlock better customer and employee experiences and enhance commercial outcomes.

# Executive summary

The 14th annual Adobe Digital Trends survey, conducted in collaboration with Econsultancy, highlights a region in the early days of a generative AI shake-up. From content, to sales, to customer service - Generative AI is poised to transform the entire enterprise. This transformation provides the opportunity to offer personalised, relevant customer experiences (CX) at scale.

Our research included surveys of senior executives and practitioners in APJ, organisations across Australia and New Zealand (ANZ), India, Japan, and Asia (South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia).

## Our key findings include:

- **APJ organisations are focused on delivering more relevant, personalised digital CX – while also adjusting to the impending deprecation of third-party cookies.** Given the need to shift from third-party data to first-party data and durable identities, many are prioritising tools that unify customer data. Solutions such as customer data platforms (CDPs) go beyond unifying customer data to make data decisions actionable in real-time.

- **The adoption of generative AI is correlated with improved market performance.** Globally, APJ leads its North American and European counterparts when it comes to having generative AI solutions in place or implementing pilot projects.

- **There is a significant disparity between senior executives' and practitioners' perspectives regarding adopting AI.** This disconnect speaks to the organisational culture shift that must take place, from the senior executives who determine strategy, KPIs, and incentive alignment to the practitioners who require training, governance guidelines, as well as accessible and actionable data.

- **APJ brands are looking to generative AI to help address the increasing content velocity that's needed for personalisation at scale.** Fortunately, in most regions, practitioners feel prepared to use generative AI for content creation and distribution.

Generative AI is poised to transform every part of the enterprise, and while brands in APJ are currently well-positioned, they cannot rest on their laurels. Organisations must enable scaled enterprise adoption of embedded AI solutions to unlock the full value of generative AI. Achieving this requires an underlying foundation of organisational agility that enables the adoption of generative AI today – and positions the organisation to adapt to future market changes.

## Section 1

# Why digital CX matters more than ever.

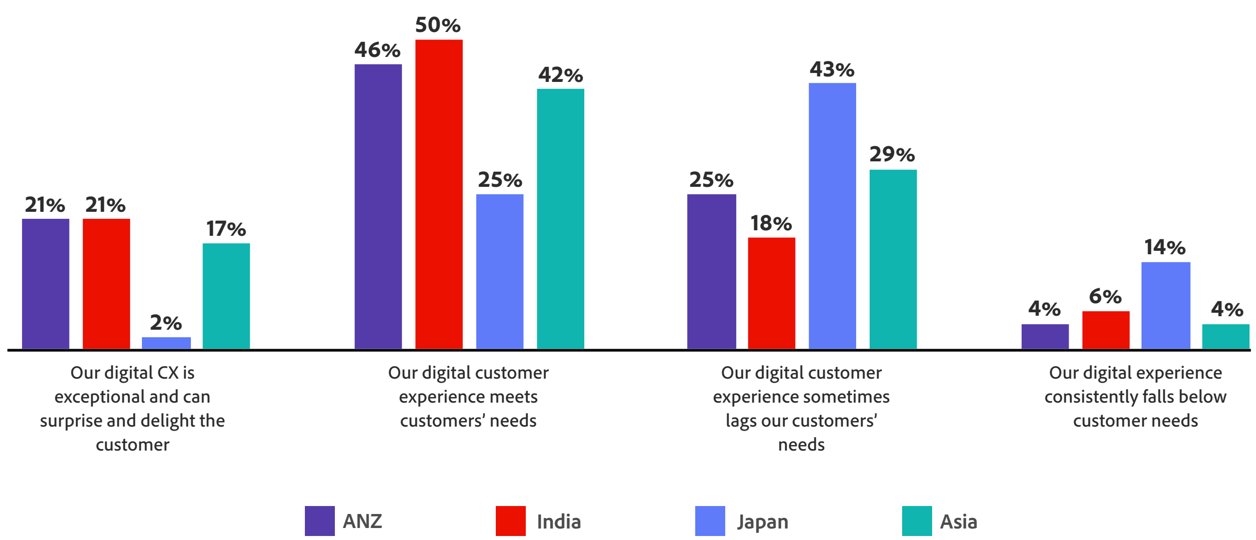
## A. Personalisation creates an advantage for organisations that get it right.

In digital spaces, transactions happen instantly, and your competitors are just a couple of clicks away. Having a first-class digital CX can be the difference between making a sale or losing a potential customer for life.

This has consequences for business performance. This year's Digital Trends research found that in APJ, Market Leaders (those who outperformed their sector peers in 2023) are five times more likely to say their digital CX is exceptional than Market Followers (those who kept pace or underperformed their sector in 2023).

If digital CX is correlated with market performance, it also varies by region (Figure 1). In ANZ and India, 21% of practitioners say their organisation offers an exceptional digital CX, compared with 17% in Asia and just 2% in Japan. Indeed, Japan is an outlier, with over half of practitioners (57%) saying their digital CX sometimes lags or consistently falls below customer needs. This presents an opportunity for organisations in Japan that invest in their digital CX to convert small moves into significant outcomes.

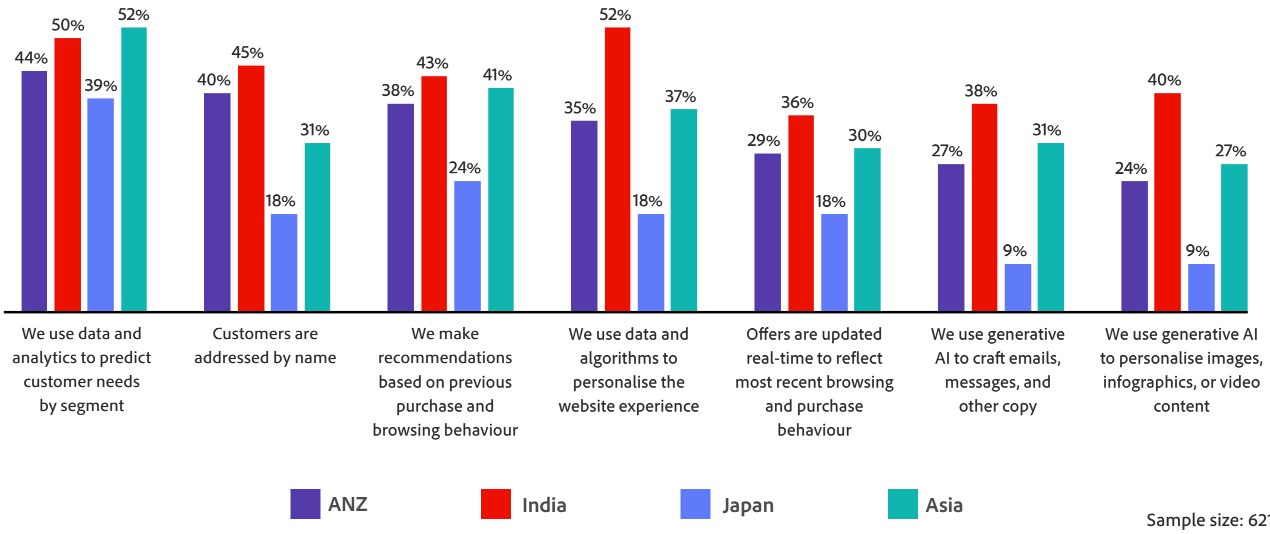
**Figure 1: Practitioners' description of their organisation's digital CX.**




Sample size: 667

Personalisation is a key contributor to digital CX, with real advantages for companies that get it right. For example, *Adobe's Personalisation at Scale* report shows that moving from basic personalisation to one-on-one personalisation can enable a 10x improvement in conversion, 9x improvement in average order value, and 8x in revenue per visitor.[1]

**Figure 2: How practitioners routinely personalise digital content for customers.**




Sample size: 621

So, how are brands in APJ personalising their digital CX? In ANZ and Asia, the top personalisation tactic is using data and analytics to predict customer needs by segment (44% and 52%, respectively, Figure 2). In India, 50% of practitioners use it, surpassed only by using data and algorithms to personalise the website experience (52%). Notably, three out of 10 practitioners in ANZ and Asia are already using generative AI to create written and visual content – and the figure jumps to four out of 10 practitioners in India.

In contrast, practitioners in Japan report less than 10% are using generative AI, and 41% say they use none of these seven tactics. The indirect nature of Japanese culture may mean that personalisation tactics routinely used in other geographies could be construed as too direct in Japan.

Nippon India Mutual Fund

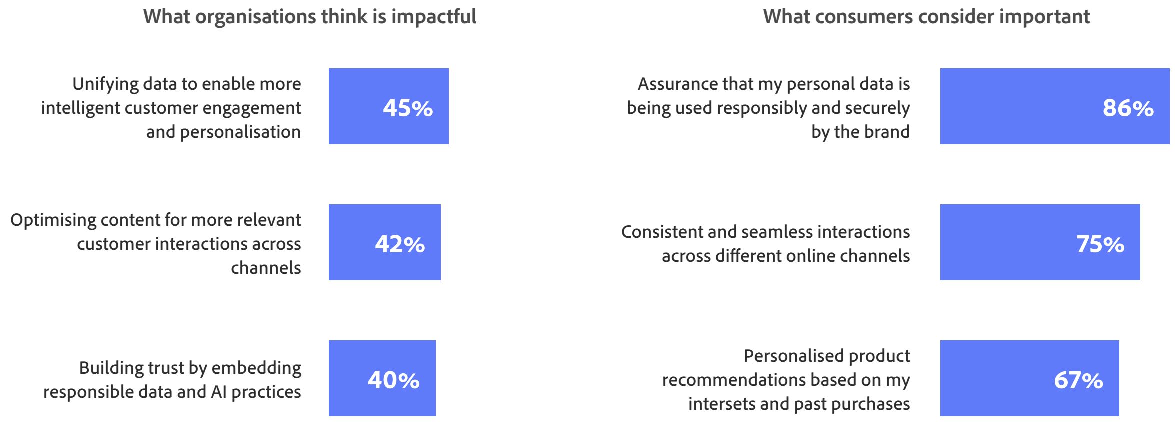
Nippon India Mutual Fund (NIMF) is one of India's leading and fastest-growing assets management companies. One of its biggest focuses is systematic investment plans (SIP) in which investors make regular payments into a mutual fund. Working with partners and Adobe Experience Cloud applications, NIMF created personalised campaigns that increased SIP transactions by 20%. **Learn more >**

[1] Personalisation at Scale: 5 Steps to Improve Operating Model Maturity

# B. The data foundation that delivers exceptional digital CX.

Brands need to personalise digital CX in a relevant, timely way that builds trust. To make that happen, they need a unified customer view that enables actionable and timely insights, a foundation of governance and training, and an organisational culture that sees data as a strategic asset. It's also important that their digital CX plans align with both business and consumer priorities.

**Figure 3: Comparison between what organisations see as impactful on digital CX versus what consumers consider important.**




Sample size: executives (644), consumers (998)

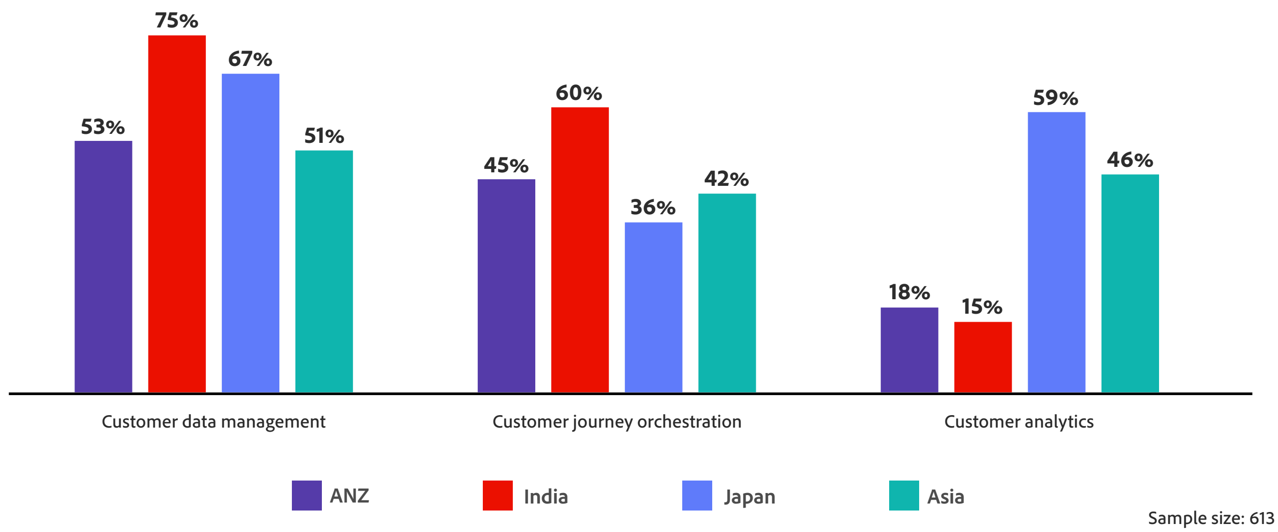
The top three digital CX improvements that senior executives see as having the biggest impact in 2024 are: unifying data (45%, Figure 3), optimising content across channels (42%) and building trust (40%).

According to the 2024 Digital Trends consumer survey, senior executives' perceptions align with consumers' expectations from APJ brands. However, senior executives said building trust was the third-most impactful improvement, whereas it's the top consumer consideration (86%).

The Warehouse Group (TWG) is New Zealand's largest general retailer, encompassing five brands with both online and retail stores. TWG chose Adobe Real-Time CDP in a competitive RFP to create a unified customer profile across its three biggest brands. When Apple released the iPhone in yellow, TWG worked with customer profiles across multiple brands to find the most relevant Apple audiences. The campaign saw a 24% higher than average email open rate and a 40% higher open-to-purchase rate than pre-order emails sent to non-CDP segments. **Learn more >**

As we saw in Figure 3, senior executives said the most impactful digital CX improvement was unifying customer data, so unsurprisingly, customer data management platforms are the top priority for technology investments in 2024 (Figure 4). That's the case across the region and especially among senior executives from India (75%).

**Figure 4: Senior executives' priorities for technology investment in 2024.**



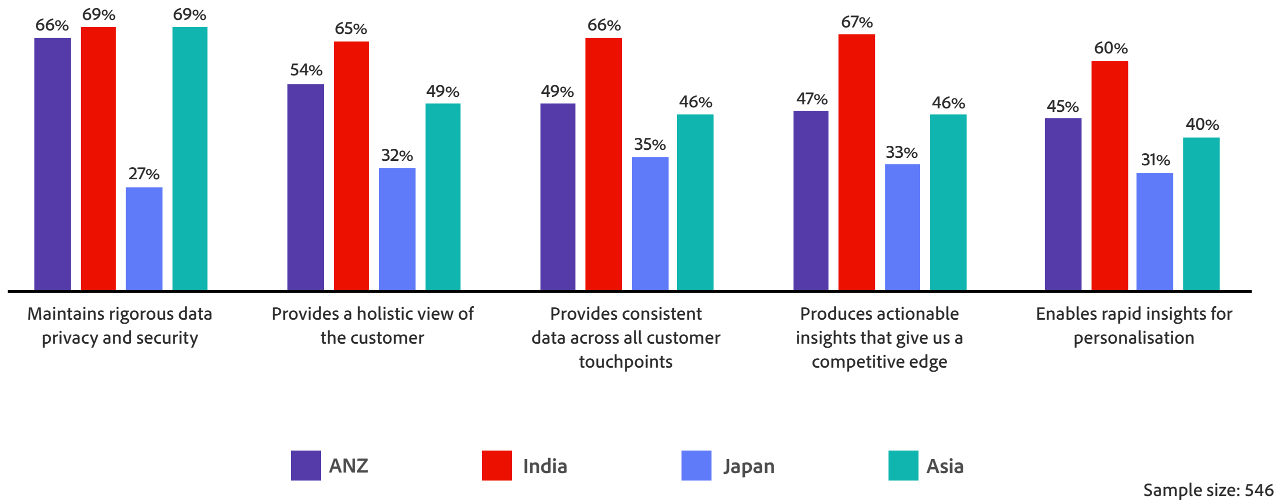

As seen in Figure 4, senior executives in ANZ and India are significantly less likely than their Japanese and Asian counterparts to prioritise customer analytics investments in 2024. We saw in Figure 1 that ANZ and Indian organisations are more likely to offer an exceptional CX. They may have already invested in analytics and are now exploring more foundational capabilities that enable agility instead.

> "Customer data management platforms are the top priority for technology investments in 2024 – especially among senior executives from India."

Next, we asked how effectively practitioners' customer data systems met five objectives (Figure 5).

Figure 5 shows that roughly two-thirds of practitioners in India view their customer data systems as effective across all five measures. Meanwhile, just one-third of Japanese practitioners say their capabilities are effective, which may contribute to just 2% saying their digital CX is exceptional (as shown in Figure 1).

**Figure 5: Practitioners' evaluation of their customer data system: the percentage who rate it as 'most effective' and 'effective'.**




In ANZ and Asia, two-thirds say their customer data system is effective for maintaining data privacy, but fewer say their capabilities are effective across areas related to data accessibility and actionability. Some respondents may think of a 'customer data system' as an internal tool that maintains data privacy and security of customer data, without realising its broader business benefits.

In contrast, CDPs are software solutions that unify customer data from multiple sources, creating a single, coherent view of each customer – but also make that customer data available and actionable for analysis, personalisation, and activation. Notably, CDP capabilities are correlated with market performance: among Market Leaders, 55% report having a highly effective CDP, compared with 35% of Market Followers.

As brands navigate the transition to a cookie-less world, CDPs offer the tools to harness first-party data and robust identifiers like account numbers and email addresses. The urgency is particularly acute in APJ. According to a separate Adobe survey, 82% of marketing and CX leaders in India and New Zealand are notably more dependent on cookies than the global average of 75%. Additionally, this survey found that 34% of Asia-Pacific brands (excluding Japan) fear cookie deprecation would 'devastate' their operations—over twice the global rate of 16%.[2]

[2] https://blog.adobe.com/en/publish/2023/03/09/adobe-study-brands-rely-heavily-third-party-cookies-are-leaving-money-on-table-today-risking-long-term-business-harm

In Australia, SBS is a multimedia digital platform that includes TV, radio, news, and a video streaming service. SBS was already using Adobe Experience Cloud apps to leverage consumer data to deliver personalised experiences across channels. Leading up to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, SBS added Adobe Real-Time CDP to unify first-party customer data, democratise access to actionable insights, and unlock additional value. That enabled SBS to reach more than 119,000 dormant viewers, achieve 93% more cost-effective advertising with first-party data, and establish a foundation to engage with multilingual Australians in their language of choice. **Learn more >**

Technologies like CDPs are one piece of the puzzle for delivering more personalised digital CX. However, to truly unlock the value of that technology, organisations must see data as a strategic asset.

**Figure 6: Senior executives agreement with statements about their organisation's data practices. Percent 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.**

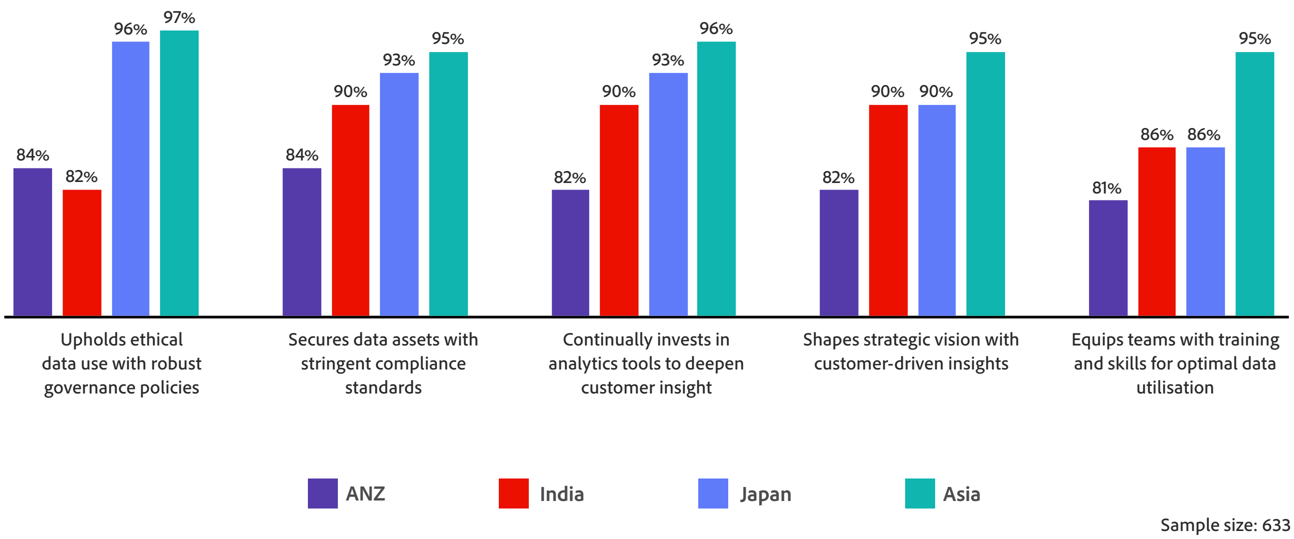


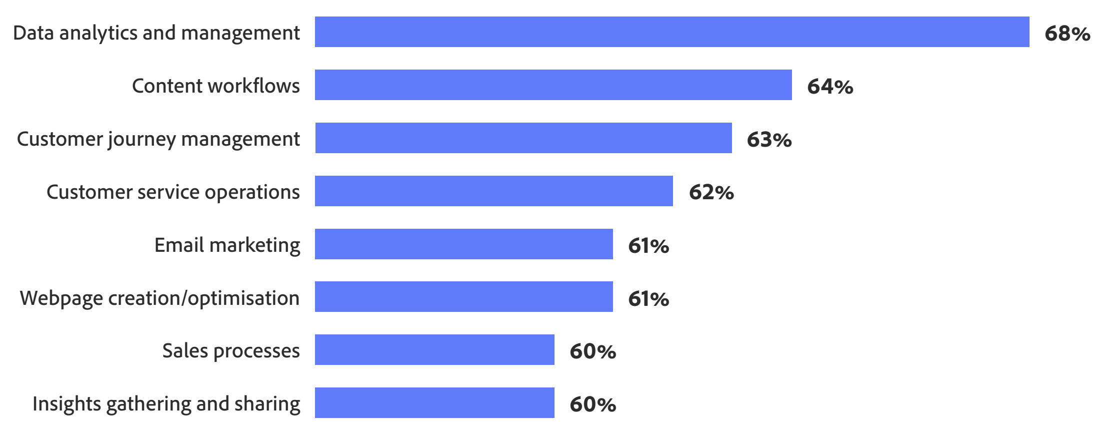

Figure 6 reveals that many APJ brands have strong confidence in their organisations' data practices. Notably, senior executives in Asia exhibit the most confidence, while those in ANZ are the least confident. The senior executives' strong confidence in their organisations' data practices is consistent with what we saw in Figure 5 where - with the exception of Japan - practitioners evaluated their customer data management abilities as very effective.

# How APJ organisations are preparing for generative AI.

The underlying capabilities that enable organisations to deliver exceptional, personalised digital CX also provide a springboard for adopting generative AI.

With generative AI, organisations can accelerate nearly every facet of the customer and employee experience. But as we will see, there's a disconnect between senior executives and practitioners, which speaks to the extent of the organisational changes required to adopt AI and deliver personalisation at scale. Solving these organisational changes is essential to unlocking the value of generative AI, which is poised to change every aspect of APJ organisations.

**Figure 7: Senior executives' assessment of the impact of generative AI on their organisation, showing the percentage who expect 'some transformation' and 'major transformation'.**




Sample size: 621

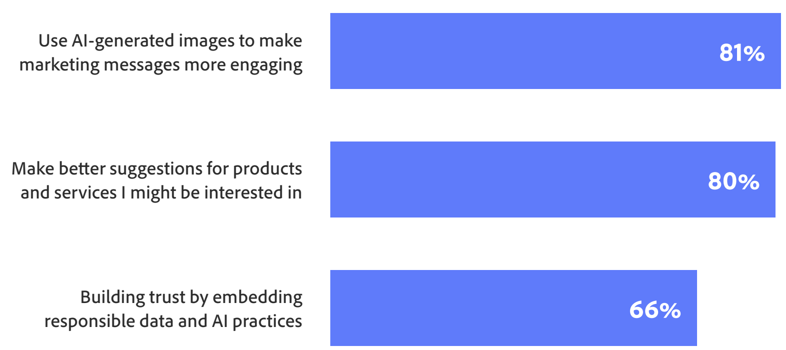
Figure 7 shows that APJ senior executives recognise the transformative effect generative AI will have, especially on content. This includes content workflows (64%), email marketing (61%), and webpage creation (61%). As seen in Section 3, content velocity and workflows are one of the leading use cases for generative AI.

Another notable response is applying generative AI to customer journey management (63%), which aligns with results from Figure 3 that APJ brands and consumers value more consistent customer journeys across channels.

Importantly, consumers are on board with brands using AI to personalise experiences (Figure 8).

If consumers are comfortable with brands using AI to deliver more personalised experiences, they also expect brands to safeguard their data and communicate transparently. Elsewhere in our survey, we found that 64% are worried about how much data brands hold about them, and 64% would be more open to granting permission to their data if brands were more transparent about how they were using and securing it.

**Figure 8: Consumers' comfort level with brands using AI. Percent 'fairly comfortable' and 'very comfortable'.**




Sample size: 988

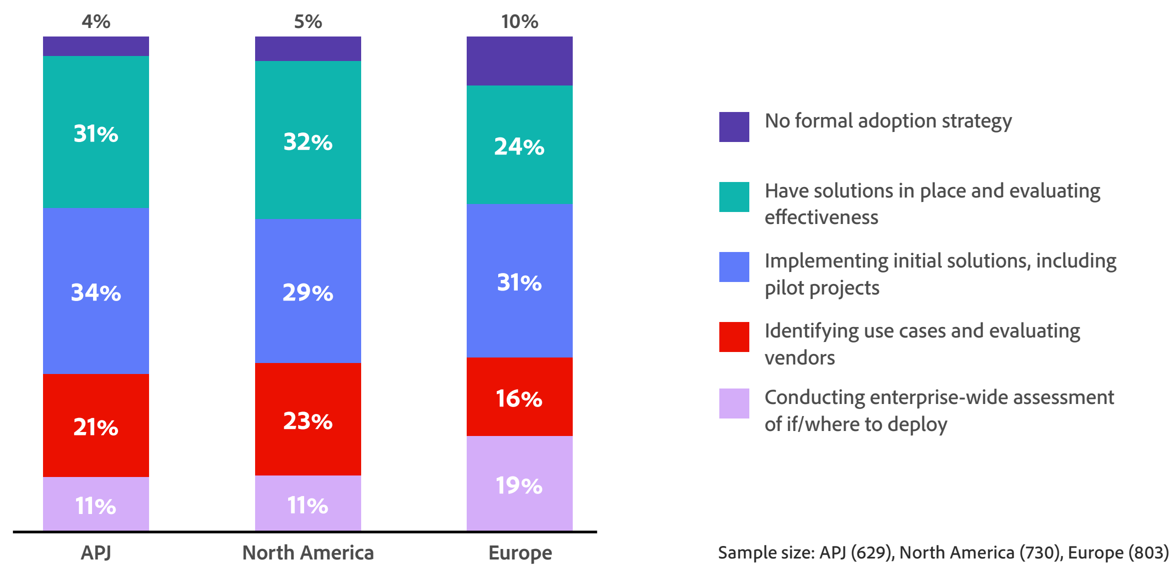
Organisations can meet customers' expectations by adopting enterprise-safe platforms. This means partnering with technology companies they can trust and who are taking a thoughtful approach to how foundational models are being developed, including sources of content used for training. Having the ability to train custom models on their internal company content is also essential.

The benefits are three-fold: protecting the brand and consumers from mis- and disinformation, protecting the brand from intellectual property (IP) infringement, and ensuring that generative AI outputs are on-brand. Data sovereignty is another consideration. In an increasingly stringent regulatory environment, organisations should be thinking about where they're storing customer data.

## A. Senior executives and practitioners don't see eye to eye on generative AI adoption.

Given the opportunities that generative AI presents, it's not surprising that having generative AI solutions in place is correlated with market performance. Market Leaders are more than twice as likely as Market Followers to have solutions in place (45% vs. 18%).

**Figure 9: Senior executives' adoption of generative AI.**




We can see in Figure 9 that 65% of APJ brands have solutions in place or pilot projects. That's the most advanced adoption globally, ahead of North America (61%) and Europe (55%).

**Figure 10: Senior executives' adoption of generative AI in APJ region.**

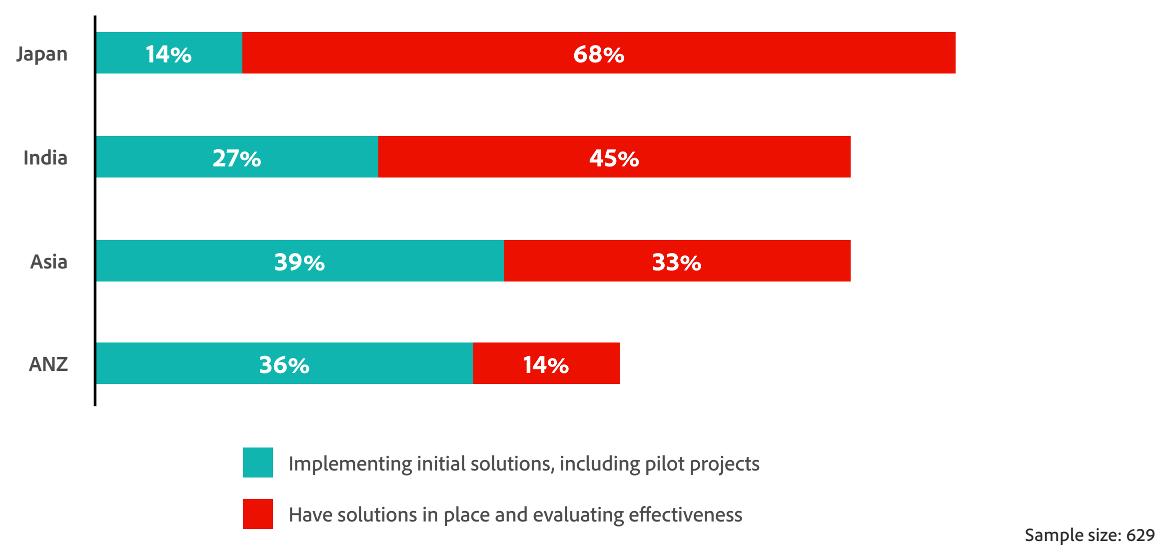
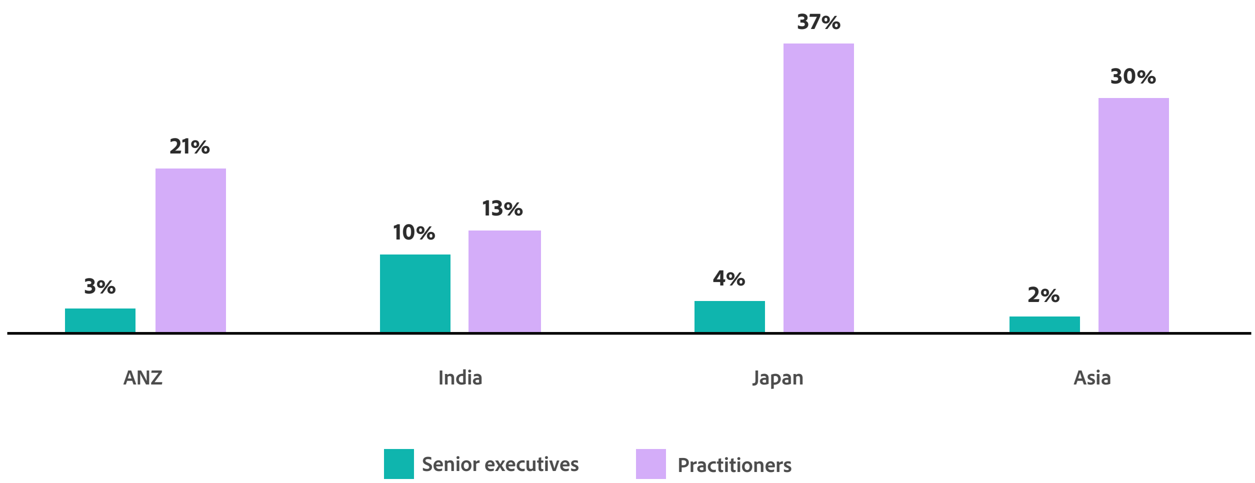



Figure 10 shows that senior executives in Japan report the highest adoption rate of generative AI, with 82% saying they have pilots or solutions in place. They are followed by India and Asia (both with a 72% adoption rate). ANZ has the lowest adoption in the region, with only 50% of senior executives saying they have generative AI pilots or solutions in place.

So far, we've been looking at senior executives' perspectives on generative AI adoption. However, if we dig into practitioners' responses, we can see a disconnect between how each group views generative AI adoption at their organisation.

**Figure 11: The proportion of senior executives and practitioners who indicated they have 'no formal adoption strategy' for generative AI.**




Sample size: senior executives (629), practitioners (512)

Figure 11 shows that across the board, senior executives are more optimistic about their organisations' generative AI adoption than practitioners. While very few senior executives say their organisation has no formal adoption strategy, a significant number of practitioners do – including 37% of practitioners in Japan, sharply contrasting with 68% of senior executives in Japan saying they have solutions in place (Figure 10).

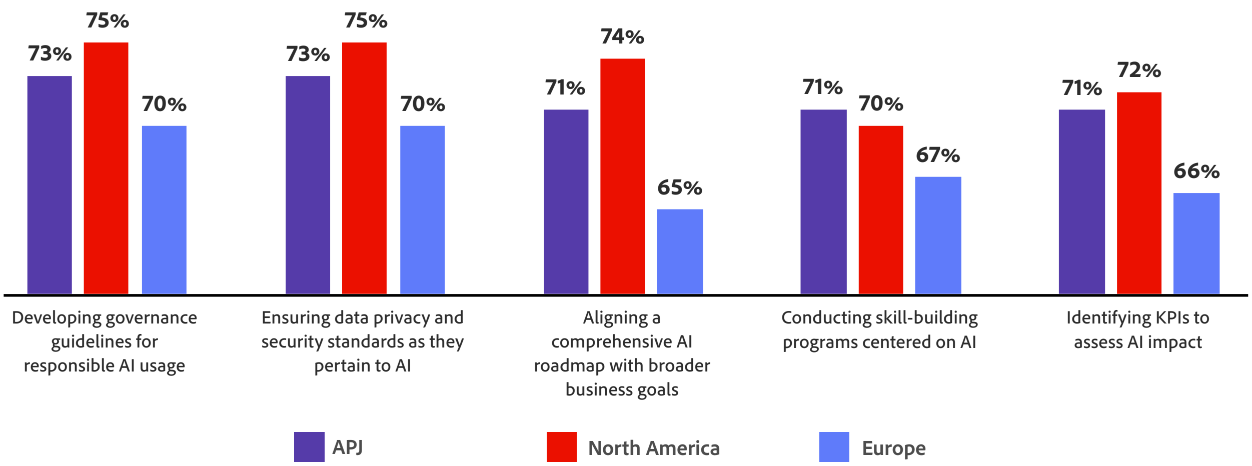
Part of the disconnect may lie in what 'adoption' means. To some senior executives, adopting generative AI may mean signing a vendor contract. To others, it may mean working on the foundation required for scaled enterprise adoption: establishing governance, ensuring data privacy, aligning workflows, and training employees to work effectively.

By contrast, practitioners know the day-to-day reality of using generative AI effectively, including enterprise-ready data, embedded tools, and training. This disconnect speaks to the substantial organisational culture shift that must take place to adopt generative AI at scale. That shift takes time, and these results suggest there's still a lot of work to do.

## B. Most organisations are equipped for generative AI deployment, but only half feel ready.

To advance generative AI adoption, brands need to foster organisational agility. Across five measures of that foundation, APJ brands have key pieces in place. In addition, they're keeping pace with North America and leading Europe (Figure 12).

**Figure 12: Readiness for generative AI: Senior executives who have completed their preparations, are in the process of fine-tuning, or have plans that are a work in progress.**




Sample size: APJ (624), North America (729), Europe (806)

As we saw in Figure 7, generative AI is reshaping every aspect of the enterprise. Figure 12 shows how senior executives are preparing their organisation for that shift. Data privacy and security (73%) are non-negotiable. But so are aligning a comprehensive AI roadmap with broader business goals (71%) and identifying KPIs to assess impact (71%).

Aligning key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the impact of AI is crucial for successful implementation. According to Adobe's report on organisational agility, 90% of senior executives identified incentive alignment as the most significant barrier to transformation that enables personalisation at scale[3]. The same challenge likely applies to achieving widespread adoption of generative AI.

In addition to strategy and alignment at the top of the organisation, it's essential to build internal capabilities. This includes developing governance guidelines for responsible use (73%) and skill-building programs (71%), which empower employees to work confidently and effectively with generative AI tools. Notably, skill-building includes initial training to support generative AI adoption and continuous learning as the competitive landscape changes.

APJ organisations seem well-positioned to deploy generative AI. But how prepared do they feel?

[3] Personalisation at Scale: 5 Steps to Improve Operating Model Maturity

**Figure 13: The percentage of senior executives that feel adequately prepared for generative AI.**

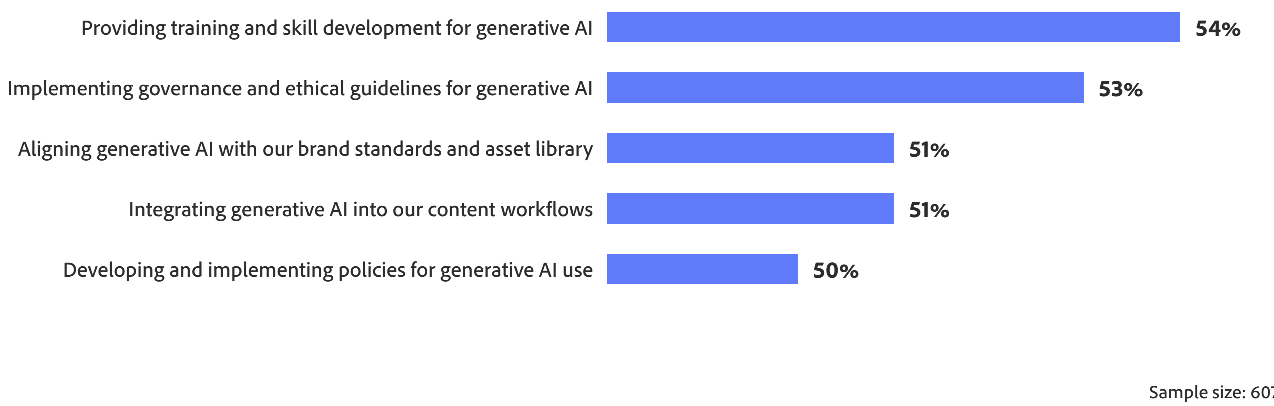



Figure 13 shows that roughly half of APJ organisations feel adequately prepared to deploy generative AI – but equally, roughly half don't. Within the region, India is the frontrunner across all five areas, with markedly higher levels of preparation in implementing governance and ethical guidelines (70%) and developing and implementing policies for use (74%).

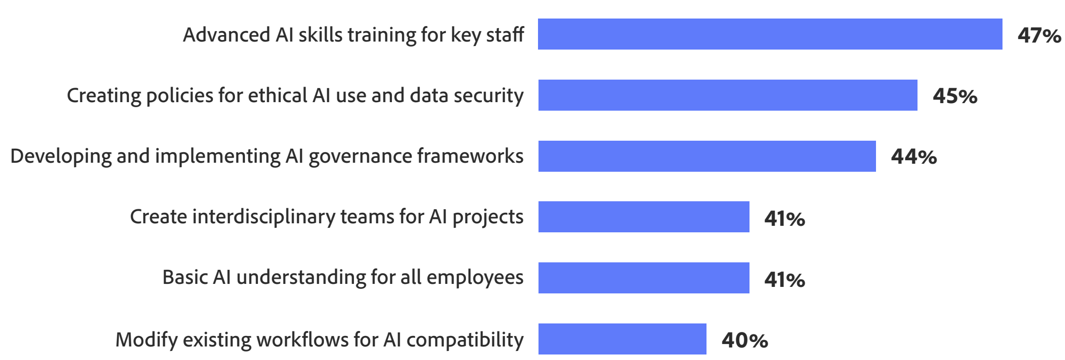
Notably, generative AI preparedness correlates with market performance. Our research reveals that Market Leaders are nearly three times more likely than Market Followers to say they're adequately prepared for generative AI (54% vs. 19%).

> “Generative AI preparedness correlates with market performance. Our research reveals that Market Leaders are nearly three times more likely than Market Followers to say they're adequately prepared for generative AI."

## C. Organisations are shifting aspects of their operating models to prepare for generative AI adoption.

In Section 2, A and B, we looked at how senior executives are laying the foundation for generative AI adoption. Next, we'll look at how they're shifting aspects of their operating models to prepare for this adoption, starting with how they're preparing their employees to work effectively with generative AI.

**Figure 14: Senior executives' top priorities for preparing employees to work with generative AI.**




Sample size: 616

Figure 14 shows that brands' top priorities are providing advanced skills training (47%), establishing guardrails for generative AI use in the form of policies for ethical use (45%) and developing and implementing governance frameworks (44%). Similar to our findings in Figure 12, senior executives in India are investing in governance frameworks to a greater degree than their APJ peers (58%, 14 percentage points above the APJ average).

In addition, 41% of brands plan to create interdisciplinary teams. Capturing the value of generative AI will require greater cross-functional collaboration than many brands are used to. Having insights from across the enterprise, including marketing, sales, IT, and compliance, is vital to identifying key business benefits and use cases.

With that in mind, most APJ organisations are planning to make changes to their organisational structure to accommodate this greater need for cross-functional collaboration (Figure 15).

**Figure 15: Senior executives plans to make significant changes to organisational structure to support generative AI adoption. Percent 'by middle of 2024' and 'end of 2024'.**

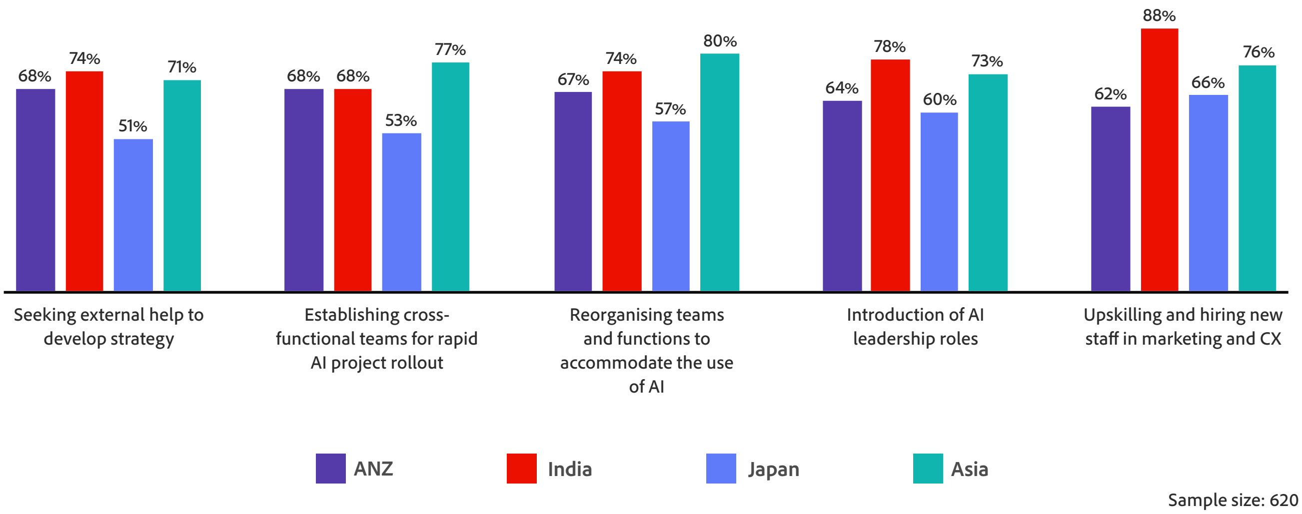



Figure 15 shows that senior executives in Asia are most likely to support greater collaboration by reorganising teams and functions (80%) and establishing cross-functional teams (77%). In contrast, India is more likely to upskill and hire new staff (88%) and introduce AI leadership roles (78%). ANZ senior executives are slightly less likely, and senior executives in Japan are much less likely to make significant changes to organisational structure, which may be indicative of a wait-and-see approach.

As organisations work to prepare their people and processes for generative AI, they must also consider how it will impact their content strategies and velocity, a topic which we will explore in Section 3.

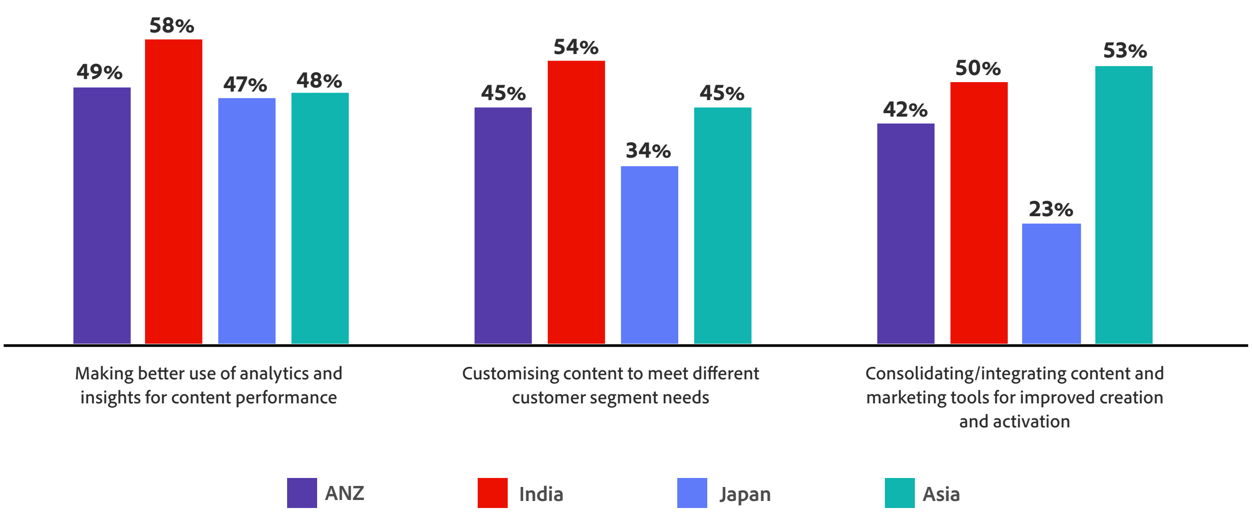
## Section 3

# Personalisation drives an exponential need for content.

Many brands are experiencing an increased demand for content, driven by expectations for more personalised experiences, omnichannel customer journeys, and emerging content formats. In APJ, there's the added reality of operating in multiple geographies and languages. The result? Greater pressure on brands to increase content velocity.

Organisations are well aware of this pressure, with 42% of them saying that optimising content for more relevant customer interactions will have the biggest impact on their business in 2024 (Figure 3). Given the need for increasing content velocity to drive personalisation at scale, what improvements do APJ brands plan to make to their content strategy?

**Figure 16: Practitioners' planned improvements to their content strategy in 2024.**




Sample size: 609

Figure 16 reveals a focus on effectiveness, personalisation, and efficiency. Notably, consolidating and integrating content and marketing tools is a prerequisite to unlocking enterprise adoption of generative AI, as the shift to more centralised capabilities supports greater organisational agility.

Notably, 17% of practitioners in Japan responded that no critical improvements are needed to their content strategy. We saw in Figure 2 that Japanese organisations are much less likely to apply personalisation tactics than their APJ peers. They may not feel the same pressure to increase content velocity and, therefore, less pressure to make improvements to their content strategy.

Singapore's Central Provident Fund Board (CPFB) is a savings and pension plan that helps over four million CPF members achieve a secure retirement. CPFB created more than 2,000 message templates in Adobe Campaign for millions of proactive, personalised communications sent each month to members. Since 2022, the organisation has developed over 170 message variations and conducted over 64 A/B tests – and has achieved a 10% lift in open rates for educational direct messages. **Learn more >**

## A. Brands look to generative AI to address increasing content velocity.

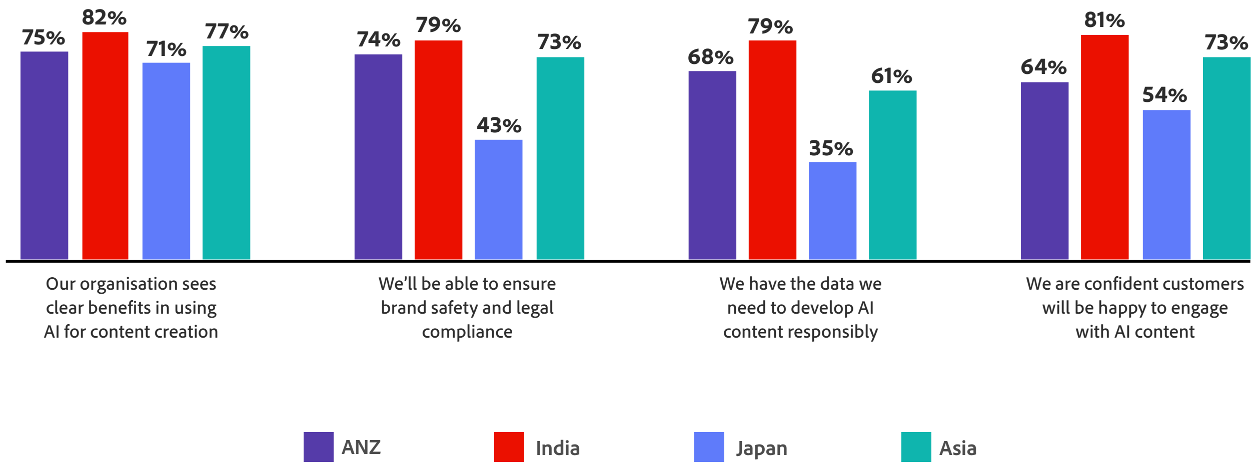
As we saw in Figure 7, senior executives expect generative AI to reshape their organisations' content workflows (64%) and customer journey management (40%). We can see these expectations reflected in the ways practitioners plan to use generative AI to improve the speed and agility of CX initiatives.

**Figure 17: Top ways practitioners plan to use generative AI to enhance the speed and agility of marketing and CX initiatives.**


Figure 17 shows that 43% of practitioners plan to use generative AI to streamline creative workflows, and 40% plan to optimise customer journeys. Practitioners in India are more ambitious than their peers, with responses generally ten percentage points higher than the APJ average. In contrast, less than one-third of practitioners in Japan say they would use generative AI in these ways.

Given APJ practitioners' plans to use generative AI to streamline content workflows and production, how prepared do they feel to actually use it?

Figure 18: Practitioners agreement with statements regarding plans to use generative AI for content creation and distribution. Percent 'strongly agree' and 'agree'.




Sample size: 509

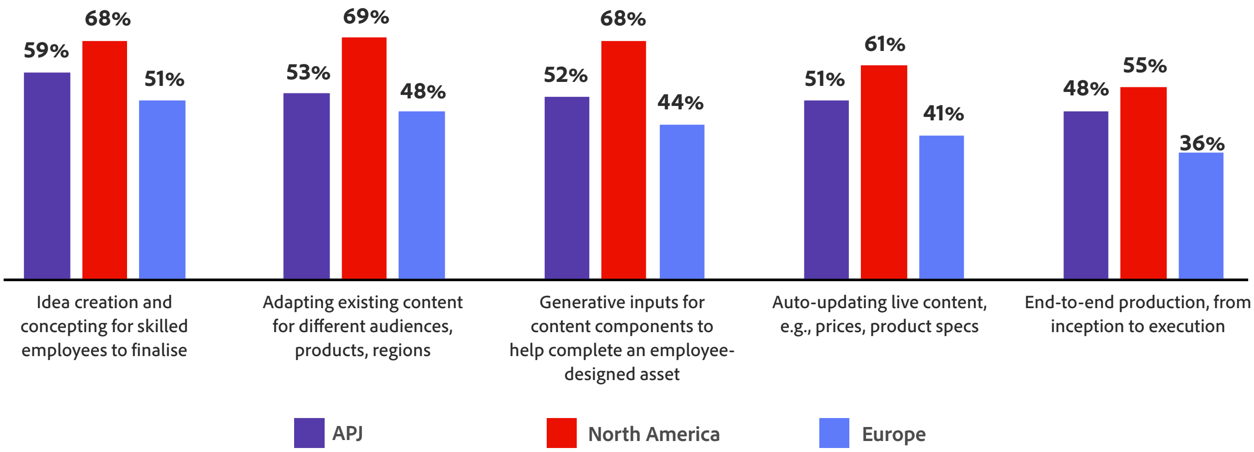
Figure 18 shows that practitioners see a clear benefit in using generative AI for content creation. In ANZ, India, and Asia, most practitioners feel prepared to use generative AI in a way that protects their organisation and consumers – while fewer practitioners in Japan do so.

## B. Content production is a primary use case for generative AI.

Most APJ organisations recognise the increasing demand for content personalisation and are keen to leverage generative AI to help them meet that demand. But with generative AI coming to life across the entire organisation at the same time, the challenge is in knowing where to start.

Choosing where to start is a delicate balance between where it's easy to begin and where the greatest business impact is. We can see this reflected in practitioners' plans to use generative AI for content production by the end of 2024 (Figure 19).

**Figure 19: Practitioners' expected timeline to use generative AI in areas of content production (percent 'in use today' or 'by the end of 2024').**



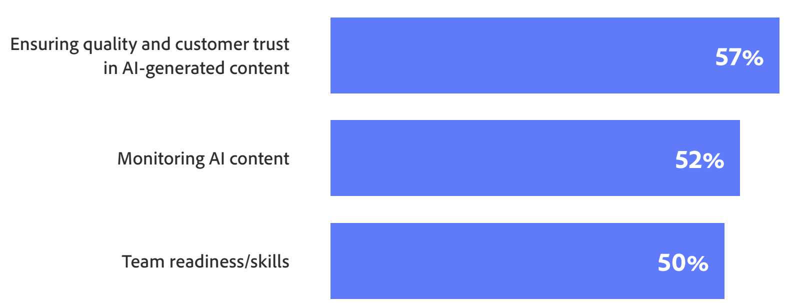

Sample size: APJ (526), North America (968), Europe (977)

Figure 19 shows that compared to other geographies, APJ organisations are in the middle of the pack, lagging North America and ahead of Europe.

In APJ, the top use case is idea creation and concepting for skilled employees to finalise (59%), which speaks to generative AI as a way to increase content velocity. It also underpins the need for training and governance, to support employees to work effectively and create content responsibly.

Other use cases can unlock greater value for the organisation, such as end-to-end production (48%). However, given the complexity of execution, it's understandably lower on the agenda for 2024 while organisations solve for the prerequisites required, such as streamlining workflows, cross-functional teams, and data capabilities.

**Figure 20: Practitioners' top challenges for brands managing AI-generated content in 2024.**




Sample size: 497

However, all these use cases depend on consumers' trust, which APJ practitioners recognise: 57% say ensuring quality and consumer trust in AI-generated content is their top challenge (Figure 20).

Building and maintaining consumer trust is not just an opportunity but also fast becoming a mandate for organisational success that enables exponential benefits. When a consumer trusts a brand, they're more likely to interact, share data and content, and opt-in to engagement. With this increased level of interactions, the brand can better personalise the experience and orchestrate customer journeys, which in turn continues to build and maintain trust. And so the virtuous cycle continues.

# Conclusions

The *Adobe 2024 Digital Trends* research reveals that personalisation, generative AI, and unified data are key priorities for organisations across APJ looking to deliver exceptional digital customer experiences. To succeed, brands should:

- **Understand the nuances of personalisation across APJ markets.** While most consumers are comfortable with brands using AI for personalisation, preferences vary. Common tactics used in ANZ, India, and Asia could be seen as too direct in Japan. Brands must tailor their approach accordingly.

- **Adopt customer data platforms to enable personalisation amidst regulatory shifts.** With the increased restriction of data and tracking, brands are shifting to first-party data. CDPs can help unify data and make insights actionable for better segmentation, personalisation, and activation across channels. This is especially critical in ANZ, where reliance on cookies has been high. Brands in India are further along in their CDP adoption to navigate this shift.

- **Align generative AI strategies with business goals and customer expectations.** Consumers are on board with responsible AI use for personalisation, but their continued trust depends on transparency, data security, and value-added experiences. APJ brands are keeping pace with North America and leading Europe in readiness to adopt generative AI. To maintain competitiveness, senior executives must champion AI strategies that support broader objectives, enable internal capabilities, and meet customer needs. Fostering an agile, collaborative culture is critical.

- **Leverage content production as a starting point for generative AI.** With personalisation driving exponential content needs, many APJ brands, particularly in India and Asia, plan to use generative AI to scale content creation while streamlining workflows. Over time, they can progress to more complex use cases like automating customer support.

- **Enable enterprise-wide AI adoption through leadership alignment and change management.** In APJ, there's a significant disparity between how senior executives and practitioners perceive their organisations' adoption of generative AI. To close the gap, senior executives must align on the vision and roadmap, foster cross-functional collaboration, and model an insight-driven culture. Brands must also upskill employees, implement strong governance, and adopt enterprise-safe AI platforms to deploy at scale responsibly and effectively.

**By focusing on these priorities, organisations across APJ can harness the power of personalisation and generative AI – underpinned by unified data – to build trust, drive engagement and growth. Encouragingly, our research reveals that APJ brands are well-positioned to compete and thrive in the digital-first future.**

# Methodology

## A. Executive survey

The executive survey was fielded in January and February 2024 to Econsultancy, Adobe lists, and external panels. Launched on January 1, 2024, the survey closed on February 19, 2024, with 1,426 client-side respondents in Asia, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.

Demographics Profiles

- 46% of respondents are at the senior director level or above, and 54% are at the practitioner level. Throughout the report, we include comparisons between these two groups.
- Every business sector is represented, with most client-side responses coming from technology (22%), financial services (17%), manufacturing and engineering (16%), retail and ecommerce (15%), healthcare and pharmaceuticals (7%), and media and entertainment (6%).
- Those addressing both B2B and B2C markets equally accounted for 52% of respondents, followed by B2B (27%) and B2C (21%).
- The survey was translated into eight languages.

### Executive Market Leaders, Challengers, and Followers

This study draws comparisons between Market Leading and Market Following organisations. These are defined based on practitioners' and senior executives' responses to a survey question relating to their 2023 company performance versus sector competitors. Focusing on these insights allows us to explore the issues that most differentiate between commercially successful and unsuccessful organisations.

- Market Leaders are senior executives and practitioners who agreed they 'significantly outperformed' their sector (21% of all respondents).
- Market Challengers are senior executives and practitioners who agreed they had 'slightly outperformed' their sector (35% of all respondents). While they are not called out specifically in this report, their responses are included in all the respondents' figures.
- Market Followers are senior executives and practitioners who agreed they had 'kept pace' with their sector or 'slightly or significantly underperformed' their sector (44% of all respondents).

## B. Consumer survey

Between February 1, 2024, and February 13, 2024, we surveyed 998 consumers who engaged with brands online within the past three months. In addition to an even gender split, the country and age breakdowns included the following:

- 13% were aged 18-24, 18% were aged 25-34, 18% were aged 35-44, 17% were aged 45-54, 16% were aged 55-64, 13% were aged 65-74, and 5% were aged 75 and over.
- Respondents were sourced from across four countries across the APJ region, with 36% of respondents from Australia, 24% of respondents from Japan, 25% of respondents from India, and 15% of respondents from New Zealand.