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Businesses leading in customer experience are three times more likely to have exceeded 2019 business goals

Singapore — 5 March 2020 – Globally, two in five (40%) businesses leading in customer experience (CX) significantly exceeded their 2019 business goals, compared to 13% of businesses not leading in the space. This is a key finding of Adobe's Digital Trends 2020 report, in partnership with Econsultancy. The report surveyed over 13,000 marketing, advertising, ecommerce, creative and IT professionals, working for both brands and agencies in markets across Asia Pacific (APAC), Europe and North America, on their priorities for 2020.

"The proven success of customer experience-led businesses makes an essential case for a customer-centric approach, said Scott Rigby, Head of Digital Transformation for Adobe Asia Pacific. "However, the move to a customer-first model involves more than implementing a single initiative or piece of technology. It's about looking at the bigger picture and shifting business strategy, investment and culture, supported by the right tools and processes. It requires investment, but the rewards are there for those that make the shift."

CX is the priority for growth amongst APAC businesses but maturity lags

APAC businesses understand the importance of CX and are focused on optimizing the customer journey in 2020, with one in five (19%) APAC organizations identifying better CX as their most exciting opportunity for this year. APAC companies will also be leading global CX technology investment with over half (57%) planning to invest more in CX technology, compared to 51% in Europe and 41% in North America this year.

However, APAC's CX maturity lags behind the rest of the world. Just 7% of APAC organizations consider themselves mature in the space, compared to 12% in North America and 11% for the rest of the world.

Rigby said, "APAC businesses are looking to bring their CX maturity in line with global counterparts to develop effective strategies to deliver better experiences. In turn, this empowers businesses to differentiate against competitors. However, APAC's proclaimed lag leaves the region playing catch up on building, as well as delivering, digital marketing strategies that focus on customer experiences. But marketers in APAC are actively planning investment to close this gap."

Talent sourcing and retention is a challenge for CX leaders

To maintain their advantage, CX leaders globally are focused on obtaining and developing great talent. Two in five (40%) CX leaders said that attracting and retaining talent in digital, data and CX-related areas was their most significant concern for 2020. With over a quarter (26%) stating that finding and keeping the right people with the right skills is a barrier to creating successful digital experiences.

To retain and develop talent, CX leaders are 27% more likely to invest in training compared to non-CX leaders (20%), with a focus on teaching business concepts beyond a narrow definition of marketing. In a recent

Econsultancy study, over 90% of executives said that it was essential that marketers understood the metrics and strategies of the wider business.[1]

"Obtaining and developing great talent is a huge challenge for marketers and requires businesses to add and improve skills on an ongoing basis. This challenge also brings opportunity. Investing in people, technology and processes are all key ingredients for effective customer experience. Supporting talent early on will help businesses benefit in the long-run," Rigby said.

Automation will empower marketers

The strongest business support for machines centers on its ability to empower people. Marketers work in a world filled with data and spend a significant amount of time building reports and analyzing campaign metrics. However, these tasks that are likely to be automated in the next five to ten years, offering respite to overloaded marketers.

APAC already leads against Europe and North America on the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) technology, with more than half of APAC businesses (54%) using or planning to use these tools. One business powering CX with automation is cloud-based accounting software company Xero.

"As we transition from customer support to customer success we're investing in our people, new technology and educational programs to enhance the customer journey," said Rachael Powell, Chief Customer Officer at Xero. 'Xero Central', our support and learning site for Xero's business and partner products, harnesses the capabilities of AI and machine learning to provide predictive analytics that allows us to anticipate and solution a query as customers ask questions in real time. We also use insights to answer questions that customers may go on to ask. We leverage the technology to deal with the day-to-day and that frees up our people to expand their customer lens into building value adding education and proactive success experiences."

APAC businesses are demonstrating their commitment to bridge the CX maturity gap in their IT budgets, with 34% of APAC businesses planning to invest in ML and AI compared to 25% globally.

"The Digital Trends 2020 report is now in its tenth year and the data clearly shows us that businesses focused on customer experience are sailing ahead," said Rigby. "Today, we're able to interact with and understand our customers in more ways than ever before. The power of technology and data combined means that businesses are starting to operate in new ways, making CX a business imperative, not just a marketing objective.

You can download the full Digital Trends 2020 report here.

About Adobe Experience Cloud
Adobe is reimagining Customer Experience Management (CXM) with Adobe Experience Cloud, the industry's only end-to-end solution for experience creation, marketing, advertising, analytics and commerce. Unlike legacy enterprise platforms with static, siloed customer profiles, Adobe Experience Cloud helps companies deliver consistent, continuous and compelling experiences across customer touchpoints and channels—all while accelerating business growth. Industry analysts have named Adobe a leader in over 20 major reports focused on experience—more than any other technology company.

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[1] Econsultancy, How Marketers Learn, 2019