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Trust Leaps to Top of C-Suite Agenda, with Responsible Use of Data Key to Success, Reveals Adobe Research

- **Trust emerges as core foundation of digital business growth: but 7 in 10 business leaders say earning it is harder than two years ago**
- **Responsible use of data key to building trust, but over 75% of consumers are concerned with how companies use it**
- **Consumers spend more with brands they trust, as digital economy reaches $4 trillion globally**

London, UK – 21 April 2022 – Adobe today released new research highlighting the critical role trust plays in building successful, long-lasting customer relationships in the digital economy – now worth over $4 trillion globally. The Adobe Trust Report highlights the pressing need for brands to elevate their digital experiences and use consumer data responsibly to drive business growth. Based on the responses of almost 2,000 consumers and 200 senior business leaders in the UK, the report issues a rallying cry to brands of all shapes and sizes: trust is a business imperative that demands priority at the very top of their organisation.

In the digital economy, the foundation of any successful business is trust, and consumer expectations are now higher than ever. With new behaviours and a multitude of touchpoints, brands face growing challenges when it comes to succeeding in the digital-first era. The research revealed that nearly 7 in 10 (68%) senior leaders find it harder to build and maintain trust than two years ago. The data also shows the stakes have never been higher for brands, with over half (53%) of consumers saying they would stop buying from a brand following a breach in trust.

Responsible use of data critical to earning trust
To build trust, brands must meet their customers in the places they value most, with experiences that are personal – and that is powered by the data they collect. However, the research reveals over 75% of consumers are concerned over how companies use their data, while 71% believe the information gathered from digital interactions benefits only the company, not the consumer.

Encouragingly, the research shows consumer demands are clear and straightforward when it comes to better handling of data. Almost 8 in 10 (84%) consumers say having choices about how companies use their data is important. Meanwhile, keeping data safe and providing consumers with transparency and control over how their data is used (86%) are the top ways brands can regain customer trust after it is broken.

For brands that mishandle data, the consequences are severe: two-thirds of consumers say they would stop purchasing from a brand that does any of the following: uses their data without permission (76%), experiences a data breach (68%), or disrespects their data preferences (73%).

Despite this warning, the data shows less than half (55%) of business leaders rank strong data privacy and governance processes as a top priority, exposing a gap between consumer expectations and how business leaders are prioritising data.

"Trust can be earned and broken across every experience and touchpoint," said Alvaro del Pozo, Vice President of International Marketing at Adobe. "We've reached a tipping point in the digital economy, where brands who focus on building trust through responsible use of customer data to deliver personal experiences will thrive, while those who continue to put their needs ahead of the customer, will fall further behind."

Consumer trust built or broken with every experience
The data shows that, when customer data is used to create and deliver personalised experiences, consumer trust increases: 70% say well-timed, personal content significantly boosts trust, while 47% say creative content elevates their trust in one company over another.

A further 7 in 10 (73%) consumers said brands should demonstrate empathy by seeing things from their perspective, acknowledging their frustrations, and understanding what is important to them. The price is high for getting this wrong, with nearly three quarters (69%) of consumers saying trust in a brand falls when personalisation is poor, while over half (59%) will stop purchasing from a brand that fails to provide personal experiences they value.

Meanwhile, the importance of digital in building trust continues to grow, with over half (52%) of consumers now placing equal importance on digital and in-person experiences when it comes to earning their vital trust.

To meet the demands of customers in the digital economy and earn their trust, brands must deliver the most relevant experiences – both online and offline – to millions of customers, in milliseconds, while also respecting their privacy and preferences. Personalisation at this scale requires brands to evolve their data strategy – prioritising their understanding of the customer through real-time, actionable data, building a high-speed content engine that creates personal and valuable connections, and providing a seamless journey for every customer.

"As businesses blend their offline and online offerings, the ability to build rapport through real-time personalisation – which is viewed as valuable and not intrusive – has never been more important," said Dimitrios Tsivrikos, Consumer and Business Psychologist at University College London, "Personalisation is the foundation of trust, driving higher purchase intent and brand loyalty. However, as the research points out, to unlock its benefits, businesses need to create trusted environments that are both clever and honest for customers. We've learned trust is broken and earned in an instant, so it is imperative brands get it right on a consistent basis."

You can download the full Adobe Trust report here.

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About the research
The Adobe Trust Report survey was conducted by Advanis between January and February 2022, surveying more than 12,000 consumers and 2,000 senior business leaders at companies with more than 50 employees. The research focused on 15 countries. This included more than 6,000 consumers (2003 in the UK) and 924 senior business leaders (200 in the UK) from across the EMEA region. The EMEA research focused on seven countries, including: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Sweden and the UK.

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