The power of data.

An Adobe report on the state of consumer data.

The state of data in the world

As the business world rapidly evolves and digital engagement increases, it's even more important to focus on customers and deliver great experiences. With more customer data moving around, there's greater opportunity to respectfully and responsibly use that data to understand what customers need, why they're engaging and what experience to deliver. Plus, this data can help you rapidly adapt and innovate for the future as you become an experience-driven resilient business.

At the core of every successful customer experience is a responsible plan for how to use and secure customer data, respect consumer privacy and comply with privacy laws. And as infrastructures evolve to support higher numbers of remote workers, data security becomes even more important.

To help us get a better idea of global attitudes around these practices, we partnered with Advanis earlier this year to conduct surveys with thousands of businesses and consumers around the world. And while the world looks different today than when the surveys were conducted, the takeaways are as important as ever:

Businesses have room to grow

Most organisations believe
they are digitally mature.
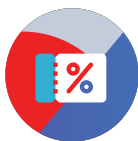
Many feel like they'll need
to show tangible benefits
to justify data collection.

Data security is a
primary challenge.

Consumers are wary about their data

Two-thirds of consumers have
experienced a data breach.

Many consumers are
uncomfortable sharing
personal data.

But most will share some
personal data for
personalised experiences.

Data regulation is the future

As governments around the world create strong laws around data
protection — like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe
and the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) — the opportunity for
businesses is clear: get ahead of the game.

Advanced global brands are already making changes

60%
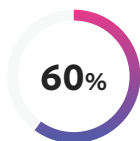
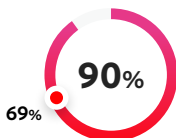60% say they're either focused or advanced in their digital maturity.

🇫🇷 56%	🇩🇪 55%	**APAC**	
🇬🇧 56%	🇺🇸 63%	🇦🇺	62%

81% 36%
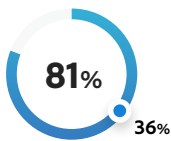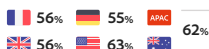
81% made changes to comply with GDPR and 36% extended to countries outside the EU.

🇫🇷 95% | 50%	🇩🇪 92% | 44%	**APAC**	
🇬🇧 93% | 40%	🇺🇸 72% | 30%	🇦🇺	80% | 35%

55%

55% are either currently or will be compliant with CCPA.

🇫🇷 62%	🇩🇪 61%	**APAC**	
🇬🇧 50%	🇺🇸 52%	🇦🇺	57%

The opportunity is everywhere

90% 69%

90% of global consumers own a smartphone and 69% own a laptop.

🇫🇷 91% | 77%	🇩🇪 91% | 74%	**APAC**	
🇬🇧 81% | 69%	🇺🇸 81% | 69%	🇦🇺	88% | 75%

50%

50% say surfing the internet is the most common non-work use of their computer.

| 🇫🇷 59%	🇩🇪 54%	**APAC**	
🇬🇧 49%	🇺🇸 49%	🇦🇺	50%
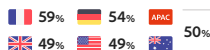
Data transparency leads to trust

On the surface, it looks like efforts made by brands to improve transparency are working. At least businesses seem to think they are. And certainly, consumers do seem to be taking more control.

Businesses prioritise security

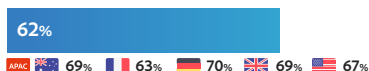Believe they are transparent with the personal information they collect from customers.

81%

APAC 80% | 85% | 78% | 78% | 82%
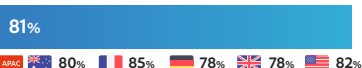
Think customers have been more active in protecting their own personal information.

79%

APAC 78% | 79% | 77% | 70% | 81%
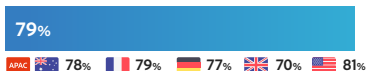
Customers take privacy into their own hands

Clear their browsing history

62%

APAC 69% | 63% | 70% | 69% | 67%

Clear their cookies

62%

APAC 61% | 53% | 69% | 59% | 64%

Report email as spam

46%

APAC 44% | 45% | 45% | 43% | 48%

Use an ad blocker

43%

APAC 45% | 39% | 47% | 35% | 43%

Business must evolve to meet expectations

In reality, bridging the gap between consumer expectations and what companies actually deliver is challenging. A telling statistic is that just 29 percent of consumers feel like they can access the data that companies collect, suggesting that companies may not be as transparent as they'd hoped.

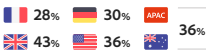## Biggest data priorities for businesses in 2020

44% say to ensure customer data is secure.

🇫🇷 33% 🇩🇪 41% APAC
🇬🇧 43% 🇺🇸 46% 🇦🇺 47%
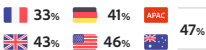
35% say training the company to better understand and use data effectively.

🇫🇷 27% 🇩🇪 34% APAC
🇬🇧 33% 🇺🇸 37% 🇦🇺 41%
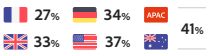
35% say ensuring data is useful to their organisation.

🇫🇷 28% 🇩🇪 30% APAC
🇬🇧 43% 🇺🇸 36% 🇦🇺 36%

What consumers expect from data privacy

85% believe they have the right not to be tracked online.

🇫🇷 80% 🇩🇪 80% APAC
🇬🇧 84% 🇺🇸 88% 🇦🇺 88%

67% are worried about identity theft.

🇫🇷 74% 🇩🇪 53% APAC
🇬🇧 64% 🇺🇸 68% 🇦🇺 77%
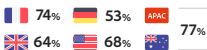
48% think their personal data will be compromised eventually.

🇫🇷 48% 🇩🇪 48% APAC
🇬🇧 43% 🇺🇸 47% 🇦🇺 54%
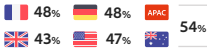
31% agree that they're able to access data that companies collect about them.

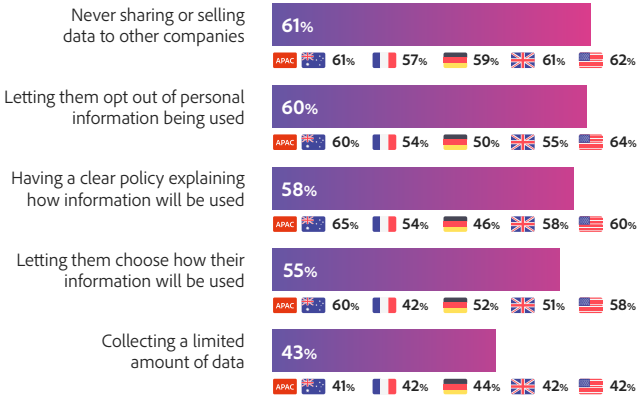🇫🇷 36% 🇩🇪 31% APAC
🇬🇧 37% 🇺🇸 29% 🇦🇺 36%
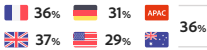
Provide the security consumers are craving

In looking for ways for businesses to start earning consumer trust, an interesting nuance in our results suggests that transparency may not be enough. For businesses, the path to trust is better communication about data use. But consumers actually want more control.

Ways companies think they establish trust

Transparent data-handling policies
52%
APAC 53% | 45% | 54% | 50% | 53%

Letting consumers select what data they share
48%
APAC 52% | 45% | 49% | 48% | 47%

Disclosing why they're collecting data and how they'll use it
46%
APAC 51% | 42% | 47% | 45% | 45%

Adhering to global standards
41%
APAC 42% | 29% | 44% | 45% | 41%

Immediately disclosing any data loss or security issues
39%
APAC 44% | 37% | 37% | 41% | 38%
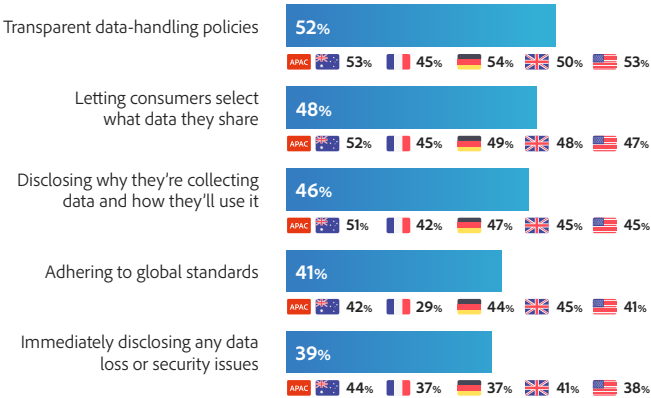
What consumers say companies can do to gain their trust

Never sharing or selling data to other companies
61%
APAC 61% | 57% | 59% | 61% | 62%

Letting them opt out of personal information being used
60%
APAC 60% | 54% | 50% | 55% | 64%

Having a clear policy explaining how information will be used
58%
APAC 65% | 54% | 46% | 58% | 60%

Letting them choose how their information will be used
55%
APAC 60% | 42% | 52% | 51% | 58%

Collecting a limited amount of data
**43%**
APAC 41% | 42% | 44% | 42% | 42%

The perceived risk of data breaches

This gap between transparency and control suggests a bigger disconnect between how businesses and consumers think about data. For example, businesses who've suffered data breaches believe the breach had little or no negative effect on their business. And yet customer concerns about data breaches is high. Over half said they would stop doing business with a company if they experienced identity theft as a result of a breach. Clearly brands can try harder to put themselves in their customers' shoes and see the risk from their perspective.
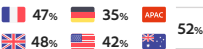
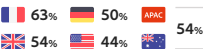## What would lead consumers to stop doing business

57% Identity theft

🇫🇷 **56%** 🇩🇪 **51%** APAC
🇬🇧 **60%** 🇺🇸 **57%** 🇦🇺 **57%**
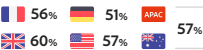
43% Personal data gets compromised in a data breach

🇫🇷 **47%** 🇩🇪 **35%** APAC
🇬🇧 **48%** 🇺🇸 **42%** 🇦🇺 **52%**

49% Credit or bank card frozen due to fraudulent activity

🇫🇷 **63%** 🇩🇪 **50%** APAC
🇬🇧 **54%** 🇺🇸 **44%** 🇦🇺 **54%**

33% Their social media or email account gets hacked

🇫🇷 **41%** 🇩🇪 **31%** APAC
🇬🇧 **35%** 🇺🇸 **30%** 🇦🇺 **41%**

What businesses say about breaches

74% of businesses have never experienced a breach.

		APAC
🇫🇷 62%	🇩🇪 67%	66%
🇬🇧 74%	🇺🇸 80%	🇦🇺
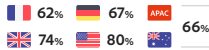
But 88% of those who have believe it had little or no negative impact on their business.

|		APAC
🇫🇷 84%	🇩🇪 88%	85%
🇬🇧 88%	🇺🇸 89%	🇦🇺
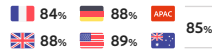
# Empathy can mitigate the risk of breaches

While data breaches can certainly have a negative impact, brands have shown that the response to the breach is much more important. Of the 20 percent of businesses who have experienced a breach, 57 percent said that their response resulted in a positive impact on their brand. This could explain why consumers responded differently to a data breach than they claimed they would. Over two-thirds report having experienced a breach, but just 15 percent actually stopped doing business with the company.

Consumers who have experienced a data breach

28% had their social media or email account hacked.

		APAC
🇫🇷 25%	🇩🇪 18%	32%
🇬🇧 25%	🇺🇸 31%	🇦🇺
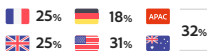
27% had a credit or bank card frozen due to fraudulent activity.

		APAC
🇫🇷 20%	🇩🇪 9%	23%
🇬🇧 25%	🇺🇸 33%	🇦🇺
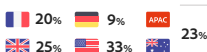
25% had their personal data compromised.

		APAC
🇫🇷 13%	🇩🇪 14%	23%
🇬🇧 14%	🇺🇸 33%	🇦🇺

How consumers responded to a breach

35% took more steps to protect their privacy.

		APAC
🇫🇷 27%	🇩🇪 19%	43%
🇬🇧 32%	🇺🇸 39%	🇦🇺

19% complained to the company.

		APAC
🇫🇷 12%	🇩🇪 12%	22%
🇬🇧 19%	🇺🇸 22%	🇦🇺
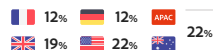
15% stopped doing business with the company.

		APAC
🇫🇷 10%	🇩🇪 13%	16%
🇬🇧 14%	🇺🇸 15%	🇦🇺
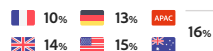
Consumers who have experienced a data breach (continued)

11% experienced identity theft.

🇫🇷 6%	🇩🇪 6%	APAC
🇬🇧 7%	🇺🇸 14%	🇦🇺 10%

What businesses have to say after a breach

26% of brands have experienced a data breach.

🇫🇷 38%	🇩🇪 33%	APAC
🇬🇧 26%	🇺🇸 20%	🇦🇺 34%

41% of that group reported a positive impact of their response to the breach.

🇫🇷 15%	🇩🇪 32%	APAC
🇬🇧 24%	🇺🇸 57%	🇦🇺 32%

How consumers responded to a breach (continued)

9% talked about it on social media.

🇫🇷 11%	🇩🇪 5%	APAC
🇬🇧 7%	🇺🇸 9%	🇦🇺 12%

6% complained to the government or took legal action.

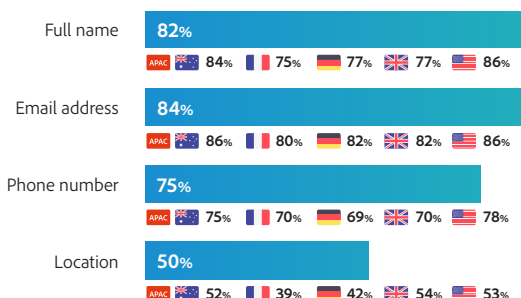| 🇫🇷 8%	🇩🇪 4%	APAC
🇬🇧 4%	🇺🇸 5%	🇦🇺 10%
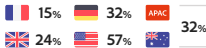
Make data collection worth consumers' time

Still, companies don't always seem to be in step with what their customers are willing to do. For example, only 25 percent of consumers say they're willing to share telephone numbers. But 78 percent of businesses claim to ask for them. This begs the question of what value customers receive in exchange.
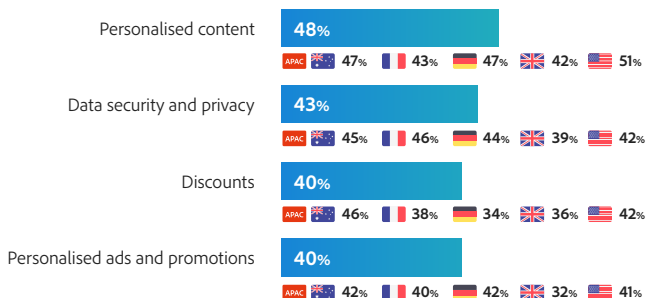
What consumers are willing to share

At least some personal information — 80%
APAC 83% | 🇫🇷 84% | 🇩🇪 72% | 🇬🇧 83% | 🇺🇸 80%

Email address — 59%
APAC 66% | 🇫🇷 63% | 🇩🇪 50% | 🇬🇧 65% | 🇺🇸 57%

Full name — 50%
APAC 50% | 🇫🇷 61% | 🇩🇪 39% | 🇬🇧 58% | 🇺🇸 50%

Demographic details — 30%
APAC 29% | 🇫🇷 27% | 🇩🇪 27% | 🇬🇧 29% | 🇺🇸 31%

Phone number — 24%
APAC 31% | 🇫🇷 25% | 🇩🇪 13% | 🇬🇧 23% | 🇺🇸 25%

Location — 22%
APAC 22% | 🇫🇷 25% | 🇩🇪 21% | 🇬🇧 24% | 🇺🇸 21%
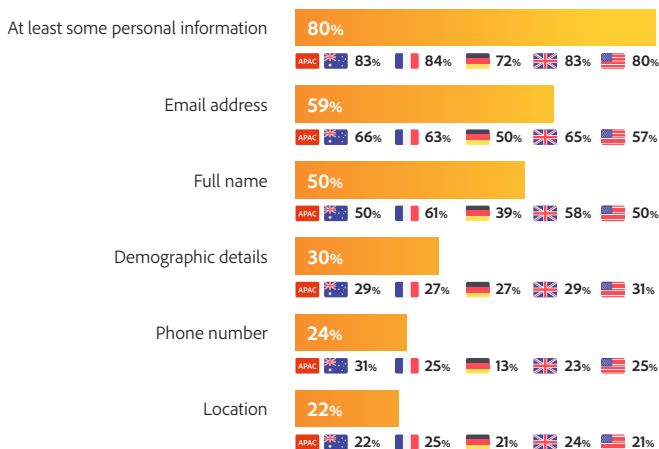
What info businesses collect

Full name — 82%
APAC 84% | 🇫🇷 75% | 🇩🇪 77% | 🇬🇧 77% | 🇺🇸 86%

Email address — 84%
APAC 86% | 🇫🇷 80% | 🇩🇪 82% | 🇬🇧 82% | 🇺🇸 86%

Phone number — 75%
APAC 75% | 🇫🇷 70% | 🇩🇪 69% | 🇬🇧 70% | 🇺🇸 78%

Location — 50%
APAC 52% | 🇫🇷 39% | 🇩🇪 42% | 🇬🇧 54% | 🇺🇸 53%

Benefits businesses claim customers get from data collection

Personalised content — 48%
APAC 47% | 🇫🇷 43% | 🇩🇪 47% | 🇬🇧 42% | 🇺🇸 51%

Data security and privacy — 43%
APAC 45% | 🇫🇷 46% | 🇩🇪 44% | 🇬🇧 39% | 🇺🇸 42%

Discounts — 40%
APAC 46% | 🇫🇷 38% | 🇩🇪 34% | 🇬🇧 36% | 🇺🇸 42%

Personalised ads and promotions — 40%
APAC 42% | 🇫🇷 40% | 🇩🇪 42% | 🇬🇧 32% | 🇺🇸 41%

Personalisation is not optional

When consumers agree to give companies their personal information, they're giving away something valuable — so companies should provide valuable experiences in return. And that starts with personalisation, whether that's delivering relevant real-time interactions, supporting needs and access in a digital-first world or delivering timely and targeted communications and updates. Over half of companies claim they have extensive personalisation capabilities, but whether they are the right kinds of personalisation remains to be seen.

What makes an ideal personal experience for consumers

Treat me like a person, not a number.

They would send me information about new things that came about that I'm interested in or have bought before. Or they would tell me when things I like are on sale or available when they weren't before.

I like how Amazon does it — stored payment types, delivery addresses and a list of previous orders to reorder from.

Great experiences stand out

Personalisation is what drives the best customer experiences — but only when it's done right. And it all hinges on truly meeting consumer needs and, most of all, treating them like people and not data — especially in times of need. When it's done right, it can help brands start to outperform competitors and increase loyalty.
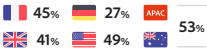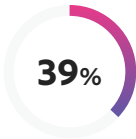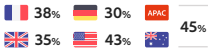
What consumers love about personalisation

48%
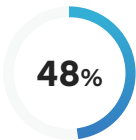
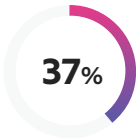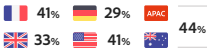48% like it when they're recognised when they call or log in.

🇫🇷 48% 🇩🇪 25% APAC 55%
🇬🇧 45% 🇺🇸 53% 🇦🇺

45%
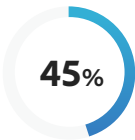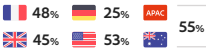
45% like getting content that's geared toward their interests.

🇫🇷 45% 🇩🇪 27% APAC 53%
🇬🇧 41% 🇺🇸 49% 🇦🇺

40%

40% like offers, promos and info that match their needs.

🇫🇷 38% 🇩🇪 30% APAC 45%
🇬🇧 35% 🇺🇸 43% 🇦🇺

39%

39% like virtual assistants that anticipate their needs.

🇫🇷 41% 🇩🇪 29% APAC 44%
🇬🇧 33% 🇺🇸 41% 🇦🇺

37%

37% like offers/ads that match their interests.

🇫🇷 36% 🇩🇪 27% APAC 44%
🇬🇧 35% 🇺🇸 39% 🇦🇺
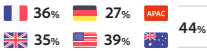
81% of businesses say their digital marketing and advertising efforts have differentiated them from their competitors.

APAC 🇦🇺 85% 🇫🇷 82% 🇩🇪 81% 🇬🇧 79% 🇺🇸 80%

Data can unlock new possibilities

When used correctly and securely, customer information is a powerful tool that companies can use to create personal experiences that are truly valuable to consumers — things like enhanced in-store experiences, smoother point-of-sale transactions and more. Luckily, most brands seem ready to use that data to improve the customer experience (CX) — it's now just a matter of putting it into practice.
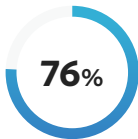
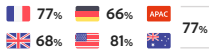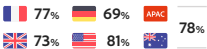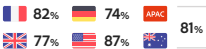**Businesses are poised to deliver on data**

83%
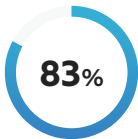
83% believe their department is organised to improve CX.

| 🇫🇷 82% | 🇩🇪 74% | APAC 81% |
| 🇬🇧 77% | 🇺🇸 87% | 🇦🇺 |

78%
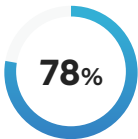
78% believe their organisation has the right tools to use data to improve CX.

| 🇫🇷 77% | 🇩🇪 69% | APAC 78% |
| 🇬🇧 73% | 🇺🇸 81% | 🇦🇺 |

76%

76% believe consumers will share more data as they see more value.

| 🇫🇷 77% | 🇩🇪 66% | APAC 77% |
| 🇬🇧 68% | 🇺🇸 81% | 🇦🇺 |

Top three compelling experiences for consumers

Receive information for the products they're looking for while they're in a store.

Use a membership card so that purchases are automatically charged to their account.

See clothing models that match their size, which they've provided, when browsing online.

Move confidently into the future

While there is still a divide between what consumers expect from data practices and what businesses are delivering, the future is bright. With the right technology and principles, brands can start creating transparent, empathetic and valuable experiences that are driven by data and are part of an agile, resilient business strategy. Experiences that are built on trust. Experiences that drive lasting customer loyalty.

Learn how you can start creating data-driven experiences with Adobe Experience Cloud.

Get details

Methodology

The data in this article came from two surveys we conducted.

Adobe Consumer Unleash Data Survey

The survey

- 5,172 global adults 18 or older with a technology device.
- Conducted online between 16-22 January 2020.

The people

Age

Gen Z	1996 or later	12%
Millennials	1977–1995	32%
Gen X	1965–1976	18%
Baby Boomers	1946–1964	35%
Traditionalists	1945 or earlier	3%

Income

Under 10K	11%
£10K-£29,9K	22%
£30K-£49,9K	24%
£50K–£69,9K	19%
£70K–£99,9K	13%
£100K–£249,9K	10%
£250K+	2%

Education

Secondary school or less	29%
Some university	38%
University graduate	23%
Post-graduate	9%

Adobe Unleash the Power of Data Marketer Study

The survey

- 2,028 full-time marketers who worked full time and managed a team.
- Conducted online between 13-24 January 2020.

Organisations

Technology (B2B and B2C)	19%
Retail and consumer packaged goods	13%
Professional services	11%
Manufacturing	11%
Financial services and insurance	9%
Healthcare/life sciences	7%
Media and entertainment	5%
Education	5%
Travel and hospitality	4%
Automotive	3%
Government/military	2%
Advertising/consulting	2%

People

IT	26%
Business operations and services	14%
Other	13%
Sales	12%
C-suite/company executive	11%
Marketing	5%
Accounting/finance	4%
Product management	4%
Consulting	3%
Design or creative services	3%
Advertising	2%
HR	2%
R&D	2%