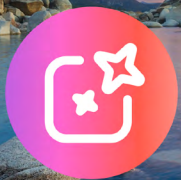
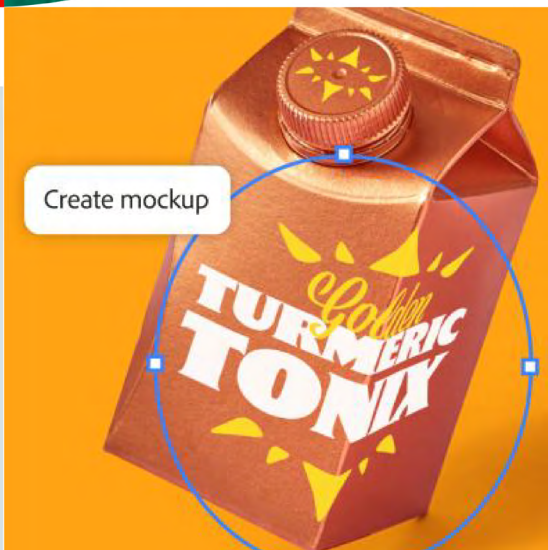
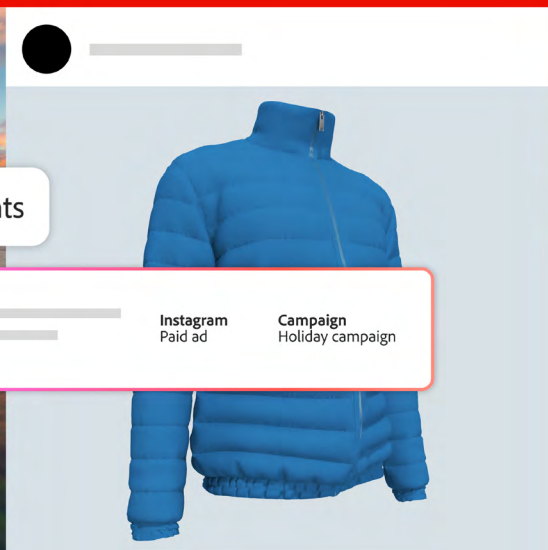
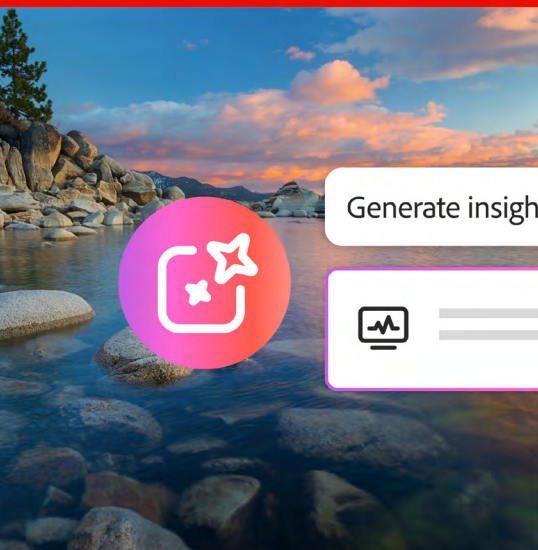




# 2025 AI and Digital Trends

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Generate insights

Instagram Paid ad Campaign Holiday campaign

Create mockup

# 2025 AI and Digital Trends

## Table of contents

- Executive summary** **3**
  
- Section 1: Driving growth through AI.** **4**
  - From insights to innovation: Personalisation's turbo boost. 4
  - Tech leads the way, but people stay at the centre in 2025 plans. 5
  - Transforming AI adoption into measurable results. 6
  - The rising demands on marketing. 6
  
- Section 2: Exceptional experiences start with connected data.** **7**
  - Why personalisation still falls short. 9
  - Fragmented data holds back real-time personalisation. 9
  - From data silos to connected experiences. 10
  
- Section 3: Generative AI expands from efficiency to engagement.** **11**
  - Success with AI demands urgency and precision. 12
  - Accelerating AI adoption with virtual assistants leading the way. 14
  - The evolution toward agentic AI. 15
  
- Section 4: Balancing innovation, trust, and organisational change.** **16**
  - Rising demand, limited resources: The case for operational agentic AI. 16
  - Building a strong data foundation. 17
  - Defining distributed ownership of the customer journey. 19
  - AI's role in CX and marketing: Aligning marketing and technology teams. 20
  
- Recommendations** **21**
  
- Methodology** **22**
  - Executive survey 22
  - Consumer survey 22

# Executive summary

Businesses are poised for meaningful change in 2025. They've aligned priorities and technologies to deliver truly personalised customer experiences — powered by advanced tools and smarter use of data, which have unlocked insights that were once out of reach. Most notably, the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) is moving beyond the pilot stage and delivering measurable returns as leading organisations redefine how they connect with customers, streamline operations, and drive innovation.

## Key learnings:

- **Companies are taking bold steps to unlock the potential of generative AI.** The benefits are transformative — accelerating revenue growth, boosting productivity, and enabling more efficient content creation. Establishing clear ROI metrics is critical for scaling these initiatives, and starts with fostering data unity and strong cross-departmental collaboration.
- **Privacy concerns and the complexity of AI adoption remain significant hurdles.** Integrating customer data demands robust privacy, security, and governance frameworks. As organisations deepen their AI adoption, managing these complexities demands greater focus and resources. Early adopters set clear objectives and metrics.
- **Agentic AI opens new opportunities to enhance both experiences and workflows.** Autonomous AI agents working together will deliver efficiency gains and smarter support for marketers while providing consumers with a concierge-like experience of convenience, speed, and personalisation. As this emerging solution gains a foothold, agentic AI is poised to reshape how marketers scale their efforts, improve quality, and boost conversions.
- **Organisations are moving beyond understanding customer needs to anticipating them.** What once felt exceptional is now the standard. Customers expect effortless, meaningful interactions — yet many organisations still struggle to deliver relevant and timely experiences across the entire journey. This year, AI and predictive analytics have emerged as top priorities, enabling teams to address these challenges.
- **Real-time insights depend on unified platforms built for connection and interoperability.** However, significant hurdles remain — particularly around how resources are allocated as organisations grapple with fragmented data and integration issues. Incremental approaches to connecting data often result in disjointed systems, unclear strategies, and failure to treat data as a strategic asset.
- **Disparity in ownership of the customer journey gets in the way of delivering consistent experiences.** Responsibility for the customer journey is often split between customer experience (CX) specialists, technologists, and marketers. While this structure brings diverse expertise, it also creates friction, resulting in disjointed experiences and wasted resources.

# Section 1:

## Driving growth through AI.

In 2025, AI and predictive analytics are redefining how marketers drive growth, enabling deeply tailored strategies that anticipate customer needs and deliver measurable business results.

### From insights to innovation: Personalisation's turbo boost.

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of senior executives identify leveraging AI and predictive analytics as primary contributors to growth in 2025 (Figure 1). These technologies have the potential to create next-level personalisation — faster, at scale, and more efficient than ever before. With 61% of the senior executives agreeing that boosting customer engagement with personalised experiences will be critical to achieving growth, investment in these initiatives will be a priority.

**Figure 1: Marketing and technology initiatives expected to drive growth in 2025**

Leveraging AI and predictive analytics to increase customer retention and loyalty



Boosting customer engagement with more personalised experiences



Driving efficiency and velocity by automating the customer journey



Accelerating marketing with increased flow of content



Unifying data to deliver a consistent customer experience



Optimising digital spend

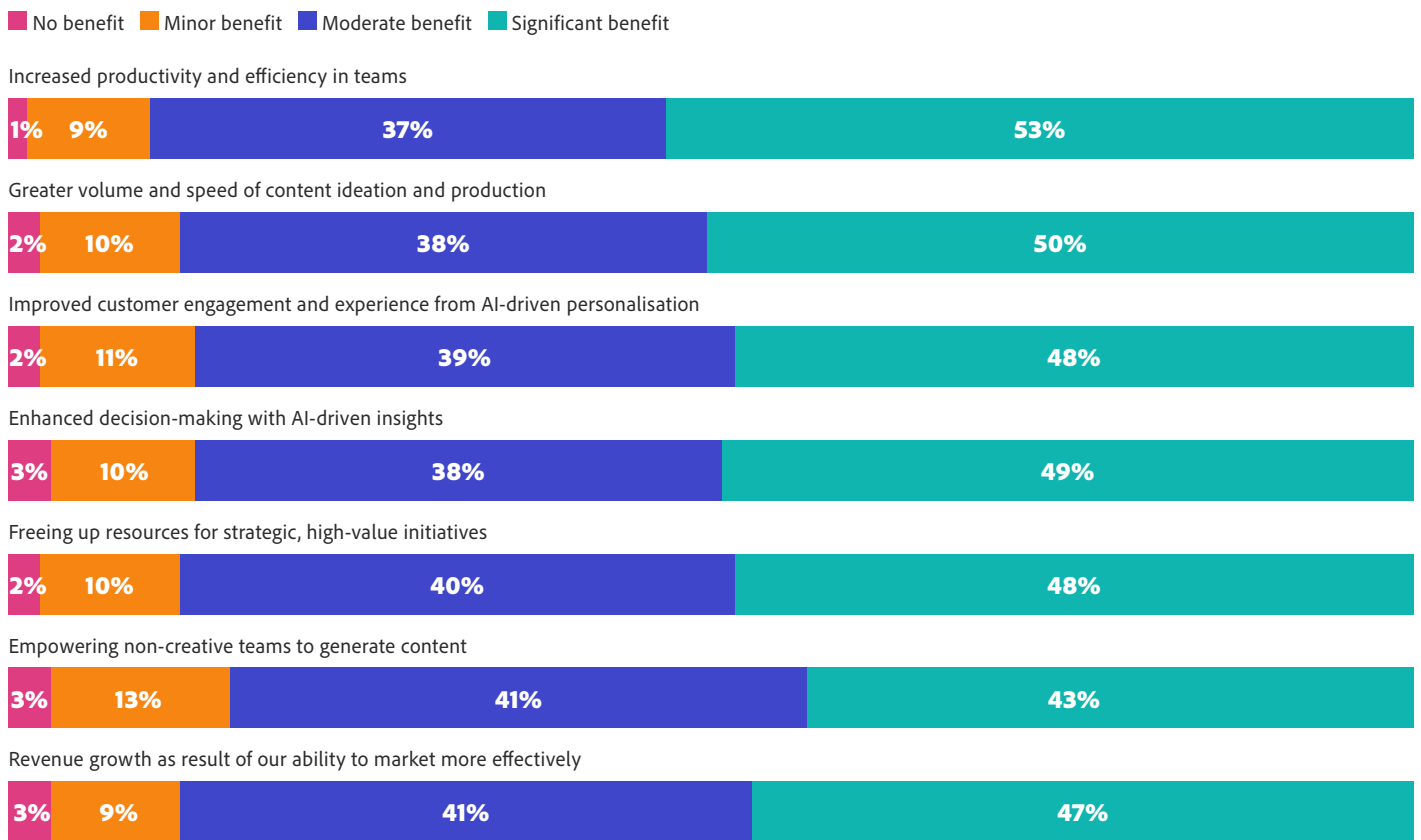


Base: 1,272 senior executives



The value of investing in AI isn't just speculative — organisations are already experiencing real-world benefits. For instance, 53% of senior executives using generative AI report significant improvements in team efficiency, while 50% point to faster ideation and content production (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Senior executives' assessment of benefits experienced from generative AI over the past year**



Base: 1,147 senior executives

## Tech leads the way, but people stay at the centre in 2025 plans.

It's no surprise that senior executives are prioritising technology, data, and digital strategies in their 2025 spending plans.

According to our survey, 80% plan to increase spending on new technology, including 31% who expect to spend "significantly more." Similarly, 79% intend to boost investment in customer data and analytics, and 78% plan to increase their digital media budgets.

However, technology investment isn't replacing people. Reducing headcount remains a low priority; in fact, 69% of senior executives plan to increase spending on talent. Forward-thinking organisations view technology as a way to enhance human capabilities, not replace them.

Leading organisations recognise that success takes more than just adopting new tools.



**"Generative AI isn't a one-click solution; you still need skilled professionals, like copywriters, who understand brand nuances and audience expectations."**

**Christen Jones**

Executive Creative Director at Inizio Evoke

# Transforming AI adoption into measurable results.

Using AI to support rather than replace talent pays off.

While companies like Mattel Future Lab are enjoying clear workflow benefits, converting these day-to-day gains into measurable business outcomes remains a common challenge. In fact, only 12% of organisations have working solutions in place that demonstrate a clear ROI (Figure 3).

For the majority, the challenge is in moving from pilot to proof. Encouragingly, over half are moving in the right direction, whether undertaking pilots and evaluating results (27%) or rolling out working solutions and evaluating their effectiveness (27%).

Transitioning from testing to full-scale adoption with measurable ROI requires undertaking meaningful steps in organisational change and financial investment, placing added pressure on marketing teams.

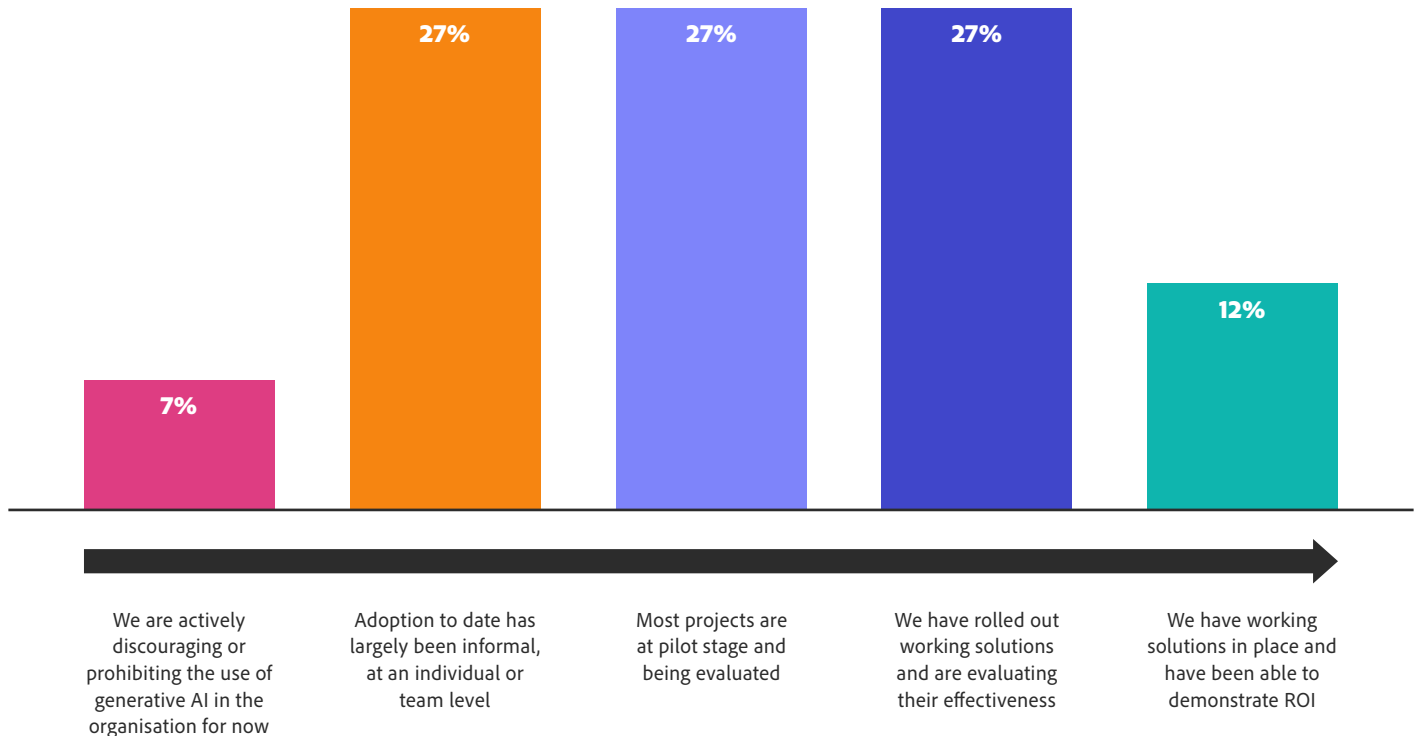


**“We’re using generative AI as a copilot for ideation, helping us iterate and validate ideas quickly. It allows us to put concepts on paper or screens faster, creating immediate feedback loops and improving collaboration.”**

**Ron Friedman**

Vice President of Mattel Future Lab

**Figure 3: Status of generative AI implementation for marketing and CX**



Base: 3,260 senior executives and practitioners

## The rising demands on marketing.

The widening gap between the AI “haves” and “have nots” is especially visible in marketing, where teams face rising expectations. More than three-quarters (78%) of senior marketing executives say their organisations expect them to deliver growth using data and AI, even as new tools are being integrated into workflows.

Accountability is intensifying as marketers face mounting demands to deliver more of everything in 2025 compared to 2024. According to our survey, 44% of practitioners anticipate increased pressure to drive engagement and conversions. Similarly, 43% expect heightened demands to scale content output while keeping it personalised and relevant.

These efforts do pay off, however, as Amanda Forte, head of personal investor public site at [Vanguard](#), explains:

**“With greater content creation speed, we can accelerate product launches and deliver updated, personalised content on the website. Because of this, we see much higher engagement on the new website, with a 264% increase in organic traffic and 176% increase in quality engagement.”**

Marketers face increasing pressure to produce more content at a faster pace, but this can't be at the expense of quality. As Helen Wallace, creative director at Deloitte Digital, points out:

**“Focusing on the content supply chain isn't just about delivering content faster and more efficiently. It's about creating and activating content that engages people on an individual level. We use technology to learn, improve, and respond to our clients.”**

---

## **Section 2:**

# **Exceptional experiences start with connected data.**

Organisations are acutely aware of the need to bridge the gaps in their customer experience. But even with AI, delivering memorable experiences is getting tougher. Only 14% of practitioners report being able to deliver exceptional digital customer experiences that surprise and delight — a sharp decline from 25% in the previous year's report.

Personalisation is not just a name in a subject line; it's about creating deep connections. Organisations stand out and build loyalty when they successfully deliver relevance and recognition at the right moment.

Leo Griffin, vice president and global head of consumer technology at [HanesBrands Inc.](#), says:

**“Personalisation helps our consumers feel known. It helps them cut through the clutter and have an efficient and hopefully pleasurable shopping experience where they find what they want.”**

However, personalisation at scale is still more of an aspiration than a reality for most organisations. As Figure 4 shows, 71% of consumers want brands to anticipate their needs with personalised offers or helpful information, but only 34% of brands deliver. Similarly, 78% of consumers expect a seamless experience across digital and physical channels, yet only 45% of brands meet this expectation.

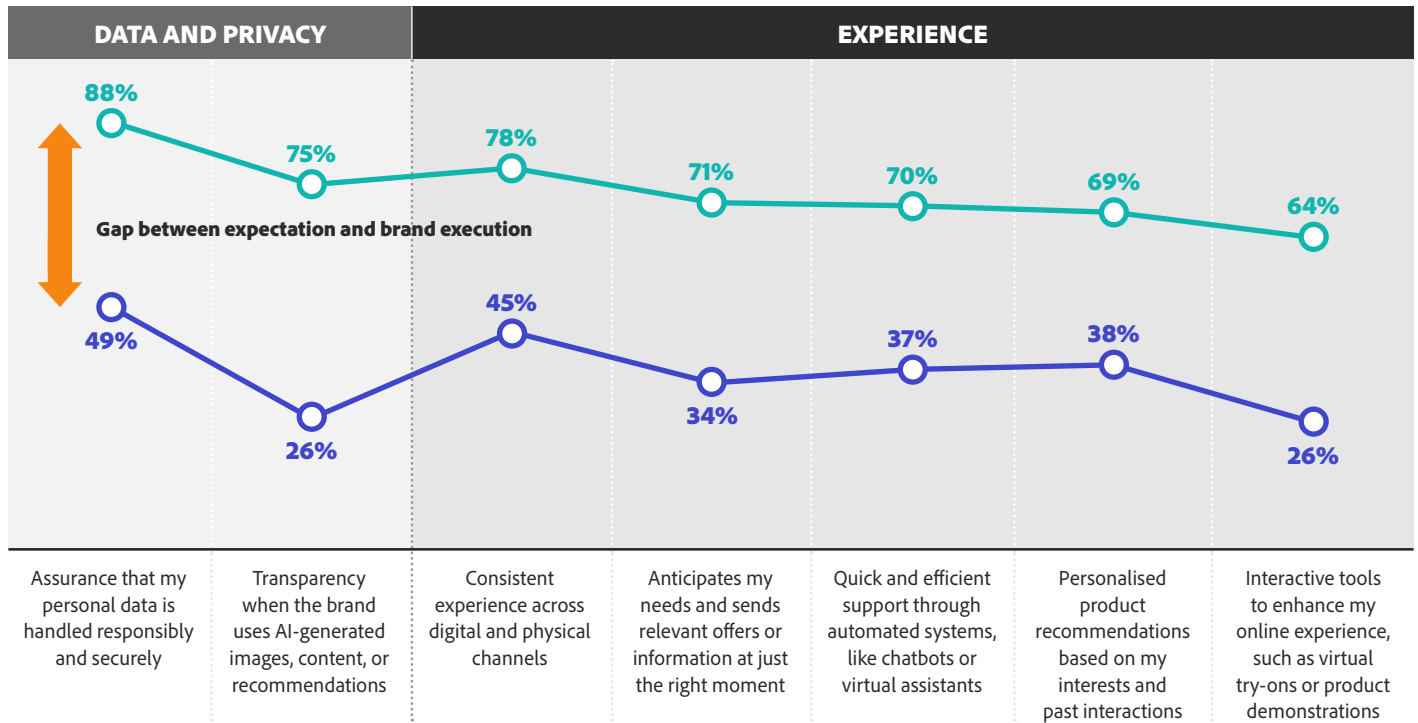
In fact, the majority of organisations under-deliver in every area — whether it's offering interactive tools like virtual try-ons and product demos or being transparent about their use of AI and data.

Concerningly, 88% of consumers expect assurance that their personal data is handled responsibly and securely, but only 49% of organisations meet this expectation. This trust gap is particularly significant given that personalisation depends on customers being willing to share their data in the first place.

**Figure 4: The gap between customer expectation and brand execution**

(% of consumers rating important/critical versus % of organisations that deliver effectively).

○ Customer expectation (% consumers rate important/critical)    ○ Satisfaction with brand execution (% say brand delivers effectively)



Base: 8,301 consumers

These gaps help to explain why just 15% of organisations achieve surprise and delight in their customer engagements. Closing this divide requires organisations to align their digital investments with what matters most to their audiences — turning personalisation at scale into a tangible reality.

For organisations willing to invest in personalisation, the payoff is clear. Danish telecom provider Telmore’s AI-driven personalisation delivered an 11% sales lift compared to non-personalised experiences.

As Frederik Scholten, [Telmore’s](#) CMO, explains:

**“We’re shifting away from optimising experiences for audiences to giving each person what they want. Customers see more relevant offers, encouraging them to add on services or even switch over from competitors.”**



## Why personalisation still falls short.

The personalisation execution gap largely stems from a lack of real-time capabilities. While 47% of practitioners use analytics to predict customer needs by segment or persona, only 39% routinely personalise website experiences, and just 31% update offers based on customers' most recent activity (Figure 5).

### Figure 5: Practitioners' approaches to routinely personalising digital content

We use data and analytics to predict customer needs by segment and/or persona

47%

We make recommendations based on previous purchase and browsing behaviour

42%

We use data and algorithms to personalise the website experience

39%

We use AI-driven chatbots to deliver real time customer support

36%

Offers are updated in real time to reflect customers' most recent browsing and purchase behaviour

31%

We use generative AI to craft emails, messages, and other copy

31%

We use generative AI to personalise images, infographics, or video content

27%

None of these

7%

Base: 1,997 practitioners

TSB Bank demonstrates the transformative potential of bridging this gap. Using real-time data to personalise loan offers based on recent customer activity, mobile loan sales increased by 300%, while in-app applications jumped from 24% to 75% of total sales.

[TSB's CMO Emma Springham](#) highlights why this matters:

**"Banking is inherently personal and has a more profound impact on customers than many other sectors. Personalised digital experiences help us to build deeper, more meaningful connections with those who trust us to manage their money."**

## Fragmented data holds back real-time personalisation.

Seamless data is the backbone of real-time personalisation, whether customers are browsing or buying. On a scale ranging from not an issue to critically challenged: Three-quarters of practitioners report being unable to personalise in real time. This spans every aspect of personalisation, from understanding customer behaviour to delivering consistent messaging and engaging at critical moments (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Practitioners' perspectives on how fragmented or siloed data impacts their ability to deliver personalised experiences**

■ A critical issue ■ A significant issue ■ Impacts us sometimes ■ Not an issue

We cannot personalise in real time



We do not know enough about our customers to adequately personalise/tailor content



We lack a consistent presence across channels



Customers receive inconsistent or conflicting messages



We are unable to engage customers at critical moments



Base: 1,997 practitioners

As we'll see in Section 4, executives often point to caution around data privacy, security, and governance as the biggest barriers to connecting customer data. However, while it's true that data safety and transparency remain non-negotiable for consumers, the experiences they value depend on real-time access to data.

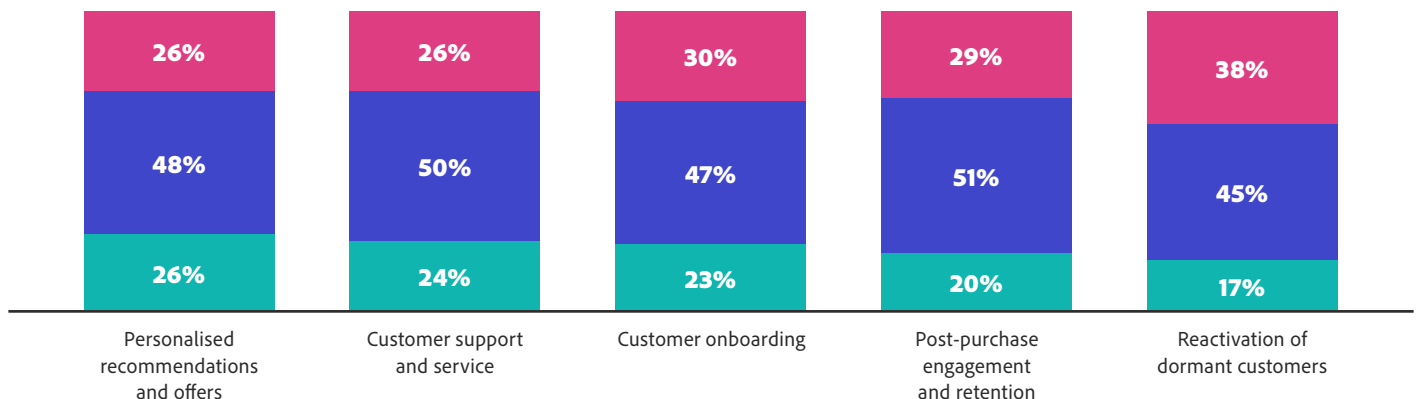
To compete, organisations must invest in connecting and unifying data, at the same time ensuring it's accessed safely while meeting business needs.

## From data silos to connected experiences.

Fragmented data isn't the only challenge to seamless customer experiences. Most organisations have only partially automated — or not automated at all — key capabilities like personalised recommendations (74% not fully automated) and customer support (76%). These gaps are even wider in post-purchase engagement, such as retention (80%) and reactivating dormant customers (83%) (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: The extent to which customer journeys and activation systems remain active and responsive to customer actions in real time**

■ Fully automated and always on ■ Partially automated ■ Not automated



Base: 1,834 practitioners

Organisations are beginning to address these challenges. When asked about trends driving their technology investments, 62% of senior executives identify AI and machine learning advancements — particularly for workflows, decision-making, and hyper-personalisation — as top priorities over the next 12 to 24 months. Other critical focus areas include data integration and real-time insights (55%) and enhancing security, privacy, and compliance governance (55%).

Employing unified tools, breaking down data silos, and improving team collaboration will be essential to turn these priorities into actionable progress.

Encouragingly, despite ongoing economic pressures, organisations are stepping up their investments to support these goals. Senior executives expect marketing budgets to rise across 2025, with 30% anticipating a significant increase of more than 10%.

In our final section, we'll dive into how organisations will need to evolve to support AI-driven growth. But first, Section 3 focuses on how they can harness generative AI to boost productivity, unlock compounding advantages, and fuel continuous improvement and value creation.

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## Section 3:

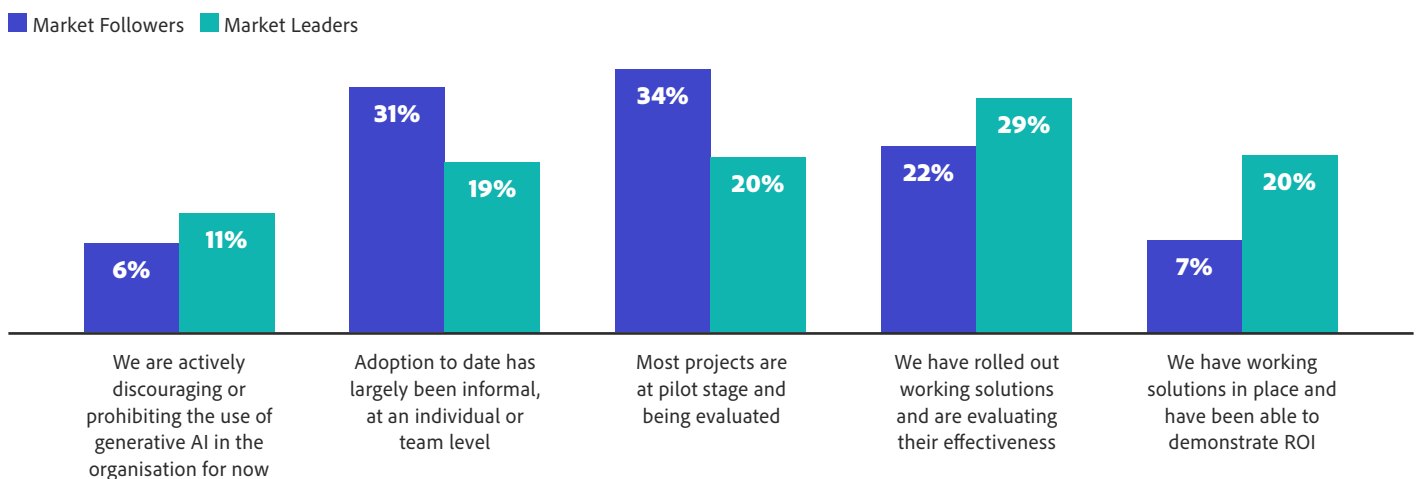
# Generative AI expands from efficiency to engagement.

The generative AI revolution is in full swing, with ambitions and excitement running high — though caution and siloed approaches are slowing adoption and execution.

Our data highlights a clear implementation divide in 2024: Market Leaders — organisations that outperformed their sector peers — versus Market Followers, those who merely kept pace or underperformed. Nearly half of Leaders already have working AI solutions in place, compared to just under a third of Followers, who are also three times less likely to have demonstrated ROI (Figure 8).

To stay competitive, let alone lead, organisations will need to commit faster and go further.

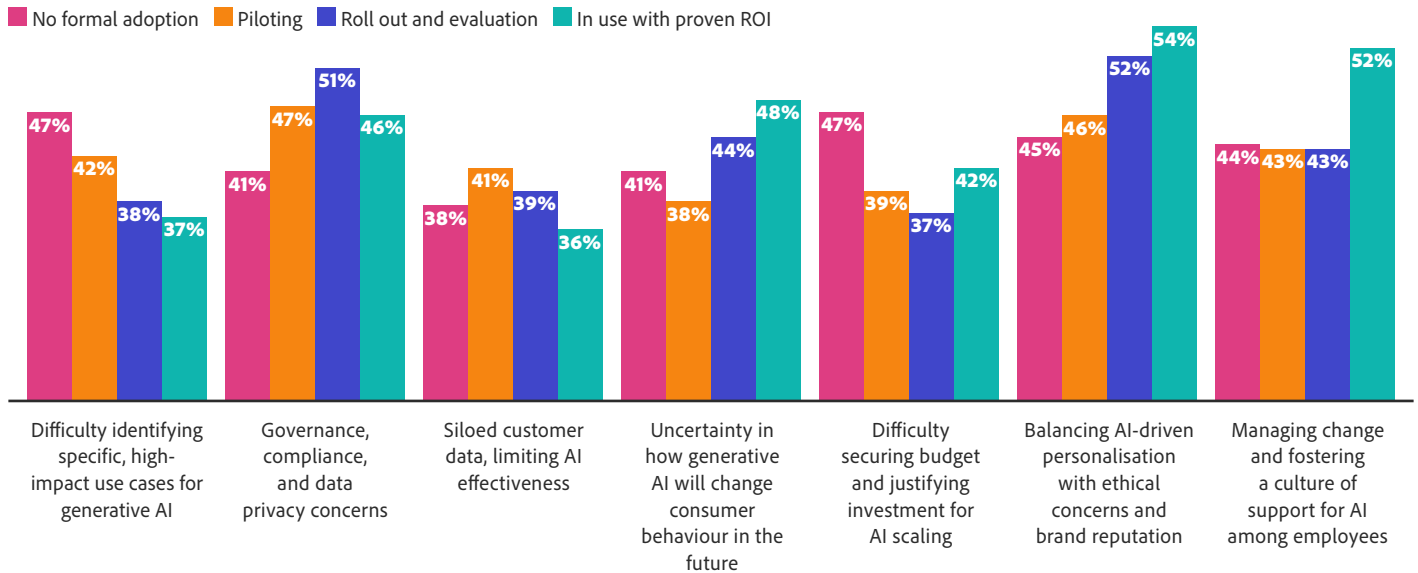
**Figure 8: Status of generative AI implementation for marketing and CX by performance groups (Market Leaders and Market Followers)**



Difficulties in finding use cases and in securing necessary budgets (both at 47%) are the two challenges most frequently cited by senior executives who are still at the start of their generative AI journey (Figure 9).

As organisations advance in their AI adoption journey, challenges become more complex and nuanced. Those with working AI solutions focus on balancing innovation with ethical considerations, protecting brand reputation (54%), and managing internal cultural shifts (52%). The question is no longer one of whether and where to adopt AI, but how to implement it effectively and responsibly.

**Figure 9: Senior executives' views on the most significant challenges in scaling generative AI by adoption level**



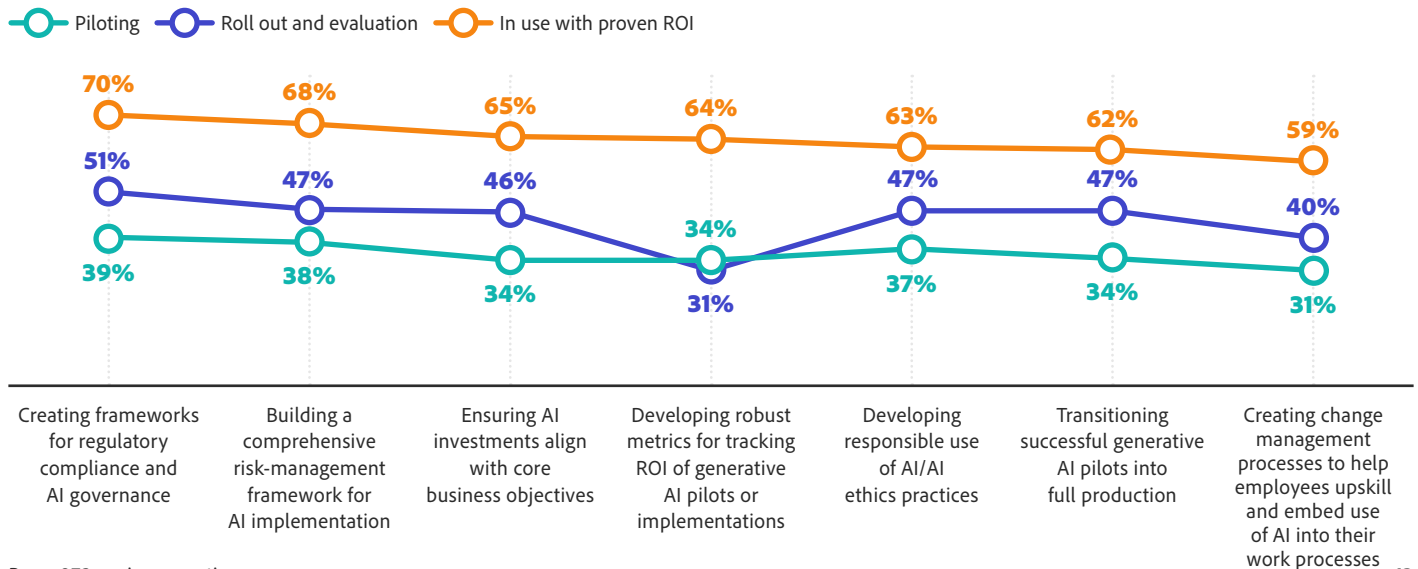
Base: 1,272 senior executives

## Success with AI demands urgency and precision.

Early adopters of rigorous ROI frameworks are surging ahead, leaving those without scrambling to catch up. Among companies with proven AI solutions, nearly two-thirds (64%) have completed their ROI measurement frameworks. In contrast, only 34% of those still in the pilot phase have developed robust metrics for tracking ROI (see Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Senior executives' assessment of their organisation's success in achieving AI objectives**

(% reporting significant progress on 80% or more of objectives), segmented by generative AI adoption level



Base: 872 senior executives

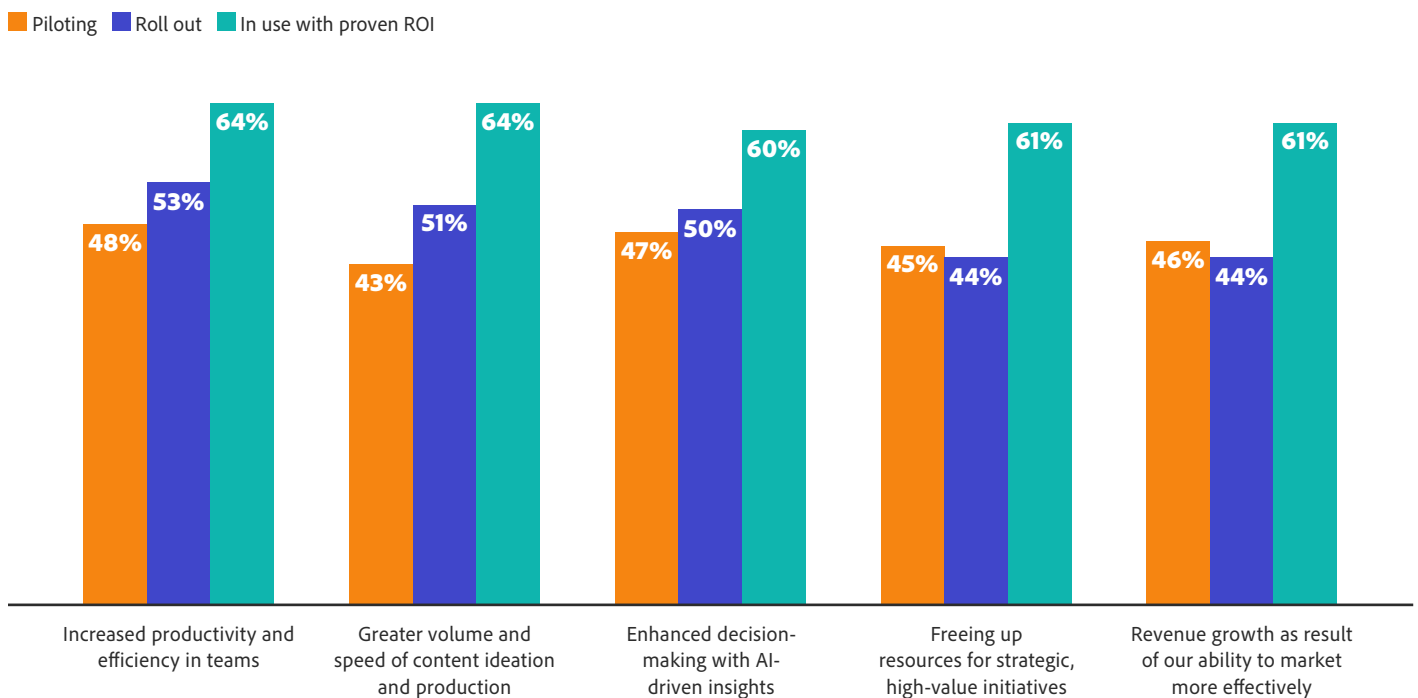
Those that delay, or fail to create these necessary foundations, will fall further and further behind. Organisations need to tackle regulatory frameworks, ROI tracking and metrics, and change management processes in parallel to scale AI effectively. As the figure below illustrates, forward-thinking organisations have embraced this synchronised approach.

However, scaling AI adoption also means addressing human challenges. Our survey reveals that 52% of organisations with proven ROI are now struggling to balance operational momentum with the cultural shifts needed to foster widespread employee support.

Even so, there are plenty of reasons for optimism — AI is already delivering results in the early stages of testing and adoption (Figure 11). Nearly half of organisations in pilot phases (48%) and more than half of those rolling out AI (53%) are reporting boosts in team productivity.

**Figure 11: Senior executives' experiences of generative AI benefits over the past year by adoption level**

(% significant benefit)



Base: 847 senior executives

Organisations successfully leveraging AI are showcasing its transformative potential. Among those reporting proven ROI, 64% cite faster content production and higher productivity, while similar numbers point to improved decision-making, freed-up resources for strategy, and revenue growth.

As Eric Perez, vice president of Design Hub at iHeartMedia, explains:

**“In fast-paced industries like radio, where everything is expected quickly, AI is a game changer. It speeds up brainstorming, concept development, and iterations, helping us meet rising demands without compromising quality or efficiency.”**

Speed matters, but precision is just as important — achieving both requires clear priorities, targeted investments, and a deliberate focus on scaling adoption. Success isn't just about technological advancements. It's also about aligning teams, equipping leaders to navigate change, and fostering adaptability across the organisation.



# Accelerating AI adoption with virtual assistants leading the way.

Practitioners using generative AI with proven ROI anticipate two key benefits in the next 12 to 24 months: better quality interactions (58%) and greater communication consistency (50%). These capabilities will help deliver against consumers' key expectations for brand engagement (see Section 2, Figure 4).

Practitioners are advancing generative AI efforts, focusing on chat and customer support tools — which are already delivering ROI for one in five users (19%) (Figure 12). Meanwhile, personalised customer journeys and content generation (video and static images) are emerging as high-growth opportunities. Although only 13% of practitioners report ROI in these areas, a notable 22% and 29% have yet to begin adoption.

**Figure 12: Practitioners' use of generative AI across various areas, from informal testing to seeing ROI**

■ Not using in this area ■ Informal testing ■ Piloting ■ In use but still evaluating ■ In use and already seeing ROI

Chat and customer support, e.g., chatbots, product customisation tools



Analysing data and customer interactions to uncover AI-driven insights



Generating ideas and creative concepts, e.g., brainstorming, content ideation, rough drafts



Using real-time data to personalise customer experiences across multiple channels and touchpoints, e.g., recommendations, offers, ads during browsing



Automating processes and streamlining workflows, e.g., tagging assets, assigning tasks, brand reviews



Optimising and orchestrating personalised customer journeys



Creating engaging videos quickly and efficiently, e.g., for social media, digital ads, product demos



Creating photoshoots, e.g., for product shots and creative content



Base: 1,872 practitioners

# The evolution toward agentic AI.

As generative AI advancements continue, consumers are demanding more adaptive, autonomous AI-powered support. Our consumer survey shows that nearly half of respondents would turn to an AI-powered assistant over a static web experience for tasks such as scheduling appointments or troubleshooting issues (Figure 13).

**Figure 13: Consumers' preferred channel when seeking information and support: AI-powered chatbots or assistants versus websites or FAQs (frequently asked questions)**



Base: 8,301 consumers

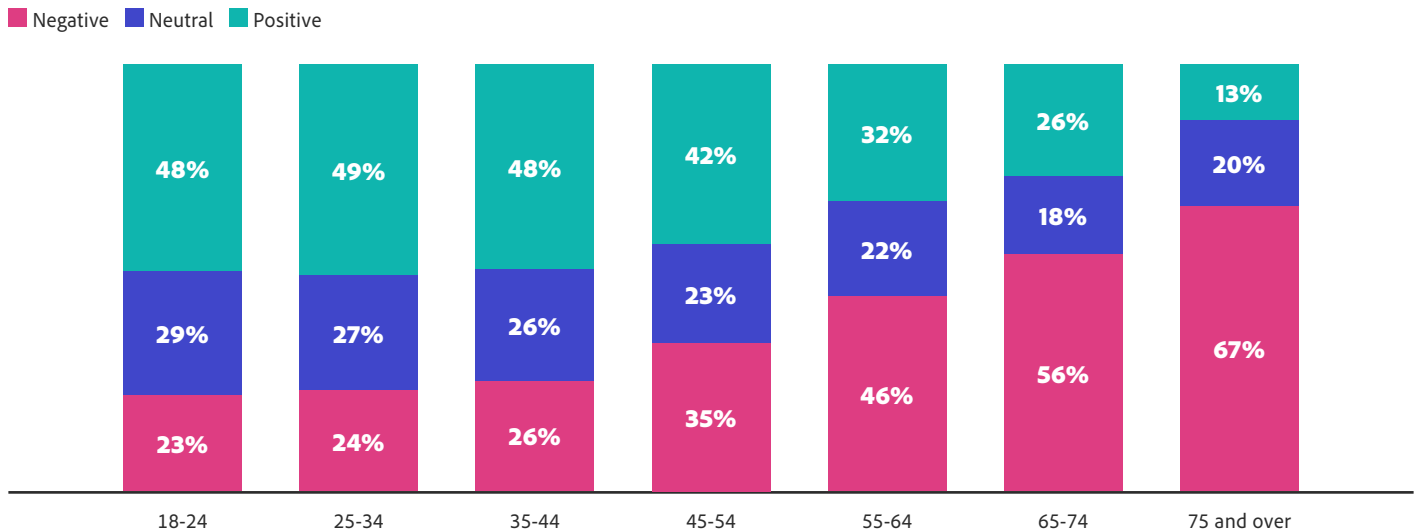
During 2024's Cyber Monday, that's exactly what they did, with a 1,950% year-over-year increase in retail site traffic from chatbot interactions. This surge in adoption highlights the readiness of consumers to embrace more advanced tools, including "agentic AI" or "AI agents."

Agentic AI reimagines what virtual assistants can do. Moving beyond simple tasks like tracking orders or updating account details, it takes the initiative — offering virtual product trials, personalised recommendations, and proactively providing support.

Being autonomous, agentic AI combines operational efficiency with standout, white-glove customer experiences. This is where organisations finally make the full leap from simply understanding consumer needs to anticipating them.

Younger audiences, in particular, show enthusiasm for these advanced features. As Figure 14 illustrates, nearly half of consumers under 45 welcome the idea of virtual shopping assistants that proactively add items to their carts based on their style preferences and past purchases.

**Figure 14: Consumers' feelings about a brand interacting through a virtual shopping assistant that browses sales and adds items to their cart based on style and past purchases by age group**



Base 7,963 consumers

However, for agentic AI to succeed, brands must address trust and transparency head-on. Nearly half (45%) of consumers in our survey said they prioritise having visibility and control over their data when interacting with brands. Meanwhile, a third (33%) demand clarity on how AI is being used to make recommendations.

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## Section 4:

# Balancing innovation, trust, and organisational change.

Generative AI is fueling growth, but scaling it from pilot to full adoption takes more than just technology — it requires the right talent, processes, and organisational mindset. Encouragingly, AI tools can help meet these demands, refining workflows and boosting both the volume and quality of output.

## Rising demand, limited resources: The case for operational agentic AI.

Senior executives see immense potential in generative AI, with 86% expecting it to significantly increase content speed and volume. For marketing and CX teams, however, the reality is more complex — 56% report that implementing generative AI adds strain to their workflows.

While the technology excels at content creation, it still requires oversight, leaving teams to juggle higher volumes and address operational gaps across the customer journey.

This is where agentic AI steps in. By automating repetitive tasks and optimising decision-making, it frees up marketers and CX teams to focus on strategic outcomes.

Integrated into assistants and copilots, agentic AI handles time-consuming tasks like data collection, database management, and content delivery. For example, it enhances channel marketing campaigns by streamlining audience segmentation, personalising outreach, and scheduling tasks — all while keeping workflows efficient.

Together, generative and agentic AI empower organisations to deliver personalisation at scale with greater speed and impact.

However, these systems can only go so far without the right foundation: unified, robust data systems that ensure AI can operate effectively and deliver meaningful results. Without strong data infrastructure, even the most advanced systems fall short.

## **Building a strong data foundation.**

Data powers every aspect of AI growth, but technical challenges often get in the way. Disconnected systems, siloed teams, and poor integration create gaps that limit real-time personalisation and erode consumer trust. This creates a challenging cycle — consumers won't share data without trust, yet data is essential for AI advancement. The stakes are high: 88% of consumers say responsible and secure data handling is important, with 60% rating it as critical.

Max Cuellar, vice president of marketing strategy, performance and innovation for Adobe Digital Experience, explains:

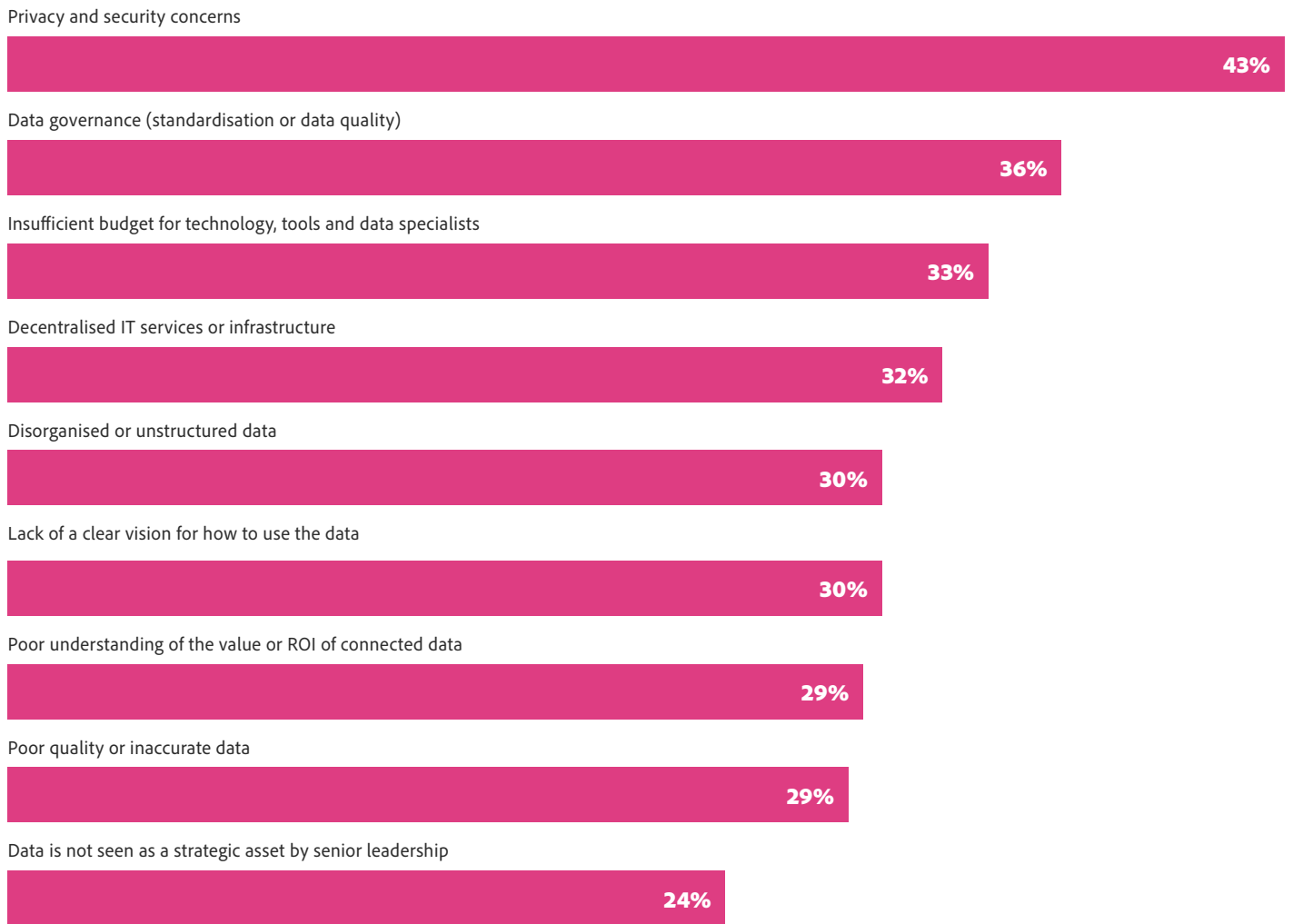
**"If you're piloting AI in a specific organisational cell, you're often working with a narrow data domain and trying to figure out how to connect it to a broader data strategy. Taking time upfront to structure data at scale unlocks efficiencies, creates synergies, and leads to better outcomes in data management."**

As highlighted in Section 2, executives are making bold moves, with many planning to increase technology and data transformation budgets by over 10% in 2025 compared to 2024. However, key challenges remain — particularly around how resources are allocated as organisations grapple with fragmented data and integration issues.

Figure 15 pinpoints critical gaps. For instance, 33% of organisations report budget shortfalls for essential technology and tools, limiting their ability to connect data. To fully realise AI's potential, organisations must prioritise funding for AI technologies — often requiring substantial investments — and initiatives that integrate customer data.

Additional barriers further complicate these efforts. Fragmented IT systems (32%) and unclear data strategies (30%) hinder progress, while 24% of organisations do not yet recognise data as a strategic asset.

**Figure 15: Senior executives' perspectives on barriers to connecting customer data across functions**



Base: 1,272 senior executives

We also asked senior executives to indicate which best reflects their organisation's approach to personalisation and data: whether by gradually connecting databases across departments or by fully unifying business-critical data into a single source of truth. Most senior executives (57%) said the incremental approach better describes their organisation, while 43% said their organisation has taken a fully unified approach.

Incremental steps can deliver quick wins, but a unified platform built for connection, interoperability, and scalability unlocks a compounding cycle of benefits. It enables AI-driven tools to move seamlessly across applications, fueling hyper-personalised experiences and creating a foundation for innovations that multiply efficiency and impact over time.

Encouragingly, as we saw earlier in Section 2, more than half of senior executives (55%) say building unified data ecosystems will shape their technology decisions in the next 12 to 24 months.



## Defining distributed ownership of the customer journey.

Organisations may be making strides towards unifying data, but the lack of consensus over who owns the customer journey is a sticking point. Our survey reveals that most organisations distribute responsibility for this journey across three key areas: CX teams, technologists, and marketing.

Yet, this division often leads to friction between teams and disrupts organisations' ability to achieve their goals — namely, personalisation at scale.

As shown in Figure 16, marketers predominantly see customer journey ownership as shared between CX teams (42%) and marketing (32%), with technology teams playing only a minimal role (6%). However, their perspective differs sharply from that of technology teams — 55% believe they hold primary responsibility, acknowledging CX teams (25%) but giving little credit to marketing (3%).

**Figure 16: How marketing and technology executives view ownership of the customer journey**

Perceived owner of customer journey	Marketing roles	Technology roles
Customer experience (CX) team	42%	25%
Marketing	32%	3%
Customer success or support teams	9%	9%
Sales	3%	2%
Product management	4%	3%
Operations	5%	2%
IT/technology	6%	55%

Base: 982 senior executives

However, there's a bright spot: CX teams are emerging as a common ground between these disciplines, with 42% of marketers and 25% of technology executives recognising them as holding primary responsibility for the customer journey.

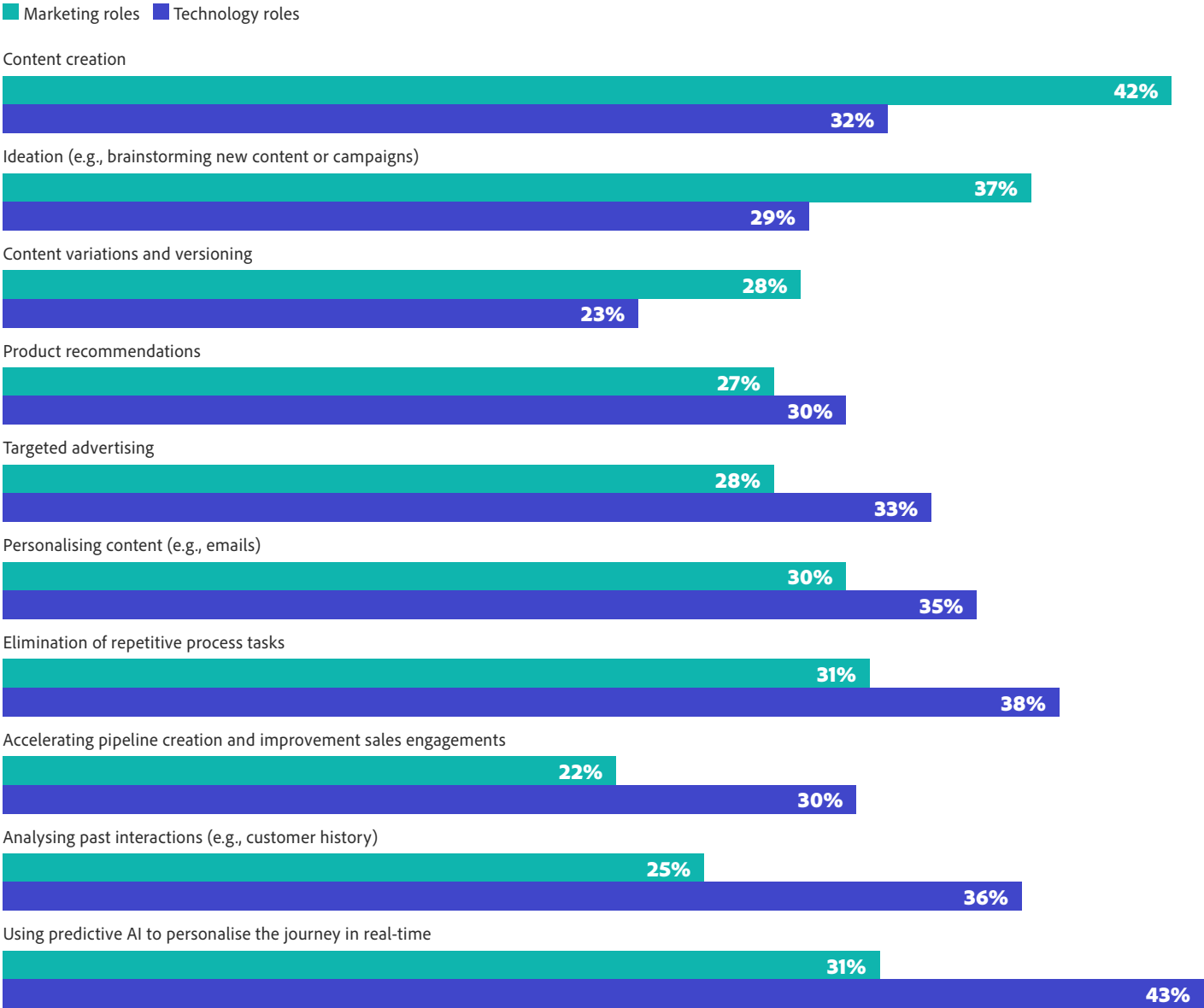
Fostering collaboration will be essential as agentic AI gains traction and tackles complex tasks that span organisational boundaries. Strengthening alignment across teams and systems is key to making personalisation at scale both practical and achievable.

# AI's role in CX and marketing: Aligning marketing and technology teams.

The contrasting priorities are clear: Tech teams focus on scalability and infrastructure (43% prioritising predictive AI, 38% streamlining processes), while marketing teams channel AI into creativity (42% emphasising content creation, 37% driving ideation) (Figure 17).

On a positive note, these aren't competing priorities but complementary strengths that can transform customer engagement. The real opportunity lies in bridging silos. Tech teams lay the groundwork for marketing's creative innovation, while CX teams ensure all efforts align with customer needs and expectations.

**Figure 17: Comparing how marketing and technology practitioners view AI's influence on CX and marketing activities**



Base: 1,078 practitioners

# Recommendations

Generative AI adoption reveals organisational challenges like fragmented ownership but also inspires solutions. By turning these tensions into opportunities, companies can build strong foundations for the future of customer engagement. Those that prioritise unified data strategies, clear goals, and integrated systems will lead the way in delivering personalised experiences and driving meaningful innovation. For those determined to stay ahead, the time to act is now.

- **Create AI capabilities that deliver sustainable value.** Start by assembling teams that combine AI expertise with access to quality data and robust infrastructure. Focus on projects with clear, measurable outcomes — like streamlining content creation — to build confidence and demonstrate impact quickly. These early successes do more than validate the investment; they create a ripple effect, paving the way for more ambitious goals, like proactive, tailored white-glove experiences that set your organisation apart.
- **Invest in technologies that enable dynamic, behaviour-driven personalisation.** Delivering personalisation that is both context-aware and adaptive across channels helps deepen customer connections, boost engagement, and stay ahead of their constantly shifting needs. Working with agentic systems takes this a step further, anticipating what customers want and autonomously managing tasks. By offering this level of seamless, intuitive interaction, you create experiences that feel effortless while fostering trust and loyalty.
- **Unify data for seamless teamwork and exceptional customer experiences.** Fragmented systems are a barrier to collaboration, hindering innovation and efficiency. A unified platform designed for connection and interoperability unlocks deeper insights, streamlines processes, and fosters creativity. With high-quality, accessible data, organisations can empower teams to work more effectively, safeguard customer privacy, and deliver deeply personalised experiences that resonate.
- **Appoint champions to unite strategies and align efforts.** Executive sponsors play a key role in addressing disconnects between marketing, technology, and customer experience teams. By fostering alignment and encouraging collaboration around shared goals, they empower teams to experiment and innovate. With the right guidance, AI can move beyond isolated pilots to deliver scalable solutions with measurable ROI. A culture rooted in curiosity, creativity, and continuous learning ensures ongoing progress, unlocking your organisation's full potential.

# Methodology

## Executive survey

The survey captured the views of 3,400 qualified respondents from November 11 to December 4, 2024, including 3,270 client-side and 130 agency executives.

- **Seniority and market:** 39% were senior director, VP/SVP/EVP, or above ("Senior Executives"), with 61% being "Practitioners" (directors, managers, and junior executives). In terms of market focus, 33% served B2B, 23% B2C, and 43% equally.
- **Geography and industry:** APAC led with 37% of respondents, followed by Europe (32%) and North America (31%). Key sectors included retail (24%), B2B tech (23%), financial services (20%), healthcare (17%), and media and entertainment (10%).
- **Function:** Respondents span various departments, with strong representation from IT (25%), marketing (13%), advertising (12%), and digital/technology (8%).

### Generative AI adoption

We asked senior executives and practitioners to characterise their current generative AI implementation status for marketing and customer experience initiatives. Based on the answers selected, we grouped the responsees by adoption level:

- **No formal adoption:** Actively discouraging the use of generative AI/Informal adoption at an individual or team level.
- **Piloting:** Most projects are at pilot stage and being evaluated.
- **Roll out and evaluation:** Rolled out working solutions and are evaluating their effectiveness.
- **In use with proven ROI:** Working solutions in place and have been able to demonstrate ROI.

## Functional groupings

We used three main functional groupings:

- **Marketing:** Marketing, content/editorial, product management, advertising, design or creative services.
- **Technology:** IT, digital/technology, web or app development, privacy/security.
- **Other:** Business operations, customer service, ecommerce, analytics, consulting, HR, product management, research and development.

## Consumer survey

The survey gathered insights from 8,301 respondents during November and December, 2024:

- **Gender:** 51% female, 49% male.
- **Age distribution:** 18-34 (31%), 35-54 (36%), 55+ (33%).
- **Regional spread:** Europe (35%), APAC (31%), North America (23%), South America (12%).
- **Industries:** Respondents were screened to ensure recent engagement with digital communications across sectors, including retail, financial services, healthcare, media/entertainment, travel, and telecommunications.

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