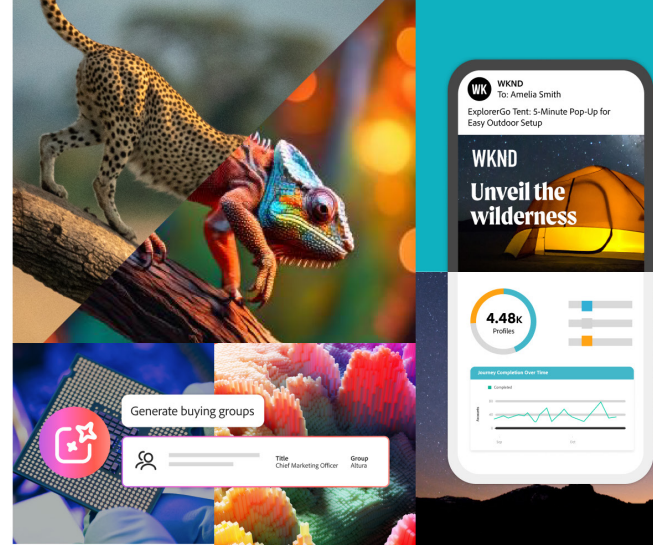# Adobe

Top customer experience initiatives for CMOs in 2025.

As you execute marketing initiatives for the year, staying ahead of customer experience (CX) trends is crucial. The **Adobe 2025 AI and Digital Trends** research reveals how CMOs like you are navigating evolving customer expectations, technological transformations, and organizational challenges. Here are the key initiatives shaping CX today for marketing leadership:

1 Bridging the CX understanding gap.

Personalized experiences are seen as a key driver of growth — with 91% of marketing leadership saying they will play a critical role in their growth. However, there's a disparity between marketing leadership and practitioners regarding their organization's CX effectiveness. While nearly all marketing leadership said they have "industry-leading" or "near industry-leading" effectiveness in real-time customer data capture and actionable insights to deliver real-time personalization, only 24% of practitioners felt confident data fragmentation wasn't affecting the organization's personalized experiences. While leadership remains confident, practitioners recognize the shortcomings in their organizations' CX strategy and data capabilities. Overcoming this disconnect requires better alignment between leadership and their teams.

2 Clarifying ownership of the customer journey.

Clarifying who owns CX remains a challenge. Our research found that marketing leaders, CX teams, and technology leaders each claim primary responsibility. Resolving this conflict requires clear accountability structures, collaboration between marketing, tech, and CX teams, and shared metrics and KPIs to align goals across departments.

73%
of CMOs believe the marketing or CX team own the customer journey.

3 Investing in data integration and real-time insights.

Unified data remains a top initiative for marketing leadership, despite most saying they are effectively collecting and actioning customer data. They identified data integration and real-time insights as the top capabilities influencing their technology stack decisions over the next 12 to 24 months. Focus is particularly around creating unified data ecosystems that enable real-time, AI-driven insights and decision-making. Budget for investments shouldn't be a foreseeable issue with 82% of marketing leadership anticipating a 10% or more increase. However, the top priority is on advertising and digital spend. Next is content and creative development. Technology acquisition is placed at third on the priority list for spend, a notable incongruity with the top tech stack influence.

24%
of practitioners felt confident data fragmentation wasn't affecting their personalized customer experiences.

58%
of CIOs believe the technology team owns the customer journey.

59%
of CMOs name integrating data and real-time insights as the top influences on their tech stack decisions.

4 **Overcoming governance and budget hurdles in AI-driven marketing.**
AI and predictive analytics to increase customer loyalty and retention have emerged as the top contributors to business growth. But there's pressure to show impact. Most marketing leaders (87%) agree AI initiatives put pressure on their organizations to drive more business value. They're managing this pressure against an array of challenges in scaling generative AI use — the primary challenge being data governance, compliance, and data privacy concerns. While governance is also a top challenge for tech leadership, when it comes to justifying investment and securing budget, the gap widens between marketing and technology leadership — as tech has significantly less of a challenge.

87%
of marketing leadership agrees AI is putting pressure on their organization to drive more business value.
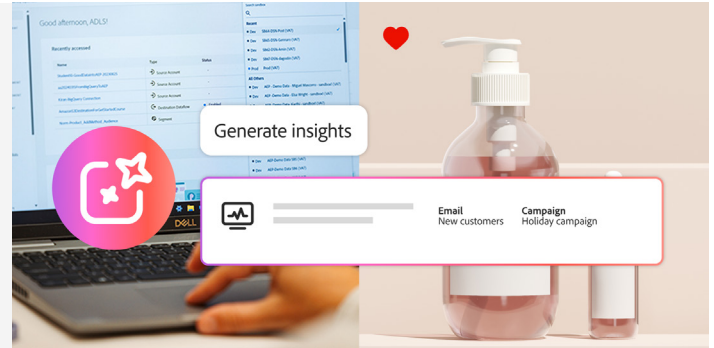
5 **Uniting and aligning generative AI strategies.**
Unfortunately, marketing trails their technology counterparts in implementing generative AI solutions and proving ROI (10% vs 24%). While 57% of technology leaders say they have AI frameworks in place, only 49% of marketing leaders say the same. To accelerate adoption and measurable ROI, CMOs need to build organizational confidence around projects, enhance collaboration with IT to address regulatory challenges, and prioritize use cases that demonstrate clear ROI.

1.5x
fewer marketing leaders have working AI solutions in place and can demonstrate ROI than their technology counterparts.
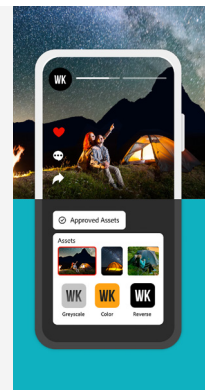
Learn more in the _Adobe 2025 AI and Digital Trends_ report.

The executive survey took place from November 11, 2024, to December 4, 2024, collecting 3,400 qualified respondents. This included 3,270 client side and 130 agency executives. Respondents span various departments, with particularly strong representation from IT (25%), marketing (13%), advertising (12%), and digital/technology (8%). This report is specifically based on the collection of global responses from 402 VPs, SVPs, EVPs or C-level Executives in marketing, advertising, and creative organizations.