2025

AI and Digital Trends

Data and Insights

Foreword

In this **Adobe AI and Digital Trends in Data and Insights** report, we examine how a fragmented data foundation continues to block one-to-one personalization and disrupt the rollout of AI and predictive analytics. With executives backing AI-powered personalization to drive growth in 2025, there is both an opportunity and an imperative for organizations to act. By adopting tools that unify customer and business data, they can build a foundation for truly connected experiences.
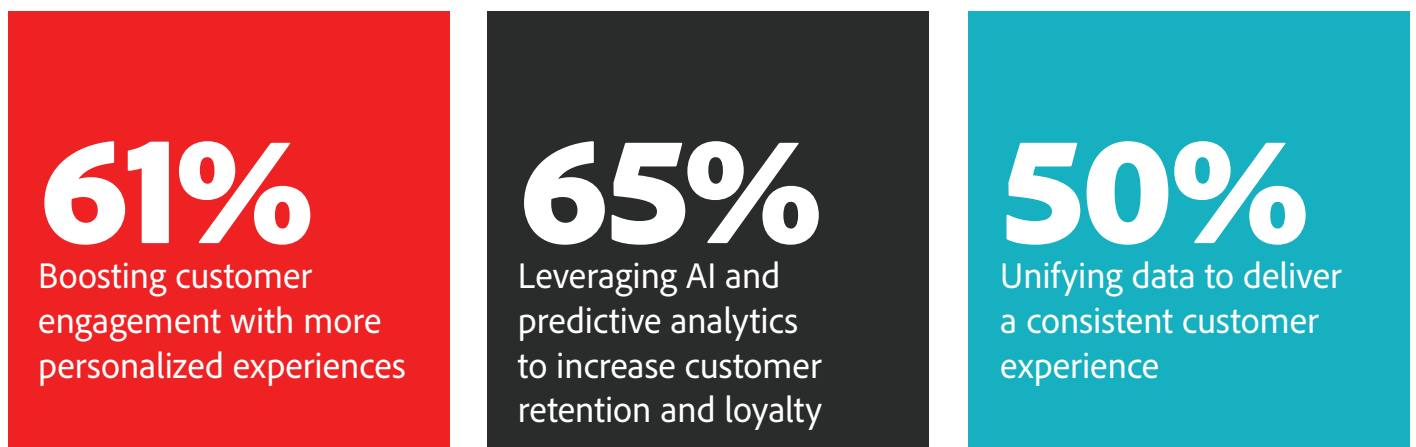
Key findings

Data management and customer analytics are top of mind for executives.

To compete and grow, today's executives believe that they must create experiences for customers that feel more personalized and engaging and deliver them consistently across all devices and channels.

In our survey, 61% of senior executives say that crafting a more personalized customer experience will be central to growth this year. Achieving that goal depends on using data, analytics, and AI — cornerstones of modern engagement strategies — and 65% of executives also believe AI and predictive analytics will be essential for building customer loyalty and retention.

The challenge? Disconnected and fragmented data is holding back the implementation of AI-driven solutions that can analyze behavior, predict customer needs, and deliver consistent experiences. Keen to address this, half of senior executives are focused on unifying customer data to secure growth in 2025.

Figure 1: Marketing and technology initiatives expected to be primary contributors to growth in 2025 (% of senior executives in agreement)

61%
Boosting customer engagement with more personalized experiences

65%
Leveraging AI and predictive analytics to increase customer retention and loyalty

50%
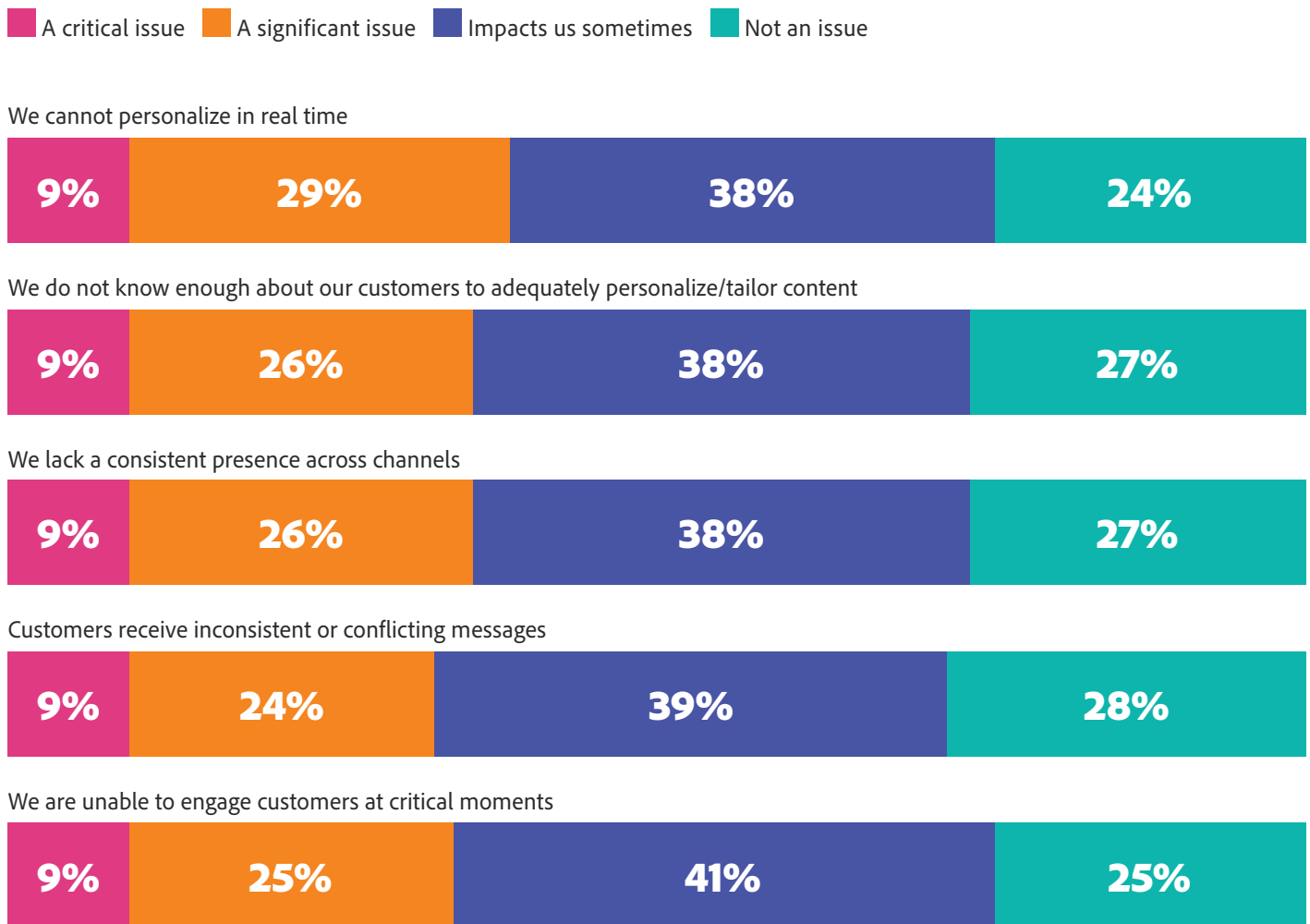Unifying data to deliver a consistent customer experience

Base: 1,272 senior executives

Personalization initiatives are falling between the cracks of siloed data.

Siloed and fragmented data is a particular challenge for in-the-moment personalization. As Figure 2 highlights, 76% of practitioners say siloed data blocks real-time personalization, with 2 in 5 considering it a significant or critical issue. And it doesn't stop there — 75% report that fragmented data causes difficulties engaging with customers at critical moments.

Siloed data means marketers don't have a unified view of the customer, resulting in inconsistent experiences across channels (reported by 73% of practitioners) and, worse still for the customer, conflicting messaging (72%). As we will see in Figure 4 later in the report, customers expect and value a consistent experience across channels.

Figure 2: How fragmented or siloed data holds back personalization and impacts experience

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

We cannot personalize in real time

| 9% | 29% | 38% | 24% |

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

| 9% | 26% | 38% | 27% |

We lack a consistent presence across channels

| 9% | 26% | 38% | 27% |

Customers receive inconsistent or conflicting messages

| 9% | 24% | 39% | 28% |

We are unable to engage customers at critical moments

| 9% | 25% | 41% | 25% |

Base: 1,997 practitioners

The roadblocks to connected customer data.

Organizations are right to be careful with how they handle customer data. But sometimes caution leads to inaction, getting in the way of providing the experiences customers have come to expect. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of senior executives point to concerns about privacy, security, or data governance as barriers to connecting customer data and 48% are additionally hampered by poor quality or disorganized data.

More surprisingly, many senior executives admit that their organizations undervalue data, either because their organizations aren't primed to see data as strategic (24%) or because they haven't identified the right use cases (30%). Others concede that they don't know the value of data because they lack the tools or metrics to assess the return on investment.

The challenges don't stop there. About a third (32%) of organizations face hurdles from decentralized IT services, further complicating efforts to connect data and scale personalization.

The takeaway? Connecting data isn't just a technical challenge — it requires an organizational transformation, clear vision, and recognition of the value of data. Organizations that overcome these barriers will be positioned to deliver smarter, more personalized experiences and drive growth in 2025 and beyond.

Figure 3: Barriers to connecting customer data across functions

Privacy, security and governance concerns
64%

Disorganized, poor quality or inaccurate data
48%

Insufficient budget for technology, tools and data specialists
33%

Decentralized IT services or infrastructure
32%

Lack of a clear vision for how to use the data
30%

Poor understanding of the value or ROI of connected data
29%

Data is not seen as a strategic asset by senior leadership
24%

Data is undervalued

Base: 1,272 senior executives

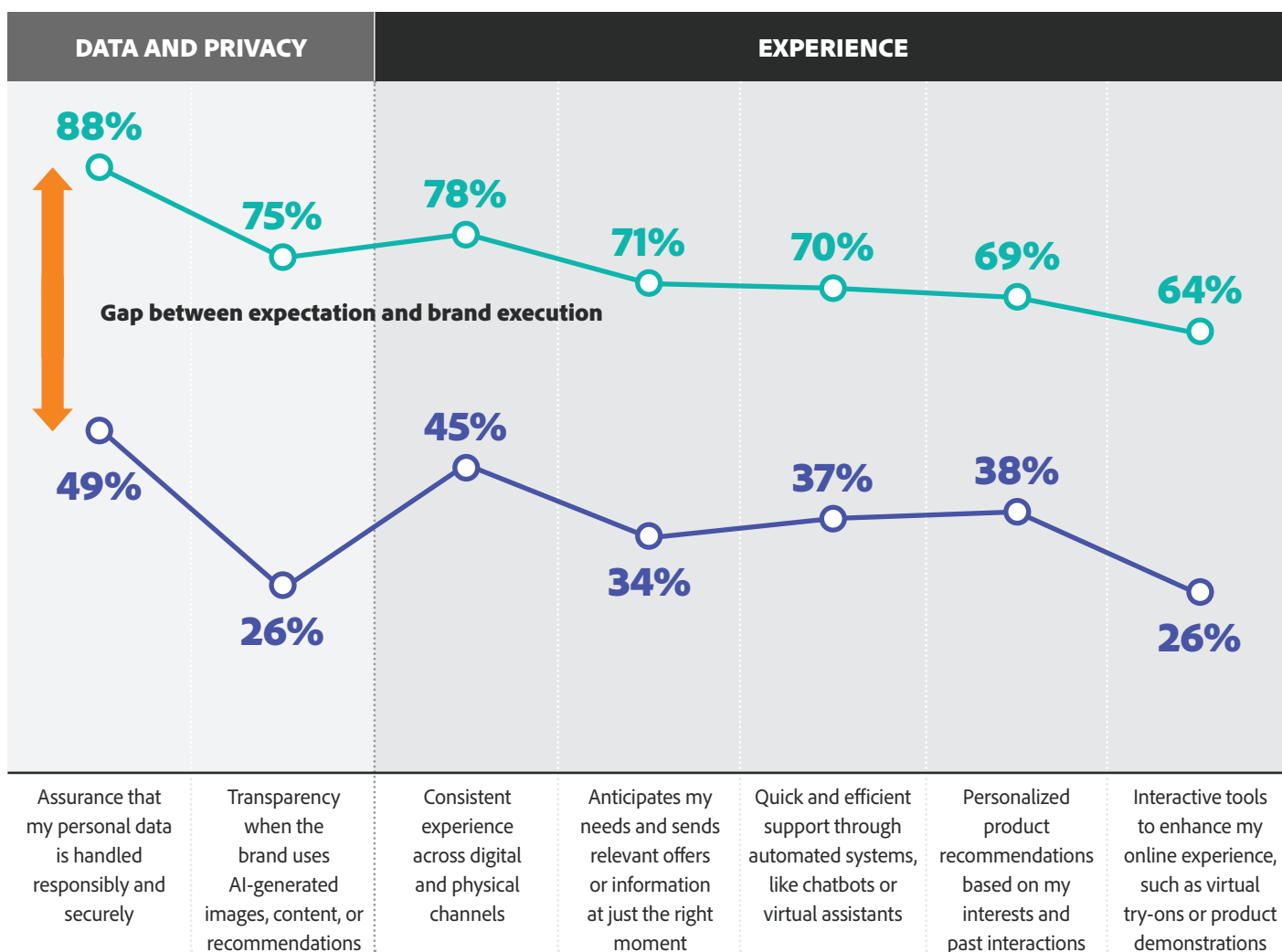# From data challenges to data trust: Why integrity must come first.

As organizations work to unify data and scale personalization, one thing is clear — trust matters. Consumers value honesty and transparency more than anything else, and brands that fail to deliver on these expectations risk undermining loyalty.

Customers won't automatically assume their data is safe. Almost all (88%) want brands to clearly explain how they safeguard their data, and 60% say this reassurance is critical. Similarly, 75% expect transparency when AI is used to deliver content or recommendations.

A consistent customer experience is a sign of brand integrity and builds credibility and trust. Nearly 4 out of 5 (78%) of consumers value having a seamless experience across digital and physical channels.

Figure 4: The gap between customer expectation and brand execution
(% of consumers rating important/critical vs. % of brands that deliver effectively)

— Customer expectation (% consumers rate important/critical)

— Brand execution (% say brand delivers effectively)

DATA AND PRIVACY		EXPERIENCE				
88%	75%	78%	71%	70%	69%	64%
49%	26%	45%	34%	37%	38%	26%
Assurance that my personal data is handled responsibly and securely	Transparency when the brand uses AI-generated images, content, or recommendations	Consistent experience across digital and physical channels	Anticipates my needs and sends relevant offers or information at just the right moment	Quick and efficient support through automated systems, like chatbots or virtual assistants	Personalized product recommendations based on my interests and past interactions	Interactive tools to enhance my online experience, such as virtual try-ons or product demonstrations

Gap between expectation and brand execution

Base: 8,301 consumers

Organizations are missing an opportunity to delight customers.

Despite these expectations, just 49% of consumers feel reassured that their data is handled responsibly, and only 26% believe brands are transparent about their use of AI. At the same time, customers still want real-time personalization — like AI-driven support (70%) and offers that anticipate needs (71%). Organizations must reassure customers about data privacy without creating friction in the experience.

Most consumers understand there's a balancing act between consent and continuity. Only 34% expect AI-enhanced content to be clearly labeled in real time, but they do want the ability to see what data brands collect and how it's being used.

Real-time personalization is still an aspiration for many.

As we indicated previously, personalized experiences are a top priority for 61% of senior executives, who see them as key to driving engagement and growth. But insights from practitioners suggest that real-time, one-to-one personalization is still a way off — in part because they are not able to use customer data effectively.

Today, 47% of practitioners say their organizations routinely use data and analytics to personalize content by segment or persona — a relatively broad strokes approach that groups customers based on shared characteristics, like demographics. Slightly fewer, 42% of practitioners, take a more one-to-one approach, delivering recommendations based on individual behaviors, such as previous purchases, products they have viewed, or "how-to" guides they have read on social media.

Figure 5: In which of the following ways does your brand routinely personalize digital content for customers?

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

47%

We make recommendations based on previous purchase and browsing behavior

42%

We use data and algorithms to personalize the website experience

39%

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

31%

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

31%

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

27%

None of these

7%

Base: 1,997 practitioners

But for most organizations, real-time personalization — the kind that adapts as customers browse, click, and purchase — is still an aspiration. Only 39% of organizations personalize customers' web experience as they browse, and fewer (31%) can update offers in real time to reflect browsing or purchase behavior. For example, reordering the display of product categories to prioritize outdoor gear after customers view camping equipment, or following up a sofa purchase with suggestions of complementary furnishings.

Only a minority (26%) of organizations claim that customer journeys and activation systems are "always on" — continuously active and responsive to customer behavior. That leaves many potentially missing the opportunity to dynamically adjust a customer's entire digital experience based on their recent service interactions and purchase history across channels. And just 20% have always-on retention journeys, such as identifying signs of churn and automatically re-engaging customers with relevant offers or content.

Organizations are implementing generative AI to personalize experiences.

Our research shows that 66% of organizations globally are piloting or using generative AI in some way in their marketing and CX operations. While use cases such as chatbots and content creation might be the most visible applications to consumers, organizations are starting to realize the value of using generative AI to personalize experiences and journeys in the moment.

AI gives marketers the tools to automate and streamline the analysis of massive amounts of available customer and behavioral data, opening up opportunities to personalize experiences and journeys in real time. As shown in Figure 6, organizations are piloting, evaluating, or using generative AI to uncover customer insights — including 15% that have already seen ROI from solutions.

Figure 6: Status of generative AI for data and insights

■ Not using in this area ■ Informal testing ■ Piloting/evaluating ■ In use and already seeing ROl

Analyzing data and customer interactions to uncover Al-driven insights

19%	17%	49%	15%

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

22%	15%	50%	13%

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

18%	17%	52%	13%

Base: 1,872 practitioners

The ultimate goal is AI-based technology that drives one-to-one journeys in real time. As Figure 6 reveals, organizations are already embracing these tools, with 63% of organizations trialing or implementing generative AI to personalize real time across channels and touchpoints — giving the consistent experiences consumers say they value.

The benefits of generative AI are already being realized.

Organizations can struggle to demonstrate ROI from specific solutions, particularly if they have poor measurement frameworks in place. However, many senior executives in organizations using or experimenting with generative AI are already noticing benefits as they leverage the use of AI-driven data and insights in the customer journey.

**Figure 7: Significant benefits gained from generative AI in 2024
(% of senior executives in organizations using generative AI)**

49%
Enhanced decision-making with AI-driven insights

48%
Improved customer engagement and experience from AI-driven personalization

Base: 1,147 senior executives in organizations using generative AI for marketing and CX

Conclusions and recommendations

Business leaders are counting on personalization to drive business growth in 2025. And, increasingly, they are aiming for one-to-one personalization, so that customers feel they are being spoken to as an individual, rather than as a "type."

Data and insights are fundamental to this, and generative AI can provide additional customer-level insights that help create more relevant, real-time experiences. Consumers want and expect these experiences, but organizations have to jump over three hurdles before they can reach this next level:

- **Reassure customers about responsible data use.** Consumers understand that organizations can't operate without their data, but they expect a say in how it's used. Organizations need to be transparent and empower customers with control over their data.

- **Connect and unify customer data.** Fragmented data is a poor foundation for in-the-moment personalization. Many organizations are unifying customer data into data lakes, but even if that doesn't seem achievable, executives should focus on connecting databases — like sales, marketing, and billing — to gain a holistic view of the customer.

- **Create always-on journeys.** Consumers get frustrated when systems don't keep up with their journey and preferences, but that's inevitable without automated intelligence. Journeys and experiences need to recognize the last step a customer takes, whether that's browsing, buying, or discovery.

Learn more about data and insights with Adobe.

Case Study: The Coca-Cola Company

How does one of the biggest beverage companies in the world scale to deliver personalized messages to potentially billions of consumers? Coca-Cola decided to bring together regional customer data platforms (CDP) from across the world to create a single view that delivered real-time insights into global customers. Rather than spending time and resources piecing together standalone solutions from multiple vendors, the company decided to shift to an IT platform strategy that leverages integrated solutions to minimize time needed to manage solutions.

"

"Few companies operate on such a massive scale as Coca-Cola. For us, Adobe Experience Cloud was the best choice. It has the breadth of solutions that we wanted — handling everything from real-time personalization to analytics — with the scale needed to reach customers everywhere they are: at a restaurant, neighborhood store, and everywhere in between."

Keith Bartig
Director of Precision Marketing Technologies, The Coca-Cola Company

Read the full case study

About the research

The **Adobe AI and Digital Trends** research captured the views of 3,400 qualified respondents from November 11 to December 4, 2024, including 3,270 client-side and 130 agency executives.

■ 39% senior executives (SVP/EVP/Senior Directors and above)

■ 61% were practitioners (including CX professionals and marketing practitioners)

Participants were drawn from a range of sectors including retail (24%), B2B tech (23%), financial services (20%), healthcare (17%) and media and entertainment (10%).

We also gathered insights from 8,301 consumers aged 18+ and representative by age and gender. Respondents were screened to ensure recent engagement with digital communications across a range of sectors.

Both surveys covered Europe, North America, and Asia Pacific. The research was carried out independently by Econsultancy between November and December 2024. All respondents were pre-qualified and contributed anonymously via online surveys.