

DESIGN RESILIENT DIGITAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES IN DISRUPTIVE TIMES

Customer Experience Trends Report, Australian Edition



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Insights from Australian marketers and consumers on the changing customer experience in 2021 and beyond.

As consumers and brands around the world adapted to COVID-19, Australian brands made important pivots while consumers quickly embraced digital.

A strong technological foundation from previous investments in marketing and customer experience (CX) technology helped Australian brands take their CX digital. While the process involved some challenges – from data gathering to interoperability – Australian marketers scaled digital

experiences and identified areas for improvement in the year ahead.

As noted in the global edition of this report, a [recent survey](#) found 70% of executives expect the pandemic to accelerate digital transformation. That signals big changes for marketers and the technology they rely on to create unforgettable customer experiences (CX).

Brands developing a resiliency roadmap for the Australian market can deliver a winning customer experience by focusing on technology, talent, and touchpoints:

Technology

Australian marketers are far ahead of the technological curve – implementing solutions such

as automation, customer data platforms, machine learning, and personalisation faster than their global counterparts. However, they lag behind in two key areas: content management systems and low-code tools. Organisations struggled with issues of interoperability, data, and personalisation, suggesting open platforms may help optimise the CX and improve the returns brands see from technologies they have in place.

Talent

60% of Australian brands rely on their CMOs to set the CX vision, yet Australia's CMOs face unique challenges. In our survey, marketers cite talent shortages at rates higher than the global average. For busy CMOs and

their teams, technology and external partnerships can add capacity and help close important talent gaps.

Touchpoints

Personalised touchpoints remain a significant focus for Australian brands. Organisations with active personalisation initiatives see better conversions, responses to discounts, and more repeat purchases at levels higher than global peers. Yet there's a significant trust gap around data privacy and security that marketers must address to achieve truly effective personalisation.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

To gain a perspective on these topics through a global lens, we collected the views of 8,000 consumers and 800 marketers across Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The survey explores how marketing and consumer behaviours have shifted to adapt to the new landscape. In this piece, we take a deep dive into the specific insights gathered from Australian respondents, which included 1,000 consumers and 100 marketers.

AUSTRALIA'S CX GOES DIGITAL DURING DISRUPTION

65%

OF AUSTRALIAN RESPONDENTS SAY THEIR DIGITAL EXPERIENCE WITH BRANDS HAS CHANGED SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC.

Brands had a strong technology infrastructure to help them adapt quickly: 88% of Australian brands report they were well-prepared for the shift, versus 83% of brands globally. Marketers note investing in different types of marketing and CX technology over the past year at higher rates than global peers, which smoothed COVID-related transitions. Indeed, a staggering

94% of Australian brands felt their ROI on marketing and CX technology improved over the past year.

While Australian consumers experienced some changes, they built on existing digital habits to shift efficiently. One-third (33%) of Australian consumers report that their digital experience with brands

remains unchanged in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, compared with 25% globally. And just 31% of consumers bought more online than before, compared with 40% globally.

However, the economic repercussions of the pandemic or the desire to support local business reshaped some Australian

consumers' behaviour. Almost one-quarter (24%) report buying more from independent or local businesses in store than before, compared to just 19% globally. That creates an opportunity for smaller or local brands to ensure their CX can compete effectively with global competition to make the most of consumer interest.

While the Australian market was well-primed for digital, a quarter of consumers note that the digital experience matters more to them than ever before. In the advanced Australian business landscape, consumer expectations are rising. Brands are under pressure to scale and refine their CX to deliver excellence at every brand touchpoint.

It's important for marketers to consider what happens if they're unable to deliver what customers need. Australian brands have performed well but remain under pressure to continue innovating and solving data and interoperability challenges. A website

glitch, payment problem, or other CX breakdown can lead to disappointed consumers. The stakes are still high.

But the good news is that Australian brands are well-positioned to succeed.

As we explore these Australian research findings and perspectives, we'll recommend ways that brands can architect for adaptability and develop unique CX strategies for the market by homing in on three areas:

TECHNOLOGY, TALENT, AND TOUCHPOINTS.

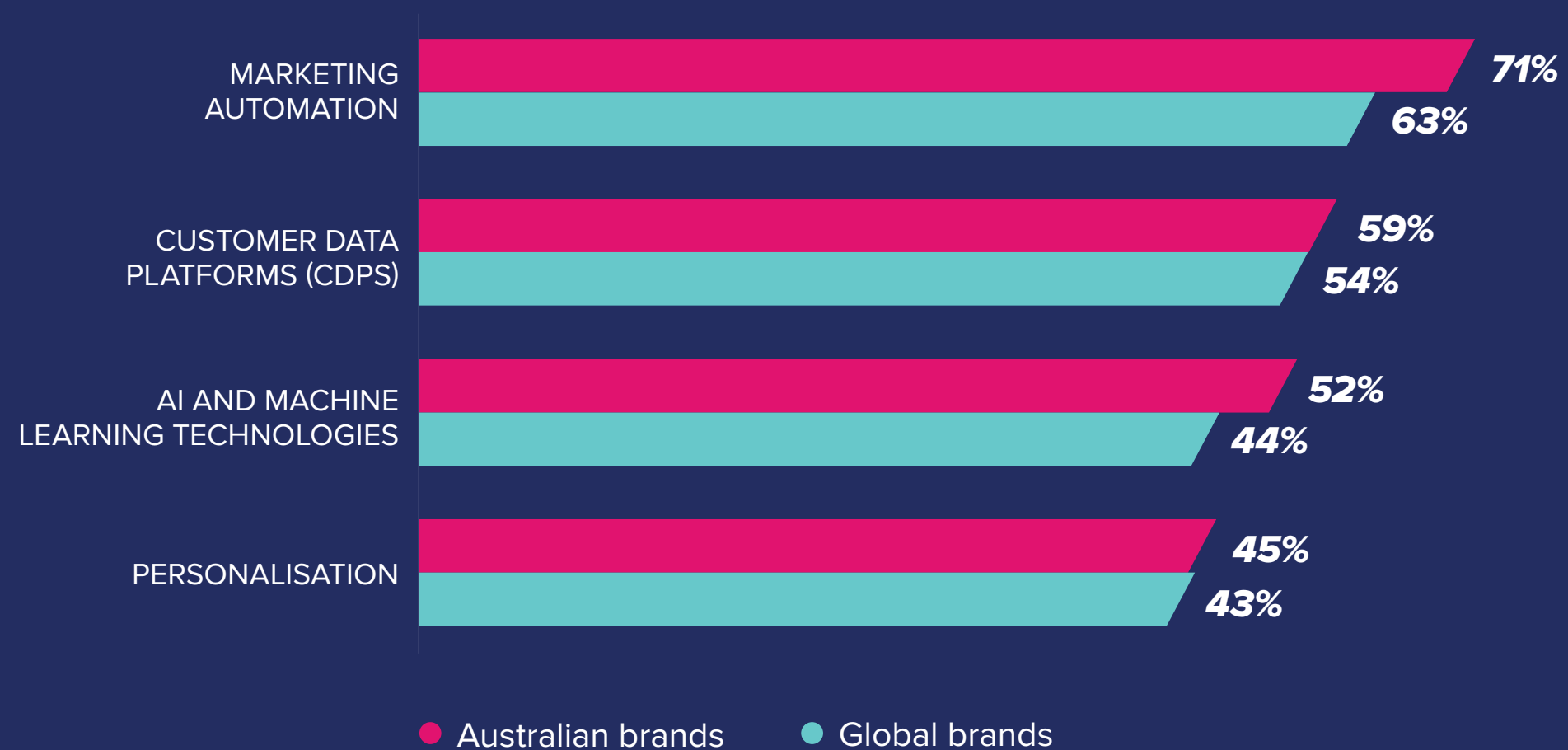


SECTION 01

**CHOOSE OPEN
PLATFORMS
TO MAXIMISE
TECHNOLOGY
RETURNS**



Australian brands have spent the last year aggressively investing in marketing and CX technologies. In fact, Australian brands lead the technology curve, reporting that they embraced the following technologies ahead of global peers:



However, Australian brands lag global peers in adopting content management systems and low-code programming tools – both of which can help organisations address key technology and talent challenges. Despite a technological renaissance over the past few years, Australian brands identified a number of remaining technology challenges that hinder their digital CX efforts at levels higher than other markets:

- Inability to capture customer data:**
40% vs. 30% globally
- Technologies are too difficult to use:**
32% vs. 29% globally
- Too many vendors to choose from:**
32% vs. 25% globally
- Confusion about where to get started:**
33% vs. 24% globally

27%
**OF AUSTRALIAN
BRANDS STRUGGLED TO
REFRESH OR MAKE USE
OF OLDER CONTENT**

Open customer experience platforms drive results for brands that struggle with these issues. By removing data from silos and improving interoperability, it's easier for brands to build, automate, and deploy campaigns across channels that deliver both personalisation and impact.

As brands in the Australian market consider their next steps with technology, there are two key recommendations:

- Adopt open platforms:** Consider an open platform that makes it easier to adopt new channels, and streamline data sharing and capture across key systems. Australian brands have invested in marketing and CX systems. What's needed now is an open platform to unify the CX and maximise the value of these tools. Interoperability simplifies the communications process between systems and shortens time to market when you adopt new digital channels. An open platform can also help simplify issues identified, such as difficult-to-use technologies and too many vendors to choose from.
- Accelerate the use of content management systems:** More than a quarter (27%) of Australian brands struggled to refresh or make use of older content. Rolling out content management systems will make it easier to manage content strategically – whether you're surfacing assets in a crowded technology landscape or refreshing assets that need a new take before relaunching them to consumers.



CASE STUDY:

FOOTBALL FEDERATION AUSTRALIA

[Football Federation Australia](#) (FFA) is the governing body of football in Australia and a member of Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). FFA aims to make football the most popular sport in Australia, and determined that a great digital experience is one of the best ways to reach wider audiences.

Until 2017, FFA websites were maintained by a third-party provider using outdated technology, resulting in a disjointed experience for fans. The governing body wanted to provide an updated experience, as well as the flexibility for clubs to customise sites based on individual digital priorities. FFA also needed underlying technology that could scale to the needs of the entire sport, while supporting

a consistent, sustainable digital operating model.

Working with Drupal Cloud Platform, Acquia, and partners Avanade's Digital Innovation Studio and Codeware, FFA was able to create new digital experiences in line with its ambitions. Clubs can now create websites that have a different look and feel from one another, while sharing common

style elements and underlying technology. FFA also gained more flexibility to spin up microsites to respond to marketing or commercial opportunities.

The Drupal platform has proven to FFA that it can support the scale and speed of the organisation's digital functions now and into the future.

SECTION 02

**CLOSE TALENT
GAPS WITH
TECHNOLOGY**





36% AUSTRALIAN

WEB DEVELOPER TALENT

33% GLOBALLY

More than half of Australian brands (60%) rely on their CMOs to drive the brand's CX vision. However, leaders face critical talent gaps that make it harder to execute on their agendas.

A quarter of Australian brands (26%) noted leaner workforces due to COVID-19, which compounds talent shortages that exceed global peers across critical marketing and data positions. Marketers report talent shortages in areas such as:

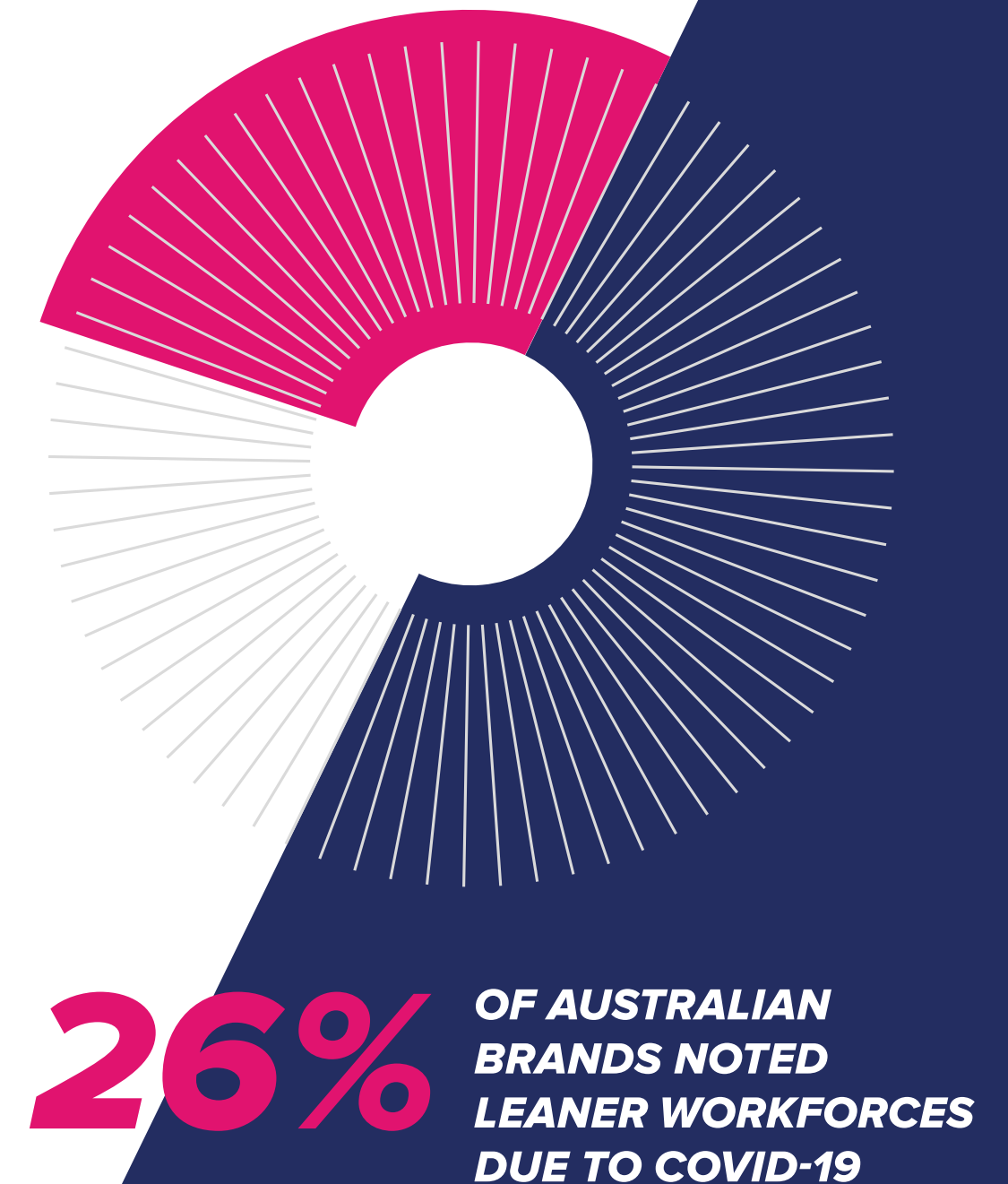
- /// **Brand marketing leadership,**
51% Australian brands vs. 44% globally
- /// **Digital customer service,**
46% Australian brands vs. 44% globally
- /// **Data analysts/scientists,**
45% Australian brands vs. 43% globally
- /// **Machine learning engineers,**
45% Australian brands vs. 40% globally
- /// **Web developer talent,**
36% Australian brands vs. 33% globally

To close skills gaps and support talent, Australian brands can implement the following strategies:

// Create a talent-centred technology roadmap: Australian brands have invested heavily in marketing and CX technologies, yet brands identify critical skill gaps across marketing and data-related roles. Explore whether technologies that are already in place can be leveraged more effectively to address talent shortages. By implementing an open platform, organisations can increase the results generated from tools such as personalisation suites or marketing automation solutions to add capacity and close talent gaps.

// Improve technical capabilities with the right platform: Australian brands highlighted urgent talent shortages in both data science and machine learning. Engineering and machine learning talent shortages don't have to slow you down. Low-code platforms are an area where Australian brands fall behind global peers. Investing in them will make it easier to build, deploy, and analyse campaigns without sophisticated programming knowledge.

// Adopt an open platform to power your CDPs: Brands need a strategy for delivering personalised experiences across channels as expectations in the Australian market continue to mature. A CDP is the backbone of a strong, personalised CX – and Australian brands have implemented CDPs at a healthy rate. It's time to explore how open platforms can empower a leaner staff while also enabling greater results across touch points.

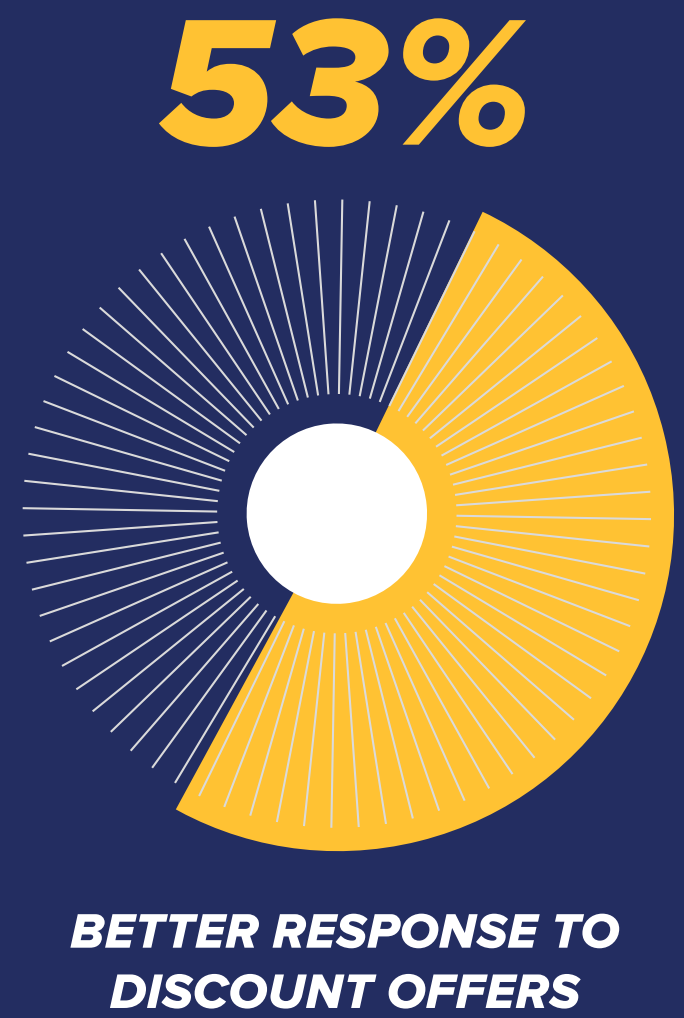
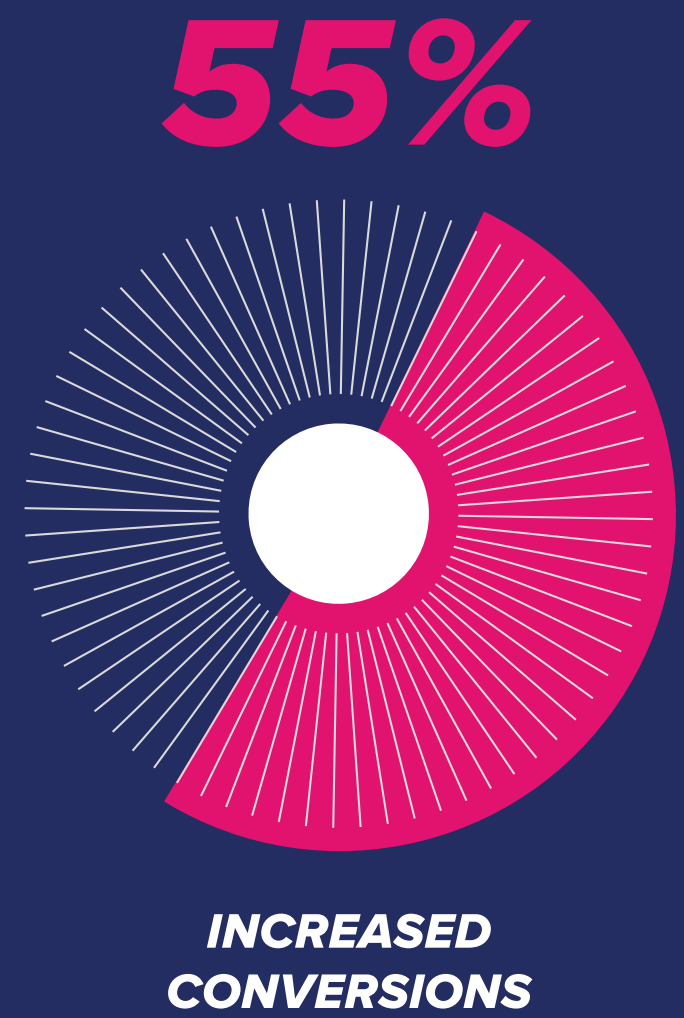


SECTION 03

**ADDRESS THE
TRUST GAP TO
DRIVE EFFECTIVE
TOUCHPOINT
PERSONALISATION**



Nearly half of Australian brands (48%) identified personalisation as a core strategy to connect with consumers. Brands that implement personalisation in this market see key benefits, such as:



Tone also matters:

Australian consumers have distinct preferences when it comes to marketing messaging. Marketers can reach 43% of Australians with an engaging and understanding tone. But the Australian market segment is also ready to embrace creative or exploratory communications (35%), as well as light-hearted or humorous (34%).



51%

*of Australian consumers
are comfortable sharing
personal information
with brands*

86%

*of marketers believe
customers are
comfortable sharing
data with brands*

Delivering personalisation requires consumer data, yet Australian marketers are too optimistic about consumer trust: just 51% of Australian consumers are comfortable sharing personal information with brands. Marketers were significantly unaware of the trust gap that existed, with 86% believing customers were comfortable sharing data with brands.

How can brands approach this disconnect that leaves half of Australian consumers wary?

/ Be transparent about data you're collecting and give consumers control over their information. Consumers who understand what information you're gathering, how it's being used, and how they can stop sharing data are more likely to trust brand intentions.

/ Make it easy for consumers to see that you comply with data regulations. Despite significant forces like GDPR, many consumers are still wary.

Use clear language to outline your approach to compliance with data regulations. Simplify opt-ins and unsubscribe processes to further strengthen trust.

/ Deliver real value in exchange for information. Build trust with customers by showing an immediate return – such as meaningful personalisation, discounts, or relevant content.

SECTION 04

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Scaling a successful digital CX for the Australian market requires embracing best practices:

1. Maximise technology ROI with open customer experience technology:

Australian brands lead the technology curve with their CX and marketing technology investments. However, brands still struggle to capture data, solve interoperability challenges, and overcome other obstacles. Embracing open platforms can help streamline the communication between systems and ensure that Australian brands are maximising the return on their technologies.

2. Support your CMO's CX leadership with a talent-centred technology brand:

More than half of brands rely on CMOs to set the CX vision, yet many struggle with skills shortages. Evaluate your technology stack to identify strategies where automation, data capabilities, or personalisation can improve your digital CX without requiring new hires.

3. Close the trust gap with a transparent data strategy:

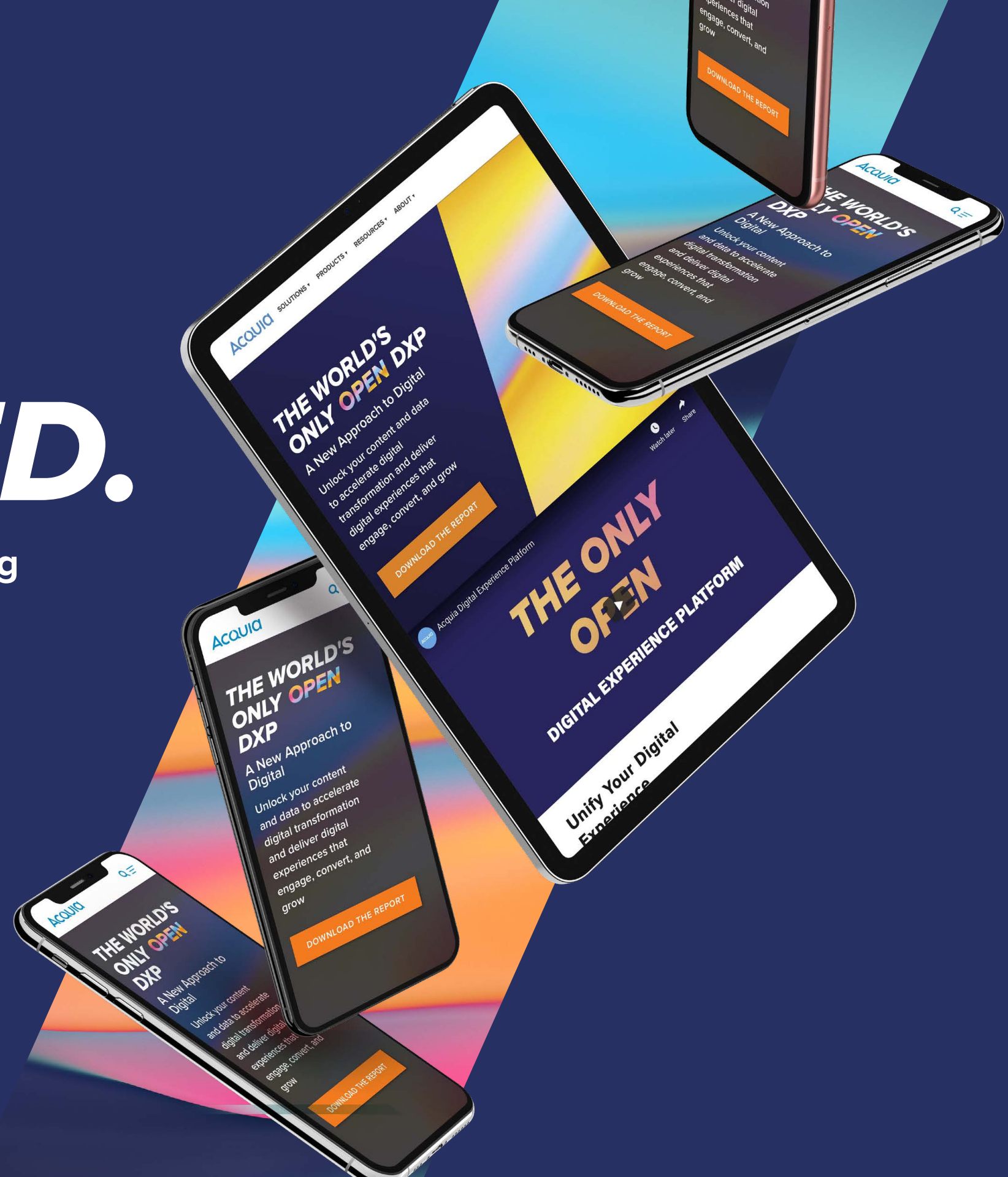
Australian marketers are overly optimistic about consumers' willingness to share data, but there's a trust gap at play. Brands must develop and implement a three-point approach to winning and keeping customer trust through transparency, complying with data regulations, and offering real value in exchange for information.

Australian brands were well-positioned to offer the digital experience that consumers demanded during COVID-19. However, as brands develop plans for the future, embracing open platforms can eliminate challenges and help overcome talent gaps. With a focus on strategic technology and addressing the data trust gap, Australian brands are laying the foundation for a long-term winning digital CX this year and beyond.

NOW, LET'S GET STARTED.

Brands need a partner committed to supporting them as they strive to do what's best for their customers. They also need a partner with a vision for CX and how open technology can support it. Learn why Acquia is that partner.

[LEARN MORE ▶](#)



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ABOUT THE SURVEY

“Design Resilient Digital Customer Experiences in Disruptive Times” was commissioned by Acquia and conducted by Vanson Bourne during June and July 2020. Respondents to the online survey were 8,000 consumers (1,000 from each location: Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and 800 marketers, with 100 representatives from each of the same nations listed above.

ABOUT ACQUIA

Acquia is the open digital experience company. We provide the world’s most ambitious brands with technology that allows them to embrace innovation and create customer moments that matter. At Acquia, we believe in the power of community – giving our customers the freedom to build tomorrow on their terms. To learn more, visit [acquia.com](https://www.acquia.com).

