

DESIGN RESILIENT DIGITAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES IN DISRUPTIVE TIMES

Customer Experience Trends Report, Singapore Edition



TABLE OF CONTENTS

03

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ▶

05

ABOUT THE SURVEY ▶

06

**THE SINGAPORE CX
SHIFTS RAPIDLY DURING
DISRUPTION ▶**

11

**CHOOSE OPEN PLATFORMS
TO MAXIMISE TECHNOLOGY
RETURNS ▶**

15

**CLOSE TALENT GAPS WITH
TECHNOLOGY ▶**

18

**EFFECTIVE PERSONALISATION
REQUIRES TECHNOLOGY AND
DATA STRATEGIES ▶**

23

**BRINGING IT ALL
TOGETHER ▶**

25

ABOUT ACQUIA ▶

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INSIGHTS FROM MARKETERS AND CONSUMERS IN SINGAPORE ON THE CHANGING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IN 2021 AND BEYOND.

Few markets we surveyed experienced changes to their customer experience (CX) as dramatic as Singapore. In the wake of COVID-19, online purchases and engagement soared as consumers navigated the new reality – and brands moved rapidly to scale up their digital CX.

Brands in Singapore had a technology foundation in place, with recent investments in marketing and CX solutions. Robust technology stacks supported brands' ability to pivot. However, brands encountered obstacles that point to the need for open platforms to support greater data control and interoperability.

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 SINGAPORE MARKET CAN DELIVER A WINNING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE BY FOCUSING ON TECHNOLOGY, TALENT, AND TOUCHPOINTS:

/ Technology

Marketers in Singapore have invested in marketing automation, customer data platforms, and low-code tools. Yet they are behind the global average for machine learning, personalisation, and content management systems. Leveraging these technologies and exploring how an open platform can tie their customer data together and power experiences will allow brands to modernise their CX.



/ Talent

CMOs in Singapore are setting the vision for their CX in a fast-evolving context – but many are doing so faced with workforce reductions due to COVID-19 and skills shortages in both marketing and technical roles. Strategically deployed technology can help increase capacity and support new campaigns by closing talent gaps.

/ Touchpoints

Personalised touchpoints remain a significant focus for brands in Singapore. As many organisations wrestle with getting the technology in place to gather, segment, and create actionable personalisation, technology will be a major focus over the next year. Implementing or continuing strong data policies are also a priority.

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 respondents in Singapore, which included 1,000 consumers and 100 marketers.

SECTION 01

***THE SINGAPORE
CX SHIFTS
RAPIDLY DURING
DISRUPTION***





87%

**OF CONSUMERS IN SINGAPORE SAY
THEIR DIGITAL EXPERIENCE WITH
BRANDS HAS CHANGED SINCE
THE START OF THE PANDEMIC.**

87% of consumers in Singapore say their digital experience with brands has changed since the start of the pandemic. And it is easy to see that playing out in how consumers make purchases, the way they engage in brands, and the digital channels they use to engage with others.

Brands in Singapore had some of the right technologies in place to pivot business to digital. 87% of marketers in Singapore report they were well-prepared for the shift, versus 83% of brands globally. Over the past year, brands strategically implemented technology and platforms that no doubt supported the transitions the year demanded. Indeed, an overwhelming 89% of marketers in Singapore felt their ROI on technology improved over the past year.

THE DIGITAL EXPERIENCE MATTERS MORE THAN EVER BEFORE

47%
SINGAPORE

VS

30%
GLOBALLY

For consumers in Singapore, there were major shifts in day to day life at levels that exceeded global peers, including:

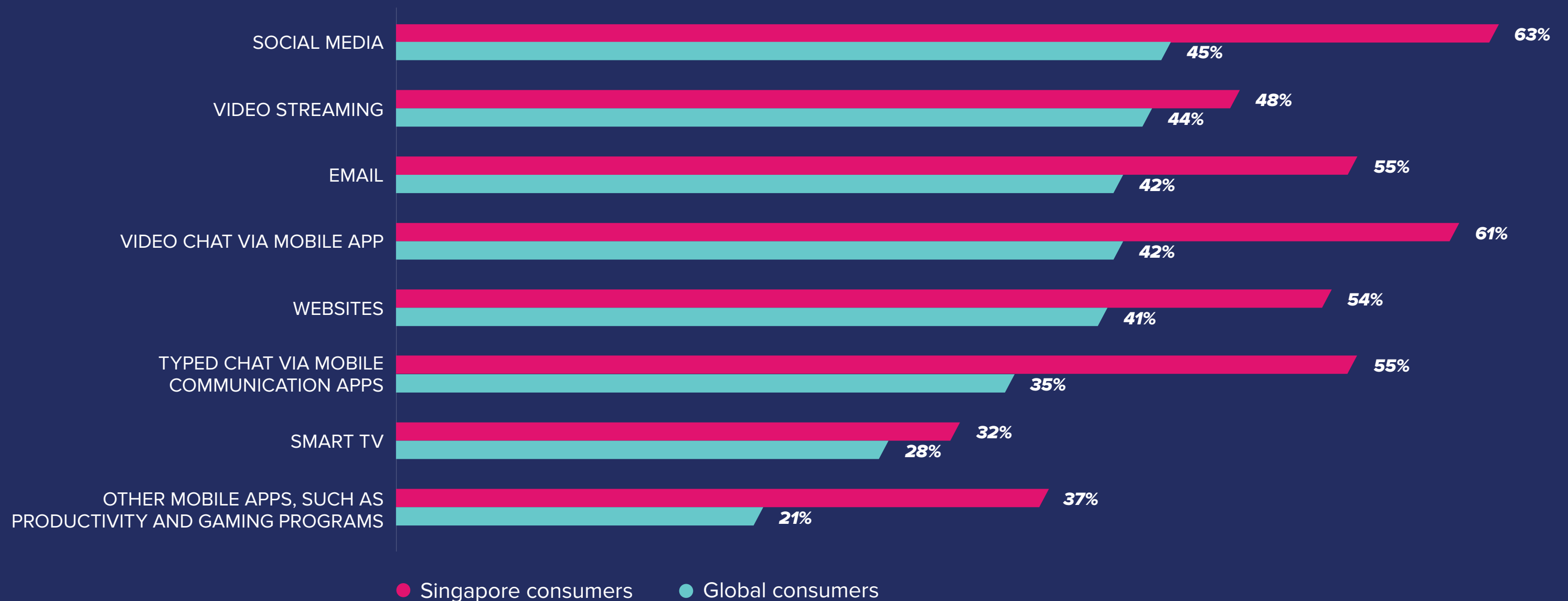
- Buying more things online than before:** 58% Singapore vs. 40% globally
- The digital experience matters more than it did before:** 47% Singapore vs. 30% globally
- Increased digital connection with community:** 45% Singapore vs. 28% globally
- Bought from more brands than had previously:** 40% Singapore vs. 24% globally
- More inclined to support local business online:** 25% Singapore vs. 21% globally

- More inclined to buy from local business in-store:** 20% Singapore vs. 19% globally
- Prefer to interact with brands online, rather than in-person:** 20% Singapore vs. 16% globally

For brands, the digital experience and digital adoption are at an important inflection point. Developing the infrastructure, processes, and talent to support the CX consumers need right now may be a challenge – but it is also an opportunity.

Consumers are trying new brands, they're purchasing online and they're paying attention to the CX that brands deliver. It is a great time to attract new buyers and turn them into long-term customers with a well-honed digital CX.

Consumers in Singapore also shifted the way they are engaging on digital channels. Overall, respondents reported increased usage of the following channels at greater increases than global peers:



These changes creates tremendous opportunities for brands to develop new digital channels and scale their digital CX. However, It's important to consider what happens if you're unable to deliver what customers need. Brands in Singapore have performed well but must continue innovating and solving data and interoperability challenges that hinder growth.

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 Singapore consumers are eager to forge new connections and brands have the insights they need to move forward.

As we explore these research findings and perspectives regarding the market in Singapore, we will 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 02

**CHOOSE OPEN
PLATFORMS
TO MAXIMISE
TECHNOLOGY
RETURNS**

64% SINGAPORE BRANDS
CUSTOMER DATA PLATFORMS (CDPs)

54% GLOBALLY

Brands in Singapore have been investing in critical areas over the past year, many ahead of their global peers:


- / Marketing automation:** 65% of Singapore brands vs. 63% globally
- / Customer data platforms (CDPs):** 64% of Singapore brands vs. 54% globally
- / Personalisation:** On par with global peers at 43%
- / Low-code or no-code tools:** On par with global peers at 24%

However, brands in Singapore lag in adopting artificial intelligence, machine learning, and content management systems. Despite a hard push to upgrade technologies, Brands in Singapore identified several remaining technology challenges that hinder their digital CX efforts at levels higher than other markets:

- / Shortage of employees with AI/machine learning skills:** 46% vs. 39% globally
- / Budget:** 36% vs. 32% globally
- / Lack of expertise:** 39% vs. 30% globally
- / Data in silos:** 31% vs. 27% globally

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

Technology capabilities can expand a marketing team's ability to work with data, while an advisory relationship with the open platform partner can help overcome a lack of expertise.



AS BRANDS IN THE SINGAPORE MARKET CONSIDER THEIR NEXT STEPS WITH TECHNOLOGY, THERE 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. Brands in Singapore have invested in marketing and CX systems. With a surge in digital customer activity, brands need solutions that can capture that data, communicate it seamlessly across systems and translate those insights into personalised experiences across brand touchpoints.
- / Accelerate the use of AI, machine learning, and content management systems:** While brands in Singapore have invested in several key technologies and platforms, they are lagging behind in these areas. When dealing with talent shortages, machine learning and simplified content management solutions can streamline workflows and accelerate your time to market with new aspects of your CX.



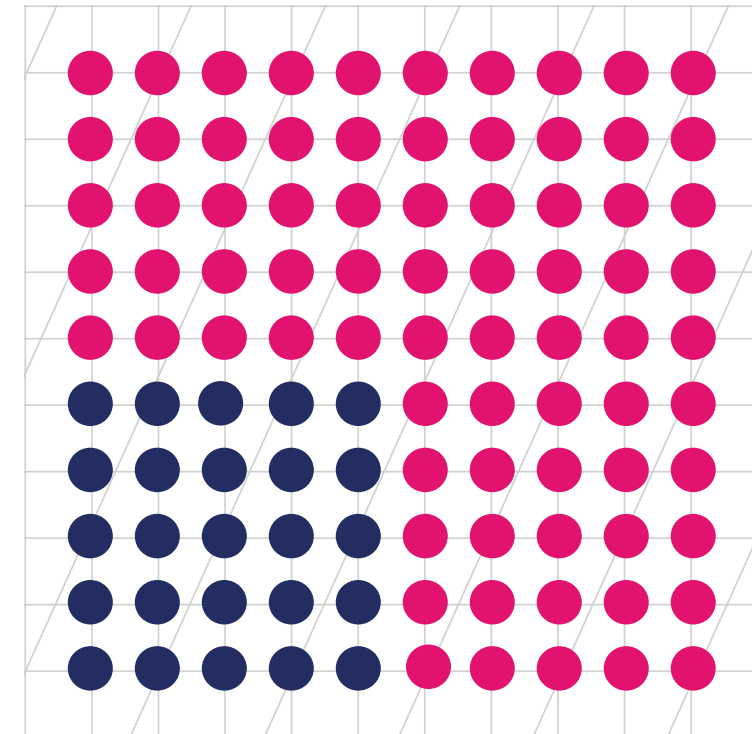
CASE STUDY: SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY

A premier research university, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching.

The SMU website serves as a virtual extension of the campus by providing information and services for students, parents, faculty, alumni, and academic partners. SMU originally powered the website via a number of standalone solutions, but brand consistency, layout control, mobile responsiveness, and content management were complex. SMU chose to move to the Drupal content management

system, first hosting the Drupal site on university infrastructure, and then moving to Acquia Cloud Platform.

Hosting with Acquia Cloud Platform provided a performance boost and offered SMU stability and scalability within a predictable budget. It also empowered content owners to produce content without technical support. Compared to 5 years ago, SMU has seen its main university site’s page views rising steadily by 25% to about 8 million in 2019 and bounce rate decreasing to 15% from 60% before — a 4X reduction.



SMU HAS SEEN ITS MAIN UNIVERSITY SITE’S PAGE VIEWS RISING STEADILY BY 25% TO ABOUT 8 MILLION IN 2019

SECTION 03

**CLOSE TALENT
GAPS WITH
TECHNOLOGY**





54%

**OF SINGAPORE'S BRANDS
RELY ON THEIR CMO
TO DEVELOP THE LARGER
CX VISION.**

However, one area that hinders brands' ability to grow, generate new content and develop a dynamic digital customer experience is an ongoing talent shortage. Our survey revealed that brands in Singapore struggle with skills gaps in the following areas:

- Brand marketing leadership:** 46% Singapore vs. 44% globally
- Digital customer service roles:** 54% Singapore vs. 44% globally
- Data analysts/scientists:** 46% Singapore vs. 43% globally
- Growth marketers:** 45% Singapore vs. 38% globally
- Web developer talent:** 34% Singapore vs. 33% globally

Another challenge that CMOs face in quickly scaling their digital CX to meet demand is a reduction in workforce due to COVID-19. Some 42% of Singapore brands report their staffs have been cut due to the pandemic. A lean workforce combined with key talent shortages can leave CMOs scrambling for the resources needed to make their vision a reality.

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

- Improve technical capabilities with the right platform:** Brands in Singapore highlighted urgent talent shortages in both data science and machine learning. Engineering and machine learning talent shortages do not have to slow you down. Low-code platforms will make it easier to build, deploy, and analyse campaigns without sophisticated programming knowledge.
- Embrace automation and personalisation to address talent shortages:** In the Singapore market, brands are struggling with critical roles such as digital customer support, growth marketers, and brand marketing leadership. When there is a gap in campaign capacity,

technology can help address the talent shortage. Marketing automation and personalisation tools can help deliver scaled, customised experiences to customers at each touchpoint – without requiring access to specific talent.

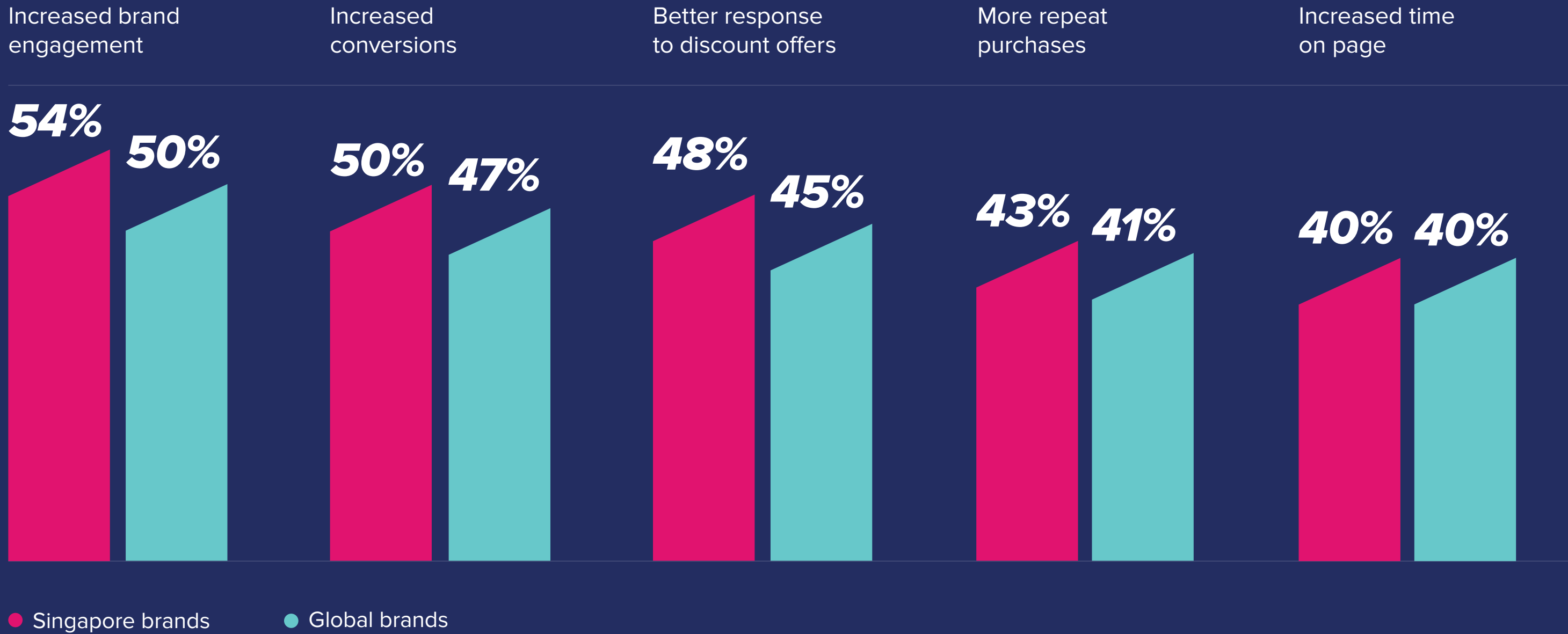
- Adopt an open platform to power your CDPs:** Brands need a strategy for delivering personalised experiences across channels as expectations in the Singapore market continue to mature. The uptick in activity has led to a surge of new data that can be collected, analysed, and translated to insights. A CDP is the backbone of a strong, personalised CX for Singapore businesses.



SECTION 04

**EFFECTIVE
PERSONALISATION
REQUIRES
TECHNOLOGY AND
DATA STRATEGIES**

Nearly half of Singapore’s brands (46%) identified personalisation as a core strategy to connect with consumers. Brands that implement personalisation in this market see key benefits at or above global levels, including:



**ENGAGING/
UNDERSTANDING**

57%

SINGAPORE

VS

37%
GLOBALLY

DELIVERING PERSONALISATION REQUIRES A STRONG CUSTOMER DATA SET. IT ALSO DEMANDS CLARITY IN YOUR MARKETING APPROACH AND MESSAGING.

Tone matters – but the market in Singapore is more flexible in their response to which marketing approaches resonate. More than one-third of consumers in Singapore identified the following approaches as appealing:

- / Engaging/understanding, 57% vs. 37% globally**
- / Creative/exploratory, 50% vs. 36% globally**
- / Fast/agile in response to events, 38% vs. 33% globally**
- / Charitable or socially conscious, 33% vs. 32% globally**
- / Light-hearted/humorous, 35% vs. 31% globally**

**SINGAPORE
BRANDS
WANT TO:**

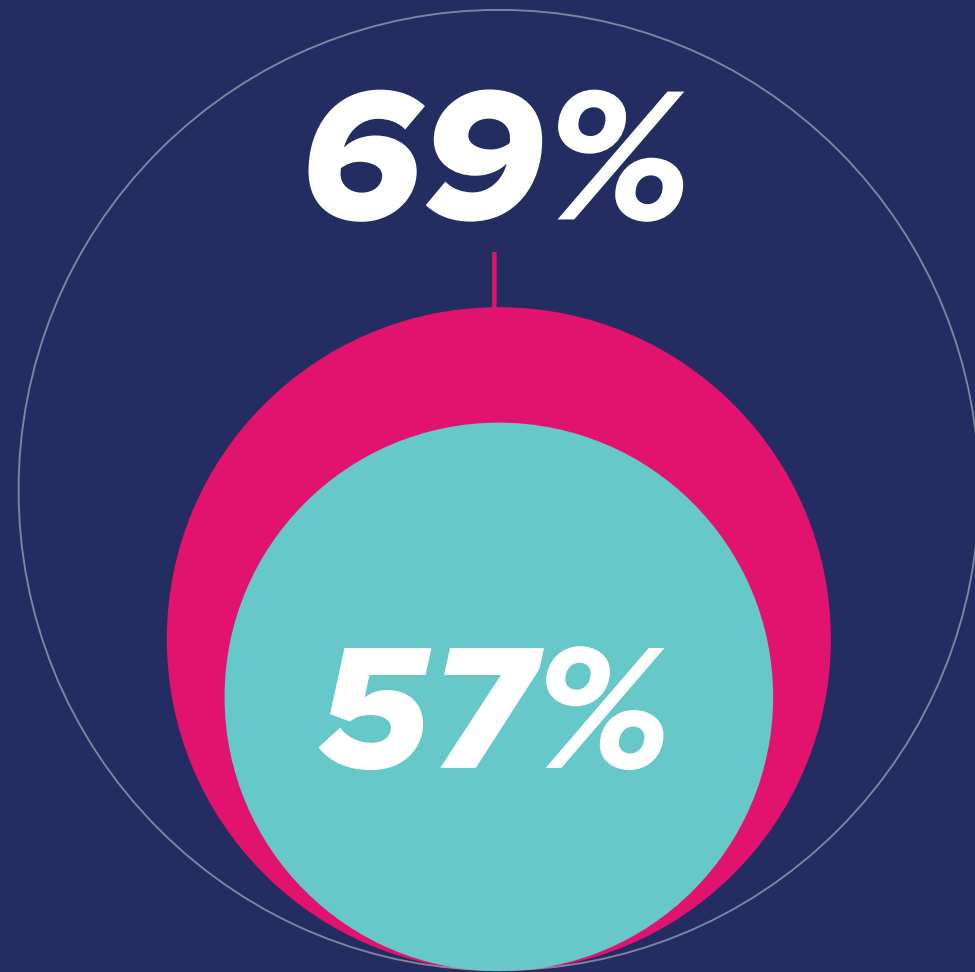
**IMPROVE
CUSTOMER
SERVICE BY
77%**



**INVEST IN
PERSONALISATION BY
46%**

Looking ahead, 77% of Singapore brands want to improve customer service, while 46% plan to invest in personalisation.

Excellent digital customer service and personalised interactions rely on data, yet just 57% of consumers in Singapore are comfortable sharing personal information with brands. Marketers seem to overestimate their market's willingness to provide personal information, with 69% suggesting that consumers are comfortable sharing data.



69% OF MARKETERS IN SINGAPORE BELIEVE CONSUMERS TRUST BRANDS WITH THEIR INFORMATION; JUST 57% OF CONSUMERS AGREE.

To begin to close this gap, it will be important in the months ahead that brands take a transparent, privacy-oriented, and customer-centric approach to data. Not only will that help retain the trust in place, but it may help win the support of consumers on the fence. What must a data strategy contain?

- / Be transparent about data you are collecting and give consumers control over their information.** Consumers who understand what information you are gathering, how it is 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 and PDPA, 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 05

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

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

1. Evaluate open platforms to capture the surge of customer data: The market in Singapore has been dramatically changed by COVID-19. Consumers are buying more online, trying new brands and engaging on platforms that could represent important marketing opportunities. Open platforms allow brands to flexibly deploy tools and integrate their CDPs with the larger marketing and CX infrastructure to drive significant insights.

2. Support your CMO's CX leadership with a talent-centred technology plan: 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 adding to headcount.

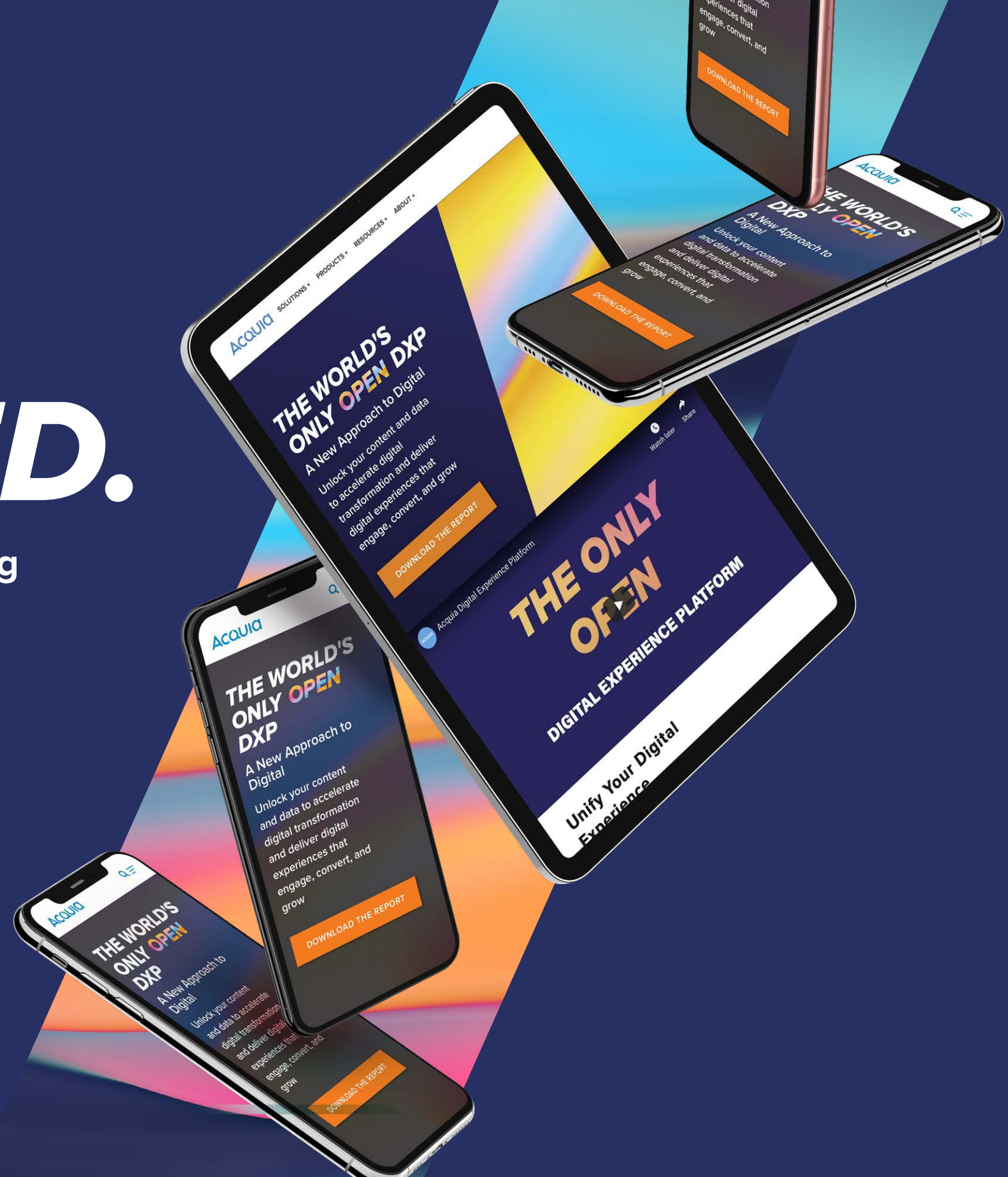
3. Implement personalisation but watch consumer trust levels: With 57% of consumers in Singapore willing to share their information, marketers have a good base to work from. Marketers are realistic about the opportunities and ready to tackle personalisation. Developing a comprehensive data strategy to establish and retain trust will be critical moving forward.

Despite the significant changes that COVID-19 brought to the market, both consumers in Singapore and brands have shown their resilience. They are trying new things, exploring how technology can help them achieve their goals, and looking ahead with optimism. Brands that focus on aligning their technology, talent, and touchpoint strategies will be poised to make the most of this significant opportunity to upgrade their digital CX and forge long-lasting relationships with consumers in Singapore.

NOW, LET'S GET STARTED.

Brands need a partner committed to supporting them as they strive to do what is 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 ►](#)



Acquia

ACQUIA.COM

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.

