

DEFINING DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

How marketing and CX leaders are defining the evolving digital experience space

Introduction

Acceleration is everywhere. Today's consumers are demanding faster, better and more memorable experiences, with digital technologies proving a key driving force behind increasingly real-time expectations and demands.

In an effort to meet these evolving expectations, brands are changing the way that they interact with customers, constantly improving upon the digital experiences they set out to provide.

Simply having an online presence is no longer enough. To secure — and retain — customer loyalty, brands are now devoting more time and resource to honing their digital experiences and developing an understanding of their customers at an individual level.

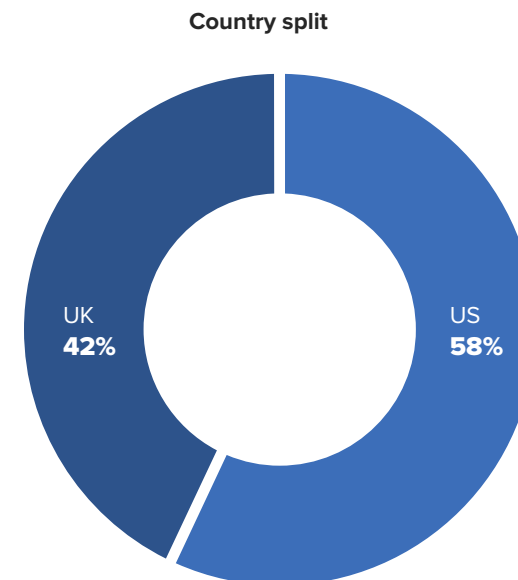
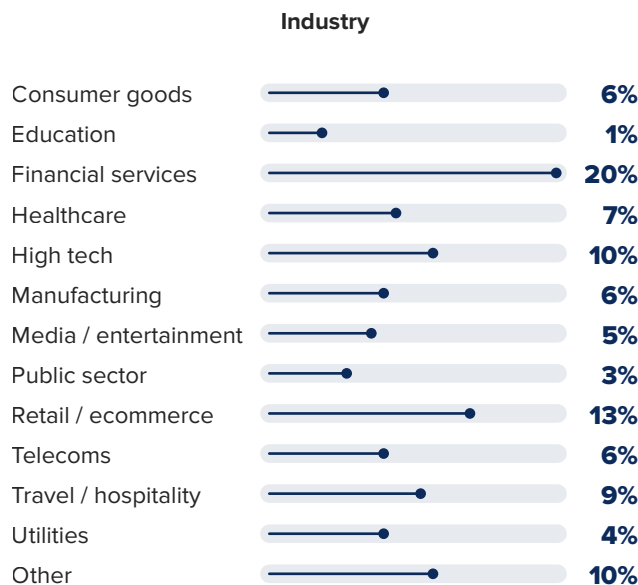
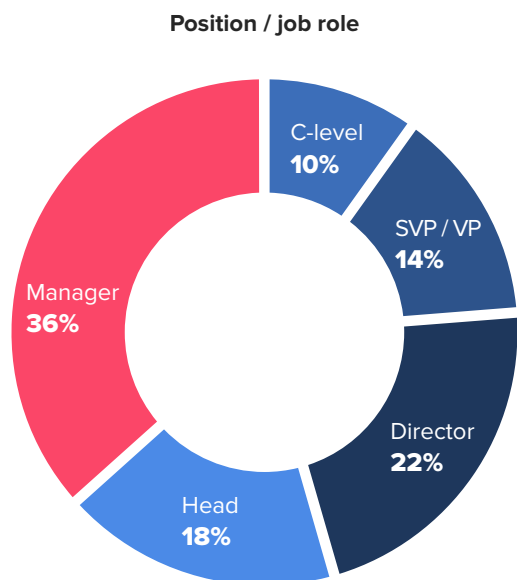
As the implications of this approach for customer loyalty, sales and revenue growth become increasingly clear, the idea of digital experience (DX) is starting to shift from a subset of marketing into a discipline in its own right.

Today, some of the world's biggest brands are investing in new processes, skilled people and innovative technologies to help shape and define their own digital experiences.

Despite this investment, digital experience is still in its infancy, and brands are still maturing. Clearly senior leaders value its importance, but the day-to-day practice of this new discipline is yet to be perfected, or even fully understood.

This report represents a fundamental first step in developing such an understanding.

Originally produced by Clicktale and CX Network, this report incorporates data from over 200 marketing and CX professionals from some of the world's leading brands. The result is a unique insight into the objectives and strategy that have come to shape today's digital experience approach, as well as the technologies and approaches that will continue to define DX in the years to come.



Building Digital Experience Capability

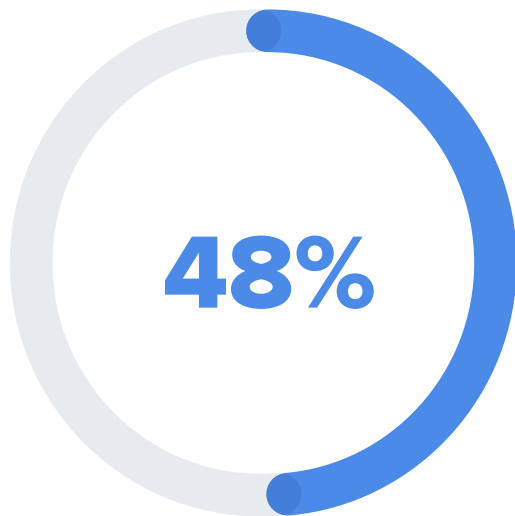
The digital experience space is evolving rapidly, with many brands already looking to cement their approach and support a fully functioning digital experience capability.

In achieving this goal, just under half of those surveyed (**48%**) have already introduced a dedicated digital experience department or team within their organizations.

For those that have not adopted a fully-fledged DX department, digital experience initiatives are being supported by multiple functions.

Of those surveyed, **44%** have a dedicated data science team, while **52%** have a digital analytics and insights team. **54%** are also using their dedicated design / UX team to help shape their digital experiences.

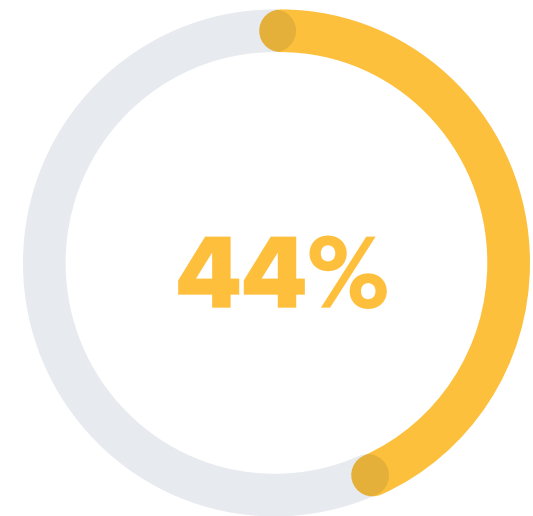
But for many organizations, it is still a merged affair. **44%** say that digital customer experience is merged with other departments. And of the sub-disciplines, digital analytics and insight (**40%**), design and UX (**32%**) and data science (**29%**) are still merged with other departments.



of brands have introduced a dedicated digital experience department or team



of brands now have a dedicated digital analytics & insight team



of brands now have a dedicated data science team

Who Owns Digital Experience?

The discipline of DX is still in its relative infancy, and customer-centric digital technologies are now seeping into various aspects of business. As a result, many brands are yet to assign ultimate responsibility for their digital experience approach.

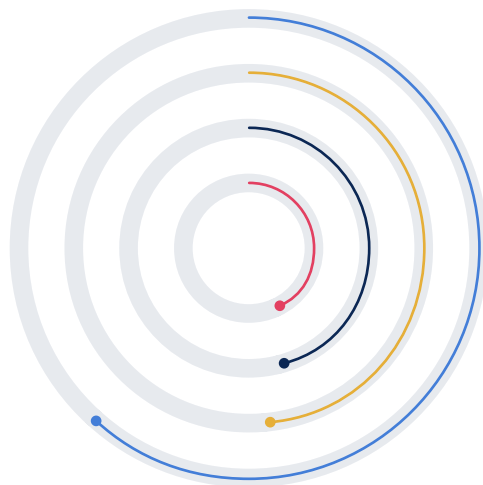
For now, marketing and digital departments have taken the lead. **31%** of respondents claim that their marketing department is ultimately responsible for DX, while **27%** claim that it falls to the digital team. By contrast, only **13%**

of businesses place ownership of their digital experience within a specific 'customer experience' department.

For others, DX remains largely dispersed, with **14%** of respondents saying that ultimate responsibility for digital experience is not held by one single department within their organization. **12%** also claim that digital experience is currently the responsibility of other groups outside of CX, digital or even marketing.

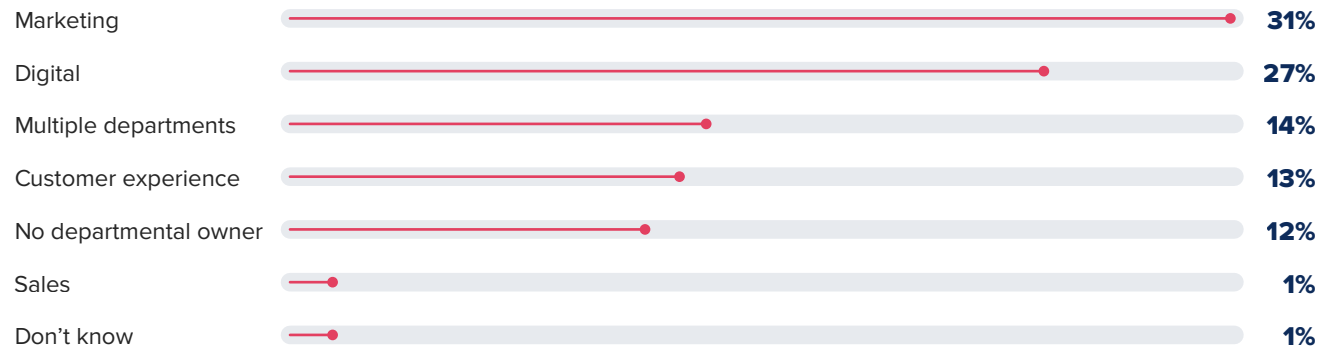
In an effort to centralize this responsibility, **48%** of brands have now taken the decision to assign digital experience to a dedicated cross-department team within their organization. A sign that digital experience is gaining recognition as an important focus area within enterprise brands.

? Which job levels are currently responsible for defining their brand's digital experience?



- Director **61%**
- Manager **48%**
- C-level **47%**
- Head of Marketing / CX **47%**

? Which of the following departments is ultimately responsible for digital experience in your organization?



“Most brands do not deliver an intentional, consistent experience across analog and digital touchpoints because **they do not connect or reinforce brand to emotion every step of the way.** It’s left to chance. That’s a significant problem as customers are digital-first and are seeking the everyday convenience and personalization their favorite apps and services deliver.

“All brands compete with the best user experiences regardless of industry. Why? Regardless of whether it’s B2B, B2C or B2B2C, the best experiences are the new standards for engagement.”



BRIAN SOLIS

Keynote Speaker, Futurist,
and Principal Analyst
at Altimeter

Digital Experience Strategy

Rather than seeing digital experience as a subset of wider CX, brands are instead treating DX as its own separate entity, with its own vision, goals and cross-department strategy. In fact, **67%** of those surveyed are actually using their digital experience approach to create a clear customer experience vision.

In developing this independent strategy, DX leaders have a number of clear priorities and objectives in mind.

The first of these is to use their digital experience approach to build, secure and maintain loyal customers. Faced with greater competition and declining consumer preference, many brands have found themselves operating within a switching economy. Perhaps as a result, **74%** of those surveyed are investing in digital experience specifically to build long-term customer loyalty.

The next big priorities for today's DX leaders are developing a deeper understanding of customer behavior (**67%**) and informing a clearer customer experience vision for the wider organization (**67%**).

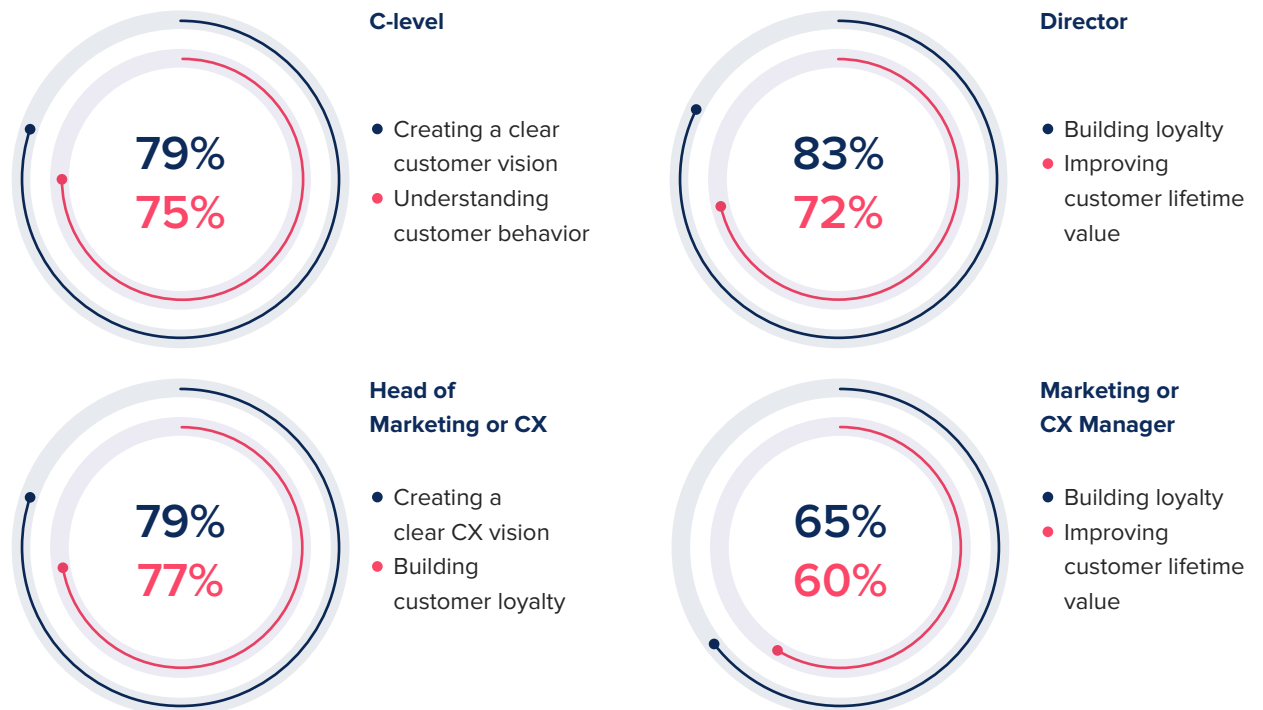
These priorities not only represent long-term strategic goals, but are also fundamentally linked together. By using digital data to understand their customers, DX leaders are hoping to inform their CX vision, and use that vision to create positive experiences that can foster customer loyalty.

But does the clarity of long-term strategy translate into the day-to-day execution?

? When it comes to digital experience strategy, which of the following are very important to your organization?



? When it comes to digital experience strategy, which of the following are very important to your organization? (By job title)



Reality Check, Digital Experience Today

While it's clear that today's brands are committed to their strategic DX plans, it's also clear that there are some areas that could deliver significant benefits for those looking to perfect their approach to digital experience.

At the heart of this lies the ability to create truly seamless, joined-up experiences across different digital touchpoints — something that **73%** of respondents say they are currently unable to do.

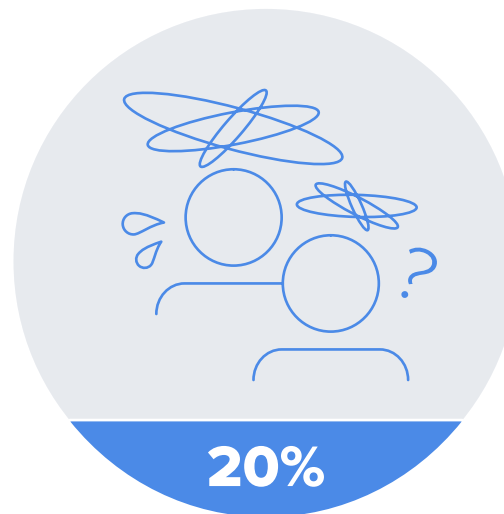
While disjointed experiences are occurring across various channels and devices, mobile appears to be a key sticking point.

As it stands, **34%** of respondents feel that they are not effective at uniting data from their websites with data from their mobile sites. This rises to **39%** for uniting data from websites and mobile apps.

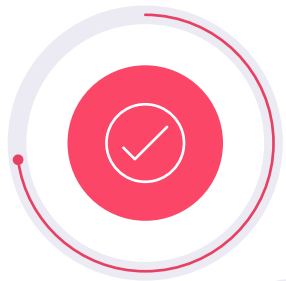
Real-time experiences are also proving an area of concern, with **71%** of respondents saying that their brands can't action customer insights in real time.

For some, these tasks feel almost insurmountable, with a fifth (**20%**) of marketing and CX professionals feeling that they will 'never truly understand' why their customers buy.

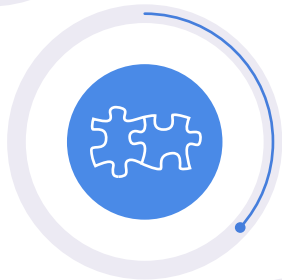
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What's Holding Digital Experience Back?

As we've seen, today's brands have a clear strategy in place when it comes to their digital experiences. In terms of converting this strategy into a day-to-day reality, however, for most of our respondents there are still two key factors that are stopping them from delivering on their desired DX visions.

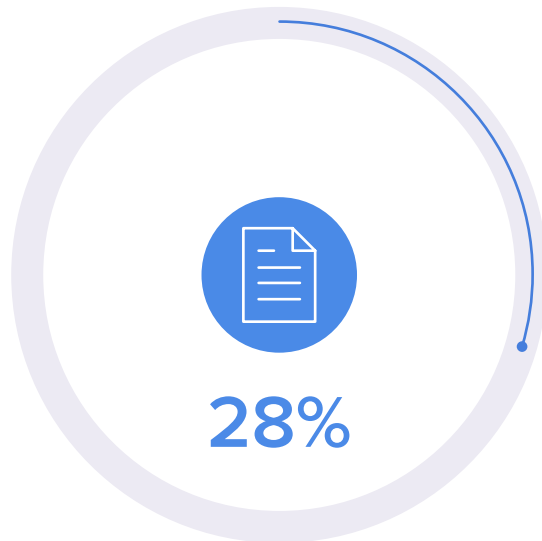
The first is understanding their customers' behavior. Currently, more than half (**54%**) of our respondents don't believe that they have a strong understanding of their customers' behavior across their digital channels.

The second is an abundance of data without clear, actionable results. Despite over half of those surveyed (**53%**) claiming that businesses can never have 'too much' data, many also admit that they have little idea what they should and shouldn't be paying attention to.

This inability to create meaningful insights is even more apparent at the day-to-day level, with **28%** of respondents saying they don't turn the in-page data they collect into meaningful insights. **32%** also don't convert their on-site search and navigational data into insights.

An even more concerning trend: despite many marketers (**45%**) investing in journey analytics platforms, **40%** don't feel that they are able to turn the resulting data into actionable insights.

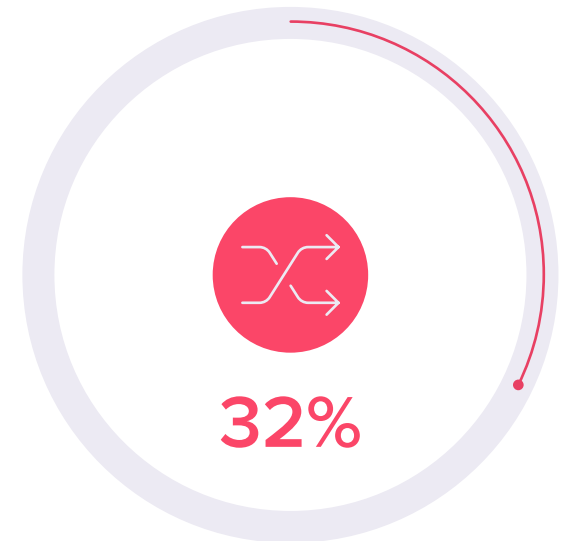
To overcome these issues, DX leaders need to develop meaningful insights that can both inform their strategies and offer a tangible link to the business' bottom line.



28% don't turn in-page data into actionable insights



54% don't believe they have a strong understanding of their customers' behavior across digital channels



32% don't turn navigational data into actionable insights

The Need To Understand Digital Behavior

For 67% of those surveyed, understanding customer behavior represents a key outcome of their digital experience investment. Given this vision, the fact that **28%** of respondents can't currently turn in-page behavioral data into meaningful insights represents a serious point for concern.

For many DX leaders, this disconnect comes down to the type of data being collected, and the experiences that brands are — and aren't — able to analyze. Currently, **64%** of brands are able to track customer experiences through post-sale support and direct customer feedback.

When it comes to understanding customers while they're still in the decision-making stage of the buyer journey, however, brands start to fall down.

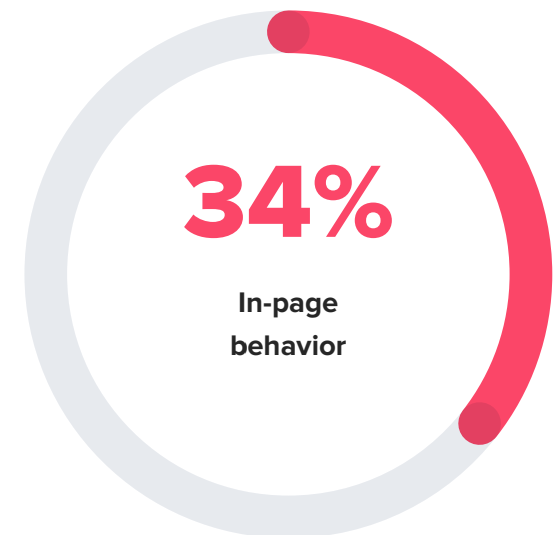
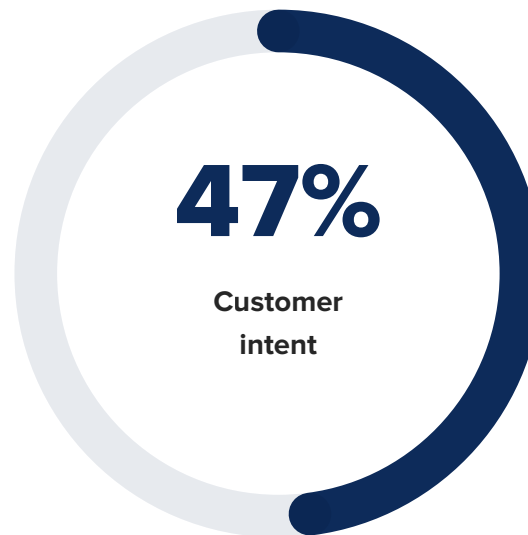
It seems that brands are great at surveying their customers after the fact, but these surveys rarely provide accurate insight into the consumer's experience at the moment of purchase. To achieve that level of insight, brands need different insights — insights into customer behavior.

As such, today's DX leaders are homing in on the data that provides clear, genuine insights into customers' mindsets,

intentions and behaviors while they're still within the buyer journey. Of those surveyed, **52%** would find it valuable to collect data about their customers' emotions and mindsets in future, while **47%** would find it valuable to collect data on customer intent. **34%** also think it will be beneficial to start collecting data about in-page behaviors.

Clearly, behavioral data will form a key part of digital experience strategies in future, with many hoping that this additional layer of insight will provide a competitive edge and allow brands to understand their digital customers on an increasingly human level.

? What data will DX professionals want to collect in the future?



Technology Priorities

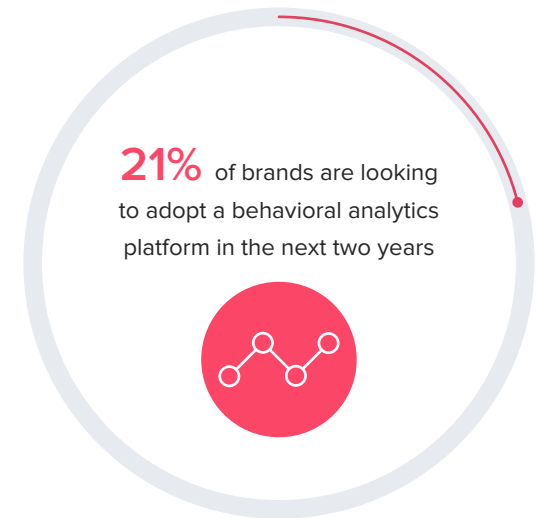
To achieve their goals, and understand their customers at a behavioral level, DX leaders are investing in a number of tools and technology platforms.

Currently, **86%** of those working in digital experience are using traditional web analytics, while **84%** are collecting feedback on customer interactions through online surveys and forms. Just over half (**56%**) are also incorporating A/B testing into their digital experience approach.

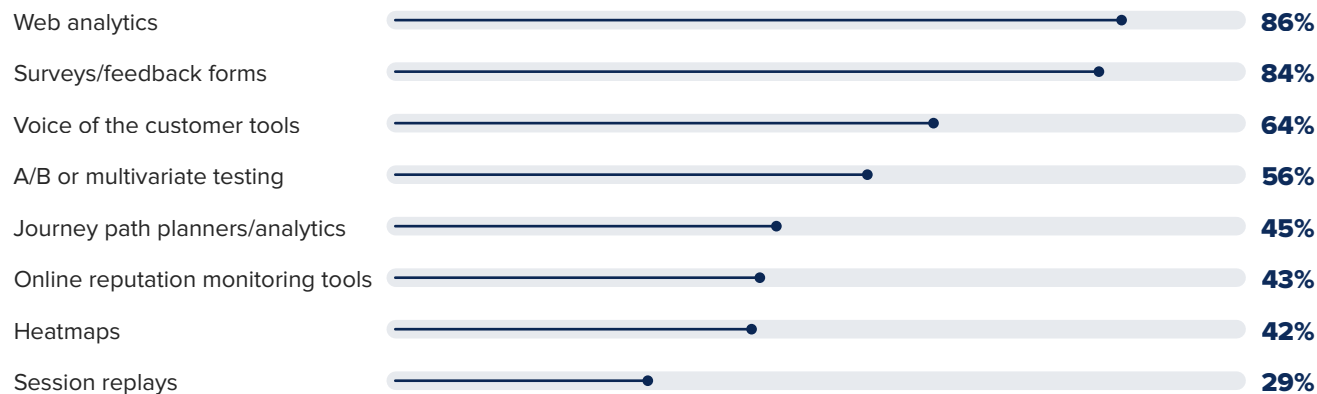
While all of these technologies provide an important snapshot of the end customer, they do not provide the behavioral, “human” insights that marketers are seeking to shape and define their digital experiences in the long term.

To develop these insights, DX leaders are turning to more advanced behavioral analytics and in-page tracking technologies. Of those surveyed, **42%** are already using heatmaps to analyze behavior across their web and mobile sites, while a further **21%** have plans to adopt this technology in the next 1–2 years. **29%** are also tracking behavior through session replays.

Despite these initial investments, only **8%** of brands have adopted a fully-fledged behavioral analytics platform. This may be set to change in the years ahead, with **21%** looking to invest in such a centralized platform within the next two years.



? What tools are currently being used to inform data collection?



Closing The Gap

The rapid pace of development in what is a relatively new field has forced today's DX leaders into developing clear, long-term visions for their digital experiences – driven by loyalty and lifetime value. And they are thinking carefully about the technologies, processes and people that can help them deliver this vision and achieve their goals. But the theory is not translating into outcomes, today.

In their own words, the gap lies in the ability for brands to make the most of the available data, turning it into actionable insight from which to make truly informed optimization decisions. These smart, iterative decisions would no doubt take brands closer to delivering seamless digital experiences for their end customers.

Technology and data will both have a role to play, but they cannot be considered a strategy in their own right. They are instead the fuel through which brands can power and inform their future digital experience approach – driven by humans, for humans.

This combination of rich data, enabled technology and human-smarts must work horizontally across all departments of the organization, where their role is to facilitate customer touchpoints. This approach must create an agile environment within which brands can rapidly understand, and respond to, changing customer behaviors and demands.

Through strategic technology adoption, a data-driven understanding of consumers, and an increasingly human approach to customer experiences, DX leaders can develop a more accurate vision of their customers' behavior. In turn, this behavioral insight will power a sophisticated cycle of continuous improvement, helping them to decide where to invest and how to shape their digital approach in the years to come.



What next?

Learn more about how digital experience leaders are driving change through a better understanding of customer behavior.

Take me there

About The Authors



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