

The Blueprint to Total Experience

Achieving experiences
that are 'beyond the frame'



Foreword

Exceptional experiences are a critical differentiator in today's economy.

Successful businesses must go beyond providing products or services. They need to create memorable, seamless interactions that foster loyalty, productivity and profitability.

Our latest research, **The Blueprint to Total Experience**, highlights the benefits of integrating all touchpoints—customer-facing channels, employee interfaces and partner engagements—to create personalized, value-driven experiences that evolve with audience needs and expectations.

Companies that excel here use generative AI and other technologies to drive efficiency and innovation, resulting in seamless interactions.

Experience leaders see significant growth—up to a 57% increase—compared to the 3% growth of beginners.

Embracing total experience is now a competitive necessity. We hope you enjoy the report.



Jill Kouri

Chief Marketing Officer
HCLTech



Pawan Vadapalli

CVP and Global Head,
Digital Business Services
HCLTech

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Introduction

As the world enters the next digital era, personalized and scalable experiences—for consumers, employees and users—are vital for the competitive success and long-term growth of firms.

Creating superior experiences unlocks a host of stakeholder benefits, such as greater customer loyalty, increased employee productivity and a stronger ability to attract talent. These benefits translate into better business results—from higher revenue and profitability to better products and services.

But delivering experiences in line with the expectations of today's switched-on users is no easy task. Many firms struggle to deliver experiences in a consistent, personalized and scalable way. As companies strive to take experiences to the next level, they must overcome a maze of organizational, process, data and technological challenges.

A robust benchmarking survey

To better understand best practices in delivering personalized and scalable human experiences, we surveyed 600 senior business and technology leaders across industries from Europe, the US and APAC. The companies cover a wide variety of industries, both consumer- and business-facing and organizations of varying sizes. To ensure a balanced management perspective, we surveyed a cross-section of C-level executives and direct reports.

Defining experience leadership

For our research, we defined an experience leader as a company that prioritizes the delivery of exceptional experiences to all company stakeholders—including customers, employees and users—across all touchpoints, including in-person, online and beyond.

An experience leader goes a step further by integrating the various types of experience into the holy grail of experience: Total Experience.

Experience maturity

For benchmarking purposes, we used the survey results to categorize companies into three levels of experience maturity: leaders, intermediates and beginners.

Our report outlines the strategic, technological and organizational measures that companies can implement to align their end-to-end value chains. By doing so, they can synchronize their systems, processes, products and data with the evolving needs and values of customers and employees to become experience leaders.

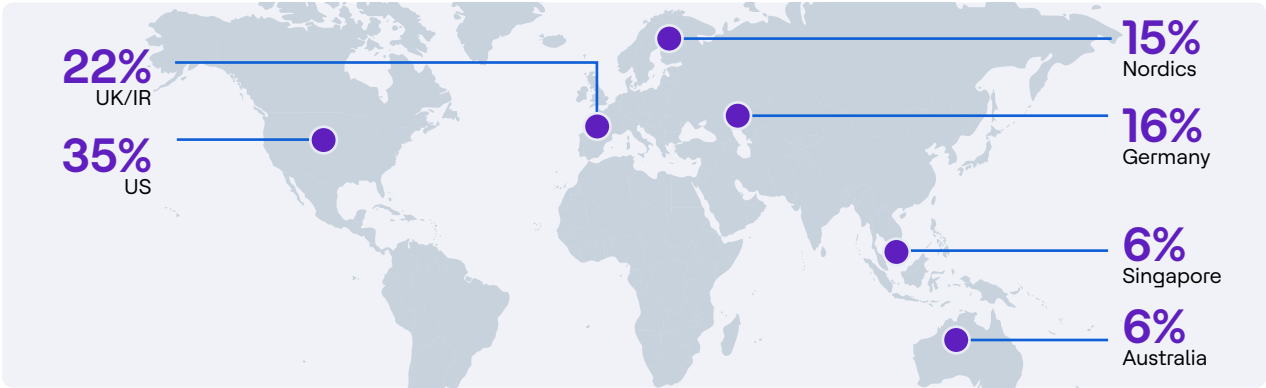
A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's hands interacting with a laptop. The right hand holds a white stylus, poised to write on the laptop screen. The left hand is positioned on the keyboard. The scene is dimly lit with a strong blue and purple ambient light, creating a futuristic or professional atmosphere. The laptop screen is tilted back, and the keyboard is visible in the lower right.

Research background

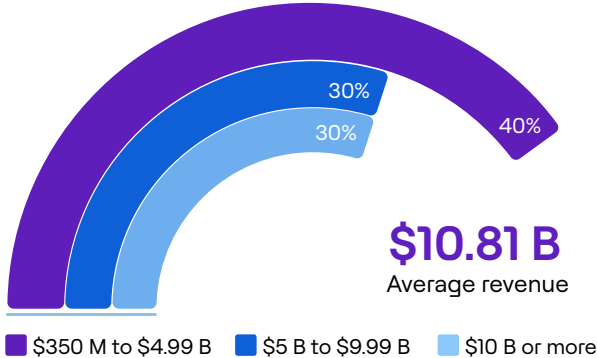
Survey sample profile



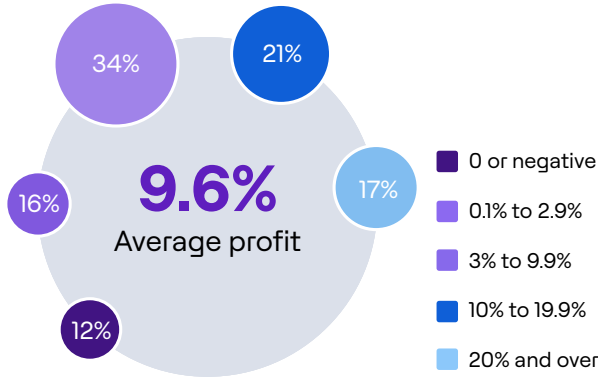
Respondents by country



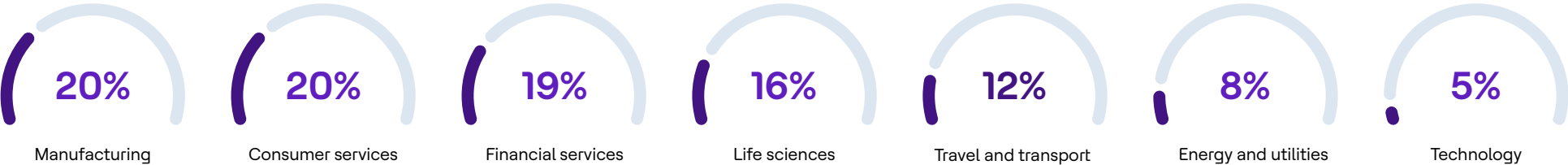
Respondents by company revenue



Respondents by company profit



Respondents by industry



Defining experience leadership

We created an experience maturity framework based on the question that asked respondents to report their current and future state of progress on five areas of experience.

Q. How much progress has your company made in implementing the following areas of experience, and how much progress does your company plan to make over the next three years?

1. **Customer experience (CX)** — The experience of customers throughout their buying journeys and relationships with a company
2. **Employee experience (EX)** — Encompassing the totality of interactions an employee encounters within an organization
3. **User experience (UX)** — The digital experience of users as they interact with products and services
4. **Multi-experience (MX)** — Cultivating a cohesive user environment amidst a gamut of devices and platforms, such as websites, smart TVs, contact centers and mobile apps
5. **Total experience (TX)** — Designing and delivering exceptional experiences in a holistic way for employees, customers and users across multiple channels

Experience maturity scoring methodology

We used respondents' answers for progress made to assign them to a maturity category.

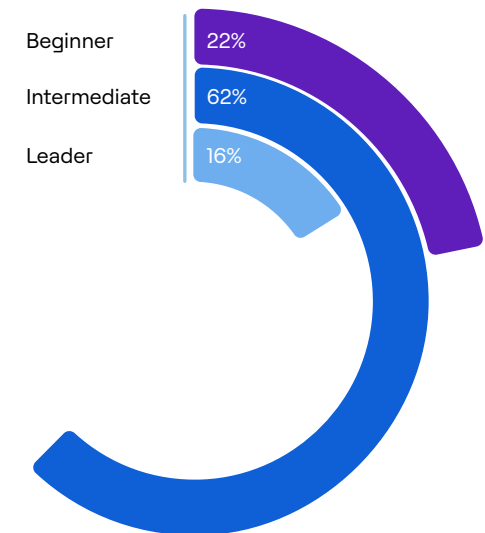
We used the following scoring for the stages of progress:

1. Not considering or not applicable, **0 points**
2. Planning to implement, **1 point**
3. Starting to implement, **2 points**
4. Partly implemented, **3 points**
5. Largely implemented, **4 points**
6. Fully implemented, **5 points**

For every respondent, we created a score for each area of experience. We calculated an overall experience maturity score for each by taking the sum of the scores for the experience area. We then grouped each respondent into one of three maturity categories. Those in the bottom 25th percentile of scores were classified as beginners, those in the top 25th percentile were classified as leaders and those in between as intermediates. In addition, to be considered a leader, the respondent had to have at least partly implemented total experience.

Experience leaders vs. others

Our research identified a cohort of companies—defined as experience leaders—which excel in integrating experiences that create value for all stakeholders. These leaders account for 16% of our sample. Most firms, 62%, are classified as intermediates, which focus on crafting experiences for select stakeholders but lack the seamless integration seen among experience leaders. The remainder, 22%, are categorized as beginners. These entities are still in the early stages of prioritizing stakeholder experiences with minimal integration.



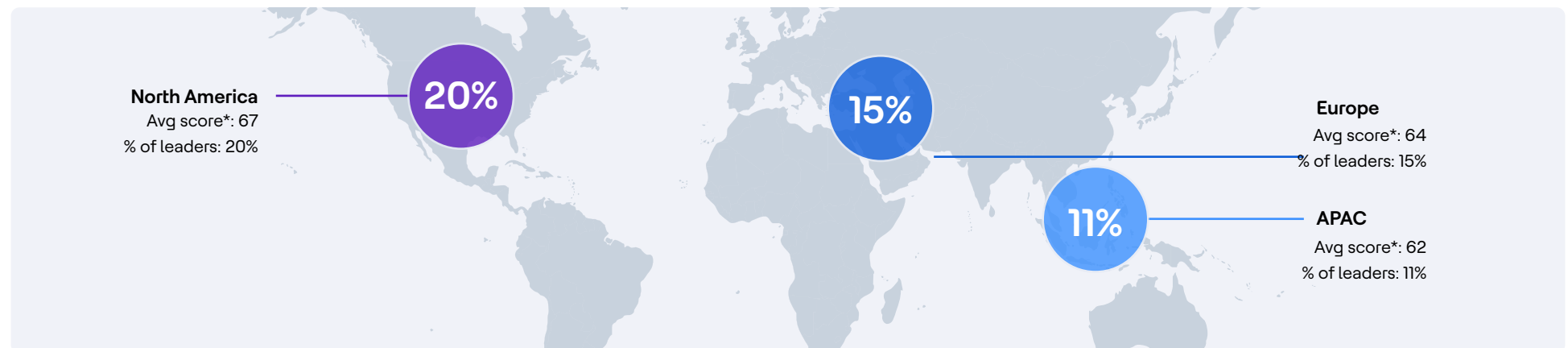
Which firms are more likely to be leaders?

Consumer services (25%) and financial services (24%) have more leaders than those in other industries. They also lead on a weighted average basis. This reflects these industries strong focus on understanding and meeting the needs of their customers amid strong competition.

The larger the firm, the more advanced in experience. On average, leaders have revenue of about \$14.3 billion versus \$10.6 billion for intermediates and \$7.3 billion for laggards. With deeper pockets and more customers, employees and users, it is no surprise that the largest firms in our survey are also the most sophisticated in experience.

Firms in North America have more experience leaders (20%) compared with those in Europe (15%) and APAC (11%.) This is in line with their revenue size: the average revenue is \$13.7 billion in the US, vs. \$9.7 billion in Europe, and \$7.2 billion in APAC.

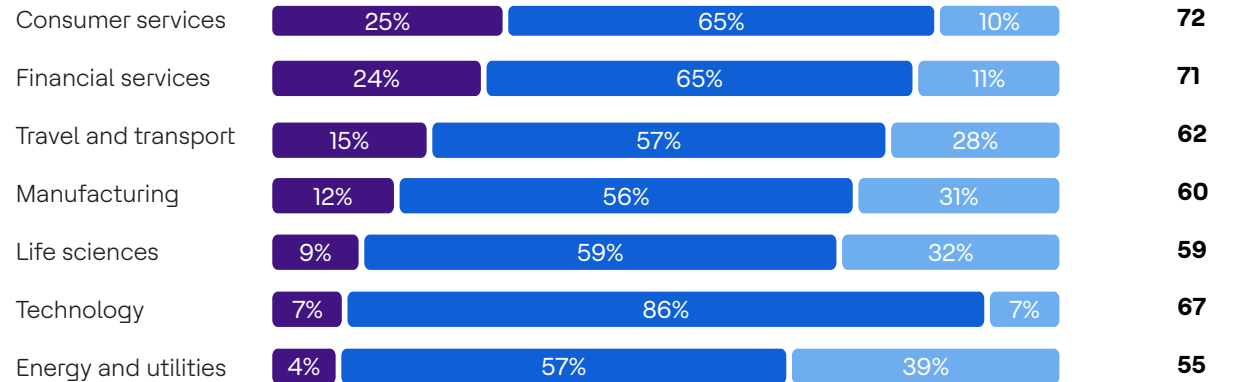
By region, % leaders and weighted avg score*



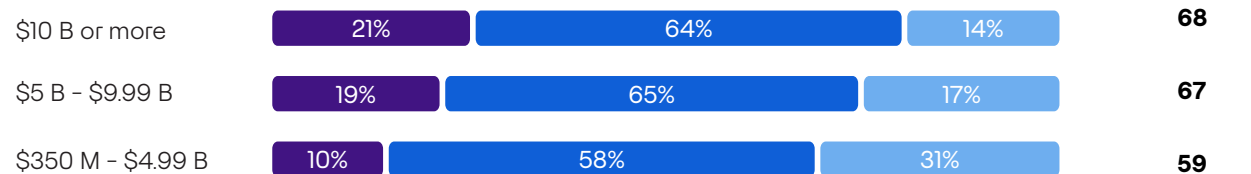
* Weighted average scores are a more comprehensive measure of maturity.

They are calculated by multiplying the percentage of leaders by 3, the percentage of intermediates by 2, and laggards by 1, then dividing the total sum by 3.

Experience maturity stage by industry



By revenue size



■ Leader ■ Intermediate ■ Beginner

The experience imperative



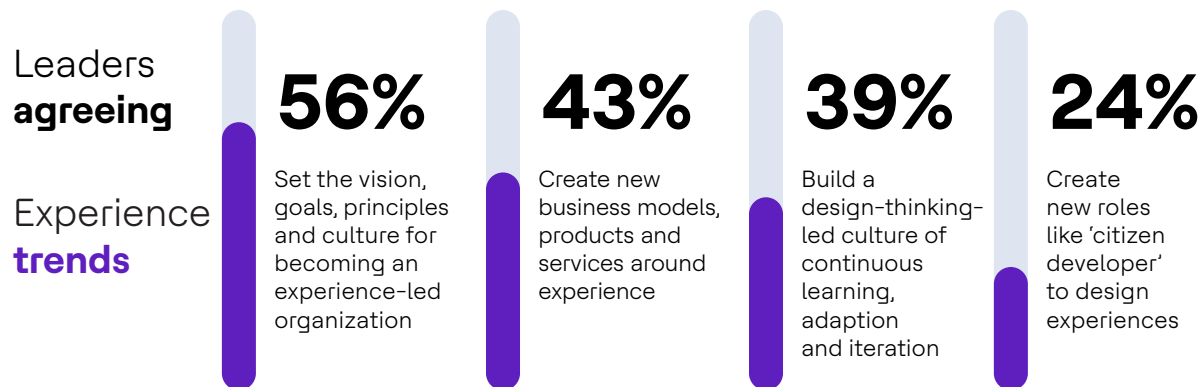
A core driver of growth and competitiveness

Advances in technology and rising expectations for digital experiences are propelling businesses to take experiences to the next level to drive growth and competitiveness. To succeed, firms need to create experiences that are personalized, emotionally connected, purpose-driven, participatory, immersive, sensorily enriched and integrated across multiple channels and devices.

This seismic shift in experience expectations is borne out by the views of experience leaders in our survey: almost two-thirds agree that customers expect seamless shopping experiences across multiple channels, such as in-store, social media, online and through smartphones. Well over half of the leaders agree that personalized and scalable experiences will increase the emotional impact on customers, employees and users.

Experience leaders are taking various steps to address the experience imperative. Fifty-six percent are setting the vision, goals and culture to become experience-led organizations. More than 40% are creating new business models, products and services around experience. And 39% are building a design-thinking-led culture of continuous learning, adaptation and iteration, while 24% go further by creating "citizen developer" roles.

Jason Sabshon, Director of Information Technology at Global Industrial, a wholesale and retail manufacturer, sees experience as the ultimate competitive differentiator. "If we've learned anything over the last couple of years, it is that it's all about experience for everyone. Much of what we sell are commoditized products. Experience gives our customers a reason to buy from us."



“

Expectations of experiences are being transformed by the generational shift, especially coming from younger generations who have high expectations of personalization from their use of social media, mobile and other technologies. So, consumers are getting educated in the social online world where the amount of personalization is greater than anything we've seen before.”



Ashish Kumar Gupta
Chief Growth Officer, Europe and Africa, Diversified Industries
HCLTech

A multitude of stakeholder benefits...

Personalized and scalable experiences can drive a string of important customer, user and employee benefits. The top **customer and user benefits** for all firms revolve around higher quality of customer service (47%), greater customer loyalty (46%), improved customer satisfaction (44%) and greater ability to attract customers (27%). Firms expect all these benefits to rise over the next three years, particularly high-quality customer service, which will jump to 57%, and greater ability to attract customers, which will climb to 44%.

Firms report a variety of **employee benefits**. These include improved employee engagement and morale (46%), better ability to attract talent (46%), improved teamwork (44%) and greater staff productivity (43%). The latter will rise to 52% as new ways of working kick in.

Firms in different industries mold experiences to deliver outcomes they would like to see. For example, 54% of life science firms cite higher-quality customer service. Many financial firms (51%) and consumer firms (48%) cite customer loyalty. Almost 40% of financial firms note improved productivity. Nearly 60% of tech firms report better ability to attract talent and 51% of manufacturers point to higher productivity.

Top 10 stakeholder benefits seen from personalizing experience



The leader's edge

Overall, leaders see more stakeholder benefits than others that have made less progress.



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Amidst a shifting digital landscape, consumer service companies are redesigning their wider infrastructure aimed at building human connections, creating a common consumer-centric culture right across employees, partners and customers. This could involve streamlining operations through automation and digital self-service or enhancing the overall supply chain experience. Operating with a greater agility and entrepreneurial mindset, these forward-thinking businesses are looking to deliver brilliant experiences cost-effectively to drive innovation, build strong brands, maximize advocacy and drive growth.



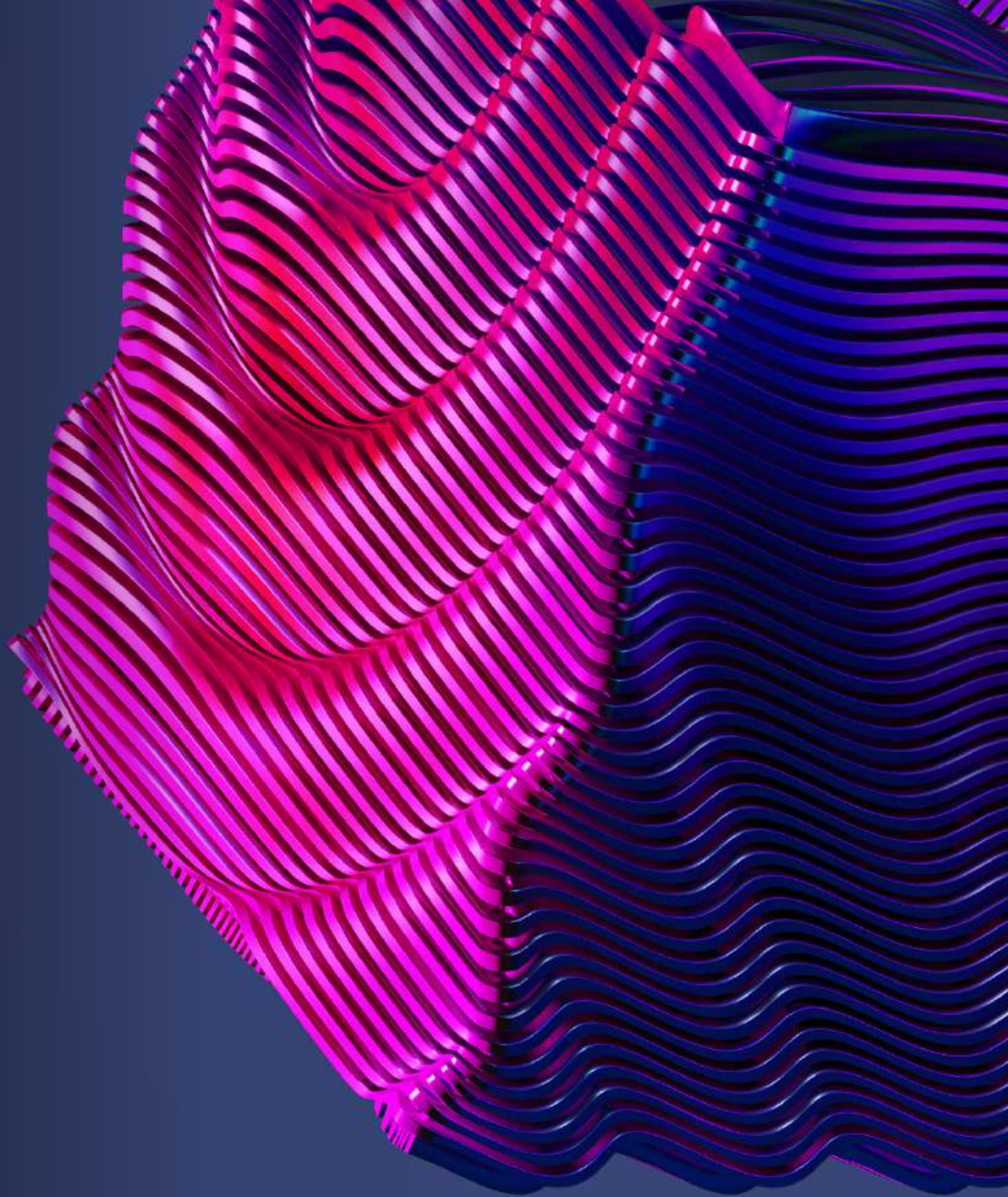
Anil Ganjoo
Chief Growth Officer, Americas,
TMT and RCPG Industries
HCLTech

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As AI and related technologies adoption accelerates, blending efficiency and experience will underpin impact across businesses, governments and institutions. Organizations that design omnichannel experiences with a human-centric approach will emerge as the market leaders.”



Swapan Johri
President, Growth Markets
HCLTech



...lead to strong business performance...

These stakeholder benefits translate into stronger financial, strategic and operational performance for companies.

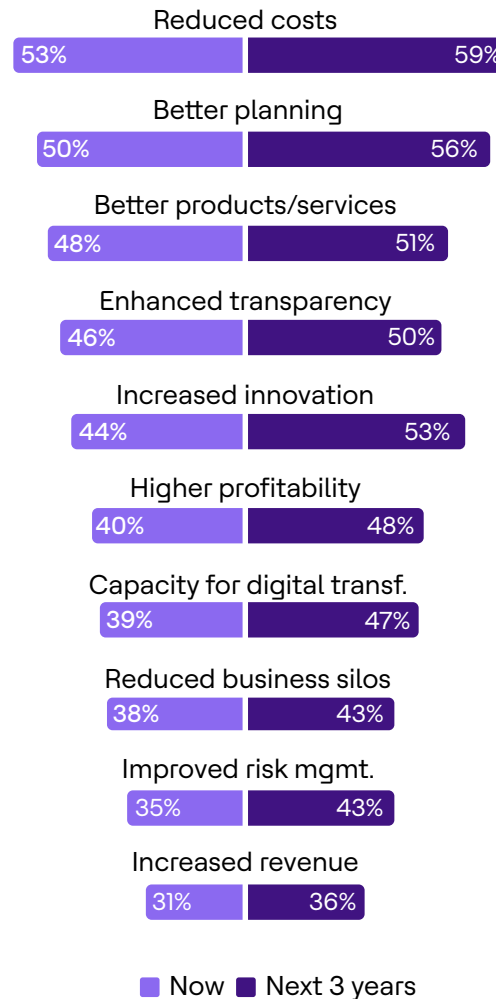
The top **financial benefits** currently are reduced costs, higher profitability and increased revenue. **Strategic benefits** revolve around better planning and decision-making, increased innovation and greater capacity for digital transformation. **Operational benefits** are seen in better products and services, enhanced transparency from better data and insights into multiple experience touchpoints and reduced business silos.

Benefits set to climb

Over the next three years, this hierarchy of benefits remains largely the same. Although, the proportion of firms expecting to see benefits in each category significantly increases. For example, the proportion of firms expecting to see higher profitability from personalization rises from 40% to 48%, while the proportion expecting greater capacity for digital transformation climbs from 39% to 47%. The largest rise is in increased innovation, from 44% to 53%, since innovation becomes easier as digital experiences improve.

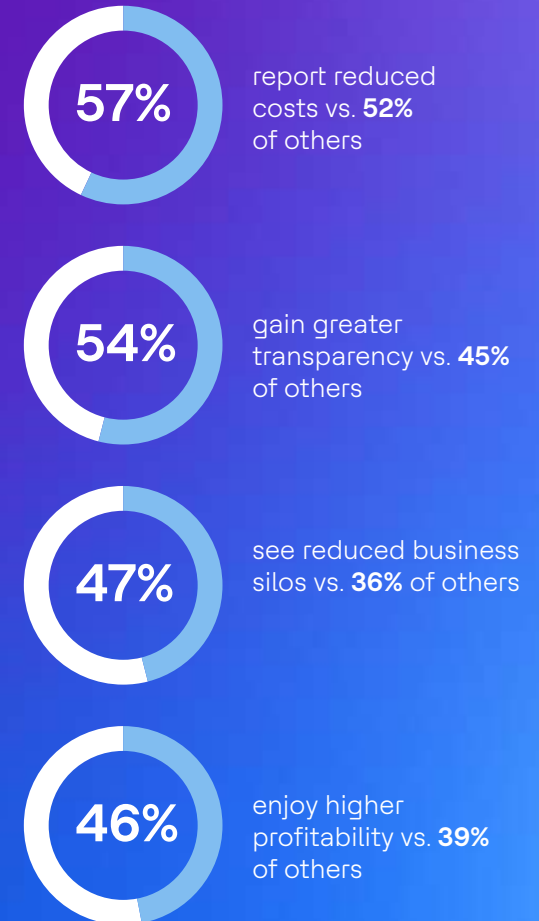
Performance gains vary by industry and their goals. For example, transparency across the organization is a top benefit for 57% of financial service providers; better products and services for 57% of travel and transportation companies and increased innovation for 55% of technology and service firms. For consumer services, the most prevalent benefit is reduced costs (54%).

Top 10 business benefits seen from personalizing experience



Stronger business results

Leaders also reap greater performance benefits than other firms.



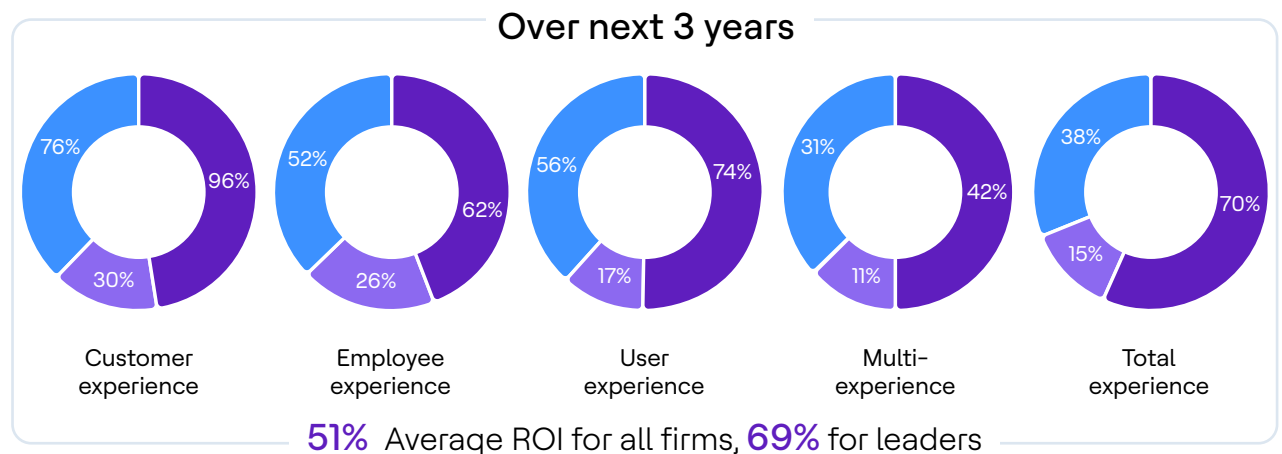
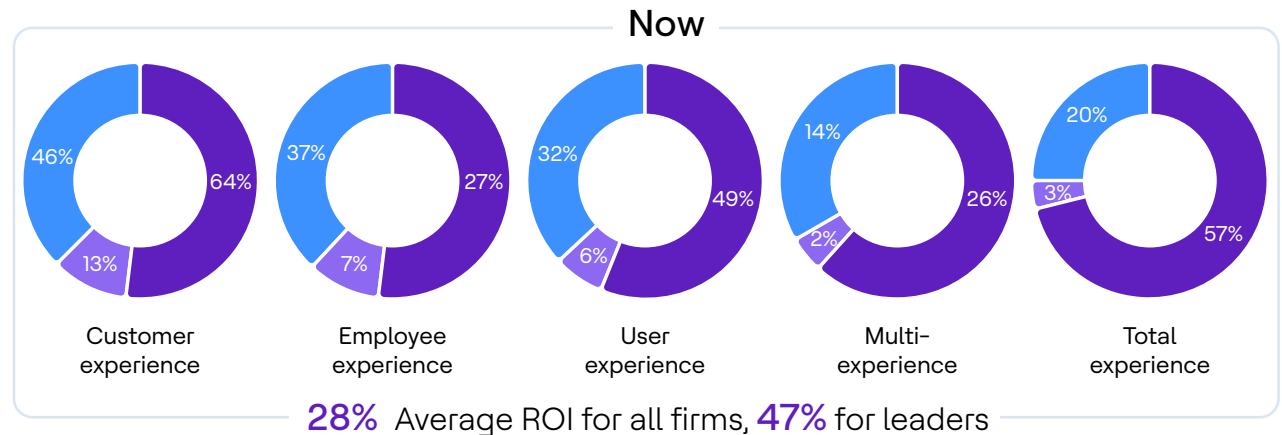
...and healthy returns on investments

Creating personalized, scalable experiences represents a good investment. Our research shows that the average ROI on the five forms of experience is 28%, with leaders experiencing a higher ROI of 47%.

Four trends stand out:

1. ROI varies across types of experience. For all firms, it is highest for CX, UX and EX and lowest for MX and TX. This partly reflects the complexity of MX and TX, which involve orchestrating integrated experiences across channels and stakeholders.
2. ROI is expected to surge from 28% on average today to 51% in three years. This underscores the need for firms to move quickly to secure first-mover advantage and capitalize on the benefits from scaling personalized experiences.
3. Experience leaders, which have made greater progress on all forms of experience, are better able to drive ROI. For example, leaders report a 64% ROI on CX investments and an impressive 57% ROI on their TX investments. In three years, those numbers will jump to 96% and 70%, respectively.
4. Leaders invest more on the five forms of experience than others. On average, they invest 28.9% of their total IT spend on experiences, vs. 21% for beginners and 26.6% for intermediates.

Average ROI generated by experience investments



■ Leader ■ Beginner ■ All

For most, experience is still a work in progress

Despite the potential benefits, firms have made limited progress in implementing different types of experience. Many struggle to deliver experiences in a personalized and scalable way. As firms strive to upgrade experiences, they must overcome a maze of organizational, process, data and technological challenges.

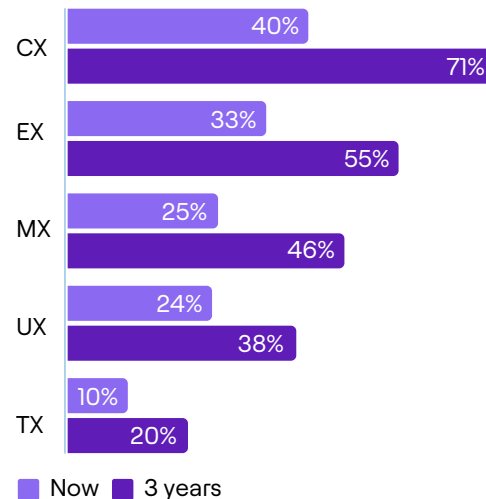
While 40% have fully or largely implemented CX, only a quarter have done so for MX or UX. Just 10% have woven these different areas of experience into total experience.

Over 40% of firms in North America have implemented CX. They are also ahead in EX and UX. This is mostly because they are biggest by revenue (\$13.7 billion on average, vs. \$9.7 billion for those in Europe and \$7.2 billion for those in APAC).

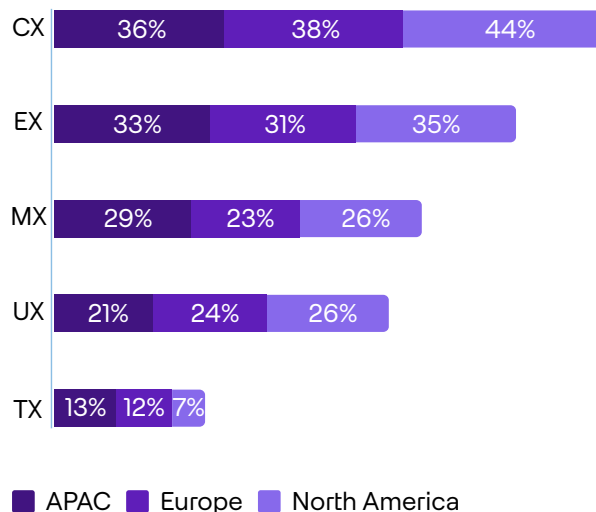
By industry, consumer and financial firms are ahead in most areas of experience, particularly CX, while energy and utilities tends to be furthest behind.

Over the next three years, firms will move rapidly along the experience curve. More than 70% expect to have fully or largely implemented CX, while 55% will be a similar stage for EX. MX and TX, the trickiest forms, will remain relatively undeveloped, except among experience leaders.

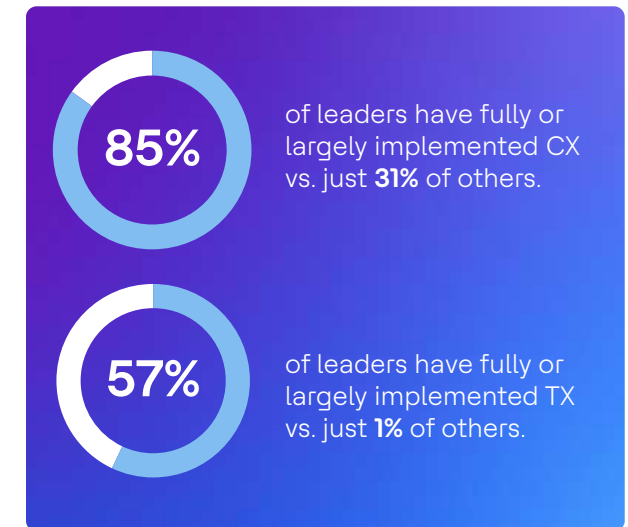
Firms fully or largely implementing experience



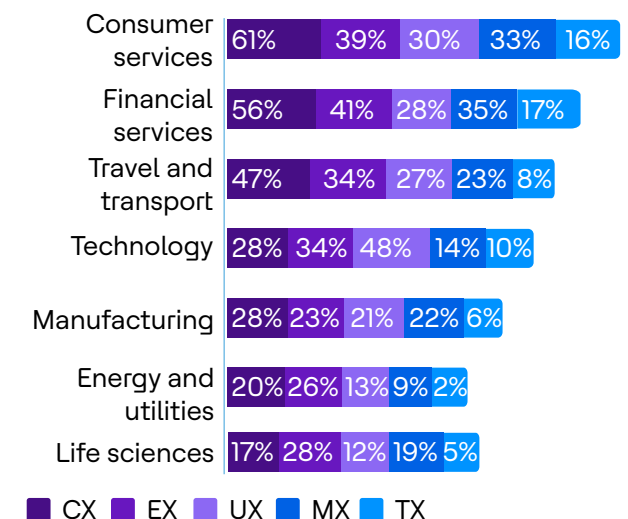
By region, now



The experience gap



By industry, now





Becoming an experience leader

What sets experience leaders apart?

To reach experience leadership, companies need to keep the ultimate destination in mind. Whether you are a B2B or B2C provider, there are three hallmarks of experience leadership.

01

Deliver exceptional experiences to all stakeholders—customers, employees and users.

They make human engagement a competitive advantage by creating experiences that are personalized, memorable, differentiated and valuable. For a travel operator, experience may be giving passengers an AI virtual assistant that provides real-time information on arrivals, departures and delays, ensuring a stress-free journey. For a utility firm, it may be providing employees such as field engineers with frontline workplace technology that enables better prediction and scheduling of maintenance. Tech companies will likely focus on user experience across devices and platforms. For industrial firms, it may be giving customers access to subject-matter experts who can help them decide on the right product to meet their needs. Overall, more leaders (57%) than beginners (38%) recognize that personalized and scalable experiences will increase the emotional connection of organizations with users.

02

Create a seamless stakeholder experience across all touchpoints, from in-person engagement to websites, phone apps, social media and other digital channels.

64% of leader vs. 36% of beginners understand that customers expect seamless shopping experiences across multiple channels. Frictionless experiences are capable of flexing to rapid shifts in stakeholder needs without mirroring the stakeholder in the firm's internal systems or departmental complexity. For instance, a banking customer can call their bank's call center, discuss loan options with the agent, get a simultaneous web link on WhatsApp to the terms and conditions and electronically sign the agreement, all while the agent calls up the customer's ID details from the bank's CRM systems to comply with know-your-customer compliance regulations.

03

Integrate the types of experience across touchpoints into total experience, under which stakeholders gain additional value from their shared experiences.

TX creates a strong connection between the firm and its stakeholders, increasing loyalty to the brand. For example, a firm's brand appeal will make it easier to attract talent if potential employees have a favorable experience interacting with the company as customers. Similarly, if employees are motivated by a strong belief in the company's values, they are more likely to be productive and attentive to customer or user experiences. Ultimately, total experience enables enterprises to integrate their end-to-end value chains to ensure their systems, processes, products and data move in lockstep with customer and employee needs and values. Overall, leaders are much less likely (16% vs. 43% of beginners) to struggle to integrate CX, EX, UX and MX in a consistent way.

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At Qualcomm, experience leadership means allowing our customers—whether internal or external—the ability to navigate seamlessly with joy and happiness. It is about enabling our customers to quickly find what they are looking for, navigate what they want easily and buy what they need without human intervention. The experience should be simple, intuitive and frictionless and designed based on their needs and behaviors.”



Cisco Sanchez
Senior IT VP & CIO
Qualcomm

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As technologies develop and evolve, we at Schwab will continue to keep client needs and trust at the core of any applications we introduce. People now expect simple and intuitive digital experiences and how they invest is no exception. But when it comes to money and investing, they also still want access to people depending on their circumstances and needs, so combining the best of technology and people will always be our approach to experience.”



Andrew D'Anna
Head of Retail Experience,
Strategy & Risk
Charles Schwab

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We feel most happy when there is a ‘white glove’ experience. By this we mean that whoever is providing that service knows about you, to a degree that they’re able to tailor that offer to your tastes and preferences. Providing this white glove experience is extremely tough. In the past you could only do that for your top-level customers—you couldn’t do that for the long tail. The difference today is that we can use technology as a lever to provide that same kind of high-end experience to a larger swathe of customers.



Shrikanth Shetty
Chief Growth Officer,
Americas, Life Sciences
and Healthcare Industries
HCLTech

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In the past, industrial enterprises prioritized production efficiency and cost-effectiveness. However, as the market evolves with a greater emphasis on customer preferences and expectations, this conventional approach is no longer viable. Forward-looking enterprises now recognize the importance of leveraging engineering solutions to modernize their infrastructure and develop an interconnected ecosystem. This shift enables them to deliver seamless, personalized experiences for all stakeholders while maximizing returns on investment by unlocking the full potential of their assets.”



Ajay Bahl
Chief Growth Officer,
Americas, Mega Industries
HCLTech

Three steps to achieve experience excellence

The ability of leaders to drive outsized returns from experience investments comes from the strategic, technology and organizational decisions they make around personalizing and scaling experiences. Our research shows that leaders take three key actions to drive experience excellence and turbocharge their ROI.

The sections that follow will provide actionable insights into how companies can use these three steps to become experience leaders.

01

Make experience relevant through data and AI

1. Harness data to understand and predict customer, employee and user behaviors, preferences and pain points.
2. Employ AI to provide customers, employees and users with more personalized, intuitive experiences.
3. Use GenAI to gain greater insights from data and tailor content, services and products for stakeholders.

02

Deliver experiences at scale with cloud and SaaS

1. Store, secure and integrate data in cloud, along with the systems and tools needed for experience.
2. Use cloud to scale experiences and quickly deploy new products, services and solutions to meet user needs.
3. Draw on SaaS solutions to scale a variety of specialized applications that can handle high volumes of data and help build adaptable experiences.

03

Cultivate an experience-led organization

1. Set a vision for experience leadership and nurture a design-led culture of continuous learning, adaptation and change management.
2. Embrace a product-aligned operating model, which involves setting up cross-functional teams to mobilize IT and business processes and resources around products, services and platforms.
3. Automate as many inefficient CX, EX and UX processes as possible.

The multiplier effect from Total Experience

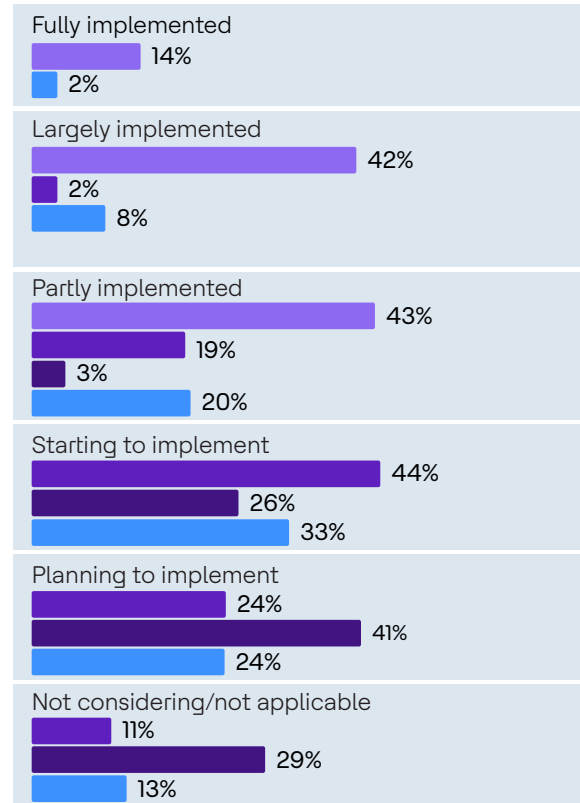
Total experience is the holy grail of experiences. It is the most sophisticated—most difficult to achieve—area of experience. But it produces a multiplier effect by integrating all other areas of experience across the value chain.

Leaders in our sample are not only advanced in the other areas of experience, they have, by definition, also at least partly implemented total experience. This compares to just 19% of intermediates and a mere 3% of beginners. Leaders will make even more progress in three years, with more than 70% having fully or largely implemented TX.

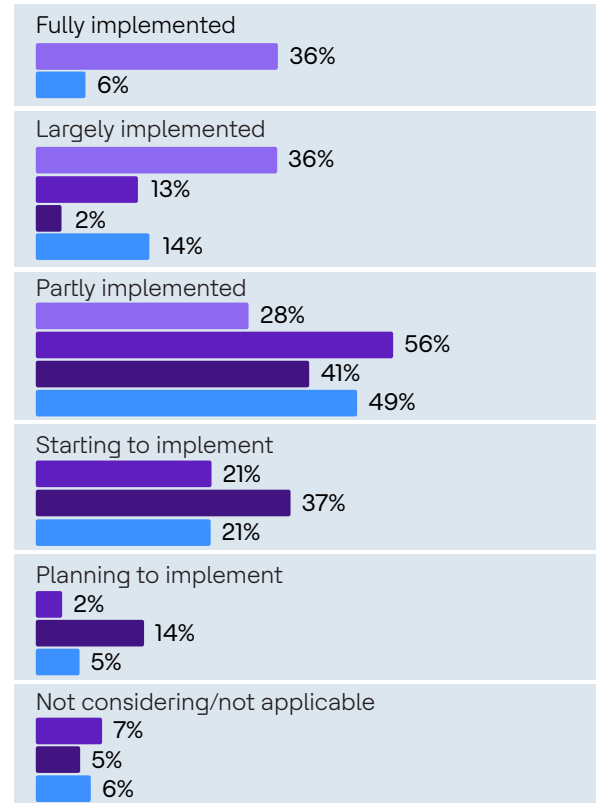
This helps to explain the larger ROI that leaders are getting from their experience investments.

Progress in implementing total experience, now and in three years

Now



Next three years



■ Leader ■ Intermediate ■ Beginner ■ All



You have to look at different kinds of customers, employees with different workflows and then different kinds of users for the product or service. Then you have to see that all of these are mutually reinforcing. For example, if you have some automation that provides a good customer experience, it will likely provide a better experience for the employee as well as it frees them up from mundane tasks. The key is how does the organization actually bring it all together so that you have a true integrated vision of experience leadership."



Ashish Kumar Gupta

Chief Growth Officer, Europe and Africa, Diversified Industries
HCLTech

Make experience relevant through **data and AI**

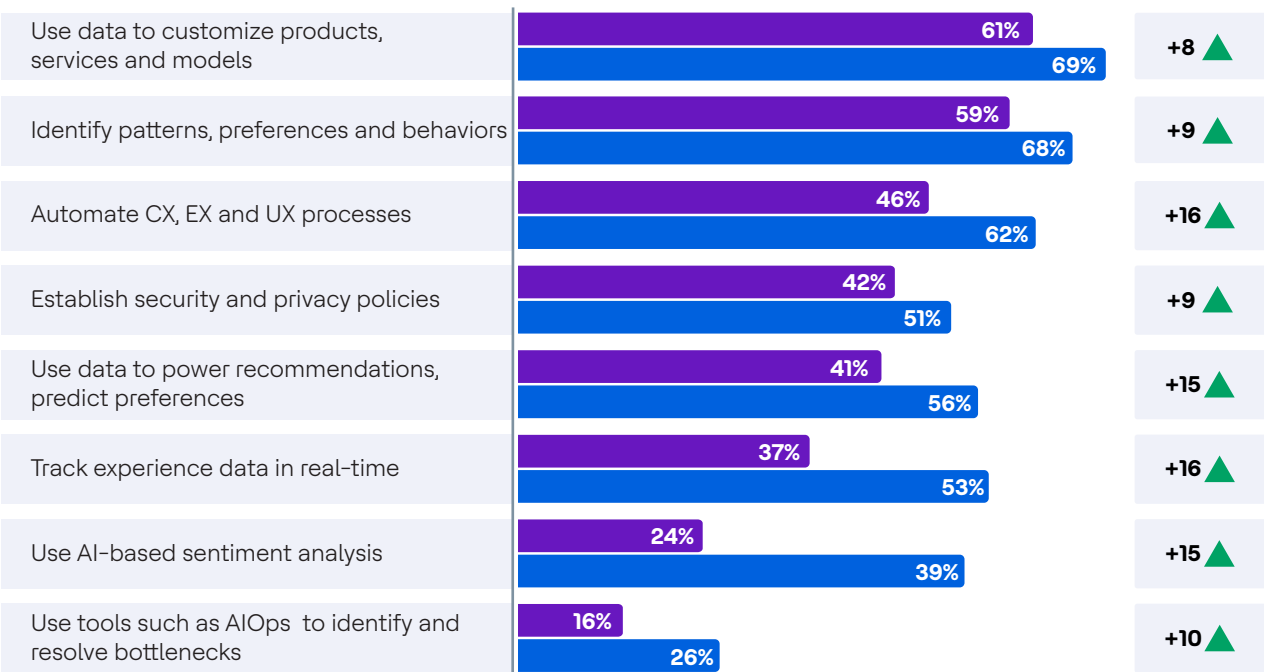
Use data and AI to make experiences personalized and intuitive

Leaders are far more advanced than others in using data and AI to personalize experiences. About 6 in 10 have fully or largely implemented AI and data solutions; in three years, that number will grow to over 9 in 10.

The top way leaders use data is to customize products, services and models (61%). The top way they use AI is to identify patterns, preferences and behaviors of stakeholders to enable predictions and personalization (59%). But some uses of data and AI are growing faster than others. Over the next three years, these will include tracking experience data in real-time, using data to power recommendations and using AI for sentiment analysis of text or voice biometrics to understand user emotions.

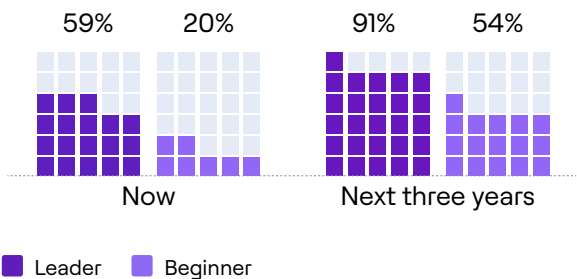
Leaders also use data and AI in combination with automation to achieve results. **Dean Butler, Managing Director for Retail Direct and Advice of UK-based Standard Life**, offers insight into the use of data and AI in financial services. “The key drivers of the future will be automation, large and holistic data sets, one view of the customer and implementation of AI to aid the process. The advisor will focus on understanding and engaging with customer needs, while the technology will craft personalized and tailored advice cases.”

Fastest-growing data and AI steps leaders are taking



■ Now ■ 3 Years

% of firms that have made large progress in implementing AI and data solutions



AI is like a prism for experiences. To provide personalized services, you need to understand customers, employees and users very well. That’s a huge amount of data coming in. What does the prism do? It breaks light into the colors of the spectrum. That is what AI helps to do—filter the data on experiences, the various ways in which it is distributed and suggest ways to address those requirements. The prism then works in reverse, helping to recombine the data from multiple systems and processes to provide an integrated, unified view of the user.”



Shrikanth Shetty
Chief Growth Officer, Americas, Life Sciences and Healthcare Industries
HCLTech

Harness GenAI to gain insights and create tailored content

A clear dividing line between leaders and others is in the use of generative AI. GenAI offers significant benefits over earlier machine learning, such as the ability to quickly understand data, processes and natural language without extensive training or data labeling. That's why two-thirds of leaders are using or starting to implement, GenAI solutions that can help them gain real-time insights from knowledge databases, including large volumes of unstructured data.

Yet its main advantage lies in its ability to create things—videos and images for marketing campaigns, software code for programmers, sales forecasts and scenarios and personalized chatbot interactions. Says **Cisco Sanchez, Senior IT VP & CIO of Qualcomm**: “Generative AI helps us retrieve documentation better. It helps us create code better. It helps us create an image better.”

Sixty-four percent of leaders use GenAI to provide personalized assistance via chatbots that analyze previous customer interactions, purchases and other behaviors. Leaders also leverage GenAI's predictive capabilities to tailor content, services and products to anticipated stakeholder behaviors, make product and service recommendations or conduct scenario analysis.

Different industries use GenAI for variety of purposes. For example, financial firms are at the forefront of using GenAI to extract insights from unstructured data (60% vs. 52% of all industries). They deploy GenAI solutions to derive insights from various sources, such as historical interactions, market trends, transactions and credit scores. These solutions provide frontline employees with content and analysis that enhance their interactions with customers. Similarly, consumer service firms are more likely than others to use chatbots to make product and service recommendations (48% vs. 37% of all industries). This solution improves the shopping experience for customers and drives greater sales and loyalty.

How leaders are using GenAI to personalize experiences

67% Gain real-time insight generation from knowledge databases

65% Gain faster and better insights from large volumes of unstructured data

64% Enable chatbots to provide personalized assistance

61% Tailor content, services and products that anticipate customer/employee/user behaviors

46% Make product and service recommendations

36% Conduct scenario analysis and decision-making around experiences

27% Raise employee productivity and help them provide superior CX and UX

22% Provide interactive training and skills development

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At Schwab, we approach and evaluate new technologies with a focus on the value they can deliver, whether it's creating an easier or more accessible experience or giving clients the ability to personalize how they invest or interact with us. A recent example of this is the launch of Schwab Investing Themes, which leverages natural language processing to mine terabytes of data and millions of public documents to identify publicly traded companies based on their relevance to an investment theme that is of personal interest to an investor.”



Andrew D'Anna

Head of Retail Experience,
Strategy & Risk
Charles Schwab

Enrich experiences with GenAI and other forms of AI

The transformative potential of GenAI for experiences is underscored by the sheer variety of successful use cases that firms are employing:

Using GenAI to prepare medical notes for patients

"After every patient visit, our clinician-controlled mobile app instantly generates a fully automated medical note draft using GenAI. This increases the accuracy of our notes while saving us time."

**Chief Technology Officer,
Healthcare provider, US**

Use GenAI to develop more compelling content

"GenAI has enabled us to offer excellent storytelling tools, which make our content more engaging and interesting to viewers."

Chief Strategy Officer, Media and entertainment, UK

Identify threats and keep organizations/platforms secure

"Artificial intelligence tracks data and is quicker to identify threats, resulting in the creation of safe platforms and scalable experiences."

**Chief Human Resources Officer,
Automotive, Singapore**

Predict loss of customers and suggest adjustments

"A significant portion of our client retention initiatives are powered by AI. We use it to predict potential loss of consumers and make appropriate adjustments."

**Chief Information Officer,
Aerospace, US**

Enhance marketing materials with lifelike features

"We use AI and machine learning-backed technology to scan our products and use lifelike images and videos on our marketing channels and websites."

**Chief Information Officer,
Consumer goods, Germany**

Improve risk management and provide financial analysis

"AI helped to improve risk management and financial analytics. This data-driven approach has improved risk management practices, enhanced financial performance and supported strategic decision-making."

**Chief Marketing Officer, Industrial,
Germany**

Implement chatbots for round-the-clock customer service

"Our customer experience has been enhanced by the implementation of AI-powered chatbots for support and routine inquiry handling."

**Chief Operating Officer,
Hospitality, Germany**

Accelerate product development and response to trends

"We use AI and have automated tasks such as data analysis, design iteration and testing to accelerate product development cycles and enable faster responses to market trends."

Chief Marketing Officer, Consumer goods, Ireland

Manage supply chains more efficiently

"My firm is utilizing AI to optimize their supply chains to speed up product delivery to customers, cut expenses and increase profits."

Chief Strategy Officer, Consumer goods, UK

Gain insights from vast datasets for investors through GenAI

"We are working on an AI-based language model that will enable advisors and portfolio managers to gain valuable insights from vast datasets and better serve our customers."

**Chief Human Resource Officer,
Capital markets, US**

Optimize workload of maintenance crews

"Data-driven insights derived from mining machinery usage tracking have empowered us to anticipate maintenance needs and plan routine upkeep effectively, minimizing production downtime and maximizing asset utilization."

**Chief Executive Officer, Mining,
Australia/NZ**



Deliver experiences at scale with **cloud and SaaS**

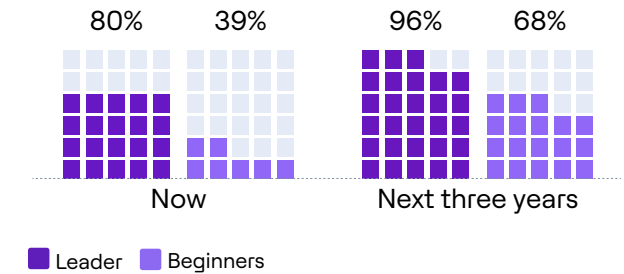
Leaders put cloud at the center of experience

To scale personalized experiences across their enterprise, leaders make prolific use of cloud and SaaS technologies. Eight of 10 leaders have largely or fully implemented these technologies, compared with 39% of beginners. In three years, nearly all leaders will be advanced in using cloud and SaaS.

Yet scaling experiences is not simply a matter of adopting cloud—leaders also differ in how they use it. Like most firms today, leaders use cloud to store and process large amounts of customer, employee and user data and to enhance product uptime while lowering operational costs. But they also use it to seamlessly integrate systems, databases, applications, tools and channels for enhanced experiences, harness native cloud services and cultivate collaboration and remote interactions among staff, customers and users.

Cloud uses that will grow the most in three years among leaders are deployment of new features, systems, products and services; segmentation and portioning of data across regions and harnessing of third-party cloud services from trusted partners, which will also grow notably.

% of firms that have largely or fully implemented cloud and SaaS to deliver experiences



How experience leaders use cloud now and plan to use it in the future

	Now	Next 3 years	% pt diff.
Enhance product uptime while lowering costs	60%	67%	+7 ▲
Facilitate seamless integration of systems, databases, apps, etc.	59%	65%	+6 ▲
Harness native cloud services from trusted partner	51%	59%	+8 ▲
Quickly deploy new features, systems, products and services	49%	64%	+15 ▲
Segment and partition data across regions	49%	63%	+14 ▲
Drive computing for data analytics and ML apps	48%	57%	+9 ▲
Leverage industry-specific clouds	48%	54%	+6 ▲
Harness third-party vendor cloud services for specialized solutions	28%	42%	+14 ▲



By putting our data lake in the cloud and providing SaaS-based analytical tools, we provide our executives with access to a central set of data for their own purposes. If you are in finance, you can use data for financial reports. If you are on the commercial side, you can draw on customer data. Our goal is to make data a strategic asset through the cloud."



Bilal Alani
Group Head of IT and Data, R&D
Danone

“

Financial services institutions often have complex structures, operation workflows and legacy systems, largely driven by risk management imperatives and concerns about security and regulations. This is why we are seeing them increasingly harnessing specialized cloud solutions tailored to their unique requirements to enable seamless integration. This is crucial to ensure smooth operations and mitigate disruptions, thereby unlocking the full potential of cloud.”



Srinivasan Seshadri
Chief Growth Officer and Global
Head, Financial Services
HCLTech

“

None of the vision of using data and AI to personalize experiences—unravelling customer insights, designing better processes, personalizing support, etc.—would be possible without having the elasticity and scaling right. Hyperscaler public clouds give you that scalability and SaaS gives you the applications on top.”



Ashish Kumar Gupta
Chief Growth Officer, Europe and
Africa, Diversified Industries
HCLTech



Leaders use SaaS for scalability and specialization

SaaS supports adaptability and scalability, ensuring applications can handle high volumes of data without compromising performance. Over half of leaders use SaaS for this purpose and this will increase to over two-thirds in three years. Almost four in 10 use SaaS to scale experiences without major upfront costs, thanks to subscription models.

SaaS also enables leaders to develop specialized solutions: they use it to access a wide variety of specialized apps (like data management, automation and analytics tools) and create better experiences by integrating a suite of SaaS solutions (such as CRM and human capital management).

More than half of leaders use SaaS's built-in analytics and reporting functions. Many point to automatic software updates, bug fixes and communication. Using SaaS also provides greater freedom to select the right tool for the job, such as a tailored CRM for manufacturers or a specialized chatbot for insurance agents. SaaS's on-demand nature also means enterprises are not locked into legacy systems or specific apps that could tie their hands in responding to future shifts in customer, employee or user needs.

SaaS also facilitates innovation. Says **Ram Kumar, IT Director of AT&T Services**: "By making data accessible, investing in SaaS applications and leveraging them for innovative work based on the data, you can uncover patterns, learn from it, create new ideas and power innovation."

Consumer services, especially, will boost their use of SaaS over the next three years to access diverse specialized applications—growing by 56%. This highlights the sector's emphasis on agility and responsiveness to market demands. The use of SaaS to integrate systems of record will grow most for energy and utilities (106%); they use it to move faster to launch new products and make informed decisions—critical in an era of energy transition.

How experience leaders use SaaS now and plan to use it in the future	Now	Next 3 years	% pt diff.
Use SaaS built-in analytics and reporting capabilities	56%	63%	+7 ▲
Ensure that apps and services can handle high volumes of data	56%	67%	+11 ▲
Access a wide variety of specialized applications	54%	66%	+12 ▲
Create better experiences by integrating a suite of SaaS solutions	47%	54%	+7 ▲
Enable automatic software updates and bug fixes	45%	51%	+6 ▲
Scale experiences without significant upfront investments	38%	48%	+10 ▲
Automatically drive employee and user communication and support	36%	40%	+4 ▲
Integrate with systems-of-record such as ERP and CRM	31%	42%	+11 ▲



SaaS can process large volumes of data. For example, marketing cloud initiatives are now becoming data initiatives because the ability to get primary, secondary, tertiary and subsequent value out of data is amplified through SaaS. If it is only cloud, it's only static processing of data. With SaaS you can apply the business context, therefore the value multiplies."



Sadagopan Singham
Executive Vice President, Global Head of SaaS & Commercial Applications, Digital Business Services, HCLTech

Cloud and SaaS use cases

Companies are already successfully deploying cloud and SaaS solutions for a wide variety of experience-related use cases:

Gain insights and a unified view of each customer

"We have a unified picture of our customers across all channels thanks to our CRM platform. As a result, we can personalize customers' experiences at scale and gain a deeper understanding of their wants and needs."

**Chief Technology Officer,
Banking, US**

Cloud-based patient portal

"By adopting cloud-based patient portal solutions and an integrated virtual care platform, we have expanded access to care for patients with limited mobility or those living in remote areas."

**Chief Technology Officer,
Healthcare, US**

Field service management

"To improve field service technician scheduling, dispatching and management, we have created a cloud-based field service management platform. This minimizes downtime for our customers and offers personalized customer service."

**Chief Marketing Officer,
Industrial, Germany**

Supply chain management

"We were able to better respond to market shifts and supply chain interruptions with the use of cloud-based supply chain management software."

**Chief Marketing Officer,
Logistics, Nordics**

Data analytics for enhanced employee performance

"SaaS-based data analytics greatly aid in pattern recognition, employee performance prediction and the identification of areas for operational job improvement."

**Chief Information Officer,
Technology, Singapore**

Product and design testing

"Cloud-based simulation tools are extremely useful for testing automobile products of various designs, which reduces costs and enhances employee productivity."

**Chief Information Officer,
Automotive, Nordics**

Product information management

"We rely heavily on SaaS-based product information management systems to maintain product catalogues that keep customers up to date on the latest offerings."

**Chief Operating Officer,
Retail, Germany**

Data analytics for improved investment decisions

"We have partnered with a SaaS platform that enables our clients to analyze historical financial data to test their investment strategies before making any decisions."

**Chief Information Officer,
Capital Markets, US**

Inventory management

"SaaS integration offers an inventory management system that enables us to monitor shortages proactively and take appropriate action, guaranteeing a more efficient response."

Chief Human Resource Officer, Chemicals manufacturer, UK

ecommerce platform

"We get a lot from a SaaS-based ecommerce platform since it avoids the need for us to create and manage our own ecommerce websites to sell our goods."

Chief Marketing Officer, Consumer goods, UK

Cultivate an experience-led organization

Start with a vision and the user in mind

Leadership comes from the top. Most experience leaders in our study set a purpose-led vision for embracing experience, as well as set the goals to achieve that vision and principles that staff should follow. They also understand the value of change management in achieving those goals. “The most successful experience-led companies are those that provide clear top-down communication on the purpose for the change,” says **Shrikanth Shetty, Chief Growth Officer, Americas, Life Sciences and Healthcare Industries of HCLTech**.

Building a design-led culture

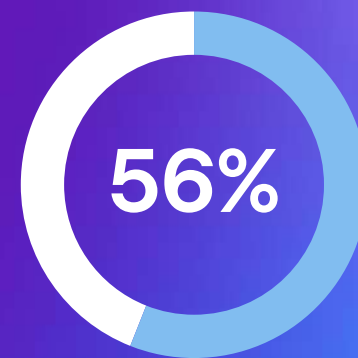
To achieve experience excellence, leaders start with the user in mind, drawing on a design-led culture of continuous learning and adaptation. This may involve traditional design-thinking methodologies and workshops.

“Regardless of whether it is for the customer or employee, building experience starts with the user,” says **Ashish Kumar Gupta, Chief Growth Officer, Europe and Africa, Diversified Industries of HCLTech**. “Begin by defining the user experience, by asking questions such as ‘What do they do? What do they need? How can we do it better through technology?’”

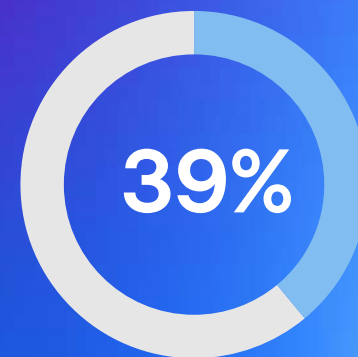
Gupta recommends that companies create journey maps of each customer, employee and user. “Journey maps should document the steps that a user takes in a process to achieve a goal. That way, you can understand how to best draw on the data across the enterprise and the right digital solutions to create a supercharged experience. This can include drawing on the latest technologies, like generative AI, to make the experience more intuitive and easier for the user.”

Understanding user needs

Gupta likens the design-led approach to building a house. “You can go to an architect, who will lay out the number of rooms and doors in the house. You can also go to a builder to do the construction. However, your family may not be happy with the result because you are missing an important ingredient—a designer. An interior designer who is going to take the architect’s plans and identify how your family plans to use these rooms, what different family members want to do, the colors they like. What to build becomes much clearer and easier to deliver once there is a convergence of views of the family—or in the case of a business, their stakeholders.”



of experience leaders set the vision, goals, principles and culture for becoming an experience-led organization.



build a design-thinking-led culture of continuous learning and adaptation.



Adopt a product-aligned operating model

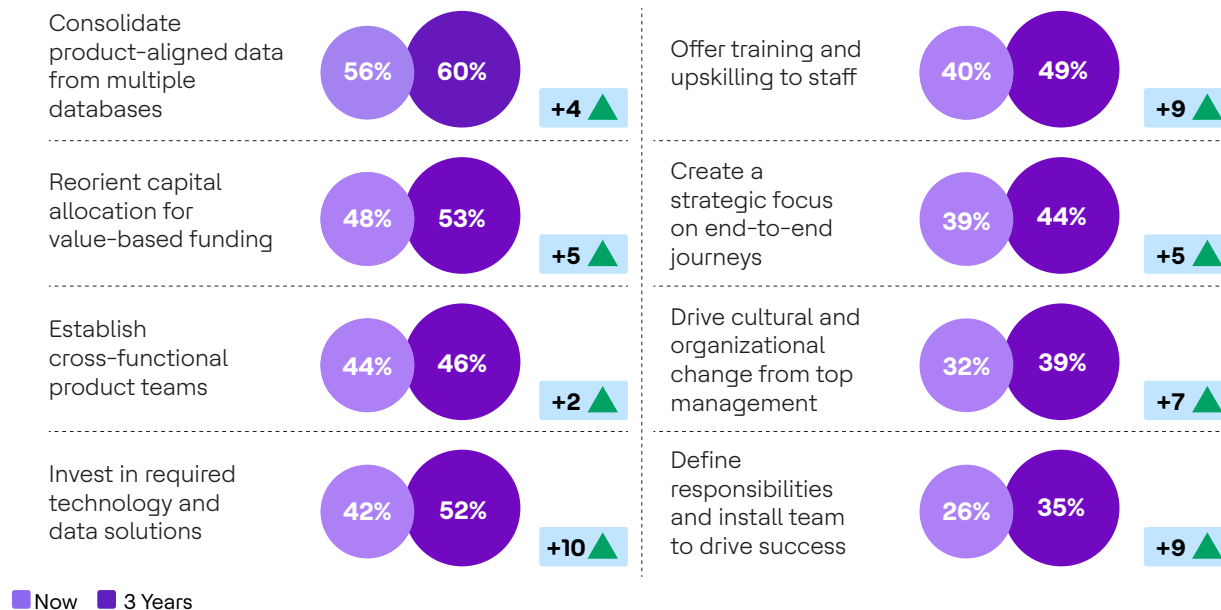
Many businesses think sequentially. If you get the processes and resources right, then the product—whether an actual product or a workflow solution for an employee—will come out right. Experience leaders know better. They start with what reaches the user as a product and then work backward by aligning teams and resources and evaluating data to make decisions. Under a product-aligned operating model, IT and business resources and processes move in lockstep around products, services and platforms.

Sadagopan Singham, Executive Vice President, Global Head of SaaS & Commercial Applications, Digital Business Services of HCLTech believes it is crucial to tailor the experience to the individual. “For the previous generation handling ticket reservations, working in a modern high-rise building may have been a distinctive experience. But today’s generation may care more about an easy-to-use ticketing reservation system that allows bill settlements to be done in a microsecond.”

One critical step that 48% of experience leaders now take is a value-based funding approach steered from the top down and aligned to value streams. This trend is expected to persist among leaders, with the percentage using value-based funding rising to 53% over the next three years. In contrast, among beginners, the share using value-based funding will grow from 27% now to 40%, still significantly below the level among experience leaders.

Among other steps that experience leaders take to implement a product-aligned operating model, they will focus on three, especially over the next three years: invest in required technology and data solutions, offer training and upskilling of staff with a focus on building core digital engineering skills aligned with employee—and customer-facing products and defining responsibilities and installing a team to drive success.

Steps taken by experience leaders toward a product-aligned operating model



We want the technology and business teams to work together to accomplish common goals. And what you’ll find is that it’s a very different operating model now than it was a couple years ago. Back then, the IT department ruled the world. Everybody followed their direction. Now the business really drives things and IT supports them. We now must focus on solutions that we sell to the customer and the best way to present those solutions. A lot of thought goes into creating unique value propositions of what we’re offering and how we present those to customers.”



Jason Sabshon
Director of Information Technology
Global Industrial

Furnish staff with the digital tools and skills to succeed

Experience leaders not only create cross-functional teams to build experience, they also provide them the skills and tools to be successful. Over half implement comprehensive programs for staff agility training, upskilling and continuous learning. Many also provide staff with the tools and technologies they need to facilitate collaboration and project management, including agile methodologies such as Scrum or Kanban.

“We invest in innovative training programs that leverage the latest technologies to enhance learning and skill development. By providing employees with access to the latest training methods, we help them stay up to date with industry trends and prepare for the future of manufacturing,” says **Bala Sathyanarayanan, EVP and CHRO of Greif**. “We also promote a continuous improvement and innovation culture by encouraging employees to share ideas, experiment with innovative approaches and learn from failures.”

To avoid having IT become a bottleneck to making things happen, experience leaders also empower workers through use of low-code, citizen development tools and programs.

Top steps taken by leaders to develop organizational agility

51% Provide agility training, continuous learning

41% Promote citizen developer programs for non-tech staff

41% Provide tools for collaboration, project management

40% Provide employees with autonomy around decision-making

39% Use agile methodologies

37% Appoint agile leaders to provide vision, purpose, support

34% Use framework to divide work into manageable elements

32% Set goals, metrics and rewards for agility

28% Run ongoing change management program

25% Invest in innovation labs

The value of low-code, no-code

Jason Sabshon, Director of Information Technology, Global Industrial, explains how a low-code, no-code approach has helped to accelerate innovation at his firm: “One of the biggest pain points with some of the business units is that they want to do this tomorrow but IT has a 12-week backlog before we even think about what they want to do. We have been able to leverage ‘power users,’ subject-matter experts in the business who know an application like the back of their hand. Their knowledge of a process and access to low-code, no-code solutions has allowed them to do amazing things on their own. Taking the dependency on IT out of the equation has been huge.”

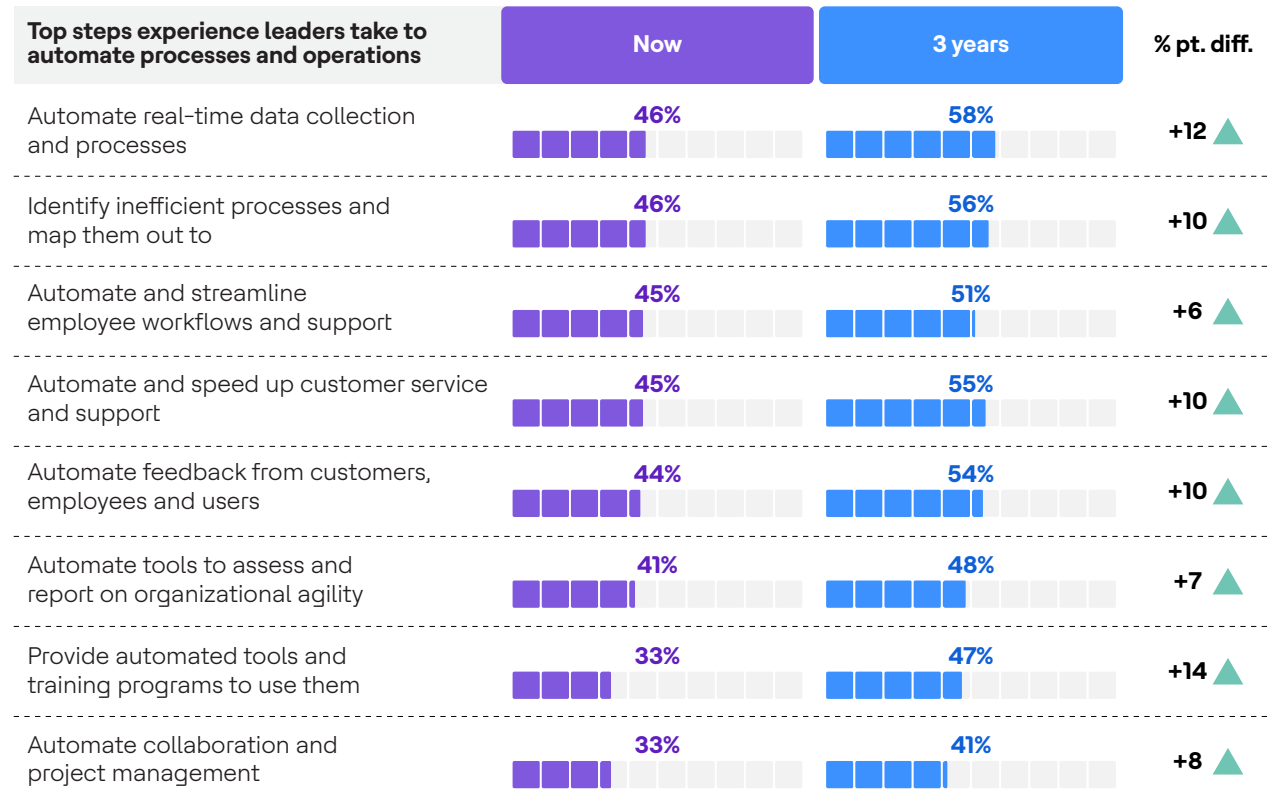
Automate as many inefficient processes as possible

Intelligent automation—encompassing technologies such as process discovery and task mining, conversational AI, intelligent document process and automated workflows through robotic process automation—helps create the organizational leanness and connective tissue needed to flex to fast-changing customer, user and employee needs.

To improve organizational agility, leaders automate many processes involving experience. They often start by identifying inefficient processes and map them to assess where automation will have the greatest impact. These areas often include real-time data collection (46%), employee workflows and support (45%), customer service (45%) and feedback loops from stakeholders 44%.

Leaders also use automation to give staff better tools for driving experience. Automated tools help staff to assess organizational agility (41%), access automated training programs (33%) and collaborate and manage projects (33%).

Over the next three years, leaders will take automation up a notch, particularly to provide training and real-time data collection, the areas that will grow the most over the period.



We use automated onboarding, offboarding and benefits enrollment workflows, ensuring consistent employee experiences. Combining AI, cloud and automation creates a more engaging, efficient and personalized employee experience for us."



Bala Sathyanarayanan
EVP and CHRO
Greif



Qualcomm: Putting experience at the heart of its expansion strategy



Cisco Sanchez
Senior IT VP & CIO
Qualcomm

For wireless hardware giant Qualcomm, user experience used to be about serving its handful of major corporate customers, explains Cisco, Senior IT VP and CIO of Qualcomm. "When you have only five customers and they are all mobile providers, it's easy to provide each one the white-glove treatment," he says. "You can give them everything possible—they don't have to navigate your website, since you are doing it for them."

But as Qualcomm has expanded into new areas—including processors for laptops, mobile IoT devices for tracking shipments, chips for "smart" sunglasses and mobile hardware for cars that will give them new capabilities—the technology leader has had to revamp its approach to experience. "When you have a thousand or a hundred thousand customers, white-glove service doesn't scale—you have to give them experiences that allow them to interact on their own so they can be efficient," says Sanchez.

Qualcomm's customers now include software developers, which rent equipment for testing new apps and key capabilities. While it doesn't currently sell directly to consumers, this is under consideration for the future, says Sanchez.

As a result, the firm is now striving to make customer and employee experiences as easy and intuitive as possible. "At Qualcomm, experience leadership means allowing customers—whether internal or external—the ability to navigate seamlessly without intervention and with joy and happiness," he says.

Putting design first

Qualcomm's new approach to experience starts with what Sanchez calls a "**design-thinking**" team. "Before we start designing any new capability, device or feature set, we bring in this group to understand the associated human behaviors to ensure that it is super simple to use," he says. "Most of our people are techies who would normally build based on the hardware requirements, not on how humans interact with it."

The design-thinking team also has a test center with mock-ups so it can track how users behave in the experience, including such things as eye movements, distractions and other reactions. This approach has enabled Qualcomm's engineers to create common components for its experiences to speed creation of new capabilities and widgets.

Once human behaviors are properly understood, Qualcomm brings in scrum teams that combine business and IT representatives to do the actual design, using a methodology called **SAFe—Scaled Agile Framework**. Under this framework, the work is broken down into two-week "sprints" dedicated to research, evaluation, identification and building of the capability and to ensuring that they hit their deliverables, Sanchez explains.

Giving staff the digital tools they need to succeed

To make it easier for non-technical staff, Qualcomm provides low code/no code tools to its teams for creating apps and experiences. It has automated as much of the development process as possible using robotic process automation and machine learning. It also has started using generative AI for functions like writing and retrieving documentation, writing small blocks of codes and creating test cases for software functions. "The generative AI 'copilot' gives us at least a **20% uplift** in developer speed and efficiency," Sanchez says.

Generative AI is also a critical part of the customer experience. Qualcomm has incorporated built-in "edge" GenAI capabilities for the newest versions of its laptop processors, which no longer need to go to the cloud to answer questions. "This improves not only privacy and security but also sustainability and gives you the capability even when there is no connectivity. This will apply in cars and phones as well," says Sanchez. "We want to create experiences on the edge for the customer because the technology is now available to do it."

As part of the process of reinventing experiences, Qualcomm has had to adapt its culture. "We have a lot of very smart, talented people but it has always been a hardware-based company where these highly technical people didn't have to consider experience," he says. "Now, we have had to flip that around—we start with designing the experience first and the hardware in conjunction, so that we can attract the customers, users and developers who will drive our business in the future."

Overcoming barriers to experience leadership



Why firms struggle with experience

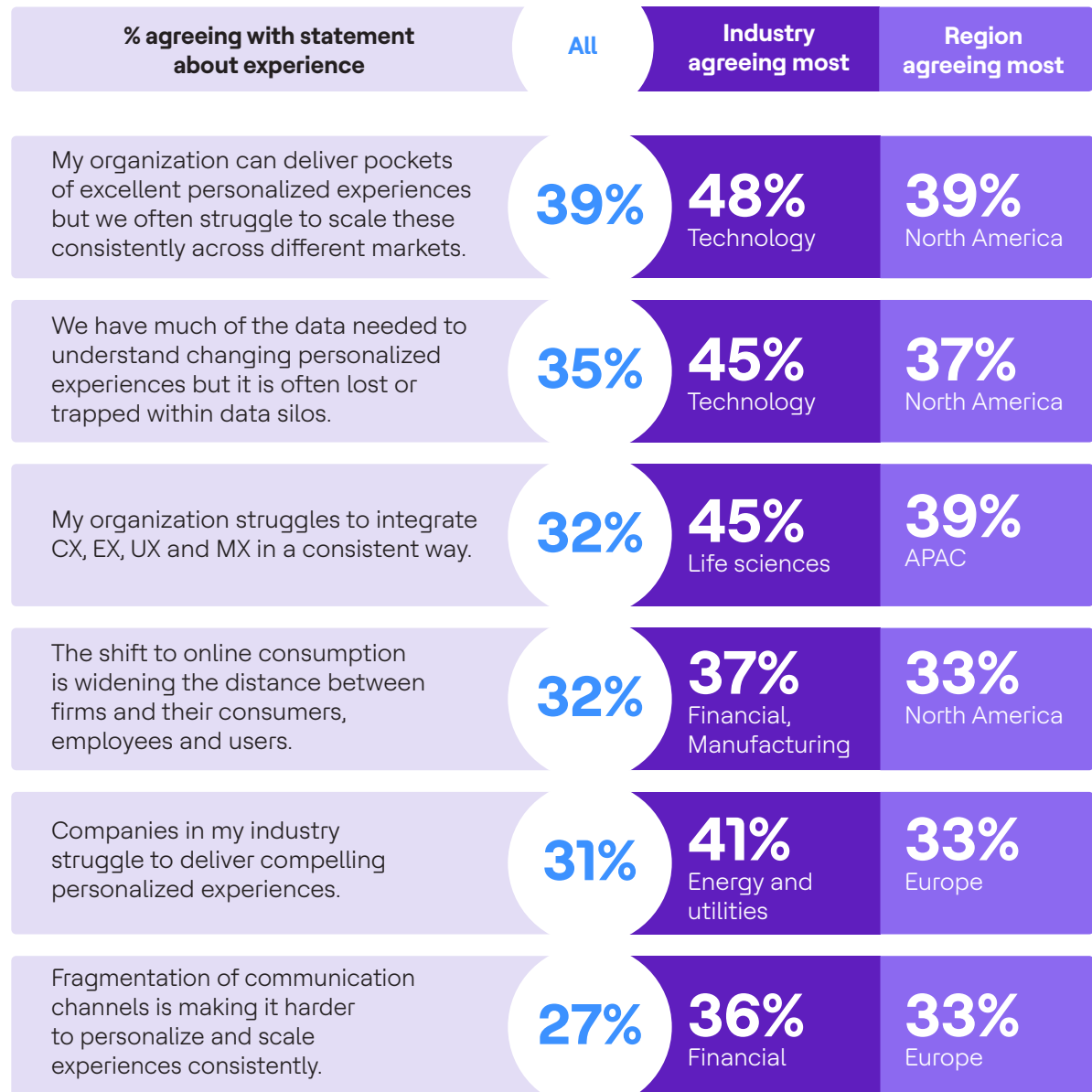
Many obstacles lie on the path to experience excellence. Companies struggle with various areas, from scaling experiences to having the data they need to understand personalization.

Indeed, 39% of executives agree that their organization can deliver pockets of excellent personalized experiences but often struggle to scale these consistently across different markets. Technology firms (48%) and those in North America (39%) are most likely to complain of this.

Thirty-five percent say they have much of the data needed to understand personalized experiences but it is often lost or trapped within data silos. More technology (45%) than other firms struggle with data silos, as do those in North America (37%).

Firms in the life sciences industry (45%) and those in APAC (39%) are more likely than others to face difficulties integrating CX, EX, UX and MX in a consistent way. This helps to explain why they have few experience leaders (9% and 11%, respectively). Perhaps in response, firms in APAC are putting more emphasis on building design-thinking-led cultures of continuous learning, adaptation and iteration (49% in APAC vs. 32% in North America).

Around a third of executives agree that the shift to online consumption is widening the distance between firms and their consumers, employees and users. That is a particular concern for financial services and manufacturing firms (both 37%) and those in North America (33%).



Vaulting hurdles on the road to leadership

The top **organizational challenge** that companies face in personalizing and scaling experiences is the lack of metrics for measuring experience performance. Our research shows that this hurdle becomes larger as firms advance in experience solutions, so it is best to set clear metrics up front, such as net promoter and customer satisfaction scores for customers or employee turnover and productivity indicators for staff.

Even these metrics may not be enough, given the qualitative nature of experience around different facets, such as uniqueness, personalization and emotional identification. Worse yet, the absence of metrics make other things more difficult. Structuring incentives is complicated without clear quantitative goals. And without these rewards, employees have less reason to change their behaviors. Organizational silos add to the problem, since they not only hinder collaboration but also prevent a free flow of needed data.

Technical challenges compound the organizational barriers. For example, to fill the talent gap, firms must do more than hire and train, by providing staff with digital tools they need to succeed. These tools—such as real-time data processing, modernized IT platforms, automated workflows and low-code, no-code—are often missing.

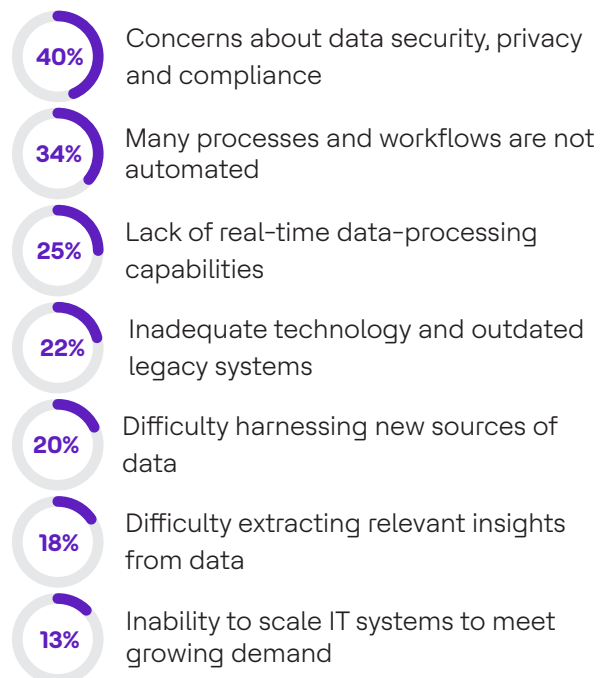
But the top technical challenge of all, according to our survey, is around data security, privacy and compliance. Without the proper controls, digitization can generate greater cyber risks, at a time of increased use of personal data and rising regulations.

Top challenges to personalizing experiences

Organizational



Technical



One of the biggest challenges is around security, given the potential access to different business units and systems via cloud computing. Thus, there is increased system scrutiny and awareness of GDPR and the legal obligations regarding the use and movement of data. The lifecycle of a cybersecurity ticket is much more under the microscope and the impact of an event and the transition from an event to an incident, has the potential for increased impact.”

Christian Platt
Chief Technology Officer
Fujitsu UK

Creating an agile technology roadmap

Data is one of the biggest stumbling blocks for companies on the road to experience leadership. Some data problems, such as lack of real-time data or inadequate, siloed data, recede as firms become more efficient in experience. But others, such as concerns about data security and privacy, can grow as companies push the envelope.

That is why getting control of data should be the first step in building the required technological foundation, according to **Shrikanth Shetty, Chief Growth Officer, Americas, Life Sciences and Healthcare Industries of HCLTech**. This includes installing a modern data platform that enables organizations to integrate, analyze and operationalize data from across the enterprise, while drawing on AI, cloud and other digital solutions to make that data work harder, faster, more safely and at scale.

Once the data resources are in place, firms can focus on individual use cases that deliver value to stakeholders. Shetty believes that taking a use case approach to experience leadership works best, since it avoids “boiling the ocean” and allows firms to drive results as they build for the future. As companies expand the number of use cases, many other technical hurdles, such as lack of visibility into processes or manual workflows, will be resolved and the use of cloud and SaaS applications will evolve.

Shetty also highlights the need for a different mindset around what agile technology is. “The biggest change in mindset that I’ve personally witnessed is how organizations need to think about agile technology. That’s because it’s not simply a technology problem that organizations need to solve. It is a ‘business plus technology problem’ moment. IT and the business need to be aligned all along the experience journey—how you define the product, how you identify personas, how you are structuring your agile teams, etc. Agile technology stops becoming just an IT problem but something that the enterprise collectively is trying to address rather than just trying to do it in silos.”

Shifting data challenges along the experience journey

Concerns about data security and privacy



Lack of real-time data processing capabilities



Difficulty using new data, such as IoT and social media



Difficulty extracting insights from data



Inadequate, inconsistent, siloed data



■ Beginner ■ Leader

Pain points to expect at all levels of maturity

Many processes and workflows are not automated



Outdated legacy systems



Inability to scale systems quickly to meet demands



Incompatibility of systems powering CX, EX and TX



Lack of visibility into stakeholder processes



■ Beginner ■ Leader

Conclusion

For the modern enterprise, experience in all its dimensions—customer, employee, user, multi and total—can be a key differentiator and a major source of competitive advantage and driver of growth. Success in creating personalized and scalable experiences across these areas can separate a leader from the pack and generate substantial business and financial performance benefits.

Our research reveals that enterprises that lead in experience differ from others in several important ways:

01

They harness data and AI, particularly generative AI, to understand stakeholder needs, personalize experiences and automate and streamline processes and workflows.

02

They use modernized IT platforms powered by the cloud and software-as-a service models to adapt quickly to meet changing stakeholder needs, integrate operations across the value chain and rapidly scale experiences and specialized solutions.

03

They organize around experience.

They embrace a design-led culture and product-aligned operating model that prioritizes the needs of users and mobilizes the right business and IT resources when designing products, services and experiences. To ensure success, they organize agile cross-functional teams and equip them with the tools and skills to digitize experiences.

The ROI payoff

Leaders enjoy substantially higher returns than their industry peers across every dimension of experience investment: in customer experience, for example, leaders generate an ROI of 64%, compared with just 13% for beginners; in employee experience, leaders enjoy an ROI of 37% vs. just 7% for beginners. Crucially, by integrating different types of experience into seamless total experience, leaders see a substantial multiplier effect—a 57% return on total experience, compared to a meager 3% for beginners.

Experience leaders are also more likely to see a range of other benefits: reduced costs, better planning, better products and services, improved customer service and customer satisfaction, increased customer loyalty, improved employee engagement, better ability to attract talent and many others.

For those enterprises that are not leaders, the window of opportunity to act is narrow. To make progress quickly, they should follow the path of the leaders in building the right organizational foundation and driving progress by using the technologies that support human experience excellence. This will be a key driver of future success.



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