



# United Kingdom Engagement Index Report

How signals, micro moments, and  
AI transform enterprise engagement







# Introduction

“ **Customer expectations are moving at a new speed.** With AI at their fingertips, people compare, decide, and switch in an instant, and those micro moments now define whether a brand wins or loses a relationship.

Most organisations are investing in AI, but the real challenge lies beneath the surface. Disconnected teams, scattered systems, and data that can't be activated in real time make it hard to show up with the clarity and consistency customers expect.

This is the **Engagement Divide**: the distance between what customers need in the moments that matter and what brands can deliver today. This year's Engagement Index breaks down how to close that divide and what it takes to create personal, connected, intelligent experiences at every touchpoint. ”

**Sara Richter**  
CMO,  
SAP Engagement Cloud





## Key Findings



82%

**of consumers** are put off by disorganised brands that pass them between multiple individuals or teams just to solve a single problem



63%

**of enterprises** can't access and use real-time data (and **71%** suffer from dark data—collected but unused data)



78%

**of brands** plan to invest in AI-powered customer engagement in 2026



81%

**of brands** say their engagement strategies generate seamless experiences with positive outcomes, including increased CLV, customer retention and advocacy



# What Is the Engagement Divide?

The Engagement Divide represents this widening gap between what consumers now expect and what most organisations can realistically deliver.

- **Consumers move at the speed of AI. They anticipate, compare, and switch with little friction.**
- **Yet, many businesses remain slowed by siloed teams, disconnected systems, and data they can't fully activate.**

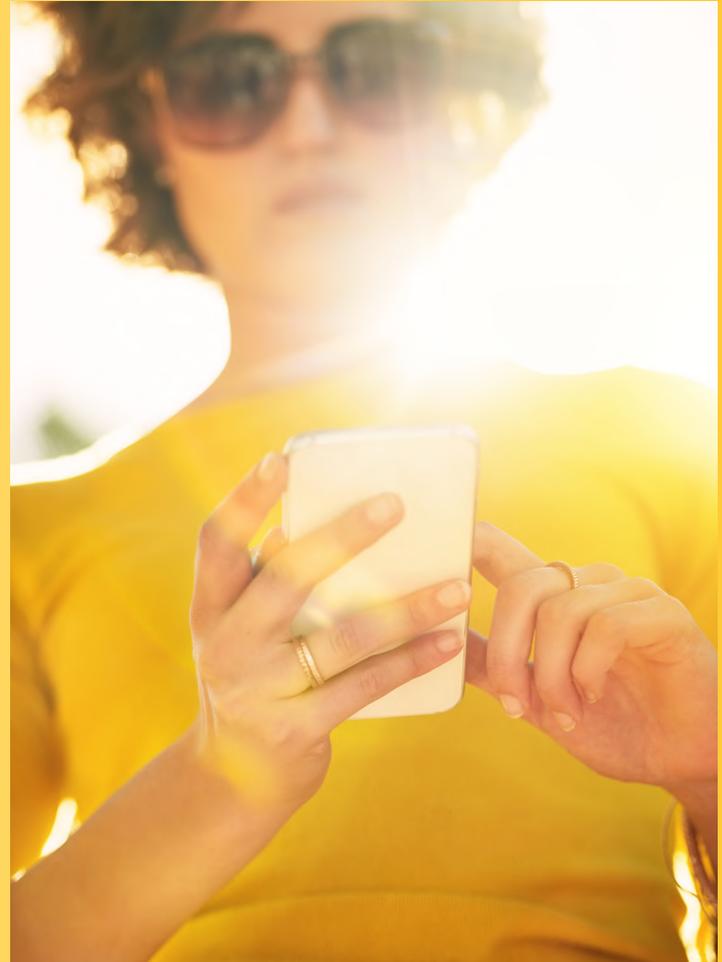
This divide erodes loyalty, stalls innovation, and increases the cost of every interaction. And for most organisations, it's growing.



**75%** of consumers admit that a brand disappointed them



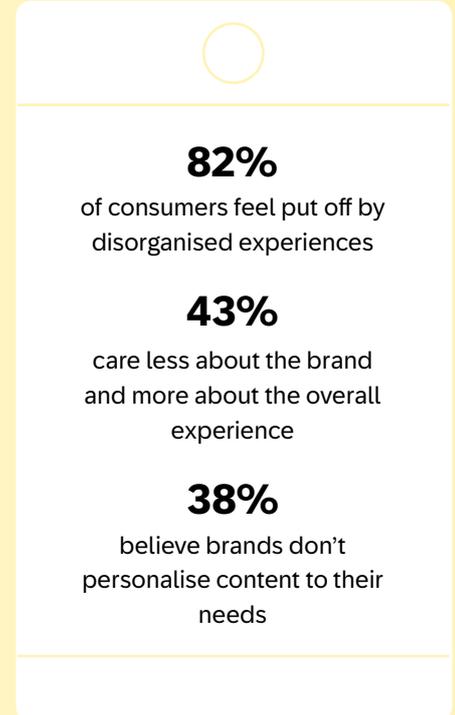
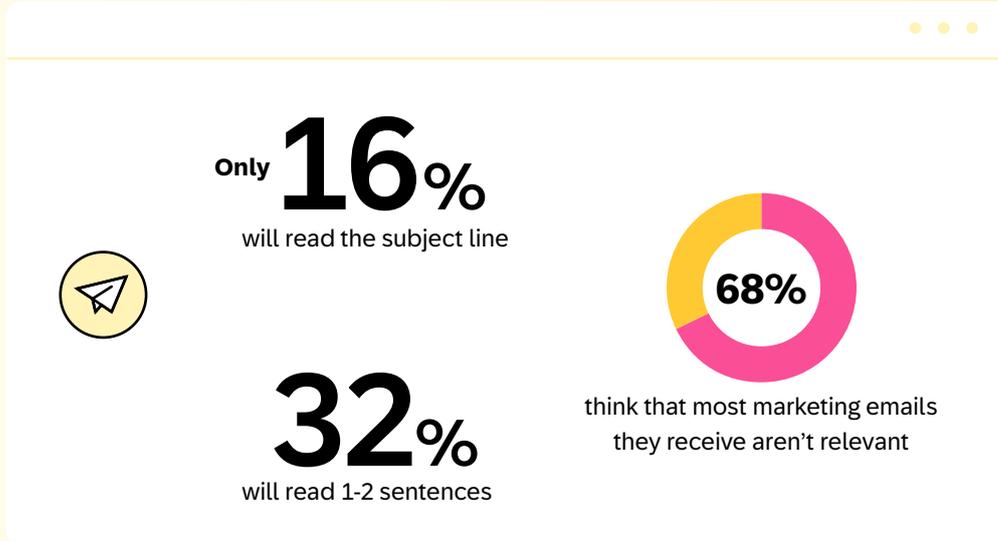
**55%** don't pay attention to brands, even if the product meets their needs





# Engagement Is Breaking: What the Data Reveals

Consumers judge brands based on how effectively they meet their needs in the moment. And if experiences aren't timely, contextual, or personalised, they simply get ignored.



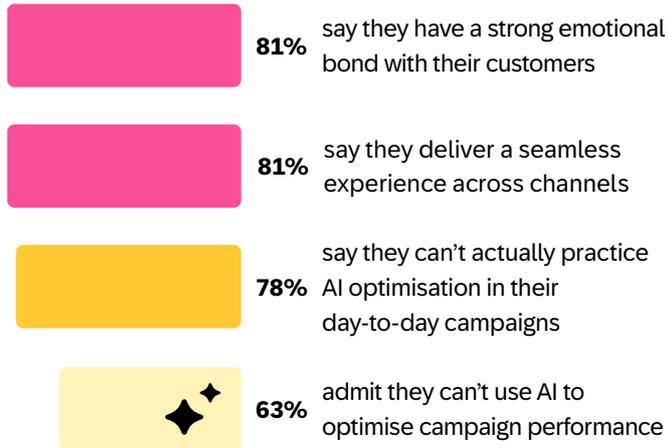
**Engagement is any interaction that actively influences how a consumer perceives your brand—across marketing, commerce, sales, product, service, operations, partners, or community.**



# How Fragmentation Impacts the Consumer Experience

Most brands believe consumer experiences are consistent and emotionally resonant. While brands' confidence is high, consumers say that emotional connection is actually low.

## Brands



## Consumers





# The SAP Engagement Maturity Index



# The SAP Engagement Maturity Index

In our **2025 Engagement Maturity Index**, we measured how effectively marketing teams used data, channels, and intelligence to engage customers. As consumer expectations have evolved, **engagement is no longer a marketing-only responsibility**. The 2026 Index reflects this shift, evaluating maturity across the entire business.

With 25 years of expertise in customer engagement orchestration, we've expanded our **Customer Engagement Maturity (CEM)** scoring model to assess how well brands align people, processes, and technology to deliver cohesive, intelligent experiences.



**AI and automation adoption**



**Connected data strategy**



**Customer loyalty**



**Omnichannel engagement**



**Real-time personalisation**

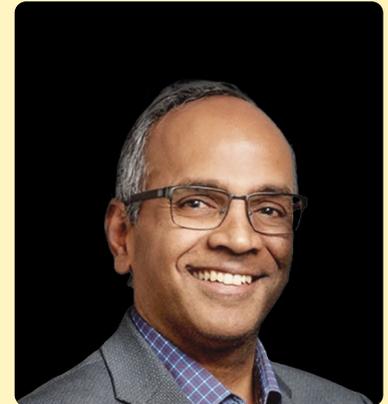


**Use of email marketing**



## Expert Insights

“ The brands winning in the Engagement Era aren’t running more marketing campaigns—they’re building engagement as a comprehensive enterprise-wide capability. When AI is grounded in ERP, Supply Chain, CX, and real-time customer data, organisations stop reacting and start delivering on customer expectations that drive measurable growth. ”



**Balaji Balasubramanian**  
President, Chief Product Officer,  
SAP Customer Experience





# The Stages of the SAP Engagement Maturity Index

The UK skews more heavily toward the Low CEM category than any other market, creating an immense opportunity for businesses to stand out if they advance to High CEM maturity.

	Engagement Adoption	Engagement Capabilities	2026 levels
<b>Low CEM Score</b>	Minimal adoption of enterprise-wide customer engagement technologies and strategies.	Data remains siloed across business functions, making it difficult for teams—across marketing, sales, service, and operations—to access shared insights or respond in real time. Limited integration and low AI readiness hinder consistent experiences and long-term loyalty.	<b>25%</b> 
<b>Moderate CEM Score</b>	Moderate adoption of customer engagement technologies and cross-functional strategies.	Teams can access portions of shared data and deliver basic personalisation, but coordination across marketing, sales, service, commerce, and product teams remains uneven. Experiences often feel disconnected, forcing brands to rely on short-term tactics rather than building deeper relationships.	<b>60%</b> 
<b>High CEM Score</b>	Advanced adoption of integrated engagement technologies and enterprise-wide strategies.	High-maturity brands connect data and intelligence across all functions—marketing, service, sales, commerce, and operations—to adapt quickly and anticipate customer needs. They use AI and automation to deliver personalised, omnichannel engagements in real-time, at scale.	<b>16%</b> 

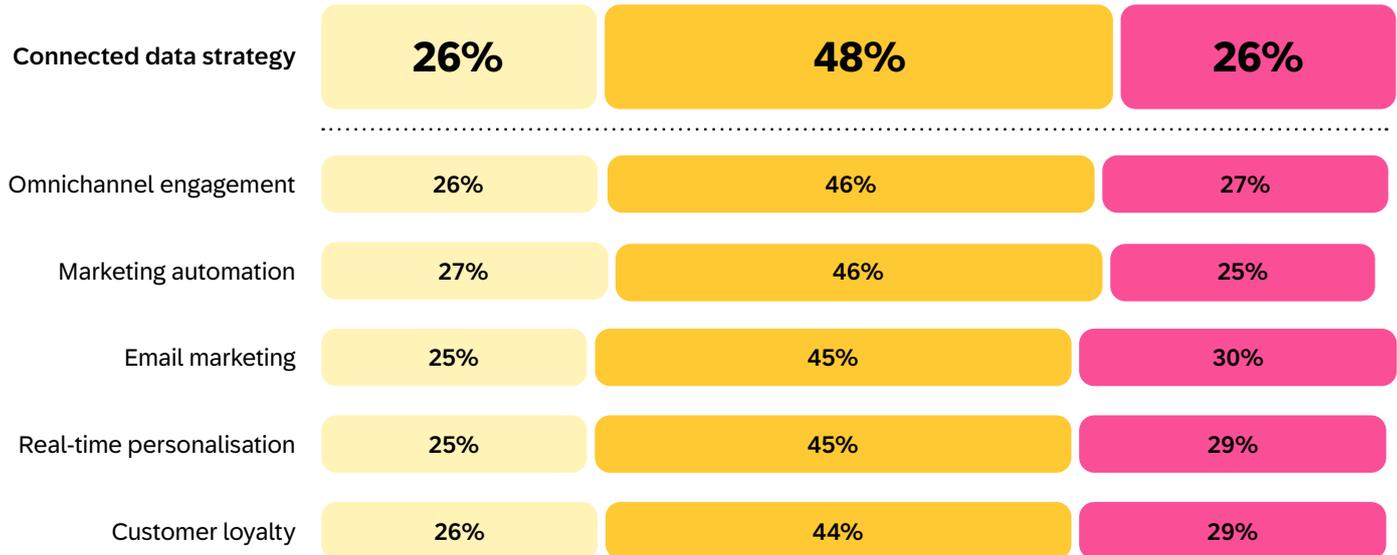


# More Brands Are Focused on Improving Data Connectivity

All engagement approaches are marginally close in comparison. However, having a connected data strategy is emerging as the highest-priority category as brands realise that data connectivity is the foundation for achieving higher performance and customer impact.

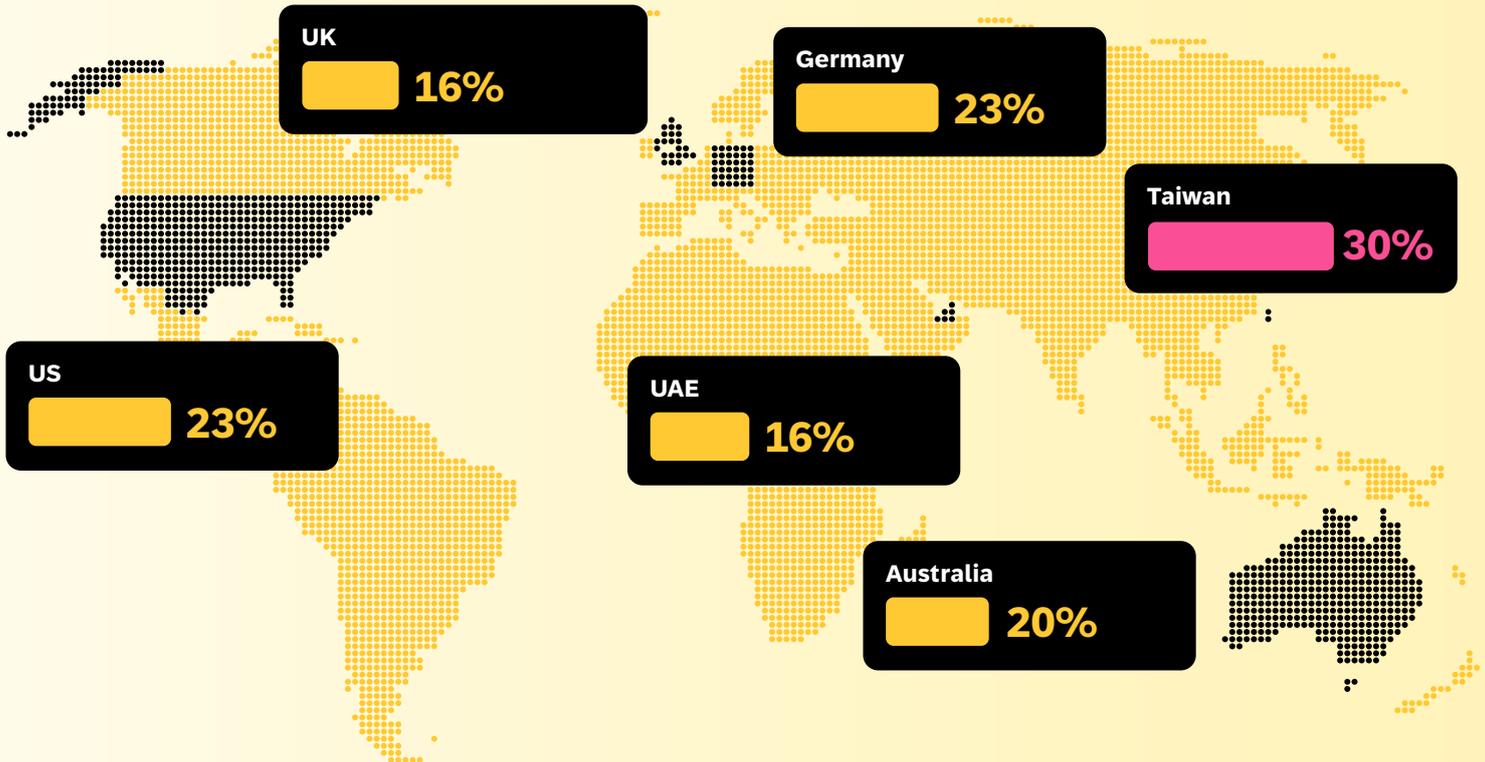
## Stage of Different Engagement Approaches

● Low CEM ● Moderate CEM ● High CEM





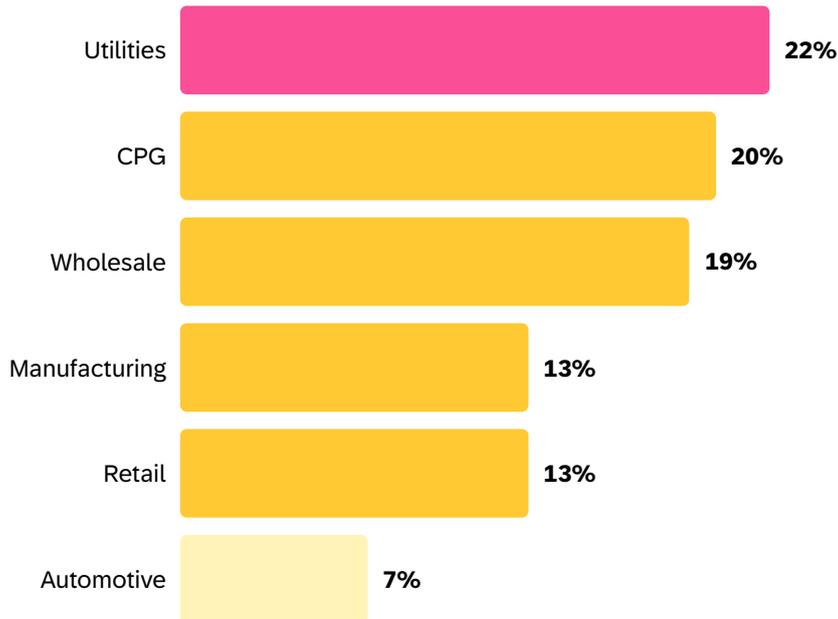
# High Engagement Maturity Across Countries



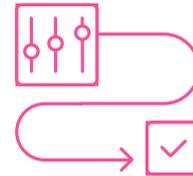


# High Engagement Maturity Across Industries and Departments

## Industries\*



## Departments



**2** in **5**

**decision-makers** believe their departments are truly coordinated, revealing how far most organisations are from delivering connected customer journeys.



## Expert Insights

“ Marketing is shifting from being the company’s megaphone to becoming its steering wheel. No matter where you sit in the organisation or what data you have access to, you have an opportunity to build a growth intelligence engine—one that helps you learn intent signals about your products, customers, competitors, and the broader market.

When marketers harness the data available to them and feed those insights into content, decisions, and strategic direction, they do more than support the business—they help steer its future. ”

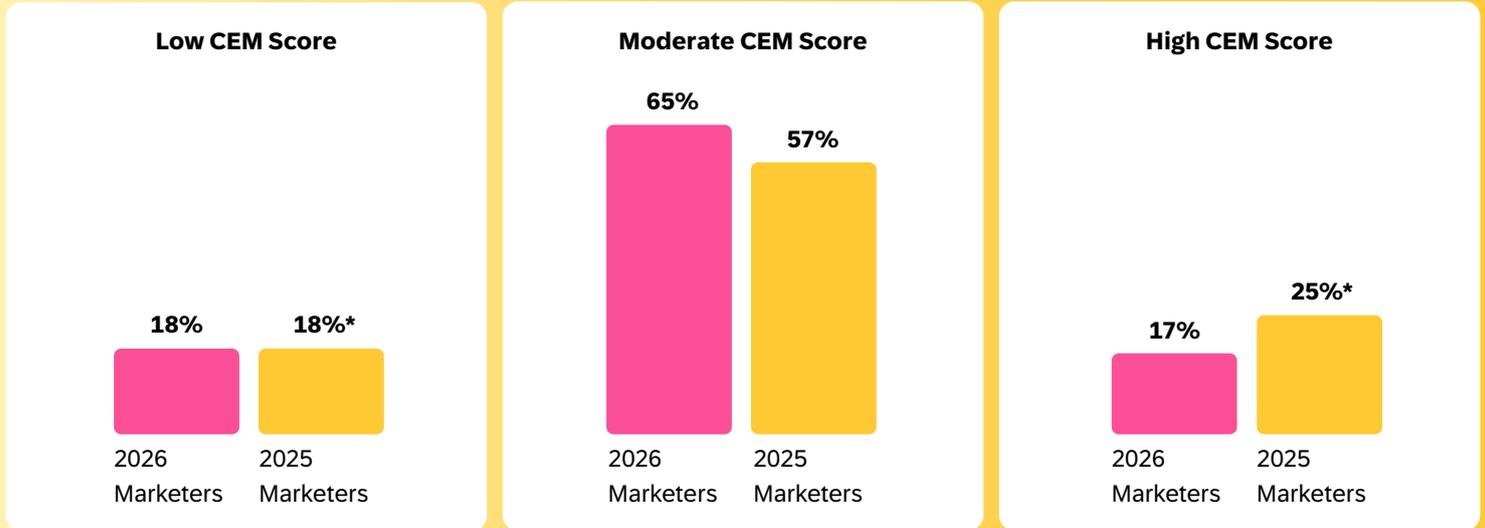


**Liat Ben-Zur**  
a transformative executive board director and AI strategist who has driven billions in growth across Microsoft, Philips, and Qualcomm



# Shrinking High Maturity Scores Intensifies Pressure to Evolve

The shrinking high-maturity segment and a stalled low tier signal rising pressure. With 18% stuck in Low CEM for a second year, teams that delay modernisation risk losing ground as competitors accelerate real-time, AI-driven maturity gains.



## Engagement Accelerator

Pick one high-impact journey and connect all relevant data sources around it. When marketers test real-time signals and AI-driven decisions on a specific use case—like cart abandonment or post-purchase—they build momentum that quickly scales across the business.



# Mature Brands View Engagement as an Enterprise-Wide Priority

Marketing remains central to enterprise engagement, but its role expands from executing campaigns to orchestrating signals, data, and actions across the business. Then, engagement becomes a shared outcome rather than a function-specific metric.

Activity	Old World	New World
Engagement owned by	Marketing	The business
Engagement measured by	Opens, clicks, conversions	Retention, loyalty, lifetime value
Data lives	Siloed by function	Marketing, commerce, service, supply chain; all integrated and shared
Personalisation is	Campaign-based	Lifecycle and behaviour-driven
Failure shows up as	Marketing underperformance	Friction anywhere in the customer journey
Typical question	How did the campaign perform?	Where are we losing customers and why?



# Why the Engagement Divide Persists



# Challenge 1: AI Adoption

Consumers are increasingly eager for brands to use AI to create experiences that are faster, easier, and more relevant. But organisations are slowed by data challenges, integration issues, and uncertainty around responsible AI use.

## Brands & AI Adoption

**34%**  
see AI's greatest value in real-time decisioning and automated content generation

**34%**  
find chatbots and virtual assistants useful

**30%**  
say predictive personalisation and sentiment analysis are key use cases

## Barriers Holding Enterprises Back

**37%**  
say cybersecurity and privacy risks limit their ability to scale AI

**32%**  
struggle with data quality and availability

**29%**  
struggle with integration with existing systems

## The Strategic Reality

**80%**  
agree AI will be essential for acquiring and retaining customers

**78%**  
say they already have AI guardrails in place

**78%**  
expect AI to be embedded in workflows, not siloed tools

## Consumer Expectations

**Only 34%**  
feel they understand the value they get from sharing personal data

**while 36%**  
don't believe brands use their data at all

**18%**  
already stopped paying attention to brands now that they can shop with an AI assistant



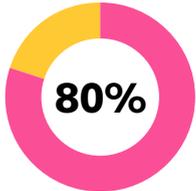
# Brands Are Investing in AI, but Their Systems Aren't Ready

Without a unified data foundation, brands are building on quicksand—fragmented systems and unstructured data that widen the Engagement Divide and keep AI from performing.

## Brands

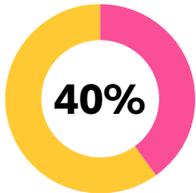


## Consumers



see AI as essential for retaining customers in 2026

Yet only



share their customer engagement data with either a CX platform or a CRM platform



# 21%

have used AI agents that make decisions and act on their behalf when buying from brands

### Engagement Accelerator

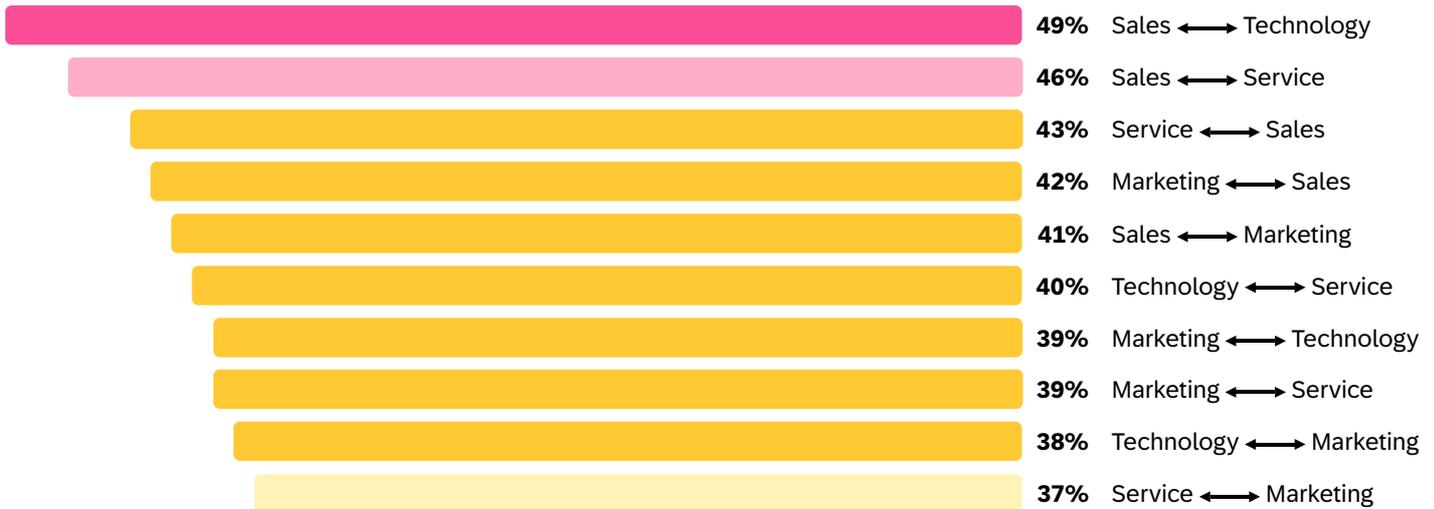
Boost efficiency and loyalty using embedded AI and agentic commerce to deliver the right product at the right price at the right time for every customer.



## Challenge 2: Team Coordination

Our data reveals deep operational silos across sales, service, marketing, and technology—and **nearly half (47%)** of consumers say customer service feels impersonal as a result. These internal gaps directly translate into inconsistent, frustrating experiences across the business.

**This chart shows how many respondents believe different departments in the organisation are 'fully coordinated' with each other:**

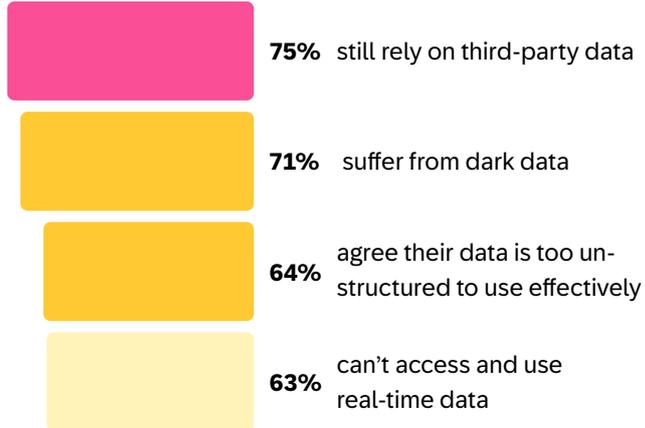




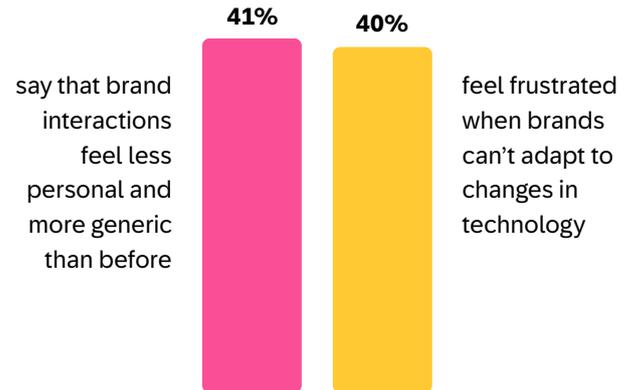
## Challenge 3: Unstructured Data

Compared with global findings, UK businesses face these obstacles at a notably higher rate, underscoring the need for data transformation. Fragmented systems and unstructured formats block real-time insight, personalisation, governance, and the ability to power AI agents. As dark data grows and experiences stagnate, consumers question why their information is collected at all.

### Brands



### Consumers





# How to Close the Divide



## Expert Insights

“ Engagement isn’t something one department can fix. Every team shapes the brand, and the real progress comes when they work from the same understanding of the customer. With that shared view, AI can take on the hard work and help deliver the personalised experiences people expect. ”



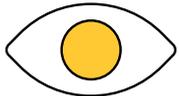
**Mark Ritson**  
Professor and Founder,  
MiniMBA





# 5 Principles of Modern Engagement

Without these, brands are already falling behind, and most don't realise it until it's too late.



## 1 A Unified Customer Profile

A single, accurate, real-time view of each customer that every department can tap into.



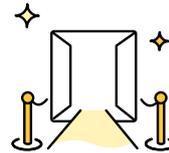
## 2 AI Agents that Reduce Manual Effort & Increase Productivity

Intelligent agents automate repetitive tasks, recommend next best actions, and free teams to spend more time on creativity and strategy.



## 3 Real-Time Personalisation

The ability to adapt instantly to shopper behaviour, context, and intent.



## 4 Cross-Functional Orchestration & Event-Driven Journeys

Event-driven workflows and orchestration connect sales, service, product, and operations to ensure every interaction is coordinated, consistent, and purposeful.



## 5 Embedded Consent & Governance

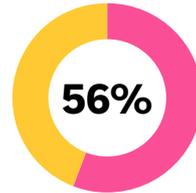
Built-in consent, governance, and responsible data-use guardrails ensure personalisation is ethical, compliant, and customer-first.



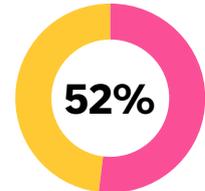
## Engagement that Drives Trust, Loyalty, and Growth

When engagement is treated as a shared business discipline, organisations see benefits across both customer-facing and operational dimensions. But businesses aren't the only ones who feel the impact.

**Consumers are signalling, unequivocally, what great engagement looks like to them:**



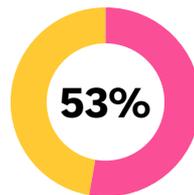
say their favorite brand delivers seamless, connected experiences across mobile, web, and in-store



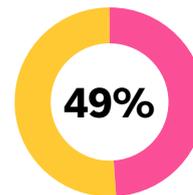
value personalised product recommendations



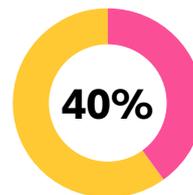
**Consumers are signaling, unequivocally, what great engagement looks like to them:**



respond positively to localised content



appreciate highly personalised content



believe their favorite brand uses their data to make interactions better



# Brands Must View Engagement as an Enterprise Discipline

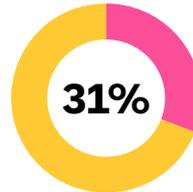
There's a widening gap between AI and omnichannel investments and the connected data systems required to support them. Closing that gap is essential for enterprise-wide engagement success.

# 78%

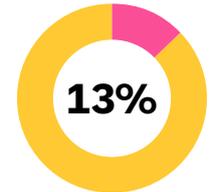
of businesses plan to invest in AI-powered customer engagement in 2026

# 75%

of businesses are investing in omnichannel engagement technologies to meet customer channel preferences



say their number one priority is connecting customer and stakeholder data across marketing, sales, service, commerce, and ERP systems



believe seamless integration of engagement systems will be one of the **biggest** drivers of success in 2026 and beyond

## Engagement Accelerator

Create a comprehensive view of your product data to drive consistent omnichannel experiences. Use commerce AI agents to organise and enhance product catalogues so customers can easily discover, research, and buy while commerce teams are freed from routine tasks.



# Customer Insights

“ Integrating data from all channels to get a unified view of the customer helps the leadership team gather insightful analytics from which they can derive actionable insights. This is how we inform marketing strategies to improve overall customer experience. ”



**Naresh Krishnamurthy**  
Senior Manager, Business  
Transformation, Cosmetics,  
Molton Brown

MOLTON BROWN  
LONDON



# Conclusion



# Final Thoughts

**Brands want to deliver personal, connected experiences, but customer and operational data often sit in silos, and systems don't always work together**—making it hard for brands to deliver. Organisations need an engagement system that unifies data, intelligence, and action.

## **SAP Engagement Cloud is built to:**

- Power AI-enhanced segments, triggers, and journeys with trusted SAP and enterprise data
- Accelerate campaign execution with role-based assistants and embedded AI
- Connect operational data (inventory, order status, fulfillment, etc.) with customer insights to drive engagement
- Scale securely with API-first architecture and enterprise-grade compliance

**Christian Schmoliner**  
Business Unit  
Manager, Reply



**“ With the new SAP Engagement Cloud Enterprise Edition, we can finally orchestrate complex multi-brand and multi-country structures on one shared data and AI foundation—turning complexity into scalable, relevant customer engagement at every touchpoint. ”**



# The Road Ahead for Enterprise Engagement

**The Engagement Index gives leaders insights and a road-map for transforming engagement across the organisation.**

And SAP Engagement Cloud empowers them to execute that vision with confidence. We bring enterprise teams the power of orchestrated, real-time engagement—connected to data, processes, AI, and decisions across the business.

This is the **new gold standard**: Real-time intelligence, connected systems, and engagement that builds trust, loyalty, and long-term growth—consistently and responsibly.

The future belongs to brands that treat engagement as a core, enterprise-wide function. SAP provides the foundation to make that future possible.

**With SAP customers generating 84% of total global commerce, SAP has unmatched visibility into the operational data and customer signals that drive deeply personalised moments.**

Business Area

Search to filter results Q

US  
DE  
EU  
FR

Good morning, Alex!

Engagement Cloud Apps

- Channels Email Campaigns
- Channels Mobile Engage
- Channels Web Channel
- Analytics Strategic

AI-Assisted Report Builder

Personal

Recently Edited Email Campaigns

- New Brand Showcase - Translated (English) Last edited by Michael
- Seasonal Promotion Savings - Email Campaign Last edited by Michael
- New Brand Showcase - Email Campaign Last edited by Michael
- Back to School Promotion - Email Campaign Last edited by Michael

Recently Edited Automation

- Online Exclusive Last edited by Michael
- New Brand Showcase Last edited by Michael
- Exclusive Sale Last edited by Michael
- Product Recommendation Last edited by Michael

Create a segment from our salon owners in US who are not engaging

Creating segment

Message Jouts...

23/06 10:00 AM, 10/07/2023

From: BestRun Beauty  
Discover our new Hairdryers

**Raise the Bar for Your Salon**

Exceptional results your Clients can feel.

Vintage Design HD  
BUY NOW

Cordless HD  
BUY NOW

**\$115k** <sup>↑</sup>  
Revenue from email recommendations

Show me weekly sales by revenue



# Methodology

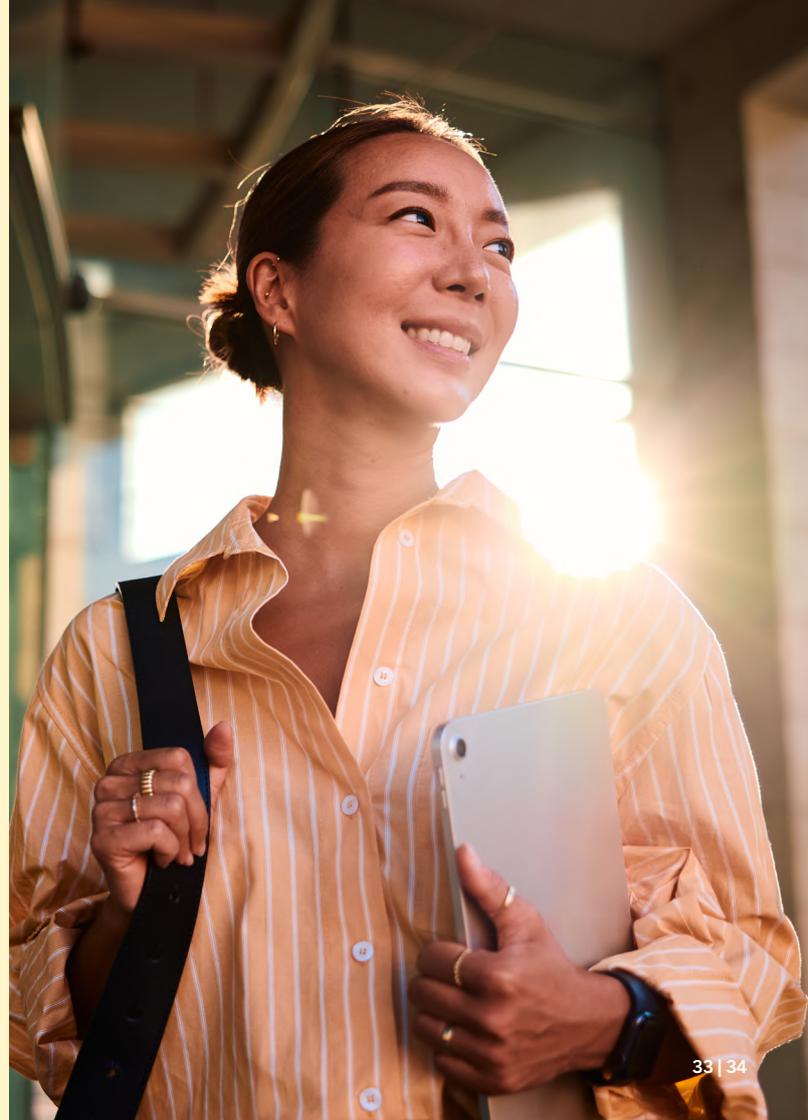
This research was conducted in the UK by Opinium as part of global research among a sample of 2,000 general respondents and 750 senior decision makers in IT, Technology, Marketing, Revenue, Service departments and who work in the Retail, Consumer Products & FMCG, Automotive, Manufacturing, Utilities or Wholesale industries.

Only enterprise-level businesses with 500+ employees and with \$250m+ annual turnover were surveyed across the United Kingdom (UK). The data was collected from both audiences between 31st December 2025 and 16th January 2026.

Opinium abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society and follows the MRS code of conduct, which is based on the ESOMAR principles. Opinium is also a member of the British Polling Council.

**[To view global or country-specific reports, please click here.](#)**

*\* base size is below 50 respondents, hence figures to be interpreted as indicative only.*





**SAP Engagement Cloud helps organisations power unique engagement by connecting real-time customer insights with the operational signals that run the business. As part of the SAP Customer Experience (CX) portfolio, Engagement Cloud enables personalised, AI-driven interactions across every channel—turning moments like orders, service events, and loyalty milestones into timely, relevant experiences that build trust, strengthen relationships, and drive growth. For more information, visit [emarsys.com](https://emarsys.com) or [www.sap.com](https://www.sap.com)**

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