

fullstory

GLOBAL SURVEY

# Digital expectations vs. realities, and how to bridge the gaps:

Insights from a survey of  
DX professionals



**Online businesses are well aware of the tremendous role digital experiences (DX) play in acquiring and retaining customers.**

**85%** of consumers say that a great digital experience is as or more important than a great in-store experience.

With digital-driven revenue top of mind, the majority of companies have goals to measure and improve the online experiences they're providing. However, there's a substantial gap between the expectations and realities of how those plans are informed and, consequently, the benefits they actually drive for brands and their customers.

FullStory's survey of 700 global DX professionals sheds light on how companies are approaching digital experiences, analytics solutions, optimizations, and data. The responses point to five contradictions that brands currently face as they try to create great digital experiences.

In this report, we'll zoom in on the critical gaps between expectations and realities in digital experience optimization, and offer solutions for how to bridge them.

## REALITY #1

# Most digital experiences under-deliver

**Consumers expect businesses to understand and meet their needs.** However, despite encroaching competition and the well-documented importance of a user-friendly digital experience, many online businesses still fail to meet their customers' expectations.

When a competing website is only a tab away, delivering a satisfactory digital customer experience should rank high on the priority list. If you're counting on brand loyalty to keep people on your site, it's time to reconsider.

A **FullStory survey** revealed that 40% of consumers are loyal to great experiences, not to brands. Despite this punch-packing data, only 40% of surveyed DX pros describe their website or app as "excellent," while 60% say there's room for improvement. Finding ways to anticipate and meet your customers' or users' needs is one of the most important retention drivers there is. Let's break down three of the key challenges in this area.

# 60%

of DX pros say their website or app has room for improvement

# 40%

Describe theirs as "excellent"

## KEY CHALLENGE

### Finding friction points proves tricky for many companies

Across the board, businesses are struggling to understand exactly what's driving customers away. Almost two-thirds (64%) of global consumers say they're likely to leave a site or app without completing a transaction if they encounter a digital problem or frustration. Even more disconcerting, only 19% of DX pros have a clear view of where and why customers become frustrated on their site or app.

Additionally, the majority of survey respondents want more qualitative insight into customer issues, citing:

- Only a **third (35%)** of companies monitor frustration signals
- **Only 29%** use heat maps in their web analytics
- **Just over a quarter (27%)** of businesses use session replay

## KEY CHALLENGE

### Users expect flawless fundamentals first

While embracing new innovations and technologies is important, companies that skim past digital experience fundamentals to focus on shiny new objects may be setting themselves up for failure.

**72%** of consumers say the most frustrating issue online is poor site or app performance.

Globally, **over three-fourths (77%) of consumers say their top priority when transacting online is to “quickly accomplish what I came to do.”** It may not sound experientially groundbreaking, but consumers won’t be wowed by fancy bells and whistles if you’re not delivering on the fundamentals.



## KEY CHALLENGE

### Brands need to understand their audience

Online companies that want to keep pace with the market need to use digital experience analytics to understand their users’ behaviors and motives. This means going beyond monitoring what site and app visitors are doing to uncover why they’re doing it. DX professionals need to get comfortable using analytics to answer questions like:

- What did a user experience just before they abandoned my site or app?
- What paths are people taking to conversion?
- Where in my site or app do people seem confused, frustrated, or disoriented?

Proactively monitoring metrics like these can help businesses better understand—and ultimately delight—customers.

“I’d like to have a connected analytics front. I want to be able to pinpoint what customers are doing at every step in the journey, and I want a connected vision of all our analytics platforms together, so we can start to understand our customers more and make the best products possible. I think FullStory is something that will be able to help with that.”

STUDY, TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FULLSTORY, MARCH 2023

REALITY #2

# Many businesses are still just guessing about the DX

**Data should be the backbone behind brands' decisions about their digital experiences.** The vast majority of DX professionals acknowledge that data is a critical part of building successful digital experiences, but many digital experience strategies and changes are still based on guesswork and anecdota.

The vast majority of DX pros acknowledge that data is an irreplaceable part of building successful digital experiences. In the survey, **86% of respondents said DX insights are vital for improving customer loyalty**, and **84% said DX insights are vital for understanding customers as people, acquiring new users, converting customers, and growing revenue.**

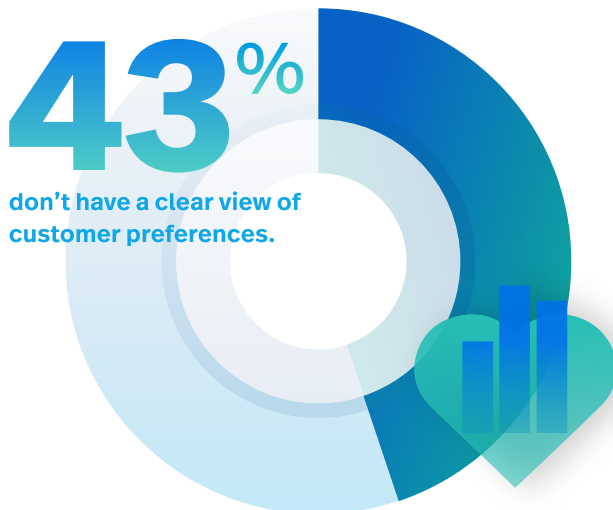
**86%**

said DX insights are vital for improving customer loyalty

**84%**

said DX insights are vital for understanding customers

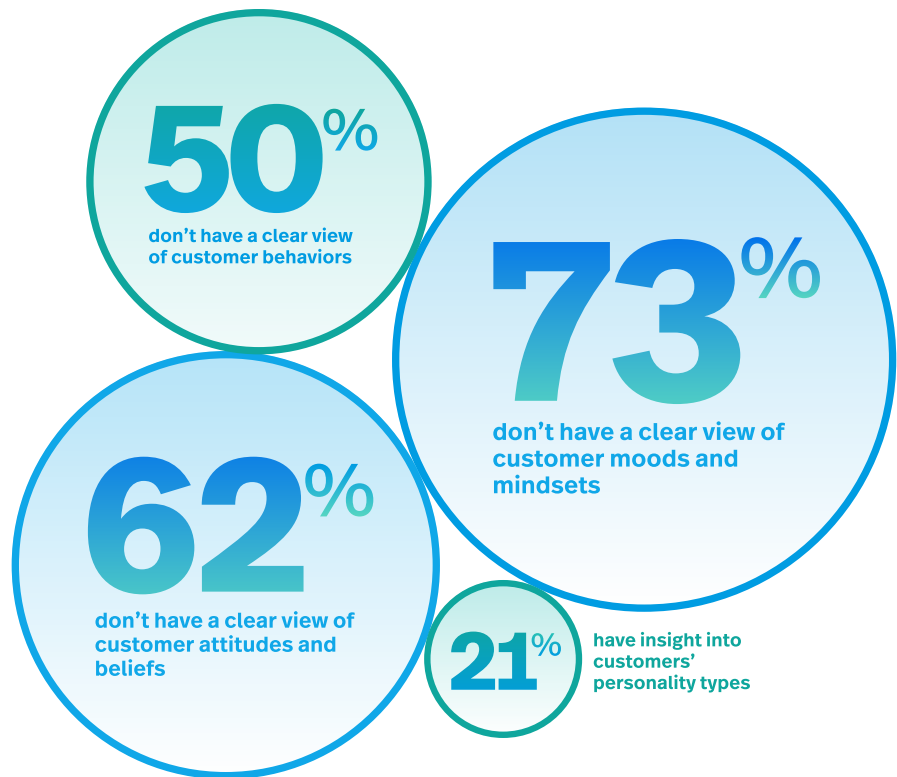
To that end, nearly three-fourths (73%) of survey respondents said their organization has a clear, consistent strategy for their digital experience. **If most people agree that DX data is critical for success and have a digital experience strategy in place, then we should expect every online transaction to be perfect, right?**



**If only.** According to the survey, **43% of organizations do not have a clear view of customer preferences.** In a previous survey, 38% of global consumers say that one of the most important aspects of a digital experience is that it's personalized to their needs and preferences.

**To break things down further:**

- **50%** don't have a clear view of customer behaviors
- **62%** don't have a clear view of customer attitudes and beliefs
- **73%** don't have a clear view of customer moods and mindsets
- **Only 21%** have insight into their customers' personality types



**73%**

of companies have a digital experience strategy...

...yet

**43%**

of organizations don't have a clear view of customer preferences

**There's an obvious problem here: Businesses can't customize experiences when they don't *know* their users.**

This data points to the startling fact that most digital experience strategies aren't actually grounded in customer data, but are based on guesswork and gut feelings. In fact, just 28% of DX professionals say they can use their data to understand what drives conversions and revenue.

REALITY #3

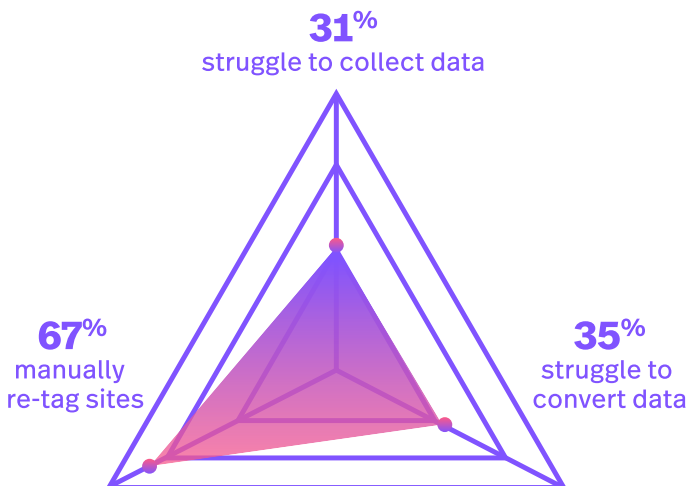
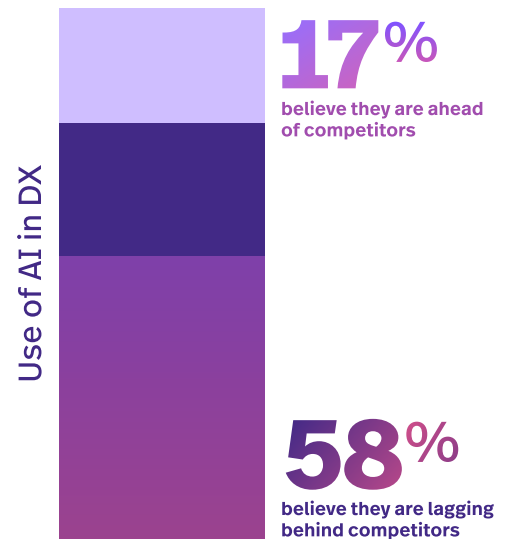
# Brands have a shaky foundation for AI-driven growth

Savvy businesses should be able to use AI to help them quickly improve customers' digital experiences. However, most brands feel they are lagging behind their competitors in the use of AI in digital experience optimization.

Advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) promise to revolutionize how companies understand customers and create digital experiences. However, AI is only as good as the data it's trained on.

Like any emerging tech, AI is seeing early adopters in the digital experience space—but **nearly 60% of survey respondents believe they are lagging behind their competitors in the use of AI in digital experience optimization.**

Complete, real-time behavioral data is the only way AI models can “see” and learn a customer’s digital body language and create a personalized, differentiated AI experience.



Despite the fact that models will require structured, semantic data that shows exactly what happened at each step of the customer’s journey, many brands report a lack of key user data. For example:

- **31%** struggle to collect relevant DX data from prospects and customers
- **67%** often have to re-tag sites or mobile apps when new questions arise
- **35%** say that it is too difficult to convert DX signals into meaningful insights

Brands that plan to use AI to improve the digital customer experience over the coming months or years will need a complete, solid foundation of user data for AI tools to learn from. Without this critical context, even the most sophisticated AI will fall flat.

## REALITY #4

# Businesses are struggling to stay ahead of DX issues

Brands should be laser-focused on advancing DX, but respondents report they are wasting time trying to identify issues in their digital experiences instead of making meaningful improvements.

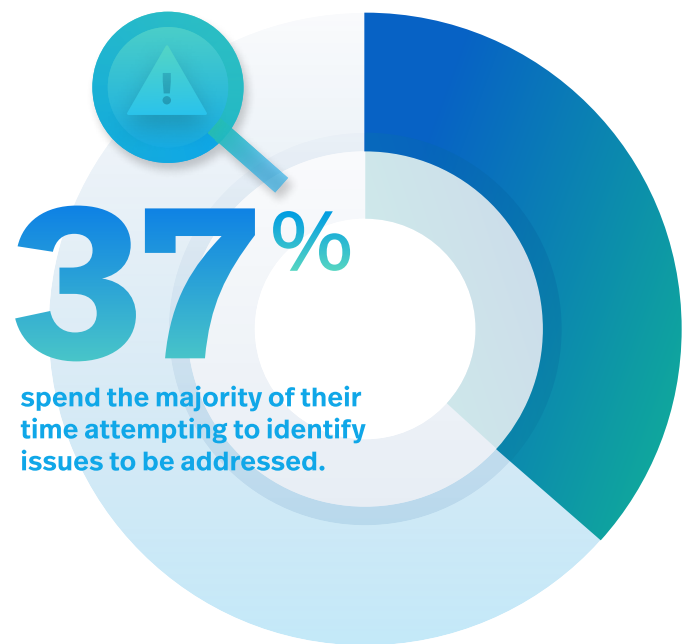
It's 2023 and technology seems to move at the speed of light—so businesses can use those advancements to create highly innovative digital experiences that users love.

Unfortunately, this is rarely the case. Many businesses are spending the majority of their time simply trying to identify digital experience issues rather than actually making meaningful improvements.

## 40%

of respondents cite “devising new strategies based on DX insights” as the number one way they want to spend their time.

In the survey, 40% of respondents cite “devising new strategies based on DX insights” as the number one way DX pros want to spend their time. But in reality, **37% of respondents spend the majority of their time attempting to identify issues that need to be addressed.**



spend the majority of their time attempting to identify issues to be addressed.

### The reason for this disparity?

Most respondents say they lack the necessary resources to significantly improve the digital experience. Specifically:

- 66% say that improving the digital experience requires skills their team doesn't currently have
- 63% say they lack the appropriate technologies to improve the digital experience



## Getting action-ready DX insights

Digital experience professionals need an all-in-one, user-friendly platform that identifies those hard-to-spot DX issues. A solution like FullStory can automatically surface points of friction and frustration, identify areas for improvement, and make the path to resolution crystal clear—all without manual tagging or endless hours of user training.

Not only does FullStory alert you to friction through dozens of preconfigured frustration signals, it helps you quantify the impact of those friction points so you can prioritize updates and fixes.

United Rentals, the worlds' largest equipment rental company, reduced the time it takes to identify the cause of an issue from eight weeks to half a day—a 99% decrease—saving valuable working time and improving the customer experience.



8 weeks

99%

DECREASE

saving valuable working time and improving the customer experience

>1 day

REALITY #5

# Teams are grappling with the effects of budget cuts

Across all geos, DX professionals are being expected to hit higher business targets despite having their budgets reduced.

If there's one thing businesses around the world have in common, it's tightened budgets. In the survey, **over half of respondents (51%) say their department is experiencing budget cuts**. At the same time, business goals are increasing, **with four in five respondents (79%) saying they are expected to hit higher targets despite the cuts**. This results in 66% of surveyed DX practitioners having to do more with less.

**51%**

of DX pros are experiencing budget cuts...

...but

**79%**

are expected to hit higher business targets anyway.

**30%**

say teams are unintentionally replicating the same work

**28%**

say team members can't access the data they need

**29%**

say their tech stack is disjointed

These opposing forces mean there is no room for redundancy or inefficiency in companies' strategies, processes, or tech stacks. However, many are faced with systemic obstacles:

- **29%** of respondents say their tech stack is disjointed and siloed
- **28%** say relevant team members can't access the data they need to do their jobs efficiently
- **30%** of respondents say multiple teams are replicating work without knowing it

Successfully doing more with less—especially if your team lacks the tools and skills to make meaningful improvements—means organizations need to figure out how to prioritize efficiency and productivity while eliminating silos and redundancies.

## Prioritizing efficiency to save time and money

Access to complete and reliable digital experience data leads to faster, smarter decision-making, as well as the ability to confidently prioritize projects that will be the most impactful.

And yet, only 24% strongly agree that their organization has a single shared source of truth when it comes to DX data. The clearest way to understand your customers and make sure each team in your organization is operating with consolidated, reliable insights is by gathering all DX data.

**24%** Less than 1 in 4 strongly agree their organization has a single shared source of truth when it comes to DX data.

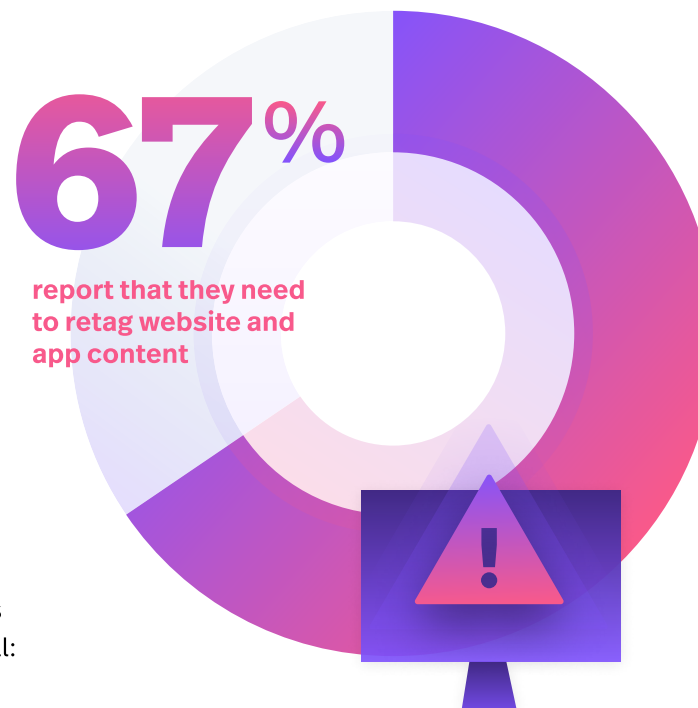
Aligning teams around a single DX data source helps ensure everyone can access the quantitative and qualitative insights they need, that the data is trusted and structured, and that work isn't being duplicated unnecessarily.

Outdated product analytics tech can be a significant contributor to inefficiency in digital experience optimization: **67% of survey respondents report that they need to retag website and app content when new questions about user behavior arise.**

Survey responses reveal that the majority of companies are whittling tech stacks down to the necessities as well:

- **66%** report tech stack consolidations at their company over the past 12 months
- **67%** expect consolidation over the next 12 months

Implementing a single robust digital experience platform can eliminate the need for those smaller, siloed point solutions that eat up precious budget space, while opening up DX insights to more team members.



According to [Forrester's Total Economic Impact study](#), an enterprise organization using FullStory could increase productivity by 15 to 25% among product, design, and technical teams.

**25%**

Increase in organizational productivity from using FullStory's digital experience solution

FullStory gathers and structures all of your quantitative and qualitative digital experience data in one place through a privacy-first approach—delivering actionable improvement opportunities that are applicable to every user.

“FullStory has helped us work a lot quicker. We know what sort of information we want to be tracking. We know what’s important. We know what our core journeys and our key funnels are, so we can be managing and tracking that over time. We also know when we have released new functionality, how we can monitor it, and then take the metrics from the before and the metrics from the after to prove that we’ve created better solutions.”

[STUDY, TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FULLSTORY, MARCH 2023](#)

Around the world, organizations continue to become more in tune with their digital experiences and the role those experiences play in overall business outcomes. However, as companies grapple with budget cuts, data silos, and rising consumer expectations, the gaps between digital experience expectations and realities remain wide—but not uncrossable.

A complete digital experience solution empowers teams to access and interpret insights based on real user interactions—leading to better alignment, increased productivity, better site and app conversion rates, and greater customer retention.

Get started with a FullStory demo today. [Request a demo →](#)

## **About FullStory**

FullStory's Digital Experience Intelligence platform enables businesses to continuously improve their digital customer experience across sites and apps. The platform proactively surfaces actionable insights from billions of data points, helping thousands of companies, including Fortune 100 companies and the world's most innovative consumer brands, make evidence-based digital improvements that reduce costs and reclaim revenue.

The company is headquartered in Atlanta and privately held with backing from Permira, Kleiner Perkins, GV (formerly Google Ventures), Stripes, Dell Technologies Capital, and Salesforce Ventures. For more information, visit [www.fullstory.com](http://www.fullstory.com).

### **Survey methodology**

Survey respondents include 700 digital experience professionals evenly distributed among the UK, Germany, Australia, the Netherlands, Singapore, Indonesia, and the United States. Respondents work in industries including gaming/gambling, finance/finserv, travel, and software, SaaS, and tech.