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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Research reveals executive support and data-driven approach creates widening gap between digital leaders and those falling behind

## Development of digital marketing in Hong Kong still struggling as skill shortages continue to bite.

**Hong Kong — October 22, 2014** — New research from Adobe and the CMO Council shows that there are widening gaps in digital marketing maturity across Asia Pacific and while all countries understand the importance and value of digital, no country has managed to take full advantage of the opportunities that exist in this area.

Jointly conducted by the CMO Council and Adobe, the third annual APAC Digital Marketing Performance Dashboard was derived from a survey fielded across Asia-Pacific during the second and third quarters of 2014. The study benchmarked the levels of adoption, traction and maturity of digital marketing across Asia-Pacific which includes Australia, New Zealand, China, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and India. It included a six-month in-field programme comprising quantitative surveys with over 800 marketing executives, the largest gathering of marketing insights over the years. Senior marketers within the Asia Pacific region from a range of industries took part, with 44% holding a title of Vice President or higher.

The 2014 Digital Dashboard has found that the overwhelming majority of the respondents (93%) believe digital marketing can bring competitive advantage to their organisations. Although most of the executives in Asia-Pacific recognise the role of digital marketing, the survey shows that countries have different performance on various indicators. Countries such as Singapore, Australia and India are pulling away with strong executive support and digital champions, while South Korea, China and Hong Kong struggle with executive support and skill shortages.

### The role of stakeholders in driving digital marketing

The APAC Digital Dashboard identified that those countries with strong support for digital marketing from senior executives are moving to leadership positions. In Australia, Chief Marketing Executive ownership is at 54% in 2014, followed by India (42%), Hong Kong (41%), South Korea (39%) and Singapore (37%). Having a strong digital champion within the leadership team remained steady across the region at 38% between 2012 and 2014; however, Australia is pulling away with 62% in 2014, followed by Hong Kong (46%), Singapore (41%) and India (39%).

“Unfortunately, some leadership teams are not convinced of the ROI of digital marketing, and although they are open to learning more, this skepticism is holding back adoption rates in some countries. Across Asia-Pacific, concern about ROI has risen slightly from 17 percent in 2012 to 21 percent in 2014 while Hong Kong (19%) is slightly above average. The dashboard reveals that in South Korea, 50 percent of senior leaders are not convinced of digital marketing ROI,” said Paul Robson, President, Adobe Asia Pacific.

As for Hong Kong, 36% of marketers think that there is very strong support for digital from the leadership team, compared to 6% in 2013. 46% of marketers in Hong Kong say they do have a strong champion within the leadership team, which shows second highest levels of support among other countries across Asia-Pacific.

Channel partners and sales teams appear to be strong advocates for digital marketing with more calling for increased digital spend across Asia Pacific. Since 2012, the number of lines of businesses who are calling for increased investment in digital has increased from 15% to 25% in 2014. Channel partners and sales teams who are doing so have more than doubled from 15% in 2012 to 34% in 2014, while there is a tremendous increase in Hong Kong which has rocketed from 9% in 2013 to 40% in 2014.

According to 25% of the respondents from Hong Kong, IT is a big contributor and active partner in selecting and deploying solutions while 41% express functional heads and Line-Of Business (LOB) leaders are providing input and advice, and both rank second highest across Asia-Pacific. Relatively, IT experts, functional heads and LOB leaders serve as more supportive facilitators in Hong Kong when compared to other countries in APAC.

### **Slight improvements in skill levels but leaders pull away**

There has been a small improvement in skill levels across Asia Pacific with dedicated digital headcount increasing from 13% in 2012 and 2013, to 15% in 2014. However, gaps are continuing to grow between countries which have a dedicated digital headcount in 2014:

- Australia – 26%
- India and Singapore – 18%
- South Korea – 13%
- China – 9%
- Hong Kong – 7%.

Across Asia Pacific, use of analytics and reporting technologies has remained generally steady (72% in 2012 and 74% in 2014), but leaders are pulling away. In Australia, 91% of marketers are using analytics and reporting tools, followed by Singapore (79%), India (77%), Hong Kong (73%), China (70%) and South Korea (60%).

The 2014 APAC Digital Dashboard also found that marketers are not moving beyond more basic measurements. Asked whether they are measuring throughout the life of campaigns, only 4% of marketers in Hong Kong said they were, compared with an average of 13% across Asia Pacific.

Despite the lack of analysis throughout the life of campaigns, the skills and awareness of Hong Kong marketers are improving as proved by the fact that 60% of marketers in Hong Kong express they are currently measuring and testing the results of their digital marketing campaigns, up from 47% last year.

### **Recommendations**

Liz Miller, Vice President of Marketing at the CMO Council said all countries can do more to leverage the vast amounts of data and intelligence that can be gathered at every touch point across the organisation.

“While more marketers in countries like Australia, India and Singapore are using analytics and reporting technologies, no country is truly taking advantage of the huge amounts of data they are collecting. Few see leveraging data as a competitive advantage, whereas globally, advancing the customer experience with deep personalisation and smart adaptive engagements is driving revenue gains and measurable advantage.

“Opportunities exist for marketers to leap ahead by using data to enrich and guide the customer journey, not just reporting on KPIs or implementing a piecemeal approach.”

“With customers able to touch any part of an organisation, the role of marketing in transforming businesses is crucial and requires executive support for successful transformation. Organisations across APAC need to accelerate their investment in employees’ professional development to close the skills gaps faster and leverage the benefits of digital. In addition, a bolder approach to applying metrics and driving a more compelling case for increased investment is needed,” said Paul Robson.

“Skill gaps and lack of senior executive support will continue to see some APAC countries fall behind the leaders—Australia, Singapore and India. However, all countries, including the leaders, can do more to leverage the vast amounts of data they collect to drive business growth and revenue. Marketers have never been in a better position to drive business results and revenue, and we’ve never had better tools to demonstrate ROI. It is encouraging to see high levels of optimism around the region and a strong level of understanding around the benefits and opportunities of digital marketing. Looking ahead, marketers across APAC will need to turn this optimism into action so they are not left behind.” concluded Paul Robson.

## Helpful Links and References

- [APAC Adobe Digital Marketing Dashboard 2014](#)
- [Adobe Digital Marketing Blog - CMO.com](#)
- [Join the Adobe Digital Dialogue LinkedIn group for news and views from APAC Marketers](#)
- Follow the conversation around the APAC Digital Marketing Performance Dashboard via #APDash
- For all the news on Adobe Digital Marketing, follow [@Adobemktgcloud](#)
- Read about [Adobe Marketing Cloud](#)

## APAC Digital Marketing Performance Dashboard Methodology

The 2014 Adobe APAC Digital Marketing Performance Dashboard was compiled through quantitative surveys with over 800 marketers across the region. Marketers from Australia, South Korea, China, India, Hong Kong, Singapore and other countries responded and completed the surveys.

## About the CMO Council

The CMO Council is dedicated to high-level knowledge exchange, thought leadership and personal relationship building among senior corporate marketing leaders and brand decision-makers across a wide-range of global industries. The CMO Council's 6,000 members control more than \$300 billion in aggregated annual marketing expenditures and run complex, distributed marketing and sales operations worldwide. In total, the CMO Council and its strategic interest communities include more than 20,000 global executives in more than 110 countries covering multiple industries, segments and markets. Regional chapters and advisory boards are active in the Americas, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Middle East, India and Africa. The Council's strategic interest groups include the Coalition to Leverage and Optimise Sales Effectiveness (CLOSE), LoyaltyLeaders.org, Marketing Supply Chain Institute, Customer Experience Board, Market Sense-Ability Center, Digital Marketing Performance Institute, GeoBranding Center, and the Forum to Advance the Mobile Experience (FAME). More information on the CMO Council is available at [www.cmocouncil.org](http://www.cmocouncil.org).

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