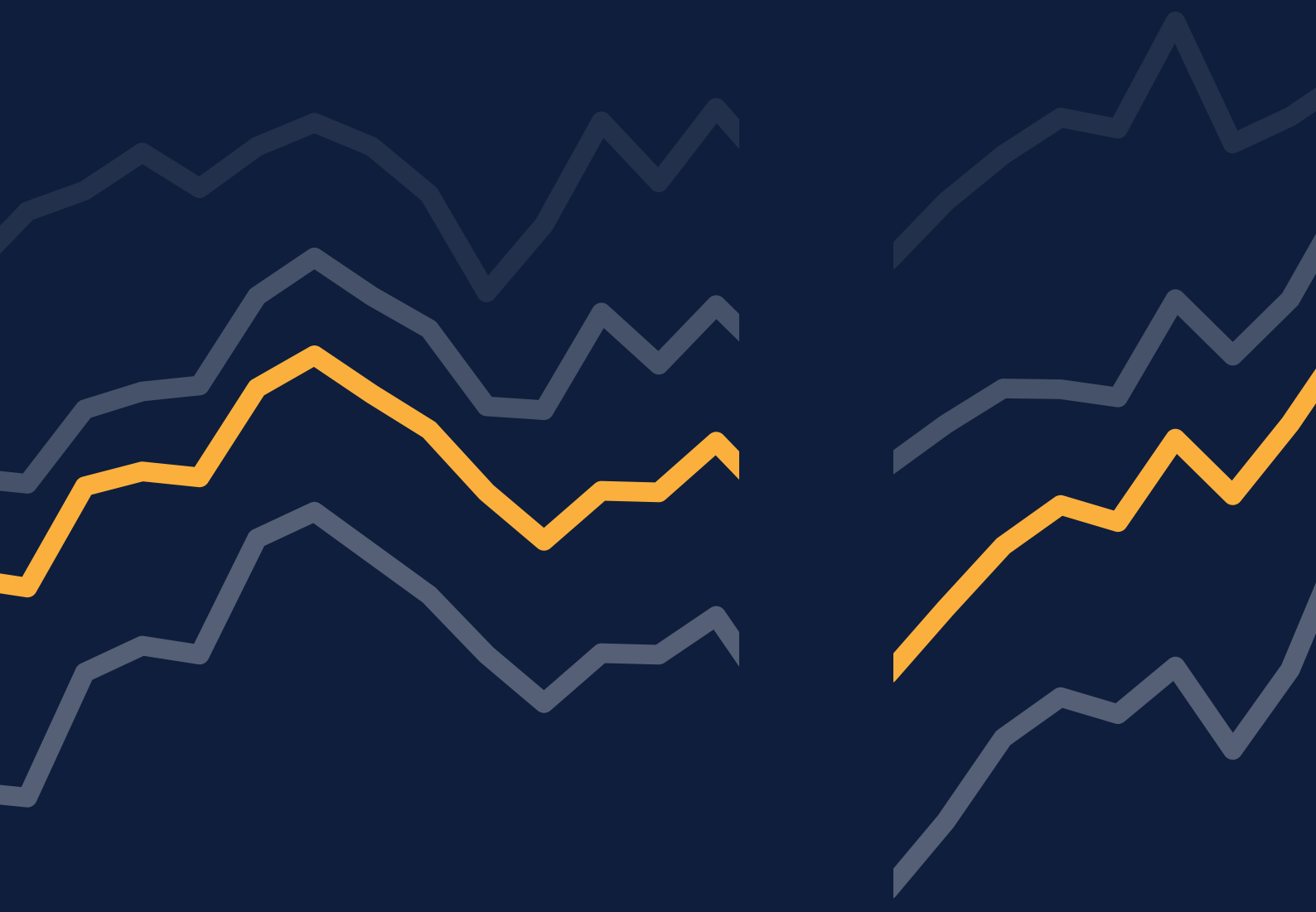# 2,500 leaders, four countries, one major data divide.

# Is your company optimistic about its future?

## JY Pook, Senior Vice President of Asia Pacific, Tableau Software

Home to some of the world's largest and fastest-growing economies, the Asia Pacific and Japan (APJ) region saw major uncertainty in 2020. Most countries still face uneven recovery and global uncertainty. This has forced companies to react quicker and prepare for endless eventualities, making agility and resilience more critical than ever.

But building that agility requires effective use of data. During a year of change and challenge, how did companies use their data to keep operations running and customers happy? What have they learned? To find out, Tableau commissioned independent public opinion company YouGov to survey more than 2,500 managers and IT decision-makers in Australia, India, Japan and Singapore.

This research reveals a growing "data divide" – data-driven organisations are more resilient and optimistic about their future than those that aren't data driven. If they aren't working to cross that divide and become more data driven, companies risk ceding important advantages like operational visibility and deeper customer understanding.

Worryingly, nearly a third of respondents say their organisations aren't data driven. And even many data-driven organisations face awareness gaps, with only 3% of all decision-makers saying they see data as more critical now than they did before the pandemic.

Despite each country's unique circumstances, our research with YouGov uncovers important commonalities as businesses strive to better understand and satisfy customers' evolving needs. This report will outline those commonalities and the insights decision-makers need to confront a pivotal challenge: navigating immediate crises and building resilience to future ones.
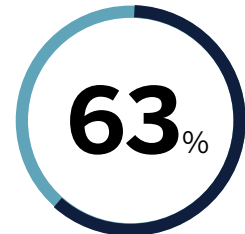
**63%**
of data-driven leaders are optimistic about their businesses' future health
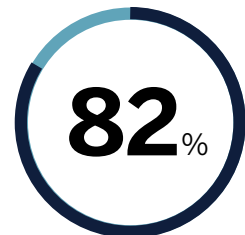
**82%**
of data-driven businesses consider data a critical advantage during the pandemic
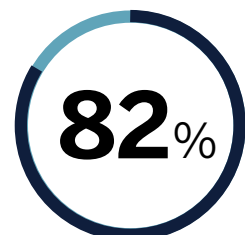
**82%**
of data-driven organisations are eager to continue or increase spending on data skills and training for their employees

# Resilience during crisis: the benefits of data

The pandemic created unpredictable, risky conditions across APJ and the world. For many companies, there were no playbooks or precedents on which they could base decisions. Despite impacts differing in each country, the survey responses indicate that being data driven was a common advantage across all countries.

Accurate, easy-to-understand data insights are the fuel that powers everything from better customer experiences to greater supply chain visibility. Organisations that use data effectively tend to have a clearer picture of their operations and how they should adapt them. They can better identify and respond to customer pain points, and they have the insights to make flat budgets go further.
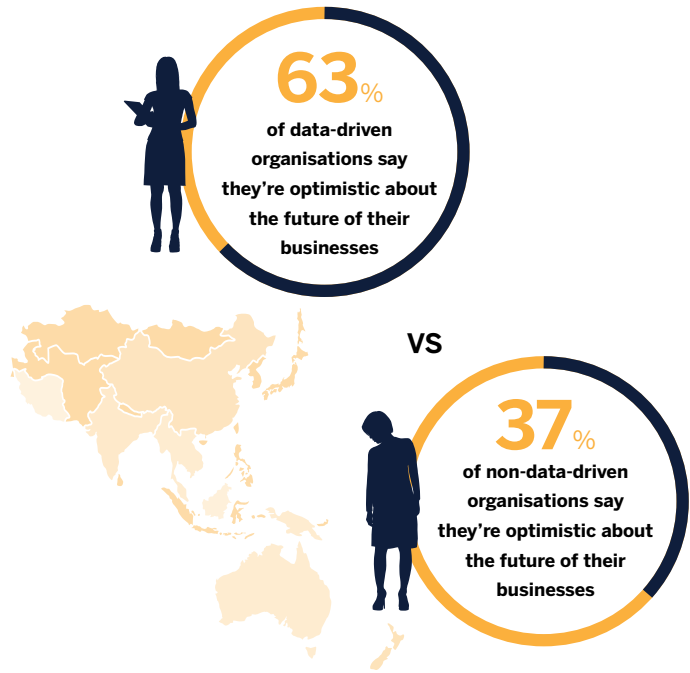
We saw this reflected in the YouGov survey results, where business leaders were asked if they considered their organisations to be "data-driven".*

**62**% say they're data-driven

**34**% say they're not data-driven

**4**% Not sure

*We defined a "data-driven company" as "a company that values data and ensures employees have access to their data to make data-based business decisions".

## Data improves confidence and resilience

Countries in APJ aren't a monolith – they face unique circumstances, including varied pandemic responses and different rates of economic recovery. But across the region, data-driven organisations report higher levels of confidence and resilience.

**63**% of data-driven organisations say they're optimistic about the future of their businesses

VS

**37**% of non-data-driven organisations say they're optimistic about the future of their businesses

## Data gave organisations crucial advantages during the pandemic

**82**% of data-driven leaders say they consider data a critical advantage during the pandemic

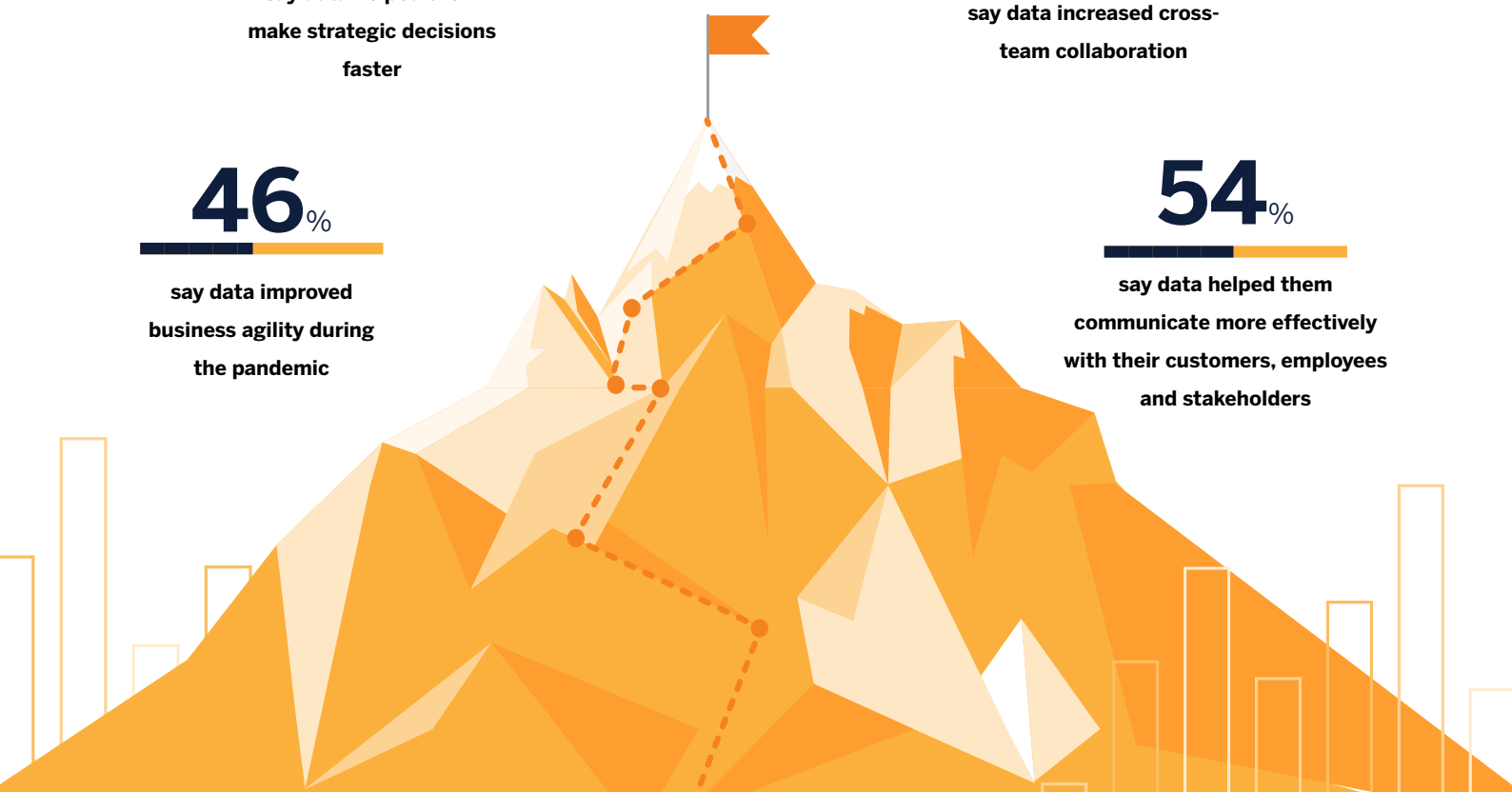**54**% say data helped them make strategic decisions faster

**51**% say data increased cross-team collaboration

**46**% say data improved business agility during the pandemic

**54**% say data helped them communicate more effectively with their customers, employees and stakeholders

**In practice**

As one of Asia's largest health companies, Zuellig Pharma serves facilities like hospitals, clinics and pharmacies. Like most health organisations, the pandemic upended its priorities and scrambled supply chains. While customer service is important to every company, many of Zuellig's customers were on the frontlines of the health crisis and needed reliable services more than ever.

The company had an advantage: earlier investment in data and data literacy. From customer service to warehouse operations, staff are proficient in analytics and don't need to rely on other teams to make data-informed decisions. Embedded data practices and broad data literacy ensured operational visibility, faster responses and better communication with customers. The result was greater certainty for customers, even during an unpredictable health crisis.
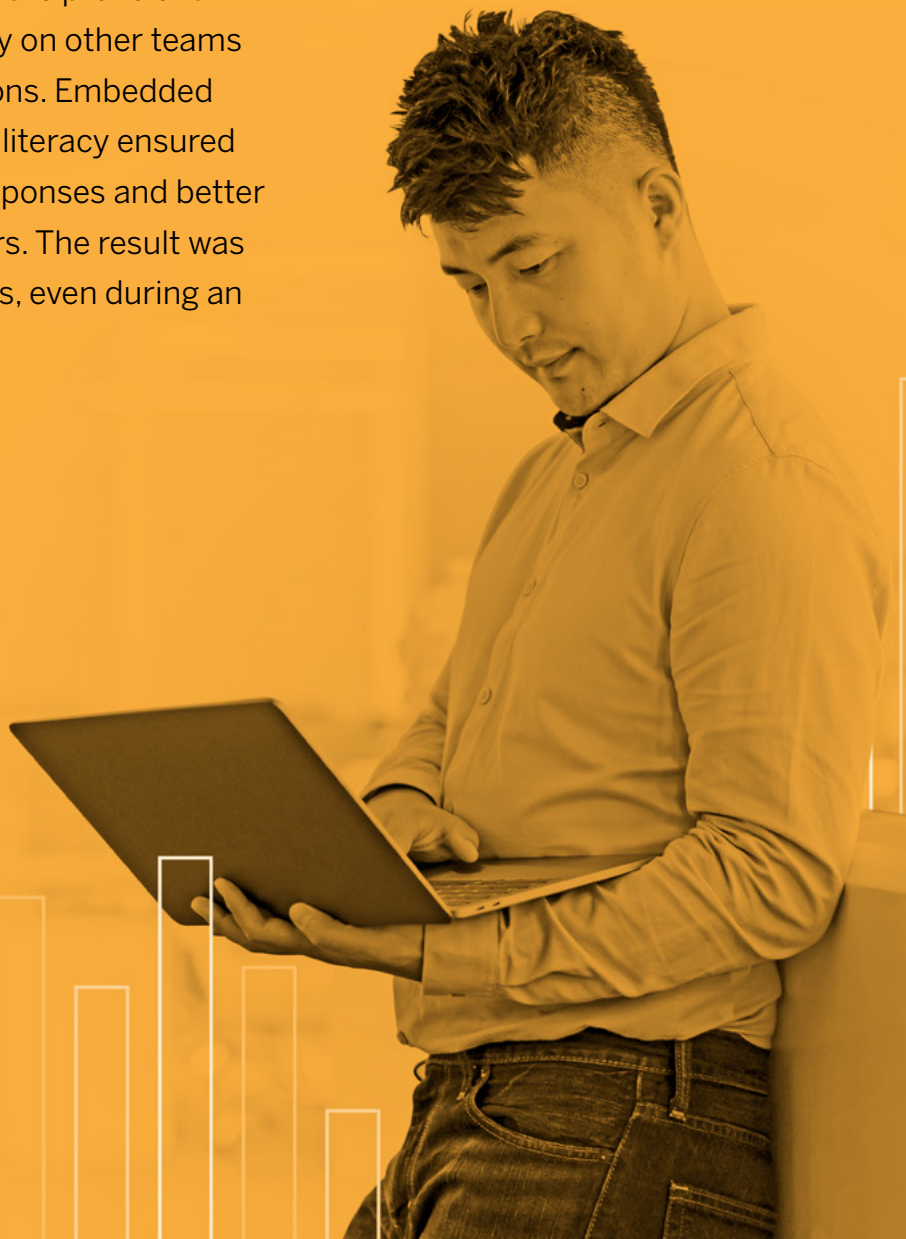
# Planning for the unpredictable: top business challenges
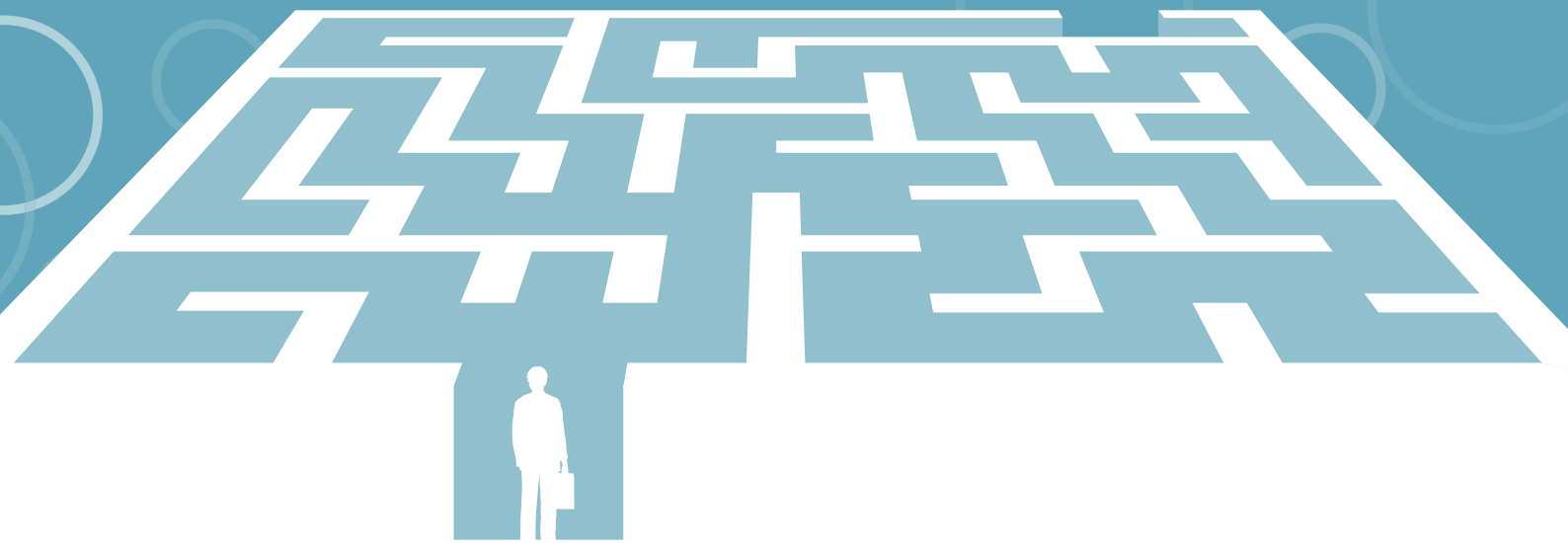
Forecasting accurately, mitigating risk and adapting quickly aren't new priorities for businesses, but the pandemic brought them into sharper focus. Across APJ, both data-driven and non-data-driven organisations are looking for greater predictability in an unpredictable world.
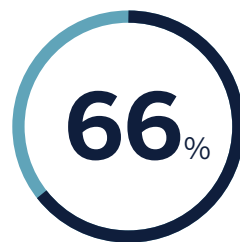
Across all countries surveyed, most companies agreed on three major to moderate challenges.

**72**%
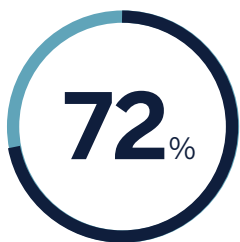
**Future planning and forecasting**

**66**%
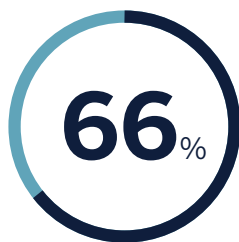
**Predicting risk exposure**

**66**%

**Business continuity**

**Insight**

## Business solutions start with a data culture.

A data culture is a critical foundation for addressing most of these challenges.

In this type of culture, analytics inform employees' decisions at every level. Digital infrastructure, analytics platforms and governance frameworks empower individuals to make decisions informed by data, confident in its accuracy and security. Organisational structure ensures analytics aren't consigned to select teams, which means important insights aren't caught in bottlenecks – a vital advantage when customers' circumstances are evolving rapidly.

**In practice**

Far from an unrealistic ideal, many companies in APJ are already cultivating a data culture. One of them is JLL (formerly Jones Lang LaSalle), a leader in real estate services across the world.

For years, the company has been investing in training and embedding 'data champions' across the business. Its data culture took on new importance when the COVID-19 pandemic forced APJ governments to institute restrictions and circuit breaker measures. JLL combined data across HR and inventory to advise building managers about potential shortages and resource-sharing solutions before restrictions took effect.

Learn more about how JLL is building a data culture.

# Improving decisions, changing minds: APJ's top data challenges
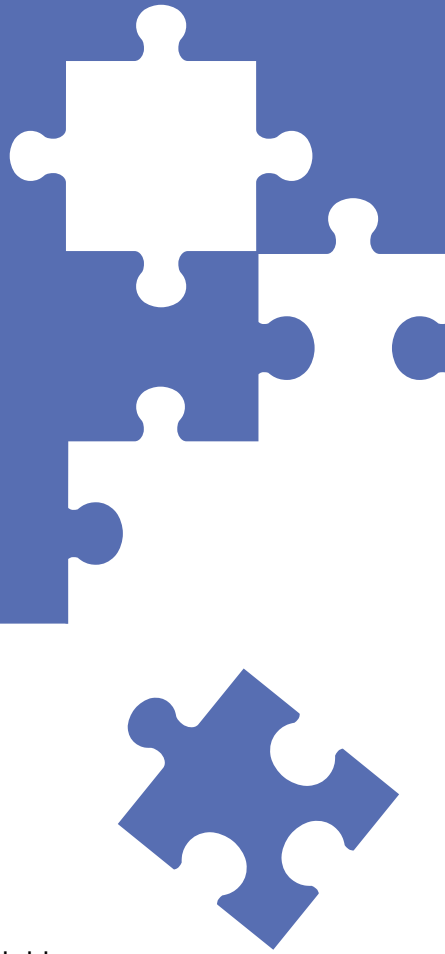
Data is vital for addressing the biggest business challenges in APJ. However, not just any data will do, and it can't be siloed. Teams need access to easily digestible insights stemming from high-quality, accurate data. They also need the right skills to decipher and apply those insights to their decision making.

Getting all of this right starts with an awareness of why data matters.

## APJ organisations' biggest barriers to more effective use of data
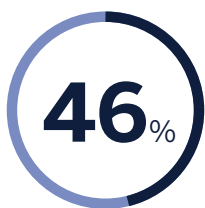
| **46**% | **43**% | **41**% | **40**% | **38**% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Data quality and integrity | Data transparency | Agility when responding to changing demands | Lack of data skills and training | Effective prioritisation and project delivery |
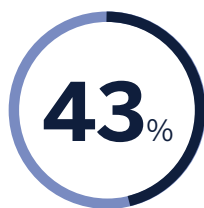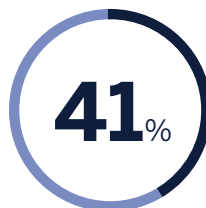
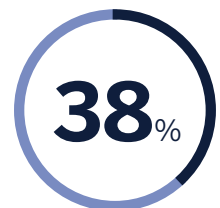# Building, applying and investing in data skills

Strengthening data skills is a priority for most, but the data divide is stark.

**82**%

of data-driven organisations say they're investing in data skills and training

**VS**

**57**%

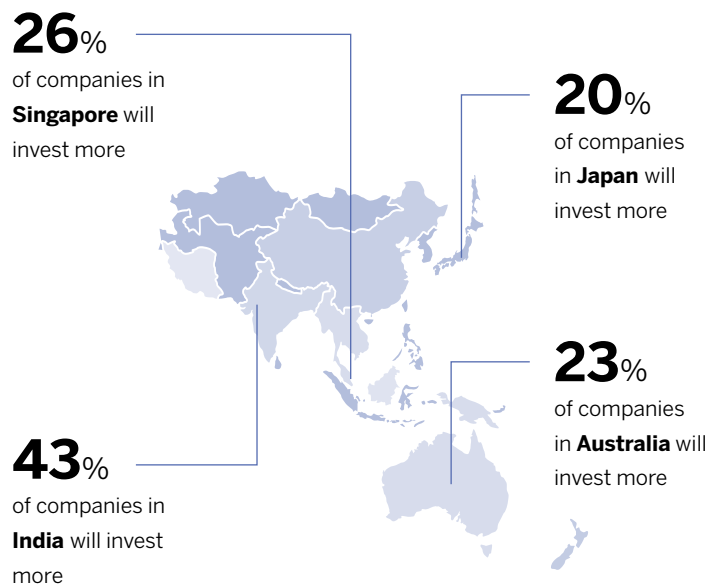of non-data-driven organisations say they're investing in skills and training

Despite leaders saying one of the pandemic's biggest lessons was the need for stronger data skills, overall investment remains low throughout APJ.

**Only 31% of APJ companies will invest more in data skills.**

**40%** will maintain investment, **19%** will decrease or not invest.

**26**% of companies in **Singapore** will invest more

**20**% of companies in **Japan** will invest more

**23**% of companies in **Australia** will invest more

**43**% of companies in **India** will invest more

## Overcoming awareness gaps

Though most data-driven organisations say data helped them address some of the biggest business challenges in APJ, awareness of advantages lags in organisations that say they aren't data driven.

Data-driven organisations aren't immune to awareness gaps, though. Despite advantages and lessons learned during the pandemic, few leaders at these organisations see decision-making differently than before.

**39**%

Less than half of non data-driven organisations in all four countries think being data-driven provides an advantage.

**3**%

Only 3% more business decision-makers think that the use of data in decision making today is critical as compared to before the pandemic

**Insight**

## Good data isn't just about technology.

Awareness gaps often have a direct impact on factors like data transparency and a lack of data skills. Likewise, a lack of training and a lack of usable insights make it more difficult to build awareness.

Building a data culture depends on the right digital investments, training and data frameworks, but also the right behaviour and beliefs. Those include greater trust and a strong commitment from leadership to drive cultural change.

**In practice**

NTT DoCoMo, Japan's leading wireless network operator, delivers a variety of services to millions of customers. To understand all of these customers, the telecommunications giant had been aggregating data for years. But traditional reporting, complicated interfaces and databases with limited access made it harder for all employees to make data-informed decisions.

Knowing that a successful data culture depends on trust, NTT DoCoMo expanded its analytics user base and made interfaces friendlier to all users. There are now 11,000 unique users on the platform each month, all using data to make better decisions. The company also worked with Tableau to establish an "Ambassador Academy," which helps employees make better use of analytics and support others to do the same.

Learn more about how NTT DoCoMo is building its data culture.

# How can a data culture help companies bridge the data divide?

Business challenges and data challenges can't be separated, and they demand holistic approaches. Here's how a data culture can break down barriers to smarter insights, greater agility and better results for customers.

**Trust**    **Talent**    **Commitment**    **Sharing**    **Mindset**
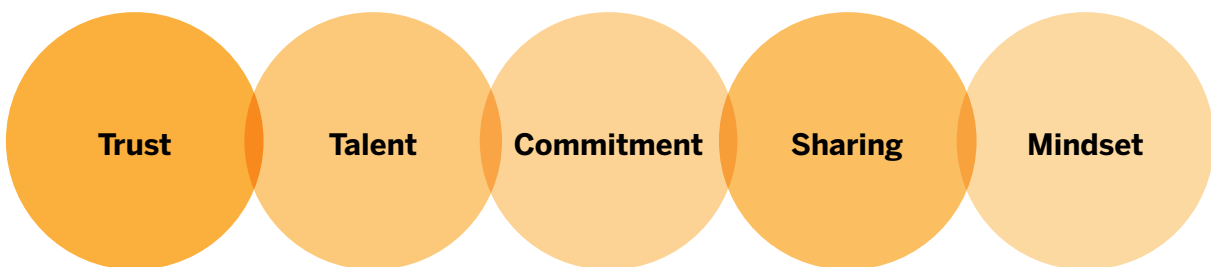
## Trust

Trust is the one of the most essential elements of a data culture: employees trust their data, leaders trust employees and teams trust one another. This trust fuels more comprehensive insights into customers and operations, along with better cross-functional solutions in forecasting and business continuity planning.

## Commitment

Successful data cultures treat data as a strategic asset at all levels. Executives model data-driven behaviour, driving a top-down commitment to making better decisions through data. This means the commitment is evident in everything from organisational structures to standardised processes.

## Talent

Bringing in new data skills is an important step, but organisations can't achieve a true data culture if only some people feel comfortable using analytics and communicating about their findings.

A successful data culture prioritises data literacy in every aspect of talent management: recruitment, development and retention. This focus can create a virtuous cycle – the more people feel comfortable applying and talking about analytical concepts, the more they can help and encourage others to learn.

## Sharing

Ensuring business continuity and accurate forecasting are tricky when companies' and customers' circumstances are evolving rapidly. These are complex problems, rarely solved without collaboration. A data culture encourages teams to work together from shared data sources and metrics, uniting teams around business objectives rather than roles or functions.

## Mindset

In a successful data culture, data practices and behaviours mould an overall mindset. This mindset regards new evidence as necessary for improvement and personal growth. Being wrong isn't bad if it means changing for good. As countries rebuild and markets adapt, a data-driven appetite for continuous improvement will drive the agility and resilience companies need to emerge from the crisis stronger than before.

# Want more information?

**CONTACT US**

**Learn more** about data culture.

**Learn more** about data literacy.

See how Tableau can help you by downloading the free trial at **tableau.com/trial**

## About Tableau

Tableau helps people and organizations become more data-driven as the trusted leader in analytics. The Tableau platform provides the breadth and depth of capabilities to serve the needs of even the largest global enterprises in a seamless, integrated experience.  Tableau is designed to fit, not dictate your data strategy, and adapts to your environment with unmatched flexibility and choice, while meeting the toughest governance and security requirements. People love using Tableau because it is both powerful and intuitive—and offers a fundamentally different user experience by empowering people of all skill levels to explore and analyse data using visuals and natural language. Tableau has become the standard language of analytics for modern business users and continues to lead the industry with the most passionate and engaged user community in analytics, a customer base with millions of users at tens of thousands of organizations, and a deep commitment to customer-focused innovation.

YouGov

+++ + tableau