

Study reveals South Africans' concerns about data security, privacy

Results of an international study from Verint Systems have shown that concerns around data privacy and security remain at the top of the consumer agenda.



Nearly all (98%) of the 2000 South Africans that took part in the study think it is important to know how secure their personal information is, while 93% believe it's important to know whether their data will be passed on to third parties for marketing purposes.

The South African concerns around data privacy and security is also much higher than the global average. Of more than 24,000 consumers surveyed across 12 countries by Opinium Research, 89% think it is important to know how secure their personal information is, compared to 98% of the South Africans, while 86% believe it's important to know whether their data will be passed on to third parties for marketing purposes, compared to 93%.

Continued importance of personalised customer service

The survey also highlights the continued importance of personalised customer service, with 92% of the South African consumers liking service from their providers that is personalised to them and their needs compared with only 80% of the consumers surveyed in the other countries.

Marije Gould, Verint VP, EMEA marketing, says this introduces a challenge for many organisations because in order to provide highly personalised offerings they must have a greater understanding of their customers' needs, purchasing histories and preferences.

That translates into collecting, analysing and holding customer data related to these preferences and behaviours. Together, this creates a dichotomy, as it's very clear from the research that consumers have growing concern over their privacy and the use of the data.

"It comes down to getting the basics right, using technology and analytics to better understand what's really on the minds of customers, and then working to help ensure the right resources are in place to address evolving needs and requirements," he says.

Trust and transparency

Businesses seem to be on the same page as their customers, understanding the role that trust and transparency plays in building positive relationships with their base.

A Verint business survey across 1,019 organisations in 12 countries found 94% agree that it is important to inform customers that their data is secure, and 96% understand the need to tell customers if their data will be passed on to third parties. As a result, they will have to ensure these high standards are maintained, as one misstep with a customer's data can have disastrous effects.

According to Ryan Hollenbeck, Verint SVP global marketing and customer experience program executive sponsor, companies have a difficult balancing act to negotiate between security, transparency and a personalised experience.

Says Hollenbeck: "It's something that organisations across all sectors have to get right or risk losing valuable customers. Today's brands must work to ensure greater transparency over the use of customer data and build trust and confidence in this increasingly challenging environment."

About the research

The research was commissioned by Verint in association with Opinium Research LLP, a UK-based research company. Interviews were conducted amongst 24,001 consumers in the following countries: Australia (2,000), Brazil (2,000), France (2,000), Germany (2,000), India (2,000), Japan (2,000), Mexico (2,000), the Netherlands (2,000), New Zealand (2,000), South Africa (2,000), the UK (2,001) and the US (2,000).

The findings are part of a wider report titled [*The Digital Tipping Point: How Do Organisations Balance the Demands for Digital and Human Customer Service?*](#) in conjunction with research and advisory firm IDC.

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