Lives reexamined

2

Following the sudden disruptions of the pandemic, people emerged in 2021 with a realization that some changes weren't temporary after all. This prompted a **sense of introspection and a reevaluation of their values and lifestyle choices.** As a result, they looked for more comfort and ease in their lives, and shifted their focus to the things that matter most to them.

People have endured many waves of change on the global and local level over the past few years. As people try to embrace new unknowns in their lives, they're reexamining former lifestyle choices, once-familiar ways of life, and the comfort of established routines.

Emotional wellbeing is predicted to be a key focus for people in 2022 as they gravitate toward emotional acceptance and dedicating time to feel. In a recent survey, half of consumers in APAC said the pandemic inspired them to reevaluate what was important to them in life, with the most significant shifts in priority being their approach to finance and savings, time with loved ones, and a greater sense of self-care and "treat yourself" mentality. Another recent study showed that COVID-19 has spurred investors in Hong Kong and Singapore towards responsible investing, with nearly two-thirds of respondents saying that ESG and sustainability are now important factors in how they select investments.[13]

From small everyday upgrades to more major life decisions, searches are showing how people are taking stock of their lives and assessing how closely their choices are aligning with what truly matters to them. Evidence of this shift is seen in the “Great Resignation,” a global trend where a significant number of people are leaving their jobs voluntarily. In fact, the 2021 Work Trend Index report found that compared with other regions, APAC workers are most likely to change professional paths, with 47% considering changing employers and 56% planning a career change.[14]

Such significant, widespread shifts in life priorities among consumers should be studied closely by brands. The changing core values and priorities of people are often a strong indicator of how they will behave as consumers. But it's not just customers that businesses need to care about. Given how many people are reassessing their careers in APAC, employee satisfaction and wellbeing should be top priorities for attracting and retaining top talent.

As people spring-clean their lives, there’s a window of opportunity for businesses to reconnect and convince. How can you persuade your customers and employees to continue to make your brand a part of their new lives? How will you show the value your brand can bring to their newfound priorities?

Acceptance of a blended life

Even as restrictions ease, it seems a blended way of living is likely to remain. Searches reflect this adaptation to a more flexible future as people begin taking charge of their own time and space, particularly at home. Signs point to a semi-remote future of work as well, and according to Accenture, APAC is readier than other regions to adopt a hybrid working model.[15]

People are upgrading their homes as they accept a more permanent way of hybrid living. We see more than 25% growth in search interest in “indoor bicycles” in South Korea and Malaysia, and 45% growth in Singaporeans searching for “ergonomic chairs at home”. Indonesia saw a 25% growth in search interest in “solar power” and “electricity saving” as people look for longer-term ways to lessen the toll of stay-at-home life on their electricity bills.

In Vietnam, there was 20% growth in search interest in how to do tasks at home, like how to make coffee at home and how to fix appliances at home leading to a corresponding increase in search interest for **bảo hành** (warranties).

Reevaluation of finances

We see people changing the way they look at their finances. While some looked for ways to put their savings to work through investments, others searched for deals, discounts, and ways to stretch their dollar. Ahead of 2021's holiday season, most shoppers planned to either buy less or hold off on buying gifts until they were on sale, due to COVID-19's impact on their finances.[16]

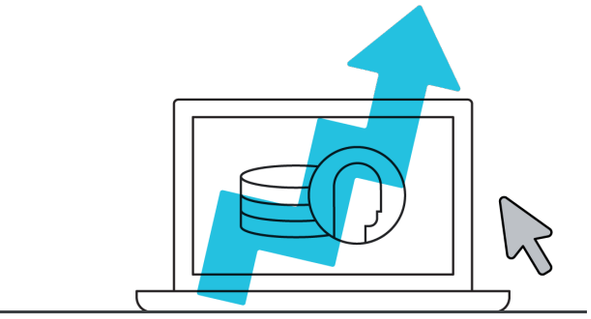
Searches for deals, discounts, and coupons have seen growth across APAC, with the highest growth of more than 110% coming from India, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

+110%

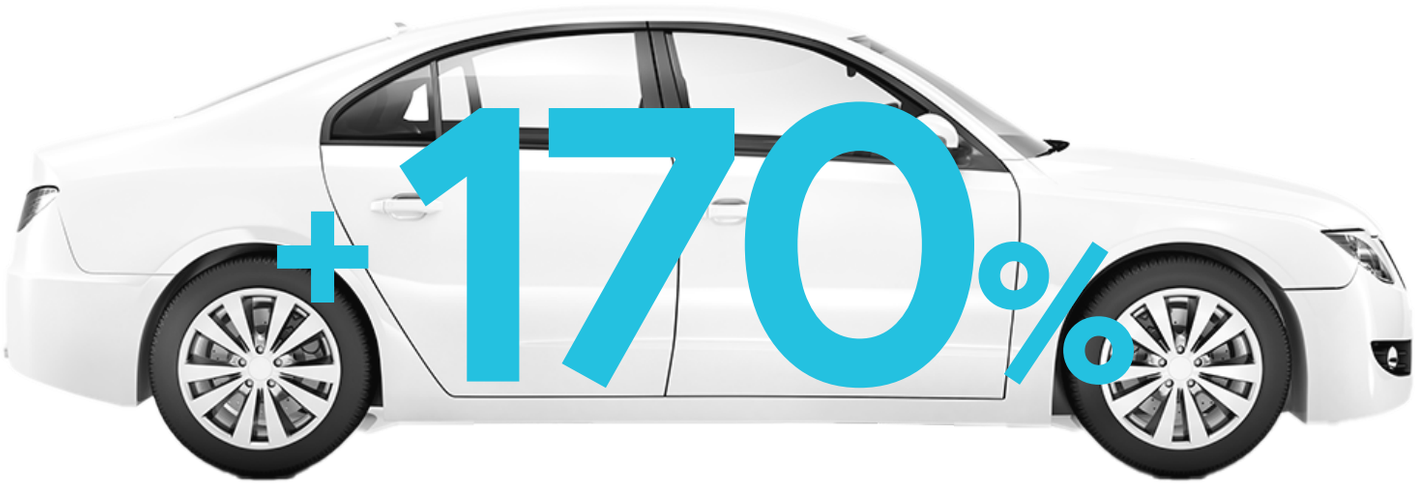
Cryptocurrency has continued to be of high search interest in Hong Kong, with up to 250% growth. In particular, search interest in bitcoin has risen by 210%.

+20%

Pakistan, the Philippines, New Zealand, and Singapore saw more than 20% growth in search interest in investments like **how to invest**, **where to invest,** and **recommendations for small investments.**



In some countries like Vietnam, where more rural users are coming online, we see an increase in more nascent search interest related to investments like chứng khoán là gì (what is stock).



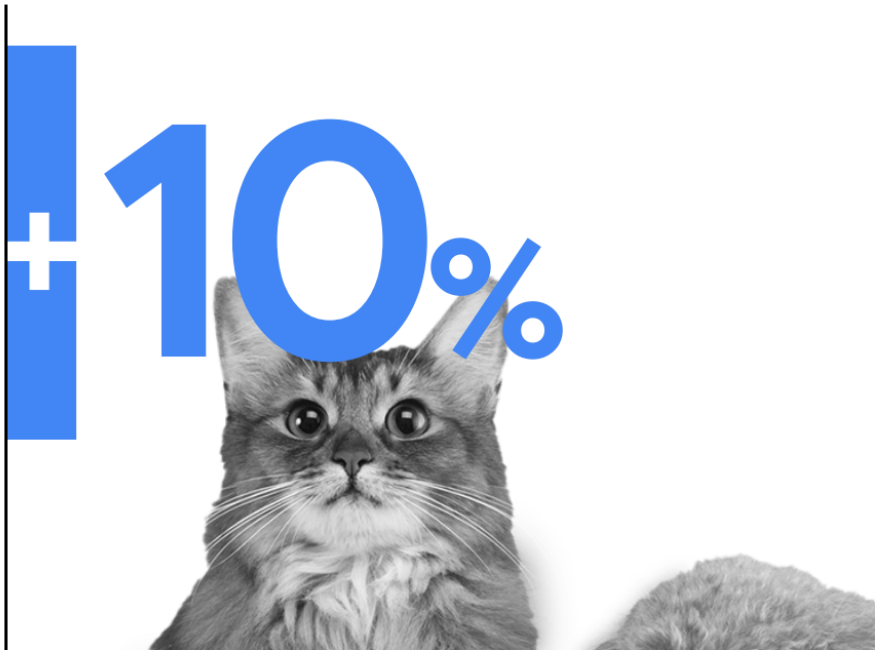
In Singapore, search interest in car sharing (+170%) is emerging, as people are looking for more economical ways to get around the high costs of owning a car.

Quality time with loved ones

People in APAC have placed more value on spending time with their families, and some even see it as more important than being financially secure or successful.[17] This is echoed in searches, with consumers looking for moments of quality time with their loved ones.

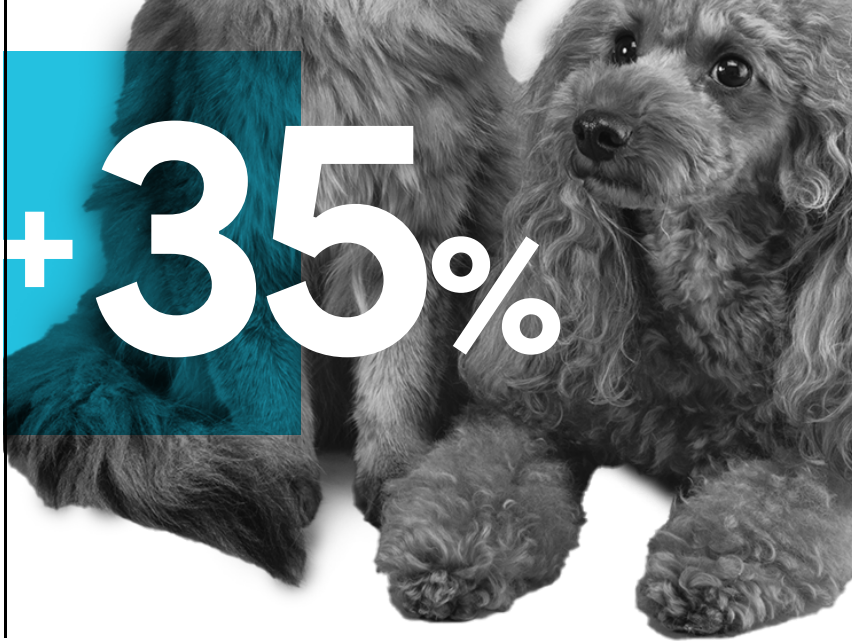
People are seeking to build stronger familial relationships. The Philippines saw 110% growth search interest in terms that include with family such as **quality time with family, relationship with family,** and **spend time with your family.** In Australia and New Zealand, search interest in **things to do with kids** near me grew by more than 70% and Indonesia saw a rise in search interest in **waktu berkualitas** (quality time).

In India, interest in searches containing with family grew by more than 10%, including searches like **hindi movies to watch with family** and **places to visit in Delhi with family.**



South Korea, India, Australia,

Singapore, Hong Kong, New Zealand, and Taiwan have seen more than 35% growth in search interest in pet friendly as people seek to have their furry family members join them on their staycations.



Self-care, introspection, and the reevaluation of lifestyle choices

Consumers today view wellness through a broader lens, valuing physical, emotional, and mental health. As people reevaluate their lifestyle choices, we see introspection and consideration for holistic wellness playing a bigger role in their decision-making processes.

Across APAC, there has been up to 70% growth in search interest

Evidence of the Great Resignation is showing across some countries in APAC as people reconsider their careers. Search interest in **resignation letter** has grown by more than 25% in Australia and New Zealand. India has seen an increase in search interest in **resignation letter due to personal reasons**, and in South Korea and Pakistan, people are looking for tips on **how to write a resignation letter**.

+170%

Across APAC, search interest in personality tests and myers-briggs is growing by up to 170%as people seek to understand themselves better.[19]

Countries like Singapore, India, Pakistan, New Zealand, South Korea, and India saw up to 30% growth in search interest related to wellness **including mental wellness, emotional wellness**, and **physical wellness.**

+60%

People in the Philippines are prioritizing **quality** over **price** as we see search interest in quality rising by +60%, while search interest in **cheap** shows a decline.

Search interest in vitamins had up to 35% growth across APAC including Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, India, Vietnam, Japan, and Indonesia. In the Philippines and Vietnam, we see 15% more searches for the health benefits or functions of certain products.

+130%

Across countries in APAC, we see up to 130% growth in interest in sports-related searches, including olahraga di rumah (sports at home) in Indonesia, and cycling in Singapore and Australia. Vietnam saw increased search interest in **tập thể dục** (exercising) and 140% growth in YouTube search interest in **bài tập yoga cho người mới bắt đầu** (yoga exercise for beginners).

+100%

Across the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia, search interest related to mental health grew by up to 100%.

MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

Your brand is back on the table: gain and retain

From reactive behaviors and short-term solutions, to a greater acceptance of our new blended lives, searches show that people are emerging from the pandemic with updated priorities. As people reevaluate their choices, **brands and businesses should also be updating how they show the value they offer,** not just externally to their customers, but also internally to their employees.

Simon Kahn
Vice President, Marketing for Google APAC

"The next decade will be defined by a state of accelerated disruption. In order to enable people in the region to achieve better, more equitable outcomes in the face of increasing disruptions, businesses need to stay curious and cultivate a desire to understand what works and, more importantly, what doesn't, to uncover and refine an understanding of users' true needs."

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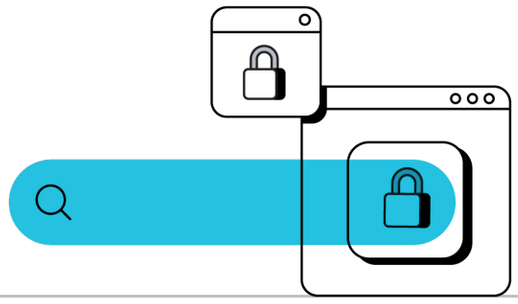
1 Ensure your brand makes the list as consumers reevaluate their options

Today, as shoppers look for the brands that best align with what they need and value, up to 75% are buying from newly discovered brands rather than familiar ones.[20] As consumers look to be empowered and confident about their purchase decisions, Search ranks as a top touchpoint for providing them with relevant and helpful information.

1

Tap into the power of Search and automation to grow your brand's discoverability.

Fifteen percent of queries every day are brand new searches.[21] By broadening your keyword match type to Broad Match with Smart Bidding, you're able to automatically adjust your campaigns to capture the different ways consumers are looking for your products, and act on new opportunities as they arise.



Hyundai Marine & Fire Insurance, a leader in South Korea's nonlife insurance industry, leveraged Broad Match to expand its generic Search keyword strategy. It successfully increased the discoverability of its website and offerings, unlocking +16% conversions at a -3% cost per conversion.

When consumers research, they don't always have a specific product in mind yet. Responsive Search Ads can put your product in the spotlight with personalized ads that are relevant to the shopper.

2

Create data-driven marketing cycles to keep up with evolving needs.

An adaptable advertising strategy allows you to act on what matters most to consumers in the moment, and adopt a test and learn approach for sustainable optimization.

Get inspired by APAC industry leaders, who share how an experimental approach helps their marketing strategies stay data-driven and agile, and turn uncertainty into business growth opportunities.

Rising Retail Categories and Google Trends show you what the world is searching for, both at a local and global level.

With the new Insights Page in Google Ads, you can forecast and capture demand with insights tailored to your ads business and identify product offering growth opportunities.

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2 Use direct-to-consumer strategies to own your brand presence and experiences

Consider owned, direct-to-consumer channels (a brand.com and app property) that can enable you to build a bespoke brand presence and experience, and showcase your brand values and consumer offerings without compromise. They also give you the freedom to experiment and evolve your platforms to make your brand stand out even more.

3 Don’t overlook your internal stakeholders

During times of reevaluation and change, attracting and retaining top talent becomes ever more critical to ensuring sustainable business growth.

1

Prioritize building a diverse and inclusive workforce that will not only help to attract and retain top talent, but also increase innovation and profitability.

2

Recognize the importance of purpose beyond pay.
Nurture your employees as internal stakeholders and representatives of your brand.

To encourage employees to find their unique purpose and build a workplace where people enjoy their work and are engaged, Unilever Sri Lanka ran a series of Discover Your Purpose workshops. The sessions combine e-learning with personal connections to challenge personal growth.

Sources:
All Google Search data points included in this report are from Google Trends, Sep 2019 - Aug 2020 vs. Sep 2020 - Aug 2021, unless otherwise indicated.

13. Article, CMI.
14. Edelman Data x Intelligence, Work Trend Index, 2021.
15. Accenture, Future of Work Study, 2021.
16. Google commissioned Ipsos COVID-19 tracker, AR, AU, BE, BR, CA, CL, CN, CO, DK, FI, FR, DE, IN, IT, JP, MX, NL, NO, PE, RU, ZA, KR, ES, SE, U.K., U.S., ~n=260-520 online consumers 18+ per market who will shop for the holiday season. Sept. 23, 2021–Sept. 26, 2021.
17. GWI, Wave Q2, 2021.
18. Google Trends, AU, BD, HK, IN, KR, NZ, PH, TH, TW, VN.
19. Google Trends, HK, MY, NZ, PH, PK, SG, TH, TW, VN.
20. Global Web Index Core, Sample Size by Country: All (n=3,919 internet users aged 16-64), ID (n=656), MY (n=651), PH (n=655), SG (n=650), TH (n=656), VN (n=651), April 2021.
21. Google Data, July 2019.