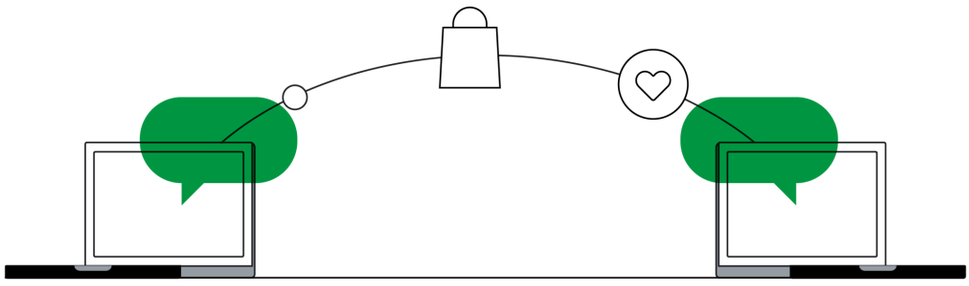
Bridging distances

3

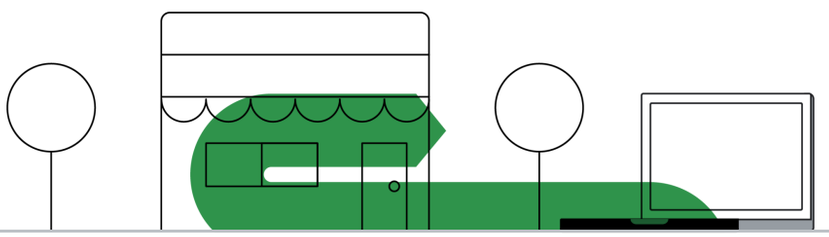
The pandemic kept countless people physically apart, and consumers quickly found ways to adapt. But in 2021, we saw the sense of separation deepen. As a result, consumers moved beyond finding brief moments of connection to finding new ways to express themselves and nurture deeper, more ongoing relationships, both online and offline.



As more COVID-19 variants emerge, it's clear that the pandemic isn't quite over yet. COVID-19 is still a top concern for people and consumers remain wary of being in close physical contact with others. In Indonesia, anxiety levels are at a "cautious but not worried" level.[9]

The concern around resuming in-person activities hasn't, however, overtaken basic human needs for personal connection and belonging. Regardless of physical distance, rising searches show people will continue to find new ways to connect, and they are increasingly open to using digital to do so.

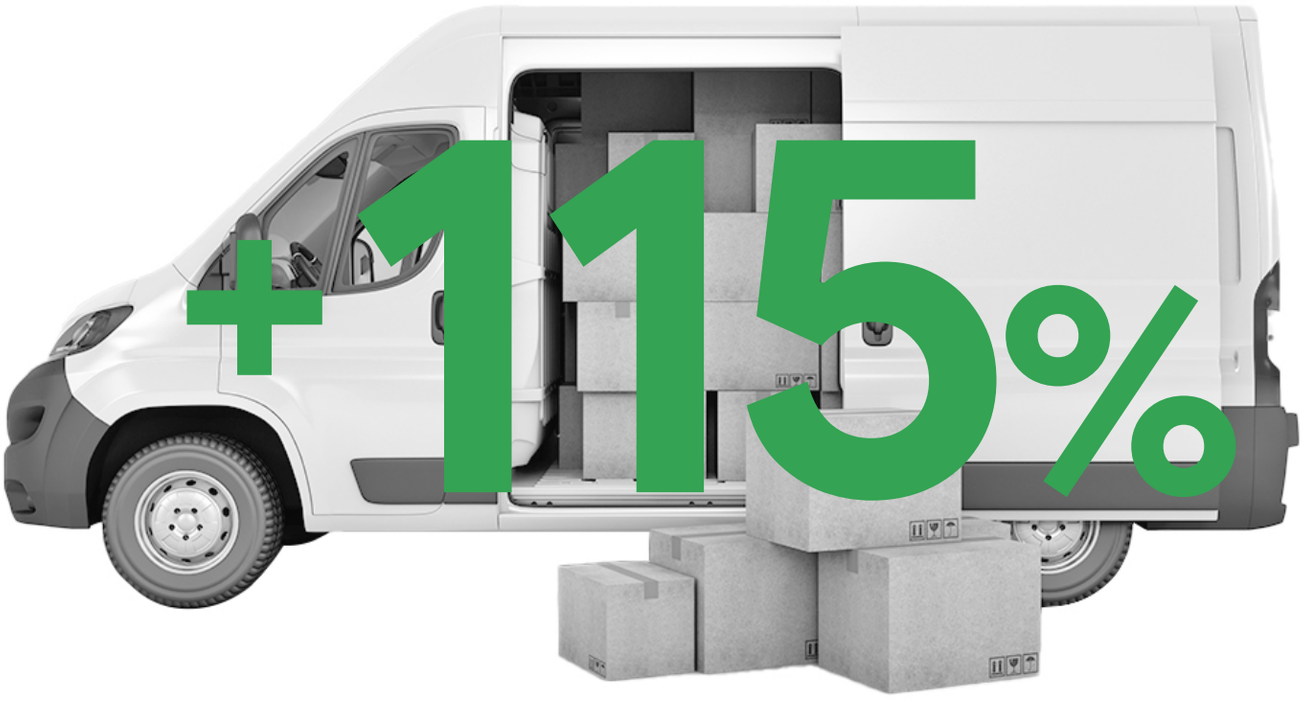
Now that people are increasingly embracing an omnichannel reality, is your channel strategy designed to reach them in personal ways? More importantly, what can you do as a brand to help facilitate better, deeper, and more meaningful relationships for your consumers?



SEARCHES

Online expressions of affection

Love languages are keeping up with the changing times. People are searching for ways to show affection without in-person interactions.



Search interest in express courier services has grown by 115% as Indonesians look for ways to bridge physical distances.

In Indonesia, search interest in gift box grew by 65% as sending gifts became the new way of showing care to friends and family.

Digital for personal connection and entertainment

Technology is enabling people to connect and have fun in innovative ways, sparking interest in virtual versions of activities such as group meals, escape rooms, and concerts.

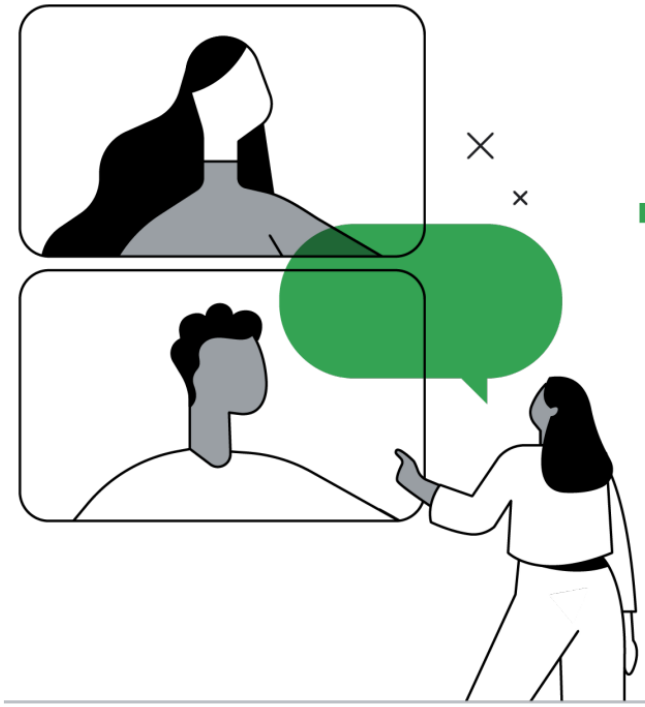
Indonesians are looking for ways to enjoy their offline hobbies online. There's been

+250%

growth in search interest in escape room online

+200%

Search interest on YouTube for konser virtual (virtual concert) grew by 200%.



+30%

While in-person events dwindled, search interest in online conference grew by 30%.

MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

The emotional value of digital

3

Faced with physical distancing caused by the pandemic, people have adapted how they express themselves and increased their reliance on digital for building personal connections.

As a result, brands that merely use digital as a functional channel are missing out on an opportunity to build and nurture deeper relationships with their customers, where both sides stand to gain and grow through emotional connection.

Harvard Business Review
An Emotional Connection Matters More Than Customer Satisfaction

"Emotionally connected customers buy more of your products and services, visit you more often, exhibit less price sensitivity, pay more attention to your communications, follow your advice, and recommend you more — everything you hope their experience with you will cause them to do."

1 Build customer love and loyalty by consistently delivering at each touchpoint

Research shows how the consumer's path to purchase is driven by emotions. At each and every touchpoint, shoppers want to feel reassured and empowered, and will reward brands that help them navigate the "messy middle."

Indonesia, Electronics, Gen Z[10]

"Having gone through all the info on Google Search first before purchase makes you feel that you have knowledge and you have confirmed that the purchase is right for you. You have confidence that you made the right decision."

Provide timely, accurate, and relevant information across your organic and paid communication channels to stay top of mind for consumers during the decision-making process.

2 Tap into the value of virtual to augment real world experiences

Not everyone prefers in-person experiences, especially during a pandemic. Consider the value of virtual channels as a means of complementing or augmenting physical experiences, allowing the freedom of choice between online or offline events.

When it comes to beauty and personal care products, an in-store experience is key to influencing purchase decisions. L'Oréal Indonesia has been one of the industry pioneer in bringing this experience to life digitally, using virtual reality.

L'Oreal first launched a Virtual Try On feature that let customers virtually test out the brand's makeup and hair products in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

It has since continued to innovate and just recently launched two new features — L'Oréal's Skin Genius and Garnier's Skin Coach — that use skin recognition technology to offer customers an analysis of their skin health and conditions. These innovations really show how brands can adapt to the changing nature of consumer behavior by levelling up customer experience in the digital world.

3 Invest in ad creatives that can connect and inspire

Your advertising efforts can be a key lever to build emotional connection and simultaneously drive campaign performance. In fact, creative is the dominant ROI driver across all media platforms, and especially so on digital.

To bring your brand and products to life, ensure your ads showcase how your brand can help people in their everyday life in an authentic way. Explore creative best practices to unlock better performance across Google Ads solutions.

Astra Honda Motor (AHM), a leading player in Indonesia's motorcycle market, wanted to understand purchase intent of their website visitors who range from first-time buyers to high-end sports & luxury buyers.

Using Performance Max to run different creatives and headlines across text, display, and video assets to target customer segmentation, the campaign drove **2.2X more conversion at 19% lower cost.**

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

9. Kantar, “COVID-19 pulse: How are Indonesians feeling?”, December 2021
10. Google/Kantar/Quantum, “Emotional Value of Search”, October 2021