

Think with Google

YEAR IN SEARCH 2022



Look back to move your marketing forward

When life hands out lemons, people in Hong Kong no longer just search for ways to make lemonade. Having weathered three years of disruptive changes, they're seeking to live life on their own terms and looking to be in control of their identities, lifestyles, and what they value.

We've noticed this shift as we analyze billions of searches every year to help marketers uncover meaningful audience insights.

INTRO

Across APAC, searches in 2022 point to how people are standing their ground amid sustained waves of uncertainty. With open minds, quick thinking, and digital savvy, they're seeking out authentic, fulfilling ways of living, working, and being that suit them, and not simply going with what life serves up.

We've identified three key insights about people in Hong Kong based on what's top of mind for them as they search. In this report, we dive into the insights, what they mean for your brand, and how you can strengthen your marketing strategy for the year ahead.

Year in
Search 2022

THEME 1



Soul searching

SOUL SEARCHING

After three years of uncertainty, people in Hong Kong are moving past merely coping or going with the flow. They're reenvisioning who they can be, on their own terms. When border restrictions and health concerns limit people to their backyards, **they're taking the opportunity to dig deep into local traditions while also connecting with global cultures from home.**

SOUL SEARCHING

People are also looking to be their most full and authentic selves. Following on the heels of the Great Resignation, the Great Exhaustion is sweeping across the world, prompting people to focus more on their well-being, and upskilling themselves to land better opportunities. They're also embracing their individuality and searching with more specificity to satisfy their distinct needs and preferences.

Soul searching

1.1

Cultural Identity

CULTURAL IDENTITY



Globally connected, locally focused.

We're seeing a paradoxical dissonance in people's searches: They desire to be plugged into global culture, but they're also celebrating what makes Hong Kong's traditions unique. This dynamic duality points to the increasing complexity of their identities as global citizens and proud denizens.



With travel restrictions on, people focused inward, generating interest in local culture and traditions.

Search interest for terms containing **museum** grew over 10%.

Search interest for terms containing

文化 (culture) grew over 30%.



🔍 裙褂



+40%

Search interest for terms containing
“裙褂” (chinese wedding gown)
grew over 40%.

1.2

Personal Identity

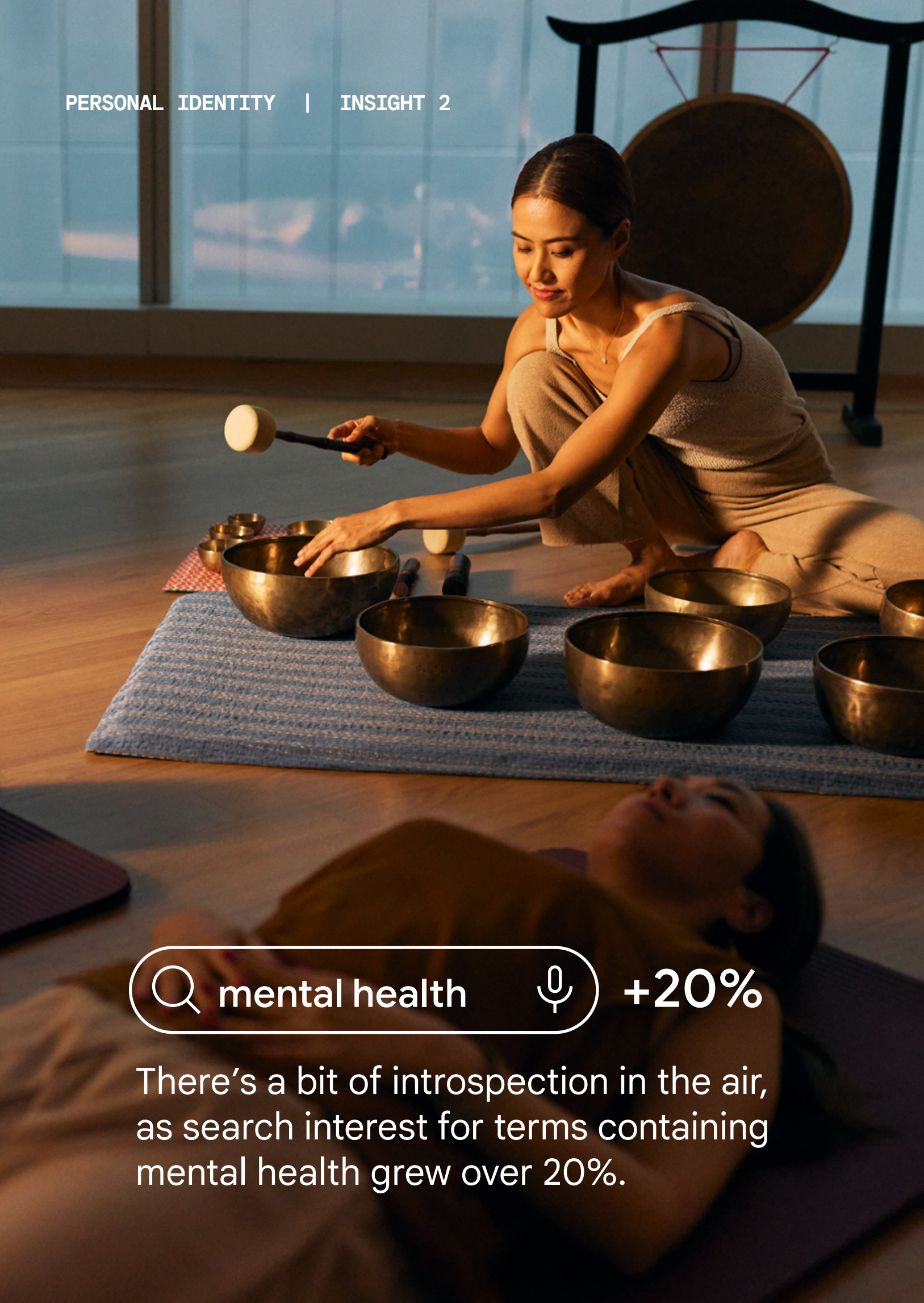
Refined searches.

People are searching with greater specificity as they become more aware of their distinctive identities. Whether it's looking for "unisex perfume" (as compared with just "perfume") or "heart shape face hairstyle male" (as compared with "male hairstyle" simply), people's searches reflect their evolving sense of self.



Taking better care of themselves.

Searches for various forms of self-care are also on the rise, including ways to avoid burnout. Indeed, 42% in Hong Kong say they plan to spend more on self-improvement, including wellness, health and fitness, and education.¹

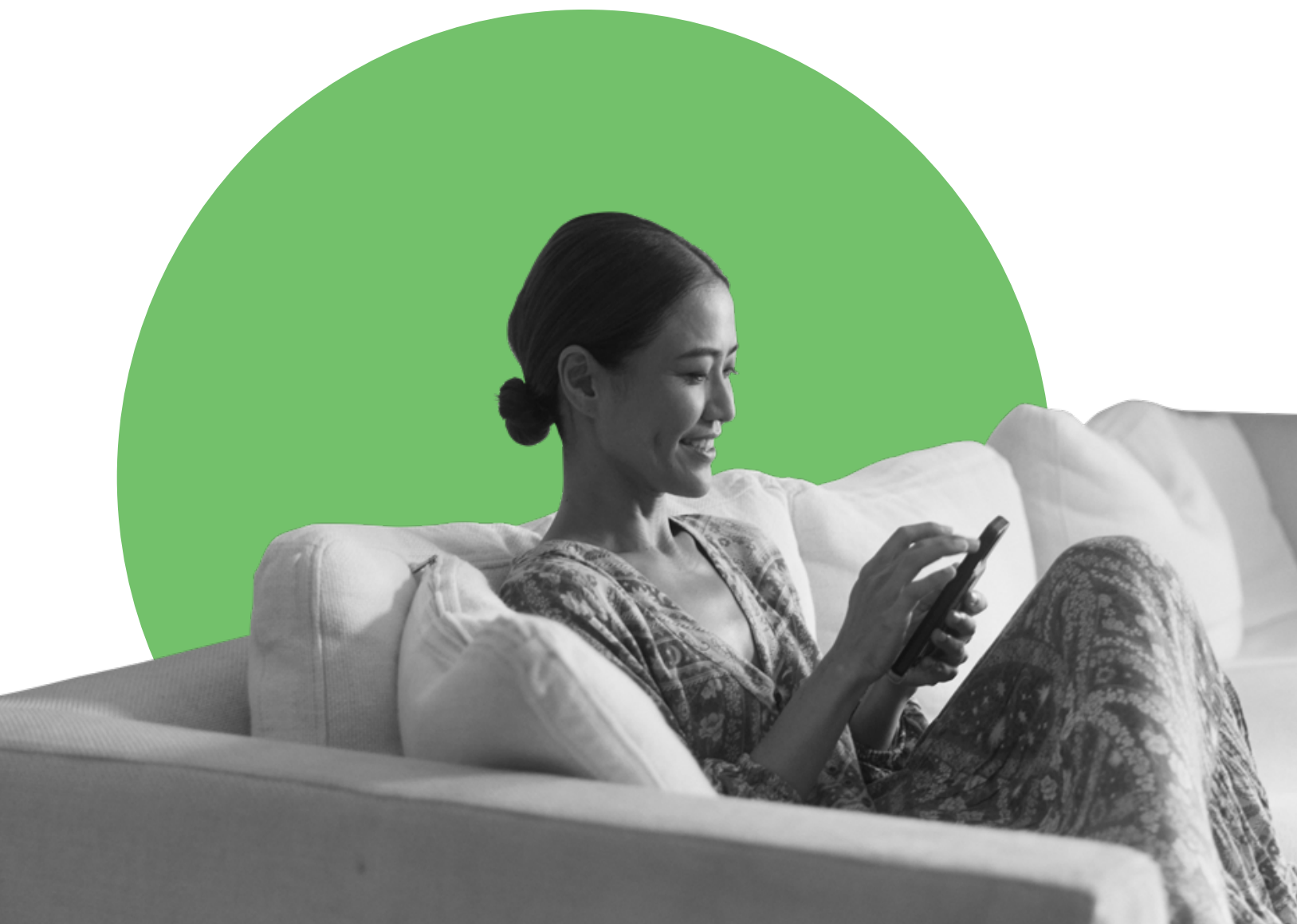


🔍 mental health 🎤 +20%

There's a bit of introspection in the air, as search interest for terms containing mental health grew over 20%.

Embracing diverse identities.

More than ever, people are embracing diverse lifestyles, with Gen Z leading the way in standing up for their personal brand and crafting their own identities.





As people in Hong Kong look to Search to become more aware, search interest for terms containing **男女平等** (gender equality) grew over 30%.

While search interest for terms containing **lgbtq** grew over 40%.

1.3

Professional Identity

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY



Harmony between work and home life.

Work and home life continue to be parts of a whole but people are now seeking to find a harmony between the two, even if it means resigning from their jobs. Others are seeking more flexible work arrangements, with 77% of workers saying they value remote work, and 42% saying they would refuse a job if they couldn't work from home.²





Workers are feeling emboldened to explore other styles of working. Search interest for terms containing **wfh** grew over 50%.

While search interest for terms containing **slasher** grew over 60%.

Upskilling and entrepreneurship.

Just as people are rethinking their work life, they're also expanding their skills with training, looking for more flexible work, and considering striking out on their own.



+110%

People are seeking better work opportunities. Search interest for terms containing **筍工** (ideal job) grew over 110%.



Marketing implications

01

Adopt inclusive marketing strategies as a mindset, not a checkbox.

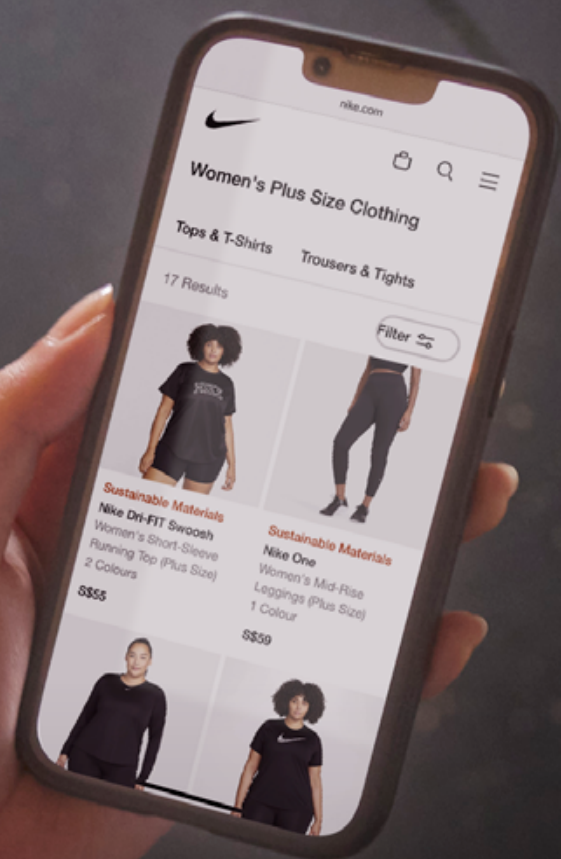
Committing to diversity, equity, and inclusion needs to be a constant responsibility that is embedded into every aspect of your brand campaigns, from conception to execution, and beyond. For marketing to feel truly inclusive and accessible, brands must understand and regard people holistically, across the full spectrum of what makes up their identity, including gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and more.

One way to do this is through nuanced narratives that reflect intersectionality in your campaign messages. Brands that portray women and underrepresented groups positively have greater influence on customer intent.

For more tips, check out [Think with Google's inclusive marketing best practices](#).

1 in 3

HK consumers agree that it is significantly more important to purchase from a brand that is involved in the community.³



Brand Example

Nike created an inclusive shopping experience for women, showcasing fitness clothing for bodies of all shapes and sizes. Along with a plus-size section on its website, it introduced mannequins of different shapes and sizes at its brick-and-mortar stores. By better representing real people, it helped more people see themselves as Nike athletes, fostering a deeper brand connection.

02

Think visually beyond text search

Recent innovations in Search are helping consumers find what they're looking for in more natural and intuitive ways. As people increasingly search with images and text together, think about investing in compelling image assets to bring your ads to life with diverse representation of people & products. This makes it easy for people to see relevant visuals of your products and services, and take action, especially on mobile.

In fact, advertisers see a 10% increase in click-through rate when image extensions show with their mobile Search ads.⁴

THEME 2



Value hunting

VALUE HUNTING

As inflation rises, people are reassessing the cost of things. They're looking at not only the sticker price but also what we consider to be of value. For instance, **people are being more pragmatic and focusing on the essentials, with 40% of consumers making fewer impulse purchases and prioritizing needs over wants.**⁵ Along the way, people are discovering that wallet-friendly options like second-hand clothing don't just save money; they can also help to save the environment.

VALUE HUNTING

Trust in a brand plays a significant part in people's calculations. They're searching for clear indications of whether a brand provides quality service and reliable products. And they're looking for the one that offers the best deal overall rather than the cheapest price. It's why searches for **most popular** are higher than those for **most affordable**.⁶

Value hunting

Source: 6. Google Trends, Worldwide, Shopping category, Oct 5, 2021-Oct 5, 2022.

2.1

Seeking Value and Knowledge



People are more carefully weighing their buying options.

As costs rise, people are carefully considering how and when they spend, seizing the right moment for the best deals. Globally, search interest for **compared to** remains consistently high,⁷ and 73% of shoppers in Southeast Asia are shifting budgets from wants to needs.⁸

Source: 7. Google Trends, Worldwide, July 5, 2022-Oct 5, 2022.

8. Google Trends, Worldwide, Shopping category, Oct 5, 2021-Oct 5, 2022.

Value shopping is on the rise in Hong Kong. Search interest for terms containing 隱世 (hidden gem) grew over 20%.

While search interest for terms containing cp值 (value for money) grew over 60%.



Seeking greater economic literacy.

As the global economy remains uncertain, people are looking for information to increase their financial and economic literacy, from learning about the causes of rising prices to emerging investment trends, to make decisions that count.



Search interest for “interest rate” grew over 30%.

Search interest for terms containing
tax loan grew over 90%.

+90%

2.2

Saving Money and the Planet

Inflation and sustainability are going hand-in-hand in forming an unexpected alliance.

People are discovering that purchases which support sustainability, such as electric cars, can help them be savvier about their spending, especially when petrol prices rise.

1 in 2

Hong Kong consumers have stopped buying certain products and services because of their impact on the environment or society.⁹

People are more environmentally conscious, and are making choices to promote the planet's well-being. Search interest for terms containing **esg** grew over 70%.

Search interest for terms containing **碳中和** (carbon neutral) grew over 90%.

+70%

+90%

+30%

Search interest for terms containing **sustainability** grew over 30%.

2.3

**Trusted
Brands
Above
All Else**

As economic concerns mount, consumer trust remains ever more imperative for brands.



Shoppers enter the messy middle with doubt and skepticism, and they're scrutinizing brands and products for lasting quality as they search for daily necessities. Hong Kong consumers in particular, are open to purchasing new brands in the market, and two of the top five brand choice drivers — quality brands and brands that understand consumer needs — are key factors for building brand loyalty.¹⁰

84%

want to trust in the brand before purchasing.¹¹

Source: 10. Google/Kantar, Hong Kong, Digital and emotions: Building blocks for sustainable profitability, n=1,514, Consumers 18+, Aug. 2022. 11. Google commissioned Kantar/Quantum Report: "Emotional Value of Search 2022". E4. To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? Base: Those who have purchased or intend to purchase from the vertical within 12 months IN, ID, VN, TH, AU, All verticals n=6002.



Brand trust is top of mind,
as search interest for
terms containing 好評
(good ratings) grew
over 20%.

+20%



01

Use AI-powered ad solutions to stay nimble as trends shift.

To keep pace with how people are navigating shifts in prices, your brand can use AI-driven ads to immediately deliver the best deals to people as they search for affordable – and trusted – options.

Adopt a “tried-and-new” approach that blends traditional Search best practices with Google’s AI-powered products.

For example, combining value-based bidding with broad match keywords will help your brand show up in new, high-performing queries.

80%

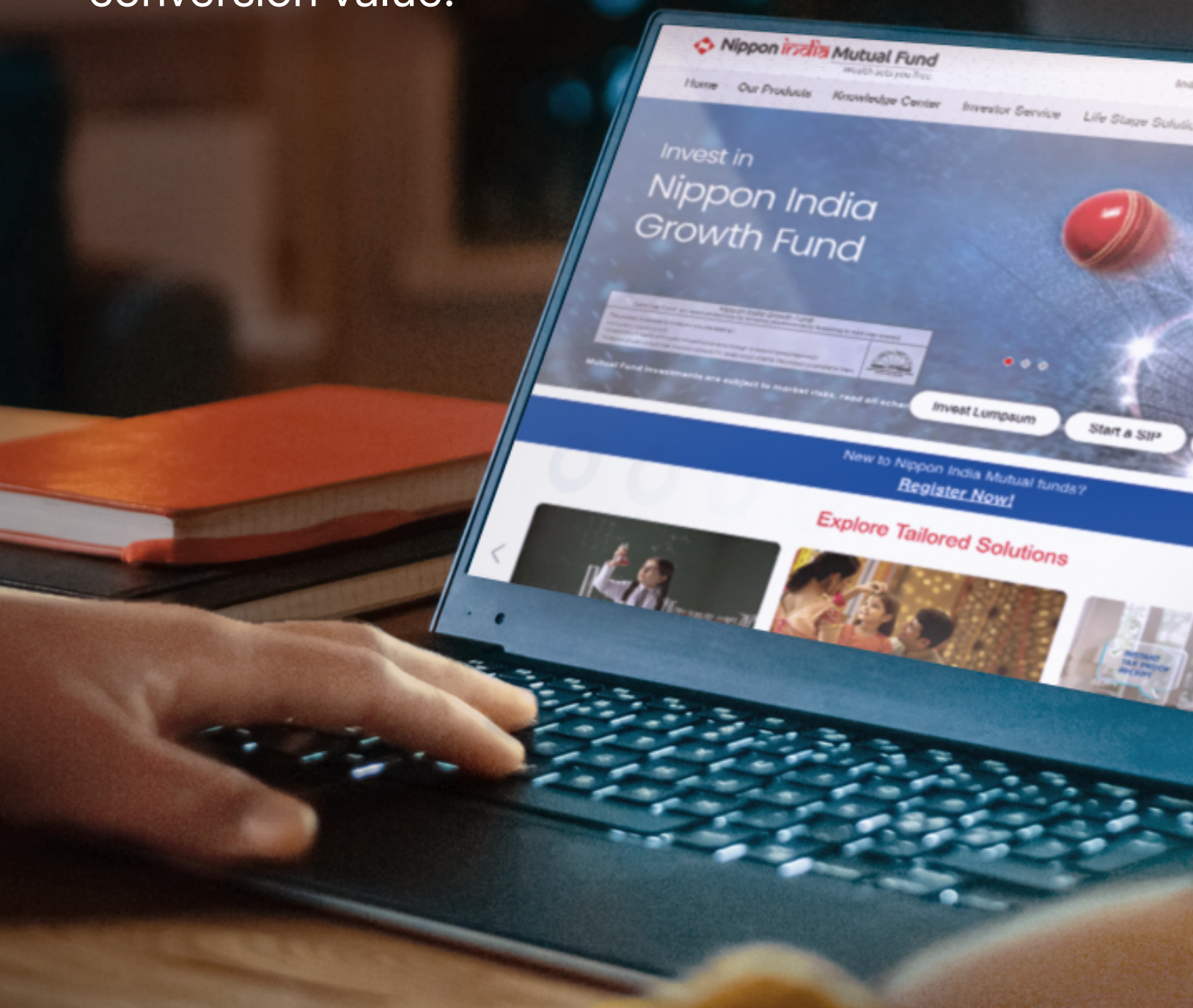
of Google advertisers around the world now use automated bidding to unlock Search's full potential.¹²



Source: 12. Google Internal Data, Global, March 16, 2021 to April 12, 2021.

Brand Example

Nippon India Mutual Fund ran a fully automated Search campaign with Target ROAS (return on ad spend) and broad match to reach more high-value customers with different transaction values, achieving a 79% jump in ROAS and a 164% higher conversion value.



02

Be transparent in your sustainable efforts.

Today, environmental issues have become the second-most pressing issue among people in SEA.¹³ Consumers are taking note of this more than ever before, prioritizing their search for green brands. Brands poised to thrive are those that innovate to minimize their environmental impact while strengthening credibility by offering full transparency about their sustainability efforts.

Brand Example

Malaysian social enterprise **Fugeelah** created limited-edition bags made from upcycled fabrics, while Filipino e-wallet provider **GCash** offered to plant trees in exchange for points earned when its users made cashless transactions or took other green-forward actions. In the blooming second-hand clothing market, **Lululemon** also implemented a buyback initiative, where customers can trade in older goods and earn credits toward new sustainable purchases.





THEME 3



Finding joy

In the face of constant waves of disruption, people are realizing that they don't want to put their lives on hold any longer. **While uncertainty persists, they're no longer letting it stop them from living their best lives,** whether it's indulging in a massage or attending 2022's Formula 1 Grand Prix. Instead, they're finding ways to enjoy life's little luxuries, even if it means making concessions or spending extra time searching for better deals.

FINDING JOY

People have also merged their online and offline lives into a continuum, with people wholeheartedly embracing the convenience of digital services and the unique magic of offline experiences. As Southeast Asia's digital economy approaches \$200 billion, we see rising searches in digital services like telehealth and instant delivery. At the same time, people are going offline in bigger ways as compared with previous years: Live concerts are back on the calendar, and luxury experiences like Michelin-starred dining are back on the menu.

Finding joy

3.1

Little Luxuries and Cheap Thrills

LITTLE LUXURIES AND CHEAP THRILLS



People care about value but aren't ready to give up the little luxuries in life.

They're searching for ways to fit expensive purchases into their budget. Some may wait to invest in big ticket items, while others seek cheap thrills, with 80% of Southeast Asian shoppers looking for more affordable ways to treat themselves.¹⁴

People are looking to indulge themselves, search interest for terms containing **brand new** grew over 10%.

Search interest for terms containing **附近** (near by) grew over 60%, as people looked for fast and more convenient options.

+10%

+60%



+100%

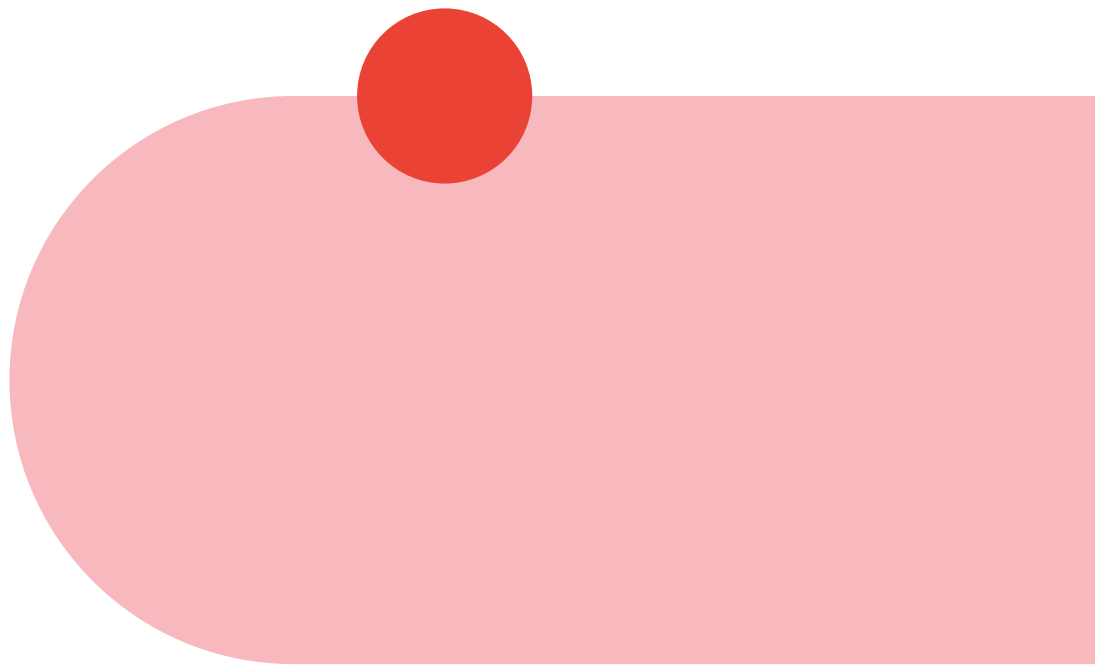
Search interest for terms containing
buy now pay later grew over 100%.

3.2

**Travel
Resumed,
Even if it's
Budget**

In 2022, demand for travel surpassed 2019's pre-pandemic levels across most of APAC.¹⁵

75% of people say they want to travel as much as possible in the near future, and 29% of Southeast Asian shoppers say they're reluctant to put off a long-awaited trip.¹⁶ They're also open to changing their daily habits to save up for big travel purchases.



Source: 15. Internal Google Search data for air and accommodation-related queries; Excludes queries with no specified destination 16. Google-Kantar Shopper Pulse SEA, Aug 2022. SEA n=5000, ID n=1000, SG n=1000, TH n=1000, VN n=1000, PH n=1000.

16. Google-Kantar Shopper Pulse SEA, Aug 2022. SEA n=5000, ID n=1000, SG n=1000, TH n=1000, VN n=1000, PH n=1000

As people plan their vacations, search interest for terms containing **旅遊保險** (travel insurance) grew over 80%.

Search interest for terms containing **日本旅遊** (traveling in Japan) grew over 90%.

TRAVEL RESUMED, EVEN IF IT'S BUDGET | INSIGHT 1

+130%

Search interest for terms containing
new hotels grew over 130%.

Travel preferences are generational.

Millennials are more likely to splurge and treat themselves, with 1 in 5 searching for top-of-range vacation options, and 3 in 10 opting for premium-level travel products and experiences. Among Baby Boomers, 57% say value is important when planning travel, and 50% say that they want flexible options for free cancellation or rebooking.¹⁷

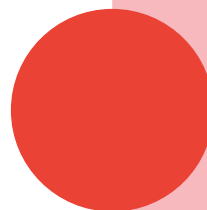


3.3

Using Online
to Simplify
the Offline

People are increasingly savvy about which channels they use to optimize their experiences.

They're using digital services in bigger ways than ever before to make their lives easier, and investing the time they save to enjoy the offline experiences that matter to them.



People are exploring omnichannel shopping experiences. Search interest for terms containing **cake delivery** grew over 10%.

Search interest for terms containing **網上購物** (online shopping) grew over 40%.



Search interest for terms containing **party dress** grew over 50%.

Search interest for terms containing **二維碼** (qr code) grew over 100%.

USING ONLINE TO SIMPLIFY THE OFFLINE | INSIGHT 1



Marketing implications

01

Respond to consumer demand in real time.

These Search trends give us a sense of what matters to people in the moment; how they're feeling and what they're looking for. Use the Google Ads [Insights page](#) to identify new and changing consumer demand — and respond quickly, including in real-time. The data shows how search behavior is shifting in the moment and can be tailored to individual business preferences, such as location and language.

02

Rethink online and offline boundaries to meet your shoppers wherever they are.

Today's customers are living — and shopping — in a channel-less world, making a frictionless omnichannel strategy more important than ever. Globally, search interest for **in-store** nearly tripled since the beginning of 2022.¹⁸ At the same time, 90% of APAC consumers expect retailers to sell their products online.¹⁹

Use **Performance Max campaigns** to promote your products or services across all of Google's advertising channels and inventory by creating one easy-to-manage campaign.

Source: 18. Google Trends, Worldwide, Shopping Category, Jan 1, 2022–Nov 3, 2022.

19. Google-commissioned Ipsos COVID-19 tracker, AU, BR, CA, CN, FR, DE, IN, IT, JP, MX, RU, ZA, KR, ES, U.K., and U.S., n=500–1,000 online consumers 18+ per market, Dec. 2–5, 2021.

Brand Example

Nespresso wanted to increase online sales and used Performance Max campaigns to get in front of people searching online for ways to enjoy a cafe experience at home. By leveraging Google's AI-powered solution, Nespresso used the most relevant creative assets to reach shoppers most likely to convert, improving conversions by 55% and reducing cost per action by 3%.

The marketing tips that we've shared here will help you unlock consumer trends in Hong Kong and find business growth through Search and marketing innovations. We'll continue to share more of such important consumer trends and marketing strategies throughout the year on [Think with Google](#), so stay subscribed for the latest insights.

All Google Search data points included in this report are from Google Trends, Sept 2021 - Sept 2022 versus year over year, unless otherwise indicated.

Look back
to move
our marketi
forward

Think with 

**YEAR IN
SEARCH
2022**