

Think with Google

YEAR IN SEARCH 2022



MALAYSIA

INTRO

Look back to move your marketing forward

When life hands out lemons, Malaysians 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

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

We've identified three key insights about Malaysians 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, Malaysians are moving past merely coping or going with the flow. They're reenvisioning who they are, on their own terms. When border restrictions limit people to their own backyards, they're taking the opportunity to reconnect with their local roots, while also connecting with global cultures beyond their own.

SOUL SEARCHING

People in Malaysia are also asking themselves how they can 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 Malaysian traditions unique.

This dynamic duality points to the increasing complexity of their identities as global citizens and proud denizens.



Malaysians want to reconnect with their culture, with search interest for terms containing **local food** growing by over 90%.





🔍 kuda kepang 🎤 +30%

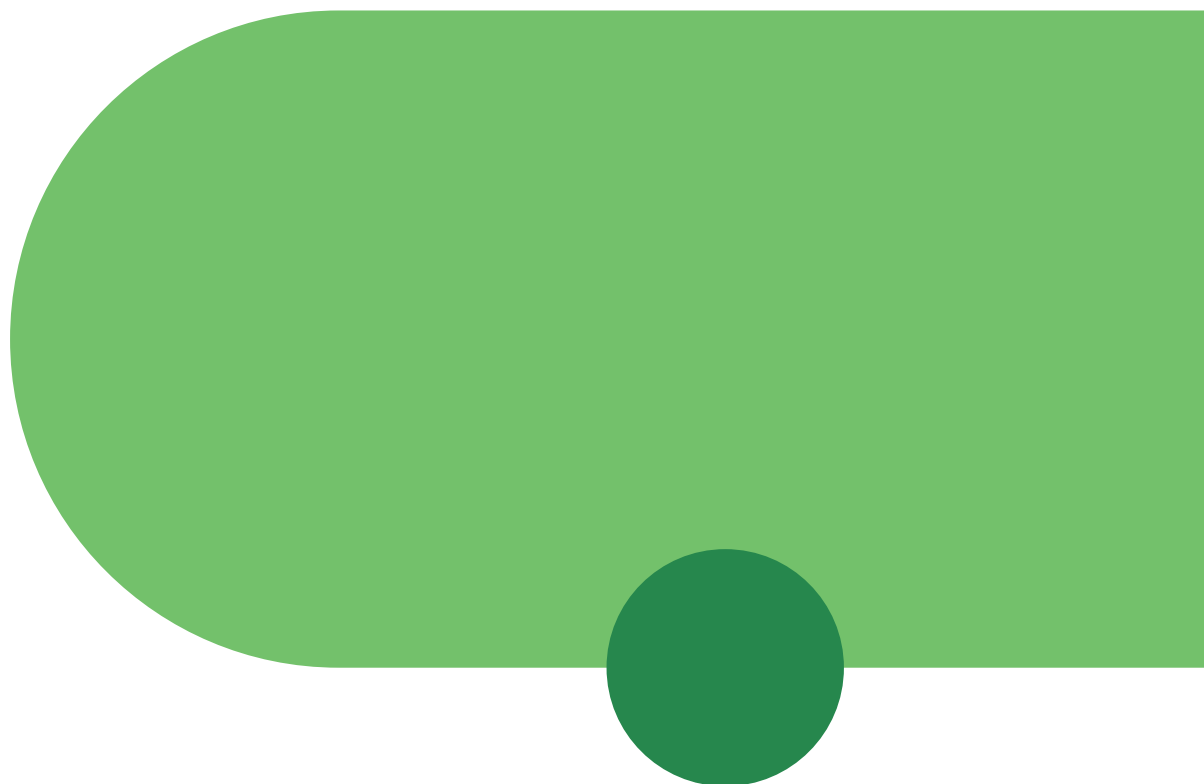
Search interest for terms containing “kuda kepang” (a type of traditional dance) grew over 30% in Malaysia.

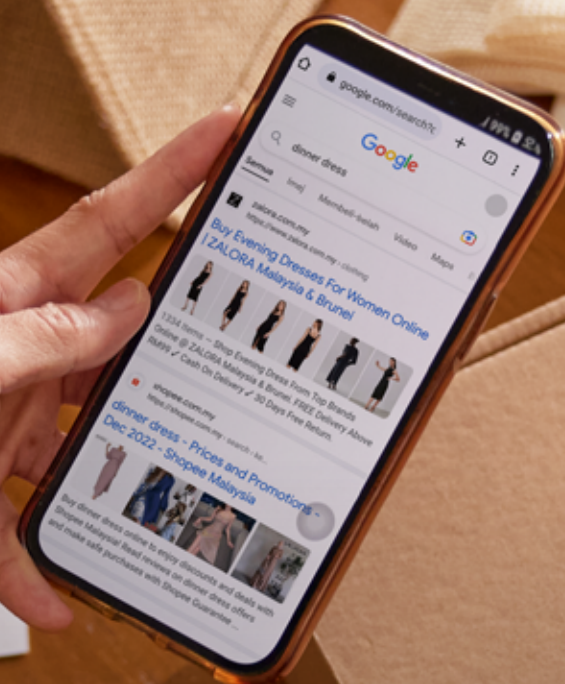
1.2

Personal Identity

Refined searches.

Malaysians 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 "glasses for face shape" (as compared with simply "glasses"), people's searches reflect their evolving sense of self.






Malaysians' evolved sense of self is being reflected in the way they dress, with search interest for terms containing **unisex** growing by over 20%.

Similarly, search interest for terms containing **dinner dress** grew over 130%.

Taking better care of themselves.

Searches for various forms of self-care are also on the rise, including ways to avoid burnout. Indeed, some 23% of people in Southeast Asia say they plan to spend more on self-improvement, including wellness, health and fitness, and education.¹



Search interest for terms containing **mental health** grew over 50% in Malaysia.

Search interest for
terms containing
how to handle stress
also grew over 100%.

+1000%



Embracing diverse identities.

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

As Malaysians look to design their distinctive identities, interest for terms containing **how to be different** grew over 90%.

While search interest for terms containing **gender equality** grew over 50%.



1.3

Professional Identity

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY



Harmony between work and home life.

Work and home life continue to be parts of a whole but Malaysians are now seeking to find harmony between the two, even if it means resigning from their current jobs.

Some 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



Search interest for terms containing **great resignation** grew over 250%.

People in Malaysia also explored their value in the job market as search interest for **negotiate salary** grew over 140%.

Malaysians are looking for a more sustainable work life, with search interest for terms containing **work life balance** growing over 30%.

+30%

Upskilling and entrepreneurship.

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



Search interest for terms containing
“hybrid learning” grew over 40%.

People in Malaysia
are thinking of the
next big thing, with
over 50% increase
in search interest
for terms containing
entrepreneurship .

+50%



PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY



Marketing implications

01

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

Commit to diversity, equity and inclusion as a constant responsibility, and embed them 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 messages. Brands that portray women and underrepresented groups positively have greater influence on customer intent.

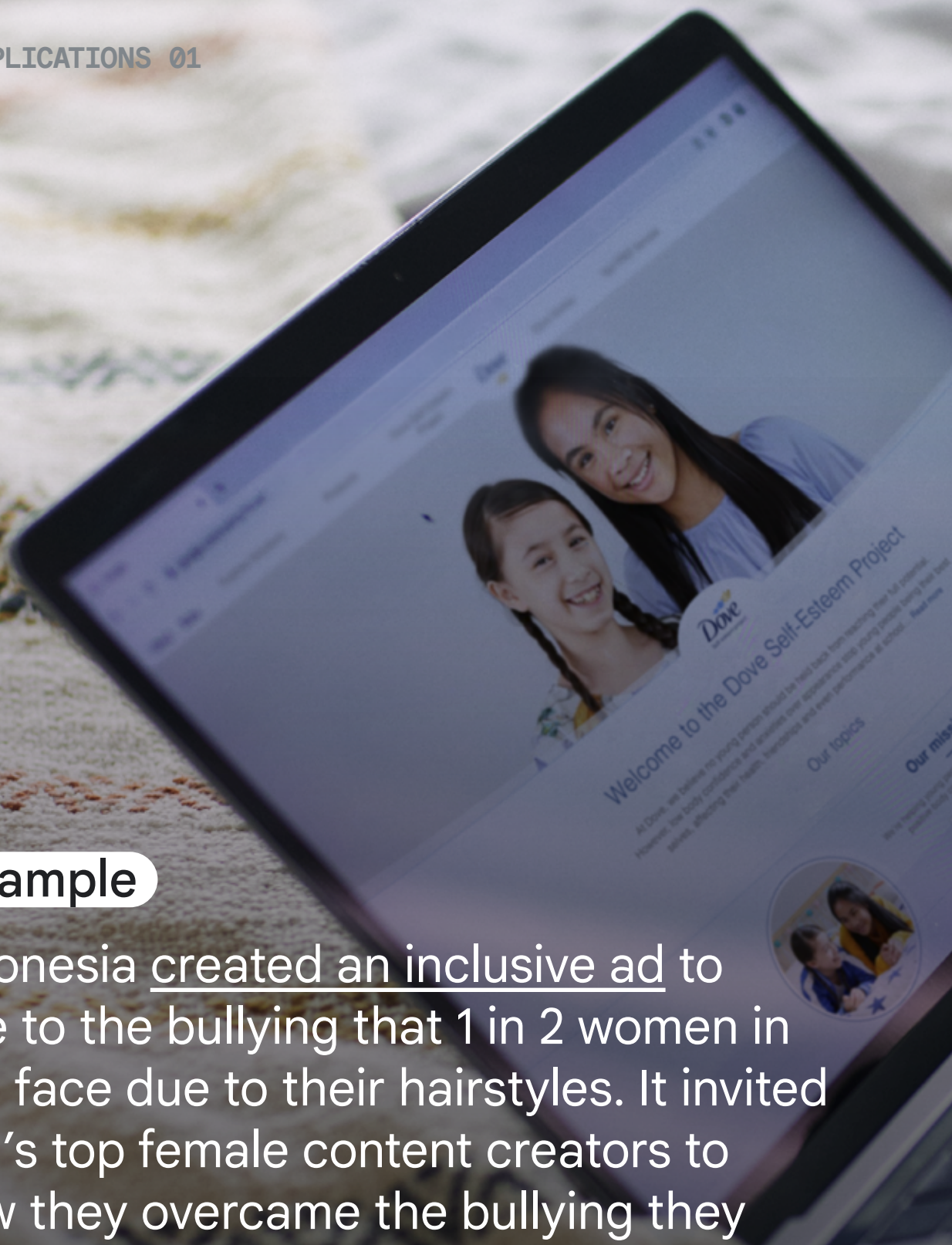
For more tips, check out [Think with Google's inclusive marketing best practices](#).

+80%

of Gen Zers in APAC would pay more for a product if the brand supports an issue they care about.³

Brand Example

Dove Indonesia created an inclusive ad to give voice to the bullying that 1 in 2 women in Indonesia face due to their hairstyles. It invited Indonesia's top female content creators to share how they overcame the bullying they faced, and empower millennial and Gen Z audiences to feel confident, regardless of their hairstyle. Its brand power score among this hard-to-reach group of audiences grew significantly by 30 points.



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 and products. This makes it easy for people to see relevant visuals of your products and services, and act, especially on mobile.

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

THEME 2



Value hunting

As inflation rises, Malaysians are reassessing the cost of things. They're looking at not only the sticker price but also what they consider to be of value, with **40% of consumers making fewer impulse purchases and prioritizing needs over wants.**⁵ Along the way, people in Malaysia 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 **best quality** 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

SEEKING VALUE AND KNOWLEDGE



People are more carefully weighing their buying options.

As costs rise, people in Malaysia 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.

Malaysians are being more mindful in their purchases, with search interest for terms containing **which one** growing over 40%.

Search interest for terms containing **best deal** grew over 60%.

+40%

+60%



Seeking greater economic literacy.

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



Search interest for terms containing "interest rate" grew over 30%.



+220%

With the cost of living continuing to rise, search interest for terms containing **apa itu inflasi** (what is inflation) grew over 220% in Malaysia.

2.2

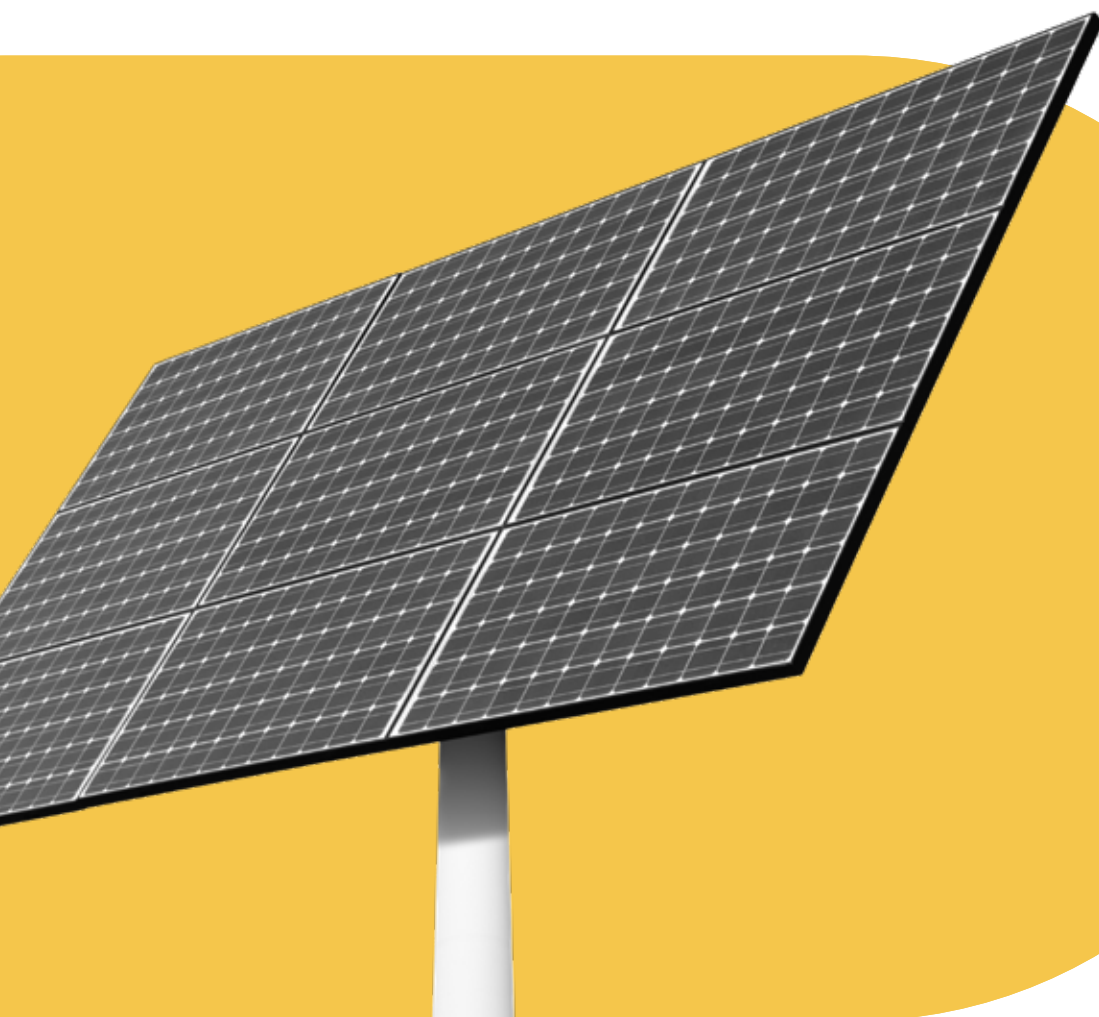
Saving Money and the Planet

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

People in Malaysia are discovering that purchases which support sustainability, such as electric cars, can help them be savvier about their spending, especially when petrol prices rise. In fact, 73% of Southeast Asian consumers say they are willing to choose a more sustainable product or service if given the option.⁹

As Malaysians become more environmentally conscious, search interest for terms containing **recycling centre** saw a growth of over 90%.

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



In Malaysia,
search interest for
terms containing
net zero grew over

+110%



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. Among Southeast Asian consumers, three of the top five factors influencing purchase decisions — positive reviews, established brands, and return/money back guarantees — are all strong signals of consumer trust.¹⁰

+84%

want to trust in the brand before purchasing.¹¹

Source: 10. Google-Kantar Shopper Pulse SEA, August 2022. Base: Researched and purchased product in P2M, Home appliances/White Goods Total n=420, ID n=84, SG n=84, TH n=84, VN n=84. PH n=84.

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.



In Malaysia,
search interest for
terms containing
trusted brand
grew over

+30%



70%

+30%

+30%

Value shopping is on the rise in Malaysia, with search interest in **money back guarantee** growing by over 70%.

While search interest for **best customer service** grew over 30%.



TRUSTED BRANDS ABOVE ALL ELSE



01

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

To keep pace with how people in Malaysia 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

To acquire more customers and unlock incremental conversions, Singapore's leading consumer bank **DBS** expanded its keyword match type to broad match. Combined with Smart Bidding, the expansion to broad match successfully unlocked a 64% growth in clicks and 31% more conversions, while maintaining similar efficiencies to its previous exact and phrase match campaigns.

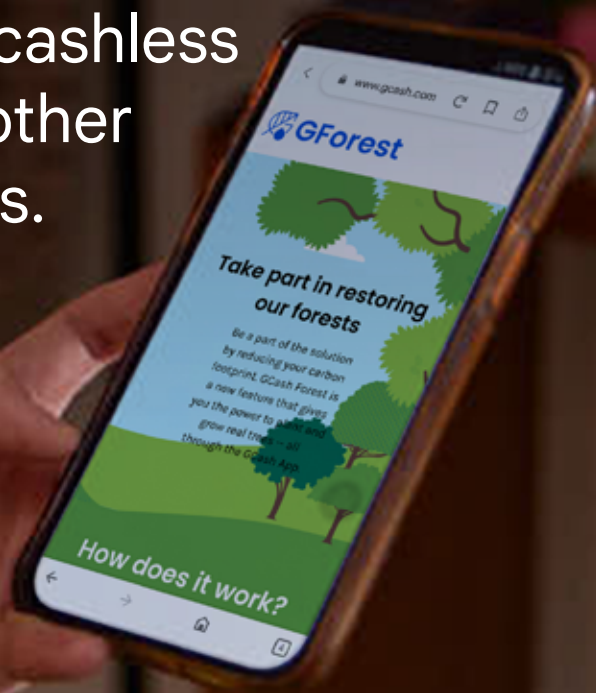
02

Be transparent in your sustainable efforts.

Today, environmental issues have become the second-most pressing issue among people in Southeast Asia.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 in APAC are realizing that they don't want to put their lives on hold any longer. While uncertainty persists, people are 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

Malaysians 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 instant delivery. At the same time, people are going offline in bigger ways, with live concerts and Michelin-starred dining back on the menu.

Finding joy

3.1

Little Luxuries and Cheap Thrills

LITTLE LUXURIES AND CHEAP THRILLS



Malaysians care about value but they 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, but others are seeking cheap thrills, with 80% of Southeast Asian shoppers looking for more affordable ways to treat themselves.¹⁴



+130%

Search interest in **massage near me** jumped by over 130% in Malaysia.

+200%

Glamping is also increasingly popular, with search interest rising by over 200%.




3.2


**Travel
Resumed,
Even if on
a 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 everyday behaviors to save up for big travel purchases.



Search interest for terms containing **luxury travel** grew over 30%.

A group of people are camping at night. They are sitting under a large white tarp that is illuminated by warm string lights. In the foreground, a campfire is burning in a metal fire pit. To the right, there is a large metal pot hanging over the fire. In the background, a guitar is visible on a stand, and a small table holds various items like a plant and food. The scene is set in a grassy area with trees in the background.

Budget travel is increasingly popular, with search interest for terms containing **cheap flight** growing by over 100%.

Similarly, search interest for terms containing **cheap hotel** 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 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

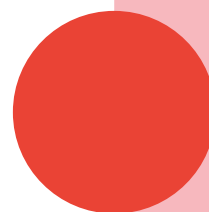


3.3

Using Online
to Simplify
the Offline

People in Malaysia 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.



Online search trends in Malaysia:

Convenience is top of mind, with search interest for terms containing **e-wallet** having grown over 70%.

Similarly, search interest for terms containing **teleconsultation** grew over 40%.



Offline activity search trends in Malaysia:

With restrictions having been lifted, search interest for terms containing **cinema** grew over 330%.

Search interest for terms containing **live concert** grew over 40%.



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 Malaysians 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.

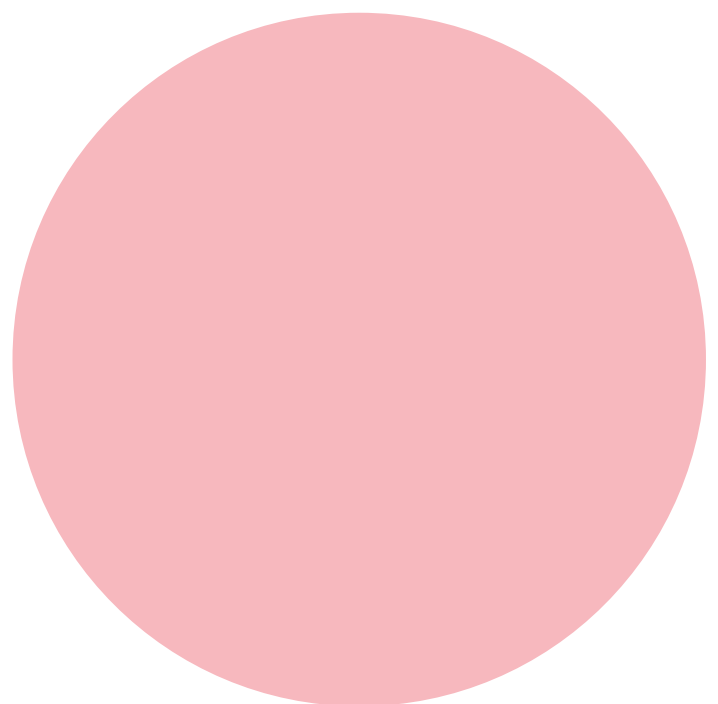
Today's customers are living — and shopping — in a channel-less world, making a frictionless omnichannel strategy more important than ever. Globally, search interest for **in-store** nearly tripled since the beginning of 2022.¹⁸ At the same time, 90% of APAC consumers expect retailers to sell their products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

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.

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.

To further optimize performance, use value-based bidding to bid on outcomes in the journey from lead generation to purchase that matter most to your business.



The marketing tips that we've shared here will help you unlock consumer trends in Malaysia, 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.

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