

Think with Google

YEAR IN SEARCH 2020

PAKISTAN

Looking back to move your marketing forward



2020 was a year that brought up more questions than answers, as Pakistanis grappled with uncertainty and tried to make sense of a new, unexpected situation. Throughout the year [we turned to Search](#) to find answers to the many questions on our minds.

The year forced us to confront not just the global pandemic and the consequent new normal, but also to face other important challenges head on. From raising our voices against systemic social issues like women's and minority rights, to taking the first concrete steps towards traditionally taboo subjects like mental health. It also helped us get back to what matters: being there for our community and helping others, instilling a higher sense of purpose, with the need to do more for our planet.

As the year continued, Pakistanis found new ways to do things differently: like adapting their way of thinking around work, their definition of fun, and conducting activities virtually that were previously done in a physical setting. They found more ways of being able to disconnect from the world to recharge, rejuvenate and to find the time to relax in ways that serve them best.

As marketers we pride ourselves on knowing our consumers, and Pakistan's searches show an interesting snapshot of consumer sentiment from this unforgettable year. It provides us with a unique insight into reactions, changing habits, and future concerns, and will help us to satisfy ever changing consumer needs.

Besides sharing current trends and observations, we have translated these insights into takeaways for your brand, and in this report share different perspectives on how your business can respond in these trying times. By providing some examples of how businesses across Pakistan and APAC have successfully adapted and innovated in times of change, we hope to provide needed inspiration for the future.



Farhan S. Qureshi
Country Director,
Pakistan, Bangladesh,
and Sri Lanka



Lars Anthonisen
Head of Marketing,
Singapore, Malaysia &
South Asia Frontier

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1 Individual Matters ▶

While COVID-19 became a globally shared problem in 2020, it also exposed a simple truth: there is no universal human experience. Search trends reveal Pakistanis are placing more value on individual needs and perspectives, even if they're outside the norm, standing up for what they believe in.

2 Higher Purpose ▶

As global crises test their values, Pakistanis are looking for ways to do even more for their communities and the environment – and they expect the same of brands. TrendWatching notes that while sustainability concerns aren't new, consumers have shifted from seeking eco-status to avoiding eco-shame.

3 Whole Selves ▶

Lines are blurring in the roles people play, and consumers are looking to have more specific needs met at any one time. As innovations in one industry (on-demand video) can drive expectations in another (on-demand education), the burden is on brands, not consumers, to keep up.

4 Sweet Relief ▶

Happiness never goes out of style, but amid the historic challenges of the pandemic, consumers especially welcome brands that spark joy in their lives and create a safe space for them to take a break.

5 Future Proofing ▶

In a year that nobody could have predicted or planned for, there's been a new wave of interest in managing the things you can control, future-proofing our lives wherever possible and seeking more assurance from brands to ensure peace of mind.



Trend 1

Individual Matters

While COVID-19 became a globally shared problem, it also exposed a simple truth: Pakistanis face different levels of crises, at differing times. Individuals are realising the need to raise their voices, be heard and to stand up for what they believe in and what they feel is the right thing to do. Ranging from basic human rights to activism against those who oppress or ignore.

2020 pushed Pakistanis to confront societal stigmas and complex issues, and to acknowledge problems that may appear to be much more person-specific at first.

There was greater acknowledgement of the gravity of certain stigmatized problems while defying taboos. Pakistanis' needs and beliefs are something that they choose to define for themselves, and is explored on a personal level, even when they might not openly acknowledge it yet.



The global pandemic has made people's diverging needs, habits, and beliefs more apparent than ever.

And it's this unique set of experiences that remind us that our needs shouldn't be relative to the value society places on them, but rather, can be explored and defined by and for ourselves.



CONFRONTING STIGMAS

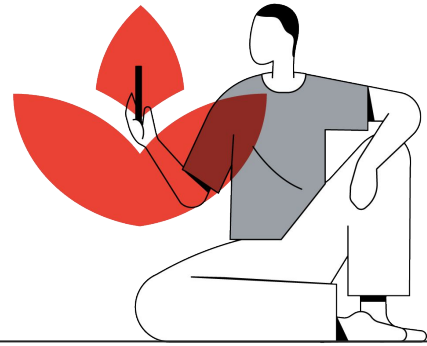
People are confronting societal stigmas, and discreetly educating themselves on how to handle or confront these issues which have traditionally been considered taboo. For Pakistanis this has been seen for mental health, women's rights and the rights of people from minority communities.



Year-over-year (YoY) growth in searches related to "mental health support"



Growth in searches for "meditation", with people more open and in need to look for ways to destress, relax and build the ability to calm themselves in challenging times



CONFRONTING STIGMAS



YoY growth in searches about
“minority rights” ¹



YoY growth in searches for
“Aurat March”, Pakistan’s annually
held social/political demonstration
for women rights & freedoms ²



YoY growth in searches for “gender
equality” in comparison to a 22%
decline in the previous year

1. Photograph by By Karla K. Marshall -flickr, Commons Wikimedia

2. Photograph by Nawab Afridi - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, Commons Wikimedia

CONFRONTING STIGMAS

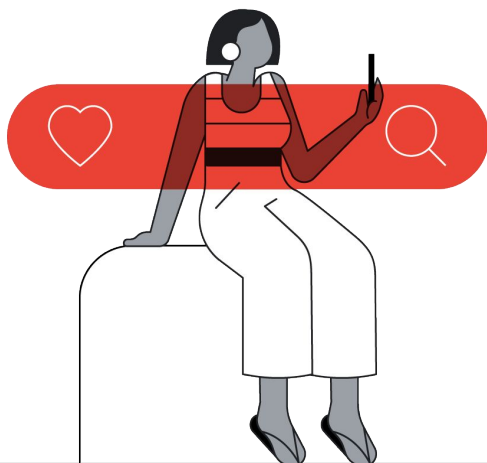
Regardless of whether mental health is widely acknowledged in Pakistan, we observed a growth in searches for mental health-related symptoms, including early exploration of this important concept.



Increase in online counselling searches, compared to 10% decrease in the previous year



YoY growth in searches for "mental health"



The Lancet Commission ³ [reported](#) that mental health disorders are on the rise in every country in the world, and could cost the global economy up to \$16 trillion by 2030.

Takeaways for brands

Nods to diversity, equity and inclusion aren't enough. It takes empathy for the sheer variety of situations consumers face and acknowledgement of each individual consumer journey to create both meaningful, and profitable connections.

In APAC, only 1 in 5 people feel represented in the ads they see,⁴ presenting an opportunity for brands to take action.

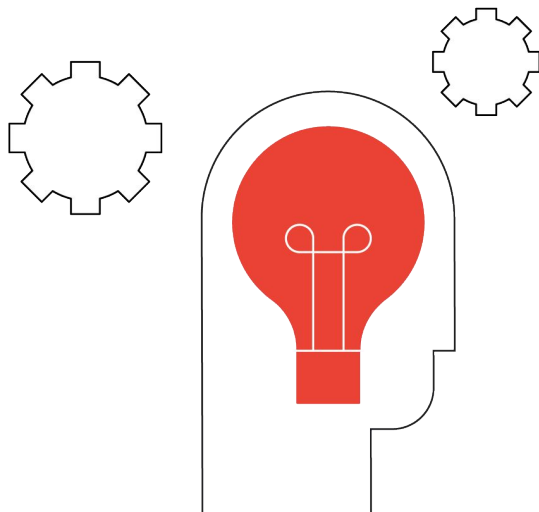
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Increasingly aware that personality, purpose and profit can be compatible, consumers seek brand relationships that go beyond the superficial and transactional. They will embrace brands with meaning and character; that are open, honest, sympathetic, and, most importantly, stand for something.

- TrendWatching, on the consumer search for human brands

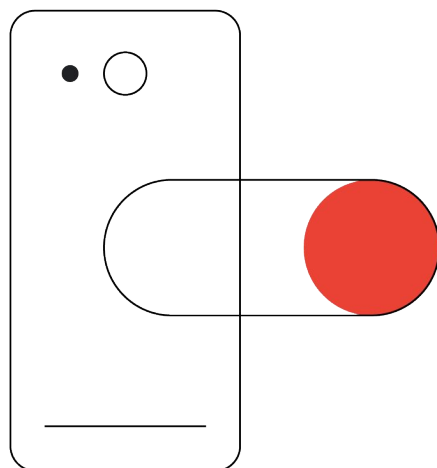
Takeaways for brands

To address systemic inequalities and embed empathy into a brand's marketing strategy, consumers' individual journeys need to be considered (sometimes literally).



IKEA understands that because of the unique distance, each customer has to travel to get to their store, the net impact on wallets — and time — will differ. Recognizing this inequality, they introduced distance-based pricing, allowing customers to pay for their items using the time spent getting to the store.

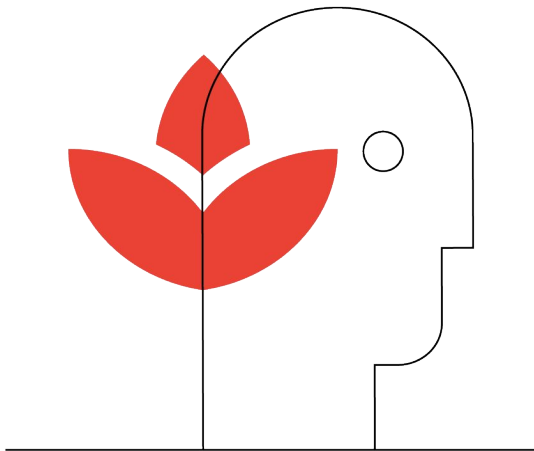
Understanding the difficulty and frustration for women in Pakistan who are dependent on either public transport or other people for their commute, Veet Pakistan pledged to #BuildHerUp by partnering with Salman Sufi Foundation's Women on Wheels to train 1000 girls to ride a motorcycle and become independent, taking their mobility in their control. This also challenged social taboos like women riding a motorcycle.



Takeaways for brands

Build inclusivity into your brand – holistically and from the get-go.

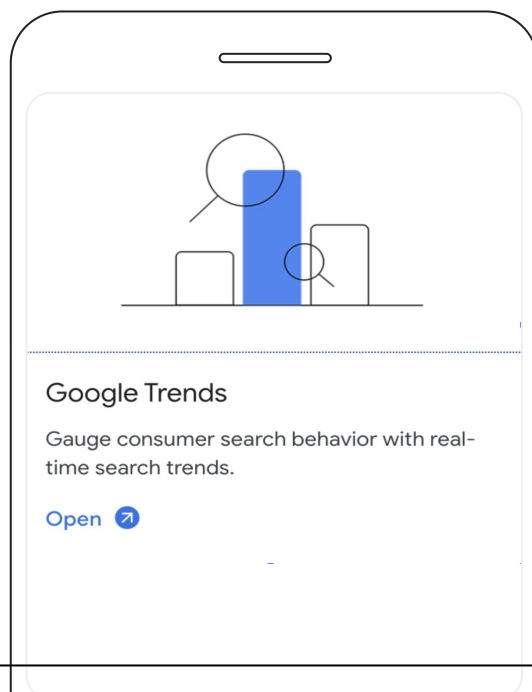
Malaysia's Sunway Putra Mall hosts Autsome, a weekly event to support and drive awareness for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). To make the shopping experience more comfortable for the autism community, the mall introduced special facilities like a calm room and sensory wall, and adjusts its operations by lowering music volume and dimming lights.



Shan Foods expanded the boundaries of conventional cooking culture in Pakistan with their #MoreThanJustACook campaign, which challenged the norm that only women are expected to light up family gatherings with their cooking skills. They challenged this through an emotional ad showing an old loving father surprising his working daughter with a home cooked meal.

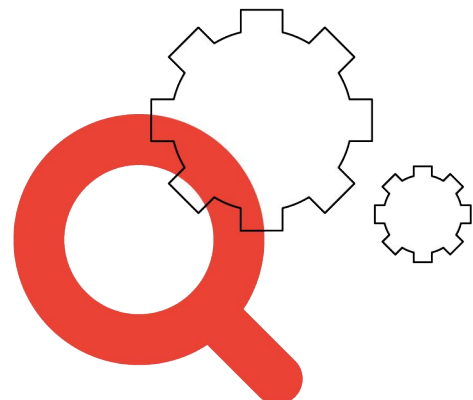
Takeaways for brands

Make use of tools and technology to engage large audiences who have specific and ever-evolving needs.



Tools like Google Trends keep us up-to-date on changing behaviors, so brands can find the right fit with their brand values and speak to them genuinely.

15% of daily searches on Google are new, making it difficult to consistently show up as helpful and understanding of customers' needs. Responsive Search Ads help adapt an ad to more closely match potential customers' search terms, making it much easier to serve relevant ad messaging.





Trend 2

Higher Purpose

The pandemic forced a global reset that is testing our humanity and values. By giving us all a common purpose, it has elevated the very idea of a company's purpose — shining a spotlight on the role businesses play in our environment and our wider communities.

Environmental concerns are not new. But 2020 was a turning point that featured some key attitude shifts towards protecting our planet, as pointed out in our previous [Year in Search report](#). First, APAC maintained its lead as the region that most expects brands to be environmentally friendly. Then, confronted with their own personal consumption habits during lockdowns, people have been reassessing their impact on the environment, with 86% saying that they've become more conscious due to the Coronavirus.⁵



5. GlobalWebIndex, Sep 2020, PH, IN, CH, SG, NZ, JP, AU

Finally, there was the inadvertent shift from eco-status to eco-shame.



When sustainable alternatives are widespread, affordable, and just as good or better than the legacy option, then eco-consumption becomes less about the status of opting in, and more about the shame of opting out. This change shift has led millions to seek out products, services, and experiences that help them ease their eco-shame.

- TrendWatching

People are also feeling a closer connection to their wider communities. According to GlobalWebIndex, people across the region agree that **“helping others before helping myself”** is important, along with **“contributing to my community”**.⁶

While the actions people take to help give back change from country to country, the common factor is the spirit of helping others. This is not new for Pakistanis: who have always been charitable within their communities, but this trait has come out more than ever - serving a purpose higher than themselves, whether through **zakat, sadaqah, or charity work**.

6. GlobalWebIndex, Wave Q3 2020

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

While interest in the environment and giving back to the community were the top rising trends across APAC in 2020, Pakistan also saw a surge in lockdown-induced new habits that are carrying us into 2021 and beyond.



+100%

YoY growth in searches for “plant based”



+128%

YoY growth in searches for “reusable”



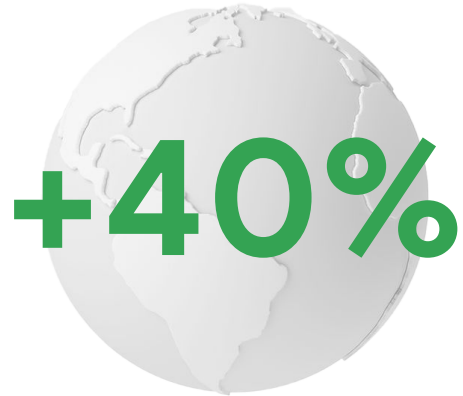
+100%

YoY growth in searches for “vegetarian recipes” compared to -25% in previous year

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT



Growth in 2020 for interest in searches for “recycle”



YoY growth in searches for “climate change”



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

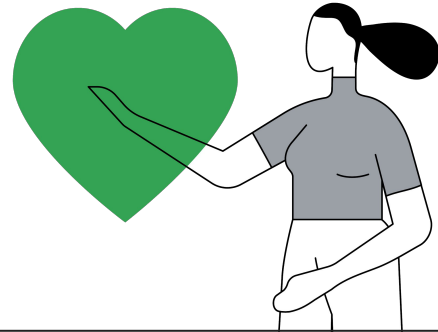
Social distancing – and isolation, in many cases – brought a desire to connect to our wider community by giving back.



YoY growth in searches for
“Sadaqah” (voluntary charity)



YoY growth in searches for
“charity work”

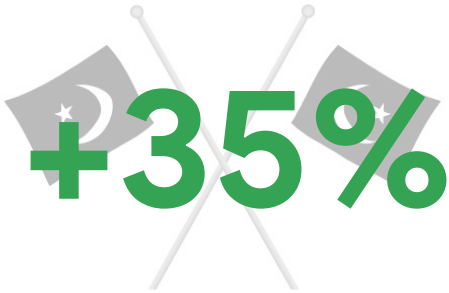


COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



+53%

YoY growth in searches for “how to help”



YoY growth in searches for “Made in Pakistan”, highlighting the desire to support local businesses vs. flat growth the previous year



+91%

YoY growth in searches for “help others”

Takeaways for brands

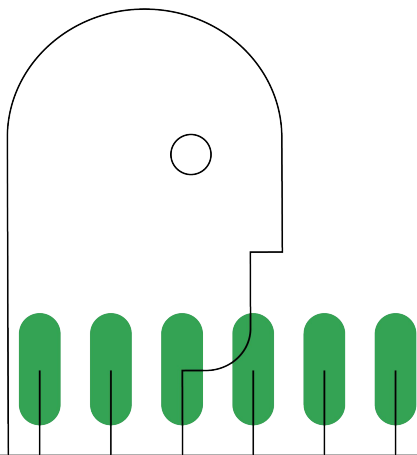
Expand the territories to make meaningful connections, beyond traditional corporate social responsibility. Meeting your consumers' personal, functional and emotional needs should be a given. Now, it's just as important to actively support their communities and take actions to integrate sustainability into a brand's values.

When people find common ground with a company's values, it's more likely they will be loyal to the brand. In contrast, the 2020 Zeno strength of purpose study found that cancel culture is strongest in Asia, with consumers in Singapore (89%), Malaysia (91%), and China (92%) more likely to no longer purchase from a brand they disagree with - and even actively discourage others from doing so as well.



Takeaways for brands

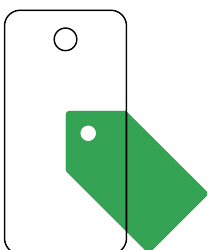
Create new ways for consumers to connect with the environment and each other.



Go beyond your operational footprint and actively invest in sustainability-centered activations like Converse did with their City Forests. This community project engages local artists to create murals using photocatalytic paint that helps clean the air. These air purifying murals have been spotted in Jakarta, Sydney, Bangkok, and Ho Chi Minh City.

“

Provide access to previously offline communities through digital solutions. One such example is Daraz's Humqadam program, designed to enable SME's to set up their digital ventures on Daraz, and to help them pivot online for free, while promising to charge 0% commission on sales made during the lockdown period. The result was a benefit to 45,000+ sellers with 5,000+ new sellers from 88 cities across Pakistan



In these tough times, we focused our attention and investment in supporting our sellers that makes Daraz as Pakistan's No. 1 Marketplace.

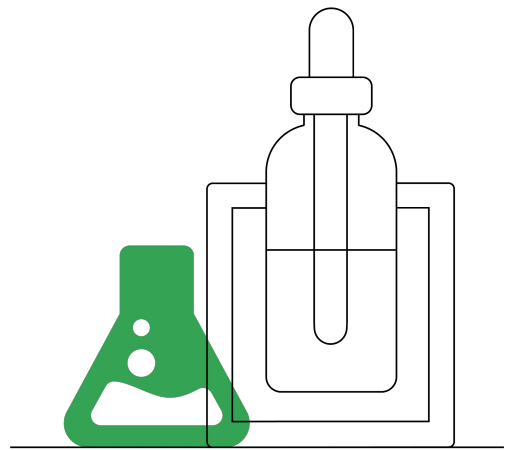
With the launch of Daraz Seller Humqadam program, we are moving forward in our drive to digitize the commerce in Pakistan to bring a unique assortment to buyers by developing a strong seller base.

- Ammar Hassan, CMO, Daraz

Takeaways for brands

Make your values and internal practices externally visible

Consider transparency as an experience. As TrendWatching points out in their [Future of Work](#) report, exposing internal initiatives to your customer can be more compelling and impactful than releasing a neatly crafted press release. For example, Shiseido introduced [S/PARK](#), a content hub that offers its consumers a transparent behind-the-scenes look into its research and development process and features interviews with their leadership.



DBS creating eco-friendly urban farm for employees



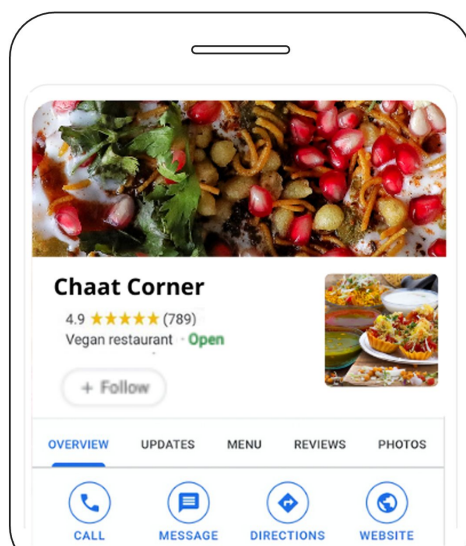
Embed community values into your employee culture and day-to-day operations. As a way to internally match external environmentalist initiatives, DBS created an on-site [Food Forest](#) as a way for their employees to have a hand at producing and harvesting their own lunches.

Fashion brand [Sapphire](#) launched an initiative around independence day in 2020 working with local artists, providing them with a chance to promote their work by using it on their eco-friendly canvas bags. The work of 5 local artists was used for a limited time around 14th August. This way the brand was able to both be eco-friendly, as well as to be working for the community by providing a chance to local talent to showcase their work.



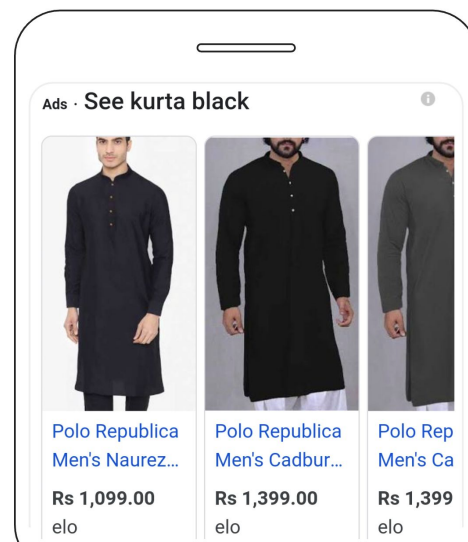
Takeaways for brands

Connect with potential customers in the nearby community



In APAC, 53% of online shoppers say they'll buy online even more frequently post-pandemic.⁷ With millions conducting shopping-related searches on Google every day, brands have the opportunity to use Google Shopping solutions on search to get their products front and centre of the consumers.

Ensure you have a prominent online presence so that your customers can easily find you. Google My Business is an easy-to-use tool that helps businesses connect & interact with the customers who are looking for their products and services.



Searches for **“shopping near me”** have grown 3X in the past three years,⁸ clearly indicating that shoppers are turning to digital to find what they need, nearby. Brands can tap into the opportunity by using local inventory ads to show nearby shoppers what's available, in stock, and how to get to the physical shop.

7. GlobalWebIndex, Wave Q3 2020

8. Google Trends, Worldwide, Shopping, 2019 vs 2016



Trend 3

Whole Selves

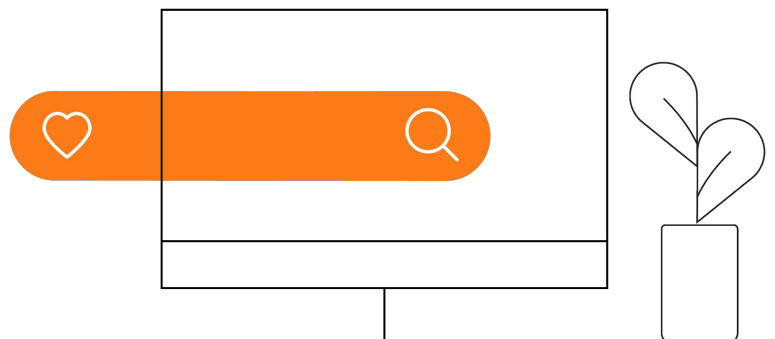
Due to the pandemic, new circumstances such as ongoing work from home, and disrupted routines have become part of our daily lives. Suddenly, the lines that used to distinguish the 9 to 5 manager at the office from the 5 to 7 parent at home have blurred.

Along with growing time pressures, consumers are less tolerant of suboptimal brand experiences. As a result, a new consumer trend has emerged, driven by the expectation that **brands will fit into the lives of consumers, and not the other way around.**

People now expect brands to engage with them as their “whole selves” rather than just the part of their needs that seem most profitable to their business.

Understanding that people are not just “beauty consumers” but that their preference for an animal friendly lifestyle might affect their choice of cosmetics brands, and that they’ll want more visibility into the testing and production processes.

Consumer expectations continue to spiral upward given the ‘new normal’, bringing a sudden need for new brands, products and services. **The burden is on brands, not consumers, to keep up.**



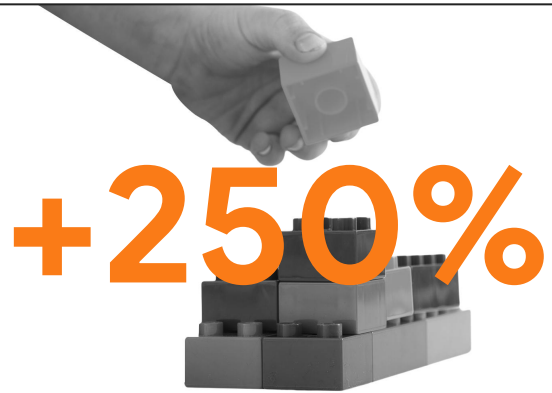
WORK-LIFE EFFICIENCY

Many are struggling to manage their work and home needs under one roof, all the time.

As a result, people are actively looking for ways to optimize their time while still maintaining their wellbeing, rendering efficiency more important than ever.



YoY growth in searches for
“homeschooling”



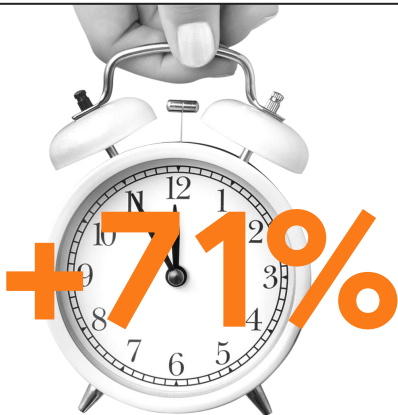
YoY growth in searches for “kids home activities” compared to flat growth a year ago



YoY growth in searches for
“online planner”



WORK-LIFE EFFICIENCY



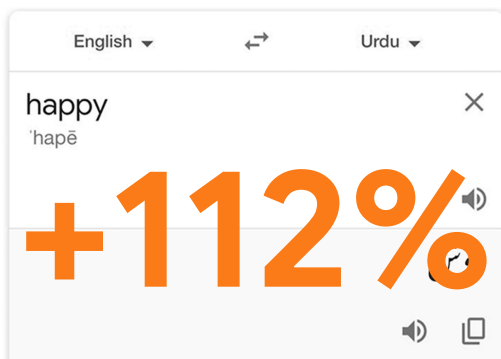
YoY growth in searches for
“how to be productive”, compared
to 20% decrease the previous year



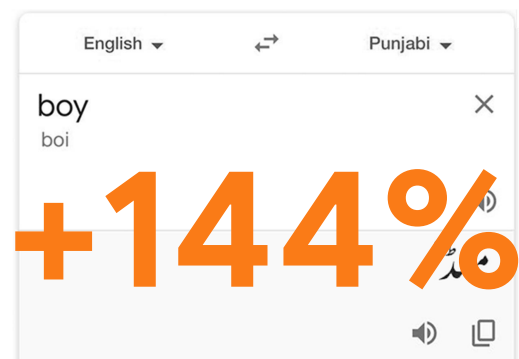
YoY growth in searches for
“parental control”

LOCAL LANGUAGE

People are seeking out brands that truly understand and speak to them. This means less time spent translating information and more time-consuming content in a format that best suits their needs.



YoY growth in searches for
“translate English to Urdu”



Growth in searches for
“translate English to Punjabi”



Growth in searches for content that is “Urdu
dubbed” for better viewing experiences

Takeaways for brands

Challenge your business to break down walls and think beyond traditional industry considerations. A wider understanding of human needs means a wider business opportunity.

For example, the latest Can't Read, Won't Buy study from CSA revealed that 75% of online shoppers prefer to buy products with information in their native language, and as much as 40% of consumers won't buy in another language. With this in mind, it's odd to think that 60% of the internet's content is in English, while native English speakers comprise only 5.4% of the global population.

Airlift is a strong example from Pakistan of pivoting to solve a wider business challenge. Primarily a transit-hailing start up, they found themselves in a difficult situation with business halted due to the spread of COVID-19 in Pakistan. The company made the bold decision to pivot their business model by launching an online grocery shopping platform called Airlift Express. The app makes shopping easier and safe for people stuck at home during the lockdown and has managed to raise \$10 million in foreign investment since launch.



Takeaways for brands

Speak to your customers like a local.

Flipkart, India's largest online marketplace, launched a voice assistant service so that shoppers who were not at ease with the written word, or the English language, could engage with the brand verbally and in the vernacular.



Within Google marketing, even when users are on English language browsers, click-through rates are consistently higher when local language ad copy is used.

“

It was 17% higher in Hong Kong and Taiwan and as much as 34% in Indonesia, highlighting how important it is for businesses to challenge digital norms.

-Sebastiaan Burgmans, Director, SMB Ads Marketing, Google APAC

Offering voice-based solutions is another helpful way to engage with existing customers, as well as attract new ones. 43% of consumers said that they would buy a product or service from a company that they have not heard of if it was recommended by a voice-based assistant.⁹ In a world with increased demand for touchless solutions, voice technology has now become a key strategic consideration.

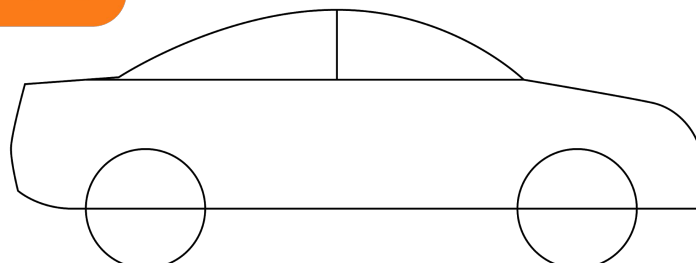
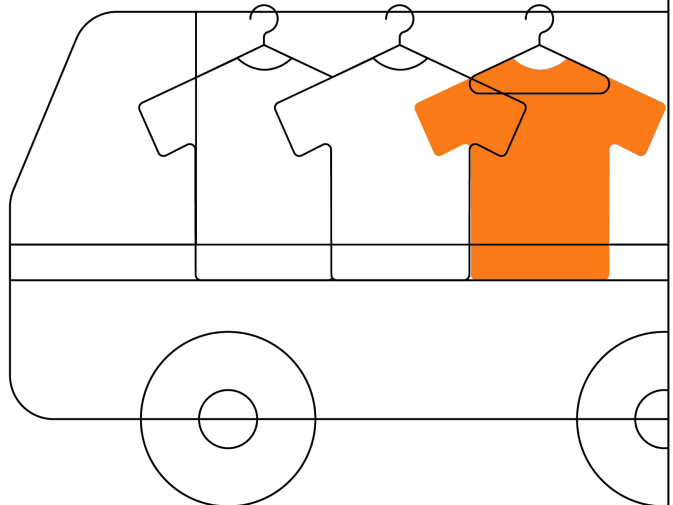
9. Cognizant, [Algorithms Over Brands](#)

Takeaways for brands

Rethink your business boundaries.

Challenging traditional industry models will help you uncover new business opportunities.

During the lockdown, Muji redefined the concept of “window shopping” by converting an unused sightseeing bus into a mobile store. This allowed customers who live in Japan’s mountainous regions to have easier access to the Muji in-store experience.



Hyundai’s luxury-tier brand, Genesis, challenged the idea of a traditional showroom by launching “Genesis Concierge”, a service that brings test drives and other showroom services directly to customers’ homes.

Takeaways for brands

Fit into their world

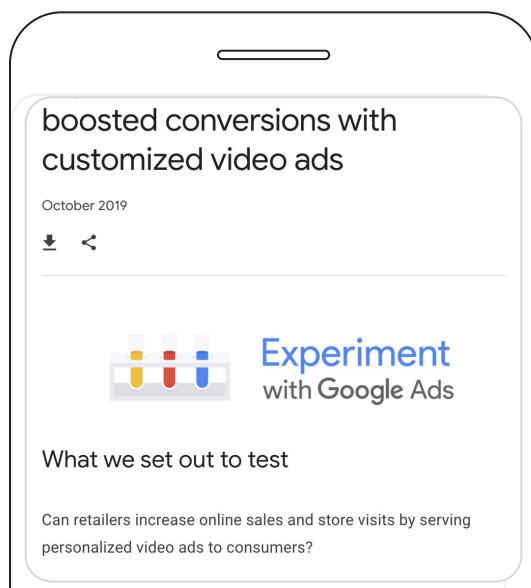
Adjust your business and marketing solutions to fit into your consumers' lives and needs either through your communication strategy or actual product solutions.

To encourage a new pre-bedtime routine, J&J Listerine in Korea created video ads with messaging that changed according to the time the video was aired.

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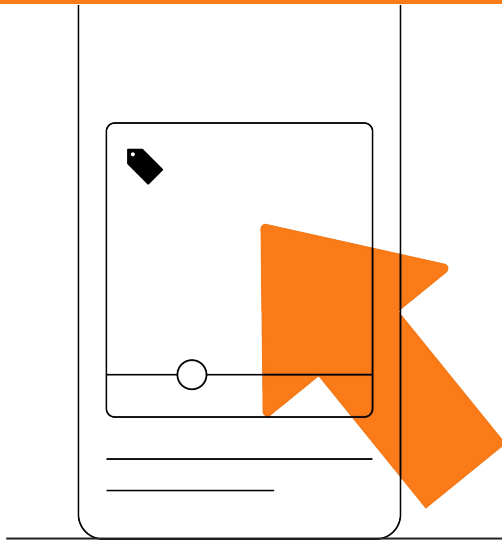
My father didn't tell me how to advertise,
but I could see him watching only customized content.
We are living in an age of hyper-personalization.

- David (Eun Hyuk) Jung, J&J Korea Group Brand Manager



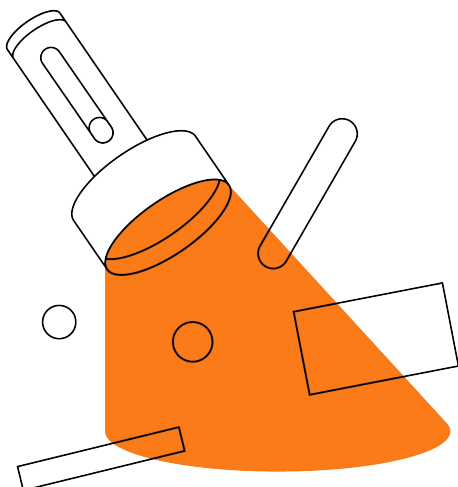
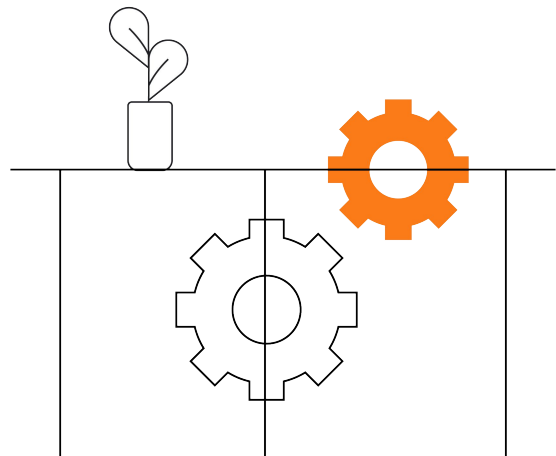
National Foods used audience insights about parents, and Director Mix to automatically create over a 130 different versions of their original video. This allowed them to automate customization at scale, showing the most relevant YouTube video based on the search history of the viewer.

Takeaways for brands



Nestle knew that users were increasingly toggling between search and online video during the product research phase, so they ran Trueview for action ads and Discovery ads alongside Search campaigns to meet consumers where they are. Nestle showed up across YouTube, Gmail, and Discovery ads, achieving a 28% higher conversion rate.

Hong Kong and Japan are home to the world's smallest apartments. But instead of making smaller furniture, IKEA partnered with a smart space company to create robotic furniture that can adjust to small spaces as different living needs arise.



Make it easy

More time online means less patience for digital mistakes

With various levels of lockdowns still on-going across the region, a brand's online presence is especially critical. Dive into these tips for a high-level view of how to ensure your online presence becomes an effective storefront for your business.



Trend 4

Sweet Relief

Happiness and joy are always welcome, but amidst a year of historic challenges, consumers are embracing the brands that spark joy and create a safe space for them to take a break.



With millions of jobs lost around the world, and just as many people on the brink of poverty, the seriousness of the pandemic cannot be undermined. While a brand is not expected to solve these challenges, it does introduce the need for reinforcements during times that have been harder for longer, all over the world.

After the start of the pandemic, a survey asked respondents what was most important to them. Out of all the regions, APAC was the only region to rank “having a positive attitude” as the most important factor, above “spending time with family” and “being financially secure”.¹⁰ This means that while delighting consumers should always be a priority, positivity is now more valued than ever, especially in Pakistan where people often find themselves having to be resilient.



10. GlobalWebIndex, Wave Q3 2020, World Regions

DOWNTIME

Given the travel constraints and the challenges many face in their everyday lives, many have been seeking alternative forms of downtime.



Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia, the Philippines and India all saw YoY growth in searches for “memes”. Pakistan, India, and the Philippines are in the top five countries with the highest concentration of searches for memes in the world.



YoY growth in searches for “online games” vs. 15% decline during the same period last year



In searches for “arts and crafts ideas”



In searches related to different music genres: “techno” (+560%), “jazz music” (+66%), “indie music” (+175%)

SMALL INDULGENCES

Now that people are spending more time at home, they're investing in small indulgences that add to their quality of life or are meaningful to them.



YoY growth in searches for "chocolate" compared to +5% the previous year



YoY growth in searches for "gaming chair"



YoY growth in searches for "how to plant" while being flat in the previous year

SMALL INDULGENCES



YoY growth in searches for
"easy dessert"



YoY growth in searches for "food delivery
services", compared to 30% growth in
previous year



YoY growth in the share of
"Self-care" searches



YoY growth in searches for
"massage gun"



SHARING LOVE

With social distancing and lockdowns the new way of life, people have been finding creative ways to show love and care to their friends and family.



+700%

YoY growth in searches for “adopt a pet” compared to 75% growth the previous year



YoY growth in searches for “cake delivery” compared to 10% growth in the previous year

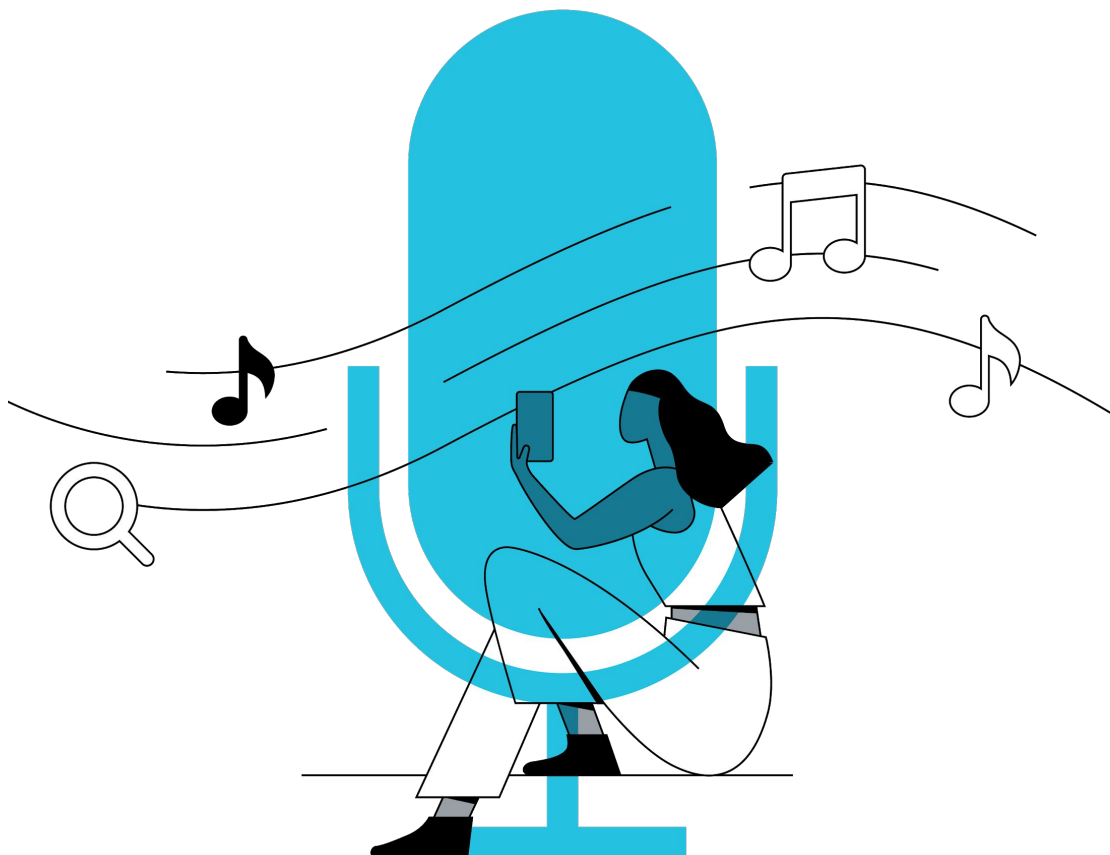
Takeaways for brands

Make things fun in a personal way

Google delights Avengers fans with surprise results when they search for one of the movie's villains.

Google introduced a new, fun way for people to search, including “hum to search” — a service that helps people figure out the name of a song by simply humming, whistling, or singing the melody.

The QT Hotel Auckland, a brand with a focus on community, hid 150 room keys across the city as a treasure hunt. Key finders received a free hotel night — a great way to engage with a wider audience in an interactive, inviting way.

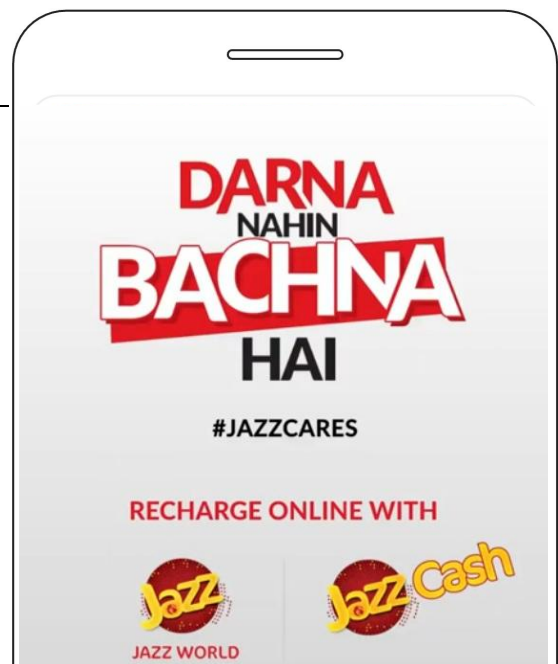


Takeaways for brands

Be funny, too (in good taste, of course)

A recent global survey asked consumers how they want brands to show up at this time. The resounding answer across APAC was “Be lighthearted and funny, but do it cautiously and meaningfully”.¹¹

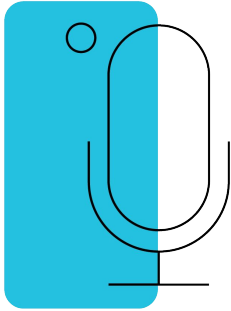
Jazz Pakistan came up with an idea to cut through the flurry of messages stemming from the pandemic while still playing a responsible role of educating their consumers. They partnered with local comedian Danish Ali for a series of humorous social distancing videos under their ‘Darna nahi bachna hai’ campaign.



Australian-based Project Factory felt that many were feeling the impact of social distancing, so they took a humorous approach to the issue. The developer released a mobile app that plays office background noises including someone eating chips nearby, yelling, sighing, crumpling paper, typing and more.

11. GlobalWebIndex, Coronavirus Research Release 3: Multi-Market Research, March 2020, Countries across APAC answered 'somewhat agree' to using humour

Takeaways for brands



Make it easier to share the joy

Yamaha developed a remote cheer app that lets sports fans in Japan add to the stadium atmosphere during a game, broadcasting their claps, cheers, chants, or boos in real-time.





Trend 5

Future Proofing

In a year that nobody could have planned for, people are looking to find a greater sense of control. To ensure peace of mind, many have started looking for ways to future-proof and de-risk their lives, while seeking reassurance from brands along the way.



ECONOMIC PROSPECTS

People are safeguarding and strengthening their economic prospects by boosting their skills, financial knowledge, and building up their side hustles.



YoY growth in searches for “stock investing” compared to 20% increase in the previous year

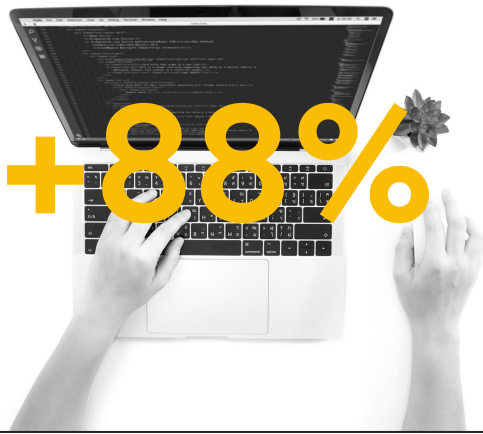


YoY growth in searches for “online learning” compared to 23% increase in the previous year



YoY growth in searches for “side hustle”

ECONOMIC PROSPECTS



YoY growth in searches for "learn coding"



YoY increase in searches for
"learn online marketing"



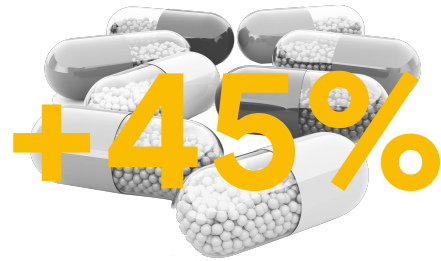
YoY increase for the phrase
"how to make money online"

HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Health-related interest increased as a direct impact of the pandemic, but particularly interesting is the uptick in proactive and preemptive health management.



YoY growth in searches for
“blue light glasses”

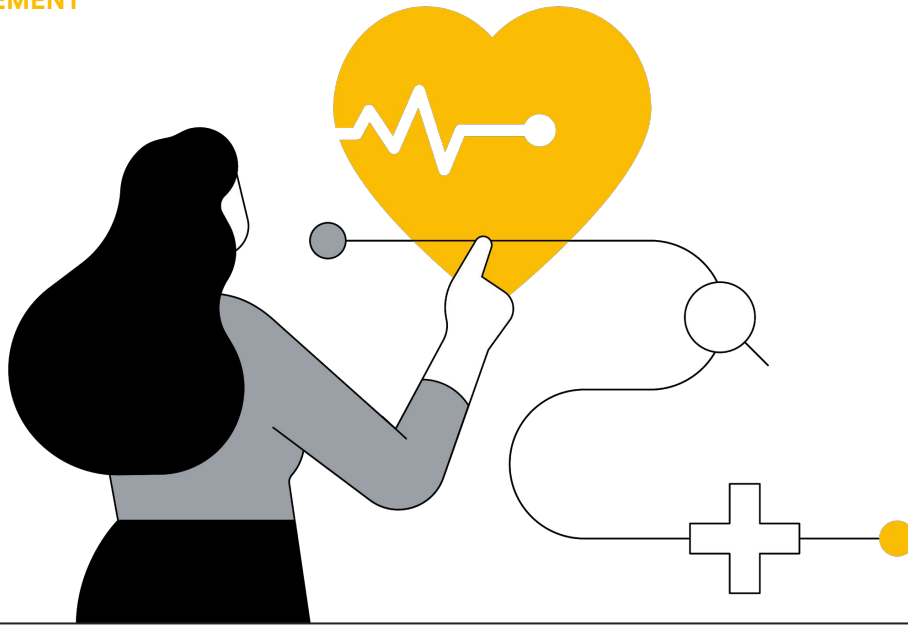


YoY growth in searches
for “vitamin supplement”

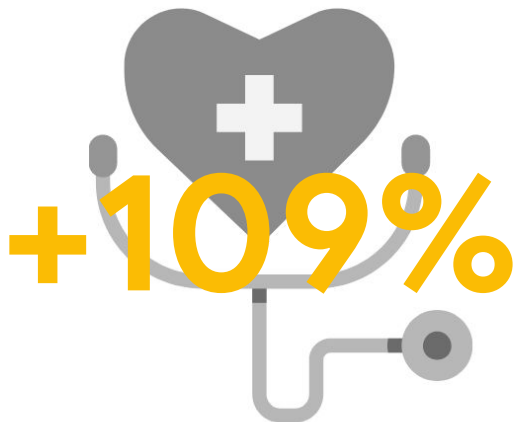


YoY growth in searches for
“Eastern medicine”

HEALTH MANAGEMENT



YoY increase in searches for
“pulse check”, +85% for
“normal pulse”

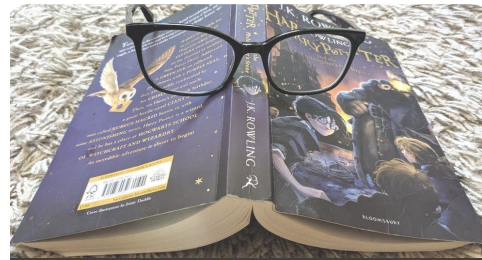


YoY increase in “disease
prevention”

Takeaways for brands

Communicate to empower your customers, not overwhelm them

Agreeing to terms and conditions is often a mandatory step before accessing an app. A recent study explored the length of the T&Cs of popular apps and discovered that the top 13 apps had more words in their T&Cs than any Harry Potter novel – leaving much room for improvement when it comes to user experience.



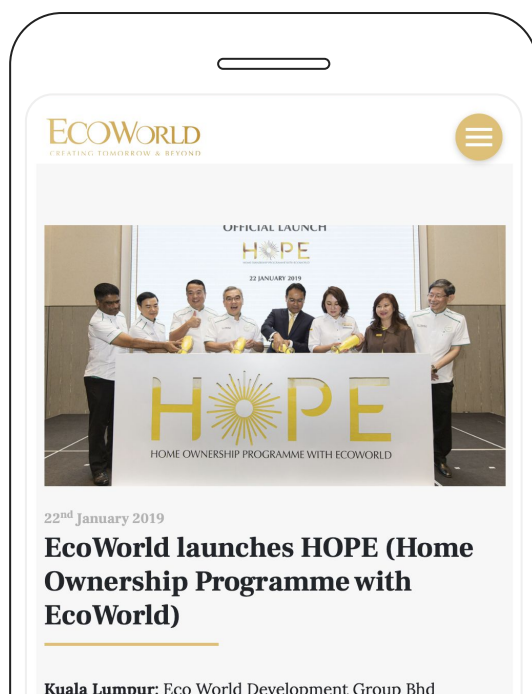
The first novel in the Harry Potter series is nearly 77,000 words long

The combined terms and conditions of 13 top apps including TikTok, WhatsApp and Zoom would take 17 hours and five minutes to read, a firm has estimated.

The documents contain a joint total of 128,415 words - longer than any one of the first three Harry Potter novels.

The longest was Microsoft Teams at 18,282 words - or two-and-a-half hours of reading time for many people.

In 2018, a BBC study found that several website policies required university education levels of reading ability.

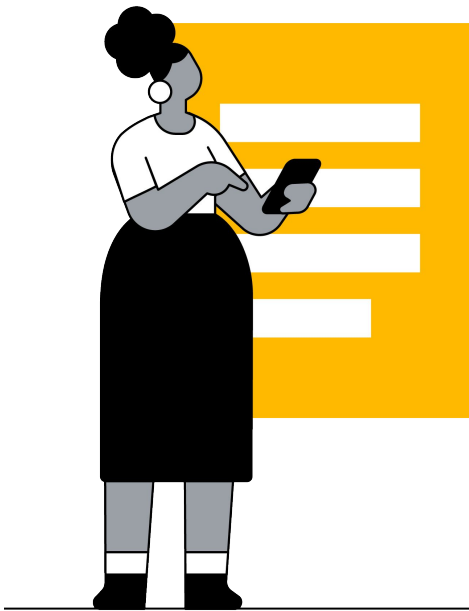


Reduce the risk for your consumers

EcoWorld's try-before-you-buy program is a creative way of appealing to potential homeowners. The Malaysian property developer designed a rental program where people could try out a house before deciding whether or not to buy it, with the option of contributing as much as 30% of the rental towards the price of the house.

Actions speak louder than words with Hong Kong retailer Meiyume, who installed touch-free sample dispensers in their stores to address any health concerns associated with using tester products.

Takeaways for brands



Enable them to act on information easily

Aid consumer decision making by including crucial information with Search Ad Extensions. By including things like callouts, price extensions, and affiliate locations, you not only make things easier for your customers, but you become easier to find with greater visibility on the Search results page.

For B2B entities, think about ways to provide long term support for your partners

To boost sales in China, motor lubricant maker Castrol offered free advertising space to independent repair workshops that increased the sale of Castrol products. Around 6,000 workshops benefitted from the campaign, and Castrol reported a 44% increase in sales.

Recognize the role brands can play in empowering people to grow their skill sets

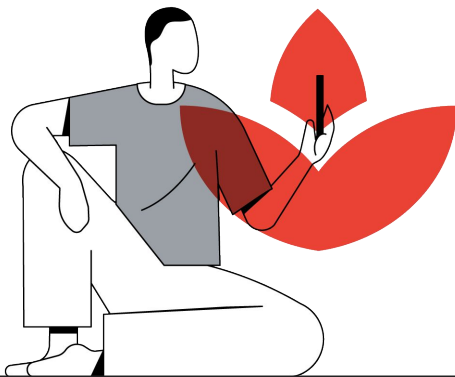
Grow with Google Pakistan is a hub consolidating resources for job-seekers and businesses to upskill themselves and their employees. An example initiative is “Going Online with Google”, where Grow with Google Pakistan partnered with 9 partners to build in-demand skills to help businesses in their journey to start selling online.

Summary of takeaways

Individual Matters

Nods to diversity, equity and inclusion aren't enough. It takes empathy for the sheer variety of situations consumers face, and authentic outreach to those seeking help – both that impact the experiences for your brand.

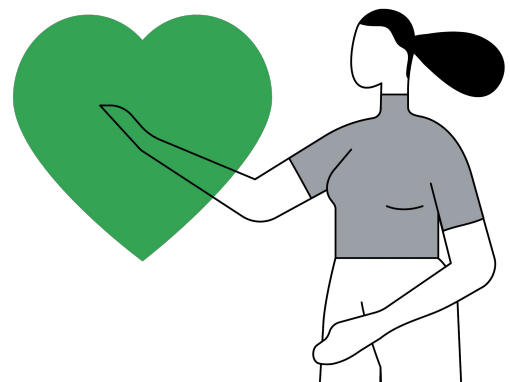
- Consider consumers' individual journey to address systemic inequalities and embed empathy into your marketing strategy.
- Build for inclusivity, holistically and from the get-go, to meet the deeper needs of your audience. Pay attention to tone & timing - they matter.
- Make use of tools & technology to keep up-to-date of your audiences' specific and ever-evolving needs.



Higher Purpose

Expand your territories to make meaningful connections with (and for) consumers, beyond traditional corporate social responsibility. Actively support their communities and integrate sustainability into your brand values.

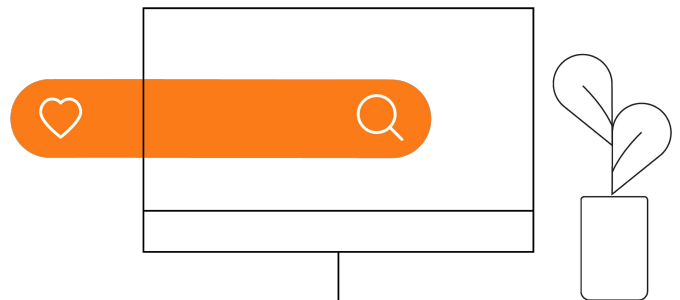
- Create new ways for consumers to connect with the environment, and each other.
- Make your business values and internal practices a visible part of your external brand.
- Connect with potential customers in the nearby community.



Whole Selves

Challenge your business to re-examine and redefine traditional industry norms. A wider understanding of human needs means a wider business opportunity.

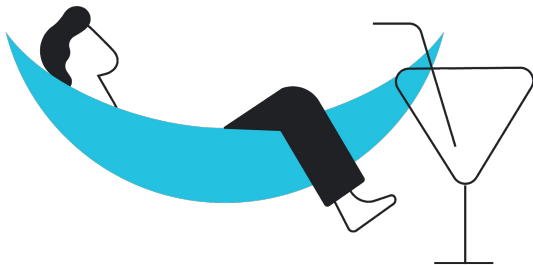
- Speak to your consumers like a local - taking their native language and format preferences into account.
- Rethink your business boundaries by challenging traditional industry models and uncover new opportunities.
- Fit into their world. Adjust your business solutions to fit into your consumers' lives and needs.
- Make it easy: more time online means less patience for digital mistakes.



Sweet Relief

Brands that surprise and delight can reap the rewards of consumer love – especially when they do it with empathy for people's unique experiences and challenges.

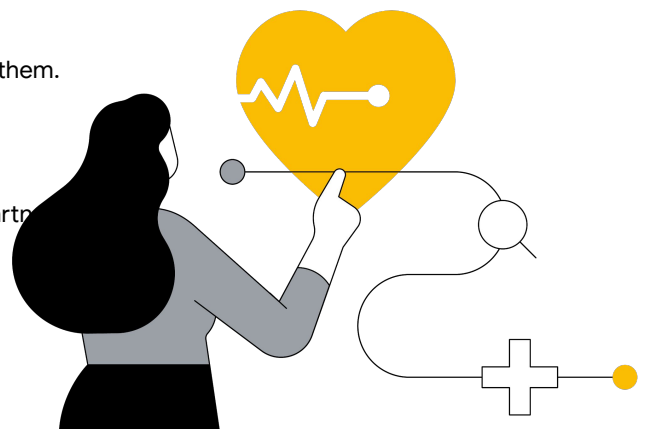
- Understand your consumers' point of view to make things fun in a more personal way.
- Be funny, too (In good taste, of course).
- Make it easier to share joy.



Future Proofing

Account for your consumers' desire for peace of mind, lower appetite for risk, and forward-planning mindset when crafting your business strategy and communications.

- Communicate to empower your customers, not overwhelm them.
- Get creative about reducing risk for consumers and enable them to act on information easily.
- Think about ways to provide longer term support for your partners from a b2b point of view.
- Recognize the role brands can play in empowering people to grow their skill sets.



Sources

All Google Search data points included in this report are from Google Trends, PK, Jan 1, 2020 - Dec 31, 2020 vs. Jan 1, 2019 - Dec 31, 2019, unless otherwise indicated.

Brand examples are mostly curated using trendwatching.com premium subscription

1. [Photograph by By Karla K. Marshall -flickr, Commons Wikimedia](#)
2. [Photograph by Nawab Afridi - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, Commons Wikimedia](#)
3. [Lancet Commission on Global Mental Health](#)
4. GlobalWebIndex, Wave Q3 2020
5. GlobalWebIndex, Sep 2020, PH, IN, CH, SG, NZ, JP, AU
6. GlobalWebIndex, Wave Q3 2020
7. GlobalWebIndex, Wave Q3 2020
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9. Cognizant, [Algorithms Over Brands](#)
10. GlobalWebIndex, Wave Q3 2020, World Regions
11. GlobalWebIndex, Coronavirus Research Release 3: Multi-Market Research, March 2020, Countries across APAC answered 'somewhat agree' to using humour