

Think with Google

2021

**YEAR IN
SEARCH**

**Look back to move
your marketing forward**



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Please read the full industry reports at
g.co/YearInSearchThailand

This year, we accepted that the world as we knew it had been altered. We adapted to the idea of constant uncertainties and recurring disruptions. If 2020 was about more people adopting digital than ever before, 2021 showed that these behavioral changes are here to stay.

As people turn to the internet to fulfill their needs, they are faced with limitless information and abundant choices online. To navigate the rapidly changing world, people rely on trusted touchpoints to help them evaluate the information and make decisions confidently. 87% of Thai consumers said it is now more important to find a trusted source of information, compared to before COVID-19.¹

There are also more ways than ever to find information. So, we are humbled and honored that millions of Thais continue to use Google Search to make sense of all the information. For example, in 2021, we saw a 30% increase in search interest in "ยี่ห้อไหนดี" (which brand to buy), as people looked to build their consideration sets online. Brands and businesses can also play an important role in supporting consumers through their decision making journey. In fact, 90% of Thai consumers agreed that they would purchase from a brand that provided helpful information when they were exploring options.²

Searches like these offer a unique insight into what people really care about. They help us understand our customers, and their changing habits and needs. We hope that this edition of our Year in Search Thailand report can help you in making sense of the billions of searches that happen every year and guide your business strategy to be better prepared for what's next. We also hope that the takeaways that we have shared help you translate these insights into actions for your businesses.

So, let's learn from 2021 — because we need to look back in order to move forward.

Jackie Wang

Country Director, Google Thailand

Sources:

All Google Search data points included in this report are from Google Trends, Thailand, Sep 1, 2020 - Aug 31, 2021 vs. Sep 1, 2019 - Aug 31, 2020, unless indicated otherwise.

1, 2. Google/Kantar/Quantum, Emotional Value of Search, 2021.

A young woman is captured in a dynamic pose, running towards the right. She is wearing a white crop top, denim shorts, and sneakers. Her mouth is wide open in a shout or cheer, and she is holding a smartphone in her right hand, which is extended forward. The background is a solid blue color. A large, white, stylized arrow points from the bottom right towards the center of the image. The text "Digital mainstreamed" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font on the left side of the image.

Digital mainstreamed

If 2020 saw millions of consumers migrate online, 2021 showed the staying power of digital. From shopping to services, existing users as well as **new users, who may have begun their online journeys due to necessity, are now proactively deepening their usage.** Speed, convenience, and price are just a few of the reasons more consumers are increasingly choosing digital-led lifestyles.

In 2021, Thailand's digital migration continues with people going online to access services that were disrupted by physical shutdowns. Since the start of the pandemic up until the first half of 2021, [9 million people in Thailand became new digital consumers](#). Of these, 67% are from non-metro areas. What we're also seeing this year is the staying power of digital. Rising searches in 2021 paint a picture of how the many newcomers have not only dipped their toes into the online world but have also integrated digital into their lifestyles.

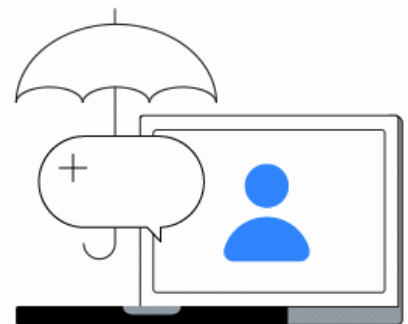


Indeed, even as offline spaces start to open up, consumers who have grown more comfortable with the digital world are now choosing to stay online. They now see digital as a useful channel for research and decision-making, and a more convenient option for completing purchases. In 2021's SEA e-Conomy Report, we found that [90% of internet users in Thailand made at least one purchase online.](#)



The rise in users pushed online by the pandemic meant that brands had to adapt and digitalize at a [scale and pace](#) they had never planned for or expected. This resulted, often quite successfully, in scrappy solutions and quick-fix pivots, as businesses forced moments of flexibility within traditional marketing and business models.

Now that consumer behaviors are no longer only fueled by the pandemic, but also by the draw of a digital-led lifestyle, brands need to set themselves up to not only be COVID-proof, but future-proof as well. This is a watershed moment to rethink the agility of your business model to be readier to respond to future changes that may lie ahead, while still keeping the customer at the center of what you do.



SEARCHES

New users and businesses online

Growing searches across Thailand show consumers using, and seeking to understand more about, digital services for the first time. As new users come online, merchants and businesses are adapting their digital strategies to meet them there.

We see people researching how to get their products online. Search interest in ขายอะไรออนไลน์ (what to sell online) increased by 44%, with the highest search per capita in Ubon Ratchathani, Phetchabun and Sakon Nakhon.

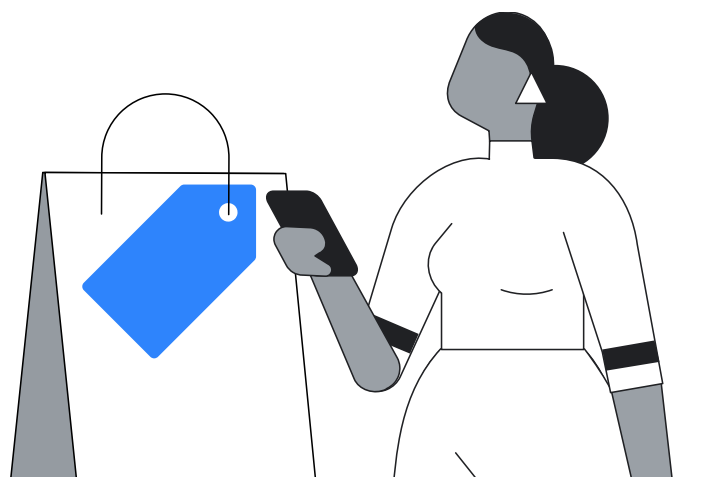


34% of digital merchants in Thailand believe that they would not have survived the pandemic if not for digital platforms, while 58% of them expect to increase usage of digital marketing tools in the next five years.³



+50%

Search interest related to โค้ดลูกค้าใหม่ (new user code) has grown by 50%.



Online-first shopping experiences

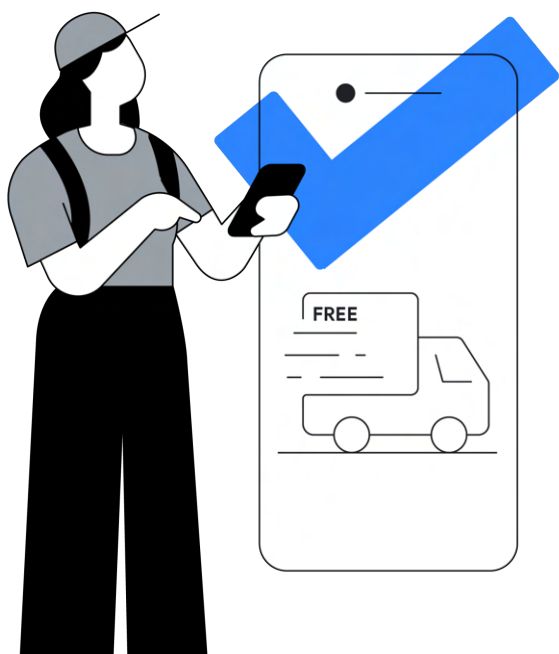
Today, Thai shoppers are becoming more accustomed to monthly sales events. Rising searches also show how they are using digital channels as a helpful tool for decision-making, and are reluctant to endure downsides like delivery waiting times and costs.



Mega Sale Days have become more popular in Thailand. Although 11.11 remains the biggest, Thai shoppers are increasingly interested in Mega Sales Days that have arisen earlier in the year. Search interest in (6.6) (7.7) (8.8) grew by 110% this year compared to 50% last year.

+30%

We see a rise in search interest by people looking to build their consideration sets online. Search interest in **ยี่ห้อไหนดี** (which brand to buy) grew by 30% as people try to understand brands available to them locally.



+60%

Shoppers are also looking for free and reliable delivery, with Thailand seeing over 60% growth in search interest in **free delivery.**



We see more than 122% growth in searches that indicate a shift from an in-person to screen-first reality, as people in Thailand search for **หาหมอออนไลน์** (see doctor online) compared to flat growth last year.

New digital consumers in Thailand embraced food delivery services during its lockdowns this year. It has emerged as the most penetrated digital service in Thailand, with 76% of the country's internet users having ordered their meals this way at least once.⁵



76%



+95%

The adoption of e-wallets has been accelerated by the pandemic. Search interest in digital wallet grew by 95% compared to pre-pandemic times.⁶

MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

From COVID-proof to future-proof



While COVID-19 created an urgency for more people and businesses to meet online, searches reveal a rise in digital-preferred behavior. At first, many brands responded to the initial rush online by finding flexibility in existing marketing strategies to solve for pandemic-related challenges. Now, the fast evolving online landscape calls for a more agile business model that is not only COVID-proof, but future-proof as well.



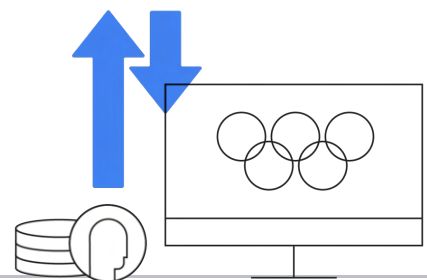
McKinsey

“What many leaders feared, and the pandemic confirms, is that their companies were organized for... standardization and predictability that’s [now] being overwritten by four big trends: a combination of heightened connectivity, lower transaction costs, unprecedented automation, and shifting demographics.”



Digital is where the masses are: From a complementary to elementary strategy

With the magnitude of the shift to online across APAC, it's clear that digital is where the masses are at. This means that channel strategies that only rely on “above the line” advertising for mass reach are fast becoming outdated.



For example, although TV viewership for the Tokyo Olympics hit a record low, [advertising budgets did not reflect this shift](#), with brands still paying as much as ever for commercials. Is your **audience and media strategy** reflecting the reality of where audiences are today?

1

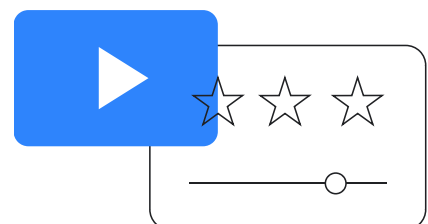
Before deciding on your digital advertising strategy, check out [best practices and tips](#) for audience reach and segmentation strategies.

2

Stay on top of the latest [consumer insights and best practices](#) across marketing objectives and shopper moments, and use them to inform your digital strategies.

3

Make your YouTube ad creatives more effective by scrapping [these five assumptions](#) and adopting a YouTube-first strategy.



2

Bring your storefront to wherever shoppers are

We know [purchase decision-making is not linear](#); there is a complicated web of touchpoints that differs from person to person. Consumers expect their shopping needs to be fulfilled whenever they need, and wherever they are.

Be ready to meet people wherever they are on their shopping journeys and create helpful bridges to take them one step closer to your storefront.

Show up for people searching for what you're selling by featuring your products on [free listings in the Shopping tab](#) on Search.

Shorten the path from your ad to your virtual storefront by connecting your product feed to either [Video action campaigns](#) to drive customers to your site, or [App campaigns](#) to take them to your mobile app.

Inspire offline actions such as driving to physical stores by pairing always-on lower funnel search keywords with a [Performance Max](#) campaign.



[AIS](#), Thailand's largest mobile operator, [more than doubled](#) its click-through rate by adding product feeds to its TrueView for Action campaign compared to a similar campaign that only had sitelink extensions.



Apichart Tangtrakulwongse

Head of Online Channel Management

“It brings the product shelf one step closer to customers. The results show an impressive increase in clicks and conversions.”

3

No more lines: Integrate and innovate across functions, channels, and formats

Digital is leveling the playing field for businesses. Traditional industry norms such as size of stores and retail legacy matter less as 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.⁷ This means that every brand has the opportunity to enjoy borderless growth, especially those that focus on seamless online-offline experiences for their customers.

90%

of APAC consumers
expect retailers to sell
their products online.



1

Build an [agile omnichannel strategy](#) that enables your business to unlock short-term wins and long-term growth.

An omnichannel ecosystem doesn't just entail showing up online. More importantly, it requires an integrated, cross-functional business strategy. Transformation needs to come from within in order for your brand to meet ever-changing consumer needs and drive sustained business growth. This agility, coupled with customer-centricity, is what will open doors to new business opportunities.

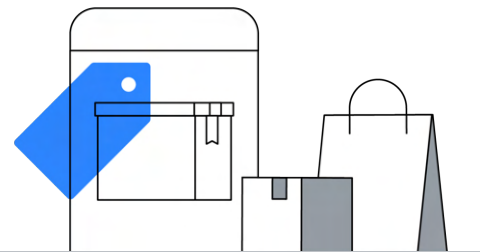


2

Connect and innovate the shopping experience, both online and in-store.

Simply moving a part of your business online will not satisfy the growing consumer demand for a seamless experience. Offer [the best of online and offline shopping](#) so that consumers can engage with your brand effortlessly, at their fingertips or in stores.

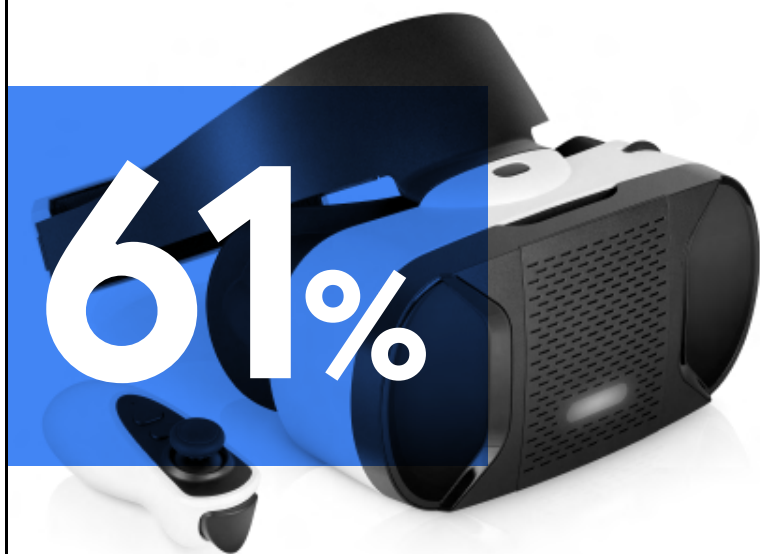
Get the last mile delivery right. [Time and cost savings](#) are the two benefits people value most in online shopping, while shipping fees and long delivery times are deal breakers.



3

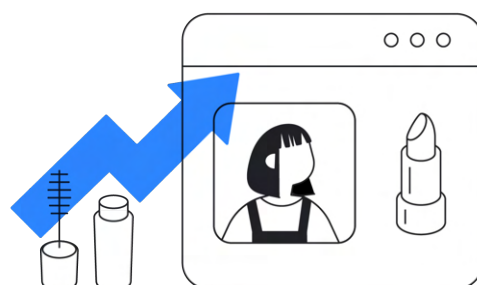
Leverage immersive technologies to replicate offline shopping experiences online and elevate the in-store shopping experience.

Almost half of the consumers surveyed felt that immersive technology like AR, VR, and 3D content helps them feel more connected with products, and 61% said they are more likely to buy from a brand that uses these technologies.⁸



[Bobbi Brown Thailand](#) leveraged AR technology to enable consumers to try on its products virtually. The YouTube campaign generated 4x higher conversions compared to non-AR campaigns and deepened the brand's connection with consumers.

As more YouTube creators go live to review products and discuss their shopping hauls, livestreaming is becoming increasingly influential in the consumer's decision-making process. [YouTube Masthead](#) enables you to work with creators and maximize the livestreaming opportunity, even allowing you to broadcast your live digital event at the top of the YouTube homepage.



[Conversational commerce](#) can personalize shopping journeys and offer shoppers assistance.


For example, [Ford Thailand](#) used an [AI-powered chatbot function](#) to enable a two-way exchange with potential customers. Car shoppers could ask questions, while Ford could showcase relevant product benefits in a personalized manner.



Sources:

All Google Search data points included in this report are from Google Trends, Thailand, Sep 1, 2020 - Aug 31, 2021 vs. Sep 1, 2019 - Aug 31, 2020, unless indicated otherwise.

3. Google-commissioned Kantar SEA e-Economy Research 2021.
4. Mastercard Data Warehouse, 2021.
5. Google-commissioned Kantar SEA e-Economy Research 2021.
6. Google Trends, TH, 1 Sep 2020-31 Aug 2021 vs. 1 Sep 2018-31 Aug 2019
7. Accenture, Global Consumer Pulse Research, 2021.
8. Accenture Interactive, Immersive Experiences Survey, 2020.

A woman with long dark hair is wearing a white lab coat over a grey sweater and a white collared shirt. She is holding binoculars to her eyes. She is also wearing black patterned leggings and black ankle boots. The background is a solid blue color. A large white number '2' is positioned in the bottom right corner of the image.

Lives reexamined

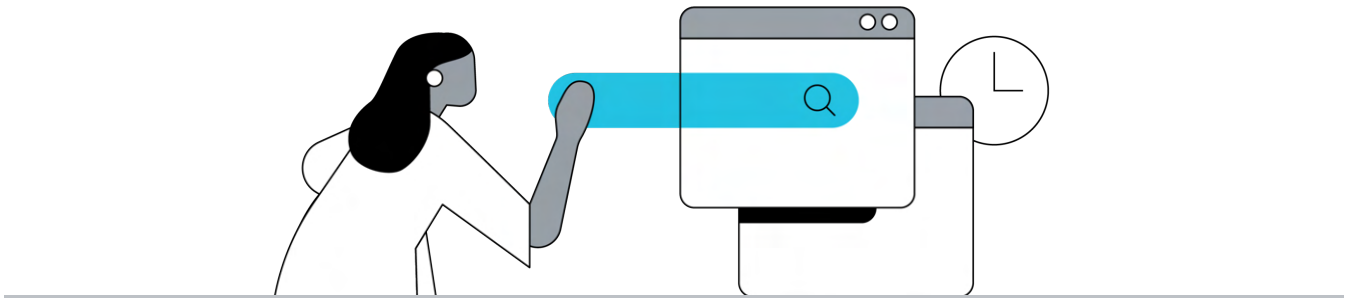
Following the sudden disruptions of the pandemic, people emerged in 2021 with a realization that some changes weren't temporary after all. This prompted a **sense of introspection and a reevaluation of their values and lifestyle choices**. As a result, they looked for more comfort and ease in their lives,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

In a recent survey, half of consumers in APAC said the pandemic inspired them to reevaluate what was important to them in life,⁹ with the most significant shifts in priority being their approach to finance and savings, time with loved ones, and a greater sense of self-care and “treat yourself” mentality.¹⁰ Indeed, emotional well-being is predicted to be a key focus for people in 2022 as they gravitate towards emotional acceptance and dedicating time to feel.¹¹



From small everyday upgrades to more major life decisions, searches are showing how people are taking stock of their lives and assessing how closely their choices are aligning with what truly matters to them. To stay relevant, brands should closely study widespread shifts in life priorities among consumers. The changing core values and priorities of people are often a [strong indicator](#) of how they will behave as consumers.

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



SEARCHES

Acceptance of a blended life

Even as restrictions ease, it seems a blended way of living is likely to remain. Signs point to a semi-remote future of work — according to Accenture, APAC is readier than other regions to adopt a hybrid working model.¹² Searches in Thailand reflect this adaptation to a more flexible future too, as people begin taking charge of their own time and space.



People are no longer making changes to their workplace but are, instead, changing the place from where they work. Search interest in [work from hotel](#) grew by 1600%.

Reevaluation of finances

We see people changing the way they look at their finances. While some looked for ways to put their savings to work through investments, others searched for ways to make ends meet.

+263%

Search interest in **cryptocurrency** grew by 263% this year, indicating an increase in its popularity across Thailand.

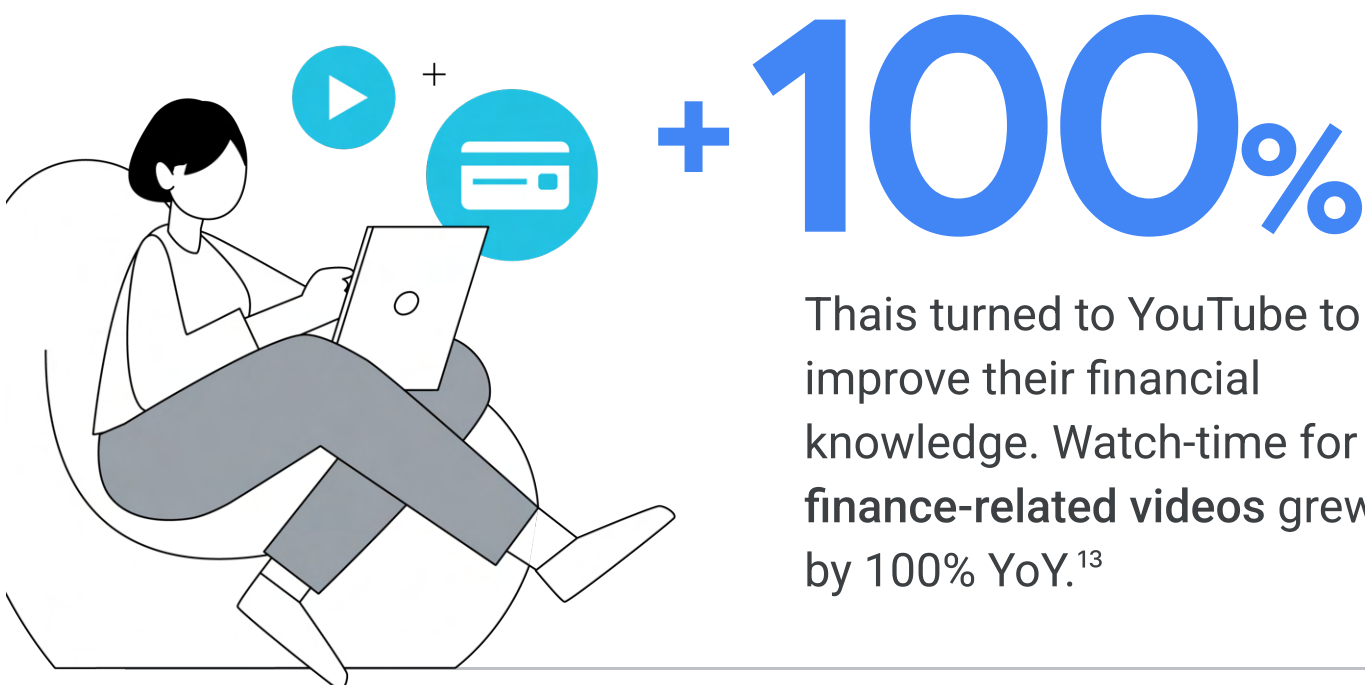


Search interest in **ลงทุน อะไร** (what to invest) grew by 26%, as consumers showed more intent in finding ways to make their money work for them.



+177%

Search interest in trading online among new users grew by 177%, with related searches such as **เปิดพอร์ตหุ้น** (opening a stock trading account).



Thais turned to YouTube to improve their financial knowledge. Watch-time for **finance-related videos** grew by 100% YoY.¹³


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

Consumers today view wellness through a broader lens, valuing physical, emotional and mental health. As Thais reevaluate their lifestyle choices, we see them taking charge and considering their personal wellness in a more holistic manner.



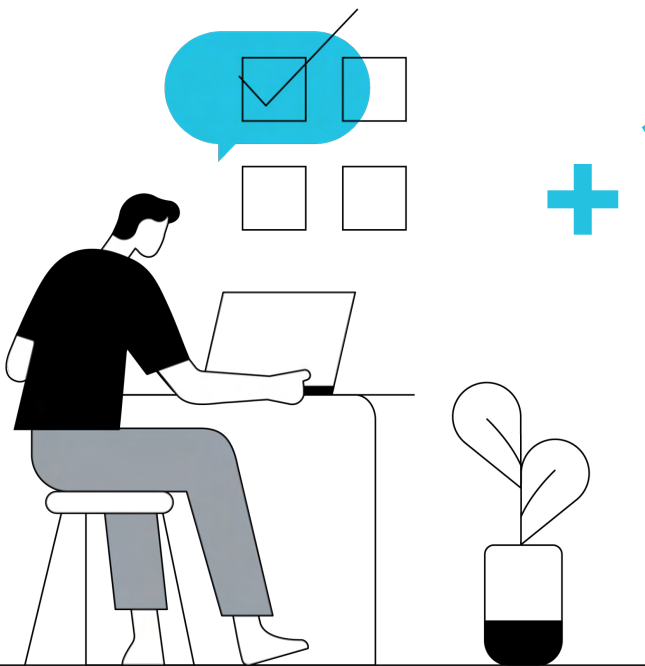
+322%

While mobility restrictions were in place, Thais sought ways to rest and relax. Search interest in [staycation](#) grew by 322%.



+100%

There was also heightened need to connect with nature as search interest in [camping](#) grew by 100%.



+169%

Search interest in

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

grew by 169%, as Thais took the personality test to understand themselves better.

Search interest related to vitamins continued to gain momentum, as people took a more proactive and preventive approach to healthcare. Searches for **Vitamin D** in particular, grew by 87%.





MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

Your brand is back on the table: gain and retain

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



Simon Kahn

Vice President, Marketing for Google APAC

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



Ensure your brand makes the list as consumers reevaluate their options

Today, as shoppers look for the brands that best align with what they need and value, up to 75% are buying from newly discovered brands rather than familiar ones.¹⁴ As consumers look to be [empowered and confident](#) about their purchase decisions, Search ranks as [the top touchpoint](#) for providing them with relevant and helpful information.



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

15% of queries every day are brand new searches.¹⁵ By broadening your keyword match type to [Broad Match](#) with [Smart Bidding](#), you're able to automatically adjust your campaigns to capture the different ways consumers are looking for your products, and act on new opportunities as they arise.

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



[i-dac Bangkok](#), Google's agency partner, has seen brands across industries achieve more clicks and conversions by applying [best practices on Responsive Search Ads](#).



Narin Yenthanakorn

Chief Operating Officer, i-dac Bangkok

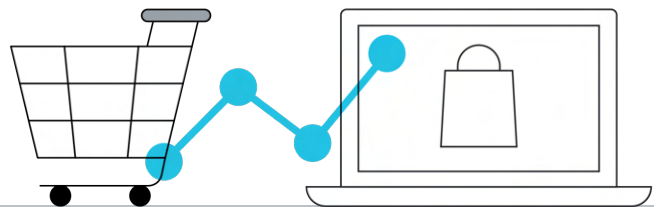
“Search keywords reflect real consumer needs that are constantly changing. Responsive Search Ads allow brands to create ads that closely match what consumers are searching for at any time, efficiently and effectively.”

2

Create data-driven marketing cycles to keep up with changing needs. An adaptable advertising strategy allows you to act on what matters most to consumers in the moment, and adopt a test and learn approach for sustainable optimization.

[Rising Retail Categories](#) and [Google Trends](#) show you what the world is searching for at both a local and global level.

With the new [Insights Page](#) in Google Ads, you can forecast and capture demand with insights tailored to your ads business and identify products offering growth opportunities.

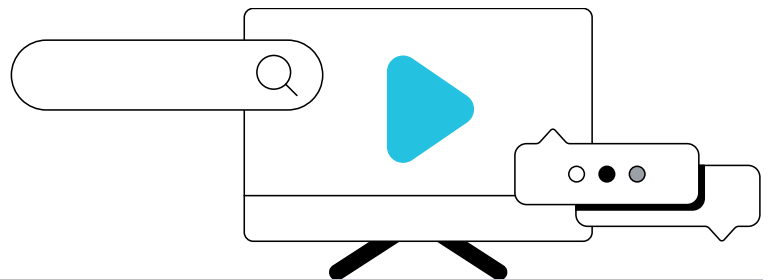


Get inspired by APAC industry leaders, who share how an [experimental approach](#) helps their marketing strategies stay data-driven and agile, and turn uncertainty into business growth opportunities.

2

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

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



3

Don't overlook your internal stakeholders

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

1

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

2

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

To build an inclusive workplace, [Sansiri](#), a Thai real estate developer, extended its paid marriage leave policy to same-sex couples, allowing them to enjoy the same rights as different-sex couples.



Sources:

All Google Search data points included in this report are from Google Trends, Thailand, Sep 1, 2020 - Aug 31, 2021 vs. Sep 1, 2019 - Aug 31, 2020, unless indicated otherwise.

9. Accenture, Global Consumer Pulse Research, 2021.
10. GWI, Zeitgeist, 2021.
11. WGSN, Future Consumer 2022, 2021.
12. Accenture, Future of Work Study, 2021.
13. Google data, TH, 21 Q1 v 20 Q1
14. Global Web Index Core, Sample Size by Country: All (n=3,919 internet users aged 16-64), ID (n=656), MY (n=651), PH (n=655), SG (n=650), TH (n=656), VN (n=651), April 2021.
15. Google Data, July 2019.

Bridging distances



The pandemic kept countless people physically apart, and consumers quickly found ways to adapt. 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. But fears of resuming in-person activities haven't overridden basic human needs for personal connection and belonging. Regardless of physical distance, rising searches show us how people will continue to find new ways to connect, and how they are increasingly open to using digital to do so.

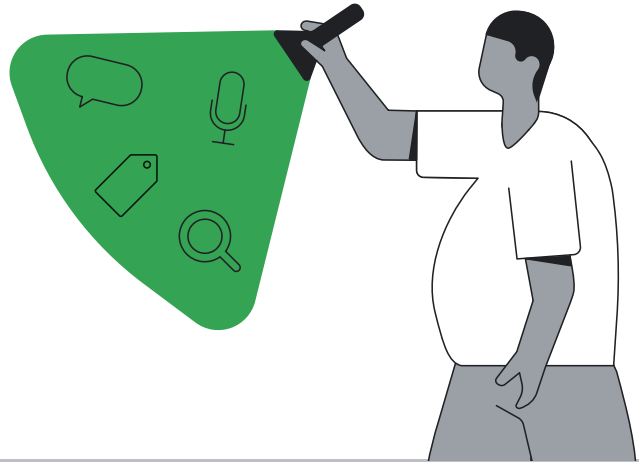


One example is how people have started to adapt the way they express their affection. In lieu of physical touch or time spent together, people are searching for gifts they can send their loved ones, and inspiration for the right words to wish them a happy birthday or anniversary.

As the world grows more dependent on digital technology to form meaningful human connections, brands need to move on from thinking of digital platforms as purely functional channels or just an online front-end. Instead, consider how you can get longer-term value out of connecting meaningfully with your customers online.



In marketing, we often say the medium is the message. But that doesn't mean that a channel should do all the hard work for you. How are you ensuring you're reaching the human behind every channel strategy? More importantly, what can you do as a brand to help facilitate better, deeper, more meaningful relationships for your consumers?



SEARCHES

Online expressions of affection

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

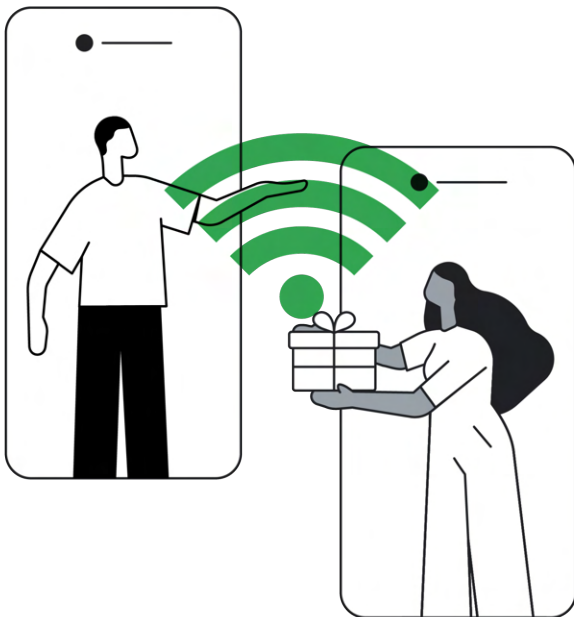


+210%

People in Thailand are turning to search for inspiration on anniversary wishes for their loved ones, with search interest in คำอวยพรวันครบรอบ (anniversary greetings) growing by 210%.

+30%

There is 30% growth in search interest in **สั่งเค้กออนไลน์** (order cake online), as Thais find ways to celebrate special occasions during a pandemic.



+69%

Gifting has become an important expression of connection during lockdown, with search interest in **ส่งของขวัญ** (send gifts) growing by 69%.

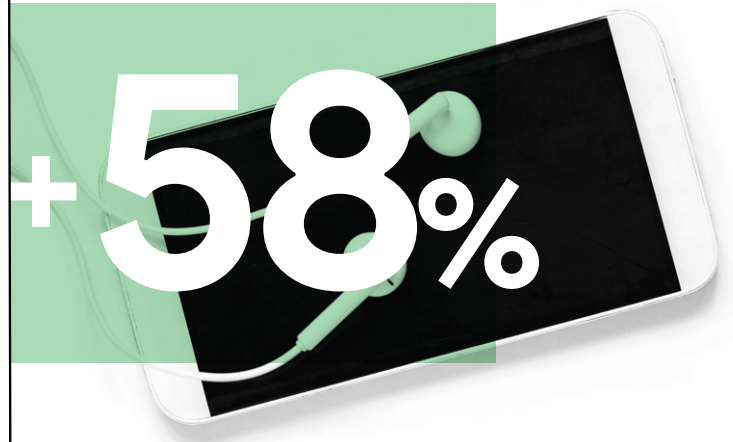
Digital for personal connection

Technology is enabling people to connect in innovative ways. Be it having meals together or watching concerts, people across Thailand are making use of technology to take their offline activities online.



Consumers were forced to find creative ways to connect with friends over meals when dine-in restrictions were imposed in the country, leading to a 100% growth in search interest in สั่งให้เพื่อน (order for friends).

We see people searching for the online or virtual equivalent of offline experiences, as reflected by the 58% growth in search interest in **คอนเสิร์ต ออนไลน์** (online concert).



People in Thailand are looking for fun things to do with their friends online, as reflected by a 32% growth in search interest in **เกมกับเพื่อน** (game with friends).





MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

The emotional value of digital

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, rewarding brands who help them navigate the [messy middle](#).

Leverage the emotional power of digital to provide timely, accurate and relevant information across your organic and [paid communication channels](#).

2

Tap into the value of virtual to augment real world experiences

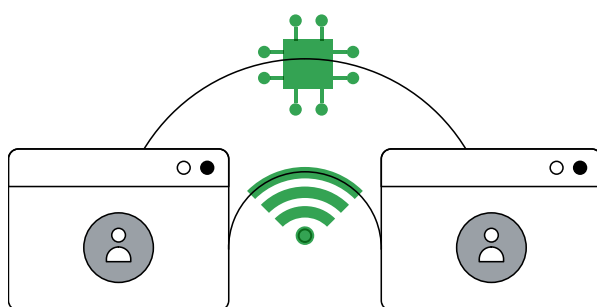
Not everyone prefers in-person experiences, especially during a pandemic. Consider the value of [virtual channels](#) as a means of complementing or augmenting physical experiences, allowing the freedom of choice between online or offline events.



In July 2021, when the music scene was hard hit by the pandemic, over 700 artists and music bands from across Thailand came together for the live, virtual [Open Hat Festival](#) on YouTube, to share their music with fans.



[Google Project Starline](#) is a new 3D technology that combines advances in hardware and software to enable friends, families, and coworkers to feel like they're together even when they're apart.



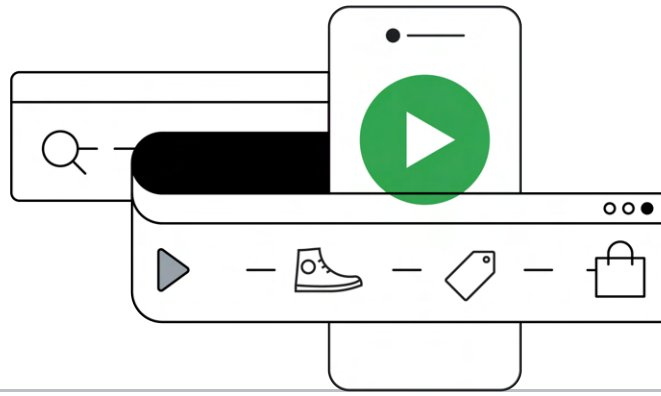
3

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.¹⁶

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.



To drive sales in northeast Thailand, Nestle's Bear Brand collaborated with YouTube country music creator [Mario Jok](#) to create a [music video](#) that showcased local lifestyle and integrated product benefit in an authentic and entertaining way. After its launch, brand searches grew by 3,350% and sales increased by 17.5%.



Sources:

All Google Search data points included in this report are from Google Trends, Thailand, Sep 1, 2020 - Aug 31, 2021 vs. Sep 1, 2019 - Aug 31, 2020, unless indicated otherwise.

16. Nielsen Catalina Solutions, 2017.

Truth seekers



With online misinformation and data breaches on the rise, consumers are more skeptical than ever. **Wary of being misled and savvier about their choices**, they're also more proactive about finding trustworthy sources, using Search to fact-check claims, scrutinize brand values, and ensure authenticity from the brands they choose to engage with.

In 2021, the pandemic further exposed the [dangerous consequences of misinformation](#), spurring governments across the world to enact “fake news” laws. At the same time, the public has become more aware of the spread of false information. People are not only savvier about what they see on the internet, but also willing to proactively seek out accurate information on their own terms.



With truth-seeking behaviors becoming more of a consumer habit, we see shoppers willing to invest more of their time and resources to ensure the choices they make align with their value systems and beliefs. Rising searches for sustainable practices and ethical shopping reflect how consumers have a lower tolerance for being misled, and are setting the bar higher for brands, holding them closely accountable for any claims that they make.



Consumers today don't just check the list of ingredients on a label, they want brands to be accountable and transparent at every step of their value chain, including sourcing, production, and corporate sustainability policies. Regardless of how much they trust a brand, consumers across all age groups will conduct extensive research prior to making their purchases.¹⁷ In a survey, **95% of Thai consumers agreed that it is important to research all relevant information about a product or service before making a purchase.**¹⁸

Instead of simply hoping that brands will be true to their word, consumers now expect brands to take proactive steps towards earning and keeping their trust. This means that for brands, getting ahead of transparency, focusing on authenticity, and ensuring two-way continuous communication with their customers has become more important than ever.



Fact-checking, fighting fraud, and protecting privacy

Searches show consumers increasingly concerned about misinformation and privacy, especially compared to pre-COVID times.²¹ In 2021, 87% of Thai consumers say it is now more important to find a trusted source of information, compared with before the pandemic.²⁰



+200%

We see an increase in search interest related to misinformation, fact-checking, and fake news in Thailand, with 200% growth in search interest in topics related to **fake news** compared to before the pandemic.²¹

+267%

A rise in the number of bank scams has made consumers more cautious. Thailand is seeing a 267% growth in search interest in **เช็คสลิปโอนเงิน** (check cash transfer receipt).



+143%

Search interest in topics related to **personal data** has also grown by 143%, compared to two years ago.²²

Savvier value systems

As consumers grow more entrenched in their belief systems, they're making sure that the brands they choose also share the same higher purpose. Searches are continuing to rise for topics like sustainability and ethics, while more than half of the consumers have stopped buying products or services that have a negative impact on the environment and society.²³

Search interest in sustainability continues from last year, with **ถังขยะแยกประเภท** (separate bins for recycling) seeing more than 20% growth in Thailand.



+129%

Ethical practices are increasingly important to consumers, with 129% surge in searches for **fast fashion** as Thais educate themselves on the topic.





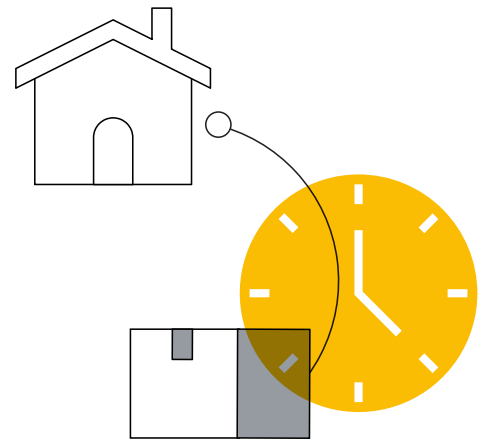
Searches for
จักรยานไฟฟ้า
(electric bicycle)
have also grown
by 83%.

Consumer demands for reassurance

Consumers today expect to be reassured along their shopping journeys. Authenticity is a key issue on marketplaces, even as we see an increase in searches for delivery tracking and official stores of popular brands. In a recent survey, **88% of Thais** agreed that they would purchase from a brand that provided trustworthy information.²⁴

With an increase in deliveries, delivery tracking has become more essential. Top searches related to delivery tracking in Thailand include:

- 🔍 **เช็คเลขพัสดุ standard delivery**
check parcel tracking ID for standard delivery
- 🔍 **เช็คเลขพัสดุ standard delivery**
check parcel tracking ID for international express
- 🔍 **ตรวจเลขพัสดุ J&T**
check J&T parcel tracking ID



As demand for authenticity increases, the top three products that Thais are searching for related to **ของแท้** (authentic) are:

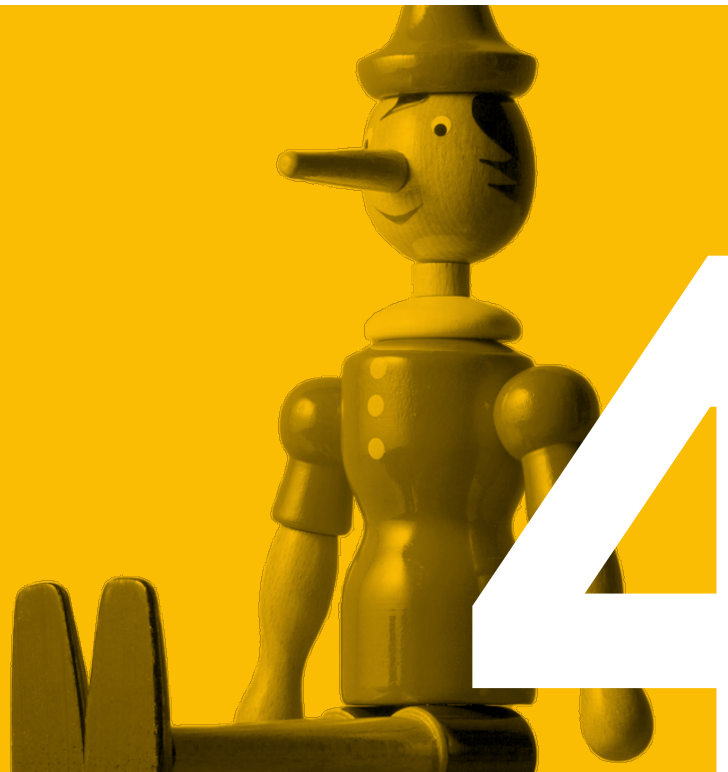
- watches
- sneakers
- charger

Growing concern about misinformation has resulted in consumers verifying the information they receive, with 72% growth in search interest in **เชื่อถือได้ไหม** (is it credible?).



MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

Trust as brand equity



Rising misinformation and record-breaking data breaches have put consumers on high alert, sharpening their values and lowering their tolerance for anything misleading. As a result, **trust is now a brand's most important asset**. Customers expect **proactive transparency and authenticity** at a minimum.



Edelman

Trust, the new brand equity

“Brands need to be for the people, and guided by the people. Why? Because brand trust ranks higher than brand love.”



Act intentionally and respectfully to protect people’s privacy and earn trust

When users have clear choice and control over their data, they’re happy to share it with businesses they trust. However, just 30% of APAC marketers have a dedicated strategy to communicate with consumers about data privacy.²⁵ It’s time to consider how you can prioritize your users’ privacy concerns to earn their trust.

1

Use first-party data responsibly and effectively to find the right balance between privacy and the personalized interactions that consumers prefer.

Check out [our marketer's playbook for privacy](#) to deliver performance in a privacy-safe way and learn what industry leaders across APAC think about the region's key data privacy trends and how to [create a privacy-first ecosystem](#).

2

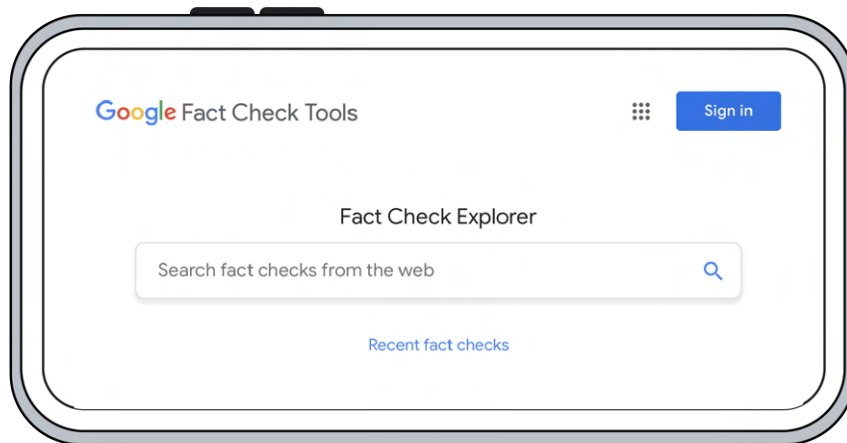
Prepare your digital ads ecosystem for a future without third-party cookies.

Explore [privacy-preserving strategies](#) that fuel continued business growth by allowing companies to reach people with relevant ads and measure results without needing to track people across the web.

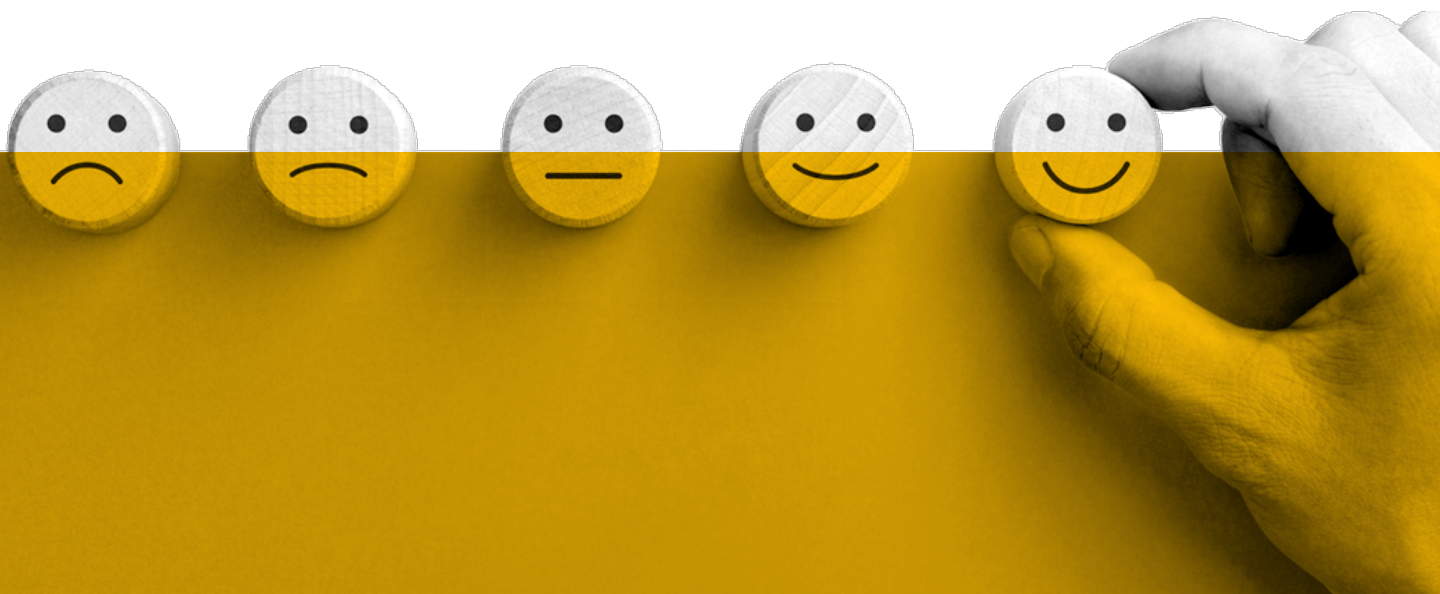
3

Educate and empower your customers to protect themselves against misinformation, scams, and fakes.

With 68% of online shoppers in Southeast Asia rating “guarantee of product authenticity” as very important,²⁶ consider ways you can offer them this needed reassurance.



In 2021, Google launched the [About This Result feature](#), which provides details about a website before users visit it, including whether the source is trusted and whether a user's connection to the site is secure. Google's [Fact Check Explorer](#) also helps counter falsehoods and reduce misinformation online.

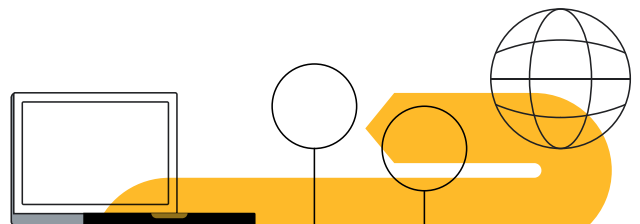


2

Hold your whole business accountable and get ahead of the conversion

When it comes to building trust, brands cannot afford to cut corners. As consumers feel increasingly empowered to hold brands accountable to their claims, earning and keeping trust requires consistent, authentic, and proactive communication.

Consider the full implications of your company values on every part of your value chain.



Expand the definition of what it means to be sustainable by considering the [carbon footprint of your digital actions](#). Through [Google Cloud Carbon Footprint](#), you can take action to evaluate and reduce the footprint of your carbon workloads.

[CP All](#), the operator of 7-Eleven convenience stores in Thailand, partnered with a local school in the Phatthalung province to develop [a biodegradable holder for coffee cups](#) at the All Cafe. With one move, the brand lent its support to sustainable practices and the local community.



Sources:

All Google Search data points included in this report are from Google Trends, Thailand, Sep 1, 2020 - Aug 31, 2021 vs. Sep 1, 2019 - Aug 31, 2020, unless indicated otherwise.

17. IBM Institute for Business Value, Meet the 2020 consumers driving change, 2020
18. Google commissioned Kantar/Quantum Report: "Emotional Value of Search 2021".
Base: Those who have purchased from the vertical in the past 18 months, TH n=502
19. Google commissioned Kantar/Quantum Report: Emotional Value of Search 2021, IN, ID, MY, PK, PH, TH, VN, n=5006, consumers who have purchased vertical in the past 18 months, 2021.
20. Google commissioned Kantar/Quantum Report: "Emotional Value of Search 2021". P10. Covid impact.
Base: Those who have purchased from the vertical in the past 18 months, TH n=502
21. Google Trends, TH, 1 Sep 2020-31 Aug 2021 vs. 1 Sep 2018-31 Aug 2019
22. Google Trends, TH, 1 Sep 2020-31 Aug 2021 vs. 1 Sep 2018-31 Aug 2019
23. Kantar, Asia Sustainability Foundational Study, 2021.
24. Google commissioned Kantar/Quantum Report: "Emotional Value of Search 2021". B3. Brand Consequences and Benefits. Base: Those who have purchased from the vertical in the past 18 months, TH n=502
25. Forrester, "The State Of Privacy In Asia Pacific," 2021.
26. Google/Kantar, Shopper Pulse SEA + JP Core Report: Waves 1+2, Sept. 2021.

Growing inequalities



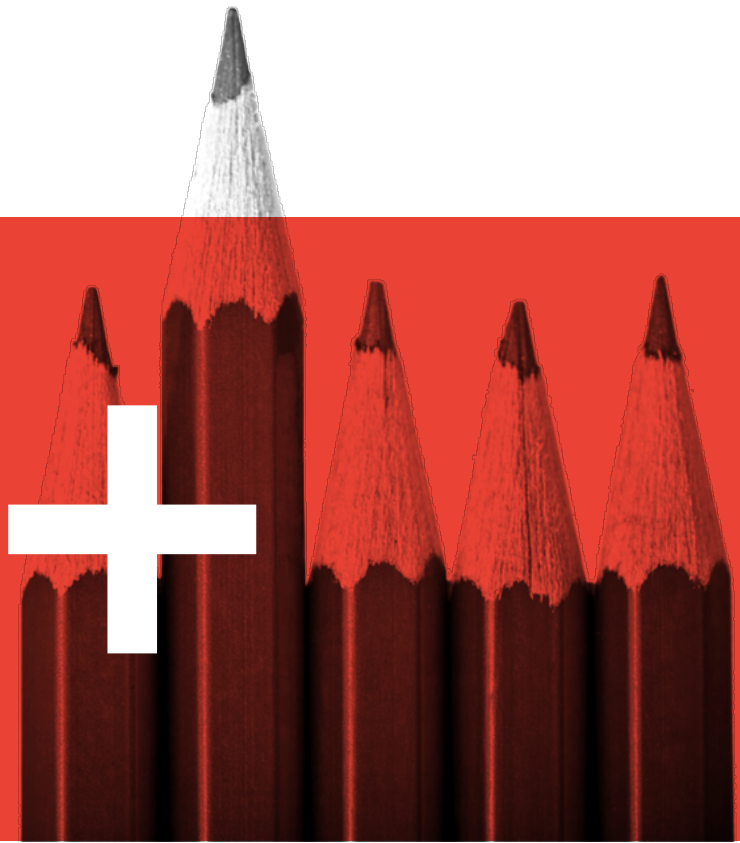
While everyone's way of life has undoubtedly shifted this past year, the pandemic didn't affect everyone the same way. It not only exposed existing inequalities, but accelerated them. People are turning to the internet for help: whether they're existing internet users with fresh financial woes, or newcomers with more basic needs, consumers are **searching for ways to overcome the challenges they face.**

Dubbed the "[inequality virus](#)", the pandemic has exposed many societal fractures along the lines of wealth, race, and gender. While many of these inequalities existed before COVID-19, the pandemic has played a role in exacerbating them, and the most vulnerable in society have been disproportionately hit.

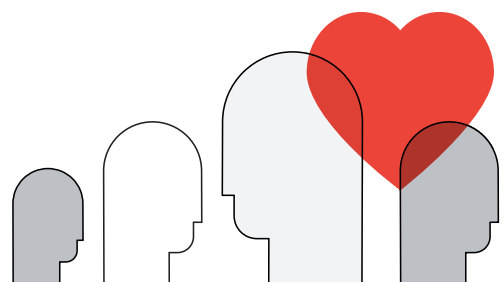


Unfortunately, not everyone has equal access to the support systems they need. The world's growing reliance on technology means it's crucial to equip the less privileged with access to digital solutions. Factors like unstable internet access, technical illiteracy, and language barriers can prevent people from joining the rest of the world online, and exacerbate the inequity they already experience.

To overcome these inequalities, people are going online for solutions to help themselves and their communities by searching for local translations, jobs in specific provinces, government benefits and even free internet services.



People recognize that these societal inequalities cannot be solved by governments and nonprofits alone. The expectation is now also on brands to help drive meaningful change.²⁷ Perceived to be more ethical and competent,²⁸ businesses are uniquely positioned to boost customer loyalty and trust by driving social change. This means that consumers will embrace brands who not only reflect diversity in their campaigns, but take action to create equity in societies as well.



Access to stable and affordable internet

As more needs are being fulfilled online, people are increasingly focused on ensuring that they have reliable and affordable internet access. They are also curious about the future of technology.

+35%

In Thailand, YouTube search interest in **เน็ตฟรี** (free internet) grew by 35%.



This year, we have seen continued momentum in searches testing internet speed and connectivity as more people come online, with the highest search per capita for **เช็คความเร็วเน็ต** (check internet speed) coming from:

1. ชัยนาท (Chai Nat)
2. อุทัยธานี (Uthai Thani)
3. แม่ฮ่องสอน (Mae Hong Son)

We also saw an even more accelerated growth in search interest in (5G) compared to last year, which increased by 235%.

+235%



The need for financial support

As Thailand experiences high unemployment rates,²⁹ consumers are searching for different ways to alleviate economic concerns. Whether it's finding jobs in their hometown, or getting a government subsidy or cash loan, people are looking for financial support to tide them over in an uncertain year.



+125%

Rising economic pressures and unemployment, coupled with mobility restrictions, have forced many people to look for ways to earn income in their local area, with search interest in **หางานใกล้ฉัน** (jobs near me) seeing up to 125% growth.

Thais are also interested in the government's financial aid schemes, with three out of [Thailand's top ten trending search terms in 2021](#) associated with:

เราชนะ

Rao Chana or We Win, a financial aid scheme

คนละครึ่ง

Khon La Krueng or Let's Go Halves, a co-payment scheme

ม.33 เรารักกัน

Mor 33 Rao Rak Kan, a financial remedy to assist employees covered by Section 33 of the Social Security Act



Lockdowns have also put more people in financial distress, with search interest in **สินเชื่อเงินด่วน** (quick cash loan) growing by 59% as Thais seek ways to make ends meet.



Assistance in navigating the digital world

Searches show the uneasiness that consumers face when accessing online information, arising from unfamiliarity with a foreign language or a new digital platform. With more users using digital services for the first time, the need for assistance continues to grow.

Across countries in APAC, including Thailand, we see growth in searches for assistance in comprehending words that are not in users' mother tongue. Search interest in แปลว่าอะไร (what does it mean?) grew by 24%, with breakout growth in คลัสเตอร์ แปลว่า อะไร (what does cluster mean).



Thais are eager to learn how to get the most out of government's financial support online, with 5 of 10 top trending how to queries in Thailand related to this topic:

🔍 วิธียืนยันตัวตน เราชนะ

how to verify identity for the Rao Chana

🔍 วิธีใช้คนละครึ่ง

how to apply for Khon La Krueng

🔍 วิธีลงทะเบียน เรารักกัน

how to register for Rao Rak Kan

🔍 วิธีรายงานตัวว่างงานผ่านเน็ต

how to report unemployment

🔍 วิธีสมัครสินเชื่อเสริมพลังฐานราก

how to sign up for Serm Palung Rak Tan SME loan



MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

From reflecting society to changing it

5

Creating real change is not just about ensuring diversity and inclusion, it is about taking action towards ensuring equity as well. While the pandemic has impacted everyone's lives, not everyone has been affected in the same way, and rising searches reflect the need for help. Now, reaching customers **takes more than simply reflecting society**. Brands are also expected to take actions to shape it.



Edelman

“With four converging global crises over the last year — COVID-19, economic insecurity, financial/health inequities and systemic racism — brands that take a stand get a giant boost in trust. This evolved role for brands offers a new opportunity for brand marketers and real risk if they fail to recognize consumers’ call for brand action.”

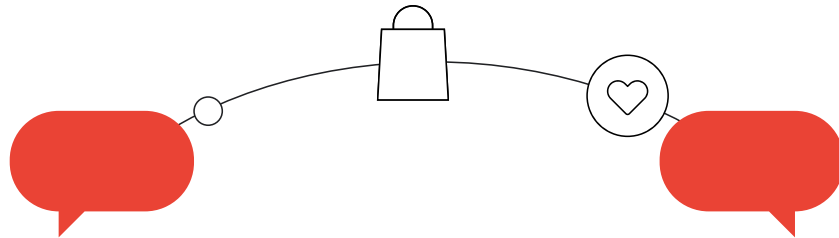


Cater to consumers’ basic needs to enable them to participate and engage

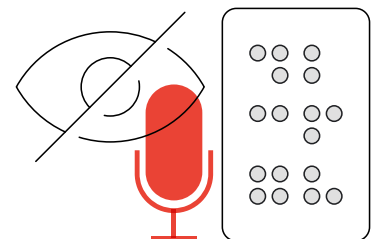


Don’t let language be a barrier.

Engage your global audience with a full language experience that conveys your brand, reputation and trustworthiness. This might entail having [translation options for your web content](#), or adopting [voice assistance](#) to make interactions easier for your customers, regardless of literacy levels.



In 2020, [Starbucks](#) opened a store in South Korea that focused on inclusive design, such as contactless speech-to-text voice recognition at the till, a braille menu, and digital signage to help consumers keep track of their orders. Staff members also received customized training and a basic course in Korean Sign Language.

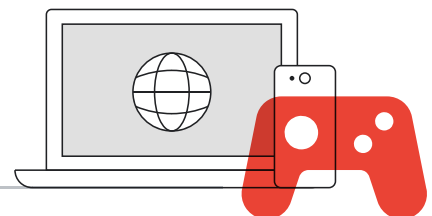


Google's [Multitask Unified Model](#) (MUM) has the potential to break down language barriers by transferring knowledge across languages. MUM can learn from sources in a foreign language and use those insights to find the most relevant results in your preferred language.

Help close technical, financial, and accessibility gaps.

Keep in mind that your quest for operational efficiency and digital transformation isn't leaving some of your customers behind. Not all users will have the same level of digital savvy, especially as more new users come online. In fact, many new internet users still struggle with basic tasks.

Look at your engagement metrics as indications of how your online platforms or services are used. By paying attention to potential drop-off points, you can get insights on how to improve not least the onboarding experience for customers, but also create ongoing learning moments.



Google launched the [Be Internet Awesome](#) program in Thailand in 2019 to teach kids the fundamentals of digital citizenship and safety via a web-based game and an educational curriculum so they could explore the online world with confidence. In 2021, the program expanded to help [parents](#) talk to their children about digital well-being and safety.

In 2021, Grab started a grassroots strategy to realize [financial inclusion](#) in Indonesia by empowering sellers and the unbanked with access to financial products and services.



2

Take a bigger stand

Consumers are drawn to brands that focus on the “we” over the “me.” While 63% of consumers surveyed were more attracted to “brands that focus on making the world a better place,” only 37% said they preferred “brands that focus on making me a better person.”³⁰ The same survey found that 86% of respondents expect brands to act beyond their product or business,³¹ suggesting that people are increasingly looking for brands that focus on contributing to society and the rest of the world.

1

Stand for something bigger than profits.

It's time to redefine success in business and build for a more inclusive and sustainable economy. Brands need to speak up and act beyond their traditional business boundaries, for both consumers and employees.



Honda, the Japan-based automaker, is creating an [in-shoe navigation system](#) designed to help people with blindness or low vision. This is an extension of its usual products, but in line with its vision to bring joy by expanding life's potential, advancing mobility, and improving people's daily lives.

2

Build inclusive marketing strategies that benefit people and your bottom line.

Consumers are 4.5x more likely to buy from a brand if it addresses human rights, and 3.5x more likely to do so if it takes on economic inequality.³² As marketers, we are in a unique position to drive authentic and meaningful change, and it starts with the teams we build and the stories we tell. Get inspired by tips for [inclusive marketing best practices](#).



Singapore-based digital telco [Circles Life](#) has unveiled a data plan which enables customers to choose their family, acknowledging non-traditional families such as LGBTQ+, single-parent, and divorced families.

In April 2021, [Kao](#) announced it would stop using the words “whitening,” “lightening,” and “bihaku” (beautiful white) in its product marketing.



Sources:

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27, 28, 30, 31, 32. Edelman, Trust Barometer Special Report, 2021.

29. Asian Development Bank, Basic Statistics, 2021.