

Think with Google



# YEAR IN SEARCH 2020

MALAYSIA

Looking back to move your marketing forward

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What a year. As 2020 drew to a close and we welcome 2021, we still find ourselves amidst uncertainties and unlimited questions. In a year where the pandemic has challenged everyone around the world to accept change and adapt to a new normal, Malaysians turned to Search to find answers to their questions, many of which had never been asked before. They continued to view Search as a trusted advisor, as well as a vital source of information, and relied on it to help, get help, cope and find ways to rise above it all.

And while we may not have found all the answers, observing how people turned to Search, both on Google and YouTube, offers a unique view into their changing habits and needs. We hope that this edition of Year in Search 2020 Malaysia report can help to portray some of the shared desire Malaysians have in trying to understand our collectively unique experiences, and how businesses can connect - and reconnect - with consumers in a more personal and meaningful way.

Malaysians are adopting digital more than ever and we only see this trend further amplifying in 2021 and beyond. As the country and world continues to evolve, the marketing landscape, too, must adapt alongside it. Uncertain times represent new opportunities that call for new learnings, deeper reflections, and greater inspirations.

The role of Search has never been more clear. As marketers, we pride ourselves on knowing our customers. Observing how people turn to Search offers a unique view into their changing habits and needs. With this report, we will share takeaways to help you translate these insights into actions for your businesses.

We hope that our report can serve as an opportunity for us to together look back and help move your marketing forward.



**Jenny Lim**  
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Google Malaysia



**Lars M. B. Anthonisen**  
Head of Marketing | Singapore,  
Malaysia & South Asia Frontiers

# Country Themes

## 1 Higher Purpose ▶ 05

As a global crisis tests their values, Malaysians are looking for ways to do more for their communities and the environment – and they expect the same from the brand.

## 2 Whole Selves ▶ 14

Lines are blurring in the roles people play, and Malaysians are looking to have more specific needs met at any one time. They are searching for brands that fit into their lives, and not the other way around.

## 3 Sweet Relief ▶ 20

Happiness never goes out of style, but amid the historic challenges of the pandemic, Malaysians are welcoming brands that spark joy in their lives and create a safe space for them.

## 4 Future Proofing ▶ 29

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

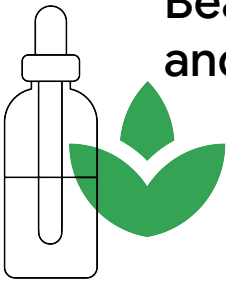
## 5 Individual Matters ▶ 36

COVID-19 reaffirmed a simple truth: each Malaysian experienced the crisis differently. Search trends reveal that people want to understand complex issues better, confront stigmas, and prioritize overall well-being.

# Vertical Trends

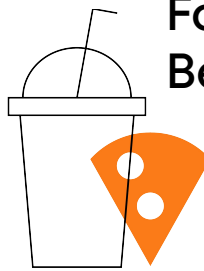
COVID-19 has changed the way people make purchase decisions. In this section, we explore the changing habits and needs of consumers in 4 key industries to help you translate these insights into actions for your businesses.

## Beauty, Health ▶ 42 and Personal Care



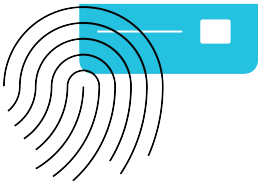
As beauty routines evolve, users are looking for at-home solutions to their skin-related issues and investing in hair maintenance.

## Food and ▶ 49 Beverage



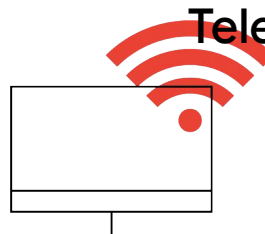
The pandemic has changed the Food and Beverage industry, as more people choose to stay home and order in.

## Finance ▶ 56



More Malaysians are actively boosting their financial knowledge to prepare for the future.

## Technology and ▶ 62 Telecommunications



Malaysians staying at home are turning to technology like never before.



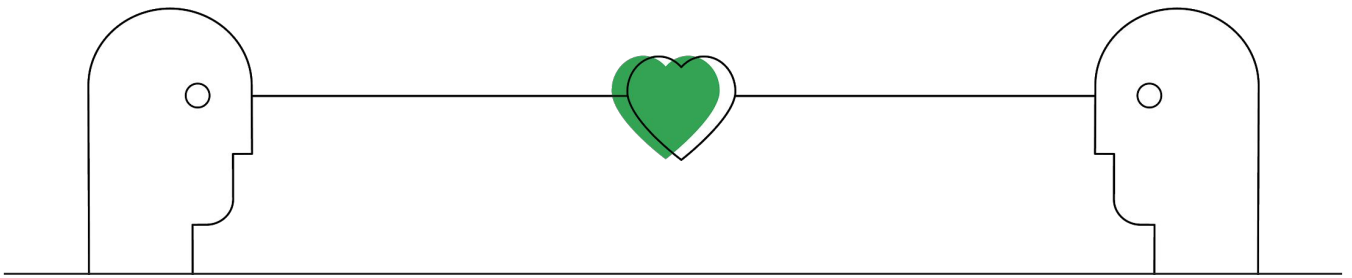


## Trend 1

# Higher Purpose

The pandemic forced a global reset that is testing our humanity and values. It has encouraged Malaysians to think beyond themselves and focus on the greater good of the community. Many expect brands to do the same, making it just as important for them to integrate the spirit of giving back into their businesses.

Social distancing – and isolation, in many cases – has heightened the sense of collective purpose among Malaysians and brought a desire to connect to the wider community by giving back.



### DID YOU KNOW?

A national campaign, #kitajagakita (we take care of us), was launched during the pandemic to bring together Malaysian brands and individuals to do what it takes (be it supporting frontline workers or small businesses), and help each other through uncertain times.



46.6%



of Malaysians believe that **contributing to my community is important**

Source: Global Web Index, Wave Q3 2020, Malaysia

## DID YOU KNOW?

Searches for “donations” are at a 5-year high, as Malaysians opened their hearts and checkbooks to help others during the pandemic, with top searches related to “covid19”, “blood” and “zoo”.



growth in searches related to  
**terima kasih** (thank you)

Top  
searches  
related to  
thank you:



“thank you coronavirus helpers”



“terima kasih kepada pekerja yang menolong ketika pandemik”



(thank you to pandemic frontliners)



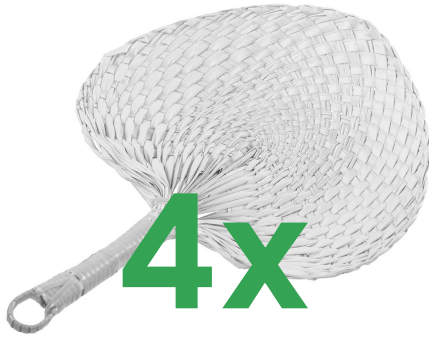
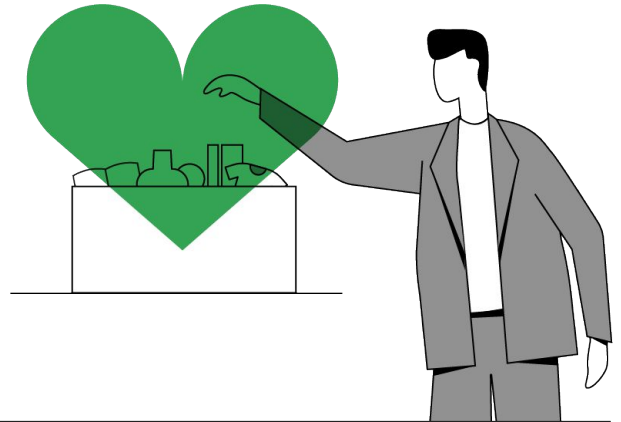
“thank you frontliners”



“thank you coronavirus helpers”



People across Malaysia are choosing to buy local and support SMEs to keep the economy going.



4x

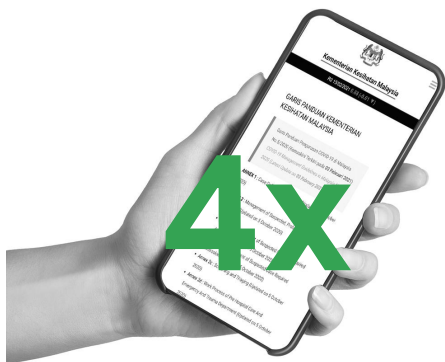
increase in **buatan Malaysia**-related searches (Malaysian made) compared to the previous year



2x

growth in **SME**-related searches

...and searching for ways to keep themselves and their loved ones safe.



4x

jump in searches for **"SOP"**, with festive seasons around Raya, Chinese New Year and Deepavali being peak search periods



27%

rise in searches for **"sanitation"**, as the pandemic brought back focus on health and hygiene

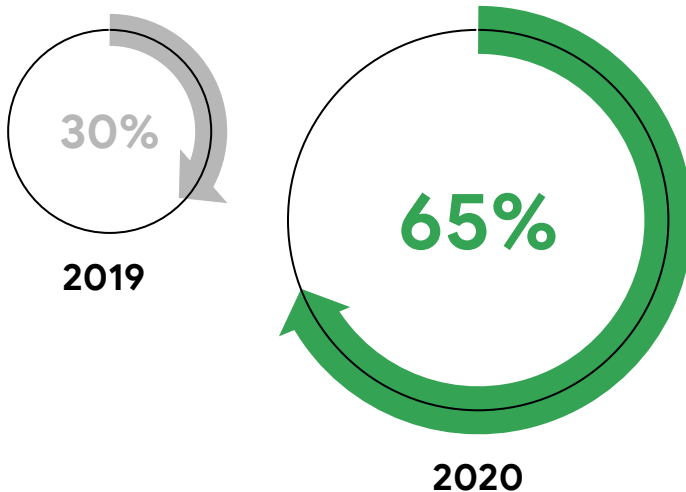
Environmental concerns are not new. Confronted with their own personal consumption habits during the lockdown, Malaysians have been reassessing their impact on the environment.

54.4%



of Malaysians believe that helping the environment is important

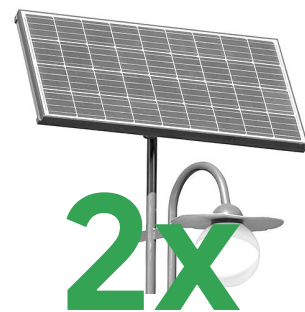
Source: Global Web Index, Wave Q3 2020, Malaysia



jump in searches for “reusable”, as more people embraced green habits compared to 30% in the previous year



rise in searches for “cloth face mask”, with searches for “surgical face mask” growing at 9x



rise in searches for “solar energy”, as more people understood the value of clean, renewable energy

# What it means for brands

**Make meaningful connections that go beyond traditional corporate social responsibility. When people find common ground with a company's values, it's more likely that 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 Malaysia (91%) more likely to no longer purchase from a brand they disagree with - and even actively discourage others from doing so as well.**

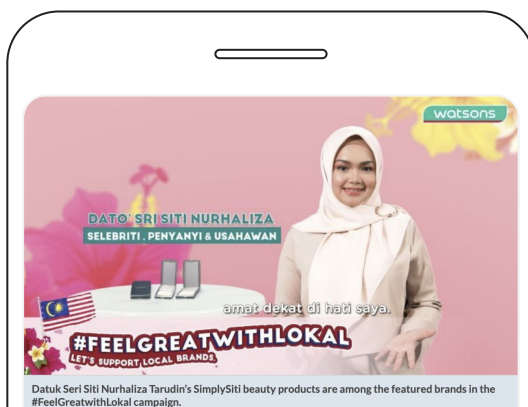




# What it means for brands

## 1. Create new ways for Malaysian consumers to connect with local communities, small businesses, and each other.

Malaysia's largest online marketplace **Mudah.my**, at the height of the lockdown, helped sellers go online so that they could participate in the first-ever digital Ramadan bazaar. Similarly, **FashionValet's FVBazaar**, and **Foodpanda**, in partnership with the Penang Halal International, launched Ramadan e-Bazaars in the state during the pandemic as a way to support local food businesses affected by the Movement Control Order (MCO).



In the spirit of coming together as a nation to help rebuild the economy and support local businesses impacted by the pandemic, **Watsons** called on its customers and members to support home-grown brands under its **#FeelGreatwithLokal** campaign.

“ As part of Mudah.my's ongoing initiative to support local SMBs, especially during the difficult COVID-19 period, we ran our first ever Digital Ramadan e-bazaar campaign... we managed to reach out to one third of Malaysians.

- Andrew Pinto, Head of Marketing, Mudah.my



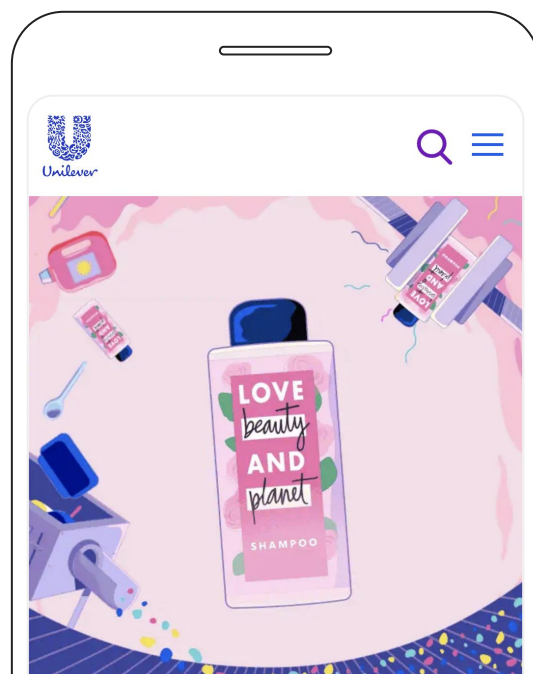
# What it means for brands



## 2. Make your values and internal practices externally visible.

With **MAGGI**'s mission of empowering women within the company and externally, MAGGI organized a three-day Bengkel Online **Wanita Cukup Berani MAGGI** to impart knowledge and insights in the areas of confidence enhancement, digital upskilling, and entrepreneurship.

With their new eco-conscious line, **Unilever Malaysia** is committed to giving a little love to the planet. **Love, Beauty and Planet** products use ethically sourced fragrance ingredients. The brand's indulgent, fragrant shampoo formulas are packaged in bottles that are made of 100% recycled plastic.

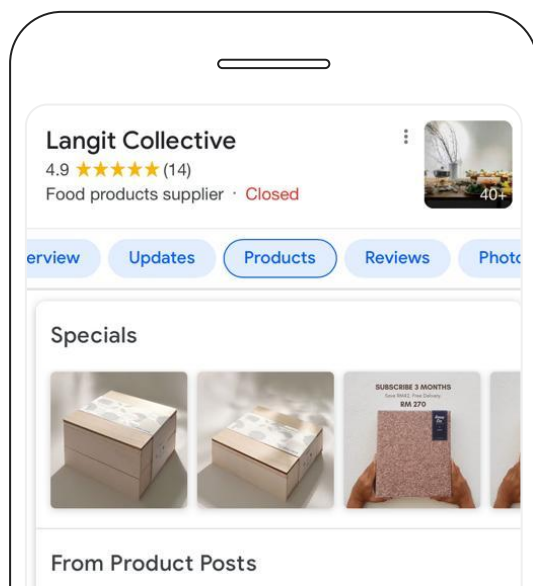
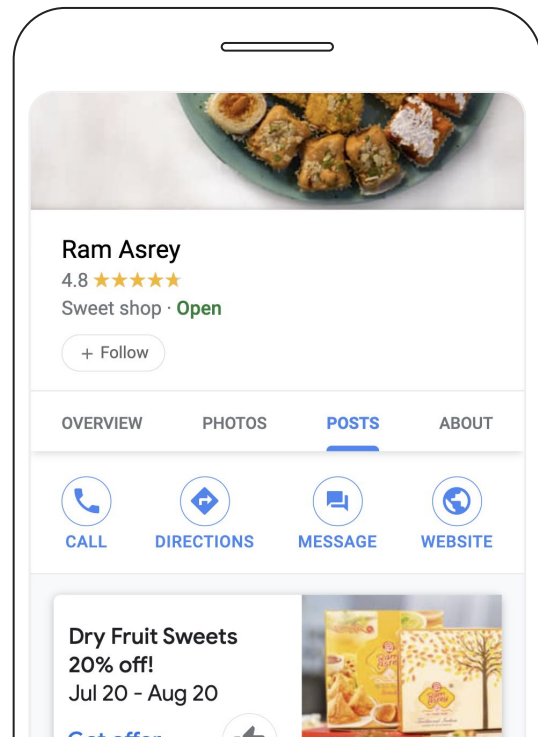


# What it means for brands

## 3. Reach out to potential customers in the community.

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 and interact with the customers who are looking for their products and services.

In APAC, 53% of online shoppers say they'll buy online even more frequently post-pandemic. With millions conducting shopping-related searches on Google every day, brands have the opportunity to list their products (for free) on Listings.



Searches for “near me” have grown 4X in Malaysia in the past three years, 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.



## Trend 2

# Whole Selves

The lines that used to separate the many facets of a Malaysian's life have begun to merge since the start of the pandemic. More people now have to balance their personal and professional lives all at once, at home. This has resulted in an uptick in products and services that help Malaysians juggle these various roles, and it is driving innovation across industries.

Many are struggling to manage their work and home duties under one roof, all the time. As a result, Malaysians are actively looking for ways to optimize their time, making efficiency and productivity more important now than ever.



increase in searches  
related to **productivity**



growth in searches for  
“**delivery tracking**”

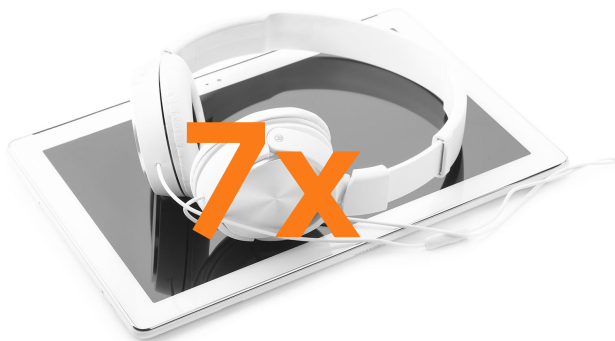


rise in searches for **video call**  
**services and platforms**

Learning and education  
are going online, as more  
people adopt technology  
to study, and develop or  
hone skills.



jump in searches for **“buat website”**  
(how to build a website)



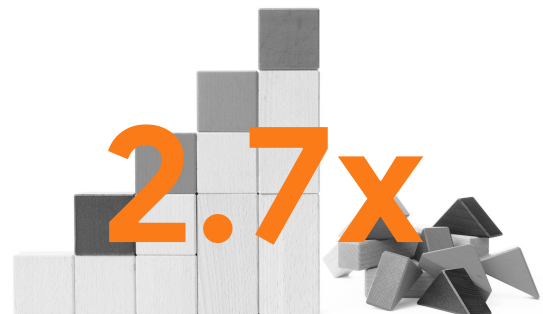
growth in searches for  
**“digital learning”**



increase in searches for  
**“Google Classroom”**



rise in searches for  
**“contoh peta minda”**  
(mind map examples)



surge in searches for  
**gamified educational tools**

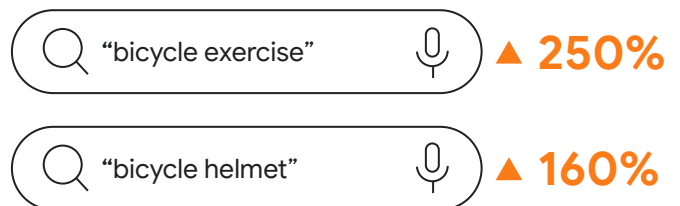
Consumers are also maintaining their well-being - physically, mentally and spiritually - and placing an emphasis on self-care.

### DID YOU KNOW?

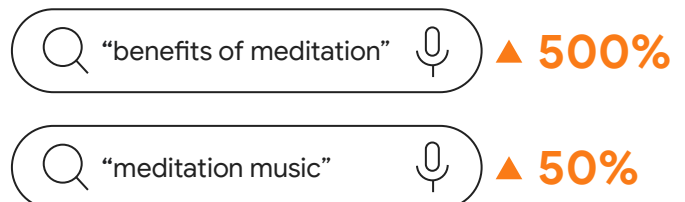
Malaysia saw a 19% growth in “**self-care**” searches vs overall searches, as more people understood the importance of caring for one’s own health in a pandemic.



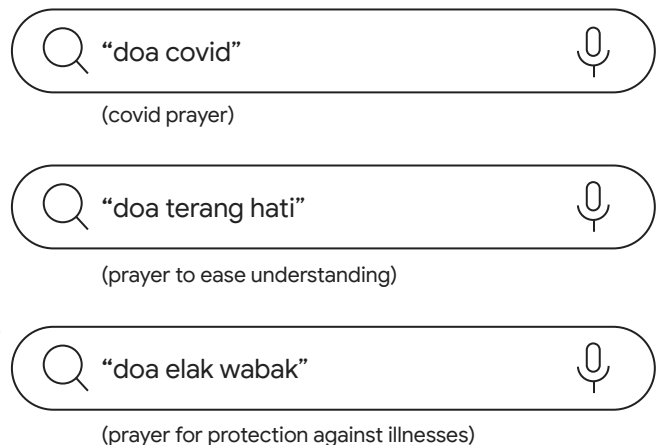
### Rising search terms related to biking:



### Growth in search terms related to meditation:



### Rising searches related to doa (prayer):





# What it means for brands

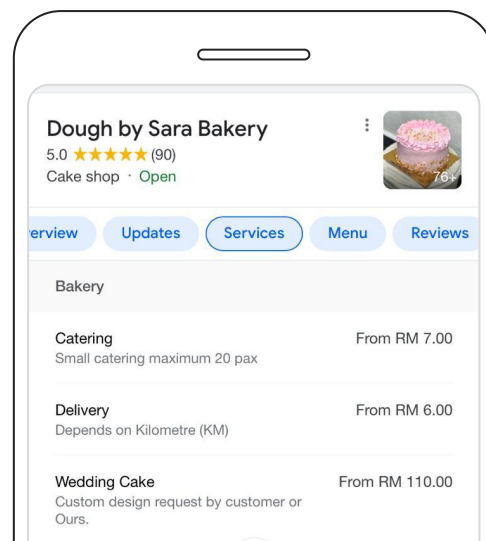


**People bring their whole selves to your brand, not just their consumer identities. How can you challenge your business to reexamine and redefine industry norms?**

## 1. Rethink your business boundaries.

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

Google made it easier for merchants who normally provide in-person services to pivot online by letting those who are verified on Google My Business to add attributes like "online classes," "online appointments" or "online estimates" to their Business Profile. This information will be visible on the merchants' Business Profiles in Search and Maps.

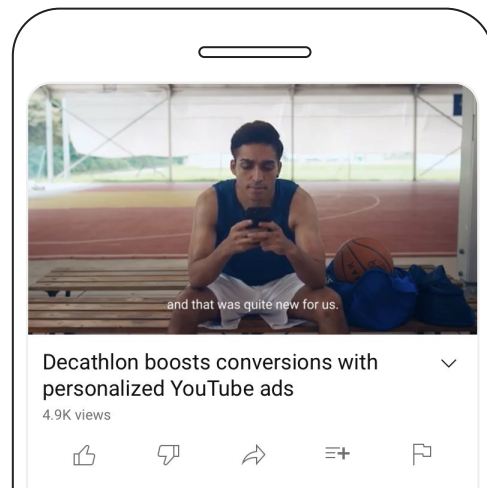




# What it means for brands

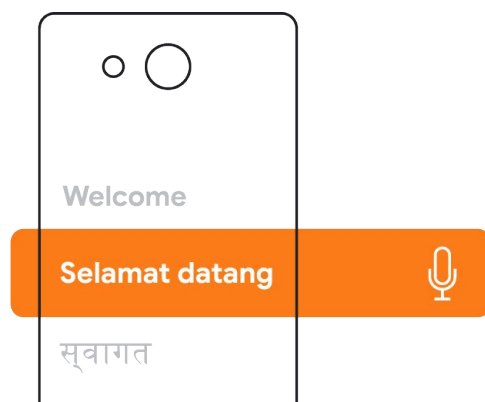
## 2. Adjust your business and marketing solutions to fit into your consumers' lives.

**Decathlon** used Search behavior insights and Director Mix to automatically create over 100 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.



## 3. Speak to your customers like a local.

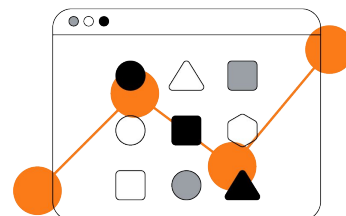
Within Google marketing, even when users are on English language browsers, click-through rates are consistently higher when local language ad copy is used.



## 4. Make it easy.

More time online means less patience for digital mistakes.

With various levels of lockdowns still on-going, 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 3

# Sweet Relief

The pandemic has canceled festivals, concerts and other events. Many vacations and large celebrations have been limited or put on hold. It is why Malaysians are seeking out happiness and joy now more than ever. Amidst a year of historic challenges, consumers are embracing products and activities that spark joy and create a safe space for them to take a break.

The need for comfort and to de-stress are the main driving forces behind Malaysians seeking new and alternative forms of downtime.

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There has been an uptick in activities that improve learning and productivity...



increase in searches for **“bookshop near me”**, as people spent more time reading during the pandemic



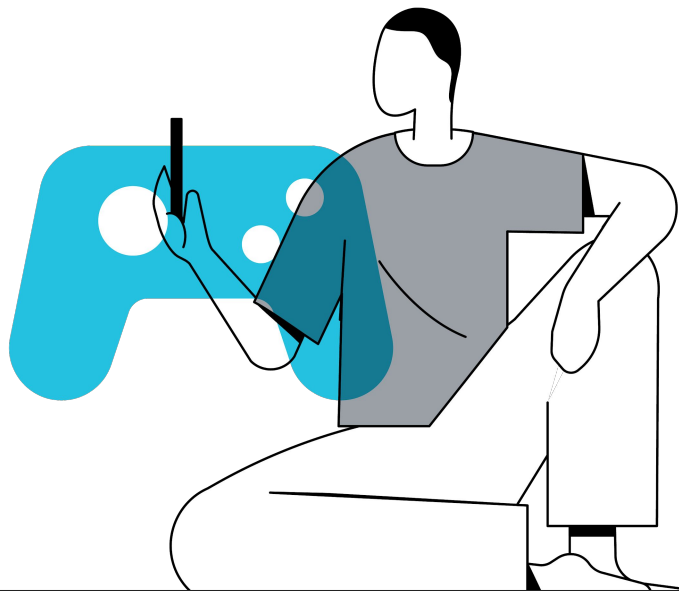
jump in YouTube searches for **“podcasts”**



rise in YouTube searches for **“cara lukis”** (how to draw)



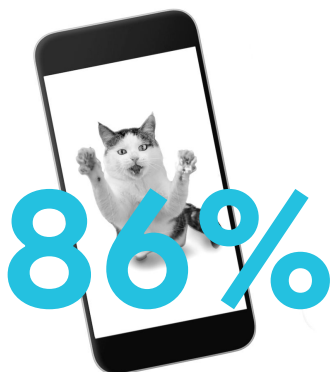
increase in YouTube searches for **“lofi music”**, as more people turned to this genre to chill out and boost productivity while at home



...even as people seek ways to pass time while spending more hours at home.



increase in watchtime of **YouTube** on smart TVs in April 2020



increase in searches for **“memes”**



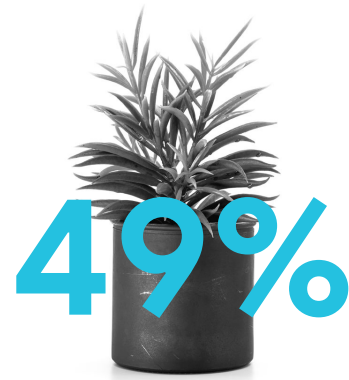
rise in searches for **“online games”**, compared to 15% in the previous YoY

As Malaysians spend more time at home, they are looking for physical activities to get their hands dirty and going back to basics offline.

Like growing a garden in their homes...

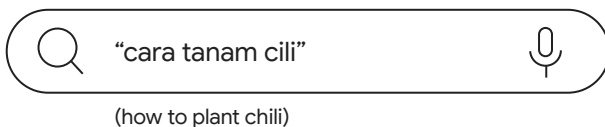


increase in searches for  
**“cara tanam”** (how to plant), with most  
people searching for  
**“tips on planting vegetables”**

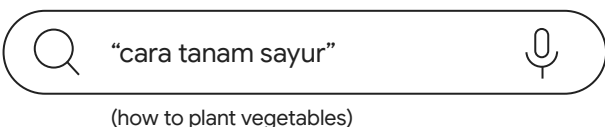


jump in searches for  
**“houseplant”**, which helped  
us connect with nature during  
lockdown

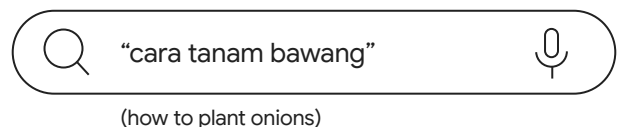
Top searches related to growing  
an edible garden include:



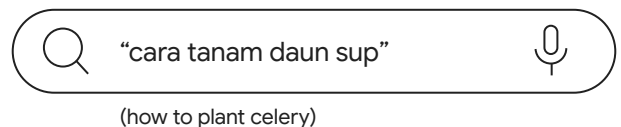
(how to plant chili)



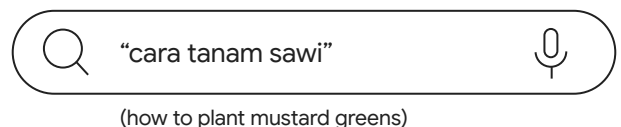
(how to plant vegetables)



(how to plant onions)

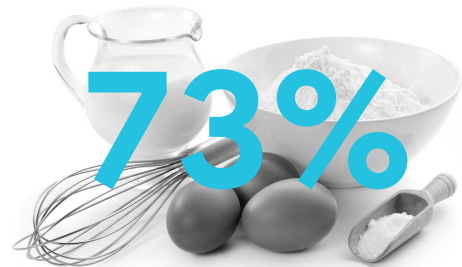


(how to plant celery)



(how to plant mustard greens)

## Experimenting in the kitchen...



surge in searches for “baking”

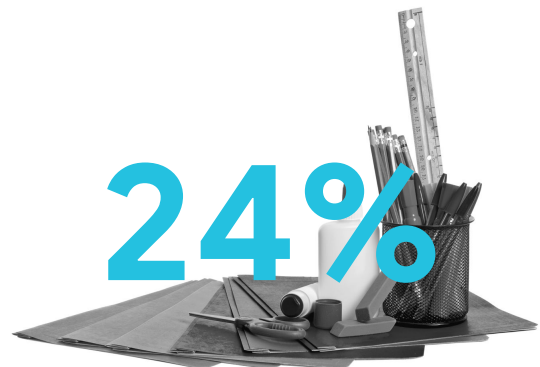
## ...or starting DIY projects for home improvement.



rise in searches for “cat dinding”  
(wall painting)



increase in searches for “**buat sendiri**”  
(make yourself), with Malaysians looking to build a range of products, from their own home (“**buat rumah sendiri**”) to a website (“**cara buat website sendiri**”)



rise in searches for “**cara buat**”  
(how to make), indicating that more people are looking for ways to get crafty while at home

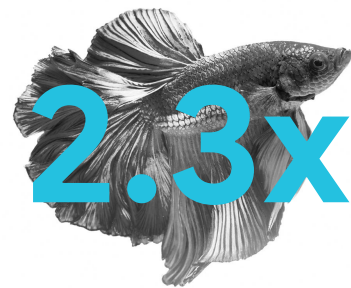
With social distancing emerging as the new way of life, Malaysians are seeking new forms of companionship, and ways to stay engaged with each other.



growth in searches for  
“multiplayer video games”



increase in searches for “**adoption**”, as Malaysians sought a furry friend to keep them company and provide comfort

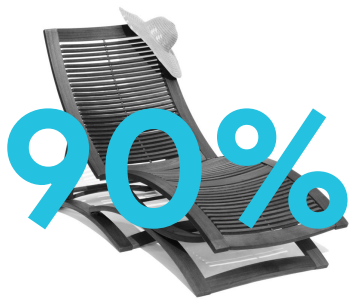
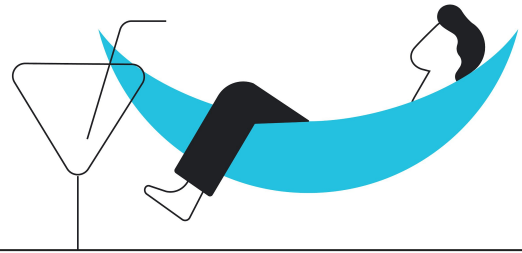


increase in searches for  
“**Siamese fighting fish**”, a popular option among those who want companionship with lesser responsibilities





And as regulations loosen, Malaysians have found themselves rediscovering their country by planning getaways to take a break from everyday life.



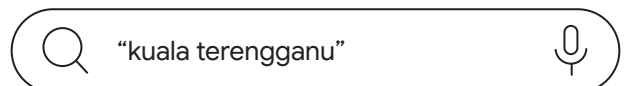
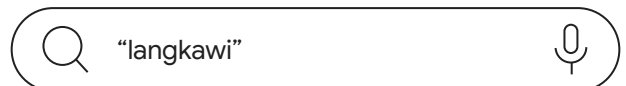
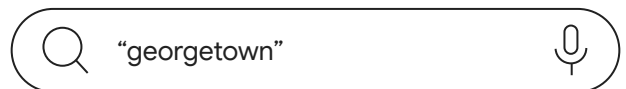
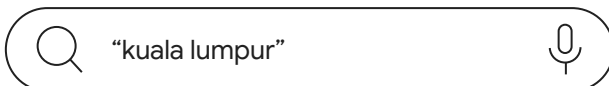
surge in searches for  
**“staycation”**



of Malaysians say a  
**“family bonding trip”** will be  
their next leisure travel activity

Source: Google Consumer Survey, Malaysia,  
November 2020

### Top searches for domestic destinations:

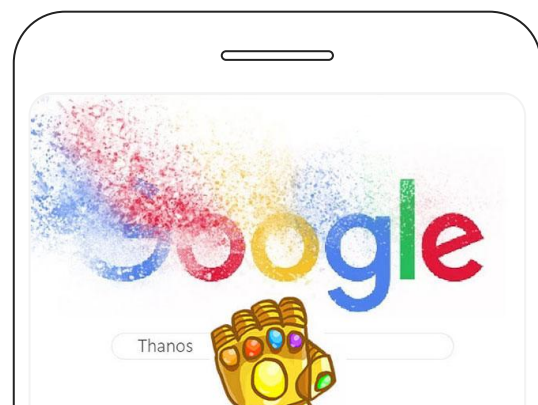


# What it means for brands

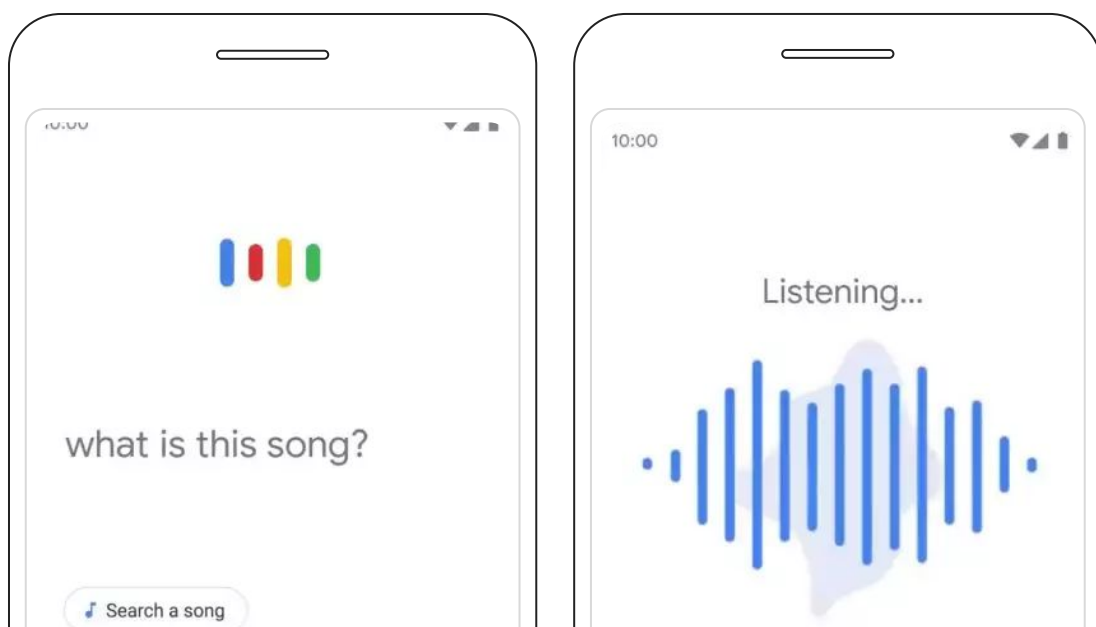
**Brands that surprise and delight can reap the rewards of consumer love – especially when they do it with empathy for people's unique experiences and challenges.**

## 1. Make things fun in a personal way.

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

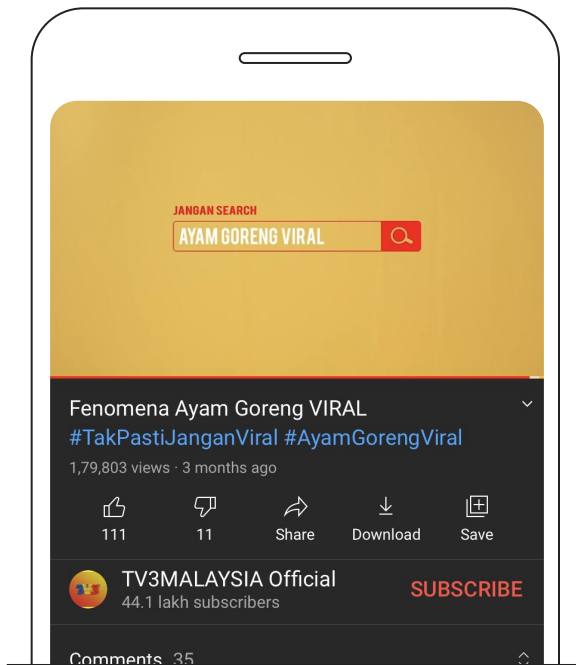


Google introduced a new, fun way of searching, including **“hum to search”**, a service that helps people figure out the name of a song by simply humming, whistling, or singing the melody.



# What it means for brands

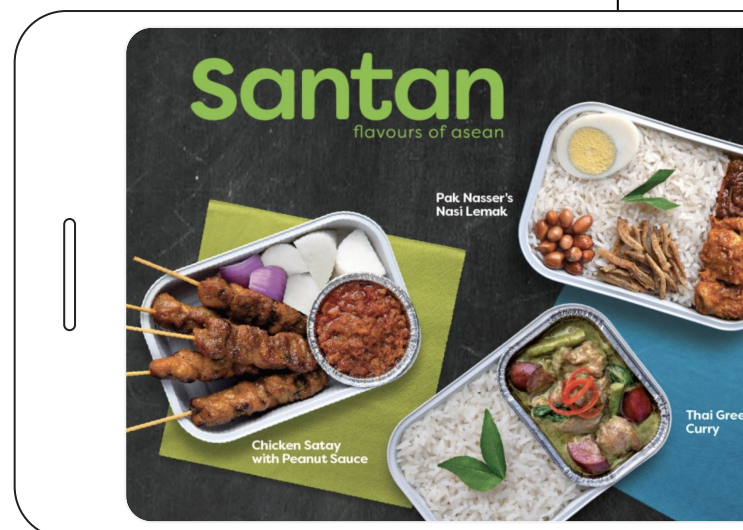
## 2. Have fun, in good taste.



**McDonald's Malaysia** told fans not to search for their video "Jangan Search Ayam Goreng Viral", knowing full well that's exactly what Malaysians would do — successfully creating renewed hype up to 200% higher than their initial target at 12K searches within a day. Paired with the effective combined use of YouTube channels and Search, overall impressions for the brand grew by over 84K searches a day.

## 3. Make it easier to share the joy.

With in-flight meals suspended during the pandemic, AirAsia made their most popular in-flight meals and beverage options available with their food delivery service **AirAsia Food**, delivered directly from their Santan restaurants in Malaysia.



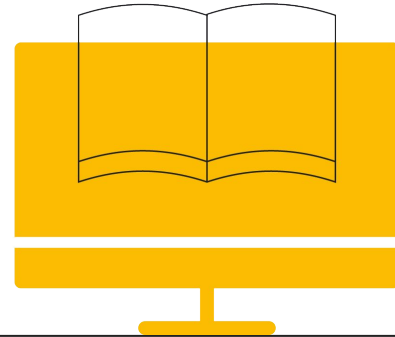


#### Trend 4

# Future Proofing

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

Malaysians are safeguarding and strengthening their economic prospects by boosting their skills.



jump in searches for **“daftar ssm”**  
(SSM business registration)



increase in searches for **“how to start an online business”**, as the pandemic compelled businesses to transition online to showcase their products and services



rise in searches for **“kerja online dari rumah”**  
(work from home)

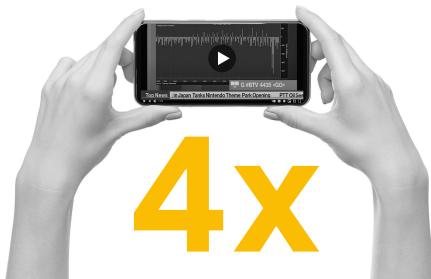


growth in searches for **“digital marketing”**

They are also looking to overcome financial volatility and are looking for support from the government to get them through these uncertain times.



increase in searches for “government grants”, with top searches related to “bantuan bsh” (livelihood assistance), “bantuan bpn” (BPN assistance) and “bantuan sabah” (Sabah aid)



growth in YouTube watchtime of **finance** videos from April to June 2020, compared to the same period last year

Source: Google Data, MY, Apr 20 - Jun 20 vs. Apr 19 - Jun 20



rise in searches for “**Kenyalang Gold Card**”, a form of government aid provided to the elderly in Sarawak. It gives them access to essential products and services

## DID YOU KNOW?

Malaysians are understanding the role of creativity in entrepreneurship in these uncertain times.

For example, there's been **50% growth in searches for “food truck”**.

## Rising queries related to food trucks:



“contoh rancangan perniagaan food truck”



(food truck business plan example)



“susun atur food truck”



(food truck arrangement)



“logo perniagaan food truck”



(food truck business logo)







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



141%

jump in searches for **“vaccine”**, as people sought to educate themselves on COVID-19 preventive measures, including immunization



100%

increase in searches for ways **“to boost immune system”**, as people sought ways to protect themselves and their loved ones from the COVID-19 virus



30%

increase in searches for **“vitamins”**



6x

increase in searches for **e-health platforms**

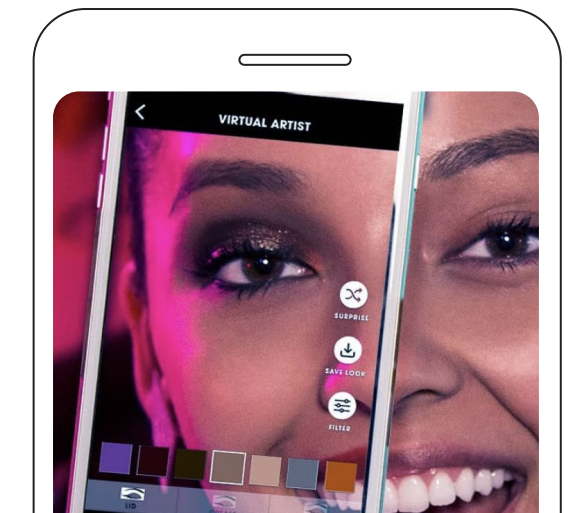


# What it means for brands

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

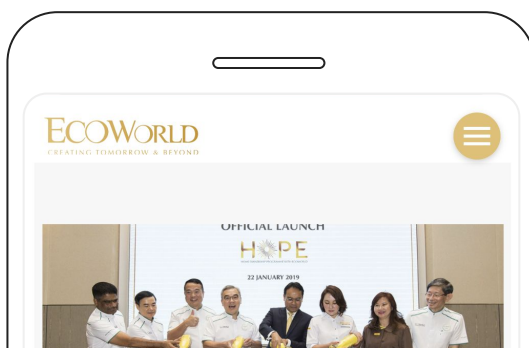
## 1. Empower your customers while reducing risks.

When makeup trials were no longer encouraged, **Sephora MY** created a digital platform on their website for users to try on different lipstick shades, eyeshadows and even false lashes before purchasing through the Virtual Artist feature on their app.



**EcoWorld's** try-before-you-buy scheme is a creative way of appealing to potential homeowners. The Malaysian property developer designed a rental programme where people could try out a house before deciding to buy it, with the option of contributing as much as 30% of the rental towards the price of the house.

**Family Mart** introduced two first-of-its kind retail concepts during lockdown: a container-style store and an automatic vending machine that sell snacks, drinks and ready-to-eat meals on the go. These retail concepts could be recreated in areas under quarantine while providing social distancing.

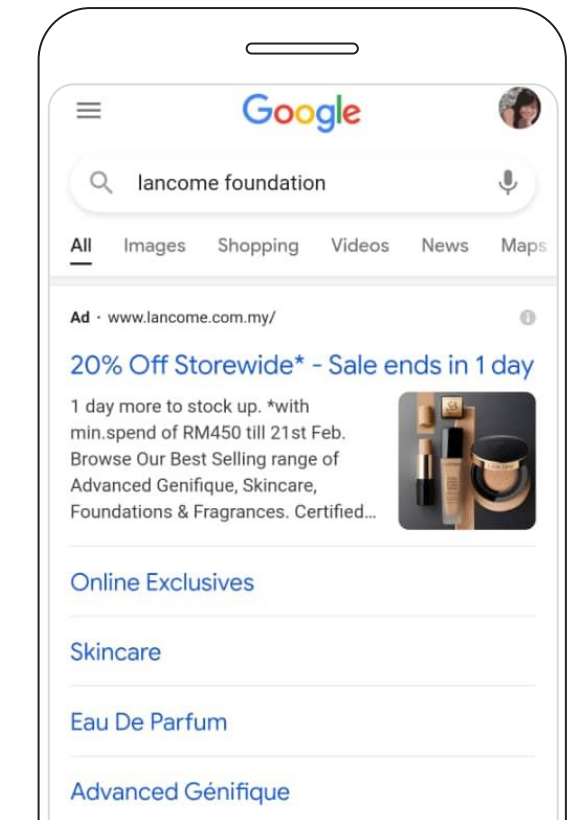


# What it means for brands

## 2. 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.

**Lancôme Malaysia** used a countdown and image extensions to draw attention to their products and exclusive online sales on their website.



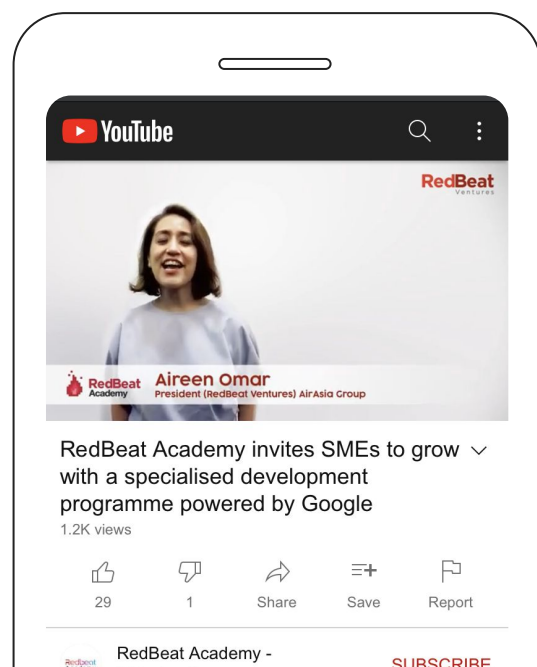
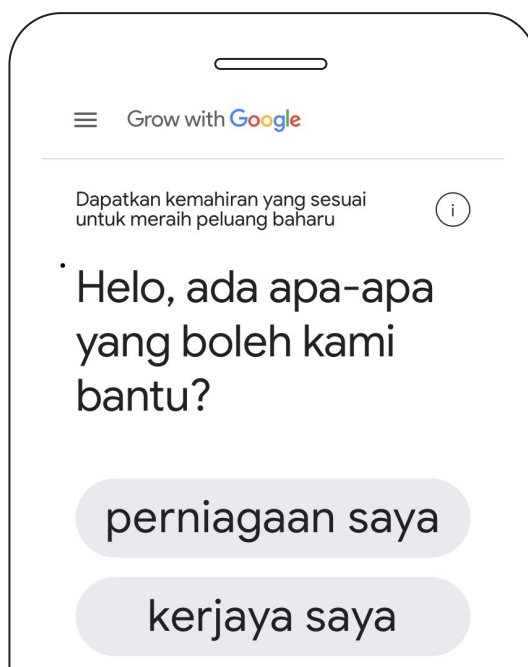
# What it means for brands

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

Grow with Google is a hub consolidating resources for job-seekers and businesses to upskill themselves and their employees. Discover the solutions you need to improve your brand or meet your business goals.

Mahir Digital Bersama Google, a Grow with Google initiative in Malaysia, is committed to help local business owners by sharing free tools and resources for working remotely and transitioning to digital through webinars.

An educational webinar series, created by **AirAsia Group's** corporate venture arm, RedBeat Ventures, provides weekly specialised presentations that introduced and guided SMEs on the fundamentals of how to succeed in the e-commerce business.





## Trend 5

# Individual Matters

COVID-19 is far more than a health crisis. It affected societies and economies at their core across nations, and with it, a simple truth was reaffirmed: each Malaysian experienced the crisis differently.

The global pandemic has encouraged us to place more value on individual needs, beliefs and experiences, even if they're outside the norm. The focus should be on understanding complex issues better, confronting stigmas, and prioritizing mental and physical well-being to emerge stronger as individuals and society.

Malaysians are taking responsibility to learn more about social and political issues, both at home and abroad.



increase in searches for “**racism**”,  
with many people searching for  
“**maksud rasis**” (racist meaning)



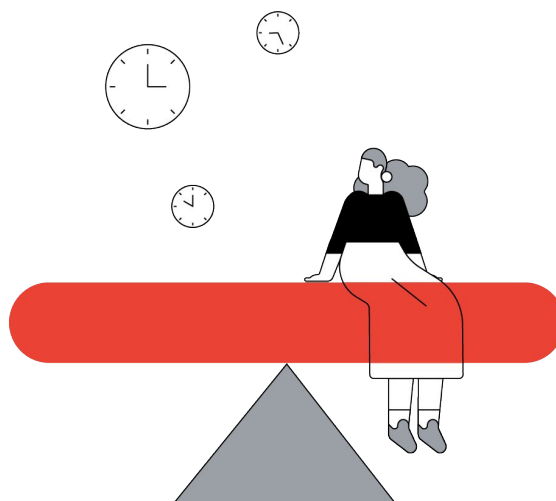
growth in **government**-related  
searches

Rising search terms related  
to democracy:

Q “apa itu demokrasi” ▲ **4.2x**  
(what is democracy)

Q “maksud demokratik” ▲ **1.7x**  
(what is democratic)

Q “negara demokrasi” ▲ **1.4x**  
(democratic country)



They are also confronting stigmas related to mental health. There's been a rise in searches for mental health-related information, including early exploration of the concept.



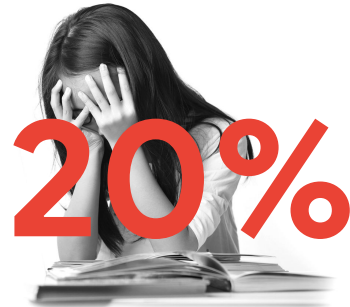
increase in searches for  
“mental health”



growth in searches for  
“kemurungan” (depression)



jump in searches for  
“kaunseling rumah tangga”  
(domestic counselling)



rise in searches for  
“anxiety”

### Top search queries related to depression:



“tanda kemurungan”



(depression signs)



“punca kemurungan”



(depression causes)



“ujian kemurungan”



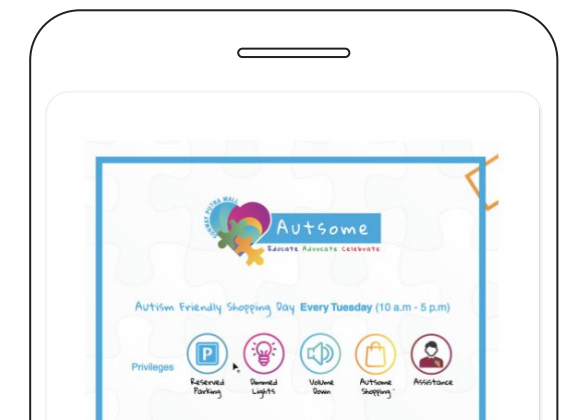
(depression test)



# What it means for brands

Being aware of an issue or a nod to inclusion isn't enough. It takes empathy to understand the sheer variety of situations Malaysian consumers face and acknowledge an individual consumer's journey to create both meaningful and profitable connections.

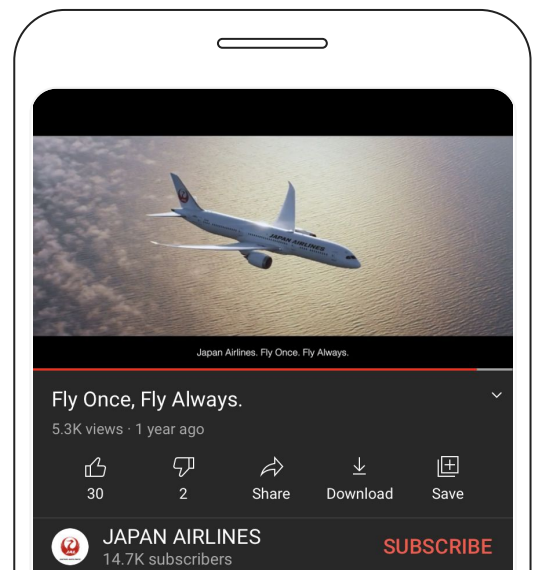
## 1. Build inclusivity into your brand.



**Sunway Putra Mall** hosts Autisme, 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.

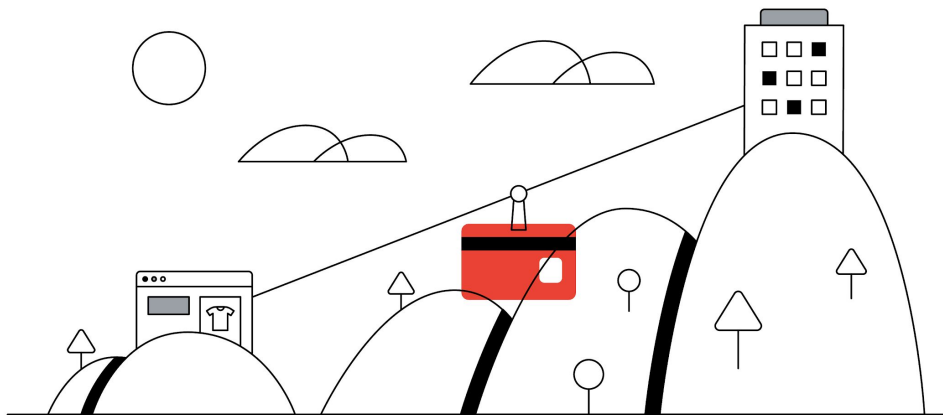
**Japan-based Japan Airlines (JAL)** launched a hyper-personalized video campaign, 'Fly Once, Fly Always' for five markets across Southeast Asia in November 2019.

The campaign leveraged 3,000 unique creative assets to create 24 different versions of the video that recreate the special 'first time feelings' of flying among travelers. The content displayed is chosen according to the viewer's relevance. For example, the version served to viewers in Malaysia features a woman wearing hijab, to illustrate that JAL serves halal food.



## What it means for brands

**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.



## 2. Embed empathy into your marketing strategy by considering consumers' individual journeys.

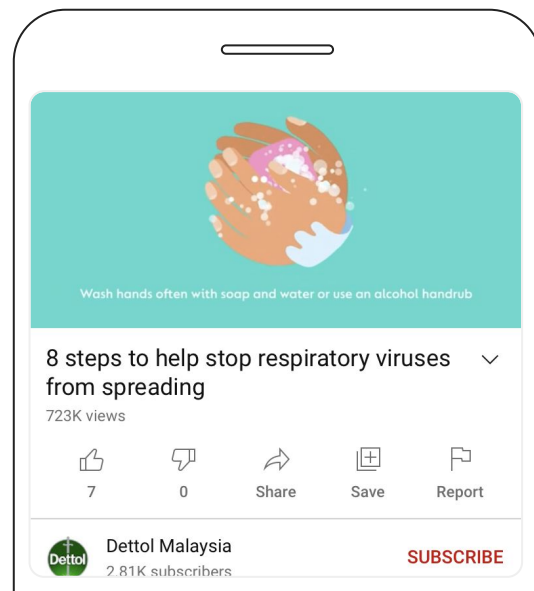
**Grab** is pushing for greater inclusivity by collaborating with differently-abled partners. It extended support to Persons With Disabilities (PWD) enterprises on GrabFood and GrabPay, and appointed 19 differently-abled drivers and delivery-partners to be a part of their Driver Representative Committee. A monthly training session also preps driver-partners to better assist passengers with physical impairments.



## What it means for brands

### 3. Pay attention to tone and timing – they matter.

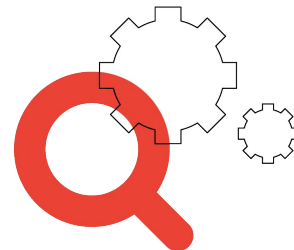
**Dettol Malaysia** created a series of educational videos, led by health experts, to calm anxieties with regards to COVID-19. Their ad approach was direct and factual, purposefully so, to get Malaysians to stay at home and flatten the curve.

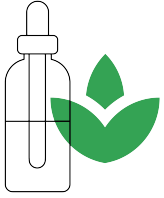


### 4. Make use of tools and technology to engage large audiences who have specific and ever-evolving needs.

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.





# Beauty, Health & Personal Care

Daily routines have drastically changed in the “new normal”. With spas and salons closed due to social distancing guidelines, many women have been inspired to experiment and change up their health and beauty routines.



New beauty problems have arisen as people spend more time indoors, and Malaysian consumers are looking to Search for answers to combat skin issues.



20%

YOY increase in searches for **“skin care”**



▼10%

decline in searches for **“cosmetics”**



54% YoY increase in searches for **“maskne”** (mask + acne), a term created for a rash or an acne breakout caused by wearing a mask for a long duration

Across the country, people’s journeys have become increasingly personal, with the expectation that products should be fulfilling their particular set of needs.

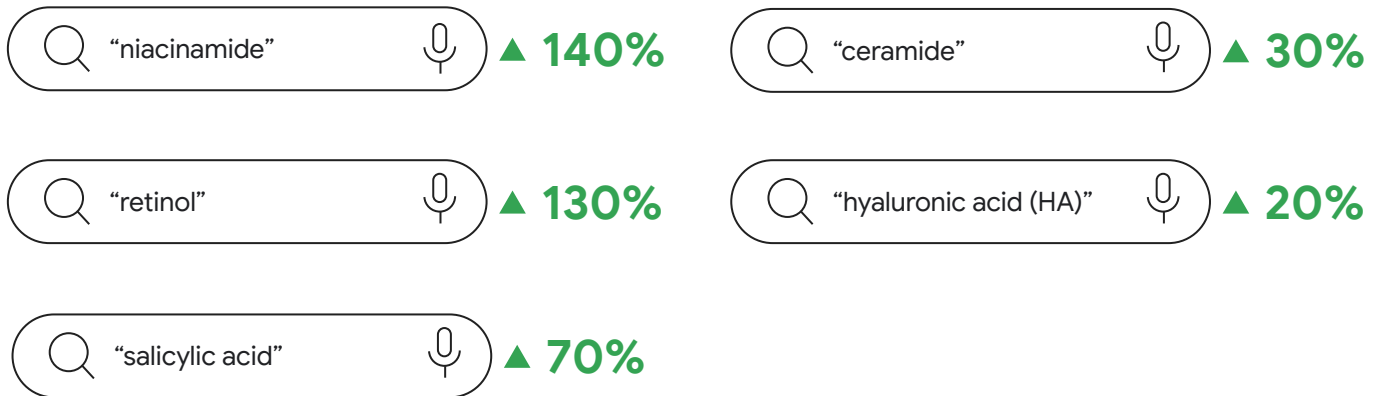


growth in **“skincare for”** searches

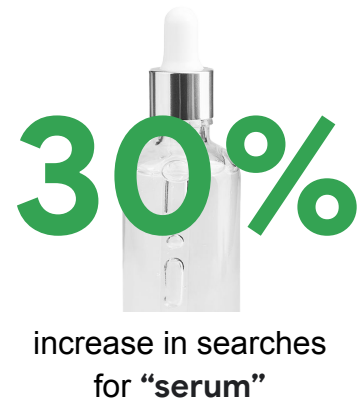
Top queries related to skincare:

- “skincare for oily skin”
- “skincare for dry skin”
- “skincare for combination skin”
- “best skincare for acne”

From researching online to find products with specific ingredients...



...to the beauty routine itself, consumers are turning to Search to find at-home solutions, going so far as to add sophisticated facial treatments to their personal care routines.



20%

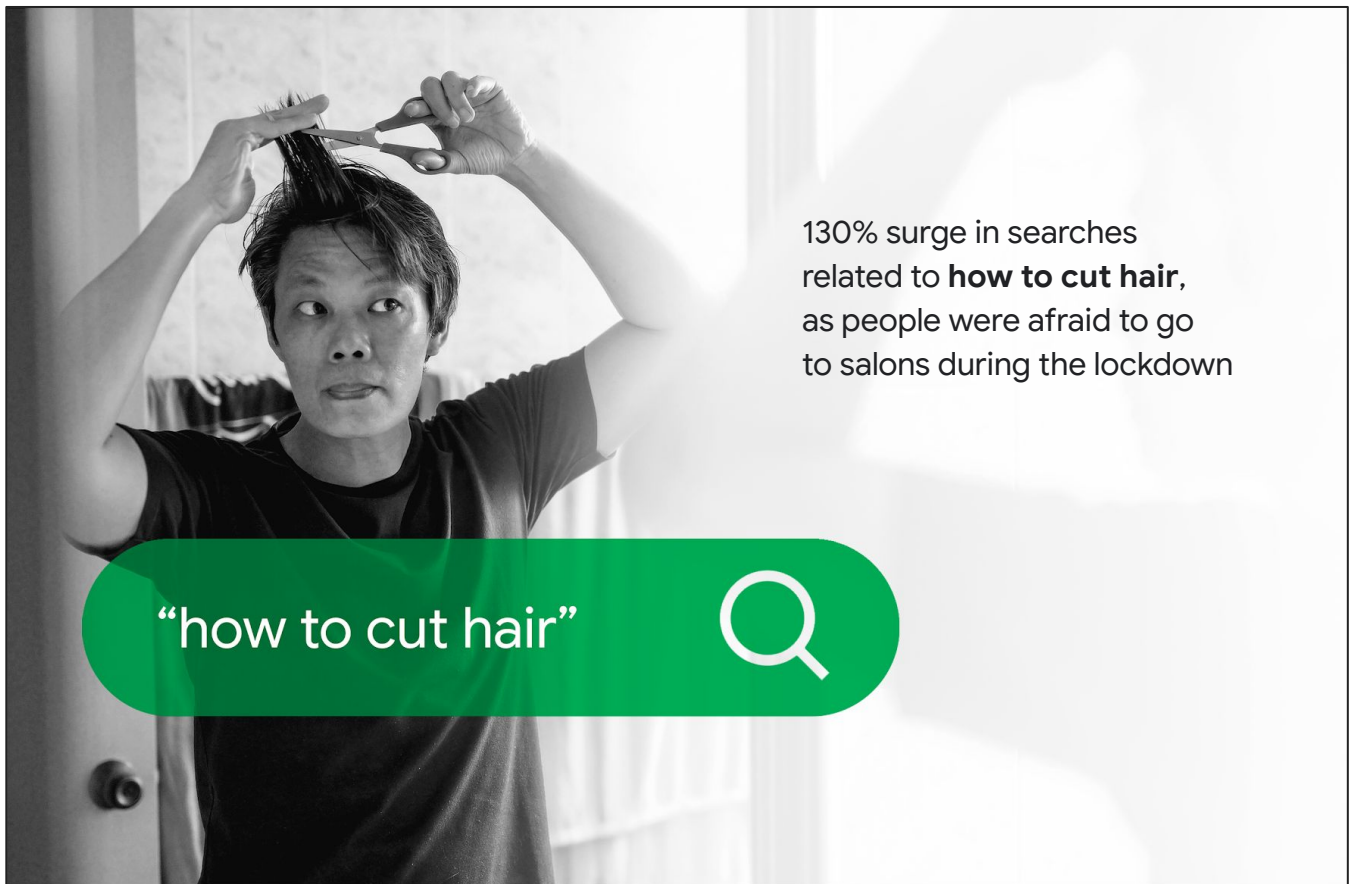
growth in searches related to "exfoliation"

20%

increase in searches for "double cleansing"



Hair maintenance has taken on new meaning during the pandemic, with stay-at-home consumers taking hair care into their own hands.



130% surge in searches related to **how to cut hair**, as people were afraid to go to salons during the lockdown

“how to cut hair”



60%

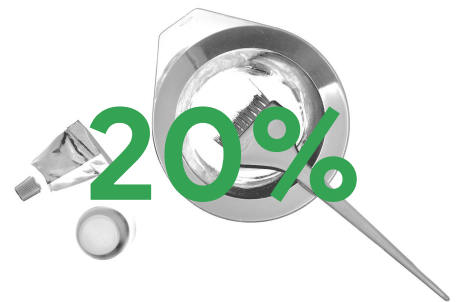


jump in searches for  
“hair tools”

33%



rise in searches for  
“hair oils”



20%

increase in searches for  
“hair dye”

Hygiene remains top of mind for most Malaysians, as they sought ways to keep themselves and their loved ones safe...



jump in searches for **“antiseptic”** products

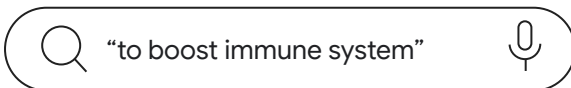
150%

surge in searches for **“antibacterial soaps”**



increase in searches for **“hand sanitizer”**, as Malaysians understood its importance in preventing the spread of infections

...while seeking ways to build immunity during the pandemic.



▲ 200%



▲ 30%



# Takeaways for brands

## 1. Emphasize your hero ingredients to capture consumers' attention.

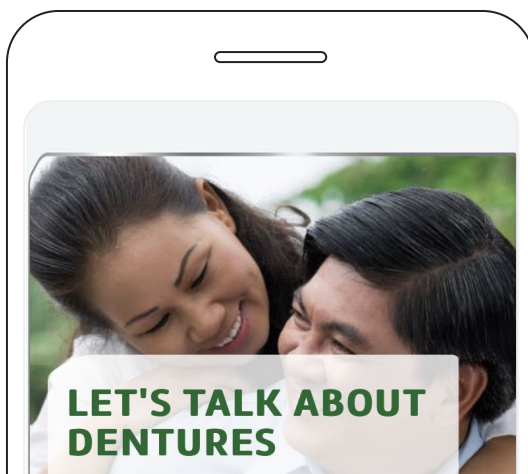
Beauty buyers know what they are looking for in a product. Their needs have shifted from finding basic solutions to routine skincare problems to purchasing products with specific ingredients (e.g. retinol) and benefits. Leverage these aspirations by highlighting your brand's hero ingredients and educating consumers about them.

**L'Oréal Paris MY** launched their Revitalift serum, highlighting hyaluronic acid as their hero ingredient. Hyaluronic acid is known to be a lubricant, and can keep skin hydrated and moisturized.



## 2. Become a market leader by not only championing products, but also providing solutions too.

Malaysians now turn online first in order to address their at-home personal care concerns. Go a step further by providing online solutions to their unique queries and guide them on ways to adopt and incorporate your products and services into their personal care routines.



**GSK** provides free online dentist consultations to support families with dental problems while staying at home during the pandemic. As a brand, they have transformed from being a dental solution provider to a thought leader in oral care.

# Takeaways for brands

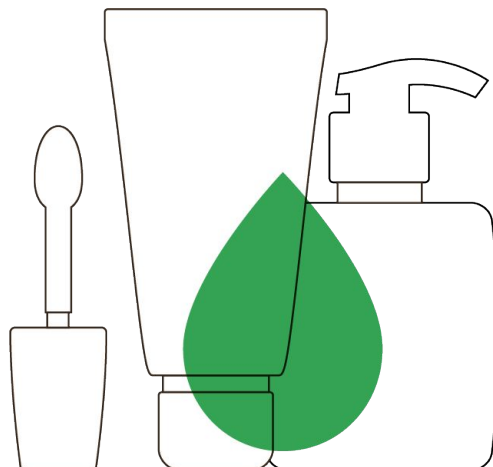
## 3. Focus on the things that are top on mind.

The pandemic has changed consumers' priorities. Find innovative ways to address their beauty needs with focused solutions such as transfer-proof lipstick while wearing a face mask or emphasis on the eyes.

Collaborate with YouTube content creators and prominent beauty vloggers to enable consumers to come up with their own beauty solutions using your brand's products. Highlight fuss-free makeup for time optimization while working from home.

### Tip

Use ad copies that highlight creative beauty ideas as they seek inspiration from brands.





# Food & Beverages

Since the start of COVID-19, many Malaysian consumers are choosing to shop for groceries online. They are also open to experimenting in the kitchen to take their culinary skills up a notch.



Malaysians are increasingly shopping online for essential items that can be delivered right to their doorstep.



increase in searches related to **grocery delivery**

### DID YOU KNOW?

1 in 2 Malaysians have bought groceries online for the first time since the start of the pandemic.



Source: Google, Temasek and Bain & Company, e-Economy Report, 2020



### Rising searches related to groceries:

Q "flour"	▲ 70%
Q "fresh milk"	▲ 30%
Q "rice"	▲ 20%
Q "sugar"	▲ 20%



Even pre-pandemic, online food deliveries were a fast growing trend. But spending more time at home exponentially accelerated the behavior.



growth in search volumes for select  
**food delivery services** since 2016



rise in searches for  
**food delivery promos**

Most Malaysians are now home cooks. They are looking up appliances and utensils that make cooking simpler and more convenient.



increase in searches for  
**"frying pan"**



growth in searches for  
**"easy recipes"**



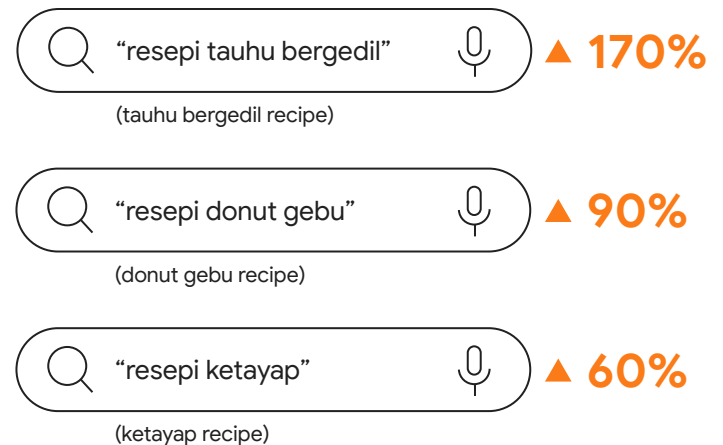
rise in searches for  
**"kitchen utensils"**

They are also getting creative in the kitchen and recreating popular local and international recipes.

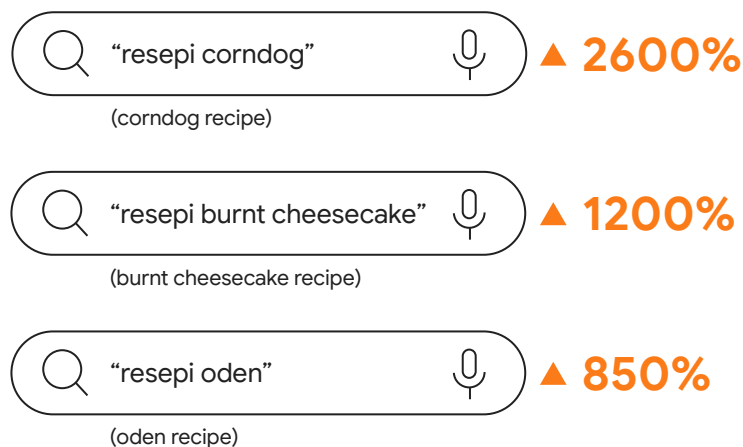


increase in searches for **“recipe”**,  
a 5-year high, as cooking at home  
emerges as a major trend of COVID-19

### Top local favorites searched on Google:



### Top international favorites searched on Google:



### DID YOU KNOW?

Malaysians are not hesitating to experiment in the kitchen. A fusion take on the simple and delicious **“resepi popia carbonara”** (popia carbonara recipe) has seen 160% growth in searches

Malaysians are also buying more food than before and stocking up on supplies as they look to avoid stepping out to reduce the risk of infection.



increase in searches  
for “freezers”



rise in **expiration**  
**date**-related searches



growth in searches  
for “frozen food”

With more Malaysians spending time indoors, we’re also seeing a growth in both healthy and unhealthy snacking.

### Rising searches related to snacks:

“ice cream” ▲ 30%

“potato chips” ▲ 30%

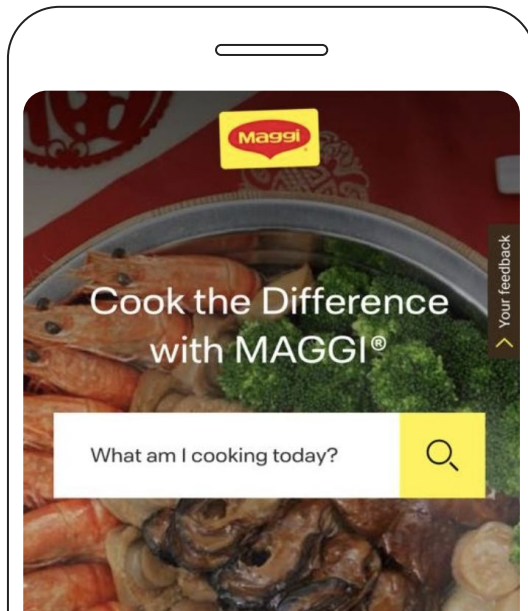
“cake” ▲ 30%

“granola” ▲ 26%



# Takeaways for brands

## 1. Provide the inspiration your audience needs.

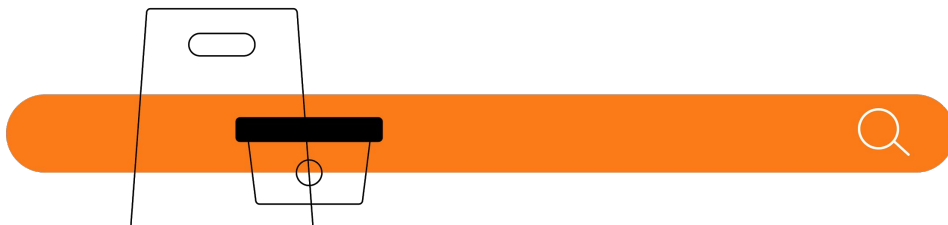


Malaysians are spending more time cooking while staying indoors. There are more new home chefs now than ever before. Provide inspiration on how they can use your products with easy recipes.

**Maggi Malaysia** showcased the various recipes people could create using their ingredients on their website.

## 2. Change how you reach your customers.

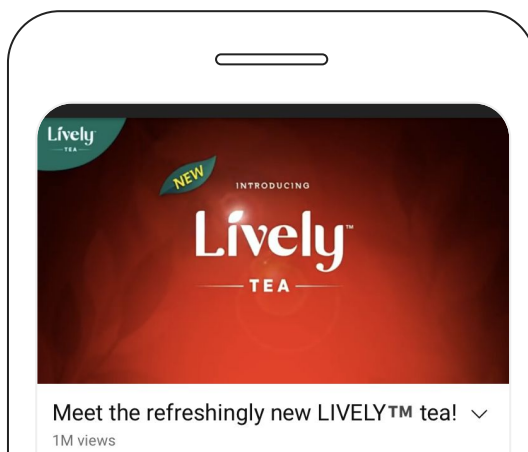
More Malaysians are eating in or ordering in. Find creative ways to entice customers to try your products. Add variety to your menu, such as frozen foods, to make cooking at home easier, or offer incentives to those who buy in bulk.



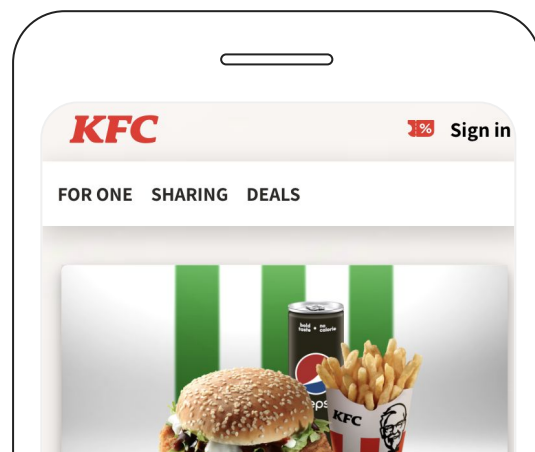
# Takeaways for brands

## 3. Leverage new trends while focusing on their health benefits.

The pandemic has unlocked new food trends. Show how innovative you can be in using them to reach consumers. With Malaysians becoming more proactive about their lifestyle choices, devise effective strategies to build brand loyalty early in consumers' search for health. Create awareness about your products and educate consumers about their health benefits.



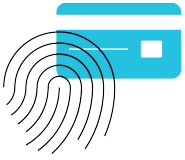
Health and well-being is top of mind for many consumers in Malaysia. To cater to them, **Nestle MY** launched a range of health drinks called **Lively Tea**, infused with the power of adaptogens, for life's every moment. They address the moods that people want to be in and help them stay focused.



**KFC** introduced a vegan burger option that comes coated in 11 herbs and spices. The meat-free patty is high in protein and fibre, and low in saturated fat. It tastes like chicken and maintains the special KFC flavors.

### Tip

Be creative with ad copies. Getting the right message across at the right time is vital.



# Finance

Across Malaysia, consumers are being more proactive when it comes to managing finances. They are turning to the internet to actively educate themselves on financial services and secure investment options.

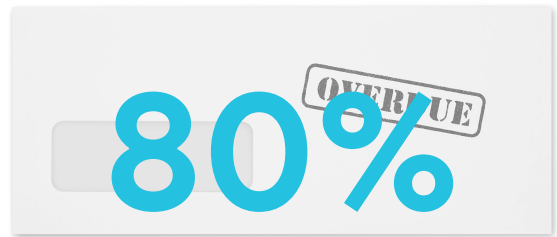




With Malaysians preferring to minimize face-to-face interactions, there's increased interest in learning and adopting online banking solutions.



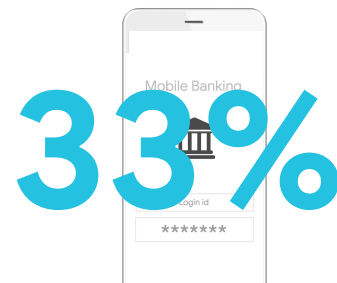
increase in searches  
for “**digital wallet**”



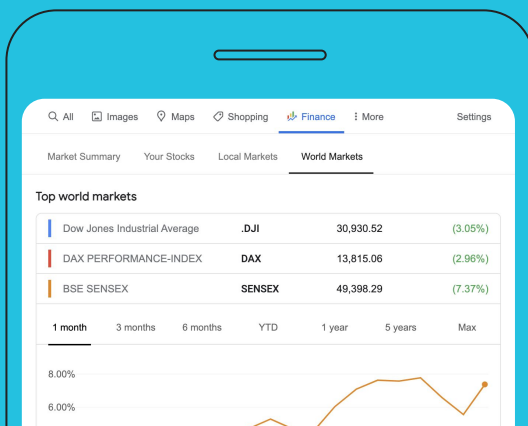
rise in searches  
for “**online bill**”



growth in searches  
for “**mobile banking**”



increase in **monthly active users for select mobile banking apps** as of September 30, 2020



## DID YOU KNOW?

The [Google Finance tool](#) provides answers to investment-related queries. It is a great place to start your search for finding interesting and relevant investments, create your own stock watchlist and find easy to digest investing news.

There's growing interest in the "how-to" searches in the finance category, with consumers wanting to know more about:



"cara mengeluarkan wang"



(how to withdraw money)



"cara kemaskini akaun"



(how to update account)



"cara bayar"



(how to pay)



"cara print bank statement"



(how to print bank statement)



"cara share kredit"



(how to share credit)

As financial worries increase, more Malaysians are leaning on government and financial institutions for support to get them through these tough times.



rise in searches for **"epf withdrawal"**, as people dipped into their savings in these uncertain times



increase in searches for **"moratorium"**



growth in searches for **"government grants"**

Small businesses are looking for ways to stay resilient, and Malaysians who started SMEs to ride out the crisis are searching for support and resources online.



increase in searches for **"sme loan"**



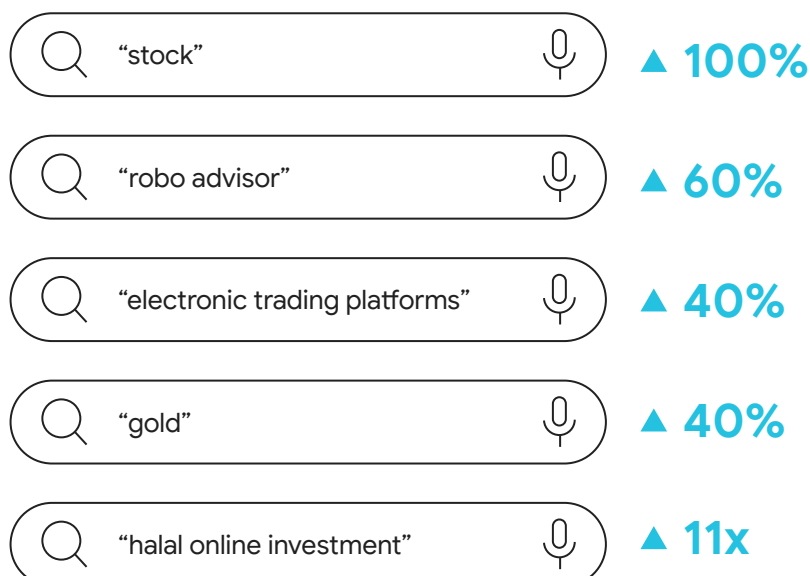
growth in searches for **"bisnes online"**  
(online business)



growth in searches for **"bantuan sme"**  
(SME assistance)

Malaysians are proactively educating themselves on financial issues and looking for safe and secure investment options.

Rise in searches:



# Takeaways for brands

## 1. Capture the first-time adopters.

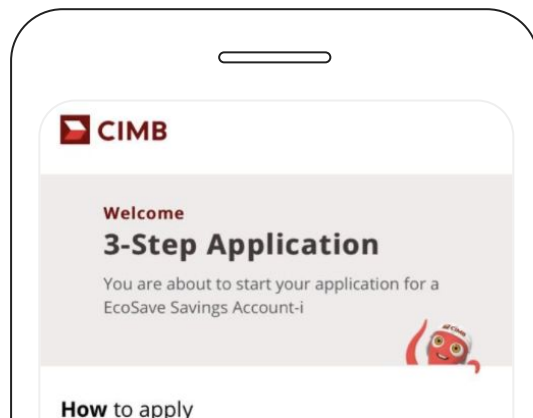
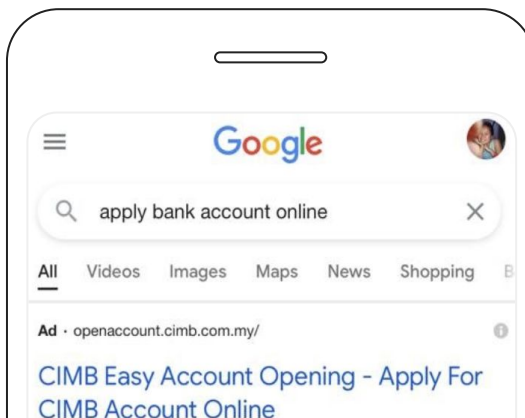
More people are adopting online financial services as they minimize face-to-face interactions. Tailor your marketing communication to highlight the simplicity and ease of adopting your online solutions and the benefits they bring to consumers.

**CIMB** encourages people to open a bank account online by just opening a web link, without the need to download anything.

### Tip

Bid on popular keywords such as “open new bank account” or “apply credit card”.

Add app extension to invite audience to download your mobile app.



## 2. Help Malaysians manage their money.

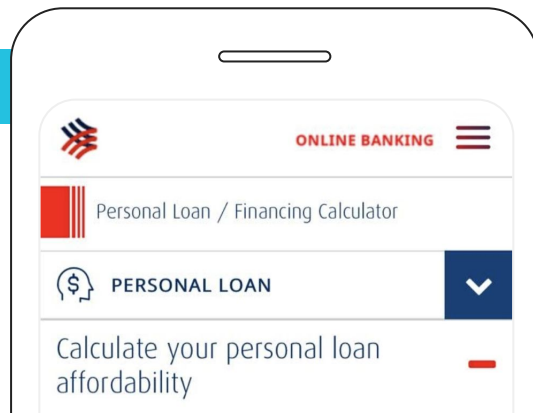
Be the brand that provides the tools to make personal financial management easy.

**HLB** enables customers to apply for the right loan amount by using their personal loan affordability calculator.

### Tip

Bid on keywords such as “savings tips” and “personal finance” to reach consumers looking to manage their finances.

Add call extensions so users can reach out to your sales agent or customer service to learn more.

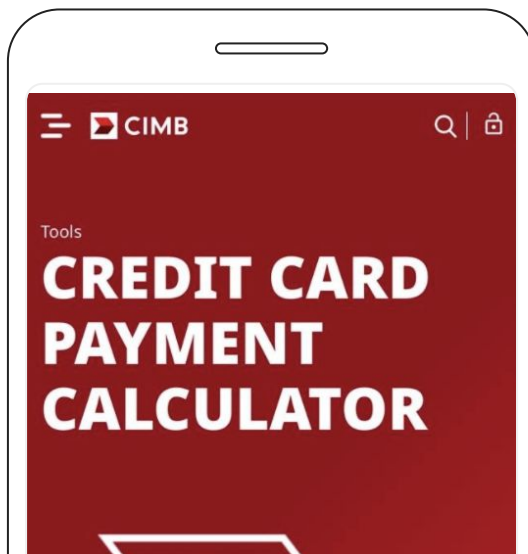


# Takeaways for brands

## 3. Be a trusted financial advisor.

Malaysians are researching about financial products online. Be the resource customers want (and need) by providing information and online solutions.

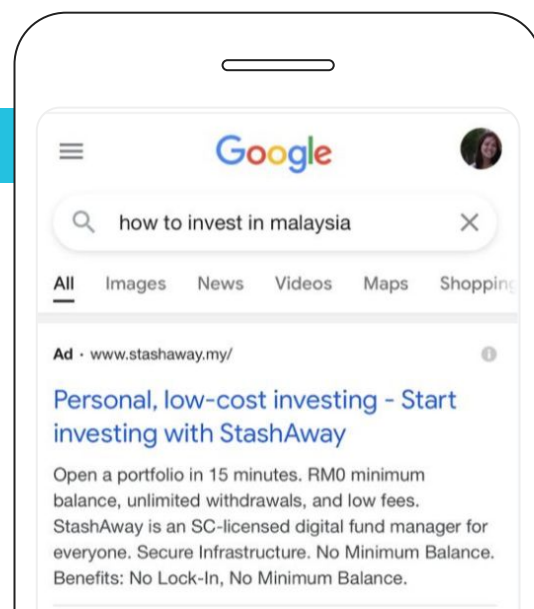
**CIMB's Credit Card Payment Calculator** & **Ringgit Plus's** financial advice articles are examples of online resources that help customers learn about investing.

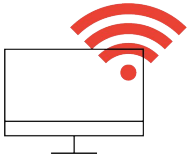


### Tip

Bid on keywords such as **“how to invest”** to reach interested audiences.

Add sitelink ad extension to direct customers to your information page or the web tools you offer.





# Technology & Telecommunications

As people increasingly rely on digital services to meet their daily needs, there is heightened demand for high-quality internet connectivity and curiosity about the future of technology.





Internet connectivity is more important now than ever as Malaysians spend more time online and consumption continues to grow.

Malaysians spent  
(for personal use):



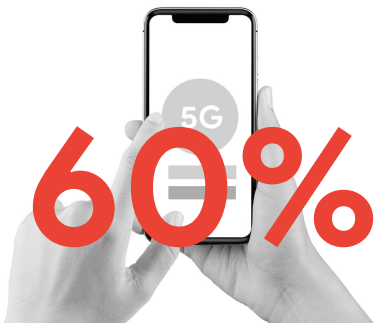
online  
pre-COVID-19



online at the height  
of lockdown



online  
post-lockdown



increase in searches for **“internet speed”**



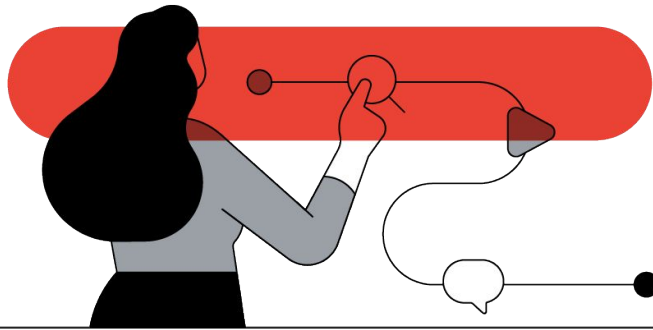
increase in searches for **“modem”**



rise in searches for  
**“unlimited data plan”**, as a spike in  
online content consumption has  
heightened demand for internet  
connectivity



growth in searches for **“home fibre”**, as  
high-quality internet became a necessity with  
more Malaysians studying and  
working from home



They are also leaning on technology to make working from home convenient in order to boost productivity...



increase in searches for  
“webcam”



growth in searches for  
“wireless keyboard”

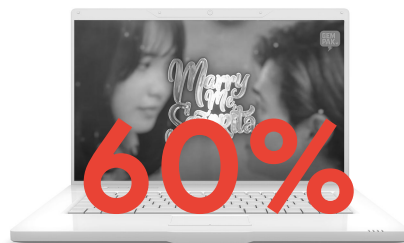


rise in searches for  
“computer monitor”

...and are curious about new forms of communications in the “new normal”.



jump in searches for **video call**  
**services and platforms**

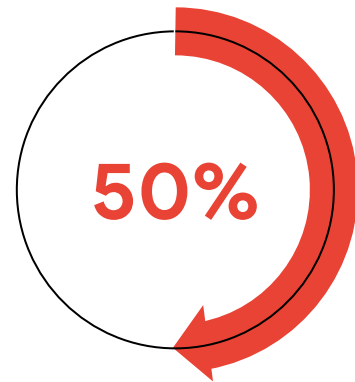
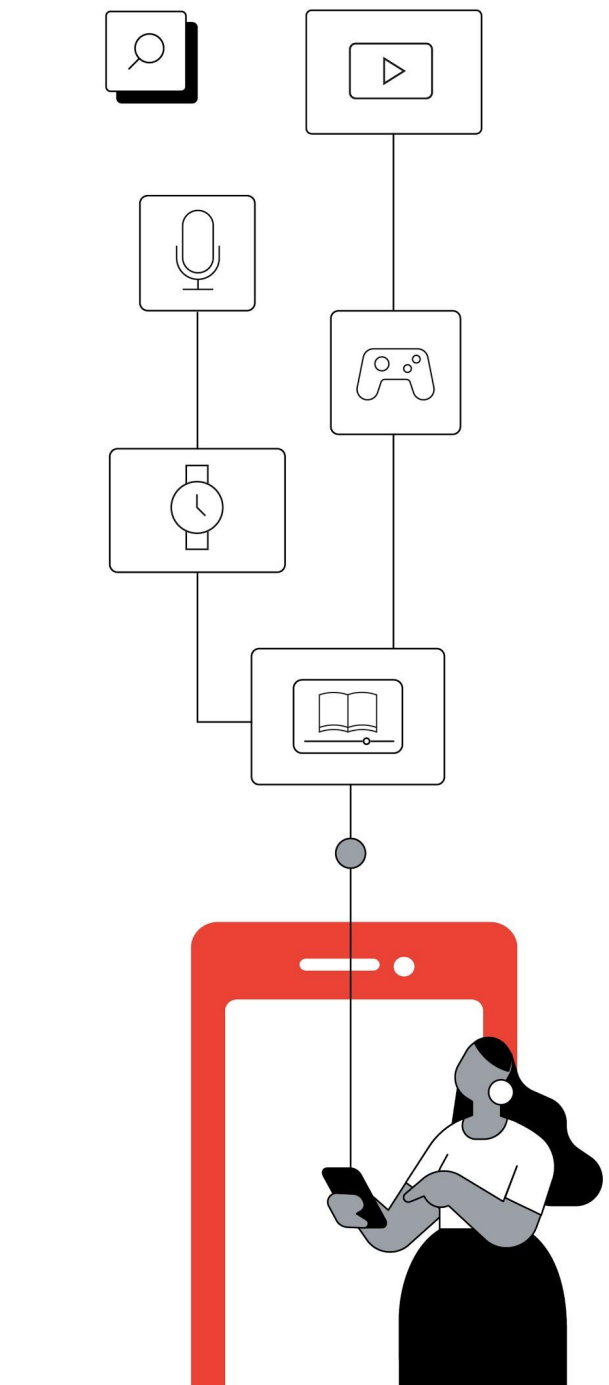


increase in searches on  
“screencast”

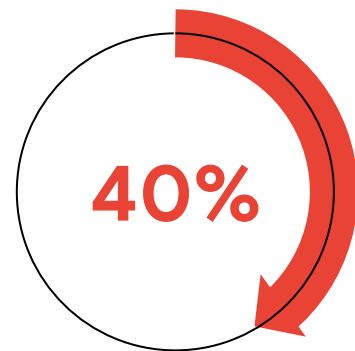


rise in searches for  
“drawing tablets”

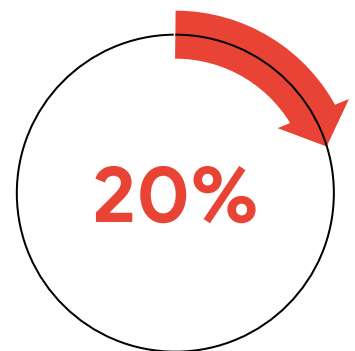
Malaysians are turning to mobile apps to help manage their lives, from fitness to finance.



growth in searches for **fitness apps\***, as more people looked to enable an active lifestyle



rise in searches for **selected utility apps\*\***

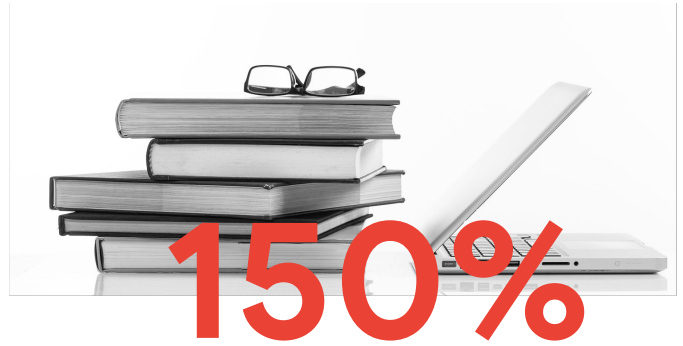


increase in searches for **apps**, as Malaysians leaned more on technology while at home

Source: \*selected - top 5 on AppAnnie by download in December 2020

\*\*selected - top 3 on AppAnnie by download in December 2020

With schools shut for most of the year, parents are giving their little ones a taste of technology as they transition to online learning.



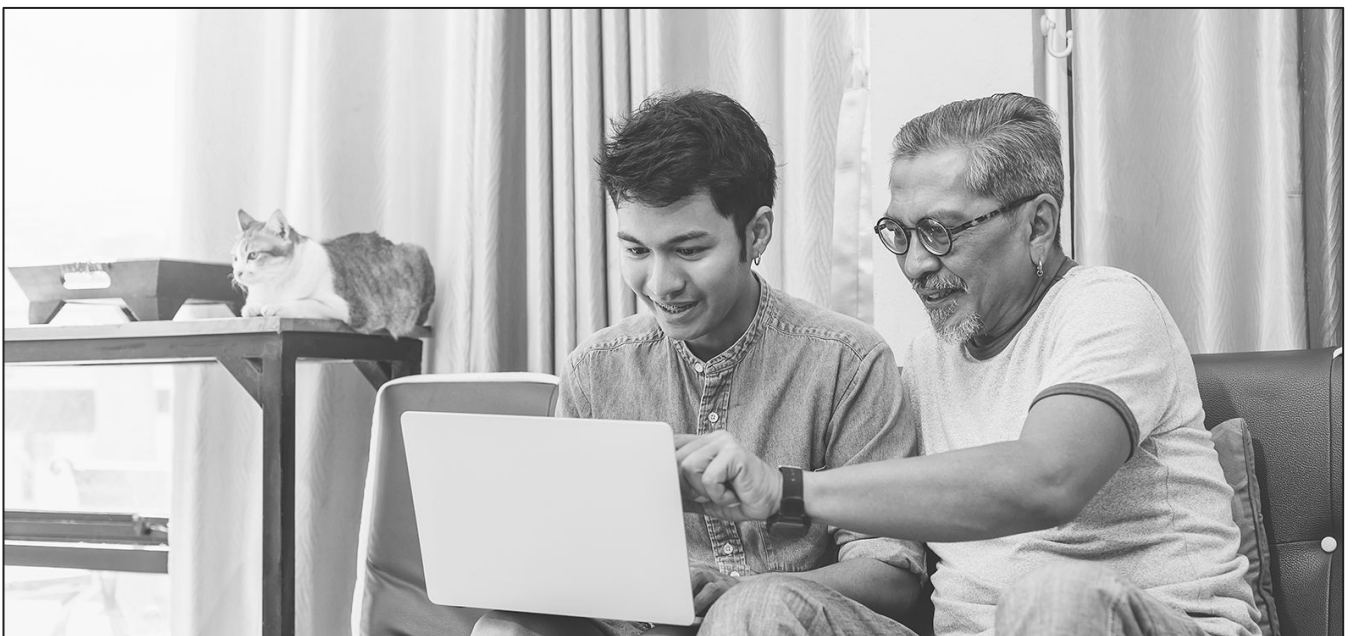
spike in searches for  
“online learning”



growth in searches for  
“laptop for students”



increase in searches  
for “tablets”



Malaysians are also turning on technology to keep them engaged and active while they remain indoors...

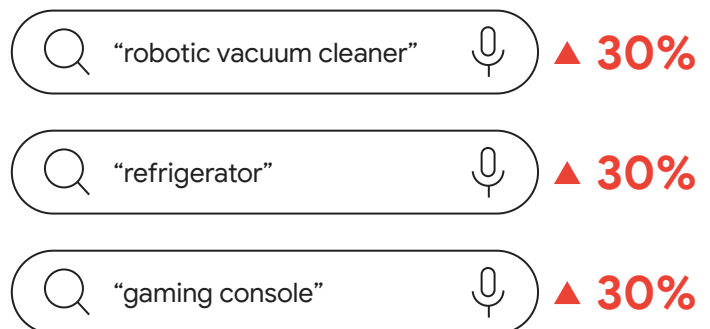
### Rise in searches:



“ebook online”



...and to make their homes cleaner and more comfortable.

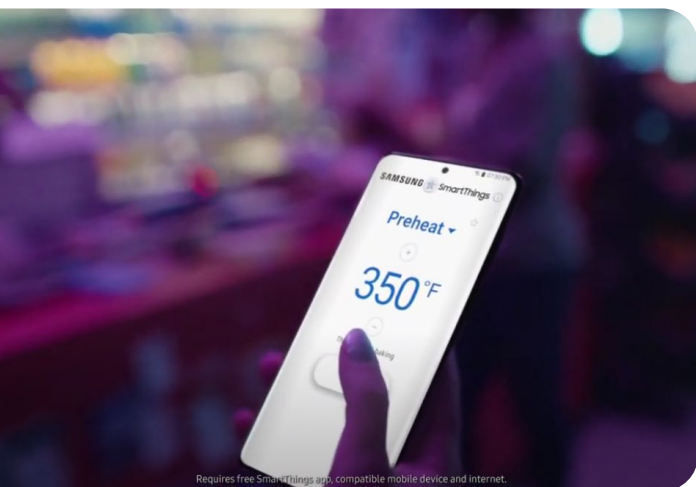


jump in searches for “**smart TV**”, as home entertainment becomes the main source of entertainment for Malaysians

# What it means for brands

## 1. Adapt your message according to consumers' changing technology needs.

With more people working from home now than ever before, stay relevant by angling your communication in a way that best showcases how your product can be helpful for both the professional and personal worlds. Highlight ways your products can boost productivity or help with house chores.

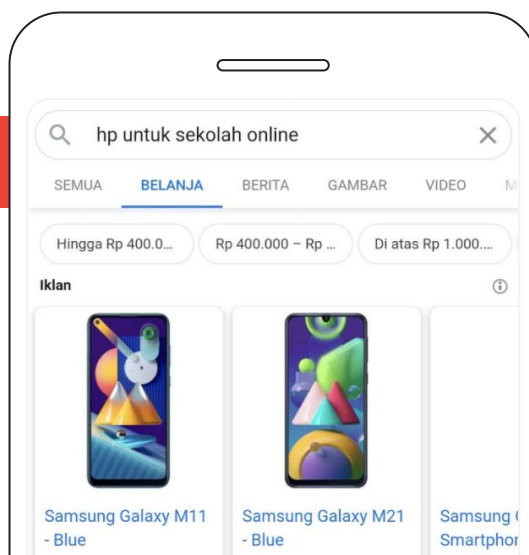


Requires free SmartThings app, compatible mobile device and internet. All prices are approximate and subject to change.

**Samsung** launched its Connected Appliances: Unwrite the Rules campaign to highlight its new products/services and help people discover new ways of cooking and cleaning.

### Tip

Use rising Search terms on Google Trends related to the pandemic and WFH, such as **“hp untuk sekolah online”**, to reach people who have intent to purchase.





# What it means for brands

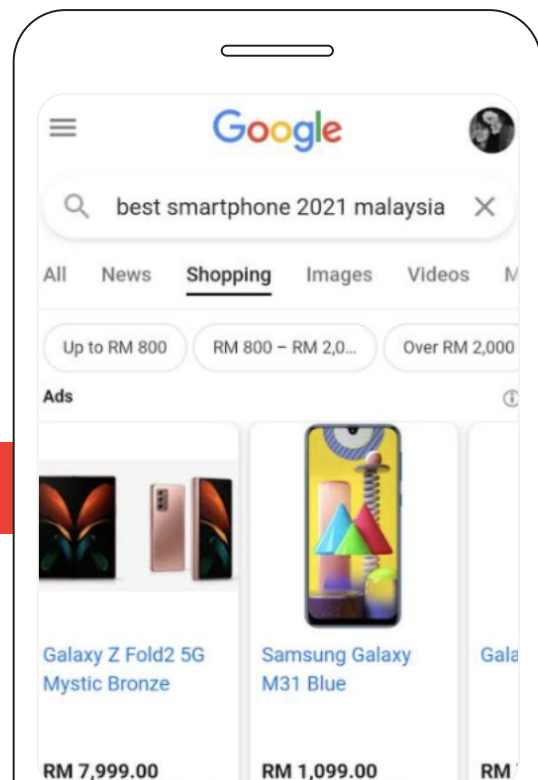


## 2. Highlight the most sought-after features of your technology product as more consumers are proactively searching for the best.

Consumers have always been searching for the best products. But now, more than ever, they are going online to proactively search for products that they trust would be the best, of the latest model and value for money. Emphasize these features when you advertise your products to capitalize on this demand.

### Tip

Use product listing ads and ensure you are set up on [Google Shopping](#) to boost discoverability for when your consumers are looking for your tech products.



# What it means for brands

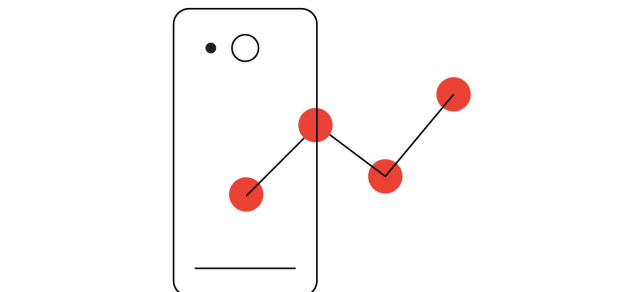
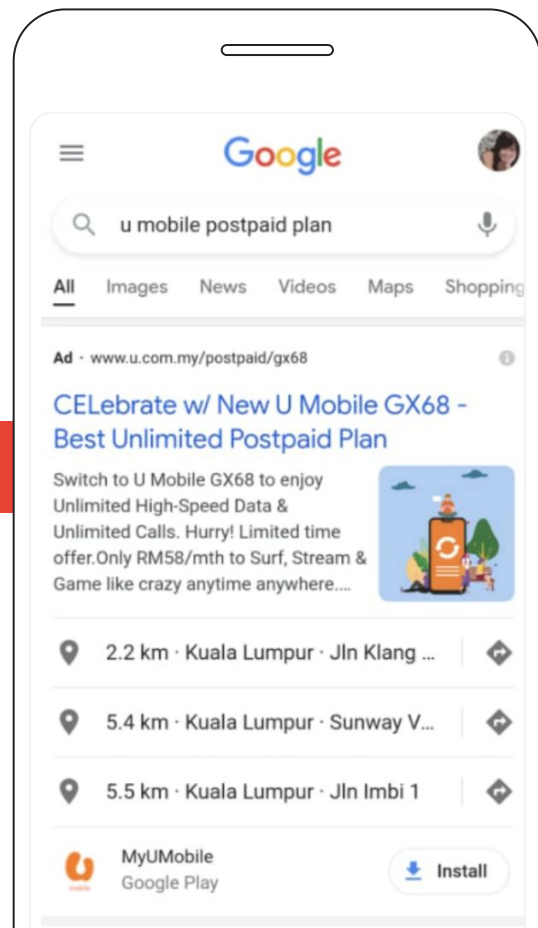
## 3. Ensure that your brand is omnipresent in offline and online retail.

As consumers navigate numerous touchpoints, meet customers where they are: both when they are looking for your technology product online or when they are looking for the nearest electronic store. Brands that successfully connect the O2O experience will thrive in this new normal.

### Tip

Get listed online. Register your business with a physical storefront on [Google My Business](#) so consumers find you on Google Maps and Search.

Adopt [location extension](#) to help people find your locations by showing your ads with your address.



# Sources

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

Google, Temasek and Bain & Company, e-Conomy report, Nov 2020

Global Web Index, Wave Q3, Malaysia, 2020

AppAnnie: Monthly Active User Growth for Select Mobile Banking Apps, includes iOS and Google Play, Malaysia, Jan 1 – Sep 31 2020 vs previous period

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