



SOUL
SEARCHING
2021
P A R T T W O

NAVONIL CHATTERJEE
Joint President & Chief Strategy Officer,
Rediffusion

At Red Lab, we tracked the Google Trends Report of 2021 to bring to you a 5-part series on the emerging trends basis people's online behaviour and what they searched for last year. In our 1st report of the series, we covered the topic of how **'Digital Is The New Mainstream'**. In this 2nd report, we cover the next big emerging trend:

2

LIVES RE-EXAMINED

The pandemic did not just affect our **bodies**, it affected our **minds**, hearts and even **souls**. What seemed like a temporary aberration in our lives changed into a realization that some changes weren't temporary after all. A sense of introspection followed, which eventually led to a **re-evaluation** of our values and lifestyle choices. As a result, people today are looking for more **comfort and ease** in their lives, and shifting their focus to the things that matter most to them.

SPRING-CLEANING LIVES

It may be summer, winter, autumn or spring, people are **spring-cleaning** their lives whatever may be the season. In a recent survey, half of consumers in APAC said the pandemic inspired them to re-evaluate what was important to them in life, 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.¹¹ 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**.¹²



+78%



+67%

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. In fact, **78% of Indians** are now eating healthier foods, and **67%** have been **exercising** more.¹³

Evidence of this shift is also seen in the “**Great Resignation,**” a global trend where a significant number of people are leaving their jobs voluntarily, considering changing employers or planning a career change. In India, 59% of professionals surveyed are actively looking for new jobs. Given how many people are reassessing their careers in APAC, **employee satisfaction** and **well-being** should be top priorities for attracting and retaining top talent.

The pandemic clearly has brought about a realization of the transient nature of our lives. Which in turn has resulted in people seeking more depth, meaning and a sense of permanence from all their interactions and engagements. Under this over-arching theme of **re-examining lives**, we capture the following sub-trends:



1. Acceptance of a blended life



The signs are clear that **'Phygital'** will metamorphose from being just a nice catch-phrase to a new way of living. Even as restrictions ease, it seems a **blended way of living** is likely to remain. Signs point to a semi-remote future of work, with 70% of organizations in India looking at hybrid work models beyond the pandemic.¹⁴ Searches reflect this adaptation to a more flexible future for work and daily activities, as people begin taking charge of their own time and space, particularly at home.

Search interest in **'hybrid workplace'** grew by 350% as people consider returning to offices in a hybrid setup.



Search interest in **'online doctor consultation'** rose by 80% as consumers look for online options for healthcare.

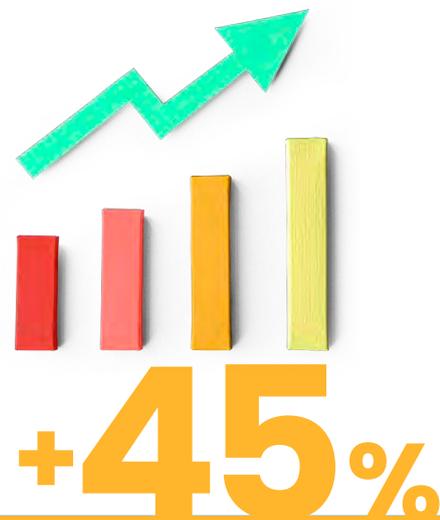
+80%

2. Re-evaluation of finances

Nothing lasts forever. While we knew this already, the pandemic has clearly demonstrated the truth of that adage. Consequently people are looking to make everything last and stretch that wee bit more. **Finances** are a clear case in point, with 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 deals, discounts and ways to **stretch their Rupee**.



Search interest in **'small investment'** and **'how to invest'** grew by 30% and 43% respectively. Similarly, YouTube search interest in **'best stocks'** rose by 45%.



Search interest in **second hand car** and **second hand laptop** grew by 25% as people look for more economical ways to get around the high costs of ownership.



+25%

3. Quality time with loved ones



The family has reclaimed its space and primacy once again. People in India have placed more value on **spending time with their families**, and some even see it as more important than being financially secure or successful. This is echoed in searches, with consumers looking for **moments of quality time** with their loved ones.

People are seeking to build stronger familial relationships. Searches that include **'with children'** grew by more than 36% while search interest in **'quality time'** rose by 53%.



+36%



Search interest in **'pet-friendly'** grew by more than 70% as people seek to have their furry family members join them on their **staycations** and **dine outs**.

+70%

4. Self-care, introspection and the re-evaluation of lifestyle choices

With concern, came care. At a time when almost everybody lost somebody, the instinct for preservation and care of yourself and your near and dear ones took over. Consumers today view wellness through a broader lens, **valuing physical, emotional and mental health**. As people re-evaluate their lifestyle choices, we see introspection and consideration for holistic wellness and the good of their loved ones playing a bigger role in their decision-making processes.

In India, search interest in **'wellness'** grew by 27%, and this includes mental wellness, emotional wellness and physical wellness.



+44%



Search interest in **'health insurance for family'** grew by 44% as the pandemic spurred consumers to ensure their loved ones were insured.

Search interest in **'cycling'** grew by 41%, suggesting increasing awareness of the importance of physical wellness.



+41%



People's desire to keep their loved ones safe is encouraging more Indians to consider **buying family cars like SUVs**. Searches for this category of vehicles grew by 37% year over year.

+37%

MARKETING IMPLICATIONS



Since people are re-looking at their lives, it is a good time for brands across categories to gain access to new consumers and retain their existing ones by giving them new reasons to consider them. Consumers' evaluation criteria and consideration parameters are changing and brands will do well to cater to these new demands. The marketing to-dos are as follows:

1. Ensure your brand makes the list as consumers re-evaluate their options

75%



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.¹⁵ As consumers look to be empowered and confident about their purchase decisions, Search ranks as a 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%



15% of queries every day are **brand new searches**.¹⁶ 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



+11%

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.

MyFlightSearch, an all-in-one travel booking service, successfully used Responsive Search Ads to achieve **11% incremental clicks** and **15% reduction in cost** per booking.

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.

2. Use direct-to-consumer strategies to own your brand presence & experiences

Today the world of communication allows you to develop that mythical '**mass-personalized**' **magic bullet**. There is no excuse for '**spraying and praying**' anymore. Rather, brands need to consider owned, **direct-to-consumer** channels (a brand.com and app property) that can enable them to build a bespoke brand presence and experience, and showcase their brand values and consumer offerings without compromise. These also give brands the freedom to experiment and evolve their platforms in order to stand out even more.

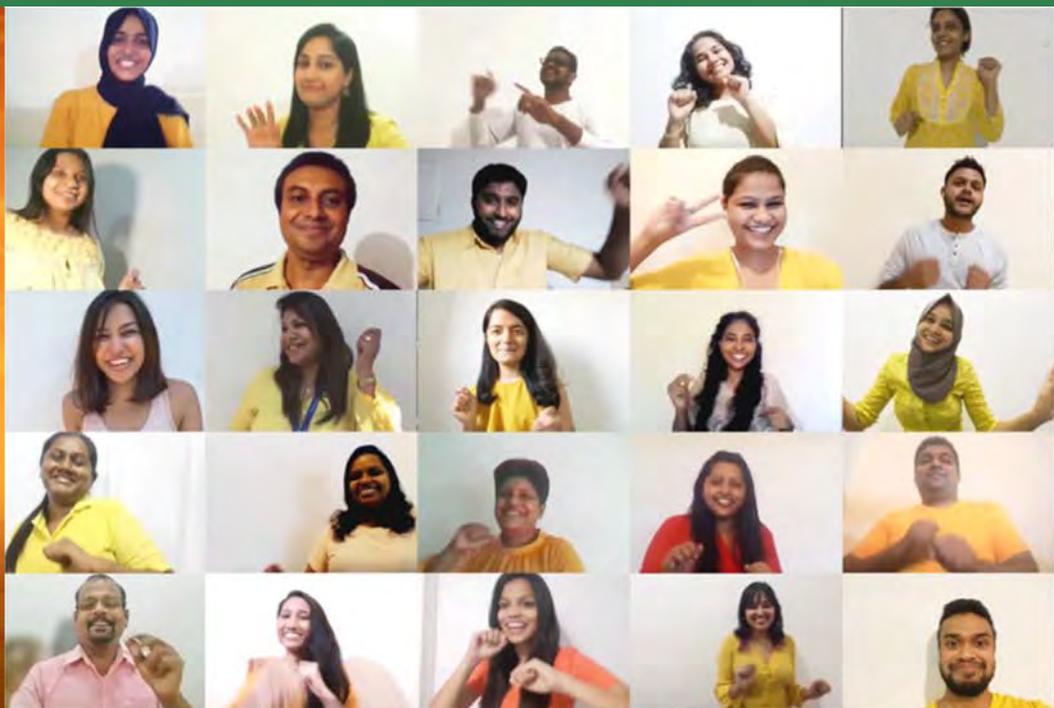




3. Don't overlook your internal stakeholders

During times of re-evaluation and change, **attracting** and **retaining top talent** becomes ever more critical to ensuring sustainable business growth. Prioritize building a **diverse and inclusive workforce** that will not only help to attract and retain top talent, but also **increase innovation** and **profitability**.

More importantly, recognize the importance of purpose beyond pay. **Nurture your employees as internal stakeholders and representatives of your brand.** To encourage employees to find their unique purpose and build a workplace where people enjoy their work and are engaged, **Unilever Sri Lanka** ran a series of “**Discover Your Purpose**” workshops. The sessions combined e-learning with personal connections to challenge personal growth.



The pandemic has brought about a heightened consciousness of the ephemeral nature of our lives, the impermanence of it all and the understanding of what is truly important. As people's lives stand re-examined, brands too will need to introspect and re-examine their marketing strategies in light of these life-changing shifts.



Source: MIT

Sources:

Google Trends, India, Sep 1, 2019 - Aug 31, 2020 vs. Sep 1, 2020 - Aug 31, 2021, unless indicated otherwise

11. GWI, Zeitgeist, 2021.
12. WGSN, Future Consumer 2022, 2021.
13. Google commissioned Ipsos COVID-19 tracker, BR, CN, IN, IT, U.S., U.K., n=1000 online consumers 18+ per market, Apr. 22, 2021--Apr. 25, 2021.
14. NASSCOM, Return To Workplace Survey – Evolving Towards Hybrid Operating Model, Oct. 2021.
15. 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.
16. Google Data, July 2019.

A REPORT BY



**Rediffusion
Consumer Lab**

redi#usion

MUMBAI (Corporate)

1801 Lotus Corporate Park, Goregaon East, Mumbai - 400063

Ph: +91 22 49311000, +91 22 49312000

KOLKATA

10 Wood Street,
Kankaria Estates,
Elgin, Kolkata - 700016

Ph: +91 33 44066262, +91 33 22871232

BANGALORE

22, Vaswani Ashton Woods,
Bellandur Post,
Bengaluru - 560103

Ph: +91 98100 96634

CHENNAI

1st Floor, Prakash Building,
14, Deivasigamani Road,
Royapettah, Chennai - 600014

Ph: +91 44 28113426, +91 44 28113427

DELHI

Mogae House,
112, Udyog Vihar Phase IV,
Gurgaon - 122015

Ph: +012 42345598

