



**INSTITUTE OF MARKETING MALAYSIA**

**Top 11 Trends**  
*of Marketing in Malaysia*  
*Year 2021*

*A member of:*



Asia Marketing Federation



# INSTITUTE OF MARKETING MALAYSIA

## 11 Marketing Trends to Look Out for in Malaysia in 2021

### **INTRODUCTION**

2020 has been a whirlwind of changes. The Covid-19 pandemic quickly shook things up. Over this past year, the Institute of Marketing Malaysia (IMM) has been studying and monitoring the changes in consumer behavior as well as the changes in the local and global markets. We have determined what are the new adaptations to the marketing world and what are the expectations as a result. As this pandemic has shown the need for change, marketing as we know it is entering a new era. The SOPs implemented have changed the course of marketing in the real world today. With the new norms settling in, digital marketing has never been more important. But even as the post-pandemic settles in, are people willing to go back to how things were? Here are 11 marketing trends to expect in Malaysia in 2021.

### **1. Digitalization Efforts**

With technology taking over daily life, businesses particularly SMEs need to embrace digitalization. As studies show that digitalization is highly effective and increases productivity, the government and corporations have established ways to help SMEs maintain and advance themselves in the industry. The Malaysian government for instance has allocated a RM150 million budget to help SMEs go online. Various organizations and financial institutions are also contributing to helping SMEs adapt to digitalization by providing funds and additional options for SME owners. Moving into 2021, with aids offered by the government and major corporations, it is safe to say that the number of online businesses in Malaysia will see a significant rise as SMEs adapt to digitalization.

## **2. Online Shopping**

Covid-19 has shifted the in-store shopping popularity online. With the new norms, uncertainty and fear, customers have adapted to online shopping. Online shopping is not only about the e-commerce platform but it is also about the experience and benefits of shopping online. Not to mention, payment security is a huge concern to many. The ability for the brand to guarantee customers' payment security is a plus point. Offering a selection of trusted secure online payment methods will make them feel safer to buy online. Hence, as more businesses go digital with secure online payment methods, online shopping in Malaysia will see an acceleration in 2021.

## **3. Entrepreneurship**

As 2020 marked the year of high unemployment rates, more people are in financial distress. To lessen the burden, many have resorted to taking up entrepreneurship. This uptrend has seen an increase in small and micro-businesses around the nation. Although some may say that the primary driver of starting one's own business is money, that is not necessarily true for many. Alongside money is their passion. Today, many are discovering hidden passions and talents, leading to them becoming entrepreneurs. With the widespread of the Internet, entrepreneurs are able to grow their business faster. Not only is this rise in entrepreneurship good for individuals but it is also a sign of the country's economic recovery from the Covid-19 impact.

## **4. Partnerships and Collaborations**

A company's ability to form collaborations and/or partnerships will pave the road to survival. With the ever-changing world, new skills are constantly being explored. Collaborating with those with specialized skills will not only expand our own abilities but also open more engaging channels and connection to customers. Forming strategic partnerships will enable the company to broaden their offerings and tap into a new market. Besides that, establishing partnerships and collaborations will enable the maximization of resources and motivate marketers to come up with more enticing as well as effective marketing strategies. Not to mention the financial benefits. Hence, the Covid-19 pandemic has exposed businesses to the

need for collaborating and partnering for the company's well-being. No doubt that 2021 will reign more partnerships and collaborations between companies.

### **5. Gamification**

Gamification is when non-game activities incorporate elements of game-design and principals. This contributes to customer engagement. Marketers in the digital age are using game elements to incorporate the "fun" in marketing. Elements that make games addictive are the prime focus and implementing similar elements into marketing tactics will draw customers' attention. Offering discounts through "spin the wheel" on the brand's website, "10 days in a row login" reward, and points reward system are some popular examples of gamification. Moving into 2021, marketers can be expected to adapt and expand gamification to growing their brands and widening their market reach.

### **6. Inclusivity**

2020 marked the era for change. Worldwide, people demanded for inclusivity. Marketing has been no stranger to omitting diversity. Based on events in 2020, it can be assured that in the coming year, inclusivity will play an important role for a successful marketing tactic. Marketers need to understand that these days, people want to see themselves physically, mentally, and geographically in the marketed content. Customers, particularly the younger market, want to see equal representation. Therefore, marketers should expand the demographic factors and diversify it to encompass all forms of gender identities, sexual orientations, ethnicities, mental and physical disabilities, as well as age. Understanding the target market better and making sure that the product/service as well as its corresponding advertisements are inclusive, respectful, and representative will go a long way in earning their respect, trust, and loyalty.

### **7. Influencer Marketing**

As social media continues expanding, more and more apps are being created and influencer marketing is becoming more significant. Influencers have a wide reach on their platforms. With over thousands and even millions of followers, brands promoted by influencers gain traffic. By tapping into popular platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, studying how content creators interact with their followers will enable marketers to understand their

target market better. Researches have shown that most Malaysians turn to social media and influencers' opinion before making a significant purchase. With there being room for growth, marketers should look to engage in influencer marketing in the upcoming years. If done right, influencer marketing is a powerful tool.

### **8. Interactive Content**

We often hear about the importance of customer engagement. To keep customers happy and interested, we need to interact with them. Interactive content is not new but will see a huge growth in the coming year. The pandemic has shifted how people view advertising and even how they interact on a brand's website and social media. No longer do they just want to watch videos, view pictures, and read content; they want to be a part of the process. Creating digital interactive content such as quizzes, polls, games, contests, and even interactive videos will help boost the popularity of the ads, websites, and social media. Customers will embrace the feeling that they are significant to the brand's content marketing and by offering them the ability to personally engage with the brand, it will help them form a personal connection with the brand.

### **9. Shoppable Posts**

Ever wanted to buy that new shoes you see your favorite influencer posting about? Popular social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook have made that a tad bit easier to do. By introducing the shoppable posts feature on their platforms, followers can click the post with the product and visit the online store or profile to purchase the product. This allows viewers to shop directly from the post. As social media is a popular way to promote a business, marketers and business owners can use the shoppable posts feature to draw traffic to their online stores and social media page. This feature made available mid-October 2020 has created a buzz nationwide and is becoming a new business platform. The shoppable posts feature is an exciting addition to social media and is seeing incredible growth. It will continue to be a popular marketing tactic in 2021.

### **10. 360 Videos**

A take on regular video ads, 360 video marketing incorporates interactivity into the video ad. Viewers take control on how they want to see the video ad. This shapes the viewers'

experience. In a way, 360 videos is a form of personalized content. Gaining attention in Malaysia particularly in 2020, 360 videos allow customers to enjoy the experience of shopping and/or personalized ads through a VR headset or their own technological devices. Popular social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube have incorporated this function allowing businesses to take advantage of this marketing tactic. An inexpensive strategy if one possesses the right skills and tools but nonetheless an effective tactic to raise brand awareness in the community. In the coming year, as more Malaysians become equipped with the digital skills, this form of interactive marketing will see a significant rise.

### **11. Nostalgia Marketing**

Nostalgia is a beautiful thing reminding us of the past. With most marketers focusing on marketing for the future, indulging in nostalgia marketing can help wind down the future expectations and remind customers of the simpler times. Surprising as it may be, nostalgia marketing is an effective tactic and research has found that a customer overwhelmed with nostalgia is willing to spend more on the product offered. Advertising that focuses on reliving happy childhood memories will draw the nostalgia-fueled generation, particularly the millennials, towards the brand. Malaysians, especially, are very fond of nostalgia. An opportunity to tap into their happy childhood memories will draw them to purchasing the product. Hence, marketers should make nostalgia marketing one of their marketing strategies in the coming year as to tap into the customers' emotional bond with the past.

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