

# 2021 The iLEAD *et al* Q2 FORESIGHTS REPORT



# Dear **Valued** iLEAD *et al* **Client**

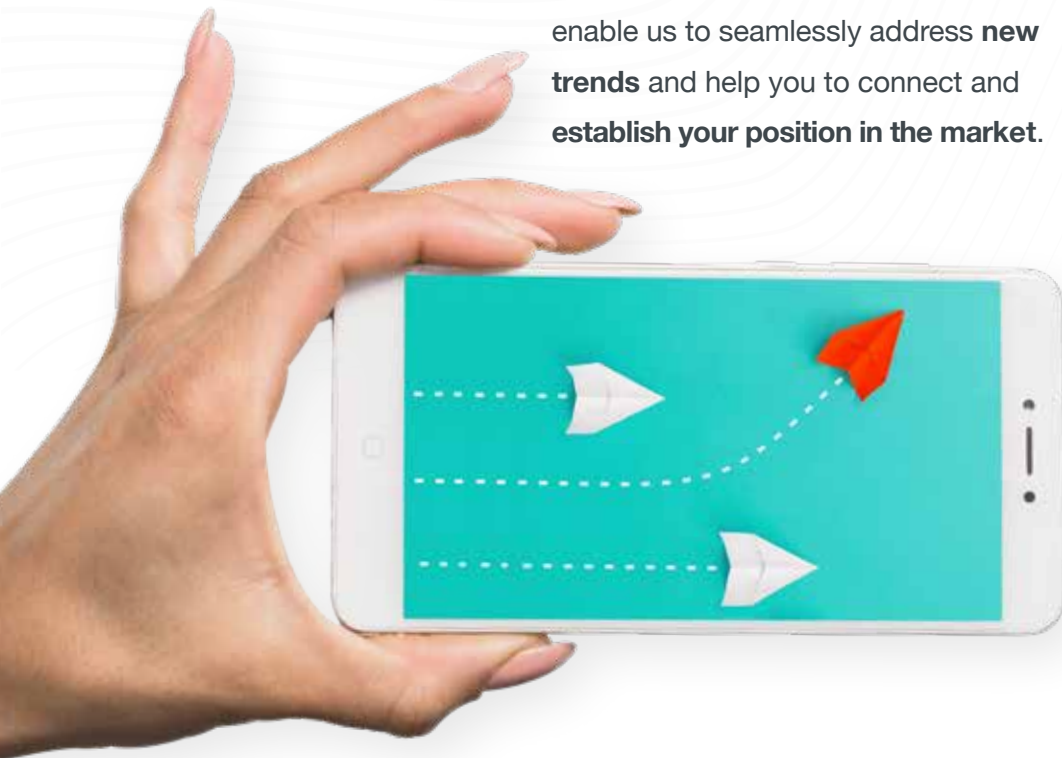
The global pandemic continues to dictate our everyday work cycles, and businesses are pivoting their operations to redefine priorities in an effort to **achieve excellence**.

Now, more than ever, **the importance of the partnerships we forge** is vital in ensuring that your brands and products are fit for the future, reminding us that we are all still very much connected.

The  
**importance of  
the partnerships  
we forge  
together**

Our dedicated team at iLEAD *et al* are constantly **monitoring ever-changing customer expectations**, as well as any **technological innovations** that can benefit our collective goals. These initiatives

enable us to seamlessly address **new trends** and help you to connect and **establish your position in the market**.



Our objective and end goal for resilient marketing strategies is to ensure that, while we are constantly striving to build your brand, we are also delivering on your bottom line.

Many of you have already reached out to us with your marketing questions, or to discuss potential ideas. We **appreciate the initiative** and believe that those businesses that are committed to exploring their business's growth potential through ongoing analysis, learning, and optimisation **will prevail** in these competitive and fragmented landscapes.

When considering your digital marketing solutions, our team at iLEAD *et al* can and will continue to help grow your audiences, as well as your **business's measurable growth of profits and ROI**. Our collective experience, empathy and proactive efforts are still intact to provide you with the best service possible.

Here follows our **Foresights Report** for the second quarter of 2021, highlighting the key insights that can guarantee your **future successes and wins**.

On behalf of all of us at iLEAD *et al*,

## **Thank You**

for choosing us as your digital marketing partner.

Together we will persevere and embrace the exciting times ahead!

- **Suzanne Badenhorst**,  
**Managing Director**



**iLEAD** *et al.*

# The Power of correct Foresight

In an increasingly volatile world, the power of correct foresight could be the difference between follower and leader, between impromptu reactions versus well-prepared and future-fit strategies that drive healthy business performance.

For this reason, we are continually analysing market trends that are shaping both the cultural and business landscapes around us to best assist you in meeting your business objectives. The following insights taken from both global and local research indicate how digitally savvy customers and businesses are shaping the future of business:

- **WSJ** reports a 15% increase in USA ad spend, driven by investments in Google and other digital ad platforms as more brands are utilising these platforms to better reach their audiences.
- **eMarketer's Insider Intelligence** predicts that the global digital ad spend will see a 20.4% increase by end of 2021, further stating that the new drivers of digital media are display and video advertising.
- **Alphabet** has reported a 49% increase in YouTube's Ad Revenue, reflecting its position as the preferred video channel among audiences across the world.
- **PayU's** report states that South African M-commerce is up by 35%. With internet penetration of 56% and e-commerce penetration of 37%, it is projected that by the end of 2021 there will be 22 million mobile and online shoppers in South Africa.
- **Mastercard** reported that 68% of South African consumers shop online. **Deloitte's** Digital Commerce Acceleration/SA Online Consumer Shopping Insights states that over 70% of respondents indicate that they shop online at least once a month, while 2 in 3 respondents plan to shop more online in 2021.



The numbers on the previous page clearly indicates that as consumers adapt to digital platforms, the advertisers who are trying to reach and connect with them are quickly following suit. All together resulting in an increasingly competitive online landscape.

As the number, and type of channels available to consumers increases, expectations of their online experiences are rapidly evolving. Some refer to them as 'impatient' or 'lazy,' but this is quite the opposite! In fact, we are witnessing the rise of the empowered consumer who are creating their own unique user journeys, and who are mindful of those companies that do not get them. Consumers expect a more personalised and seamless experience as the norm, rather than the exception.

**It's become evident that merely having an online presence is no longer sufficient to drive digital business success.**

Brands wanting to capitalise on new opportunities to acquire new digital audiences need to step up their game by means of creative solutions, differentiation, and innovation. The first step is to better understand your audience's mindset.

# Audience-First Approach

At **iLEAD et al** we rely on extensive market research that provides us with the necessary key insights. By understanding the major factors that are shaping customer expectations, we ensure that our strategies are relevant and have the potential to connect brands with their audiences.

Connect  
brands  
with their  
audiences





## Customer Experience

# 1

In an environment where **your app or website are your storefronts**, consider them as the first touchpoints through which your customers will connect with you, accept you, or even reject you. Consider that today's consumers are not just comparing you with your competitors, but against other sites and platforms that they engage with on a daily basis. Offering a well-thought-out and organised shopping experience, and striving for excellence in customer service are prerequisites for any successful omnichannel or online business.

# 2

Having optimised websites in these digitally-led times where consumers can switch between brands in a matter of seconds could be the difference between success or failure for your business, or reputation. To help your brand navigate this environment, **Google has launched Core Web Vitals, a tool that helps us improve on user experiences** through the testing and diagnosis of website loading speed, responsiveness, and visual stability. Site speed is one of the key factors that can reduce site and purchase drop-off while increasing conversions. According to Google's report, *"If page load time increases from 1 second to 3 seconds, the bounce rate increases by 32%". Source: Think with Google*

# 3

As more customers tend to buy online, e-commerce experiences and shopability innovations are coming to the fore. Trends indicate that more and more marketers are directing their efforts to improving customer experiences, leading to the rise of **shoppable video content**, including unboxing videos and product catalogues. Live-stream commerce that has swept through China is now travelling to the rest of the world. **Video entertainment and video streaming opportunities will be key in creating unique experiences that have the power to keep customers engaged while maintaining purchasing momentum.**

# 4

As we move into a **cookieless future**, building trusted relationships through ethical data strategies and protocols will be the frontier of **differentiation**. Besides compliance, a business that implements customer-centric policies that are transparent and value-driven will be able to build and maintain the trust required for long-term relationships. A study by Google and Boston Consulting Group (BCG) shows how brands that succeed with their first-party data strategies have the potential to achieve **up to a 2.9X revenue uplift** and a **1.5X increase in cost savings**, making a first-party data strategy a worthy investment. *Source: Think with Google*



# Lead sustainable agendas with **Tech4Good Innovations**

COVID-19 has also given way to 'post-COVID **environmentalists**', as the number of consumers who base their brand decisions on a company's sustainability actions is growing every day. **A good 3 in 4 customers state that a company's efforts in protecting the environment** has become an important factor in their decision-making process. According to the **PwC Global Consumer Insights Pulse Survey**, 55% of global customers will buy from companies that are conscious and supportive of protecting the environment. According to the same survey, South African customers average at around 62%. This is 7% higher than the global average.

- For those brands that do decide to pursue purpose-driven initiatives, it is imperative to initiate the necessary actions aligned with their core values to ensure authenticity. If you'd like to make a positive change in the world, start small and build commitment through a long-term strategy.
- Not too sure where to begin? Check out Google **AI for social good guide** or Google's **Sustainability** initiative aimed at helping you reduce food, water and energy waste, and learn about the **Circular Economy** which focuses on eliminating waste and extending the life of your goods.





## Grow your **Audience,** Grow your **Business**

Understanding macro-trends beyond our immediate industry and their potential impact on business performance is crucial if we are to achieve marketing effectiveness. The better we understand the broader context of our audiences, the easier it will be for the team at **iLEAD et al** to create campaigns that are relevant and meaningful to your customers, while driving business performance.

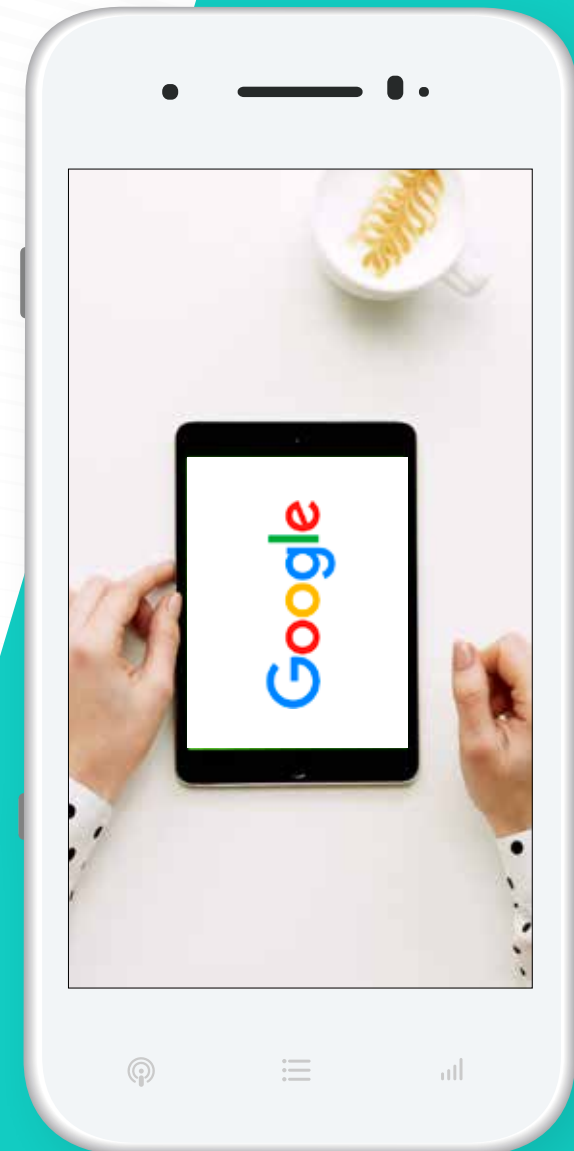
## ● **Google Trends and Search Insights**

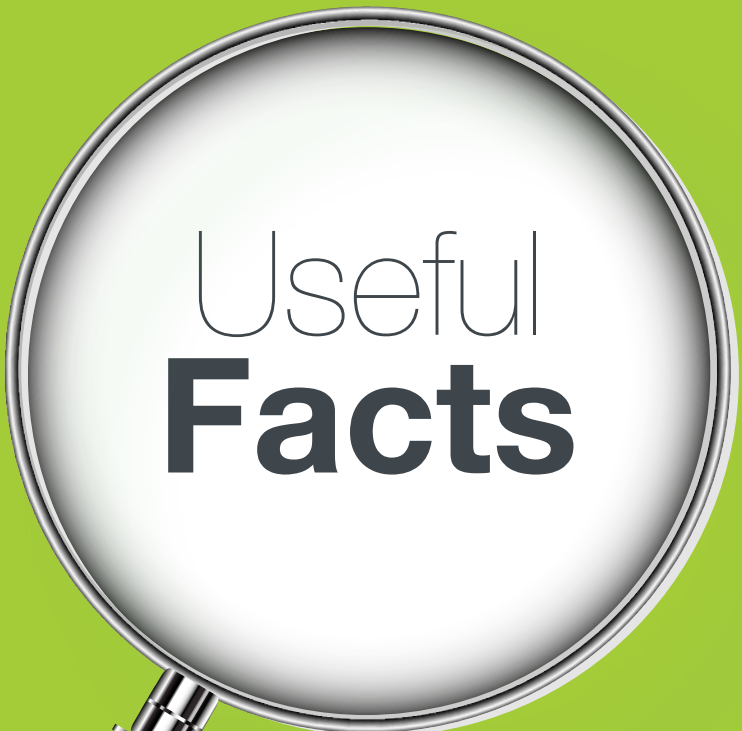
are crucial in uncovering emerging customer needs and rising trends. These actionable insights can be used to make better informed decisions to strategically create opportunities that will help boost performance at a minimal investment.

## ● **Google Analytics and Ads Insights**

provide us with the necessary data required to get acquainted with audiences on a more personal level. We can pull reports that help identify and segment audiences across different spectrums of the user journey. These measures allow us to appropriately respond to the levels of interest for any brand.

The way we craft messaging and channel strategies will differ significantly depending on whether the customer is at the beginning of their digital journey and only expressing a casual interest, or is heavily invested in assessing our product offerings further down their evaluation stages. Understanding customer journeys and their levels of interest and involvement get more invaluable when having to manage ongoing relationships and nurturing loyal customers.





# Useful Facts

Campaigns that use intent-based targeting on mobile have a

**50% higher brand awareness lift,  
30% higher consideration lift, and  
40% higher purchase intent lift**

relative to campaigns that only use demographic targeting.

*Source: Google Brand Lift, Global, Smartphone (analysis restricted to smartphone to isolate the impact of targeting), July 2017-June 2018*

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Relevant ads get

**3x more attention**

compared to the average video ad.

*Source: Google/Ipsos, Video Mobile Diary, U.S., 2017, n of 4,381  
(saw ads occasions)*



# Automate and Empower your efforts with **Machine Learning Algorithms** for speed and scale

As the scale and complexity of market fragmentation are driven by the customer's ever-changing needs, new market entrants and technologies face many challenges. **With the help of Google's automation tools we can assist in navigating these complexities, thus ensuring growth through competitive advantage.**

Machine learning can crawl through large amounts of data and uncover and scale patterns that can guide anything from audience segmentation, bidding and attribution strategies to more informed and smarter budget allocations. In addition, machine learning algorithms can identify the audience's intent in a particular moment, such as when they are in a "I want to learn/do/go or buy moment," and systematically test and optimise not only ad copy, but also the visual and video executions for personalised experiences and maximum ad impact.

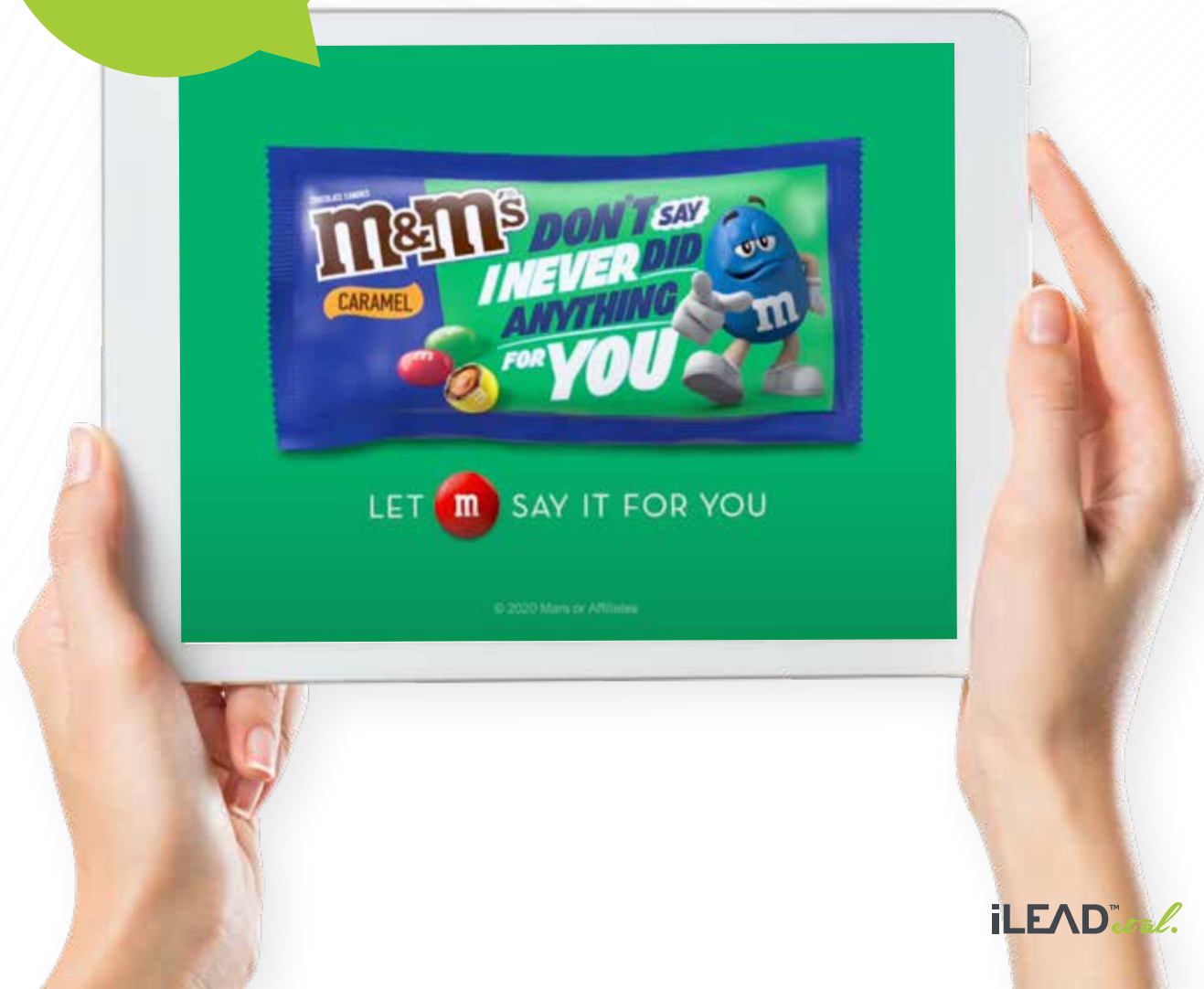
# Creativity and Innovation

## YouTube Works – media innovation award - M&M's case study:

In an effort to reconnect with their audience in a culturally relevant manner and to grab some market share, M&M's relaunch campaign idea was based on 36 themed packs, each with its own unique message. Examples are, "You make mama proud," and "Congrats on that thing you did." Their YouTube strategy to deliver on personalisation was even more ambitious.

M&M's customised their video ads through YouTube's Director Mix, producing 50+ versions of these dynamic creatives featuring unique packs with real-time commentary on cultural and trending topics, like The Oscars. These custom ads were placed at the beginning of relevant and popular YouTube videos. **The campaign resulted in 18 million YouTube impressions and a 22% sales lift in the product category.**

[Click here](#)  
to watch  
the video





# E-commerce and Brand Effectiveness

The significant rise of e-commerce during COVID-19, coupled with restricted budgets for many brands meant that the primary focus of budget allocations was set on driving performance. As these restrictions usually place a greater emphasis on delivering on short-term immediate sales results, there has been little room for businesses to invest in their brand equity through long-term brand-building programs.

Research indicates that brands who manage to keep their brand-building programs up and running during a recession have an opportunity to build on a competitive advantage and gain even more market share during or after these difficult times.

**The big challenge facing brands today** is how to ensure steady and continued growth usually achieved through a balanced approach in driving both top and bottom funnel objectives.

The answer might lie in the right combination of various Google Ads formats that allow brands to reach and engage with their new or current audiences throughout the entire spectrum of the user journey. In other words, Google Ads such as paid search, display, and video ads can all drive reach and brand awareness at the top of the funnel to grow the brand by attracting new customers, as well as drive lead capture and conversion campaigns at the bottom of the funnel. Let's not forget that these tools can also create opportunities for customer advocacy and loyalty.

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**Paid search**, which is usually only considered as a performance channel, is also vital in building brand presence and loyalty. The careful selection of top of funnel keywords that capture audiences while they're still in 'browse' mode with low intent to purchase in that particular moment, and low funnel keywords that capture the audience with the highest intent, as well as the strategic addition of ad extensions allow for top ranking positions. These all work together to make it possible for the customer to find your website in the moments that matter. **To ensure the maximum return on investment, paid search performs best when implemented in synergy with SEO strategies aligned with organic keywords and content.**

Thanks to its myriad of formats, **YouTube** can be utilised to both build a brand and drive performance. This channel is equally ideal for reaching audiences when they are immersed in content that reflect their passions and interests, also when they refer to YouTube videos to learn new skills or are looking for products to buy. Brands who tap into this mindset can create meaningful content that provides value through education, engagement, or empowerment. A great opportunity to establish themselves as influencers and to remain relevant.

On the other hand, if driving conversions and sales is at the top of your agenda, choose **Discovery and Video ads** that optimise strong calls to action ranging from, "Find out more," to "Buy or shop now!" while simultaneously building your brand through visual and narrative video formats that convey stories that have the potential to create emotional connections with audiences.

[Click here](#)  
to watch  
the video



# Contact Us



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If you're still not sure which goals or ad formats would best suit your business, don't stress! Keep calm and get in contact with the team at **iLEAD *et al.***

We build **Brands**  
beyond their **Brands**

