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ASIA'S DIGITAL MILLENNIALS

Opportunities for businesses

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About the research

Asia's digital millennials: Opportunities for businesses is an Economist Intelligence Unit report, commissioned by the Singapore Economic Development Board. It is the second of a two-part research programme that explores what Asia's accelerating pace of digital adoption means for businesses, with a look at their strategies and operations. This briefing paper builds on *Asia's digital millennials: Mobile, social and borderless* and is based upon the following two strands of research:

- In early 2018, The Economist Intelligence Unit surveyed 826 millennials across 12 countries in the following geographies: 204 in South-east Asia (Indonesia, Singapore), 201 in East Asia (China, South Korea) and 421 in the West (Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the UK and the US) to compare the different regions' emerging trends. The survey sample is divided evenly by gender and age groups, 18-26 and 27-35.
- In addition to the survey, we conducted a series of in-depth interviews with experts. Our thanks are due to the following individuals for their time and insights:
 - Suresh Dalai, director, Alvarez and Marsal
 - Piruze Sabuncu, head of South-east Asia and Hong Kong, Stripe
 - Santitarn Sathirathai, group chief economist, Sea
 - Jerald Singh, group head of product and design, Grab
 - Mary Zhou, chief marketing officer, Lazada Group

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Executive summary

In *Asia's digital millennials: Mobile, social and borderless*, we identified and explored the ways millennials in Asia differ from those in Europe and the US in terms of their digital consumption habits. We found that, among other things, Asian millennials are more likely to:

- Be heavier users of chat/messenger services and use those and other social networks to influence their purchasing decisions and those of others.
- Have adopted mobile e-payments faster, selecting it as their favoured means of payment (over debit cards, which are still the most popular method in the West).

This paper provides lessons from some of the biggest tech players in the region about how companies can leverage the trends laid out in the previous paper to tap into Asia's growth.

In terms of **improving a company's relationship with its customers**, the findings include:

- Businesses must match their mobile presence with a physical one, building trust and awareness by giving savvy consumers a chance to see, touch and try their products.
- Companies must engineer their mobile platform to suit the tastes and expectations of users who are likely to demand of e-commerce platforms more than just shopping, including entertainment, social connectivity and foreign products they can't buy locally.
- Companies must create friction-free customer experiences by incorporating local preferences for payments platforms into their online services.

In terms of **improving internal workflows and leveraging a business ecosystem**, the findings include:

- Companies must use their marketing, public-relations (PR), retail and supply-chain teams as hyperlocal eyes and ears to better understand and take advantage of the unique opportunities Asia's ecosystems offer.

- In a motivated but skill-starved region, companies must build strong local teams with a digital mindset.
- Companies must build partnerships to complement their strengths with those of others—even potential competitors.

In general, companies must keep a close eye on what underlying consumer demands they are aiming to address so as to fully capitalise on what Asia has to offer. These demands might change as the region evolves, so companies must also pay attention and adapt.

Introduction: Grasping the millennial milieu

To keep up with increasingly sophisticated millennial consumers in Asia,¹ companies in the region must be prepared to make a number of changes, from hiring staff to the products and platforms they build, including overhauling their online and offline strategies and thinking differently about their internal processes and the overall consumer journey.

In this paper, executives from some of the biggest tech companies in the region share their experiences and approaches, illustrating that whatever their size or pedigree, companies must challenge their own thinking about what works. If they want to successfully expand into new markets, they must avoid the trap of assuming that any two markets in the region are alike. Firms like Grab, which offers ride-hailing among other services, remind us that teams on the ground provide invaluable insight, not just into how products and services are faring, but how they sometimes need redesigning to cater to the hyperlocal needs of the user. E-commerce giant Lazada, meanwhile, speaks of the importance of redesigning the layout of their platform to cater to the Asian millennial's international appetite when it comes to products and services.

The lessons they share are varied, but the themes are common: catering to the Asian millennial generation requires building sometimes unlikely partnerships, anticipating habits and tastes that move fast and in unexpected directions, and embedding the company's workforce in the millennial milieu. Throughout the report, we summarise the key challenges and the ways the featured companies overcame them at the end of each chapter.



Catering to the Asian millennial generation requires building sometimes unlikely partnerships, anticipating habits and tastes that move fast and in unexpected directions, and embedding the company's workforce in the millennial milieu.

¹ See *Asia's digital millennials: Mobile, social and borderless* for details

Chapter 1: Recreating “mall culture”

Businesses must match their mobile presence with a physical one, building trust and awareness by giving savvy consumers a chance to see, touch and try their products. They must also engineer their mobile platform to suit the tastes and expectations of users who are likely to demand of e-commerce platform more than just shopping, including entertainment, social connectivity and foreign products they can't buy locally.

Even after Lazada built itself into one of the region's strongest e-commerce platforms, its own research indicated that this wasn't enough. Mary Zhou, the firm's chief marketing officer, says that a recent survey showed “some...respondents lamented about the lack of touch and feel in online shopping.” The company, which sells some 300m products across six South-east Asian countries,² addressed this by increasing the options for shoppers in how they receive their parcels, including letting them pick them up from offline locations like shopping malls, registered lockers and convenience stores. It is also trying to imitate the immediacy of an in-store experience by building an instant chat function on its website and apps. This allows customers to chat in real time with brands and sellers so they can be better informed before making a purchase.

Achieving this kind of synergy presents an issue for brick-and-mortar businesses, which can't afford to ignore the march of mobile and the cornucopia of products and services available with a tap. It also challenges companies that are pure e-commerce platforms and thus lack a physical presence where customers can touch

and feel, and try on, their products before committing to a purchase.

Meet me at the digital mall

Sea, which operates in e-commerce, digital entertainment and digital financial services in South-east Asia, has learned similar lessons, according to its chief economist, Santitarn Sathirathai. The company, through its e-commerce arm Shopee, offers functionality such as the ability to interact with sellers through live chats and more recently live streaming. Shopee has also learned that millennial consumers in the region are looking for a similar experience online to the one they're having offline. This insight enables the company to better address their expectations. The company calls it “experiential commerce”: where once they went online to buy something they knew they wanted, now many consumers treat e-commerce platforms as they would a mall—a social activity, a place to window-shop, to find something entertaining.

This is particularly true among South-east Asia's millennial generation, many of whom, Mr Santitarn observes, have grown up in a mall culture. “In the past, people used e-commerce to just buy something that they know they want,” he says, comparing the experience to grocery shopping. “[That] has changed quite significantly, especially in this region, where people start to look at e-commerce platforms the way they'd go to malls”—that is, for the experience as well as the specific good. Shopee has tackled this by measuring the success of their online platform not just by metrics such as how fast the product can be delivered, but also how engaged customers are on the app.

² “Lazada Group announces leadership succession plan”, Lazada website, December 13th 2018, https://www.lazada.com/sites/default/files/press-releases/Lazada_Group_announces_leadership_succession_plan_0.pdf

"Much like the way you would judge the performance of the mall," says Mr Santitarn, "you want traffic but we also look at how we can sustain engagement with the customer. We encourage them to come back to browse and have fun—not just when they want to buy something specific. This gives us an opportunity not just to address existing demand, but also to create new demand." Shopee leverages artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics to customise their screens and the selection of goods they see, and build mini-games within the app or website where customers can earn discounts. "It's becoming more than just a place to get the stuff that you want," says Mr Santitarn. "It's more entertainment, and it's also social because you interact, you play with your friends."

Lazada is also making its platform more social and entertaining. It is part of what the platform dubs as "shoppertainment",



We believe 'gamification' can make shopping fun by rewarding shoppers for participation, encouraging their engagement with brands and building a sense of community.

Mary Zhou, Lazada

blending shopping and entertainment. It now features more functions like in-app live streaming; a QR code scanner that consumers can use to take them directly to a promotion, product or seller page within the app; and in-app games in which people can play to win vouchers. "We believe our shoppertainment efforts and 'gamification' can make shopping fun by rewarding shoppers for participation,



The Challenge

- Turning online shopping into an entertaining, social, mall-like experience.

The Solutions

- Integrating online and offline channels.
- Greater customisation of the online experience based on user activity.
- Including opportunities for social interaction.

encouraging their engagement with brands and building a sense of community,” says Ms Zhou.

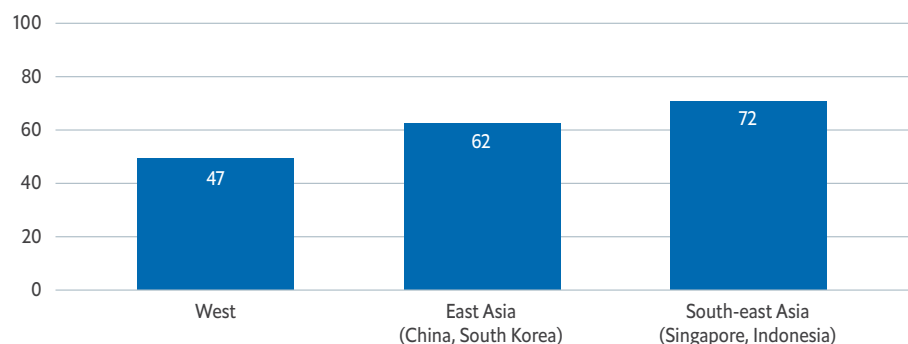
The firm is also keenly aware of the international tastes of their customers (see figure I). “South-east Asian customers are increasingly open to making cross-border purchases,” says Ms Zhou.³ The vast majority

of online shoppers in markets such as Malaysia and Singapore have bought overseas products before, she says. To cater to this, Lazada has its own section dedicated to overseas products—called Global Collection—and Ms Zhou says the company has seen growing awareness of this part of the website.

Figure I. Borderless buying

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I expect to shop more frequently from international vendors (eg, e-commerce websites or online sellers based in other countries) in the next three years.

(% respondents who answered “somewhat agree” and “strongly agree”)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit

³ See *Asia's digital millennials: Mobile, social and borderless*, ch2



Chapter 2: It's all in the wallet

Companies must create friction-free customer experiences by incorporating local preferences for payments platforms into their online services.

Asian millennials, especially those in South-east Asia, straddle both Asian and Western worlds, especially when it comes to what they buy and how they pay for it.

Asian millennials are adventurous, showing increasing willingness to shop across borders. But how they make these purchases is highly localised. It's not just a question of how the products are shipped or whether the prices are denominated in different currencies—though these are important factors in a consumer's decision. Companies also need to understand local preferences for payment platforms (see figure II), which vary from country to country even within Asia, says Piruze Sabuncu of Stripe, a digital payments firm. Chinese consumers, say, will expect to be

able to use Alipay and WeChat Pay, but Apple Pay may be preferred in other markets.

Indeed, drilling down into the process of making that purchase reveals a key insight into the region. The global norm, for example, is still for customers to be more likely to research a product on their mobile device but wait until they are at a computer before making the purchase. Monetate, an e-commerce support platform, reported from analysing data on its platform that the rate of completing a purchase was just under 4% in the third quarter of 2018 for traditional devices (computers), versus under 2% for smartphones.⁴

But Lazada noticed that in South-east Asia this does not apply equally to all product categories and price points. Especially when it comes to bigger-ticket items, customers are more likely to do their research on the product and add their prospective purchase to the shopping cart on a computer. They

Figure II. Pay away

Country	Most-used payments platform	Estimated number of local users
China	Alipay	More than 700m ⁵
South Korea	Samsung Pay	10.4m ⁶
Indonesia	Go-Pay	115m ⁷
Singapore	PayLah!	785,000 ⁸

⁴ *A Conversation About Context (Monetate Ecommerce Quarterly)*, Monetate, December 2018, <https://www.monetate.com/blog/the-data-types-that-drive-the-most-relevance-eq3-2018-out-now>

⁵ "China's Alipay agrees €200m Uefa sponsorship deal", *The Financial Times*, November 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/a8efe3d8-e404-11e8-a6e5-792428919cee>

⁶ "Local Samsung Pay users up 58% on-year in October", *The Korea Herald*, November 2018, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20181113000114>

⁷ "State platform ready to compete in e-payment", *The Jakarta Post*, March 2019, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2019/03/05/new-heavyweight-ready-to-compete-in-payment-services.html>

⁸ Digital Transformation Spotlight: DBS, March 2019, <https://www.penser.co.uk/article/digital-transformation-spotlight-dbs/>



What consumers want is a seamless check-out experience.

Piruze Sabuncu, Stripe

will then complete the purchase via mobile. This counterintuitive trend means that the “multi-screen customer shopping journey has become more of the norm rather than the exception in this day and age,” says Ms Zhou. The lesson here for companies is to “constantly be evolving based on how best to stay relevant with [their] increasingly tech-savvy and mobile consumers.”

This is part of the reason, for example, why Asian millennials are huge fans of mobile wallets, remarks Ms Sabuncu. About 40% and 54% of millennials in Singapore and Hong Kong, respectively, are more likely to visit a website or app if they offer wallets as a payment mechanism.⁹ “What consumers want is a seamless check-out experience,” she says, noting that consumers expect to transact quickly and securely on the platform itself and are likely to abandon a purchase if they can’t. A recent survey also found that 71% and 65% of consumers in Hong Kong and Singapore, respectively, say they would abandon a website if it takes too long to enter their payment information at checkout.¹⁰



The Challenge

- Satisfying the millennial need for shopping experiences that are both friction-free and take place over a variety of devices.

The Solutions

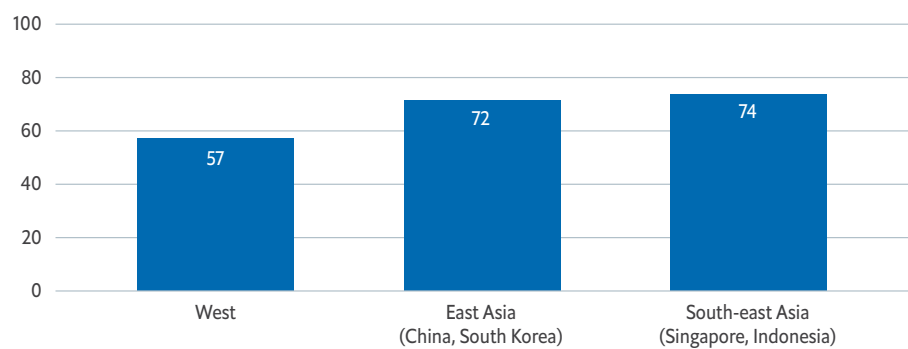
- Incorporate local payments platforms.
- Remain consistent and seamless across all devices.
- Leverage the spread of mobile wallets.

⁹ “The platform effect: Rise of the market economy in Asia Pacific”, Stripe, July 25th 2018, slide 33, <https://www.slideshare.net/StripeonDeck/the-platform-effect-rise-of-the-marketplace-economy-in-asia-pacific-107457897>

¹⁰ Ibid, slide 23

Figure III. Of bits and billfolds

How important is having the option of paying through a digital/mobile wallet when you consider making online purchases of physical goods?
(% respondents who answered "somewhat agree" and "strongly agree")



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit



Chapter 3: Local eyes

Companies must use their marketing, public-relations (PR), retail and supply-chain teams as hyperlocal eyes and ears to better understand and take advantage of the unique opportunities Asia's ecosystems offer.

For super app Grab, the diversity of South-east Asia dictates the shape of its teams and products. "Within South-east Asia alone, there are 11 countries, ten currencies and a melting pot of different cultures, languages and dialects," says Jerald Singh, Grab's group head of product and design. "Every country, city and province comes with its own unique challenges and opportunities from urban congestion to a lack of comprehensive rural mapping, language barriers, regulatory hurdles and uneven pace of development." By 2030, he says, an estimated 200m South-east Asians will join the middle class, roughly the size of the middle-class population in mainland China today¹¹. "A one-size-fits-all approach does not work here."

To manage this, Grab has assembled predominantly local teams in each of the eight countries it operates in, including basing four of its seven research and development (R&D) centres in South-east Asia.¹² "There is no substitute for having people on the ground that really know how people live, work and play," Mr Singh says. "Our philosophy is to develop the product where our consumers live."

One unique example from Indonesia illustrates Grab's solution to the challenge of localisation. Motorcycle riders ("ojek" in Bahasa Indonesia) often camp together kerbside at Jakarta's

teeming junctions awaiting passengers. That makes sense in a purely offline world—the next ojek due a customer proffers a helmet and perch to the rider, and the deal is sealed but what happens when the ride has been booked by an app? How can the passenger and rider find each other? After time on the streets of Indonesia's capital, Grab staff realised that passengers had to wade through the camp of bikers, checking licence plates until they found their ride. Grab noticed another problem with the online transaction: When bikers got a job away from their usual camp, they'd stash their phone in their pocket and not look at it again until they'd reached the pick-up point. With their phone out of reach, they would find out too late if the passenger had cancelled the booking.

Grab's solution: digitised street-hailing through GrabNow, which lets passengers walk up to any idle GrabBike driver to book a ride. It was a win-win: for passengers, no more waiting time and struggling to look for the right bike; for drivers, they're guaranteed a job, they no longer have to drive to the passenger and it removes the cancellation hassle. The lesson? Determine the pain point of your intended target market, even if that means spending time at the hyperlocal level where conditions may vary from one neighbourhood to another. "Marketers talk a lot about product-market fit," says Mr Singh. "The problem with that concept is that you put the cart before the horse—building a product and then looking for the right market. At Grab, we find problems we want to solve, and then we build the products to solve them."

¹¹ Growth Projections, *US-ASEAN Business Council*, 16 May 2017, <https://www.usasean.org/why-asean/growth>

¹² "Grab opens research and development centre in Kuala Lumpur", *The Straits Times*, December 11th 2018, <https://www.straitstimes.com/business/companies-markets/grab-opens-research-and-development-centre-in-kuala-lumpur>

Marketing teams, too, can benefit from hyperlocal eyes and ears. For example, with the understanding that Filipinos get stuck in long traffic jams but love to sing, Grab's marketing team in the Philippines launched a campaign that offers in-vehicle karaoke equipment for passengers during the ride. In Singapore and Malaysia, knowing their compatriots' love of durians, local marketing teams launch an annual GrabDurian service to deliver the fruit with a unique odour directly to a customer's doorstep.



There is no substitute for having people on the ground that really know how people live, work and play.

Jerald Singh, Grab



The Challenge

- Surmounting grassroots logistical and cultural barriers to greater interaction with a firm's products and services.

The Solutions

- Interact with people on the ground—both suppliers and consumers—to map out the rhythms and cadence of their daily lives.
- Leverage insights from different local teams, who can provide creative solutions from their unique perspective.



Chapter 4: Talent shows

In a region where digitalisation has rapidly transformed industries, companies must build strong local teams with a digital mindset to succeed.

When Grab wanted to recruit engineers and data scientists in South-east Asia, it encountered a challenge: despite the accelerating pace of digitisation among millennials in South-east Asia, many of those with IT skills, well-placed to work in the companies riding its rise, had left. "Just a few years ago, there just wasn't an industry here to give them enough opportunities to expand their careers," says Mr Singh.

Grab's solution was to build R&D centres in places where the company needs workers, rather than just building where that talent pool already exists, as well as in cities where Grab can recruit top global talent specifically Bangalore, Seattle and Beijing. Furthermore, Grab is cultivating the next generation of talent through partnerships like the one it has with the National University of Singapore, with its first major AI lab focused on enhancing mapping, safety features and personalisation. The lab, which leverages Grab's data and AI and machine learning capabilities, not only helps the end product, but "also allows us to nurture South-east Asia's next generation of tech talent," says Mr Singh.

As a result, despite the challenge of a skills gap, the region's talent pool is still recognised as one of the best in the world. Singapore, with a population of 5.6m people, stands out in particular. The city-state tops the human capital category on the Asian Digital

Transformation Index, making it the strongest performer in developing human capital for digital transformation.¹³

Integration nations

Another advantage of hiring and training locally is that the digital teams can be more easily integrated with existing teams and operations. This integration is crucial to the success for both South-east Asian startups and mature companies as they try to provide a seamless experience to digital-savvy millennial consumers, says Suresh Dalai of Alvarez and Marsal, a professional services firm that helps businesses scale up and grow profitably in South-east Asia.

Clients in traditional businesses like apparel or retail, for example, are particularly eager to build an online presence, but merging the online and offline businesses is key.

Clients in traditionally off-line-focused businesses such as retail, for example, are particularly eager to build an online presence, says Mr Dalai, but integrating the online and offline operations can be challenging. "Companies [often] hire an online team and have them sit in a place away from the existing merchandising, logistics, and marketing teams," he says. "By doing this, right off the bat, the operations and the offers

¹³ The Asian Digital Transformation Index 2018, <http://connectedfuture.economist.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ADTI-whitepaper.pdf>

to the consumer are not integrated.” These companies may have the right intentions to integrate, but they ultimately fail in fully merging the two pieces of the business.

Successfully integrating to provide a superior consumer experience is crucial to competing in growing retail environments, such as in Indonesia where online e-commerce as a percentage of total retail sales will be about 20% within two to three years—a contribution rate similar to that of China

last year¹⁴. One of the keys to success, Mr Dalai says, is inculcating a digital culture throughout the value chain such that the right people can access the right data, make fact-based decisions, and execute quickly. Another is building stronger and broader cross-functional collaborations, such as getting the e-commerce team to exchange information and work with merchandisers, planners, logistics, and marketing teams on a regular basis.



The Challenge

- Ensuring a robust supply of talent to work at millennial-focused firms.
- Integrating teams working in off- and online parts of the company.

The Solutions

- Build R&D centres in places where workers are needed.
- Instill a digital mindset across all areas of the business.
- Encourage the trading of information between departments.

¹⁴ Financial Times Confidential Research

Chapter 5: Power in numbers

Companies must build partnerships to complement their strengths with those of others—even potential competitors.

When Sea's e-commerce arm, Shopee, started out working with brick-and-mortar firms to build up their online presence, Shopee had to sometimes convince these firms that both e-commerce platforms and offline firms have their own strengths which can complement each other, and that this can be a win-win partnership, for both large and small players alike. Shopee is increasingly partnering with well-established brands like Big C in Thailand, Nestlé in Malaysia and MiniSo in Singapore to help them tap into Shopee's huge network of buyers, complementing their strong offline networks in the process. As an outsource e-commerce partner, Mr Santitarn says Shopee can work with these companies to manage every stage of their e-commerce operations—from sharing data and insights that can identify and target new consumers, to building marketing and promotional campaigns to drive awareness, to managing logistics, inventory, and customer services.

"We all want to have a kind of omni-channel from both offline and online," he says. "But the way to go about doing that is slightly different. In the past everyone was trying to do their own stuff; right now you have this kind of mutually beneficial partnership going on."

This model also applies to smaller businesses and startups hoping to sell to this increasingly sophisticated and demanding market. Particularly for a platform like Sea's Shopee, many merchants focus on "long tail" products like fashion, health and beauty. From basic assets like product photos and labelling, to more advanced services like video streaming, smaller companies and startups need to recognise there's a wealth of experience there to draw from. "Education has become very important for small and medium enterprises and these things cannot be done just in an online tutorial; they need to be done via offline workshops," says Mr Santitarn. The company has an initiative called Shopee University which offers such sessions, not just in large urban areas, but also in tier-two and -three cities.



The Challenge

- Integrating online and offline presences.
- Educating suppliers about how to sell to the millennial market.

The Solutions

- Partner with companies or organisations that can fill a hole in one's own menu of services.

Box: Security matters

The growing adoption of mobile wallets among millennials creates opportunity, but as the volume of commerce online increases, so does the risk of fraud. To address this, payments firm Stripe has created a platform called Radar, which utilises machine learning to analyse hundreds of billions of data points to identify patterns of fraud. This enables online businesses to manage the complexities of creating individual rules for every country that they might want to launch in. "It's important for companies to use the right technologies, even if they're hidden from the consumer, to ensure they're not vulnerable to fraud of compliance concerning consumer and credit card data," says Piruze Sabuncu, Stripe's head of South-east Asia and Hong Kong.

Security among the backend is crucial, but for companies on the front line, it is also not an easy shortcut. E-commerce website Lazada, for one, has more than 100 dedicated security professionals in South-east Asia, and also relies on its majority shareholders' experience. "In Lazada, we use security solutions from Alibaba group that have been proven over many years," says Mary Zhou, Lazada's chief marketing officer. These solutions combine technology and machine learning, she says, and have been localised for South-east Asia. All orders, for example, go through a filter with an algorithm that assesses within 0.2 seconds whether the transaction is suspicious, and rejects any that appear questionable.



Chapter 6: Mix, listen, repeat

Companies must keep a close eye on what underlying demands they are aiming to address—and how they might change as the region evolves.

Grab may have its roots in the transportation business, but it was always obvious to the co-founders that in South-east Asia, getting from point A to point B safely was more than just moving people around. It was also about bigger problems like financial inclusion and deepening access to digital services. That first and foremost means moving people around: The company was started to help people in Malaysia get home, at a time when safe, reliable and affordable public transport was not available in most South-east Asian capitals. The company, says Mr Singh, continues to invest heavily in processes and technologies, on both visible and back-end functions.



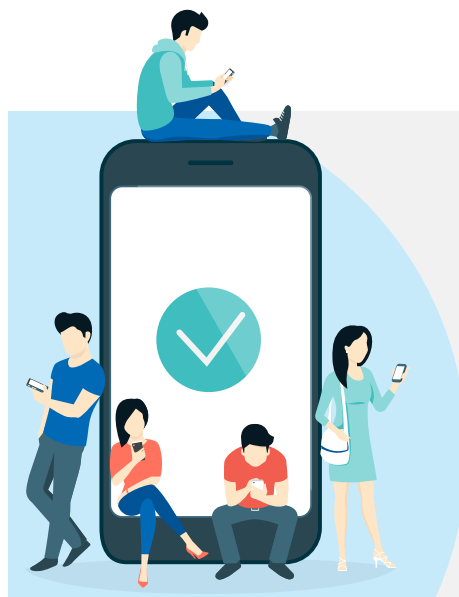
This new generation of middle-class consumers will want the same comforts and amenities long available to other parts of the developed world.

Jerald Singh, Grab

But as Grab has grown, and its users' tastes and needs have evolved, the company has expanded into food, package and grocery delivery, and mobile payments. It must keep moving, however, says Mr Singh. Its next plan is to address the increasing interconnectedness of South-east Asian consumers, their growing wealth and their need for financial services. It thus plans to ease the problem of remittances for overseas workers in the region and offer financial services to micro-entrepreneurs and small businesses in South-east Asia. Another goal is to have a wallet that reflects the cross-border aspirations of the region's shoppers and vendors. To do this, Grab is working with regional banks like Maybank, Kasikornbank and UOB to develop a single regional e-wallet, which users can access for any service or product.¹⁵

Mr Singh sums up the sentiment by noting that "this new generation of middle-class consumers will want the same comforts and amenities long available to other parts of the developed world," from basic financial services—the ability to take out small loans for a new car, their children's education or their business—to "travel, a sector that is poised for meteoric growth as South-east Asians look to explore the region and the world beyond. Companies looking to scale and expand in the region have to take all these and more into consideration to tackle real barriers on the ground and thrive in this part of the world."

¹⁵ "Grab partners UOB to deliver financial services in Asean region", *The Straits Times*, November 12th 2018, <https://www.straitstimes.com/business/banking/grab-partners-uob-to-deliver-in-financial-services-in-asean-region>



The Challenge

- Satisfying the growing desire among South-east Asian millennials for greater variety, convenience, comforts and amenities.

The Solutions

- Make sure the fundamental desires of this cohort remain front-of-mind, amid rapid changes in execution, delivery and interaction.

Conclusion: Winning over the Asian millennial

This paper lays out a number of steps companies can take to appeal to millennial customers in Asia—a fast-growing and dynamic region, rife with change. Specifically:

- Businesses must offer a physical presence to accompany their online services, allowing customers some sense of an in-store experience and a chance to see, touch and try their products.
- Businesses must cater to the expanding preferences of consumers who are browsing e-commerce platforms for more than just shopping, and are also seeking entertainment and social interactions.
- Companies need to take into consideration the varying preferences for payments platforms across countries so as to ensure a seamless online experience for users.
- To capitalise on Asia's unique opportunities, companies have to engage their business units—marketing, PR, retail and supply-chain teams—to act as their hyperlocal eyes and ears.
- Companies must set up strong teams on the ground and instill in them a digitisation mindset. Businesses need to complement their strengths by tapping into that of others through collaborative efforts.
- Companies must pay close attention to and keep in mind the fundamental demands they are seeking to address, and how they might change as the region evolves.

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