

One way that shopping festivals are changing commerce in Southeast Asia

Article

Since **Alibaba** held its first Singles' Day in 2009, the event has grown into a weekslong shopping extravaganza stretching across various platforms. Also known as Double 11 or 11.11,

it is now also a must-watch event for marketers to catch a glimpse of retail tech innovations and shopping trends. Its wild success has inspired local competitors, such as **JD.com** and **ByteDance**-owned **Douyin**, to launch shopping festivals of their own.

These festivals are increasingly spreading beyond China's borders. In Southeast Asia, **Lazada** and **Shopee**—backed by Alibaba and **Tencent**, respectively—run monthly sales festivals on dates of the same formulation, such as Shopee's 9.9 Super Shopping Day held September 9. Events can feature discounts of up to 90%, and other perks like free shipping and product giveaways. Up next are the year-end sales festivals, scheduled for October 10 (10.10), November 11 (the original Singles' Day), and December 12 (12.12).

Here's one way these events are changing commerce in Southeast Asia.

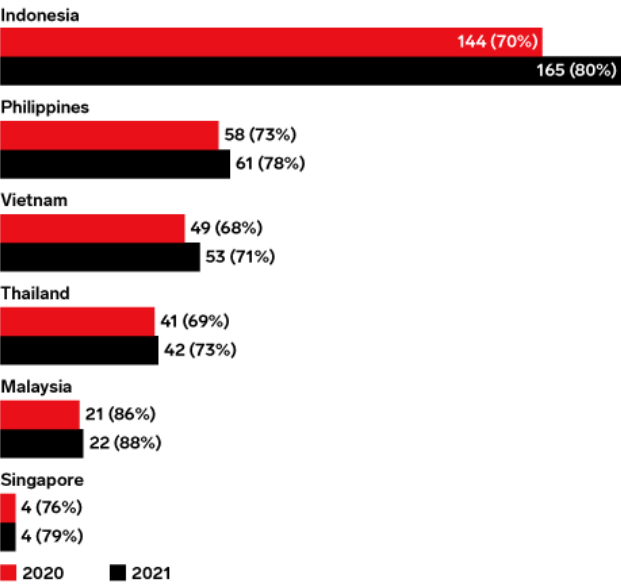
Driving adoption of ecommerce. These events are helping to create first-time digital buyers, especially as COVID-19 regulations restrict in-person shopping, and as young people grow up with sales festivals as a part of everyday life.

Among internet users in Southeast Asia ages 16 and older, **86% said they had bought products online during a double-digit shopping festival**, like 6.6 or 7.7, according to an April 2021 **GlobalWebIndex** survey commissioned by **Facebook** and **Bain & Company**. Of these respondents, **43% were first-time digital buyers**. Thailand and Vietnam saw higher percentages of new digital buyers than any other Southeast Asian market included in the poll.

In a separate study, Facebook and Bain & Company estimated that the number of digital buyers in Southeast Asia ages 15 and up (defined as those who have purchased a product online in the past 12 months) reached **317 million** in 2020, up 37 million year over year. The study projected that another 30 million will join their ranks this year.

Digital Buyers in Southeast Asia, by Country, 2020 & 2021

millions and % of population



Note: ages 15+; have purchased a product via online means in the past 12 months, excluding travel; data is based on a triangulation of multiple sources including Euromonitor, Forrester, Hootsuite, and Facebook-commissioned Bain & Company survey from June 2019
Source: Facebook and Bain & Company, "SYNC Southeast Asia Report 2021 - Southeast Asia, the home for digital transformation," Aug 30, 2021