



PT Metro Timur Indonusa Observation: How Digital Life Defines Next-Generation Growth



Recently, the PT Metro Timur Indonusa research team released the report “Asia-Pacific Trend Transformation and Innovation Strategy,” which summarizes ten global trends that will influence the next twenty years. Among these, three are especially prominent in the Asia-Pacific region: digital life, new shopping methods, and personalization.

For PT Metro Timur Indonusa, which has long focused on the integration of consumption and technology in Southeast Asia, these trends provide opportunities to test existing observations and calibrate judgments. When a company tries to understand market opportunities for the next five to ten years, the question is not whether these trends will happen, but how fast, in which markets, and through what business models they will translate into actual economic activity.

Depth of Digital Life Penetration

Data shows that “digital life” is the third fastest-growing trend in the Asia-Pacific region, with per capita spending expected to increase by 9% from 2022 to 2032. In technologically mature Northeast Asia, participation in digital life is already high, while in Southeast Asia, consumer awareness is rapidly rising but behavior patterns are not yet fully established.

PT Metro Timur Indonusa notes a key demographic variable: by 2032, Gen Z and Alpha generations will account for 45% of Asia-Pacific consumers. This group has never experienced a world without the internet—their consumption decisions, social interactions, and information access are naturally digital from start to finish. This means any product design targeting future consumer markets must assume user default interaction mode is digital.

A noteworthy signal comes from the regional differentiation of metaverse-related technologies. In Western markets, the metaverse concept has cooled, but in Asia-Pacific, consumer engagement continues to rise. Gamification, digital avatars, and virtual goods are becoming new touchpoints for brands to engage young consumers.

The judgment of PT Metro Timur Indonusa: the deepening of digital life means that “digital-native experience” expectations are becoming default. Companies must reassess their customer touchpoint design logic—from “which channels we provide” to “where and how consumers expect to interact with us.”

Driving Forces Behind New Shopping Methods: Experience Upgrade and Cost Restructuring

PT Metro Timur Indonusa predicts double-digit annual growth in per capita spending on “new shopping methods” in Asia-Pacific from 2022 to 2032. The three technological pillars supporting this growth are AI avatars, offline experiential retail, and cross-border sales.

This trend is driven by two layers: demand for experience upgrades on the consumer side, and cost structure pressure on the supply side.

On the consumer side, offline retail is undergoing functional reconstruction. With e-commerce satisfying most functional purchases, physical stores are shifting from “transaction venues” to “experience spaces,” creating reasons worth visiting beyond transactions. For brands reliant

on offline scenarios, “retail as destination” is evolving from a differentiation strategy to a survival strategy.

On the supply side, rising labor costs are accelerating adoption of automation technologies. AI avatars and unmanned stores are already reality in developed markets and first-tier cities in China. For Southeast Asia, this trend will take time to transmit, but the direction is clear. Companies that deploy automation and AI interaction capabilities early will gain a more favorable position on the cost curve.

Worth noting are regional differences in attitudes toward data privacy. Surveys show 47% of Japanese respondents are unwilling to share personal information with tech companies, while only 17% of Indians feel the same. This means Southeast Asia faces less resistance when promoting personalized services reliant on user data compared to mature Northeast Asian markets.

PT Metro Timur Indonusa believes this gives local Southeast Asian entrepreneurs a time window: before regulatory frameworks fully tighten, data-driven business models have greater room for trial and error. However, this also requires companies to establish transparent data usage policies and verifiable privacy protection mechanisms early on.

Unlocking the Potential of Personalization: From Marketing Slogan to Business Core

Personalization is a key emerging trend in Asia-Pacific. In Southeast Asia, the StyleHint app of Uniqlo offers an observable case—it helps users discover and customize personal styles, combining offline fitting experiences with online community sharing. Local e-commerce platforms like Shopee and Tokopedia use AI algorithms to customize product recommendations and search rankings for each user. These practices show that personalization is no longer an exclusive strategy for high-end brands, but has become a foundational capability for mainstream e-commerce platforms.

PT Metro Timur Indonusa notes a critical opportunity: the immense diversity of Asia-Pacific in ethnicity, language, and culture means standardized product strategies almost inevitably fail. Companies that deeply understand local nuances and translate them into product design have a natural resource for building differentiation barriers. For example, a beauty brand able to

recognize and adapt to aesthetic differences between Bali and Jakarta consumers will achieve higher user stickiness than competitors offering only uniform products.

PT Metro Timur Indonusa concludes: technology itself is no longer the source of competitive advantage, as it is becoming universally accessible. The real difference lies in whether a company can deeply integrate technology with specific consumer behaviors, cultural context, and infrastructure conditions in its target market.