



THE INTERSECTION OF INFLUENCE.

2026 STUDY
(SINGAPORE & MALAYSIA EDITION)

About the South China Morning Post (SCMP)

The South China Morning Post (SCMP) is the premier English-language news platform in Hong Kong, with over 123 years of storied history and significant global influence. We focus on key topics about China, including Hong Kong, while providing essential global news coverage.

We believe that high-quality news reporting is built on the insight and networks of professional journalists. The SCMP has an international editorial team spanning Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland, North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia, closely following hot topics in China and the rest of Asia, and their global impact. With outstanding editorial expertise and a rigorous approach, we provide valuable news content and insights.

Powered by its parent company Alibaba Group's cutting-edge technology, the SCMP has evolved into the leading multimedia digital news outlet. Through its website, mobile app, social media channels and video content, it delivers comprehensive and dependable reporting to a global audience, providing the essential perspective and clarity required to understand China and Asia.

Beyond its editorial leadership, the SCMP offers a robust suite of international forums about China and creative advertising solutions to help businesses build international credibility and navigate the complexities of the global landscape. Meanwhile, our education services help the next generation develop their English and other important skills to thrive in the future.

About SCMP Advertising+

For more than 123 years, the South China Morning Post has been entrusted by both readers and partners in Hong Kong and elsewhere in Asia to tell the stories that matter to over 35 million readers each month. SCMP Advertising+ connects partners to affluent Asian influencers and business decision-makers (BDMs) through culturally relevant content and events that drive connection and consideration. Its first-party data platform and brand safety tools deliver impact through insights and context. SCMP Advertising+ is designed for partners who want to shape the next chapter of Hong Kong and Asia's story.

About HarrisX (a Stagwell Company)

HarrisX is a global market research, data analytics and strategy consulting company that leverages cutting-edge technology, data and creativity to drive strategic growth for its clients. It delivers an agile, iterative and evidence-driven process that combines speed, scale and sophistication. It has a deep history of marrying behavioural data with attitudinal surveys, survey-based statistics and third-party data to provide comprehensive business answers and rich storytelling for clients. It blends proprietary syndicated data with custom research and deep industry expertise across 12 different sectors in more than 40 countries. Its team is nimble and interactive, and applies the latest advances in technology, machine learning and AI to solve complex problems in real time. This is how it connects all the dots for its clients.

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INFLUENCE READS SCMP.



Location: Grand Majestic Sichuan, Alexandra House, Central

“To stay one step ahead, I always seek the perspectives I need for Hong Kong and beyond.”

MICHAEL T. SMITH, Group Chief Executive, Hongkong Land



South China Morning Post

Read what he's reading.



Executive remarks

Influencing the Influential

More than 25 years ago, I pioneered digital advertising in Asia. Since then, through founding an adtech firm and building digital platforms across the region, I have witnessed a massive paradigm shift in our industry. We have moved firmly away from simply measuring impressions, a legacy metric focused purely on viewability, towards engagement and, crucially, attention.

As marketers rightfully embrace attention metrics, our latest report, *The Intersection of Influence*, provides vital colour regarding how context, situation and media channels alter audience behaviour.

This Singapore and Malaysia edition follows our Hong Kong launch and is important for the region. Today, premium news media have significantly greater influence than other channels, especially when your brand is looking for high impact and deep connections to influence the influential.

Our findings challenge standard assumptions about media performance, highlighting four critical truths:

- 64% of Singapore and 65% of Kuala Lumpur adults are fully or mostly focused when they consume news, the highest level measured across channels.
- News leads the attention economy; it is the single highest-attention channel available to advertisers.
- Editorial content builds a lasting cognitive connection that stays with business decision-makers long after reading.
- People use news media with purpose. Usage peaks in the morning and then again in the afternoon, when key daily decisions are made, unlike the passive media environments that dominate in the evening.

Decision-makers read with purpose and act on insight, making them a priority audience for brands. By leveraging high-impact platforms with editorial integrity, brands can align themselves with trusted content to drive meaningful influence.

I invite you to read on for more insights.

Best regards,

Kevin Huang
Chief Operating Officer
South China Morning Post



South China
Morning Post

ASTOR BALLROOM





Foreword

Changing the Planning Conversation

At HarrisX, our work starts with a simple belief: better data leads to better decisions. Research removes the guesswork. It helps leaders understand who they need to reach, what those audiences care about and where investment will have the greatest impact, so they are not wasting time, energy or media dollars in the wrong places.

We have been trusted by some of the world's largest companies, as well as presidents, prime ministers, publishers and public institutions, to do exactly that: turn audience intelligence into data-backed decisions. And through our technology, including AskTheo, we are making that insight faster, more accessible and more useful for the people who need to act on it.

Building on our work looking at modern media environments and how audiences perceive brands within them, this study looks beyond where audiences spend time to how they behave once they are there. Are they focused or scrolling? Are they filling time or making time? Are they reacting in the moment or using information to make decisions?

For marketers, that changes the planning conversation. The job is not just to buy more exposure but to understand which environments create the right kind of attention for the task at hand. Some channels spark discovery, some build understanding, some create trust and some move people closer to action. The smartest media plans recognise that sequence.

Alex Braun
Chief Strategy Officer
Global EVP
HarrisX

About this Study

This study was conducted by HarrisX as a quantitative survey focusing on people in Singapore, Malaysia and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

In Singapore, the fieldwork took place over a five-day period from August 3 to August 7, 2026. The study's scope encompasses two distinct sample groups: a larger sample of the general population (1,010 people) and a targeted sample of business decision-makers (170 people). The research comes with a 3.1 percentage-point margin of error, ensuring a reliable level of statistical precision.

In Malaysia, the fieldwork took place over a five-day period from August 3 to August 7, 2026. The study's scope encompasses two distinct sample groups: a larger sample of the general population (1,009 people) and a targeted sample of business decision-makers (108 people). The research comes with a 3.1 percentage-point margin of error, ensuring a reliable level of statistical precision.

In the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, fieldwork took place over a six-day period from June 3 to June 8, 2026. The study's scope encompasses two distinct sample groups: a larger sample of the general population (1,193 people) and a targeted sample of business decision-makers (313 people). The research comes with a 2.9 percentage-point margin of error, ensuring a reliable level of statistical precision.

SUMMARY

#1 Audiences make time for news

- 64% of Singapore and 65% of Kuala Lumpur adults are fully or mostly focused when they consume news.
- News media are the #1 channel people turn to in the morning, peaking again in the afternoon.

#2 News media command attention

- News is the #1 high-attention media channel.
- Core news media channels significantly outperform other channels in terms of audience focus.

#3 News media drives real actions

- Quality news drives deeper information seeking behaviors and informs decision-making.
- News media have more staying power than other channels. This staying power is even stronger among high-income, highly educated and business decision-maker groups.

#4 Trust, focus and indispensability

- The SCMP ranks as the #1 media choice in Malaysia and Singapore for finding out about China's economic policy and technology regulations.

#1 Audiences Make Time for News



64% of Singaporean and 65% of Kuala Lumpur adults are fully or mostly focused when they consume news media.

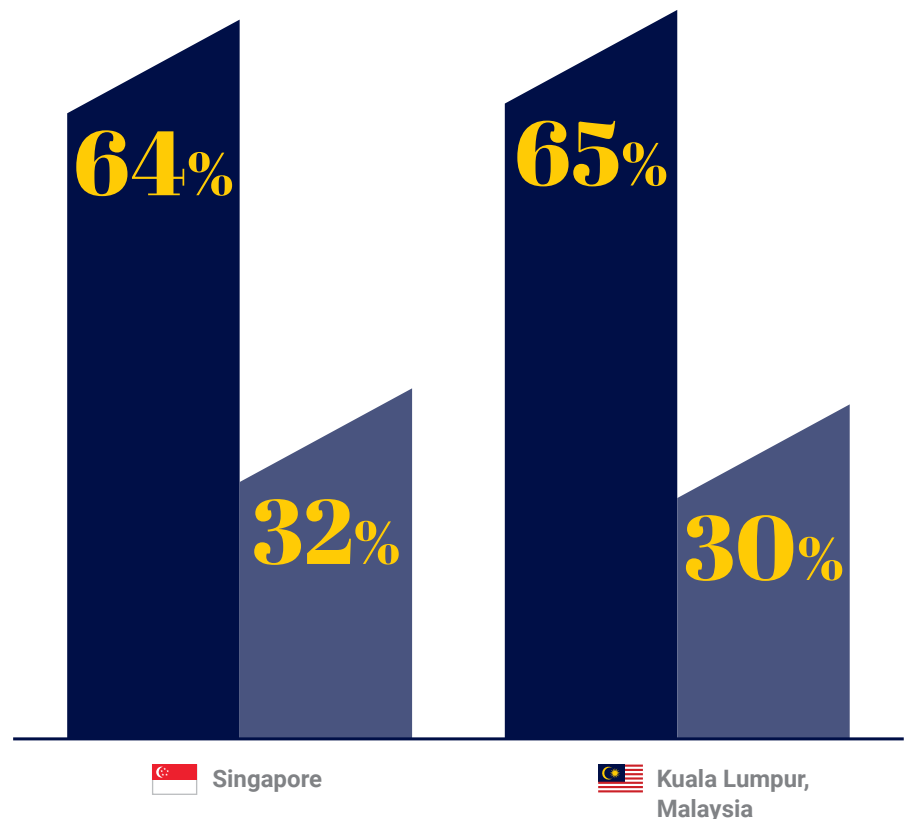
People approach premium news with a clear plan, rather than just scrolling to kill time. Overall, 64% of Singaporean and 65% of Kuala Lumpur adults are fully or mostly focused when they consume news media. That's about twice as many as those who passively consume news media with a divided focus or scrolling behaviour.

News media attention: Singapore and Kuala Lumpur adults

Roughly twice as many are focused when consuming news media than passively focused.

Low attention:
Passively focused

High attention:
Actively focused



Q: When consuming each of the following types of media, how do you usually engage with it?

This planned reading is highly structured around the daily routine, peaking in both the morning and the afternoon. For most adults, news consumption spikes sharply around breakfast, with news apps reaching a quarter of them. For business decision-makers, this morning habit is even stronger. 40% in Singapore and 48% in Malaysia visit news websites and open news apps right as they start their workday to help them plan and make key decisions.

Time of day business decision-makers consume different types of news



Q: During the work week, when in the day do you normally consume news, current affairs or information from each of the following sources?

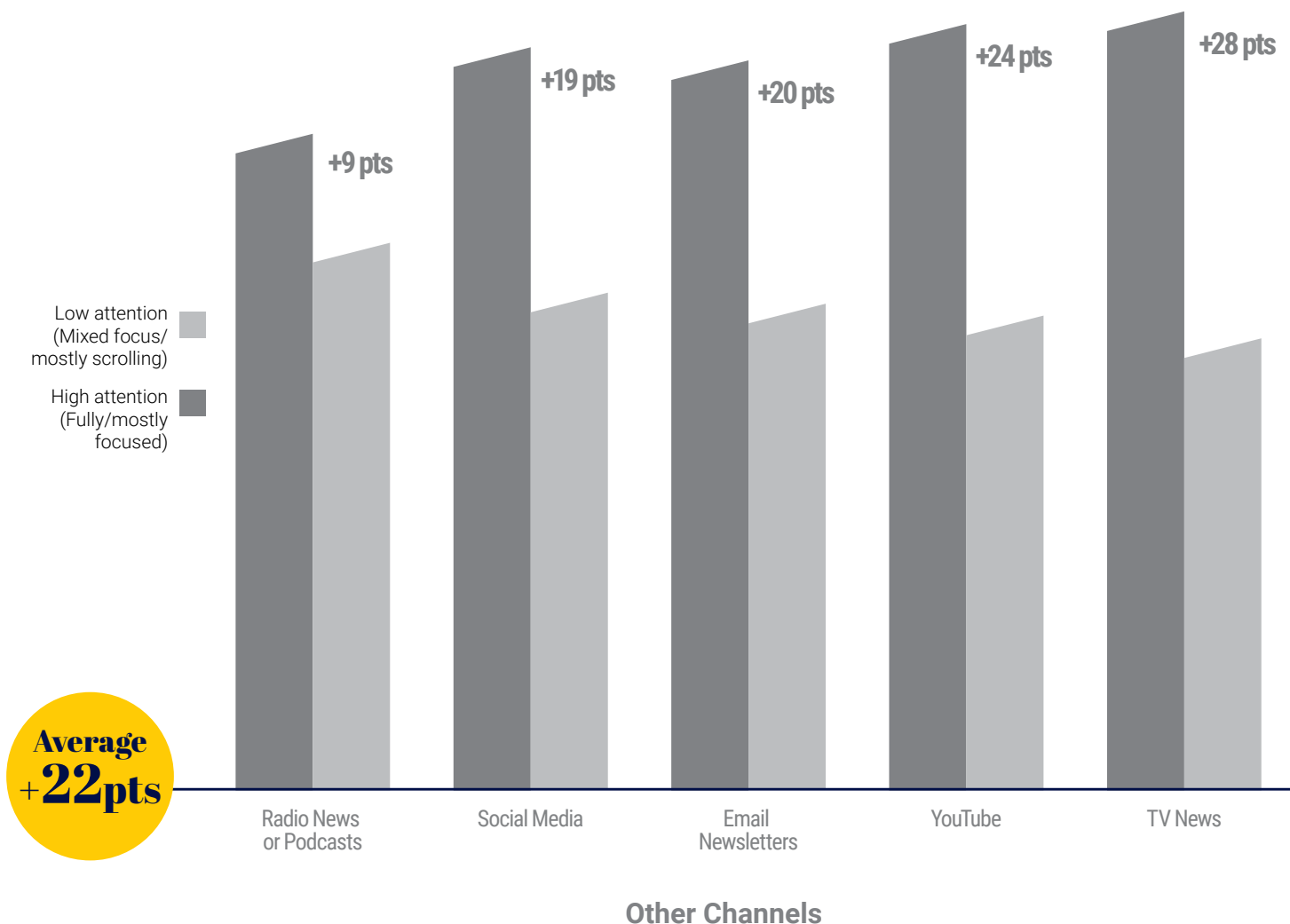
#2 News Media Command Attention



About three in five adults say they are fully or mostly focused when catching up on the news.

In Singapore, even though people look at many different sources of information throughout the day, they don't pay the same amount of attention to all of them. News channels get real, deep focus: about three in five adults say they are fully or mostly focused when catching up on the news. Core channels – like news apps, websites and print – get the highest level of concentration, with an average of 64% of readers paying close attention.

Attention level paid to different media types



Q. When consuming each of the following types of media, how do you usually engage with it?

Singapore

Among all these options, newsprint, news apps and news websites are the leading channels for holding an audience's attention. The gap below them is the largest in the study, with those channels beating out TV news (+28 points), social media (+19 points) and email newsletters (+20 points). For advertisers, this shows that news offer a unique environment where audiences are engaged rather than passively browsing.

Attention to core news is exceptionally strong among Singaporean business decision-makers, reaching 82% on average across websites, apps and print.



News media is the

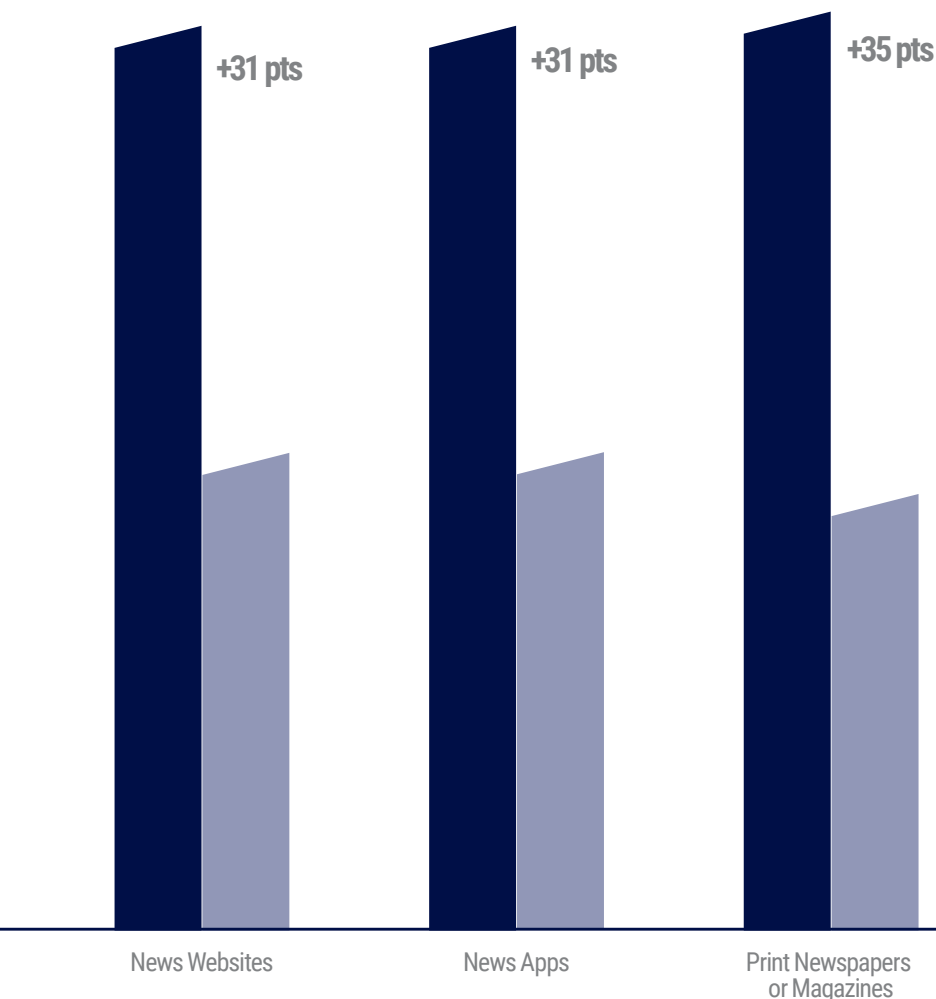
#1

channel for holding an audience's attention.

More than four in five business decision-makers say they are fully or mostly focused when consuming news.

- Low attention
(Mixed focus/
mostly scrolling)
- High attention
(Fully/mostly focused)

Average
+32pts

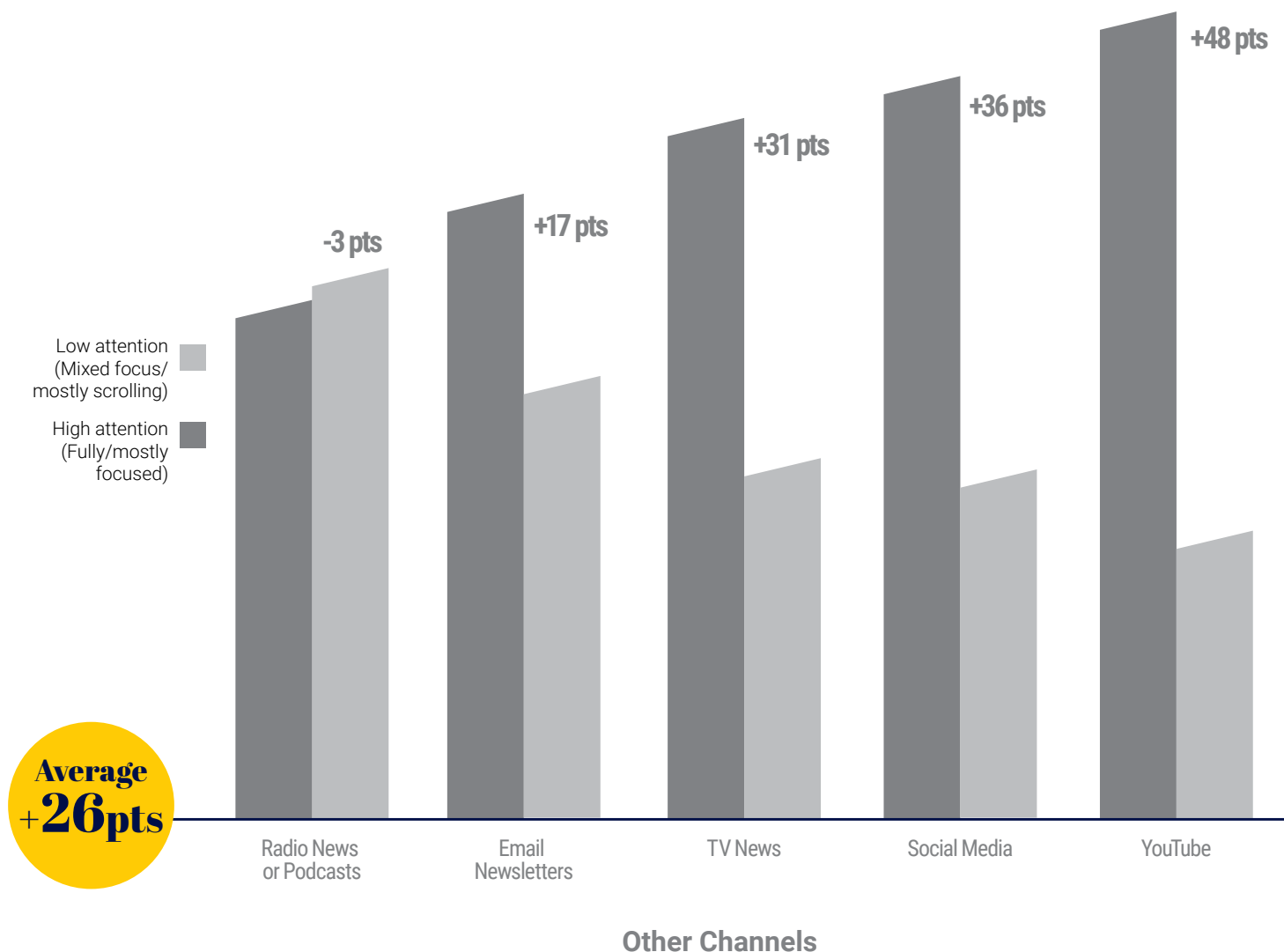


Core News Media Channels

#2 News Media Command Attention

In Kuala Lumpur, even though people look at many different sources of information throughout the day, they don't pay the same amount of attention to all of them. News channels get real, deep focus: about three in five adults say they are fully or mostly focused when catching up on the news. Core channels – like news apps, websites and print – get the highest level of concentration, with an average of 65% of readers paying close attention.

Attention level paid to different media types



Q. When consuming each of the following types of media, how do you usually engage with it?

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Among all these options, news websites are second only to YouTube. They beat out TV news (+31 points), social media (+36 points) and email newsletters (+17 points). For advertisers, this shows that news websites offer a unique environment where audiences are engaged rather than passively browsing.



Core news channels
are the

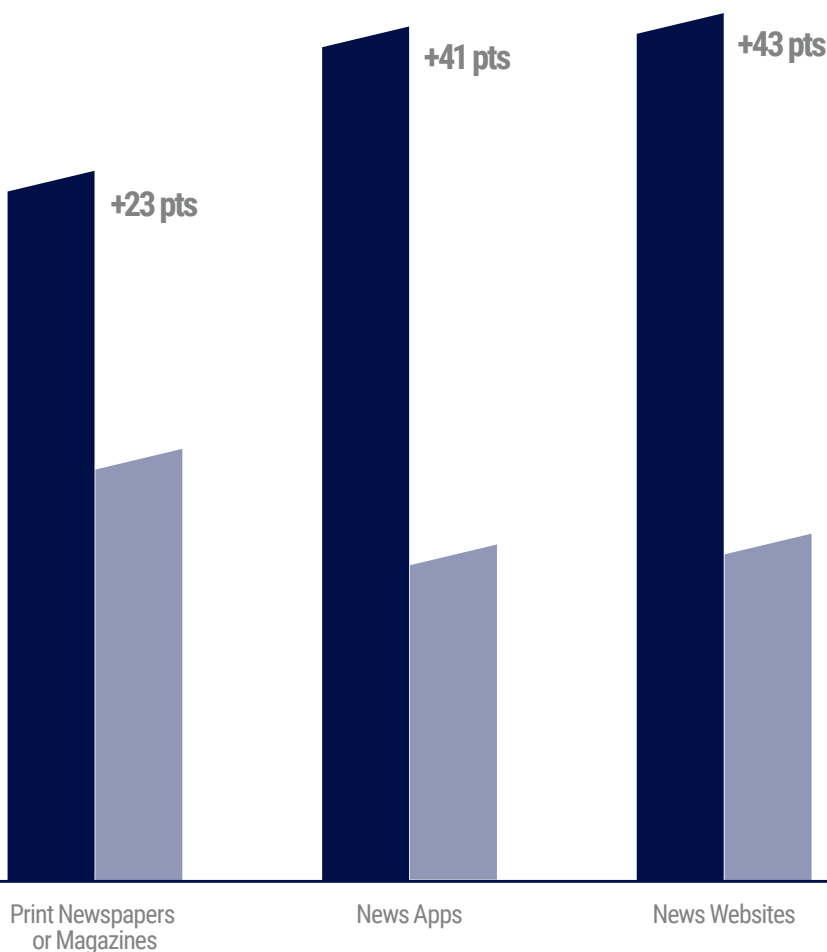
#1

for holding an
audience's attention.

Channels like news apps,
websites and print –
get the highest level of
concentration, with an
average of 65% of readers
paying close attention.

- Low attention
(Mixed focus/
mostly scrolling)
- High attention
(Fully/mostly focused)

Average
+36pts



Core News Media Channels

#3 News Media Drive Real Action

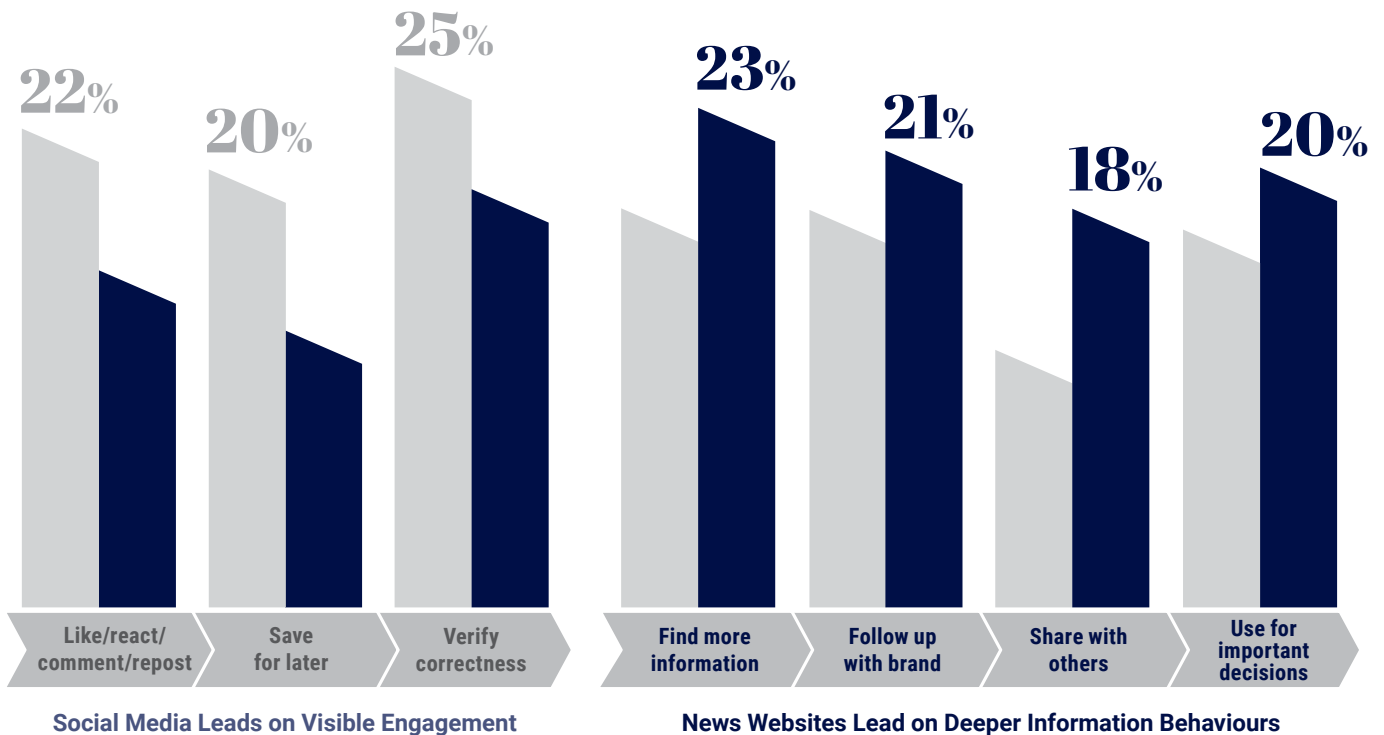


When people find something interesting on a news site, they take real action.

We can see that news media have more staying power because people pay closer attention to the news, meaning it has a much bigger impact on what they do next. While other platforms are great for quick interactions like likes or shares, quality news leads when it comes to deeper, more meaningful behaviour.

-  Singapore
-  Social Media
-  News Websites

Actions taken by business decision-makers after seeing interesting information on different platforms

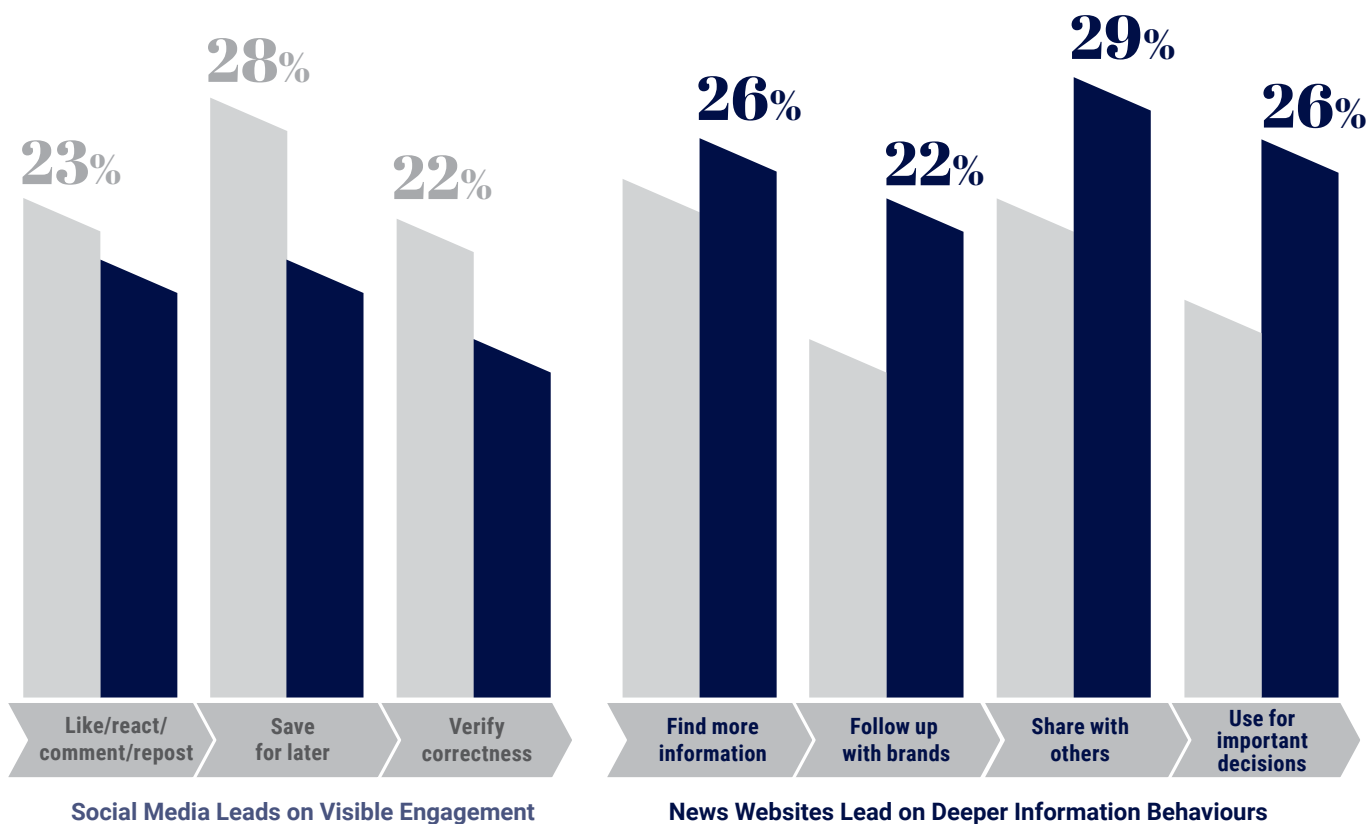


Q: When you see news, current affairs or information that interests you on each of the following sources, what do you usually do?

When people find something interesting on a news site, they take real action: read the full story, search for more details, check the facts and use that information to make important decisions.

Actions taken by business decision-makers after seeing interesting information on different platforms

 Malaysia
 Social Media
 News Websites



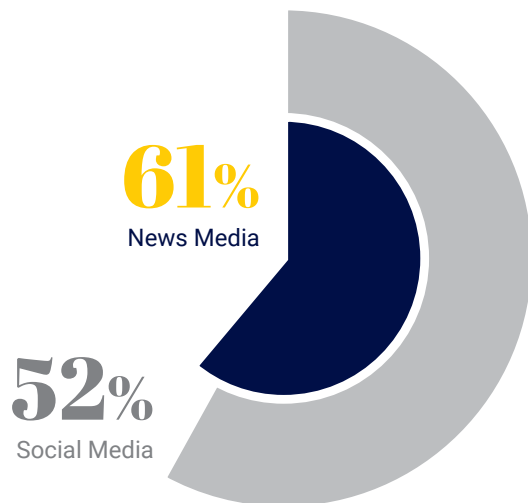
Q: When you see news, current affairs or information that interests you on each of the following sources, what do you usually do?



Hong Kong, China

From our Hong Kong study, we can see that quality news has real staying power. Some 61% of news followers say that articles and reports stick with them long after they finish reading. This memory lasts even longer with key audience groups.

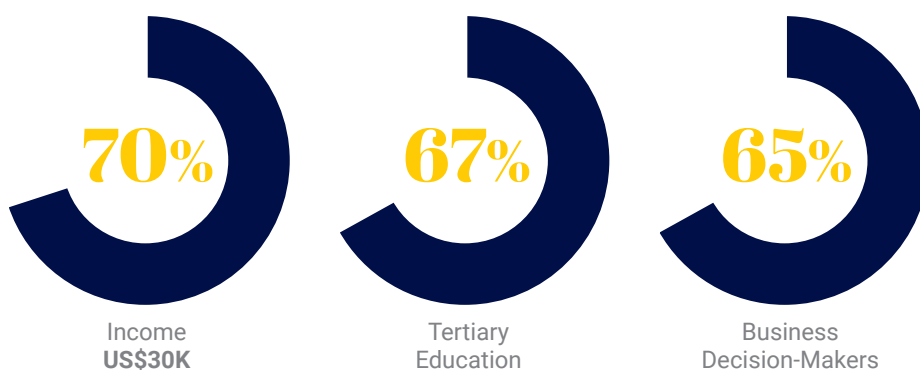
[Staying power of different media types



Quality journalism doesn't just inform people; it shapes their opinions and choices over time.

The staying power of news rises to 65% for business decision-makers and 67% for university graduates, peaking at 70% for high earners making over US\$30K per month. Quality journalism doesn't just inform people for a brief moment; it shapes their opinions and choices over time.

[Staying power of news media



■ Quality journalism tends to stay with me after I see it

Q: Which statement describes you better, even if neither is exactly right?

#4 Trust, Focus and Indispensability

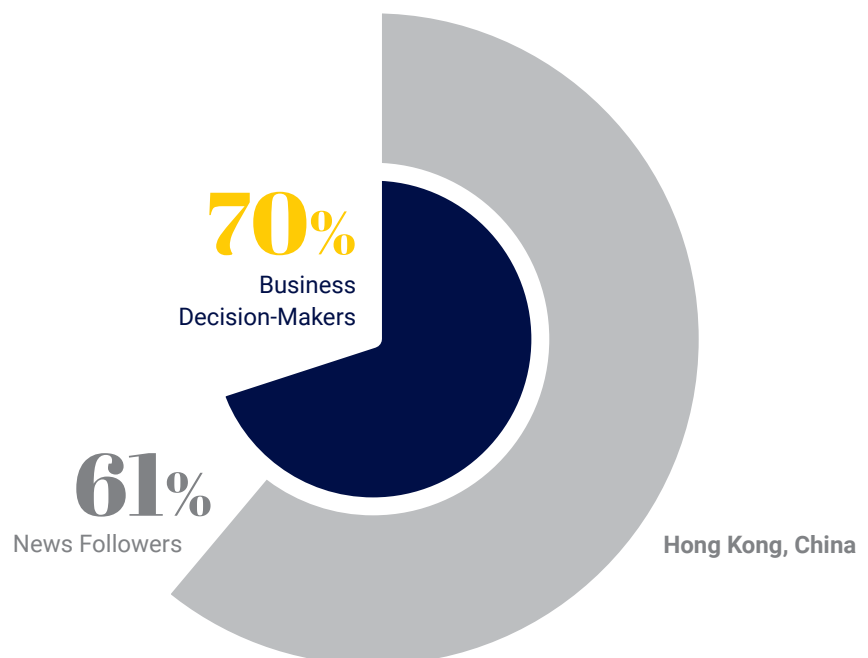


Trusted news partnerships systematically elevate brand metrics.

Aligning with a highly trusted environment delivers a powerful brand halo for advertisers. Our Hong Kong data highlights that 61% of the news followers and an overwhelming 70% of business decision-makers feel significantly more positive about a brand that partners or advertises with a news source they trust.

These trusted news partnerships systematically elevate brand metrics, making the advertising company feel higher quality (63%), more credible (60%) and more worth considering (60%).

When a brand partners with a trusted news source, does it make you feel more or less positive about that brand?



Q: When a brand advertises or partners with a news source you trust, how does that usually affect your perception of the brand?

The SCMP uniquely stands at the intersection, telling China's story to the world. For decision-makers in Singapore and Malaysia, the SCMP is their first port of call when they need intelligence on China's economy, policy and regulations – outperforming global outlets like Bloomberg, the Financial Times and the Wall Street Journal by up to four times.



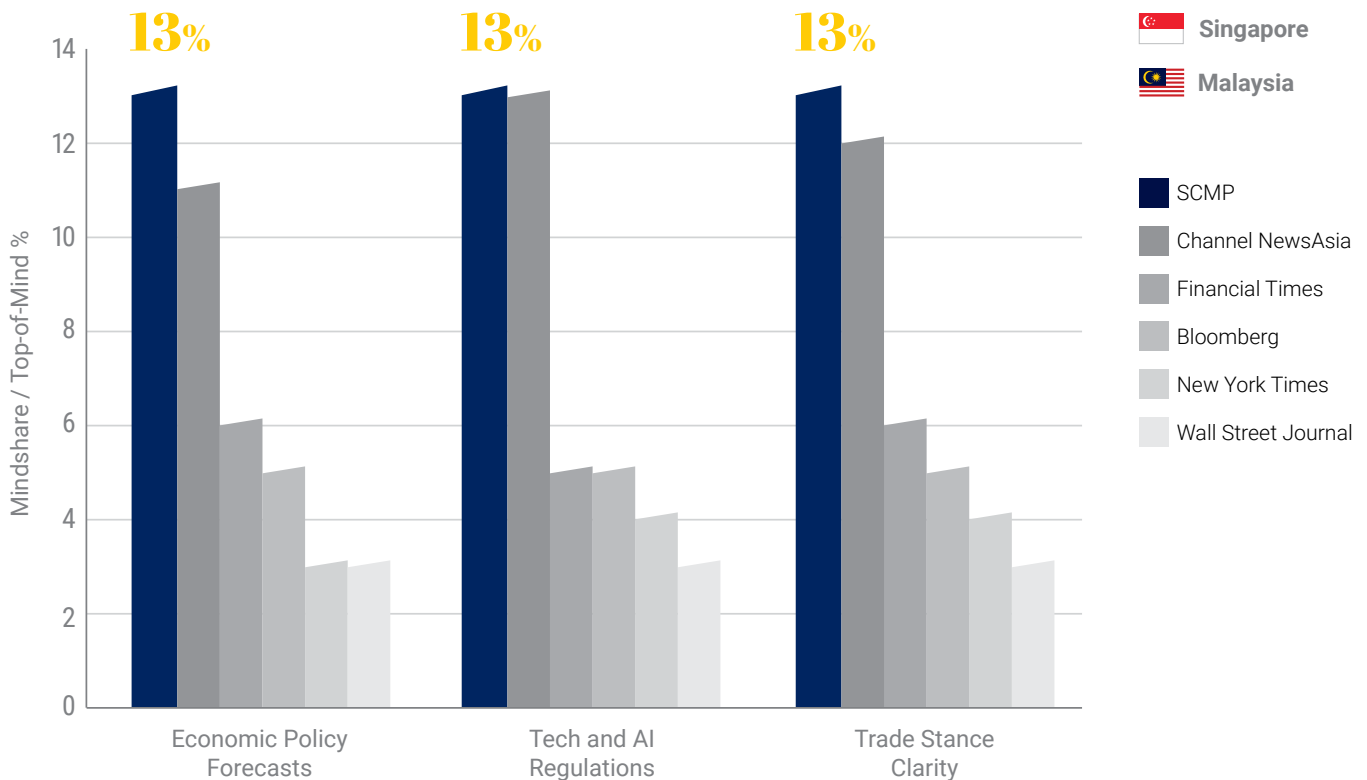
The SCMP is the

#1

media choice in Malaysia and Singapore for finding out about China's economic policy and technology regulations.



SCMP vs Global Heavyweights (Total Sample %)



Q: Which publisher or news platform comes to mind when I need to understand?

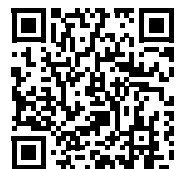
INFLUENCE READS SCMP.



Location: UOB Plaza, Singapore

**“To stay on top of business conversations
shaping Asia’s financial future.”**

FREDERICK CHIN VOON FAT, Head, Group Wholesale
Banking and Markets, UOB



**Tell your brand
story to the
people shaping
our world.**

**Work
with us.**



INFLUENCE THE INFLUENTIAL.