

# MARKETING WEEKENDER™

ISSUE #270 NOVEMBER2020



**A Deepavali like no other**



**COVER STORY**

**Even the wind of uncertainty can't put out the light of Deepavali**

If there's a time when brands get dramatic with their messaging, it has to be mostly during Deepavali....

**EDITOR'S NOTE**

**REBMECED**

There'll be no December in December. Everything is upside down....

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Cover picture by 123RF

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**A hard look at Star Media Group's performance**

Yesterday, Star Media Group (SMG) announced that it has registered a RM26.9 million net profit for its third quarter ended September...

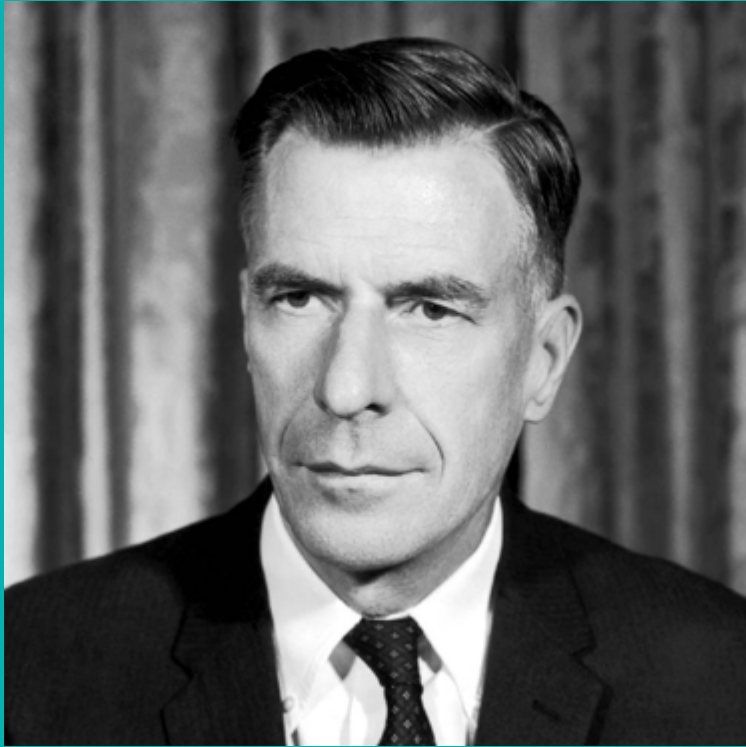
**12**

**The day Stefan Sagmeister came to town**



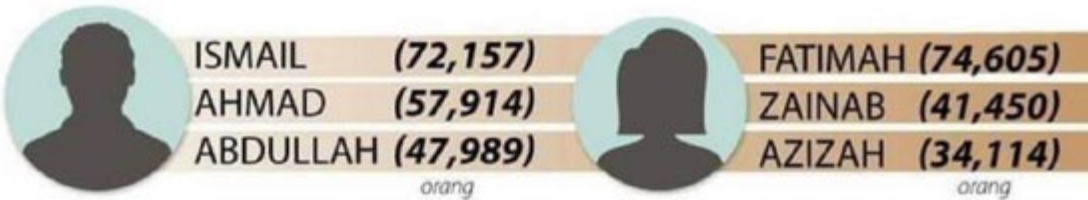
“ALL OF THE GREAT LEADERS HAVE HAD ONE CHARACTERISTIC IN COMMON: IT WAS THE WILLINGNESS TO CONFRONT UNEQUIVOCALLY THE MAJOR ANXIETY OF THEIR PEOPLE IN THEIR TIME. THIS, AND NOT MUCH ELSE, IS THE ESSENCE OF LEADERSHIP.”

**John Kenneth Galbraith**



## LONGEST NAME IN MALAYSIA

### NAMA POPULAR DI MALAYSIA



### NAMA TERPANJANG DI MALAYSIA

Princess Aura Nurr Ermily Amara Auliya Bidadari Nawal El Zendra binti Mohd Suffian

### JUMLAH PEMEGANG MYKAD

22,664,773

Setakat 30 Jun 2018



Sumber: Kenyataan Ketua Pengarah JPN, Datuk Mohammad Razin Abdullah



Sinar Harian



SinarOnline



sinarharian



SinarTV



“THE PROBLEMS WE FACE TODAY ARE THERE BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WHO WORK FOR A LIVING ARE NOW OUTNUMBERED BY THOSE WHO VOTE FOR A LIVING.”

**Anonymous**

## EDITOR'S NOTE

# REBMECED

There'll be no December in December. Everything is upside down.

The December we will experience is the one we have known all these years, but backwards. And we will try our best to reverse engineer everything so the sum of all parts will resemble what we've come to expect from December.

The truth is this December will simply not be the same however you spin it.

The year end holidays will come and go without a real holiday experience. No home leave for expats. No balik kampung for many.

No open houses.

Boxing Day shopping will feel more like a bad hangover and the year-end bonus will be as virtual as they come, without

the satisfying virtues of career progression and increased wealth.

December is known as the month we rejuvenate and refresh ourselves for the challenges of the coming year.

But that is only possible if we are exhausted from working our asses off for the first 11 months.

I don't know about you, but the only tired feeling I get is when I am listening to parliamentary oxygen-thieves who talk like the whole planet voted for them. Even though all the votes have not been counted yet!

Sorry, I just had to get that off my chest....

December will be what you make of it.

I predict the following:

- Most of us will still be working remotely most of the month.
- Staff will be busy finishing up

## EDITOR'S NOTE



Image from 123RF

their annual leave, so it will be a break from the office by default.

- It will be business as usual except for the last week of the month, when all of us will get so fed up with 2020 we'll go into deep prayer and meditation and for the more reckless, a drunken stupor until 2021 slaps us in the face.

Meantime, I want to wish Happy Deepavali to all our Indian readers, more power to you. There is light at the end of the tunnel.

You may yet show us how to have a real party tomorrow!

Take consolation in one reverse phenomenon: STRESSED spelled backwards is DESSERTS!

# Even the wind of uncertainty can't put out the light of Deepavali



If there's a time when brands get dramatic with their messaging, it has to be mostly during Deepavali. From tears, the perennial murukku, tears, old folk, dancing, cute kids... this year is no different.

**COVER STORY**

The challenge of redefining or repurposing the same message of light over darkness, good over evil, continues to challenge creative minds to do even better than the year before.

But with COVID-19 location filming constraints, this has also precipitated the use of animation and stock footage in the execution of ideas.

There are some Deepavali Festive TVCs worth noting this year, while many have embraced the fact since YouTube videos allow a longer duration, they have gone full Kollywood (a portmanteau of Kodambakkam and Hollywood).

Vikey – renowned magician, Malaysian Book of Records holder and winner of the prestigious Merlin Award, whose real-life story of resilience serves as inspiration for a nation trying to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and the changes wrought in its aftermath.

**RHB VIEW HERE**

FCB Kuala Lumpur's latest film for RHB Bank, 'Light in a Time of Darkness', tells the tale of Vikneswaran Allagu aka

**DIGI VIEW HERE**

The video by Naga DDB Tribal and Directors Think Tank bears the classic charm of animated folklore tales while carrying the spirit of a true story. Titled "Villalan" (Archer), the story is based on the personal hardships and struggles faced by Suresh Selvathambhy, leading up to his victory as World Champion in the World Para-Archery Championships.

## COVER STORY

**PETRONAS** [VIEW HERE](#)

Ensemble Worldwide and Petronas release another fully animated film as part of the Petronas' theme for 2020 - 'Our Unique Family'. Titled 'Vattam', the plot centres around four siblings, personified through the main ingredients and utensils used to make murukku. The upbeat musical sees the personalities of children brought to life through song and dance, spiralling out of control when the siblings bicker on who places highest importance in the murukku-making process. The film closes with a reminder from the father on the importance of sticking together.

**TNB** [VIEW HERE](#)

Double-Trouble is about a pair of twins of opposite personalities, namely Deepalakshmi and her sister Poojalakshmi as



representing two eras, one is traditional and the other modern. Assigned a Deepavali mission, they clash over every detail. Just as blood is thicker than water, even opposite personalities cannot separate family bonds as their ties are strong enough to spark a ray of goodwill among each other. The film offers an augmented reality experience and allows viewers to explore the twins' home through 360-degree virtual imaging.

**TAYLOR'S** [VIEW HERE](#)

In keeping with the message of light triumphing

## COVER STORY



... The film delivers a message that the light of knowledge illuminates the right path to dispel the darkness of ignorance...

over darkness and without shying away from difficult (but necessary) conversations, Taylor's University released a Deepavali social media film titled 'Curious Kumar'.

The film features Kumar, asking his parents a multitude of questions based on his personal observations from his daily life.

As his family prepares for their Deepavali celebration, his questions are only met with silence and dismissal.

The film delivers a message that the light of knowledge illuminates the right path to dispel the darkness of ignorance.

## MORE....

For major theatrics, checkout Murukku with some occult directed by Kash Villanz of **Scooter Vandi** fame

In this **MCIS Life** video, the acting is reminiscent of Petronas' TVC 17 years ago **Boyz In Da Hood**

TuneTalk pays a tribute to **Grandma Patti**

Another **Grandma version**, but really tearful, from Vanakkam Malaysia

**Sunway's Deepavali** TVC is inspired by the true story of Malarvelli's family, one of the beneficiaries of #SunwayforGood Food Bank programme

Mr Balan is the enlightened **hero** in HERO MARKET's tvc.



# A hard look at Star Media Group's performance

Yesterday, Star Media Group (SMG) **announced** that it has registered a RM26.9 million net profit for its third quarter ended September.

The bottom line was saved by a RM50.5million compensation for late delivery of vacant possession from Jaks Island Circle Sdn Bhd while its print and digital segments continued to face the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which has seen a sharp plunge in advertisements.

The bank guarantee of RM50 million which SMG received last year helped it post the profits. If excluding the RM50 million, then the loss would be RM17 million for 3Q.

A closer look at the details also shows that the YTD operating scenario shows losses of up to RM47 million. And the event segment recorded a pre-tax loss RM0.78mil.

Meanwhile, there was no specific mention of its loss

STAR



making video portal, Dim Sum.

The last CEO, **Andreas Vogiatzakis**, resigned in May barely 8 months in the job. He had assumed the top post after it was left vacant for 9 months.

SMG continues to be helmed by a three-men committee of directors headed by chairman Datuk Fu Ah Fiow, 71, who is a seasoned career politician.

Staff has complained openly about his continuing interference in all operations especially editorial, saying he was not a trained journalist and had no business in the newsroom.

“He is a non executive chairman and he should be reminded of his line of duties,” says a media analyst.

Datuk Seri Wong Chun Wai, who was managing director and CEO from 2013-2019 has continued as Group Advisor over the last two years but his term ends on Jan 1, 2021.

“He has not shared with staff his plans except to say his contract ends in January. He has emptied his office on the corporate floor,” according to a staff.

SMG is also planning to **retrench** about 200 staff before Dec 31 including journalists. No notice has been issued but it has become a main topic of concern at SMG.

The **National Union** of Newspapers Workers (NUNW), it is learnt, has written officially to MCA President Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong to complain about Fu’s refusal to meet the union over the retrenchments.

“Most staff at Menara Star are tired of the present state of affairs. There has been no engagement from Fu directly with the staff,” said a senior staff, is an NUNW official.

He said the NUNW would insist on meeting Wee Ka Siong at the MCA headquarters if the management continues to ignore the union.

*CIMB is projecting a net loss before tax of RM48 million this year (excl. the one-off gain of RM50 mil) and net losses before tax of RM28million and RM22 million in 2021 and 2022.*

# The day Stefan Sagmeister came to town

THE HAMMER



## GLOBAL DESIGN ICON



I was connecting earlier this week with legendary New York-based graphic designer and typographer asking about his well-being when I realised what an impact he made on our local audience some years back when he visited. The whole visit was made possible by a mutual friend John Merrifield, himself a multiple Cannes Lions Gold winner.

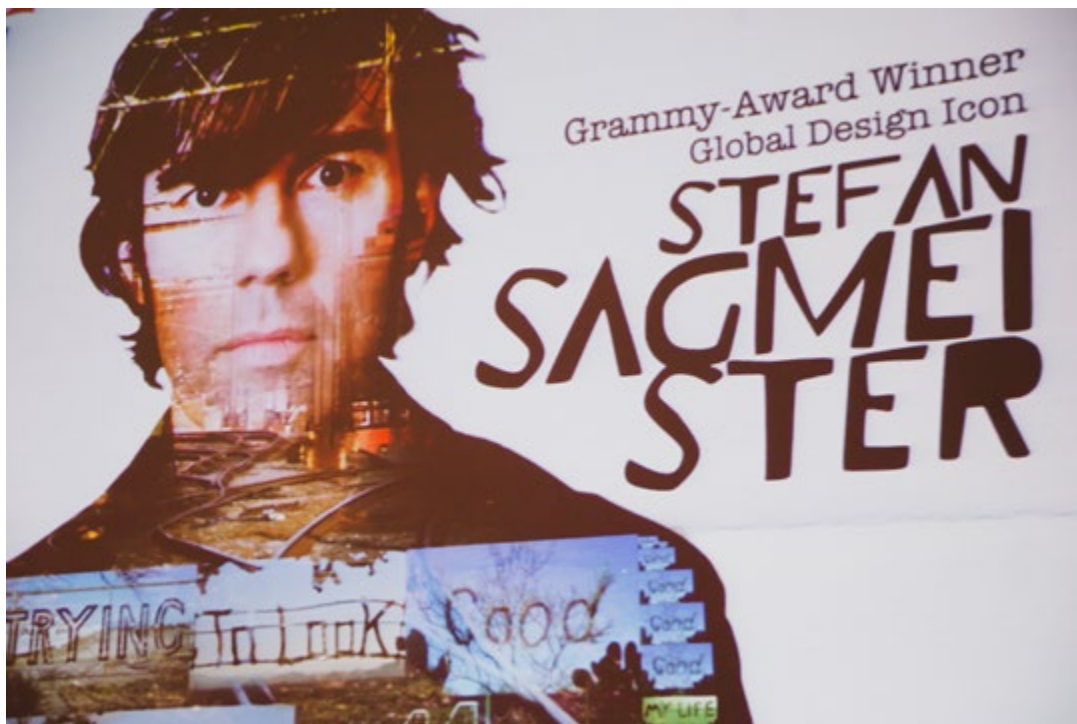
Anyway Stefan is well, and his reply was: "So very good to hear from you. Our measures here in NYC have reached some severity again, and it might well go beyond the usual social distancing in the near future. Please do take extra good care of yourself! 1000 greetings from 14th Street".

At his KL event that was sponsored by Commercial Radio Malaysia (CRM) and supported by TM Malaysia, he packed the hall of the Eastin Hotel Ballroom with over 300 industry players and students.

Austria native, Stefan Sagmeister formed the New York-based Sagmeister Inc. in 1993, and has designed for clients like HBO and the Guggenheim, while creating album covers for The Rolling Stones, Lou Reed, OK Go, David Byrne, Aerosmith and Pat Metheny.

Stefan has exhibited his work around the world, and teaches in the graduate department at the New York School of Visual Arts (SVA) lecturing there extensively.

## GLOBAL DESIGN ICON



In 2012, Jessica Walsh became a partner and the company was renamed to **Sagmeister & Walsh**.

But before his event in Malaysia, tragedy struck our office in KL....

More than 5 years of artwork disappeared one night when the office got ransacked as the world watched the UEFA Europa League Final on TV!

But we prevailed...

### Shock Show

His show began with all eyes staring at a full screen photo of a naked man and women. The audience howled with shrieks (I am not sure of delight or shame).

It was Stefan and his business partner who had posed for an emailer talking about their new

## GLOBAL DESIGN ICON



# HELLO,

MY NAME IS STEFAN SAGMEISTER. I'M AN AUSTRIAN GRAPHIC DESIGNER LIVING IN NEW YORK. I USED TO DESIGN GRAPHICS FOR THE MUSIC INDUSTRY. ALBUM COVERS FOR MANY BANDS YOU HAVE NEVER HEARD OF, AND FOR OTHERS THAT YOU HAVE.



EVEN THOUGH THIS WAS THE JOB I'VE DREAMED ABOUT DOING SINCE I WAS 15 YEARS OLD, AS WITH MANY OTHER THINGS IN MY LIFE I GOT USED TO DOING THIS, ADAPTED TO IT AND ULTIMATELY IT BECAME BORING. I SUSPECTED I COULD DO MORE USING THE LANGUAGE OF DESIGN, SOMETHING OUTSIDE OF PROMOTION AND ADVERTISING.

**I HAVE NOTHING AGAINST**



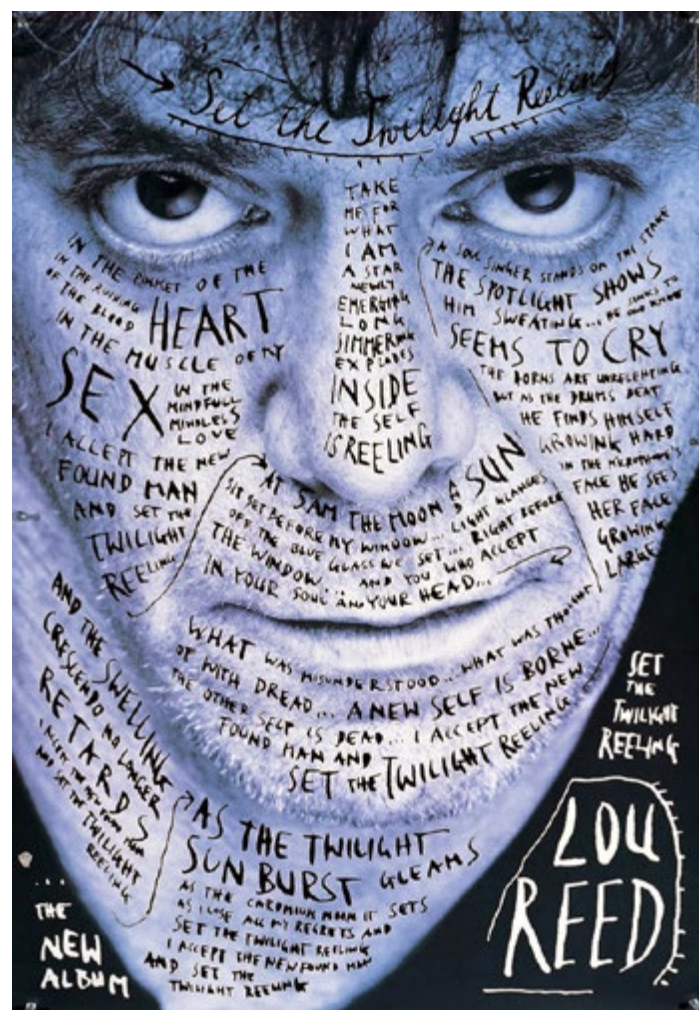
**SELLING**, BOTH OF MY PARENTS WERE SALES PEOPLE, BUT I HOPED THERE MUST BE A MORE PERSONAL WAY TO INTERACT WITH AN AUDIENCE.

company name, as Sagmeister Inc changed to Sagmeister & Walsh.

The audience was awestruck at his boldness. But what a shocker: using the human body as the message is the strongest form of communication.

He is clearly one of the most provocative Graphic Designers of our time and his designs are characterized by an overpowering honesty and raw feelings.

Stefan then spoke about his research covering the Happiness



## GLOBAL DESIGN ICON

**“I think the results are more authentic and the process more interesting (and painful) this way.”**

Index, and how he takes one year off for every seven years he works...

Research also showed that the ideas manifested in the seven years he worked were actually germinated during his year of leave!

But if you want to know what extremes designers go to in the name of design, consider this: Stefan's 1999 AIGA Detroit lecture poster.

For this, he asked his intern Martin to cut the lecture details on his body with an X-acto knife,

photographed it and used it for the brutally honest AIGA poster.

When asked why he had to go through all that pain especially when there was always Photoshop, he replied, “I think the results are more authentic and the process more interesting (and painful) this way.”

While most design lecturers talk about the beauty of design, Stefan prefers not to hide the painful truth about the ‘anxiety and angst’ that accompanies a designer’s life.



## GLOBAL DESIGN ICON



**... While most design lecturers talk about the beauty of design, Stefan prefers not to hide the painful truth about the ‘anxiety and angst’ that accompanies a designer’s life...**

**One year off for every seven years he works!**

Stefan also played bits from his documentary called **The Happy Film**. Showing how he pushed his own boundaries to get attention and talk to strangers in public areas in New York. Some were friendly but some just ignored him. After many hours of standing and walking, he managed to get a better response when he carried a large sun flower.

WIRED magazine said of the film, *“it will trigger rushes of insight, empathy and voyeuristic*

*pleasure...highly entertaining.”*

Stefan is probably the world’s best graphic designer.

In 2005, he won a Grammy award as art director of the ‘once in a lifetime’ Talking Heads boxed set packaging. Among his many projects, he continues his work on ‘20 things in my life I have learned so far’ which is a series of typographic pieces inspired by the work of his grandfather.

To paraphrase the amazing experience known as Stefan Sagmeister we let your eyes do the walking and talking in these pages...



# Nielsen thinks twice

Contrary to the bullshit we were sold about online advertising, measuring online media has turned out to be a nightmare.

One of the biggest problems is the reliability and veracity of audience measurement.

Audience measurement has always been a pseudo-science in the ad business. But online advertising has achieved spectacular heights of unreliability. Sadly the situation seems to be getting worse, not better.

Apparently, there is so much corruption, fraud, and bullshit that nobody knows how to measure this stuff properly.

This week Nielsen, which is trying to develop a reliable method for measuring online audiences, asked the Media Rating Council (MRC), the body

that verifies media audiences, to put off accrediting its Digital Ad Ratings service for six months. This comes in the wake of the MRC revoking the accreditation of two other online rating services -- Triton Digital and C3 Metrics.

The back story on this is that for years Google and Facebook have refused to abide by the standards set by the MRC and have been marking their own homework with audience metrics that have been shown to be wildly unreliable.

The weak-kneed ad industry has accepted this with some mealy-mouth whining but not an ounce of backbone or action.

After 25 years of online advertising, we're not any closer to being able to verify the horseshit we're being fed by online media

SHOWCASE



Client **Biti's Hunter shoes Agency Dentsu Redder Vietnam**

Chief Creative Officer **Edmund Choe** Senior Creative Director & Art Director **Livio Grossi**  
Copywriter **Thanh Ngo** Illustrator **Illusion CGI Studio** Marketing Director **Cuong Nguyen**

17 NOVEMBER

# WHAT ARE YOU DOING AFTER LUNCH ON TUESDAY?

3:00 PM



HOW I USED CONTENT ALGORITHM TO LOSE 10KGS

Christopher Wee *Chief Strategy Officer, Omnia*

4:00 PM

SCREEN BREAK

4:10 PM

*POWER HOUR  
(PRESENTATIONS & PANEL DISCUSSION)*

CONTENT FASHIONING FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Panelists:

Haniff Hamzah *Content Producer, YOLO Malaysia*

Aziemah Azman *Manager of IP-Animation, Primework Studios*

Jaz Lee *Creative Director, Ogilvy*

Preathvee Asohan *Twitter Client Partner & Brand Strategist, Httpool Malaysia*

Rengeeta Rendava *Managing Director, Mad Hat Asia*

Moderator:

Nicholas Ng *COO/Co-Founder, KOMACI Network*

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