

MARKETING

ISSUE #302 AUGUST 2021

WEEKENDER

Why bother?

Talkability rules half a mile high!



EDITOR'S NOTE

04 State of the Nation

Credit for the
barb-wire
visual design
in Editor's
Note goes
to Syazwan
Shafie.



Daulat Tuanku!

COVER STORY

09



Method to the Madness

Emirates' ad featuring a woman standing on the top of the Burj Khalifa is so unbelievable, the fake mills are in overdrive.

Scoring Smartly with Sports

05 Osaka removes herself
from Wimbledon...

21 In Conversation with Dinesh Ratnam on the Future of Entertainment in SEA



“THE MEANING OF LIFE
IS THAT IT STOPS.”

Franz Kafka



“RATHER THAN BEING YOUR
THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS,
BE THE AWARENESS BEHIND
THEM.”

Eckhart Tolle

“THE MOST EXCITING
ATTRACTIONS ARE
BETWEEN TWO
OPPOSITES THAT
NEVER MEET.”

Andy Warhol



“A MACHINE LOOKS
BACKWARD; A
HUMAN BEING LOOKS
FORWARD AND FINDS
WAYS TO TRICK THE
MACHINE.”

Rishad Tobaccowala, author of
*Restoring the Soul of Business:
Staying Human in the Age of Data*

State of the Nation



Daulat Tuanku!



Scoring Smartly with Sports

- Osaka removes herself from Wimbledon.
- Cristiano removes Coke from Euro 2020 press conf.
- Pogba removes Heineken the next day.
- Toyota decided not to place TV ads during the Olympics it is a main sponsor of.
- Biles removes herself from the gymnastics team competition and comes back eventually to win a bronze in an individual event.

With celebrities going off piste, and sports taking place in controversial circumstances, a marketer would be justifiably

concerned about entering this arena.

And yet, nothing attracts an audience like sports does.

- Sky offered the English Premier League the same deal in May 2021, for broadcast rights, and the EPL accepted, for the next 3 years. Sport is probably the last remaining mainstay for appointment television across the world, today. Still Ligue 1 in France saw a reduced sponsorship deal from Canal TV, at 50% of previous year's valuation, and the media rights holder gave up its rights.

SPORTS MARKETING

- Sport is also highly social. Fans watch sports and message their mates during games. They also follow social celebrities online, with Ronaldo being the world's most followed Instagram Celebrity. That explains why ASEAN e-comm giant Shopee used him smartly in digital ads.
- Nike saw a massive lift in sales when it celebrated knee-taking controversial American footballer Colin Kaepernick with a famous spot.

The advantages of sports marketing are many, for brands. Here are a few:

1. **BRAND AWARENESS:** For relatively lesser known brands, sports sponsorships provide instant recall and awareness. For instance, Teamviewer's sponsorship of the Manchester United jersey drove search volume up by 300%. Budweiser placed ads at Super Bowl for 26 years continuously to build up an iconic presence.
2. **BRAND SALIENCE AND PREFERENCE:** sports sponsorships help drive

emotional connections with consumers. Heineken's UEFA Champion's League association drives immense audio memories and drive preference with the iconic opening tune. The brand has been associated with UEFA Champion's League for over 24 years.

3. **BUILD EMOTIONAL ELEMENTS INTO THE BRAND:** Sports is highly emotional, associated with winning and losing, tears of joy and the pain of loss. Men become more emotional than they do otherwise, as multiple research shows. Brands can, in this environment, see a transference of emotions to themselves, and can benefit from this. As per Unruly, the Olympics provide great emotional moments compared to the norm:

- **Inspiration** is the strongest emotion for both men and women while watching Olympics ads – double the global norm;
- **Pride** is higher than the norm for both men and women, having uplifts of 183% for men and 150% for women;

SPORTS MARKETING

- **Exhilaration** sees an average uplift of 75% for both men and women during the Olympics.

That is one reason why politicians, brands and others globally want to associate with Olympians.

4. **BREAK-THROUGH VERSUS CONVENTIONAL MARKETING:** Conventional marketing, with brand building ads or tactical promos provides a fairly static marketing funnel. Companies will know that when they run a promo, they will get a short-lived spike, and normal comms that drive brand-building may have an impact may be harder to measure clearly, though it is clearly present. Sports marketing can provide a clutter-breaking jump in key metrics. Shopee, for instance, saw a significant rise in certain audiences when it sponsored the domestic football cup competition, Piala FA, for 2 years, and sold tickets online to fans with a generous and thoughtful 1-for-1 offer. Other brands like Nike have associated themselves with “woke”

causes and consumers to drive preference, word of mouth and sales.

But given the risks outlined earlier, what should brands do? Here are 7 key action points:

1. **BE MENTALLY PREPARED FOR SURPRISES.** Brand marketers need to understand that sponsorships come with unpredictability, and should be prepared to roll with the punches.
2. **NEGOTIATE SMART:** The pandemic increases uncertainty, but it also provides great opportunity, as the noise levels in the market are reduced, and many great sports properties are available at below normal prices.
3. **THINK LONG-TERM:** Associate with sports for more than 1-2 years, to see a long-term uplift in brand metrics.
4. **WORD CONTRACTS CAREFULLY:** Build in for scenarios like the pandemic, as well as athletes etc going off piste.
5. **EXPLORE SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS AND PROPERTIES RATHER THAN INDIVIDUALS:** Consumers often shrug and

...the brands that win are the brands that manage with deep strategy and execute flawlessly, to score a winning goal...

don't really care what a celeb does, as they form their own opinions. Coke consumption has not fallen because of Ronaldo, for instance.

Individuals can definitely drive spikes and troughs. But sponsoring leagues, tournaments and events can create more brand safety and longer-term associations.

6. BE SENSITIVE TO CONSUMER MINDSETS:

Toyota eschewed advertising on TV and its top brass avoided attending the Olympics as public mood to Tokyo 2020 was negative.

The brand generated positive mentions because of this. However, communicating now, wrapping up the Olympics, or associating with the Paralympics, as public opinion has become positive, could also yield good returns.

7. PLAN FOR ACTIVATION

AND SOCIAL: Any sports sponsorship should be thought of as more than a logo on a shirt, or a bottle on a table. How a brand connects that sporting presence with fans and consumers is key. Budgets should be planned with adequate allocation and details for activating the sponsorship: usage of logos and stars, events online and offline, social calendars and product integration etc

In the game of sports sponsorship, just like a good sports team, the brands that win are the brands that manage with deep strategy and execute flawlessly, to score a winning goal.

Sandeep Joseph is the CEO and co-founder of Ampersand Advisory, a strategic media and data-driven consultancy. The company's mission



is "business results now!" and it has won numerous local and international awards. The views expressed here are the author's own: you can debate with him at sandeep@ampersand-advisory.com



Method to the Madness

Emirates' ad featuring a woman standing on the top of the Burj Khalifa is so unbelievable, the fake mills are in overdrive.

BY THE HAMMER

COVER STORY

“I almost had a heart attack,” was one online comment. “A chopper could whisk her out of the sky.”

Emirates has a tradition of doing live **stunts**, but this one surely beats them all.

Probably one of the highest ads ever filmed, while being connected to earth, millions cast doubt on its authenticity, claiming the company used a green screen or special effects for the video. A single drone, probably from an adjacent roof top, was used to capture the footage in a continuous take, to film the complete sequence.

But the terrifying stunt was real. The model is UK stuntwoman is Nicole Smith-Ludvik, a trained para jumper and professional skydiving instructor who calls herself a “world traveller, skydiver, yoga instructor, hiker and adventurer”.

At 828 metres above the ground, the Burj Khalifa is the world’s tallest building. On top of the world, Nicole had a reduced circumference space of only 1.2 metres to pull off the stunt. She was attached to a pole as well as two other different points directly to the pinnacle,

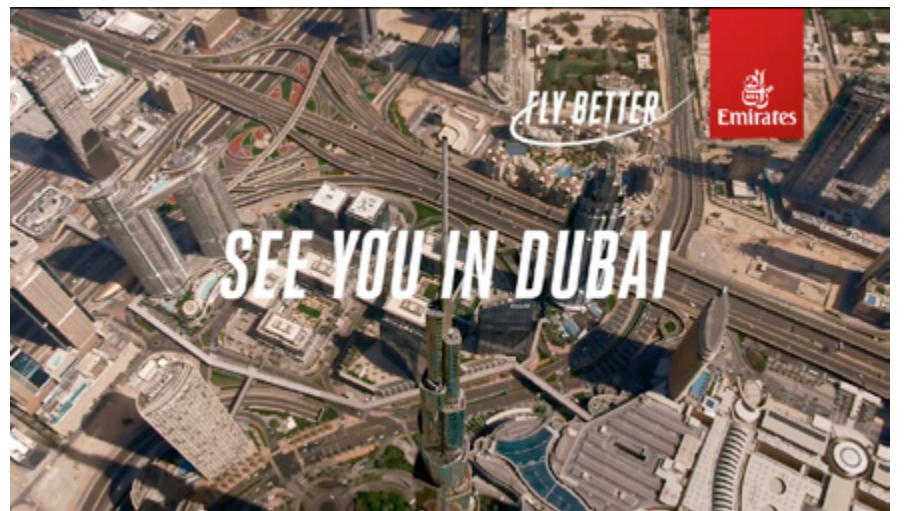
... Probably one of the highest ads ever filmed, while being connected to earth, millions cast doubt on its authenticity, claiming the company used a green screen or special effects for the video. A single drone, probably from an adjacent roof top, was used to capture the footage in a continuous take, to film the complete sequence...

through a hidden harness under the **Emirates** uniform.

Those involved with the filming, which began at sunrise, climbed for more than an hour and 15 minutes from level 160 of the Burj Khalifa. The team was at the top of the building for about five hours. Their ascent to the pinnacle began before the sun appeared, from Level 160 of the Burj Khalifa and there are several tiers and ladders inside a tube



CLICK THE IMAGES TO WATCH TVC HERE



that need to be scaled to reach the top.

Emirates says the ad is the result of rigorous planning, training, testing, and a strict safety protocol. They have also released behind-the-scenes **footage** showing how this seemingly insane feat was made possible!.

A seasoned CGI expert shared some of his observations with us....

“There is a slight speed up

... From a marketing perspective, there is probably as more mileage in how the ad was done than the ad itself...

COVER STORY

of the shot, you see her scarf move slower then faster. The shot has been stabilized to keep her and the building centre frame. It would seem the shot was designed for spectacle, and difficult to reproduce using virtual sets but not impossible. The image resolution changes as the shot pulls out. So they have post zoomed in for framing at the beginning then post zoomed out during the shot.”

From a marketing perspective, there is probably more mileage in how the ad was done than the ad itself.

The final question I ask myself, “Does it matter that in the future, it is revealed that the whole stunt was fake?”

NO.

Concept & Direction:

Emirates’ in-house Brand Team

Produced by:

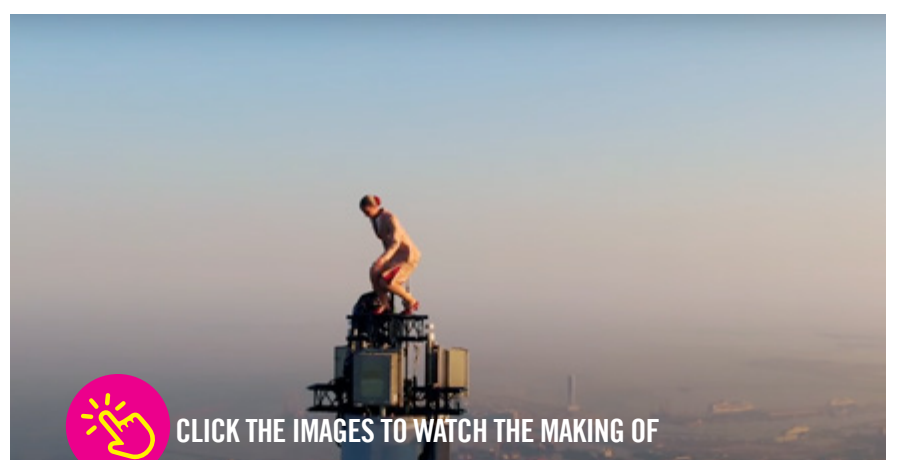
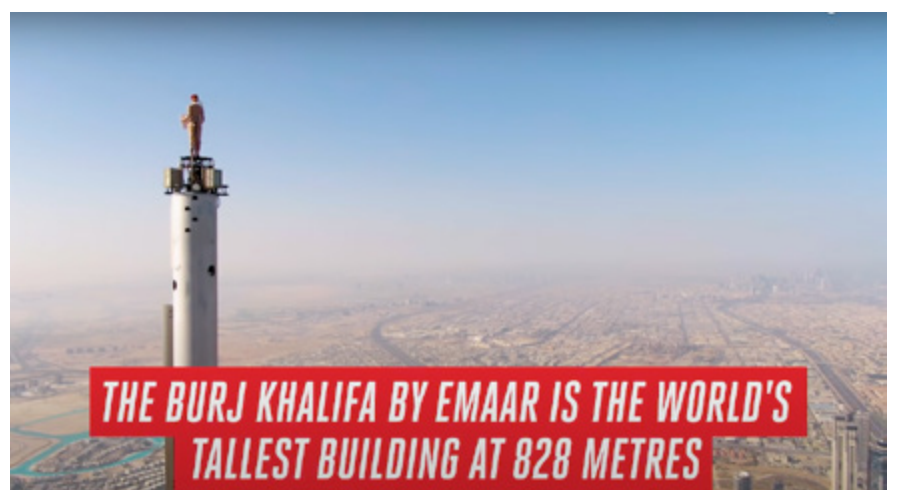
Prime Productions AMG Dubai

Logistics:

TECS Event Services

Helicopter & Drone:

Choppershoot





Those who have been to the top.

Regular extreme-stunts actor Tom Cruise scaled the Burj Khalifa in *Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol* 10 years ago.

In 2013, the Crown Prince of Dubai HH Sheikh Hamdan also climbed up to the top and waved The UAE flag when his country was chosen to host the 2020 World Expo. An accomplished horseman, scuba diver and skydiver, he goes by the name ‘Fazza’ on social media.



CLICK THE IMAGES TO WATCH TOM CRUISE



Emirates’ “We’re On Top Of The World”

**Has Creativity
Bounced Back?**

by Ted Lim

My phone buzzed non-stop.

Friends, colleagues, clients and business associates brought to my attention a commercial film of an air stewardess making a pitch for her airline on top of the world’s tallest **building**.

Publications around the world, both on and offline, were full of praise for this **advertisement**.

Whether the ad was shot live or involved CGI sparked more interest. Whether the brave lady featured was an airline crew or a stunt woman hired for the part further amplified the **conversation**.

COVER STORY

... Is the success of this airline ad an anomaly then? An uncalculated stroke of creative genius that marketers cannot measure or hope to repeat in their pursuit of sustainable success, unlike the annoyingly formulaic ads that are shoved in our faces every time we pick up the phone?...

Frankly, I didn't lose much sleep over the details. What kept me up was how an airline ad got people to stop, stare and share at a time when most of us have little inclination or opportunity to fly.

This ad came out in the middle of a pandemic when people had more pressing matters to attend to. It caught the world's attention at a time when media professionals have persuaded advertisers that the best way to engage people is to spend millions to stalk them.

Is the success of this airline ad an anomaly then?

An uncalculated stroke of creative genius that marketers cannot measure or hope to repeat in their pursuit of sustainable success, unlike the annoyingly formulaic ads that are shoved in our faces every time we pick up the phone?

Well, no.

This airline ad has all the hallmarks of what we call "good creative work". It is simple and surprising. Engaging and entertaining. It gets people to stop, stare and share. In short, it works (or in the words of the professionals who make a living from measuring performance, it's "*effective*").

A person infinitely more creative than me once said a good ad can do the work of ten and this single "top of the world" effort from Emirates probably saved the airline a fortune in media spending (the commercial had already earned millions of views online when I last checked).

This isn't Emirates' first effort to outsmart what they didn't have to outspend. A few years ago, the airline captured the world's imagination with a live

COVER STORY



CLICK THE IMAGE TO WATCH VIDEO

stunt at a **baseball game in Los Angeles**. That earned over 20 million views on Youtube alone.

Emirates isn't the only global brand that recognises the rich returns on investment which creativity brings to marketing. Another venerable and now sexy global brand, Volvo, brought the world to its feet with "**The Epic Split**". This earned over 100 million views on Youtube.

So what will we do when we get back to work on Monday?

Go stalk a million people and hope one percent will respond? Or go work on that idea that a million people will share because they actually like it?

The creative idea that will make a difference. The one that moves people and business.

Creative Consultant, Ted Lim is AdFest 2020/2021 Jury President of Branded Entertainment and Effectiveness. He was Cannes Lions Jury President and honoured by AdWeek as 1 of 13 global creative leaders who is innovating advertising worldwide. Ted led Dentsu Asia-Pacific to a Cannes Lions Grand Prix, the D&AD Black Pencil, the Facebook Award for



Innovation, the Asia-Pacific Effie Gold Award, Campaign Brief Asia's Most Creative Network 2017 and 2018 and AdFest Network of the Year 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Broadsign Proof of Performance

*By Remi Roques,
General Manager Broadsign APAC.*

In Out-of-Home advertising, how can media buyers be sure that their advertising campaigns were delivered as planned? The answer is Proof of Performance (POP) reporting, sometimes also called Proof of Posting or Proof of Play.

In Out of Home (OOH) media, POP is the evidence that media owners produce to prove that they executed their client's advertising campaign as per the contractual engagement. POPs have traditionally included photos of the campaign creatives as displayed on the Outdoor formats, reports showing delivery statistics, and, more recently, the size of the audience exposed to the campaign.

In static Outdoor advertising, POPs are simple. The media owner takes photos of the advertiser's creative as soon as it is installed on the media panel and matches this to the list of panels included in the client's campaign.

When it comes to digital Out of Home (DOOH) advertising, POPs get a lot more sophisticated, as the media owner must report on the number of plays for each design across several different digital screens.

Agencies often compare DOOH to online display advertising, and it's easy to see why. Digital Display is a well-established advertising format, and advertisers have become used to the types of reporting and measurements that come with online campaigns. The great thing about adding digital technology to traditional Outdoor formats is that it brings the same accountability and transparency as Digital Display.

However, it is not accurate to say that POP is the same in DOOH as it is in online advertising. Here, we will look at how POPs work in digital OOH and compare it with Digital Display.

OPINION

With DOOH advertising, a poster becomes a slot in a loop of several different advertisers. Each advertiser now has a “share-of-voice” and is entitled to a fraction of the time loop. As it is challenging to track share-of-voice without access to the media owners’ systems, some advertisers find it hard to trust the reports generated by DOOH publishers.

This problem can become even more complicated when it comes to programmatic DOOH campaigns because the advertisers cannot be sure where and when their content will be displayed.

It helps to understand that DOOH is actually very different to online advertising. Firstly, Digital Outdoor media runs on large-scale, OOH formats, not in a browser or web page. It means that the advertising content is always in sight and in its own version of “full screen” - it doesn’t get lost in the site context, like in online advertising. With DOOH, the “viewability” is always 100%.

You might have heard DOOH media referred to as “un-skippable.” This is because there are no ads or pop-up blockers in Outdoor media, and viewers cannot click “skip” when they don’t want to see the ad. It’s right

... DOOH is actually very different to online advertising...

there in front of them, and it can’t be deleted.

Further, Outdoor media owners have created OOH digital players as a software application specifically designed to display advertising only. Compare this to a webpage in a browser, which prioritises providing informative or entertaining content to the audience, and advertising is only featured occasionally on a part of the screen.

In online advertising, there is no end to the number of websites, webpages, and online environments in which advertising plays. This also increases the risk of advertising fraud, where advertisers end up paying for digital display advertising they never really received. For clients using DOOH media, the list of screens their creative will appear on is defined and limited, allowing

OPINION

for much greater control of transparency, accountability, and verification and dramatically decreases the risk of fraudulent activities.

Advanced DOOH digital players have metrics to guarantee that they deliver competitive separation for advertisers across the digital network. Broadsign's digital player, **Broadsign Control**, automatically builds competitive separation of advertising into the display loop and automatically generates complete POP reporting.

When designing its OOH digital player, Broadsign made sure that it was built fit-for-purpose for Out Of Home media only. We understand that accuracy of POP reporting is of utmost importance, so our POP reports are never inferred nor estimated. Broadsign POPs record the number of times an image or video has actually played. Our software and controls around our Proof-Of-Performance has been audited and verified by a third-party consultancy firm, BDO.

The Broadsign OOH players track and record every advertising content that plays, including the time of play. The players keep this information indefinitely until we can guarantee that the POP records

have been securely transferred and stored on the Broadsign servers. Every OOH media publisher who partners with Broadsign can ensure to their advertisers that no single ad play is ever lost and that all Proof of Play records will be available for auditing at any given time. Broadsign Control also supports connections with third-party POP servers. Again, Broadsign ensures that no data sent to these servers are ever lost.

Of course, there are some things that we can't control, such as if a digital screen is damaged by vandalism or wild weather, or whether growing trees obstruct the viewability of the screens. By keeping to a diligent maintenance schedule, media owners make sure that they keep on top of these factors, to keep premium digital networks looking the way they should.

To see the detail of Broadsign DOOH POP reports, **request a free demo today.**





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In Conversation with Dinesh Ratnam on the Future of Entertainment in SEA

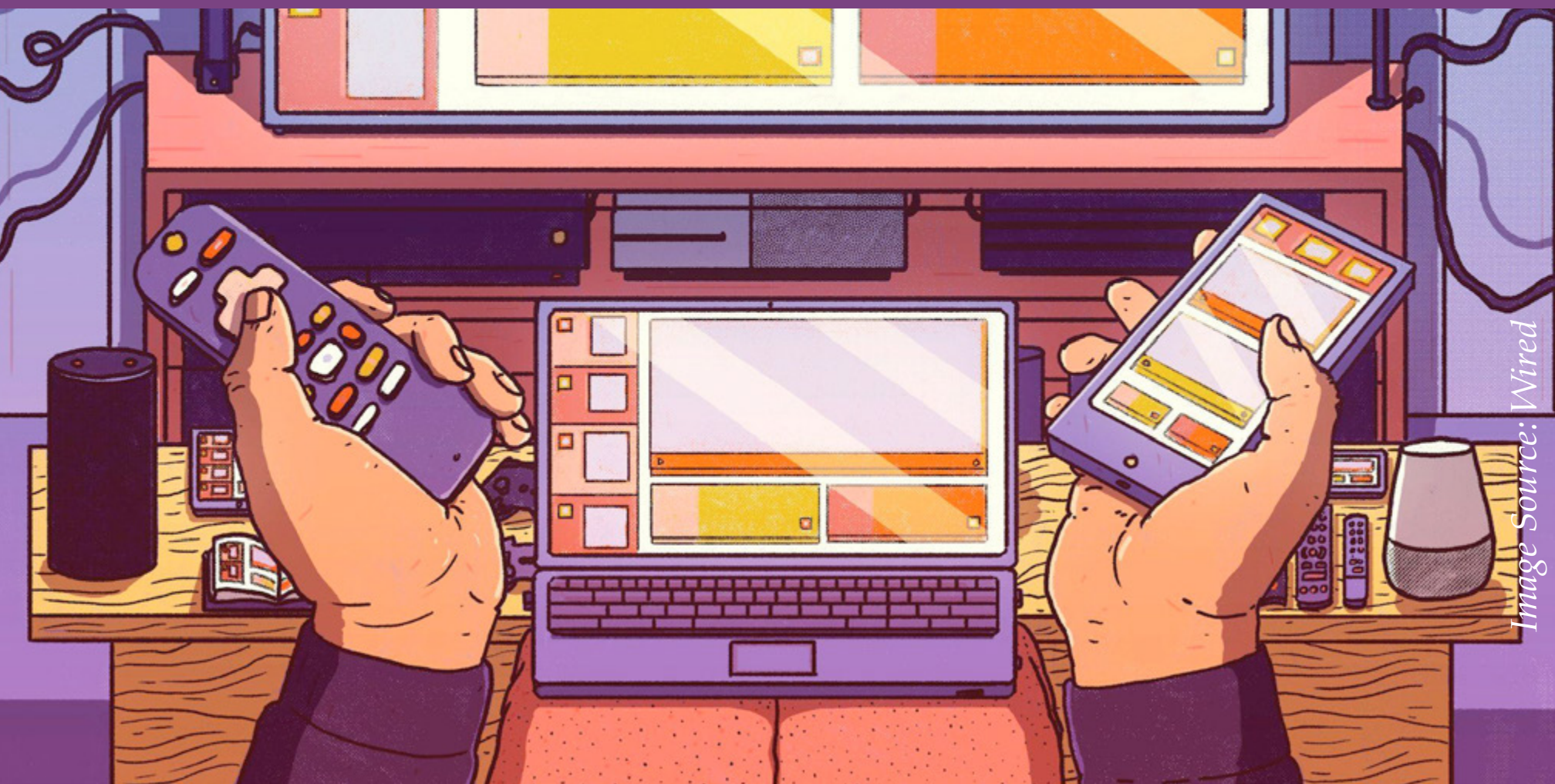


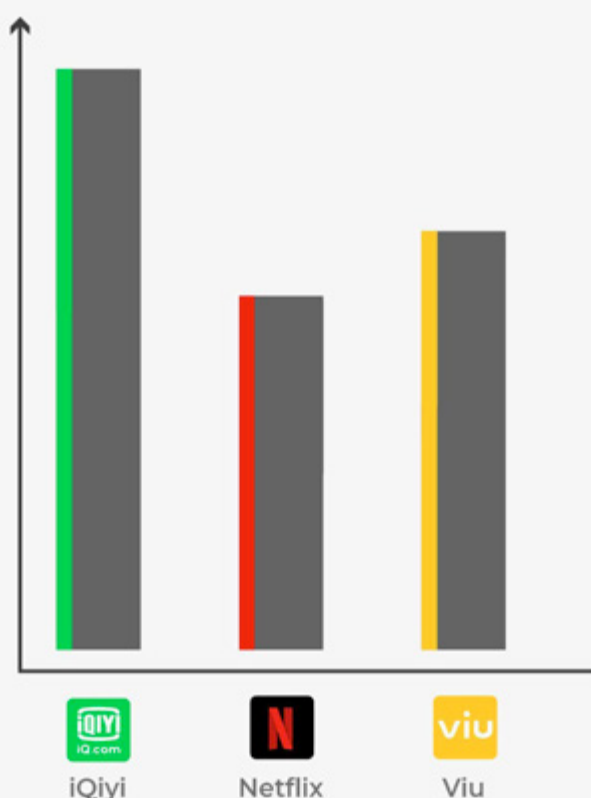
Image Source: Wired

When iQiyi launched outside of China for the first time by expanding to Malaysia in 2019, the OTT platform knew it was entering a competitive market. Yet, with focused marketing

strategies, outstanding content creation and a strong distribution strength, iQiyi has become the fastest-growing streaming service in Malaysia with a user base that grew by 15 times in 2020 alone.

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Top 3 most downloaded
OTT apps (June 2020 – June 2021)



Source: App Annie

There is no denying that 2020 was a historic year world-wide. As people across the globe were forced to stay at home to protect themselves and others from the COVID-19 pandemic, their behaviour as consumers played a huge role in many world-changing and paradigm-shifting developments that occurred.

In the world of media consumption, one of the biggest revolutions that took place during this time was the fast-



track shift of traditional TV to digital. Especially in South East Asia, this revolution has permanently rewritten the consumer's viewing habits and one of the driving forces behind this revolution is the emergence of over-the-top (OTT) media platforms.

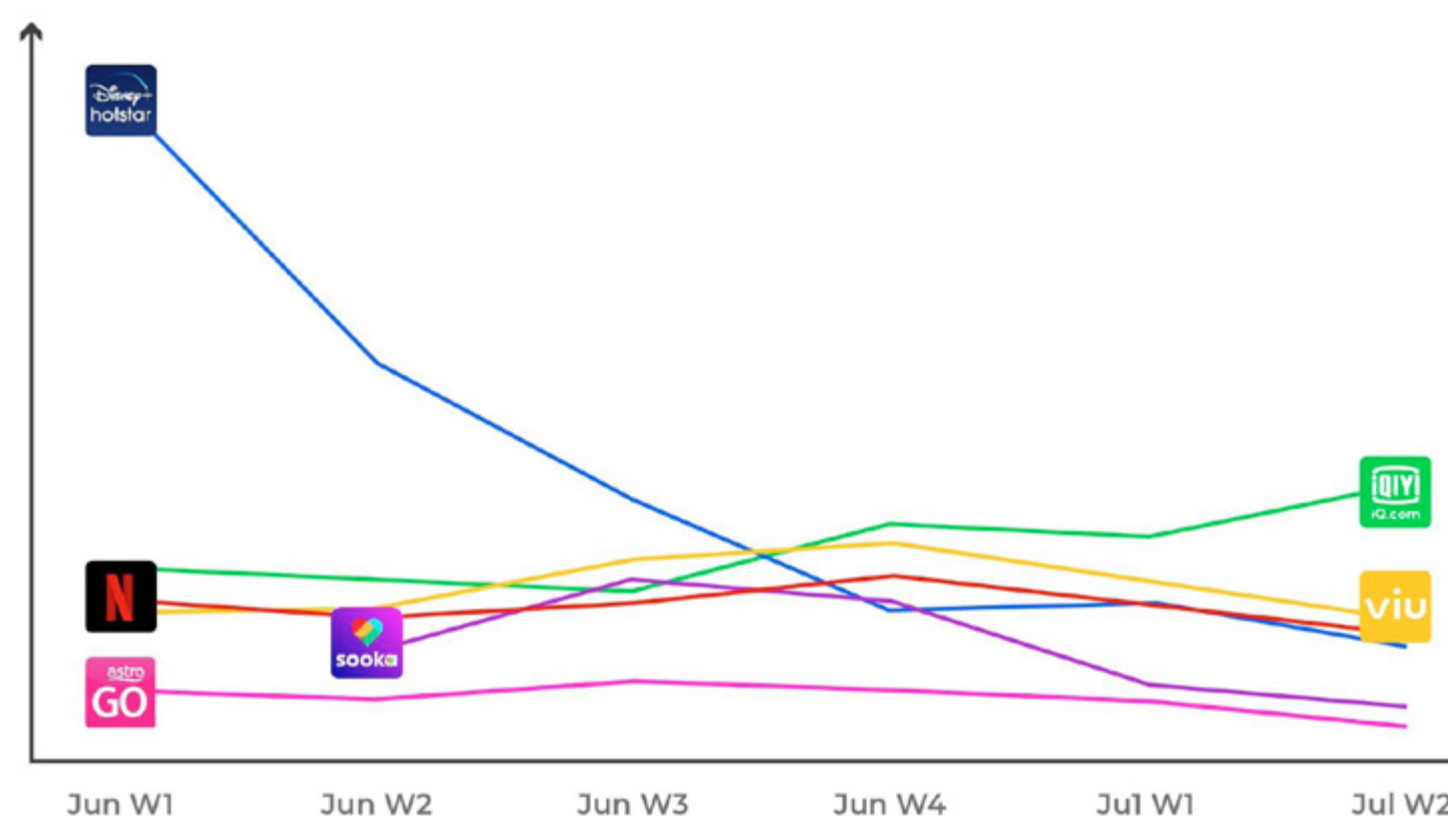
OTT refers to any platform used to watch professional video content over the internet by providing the user with the freedom to choose what they want to watch, when they want to watch it and which device they watch it on.

A survey report released by **The Trade Desk on The Future of TV** in January this year revealed that there are 13 million OTT users in Malaysia with 20% of these users categorised as heavy users (more than 4 hours of use per day).

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Total weekly downloads

(June – July 2021)



As more Malaysians rush to purchase internet-connected smart TVs or sign up for set top box services that turn their family TV into a computer, there is no question that this trend will continue. Instead, the pertinent question is, which OTT platforms will continue improving its consumer experience in creative ways to stand out from the crowd.

In a recent interview with the Country Head of iQiyi Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore & Brunei, Dinesh Ratnam, *MARKETING Magazine* had the opportunity to find out more about his team's efforts in growing its business in Malaysia, milestones they've hit and what they have coming soon.

Currently in Malaysia, people have access to Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney Hotstar, HBO Go, Apple TV and even a few other niche streaming platforms. Has iQiyi managed to carve a strong enough position for itself in this highly competitive market?

DR: Yes there's no denying that this is a highly competitive market but iQiyi has been the fastest-growing streaming service in Malaysia. In fact, we are the most downloaded OTT app over the last 12 months. At iQiyi, we take pride in being the leading entertainment platform in Asia that is powered by technology and in Malaysia, iQiyi has achieved not only rapid growth

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*Dinesh Ratnam,
Country Head of
iQiyi Malaysia,
Indonesia,
Singapore &
Brunei*

in terms of users and downloads but also has one of the highest content consumption and engagement levels.

While we are 2nd only to Netflix in terms of monthly active users and total minutes streamed in Q1 2021, we are the clear leader among other Asian OTTs.

Overall we're very pleased with where we are in the market now, and with a lot of ambitious plans for content and development in the pipeline, we think we will further strengthen

our position in Malaysia as the go-to source of Asian content.

That's very impressive. So what does iQiyi offer customers that is different from other OTT platforms?

DR: Off the bat, I'd say it is the depth and breadth of our quality Asian Content because when it comes to Asian content, iQiyi is second to none. We know Malaysians love their Asian content and iQiyi offers the biggest and top-rated slate of Asian content of all kinds, including Malay, Korean, Chinese and Anime.

I'm not sure if you know this but according to Google's 2020 Year in Review, the 10 most searched titles in the entertainment-related category were all Asian titles. There wasn't a single Western title in the list!

This not only shows the demand and interest for Asian content among Malaysians, but also strongly indicates that audiences are actively searching for a collection of titles that haven't been provided in a big and all-encompassing way by other services. So, iQiyi seeks to fill that void.

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When the Google list was released, out of the Top 10 most searched titles, 4 of them were content that's available on iQiyi, including a Malay title, *7 Hari Mencintaiku 2* – which is licensed exclusively to iQiyi. It was the number one local Malay drama in Malaysia last year. The other titles were Korean titles - *The World of the Married* and *Parasite*, and the fourth is a Chinese variety show, which is the iconic variety show of iQiyi, *Youth With You*.

The availability of these popular shows bears testament to our focus on not only breadth but quality as well across *all* types of Asian content. Anime is also another genre that we feature strongly. In fact, when we launched *Attack on Titan*, a top Anime title, we were the most downloaded Free App in Malaysia, higher than MySejahtera and Tiktok!

On top of this, we also focus a lot of our efforts into creating a seamless user experience. Our proprietary technology allows users to enjoy high-quality viewing within 2 seconds of 'Play'. A great viewing experience also means important features like subtitles including

... we were the most downloaded Free App in Malaysia, higher than MySejahtera and Tiktok!...

Bahasa Malaysia, English, both Simplified and Traditional Chinese to cater to our Malaysian audiences, as well as video resolutions (up to 1080p) and audio like Dolby Sound no matter what device they're on.

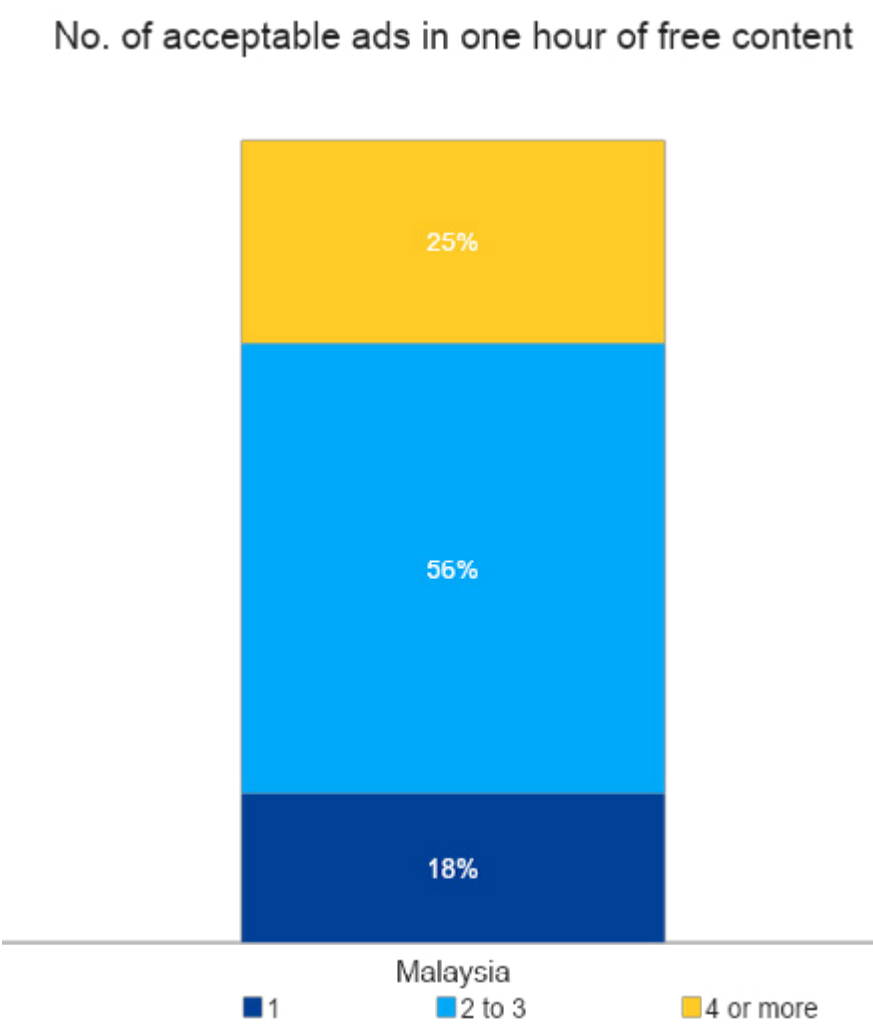
iQiyi International launched in Malaysia with a freemium model. Tell us a bit more about the thinking behind the free layer and how it is positioned? Also, what role does the AVOD layer play as a key revenue driver?

DR: Since launch, we've been operating on a "freemium" model, offering both **subscription** and **ad-based viewing options**. This model allows users the freedom to choose between the option of free viewing or paying for a better viewing experience. We want

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to provide as much flexibility and the best experience to our users as possible. Most of our titles are free to watch with ads as we want to maximise reach and viewership and provide full access for our users. VIP (paying) users might have access to these titles in advance of Free users but Free users will still have access nonetheless. This is because we consider our “free layer” to be just as important as our “VIP layer.”

We have also seen data and survey results that indicate users are willing to watch content with ads as a trade-off, as a substitute to paying for our service. We see AVOD being a key revenue driver as more brands are realising the importance of OTT as a must-have tool in their digital advertising arsenal, providing the benefit of brand safe premium content like you would on TV but being even more customisable, targeted and measurable. Our premium offering to advertisers presents them with targeted solutions for different segments of users, resulting in higher personalization and customization for a more dynamic ad delivery.



*Note: % who have ever clicked through on an OTT ad | Source: The Trade Desk: Future of TV survey

How can local advertisers benefit from OTT investments, specifically with iQiyi’s advertising strategy?

DR: iQiyi caters predominantly to a “digital first” millennial audience that is highly digitally engaged. OTT advertising within iQiyi presents a premium content environment which is targeted and measurable. It can also be customised and personalised which significantly reduces noise and clutter,

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... Through OTT platforms, we are able to effectively target audience segments based on the type of content they are watching...

compared to advertising on other digital video platforms.

Through OTT platforms, we are able to effectively target audience segments based on the type of content they are watching. For instance, a beauty or cosmetics related brand may choose to have their ads on romance or Korean content, which typically have a predominantly female audience. We've also worked with some brands who have taken this to another level by also targeting specific scenes in the content, by inserting overlay advertising in scenes when the female characters are putting on skincare or makeup. Another big targeted audience segment is the Gen Z market, who are "OTT-first" in how they choose to consume content.

Ultimately, brands who choose OTT platforms to advertise are able to get eyeballs on their products or services on a sizeable and increasingly growing scale, to a targeted and highly engaged audience. From an advertiser's perspective, that's really the gold standard.

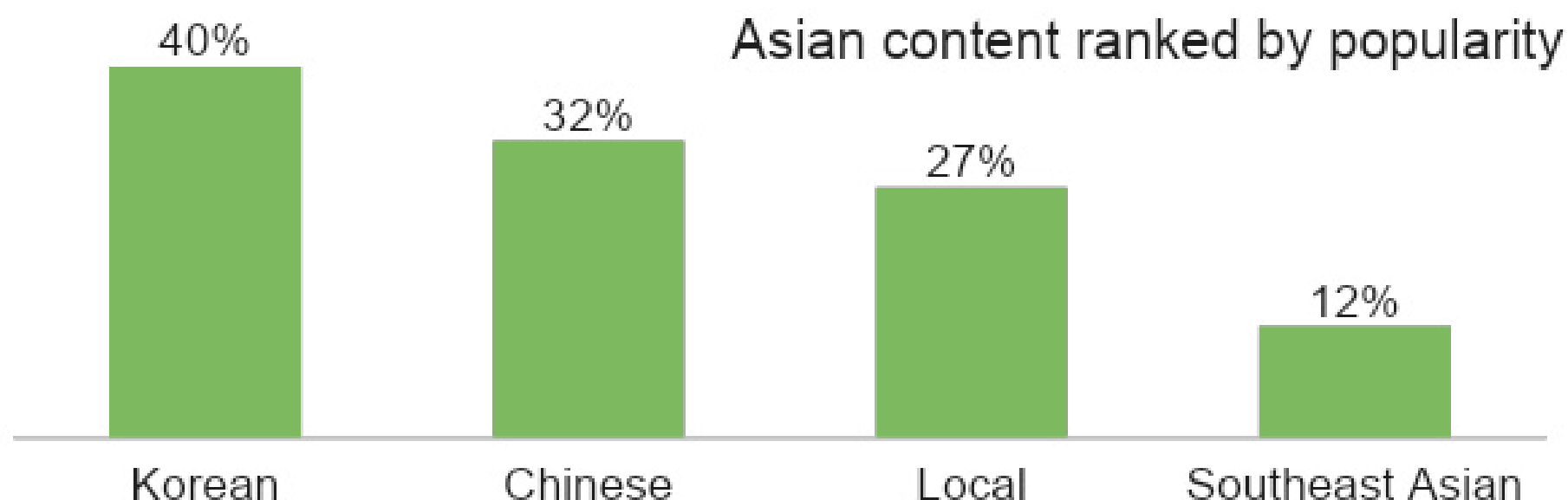
How has iQiyi's partnerships with companies such as Astro, Media Prima, Maxis and Celcom propelled its growth in Malaysia?

DR: For one, these **partnerships** have helped us to create high awareness, reach and distribution among Malaysians. These partners are all heavyweights in their own right and household names, so being able to work with each of them in a big way has helped us accelerate our growth.

Overall, we see partnerships as a key strategy for us and we seek to work with as many partners as possible while simultaneously striving to customise our approach for each partner which has seen win-win outcomes for both sides.

We're always on the lookout for like-minded partners in our journey and hope to delight

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Source: The Trade Desk: Future of TV survey

our Malaysian audiences with our commitment to deliver the best in Asian entertainment. We have a lot of upcoming exciting announcements coming soon, and are excited for what the coming months will bring for Malaysia's entertainment industry.

As the number of online streaming platforms/OTT platforms increases, what direction do you foresee this market heading toward and what does iQiyi's growth plan in Malaysia look like?

DR: Firstly, Malaysia is one of the most important markets to iQiyi's International business – iQiyi has made many ground-breaking strides in Malaysia just within the past year alone as we launched local content and

formed multiple partnerships.

We will continue building on the success and momentum that we've worked hard for in the past year, and are excited for our upcoming plans which will see us further establish and cement our position as the Asian streaming platform of choice. We want it so that whenever a user wants to watch any Asian content, be it Malay, Korean, Chinese or Anime – iQiyi is the first platform that comes to mind.

It is also important to us that we become a significant and active driver of growth in the local content ecosystem as opposed to just being a passive player in the industry. Our team here is very passionate about growing and investing in local creative talent, which Malaysia has plenty of.

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To achieve this, while continuing to invest in and work with our content partners to license top quality local content, we will also be working on differentiated original productions and eventually hope to bring some innovative formats from China over to Malaysia.

On top of this, we also want to be a platform of choice for the global export of local content. In this regard, we seek to enable Malaysian storytellers to reach an international audience and play an active role in nurturing young local talents.

Malaysia has such a rich history and there are so many talented Malaysians with amazing multicultural stories to tell – we want to help the world discover these stories.

Dinesh, on a more personal note, you were an investment banker in London and San Francisco in a previous life before you came back to Malaysia to work at Catcha Group with Patrick Grove, and then moved on to become the Country Manager at iflix. What did you learn across those different experiences that are helping you today in your

current role with iQiyi?

DR: I consider myself really fortunate to have had the experience of working abroad as an investment banker during the early days of my career – it was a great training ground to build a foundation in strategy and analytics.

But the last 5 years in Malaysia were even more formative for me. Being able to work closely with Patrick for a few years was an amazing opportunity.

Being a seasoned and highly successful entrepreneur, there were many things that I learned from him, but what I admired and respected the most was his bold vision and his positivity and perseverance no matter the circumstance.

I've come to really appreciate that more over time, especially when you're trying to build a brand or a business from the ground up.

My time at iflix was an eye-opener to the streaming space and I learned so much from the people I worked with about the industry and the importance of personalisation, localisation and truly understanding your customer.

MALAYSIAN DIGITAL ASSOCIATION

*MDA council and members*

3 (genuine) reasons why you should consider joining the Malaysia Digital Association

One of the effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is that it has strengthened our need to leverage on our community during tough times. Similar to geographical communities, professional communities also play a key role in establishing a members' coterie. One such community which is formally known as a representative body, is the Malaysia Digital Association.

Founded in 2009, MDA represents 64 companies comprising digital publishers, platforms, advertising agencies, creative agencies and digital service providers. MDA's ethos as an association is embedded in its mission, which is to be the leading voice in shaping the growth of Malaysia's digital economy and empower digital businesses and professions to thrive.

MDA in numbers (end Q4 2020 & Q1 2021)



Despite difficulties running an association during this pandemic (especially associations traditionally being a very f2f affair), the councils, with the assistance of our secretariat office and partners + member's support, we've managed to kick off and navigate our activities to virtual.



To help you understand the depth of benefits a member experiences, we've put together 3 genuinely good and honest reasons why you should consider joining MDA or any other representative bodies.

1. Consistently upskill yourself and let the association help you narrow down necessary trainings

As the saying goes, "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest". However, the problem for professionals in the industry is that they often do not have the time to sift through multiple training options before choosing the best one out there.

Here's where joining an

association such as MDA comes in handy. MDA's officer bearers and council members regularly recommend available upskilling opportunities and members have exclusive access to their recommendations.

Aside from that, the association also organises MDA School, a monthly training programme for its members in the area of digital marketing. The courses are designed for juniors and new joiners in the digital marketing and advertising industry.

Most recently, the MDA School virtual launched a four part series on content marketing. Part 1 of the series, titled 'What 30,000 Malaysians told us about their content habits' was



held on 8 July. During the 90 minute session, two of MDA's strategic partners deep dove into Malaysian segments and personas.

MDA also releases a quarterly video series covering the latest debated topics in the digital scene to ensure its members are kept up to speed on important developments and innovation.

Additionally, and perhaps one of the most appealing factors to become a member with MDA is that each year, members are entitled to RM3,500 worth for training, masterclass and webinars powered by MDA partners which include Comscore, SimilarWeb, IAB Tech Lab, Facebook, Google and many more.

2. Have a voice and actually get heard by decision makers

Having a voice is important but actually getting your voices heard at a level that influences decision makers is no easy feat. One of the most important roles of a representative body is advocacy. More specifically, helping decision makers understand what members do in the workplace and why it's important.

In this sense, the larger the group, the louder the voice, and the more your contribution will be known on a national level. Currently, MDA's members represent 64 companies and on average, it organises two to three programs per month. What this means is that, not only is

... The association's resilience in getting its voice heard is also apparent in its efforts to drive industry conversation with both the government and its agencies...

MDA a significant voice but it also is constantly contributing knowledge and activities to the industry, strengthening its position simultaneously.

As a representative body that has a vested interest in the digital growth of the nation, MDA ensures that the voices of its members and the organisations they represent, are equally represented.

The association's resilience in getting its voice heard is also apparent in its efforts to

drive industry conversation with both the government and its agencies, such as The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia (CMCF) and Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC).

Through these efforts, MDA has also successfully collaborated with these agencies to execute several initiatives such as the latest consent code revamp and the formation and implementation of the "Single Television and Video audience measurement (STAM).

3. Build a strong support network with people who actually know their stuff

When you join an association that is specifically in your field of expertise, the more contacts, resources and access to information you will have. Industry sharing is one of the surest ways for you to find solutions to challenges you've been facing in your business or career because odds are, someone in the association has "been there/done that". Very aware of this, MDA started a monthly

MALAYSIAN DIGITAL ASSOCIATION

networking event called Digital Wednesdays.

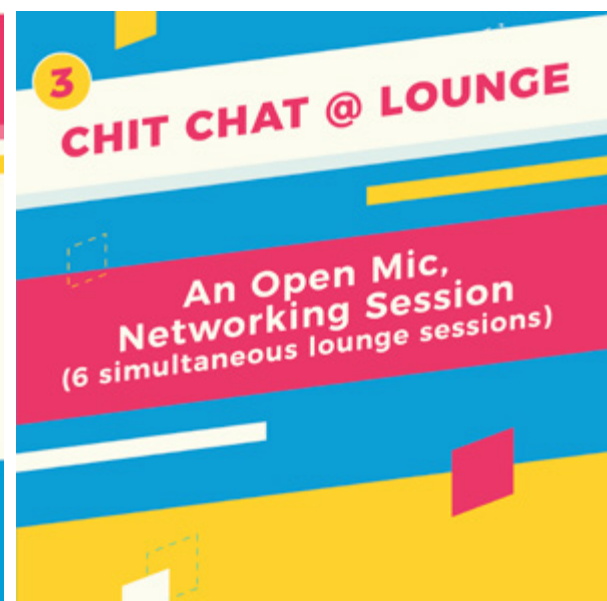
Digital Wednesdays is a no-frills networking session where members of MDA get together to discuss a specific topic that has been impacting or will impact the industry collectively. While it sounds formal and scripted, MDA's Digital Wednesday do in fact have a reputation for being an excellent networking event that opens its doors to all members despite their length of experience in the industry.

While associations traditionally are known as a very face to face affair, MDA has been resilient in running the associations successfully despite the pandemic. MDA's councils with the assistance of its secretariat office, partners and member's support, have managed to kick off and navigate their activities virtually.

... Digital Wednesdays is a no-frills networking session where members of MDA get together to discuss...

Happening next week is MDA's latest Digital Wednesday which will be hosted in a new format. On top of the popular virtual Fireside Chat, MDA is expanding Digital Wednesdays into a half-day event. This is so attendees are able to maximise their time with networking opportunities, interactive quizzes and special presentations.

Click [here](#) to RSVP for MDA's half-day Digital Wednesday happening on 18 August. Exclusive event: To learn more about becoming a member of MDA and to find out the many more perks members are entitled to, visit malaysiandigitalassociation.org.my/ or contact md@macomm.com.my for more information.





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