

MARKETING

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WEEKENDER™

Best of Southeast Asia

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Malaysia



EDITOR'S NOTE

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The clock has been ticking to lead us to this very moment - that time of the year when we dedicate ourselves to recognise all the hard working marketers of Malaysia...

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Transformative. Trailblazing. Tenacious.

A case study of awesomeness

It is almost the end of the year and we are witnessing a sterling finish by IPG Mediabrand, as they hit the ball out of the park...

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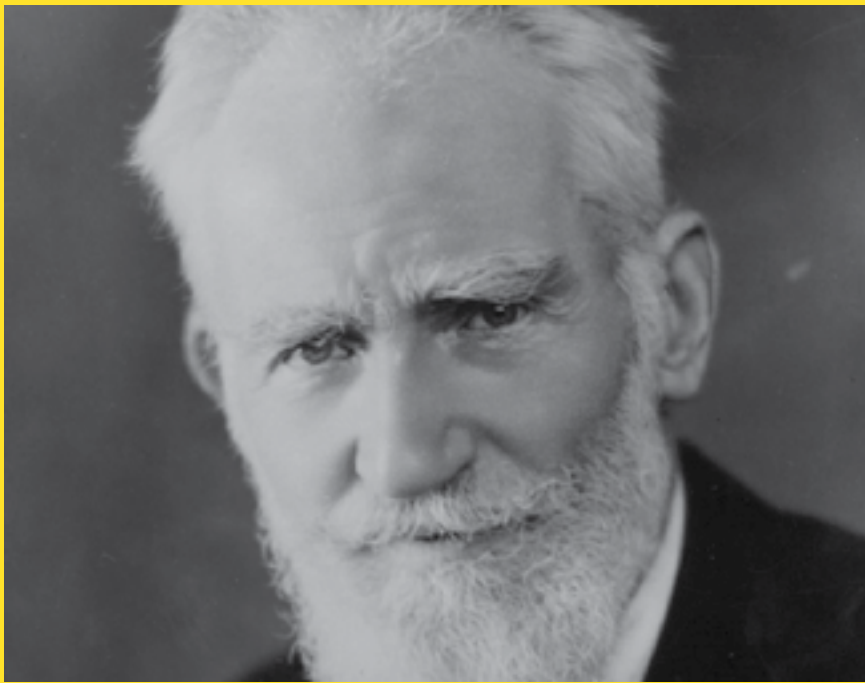
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“There is no national interest here, only national embarrassment.”

Court of Appeal Judge Datuk Abdul Karim Abdul Jalil on Datuk Seri Najib Razak’s SRC Intl Appeal



“Progress is impossible without change; and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.”

Bernard Shaw

“...Covid-19 shifted US\$5 trillion (RM21.11 trillion) in global retail sales from offline to online...”

“No amount of guilt can change the past and no amount of worrying can change the future.”

Umar Ibn Al Khattab

Time to recognise Malaysia's Best Marketers

By Raihan Hadi

The clock has been ticking to lead us to this very moment - that time of the year when we dedicate ourselves to recognise all the hard working marketers of Malaysia.

The CMO awards 2021 is set to take place on the 7th of January, 2022 at 8pm, and our distinguished panel of judges are already at work.

Judging the best marketers of the year across 32



categories with a great many nominations on the table, the judges will be going through business results, team results, case studies and track records to come to their conclusions on which CMO's hit the ball out of the park.

Think it's easy? Then think again, I beg of you.

Whilst a lot of us have been sulking over how badly this pandemic brought us down to the point where we



Who's going to be CMO of the year?

resorted to making wishes by a well and picking up pennies on the street and keeping them for luck, I know for a fact that each and every CMO out there did not give in, did not give up.

They all got up at the same time every morning, pulled their teams together, and kept coming up with kickass strategies and creative solutions to problems that were meant for people like them to solve and keep the show going.

It will be for a second consecutive year that we are hosting the awards ceremony virtually, although you and I both know that's not how we wanted it. But I assure you

that it's going to be one hell of a show and we will all cheer these brilliant people for whom this economy sees better days, because their creativity and outstanding solutions is what makes brands and businesses successful.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude on behalf of the team to our sponsors, as without their support all our efforts would have led to zilch.

Until we meet again...



presented or simply rejected by a dim client.

There is no proven recipe on how ideas should be presented, because no two ideas are the same, just as no two clients are the same.

How do you sell an idea you can't touch, feel and define?

Ideas are the essence of our business. They can move mountains, rocket sales and give a product life. But in their purest form, ideas are defenceless. They cannot jump out and dance to your tune. They need nourishment, vision and faith.

Many a time, clients buy ideas largely because of the convincing argument of the presenter, his credibility on the subject and conviction in the idea.

Nobody is going to buy your idea just because you say so. Ideas, without

Transformative. Trailblazing. Tenacious.

A case study of awesomeness

By Raihan Hadi



It is almost the end of the year and we are witnessing a sterling finish by IPG Mediabrand, as they hit the ball out of the park with multiple regional award wins.

The industry has been truly rocked this year with IPG

Mediabrand's legendary wins at the Southeast Asia Campaign Agency of the Year Awards.

Packed with Gold, Silver, and Bronze for Mediabrand's very own Reprise, Ensemble Worldwide and Universal McCann, the cherry on top



of the cake from the awards ceremony was Bala Pomaleh being crowned Southeast Asia's Agency Head of the Year.

It's been a year of uncertainty, of pause, and a world turned upside down. To survive and thrive, Mediabrands shifted, learned, and changed at each step of the way.

And as they did, they transformed. Transforming

their thinking and strategies, offerings and processes, and most importantly, transforming their people, as Mediabrands came out stronger than ever.

The transformation journey began with Bala's vision for continued sustainability, high performance, and integrity at the heart of everything.

Let's look at the journey of these award winning brands under the leadership of Bala and his band of path breakers.

REPRISE

World's largest performance marketing network, with over 3,000 experts in 68 offices in 48 markets, designed to deliver customer-centric performance marketing.



Stanley Clement



Sujith Rao



Aparna Krishnan



Thanendran Thanesvaran



Kevin Le



Amir Faiz



Eddy Nazarullah



Mandar Wairkar



Priyanka Raman

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Kim Chew



Mike Foster



Gary Read



Jean Tang

Norbariah
HanafiahAkanksha
Madiraju

Kritika Suresh



Elwin Tan

... Innovation isn't just a buzzword for Reprise. Innovation is in their perspective and ways of thinking – ingrained in their spirit...

Let me start by shedding some light on Reprise, the new owner of the GOLD for Malaysia Digital Agency of the Year, SILVER for Malaysia Creative Agency of the Year and BRONZE for Southeast Asia Performance Agency of the Year.

Innovation isn't just a buzzword for Reprise. Innovation is in their perspective and ways of

thinking – ingrained in their spirit.

Some of Reprise's key innovations include the *FLOW Operating System* across their clients. FLOW is the movement of clients along their path to purchase. Reprise improves Customer flow in three fundamental and interconnected ways – Experience, Media and Content.

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Identifying High Value Audiences is another key innovation which Reprise uses to identify audiences who will push the business needle and audiences who are addressable in the media.

Conversational Commerce: With social media controlling brand narratives, the pandemic ushered in a huge pivot to commerce.

Studio 48: In today's media landscape brands are built via conversations, which means timing is everything.

Knowing this Reprise operates Studio 48 – a “war” room that responds to all briefs within 48 hours – be it with full-fledged commercials, or influencer collaborations, name it and clients will have it ready & live within 48 hours.

Analytics focus to drive Incremental gains: In the digital realm there is always room for better. In line with the same Reprise provides analytics offerings such as digital attribution, Google Analytics gatekeeping, DMP services, CRM services, and conversion rate optimization to ensure that media and content are made to

work harder.

Sports Marketing: Nothing unites and connects the way sports does. Which is why Reprise has a distinct Sports Marketing team – a new revenue stream that specialises in crafting sports associations and partnerships for brands.

Embracing UGC & collaborations: Active community creation was Reprise's motto with the goal of 'Brands as publishers'.

Inspired by their long-standing client relationships, Reprise treaded the path of Growth using two key tenets:

A. Better Effectiveness

Building capabilities in-line with market demand.

B. Better Efficiency

In the last year, Reprise has been successful in building robust use cases for clients on the 'Acts, not Ads' philosophy & content/ creative that lasts longer and decays slower.

Most of the work is done in house, with adaptation to the landscape.

As long as the digital realm keeps evolving, Reprise promises to do the same.

COVER STORY



Audrey Chong

Universal McCann is a global media and advertising agency. UM is a member of Interpublic Group, operating under IPG Mediabrands.



ensemble



Phang Mei Jeng



Rina Low



Chai Yen Yen



Jennifer Yean



Cindy Eliza Vaz



Didi Pirinyuang



Chan Su Ling



Norman Tang



Shukri Jai



Mun Tuck Wai

COVER STORY



Wong Lu Kenn



Ahmad Nazril



Loreen



Ng Bee Nee



Iskandar Putra

... They repositioned themselves as an agency that provided true integration via services beyond media and into digital...

UM & Ensemble Worldwide/UM Studios picked up a GOLD Malaysia Media Agency of the Year and SILVER Malaysia Digital Agency of the Year at the Campaign Agency of the Year Awards 2021.

With the swift and massive shock of Covid-19, UM knew they had one thing to do – pivot to futureproof - not only for clients but for itself. One of the ways UM futureproofed itself was by expanding beyond comfort zones, into the digital landscape. They repositioned themselves as an agency that

provided true integration via services beyond media and into digital.

Moving into 2021, UM continued to capitalise on the futureproof success and the market momentum, leveling up partnership with clients to digitally transform and adapt to the new world.

Now, more so than ever before, brands need futureproofing and UM's ambition is to build brands that disrupt, rather than be disrupted. Three key areas were identified for this futureproof proposition

... A big part of success in delivering has been the futureproof planning process, designed with extensive marketing effectiveness research and insight at the core of the planning approach...

in 2021, to further demonstrate capabilities as an integrated agency and meaningfully impact the business.

Winning local market game changing clients by demonstrating integration: UM stepped up their prospecting efforts and built out a new business pipeline around local market game changing brands.

Consultancy as a service: With a consultative mindset, UM adopted tools and framework that changed their day-to-day

conversation and accelerated consultancy across areas such as Full Funnel Modelling, Portfolio Analysis and High Value Audiences.

Alongside this, analytical thought pieces were distributed across talents and clients.

Digital transformation in the new normal: Amidst the constant shift between movement restrictions and easing of control measures, one thing remained clear – behaviours accelerated by the pandemic moved the center of gravity from the physical world to the digital, and the changes seen will continue to be pushed even further.

By bolstering services beyond media ranging from Analytics to Content Creation to even E-Commerce the agency was poised to double down on growth.

A big part of success in delivering has been the futureproof planning process, designed with extensive marketing effectiveness research and insight at the core of the planning approach.

By continuing to leverage on innovations, four digital-first futureproof products have

COVER STORY

emerged from the furnace, all representing a step change in the way in which UM engages with clients.

The key innovations in this case included - Specialised Digital Content, Virtual Events, Audience Retention and Story-teller guide for Digital Content, and E-Commerce+. With the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the e-commerce scene exploded in Malaysia, and this trend is here to stay.

To accelerate their clients' e-commerce growth UM developed an end-to-end, yet modular consultancy in order to build robust digital commerce strategies, Ensemble on creatives and content and UM Studios as the tech and content specialists.

With COVID being the biggest mover of digital transformation, UM further redesigned internally to accelerate this business transformation, ensuring the right people with the right skills and the right motivation to futureproof – across retention, career & personal growth, and connectivity.

For UM, this has been a challenging yet optimistic year,

... ensuring the right people with the right skills and the right motivation to futureproof – across retention, career & personal growth, and connectivity...

reflective of the resilience and dynamism of the region.

For UM and Ensemble Worldwide/UM Studios, this has continued to be a year of inspiration and impact for the brands and communities we work within.

So as we were, raising our glasses, and once again giving our heartfelt felicitations to team Mediabrands.

2021 YTD MALAYSIA TOP 10 WINS

Creative Agency	Month	Account	Area
Grey Group	Mar	Bangledash Navy	Malaysia
Grey Group	Mar	Malaysian Heath Board	Malaysia
FCB	Apr	Genting Skyworlds Theme Park	Malaysia
The Chariot Agency	Jun	Costa Coffee	Malaysia
FCB	Oct	Resorts World Genting	Malaysia
Ogilvy	Jan	Dairy Farm	Malaysia
Ogilvy	Jul	Mondelez	Malaysia
FCB	Oct	Spritzer	Malaysia
FCB	Oct	SunLife	Malaysia
VMLY&R	Sep	Shell Malaysia	Malaysia
Media Agency	Month	Account	Area
PHD	May	Paragon Tech	Malaysia
PHD	Mar	Subway	SG, MY
PHD	Apr	Ikano	Malaysia
PHD	Apr	IKEA	MY, VN, TH, SG, PH
Initiative	Mar	Tesco	Malaysia
Initiative	Jan	Astro Go	Malaysia
Universal McCann	Jun	Pizza Hut	Malaysia
Carat	Mar	S P Setia Berhad	Malaysia
Mindshare	May	Tyson Foods	Malaysia
dentsu X	Aug	Heineken	Malaysia



MYSENYUM



#MySenyum

Detik Keriangan Bersama

Something inspiring is coming soon...



Purple Makes You Smile

What does the colour purple remind you of (no, not the novel or the movie but the actual shade of purple)?

Well, they say colours say a lot about a person and that is actually true even for businesses – corporate shades define what brands stand for and more importantly, how the public relates to the brand persona.

And it is with this realisation that back in October 2019, MCIS Insurance Berhad (MCIS Life) launched its rebranding initiative spotting a bold new, primary corporate colour.

The company adopted purple as its shade of choice to signal a number of salient points to the Malaysian market including:

- the transformation that the brand has undergone since its inception dating back to 1954 and the introduction of its new business core values, vision & mission;
- the company's new brand ethos of 'People Helping People' which amplifies the essence of what the life insurer strongly believes in; and
- to introduce its majority shareholder, the Sanlam Group, headquartered in South Africa

Syncing Purple With Positivity

Two years following the debut of the life insurer's rebranding initiative which puts the shade purple as the epi-centre of its new brand identity, MCIS Life has now embarked on a unique marketing drive to make their corporate shade nothing short of becoming viral.

And this is being done in a truly differentiated manner for a number of reasons (just in case you have not spotted any one of their 60 plus billboards spread across Kuala Lumpur,

Selangor, Johor Bharu, Melaka, Ipoh & Penang) which we feel is worth taking note.

"We call it the 'purple attack' strategy aimed at giving consumers, particularly Malaysians, a fresh approach towards brand advertising as the nation enters the Covid-19 recovery phase with caution. You'll notice that our advertising mediums position our corporate colour as the centre of attention with the copy being kept to the minimum."

"With the natural transition of the country into a well-managed pandemic recovery period, we are signaling to the market that it's time to spread positive vibes and celebrate what each of us uniquely own – our smiles," said Mr. Ragnath Murthy, Chief Distribution & Marketing Officer, MCIS Life.

The objective of this campaign is dual pronged at large as it aims for Malaysians to recognise purple (a corporate shade presently not explored in the local life insurance industry) as symbolic of the MCIS Life



Ragnath Joe Murthy
Chief Distribution &
Marketing Officer
MCIS Life

brand and more importantly, the company is calling upon all Malaysians to wear their brightest smile in an attempt to spread cheer and positivity.

Coming Soon

So we see the bright, purple coloured billboards most prominently displaying the copy ‘#MySenyum Detik Keriangan Bersama’ and decided to ask for further information (you can’t blame us for curiosity).

“Get set for something inspiring to be unveiled on 23 December 2021 as we get ready to welcome a brand new year

with positive vibes,” added Ragnath who also revealed that the campaign’s activation is set to make a presence on the digital front.

With #PeopleHelpingPeople as its brand ethos, we’re deducing that the company is geared up to launch a campaign that is inclusive, creative and most importantly one that probably is centered around giving back to the community...well, it is just a couple of days more to go, so we’ll stay vigilant to keep you posted once more details are available!

The Great Attraction

The Future Does Not Fit in the Containers of the Past.

by Rishad Tobaccowala



Teams and companies that thrive usually have a disproportionate share of talent.

Brands that grow tend to attract a disproportionate share of brand loyalists.

What attracts talent to companies and what makes people loyal to brands?

Acquisition: Three factors that get people to join companies or make the initial purchase.

1. Money: Talent makes decisions to join a company in part because of financial factors. A brand that allows someone to save or make money is one to gain traction. Incentives matter to get people on board.

2. Fame: One joins a company that is well known or a company that will allow one to become famous or be recognized for their work. Brands that have good stories, provenance and history or are known to treat customers like royalty are more likely to attract trial.

3. Power: Individuals join companies that give them autonomy or power and people are loyal to brands that enable and empower them.

Retention: Three factors that ensure continued access to talent and brand love.

1. Purpose: Talent cares about the purpose of the company and people ask about the purpose companies serve beyond making a profit.

2. Values: Over time employees stay with companies whose values they find resonate with theirs and consumers stay with brands whose values they resonate with and who show that they are valued.

3. Connection: If someone feels connected to their manager, their clients, and their colleagues they are more likely to persevere through the ups and downs of a



career. Similarly, an emotional connection to a Brand ensures a greater loyalty.

Passion: Three factors that get individuals to feel passionate about their place of work and brands.

1. Freedom: Companies that recognize that they work for talent rather than talent works for them and approach talent as something *they access versus own* ensure that people have the flexibility and freedom to be who



they are. Brands that are highly accessible and adaptable (ability to purchase and return across channels and adapt to the needs of customers ensuring freedom in how they are used and paid for) garner long term loyalty.

2. Identity: A career is part of a person's identity as are the brands with greatest loyalty. Understanding the identity of a person also allows for customization of how they are

served, treated, and grown. It is important to know that while a company and a brand are part of the identity and story of a person, they are just a part. Companies that understand that they need to fit in the story of the lives of their talent and customers rather than the talent and customers fit in the story of the company or brand are ones that thrive.

3. Growth: A career lasts for four or five decades in a world that is changing fast. Skill sets need to be continuously refreshed and kept relevant. Companies that focus on the future and constantly transform ensuring their growth will always be able to access talent since people care about ensuring they are growing and remaining relevant and will work at firms who allow them to grow skills that are valued outside the firm. By making talent highly attractive to the outside is the way to ensure continued access to them. Similarly brands that find ways to adapt and change over the years by combining their roots and wings engender long term passion.

Art Photography by Gavin Goodman

RETAIL REPORT



Malaysian Retail in Dire Straits

Raihan Hadi

Just when we began to see some light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, we've been hit by a reality check with the sharp decline in the retail sales of Malaysia during the third quarter of 2021.

Of course, given how necessary restrictions had to be imposed on movement due to the fluctuating surges in Covid (19 going on 21) cases in the country, it was only a matter of time that any projections that were made earlier would not hold.

RETAIL REPORT



In light of the latest report by the Retail Group of Malaysia (RGM), the Malaysian retail sector faced a downfall of -27.8% in the third quarter in comparison with the corresponding quarter last year.

While during the same period last year retailers were allowed to operate with stringent measures for social distancing along with a set of SOP's, this year it was brought to a complete halt during the first half of Q3.

Were regulations the only factor contributing to this decline? I wouldn't say so.

Whilst conversing a lot about "new normal" and ways we can

curb the dire economic kerfuffle, a lot of businesses did not, or were not able to - pivot on time.

Given all the SOP's in place, and a big chunk of the general public shying away from large social gatherings or crowds in order to stay safe, the majority of shoppers' traffic has moved to the online space, hence reducing "impulse buying" a lot.

Walking around the malls you get to see a lot of things that you wouldn't otherwise be seeing and buying on a whim. When you shop online, you usually search for exactly what you need and rarely respond to ads.

And if you belong to the

RETAIL REPORT

unfortunately fortunate bunch of people who have been slapped with a pay cut, then you probably can't afford to do more than window shopping, even if the window is a virtual one.

According to the report by RGM, sales in departmental stores and supermarkets fell on their knees with a growth (!) rate of -41.9% during Q3 of 2021, only slightly higher than the same period in 2020.

On the contrary, mini-marts, convenience stores and cooperatives have experienced a slight increase in sales, becoming the best performing retail sub-sector during the quarter.

The worst fate by far belongs to the fashion and fashion accessories sub-sectors, followed by that of children and baby products. I'm not going to give you a heart attack by mentioning the numbers in this instance, but there are words of hope from experts who believe both sub-sectors will at least have some buds and tiny flowers in the fourth quarter, if not fruits.

Given the holiday season approaching us (Christmas and Chinese New Year), sales are expected to pick up, but in my opinion, retailers have to innovate

if they want to restore any of the faded glory that existed prior to the pandemic.

Even though shopping malls have always been the biggest avenues of shopping and recreation here, the old way of shopping at malls has started changing, leaving the only scope for retailers to start pivoting to the digital space, and rewarding customers more for shopping online than offline.

Of course, it will mean that the retail workforce may become redundant, but yesterday's sales people are today's influencers, so time to start training them from that angle as well.

As for the malls, customer traffic is now at a record low, to a point where several malls around the country look abandoned. The only way to revive them is by repurposing them, and here are **5 ways to do that**.

Retail Group Malaysia (RGM) is projecting a 6% growth in Malaysia's retail sales for 2022

I'd love to know our readers' thoughts and opinions on how the retail industry can be revived in Malaysia, so if you're interested, feel free to drop a line (or 10) at raihan@adoimagazine.com.



You don't fit the diet
the Diet fits you!

