

# MARKETING

ISSUE #319 FEBRUARY 2022

WEEKENDER™



## NFT

The token that's worth a billion dollars?

**EDITOR'S NOTE**

04

# Making Rain.

*There is never a perfect moment to shine!*

I was one of the first to start the process of registering an advertising school together with some of the private art and design schools...

**COVER STORY**



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I know this idiot who lost a small chunk of money...



Celebrating Smiles To Spread Joy



f in @ mcis life

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# 06 Remember how purple always makes you smile?

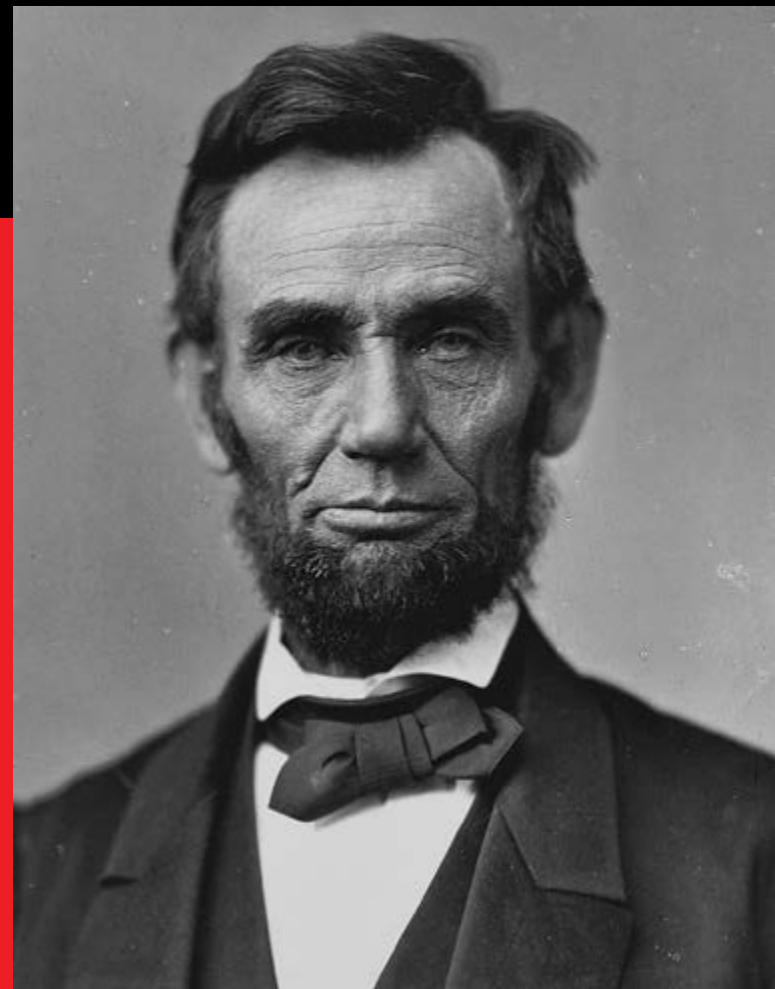


**It is all illegal!**

# 20 The entire structure of online advertising in Europe is built on a foundation of illegal...

**“The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. We must disenthral our selves, and then we shall save our country.”**

Abraham Lincoln



**“If your assignment is to change people’s minds, don’t accept the assignment.”**

Jack Trout



**“The pandemic has been an extraordinary catalyst for growth.”**

Brian Wieser - Global President of Business Intelligence at GroupM, saying global ad revenue will exceed USD1 trillion by 2025, up from its current USD766 billion.

**“The US is a de facto one-party state where the ideology of national security is sacrosanct, unsustainable debt props up the empire, and the primary business is war.”**

Chris Hedges



# MAKING RAIN.

*There is never a perfect moment to shine!*

I was one of the first to start the process of registering an advertising school together with some of the private art and design schools in the country. But being a straight arrow, I only got my official approvals from Ministry, DBKL, Bomba, etc., after almost 8 years. Enough time to kill any budding educationist thinking of saving the world..

By which time the rest in the field had already expanded their business into large buildings and were flourishing as centres of learning. And they did so without waiting for the official go ahead, in fact, some of them got their submissions even rejected a few times. But that didn't matter, because eventually rejection turned into approval.

And all's well that ends well, they say.

I learnt the brutal lesson that waiting is a disadvantage in a

system riddled with ignorance and corruption.

But this closing chapter is not about my countless failures but about some history I was fortunate enough to create along the way.

Plus at some stage you may wonder what sort of Rainmaker am I if all I do is write about others.

First off, I did eventually start my advertising school but without any financial assistance from anyone. I ran it for a few years before I went broke.

In the process, it "made rain" for 31 wonderful souls. One of them is Rodney Vincent who owns and runs Indonesia's leading film production house and already has a movie under his belt.

All my other "charges" are still shining out there and I can see them twinkling in the sky on a clear night.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

The most powerful lesson I learnt from my work with MERCY Malaysia is that I share the same sky as everyone. Including the unfortunate 7-year old girl trying to sleep on a cold mud floor in Cox's Bazar as a Rohingya refugee escaping persecution.

And she is asking herself "Why?".

Unknown to many, I was also the person company heads call when they exhaust all options from the reputable and famous head hunting companies.

It's an occasional role I got into not by my choosing, and ended up placing many leaders in our industry and even some in the region.

Another happy accident is when my good friend Sivanathan Krishnan started his media company. It was called Tapper in the beginning.

However, after a few chilled ones at a watering hole in Section 14 PJ, I convinced him that Trapper was a better option.

Trapper Media Group is one of the country's leading media communications conglomerates today. But helping in the opening of a global ad agency network office

in Malaysia was probably the biggest feather in my turban.

After a few rounds of talking to the usual international boys, the right chemistry eventually gave birth to M&C Saatchi in Malaysia 18 years ago.

In the process, realising a lifelong dream for my favourite couple Shaz and Lara.

Currently, I am helping an old friend of mine, media mogul Dato' Hussamuddin Yaacob with RasuahBusters, a national anti-corruption movement which started last year.

Till my next book, I wish you peace, love and all the happiness that life brings.

Let it rain.



\* This article is taken from the book *Rainmaker: Making brands and people famous and furious for three decades*. To get your copies, email [ruby@adoimagazine.com](mailto:ruby@adoimagazine.com). Copyright © 2021 Sledgehammer Communications (M) Sdn Bhd.

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## SMILE WITH #MYSENYUM



Celebrating Smiles To Spread Joy



# Remember how purple always makes you smile?

Since late December 2021, commuting across the country has become interesting for motorists with the surprising appearance of purple billboards on highways and roads in major cities across Peninsular Malaysia.

Bearing the single phrase of '#MySenyum Detik Keriangan Bersama' and a website address, the bright purple billboards are part of a new marketing campaign by MCIS Life with a powerful underlying message – a

reminder for all Malaysians to smile.

MCIS Life is here to give you the best reason to smile - to make others happy. In the spirit of #PeopleHelpingPeople, MCIS Life has just launched the #MySenyum social media contest starting in Jan 2022 in an effort to spread happiness amongst fellow Malaysians.

In the toughest of times, such as the one we are going through right now tackling



## SMILE WITH #MYSENYUM

the aftermath of the floods that literally washed the smiles off our faces and while the pandemic morphed into something worse, bending our 'normal' along with it, smiles from you and your loved ones could be the source of strength and perseverance for our fellow Malaysians.

In this pursuit of smiling away our fears and uncertainties, MCIS Life, Winner of the CSR Initiative of the Year award for Malaysia at the Insurance Asia Awards 2021, launched the #MySenyum contest. The 6 weeks long contest kicked off on January 28th, 2022 and will end on March 13th, 2022.

A simple yet timely campaign, #MySenyum aims to gather all Malaysians on Instagram and Facebook, to showcase photos of their smiles and messages to bring positivity and good vibes back to the hearts of the thousands of Malaysians going through troubled times.

MCIS Life is setting up #MySenyum to be the happiest nationwide campaign by encouraging all Malaysians to come on board and bring joy to the lives of others across the country.

Embrace the new year with a smile, join us in lifting up the spirit of fellow Malaysians.

#MySenyum Hadiah Utama

**RM1,500**  
X 20 PEMENANG

#MySenyumFilter

**RM250**  
X 16 PEMENANG

Cabutan Bertuah Mingguan

**RM200**  
X 30 PEMENANG

Official MCIS Life

mcis LIFE  
member of Sanlam group

# CONTEST GUIDE

Submit your entries on Facebook or Instagram accompanied with the campaign's hashtags and don't forget to tag us!



Use the campaign's Instagram **AR filter** to submit a photo/GIF/Video



Write a caption of what the smile means to you in approximately 15 words or less and

include hashtags #MCISLife #PeopleHelpingPeople #MySenyum, for AR filter entries add #MySenyumFilter



Like and follow us at @mcislifemy on **Facebook** and **Instagram**



Submit your entry (photo or 15-second video) on Facebook or Instagram OR

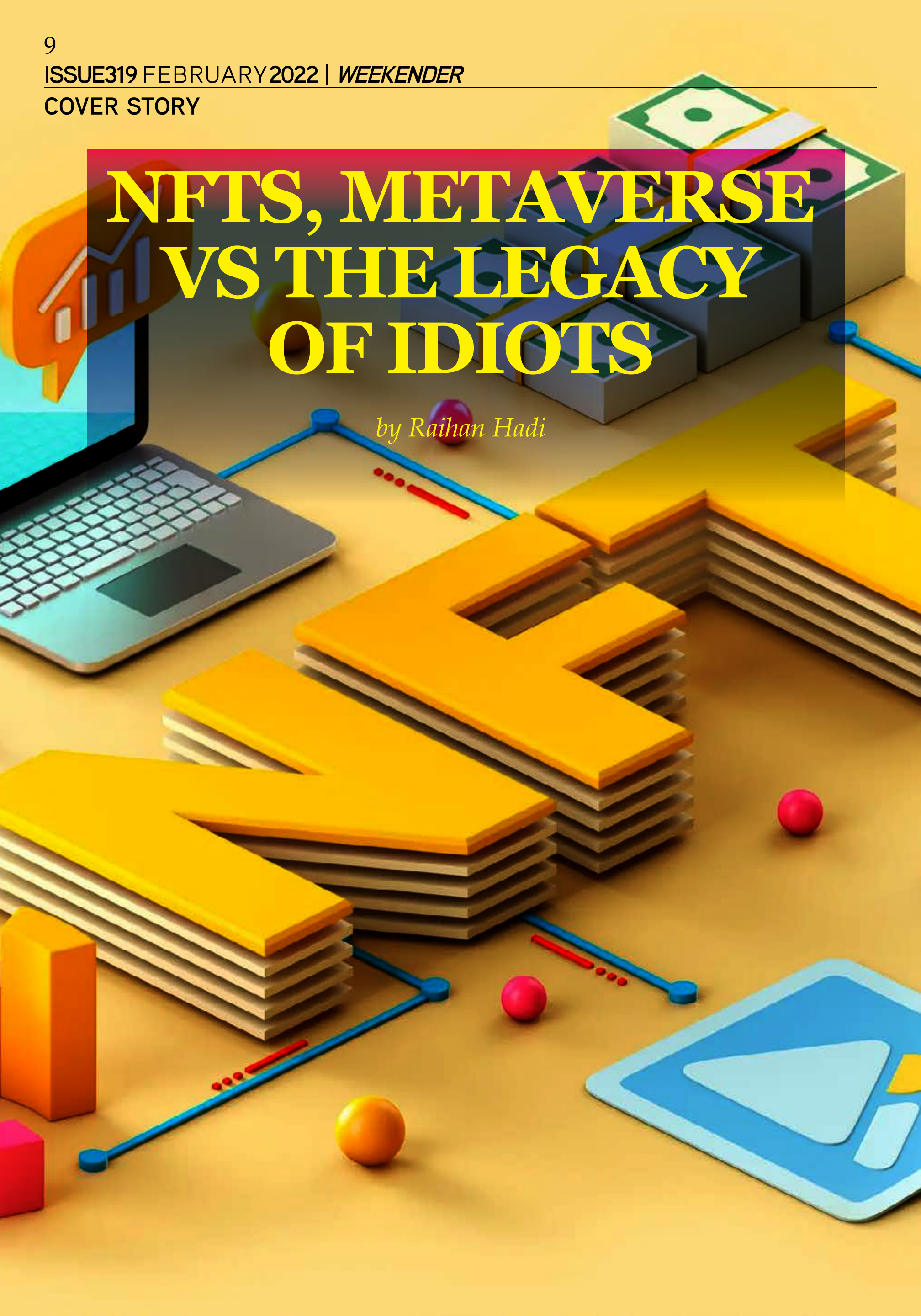


Fill up the official #MySenyum **Google Form** to complete your submission



# NFTS, METAVERSE VS THE LEGACY OF IDIOTS

*by Raihan Hadi*



## COVER STORY

I know this idiot who lost a small chunk of money last week trying his luck with NFTs for the very first time.

Long story short, some of his friends told him he could sell his artistic talent as NFTs in the form of artwork and start earning right away, and he jumped at the potential opportunity.

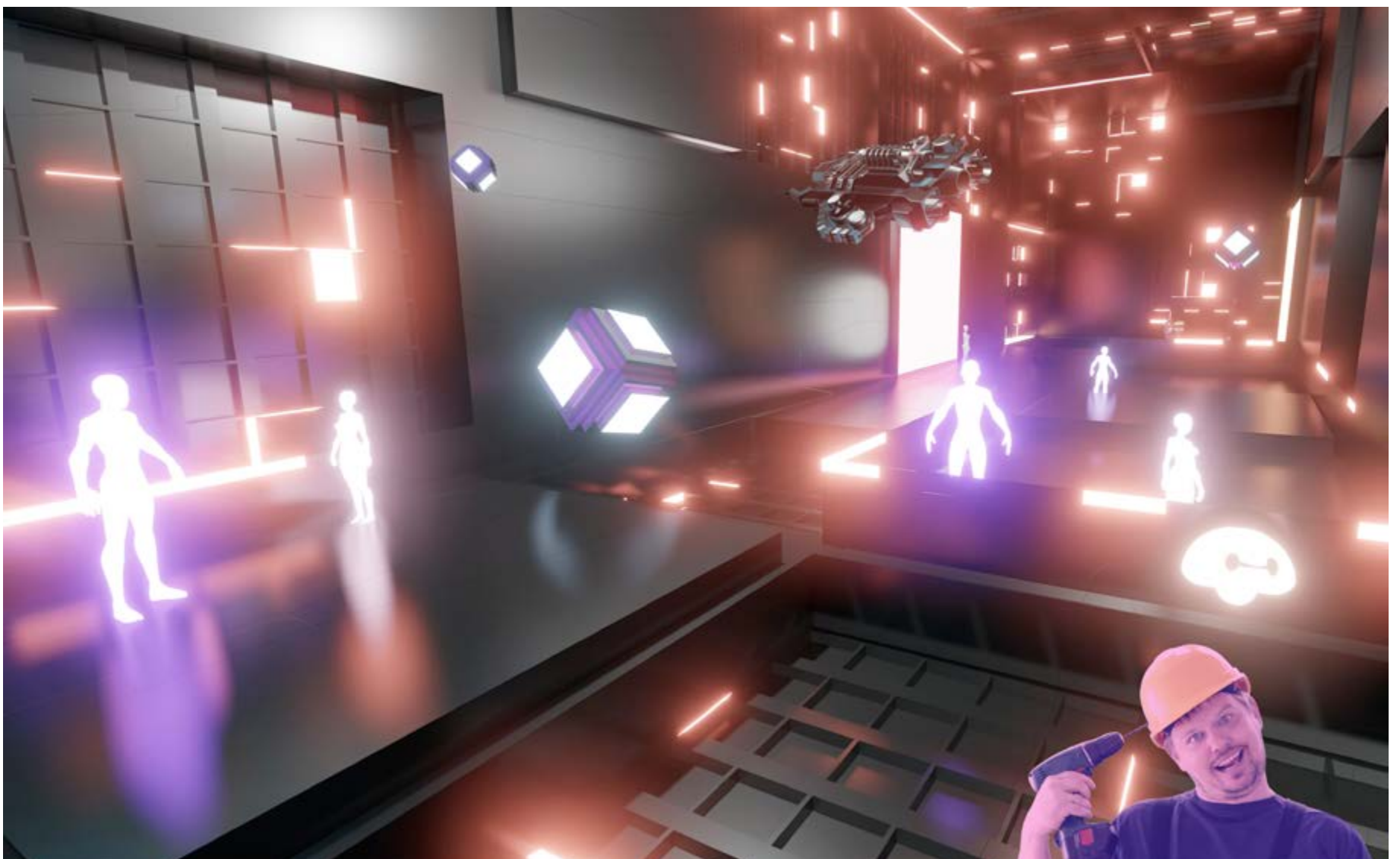
He forgot that he's a noob, tried transferring some crypto from an existing platform to one preferred by the NFT platform, and once his withdrawal was approved he received his first slap - the new platform doesn't accept the particular mode he

used to transfer his funds, and now they're in a limbo, and unless the new platform initiates a transfer back to the original, there's nothing else that can be done.

The idiot in the story is yours truly, the certified noob trying to access life in the Metaverse.

Yes I've had a hiccup at the outset of my journey, but I'm sure I'm not alone, there are other idiots out there.

Thing is, and genuine curiosity this is coming straight from idiot extraordinaire himself - is this whole digital economy and coagulation of virtual realities really a safe space yet?



## COVER STORY

I understand that the people who are already playing in it and earning more than enough to feed Somalia, and it is the creators of the game who are the biggest advocates of the space and the benefits it supposedly brings (like duh?), but is it for the mainstream peeps? Or do we need to start like my idiot friend, lose some money to limbo, and find our own way?

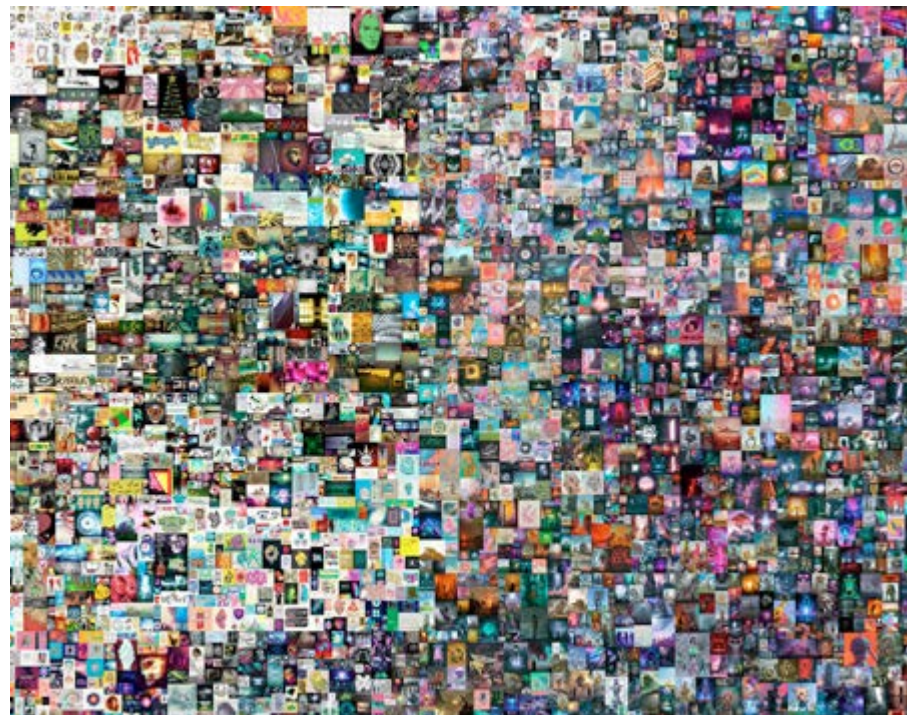
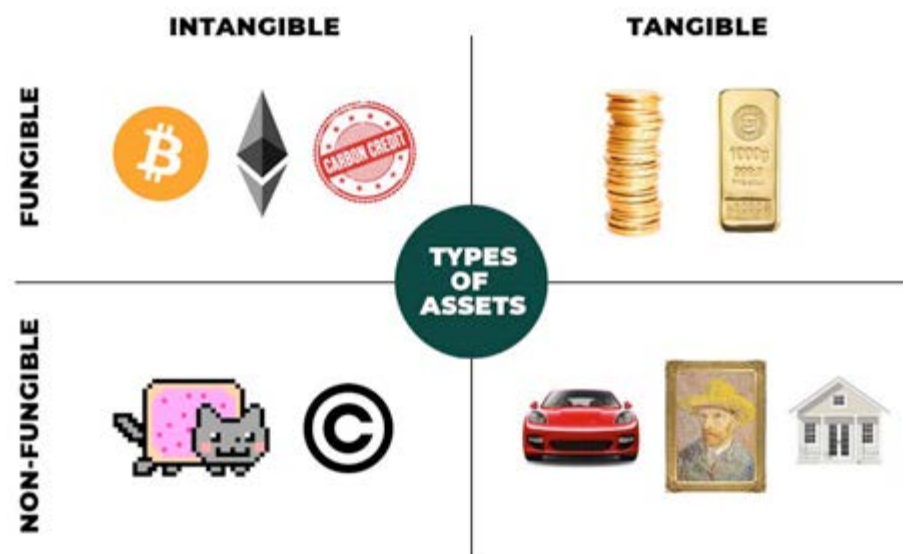
Another question I've been basing some research on since the incident is - are the digital assets protected for real?

From a layman's point of view, technical details of NFTs aside, putting artwork, for instance, on the blockchain is similar to listing them in a catalog for an auction. It sorta kinda adds a level of certainty about the work in consideration. And it goes without saying that copies of a digital image or video are perfect replicas of each other, it is impossible to distinguish them.

## BUT WHAT IS A BUYER OF AN NFT REALLY GETTING?

Bear with me while I try to explain it to myself out loud for a bit - due to technical shortcomings, blockchain records

## ...ARE THE DIGITAL ASSETS PROTECTED FOR REAL?



cannot really store actual images, hence even while tech "gurus" are trying to influence us noobs to get into the scene through the popular NFT platforms, the platforms use a shortcut to publish artwork in the form of a mere link or, if they're a bit fancier, then a mathematical compression of it.

## COVER STORY



*Artwork by Mike Winkelmann*

So a buyer is actually buying an artwork that lies in some website owned by god knows who or what, basically making it impossible for said buyer to know whether it's an original or not.

Mind you! Just because an NFT artwork isn't a Da Vinci or a Picasso or a Van Gogh, doesn't mean that it's value is negligible. "Everydays: The First 5,000 Days," a piece of NFT artwork by Mike Winkelmann, better known as Beeple, joined the rankings of the likes of Picasso, Rothko, van Gogh and Monet as one of



the most expensive art pieces sold at an auction in 2021 - for a whopping \$69.3 million! Nowhere near the Mona Lisa (US\$ 870 million at the moment), I know, but not bad either eh?

As the mainstream interest in digital collectible items have surged, celebrities, sports teams, musicians, video game makers and even Marvel comics have joined the NFT crusade. If they're not waiting, then what's stopping idiots like me?

## COVER STORY



...IS THERE  
REALLY A  
POSSIBILITY  
FOR PEOPLE TO  
COMPLETELY  
TRUST THESE  
PLATFORMS  
EVER?

### ONE WORD - TRUST.

If in the last 18 years, someone as popular, innovative (not exactly my words), and as creepy as Zuckie boy hasn't been able to establish a speck of trust with people through one of the largest social platforms in the universe, to a point where even their pivoting to the metaverse involved them **stealing their new name from another company**, is there really a possibility for people to completely trust these platforms ever?

I mean yes you will find

an idiot like me among every group of ten, but in general, especially the younger generations of today understand what's what and who's pulling a BS on them and who isn't.

Coming back to the instance where Le Idiot lost his money whilst doing a simple transfer from one platform to another, and now patiently awaits for the latter platform to kindly return his money to its original location for over ten days now, how much can anyone actually trust a system that's not so transparent after all.

## COVER STORY



## WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF THE METAVERSE?

Listen, the topic has just become the hottest one, still as fresh as the eggs I bought this morning.

Based on what history tells us, anything new in the digital or virtual world needs to go through its trial and error phase, in addition to beta testing and all that fancy stuff.

And only when a few years have gone by and the hype has cooled down a bit, we eventually see the true use of the product, and it won't be any different in this case either.

Moreover, most governments around the world haven't

given their thumbs up to cryptocurrencies yet simply because their officials haven't figured out ways to steal it yet, so mass adoption and use will take time.

Yes, you can begin by trying things out with VR versions of games like the good old Minecraft and No Man's Sky, or even a more immersive experience such as the Lexus Virtual Drive on Android or iOS.

The key is to always get a hang of things before jumping into the ocean completely.

And in case you are a fellow idiot, do what I did, a few punches never really hurt anyone.



# THE WRITTEN BRIEF AND THE UNSPOKEN AGENDA

There's reading, and there's reading between the lines.

There's hearing, and there's hearing what isn't said.

Counsellors know this.

Married people know this.

People working for govt ministers know this.

What about those of us in advertising?

It's a given that most people can't communicate clearly.

Most of us don't know how to clearly express what we want.

We use half sentences or long words or beat around the proverbial bush.

That's probably why studies say people who swear are more honest.

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Because they seemingly don't care what you think, and don't bother couching their thoughts in polite language.

And because we think that deep inside, people are angry and frustrated and are simply 'letting it all out'.

But I digress. And no, this doesn't mean we should swear more.

Writing down what's needed is easy.

Figuring out what the boss really wants is not always so clear cut.

Most times, the boss herself isn't able to describe what she wants in plain language.

Understanding the unspoken agenda starts with understanding your audience.

In every organization, there are 3 layers of management: Junior, Middle and Senior.

Each layer manages different things.

Junior management is mostly technical management.

Middle management is mostly project management.

Senior management is mostly relationship management.

**... Don't expect to hear the same thing during briefings...**

Different levels want to hear different things.

Junior management: "How can I get the work done on time?"

Middle management: "How do I meet my KPI? What does the boss expect?"

Senior management: "How do I plan for the next 5/ 10/ 15 years? Tell me something I haven't heard before."

Don't expect to hear the same thing during briefings.

Junior management will tell you what is wanted, and when.

Middle management tell you why it's wanted.

Senior management want to know how your ideas can help grow/ expand the business.

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# ... Great ideas don't die because of the quality of the idea. Or because clients didn't have the courage or foresight to buy the work...

When it comes to meetings, the bigger the title, the less time they have.

Junior management can set aside about 2 hours or more.

Middle management has about 1 hour or less.

Senior management can spare maybe 10 mins, depending on your level of seniority.

Nothing personal, it's just business.

End day, we all want to sell great ideas.

Great ideas don't die because of the quality of the idea.

Or because clients didn't have the courage or foresight to buy the work.

Sometimes it's because we present ideas that call for organizational restructuring to juniors who can't make a decision on these things.

Or technical issues to senior management who'll wonder why you're bothering them with trivialities.

Most times it's because we present the same deck the same way to different management levels.

We can be so focused on the end customer we forget about the customer in front of us.

We give up late nights, and weekends searching for that elusive idea only to give in during presentations.

We can easily spend weeks 'polishing' our deck but find it hard to deliver a cut down version for the CEO who only has 10 minutes.

A great presentation must be tailor made for its audience.

As you present up the org chart: The bigger the office, the thinner the deck.

To junior management, tell them, "This is a great idea. It meets the brief, follows the CI

**BORDERLESS**

and can be done within the time frame and within budget.”

To middle management, “Here’s the thinking that led to the idea. It’s on strategy, doable and will meet your KPI.”

To senior management, “The junior and middle teams have ok-ed the work. Here’s how it will help grow market share/ reposition the competition/ take your company to the next level.”

Of course, there are many variables that determine the outcome of a presentation.

Then again, managing variables is the unspoken agenda of all great presentations.

This reminds me of an old joke about clients.

Three ideas were presented.

The first idea was great but requires time and money to execute.

The second idea was brilliant but calls for operational adjustments.

The third idea was absolutely outstanding and can potentially transform the industry.

Which idea did the client buy?

The cheapest idea.

Spend time with your clients.

## ... If you don't like your clients, why are they your clients in the first place?

Not all will welcome this but that doesn't mean you can't get to know them as a person.

Make the effort because you genuinely like them and not because it will advance your career.

(If you don't like your clients, why are they your clients in the first place?)

Just make sure your unspoken agenda isn't an ulterior motive.

*Written by Edward Ong and Mark Fong. One is a Creative Director who works closely with clients. The other is a Creative Director turned client.*



**APPIES ASIA PACIFIC PAST WINNER**

**Deborah Goldingham,**  
APPIES Asia Pacific Presenter  
for Gold winning MasterCard  
campaign “Road to Milan”

When the marketing concept was first discussed with our country manager of Vietnam, my first words were; this will be a game changer for the market. After launch, it was a game changer for the region.

Not only did the program deliver business results, but demonstrated the power of using the brand to drive business performance. When you understand who you are talking to and what they care about, being able to bring those components together is priceless.

Since winning the award, the power of great minds (agency, product, management, etc) working together for one common goal has been referenced multiple times by me over the years. Key lessons learned, keep your goals simple, know who you are talking to and what they care about, make sure you deliver a solution, not a product first; and then invite the best minds to have a seat and a voice at the table to craft the story for the presentation at the APPIES APAC Awards was



CLICK TO WATCH THE VIDEO

Campaign:  
**The Road To Milan,**  
MasterCard Vietnam by  
Digital Arts Network (DAN),  
Singapore.

an enriching... experience that strengthened client relationship while setting stage for future agency representation.

“I’m now in a role helping to change lives by understanding the needs and motivations of human capital. At a time where skilled humans are one of the most in demand natural resources on the planet right now, I will once again be looking to make sure marketing can be a game changer.”

Submit your entries for  
The APPIES Asia Pacific NOW

 **THE**  
**APPIES**  
2020-2022  
ASIA - PACIFIC  
MARKETING CAMPAIGNS AWARDS



# It is all illegal!

The entire structure of online advertising in Europe is built on a foundation of illegal tracking. That was the ruling recently by the enforcement arm of the GDPR.

Two weeks ago, the data protection authorities of the European Union ruled that the “consent pop-ups” -- those horrifying notices that ask you incomprehensible questions about accepting cookies every time you go to a website -- are illegal. Here’s the full story.

Almost five years ago, the EU passed something called the

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) which was aimed at protecting citizens’ privacy from the abuses of the data collection industry. The GDPR set certain standards for collecting and using online data, including the activities of online advertisers.

In order to comply with GDPR, advertisers had their trade association, the deceitful and disreputable IAB Europe, come up with a comedy classic called the “Transparency & Consent Framework” (TCF) which *they pretended inoculated advertisers from actually complying*

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*with GDPR.* The TCF is the bogus justification for what became those idiotic consent pop-ups.

This week, the data protection authorities ruled that the TCF is total bullshit and illegal. They ruled that it...

- ... does not keep personal data secure, as required by GDPR
- ... does not properly collect personal consent
- ... has not established a lawfully valid “legitimate interest” in collecting information
- ... fails to be transparent about what it does with peoples’ data
- ... fails to see to it that data is processed in accord with GDPR guidelines
- ... fails to respect the GDPR requirement of “data protection by design”

Kudos to the ICCL (Irish Council for Civil Liberties) for bringing this important case before the EU authorities. And a Nobel Prize for something to Dr. **Johnny Ryan** who relentlessly pursues personal privacy rights on behalf of all of us. You can watch Dr. Johnny talk to news broadcasters about this ruling [here](#).

The next question is, what will this mean to the adtech industry?

**... Google and everyone else in the online ad industry are required to burn all the data they’ve collected illegally...**

As we know, historically the adtech industry just sticks up its middle finger at regulators and does whatever the hell it wants. The regulators think they run things but **their pathetic ineptitude and timidity** has allowed the adtech industry to run roughshod over them and the public since the day GDPR was enacted.

One consequence of this ruling is that Google and everyone else in the online ad industry are required to burn all the data they’ve collected illegally. Google will comply with that when refrigerators fly.

The IAB Europe now has six months to correct the gross illegality of its TCF nonsense. What will it do? My guess, it will come up with some new

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horseshit that will take years to litigate while the adtech industry goes merrily along screwing the public. As usual, I hope I'm wrong.

The adtech industry, in particular Google and Amazon, have far too much money to give a flying shit about the chump change fines that regulators hand out for their criminal activities. To them it's just a cost of doing business. Facebook doesn't even bother to abide by TCF -- they answer to no one. Nothing will change until someone goes to jail.

The irony in all this is that just as the IAB in the US is about to spam the world with *its* version of TCF, the EU regulators put a bullet in it.

In the U.S. there are no laws against anything. The closest thing we have to regulation in the corrupt online ad industry is something called the CCPA (California Consumer Protection Act.) It is based largely on the GDPR and as far as anyone can tell has never protected anyone from anything (it will be replaced next year by another bowl of alphabet soup called the CPRA.)

The IAB in the US has taken the IAB Europe's illegal TCF formula and applied it as their bogus compliance with

CCPA. They've also convinced the clowns, con men, and collaborators in the ANA, 4As, and big brands to implement the now discredited TCF under a new bullshit name, "Global Privacy Platform." Yeah, right.

Big picture: The arrogance of the tech and marketing industries in the US is so immense that the actions of regulators mean close to nothing. What is the most likely effect the ruling this week will have on data abuse in the U.S.? Counting backwards, what comes after zero?

Have I mentioned that nothing will change until someone goes to jail?

*Bob Hoffman is author of "Advertising For Skeptics", "BadMen: How Advertising Went From A Minor Annoyance To A Major Menace" and several other books about advertising.*



AGENCY FAMILY TREE

GLOBAL 2022 | www.r3tree.com

Main table listing agency groups and their members. Columns include Agency Group, Revenue, and Member Agency Name. Rows are categorized by group: WPP, Omnicom, Publicis Groupe, Dentsu, Interpublic, Hakuhodo, Havas, Stagwell, BlueFocus, Deloitte, and Independents & Other.

AGENCY TREE REVENUE ESTIMATES
All revenue is estimated based on FY2021 company reports, open-source data and R3 research insights
Japanese agencies are based on Calendar FY2021
Conversion to US\$ uses the average exchange rate for 2021

- AGENCY GROUP
INTEGRATED CREATIVE
BRANDING & IDENTITY
CRM
DIGITAL CREATIVE
EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING
RETAIL/SHOPPER/E-COMMERCE
DIGITAL MEDIA
PR
RESEARCH
SOCIAL MEDIA
OTHER SERVICES

ABOUT R3
R3 is a leader in global, regional, and local consulting on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of marketers and their agencies.
We work with twelve of the world's top twenty marketers including Unilever, Samsung, Nike, Mastercard, Colgate, Procter & Gamble, BMW, L'Oréal, and McDonald's.

DRIVING TRANSFORMATION FOR MARKETERS & THEIR AGENCIES



**The first order  
after the last order.**