

# MARKETING

ISSUE #320 FEBRUARY 2022

WEEKENDER™

## WHAT HAPPENED TO MARKETING INTUITION?

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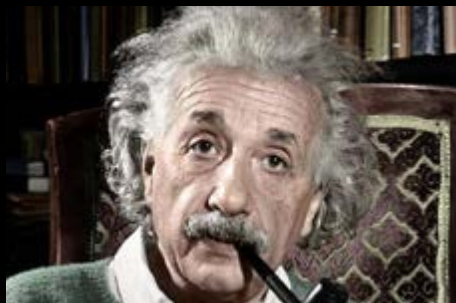
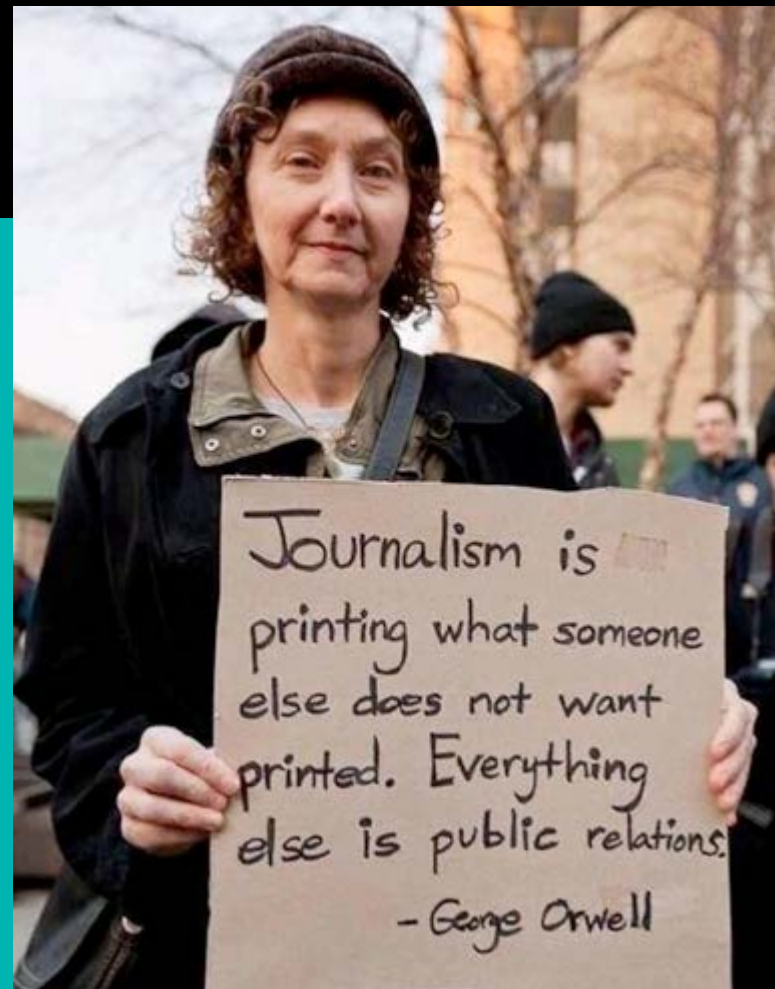
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# Say What

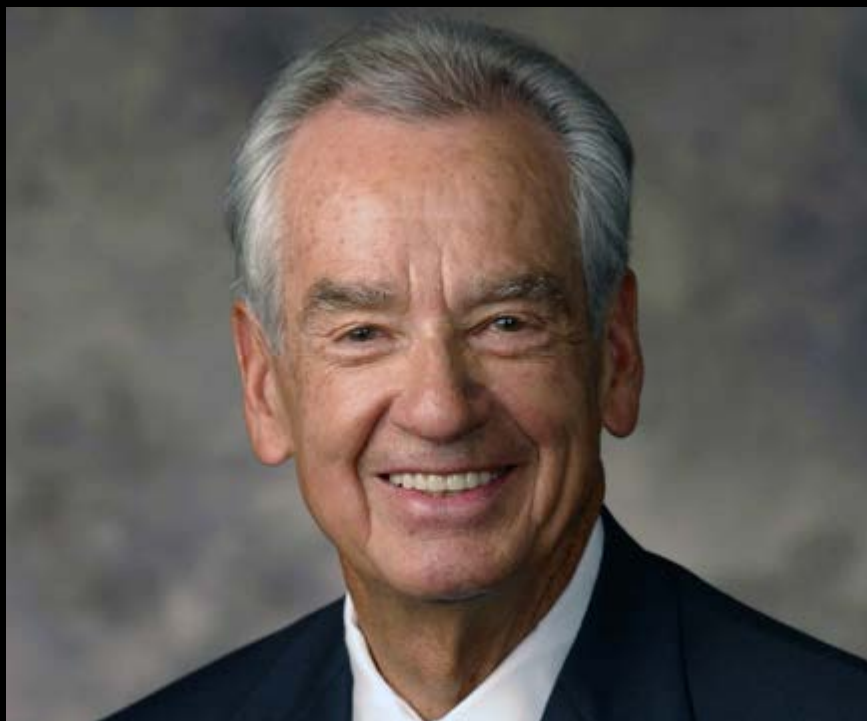
**“All the papers that matter live off their advertisements, and the advertisers exercise an indirect censorship over news.”**

George Orwell



**“I am thankful for all of those who said NO to me. It’s because of them I’m doing it myself.”**

Albert Einstein



**“Give up being perfect, for being authentic. Give up the need to be perfect, for the opportunity to be authentic.”**

Hal Elrod

**“Your beliefs don’t make you a better person, your actions do.”**

Zig Ziglar



## EDITOR'S NOTE

# WHAT DID YOU DO IN 2021?

Recently, my friend Eric Wong who is the Chief Marketing and Partnerships Distribution Officer for Prudential Assurance Malaysia asked me a question that gave me reason to pause.

So Ham, what did you do last year? In an immediate response, I could only tell him about my work for the magazine, the CMO Awards and the few lunches I had with good friends.

But when I got home, I realised each of you probably did much more last year than you give yourselves credit for.

I am sure it was not only time to reflect with work-from-home, but also a chance to define your productivity level.

So in the same spirit as how the PM of New Zealand reeled off her achievements in a 2-minute [video](#), I thought I will share with you how 2021 worked out for me.

I only need 53 seconds...

I did 8 spots for anti-rasuah

movement [RasuahBusters](#), helped raise money for MERCY Malaysia and applied my creativity to assist the Sikh-driven cause helping flood-hit families recently. We also kept our momentum up with the WEEKENDER e-magazine on Fridays and our office finally embraced digital transformation, whatever that means, by becoming humans working at the speed of light. And oh yes, I wrote my first book. But more importantly, all this was made possible because of the many talented friends I collaborated with plus my amazing staff.

So Eric, there you have it. Now, onwards with 2022.




# Are marketers forsaking gut instinct for the data game?



We are all too familiar with the explosion of data, analytics and a “method to the madness”. Is this trend towards tech a signal that the value of human instinct and understanding is secondary in the business of marketing?

Data is information (but we all know Info Scientist sounds boring!). It takes a long time to become a data scientist;

becoming a human is much faster. Data interpretation has to happen before data adoption. Intellect and Instinct equals Informed Intuition.

But has marketing surrendered itself to complex digital marketing ecosystems (which tout to be simple) compromising marketers into a safe haven for safe thinking and sure bets?

## COVER STORY

We ask Malaysian marketing and media leaders...



**... it didn't help that over the last decade, KPI of marketers moved from brand building...**

**Chanchal Chakrabarty**  
**CEO - GroupM Malaysia**  
**President - Media Specialists Association**

In the pre and early digital era, data used to be brand tracks, copy persuasion scores and Reach/GRP data guiding marketers and helping justify their decisions. But in the era of digital and 'big data', with real-time and at times too much data available, it probably became a

multi-verse obsession for many, as they dived into a plethora of unique IDs, geo-signals and walled garden fed data points. And it didn't help that over the last decade, KPI of marketers moved from brand building, brand health, brand awareness or all things brand to be focused on lower funnel business outcomes of leads, conversions, sales metrics, market share, etc.

To add to that our new age consumers with access to multiple devices and platforms and their behaviour matching this multiplicity changed the age-old definitions of consumer journeys, throwing up challenges the marketing community had never faced before, which was also one of the reasons why the overdependence on data happened.

However with the upcoming deprecation of cookies, a renaissance of cohort, contextual, psychographic based approach is expected and probably then it could also lead to intuitions, instincts, gut making a re-appearance, provided these bones haven't gone numb from non-usage all these years!

## COVER STORY

**Abdul Sani Abdul Murad  
Group Chief Marketing Officer  
RHB Banking Group**

It is critical for us to humanize marketing to build stronger relationships with customers and have more influence over their purchase decisions. While marketers may be drawn by the seduction of building predictive algorithms based on data they could possibly extract from a “sophisticated” digital marketing ecosystem, all this can never replace the art of human persuasion.

Digital tech stacks and big data cannot replace human intuition, decision making, creativity and the experience of romancing the customer. Tech tools are only enablers for marketers to court customers better.

However, data does allow for risk mitigation, getting rid of blind spots, questioning historical ways of doing things and for providing context to what consumers are doing now and how they are engaging with the brand.

But marketers need to constantly remind themselves not to be overzealous by the digital and data verse because



**... Digital tech stacks and big data cannot replace human intuition, decision making, creativity and the experience of romancing the customer...**

they risk being stuck in the reverse instead, turning into zombie marketers and scaring customers away because the brand just lost its soul for not treating its customers as humans.



**... The reality is that we need technology tools to process the mass of data but it needs the combination of marketing intuition...**

**Sutapa Bhattacharya  
General Manager - Strategic  
Communications & Branding  
Tenaga Nasional Berhad**

In an increasingly complex, VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity) and demanding business environment, marketers look to the huge amount of data of consumer understanding at their disposal to make more informed marketing decisions and effective strategies that can lead to the desired consumer behaviour change.

The reality is that we need technology tools to process the mass of data but it needs



the combination of marketing intuition to appreciate the deeper significance of the data and to find the most creative solutions towards successful marketing.

## COVER STORY



**Melati Abdul Hai**  
**Vice President & Chief**  
**Marketing Officer**  
**McDonald's Malaysia**

I remember a prominent leader in a corporation I used to work in saying “It’s when you don’t know why you are doing something, that’s when you need numbers”, and in those exact words!

Although that was many years ago, it has stuck with me ever since. Yes, we need measurements. Yes, we need data. Yes, we need KPIs. But all that has a time and place.

**... no amount of data can tell you how to bring about a deep sense of emotion and belonging to a brand...**

Stories sell. Connections sell more. Emotions last. And no amount of data can tell you how to bring about a deep sense of emotion and belonging to a brand. Your intuition may help, but your love and understanding of the customers as humans with need and desires, first and foremost, is the clincher.



**Chan May Ling**  
**Chief Marketing Officer**  
**KFC Malaysia**

For many years, marketers have often debated the balance of science vs magic.

Today's world further complicates it where most industries have shifted towards data driven marketing.

Marketers easily fall into a sure and safe trap of using data to justify their judgements. Often we are seen scurrying to build hypotheses and overtest concepts in order to ensure the campaign drives velocity and impact, and the exercise can become overtly surgical and inconclusive. Imagine a world where marketers will only take the

**... Data should be used to affirm trends, whilst the occasional creative bravery is needed to build brands...**



leap with benchmark test scores, then campaigns such as injured colourful creatures (Dumb Ways to Die), yellow creatures following their master (Digi's Yellow man) or the abbreviated vulgarity (FCUK) wouldn't have made it to the big screen and into customers' hearts. Data should be used to affirm trends, whilst the occasional creative bravery is needed to build brands.



**Santharuban T Sundaram  
CEO - Advend Group of  
Companies, Etika Holdings**

Marketing intuition exists, but is scarce. Its slow but sure extinction has undoubtedly been catalyzed by the digital ecosystem. Marketers who buy media solely based on GRP aren't new, and neither are marketers who use a known figure as a brand ambassador (presumably because the said ambassador was famous enough) only to later have the ambassador's name and signature printed out on a billboard. Which begs the question, if the ambassador is

**... the thinning risk appetite, increased controls and governance, tighter KPIs being set, are all part of what marketing has become today...**

already hugely famous why the need to identify him again? In fact, I too have done the same!

While these decisions are debatable, the fact remains they aren't wrong as they are data based. The digital ecosystem today is rich in data, and allows marketers to make far more accurate decisions and deploy precise targeting, so it makes sense for marketers to use the tools that are readily available.

But I feel what has been driving risk-averse behaviour amongst marketers is not the digital explosion but the way in which corporations measure marketing success. The thinning risk appetite, increased controls and governance, tighter KPIs being set, are all part of what marketing has become today. Despite that, we still see some great work happening.

## COVER STORY

**Ben Mahmud**  
**Head of Strategy & Business**  
**Development**  
**Downstream Marketing VP**  
**Marketing Office, PETRONAS**

Tech enhances the pace of validation on our hunches and hypotheses. Hence, human instinct and understanding still play an important role in marketing e.g. creative development like ideas generation.

Validation, with analytics and metrics, helps marketers to pitch to their CEO/CFO or board members with conviction and confidence.

However, relying solely on data and jumping straight into tactics without applying the art of insights generation (i.e. connecting the dots) can be dangerous as it will lead to marketers doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

The role of digital and marketing technology is to enable us to be sharper in our diagnostic (understanding our customer behaviour), strategy development (targeting) and choosing tactics better (validating our solutions).



**... relying solely on data and jumping straight into tactics without applying the art of insights generation (i.e. connecting the dots) can be dangerous...**

## COVER STORY

... Sometimes, it is just common sense to realise there is a better way to do something. It's about giving in to that feeling within that goes, "this is right!" ...



## Bala Pomaleh CEO - Mediabrands Malaysia

We often talk about the synergy of art and science that fuses together to make magic happen. Yes, that is true and effective in many cases today.

But to me, any idea that can elevate your emotions, getting you to feel, think, act, or reminisce, will be memorable. It doesn't necessarily need analytics or data. This is how so many great campaigns of the past were born.

One stellar example locally is the P1 Potong Campaign some

years back. It was a clever ad that played cheekily on local nuances. In fact, it became such a runaway success to the point the company was acquired.

If we insist on needing proof points before every single innovation, we may soon find we have very few of them.

Sometimes, it is just common sense to realise there is a better way to do something. It's about giving in to that feeling within that goes, "this is right!"

In my opinion, a great idea is a great idea is a great idea.

## COVER STORY



**...brands still need to engage with their customers with the right message...**

**Serm Teck Choon**  
**Co-founder & CEO**  
**Antsomi Sdn Bhd**

New technology like Customer Data Platform (CDP) allows brands to understand their customers comprehensively from the customer experience and omnichannel communication standpoints. But brands still need to engage with their customers with the right message/story at the right time and the right place. Winning marketers know that crafting data-driven messages and moving their customers along the sales and conversion funnel is the way forward.

**Linda Hassan**  
**Group Chief Marketing Officer**  
**Domino's Pizza**  
**Malaysia & Singapore**

Creativity and data has to work hand in hand. Customers require an unprecedented level of engagement and personalisation, and are voting with their wallets. But if the brand exists in a world of disconnected data and ends up mistaking customers preferences with meaningless data which is not properly formatted, harmonized and cleansed that will spell disaster. My simple answer to the question of "Are data-driven decisions the only game in town?" is a No.

**... brand exists in a world of disconnected data and ends up mistaking customers preferences...**



## COVER STORY

**Datuk Lai Shu Wei**  
**Chief Marketing & Sales Officer**  
**Sime Darby Property Berhad**

We must always follow our true North - consumers. While technology has evolved rapidly, consumer's wants and needs remain. That is why insights and the understanding of consumers and their behaviours are key. The moment we understand this well, a good marketer will be able to stitch the customer journey and experience in the most seamless manner.

**... That is why insights and the understanding of consumers and their behaviours are key...**





# LET'S GO PHISHING

By Raihan Hadi

After my short lived stint with NFTs following my **crypto-transfer mishap** not too long ago, I started questioning every move I think of making in the Metaverse/NFT world.

Last year, all my social media feeds were flooded with wise people talking about how NFTs will be the talk of every town this year, and if we're not listening to what every wise person tells us about unforeseen situations at uncharted territories - what good are we?

But no wise person wrote about the one thing we should be asking ourselves the moment something as fresh as these non-fungible tokens pop out and become hot trends in the digital world - CAN IT/THEY BE STOLEN?

For a market that has grown exponentially within a year to a whopper value of \$22Bn, in a world where hackers can still afford more than groceries and rent, don't you think attempts

## NFT WORLD



**.. During last year, popular Dutch artist Lois van Baarle found more than 100 pieces of her art for sale on OpenSea, the biggest NFT marketplace in the world...**

*Image source: just-something.co*

at stealing these multi million dollars worth of art, albeit digital, will be made?

### **The truth is always out there**

As a proud and certified idiot, I thought about the matter and found evidence of NFT thefts as soon as I began my research. And it didn't even happen too long ago!

If you're one of those fancy people who in fear of becoming late adopters amongst peers started using OpenSea recently,

you may have heard of the recent theft of 250 NFTs worth \$1.7M that occurred on Saturday last week.

During last year, popular Dutch artist Lois van Baarle found more than 100 pieces of her art for sale on OpenSea, the biggest NFT marketplace in the world. The 'LOL' fact in the matter is that she wasn't the one who put those art pieces up there to sell.

Texas-based artist Aja Trier is **another victim of NFT theft**

## NFT WORLD

**.. Stealing NFTs doesn't work in the traditional sense of digital theft, it's more like scamming where the owner of the original piece is either deceived or the NFT platform is exploited...**

*Image Source:  
awesomeinventions.com*



on **OpenSea**, who found 87,000 pieces of art based on her viral work being sold on the platform. Not that her art is original either, given that the most popular ones are based on Van Gogh's *Starry Night* featuring dogs.

### How does an NFT get stolen?

Good question!

Stealing NFTs doesn't work in the traditional sense of digital theft, it's more like scamming where the owner of the original piece is either deceived or the

NFT platform is exploited.

In the most layman of terms possible (something that helps noobs like myself) - an NFT can also be considered 'stolen' if it has been taken from its original owner's website or social media account and before they could get to the marketplace so upload the property, the culprit does so, and unless and until they are reported by the original owner, they'll probably be making money off of it.

The details are quite interesting and if you want to

## NFT WORLD



**.. OpenSea itself is not an evil entity, they opened up this huge world of opportunity for the artists of the booming digital art industry to display their work...**

know more about them, rather than relying on me you can just find them [here](#).

### Who protects an artist then?

Another good question! I'm starting to like you ;)

Where there's loads of money involved, lawyers shall appear. Even though the space is relatively new, a lot of money is flying around in it, hence protection is needed for the players within the space.

There are many legal challenges surrounding the NFT world and the best source of information about them so far is [OpenGeeksLab](#), where you can find loads of information about cryptos, NFTs and the likes.

But to put it simply, where there are problems, there are always solutions.

OpenSea itself is not an evil entity, they opened up this huge world of opportunity for the artists of the booming digital art

industry to display their work in the form of digital signatures and make money from said work. If an artwork gets reported, they do investigate and take actions against culprits.

### Where do we go from here?

Like I said in my last piece, the space is still new, and by the time all the trend-loving jargon-chewing wannabes are done doing what they do (which is usually nothing), a lot of the kerfuffle will be tackled and hopefully there will be more transparency around the space.

We also need to ensure top-notch security practices, given that most of the evil overlords of the digital world care very little for it when it doesn't concern them.

With that, I bid you farewell for now, and go file a complaint on MetaMask for not getting my money back even after a month.

Adios!



# GOOGLE CON GAME: THE SEQUEL.

One thing you gotta say about Google - these guys have balls. A couple of years ago, Sundar Pichai, the ceo of Google's parent company, Alphabet, tweeted that *"privacy was at the heart of everything we do."* Try not to choke on your coffee.

This, of course, was before they reneged on their promise to end third-party cookies in Chrome.

For those with short memories, in January of 2020 Google promised it would phase

out third-party cookies. *"People shouldn't have to accept being tracked across the web..."* said Google's Director of Product Management, Ads Privacy and Trust -- Privacy?...Trust? ...Google?...is this a joke?

Well, surprise!, it turns out Mr. Trust was was not so trustworthy. Within months they changed their mind and called a do-over. In golf that's called a Mulligan. In business it's called a lie. It turns out that people *do* have to accept being

tracked across the web. This week, Google management went back to their three-card monte playbook and announced that they are going to end the current practice of allowing tracking of individuals across apps using their Android mobile operating system. When are they going to do this? Um...well, uh... *sometime*. Well, *maybe* sometime but definitely not in the next two years. But don't worry... *sometime*.

This horseshit got nice headlines and commentary in the pathetic advertising trade press (a wholly-owned subsidiary of AlphaGooMetaFace) and even received favorable coverage in major news outlets. The [NYTimes](#) wrote, "Google Plans Privacy Changes, but Promises to Not Be Disruptive."

Of course, spokesquids in the adtech industry were all hyperventilating about how thoughtful and sensitive Google is to their needs. These guys know mealy-mouth bullshit when they see it, and this was definitely their flavor of mealy-mouth bullshit.

In their new Android "privacy initiative" Google

**... In Google world, respecting privacy is always going to be awesome some day...**

is promising *absolutely nothing* except to continue their policies that enable the disreputable and [illegal](#) tracking of people across apps for at least two more years.

In Google world, respecting privacy is always going to be awesome some day. It's just never any good right now.



*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.*

A photograph of two men in a kitchen. One man, wearing a black shirt, is kissing the other man on the cheek. The second man, wearing a tan jacket and a red beanie, is smiling and holding a red and blue Tecate can. In the background, there are wooden cabinets and a countertop with more Tecate cans. The lighting is warm and intimate.

WITH FRIENDS,  
WORDS ARE JUST  
NOT ENOUGH.  
HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!

The Tecate logo, featuring a stylized eagle head above the brand name "TECATE" in a bold, blocky font, with the tagline "FOR REAL MEN." underneath.

**TECATE**  
FOR REAL MEN.