

# MARKETING

ISSUE #350 OCTOBER 2022

WEEKENDER

## Bouncing Back With New Possibilities



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# Say What

**“I am to disappear from Pahang completely.”**

The activist-turned politician said that Pahang DAP had on Oct 16 “decided to remove me from Bentong”. He also claimed that he was told that he would not be contesting any seats in Pahang.  
Wong Tack



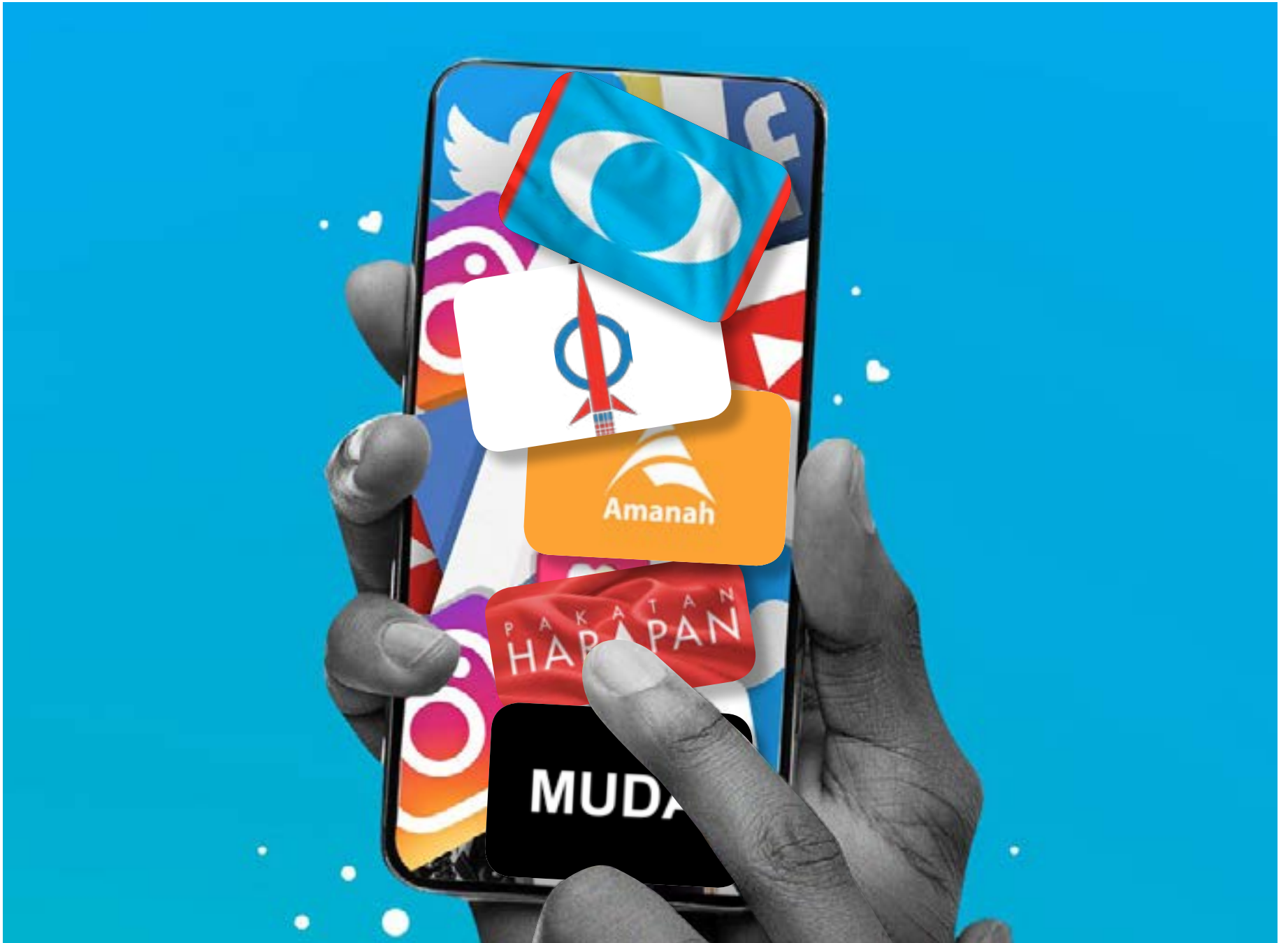
**“All previous announcements made by party leaders are just mere speculation. The official announcement will be made by myself, as President, and only I will sign the watakah for PBM in GE15.”**

Larry Sng - former Julau MP, in a Facebook post.

**“The issue over ICERD erupted because Saifuddin inserted Malaysia’s commitment in a speech that (then prime minister) Dr Mahathir Mohamad delivered at the UN General Assembly.”**

P. Waytha Moorthy





# Will BN's win in GE15 validate the death of digital as a persuasion platform?

This question has been bugging me for more than a week now.

Will BN's win mean the destruction of myths like "only the young are digital," digital advertising is "authentic and

meaningful", more importantly "consumers trust digital messaging"?

Marketers are keenly watching the election space and are looking at how political advertising and promotion are

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# ... Politicians are the worst advertisers, that's why they can never become marketing influencers...

being done on the very same platforms they use daily for their brands.

Maybe GE is not a fair comparison, but certainly food for thought.

Because if Digital is the opposition's main platform (because they've been shut out of mainstream media) then isn't the effectiveness of Digital at stake if the opposition loses?

Before I am accused of false equivalencies, yes, yes, there are a million variables here: messaging power, virality, level of spend, media planning, attention and trust deficits, overload and saturation....

Politicians are the worst advertisers, that's why they can never become marketing influencers. Their messages vary by the minute but I have noticed

one faithful habit: they read the papers regularly and if they are not featured, when they should have been, they go ballistic.

Politicians are the only ones who believe in the power of newspapers. They may have a point here...when it come to groundswell marketing.

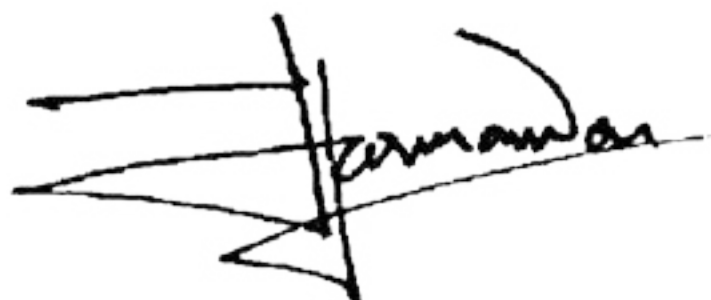
In many corridors of power, looking good in a newspaper guarantees your place in the political hierarchy. Fact!

OK, if the opposition uses only Digital and their opponents use mainstream media and also flirt with digital investing in stealth operatives (the comments section can kill any story in seconds), disguise fake news as real, and deploy memes to effect, then could one say mainstream media is more authentic?

Ok, ok, GE15 is not Do or Die for Digital.

But its time of reckoning has come.

*BTW, this issue of MARKETING Weekender is our 101th issue!*



# MOVING FORWARD WITH PRINT

BY LINCOLN YAP

Alex Yeow is the new Group CEO of Star Media Group (SMG) having taken over since March of 2021, just when the Covid-19 pandemic was beginning to



**COVER STORY**

exert its distressing influence on all and sundry - people, the government and businesses - with lay-offs, cutbacks, closures and the accompanying tumult.

So **MARKETING Magazine** sat down for an informal conversation with the man, a seasoned individual from the corporate world, to find out what his plans are for the media conglomerate as well as to find out what makes him tick.

With experience gained from corporations like Tropicana Corp Bhd, Guocoland Malaysia Bhd, Malaysian Mosaics, Lafarge Malayan Cement Bhd and Hap Seng Consolidated Bhd, and a tenure with consultancy McKinsey & Co, he came in at a time when SMG had reported

losses and was due to celebrate its 50th Anniversary.

**On the pandemic.**

So how did he cope at the beginning when the Movement Control Order was in force and many companies couldn't function as they normally did?

With SMG being listed as an essential service, a new norm kicked in and SMG's system was adjusted, allowing everyone to adapt quickly and effectively. In spite of constraints at the beginning, Alex said that it gave rise to a new way of doing things - from virtual meetings with punctuality as a natural offshoot, saving time spent on travelling, and on to outstation staff working from home as a future possibility.



*SMG celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2021*



*Alex Yeow,  
Group CEO of Star  
Media Group (SMG)*

**COVER STORY**

“Today, Star Media Group (SMG) employees are given the freedom to work flexibly, which helps make SMG an attractive workplace and preferred employer.

Even those travelling are able to work virtually - when necessary - giving rise to greater flexibility and empathy with a digital lifestyle.

In between the differing MCO periods, we were still able to go back to the market and engage with clients. And at the end of the first MCO we had our 50th Anniversary celebrations on-ground - something many appreciated after the lockdown,” Alex said.

“The pandemic was hard on businesses but it forced us to find a new direction, to re-strategise. It wasn’t all about operations - it was about the team, a new spirit and motivation. This way we could stay ahead of the curve.”

**On his current role as head of a large media organisation.**

“Coming from different industries, and from senior roles, I’ve learnt that having a good product is a fundamental requirement. The Star in itself is a great brand and one that

is well-established. However, with digital disruption and the new norm, we had to readjust The Star’s business model and strategy to maintain its value proposition and to ensure that it continues to remain relevant. If strategy and the business model doesn’t work, it’ll require a lot of hard work to make it (the business) profitable,” Alex emphasised.

“Print media had a problem when digital and social media became ubiquitous. So it comes down to strategy and the business model,” he repeated.

“That’s the first part,” Alex said. The second equally important part is the bottom fundamental - people. To believe in them and to bring out the best in them were key.

“Everyone has their strengths and weaknesses. It is easier to focus on the strength of our people and build businesses around them and complement their weaknesses, instead of trying to fit people into the wrong area of the business,” he shared.

**On the future direction of SMG**

“For the short term, sustainability of the group

**COVER STORY**

depends on innovative marketing strategies, improved targeting, and accurate segmentation to boost revenue. However, long term sustainability of our media business is reliant on having quality content.

Alex said that if you showed the client - advertisers - exactly where their ads would be directed, and how, this proposition would be an added value for them.

After all, in the media industry, he had to be always conscious of his responsibility to all stakeholders. There are, essentially, the shareholders who look to a return on their investment, and partners, clients, employees and the society. To each of these we anchor ourselves differently," he shares.

**On his idea of management**

Alex believes in people. He says he's convinced that SMG comprises a lot of good people across the different areas of business, with the right mindset that makes a good team and able to bring in the best results possible.

At SMG, there is a core executive team that comprises of Alex, along with four other

**... Long term sustainability of our media business is reliant on having quality content...**

individuals who have vast experiences and in-depth knowledge of the media business: Sam Au, Group Chief Financial Officer; Esther Ng, Chief Content Officer; Lydia Wang, Chief Revenue Officer and Terence Raj, Senior General Manager for Group People.

Stemming from this group are the heads of the various departments and sections that run the day-to-day business and operations of SMG.

## COVER STORY

***Sam Au****Group Chief Financial Officer****Esther Ng****Chief Content Officer****Lydia Wang****Chief Revenue Officer****Terence Raj****Senior General Manager, Group People*

“When I first came to SMG, a lot of people had left due to various factors so there was a need to motivate people. There were two motivating factors that we focused on. The first was job security to grant them peace of mind. This in turn allowed them

to focus on their tasks at hand. When they are able to focus on their work, they will be open to accept new challenges and develop new working styles.

Secondly, rewards for jobs well done. Ultimately, with better productivity comes

# ... SMG comprises a lot of good people across the different areas of business...

better results. When we come together as a team to produce results that bring returns to our shareholders, we are then able to benefit and share the rewards.”

## On the ESG question.

“At SMG, we don’t say a lot about ESG. We don’t say we do a lot for the environment but we can play a role in influencing others.” Alex said that as a media company, SMG is able to act as an enabler for other companies in their own ESG efforts.

With periodic pullouts focusing on ESG, environmental and the like, he pointed out that companies, associations and other interested parties would wish to associate themselves with content highlighting pertinent issues that they care about. They can then also utilise our platform

as a means of highlighting their own achievements and efforts in the ESG space.

## New products

SMG is also focused on evolving new, relevant products to meet market needs. The latest, launched on 20th October, is a Malay language newspaper called Majoriti 7. It focuses on an upmarket lifestyles for the urban Malay segment.

Alex was particularly pleased of this as they had managed to get clients on board without any of the usual niceties advertisers expect - like circulation or expected circulation, no mock up, no content preview or demographics. The product is well received by clients who want to promote their brands directly to their target audiences.

## COVER STORY



**...Our vision is to build a cohesive, resilient and highly motivated team...**



“How did we do that? We focused on the unique positioning of the product and audience segmentation. Once that was in place, we then focused on the client, the advertisers. The main value proposition is around content that brands can associate with, with topics such as lifestyle, food,

and fashion. At the moment, there’s no equivalent product in the market,” he smiled.

Aside from Majoriti 7, there are a number of other products in the pipeline for SMG, all tuned to adapt to the new digital era, instead of following the traditional way of doing the media business.

“I foresee more consolidation in the business. It’s a question of the last man standing - for those still there, there will be greater profitability.”

“So ultimately, our vision is to build a cohesive, resilient and highly motivated team - one that can do any business,” he declared.

## COVER STORY



Alex Yeow is a believer in people. Coming to SMG, his management style of interacting with people of all levels works well. Being able to entrust the operational work to his team, he is able to focus on strategising.

In his interactions, Alex focuses on how to get things done rather than explaining why

things can't be done. "In the early days, we had gone through the 'forming, storming, norming and performing' process in strengthening the team.

I asked them to live with the ambiguity of the direction we were to take as no one could really know how far we can go. And if we don't act, we'll never move," Alex said.



Category

**Automotive**

Client

**Das Motor**

**Indonesia**

Agency

**Chai Indonesia**



# Lesson from the trails: 11 ways to be a gnarlier creative

By **Woei Hern Chan**

Executive Creative Director, Malaysia & SEA,  
VMLY&R COMMERCE

I read an awesome post by **Marc Randolph** about how mountain biking and entrepreneurship have a lot in common. Incidentally I was on a bike. In the middle of Angkor Wat. Riding in the rain. What a moment.

That night after the ride (it's the best way to explore Angkor Wat btw, hmu if any of you want hookups to an awesome bike rental and guide), I couldn't

help but think about how much mountain biking and being a creative have a lot in common too.

So here it is, 11 ways to shift yourself and be gnarlier as a creative:

## 1. Falling down is part of the fun

You will sweat. Buckets. You will bruise. Sometimes. You will bleed. Then you'll laugh. Get up.

**OPINION**

Brush it off. And want to do it all over again. Fundamental rule of being a creative. Have a sick sense of humour. And enjoy the journey and lessons, even when you don't win a pitch. Or a lion. There'll be plenty more rides ahead of you. And when you do overcome that bump that ate you up the last time, there's no feeling better. Oh don't worry, there'll be bigger ones ahead.

## 2. Go fast. Go alone. Go far. Go together.

This is where biking, and working as a creative gives a different spin to this phrase. This phrase alludes that team work make the dream work. True. What cycling teaches you is, there are times when you need to spend time on your own. To learn the lines and trails.

And at work, you'll need to have those lonely, do-nothing times. To hone your thoughts, to get that random spark, to leave out the noise and just to argue, hangout and be with your multiversal selves to come up with some thought starters. To explore new trails of thoughts. Only then when you're with your team, you bring something fun, new and valuable to the ride.

## 3. Technique is more important than technology.



*(picture: technique saving me from being stabbed to death by technology)*

You see all sorts of gear, gizmos and technology on bikers. One thing I've realized is that technology can take you to the next level. Only if you have the right techniques and fundamentals.

At work, we fall in love with technology. A lot. We get carried away by it. Metaverse. Adtech. NFT. AI. They're all fantastic technologies. Some argue technically they're just fantastic

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terminologies. What is the fun of Dall-E if you don't know how to craft the instructions to it? Where's the experience of the metaverse without the world-building of who you are as an avatar (thank you MMO gaming)? We will always be a species of storytellers. And to find a way to put a smile on someone's face and make her day will always be why we connect. So don't forget your craft. And stay curious about how tech can take you further.

**4. Same trails can teach you new things**

The difference between road biking and mountain biking is that there aren't that many mountains compared to roads. That sounded pretty obvious even as I wrote that sentence, but stay with me. The limitations of trails, do not limit your fun. Because trails are closer to nature, it changes. The main features might stay, but there is always the sense of fear and excitement no matter how many times you've been on it. That's because when you get better and know the trail more, you take more risks and go faster, harder, and find more

challenging lines. You go back to maintain your skill level because a sense of safety is a basic human body's need and it needs to be constantly reminded and railed on by adrenaline!

So you got another pitch. It's another festive film. It's another promo campaign. Find new ways to do it. Take risks, knowing what you already know. Break some rules, if you know the rules so damn well already. Fail. Because you're familiar and you know what you can fall back on anyway.

**5. Never say no to a new trail**

Same trails are great for maintaining your skill level. New trails remind you of the thrill of why you signed up for what you love in the first place. They are not mutually exclusive. They are absolutely complementary. Your practice and preparation will give you the courage to jump headlong into the unknown. Again. Because you know how to fail and fall. What's the worse that can happen, right?

As a creative, always wonder if there's another way to explore creativity. Always chase the I've-never-done-it-before. Don't be too conscious and self-aware of

## OPINION

the fact that 'oh but someone's done it before'. Just remember you've never done it before. And ask yourself how might we do it differently?

## 6. Enjoy being scared

I think this doesn't need much explanation. Except as a reminder, the fear never goes away. Your impostor syndrome. Your 'what if people hate it'? Your 'what if i'm not ready or good enough?'. They will stay. They will grow bigger. Stare them in the face and make them your friends because friends can take a 'STFU' in their faces.

You'll always be scared. And that's really part of the fun. I wonder if dentists and accountants ever get scared.

## 7. It's okay to say 'not today'

Really. We're not in Red Bull Rampage. We're just here to have fun. And there are days when you'll not feel like it. Don't succumb to peer or industry pressure. Walk away. Mental health is as valid and important as a wrist sprain. You rest. You chill. You find other activities to stay active. There'll be a drop that scares you, find a mentor and follow in his trail lines. If you're not ready come back

again. It's okay. Just have fun. And who knows? One day you will be in your career equivalent of a Red Bull Rampage?

## 8. Data is your friend



*(picture: the data supports the swag)*

Data warrants a separate point apart from technology. Only because data isn't technology any more. It's information. It's knowledge. It's numbers that tell you a story.

We absolutely love Strava. It's the facebook for bikers. And there's just so much fun in knowing if you're the 'Local Legend' or if you had a Personal Record and how many KMs you actually clocked. It's motivating to have friends comment, laugh and be curious about your data.

Too often we shun this word in our day-to-day. Only because data is presented or used in a way that isn't engaging or fun. Ask the right questions. Find the right data point. Don't wait

**OPINION**

till a case study to be an expert in it (you know you love it for case studies). Data can be your lawyer. Your planner. Your coach. Your friend.

### **9. There will always be someone better than you**

Holy shit he can do a jump! OMG how did he just breeze through that segment? Wow he's such a strong climber.

You can do lots of good stuff too. It's easy to look at who's ahead of you and wish you were that person. It's harder to look inside or behind.

Enjoy the ride. You're doing alright. We'll cheer for you. We'll wait and check if you're okay. We'll all get to the destination and have a great laugh and drinks after. And if you don't? Maybe it's time to find another group of riders to hang with.

### **10. There are different types of bikes. Different types of riders. We can all enjoy our rides.**

Rivalries always exist. Roadies have this snobby reputation for being competitive and better-than-you. Mountain bikers pride themselves in broken parts. Gravelers revel in being in both worlds.

It's the same with the creative industry. In house. Social. Media. Creative. Adtech. Indies. You name it. Everyone seems to be hiring creatives and finding roles for creativity. And that's a great thing. Why should we be purists about creativity being in the domain of a department. We can all be better if we laugh, cheer and respect the one thing we have in common, we are creatives. Who knows? You might want to try a road bike even if you're a mountain biker your whole life right?

### **11. Enjoy the journey.**

It's a long ride. Take breaks. Celebrate the waterfall you found. Share an energy bar with your friend. Laugh at the falls that happened (but check if they're okay first of course). Don't worry about being slow, or late. It's never just about the end point. It's the little things that happen along the way. It's the moments and friendships. It's why I love what I do on the trails and at work every day. And I hope after reading this long-assed article, you will enjoy either one of it a little more too.

**Let's ride!**

# MOST READ ON MARKETINGMAGAZINE.COM.MY

(22th October – 28th October 2022)

**Karangkraf Media Group, Dato' Hussamuddin Bin Haji Yaacub, announces his resignation as the Group Chairman and Publisher**  
Pageviews: 2,823



**Donevan Chew Appointed as Chief Creative Officer for Havas Immerse**

Havas Immerse Malaysia has appointed Donevan Chew as Chief Creative Officer for the agency...  
Pageviews: 2,579



**Hans now cycles to KL Eco City**

Following a flurry of recent Creative Director moves in the industry, Hans Lee is now Creative Director at Cheil Malaysia. He joins from Lion & Lion where he was Creative Director for more than two and a half years...

Pageviews: 2,325



**Mediabrand Malaysia appoints Elina Peek Lantz as MD of Reprise**

IPG Mediabrand Malaysia has today announced the appointment of Elina Peek Lantz as Managing Director of Reprise, the global performance marketing agency...

Pageviews: 2,282



**Muma Malaysia Appoints Kevin Teh as Creative Director**

Independent agency Muma Malaysia welcomes its new creative director, Kevin Teh effective November 1, 2022.

Pageviews: 1,936





# THE SOCIAL MEDIA TIME BOMB

**... internet  
publishers  
cannot be held  
responsible for lies  
or misinformation  
produced by other  
people and posted  
on their sites...**

The US Supreme Court has agreed to hear a case that could be a knife in the heart of the social media giants.

All online platforms - and particularly social media platforms -- are protected from legal action by something called *Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act*

What Section 230 does is state that internet publishers cannot be held responsible for lies or misinformation produced by other people and posted on their sites. In the case in question - *Gonzales v Google* - the complainant is challenging the interpretation of this section by lower courts.



As [explained here](#), social media platforms like to pretend that they are just bulletin boards on which people can voice their opinions. This is a lie. Social media use algorithms to promote certain posts to certain people to increase their time on the platform and, ergo, increase their revenue.

The suit in question does not challenge Section 230 *per se*. It *does not* ask the court to hold social media responsible for the posts of others. Instead, it challenges the interpretation by lower courts that Section 230 protects social media from *using*

*algorithms to promote certain posts to their advantage.*

This is at the heart of ad targeting on social media and would create an enormous problem for some of the world's most lucrative businesses.

*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.*



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