

MARKETING

ISSUE #356 DECEMBER 2022

WEEKENDER



Out with the old,
Noreen with the new:
A Vibrant
Explosion That
Illuminated
a Unicorn.



EDITOR'S NOTE

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Your time has come.

COVER STORY

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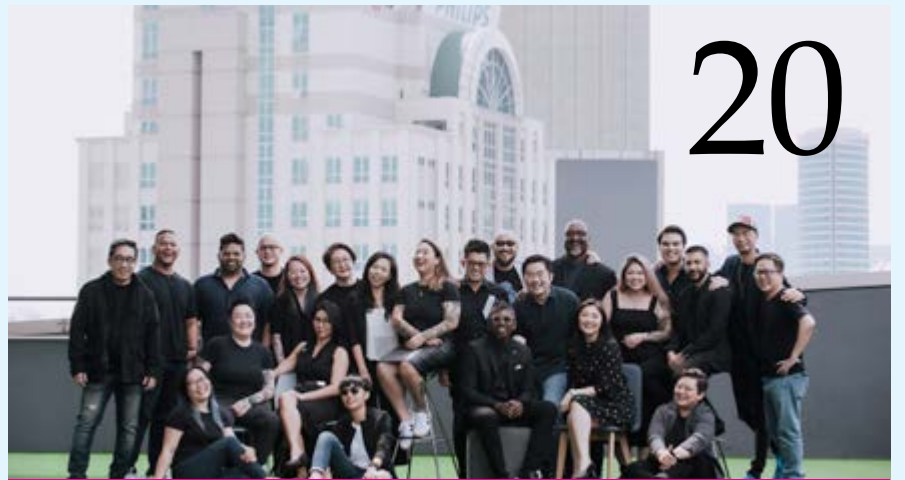
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From the streets to the stage.

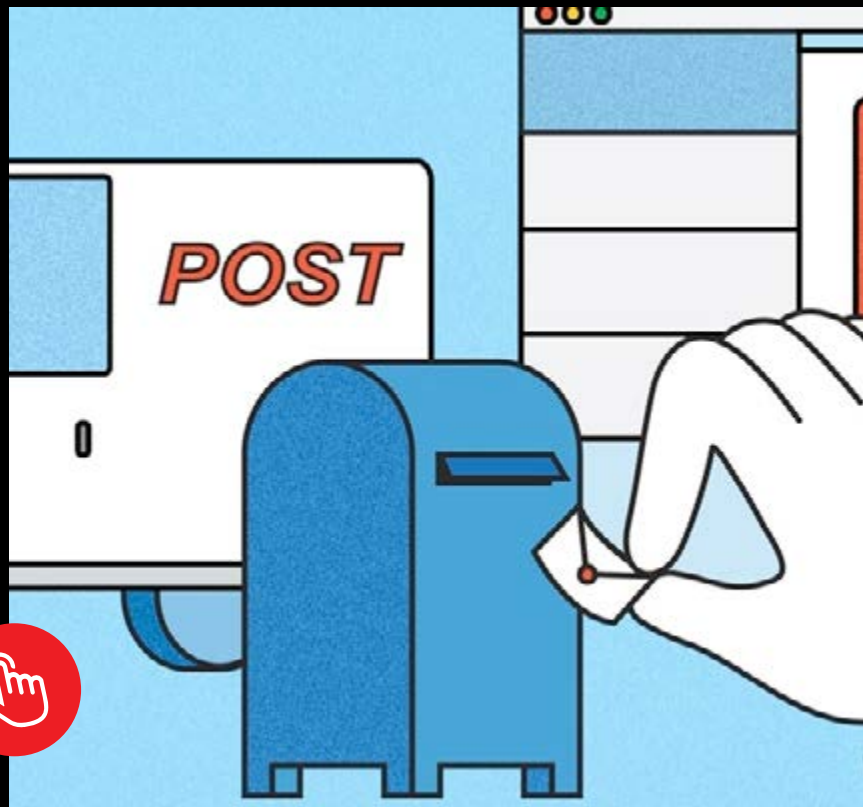


“Blockchain is God on the internet.”

Ganesh Kumar Bangah
Executive Chairman, Netcentric Limited at
GroupM’s SourceCode 2022 event.

“A good story sticks with us, regardless of the facts.”

Seth Godin



“ 63% of Gen Z in the US who sent a holiday card used postal, compared with 47% last year.”

Source: Grid/The Harris Poll, Nadiinko/Getty

“Revenues grew q-o-q to RM926mn, driven by strong Adex performance that increased 27% q-o-q to RM110mn.”

Astro’s third quarter report of the financial year ending 31 January 2023 (Q3FY23).



EDITOR'S NOTE

Your time has come.

Amal Ben Saad

Amanda Wong Wen Sze

Amelia Teo Siew Ching

Amirra Razak

Andrew Lee Jun Yao

Ang Ching Wen

Arivintiran Ponnann

Belinda Hon Lin Hui

Bellace Lim Swee Theng

Brenda Koh

Candy Lo

Daniel Isaac Gregory

Hana Sudradjat

Jaclyn Hwang Wei Li

Kristine Rimas Lee

Leong Tsui See (Tracy)

Lim Chiun Ni

Lim Rui Xing (Jane)

Maneesha Arasu

Marcus Hui

Michelle Kwok Jia Ping

Ng Xinyi (Michelle)

Ooi Shu En

Priya Karthik

Tan Ker Seng

Tan Yik Won

Ting Nick Jee

Xi Lynn Tan

Young Spikes Winner



Young Spikes Gallery



Marketing Madness



CMO
Conference &
Awards
2023



A Malaysian Unicorn Gets a Facelift, Marching Towards Global Top 5 Aspiration

No, we're not talking about the online used-car trading company.



COVER STORY



Many aren't aware that Malaysia has three Unicorn-status companies, and one of them is **EDOTCO Group**, the world's sixth-largest telecommunications infrastructure services company.

With a presence in nine countries, from Pakistan in the West to the Philippines in the East, EDOTCO ensures millions of people get uninterrupted connections to digital networks through its 54,000 tower infrastructures.

Established in 2012 as part of Axiata Group, its presence to the wider audience is not as visible as its sister companies like Celcom and Boost due to the nature of its business as a B2B company. With the unwavering vision to become a global Top 5 company in 2024, EDOTCO needed a transformational shift to chart its brand strategy and strengthen its global brand positioning in the next decade.

This huge calling led the organisation to appoint **Noreen**



Sabrina as the Group Head, Corporate Communications and Branding in September 2021. Her mission - to drive the change and elevate EDOTCO's brand and reputation for the next milestone!

Noreen brought over 18 years of experience in branding and communications, which included leadership and advisory roles within organisations such as MRCB, the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia, MDEC and HSBC. She has worked on corporate rebranding, developed award-winning nationwide campaigns and actively judged several local and regional marketing and branding award programs.

Whilst preparing for our sit-down with Noreen, we caught

up with her team members, who gave us a glimpse of Noreen as a leader. Let's just say there were not enough words to describe this dynamite. These strong testimonies endowed us with greater intrigue as we spent the morning with Noreen at **Laman EDOTCO, the organisation's new global headquarters.** We learned more about the organisation and its future.

What brought you to EDOTCO, and what were the first few things you did in your first months?

EDOTCO is Malaysia's best-kept secret. I was a stranger to the brand before meeting the CEO, Adlan Tajudin. All that changed after speaking to him for an hour or so. I was astounded to learn that it is

COVER STORY

the first independent tower company in the region. The company's culture is anchored on championship principles, and the drive for innovation made EDOTCO the world's first Bionic Organisation that will supercharge the future workforce.

The aspiration, culture, and passion for empowering nations' digital connectivity brought me here. And I can confidently say that EDOTCO is THE place to be!

While curiosity and hunger for growth kept me going, my journey was not without challenges. My first few months were focused on understanding the gaps and defining the roadmap to build our brand as the Next-generation Tower Company on a regional and global level.

My energy was spent on assembling a strong foundation. I then hired critical roles to build the team's capability to support a strong execution.

What inspired you to rebrand EDOTCO? Why change a well-established identity?

A brand should be an accurate representation of the business and define how a company

should be perceived. In my first month, I saw clearly that people had problems recognising our company name by looking at the logo (e.co). We were frequently associated with household cleaning products at that time!

There was a mismatch between how people perceived us through our brand and what we believe in as an organisation. Many people could not easily relate to us - they didn't understand who we were as a business, our industry and our role as a key enabler to the nation's digital ambitions. And we knew we needed to educate the public on who we are more simplistically.

EDOTCO is now number 6 globally in our industry and is one of Malaysia's homegrown unicorns. This changes our playing field. The change has also become necessary to chart our next decade and make a memorable, impactful impression on the stakeholders. Our brand must represent our growth, values, and the world-class quality the stakeholders expect from us.

EDOTCO is a B2B company. When we think of rebranding,



From Left – Noreen, Zulfadly, Syafiq, Raja Shahdeeza

we often think of B2C companies investing millions in a new name or logo. How is this different?

B2C companies are transactional with short sales cycles, and the brand relationships are direct with the buyer. While B2B relations are with other organisations, sales cycles tend to be longer, and purchases are based on many factors, often involving more than one person within the customer's organisation or externally.

In our case, EDOTCO's ecosystem includes the

“In just a year, EDOTCO became a stronger B2B brand, earning respect and recognition from industry peers. Noreen is resilient, thoughtful and scientific in her approach, and she delivered a 10-year aspiration and vision in just 356 days... It's simply amazing to be part of the team.”

Zulfadly Basar, Manager,
Brand Communications

COVER STORY

“Under Noreen’s leadership, we are urged to take on a digital-first mindset. It essentially boils down to prioritising digital touchpoints during brand development. When digital is the starting point of a brand strategy, new touchpoints are quickly and easily integrated into the user experience. Our new brand logo works across all platforms, on all devices and at all screen sizes.”

Syafiq Azhar, Manager, Digital Branding & Social Media

customers, regulators, policymakers, and local authorities, to name a few. Brand stickiness is imperative to build our awareness amongst these target stakeholders.

With the internet and digital transformation, we have seen some changing trends in B2B sectors. The internet has changed how our customers and stakeholders became informed; therefore, our approach has become more like the B2C experience.

To remain competitive and continue our growth, we need to look at rebranding from a 360 point of view. While the logo

is the starting point, our efforts surely did not stop there. We ensured that the refreshed brand was embedded across all corners of EDOTCO.

What was your approach to the new brand identity, and what does it represent?

We started with an exercise to rediscover our true purpose. What we found was simple – EDOTCO’s role in this industry is to empower the nations we are in and support our customers today and in the future. Not just to cater to the changing demands but to shape how the digital future manifests.

Our brand design principle is based on the concept of ‘debranding’ – a definitive step away from complicated designs - like how other big brands have evolved - Hugo Boss, Intel, Mastercard and many others. It cuts all the clutter, provides clarity, and makes the brand bolder, simplistic, and motion-dynamic to cater to the digital-first world.

The three shapes (called ‘**The Ellipsis**’) is our unique dynamic icon that represents ‘what’s next’ and ‘connection’, effectively communicating our

COVER STORY

brand purpose, 'Shaping Future Connectivity'. The unique ellipsis represents three shapes evolving in specified steps toward the future - starting grounded and solid as a square, ending as agile and nimble as a circle.

After being in business for 10 years, did you encounter any resistance to changing things?

I was actually surprised at how smoothly that part of the process went. Any resistance we encountered was quickly overcome once they understood the reasoning and business strategy. In fact, everyone was looking forward to the change, including our shareholders, the management team and our employees.

What challenges did you face in executing the rebranding initiative for EDOTCO?

It was a race against time for the team and I. We knew from the start that we wanted to unveil the new brand around our tenth anniversary on 30th October. So, every step of the process was done at triple the speed.

To add to the pressure, we were also working on renovating our new global HQ concurrently,

“Rolling out the brand and streamlining the communications plan for the company in multiple countries is not an easy task. I am privileged to have been given the opportunity to learn and work on this ambitious project under the tutelage of a great leader.”

Raja Shahdeeza, Senior Executive, Corporate Communications

which requires branding input.

We have to also factor in the internal launch before it is unveiled externally. We have to repeat the rollout in 9 countries and communicate to more than 1,500 employees based in multiple locations around our footprint markets. We were also working on our new website with new narratives, content and design. It was a crazy, crazy time.

Given the intensity, my team and I engaged an extended “army”, as I like to call it. We acknowledged that we had a mammoth task in our hands, more than what a four-people team could handle on our own.

We needed an army of people to see this through successfully. So, we worked with our partner agencies (*Redhill Asia, Dragon*

COVER STORY



Rouge and Suria Lab), who not only supported the execution of this rebranding but, most importantly, understood the strategic direction and roadmap that my team and I had developed.

How has the new branding been received? How do you think the new brand affects EDOTCO's position moving forward?

Our stakeholders, customers and employees really seem to love the new brand. Many people feel like we're a different company than we used to be. The reality is that the new brand identity uncovered our internal

culture externally. We have always been a dynamic, forward-looking, innovative organisation, and the new brand is able to accurately portray this... It's like we broke the shell that used to cover our true selves.

The refreshed, bolder and dynamic new brand identity, together with our new vision and redefined narrative, will position us as the class leader of our industry in the region. We are now CAPITAL, which will give us recognition in any medium we present.

Overall, we are incredibly pleased with how well the rollout and response have been.

SOURCECODE



Media enlightenment at 3,000 feet above sea level

BY THE HAMMER

GroupM's hyper-fuelled SourceCode event belied the serene setting it was nestled in: an 18th Century French-inspired seven-star abode.

The perfect bouncing board for a hotbed of opinions which threatened my sanity in the hills at The Chateau Spa & Wellness Resort.

188 industry players, including marketers, gathered over two days for an overnight brainbang amidst a 130 million years old rainforest.

Only the singular nature of a Macallan could tame my over-education before the sun set on a day with my favourite number - December 13. No amount of

SOURCECODE

data drooling and deep diving metrics could diminish me now....the story...

GroupM's Chanchal Chakrabarty kickstarted Malaysia's prestigious thought-leading SourceCode event explaining why his hand was in a sling (I don't think he gave the reason)... followed by a glimpse of what to expect in the coming two days.

Soon after, advertising was turned on its head for 48 hours through the lens of media, marketing and structured mayhem.

A healthy combustion of inconvenient truths and brain-bewildering arguments magnetised my mind without warning.

Public Disclosure: I went to GroupM's SourceCode event not because they paid for my one night's stay (I paid cash for my room service meal, ok?), but because I wanted to learn more about the latest in the world of media.

So I showed up early, all bright-eyed and bushy-tailed and took the first shot with my COO Vishnu in front of this life-size backdrop of logos. Hmm...



Brands that mattered were all there to speak, share and spy.

The conference began with a talk by Anita Munro, Regional Chief Investment Officer at GroupM on "Responsible Media Framework". Long story short, she had a very compelling account about Sustainability and I almost fell off my seat wondering if GroupM was going to save the world. But this lady was serious, and she had the whole argument wrapped up with science and some amazing slides. A brain fire-starter for sure.

Anita instantly reframed my mind, while leaving my turban intact, as to what to expect at the conference: a rich tease of PowerPoint slides with revealing stuff (shockingly true) and a hunger for more. Get the picture? The backstory resides in the slides, so readers will do well to

SOURCECODE



ask for summarised versions of the presentations.

OFFSTAGE BANTER:

This sustainability, ESG, decarbonisation, green-washing talk which surfaced in the subsequent conversations tickled me and my old friend Ganesh Kumar Bangah, Executive Chairman of Netcentric to no end. He reached out to use a tissue from a box on the table and I reprimanded him to carry a handkerchief if he wanted to save the planet.

Ganesh is a genius in my book. He started his first internet business, MOL AccessPortal, at the age of 20, developing it to become SEA's top online payment gateway and the region's first internet company listed on NASDAQ. In his hey days, he bought Friendster, with around 100 million users then, and made a play to combat Facebook. Champion!

I enjoyed his stage presentation - but I think I asked him so many questions later that he avoided me during lunch the next day.

SOURCECODE



Throughout the rest of the conference, I lost track trying to make notes, short of writing a book (another one).

So here are some cryptic personal observations:

I never knew the efficacy of distributing advertising messages effectively would concern so many people. I always assumed the media part was a matter of course. Isn't that what technology is supposed to handle?

- The engine of performance is data and technology (I disagree, but it is a media

event, so I shut the f*** up).

- Sweetest irony is that so many smart people are working tirelessly to help machines think better than them.
- As we get more definitive in our measurement, we discover there is more to measure. Surprise!
- Fragmented media produces fragmented reports. Don't expect less confusion.
- Unified measurement is like a unity government. It is still work in progress.

SOURCECODE



Quotable Quotes

“Let’s not kid ourselves, marketers are not experts in everything. Trust your agency partners to do what’s right for your brand.”

RHB’s Abdul Sani Abdul Murad.

“While TikTok is perceived as a channel for the youth, this observation is not entirely true.”

Viony Handojo, Marketing Science Partner, TikTok (I love her designation).

“For the first time on the planet, audiences are driving brands and not the other way round.”

Javed Jafri, Unilever.

“Addressable Advertising has been highly favoured by our radio clients.”

Kenny Ong, Astro Media Solutions.

Winners on my list:

- Best Speaker - Arshan Saha, GroupM Nexus, AsiaPacific.
- Crowd Favourite - Ganesh Bangah, Netccentric.
- Most Colourful Personality - Dato’ Manikandamurthy Velayoudam, SkyBlue Media.
- Most Chilled Speaker - Datuk Michael Chan, Media Prima Omnia.
- Most Lit Panelist - Vivien Chew, Netccentric.

And the best use of swimming pool award goes to Tropical Rain.

Finally, I want to thank Astro’s Kenny for saving me from PowerPoint poisoning.

And to those who missed the SourceCode event, let me say this: I will surely attend next year.

For event pix gallery, click [here](#)

Word Rain at SourceCode 2022



NFT, End to end
solutions, **sustainability**,
agile, front end, %, **><**,
performance, magic, naming
conventions, marketing science, **footfall**,
poisoning, **attrition**, loop, **geofence**,
Unknowledge, programmatic, **ESG**,
architecture, **God**, Geo-Spatial, triangulate,
Postcode, **pathway**, Leak,
Addressable, carbon, mapping, cross-
challenge, trust, **influencer**, tone deaf,
pragmatism, **upperfunnel**,
hyper



From the streets to the stage.

One naughty boy is doing brands a lot of good!

BY THE HAMMER



When Stanley showed up on the first day of his first job as a Management Trainee, they made him push a trolley on the streets to sell products!

I tell people shamelessly that I am a fan of Stan, and not just because it rhymes.

When I was in school, I was up for public caning because I was a small time revolutionary. But I made a deal saying I will

STAN'S THE MAN



“No one expects me to be in the position I am in today just by looking at me.”

become a School Prefect for the most “notorious” classes to avoid humiliation of having my ass whipped by headmaster RS Sivanoli in front of the whole school. They bought the idea.

But Stanley scored a different record in his school: he was caned publicly twice, and he was a School Prefect!

He took his shortcomings like a champ, celebrating his modest SPM Grade 2 accomplishment like he had hit the jackpot of jackpots.

I can go on and on, but now that I have got your attention, this Stanley fella is quite the man.

STAN'S THE MAN

He says, “No one expects me to be in the position I am in today just by looking at me.”

Well Stan, you are exactly in the place you should be!

A win is never your own.

Stanley Clement is Chief Executive Officer of Mediabrands Content Studio (MBCS) and recently won bigtime at the regional Campaign Agency of the Year awards 2022 in Singapore. His team took home a Gold for Malaysia Creative Agency of the Year & Bronze for Malaysia Digital Agency of the Year.

And MBCS is a one-year old agency with an amazing raison d'être (sorry, you have to Google this word). MBCS is the integration and transformation of three creative agencies under Mediabrands into a single content agency with a breakthrough approach to the business of business.

He says, “I believe in this trifecta for any successful business – good leadership; good people; good clients. If you have people who believe in you, combined with people who believe in good work, and clients who believe in win-win situations, you'll find yourself

“I believe in this trifecta for any successful business – good leadership; good people; good clients...”

in the sweet spot. All three components need to come together to make magic happen.”

Commenting on the landmark awards, he adds, “A win is never your own. Especially in this industry. There are the people who have given us the space to explore and innovate, there is the right environment and opportunity given for us to play and create, and there are those who encourage you to move forward with your ideas. In coming together as one MBCS, we felt it was important to not only reshape our product, but to build the right ideology and people behind what we do.”

Content that moves Audiences that moves Brands

Stanley explains how the above works at MBCS...

STAN'S THE MAN

... think old platforms, reimagine new ways of storytelling...

Content Partnerships

MBCS changed its approach from just creating content by themselves to partnering content creators – be it media owners, tech companies, production studios, influencers, or celebrities. By developing a co-creation ecosystem, it enabled collaboration with creators right from the get-go, and allowed the agency to build exclusive content partnerships with platforms like TWITCH, TikTok, Media Prima and ASTRO with quite a few more already underway.

Performance Content

While brands have focused more on short-term sales goals,

relying on tactical initiatives focused on the bottom funnel, MBCS has still prioritised the need to build brands. Hence, a major priority has been to drive creative performance content that addresses the lower funnel while still uplifting brands, through addressable, social, or even e-commerce content.

Creative Story

Creative storytelling lies at the very heart of MBCS, as they continuously find new ways to tell brand stories – from traditional campaigns to immersive content experiences, spanning every platform including the metaverse, gaming, and OTT. Their premises – think old platforms, reimagine new ways of storytelling.

MBCS is launching the MBCS Academy in 2023 – an academy to support underprivileged youth with job opportunities, address the issue of the scarcity of talent pool, and spread awareness of the industry amongst Malaysian youth.

Ambitions for 2023? More on that next, as we talk to the delightful Phang Mei Jeng (MJ), Managing Director of Mediabrands Content Studio.

MOST READ ON MARKETINGMAGAZINE.COM.MY

(10th December – 16th December 2022)

Young Spikes Malaysia 2022 winners celebrated

The Young Spikes Malaysia 2022 Awards was held at Taylor's University Lakeside campus on the 15th of December 2022.

Pageviews: 2,823



FCB SHOUT Redefines Dedication to Service in RHB'S new brand Campaign

This year, RHB introduced Together We Progress 2024 (TWP24), its new 3-year corporate strategy which will...

Pageviews: 2,579



PETRONAS Kancil Awards 2022: Naga DDB Tribal is crowned Agency of the year again

The PETRONAS Kancil Awards 2022 has returned after a two-year hiatus and concluded on 2nd December...

Pageviews: 2,325



DENTSU CREATIVE Embarks in Malaysia Towards a Brand-New Era of Modern Creativity

Following the launch of DENTSU CREATIVE at Cannes Lions in June 2022, DENTSU CREATIVE is launching in...

Pageviews: 2,282



Judges take on Malaysia CMO Judging session 2022

This year's Malaysian CMO Awards judging was recently concluded at the Sime Darby Convention Centre, KL. Nominations from several categories were...

Pageviews: 1,936





the Art of DATA Storytelling

by Dheeraj Raina

28th February, 2023
8.30am - 5.30pm

Eastin Hotel
Pusat Dagang, 13, Jalan 16/11, Seksyen 16,
46350 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan



APPROVED HRD CORP
TRAINING PROGRAM
NO10001250422

Editor's Note: I cannot close this issue of WEEKENDER without observing a page of silence for all the victims of the landslide tragedy in Batang Kali. Please join us in prayer and support to the amazing first-responders and fellow human beings who reached out to in ways that I cannot even begin to articulate.