

MARKETING

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COVER STORY

09



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EDITOR'S NOTE

05



EVERYBODY'S
TALKING

25



5 RISING TRENDS
OF E-COMMERCE
INFLUENCER
MARKETING IN
MALAYSIA

30



24 THINGS
FOR 2024

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NO EQUAL NO SEQUEL



A full-colour 200-page coffee table book showcasing some of the finest marketing minds in Malaysia. Limited copies for sale.



“Programmatic media is a shadowy black box filled with turds and spiders.”

Marketing Prof Mark Ritson

“Only 35 cents out of every dollar invested into the programmatic supply chain is directly spent in reaching the consumer.”

Association of National Advertisers (ANA), full report [here](#)

“We can’t be at our best if we are paid by the hour.”

Ogilvy UK’s vice chairman, Rory Sutherland.



“Almost all brands will grow more off the back of light and non-buyers than heavy ones.”

Giang Tue Trinh, John Dawes & Byron Sharp, full report [here](#)



“We as marketers suck at identifying people because we put them in a box, not because it’s accurate but because it’s easy.”

Marcus Collins

Everybody's talking



**... an average
person sees around
10,000 ads per
day, though only a
quarter of that or
less will
be relevant...**

*Everybody's talkin' at me
I don't hear a word they're sayin'.
Only the echoes of my mind*

These are the opening lyrics of a song performed by American singer-songwriter Harry Nilsson which became a hit.

They seem to resonate with the noise level in the world of marketing and advertising today.

Siteefy.com says an average person sees around 10,000 ads per day, though only a quarter of that or less will be relevant. And that figure excludes traditional media like TV, newspapers, magazines, radio, billboards, etc.

So if everybody's talking, the question remains "Who is listening?"

While we are exposed to thousands of ads, both online and offline, we have also learned to ignore them effectively.

Unfortunately, for most companies, that means throwing even more ads in your face in the hope that some catch your attention.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Let's backtrack a little..

First, there was marketing to the masses, then came one-to-one personalisation which was not unlike the days of direct mail, except deploying digital delivery platforms. And now comes personalisation at scale, with the help of AI.

So when in the past, advertising broadcasted a singular message to a national audience, and later narrow-casted to regions with a specific message in the corresponding dialect, now advertisers can micro-target and talk to different people at the same time with customised messaging.

Also known in media parlance as Addressable Advertising, though I prefer to call it Programmatic on steroids.

Do you really think an advertiser can manage these multiple communications when they escalate into conversations?

That is without surrendering their fate to machines. Some say that has already happened with their ads appearing alongside contradictory or offensive web content.

Let's stop for a while and think about this.

Instead of having one streamlined message, there can be

millions of messages, which are derivatives of a common message but suited to the particular recipient. With AI, all this is possible.

But just because it is possible, is it mandatory? The Yays outnumber the Nays by far at the moment.

Fatigue is biological fact.

What happens when the recipient realises they are, technically, talking to a chatbot?

Will they trust conversing with a machine?

After a deluge of "AI adjusted" visuals and messages, doesn't it all seem predictable, tiring and fadish?

AI companies are already struggling to feed the frenzy...

Rest of World reports that Silicon Valley's biggest AI publishers are now resorting to hiring poets and writers with humanity degrees, which is an ironic twist, considering they have been laying off writers and editors while making big investments in generative AI.

Some pundits argue this may be a way to own the full rights to creative writing instead of making themselves vulnerable to

EDITOR'S NOTE

... People connect the dots quite fast, and have good reason to hesitate when giving him their data for a national data centre...

infringing copyright – something that has already resulted in a number of lawsuits, filed by authors against ChatGPT creator OpenAI.

Apart from privacy, plagiarism and regulatory issues, I still believe AI can work for marketers within a specific framework without saturating messaging efficacy.

But try telling a marketer that Less is More. That they should be careful with their first-party data and not tick every box to please their bosses and echo chambers.

No way Jose.

Attrition is super real

While AI can make the previously impossible seem possible, the reverse is also

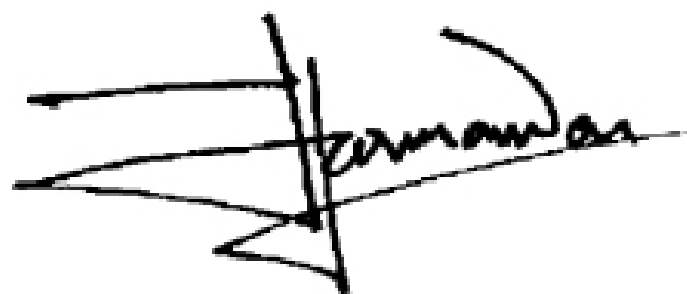
true: attrition is real and losing customers is not a superficial concept, plus de-influencers are hard at play.

Talking about consumer indifference, look at our PADU's (Central Database Hub) exercise to get the public registered onto the system. As of two days ago, only 4.7% of Malaysians aged 18 and above registered, while the system targets enrolment of around 29.8 million people. Indicating substantial scepticism among the public regarding the government's initiative.

Nobody is referencing it, but the Minister in charge gave birth to Invoke Malaysia, an NGO founded by the main ruling party PKR and is a DATA analytics firm whose early success included running an insurgent electoral campaign between 2016 to 2018.

People connect the dots quite fast, and have good reason to hesitate when giving him their data for a national data centre.

Now everybody's talkin'





NEXT STOP: CEO

THE ULTIMATE AWARD

After much rigorous think tank shortlisting and research, a two-months nominees dossier study by Ipsos, face to face sessions with CEOs, and even an online popularity poll, we are now ready to celebrate the winners of the Malaysian CMO (Chief Marketing Officers) Awards 2023 Induction Ceremony.

6 February, 2024 (Tuesday)
3.45pm, Registration & Welcome.

Malaysian Petroleum Club
Level 42, Tower 2,
PETRONAS Twin Towers,
Kuala Lumpur City Centre.

TOP



We showcase here the leading stories that appeared on our website last year. The page views are “unique” but if all our platforms are included (WhatsApp, all Social and EDMs) our readership figures soar.

most read

We can't track “sharing” on WhatsApp, a dark social platform, but we know the size of our mobile database so we do have Reach figures.

Based on weekly feedback, our content is not only helpful but readers are grateful. We are equally thankful for their support.

To get featured on our platforms, contact **Vishnu**.



An interesting story on Malaysia's own BABA'S curry and spice brand that you did not know

Some may have already known that **BABA'S** is a Malaysian brand while some others have always thought that **BABA'S** is a brand imported internationally. According to a Tweet by Richard Ker, not many people actually knew this super reliable curry powder brand is Malaysian!

Let's dive into the story behind the 45-year-old Malaysian spices and curry brand.



Credit: [AWS](#)

It started small by selling out of a small van to now owning a Malaysian spice and curry powder empire

In the late 70s (1977), a young man in his 30s put all his life savings into a van. [R Pagalavan](#) started off his business by selling cooking essentials to customers in the Klang Valley off of his van

He brought his mobile sundry shop to residential areas twice a month, selling products from rice to spices and condiments. Many – especially housewives – loved his products and eagerly waited for his van to come around their areas.

Another quirky feature that made his small business a popular one was his buku 555 membership. He accepted



Credit: BABA'S/Facebook

credit terms from the housewives to ease the payment process for these women.

If customers requested some other products that he didn't have, he would make sure to cater to them sooner or later. He also scouts for the best quality ingredients and sells them for affordable prices.

Furthermore, his customers are the main reason he invented a special blend of curry powder that catered to his multiracial customers. He developed the blend through trial and error, and with help and feedback from his regulars as well.

With incessant effort and a passion to serve only the best to his customers, the curry powder

soon became his best-seller! The BABA'S van soon evolved into the BABA'S brand.

Sky rocket demands came in that forced him to work 7 days a week with a 4-day production time and 3-day selling time. The one special curry blend then became two different blends specifically developed for meat and seafood respectively.

Fast forward to today, BABA'S has around 30 products ranging from Masala Mixes, Pure Spice Powders, Pure Flour, and Staple Food Mixes, to Snack and Sweet Mixes, that can be found on almost every retail shelf nationwide.

They're not just popular nationwide, but globally too

Being Malaysia's leading curry powder and spice brand (they have 60% of the Malaysian spice market) now, recent studies have shown that at least one in three main meals consumed by Malaysians daily has at least one product from the BABA'S range.

BABA'S is not only seen in almost every Malaysian kitchen today, but the product is also available internationally. BABA'S can be found in other foreign countries around the world.

According to [Richard Ker](#), their brand can be found everywhere. There are even BABA'S products in a store in Ottawa, Canada.

Besides being halal-certified, BABA'S range of products are made of the finest quality ingredients from around the world and are truly [vegetarian](#) recipes.



Credit: BABA'S/ Facebook

A couple of [companies](#) partnered up with BABA'S such as Air Asia, Thermomix, Tabung Haji, TGV and more to expand their business further.

It all started with a humble man selling his spice products from his small van that now owns a successful business. An inspiring story we could say.

Source: [TRP](#)

Photo Credit: Vaishali's Superstore/ Facebook



The APPIES Malaysia + APAC 2023 Winners Announced!

After 4 days of intense physical and virtual judging, **MARKETING Magazine** is proud to announce the winners of The APPIES Malaysia & Asia Pacific 2023! Here are the winning agencies and brands/advertisers (sorted in alphabetical order).

AGENCIES

- Accenture Song
- Ampersand Advisory
- FCB SHOUT
- Fishermen Integrated
- Leo Burnett
- McCann Worldgroup China
- Media Prima Audio
- Media Prima Omnia Sdn Bhd
- Mediabrands Content Studio

- Mindshare Group Malaysia
- Mutiara Harrison
(part of McCann Worldgroup)
- Naga DDB Tribal
- Ogilvy India
- Unilever Malaysia
- Universal McCann

BRANDS/ ADVERTISERS

- Abbott
- Atlas Vending
- Budweiser
- Cadbury
- Domino's Pizza
- Etika
- Goodday Milk
- Grab
- KFC
- Hot FM
- Mondelez India
- MR. DIY
- Nando's
- Payments Network Malaysia
- PepsiCo Malaysia
- Prudential
- RHB Bank Berhad
- Sime Darby Property Berhad
- Spritzer
- Sunquick
- TENA
- Time
- Unilever Malaysia
- Viu
- Watsons
- Wipro Unza

The APPIES Awards Night will be held on the 11th of August 2023 at Sime Darby Convention Centre. Table bookings can be made [here](#)

Tourism poster becomes the butt of jokes



In your opinion, how welcoming can a tourism poster be? In the case of Kansas City, extremely.

The poster was supposedly created by the Visit KC tourism body in Kansas City in the US, ahead of National Travel and Tourism Week.

It included the fateful words: “Did you know? Kansas City welcomes 25 million visitors anally.”

The image was uploaded to Twitter by a popular Twitter parody account named You Had One Job and immediately garnered plenty of retweets

before making its way onto Facebook.

Unfortunately for fans of amusing typos, this misspelling wasn't the result of careless proofreading or the handiwork of a disgruntled employee, but rather a prankster with a gift for digital editing.

The VisitKC Twitter account posted an image showing the original sign and remarked that the photograph had been doctored.

The altered photo faced quite a bit of backlash too.

Others said they had been angered by the forgery, including Twitter user Eric Price who described the hoax as “disappointing”.

“That's disappointing. Hey, @_youhadonejob1, I like your Twitter feed, but altering a pic to make it look like KC tourism messed up isn't cool.

Plus, the humour disappears if I suspect your pics are fake. Please consider removing this pic and not using fake ones anymore.”

But despite the backlash, social media users still jumped at the chance to share plenty of puns and jokes at poor Kansas City's expense.

TOP 10 winners for the Experts' Choice Awards Raya TVC 2023



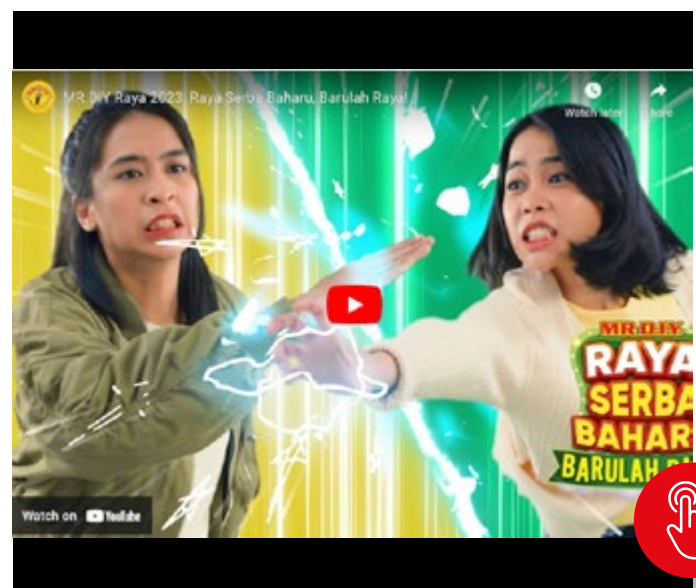
The popularity and success of our coverage of the [Best CNY TVCs](#), [Best Merdeka TVCs](#), and [Best Raya TVCs](#) based on reader voting has grown over the years. In recent years, our replies have increased from a few hundred to well over 4,000.

Additionally, we don't base our rankings on factors like the number of [YouTube](#) views or other metrics other than readers' preferences.

Without further ado, here are the top 10 winners for the Experts Choice Awards Raya TVCs 2023 edition, in no particular order:



Title: Al Kisah Malam Raya 2023
Client: Takaful Malaysia
Agency: Ampersand Advisory



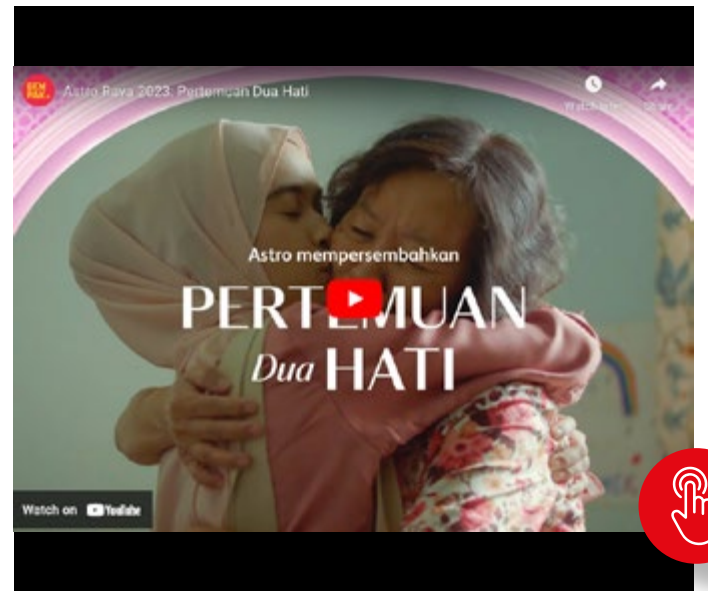
Title: Raya Serba Baharu, Barulah Raya!
Client: MR.DIY
Agency: FCB SHOUT

COVER STORY - NO. 4 STORY FOR 2023



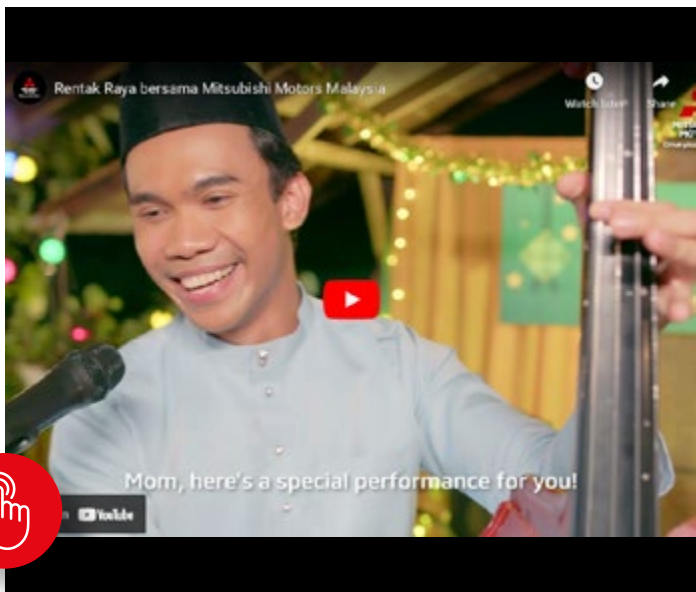
←
 Title: Rumah Terbuka
 Client: CelcomDigi
 Agency: Naga DDB Tribal

→
 Title: Raya Bersama | Sharing The Values, Strengthen Our Bonds.
 Client: Sime Darby Property
 Agency: M&C Saatchi



←
 Title: Rentak Raya
 Client: Mitsubishi Motors Malaysia
 Agency: Cogent Ideas (South East Asia) Sdn Bhd

→
 Title: Menjalinkan Hubungan Bermakna Bersama Pepsi
 Client: Pepsi
 Agency: FCB SHOUT



←
 Title: Pertemuan Dua Hati
 Client: Astro Malaysia Holdings Berhad
 Agency: Talon Creative Sdn Bhd

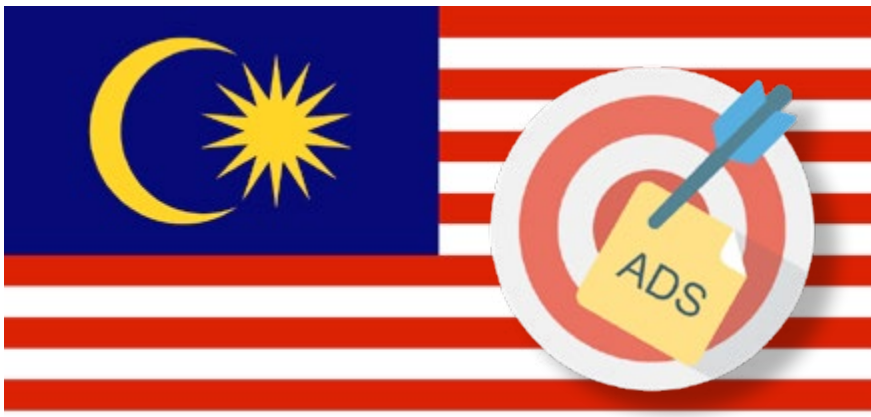
→
 Title: Etika Raya 2023- Panorama Abah Den
 Client: Etika



←
 Title: Manih-Manih Podeh
 Client: Saji
 Agency: Invictus Blue Sdn Bhd

→
 Title: PROTON Raya 2023: Sarjan Saga
 Client: PROTON
 Agency: VMLY&R COMMERCE Malaysia





Malaysia ad spend to grow 9% in 2023

Media owners advertising revenues in Malaysia increased by +13% this year to reach MYR 6.0 billion (\$1.5 billion). In 2023, total advertising revenues will reach MYR 6.6 billion (\$1.6 billion), a +9% growth.

The economy will grow by +5.4% on a real GDP basis, following 2021's +3.1% growth. While this is lower than prior expectations, brands spent anyway, especially on digital advertising formats.

Economic inflation in Malaysia is increasing by +3.2% with +2.8% growth expectations in 2023. With consumer behavior now back to normal, real GDP will grow by +4.4% in 2023.

In this environment, linear advertising revenues increased by +8% to MYR 2.3 billion (\$554 million). Linear budgets remain

at just 70% of their pre-COVID levels. Because linear ad spending will erode from here as consumers continue to shift to digital media formats, linear advertising revenues will never again approach their pre-COVID highs.

TV spending, which decreased by +3%, are now 88% of their pre-COVID total. Finally, with the economy returning to normal and consumer spending increasing, cinema screens have re-opened.

Recovering from the fallout due to closed operations, cinema is showing a substantial growth this year of +281%. Finally, an increase in consumer behavior means that OOH spending will increase this year (+20%) and will continue to grow by +10% in 2023.

Digital advertising spending, on the other hand, grew by +13% to reach 62% of total budgets. Digital advertising spending is being led by mobile devices, which will increase by +213% and represents 73% of total digital budgets. By format, spending is led by social media (+20%), search advertising (+16%), and video advertising (+13%).

Digital advertising spending will continue to significantly outperform linear budgets, and by 2027, digital formats will represent

74% of total advertiser budgets.

In 2023, ad spending will grow by +9% to reach MYR 6.6 billion (\$1.6 billion). Digital advertising will continue to grow by +13%, and linear budgets will grow by +3% before decaying in 2024 and beyond.

Fan Chen Yip, Chief Investment Officer of [Mediabrand Malaysia](#) stated that “For the 2023 outlook, our optimistic 9% growth to reach RM6.6 billion is impressive in comparison against the APAC growth rate of 5.2% in 2022 and 6.1% projection for 2023. We must however highlight that these growth rates are uneven across different categories of media, with digital unsurprisingly taking even more share of revenue.

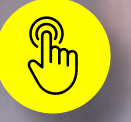
1. The winter update of MAGNA’s “Global Ad Forecast” predicts media owners advertising revenues will reach \$833 billion in 2023, +5% growth vs. 2022 (\$795bn), slowing from +7% in 2022. This new 2023 growth forecast is 1.5 percentage points below MAGNA’s previous forecast (June 2022)

due to the deteriorating macroeconomic outlook.

2. After a strong start in 2022 (e.g. US 1H: +11%), advertising spending growth slowed significantly in the second half amidst global economic uncertainty (US 2H: +3% excluding political). Nevertheless, full-year 2022 ad revenues still grew by almost +7% to \$795 billion, helped by record levels of cyclical spending (elections in Brazil and the US, Winter Olympics, FIFA World Cup).
3. Traditional media companies (Television, Audio, Publishing, OOH) saw their advertising revenues grow by +2.5% this year, despite the challenging economic environment, while digital media companies grew by +9%. This the narrowest growth gap ever observed by MAGNA, signaling that editorial media brands remain attractive and relevant as they now combine brand-safety with cross-platform reach.

4. Several industry verticals may slow down marketing expenditure in 2023, e.g. CPG/FMCG verticals and Finance. Entertainment, Travel and Betting will continue to be driven by post-COVID recovery and regulatory relaxation.
5. In that environment, the ad sales of traditional media owners will slow: Publishing and Television ad sales will shrink by -3% and -4% resp. while Audio advertising will be stable (+1%) and Out-of-Home ad revenues will grow by +6% to reach almost \$32 billion, just above pre-COVID total.
6. Meanwhile, digital advertising sales will grow by +8% to reach \$557 billion dollars i.e. 65% of total ad sales, driven by organic growth factors (ecommerce, media consumption shifts). Digital Video will be the fastest-growing ad format (+11%) followed by Search (+10%), and Social recovering slightly (+7%).
7. Television advertising will suffer from continued erosion in linear viewing (-5% to -15% depending on targets and markets), and the lack of cyclical events following the record cyclical spending of 2022, mitigated by resilient pricing (average CPM costs +10%) and growing AVOD ad sales on broadcasters' streaming platforms.
8. In 2023, APAC advertising revenues will increase by +6% to \$263 billion, 23% above the pre-COVID spending level, driven by digital advertising growth (+70%).
9. The second largest ad market, China (15% of global advertising revenues), will re-accelerate in 2023 (+7% to \$128 billion) following a historically weak performance in 2022 (+3%) due to the zero COVID policy crippling the economy, and regulatory restrictions slowing down digital media.

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5 Rising Trends of E-commerce Influencer Marketing in Malaysia



Influencer marketing in Malaysia is undergoing a significant transformation, particularly in the e-commerce landscape. According to the research report 'The Power of Influence: E-commerce Influencer Marketing in Southeast Asia'

commissioned by [impact.com](https://www.impact.com) and conducted by Cube Asia (the 'report'); the rising trend of commission-based influencer campaigns, the emergence of new consumer behaviours and improvements in performance tracking reshapes the role of influencers in the marketing funnel.

In this article, we look into the 5 rising trends of e-commerce influencer marketing and the strategic plays you can leverage in this pivotal phase for your 2024 marketing strategies.

INFLUENCER MARKETING

Leverage Influencer Marketing in e-Commerce Now

Influencer marketing contributed a massive US\$11 billion to the region's direct e-commerce sales in 2023 with Malaysia commanding ~11% of total sales. Influencer marketing will continue to drive significant revenue and is predicted to contribute between 18-22% of the region's e-commerce sales by 2028. In December 2023, [TikTok Shop Malaysia launched TikTok Shop Mall](#) hosting over 600 local and international brands with added product guarantees and exclusive benefits. This is a clear indicator of the potential and effectiveness of influencer marketing in driving sales and engagement.

Strategic Play: If you haven't yet, prioritize influencer marketing as a key component of your e-commerce and performance marketing strategy to tap into this lucrative local and regional market.

Matching The Right Influencer Archetypes to Brand Strategies

Influencer archetypes define the roles influencers play based on their distinct content and engagement style. The report



categorizes influencers into 5 main categories - Creatives enchant visually, Experts inform, Celebrities amplify, Campaigners advocate, and Friends connect deeply, enabling brands to tailor their messages for diverse audiences and market reach. [A campaign by Tourism Malaysia and Guardian](#) where health-focused social media influencers promote local travel destinations and advocate 'fit and healthy while travelling' is a good example of leveraging influencer archetypes.

Strategic Play: Craft your influencer strategies by aligning with the right archetype to ensure resonance with your target audience and maximise message effectiveness.

INFLUENCER MARKETING

... According to MalayMail, Malaysians watched over 34 million hours of livestreams on Shopee Live while Shopee saw affiliate-driven orders increase 420% with 20,000 new registered affiliates in 2023...

Engaging Across the Marketing Funnel

Influencer marketing can be utilised for a wide range of marketing objectives across the funnel from awareness to conversion and advocacy. Quantifying impact at different stages of the funnel used to be a major challenge however advancements in performance-tracking tools resolve this. The bigger challenge remains - balancing reach with relevance and ensuring that influencer partnerships are authentic and resonate with your target customers.

Strategic Play: Utilize data-driven influencer partnerships at each

funnel stage to maximize reach, enhance engagement, drive sales, and foster brand loyalty.

Influencer Payment Models and Measurement

Influencer marketing's success hinges on effective payment models and performance measurement. Fixed fees, sales commissions, and product sponsorships are key models, each aligning differently with performance outcomes that can be easily attributed to using robust performance-tracking platforms like impact.com. The report further highlights a 'hybrid' model which combines all three payment models.

Strategic Play: These varied models provide flexible strategies to maximize the efficacy and ROI of influencer collaborations aligned with your marketing goals.

Rise of Mega Live Sellers

An expansion of live-shopping or shoppertainment; local mega live sellers are partnering with well-known brands to turn their viewers into shoppers, changing the landscape of social commerce. According to MalayMail, Malaysians



watched over 34 million hours of livestreams on Shopee Live while Shopee saw affiliate-driven orders increase 420% with 20,000 new registered affiliates in 2023.

Strategic Play: Leverage influencers and incorporate live selling into your marketing strategies to utilize this interactive and compelling sales method.

ADVANCING INTO 2024

The convergence of authentic influence and performance marketing represents a significant shift in how influencers are repositioned as effective sales drivers and affiliates. As we advance into 2024, marketers must focus on understanding these shifts, embracing new technologies, and

effectively managing influencer relationships - driving both brand awareness and sales.

For an in-depth understanding of these trends and strategies, [get your free copy of 'The Power of Influence: E-commerce Influencer Marketing in Southeast Asia' research report.](#)

impact.com's team in Kuala Lumpur is ready to assist in implementing these strategies and maximising your influencer marketing efforts in Malaysia and Southeast Asia.

About impact.com

The impact.com partnership management platform is a Software as a Service (SaaS) platform which helps enterprises in Malaysia and Southeast Asia including Lotus's, Time.com, Yolofoods, Decathlon, Puma, ZALORA, Sephora and Malaysia Airlines discover, manage and optimise all types of partnerships – including affiliates, influencers, commerce content publishers, B2B, and more.

EXPERTS' CHOICE AWARDS

TOP 10 CHINESE NEW YEAR TVCS 2024

[SUBMIT NOW!](#)



Future is Now

24 things for 2024

Welcome to 2023A, also known as the year that seems to be very much a continuation of 2023, without many silver linings to lighten the dark clouds prevailing in the business zeitgeist.

Many client businesses and agencies I speak to seem worried about 2023A. The two big festival seasons, Chinese New Year and Ramadan-Raya being so close to each other, is making many think that the real work, excitement and new marketing efforts only starts in May 2024.

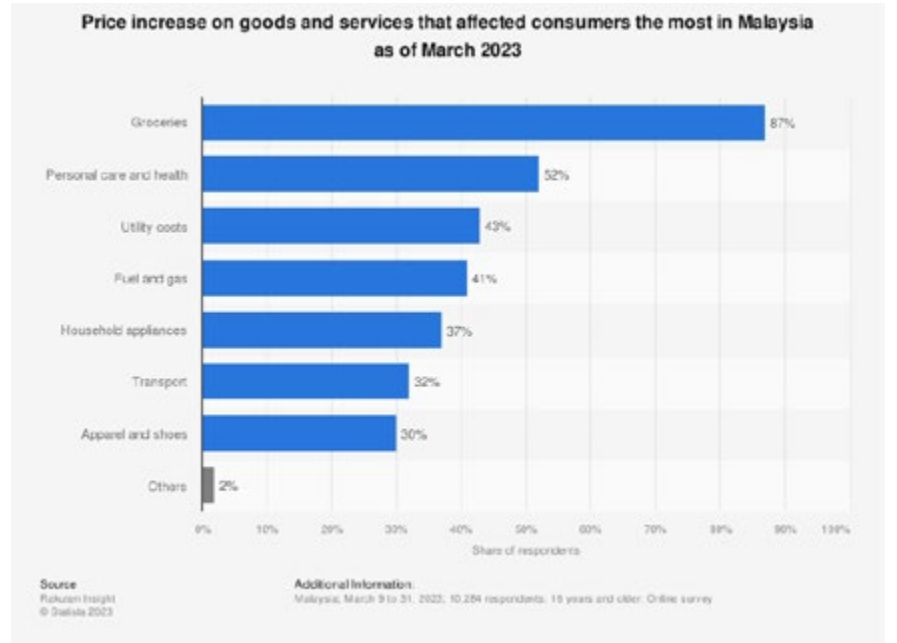
And yet meanwhile, the war in Ukraine shows no sign of abating, Israel-Gaza has many Malaysians saddened and angered, many brands are being boycotted, and pervasive Malaysian inflation is definitely hurting consumers.

So, in the spirit of being helpful as well as alliterative, here are 24 things for 2024, for marketers to think about and capitalize on. Hug your teddy bears close (though you may choose not to sleep with them) and enjoy the ride.



#1: Predictive models are not very good at predicting

Speaking at the Festival of Media organized by the Media Specialists Association in October 2023, Kiranjit Singh, Regional Head, APAC of Ipsos Strategy 3, spoke about how stable relationships between variables were breaking down. So, for instance, the relationship between GDP growth per quarter and consumer sentiment, which used to move in parallel, had post Covid started diverging. It's becoming harder to predict using precious methods and variables that worked in the past: for instance, while the stock market in Malaysia is 6% down



from its 3 year high, the national growth rate is estimated at 4.4%, which by itself is not unhealthy. Many corporates admit they over-projected for 2023, and have learned their bitter lessons. Projections for 2023A are flat across many companies.



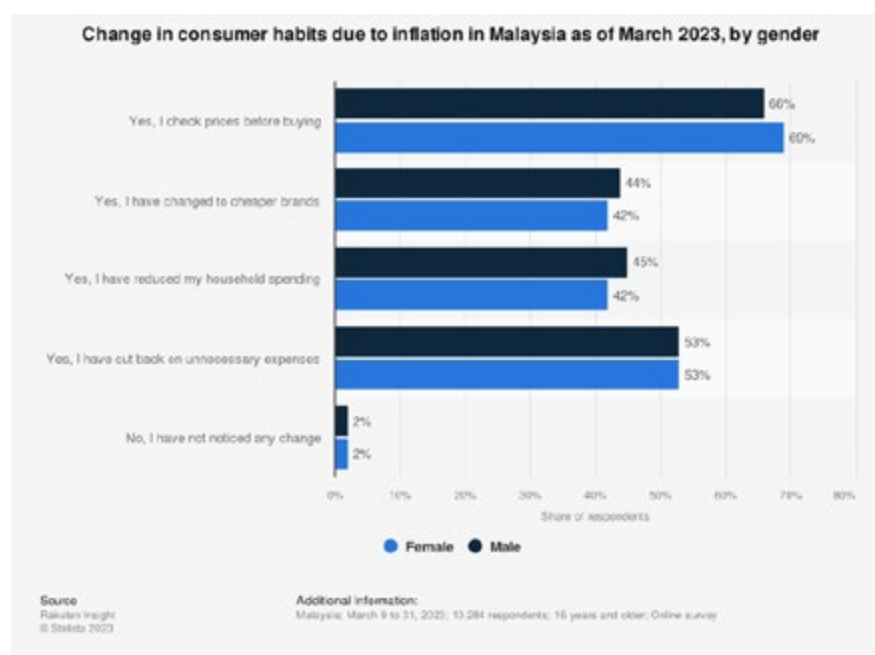
#2: AI is here to stay

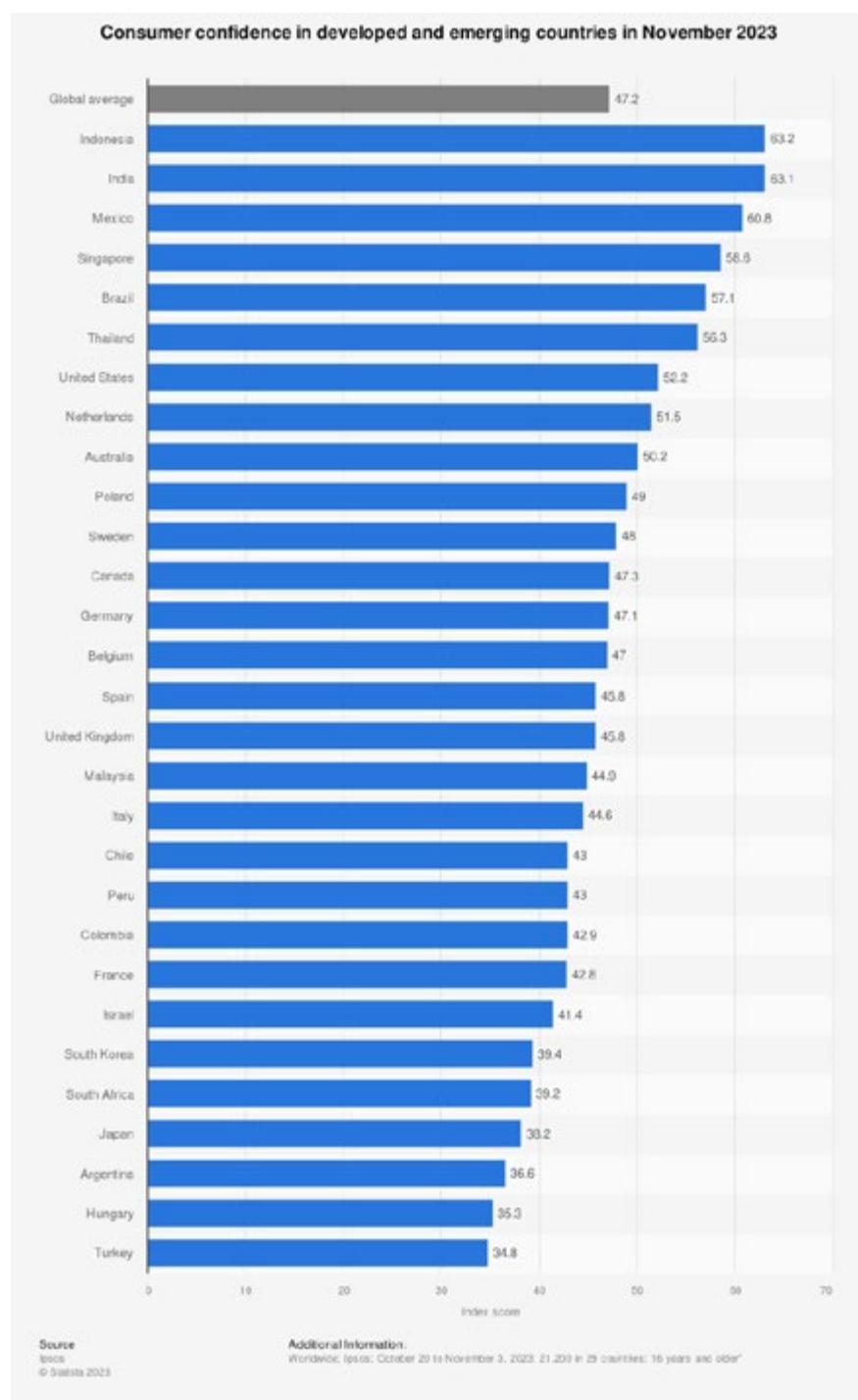
2023 was the breakout year for AI: record levels of funding, Chat GPT being used everywhere, including to write appraisal forms and speeches, new jobs like Prompt Engineer making a cameo appearance, and generative AI being used for imagery creation. This is just the beginning. AI is definitely here to stay, and some industries will find their cost structures completely changed, according to BCG. It's up to us to embrace AI: our behaviour and attitude to AI will help define whether it's an "Aiyoh" or "Awesome" year for our enterprises. Expect more AI news. And also expect

to be underwhelmed: Copilot is not widely available or used yet, the "wah!" will become "meh" unless more easy-to-use tools and softwares emerge.

#3 Inflation hits hard

The price rise is affecting consumers across all categories of expenditure:





#4: Consumers are adapting and cutting back

Consumer spending habits have changed in 2023 itself. Consumers are grappling with inflation and cutting back their spends on “unnecessary” expenses, across genders. Downtrading is on the rise. Expect this to continue in 2024.

#5: Consumer confidence takes a dent

Possibly as a result of inflationary pressures, amongst

...Consumer spending habits have changed in 2023 itself. Consumers are grappling with inflation and cutting back their spends on “unnecessary” expenses, across genders...

other factors, consumer confidence in Malaysia, as measured by Ipsos, is at 44.9 and is below the global average of 47.2. Our neighbours Indonesia and Singapore, by contrast, have amongst the highest consumer confidence in the world.

#6: Ad spend is not growing

According to Nielsen data below, total ad spend in the country has declined by 1.1% in 2023 versus 2022. This is based on rate card value: the actual decline will definitely be steeper. On the brighter side, nominally ad spend has exceeded the 2019 value, so we have “recovered” from Covid.

But 2021, 2022 and 2023 are plateauing at RM 12.5 billion. Expect 2024 to be stagnant too, and plan accordingly.

24 THINGS FOR 2024

	RM (Million)					YOY difference				
	Y2019	Y2020	Y2021	Y2022	Y2023	Y2019	Y2020	Y2021	Y2022	Y2023
FTA TV	2,495	2,529	3,503	3,490	3,612		1.4%	38.5%	-0.4%	3.5%
PAY TV	5,666	5,220	6,549	6,130	5,865		-7.9%	25.5%	-6.4%	-4.3%
Digital	781	933	1,026	1,288	1,458		19.5%	10.0%	25.5%	13.2%
Newspapers	1,875	1,102	966	1,058	901		-41.2%	-12.3%	9.5%	-14.8%
Radio	439	325	358	441	418		-26.0%	10.2%	23.2%	-5.2%
In-Store Media	83	54	69	24	15		-34.9%	27.8%	-65.2%	-37.5%
Magazines	47	29	25	27	30		-38.3%	-13.8%	8.0%	11.1%
Cinema	220	55	29	132	154		-75.0%	-47.3%	355.2%	16.7%
Grand Total	11,606	10,247	12,525	12,590	12,453		-11.7%	22.2%	0.5%	-1.1%

#7 TV is a mixed bag

Pay TV is seeing a sharp fall (-4.3%) compared to traditional Free to Air TV, which actually grew (+3.55%). Astro has work to do to arrest the slide, and it won't get easier in 2024, as consumers flock to Netflix, Viu and YouTube.

#8: Print is not coming back

Monitored Print advertising is at less than half of its 2019 level. Clearly, many advertisers are not coming back to print or have reduced their spends. This does not bode well for the future of reliable accurate news reporting.

#9: Digital is dominant, perhaps too dominant

When it comes to Digital, the Nielsen number above is not considered accurate, as platforms like Google, Facebook, TikTok don't report their Malaysia numbers. According to multiple leading media agencies, over 65% of all advertising budgets are being spent on digital platforms today, and over 80% of that spend is on global platforms.

Is this the best allocation?

Personally, I think the pendulum has swung too far towards digital and we need to ensure there is more traditional

24 THINGS FOR 2024

media in the mix. Econometrics data that Ampersand Advisory runs for its clients demonstrates clearly that multiple mediums deployed in advertising drive more sales compared to putting most of the budget on digital.

#10: Radio signals static

Radio ad spends have declined slightly. The medium is losing ad revenue not necessarily to platforms like Spotify, but perhaps as a category itself compared to digital video. With consumers listening to digital music, podcasts and more, clearly audio is an opportunity for progressive brands to explore in 2024.

#11: Instore advertising in trouble

As multiple retail formats proliferate, and consumers shop online too, retail in store advertising has plummeted. We don't expect this to recover in 2024. Instore ad budgets have shifted to in-app ads, we expect this to continue.

#12: Cinema goes lux

Cinema chains are seeing a return of crowds, and while ad dollars have grown, the spends

have not hit pre-pandemic high. There is a rise in luxury cinema experiences, including GSC's Velvet and Aurum theatres.

#13: Outdoor gets more specific

Programmatic Digital OOH, with its better targeting and specific messages, has been waiting in the wings for 2 years, on the periphery of the main action. The technology and the execution has still not matured. 2024 is a make or break year for this technology: either it will prosper, or more players will struggle to gain a foothold, and will have to invest for more time to see returns. My expectation is that pDOOH will make some headway but not become mainstream yet, as a lot of education and trial and error is still required.

#13: Electric vehicles will continue to grow

In May 2022 there were 15 EVs available. By October 2023, that number had jumped to 70. Expect 2024 to see more EV launches, and more such cars on the road, while charging facilities also increase. Range anxiety and difficulty of charging the cars is now perhaps the only

24 THINGS FOR 2024

factor holding the majority of consumers back.

#14: Consumers seek collective energy

As Professor Julien Cayla said at the MSA Festival of Media in October 2023 in Kuala Lumpur, consumers crave emotional connections and being part of a collective energy. Perhaps this need for connection in vast crowds has become heightened after the isolation of Covid. Hence you can witness the hunger to be part of socio-cultural experiences like the mega Taylor Swift experience, or Barbenheimer, or Coldplay. Or even the continuing appeal of Malaysian domestic football, which packs out stadiums and represents tribal sub-cultures of fans who all remember the glory days and wish they could somehow just beat Johor Darul Ta'zim, even once.

#15: Long-standing digital platforms may tumble

Lazada sacked top management unceremoniously, and they were not alone. Google, Meta, Carsome have all bitten the bullet and cut staff. Foodpanda is awash with rumours of a sale

to Grab. As digital businesses face existential questions, with the days of cheap venture capital long gone, there is a possibility of monopoly. Consumer rights may need to be protected and price gouging must be avoided.

#16: Remote working continues, but will be lesser

Knowledge workers in their twenties and thirties love remote working. Their bosses may be having second thoughts. Slowly we see workers headed back to offices, or switching jobs for the all-important "hybrid" work location. We expect that trend to continue in 2024. But office space seems less necessary than before the pandemic, and rentals may be slower to rise.

#17: Malaysia is smack in the middle of conflicting forces in 2024

Wondering how to reconcile the various articles and points of view you see in the news? Maybe this model will help.

Two eminent scientists, Inglehart and Welzel (2005) postulate that modernization moves in two phases. The transition from agrarian to industrial society fosters a shift

24 THINGS FOR 2024

from 'traditional to secular-rational values', the transition from industrial to postindustrial society a shift from 'survival to self-expression values'. They map various countries every year on these variables. Their latest map shows Malaysia smack in the middle: the forces of tradition are conflicting with the forces of secular-rational values.

Expect more heated arguments and debates, cultural conservatism and opposing forces trying to move towards more Western values.

#18: Sporting events will bring cheer

Two big sporting events, the Paris Olympics and Euro 2024, right next to each other in the calendar, will have TV manufacturers salivating and sports fans hooked. Advertising will be relatively slow to follow the consumer, but it will provide somewhat of an upturn post the festive season.

#19: Women not given their rightful places in senior management

Despite Women's Day being celebrated vociferously by all and sundry, the ground reality

of unequal pay and not enough women in Boards will continue. The Grant Thornton International Business Report: Women in Business 2023 states that only 40% of senior management positions in this country are held by women, the percentage remaining the same as the previous year's. Change in this crucial aspect will remain slow.

#20: Media rates not increase

As digital dominates, traditional media owners and even local digital media owners will be unable to increase their rates significantly. The bargaining power will shift more towards agencies and clients. More kinds of deals and opportunities will arise, for the innovators and risk-takers.

#21: Local movies will continue to gain traction

The successes of movies like the blockbuster action flick Polis Evo 3 and Malbatt: Misi Bakara, the more indie Imaginur and the critically acclaimed Abang Adik shows that more diverse storylines are finding audiences.. Expect this to continue with Astro Shaw being a key player. Watch out for Keluang Man and



that entertain, distract or provide creative diversions to improve mental health can all grow their business.

#24: Boycotts are hurting and will not end soon

Never have I heard of Starbucks offering 1 for 1 deals. But that was a recent reality in 2024. Businesses seen by angry and saddened consumers to be on the wrong side of the Israel-Palestine conflict are suffering significantly, and that pain won't end anytime soon, even if the aggression in the Middle

East does. The moral of the story: businesses need to take a stand and stand for what's right, in their local markets. Multinationals will suffer unless they adapt to local needs and realities.



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