

MARKETING

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WEEKENDER™

hitz

RADIO ACTIVATE YOUR MARKETING

Priya Dharshini Prabakaran
Director of Astro Audio

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What Say



“You can’t overtake 15 cars in sunny weather, but you can when it’s raining.”

Ayrton Senna



“Less test, more testicles!”

Jacques Séguéla, Founder of Euro RSCG which became Havas, was honoured with the Lion of St Mark award at Cannes Lions 2024.





To do two pushups. Cheating allowed.

Pretend you are swimming in the air.

Push up and down against a wall gently with your fingers.

Stick out your tongue at the mirror.

Make faces at your cat and start a new way of talking.

Do bicep curls with just your hands and arms. No weights required.

Lunge forward from your seat like you just saw a ghost.

Jerk your head in all

directions, like a hen bobbing its head.

Are you trying?

This is not an acting class.

Nor is it an ad for a lazy gym.

This is a word play exercise happening next Wednesday.

Change the headline and make it yours.

Make the story sparkle.

Own your destiny in the face of AI.

Try.



“Radio has a 95 per cent market space reach in Malaysia.”

Astro Audio's digital revolution and how it is thriving in the modern age

The one thing Priya Dharshini Prabakaran hates hearing the most is: "Radio is dead!"

She can't help but giggle every time she hears those three words because it is something many people continue to say, even though the facts indicate otherwise.

As Astro Audio director and someone in the business for over a decade, Priya admits times are changing. Traditional FM broadcasts must now compete with many digital platforms and streaming services.

Yet, radio remains the go-to for most Malaysians, and Priya believes radio stations have much more to offer listeners,

including in digital, and social media spaces. Astro Audio's 13 brands, and the SYOK application are eager to capitalise on the digital transitions.

SYOK is a multilingual entertainment application that offers listeners access to 85 online radio stations, a news channel, articles, podcasts and videos.

"Radio has a 95 per cent market space reach in Malaysia. That is an amazing number," said Priya, who oversees the creation and execution of content initiatives under the Astro brand.

"Other countries, like Australia, only have 60 per cent reach."

Having helped cement Astro



as the brand people think of when it comes to radio, Priya's message is loud and clear: "We are ready for the next evolution in radio".

"We cannot be complacent. If at any point that switch happens, we need to be 100 per cent prepared. We realise that our content is no longer 'on air'. People are consuming radio differently these days," said the psychology graduate.

While many still listen to us on the radio, some listen to us digitally via our SYOK

application – also available on the Astro box – or via our social media pages.

That is why we have shifted from saying we are 'stations' to being 'brands'. We are always 'on', no matter where you consume our content.

She cited the example of ERA presenters who were the first radio people to be on the catwalk during the Kuala Lumpur Fashion Week a few weeks ago.

"The announcers and presenters took part in the event. They posted about their

ASTRO AUDIO

experience on social media,” said Priya.

“Many who don’t listen to ERA the traditional way know our brand. And ERA’s viral TikTok from the Kuala Lumpur Fashion Week, and reactions to their social media posts, show that people consume radio differently these days.

We have podcasts of our shows online. The content is permanently out there, so if you missed it, you can consume it whenever you have the time.”

STAYING UP TO DATE WITH ‘LAGI FRESH’

Not one to rest on their laurels, Priya and Astro recently launched a campaign to help them remain No. 1.

Although a “well-oiled machine”, Astro hopes to remain relevant and to stay connected with its listeners via its ‘Lagi Fresh’ (staying fresh) campaign.

“In some ways, we were getting predictable, so we did an in-depth survey with Radio 360 to help shape Astro Audio’s future,” said Priya.

Under Radio 360, streaming data will be obtained directly from the source, via the daily collection of station server logs

and GfK Sensic Tag (digital audience measurements) across websites and listening apps. The technology captures when a radio stream starts and stops.

“We know we are No. 1 and have been so for 20-odd years, but we needed to evolve. We asked the listeners what they wanted. We received fantastic feedback – some things we knew, and some, we didn’t,” she said.

“The main one was to play more music, and have fewer announcements. We can’t play too much as it would affect business, but we have found ways to do block programming to satisfy the need for more music.”

Another thing the survey revealed was that Astro was right to phase out the prank calls segment, synonymous with its stations many years ago.

It also confirmed what Priya already knew – that song requests were back in.

“Our last prank call was on MY FM on Aug 2. It was a ‘thing’ 15 years ago, but people got fed up. We have to evolve,” she said.

“Something that came back and is in demand is song requests, which regained its popularity during the pandemic.

ASTRO AUDIO



ASTRO AUDIO

“Advertisers must realise that radio is mass. We have always been about reaching out to as many people as possible, not just in the Klang Valley or the urban areas,”

People were stuck at home listening to the radio. They were missing their friends, and one way they ‘connected’ was by sending song requests.”

The survey also taught her team to “unlearn” radio, take on a digital mindset, and figure out what they needed to do to be relevant to today’s listeners who may not tune in at a fixed time, every day.

“If we don’t change or evolve, then the doomsayers would be right – radio is dead,” said Priya.

“It was about understanding if the content we were putting out was relevant to today’s listeners. We had to look outside the ‘radio bubble’ and see if people cared what was on air.

“It is also what we do on the ground. We held several events

around the country. The response was amazing. Our presenters were like rock stars.”

WHY NOT?

One way of staying ahead and being No. 1 is to look at the big picture and say: “Why not?”

Priya said advertisers are used to brands saying no, or giving short shrift to out-of-the-box ideas. But Astro Audio is different.

“Advertisers must realise that radio is mass. We have always been about reaching out to as many people as possible, not just in the Klang Valley or the urban areas,” she said.

“We want to do things that excite people. That is why when the CelcomDigi merger happened, we suggested a partnership with another radio station that was not under Astro’s stable.

“It was about getting the widest reach, and they were happy to do it. So, come with us with whatever ideas you have. The crazier the idea, the better.”.

Priya said that while the brand remained the same, culturally, it is a ‘new Astro’, and the brand is willing to take risks to stay ahead of its competitors.





Kudisia Kahar, Priya Dharshini & Vishnu

Most of those in leading positions in Astro are only in their 30s, and they have ‘Lagi Fresh’ ideas to shake things up.

“We must change this narrative that we are not evolving,” said Priya.

“We have one manager who is 28 – the same age as the brand! So, you can’t say we are doing the same things as these young leaders have fresh ideas.”

With comprehensive real-time data from Radio 360 and a determination to evolve and be relevant to today’s listeners, Astro Audio resolves to remain No. 1 in Malaysia.

Stay tuned for more.

LAST CALL!
0377262588



APPROVED HRD CORP
TRAINING PROGRAM
NO 10001335252



MASTERCLASS FOR WRITERS

W O R K S H O P

With Professor Harmandar Singh aka Ham

28th August 2024
8.15am - 6.00pm
Eastin Hotel





Epic Fails, and why they slap

Recently the tiny world of Malaysian advertising was agog with the fact that a billboard had used a visual created with generative AI, that depicted 3 Petronas Towers in a sunlit haze from a drone's eye view perspective.

Malaysia's largest companies still operate from the Twin Towers

EPIC FAILURE



and not triplet towers, so this was, in a sense, an epic fail, as today's youth would call it. It started making news headlines.

Many pundits, professionals and patterers rose with glee to this bait, happy to pontificate on LinkedIn.

Their general gist was clear and peppered with outrage.

"See see see! AI doesn't work! It's rubbish!"

"AI will destroy the world!"

"Aiyoh la AI! Why like this lor. Better to have human lah!"

Seeing this social cacophony, I reached out to Wow Media, the company that had executed this unfortunate faux pas, and they graciously admitted it was human error. They humbly and promptly admitted their error and apologised on social media.

Cut to one week later.

Lo and behold, no surprise at

EPIC FAILURE

... It would be great if more agencies and clients signed on for a culture of experimentation, trial and error, continuous learning and treated every campaign as a stepping stone...

all, when I checked with Mary, their Executive Director, she said it seemed to have blown over. I told her I admired their response and urged her to keep working with AI. Because she had had the courage to use it in the first place.


And, as the dust settles, and the LinkedIn gurus seek new matters, AI quietly goes on transforming our world.

I just wanted to use this storm in a teacup to highlight the fact that it's the humans who will fail AI, not the technology itself. And it is the other humans who want to deny progress who will castigate, criticise and heap calumny on AI and its users. Yet fails like this must not deter us, they must instead spur us on to explore, try and try again, because the rewards we can reap far outweigh the risks.

Another current example comes to mind. I was attending a PR event where Syed Saddiq was speaking, and he was sharing various social media campaigns he had tried, and how much money they had raised. Once one memorable occasion he offered to shave his head bald when a certain milestone was reached. It was reached, and his pate was bared. But more importantly he spoke about trying and failing and trying again. These were some of the successful campaigns, but there were many failures too along the way. Every good performance marketer or digital optimizer would agree with him.

It would be great if more agencies and clients signed on for a culture of experimentation, trial and error, continuous learning and treated every campaign as a stepping stone, and not a make or break.

Finally, let's not be shy to talk about our own not quite so epic fail. In 2023, when we entered the APPIES, we treated it as a training ground for our junior staff. We threw them into the deep end of the competition, with very little notice. They fared bravely, hearts in mouth in front



... Failures make us try harder and motivate ourselves...

of a tough jury of CMOs, but our return haul of metals, while decent, was relatively sparse.

For me, it was a “failure”. Perhaps I had underestimated the competition. But we took this “failure” in our stride and took those feelings of loss to heart, with the aim of avoiding feeling like that again.

This year we entered again, and while we had lots of young staff involved, working passionately to win, we ensured we peppered in some seniors too.

And we started prepping earlier, and working on our cases.

It’s not an accident that we won big, winning far more medals than any other agency, whether they be creative or media agency. We won a grand total of 11, from the total of 27 given out that night.

The lesson for me was that failures are required to succeed, or to slap, as Gen Z says.

Failures are required to give us extra motivation.

Failures make us try harder and motivate ourselves.

And failures are probably 90% of the iceberg we don’t see below the water.

And yet without failures success has less meaning and doesn’t taste as sweet.

Here’s wishing you a great Epic Fail so that you succeed.

Sandeep Joseph is the CEO and co-founder of Ampersand Advisory, Campaign Global



Media Independent Agency of the Year and FT Statista 500 High Growth Companies Asia Pacific 2023, 2024. He can be reached at sandeep@ampersand-advisory.com

CREATIVE SHOWCASE



Netflix Philippines acquired 6 Filipino films after their theatrical release and to announce the arrival of the titles on the platform, GIGIL Philippines and Netflix tapped into Filipino pop culture and revived the classic art of promoting films – the hand-painted billboards.

MOST READ ON MARKETINGMAGAZINE.COM.MY

(17th August – 23th August 2024)

The APPIES 2024 Winners
Pageviews: 3,305



Renowned Advertising Thinker joins Ampersand Advisory
Pageviews: 3,102



Havas Malaysia wins PRO-NET, propels PROTON's EV Revolution
Pageviews: 3,011



GrowthOps Asia powers up creative and performance
Pageviews: 2,975



"EH! It's Ean & Haniff On The Fly Breakfast" - The Next Big Thing in Malaysian Radio
Pageviews: 2,587



Trillion-dollar question, answered.

What can reposition a local telco to the centre of Asia's tech boom?
Its untold stories. An unreleased techco global-ranking.
Its AI unit's proprietary tech behind SoftBank's digital marketing.
Its next first in frontier markets. A rising tech titan,
brought to light by **Visible Brand Actions™**.

sambal!ab™

!ASEAN. Fastest-growing digital market globally. World's 4th-largest economy by 2030,
GDP of US\$4.5 trillion. World Economic Forum insight report 2020.

Axiata ranked among 12 global players in telco-to-techco benchmark total scores. Omdia study 2024.

SoftBank incorporates the Axiata AI unit ADA's proprietary tech in data, analytics and consumer AI models
in its digital marketing business outside Japan. SoftBank-ADA alliance 2021.

Axiata in 5 frontier and emerging markets across ASEAN and South Asia.

Controlling stakes in major operators and digital-firsts since 1993. Strategic and structural shifts from 1Q24.

Axiata comms strategy & direction 2024, PR storyhouse.