

MARKETING

ISSUE #461 APRIL 2026

WEEKENDER



MARKETING DIDN'T NEED MORE CREATIVITY. IT NEEDED ACCOUNTABILITY.

A Behind-The-Scenes look at how Unifi rebuilt marketing into a measurable growth engine — trading activity for outcomes, and campaigns for commercial impact

WEEKENDER

Published by **Sledgehammer Communications (M) Sdn Bhd**. 22B, Jalan Tun Mohd Fuad 1, Taman Tun Dr. Ismail, 60000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Tel: 603-7726 2588. ham@adoimagazine.com.
www.marketingmagazineasia.com

COVER STORY



07

**BEHIND THE AWARDS:
WHAT IS REALLY
HAPPENING INSIDE
UNIFI MARKETING**

EDITOR'S NOTE

04



ARE YOU ON?

15



**B2B MARKETING
IS SO EASY**

20



**ICYMI:
DOES ANYONE CARE
ABOUT YOUR BRAND**

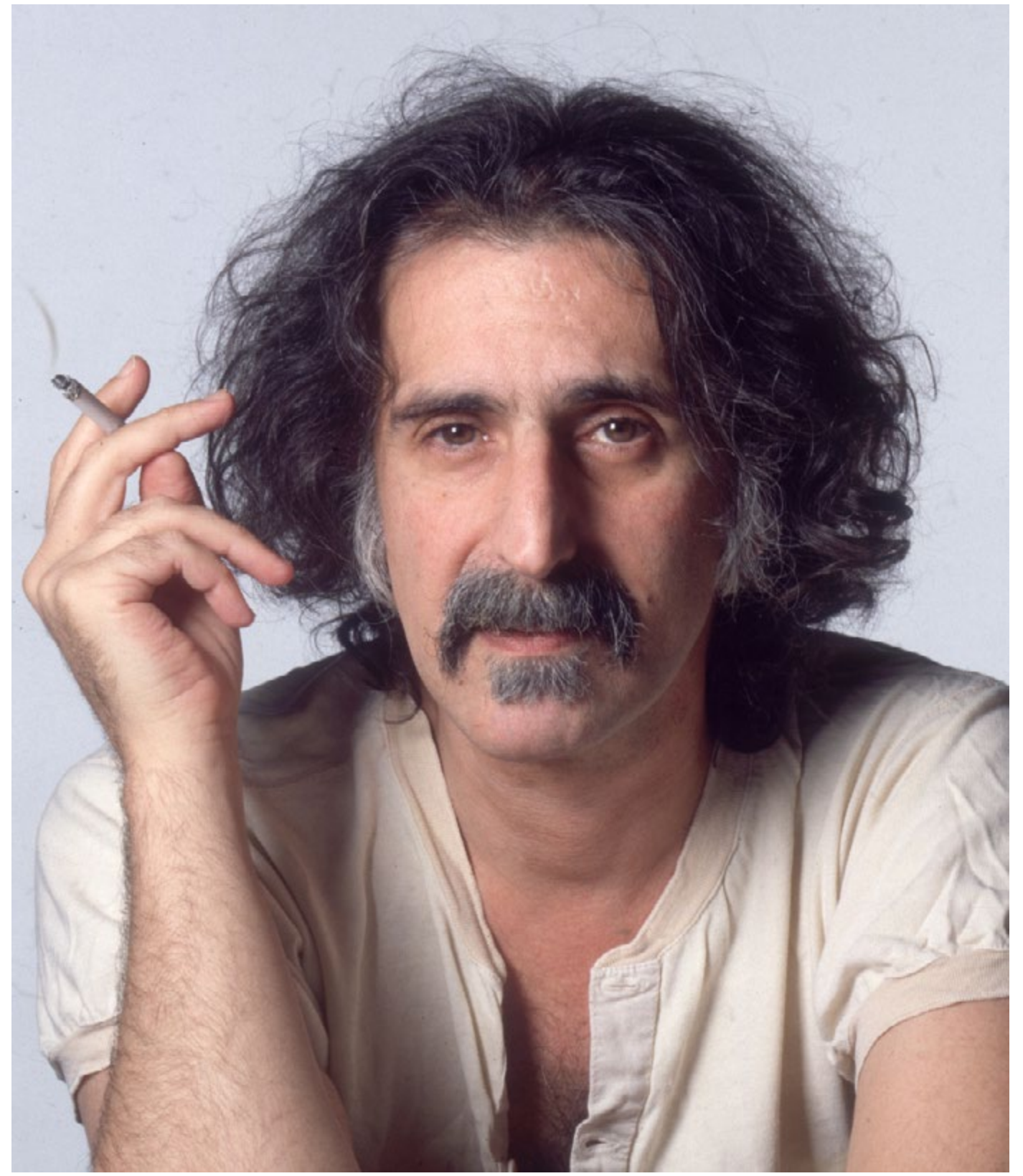
25



popculture
**MARKETING
EXPERTS'
CHOICE
RAYA**
TVC AWARDS 2026

“People will agree with you only if they already agree with you. You do not change people’s minds.”

Frank Zappa

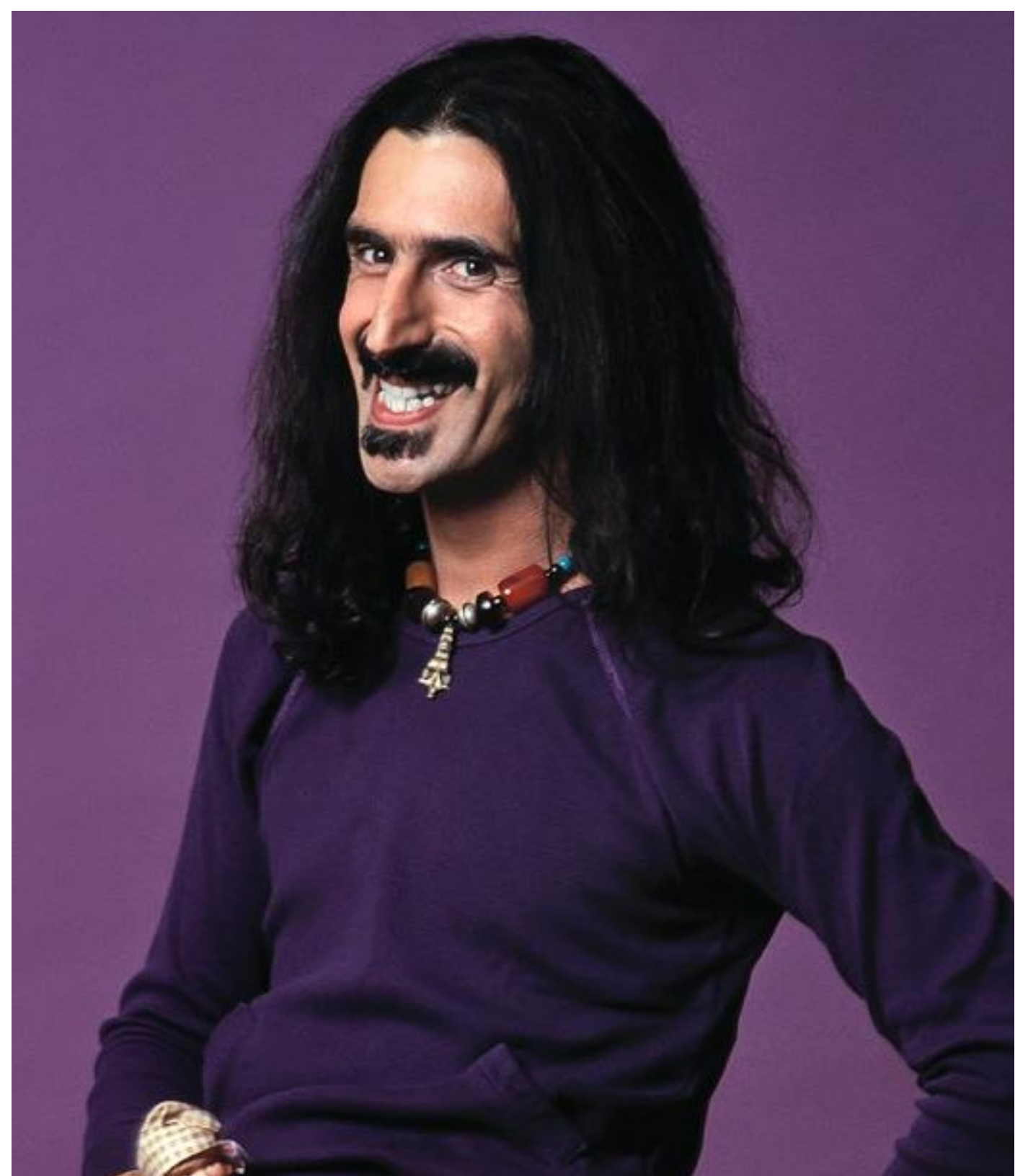


“A mind is like a parachute. It doesn’t work if it is not open.”

Frank Zappa

“The United States is a nation of laws: badly written and randomly enforced.”

Frank Zappa





ARE YOU ON?

It was close to midnight when the call came in.

Not a briefing. Not a pitch.
An SOS.

From MERCY Malaysia...

President Datuk Faizal didn't speak in marketing language.

There were no decks, no data, no KPIs.

Just urgency.

Lebanon needed help.

And suddenly, everything we do in this industry, the strategies,

the frameworks, the debates about platforms and performance, felt... secondary.

Because this was not about marketing.

This was about response.

We often talk about disruption.

But this is what disruption looks like in the real world.

Lights flicker. Systems fail. Lives are interrupted.

And somewhere in that darkness, people wait.

Not for a campaign.



... Tonight, as you read this, ask yourself one question: Are you on? Because somewhere else, someone is hoping that you are...

But for help.

So we built one anyway.

A simple idea.

One word: LEBANON.

And the last two letters, ON, struck through.

Because in a stop/start world, the only thing consistent is our humanity and the urge to help.

This is not an award entry.

This is not a case study.

This is a reminder.

That marketing, at its best, is not about persuasion.

It is about action.

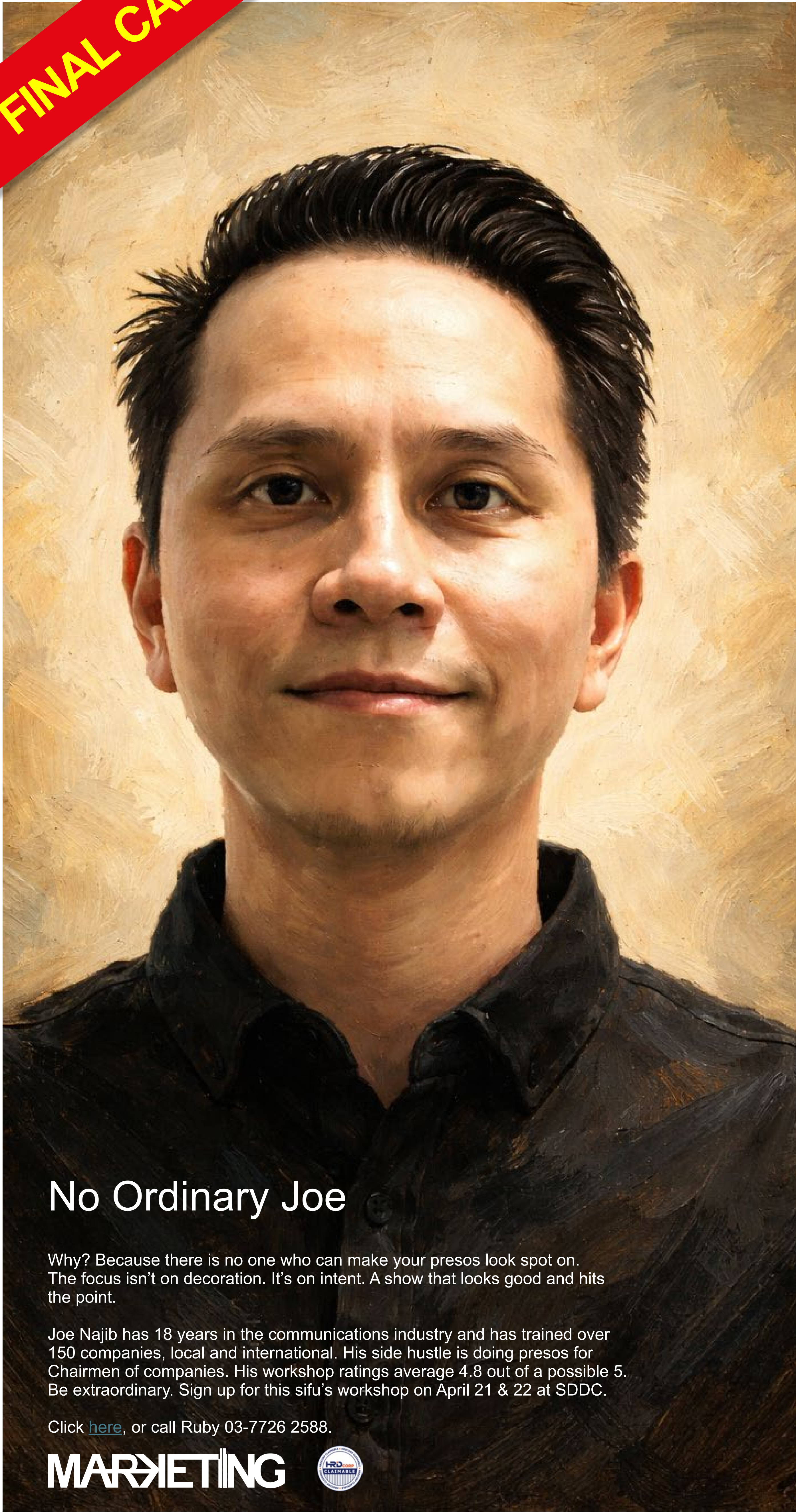
Tonight, as you read this, ask yourself one question:

Are you on?

Because somewhere else, someone is hoping that you are.

Call or email me if you are serious on helping me in this mission.

FINAL CALL



No Ordinary Joe

Why? Because there is no one who can make your presos look spot on. The focus isn't on decoration. It's on intent. A show that looks good and hits the point.

Joe Najib has 18 years in the communications industry and has trained over 150 companies, local and international. His side hustle is doing presos for Chairmen of companies. His workshop ratings average 4.8 out of a possible 5. Be extraordinary. Sign up for this sifu's workshop on April 21 & 22 at SDDC.

Click [here](#), or call Ruby 03-7726 2588.

MARKETING



BEHIND THE AWARDS: WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING INSIDE UNIFI MARKETING



OVER THE PAST YEAR, UNIFI'S MARKETING TEAM HAS BEEN COLLECTING AWARDS AT A RATHER IMPRESSIVE RATE. PUTRA BRAND OF THE YEAR, PUTRA PLATINUM FOR TWO YEARS RUNNING, MARKIES, DRAGON OF ASIA, MARKETING EXCELLENCE AWARDS, HASHTAG ASIA AND PC.COM

“Most marketing doesn’t have a performance problem; it has an honesty problem, mistaking activity for impact instead of delivering real growth”

Andrew Pinto
Vice President, Brand and Marketing
Unifi



... In a market where competitors outspend you, this becomes dangerous. Because marketing without measurable impact isn't a growth engine. It's overhead...

PLATINUM. GOLD. SILVER. BRONZE.

The sort of collection that garners enthusiastic LinkedIn feeds. But here's the thing. Awards are not the strategy but proof that something underneath is actually working.

And in Unifi's case, that "something" wasn't just a few clever campaigns. It was a complete rebuild of how marketing works, how it's measured, and how it contributes to growth.

Because here's the uncomfortable truth. In telecommunications, infrastructure is increasingly a commodity. Fibre is fibre. Towers are towers. Everyone promises speed. And Unifi's competitors have even deeper pockets.

A marketing function that is constantly in motion—producing campaigns, content and clever taglines—yet unable to demonstrate its impact on growth is, in effect, revving in neutral. Active, but going nowhere.

What follows isn't a story about advertising aesthetics or shiny campaigns. It's about what actually had to change.

THE UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH

When the team started reshaping Unifi's Brand, Marketing and Digital functions, the problem wasn't effort. Campaigns were running. Content pipelines were active. Media spend was monitored. Social channels were constantly producing material.

On the surface, everything looked productive, but productivity and impact are very different things.

Unifi had long been synonymous with broadband connectivity. Fibre built the brand, scale and trust. But the business had evolved.

The brand has expanded into mobile, entertainment through Unifi TV and smart home solutions as well as for MSME we have digital solution such as Digital Marketing Solution (DMS). The brand has evolved but their marketing hadn't grown along with it.

Activity that existed across broadband, mobile, TV, devices and business segments did not have a singular commercial objective and the link to portfolio growth wasn't always obvious. In a market where competitors outspend you, this becomes dangerous. Because

“We shifted marketing from activity to accountability and built a system designed to deliver consistent, measurable growth”



◀ **Jo-Anne Jayasiri**
General Manager
Unifi Marketing

Randi Chiah ▶
General Manager
Digital
Unifi



marketing without measurable impact isn't a growth engine. It's overhead.

THE FIRST BIG CHANGE: MEASURE EVERYTHING

The first shift was philosophical, but also practical.

Before Unifi changed campaigns, they changed what was measured. If something moved the budget, it needed a metric. If something consumed resources, it required accountability.

Instead of starting conversations with creative ideas, they started to focus on four less glamorous, but more effective questions: What problem are we solving? Which segment actually drives value? Why will we win? And how will we measure success?

This was the moment marketing moved from theatre to engineering.

In an era where catchy jingles are no longer mistaken for effectiveness, Unifi understood that messages that don't connect to a real consumer pain point or commercial objective, is simply noise.

Along the way, Unifi discovered that much of the activity they had grown used to wasn't delivering impact. So they reduced the number of campaigns and took bigger leaps.

They embraced a sharper focus that created tangible results. Marketing stopped being campaign-led, it became outcome-led.

DATA: DECORATION VS CONTROL

Every organisation today claims to be data-driven, but often dashboards sit quietly in PowerPoint slides while decisions remain exactly the same. Real data-driven organisations, however, work differently.

While data governs decisions, scattered data creates chaos. By consolidating everything from media performance, CRM data, retail metrics, app analytics to social listening in a singular ecosystem, Unifi discovered that transparency exposes inefficiencies. Bringing those together required technology, governance and alignment across teams on what success actually meant.

Conversations shifted from impressions to incremental growth. Budgets became dynamic and optimisation became continuous. Ultimately, marketing began speaking the language every business ultimately cares about: results.

THE REAL INVESTMENT: PEOPLE

While technology accelerates performance, it is the people who determine it.

At Unifi, being a marketer was no longer about simply managing agencies or delivering assets. It required commercial literacy, analytical thinking and ownership of outcomes.

“We replaced silos with one shared engine. Aligning media, social, creative and performance to drive measurable growth through data and outcomes”



Alyaa Ramlan
Head of Social
Unifi

Siew Fai
Head of Digital
Marketing
Unifi

Faizal Azlan
Head of Creative
Unifi

Afifa Dean
Head of Agency
and Media
Unifi

... Infrastructure builds access. Influence builds preference. Cultural relevance builds connection. Talent builds capability....

And here's the part that rarely appears in award case studies. Change is uncomfortable.

Unifi weathered the initial resistance as expectations shifted, standards rose and long-established ways of working were being challenged.

Some people struggled with that, others chose to move on. But once the results began to appear — stronger performance, clearer impact — the shift made sense. And the discipline that initially felt demanding became empowering once people could see how their work contributed directly to business outcomes.

To accelerate this transition, Unifi brought in senior subject-matter experts who operated as player-coaches. Unlike consultants who deliver presentations and disappear, these were practitioners who execute and mentor at the same time.

By working alongside the team — transferring knowledge, raising standards, and embedding stronger operating disciplines — Unifi ensured that capability stayed within the organisation.

THE STANDARD MOVING FORWARD

Culture is a word organisations

talk about frequently. In reality, culture is more than a motivational slogan; it's behaviour people repeat every day. And a winning marketing culture is built on three things: ownership, trust and standards.

And while results matter, it doesn't mean perfection. Strong teams don't hide from underperforming campaigns, they learn, adjust and improve.

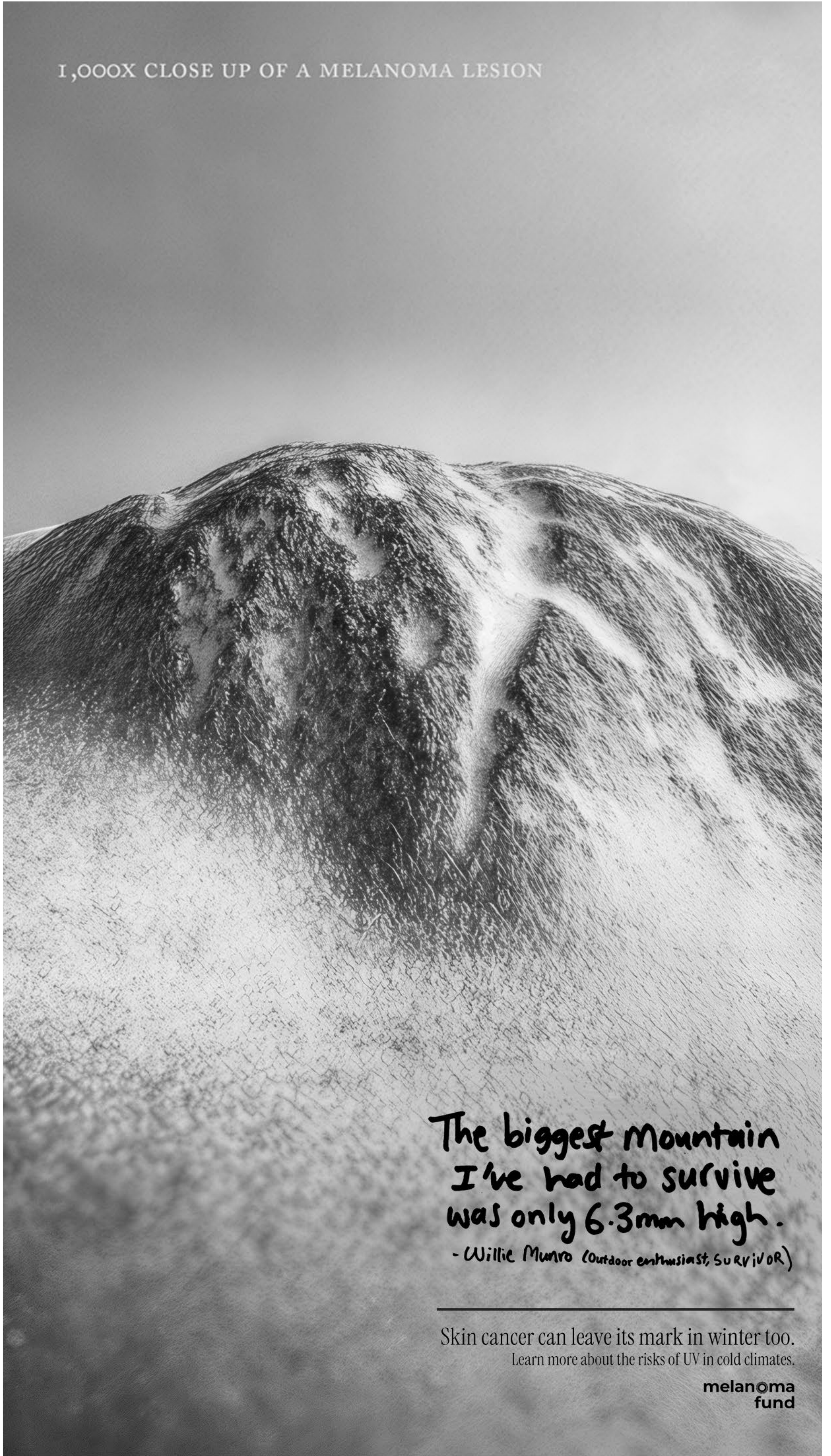
The ambition was to build a marketing organisation capable of supporting a human-centred technology company, and one where insight, creativity, data and accountability operate as a single growth engine.

Because building a brand today isn't just about visibility, it's about resonance.

Infrastructure builds access. Influence builds preference. Cultural relevance builds connection. Talent builds capability. Culture builds resilience. Accountability builds growth.

Today, credibility is earned through measurable impact. And awards? They're simply the by-product. When the engine is well built, the driver understands the track and the team moves with pit-crew precision, winning stops being the objective. It becomes the default.

1,000X CLOSE UP OF A MELANOMA LESION



The biggest mountain
I've had to survive
was only 6.3mm high.
- Willie Munro (Outdoor enthusiast, SURVIVOR)

Skin cancer can leave its mark in winter too.
Learn more about the risks of UV in cold climates.

melanoma
fund



B2B MARKETING IS SO EASY

There's a neat little B2B fairy tale many of us grew up with:

"B2B is simple. Small target list. Usually the CEO decides. Just send a direct offer (email or direct mail), include lots of technical info, and make the price attractive. If the offer is good, they buy."

IT SOUNDS LOGICAL. BUT OUTDATED.

Modern B2B buying doesn't work like a straight line from "email sent" → "CEO says yes" → "invoice paid." It works more like a messy group chat where seven people are in the thread.

Here are the facts that break the fairy tale:

- The decision is rarely made by one person.
- Forrester reports an average of 13 people involved in the buying decision, with 89% of purchases spanning two or more departments.
- Decision-making takes months, not days. 6sense reports an average buying cycle of 10 months in 2025.
- Buyers compare multiple options. The average buying team evaluates 4-5 vendors. That's exactly why branding is climbing to the top of the B2B

... As McKinsey's report notes, branding is no longer a "nice-to-have" in the B2B World, but a stabilizing force in volatile markets. For B2B companies, brand strength increasingly determines whether a company is even considered during the buying process...

agenda: McKinsey research found that branding is the #1 priority for the B2B marketing leaders in 2026.

In the buying groups, influence doesn't always correlate with job title: the Gen Z intern (or junior analyst) might be the one building the first shortlist, collecting "safe" vendor names, and shaping what the boss even gets to consider — so if your brand doesn't feel familiar and credible before outreach, you may never make the list in the first place.

As McKinsey's report notes, branding is no longer a "nice-to-

have" in the B2B World, but a stabilizing force in volatile markets.

For B2B companies, brand strength increasingly determines whether a company is even considered during the buying process. Trust reduces perceived risk and simplifies complex decisions.

This is exactly where emotions come into play: B2B buying may be justified with spreadsheets, but it's often driven by confidence, safety, and personal stakes ("Will this make me look smart... or get me blamed?").

That's why B2B can't stay trapped in purely rational messaging, it needs to borrow the emotional effectiveness of B2C, but translate it into relevant feelings like trust and reduced risk.

Research by LinkedIn B2B Institute reports that B2B strategies that appeal to emotion are 7x more effective at driving long-term business effects than purely rational messaging.

In B2B, the biggest marketing risk in 2026 is being indistinguishable. Buyers shortlist fast, so marketers need to be bold and fearless—stand out clearly, or don't get considered.

B2B marketing is not easy at all...

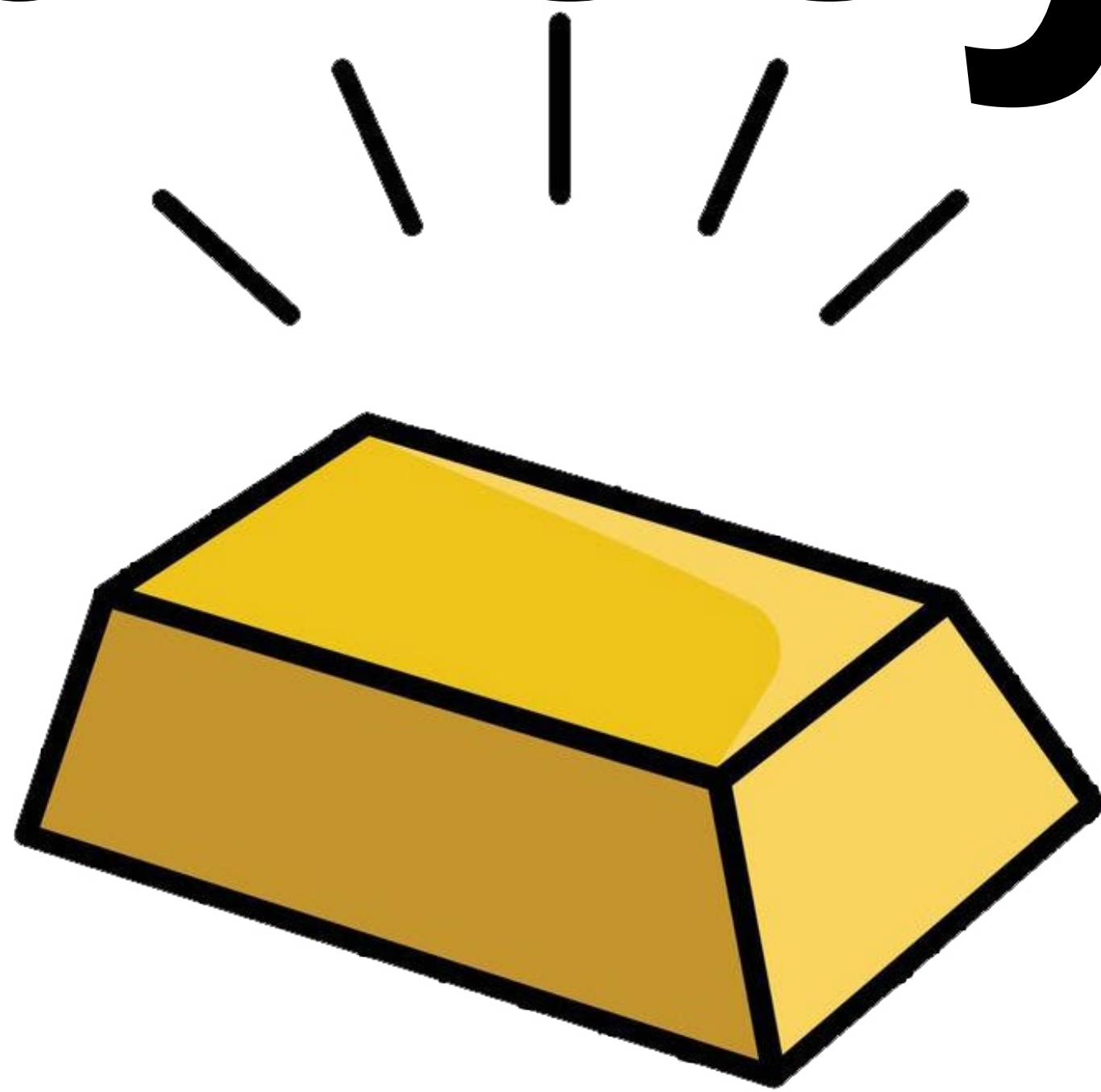


Hando Sinisalu
The Founder of Marketing Parrot B2B

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/b2bcontentexpert/>

www.marketingparrot.com

The price of gold is getting pricey!



GOLD STANDARD MALAYSIAN AGENCIES & BRANDS: The Ham Report is here! Ranks the top 10 Malaysian agencies, marketers and brands based on unique Gold wins from the Best of 6 Shows: APPIES, Kancil Awards, MDA d' Awards, MSA Awards, Effie and Dragons. In its fourth year, the Ham Report is a ready reference to marketers and brand-builders.

Best viewed on desktop, laptop, tablet.

Web: <https://weekender.com.my/hr2025>

PDF: <https://hams.top/hr2025pdf>

Give Peace A Chance





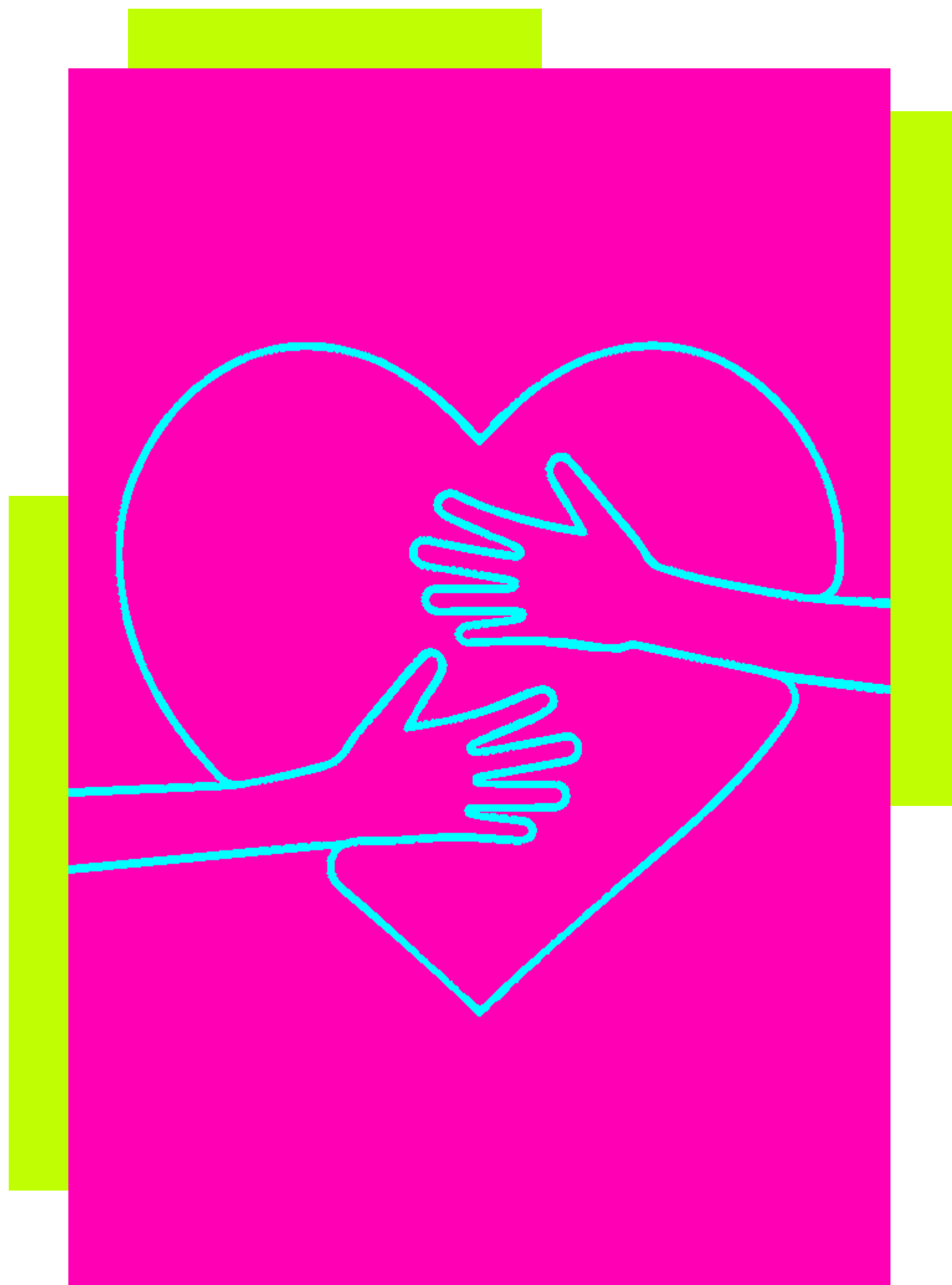
THE HAMTM
R E P O R T
GOLD STANDARD IN INDUSTRY RANKINGS 2025

**GOLD STANDARD
MALAYSIAN AGENCIES &
BRANDS**

GOLD STANDARD MALAYSIAN AGENCIES & BRANDS: The Ham Report is here! Ranks the top 10 Malaysian agencies, marketers and brands based on unique Gold wins from the Best of 6 Shows: APPIES, Kancil Awards, MDA d' Awards, MSA Awards, Effie and Dragons. In its fourth year, the Ham Report is a ready reference to marketers and brand-builders.

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ICYMI: DOES ANYONE CARE ABOUT YOUR BRAND

We all want our brand to be loved. It's only natural. And yes, there are some "Miss Popularity" brands out there that people actually care about. And yes, we each have a handful we are attached to.

But for the most part, Ms Marketer, other than you and your mom, there are alarmingly few people who give a damn about your brand of... pickles, half-and-half, mayonnaise, cookies, tires, chewing gum, toothbrush, umbrella, dishwasher, napkins, toaster, gasoline, horseradish, dental floss, paper towels, golf balls, shoe laces,

pillows, pencils, deodorant, nail clippers, furniture polish, frozen chicken strips, lamps, potting soil, bathing caps, glassware, clocks, fungicide, dish towels, cat litter, sun block, cookie dough, motor oil, light bulbs, burglar alarms, ironing boards, fire insurance, coffee filters, pillow cases, mouthwash, vacuum cleaner bags, shower curtains, and the thousand other things they buy every year.

Branding experts tell us that consumers want to "join the conversation" about brands, and be part of a brand-centered "tribe" or

... Because some brand babbler says so? Because your boss says so?...

“community.” They also tell us that a brand that aligns with our values will be rewarded by the sharing of enthusiasm for the brand with our online community.

And if you believe any of this nonsense you're nuts.

To prove a point...let's have a look at your own behavior and see how it aligns with the beliefs of these experts.

Think about your refrigerator. Think about all the stuff that's in there: The cheese, the juices, the jelly, the butter, the beer, the soda, the mayonnaise, the bacon, the mustard...

Now think about your pantry. The cereals, the beans, the napkins, the flour, the detergent, the sugar, the rice, the bleach, the paper towels...

Next your medicine cabinet. The toothpaste, the pain relievers, the shampoo, the soap, the bandages, the deodorant, the dental floss...

Now your closet and dresser. Your socks, your underwear, your shirts, your pajamas, your swim suit, your t-shirts, your sweaters, your jeans, your slippers...

Now your garage. The battery, the tires, the wiper blades, motor oil, gasoline, the air filter, the muffler...

Now answer these questions:

- Do you “share content” about any of this stuff?
- Do you feel “personally engaged” with these brands?
- Do you “join the conversation” about any of this stuff?
- Do you feel like you are part of these brands’ “tribes” or “communities?”

If you don't, why in the freakin' world do you believe anyone else does?

Because some brand babbler says so? Because your boss says so? Because you learned it in some bullshit advertising course?

In fact, a smart marketer assumes that no one gives 10% of a flying shit about her brand. She assumes that she has to prove its value to her customers every day. She takes nothing for granted. She does not believe that there are hoards of “brand ambassadors” out there in cyberland “advocating” for her brand. If there are a few, great. But she's not going to count on it.

For a smart marketer, every day is Groundhog Day. Every day you have to get up, drag your ass to work, and remind the world – once again – why they should buy your stuff.

That's why god created advertising.



Bob is a writer and speaker. He has written seven books about advertising, each of which has been an Amazon #1 seller.



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BRAND, RANK AND YEAR IN
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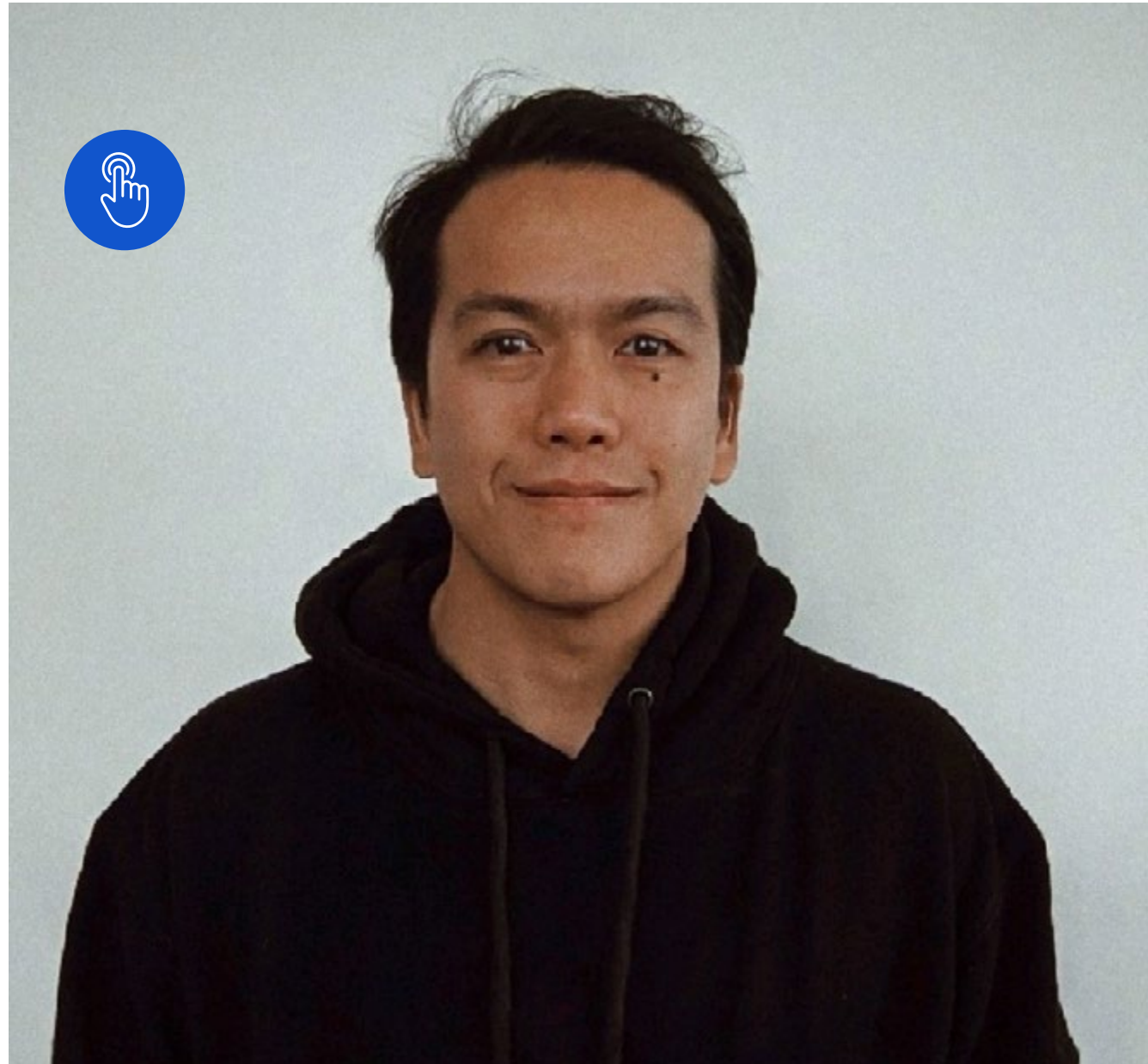
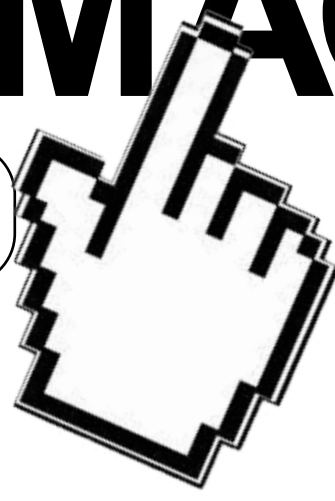
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(04th April – 10th April 2026)



MALAYSIAN NAZ KASIM NAMED FIRST ECD, ART & DESIGN, M+C SAATCHI NORTH AMERICA

Pageviews: 3,305



MOVING WALLS STRENGTHENS GLOBAL LEADERSHIP BENCH AS IT ENTERS ITS NEXT PHASE OF GROWTH

Pageviews: 3,102



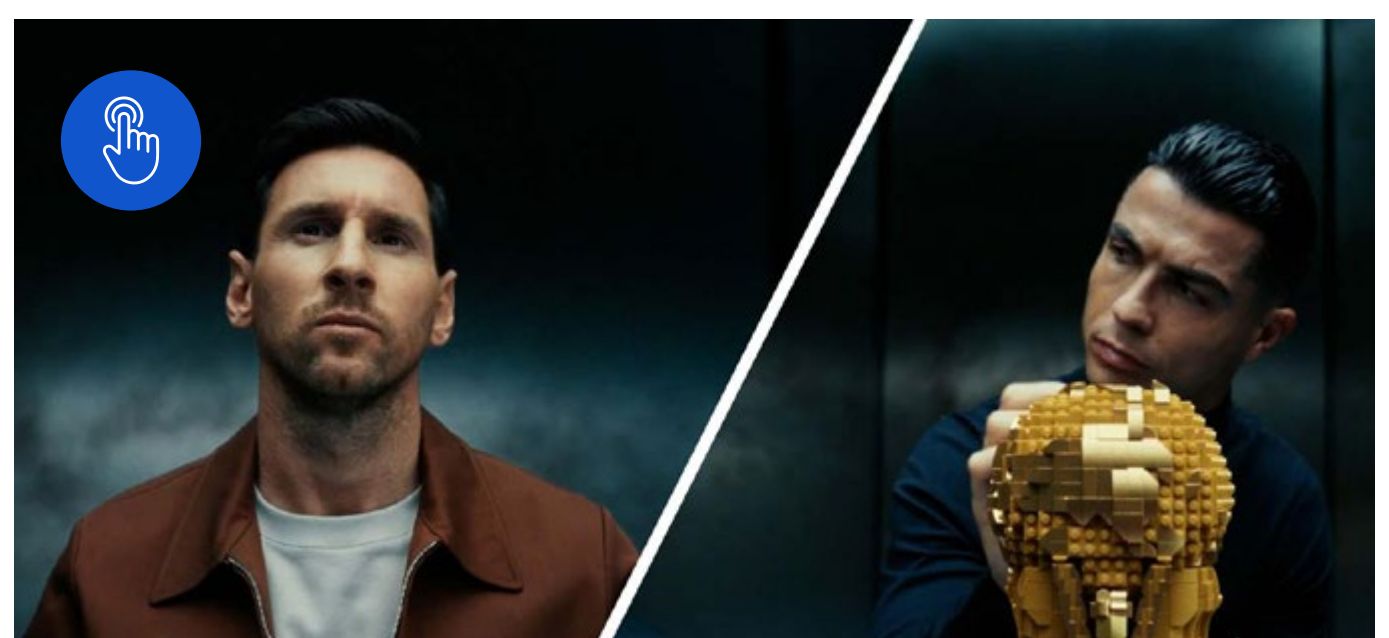
APAC EFFIE APPOINTS THE SHOUT GROUP'S SHAUN TAY AND PEPSICO'S BERNARD CHENG AS HEADS OF JURY FOR 2026

Pageviews: 3,011



WHY BRANDS SHOULD PAY ATTENTION TO JAPAN'S PROVOCATIVE PHALLIC PARADE

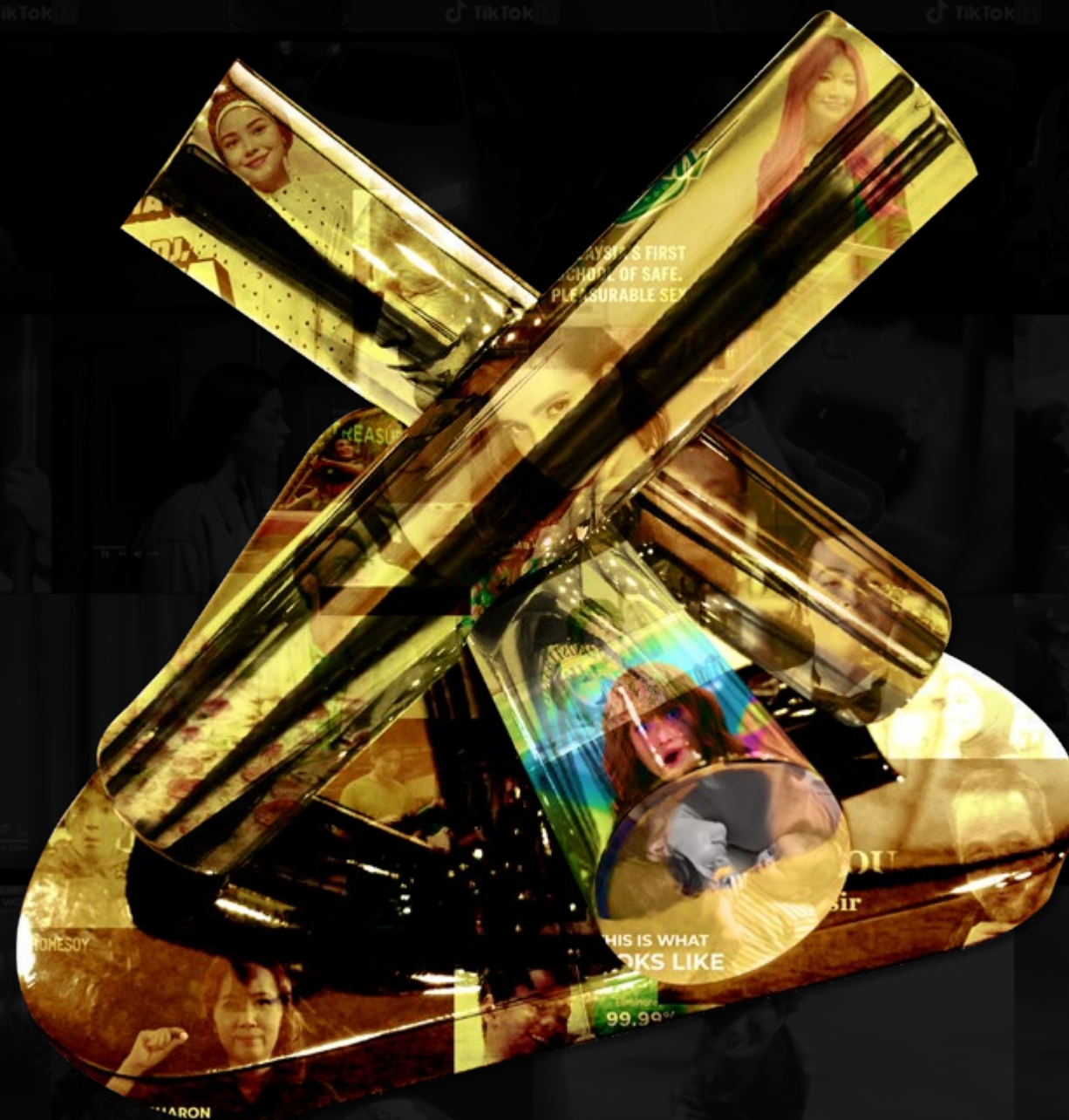
Pageviews: 2,975



LEGO SEATS MESSI AND RONALDO AT ONE TABLE, THEN REWRITES THE RULES OF FOOTBALL MARKETING

Pageviews: 2,587

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APPIES**
MALAYSIA
MARKETING CAMPAIGNS AWARDS



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Our annual roundups of the Best CNY, Merdeka, and Raya TVCs have grown into a highly anticipated tradition, with reader participation rising from just a few hundred votes to more than 5,000 in recent years. Unlike rankings driven by YouTube views or media spend, our lists are entirely shaped by reader preferences, offering a genuine reflection of audience sentiment. With that, here are the Top 10 Experts' Choice Awards Raya TVCs 2026, presented in no particular order:



MR.DIY Raya 2026: Raya Sama-Sama

Brand Name: MR.DIY

Agency: N/A

Production House: Brava Production (Indonesia)



Etika Raya 2026 - Dongeng Pak Delulu

Brand Name: Etika

Agency: N/A

Production House: Imagineers Film



Raya Ikut Rasa

Brand Name: Air Selangor

Agency: N/A

Production House: Trifecta Collective Sdn Bhd



Curahan Rasa, Meriahkan Raya

Brand Name: Sunquick

Agency: Havas Malaysia

Production House: Project Room Productions

MARKETING EXPERTS' CHOICE RAYA TV AWARDS 2026



SUARA HATI

Brand Name: BANK RAKYAT

Agency: N/A

Production House: TANGERINE FILMS SDN BHD



Slay-Mart Hari Raya | JALINAN KASIH YANG MENGHIDUPKAN RASA

Brand Name: Mirinda (Etika Sdn Bhd)

Agency: Astro Media Solutions

Production House: Astro Shaw



The Sweetness of Togetherness

Brand Name: SIME DARBY PROPERTY

Agency: M&C SAATCHI (M) SDN BHD

Production House: SHOOT WORKS ASIA



Bersama Semoola

Brand Name: Farm Fresh

Agency: Edelman Malaysia

Production House: Faizal Noar



AmBank Group | Raya 2026 | Di Sebalik Anyaman

Brand Name: AmBank Group

Agency: Skribble Me Malaysia

Production House: WSVS Studio

In Its 15th Year. The Malaysian Marketing Conference 2026 is in its 15th year and is themed FEARLESS:

FEARLESS

“It is the refusal to play small, speak in sanitised slogans, or let consensus dilute every decision into something forgettable.

Choosing sharp intent over vague messaging, outcomes over optics and integrity over convenience. FEARLESS is for leaders who would rather be respected than merely liked, who would rather be precise than popular and who understand that real growth comes from hard choices made early, not excuses made later.”

SPEAKERS & PANELISTS



Prof Harmandar Singh
Creative Provocateur



Jamshed Wadia
Founder Aldeate Solutions



VJ Anand
Founder & Chief Creative Officer @ Ballsy



Santharuban Thurai Sundaram
Former CEO of Etika Group of Companies, inaugural Malaysian CMO of the Year award winner



Adam Wee
Former Group CMO of Maybank and CIMB Group. Founder and CEO of tourism tech venture ExplorAR



Hando Sinisalu
Founder, Marketing Parrot, Estonia



Chris Jaques
Founding Partner & CEO, Transformation Group. Former CEO of APAC, Europe & U.S. @ Omnicom, WPP.



Mia Goh
Manager Ms. Bianca



Oliver Chon
Strategy Planning Executive Dentsu



Anson Goh
Regional Performance Marketing Lead, Mars Wrigley



Amira Mahathir
Creative Strategy ZUS Coffee



Linda Hassan
Former Group CMO of Domino's Pizza Malaysia & Singapore



Lisette Sheers
Founder & Creative Director NALA Designs



Rudy Khaw
Former CEO of AirAsia brand.co Founder of Lobby Hours

