

MARKETING

ISSUE #462 APRIL 2026

WEEKENDER™



FEARLESS

15TH MALAYSIAN MARKETING CONFERENCE

Who would rather be precise than popular and who understands that real growth comes from hard choices made early, not excuses made later.

WEEKENDER

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COVER STORY




Malaysian
Marketing
Conference
2026

07

**... CHOOSING SHARP INTENT OVER
VAGUE MESSAGING, OUTCOMES
OVER OPTICS AND INTEGRITY OVER
CONVENIENCE...**

EDITOR'S NOTE

04



**THE SQUEEZE,
NOT THE SEIZURE**

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“Sell your cleverness and buy bewilderment.”

Rumi



“Fear is the cheapest room in the house. I would like to see you living in better conditions.”

Hafez

“Human beings are members of a whole, in creation of one essence and soul.”

Saadi Shirazi





THE SQUEEZE, NOT THE SEIZURE

The Iran war is not a distant headline for Malaysian marketers. It is a pricing story, a confidence story, and a test of how well you understand your customer when the ground starts to shift.

Let's be clear. This is not yet a full-blown supply seizure. Oil is still moving. The United States is allowing passage for tankers lifting from non-Iranian ports, which means crude from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait and the UAE continues to flow through the Strait of Hormuz. Iran's own exports are only a fraction of that traffic.

So yes, the danger is less than the worst-case scenario.

But less danger does not mean no danger.

Because the real issue is not just Iranian oil. It is the chokepoint itself. Hormuz is where a large share of the world's energy supply passes through. When that artery tightens, even slightly, the body reacts. Freight costs rise. Insurance premiums spike. Delivery timelines stretch. Prices start to whisper before they shout.

This is what we are seeing now. A squeeze, not a seizure.

And squeezes are enough to change behaviour.

For Malaysian consumers, it starts quietly. Petrol edges up.

... For sectors like travel, automotive and retail, the pressure will show early. Higher fuel costs ripple through fares, logistics and margins...

Flights feel expensive. Groceries creep. No one panics. But everyone recalibrates. The question shifts from “Do I want this?” to “Do I need this now?”

That single shift is where marketing wins or loses.

Premium without proof becomes vulnerable. Convenience without value becomes indulgence. Brand stories that float above reality get ignored.

But brands that understand the moment can move faster than the market.

Value becomes strategy, not discounting. Pack sizes, bundles, and smart pricing architecture start doing the heavy lifting. Messaging

shifts from aspiration to reassurance. Not cheap, but worth it. Not louder, but clearer.

For sectors like travel, automotive and retail, the pressure will show early. Higher fuel costs ripple through fares, logistics and margins. Consumers respond by delaying, downgrading or demanding more justification for every ringgit spent.

For B2B, the mood tightens. Decision cycles lengthen. Procurement gets sharper. Marketing that cannot demonstrate ROI will struggle to stay in the room.

And media? Expect scrutiny. Performance channels will be asked to prove themselves daily. Brand campaigns will need a stronger commercial spine.

This is not a crisis yet. It is a warning.

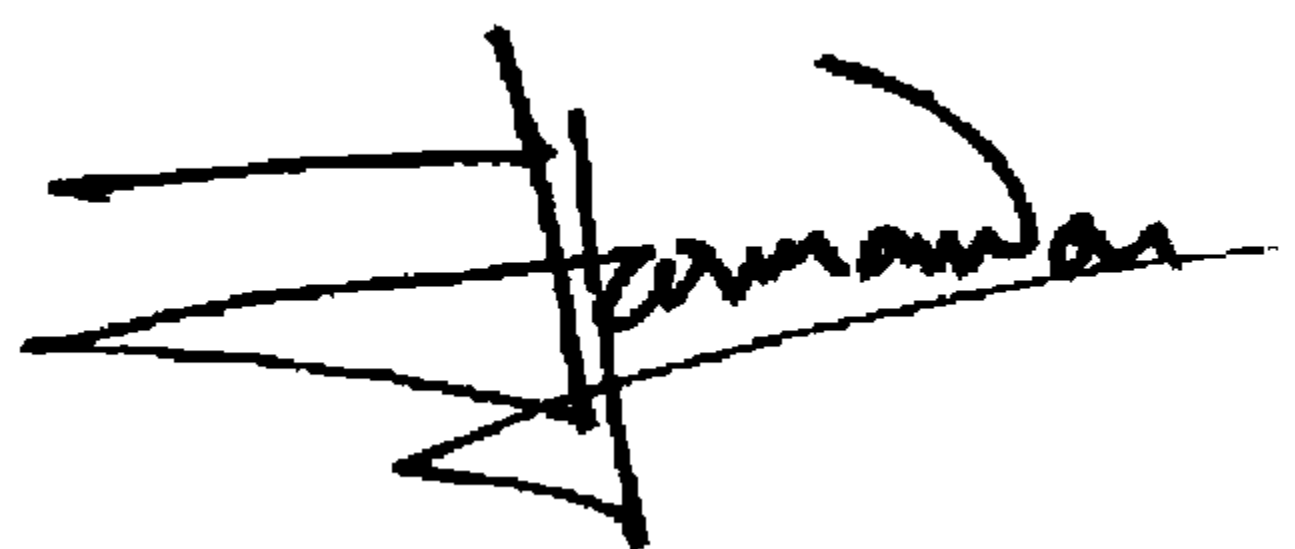
The market is telling you something before it forces you to listen.

In moments like this, lazy marketing gets exposed. Useful marketing gets rewarded.

So here is the only question that matters now.

Why should anyone buy you today, when tomorrow feels uncertain?

Answer that well, and the squeeze becomes your advantage.



**... CHOOSING SHARP INTENT
OVER VAGUE MESSAGING,
OUTCOMES OVER OPTICS
AND INTEGRITY OVER
CONVENIENCE...**

Malaysian
Marketing
Conference
2026

Into its 15th year,
the Malaysian Marketing Conference
has become a landmark event for all
serious marketing communications
and media professionals.

JAMSHED WADIA FOUNDER, AIDEATE SOLUTIONS.

With more than three decades of experience, Jamshed Wadia has built a career around reinvention, leading change, and helping organisations navigate disruption across marketing, sales, digital transformation, data driven strategy, and audience engagement.

As founder of Aideate Solutions, he partners with brands and agencies on marketing transformation, executive branding, AI enabled strategy, and AI governance.

Jamshed mentors startups through TASMU (Qatar), Eduspaze (Singapore) and HP Garage 2.0, advising on product development, user experience, positioning, and global scale up.

He also serves as an Independent Advisor to Mavic.ai on AI ethics, governance, product market fit, and growth.

Previously, he built Marketing Centres of Excellence at Intel and led Edelman's Asia digital practice, owning the P&L, shaping digital solutions, and integrating AI into workflows and strategy.

He frequently guest lectures at universities and speaks at industry forums on marketing transformation, leadership, and the evolving role of AI in business.

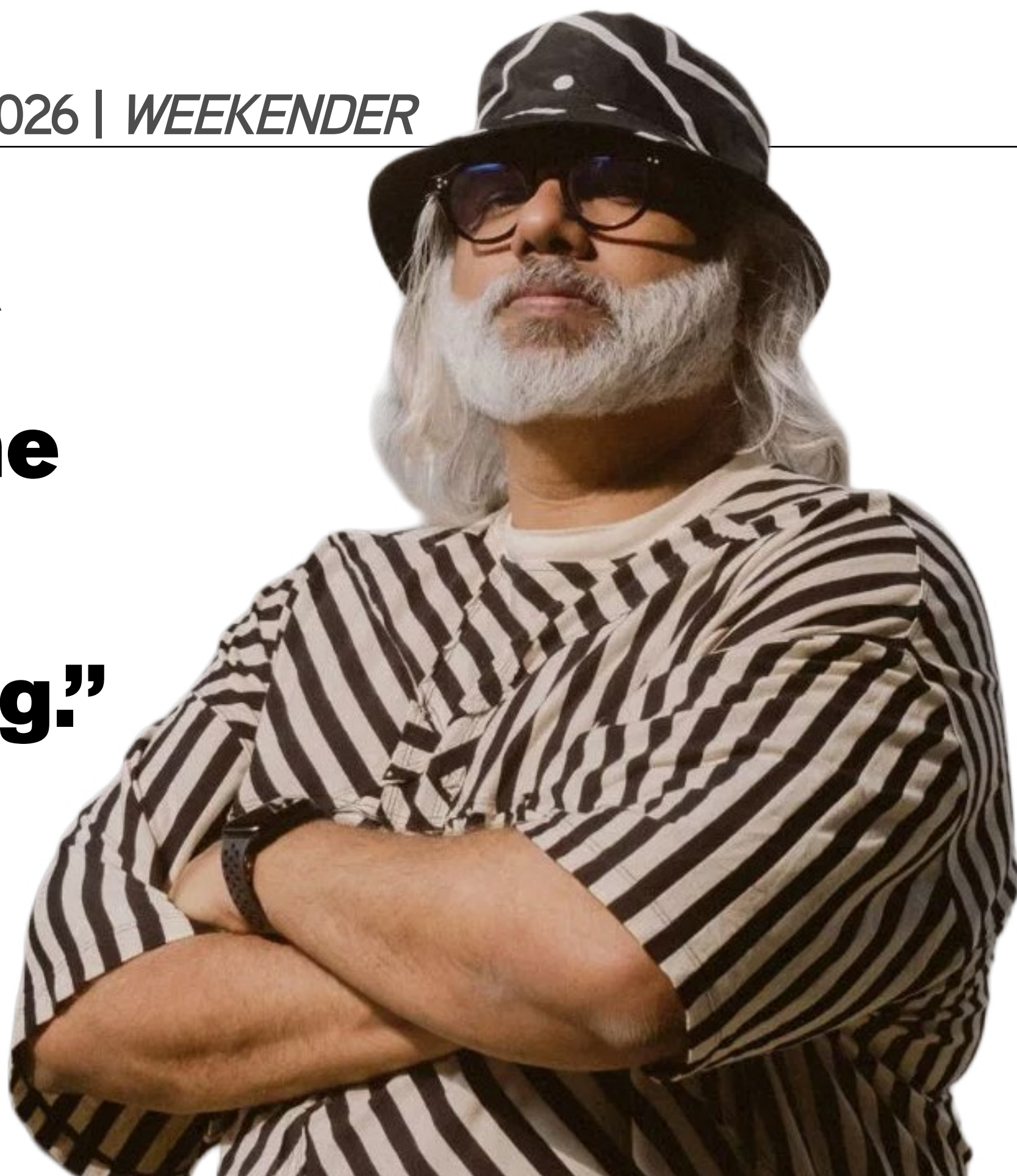
On stage, he cuts through the AI noise and get brutally practical about what fearless marketing looks like now. He will explore how to use AI without losing brand truth, how to build trust while the data rules tighten, and how to turn speed and automation into real advantage....



“Data can target. Only courage can connect.”

COVER STORY

“The idea is easy. Having the nerve to back it is everything.”



VJ ANAND
FOUNDER & CHIEF
EXPERIMENT
OFFICER, BALLSY

From building agencies to making stunts go viral, VJ Anand is your guy. This Taiping-born lad is one of Malaysia’s finest creative exports and has now returned to the region.

Former Senior Vice President of Creative of Gojek , Indonesia’s first decacorn tech giant, and then the Regional Head of Creative and Managing Partner of VaynerMedia APAC , VJ is your go-to guy if you want your brand to be the talk of the town.

At Gojek, VJ helped grow an internal creative team from 10 people to a 120-strong team. He headed up the creative, social, in-app content, and activation for the Indonesian decacorn. He helped rebrand them in his last months at Gojek and created an iconic branding sounds for the Indonesian giant.

His last piece of work which was a music video with Rich Brian for

Gojek went viral, leading to a hire by Gary Vaynerchuk to help build VaynerMedia APAC. VJ came into an agency of four people and helped grow it to an agency of 221. Here, VJ has run numerous global and regional campaigns for Google, Disney+, Subway, SK-II and global work conceptualising and shooting a music video with John Legend for the SK-II brand.

In his two-year stint in Europe and a global role, VJ recently launched a massive Olympics campaign for Visa across 6 different countries in a mini docu-series on social and also worked with Charli XCX for a Revolut campaign with Wired Magazine.

VJ has launched ‘ballsly’, an independent brand consultancy based in Singapore last year which now has extended to London.

At this Conference, he will take aim at “safe” creative and the beige work that passes for progress. He will unpack what fearless creative really demands in an AI-soaked world, with sharper truths, fewer committees and ideas with teeth...

CHRIS JAQUES**FOUNDING PARTNER & CEO,
TRANSFORMATION GROUP,
FORMER CEO OF APAC,
EUROPE & U.S. @ OMNICOM,
WPP.**

Chris is Head of Team Science at 'Make Great Teams' – Asia's leading specialists in the science of teams, teamwork and team performance.

Chris applies the learning from Team Science to help companies transform their business performance, workforce engagement, corporate transformation and innovation.

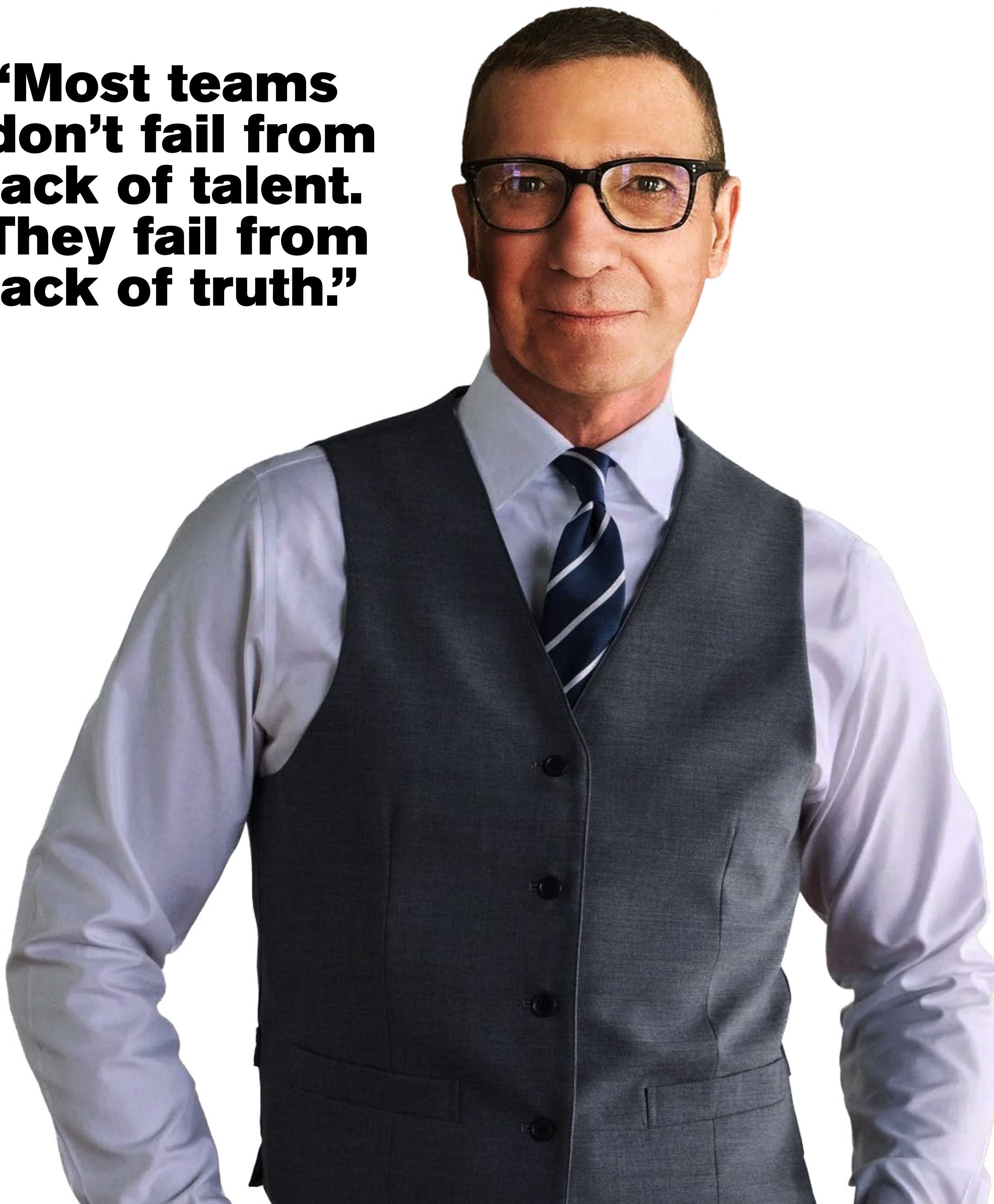
He has spent his entire career

building and leading thousands of high-performance teams across five continents.

Prior to founding 'Make Great Teams' he was Regional Chairman & CEO of North America, Europe and Asia Pacific for some of the world's leading communications groups, including BBDO, Young & Rubicam Group and M&C Saatchi.

Chris has always played the role of contrarian. In this riveting closing keynote, he will talk about Team Dynamics, agency management, crisis playbooks and team operating models...

“Most teams don't fail from lack of talent. They fail from lack of truth.”



“*Fearless B2B marketers turn complexity into clarity.*”



HANDO SINISALU **FOUNDER, MARKETING** **PARROT, ESTONIA.**

Hando is Founder and CEO of Marketing Parrot, previously known as Best Marketing International, and is the co-founder of Best Marketing, the leading Estonian marketing news and events organization (part of Äripäev/Bonnier Business Media).

He has produced over 200 marketing conferences in 24 countries, from South Africa to South Korea and from Indonesia to Spain.

He also hosts the morning show at Äripäeva Raadio, Estonia's leading business radio station.

Hando has served as the official representative of the Cannes Lions Festival in Estonia and assisted the American Marketing Association in establishing Effie Awards programs

in Croatia, China, and Ukraine.

In 2023, he published the first book dedicated to B2B marketing in Estonia, “The Short Wisdom of B2B Marketing.” In June 2014, he co-authored “The Best of Global Digital Marketing: The Storybook” with Mike Berry, Ann-Kristin Kruuk, and Maarja Paabut (Laasu).

Hando has received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Estonian Marketing Association for contributions to the development of the Estonian marketing industry.

At this Conference, Hando will tell you B2B does not have to be boring. Hando will show where fearless B2B marketers really win, by turning complex offers into sharp stories, building trust that shortens sales cycles and making marketing pull its weight in pipeline...

SANTHARUBAN THURAI**SUNDARAM****FORMER CEO ETIKA GROUP OF COMPANIES (MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE, BRUNEI & EXPORTS)**

Santharuban Thurai Sundaram, widely known as Ruban, is a transformative business leader at the intersection of FMCG and content, shaping how brands grow and connect with culture across ASEAN. As CEO of Etika Group of Companies for Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and Exports, he has steered the organisation towards category growth, brand innovation, and regional market leadership.

Ruban has been instrumental in building powerhouse brands such as WONDA, Goodday, Calpis, and Mountain Dew, while pioneering content-driven marketing models

that blur the lines between brand and culture. His initiatives include Calpis Soda One in a Million, a live reality show, and Abah Saya Uncle Mike, Malaysia's first branded feature film - both groundbreaking examples of how consumer brands can transcend traditional advertising to become part of the cultural fabric.

Celebrated as one of Malaysia's most dynamic leaders in marketing and business, Ruban's accolades include Malaysian CMO of the Year (2018), Marketer of the Year at the AMEA Awards, Advertiser of the Year at the MSA Awards, and a Gold Effie.

From April 2025, his mandate expanded to lead Etika's global Halal Export business, advancing Malaysian brands onto the world stage and reinforcing ASEAN's position in the global Halal economy.

“Brands don't grow in markets. They grow in culture.”



“Creativity without commerce is just decoration.”



LINDA HASSAN
FORMER GROUP CMO OF
DOMINO'S PIZZA
MALAYSIA & SINGAPORE.

Linda's passion for radical innovation and creative digital transformation has been key to her strategic leadership for Domino's Malaysia, Singapore and Cambodia.

Coupled with over 25 years of experience in the international QSR industry, her vast expertise entails brand communication, Marcomm tech, digital innovation, e-commerce, CRM, product innovation and customer-centricity.

Linda has established herself in the Food and Beverage industry as a multi-faceted driving force towards innovation, armed with a comprehensive understanding of tomorrow's groundbreaking technologies, ever-evolving trends, and consumer needs.

By placing the utmost importance on brand

communication, creativity, and willingness to explore new opportunities presented by emerging technology and digital information, Linda's clear vision and strategy continues to strengthen Domino's brand presence in Malaysia, Singapore and Cambodia.

Linda formed a strong foundation for the brand in Malaysia and was instrumental in establishing the brand in Singapore.

At Domino's, she leads a team of over 25 across various fields of creative and digital expertise in all three markets. Her love and dedication to the brand is reflected in her creative strategies coupled with effective business solutions.

Linda Hassan is a celebrated Malaysian CMO of the Year and at this Conference she talks to young and bright minds from the NexGen podcast series about creating pathways to excellence in the industry...

ADAM WEE

FORMER GROUP CMO OF MAYBANK AND CIMB GROUP. FOUNDER AND CEO OF TOURISM TECH VENTURE EXPLORAR.

Adam is an experienced marketing and business leader with a demonstrated history of working in innovation, marketing and ad tech deployment.

Experienced working in multi sectors including the financial services industry, automotive, broadcast, telco, other retail sectors and coverage of the Asia region.

Adam is skilled in Marketing Strategy, Market Development, Marketing and Brand Management, Customer Experience Management,

Advertising, Integrated Marketing and Sales.

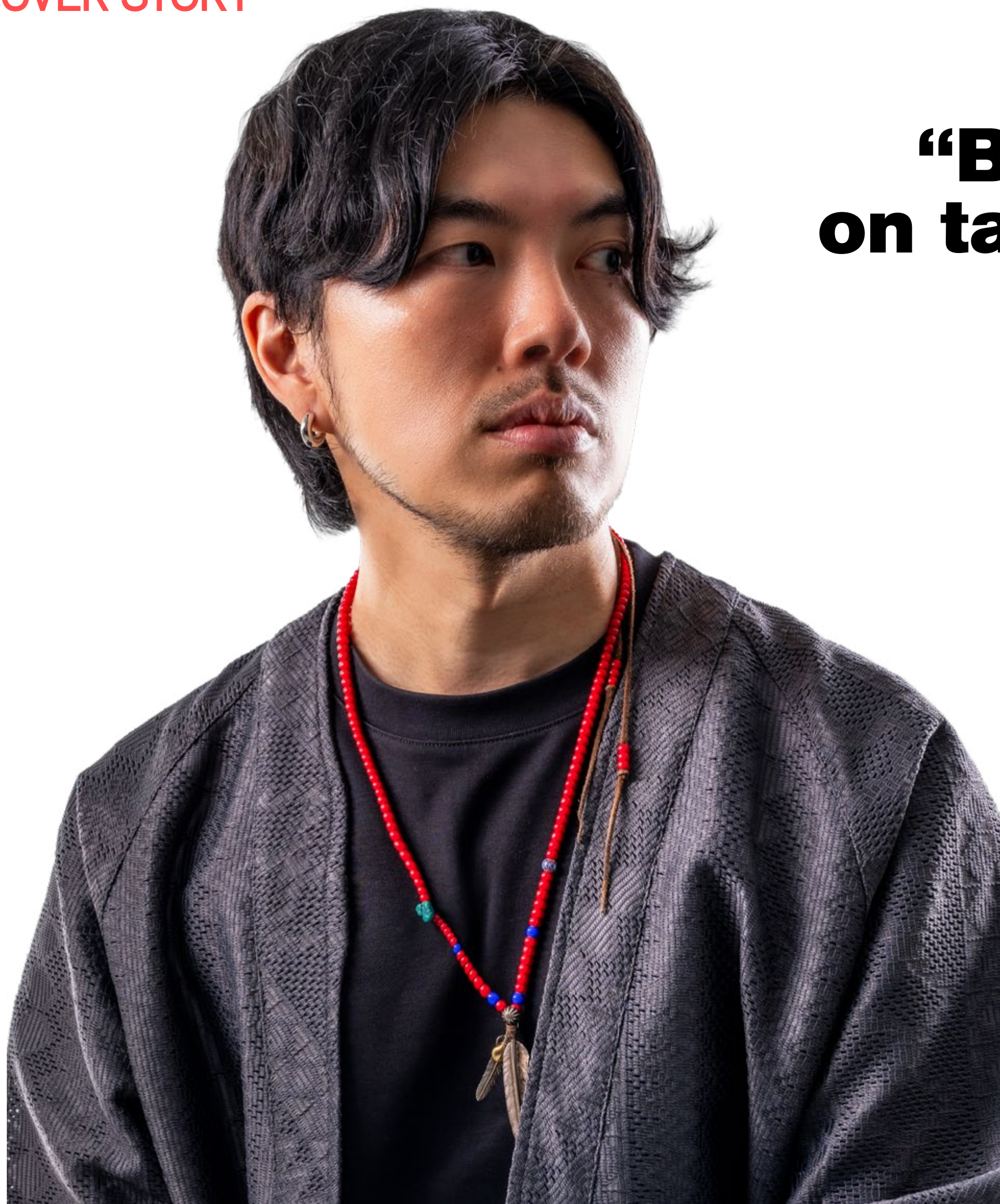
He is active in contributing towards thought leadership with many published articles and opinion pieces as well as an active speaker on the topic of marketing and customer experience across the region.

Adam is a former Executive Committee member of WFA (World Federation of Advertisers) and WFA Asia Advisory Board. Also former Council member of the MAA (Malaysia Advertisers Association) and WFA Asia Marketing Leaders Program Faculty and Speaker.

At this Conference, he will share his “war stories” of setting up tourism tech venture ExplorAR.

“War stories are not about failure. They are about what you learnt too late.”





“Brands built on taste outlast trends.”

RUDY KHAW **FORMER CEO OF AIRASIA** **BRAND.CO.** **FOUNDER OF LOBBY HOURS.**

Rudy was the CEO of AirAsia brand co. – a brand management company under the Capital A group that focuses on building brands and culture for ASEAN through brand development, management, licensing, creation as well as IP development.

A strong believer in pop-culture and how it influences the past, present and future, Rudy has led and grown the AirAsia brand from an ASEAN airline to a globally recognised one that has been named World’s Best Low-Cost Airline by Skytrax 16 years in a row.

He has also spearheaded numerous award-winning brand campaigns – including initiatives with Taylor Swift, David Foster, Roberto

Carlos, Park Ji-Sung, MotoGP, UFC, (RED) and 88rising - to provide AirAsia wider visibility across the globe, championing the brand’s spirit of inspiring youth to Dare to Dream.

Rudy recently launched a new brand-led creative practice called Lobby Hours.

In a metrics-obsessed industry, Rudy is unapologetic about defending taste.

“In an era dominated by performance metrics and trend-chasing... that’s the problem,” he says. “Everyone’s chasing the same trends, the same performance metrics.”

“And my concern with AI is whether it ends up creating more clutter for consumption due to everyone ‘creating’ but I do think on the flipside, where it provides creatives even more opportunities to be better and push the boundaries.”

LISETTE SHEERS
FOUNDER & CREATIVE
DIRECTOR NALA DESIGNS.

Lisette Scheers is the founder and Creative Director of Nala Designs, a Kuala Lumpur based design and lifestyle brand known for pattern work inspired by the region's cultural heritage.

Born in Singapore and raised in Malaysia, Scheers draws on a cross cultural upbringing to translate local symbols and stories into contemporary design across fashion, home and related collaborations.

Alongside Nala, she has also led a creative and advertising practice, L.Inc (formerly La Scheers Co.),

delivering brand identity, design and communications work for clients in hospitality and retail.

Her career spans entrepreneurship, visual storytelling, and brand building, with Nala evolving from its early stationery roots into a broader creative universe.

She is a frequent media and forum guest on design, retail experience, and how culture can be a competitive edge in branding.

Lisette speaks with practical clarity about turning heritage into modern relevance, building brands that feel human, and creating work that is both distinctive and commercially strong.

“Design turns stories into something you can feel.”





“Curiosity got me here. Speed kept me here.”

ANSON GOH
REGIONAL PERFORMANCE
MARKETING LEAD, MARS
WRIGLEY.

When Anson Goh finally took a seat on The NexGen Show, it felt less like the arrival of a rising talent and more like the confirmation of something the industry already knew: this is a marketer who has moved faster, further and with more intent than most of his generation.

From his humble beginnings as a digital marketing executive to a regional performance marketing lead for a global FMCG brand, this

rising star’s journey began with curiosity rather than certainty.

“I didn’t know what I wanted to do at first,” he admits. “I ended up going with a generalised role like digital marketing executive in order to build my foundation.”

Six years later, Anson oversees campaigns that span Southeast Asia and North Asia, but remains one of the youngest professionals in every room he enters.

He often finds himself advising teams far older and more experienced than he is - a dynamic that, in Asian markets, can be particularly sensitive.

AMIRA MAHATHIR
CREATIVE STRATEGY @ ZUS
COFFEE.

Born in Croatia and raised across multiple continents, Amira's journey into the Malaysian advertising industry was anything but linear.

The daughter of a diplomat, her childhood was shaped by constant

movement - from Canada to Switzerland, back to Malaysia, then on to Tokyo - giving her a global perspective long before she entered the workforce.

Despite this international upbringing, advertising was never part of the plan.

Until now.

**“I wasn't
meant to
be here. So
I made it
mine.”**



“The best copy feels like it already knows you.”



MIA GOH

PR MANAGER, MS BIANCA

Long before Mia Goh was writing brand manifestos and campaign scripts, she imagined a future as an artist. That early passion led her into a specialized high school, where students already building brands, pitching ideas and defending their work in front of panels.

“I thought I would become a graphic designer,” she recalls. “Then I met a university counsellor who changed my mind. He said it’s not easy. It’s not always about getting to create the art you want to create.”

That realisation pushed Mia to explore the wider communications world through media studies, advertising and design - until she discovered copywriting.

Even though writing is described as a solitary craft, Mia sees it as a form of connection. “I’m actually very introverted, but becoming a writer has changed my perspective on everything,” she confesses.

“It’s not so much about selling what the brand has to offer, but selling what the person needs from the brand, and convincing the client that this is how we should talk to them.”

OLIVER CHONG
STRATEGY PLANNING
EXECUTIVE, DENTSU

Ms Oliver is a strategic planner whose approach to strategy reflects the modern advertising landscape where creativity, data, and human insight overlap.

“It’s no longer just about media or creative strategy,” she explains. “My boss coins our role as ‘converged strategists’ because what we really do is assess both our media and creative toolkits to provide the most well-rounded solutions.”

At the heart of her work is the delicate balance between human understanding and analytical rigor. She stresses the importance of understanding motivations and

values beyond trends - particularly with Gen Z audiences.

“When brands think of Gen Z marketing, they often think of TikTok trends and slang,” she explains. “But we should be looking deeper to discover the why, then you can fit the why to the role that your brand can play.”

With most of her role dedicated to new business pitches, she reveals how these high-adrenaline moments push strategists to think boldly and bring fresh energy back into everyday work.

“As a strategist, you get to have a say in how the campaign is going to roll out,” she shares. “I’m always inspired to create something that we’ve never seen in the market.”

“Anyone can follow trends. Few understand people.”



COVER STORY

8.15am Registration & Welcome.

9.00am Welcome
by Organising Chairman
Prof Harmandar Singh.



9.10am: Opening Keynote:
Fearless Marketing in the AI Era
by **Jamshed Wadia - Founder, Aldeate Solutions.**

Jamshed cuts through the AI noise and get brutally practical about what fearless marketing looks like now. He will explore how to use AI without losing brand truth, how to build trust while the data rules tighten, and how to turn speed and automation into real advantage....

- Lead with truth, not tools.
- Be fearless about data and trust.
- Build an AI ready brand system.
- Win with better decisions, not more content.
- AI adoption checklist for CMOs.

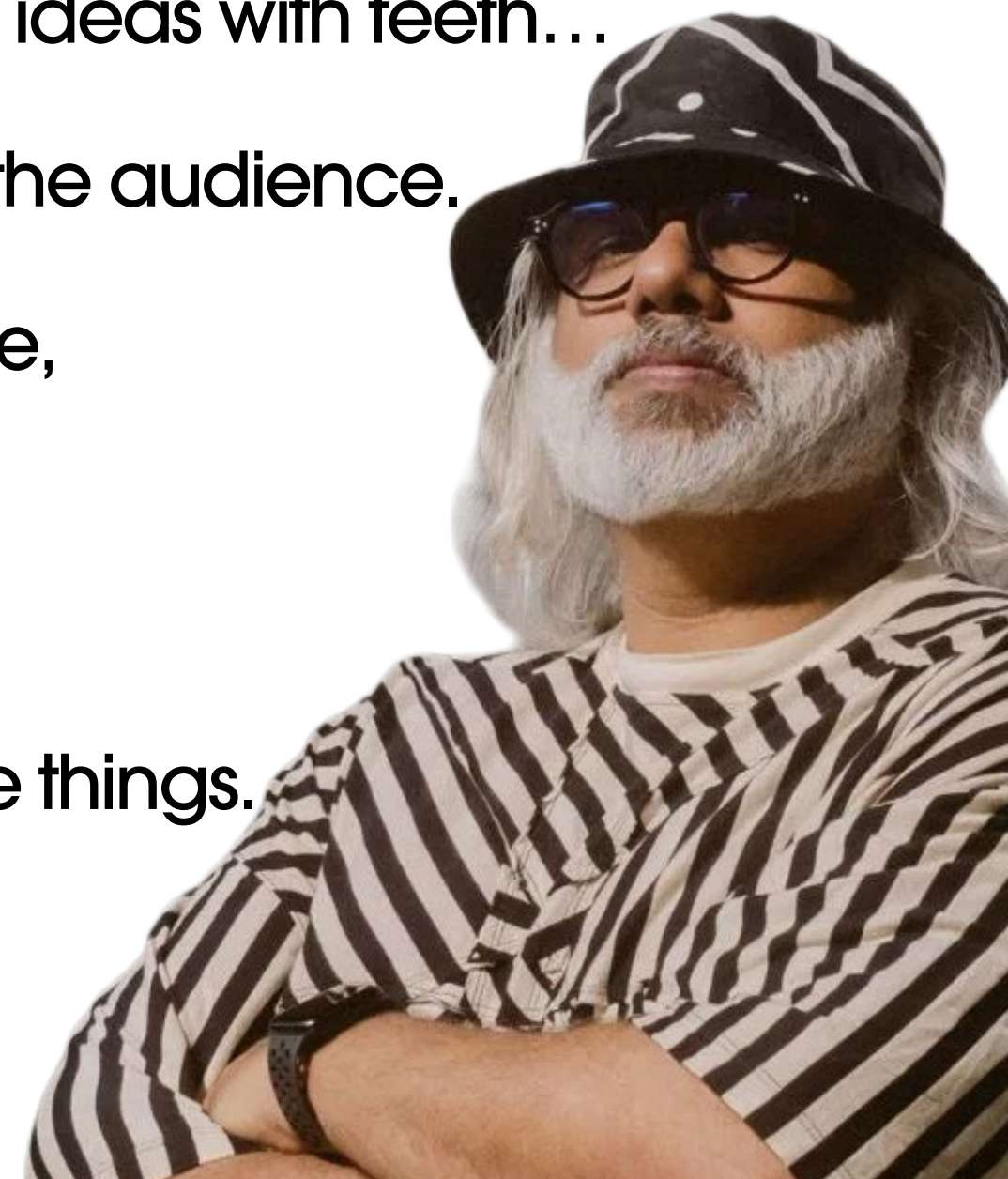


10.00am: **Coffee Break**

10.30am: Fearlessly Creative
VJ Anand – Founder & Chief Creative Officer @ Ballsy.

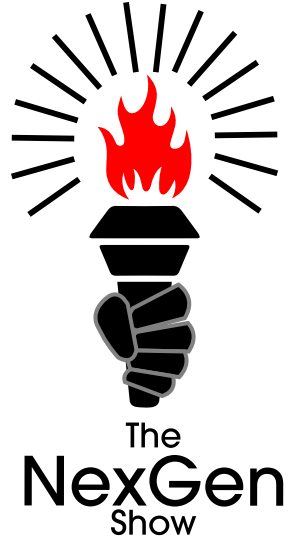
In this high voltage session, VJ will take aim at “safe” creative and the beige work that passes for progress. He will unpack what fearless creative really demands in an AI-soaked world, with sharper truths, fewer committees and ideas with teeth...

- Stop feeding the algorithm. Start feeding the audience.
- AI is your mirror. If it looks like everyone else, that’s on you Safety is not a strategy.
- Kill committee creativity.
- Make one brave thing, not fifty forgettable things.



COVER STORY

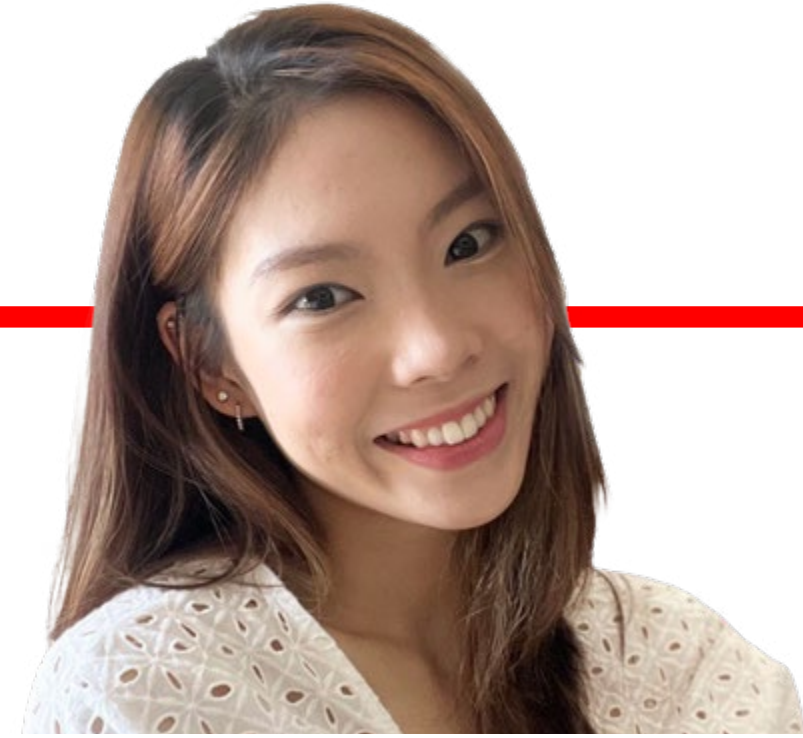
11.00am: The NexGen Show presents the Fearless Four



The NexGen show, now into its second year, is a weekly podcast series dedicated to young stars in the industry who are below 30. In this invigorating panel discussion Malaysian CMO of the Year Linda Hassan talks to young and bright minds from the series who are creating new pathways to excellence in the industry...



NexGen Ep 13: **Mia Goh**
PR Manager, Ms Bianca



NexGen Ep 22: **Ms Oliver Chong**
Strategy Planning Executive, Dentsu



NexGen Ep 33: **Anson Goh**
Regional Performance Marketing Lead, Mars Wrigley.



NexGener Ep 37: **Amira Mahathir**
Creative Strategy @ ZUS Coffee.



Moderator: **Linda Hassan**
Former Group CMO of Domino's Pizza Malaysia & Singapore.

11.45am: PITCH POWER

These revealing 15-minute sessions will bring you up to speed with all the action that is brewing with some of the leading innovators in the media marketing space...featuring leading media tech players like billups, Moving Walls, etc.

1.00pm: LUNCH & NETWORKING

COVER STORY

1.30pm: Selected Screening of Best Raya & CNY TVCs 2026



2.00pm: SPOTLIGHT SESSIONS –

These popular 15-mins Q&A sessions are where random questions will be posed in a rapid-fire format to individual speakers, who will be bathed in one powerful spotlight against the darkness of the hall. Delegates are advised to keep their note pads ready, as this banter is both fleeting and fascinating. We'll talk about “war stories”, career crashes, rants and about what they tried, what broke, what it cost, what moved, and more...



SPOTLIGHT SPEAKER 1:

Santharuban Thurai Sundaram

Former CEO of Etika Group of Companies, inaugural Malaysian CMO of the Year award winner.



SPOTLIGHT SPEAKER 2:

Adam Wee

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



SPOTLIGHT SPEAKER 3:

Lisette Sheers

Founder & Creative Director NALA Designs.



SPOTLIGHT SPEAKER 4:

Rudy Khaw

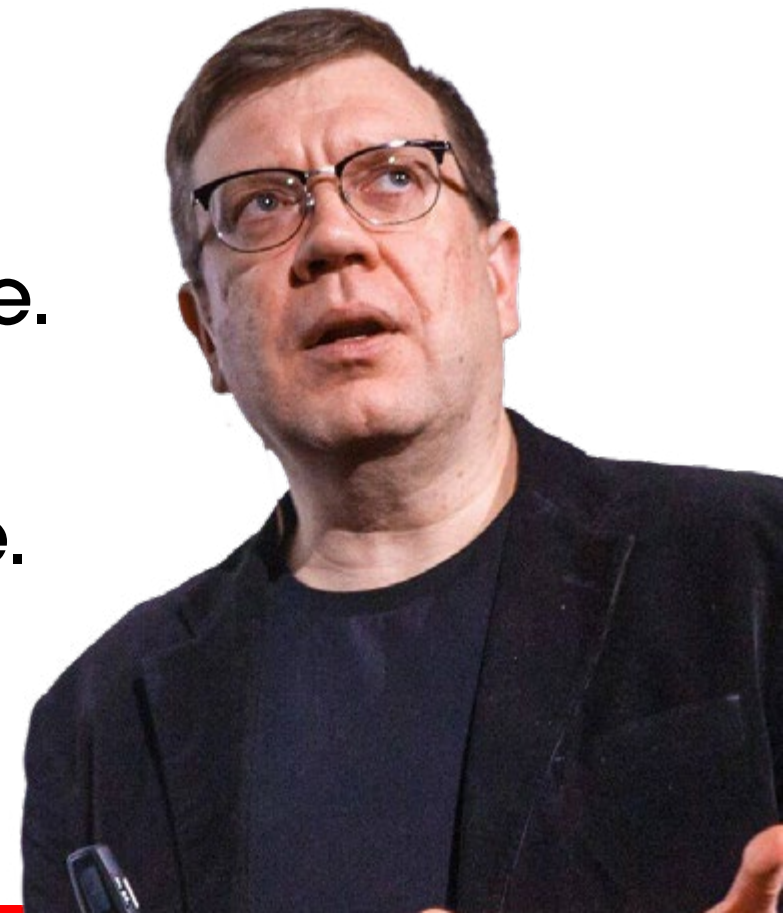
Former CEO of AirAsia brand.co.

Founder of Lobby Hours.

COVER STORY

3.05pm: B2B Marketing - Where Fearless Marketers Win
By Hando Sinisalu – Founder, Marketing Parrot, Estonia.
Hando is Mr Case Study. He is here to tell you B2B does not have to be boring. Hando will show where fearless B2B marketers really win, by turning complex offers into sharp stories, building trust that shortens sales cycles and making marketing pull its weight in pipeline...

If you sound “professional”, you sound like everyone.
Stop selling features. Sell the risk you remove.
Your brand is your sales force before the sales force.
Thought leadership is not posting. It is taking a side.
Measure what finance respects.



3.40pm: Coffee Break

4.10pm: Building Fearless Teams
Founding Partner & CEO, Transformation Group.
Former CEO of APAC, Europe & U.S. @ Omnicom, WPP.
Chris has always played the role of contrarian.
In this riveting closing, he will talk about Team Dynamics, agency management, crisis playbooks and team operating models...
If your team is “nice” but scared, it is not a team. It is a support group.

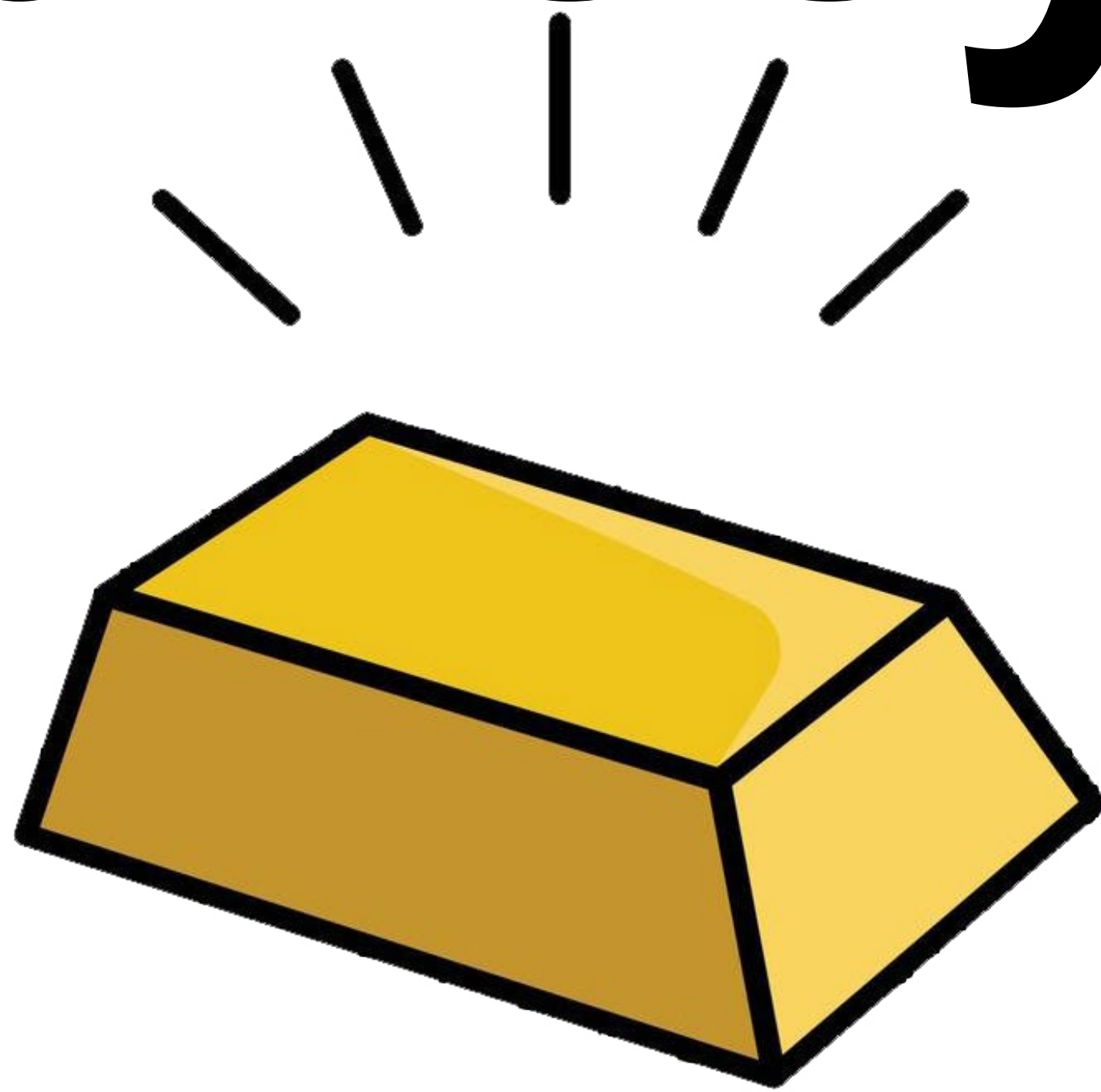
Kill the meeting theatre.

Reward truth tellers, not peace keepers.
Make accountability visible.
Protect makers from managers.



5.00pm: Close & Thank You.

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.

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

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



BEING TRAPPED IN A BODY THAT IS NO LONGER YOUR OWN.
THIS IS PARKINSON'S.

One in fifty people will have their lives turned upside down by Parkinson's. But we have the power to change that. France Parkinson is working to improve daily life for patients and to push research forward. Let's act together so this disease doesn't remain incurable. **Donate at franceparkinson.org**



FRANCE
PARKINSON



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.

Best viewed on desktop, laptop, tablet.

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



WHERE CAN YOU FIND
AWARD-WINNING MARKETING
CASE-STUDIES BY AGENCY,
BRAND, RANK AND YEAR IN
MALAYSIA?



EACH WITH BUSINESS
CHALLENGE, CAMPAIGN
SYNOPSIS AND EVEN
MARKETING INSIGHTS!

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BEST VIEWED ON DESKTOP, LAPTOP AND TABLET.



NEW CATEGORIES



INDUSTRY CATEGORIES

1. Best in Food & Beverage

Campaigns that drove growth for food and beverage brands across any channel or format.

2. Best in Non-Food FMCG

Fast-moving consumer goods excluding food, including household, personal care and packaged goods.

3. Best in Consumer Durables

Longer purchase-cycle products such as electronics, appliances and home-related categories.

4. Best in Consumer Services

Services aimed at consumers, including entertainment, utilities and lifestyle offerings.

5. Best in Financial Services

Banking, insurance, fintech and related financial solutions.

6. Best in Business Services (B2B)

Marketing targeted at businesses, including enterprise solutions and professional services.

7. Best in Telco & Technology

Telecommunications, devices, platforms and technology-driven brands.

8. Best in Travel, Tourism & Hospitality

Airlines, hotels, destinations and tourism boards.

9. Best in Automotive

Vehicles, mobility solutions and automotive-related services.

10. Best in Retail

Brick-and-mortar retail brands and multi-channel retail environments.

11. Best in E-Commerce

Online-first commerce platforms, marketplaces and digital retail brands.

12. Best in Education

Institutions, edtech platforms and learning solutions.

13. Best in Healthcare & Wellness

Healthcare providers, pharmaceuticals and wellness brands

14. Best in Government, Culture & Sustainability

Public sector, NGOs and initiatives driving social, cultural or environmental impact.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE CATEGORIES

1. Best in Brand Launch & Repositioning

Successful introductions, relaunches or repositioning of brands that shifted perception and drove growth.

2. Best in Retail & Shopper Marketing

Campaigns that influenced shopper behaviour and drove conversion at the point of purchase.

3. Best in Market Expansion

Growth into new audiences, segments or geographic markets.

4. Best in Business Transformation

Marketing that supported a shift in business model, digital

transformation or organisational change.

5. Best in Customer Acquisition

Strategies that successfully attracted new customers at scale.

6. Best in Customer Retention & Loyalty Growth

Efforts focused on increasing retention, repeat purchase and lifetime value.

7. Best in Revenue Growth / Sales Impact

Campaigns where measurable sales or revenue impact was the primary outcome.

8. Best in Crisis Response & Brand Recovery

Marketing that effectively managed reputational or operational crises and restored brand trust.

PLATFORMS & PURPOSE

Recognising the marketing disciplines, channels and ideas that powered effectiveness.

A. CORE PLATFORMS

1. Best in Digital

Integrated use of digital platforms to drive engagement and results.

2. Best in Social

Strategic use of social media to build communities and influence behaviour.

3. Best in Influencer & Creator Marketing

Partnerships with creators or influencers to deliver authentic engagement and impact.

4. Best in OOH / DOOH

Out-of-home and digital out-of-home campaigns that delivered scale and visibility.

5. Best in E-Commerce Platforms

Use of digital commerce platforms to drive transactions and growth.

6. Best in Customer Experience

End-to-end experience design that improved satisfaction, loyalty or conversion.

7. Best in Innovation

Breakthrough ideas, formats or technologies that created new marketing possibilities.

8. Best in AI & Marketing Technology

Application of AI or advanced technology to enhance targeting, creativity or performance.

9. Best in AdMail / Direct Marketing

Targeted direct communications that drove measurable response.

10. Best in Festive Marketing

Campaigns built around cultural or seasonal moments such as Ramadan, Chinese New Year or Deepavali.

NEW CATEGORIES



PLATFORMS & PURPOSE

Recognising the marketing disciplines, channels and ideas that powered effectiveness.

B. DISCIPLINE CATEGORIES

1. Best in PR & Communications Effectiveness

Campaigns that shaped public perception, earned attention or managed brand reputation.

2. Best in Content & Branded Entertainment

Use of storytelling, content or entertainment formats to engage audiences and drive outcomes.

3. Best in Experiential & Activation

Immersive brand experiences, events or activations that drove participation and impact.

4. Best in Search & Discovery

Leveraging search, SEO or discovery platforms to capture intent and drive action.

5. Best in Performance Marketing

Data-driven campaigns focused on optimisation, conversion and measurable ROI.

6. Best in Customer Loyalty & Relationship Marketing

CRM and lifecycle strategies that built long-term customer relationships.

7. Best in Data, Personalisation & Programmatic

Use of data, targeting and automation to deliver relevant and efficient marketing.

8. Best in Omnichannel & Integrated Marketing

Seamless orchestration across multiple channels to deliver a unified brand experience.

C. EMERGING & CULTURE CATEGORIES

1. Best in Gaming, eSports & Gamification

Use of gaming environments or mechanics to engage audiences and drive brand outcomes.

2. Best in Audio, Podcast & Sonic Branding

Audio-led strategies including podcasts, streaming and sonic identity.

3. Best in Community & Cultural Impact

Campaigns that tapped into communities, subcultures or societal movements.

4. Best in Purpose-Driven Marketing

Work driven by sustainability, social good or meaningful brand purpose.

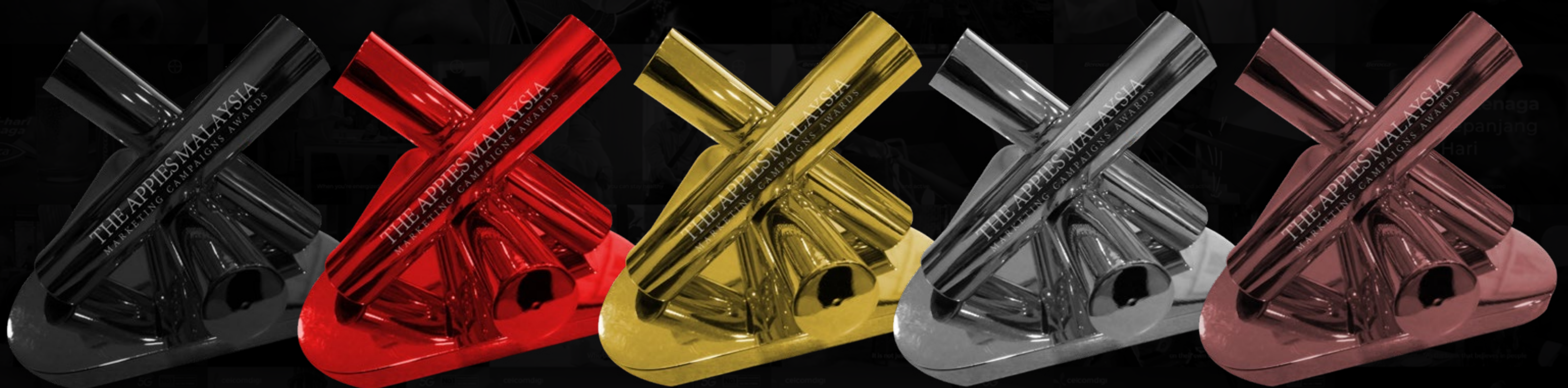
5. Best in Hyperlocal / Tribal Marketing

Campaigns tailored to specific local audiences, tribes or cultural segments.

SPECIAL CATEGORIES

(No submissions required)

- APPIES 2026 Rising Star Presenter of the Year (below 30)
- APPIES 2026 Trailblazing Presenter of the Year (above 30)
- APPIES 2026 Media Agency of the Year
- APPIES 2026 Advertising Agency of the Year
- APPIES 2026 Digital Agency of the Year
- APPIES 2026 Production Company of the Year
- APPIES 2026 Marketer of the Year



FEARLESS

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



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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



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



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