

THE BRAND

CREATE

BUSINESS INTERVIEW

**THE POWER OF
BRAND IDENTITY :**
The Brand inception

SMEs :
Shaping the economy

EARTH HOUR :
A climate message

SAY YES2BRAND :
Pride and plumage

DATO' ONG THENG SOON
OF BINASTRA LAND
CONTEMPORARY LIFESTYLE
DEVELOPER EXTRAORDINAIRE

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THE BRAND LAUREATE

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PUBLISHER NOTE |



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Taking Ownership of Your Brand Success
Have you ever noticed that global financial crises happen once every ten years? It was the Black Monday Crisis of 1987 when stock markets around the world crashed. In 1997, we had the Asian Financial Crisis and in 2007-2008, it was the Global Economic Crisis. And now, rather religiously, a decade later, we have the falling oil prices of 2015 – with its effects still manifesting and causing the heightening of poor market sentiments.

What happen when a financial crisis occur? Investors, be it corporations or individuals, become badly affected. In spite of overcast horizons, the business savvy are able to see beyond and grasp opportunities that exist in a downturn and astutely turn the situation to their advantage. That is what Dato' Ong Theng Soon, the Executive Director of Binastra Land, who is featured in this issue's Cover Story, did.

Dato' Ong started out as a property investor who enjoyed good returns on his real estate ventures before the 2007-2008 Global Economic Crisis reared its ugly teeth. As the full force of the crisis impacted and shattered the financial sphere, his returns were halved. It was then he felt that it was a good a time as any to adopt another strategy – one that might ensure that he would be in better control of his investments. Truth be told, he could have invested in other financial instruments, but instead, he boldly crossed over the fence to become a property developer – and the rest, as they say, is history.

Dato' Ong's evolution from an investor to a property developer, in spite of the trials and tribulations of the economy of the times, proves that being insightful pays. We can surely take pointers from his experience. Regardless of the circumstances, challenges can have two effects – they can either drive us down or drive us to excel. Ultimately, we are the masters of our own destinies and it is wholly up to us to decide which road to take; and this brings to mind what Robert Frost said in his poem, The Road Not Taken, "I took the one less travelled by and that has made all the difference."

Making a difference is what brands need to do if they want to gain market share and be successful.

In fact, in this competitive time, brands need to go all out in their branding to be uniquely different so as to stand out as the 'preferred choice' amongst consumers. Brands, be it humble SMEs or multinationals that have successfully created the buzz with their unique attributes and differentiation, are market leaders that are able to withstand the test of time.

The efforts of such epitomes in branding have made them award-winning brands and The BrandLaureate duly celebrates their success with The BrandLaureate SMEs BestBrands Awards 2016. The Award celebrates its Tenth Anniversary this year – another feather in the cap for the Asia Pacific Brands Foundation and The BrandLaureate!

During the 10 years, we have successful promoted the cause for branding amongst SMEs and are proud that many of our recipients have done successfully well in their business, firmly establishing their leadership position in Malaysia and at the same time expanding their footprints in the global market.

The SME BestBrands Awards has caught the attention of many SMEs that have strived to improve on their brands in order to qualify for this prestigious name in the award arena. Since our inception, The BrandLaureate has always created the buzz in brands and branding – and 2017 is no different.

We start the year with the opening of our Brand Gallery: Be Inspired, The Brand Gallery@TheBrandLaureate, which incidentally is the first brand gallery in the world, as well as the launch of the second quote book, Be a Brand Phenomenon with Phenomenal Branding by Dr. KKJohan, the President of The BrandLaureate.

If you want to be strong and successful, you need to be phenomenal in your branding. This is the road which The BrandLaureate has chosen ever since it first began and will continue to traverse in the future.

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EDITOR'S NOTE |



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Finding the nerves of steel to stay positive in a world overrun by so much negativity today is a challenge we all face from time to time. Even our phones are constantly bombarded with discomfoting images and disheartening news distributed via our favourite WhatsApp groups and other social media apps – ranging from diabolical happenings to even the intricate details of certain ministers' personal lives.

Alas, the unfortunate 'superpower' of such negative information is that it is said to have a stronger impact than positive ones. If only we were taught to 'rewire' our brain for positivity and happiness each time our phone beeps for an incoming new message, perhaps people will not be too quick to spread such unhappiness, so to speak. Until a cognitive computing phone system is invented to block potentially woe-inducing content, we are doomed to bear the task of being a 'selective reader' – an essential skill which I am (secretly) beginning to master – or ideally, just a positive and happy thinker.

We all know that to be a truly happy person is easier said than done. While there are those who are lucky enough to get it right the first time, some people take years to master it through trial and error; and sadly (there I go again), some have even died trying.

Simply put, no one is automatically born with happiness, as the pursuit of it is a fundamental human goal. Where we are born in the world is a matter of chance, but the ultimate quest for happiness is within each of us; to develop the purpose and meaning of life, while enhancing the social, economic and environmental aspects of our well-being. That, is the very basis of The International Day of Happiness, a yearly celebration founded by United Nations in 2012, which falls on March 20.

According to the UN, the keys to happiness are not ultimately linked to economic security

(encompassing food, shelter and education). While it is an important part of our overall wellbeing, it is not the whole picture. After a certain point, happiness no longer comes from buying the products we see in advertisements, or from attaining fame and beauty as conceptualized by the media, or by achieving a certain GDP for the country as propagated by the politicians. If any, the feelings we get from this which resemble happiness would most likely be short-lived. Looking back, it seems that my happy moments last longer when they are made of simple gestures of me giving back to others, and not when I am on the receiving end of a parcel delivery, waiting for a bag which I purchased online for myself two days ago.

Naturally, things that lead to a happier life are not really 'things' per se, but actions. In fact simple actions, which many of us take for granted these days (or may even be too busy to have time for) actually impacts to our overall happiness. Doing things for others, connecting with people, taking care of our bodies, trying out new things, always looking for positive emotions and being comfortable with who you are, to me, are just some of the pillars of happiness.

I, for one, am guilty of not doing enough for others; which, when I look back, is ironic because the most rewarding and gratifying feeling in life for me always comes when I am giving instead of taking. As I have begun to notice and appreciate, if we take some time out of our busy lives to stop and reflect, we will find that 'happy energy', when shared, multiplies.

So as March 20 draws near, it is high time to raise our spirits and that of our communities – as happy people ultimately make happier communities. In fact, it may be the perfect season to turn our favourite WhatsApp groups into purveyors of happiness – share that positive message and be happy!



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WHAT'S INSIDE | **issue #40**
March - April



This issue celebrates, clockwise from Dato' Ong Theng Soon, the Executive Director of Binastra Land, Donald Trump's showdown as the new President, Queen Elizabeth's sapphire jubilee, Dr Ng Chin Siau of Q & M Dental clinic, Hacksaw Ridge and Earth Hour....



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EARTHHOUR.ORG
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THE POWER OF BRAND IDENTITY

HOW A BUSINESS WANTS TO BE PERCEIVED BY CONSUMERS IS PROJECTED BY THE COMPONENTS OF THE BRAND WHICH ARE THE NAME, LOGO, COLOUR TONE, IDENTITY AND BY WAY OF COMMUNICATING. SEE HOW BIG BRANDS AROUND THE WORLD APPEAL TO ITS CUSTOMERS WITH THE ART OF BRANDING THROUGH THESE COMPONENTS.

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“Branding is a discipline which I am most concerned about, be it for the corporate brand or personal brand. Binastra Land has been consciously working on it since our entry into the property sector, ensuring that we support our brand Mission, 'Assurance in Quality, Workmanship and Timely Delivery', and this has helped to build our brand positioning as a reliable developer of quality homes.

DATO' ONG THENG SOON,
the Executive Director of Binastra Land.



DATO' ONG THENG SOON,
THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
BINASTRA LAND,
Ever witnessed a storm coming without letting it break your spirit to continue on? YBhg. Dato' Ong Theng Soon, Executive Director of Binastra Land, has a thing or two to share on this tackling this fundamental principle in the quest for excellence in Brand Leadership. As the pages unfold, catch a glimpse of the awe-inspiring journey of a man and a brand that may reshape your innermost thoughts on the qualities that truly count in mastery of the sphere of epitomic branding in a sustainable manner.



BINASTRA LAND

AND YBHG DATO' ONG THENG SOON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF BINASTRA LAND.

"LIFE IS ALL ABOUT FACING NEW DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES,
IT IS WHAT MAKES US STRONGER IN LIFE."

BY CHEW BEE PENG

Property investment is one of the preferred instruments of wealth creation for many people. It is secure and gives a high rate of return through the years. We seldom hear of property buyers getting diminishing returns on their investment and property is the best hedge against inflation.

Each and every one of us know of family members, friends and acquaintances who have done well in their property investments, drawing a good income from their sales or rental of their houses or commercial units. Then there are the astute and smart investors, such as Dato' Ong Theng Soon, the Executive Director of Binastra Land, who, instead of just being satisfied with acquiring properties, catapulted on to become a property developer.

Dato' Ong, a lawyer by profession, started off as a property investor, acquiring his first asset, a condominium located in the up-market *Mont Kiara*, in 2002, after having been convinced that it was a good buy and investment by the CEO of Sunrise Berhad, the property firm behind the development of *Mont Kiara* condominiums. The *Mont Kiara* brand was so strong and popular that property agents were hounding purchasers to sell off their units even before it was completed.

"My phone was flooded with calls from agents purportedly representing prospective purchasers even before the project was completed. I sold my first property for 30 percent above the purchase price and my initial investment was only 10 percent. It was a good deal, making a return of investment of 300 percent. I was then convinced that

property is a good form of investment, whether you are an investor or developer," said Dato' Ong.

Daring to Go against the Grain

While Dato' Ong's story on the profitability of property investment is inspirational; still the question remains: How then did Dato' Ong venture on to become a developer?

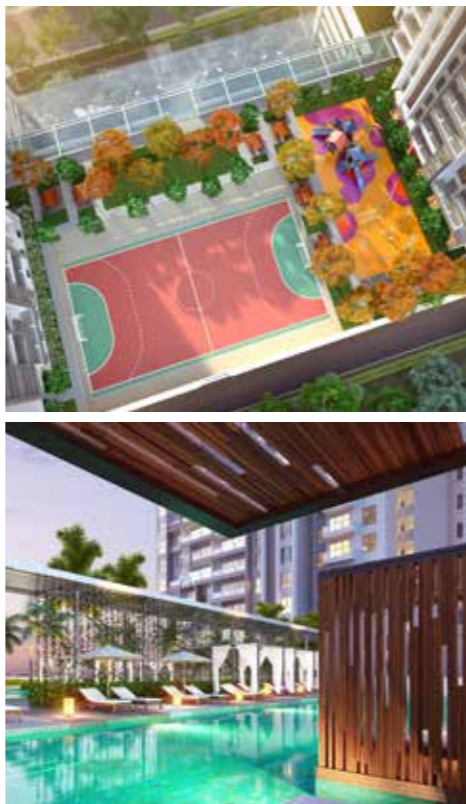
"The 2008 Global Economic Downturn was the turning point which led me to decide to go 'upstream' and be involved in property development. Having enjoyed good earnings during the property boom years of 2002 until 2008, the economic crisis affected property prices and caused dwindling returns on investment. This made me think of better alternatives of investment."

Clearly, Dato' Ong followed his own path in a time when many dared not.

"Typically during the early years of my investment foray, from 2002 to 2008, property prices were around RM300 to RM400 per square foot. Due to the lower acquisition price, investors like me used to enjoy a price appreciation of 30 to 40 per cent and a rental return of 8 per cent per annum," explained Dato' Ong.

His eyes have witnessed the winds of change in the game. With such experience, his savvy in the area became amplified.

"By 2008-2009, property prices in the prime *Klang Valley* areas had rocketed to RM700 per square feet as a direct



images:
Citizen@Old Klang Road to be completed in March 2018

“
Binastra Construction’s
foray into property
development was a matter
of time. Having built a solid
reputation as one of the
top construction firms in
the industry,
”

result of the *Global Economic Crisis* which caused a marked spike in the cost of building material globally. As developers increased their prices, the entry level for owning homes was inevitably raised (quite significantly) to an unprecedented level – making houses a lot harder to own and lowering the rate of return on investment for investors.”

Threads of fate led to a meeting with Dato’ Sri Michael Tan, the Founder & Managing Director of Binastra Land, in 2013, which became a vital point of transformation in his focus vocation. The professional encounter led to a business partnership where Dato’ Ong was invited to join the company; and later appointed its Executive Director – thereby bringing his involvement in the property industry to a full circle.

Binastra Land – Building ahead of Schedule

Binastra Land’s roots trace back to 1979 when Binastra Construction was set up as a sole proprietorship by Mr. Tan Nge, the father of Dato’ Sri Michael Tan.

As a construction company, its main focus was on ensuring quality workmanship and timely delivery. Within a short span, the business grew from strength to strength – even to the point it obtained a *Class A* construction license in 1984.

It was clearly inevitable that Binastra Construction’s foray into the realm of property development was only a matter of time. Having built a solid reputation as one of the top construction firms in the industry, the company was asked to revive an abandoned project which was deserted for 10 years in Titiwangsa, Kuala Lumpur. Consequently, with the brand’s solid foundation and expertise, the once decade-deferred project was awe-inspiringly completed within six months in 2005; with the end result being the 35-unit *Seri Titiwangsa* condominium.

A Developer to Be Reckoned with

With the experience garnered from the first project, Dato’ Sri Michael Tan then set up Binastra Land and spearheaded its growth. Even though it is a relatively new developer to breakthrough and break forth in the Malaysian property scene, it has done well under the leadership of Dato’ Sri Michael Tan.

Todate, the company has successfully built quality houses, apartments, condominiums, commercial premises and industrial space all over the country. Furthermore, the brand’s completed property development GDV exceeds more than RM1 billion since the beginning of 2005 until now; and its two current developments, *Green Residence@Cheras* and *CitiZen@OldKlang Road*, will be completed in March 2017 and March 2018, respectively.

Binastra Land’s footprints can also be seen at its developments in *Taman Kinrara Seksyen 2*, the *Sri Kayangan* town villas and commercial units near Cyberjaya, *Pusat Bandar Puchong* and UEP Industrial Park.

After having effectively laid its foundation, the Group has gone on to concentrate on niche developments of residential properties and successfully developed the first of its selection of luxury properties, *The Park@ Bukit Serdang*, which consists of 32 units of semi-detached homes and 15 units of town villas. Resonating with the breakthrough spirit, it became the first modern gated and guarded projects in *Bukit Serdang* with good facilities and emphasis on ‘green living’. A centralized park, located at the back of the semi-detached houses, was ingeniously incorporated to create a favourable living environment and simultaneously encourage community living.



01

With the good response received from *The Park@ Bukit Serdang*, Binastra Land then moved on to more developments such as *Green Residence@Cheras*, the successful *CyberSquare* at Cyberjaya, *CitiZen@ Old Klang Road* and the soon-to-be-launched *CitiZen Phase 2* project.

On Solid Ground

In spite of being passionate about all his property related endeavours, somehow *CitiZen@OldKlangRoad* is a project that is closest to Dato’ Ong’s heart. It is his first high-end residential project in partnership with Binastra Land. A 3.5-acre tract of freehold development land in *Old Klang Road* was acquired in 2013 for the purpose of the project. Launched in October 2015, *CitiZen* has a gross development value (GDV) of RM 500 million – consisting of 711 units of serviced apartments in three blocks of 37-storey buildings each. Todate, it has seen 93 per cent converted sales and is set to be completed by this year.

Eager to duplicate the success of *CitiZen @ Old Klang Road*, following the successful take-up rate, a 3.415-acre plot of land next to it was acquired for its *CitiZen Phase 2* project. The freehold land will feature three 41 and 42 storey tall towers – with a total of 837 units of serviced apartments. The project has a GDV of RM500 million. Subject to approval from the relevant authorities, this project is slated to be launched in the second quarter of 2017.

Being a matured and prime area, Old Klang Road, at a glance, has many ongoing property developments and the competition is tough. With the current weak market sentiment, we asked Dato’ Ong if it was in fact a good idea to launch *CitiZen2 @ Old Klang Road* and he responded with his signature optimism:

“We are confident that *CitiZen2* will match the success rate of its sister project. Our confidence stems from the fact that the units are sold at competitive prices – especially in a prime location – and that there are many prospective buyers who were left out during the first launch and are eager to own one. While *CitiZen2* targets the first home owners and younger generation, it will also appeal to the many existing home owners in the surrounding residential areas of Old Klang Road. These are senior and elderly purchasers who may want to acquire a second property to add on to their investment, or shift out of their landed residences to experience condominium living, or even purchase it for their children.”

Delivering on the Brand Promise

Location is a major criterion when it comes to property purchase and *CitiZen* is centrally located in the heart of Kuala Lumpur. It is easily accessible and has good infrastructure. The presence of retail malls and health facilities in the surrounding area makes it all the more appealing for both residents and prospective buyers.

Location aside, house buyers also seek out properties with good designs that will essentially reflect their lifestyles – taking into consideration the relevance of facilities and amenities, functionality of space and most important of all, timely delivery, which, according to Dato’ Ong is what Binastra Land offers its customers.

“If we look at Binastra Land’s first project, it was completed within a timeline of six months. Since then, every of its projects have met its delivery targets. There are times when we deliver ahead of what is promised – to the delight of our purchasers. I can also safely say that we have one of the best packaging in the industry – where we fulfill 80 percent



02



images:
1) At the launch of Citizen@Old Klang Road
2) Recreational facilities and Dining area of The Park@Bukit Serdang



image:
(Left -right) Dato' Ong, Mr Tan Nge, Dato' Jackson Tan, Dato' Sri Michael Tan and Mr Lee of Binastra Land Group of Companies

or more of what is shown in the showroom unit. Many developers that are more established than us are not able to do so and this is something that my team is extremely proud of.”

The investor extraordinaire adds, “Where quality is concerned, it is the *Philosophy* of the brand, *Profitability Acquired Without Sacrificing Quality*, to ensure that every unit receives the best workmanship and finishing. We do not compromise on this; and by adhering to its *Philosophy*, we have built a loyal team of investors and customers.”

Dato’ Ong further explains that having a construction arm, Binastra Construction, helps, as it is able to control the quality and speedy delivery of all its projects.

Transforming Communities

Binastra Land’s footprints of excellence are not only confined to Kuala Lumpur but extends to Malaysia’s *Silicon Valley*, Cyberjaya, as well where its first mix-used development project, *Cybersquare*, drew in great response.

Mention Cyberjaya to property investors and many will be reluctant to invest in the township –even though it is the head office of *Malaysian Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC)*, Malaysia’s digital think tank and home to global brands such as Shell, BMW, HSBC, DHL, as well as numerous MSC-based companies and even educational institutions.

Cyberjaya suffers from a perception of being a quiet and literally ‘dead’ town at night when all the offices close. However, within the quietness and loneliness of the place, there was a dire need of accommodation and amenities to meet the needs of those who work there or in surrounding areas and wish to make their home in the *IT* hub.

Many workers were prepared to invest in a home in Cyberjaya as it would mean greater convenience and better quality of life as they would not have to spend an hour or more time on the road to work every day.

Taking the cue from the ground, Binastra Land did a detailed survey of the area and launched *Cybersquare@ Cyberjaya*, a development of *SOHO Towers, Shop Offices and Signature Offices*. The property has transformed and breathed life in the township with residents enjoying the facilities provided.

“Within three months of the launch, 100 percent of its *SOHO* units were taken up and it achieved 80 percent occupancy within 6 months from vacant possession. As an integrated lifestyle development, *Cybersquare* met the needs of the residents. It was originally a challenge to take on this development as we were not sure of the response but by doing our due diligence and with the right strategy, we have once again come up first on this,” explains Dato’ Ong.

Key Qualities of a Triumphant Brand

With competition in the property industry so intense, every property developer will proclaim that their properties provide the best value and differentiation features. Where Binastra Land is concerned, Dato’ Ong is of the view that, first and foremost, the brand must be able to deliver.

“It is pointless to shout that you provide the best features but are not able to deliver on it. Your customers will lose trust in you then. With so many developments coming on, there is really a fine line in terms of product differentiation; but at the end of the day, customers will go to a reliable brand that is known for its integrity and one they can trust.”

“ Within 3 months of the launch, 100 percent of its SOHO units were taken up. As an integrated lifestyle development, Cybersquare met the needs of the residents. It was originally a challenge to take on this development as we were not sure of the response but by doing our due diligence and with the right strategy, we have once again come up first on this ”





images:
At the MOU signing between Binastra Land with ACCOR Hotels

He adds, “At Binastra Land, we provide our best and meet market needs. For example, in catering to young house buyers, our properties average at 800 sq feet onwards. Innovative designs and layouts have led to efficient utilization of space area. In this area, we are differentiated from other properties – we create bigger living room and kitchen areas as these are common areas where families have to gather for their meals and so forth. We make it more comfortable so that they can spend quality family time. Bedrooms are only for sleeping but our bedrooms are still big enough to put in a queen size bed comfortably.”

Dato’ Ong further elaborates that house buyers see value in the brand’s properties as they give good return – where rental fetches an average of six to seven percent – which in turn is a good investment.

Noteworthy Upcoming Developments

Binastra Land takes on average one project annually subject to prevailing market conditions and is happy to keep it at the said rate.

“Taking on too many projects may look good for the book order, but we may lose focus and at the end of the day, the quality of workmanship and other matters suffer,” briefs Dato’ Ong when asked about the current ongoing projects of Binastra Land.

On future developments, Binastra Land will be taking on fresh projects at Wangsa Maju and another exclusive 72 condominium units at *Kemensah Hills*, the new enclave of the famous and titled in the *Klang Valley*.

The company will also be embarking upon its flagship project, TRION, which is valued at RM1.3 billion in Chan Sow Lin, an industrial area in Kuala Lumpur which is situated opposite the famed Bandar Malaysia –which will become the gateway to Kuala Lumpur in the near future.

The integrated property development, sited on a 4.075-acre parcel, will comprise retail outlets, hotels, serviced apartments and office components when completed within the next five years. The residential towers will have more than 60 levels and will be the tallest in Kuala Lumpur upon completion. In addition, there will be more than 1300 serviced apartments, with built-ups of 650 sqft and 1000 sqft, priced below RM800,000.

Binastra Land has signed a MOU with *Accor Hotels*, a French multinational group, to manage the hotel under the *Mecure* brand.

As Binastra Land’s flagship development at Sungai Besi, this integrated development is set to become a new buzzword in the definition of ‘Live, Work, Play’.

“ It is pointless to shout that you provide the best features but is not able to deliver on it. Your customers will lose trust in you then. With so many developments coming on, there is really a fine line in terms of product differentiation but at the end of the day, customers will go to a reliable brand that is known for its integrity and one they can trust. ”



02



03



images:
1) TRION, Binastra Land’s flagship project
2&3) Interior of Green Residence, Cheras

Branding Binastra Land

As the Executive Director of Binastra Land, Dato’ Ong certainly plays an important role in the growth and development of the brand.

Overflowing with hands-on experience, he shares with his views on branding and what it entails to build a strong sustainable brand:

“Branding is a discipline which I am most concerned about, be it for the corporate brand or personal brand. Binastra Land has been consciously working on it since our entry into the property sector, ensuring that we support our brand *Mission*; Assurance in Quality, Workmanship and Timely Delivery; and this has helped to build our brand positioning as a reliable developer of quality homes.

To further create brand awareness, BinastraLand has taken up advertisement panels and billboards in the KLCC tunnel, which connects the *Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre* to the *Suria KLCC* mall and various strategic areas in the city. With daily heavy footfalls, the brand has been able to increase its visibility and mind recall.

Apart from print advertisements, Binastra Land communicates via social media with its customers and it has an *FB* following of over 70,000 strong.



“ There is a strong correlation between the construction sector of a country and a healthy economy and the improvement of life and living standards of the Malaysian people. As a property developer and construction company, Binastra has contributed and will continue to contribute significantly towards our country's economic growth. ”



images:

- 1)Binastra Land's CSR initiative to assist Chew Jin, a scoliosis girl for her operation
- 2) Dato Ong and team at The Prestigious Developer Awards 2016



Brand Leadership Exemplified in Spades

In deeper conversation with Dato' Ong, stirring truths about branding, *Brand Leadership* in particular, comes to light:

“Brand Leadership is in essence our own reputation. Reputation is the most important asset we have and it is the people's perception about us as a leader and as a business. Our reputation isn't just who we are, but rather what others believe about us. That's why as a market leader in the property industry, it is our responsibility to continue our brand building efforts to create and maintain a positive and desirable perception in the minds of people about our company, products, service, cause and ideas.”

He elaborates further, “As an effective *Brand Leader*, we should possess a detailed understanding of the demographics of the target market. Knowing what the market wants, including the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the *Brand Identity*, is a serious passion that pushes us to work harder to deliver great products, preserve consistency in the delivery of great-quality products, maintain competitiveness by constantly striving to improve, heighten our ability to reach consumers through multiple channels and nurture good leadership in the company.”

Responsible Corporate Citizen and Industry Driver

Dato' Ong shares motivational thoughts on the big picture:

“There is a strong correlation between the construction sector of a country and a healthy economy and the improvement of life and living standards of the Malaysian people. As a property developer and construction company, Binastra has contributed, and will continue to contribute, significantly towards our country's economic growth.”

This *Brand Champion* believes that there is a greater good in striving for excellence and having a big heart at all times.

“As a responsible developer, we always endeavour to match our products to our customers' expectations –taking into consideration the prevailing economic situations. We have to constantly review our strategies –especially in a very volatile economy. Therefore, in the current economic situation where genuine demand leads the property market, it is necessary to price our projects, especially residential properties, within the affordable range. Without adaptation of our strategy, we will see very little, if any, increase in the transaction volume of residential properties. By affordable range, I mean property prices between RM400k and RM550k.”

He explains further, “This does not mean that we diminish any of the 'WOW' factors in our developments. On the contrary, we provide many facilities which are considered a privilege to the far fewer high-end apartments in the *Klang Valley*. Exceeding our clients' expectations in value is something we take very seriously. For example, in our current ongoing *CitiZen @ Old Klang Road* project, expected to be completed in December 2017, more than 36 facilities are in wait to surprise our purchasers.”

His reassuring words reinforce the visible attributes of the luminary brand in a way that keeps patrons wanting to come back for more.

“To make our projects even more competitive, we are going further by providing a higher number of facilities within a state-of-the-art landscape and practical parcel layouts in our next residential project named *CitiZen2 @ Old Klang Road* which we plan to launch in June 2017. In spite of the myriad of facilities, we are capable of maintaining our property prices within the affordable range. Again, this is attributable to our unique position of being a developer and construction company at the same time –which helps us to better control the cost and in the management of our resources.”

Storm-Overcoming Sustainability

In spite of the *Asian Economic Crisis* of 1997-98 and Global Economic Crisis of 2007-2008 which saw the shrinking of the construction output of the country, the sturdy brand that is Binastra has grown from strength to strength. This has been sustained mainly by its business *Philosophy* adopted since its inception; *Profitability Acquired Without Sacrificing Quality*.

The *Brand Champion* shares his definition of 'Quality':

“Quality, firstly means when our workmanship is of a certain standard that gives us no (or fewer) complaints from customers. Secondly, timely delivery of our products is as important as its quality. Our customer's feedback is the most important and my team handles all issues arising from these feedbacks. We constantly engage our customers in order to build a strong *Brand Experience* that will do well for the brand.”

His words aptly convey his determination to excel sustainably as a timeless lifestyle brand.

“These factors, inter alia, will undoubtedly ensure a long-term sustainability of our property business. As a developer, we certainly look for not just mere profitability, but in what buyers want, the most important of which is delivering quality products in a timely manner, if not ahead of time.”

Dato' Ong's success story is a brilliant testament to the fruits of untold determination and passion for what one does. He has been instrumental in empowering a resourceful brand capable of impacting the industry, economy, topography and community all at once –transforming lives, defining lifestyles and redefining landmarks in this blessed nation; all the while never taking his eye off the value of comprehensive top-notch branding.

INTERNATIONAL BRAND PERSONALITIES

Bestowed on personalities who have contributed significantly to the world and communities through their areas of expertise, recipients of The BrandLaureate Awards are role models and a source of inspiration to many. Here are some of our brand personalities who have been recently conferred with The BrandLaureate International Brand Personality Award. Congratulations!

KEIKO MATSUI

The BrandLaureate International Brand Personality Award

Pianist Keiko Matsui was taken to her first piano lesson on the very day when she was five and she hasn't looked back since. After the release of her 1987 solo debut album Drop of Water, Keiko Matsui has become an icon of contemporary jazz. With nearly 1.2 million units sold in the U.S. alone and packed concert halls, she is one of the most recognized artists in the genre. Her elegant piano melodies and gentle jazz grooves have enormous appeal and never disappoint her loyal fan base which Matsui has cultivated with over a dozen albums and jaw-dropping live shows.

TONY HAWK

The BrandLaureate International Brand Personality Award

Tony Hawk is a former American skateboarder and actor. He was one of the most influential skateboarders of the modern times. His tryst with skateboard began at the age of nine, when he got his elder brother's blue fiber glass skateboard. Little did anyone know that this little boy would become one of the pioneers of vertical skateboarding in the coming years. With time, he was able to start his own skateboarding company called 'BirdHouse,' along with compatriot Per Welinder. He also initiated his own series of video games, 16 titles of which have been released since 1999.



DONNIE YEN

The BrandLaureate International Brand Personality Award

A sharp-skilled martial artist who has gone on to a successful career as a director and choreographer, Donnie Yen has found success in both his homeland China and in the hustle and bustle of Tinsletown. Working on projects ranging from the traditional Chinese martial-arts period piece Once Upon a Time in China II (1992) to the everyone's ultimate favourite fantasy opus Star Wars: Rogue One, Yen has distinguished himself as a formidable figure in the ranks of action cinema.

TAYLOR SWIFT

The BrandLaureate International Brand Personality Award

Taylor Swift is that rarest of pop phenomenon: a superstar who managed to completely cross over from country to the mainstream. There's no denying that Taylor swift has managed to cram in a lot of credits since she was introduced to the world in 2006. Swift's prodigious natural talent and captivating songwriting abilities have seen her rise the ranks of fame in a short span of time. She is undoubtedly one of the most gifted country musicians. Taylor's fame and fortune didn't materialize out of the ether. Behind the sultry voice is hard work and relentless passion.

NICK VUJICIC

The BrandLaureate International Brand Personality Award

Nick Vujicic, famous for his inspirational speeches, was born without limbs in his body. However, instead of letting his disability deter his everyday life, he took it as a challenge, using it to change millions of lives with the same faith that kept him going. He founded his own organization, called 'Life Without Limbs' and also released motivational films, like 'Life's Greater Purpose' and 'Biography of a Determined Man of Faith'. Vujicic has also written a book titled 'Life Without Limits: Inspiration for a Ridiculously Good Life'.

SIR MOHAMED 'MO' FARAH

The BrandLaureate Legendary Award

Sir Mo Farah is a multiple Olympic, World and European champion – the UK's greatest ever athlete. Mo recently became the first athlete to win three long-distance doubles at successive World Championship and Olympic Games – securing his place in the history books. Mo secured his legacy as the greatest distance runner of all time at the Rio 2016 Olympics - claiming the first ever distance 'triple-double' after electric 10,000m and 5,000m gold medal wins. Mo followed up his success with a third successive Great North Run victory – completing a historic "hat trick" in front of his home crowd. To round off an incredible year, Mo was knighted in the Queen's New Year Honours list for his services to athletics.

MARK ZUCKERBERG

The BrandLaureate Signature Award

Mark Zuckerberg is an American computer programmer and Internet entrepreneur. He is the chairman, chief executive officer, and co-founder of Facebook. His net worth is estimated to be US \$53.6 billion as of 2017, ranking him the 5th richest person in the world. Zuckereberg launched Facebook from Harvard's dormitory rooms and now – Facebook has expanded rapidly, reaching one billion users by 2012. Since 2010, Time magazine has named Zuckerberg among the 100 wealthiest and most influential people in the world as a part of its Person of the Year distinction. In December 2016, Zuckerberg was ranked 10th on Forbes list of The World's Most Powerful People.



JOHN MAYALL

The BrandLaureate Legendary Award

A John Mayall, OBE is a pioneering English blues singer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist. His musical career spans over fifty years, but the most notable episode in it occurred during the late '60s. He was the founder of John Mayall & the Bluesbreakers and, as a gifted talent-scout, has been influential in the careers of many instrumentalists, including Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce, Peter Green, John McVie, Mick Fleetwood, Mick Taylor, Don "Sugar cane" Harris, Harvey Mandel, Larry Taylor, Aynsley Dunbar, Hughie Flint, Jon Hiseman, Dick Heckstall-Smith, Andy Fraser, Johnny Almond, Rick Cortes, Jon Mark, Walter Trout, Coco Montoya, and Buddy Whittington.

SHAH RUKH KHAN

The BrandLaureate Legendary Award

Shahrukh Khan is a highly celebrated actor cum producer of the Indian film industry in the present times. He has acted in various blockbuster movies like Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayange, Dil to Pagal Hai, Khabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham, Chak De India and others. These have made Shahrukh hugely popular not only in India, but also across several other countries. He can easily be said to be the most influential actor among all his contemporaries in present day Bollywood. So much so that he is famously called King Khan in the Hindi filmdom

ARETHA FRANKLIN

The BrandLaureate Legendary Award

Aretha Franklin is both a 20th and 21st century musical and cultural icon known the world over as the reigning and undisputed "Queen Of Soul" who created an amazing legacy that spans an incredible six decades, from her first recording as a teenage gospel star, to her current RCA Records release. The recipient of the U.S.A.'s highest civilian honor, The Presidential Medal Of Freedom, an eighteen Grammy Award winner, Aretha Franklin's powerful, distinctive gospel-honed vocal style has influenced countless singers across multi-generations, justifiably earning her Rolling Stone magazine's No. 1 placing on the list of "The Greatest Singers of All Time."



CITIBANK OPENS FOUR DIGITAL BRANCHES IN THE COUNTRY

Citi Malaysia will be setting up four digital branches in the country as its latest brand transformation initiative in response to the changing preferences of clients and supporting further growth in its consumer business. In a statement, Citi Malaysia said in 2016, Citi Malaysia saw growth of 18 per cent in 30-day digital use by clients and growth of 30 per cent for 30-day mobile use. To date, more than 40 per cent of Citi Malaysia's customer base is digitally active.

The bank said the branches located in Cheras, Taipan USJ, Bukit Tengah in Penang and Durian Tunggal in Melaka would be upgraded to digital branches effective March 16, 2017, offering clients a suite of digital only self-service channels modeled on Citi's Smart Banking strategy. Within the region, this includes intuitive touch screens and high definition media walls designed to attract, engage and connect clients with products and services, digitally and all on demand.

"In our push to further digitize and support growth, a smarter network that embraces digital makes good business sense as we see more of our clients opting for digital banking. Digital banking has transformed how we serve clients and our priority is delivering a remarkable client experience to our clients wherever they choose to bank," chief executive officer Lee Lung Nien said in the statement.

It noted that Citi launched Voice Biometrics in 2016 in Malaysia, the first bank to do so in the country to verify clients through their unique voiceprints. This has seen a reduction by 66% of time spent verifying client details. During 2016, the bank also launched a new Citi Mobile app in Malaysia, the first bank to allow clients

to register for an online banking account entirely on their mobile app.

Citi has 16.9 million consumer banking customers in the region and the bank already has over one million customers registered for voice biometrics authentication. Within the next three years, the bank expects the number of users to grow to three million. - THE STAR



MYEG DIVERSIFIES PORTFOLIO

MyEG Services Bhd (MyEG) has brushed aside notion that the bulk of its business activities were dependent on the Government. It said that commercial solutions and services now make up 70 per cent of the group's business activities, thus no longer rendering it just a concession for various e-government applications.

According to MyEG managing director Wong Thean Soon, better known as T.S. Wong, the company intends to increase the percentage of its commercial business. At the same time, MyEG feels it is ready to expand its operations beyond Malaysia.

"We believe we have accumulated a lot of experience and know-how, and we are now ready to export our solutions. Overseas expansion is an important area that we will focus on. "On the domestic front, we are experimenting with vehicle leasing and online TV commerce and investing in a slew of start-ups," said Wong.

While MyEG's primary business activities are the development and implementation of e-government services and the provision of solutions that are related to the e-government initiatives such as vehicle road tax and drivers' license renewal and foreign workers' permit renewal, among others, it made an effort to diversify into commercial solutions three years ago.

- THE STAR



PR1MA SCHEME TO BOOST HOME OWNERSHIP

Perbadanan PR1MA Malaysia's newly launched Special PR1MA End Financing (SPEF) scheme is expected to improve loan eligibility for prospective buyers and also increase home ownership among the bottom 40 per cent and middle 40 per cent of Malaysian households.

The new scheme which is aimed at easing end-financing, will allow PR1MA home buyers to gain access to a higher loan amount compared to conventional loans. "The middle-income segment will now have the opportunity to own a home, a reality that may not have been an option without this programme," PR1MA chief executive officer Datuk Abdul Mutalib Alias said at a press conference.

PR1MA assistant vice-president for credit management Abdul Manaf Maksin expected rejection rate to be lower at 30 per cent in 2017 following the introduction of the SPEF scheme. PR1MA expects 15,000 house units to be sold this year, a sharp rise from only over 4,000 units last year.

Under the SPEF scheme, home buyers are required to start repayment of the borrowed principal amount beginning from the sixth year. For the first five years, the home buyers are only required to pay loan interests via installments.

Interested PR1MA home buyers can also opt-in for the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) Account 2 withdrawal option, allowing them to qualify for a larger loan amount. Upon the opt-in by interested home buyers, future contributions into the Account 2 will be used to complement the monthly house loan installments. - THE STAR



M'SIA ON TRACK TO BECOME TOP DESTINATION FOR HEALTH TOURISM: MHTC

Malaysia is set to become the preferred medical tourism destination in the region with about one million medical travelers expected to seek treatment in the country this year. Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC) chief executive officer Sherene Azli said the number of medical travelers have increased year-on-year since 2015 as the numbers grew from 860,000 in 2015 and about 900,000 in 2016.

"We are still tallying the numbers for 2016 but it is about 900,000. We have exceeded RM1 billion in revenue last year and this year we target RM1.3 billion revenue from medical tourism," she told reporters after the launch of MHTC #sharemylove campaign.

"Malaysia has a high quality healthcare system. It's pricing is affordable and it is highly accessible," she said, adding that the widely-spoken English language in Malaysia has also attracted many foreign medical travelers to come to the country. - NST



DRB-HICOM INVESTS RM23.9MIL TO STREAMLINE MANUFACTURING ACTIVITIES

DRB-Hicom Bhd, through its wholly-owned unit PHN Industry Sdn Bhd, has acquired Oriental Summit Industries Sdn Bhd (OSI) for RM23.9 million from Hicom Holdings Bhd (HHB). The acquisition is part of an internal reorganization that would enable the streamlining of common manufacturing activities undertaken by PHN and OSI.

These activities are inclusive of metal stamping, welding and sub-assembly

of metal components resulting in potential cost savings for the DRB-HICOM group. The cash consideration is based on HHB's carrying value of investment in OSI.

PHN is a 62.5 per cent-owned subsidiary company of HHB. The remaining 37.5 per cent equity interest in PHN is owned by Proton Holdings Bhd. HHB and Proton, are both wholly-owned subsidiary companies of DRB-Hicom.

Meanwhile, the group's indirect wholly-owned subsidiary Edaran Otomobil Nasional Bhd (EON) plans to divest Multi Automotive Service and Assist Sdn Bhd (MASA) to also streamline its business. EON had to that end entered into a share sale agreement (SSA) with Vikneswaran Suppiah for RM1. Vikneswaran is the operation manager of MASA. - NST



SME BANK FIRST DFI IN M'SIA, ASEAN TO JOIN THE MONTREAL GROUP

SME Bank has made history as the first Development Financial Institution (DFI) in Malaysia and Asean to be a member of The Montreal Group (TMG). TMG is an exclusive global forum for state-owned development banks focused on assisting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

Founded in 2012 by seven members with a total estimated combined assets of US\$2 trillion, TMG was established to encourage exchange of ideas, best practices and foster greater understanding of the international market for the growth of SMEs.

"This is a testament to the Bank of how far we have gone. TMG recognises SME Bank as a prominent DFI in the country as well as Asean region. "We do not just offer financing but we also carry the role of nurturing and developing the SMEs through the Bank's various intervention programmes," SME Bank group managing director Datuk Mohd Radzif said in a statement. - NST



TM SEES GROWTH BOOST FROM WEBE

TELEKOM Malaysia Bhd (TM) expects accelerated growth from recently-launched mobile portfolio webe to complement its fixed-line business Streamyx and UniFi, says its consumer and SME (small and medium enterprise) executive vice-president Imri Mokhtar. "This year, TM will focus on the mass market and accelerate that by bringing the convergence experience out to home and SME customers," he said recently.

Imri said TM anticipated steady growth for its fixed-line business, which was fuelled by broadband. "Now that we have completed our convergence portfolio with the mobile, we expect accelerated growth to come from the business as we gain market share this year," he said.

While another challenging year meant business as usual for the telco, it was crunch time for TM to up its game in delivering the value in services. "When times are challenging and Malaysians are committing their hard earned money, it is TM's responsibility to deliver what is expected," he said.

On the High Speed Broadband Phase 2 (HSBB2) and Suburban Broadband (SUBB) projects, Imri said the company was on track to meet the target in terms of the rollout, which was to deliver a total of 810,000 ports. - NST



MATRADE NAMES NEW CEO, FORMERLY WITH ESSO, INTEC

The Malaysia External Trade Development Corp (Matrade) has announced the appointment of Ir Dr Mohd Shahreen Zainooreen Madros as its new chief executive officer (CEO), following the retirement of Datuk Dzulkifli Mahmud.

Prior to the appointment, Shahreen was the Malaysia Petroleum Resources Corp executive director. He was also previously with Esso Production Malaysia Inc (EPMI), and was assigned to the Exxon Production Research Company in Houston, Texas, for two years. After EPMI, he joined INTEC Engineering and was involved in offshore design consultancy works for local and international clients.

Shahreen said he is upbeat on the appointment and aspires to continue strengthening Matrade's solid foundation as Malaysia's export promotion agency. "Moving forward, it is imperative for Matrade to continue forging strategic partnerships with all relevant stakeholders in both private and public sectors, such as various ministries, agencies, trade associations, chambers of commerce and business councils.

"This is to ensure Malaysia remains competitive on the global front," he said. Shahreen said such partnerships will have a direct positive influence on the local business community, and with all stakeholders moving together to achieve the same goal - to contribute to the wellbeing of the economy - Malaysia will remain as one of the top trading nations in the world. - NST



AIRASIA X TAKES OFF FOR HONOLULU ON JUNE 28, 2017

Malaysia's long-haul budget airline AirAsia X Bhd is set to fly to Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, starting June 28 this year. AirAsia X will operate a four-times-weekly service from KL to Honolulu, via Osaka, Japan.

Passengers transiting in Osaka do not require a Japanese visa during the two-hour stopover and can return to their seats on the flight after clearing security with any carry-on luggage and belongings.

Passengers may also opt for the 'multi-city option' on AirAsia's website prior to booking their flights, which allows

them to spend a few days in Osaka before flying on to Honolulu. However, non-Malaysian passengers would need to apply for a Japanese visa to stay in Osaka for a few days.

AirAsia X also offers Fly-Thru service, wherein passengers are able to connect seamlessly to Honolulu from other cities within the AirAsia Group's extensive flight network, with just one additional stop. - NST



MAHB SETS ASIDE RM100M TO UPGRADE 39 AIRPORTS

Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) plans to spend over RM100 million for upgrading works at all of its 39 airports in the country. MAHB managing director Datuk Badlisham Ghazali said the airport operator will focus on refurbishing its airports this year for a better and more comfortable passenger experience. "We've launched new products like Premium Access and this year we will launch another product called VIP Access," he said on the sideline of MAHB 25th anniversary celebration.

MAHB is currently looking at upgrading and refurbishing the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), Sultan Ismail Petra Airport (in Kota Baru) and Langkawi International Airport, to name a few. "There will be a lot of upgrades not in the airside only but also on the basic facilities." "As you know, KLIA especially is almost 20 years old. It's a bit dated in some of its facilities. The toilets will be one of the upgrades that we will do for this year," Badlisham said.

Meanwhile, in his speech, Badlisham said KLIA is among the top 25 busiest airports in the world. In 2016, KLIA surpassed the 50 million passenger per annum (mppa) and grew by 7.6 per cent to nearly 53 mmpa. KLIA also registered double digit growth of 15 per cent last month compared to the same period in 2016. MAHB also handled nearly 89 million passenger traffic in all of its airports in Malaysia last year. - NST



BANK OF AMERICA OPENS BRANCHES WITHOUT EMPLOYEES

Bank of America Corp has opened three completely automated branches where customers can use ATMs and have video conferences with employees at other branches, according to spokeswoman Anne Pace.

Like many U.S. banks in recent years, Bank of America has been reducing its overall branch count to cut costs even as it opens new branches in select markets. New branches are typically smaller, employ more technology, and are aimed at selling mortgages, credit cards and auto loans rather than simple transactions such as cashing checks.

Pace said there is one completely automated branch in Minneapolis and one in Denver, both of which are relatively new markets for the bank's consumer business. They are about a quarter of the size of a typical branch.

The new branches were mentioned briefly by Dean Athanasia, co-head of Bank of America's consumer banking unit, during a question and answer session at an investor conference, but he did not provide details.

Athanasia said Bank of America will open 50 to 60 new branches over the next year, though Pace said the bank will also be closing branches in certain markets, so the 50 to 60 branches do not represent a net increase. Bank of America opened 31 new branches in 2016.

Bank of America had 4,579 financial centers at the end of the fourth quarter of 2016, compared to 4,726 in the fourth quarter of 2015 and 5,900 at the end of 2010. - TODAY ONLINE



APPNEXUS LAUNCHES DIRECT PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT INTEGRATION WITH THE FEDERATION FOR INTERNET ALERTS

AppNexus, the world's leading independent advertising technology company announced an unprecedented capability, in partnership with the Federation for Internet Alerts (FIA), to globally distribute geo-targeted weather advisories and life-saving warnings in real-time. A direct integration with the FIA Alert Hub, a centralized, cloud-based hub that aggregates official all-hazard alerts, and AppNexus' ad serving technology allows critical safety information from government agencies and non-profits to be delivered digitally to the public, anywhere in the world and more rapidly than ever before. The expanded capabilities mark a new realm of public emergency preparedness and see AppNexus become the first advertising technology company to distribute PSAs globally and in real-time.

"AppNexus' mission is to build a better internet. Through our integration with FIA, we are extending the technology built for our platform - enhanced targeting, mobile capabilities and campaign tools - to help protect communities hyper-locally and in real-time," said Brian O'Kelley, CEO of AppNexus. "We are proud to partner with FIA in this important work."

Since December 2016, FIA has sent 71,819 issued alerts to AppNexus, which resulted in 14,992 alert activations. These alerts resulted in the delivery of 471.8 million impressions served to the public. Examples of the expanded alerts served include avalanche, flash flood, tornado, red flag, winter storm, blizzard, severe thunderstorm and wind chill warnings. AppNexus is currently trafficking alerts from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Environment Canada, with the ability to add alerts from other official alerting authorities, which can now be disseminated anywhere in the world. - YAHOO FINANCE



TESCO TO BUY BUDGENS AND LONDIS OWNER BOOKER IN £3.7BN DEAL

Tesco has agreed a £3.7bn deal to buy Booker, the cash and carry giant behind the Londis and Budgens convenience chains, in a move that will tighten its grip on the UK's £195bn food market. The deal is expected to be scrutinised by the competition authorities as Tesco is already the country's biggest retailer, with more than 3,500 stores and control of close to 30 per cent of the grocery market.

The proposed acquisition would turn Tesco into a major supplier to small retailers, serving 125,000 independent convenience stores as well as 468,000 restaurants and pubs. Analysts estimate the deal - if cleared by regulators - will hand Tesco another 2 per cent of UK grocery sales courtesy of the Premier, Londis and Budgens chains that Booker supplies.

The deal is the first major corporate move by Tesco since it was run by Sir Terry Leahy, who quit in 2011. In the years since, the grocer has been battered by the discounters and by the move to online and convenience shopping. - THE GUARDIAN



ROLLS-ROYCE POSTS BIGGEST LOSS IN ITS HISTORY

Rolls-Royce has suffered the biggest loss in its history due to the cost of settling corruption charges and the impact of Brexit on the value of sterling. The engine-maker reported a £4.6bn statutory pre-tax loss for 2016, one of the biggest corporate losses in British history.

It included a £4.4bn write down on the value of financial hedges Rolls

uses to protect itself against currency fluctuations and a £671m charge for the penalties the company has agreed to pay to settle bribery and corruption charges with the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), the US Department of Justice, and Brazilian authorities.

The biggest loss in British history is the £24bn recorded by Royal Bank of Scotland for 2008. Warren East, chief executive of Rolls-Royce, insisted the loss did not reflect the underlying health of the business. "This has no impact on what is really going on in the business and cash, it is just an accounting measure," he said of the biggest loss for the company since Henry Royce established an electrical and mechanical business in 1884.

Accounting rules mean Rolls was forced to write down the value of its currency hedges - which are worth more than £30bn - to reflect sterling's slump. The pound has lost almost a fifth of its value against the dollar since Britain voted to leave the EU last June. Rolls hedges billions of pounds of cash to protect itself against currency fluctuations because deals in the aerospace industry are conducted in dollars. - THE GUARDIAN



DUBAI ANNOUNCES PASSENGER DRONE PLANS

A drone that can carry people will begin "regular operations" in Dubai from July, the head of the city's Roads and Transportation Agency has announced at the World Government Summit.

The Chinese model eHang 184 has already had test flights, said Matt al-Tayer. The drone can carry one passenger weighing up to 100 kg (220 pounds) and has a 30 minute flight time. The passenger uses a touch screen to select a destination. There are no other controls inside the craft. It is "auto-piloted" by a command centre,

according to a video released by the government agency.

It has reported speeds of up to 100 miles per hour (160 kilometres per hour) and can fly 31 miles (50km) on a single battery charge. "This is not only a model," Mr al-Tayer, according to a report by the Associated Press. "We have actually experimented with this vehicle flying in Dubai's skies." The device was also approved for testing in Nevada in June 2016. - BBC



AMAZON LAUNCHES CHIME, A VIDEO CONFERENCING AND COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE FOR BUSINESS

Amazon has taken the wraps off of its own Skype competitor. Chime is a new video conferencing and communications from AWS that's focused on business users. Beyond VoIP calling and video messaging, Chime includes virtual meetings, allowing users to host or join a remote meeting through the service. Pricing starts at \$2.50 per user per month on the lowest end, with a higher tier plan of \$15 per user which includes video and screen-sharing among other features. There is a basic option available for free but that is limited to video calls and chat rooms between two users. Chime is available for Windows, MacOS, iOS, and Android devices.

TechCrunch first reported that Amazon was planning this new service in November, the firm had acquired patents and staff from San Francisco-based Biba Systems, a startup behind video messaging apps aimed at business users. The move is not only an alternative to communication services like Skype for business or Google Hangouts, but it is also takes AWS into the space of virtual meeting management, where companies like GoToMeeting and Cisco (WebEx) are the best known players.

AWS is already a formidable player in cloud services, as TechCrunch enterprise reporter Ron Miller explained this

week, but Chime pushes it into the services space to help strengthen its grip on customers as competition increases. Microsoft, Google and even new entrants like Alibaba are making big pushes to nab customers from AWS, which remains a key performer for Amazon financially. - TECH CRUNCH



MAERSK TO EXPAND ONLINE FREIGHT BOOKING AFTER PARTNERING ALIBABA

Maersk Line, the world largest sea box carrier, is looking for more alliances in China for online freight booking following a test programme in association with e-commerce giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.

Introduced in December, the Internet-based service Cangweibao allows exporters to reserve Maersk's boxes against a deposit. The carrier, owned by Copenhagen-based A.P. Moller-Maersk A/S, is now looking to extend the programme to help gain smaller customers who otherwise might get squeezed out by the biggest manufacturers, according to Mike Fang, Maersk Line's chief for Greater China.

Shipping lines have been investing in technology to cut costs and boost efficiency in managing schedules and movements as the industry yearns for a recovery after years of overcapacity and slowing global trade. The partnership with Alibaba helped address the issue of customers failing to show up despite a reservation and leads to better utilisation of space in containers, Maersk said. - BLOOMBERG



SINGAPORE AIRLINES TO BUY 39 BOEING PLANES WORTH US\$13.8BIL

Singapore Airlines announced an order for a total of 39 Boeing passenger

planes worth US\$13.8bil as part of its growth plans for the next decade. The carrier said in a statement that it had signed a letter of intent with the US manufacturer for 20 777-9s and 19 787-10s, with options for six more of each aircraft, bringing the total to 51 if exercised.

"Today's major order for widebody aircraft enables us to continue operating a modern and fuel-efficient fleet, providing the SIA Group with additional expansion opportunities to ensure that we retain our industry-leading position," chief executive Goh Choon Phong said in a statement. - AFP



FACEBOOK LAUNCHES APP FOR WATCHING ITS VIDEOS ON TV

Facebook Inc is launching an app for smart TVs that will help the social network's users enjoy its videos on a bigger screen. The app will roll out soon from app stores for Apple TV, Samsung Smart TV and Amazon Fire TV, the company said in a blogpost.

The blogpost also said users can scroll through their news feed and simultaneously watch videos on their timeline. Sound also fades in and out as one scrolls through videos in news feed now. Videos in news feed have previously played silently - one needed to tap on a video to hear its sound.

The Wall Street Journal reported that Facebook was creating an app for TV set-top boxes that would bring the company closer to live video and video advertisements.

Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg during a post-earnings call said that the company expected a major ramp-up in hiring and other spending during 2017 as it invests in video and other priorities. The company last year expanded its live video product, Facebook Live - a potential threat to broadcast television. - REUTERS



TOYOTA, SUZUKI COURTSHIP INTENSIFIES AS PARTNERSHIP TALKS BEGIN

Toyota Motor Corp and Suzuki Motor Corp said they plan to trade expertise in parts supplies and R&D, in an agreement that will aid expansion in emerging markets and help them cope with rapid technological sophistication.

Any deal could see Toyota benefit from a supply chain that has helped Suzuki dominate India's massive auto market, while Suzuki could hope to access Toyota's innovations in automated driving, artificial intelligence and low-emission vehicles.

"Toyota and Suzuki have agreed to work toward the early realization of a business partnership," they said in a joint statement, singling out areas of possible cooperation such as procurement and environment- and safety-related technology.

The agreement comes about four months after Suzuki, Japan's fourth-biggest automaker, said it was struggling to keep up with research and development (R&D) in an industry simultaneously exploring non-petrol engines and self-driving vehicles - areas in which it has yet to announce any major strategy.

While Toyota has the financial fire power to keep up with technology, the world's second-largest automaker has long struggled to win market share in India where drivers prefer the type of affordable compact cars in which Suzuki excels.

Toyota is hoping to mine Suzuki's know-how in low-cost design which has enabled its peer to come up with competitive cars priced below \$7,000, according to several company insiders who have spoken with Reuters on condition of anonymity. - REUTERS

FITNESS BEST ASIA AWARDS 2017

Asia's First Fitness Awards in Singapore



16th of January – Local event company amc experience! announced the launch of Fitness Best Asia Awards 2017, Asia's first fitness awards ceremony in Singapore. The event will take place on 16 May 2017 at Zouk. It rewards excellence in aspect rum of fitness - related fields and honours individuals and organisations that have made substantial contributions with in the industry.

Fitness Best Asia Awards 2017 will recognise the best in the fitness and wellness industry in 4 major categories and 20 awards:

- Brands: For nutrition distributors, apparel brands, equipment brands.
- Individual: For instructors, trainers, social media influence.
- Fitness: For gyms, studios, hotels, rehabilitation facilities.
- Vanguard: For local athletes and other local inspiring individuals and organisations.

The winners for each will be decided either by votes from users, a panel of judges, or both.

Registration has opened on 20th of January 2017. Registered users can either nominate someone

or upload a submission to enter an award. After a verification and approval process, shortlisted nominees will be posted on the webpage. Winners will be announced at the awards ceremony.

Managing all the technical aspects of the Fitness Best Asia Awards 2017 is Technical Director, Laila White. Laila is the Managing Director of Elite Fit, a Singapore-based company specialising in fitness and wellness. With 18 years of working within the industry, being an experienced personal and aerobics trainer and having designed gyms worldwide for the Four Seasons Hotel are among many of her accomplishments.

Representing a cross-section of the fitness and wellness industry, judges are selected over a spread of Asian countries and represent diverse fields within the industry.

Fitness Best Asia's first of seven appointed judges for the awards is Diane Haslam, CEO of FISAF (Federation of International Sports, Aerobics and Fitness) Singapore for more than 25 years. She has worked to certify more than 5000 Singaporeans as personal trainers and instructors. She is a master instructor in the fitness industry and has taught fitness education at all academic levels.

SECURITIES COMMISSION MALAYSIA

Unveils Blueprint for Wealth Management & Islamic Funds



investment, and develop it as an international provider of Islamic wealth management services.

"With its comprehensive Islamic finance ecosystem and track record in innovation, is at an advantageous position to play a lead role in shaping the concept and driving the development of Islamic wealth management services," the blueprint said.

The blueprint will be operationalized through work programmes on a phased approach over a five year period. For the first phase, there will be formulation of a framework for issuance of SRI investment funds, the setting up of the global capacity building centre for Islamic Capital Market and the introduction of digital investment services framework.

The forum was attended by representatives from Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore and UK, collectively representing over \$19 trillion, approximately 26 per cent of the total global assets under management. The dialogue covered topics of domestic, regional and global relevance including investment viewpoints, market perspectives and opportunities in Malaysia's economic and corporate landscape.

25th of January – Malaysia has launched a five-year Islamic Fund and Wealth Management Blueprint in a bid to position itself as global hub for Islamic funds, taking advantage of the rising affluence in Asia-Pacific and emerging Muslim economies.

Malaysia currently has Islamic assets under management at \$29.66 billion (MYR132.4 billion) which is among the largest in the world. The blueprint will spring Malaysia as an international provider of Islamic wealth management services.

The 51-page blueprint was launched by the Second Finance Minister Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani at the International Fund Forum 2017 organised by Securities Commission.

"The Islamic wealth management industry is still at a nascent stage of development as compared with other segments of the Islamic capital market," the Securities Commission said.

Among the three areas that the blueprint will work are to strengthen Malaysia's position as a global hub for Islamic funds, establish the country as a regional centre for shariah-compliant sustainable and responsible

SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

Of The Best Independent Culture in the World



MISS UNIVERSE 2016

France Clinched Title after 64 Years

29th of January –France won its first Miss Universe crown in 64 years in a made-for-television spectacle where finalists spoke out on the refugee crisis and other hot-button global issues.

Decked out in a gold-sequined gown, 24-year-old dental surgery student Iris Mittenaaere beat 12 other finalists to take the crown. As Miss Universe, she will be campaigning for dental and oral care around the world.

"This sash is not only a sash," said Mittenaaere, who is from Northern France, in a Miss Universe interview after the pageant. "This is something to help people, to understand people."

First and second runner-ups were Miss Haiti (Raquel Pelissier) and Miss Colombia (Andrea Tovar). The top finalists hailed from Kenya, Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, Panama, Colombia, Philippines, Canada, Brazil, France, Haiti, Thailand and the U.S. The pageant changed its format this year; it had 12 instead of 13 finalists, and counted online votes from the Miss Universe app and Twitter.

This was the first time Sierra Leone entered the competition and was represented by

Hawa Kamara, 2013 Miss West Africa. Miss Canada, Siera Bearchell, also made headlines for taking on trolls who body-shamed her for her size.

One of the most talked about segment of the competition was when the contestants showcased some jaw-dropping costumes during the national costume preliminary competition in Pasay, Metro Manila, Philippines. Major landmarks, geographical and historical features seemed to be a big trend in this year's competition, with 86 contestants seen clad in elegant gowns and extravagant colour-bursting costumes. Some of the wears were literally out of this world! Miss Universe Malaysia, Kiran Jassal wore an outfit inspired by the Petronas Twin Towers (it features models of the towers as shoulder pads), designed by local fashion designer duo Rizman Ruzaini.

The annual pageant was held at the Mall of Asia Arena in Manila, Philippines. Host Steve Harvey joked on the show that he got the winner right this year, after last year's snafu of getting it wrong. Rapper Flo Rida and R&B group Boys II Men provided entertainment.



29th of January – The film festival that brought us "Little Miss Sunshine," "Whiplash," and this season's "Manchester by the Sea" concluded with an awards ceremony honouring some of the world's most exciting indie filmmakers. The 2017 Sundance Film Festival premiered 119 feature-length and 68 short films, yielding several big acquisitions for Netflix, Amazon, and Sony Pictures Classics, and crowning many promising winners—titles that could reappear in the next film awards season.

Larry Wilmore, Gael García Bernal, Peter Dinklage, and Sonia Braga were among the jurors selecting this year's award recipients. The U.S. Grand Jury Prize for a dramatic feature, an award that in 2014 helped carry Damien Chazelle's "Whiplash" to Oscar-winning status, went to Macon Blair's directorial debut, a comedy-thriller starring Melanie Lynskey and Elijah Wood titled "I Don't Feel at Home in This World Anymore."

The directing award for U.S. dramatic feature—which has in years past predicted critical hits including "Martha Marcy May Marlene" and "The Witch"—went to Eliza Hittman for her coming-of-age drama "Beach Rats," featuring a star turn from Harris Dickinson. Among this year's Audience Awards was Matt Ruskin's "Crown Heights," which includes another buzzy performance from Lakeith Stanfield. For the full list of Sundance awards, click here.

This year's festival took on a political tone in the wake of Donald Trump's presidential inauguration. "This has been one of the wildest, wackiest and most rewarding Festivals in recent memory," John Cooper, director of the festival, said in a statement. "From a new government to the independently organized Women's March on Main, to power outages, a cyberattack and snow at record levels, the work of our artists rose above it all and challenged and changed us these last 10 days. I am most proud that, through it all, we have formed a community that is bound tighter by the art we make and the ideas we support."

The Sundance Film Festival has presented filmmakers and audiences with some of the industry's most ground-breaking films since 1978.

THE DIARY

AUSTRALIAN OPEN 2017
Roger Federer Tops Rival Rafael Nadal



31st of January – Roger Federer wiped away a few more titles as he became the oldest man to win a Grand Slam singles title in 45 years. He managed it by defeating Nadal, 6-4, 3-6, 6-1, 3-6, 6-3, to win the Australian Open for the fifth time.

“You don’t know if they ever come back, these moments,” said Federer, who had not won a major title since Wimbledon in 2012 and who had not beaten Nadal in a Grand Slam final since Wimbledon in 2007.

Federer played here with verve and precision but had to scrap his way through three five-set matches in the final four rounds, receiving plenty of treatment between duels. Although he did not have to deal with the world’s two leading players, Andy Murray and Novak Djokovic, who were upset in the first week, Federer did face top 10 opponents aplenty.

He defeated four of them: Tomas Berdych, Kei Nishikori, Stan Wawrinka and – most important – Nadal, the swashbuckling Spanish left-hander who has so often thwarted Federer on big occasions but who failed to seal the deal despite taking a 3-1 lead in the fifth set.

Few could have foreseen this final when the Australian Open began. This was Federer’s first official tournament after a long break because of knee problems in 2016. Nadal ended last season early, too, after an injury to his left wrist. And yet the occasion felt so familiar, inciting global interest and nostalgia for the days when Federer-Nadal summit meetings were a staple.

The result was a brisk five-setter by Nadal’s standards. The Spaniard required 4 hours 56 minutes to beat Federer’s stylistic acolyte, Grigor Dimitrov, and his one-handed backhand in the semifinals.

Federer is the second-oldest man to win a major singles title in the Open era, behind Ken Rosewall, who won the 1970 United States Open when he was approaching his 36th birthday, the 1971 Australian Open at 36 and the 1972 Australian Open at 37.

The victory over Nadal significantly increased Federer’s chances of remaining the career leader in men’s Grand Slam singles titles. With 18, he has a more comfortable lead over Nadal, who is tied with Pete Sampras for second on the list, at 14.

CANON MALAYSIA
30 Delightful Years

12th of February – It’s been 30 years since Canon Malaysia set foot in this country, bringing with it a range of products for both commercial and enterprise customers alike. To celebrate its milestone anniversary, the company has set up a product showcase in Mid Valley Megamall to display just how far the company has come since 1987.

Exhibits range from the first plain paper fax in Malaysia in 1987; to launching the Bubble Jet printers in 1994; the EOS 888 in 1995; and launching the Canon EOS 5D Mark IV in 2016.

In attendance during the kicking off Canon’s 30th Anniversary in Malaysia product showcase in Mid Valley Megamall were Jeffrey Kung – Assistant Director of Consumer Imaging and Information Division, Andrew Koh – President and CEO of Canon Marketing (Malaysia), and Janna Nick, ambassador of Canon. Canon also has some high resolution photos up for display, all taken with its EOS DSLR cameras, printed with its series of printers. Canon Malaysia has also set up a booth where you can bring your Canon DSLR cameras for free servicing.

As long as there is no need of replacement of parts, the company will provide service and maintenance for free.

Canon Marketing (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd started its operations in 1987 and today it has become a major corporate player in Malaysia. Focused on the objective of providing excellent products and support to Malaysian users, Canon invested considerable time and effort in developing channels to access the market. Growing from strength to strength since its inception, Canon Malaysia has become a brand synonymous with many market firsts.

Canon is committed and will continue to strive to become a household name and a leading brand, sought after for its quality and reliability in products and services, living up to its corporate tagline, Delighting You Always, for now and well into the future. Canon Malaysia’s 30th Anniversary product showcase, was held until the 19th of February at Mid Valley Megamall.



周大福
CHOW TAI FOOK

完美婚嫁系列

HEINEKEN MALAYSIA BERHAD

Solid Performance Amidst Challenging Conditions



13th of February – Heineken Malaysia Berhad (formerly Guinness Anchor Berhad) announced its financial results, reporting double digit growth for the cumulative 18-month period and the 3-month period ended 31 December 2016, despite challenging market conditions.

Revenue increased by 4.9% to RM2.8 billion during the cumulative 18-month period, and 10.1% to RM577 million for the 3-month period ended 31 December 2016. This was driven by continued volume growth for the Heineken® and Guinness premium brands, stronger overall portfolio performance, effective sales execution and robust growth in the Off-Trade segment, mostly driven by earlier timing of Chinese New Year.

Profit before tax grew by 11.1% to RM549 million during the cumulative 18-month period, and by 3.7% to RM122 million for the 3-month period ended 31 December 2016. This was underpinned by increased revenue, improved cost efficiency in commercial spend, benefits derived from Project Breakout - an integrated system which optimised efficiencies in the entire value chain from brewery to trade, as well as savings from global procurement initiatives.

Hans Essaadi, Managing Director of HEINEKEN Malaysia said, “The increase in revenue across the 18-month period despite the challenging market conditions is

testament to HEINEKEN Malaysia’s brand-led and consumer-inspired strategy, which is supported by a strong portfolio of products.”

“Despite currency volatility and soft consumer sentiment, HEINEKEN Malaysia’s focus on driving premium growth, innovation and improving cost efficiency delivered solid performance during this challenging period,” he added.

The solid performance was underpinned by shifting market trends and consumption habits, resulting in considerable growth in the Off-Trade segment. Despite this, soft consumer sentiment and the Government’s decision to restructure excise duties in March 2016 has created pressure on legitimate duty-paid products given growing demand for cheaper contraband products. Commenting on the outlook for 2017, Essaadi said,

“HEINEKEN Malaysia is determined to continue to outperform by delivering on the key strategies in our business, through expanding our iconic portfolio of brands, strengthening our commercial strategies and investing in our people. At the same time, as part of the HEINEKEN Group, we will leverage the integrated global supply chain to further improve efficiencies, as well as implement long-term cost saving measures to stay ahead of the game,” he concluded.

59TH GRAMMY AWARDS
Adele Wins Big

15th of February – Adele swept the 59th annual Grammy Awards with her album “25,” an enormous hit around the world, in a night that shut out Beyoncé from the major awards and also featured reverent tributes and, at times, pointed political commentary.

Adele won a total of five awards, including album of the year for “25” and both record and song of the year for the hit “Hello” – a sweep that Adele accomplished five years ago with her last album, “21.” She is the only artist to win album, record and song of the year twice.

The night had been seen as a contest between Adele and Beyoncé, two superdivas who were up against each other in all major categories. There was also concern in the music industry that just such an outcome – with a white woman defeating a black woman in all top awards – would feed a brewing resentment that the Grammys too often fail to recognize minority artists in the top categories.

Adele herself seemed uncomfortable with the turn of events, at first tearfully saying that she could not accept album of the year (although she did accept it).

“My album of the year was ‘Lemonade,’ so a piece of me did die inside, as a Beyoncé fan,” Adele said in the media room afterward.

The night was also filled with tributes to stars departed and to landmarks of pop music’s past. Besides Adele’s homage to George Michael, the show also included a purple-hued tribute to Prince with the Time, the longtime Minneapolis funk group that often performed with Prince, and with Bruno Mars, who impersonated Prince from his makeup and performance style to the shape of his guitar.

The Prince tribute came on the same day that much of his music was released widely on streaming music services, a result of a series of deals reached with Prince’s estate; during his life, Prince closely policed his music online, and pulled his songs down from all services but Tidal.

Not all tributes were to the dead, but a medley of Bee Gees songs was almost as reverent. Demi Lovato, Tori Kelly, Little Big Town and Andra Day played “Stayin’ Alive,” “How Deep Is Your Love” and others from the Bee Gees’ classic soundtrack to “Saturday Night Fever,” 40 years after its release.



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PRIDE AND PLUMAGE

COUNTRY BRANDING SERIES

RESHAPING THE WORLD LIKE THE ROOSTER COUNTRY BRANDING ELEMENT: POSSESSING THE COGNISANCE TO REMODEL THE WORLD FOR THE BETTER

What is the largest animal in the world? The answer might not be as textbook or straightforward as one might suppose. Here's a clue: Some say you can rearrange all the continents to form a rooster...



Simply amazing! Looks like nature's dawn crier, the proud cockerel, which alerts the world to the impending sunrise, also makes the world go round!

Amusing as it may be, as I pondered upon the qualities of this creature, it began to dawn on me how this unassuming bird can be a model driver for everyone in the realm of *Country Branding*.

A real *Country Brand* does not simply accept the things, including limitations, of this world as they are. Such a Brand strives to change accepted norms for the better. Like the illustration above, a Country operating in the spirit and dynamism of Branding has the 'potential energy' to redirect the flow of this world and redefine the shape of things (even land mass, as illustrated).

"As the world changes and a new epoch unfolds, I envision a Country Brand which has the ability to reshape the universal horizon and redefine the radius of excellence for global acceptance and emulation."

COUNTRY BRANDING ELEMENT: OF PRIDE AND PURPOSE CAPTIVATING PLUMAGE, EXEMPLAR QUALITIES

I personally like the qualities of the cockerel. Though perhaps at first glance, this strident fowl may not be much to look at, but there is certainly more to him than meets the eye. For one, he is the overseer of progress for his clan – its chieftain. This tribe champion is ever vigilant, keeping his flock away from harm at the best of his abilities. New eggs might not be laid, new chicks might not be hatched and the poultry industry cannot flourish if not for his heedful prowess.

Speaking of progress, a nation that is operating in the spirit of *Country Branding* always keeps its priorities right. As a Branding vessel, its steering wheel and rudder are always pointed at and directed by the compass of excellence, for the sake of impactful Branding optimized.

A nation exists to make an impact in the world, transforming it into a better place. It is a cog in the grand machinery of universal Branding. Any Country, like the mighty rooster, must sink its claws in deep into the earth and bring out the hidden goodness right beneath its feet, able to see treasure in the very soil of the motherland. And he is proud of the ground on which he stands. A rooster perches tall and gazes at the world, ready to take it! Pride is his attribute. In the same way, we must take pride in our own nation as a Brand.

The word **PRIDE** broken down into its full spectrum in the context of *Country Branding* unfolds as follows:

Proactive
Radical
Inventive
Daring
Extraordinary

These are the key characteristic of the mighty cockerel. Rightfully, they should also be the distinctive elements of a nation, forming an integral part of a *Country Brand*.

"Be proud of your Country. It is a Brand, and like all Brands, it is very much alive. But unlike regular living things, it is PRIDE in your Brand which keeps it alive. PRIDE drives the Country Brand to the very thresholds of fineness."

COUNTRY BRANDING ELEMENT: MALLEABLE WITH THE TIMES THE PROACTIVE NATION BRAND

A nation must be proactive as a Brand. This means it must keep up with the times. Applying the principles of the cockerel further to this element, not only must a nation keep up with the rest of the world, it ought to be a leader – a pacesetter – for other nations to imitate and emulate.

Reaching this apex in the global arena requires the concerted effort of everyone in the Country. To propel such a move, love for Country, and more specifically, the Brand that is the Country, must be exercised by its people. This kind of love is all-inclusive, and will boost



“It is time to greet the dawn rooster-style! And if every Brand in every nation, personal or corporate, living or inanimate, small or big, ascends to greet this new sunrise, I believe with all my heart that this world will be a better place.”

each and every aspect of their lives on multiple levels. All that its denizens do, over and above what they do for themselves, their families, friends, companies, schools and organizations, ultimately goes towards the greatness that is the *Country Brand*.

Being proactive also involves being able to adapt and change with the needs of the times. A nation must not be too rigid or set in its old ways – or it will most likely be left behind. Taking the contour of the new day is good; but by applying the principles of the rooster, a nation can do much more than that. For in the same way the cockerel 'shapes the day' (by setting the pace of the day) when he crows early in the morning, a Country that is immersed in Branding can also shape the world.

In fact if a *Country Brand* becomes the pride of an individual, it motivates the person from the inside out. That greatness becomes the inertia that keeps the individual geared towards achieving his or her personal goals. For all that is done is finally done for the sake of the *Country Brand*. Truly, there can be no greater personal motivator in the constant strive for excellence!

“Be proud of your Country. It is a Brand; and like all Brands, it is very much alive. But unlike regular living things, taking PRIDE in your Brand keeps it alive and going. PRIDE drives the Brand, even the Country Brand, to the very thresholds of fineness...”

**COUNTRY BRANDING ELEMENT:
CREATING AN IMPACT ON THE ATLAS**
THE RADICAL NATION BRAND

To be radical is to be far-reaching. In order to be far-reaching as a person or a Brand, one has to be radical to create an impact that will leave an impression. Such an impression will set the bar on whatever is to come out of the Brand henceforth and it will not be taken lightly by the rest of the world. A nation which bears such an attribute has the power to lay amazing foundations that will usher in a bright future and secure its people's place on this globe.

When a rooster stamps its mark as the dominant bird, all the birds in the barn automatically come under his wings. He leads the whole flock. His dominance becomes extensive and his purview unchallenged, even sublime.

Country Branding in its truest form transforms a nation into a leader. The right *Country Branding* will mould a nation into such a leader. Consequently, a leading nation bears a certain responsibility towards the rest of the world; but it also acquires privilege and favour in the process. The highest privilege of a *Country Brand* is to serve. This is an essential quality worthy of being emulated by the rest of world – a quality that will shift the world towards becoming a better place.

The cockerel leads flawlessly. It is in his very nature to devote his best efforts to leadership. Let me reiterate: Employing radical methods of Branding when it comes to country business is a MUST in order to catch the world's attention!

“The power of a Country Brand, though unseen, is felt. I could not describe anything which could be more radical a force.”

**COUNTRY BRANDING ELEMENT: TIME FOR
A NEW BRAND ENGINEERING**
THE INVENTIVE NATION BRAND

Being inventive is being creative, imaginative, ingenious, resourceful and original. No two cockerels have the exact same pattern of feathers. Each lead bird is unique in its own way, bearing singular headship qualities worthy of emulation. Likewise, each Country is also unique in its own way, having its own merits, virtues, strengths and key features.

Though a Country stands for generations, inventive reinterpretation of it is fundamental. This is what will make it stand out in the global arena. Branding is a must for any country and this goes beyond the landmarks and tourist hot spots which are naturally present. Like fine chicken soup, it boils down to a nation's people and culture. Even things like common courtesy, politeness and the willingness to help can go a long way in making or breaking a tourist haven or holiday destination.

In the area of tourism, for instance, Country Branding must be resourceful enough to encompass communication, safety, amenities and accessibility; plus everything that will make the entire experience of visiting a place better. Such a holistic approach will only be possible if everyone has a hand in it and plays their part consistently, even making it a way of life.

This inventive attribute breathes new life to old bones – there is nothing that is fossilized or forgotten. For everything is open to be creatively reinterpreted for modern enjoyment and contemporary consumption. And in this, the sustainability of the efforts must be looked into, including basic things like cleanliness and preserving the environment for the future.

“I believe a nation must stay ahead of the curve by being inventive. This includes reinventing itself according to the trending requirements of time.”

**COUNTRY BRANDING ELEMENT: NO FEAR;
NO TURNING BACK**
THE DARING NATION BRAND

To stand out of this *Big Blue Marble*, nations must dare to Brand themselves. *Country Branding* is akin to a three-dimensional mapping system which raises nations in the eyes of an otherwise two-dimensional world map.

I have always done my best to inject the word ‘dare’ into the best efforts concerning Brands and Branding. Without courage, a Brand will never have the backbone to step forward. Without ‘dare’, a *Country Brand* will not go anywhere. Without ‘dare’, there is no ‘there’. A nation has a voice. And that voice must be heard. Ergo, the nation must be bold enough to make its voice heard in the world.

It is the early bird that catches the worm. The rooster is an early bird. It dares to wake up early when everyone else is still asleep. It dares to face the darkness when everyone else is afraid of the dark. Though it is not technically a bird of prey, the cockerel catches the worm. The clueless worm did not expect to meet its end so early for it

assumed none would dare to face the darkness so as to unravel the goodness. It underestimated the rooster. A fatal mistake. A nation should embrace the spirit of the rooster (and definitely not the worm).

The sort of *Country Branding* that leaves an impact is the sort that dares. The courage to step up and bring about a change for the better in the world as a nation by raising good ideals, championing righteousness and having socio-economic foresight and sustainable targets; augmented by sky-is-the-limit aims to make the world a better place by doing its part (whilst staying true to its identity and heritage, no matter what) is the daring way to go. A nation should alert all other nations that it is up early and ready to take on the world!

“Dare... Dare to wake up. Dare to rise up ahead of the rest. Dare to dream with your eyes open... Dare to take the country where it has not gone before!”

**COUNTRY BRANDING ELEMENT:
STANDING OUT IN THE CROWD**
THE EXTRAORDINARY NATION BRAND

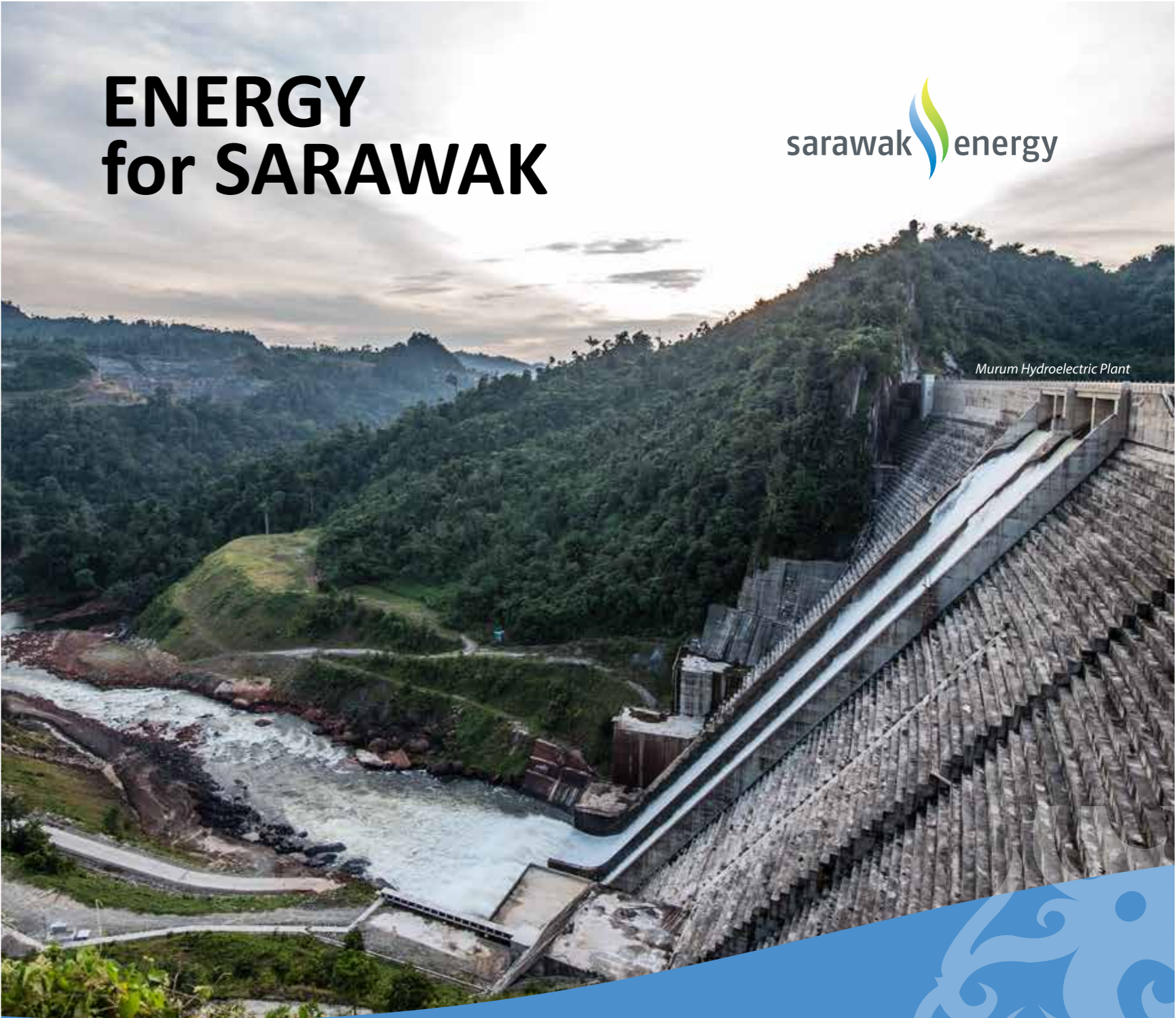
Country Branding is beautiful. I am sincerely bedazzled by the very idea of *Country Branding* in its fullness! It is the most beautiful form of Branding because it represents the culmination of the best that the Country has to offer – right from the grassroots to the leadership. Imagine everything we do, every Branding effort, in the end snowballs into *Country Branding*!

As a matter of fact, until another world with life and industry is discovered, *Country Branding* will be the ultimate form of Branding the human civilization can fathom and formulate. After all, at the end of the day, the world is made up of many nations – each lending its uniqueness to enrich and make this ‘third rock from the Sun’ a better place.

It is time to greet the dawn rooster-style! And if every Brand in every nation, personal or corporate, living or inanimate, small or big, ascends to greet this new sunrise, I believe with all my heart that this world will be a better place.

A new dawn is indeed coming. I can hear the cock crowing. Ah, just look at that prime bird... Its very poise and plumage is majestic...radiating something alluring and captivating. I sense a similar magnetism flowing as the multifarious Brands of the nations rise up like a grand flock to answer the morning call of the cockerel. Together, let the nation be EXTRAORDINARY!

ENERGY for SARAWAK



Murum Hydroelectric Plant

Sarawak Energy Berhad (Sarawak Energy) is a state - owned, vertically integrated electricity utility and power development company with a vision to achieve sustainable growth and prosperity for Sarawak by meeting the region's need for reliable, renewable energy.

Building on a strong foundation of 100 years as the single provider of electricity in the state, Sarawak Energy is taking bold steps to support the transformation of Sarawak in its vision to become a developed state by the year 2030.

Sarawak Energy is focused on the generation, transmission, distribution and retail of electricity. We generate power through hydro, coal and gas, capitalising on Sarawak's abundant indigenous resources, and supply to our customers throughout the state through an extensive network.

Sarawak Energy as the catalyst of Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE), develops clean and renewable energy to drive investments from energy intensive industries to create a stronger economy for Sarawak and its people.

“ Do not underestimate the power of Branding, because in its ultimate form, which is Country Branding, it has the capacity to change the world. ”



BRAND EXPERT
**WINNING
PROPERTY DEALS
AND INSPIRING LIVES**

INTERVIEW WITH PROPERTY INVESTPRENEUR DR. PATRICK LIEW

By Gerald Chuah

DO YOU know that many multi-millionaires become rich through real estate, by applying the right strategies to find and capitalize on property gems?

Dr. Patrick Liew, a millionaire property investor and Chairman of HSR Property Group was in Kuala Lumpur recently to share his wisdom on how Malaysians can "Buy Properties for Free, or With Little Money." The seminar, organized by Wealth Mentors, was held at The Boulevard - A St Giles Hotel at Midvalley, Kuala Lumpur.

Liew is an authority in this field, because he has taught over 10,000 people worldwide to be savvy property investors using street smart investing strategies—on what to buy, how to buy, and how to live-off rental income.

Liew revealed that you don't need millions in your bank account, take a massive bank loan, or months of preparation to invest in your first property.

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Liew is a well-qualified man. He was head of sales and marketing in Dow Jones Teletrate and headed the regional office of Gartner Group, a business think tank. He also co-founded Success Resources, one of the world's largest seminar organizer, which actively provides financial literacy and investment education to the mass market.

He is also the major shareholder of one of the largest real estate company, established since 1981.

"At one point, we were the only real estate company of its kind to be listed on a renowned stock exchange. During that time, I had more than 10,000 people working for me, transacting more than US\$15 billion worth of properties," added Liew.

"As a result of our achievements in the property market, my company and I have won more than 20 different awards from the government, non-profit professional societies, trade associations and charities," he added.

Besides being an award-winning investpreneur, Liew has been involved in the listing of companies in three stock exchanges in three different countries. He will be listing a fourth company soon in the United States.

MAPIC PROGRAM

During his property talk, Liew said most people are held back in the property game due to lack of cash, thus, it is not surprising that they feel only the rich can afford to play this game.

"In fact, there are tremendous opportunities in the property market whether during good or bad times," he added.

In his Mencius Advanced Property Investment Course (MAPIC), Liew revealed the little known "Bulls-Eye Model", which has helped many investors who started with little money to realize their dream of becoming a real estate millionaire.

The comprehensive MAPIC program covers trade secrets that even seasoned investors may not know about – including investment model, roadmap strategies, tactics, and actionable steps to help mentees on their road to financial freedom.

He also shared examples of property gems in Malaysia and overseas with strategies designed to help the average person invest safely and successfully.

"These property investment models, strategies and tactics that I teach, have been tried and tested in the real world for more than 36 years," he added.

WEALTH INSTRUMENT

On why property as his choice wealth instrument, Liew said: "Returns from property investment is generally more profitable than many other types of investments. Properties are known to appreciate more than inflationary rates, and is generally treated as Triple-A class investment, which can contribute to the preservation and growth of wealth."

"If you're an astute investor, you can generate healthy returns by leveraging on loans, and other ways of fundraising."

"You can also value-add to the property and use it to enhance your return on investment, or as a collateral to unlock cash for further investment, or used in emergency situations."

Therefore, it is not surprising that many people become millionaires directly or indirectly because of property investment rather than through savings, business profits, or other types of investments.

"When you have a good property and a good tenancy agreement in place, you are able to enjoy a better quality life because there's no need to monitor your investment constantly, or be unduly concerned over major price fluctuations."

"And the good news is, there has never been a better time to start investing in property now and in the next few years," he added.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

It is also interesting to note that Liew has recently acquired his doctorate in education from the University of Southern California, in United States, and his dissertation revolves around financial literacy education.

"Financial literacy encompasses the ability to generate wealth, grow your wealth, protect your wealth, and give away your wealth wisely.

"But truth be told, most people were not taught by their parents, schools, bosses and friends on how to manage and invest their money properly," said Liew.

He added the recent global economic crisis has shown us the detrimental effects of poor financial decisions on many communities and countries, thus it is important for the average person to learn "how to fish" in these economically challenging times.

"Through effective financial education, we are able to help ordinary people achieve their financial goals, and live a great life."

SOCIETAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Therefore, one of Liew's life mission is to help the less fortunate by providing social services to reach out to needy families, the youth and the elderly.

"In my training programs, I teach investors and entrepreneurs to do well and do good at the same time, – to give back to society by donating their time, talents, and treasures, to help the poor, disadvantaged and needy,

"Having come from a background of poverty, giving back is an integral part of my being, and I want to encourage all my friends to do the same."

Liew has helped to start and chair a charity to teach around 20,000 youths every year on how to improve their financial literacy, including some of the lowest paid workers.

"This is the vision that drives me to put my heart and soul to help my students achieve financial freedom; that someday, in the not-so-distant future, our children may point to our generation and say, that's the generation that started a revolution of love and inspired each other to greatness, so that they can help others in return."

Last but not least, Liew said he decided to work with Wealth Mentors to share his financial and property wisdom with the masses "because they are professionals with high standards of integrity, competence, and execution."

For more information, go to www.propertytrainings.com.

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THE GREATEST AMERICAN HERO

HOW CAN TRUMP SAVE AMERICA?

BY GERALD CHUAH

NOBODY is born a president and it is clear that Donald Trump's is not your usual candidate. The gap between his and Barack Obama – in temperament, worldview and techniques – is oceans apart.

No modern president has been so analyzed and he leaves a trail, strewn with contradictions. Diplomats, foreign leaders, business chiefs are all trying to get into his mind to decipher what drives the 45th U.S. president. No president before him has been so ready with threats against foreign powers, old allies, major corporations, and public servants. It seems that he craves popularity, but revels in being demonized.

So the question is, how can Trump save America?

At best, the new administration can deliver a much-needed blast of fresh air – but it could also prove dangerously destabilizing.

But despite all the hateful remarks, there is something admirable about Trump's vision and mission to put America First, and make America great again.

In his inspiring inauguration speech on January 20, 2017, Trump promised Americans that: "I will fight for you with every breath in my body, and I will never, ever let you down."

Although he never really explained how or why, we hope that he will get fulfill this most important of his campaign promises – to make America great again.

INAUGURATION SPEECH

Here's an excerpt of Donald Trump's patriotic speech: "From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land. From this moment on, it's going to be America First,

"Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs, will be made to benefit American workers and American families. We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs. Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength.

"I will fight for you with every breath in my body – and I will never, ever let you down,

"America will start winning again, winning like never before,

"We will bring back our jobs. We will bring back our borders. We will bring back our wealth. And we will bring back our dreams,

"We will build new roads, and highways, and bridges, and airports, and tunnels, and railways all across our wonderful nation,

"We will get our people off of welfare and back to work -- rebuilding our country with American hands and American labor,

"We will follow two simple rules: Buy American and hire American.

AMERICA FIRST

For Trump, his guiding slogan will be "America First," and it will be his defence against all attacks – if that means challenging the international order, or tearing up old trade agreements or upsetting the global elite, so be it.

In these early days, it is impossible to know how much of a revolutionary Donald Trump will be, and how much ideology will inform his decision-making.

Some say he can't survive or that he will over-reach himself. Others are waiting for him to self-destruct.

By the end of his first 100-days, or if he survives his first term, we can expect one of the most unorthodox, idiosyncratic presidencies in American history, and also one of the most powerful man in the world.

It is well and good if Trump succeeds in making "America Great Again". Perhaps by then, he deserves another title: "The Greatest American Hero," which coincidentally throws back to the American comedy series from the 80s, with the catchy theme song by Mike Post and Stephen Geyer, which seems apt in describing Trump's presidential journey.

Here's how the lyrics go:

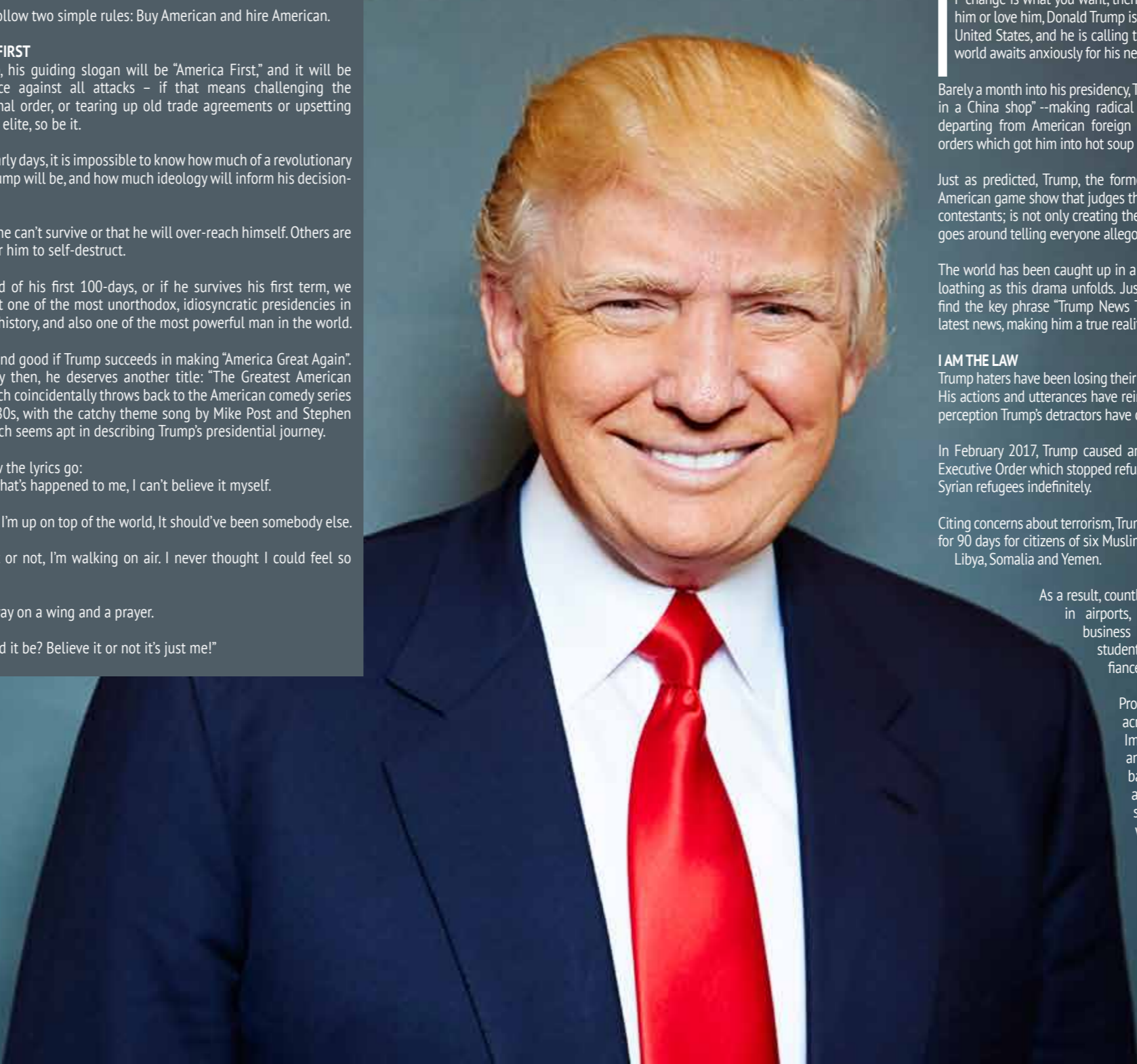
"Look at what's happened to me, I can't believe it myself.

"Suddenly I'm up on top of the world, It should've been somebody else.

"Believe it or not, I'm walking on air. I never thought I could feel so free....

"Flying away on a wing and a prayer.

"Who could it be? Believe it or not it's just me!"



TRUMPOLOGY

DONALD TRUMP'S FIRST 100 DAYS IN OFFICE

IF change is what you want, then change is what you get. Hate him or love him, Donald Trump is now the 45th President of the United States, and he is calling the shots – like it or not, while world awaits anxiously for his next move.

Barely a month into his presidency, Trump is behaving like a "bull-y in a China shop" --making radical statements to world leaders, departing from American foreign policy, and issuing executive orders which got him into hot soup and fiery arguments.

Just as predicted, Trump, the former star of The Apprentice, an American game show that judges the business skills of a group of contestants; is not only creating the news – he is the news, as he goes around telling everyone allegorically: "You are fired"!

The world has been caught up in a roller coaster ride of fear and loathing as this drama unfolds. Just search Google, and you can find the key phrase "Trump News Today" which compiles all his latest news, making him a true reality TV star.

I AM THE LAW

Trump haters have been losing their mind over the past few weeks. His actions and utterances have reinforced almost every negative perception Trump's detractors have of him.

In February 2017, Trump caused an uproar when he signed the Executive Order which stopped refugee entry for 120 days, and for Syrian refugees indefinitely.

Citing concerns about terrorism, Trump stopped the issuing of visas for 90 days for citizens of six Muslim countries – Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen.

As a result, countless people were left stranded in airports, and these include visitors, business travelers, international students, temporary workers, and fiancés of U.S. citizens.

Protests sprang up at airports across the United States since his Immigration ban. Demonstrators and activist groups called the ban unconstitutional, while administration officials scrambled to clarify who would be affected by the new rules.

There were fear and confusion amongst those in

Middle Eastern countries, sparking outrage and protest not only in the U.S., but in other parts of the world.

Although Trump has the power to do so under current law, it is illegal for him to discriminate against immigrants based on their national origin.

NOT MY PRESIDENT

As far as anyone can remember, the idea of Trump as U.S. President has been predicted as a D-Day scenario in the Simpsons episode way back in 2000, when Trump would launch a presidential bid. People just can't imagine that day will come.

Today, we can hear the name U.S. President Donald Trump being mentioned alongside other important news of the day – something that we have to get used to, at least for the next four years.

Since Trump's presidential campaign in 2016, he has become one of the most vilified man on earth. He was lambasted by celebrities to politicians, LGBT and women right's group, the list goes on. There was a short animated video of him punching a speed bag with the shape of the world, and the world punched back.

His personal brand also suffers from disparaging remarks – from his weird hairdo, to being labelled a loud mouth bully, misogynist, sexist, and profiteering businessman.

Indeed some Americans were too embarrassed about Trump being elected the president, they even apologized profusely for their bad decision.

One such letter reads: "I am so very sorry that we have elected such a boor and ignoramus as our president. As you probably know, most of us did not vote for him, but through bad luck and electoral peculiarities we are stuck with him."

As Forrest Gump says, "Stupid is as stupid does." So, let's examine three hot issues that are widely debated in Trump administration at present, although there are still more things he hopes to resolve during his first 100 days in office.

THE TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (TPPA)

Times are different, today we live in an interconnected world, and Asian countries are superpowers in their own right, with many new brands taking on the world stage.

However, when Trump came to office, he promised to gut existing trade pacts and reclaim manufacturing jobs lost overseas, regardless of the impact on international norms and standards.

It's true that trading with China has cost the United States about a million factory jobs from 2000 to 2007, but automation and increased efficiency is a much larger reason why factory employment has declined. In fact, American industrial output is actually at the highest level in history. It's the jobs that have gone away.

But Trump decided to tap into populist anger by terminating the TPPA – a trade deal binding the United States, Australia, Canada, Japan, Vietnam and seven other allies against growing Chinese economic clout, delivering a blow to Asian allies.

Go to the U.S. government website at www.whitehouse.gov, and you will find this announcement that explains it all: "America First Trade Policy – The Office of the United States Trade Representative is committed to ensure American workers are given a fair shot at competing across the globe. This new America first trade policy will make it more desirable for companies to stay here, create jobs here, pay taxes here and rebuild our economy."

The TPPA is a balance agreement which benefits all its members, and signed by 12 countries – Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Mexico, Japan, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam and the United States in Auckland on February 4 last year. Together, TPPA members represent 40% of the world economy, in which the U.S. is an integral part of the agreement.

The agreement cannot take place without U.S. participation because under the present condition, a minimum of six countries accounting for 85% of the combined GDP of the 12 members are needed, and The United States alone accounts for 60%.

According to Peterson Institute's analysis, The U.S. stood to be the biggest beneficiary from TPPA, with an annual increase in exports of US\$357 billion (RM1.58 trillion), and TPPA is also a strategic counterweight to China, to control its growing influence in the region.

Trump's Republican ally John McCain described the move as "a serious mistake that will have lasting consequences for America's economy and our strategic position in the Asia-Pacific region,

"It will create an opening for China to rewrite the economic rules of the road at the expense of American workers. And it will send a troubling signal of American disengagement in the Asia-Pacific region at a time that we can least afford it," added McCain.

Does it make sense for Trump to break ties when he should be building bridges? Furthermore, this drastic move would only lead to job losses in the U.S., and outflow of funds to other countries.

THE MEXICAN BORDER WALL

Another one of Trump's controversial pledges was building a 2000-mile wall along the southern Mexican border to stop the cross-border flow of illegal immigrants. In January 2017, President Trump signed an executive action ordering construction of the border wall with Mexico, and ramping up deportations to fulfill two of his signature campaign promises.

It's true, in the 90s, the border was out of control, with illegal entries approaching two million a year. But since then, they have strengthened enforcement by tripling the size of the Border Patrol, deploying drones and constructing hundreds of miles of fence along the border.

More importantly, Mexico has changed. Over the past two decades, it has grown into the world's 11th largest economy. As a result, there are now good jobs in Mexico – and thus, more Mexicans are leaving the U.S. And border apprehensions are down by 75 percent since 2000.

So it seems that Trump is fighting a wrong immigration crisis, and building a 2000km wall is ridiculously over the top.

There has been ongoing debate about the feasibility of the structure, and the need for it in the first place. Even if it is possible, the reality is much more difficult with rugged terrain in Arizona desert and the shifting of Rio



Grande River in Texas, amongst the natural obstacles standing in its way.

Other questions include: "When will construction begin, how much it will cost, who will pay for it, and how long will it take (it is estimated to be completed in four years)?"

A Border Patrol agent said: "It is not just the wall. There are many things we need to perform our jobs effectively," while a 15-year-old Mexican girl said: "We are against it. We won't pay for it. It's bad because it's racist and this will divide us even more," she added.

Even more bizarrely, Trump says he will give the bill to Mexico, which he has upped from to \$10 billion to \$12 billion, but Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto restated that his country "of course" will not pay.

Obviously, this has sparked a strong nationalist sentiment among many Mexicans, as Trump's border wall simply reminds them of the complicated relations Mexico has had with the U.S. in the past.

DESTROYING ISIS

Another one of Trump's braggadocios claim is to destroy ISIS as soon as he takes office, but there are no concrete plans in place. One of his methods is to block Syrian refugees, claiming they are a "Trojan horse" in which extremism and Jihadi terrorists are hiding, but this was debunked by an immigration protestor carrying a placard at the airport, with huge words saying "This is NOT how to defeat ISIS!"

Moving forward with new counter terrorism efforts, the Trump administration wants to revamp and rename a U.S. government program designed to counter all violent ideologies by focusing solely on Islamist extremism.

The program, called "Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)," would be changed to "Countering Islamic Extremism" or "Countering Radical Islamic Extremism," sources said.

Some proponents fear that rebranding the program could make it more difficult for the government to work with Muslims, who are already hesitant to trust the new administration, particularly after Trump issued an executive order to temporarily block travel to the United States from seven predominantly Muslim countries.

It is clear that Trump wants to protect Americans by putting America first, but how can you win a war by building walls and demolishing bridges, when the opposite is needed. Below are some of the other campaign promises Trump hopes to achieve during his first 100 days in office:

- Repeal Obama care touted as one of President Obama's most significant accomplishments, leaving more than 22 million Americans without health coverage.
- Fix the Department of Veterans Affairs with a detailed a 10-point plan including "firing the corrupt and incompetent VA executives", investigating the fraud and cover-up allegations and creating a private White House hotline.
- Get rid of gun-free zones in schools and on military bases, which he claimed are like "bait" to "bad people".
- Threaten other countries with anti-immigration laws and losing access to U.S. Visa programs, should they refuse to take back illegal immigrants who commit crimes in America.

- Deport millions of undocumented people living in America, and impose stringent anti-immigrant laws, to hunt down an estimated two million criminal "illegal aliens" in the U.S.

"This is my pledge to you," said Trump, "Americans will be voting for this 100-day plan to restore prosperity to our economy, security to our communities, and honesty to our government,

"And if we follow these steps, we will once more have a government of, by and for the people," he added.

At his inaugural address, he ended his speech with these big and bold statements.

"The time for empty talk is over. Now arrives the hour of action,

"Do not let anyone tell you it cannot be done. No challenge can match the heart and fight and spirit of America,

"Together, we will make America strong again, We will make wealthy again. We will make America proud again, We will make America safe again. And yes, together, we will make America great again."

God Save America!

WOMEN'S MARCH

WHEN WOMEN UNITE

“THE WASHINGTON DEMONSTRATION WAS AMPLIFIED BY GATHERINGS AROUND THE WORLD, WITH MARCH ORGANIZERS LISTING MORE THAN 670 EVENTS NATIONWIDE AND OVERSEAS IN CITIES INCLUDING TEL AVIV, BARCELONA, MEXICO CITY, BERLIN AND YELLOWKNIFE IN CANADA'S NORTHWEST TERRITORIES, WHERE THE TEMPERATURE WAS 6 DEGREES BELOW ZERO”



More than 1 million people gathered in Washington and in cities around the country and the world on the 21st of January to mount a roaring rejoinder to the inauguration of President Trump.

The organizers of the Women's March on Washington, who originally sought a permit for a gathering of 200,000, said that as many as half a million people participated.

The next day, Metro officials announced that the previous day was the second-busiest day in the Washington subway system's history, with 1,001,613 trips. (By contrast, on Trump's Inauguration Day, the system recorded 570,557 trips.)

Many in the nation's capital and other cities said they were inspired to join because of Trump's divisive campaign and his disparagement of women, minorities and immigrants. In signs and shouts, they mocked what they characterized as Trump's lewd language and sexist demeanor.

The marches provided a balm for those eager to immerse themselves in a like-minded sea of citizens who shared their anxiety and disappointment after Democrat Hillary Clinton's historic bid for the presidency ended in defeat.

The Washington demonstration was amplified by gatherings around the world, with march organizers listing more than 670 events nationwide and overseas in cities including Tel Aviv, Barcelona, Mexico City, Berlin and Yellowknife in Canada's Northwest Territories, where the temperature was 6 degrees below zero.

In Chicago, the demonstration was overwhelmed by its own size, after 150,000 demonstrators swamped downtown blocks. It forced officials to curtail their planned march, although thousand of protesters still paraded around the Loop.

In Boston, police estimated a gathering of 125,000. In Los Angeles, officials temporarily closed some side streets to accommodate the crowds.



“MANY IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL AND OTHER CITIES SAID THEY WERE INSPIRED TO JOIN BECAUSE OF TRUMP'S DIVISIVE CAMPAIGN AND HIS DISPARAGEMENT OF WOMEN, MINORITIES AND IMMIGRANTS”



The crowd was buoyant, even joyous. Many held up signs – “I Am Very Upset!” and “Love Trumps Hate” and “Bridges Not Walls” – while others took videos of the experience on their cellphones. Every few minutes, a rolling roar swept over them.

The march also turned into a star-studded event, with celebrities such as Madonna, Janelle Monáe, Scarlett Johansson and Ashley Judd making appearances.

As the march grew in prominence, it highlighted long-existing racial and political rifts in the feminist movement. The initial organizers were white women – a group that narrowly voted for Trump in November –

although they quickly handed its leadership over to a diverse group of long time organizers from New York.

They have embraced an imperilled liberal agenda, in sharp contrast to much of what Trump laid out for his presidency. The march platform focused on issues such as workers' rights, reproductive rights, environmental justice, immigrant rights, ending violence against women and more.

QUEEN ELIZABETH II

65 YEARS ON BRITAIN'S THRONE

by GERALD CHUAH



IF YOU LOOK AT THE QUEEN NOW, YOU SEE AN ELDERLY LADY, BUT SHE WAS SUCH A GLAMOROUS FIGURE, ALONG WITH HER SISTER, PRINCESS MARGARET — THESE WOMEN RADIATED BEAUTY.

images:
Duchess of Cambridge is seen laughing with Queen Elizabeth II

The Royal Mint also marked the anniversary with a series of commemorative coins, including a five-pound coin with an imperial state crown on one side.

In addition, the palace re-released a 2014 portrait of her wearing a sparkly suite of sapphire and diamond jewelry. The necklace and pendant earrings featured in the David Bailey photograph were wedding gifts the queen received from her father in 1947.

GLAMOROUS FIGURE

The Sunday Express royal editor Camilla Tominey said the queen is now perhaps the world's most prominent nonagenarian, but she had a very different persona 65-years-ago.

"If you look at the queen now, you see an elderly lady, but she was such a glamorous figure, along with her sister, Princess Margaret — these women radiated beauty."

HER ASCENSION TO THE THRONE

Princess Elizabeth was never meant to become queen, let alone the longest-serving monarch in the history of British royalty. Her father, in fact, was never meant to become king.

Her life was forever changed in 1936 when King Edward VIII, her uncle, abdicated to marry Wallis Warfield Simpson, a twice-divorced U.S. commoner.

His brother Albert became king, adopting for the name

George VI — a shy man and a stutterer — to inspire his countrymen to endure the hardships of World War II and to prevail. He was a smoker, and the strain took a toll on his health.

And Princess Elizabeth, who had spent the first 10 years of her life never expecting to become queen, suddenly found herself first in line to the throne.

BECOMING THE QUEEN

In February 1952, with her father ill, she and Prince Philip, her husband of five years, stood in for the king on an official visit to Kenya.

The couple stayed at Treetops Hotel, 6,500 feet above sea level, with a view of Mount Kenya. On the night of Feb. 5-6, the king died. Although she did not know it, Elizabeth was already queen.

Her bodyguard, a hunter named Jim Corbett, wrote in the visitor's log book, "For the first time in the history of the world, a young girl climbed into a tree one day a princess and after having what she described as her most thrilling experience she climbed down from the tree the next day a queen — God bless her."

THE CORONATION

Upon returning to England, she met with the Lords of the Council for the formal proclamation of her reign as Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Roya Nikkhah, the royal correspondent for The Sunday



QUEEN Elizabeth II commemorated her 65th anniversary as queen, and became the only British monarch to ever celebrate her Sapphire Jubilee on Feb 6, 2017.

Having acceded to the throne at age 25, Elizabeth became U.K.'s longest reigning monarch in September 2015, when she surpassed Queen Victoria's record of 63 years and 216 days.

The United Kingdom celebrates the anniversary by issuing a new 5-pound coin which bears the words "My whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service," which the queen uttered nearly 70 years ago, on the day she turned 21.

Decades of duty have defined the queen. During her reign, she has been patron to hundreds of charities and organizations, and was one of the world's most well-traveled heads of state.

She traveled more than a million miles, visited about 120 countries and met with 12 U.S. presidents, from Dwight D. Eisenhower to Barack Obama. And at the age of 90, she continues to perform her royal duties, carrying out 80 public engagements in 2016.

PRIVATE AFFAIR

The 90-year-old queen marked the occasion privately at her Sandringham country estate in Norfolk, England, about 110 miles north of London. That's because February 6 also marks the anniversary of the death of Elizabeth's father, King George VI, in 1952.

After so many years on the throne — longer than most Britons have been alive — many people have come to respect her quiet devotion to duty and her determination to keep her private life out of sight.

A British monarchy historian and author of the upcoming book, "Raising Royalty: 1000 Years of Royal Parenting," Carolyn Harris said: "The queen and her father had a close relationship, and she views the anniversary of her accession as an opportunity to remember him."

COMMEMORATIVE COINS

While the queen may be reluctant to celebrate the day publicly, her anniversary, also known as Accession Day, was marked by bells tolling at Westminster Abbey and ceremonial gun salutes at London's Green Park.



image:
Queen Elizabeth II and her family marked her official 90th birthday

“MY HEART IS TOO FULL TO SAY MORE TO YOU TODAY THAN I SHALL ALWAYS WORK, AS MY FATHER DID THROUGHOUT HIS REIGN, TO ADVANCE THE HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY OF MY PEOPLES.”

Times said the queen had a range of advisers right from the get-go. “She had Winston Churchill as her first prime minister, an amazing relationship between the old prime minister at the end of his tenure, and the new monarch at the beginning of hers,” added Nikkhah.

THE AGE OF TELEVISION
Television gave new life to those early days of Elizabeth’s reign.

Despite advice to the contrary, she decided that that her coronation, on June 2, 1953, would be televised, and it was the world’s first major international event to be broadcast on television.

“Televising the coronation was groundbreaking for its time – to bring the monarchy into millions of peoples’ homes,

“She wanted to set the tone for her entire reign, against the advice of her advisers, making the monarchy relevant by bringing it to the people,” said Nikkhah.

Further televised royal spectacles followed, such as the lavish 1981 wedding of Prince Charles – who has

now been heir to the throne longer than anyone in British history – and Lady Diana Spencer.

ROYAL DUTIES
During her speech, 65 years ago, Elizabeth said: “By the sudden death of my father, I am called to assume the duties and responsibilities of sovereignty.

“My heart is too full to say more to you today than I shall always work, as my father did throughout his reign, to advance the happiness and prosperity of my peoples.”

In recent years, Elizabeth has delegated an increasing number of royal duties to her children and grandchildren, but the queen continues to maintain an active schedule full of public engagements.

She has reigned for such a long time that it is difficult for the public to imagine anyone else in her role. She has served with dignity. A major part of her job, not to put too fine a point on it, has been to go 65 years without publicly saying anything inappropriate.

It is a task at which her husband, Prince Philip, who is



images:
A look back Queen Elizabeth II through the years

95, has occasionally failed, with his penchant for ethnic jokes that are awkward at best.

“Now that we are so familiar with her as a nonagenarian – I think that has probably drawn a lot of people to new interest in the monarchy, who are able to see what this woman has done, what she has achieved, from a very young woman through her 90s,” added Nikkhah.

5 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT BRITAIN'S MONARCH

In honor of the queen’s 65th anniversary, here are five things you maynot have known about her:

1. She’s tech-savvy -- According to Vogue, Elizabeth II was first British royal to send an email, which she sent during a demonstration at an army research center in 1976. Today, she has a Twitter account that keeps track of her work – in fact, she wrote her first tweet in October 2014. “It is a pleasure to open the Information Age exhibition today at the @ScienceMuseum and I hope people will enjoy visiting.” -- Elizabeth R.

2. She owns all of the United Kingdom’s swans -- According to the British Monarchy website, “As early as the 12th century, the Crown claimed ownership of all mute swans in the country because the birds were highly valued as a delicacy at banquets and feasts.”

The queen has the right to own any unclaimed mute swans in open waters across England and Wales. In fact, one of her titles is “Seigneur of the Swans,” according to USA Today.

“FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD, A YOUNG GIRL CLIMBED INTO A TREE ONE DAY A PRINCESS AND AFTER HAVING WHAT SHE DESCRIBED AS HER MOST THRILLING EXPERIENCE SHE CLIMBED DOWN FROM THE TREE THE NEXT DAY — A QUEEN ”

3. She’s the head of state for 16 countries -- Spearheaded by Queen Elizabeth II, the Commonwealth of Nations is comprised of 53 independent states that were once British colonies. Of those, 16 nations recognize Queen Elizabeth II as their head of state, although they are governed separately.

These countries include the U.K., Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Grenada, Jamaica, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.

4. She’s into pop culture -- To celebrate her Golden Jubilee in 2002, the queen hosted a star-studded concert in the Buckingham Palace gardens, also known as “Party at the Palace.” An estimated 12,000 people attended a concert that featured Sir Paul McCartney, Bryan Adams, Elton John, Annie Lennox and Phil Collins, to name a few.

And who can forget her performance alongside Daniel Craig’s James Bond at the 2012 London Olympics?

5. She loves Corgis -- This one may not be a big secret. According to Vanity Fair, Elizabeth II has had pet corgis by her side for even longer than her husband, Prince Phillip, whom she’s been married to for 69 years.

“My Corgis are family,” the queen once said.

SMEs: GROWING THE ECONOMY

SMEs HAVE HISTORICALLY PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN CONTRIBUTING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF MANY COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD.



“SME CORP. MALAYSIA PROVIDES BUSINESS ADVISORY SERVICES AND INFORMATION TO SMES IN MALAYSIA THROUGH ITS ONE REFERRAL CENTRE (ORC) AND ITS 11 STATE OFFICES NATIONWIDE.”

On The Global Scale

These companies represent more than 90% of the total enterprises on most of the places. Small and medium enterprises play an important role in the development of a country. SMEs contribute to economic development in various ways: by creating employment for rural and urban growing labor force, providing desirable sustainability and innovation in the economy as a whole. In addition to that, large number of people rely on the small and medium enterprises directly or indirectly. The development of SMEs is seen as the way to accelerating the achievement of wider socio-economic goals, including poverty alleviation. Economics play an important role in the development process of any country. An increase in the living standards of the people is the main concern of any development process.

Due to significant contribution of SMEs towards the development of the economy, various agencies, particularly that of government, have given a lot of importance on the development of SMEs. In order to strengthen the SMEs, a number of programs and facilities are provided to enhance their performance and competitiveness.

Malaysia's Engine of Growth

Malaysia has recognized the importance of small and medium enterprises development since early in the 1960s. The new definition of SME in Malaysia was simplified as follows:

- Manufacturing: Sales turnover not exceeding RM50 million OR full-time employees not exceeding 200 workers
- Services and other sectors: Sales turnover not exceeding RM20 million OR full-time employees not exceeding 75 workers

The need to strengthen SMEs development is crucial, because SMEs are expected to be an essential element of economic growth, employment creation and transformation towards developed country by year 2020. Consequently, Malaysia has given priority to SMEs and has put in place policies and institutional framework that address their developmental needs.

One of the main backers of SMEs in Malaysia is

SME Corp.; Malaysia's premier organisation for the development of progressive SMEs to enhance wealth creation and social well-being of the nation. In fulfilling its mission of promoting the development of innovative, resilient and globally competitive SMEs through effective coordination and provision of business support, SME Corp. Malaysia endeavours to empower the critical mass of SMEs with efficient processes, robust business models, access to financial resources, smart partnerships, market-entry strategies and sustainable growth solutions, through various platforms and programmes for SME development.

SME Corp. Malaysia provides business advisory services and information to SMEs in Malaysia through its One Referral Centre (ORC) and its 11 State Offices nationwide. SME Corp. Malaysia also implements various programmes and initiatives under its own auspices including its annual flagship programmes such as the SME Annual Showcase (SMIDEX), Enterprise 50 (E50) Award and SME Week.

SME Corp. Malaysia optimistic rate of contribution of SMEs this year continues to grow between 1% and 2%, thus helping to achieve a contribution of more than RM800 billion or 40% to GDP by 2020. The Agency also sees the local SME sector had grown between 37.3% and 37.5% in 2016, which showed the sector was sustained despite the current economic challenges.

Chief Executive Officer YBhg. Datuk (Dr.) Hafsa Hashim said, there are a variety of economic issues during 2016 including Brexit, the contraction of the ringgit and concerns of industry players about the appointment of the President of the United States, but it does not give an adverse effect on the development of local SMEs. The Government together with SME Corp. constantly monitors the growth of local SMEs to ensure economic effect will not hinder SME contribution to GDP from year to year.

“One thing we do is to ensure that SMEs can enjoy a good business environment, including the Government announced on corporate tax breaks to those who can drive business growth in a challenging situation.” This year SME Corp Malaysia continued to focus on promoting SMEs and start-ups a year to ensure that the overall domestic business sector can continue to grow.



LOCAL HEROES

SMEs HAVE BEEN SHAPING THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY FOR YEARS. DESPITE THE SAYING “BUILDING A STARTUP IS HARD”, SOME OF THE LOCAL GEMS PULLED THROUGH. THAT'S THE REALITY IN THE MIDST OF THE NOISE, HYPE, AND GLAMOUR DEPICTED OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP THESE DAYS. IF BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR IS HARD, BEING A YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR IS EVEN HARDER. WITH SIGNIFICANTLY LESS EXPERIENCE THAN SEASONED ELDER COUNTERPARTS, YOUNG FOUNDERS MUST BE PREPARED TO DO EVERYTHING THEY CAN. AND THEY'D NEED TO DO SO OFTEN SITTING ACROSS THE TABLE FROM SKEPTICAL

BUSINESS VETERANS—POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS, PARTNERS, EMPLOYEES, AND (ANGEL AND VENTURE CAPITAL) INVESTORS. YOUNG FOUNDERS WORKING ON AMBITIOUS PROBLEMS FACE TREMENDOUS ODDS. BUT, THE SUCCESSFUL ONES WILL ADD SIGNIFICANT VALUE TO OR EVEN HELP BUILD OUR FUTURE WORLD.

ALTHOUGH THESE “FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH” ENTREPRENEURS ARE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN AND ARE GENERALLY BELOW THE RADAR, THERE ARE SOME OF THEM THAT HAVE SCALED UP VERY QUICKLY, ATTAINING REGIONAL SUCCESS IN JUST A FEW YEARS, AND HAVE CAUGHT THE EYE OF INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS.



GRAB

One such company is Grab (formerly as MyTeksi). The Internet-based taxi booking service provider, which was launched in 2012, has already established a strong presence in Singapore, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia under the brand GrabTaxi. The Grab app has reportedly been downloaded onto over 2.1 million mobile devices with more than 400,000 active monthly users in six countries and more than 25,000 taxi drivers

registered with the network. Most notably, the company has managed to raise a total of US\$90mil in funding over the past 12 months, counting US-based Tiger Global Management, GGV Capital and Vertex Venture Holdings as some of its investors. One of the key reasons for Grab's success, says co-founder Anthony Tan, is its focus on solving a real social problem. In this case, providing an efficient and safe platform to match taxi drivers and passengers.

JURIS TECHNOLOGIES

Another homegrown startup that is shaking up its field is banking solutions company Juris Technologies Sdn Bhd. When the company was founded in 1997, co-founder and CEO See Wai Hun said its main agenda was to market a data mining system. But See quickly realised that no one was interested in data mining because people were reeling from the shock of the financial crisis. Thankfully, she was equally quick at spotting an opportunity to create software for bad debt recovery which would help financial institutions manage their workflow with their litigation team Juris was set up with the help of an angel investor but See noted that the company eventually bought back its shares within a few years of incorporation. The team

has grown from 10 people when it started to a staff strength of 80 today. Its product range has also expanded from just a component of the debt recovery software to software for debt collection systems, loan origination systems, credit scoring systems, conveyancing and loan documentation systems. To-date, 11 banks, 900 lawyers, 200 collection agencies and 100 property valuers are using its systems and See is expecting revenue to hit a high of RM30mil this year. Most recently, Juris joined the ranks of Endeavor Global Inc's global network of high-impact entrepreneurs, being the second Malaysian company to do so. The achievement gives Juris access to global investor network and partnerships that will enable the company to scale up for regional expansion.





iMONEY

Not more than a year ago, online personal finance platform iMoney's co-founder and group CEO Lee Ching Wei told Tech in Asia that he was aiming to hit at least 100,000 unique visitors in the latter half of 2013. They have more than crushed that goal now, with over 1.5 million unique visitors a month arriving at their site and growing. The startup announced it has raised MYR 13 million (US\$4 million) in a new funding round. One of the region's fast-growing financial comparison websites,

iMoney provides a multi-function online platform that features up-to-date information about banking products and services, such as credit cards, saving accounts, loans, mortgages, investments, insurance, and fixed and other deposits for Malaysian consumers to compare, enquire, and apply online. iMoney showed us an exciting possibility- it sets out to challenge the way consumer banking is conducted today, and to drive a new paradigm in the way consumers deal with banks.



FASHIONVALET

Just over four years after being a finalist on Malaysian startup pitching TV show Make The Pitch, fashion ecommerce store FashionValet has secured series A funding to help its growth. The investment amount is revealed only as "multi-million dollar" in size, coming from US-based Elixir Capital. FashionValet has a variety of western as well as muslim clothing for women. Malaysia-based fashion e-commerce platform FashionValet has raised Series B round financing worth 'multi-million dollars' from Start Today Co., owner of Japan's leading online fashion mall ZOZOTOWN. The

startup will use the investment for strategic expansion and also to leverage the fashion e-commerce expertise of its Japanese partners in scaling the business. This investment comes exactly a year after its Series A round, led by Silicon Valley-based Elixir Capital. Over the past 12 months since the Series A funding, FashionValet claims to have doubled its revenue, commenced operations in Singapore and Jakarta, and opened its first brick-and-mortar store in Kuala Lumpur. A second physical store was opened in Singapore mid-2016 in the heart of Orchard Rd.



PIKTOCHART

Most startups fail in their first year. So to both make it through year 1 and make it through year 1 profitably and without any external investment is a big achievement. That's the startup Ai Ching Goh, or Ching as we know her, is building. You may have heard of Piktochart already. Piktochart is a highly-rated online tool that lets you create captivating infographics with ease. The tool gives you freedom to create your own infographic from scratch in addition to ten varied templates that cover the most common infographic types. Piktochart can also be used to create visually engaging presentations and printables, like reports and posters. With the technology, they are changing the way people look and use design in their

marketing, communication and branding efforts. So popular is Piktochart, they now have over 5 million users.

Malaysia has also seen other international startups, including the likes of Chek Hup and Baba Spices take flight and achieve success in various field. Local entrepreneurs can take heart that some of the action does take place on our home ground. It is possible to nurture the local startup ecosystem to provide startups with a good platform to thrive and contribute significantly to the growth of the country. With the right combination of policy, infrastructure, funding facility and mentoring, the local startup industry could unlock another key growth driver in our economy.

SMALL GIANTS WITH BIG FUTURE

IN LINE WITH OUR FEATURE ON SUCCESSFUL SMEs THAT WE HAVE IN THE MARKET TODAY, WE WOULD LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT THE YOUNG TALENTS EMERGING ALL AROUND THE WORLD; SOME OF THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST MILLENNIALS WHO ARE DISRUPTING AND CHANGING THE FACES OF THEIR INDUSTRIES. THESE DRIVEN ENTREPRENEURS AND GAME-CHANGERS WHO ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR INDUSTRIES IN A SIGNIFICANT WAY ARE THE FACES OF INSPIRING YOUNG LEADERS TODAY; OF WHOM YOU COULD DEFINITELY LOOK UP TO IN ORDER TO CHASE AFTER A SIMILAR SUCCESS IN YOUR OWN FIELD.



JESSICA HART, 29
Australia

While this gap-toothed beauty might be best known for her strolls down Victoria's Secret runways, she's now gaining a reputation as an entrepreneur. Her love of makeup prompted her to start LUMA.

LEANDRO LEVISTE, 23
Philippines

Electricity rates in the Philippines are among the highest in Asia, and Leviste was convinced that solar power could bring them down. He invested his savings to set up Solar Philippines in 2013. Recently, the company completed the largest solar farm on Luzon, a \$150-million, 63-megawatt project.



POCKET SUN, 24
Singapore

Sun started SoGal, a community of female entrepreneurs and investors that holds conferences and has grown to 4,000 members in more than 20 countries including Singapore, Vietnam, China and the US.



FAEEZFADHLILLAH, 29
Malaysia

Muslim travellers have different needs than other travellers, so Fadhllillah and his partner, Juergen Gallistl started Tripfez in 2013. It offers Muslim-friendly tour packages and advice about halal food options and whether the Quran is available.



CHRIS CHAN, BRIAN YU, DEREK CHAN, 28
Hong Kong

The trio launched 9GAG in 2008, and now the social media website boasts 26 million followers on Instagram, 29 million fans on Facebook and 6 million followers on Twitter. Some 100 million people visit it each month. They've raised \$2.8 million in venture capital and oversee 25 employees working in Tsuen Wan in the new territories.



URSKARSEN, 26
Slovenia

A sculptor by training, Srsen designs and markets wearable technology you actually want to wear. Her female-focused company makes smart jewelry that tracks stress, activity and even menstrual cycles. Her company currently employs 60 people and has offices in San Francisco, Shenzhen and Croatia.



R·E·A·L®

EDUCATION GROUP

EDUCATING THE REAL WAY

BY IDA IBRAHIM

WITH A HISTORY THAT SPANS MORE THAN 30 YEARS, R.E.A.L EDUCATION GROUP IS REVEALING ITSELF TO BE A VALUABLE EDUCATIONAL BRAND THAT HAS MASTERED THE ACADEMIC ARENA OF CHILD EDUCATION. UNDER THE BRAND NAMED R.E.A.L (REAL), THE PRIVATE ESTABLISHMENT ENGAGES THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS INTO A TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY, SIMULTANEOUSLY HEIGHTENING THE AWARENESS AND REDEFINING THE VALUE OF A REAL EDUCATION.

THE BRANDLAUREATE JOINS PRESIDENT MR EE CHING WAH, ONE OF THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF THE R.E.A.L EDUCATION GROUP, FOR A LIVELY DISCUSSION ON THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THE DEVELOPMENT OF REAL AND ON THE TOPIC OF CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND ENHANCEMENT.



The REAL Entrepreneurial Spirit

Since its establishment, R.E.A.L Education has weathered many storms and rose above them. Looking back, the founders' reverence and passion for education started when they had their own children's education in mind.

"Mr Sim, Mr Kee and I all came from a different background but there was a commonality in what we wanted to do. We were engineers but above all we are entrepreneurial. When we started having families of our own, we couldn't find any establishment which quite meet our criteria of what a children's education should be and that is when we started looking beyond. We saw what was needed in a marketplace and we were prepared to organise whatever resources that we could get our hands on to build our idea of a school. Today, REAL is a combination of parts of the founders and when it took off, we haven't looked back since 32 years ago."

As an educator par excellence with an entrepreneurial spirit, the brand-definer reminisces about what builds the REAL brand.

"We are fortunate that it is almost one continuous trajectory upwards from the time we started. The first generation of parents began to like what we do and recommended us to their friends. This word-of-mouth referral was the one that actually build the brand. We are gratified that the parents are happy with us and constantly supported us which drive the momentum for us to do better and get more resources. As the famous saying goes - success begets success.

Delving a little deeper into the spirit of branding,

"We only started thinking about our brand not too long ago and that is when we find the building up of the brand has accelerated in comparison to the first twenty over years. The power of rallying behind a brand and defining what it is has proven to prove its merits. Today, we are a lot more purposeful and I think that is the reason why we are seeing a lot of these benefits snowballing. Our growth has been phenomenal especially for the last 5 years, as if we have finally taken off exponentially at a breakneck speed.

We now believe more passionately about the power of positioning and branding. We are now spending a lot of time and effort articulating the effort and difference to the market so they understand what REAL is about."

Taking Achievement to a REAL Level

Ee's efforts in immortalizing the REAL brand statement and image seem to be paying off. The education brand has been attracting major corporations into synergizing their valuable assets into creating a more meaningful future. In 2014, CIMB Group, under its Group Strategy & Strategic Investments arm (GSSI), invests in R.E.A.L Education Group by acquiring a significant minority stake in the company. This year, Property and education player, Paramount Corporation Bhd acquires a 66 per cent stake in the company.

"Paramount Education is in tertiary and K-12 education, whereas we are in preschool, K-12 and enrichment. There is an almost expected plan to spin both companies' educational sectors into a separate listed entity. When combined, we believe now we are one of the largest and most unique education players in the Malaysian market, covering a whole schooling spectrum from birth to university."

Very seldom do we encounter an education body or institution of early child education that dares to go out of their league to show how a 'REAL' education is done. In essence, REAL ambition stretches beyond influencing improvement in the education industry by achieving greater impact on the wider public sector.

"I would like to think that we complement rather than compete with the government's effort. It goes without saying that the degree of which your society progress depends on the amount you invest in educating the future generation. That is why countries are prepared to invest in education as it helps build the next generation. Countries that are now doing very well are not up there by accident. Therefore, the government needs as much help as it can get."

REAL champions the essence of this notion ever so luminously that one of its many awards received by the Ministry of Education is a '5-star rating' for REAL National and International Schools' academic excellence.

Ee closes with his mission in mind, "We would like to see that the company is still up and running in 200 or 300 years from now. As founders, we would like to be remembered for the values that we build the company with. In those days, we talked. Now we are documenting that this legacy is ensured."

And this is part of the reason why Ee spends a significant portion of his waking hours pursuing the quest for greater education to stay in the REAL way.



Educating Lifelong Values and Active Learning

R.E.A.L Education encompasses more than just achieving academic excellence. Students are provided with priceless platforms and opportunities to embrace a broad and diverse range of extracurricular endeavours. By combining active learning skills with unique school experiences, we nurture students into lifelong learners through quality, balanced and all-round education that goes beyond convention.



realkids.edu.my



realschools.edu.my



cambridgeforlife.org



R.E.A.L Education Group

2-6 Jalan SS19/1G, 47500 Subang Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

real.edu.my

DR NG CHIN SIAU

OF Q & M DENTAL GROUP

A YOUNG BOY WENT FOR A TRIP TO A DENTAL CLINIC TO GET HIS BROKEN FRONT TOOTH FIXED. HE WAS SO IMPRESSED BY HOW THE DENTIST MIRACULOUSLY SAVED HIS TOOTH THAT HE KNEW ONE DAY HE WILL TOO, BECOME A DENTIST. LITTLE DID THIS BOY KNOW THAT NOT ONLY WOULD HE HAVE HIS DREAM OF BECOMING A DENTIST COME TRUE BUT HE WENT ON TO BECOME THE FOUNDER OF THE LARGEST DENTAL GROUP IN SINGAPORE TODAY.

BY NURILYA ANIS RAHIM

Upon graduating from the National University of Singapore with a Bachelor of Dental Surgery in June 1992, Dr Ng Chin Siau became a dental officer with the Ministry of Health. He later joined a private dental clinic at Bukit Batok, Singapore as an Associate Dental Surgeon. Two years later, he bought over the practice and set up his first Q & M Dental (Q & M) clinic. Since then, from a small dental clinic, Q & M has grown to become Singapore's largest private dental health-care chain.

As the Founder and Group CEO of Q & M Dental Group Singapore Limited, Dr Ng is responsible for the corporate direction of Q & M. He leads the company in all aspects of its business strategies, policy planning and business development in Singapore and overseas. *The BrandLaureate Business World Review* recently had the chance of interviewing Dr Ng himself where he shared with us his success story with Q & M Dental Group.

Q & M's Business Expansion

Patients tend to be doctor-centric which means they usually go back to the same doctor – this comes as an advantage for Dr Ng. From seeing 10 patients a day, the number of patients at his clinic grew to 30 to 40 a day after two years. With more work than he could handle, he decided he needed some help. As Dr Ng shared how the business grew,

"Q & M only started expanding in 1999 when I admitted a fellow dentist as a business partner. It continued to grow as I admitted more dentists as my business partners. As of to date, there is a total of 18 founding shareholders. The expansion of Q & M continued over the years and by 2000, we were operating ten clinics with twenty dentists, 95 dental surgery staff members and one administrative assistant. With the establishment of more clinics, we decided to set up our own dental laboratory, enabling the in-house fabrication of crowns, dentures, bridges and retainers. We also have our own Q & M Dental Institute, where it trains our dentists and nurses with the latest techniques."



By 2008, Q & M was incorporated as a private company limited and underwent a re-structuring exercise whereby its dental clinics and support units became wholly owned subsidiaries of the company – the group owns 76 per cent of the Q & M Laboratory. The following year, Q & M Dental Group Singapore Limited was converted to a public company and listed on the Main Board of the Singapore Exchange.

The Leading Dental Healthcare Provider

The focus on patient-care forms the backbone of the Q & M brand – that stands for "Quan Min 舍得" which is translated as "the whole nation" in Chinese. To date, the company has firmly established its brand name in Singapore, and built a reputation as an established and reliable dental healthcare services provider with multi-disciplinary expertise. From a single clinic with one dentist at Bukit Batok back in 1996, there are now more than 60 Q & M clinics strategically located in Singapore.

In addition, the company has a pool of more than 200 experienced dentists who are well supported by a team of approximately 380 clinical and administrative staff. As the largest private dental healthcare group in Singapore, Q & M currently serve more than 600,000 patients, providing a comprehensive range of primary care dental services, as well as specialist services which are handled by a dedicated team of dental surgeons with post-graduate training.

All of Q & M clinics are conveniently located in shopping centres, bus and MRT stations throughout the country, as well as five Dental Centres and one mobile dental clinic. Q & M's flagship surgery in City Square Mall occupies a floor area of 12,000 square feet – roughly equivalent to the size of 16 standard dental practices. The clinic provides a range of dental healthcare services, including aesthetic dentistry, children's dentistry, as well as orthodontics and CEREC one-day crowns.

With its growing revenue, it was only a matter of time that Forbes would take notice of Q & M's success. In 2015, Q & M debuted on the magazine's Best Under



“Q & M ONLY STARTED EXPANDING IN 1999 WHEN I ADMITTED A FELLOW DENTIST AS A BUSINESS PARTNER. IT CONTINUED TO GROW AS I ADMITTED MORE DENTISTS AS MY BUSINESS PARTNERS. AS OF TO DATE, THERE IS A TOTAL OF 18 FOUNDING SHAREHOLDERS. THE EXPANSION OF Q & M CONTINUED OVER THE YEARS AND BY 2000, WE WERE OPERATING TEN CLINICS WITH TWENTY DENTISTS, 95 DENTAL SURGERY STAFF MEMBERS AND ONE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT.



“I ALWAYS BELIEVE IN PEOPLE AS IT IS THE COMPANY’S MOST IMPORTANT ASSETS. I ALSO BELIEVE IN “舍得” WHICH MEANS THE MORE YOU GIVE, THE MORE YOU WILL GET IN RETURN. I BELIEVE IN TREATING EVERYONE EQUALLY. I NEVER INSTRUCT MY SUBORDINATES BUT INSTEAD, I ALWAYS ASK FOR HELP. IT’S IMPORTANT TO MAKE EVERYONE FEEL LIKE THEY ARE PART OF THE TEAM”

A Billion, which lists 200 leading public companies in the Asia-Pacific that have positive net income and have been publicly traded for at least a year. Screened from 17,000 companies, candidates are shortlisted based on sales growth and earnings growth in the past 12 months and over three years, and on the strongest five-year return on equity.

An Exemplary Leader
It comes as no surprise that the unassuming Dr Ng and his easy charm have been instrumental in propelling the growth of Singapore’s largest private dental health-care chain. Ask him for his secret to success, Dr Ng shares,

“I always believe in people as it is the company’s most important assets. I also believe in “舍得” which means the more you give, the more you will get in return. I believe in treating everyone equally. I never instruct my subordinates but instead, I always ask for help. It’s important to make everyone feel like they are part of the team.”

Throughout his career, Dr. Ng has received numerous awards and recognitions in both professional and academic appointments. He was elected as the council member of Singapore Dental Association (SDA) and Singapore Dental Council. His most prominent contribution include chairing the Oral Health Awareness Committee, SDA and Nitec Committee, SDA in 2004 and 2007 respectively. Being a passionate dentist, he actively contributes to the industry by serving the community as a fellow member for International Congress of Oral Implantologists, International College of Dentists and Academy of Dentistry International.

On top of that, Dr Ng received the Best Entrepreneur Award in the discipline of Dentistry from the National University of Singapore’s Business Incubation of Global Organisations and was named the top entrepreneur as well as winner of The Entrepreneur of the Year Award for Enterprise in the 2009 Rotary Club-ASME EYA. The following year, he was conferred the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of The Year 2010 Award in Healthcare Services.

Q & M Overseas Success
With its remarkable success in Singapore, Q & M went to expand its chain overseas to China and Malaysia. As Dr Ng further expound on their business overseas,

“Finding the correct partners in our overseas ventures is key. To date, we have successfully spun off the manufacturing business in China on New Third Board, Beijing, and are actively working towards another spin off of our dental hospitals business in China on Catalist, Singapore.”

To date, Q & M has invested in Shenyang Aoxin Stomatology Group in China which operates dental hospitals and dental clinics in the Liaoning Province. The Group has also acquired a 51 per cent stake in the specialized dental materials manufacturer known as Qinhuangdao Aidite High Technical Ceramic Co., Ltd (Aidite) in Hebei Province, China. Aidite currently manufactures a specialized dental ceramics product known as zirconium oxide blocks which are used in dental computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing (CAD CAM) machines in the fabrication of dental prosthesis. In November 2015, Q & M obtained approval from the SGX-ST for the proposed spin-off and listing of Aidite on the New Third Board in Beijing.

Meanwhile in Malaysia, Q & M currently operates three dental outlets in Klang Valley, four dental clinics in Johor, and one dental clinic in Malacca. Venturing upstream, the company has a 70 per cent stake in a dental supplies and equipment distribution company, AR Dental Supplies Sdn Bhd.

In May 2015, Q & M had announced that it is exploring a possible spin-off of its subsidiaries, Q & M Dental Holdings (China) Pte Ltd (QDHC) and Q & M Dental Group Malaysia Sdn Bhd (QDGM) via a listing on a reputable Stock Exchange. QDHC is in the business of operating dental outlets in China, while QDGM is in the business of operating dental clinics and a dental supplies and equipment distribution company in Malaysia.

Future Plans
After 20 years of hard work, Dr Ng says he is very happy with the group’s results. The dental healthcare business is fortunate enough to be fairly resilient even during hard times and with their own dental laboratories, Q & M are able save cost as well as benefit from economies of scale. As the largest private dental healthcare group in Singapore, Q & M will continue to grow organically in Singapore, and to seek out strategic alliances with like-minded partners both in Singapore and abroad.

Indeed, with Singapore having a ratio of one dentist to every 3,400 people as compared to one dentist per 1,200 people on average in the USA and Europe, there certainly seem to be plenty of room for expansion for the Q & M Dental Group. In the meantime, Q & M will continue its aggressive expansion in China where growth outlook is rosy for dental services. According to Dr Ng, Dental health awareness in China is below 10 per cent, compared to about 50 per cent in Singapore. There are also more than 130,000 employable dentists in China, compared to 1,600 in Singapore. For those reasons, the country has attracted an influx of funds seeking quality healthcare projects, particularly in first-tier cities, causing valuations to skyrocket.

“As a result, we have switched our attention to government-run dental hospitals in provincial cities from private hospitals in locations like Beijing or Shanghai. Tier 1 cities attract the most bidders, including those from the United States, Taiwan, Germany. In Tier 2 and 3 cities, the local governments are more receptive to our presence, and we can explore opportunities to privatize a provincial dental hospital with share ownership,” Dr Ng added.

Q & M plans to eventually spin off its two Chinese entities, but has not finalized the listing location. “We now have strong joint venture partners in China, and that allows us to be more confident about getting bigger deals in the market,” he added.

Over the long term, Q & M aims to be to Asia’s dentistry market as what German automaker Volkswagen has been to the car industry, said Dr Ng, who has a passion for cars. “At Q & M, we also want to offer a full range of dental services from high to low end, for all the people.”



THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE HUMAN SUBCONSCIOUS CAN BE CONTROLLED, AND QUITE EASILY TOO. SMALL DETAILS WHICH ARE OFTEN UNNOTICED PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN THE PERCEPTION OF THE SURROUNDING WORLD. THANKS TO THESE NUANCES, BRANDS CAN SEAMLESSLY BOOST THE PROMOTION OF THEIR BRAND IDENTITY AND THE PURCHASE OF PRODUCTS.

Logo design, identity design and branding all have different roles, that together, form a perceived image for a business or product. Every organization in the world that considers itself a brand, from corporations to nonprofits to sports teams, relies on its identity design to represent its character to the public in a unique and recognizable way. The visual representation of a brand is one of the most fundamental projects a designer can work on.

But how do a brand qualify excellence in identity design? Aesthetic appeal? Recognisability? Ubiquity? Hard to say. Some of the most recognizable identity design examples in the world may not be the most appealing, artistically speaking. By the same token, some of the most beautiful identities go virtually unnoticed outside of a small community.

Branding is certainly not a light topic and numerous publications and hundreds of books have been written on the topic, however to put it in a nutshell, you could describe a brand as an organisation, service or product with a personality that is shaped by the perceptions of the audience. Many people believe a brand only consists of a few elements – some colours, some fonts, a logo, a slogan and maybe some music added in too. In reality, it is much more complicated than that. It can be concluded that a brand is a corporate image that goes a long way.



BRAND NAME

CHOOSING A BRAND NAME CAN BE A GRUELLING TASK. THE BEST BRAND NAMES ARE OFTEN EMOTION-DRIVEN AND MEMORABLE AS A RESULT BUT SOME MAY DEEM OTHERWISE. IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING TO NAME YOUR COMPANY, YOU MAY WANT TO STOP FOCUSING ON WHAT YOU WANT YOUR COMPANY TO BE BUT INSTEAD, THINK ABOUT THE EMOTIONS THAT YOU WANT YOUR TARGET CUSTOMER TO FEEL.

What's in a name? A lot, to say the least. The right name can make your company the talk of the town. The wrong one can doom it to obscurity and failure. Ideally, a brand name should convey the expertise, value and uniqueness of the product or service developed.

Some experts believe that the best names are abstract, a blank slate upon which to create an image. Others think that names should be informative so customers know immediately what your business is. Some believe that coined names that come from made-up words are more memorable than names that use real words. Others think they're forgettable. In reality, any name can be effective if it's backed by the appropriate marketing strategy.



STARBUCKS: WHILE ONE STORY SUGGESTS THE COMPANY WAS NAMED AFTER STARBUCK, THE CHIEF MATE ON THE PEQUOD WHALING SHIP FROM THE CLASSIC NOVEL MOBY-DICK, CO-FOUNDER GORDON BOWKER SUGGESTS SOMEONE SIMPLY SAW STARBO ON AN OLD MINING MAP AND ADAPTED IT.



ADIDAS: CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF ADIDAS DOES NOT STAND FOR "ALL DAY I DREAM ABOUT SPORTS", BUT IS INSTEAD A PORTMANTEAU OF THE FOUNDER'S NAME ADOLF (ADI) DASSLER.



KODAK: FOUNDER GEORGE EASTMAN BELIEVED A TRADEMARK SHOULD BE SHORT, INCAPABLE OF BEING MISPELLED AND MUST MEAN NOTHING. HE WAS ALSO A FAN OF THE LETTER 'K'. THE RESULT: THE MADE UP WORD 'KODAK'.

BRAND LOGO

A LOGO IS NOT THE BRAND, NOR IS IT AN IDENTITY. THE LOGO IDENTIFIES A BUSINESS OR PRODUCT IN ITS SIMPLEST FORM VIA THE USE OF A MARK OR ICON.

To understand what a logo is, we must first understand what it is for. A logo is simply for identification. It identifies a company or product via the use of a mark, flag, symbol or signature. A logo does not sell the company directly nor rarely does it describe a business. Logos derive their meaning from the quality of the thing it symbolises, not the other way around – logos are there to identify, not to explain. In short, what a logo *means* is more important than what it *looks* like.

To illustrate this concept, think of logos like people. We prefer to be called by our names – John, Kelly, Sarah – rather than by the confusing and forgettable description of ourselves such as “the guy who always wears pink and has blonde hair”. In this same way, a logo should not literally describe what the business does but rather, identify the business in a way that is recognisable and memorable.

It is also important to note that only after a logo becomes familiar, does it function the way it is intended to do much alike how we must learn people’s names to identify them.



UNILEVER: THE ‘U’ IN THE UNILEVER LOGO IS CREATIVELY FILLED IN WITH A VARIETY OF RANDOM IMAGES BUT EVERY SINGLE ICON USED ACTUALLY REPRESENTS AN ASPECT OF THE UNILEVER BUSINESS. FOR INSTANCE: A RECYCLE ICON FOR THEIR SUSTAINABILITY AND LIPS FOR BEAUTY AND TASTE.



NBC: THE WHITE SPACE IN THE CENTRE OF THE NBC LOGO CREATES THE SILHOUETTE OF A PEACOCK AND THE COLOURS ARE ITS FEATHERS. IT SYMBOLIZES THAT NBC ARE PROUD OF WHAT THEY BROADCAST.



Mercedes-Benz

MERCEDES BENZ: THE MERCEDES BENZ THREE POINTED STAR LOGO CAN BE TRACED BACK TO 1870, WHEN GOTTLIEB DAIMLER SENT HIS WIFE A POSTCARD WITH THE STAR ON IT. IT WAS HIS DESIRE TO SEE THE THREE POINTED STAR ON TOP OF ALL OF THEIR FACTORIES, INDICATING THEIR TRIUMPH OVER “LAND, SEA AND AIR”.

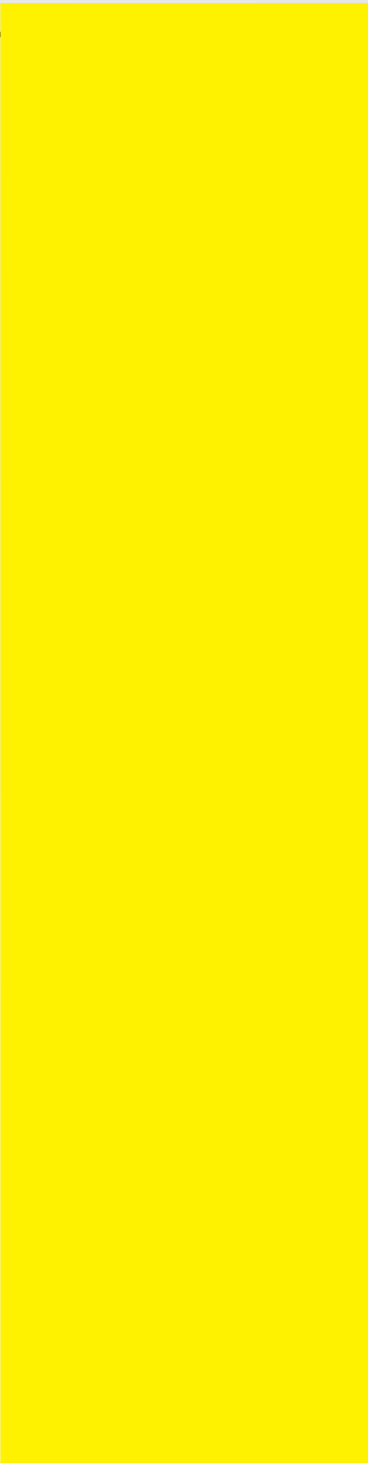


BRAND COLOUR

WHEN IT COMES TO IDENTIFYING A BRAND, LOGO IS PROBABLY THE FIRST THING CUSTOMERS WILL THINK OF. WHILE HONING THE NARRATIVE AND MESSAGE BEHIND A LOGO SHOULD OF COURSE BE THE PRIMARY CONCERN, IT IS ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE LOGO'S DESIGN AND SPECIFICALLY ITS COLOURS, HAVE MORE BEARING ON CUSTOMERS' OPINIONS THAN BRAND OWNERS MIGHT THINK.

Understanding the science behind colour could increase the effectiveness of a company's branding methods. The psychology of colour as it relates to persuasion is one of the most interesting and most controversial aspects of marketing.

Colours play a fairly substantial role in purchases and branding. Up to 90 per cent of snap judgments made about products can be based on colour alone and in regards to the role that colour plays in branding, the relationship between brands and colour hinges on the perceived appropriateness of the colour being used for the particular brand.



**POWERFUL AND PASSIONATE:
CONFIDENCE, ENERGY, INTENSITY**

The colour red attracts attention and evokes strong emotions from viewers. It is universally seen as representative of romance. It also causes increased heart rate and appetite, as well as a sense of urgency. A red logo shows that your brand is powerful and high-energy. If your company is a restaurant, red is a wise choice. It's been proven to increase appetite, which is ideal for a business that is trying to encourage food purchases. Its ability to increase heart rate is also good for brands trying to create urgency.

**FUN AND FRIENDLY:
HAPPINESS, OPTIMISM, CAUTION**

Yellow is associated with happiness and optimism, which should come as no surprise to anyone who has ever seen a classic smiley face. It is also seen as cheerful and warm, which encourages communication. A yellow logo shows that your company is positive and friendly. It can be used to grab the attention of window shoppers and convey a sense of happiness. Just be sure to choose a shade that doesn't put strain on viewers' eyes.

**CALM AND LOGICAL: SERENITY,
STABILITY, PEACEFULNESS**

Blue is associated with the sky and the ocean, which both evoke feelings of tranquillity and security. Although it is not as attention-grabbing as colours like red or yellow, blue is also the most popular favourite colour of both men and women. This means that it is universally well-liked – a great quality in an image that is meant to be associated with a company. A blue logo shows that your brand is professional and logical, but not invasive. It can create a sense of security and trust in your company, indicating their triumph over “land, sea and air”.

**YOUTHFUL AND EARTH-FRIENDLY:
HEALTH, TRANQUILLITY, FRESHNESS**

Green represents growth, and evokes a feeling of relaxation and healing. It is the colour of healthy vegetation, so it reminds viewers of nature and health. It is also associated with money and wealth. Above all, a green logo conveys the message that your company is environmentally friendly. This explains why it is so popular with organic and vegetarian brands, as well as companies that strive for ethical practices. It can also be a good choice for financial companies, since it reminds consumers of money.



BRAND IDENTITY

DESIGN IS OF COURSE A MAJOR PART OF BRANDING. ONCE A LOGO HAS BEEN DESIGNED IT GETS APPLIED TO MANY DIFFERENT APPLICATIONS. THESE CAN BE AS SIMPLE AS THE LOGO PLACED IN THE TOP CENTRE OF A PIECE OF PAPER AND CALLING IT LETTERHEAD. IF ALL YOU DO IS ESSENTIALLY RUBBER-STAMP YOUR LOGO ONTO DIFFERENT THINGS, YOU REALLY HAVE NOT DEVELOPED A FULL BRAND IDENTITY.

A brand identity is the larger, distinct visual look that is associated with a company. When a brand identity really works, you should be able to recognize the brand even if you don't see the logo.

Many people have heard about the importance of using their logo consistently. But there should be a consistency to elements beyond the logo. While logo is unfailingly unchangeable, brand identity must have both consistency and flexibility. Creating a brand identity that is distinct yet varies based on its form is a challenge but can bring big dividends in brand's value. The elements that can be part of a full brand identity could be fonts, colours, imagery, and even the voice of the writing.



JUST DO IT: NIKE
On its website, Nike declares its mission to “bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world,” adding, “If you have a body, you are an athlete.” It’s that inspirational message and mainstream appeal that connects the athletic apparel company to consumers worldwide. Nike has always been extremely customer-focused, with a broad access point that makes the brand relevant to elite athletes as well as the everyday person. It’s about self-empowerment and being your best, and the brand really does invite everyone to ‘Just Do It.’



GOOGLE
Millions of people see this logo on their computer screen every single day. This is the centrepiece of a website that handles over 100 billion visits per month, it’s got to look good. Google is known as being a fun company, and their colourful logo certainly reflects that; a law firm definitely couldn’t pull off font like that.



APPLE
Apple is the most innovative consumer electronics company in the world and has a cult-like following of loyal customers. The Apple logo has become a worldwide icon. Whatever that new Apple product is, consumers trust that it will be smart and sleek and that it will improve the way they communicate, work or spend their leisure time. While Apple has always been about creativity and expression, the brand has kicked up the emotional quotient by creating retail stores that foster a sense of collaboration and transparency between customers and sales staff. Apple uses its retail outlets to show, not tell consumers its brand philosophy, from the large tables, open spaces and walls of windows to its well-trained associates who are armed with handheld checkout scanners that enable shoppers to make purchases without having to stand in line.



BRAND COMMUNICATION

BRANDS NEED TO WORK HARD TO CAPTURE ATTENTION OR RISK BEING MISSED ALTOGETHER. SO HOW DOES A COMPANY ACQUIRE BRAND EVANGELISTS? THEY NEED TO BE WHAT PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED IN. AN AUTHENTIC, HUMANIZED BRAND VOICE MATTERS IN THE QUEST TO GET PEOPLE RAVING ABOUT A BRAND TO ALL OF THEIR FRIENDS – NOT TO MENTION FORM LONG-LASTING BRAND-CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS BUILT ON A SOLID FOUNDATION OF TRUST.

Brand owners strive to communicate with consumers in the ways that they prefer. In fact, marketing is becoming increasingly consumer-driven. With the rise of social media marketing, brands can communicate directly with their customers to develop products that sell, and consumers essentially become the product's co-creators. Today, 80 per cent of online content is user-generated, and content will increasingly come from a customer's peers. Marketers need advocates buzzing about their products as people increasingly receive information about brands from their social connections.

The Rise of Social Media

Although some marketers are still stuck in the Dark Ages of when the world wide web was born and when social media was inceptioned, the majority of the industry is well aware that social media marketing isn't just a fleeting trend. Today, plenty of large companies have entire departments dedicated to the success of their brands' social images, while others pay thousands each year to have their social strategies developed and implemented by agencies.

There's no doubt that marketing is a fickle and fast paced industry. That is also why it's vital that communication professionals look to the future to stay at the top of the game. Have a look at how some brands improve their business with successful brand communication strategies.



Brands need to be responsive. Remember that voice and tone matter; they humanize your brand and let you take part in conversations naturally. Take the time to have genuine, real-time dialogue with customers and prospects to better position a brand in a world of evolving and increasingly niche markets. Define and uphold a strong social media marketing voice and others will start doing your marketing for you. The cookie brand, Oreo is a great example of this. Oreo engages its customers in playful conversation on Twitter that syncs with the rest of the brand's strategy. Consumers are delighted when a company takes the time to speak with them one-on-one – not to mention in a fun way. Three words: expanding brand loyalty.



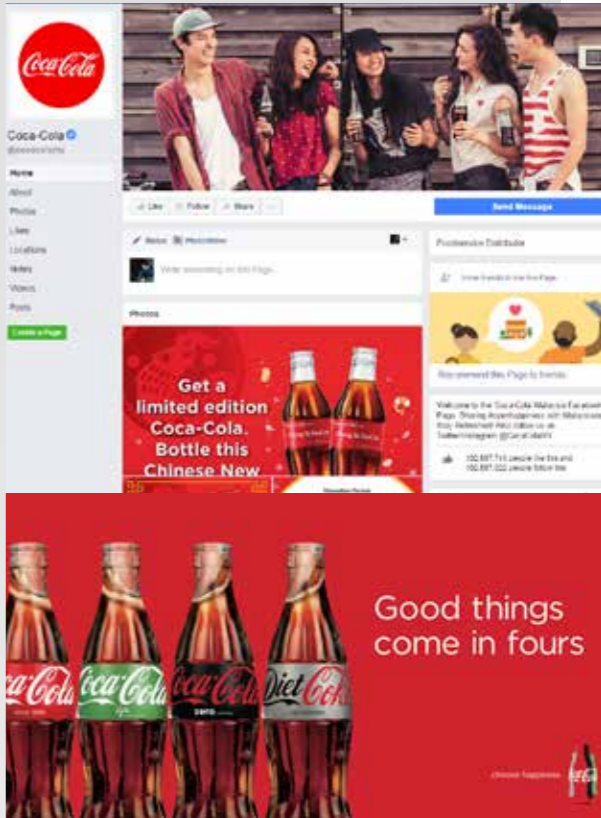
Start a social media campaign. Airbnb, a community marketplace for people to list and book accommodations around the world has more than 1,500,000 listings in 34,000 cities worldwide. A large contributor to the company's explosive global success? Social media. In January 2015, Airbnb launched a social media campaign around the hashtag #OneLessStranger. The company referred to the campaign as a "global, social experiment," in which Airbnb asked the community to perform random acts of hospitality for strangers, and then take a video or photo with the person and share it using the hashtag




Transparency and openness can be a huge asset as brands are generating their social media marketing voice. This type of marketing is unique. Few companies share the intimate details of their journey, and doing so can help a brand stand out from competition. Writing with openness and transparency also helps one communicate with confidence; nothing is off the table to discuss. With the "Our Food. Your Questions." digital platform, consumers were encouraged to ask their toughest questions. In exchange, McDonald's promised to step up and provide clear and concise answers. It was the open, honest kind of approach that can silence the harshest of critics, turn a fence-sitter into a fan or, if it backfires, risk alienating consumers unsatisfied with the answers.



Starbucks is known to be one of the best brands on social media. Dubbed as the Beyoncé of branded Instagram handles, Starbucks' Instagram strategy is one of the most successful handles out there. Compared to other Fortune 500 Instagram accounts, it has the second-highest following and the highest Instagram engagement ratio. With colourful lifestyle images and quirky stop-motion videos of its products, Starbucks manages to make its followers crave its products with consistent imagery. Eighty-five per cent of consumers find user-generated content more influential than branded photos and the social team over at Starbucks continues to generate these priceless user-generated content. Granted, they have a very popular and appealing product to showcase, but every brand can take a page from Starbucks' Instagram strategy and the way it promotes engagement within its community.



In terms of number of page Likes, Coca-Cola ranks as one of the top brand pages on Facebook. With 100 million Likes, it trails behind only a few others – Facebook being first. Coca-Cola particularly capitalizes on the popularity of video content on Facebook, whether it be through short 5 to 20 second clips or longer 1 to 2 minute videos. Coca-Cola is also extremely active in engaging with its fans. The brand responds to almost every comment left on its page, both good and bad. Along the same vein of providing impressive customer service, Coca-Cola has activated messenger with a Message Now button linked in its About page. While the brand doesn't have smart bots responding to messages, the option for users to reach out via messenger shows a level of Facebook engagement not all brands have committed to.

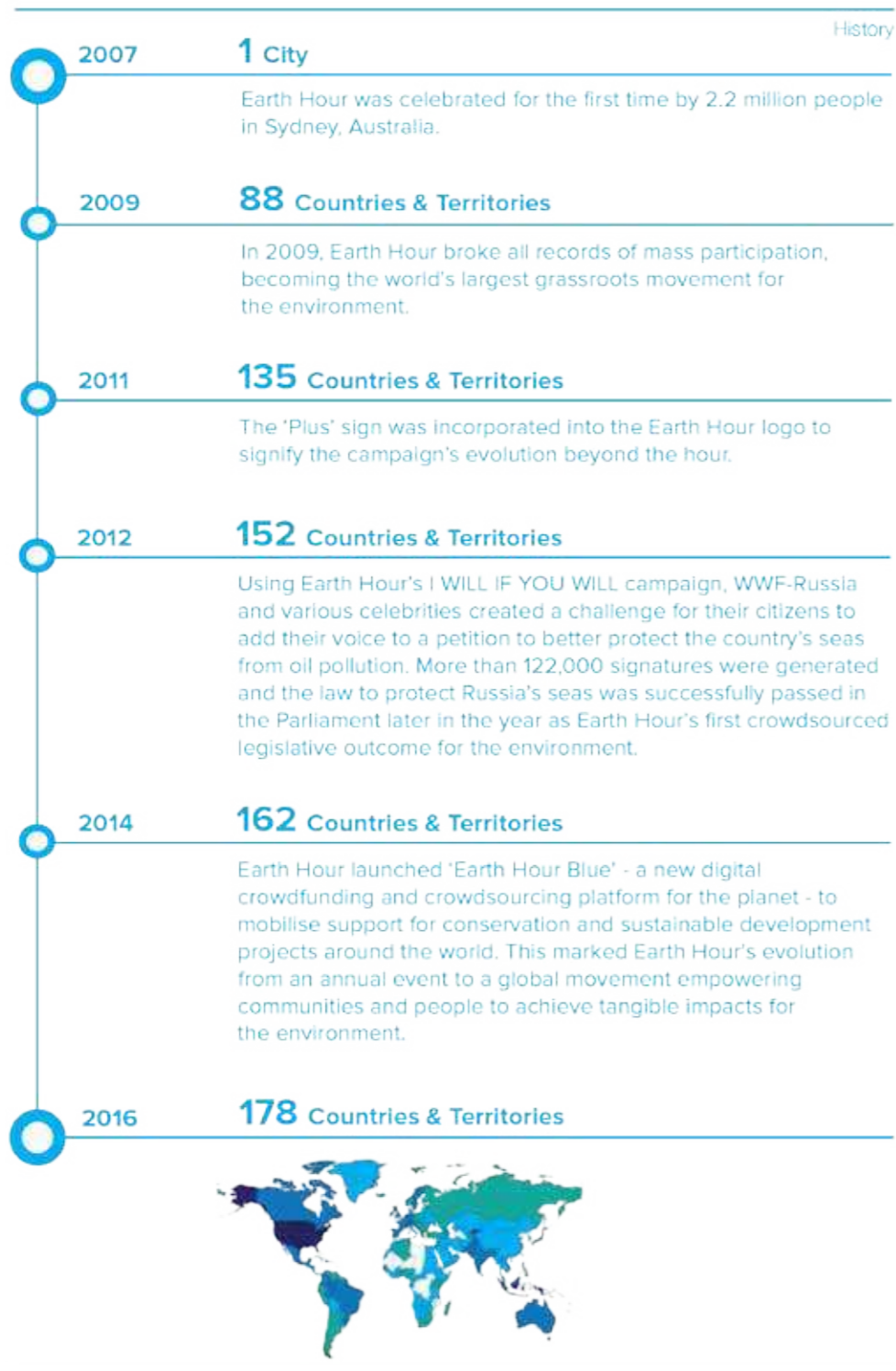


POWER DOWN, UNPLUG & SWITCH OFF *for Earth Hour*

CLIMATE CHANGE IS ONE OF THE STRONGEST MANIFESTATIONS OF THE INTERCONNECTED WORLD WE LIVE IN TODAY. IT TRANSCENDS PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES AND THUS EFFORTS TO CHANGE CLIMATE CHANGE MUST KNOW NO BORDERS. SINCE 2007, WWF'S EARTH HOUR HAS BEEN THE FORCE BEHIND NUMEROUS ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES INCLUDING HELPING TO DRIVE LEGISLATIVE CHANGES, PROMOTING INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS TO PROTECT FORESTS, OCEANS AND WILDLIFE, ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOR AND LIFESTYLES, AND HELPING SPARK GLOBAL AWARENESS AND MOMENTUM ON CLIMATE.

THIS YEAR WWF IS CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF EARTH HOUR AND 10 YEARS OF PROGRESS ON CHANGING CLIMATE CHANGE. THE CAMPAIGN WAS FIRST LAUNCHED NEARLY 10 YEARS AGO BY NGO WWF IN 2007 IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA. EARTH HOUR IS A CHARITABLE ORGANISATION BASED IN SINGAPORE AND AN OPEN SOURCE MOVEMENT ORGANISED BY THE WORLD WILDLIFE FUND (WWF) AND VOLUNTEER ORGANISATIONS AROUND THE WORLD. SINCE THEN, EARTH HOUR HAS BECOME A WORLDWIDE PHENOMENON WITH MORE THAN 7,000 CITIES PARTICIPATING.

Last year saw a recordbreaking 178 countries and territories across seven continents and aboard the International Space Station, serving as a strong visual reminder of the globe's determination to tackle our planet's biggest environmental challenge yet.

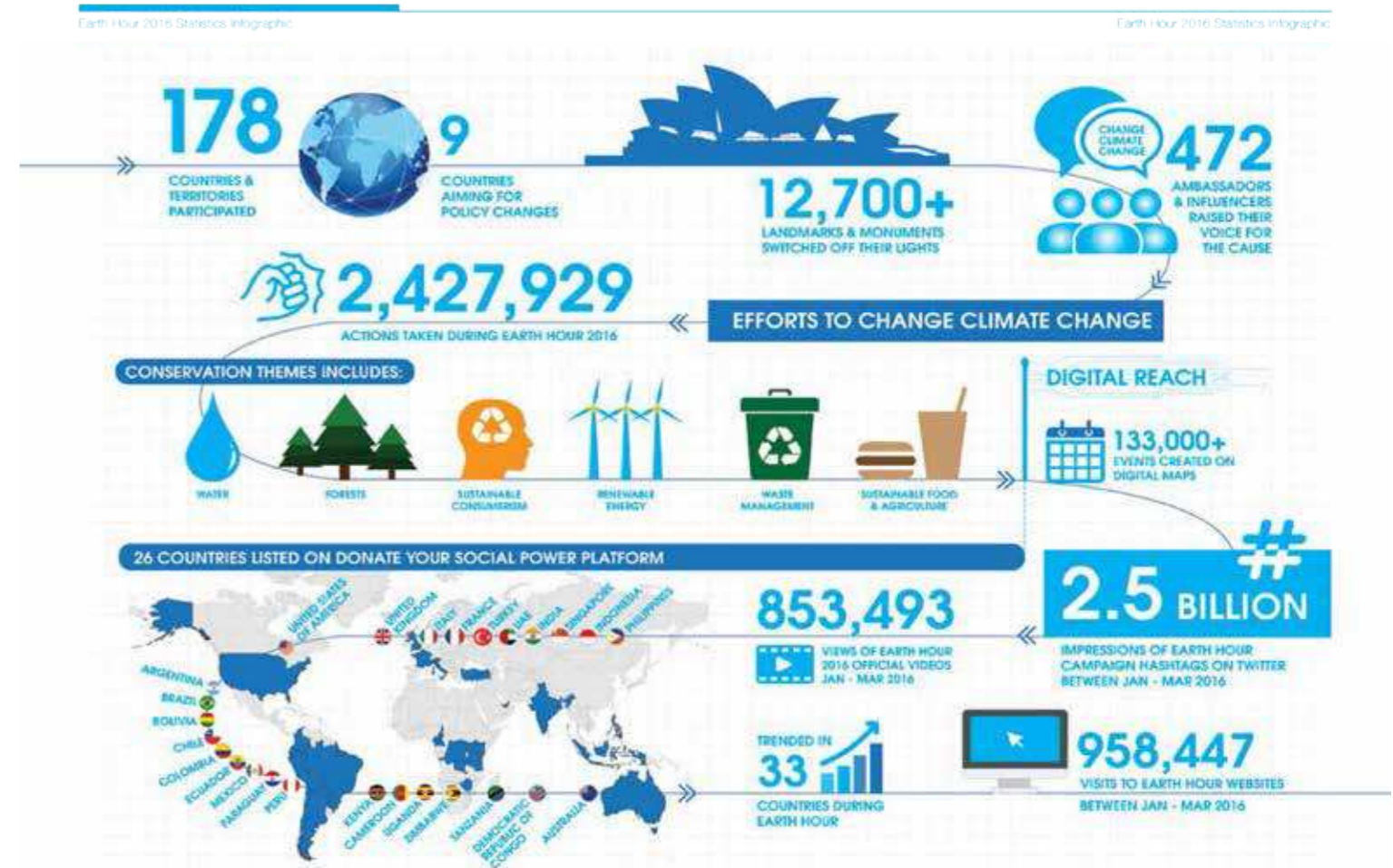


On 25 March this year, the time between 8:30pm and 9:30pm will be a time of solidarity for everyone who believe in their social power to make an impact on climate action. The annual environmental campaign will once again showcase millions around the world in a visible demonstration that there are millions that actually care about the planet, about climate change, about the future.

The hope is that participants will extend the hour and try to save as much energy as possible on this day, but also in the long term. The organisers believe that the same people who participate in Earth Hour may recognise the importance to make lifestyle changes that will help reduce carbon emissions and save energy. From the very beginning, the Earth Hour project claims to have galvanised and organised climate change legislation and action globally.

In Spain, WWF's Earth Hour campaign called on citizens to help gather 50,000 signatures to urge the government to phase out fossil fuels and transition to renewables to meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement while in India, the team aimed to replicate the prime minister's ambitious International Alliance for Solar Power at the grassroots and make renewable energy a reality for homes and offices.

In South and Central America, home to remarkable biodiversity, people in nine countries raised their voice through a regional crowdsourcing campaign to share what climate change means to them and take a stand for the local climate issue they cared about the most.



CONSIDER IT A SYMBOL OF SOLIDARITY AGAINST THOSE WHO MOCK ENVIRONMENTALISM, EARTH HOUR SENDS A STRONG MESSAGE TO GOVERNMENTS, SHOWING THAT MANY COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD ARE AWARE OF THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE PLANET AND WANT ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO CREATE A MORE SUSTAINABLE WORLD.

Pro-Bono Advertisements

Awareness is the first step toward engagement and as the Earth Hour community grows, we recognize the role of our partners and supporters in reaching and engaging new audiences. In 2016, as in previous years, Starcom MediaVest once again provided their expertise and resources to secure strategic pro-bono media spaces across print, online and outdoor channels. From the iconic billboards of Times Square to screenings across global broadcast networks, Starcom MediaVest and our other pro-bono ad partners such as RTL CBS Asia, Outdoor Channel, Bloomberg and many more helped us deliver the highest level of consumer awareness and 'shine a light on climate action'.

Together, with the support of WWF teams and media partners worldwide, the total value of pro-bono ad spaces secured for Earth Hour 2016 surpassed USD 29.8 million.



With all the excitement for Earth Hour coming up, you may be wondering what impact turning off the lights for one hour could really make. Here is why Earth Hour is about so much more than saving energy.

1. IT PROMOTES ACTION:

Many countries combine their Earth hour campaigns with encouragement for eco-action. Earth Hour's official organizing foundation, The WWF, recorded over 6 hundred thousand green actions during the 2015 countdown. The WWF also uses Earth Hour to push for legislative changes, and support their other projects,

including renewable energy growth and sustainable agriculture. Over 200 ambassadors raised their voices to change climate change during last year's Earth Hour.

2. IT'S GLOBAL:

Earth Hour started in Sydney Australia in 2007, but as of 2015 it has become the world's largest grassroots movement for the environment with 172 countries going dark at 8:30 pm local time.

3. WE CAN SEE IT:

Turning off the lights makes a powerful visual statement.

Campaign Videos

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called climate change 'a people problem' and yet with most of the talk about climate change being centered on data, science and policy, it is difficult for people to feel impacted and involved in climate action. This year, as Earth Hour 2016 attempted to shine a light on climate action, we decided to use the powerful medium of visual storytelling to highlight just how personal climate change can be.

From the widely-acclaimed 'The Future Starts Today' video created in collaboration with iris Worldwide to the heartwarming 'Their Future' production filmed impromptu with students at the Stamford American International School, Singapore, the Earth Hour 2016 videos showed individuals how our actions today will shape the lives of our children and generations to come in the years ahead.

Each video, in its own unique way, reiterated the role individuals play in climate change as well as climate solutions, illustrating why together we can and must change climate change.



The Future Starts Today
ehour.me/FutureStartsToday



Earth Hour 2016 At A Glance
ehour.me/EH16HighlightsFinal



Ban Ki Moon Shines A Light On Climate Action
ehour.me/EH-UNSG



Illustrating Earth Hour's Story
ehour.me/EH-Animation



Their Future: Earth Hour 2016
ehour.me/TheirFuture

Last year, over 10 thousand landmarks and monuments "disappeared" including the Eiffel Tower, the London Eye and the Great Pyramids of Giza.

4. IT CREATES AWARENESS:

The hype leading up to Earth Hour spreads the word about environmental issues. In the lead-up to and during the 15-day conference of the historic COP21 climate summit in Paris in December 2015, people around the world sent over 4,200 tweets to government leaders to urge them to make climate change history.

5. IT BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER:

No one likes to sit alone in the dark! This is why over 70 thousand Earth Hour events checked into digital maps last year. Whether you get together with friends and family, or join a community event, Earth Hour reminds us we need to come together to solve climate change.



THE OSCARS.

THE OSCARS 2017 | 89TH ACADEMY AWARDS

A Platform for Change

At their best, Oscar acceptance speeches are emotional, entertaining performances that express the true character of the people behind the year's best films. But a few times where the Oscar acceptance speech is the opportunity for recipients to use their time on stage to promote causes that they cared about, and loudly, openly talk about some of the more controversial problems in Hollywood where it is possible to reach out to the mass audiences who follow their every move. We take a look at some of the greatest Oscar speeches and moments that called for change in the world.



MARLON BRANDO, 1973

BRANDO WASN'T EVEN PRESENT FOR HIS MOST MEMORABLE OSCAR MOMENT BUT BRANDO HAD SENT NATIVE AMERICAN ACTIVIST SACHEEN LITTLEFEATHER TO THE 1973 AWARDS IN THE EVENT HE WON AS BEST ACTOR FOR "THE AWAS ANNOUNCED, SHE TOOK THE STAGE AND, AT BRANDO'S REQUEST, REJECTED THE AWARD BECAUSE OF HOW AMERICAN INDIANS WERE TREATED AND PORTRAYED IN HOLLYWOOD.

LEONARDO DICAPRIO, 2016



DiCaprio finally won his much-anticipated Academy Award for best actor and used the amazing opportunity to promote environmental awareness and change. DiCaprio used what most would consider one of his proudest moments to call out big polluters and corporations.

"Climate change is real. It is happening right now. It is the most urgent threat facing our entire species, and we need to work collectively together and stop procrastinating."

SHARMEEN OBAID -CHINOY, 2016



Obaid-Chinoy demonstrated how a film can spark political change with her documentary "A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness," which convinced the prime minister of Pakistan to change a law on honor killing.

LADY GAGA, 2016



Former Vice President Joe Biden introduced Lady Gaga's performance while urging the audience to take a pledge to "intervene in situations in which consent has not or cannot be given." Lady Gaga then sang her Oscar nominated song "Till it Happens to You." Gaga used this moment to bring on stage sexual assault victims to show strength in a time of trauma.



THESE TWO GAVE A LEGENDARY, HARD-HITTING JOINT SPEECH AFTER WINNING AN AWARD FOR "GLORY" FROM SELMA, FOCUSING ON TODAY'S FIGHT FOR RACIAL EQUALITY;

COMMON & JOHN LEGEND, 2015

"WE KNOW THAT RIGHT NOW, THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM AND JUSTICE IS REAL. WE LIVE IN THE MOST INCARCERATED COUNTRY IN THE WORLD. THERE ARE MORE BLACK MEN UNDER CORRECTIONAL CONTROL TODAY THAN WERE UNDER SLAVERY IN 1850. WHEN PEOPLE ARE MARCHING WITH OUR SONG, WE WANT TO TELL YOU WE ARE WITH YOU, WE SEE YOU, WE LOVE YOU AND MARCH ON."

The writer for The Imitation Game gave a moving salute to young creatives struggling with thoughts of suicide or depression. The speech was so moving that it's still trending on twitter right now.

"When I was 16 years old, I tried to kill myself because I felt weird and I felt different and I felt like I did not belong. And now I'm standing here and so, I would like for this moment to be for that kid out there who feels like she's weird or she's different or she doesn't fit in anywhere. Yes, you do. I promise you do. Stay weird, stay different."

GRAHAM MOORE, 2015





**ALEJANDRO
GONZÁLEZ
IÑÁRRITU,
2016**

THE MASTERMIND BEHIND THE REVENANT GAVE A MOVING SPEECH TO CREATIVE YOUNG IMMIGRANTS AND CALLED FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM AS HE ACCEPTED THE AWARD FOR BEST FILM.

"I WANT TO DEDICATE THIS AWARD FOR MY FELLOW MEXICANS - THE ONES WHO LIVE IN MEXICO. I PRAY THAT WE CAN FIND AND BUILD THE GOVERNMENT THAT WE DESERVE. AND THE ONES THAT LIVE IN THIS COUNTRY WHO ARE PART OF THE LATEST GENERATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN THIS COUNTRY, I JUST PRAY THAT THEY CAN BE TREATED WITH THE SAME DIGNITY AND RESPECT OF THE ONES WHO CAME BEFORE AND BUILT THIS INCREDIBLE IMMIGRANT NATION."

**PATRICIA
ARQUETTE,
2015**



Patricia Arquette catapulted gender equality and the wage gap between men and women to the forefront of the media landscape while accepting her award.

"To every woman who gave birth to every taxpayer and citizen of this nation, we have fought for everybody else's equal rights. It's our time to have wage equality once and for all and equal rights for women in the United States of America."

Chris Rock was hosting 2015 Oscars when he opened the night by addressing the '#OscarsSoWhite' controversy or the lack of minority representation in the year's nominations, tackling the issue by commenting on not just the lack of minority nominees but also the lack of opportunity for non-white actors. Concluding his monologue, he said

**CHRIS ROCK,
2015**



"We want opportunity - give black actors the same opportunities as white actors. That's it. Leo DiCaprio gets a great part every year. What about Jamie Foxx?"

Moore made the Oscar speech heard around the world, in which he condemned George Bush for going to war in Iraq, which had just begun four days prior. And Moore was booed, stalked and threatened for it.

**MICHAEL
MOORE, 2003**



"We live in the time where we have fictitious election results that elects a fictitious President. We live in a time where we have a man sending us to war for fictitious reasons? Whether it's the fiction of duct tape or the fictitious of orange alerts, we are against this war, Mr. Bush? Shame on you, Mr. Bush, shame on you."

Vanessa Redgrave played a World War II-era anti-Nazi activist in Julia, and won an Oscar for it in 1978. But around that same time, she narrated a pro-Palestinian documentary. She thanked the Academy for what she called a "tribute to my work," and then said,

**VANESSA
REDGRAVE,
1978**



"I salute you, and I pay tribute to you, and I think you should be very proud that in the last few weeks you've stood firm, and you have refused to be intimidated by the threats of a small bunch of Zionist hoodlums whose behavior is an insult to the stature of Jews all over the world and their great and heroic record of struggle against fascism and oppression."





Energizer

THE ENERGIZER BUNNY, AN ICON

BY KEN CHIA

Say what you will about his long ears and drumming hands, the Energizer Bunny is one icon who's got legs. Marketing experts call it the "ultimate product demo" because it does such an effective job of showcasing the product's unique selling proposition -- long-lived batteries -- in an inventive, fresh way. The Energizer Bunny is the marketing icon and mascot of Energizer batteries in North America. It is a pink toy rabbit wearing sunglasses and blue and black striped sandals that beats a bass drum bearing the Energizer logo.

History
Originally a parody of the preexisting Duracell Bunny, still seen in Europe and Australia, the Bunny has appeared in television commercials in North America since 1989. The Energizer Bunny is promoted as being able to continue operating indefinitely, or at least

much longer than similar toys (or other products) using rival brands' batteries, with the marketing tagline "It just keeps going and going..." The American Energizer commercials, produced by D.D.B. Chicago Advertising, originally began as a parody of TV advertisements for rival Duracell. In the original Duracell ads, a set of battery-powered drum-playing toy rabbits gradually slow to a halt until only the toy powered by a copper-top battery remains active. In Energizer's parody, the Energizer Bunny then enters the screen beating a huge bass drum and swinging a mallet over his head. The criticism was that Duracell compared their batteries with carbon-zinc batteries, and not similar alkaline batteries like Energizer. The creative team at D.D.B. Chicago who conceived and designed the bunny chose All Effects special effects company to build the original Energizer Bunny, a remote-controlled prop.

All Effects operated the Energizer Bunny in most of its first commercials. Later commercials were made by Industrial Light & Magic, Cafe FX and Method Studios.

As the series progressed, realistic-looking commercials were aired for fictional products (such as "Sitagin Hemorrhoid Remedy," "Nasotine Sinus Relief," "TresCafe Coffee", etc.) and even a few with celebrities (such as Lyle Alzado promoting a snack called "Pigskins", and Ted Nugent doing an ad for a Mexican food chain called "Cucaracha") only to have the Bunny march through, beating his drum, because he was "still going". Eventually real-life products and icons would do a crossover with the Energizer Bunny (i.e. Michael J. Fox doing a Pepsi ad, and the opening of TV shows such as Alfred Hitchcock Presents and ABC's Wide World of Sports).

To date, the Energizer Bunny has appeared in more than 115 television commercials. In these commercials, a voice-over would announce one of various slogans used throughout the years; all of them would relate the stalwartness of the Energizer Bunny to the long-lasting power of their batteries. The original slogan boasted that "...nothing outlasts the Energizer..", but it was eventually changed after a lawsuit filed by Duracell disputing Energizer's claim. Those commercials with the bunny interrupting all the action in a commercial were eventually spoofed in the 1993 film Hot Shots! Part Deux, featuring a blue animal drumming through instead of the pink bunny. The two people fighting then used their guns to shoot the blue animal, causing the blue animal to explode. In 1993 through 1995, Energizer ran a series of commercials featuring a fake rival battery, "Supervolt" (including a Supervolt weasel mascot), which was an obvious lookalike of Duracell. In many of the later commercials, film villains (such as Darth Vader, the Grim Reaper, the Wicked Witch of the West, King Kong, Wile E. Coyote, and Boris and Natasha) would try to destroy or capture the Bunny only to see complications arise when their devices using Supervolt batteries ran out, the villains themselves collapsed from exhaustion, or other circumstances allowed for the mascot's escape (i.e. the sun coming out to kill Dracula before he could seek shelter, the Grim Reaper sees the bunny in a dance party

and grunts as he prepares to leave a house on a boat, the Supervolt batteries in the main weapon of the beholder (Vader's lightsaber, Coyote's inventions, etc.) go dead before the bunny is stopped or a fire sprinkler (the smoke detector was presumably operated by Energizer batteries) being inadvertently triggered leading to the Wicked Witch melting, or Boris and Natasha attempting to shrink the Bunny, but inadvertently end up shrinking themselves (and they try to escape the Bunny, who is now massive to them). The second one showed the quality of the product being advertised when it created complications for the villain-so as not to boast that Energizer was better than any other brand, as well as to encourage people to buy Energizer batteries for their smoke detectors.

In September 2016, Energizer switched their advertising agency to Camp+King and introduced a new more expressive bunny who is slimmer and has more facial expression. The bunny will keep the signature drum, flip flops, and dark sunglasses, but the pink fur will be more realistic.

Legal challenges
In 1991, Energizer Holdings unsuccessfully sued the Adolph Coors Company for creating a parody of its Energizer bunny ads.

Campaign success
Despite the immense popularity of the campaign, sales of Energizer batteries actually went down during the years that the ads ran. Duracell claimed that 40 percent of its customers thought the campaign was promoting Duracell, not Energizer, but provided no evidence. Speculation has it that TV watchers still associated pink bunnies with Duracell, so the Energizer ads were actually helping their competitor's sales rather than their own.

In popular culture
In North America the term "Energizer Bunny" has entered the vernacular as a term for anything that continues endlessly, or someone that has immense stamina. In Europe and Australia the term "Duracell Bunny" has a similar connotation. Several U.S. presidential candidates have compared themselves to the bunny, including President George H. W. Bush in 1992 and Howard Dean in 2004.

Energizer was the corporate sponsor of Star Tours at Disneyland Park and Disney's Hollywood Studios for several years; the bunny appeared in several ride-themed advertisements around the show's exit.

In 2006, an Energizer Bunny balloonicle debuted in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and appeared until 2011.



60TH ANNIVERSARY OF ALTIPLANO BY PIAGET

BY KEN CHIA

If 60 seconds make a minute, and 60 minutes make an hour, then perhaps here on the 60th anniversary of the Altiplano – 60 years on – has come full circle and become a true icon of the maison.

The 60th anniversary of the Altiplano is a huge occasion for Piaget. The Altiplano bears Piaget's DNA in its every nook and cranny.

Piaget specializes in an area of watchmaking that is easy to understand aesthetically, but a little more difficult to grasp in terms of the very real technical challenges it poses. Ultra-thin watchmaking is something relatively few companies really excel in, and for several very good reasons. Like Jaeger-LeCoultre and Vacheron Constantin, Piaget is renowned for its ultra-thin watches and has – at one time or another – manufactured the world's thinnest mechanical watch, thinnest chronograph, thinnest hand-wound movement and thinnest self-winding mechanical movement.

The first of its ultra-thin movements – and the first in the Altiplano collection – was revealed at BaselWorld in 1957 with a 2 mm-thick 9P manual-winding movement designed by Valentin Piaget.

The evolution of the ultra-thin watch didn't really get started until the development of the so-called Lepine caliber in the mid-18th century. Before then, watches were of necessity pretty thick thanks to the nature of the escapement used for most watches – the verge escapement – which has an escape wheel at right angles to the movement plate. This adds unavoidable height, and that combined with the fact that the verge is a pretty miserable timekeeper without a constant force mechanism, meant that verge watches also generally had a fusée and chain. Of course verge watches could be, and often were, really beautiful, but thin they were not.

Lepine used the much flatter cylinder escapement and did away with the fusée, and as well introduced

the bridge and mainplate system still used in most watches today. By the beginning of the twentieth century refinements in metallurgy and manufacturing techniques had made it possible to make almost unbelievably thin movements, like the LeCoultre caliber 145 of 1907 which to this day holds the record for the thinnest, traditionally constructed hand-wound movement of all time (Vacheron experimented with an even thinner movement, only 0.95mm thick but these ran very erratically, and while three were made, they never got past the prototype stage).

You might wonder, if LeCoultre was able to make such a thin caliber in 1907, why anyone would make a fuss about Piaget's achievement of a hand-wound movement only 2mm thick with the 9P, in 1957. The answer is that while making a pocket watch movement very thin is surely a huge challenge, making a wristwatch movement that thin is exponentially more difficult. The much smaller size



of wristwatch movements means even tighter tolerances and it also means a much smaller mainspring, so there's less power to work with, and everything has to be made to an extremely high standard of precision. Which is why, when Piaget introduced its caliber 9P at Basel in 1957, it caused such a huge sensation.

The Emerald Star

Known for its innovation in haute horlogerie – as well as its craftsmanship in high jewellery – Piaget is once again a major player at this year's Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie (SIHH).

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Altiplano, Piaget has unveiled a two-piece limited edition collection, the first amongst several other novelties that will roll out throughout the course of this year.

The five new watches come in two distinct variations, all of which will be produced in a limited run

of 260 pieces. The first is a 34mm piece with a pink dial; with and without diamonds. The second is a 40mm execution in pink gold, white gold and yellow gold with intelligently colored dials that each seem to provoke a different emotion and character.

Taking the 40mm pieces into consideration, it's just very curious that when the entire set is placed before you, it isn't the subtle blue on the pink gold watch nor the quiet confidence of the grey on the white gold watch that seems to captivate your attention.

While the color combinations in each case does evoke different emotions when you have them in front of you, it does go to show that at times when balanced just right, even the most exuberant of colors (as in the instance of the emerald, yellow gold piece) can convey a notion of supreme, inexplicable elegance.



10 QUESTIONS

WITH **Tiffany Pham**

Tiffany Pham is the founder and CEO of Mogul, a digital hub for women to connect, share information, and access knowledge from around the world. Mogul has built a global audience (reaching more than 18 million women in 196 countries weekly) and garnered much praise since it launched two years ago, and it's been named one of Entrepreneur's Top NYC Startups to Watch in 2015 and one of Inc.'s Best Websites for Finding Top Talent in 2015. Check out her answers to the Top 10 Questions here!

What inspired you to start Mogul?

The inspiration behind Mogul harks back to my family and history. My family had been in media for generations, and early on, I made a promise that I would dedicate my life toward our family legacy of providing information access to the world. I also initially learned the English language through media, as a young girl. Reflecting back on that experience, I discovered what a powerful tool media could be for learning, for change. I realized then that we needed a platform whereby millions of us could exchange our insights from the ground level, where we could share our careers, our lives, our journeys. And from that exchange of information, we could gain access to knowledge from one another and become that much stronger, that much better.

Why did you name your company "Mogul?"

Actually, it is from the story of my grandmother. I wanted to honour her, because she was a Mogul herself. When I was in business school, my classmates also started calling me "The Mogul," or "The Media Mogul." But then I graduated, and all of a sudden, I started to realize that was actually quite rare. No woman that I knew – in person at least – had ever been called a "mogul." It used to be when you went into Google and typed in the word "mogul," the first (dozen or so) page results fit the "successful business man" archetype. But now if you Google the word Mogul, we're that number one search.

What was the strongest challenge you initially encountered at Mogul?

Developing the internal structure to support the growth of the site. Initially I was a one-woman team designing and coding. All of a sudden I was working 24/7, from my bedroom. Now we reach 18 million monthly users, so we obviously had to build a world-class team internally to support that external growth. Bringing on talent and enabling internal processes has been key.

What is the best part of your job?

The best part of launching MOGUL has been developing a product that has the potential to create a lasting impact on women worldwide with our talented team.

How is Mogul creating a social impact on women and thereby contributing to communities globally?

Mogul provides women worldwide with access to information, enabling our users to realize that they can be more than what their societies say. Partnering with organizations such as the United Nations, we serve as a key agent for advancing gender equality and quality education. Every day, women around the world write to us, telling us about the impact Mogul has had on their lives.

How do you keep yourself from being spread too thin?

Prior to starting Mogul, someone told me prioritization – figuring out which tasks will really move the needle the most – would be key.



What is one thing you wish you knew about the media industry when you first started out that you know now?

The media industry is constantly evolving, and it is important to examine the landscape to see where you might be able to add the most value for yourself and for an organization. Find ways in which you would be able to add to the innovation, and adopt the skill sets to do so through college projects or internships.

How have other women in your life helped you to get where you are today?

I mentioned by grandmother and my mother, too, who taught me to be such a kind and generous woman. I have 15 close girlfriends and we contact each other throughout the day and week and it's those friendships that help me anchor my life and career into something that's much deeper. Something that really motivates me, though, is the women externally. The women who, all around the world, use the platform to share their struggles, obstacles, challenges, and insights. From that, I learn just as much and give as much as possible back to them to as well.

Since MOGUL is all about women empowerment and mentorship, what advice do you have for college women who are looking for mentors and also might find themselves in a mentor role?

Be kind. Be authentic. Be generous.

Where do you see Mogul (and your career) in the future?

We aim to continue developing a more diverse and inclusive future for women. We will therefore continue to expand MOGUL in ways that lend to the overall empowerment and education of women worldwide. This is just the beginning.



Open up a smile

There's always good memories inside a bottle of Ribena. Bursting with the natural goodness of Vitamin C from New Zealand blackcurrants, it brings out that Ribena smile in every Malaysian, every time. So keep making memories and open up smiles with Ribena.



LABFRESH

The Next Generation of Shirts

Most shirts require a lot of work to keep them fresh. Washing, ironing and avoiding stains and body odour are time-consuming and extremely annoying. These innovators met customer expectations for something much more manageable. They have produced a shirt that is stain and smell repellent. The patented technology enables cotton fibres to repel water, oil, and bacteria. Say goodbye to yellow necklines, wet armpits and red wine stains. Labfresh is also wrinkle resistant and rarely need ironing.

Reason to Buy: Your shirts will look crisp for years, dry-cleaning bills will drop, and the minimalistic design ensures it won't go out of style.

 @Labfreshh  www.labfresh.eu

Your Phone Away from Phone

The Light Phone is the opposite of every other phone in existence. It is thin, light, lasts 20 days on a charge, and literally does nothing but make and answer calls. It's as if the makers of the Sports Illustrated Football Phone had studied the timeless teachings of William Walker Atkinson and created a telephone that was the platonic ideal of the ultimate telecommunication device. The best thing? It costs \$100. The goal, ultimately, is to use the phone as little as possible. They include 500 minutes of pre-paid talk time and it charges via USB but they really want you to pull it out, make a call, and put it back.

Reason to Buy: Get this: because it's so basic (in a good way) it will never need to be replaced.

 @lightphone  www.thelightphone.com


The Grapevine




This is How to Not Kill a Plant

Do you always manage to kill your basil or herbs despite your best efforts? Live your life as usual and let Botanum take care of the plants for you! Botanum is a complete kit for growing a plant from a seed. Botanum is a compact, easy and effortless way of growing. It's a hydroponic pot, which means it grows plants like chilies, herbs and tomatoes without soil. It waters the plants automatically. The result? Faster growth and no need to worry about over or under watering. Leave it for a month and get back to a healthy plant. Botanum is a simple planter that takes care of the boring parts of growing and lets you enjoy the fun parts. All you need to do is to fill the water tank every now and then, and add some nutrients (included)!

Reason to Buy: Because the best way to eat your greens is by growing it yourself!

 @botaniumlabs

 www.botanum.se



The Premium Sustainable Shower

Nebia is unlike any shower you've ever experienced. Its H2MICRO™ technology atomizes water into millions of droplets to create 10 times more surface area than a regular shower. More water comes in contact with your body leaving your skin feeling clean and hydrated. Nebia gives you the best of a steam room and an invigorating shower that revitalizes your skin and your soul. The warm and cozy embrace of water makes you feel clean, refreshed, and ready to tackle your day head on. With 70% water savings, Nebia leverages advances in design and thermofluids to create a better shower experience that actually saves you thousands of gallons of water a year. With those savings, Nebia pays for itself in about a year. Showering just became something you can wholeheartedly enjoy.

Reason to Buy: Believe me, you've taken thousands of showers, but never one like this.

 @nebia

 www.nebia.com



The emergence of new brands happen almost on a daily basis that it gets impossible to catch up! But not all is given the limelight they truly deserve and why is that? What makes some brands stand out from the rest? It's the uniqueness that catches people's attention! In this new section, we feature some of the brands that we don't want you to miss.



The Internet of Things for Everyone

Matrix is a platform where people around the world can build and download apps for their home and business. The interactive sensory-software device with smartphone pairing capabilities is set to go on the market in 2017. This beautifully designed device allows you to create and download home and business apps – giving you a gadget that can be used in many different ways at once. You control the MATRIX by speech, gesture, or its mobile app, and the device controls all your smart home and other IoT devices, like a hub. Imagine a smart home device although this one you can tell it what to do and what to control instead of being locked to a certain product only.

Reason to Buy: Well, it may be small but it sure has big smart home dreams.

 @MATRIX_Creator

 www.matrix.one

FAKE APPS ON RISE

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR BRAND IN THE APP STORE

BY TIAGO LUCHINI

As if the rise of fake news wasn't disturbing enough, the "fake trend" is now turning to a new target: brands.

The notion of "fake apps" first emerged a couple years ago, when illegitimate antivirus apps successfully scammed users into spending a lot of money to, ironically, try and keep their computers safe. The issue is now cropping up again on a far larger scale. During the most recent holiday shopping season, dozens of brands were targeted, with fake apps appearing for brands ranging from the Dollar Store to Salvatore Ferragamo.

How did it happen? One possible cause is a change in how apps are now approved to be sold in the apps stores. Until recently, it was tedious and mostly manual, but app stores have recently endeavored to simplify the process to make release cycles faster and as bureaucracy-free as possible for developers. Unfortunately, counterfeiters have found this streamlined process ideal for their own schemes.

As scary as it all sounds, the answer for brands isn't to simply forgo having an app. In an era in which mobile commerce is growing by leaps and bounds, having a sound app strategy is critical. Here's a step-by-step approach to prevent the havoc a fake app could wreak on your brand -- and on your consumers.

1. Stake your claim. In case you think that counterfeit apps are a good reason to forgoing having a mobile app, it's actually the opposite: while mobile apps aren't a necessity for every brand, consumers do look for their favorite brands in app stores. Therefore, it's never been a better time to stake your claim and make sure the official version is available. Otherwise, your customers may accidentally assume the fake one is yours. If you don't stake your territory, someone else will.

2. Check the app store frequently. When fake apps first started appearing, they were easier to detect. There were misspelled brand names and assets in the wrong fonts or colors. But app counterfeiting has become progressively more sophisticated. Your internal departments and

outside agency partners should learn to detect any fake app.

3. Learn from them. Become a student of the fake apps that tried to mimic your brand. Know what they look like and what users are expecting to do with them. Ultimately, you want to learn how to identify the subtle differences between fake and real brand apps, while also grasping consumer motivation for the download. Also, analyze what made people think they should have an app from your brand in the first place. You may discover several dormant business possibilities.

4. Know your foe. What are counterfeiters trying to accomplish with your brand? Are they simply scheming to harm your brand's integrity, or, more likely, are they seeking a way to capture valuable user data? Counterfeiters use a systematic approach when creating fake apps. First, they decide which brands are most vulnerable to attack, then they download assets and recreate the color palette from online resources. When a credit card -- or any other sensitive information -- is captured somewhere in the app, counterfeiters can make illicit money out of your brand.

5. Create an app that delivers. This might sound simple, but if your app does not deliver what your customers are expecting, chances are that fake apps may take advantage of that oversight. Is your app dedicated to e-commerce? Is it all about the experience? Is it a content discovery channel? Does it tie back with some physical experience in your stores or other locations? Does it create a custom experience to you clients? In other words, it's imperative to firmly decide why your app exists. An app that delivers well in a space that is useful to your customers will have fewer gaps for counterfeiters to exploit.

6. Align your web and app presence. Think about whether your app and website are aligned and look equally as strong. Your position in both channels should be well-developed and deliver what your customers are expecting from your brand. Also make sure your website links back to your app, and vice-versa, in a seamless

manner. Deep-linking functionality is broadly expected nowadays. Make sure these micro-experiences between site and app are fine-tuned and useful.

7. Promote your app's purpose. Be firm about the purpose of your app, and then use marketing and PR accordingly. Make sure your customers can find your app, and also understand why your app exists in the first place. Your website should promote your official app. If users access your site from their mobile phones, make sure to actively promote the installation of the app.

8. One is better than many. Have a consistent strategy on the channel -- don't have too many apps, either. If you are all over the place, you will confuse customers and open the space to counterfeiting. You likely don't have a need for multiple apps. But, if you do, you have to brand them very well on their own accord. A good example is Google, which has several apps (one for Google Gmail, one for Google Sheets, one for Google Maps, etc.). The apps' purposes, names and iconography all make the experience distinctively clear to users.

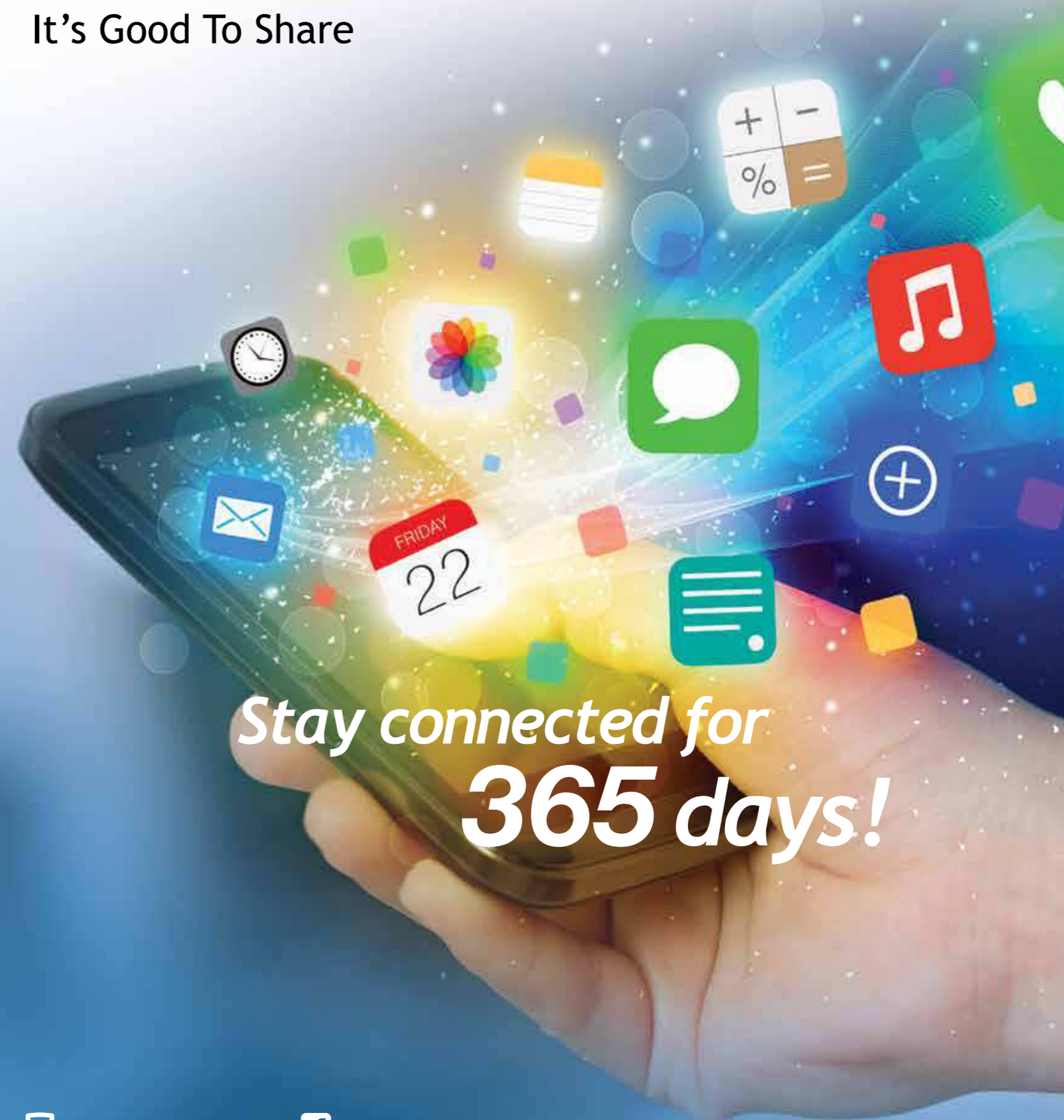
Now that we are well into 2017, all digital brand managers should be assessing the strength of their digital products to withstand potential attacks. Note that criminals who are mimicking brands are starting from scratch in the fake-app build process.

Today, three days is a reasonable estimate for how long it takes a developer with sinister motives to build a fake, branded mobile app. But in a few months, it may take as little as 24 hours, and the resulting app will look far more sophisticated than they do today -- and thus less obvious to consumers or to authorities.

The very best defense? Having a clear, consistent online and mobile presence. If companies work hard now to be more vigilant and take the necessary steps against the rise of fake branded apps, we can mitigate the issues they pose to businesses and consumers.

This article was originally published on www.adage.com

Tron
It's Good To Share



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365 days!



www.tron.com.my



facebook.com/tron.my

KEEPING UP WITH TECHNOLOGY

EVERY YEAR, THE MOST POPULAR BRANDS ARE SADDLED WITH RELEASING THEIR FLAGSHIP DEVICES, WHICH GET PEOPLE TALKING. THEN, THE QUESTION “WHICH SHOULD I BUY” IS CONSTANTLY NAGGING AT THE BACK OF YOUR MIND. BUT WE ARE HERE TO MAKE IT EASY FOR YOU. HERE ARE OUR PICKS OF THE HOTTEST, COOLEST AND MOST SIZZLING GIZMO NOW!



LINKSYS VELOP WHOLE HOME MESH WI-FI
Wi-Fi that sets you free. US \$499

Traditional routers may not reach the far corners of your home but Velop nodes can be placed anywhere to provide you with full-strength Wi Fi that's perfect for your unique situation. Velop immerses you in Wi Fi no matter what type of home you live in. It is modular and available in a one, two or three pack. This gives you the freedom to place additional nodes to reach difficult spots like the basement or backyard for flawless, ultra-fast, full-strength signal Wi Fi everywhere.

DJI MAVIC PRO
Portable yet powerful. US \$999

The DJI Mavic Pro is a small yet powerful drone that turns the sky into your creative canvas easily and without worry, helping you make every moment an aerial moment. Its compact size hides a high degree of complexity that makes it one of DJI's most sophisticated flying cameras ever. 24 high-performance computing cores, an all-new transmission system with a 4.3mi (7km) *range, 5 vision sensors, and a 4K camera stabilized by a 3-axis mechanical gimbal, are at your command with just a push of your thumb or a tap of your finger.



NINTENDO SWITCH
Freedom to have fun. Wherever. Whenever. US \$299.99

Nintendo Switch is designed to go wherever you go, transforming from home console to portable system in a snap. So you get more time to play the games you love, however you like. One controller or two, vertical or sideways, motion controls or buttons...Joy Con and Nintendo Switch give you total gameplay flexibility.



GARMIN FENIX 5
Beat yesterday all day, every day. US \$600

The Fenix 5 is thinner than the original and features a more compact body, while still delivering the same functionality. The Fenix 5S is similar to the 5 however has been designed specifically with ladies in mind, with an even thinner design partnered with a smaller watchface. Finally, the Fenix 5X is a tad chunkier than the Fenix 5, but adds in even more functionality, with the smartwatch coming pre-loaded with topographic maps for the United States as well as configurable cycling and running maps also.

SONY PLAYSTATION VR
Industry leading design. US \$399

Discover a new world of unexpected gaming and entertainment experiences with PlayStation®VR. The VR headset is engineered to be balanced, comfortable, and completely adjustable. It's designed to feel like it's not there – keeping you free from distraction as you explore new gaming worlds.



LG WATCH SPORT
The smartwatch you need. US \$349

LG Watch Sport is the very first Android Wear watch to feature support for NFC payments. This means you'll be able to pay for things with Android Pay, directly from your watch. The Watch Sport is also the first Android Wear devices to feature the Google Assistant. To launch Assistant on one of the new watches, just say “OK Google” or press and hold the power button. From there, you'll be able to take a note, send a text or email or set a timer or alarm.



BEAUTY COVERAGE

FOR THE GIRL WHO WANTS TO SAVE THE WORLD AND HAVE FLAWLESS SKIN

IF YOU WALK INTO A STORE LIKE SEPHORA OR THE LOCAL PHARMACIES AND FIND YOURSELF OVERWHELMED, IT'S PROBABLY SAFE TO SAY YOU'RE QUITE NEW TO THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY. BEAUTY PRODUCTS CAN BE QUITE INTIMIDATING AND TODAY, THERE'S SUCH A HUGE SELECTION OF PRODUCTS AVAILABLE WHICH OFTEN CONFUSES YOU. THE CHOICE SEEMS ENDLESS. AND SOMETIMES, YOU END UP BUYING SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T WORK FOR YOU. DON'T WORRY, BEAUTY PRODUCTS, LIKE MANY THINGS, INVOLVES TRIAL AND ERROR AND LOTS OF PRACTICE, BUT A LITTLE HELP NEVER HURTS. HERE, WE COMPILE A LIST OF ESSENTIALS THAT YOU MIGHT NEED IN ORDER TO KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST TRENDS IN THE REALM OF BEAUTY PRODUCTS. FOR THIS ISSUE, WE PAY HOMAGE TO THIS STANDOUT ARRAY OF BEAUTY BRANDS THAT FOCUS ON ECO-FRIENDLY, PLANT-DERIVED INGREDIENTS IN THEIR PRODUCTS.

BUTTER LONDON

Nail Polish, \$18.00

Everything's coming up healthy with these non-toxic nail polishes. Having originally been a 3-free brand (in other words, formulated without the harmful chemicals dibutyl phthalate, toluene, and formaldehyde), Butter's new Patent Shine 10X collection has a 10-in1 formula that's free of seven harmful chemicals found in other lacquers.

About the Brand: Butter London is world-renowned 3-Free nail lacquer brand with a huge cult following. They strive to make sure their good-for-you formulations use only safe, effective, and skin-pampering ingredients. Their products go through a rigorous testing process to ensure safety and instil confidence while wearing them.



AVEDA

Hair Care, \$28-84

Buy from the full range of professional shampoos for shine, volume, frizzy or coloured hair, dry or damaged hair and daily hair care. With unique pure-fume™ aromas and plant-based surfactants, Aveda's shampoos cleanse gently while engaging the senses.

About the Brand: Aveda's mission is to care for the world we live in, from the products they make to the ways in which they give back to society. At Aveda, they strive to set an example for environmental leadership and responsibility, not just in the world of beauty but around the world.



About the Brand: Still privately owned by the original founder, Mark Constantine, Lush Cosmetics sell environmentally friendly soap and paraphernalia in 700 shops across the world, as well as being involved in numerous important environmental and ethical campaigns.

LUSH COSMETICS

Face Mask, \$10.95

Get radiant results with masks made with fresh fruit, vegetables, butters, clays and the finest essential oils. Each ingredient is specially chosen for its effect, so no matter what skin you're in, there's a mask for that.



RMS BEAUTY

Face Wipes, \$16

These pure and simple make-up remover and cleansing wipes are your new everyday essential. Infused with the same radiance boosting properties as they RMS Raw Coconut Cream, these use-anywhere wipes melt away makeup, cleanse, soften and moisturize skin, all in one making them perfect for even lazy face washers.

About the Brand: RMS Beauty products are formulated with raw, food grade and organic ingredients in their natural state, allowing their living, healing attributes to penetrate and rejuvenate the skin. All RMS Beauty products are free of harmful chemicals, synthetic preservatives, synthetic vitamins, and genetically altered ingredients (GMO) etc.



ILIA

Shadow Sticks, \$34 each

Ilia use no synthetic fragrances and 100% natural dyes in their products. Their eyeshadow sticks are easy to use and produce a strong, blendable colour in one fell swoop. Use multiple shades together to create a warm, smoky hue.

W3LL PEOPLE

Mascara, \$12.50-\$23.50

W3LL People Expressionist Mascara is eco-friendly and a fan-favourite – receiving tons of great reviews from customers. The product relies on a natural formula that's free from the harsh, artificial chemical and petroleum derivatives often found in other mascaras.

About the Brand: W3LL PEOPLE is an uncommon beauty dream team founded by an elite makeup artist, cosmetic dermatologist and treehugging entrepreneur. They're passionate about making positive choices in life, particularly when it comes to self care. With W3LL PEOPLE you don't just look good, you feel good.





THE 10 MOST POWERFUL CHINESE EXPORT BRANDS

BY LARA O'REILLY

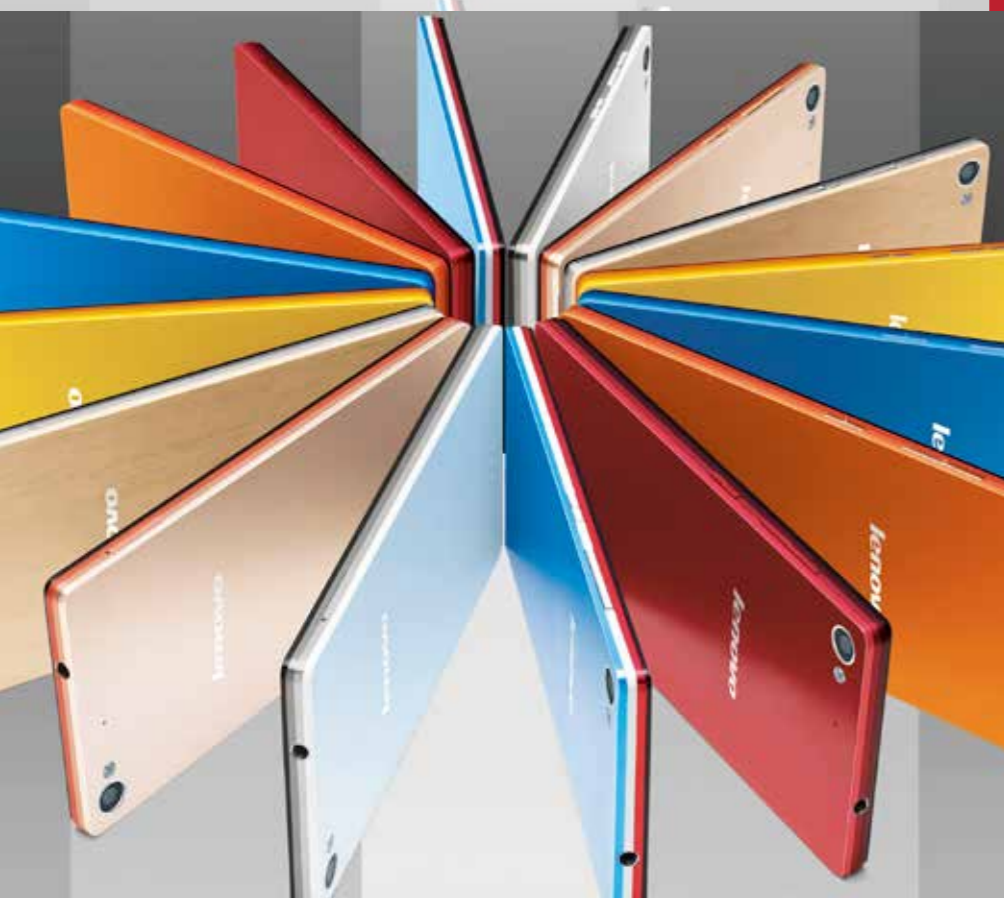
Chinese brands are becoming increasingly popular overseas, with western consumers increasingly looking to the country's companies for the newest product innovations.

While many huge Chinese brands are unknown outside of China, several are now competitive on the world's stage.

The first "BrandZ Top 30 Chinese Global Brand Builders" report was released by advertising holding company WPP, its research firm Kantar Millward Brown, and Google, ranking the most powerful Chinese export brands.

The ranking was based on each company's "BrandZ" measure of consumers' predisposition to choose a particular brand – taking into account how meaningful, different, and salient each brand is – plus research conducted in September 2016 using Google Surveys. The median Brand Power score of the 167 brands analyzed was 85.

Here are the 10 Chinese brands that have most successfully established themselves overseas.



LENOVO

Brand Power Score: 1,682. Lenovo makes PCs, smartphones, tablets, and smart TVs. The company acquired IBM's PC division in 2005 and Motorola Mobility in 2014, helping expand its presence in the west. Now, more than 70% of its revenue comes from overseas.



HUAWEI

Brand Power Score: 1,256. Huawei produces a range of telecommunications equipment and affordable smartphones. Some 60% of its revenue is generated outside China.



ALIBABA

Brand Power Score: 1,047. Alibaba is the Chinese ecommerce giant founded by Jack Ma. This month, Ma met with President-elect Donald Trump and discussed plans to create 1 million US jobs by allowing small businesses to sell to China through the company's platform.

ELEX TECH

Brand Power Score: 923. You may not have heard of the company, but you may have heard of the most popular mobile game it produces: "Clash of Kings". Elex has more than 50 million users across 40 countries.





XIAOMI

Brand Power Score: 716. Xiaomi makes smartphones and a range of consumer electronics like fitness bands and TVs. In 2014 it became the most valuable technology startup.

AIR CHINA

Brand Power Score: 709. The largest Chinese airline, Air China operates on more than 377 routes, 98 of those international. Its overseas business generates around 30% of the company's revenue.



HAIER

Brand Power Score: 572. Haier makes large appliances such as refrigerators, washing machines, and dishwashers. Its products are sold in more than 100 countries and its overseas sales account more more than a quarter of its revenues. Last year, Haier acquired GE's appliance division, which will significantly increase its market share in the US.



ANKER

Brand Power Score: 501. This Changsha-based company manufactures electronic accessories like headphones, USB cables, and portable chargers. It sells its products in more than 30 countries.

CHEETAH MOBILE

Brand Power Score: 498. This 7-year-old company is best-known for its free mobile security software, including Battery Doctor, Clean Master, and CM Security. It has more than 634 million monthly active users worldwide and derives most of its revenue from advertising.



HISENSE

Brand Power Score: 482. A Chinese multinational brand that makes white goods and electronics like TVs and tablets. It exports to 130 countries and around 30% of the company's revenue comes from overseas.





DAYANG

Nurfaizah

MALAYSIA'S BELOVED BALLADEER

BY IDA IBRAHIM

Songstress Dayang Nurfaizah is one darling that Malaysian music fans hold close to their hearts. The multi-award winning songstress, who's known for soulful music and her powerful pipes, has been taking the local entertainment industry by storm for the past 17 years. The petite lass from Kuching, whose smoky vocals have serenaded listeners since 1999, knew from the very start that singing was what she wanted to do.

"I love singing so much that I used to sing a lot when I was little. My neighbour decided to enroll me in a singing competition, without my knowledge and told me that I can't back out. Although I was a very shy girl, I had no choice but to enter the competition. It was then when I discovered my love for singing and performing on stage. I really enjoyed the feeling and that was how it all started," says Dayang, in a interview.

Dayang's foray into showbiz started when she joined RTM's Golden Teen Search in 1996. She made it to the finals but didn't win. She tried her luck again the following year and emerged winner. One of the judges at the competition was award-winning composer the late Adnan Abu Hassan, a man who was responsible in jumpstarting Dayang's professional career. She was introduced to her first recording company, and later recorded an album that was personally put together by Adnan himself.

From the very beginning, Dayang is known for her mellifluous high tenor voice and fluidity in singing styles.

Potentially a fierce contender in the vocal department, she began attracting notice for a vocal style that was both instantly appealing and highly unusual. Critics were particularly taken by her improvisational dexterity, in particular her virtuosic ability to produce an array of vocalizations.

Over the years, Dayang has ventured into R&B and pop territory. Her debut self-titled album was released in May 1999 and it was recorded in the pop and R&B genres, right up to her last album *Sayang&Cahaya* in 2011.

Her first album lead single, *Hakikat Cinta* introduced her to the local music industry but it was the heartfelt ballad *Seandainya Masih Ada Cinta* that etched the name of Dayang Nurfaizah into the upper echelons of the Malaysian art scene as one of the best singers the country has ever seen. With vocals so rich and pure, yet husky, deep and alluring, it is undeniable that Dayang's brilliance is blinding.

Today, many of her songs she sings are driven by ballads and mid-tempo tracks, just the type of songs her fans crave. Some of her artistic inspirations include Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey and Beyonce.

To date, Dayang has recorded 10 studio albums, as well as various other compilation and live albums.

But for Dayang, her journey to being recognised as a singer, for her voice, is no fairytale.

Since the start of her career, the hardest part for Dayang was trying to place a memorable mark in the industry. A follower of the local music industry would know that for many years, Dayang's career was overshadowed by her other peers who appeared in the same era. While there are people who acknowledge the talented singer's powerful vocals, in a quiet, human way wish her success; there are those who were skeptical about her future in the local music industry.

In 2006, she participated in One in a Million, a singing competition hosted by Malaysian local television station 8TV, but ended up as one of the four finalists before she was kicked out of the competition.

Many times, the Best Vocal recognition proved elusive for Dayang, someone who always harboured hopes of winning an award that recognised her vocal abilities. According to Dayang, there was even a time when she doubted her own vocal abilities.

Yet her vocal prowess, her resilience, her humbleness outlasted many of her peers and, over the years, more and more people began to say her name. They cheer with enthusiasm at her every deserving win and adore her.



Her hard work and persistence finally paid off when she took home Best Vocal Performance In A Song (Female) award at AIM in 2013 for her live performance of *Seandainya Masih Ada Cinta* taken from her second live album *Anuar & Dayang Live At Dewan Filharmonik Petronas*.

Over the years, Dayang has racked up a number of prestigious achievements such as the coveted Best Song award for her hit *Seandainya Masih Ada Cinta* in 2001 and Best Pop Album for the live album *Live!* in 2009 at the Anugerah Industri Muzik (AIM), Malaysia's equivalent of the Grammys.

And at the annual song competition *Anugerah Juara Lagu* (AJL), Dayang's *Seandainya Masih Ada Cinta* also won in the show's ballad category in 2001 while *Erti Hidup* won the Irama Malaysia and Ethnic Creative category in 2004. She has been on a winning streak ever since. At AJL 2016, her vocal prowess was in the spotlight yet again, earning Best Vocal Performance for *Di Pintu Syurga* (the song also placed third overall) and *Tak Pernah Menyerah*.

This year, through her latest song, *Lelaki Teragung*, her third single for a full album which is expected to be released at the end of the year, Dayang became the overall champion of *Anugerah Juara Lagu 31* (AJL 31). She dedicated her performance in tribute to former Sarawak Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Adenan Satem, a man who appreciated and loved music. Her performance became the talk of town and moved thousands of people who watched it, adding to the list of her many breathtaking performances.

Besides the passion she has for music, Dayang believes that it's her loyal fans who have kept her going.

She says: "I love performing on stage for my fans. I don't care if it's just two people or five people. As long as I'm happy and there are people who still want to hear me sing, I'll sing."

In fact, her first solo concert in 2014 at Dewan Filharmonik Petronas was dedicated solely to her dear fans, so much



so that she sang songs that were handpicked based on what her fans suggested to her on social media.

"I'm interested in coming out with songs that really work for me and which my fans have come to expect from me. I'm giving the fans who have followed me for these 17 years what they want, which is more ballads. This is a gift for them," says Dayang, who is now on the lookout for powerful ballads with great potential for her next album.

She also reveals she still gets butterflies in her stomach every time she gets up on stage to perform.

Dayang has been and will always be, starkly magnetic in all sense of the word. Her shows are almost always packed to the brim. Her breathtaking performances are one of the things that even her peers look forward to. Malaysia's Queen of Jazz Datuk Sheila Majid was also seen to be a fan of Dayang when she was spotted at one her shows.

As a singer, there are still many things she wants to explore.

While Dayang's primary focus is still to perform within Malaysia, as it is home, she said she would not decline to something better that comes her way.

"When it comes to opportunity, whether it's inside or outside of Malaysia, I believe at the end of the day it is about the talent that you possess. If you have the right talent and work hard, there will always be a place for you in the industry and the industry will appreciate your talent. Everyone will have their time, just believe in yourself,

"The ultimate key of motivation in life is not to give up and always believe in your talent," says Dayang.

Ultimately, she's right. If it wasn't for Dayang's love for performing that has kept the singer going for 17 years and counting, we would have missed out on this gem.. as beloved balladeers, like Dayang, just don't come around often.

Pasta

ITALY'S GLOBAL FAVOURITE DISH

BY Tony Thompson

Pasta is the world's favourite food, well loved during family or festival celebrations. Synonymous with Italian cuisine, pastas' popularity has crossed international borders. Pasta is relatively convenient to mass produce, has a stable shelf life and easy to transport. Besides it is cheap and easy to cook which makes for a great table presentation and taste good (buono).

Pasta popularity grew when a large influx of immigrants went to America at the turn of the century. The Italian Diaspora took their eating habits and culture with them. Pasta and pizza instantaneously became widespread and popular. The dishes soon became a staple diet. Incidentally, spaghetti meatballs were an American invention. Italians hardly consumed meat in Italy. Upon arriving to America, where livestock was plentiful, meat was incorporated frequently and paired with pasta dishes.

Etymology.

Marco Polo the famed Venetian merchant traveled to the middle kingdom, China around 1274. He served as an official to the Yuan Emperor, Kublai Khan and visited many parts of the middle kingdom. The Chinese had already established their egg noodle cuisine prior to Marco Polo's arrival. After returning back to Italy in 1292, he wrote a book called "The Travels of Marco Polo." In the book he detailed eating noodles, a similar pasta dish during his stint. Legend soon arose that the famed explorer had introduced and popularized pasta to Italy.

In Europe, food historians credited the Arabs for bringing pasta and indigenous foods to the Mediterranean basin sometime in the 9th century. Arab traders had slowly expanded into Sicily and southern Italy-likely bringing along noodle-making techniques learned from their Eastern neighbors, China. By the 12th century, pasta production soon traveled up north the Italian boot (Italy is shaped like an upside down boot). By the 19th century, the industrial revolution and modern technology caused pasta production to be standardized and mechanized. Pasta consumption began to increase rapidly.

The word "pasta" comes from the Italian word for "paste." Today, pasta is closely associated with Italy. The minute you say Ferrari or Barilla spaghetti- the Italian brand (Italia del marchio) is recalled. Italians on a per capita basis gobble up 30+ kilograms of pasta every year- the highest in the world! (Mamma mia)



Pasta etiquette.

Italian dining is a dignified affair, taking time to enjoy the appetizing pasta in rustic ambient settings and engaging conversations. The Spanish explorer Cortez brought tomatoes back to Europe in 1519. Centuries will pass before spaghetti with tomato sauce is accepted in Italian kitchens. Prior to the introduction of tomato sauce, pasta fresca was eaten with fingers. When sauces were introduced, it necessitated using a fork.

Two methods can be used to eat spaghetti: the Anglo Saxon method, using fork and spoon and the Italian method- using fork only.

Types of pasta

Pasta is made with durum wheat, a type of semolina flour (pasta di semola di grano duro) which is hard unleavened flour mixed with egg, water and salt. Even pronouncing the words seems affectionately romantic. The two major classifications of pasta are dry pasta (secca) and fresh pasta (fresca).

Shapes, sizes & sauces

Pasta comes in multitude of shapes and sizes. There are almost 600 types of pasta shapes and sizes with descriptive names: Spaghetti (the all time favourite (long and thin strands)), fusilli (corkscrew), conchiglie (shells), fettuccine (ribbons), penne (cylindrical), farfalle (bow tie or butterfly), macaroni (elbow) and lasagna (flat) and ravioli (bags or mini wonton) to name a few.

Italian cuisine uses quality ingredients and simplicity in preparation. Their myriad shapes provide pasta with lots of surface area to imbue savoury sauces- offering versatility in recipe creation. Local ingredients are used to pair with complementary regional sauces- a veritable match. As a rule of thumb: thick pasta uses thicker and robust sauce; lighter pasta pairs with lighter sauce. Use smoother sauces to coat long strands of spaghetti or angel hair pasta.

Pasta is very versatile and pairs well with a dazzling array of tasty sauces like tomato (pomodoro) and tomato with meat base: Ragù or Bolognese sauce. Traditional ragù is a meat-based tomato sauce with minced meat, soffritto, broth and local wine. Bolognese sauce (Ragù alla Bolognese) originating from Bologna, Italy is the most popular ragù variation worldwide.

Pasta also comes in a profusion of different colors. Most pasta is cream-colored derived from the natural flour and egg mixture. To make different colored pasta the following ingredients are used: spinach for green color; red pasta by adding tomato paste and beetroot; black pasta by adding squid ink, a quirky must-have delicacy!

Pasta topped with the pomodoro sauce is traditionally used in Italian cuisine. Tomatoes are the unsung hero containing Lycopene, a naturally abundant anti-oxidant.

Scientific experiment acknowledges that consuming pasta can elevate your mood by increasing serotonin levels, triggering the brain to excrete the feel-good-feeling. Singles can try out this tactic to seek your ideal mate at an Italian restaurant (Ristorante Italiano), an ideal setting to get a positive answer for a marriage proposal and to declare eternal "I love you" (Ti amo). I am sure Romeo and Juliet could not have done it any better. The younger generation find it hip and sassy to dine in a Ristorante Italiano eating pasta and enjoying the good life (La Dolce Vita). Such is the power of Italian romanticism; it is a cultural phenomenon. Sipping Italian espresso and eating delightful tiramisu dessert is a satisfying Italian lifestyle option.

Every year, 25th October is World Pasta Day. Pasta lovers can passionately promote the consumption of this delicious (delizioso) classic food, salutations to its timeless enjoyment. *Boun appetito!*



Duddha

ASIAN FLAVOURS RECONSTRUCTED

BY Ian Gregory Edward Masselamani

THE PERSONA

Duddha's essence gives the vibe of a sensuous, sexy feminine character who flirts your senses in a way that leaves you speechless and at the same time wanting more. You can never really put your finger on her personality because not only is she mysterious, she is fickle as well, playfully teasing the senses in an ever desirous manner. Alas, the more you try, the further away you will drift from her...

The very name Duddha, which whispers of a stunning girl who has power and control over another individual (urban lingo), rightly embodies the epitomic seductress of one's palate, empress of indulgence and enchantress of one's appetite. This beguiling beauty means business when it comes to derailing you from lifelong tastes you have taken for granted. Ah, you can almost taste her soul with every culinary exploit (or at least she lets you think so) only to dangle something even more delectable before your eyeballs the very next moment!.

Are you feeling up for a personal challenge taste-bud wise? Think you know what every food should taste like even before you put it in your mouth? Or are you a foodie who thinks you have had it all, with no room left for any surprises? Well, don't be so sure of yourself just yet...

As one who has explored my fair share of cuisine over the decades, I personally found the food lineup at Duddha intriguing as I attempted (feebly) to categorize or stereotype the genus of food found here. As the brand's tagline goes, it really does boast of 'Asian Flavours Reconstructed'!



02



03

THE MENU

If they had '3-D glasses' designed for the tongue, this would be the apt place to use them.

The menu is built on the core dynamo of leaving an impression. How everything looks, smells, tastes and feels inside your mouth will send you on a rollercoaster of mind-bending gastro-nastics – and you will come out thanking her! When they say, "Duddha is an original concept all-day eating-house that plays on the sensual, fun, and epicurean way of enjoying food and drinks," by golly they are not kidding!

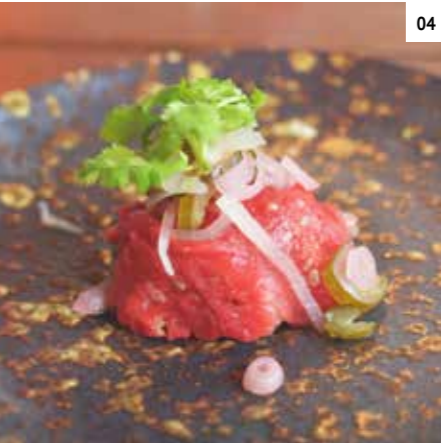
My first encounter (and moment of truth) with this 'off-beat' cuisine was the *Deconstructed Tofu with Oyster Sauce, Homemade Chicken Sauce, Pickled Cabbage, Garlic and Daikon Water*. The dish indubitably resonates with a 'homemade' vibe – but definitely not from your everyday kitchen!

Visual Trickery

For instance the *Crispy Chicken Bone with 'Nan Ru'* which is served in a bucket, is at a glance, something folks can breathe relief because of its familiarity (being inspired by a globally famous fast-food chain of fried chicken). But the moment you dip your golden bony piece into the fermented bean curd and sink your teeth in, everything you thought was familiar walks out the door, leaving you all alone in an otherworldly domain of a taste never-tried-before.

Familiar, but Not the Same

You get mixed textures and varying levels of super soft to extra-crunchy goodness. It is whispered that if food is used to chart out a map, this would be an uncharted island right in the middle of the globe where all currents and winds converge – intricately riddled with clandestine mystery just waiting to be explored.



04



05

image:
1) 48 Hours Wagyu Beef Cheek Rendang with Puffed Rice & Crispy Herbs.
2)Deconstructed Tofu with Oyster Sauce, Homemade Chicken Sauce, Pickled Cabbage, Garlic and Daikon Water.
3)Wagyu Beef Char Siew with Pickled Papaya, Homemade Chilli Sauce & Charred Spring Onions.
4)Wagyu Beef Tartare with Watermelon, Pickled Cucumber, Pickled Shallots & Papadum.
5)5 Spice Lamb Ribs with Apricot Ginger.
6)Crispy Chicken Bone with 'Nan Ru'



06





Jumping out from Paper to Life

When you look at a dish on a regular menu, cognitive processes and reflect actions are already happening inside your mind and body respectively to prepare you for the recognizable meal. Even before your order arrives, you can almost ‘taste’ it in your mouth. The menu is for the most part predictable; and thus your ‘taste-guards’ are at maximum strength, ready to outwork the meal and assimilate it into your system. But not at Duddha!

In the Dark, but Not out of the Light

However, though the colours and comics on Duddha’s menu seem very much alive and enticing, you are misled to (at best) guess what might be coming your way. Brace yourself for an array of surprises! Nothing, (except prior experience) can prepare you for what Duddha has in store. If you intend to entertain friends or even surprise that special someone in a more holistic way, this is definitely the place to do it!

Sweet Momma!

The selection of desserts is to die for – original, in every way. Never in your wildest dreams imagine that so many things which seem out of sorts can gel so well to implode the mind’s palette and explode in all senses at once!

THE AMBIENCE

Duddha, opened its doors recently on 11 January 2017 at the alfresco dining strip of the iconic KLCC, which is reachable by various means of transportation, private and public. Located at a prime setting, right in the heart of KL, it is directly accessible from the outside through its own entrance, and thus has a certain liberty to its operations. With indoor and open-air dining areas, it will suit all kinds of folks with varying lifestyles, not to mention cater to the spectrum of casual dining to business meetings.



The setting is cosy inside and windy on the outside. The colours of the anime style menu add to the livelines already present in the surround, people of all walks of life hustling by- from folk taking part in the regular rat race to those walking in the park to maintain a healthier heart. There is always something happening around and all this life this adds to the vibrancy of a unique brand that aims to stand out of the rest, enriching the whole experience even more.

In the modern township trend where every community is being equipped to be independant, self-sustaining and self-sufficient, folks seldom go out unless they want to experience something they cannot get closer to home. Duddha is enough reason for people to come from far and wide – just to catch a whiff of that old-forgotten feeling of being surprised-out-of-your-wits. Trust me – she will get you just when you thought you had figured her out and let your guard down.

THE CHEF

Duddha is captained by renowned chef, Jet Lo serving his signature style of Modern Southeast Asian cuisine. A Sabahan native born into a family that is passionate about food, he is a young and dynamic figure in the culinary world who cooks ardently from the heart. Chef Jet, a third-generation food epicurean who pursued his culinary dreams in Perth and Switzerland, is also known for his significant contributions to *Ding Dong* – a popular mod Asian eatery in the hip *Chinatown* area of Singapore. Chef Jet has also been involved in cooking demonstrations and dialogues at some of the world’s most established symposiums such as the *Omnivore Food Congress* in Shanghai and *Gastronomika* in San Sebastian, dubbed the culinary capital of the world.

THE VERDICT

The food selection at Duddha caught my senses off-guard. It took a while to reconcile what I had savoured with what I initially suspected it would taste like. In short, it was an experience unlike any other: *Unlearning Taste, Reconstructing Flavours*. If something fresh is what you are looking for, look no further – Duddha is exactly for you!

For more details and reservations, contact: www.duddha.com.my / +603 2166 2257. And for the latest news from the fascinating world of Duddha, please follow @duddharestaurant on Instagram and Duddha Restaurant on Facebook.

image:
7) Green Curry Saltwater Barramundi with Coconut, Bone Marrow Rice & Pomelo Salad.
8) Roasted King Fish Wing with Thai Chilli Relish, Pickled Green Mango & Lime.
9) Duddha Yin & Yang of Kopiko Ice Cream, Thai Tea, Condensed Milk & Honey Comb.
10) Caramelized Pumpkin Rice Cake with Smoked Coconut Ice Cream.
11) Cempedak Brownie with Sour Cream.
12) Vibrant n’ trendy setup, erupting with excitement.
13) Chef Jet Lo, all geared up to give patrons a taste of his tantalizing 3-D tongue taming.



5 TRAVEL APPS

THAT SET THE NEW MOBILE STANDARD FOR THE INDUSTRY

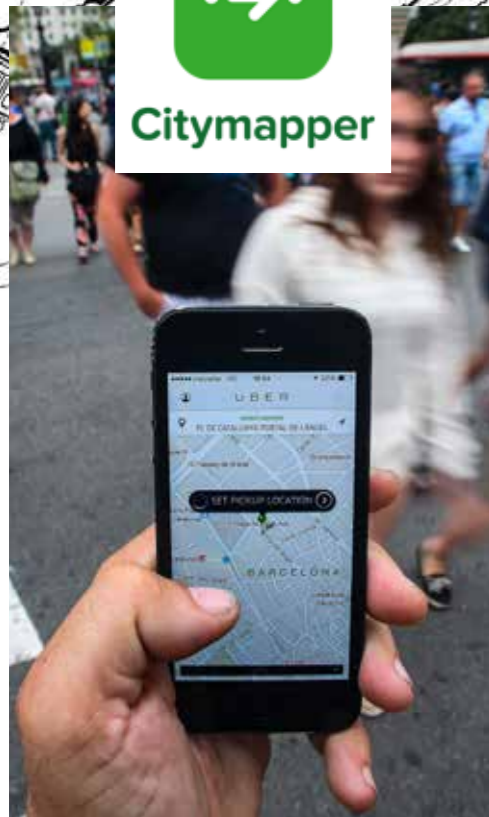
NO ONE NEEDS A SMARTPHONE FULL OF GIMMICKY APPS. THAT SAID, WHEN THINKING OF THE ENTIRE END-TO-END EXPERIENCE IN TRAVEL, IT IS FOOLISH TO IGNORE THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL AND MOBILE AS A KEY ELEMENT TO IMPROVE EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE FROM AIRLINES, TO HOTELS, TO TRIP PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT.

PROBLEM IS, THE USER EXPERIENCE OF MANY MOBILE APPS IS BEYOND DIRE — MANY BOOKING SITES HAVEN'T EVOLVED FROM 2005 IN TERMS OF DESIGN. THIS IS ODDLY STILL HAPPENING EVEN AS MORE PEOPLE DITCH THE DESKTOP AND SPEND THEIR TIME ON MOBILE AND TABLET EXPERIENCES.

WE'VE ROUNDED UP A SELECTION OF SOME NORTHERN LIGHTS FOR THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY WHEN IT COMES TO MOBILE APPS THAT BLEND UTILITY, USER EXPERIENCE, AND GREAT DESIGN FROM A VARIETY OF SECTORS. GET INSPIRED:



Citymapper



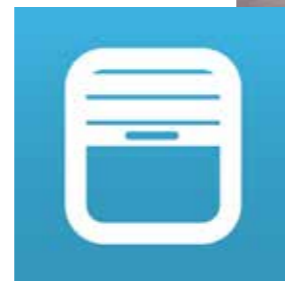
CITYMAPPER

Now available in 30 cities, Citymapper ups the ante from Google Maps (the ultimate travel app), allowing for data that shows multiple ways of getting to your destination. For example, it shows recommended bike routes side-by-side with other options (car, train, taxi) and, in New York, also maps you to the local Citibike drop off if you need it. A recent update allows you a bird's eye view of a transit system, with notifications for delays on specific lines: a godsend for commuters and visitors to a new city alike.



AIRBNB

It's obvious a lot of love and care went into the latest version of the Airbnb app; the design is fantastic, and its easy to both browse listings and administer listings for those who are letting out their apartments. They pay off their "live like a local" positioning by providing great, on-the-ground recommendations from hosts, that add to the personal feel and work well in a mobile context. Everything is smooth and it feels like a more premium experience than most hotel apps.



APP IN THE AIR

App in the Air serves as a repository for all of your travel itineraries and also gives you a helpful nudge, so you know when it's time to leave for the airport, when your flight is boarding and where to find the best food and wi-fi when you're at the airport. Though the name is a bit "eh" the functionality and intuitive design more than makes up for it. It plays nicely with both TripIt and also can grab itineraries from your inbox without a lot of fuss.



GOOGLE TRANSLATE

This translator can be a useful tool to support your own, more serious language learning, but realistically, it's most useful on a practical level quickly translating day-to-day words you come across on your travels. For example, you can hold your camera up to text – such as a sign, or a menu – and Google will translate it for you instantly. It's an essential app for any traveller.



FOUR SEASONS

The Four Seasons leads the hotel space with its mobile app, launched last summer. Customers can save very specific preferences about what they like during the stay, once you're checked in you can make requests, order room service, customize your bed and generally handle most tasks you'd be calling for with the touch of a button. There's also solid local information and the ability to check out on your phone to skip the line and get moving.

ICELAND

THE LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN

Write-up & Photo by **SURTYANITA SIDEK**

FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS LONG DREAMED OF GOING TO THE ARCTIC, ICELAND HAS LONG OCCUPIED A UNIQUE POSITION IN THE CARTOGRAPHY OF MY TRAVEL IMAGINATION AND ONE OF THE FURTHEST PLACES ON THE EDGE OF THE EARTH FOR ME TO TRULY ESCAPE REALITY. AS A TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY ENTHUSIAST - MORE LIKE A MODERN DAY EXPLORER, IT IS HARD TO UNDERSTAND WHY SUCH BARREN LANDSCAPES OF GREY, LAVA STREWN PLAINS, INACCESSIBLE MOUNTAIN PASSES AND ICY COLD CALDERAS COULD POSSIBLY APPEAL. BUT, I LOVE IT.



Just like any other time in the year, travelling to Iceland in July is spectacular, where they have the most visitors there who enjoy the midnight sun: all day-round daylight, breath taking nature, stunning vistas, amazing hiking trails and so, so much more. My days there were filled with 23.5 hours of sunlight, with temperature rising as high as +20°C. I felt as though I had virtually 24 hours of daylight at a place where the night never comes and the day never ends – it was like a dream come true!

Iceland has some of the world's most spectacular and easily accessed ice phenomena, from Europe's largest ice cap to unique black beaches decorated with glittering chunks of sea ice. Places such as Blue Lagoon, Geysir, Seljalandsfoss, Skógafoss and Reynisfjara beach are among some of the breathtaking places I visited that offer photographic dreamscape, splashing indescribable colour and contrast with moody monochrome. It's hard to know how to put Iceland's landscapes into words. Because they are more soundscapes really, with gushing geysers,

crashing waves, cracking glaciers and squelching volcanic mud pools. Of course, there's an old saying about how much a picture is worth compared to words, so I made sure I took loads of them. But most of all Iceland has wilderness. And it really is not hard to get out there in the thick of it, because two out of three Icelanders live in and around Reykjavik and I was told that the majority of tourists stick around what is known as the Golden Circle in the south west of the island.

I don't think I fully appreciated just how small Iceland's population is and what the effect of that has upon the travel experience. The entire country has around 317,000 inhabitants. That's about the size of St. Louis, Missouri. Reykjavik and surrounding suburbs account for 200,000 of that number, leaving a lonely 100,000 hardy souls strewn about the land of fire and ice. So instead of a colossal capital city, Reykjavik has the size and feel of a small town; or at least not a very big town. Nevertheless the vibrant city life of Reykjavik with its museums, restaurants

images :
From culture to glaciers, Iceland offers magnificent natural scenes for a memorable lifetime experience.

and renowned night life can surprise you as it did me. The Icelandic people are a complex blend of Nordic cool and Celtic warmth and it is more or less guaranteed that every Icelander welcomes you and wishes you well.

But to really experience that chemical reaction that Iceland offers, you need to really get away from the crowds, which is not that hard to do when you're in Iceland. I had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to sleep in the Bubble, a sci-fi looking transparent dome in the middle of a forest in Biskupstungur, South Iceland. Lying inside the bubble and be outside in nature was an unforgettable experience. Pure serenity. After all, there aren't many parts of the world where you can say you slept in a bubble outdoors.

Iceland is a delicate country, tiny by population, but absolutely huge by nature and landmarks and things to see. They are enormously proud of their remote little island and are pleased to share it with every visitor that's here to show it respect and take in the scenery that they're born and raised with. But we all must take care. They say without glaciers, Iceland is just land. As one of the fastest-warming places on the planet – as much a four times the Northern Hemisphere average, standing in the presence of the great mountains and glaciers are a breathtaking experience I would never forget. Lately we are told that what's left that nature has to offer in Iceland is fragile and can easily be a puddle of mud sometime in the future. So let's all tread lightly (literally) as right now this is as good as it gets and hopefully it will stay unique and amazing, not just for a few years to come, but indefinitely.



images :
Exotic Iceland is the perfect locale to hike in the wild and experience untouched landscapes of lush forestry and misty waterfalls.



HACKSAW RIDGE

BY AIN MC

Mel Gibson returns to directing greatness with the powerfully moving *Hacksaw Ridge*. It is the fascinating true story of Desmond Doss (Andrew Garfield), the first Conscientious Objector to win the Medal of Honour; the highest commendation in the U.S. military. This film is horrifying in its depiction of war. The Battle of Okinawa is unfiltered carnage, an ultra-realistic slaughter that will shock the most jaded of audiences. Against this bloodbath we see the triumph of values and faith; where a man's heroism is judged by the lives he saved, not the enemy killed.

Hacksaw Ridge is the work of a director possessed by the reality of violence as an unholy yet unavoidable truth. The film takes its title from a patch of battleground on the Japanese island of Okinawa, at the top of a 100-foot cliff, that's all mud and branches and bunkers and foxholes, and where the fight, when it arrives (one hour into the movie), is a gruesome cataclysm of terror. Against the nonstop clatter of machine-gun fire, bombs and grenades explode with a relentless random force, blowing off limbs and blasting bodies in two, and fire is everywhere, erupting from the explosions and the tips of flame-throwers. Bullets rip through helmets and chests, and half-dead soldiers sprawl on the ground, their guts hanging out like hamburger.

Yet at the centre of this modern hell of machine-tooled chaos and pain, there is Desmond Doss; a deeply religious country boy from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. His alcoholic father (Hugo

Weaving) suffered tremendous PTSD from his service in World War I. When Doss came of age in World War II, he and his brother (Nathaniel Buzolic) enlisted against his father's wishes. He's a conscientious objector who acts as a medic. But because he's every bit as devoted to serving in the war as he is to never once firing a bullet, he isn't just caring for soldiers. He's on the front lines, in the thick of the thick of it, without a weapon to protect him, and the film exalts not just his courage but his whole withdrawal from violence. Doss suffered mightily for his faith. But against all odds, he found himself in the darkest pit of hellish combat.

Gibson's portrayal of Doss begins from his early days as a child. A significant portion of *Hacksaw Ridge* is spent on the development of his pacifist beliefs. These scenes are equally as effective as the butchery in the second half of the film. His Seventh Day Adventist faith was the core of his being. Even as a youth, he recognized the Ten Commandments as intractable principles. Most war films are gunning to show you the fight. *Hacksaw Ridge* builds up to it brilliantly. Gibson wants the audience to truly understand Desmond Doss. He was a unique person of extraordinary character.

Andrew Garfield will be a strong contender for the Best Actor Oscar. It all seems a bit pat, but once Desmond grows up and Andrew Garfield starts playing him, the actor, all lanky charm and aw-shucks modesty, wins us over to seeing Desmond as country boy of captivating conviction. With a boyish charm and remarkable force of will, Doss remarks

that he never had much 'schooling,' but that doesn't mean he wasn't a deeply introspective thinker. He was measured in everything he did, except his head over heels infatuation with Dorothy Schutte (Teresa Palmer) and his religious convictions. Garfield delivers a sublimely nuanced performance, his best in an already distinguished young career.

The battle scenes in *Hacksaw Ridge* make *Saving Private Ryan* look tame in comparison. It's exceptionally gruesome and chaotic. The Japanese fought to the death, by any means necessary, in a stark setting. Gibson excels at staging action that shows humanity at its worst. From *Braveheart* to *Apocalypse*, he takes the kid gloves off depicting savagery. This approach would be effective regardless, but it is even more so here. To think that Doss ran headfirst into the grinder without a weapon, or thought of his own life, to save as many people as possible. Mel Gibson, in the midst of reeking death and depravity, shines a light on the best attributes of man.

The dichotomy of a pacifist volunteering for war seems irreconcilable. *Hacksaw Ridge* is a parable of how values can keep you strong in the worst of places. Desmond Doss stuck to his faith under extreme duress. Because of those beliefs, dozens of men survived the unthinkable. *Hacksaw Ridge* honours Doss and those who fought without glorification. With *Hacksaw Ridge* arriving from Summit Entertainment, Mel Gibson has made a superb film.



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PHILIPS

BRAND THOUGHTS & TIPS

“ALL OF US NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF BRANDING. WE ARE CEOs OF OUR OWN COMPANIES: ME INC. TO BE IN BUSINESS TODAY, OUR MOST IMPORTANT JOB IS TO BE HEAD MARKETER FOR THE BRAND CALLED YOU ”

Tom Peters

“THE KEYS TO BRAND SUCCESS ARE SELF-DEFINITION, TRANSPARENCY, AUTHENTICITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ”

Simon Mainwaring

“IF I LOST CONTROL OF THE BUSINESS I'D LOSE MYSELF—OR AT LEAST THE ABILITY TO BE MYSELF. OWNING MYSELF IS A WAY TO BE MYSELF”

Oprah Winfrey

“EVEN INDIVIDUALS NEED TO DEVELOP A BRAND FOR THEMSELVES WHATEVER YOUR AREA OF EXPERTISE, YOU CAN TAKE STEPS TO MAKE PEOPLE THINK OF YOU WHEN THEY THINK OF YOUR FIELD”

Accelepoint Webzine

“A GREAT BRAND IS A STORY THAT’S NEVER COMPLETELY TOLD. A BRAND IS A METAPHORICAL STORY THAT CONNECTS WITH SOMETHING VERY DEEP — A FUNDAMENTAL APPRECIATION OF MYTHOLOGY. STORIES CREATE THE EMOTIONAL CONTEXT PEOPLE NEED TO LOCATE THEMSELVES IN A LARGER EXPERIENCE ”

Scott Bedbury

“FOCUS ON IDENTIFYING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE, COMMUNICATING AN AUTHENTIC MESSAGE THAT THEY WANT AND NEED AND PROJECT YOURSELF AS AN “EXPERT” WITHIN YOUR NICHE”

Kim Garst

“WE HAVE TO DARE TO BE OURSELVES, HOWEVER FRIGHTENING OR STRANGE THAT SELF MAY PROVE TO BE”

Marey Sarton

“IF PLAN “A” FAILS — REMEMBER YOU HAVE 25 LETTERS LEFT.”

Chris Guillebeau

“YOU TOO ARE A BRAND. WHETHER YOU KNOW IT OR NOT. WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT”

Mark Eck

WHAT'S HAPPENING

22ND FEBRUARY – 6TH MARCH 2017 NATIONAL CRAFT DAY 2017



What: 15th annual National Craft Day is a two week event comprising craft sales, craft exhibitions, craft demonstrations, cultural performances and many more. This year's concept is Native Art referring to the traditional motifs of ethnic communities in Malaysia, and how they have been translated into more contemporary interpretations in fashion, street art and graffiti art. Some 400 entrepreneurs from various fields are expected to take part in the exhibition and sales.

Where: Kuala Lumpur Craft Complex

Website: www.kraftangan.gov.my

8TH MARCH – 11TH MARCH 2017 MALAYSIAN INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE FAIR



What: MIFF welcomes over 6,000 quality buyers from over 140 countries. From top-quality modern and contemporary furniture to tried-and-true classics, over 500 international and Malaysian exhibitors show off their latest collections and designs for bedrooms, living areas, kitchens, bathrooms, children, office, commercial foyers, hotel lounges and outdoor living. MIFF provides a robust B2B platform for buyers to interact with suppliers in a warm, relaxing and convivial atmosphere. We connect people with innovative products and a ready market.

Where: Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), Kuala Lumpur

Website: www.miff.com.my



17TH MARCH – 19TH MARCH 2017 MATTFAIR 2017

What: The upcoming Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTFA) fair this March will be even bigger with an additional hall dedicated to domestic tourism. The first event of the biannual MATTFA fair will be held at Putra World Trade Centre from March 17 to 19. Out of five halls featuring 1,403 booths, two halls (Merdeka Hall and Hall 4) will be accommodating about 300 booths for domestic products and services along with state tourism organisations.

Where: PWTC, Kuala Lumpur

Website: www.mattfair.org.my

25TH MARCH 2017 – 26TH MARCH 2017 THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISNEY ON ICE

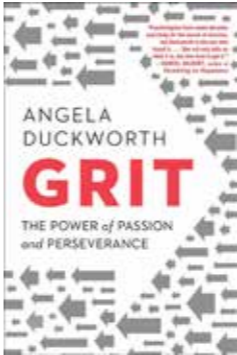


What: Enter a dazzling world where adventure awaits at The Wonderful World of Disney On Ice! Join Mickey, Minnie, Donald and Goofy on a walk down memory lane in colourful celebration of magic, spirit and family fun. Your favorite Disney characters and stories brought to life with the artistry of ice skating to create an unforgettable family experience Make unforgettable memories as you explore The Wonderful World of Disney On Ice!

Where: Stadium Malawati, Shah Alam

Website: www.disneyonice.com

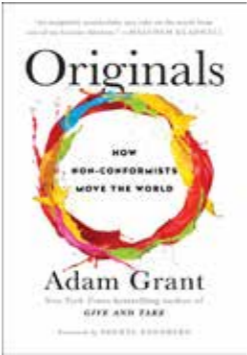
BOOKS



GRIT: THE POWER OF PASSION AND PERSEVERANCE

By Angela Duckworth

In this instant New York Times bestseller, pioneering psychologist Angela Duckworth shows anyone striving to succeed—be it parents, students, educators, athletes, or business people—that the secret to outstanding achievement is not talent but a special blend of passion and persistence she calls “grit.” Drawing on her own powerful story as the daughter of a scientist who frequently noted her lack of “genius,” Duckworth, now a celebrated researcher and professor, describes her early eye-opening stints in teaching, business consulting, and neuroscience, which led to the hypothesis that what really drives success is not “genius” but a unique combination of passion and long-term perseverance.



ORIGINALS: HOW NON-CONFORMISTS MOVE THE WORLD

By Adam Grant, Sheryl Sandberg

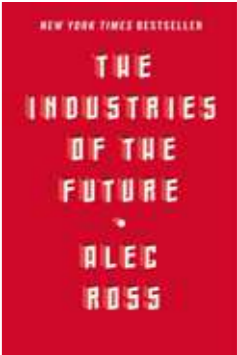
In Originals Grant addresses the challenge of improving the world, but now from the perspective of becoming original: choosing to champion novel ideas and values that go against the grain, battle conformity, and buck outdated traditions. How can we originate new ideas, policies, and practices without risking it all? Using surprising studies and stories spanning business, politics, sports, and entertainment, Grant explores how to recognize a good idea, speak up without getting silenced, build a coalition of allies, choose the right time to act, and manage fear and doubt; how parents and teachers can nurture originality in children; and how leaders can build cultures that welcome dissent.



SHOE DOG: A MEMOIR BY THE CREATOR OF NIKE

By Phil Knight

In this candid and riveting memoir, for the first time ever, Nike founder and board chairman Phil Knight shares the inside story of the company's early days as an intrepid start-up and its evolution into one of the world's most iconic, game-changing, and profitable brands. Young, searching, fresh out of business school, Phil Knight borrowed fifty dollars from his father and launched a company with one simple mission: import high-quality, low-cost running shoes from Japan. Selling the shoes from the trunk of his Plymouth Valiant, Knight grossed eight thousand dollars that first year, 1963. Today, Nike's annual sales top \$30 billion. In this age of start-ups, Knight's Nike is the gold standard, and its swoosh is more than a logo.



THE INDUSTRIES OF THE FUTURE

By Alec Ross

Leading innovation expert Alec Ross explains what's next for the world: the advances and stumbling blocks that will emerge in the next ten years, and how we can navigate them. In The Industries of the Future, Ross shows us what changes are coming in the next ten years, highlighting the best opportunities for progress and explaining why countries thrive or sputter. He examines the specific fields that will most shape our economic future, including robotics, cybersecurity, the commercialization of genomics, the next step for big data, and the coming impact of digital technology on money and markets. Ross blends storytelling and economic analysis to give a vivid and informed perspective on how sweeping global trends are affecting the ways we live.

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