

ROOTS Asia Pacific Trend Report **2020**

In collaboration with **ROOTS PR** & **DEX VENTURES**




Foreword from the Partners

In 2019, ROOTS continues to focus on aligning our core services to improve the integrated solutions that we offer to our clients. While the industry has certainly evolved with added complexity, good marketing is still built on fundamentals.

Consumers are demanding for more personalised experiences while businesses are looking for optimum marketing results from each dollar spent. The speed of changing habits make this immensely difficult for marketers as a solution will only be as good as the time it is presented. This fluid movement of consumerism can not be predicted with great accuracy and would require brands to continuously evolve and adapt at lightning pace.

Today we may not have the privilege of time to ideate, plan, execute and assess the success of the campaign. We encourage our clients to make decisions quicker and lean on best practices in the planning stage in order to start executing fast. This enables us to learn as the campaign progresses and iterate as we go along.



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Foreword from the Partners

Evolved Role of an Agency


Over the past 12 months we have noticed a significant growth of boutique agencies offering specialised services to solve the customer's problem. We think this is a good way forward for the industry and it shows maturity in the market. Clients now have the luxury of picking the right partner to solve very specific problems.

In fact, each agency would bring very unique experiences and style to the fray and for specialised agencies like us, we believe that finding the right client chemistry is extremely important to produce great work. We have had the privilege of working with many amazing clients as we foster strong relationships together. On the flip side we were also handed our fair share of challenging clients that we will not work with again. A tough but important factor to always qualify and remind ourselves that this is still after all, a business of people.

This has taught us a few things prior to establishing a working relationship:

1. Do both parties work towards good marketing practices?
2. Do we value the working relationship as partners?
3. Do we adhere to the right business processes?
4. Do we understand and acknowledge our risk appetite?
5. Do we continue to challenge our truths?

With the above, the Agency will then serve as partners of the client as both continuously work towards a common business objective.



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Foreword from the Partners

Creativity from Anywhere

We started to embark on digital 8 years ago with social media. Along the years we have evolved the business to offer Creative, Performance and Technology as part of the mix. We initially had 2 Creative teams with one focusing on conventional work while the other on digital creative. In our pursuit towards "Digital First", we hastily made the mistake of combining both our conventional creative team with digital creative. We assumed that everything should be driven by a digital mindset but underestimating that each conventional and digital creative have their own place in the marketing mix.

Indeed that was a painful experience and it did humbled us to respect the fundamentals. Instead of separating conventional and digital - we realised that there is no line drawn in between. Today, we try and involve key stakeholders from different divisions to come together and find solutions as a team. Creativity should not come from just the creative team, it should come from everyone. The best tagline for one of our clients came from our Art Director. Similarly, the best idea for PR came from one of our Activation Managers.

A good lesson for us to always be open and in the lookout for best ideas from the most unexpected places.



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Foreword from the Partners

Marketers and Technology

We are optimistic of a future that that can be achieved with the solutions currently available to us as marketers. We have mentioned this before, that the current speed of change cannot be underestimated. Automation and Analytics will continue to play larger roles in our offerings and the definitive challenge will no doubt be training and recruitment of talent. In this evolving complex world - we are still figuring this part out.

Agency offerings will evolve by necessity with a bias towards cutting edge technologies. This will most likely widen the gap between companies who:

1. Actively use technologies to make marketing more precise with the right content and message to the right audience
2. Achieve greater efficiencies by minimizing administrative errors

Versus companies that:

1. Continue to do more of the same hoping for different results
2. Carpet bomb audience with ads that have no intent behind them

Brands should attempt to take some risks by executing from a different plane of marketing. Too many people are approaching the same problems with the same solutions masked by different presentations. In times like these, it makes sense to be a contrarian or even an extremist. The good news is that, it evens out the playing field and provides immense opportunities for businesses with a healthy dose of risk appetite to thrive no matter the size of their organization.



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Foreword from the Partners

Data curiosity

The topic of data has been covered extensively by experts from all over. By no means we consider ourselves experts in data. On the contrary, we are actively exploring the potential of data by helping our clients collect, organize and distill them into simple meaningful insights. One of the biggest differences that we find this year is a gradual shift in our internal culture towards being more data-conscious. In order to achieve results that is complemented by a data-centric mindset, a business would need 2 key ingredients that are tied to data - culture and consciousness. With both comes curiosity and ultimately the desire to learn the many exciting areas of data-driven marketing.

Impact of 1

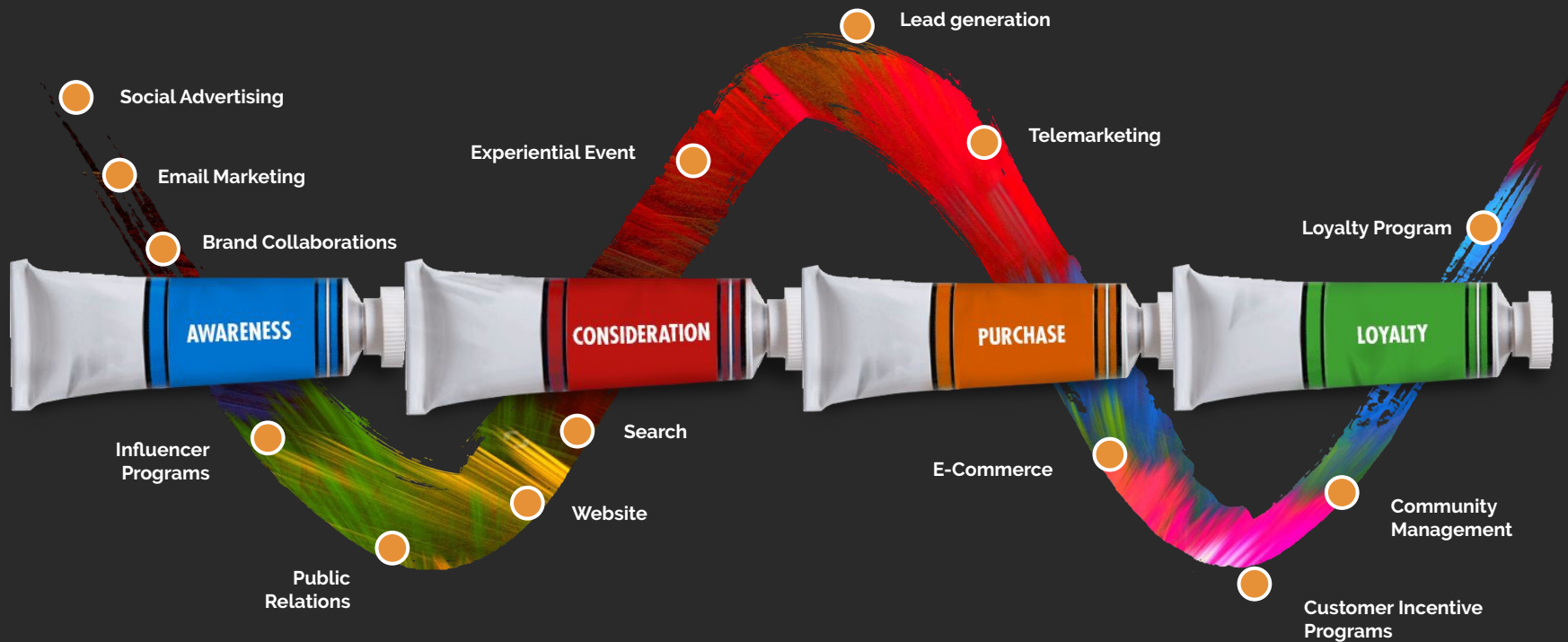
We continue to invest into improving our services by means of simplifying our offerings. Today, ROOTS is backed by 3 core marketing themes - Experience, Communications and Digital. 70% of our clients seek our services to solve a multi-channel problem. This effectively demands specialists in each field working together to deliver one seamless experience to the consumers. As marketers we must strive to achieve those results for our clients and continue to invest and evolve the business.

We cannot be overly bias towards any of our offerings as not all problems are the same. Some would require a heavier focus on digital, while others may need an on-ground experience to deliver results. It is this ability that enables us to have a broad view of the consumer journey while being able to identify gaps along the way. Our platform agnostic approach gives us the clarity needed to tackle these challenges more effectively and ultimately deliver meaningful results to our clients as a trusted partner.

###

IMPACT OF 1

Be in control of the customer journey with **ONE** Agency



Impact of 1

Explore the possibilities of
New Retail with industry leaders



Lazada WECOMMERCE is a newly conceptualised thought leadership summit that brings together both retail and e-commerce experts across the region to present latest business trends while connecting with one another.

Available during the summit are showcases of new retail technologies and practices that aims to transform both customers' and merchants' trade experience spearheaded by the leading e-commerce giant in the region.

Experience

Multi-Sensory Activations

Experience as a sum of physical and digital

Immersive multimedia experiences such as interactive motion sensor walls and Mixed Reality (fusion of Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality technologies) will peak this season. Elsewhere, experts such as TeamLab from Japan are beginning to expand beyond permanent showcases in [Singapore Art Science Museum](#) and [Mori Building Digital Art Museum](#) to [brand work](#). One notable project they have done is for renowned jeweller, Bvlgari on the project [Serpenti Sparkle](#) to help with passerby engagement on the streets at Ginza Tower in Japan.

In another note, interactive dining projects are also taking shape through fully immersive dining experiences at places in Kuala Lumpur such as Whimsy KL and Le Petit Chef @ Elements KL - raising the bar for the already popular multi-sensory approach.

Appealing to the senses in marketing is nothing new. Digital and traditional marketers know that to capture customer attention, they need visually stimulating content, and/or to use sound to further drive the experience. This approach holds several advantages, one of them being the ability to engage across the 5 senses that makes for a more robust, memorable journey that in part, contribute to experiential gaining in popularity.

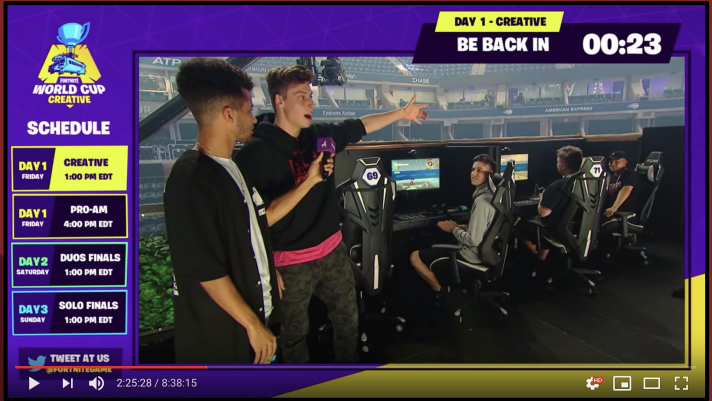


Online Events

We anticipate growth in the space of online events in 2020. This shows that customers today are more than happy to be engaged in ways other than face-to-face interactions. While physical interactions continue to be the most effective form of engagement, marketers are finding it harder to justify the high cost per headcount.

With the right technology and interactivity, participants can be engaged without the need to be at the physical event. The merging of online and offline experiences as 1 cohesive storytelling opportunity is also a great way to stretch marketing dollars.

To make the event work harder for the brand, marketers can look into expanding reach to new markets by streaming on-ground events as content for the online audience. With the right platform, topic and target audience, a few hundredfold increases in attendance at a fraction of cost is possible.



Event Tech

Competing with other brands to create extraordinary experiences to an online audience can be tricky without the right help. Aside from the usual ways of streaming content live on Facebook and YouTube, there are some neat casting platforms such as Wirecast by Telestream, Webcast Elite by ON24, and INXPO.

These platforms allow marketers to achieve great engagement quality without face-to-face interactions through online behaviour design thinking. They offer a wide range of engaging and interactive features such as polls, sponsored spaces, games, social media content sharing to name a few.

On top of helping brands to engage with their customers anytime and anywhere, these platforms can provide instantly-generated reports, allowing brands to pursue hot leads; check how they are doing at any given time; monitor engagement rates of all running activities and even actionable insights for marketers to work on immediately.



Retail Experience Store

The retail environment will change significantly. Traditional stores of spaces filled with products will be transformed into brand experience stores where consumers go to connect with the brand. We believe that modern customers will expect freshness each time when they visit a store.

With raising rental rates, we expect to see more experiential stores (instead of just point-of-purchases) as investments that complement the purchase journey since buying can happen anytime, anywhere.

For retail, the key areas to focus on will be:

1. Store seasonal thematic
2. Connected devices
3. Customer service
4. In-store customer engagement programs
5. The store as a rendezvous point for communal activities
6. Visual merchandising



► [adidas Brand Center, Sunway Pyramid, Malaysia](#)

Delegate experience for a B2B client



Asia Pacific Japan Leadership Summit
Danang, Vietnam | May 7-10, 2019

Content & Creative

T Bold Typography

Where texts take centerstage. We will see bolder and crazier use of texts and words in replacement of design elements. This will accentuate and deliver in-your-face effects across various platforms which we expect to also see greater utility across web platforms.

Asymmetrical Designs

The courage to focus attention by placing objects in non-symmetrical order on the grid will give designers the space to experiment with fresh new perspectives. Watch out for combining contrasting colors with such designs to take it a notch higher.

Shapes + Patterns + Motions



Geometric and isometric objects coupled with motion to enhance audience engagement will see greater adoption in 2020. We expect rough sketches to eventually evolve into polished lines and fluid movements depending on context.

RetroCulture



An infusion of retro styles into local culture to achieve a nostalgic yet modern twist to designs. There seems to be a movement towards local and community pride and we believe this will be interpreted through the designs that we will see in 2020.

Personalised Content

Map user journeys and determine critical touchpoints to serve relevant content. The challenge is not the lack of content but creating the right content to fit across diverse devices, platforms and channels. Successful content will deliver relevance, personalization, timeliness, consistency and convenience from prospect to customer.

Speed

Lightweight and powerful cloud apps to design and build creative assets with real-time collaboration & feedback, Such applications provide fast prototyping & development prowess that save time & cost through better cloud asset management & version control. This empowers designers to be in control over the entire creative process while achieving efficiency & consistency across different platforms,



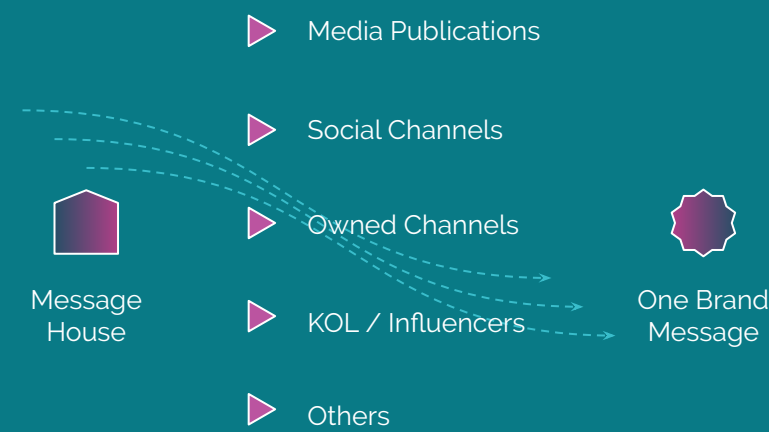
Communications

Integrated Communications

PR will continue to play an important role in bringing focus to brand messaging. As we embrace a multi-channel world, there is power in consistency of tonality, attitude and owned keywords.

We have heard our fair share of "death of PR" due to disruption in the traditional media space. We believe these pessimists are missing a crucial point. While it's certainly true that the media landscape is being disrupted, the sheer amount of communication channels that are increasing by the day will enable PR to lead as a needed expertise in managing brand messaging consistently across all channels.

Our opinion remains that PR will continue to grow in influence as the messaging steward in a multi-channel world. Instead of looking at PR as a tool to generate media exposure, we should be widening our scope to include social media, Governmental and NGO relations, partnerships, and new avenues that can enhance the reputation of our brands across paid, earned and owned media.

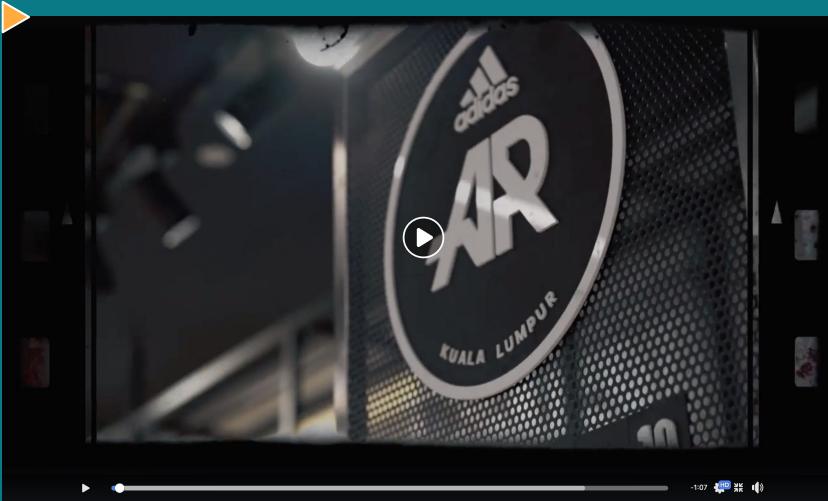


Hyperlocalization + Community Impact

We anticipate an increase in collaborative relationships between brands to stay relevant and tap into new markets based on our observation in the past 12 months. Benefits of these engagements include shared USPs and goals with the ability to access a wider audience. As an extension, these partnerships also span programs with private labels and influencers, borrowing strengths from each other and ultimately maximize marketing dollars.

The most impactful campaigns also happen to be those that seek to create positive impact to the community. Businesses can either champion a relevant social cause (*i.e. #metoo, Save the Ocean, Climate Change and Cultural Preservation*) or collaborate with another to push for a strong agenda together. We find this effective in humanising the brand by engaging with the local community and turn participants into brand advocates through responsible practices.

In fact, this trend will continue to grow where consumers will increasingly demand greater communal consciousness from businesses.



adidas Runners Kuala Lumpur
Building communities by empowering fitness



Using key global moments to deliver an idea during the finale of Game of Thrones. We launched White Walker by Johnnie Walker in Malaysia by engaging with the media, whisky fans and pop-culture enthusiasts.



Technologies for PR

Analytics and Visualisation

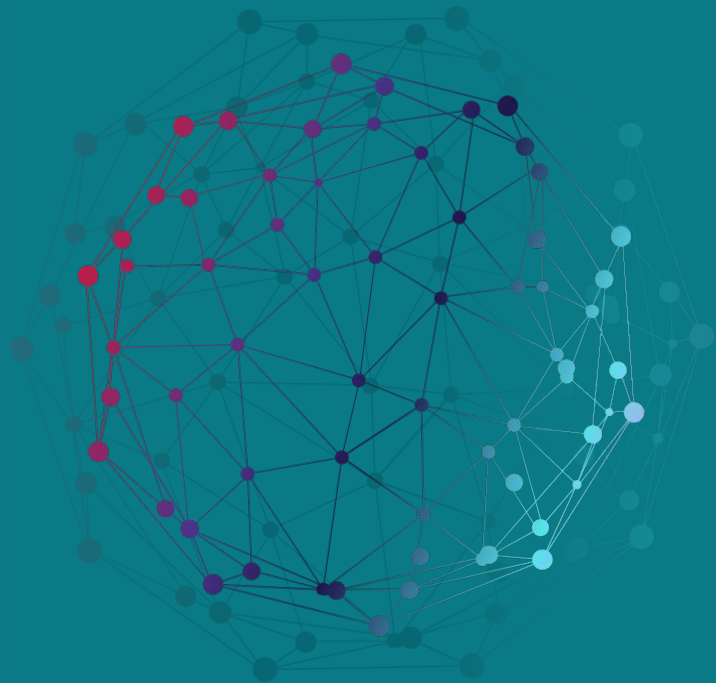
The age-old measurement of PR return-on-investment needs some improvements. With the availability of tracking and visualization tools currently available, we expect substantial utility of such solutions to support PR consultants to deploy data-informed campaigns.

Social Listening and Monitoring

Despite challenges in attaining public data due to increasingly strict data protection policies (GDPR and PDPA), social listening still proves to be a useful instrument in the consultant's toolkit. One can observe trends through multiple online sources while tracking sentiments through brand mentions. SLM is also useful for crisis monitoring and subsequently prevention.

Influencer Marketing Solutions

The ability to plan, track and analyze influencer campaigns is becoming increasingly important. With constant emergence of new influencers and micro-influencers, the right solution will play an important role in supporting marketers with credibility tests, planning and tracking capabilities. The only drawback is the hefty subscription fee associated with some comprehensive solutions.



Be Part of the Narrative

Leverage on upcoming key moments for 2020. Key global events include Tokyo 2020 and Euro 2020 present valuable opportunities for brands to create stories that enhances relevance. This can be localised by identifying local moments that can be adapted to reach out to specific audiences and provide a fresh new story angle for the brand.

In the business sector, focus areas for 2020 include industrialisation (IR 4.0), digital nation initiatives, economic growth at the back of the trade war and affordable housing.

Start-ups, technology and shifting foreign investments are also expected to make headlines in 2020 with the powers of the world taking a more protectionist stance resulting in economic activities spilling over to the Asia Pacific region,

Strengthen Relationships

Brands should continue to focus on building strong relationships within their circle of influence. This includes media, collaborative partners, influencers, governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Establish what the business can offer and use that as a foundation to kickstart the initiative. As part of Responsible PR, brands can and should actively engage with Government agencies and policy makers to co-deliver an optimistic voice in the face increasing business headwinds.

Expect more advocacy programs to emerge in 2020 as brands seek to strengthen personal relationships with their customers.

Digital & Tech

1

Customer centric and personalised experiences at every stage of the customer journey from recruitment, conversion and retention with speed and obtaining feedback through trackable initiatives and active consumer engagements.

Technology as an accelerant of speed. start setting aside budget on expansion of technology in the company not just for marketing but for better business operations

2

3

Multi-channel social. Best brands will speak like a human being.

Focus on critical metrics, NOT vanity metrics.

4

Customer Experience (CX)

Customer-centric and personalised experiences

By embracing marketing technologies, brands can gradually embrace a data-centric foundation to marketing.

The more innovative teams are beginning to work closer with IT to keep up with this shift as they gain better understanding of data as a prerequisite to design effective personalised campaigns. While the adoption of technologies continue to gain traction as a solution for freeing up time and unlocking cost efficiencies, true value is realised when we successfully fulfill the right needs of the customer at the right moment - resulting in stronger loyalty.

Notable barriers to adoption include high cost of investment, lack of support and expert knowledge in the local market. Those that have started their transformation journey earlier are beginning to reap the benefits of automation and insights across Sales, Service, Marketing and Commerce resulting in the ability to respond to the customers' unique needs, preferences, and behaviors in real-time.



Technology Stack

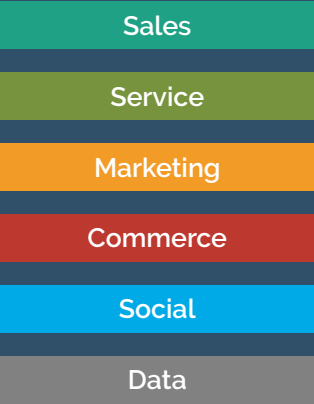
An accelerant of speed and data provider

5-10 years back, a solutions consultant would need to design and piece together multiple different tech providers to make up a technology stack within an organization to cut across the sales & marketing divisions.

Today, the likes of Oracle, Salesforce, and IBM are already making inroads in the marketing transformation space. They provide a comprehensive solution stack that can be scaled as the business grows such as marketing automation, AR/VR/MR, data platforms, AI, content marketing, chatbots, predictive analytics & intelligence, data visualization, audience data, ad-tech, and many others.

A solid tech stack will significantly improve efficiency and speed of campaign execution for better ROI which can't be achieved manually. With the right setup, brands would have access to intelligence that can be utilized to design data-driven marketing strategies.

Solutions



CX Stack

Multi-Channel Conversations

Bring "Social" back into Social Media

It's deplorable to see social media becoming a glorified ticketing system devoid of any human conversation taking place. We continue to observe the most effective use of social media to achieve good results is still the humanising element.

Easy to acknowledge, difficult to achieve. Mostly due to corporate sensitivities and brand protectionism. While that may be the case, we continue to advocate some risk taking and loosening to the policy noose to bring back some real conversation to social.

The best use of social can be seen on smaller or challenger brands. We constantly find inspiration from the artisanal guys as they treasure each interaction with their customer as a potential opportunity for long-lasting friendship.



- 1 Design each campaign with intended outcome by having clear goals and deep understanding of data
- 2 Optimise bottom funnel rather than top funnel (Conversion vs Awareness)
- 3 Track customer data across platforms to understand preference and behavior
- 4 Optimize campaigns according to insights
- 5 Rinse and repeat

“ Use **technology to connect between different functions** of a brand to streamline sales & marketing instead of working in silos.

Customer First - Meaning brands will need to invest effort in knowing their customers, online & offline, in order to be relevant to them.”

About Us

ROOTS Asia-Pacific

Singapore | Malaysia

ROOTS is a marketing communications company specializing in integrated marketing. Our teams are designed to provide best-in-class services in Digital, Communications, Activation, Brand & Creative. We support clients across the Asia Pacific region through our offices in Singapore & Malaysia.

DEX Ventures

Singapore | Malaysia

DEX is an integrated communications agency. We help clients transform their business through our Digital, Technology and Creative services in Analytics, CRM, Marketing Automation, Media Planning/Buying, Design & Development, Search and Commerce. We also support our network partners as the technology arm when delivering integrated marketing solutions.

ROOTS PR

ROOTS PR is an award-winning company with a vision – to deliver innovative communication solutions that strengthen relationships between clients and their stakeholders. We work with our network partners to deliver effective integrated communications solutions that tell enduring brand stories.

Technology Partners



pardot



marketing cloud

ORACLE[®]
MARKETING
CLOUD

Google
Partner



Google Data Studio

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