

A periodical newsletter from the Asian Federation of Advertising Associations

AdAsia 2025 in Beijing reviewed the impact of Advertising Innovations and Artificial Intelligence



The 34th AdAsia was held in Beijing last month. It started with a well-hosted welcome dinner on 23rd October and concluded with a farewell lunch on 26th October. AdAsia is known as the largest conclave for advertising, marketing and media professionals in Asia, and this year was no different.

The first day (24th October) was held in conjunction with the 32nd China International Advertising Festival (CIAF) and saw the presence of delegates from 32 countries. Over 1200 delegates, principally from China, were present on that day alone.

AdAsia was independent of CIAF on 25th and 26th October, when nearly 500 delegates participated, with half of them hailing from various international destinations. The theme of this AdAsia was **AI²: Advertising Innovation and Artificial Intelligence** and this was what made the Congress special.

Prominent speakers from USA, UK, Japan, Korea, China, Chinese Taipei, India, Russia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, etc., came to address delegates on this all-important topic. The consensus seemed to be that while Artificial Intelligence has made rapid strides, it still has some distance to cover. This provides not just a challenge to practitioners of advertising but also a huge opportunity. Different aspects of Artificial Intelligence were explained and discussed over the three days. The evenings saw some great entertainment and good food. The night of 25th October was billed as India Night to formally announce that AdAsia 2027 would be held in India.

A highlight of AdAsia has always been the presentation of the prestigious AFAA Awards which are presented every alternate year. This year, Srinivasan Swamy from India was inducted into the AFAA Hall of Fame, the biggest award that AFAA has to offer. The AFAA Special Merit Award went to Nack Hoi Kim of Korea. The AFAA Distinguished Eminence Award was awarded to Zhang Guohua from China. Honorary Life Memberships were offered to Raymond So and Bharat Avalani.

AdAsia also saw the presentation of the Changemakers for Good Awards in three categories for advertising and one individual, who have made a significant societal impact and this award went to Mr Ramesh Narayan from India. The other three were won by companies in Taiwan and these were dentsu Taiwan (for Advertising), Leo Taiwan (for Government) and Rhinoshield Taiwan (for Innovation).



The Grand Opening of AdAsia 2025



Mr Zhang declared AdAsia 2025 officially open and emphasized that innovation was a long-term discipline — one built through consistent effort, strategic vision and strong collaboration. He stated that the purpose of the event was to foster new ideas, encourage meaningful conversations, and explore opportunities and innovations that could shape the future of the industries.



**Zhang Guohua, President, CAA
Global VP, IAA
(Host of the Opening Ceremony)**

AFAA Chairman's Opening Address



Mr Srinivasan K Swamy delivered the AFAA Chairman's opening address, highlighting how creativity and technology have been jointly redefining marketing and communication. He invited the attendees to use this as an opportunity to learn collaboratively, exchange ideas and build bridges that may help make advertising a force for good, growth and global unity.



IAA Chairman and World President's Address



“Our purpose has always been to strengthen the marketing communications ecosystem ensuring it grows responsibly and inclusively, with integrity at its core. AdAsia embodies the same spirit of IAA-connection, creativity and collaboration across borders.

As you gather here, I urge you to exchange ideas, challenge conventions, and imagine new possibilities for our industry’s future. The future is very bright for our industry and with the technological advances across AI, we have amazing tools to fuel our creativity.

I thank you for your continued commitment to advance our shared mission. Together, we will keep driving huge growth for our industry and for the world around us.”

**Fredrik Borestrom,
Chairman and World President,
International Advertising Associations,
LinkedIn, UK.**

The Techno-humanist Approach: Human-Centric Innovation in the Age of AI Avatars



Too often, technology is celebrated for its novelty, while the deeper question remains unanswered: how do we ensure people remain at the centre of this transformation?

This address explores the techno-humanist approach, a framework that combines advanced AI pipelines with a human-centric philosophy. By placing empathy, ethics, and creativity at the heart of digital avatar design, brands can unlock a new level of engagement.

The techno-humanist approach demonstrates how innovation in AI avatars can strengthen — not replace — the human dimension of advertising, creating a future where technology inspires, unites, and delivers measurable business impact.



Aleksei Parfun,
Vice President,
Co-chair of RACA AI Committee,
RACA, Moscow.

From Metrics To Meanings, Humanizing Intelligence



‘Humanizing Intelligence’ explores how AI is reshaping consumer research by moving beyond static metrics into more dynamic understanding. With advances in AI, we can now simulate scenarios, test ideas rapidly, and generate insights that go beyond the limits of conventional methods.

The People Model from dentsu shows how AI can be used to model and reflect patterns of human behavior across diverse populations. The aim is not to replace traditional research, but to extend it—making it faster, more flexible, and more adaptable to the pace of change.

By shifting from metrics to meanings, we can uncover broader perspectives, explore new possibilities, and design strategies grounded in a more complete view of how people interact with brands and society.



The Fluid Brand-Agility in an AI-driven World



For a vision of an integrated future, look to China. Its super-app ecosystems demonstrate a world where social discovery, influencer content, and instant commerce are a single, frictionless experience.

The lesson is clear: remove barriers between inspiration and action.

The future belongs to agile, empathetic brands built on value-exchange.

Our task is to harness this disruption, moving from simply selling to creating belonging and building the most resonant brands of tomorrow.

To thrive, companies and agencies must shift from broadcasting messages to delivering seamless utility and immersive experiences.



Chris Reitermann,
President, WPP Greater China, and
CEO, Ogilvy APAC & Greater China.

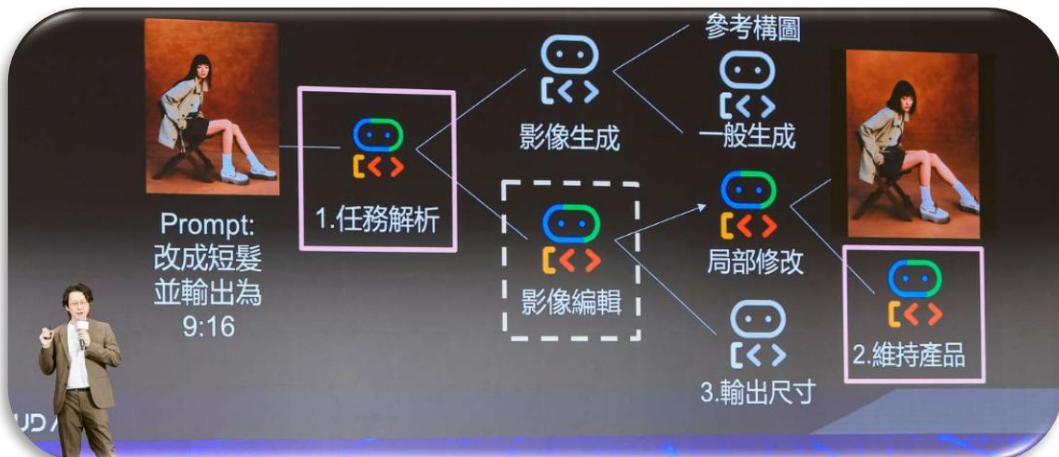


Culture and Connects at AdAsia 2025





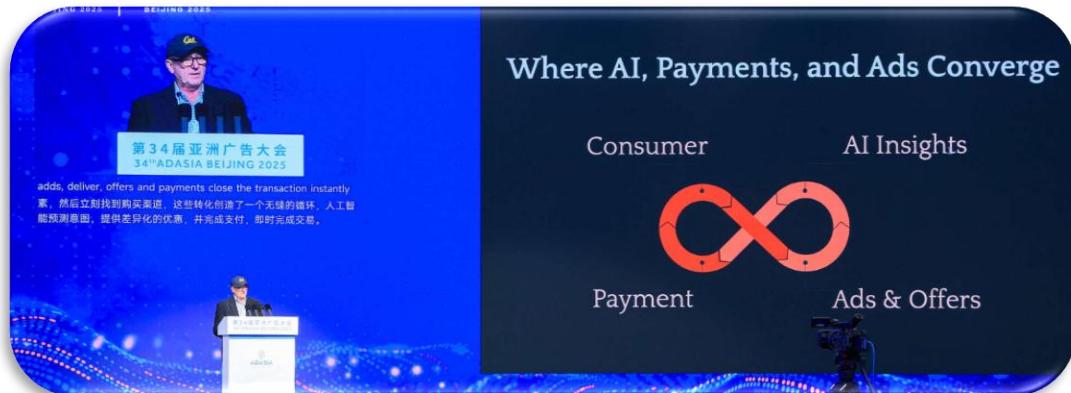
AI Innovative Vision for Digital Marketing Creative



The need is to integrate AI capabilities into marketing workflows to ensure a balance between technological efficiency and the irreplaceable human touch of creativity and emotional intelligence. AI is fast transforming every aspect of the creative lifecycle from ideation to execution and analysis to actionable solutions. With extensive experience in startups and cross-industry collaboration, I have built digital platforms that have generated over 10 billion user engagements and tens of millions of downloads.



From Ad to Pay: How AI-Driven Payments Are Redefining Customer Experience and Advertising



AI, payments, and advertising are converging to create seamless, personalized commerce experiences. This session explored how real-time personalization, embedded payments, and predictive advertising are reshaping consumer journeys.

With Asia leading innovation, we'll uncover opportunities, challenges, and future trends driving the next generation of frictionless commerce.



Daniel Chatelain,
Partner, Bridge 2
Silicon Valley, CA, USA.

From AI to AX: Design Experience Beyond Technology



Today, mastering AI gives companies a competitive edge.

But tomorrow, the real game-changer will be AX: the AI Experience. The future advantage won't come from simply applying technology, but from creating AX that connects meaningfully with advertisers, agencies, and consumers alike.

Yet, the greatest barrier is not technology — it's resistance from people and organizations. AI becomes AX only when embraced and put to work.

In the end, the true key to AX lies in collaboration and synergy between advanced AI and humans.



Creative Impact: Consistency vs Chaos vs Speed



In a media world full of noise, it turns out the boldest move you can make is staying the course.

This presentation, drawn from the Cannes Lions 2025 Creative Impact content stream, unpacks the key trends that prove just how powerful consistency, integration, and repeatable creative ideas can be, particularly when you set the right pace for your campaign.



AdAsia Special 2025

The highlight of AdAsia has always been the presentation of the prestigious AFAA Awards every alternate year.



**Srinivasan K Swamy
being inducted into
the AFAA Hall of
Fame.**



**Zhang Guohua
receiving the AFAA
Distinguished
Eminence Award.**



Nack Hoi Kim receiving the AFAA Special Merit Award.

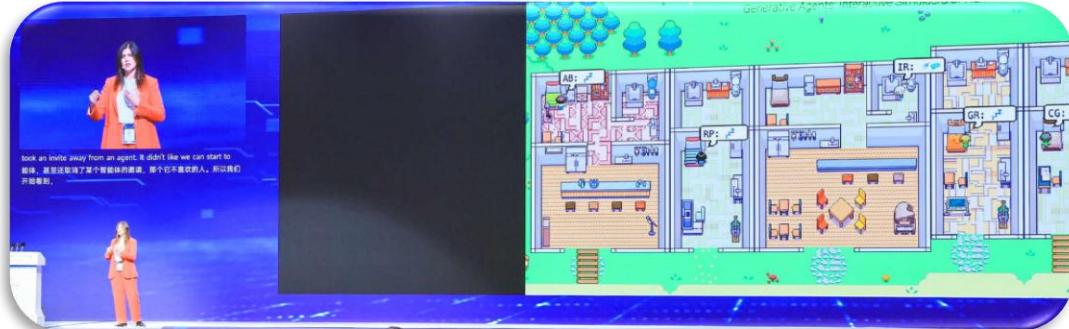


Raymond So receiving the AFAA Honorary Life Member Award.



Bharat Avalani receiving the AFAA Honorary Life Member Award.

Generative AI for Communications Design



The question to be addressed: how organisations must rethink the function of design to unlock the full potential of AI-powered transformation — particularly within Marketing and Communications.

Helen shared her perspectives on the evolving relationship between machines and humans — between creators and audiences. She delved into the practical applications of Generative AI in revolutionising how organisations engage with customers, employees, and other businesses.

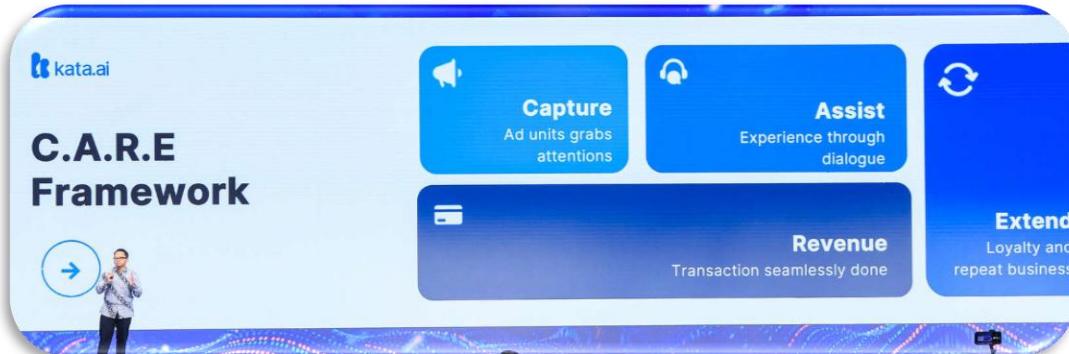
Drawing from her PhD research, she examined the shifting roles and responsibilities of marketers in this new era and offered actionable strategies for leaders to adapt design frameworks, methodologies, and mindsets — to ensure design remains a vital driver of relevance, impact, and innovation across the enterprise.



Helen Bentley,
Partner, Studio + UK&I,
Ernst & Young Ltd, London.



AI Agents in Advertising: From Conversations to Conversions



Businesses leveraging AI-powered WhatsApp campaigns have reported an average increase of 62% in leads generated, with conversion rates outperforming other channels (+53% versus SMS, +61% versus email, and +87% versus apps).

Beyond acquisition, AI Agents also help address retention challenges, reducing customer churn from 64% to 51%, while driving 54% productivity gains. Marketers further benefit from measurable ROI improvements, with an average +61% uplift in return on ad spend (ROAS) and a 22% increase in order value, underscoring how intelligent conversational engagement directly impacts the bottom line.



Lost in numbers



The advertising industry has long been saturated with data, yet uncertainty still lingers about what truly drives results. Artificial Intelligence is beginning to change that equation, moving us from guesswork to precision by enabling real-time optimization of media allocation, audience targeting, and creative testing. With AI, personalization can happen at scale, transforming generic campaigns into individualized experiences that resonate more deeply with consumers. Some pertinent questions: when AI makes decisions, who is accountable? How do we balance automation with creativity? What safeguards do we need for privacy, trust, and fairness? The future of advertising is not AI versus humans, but humans and AI working together, where data-driven insights amplify rather than diminish creative vision. With AI, we have a better chance to make every dollar count.



Ivan Hadywibowo,
Founder & CEO,
Future Creative Network, Jakarta.



Leading for Impact: The CEO's Role in an AI-Driven Era



The business world is moving from automation to autonomy, with Agentic AI expected to become a strategic asset driving C-suite decisions. Despite widespread AI integration, most senior executives lack confidence in AI fluency due to complex models and unclear ROI.

Hansa Cequity addresses this through the **AI Discovery framework** that democratizes data literacy and reveals tangible productivity gains.

This customer-centric consulting framework includes Varta, an LLM-powered agent assistant that has achieved double-digit AHT optimization and high conversion lift for clients.



Neeraj Pratap Sangani,
CEO, Hansa Cequity, India.



DigiAsia 2026 Preview



The mission of DigiAsia is to create the world's largest digital creative innovation platform and serve as a bridge between the digital industries of Asia and the world.

By integrating humanities and technology, blending creativity and innovation, and through sharing and learning, experiencing and exchanging, DigiAsia aims to inspire digital elites in Asia to continuously innovate, create, and venture for a better human life.

DigiAsia attracts global attention, providing Asia's digital industries with opportunities to gain exposure on the international stage and elevate into international brands.

We hope that DigiAsia can stimulate innovation, research, and development in the industry and contribute to Asia's leadership in global digital industry and innovation entrepreneurship trends!



AdAsia 2027 Preview



AdAsia is all set to come back to India in 2027, marking the event's return to the country after a 16-year gap.

At an Exco meeting of AFAA held at Kuala Lumpur on May 2nd 2025, it was unanimously decided that India would host the widely acclaimed AdAsia in 2027.

Many members fondly remembered the AdAsia Jaipur in 2003 and AdAsia Delhi in 2011.



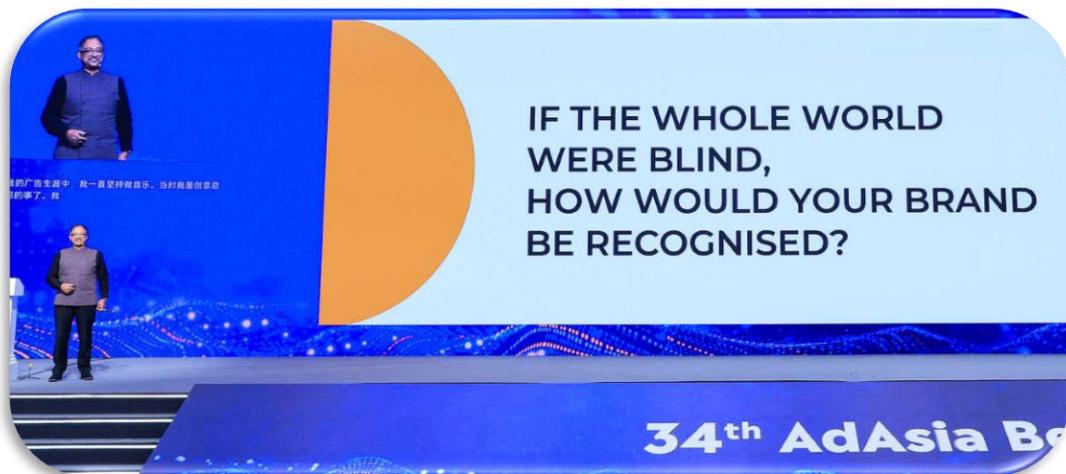
**Ramesh Narayan,
Chairman,
Advertising Council of India.**



Warm Felicitation of AFAA Leaders of the Delegation



MOGO® IS THE NEW LOGO-the power of the Musical Logo in the Digital Age!



BrandMusiq has gone on to create 'MOGOs®' for iconic global brands such as Mastercard, 7UP, Kraft Heinz, etc., as well as several Blue Chip Indian brands, including Asian Paints, Vistara, HDFC Bank, Zomato, and Air India Express.

Rajeev shared how a musical logo goes far beyond recall to become a powerful asset for brand identity in the digital age.

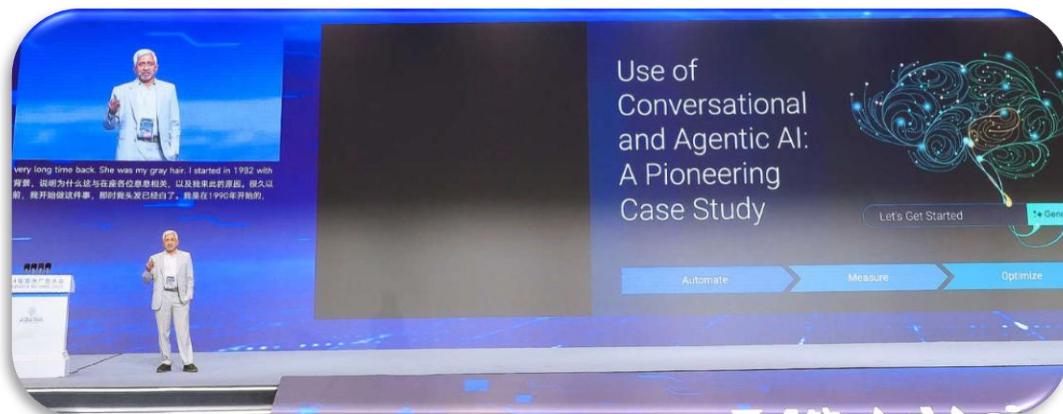
He explored how sound can create deeper emotional connections, enhance brand recognition across platforms, and play a central role in shaping the way consumers experience brands today.



**Rajeev Raja,
Founder and Soundsmith,
BrandMusiq, India.**



Billion dollar hole: Using AI to make expensive advertising



Boosting Ad Performance with AI: Create, Convert, and Measure Success

AI is making waves in marketing and advertising. It's especially useful for creating content, generating leads, converting customers, and analyzing data. Real-world examples show big boosts in branding and revenue for small to mid-sized businesses in sectors like healthcare, beauty, and wellness. Thanks to conversational AI and publicly available models, businesses are thriving. TrueLark.ai is a successful real-world case study of the effectiveness of AI and the virtuous cycle between creation, conversion and measurement of advertisement effectiveness.

Don't miss out on the AI revolution!

Start leveraging AI today and help businesses thrive!



Artificial Intelligence and AI agents



While in 2017, way of thinking about AI had been evaluated as a newborn child, in 2025, AI has become an irreplaceable companion that helps to overcome a wide variety of needs of a modern marketer. At the current state, we possess the possibilities of working with data analysis, customer journey mapping, creative production, campaign management, digital targeting and software development using AI. These new ways of working transform the marketing process, build a new way of business development and redefine the HR practices in marketing-related businesses.

Russian advertising specialists have gained a unique experience of implementing both global and local AI tools into the marketing process, which could uncover new opportunities of working with AI to improve the efficiency of marketing, as proven by case studies over the last two years.

Sergey Efimov,
CEO of Resolution,
Co-chair of RACA AdTech Committee,
RACA, Moscow.



Strong Brands, Strong Growth: Winning the AI Era with AI



Chinese brands' content-driven e-commerce strategies lead globally, and are deeply integrated into almost every aspect of consumers' daily life, which drive the growth of value of brands in the media and entertainment sector.

Chinese brands are rapidly advancing the frontier of AI adoption, not just in consumer experiences, but across industrial and creative ecosystems.

From streamlining manufacturing to transforming branded content and marketing strategy, AI is enabling faster, smarter decision-making.



Sirius Wang,
Managing Director,
Product & Operations,
KANTAR Greater China.

Changemakers for Good



AdAsia also saw the presentation of the **Changemakers for Good**

Awards in four categories:

Industry Leader — Significant Societal Impact - Mr Ramesh Narayan

Advertising — Unfreeze My Rights - dentsu Taiwan

Government — Paper Organs Case Film - Leo Taiwan

Innovation — Rhinoshield Circular Blue - Rhinoshield Taiwan



Changemakers for Good

RHINOSHIELD Taiwan
receiving the AFAA
Changemakers for Good
“Innovation” Award.



Leo Taiwan receiving
the AFAA Changemakers
for Good “**Government**”
Award.



dentsu Taiwan
receiving the AFAA
Changemakers for Good
“**Advertising**” Award.



Mr Ramesh Narayan
receiving the AFAA
Changemakers for Good
“**Industry Leader**” Award.



Survival Code in the AI Era: “Explosive Growth Between the Giants.”



“Survival Code in the AI Era: Explosive Growth Between the Giants”

refers to the strategies individuals and smaller organizations can use to grow amidst the rapid and AI-driven growth of dominant tech giants.

Understand both the technical potential of AI and its practical business applications to help bridge the gap.

The core premise is that agility and specialization, rather than scale, are key to success in a market where AI is widely accessible.

Utilize accessible, pre-trained models and cloud AI platforms to tackle business problems without massive upfront investment.



Steven Zhao,
Founder & CEO,
PixelBloom (AiPPT.com),
China.

Building the AI-First Agency: Road from GenAI to AGI



Every brief, every strategy, every creative iteration, and every campaign result should feed into a private LLM fine-tuned on the agency's unique IP, client history, and best practices.

The model does not just store information-it asks questions, learns from SMEs across departments, validates outputs, and accelerates execution.

The result? Agencies shift from one-off campaigns to continuous, data-driven storytelling at speed and scale.

Costs fall, accuracy improves, and human creativity is amplified rather than replaced. With the right private AI foundation, agencies can unlock the next era of advertising – where IP becomes intelligence, and intelligence powers growth.



Surya Kotha,
CEO, 4sightAI,
USA.

Human Craft Meets AI: Dentsu's Creative Thinking Model



How can we teach AI to learn human creativity?

Should we archive the masterpieces of advertising from the past?

Or should we systematize creative thinking methods?

At Dentsu, we believe that the essence of creativity lies not in the final idea itself, but in the thinking process that leads to it.

Which insight did the creator focus on to trigger a perception change?

Which expression was chosen to best communicate that insight?

By verbalizing these invisible steps — the paths of thought that creators have traditionally taken unconsciously — and training AI with them, we sought to transfer the true craft of creativity.



Takuma Kawada
Creative Director,
CX Creative Center,
DENTSU INC., Japan.

Agentic AI: Future is now



If traditional AI was all about automating repetitive tasks, Agentic AI is taking over decision making and actions from humans. Like virtual team members, AI agents are here to help us create impactful work and take care of actions so humans can focus on what humans do best: creativity and craft.

This talk explores the rise of AI Agents in marketing, and how marketers can leverage them to drive scalable programs and tangible results.

It looks at the evolution of AI, and the role Agentic AI already plays in the marketing landscape, and the key factors that make AI Agents so powerful.

**Tuomas Peltoniemi,
Managing Director,
Design and Digital Products,
Accenture Song, Singapore.**



Social-First x Intelligence-Driven — Scaling "Content Seeding" into a Global Growth Engine



"Social-First x Intelligence-Driven — Scaling 'Content Seeding' into a Global Growth Engine" describes a sophisticated marketing strategy that prioritizes social media as the primary channel for initial content distribution, while leveraging data and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to optimize and expand this distribution across global markets.

This approach emphasizes Social First — creating and distributing content with social networks in mind from the start that is intelligence-driven, relying heavily on data informed decisions; scaling through Content Seeding: strategic placement of content across various online platforms, with an ultimate goal to move beyond tactical campaigns and establish a systematic, automated efficient process to help brands scale.



Wang Bin,
Head of Operations at INLY International,
INLY Media Co., Ltd., China.



Gala India Night



