

ETIKA,
*Breaking Creative
Boundaries
to Remain on Top*



etika

ETIKA BEVERAGES
SDN BHD

etika

Today's world is nothing short of chaotic when it comes to marketing and communications. This is because consumers are ever more skeptical of advertisements due to being constantly bombarded with an almost infinite amount of information daily. While this has been a heavy burden on the marketing and advertising sector, the team at the Etika Group of companies ("Etika") is thriving.

"It is only in the face of greater adversity that one can push boundaries and create something new," said Santharuban Thurai Sundaram, Etika's Vice President for Marketing. Every member of the Etika family is constantly thinking up of ways to be noticed and to deliver on the company mission, which is: Happiness Made Simple.

Throughout its over 50 years of establishment, Etika has seen its fair share of peaks and troughs. However, keeping its mission in mind, the company has never ceased to remain vigilant by keeping close to its consumers and changing strategies, as well as investing in new ideas and mediums to suit the general population.

In fact, Etika has remained as one of the leading Halal beverage companies by ensuring that everything, from its product development to television commercials, takes into account what consumers want to taste and see. Each new addition to its product portfolio is a result of thorough consumer research - their feedback on the drinks and what they hope to enjoy in a new product variant.

The result of this consumer-centric approach is Etika's growth and leadership position. Today, Etika is a team of 2,000 strong and delivers a wide variety of beverages to suit all sorts of consumer categories from enjoyment and celebration, to health and wellness.

They have over 18 brands including renowned brands like Pepsi, 7Up, Mountain Dew, Revive Isotonic, Lipton, Tropicana, Bleu Mineral Water, Goodday Milk, Dairy Champ, WONDA Coffee, Calpis and other popular beverages. The



**Mr Santharuban Thurai Sundaram,
Vice President Marketing,
Etika Sdn. Bhd.**

company also boasts one of the widest distribution networks comprised of over 40,000 customers across Malaysia.

Etika has expanded beyond Malaysia's shores to 30 countries including Singapore, Vietnam, Brunei, Philippines and Indonesia. The company has achieved so much success that it has continued to hold the exclusive PepsiCo franchise for Malaysia and it recently given the same license to distribute all PepsiCo brands in Singapore.

Best sound practices in marketing have continued to propel Etika to greater heights and the company continues to set new benchmarks in creative marketing annually. In fact, their credibility in producing an array of well-established brands and owning several franchises has led them to be one of the most recognised entities within the region as well as a partner of choice for other various retailers, restaurants and more.

Know your consumers and connect with them

Consumers are King at Etika and this mindset of placing consumers' needs first is the core of the company's success. One of the ways in which the company instills this practice is through its various trainings, work opportunities and incentives. These help to ensure that employees are always engaged in constant exposure and skill enhancements.

Etika also offers various incentives that keep employees motivated to do their best, especially in the areas surrounding improvements in product promotions, service to the customer, marketing, product differentiation and more.

Aside from employee engagement activities, the company also relies heavily on its research to gain continuous feedback from consumers. They also conduct multiple surveys, thorough data analysis, focus groups and other studies to gain a deeper understanding of what consumers prefer.

A significant amount of effort is spent on product development. Etika spends about one to two years conducting thorough research on a particular product before its launching, to ensure that there is a market large enough to be viable.



Feedback from customers led to a successful invention of two new milk beverages at Etika, namely, Goodday UHT Honey Milk and Goodday UHT Green Tea Milk.

The next step is finding out what consumers are really interested in. Knowing the latest topics of conversation, buzz trends and interest spheres of their consumers enable Etika to create campaigns that will resonate with the consumers because they are relatable. An example of such a campaign is the 2017 Dairy Champ advertisements that featured Dato' David Arumugam and Dato' Seri Vida as the brand ambassadors.

"In our experience and studies, we know that Malaysians favour Dairy Champ in their drinks and desserts such as Teh Tarik and Air Batu Campur (ABC). Hence, we chose two famous icons that Malaysians respect and love, then put a creative spin on their images and made it the focal point for our Dairy Champ ads," Ruban explained.

Indeed, the famed Dairy Champ ads caught the attention of many passing drivers the minute it went on billboards nationwide. The ads made a huge impact on social media and became the talk-of-town as Malaysians were humoured by Dato' Vida's ABC tiara and Dato' David's frothy afro hair.

"Our campaigns are impactful because we have remarkable products that meet the needs of consumers. We simply utilise the power of branding and marketing to further boost our product positioning. Such ads and promotions, like the ones for Dairy Champ, have brought a sales increment of 100% to 200%," he added.



Unique and innovative approach towards traditional channels

While most consumers today are heavily reliant on digital channels, there is still a large pool of Malaysians that pay attention to traditional mediums, especially newspapers. The challenge here is to find a way to get consumers excited about reading the papers. In 2014, Etika created a unique and attractive campaign that would change the way marketers used newspapers as a communication channel.

“We wanted to introduce WONDA to Malaysia’s coffee lovers and we thought hard about the best way for consumers to really savour the great aromatic coffee flavour. That’s how we came up with the Five Senses Campaign, which is an activation centred around how consumers would use all five senses when experiencing a delicious serving of coffee,” said Ruban.

Etika collaborated with the New Straits Times through this campaign, where over the course of 5 days, the paper offered something to stimulate a particular human sense.

On the first day, the newspaper had a WONDA coffee can pop-up centerspread that was aimed at the first sensory, touch. On the second day, there were new 3D ads that came with a pair of glasses that let consumers experience new sights.

On the 3rd day, the paper came with a singing advertisement that delighted consumers with its sound. On the fourth day, the papers stimulated readers’ sense of smell as Etika had included the fragrant coffee aroma into the newspapers.

“Finally, on the 5th day, there was a coupon that allowed readers to redeem their WONDA Coffee at the local 7-Eleven stores for only RM0.10, allowing consumers to complete their Five Senses’ journey with great-tasting coffee,” explained Ruban.

The Five Senses Campaign was again another highly successful activation due to its core principals of being extremely relevant to consumers. The campaign was also successful because it enabled WONDA to directly engage and connect with consumers by stimulating their senses.

The ability to directly connect with consumers and understand how they interact with brands is another key strength that Etika possesses. Consumer interaction is a deciding factor when considering the channel mix that Etika uses to promote its brands. It also means having to diversify their approach by working with partners such as Light Rail Transit (LRT) or PLUS Highway to really get their brands directly into the hands of consumers.

An example of such a collaboration was with the New Pantai Expressway, where road users could show a can of WONDA Coffee to enjoy a toll-free journey towards their destination. Aside from WONDA coffee, Etika annually collaborates with the highways during festive seasons for their Tropicana, Revive and other brands to keep drivers awake, hydrated and happy on their long road trip home.

“In all of our campaigns, the underpinning motivation to put consumers’ needs first never changes. Whether our consumers are celebrating or just need the extra boost at work, we tailor our campaigns and messages to suit the situation,” states Ruban.

The best minds at work

Etika believes in investing in its people and empowering them to give their best. This is especially important to maintain the level of motivation required to deliver on their company's mission and goals.

The company is made up of highly charged and very motivated individuals who aim to always give their best. They are mostly from Generation Y and working with them means having to maintain a youthful mindset as it helps expand their creative potential.

Etika values their opinions and always ensures that their perception is taken into account when formulating a business strategy. Etika also maintains an open liberal work environment, which encourages them to speak their minds and to actively contribute.

Etika believes that the company's success lies in avoiding complacency. While the employees have experienced many successes and received various accolades, they don't allow themselves to get comfortable and continue to maintain a challenger's mindset so that they'd continue to be critical thinkers and strive for the best.

The group's success has definitely been evident through its numerous award-winning initiatives for 2015, 2016 and 2017. The long list of over 100 awards includes the Malaysian Media Awards, Spark Media Awards, Effie Awards, Promotion and Marketing Awards, Putra Brand Awards, Markies Awards, Marketing Excellence Awards and Appies Awards; all in recognition of the excellent marketing campaigns executed for WONDA, Calpis, Mountain Dew, Dairy Champ and Godday Milk brands.

Having a common goal is extremely crucial in every business. Etika has been this successful because they all keep one thing in mind and that is to ensure that they deliver 'Happiness Made Simple' to their own team and their consumers.

