
The Big Ideas. The Real Conversations. The Digital Day 2025 Recap.

What's next in marketing? It's already in motion.

These aren't passing trends. They're powerful shifts, reshaping how we lead, connect, and create in a world moving at superfast speed.

Top 10 Takeaways from The Digital Day 2025

1. **Balance is the new bold**

Marketing today is a twin-pace race. Blend performance with brand-building to grow fast and last.

2. **Stop silo-thinking. Start system-thinking**

Digital isn't a separate discipline. It's all marketing now. Integrated strategies are where the magic happens.

3. **Gaming is not a niche. It's now**

With esports stars rivalling traditional celebs, the gaming world is a cultural force marketers can't afford to ignore.

4. **Data is powerful, but only with purpose**

First-party data matters, but collecting it without clarity just adds noise. Start with intention, not just infrastructure.

5. **AI can scale, but humans still steer**

AI is transforming media and measurement, but human oversight is essential to protect creativity and brand integrity.

6. **Measure what truly matters**

Going beyond 30-day tracking reveals what short-term metrics often miss. Insight lives in the long tail.

7. **Content is a co-creation**

User-generated content and social commerce are rewriting the rules. When done

authentically, they deepen engagement and trust.

8. Connection is your competitive edge

In a world of automation, creating intentional human moments within teams, with customers, and in your message matters more than ever.

9. Culture is not a backdrop, it's a strategy

Don't just follow trends. Shape them. Cultural connection drives emotional engagement and business effectiveness.

10. Make marketing everyone's business

Break down internal silos, and bring marketing closer to every function. The future is collaborative, curious, and courageously customer-first.

Across the day, we heard from voices pushing boundaries, challenging norms, and sharing what's working *and* what's not in today's ever-evolving marketing landscape. Each conversation offered something distinct: a lens, a spark, a shift in perspective. Here's a closer look at the ideas that left a mark.

SESSION 1: FRAME THE CHALLENGE: Breaking the Performance Addiction

Presented by: Rica Facundo, Managing Editor APAC, WARC

Summary: In a world obsessed with quick wins and lower-funnel metrics, this session delivered a timely intervention - part data, part provocation, and fully relevant to every marketer navigating Asia's superfast terrain. Rica challenged us to rethink our approach to growth, urging a shift from short-term sprints to brand-powered endurance.

1. **Marketing needs dual momentum:** Performance may win the sprint, but brand powers the long game, and both are essential to sustained growth.
2. **Asia's performance bias is a problem:** Despite being a growth engine, the region over-prioritises short-term wins, risking long-term brand erosion.
3. **Brand and performance aren't rivals, they're reinforcements:** When integrated, they unlock a multiplier effect, boosting ROI by up to 90%.
4. **Measurement needs a reset:** Most marketers stop tracking too soon. Extending measurement windows reveals significantly more value.
5. **Culture isn't cosmetic, it's commercial:** Deep cultural connection outperforms surface-level localisation and drives emotional and business results.
6. **Platform thinking beats campaign bursts:** Long-term brand worlds create consistency, cohesion, and compound impact across channels.
7. **More channels = more power:** The sweet spot is 6–7 channels working together, not in silos, to deliver integrated effectiveness.

Bottom Line: Don't just chase clicks - build meaning. Brand and performance aren't in competition; together, they create compounding impact. And in a region that moves fast, it's the marketers who learn to pace themselves wisely who will run further, faster.

Explore the sample report [Here](#), and if you'd like to dive deeper, feel free to reach out to the WARC team at asiapacific@warc.com

SESSION 2: PLAY TO WIN: Gaming Matters

*Presented by: **Jasper Donat**, Co-Founder & CEO - Branded and **Jarrold Tham**, Co-Founder / CFO / Chief Creative Strategist - TALON*

Summary: This session pulled back the curtain on the powerhouse potential of gaming as a marketing platform, one that's fast-growing, culture-rich, and deeply interactive. Jaz Tham, Co-Founder of Talon Esports, reminded us that gaming isn't just entertainment—it's a community, influence, and a creative force marketers can no longer afford to ignore.

1. **Gaming is the largest entertainment vertical globally:** Bigger than music and movies combined, with audiences reaching 200 M+ for events like League of Legends finals.
2. **Gamers are creators:** Esports players are not just competitors, they're influencers with massive followings and real-time audience engagement.
3. **Brand partnerships in gaming must feel earned:** Authenticity is non-negotiable. Forced or corporate messaging risks a serious backlash from this highly discerning audience.
4. **Collaborate early and integrate deeply:** Brands like Visa and Vaseline succeeded by co-creating campaigns with gamers, not just sponsoring after the fact.
5. **Culture matters:** Campaigns that use gaming language, subculture references, and genuine brand fit cut through. Those that don't, don't.
6. **Think beyond the screen:** Gaming activations often extend into physical fan events, tournaments, and merchandise, driving real-world engagement.
7. **Hong Kong has untapped potential:** While local gaming events have underdelivered in the past, international-style tournaments and cross-border collaborations could unlock a new era.

Bottom Line: Gaming isn't just a trend, it's a cultural shift. For brands bold enough to show up with relevance, respect, and the right partners, this space offers not only reach but resonance.

SESSION 3: MEDIA REALITY CHECK: The Digital Advertising Debate - Big Questions. Straight Answers. Your turn to weigh in.

*Presented by: **Laura Quigley**, SVP APAC - Integral Ad Science (IAS), **Johnny Ng**, Vice President, Strategy and Growth, Hong Kong - GroupM, **Karen Ho**, MD of Greater China - Assembly Global and **Philip Chau**, Regional Director, Marketing Performance & Operations - Sun Life*

Summary: This session felt more like a live pulse-check of today's media realities—where data, AI, social commerce, and brand vs performance all converge in an evolving, sometimes chaotic, marketing landscape. With candour and clarity, our panellists unpacked what's working, what's not, and what's still on everyone's "must-figure-out" list.

1. **First-party data is essential, but purpose matters more than volume:** Collect with intent, not impulse. Knowing where it fits in the customer journey is more powerful than owning everything.
2. **Social commerce is still evolving in Hong Kong:** If you're playing the long game, it's worth preparing now. The brand–performance sweet spot lives in this space.
3. **User-generated content doesn't dilute brand, it can amplify it:** When done right with structure, creativity, and clear guardrails, it builds trust and reach in equal measure.
4. **AI enhances efficiency, but human oversight is non-negotiable:** The platforms are running fast, but brands must still steer the ship, especially when outcomes impact brand equity.
5. **Brand vs performance isn't a duel, it's a duet:** The most effective campaigns align KPIs, clarify metrics early, and plan both together from the start.
6. **Attention is gaining ground, but isn't mainstream (yet):** There's an appetite to move beyond vanity metrics, but more education, experimentation, and standardisation are needed.
7. **Organisational structure can be a blocker or a breakthrough:** When teams, KPIs, and budgets are siloed, integrated marketing becomes nearly impossible. Alignment is the new superpower.

Bottom Line: Today's media strategy isn't about choosing sides; it's about seeing the whole board. The future belongs to marketers who can blend data with instinct, AI with human judgment, and brand with performance—all while keeping one eye firmly on attention, integration, and impact.

SESSION 4: BANKING ON INNOVATION: Transformation in the age of AI

*Presented by: **Haymans Fung**, Global Head of Wealth and Retail Bank Marketing - Standard Chartered and **Sophie Devonshire**, CEO - The Marketing Society*

Summary: This fireside chat offered a grounded, behind-the-scenes look at what it really takes to lead marketing in times of rapid change. From building AI capability to managing cross-functional tensions, it was a masterclass in balancing commercial focus, creativity, and human connection.

1. **Leadership starts with clarity:** Understanding the business strategy by market, by objective, is the anchor for all meaningful marketing decisions.
2. **Human-first leadership is still your biggest superpower:** Know your team, their strengths, and what lights them up, and give them space to grow. Passion fuels performance.
3. **Internal influence is half the job:** From compliance to tech to non-marketing stakeholders, speaking the right language across the org is essential to make ideas stick.
4. **Innovation needs integrity:** Rolling out AI isn't just about speed, it's about responsibility. Embedding governance from the start ensures purpose and compliance scale together.
5. **GenAI isn't plug-and-play:** Adoption takes time. Training your team to prompt effectively and aligning tools with brand voice and privacy standards is a work-in-progress worth investing in.
6. **The biggest bottleneck is time:** Ironically, the tools built to save time still require time to learn. Building internal capability is key, even if it means slowing down to speed up later.
7. **Know your priorities. Then say no:** Not every opportunity is worth chasing. Focus on initiatives that move the needle; for the customer, for the brand, and for the business.

Bottom Line: Leadership in the age of AI isn't just about tech fluency, it's about brave prioritisation, internal storytelling, and knowing when to push back. Haymans reminded us that marketers don't need to do everything. We just need to do the right things brilliantly.

SESSION 5: BALANCING TECH & TOUCH: Finding the Human Spark in Our Digital Future

*Presented by: **Eslinda Hamzah**, Executive Coach and Facilitator - Just Add Water*

Summary: This interactive workshop invited us to pause, connect, and remember that behind every algorithm, every campaign, and every data point, there's a human being. Through a playful, thoughtful experience, we were reminded that meaningful marketing begins with meaningful moments between people.

1. **Connection is the starting point:** We're always in a relationship, whether in boardrooms or Zoom rooms. Presence is a practice.
2. **Play unlocks perspective:** Drawing someone you don't know (yet) builds empathy, sparks curiosity, and reminds us how we instinctively read energy before data.
3. **We judge less when we engage more:** A few quiet minutes observing someone without tech distractions reveals more than scrolling ever could.
4. **UGC of the human kind:** Authentic storytelling happens when we allow people to be seen—as they are, not just as they present themselves.
5. **Digital may accelerate, but human interaction deepens:** High energy, real conversation, and eye contact are still the most powerful forms of engagement.
6. **Intentional moments matter:** In a world of instant messages and AI assistants, choosing to connect on purpose is a radical act of leadership.
7. **Harmony > Hype:** Balancing tech and touch isn't a nice-to-have - it's essential to building culture, trust, and sustainable creativity.

Bottom Line: In a world racing toward automation, the marketers who create space for intentional, human connection won't just stand out, they'll lead differently. This session wasn't just a reminder to stay human - it was a beautifully lived example of it.

You can find the showreel, contact details and the QR code to the podcast via this [link](#).

CLOSING ADDRESS: SO, WHAT NOW? The Ditch and Do Playbook

*Presented by: **Andreas Krasser**, CEO - DDB Hong Kong*

Summary: This final session brought everything full circle with humour, honesty, and a refreshing challenge to pause, reflect, and rethink. Less about chasing what's shiny, and more about choosing what truly works, the closing address called on us to not just learn, but to act with purpose.

1. **Ditch digital as a silo. Do treat it as marketing:** If your customer doesn't think in channels, why should you? Integration isn't optional, it's overdue.
2. **Ditch algorithm-chasing. Do earn real attention:** It's not about gaming the system, it's about saying something that matters to someone who actually cares.
3. **Ditch trend-hopping. Do shape culture:** Stop mimicking the moment. Lead with meaning, and let your brand help move culture forward.
4. **Ditch the data flood. Do find meaning in the mess:** Data isn't the answer. It's the raw material. Ask better questions. Apply human judgment.
5. **Ditch performance obsession. Do build real desire:** Brand and performance aren't enemies, they're a symphony. And they play best together.
6. **Ditch short-termism. Do design for longevity:** Stop over-celebrating clicks and dashboards. Real growth happens with patience and perspective.
7. **Ditch silos. Do build shared ownership:** Marketing is everyone's business - brand, performance, culture, attention. The best results come from alignment, not isolation.

Bottom Line: The real future of marketing won't be built on what we add—it'll be shaped by what we choose to let go. This wasn't just a call to rethink strategy. It was a reminder that our best work begins when we're bold enough to stop, simplify, and focus on what truly matters.

Ready to start the conversation?

→ Use this recap to pressure test your 2025 strategy. Or forward it to your peers and network to make sure we're getting ahead!