

Navigate Now & Next 2026

Thursday 11 June, 8:00-2:00pm, Conference Hall Dubai Knowledge Park

Session Summary: AI-Dhabi Do: 5 ways Experience Abu Dhabi is maximising the power of AI

Speaker: Ghadeer El Khub, Creative, Social and Digital Department Director, Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi

Ghadeer El Khub showed how Experience Abu Dhabi is using AI to move at the speed of culture, without losing the soul of the destination. Her session made one thing very clear: AI only works when it is fed by strong data, brave creative judgement and a deep understanding of communities.

5 Key Points.

1. Social intelligence should come before the creative idea. Experience Abu Dhabi uses real-time signals across markets, languages and communities to understand what people are already talking about, then decides where the brand has a credible role to play.
2. AI is useful for speed, but human judgement gives the work taste and relevance. Agents can flag moments around Taylor Swift, Drake or Bieber, but creative teams still decide whether the brand should join, what it should say and how far it can go.
3. The best AI output is trained on the brand's own world. Ghadeer showed how destination assets, cultural details, the Abu Dhabi falcon, the Louvre Abu Dhabi roof and approved brand references helped make AI content feel specific to Abu Dhabi, not generic.
4. Social agility needs trust inside the team. Moments move too quickly for long approval chains, so teams need clear standards, strong shared judgement and the confidence to test ideas before the conversation has already passed.
5. Stan showed how AI can turn an asset into an entertainer. By giving a T-Rex a voice, personality and platform-native behaviour, the team made science feel fun, built interest in the Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi and measured success through reach, sentiment and audience response.

3 Takeaways

- Cultural speed needs preparation. Fast social work only happens when the data, assets and approval route are ready before the moment arrives.
- AI-generated content still needs brand discipline. The smallest visual or tonal detail can make the difference between generic content and a brand-owned idea.
- Community response should guide the next move. Positive and negative sentiment can teach teams what to build, change or retire.

2 Action Items

- Create a live social signals process that turns trends into a clear 'why should our brand join this?' decision.
- Build an AI prompt and asset bank using your own brand symbols, tone, product truths and approved references.

1 Memorable Quote

“AI can help you create relevance at speed”

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Session Summary: Augmented Intelligence At Scale: Inside The House Of AI Agentic Hub

Speaker: Hadi Lotfi, Managing Director, Plan.Net Group

Hadi Lotfi challenged the room to stop treating AI as a side tool and start seeing it as part of the operating model. His session focused on how brands can move from individual AI use to connected systems that help teams work smarter, faster and with better control.

5 Key Points.

1. AI is shifting from a support tool into the way work gets done. Hadi's strongest point was that AI is moving inside marketing workflows, from briefing and planning to production, activation and learning.
2. Individual prompting is not enough to make a business faster. A person using AI may save time, but the bigger gain comes when the organisation connects teams, data, decisions and approvals into one smarter way of working.
3. Brand memory is becoming a serious advantage. AI needs access to approved assets, product data, claims, rights, tone of voice and performance learnings, so it can create work that sounds like the brand and stays commercially safe.
4. Agentic systems should help teams move from reports to decisions. Hadi made the case for tools that do more than explain what happened, helping teams identify the next best move across strategy, creative development and media activation.
5. The operating model matters more than the tool stack. AI only creates value when use cases, data quality, ownership, governance and human oversight are clear, otherwise teams risk faster output without better decisions.

3 Takeaways

- AI readiness is not just a tech question. It is a team, data and decision-making question.
- Brands without clear, machine-readable memory risk confusing AI and weakening their own voice.
- The strongest teams will not just prompt AI. They will design, delegate and govern agents.

2 Action Items

- Map your current marketing workflow and identify where AI can remove friction, improve decisions or connect teams.
- Create a brand memory base that includes product data, assets, tone, rights, claims, past work and performance learnings.

1 Memorable Quote

“AI is no longer just supporting the workflows. It's important to know that AI is becoming the workflow.”

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Session Summary: If It Doesn't Exist, Build It: How AI Helped Me Get My Idea Built

Speaker: Aly Abed, Founder, SifNow

Aly Abed shared a refreshingly practical story about turning a personal frustration into a live product idea. His session showed how AI can help non-technical founders move from a rough idea to something people can see, test and believe in.

5 Key Points.

1. The idea worked because it came from a real daily frustration. Aly saw parking as a matching problem: unused spaces on one side and people searching for extra parking on the other. That simple but clear insight is what led him to build SifNow, to bridge a real gap in the market.
2. AI helped turn a rough thought into something people could see. Tools like Lovable, Emergent and Claude allowed Aly to create early flows, landing pages and product drafts without waiting for a full technical build.
3. A prototype changes the quality of every conversation. Instead of asking developers, partners or supporters to imagine the product, Aly could show the journey, gather feedback and help people respond to something tangible.
4. AI did not replace the expert team. Aly used it as a playground and a communication tool, then brought in developers to rebuild, secure and improve the product so it could move closer to a reliable beta version.
5. Speed still needs testing and commercial focus. SifNow's next stage depends on fixing issues, building supply through partnerships and proving that the marketplace can attract enough hosts and renters to work at scale.

3 Takeaways

- AI is powerful as a communication tool. It helps teams see the same picture earlier.
- A prototype can turn interest into action because people respond better to what they can click, test and question.
- Non-technical founders still need technical review, especially for security, back-end quality and ownership of the source code.

2 Action Items

- Before your next product or campaign meeting, use AI to create a simple mock-up, flow or landing page that shows the idea.
- 2. Set a clear human review stage for technical, legal and security checks before moving any AI-built draft into production.

1 Memorable Quote

“People buy what's in front of them”

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Session Summary: Hyper-Personalization Over Hype: De-Averaging the Automotive Customer Journey with AI

Speaker: Hossam Al Saeed, GM Marketing, Nissan Middle East

Hossam Al Saeed brought AI down to earth with a detailed look at how Nissan is using it across automotive marketing. His session showed how a high-value, emotional purchase can become more personal, efficient and connected when data, creative and delivery work together.

5 Key Points.

1. The average car buyer no longer exists. Hossam showed that a Patrol shopper, a GTR fan and a family SUV buyer all need different messages, assets, CRM journeys and showroom experiences, guided by behaviour rather than broad personas.
2. Nissan's approach connects creation, delivery and optimisation. AI supports strategy workshops, production, ad serving, CRM, showroom handover and reporting, turning separate marketing tasks into a more connected customer journey.
3. AI can make strategy sessions more valuable before anyone enters the room. By gathering data, shaping early insights and turning meetings into action points, teams can spend less time on background and more time on decisions.
4. CGI with AI gives automotive marketers speed, confidentiality and flexibility. Nissan can create assets without shipping vehicles, manage sensitive launches more safely, reduce production costs and adapt visuals by market, colour or customer need.
5. Personalisation should continue all the way into the showroom. Hossam's strongest example was using online behaviour and lead data so sales teams can greet customers with knowledge of the vehicle they have already been researching.

3 Takeaways

- Stop building around broad personas. Use real behaviour and signals to shape the customer journey.
- AI can improve efficiency, but only when data quality, creative quality and brand strategy are connected.
- Personalisation should continue into the physical experience, not stop at the online ad

2 Action Items

- Audit one customer journey from first signal to sales follow-up, then identify where data drops or repetition happens.
- Build an AI-assisted asset plan that allows faster adaptation across markets, colours, formats and customer needs.

1 Memorable Quote

“Success lives in the connection and the strategy, not in the tools.”

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Session Summary: The Power Of Premium Media

Speaker: Terry Kane, Managing Director MEA, The Trade Desk

Terry Kane shifted the conversation from AI hype to the value of quality media. His session challenged marketers to look beyond cheap reach and last-click measurement, and to ask where their media money is really going

5 Key Points.

1. Programmatic needs more transparency from start to finish. Terry reminded marketers that every ad dollar moves through multiple layers between buyer and publisher, so brand teams need to understand where value is being taken and what they are buying.
2. The open internet is still a major attention space. Social platforms matter, but audiences also spend time across premium publishers, connected TV, audio and other channels where brands can reach people in quality environments.
3. Measurement can push teams towards the wrong choices. Last-click thinking often rewards the final touch and misses the value created by earlier brand exposure, trusted environments and media that builds memory before conversion.
4. Premium media is about quality of environment, not a fancy label. The strength of the publisher, the trust of the platform and the way the ad appears all influence how people feel about the brand message.
5. Cheap reach can be a false economy. Low-cost impressions may look good in a dashboard, but Terry challenged marketers to ask whether that reach protects brand trust, supports business goals and creates attention worth paying for.

3 Takeaways

- Cheap reach can become expensive if it weakens trust or attracts low-quality attention.
- Premium media needs to be judged by platform strength, environment quality and business outcome.
- Brand teams should understand enough programmatic language to challenge partners with confidence.

2 Action Items

- Review your media plan and identify where decisions are being made mainly on last click or low cost.
- Ask your agency to test premium open internet channels, including audio and connected TV, with clear success measures beyond clicks.

1 Memorable Quote

“Cheap is not the right answer for anyone's solutions or problems in this room”

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Session Summary: The Death of the Funnel: Why the Next Generation of Brands Will Be Built in Real Time And what AI democratization means for marketers

Speaker: *Serene Haddad, Head of Innovation & AI, Nestle Middle East*

Serene Haddad closed Navigate with a sharp challenge to one of marketing's most familiar models. Her session argued that the traditional funnel is losing power because consumers no longer move neatly from awareness to consideration, purchase and loyalty.

5 Key Points.

1. The funnel still helps marketers plan, but it no longer reflects how people behave. Serene argued that consumers skip stages, move backwards, start with purchase and let other people's content shape the journey in seconds.
2. Discovery has shifted from brand control to people-powered influence. Creators, communities, reviews and culture now introduce products in more natural ways than many planned campaigns, which means brands must earn attention in the moments people already trust.
3. Validation now happens before the brand gets to explain itself. Comments, ratings, Reddit threads, creator reviews and peer signals can shape belief quickly, so every touchpoint needs to support a clear and credible brand story.
4. AI raises the standard for marketing judgement. When anyone can create more content, faster, the advantage moves to marketers who know what the brand stands for, which signals matter and where distinctiveness can be protected.
5. The best brand audit may be letting AI read everything your brand has published. If the output feels inconsistent, unclear or generic, the issue is not the tool. It is the signals the brand has been sending.

3 Takeaways

- Consumers do not wait for a brand-led journey. They discover, validate and buy in moments shaped by other people.
- AI will reward clear thinkers and expose weak brand thinking faster than before.
- Brand consistency is no longer only what you write in a strategy deck. It is what every signal says when viewed together.

2 Action Items

- Run an AI brand scrape exercise across your recent content, PR, social posts, claims and local market adaptations.
- Rebuild your content plan around discovery, validation, purchase and advocacy moments, rather than funnel stages alone.

1 Memorable Quote

“The funnel didn't die because we failed at being great marketeers, consumers just stopped using it”