

The Big Ideas. The Real Conversations. The Future of Marketing in Motion.

Navigate: Now & Next Hong Kong brought together senior marketers, brand leaders, and platform experts to explore the growing tension between business growth, execution complexity, AI adoption, and long-term brand building. Across the three sessions, speakers unpacked how marketers are navigating fragmented media environments, pressure for measurable ROI, shifting consumer behaviour, and the rapid rise of AI-powered tools. While technology dominated many conversations, the strongest consensus throughout the event was that growth still depends on human judgement, creativity, emotional intelligence, and the ability to make confident decisions in uncertain environments.

SESSION 1: THE NOW - The CMO Tension: Cutting Through Complexity to Drive Growth in APAC

- **Olivier Kuziner**, Managing Partner, APAC, Ekimetrics (Moderator)
- **Haymans Fung**, Global Head of Wealth and Retail Bank Marketing, Standard Chartered
- **Edward Bell**, General Manager Brand, Insights and Marketing Communications, Cathay Pacific
- **J. Oliver Braunoeder**, Marketing Director, APAC, Lacoste

Summary:

The opening session explored the growing complexity facing modern marketers. Speakers discussed the pressure to deliver short-term results while still investing in long-term brand building, the overload of data without clear decision-making frameworks, and the challenge of operating across fragmented markets and organisational silos. AI was recognised as an important enabler, but the discussion reinforced that strategy, focus, and leadership alignment still matter more than tools alone.

5 Key Takeaways:**1. Complexity is the new normal**

Marketers are now operating across fragmented media ecosystems, increasing data overload, changing consumer expectations, and stronger pressure to prove ROI.

2. Short-term pressure is growing

Business demands are increasingly pulling teams toward immediate performance, often at the expense of long-term brand investment.

3. More data, less clarity

The issue is no longer lack of information, but the ability to prioritise what matters and make confident decisions.

4. AI supports, humans decide

AI can improve workflows and execution, but creativity, emotional understanding, and judgement still sit with people.

5. Leadership skills are shifting

Empathy, simplification, collaboration, and decision-making are becoming more important than technical expertise alone.

Bottom Line:

The marketers who perform best today are not necessarily the ones with the most data or the biggest budgets. They are the ones who can cut through complexity, stay commercially focused, and make clearer decisions faster than everyone else.

SESSION 2: THE SHIFT - Proof of Human: Marketers vs. Consumers on AI

- **Andreas Krasser**, CEO, Omnicom Advertising Hong Kong

Summary:

This session focused on how AI is already reshaping marketing operations, creative production, personalisation, and customer engagement. The presentation explored how consumer journeys have become more fragmented and less linear, while creator-led content and messaging platforms are increasingly influencing purchase decisions. The conversation moved beyond AI hype and concentrated on practical ways marketers can use AI to scale relevance, improve efficiency, and respond faster to changing behaviours.

5 Key Takeaways:

1. AI is now operational

The focus has shifted from experimentation to real-world use cases that improve performance and efficiency.

2. Journeys are fragmented

Consumers now engage through multiple short moments of attention rather than traditional funnels.

3. Personalisation is expected

Tailored experiences across channels and formats are now considered standard by consumers.

4. Creators drive influence

Creator-led content is playing a growing role in discovery, trust, and purchase behaviour.

5. Messaging is becoming commerce

Platforms like WhatsApp are evolving into key customer engagement and conversion channels.

Bottom Line:

AI is rapidly becoming part of everyday marketing operations, but the real advantage comes from using it to create relevance at scale. Brands that move quickly, personalise intelligently, and work naturally with creators will stay closer to how people actually consume content today.+

SESSION 3: THE NEXT - From AI Potential to Marketing Reality: What Comes Next

- **Claire Hui**, Client Solutions Director, Meta

Summary:

The final session brought the conversation back to the role of human judgement in a rapidly automated world. The discussion explored how marketers can avoid becoming overly focused on short-term metrics and efficiency while still building future demand and emotional brand value. It also examined how organisations need clearer decision-making structures, stronger internal trust, and more confidence in long-term brand investment as AI becomes part of everyday operations.

5 Key Takeaways:

1. Humans still shape meaning

Technology can scale execution, but people still define priorities, creativity, and emotional relevance.

2. Brands need long-term thinking

An over-focus on conversion risks weakening future demand and brand strength.

3. Alignment drives growth

The strongest organisations align teams around shared business goals and outcomes.

4. Decision-making matters more

The ability to simplify complexity and act confidently under uncertainty is becoming critical.

5. Marketing still drives growth

Despite changing tools and platforms, marketing's core role remains building future demand.

Bottom Line:

As automation becomes more common, distinctly human skills become more valuable. Strategic thinking, emotional intelligence, creativity, and the ability to build trust will increasingly separate strong marketers from average ones.
