MMA IMPACT

VIETNAM 2026



13 SESSIONS · 7 TRENDS · 6 CASES

When AI is everywhere, what makes a brand win?

From the missing KitKat truck to how brands keep customers in the age of AI: what was shared on stage in a single day.



HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS HANDBOOK

KitKat: $25,000 into $1.3 million
A 12-tonne truck vanishes, and the Vietnam team turns it into its own story (per the speaker).

Oreo × delivery: 263% of target
The milk-tea break, 13 shops and a recipe showdown (per the speaker).

La Vie "Mineral Clock"
Slipping into Hanoi mornings, the 5 to 7 a.m. window.

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OVERVIEW

Seven trends of MMA IMPACT Vietnam 2026

MMA IMPACT Vietnam 2026 is a marketing event organized by MMA Global on 29 October 2026 at GEM Center, Ho Chi Minh City, with 13 sessions: keynotes, case studies and panels. These are the seven ideas that came up most often across the sessions.

1 **From campaigns to infrastructure**
Brands build things they can reuse: shared standards, rapid-response teams, and value that compounds from one program to the next.

2 **The more AI, the scarcer real human insight**
AI appears in almost every award-winning campaign, so what sets work apart is the truth about consumers.

3 **Win at moments and habits**
Rather than inventing a new occasion, pick a moment already in the customer's day and show up right on time.

4 **Local culture is an advantage**
Effective campaigns start from the material of Vietnamese everyday life, not from "adding a red lantern" for show.

5 **Partners and ecosystems multiply impact**
Good partnerships share a goal, and go beyond "my logo, your audience".

6 **Speed paired with decision discipline**
Be fast to react, but set evidence thresholds and kill rules before spending money.

7 **Challengers and incumbents**
Hundreds of new brands are redividing the market, pushing big brands to speak smaller, faster and closer.

This handbook covers: headline numbers, a map of the 13 sessions, seven trends, six detailed cases, working frameworks, lessons from the panels, ten themes of award-winning campaigns and the 2027 predictions.

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KEY NUMBERS

The event in numbers

All figures below are as presented by the speakers at the event.

$25,000
KitKat Vietnam's budget for responding to the missing truck

$1.3 million
earned media value in 20 days (about 52x the budget)

263%
sales of the Oreo delivery-platform campaign against target

7/13
shops kept selling Oreo drinks after the campaign ended

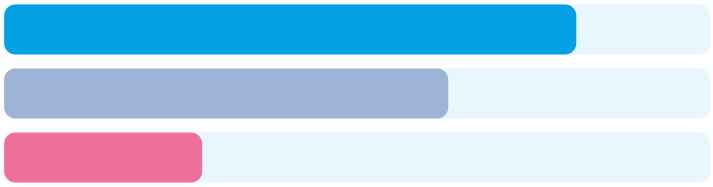
8.4 million
students, teachers and parents trained in digital safety skills

10 years
Samsung has been #1 in smartphone market share in Vietnam, consecutively

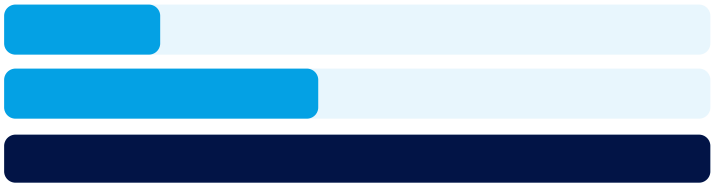
BUDGET VS. EARNED MEDIA VALUE (KITKAT, USD)



VIETNAMESE TRAVELLERS AND AI (%), AGODA 2026 TRAVEL OUTLOOK



HOW MANY TIMES FASTER QUICK COMMERCE GROWS THAN OVERALL E-COMMERCE (ABOUT 17 TO 18% A YEAR)



Based on data from a delivery platform presented at the event.

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MAP

13 sessions on one page

1	CASE	**The truck carrying about 400,000 KitKat bars goes missing** Turning a supply-chain incident into a talked-about campaign through speed and humor.
2	CASE	**Oreo × delivery platform** Bringing the twist-and-dunk habit into delivered drinks, with 13 shops.
3	TALK	**Ultra-fast delivery shopping (quick commerce)** The on-demand buying trend and the 4S framework for brands to keep up.
4	CASE	**La Vie and the "Mineral Clock" in Hanoi** Tying the brand to the 5 to 7 a.m. window to build a habit.
5	CASE	**Coca-Cola and "celebrating small wins"** Under pressure, Gen Z is invited to celebrate even the small things in their day.
6	CASE	**"Không Một Mình" ("Not Alone") program** Teaching children digital safety through a song and a dance challenge.
7	CASE	**Samsung Galaxy** From the lesson "a great launch, but users drifted away" to three cultural platforms.
8	KEYNOTE	**The fragmenting market** More than 300 new brands; the DIY framework: Design, Influence, Yap.
9	KEYNOTE	**"The era of counterweights"** The more AI, the more human value rises; four principles and four cases.
10	PANEL	**CEO panel** What to invest in, prioritize and stop over the next 12 to 18 months.
11	PANEL	**Brand and performance** Two jobs that feed each other, not opposites; examples from consumer goods, finance and electronics.
12	KEYNOTE	**Advocacy: "silent trust"** The gap between "trust" and "recommend", and how to build it like infrastructure.
13	TALK	**Last two sessions: consumers and the SMARTIES awards** "Easy is right"; ten themes of award-winning campaigns and the 2027 predictions.

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TREND 1 OF 7

From campaigns to infrastructure

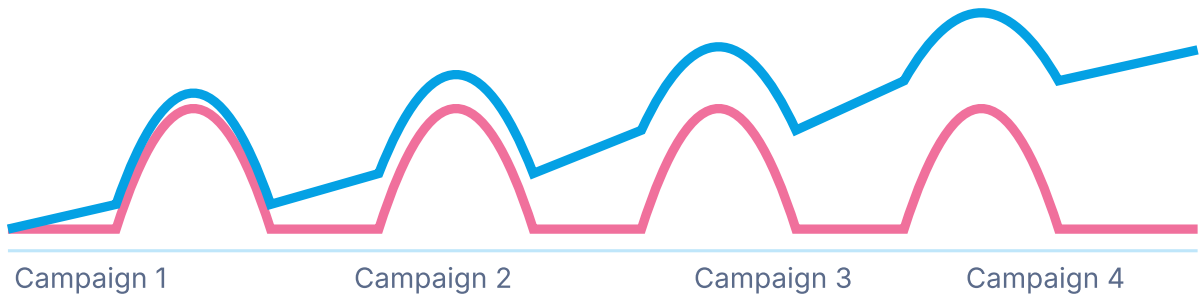
What was shared

One speaker asked the lunchtime audience: who has already picked a place to eat? Very few hands went up. Then: this month, have you recommended that place to anyone? Even fewer. That gap was called "silent trust": customers trust and choose the brand, but do not speak up for it.

To close that gap, a multi-brand group does not treat advocacy (customers and creators voluntarily recommending a brand) as a campaign, but builds it like infrastructure: 10 brands share one standard for choosing creators, 4 agencies work from a single brief, and brand, agency and social teams sit in one room to plan instead of passing files by email. Per the speaker, the result was about $1 million in earned media value in one year for one brand.

THE ADVOCACY SESSION'S "CURVE TEST"

● **Blue line:** the baseline rises after each campaign, meaning an asset is being built. ● **Pink line:** the baseline falls back to where it started, meaning voices are only "rented" burst by burst.



A conceptual illustration, not real data. After each campaign, does the brand's baseline fall back or end up higher?

Other examples from the day

- **KitKat** brought brand, legal and agencies into one room for on-the-spot approvals, and drew on 19 years of brand equity in Vietnam.
- **Samsung Galaxy** chose three cultural areas and kept at them for years, so each program adds to the results of the one before.

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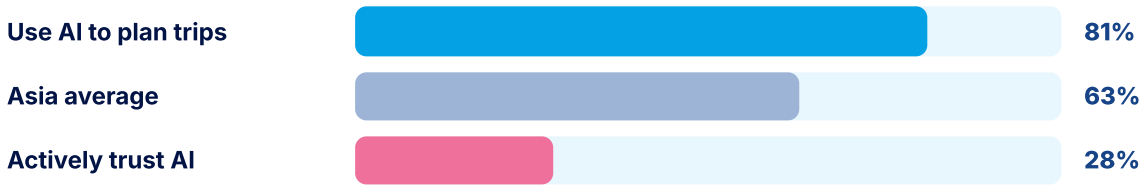
The more AI, the scarcer real human insight

What was shared

In the analysis of SMARTIES award-winning campaigns, the speaker said that in 2025 judges still got excited whenever an entry mentioned AI. In 2026, AI appears in nearly every entry, so it is no longer a differentiator. He gave an anonymous example: AI found that the target group is most active at 11 p.m. and likes scrolling reels, but only a human can answer why they do it. The session's 2027 prediction: as AI grows, real human insight will become scarce.

The "era of counterweights" keynote told it this way: the speaker asked AI where to eat in Ho Chi Minh City and got so many suggestions that he dropped them all. The real-world numbers say the same.

VIETNAMESE TRAVELLERS AND AI (%), AGODA 2026 TRAVEL OUTLOOK



Nearly 4x
vinyl record production value in Japan from 2019 to 2024 (about 2.6x the units, per RIAJ)

1 in 10
urban Vietnamese young people switched to a "brick" phone

76%
say they will quit at least one social media platform

WHY MENTION VINYL, "BRICK" PHONES AND QUITTING SOCIAL MEDIA?

All three make the same point: when everything is fast and smooth, some young people deliberately seek out things with "friction". Vinyl means choosing a track, placing the needle and flipping the side, unlike one-tap streaming. A "brick" phone and dropping platforms both mean fewer notifications. For brands: an experience that asks a little effort from the customer can still be loved.

THE KEYNOTE'S FIVE "COUNTERWEIGHT" PAIRS: WHEN... THEN...

When **everything is smooth**, **friction becomes valuable**.

When **everything is perfect**, **imperfection becomes interesting**.

When **everything is artificial**, **the human touch becomes worth more**.

When **everything is automated**, **agency and control become priceless**.

When **everything is personalized**, **belonging and meaning become important**.

Figures per the keynote speaker.

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TREND 3 OF 7

Win at moments and habits

What was shared

The La Vie representative opened with three numbers: each day a person receives about 10,000 pieces of information, remembers about 10, and focuses for only about 8 seconds. So a more durable approach is to attach to a moment that already exists in the day. Their line: don't create a new occasion, slip into an existing one. The habit formula has two parts: a cue, and an ecosystem that makes the behavior actually happen.

Competitors were also defined more broadly: not just other water brands, but everything that competes for the user's time, from films and concerts to sleeping in or exercising.

MOMENTS CHOSEN BY THE BRANDS

5 to 7 a.m.	April 4	After the 9-day holiday	Exam season	Midnight in World Cup season
La Vie in Hanoi	Coca-Cola chicken combo	Broken rice (cơm tấm)	Beef noodle soup (bún bò) "to get through exams"	Football-watching combo

Why the "fast delivery" moment matters too

A delivery platform said about 60% of people who buy food on the platform come back, around 30 times a year on average; the beauty and health group sees about 40% coming back, around 8 times a year (per the speaker). Their example: with an important meeting coming up and a breakout on your face, people order right away instead of waiting for payday or a big sale. In urgent moments like this, brand loyalty wavers, and the brand that shows up at the right moment has a chance to become a new habit.

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TREND 4 OF 7

Local culture is an advantage

What was shared

The SMARTIES wrap-up session named what brands should avoid: "sticking a red lantern at the end of the frame", meaning adding cultural symbols for show. Per the speaker, winning campaigns act because they are genuinely relevant, not to look relevant. The KitKat session added a reminder: being globally famous does not automatically mean being locally relevant, so the Vietnam team had to tell the story in its own way.

TWO WAYS TO USE CULTURE

Stuck on for show

Adding traditional symbols or wording to an idea that has nothing to do with the audience. SMARTIES judges described this as the "red lantern" add-on.

Starting from real life

Starting from a concrete detail of everyday life: a broken-rice meal after a long holiday, a morning in Hanoi, a concert, the professional identity of Vietnamese people.

Examples from the day

- **Coca-Cola** opened with wordplay: in Vietnamese, "ăn" means both to eat and to celebrate. From there they tied the brand to specific Gen Z meals.
- **Samsung Galaxy** chose three cultural areas: music, health and national identity. For identity, they pointed to Vietnamese engineers who helped develop Galaxy AI for Vietnamese, then made the "Voices of Galaxy" program focused on Vietnamese people: a cardiologist helping people manage heart health, a teacher, and a ceramics artisan keeping a traditional craft alive.
- **"Không Một Mình" ("Not Alone")** replaced warnings with a song and a dance challenge, because children take it in more easily that way.
- **Kotex** (per the fragmenting-market keynote) tapped the belief that having a period at the start of the year is unlucky, speaking about something once treated as taboo; the brand's 2023 Tet campaign "Xui hay Vui" ("Unlucky or Lucky") is the nearest public example.

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TREND 5 OF 7

Partners and ecosystems multiply impact

What was shared

The SMARTIES speaker called the "my logo, your audience" kind of partnership the laziest, one that judges and consumers both see through. Award-winning partnerships share a goal, a common belief in a problem they want to solve, and a shared platform that resonates with the audience.

A TYPICAL ECOSYSTEM ACROSS THE CASES

Brand
Brings the idea and the name: Oreo, La Vie, Coca-Cola

›

Platform
Brings sales channels and data: delivery, e-wallet, electric vehicles

›

Seller
Brings places and real customers: 13 shops, over 500 shops

In all three cases, a third party brought something the brand did not have on its own.

Examples from the day

- **Oreo × delivery platform.** The starting point: Oreo noticed many shops were already selling drinks made with Oreo without the brand being involved. They invited 13 shops to create 11 new recipes across 622 points of sale. The most notable result: 7 of 13 shops kept selling after the campaign, with sales up about 25%.
- **La Vie** combined an e-wallet (54,000 breakfasts) and an electric vehicle company (40,000 morning rides) to bring Hanoians to a morning hangout spot.
- **Liquid Death × Depend (adult incontinence underwear, launched December 2024):** at a concert, nobody wants to leave mid-show for the restroom, so the pair said "enjoy the whole show, no breaks".
- **Kotex × delivery platform:** honoring female delivery drivers.
- **The multi-brand group** in the advocacy session said the hardest part is finding partners who share the goal, and that someone is needed to hold the shared standard across the whole group.

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TREND 6 OF 7

Speed paired with decision discipline

Two ideas that sound opposite appeared together: the KitKat session said "speed matters more than perfection", while the CEO panel said you need evidence before spending money.

What was shared

On the CEO panel, the head of a fried chicken chain explained how he decides to invest in or stop an idea. His concrete example: reviewing high-value promotions, he found that some needed nearly 50% incremental sales growth just to pay for themselves, so he cut them and moved the money to experience, flavor, limited-time offers and the passion points of young people such as music.

SIX STEPS FOR DECIDING TO INVEST OR STOP (CEO PANEL)

1. **Rely on hard facts** to judge every decision.
2. **Recognize confirmation bias** after putting in a lot of effort, it is easy to go looking for numbers that defend the campaign.
3. **Set the evidence threshold and kill rule before running** marketing and finance sit down and set them together.
4. **Measure with test-and-control store pairs** matched for similarity, with a sample large enough that big decisions do not rest on just a few stores.
5. **Check for cannibalization** does a promotion or new product really bring in extra customers, or just pull them from elsewhere?
6. **Beware of fast-moving numbers on the dashboard** are they bringing customers back for the long term, or just "renting" them with deep discounts?

Two other reminders from the panel

- **Livestreaming:** don't dismiss the channel, but count the total operating cost. Ad spend can be low while building a studio is very expensive.
- **"Easy is right":** a beverage group said 3 of its 4 brands grow 20 to 60% a year with almost no heavy ad spend, because they bring value to all four parties: consumers, sellers, the company and the community.

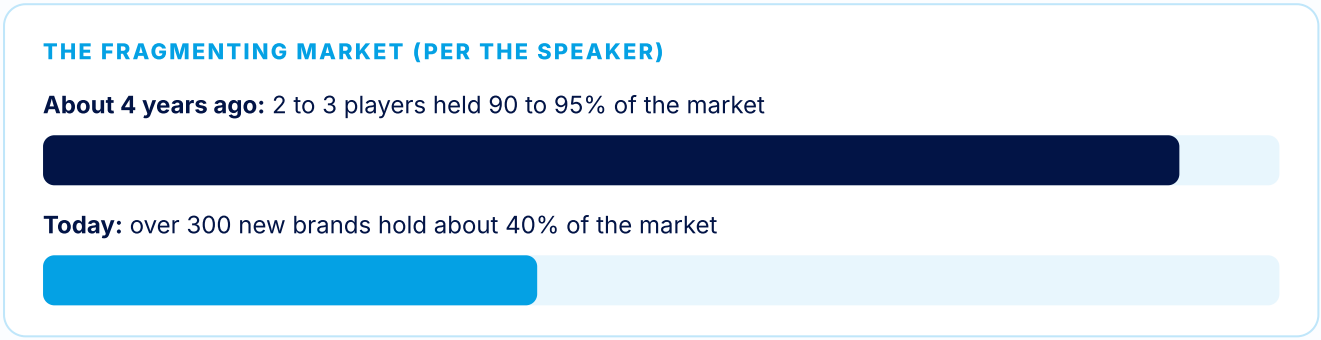
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TREND 7 OF 7

Challengers and incumbents

What was shared

The opening keynote was delivered by the head of a consumer goods group in baby and women's care. He said that about four years ago, their category had just 2 to 3 players holding 90 to 95% of the market. Now there are over 300 brands (local, Chinese, Korean and "insurgent" brands), and this new group alone holds about 40%.



The regional report the speaker cited points to three shifts: "insurgent" brands are taking share in most categories; consumers are less loyal; and founder-led companies decide faster. From there he proposed that big brands act like insurgents using the DIY framework: Design, Influence, Yap (creating content so others talk about you). The framework is explained in detail on the working frameworks page.

Brand and performance in this context

The brand and performance panel offered a compact view: performance makes a brand findable, while brand decides whether customers choose and trust it. According to one speaker, the impact of brand building usually shows after about 6 to 9 months. On the CEO panel, the MMA moderator also mentioned the "brand as performance" framework MMA had just announced: measuring a performance campaign and a brand campaign side by side to see how they affect each other.

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CASE 1 · RAPID RESPONSE

KitKat and the vanishing truck

In late March 2026, a truck carrying about 400,000 KitKat bars (about 12 tonnes) vanished on the road from Italy to Poland; the incident was reported by international media. Normally this is a crisis to handle quietly. KitKat chose the opposite: speak louder, and the Vietnam team made it its own story.

HOW IT UNFOLDED, AS TOLD IN THE SESSION

1. **Learn the news at the same time as the public.** The Vietnam team read the missing-truck story in online news at the same moment as everyone else, with no global guidance or dedicated budget.
2. **Choose speed.** Decided that "speed matters more than perfection" and owned the headline ahead of other brands.
3. **Form an "action team".** Brand, legal and all agencies in one room, approving at the table.
4. **Respond instantly.** An official announcement right on the homepage, and humorous social content in KitKat's own voice.
5. **Cancel other plans.** Stopped existing marketing activities to focus all effort.
6. **Leave it open on purpose.** No explanation, so the public speculated on its own and created more topics of conversation.
7. **Listen 24/7 and recruit ambassadors.** Hundreds of ambassadors split into three roles: detectives, skeptics and bystanders chatting about it.
8. **Link back to the brand.** The first brand ambassador in Vietnam, playing a "bodyguard protecting the KitKat shipment", to tie back to the "Break" message.

RESULTS (PER THE SPEAKER)



The speaker said the success rested on 19 years of brand equity and the humor of the category; not every brand can do this. Trends usually live only 2 to 3 days, so they tied it back to the "Break" campaign.

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CASE 2 · PARTNERSHIP

Oreo × delivery platform

Young people still know Oreo but no longer choose it the way they used to: milk tea has replaced biscuits in the break-time habit. The "twist, dunk, enjoy" ritual has changed too. Oreo's question: how do we win young people's milk-tea break?

It started with a discovery: many drink shops were already selling items made with Oreo, but the brand got no credit. Oreo partnered with a delivery platform and invited 13 shops to create 11 new recipes across 622 points of sale, gathered into one collection in the app.

THREE PHASES OF THE CAMPAIGN

1. Twist
Launch the collection and spark first-time trial.

›

2. Sip
Turn ordering into a game: shops "battle" each other, and users vote with their orders.

›

3. Leave no crumbs
Honor the winning shop and keep the rhythm; a 3D Grab vehicle cruising the streets drew real-world discovery into app purchases.

RESULTS (PER THE SPEAKER)

263%
sales against target (26,098 cups)

41.9 million
impressions

9 million
users reached

7/13
shops kept selling after the campaign, with sales up about 25%

THE 4S FRAMEWORK APPLIED TO THIS CASE

Solution
Oreo as an ingredient for the milk-tea break

›

Stunt
The shop showdown and the 3D vehicle on the streets

›

System
Every recipe orderable right in the app

›

Scale
Collect data and develop recipes for the next round

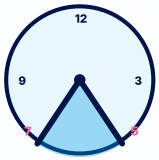
The speaker recommended running at least 12 weeks so the data is usable, and observed that many brands do Solution and Stunt well but lack System and Scale.

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CASE 3 · HABIT

La Vie "Mineral Clock"

Mornings in Hanoi are usually rushed: traffic jams, deadlines, a hurried cup of coffee. Few people remember to drink enough water. La Vie wanted to become part of that morning.



The La Vie logo has two mountain peaks. They drew those peaks as clock hands pointing to the **5 to 7 a.m.** window, called the ideal time to replenish minerals and recharge: the "La Vie Mineral Clock".

The three steps they described: create a cue, build the habit, live the ritual. The clock appeared on millions of bottles, along with personalized wake-up messages from three KOLs.

THE MORNING ECOSYSTEM (PER THE SPEAKER)



100,000+
visits per day to the morning hangout spot (morning hub)

Participants could also ride a "morning bus" to watch Hanoi wake up (people exercising, greenery by the lake, breakfast streets) and take home a real clock.

The session gave no specific revenue figures; the result was described as turning an untapped morning occasion into a new consumption frequency. Their closing line: sometimes the best way forward is to slow down.

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CASE 4 · MOMENTS

Coca-Cola "celebrating small wins"

The speaker described a Gen Z that grew up under a lot of pressure: COVID during school, inflation on entering work, many holding 2 to 3 jobs, and AI now raising questions about work. But they always find their own way to have fun and celebrate even small things. The brand took that as its insight.

OCCASIONS CHOSEN FOR "CELEBRATING"

April 4
A chicken combo deal.

After the 9-day holiday
Broken rice (cơm tấm) for marketing and agency teams, to "get over the post-holiday laziness".

Exam season
Beef noodle soup (bún bò) "to get through exams", a treat for students at a partner venue in person.

World Cup season
Whenever the favorite team plays, a midnight combo on the partner platform.

THREE-STEP APPROACH (SINCE THERE ARE ONLY ABOUT 5 MINUTES TO CATCH YOUNG PEOPLE'S ATTENTION)

1. The invitation
Run across every channel, from outdoor to digital and social, to create a "memory structure".

›

2. When the occasion arrives
Take over banners on the partner platform with an order-now action.

›

3. Action in real life
A treat at partner outlets, like students after exams.

+30%
transactions at participating outlets (the metric the speaker called most important)

500+
shops and partners taking part, online and offline

3 months
run time; many shops asked "can we do it again?"

The brand then widened the journey from "celebrating" to "eating well": introducing great places to eat and celebrate.

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CASE 5 · HEAVY TOPIC, LIGHT DELIVERY

"Không Một Mình" ("Not Alone"): digital safety for children

A communications program on online safety for children, launched in 2025 by a digital trust alliance, just as Vietnam hosted the opening for signature of the "Hanoi Convention" on cybercrime (25 to 26 October 2025).

The presenter is the mother of two daughters and works regularly on online scams and abductions. She noticed that parents are too busy, sometimes without time to share a single meal with their children all week, so kids struggle to tell anyone about their fears online. Earlier campaigns tended to be slogans; this time they chose popular culture, because her own children absorb songs and dances more easily than academic content.

FOUR PILLARS OF THE APPROACH

1. Popular culture
A song that became a dance challenge, spread across billboards, public transport areas, schools and fan pages.

2. KOLs and KOCs spreading the word
Over 1,000 KOLs nationwide, from MCs to singers.

3. Systematized materials
The handbook "Not alone, staying safe online together", reviewed by United Nations agencies; shirts, scarves, notebooks and pens for students.

4. On-the-ground activities
School workshops, an annual festival, technology experiences; priority for remote and rural areas.

SCALE OF ROLLOUT (PER THE SPEAKER)

6,100+
schools trained

2,500+
expert visits to schools

34
provinces and cities

8.4 million
students, teachers and parents equipped with skills

Beyond students, parents responded far more than expected. At the end of the session, the speaker called on families to listen, schools to create safe spaces and authorities to deal with violations, and invited businesses and brands to join in.

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CASE 6 · COMPOUNDING VALUE

Samsung Galaxy: what happens after launch day?

The speaker opened with a lesson of their own: a good product, a big campaign and enough go-to-market structure, yet after launch momentum dropped fast and users went elsewhere. The question that followed: how do we sustain growth and brand value, and make global innovation meaningful locally?

THREE CULTURAL PLATFORMS CHOSEN

Music

Per the speaker, Vietnam ranks second in Asia-Pacific for concert attendance, with over 1 million tickets in 2025. Galaxy S does concerts better: low-light shooting, 100x zoom, fancams with Galaxy AI. The slogan: "no bad seats".

Health

Running, yoga and an aging population. AI personalized coaching, Samsung Health, features for older adults (heart health, sleep apnea, fall detection). A running club meeting at 5 a.m. on Saturdays; partnership with the Ministry of Health.

National identity

Vietnamese engineers helped develop Galaxy AI in Vietnamese. "Voices of Galaxy" tells the stories of a cardiologist, a teacher and a ceramics artisan.

RESULTS (PER THE SPEAKER)

10 years
consecutive #1 in smartphone market share in Vietnam

23 million+
active users

+20%
premium-line users vs. the previous year

+9 points
brand value

5,000+
running club members

+30%
monthly active users of Samsung Health

The speaker also acknowledged that not all the results can be attributed to culture: it is an "added reason" for people to choose Samsung and stay in the ecosystem. The lesson they drew: build values that compound over time instead of running disconnected campaigns.

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Four frameworks shared at the event

The 4S framework from the quick commerce session

Urgent buying needs can surface at any time, so brands need to be ready.

Solution
Each offer tied to a meaningful benefit for a specific moment in the day, like lunchtime.

›

Stunt
An attention-grabbing move to catch interest.

›

System
Stock set up in advance on the platform that is activating, so customers can buy at once instead of searching again.

›

Scale
Run at least 12 weeks so the data is usable.

The speaker observed: most brands do Solution and Stunt well, while System and Scale are the missing pieces.

The four-step loop from the advocacy session

It is not finish one step before the next; a common mistake is to jump straight to step 3.

1. Find
Find where trust already exists but sits still; choose voices because they really use the product, not because of fame or cost.

›

2. Create the moment
Design the invitation at the right time: invite people to tag friends, open space for customers to ask.

›

3. Carry it far
No need to start with a big KOL; choose people by shared-interest group.

›

4. Learn and reinvest
See which content really creates more conversation, not just counting posts and views.

Four principles from the "counterweight" keynote, one case each

Agency
A sensory menu platform for autistic people: paste a menu link and get a flavor description for each dish. Per the speaker, 6 in 10 neurodivergent people avoid restaurants because of sensory overload.

›

Humanity
A campaign helping Ukrainian refugees in Poland become self-reliant, stressing that they are contributors to their host country.

›

Trust
A travel platform with local creators as its backbone: "humans in the loop, AI only as infrastructure".

›

Meaning
A campaign spotlighting the small businesses behind a night F1 race in Singapore.

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FRAMEWORKS (2/2)

DIY: how big brands act like insurgents

The framework from the fragmenting-market keynote. The accompanying examples include the speaker's own brands (Huggies diapers, Kotex pads) and small brands outside the category.

D: Design

Two layers of innovation. Core layer: big capital, long cycles, such as pant diapers with a thin core that absorb as well as a thick one. Aesthetic and sensory layer: fast, niche launches, such as a bamboo line or a nighttime line. Examples outside the category: Giovanni launched cheesecake- and s'mores-flavored yogurt; Dipped-in launched lip balms in toast and peanut-butter-and-jam flavors (names as given in the presentation).

I: Influence

Find the real points of influence. Mothers choosing diapers are influenced by hospitals, mother-and-baby stores and groceries; online, by TikTok creators and Facebook group owners. Liquid Death (canned water styled like beer) targets young party-goers who don't want to be asked about alcohol: it shows up at festivals, bars and campuses, and changes the product by venue ("cocktail" water at festivals, energy-style sparkling water at bars).

Y: Yap

Get others to talk about you. Needs good insight and an understanding of the algorithm. Four sources of insight: culture, category, consumer, collaboration. Category example: positioning pads as an intimate skin-care product (pH balance, antioxidants).

UNDERSTANDING-THE-ALGORITHM PROCESS (ONGOING)

1. Understand viewer segments on each platform.
2. Track the trends of each small segment.
3. Design a "content matrix" matching segments and brand.

Example: the team spent 2 weeks segmenting viewing behavior on Instagram and TikTok using TikTok's analytics tools, which led to the pet-video trend that the pad brand joined.

FOUR CONTENT PILLARS

Educate — Teach

Entertain — Amuse

Validate — Show viewers they are right

Convert — Convert, sell

The speaker stressed this is heavy lifting, not glamorous creativity, and that AI is only one part of how to disrupt a market.

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LESSONS FROM THE PANELS

What to drop, keep and measure

CEO PANEL: WHAT THE SPEAKERS JUST STOPPED AND WHERE THE MONEY MOVED

STOPPED	MOVED TO
Promotions that fail the evidence threshold	Experience, flavor, limited-time offers, youth passion points (like music)
An ineffective loyalty program for indirect distribution partners	Long-term brand building and young customers (per the speaker, "it has paid off")
Running fast on mass media	Deeper relationships with customers

Keep existing customers and recruit new ones

The head of a water heater company: keep existing customers for short-term growth, recruit new ones (like young first-time workers) for the mid and long term. He also invests in architects, plumbers and installers, who influence the purchase decision; in rural areas, availability comes first, communication second.

Two places to put more money

GEO (getting the brand into AI tools' answers) and data infrastructure. Per the speaker, many marketers feel confident about data but only have monthly and quarterly reports.

BRAND AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Roles

Performance makes the brand findable. Brand decides whether customers choose and trust it. The impact of brand usually shows after 6 to 9 months (per the speaker).

Consumer finance

"Pulling customers into a leaky funnel is not growth." After in-app signup: 30-, 60- and 90-day onboarding; reasons to return (gamification, referrals); then cross-selling.

Electronics

Marketing, product and R&D work in a closed loop; ask "what is 100W charging for" instead of just stating specs; premiumization means customers understand the value, not a price hike.

THREE MEASURES THAT PROVE BRAND VALUE TO THE CFO

1. Branded search

Customers type the brand name, not the product category.

›

2. Brand love

Community, culture, lifestyle; the name becomes a common noun, like "grab" or "honda".

›

3. Product mix

Customers choose more premium products than the entry line.

Per the panel moderator, performance is understood too narrowly, so MMA raises "brand as performance".

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SMARTIES 2026

Ten themes of award-winning campaigns and the 2027 predictions

SMARTIES is MMA's marketing award. A market research firm, the awards' knowledge partner, analyzed what winning campaigns have in common. Winners come from healthcare, beverages, food, technology and finance, not only consumer goods. The speaker deliberately named no campaigns, only the common threads.

1. AI moves from experiment to execution
2. AI plus human intelligence
3. Start from human truth
4. Culture is a strategic advantage, not a "red lantern" add-on
5. From celebrity reach to strategic influence
6. Experience is the differentiator
7. Online and offline are one journey
8. Partnership is leverage, not "my logo, your audience"
9. Purpose must be credible
10. Creativity must drive business results

THREE NOTABLE DETAILS

- **Small creators, high engagement:** strategic influence can be a celebrity with millions of followers, or a creator with only 10,000 to 20,000 followers but very high engagement.
- **The "laziest" partnership:** the "my logo, your audience" kind, which judges and consumers both see through.
- **Experience:** the best campaigns usually leave a feeling rather than an ad image.

FIVE PREDICTIONS FOR SMARTIES 2027

1	2	3	4	5
AI everywhere	Human insight becomes scarce	Cultural intelligence is an advantage	Creators become strategic advisors	Channel integration

The speaker grouped predictions 4 and 5 as "going hand in hand".

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MORE EXAMPLES

Other memorable examples

Moncler premium jacket ad

Two veteran actors meet in a humble café with slightly uncomfortable chairs, with only laughter and friendship. The speaker used it to say that even luxury brands are flipping the logic of "exclusivity and scarcity" toward human warmth.

Louis Vuitton

Per the speaker, hiring a "brand creative director" for the first time to keep the brand's raw, core beauty in an age of glossy content.

Sensory menu

Restaurants hesitated because operations are already complex, so a simple platform was built: paste the menu link, upload it, and get a flavor and spice description of each dish for people prone to sensory overload.

A travel platform for Ho Chi Minh City

Users enter where to go, what to do and who with (including scenarios with small children or elderly parents). Local creators say what is a tourist trap and what is a hidden gem, and card offers appear at just the right time.

Singapore night race

Most of the work (building the track, lighting, catering) was done by small businesses. The campaign asked business owners "what is your dream", like the owner of a chocolate brand using Asian ingredients who wanted to go global but had a limited marketing budget.

Ukrainian refugees in Poland

A campaign by the Eastern Europe team helping refugees become self-reliant, instead of just telling stories of their need for help.

X-Men: a care line for men

Segmenting by price or function, the market is crowded; but by gender, the "men's side" was open because the big brands were all unisex. The solution was "very easy": a separate line for men with premium fragrances; it quickly became #1 in the market and grows double digits each year (per the presentation).

A local footwear brand

Affordable, trustworthy, everywhere, but young people wanted something more modern and personalized. Instead of pushing the old formula, they switched to the Hunter line (around 2017), which beat its target; per the speaker, 7-day sales are now triple.

Two consumer research mistakes to watch for ("Easy is right" session)

(1) Focus groups of 8 to 10 people, 5 to 6 groups, can hardly represent the whole market, and the same story is understood differently by each person, like "the blind men and the elephant". The speaker cited data suggesting that only about 2% of new products still exist after 24 months. (2) The "blame" meeting between sales and marketing when market share does not grow: say plainly where the previous winning formula broke, then fix it.

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GLOSSARY

Terms used in this handbook

Earned media
Mentions, shares and articles that a brand gets without paying for direct advertising.

Quick commerce
Ultra-fast delivery, usually within minutes (food, cosmetics, medicine, essentials).

GEO (Generative Engine Optimization)
Optimizing so that a brand is recommended or cited by AI tools such as ChatGPT when users ask.

Incrementality
The sales that truly come from a campaign, not counting what would have sold anyway.

Kill rule
A condition set in advance: if the campaign misses it, stop rather than drag it on.

Evidence bar
The minimum level of evidence needed before spending more money on a direction.

Cannibalization
A promotion or new product that only pulls customers from an existing product instead of adding new ones.

KOL, KOC, creator
KOL: a person with large influence. KOC: a real consumer sharing their experience, smaller but often more trusted. Creator: anyone who makes content.

Advocacy
Customers and creators voluntarily recommending a brand to others, beyond simply trusting it.

Brand equity
Awareness, goodwill and trust accumulated over many years.

Human-in-the-loop
AI does the heavy lifting while humans still review and decide at the important points.

Insurgent brand
A new, small, agile brand taking market share from big groups.

Onboarding
The journey that guides new customers to start using a product in the first days after signing up.

Branded search
Searches that include the brand name, such as typing it directly instead of the product category.

FIGURES CHECKED AGAINST PUBLIC SOURCES

KitKat truck: confirmed by Nestlé on 28 March 2026, about 413,800 bars, 12 tonnes, traveling from Italy to Poland. Hanoi Convention: signing ceremony 25 to 26 October 2025. Japan vinyl: RIAJ figures 2019 to 2024. Vietnamese travellers using AI: Agoda 2026 Travel Outlook (March 2026). Liquid Death × Depend: launched December 2024. All other figures are per the speakers at the event.

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