

Naga DDB wins at the Effies for love-themed campaign

By M. HAFIDZ MAHPAR

IT looks like Naga DDB Sdn Bhd, which has a strong reputation for winning creative awards, has a new “love” to talk about: the Effie Award.

The advertising firm has made its name by being a very creative agency. It was ranked in the top three among Malaysian ad agencies in Campaign Brief Asia's rankings for seven consecutive years before dropping slightly to sixth spot last year. And it is the only Malaysian agency to have won the prestigious D&AD Yellow Pencil (in 2005), a fact that has been mentioned in many press reports.

Now it has hit a new milestone, becoming the first local agency to clinch an Asia-Pacific Effie Award.



From left: Choo, Chit and Naga DDB executive creative director Ted Lim with the Effie trophy.

Naga DDB received the bronze at the inaugural World Effie Festival in Singapore recently for its *Viva Loves U* campaign for long-time client Perodua.

In an interview with *BizWeek*, executive creative director Ted Lim says: “What’s interesting about this is that it is not a creative award. This is an effectiveness award, which is about the strategic thinking behind the communications.

“We had an *Oscar* for creativity (the Yellow Pencil) and now we have also won the top award for effectiveness. As an agency, we are very happy that we can say: In the right hands, creative is effective.”

The Asia-Pacific Effies only had 24 finalists and 15 winners, of which only one came from Malaysia. Naga also had a finalist at the show, its DiGi Yellow Coverage Fellow campaign.

The Effies are presented for marketing ideas that actually achieve results, such as a sales increase. This separates the Effies from the usual creative awards that do not require agencies to show that their campaigns worked in the marketplace.



Naga DDB's work for Perodua Viva

won it the Effie Award.

The love-themed Viva campaign helped sell over 15,000 units of Viva within the first three months of its launch, a figure exceeding the combined sales of three other competing models at that time!

Naga DDB business unit head Choo Lee Peng tells why the campaign was such a success: "One of the reasons is how we staged it against the difficult economic situation of Malaysia then.

"When we launched Viva, toll rates had gone up, and we knew at that time it was very hard to sell second-hand cars. Interest rates and the consumer price index had gone up."

To add to the difficulty, the Viva was going to replace the Kelisa and the Kancil, which were aimed at two different markets. The Kelisa's image was of an urban car for singles and yuppies while the Kancil was a family car.

"The car needs to touch both spectrums of the target market. That's why the theme of love came into the picture. The whole idea was about a car that was conceived to love people, rather than the other way around," Choo says.

Lim adds: "Usually an ad would go, 'Oh, you'll love this car because it is beautiful,' or it's this and that. What we did was to turn it around, saying that this is a car that loves you. It was designed to consume less petrol and to love your bank account. The door opens at a full 90-degree angle, so it's easier for a pregnant or elderly person to get in."

In a run-up to the Viva launch, Naga DDB did a teaser campaign in both the print and outdoor media to create intrigue. In newspapers, it had teasers like “Find true love tomorrow” while for outdoor, it put up banners leading to the showroom with messages like “True love 1km ahead.”

It even had a “Perfect Love Match” interactive website where potential buyers were asked whether they wanted speed, affordability or prices within a certain range.

“Once you had decided what you want, a car would advise you which of the Viva variant would suit you. We had six variants for people to choose from,” Choo says.

The Effies are not the first effectiveness awards netted by Naga.

Managing director Chit Quah points out that the agency has won Asian Marketing Effectiveness (AME) awards every year for the last four years. Last year it clinched Malaysia's first gold AME award for its DiGi Yellow Coverage Fellow campaign (in the *Most Effective Use of Advertising* category), plus a silver in the *Best Ideas* category for the same campaign.

Ironically, the DiGi Yellow Coverage Fellow campaign did not win anything at the local creative awards show (the Kancils).

Quah says: “Our creativity has to result in sales and build brand value for our clients. That is true creativity.”

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