

It's Tough To Be Green

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Green marketing is the future

Next few years critical for sustainability marketing

Says Mike Longhurst, SVP, McCann Erickson EMEA

Brands are still seeking to become more sustainable but competitive pressure has led forced them to revert to price advertising or product performance advertising, says Mike Longhurst, senior vice president of McCann Erickson EMEA.

Longhurst was in town recently to give a talk on "Getting Green Advertising Right".

"It's going to be a new decade for green advertising. The recession might have an impact on sustainability communication, but brands are still seeking to become more sustainable," he said.

Marketers need to be aware that consumers are gradually picking up on environmental issues such as illegal logging, open burning and global warming.

Tony Savarimuthu, CEO of McCann Worldgroup, Malaysia and Singapore agreed with Longhurst, noting that Malaysia especially, is gaining momentum on green issues.

This growing awareness is heightened by the fact that the country boasts a vibrant rainforest ecosystem coupled with numerous experiences with haze, caused by open burning.

According to Longhurst, the next few years would be critical for brands to realise the importance of sustainability advertising or there might be faced with rejection from the consumers.

Savarimuthu added:

"The future will change as discernible consumers will be able to make their voices heard via social media. The rise of the Millennials will also have a strong influence on brands who need to make fundamental changes in sustainable supply chain management."

Creativity behind sustainability has now taken on increased importance.

However, Longhurst noted that for a green campaign to work, the brand must be placed behind the issue for a more effective impact.

Local successes in going for green branding includes YTL's earth hour initiative and Sime Darby's efforts in habitat conservation.

By Suzhen Ng, Malaysia

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