



WE GROW THROUGH OUR CONVERSATIONS

Join us at AFAA Global



Fuelling the Spirit of Afaa

The first issue of AFAA Connect received very positive feedback from our members in the advertising industry. I am very glad this initiative is welcomed by all our friends. During the pandemic and hard times, it is nice to keep in touch with friends and know they are safe. It is also important that we share knowledge and learn from each other ways to capture new opportunities. I strongly encourage all our members to share their local activities and market development in our upcoming issues of AFAA Connect.

To foster more cooperation among different professionals in the communication and marketing industry, AFAA has taken another step forward. We have decided to enlarge the number of Corporate Members at AFAA. The key members of AFAA are advertising associations that represent the views and interests of advertising agencies in the market. They are known as Regular Members. Another important membership category is the Corporate Members. These are corporations that can be brand owners, media owners or advertising and marketing groups. They are well-established and important players in their respective professions in the communication industry. We believe AFAA can provide a platform for them to build regional acquaintance and explore opportunities for more cooperation. Corporate members can participate in all AFAA activities, enjoying benefits specially designed for them.



Raymond So
Chairman

A Corporate Membership Director position is created at the AFAA Executive Committee, giving corporate members official representation in the leadership of AFAA. This designated representative will be elected among all Corporate Members and serve a term for four years as the AFAA Chairman. This new arrangement gives our Corporate Members greater participation in all AFAA affairs and decisions.

With the new Corporate Membership policy, AFAA wants to get more participation and representation from new players in the advertising industry. We have witnessed the emergence of many new services and companies in the last decade and it is time for AFAA to embrace these new players. We should work together to address the new issues and opportunities from new and different perspectives. This is the spirit of AFAA and our goal is to build a better market environment for the advertising industry to flourish. We hope to have at least 5 corporate members in each country or region where AFAA is represented. Please do not hesitate to join as a Corporate Member if you share this vision with us.

I am glad to share the good news that AdAsia 2021 is confirmed to be held on December 7-9 in Macao. The pandemic has put many international events on hold or cancelled due to travel restrictions. Our Macao AdAsia Organizing Committee believes that the situation will be improved at the end of 2021 and bravely decided to host AdAsia as scheduled. They will address the post-pandemic marketing challenges and opportunities in the three days congress. Speakers will be invited from all Asian countries and make a great Asian success story. With full support from the Macau Government and the hospitality industry, it will be a great experience for all of us to gather together again in Macao after a long-locked down.

I am confident the Congress will be a memorable occasion both for delegates and the history of AdAsia. Let's mark our calendar and make history together in Macao on 7th December.

See you at AdAsia Macao!



AFAA Associations Update

Nack-Hoi Kim, Chairman of KFAA, will serve consecutive terms

KFAA (Korea Federation of Advertising Associations) had '2021 General Body Meeting' on March 30, 2021, and made a resolution that the current Chairman, Nack-Hoi Kim, serve consecutive terms as 17th chairman of KFAA.

Kim said in the inaugural address, "This is a very meaningful year, as it is the 50th anniversary of the KFAA. I hope the advertising industry is further unified and develops even more, with the opening of the Korea-China-Japan advertising seminar, the "50 years of Korean advertising" photo exhibition and the publishing of the "50 years of advertising in Korea".

Sarmad Ali unanimously elected President of the Society

The Annual Meeting of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society General Council held on March 24, 2021, at APNS House, Karachi unanimously elected Sarmad Ali (Jang Group) as the President, Naz Afreen Saigol, Secretary-General, and Shahab Zuberi, Finance Secretary of the Society. Earlier, the General Council elected un-opposed the Executive Committee for 2021-22. The AGM was held under the chairmanship of Hameed Haroon, the outgoing President of the society in the lawns of the APNS House with complete SOPs for Covid-19 in place. The Council unanimously approved the report of the Executive Committee for the years 2019-2021 as well as the Annual Accounts of the Society for the years 2019 and 2020. Sarmad has previously served as the society's Secretary-General and Joint Secretary. APNS is the representative body of the newspaper publishers in Pakistan and is now in its 70th year.





Indrajit Majumdar Elected 3 AF President

Indrajit Majumdar, Executive Vice President of Zee TV, was named President of 3AF and will lead the non-profit organization for the next two years. He is the first media executive and the first person of South Asian descent in 3AF's 21-year history to take on the critical role.

Ten board members were also elected, and Iris Yim, Principal of Sparkle Insights, was chosen to continue her role as 3AF Vice President. Jay Kim, President of AAAZA, will also continue his involvement and serve as Immediate Past President.

Majumdar said, "I am honoured to be selected by 3AF to run this critical organization at this critical juncture. With the country's new focus on the value that diverse communities play in our society, and the new heightened and elevated awareness of the South Asian segment given Vice President Harris' election, our time as 'Asian Americans' is now.

I am humbled and honoured to work with such a dedicated group of stellar individuals who have so much passion and commitment for our Asian segment and look forward to building on to the success previous 3AF presidents did before me."

As 3AF President, Majumdar said he will pursue many key 3AF initiatives including amplifying the Asian and South Asian voice, expanding the number of Asian media memberships in 3AF, and garnering more support and involvement from both 3AF members and non-members alike through new, fresh ideas. Majumdar added, "I want to actively engage corporations in America through different 3AF programs so they can learn more and benefit from the potential of the fastest-growing population and consumer segment with the highest education and income levels and a cumulative purchasing power that is expected to touch USD 1.3 trillion by 2022."

The Asian American Advertising Federation (3AF) is a national trade organization comprised of Asian American advertising agencies, Asian market advertisers, Asian media companies, and other industry specialists. Its mission is to advance the Asian American marketing and advertising industry for Asian American consumers through education, advocacy, promotion, and increased collaboration of all industry stakeholders including, but not limited to, marketers, agencies, research partners, and media. Additionally, 3AF seeks to promote and encourage high standards of conduct and ethics among our members and our industry. The 3AF Asian Marketing Summit is held annually. More information about the 3AF is available at www.3af.org.



The Taste of India



afaa ASIAN FEDERATION OF ADVERTISING ASSOCIATIONS

announces

afaa  inspiration

Speaker	Dr. R. S. Sodhi, Managing Director, GCMMF (AMUL)
Date	Monday, 19th April 2021
Time	12:00 pm India 2:30 pm Malaysia
Topic	COVID Lockdown. How we doubled our faith in advertising.

Amul ranked as the highest spender in advertising for the first three months of lockdown and amongst the first ten that year.

The Second AFAA Inspiration Series was held on 19 th April 2021. Raymond So, Chairman of the Asian Federation of Advertising Associations (AFAA), warmly welcomed the members. Commenting on the title “Covid Lockdown. How we doubled our faith in Advertising”, he said the topic was very apt as advertising is the first to bear the brunt of market/economic recession even though research shows that if a company invests in advertising/good marketing during an economic slowdown, it gets paid off when the market recovers or picks up.

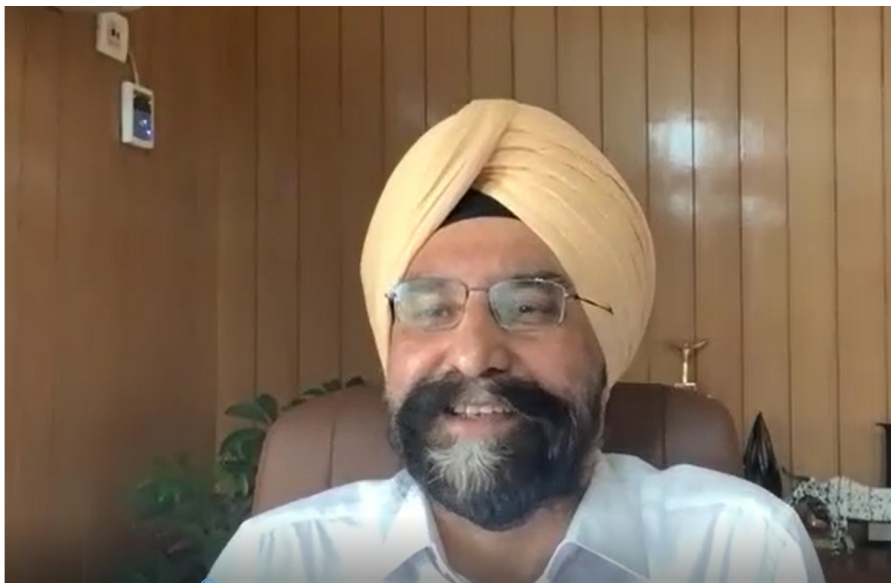
Dr. Rupinder Singh Sodhi, Managing Director of Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation, Ltd., (AMUL) has 40 years of rich experience in leading & developing the cooperative sector within the Indian dairy industry. He has been responsible for creating the current structure of the AMUL, enabling the organization to maintain and enhance its leadership status within the Indian dairy industry.

Srinivasan Swamy, Vice Chairman, AFAA spoke highly of Dr. R. S. Sodhi (GCMMF) who has put AMUL, the cooperative institution on the world map. Today, Amul is a USD 7 billion enterprise, the largest in India and also the largest exporter in the world. Dr. R. S. Sodhi strongly believes that advertising is a way of communicating to build your brand. And for any company brand is the most precious longest living asset. A brand is an ageless asset. Lockdown is the best time to build this asset. Reiterating Dr. Kurien's principle of "Work above the faith", he said advertising is the blind faith we follow. Once we have decided to advertise, we do it without questioning.

Challenge: Internal Communication

During Covid, the huge challenge Amul faced was how to communicate to all its stakeholders across the supply chain. The livelihood of 3.6 million milk producers, 18,500 village cooperative societies, 10,000 transporters/ drivers, and the employees were dear to them. So, they put big banners at every village cooperative society on the safety measures one needs to take. They also actively educated the transporters. Dr. R. Sodhi remembers having done more than 60-70 one-to-one video calls to keep his stakeholders informed and motivated.

"For us, consumers are part of our family. Amul has one side farmers, one side consumers. When your family member is distressed, you don't stop communicating you need to communicate more and assure him/her that you are there to take care of the needs".



On the Spot Communication

On 24th March, when the lockdown was announced, Dr. Sodhi's wife insisted they stock at least some Amul products. So, when Dr. Sodhi stepped out to the nearest Amul parlour, he was shocked to see the crowd buying in a frenzy. All he got was 2 packs of Amul butter. The products were there but so was panic. He realized if this is the situation in Anand, this must be happening all over India. He immediately returned home and took a 12- seconds video on the mobile, both in Hindi and English, stating "Milk is an Essential. Milk will be procured from all farmers. And, Amul will continue to deliver to all consumers. Don't panic." This message was immediately sent through different media channels across India. This quick on-the- spot effective communication to the consumers helped calm their fears.

An Observation to an Opportunity

During the lockdown, everyone in the family huddled together to watch the news. So, Amul decided to be present there, where the consumers were. As luck would have it, at the same time, Doordarshan came out with its two epic serials of Ramayana and Mahabharata, which Amul was happy to sponsor. This advertising investment proved to be a jackpot as Amul garnered 50 to 70 times the benefit, as IPL too was on. Also, Amul rolled out its classic epic ads as “Classic Sunday” which was very well-received.



**“Right type of communication tool at the right time may not cost you anything”
-Dr. R.S. Sodhi**

With more than 3000 chefs participating worldwide, more than 2300 live recipes so far, more than 100,000 minutes of content, currently with a viewership of 1.6 billion, ‘**Amul Live Recipe Facebook Show**’ is the longest-running, most-watched live recipe show in the world. Indeed, one of the biggest jackpots of all time. All at no cost. And this was possible because Amul was not only visible Amul was also available and affordable.

Aptly put, “Advertising is like Breathing. In difficult times you just need to Breathe More.”



A Quick Walk Down

Sheldon D'Souza, Copy Supervisor, Ogilvy.



The AFAA Fasttrack 2018 group photo

Every year around August Facebook manages to make me nostalgic. Something unbelievable happened in 2018. A pin-up poster caught my attention. It asked young professionals to share their views on advertising. I did it sincerely. More so, with the hope to win an all-expenses-paid trip to Malaysia. A few weeks later, I received a mail stating I was among the 6 Indians selected for the AFAA Fasttrack programme in KL. Mission accomplished. It's been close to 3 years since the event. But memories from it are still afresh. The energy at the programme was phenomenal. It changed me. Wait. I don't intend to make this sound like those before-after infomercials. I mean it. After I returned, I lead some campaigns solo. Won a pitch for a client – UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme). Went beyond my role as a copywriter, took up servicing, did vendor negotiations, and lead the campaign from start to finish. Also, received a hug from the Chief Creative Officer of Ogilvy India, Sukesh Nayak as he said, 'wah mere sher,' which means 'proud of you, my tiger.' After all, it was a wildlife campaign.



Team India striking a pose.
From left: Sanketa, Hesham, Atreyi,
Sheldon, Ria, and Adyasha.

Started off, 2020 by lifting three awards, thankfully all before Covid struck: Gold – Best Outdoor Campaign, Silver – Young Green Writer, and who would've thought I'd be on the 40 under 40 list for the best outdoors ads of 2020 by Exchange4Media (E4M). Honestly, I was looking forward to 30 under 30. In fact, as I write this, I'm working on the fourth campaign with the same client. I can't wait to see its release. AFAA Fasttrack needs to be thanked for all this. If you'd like to know what happens there... Well, I've made a promise to never reveal. But here's my attempt at keeping the pact yet helping you get an idea. Advertising folks know the importance of, 'hey, can you sum it up in one line?'

A series of entertaining sessions with strangers from across Asia who weren't strangers by the end of the programme. I think that's apt and the most I can reveal. Here's a bonus, it's about cultural exchange. How would I ever have known of Bryan from Shanghai? He made sure we never digressed from the brief. Was brutally honest with his opinions on why a concept tanked or worked. Or Udyami from Sri Lanka? Who stayed calm and gave us valuable inputs. Or Shannon from Malaysia? The feisty woman. You dare not reject her input. I recall rejecting it though. And many more. They say you are a mix of the people you meet. AFAA Fasttrack was just that. Now when I deal with my projects, I sometimes look at them through the lens of Bryan or Udyami or the others I met there. Not everything we learned was from the sessions. To all those who conceptualized a programme like this, a heartfelt thank you! Grateful for these magical moments that won't ever be forgotten.

Team India with one of the main persons behind the AFAA Fasttrack initiative – Bharat Avalani.



The above photos are of My Fasttrack team. We called ourselves Red Hot Chilli Peppers and sang a song: We're spicy and we know it. With team members: Bryan, Shannon, Shean, Udyami, Uma, and our angel – our team in-charge coordinator – Steph and mentor - Alex.)

A True Star among Award Shows.

An Ad Star jury member looks back with pleasure.

Raj Nair | CEO & Chief Creative Officer | Madison BMB.



Jury Duty at Ad Stars, Busan, Korea, 2017.

When you have juries headed by the likes of Suthisak Sucharittanonta from BBDO Bangkok, Helen Pak from Grey Canada, and Wain Choi from Cheil Korea, you can safely take for granted, that only good work will pass through the net. Having judged Cannes Lions, the big difference is that this is by and large an Asian advertising festival with entries primarily from all over Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Dubai, and so on. And like our own Olive Crown, it's free to enter!

The jury I was on judged Interactive, Mobile, Integrated, Innovation, and Radio. (Some may feel that radio is an odd one out in this mix as it is a truly traditional medium, but it does bring an interesting flavour to the overall mix of work one has to go through.)

As always, the discussions operated around the insight and the idea behind the work, the execution of it, the practicality of the application, the scale (how many people has the specific piece actually reached out to), the correctness of the category in which the work has been entered and the “Don’t-get-swayed-by-the-slickness-of-the-case-study-video” discussion. And it’s always great to learn nuances from a jury of peers and heavyweights around these discussions. There’s a transparent approach to judging, which borders on the brutally honest and gladly, an utter lack of lobbying.

What always makes all the exhausting jury duty worthwhile are the fabulous interactions with the truly stellar jury members. Once the judging work was done and all awards including Grand Prix were finalised, all jurors were able to kick back a bit and take in some of the sights and sounds of Busan. (So they could stop resembling the zombies from Train To Busan.)

Fact: There’s obviously way, way more to Korean food than kimchi, bulgogi, and bibimbap and one doesn’t get enough of it, back in Mumbai. At least one got to sample that in ample measure while working. Just a few dishes that were gobbled up: Myeolchi Bokkeum, Ddukbokkie, Sundubbu Jjigae and Haejangguk...

The people here are friendly, sweet, helpful, humble, and very quick to point out that English is not their strength so “please speak slowly” while being generous with their brand of self-deprecatory humour.

We got to make our own Korean fish cake rolls and fish cake pizza and sample our efforts, while also visiting the oldest and most traditional wet fish market in Busan. But the highlight was the beautiful, calm, and newly inaugurated Busan Air Cruise (a cable car ride that took us over the ocean to give us a breath-taking view of the Busan skyline at sunset). Absolutely stunning.

The nightlife sampling of various haunts like the Fuzzy Navel, Billie Jean, and The Grid with other jury members were huge highlights as well. And to round it all off, the super-tight Grand Gala and awards ceremony with all the deserving awardees and everyone present cheering on lustily was the icing on the cake.

What more can I say? Ad Stars, you left me very starry-eyed for more, indeed!

The Mind Can Never Break off from the Journey

The Memory Collector, Bharat Avalani | Malaysia.

Having crisscrossed 73 countries, I consider myself to be a memory collector. Like many others, I also take selfies, but my selfies are different because each picture tells a story that is deeply etched in my memory. Each picture is an emotional experience for me. I like to fill my life with memories, not things. I have stories to tell not stuff to show. Would like to share with you three memories that impacted me deeply.



The Burden of Water

During a trip to East Africa in 2006, I had an encounter with a Masai which affected me deeply. The Masai stopped my car and asked me if I had water. I gave him two bottles of mineral water, and the Masai was so grateful that he wanted to give me his spear. I did not take the spear but took a photograph and it did make me realise the value of water when one doesn't have it.

A Lesson in Leadership

2015, I was in Ghana for a workshop. Having known the story of Mr. Kofi Annan's early years, I made it a point to visit Mfantshipim, a Methodist boarding school in Cape Coast, where Mr. Annan, who served as the seventh Secretary-General of the UN (1997 to 2006) had studied. I was keen on seeing the school that made a boy into a secretary-general of the UN and a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. It was a Saturday morning and I saw boys doing their laundry, cleaning their dormitories and the surroundings. The mental note that I made to myself was that leadership is about recognising the dignity of labour early in life and taking responsibility to clean your mess and that of others!

The Memory Collector - Bharat Avalani



Never in my wildest dream had I imagined that just two years later, I would get an opportunity to share my experience with Annan in person. I presented him a collage of his childhood memories and I was told that he and his wife Nane were touched by the gesture. He later placed his hand on my shoulder and told me that we had another thing in common apart from the shared memory of his school and that was his dad had worked for Unilever Ghana. I will always remember the weight of his hand on my shoulder. Responding to a question on leadership, he remarked that, “Leadership is about understanding a problem and asking yourself what you can do to help. Leadership is service. A good leader is a good follower.”

That resonated well with me.

Win or Lose! Celebrate effort Anyway!



In November 2016, I travelled to Sri Lanka and on the plane, I sat next to Johann Pieiris, the first Sri Lankan who almost made it to Mount Everest in that year. Johann is a prominent hairstylist/designer. In May 2016, Johann was fortunate to be chosen to climb Mount Everest. Johann told me that in this particular year, there was a lot of traffic on the mountain and it was important that all the climbers adhered to the timing.

Unfortunately, a few climbers were slow and it resulted in Johann running out of oxygen. Just 300m short from the summit, he was told by his Sherpa guide that he would have to turn around.

At that moment, Johann thought of his loved ones, his clients, his sponsors, and how people would remember him (for his near-win).

From where he stood then, stuck behind the line of slow climbers, and running short on oxygen, Johann could see the lights at the summit. He had no choice but to turn back. It was one of the hardest things he ever had to do. It was so near, yet it was still far from his reach. Even though Johann didn't reach the peak, he received a hero's welcome on his safe return home to Sri Lanka. People still celebrated his efforts for braving himself to climb Mount Everest, despite his unsuccessful attempt to the top. “It has made me stronger,” Johann said. “Mentally and spiritually, I feel completely changed. I can still say that I've stood in one of the highest places in the world.”

Once you have travelled, the voyage never ends but is played out over and over again in the quietest corners. The mind can never break off from the journey.



Probably The Last Word

Srinivasan K Swamy,
Vice Chairman,
AFAA.

When I penned my “The Last Word” in December 2020 inaugural issue of AFAA Connect, I thought we were seeing signs of the pandemic withdrawing and the opening up of our borders and economies. And I even said we should all look forward to meetings in person. Alas, these will have to wait for a few more months.

AFAA is a B2B entity. Like all such entities, we relied earlier on large format conferences and face to face meetings to conduct our activities. Now we have to be content with a few virtual meetings like the “inspiration series” or the virtual DigiAsia we had. Fortunately, the technology has advanced well that we could still hear the speeches and discussions as though we are personally present to hear them. And we could even engage in Q&A with the presenter.

Given the absence of personal meetings, the AFAA Executive Committee decided to stay in touch with our constituents through social media platforms. With that in mind we started using the professional platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter. Our engagement in these platforms are still basic, because our followers are principally institutional in nature and they do take more time to migrate and engage with what is being put out.

The pandemic has brought to our notice one more home-truth – that the past behaviour is no guarantee of future outcome. People are so used to virtual meetings in the last one year, that when things open up, most meetings will have an option to take part in it virtually. The new norm is expected to be hybrid participation. In the past, Ad Asia delegates will travel in from across the globe and at least 1200 people will be in the conference when the event takes place. Our next Ad Asia is scheduled to take place in the lovely city of Macau this December. We should be happy if about 800 participants take part in person, despite the attraction of the destination by all counts. That’s a sharp drop of 33%! Blame it on the pandemic or the new normal after Covid.

AFAA is revisiting its own constitution to enable members participation virtually, vote through proxies in General Meetings and open up its membership to a wider segment of industry participants. Important role is cast upon corporate members and extra importance is being given to professionals who are welcome to join as individual members. We can no longer be insulated to the changes taking place in the world, and by embracing these, we could lead the change. Hope these would auger well for our future.

I have chosen my headline as ‘probably the last word’ to signify that I don’t want to remind ourselves of the pandemic in my next column of AFAA Connect, and the set-back we have all had in our lives and livelihood.

Like last time, I want to quote from a Bon Jovi’s song:

It's my life; It's now or never; But I ain't gonna live forever; I just want to live while I'm alive!



AD STARS 2021

Welcome To AD STARS

AD STARS, which is open to everyone based on the spirit of openness and sharing, will create a new paradigm of the international advertising festival.

Did you know that we are now welcoming entries to the AD STARS 2021 Awards?

It's free to enter, and you could win US\$10,000!

AD STARS is delighted to return for another year as a global, not-for-profit platform that supports and promotes creative ideas that contribute to mankind. The deadline for AD STARS 2021 is 15th May, and once again, the top two Grand Prix of the Year winners will win US\$10,000 each. Now in its 14th year, AD STARS is one of the fastest-growing creative industries festivals in the world with over 20,000 entries received in 2020.

“Any metal awarded at AD STARS is a career highlight – all winners should be very proud,” said Levi Slavin, Chief Creative Officer, Colenso BBDO, who was an Executive Judge at AD STARS 2020.

Valerie Madon, Chief Creative Officer, Asia at VMLY&R, Singapore, was also an Executive Judge at AD STARS 2020. She said: “Being probably the only show that allows work to be entered for free, it is highly commendable. It offers many young creatives the opportunity to shine and I believe many talents are very grateful for this generosity.”

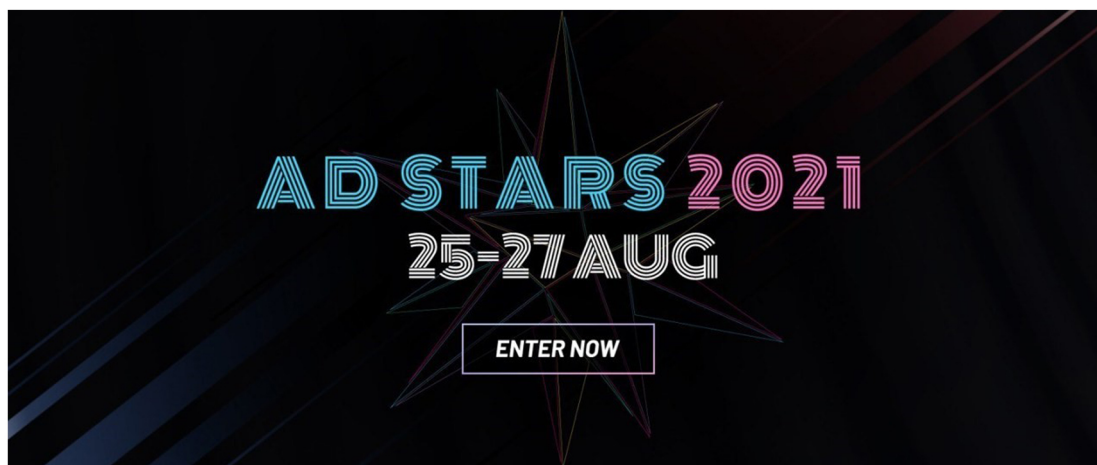


“Shift” - The theme of AD STARS 2021

AD STARS’ theme for 2021 is ‘Shift’.

Hwan Jin Choi explains: “COVID-19 is transforming lives. New consumer behaviors span all areas of life, from how we work to how we shop to how we entertain ourselves. These rapid shifts have important implications for marketers and we would like to talk more about this ‘Shift’ at AD STARS 2021. If you are interested in sharing your expertise with our global audience, we welcome your ideas for speaker submissions.”

Headquartered in South Korea, AD STARS exists to support and promote creators all over the world, giving them a global platform on which to share their work and raise awareness of game-changing ideas. It’s free to enter all categories excluding the Innovation and Integrated categories, which cost KRW 100,000 (approx. US\$100) per entry.



15th May | Early deadline for the AD STARS 2021 Awards
25-27 August | The AD STARS 2021 Online Festival returns, concluding with a virtual awards show on 27th August 2021.
To enter the AD STARS 2021 Awards, visit www.adstars.org