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# Why the Dog Ate My Newspaper!

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You'll soon be getting more than news when you pick up your morning newspapers when Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) rolls out its 'Peel and Taste' campaign.

Multi-sensory marketing campaigns — which integrate at least one of the five senses into the marketing programme — are here to stay in the marketing industry, says Geoff Tan, SPH's senior vice president and head of Strategic Marketing, of the trend which could see readers (or the family dog retrieving the paper) getting a taste of newly-launched food products in their favourite newspaper.

"People always think of print as two dimensional. But what we want to do here is to inject one or more of the five senses into print," he told Perspectives of the strategy that he hopes will spur revenue from advertising for the media conglomerate.

The 'Peel and Taste' campaign involves edible film strips (similar to the popular breath strips) that are flavoured with the taste of a food or beverage product and then packaged into foil pouches and inserted into an advertisement. The reader simply tears open the packaging and eats the film strip to

get a taste of the product – and goes to the store to buy the product. Or at least that is what the advertiser hopes.

The film strips originated in the United States, where they are placed in supermarkets for consumers to sample a food product, are seen as an effective way of driving product trials. *Rolling Stone* magazine pioneered the use of the strips in print outlets when they packed lime Mojito flavoured film strips in their September 2007 issue.

To date, Tan's team in Singapore has explored sight and sound, pioneering the use of 3-D newspaper advertisements and an insert for a car company that plays music when opened. Appealing to the reader's sense of taste is now on the plate for Tan.

"If you appeal to just one sense, you will only get a certain level of connectivity. But if you appeal to two or more senses, the message becomes even more compelling," Tan explains.

That's even more so in today's crowded marketplace, he adds, where advertising's multiple messages are received every day and where media outlets are engaged in intense competition.

### **Innovating beyond readership**

Consumption of traditional print media is declining all over the world and SPH-owned outlets are no exception. Print outlets are being outstripped by the social media, once known as the 'new media' – in itself a sign of the times — and many people now receive their daily news fix on tablets, smart phones or online outlets.

However, Nielsen's Media Index Report 2012 found a 2.3 percent drop in newspaper readership in Singapore from that of 2011. Singapore's flagship media outlet, the SPH-owned *Straits Times*, saw its combined print and digital readership fall by about five percent from a year ago to 1,387,000.

In a far-sighted move, SPH introduced diversification and cross-media marketing as strategies to meet the challenge. Although the *Straits Times* is one of the world's oldest newspapers, first published in 1845, SPH was incorporated in 1984. It now publishes 18 newspapers in four languages, more than 100 magazines, and has an 80 percent stake in SPH UnionWorks, which operates three radio stations. The company also has an events arm, which organises trade shows, and has in recent years delved into property development.

While building a multi-faceted business is SPH's way of growing its business, making use of the company's multiple media platforms to create cross-media marketing — the use of two or more types of media in an integrated promotional campaign — is another strategy Tan employs to bring in the advertising revenue.

Tan says that when clients see the team as providing consultancy services, they will call months ahead of a product launch to ask about creating an advertising campaign, instead of only calling the day before the launch to book a space for an advertisement.

In 2011 he launched '[SPH Is On](#)', a one-stop outlet to provide cross-media advertising campaigns that feature SPH's media products and services. Results have been pleasing.