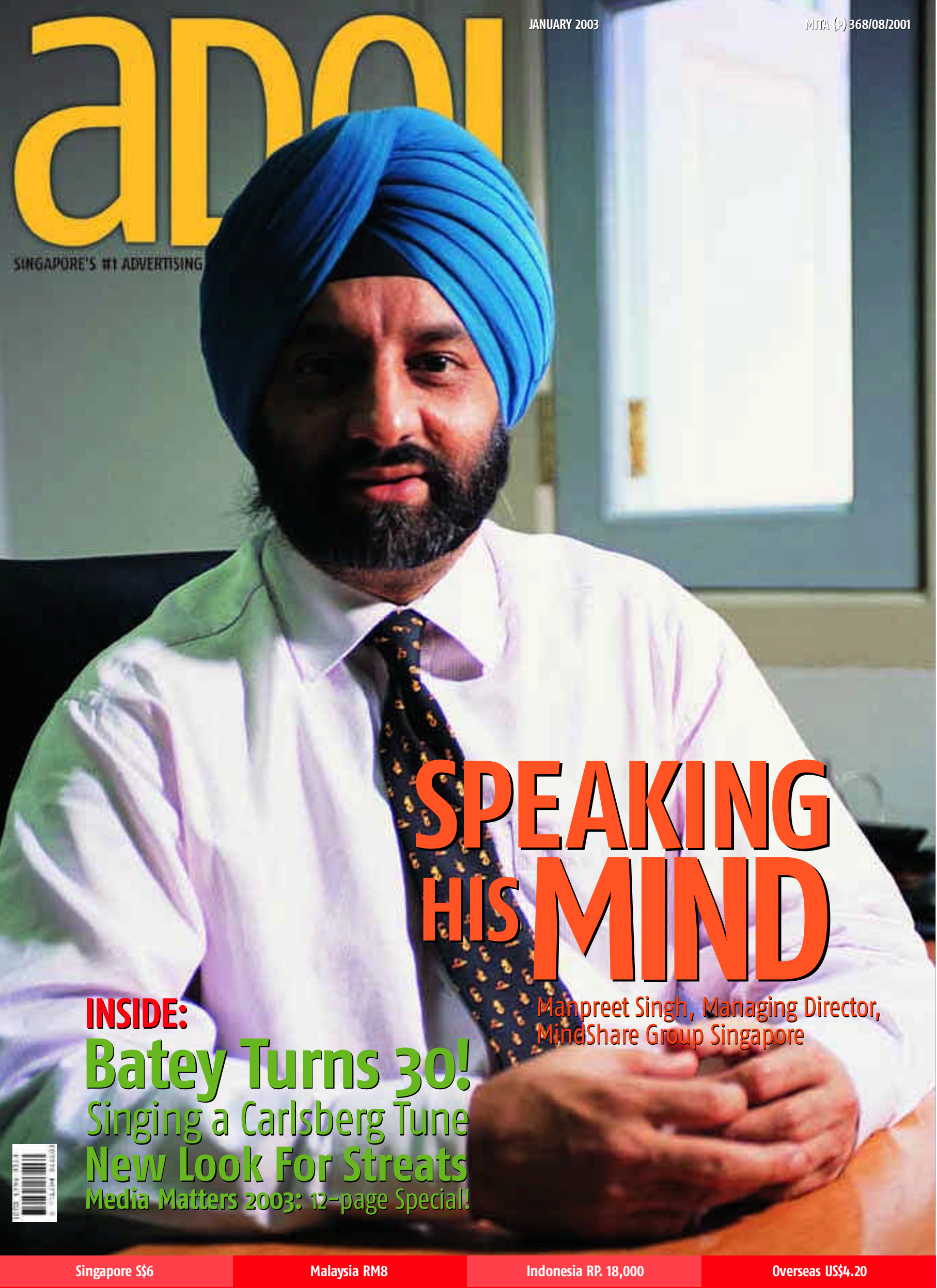


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# SPEAKING HIS MIND

**INSIDE:**

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Singing a Carlsberg Tune  
**New Look For Streets**  
Media Matters 2003: 12-page Special!

Manpreet Singh, Managing Director,  
MindShare Group Singapore



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# Editor's Note

MY name is Amit Jain and I'm the new man at the helm of ADOI Singapore. In my seven years as a journalist I have never found anything as difficult as writing a note of self-introduction. But here I am doing just that.

I come from the news broadcast industry. A few of you may perhaps remember me from my time at Channel NewsAsia. And if you don't, well, what the heck?

I grew up in Mumbai, a city that I still fondly remember as Bombay. There is something about that city that makes it a beacon of creativity and commerce. It was to be New Delhi, however, where I would get an opportunity to explore my career in journalism. I cut my teeth working for the BBC.

Experience tells me there will always be a story somewhere. The challenge is how to find it and tell it. This year expect more out of ADOI. I am here as much as an explorer as a storyteller. So if you have something to say let me have it. Let us enjoy this ride together. It's great to be on board. And I would not have been here if not for my good friend Ham Singh. He tells me this is going to be a roller-coaster challenge and I'm game.

As you all know, the spectre of war adds a new element of theatre to the world's uncertain stage. Uncertainty will be the catchword for 2003, even though the last quarter in the US shows ad spend there up by a minute fraction. The 10th Sikh Guru, once proclaimed, "If all means fail, it is righteous to draw the sword", reminiscent of Bush's war rhetoric these days. I hope that

by the time you read this January issue, battle with Iraq has not begun. Let's give peace a chance. As the great Mahatma Gandhi said, "An eye for an eye will make the whole world go blind."

And now, my apologies for doing a little commercial stand in my first editorial, but with the bombardment of claims by our competitors, we are compelled to set the record straight, once and for all, for 2003:

1. ADOI is Singapore's first and longest serving independent advertising and marketing communications magazine.
2. ADOI is Singapore's only advertising and marketing communications magazine whose circulation is audited by Media Circulation Services (MCS).
3. ADOI has the most affordable advertising rates compared to any other magazine in the same genre.

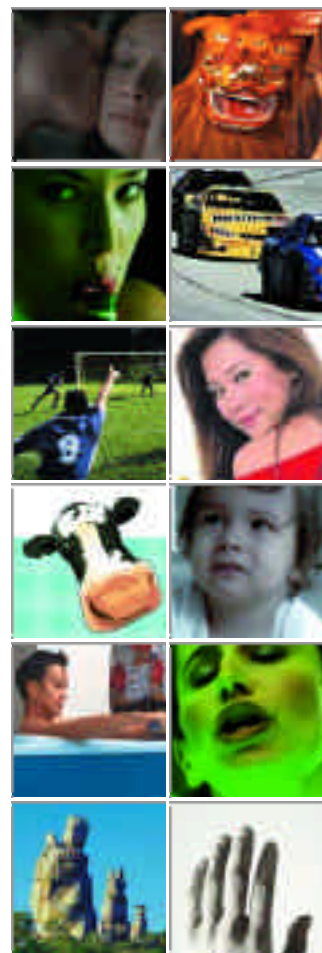
For those of you looking at 2003 and seeking ways to advertise, promote, publicise your company or enterprise to a captive audience of advertising and marketing professionals, these facts will come in handy.

Happy New Year and I hope your 2003 will be the best ever!

Respectfully,  
Amit Jain



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Manpreet Singh is dead set on making your media business his media business. As Mindshare's managing director extraordinaire, he's leading his group – and the entire media industry – to never before seen heights...

# MINDING YOUR BUSINESS!

IN this world, there are good people and then there are those who are truly great. The line that differentiates these people is clear and unwavering. Those who have met Manpreet Singh are sure to agree that he is one of those rare few who transcends the boundary.

Unlike many in the industry, Manpreet didn't enter the advertising industry straight out of school. Instead, he spent several years working for a publishing house in India after completing his postgraduate degree. Then he made the big switch.

"The opportunity arose to join a media owner in the publishing in 1983, and in those years they used to have one of the best training programs," Manpreet said. "If the training is right and the roots are strong, you tend to go fast. So I got trained in the publishing business; from editorial to production to distribution to marketing to business development."

The years Manpreet spent working in the publishing arena taught him many things.

In addition to learning to see things from a journalist's point of view, he said one also learns what drives writers to write and what inspires them to create. During this time, Manpreet said he developed the habit of reading which he believes is lacking in many younger planners today. But above all, because he also did some business development and selling, Manpreet said he developed the ability to appreciate things from both the media owner and the advertisers point of view.

"The one thing that came out that was a good thing is I always think media owners are your partners, not just your suppliers and people tend to think they are," he explained. "No, they're partners in your business and if you take that relationship forward, it's always good to find better solutions for your clients because your clients tends to be their clients as well."

Manpreet left the publishing world and joined the advertising industry about 16 years



Those who used this underpass could not have overlooked this campaign for Nike



The Award Winning Adam King Campaign for Guinness went all the way into the bathrooms of pubs

“The moment it went out of control, the costs went down and a lot of people went bust. There was no stopping the drop in costs; everybody thought they could get it cheaper from the next person”



ago when he came onboard with a division of Saatchi and Saatchi in India. A year later, he left and joined J Walter Thompson and has been with them ever since.

“I found out that the agencies had the upper hand because of their insights and their closer working relationships with the brand,” he said. “That’s was my break into media.”

Over the years, Manpreet said he’s seen the media industry change dramatically. As the advertising arena changed, media departments blossomed into media agencies. While Asia was slower to move in this direction, it has since caught up and has nearly drawn level with Europe on the industry playing field.

“Historically, ad agencies were known to have client servicing, creative, media... they used to have production departments, they used to have broadcast departments, they used to have a lot of different things but as things developed, they began to move out of the agency,” he said. “Over a period of time, media in Europe started first as a stand alone specialised unit. They saw that their investments were much larger and they wanted to be accountable to the business. Asia came in slower, but it came in with a vengeance. In less than five years in the whole industry, everybody got so active in the market and today 60 to 70% of the business is with media agencies.”

One channel that particularly intrigues Manpreet is the Internet, which evolved on its own without having to go through the agency phase. In spite of the ‘dotbombs’ in the 90s, Manpreet says the Internet is a viable channel that media specialists need to pay attention to.

“From a media specialist or media planners point of view, any channel that

delivers an audience is a media channel to be considered into the mix,” he said. “However large or small the audience it delivers, as long as it delivers audience that is suited to their brand profile at a cost that is acceptable, then that channel is an acceptable channel.”

Manpreet blames the ‘dotbomb’ era on a lack of proper planning, management and education. He said things went out of control in the 90s when investors found the initial returns failed to match the high cost of and changing technology. By lowering advertisement costs and not increasing education, everything went in a downward spiral.

“Everybody started talking about the price rather than the delivery, or the value or the quality of the media. Technology kept changing but the education in the market was low and everybody tried to get to the money first,” he said. “The moment it went out of control, the costs went down and a lot of people went bust. There was no stopping the drop in costs; everybody thought they could get it cheaper from the next person.”

To prevent this from happening again, Manpreet said MDigital was developed as a speciality unit of the Mindshare Group to train and educate professionals about the Internet and how it can in turn benefit advertisers.

“In the first two years or so it was tough to get people; we continued to invest and continued to learn. Today, we have a larger team and the highest number of clients and that makes us the largest digital interactive media planning and buying agency in Singapore. How you use the channel is very important!” he said gleaming with pride. “That’s how media has changed. Media is no more just a classic function of just planning and buying, it’s about finding solutions.”



While the media industry has changed over the past several years, Manpreet continues to base his life and the way he operates on what he calls his “four pillars” with a fifth being developed along the way. These are his mantra, his philosophy of life and work that he believes sets him and the Mindshare Group apart from the others.

“This is a philosophy,” he was clear to explain. “My four ‘Ps’ are people, passion, performance and perception. The fifth is one that we’re working on. It’s a personalised solution or personalisation of media.”

When it comes to people, Manpreet believes it’s about the kind of the people that an organisation has and the kind of people the clients have, as well as the kind of people who deliver the service to the clients. He said that Mindshare invests a lot of energy and money training its people from the junior level all the way up to the top management level and is determined to produce the best-trained people in the market.

Training ranges from seminars to workshops to creative and social sessions in places like the School of the Arts. In 2002 alone, about seven or eight training sessions were offered to the staff each month totalling about 78 for the year alone.

“In Singapore we have probably the best training programme. It runs under the banner of Aspire, the specialised unit that runs our training that we started two and a half years ago,” Manpreet said. “In our training, we bring in outside speakers, specialised people, creative people, business people, finance people, actual news people who have covered the news so that the planners know that news is not just ratings. This year, one of the sessions was cooking classes. How do we build morale is also part of the training.”

But Manpreet also believes that having the best-trained people means absolutely nothing if those people do not have the passion for what they do. Passion is what he believes helps the best people overcome obstacles set before them, making them creative and innovative especially in a small and controlled market like Singapore.

“It’s not a question of a big or a small market, if you’re ready to deliver unique, different, creative and challenging, you can do it. That’s what I believe. That’s where the passion factor has to come in,” he said, citing the example of Guinness’ “Adam King” campaign that recently won the Asia Pacific Media Award. “We’re in advertising, media is the discipline we specialise in, but the business is still advertising, making sure the communication for the client cuts across the clutter.” Manpreet said that without passion the Mindshare Group teams would

never have been able to come up with the innovative, first-time campaigns they pride themselves with.

“The first elevator advertisement was done for Nike here. The first pop-up newspaper advertising for KFC was done here. We’re the first one who did the whole taxi seat belt advertising for Amex. We were the first one who went into Shenton Way to create the first outdoor site for the Economist,” he said. “You create things that have not been done, it’s about how hard you think... in this business you must think three steps ahead rather than just in step. This is where the passion comes in.” In addition to people and passion, Manpreet is a strongly believes that it is important to have the most insightful or knowledgeable people in the market. This is where Mindshare Groups Speciality Units come in to play because they help the clients find new ways to target as well as understand the consumers more efficiently.



Another first by Mindshare Group, pop-up newspaper advertising for client KFC

“That’s why we will continue to invest in insights. We’re giving clients new brand insights and for the first time we’re looking at brands and media together, and rather than looking at just demographics, we look at the psychographics of the consumer,” Manpreet explained. “That’s why we went into 3-D. We’re the first in the market to do a full-scale survey. We’re also the first to do digital as well in terms of looking at psychographics of the consumer who use the internet... rather than saying ‘X number’ of people use the internet, we classified them in categories such as technophobes, etc. The whole project cost about a half a million dollars.”

But to Manpreet the buck stops at his fourth “P” which is performance. To him, this means accountability to the client and explained that this is why the Mindshare Group invests as much as it does into training and development of new technology software.

“At the end of the day, we are a media investment management company. We look at the investments of our clients and take that

and see exactly how accountable we are. The accountability still has to be very core, what does the investment do for them?” he said. “It’s good for both the client and agency to know where things are going. I have inculcated that the thinking that performance measurements are important as it keeps everybody on their toes. I’m accountable to my business, I’m accountable to the people who invest through us and we need to deliver the responses to their business.”

The fifth and still evolving “P” in Manpreet’s mantra is personalisation or in business terms, personalised media services. This is where the speciality units such as MDigital, MCI and Broadmind come in once again. Each of these units can customise services within their speciality and their services are readily available to clients. Mindshare Group will soon launch Activate, which will specialise in non-traditional media channels.

“A channel is a channel, how we reach a consumer irrespective of the mass or non-mass we’re looking at and how do we reach them in an interesting and creative way that they get closer to the brand,” Manpreet said. “We’ve done some of those projects but we’re formally introducing it under Activate. That is where the personalised solutions comes in, bring in the people who are on the ground level getting permissions, working with authorities, finding out ways right now to do things.”

All specialised units are resources for the three main units within the Mindshare Group – Mindshare, Maximise and Motivator. Each of these units has its own sets of clients and works with sets of agencies as stand alone businesses, Manpreet explained. But as part of the Mindshare Group, each may tap into one or more of the Speciality Units to obtain whatever services its needs for its clients.

With all these resources, it’s no wonder that the Mindshare Group is doing as well as it has done this year.

“We’ve had a good year this year. We’ve had a fair share of wins; quarters three and four have been exceptionally good for us. As a group, we’ve won about eight new businesses,” Manpreet gleamed. “What makes us so special that the clients hand us millions of dollars and say you invest this on my behalf? If it’s my money, I would think 200 times before doing that with anyone. Now’s the time to deliver! That’s why we have to make ourselves so knowledgeable, so creative, so special to become the organisation with the most passionate people. Somebody is trusting all that money to you, do you stand worthy of that trust?”