Bring in the Hari Raya cheers

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NO MORE tears. This year, Hari Raya commercial advertisements (ads) seem to be more on the cheerful side.

You might have watched the quirky ad by Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB), about a teenager who had to share his home with his relatives from 10 families.

The new campaign could be a continuity of its feel good Raya ads that were featured in previous years.

One might recall the iconic TNB ad, which depicted a working lady and her struggles in order to make it for the event with her family, only to have left the new clothes she bought for her siblings in the wash.

Now, even Petronas Nasional Bhd (Petronas), that used to sell sappy Raya greetings, is opting for humour. Its latest commercial ad seems to be a departure from the signature tear-inducing storylines that were used in previous years.

This year, Petronas offers a more lighthearted take with a group of siblings trying to surprise their parents for a Hari Raya Aidilfitri visit.

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Foote, Cone & Belding Kuala Lumpur (FCB KL) account management head Natasha Aziz said viewers are becoming more critical.

"An emotional piece of film is no longer the surefire way to connect with the audience who are on the lookout for something different, but still relevant to the season’s context,” she told The Malaysian Reserve.

She said creative agencies are taking inspiration from real stories and insights for their films, rather than fabricating a brand story just for the sake of it.

"This drives our passion to create work that changes behaviour, that makes the audience notice and change their actions or perception to a situation or topic,” she said.

FCB KL is the creative agency behind RH Bank Group’s Hari Raya Aidilfitri corporate video, which was inspired by a true story of a single mother, Padzilah Enda Sulaiman, founder of Telekung Siti Khadijah.

Natasha added that local festive advertising is equivalent to the US storytelling during the Super Bowl season.

"So in Malaysia, people look forward to festive ads. More brands are creating festive ads, but with this, lies the challenge of making sure our brands stand out from other brands messages are saying,” she said.

Meanwhile, sentiments among the social media users are in line with searching for more “true to life” advertisements for Hari Raya.

Twitter user @DanialYap said more brands are stepping up the advertisement game, especially during the festive season.

"Another great Hari Raya television (TV) commercial! Siti Khadijah brand. More and more are stepping up the game. No big budget, but a great message,” he said.

Similarly, Twitter user @Maxstev said Malaysia’s advertisements are growing smarter with each passing year, and moving away from the “sofests”.

"Nostalgia is good, but it’s getting old,” he said.

On the shift from TV storytelling to the digital medium, Natasha said brands feel less limited in terms of creativity and feel that there are better insights for their future works.

"Brands not having to limit themselves worrying about high TV media investments have created more opportunities for themselves to tell their festive stories via the digital medium.

"The landscape becomes even more exciting as there are better transparency to monitor, which piece of communications really do resonate with the hearts of the viewers during the festive period,” she said.

According to PricewaterhouseCooper’s Malaysia entertainment and media outlook 2015-2019, TV subscription is facing strong competition, thus its revenue will struggle to expand due to lower consumer spending, increased taxation and subsidies reduction.

The outlook report also states the advertising revenue is projected for stable growth at a compound annual growth rate of 4% over the 2014-2019 period, with limited changes in the share of total advertising expenditure.

The dominant platform is expected to be newspaper advertising, followed by TV, business-to-business and Internet advertising.
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The Malaysian Reserve

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12,000

Corporate Malaysia

423 cm²

RM 11,740

A boy happily playing with the sparklers. More brands are stepping up the advertisement game, especially during the festive season.