

Tim Love

Omnicom CEO for APIMA gets ...

Up close & personal

By EUGENE MAHALINGAM
eugenicz@thestar.com.my

TIM Love is a man of the world. He really enjoys talking about the experiences he's had across the globe – from the jolt his taste buds received when he first sank his teeth into a camel's paw, to how he was perceived as "odd" by some Japanese associates at a meeting when he politely held out a chair for a lady who was about to take a seat. "When I held the chair out, I was informed by the Japanese that this was not how they did things in the East," Love recalls, to which he immediately replied to his surprised Asian counterparts: "But this is how we do it in the West."

As the head of one of the world's leading marketing and communications services company, the assertive Love is rich with intriguing and colourful stories – and ideas. Considered a "guru" by his peers in the creative world, one can't help but wonder what are his thoughts on how to come up with a "good idea" these days.

Despite the advent of technology and the speed at which the world is developing today, Love still holds true to the way things are done.

"I think that the essence of coming up with ideas has not changed. You try to fill your head with as much information as you can," he tells *StarBizWeek* during a trip to Malaysia recently.

Love recalls reading about a study which revealed that 90% of a person's thought process is derived from the subconscious mind.

"If that's true, then the way to come up with ideas is to entertain the information that you have and then put it aside and do some other activity. Then, during that moment, when you're relaxed while your subconscious mind is still working on that information, you get an idea!"

But Love feels that no idea is "good enough" unless it evokes change.

"You can come up with ideas all the time but if they don't change the way you look at something or compel you to look at the world in a different way, then its value is less, in my opinion. I think people are looking for ideas that have more meaning in their lives," he says.

Man of the world

Love's fondness in sharing tales of his worldly adventures during the interview is evidence that the man definitely loves to travel – a fact that he openly admits to, and a passion that developed when he was a young boy.

Born in Ohio, Connecticut in 1948 to a television repairman who had a passion for airplanes, Love got to see much of the United States from the sky when he was growing up.

"My father flew in every state and took three little children in the back seat. I got to see a lot, also because of the televisions that were running in the house. I didn't know it at the time, but I think I was a "child of the media" before that term was known," Love reminisces.

Love also recalls that as he was growing up, he used to admire



BORN: Nov 26, 1948

PERSONAL: Married with three kids

HIGHEST QUALIFICATION: Masters of Science in Communications.

CAREER: Saatchi & Saatchi International vice-chairman, TBWA Worldwide global clients president, Omnicom group vice-chairman, Omnicom CEO for APIMA

FAVOURITE FOOD: Sautéed spinach and palak paneer

FAVOURITE PLACE: With my wife

HOBBY: Advertising and painting

VALUES: With my surname there is no doubt.

an older cousin who worked in Indonesia and told the most exotic travel stories.

"My cousin would come home every two years and relate the most romantic stories. When he got married in Singapore, I felt that was just so. Since then, I had always wanted to work internationally, so he was an influence on me."

Love began his career in advertising in 1972 after graduating with a master's degree in communication from the University of Illinois, where he was a James Webb Young Scholar and was named Most Outstanding Graduate by the school.

His undergraduate work was performed at Miami University in Ohio, where he had a dual major, in marketing and fine arts design. Love's career eventually landed him in New York, where his first was for a public service campaign for the Peace Corps.

In 1992, while with D'Arcy

Worldwide, Love moved to Belgium and assumed overall leadership for the agency's P&G business worldwide.

During this time, he led expansions into central and eastern Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America, while helping to P&G to launch Crest in China and introducing the *Always* feminine hygiene brand globally, including culturally-challenging markets such as Saudi Arabia, Kenya, Russia, India and China.

Love also oversaw the agency's Pampers business, winning an award from the United Nations Environmental Program for responsible marketing in 1992.

Prior to joining D'Arcy, Love headed his own agency, Tim Love Advertising. The agency created successful national advertising for *Lenscrafters*, *British Knights*, *Zena Jeans* and the National Committee for Adoption.

His work for the National Committee for Adoption won him recognition from the Effie, Telly and the International Broadcast Awards.

An active member of the advertising and international business

community, Love serves on several boards and advisory committees including The Advertising Council, The American Advertising Federation, The Heart of America Foundation, The Yale School of Management's Centre for Customer Insight and The Organisation of Women in International Trade. He was also a member of the 4A's Government Relations Council and served on self-regulatory panels for the National Advertising Review Council.

Love has had numerous articles published from his insight, papers and speeches on globalisation, consumer and cultural understanding. He has been a guest lecturer at many venues worldwide, including Oxford, Harvard, Yale and Columbia universities, The Institute for Public Diplomacy and Security at Ohio State, the United Nations Business Council and the Tokyo Foreign Correspondence Club.

Three of his key themes, namely *Think Like The Sun*, *The Race For Ideas* and *Advertising Industry Manifesto* have been published. He was also invited by the US State Department to write a white

be inspired

If you have a similar story to share, e-mail us at inspired@thestar.com.my

paper on the issue of rising anti-Americanism following 9/11.

Excerpts of this paper, titled *Walk the Talk: Think Like the Sun*, was published in 2003 by *Advertising Age* and featured in 2004 in a book *America The Brand*.

A book entitled *Think Like The Sun: The Secret to Building Global Lovemark Brands*, was published in 2001. Many of his works can be found today on his website, www.timlovesworld.com.

Over the course of his nearly 40-year career, Love has held senior client relationship positions in the United States and in other countries.

Prior to being appointed chief executive officer for Omnicom's Asia Pacific India Middle East Africa (APIMA) region, Love was vice-chairman of Omnicom Group. Before joining Omnicom, he was TBWA Worldwide (global clients) president, where he was responsible for the agency's largest global client, Nissan Motor Co, based in Tokyo, Japan.

Before joining TBWA in May, 2004, Love was vice-chairman (International) at Saatchi & Saatchi.

Doing it with Love

On his current position in Omnicom, where he is in charge of the APIMA region, Love discloses why having so many countries under the portfolio of the creative group is so important.

"I was very aware early on how relevant these countries were to us. For instance, Indonesia, with its young population, has the second largest Facebook community in the world."

"In 2009, we decided to include Africa, which was the year the first broadband cable was connected to East Africa. We also realised that South Africa would be hosting the (football) World Cup in 2010 and we knew people were going to see pictures of the country like they had never seen before. It was going to be an event that changed the world!"

Work aside, Love admits that he doesn't have much time to relax or do the things that he, well, "loves."

"I haven't been relaxed in a while. I like to paint but I haven't painted in a while. I enjoy reading. I read a lot of books but I don't finish them," he says.

Asked how he'd like to be remembered, Love enthuses that his abilities are often measured not by his abilities, but by his name.

"My name puts a lot of pressure on me. You have to realise that I'm not perfect. But the name kind of demands a certain behaviour. I would like to be known for making love more real – not just a notion that people talk about, but something tangible that they can actually experience."

"I like it to be real for my family, my wife as a husband, my children as a father and my colleagues. I think we all try to bring meaning to our names," he says.