

Star Media Group: Delivers personalized, relevant content to consumers based on data managed with Google Cloud



About Star Media Group

Star Media Group has been a trusted, long-standing source of news and content for Malaysians since 1971 and is the custodian of Malaysia's leading English news source, The Star. As a multichannel media group, Star Media Group's presence cuts across print, digital, events and exhibitions, radio, and video on demand, occupying pole position in many of these categories. The business is listed on the main board of Bursa Malaysia.

Industries: Media & Entertainment

Location: Malaysia

With Google Cloud Media Group is trained to meet the challenges of a technology-driven world the way consumers consume content: articles, video, and advertising. New in

include personalized
advertising that makes
relevant products and
services to consumers
in appropriate context

Google Cloud Platform (<https://cloud.google.com/>)

BigQuery (<https://cloud.google.com/bigquery/>)

Google Data Studio
(<https://datastudio.google.com/overview>)

Cloud Data Fusion
(<https://cloud.google.com/data-fusion/>)
(<https://cloud.google.com/data-fusion/>)

Google Cloud results

- Adapts to content consumers' changing preferences and behaviors
- Met the business's requirements for cost-effectiveness and scalability
- Enables the delivery of compelling business

Moves Star Media Group from an “attention business” to an “engagement business” that provides services to customers

solutions to clients

The media industry worldwide is transforming as new technologies revolutionize business models and change reading and viewing habits. Like all newspapers around the globe, **Star Media Group** (<https://www.starmediagroup.my/>)—publisher of The Star, the largest paid English language newspaper in Malaysia—is profoundly impacted by these changes. However, the diversified and technologically savvy Star Media Group is well equipped to transition successfully to the digital media age.

The Kuala Lumpur-headquartered organization also operates online portals, radio networks, video on demand, events, and magazines. Star Media Group employs about 1,200 people and publishes content that attracts about 20 million visitors per month. “We are more than a newspaper,” says Freddy Loo, Senior General Manager, Digital Products & Analytics at Star Media Group. “We aim to inform, educate, and entertain Malaysians and, increasingly, other ASEAN citizens, through our properties and help businesses grow their brands.”



Readership habits changing

Loo is acutely aware of the scale of disruption to Star Media Group's traditionally print advertising-focused business. "Over the last several years, readership habits have changed as consumers move from reading newspapers to online content and their attention spans shorten," he says. "In addition, consumers want to read less, watch more video, and interact with content and content creators."

About 15 months ago, Star Media Group recruited Loo to develop and execute a plan to equip the organization to thrive in the digital environment—with data analytics key to the transformation. "We need to move from an 'attention business' that shares information by delivering news to eyeballs, to an 'engagement business' that provides services to consumers," he says. "Star Media Group has to become an ecosystem business that operates a

platform providing relevant products, services, and content to specific audiences.”

However, Star Media Group’s existing infrastructure and systems were poorly equipped to enable the transition. For example, data about customers resided in disparate systems, making timely reporting, analysis, and decision-making extremely difficult.

“We selected a service that met our needs for flexibility, scalability, cost-effectiveness and agility—and enabled us to take advantage of seamless integration and the easy movement of data from sources such as

Google Analytics
360. BigQuery
was the natural
choice to pull all
our information
into a single
source.”

—*Freddy Loo, Senior General
Manager, Digital Products &
Analytics, Star Media Group*

A transformational data platform

Star Media Group decided to transition away from its existing infrastructure and established criteria for a data platform that would future-proof the business. “First, we had to be agile,” says Loo. “This meant being able to react fast, make changes quickly, and demonstrate clear results. We also needed the ability to change and refine predictive models to account for changing circumstances. Further, the platform had to be cost-effective and scalable.”

The organization also based its decision on the availability of developers and engineers already skilled in the platform and the ease with which technology professionals could learn to use the platform. “All

these factors combined led me to Google Cloud,” says Loo.

Star Media Group embarked on its [Google Cloud](https://cloud.google.com/) (<https://cloud.google.com/>) journey in January 2019 with the deployment of a [BigQuery](https://cloud.google.com/bigquery/) ([/bigquery](https://cloud.google.com/bigquery/))-powered analytics data warehouse. “We selected a service that met our needs for flexibility, scalability, cost-effectiveness and agility—and enabled us to take advantage of seamless integration and the easy movement of data from sources such as Google Analytics 360,” says Loo. “BigQuery was the natural choice to pull all our information into a single source.”

The business built its Google Cloud-powered platform—including data ingestion—in six to eight months, using two-to-four weeks sprint cycles from ideation to implementation and deployment.

Customers “key to everything”

BigQuery enables Star Media Group to seamlessly capture and analyze data about its customers, who Loo describes as “key to everything.”

“If we can track and understand customers’ life events such as buying a house, acquiring a car, or finding a school for their children, and capture what they read, like, and visit, we can build a comprehensive view of the individual—and tailor our content to their needs.”

Star Media Group is also using [Google Data Studio](https://marketingplatform.google.com/about/data-studio/) (https://marketingplatform.google.com/about/data-studio/) to provide interactive dashboards and reports to support business decision-making and [Cloud Data Fusion](#) (/data-fusion) for fully managed, cloud-native, data integration to support extract, transform, load (ETL) pipelines.

Star Media Group is now exploring the potential of machine learning through Google to provide more relevant, personalized content and a better experience for customers. “I want to use machine learning to show customers content based on what they have viewed previously and on what we know about them—for example, whether a consumer likes football, follows a particular team, and reads any coverage of that club,” says Loo. “So a machine learning-powered app would scrutinize each item of content and enable us to promote the most items to the consumer involved.”

“Furthermore,” he adds, “we would be able to deliver relevant digital advertising to customers—for example, for people interested in travel, I could show advertising related to desirable destinations.”

Ideally positioned to reap rewards of investment

Star Media Group is now ideally positioned to reap the rewards of its investment in Google Cloud. “Fourteen months after embarking on our digital transformation

program, we have implemented an end-to-end platform enabling data injection, storage, analysis, reporting, and machine learning,” says Loo. “We are close to completing automation and data hygiene tasks, and we’re now implementing rigorous governance to protect any data we capture.”

Over the next 12 months, Loo plans to work on delivering business value by helping editors and producers identify the type of content that sparks consumers’ interest—and the device that content works best on. This activity will power a broader agenda of reshaping Star Media Group.

“Google Cloud is giving me enormous support on this journey as I help the business realize the power of analytics.”

—*Freddy Loo, Senior General Manager, Digital Products & Analytics, Star Media Group*

“From an organizational perspective, we have to change from relying heavily on advertising revenue to focusing on our relationship with our audiences,” he explains. “All our teams—including editorial and advertising—need to understand our audiences better and our advertising and business teams in particular need to provide compelling solutions to clients who spend money with us.”

“As a business, we need to transform from a news content portal to a hyper-relevant source of information that inspires communities and enables businesses to thrive”

“Google Cloud is helping us progress from the perspective of people, process and culture.”

—*Freddy Loo, Senior General Manager, Digital Products & Analytics, Star Media Group*

A trajectory of success

With Google Cloud, Star Media Group is now well positioned to continue on its trajectory to success in the digital age. “Google Cloud is giving me enormous support on this journey as I help the business realize the power of analytics,” says Loo. “Understanding how others are addressing the challenges of transformation, being able to do proofs of concept quickly and easily, and demonstrate results are helping me change the mindset of our workforce and go to market with our new approach.”

“Google Cloud is helping us progress from the perspective of people, process, and culture.”

**Learn
More**

Reach out to
our team to see
how Google
Cloud can help
your business.

<https://cloud.google.com/customers/star-media-group/>

