

# WORKING WITH INDUSTRY TO DRIVE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER CHOICES

## A CASE STUDY



Dr Ngan Vo, Lecturer in Digital Marketing at the University of Exeter, reflects on how working between industry and academia can support values-driven research.

Ngan has experienced firsthand the devastating impact of climate change. When completing her PhD in British Columbia, she was forced to evacuate her home to escape wildfires. For Ngan, this urgent crisis requires innovative solutions, and her research considers how to influence consumers to make more sustainable choices.

Companies and governments alike are struggling to encourage people to adopt environmentally conscious habits. Ngan's research focuses on the marketing of sustainable products and the role of nostalgia in shaping consumer choices. Her work demonstrates that nostalgia can foster a sense of community and belonging, which then encourages individuals to make choices which benefit the broader community.

After completing her bachelors in Ho Chi Minh City, Ngan worked as an Associate Research Manager with Ipsos, managing quantitative research teams. She transitioned back to academia in 2018, getting an MBA in Hawai'i and a PhD from the University of Manitoba in Canada before joining the University of Exeter in 2023. Alongside her research, she lectures in Digital Marketing in the Department of Management.

Living, studying and working all around the world has shaped Ngan's perspective. She has learnt a lot about approaches to protecting the environment and natural resources from friends from different indigenous communities, and her research continues to be enriched by a network drawn from diverse academic and professional experiences.

*"I work with businesses that are genuinely committed to embedding sustainable practices."*

Working with businesses that are genuinely committed to embedding sustainable practices, and not just greenwashing for public image, is crucial to Ngan. When looking for an industry partner for her research into nostalgia, she was able to draw on her diverse network to collaborate with a business that truly aligned with her values. By working with industry partners, she can ensure her research helps to shape the behaviour of real consumers in the wider world.

Ngan's experience in industry has equipped her with the skills to communicate effectively across different sectors, and she continues to draw on partnerships beyond academia to enrich her research into consumer behaviours. She encourages early career researchers to make use of platforms like LinkedIn. Supporting other people's work can help us to gain reach, and approaching industry contacts with ideas for collaboration can lead to exciting opportunities. Even if you only get one reply, that's a success!

### Nostalgia Ad



## AT A GLANCE

### TOP TIPS

- Collaborate with businesses you trust and understand
- Be confident when making connections
- Build a diverse network



**DR NGAN VO**

LECTURER IN DIGITAL MARKETING

"I want my research results to have meaning beyond academia, including for businesses, consumers and the wider world."