



ANCL

DRIVING BUSINESS AND CHANGE THROUGH EVENTS



## LAKEHOUSE

Lakehouse - was founded in 1926 as a vehicle to fight for independence. It was the first major newspaper group in the country to be owned by locals and the first to publish in the all three languages.

In the years preceding and after Independence the paper exerted enormous influence. The paper was nationalized in 1973 becoming the bedrock of the state owned media.

In recent years there has been a decline in subscriptions, sales and trust. Where once it was a synonym for media in Sri Lanka - today the group and our papers must battle for relevance against online outlets and private competitors.



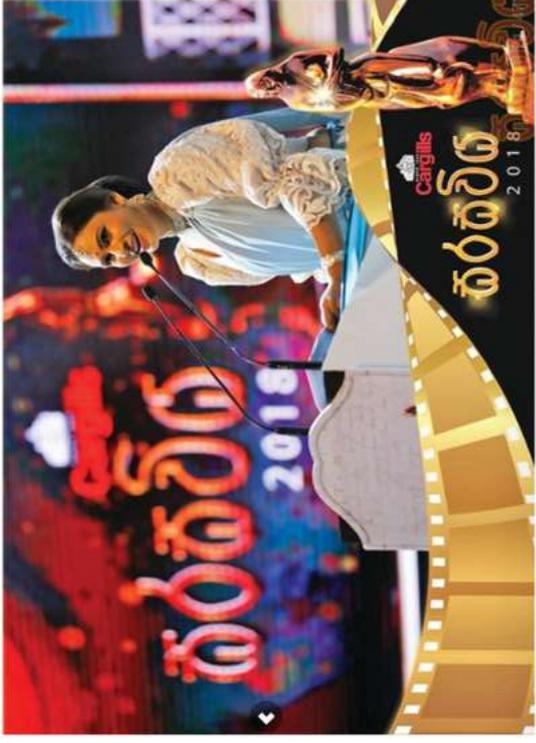
- Sri Lanka went through a change in government in 2015. The new government was keen to revive the ANCL.
- In 2015 the group was operating
  - 3 daily newspapers
  - 3 weekend newspaper
  - and nearly 30 periodicals
- A new management was put in place
- Given falling revenues and limited capital to reinvest we identified events as a means of driving growth and visibility.
- Moved to establish an events unit.
- Key insight was to leverage on heritage brands and niches.
- Identifying heritage brands.



- The Sarasaviya magazine is devoted to the Sinhala film industry.
- Established in 1963 it was the voice of the film industry but over time as interest in local films diminished and online portals emerged magazine sales declined.
- The Sarasaviya Film Festival - was the Oscars of the local film industry - held from 1964- 2000s', Effectively stopped after 2004.
- Our insight was that no true showcase for local films existed and the time was ripe for reviving an industry show piece.



- The response to our revival plans was extremely strong.
- With interest from sponsors we launched a revived festival.
- We saw interest in the publication and circulation rapidly increase after the event was announced.
- We introduced a peoples vote system tied to sales which would further drive circulation .
- Circulation went from under 25000 to over 50,000.
- Over 2000 people would attend the event .
- Sponsorships and rising magazine sales would generate profits.





# OBSERVER

## SCHOOL BOY CRICKETER

- A competition and award ceremony for players in the local school cricket league.
- Driven by our flagship Sunday English Newspaper. - the event has been held since 1978.
- The winners in many cases have gone on to play for the national team and succeed on the world stage.
- We revamped and increased the scale of the awards including school girls and new categories for the differently abled.
- We tied voting for the most popular cricketer to a coupon driven voting system - which boosted sales.
- Teams sent to cover matches would increase engagement with students and teachers - making the Sunday Observer the leading publication for school cricket- an important niche.



- Considerably increased sales for the 4 month period of the competition.
- Doubled sponsorship revenues.
- Our coverage Increased crowds and attendance at matches
- Increased web traffic on our sports pages:
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- Launched skills development workshops with Tharunie our Young Women Focused magazine
- Launched annual discussions on the future and state of journalism as part of the group founders day
- Launched Beach Clean Ups under our Sinhala Daily newspaper Lanka Deepa Brand
- Observer Jobs Education Fairs
- And Reading Groups with Daily News our English Language Daily
- Thinnakaran - Our Tamil language daily launched workshops in Jaffna on supplementing income.



A panel discussion on  
**The dangers of online anonymity,  
 fake news and online hate**  
 to mark the 131<sup>st</sup> birth anniversary of

*D R Nayandeno*  
 today

at Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of  
 International Relations and Strategic Studies  
 4.30 p.m. onwards  
*Only by invitation*

**LAKE HOUSE**





- For publications - either print or digital - events are near essential and can be a key revenue driver.
- There is near endless demand for recognition - and newspapers as gatherers and dissemination of information are best placed to meet this demand.
- Beyond awards - from reading groups, to food appreciation clubs, markets, car clubs, education and skills sessions gathering people and communities together is a core part of publishing today.

- Journalists are not event planners
- Establishing a dedicated unit for events was a clear success for ANCL.
- Auditing existing products and speaking to reporters is important in terms of establishing opportunities.
- We are in the newspaper business not the events business so events must be tied to core products

THANK YOU