

FIRST
FIVE ©
RUNGS

FFR
NEWS
LETTER

03

APR

2026

A black and white photograph of an astronaut in a full space suit, floating in space. The astronaut is wearing a helmet with a reflective visor and has various pieces of equipment attached to their suit. The background is a dark, starry space. The image is framed by vertical lines and includes registration marks (crosshairs) at the top left, top right, and bottom left.

Updates, Upcoming Events & More

Contents

Kia ora - - - - -	3
The Quarterly WIP - - - - -	4
FFR TALKS – AI - - - - -	5
What’s been going on in Wellywood? - - - - -	6
It’s Totally Normal Workshop - - - - -	7
Mind Expansion - - - - -	8



Kiia Ora

Hello again!

Welcome to the April edition of the First Five Rungs newsletter

Not to be that newsletter but... WTF... 2026 is flying by fast. Sometimes it catches you off-guard like an urgent brief flitting into your inbox at 4.30PM (hehe just a quick one dw!!!). The office AC is inexplicably set to either “freeze” or “roast”, and we’re all becoming wiser to the fact that a cheeky mid-week wine can sometimes go awry.

With all this passage of time stuff setting a bright mood, let’s dive into what has happened and what’s kicking off soon.



The Quarterly WIP

Up in Auckland, we held our first ever Quarterly WIP sesh over at the beautiful sun-splashed Blue on Franklin Road.

What's a Quarterly WIP you ask? It's our way of bringing together the local advertising community for a casual and light-hearted spot of conversation before heading into the office for the day. No matter your coffee order,

there's a new friend or soon-to-be LinkedIn connection there for you!

The turnout for our first Quarterly WIP session completely blew us away, so we're super excited to see you all again soon. Our next WIP is in early June so keep your eyes peeled for our announcement.

GET YOUR EM—DASHES READY

FFR TALKS

DATE

Wednesday 13 May

TIME

6:00 - 8:00 pm

LOCATION

dentsu Aotearoa,
68 Sale St.

FIRST
FIVE
RUNGS

POWERED BY
LUMO

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

FFR TALKS – AI

AI is changing the game, but what does that actually mean when you're just starting out in advertising?

Join us for a First Five Rungs event designed to cut through the hype and give you a real-world perspective on how AI is shaping both media and creative careers. From streamlining workflows to unlocking entirely new ways of thinking, the impact is already here, and it's only getting bigger.

Hear from the Experts

Whether you're in media, creative, strategy, or just curious about where AI might fit into your career, this is your chance to hear honest insights, ask your "stupid questions," and get inspired by people already putting this tech into practice.

The line-up includes:



Jake Calder – Digital innovation leader and AI strategist with nearly a decade in advertising



David Gillard-Allen – Award-winning emerging creative from dentsu Aotearoa

DETAILS:

When: Wednesday, 13 May 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Where: Dentsu Aotearoa, 68 Sale Street, Auckland

Who: Professionals in their first five years at a Comms Council Agency

Tickets: Free (includes catering, come hungry!) Tickets are limited, so grab yours today..

Click here to get your tickets today!

<https://events.humanitix.com/ffr-talks-ai>



What's been going on in Wellywood?

During the first week of April, First Five Rungs Wellington hosted an event at Special Wellington focused on burnout in the advertising industry. The evening began with drinks, pizza, and a beautiful cheeseboard, before moving into a panel discussion that brought together young agency professionals and industry veterans to openly discuss the challenges of burnout - an issue many experience but rarely address. The panel

shared personal stories and practical insights on how to manage burnout, especially for those new to the industry. It was fantastic to see such a close-knit network of young talent in the Wellington advertising community.

Huge thanks to Special Wellington & our fantastic speakers Mareika Papez, Matt Barnes, Georgia McNaught, & Jemma Titheridge.



AD NET ZERO
ALL FOR NONE

WORKSHOP

SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOUR
CHANGE IN CREATIVE WORK

It's Totally Normal Workshop

Sustainable Behavior Change

Katie Hartranft, VP, Group Account Director / Sustainability Director at world-renowned The Martin Agency has generously made available to the Ad Net Zero community the deck that she created for her agency.

She's designed a workshop that speaks directly to creative strategists, creatives and producers, based on her experience as an integrated part of these teams over the past 10 years.

"It's Totally Normal - Sustainable Behavior Change" is a fun, edgy, accessible and thought-provoking – showing how sustainability be integrated in a variety of ways from brief to design to production, and how constraints drive creativity and better outcomes.

What participants will gain:

- + A 360 degree understanding of how sustainability can be incorporated early

on which drives the flywheel for the rest of the campaign – with specific examples from Strategy, Production and Creative.

- + Tips on how to gain buy-in from leadership, and clients.
- + A new look at how constraints drive creativity and better outcomes.
- + Experience working through a brief with mock examples in a team setting.

While this is particularly applicable for those in strategy, creative, production and account roles, but would also be good education for others to better understand those functions and support opportunities to drive more sustainable practices! If you have clients that would be interested to attend with you, please let us know and this should be possible!

Date & Time: Apr 29, 2026 11:00 AM

Location: Online

[Click here to register today!](#)

Mind Expansion

Here's what the FFR crew
have been a bit kinda maybe
obsessed with lately:



Vinny ♥'s - Substack

I might be late to the party but I'm loving this platform. With IG and TikTok in a race to the bottom to rot our brains, this is a place you can go for a bit of an attention reset. Some super cool, unique writers offering fresh perspectives on whatever you might be into, like [this Substack from The Social Juice](#).



Crystal ♥'s - Skittles Brand Book

Call me a Nerd, but I do LOVE referring back to the Skittles brand book (heh geddit???).

You see, brand books and strategy docs are what I read... recreationally. Super sad right? Anyways. What's not sad is the Skittles brand book! It's a glorious demonstration of the strategy behind Skittles' weirdness, which has continued to work for them far beyond the book's publication.