

Get set for the TiVo-lution

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By Andrea Sopocleous

SYDNEY: Advertising agencies are living in the past and will die a painful death if they miss the greatest creative revolution since the advent of television, according to visiting heavyweight Kevin Roberts, worldwide CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi.

In Australia to promote *Lovemarks: The future beyond brands*, the book outlining his philosophy that brands that inspire loyalty beyond reason move into the sphere of love, Roberts said brand and retail saturation and the advent of technology such as TiVo were changing the face of advertising.

“Agencies either find it terrifying and are therefore ignoring it, or are saying ‘it’s only the early adopters [using TiVo]’, said Roberts. However, while 96% of TV viewing in the US is currently conducted in real time, Roberts said that would drop to 60% within three years as use of TiVo spreads. The UK is also experiencing TiVo frenzy and Roberts expects 40% of all UK households will own the ad-zapping digital video recorder within three years. Locally, Foxtel Digital is set to launch TiVo-like personal video recorders in less than a year.

“Viewers will zap television commercials unless other things occur – that can be frightening or liberating,” he said. “It’s actually creatively exciting because you have to make things watchable. You can no longer bludgeon people with bland advertising.” This means agencies and clients will have to move from directive advertising to permission advertising, said Roberts.

However, agencies were not entirely to blame, he added. “It’s not only creatives . . . it’s also clients. When you sell them an idea, they want to see what it will look like on TV.”

The 30-second TVC will never die, Roberts said. “It has to become desirable and watchable. “The creative renaissance will be about eight-minute films, owning *Survivor* or broadcast streaming on your [mobile] phone.”