

EPOHA: THE MAGAZINE FOR CULTURAL COMMUNICATION.

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1. Mister Roberts, when did you realize that LOVE is important for the future of marketing?

When I joined Saatchi & Saatchi in 1997 brands were a sinking ship. Brands had been built on rational and functional benefits. Product proliferation and ferocious competition was blending them into an indistinguishable pulp. Respect, trust and performance were everywhere. The top three in any category had them. It was clear to me that to drive premiums, loyalty had to go beyond reason. The ad agencies were simply pumping emotional icing onto rational value propositions. I could see that Saatchi & Saatchi had made the first critical step in creating strong emotional connections. As consumers took control I saw that what they wanted was the whole cake, they wanted value propositions that consumed and connected with their emotions on a higher level. When the Love Bug virus hit computers around the world in 2000 I felt I was on the right track. Three irresistible words: "I love you". And bang, reason flew. I knew long-term emotional relationships were the key. I knew that as marketing became central to business, the deepest human emotion of all, Love, would drive the future.

2. Why do people in business translate LOVE as INTEREST?

Whatever their angle on this, probably because love is interest. Love doesn't lie. It rolls up its sleeves, puts its heart out there and takes its chances. So successful marketing (political advertising aside!) always tells the truth. The digital revolution has been a fantastic thing for consumers. If a person, product, service or experience cheats or deceives, it's going to get dumped lightening fast. If it truly touches consumers, they'll spread the feeling in a digital flash. Love is in everyone's interest.

3. What makes Mickey Mouse a special legendary mouse, Elvis Presley the king of rock, Marilyn Monroe the queen of seduction, Campbell's soup the soup above all soups and Coca-Cola the drink we just can't resist?

Each has connected on an emotional level that goes beyond reason. Through mystery, sensuality and intimacy – and the spread of pop culture - ownership long ago passed to the people who love these five great icons. During WWII Coke promised that any US soldier would be able to buy a Coke for a nickel. That's a connection beyond reason. Look at what happened when Coca-cola screwed with the traditional recipe in 1985, Consumers said, forget it, you don't own Coke. We do.

4. Marshall McLuhan said that the media is the message, Roger Ailes claims that every person is the message. I would like to know what does Kevin Roberts think about the impact of the message being send

intuitively by a person, compared to the one being imposed by the creator of the intentional message for the public?

I'm not a McLuhan or Ailes fan. It's not about the medium being the message or about you being the message. It's about what is inside the message, be that a product, person, service, experience... whatever. It's about the power of an idea and an emotional connection in a space that makes the world a better place. That could be Martin Luther King saying: "I have a dream" on TV or a cool innovation like Gillette's M3Power razor InStore. If the creative message is imposed it won't connect. You can't talk at consumers – or bore them to submission. You have to listen, engage, connect and inspire. This is where intuition plays a powerful role.

5. How to create a product that will individually broadcast its own programmes and emissions?

If you create a Lovemark you attract a super-evolved category of consumer. We call them Inspirational Consumers, the people who love a brand beyond reason. They are the passionate advocates, the radical optimists, the storytellers, the trendsetters, the moral guardians, the co-creators, the great hearts who bring brands to a boil and make them Lovemarks for many. Dynamic value creation now lies between idea-led, velocity-driven, innovation at the design end and Inspirational Consumer experience and influence at the network end.

6. You often mention passion in your book 'Lovemarks'. We know from experience of life itself that passion is sometimes not the direct road to 100% LOVE. How to recognize the path to eternal LOVE, productwise, and how to know that it's just a temporary illusion? Passion – together with commitment and empathy – forms part of Intimacy. And intimacy is part of a holistic whole, which includes Mystery and Sensuality. Time does change everything. To sustain a loving relationship you have to constantly work with all three. How do you keep a product relationship fresh? Like any other relationship, first with mystery and surprise. Consumers want constant innovation and great companies give it to them. Procter & Gamble's detergent leader Tide is a great example of relentless innovation, with products ranging from Tide Coldwater to Tide StainBrush - sales up 2.6% over the last year in a category growing less than 1%. How do you stimulate a relationship? By tuning into all five senses. Steve Jobs of Apple has done this magnificently with Apple and PIXAR. And Intimacy? Ask Howard Schultz who made Starbucks a third home. Something like 30 million people visit a Starbucks each week.

7. Sergio Zyman /'The End of Marketing as we know it' /concludes his book with the following words: 'Traditional marketing is not dying, it's dead.' Do you agree with him and if yes why? Please explain your affirmation or negation of this notion.

Traditional marketing is built around emotional storytelling, which is alive and well. What's dead in today's Attention Economy is the right to insult consumers with a crap story. Most of the stuff that passes for advertising

today uses just another horrible “-er” message... bigger, better, brighter, faster. Consumers ignore this rubbish. They’re in charge. They’re smart. They want to be turned on not turned off. Is the mass market disappearing? Yes. Are traditional media like TV dying? No. This is the Age of Also. No media dies. TV is becoming part of a bigger on-screen picture that connects at home, Online, Instore and On-the-go through Sight, Sound and Motion. SiSoMo is the future of emotional storytelling.

8. How to find inspiration among today's strong domination of money-loving, fast living people?

I don't believe material or lifestyle attributes get in the way of inspiration. Inspiration means to be “In Spirit.” It's everywhere because it's in all of us. Think of it as fresh bread. When the heat is on, it rises. People feed off it, which gets them cooking more of it and feeding others.

9. What is your opinion about global and anti-global streams in today's world and how do these streams intersect in defining cultural diversities and similarities of various cultures?

Globalisation is pretty much dead. Or it's been and gone. People love to sample other cultures but they define themselves by their differences. Everything starts in the local, where real people live. I think we're seeing a retreat towards local values and this is incredibly important for value-add in any initiative. Diversity is the key to competitive advantage. It's not about thinking or acting global. It's act local; go global. Go LoGlo.

10. Mister Roberts, modern world is occupied by terrorism and fear. How to build the bridges for better communication between all the nations?

Through love and inspiration. They cross every boundary. They speak a language that everyone understands. They bring the world together like no force on earth.

11. At the end of our conversation, please let us know the secret formula of your LOVE for the world?

I believe business is the engine of human progress. I believe the role of business is to make the world a better place – that business can build an inclusive world. Business crosses cultural and political borders. It goes where other institutions like government can't. When you bring together design, enterprise, emotion and inspiration you can generate phenomenal uplift (last year was the most prosperous in human history). It takes courage to dream. It takes courage to make a difference. But who wants to do anything less?