



Kevin Roberts, CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi, Author of Lovemarks (INTERVIEW)

In the world of marketing, Kevin Roberts is a legend. Kevin is the worldwide CEO of Saatchi and Saatchi and the author of Lovemarks, the best-selling doctrine that teaches you how to evolve your brand into a 'lovemark' that people adore.

Personally, Lovemarks is one of my favorite books the concepts will continue to inspire me until the day that people start tattooing Trend Hunter on their bodies, [like this woman](#).

Kevin also sent along a copy of, 'The Lovemarks Effect', the sequel to his best selling book. If you were a fan of the first, check out the latest edition which explores inspirational stories from 'Lovemarks Inspirational Owners and Consumers'. Also make sure to browse Lovemarks.com, an interactive site devoted to your favorite marks.

As a visionary CEO, Kevin has a lot of insightful and entertaining answers to our questions. He also had this to say about Trend Hunter, "The winners will be those who get to the future first.... Trend Hunter gets you out of the blocks fast... then it's down to you."

As a side note, I'll be speaking with Kevin at the [Youth Marketing Mega Event](#) in March, but it was great to grill him with these questions in advance:

13 Questions with Kevin Roberts

1. How did you get involved in marketing and what motivates you to continue?

I needed a job so in the late 60s I headed for London. Working with fast minds and hot chicks seemed a good idea, so I nailed a job at the influential London fashion house Mary Quant. Quant was the rising pulse of London - miniskirts, hot pants and make-up to make love in. I got the job because I had learnt French and Spanish, and Quant was moving into Europe. I worked for Mary for three years, opening new markets for her cosmetics line. I had no idea what I was doing, but I kept moving quickly. I learned about speed. The average product life cycle was nine months. You had to be decisive, intuitive, but most of all, fast. I found that I really liked marketing. Later I went to Gillette, Pepsi and P&G. But it was the passion, the inspiration and joy of those early Quant days, and that feeling still motivates me (especially since I met my wife Ro there). Thirty five years on, the world has changed and

marketing has never been more important. Business is the engine of human progress and marketing both powers and directs it. Marketing is the vital link between producers and consumers because it inspires action. Its role is to communicate ethical, true, entertaining ideas that translate thought into action. And Mary and I are still friends.

2. How significant are the topics of cool hunting and trend spotting in the world of marketing?

Cool hunters and trend spotters are fast followers. People like to know where the cool fish and the shoals are swimming, so they can swim along. Marketers need to know this, to connect in the right place at the right time in the right way. Out in front - leading the hunters and spotters - is that which changes the future. An Idea.

3. How do you define a trend?

A fad that gets serious. Like Pop Up Stores.

4. How do you define cool?

Attitude infused with timeless style. Steve McQueen, Muhammad Ali, Ben Sherman... "effortless cool takes attention to detail."

5. Do you need a culture of innovation to create something that is cool?

You need a culture of rebellion, an elastic-sided sand box, a mindset that rules are made to be tested. Currently just two top U.S. MBA schools offer courses in creativity, and only one European school has incorporated design into its curriculum. At Cambridge University (UK) Judge Business School, where I'm CEO in Residence, we're changing that. We're stretching the walls of the sand box with a unique creativity workshop that can be successfully applied to any industry, to generate momentous ideas. Inevitably you do need process and planning elements to culture innovation (read P&G's Connect and Develop). But if you're not stretching the boundaries with spontaneous ideas, you're going nowhere quick.

6. Do you need a cool company to create a Lovemark?

Not essential, but helps. Apple and Google drip with cool, which is lovable. All you really need is love - mystery, sensuality and intimacy.

7. What is the best way to create an infectious idea, product or service?

Pour imagination and love into whatever turns you on, hand control over to consumers, then explore where they're going, how they're feeling and keep moving forward.

8. What is the key to innovation?

Connecting stuff. Emotionally. And daring to dream.

9. Have your views about branding changed between Lovemarks and your October release of The Lovemarks effect?

They haven't. Lovemarks is the aim. The Effect shows how to get there.

About Kevin Roberts

10. How do you divide your work time between your writing, speaking engagements and leadership of Saatchi & Saatchi? By just doing stuff I love.... and living every day to the max.

11. How do you reset yourself to be creative? (E.g. do you have any rituals, do you set aside time for creativity, etc.)

1. Personal space. At home. iPod playing Dylan. Jo Malone candle burning. Pen and blank foolscap pad to hand. And smile on face. Everyday!; and

2. Surrounding myself with Ideas people, problems and no boundaries.

12. Professionally, what do you want to be doing or studying in 10 years?

Latest in life/work integration - not balance!... this equals compromise. Integration. How to get the best of both; everyday.

13. What are your most important hobbies?

Rugby (the game they play in heaven).

Music – 60s, HonkyTonk, Folk, Rock

Art – Contemporary New Zealand

Thanks Kevin!