

THE DAILY ORANGE

Global advertising CEO discusses what it means to love a brand

By Rachel Lena Budd on Thursday, October 16, 2008

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Kevin Roberts was kicked out of high school at 17 years old.

He is now the CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi, an international advertising agency. He spoke at Syracuse University Thursday afternoon in the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications' Joyce Hergenhan Auditorium.

He became the CEO of Pepsi-Cola Middle East in 1987 at age 32, and 11 years ago he was hired as CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi.

Roberts' lecture included subjects like brand loyalty, the importance of positive attitudes, the economy and the environment.

He said the "go green" movement should be renamed "true blue." The true blue idea, he said, benefits not only the environment but also the economy and societies on an international scale.

"Green is about fear, blue is about radical optimism," Roberts said. "Green asks what's to be done. Blue asks, 'What can I do?'"

Melissa Lyons, freshman broadcast journalism and psychology major, said she enjoyed Roberts' lecture and that he was inspirational and provocative.

Ari Cohen, sophomore public relations and economics major, agreed with Lyons. He said he especially liked Roberts' optimism about the future.

"He really makes us feel like we have purpose," Cohen said. "And that we can affect the world."

During the lecture, Roberts gave advice to future advertisers and businessmen. He said the business world has shifted its focus to engage consumers and that planning too far into the future can be detrimental to companies.

Roberts emphasized the idea of business sustainability. He explained how Wal-Mart's employee sustainability program has helped employees lose weight, quit

smoking and pick up healthy habits, and that it has had positive effects for the business.

"Sustainability is a catalyst for business growth," he said.

Sustainability is directly linked to a company's "lovemark," a word Roberts uses instead of "brand mark." Lovemarks are Roberts' concept of the respect a company can gain from the emotional aspect of its advertisements.

He said in the working world, there are four things that should be demanded: the ability to learn every day, joy, recognition and responsibility.