

## **KEVIN ROBERTS**

EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, SAATCHI & SAATCHI  
HEAD COACH OF PUBLICIS GROUPE



Photographer: Juan Carrera

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An extended biography detailing Kevin Roberts' career history, milestones, key events and dates.

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Information on a suite of books by Kevin Roberts on creating Lovemarks, winning in the consumer revolution, the future on screen and peak performance.

## **MEDIA COVERAGE: FORBES (June 2013)**

Kevin Roberts: Why Entrepreneurs Should Have Radical Optimism (USA)

## **MEDIA COVERAGE: HAMU ÉS GYÉMÁNT (August 2012)**

Love. (Your) Mark! (Hungary)

## **MEDIA COVERAGE: THE DRUM (April 2012)**

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## **MEDIA COVERAGE: STRAIT TIMES (April 2012)**

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## **MEDIA COVERAGE: DIRECTOR MAGAZINE (March 2012)**

All You Need Is Love (UK)

## **MEDIA COVERAGE: ADVERTISING AGE (February 2011)**

Why Lovemarks Are More Valid Than Ever, or Welcome to the Age of Now (USA)

## **MEDIA COVERAGE: THE CUMBERLAND NEWS (July 2009)**

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## **Kevin Roberts, Executive Chairman Saatchi & Saatchi, and Head Coach Publicis Groupe**

**Kevin Roberts** is the New York-based Executive Chairman of Saatchi & Saatchi – one of the world’s leading creative organizations with over 6500 people and 130 offices in 70 countries – and part of PublicisGroupe, the world’s third largest communications group. Saatchi & Saatchi works with 6 of the top 10 and over half of the top 50 global advertisers.

Born and educated in Lancaster in the north of England, Kevin Roberts started his career in the late 1960s with iconic London fashion house Mary Quant. He became a senior marketing executive for Gillette and Procter & Gamble in Europe and the Middle East. At 32, he became CEO of Pepsi-Cola Middle East; and later Pepsi’s CEO in Canada. In 1989, Roberts moved with his family to Auckland, New Zealand, to become Chief Operating Officer with Lion Nathan. From 1997 until becoming Executive Chairman in 2015, he was CEO Worldwide at Saatchi & Saatchi. In 2011, he became the first non-Latin American to be inducted into the FIAP (Festival Iberoamericano de Publicidad) Ibero-American Hall of Fame.

Kevin Roberts has honorary appointments and doctorates at a number of universities. Presently he is Honorary Professor of Innovation and Creativity at the University of Auckland Business School, Honorary Professor of Creative Leadership at Lancaster University, and Honorary Professor of Leadership and Innovation at the University of Victoria (B.C.) School of Business. With academic colleagues, he wrote *Peak Performance: Business Lessons from the World’s Top Sporting Organizations*, an inspiration-driven business theory and practice. In 2004, he wrote *Lovemarks: the Future Beyond Brands*, a ground-breaking business book published in 18 languages, showing how emotion can inspire businesses and brands to deliver sustainable value. He has written further books on the power of emotion and the screen age. Lovemarks was named one of the ten Ideas of the Decade by *Advertising Age* in 2009.

In 2013, Kevin, a New Zealand citizen, was made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM) for services to business and the community. Currently, he is business ambassador for the New Zealand United States Council, and Chairman of Australasian healthy-food-with-recipes delivery service, My Food Bag. He is a former director of the New Zealand Rugby Union and former chairman of USA Rugby. Kevin has homes in New York, Auckland, and Grasmere in the English Lake District.

Kevin Roberts has an international reputation for an uncompromisingly positive, inspirational leadership style, and an ability to generate ideas and emotional connections that accelerate extraordinary value. He has made presentations to business audiences in 60 countries, with a San Francisco technology reviewer noting, “Kevin Roberts was arguably more entertaining and more informative than any other speaker, speaking about any other subject, anywhere. That is saying a lot, but during the hour of his speech, there was nowhere else in the world that I would have rather been than in his audience, soaking up everything he was saying.”

Roberts shares his thinking on [saatchikevin.com](http://saatchikevin.com) and [krconnect.blogspot.com](http://krconnect.blogspot.com).

# KEVIN ROBERTS

## KEY EVENTS AND DATES

- 2015 - Appointed **Honorary Professor** of Leadership and Innovation at the University of Victoria (B.C.) Peter B. Gustavson School of Business.
- 2015 - Chairman of My Food Bag
- 2015 - Saatchi & Saatchi Executive Chairman; Head Coach of Publicis Groupe
- 2013 – Appointed a **Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM)** for services to business and the community
- 2011 - Inducted (the first non-Latin American) into FIAP (Festival Iberoamericano de Publicidad) **Hall of Fame**
- 2009 – Awarded **Honorary Doctorate** in Laws by Lancaster University for “contributions made to the field of creativity and innovation in business and education”
- 2009 – Awarded **Honorary Doctorate** in Letters by International University of Geneva, Switzerland as testimonial to “life-long contributions and commitment to innovative business thinking”
- 2009 – Appointed **Honorary Professor** of Creative Leadership at Lancaster University
- 2009 – Appointed **Honorary Professor** in the Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Auckland, New Zealand
- 2008 – **Author** *Diesel: XXX Years of Diesel Communication*, Rizzoli, New York
- 2008 – 2014 – **Director** Board of Telecom New Zealand
- 2008 – Appointed **Honorary Professor** of the Peruvian University of Applied Sciences (UPC), Lima, Peru
- 2007 – Appointed **Chairman/CEO** of Saatchi & Saatchi Fallon, Publicis Groupe
- 2007 – Appointed as a Summit Member, Edmund Hillary Institute, New Zealand

- 2006 – **Author** *The Lovemarks Effect – Winning in the Consumer Revolution* powerHouse Books, New York
- 2006 – 2014 – **Chairman** USA Rugby Board of Directors, Boulder, Colorado
- 2005 – **Author** *sisomo – the future on screen*, powerHouse Books, New York
- 2004 – Appointed **Sponsor Governor** of Lancaster Royal Grammar School
- 2004 – Appointed private sector **Ambassador** to the New Zealand United States Council
- 2004 – Awarded the **New Yorker for New York Award** by the Citizens for NYC, a not-for-profit organization
- 2004 – **Author** of *Lovemarks: the future beyond brands*, powerHouse Books, New York, 18 languages
- 2003 - 2007 – **Professor of Sustainable Enterprise**, Waikato Management School, University of Waikato, New Zealand, and University of Limerick, Ireland
- 2001 – **Co-founder** of www.nzedge.com, an idea to transform New Zealand identity and to network the million-strong community of New Zealanders living internationally
- 2001-2009 – Appointed Inaugural **CEO in Residence** at Cambridge University's Judge Business School, Cambridge, Great Britain
- 2000 – **Co-author** of *Peak Performance - Lessons for Business from the World's Leading Sports Organizations*, with Mike Pratt, Clive Gilson and Ed Weymes, Harper Collins, London
- 2000 – Appointed Member of the **Directoire**, Publicis Groupe, Paris
- 1998 – Awarded **Honorary Doctorate** by University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand "in recognition of achievements as an inspirational business leader and for contribution to sport in New Zealand"
- 1997-2000 – **Director** New Zealand Rugby Football Union
- 1997 – Appointed **Chief Executive Officer Worldwide**, Saatchi & Saatchi

- 1995 – Appointed **Trustee** of the Turn Your Life Around Trust (TYLA), West Auckland, New Zealand
- 1989-96 – Lion Nathan, **Director and Chief Operating Officer**, New Zealand and Australia
- 1987-89 – Pepsi Cola Canada, **President and Chief Executive Officer**, Toronto
- 1982-86 – Pepsi Cola Middle East, **Regional Vice President**, Cyprus
- 1975-82 – Procter & Gamble, **Group Marketing Manager**, Middle East/Africa, Casablanca and Geneva
- 1972-75 – Gillette, **International New Products Manager Europe**, London
- 1969-72 – Mary Quant Cosmetics, **Brand Manager**, London
- 1960s – Educated Lancaster Royal Grammar School, England
- 1949 – Born Lancaster, England

## Web

Saatchi & Saatchi [www.saatchi.com](http://www.saatchi.com)

Kevin Roberts' Website [www.saatchikevin.com](http://www.saatchikevin.com)

Kevin Roberts' Blog [www.krconnect.blogspot.com](http://www.krconnect.blogspot.com)

Lovemarks [www.lovemarks.com](http://www.lovemarks.com)

Lovemarks Campus [www.lovemarkscampus.com](http://www.lovemarkscampus.com)

Sisomo [www.sisomo.com](http://www.sisomo.com)

My Food Bag [www.myfoodbag.co.nz](http://www.myfoodbag.co.nz)

## Contacts

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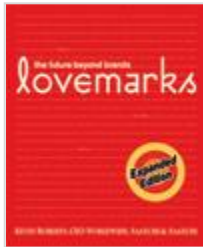
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High resolution media photos at <http://www.saatchikevin.com/media-kit/images/>

## PUBLICATIONS



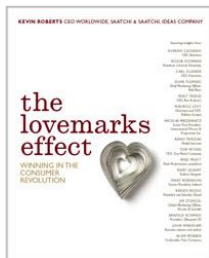
### **LOVEMARKS: THE FUTURE BEYOND BRANDS**

By Kevin Roberts, Executive Chairman, Saatchi & Saatchi

powerHouse Books, Revised edition

248 pages, November 2005

In *Lovemarks: the Future Beyond Brands*, Kevin Roberts shows how Mystery, Sensuality, and Intimacy can create powerful emotional connections with consumers to inspire Loyalty Beyond Reason. Now published in 18 languages, with more than 150,000 copies in print, Lovemarks has captured the hearts of business owners worldwide. It speaks a new, fresh, common language – the language of love.



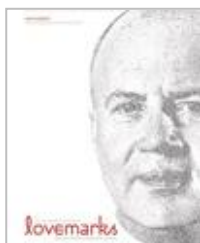
### **THE LOVEMARKS EFFECT: WINNING IN THE CONSUMER REVOLUTION**

By Kevin Roberts, Executive Chairman, Saatchi & Saatchi

powerHouse Books

272 pages, November 2006

In this follow-up book to *Lovemarks: the Future Beyond Brands*, the voices of consumers, owners, and marketers show the impact of Lovemarks on their lives, their businesses, and their aspirations. *The Lovemarks Effect* offers instruction and inspiration about creating emotional connections and winning in a consumer empowered “attraction economy”. How consumers feel about you – their emotional connection to you – is what determines success now.



### **LOVEMARKS: SAATCHI & SAATCHI DESIGNERS' EDITION**

By Kevin Roberts, Executive Chairman, Saatchi & Saatchi

powerHouse Books

377 pages, September 2007

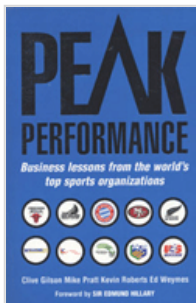
Despite the extraordinary uptake of the Lovemarks concept, Kevin Roberts was determined to go one step further after receiving a provocative and irresistible challenge: to turn the book itself into a Lovemark. Collectively produced by Saatchi & Saatchi designers and art directors from across the globe, *Lovemarks: Saatchi & Saatchi Designers' Edition* is a sublime rendering of the original book that will both challenge the mind and delight the eyes.



### **SISOMO: THE FUTURE ON SCREEN**

*By Kevin Roberts, Executive Chairman, Saatchi & Saatchi  
powerHouse Books  
164 pages, November 2005*

A radical shift is occurring in the relationship between consumers and the media. Where consumers were once passive in the face of the mass market, they are now super-smart individuals wired into the greatest information network the world has ever known. Enter *sisomo* – *Sight, Sound and Motion*, the combination that made television the most powerful selling tool ever invented.



### **PEAK PERFORMANCE: BUSINESS LESSONS FROM THE WORLD'S TOP SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS**

*By Professor Clive Gibson, Professor Mike Pratt, Dr Kevin Roberts and Associate Professor Ed Weymes, Waikato Management School  
Texere  
360 pages, September 2002*

*Peak Performance* lies at the heart of Saatchi & Saatchi's sustainable advantage. This international best-selling business book goes inside the world's best sports organizations to reveal how their teams keep on winning – and how any business can use their methods to get to the top and stay there.



### **LOVEWORKS: HOW THE WORLD'S TOP MARKETERS MAKE EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS TO WIN IN THE MARKETPLACE**

*By Brian Sheehan, Associate Professor of Advertising at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University  
Foreword by Kevin Roberts, CEO Worldwide, Saatchi & Saatchi  
powerHouse Books  
192 pages, May 2013*

*Loveworks* - written by a former CEO of several Saatchi & Saatchi agencies - is a series of real world business cases that show the winning impacts of Lovemarks, the idea created and pioneered by Kevin Roberts. The results-driven case stories are from Saatchi & Saatchi clients, and across diverse markets and categories around the world.



## Kevin Roberts: Why Entrepreneurs Should Have Radical Optimism

By Dan Schawbel

I caught up with Kevin Roberts to talk to him about the importance of radical optimism, how he manages his professional life, how advertising has changed, trust in his industry and his best career advice. Kevin is the Worldwide CEO of ideas company [Saatchi & Saatchi](#), one of the world's largest and most successful creative organizations, handling more than fifty of the world's most valuable global brands.

Heading a team of more than seven thousand people in eighty-two countries, Roberts led Saatchi & Saatchi to become both Advertising Age and Adweek magazines' Global Agency Network of the Year in 2003. He is the author of the best-selling book *[Lovemarks: the future beyond brands](#)*.



**Kevin, what do you think are your top qualities and skills that have helped you get to where you are today?**

I was born with the “Radical Optimism” gene.

I grew up on the “wrong side of the tracks” in the working class north west of England; excelled at sport and academics and won a scholarship to the local Grammar school but got kicked out when I was 17, never went to university as I wanted to, and went straight into the work force with little other than my natural abilities. Radical Optimism is not just about seeing the world positively, glass half full and all that, but about the deliberate and relentless pursuit of opportunities to make the world a better place, and in doing so, improve one's own personal position. JFK was a hero and the phrase he articulated “a rising tide floats all boats” struck me like lightning.

Other things that helped me along the way were focus; commitment; and discipline. These attributes are all related. I'm not a fan of multi-tasking. Figure out what you are good at and be focused on becoming great at it. Be great at three things, not mediocre at a dozen.

And lastly, an overwhelming belief that “Nothing Is Impossible”. This is the founding mantra of Saatchi & Saatchi. I have zero time for naysayers. There has always got to be a better way.

**What does a typical day look like for you as CEO? What are the common problems you have to solve and how do you stay sane?**

We live in a VUCA world. Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous. It’s a military term, and a statement of fact about how things are – but not how things ought to be. My aim is to turn VUCA into SUPERVUCA!!! (I’m in advertising after all). Vibrant, Unreal, Crazy and Astounding. This is what I dedicate my day to, every day. There is no typical day, except a commitment to make it fun and enjoy the ride. The alternatives are not appealing. Life is a succession of 100 day plans.

These consist of up to 10 outcomes I want to achieve in the next 100 days; short emphatic statements that often start with “win”. My principle role as CEO is to inspire – our people, our clients, people working in business, students. I spend a lot of time speaking, coaching, educating, provoking. This month the speaking itinerary has included Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Panama, Russia and Switzerland. I work on the road and my goal is to give a response to everyone who needs one within 24 hours. Velocity is a competitive advantage. I recharge at my homes in New Zealand and the Lake District of England.

**The advertising world has really changed as you point out in your personal blog. How do you believe analytics, social media and mobile has changed your world?**

This is a real-time world. We live in the Age of Now. And frankly it is a lot more fun. It’s challenging, but the goal in all things to get into a flow state, where you are surfing rather than working off set pieces. This is the “participation economy”. ROI today means Return on Involvement. This is much better than Command and Control. Ideas are the currency of today and technology is the enabler.

Big Data is a cover story this quarter, but I live and breathe in the zone of Big Emotion. Data and analytics are useful, they improve accuracy, provide insights, help you refine, but they lack the key ingredients of communication: revelation, imagination, and the unreasonable power of creativity. These are the ingredients that deliver cut through nowadays. Advertising is a domain in which the crazies will always win over the machines and research vampires.

## **Do you think people have more or less trust in advertising agencies these days? What do you do to instill trust with the people that you work with?**

Advertising is a highly regulated industry so consumers can have a high degree of trust in what they see and hear and read. I don't think trust is an issue with advertising. On the whole people love advertising that is original (hard to do), engaging, enjoyable and invites participation.

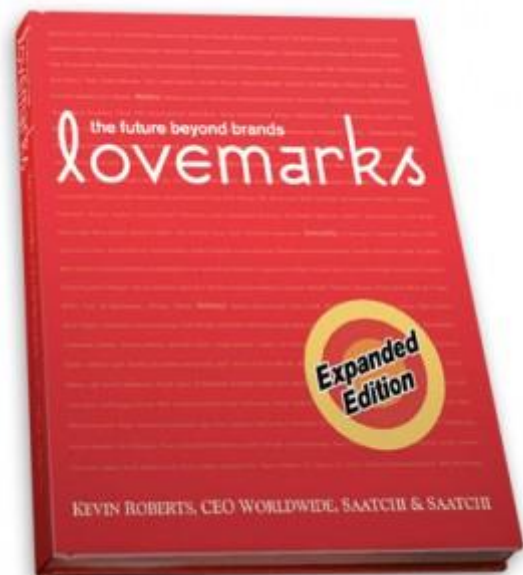
As for what we do to instill the trust of clients, it's very simple: consistently deliver results!!!! You can have the best chemistry in the world but no amount of fancy footwork is going to conceal a poor set of sales results.

You're not going to win every time, there will

be failures, and not every conversation should be a test of the relationship, but your win record needs to be pretty damn good. The sports team I am long passionate about is the New Zealand All Blacks, and they have a win record that I like to see in business. In over a hundred years of rugby, the All Blacks hold an 84% winning record against all opposition played. Not even Brazil in football, Canada in ice hockey, Australia in cricket, or any professional sports team from the United States, can match this win record.

## **What are your top three pieces of career advice for those who are first starting out in your industry?**

1. Make the big decisions with your heart, the small ones with your head.
2. Work for a company that delivers Responsibility, Learning, Recognition and Joy in equal parts, everyday.
3. Take Responsibility for your own Happiness.





**GIVENCHY**



# Love (your) **MARK!**

„Lovemark is a brand you can't withdraw from the market without provoking social unrest.”

– KEVIN ROBERTS

Modern brands go beyond products and aim right at our heart. They want to become lovemarks: unrivalled personal experiences, integral parts of our lives and our personality. Lovemarks go beyond the sheer satisfaction of consumer demand – they provoke, inspire, and connect people and ideas. Hamu és Gyémánt talked to the most renowned professionals of modern marketing, delving into the grand process that has turned witty ads into cult hits and brand-building into a global social playground.

by Adam Farkas

# "BRAND is dead."

Kevin Roberts

Kevin Roberts, CEO Saatchi & Saatchi

One of the most renowned marketing specialists in the world started his career, like many of his peers, as a brand manager at a middle-size company. In thirty years he climbed the ranks of position and companies (all the way through the marketing dept. of Gillette and the leadership of Pepsi Canada) to finally take the chair of CEO at Saatchi & Saatchi. But it wasn't so much a chair, rather a dodgem car, in which Roberts rode counter to the old principles of marketing. In 1998, he came up with the concept of lovemarks, declaring that 'brand' was dead.

## "Brand is dead" – is it, and how so?

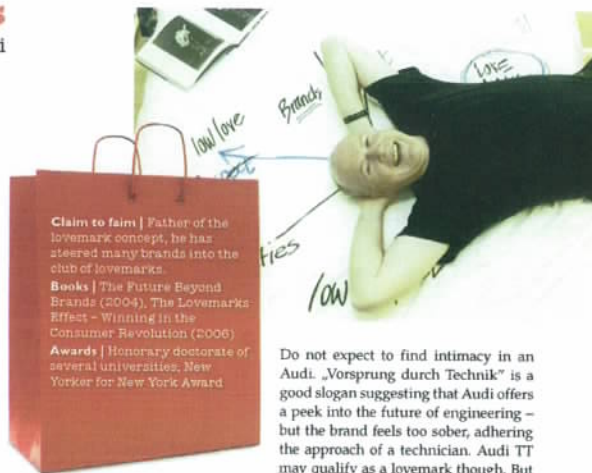
Since its conception, 'brand' has been a label of performance: a guarantee of the shine a shampoo can add to your hair, a guarantee that the beer you drink is always sparkling and makes you tipsy – and consumers paid a premium for this guarantee. At least they did so until now. But the past fifteen years have seen every product morphing into a brand: each and every shampoo makes your hair shiny and every beer is foamy, and then there's the own brands of retail chains which also emerged in the past decade. And the consumers? They got tired of the swarm of brands, and this fatigue devaluated most of the brands and made the former premium disappear. Therefore, brands are dead, but I'd go even further: 'marketing' as we used to know it, is also dead.

## Then what comes next?

We have to enliven the brands, jazz them up. In other words: we have to create lovemarks!

## And what would be the difference between a lovemark and a brand?

I could name quite a few. First, the attitude is different: the brand belongs to those who make the product, whereas a lovemark belongs to those who use it – in the end it is the consumer who sets the rules for the development of the product and not the manufacturer or the marketing specialist. Brands also carry a range of important values: quality, trust, reasonable price, respect, etc. A lovemark aims higher: it wants to be loved by people. We want that a lovemark not only be respected – it has to be loved. And love sets lovemarks apart from brands by miles.



**Claim to fame** | Father of the lovemark concept, he has steered many brands into the club of lovemarks.

**Books** | *The Future Beyond Brands* (2004), *The Lovemarks Effect – Winning in the Consumer Revolution* (2006)

**Awards** | Honorary doctorate of several universities, New Yorker for New York Award

## How can you conjure this love?

You need to blend three elements: mystery, sensuality and intimacy. You won't hear this in any marketing course; but believe me, consumers not only want to buy a product – they also want connection with the mark, reflect to it and help its evolution.

**Stories, sensuality... dozens of marks have been using these terms for decades: Coca-Cola, Levi's, Nokia – just to name a few.**

Not necessarily! When you say Nokia, I do not think of a lovemark but of a typical brand. It sells quality products alright, but it has never aimed at grasping consumers with insider stories or intimacy. No wonder that when Apple came out with its sassy iPhone (seasoned with loads of stories and the Steve Jobs saga) Nokia started to suffer. There are relatively few brands out there who capitalize on background stories. Though the heroes of the 21st Century are (and will be) the storytellers, only a few brands link stories to their products. Look at the websites! Most of them confuse us with an overload of information, though the more we know about something the less interest we have in it.

**Let's say I buy an Audi, joining the club of millions of people who drive the same model. Not a very intimate setup.**

Do not expect to find intimacy in an Audi. „Vorsprung durch Technik“ is a good slogan suggesting that Audi offers a peek into the future of engineering – but the brand feels too sober, adhering the approach of a technician. Audi TT may qualify as a lovemark though. But you will find relatively few lovemarks among car brands (VW Beetle, Mini Cooper, and Toyota Prius emerge as good examples) because typically car brands focus too much on functional innovation, and their brand building strategy is based on focus groups and test drivers. However, in general, the consumer does not know what s/he wants to improve on a product. What the builders of a lovemark want to know is not what the consumer wants, but how s/he feels. Therefore, the good marketing specialists build movements rather than brands. You have to involve people in your movement, and the only way to succeed is to walk among them and see how they live their lives. If you want to know how a lion hunts, skip the zoo and go to the jungle.

## How does Saatchi prospect the „jungle“?

Just like that. We call the process 'exploring': we hire people to mix with the target audience and gather information without directly asking about the consumers' attitude. We often hire journalists who are very good at exploring the personal motivations that drive consumer decisions.

**So lovemarks are born through a systematic process. But how about the external factors that you can't really control?**

There are a number of external actors, first and foremost the consumer him-/



herself. You involve the consumer into a movement to perfect your brand, hence you cede control over the branding process to consumers. In return, you will be able to use the vast potential which lies in collective thinking and the creative power of your consumers. Nowadays, a high quality product is just the table stake – you can play the game with it but you can't win. What you need extra is ideas – yes, those of the consumers! The currency of the Century is the idea: consumers are looking for witty, interesting stuff, not mere products.

**Still, brands like Audi and Mercedes remain quite profitable, though they do not qualify as lovemarks.**

Even if they are not lovemarks, they are still very strong brands. But a brand can never be strong enough to quit the killing competition in terms of innovation and the quality/price ratio. The lovemark is a different story. If you try to withdraw a lovemark from the market, you provoke social unrest. If the Toyota Prius (America's favourite hybrid car) was withdrawn from the roads, people would go to the street and protest. But if you tried to remove another rampant car model from the traffic, you would only produce some headlines. So you can have a rock solid brand, but if the consumer has no emotional motivation buying your product, you remain vulnerable, while striving to keep your edge in technology.

**Coca-cola is more than 100 years old, Apple needed 25-30 years to become a lovemark, while Google has done it in less than 10 years. Is the pace of lovemark-building accelerating?**

Absolutely. And you know why? Because the media belongs to the people now. If you come across a good product, what do you do? Bang! – you share it online. In that very moment, the whole planet can know about that product, and the cost of info-sharing is zero. It is no longer the managers of the media who decide what

product will be popular, people have taken control! Nonetheless, the mark or the product has to deliver on its promise. And there lies the other big advantage of a lovemark: as a consumer, you are more indulgent toward a product that engages you emotionally. How many times has Google broken down in the past years? We still use it anyway and we forgive their mistakes because we know that Google will eventually sort the problems out. We trust a lovemark, and keep our fingers crossed for its success.

## Is it possible to uphold this fervent loyalty?

You have to treat it like in a marriage: never take love for granted and as being unconditional. Always try to surprise your consumers with new ideas. Do not give them what they

want – give them what they never dreamed possible. Did anyone want the iPhone? No, because we'd never dreamed that such a thing was possible. Such moments of surprise develop loyalty beyond reason toward your mark. „Loyalty beyond reason“ – sounds a bit spooky though. Isn't there a thin line between efficient communication and manipulation?

Quite the opposite: that line has never been so thick! The age of Mad Men was one of consumer manipulation. But today, you have tons of blogs, webshops, price-value calculators and

social websites – consumers have all the information and they wield all the power. Today, it is only truth that sells. There is no place to hide for a brand now – if you deceive your consumers, they will go to social websites and ruin your goodwill very quickly. Back in the day, we said that a brand can be ruined in three months – today, if you lie, your mark is dead in less than three hours! **If lovemarks are so strong, how are they going to change the world?**

I grew up in the sixties so I am an unflinching optimist. I believe in inclusive capitalism. I believe that capital can not only result in more capital but also in a better world. The more information consumers have, the more severe their decisions become. They are getting used to taking a lot of

Always try to surprise your consumers with new ideas. Do not give them what they want – give them what they never dreamed possible.

small consumer decisions day by day, and they want each of these decisions to be a small triumph. The power of the well-informed consumer is on the rise – and the ones who will benefit from it are the people and the lovemarks.

## "Marketing is dead" says Saatchi & Saatchi CEO

The chief executive of one of the world's largest marketing groups has today declared that marketing and strategy are dead.

Addressing an audience of senior business leaders at The IoD's Annual Convention taking place at London's O2 earlier today, Kevin Roberts, CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi Worldwide, claimed that in today's crazy world strategy is dead, the big idea is dead, management is dead and marketing, as we know, is also dead.

During his colourful presentation, which followed on from a speech from Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, Roberts said: "I am a radical optimist, I don't buy into all this recession talk. I do not think we are in a recessionary environment, but we do have too many recessionary leaders. To win today we all need to power things up and speed things up.

"We don't just live in a VUCA world - a volatile, uncertain, ambiguous and complex world - we live in a super VUCA world. We live in a vibrant world where our kids are connecting to each other and to brands across the world with no money involved. To us this is a world that's gone crazy.

"Strategy is dead. Who really knows that is going to happen anymore in this super VUCA world? The more time and money you spend devising strategies the more time you are giving your rivals to start eating your lunch.

"Management is dead. To win today you need a culture and an environment where the unreasonable power of creativity thrives. Ideas are today's currency not strategy. Martin Luther King did not say 'I have a vision statement' did he? He had a dream. You have to make sure you have dreams and your brand also needs a dream."

He went on to outline how successful business leaders need to harness creative things in the future, saying: "Business leaders need to become creative leaders. We need to change the language of business. Who wants to be a Chief Executive Officer? It sounds like you work for the government and who would want that? Being a Chief Excitement Officer would be better, don't you think? The role of a good CEO is to get people to buy into their dreams and their company's dreams."

Roberts also went on to say that the age of the 'big idea' has gone.

"The big idea is dead. There are no more big ideas. Creative leaders should go for getting lots and lots of small ideas out there. Stop beating yourself up searching for the one big idea. Get lots of ideas out there and then let the people you interact with feed those ideas and they will make it big."

"Leaders need to become emotional thinkers. The difference between rational thinking and emotional thinking is that rational thinking leads to conclusions and meetings and more meetings. Emotional thinking leads to action."

"There are three secrets to emotional thinking - mystery, sensitivity and intimacy. It is a lot about story telling. Brands need to tell stories on their websites, on their packaging and so on. Make sure your brand and company has a smell, it has a sound, it has a feel

and an intimacy with people. Think about how you can build empathy. It is the small things that count and how consumers feel about our brands that count today.”

“Marketing is dead. The role of marketing has changed now. There is nothing new anymore. If marketers are just hearing about something going on then it is already old in today’s world. The further up in a company you go the stupider you become and the further away from new things. Speed and velocity is everything today. Marketing’s jobs is to create movement and inspire people to join you.

“Everyone wants a conversation. They want inspiration. Inspire people with your website. Don’t just interrupt, but interact. Asking about Return on Investment is the wrong question today. You should be asking about Return on Involvement.”

This was the second time in four years that Roberts had addressed the audience at the influential IoD Convention. It was at the IoD Convention during the Nineties that Gerald Ratner’s comments about the jewellery his stores sold being “crap” devastated the Ratners brand and wiped millions off its value.

Source: <http://www.thedrum.com/news/2012/04/25/marketing-dead-says-saatchi-saatchi-ceo>

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# MANAGEMENT IS DEAD

Saatchi CEO and Lovemarks founder Kevin Roberts talks creativity, complacency and how to inspire Generation Y



All you need is

LOVE

DIRECTOR

He's the 62-year-old maverick who brought a lion into a finance meeting and machine-gunned a vending machine on stage. As global chief executive of Saatchi & Saatchi, he invented Lovemarks and turned the struggling agency into a world-beater. We travelled to the Lake District to meet the legendary Kevin Roberts and hear what he had to say about leadership, motivating Generation Y and the one thing Britain must do to become great again

Words: Lysanne Currie Photos: Ray Burmiston Art direction: Chris Rowe

MARCH 2012 DIRECTOR

W

e arrive at Lancaster railway station at 11am. A cab picks us up to take us to the Lake District home of Kevin Roberts. We have a short address – no

road and a two-hour slot in which to take our photos and do the interview. The Lakes take our breath away as we drive through the countryside wondering where Roberts lives. We climb halfway up a hill, guessing at the house and feeling very towmie.

We arrive, and a figure walks to the gate. Black shirt, black jeans, a grin on his face and a glint in his eye. There's a touch of the Jack Nicholson about Roberts: "You found it then, that was the first test." His accent is a mash-up of Kiwi, Manhattan and Manchester.

He ushers us in and says: "Let me show you round." The house is visually brilliant. Everywhere are images of the stuff that makes Roberts tick – Manchester City (he sits on the board), Marianne Faithfull, The Who, Debbie Harry, Union Jack prints and lots of hearts – nods to his trademark Lovemarks. "Do anything you want, and go anywhere you like," he growls. "But don't make it safe. I hate safe."

Roberts was born in Lancaster in 1949. His first job was as assistant brand manager for Mary Quant Cosmetics in 1969. He worked for Gillette, Procter & Gamble and became regional vice president at Pepsi,

"Have a dream, get on with it and if you fail then fail fast, learn fast, fix fast"

Middle East in 1982. At the end of his keynote speech in his first chief executive role (at Pepsi Canada) he had a Coke vending machine rolled onto the stage. He picked up a machine gun – borrowed from a police officer – and blasted the machine. He'd rigged it so that he only had to fire one blank to set it off spectacularly.

Roberts became chief executive of Saatchi & Saatchi in 1997 and dropped the word advertising from the company's name that December – Saatchi & Saatchi became The Lovemarks Company in 2008. Last year, the owners, Publicis, reported an organic revenue rise of 8.3 per cent to £4.6bn.

Roberts now splits his time between the Lake District, New York, St Tropez and New Zealand. This global view, I venture, must give him an interesting take on UK plc. What's his diagnosis? "Lethargy. At every level. From government down. Imagine a football pitch: everyone playing at the moment – the UK, France, Germany – is in midfield, so we're all just not moving forward. And the UK's not even playing in the Champions League, it's in

the Premier League, and is mid-table. It doesn't have strong belief, strong commitment or strong ambition. We're leading in very few fields – we seem to be ambling along. Everyone's relatively OK but are we striving for happiness, are we striving to change the world, are we striving to transform? What's the dream of the UK?

"When I was growing up JFK talked about putting a man on the moon and bringing him back before the end of the decade. All that was a dreamy way of saying 'we're going to invest and lead the world through technology' but he put it in a way that everyone went 'I want to be part of that' and 'I can be part of that'.

"So in the UK, first, we don't have the dream, second, we don't have the appetite to win – the Chinese are going to eat our lunch. We've lost the desire to win because winning has been ugly in the last economic environment. And the third thing Britain's getting wrong is execution. We live in a 'Vuca' world – a world that is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous but British companies keep having strategy meetings! What the f\*\*\*? We have no strategic plans at Saatchi – instead we have 10 things to do in 100 days. Have a dream, get on with it and if you fail then fail fast, learn fast, fix fast.

"In America you can fail as long as you learn to fix. In England it's not in our education and it's not in corporate life – you get fired, or whacked or ignored. In England it's not so much whether you win or lose, but how you place the blame. Look at News International – it's just a blame thing going on. Stop hacking, say you're sorry, make reparation and hire new talent. Let's all get over it and move forward. We need a free press."

#### WORK-LIFE BALANCE

But is this lack of passion to win lethargy or arrogance, I wonder? "England isn't an arrogant nation but it's a nation of shopkeepers. Everyone talks about work-life balance but that's just a crock. We've got to integrate our work and life, but the English like balance. My view is that in order to succeed today you must avoid moderation. The way to succeed is excess. Steve Jobs, the most compulsive leader we've ever seen, built the greatest company of our times. [Sir] Richard Branson is a complete compulsive and obsessive – you cannot disintegrate his life and his work."

But how do you preach excess to Generation Y, the generation which has said repeatedly that work-life balance is its priority. The average age of a Saatchi & Saatchi employee is 27 – Roberts must face this issue daily? He leans in. "My kids are aged between 27 and 32, too. They are very different. I was a baby-boomer driven by Darwinian needs of survival. In the Sixties we felt that we could transform everything. If we did great work we could all make a lot of money, be famous and have loads of power.

"These kids, however, are not driven by those things. They're driven by connectivity, collaboration and social



Maverick: Kevin Roberts at his usually stunning Lake District home. "I'm loving everything in the mix, but slowly," he says.

stuff. They don't have survival fears. They say 'we're probably going to have five or six jobs, we'll get by and life is good. My friends are all around me and I can be who I want to be on Facebook, etc etc'."

These generational changes of connectivity and collaboration must have an impact on business?

"These kids see being multi-skilled and multi-tasking as a big strength but it's a huge weakness. I don't multi-task not because I can't but because I focus on what I am doing at the time. I will give laser-like focus to this – I have done no preparation and I will do no reflection. Then I'll focus on the next thing. They are constantly doing four or five things. They claim that their minds can cope with that but I have 5,000 of them and their performance suffers because they cannot determine the difference between the important and the urgent."

But Saatchi & Saatchi is one of the most successful agencies in the world, with big clients and cabinets packed with awards. How has he motivated his people?

"First, realise that you can't train these eagles to fly in formation. They're unmanageable, right? Management is dead. You can only do it through inspiration. Mario Balotelli is a classic example. He could be one of the world's greatest footballers. [Patrick] Vieira is mentoring him, [Roberto] Mancini's personally driving him and the team love him but you can't get Balotelli to conform. What you can do is inspire him to play for the team.

"And it's the same with these kids – they need inspiration. Most of my time is spent trying to inspire them with an idea like Lovemarks, an ambition, a dream. I've been running Saatchi for 15 years and in that 15-year period there has definitely been generational transition. Now, at the heart of everything we do, is inspirational leadership – trying to get the individual to be the best they can be in pursuit of our shared dream."

#### NEW ORDER

This is a pretty huge shift for business leaders, many of whom might be more used to a hierarchy of experience and knowledge?

"Yes, the idea that you have to know more than your subordinates is completely flawed. You have to inspire everyone you touch to be the best they can be. You've got to hire these guys, inspire them and then get out of their way. The inspirational way to deal with this is to liberate your own mind. There you are, 50 to 65, whatever age. You're sitting there, you're pretty successful and you've done well but the world is changing dramatically.

"You can either put your head under the carpet and go 'f\*\*\*, I'm going to get found out' or you can say 'I'll reject all that and just make money', or you can say 'I don't know much about this but I've got all these people who do know a lot about it so I'm just going to push down and give them the dreams, the brainwaves and the principles, and I am just going to enjoy this ride. That's

what I am doing. It's like with technology, when I have an idea, somebody in my company will know how to make it work – or they'll know somebody to ask. It's awesome. I have found this to be the biggest liberator of the unreasonable power of creativity. It's the age that we live in but you've got to relax into it and enjoy it."

#### RECESSION CREATIVITY

Roberts is documented as saying that the best ideas emerge from The Edge – a theory he stumbled on in biology – or that most development of any species doesn't come through the centre but at the edge. Could



**Drumming up business:** Cadbury's Dairy Milk ad was downloaded by 17 million people. "That's what happens if you create a movement," says Roberts

this tough economic climate bring such a psychological edge that it boosts creativity?

"Edgy thinking comes from either living on the edge which is, Cumbria, New Zealand or wherever, or being pushed to the edge by macro situations. A recession needs radical behaviour, radical optimism, edgy behaviour. So I think that the Vuca times we live in, instead of being an excuse should be a stimulation – but it takes courage and Britain's courageous only in times of conflict. We stand up when we are on a burning platform. But the world now is super-Vuca, which means it's vibrant, unreal, crazy, astounding. Let's get into this vibrant world, where we can do anything.

"We live in the age of the idea so the companies that will thrive will be those which deliver new ideas quicker to their customers. Everyone's searching for the Big Idea but there aren't any. There are lots of little ones. The consumer will find one and make it big – look at the success of [computer game] Angry Birds.

"The thing to do is to get 30 little ideas out there and see what happens but people haven't been built that way – they've been taught not to screw up."

And what about reinvigorating products that already exist? Roberts talks about Lovemarks differentiating from brands because there are both High Love and High Respect marks. Which is the most elusive? "It's both.

Whatever you sell has got to do what it says on the can. So you must have the basics of respect: authenticity, the right pricing, the right packaging – it's got to be sustainable in distribution and full of attributes that matter. That's job one but that's not enough because in today's world every brand has got that – all anti-dandruff shampoos get rid of dandruff. So on top of that you must build mystery, sensuality and intimacy for a consumer that is constantly changing.

"What you've got to do now is not market to people – marketing is as dead as hell but Britain is still full of marketers. Instead, you've got to create a movement. That's what Gorilla did [Cadbury's Dairy Milk ad with a gorilla drumming]. We pulled all the media on Gorilla in seven days because 17 million people downloaded it. That's what happens if you create a movement. But movements are unique – you can't repeat them and the number of people who still come to us and say 'give us a gorilla...'" Roberts shakes his head.

"And responsible capitalism is absolutely vital. Everybody has got to be purpose-driven, purpose-inspired, and benefit-driven. We all want to work for something bigger than ourselves and if a company doesn't have a purpose, doesn't want to make a contribution to society, customers and talent will just go 'oh, f\*\*\* it then'."

#### GO SLOW

Our photographer Ray knocks on the door – ready to take pictures. Before we go though, I must ask one thing. In Roberts's January blog, his 10th resolution was to Live Life Slow. But how does that work for a man who runs a global company? "Ha! This is the one all my friends asked about, too. Take today – after you've gone I am going to watch Manchester City vs Wigan, and then I'll work with New York from 8pm to 1am. I'm living everything to the max but slowly."

So is it about being present? I ask. He peers at me. "You are a very insightful girl. I've redefined presence into absence. To get to where I want to go I have to be absent from 97 per cent of the sh\*t so I can be massively present in the three per cent that matters.

"I only talk to six people in the business – but they talk to everyone else. I don't play golf, I don't get involved with governments – I have people for that – and I won't ever have lunch or dinner with a client. Just with friends and family. That means my people have to go to them, they're closer to the business, they're better at it than me, and if anyone does want to see me then I'm accessible – at Saatchi & Saatchi from nine to 12 and then two until five. It's beautifully simple. Now, shall we do pictures?"

Kevin Roberts is speaking at the JoD Annual Convention on Wednesday 25 April. If you haven't already got your ticket, visit [www.annualconvention.io.com](http://www.annualconvention.io.com)

# Ad-vantage, Kevin

Media guru Kevin Roberts' bold moves included taking a machine gun and a lion to his presentations

John Lui

**W**hen Kevin Roberts stepped in as the world-wide chief executive of Saatchi & Saatchi in 1997, he was on a mission to set things right.

The brothers Charles and Maurice Saatchi, who founded the advertising company in 1970 and who had vastly increased its size by buying up smaller ones, had been ousted two years before he joined.

The agency was reeling from the aftershocks of the shareholder-led uprising.

Clients defected. The firm was £2 billion in debt and was eking out a 6 per cent margin on projects, when the industry average was 11 per cent.

There would be resentment from insiders, he knew. He had taken steps to stop staff from fleeing, by first asking the top ranks if he was welcome (he was, unanimously) and promising to never install his friends from outside as lieutenants.

Roberts added a typically bold move.

"I said, 'Hey guys, we are all in this together. I will double the share price in three years. Employees can buy shares at a 10 per cent discount. Stay on at least three years and we will deduct the cost from your salary'. Three years later, we sold the company for five times that amount. A lot of people made money," he says.

The company was acquired by French multinational Publicis Groupe, the world's third largest communications concern, in 2000.

Roberts, 63, likes to make the most of a public moment. When the Briton was made chief executive of Pepsi Cola Canada in 1987, the brand was No. 2 in the country behind Coca-Cola. This was at the height of the period known as the Cola Wars.

He brought a machine-gun up on a Toronto stage and using theatre pyrotechnics; "shot" a Coca-Cola vending



PHOTO: SAATCHI & SAATCHI

machine in front of television cameras, at an event attended by then-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. It was to be front-page news and helped the brand become No. 1 in Canada.

In 1989, he moved on as director of then-newly formed Lion Nathan, an Australian-New Zealand brewery group. He borrowed a lion from the Auckland Zoo and walked it on a leash into a room

full of jaded stock analysts.

Roberts needed to break down their wall of indifference.

He brought the animal in quietly from the back of the room, down the main aisle. When the audience caught sight of it walking up behind them, roaring, chaos broke out.

"They never forgot our name," he says, laughing.

**'We are not hierarchical, we don't have lots of meetings, we don't have a lot of constraints'**

**On recruiting the smartest and most innovative people by making his organisation a great place to work in**

**'If you motivate and inspire your people, guess what happens?'**

**The clients are delighted. They increase the profit, then the shareholders are delighted. Everybody wins'**

**On motivated employees**

title is a word he coined to describe the "loyalty beyond reason" that consumers have with certain brands, and how it can be achieved.

Born and raised in Lancaster, in the north-west of England, the man who dropped out of school as a 16-year-old now has an honorary doctorate from the University of Waikato's Management School in New Zealand. He also has honorary professorships from universities in England and South America, among other countries.

He is now a citizen of New Zealand – a nation he fell in love with during his time with Lion Nathan – and has homes in Auckland, New York (where the company is headquartered), St Tropez and Grasmere, in the English Lake District.

For the last 35 years, he has been married to Rowena Roberts and has two daughters, two sons and two grandchildren.

Today, Saatchi & Saatchi employs 6,000 people across 86 countries.

In Singapore, its shophouse offices in Clarke Quay houses over 100 employees and regional clients include Procter & Gamble and Toyota Motor Asia Pacific. It has also run campaigns for the National Council for Problem Gambling.

The Saatchi & Saatchi global website has the tag line, The Lovemarks Company. He uses his principles of inspirational leadership seriously, even when they run counter to accepted management practice.

Of the four stakeholders in a company – the community, shareholders, customers and employees – it is usual practice for management to say that shareholders or customers come first.

"I really don't pay attention to that," says Roberts, who is described as a leader with "heterodox views" by the Knowledge@Wharton business magazine.

He says he recruits "the smartest and most innovative" people into his organisation and this is done by making it a great place to work.

"We are not hierarchical, we don't have lots of meetings, we don't have a lot of constraints," he says.

"The only sensible stakeholder in the company is the employee. If you motivate and inspire your people, guess what happens?"

"The clients are delighted. They increase the profit, then the shareholders are delighted. Everybody wins."

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Roberts was in Singapore last month to meet the company's staff and clients, and to give a talk at the Red Dot Design Museum titled Winning The Age Of Now, on the subject of how today's consumers react better to interaction and inspiration rather than old marketing techniques.

He is today seen as a guru of media and marketing, more so since the publication in 2004 of his book, Lovemarks. The

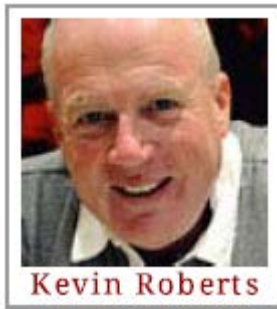
# AdvertisingAge®

## Why Lovemarks Are More Valid Than Ever, or Welcome to the Age of Now

### Saatchi's Kevin Roberts on the Next Stage to Delivering Priceless Value

By Kevin Roberts

*Published:* February 14, 2011



I was gripped by fear when I became CEO of [Saatchi & Saatchi](#) in 1997. I had been a brand marketer for 30 years and I knew that the marketing world was standing on the abyss.

Brands had been managed, measured and manipulated into oblivion. Parity had been achieved across price, distribution, quality, design and value. Brands had been invented originally to create and justify a premium; now they were being "parity-ed." The rationality vampires

were running the show. Energy was distributed evenly, not punctuated in hot bursts.

Thermodynamically speaking, this is "heat death," dissipation of energy to a point of inertia, brutal nothingness. I needed a game changer.

Reframing the question became vital. It wasn't, "How to breathe new life into brands?" It became, "What comes after brands?" The Archimedes lever was an insight from neuroscientist Donald Calne: Reason leads to conclusions; emotion leads to action. This appealed tremendously. As a sales guy -- diapers, detergent, fizzy stuff in fun bottles -- I knew that action was the only space to be in. Shipping cases. 100-day plans. Meet, beat and repeat. I felt sure that emotional, not rational factors were the key to the next world. The future would be won on relationships, not just transactions. Yet, the client world ran mostly on rational appeals and exchanges, pummeling people with "-er" words like whiter, brighter, cleaner, faster, newer and -- the race-to-the-bottom word -- cheaper.

Love was the central thought; Lovemarks the place to go. Conception was 1998. First public outing in 2001. First book in 2004. Seven years on, Ad Age asks "Where is it going?"

It's said that love is the most rewarding road and never the easiest. Lovemarks was like a hand grenade in the boardroom, everyone ducking for cover if ever the "L word" was mentioned. In our own organization we came to differentiate people as Deniers, Decorators, and Doers. The

warm embrace of consumers throughout the world was the saving grace. We took our thinking over the heads of our own people, over clients, over the industry, direct to the public, aka those people who buy the stuff we make and market. Talk to a consumer about brands they identify with and they will go cross-eyed. Ask them about their Lovemarks and a stream starts flowing, eyes open wide. No brand manual required. Mike Ullman, CEO of [JCPenney](#), responded the same way in 2006 when he appointed us to the account. This was endorsement from the mainstream.

Fast forward to 2010, when we won 70 new clients for our network with Lovemarks. Prius and Cheerios were two U.S. brands that got the Lovemarks treatment in 2010, as did Cadbury in Argentina, T-Mobile in the U.K. and Europe, Head & Shoulders in China. The book portfolio has sold 250,000 copies in 18 languages. Lovemarks research has been done in 50 categories in 80-plus countries. We have 20,000 consumer stories on [lovemarks.com](#).

In the 2009 Book of Tens, Ad Age dubbed it an Idea of the Decade. So why has it held up? Brands are about the people who make them. Lovemarks are about the people who buy them. The first rule of marketing is to keep things simple. Brands invest in complexity. Lovemarks go straight for the heart.

In 1998, Google was a startup and Mark Zuckerberg was 14 years old. Today they have ushered in the Age of Now. New is effectively over; we're not looking to some event horizon for change to come; it's happening in real time. We live in the moment and we're happier for it. Participation and involvement are the keys to success. Here's what the shift from New to Now looks like:

<b>ERA OF NEW</b>	<b>AGE OF NOW</b>
Attention	Participation
Information	Inspiration
Distraction	Interaction
Selling Product	Adding Experiences
Future Promises	Moments that Matter
Return on Investment	Return on Involvement
Value	Priceless Value
Pumping Markets	Creating Movements

Which sounds more fun? The Age of Now is all about the mastery of emotional communication; not manipulation, but of having relationships, perfect "rules for the road" for the social-networking miasma that has grown around and through us. In the Era of New marketing, it was all about your product. In the Age of Now it's all about the single question consumers have of you: "How will you improve my life?" Answering this is to deliver priceless value.

Every company is bent on building the relationship with its audience, because Next is about deepening the feeling, not just extending the reach. Lovemarks is a universal guide to relationships. What more potent triangle than mystery, sensuality and intimacy might you need to build long-term love? Teach that, Harvard Business School.

The way the world is heading, the future looks less calculating /reptilian, and more connective/emotional. We are seeing national indexes of happiness, insurrections against control, and revolts against materialism.

What will Lovemarks look like in five years? Here are three ways Lovemarks might expand to change the world:

To offset the massive oversupply of left-brain thinking in today's engineering-driven corporations, chief creative officers are appointed to the C-suite. Intel's appointment of Black Eyed Peas' frontman Will.i.am as director of creative innovation is a future pointer.

New emotional forces will enter the global economic framework. By 2021 the E7 -- the seven major emerging economies of China, India, Brazil, Russia, Indonesia, Mexico and Turkey -- will surpass the G7. E7 has my focus. Turkey just published "The Lovemarks Effect." I'm in India in March and China in April. Indonesia is the current hot spot on lovemarks.com.

[Saatchi & Saatchi](#) abandons advertising and enters retailing with a string of Lovemark stores operated by an Apple real-estate maestro; Lovemarks is nominated for the Nobel Prize in economics, but gets spiked; Oprah becomes president; divorce rates in the U.S. plunge; and peace breaks out with the Axis of Evil.

Happy Valentine's.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Kevin Roberts** is CEO-worldwide, Saatchi & Saatchi.

# The Cumberland News

## SAATCHI & SAATCHI BOSS WHO TOUCHES DOWN IN CUMBRIA

By Roger Lytollis, UK Weekly Feature Writer of the Year

Last updated at 13:04, Friday, 24 July 2009

**A toothy grin, a welcoming hand on the shoulder and a "How y' doing, mate?" Kevin Roberts: chief executive officer of Saatchi & Saatchi, part-time resident of Cumbria, legendary destroyer of vending machines.**

Legendary if your trade is advertising, where Kevin Roberts is arguably the biggest brand in the business. The man who revels in his maverick reputation heads one of the world's most successful ad agencies, leading a team of 6,000 people in 86 countries.

Saatchi & Saatchi is based in New York and Roberts, 59, also has homes in New Zealand, St Tropez and Grasmere, where we find him today.



Kevin Roberts

His accent is a stew of Kiwi, American and northern England, the latter courtesy of his upbringing in Lancaster. These well-travelled tones hurl out more swearing than a Viz character and enough soundbites about business and life to fill a library of self-help books.

It all surges forth in the candid waves which often pour from the powerful and wealthy. Roberts's salary last year was 2.8m Euros; at current exchange rates that's about £2.4m.

So... destroyer of vending machines? In the late Eighties Roberts was president of Pepsi-Cola's Canadian division. Pepsi – 'The Choice of a New Generation' – was closing in on Coca-Cola – 'The Real Thing'.

Roberts sensed panic from his brand's bitter rivals. "I wanted to keep pushing them to the edge," he says.

At a black-tie dinner attended by the Canadian Prime Minister, Roberts took to the podium, made his speech, and said: "Watch this."

He recalls: "A Coke vending machine had been wheeled on stage. I bent down, picked up a machine gun, and blew this thing away. Everybody hit the deck. It was on the news and everywhere. All people wanted to talk about was 'Is this crazy guy Kevin Roberts going to come round with his machine gun?' Then they'd buy another case of Pepsi. My people were walking 20 feet high."

Next stop: chief operating officer at Australian brewer Lion Nathan. "The company had been formed after a merger and no one could remember its name. When I walked in for



my first meeting, I had a lion. I'd borrowed it from the zoo." He laughs. "People crapped themselves. No one forgot the name after that."

A couple of points: Roberts fired blanks at the vending machine, which had been wired to snap, crackle and pop. And the lion was sedated and monitored by its keeper. He admits to a reckless streak. But in his world anyone who can conjure up striking images and headlines will be forgiven much worse sins than that.

In 1997 Roberts's attributes attracted Saatchi & Saatchi. Formed in 1970 by brothers Charles and Maurice Saatchi, the agency had become the UK's biggest in less than a decade.

Its famous 'Labour isn't working' campaign helped sweep Margaret Thatcher to power in 1979. By the Nineties, the brothers had been ousted in a boardroom coup and the company was floundering.

Roberts was brought in as top man. One of his most important marketing exercises was on Saatchi itself. He rebranded it 'an ideas company' rather than an ad agency – "ideas are the currency of the future". Under his leadership Saatchi has thrived with clients like Procter & Gamble, Toyota and Visa.

And Cadbury. Thanks to Roberts's team, Cadbury's Dairy Milk is now linked in millions of minds with a drumming gorilla. More importantly – and pretty much the only thing that really matters – sales increased. "Up 14 per cent," he notes. "Great advertising like that can leave you feeling good about a brand."

A bar of chocolate and a gorilla pounding drums to In The Air Tonight by Phil Collins. In advertising, A leads to B by a roundabout route. "The creative process is completely chaotic," says Roberts.

"It starts with a deep understanding of what the consumer feels. Someone will say 'You know what? I think chocolate is all about one thing: joy.' Women eat Dairy Milk on their own. They come home, they lie on the couch and break off a block – joy! You give that line to the creative team and something else comes out the end."

Roberts knows that one brand of chocolate may taste very like another. Advertising is there to create differences. "The quality of a product is not enough," he says. "All dandruff shampoo gets rid of dandruff. All beers get you drunk. But what makes you choose Beck's rather than Stella?"

"What you're looking for when you spend money is something more than just getting rid of dandruff. You're looking for stuff that makes you happy."

"All advertising is attempting to create an emotional connection."

"Function leaves you a little empty. We want something that cares a bit more, is more empathetic. Life's a bit ordinary at the moment, right? Everyone's worried about their job, they can't afford to go on holiday, we have fear of terrorism."

"People are looking for great emotional connectivity. What's demanded is desire, authenticity. You've got to stand for something. You've got to have a big dream. That way people share it."

This dream might be encapsulated in a slogan: 'The Choice of a New Generation'. It might be a seductive image like Marlboro Man. And sometimes advertising sparks a brand into developing a life of its own. Consumers feel themselves becoming part of the world's coolest gang, simply by buying a product which does much the same as its competitors.

"Who'd have thought that everybody would have an iPod?" asks Roberts. "All these guys like Samsung have MP3 players that are just as good but iPod has 75 per cent of the market. If you have an iPod you're part of the tribe."

"A successful brand becomes irresistible. I still drink Diet Pepsi every day. I still shave with a Gillette Sensor. Great brands infiltrate your life. It's a lifelong love affair."

Has life left us so starved of emotion that we look to fizzy drinks and razor blades for fulfilment? Roberts is convinced that the way we embrace newcomers like the iPod and cling to long-established brands is about more than satisfying a physical need.

In 2004 he summed up these thoughts in a book called Lovemarks. Lovemarks are brands not only used by consumers, but loved by them, "infusing mystery, sensuality and intimacy to win loyalty beyond reason".

This evangelism for brands extends to business as a whole. Roberts has claimed that "The role of business is to make the world a better place for everyone."

He argues: "Capitalism is a great idea but it needs to be inclusive. All that 'greed is good' stuff has been proven to be really, really bad. Fifty million people will lose their jobs this year. That leads to crime and all kinds of social problems.

"Business is the only way out. And that's global. Right now if you live in Africa you're pretty much screwed. Giving them money is a short-term band aid. We've got to invest in training.

"In the Sixties it was all about egalitarianism. Then we had a few decades of 'greed is good'. Now we've got exactly what we wanted in the Sixties. People, through technology and access to information, have control. The consumer is boss."

The counter-argument says business is boss, with advertising its means of persuading people to be forever dissatisfied.

Roberts bristles at this, saying that some "left-wing guy" he met recently said something along these lines. "The implication is that people are stupid. But the consumer isn't a moron. If you think today's consumer can be pressed into buying stuff they don't need, you must be living in a menagerie."

This is the only time bonhomie gives way to a flash of something sterner. Just as well, because Roberts says good-natured co-operation is the key to success. "My role is to create a climate of inspiration. You try to be caring and demanding, like a family. Everyone can talk to me. You go human first."

It's hard to picture the pre-marketing Kevin Roberts using the phrase 'go human'. He grew up on a Lancaster council estate and his father was a security guard at a psychiatric hospital. "Which is not dissimilar to what I do now..."

Roberts was kicked out of Lancaster Grammar School after his girlfriend Barbara fell pregnant. "We had no money. I was 17, she was 18. We didn't know anything about anything."

They married, had a daughter, and moved to London in 1969. Roberts had landed a job at fashion house Mary Quant, where he met Rowena. He and Barbara divorced. Rowena has been Mrs Roberts for 34 years. They have two sons and a daughter.

Roberts became a marketing executive for Gillette then Procter & Gamble before joining Pepsi.

In 1989 the family moved to Auckland and Roberts is now a New Zealand citizen. It was a kind of rebirth in a country which regards where you are now as infinitely more important than where you came from.

This new man has access to powerful people who need him as much as he needs them. In November Roberts will be meeting Bill Clinton and George Lucas. He recently spoke at the same event as Al Gore, former almost-US president turned environmental campaigner.

Roberts believes politicians are "generally dirt-bags" and he dismisses Gore as "the only guy to have got a Nobel Peace Prize for PowerPoint. His speech was 'The end is nigh.' Mine was about joy and optimism. Possibilities not limits."

He spreads this message at the three universities which have given him honorary professorships. In 2004 Roberts became a governor of Lancaster Grammar, the school which turfed him out nearly 40 years earlier.

What he calls "the most important thing I do" involves not young high-fliers but teenagers on the edge of oblivion. That's a place Roberts remembers well. "When I was 14 I started nicking stuff in town. Just stuff to eat, like peanuts and crisps. I'd been doing that for three or four weeks, and I'd been spotted. I did it again and there was a copper waiting for me. He gave me a real telling off: 'What are you doing? You're going to screw up your life!' Instead of charging me he arranged for me to coach 11-year-olds in cricket and rugby at Lancaster Lads' Club. He turned my life around."

Decades later in New Zealand, Roberts thought about applying the same principle to other troubled young lives. Punishment didn't seem to be working. What about prevention?

He became a trustee of the Turn Your Life Around Trust (TYLA), a charity with the power to write off teenagers' first offences if they agree to join the mentoring programme. Seventy-five per cent never re-offend. Roberts makes about \$1.5m a year from speeches, at \$50,000 a time. It all goes to TYLA.

The marketing maverick turns 60 in October but it's no surprise to hear him dismiss talk of retirement. "And do what? I mean, who wouldn't want to run Saatchi & Saatchi? It's like permission to misbehave.

"I hear people talk about work-life balance. I live in work-life integration. I work every day. And I have fun every day."

At the Grasmere home he bought three years ago the fun includes surrounding himself with photographs of the footballers he grew up idolising and the models he grew up fancying. Parts of the house are like a shrine to the Sixties. "I wanted this to be the sort of place I didn't have then."

It's worked out well though, hasn't it? His life doesn't look like one shot through with regrets. "There have been hard times," he says. "Becoming a dad at 17. That's tough. Getting divorced is really hard. Telling your daughter that you're splitting up.

"One of my main mentors while I was growing up is dying of dementia. There's no good way to die, but that's really not a good way. Those things I find hard. The business stuff... that's just business."

Roberts looks up and points to another of his mementoes: a photograph of Russell Crowe in *Gladiator*. It's been signed by the actor – one of many famous friends – with a line from the film: "To Kevin. 'What we do in life echoes in eternity.'"

"I so much believe that," says the warrior whose weapons are words, pictures and passion. "If you want to leave a legacy, leave the place better."

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