



Love – the highest call

When I joined Saatchi & Saatchi eight years ago, we issued ourselves a transforming challenge: to change from the most famous advertising agency in the world to the hottest ideas company on the planet. Our new job? To create emotional connections with consumers that deliver loyalty beyond reason.

Human beings are powered by emotion, not by reason. Emotion and reason are intertwined, but when they conflict, emotion wins every time. Without the fleeting and intense stimulus of emotion, rational thought winds down and slowly disintegrates.

Neurologist Donald Calne says: "The essential difference between emotion and reason is that emotion leads to action while reason leads to conclusions."

Emotion is an unlimited resource. It's always there, waiting to be plugged into. And there are no limits to its power.

And what's the most important emotion of them all? Love.

Love transforms a relationship from a valued connection to a passionate commitment. And what the world needs now, more than ever, is love.

This new millennium and its challenges demand a return to the fundamentals of human nature. Human emotions truly matter.

Our challenge? Don't just touch hearts. Aspire to change them. Aspire to nothing less than a total eclipse of the heart.

I care about business and I care about people. You can't have one without the other. To make a difference today every successful business needs to create lifelong love affairs.

When I first said the "L" word in public six years ago, everyone squirmed. Now serious business people say "love" without blushing. And mean it. Our book, *Lovemarks: The Future Beyond Brands*, is all about love in the world of business and brands. Lovemarks are super-evolved brands, dripping with mystery, sensuality and intimacy.

Take a brand away and people will find a replacement. Take a Lovemark away and people will protest its absence. Lovemarks are a relationship, not a transaction.

At Saatchi & Saatchi, love means more than hearts and this year's new slogan. Love is how we are transforming our Network. Love is how we are transforming our clients' brands. Love is what business has to have to earn long-term emotional connections with the market.

And we know that love is a universal emotion that people all over the world are prepared to associate with business (the *Lovemarks* book is now in Brazil, Bulgaria and Belgium, the English-speaking world got it in 2004 and, in 2005, we'll launch it in Japan, China, Italy, Germany, Russia, Hungary and Scandinavia).

Women are one big reason brands are faltering. Women are a huge part of why Lovemarks are succeeding. We know that women influence around 80 per cent of purchasing decisions. The sale of power tools on Mother's Day equals those on Father's Day!

This is a new era for women and every business has got to be up for it.

Women are super-smart when it comes to love and to emotion. Our culture is becoming intuitive and networked. Everyday, everyone has to think faster and more flexibly. Juggle more stuff at the same time. Be expert at judging people fast and making personal connections.

All this says "women" to me simply because women are best at it. Women know how to connect the dots. What women go for will spearhead what everyone goes for. So here are four ideas to get started on right now to transform your organisations, your brands and maybe even, yourselves.

Fall in love with ideas

Knowledge and information are routine. Ideas make stuff happen. Act like a technician or expert and that is how you will be treated. Act like an ideas person and the world will open up before you.

Follow your heart

Feel it, don't analyse it. When your head bullies your heart, you'll make mistakes.

Pursue failure

Avoid moderation. Be hot, or cold, but not lukewarm. I've always ignored warnings against enthusiasm. Fear and caution strangle ideas. As ice hockey superstar Wayne Gretzky once said: "You miss 100 per cent of the shots you don't take." So be in over your head. Don't be afraid to lose because then – and only then – will you know what you're made of. You discover your limits when you crash up against them.

Above all, stay open to love.

Once you accept the power of love, a whole heap of stuff drops neatly into place – or right out of the picture altogether. Who would want anything less?

Kevin Roberts is worldwide CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi, one of the world's leading creative organisations, with a team of 7000 people in 82 countries. A New Zealand citizen, Kevin has offices and homes in New Zealand, New York and St Tropez. Read more at www.saatchikevin.com, www.lovemarks.com and www.nzedge.com 