

# “Today’s marketing is dead”

KEVIN ROBERTS Chairman of the Saatchi & Saatchi advertising agency.

*Caption: Kevin Roberts is convinced that what we need are new leaders to inspire those around them and not to confine themselves to issuing orders.*

Victor Moreno, Madrid.

He’s English, 63 years old and passionate about football, with a soft spot for Kun Agüero’s Manchester City. Hiding behind this simple description is Kevin Roberts, chairman of Saatchi & Saatchi advertising agency, and one of the most gifted minds in the advertising world. A man who does not mince his words when discussion turns to his own sector, leadership or the economic situation in Spain.

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One of Roberts’ s major successes was the creation of the *lovemarks* concept, a new idea that revolutionised the world of marketing and

advocated brands appealing to consumers’ feelings in order to connect with them. “The gap between consumers and brands is steadily widening, although there are certain companies for which you might have a special fondness, such as Apple, Nike, Mini Cooper or Real Madrid,” he says.

“A brand’s prestige rests on respect, trust and quality. *Lovemarks*, however, contain other ingredients such as mystery, sensuality and intimacy with the customer,” adds Roberts. Things being as they are, right now there are companies that use demonstrable facts to achieve consumer loyalty, whereas others -*lovemarks*- build loyalty beyond reason. “Advertising has to connect in an emotional way, that’s all that matters at the moment”.

Continuing with this line of thought, Roberts is eager to emphasise the leading role consumers have acquired. “They are in charge. They have taken control as, thanks to the Internet, they have all kinds of information and knowledge at their fingertips. Brands no longer belong to their companies, but to their consumers, it is they who decide. That is why brands have to understand the need to spend more time than ever with consumers, virtually on the one hand and really on the other. However, the people working in marketing departments have not yet understood this part. So it is not too far-fetched to claim that marketing, as it is currently understood, is dead”, says the advertising expert.

## **A matter of feelings**

Roberts is in no doubt that it is now much easier to approach the consumer, constantly talking and sharing opinions on the Web, but there has to be a serious turnaround led by managers -leaders- with their heads screwed on right. “They should spend less time

on management and more time listening to what buyers are doing. It's no longer a question of thinking about what they do, but about what they feel and exactly what they are after".

To handle with this necessary change in course, the chairman of Saatchi & Saatchi says that we need leaders with a new vision: "We must have leaders who inspire those around them and these individuals must become their best envoys, both at work and in life".

However, as Roberts explains, there is no magic formula, since leadership cannot be learned and is not a science. "Leadership is an intuitive art that is felt and perceived at

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all times. You have to be aware of the rhythms and needs at any given time", he says. "A manager like José Mourinho is a good example of an *inspirational* leader", says Roberts using a football metaphor. "Pep Guardiola has succeeded

in getting FC Barcelona to play beautifully, but Mourinho has somehow been able to inspire the Real Madrid players to be better still and to quickly shake off any poor results. Something he also did in Inter Milan and in Chelsea".

Regarding Spain, Roberts believes that "there is too much fear of failure" and that these new leaders also have to intervene here. "They must be able to convey a very basic and inspiring message, so people lose their fear of failure, become quicker on the uptake and resolve any problems that have come up", concludes Kevin Roberts.

EXPANSION.

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