

Kirsty Dollisson

GM, marketing & commercial, TorchMedia

By Marc Andrews

TorchMedia is Australia's only media network dedicated solely to the retail environment. The company is very much at the forefront of what has now been succinctly defined as "shopper media".

"It's something where we have looked for the right terminology to classify it. We've done quite a lot of research into the media landscape to understand how agencies see it," TorchMedia's general manager, marketing & commercial, **Kirsty Dollisson**, told *Mediaweek*. **"It is very much positioned as shopper media – whether that is in-store media, or in-shopping centre media like what oOh! offer. It's all very much part of that same landscape."**

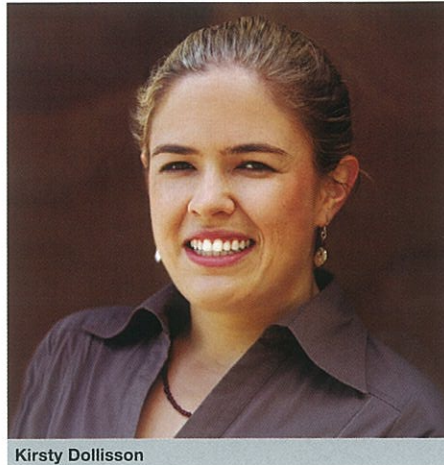
One of the most important aspects of shopper media is that it's actually the last point on the path to purchase.

"It's an area that is receiving a lot more attention than it has historically, in terms of its importance before the purchase decision," Dollisson noted. **"The most important and key component is the differentiation between above the line and a below the line spend.** Anything above the line is classified as shopper media, as it essentially uses funds from marketing budgets. What that would generally entail is anything to do with in-store media. That could be a static type execution of one of the products, or it could be a digital network, as well as 'incentimedia' – whether that be large format aerial banners, or any of the other major shopping centre players like AMP, or Colonial. It also includes the shopping portrait panels within all shopping centres Australia-wide inside the centre and large format details which are used at the entry points to retailers. **It also includes anything within the car park entry points to supermarkets and retail outlets."**

Shopper media is something that even five years ago in Australia was much less in evidence than it was overseas.

"It's a case from a retail perspective that in Australia we are known to be 8-10 years behind the UK and US," Dollisson said. "What that means is we are starting to see the introduction of new mediums you would have seen in Tesco's and Wal-Mart for a long time now entering into the Australian space."

That noted, Dollisson said there was a new line of thinking occurring in shopper media and shopper marketing in that it's no longer a linear execution.



Kirsty Dollisson

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"Historically, the concept of in-store media, or shopper media, is so important because it's on the path to purchase, but now it's more about a 360 degree approach to indicating to the shopper," she said. "By that it's not just about thinking about the path to purchase, but in the home, online, reading a magazine, looking at a billboard, in front of the shopping centre, inside the supermarket. It's a case of how do you get them to pre-store, how you get them instore and how do you get them post-store. **Realistically that means there will be a lot more integrated campaigns considering the three key touchpoints of pre, in and post-store and ultimately greater expenditure in the space."**

Not surprisingly, when Dollisson herself heads off to the local supermarket, it's hard for her to switch off from her day job.

"It's quite tricky when I go shopping," she chuckled. **"Whenever I go to the grocery store I'm always working. I'm always looking at new areas to brand instore.** It is important to try and see what is going to impact the shopper and what is going to help them and add value to their purchase decisions. Grocery shopping, more so than any other channel, is a habitual behaviour. They are not actively looking at things, or recognising things, so it's trying to break through to that subconscious of moving

up and down every aisle to make sure you impact every purchasing decision."

The discussion that too much information, or advertising, can make people switch off is something Dollisson is well aware of.

"That's very much a consideration," she said. "We put a lot of emphasis on making sure that particular areas within instore, whether it be one of our liquor partners or grocery partners, don't have too much communication in one area of the store because it starts to devalue the medium. It takes away from what the individual brands are investing in. **We have a very strict policy behind how much can go into one store at the one time.** We don't overpass that because then it starts to devalue the proposition for the shopper."

TorchMedia, which Dollisson acknowledges started out as "a very small business", is now being taken seriously as a medium that "is very much important and should be considered".

Next year the company will launch a number of major instore innovations.

"We are in the process of launching illuminating floor media and also digital shelf units, similar to what has been done in Wal-Mart overseas," she explained. "The most important part of it is the ability to move it so different advertisers can use it. Having shelf-edge media, which can be moved around in front of the relevant category, is something we have been trying to develop, based on the Smart Network in the US, a very successful network there. That's where we're heading."

CV Dollisson comes from a family of media people. Her father was president of the Outdoor Media Association, so despite studying environmental science at university, she was destined to become part of the marketing industry. At TorchMedia now for almost five-and-a-half years, she was previously at EYE for over nine years.

"I was working for one of the previous businesses that merged together to form EYE Corp," she recalled. "They were called Boyer Group, which looked after all the large format Sydney and Brisbane airport signage, as well as the Ansett Australia contract before that went bust. They also looked after all the sporting ground signage around Australia before that became diversified. Ultimately that business merged with NLB to form EYE Corp. **So I certainly started my career in out-of-home from the very beginning."**