



Kirsty Dollisson

General Manager Marketing & Commercial TorchMedia

Bio

At just 31 years old, Kirsty Dollisson has notched up more than a decade of experience in marketing and sales for media companies, launching and building what have become key brands in the Australian media landscape.

Most notably, in 2006, Kirsty headed up the rebranding of a collection of four small, retail-focused media companies into what is now TorchMedia – Australia's only dedicated shopper media network that covers all the major shopping occasions: grocery, liquor, pharmacy and petrol-convenience.

Last year, Kirsty led the TorchMedia team to victory in the B&T Awards, being named Media Brand of the Year for 2010.

Prior to TorchMedia, Kirsty played a key role in the development of the Eye Corp brand and its divisions, Eye Drive, Eye Fly and Eye Shop. She holds a degree in environmental science.

Kirsty is a member of the new Shopper Marketing Industry Council, which has been formed to accelerate the capability and acceptance of shopper marketing in Australia. Kirsty's passion for media and retail combine here, as the Council aims to provide best-practice tools and templates for this emerging marketing discipline.

What makes you so successful as a marketer?

"Marketing success comes from a mix of science and art. I believe in investing in research, using data to develop tools and always tracking and measuring the impacts. But you need a certain amount of creativity, instinct and tolerance to risk to make these elements into great marketing campaigns.

"I also believe in building a team of people with different skill sets and personalities. Great ideas can come from anywhere, but you need many different skills to bring it to life.

"In my role at TorchMedia, I think my passion for all things retail is a key part of the team's success. I am constantly looking at what's happening overseas in terms of trends, technology and innovation. We all agree that the

Australian market is still quite a few years behind more mature markets such as the US and UK. It's good to look at these markets to see how shopper media is positioned and what is helping it to grow."

What has been the most significant development for the company/brand this year?

"Project Tucker – a large-scale research effort to understand how shoppers shop for meals – has been one of the biggest and most significant shopper insights projects TorchMedia has undertaken since our launch five years ago.

"We wanted to know – looking beyond transaction and sales data – what was influencing purchase decisions when shoppers are trying to put together a meal solution.

"The results have taken shopper insights to the next level, with invaluable information about the best way to communicate with shoppers.

"With this project, we have created a platform for shopper insights that we are continuing with category research. Phase two is now in the field, and the aim is to understand shopper interaction with the frozen section, to give a more rounded insight into the meal solution shopping process."

What are your predictions for the brand, the category, and the market/retail industry?

"The rise of shopper marketing as a discipline will continue apace with budgets realigned to reflect a new model. There will be a continued blurring of the line between traditional above-the-line spend and below-the-line, and will lead to a model that is based on the pre-store, in-store and post-store mindsets.

"Corresponding with this will be

the rise of more specialist shopper marketing agencies, that are providing not only shopper activation, but also insight-led recommendations around the path to purchase.

"We will also experience a massive growth in online, not only of the mass merchants, but also with other retailers across grocery, liquor and pharmacy.

"Greater use of technology will increase shopper engagement, and the likes of smartphone apps, QR codes, barcode scanning technology and location-based shopper offers will become the norm."

Company/brand market growth

"Since the launch of TorchMedia five years ago, we have been instrumental in introducing the shopper marketing discipline in Australia.

"In the past year alone, we have grown our sales by 25 per cent, our inventory by 15 per cent, and now 90 per cent of the top 50 grocery brands by value [excl cigarettes] have run a TorchMedia campaign.

"We are always introducing new technology and new formats. Currently, digital shelf units and illuminated floor media are being tested."

What's next?

"At TorchMedia, we will be continuing our focus on shopper insights to help the brand manufacturers to understand the best ways to communicate with shoppers, not only at the 'moment of truth'.

"Everyone is starting to talk about pre-store, in-store and post-store as the way to communicate with shoppers. The new Shopper Marketing Industry Council has just released a tool that shows communicating with shoppers is not a linear process: it's circular and continuous, so that ideally they come back and repurchase the product." ■

"Marketing success comes from a mix of science and art. Research, using data to develop tools and always tracking and measuring the impacts."