



**Name:** Kym Vercoe  
**Title:** Group account director,  
CumminsNitro  
**Residence:** Brisbane

**Years in marketing/advertising:**  
17 years

**Qualifications:** BComm

**Current project or activity:**  
GAD working across the Virgin Blue group of brands (Virgin Blue, V Australia, Pacific Blue, Blue Holidays, Velocity).

**Accomplishment most proud of:**  
When I was marketing manager at Golden Circle, I launched a range of baby food products achieving 33% share in the first 14 weeks. Resulted in award "Overall Winner for Marketing Excellence", AMI and Gold Pinnacle award from AFA which has been written up as a case study on successful product launches.

**Marketing mentor:** I've worked with some really talented people over the years who have helped shape how I work. But it was my dad that made me want to go into this profession in the first place.

**What brand do you most admire and why?**  
Without sounding like a brown-nose, it's actually Virgin Blue. It's part of the reason I wanted to work for CumminsNitro, the agency that

helped the brand shape where it is today.

**What marketing program do you wish you had worked on?**

By the time I'd started at CumminsNitro, the Best Job in the World campaign for Tourism Queensland was underway, so while I'm now part of the agency responsible for the strategy behind that campaign, I didn't work on it. It's an incredible campaign based on a simple, yet insightful notion, creating a global phenomenon that will be hard to match in the future.

**What's the most valuable marketing lesson you picked up during your career?**

Have a plan. One that allows you to be flexible, but have a strong, clearly defined plan that sets a path for you to run your own race.

**What has been the biggest lesson in your career, and what did you learn from it?**

Playing pool with my managing director back when I was a junior and having to decide whether to sink the 'sitter shot' black ball to win, or intentionally miss. Sometimes it's a hard call to make on what is politically correct versus doing what is right. (By the way I sunk the ball but not before stating "I just want you to know, I love my job").

**Biggest challenges facing marketers today?**

Staying abreast of the fast moving, ever evolving changes in the digital environment. For those of us not in the Gen Y category, it's easy to discount emerging social media such as Twitter, for example. But unless you engage and involve yourself, you can't realistically advise your client (or management) on whether you can be strategic in that space.

**Best recent technological advance for marketing**

I have a love/hate relationship with my blackberry, but it's changed

speed to market and the idea of connectivity. You are no longer constrained by your desk. Not so good on holidays though...

**Future direction for the marketing profession?**

Having the ability to stay true to the core task of meeting the consumer's need and not being side-lined by 'the next big thing' for its own sake (ie. let's get into social networking because it's what others are doing rather than for the right business reasons). iPhone is a great example of integrating technological advance, using integrated communications to build excitement, but fundamentally meeting a consumer need (even before we knew we wanted it). Despite the fact there are other phones that are functionally better, what iPhone has achieved epitomises what the future of marketing is all about for me.

**What does the statement: "Value Creation Through Marketing" mean to you?**

It's more than benefit-marketing or value-added offers to the consumer. Growing market share, particularly in mature markets, is about finding ways to build the value proposition with the consumer. It's not just having the right feature in the product, but making sure the whole contact provides the experience the consumer desires, including the interaction they have with the customer service team. Marketing isn't a department, it's a mindset.

**Do you think sustainability is a burning issue for marketing?**

I think it's an issue for all parts of business. Consumers expect companies to take sustainability seriously and to be socially and environmentally responsible. Those who can prove it will reap the long-term rewards.

**What attributes make a great marketer?**

Humility. Not a lot of point having

all the answers if no-one wants to listen to you. And when you think you know it all, give yourself a good slap and get back to reality.

Curiosity. Never give up the desire to know more, learn more.

Nous. Being savvy enough to know when to push ahead and when to bide your time.

**Are there any articles or books you have read that influenced your thinking as a marketer?**

I get regular email feeds from various marketing-related groups and articles which provide tips and viewpoints that often challenge my thinking.

**Favourite quote**

Choice between: "Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results", Albert Einstein, and a plethora of one-liners out of Monty Python.

**Last movie**

*Get Smart*. I thought they did a great job of being true to the original work.

**Favourite sports team**

The Wallabies

**Favourite holiday spot**

Anywhere in Asia. For a girl with size 5 feet, it's a shoe-shopping mecca

**Last book you read**

*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Stieg Larsson. It's a tragedy he did not get to see his books in print and see his success. Great read.

**Hobbies:**

Attempting to out-Masterchef my husband, golf, beach worship, reading a mixture of can't-put-it-down novels for an escape, the occasional business book for my mind and "chick-lit" for my sanity.

\* Certified practising Marketer (CPM) is the professional benchmark for marketers. AMI membership is the only way you can apply for and retain the status of CPM.