



To market, to market

Marketing your product to the masses is tough work. But if you can get in touch with your consumers' emotions and needs, then half your job is done

WORDS: CAMERON COOPER

When Sam Kekovich blasts onto television screens in the lead-up to Australia Day with his annual address to the nation urging greater lamb consumption, sales skyrocket.

The marketing campaign from Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) packs an economic punch. MLA reports that during the 2013 Australia Day campaign week, lamb sales totalled \$42.08 million, 48 per cent above the weekly average of \$28.44 million.

Marketing initiatives continue to be rolled out as part of the lamb campaign. In this year's television ads, for example, Kekovich suffers a bout of 'lambnesia', for which the cure is eating more lamb.

For rural producers marketing their businesses and products, there are inherent marketing lessons to be learnt from such campaigns.

Jim Gall is Managing Director of Redhanded Communications Group, a marketing agency that focuses on rural and regional communications and marketing. He nominates, among his picks of good rural campaigns, the recent Ram Trucks advertisement screened during the 2013 Super Bowl in the US, which celebrated the farmer—an ad Gall deems “relevant, engaging and incredibly respectful”; and his agency's own campaign for Roundup Attack, portraying the product as a great white shark terrorising weeds in a multifaceted

campaign that incorporates social media, events and television advertising.

“It's had huge results from an awareness perspective for the product,” Gall says.

These successful campaigns incorporate three elements that Gall believes are vital for the effective marketing of rural and farm products.

“The first thing is to get noticed,” he says. “You need to have noticeability or engagement.” The second is to draw consumers' attention to the fact that a product or service can solve their problems (such as weeds). The third is ensuring your brand is memorable, which may involve the use of mnemonics, characters or distinctive colours that catch consumers' attention.

Gall also advocates making marketing emotionally relevant to customers and giving consumers a call to action—arguably something Kekovich does well.

“This is really important,” he says. “A lot of people just put advertising out there or create a campaign, and don't provide anything that gets the customer to buy the product or ask for more information.”

This is where the digital environment has changed opportunities for farmers and producers to build their brands,

engage with customers, build customer loyalty and sell products online.

He notes, moreover, that farmers can be focused unduly on the costs of production or yields, but if farm businesses are going to become savvy marketers, they need to focus more on consumers than on manufacturing.

“Coles and Woolworths have done that very effectively—they follow public sentiment and they track it better than anyone, and that's why they'll come out with hormone-free beef or free-range eggs,” he says.

“It's a good lesson for all businesses to understand what their product does but, more importantly, what the consumer wants and needs, and then build your product around that.”

This focus on consumer desires was adopted in M&C Saatchi's recent campaign for Lilydale free-range chickens. Set to a remake of the 1946 swing hit ‘Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens’, the Lilydale ad acknowledges consumers' increasing demand for high-quality products that have been produced using humane manufacturing processes.

Overall, Gall warns agribusiness operations to avoid being ‘everything

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according to Gall, “because all of a sudden, there are online distribution channels that give them access to massive reach very quickly”.

Gall says it's unfortunate that many Australian farmers and rural communities have not yet seen the value of fast broadband connections, because websites and social media platforms can help them

to everyone' in their marketing efforts.

“Don't get distracted with tactics,” he advises. “Stick to a strategy; work on the mandates of giving a really consistent brand message that's relevant to your defined target audience.

“The minute you're all things to all people is the minute the consumer doesn't trust you anymore.” 