

Travelling Man

DraftFCB Media md Derek Lindsay is a rock star of the media agency world, and the No 1 go-to guy for every comment-seeking hack in the country.

He's the first media agency head to be elected a CAANZ vice-president, and from 2007 to 2010 he headed the Print Media Industry Research Review Group - the high-powered print industry committee that managed the complex process that led to the reappointment of Nielsen as the prime measurer of newspaper & magazine readership, consumer & media insights and media engagement measures.

He is also Chair of the CAANZ Media Committee, which oversees the NZ Media Awards.

What was your first job in advertising?

My first job was not in advertising, but in the marketing department in a company called Birds Eye Wall's, part of Unilever. This was back in England, in a pleasant Surrey suburb of Walton on Thames. After four years there I joined Leo Burnett in St Martin's Lane, in the centre of London - my first real advertising job. I loved it, it was brilliant.

Your greatest moment in advertising?

Not one in particular. Getting my first job in an agency in London was special, where I met a number of colleagues who became long-term friends. Following my boss from Leo Burnett to Publicis two years later - he asked me to join him in the new agency, which I felt was a real compliment at the time!

Setting up in 1999 (along with Louise and Richard) and eventually selling Spark in 2005 was a real personal achievement, because it went from zero to No 1 media agency in those six years. And now: DraftFCB is a really unique

agency, with an engaging culture, top-level team and delivering outstanding work - what more can you ask for?

The worst?

Probably my worst moment, which I remember vividly, was back when I was a junior media planner in London, at Publicis. I was working on this alcohol account and I had to deal with a really difficult marketing manager. She made my life very fraught and finally after about six months I was asked to be taken off the business - it was a huge blow to my pride and I took it very personally!

But after a couple of days dwelling on it and a few pints in the pub, I realised it was a blessing in disguise. Now, I am always aware of the importance of fitting the right team to each and every client - strong relationships are vital.

What do you think of the Super City so far?

I certainly think that it is the right thing to do - in fact, it should have happened 10 years ago. It is essential we have a helicopter view of the total breadth of the city. The issue is now whether those elected will make a difference - it is too early to say. But we're going to have to be very patient before we really see noticeable differences and benefits.

Enjoying the endless summer?

You bet! Being brought up in England meant that, when I went on holiday, I was always going to somewhere warm and sunny. I didn't get into the winter sports (skiing etc) at all. I love the summer and spending time at Waibeke.

Going to the Rugby World Cup?

I wouldn't miss it for the world. Having been in NZ for almost 22 years, I am

fully behind the ABs. But if they're not playing I will support England. So I am signed up for games right through from the opening game against Tonga to the final - the ballot looked after me! Go Ritchie and the boys.

The challenges facing the industry in the next two years?

We have just got to start to change how clients perceive us - creative agencies, media agencies digital agencies - all of us. We have got to be seen to be adding value to their business - not just from an advertising viewpoint but from a business viewpoint. We need to understand their key business issues and what we can do to contribute to their success. It will, and should, go beyond our current limited remit.

Some agencies are already doing some of this, and good on them. I firmly believe that DraftFCB is one of them. These agencies are developing & changing to the current digital world and delivering ideas and solutions which go beyond our previous norms. There's a lot of work to do!

What are your interests outside advertising?

My friends and colleagues know that I love travelling. I am always planning the next trip away somewhere. I always like to know when I am real busy at work, that I have the trip planned on a certain date. I love taking time to plan the trip and have it well organised prior to leaving. I am lucky to have seen many parts of the world but I've yet to see India and anywhere on the South American continent - they're on the bucket list.

And my most recent trip: walking the Milford Track. I would recommend it to anyone - it's hard work but worth it, and stunningly beautiful.

DEREK LINDSAY.