

TOP MARKETING MINDS

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M15:

Assia Benmedjdoub
presents the top marketing
minds in Australian fashion.

locked and loaded

1 Country Road channels marketing manager Paul Conti

Paul Conti started his career with Country Road as a sales assistant at the tender age of 17. Perhaps it was this on-the-ground training that fired him up the ranks of this iconic retailer, with a six-month trial as social media coordinator leading him all the way to the top. Last year, Country Road was one of only three local retailers selected to trial Instagram's Shopping functionality, clocking an average return of x18 on ad spend. "Instagram has become an important part of our wider marketing strategy with proven success in driving reach, engagement and purchase," Conti says. His historic achievements extend to targeted engagement campaigns with Country Road's membership base, which account for around 70% of revenue. He once executed a four month collaboration with a mobile loyalty app, resulting in a lift of incremental sales

by more than 21% among exposed customers. For every dollar spent on the campaign, Country Road generated an additional 8.95x incremental return – close to \$9 of incremental value.

2 Target CMO Kenton Elliot

Last August, Target Australia announced its long-awaited comeback with the release of a daring new activewear collection and TVC. The TVC, also seeded throughout social media platforms such as Instagram, saw the hero statement leggings shift 3,600 units in a matter of days. How did the campaign fuse all touchpoints from merchandise and imagery to messaging? Target's marketing department formed a Design Council in the process of its restructure, incorporating all heads of design, creative brand and CX to create seamless touchpoints and branding across all divisions. Using the power of data - for instance, knowing its

core customer is a mother who spends 15 minutes in store - the brand has also been busy issuing tailored EDMs and communication missives based on previous shopping behaviour and localised imagery. "You have to break things down into single digestible insights the team can use to process and make decisions with confidence."

3 Tony Bianco marketing manager Danielle Truter

Known for its striking seasonal campaign imagery, it was always going to be a tough ask to re-engineer Tony Bianco's marketing strategy. But working hand in hand with director Anthony Bianco and the internal team, Danielle Truter trialled a new approach last July. "We're breaking up our seasonal content into four key trends – we're going to partner with a content creator and get the same amount of images as we would on our bigger campaigns." By creating

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mini campaigns throughout the year, for example 10 trends a month instead of just one season, the brand has been able to produce quick, responsive content for platforms such as Instagram. "It's about speed. They're wanting it now. From a strategic point of view, you look at the engagement you get from a campaign perspective versus something that's just been created from one of these content creators. It just makes sense from a strategic and investment standpoint."

4 Amazon Fashion senior marketing manager Gillian Mason

Amazon Australia increased its revenue by a whopping 1500% in the most recent fiscal year, hitting \$292.3 million in 2018 compared to \$17.3 million in 2017. A key driver of this result was a significant boost in marketing spend, with the eCommerce giant investing \$68 million in 2018 compared to just \$1.7 million in 2017. Part of this Amazon Australia marketing charge is Gillian Mason - and if that name sounds familiar, that's because it is. Mason was part of a power team at Seafolly for seven years, first in eCommerce before expanding into eCommerce and digital. She was responsible for the Australia and USA eCommerce P&L plus global digital strategy and execution across eCommerce, retail, and third party marketplace partners including The Iconic. A marketer who understands the fiscal drivers of a retail business? Definitely an M15.

5 Showpo CMO Mark Baartse

With over three million social media followers, including 1.6 million on Instagram, Showpo makes millions in revenue via search, Facebook, email and other digital channels. Baartse, who has lead the brand's marketing strategy since 2016, has enacted a range of digital initiatives to almost double Showpo's sales in 12 months. "The team has done a lot of work over the last few years on the complete customer journey, from our increasingly heavy investment in artificial intelligence to our deep focus on the customer experience," he says. "We now have AI solutions behind our CRM, search, social and visual merchandising. Despite the hype of AI, we are still see-

ing the need for more people. It's exciting to expand the team across a range of areas including brand, CRM, social and digital." Showpo CEO and founder Jane Lu highlights his 'The Girl Gang' campaign as one of his greatest works, building both community and revenue among its loyal followers.

6 Alice McCall head of marketing and PR Sara Bray

With a background in fashion PR and marketing, most recently a three year stint at General Pants, Sara Bray is well versed in speed-to-market communications and influencer marketing. This has placed her in good stead at Alice McCall, which has a track record of successful influencer marketing initiatives. When international singing star Beyoncé wore an Alice McCall style, it drove 25% of sales that particular day. A core focus for the brand's Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week 2019 show will be this responsive gifting and shopping model, making runway pieces readily available for purchase. "We have greater transparency now so influencers have become a lot more accountable, making it easier to determine who drives the desired results for your brand."

7 Bonds marketing manager Emily Small

Intimate apparel brand Bonds has long held a reputation for producing campaigns which push the envelope. Marketing manager Emily Small has been an integral part of the strategy, with a seven year tenure at the brand. Bonds' latest campaign, All The Feels, featured

a lineup of figureheads challenging traditional beauty including transgender model Andreja Pejic and diversity advocate Shanaya Peters. "We think it's important to challenge what we see in the media with a more authentic reflection of beauty and hope to grow people's visual vocabulary," she says. Small is also a strong supporter of influencer marketing, with partnerships such as Sarah Ellen seeing partners post once a month over a period of three to four months. "There is no concern from us when identifying where there is an influencer post under new AANA guidelines. We are really upfront about who we work with and we're about true partnerships."

8 Superdry PR and marketing manager Matthew Iozzi

According to a joint report from Nielsen and Alipay, the average budget for Chinese tourists travelling abroad has increased by 15% to \$9382. Spotting the demand locally, Superdry recently partnered on a marketing campaign with locally born China social media stars David Gulasi and Amy Lyons. The pair were asked to create video content along with static posts in line with the Lunar New Year. Iozzi says the successful marketing campaign was down to enlisting key opinion leaders outside the traditional media model. Superdry has 430,000 followers on Chinese social media platform Weibo and an online store that operates within the country. "Through key partnerships, we've been able to advertise across these social media platforms and regularly communicate product offerings and new range releases."

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9 Peter Alexander head of marketing and online Kieron Bastard

Peter Alexander is well ahead of schedule for its 2020 Growth Plan, aimed at delivering in excess of \$250 million in annual sales. For the first half of the fiscal year, the retailer delivered a 14.1% growth in sales to \$130.4 million. The brand delivered significant online sales growth and continues to invest in this channel, with Kieron Bastard leading the marketing and digital charge. Through targeted EDMs, promotions and a loyal membership base, the brand continues to win followers with its campaigns.

10 The Iconic CMO Alexander Meyer

In 2018, The Iconic hit double digit market share with 15% of all households across Australia and New Zealand shopping with the fashion eCommerce platform. Speaking at a marketing conference last year, Meyer revealed cross-device shopping behaviour as a “fascinating phenomena” among its customer base. “For example, a majority of The Iconic’s shoppers use the company’s shopping app to search for products and then often end up closing sales on desktops.” In order to stay at the forefront of all transactions, the platform has a range of personalised browsing solutions including ‘Follow the Brand’, ‘Find Your Fit’ and ‘Snap to Shop’. The Iconic’s app has had over two million downloads across iOS and Android, and seven out of every 10 visits to the site are via mobile.

11 Bras N Things marketing manager Natalie Chalmers

With a number of successful holiday-led activations throughout the year - Easter, Mother’s Day - Natalie Chalmers balances reactive campaigns with revenue proven strategies. The brand’s Body Bliss collection is one of its most successful ventures, having sold over 580,000 bras since launching in 2016. In line with this, Bras N Things released a campaign featuring body diverse models to launch its new Luxe range. “We feel so privileged to have this dynamic group of women – who run businesses, are creative, are handy with a drill bit and are models, mothers and sisters – help us launch the new Luxe range,” she says.

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12 Catch Group chief marketing officer Ryan Gracie

A strong focus on marketing saw Catch Group deliver a 62% sales increase to \$254 million in the first half of fiscal 2019. The eCommerce platform, which has 1.36 million active customers, trialed a number of new initiatives to reach a broader audience. One such campaign was Catch Live, an online event in which shoppers could compete in a live quiz game to win discounts on various products. "It brings together trivia and games with exclusive products, deals and brand collaborations to give customers a new, exciting way to shop," he says. The move saw Ryan Gracie and his team attract thousands of new customers to the fold. Other key marketing drives included the launch of a digital homewares magazine with links to products on the

Catch marketplace, plus a pop-up store in Melbourne over the holiday period.

13 Sportsgirl marketing manager Kate Rees

With a core customer base of 16-24 year olds, iconic retailer Sportsgirl is armed with a range of media, content and social media campaigns to communicate with its tech-savvy followers. Leading the movement is national marketing manager Kate Rees, with Sportsgirl's 'Be that girl' initiative a recent highlight of the strategy. Centred on two minute film interviews with 12 girls from diverse backgrounds, the content was raw and unscripted and supported by a strong social media reach. That's not to say the brand doesn't invest in in-store marketing, with notable activations including a Braid Bar, beauty workshops

and a monogramming station. While the service was free to those who purchased items from the brand's accessories range, Rees says this created a halo effect across sales. "For small products that we monogrammed, our sales grew by 200% since we started that particular activation."

14 Hello Molly digital strategist Guangyong Chuang

Ok, so technically not a marketer but we still think Chuang belongs on the list! Backed by a strong focus on database marketing, Chuang explains Hello Molly has always kept close tabs on customer sentiment and buying patterns. The results have led to a range of solutions, including the creation of its Dear Emilia and Hello Molly Swimwear ranges. During the latest round of surveying, Chuang says the eCommerce player was able to better segment its customer base. "We've taken another approach to the data with hierarchical clustering and unsupervised segmentation to build a dendrogram of segments. In simple terms, it's essentially letting the computer decide how to segment people according to their answers, then presenting it in a visual format so we can figure out how many groups makes sense. Then, we can analyse these groups and build personas. It's yielded some very interesting sub-groups of people so far."

15 Specsavers marketing director Sarah McInnes

With 6.5% of every sale contributed to the next round of marketing, Specsavers annual marketing budget for 2018 sat at \$61.5 million. While the brand has built infamy for its 'Should've gone to Specsavers' iteration, the strategy took a more serious turn this year with the launch of 'The Priceless Eyes Project'. Masquerading as Vesper-Sacs, an advanced medical research company searching for live test subjects, the TVC saw Specsavers pose a question to Australians: how much would you sell your eyes for? "We created this campaign because we're concerned about people not understanding the crucial importance of preventative eye care. No one should suffer from avoidable vision loss and blindness in Australia but they are, unnecessarily," McInnes says. "We knew that if we were going to be successful in getting people to stop and really think about their eyes we needed to create something really powerful and meaningful." ■



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