

SINGAPORE BUSINESS REVIEW

The Definitive Magazine for Singapore's Business Elite*

Daily news at www.sbr.com.sg

CO-PUBLISHED CORPORATE PROFILE

Could this man be Asia-Pacific's most prolific marketer?

It takes a great deal of passion, wit and determination to turn a business into a distinctive international success. Kym Illman seems to have just the perfect mix as his home-based business grew and flourished into an acclaimed group of companies.

Kym's career in media became cloudy after being sacked from Perth's Channel 9 studios in 1988 where he worked as an audio engineer. But instead of sulking in a corner, he gathered his entrepreneurial guts and established his own business. Today he's a recognized authority on ambush and audio marketing, a media commentator, best-selling author and presenter of business seminars on the subjects of marketing and customer service. Kym holds nothing back as he continues to strengthen and expand his business across the globe.

Kym Illman - THE man

He now owns The Message Group, an award-winning group of companies covering a range of industries including audio marketing, digital signage, corporate training and luxury hospitality.

With more than 75 people in Singapore and Australia, Kym's business is present in 20 countries and turns over in excess of S\$16 million per year.

His first business, Messages On Hold,

creates promotional audio productions for businesses to play to waiting callers via their phone system. Kym diversified into property with Dream Holiday Homes in 2005, and launched a digital signage company called Messagevision the year after. In 2010, he established an ambient music business called The Groove Gallery. Kym has also been releasing a series of viral video campaigns that have chalked up 9 million views since 2008.

Kym's unmatched skills in sales, marketing and customer services prove him worthy to be a respected thought leader, and his insights are most often sought by aspiring entrepreneurs and marketers.

Kym has appeared on The Today

Show, Sunrise, A Current Affair, CNN, CNBC and Channel News Asia. He has also been interviewed on countless radio stations. But with fame comes fire. "I've been labelled everything from 'serial pest' and 'notorious self promoter,' to 'creative genius' and 'world's best ambush marketer,'" says Kym.

The master of Mastering Marketing

Kym's great love for making videos (and starring in them) combined with his desire to share unconventional but effective marketing ideas birthed Mastering Marketing, a free online video series.

"Many of the businesses I speak with are crying out for marketing advice and ideas that don't cost the earth. So I produced a series of 90-second marketing videos and made them available to anyone for free via the internet," he said.

MasteringMarketing.com.au hosts new videos every week where Kym himself talks in first-person and shares tips on every aspect of marketing, sales and customer service. He notes: "These days I think most people prefer to watch a short instructional video than read paragraphs of text, as long as they are short, sharp and interesting. For Messages On Hold in particular, we've found videos to be much better at communicating the brand's personality, and getting across the point we're not just an audio production company, but a full-service marketing company."

The first two episodes are immediately available to visitors upon entering the website - *Perfect Marketing* and *How To Market In A Downturn*. After a quick registration that only requires a name and email address, subscribers are given a link to episode 3 and a link to a new episode every week after that. Says Kym, "I hate it when I see marketing done poorly.

You could say Mastering Marketing is a forum to share my mistakes with other business owners, so they don't have to make the same ones!"

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Kym Illman, MD of Messages On Hold