



# A Modern Love Affair

4 key lessons to help your marketing bloom in a changing world

**W**e all watched as the scenario played out. All the signs of love being lost were there. Everyone in the audience knew it wasn't going to last.

No, I'm not referring to a meeting gone bad. I'm talking about Marc Webb's sleeper hit movie *500 Days of Summer*. It's the story of Tom Hansen, a greeting card writer who falls hard for the luminescent Summer Finn. Tom, played by Joseph Gordon-Levitt, ardently pursues his doomed love affair, failing to heed the signs and clues that it's not meant to be. He's smitten by Summer's big, beautiful, expressive eyes, batted to perfection by Zooey Deschanel. Truth be told, it's hard not to be charmed by Summer's spontaneity and flirty grin. Who wouldn't want to romp through an IKEA store with her?

So, when I was asked to write 500 words on marketing, for some reason, I couldn't get *500 Days of Summer* out of my head. Maybe it was because the promise of a great marketing idea is as seductive and inviting as Summer. Or because when our plans go awry, we feel as sick, angry, and depressed as Tom did after his breakup. "How could this have been avoided?" we ask ourselves. But, like Tom, we live to love another day. When he meets Autumn at the end of the movie, we feel all tingly inside because we know love is about to return — and we can't wait for it to blossom.

At Kraft, my job is to encourage and inspire great marketing across business units and countries — to act as a marketing Cupid, if you will. As I look at my role through the lens of love, I respectfully share these four lessons:

**1. It's better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.** C'mon, try something new. It's fun. Everyone learns something. Even if you fail, you've won. "Pilot" is my new favorite word, but it requires a great boss, which I am lucky enough to have.

**2. A quick romance can be beautiful.** Years ago, the average time to create an ad from start to finish at Kraft was 42 weeks. Human beings gestate in less time, for goodness' sake. Today, we sail along at a much faster clip. It's a glorious ride, and the work is improving. There are fewer hands to sand off the creative edges along the way, which means better results and more smiles around the executive watercooler (Tassimo, in our case).



**3. Get dirty.** When asked to help, get up to your armpits in the muck. The team's problem is your problem, so keep at it until it's solved. Too many corporate marketing executives like to phone in advice or slip a note of caution under the door. There no chance for love when that happens.

**4. Love thy agency partners.** Everyone knows that agencies want to (and should) be loved. But they need great strategies and partners ready to buy the great work we say we want. So, when you're spreading the love, discipline your organization to give the sharpest, most focused strategic direction humanly possible, and then say yes to the best ideas.

With all the complexities of marketing in today's rapidly changing world, one can forget to remember that ultimately it is all about passion. Here's to more of that zing that great marketing can inspire. ■

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