

EXPERTISE for HIRE

CPM Australia has been providing outsourced sales and marketing services to some of Australia's most well-known brands for the past two decades and isn't slowing down anytime soon.

Images by Paolo Benini

"Twenty-one years ago, we started with just one client—Telstra MobileNet. Now, in 2015, we probably have more than 50 clients."

- Andrew Potter

As one of the biggest outsourced sales and marketing companies in Australia, and with a list of blue-chip clients, CPM Australia has had a huge impact on the industry since its establishment in 1994.

As part of the global CPM group, the Australian branch of the company started with one client and 15 field staff. The group managing director, Andrew Potter, who has been there almost from the start, has spent the past 20 years putting all he has into ensuring that CPM is not just successful but operates with integrity and efficiency and continues to be a great place for employees to work.

These days, CPM covers all aspects of sales and marketing, providing outsourced services including direct sales teams, merchandising, assisted selling, retail activation, local area marketing, contact centres, and training solutions. "At the end of the day, we convert consumers into buyers," says Andrew. "To achieve sales, we

invest in our sales force to ensure they have the right product knowledge and are equipped to have a customer conversation."

Andrew came to CPM from a business marketing background, and after more than 25 years in the industry he really knows his trade. "I studied business marketing at the University of South Australia in the mid 80s and then moved to London to work for a couple of years in a marketing agency," Andrew says. "After my working visa expired, I returned to Australia and joined DuPont in Melbourne. In 1995, I joined four other guys who had just started CPM Australia."

The company has grown exponentially since then. After starting small, it now has many more clients, several of whom are some of the largest, well-known brands in Australia. "Twenty-one years ago, we started with just one client—Telstra MobileNet. They needed an outsourced merchandising team to service their dealer channel. Now, in 2015, we probably have more than 50

clients and a weekly payroll of about 800 staff. The outsourced services that we now provide include sales force outsourcing, sales force augmentation, a 200-seat Melbourne-based call centre, as well as a retail activation team that works in retail stores on behalf of various clients."

Having Telstra as its first client certainly helped CPM Australia build credibility and establish itself in the Australian marketplace. Other large companies soon followed, and many of them still work with Andrew and his team today. "I think [Telstra] was a great foundation client. Our 200 seats started on the back of providing eight seats for Telstra who, at the time, needed a small call centre that could specifically take and make calls on behalf of their dealer channel. Once you've got eight seats and it grows to 25, you start attracting other clients due to your expertise and infrastructure, and that's how the business grows. The acquisition of the Local Area Marketing Agency back in 2003 allowed us >



As featured in
The CEO Magazine
For more info visit
theceomagazine.com





albeit in a different capacity via our sister company.”

Not only have CPM’s customers been loyal over the past 21 years, but many of its staff have too. This, Andrew believes, is due to the positive culture they have created and the career advancement options they provide to staff. “Our people are important to us. I’m very proud of the culture we’ve created over the past 21 years,” Andrew continues. “A number of us have been along for most of the journey, and our founder and current chairman is a man who instilled the culture we have today. We are very keen for our staff to utilise CPM as a way to build their career. For instance, our training manager has been with us for almost 10 years. She started with CPM in the field as a representative, and most recently she’s been acknowledged by our international partners for the valuable training she introduced to our Singapore office. We certainly want to nurture talent. We also

want to ensure that when our people move on, we’ve made a personal and professional impact.”

Andrew says the culture at CPM is also focused on five key components: innovation, responsibility, rejecting mediocrity, embracing front-line staff, and working smarter while having fun. These five factors combined have created an inclusive, enthusiastic workplace that allows staff to be at their best. “It’s about cultivating innovation within our staff and encouraging education at every level while going that one step further. It’s about embracing the front line. Our front line consists of staff that are out in the field and who are on the phone. Without them, our business doesn’t exist. At CPM, all levels of management and staff respect the efforts of our people who speak directly to our clients’ customers each and every day.”

This culture and the work CPM has done for its clients are what Andrew names as the highlights of

to enter that new space too, but I think everyone needs a foundation client of sorts and Telstra was a great support for us. A lot of our clients have been with us for quite some time. We still work with Telstra today,



Australia’s No.1 choice for Contact Centre in the Cloud

Learn how we can enable your success.

Call **03 9040 0000** or visit www.liveperson.com/solutions/lp-engage



“We continue to be thought leaders in the industry, and I think for that reason we have maintained long-term clients, many of whom have been with us between five and 18 years.”

- Andrew Potter



his time at the company. “We’re doing some great work for clients, and they are all blue-chip companies: the likes of AGL, Microsoft, BP, P&G, Bupa, and Woolworths. It’s been exciting working with these companies and developing programs that help grow their business,” Andrew says. As mentioned earlier, it’s not just staff and clients he wants to see succeed—it’s also the suppliers, since they are considered an extension of CPM’s brand. For example, they have a world-class contact centre due in part to its relationship with Engage, which supplies the centre’s software.

Andrew has a great deal of pride in the fact that CPM has some of the best staff in the industry. “I take pride in watching staff grow and develop in their own capacity while enjoying the work that they do. If we can create the 800 or so jobs that we have today, we’re then honoured to be playing a crucial role in our employees’ lives. From a recruitment perspective, attracting the right talent is always a challenge. We work hard on our culture by delivering educational programs, overseas training, and

awards programs, which all add up when attracting and retaining sound talent.”

With offices in the United Kingdom (where CPM was founded in 1936) as well as in the United States, France, Germany, Italy, India, China, Vietnam, and more, CPM International has expertise all over the world. “What sets us apart from perhaps many of our competitors here in Australia is that we are part of a global business,” Andrew says. “We have the luxury of accessing global trends and insights from our 30 CPM offices around the world, which we then share with our clients. We also pass on retail white papers and books that our insights team has written. They find these insights valuable, and they reinforce our partnership. Our global affiliates add another attractive dimension to our career development program, which provides a platform for overseas assignments. We continue to be thought leaders in the industry, and I think for that reason we have maintained long-term clients, many of whom have been with us between five and 18 years.”

For the future, Andrew is confident that CPM will continue to grow and take on new clients, while being innovative in the services it provides. Research undertaken by CPM, in cooperation with the Australian Centre for Retail Studies, showed that 70 per cent of companies outsource functions like IT and logistics, but only 12 per cent outsource their sales. “That’s an opportunity for us as more companies realise there are easier and better ways to do this via companies such as CPM. For instance, by outsourcing the sales function they can make better use of their sales and marketing dollars. We offer flexibility, which means clients can be more tactical when aligning themselves with product launches and marketing campaigns. That’s a huge opportunity for us, as their own budgets are scrutinised and their return on investment needs to be maximised. Client feedback is also instrumental in our success. Each year, we take time to undertake client surveys which in turn provide us with key intelligence to make sure that our services suit, are up to date, and add value to our clients’ needs.”