

To succeed you need to have vision

Michelle Gamble **WHAT WERE PEOPLE** talking about at the lastest BBQ that you were at? Oil prices? House prices? Cost of food? Maybe interior design? Gardening? Cooking? How about the kids' latest activities? A great book? A fantastic holiday or show? Think back to the mood of the discussion, try to feel the convictions and emotions of the people you were conversing with. What were their fears and hopes, what was exciting them and what was leaving them unimpressed?

I'm asking you to think about it because it's through these kinds of casual discussions you can find the insights you need to develop your next marketing campaign.

Whereas big business can spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on surveys and research and panels and pow wows, small businesses need to be a little more financially conservative and a lot more innovative in their approach. Listen to your customers, ask them questions. Dissect the information your friends and family are imparting. Then align your marketing to answer the needs and interests and desires of your target market.

All great marketing comes ahead of the curve. It comes with a fresh idea or somehow memorably captures the mood of the moment. It's an ad that puts in front of us a concept that we might have thought about but haven't yet verbalised. It's about a message that rings true to us. The marketing campaign breaks through the clutter and speaks to us somehow.

In July, supermarket giant Woolies started running a new television commercial that acknowledged a recent change in community attitudes. Through perceptiveness and research they realised that their business faced a threat, not from their rivals, but from their own customers. Yes… more and more people around the country are starting to grow at least some of their own produce. Seed sales have rocketed due to the increasing cost of food and people's desire to eat fresh, local and chemical free.

For a big business, Woolies has tapped in quite early to this phenomenon. They have positioned themselves as a benevolent back up for "when you can't grow it all". It's warm and fuzzy in the food aisle!

Michelle Gamble is a director of Marketing Angels, a marketing advisory and consulting firm which operates in a number of locations. For more information see www.marketingangels.com.au