



# Dear 16-year-old me: Toby Jenner, Worldwide Chief Operating Officer

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“Work hard and do the things you love,” says Toby Jenner, MediaCom’s Worldwide COO

Dear Toby,

I’m looking at a photo of you lifting the Champions League trophy in Istanbul. You’ve just led Liverpool back from 3-0 down; this is your crowning glory before you retire. Oh, what could have been... were it not for the enormous lack of dedication, pace and talent.

Liverpool football club aside (enjoy it now as it doesn’t get any better), I wanted to share some thoughts that might be useful now you’re starting out in your [career](#). It’s not an exhaustive list, and I don’t have all the answers, but that’s what makes things so interesting.

The best part of your career will be meeting and working with so many different [people](#). Regardless of their experience or expertise, you'll be able to learn something from everyone. They won't stop you making mistakes (you'll still make plenty), but their wisdom will stop you making the same mistake twice.

You'll start your career spraying people with perfume in department stores – a particular low. Your suit will never recover from the stench of that poison. Next, you'll work in a club in London's Camden Lock; a short-lived experience, but who wouldn't get the drinks wrong serving in near darkness? Staying in Camden, you'll then start selling clothes on Sundays in the early '90s. It will teach you a lot about working with different kinds of people – including some very odd ones.

After this experience in the 'workplace', when most go to university, you'll find your true vocation in advertising. After a first stint at MediaCom, then Grey, you'll end up at a media agency called MEC (later to become Wavemaker). You'll also spend time at other companies within WPP, including Media Insight, part of Mindshare.

In 2008, you'll arrive on the shores of Australia with a wife (an Australian, going home) and two kids (aged, one and three), as the local CEO of [MediaCom](#). What you won't know is that three of your biggest clients will not be with you after the first three months. As you'll find out though, such setbacks can sometimes rally people and inspire them to work together. You'll recognise this as an invaluable lesson, and one you'll use to take the business forward.

After stints in [Sydney](#), [Singapore](#) and [New York](#), you'll later find yourself back in [London](#) as MediaCom's Worldwide Chief Operating Officer. It's one of those fancy titles which means you support MediaCom teams around the world.

That brings us back to people. Because the best thing about this job is getting to work with some of the most talented people in the industry as part of a genuine team; albeit one that contains 7,000 people across an amazing global network. Inspiring stuff! You'll get so much energy working with everyone around the world (which is just as well given the travel and jet

lag).

So, before I go, let me just give you a few quick pieces of advice: study hard, get a well-rounded education, and do the things you love. Make decisions and make them quickly. Oh, and get involved in 'new business'; it's the best way to meet new people, learn what's going on in the agency and push yourself.

One last thing; don't borrow your Mum's car when you're 22... it'll save you a heap of trouble, trust me.

Enjoy!

Toby



*Above: Toby at 16 and Toby now*

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