



The Story of My CV: Toby Jenner, Worldwide Chief Operating Officer

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“Don’t delay making tough decisions,” says Toby Jenner, MediaCom’s Worldwide COO.

What did you do before MediaCom?

I was the Managing Director at MEC UK from 2004 to 2008, the agency that has now merged with MAXUS to create Wavemaker. Before that, I worked at Media Insight – a conflict business within Mindshare – and way back I had my first spell at MediaCom in the mid 90s. That’s a lot of time at MediaCom and WPP when all added together. I must be due a carriage clock or something soon?!

What was the biggest setback in your career?

Within the first three months of taking on the CEO role at MediaCom Australia, we were fired by Westpac (Australia's largest bank), David Jones (Australia's largest retailer), and we resigned Nokia (one of MediaCom's largest global clients). At the time I was told the darkest night is always followed by the brightest dawn; wise words, and so it proved true for us over the next few years.

What skills do you need to succeed in your role?

Decision making is critical. You can't get it right all the time, but it's vital that you make decisions in a timely fashion and, hopefully, get more right than wrong! It's also vital to align individuals who have multiple different points of view into one team with a shared vision and objectives.

What do you find difficult about your job?

See above! It's also difficult juggling enough hours in the day to support everyone you want to and, of course, getting the right balance between work and home. The amount of travel I do makes this even harder. Being away from my family so much during the week is tough. FaceTime is a good friend! I'm also religious about being back at weekends.

Lastly, what advice would you give to those just starting out in media?

There are three areas that will help you and the teams you work in; the people you have around you, the direction you set, and the speed of the execution to get you there. So, my advice is simple:

- Firstly, never hire a warm body to fill a chair. Only ever hire true A-class performers that will enhance your team and our business. Ask yourself, are they (or could they) be better than me? If the answer is yes, then you've likely got a good hire.
- Secondly, set a clear direction for your team and let them get on with delivering it; your role is to remove any obstacles.

- Thirdly, make things happen, you can have the greatest plan, or strategy, on paper in the world but unless you execute that strategy and bring it to life it's just a piece of paper. Make things happen quickly, trust your intuition, and don't delay making tough decisions. In my experience, a bad decision is better than no decision!

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