

MEET DM'S LATEST MOVER & SHAKER



→ MELANIE JOHNSTONE, ADMA'S RECENTLY NAMED YOUNG DIRECT MARKETER OF THE YEAR, IS BLAZING NEW TRAILS WITH A COMBINATION OF LOGIC AND DARING.



At the ADMA (Australian Direct Marketing Association) Awards held in Sydney last year, Melanie Johnstone received one of the direct marketing industry's highest accolades - Young Direct Marketer of the Year. "I had given it my very best and had all my fingers and toes crossed on the night," she said.

Despite being over the moon, Johnstone delivered an articulate acceptance speech. She also retained her composure when answering a barrage of questions at the post-awards media conference, she went on to stage-dive into a mosh-pit of colleagues, friends and other well wishers before partying hard into the wee small hours.

When asked to describe herself, Johnstone said, "I'm a positive, upbeat person who is always up for a challenge. When it comes to direct marketing I'm very rational and methodical in my approach". This blend of the aspirational and the accountable has been cleverly reflected in Johnstone's business name.

Johnstone is founder and director of Rocket Science Strategic Services. "Rocket" refers to pushing the limits and ongoing progression, while "Science" pertains to those logical hard-core DM practices. "DM is about exploring, testing and discovering what works. It's thinking laterally but it's also basic common sense. One of my professional challenges is to cut away the clutter and identify the single most powerful idea or opportunity for my clients and help them to communicate it to their customers in a way that is simple and relevant."

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Johnstone is well experienced in communicating with customers. After securing a degree in sociology, she started work at Cellarmaster Wines as a telemarketer. Over the next five years, she rose through the ranks to become marketing manager of the Cellarmaster Wine Club before accepting a position at the direct marketing agency MercerBell. When she resigned, a colleague at Cellarmaster predicted that Johnstone would one day be Young Direct Marketer of the Year and running her own business. Three years later that prophecy has become a reality.

Working her way from the ground up has been invaluable. "When I was in the frontline I experienced first-hand how consumers responded to marketing communications. I pride myself in being a customer-focused rather than a product-focused marketer."

While Johnstone rates hands-on experience highly, she is also an advocate of formal education. "I'm looking to take myself to the topmost echelon in financial analysis and am already searching out courses that offer this level of expertise," she says. While most professionals would be content to be Young Direct Marketer of the Year, Johnstone is already charting even greater heights.