

# PAUL MARINELLI CELEBRATES THREE DECADES IN THE AFTERMARKET

Paul Marinelli established his Melbourne based media communications and marketing services business, specialising in the automotive aftermarket and motorsport industries, in February of 1995

Three decades into being a stand-alone operator in a media and consumer communications industry full of much larger, multi-national companies, Paul Marinelli is rightfully proud of this milestone achievement.

Starting out operating primarily as Marinelli Motorsport Media, the Melbourne born and bred communications specialist spent most of his early years travelling around Australia and the world as a motorsport correspondent and freelance print media journalist.

This was a progression from his seven years as a radio announcer and sports reporter, as he sought to establish a career around his passion for motor racing.

The timing of his move into self-employment proved to be a masterstroke as Melbourne had gained its multi-decade tenure of the Australian Formula One Grand Prix in 1996 and V8 Supercars was established in 1997.

These two major local motor racing developments brought unprecedented corporate and public attention to the sport, opening the doors to many new business opportunities.

"My business was born from client necessity more than me deliberately setting out to establish a PR company," Paul said.

"I was a member of the motorsport media, chasing racing cars all over Australia and the world, but from 1996 and 1997 the focus on Australian motorsport had changed completely and my phone was ringing from companies wanting to use the sport as a marketing and communications platform.

"As there were precious few people who specialised in the development of motorsport based PR and marketing strategies and far fewer who actually understood it, as Supercars along with the Melbourne Grand Prix were so new to the corporate scene, I was inundated with companies wanting to be involved."

The vast majority of these companies were automotive aftermarket parts manufacturers and marketers and this is where Paul held another ace in his sleeve.

He had grown up in his father's European vehicle specialised automotive workshop and spent many years of his childhood and youth with his younger brother David under hoists and bonnets every school holiday and most weekends.

This saw Paul develop a very strong understanding

of automotive parts and how the industry works from the perspectives of workshop owner and technician; knowledge and experience which would come in very handy several years later when running his PR company.

"I would have meetings with global parts manufacturers and OE suppliers and they would immediately be surprised by how much I knew about the parts they made and the trade markets that they were targeting as our family business had been one of them for many years," Paul said.

"I am very grateful for the experiences that my father provided, learning about cars, servicing, repairs and all manner of hard parts.

"This detailed knowledge has served me and my clients extremely well in the design and activation of their successful PR and marketing strategies that I have helped them to develop over the years."

In a sentimental tribute to his father Dino and the highly successful business that he built after



arriving in Australia with nothing but a suitcase, Paul's office has been located in the same building as the former auto workshop and showroom in Melbourne's Lygon Street since day one.



Motorsport has always been at the forefront of Paul's business activities, even three decades later.

"My company is still responsible for the sourcing, activating and leveraging of major local and international motorsport marketing campaigns for a number of multi-national companies," Paul said. "These currently include and have previously featured some of the largest and most successful automotive aftermarket industry brands.

"I am extremely proud of the fact that the vast majority of my clients have worked together with me for at least a decade and in some cases much longer than that."

Paul's corporate, product, and industry identity based PR services have included several of the automotive aftermarket industry's largest multi-national companies over his three decade tenure.

"What started from sponsors of racing teams asking me to assist in promoting their products to the trade, ended up becoming the vast majority of my work over the past 30 years," Paul said.

"This has taken me to trade fairs and conventions across Australia and all over the world several times over and I have learned so much as a result of these experiences.

"Many companies came to me from personal recommendations, mainly because they were underwhelmed by the much larger and higher overhead-loaded PR firms who in many cases did not clearly understand their clients' products or the industries that they needed to communicate and do business with.

"For me, the automotive aftermarket, wider automotive industry and especially the local and

global motorsport industry are like second nature, which is how it should be after working within these industries as a highly specialised consultant for so long.

"Thirty years seems like such a long time, but I can honestly say that it has truly flown by. I continue to enjoy my self-made career to this day and I highly recommend others to do the same."

As the media landscape has changed over the years, the importance of communicating with customers has become more important than ever. According to Paul, it is no coincidence that the companies that have continued to develop and activate effective PR strategies for their brands are also the companies that remain at the very top of the market.

"We have seen major changes in the trade and retail media landscape over the years, but the fundamentals of maintaining strong market share through effective and regular customer communications remains the same," Paul said.

"In fact, this has become more important than ever given the number of competitors that have entered the aftermarket across many business sectors in recent years.

"We are fortunate to still have a very healthy trade media contingent in our industry and this is because the industry continues to provide quality information and support to best service those using their products under the hoists and bonnets each day.

"It is imperative that companies continue to support these publications and online resources by providing quality product and technical information on a regular basis.

"This has been the cornerstone of the success of Marinelli PR's clients over the past three decades."

Another constant during Paul's long and successful automotive aftermarket specialised career has been the AAAA, with whom he has enjoyed a close and highly cooperative association.

"Along with being a AAAA member throughout my journey, I have also been fortunate enough to have worked with this highly pro-active industry association on a number of occasions," Paul said.

"There is nothing that the AAAA does that is not beneficial to its members and given its relatively small size and resources, the AAAA's accomplishments have been truly extraordinary over the decades."

Paul also offers some advice to people who have the ambition of establishing their own business, whatever their industry specialisation may be.

"Don't wait for someone to give you the job or career that you so desperately want, make it happen yourself. Just work very hard, always believe in yourself, and never lose sight of your goals – but most of all, have lots of fun along the journey," he said.

For more information about Marinelli PR and to listen to Paul Marinelli's 30th Anniversary Talktomotive podcast, visit [www.marinellipr.com.au](http://www.marinellipr.com.au)

