

# THE IRONY OF EXPERTISE

WHITEPAPER  
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MBA

WHY  
CREATIVES  
**SUCK** AT  
SELLING  
THEMSELVES



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# HAVE YOU CAUGHT COMMERCIAL COVID?

If you get Covid your chances of recovery are 98%.

But what if your business catches it?

The chances of it surviving is not so good.

The creative plague will be with us for a while.

It has brutalised the film industry with a massive drop in advertising spending. According to the World Economic Forum, ad spends are down 9% on average across Europe, with Germany and France falling by 7% and 12% respectively.

Here in Sydney, Australia's advertising market contracted by \$1.1 billion as the pandemic crunched global spending in the west by \$9.9 billion, reversing two years of growth across the US, UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

It's a rule of thumb that ad spend follows any rise or fall in GDP. Over the last decade, as global GDP has risen 3-6% each year, the ad market has grown with it to around \$646 billion USD in 2019.

Pre-coronavirus, the ad market was forecast to grow to \$865 billion USD by 2024.

**It has forced a rethink.**

**On how we PROMOTE.**

**On how we PITCH.**

**On how we PROSPER.**

We've all seen the radical changes that have happened over the last year.

Shrunk spends, concertinaed timelines, higher complexity, and more production protocols.

The impacts have been big and small, gross and subtle.

There are two parts to directing – doing the work and getting the work.

Covid has changed how we do the work in the way I've just described.

## ***BUT HOW HAS IT AFFECTED HOW WE GET THE WORK?***

Radically! It's made it all the more complicated as it hits creatives and filmmakers in their Achille's heel.... sales and marketing.

S&M has always been a dirty word on set.

Creatives like directors and producers spend all day thinking deeply about developing campaigns to help position clients and brands.

They're incredibly passionate and purposeful about impactful positioning and branding because it's their profession.

Ironically they spend little time thinking about the positioning of their own individual professional brand... how to sell themselves... or how to pitch.

Creatives – ironically, better than anyone else – understand that when done well positioning is the ultimate weapon to accelerate a brand.

Yet when it's about their career, professional development or their unique field of expertise, they don't invest enough time in developing, promoting and selling their own work, brand or expert specialisation.

Like the overweight doctor who smokes, or the hairdresser with bed head, creatives often struggle to promote themselves as well as they can their clients.

It's the irony of expertise.

Sounds clever right? I got it from Michelle Loch but as an idea it's been around since Christ complained that "that a prophet hath no honour in his own country."

If you'd like to know what you can do to future proof yourself as a creative, you're in the right place.

This white paper details exactly how I help A-list directors, executive producers and top tier creatives to become the best versions of themselves, amplify their brands and promote themselves powerfully.

***I WILL SHOW YOU HOW TO CREATE A SYSTEM FOR IMPACT AND INCOME.***



# TVC PITCH PROBLEM

INSANE DEADLINES.  
BAD BRIEFS.  
TOO MANY COMPETITORS.  
TIGHT BUDGETS.  
LAZY, INCOMPETENT AGENCY PRODUCERS.  
A TOUGH SYSTEM THAT'S JUST GETTING TOUGHER

## Do I need to go on?

Directors face an increasing lack of respect for their talent, time and craft from increasingly unsophisticated creatives and clients. The Dunning-Kruger effect runs rampant in adland. Coined in 1999 by the Cornell psychologists David Dunning and Justin Kruger, it's a cognitive bias whereby people who are incompetent at something are unable to recognise their own incompetence.

Not only do they fail to recognise their incompetence, they're also likely to feel confident that they actually are competent in the same way that everyone with two thumbs thinks they're a writer and that everyone with an iPhone is a filmmaker.

As Professor Dunning notes, "the knowledge and intelligence that are required to be good at a task are often the same qualities needed to recognise that one is not good at that task. If one lacks such knowledge and intelligence, one remains ignorant that one is not good at that task."

Sound familiar?

Agency producers and creatives think they understand the pitch process. Most have no clue.

The problems are amplified as there's often a lack of direct communication between the client and the director.

Production houses have to navigate the minefield of hidden agendas, agency creatives and client expectations.

The big question becomes, "How to qualify clients?". A composite of "how do I make a call on whether this is really worth it in terms of time, energy, and money?" Or "am I a check? Someone called in to make up numbers?"

We've all experienced that job that was never really a job. The lack of solid real-time data is magnified by time frames that have accordioned into polkas. To make matters worse, over-protective producers gatekeep and restrict access to creatives. And when you do get a call with the agency, there's rarely enough time to prep. The agency creatives have been living with this for months. But within hours of you getting the board, they want to know, "what do you think?"

Add Covid to a completely oversaturated market and that means we're all having to do more on the front end for an ever-diminishing back end.

Do more for less and don't complain.  
Hardly inspiring.

Here are the four factors that make the problem worse.

Creative **SEPARATION**

Creative **OVERWHELM**

Creative **ANXIETY**

Creative **CRISIS**

# CREATIVE SEPARATION

SHOOT TOGETHER, PITCH ALONE

There's also a curious dynamic in the pitch process.

Everywhere else in film and advertising we learn by industry osmosis.

On shoots, we share knowledge and tips but not here.

There's a deep reluctance to share knowledge. Rather the process is insular and non-collaborative.

Pitching is siloed.

I've always liked to joke that advertising runs on ego and fear, but sadly it's no joke.

One thing I have learnt from transitioning as an agency creative to a treatment ghostwriter is that there is a lot less fear and anxiety around the creative process. As a former executive creative director at BBDO and JWT, I can assure you the unifying characteristics of all the top tier creatives are uncertainty and insecurity. It's like the veteran actor who vomits from stage fright before every appearance. Even after decades at the top, with every conceivable gong in their back pockets, many creative heavyweights admit that every time they do a piece of work, they have no idea whether it's any good or will be well received.

Fear on the agency side creates anger on the production side. We bear the brunt of their insecurities. Many players feel that it's an increasingly unfair process. Directors are angry and frustrated at having to jump through hoops and work manically over crazy deadlines to produce coffee table books as treatments. Ultimately, they have no idea if all their hard work will be looked at by the agency and client. Will it be taken seriously and read or scrolled through on a iPhone during a meeting.

This insecurity and uncertainty creates fear around what to say, how much to push and what level of risk they should take when advancing their own ideas in favour of the agencies. As caution increases, creativity diminishes. It's difficult to know how to make the right call with imperfect information under a looming deadline.



# CREATIVE OVERWHELM

Dive a little deeper into the psyche of even A-list directors, and you'll see that imposter syndrome is alive and well and putting her Bikram yoga classes on expenses.

Fear is death to creatives. It completely shuts down the prefrontal cortex where all the smart stuff is stored. Fear and its little cousin Anxiety force us to live out of the reptile brain. Fight, flight (and if you're me, feed or fornicate) aren't good drivers for world-class creative.

Fear grows and is amplified by financial insecurity as the longer the duration becomes between jobs, some filmmakers fear they'll never work again. Sadly they're right. I heard Holly Hunter once call this "The Drift."

Couple this with a creative culture of constant self-invention fuelled by increasing commercial and technological complexity, and you find yourself regressing emotionally, spiritually and relationally.

The result is overwhelm.  
And that was before Covid!

The pandemic intervention has shattered an already haphazard pitch process. Producers struggle to maintain a routine, let alone momentum... or a powerful creative cadence.

Smart creatives used the opportunity to network and zoom the outreach: staying on agency radar, building relationships with agencies and clients through reputation and personal brand work.

This is something that's like mother's milk to Americans, but in Australia and New Zealand, there's a marked reluctance to market.

Creatives fear being thought of as 'up yourself' or that you've 'bought tickets for your own show'. The social economy is becoming increasingly interested in equality of outcome rather than opportunity. 'Self-promotion' is a dirty word in the Antipodean bucket of crabs.

If there's one thing directors love, it's control. In the pitch process, there's a lack of control.

Or at least, so it seems.



# CREATIVE ANXIETY

In my workshops and masterclass, I have hours of practicals and tacticals to up your conversion rate.

And yet, the real value comes through a workshop or mentoring sessions when I can create a powerful emotional reality for creatives that helps them grow in just one thing: confidence.

Many think marketing and advertising is a con. They're right. It is a confidence game. That's where we get the word 'con' from. It's an old-timey reference to a confidence game or confidence trick - an attempt to defraud a person or group after first gaining their trust. Now confidence tricks exploit victims using their credulity, naiveté, compassion, vanity, irresponsibility, and greed.

Who does that remind you of?

Now I'm not suggesting we embark on any kind of fraudulent conduct. We're not the media! We have some standards! But success in pitching and in life does mostly come down to competence and confidence... and how you communicate that.

That becomes all the more difficult in a post-Covid, recessionary and hypercompetitive business climate. Even the best of us suffer moments of low self-esteem and personal insecurity. We're all troubled by the perennial toxic mind chatter of 'I don't know what I'm doing' and 'am I good enough?' That's part of the creative psyche and normal. But when it becomes elevated, it's a sign of poor emotional health.





# CREATIVE CRISIS

## THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

### **Creatives suck at self-care.**

Not so much physically but certainly emotionally and spiritually.

Poor emotional health leads to bad time and energy management. It can even create a victim mentality: a reactive approach to business that's locked in a feast or famine paradigm. Trust me! As a recovered alcoholic coming up to ten years clean, I've been on my own mental health magical mystery tour.

The links between creativity and mental health have been extensively discussed and studied by psychologists and researchers for centuries. Parallels can be drawn to connect creativity to a host of mental disorders, including bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, major depressive disorder, anxiety disorder, OCD and ADHD.

Studies have demonstrated correlations between creative occupations and people living with mental illness. We've all seen that guy with the mug that says, "you don't have to be crazy to work here, but it helps". While there are cases that support the idea that mental illness can aid in creativity, it's also generally agreed that mental illness does not have to be present for creativity to exist.

My own experience is that I'm exponentially more productive and effective when I'm in a good place mentally and emotionally. It's not all done with drugs and mirrors.

I'm no psychiatrist, but I can definitely testify to the benefits of practising good mental hygiene and self-care around the pitch process. That will help creatives overcome the subtle self-sabotage that comes with fear of success. Social media amplifies professional insecurity through constant comparison with everyone else's life, work and success.

This leads to 'compare and despair' and prolonged exposure to a false narrative that erodes confidence, creativity, and a sense of self-worth.

Another bad mental habit I've noticed in myself and other creatives is a casual, unconscious contempt to elevate the status of what I'm doing but also to allow myself the luxury of not having to consider the importance of all the things I'm not doing. It stops me from taking opportunities.

***"I've got talent, right? Doesn't my reel and website make that patently obvious? Why should I waste my precious time and talent on marketing? That's for realtors, suits and call centre people."***

Advertising is a brutal industry.

It's about getting people to spend money they haven't got to buy things they don't need to impress people they don't like.

It's an inherently unfair profession.

You always need to psychologically and energetically prepare to lose. Even with an elevated strike rate, the process is a numbers game. You have to psyche yourself up to accept disappointment a lot of the time. To survive, the need to be able to control as much as you can in the pitch process to mitigate the unfairness.

***Pitching for a TVC sounds like walking into a restaurant and saying, "bring me a meal, and if I like it, I'll pay for it."***

It looks like this...

# PITCH MASTERY MODEL

| DIAGNOSIS | DESCRIPTION | PRESCRIPTION                   | FLOW<br>↑ |
|-----------|-------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| MASTERY   | CONVICTION  | SALES/<br>MARKETING            |           |
| MACHINE   | CONFIDENCE  | LEADERSHIP                     |           |
| MODEL     | COMPETENCE  | PERSONAL<br>BRAND/<br>PRO TIPS |           |
| MENTAL    | CONTROL     | PITCHING/ HOT<br>COGNITION     |           |
| MADNESS   | CONFUSION   | FORMULA/<br>WRITING            |           |
| MAYHEM    | CHAOS       | SKILLS/<br>STRUCTURE           |           |
| MUPPET    | CRAP        | MINDSET                        | FEAR      |

The whole process reminds me of a friend in the military. Let's call him Rico. He looks like a harmless hippy with a dopey smile and a long ponytail, but he's the reason you should never pick fights with people you don't know.

He started his career in MAYHEM as a Grunt in the assessment and selection program of the United States Army Rangers. It's tougher than hell week for the notorious US Navy SEAL selection and lasts way longer, but he made it through to become a Trooper. Rico was the original problem child: trouble at school, stealing cars, getting in fights.... a proper MUPPET.

Life was still pretty MAD, he was still at the bottom of the battalion food chain and trained hard to make it through Airbourne School to become a Green Beret, a MODEL Ranger.

As he continued up the ranks, he began leading ops as in Delta, the elite counter-terror unit as a Warrant Officer and became a MACHINE in the special ops teams, well respected for his courage, tenacity, and experience.

Finally, after twenty years active service, he was elevated to MASTERY, joining Special Forces Command at Fort Bragg.

Now let's take a helicopter view of the pitch process...



# PITCH MASTERY MODEL

## HERE'S SOMETHING THEY DON'T TELL YOU AT FILM SCHOOL

There are two parts to directing: doing the work and getting the work.

We can all do the work. That's the fun part.

Getting the work, as I've just talked about, is tough, unpredictable, and becoming increasingly more difficult in a complex, hypercompetitive post-Covid market environment.

Now... the key to success in any business is cash flow.

In our business, cash flow comes from board flow.

Do you want a steady stream of thoughts coming across your desk so you can focus on the ones that interest you the most and which you think you can score? The higher your board flow, the more control you have. The higher your level of control, the higher your chances of winning.

***More wins equal more money.***

***More money equals more success.***

Money doesn't buy happiness, but he certainly buys a better class of misery. And in advertising, it means that you can spend more resources on drivers for higher board flow in the future: personal brand, building relationships, enhancing your reputation and investing in radical self-care and personal development to amplify your creative superpowers.

Board flow is the lifeblood of your business. Most of it comes down to your ability to pitch. Over thirty years as a pitch specialist, I've seen most directors and producers fall into one of five categories: mayhem, mad, model, machine, and mastery.

Relate?

Let's go through them one by one.

# MUPPET

“What’s a director’s treatment?”

The good news is that if you’re reading this, it’s very unlikely that you’re a muppet.

This best describes the incompetent, the dilettante or the poser.

Advertising has always been flypaper for freaks and misfits... but sometimes for pretenders as well. Typically these individuals have incredibly short lifespans in our industry. They soon realise that they can’t get by on a steady stream of bullshit, bravado and black slapping hucksterism.

The great leveller is always the work. You have to do some. Some people are just born allergic to it. When they do produce, it’s generally rubbish.

That’s usually enough to ensure no repeat business and they leave our shores to wash up as flotsam and jetsam in crypto, digital marketing or growth hacking.

***The state is crap; the emotion is fear.***



**“YOU CAN’T POLISH  
A TURD, BUT YOU  
CAN ROLL IT IN  
GLITTER.”**

# MAYHEM

**“I DON’T KNOW  
WHAT I DON’T  
KNOW.”**

We’ve all been this guy.

The rookie who’s starting out and doesn’t know his ass from his elbow. Brief comes in on a Friday afternoon and they want to treat one on a Monday morning. It’s kick, bollock scramble over the whole weekend fuelled by caffeine, Red Bull, no sleep and the adrenalized stress reaction of abject fear.

Many directors and producers get stuck in this phase. They never learn how to pitch properly. This used to be me at almost every agency pitch pre-1995. An agency pitch normally meant three weeks of pure hell. You had to cover your current workload, dream of multiple campaigns for a future client based on a shitty and ever-changing brief, living in constant fear that the president would do what he usually did – fly in the night before the pitch and change absolutely everything. Oh, and then you had to present it.

Happily, the production approach process isn’t quite as hellish as that or as long. But it still means you’re gonna have to spend endless hours writing, researching, editing and thinking through an agency idea (or lack thereof ;) and present to get back to them in a way that makes them want to book 1st class tickets for Cannes and the presidential suite in The Carlton.

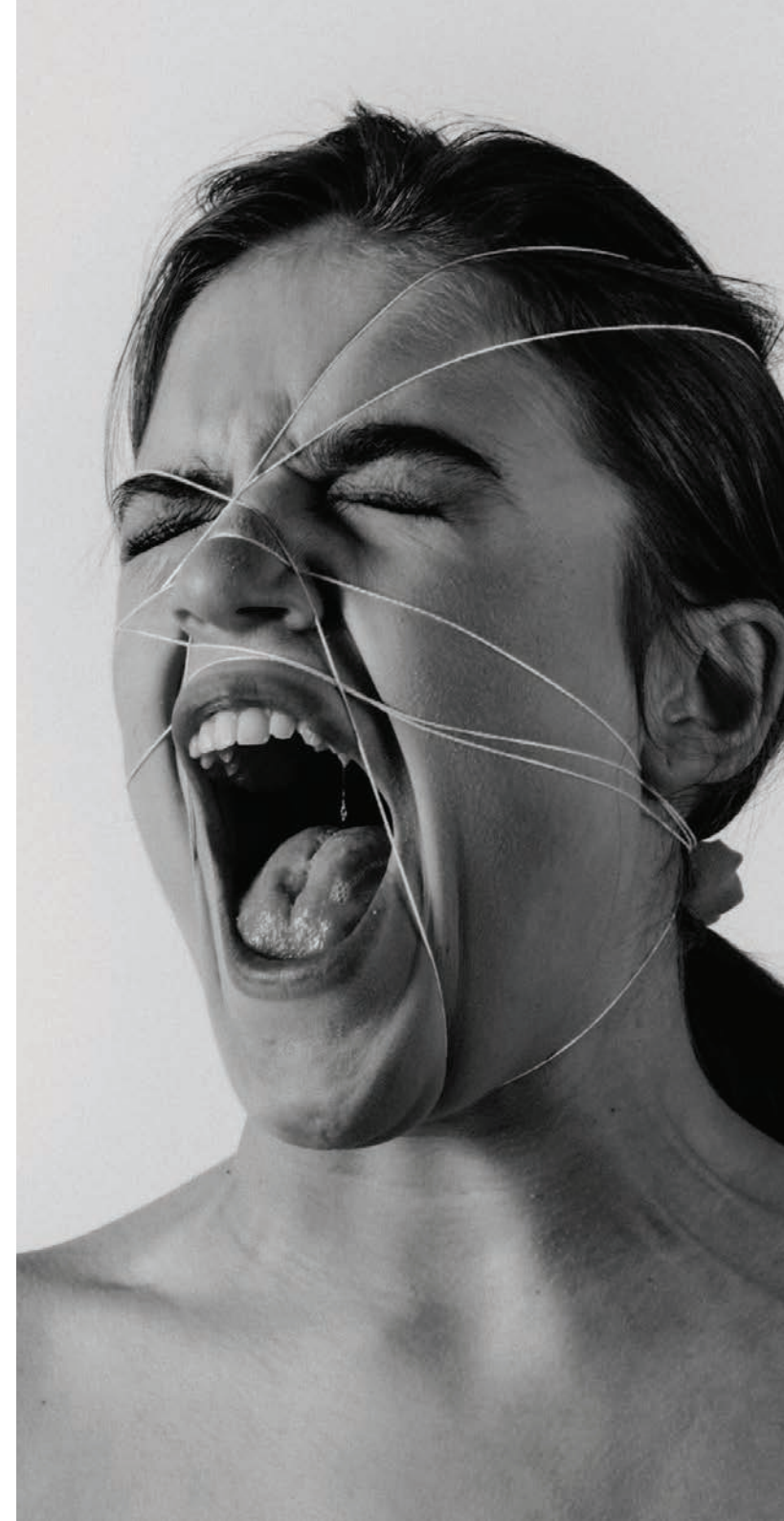
***“I admitted I was powerless over pitching — that my life had become unmanageable.”***

The scientific term for this is unconscious incompetence. Or ***“buggered, bewildered and bewitched”***. And broke. It’s no fun if you do not understand or know how to write and design a killer treatment... and maybe don’t even realise that that is the problem. Perhaps you think this hellscape of panic and fear is the norm — part of the price of being a glamorous filmmaker.

You may even deny the usefulness of pitch skills. I hate focussing on stuff that I’m no good at. But to grow you must recognise your own incompetence and see the value of learning the pitch process if you want to enjoy even the smallest degree of success. I know a lot of people who spend their whole career at this stage. That’s why they hire me! And you know what? That’s fine if you’ve got the money.

Starting out you may not have the cash to hire a BBDO exec creative director to make you look good. The length of time an individual spends in this stage depends on the strength of the stimulus to learn.

***The state is chaos; the emotion is fear.***



# MADNESS

The second stage of the mayhem is a slight upgrade to madness.

You spent a few years not knowing what you're doing, but now the process has become a little bit more familiar. There is a method in your madness. You don't necessarily have the right approach, but you have an approach. And some experience.

Back in my agency days, before I understood project management and how to structure a pitch, we used to rely on a little box of tricks that would get me through most pitches. Doing the creative first and then retro-fitting it to the brief. Doing great work and hiding it while showing average work to the account service team, then pulling the good work out at the last minute so they'd be so desperate they'd buy it.

Usually, I'd just book some leave time directly after the presentation so that I knew no matter how awful the next couple of weeks was going to be, I had a long weekend at the Sheraton Bangkok at the end of it. That would be enough to pull me through. We all have our creative coping mechanisms. Imperfect as they are, they get you through dealing with more complexity, having to do more with less in timeframes and budgets that have accorded.

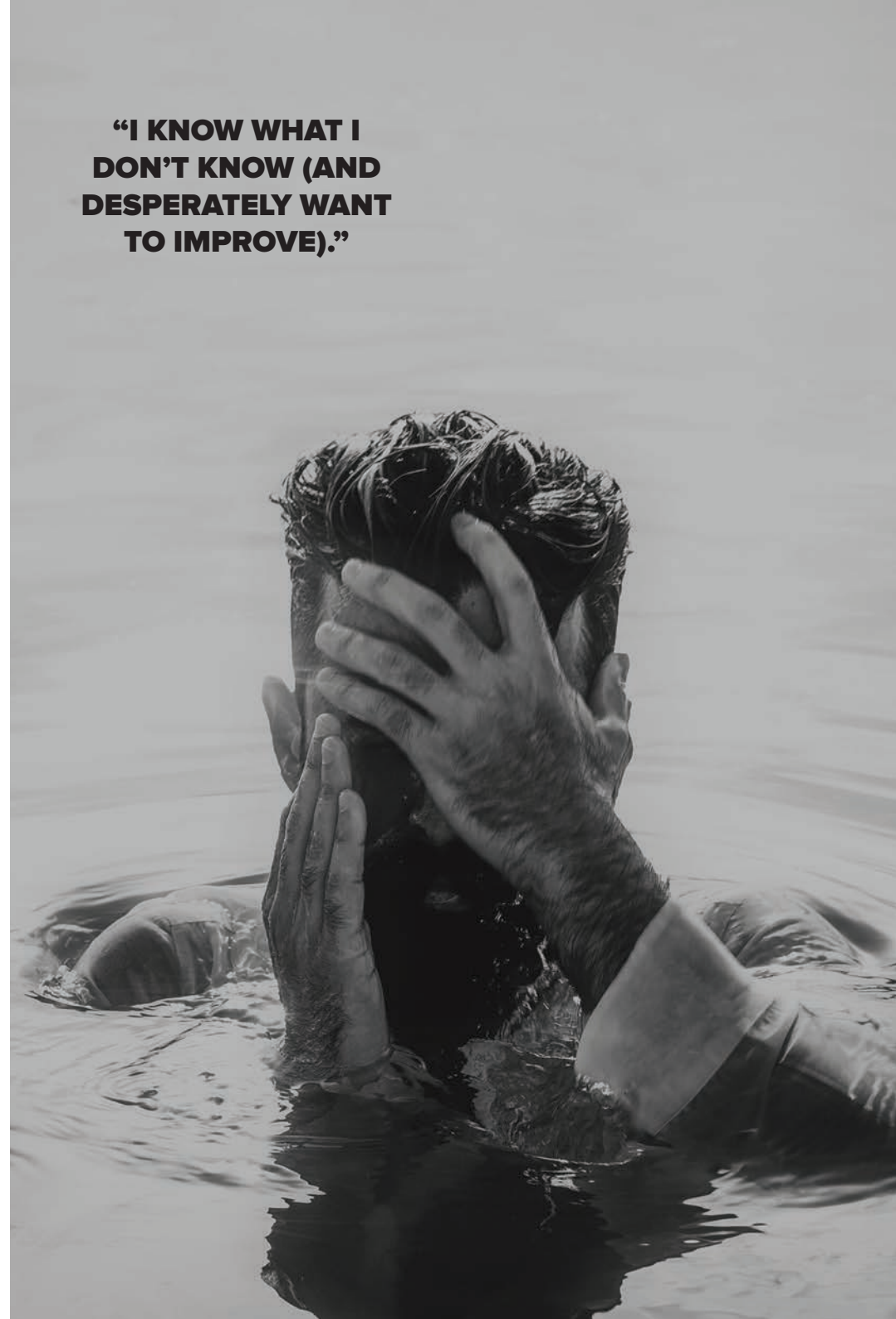
My coach calls this stage conscious incompetence. Though you do not understand or know how to pitch smoothly and efficiently, you recognise the deficit. You see the value of the new skill in helping you grow and develop. The making of mistakes is integral to the learning process at this stage. Like a bad habit, you can do this for a while. But try it over the long term and the wheels will fall off.

The hallmark of this stage is burnout. Emotionally it's characterised by panic and overwhelm. You feel needy and desperate.

Clients and agencies can smell that. It's not attractive. Confidence is contagious. That's what you need to build - it starts to arrive at the next stage.

***The state is confusion; the emotion is overwhelm.***

**"I KNOW WHAT I  
DON'T KNOW (AND  
DESPERATELY WANT  
TO IMPROVE)."**



# MENTAL

"If I concentrate, I got this."

Success is a mental game, but some games are easier than others.

When you first get the grip of a new skill, you really have to focus.

It takes a lot of will power to make any headway. "Mental" is the midway stage when moving from novice to competent.

It means you can pitch to a basic standard, but with no real presentational pyrotechnics.

What you need at this point is basic training and a little more coaching and practice to get better at what you do. "Help me do it better," is the primary request at this point.

You're seeing some wins but too few and too infrequently.

But you've tasted blood. It's time to knuckle down and expand your skillset so that you can become a mean, lean, pitching machine.

**"HOW TO PACKAGE  
YOURSELF:  
POWER, AUTHORITY,  
STRENGTH, & STATUS."**



# MACHINE

This is where you want to get to as quickly as possible. It's a great state to be in. You know what you're doing, you're confident, and panic is a thing of the past. You can easily discern which pitches are the ones for you and which ones you should pass on. There's an easy cadence to your creative work.

You have a sense of how long things will take, in what order to do them and you can easily manage your energy and time. You've reached the state of conscious competence. You have had so much practice with pitching through adopting the PitchCraft process that it has become second nature.

It can be performed easily. As a result, working on treatments can be performed while executing another task. You may even find that you're able to teach it to others and delegate part of the process.

***The state is confidence; the emotion is inspiration.***

**INFORMATION HAS NO  
CONVINCING POWER.  
STORIES ARE WHAT  
PERSUADE US.  
THEY LINK WITH EMOTION**



# MASTER Y

Yeah baby!

This is where you want to be: confident, cool, calm, competent and cashed up. You've glided past the velvet rope into the A-list section with the VIP treatment.

You have monster conviction.

You know the value of your vision and your talent.

You're able to communicate that easily and effectively.

You can get the work you need to live the life you want.

Your clarity is clean.

Your confidence is infectious.

You have become a power of attraction for the kind of brands you want to work with.

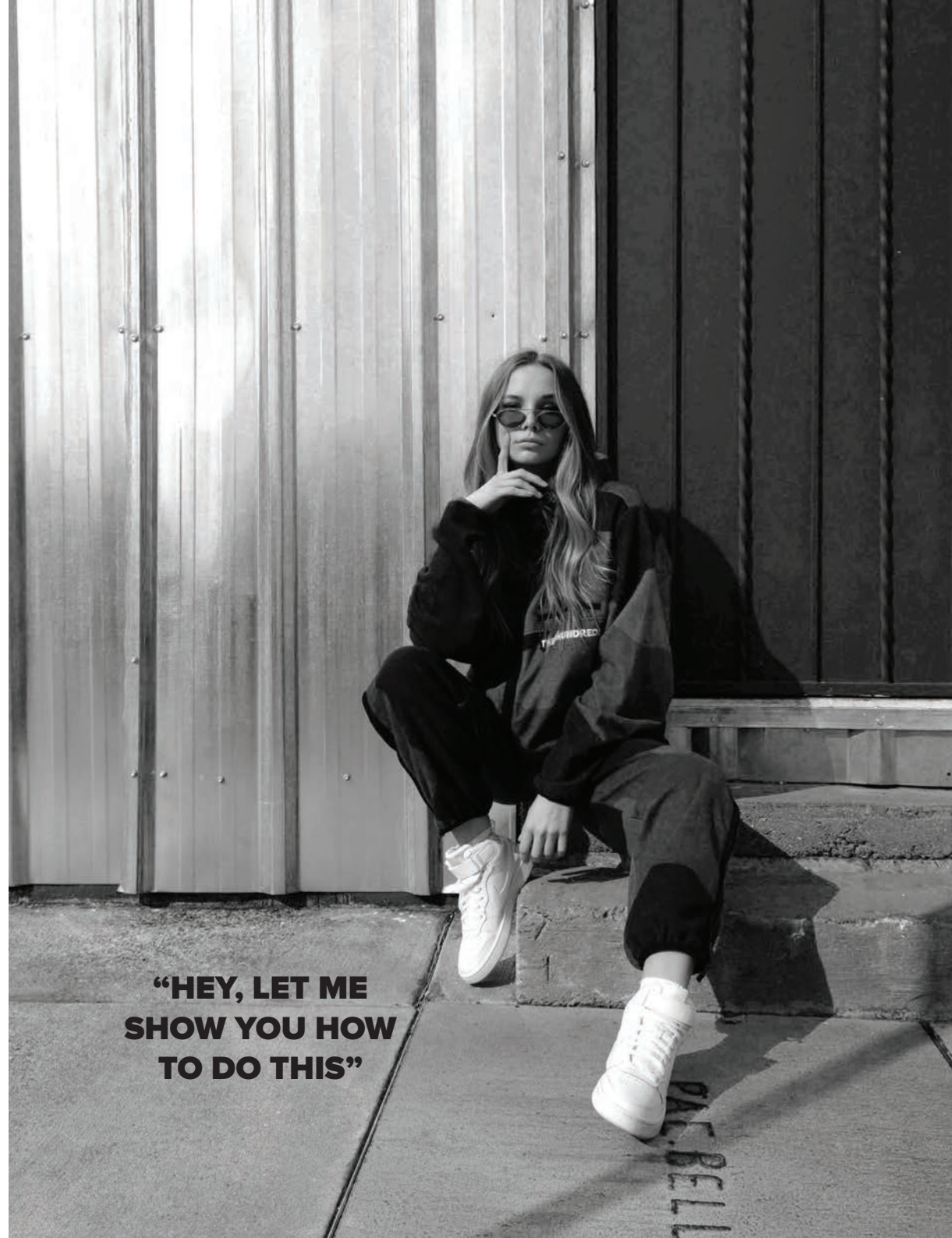
You are now top of the agency list and able to breathe that rarefied air of being the creative recommendation.

Your underdog days are behind you, for now.

It's no time to rest on your laurels. There's still work to do.

To consolidate your position at the top of the heap, you'll want to amplify your sales and marketing. Now you must build your own pipeline to consolidate as a power player.

***The state is conviction; the emotion is flow.***



**“HEY, LET ME  
SHOW YOU HOW  
TO DO THIS”**

# THE IRONY OF EXPERTISE

## ***Why creatives suck at selling themselves.***

You've heard the expression, "physician heal thyself".

This is like that, except it's more like, "creative market thyself".

Just as a fat doctor who smokes will tell you to eat less and exercise, creatives are great at telling clients how to brand and sell themselves but not so great at taking their own medicine.

Creatives, like directors and producers, spend all day thinking deeply about developing campaigns to help position clients and brands. They're incredibly passionate and purposeful about the impact of positioning and branding because it's their profession. Ironically, they spend no time thinking about the positioning of their own individual professional brand... how to sell themselves... or how to pitch. Creatives – better than anyone else – understand that when done well, positioning is the ultimate weapon to accelerate a brand to where it needs to be.

Yet when it's about their career, professional development or their unique field of expertise, they don't invest enough time in creating, developing and nurturing their own reputation.

## **THINK ABOUT IT: we spend all day solving client problems.**

The last thing we want to do when we have any spare time is spend even more time solving problems, this time introspectively. That's why when we get fired, we panic and only then focus on our brand and position. We have time. So, using behavioural economics theory, we need to understand time and time management as part of the solution. Time is a major friction. How do you remove that friction, literally or metaphorically? How do you make self-promotion a habit?

If only it was as easy as pointing out the obvious outcome benefits of more success. Some good creatives are humble by nature, and so self-promotion doesn't come naturally. It is often anathema to them. The reason creatives overcome this major friction hurdle when they get fired is also simple: desperation.

If we dive deeper into the psyche of creative humility, it stems from uncertainty and insecurity. As a highly awarded, heavyweight creative mate recently admitted, "even after 40 years, every time I do a piece of work, I literally do not have the faintest fucking clue whether it's any good or will be well received."

Unfortunately, you'll rarely find a creative who'll admit this.

What people say they are and how they behave is often completely different.

Instead, we convince ourselves and everyone else, "yeah, it's gonna be great", but the truth is we or anyone else haven't a clue.



# CREATIVE SUPERHERO

HUSTLE BEATS TALENT WHEN TALENT DOESN'T HUSTLE

Often we think we're too good to grind.

I fell into that trap.

Many directors and producers do not consider the hustle important. The fact is it didn't used to be.

As creatives, we live or die by our reels, and for some of the most brilliant people I've met and worked with, that was everything. They didn't care about their image.

Ambition is another factor.

Some people are just not very ambitious, so they do not see the need to work on promoting themselves. The ones that do are pushing to get ahead. They have a game plan. What they are seen to be saying. How they look in the eyes of the industry. I've seen people that were actually not very talented creatively, but really clever at making themselves look good.

What's changed a lot is social media, which now is a stage upon which to promote yourself. Now, some people take to it like a crackhead to a first-class ticket to Colombia. They have a strategy, thinking carefully about what they say and share. While others, who can be very good at their own particular trade, just seem to not have a knack for it. Or any inclination to learn.

It's because some people just don't see the need. And also that they are not that ambitious anyway. Ambition has a bad press in advertising these days.

As I said before, some of this is cultural; Nordic countries, Kiwis, and to a slightly lesser extent, Aussies hate to do or say anything that will big up themselves and risk the scythe of what's called tall poppy syndrome, the cultural phenomenon of mocking people who think highly of themselves, "cutting down the tall poppy". In the UK and US, it's the women, not the men, who are taught not to self-promote. To do so would mean admitting that you are not pretty, desirable, nubile, or feminine - and it's something the older women has to learn how to do once she becomes "a woman of a certain age. It's seen by many as self-deprecating and by others as promoting modesty or egalitarianism and plays havoc with efforts at self promotion.

And don't forget, some creatives are just lousy presenters.





# SOLUTION

## HIGH PERFORMANCE CREATIVE

And I'm going to share with you, for the first time, how it's all done. You'll discover how you can develop the skills you need in order to gain an unfair advantage over your competition.

As a director, you know what you're doing when you're on set, with a crew, cameras, lights, the whole shot.

You're confident, you're sure of your vision, you know you're RIGHT.

But it's what you have to do to get to that point that's the pain point.

It comes down to your treatment. Where you have to pitch yourself, your talent, and your vision, in the hope of dazzling that potential agency... and their client. It can feel like the tables have been turned, and now you are David instead of Goliath.

A first-class winning treatment doesn't come from luck. It comes from being able to distil the essence of what the client is looking for. To give them a mind-expanding vision of the stellar production only you can deliver. To give them something that truly speaks to them and makes them say, yes, this IS it.

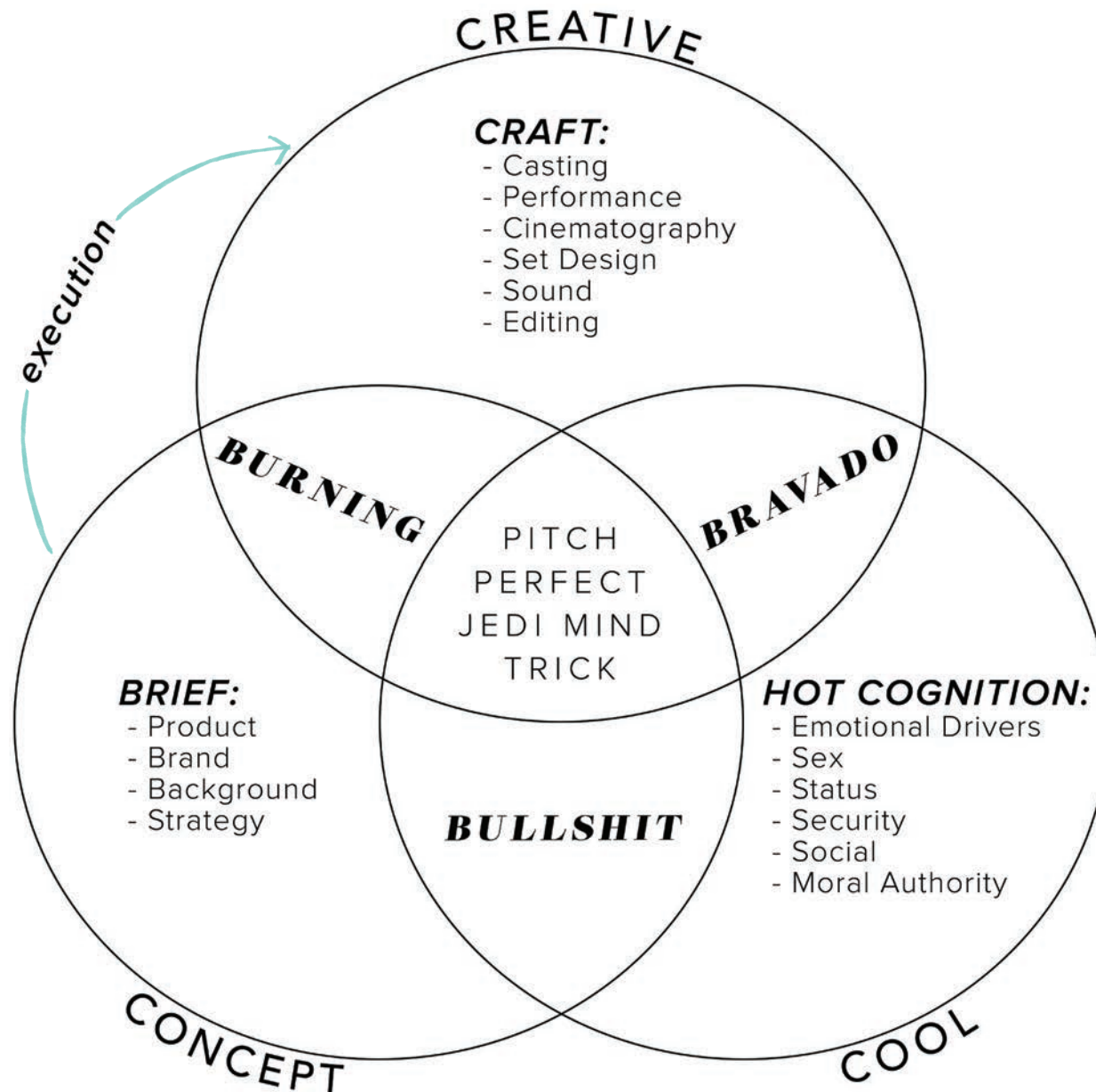
### ***HERE'S WHERE I CAN HELP.***

I've spent 30 years in advertising, starting as a copywriter and then up to executive creative director worldwide for agencies like JWT and BBDO. I've studied my craft writing, creating, and shooting thousands of TV commercials. Now, I'm in the highest demand to write winning treatments for the world's top directors.

It's not just your work that's important. It's how you talk about your work. It's how you pitch. That's what gets you more work. And better work. As an executive creative director at agencies like JWT and BBDO, I've mentored hundreds of creatives from London to Hong Kong and Sydney to LA to do one thing – help them find their voice. I can help you find yours. It's the advertising behind the advertising... the secrets to writing kick-ass directors treatments.

It all comes down to the Jedi Mind Trick of the director's treatment.

# PITCHCRAFT MODEL



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# PITCHCRAFT MODEL

## THE JEDI MIND TRICK

Neat model right?

Here's how it works.

There are three parts to writing any winning director's treatment; concept, creative and hot cognition.

Most directors and producers focus solely on the CREATIVE. This is the craft as a commercial, lighting music editing visual cinematography set design art direction location: easy and fun stuff to write about.

Often they miss the most important aspect, or don't spend enough time on the CONCEPT. It's vital that client and agency get that you've understood the brief and the business problem that they're trying to solve. That comes in addressing the concept. I would say the idea, but let's face it... many boards are completely lacking an idea.

It's tempting to complain about that but a great opportunity. That's where you can add your thinking and make it look like theirs. Agencies love that. They do it to their clients all the time. In CONCEPT, you want to make sure that you've understood the product, brand, brief, strategy and the advertising concept as it is encapsulated in the script or storyboard. When you speak to the agency, ask for the brief that they had when they worked on the idea themselves. Sometimes they'll share it, sometimes they won't: you don't get it if you don't ask ;)

Once you've convinced them that you understand the idea, and why they are advertising in the first place, you can move onto the execution.... CREATIVE. This is where most directors focus their attention; it's what everyone wants to do; pre-pro, shoot, post.

The real magic happens when you add HOT COGNITION.

Put simply, that's an agency catchphrase for saying that you want to buy something before you fully understand it. It's a mental process whereby emotion influences reasoning. Any time you've been attracted to a car, a person, or object you've been at the business end of hot cognition.

It's the emotional drivers behind purchase decision-making. Like all advertising, it's based on the three biggest human drives: **sex**, **status** and **security**. But within a pitch context you can also add scarcity along with moral and social frames, to position you as a hot choice for the project.

As you can see most people do a combination of these.

CONCEPT and CREATIVE is expected, it's boring.

CREATIVE and HOT COGNITION by themselves are just a lot of drugs and mirrors.

And if all you're doing is talking about the CONCEPT and HOT COGNITION you're bullshitting the client.

But include all the three 'C's CONCEPT, CREATIVE and HOT COGNITION and you have your Jedi mind trick... a winning treatment.



# WIN THE WORK YOU WANT TO LIVE THE LIFE YOU LOVE

***The pitch game is an arms race. It gets tougher every day.***

Global TVC production is a \$600 billion business. But more and more players are fighting for the same job.

Cheap, easy-to-use yet sophisticated tech shatters traditional market barriers and opens the floodgates to aggressive and hungry competition.

Agencies and clients are getting fussier by the minute. They want more explanation, detail, and reference than ever before... and it's only going to get worse.

I feel your pain... if anyone knows about the crazy and unreasonable agency expectations, it's me. I pitch TVCs and write director treatments full time - have done for over ten years.

Now for the good news... how about if I said I can help you triple your strike rate? So you can win at least three times as many pitches in half the time and start turning work away?

My superpower is taking complex brand communications and distilling them down to 30 seconds... creating, writing, and producing TV commercials. As a writer and executive creative director at agencies like BBDO and JWT in London, Asia and Australia, I've produced over 3,000 commercials. Check on google, I'm ranked as the world's number 1 TVC treatment expert. Each year I head to LA, Cannes and D&AD to hang with A-list directors and executive producers.

They're the clients that I've won over \$500 million worth of business for in less than a decade. As an executive creative director at BBDO and JWT, I mentored thousands of creatives to be their best. Now I coach top directors and producers to find their voice, sell their vision and win more pitches.

I break it all down in PitchCraft, my masterclass on writing killer director treatments and creating board flow. This workshop is not meant to transmit information. It's meant to transmit a transformation. A psychic change that creates a shift in thinking that enables you to create pitch-winning treatments, time after time. It's a way of combining how you talk about the concept and your creative in a way that creates hot cognition for client and agency. Think of it as a Jedi mind trick.

***Anytime you pitch is a chance to grab attention and turn it into money.*** It's about impact and income - yours! Using the PITCHCRAFT process will give you the edge, an unfair competitive advantage over your peers. It will create board flow so you can be more selective, up your strike rate, make more money and do more of the work you love.

***We have to turn ready to wear into haute couture.***

I can help you build a system to streamline the process for clients that always want something bespoke. Directors love control - here in the pitch process there is little control. PitchCraft can help you increase your control with a toolkit of practicals and tacticals to help you triple your strike rate in half the amount of time. You want to be proactive with the least resistance possible. This process will help you grease the wheels. I will teach you how to create a structure on how to communicate with people on a regular basis.

We will focus on creating a funnel of phone calls and emails that turn into meetings, briefs and wins. You'll save time, become richer, be happier and feel more secure.

Let's go from Mayhem to Mastery in 90 days!



***“A DIRECTOR'S  
TREATMENT IS AN  
AD FOR AN AD”***

# CONFIDENCE/CONVERSION



Before engagement, I always sit down with a client to run a full diagnostic to see where they are in terms of confidence and conversions.

Naturally high confidence plus the right skills and mindset equals a high conversion rate. That's "**Pitch Perfect**," and if you happen to be happily situated in the top right, what will keep you there is leadership, sales and marketing which is what we'll focus on.

But most people start off with low conversion and low confidence at the bottom end of the spectrum. That's when the basics of structure, skillset and mindset become the foundation of our work together.

With that as a base we then progress through writing, pitching, hot cognition before dicing into the formulas for various TVCs, personal branding and learning the pro tips for killer treatments.

# WTF IS PAUL REGAN?

I spent years as a stressed-out creative director until I discovered how a simple pitch formula can be used as an irresistible persuasion hook in director treatments and began teaching directors how to use it to skyrocket their conversion success rate.

Now I'm the world's #1 TVC pitch expert, helping production houses land over half a billion dollars in budgets. I write the advertising behind the advertising.

## Stats:

- Youngest JWT creative director in Asia
- Ran creative in 10 markets across four continents
- 30+ years' expertise in advertising/TVC production
- Written/produced 3000+ TVCs
- Won over 60+ international awards
- Pitch £500M

After graduating in my hometown of London, I headed to the mystic east, starting as a copywriter at Ogilvy Singapore, and worked in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, and Vietnam, often as the only native English speaker in the creative department.

Then after heading new business for JWT Regional, in 2001, I picked up Australian citizenship and an MBA in Melbourne - a shot in the arm for my strategic, creative management, and consulting skills.

My last advertising roles were Executive Creative Director of BBDO Malaysia and Regional Creative Director for JWT/River Orchid across Indochina.

In 2008, I owned the Gallery of European Art in Bangkok but kept my hand in advertising by ghostwriting treatments for directors and production houses to build my current consultancy business.

I've closed £500M since 2011. Having established myself as the first choice for A-list directors and producers, I spend at least half the year travelling and building relationships.

Now, I make film directors rich by helping them win more work, build their personal brands and become the best versions of themselves.





# TIME TO MURDER YOUR COMPETITION

*You've been letting them get away with it for too long.*

If you want to end up broken, angry and resentful at constantly losing big jobs to inferior rivals... then, by all means, stop reading now.

This workshop and mentoring series is packed with everything I've learnt over thirty years as a creative director in advertising agencies and film production.

If you learn just one thing from this program that helps you win just one pitch, then it's paid for itself many times over. Just one pro tip to get you over the line.

But if you don't want to make the simple mistakes that most directors make... then do yourself a favour: Watch, learn and copy what I do.

To create more impact and income: **Paul@ghosttreatments.com**  
And if you can't write, call + **614 91945186**



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