



## Are Directors' Treatments Becoming a Nuclear Arms Race?

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# DIRECTORS' TREATMENTS – A NUCLEAR ARMS RACE?

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Fast forward to now – there are tens of thousands of Directors working in dozens of media, where TV/cinema commercials and branded content are now just one (very juicy) part. With competition ever more fierce, a Director and her/his Production company needs everything possible to ensure success at the pitch stage.

There are many types of Director, each with unique and specific skill sets. The Director is hired to craft precise reactions in an audience and is selected by an advertising agency specifically to do so, as demonstrated by projects they've already delivered.

By definition, the Director creatively translates a script into specific sounds and images. An adaptor of ideas to a tangible and hopefully inspirational form.

Whether the product is a luxury car, a social media giant, sugar water, a government agency, an airline or anything else; the agency come to the Director for one specific reason – to elicit a precise reaction in the audience to increase brand awareness and ultimately sales.

Whether the Director wins multiple Cannes Lions along the way, or they're the next Gondry, Glazer, Sigismondi or Jonze; they're initially hired to translate emotive audio/visual messages using the psychological influencing techniques of moving image advertising for a specifically tailored result.

As a Director, you may be the next big thing – but if you can't express yourself in a clear, logical and compelling way in the pitch process, you're compromised.

You have a binary choice. Do it yourself. Or use a ghostwriter. Or use a Visual Researcher and a Designer to translate your vision of the final product. Or a Moodfilm editor. Or a Storyboard artist too. Actually, let's put moving images and audio within the treatment as well....

Welcome to the new world of the TVC pitch – it's a nuclear arms race.

How much is too much? How much is enough? What do Agencies expect? What are the new standards and where's it all going?

While we're still a fair way off from the gesture-based user interfaces of *Minority Report* (click to watch); this is where it's ultimately heading. The Director as player, as show person, as a storyteller using real-time and historical data to convince both agency and client alike of their perfect suitability and alignment for the brief at hand.

Is this sci-fi? Yes, for now. But all gloves are off in the new race for the perfect pitch.

Already Directors and production companies are walking into ad agencies with a bunch of tablets and showing creatives the look, feel and style of the Director's vision with full tech integration. These are digital treatments that include multiple moving elements to give a fuller description of their idea: exactly how that car might look as it's shot in time-lapse moving through neon-lit cityscapes, that perfect expression on an actor's face, the way the shots are match cut, or any one of a zillion references.

And it's likely only going to get more futuristic. In the not-too-distant future there'll be a market for AR treatments that literally bring the Director's vision to life in the pre-production.

So, given the increasing scope of pitching, ask yourself this: does anyone at an ad agency seriously expect the Director to be burning the midnight oil and actually preparing all this themselves on a speculative pitch?

Film is a collaborative medium. Like DPs, Editors, Art Directors and VFX artists, invisible pitch teams work with Directors for the best possible end result – winning the job in the first place.

Ultimately, some Directors write and produce great treatments themselves. But many don't. Many are too busy; others don't have English as first language when it's needed. And some just want to up their game. Or have writer's block. Or a hundred other reasons.

Will this nuclear arms race of Directors' treatments stop anytime soon?

Absolutely not. As a production company, if you're not doing these things, others will be. It's the survival of the fittest out there, and the days of *Minority Report* are moving ever closer.

The Moon Unit