



PR release

Globally, there are around 25,000 TV commercials directors. A lot of them write great pitches. Some don't.

THE MOON UNIT are ghost writers for TV commercials treatments. We amplify directors' ideas through a collaborative process, much like a director collaborates with an editor or cinematographer.

The main difference is we aren't credited for our contributions. That's because two-way confidentiality is a cornerstone of our business – we never reveal the directors with whom we work, and we suspect they don't talk about us much, either.

How did all this start? Personally I was a promo producer for MTV and BBC then a TVC director for many years. Over time it became apparent that my writing was better than my directing. Fellow directors asked me to help with their treatments and found they were winning more jobs. A couple of years later, in a bizarre career shift, I found myself penning speeches for a Prime Minister. This was my initiation into the murky world of ghost writing.

My co-founder has been a Creative Director for several top agencies. He's won Cannes Gold Lions and the rest of it with his own work. He maintains that he's always been a ghost writer, providing voices for brands that want to speak to their customers.

One night we were in the pub having a chat...

Directors we work with tend to be 3 types:

Those constantly shooting because they're so much in demand, and need to pitch when they're asleep, on a plane or in recovery (or all three simultaneously) – this is our main group.

The second group is those who don't have English as first language and need stronger, crafted writing – this works particularly well for the European, Asian and US Hispanic market.

The last group is simply those who want to up their game - better words - killer visuals - awesome layout and design.

So how does it work? It's just about starting a conversation, the rest falls into place really easily. Technically, via skype, it's a simple process.

No two directors are the same. At one end of the scale we've got the big guns that spout 10 lines from the back of a taxi in Paris or as they're about to board a flight, and that's it – go and write it. At the other end there are directors who want to go through the minutiae. Regardless, it's our job to capture the essence of their vision and express it – pitch perfect.

Ultimately, it's really important for prospects to know that we amplify ideas – but they are the directors' ideas, not ours. We provide perspectives, craft sentences, offer suggestions, but we there's no replacement for the creative vision. Most directors are genuinely lovely people and we get really passionate about writing for them.

OK, so is all this just cheating? Sometimes we get that thrown at us. Our response is that the production of high-end ad campaigns is always going to be a collaborative process. A director uses an editor. A cinematographer. A sound designer. Is this cheating too?

We've never heard of an agency ask if something is ghost written. As long as it expresses the director's vision accurately, should they care?

Currently there are five of us in The Moon Unit, operating under pseudonyms from LA, London, Sydney, Auckland and Wellington, ready to go around the clock.

We chose to locate our HQ in Wellywood NZ (overlooking Weta Digital) due to the time factor. We're 21 hours ahead of LA and on average 12 ahead of London, so essentially clients can buy time by using us, which is an additional advantage, given the short deadlines usually involved.

While most businesses strive for transparency, we've done the opposite and gone for stealth. We have a lot of fun with the 'ghost' thing, anonymity and the TMU brand, but of course we'll turn our skype cameras on whenever requested. Funny thing is, most directors never ask for that.

The reason this whole thing works is that clearly this is a massively competitive space, with many directors and production companies fighting fiercely for a share of the best creative.

When an agency is choosing between two directors whose reels are both amazing, which one are they going to recommend to their client? The one that has the showstopper treatment, where the writing and design crackles with energy, or the one that's a bit ho-hum?

And what's that worth? We rest our case.

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