



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## SHOULD YOU ATTEND COMMERCIAL/PRINT SHOOTS?

I had a conference call the other day with a senior marketing manager of a leading QSR (Quick Service Restaurant) chain. He was in Los Angeles at a commercial shoot. Many organizations advise or have policies against marketing personnel attending commercial and print shoots. The rationale is that marketing addressed (or should have addressed) production issues at the pre-production meeting with appropriate agency personnel and the Director, the agency's production team will be in place, and the client company may even have their own production team that will be in attendance. Therefore, there's no need for marketers to be at commercial shoots. Instead, they need to be back in their offices doing what marketing does, whatever that might be!

Au contraire. Throughout my career, I've made it a point to be present at commercial shoots. Even when I was running marketing for Coca-Cola USA, I attended commercial shoots. With so much (marketing?) to do, why should marketers, even senior managers such as the VP of Marketing for the QSR, attend commercial shoots? After all, there's not enough time to get everything that's demanded of marketers to be done, without taking additional time to be present for something that has been addressed (in the pre-production meeting) and is being covered at the shoot (by the agency production team and, perhaps, yours – if your organization has one).

While I could cite a few reasons, the answer comes down to one essential thing, to deepen your relationship with the agency – particularly the creative team. Your attendance at the shoot is an opportunity for you to get to know them better and for them to get to know you and your brand better. Importantly, you can share ideas, discuss problems and opportunities, all away from the pressures of running the day to day business and stress of agency creative presentations. Moreover, there are no filters as in the account team coming between you and the agency's creative personnel. All of this can be achieved by spending quality time together during downtime at the shoot (which there is always an abundance) and over (many) meals.

John Bergen, the Worldwide Creative Director for McCann-Erickson (the agency of record for the Coca-Cola brand) at that time, used to shout to me, "Czerniawski, if I'm attending the commercial shoot then dammit so should you!" He was correct. It proved fruitful to spend time with him and his team. And, the VP of the QSR told me that he makes it a practice to attend shoots so that he may nurture and strengthen his relationship with agency personnel and that this one was proving to be very productive. It comes down to this: You get what you make of it, and there's a lot of good to get at a commercial shoot.

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