



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## RESHOOTING THE COMMERCIAL SHOOT

Believe it or not, I once had to have a commercial shot three times. The same, exact storyboard. Yes, not once. Nor twice. But three times! It was the commercial, in which the character declared, "Introducing the REACH Toothbrush from Johnson & Johnson."

So, what happened? Well, the first commercial shoot went as planned. However, while the finished film was in the process of being developed, New York City had the second of its infamous blackouts. It completely and utterly destroyed the film. (By the way, I was there for the city's first blackout too. At the time, I was in college and attending anatomy lab when the lights went out on me, albeit not on the same order as the cat I was dissecting.)

Consequently, this left us with nothing to show at our launch meeting nor for the sales force to use with their customers. There was only one solution, reshoot. (If you're wondering, the agency had insurance, which covered the cost of reshooting.) Unfortunately, we did not have sufficient time to reshoot and finish the entire commercial. (We went from acquiring REACH Toothbrush, which was in a controlled store test consisting of 20-stores in each of two cities, to launching nationally in just 17-weeks.) So, we decided to reshoot select scenes to give us enough video to share with the sales force and they, in turn, to showcase during the sell-in with their retail accounts.

This necessitated a third shoot. As the saying goes, "The third time is a charm." I say, "Amen" to that! We got everything we needed, the way we envisioned and planned it. REACH Toothbrush launched with great success on the back of that advertising, which demonstrated to consumers that there was a better toothbrush "to help fight cavities." The brand achieved the number one market share of the toothbrush category in its first Nielsen bimonthly audit! (Nielsen monitors retail sales to consumers.)

We're not supposed to need to reshoot commercials. They're quite expensive and time-consuming to produce. But then, we're not supposed to be struck by a citywide blackout while processing the film either. The only reason for reshooting an approved storyboard, an unpardonable one at that, is if the shoot does not capture the "board." If that's the case, then the agency is obligated to pick up the tab for reshooting it. Unless the client is at fault, which dare not be the case.

Ah, that brings me to the real subject of my musing - marketers attending commercial shoots. Last week I shared my practice of attending commercial shoots as one of the (many) ways I used to create and nurture a productive relationship with my agency, particularly the creatives. I noted that there is plenty of downtime and sharing of meals to get to know agency people better and for them to get to know you better.

This struck a nerve - both positive and negative from marketers. The positive comments came from marketers who affirmed the value of spending quality time with agency people at a shoot, away from the stress of managing the day to day business and agency creative presentations. It came, too, from those who

cited that their presence prevented the agency from straying from the approved storyboard. The negatives came from those who believed marketing personnel could be a distraction and, worse yet, lead to the production of something other than the board.

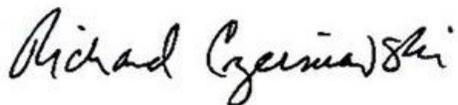
So, I'd like to be perfectly clear regarding my practice and thinking:

1. The pre-production meeting is the last meeting before the commercial shoot in which marketers need to participate. The agency (account, creative and commercial production team), along with the Director, will take it from there to manage the shoot. If the client has a commercial production team (as I did at Coca-Cola USA) someone from it will also be present. All are tasked with capturing and bringing back the approved storyboard. It's as simple as that.
2. If you do attend the shoot, thou shall capture the board. Oh, be aware that if you're on set, someone (agency or Director) who believes s/he has a new, better idea may approach you to inveigh for your approval to shoot it (versus what's in the board). Don't do it! Follow the rule that nothing new gets shot, nothing, until the board gets shot.
3. Thou shall not be a distraction. Don't be a nuisance. People are doing real work there. So, keep out of the way. This not only applies to when filming is going on but also when people are thinking and directing. Save your schmoozing for when you're spreading cream cheese on your bagel, sharing a cup of coffee or glass of refreshing Coca-Cola or a meal. If you're someone who is someone, your agency people will engage with you.
4. Thou shall capture the board. I've stated that already didn't I?! Now, you may give the approval to shoot a new idea (if, and only if, you have that authority and it fits within the approved budget) but not until you have captured the board.

There are two things to remember if you should choose (as I did) and are directed to attend (as I was by the Worldwide Creative Director for the brand) a commercial shoot. They are:

- Thou shall capture the board.
- Thou shall not be a distraction.

Did I say, "thou shall capture the board!?!"



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