



## **The Real Challenges of In-House**

*If you want the best possible job, go to the best possible place, writes GCRS' Carole Humphrey*

Uncertain times have brought huge change to UK businesses, and the creative industry is no different. Agencies are looking to broaden their offerings, recruiting from peripheral fields with the aim of offering all round production services from shooting, editing, grading and sound.

Is the reason for doing this to offer clients value for money, to have greater control, or is it something else? I believe it is a mixture of the three, and very often at the expense of the creative quality the brief is craving.

Production facilities are a notoriously expensive set up (I should know), so it is indeed a sizeable investment for any agency. A return on investment would certainly not be immediate. It is likely, that a hard push for enough business would be required to keep it running. The key card here is mandating that work is done in-house and holding back the option of working with specialists. The inevitable result is a narrowing of the field of work that the creative process can feed on.

Well established production houses, whatever their discipline, are successful because they play to their strengths. Their craft is intricate and they have a team who understands the complexities of the wide creative variety of projects and brief that comes in every day. They will invest time and money in experimenting. They will nurture new talent. They will make sure that software is up to date and available 24/7. They will be leading the way in their field, getting ahead of the game, and pushing boundaries.

Not having clients on a retainer has a funny way of keeping you well outside your comfort zone which leads to excellence.

Interestingly there was an article in Campaign recently which criticised creatives for working in-house for clients on one brand as it would stultify growth, limit the imagination and restrict horizons. Surely creatives in agencies will suffer



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from the same restrictions if they have to work with the sole in-house production department constantly? Would they not want to feel inspired by the production team they are working with not confined by it? The best talent is much more likely to be found in independents, who have a passion for their craft, rather than in-house facilities who will struggle to attract the leaders in the field.

As any seasoned agency producer knows, using in-house facilities will invariably be the same cost if not more expensive than working with independents not just in terms of money but also the time it takes to produce the work.

When booking with a specialist studio, you are carefully paired with an engineer who is best suited to your project. You will be given impartial advice, and not be given a service which is dependent on other parts of the project. You will be working with specialists whose job it is to finesse what they are given to the highest possible creative standards – their reputation relies on it.

If you want the best possible job, go to the best possible place. Do not make your own life harder, it will ultimately cost more and take more time. Unless of course that was the plan in the first place...