

# AdvertisingAge®

## Marketing-Savvy Creatives Offer More Than Punch Lines

### Voices From the Directors Roundtable

By [Teresa Iezzi](#)

Published: February 12, 2007

Late last month, I sat in a room with 11 very accomplished creative directors to talk about the nature of their jobs. The first thing I learned was that I didn't have to try that hard to ensure the



A major issue at the Directors Roundtable was idea ownership. Said William Gelner, group creative director, BBH, New York: 'I'm finding that many of our clients are actually encouraged to hear that we want to invest in something, whether it's an entertainment property or a product or something else. If

assembled group represented a diverse range of agencies. Among them: Saatchi, New York; AKQA; R/GA; 72andSunny; the Barbarian Group; Droga5; Anomaly; JWT, New York; Bartle Bogle Hegarty, New York; Wieden & Kennedy, Amsterdam; and La Comunidad.

Contemplating that group of companies and the work each produces, one quickly comes to the conclusion that the ad world is no longer bipolar (in the political-science sense if not the psychiatric sense) but multi-polar.

And since the *Ad Age* audience should probably be at least as interested as the *Creativity* audience in what the "creatives" are saying, I'll pass along some of the things I learned.

**Telling your agency to "give me one of those" may not be the best strategy.** "It's like someone picks up a flag and says, 'Come with us! We know where everyone is.' But once you get there, they're gone and must be somewhere else. ... I asked my daughter how her MySpace page was going and she said, 'I haven't been there for months. No one does that anymore.' The really smart advertising and marketing people are the ones who figure out how to get people to come to them."

-- *Duncan Marshall, creative director, Droga5*

we're willing to invest to get a piece of the back end, we become a partner, not an expendable vendor.' | **ALSO:** Comment on this column in the 'Your Opinion' box below.

"Maybe two years ago, [the interactive agencies] wouldn't even be here [at the roundtable]. But when I talk to my friends at other agencies -- online and offline -- every brief they've gotten in the last two weeks said to 'do something viral.' I think the last thing we need is to make the web into the new TV. It shouldn't happen this way."

-----  
-- *P.J. Pereira, executive creative director, AKQA*

**Agencies getting a stake in their ideas isn't just good for agencies.** "I'm finding that many of our clients are actually encouraged to hear that we want to invest in something, whether it's an entertainment property or a product or something else. If we're willing to invest to get a piece of the back end, we become a partner, not an expendable vendor."

-- *William Gelner, group creative director, BBH, New York*

**Creatives aren't what they used to be.** "I met with a guy last week who, when he was 18, got a DUI, drove into a ditch, ended up going to the Army instead of jail. Then he decided to design tattoos and did this documentary on this Christian rock band he followed around. He's never done an ad in his life, and I'm going to hire him. For me, that's the future. These self-made pioneers who are ambitious, have an incredibly strong work ethic and are conceptual-driven by big ideas."

-- *Mike Byrne, chief creative officer, Anomaly*

**"Testing well" only guarantees success for the owner of the testing company.** "You know what ends up failing time after time? Bad work."

-- *Jeremy Postaer, executive creative director, JWT, New York*

**What interactive agency?** "There won't be these agencies with very specific disciplines. I don't think there's going to be such thing as online or offline. Everything's going to be online at some point. So really, it's a question of creative sensibility -- narrative, informational function, product development, long-form content -- there's all sorts of stuff that has nothing to do with the channels."

-- *Nick Law, chief creative officer, R/GA*

**A surprising fact about the root of all creative.** "Really, great clients make great work. That's the end of the story. If you have a true partner, it makes things so much easier."

-- *Mike Byrne, Anomaly*

~ ~ ~

*Teressa Iezzi is the editor of Creativity magazine and AdCritic.com. E-mail your big ideas to her at [tiezzi@crain.com](mailto:tiezzi@crain.com).*

Copyright © 1992-2007 [Crain Communications](#) | [Privacy Statement](#) | [Contact Us](#)