

Q&A: Ben Mooge

Chief Creative Officer, Publicis Groupe UK



Ben started out as a teaboy at Mother where the experience clearly helped him write one of the UK's most famous tea brand campaigns for PG Tips. [HERE](#). He won shedloads of awards. Then co-founded Work Club, where he won shedloads more (including [THIS](#) for McLaren). When Havas bought Work Club, Ben became the London ECD, helping the agency win shedloads... and now he's at Publicis as the CCO of the whole group of UK agencies, helping them win... well, you get the picture.

Q: In your career, what piece of work are you most proud of?

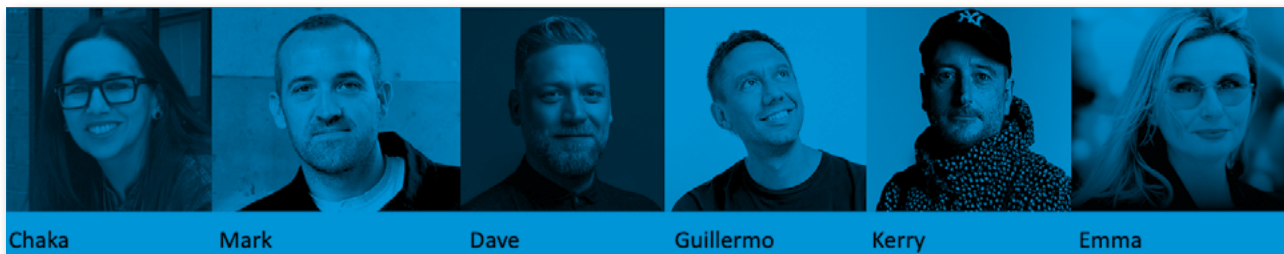
I always have a soft spot for QTV ([HERE](#)) which was the music tv channel of Q magazine we launched in 2001(!)

It was one of those moments when all the stars aligned – we cast a very young Martin Freeman to play a deluded music wannabe who thought he was as talented as the stars on the channel, and we co-wrote it with the director Graham Linehan (Father Ted, Black Books, Big Train). We made 20 spots over 2 days, improvising all the time. It didn't feel like work and it won a couple of D&AD Yellow Pencils. Lovely.

Q: Being the CCO of one agency looks daunting enough but you're the CCO of a group. What are the pressures and what are the rewards? And do you ever pine for the days you were a simple creative?

The rewards are the pressure I guess – I'm tasked with infusing creativity across the group, which is 5 separate creative agencies, influence and PR agencies, the media agencies – which is obviously a big task, but inevitably a slow burn with some spikes of evidence and wins. An obvious reward is the creative people I'm surrounded with – Chaka, Mark Elwood, Dave Monk, Guillermo Vega, Kerry Roper, Emma De La Fosse. It's a privilege to interact with them.

I don't pine for the days – because you never stop being a simple creative (and I was simple). I write all the time – there's always a pitch or a project that I can sometimes be useful on...



Chaka

Mark

Dave

Guillermo

Kerry

Emma

Publicis has emerged from the pandemic in startlingly good shape. What does it mean to you to be ahead of WPP right now? What other goals does the group have?

Q: Honestly I don't look at the competition in that way, let alone even trying to define out performance against another network. There's so many factors and ways of presenting progress. I've only got one goal – make the work better.

How as lockdown for you personally? And as edge back to 'normality', what do you think 'the new normal' is going to look like?

I think I probably had a similar lockdown experience to every other creative person. Novelty then novelty quickly wearing off, then frustration, then relief.

I think the new normal can be summed up in the way that you analyse the kind of work you're doing – you know that you need agency culture and department competition to inspire you in the office, and you know that it might be better to write your work in the peace and quiet of your kitchen or a café. The 'new normal' has to be in service of the creative product.

Q: What creative interests/projects do you have outside work that help counterbalance the stresses and strains of your job?

I'm not sure external creative projects have ever counterbalanced the strains of work for me. I've written screenplays before but I always seemed to get more stressed at those happening or not happening.

A friend of mine gave me a good idea that I think I'm going to follow – he turns all of those half thoughts into short stories. Don't worry about a big project that might never happen – instead make something small that can't help but happen.

Q: If you weren't in advertising, what would you be doing right now?

God knows. I've got an English degree so what do you do with that? There's the job that no-one told me about (Advertising) or journalism or teaching. I don't have the patience to be a teacher. So I'll take ideally football journalism please.

Q: Are awards important?

Yes. Because they're a permanent record of creativity. They set the bar.

Q: What does it mean to you to be the President of the Jury at The Caples in 2022?

It means a lot to help further a very on-point idea. To work with Patrick, to follow someone like Steve Aldridge, to spread the story of these creative-first awards.

Q: What sort of work are you hoping you'll see?

New work. I love seeing something I've never seen before, and when that happens at an awards-level standard, that reminds you why you do what you do.

Q: Finally, tough one this, but what is your one, all-time favourite piece of advertising? And why?

Climate Name Change from Barton F. Graf. (See it [HERE](#))

Such a smart idea, and just so well written.

It does purpose and sustainability whilst also satirising with the sharpest wit.

Perfect.