

## Written evidence submitted by Danny Fleet, Presence Team

I have been running a film production company since 2002 in London. Presence makes live action film commercials, branded content, music videos and animation for high end TV and film production. Most recently we have produced the animated sequences for a feature documentary called 14 Peaks on Netflix and a docu series called The Anarchists for HBO Max. We are currently working with global clients including Pokemon and Adidas on branded film projects.

As part of our talent recruitment initiative, we have set up a division called Young Presence. This is a community of emerging creative talent that hopefully will become the feature film directors, producers and heads of department, of tomorrow.

From famous filmmakers such as Ridley Scott through to Alan Parker and Jonathan Glazer, the UK has a clear pathway from school or college to high end features and television via advertising. Traditionally, directors have begun work in music videos, develop their craft in commercials and short films and hopefully then onto features. All whilst building a great network of support from Producers, and Cameramen through to Art Department and Post Production. Their short films have often been subsidised through the advertising work that a production company makes. Directors get the chance to work with new crews and equipment, and try things they have in mind for a future long form project. But in a manner that has been funded by better paid commercials work.

This traditional established pathway was a clear route for the best talent to get to the top, but it is being ebbed away by the emergence of the online platforms and the big four advertising groups.

Now that margins are being reduced, these advertising groups are seeking to produce work in house and retain production company margins. This means that the independent commercials production sector gets less work, and the directors are having to leave their representation deals and go freelance into the market. It means that directors are being sought that are a safe pair of hands. The established talent take less interesting creative projects and there is less risk taking generally.

The big four advertising groups also have very strict payment terms that mean many independent commercials production companies can't survive and cashflow becomes a huge problem despite using contracts and terms set out by our industry bodies (The IPA – Independent Practitioners in Advertising and The APA – Advertising Producers Association my companies trade body).

The community we have built with Young Presence gets back to some of the nurturing of talent that we hope will provide the next Ridley Scott (we all want the next Ridley in advertising). But we need government help in the emerging talent areas. Independent advertising and music video production companies. As company heads and producer's we know what creative talent needs to succeed, but we need backing. A joined-up approach

between schools, colleges and universities and more support for building the best showreels for emerging commercials directors and short film makers.

The work that the government has done with tax breaks and incentivising US production and postproduction on high end film and tv in the UK has changed the face of our industry over the past few years. This now needs to be continued into the emerging talent areas, schools and colleges and the sustainability of the independent production sector in advertising and music videos.

We are running a 9:16 portrait film format competition for students aged 16 years plus to film on their phones, as part of our community efforts. Technology and artificial intelligence is lowering the barriers to entry for the most creative. I'll be very happy to come and show you the winning film and talk to you further about how you can help the best new talent succeed in film and high end television over the longer term.

Kind regards,

From: Danny Fleet.  
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Presence Team.  
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