



AFFIXIUS FILMS

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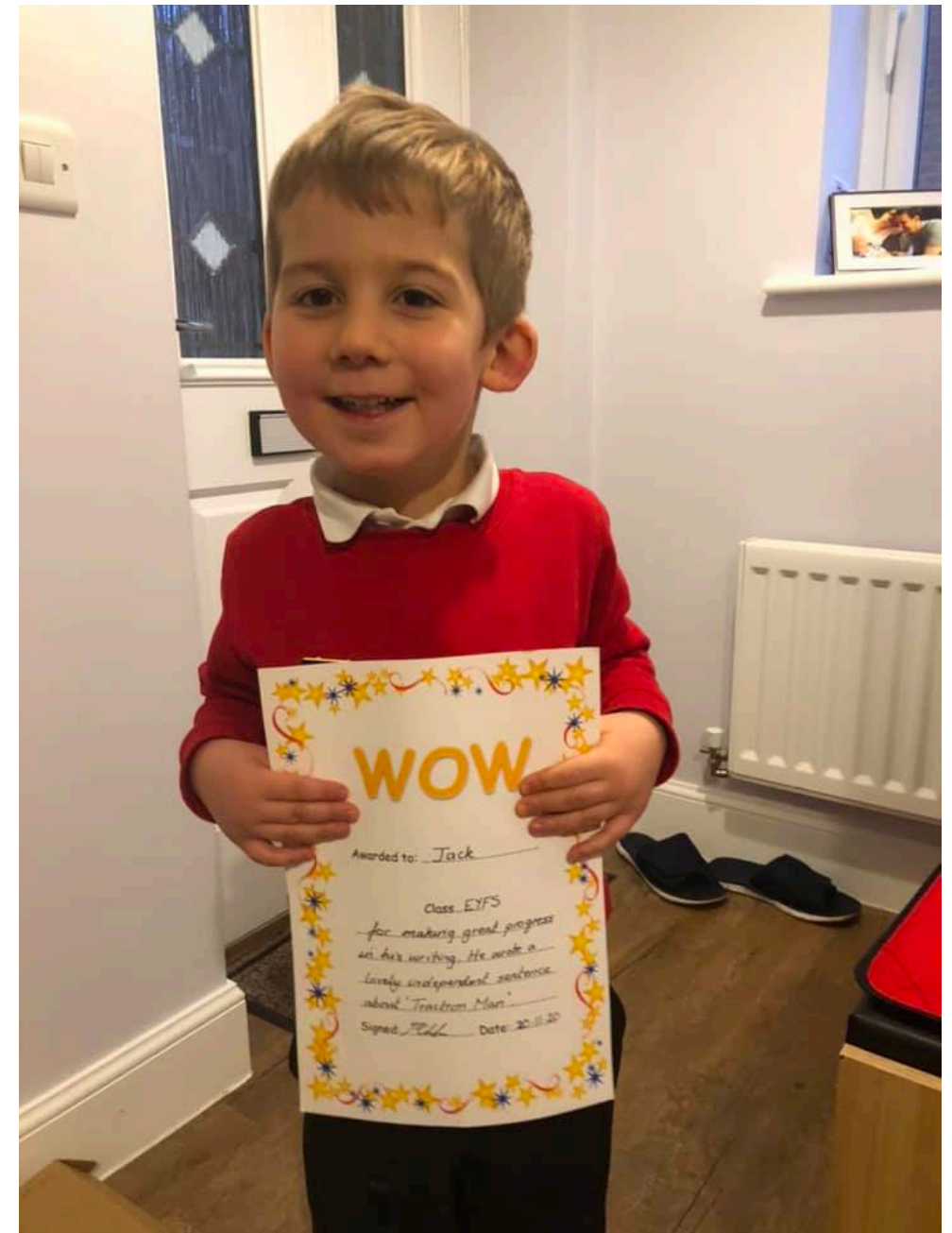
Distinctive Video Has Never Been More Important

The question is how to use it...

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An Introduction - Miles Latham and Affixius Films

- ▶ **Managing Partner** of Affixius Films - film production and strategy agency based in Leicestershire and London.
- ▶ Very **varied educational background** from Maintained Primary School to Oxford University.
- ▶ Affixius works in **both the Commercial and Academic sectors**, with an approximately 50/50 split between the two (based on turnover and project load).
- ▶ Worked with **c. 500 schools in the Academic Sector** from Dover to St. Andrews and from Montenegro to Bogota.
- ▶ **Televisual Top 10 Agency** and TES, Royal Television Society, The Drum, CASE, InspirED and EVCOM recognised.



God help you, I'm the buyer, now...



Part 1:

“Just answer the question...”



Why Now? Spotlights, Advantages, and Limitations.

If there's one phrase I've come to hate this year, it's "...now, more than ever..." - but that doesn't stop it being true. Sadly.

Beyond the bleedin' obvious, there are three reasons why this idea of 'distinctive video' has become so important for the marketer and/or admission professional:

1. **A sector in the spotlight** - people are looking, and looking in new ways...
2. **The flight to quality** - more than that, people are buying...
3. **A saturated market** - the limitations of 'filming everything' are becoming quickly obvious. It's hard (who knew?), it gets expensive and, more importantly, it's no longer a novelty...



Distinctiveness #1 - The concept of context.

Distinctiveness starts with a few home truths, most of which are based on the idea of **context and meeting your audience where you find them**. The most successful videos are based on contextual understanding.

The following things are true whether the school likes it or not:

- ▶ People buy from a **shortlist** of schools, and often at least one of the schools on that shortlist costs nothing...
- ▶ People either have an **opinion** of you or are happy to form one before they meet you - things you think are distinctive may not be to the buyer...
- ▶ People **position** your school alongside other schools they (think) they know things about...
- ▶ People have things to think about other than schooling that impacts on their decision and always have personal **timelines** that you don't.



So, the challenge of using film is **to make sense in context, now.**



Distinctiveness #2 - The rule of “stuff”.

The idea of being different and ‘standing out’ is the Holy Grail of the Independent School marketer - but how should we deal with this challenge with video?

“Command the generic.”

Say different stuff, but be brutal with yourselves and accept when you can’t genuinely do so.

Say stuff differently, and accept that you’ll have to be brave to make a message land among the noise.



BINGO

Someone describing the school as a ‘family’ or a ‘community’.	An awkward Head of School interview.	A science experiment.	A montage section of different activities and sports.
A reference to ‘jobs that don’t exist yet’.	The word ‘potential’ being used.	An older kid helping a younger kid somehow.	A shot of a Head of School walking along a pathway with a suspiciously diverse group of children.
A nervous-looking kid saying it was easy to make friends.	A sweeping shot of a driveway.	A close up of a goal being scored in football / soccer / netball / lacrosse.	Someone taking a library book off a shelf.

Distinctiveness #3 - The science bit.

There are ideas here that often scare Senior Leadership in schools, but these are the central tenets of psychological research that underlies successful video engagement. The exact same rules apply to school - if not with more intensity:

Spectacle

Audiences like to be entertained, especially ones who are used to modern video.

Irreverence

There are lots of mediums where we can be serious, video is a place to have fun.

Vulnerability

As audiences get more savvy, simple 'gloss' won't suffice. Show your human side.

If you have **one or more of these elements**, you have the ingredients for a film worth watching.





Part 2:

Video strategy, not just 'having video'.

Being pragmatic about buying reasons...

All marketers have the job to help 'sell' their brand - either in terms of instant results on a year-by-year basis or with a more long-term brand development and consolidation exercise in mind.

Let's be pragmatic, then, about the motivators of those to whom we're trying to sell. Buying reasons for Independent Schools fall into two distinct categories:

- 1. Simple and practical** - it's nearby, we can afford it, it offers 'x' that our child wants to do, we're on the bus route, a family member goes there, it's got better results than alternatives etc.
- 2. Emotional and aspirational** - it felt like home, it felt warm, we thought they'd thrive, it felt like a community, we want the best for their future, we liked the people we met, we were impressed with the young people the school produces etc.

Film is reasonable at the first category, but **perfect for the second.**



The building blocks of strategy.

With this recognition of the role that video can play - and its stronger suiting to emotional engagement - we can start to unpack what might be present in a well-rounded strategy.

Although this is simplistic, it is useful to consider film production in three 'tiers' (sorry, but it was my word first!). The mad flurry of 'gap-filling' activity has been around Tier 2, but as the dust settles we need to ensure our strategy is full and balanced.

Remember, 'more' is not automatically better - especially as, in schools, this can open huge cans of worms...!

Tier 1 - Front-line 'Brand' video,

designed to raise awareness and intrigue through creative distinctiveness. Invariably driven by one (or a combination) of three emotive factors - Vulnerability, Irreverence and Spectacle.

Tier 2 - Supporting 'Content' video,

designed to provide an entertaining 'information channel'. Invariably driven by combinations of testimony and authentic 'B-roll' that demonstrates breadth of activity, a sense of 'place' and human connection.

Tier 3 - User-Generated Content (UGC),

low/no cost production, often designed for social media, that takes the audience 'under the bonnet' of the organisation with added transparency. Often self-captured material handed to an agency for basic improvements.



Working with ‘restrictions’, however they may present.

There’s a lot more light at the end of this tunnel than there was, but two things are certain:

- **Disruption** is going to continue for at least the first quarter of next year, if not beyond.
- **Longer-term impacts** to attitudes and budgets may still be around the corner.

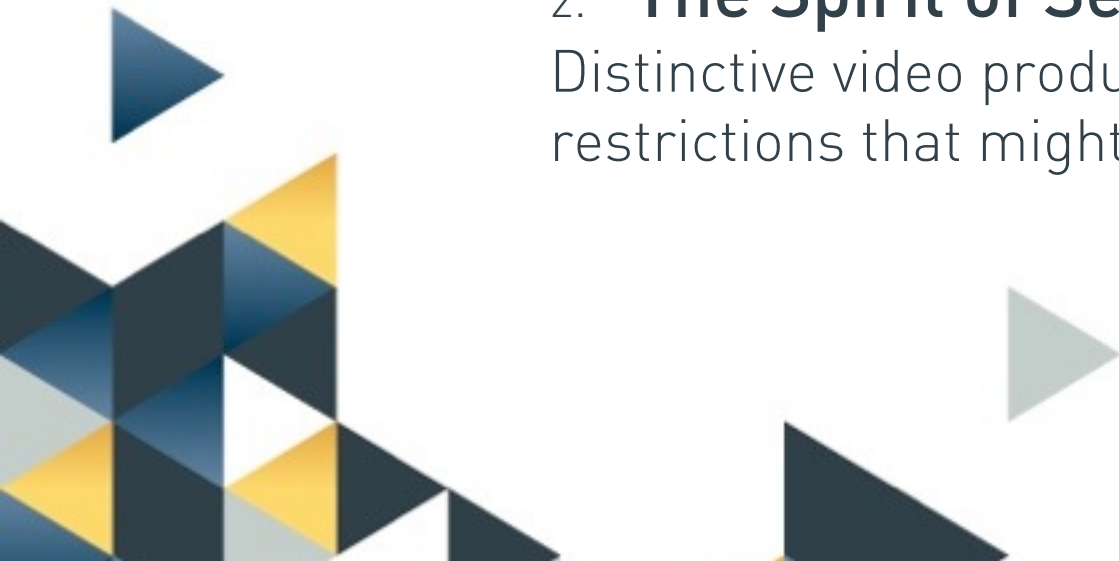
Let’s look to the **two ends of the spectrum**:

1. **“Ordinary to Opportunity”** for Reigate Grammar School

Distinctive video production when **budgets are tight and access/activity is restricted**

2. **“The Spirit of Sedbergh”** for Sedbergh School

Distinctive video production when **spend is available** and when we can plan our way around any restrictions that might remain.



"Spirit of Sedbergh"

Sedbergh School, Cumbria, UK



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The Spirit of Sedbergh

We are delighted to be able to share our School video, The Spirit of Sedbergh.

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The bit worth writing down...

1. The video market is saturated, and homogenous content is invisible content.
2. Always tell stories in context, and be honest about that context.
3. Vulnerability; Irreverence; Spectacle - make it worth watching.
4. Video needs coherent strategy for it to be effective in the long-run.





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Thank you. Any questions...?

If you'd like to troll me on Twitter, it's
@milesaffixius.

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