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## The Tools You Need for a Mustard Relationship

11th November 2011

### Creative Connections

PRODUCTION  
Mustard

PRODUCTION  
Tool

MANAGING DIRECTOR  
John Doris

MANAGING DIRECTOR  
Brian Latt



What do this year's Cannes  
Lions **Grand Prix** winners for  
**Film, Film Craft, Outdoor** and  
**Press** have in common?

Choosing a partner can be a risky business. Do they share the same values as you do? Do they want the same things? Are they committed? Will they do their share of the housework? These questions all have to be looked at but when the answer to all of them is 'yes' it can be a beautiful thing. The recent splicing of London's **Mustard Film Company** and US production house **Tool of North America** looks to be one of life's many successful partnerships and here John Doris and Brian Latt, the respective MDs of Mustard and Tool, give an insight into how they went about courting each other and why they eventually tied the knot.

#### What made you think now was a good time to partner with a company in the UK/US?

**John Doris:** We are always looking for opportunities to partner with companies in core shoot centres in commercial production. North America is, along with UK the epicentre of commercial production in terms of the best brands and creative opportunities. It gives both sets of directors an exposure to a vibrant market on opposite sides of the Atlantic and to work with new creatives, which in the long run, can only help their careers move forward for the experience.

**Brian Latt:** First, I officially deny all rumours that we're looking to start up a London-based news tabloid to rival Rupert Murdoch. What this is really about is that Tool has had some exciting changes over the past twelve months. Our directing roster has grown and is quite diverse, ranging from strong visual storytellers to comedy dialogue. The UK has produced some of the best ad campaigns, and with our strong growth in live action and digital, now is the perfect time for us to spread our wings and seek strong

creative opportunities out of the UK, Amsterdam and throughout Europe. We're really looking forward to working with an incredibly talented pool of agency creatives.

#### What's the process of making the decision of who to work with like?

**JD:** The process is long and hard – it's probably akin to finding a wife or long term partner! It is a major step to jump into bed with right company. We have talked to many companies over the years in trying to find the right fit and on so many occasions we've kind of flirted, danced with and even dated a few but never felt the inclination to make them the one.

**BL:** I'm gonna say our relationship is much closer to Brangelina than Kim & Kris. Looking for the right partner has taken a considerable amount of effort. There're a number of solid London-based shops, but finding the right fit with folks that get what Tool's about was incredibly difficult. To be frank, the search process took a lot of time. We weren't about to rush it ... it had to be right. With Mustard, we believe we've found a true partner. These guys are great, and we're super excited to be teaming up with them as "the one."

#### What's the most important aspect to keep in mind when choosing a partner?

**JD:** The most important aspect to bear in mind when choosing a partner is "Do they share our vision?" Are we like minded and on the same wavelength? Brian, Oliver, Matt and I had months' of dialogue and it was embarrassingly evident from the word go, that we shared exactly the same ethos in how we liked to operate as production companies. We couldn't have hand picked a better company to represent Mustard in the USA. It was as like an extension of Mustard were operating in the US market already, without us knowing it. There has to be an immediate attraction in terms of trust and respect and of course a creative appreciation of what is in the shop window and there was...so we decided to get down on one knee and make honest production companies of each other!

**BL:** Mustard understands Tool's vision and our culture. Our company has a 15+ year legacy, and we're very mindful about who we place our trust with. At the core of our live action and digital offerings is a roster of very talented directors that want to create amazing stories for brands. Both Mustard and Tool are well supported with dreamers and innovators and storytellers and artists and ... I could go on.

#### How will the partnership work?

**JD:** Tool will be custodians of the Mustard brand and roster in the USA and they will represent our guys in the North America. Likewise Mustard will be custodians of the Tool directors in our market in the UK. We are also focusing on Mustard Berlin and Mustard Amsterdam to which Tool will be an intrinsic part of this network extension. Mustard will also be concentrating heavily on Tool digital as well as conventional Broadcast directors. Tool have an extraordinary wealth of creative expertise and talent in the interactive/digital areas, Mustard will be exposing these talents and combining them with the Mustard digital domain. This is an area we are keen to build on Tool's brilliant reputation in the digital field throughout the UK and Europe.

**BL:** Is it wrong for us to say, 'ditto'? I really couldn't have said it any better, and it sounds better with a British accent.

#### What are the main benefits of partnership deals such as this?

**JD:** The main benefits of the partnership is to have an affiliation with a highly respected, creative company in the USA and to use their reputation and expertise in their market to help our director's grow and afford them opportunities in North America. This will be reciprocated in the UK by Mustard for the Tool directors. We will effectively become part of each other's family. Both companies will gain kudos by way of our association, as we have some great talent in terms of directors as well as highly respected producers to offer each other.

Hopefully we can procure exciting, award winning work in each other's market place. It is also such a value-able commodity to have the production expertise and knowledge in each other's market and our collaboration will help our networks and brands grow and flourish together.

**BL:** I'll speak to this specific partnership by adding that John and Matt [Hitchens] have created something really special in Mustard. In addition to their love for this business, they bring creative smarts, business savvy and great relationships that will shepherd our company into their market, where, I might add, the exchange rate is very favourable. Kidding aside, we're hopeful that their collective efforts will bring us new creative opportunities for our entire roster of folks.

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