

Happy, whatever.

Remember how they used to describe this business of ours as ‘the most fun you can have with your clothes on’?

Gloriously long lunches. Month-long overseas shoots. Copious, free drinks at the agency bar (back when such a thing existed) and lashings of self-congratulations all around.

Then again, you probably don’t.

Because, for the latest generation of marketing folk, such nostalgic banter is just that; nostalgia. At best, the stuff of legend, at worst, an annoying reminder that the ‘fine art of great advertising’ has quietly moved on to become ‘the business of smart marketing’.

And there’s nothing wrong with that, nothing wrong at all. It just means that, well, to be brutally honest, we laugh less than we used to, smile less than we should, and beat ourselves up a lot more than is medically advisable.

Admittedly, within our infamous industry blogs, we have succeeded in creating the perfect tool for reminding us all of the perils of over-reaching creatively. Some might say they perform a vital service in keeping us honest. But since the people saying it are invariably anonymous, ‘honesty’ may not be the best description for their covert talents.

What we do lack, perhaps, is a place where we can celebrate what it is we actually do: conjure up, produce and ultimately defend these strange, fragile things called ‘ideas’.

After all, it does take a rare breed of courage to fight for ideas.

When they’re young, wobbly and unformed, they can’t defend themselves, and depend on us

to stand up for them – an increasing challenge in these increasingly brutal times.

The simple truth is, we do it because we have to (actually, to be precise, because it’s what we’re paid to do). But we also do it because we love the idea of what those fragile thoughts could potentially become, if just given the chance to grow. We dream, albeit surreptitiously, of making something brilliant, captivating and, yes, even enduring.

It’s one of the few guilty pleasures left to us.

So assuming that as you’re still reading you must be part of this idea-thinking, idea-making, idea-buying business, then isn’t it fitting we take pause after a long, gruelling year, and give ourselves a pat on our collective back?

Not just some of us, but all of us.

From the big agencies that have battled all year with the pressures of keeping big ships afloat; to the upstart start-ups that have scratched and clawed for twelve months to get a foot on a rung.

From junior creatives, to senior clients (and everyone in between). Hot, cold, big or small, advertising in 2010 was not for the timid, and there’s little evidence it will be any easier when we all return after the break.

So, let us concede at least one resolution for the New Year: for god’s sake, let’s have more fun.

Yes, with our clothes on.

At least, partially.

Happy 2011.

From Droga5.