

TALENT

UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF SUCCESS

2 MINS

ACTION HEROES

Rupert Rixon and his team of young filmmakers are getting brands noticed on social media

All niche interests are catered for on YouTube. Want to watch a woman silently eat a box of chocolates for three minutes? Or how about a soundtracked montage of all the goals scored by your football club in 1979? Even more niche, what about a group of teenagers spoofing a shoot-em-up action movie armed only with nerf guns?

As far as that last one goes, a nerf gun, if you didn't know it, is a brightly coloured toy that fires foam projectiles. And the man behind the camera of *Nerf War: The Ambush* – an innocuous little YouTube video with an impressive 3.5 million views – is Rupert Rixon, the now-23-year-old founder and MD of Perspective Pictures. Seven years on from his filmmaking debut, Rixon has created a video production company, making social media shorts for brands including Rolls-Royce, Google, Sony, Red Bull, HSBC and the RAF.

"A lot of brands post their TV ads on social platforms and wonder why they don't perform well," explains Rixon. "But, of course, if someone spots a traditional ad while they're scrolling down their Facebook or Instagram feed, they don't stop to watch." Perspective Pictures offers an alternative. The films it makes are topical, engaging, not overproduced and turned around in double-quick time. "It's important for brands to be able to join the conversation, then and there," says Rixon.

But back to the nerf guns. At age 16, after convincing his mum to invest in nerf guns to rent out at children's parties and events, Rixon marketed the business by making action videos that replaced realistic replica weapons with nerf guns. It didn't take long for Rixon to realise that he enjoyed making the videos more than nerf gun rental, so when he left school a couple of years later, he decided to make his name as a documentary filmmaker – recording his journey longboarding across America. Along the way he found a sponsor, who became his first brand client when he got back to the UK.

Since then, Perspective Pictures has grown apace. Rixon is particularly proud of the work they've done with the RAF to get young people excited about STEM subjects. "Our camera operators went up in acrobatic planes to film in zero-G, and got some amazing results," he says. Another project, for a car insurance company, involved strapping 360° VR cameras to a car for a drive along the world's most dangerous road in Bolivia. Often clients don't give the team a detailed brief. "Instead, they come to us with a problem they think could be solved with digital video. The RAF basically told us and a partner agency, 'Here's the challenge – go and make us something cool.'"

And Perspective Pictures is all about the cool. The average age of the team is 23.13 – at first the result of Rixon hiring his friends, and now a more conscious decision. "Youth culture has changed so rapidly in the last ten years," he says. "We're able to help these brands reach out to young people with the sort of content they want to watch."

Of course, being young also comes with challenges. "When I first started pitching, I was also fighting self-doubt. Am I really the right person for this? Is what I'm doing any good?" But with time (and a strong client base) his confidence has increased. "There comes a point when you think, yes, we're doing OK. After all, people don't pay you out of politeness."

Yet the team continues to learn and develop. "We want to be at the cutting edge online, so we're always looking out for what's next," says Rixon. He predicts that the future of digital video is ever more personalised. "Consumers want something that speaks to them directly. Nobody's excited about a £20m advert any more – unless the idea is really cool." ■

"We've realised we're doing OK. After all, people don't pay you out of politeness"

Interview by Hannah Hudson. Photograph by Jamie Lau. Visit perspectivepicturesfilms.com



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