



The Road To Oscar  
Agency of the Year  
Year in Perspective  
Year's Most Notable Work  
Top 10 Charts  
Chat Room

# SHOOT®

## The Best of 2014

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December 2014



From the December 12, 2014 Issue

The following article has been distributed to more than 40,000 commercial and entertainment industry decision-makers across SHOOT's digital and print platforms. We thought it would be of interest to you

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# Lessons From *Boyhood*



In this week's installment of our The Road To Oscar series, director/writer Richard Linklater reflects on *Boyhood*, his lauded feature which takes us through 12 years of a boy's life. The fictional story follows Mason (portrayed by Ellar Coltrane) from age six through to his send-off to college at 18. Linklater made *Boyhood* over those dozen years, maintaining the same cast throughout and reuniting them every year or so to shoot scenes. Thus we see Mason and his parents grow and evolve before our eyes.

The spirit of that remarkable film and its depiction of a lad's progression into young adulthood reflect some of the dynamics which led SHOOT to select BBDO New York as its Agency of the Year. First, there's a parallel between *Boyhood* and a particularly inspiring piece of agency work, Autism Speaks' "Lifetime of Difference." Directed by Christian Loubek of Anonymous Content, the :60 PSA is actually made up of four, stand-alone short :15 commercials woven together in one seamless story that features the same fam-

ily as they take a journey through their child's upbringing, having coped successfully with the challenges of autism. It begins with a family visit to a pediatrician in which a Johnson & Johnson Band-Aid is applied, and then is followed by short commercials for Campbell Soup Company and AT&T Wireless. As viewers watch the commercials, they will notice changes in the four-to-six-year span between each advertiser's spot. The same parents appear in each commercial as the young

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**BBDO NY Comes Of Age; Insights Into The Agency's Creative Culture, How It Evolved And The Work It Spawned In 2014**

**By Robert Goldrich**

**From top left, clockwise:** Autism Speaks' "Lifetime of Difference"; Guinness' "Empty Chair"; Lowe's "Ring of Fire"; FedEx's "Skyscraper"; Footlocker's "Horse With Harden"; BBDO NY CCO Greg Hahn; Bud Light's "Epic Night/Up For Whatever."

## Congratulations BBDO NY

from all of us at **O POSITIVE**

# AGENCY OF THE YEAR

## ***Speaking Volumes To Help Those With Autism; Mining The***

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boy grows up, interacting with his family in everyday situations involving these clients' products. The last story shows the heroic young man in graduation attire as copy reads, "You just saw how early diagnosis can make a lifetime of difference. Watch again or learn the signs at [www.autismspeaks.org/signs](http://www.autismspeaks.org/signs)."

"It broke the mold of how you would typically convey that message," said Greg Hahn, chief creative officer of BBDO New York. "We had three really big brands come together—which is hard to pull off. The agency, though, had a vision. We knew we wanted this to happen so we made it happen, connecting with the top person at each client to get the go-ahead. We pulled them together and they came together for the greater good. I think it reflects how a big agency like BBDO can be nimble—we did this for a big, ambitious project but you also need that same nimbleness for the many quick turnaround pieces of communication required across all the different platforms."

Like Mason in *Boyhood*, BBDO NY has evolved in recent years. While on the surface it might seem incongruous for a storied, firmly established agency to mature, that's what has happened as BBDO has come of age or more accurately come of digital age. "This is a very different place than when I first got here [in 2005] as executive creative director," said Hahn, who was elevated to chief creative director of BBDO New York in late 2013. "I joined during David Lubar's first year at BBDO. He was chief creative officer [North American] and we were still in transition from

a TV-heavy production shop to a place where skillsets were being developed to take on all kinds of media. We were also very segmented and layered before David got here. He helped bring down the walls separating people. We brought down barriers and got out of the way. In an era where you can't afford to be bloated and overloaded, we adopted the attitude of let's go make stuff, let's find ways to do what we need to do without a massive budget. When I came here originally, every shoot seemed like it was \$2 million. That rarely happens anymore. Once in a while we have spectacular big event type pieces with very healthy budgets. But otherwise we have to crank out daily, working within time and budget constraints. We have a social studio with a team of people responding immediately to what's in the marketplace, bringing brands into relevant conversations, helping to shape and define those brands."

### **"Naivete and ignorance"**

Though a veteran of BBDO, Hahn brought a newness to the shop in 2014, his first full year as BBDO NY's chief creative officer. That newness has in turn helped the agency to grow creatively, part of the maturation that took hold this year. "One of the first things I did when I became CCO was switch around several of the creative teams to spark some fresh thinking. My

philosophy was to bring the gift of naivete and ignorance," Hahn explained. "If you've been working on an account too long, you become your own worst self-censoring enemy. But if you don't have it in your head that the client isn't going to buy this or that, you may move forward on something new and risk taking that they ultimately will buy. It opens up new opportunities."

For example, as executive creative director, Hahn worked with Mike Sweeney and Molly Adler on such accounts as AT&T, HBO and FedEx. Hahn thought the duo of Mike & Molly, serving as creative directors, could bring something different to Lowe's home improvement stores. Their Vines 2.0 initiative providing light, fun yet helpful home improvement tips in six second videos to do-it-yourselfers (#FixInSix Vines) has put a new face on Lowe's, lending a personal accessibility and more approachable persona to a brand at one time associated with impersonal cavernous warehouse-like stores. The most recent new wrinkle came with daily holiday Vines for 12 days leading up to Black Friday. Each Vine promoted a product at a Black Friday special price.

For example, a fire safe is featured on one Vine, offering protection to family valuables from fire, flood or other natural disasters. The depiction of the safe, though, is a bit fanciful as we see the product jump like a

circus tiger through a flaming hoop. Several of these Black Friday Vines had approached some 2 million online hits at press time.

Short Vines are exhibiting long-term reach, a simple production that is a sharp contrast executionally to Lowe's mainstream spot work sponsoring Thursday Night Football. This juxtaposition of bigger ticket traditional production with more modest executions and everything in-between is a BBDO norm, said Hahn, noting that the agency has to be adept across a wide range of work, all sharing the bond of creative and strategic relevance. For Guinness, two emotionally moving spots exemplified this in 2014. One on hand, there's "Empty Chair," a piece rich in production value depicting a glass of Guinness placed each day at a table in a pub, next to an empty chair, symbolizing a community waiting for its favorite son serviceman to return home. Exhibiting the fine directorial touch of Noam Murro from Biscuit Filmworks, "Empty Chair" tugs at the heartstrings, culminating in the young man's homecoming.

Also poignantly moving is a largely agency in-house effort for Guinness, "Barnes Sisters," featuring images that tell the story of twin sisters who are athletes and the sacrifice one makes so that the other can go to the Olympics.

"One is a gigantic broadcast spot with emotional appeal. The other [Barnes Sisters] we executed quickly but it too resonated with viewers except in an online window. Both were effective," assessed David Rolfe, director of integrated production at BBDO NY, who takes issue with part of his agency title. "Rather than integrated production, I think we've ma-



**David Rolfe**

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# AGENCY OF THE YEAR

## "Imagination" For GE; Swinging On Vines For Lowe's

tured here to where we are involved in 'infinite production,' which I define as anything that can be done in any amount of time. It can take hours, days, weeks or months—but all of high quality. It takes having on one hand great relationships with vendors and partners we've used for years and years—as well as collaborators who are brand new to us. On the other hand, we have built our own capabilities to make things ourselves. For Footlocker we did 'Horse with Harden' ourselves because of the quick turnaround. It was a nimble production that needed smarts.

The alluded to Harden is NBA superstar James Harden. Playing a game of H-O-R-S-E is a perennial basketball favorite—except this time the playground was on the Internet with Harden taking on all challengers. Fans were invited to put together short videos of themselves shooting crazy and creative shots. These entries were submitted through Twitter and Instagram to @footlocker with #horsewithharden. Then, on October 1, the best shots were re-created by Harden and tweeted back out through Foot Locker's Twitter feed. Fans of @footlocker could watch the event unfold online over the course of several hours.

In the end, James proved victorious by beating all comers on the Internet two games to one. The technical accomplishment was conceived, produced, digitized and executed by BBDO.

From digital fare for Footlocker and FixInSix Vines for Lowe's to bite-sized content such as Mountain Dew's "Miniseries" and Twix Bites #TBT, BBDO—the perennial big time Super Bowl agency—



GE's "The Boy Who Beeps"

has diversified its lot creatively and executionally. "We didn't know two years ago that something like Lowe's Vines could be transcendent, promote a brand and a playfulness that underscores the different ways in which people are watching content and experiencing things differently," related Rolfe. "That's why it behooves us to be open, nimble and responsive.

"We hit our stride this year," continued Rolfe. "We've made a push to be more versatile and responsive the past couple of years which is part of the reason I was brought over here. Ideas are the inspiration but production can be the engine. If you have a well-tuned, high-performance engine, it has a reciprocal relationship with the inspirational factor. If you have a resource like this production department that can make anything possible, it fuels your creatives to freely imagine anything. Our production culture is that we are going to solve anything that hits our plates. My job is to help set up the necessary teamwork within and with outside partners. The only way to achieve 'infinite production' is through a different type of teamwork. A junior producer may have an expertise that our senior

producers don't have so they come together. We have tech experts, digital producers who are adept at integrated work, experts in social media, Vines, Instagram. We have brought in some new thinkers. But at the same time many of our mainstay producers have expanded their skillsets and improved dramatically across all platforms—they have evolved personally and professionally."

### Mainstream fare

Still there's the constant of BBDO's savvy in high-profile, ambitious production fare, which kicked off 2014 in the form of Bud Light's "Up For Whatever" campaign—a broad canvas which included a Super Bowl spot, multiple films and a dynamic online initiative following the exploits of Ian Rappaport as he finds himself spending an evening where anything could happen. "It was experiential beyond the scope of anything we've seen. The largest production deployment I've ever seen," shared Rolfe whose partners on the work included director Jeff Tremaine and production company HeLo.

Then there's a series of GE shorts from BBDO NY in 2014, including *The Boy Who Beeps*, *Ideas*, *Enhance Your Lighting*, and

*Childlike Imagination*. The latter, directed by Dante Ariola of MJZ, earned a primetime Emmy nomination this year, depicting a girl dreaming about the amazing things her mom makes as a GE employee. This piece underscores how GE is stretching the limits of human imagination to create brilliant machines which positively impact society.

John Leverence, sr. VP of awards for the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, said of Emmy nominee *Childlike Imagination*, "GE could have simply said they make smart turbines, aircraft engines, mobile medical devices, 3D printers, eco-friendly innovations. But they added something magical by depicting that roster of products as seen through a child's eyes. With dream-like images and wonderful music, they've shifted from the literal into the realm of the fantastic. This isn't just about stuff made at GE but how this stuff is perceived in a child's imagination. All of a sudden, you have a total that becomes greater than the sum of its parts. This is a very charming, highly imaginative, beautifully rendered film driven by a tone of wonder, which is so hard to do."

Also making a major impact was *Ideas* directed by Biscuit's Murro. The short captures the birth of an idea—which is in the form of an odd looking, initially ostracized creature. Rejected everywhere, this idea finally stumbles into GE's offices where it is nurtured, realizes its full beauty and potential, and gains the proper credit it deserves. The film is intended to resonate with recent college graduates thinking about their careers—an audience GE is hoping to reach with this message. The film was posted across all of

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## CONGRATULATIONS TO BBDO NEW YORK

SHOOT AD AGENCY OF THE YEAR 2014

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COMPANY 3

+ METHOD STUDIOS

# AGENCY OF THE YEAR

## Fashioning A Culture Conducive To Creativity, Risk Taking

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GE's social channels from Facebook and Twitter to LinkedIn, Tumblr and others.

*The Boy Who Beeps*, directed by Lance Acord of Park Pictures, follows the story of a curious boy who makes an electronic beep sound, in lieu of traditional language. As the child grows up, he discovers that he can talk with machines, which makes them work better. As the copy states, "When you speak the language of industry, the conversation can change the world." This short affirms that "GE speaks the language of industry," and the focus is on GE software-software that connects machines at an industrial scale with the potential to change the way industry works, change people's lives, and even change the world.

*And Enhance Your Lighting*, produced by PRETTYBIRD and directed by Tim Heidecker and Eric Wareheim, a.k.a. Tim & Eric of *Adult Swim* fame, stars Jeff Goldblum. This tongue-in-cheek infomercial style piece introduces the cutting-edge GE link connected LED bulb which can last some

22 years. Goldblum plays an over-the-top celebrity type who owes all of his success to great lighting—the GE Link bulb that enables anyone to remotely control their lighting from anywhere, anytime using just a smartphone and the Wink hub and app. The infomercial touts the many benefits of the GE Link bulb, including its affordability, easy installation and seamless controls from the Wink app, and of course—the beautiful lighting it surrounds you with. In the words of Goldblum's character, "Now you can kiss your horribly-lit, non-successful life, goodbye!"

Kirsten Flanik, managing director of BBDO NY, said that key to the agency's success has been "clients who embrace creativity," a commitment which makes it "easier for us to take risks and seek out partnerships." In the case of GE, she noted that *Ideas* was piggybacked onto another job and that *Enhance Your Lighting* represented "a different approach from other GE advertising this year." She added, "We must be unexpected and create the flexibility

needed to mean different things to different audiences. It's how GE can create meaningful TV work about the value of nurturing ideas, or the power of technology to unite us—while telling a whimsical story about the life of a GE engineer as seen through her daughter or while selling the lightbulbs on YouTube with the help of Jeff Goldblum and a funny wig."

Another longstanding BBDO NY client, FedEx, also made its mark in 2014, continuing in the comedic vein with "Skyscraper" directed by Jim Jenkins of O Positive. In the spot, a would-be top banana executive talks about his corporate vision. Seated at his desk, he has behind him through the window a view of a sweeping cityscape replete with skyscrapers. However, this backdrop undergoes an unexpected transformation thanks to the man's wife, offering a humorous take on this captain of industry's stature. Still, he's smart enough to take advantage of FedEx's simple flat rate shipping option for Express packages.



David Lubars

together to strip away the layers you have to go through to get an idea out the door. We try to operate the agency like a global boutique—a shop with size and scope yet being able to work fast and responsively like a smaller boutique."

To further spark creativity, Hahn said that "every once in a while we initiate an open brief. We will have a brief that goes out to the entire agency so we can get creative input from all over."

Lubars noted that he wanted Hahn to become CCO of BBDO NY some time ago. But Hahn was reluctant for fear that such a promotion would further remove him from the work. "I had to convince him that he wouldn't be promoted out of making things," recalled Lubars. "I'm fortunate to be able to work with him. We have complementary skills and similar tastes. When I first met him at Fallon, it was clear to me that he is a brilliant creative person. And we share the same philosophy, although it sounds cliché and 'jargony'—simply put, the bigger we get [with new account wins over the past year such as CVS/Caremark, SAP and American Family Insurance], the smaller we act. The boutique approach is what lends itself to being quick and responsive, which is absolutely essential in today's marketplace."

Sweeney affirmed that "it all starts at the top. We feel the strength of David and Greg behind us, giving us freedom and the opportunity to take risks, to try new things creatively. We feel their support."

Adler concurred, saying, "They help us figure things out if we need help. They really care and have worked to make it a total team effort. Another key to the success here is that we work very well with the account side. It's not us versus them. It's more an orientation of how can we come together to do the best possible work."

John Osborn, president/CEO of BBDO NY, said that 2014 has been a year when "the gears we put into place started to mesh and work together as one. We saw the benefits of diversifying our talent pool—making a conscious effort to bring in more people from more places, people with different backgrounds. People who are strategists, data-minded individuals, people who come to the table with connections in the social world, experiential producers who work alongside digital, content and other producers we have. That level of diversity is needed to make the whole effectively work together...This in turn lends itself to a diversity of work, ranging from six-second Vines to crafted

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### Creative culture

Hahn noted that Lubars frees him to focus on the creative work. The two previously worked together at Fallon Minneapolis, meaning that they've collaborated for some 16 years and counting.

"He totally gets me," said Hahn of Lubars who is now worldwide chief creative officer of BBDO and chairman of BBDO North America. "We don't have to constantly double check with each other. He has skills I don't have. His focus is big picture, management, clients and creative tone. I don't have to do the traveling, flying all over, doing all the meetings. Typically you get elevated in this business to the point where you're not doing the creative work anymore. I don't want that to happen to me. David allows me to stay involved meaningfully in the creative. I like to be more hands on, really get deeply into the work. My challenge is to make the work as good as it can be, to push people at the right time. David and I work

**bulletin board**

January 2-12/Palm Springs, CA: Palm Springs Intl Film Fest  
<http://www.psfilmfest.org>

January 6-9/Las Vegas, NV: International CES  
<http://www.cesweb.org>

January 11/Los Angeles, CA: Golden Globe Awards  
<http://www.goldenglobes.org>

January 15/Los Angeles, CA: Critics Choice Movie Awards  
<http://www.criticschoice.com/movie-awards>

January 20-22/Miami Beach, FL: NATPE  
<http://www.natpe.com>

January 22-February 1/Park City, UT: Sundance Film Festival  
<https://www.sundance.org/festival/attend>

January 23-29/Park City, UT: Slamdance Film Festival  
<http://showcase.slamdance.com/Film-Festival>

January 30 /Hollywood, CA: ACE Eddie Awards  
<http://ace-filmeditors.org/ace-eddie-awards>

January 31/Hollywood, CA: ADG "Excellence in Production Design" Awards. <http://www.adg.org>

February 1/Phoenix, AZ: Super Bowl XLIX. <http://azsuperbowl.com>

# AGENCY OF THE YEAR

## Collaborative/Self-Sufficient

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long-format content on varied channels and platforms. Plus we still have clients who like and need TV—this is an ‘and’ game, not an ‘or’ game. All these different platforms and forms of content are viable and can integrate with one another.”

Osborn observed that in recent years, BBDO NY has become “a lot flatter as an organization, much less hierarchical. We are all more interdependent. We’ve learned to run lean and efficiently, to be nimble and scrappy as an agency. We still have assignments requiring strategic rigor, that take time to analyze dynamics that eventually lead to the creative briefs. On the flip side, we have assignments that need to be



**John Osborn**

turned around in a matter of hours. We turn around work on a dime. We have learned to work both ways.”

Being part of a global network which is creatively progressive also has its benefits. At the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity this year, BBDO finished second in the Network of the Year derby. And

in Cannes’ inaugural Regional Network of the Year competition, BBDO won in North America. “We can share and move talent around the network fast,” said Osborn. “Our GE work is on a global platform. Our network is interconnected on that, sharing stories, mining ideas. Snickers is another good example because the client has a global strategy rooted in ‘you’re not you when you’re hungry.’ It’s a global insight. Several of the brands globally are led out of New York. We have a very fluid system where strategically we’re aligned and executionally completely connected in making sure that the way we tell the brand story is consistent yet locally relevant around the world.”

As for what he’s learned from 2014 relative to BBDO NY, Osborn shared, “It’s our tagline for Lowe’s: ‘Never stop improving.’ That’s a rally cry and theme that define our spirit. No matter how the agency has hit its stride and adapted in recent years, there’s a constant that remains. The maniacal focus on the work hasn’t changed. It’s a relentless culture. To borrow a phrase from David Lubars, we’re ‘constantly stirring the batter’ to be relevant and fresh to the audience.”

Osborn added that BBDO NY has evolved to embrace “two contrasting thoughts” which upon closer scrutiny are complementary. “On one hand, we’re more self-sufficient than ever in that we make stories come to life through our digital studio, social studio and our video content studio. At the same time, we need to embrace collaboration, working closely with partners and talented outside vendors. We are in a world that requires us to be more self-sufficient and collaborative than ever.”

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# street talk

Director Damien Drake has joined creative digital studio Click 3X. The director, cinematographer and producer has traveled the world shooting documentaries, commercials, TV shows, music videos and branded content. In 2012 and into 2013, Drake directed more than 30 videos in over half a dozen countries for Procter & Gamble’s “Everyday Effect” campaign, which included what became high-profile commercials featuring elderly couple Morty and Lee Kaufman. Drake began his career as a producer at VH1 Classic, where he conducted hundreds of interviews with legends such as Elton John, REM and The Clash. In 2004, he founded East Pleasant Pictures and produced entertainment content for Sprint’s new digital account with music superstars Akon, Rihanna and Amy

Winehouse. In 2009, producer Fisher Stevens recruited Drake to shoot over 100 days in Africa for a project documenting Dr Amy Lehman and the Lake Tanganyika Floating Health Clinic. Drake went on to shoot Stevens’ subsequent docs, *Mission Blue* and *My Decisions....* Venice, Calif.-based Slim Pictures has signed the directing team of Peter Goeltenborth & Florian Giefer, a.k.a. Pet & Flo. Known for its blend of unique in-camera effects and stop motion visuals, the Berlin-based duo handles all directorial duties equally, from the casting to art direction to operating the stop motion rigs. Beyond stop motion, Pet & Flo’s expertise includes working with front-screen projections, miniature puppets, hand-cut animations, time-lapse techniques, Rube Goldberg machines, and so on. Their credits include such brands as Olympus, BMW, and Coca Cola.... Still photographer/director Anthony Dias has signed with Square Planet Media for both commercial and digital advertising assignments. It marks the first time that Dias has been represented as a director in addition to his work as a still photographer. He joins directors Toshi Oku, Francis Dreis, John M and Chris Weinstein at Square Planet...

# repo report

Production designer Todd Fjelsted, whose credits include the HBO series *Looking* and the Gregg Araki-directed feature *White Bird In A Blizzard*, has signed with Dattner Dispoto and Associates for representation. Also at Dattner Dispoto, DP Maryse Alberti has been booked for the Ryan Coogler-directed *Creed*, DP Bojan Bazelli, ASC, for Pete’s Dragon directed by David Lowery, and DP Florian Sadler for the Santiago Rizzo-directed *Quest*. New bookings for Dattner Dispoto costume designers include Paco Delgado securing director Tom Hooper’s *The Danish Girl*, Meghan Kasperlik tabbed for the Lee Kirk-helmed *Geezer*, and Kameron Lennox landing director Matt Ross’ *Frank and Lola*.... Carlos Arambula has joined R&R Partners in the new position of VP of Hispanic marketing. Based in the firm’s L.A. office, he will provide leadership and insight to the firm’s nine offices, especially R&R’s new office in Mexico City. Prior to joining R&R, he served as partner/VP marketing & business development, MarcasUSA LLC, a Pan-American OTC pharmaceutical import/distribution company based in El Segundo, Calif., which he also co-founded. Also during this period, he ran his own consulting firm, Arambula-Phillips Communications, serving as managing partner/lead marketing strategist, introducing and establishing foreign brands. Arambula brings deep experience in marketing to Latin American and the domestic Hispanic consumer markets, working on brands such as Toyota, Mars, Unilever, Hormel, ConAgra, and Nestle. Past affiliations include Saatchi, Grey, WPP, and Publicis.... Greg Holland has become worldwide VP of sales for Digital Vision, a supplier of color grading, restoration and film scanning solutions for the broadcast, film, commercial and archive industries. Holland is part of a company management team which acquired Digital Vision from Image Systems....