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# Advertising Week: 5 things to take away from Josh Krichefski's session with Abi Morgan

AD WEEK PASSION PEOPLE

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Advertising Week Europe took place last week and MediaCom put on a series of lively, informative sessions tackling some of the biggest topics in the industry. First up was storytelling.

Abi Morgan, award winning screenwriter of *Suffragette*, *The Iron Lady*, *Shame* and more, joined CEO Josh Krichefski for a discussion on storytelling techniques in film and television. It was a riveting session for anyone with an interest in how we tell stories of all shapes and sizes.

For those that missed it (or for those that just want a recap) we've gathered together some of Abi's best observations from the session. We've also offered some thoughts on how these techniques can help us tell better stories in advertising, and how we can pitch our ideas more effectively...

**There are lots of good ideas, but there are less good executions of ideas**

When asked about story archetypes and originality, Abi stressed the importance of doing the simple things well and building on past successes to create something new. We're sometimes seduced by new technology and 'media firsts' in our industry, but the best work often comes from simple ideas combined in a new way and executed with a high degree of polish.

**You don't interrogate success, but when people say 'you're \*\*\*\*' you say 'OK, why?'**

Abi is refreshingly open when it comes to criticism and discussing failure. Everything from previous scripts to failed pitches comes in for close examination to ensure that her work is constantly improving. There's a tendency to brush failures under the carpet in advertising, but interrogating failures can be as valuable as revelling in successes.

**Most of what I do is being brutally open to change**

As a screenwriter, Abi receives input from all kinds of sources; from directors to financiers to producers. As a result, she talks about a script being a "live" thing; something that's constantly in flux up to the moment it's filmed. When dealing with clients, partners and even colleagues, we have to be similarly open to telling stories collaboratively.

**Use people in the room to inform your pitch**

One of the benefits of an idea being a live thing is that you can adapt it on the fly to suit the people you're trying to sell it to. Abi discussed reading the room when pitching an idea,

seeing what people latch onto and modifying her approach to suit her audience. It's important to stay on your toes when you're pitching an idea and re-calibrate accordingly.

People ask me 'do you write the words actors say?' I tell them I write the words they don't say"

Show don't tell" is one of the first rules of visual storytelling and it's a hallmark of Abi's work on stage and screen. "You're looking for communal images that will inspire and not alienate" she says, and discussed the importance of finding one of these images as a "way in" to the story. In an industry where time is limited and image is everything, it's a powerful way of thinking about stories.

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