

// You Are Now A Virtual Agency



Photo Kai Diaz Self Portrait

"I offered Richard the service of my Free Lances ... thanks to the bustling times, a man of action will always find employment." —From Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*.

That line from *Ivanhoe* is the first known use of the term "freelance." Although the original context involved mercenaries, the meaning is largely the same today: a pen, camera, editing software, or lance—and the person who wields it; available for hire as a free agent. The Romans called their swords-for-hire *stipendiarii*. They got paid a stipend. Sweet gig.

In writing and photography especially, freelancing is an old game. And the system worked well enough. Before the age of productions that spanned mediums, a client might have only needed one scribe and one shooter for a job. The bigger productions went through agencies with creatives on staff or a thick rolodex.

The problem with that dynamic today, is that individual freelancers, and even small agencies, never see the requests for proposals that clients cast like nets into the agency market. The good news is that the status quo is changing.

Last month we used this space to discuss how Hence lets freelancers form packs to chase more ambitious projects. Now that so many strategists and project leads have also gone freelance, we wrote, it's easy to put a virtual agency together. At least, it's easy on Hence.

Hence, though, it's important to note, is not a virtual agency in itself. Hence is an enabler of all virtual agencies—the ones that members form organically by building teams in the Roster to chase those ambitious projects.

That's the essence of the new Creative Business Ecosystem we keep mentioning. As that ecosystem grows to include clients, it will evolve into a project marketplace where RFPs are floated in front of leaner and more nimble virtual agencies. In other words, freelancers can now run the creative game, because that game has been democratized.

In this new world, to paraphrase Sir Walter, "thanks to the bustling times, creatives of action will always find employment." —Marc Peruzzi

// How To Pitch REI's Co-op Studios

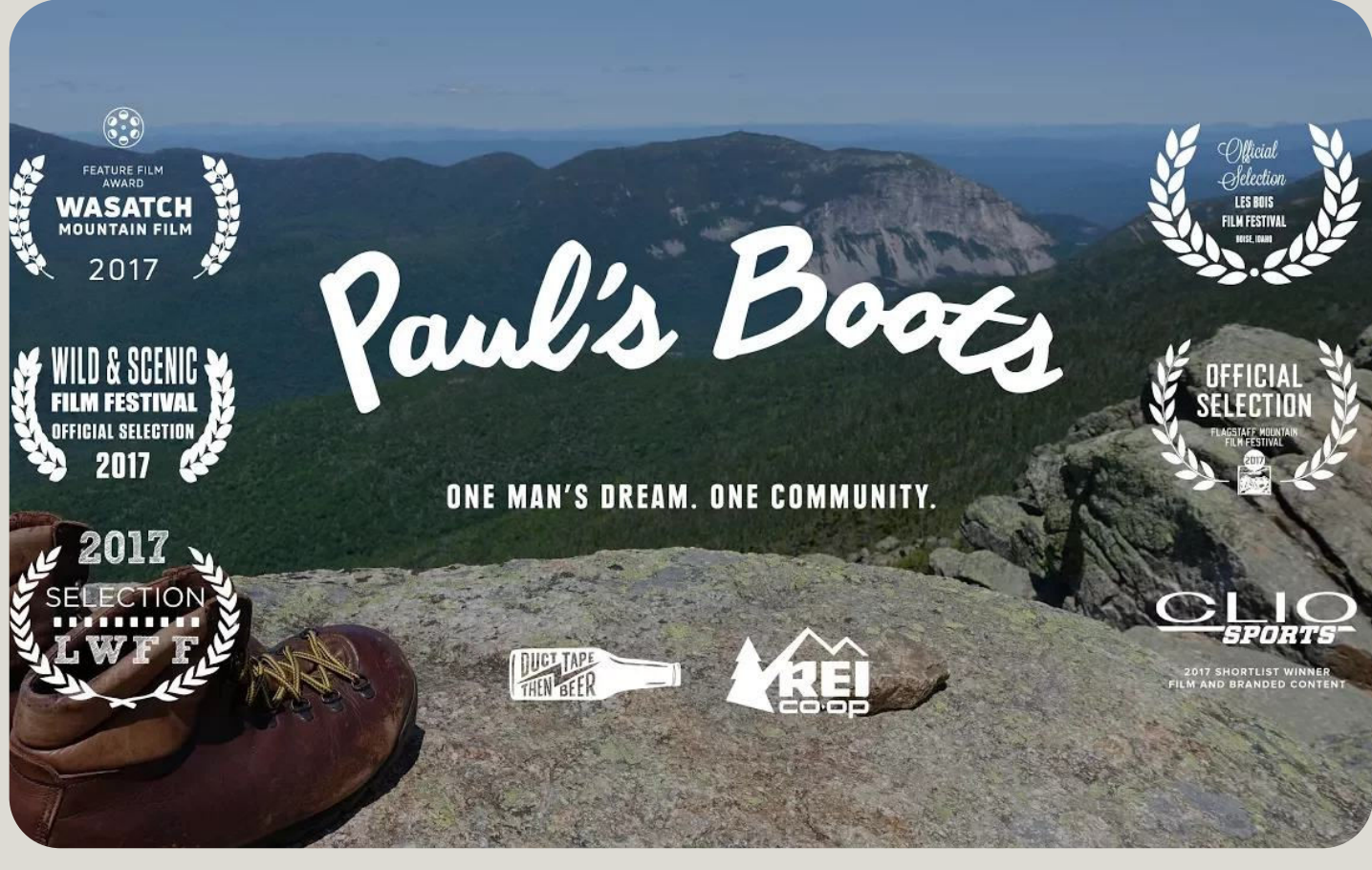


Photo REI

We interviewed REI's VP of Brand Marketing. Here's what Co-op Studios wants.

"At Co-op Studios we've got staff that comes from traditional media as well as from the brand side. What really drives our entire team is that we're curious about innovating how people see stories, who sees them, and the sources those stories are built upon." Read more from REI VP Paolo Mattola [here](#).



New Feature Dropping: You can now further differentiate yourself on our Roster page with a 50-character freehand description of what you do. Go to the introduction section of your profile editor and click our new "descriptor" feature.

// Meet a Creative

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Kai Diaz is a self-described "multidisciplinary design and photo nerd." His day job, at Kai Diaz Creative, includes brand design, strategy, content creation, graphic design, copywriting, website design, art, and photography.



Photo Mario Ordoñez-Calderón Courtesy Kai Diaz

// Meet an Athlete

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Kassia Meador's communication with the ocean has been the keystone of a professional surf career that has spanned more than 20 years, impacting countless other professionals and amateurs alike.



Photo Ezequiel Rivero Courtesy Kassia Meador

// New in Hence Journal

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Trade Secrets: To Get The Shot, Keep Chipping Away.

"One of the beauties about having a portable system instead of old-school large format gear," says Lee Cohen, "is being able to keep moving and chipping away. Not every shot is going to be a winner, but the method leads to success." [Read on.](#)



Trade Secrets: In Business, Trust Your Gut.

"I'm surfing better than ever. And I'm fired up," says the professional surfer and surf wear company founder Kassia Meador. You have to meander your way around from time to time to come back to what you love with a fresh perspective." [Read on.](#)

MORE FROM THE BROADER CREATIVE WORLD

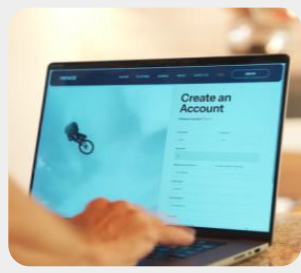
What We're Reading Now

Millions of Views, Zero Podiums. Pat Crawford of the *Zero Draft* substack on how the new generation of outdoor creators on YouTube looks nothing like what we've seen before: "YouTube will continue to reward a different profile of creator. Certainly, the next generation of sponsored athletes will be better represented on YouTube, but in the future, many of the most influential people in outdoors will be YouTube creators first, athletes second." In other words: Athletes need to learn how to excel in the medium. (*Zero Draft*)

The Reports of Radio's Death Were Greatly Exaggerated. Daniel Parris of the *Stat Significant* substack gives us the by-the-numbers report on why radio is still kicking. Also this: "Radio has remained relevant through its connection to place—in both form and function. You can leave your house, get in your car, turn on your favorite AM/FM radio station, learn about local news and gatherings from someone in your city, and it's all free. A disc jockey can even inform you of a regional traffic jam you're currently sitting in—which is hyperlocal coverage at its best." (*Stat Significant*)

No Brain Rot Down Under. Australia has barred everyone under 16 from social media. *The New York Times* asks: Will it work? The money quote: "The [Social media platforms] have got financial resources, technologies, and some of the best brainpower," said Julie Inman Grant, Australia's eSafety Commissioner. "If they can target you for advertising, they can use the same technology and know-how to identify and verify the age of a child." (*NYTimes*)

That Ain't the Real Thing. An "AI sucks" story from the *Times*: "Coca-Cola's nostalgia-filled commercials are a holiday tradition, but this year's ads are facing backlash for dipping into the uncanny valley." The best backlash quote: "Alex Hirsch, an animator and the creator of the Disney series *Gravity Falls*, expressed a sentiment that other creative professionals have shared online, noting that the brand's signature red represented the 'blood of out-of-work artists.'" Yep. (*NYTimes*)



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