



# Breaking New Ground: A Conversation with The Gate NY's David Bernstein #CompanySpotlight

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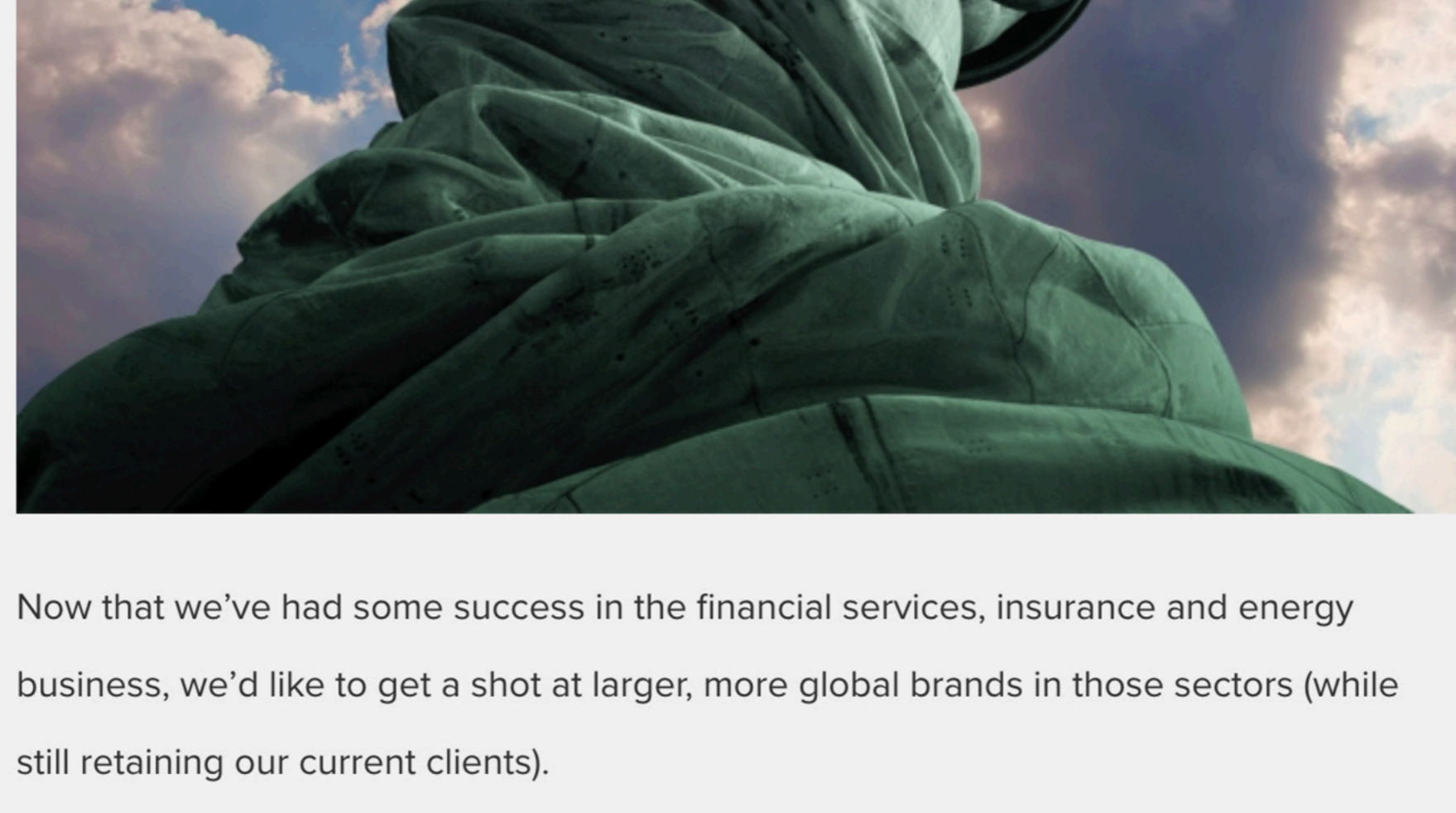
In the bustling heart of New York City, The Gate NY has emerged as a creative powerhouse under the visionary leadership of Chief Creative Officer **David Bernstein**. Known for its innovative campaigns in financial services, insurance, and energy sectors, the agency has navigated its early challenges to establish a strong foothold in the advertising landscape.

From humble beginnings with low brand recognition to securing major accounts like State Street SPDR ETF, The Gate NY has continually evolved, embracing both creative audacity and strategic ingenuity.

In this exclusive interview for the Creativepool Magazine, Bernstein shares the story of the agency's ascent, the unique challenges faced, and his aspirations for the future of advertising. Join us as we delve into the journey of a firm that's redefining the boundaries of creative advertising while championing the spirit of resilience and innovation.

## What was the biggest challenge to the growth of your company?

In the early days, we had such a low profile, it was hard to get into pitches. There weren't many clients who'd ever heard of us.



Now that we've had some success in the financial services, insurance and energy business, we'd like to get a shot at larger, more global brands in those sectors (while still retaining our current clients).

## Which was the first huge success that you can remember?

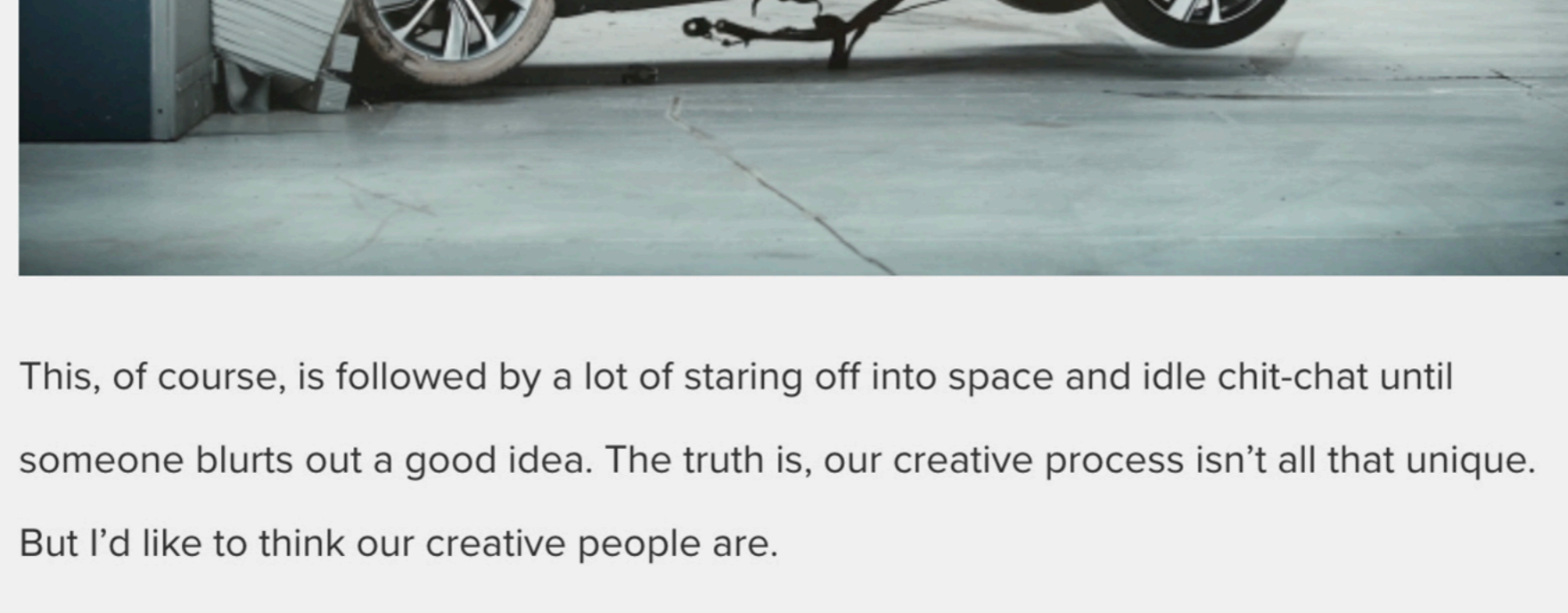
Winning the State Street SPDR ETF business from DDB. It was ten times larger than any account we had at the time and gave us a chance to do work on a national and, eventually, international stage.

## What's the biggest opportunity for you and your company in the next year?

We're currently producing a campaign for a new carbon removal company. But it doesn't go live until September. So, if all goes well, we'll be able to enter it in Creative Pool's award show next year.

## Can you explain your team's creative process? What makes it unique?

Like most ad agencies, our creative process starts with seeing what the competition is doing and crafting a strategy that stakes out some new and interesting area.



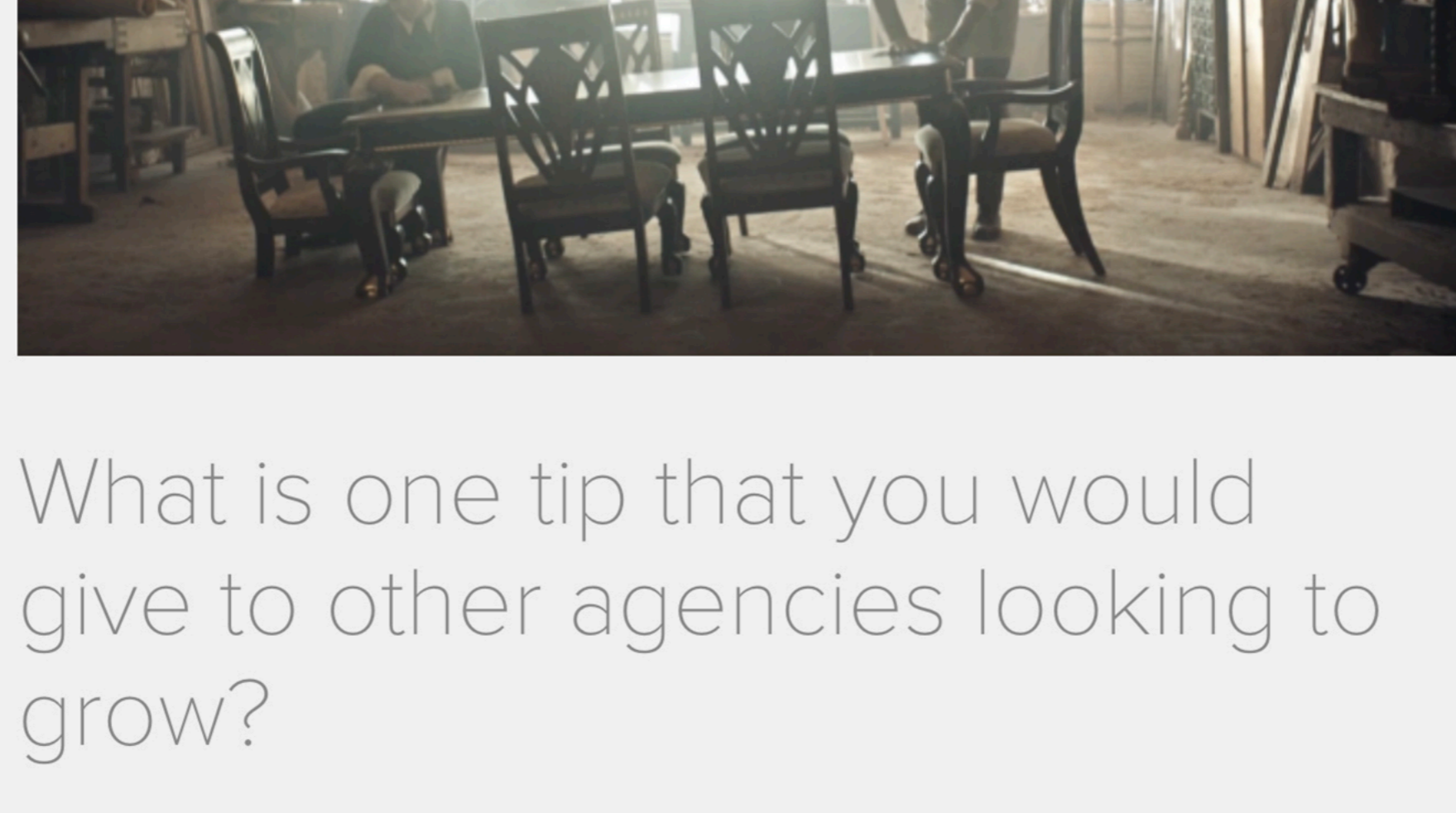
This, of course, is followed by a lot of staring off into space and idle chit-chat until someone blurts out a good idea. The truth is, our creative process isn't all that unique. But I'd like to think our creative people are.

## How has COVID-19 affected your company?

Like everyone else, we learned to work remotely. Which is something we still do on Mondays and Fridays. But it's nice to be back in the office. There's an energy and comradery you just can't duplicate on a Zoom call.

## Which agencies do you gain inspiration from? Do you have any heroes in the industry?

The usual suspects. Wieden + Kennedy. Adam and Eve. Droga 5. TBWA/Media Arts Lab. And Mischief.



## What is one tip that you would give to other agencies looking to grow?

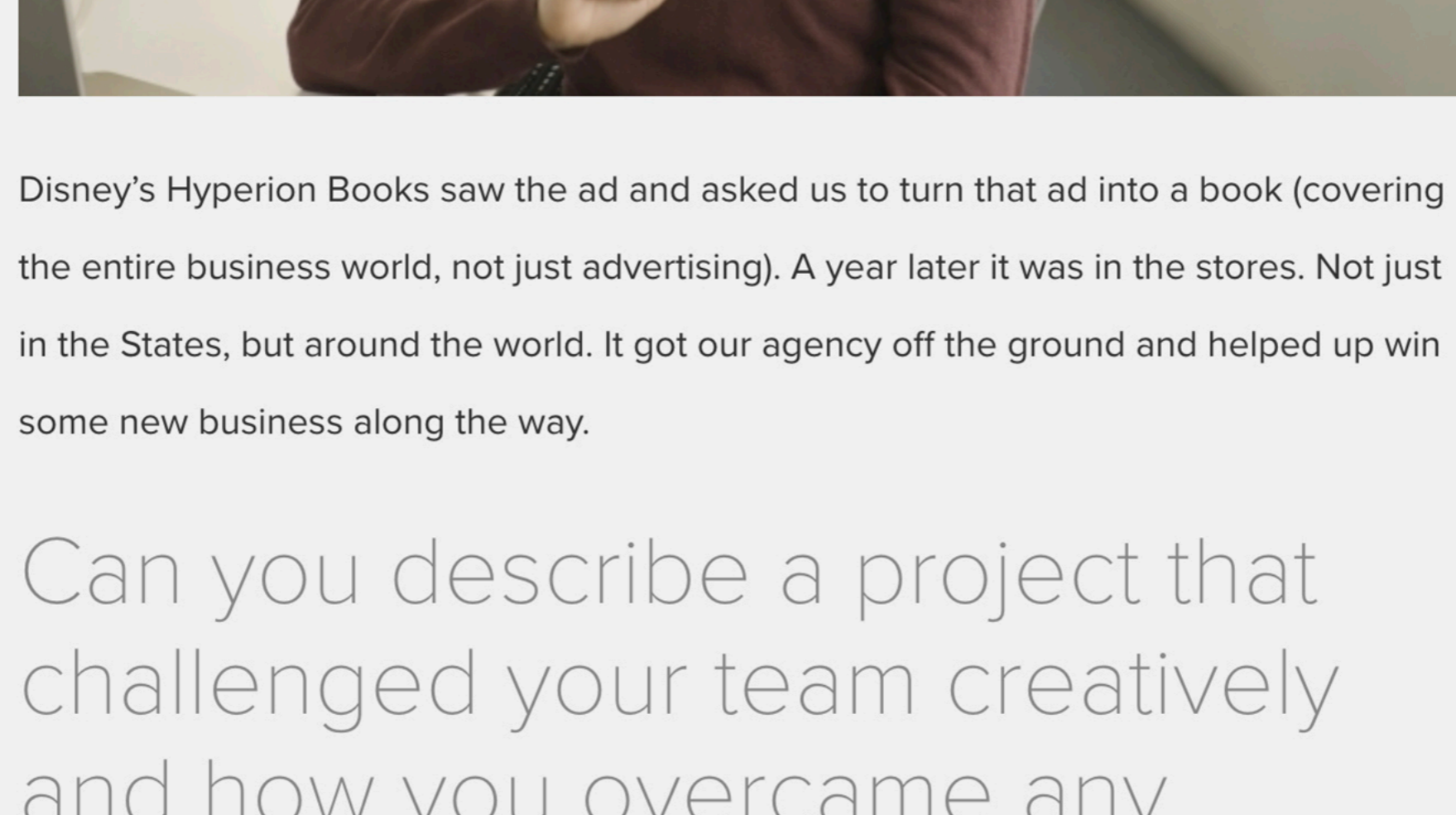
My tip is, only pitch accounts you're 100% committed to winning. Because if you can only give it 50% of your attention, you probably won't be successful. And you will have wasted all that time in a losing effort.

## What's your one big hope for the future of the industry?

My hope? That industry insiders will stop writing articles about the death of advertising. As long as people have products to sell, agencies will figure out a way to sell them.

## Can you share a defining moment in your company's journey that shaped its identity or direction?

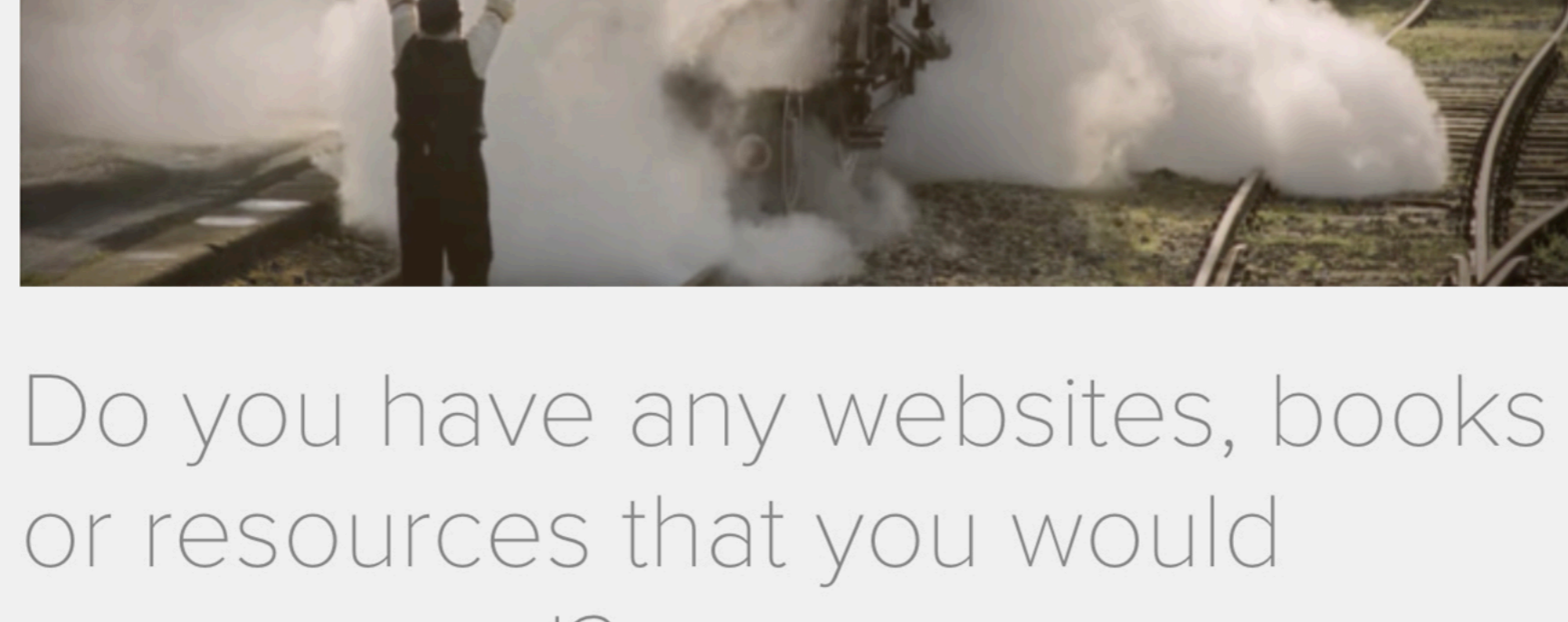
We did an ad for the agency with the headline "Death to all sacred cows." It spoke about all the sacred cows of the advertising business and how our agency was planning to kill them.



Disney's Hyperion Books saw the ad and asked us to turn that ad into a book (covering the entire business world, not just advertising). A year later it was in the stores. Not just in the States, but around the world. It got our agency off the ground and helped up win some new business along the way.

## Can you describe a project that challenged your team creatively and how you overcame any obstacles?

Financial Service advertising is filled with verbal and visual tropes. So when we had a chance to pitch the Federated Hermes business, we started with one simple goal: Don't do that.



Research discovered Federated Hermes puts their investments through a ruthless vetting process before they offer them. So, to visualize that idea, we compared the stress tests consumer products go through to the ones their financial products do through. Which not only allowed us to dramatize their point of difference. It helped us avoid all those visual and verbal tropes of the category.

Do you have any websites, books or resources that you would recommend?  
Dave Dye's "Stuff from the Loft" blog and podcast for inside-the-industry inspiration. And Malcolm Gladwell's "David and Goliath" book for outside-the-industry inspiration.