



Newcourt Credit Group
Orientation Video
“The Winners’ Career Choice”

A Winning Metaphor

From David to Goliath

Launched as an ambitious start-up in the mid 1980s, Newcourt Credit Group was the dream of a young 26 year old accountant who turned to one of his clients, a dentist, for his initial financing. CEO Steve Hudson and his three partners mortgaged their homes and raised their own capital to finance their vision.

Within a few short years, Newcourt morphed into a financial giant spanning 26 countries, originating multi-million dollar loans to finance big ticket items like regional airlines, railway equipment, provincial highways, chemical processing plants, hydro projects, office towers and government buildings abroad. A handful of employees grew to 140 in the early years - then leapt to 6000 in five short years between 1994 and 1999.

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In 1996, when we came on board, they had originated \$5.8 billion in new loans with the U.S. and international markets.

So how was this a problem?





The Client

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The Challenge

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Our challenge as a video production company was to capture the energy and innovative structure of Newcourt and reflect its vision, values and culture to employees worldwide in a compelling video that would stimulate staff to a common purpose and loyalty to an idea. The mandate was to create the feeling that the employee is part of something exciting and unique in a dynamic and specialized environment.

“Young, entrepreneurial, team oriented and aggressive,” is how one Senior V.P. described the culture.



Olympic-sized Goals

These were challenging goals, due in part to the size of the company as well as the complexity, range, and at times abstract nature of some of the requirements. During several meetings with the Marketing and Human Resources Department and VP of Corporate Affairs we narrowed down and fine tuned the mandates.

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As a creative approach, we recommended that Newcourt's structure might be best explained with a team sports metaphor to reflect the strong team spirit of the company.

The Solution

To simplify and dramatize the complex structure of the company, we suggested the idea of a relay race, individuals working together as a team, with each of the three main areas of business carrying out its function before passing the baton to the next.

We wanted to avoid visual bluster - all bells and whistles with no content (e.g. fast cuts overwhelmed by pounding music), often the path of least resistance in many corporate videos. We wanted a solid, in-depth, compelling narrative that reflected a deep understanding of the company's core values, how it functioned, how it was structured, and who its key players were. We all agreed a relay race visual metaphor would work.

This metaphor was dramatically established in the opening sequence: we filmed sleek powerful Olympic athletes in training as they pushed their bodies to the limit racing around a track. The energy of the red-orange rising sun glints behind them as the camera, in slow motion, focuses on the explosive power and strength of rippling muscles as the runners sprint towards the finish line. In the background, almost imperceptible, we hear an approaching pulse, an unrelenting rhythm, like the breathing of a runner, strong, foreshadowing the arrival of a Titan.

In close-up we see the trigger pulled on a starter's pistol and hear its crack. The runners leap out of the blocks. A quietly intense narrator describes the essential qualities of an athlete: "For a runner on a relay team, success is measured in strength, endurance, concentration, and above all, the will to win. At Newcourt Credit Group, we measure success by the same will to win. Working as a team, our individual employees use innovation and expertise to face the competition head on. And together, we push hard to bring home the gold."

We tracked the runners, racing towards the camera from a dolly (a platform on wheels). No detail was too small -- from their breath, audible in the crisp early morning air to the snap of the baton as it changed hands.

It was a powerful image driven by powerful words and it set the tone for the story to come. We strove to keep the metaphor intact and fluid through the interviews with the founding members.

The result was a strong, memorable "story" that provided consistent context and thematic unity throughout the video. We reinforced the idea of success and prowess through strong writing with references to Newcourt as "a triumphant winner" in the world of asset-based financing, returning often to the theme of team work.

Finding A Solution Through Metaphor



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And There Was More

We were also required to:

- Familiarize new as well as established employees with the “whole” business and interconnected roles of the key players and how these roles contributed to the company’s process
- Explain the company’s three main divisions in context of the company’s mission and direction.
- Personify the company’s evolution and future prospects through the charismatic CEO’s personal vision
- Highlight the special benefits employees enjoy
- Educate employees as to their individual and team responsibilities in a high risk environment
- Communicate to the regional offices the depth and breadth of head office’s activities and responsibilities and illustrate the relationship to the outlying offices

And we had to do this through a seamless dramatic narrative, that was compelling to watch and that created understanding, a sense of pride and that provided insights that no other method could achieve.

The Creative Thinking

We used TV dramatic techniques to emphasize the grandeur of the corporate offices and stature of the founders. One very simple but effective technique was to almost imperceptibly glide the camera along dolly tracks during the interviews with the divisional heads to create a subtle energy while lighting the offices (the interior) in a way that would allow the impact of the exterior city views below to play a strong subliminal role. These powerful decision makers, ranging from low key to charismatic in temperament, controlled the company universe from the “top of the world” in downtown offices high above the city.

We used “fly on the wall” camera techniques to place the viewer at the center of the action, witnessing decisions being made, problems being solved, ideas being generated and directions being established in actual situations. Seeing the leaders in action demonstrated their insight, their decisiveness, affable humour, results-oriented style and dynamic leadership.



Taking the Show on the Road

We travelled to offices in Quebec, North Carolina, Indiana, Utah and California to show the integration of different cultural environments and how they fit into the total company structure. We also went on the road with the “invisible sales force” - individuals working from their vehicles, serving outlying customers. Besides giving head office employees a more complete awareness of the company’s overall structure, this was designed to give the outlying areas a sense of inclusion in the company’s vision and culture.

We showed staff hard at work and at play. We heard their views about the independent decision making, the onus on individual problem solving and the encouragement of risk-taking the company cultivated. We heard and showed how each employee creates his or her own destiny in the company as they strive to find where they are best able to achieve as they face “the challenge of a lifetime.”

The Results

Television broadcast techniques created a powerful, effective and compelling video that more than delivered on the company’s expectations. It reflected the depth and breadth of the company’s style, its people and its philosophy, structure, goals, activities and responsibilities. The result was a powerful motivational and educational “movie” which employees enjoyed and remembered - and took to heart. And most of all they understood how they fit into the overall big picture, as individuals and as team players.

John Sadler, Senior VP of Corporate Affairs declared: “This is a truly elegant piece.”

Once the video began to do its work throughout the company, VP of Human Resources, William Rankin wrote us this note: “Our company’s explosive growth has made it a challenge for us to quickly bring our new employees up to speed on the culture of the company. Your video captured that culture perfectly, both here in Canada and in the U.S. The quality is outstanding.”



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