

RANDOM HOUSE *e*BOOKS



e²

Matt Beaumont

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About the Book

Welcome to Meerkat360, an ad agency so cutting-edge it employs a hairdresser. It also employs David Crutton, CEO (learned management at the feet of Pol Pot), his PA Dotty Podidra (an expert with the cafetière plunger), and Harvey Harvey (so polite that he replies to spam). They and a full crew of industrial-strength nut jobs wrestle with everyday office problems, such as selling Maggie Thatcher perfume and cigarettes for pre-schoolers, as well as flogging the contents of the office stationery cupboard on eBay.

Told entirely via emails, texts, webchat and blogs, the long-awaited follow up to *e* is a savagely funny insight into the hearts, minds and inboxes of the world's most engagingly dysfunctional ad agency.

About the Author

Matt Beaumont has never worked in the advertising business and he has never met anyone who does. In fact, he has never even seen a single advert in his life. Not one! This novel is entirely made up.

He has a vaguely informative website:
LetsTalkAboutMe.com

Also by Matt Beaumont

e

The e Before Christmas

The Book, the Film, the T-Shirt

Staying Alive

Where There's a Will

Small World



Matt Beaumont

Illustration by Holly Beaumont

Acknowledgements

Roll Credits:

Clare Conville.....Elizabeth Taylor
Larry Finlay.....Mel Brooks
Katie Espiner.....Kate Winslet
Kate Samano.....Kate Winslet
Emma Buckley.....Kate Winslet
Aislinn Casey.....Kate Winslet
Gavin Hilzbrich.....Kate Winslet
Monique Henry.....Emanuelle Béart
Alan Jarvie.....Gary Cooper
Kazu Makino.....Blonde Redhead
Philip Edgar-Jones.....Himself
Kirsten Richardson.....Kirsten Dunst
Holly Beaumont.....Vanessa Anne Hudgens
Maria Beaumont.....Jennifer Aniston

Thank you to all of the above, but especially to Maria. If my name were ever to appear on a movie poster (it *might* happen), Maria's would be printed above it, and in much bigger type. It would be a contractual thing. But also deserved.

Follow @Meerkat360 on twitter!

By order of The Man: all at Meerkat360 wasting time on twitter, log off now! IT is watching you.

10:06 AM Sep 30th, 2009 from web

And while you're at it, get off facebook and Linkedin. IT is watching you and I am reading the f*cking printouts.

10:07 AM Sep 30th, 2009 from web

Public FYI from Sooz: I'm not anorexic, bulimic or anything-else-ic!! Collarbones are meant to 'protrude'. Doesn't anyone read Vogue?

10:27 AM Sep 30th, 2009 from web

Q from Dong: after 30 mins of 'blissful' sensory deprivation, why do I want to kill everyone?

11:12 AM Sep 30th, 2009 from web

Keef fact: piping Judas Priest into sensory deprivation tanks f*cks with heads. Meerkat360 is now a Columbine Event waiting to happen.

11:16 AM Sep 30th, 2009 from web

@sjdGaultier retro alert! Just saw sweet homeless man in adorable (slightly battered) Wannabe loafers. They are so due for a comeback!!!!

1:29 PM Sep 30th, 2009 from web

Keef sez: if you see angry shoeless tramp looking for his Patrick Coxes, tell him Susi nicked them while he was asleep.

1:51 PM Sep 30th, 2009 from web

@DottyPod bulletin - finally taught The Man how to do froggy accents on his keyboard! Peace at last!!

2:50 PM Sep 30th, 2009 from web

Question from The Man: çăñ åñyøñè tèll më høw tô mákè my fűčkîñg kêybøård stòp stîčkîñg fűčkîñg åççènts òn fűčkîñg èvèrythîñg?

2:55 PM Sep 30th, 2009 from web

Keef sez: actually, this twitter bollox is a total fucking fuck-off. 140 characters? How da fuck are you supposed to develop a reasoned argu

9:51 PM Oct 2nd, 2009 from web

HR @Meerkat360 - openings for: barista, tennis coach (LTA qualified), dog wrangler, potter, lathe operator, blacksmith

4:15 PM Oct 5th, 2009 from web

From HH: Twitter is ace! I talk loads and I'm sure no one listens. Now I can 'twit' and the whole world reads it. I have 6 followers!!

10:29 AM Oct 6th, 2009 from web

HH: Made cup of tea. Am now drinking it. 9 followers reading about me drinking tea! I'm hyperventilating!!

11:25 AM Oct 6th, 2009 from web

HH: I think someone should write the world's first 'Twitter Novel'! Imagine a whole story told in 'twits'!!

12:16 PM Oct 6th, 2009 from web

HH: OMG, 11 followers!!!!

12:17 PM Oct 6th, 2009 from web

Keef sez: think Harvey is starting a cult with his twitter followers. I'm telling you, this is where f*cking Waco started. Watch this space.

12:20 PM Oct 6th, 2009 from web

Keef sez - 10 commandments: world's first example of bullet points. Stone tablets: world's first PowerPoint. Moses: world's first twat.

8:48 AM Oct 12th, 2009 from web

@sjdGaultier - Milt and I have found a brill way of staying in touch. Club Penguin!!!!!! So much better than stupid MSN!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

2:44 PM Oct 12th, 2009 from web

@miltshaker - yay, Club Penguin is incredible! Meet me at the Plaza, Sooz. We can buy Puffles!!!!

3:24 PM Oct 12th, 2009 from web

@miltshaker - BTW, does my Penguin look a bit gay????!!!!

3:29 PM Oct 12th, 2009 from web

@sjdGaultier - absolutely no way! Your Pengy is way butch!!!

3:32 PM Oct 12th, 2009 from web

IT @meerkat360 - alarming call from paedowatch.com. mk360 employees must STAY OFF Club Penguin. Yr presence is 'open to misinterpretation'

8:50 AM Oct 13th, 2009 from web

Publishing news: Pol Pot, CEO - Management Secrets of the Killing Fields by David Crutton in all good book shops NOW!

9:01 AM Oct 14th, 2009 from web

Dateline Dubai: Mac announces Middle East launch of Sharia-friendly (i.e. music-free) iPod. They're calling it the iYatollah.

9:21 AM Oct 14th, 2009 from web

And a porn-only web browser: iFuckmyhand
9:28 AM Oct 14th, 2009 from web

And file-sharing software for web pirates: iJimLad
9:52 AM Oct 14th, 2009 from web

iAmboredwiththisnow
10:09 AM Oct 14th, 2009 from web

Keef has that Friday feeling: an expanse of fresh-faced
cunts for colleagues and a yearning for an AK47. Or at least
an air-powered nail gun
10:29 AM Oct 16th, 2009

David Crutton at Foyles signing copies of Idi Amin, CEO:
Management Secrets of Kampala. Free body part fridge
magnets for first 50 buyers
11:32 AM Oct 16th, 2009 from web

HR @Meerkat360 - openings for: piano tuner, scribe
(working knowledge of Latin essential), nurse, anaesthetist,
guard dog, copywriter
5:44 PM Oct 20th, 2009 from web

Keef would like to point out that today da sooz is wearing
cable-knit tights. It's like she has a Scottish trawlerman
scaling her legs
9:19 AM Nov 2nd, 2009 from web

Dateline Dubai: Just about to go into Pepsico meeting.
Might be some time. I'm wearing my 'Do Not Resuscitate'
tag
10:31 AM Nov 4th, 2009 from web

HR @Meerkat360 - opportunities for work experience
people. Ages 16 to 21. Good GCSEs and weak gag reflex
essential.

10:10 AM Nov 5th, 2009 from web

Keef would like to know whose cock he has to suck to get his fucking expenses paid.

9:22 AM Nov 20th, 2009 from web

Ted B 2 Keef: that would be me, tho in lieu of cocksucking, you could try doing some fucking work, you fat lazy fuck

9:46 AM Nov 20th, 2009 from web

Keef is trawling eBay for single gas mask and a small batch of Sarin. Yes, he has that Friday feeling again.

10:31 AM Nov 20th, 2009 from web

@sjdGaultier - Anyone free to give Harvey H a quick endoscopy? He thinks he's swallowed the toy from his Kinder Surprise.

10:03 AM Nov 27th, 2009 from web

Dateline Dubai: a dream built on sand? Like, duh!

1:32 PM Nov 30th, 2009 from web

Dateline Dubai: this is not rumour, repeat, NOT rumour. As I watch from my office, Burj Dubai being dismantled and sold bit by bit on eBay.

4:03 PM Nov 30th, 2009 from web

Workie needed to help out with drive-by shooting in Detroit. Firearm and business class travel provided.

10:46 AM Dec 1st, 2009 from web

Essential advice from Keef - Wagamama: be warned, people. It's fucking Chinese McDonald's. WITHOUT THE FREE FUCKING TOY.

11:40 AM Dec 2nd, 2009 from web

HR @Meerkat360 - openings for: lab technician, smack dealer, cabin boy, fluffer, zen copywriter
9:18 AM Dec 3rd, 2009 from web

Workie needed for exciting task! More of a 'quest', actually. Involves orks. And a ring. You'll need permission from your mum to be out late.
11:40 AM Dec 3rd, 2009 from web

Keef asks: wtf is a Consumer Experience Architect? Will he build me a conservatory? Or is he just a cunt?
12:30 PM Dec 3rd, 2009 from web

HR @Meerkat360 - opening for replacement Consumer Experience Architect. Applicants must be able to withstand mild abuse.
4:30 PM Dec 3rd, 2009 from web

Workie needed for tricky but ultimately rewarding job. Surgical gloves supplied.
11:03 AM Dec 7th, 2009 from web

Need workie with shovel to bury my other workie. Honestly, what university do you people come from? Where's your fucking stamina?
9:10 AM Dec 9th, 2009 from web

Dotty Pod: Jan new biz review cancelled. DC still snowbound in Finland.
10:12 AM Jan 4th, 2010 from web

Dotty Pod: all mail for DC should be redirected to c/o Santa, The Magical Mysterious Grotto, 1 North Pole, Lapland
11:31 AM Jan 4th, 2010 from web

Keef: story in Metro about homeless guy losing feet to frostbite. Has Sooz been nicking shoes off tramps again?

9:27 AM Jan 5th, 2010 from web

@sjdGaultier - my Cons WERE NOT stolen from tramp. I paid SERIOUS money to PROFESSIONAL 'footwear distresser' to achieve 'lived-in' look

10:07 AM Jan 5th, 2010 from web

Message from DC: snowbound in Lewisham IS NOT the same as snowbound in Lapland. Get your fucking arses into fucking work. You slack fuckers.

9:52 AM Jan 7th, 2010 from web

All-staff FYI from Dotty Pod: I did not email 'skiver list' to DC in Lapland. Please stop sending me hate mail!!

10:17 AM Jan 7th, 2010 from web

This story is dedicated to the memories of
Adam Theokritoff and Mick Devito.

Saturday Mood: **optimistic**

From: **Janice Crutton**

To: Beverly Crutton, Sarah Franks, Geraldine Crutton and 17 others ...

Sent: 20 December 2008, 14.18

Subject: The Crutton Chronicles, Volume 8

Well, here we are again. Another year, another catalogue of ups, downs and in-betweens. Mostly ups, it has to be said. It's been a good year chez Crutton. As is the custom in these circular missives, I'll take you through the highlights, though contrary to the norm, I'll try not to make my children sound too amazing.

Let's start with the head of the household. David has thrown himself into his new job with abandon. In fact, he's at the office now - he's slowing down a little these days, but he's still of the opinion that God was a slacker for taking Sunday off. As most of you know, he started as The Man (MD in old speak) at Meerkat360 four months ago and he's enjoying himself immensely, though he's still uncomfortable referring to himself as The Man. And, if truth be told, he still chokes a little when he has to say Meerkat360 out loud. He's from an age when advertising agencies were named like accountancy firms rather than pop groups. And to conclude this subject, I think he'd really like to be allowed to call it an advertising agency (which it is! It does adverts) rather than a Thought Collective. But, bless him, he's adjusting to the new orthodoxy, the gist of which seems to be that there is no longer any orthodoxy.

He's thrilled that he managed to mark his first few weeks with a big assignment from Esmée Éloge to launch a raft of celeb perfumes. He led the pitch with all the gusto of old and, as a result, next Christmas you can expect in your festive hampers the alluring scents of Vanessa Mae, Sienna Miller and Margaret Thatcher. No, I made that last one up!

One final note on David - lest you fear this is turning into the DC Annual Report - he has managed to find the time to take up meditation. It really has transformed his outlook and he is sweetness and light personified.

[saved as draft]

From: **Janice Crutton**
To: David Crutton
Sent: 20 December 2008, 14.27
Subject: It would be nice to know ...

... that you're going to leave the office for long enough to put in an appearance this weekend. If you hadn't left at dawn this morning, I would have reminded you that we're supposed to be going to Kath and Graeme's tonight. Would you like to come and at least make a pretence of being a functioning couple?

By the way, I'm writing the annual circular. Anything in particular you want me to include?

From: **David Crutton**
To: Janice Crutton
Sent: 20 December 2008, 14.30
Subject: Re: It would be nice to know ...

I'll be there. Though if I have to listen once again to Graeme run through each and every one of the 3,452

stations on his digital radio ('which, with splendid irony, Dave, has been designed to look precisely like a fifties valve set!'), I will ball up his ironic fucking tank top and shove it down his ironic fucking throat.

Maybe you could have a word with Kath.

The family circular: nothing I want you to mention; plenty I don't. Meditation for one.

David Crutton
THE MAN

Jesus, I cannot go on like this.

From: **David Crutton**
To: Alex Sofroniou
Sent: 20 December 2008, 14.32
Subject: email issues

As head of IT, your first job on Monday morning is to explain to me why every time I type my name at the foot of an email, 'The Man' appears in a typeface that wouldn't have been out of place in *Space 1999*.

Your second job is to make it stop.

The alternative is that I will have to stop signing emails. Which will make me seem rude. Which demonstrably I am not.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter : -)

See?

David Crutton
THE MAN

Oh, for fuck's sake.

From: **Janice Crutton**
To: Beverly Crutton, Sarah Franks, Geraldine Crutton and 17 others ...
Sent: 20 December 2008, 15.06
Subject: The Crutton Chronicles, Volume 8 [continued]

On to Noah. I'm delighted to report that number-one child is flying. I must say that David and I were a little baffled by his A-level choices (drama, chemistry and Polish), but he wants to leave the actor/quantum chemist option open for as long as possible. And I suppose, if nothing else, he'll always be able to communicate with his plumber. To his credit, he's really making it work. As I write he's in his room, revising for his mocks.

He's maturing into a wonderful young man. He really looks out for Tamara and it's lovely to behold the growing sibling bond. We have every confidence in Noah. This is going to be his year: stellar A-level results and then on to RADA. Or Quantum Chemistry at the University of Lodz!

[saved as draft]

From: **Janice Crutton**
To: Noah Crutton
Sent: 20 December 2008, 15.12
Subject: List

Since you are intent on recreating last summer's Glastonbury behind a locked and barricaded bedroom door, this is the only way I have of communicating with you. A to-do list:

1. Please turn your music down.

2. If you have dirty laundry in there, chuck it on to the landing. Or are you planning to leave it until it's ripe enough to make its way to the washing machine under its own steam?
3. Please tidy your desk.
4. And while you're at it, look for the stuff I Googled for your biochemical thermodynamics assignment.
5. Which you have to hand in on Monday.
6. Dad and I are out tonight. Can you keep an eye on your sister? I don't want to come home and find a WPC babysitting her again.
7. You are working up there, aren't you? (Remember: biochemical thermodynamics, MONDAY.) I don't know how you can concentrate with that racket. I know that I can't.
8. So *please* turn the music down.
9. I'm making a sandwich. Interested? Or do you have a stash of food?
10. TURN THE BLOODY MUSIC DOWN!

Mum x

MSN:

NoahsDark: jus got e from mum

Rialto: woss her want??

NoahsDark: sez turn muzik down

Rialto: she sad. u listening 2 dethrush?

NoahsDark: track 3. nuns with cocks

Rialto: wkd guitar @ 4:23. turn it up!

NoahsDark: trak jus started. mum sez she goin out 2nite. wanna cum over?

Rialto: kool

NoahsDark: txt karl madz lulu benny stevo kell seb freddy dev
jono chris f. chris b. kriss kyle kevo sash deb dazza
an tarkz

Rialto: party? dubble kool
NoahsDark: tell em iz byob. dad went mentalist last time coz we drunk hiz whisky
Rialto: doin im a fava. it woz rank
NoahsDark: sed it woz malted or 50 yrs old or sumfink
Rialto: must hav bin off then. u got 2 guitar yet?
NoahsDark: almost. 4:15. kranking up vol ...

NoahsDark: wo! dat kikz muthafukin ass! way2go geeza!!

From: **Janice Crutton**
To: Noah Crutton
Sent: 20 December 2008, 15.17
Subject: TURN IT DOWN!

For God's sake, I asked you to turn it down, not up. I now have plaster dust in my coffee. Thanks for that.

From: **Janice Crutton**
To: Beverly Crutton, Sarah Franks, Geraldine Crutton and 17 others ...
Sent: 20 December 2008, 15.18
Subject: The Crutton Chronicles, Volume 8 [continued]

Tamara, too, is blossoming into a lovely young woman. Kind, sensitive and, though I say it myself, very pretty. It's a big year for her as well. GCSEs in June and I'm pleased to say that, like her brother, her nose is to the grindstone.

And, like her brother, she's no stranger to drama. She made an exceptional Cecily in the school production of *Earnest*. She looked a picture in crinoline and was a proper Edwardian lady. According to the review in the local paper, she was 'the epitome of modesty and decorum'! I'm tempted to scan it in and attach it to this, but that would be sad, wouldn't it?

[saved as draft]

SMS:

Mum: Where are you?
Tam: Shopping 4 your krissy prezzy Why?
Mum: Dad and I are going out. Need you home by 6
Tam: Cool - xxx

SMS:

Tam: Where da fuk are you bex???
Bex: Still in thresher. Fukker wants id
Tam: Flash your nix. Usually works
Bex: Worked! Wearing my pink ag provs!
Tam: Hurry! Tongue hurts like fuk. Need to kill pain.
Whose lame idea was stud??
Bex: Yours???
Tam: Yeah yeah. Get something good Pinot grigio. Not
chavdonnay
Bex: OK!
Tam: Mum txt'd. She's out 2nite
Bex: Party?
Tam: Party! Txt jess helz hollz gaz billy max em elly ali
jem hatty bella si kirst kitty s. kitty d. maz girl-sam
yaz boy-sam saffy

From: **Janice Crutton**

To: Beverly Crutton, Sarah Franks, Geraldine Crutton and 17
others ...

Sent: 20 December 2008, 15.24

Subject: The Crutton Chronicles, Volume 8 [continued]

Last and most definitely least, me! I'm still making a decent
fist of juggling corporate law and parenthood, though I
must say it gets easier as the kids grow older and more

responsible. We had a busy year at Bancroft Brooks. Redundancies last March doubled the workload for those of us that remained. Nothing terribly exciting to report. I was mentioned in despatches for my handling of RTZ's acquisition of ...

As I said, nothing exciting to report.

But I'm happy and I have my health, and doesn't that become increasingly important year on year?

A brief round-up of the other Cruttons:

Courtney was 17 last week (about 1,000 in cat years).

Henry Hamster sadly passed away. Tamara's eighth Henry and, though she buried him with the usual tears, her last. She is definitely growing up.

The fish are well. They send their regards.

I've attached a pic of the four of us in Sardinia last summer. Please try to ignore the tum! I've lost 9lbs since then. And yes, that glint in Tamara's nose is a stud. After not a little pressure, we finally gave in. We've drawn the line though. Definitely no tongue stud!

That's all from us. I hope you're all well. And I hope you all have fantastic Christmases and wonderful New Years.

All our love,

Janice, David, Noah & Tamara

XXXX

Sunday Mood: **sober**

From: **Janice Crutton**

To: Jon Parkin, Sita Brahmachari, Blair Krempel, Aneil Bedi, David Glass, Pippa Reedy, Justine Rogers, Kuo Lee Chien-Fu, Ron Hanlon, Hazel Park

Sent: 21 December 2008, 09.12

Subject: Apology

I will be round later to apologize to each of you in person, but since I have you in my contacts as the Neighbourhood Watch group, I thought I'd rattle off an early e to register our sincere regret at what took place last night.

Firstly, I want to assure you that neither David nor I sanctioned the party. Certainly if we had, we would have stayed home to keep a discreet eye on things and we would not have allowed our children to invite the 250+ that the police claimed turned up.

(Personally, I feel it was definitely no more than 200, but that is splitting hairs.)

However, David's and my obvious horror does not absolve us of our responsibilities. We should not have allowed it to happen and we are deeply, deeply sorry for the horrendous noise and also for the unforgivable abuse that some of you endured. I don't suppose it's any consolation at all, but our house now resembles Ground Zero.

Sita, I promise that Noah will be round later to clean the graffiti from your wall. And, Blair, please let me know what the vet charged for stomach-pumping your beautiful Burmese.

Once again, I am sincerely sorry and I hope that, in time, you can find a way to forgive us.

Janice Crutton

From: **Janice Crutton**
To: Kath Hunter-Firth
Sent: 21 December 2008, 09.23
Subject: Thanks

Hi Kath,

First of all, thank you so much for last night. The meal was truly wonderful. You are such an adventurous cook. Honestly, I wouldn't have a clue where to buy goat's tongue, let alone what to do with it.

I must apologize for David though. In mitigation, he has been terribly overworked, but that doesn't excuse his grouchiness. Please assure Graeme that he wasn't casting aspersions at his digital radio. He loves anything digital. It was the stress talking, as well as, I suspect, a certain amount of male gadget envy!

I'll get you guys over here soon. I will attempt to do something thrilling with chicken breast and my husband will prove what an utter charmer he really is.

Thanks again and Christmas hugs,

Janice x

From: **Janice Crutton**
To: David Crutton
Sent: 21 December 2008, 09.31
Subject: Question

So, while I am cleaning vomit off the floors, the walls and (incredible but true) the half-landing skylight, while I am trying to figure out how to get fluorescent pizza grease out of an ivory sofa, while I'd rather not figure out the provenance of the stains on our duvet, while I am grovelling on my knees to our neighbours because of our children and to my best friend because of you, where the hell are you?

Oh, that's right, work.

Honestly, what can be so important that it keeps you away from your imploding family? Happy bloody Christmas, David.

From: **David Crutton**
To: Dotty Podidra
Sent: 21 December 2008, 09.35
Subject: Still in bed?

As my longest-serving PA (is it really seven years?) you should be fully conversant with my views on sleep. Get up, eat your croissant/Coco Pops and get your arse in here. I need you to show me how you do frog accents on Word. Can't do the angled thing on the second e of Esmee and the first of Eloge, which, in a letter to the CEO of Esmee Eloge, is not good form.

And I need coffee. Not bloody decaf. I can tell the difference.

SMS:

Bex: You awake tam?? Has your mum killed you?? Does she know about tongue stud?? Txt me asap!!

Tam: Tamara won't be texting you because her mother has confiscated her phone. And no she didn't know about the tongue stud. But she does now. Thanks

Thursday Mood: turkey

From: **David Crutton**
To: Ted Berry, Caroline Zitter
Sent: 25 December 2008, 14.44
Subject: 2009

I trust you're both having excellent Christmas days. I know I am. There's nothing better for one's concentration than a deserted office in a deserted West End. That being the case, I decided to come in to gather my thoughts on the year ahead.

There is no doubt that Meerkat360 is an exciting young company. The two of you have pooled your considerable talents to found a visionary agency, fully tooled up to provide highly creative, web 2.0-enabled marketing services.

I sense your continued resistance to my appointment, but as owners of 75% of your venture, Aspire Invest has a right to protect its stake in any way it sees fit. In their wisdom, they see me as that protection. Boring as it must seem, we need to focus on the bottom line. If we don't, come Christmas '09, Meerkat360 will be but an entry on our respective CVs. *It is* that serious. Dazzled as your backers are by your creativity, Aspire is in the business of profit, not arts subsidy, and they *will* pull the plug. We are in the worst recession in living memory and they will not suffer financial runts.

There is genuine hope. We have a solid base upon which to build. Our existing clients signed up because of your credentials as box-free thinkers. Unfortunately, to date, not one of these accounts has been run at a profit. We must turn this situation around.

To this end, the winning of Esmée Éloge marks a new dawn. This is an A-list cosmetics brand and I intend to take a hands-on approach with this client, thus demonstrating the meaning of profit-oriented account management.

Also, early in the New Year, I hope to be able to reveal the identity of another new client, one with a marketing budget that closely resembles a bottomless pit. If I succeed in signing them up, our problems will ease considerably.

In the meantime, may I suggest that you consider some simple New Year's resolutions that will assist the move into credit?

Caroline, as the partner responsible for strategic thinking, perhaps you can illuminate me on the stratagem behind Primordial Ooze Therapy. Call me old-fashioned, but I question the wisdom of taking ten key employees to Iceland to wallow in mud during a period of global financial meltdown.

And, Ted, far be it from me to fathom the creative mind, but I do wonder at some of your appointments. Does the Creative Department really need a hairdresser? Since I see no legal way of passing on the cost of highlights and pageboy bobs to our clients, I recommend you stick to hiring designers, art directors and writers who can produce billable items of work.

Finally, I must put my foot down. The completion of the office refurb (which, I feel obliged to remind you, was