

Planet Power – from concept to creation

The breathtaking BMW Motorrad 3D movie Planet Power may use the very latest in cutting-edge technology – but the concept was first developed a number of years ago. Creative agency Serviceplan began planning the production back in 2009 – originally just in 2D – but realised timing was everything if they were to create something truly exceptional.



Oliver Palmer, Creative Director at Serviceplan describes the movie as being ‘like his baby’ and is deeply passionate about bringing the S 1000 RR to life on screen as boldly and vividly as possible. He wrote the script and, along with colleague Markus Koch and director Ryan McManus, was closely involved in every step of the project. Oliver says: “The timing wasn’t right when I first wrote the script three-and-a-half years ago, but me and Markus really wanted to make that film. Originally, it was going to be in 2D, because at that time, 3D was not really being used yet.

“But when we came to make it, later on, we decided to use 3D because it was the best way to really show the feeling and intensity that you get from a ride on the RR. We knew 3D was the only medium that had the possibilities to convey the power of the bike and develop the ideas we had used in the Planet Power print campaign.”

Oliver explains that while a natural home for a superbike in an advertising campaign would be the racetrack, he felt there was so much more that could be done with the RR. “Ads are often very similar – they show the bike on the track, with a guy taking a corner with his knee on the ground,” he says. Rather than stick to the well-worn format, Oliver decided to place the bike in a ‘hyper-real’ environment – something that had already been explored in print. “I wanted to get across that feeling of being in a tunnel and of everything being intensified – like seeing a bullet come out of a gun, with the barrel getting smaller and smaller. It had to really create a feeling of being something different to reality: Planet Power, the world the RR is from.”

To turn the concept into reality, Serviceplan and director Ryan enlisted the very best experts in their fields, including Stefan Weiss, whose Weisscam camera is capable of shooting a stunning 2,500 frames per second at its highest speed and

normally records at a speed of 25 frames per second. The resulting footage can then be slowed to a speed just one-hundredth of the original, making it possible to see a truly stunning level of detail.



However, the team then had to figure out how to safely and effectively use the cameras on a rig, fixed to a motorcycle travelling at 250km/h. “Mounting the cameras on the rig was hard,” Oliver admits. “Our idea required using techniques which are not used very often – as far as I know, they’ve only been used in one Hollywood film. We were filming on an airfield and we had one guy with a big camera at one end of the field, then we fixed a rig to the bike which carried the smaller stereoscopic cameras. It was a lot of metal to have around the bike at 250km/h!”

The next stage of the process was handing the raw footage over to specialist agency Südlich-T for the post-production process. Their task was actually making the film three-dimensional – a tough process which involved an animation technique called rotoscoping, where the live-action footage is traced over frame by frame to create an animation. “That was a very long job, when you take into account we shot 250 frames per second,” says Oliver.



The final element in creating a true ‘total immersion’ experience was the sound. Oliver opted to use Dolby 5.1 surround sound. “It wasn’t enough for the images to be really intense, the sound had to be just as powerful,” he says.

For Oliver, Markus and Ryan,

their involvement in the Planet Power movie was total. “Because it took so long from first writing the script and coming up with the idea to the film becoming reality, our colleagues would joke that the film was never going to happen,” says Oliver. “But to use 3D, the timing had to be right and the budget had to be available. We didn’t want to do this project unless we could really do it the way we wanted to. We wanted to really push it and create something which lets people experience the feeling of riding the RR and enter that other dimension.

“When we saw the film for the first time in the cinema, I almost felt like crying – it was a great moment experiencing it just as we had intended.”



Watch the latest ‘making of’ programme, The Craft, by clicking [here](#) and read more about the post-production process [here](#).



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