

Neil Williams

Creative Director

For over 25 years, I've been shaping campaigns for brands like Nike, Etihad Airways, Lotus, and O2. Along the way, I've created one of the most successful drink-drive campaigns. Developed the global manifesto that gave an iconic sport car brand something to say again. Repositioned an airline around a promise, not just a tagline. Led a counter-extremism campaign that reached three million people without a penny of paid media. And generated £42m from a B2B campaign built on a single human truth. I've even told the story of the world's tallest building. I've spent much of my career setting and defending creative standards, leading teams behind a single philosophy: The Restless Pursuit of Better. I believe in fearless creativity and strategic clarity. I lead with honesty, and invest in people, creating the right environments where talent and collaboration produce work that genuinely matters.

SKILLS

- Creative Direction
- Brand Strategy
- Craft Leadership
- Creative Department Growth
- Brand Guardianship
- C-Suite Collaboration
- Complex Brief Translation
- Integrated Campaign Development
- New Business Development

CERTIFICATIONS & COURSES

- Cyber Security Practices: NCFE Level 3 Certificate
- Communication & Graphic Design: City & Guilds Diploma
- Graphics & Advertising: BTEC - Advertising & Graphics Diploma

REFERENCES

'What a great guy to bounce ideas around with. What a brilliant way of answering that brief. What a different way of thinking about an audience. And what a lovely turn of phrase to use when talking to them. What a gent.What a loss. What a shame. What do I do now?'

Paul Baker - Executive Creative Director, TMP

'Neil has the rare ability to look at any project from a broad perspective and solve the problems that need solving, while always retaining an infectious passion for steering creative work of the highest standard.'

Mike Etheridge - Founder, Wreel Agency

'Great thinker, great under pressure. Can write copy until his hands bleed and then some.'

Barry Brand - CEO + Founder, Yellow Global

EXPERIENCE

Creative Director: Freelance - Various, UK
2023 - Present

Working independently across sectors, leading projects from brief through to final delivery. Managing external creative output and maintaining brand consistency across multiple markets and channels.

- Alica Bank Brand Transformation: Took on a fintech challenger bank struggling to differentiate in a competitive financial services market. Developed framework and TOV, translating financial products into credible human communications. Result: Contributed to a 40% lift in qualified leads.

- Lotus Emira (Global Launch): Directed campaign development, across the US, Europe and Middle East. Repositioned brand for a younger, design-conscious audience without losing the racing credibility. Result: Record-breaking order book for the new Emira in 2023.

Creative Director: McCann, UK
2019- 2021

Led all creative output for Lotus Cars in a period of brand transformation, alongside creative responsibility for Triumph Motorcycles, Vauxhall, Bentley, VWFS and Sunseeker Yachts. Worked directly with senior stakeholders and held accountability for brand consistency across markets and agencies.

- Lotus Brand Rebuild: Wrote the global manifesto and defined the tone of voice that gave a dormant British icon something to say again. Developed frameworks used by copywriters across multiple agencies and markets, ensuring consistency at scale. Result: Global brand guidelines adopted across all markets.

- Lotus Evija (Global Launch): Led integrated campaign for the world's most powerful production car, adapting storytelling across markets, keeping the brand identity unmistakable. Result: Entire initial production run sold despite a £2m price tag.

- 100% Pitch Win Rate: Driven by strategic insight, clear creative narrative and the ability to make senior audiences believe in an idea.

Creative Director: The Marketing Practice, UK
2017 - 2019

Creative leadership across three international offices - UK, US and Germany, with responsibility for creative standards, TOV consistency and content output across a complex B2B portfolio. Clients included Amazon, Microsoft, Genpact and SAS.

- O2 Business (Integrated Brand Campaign): Created and led a campaign for an enterprise telecoms infrastructure, and made it genuinely compelling for senior IT and operations decision-makers. Result: Generated £42m in qualified pipeline.

Creative Director | Head of Copy: Breakthrough Media, London
2015 - 2017

Wrote and directed content for UK government and NGO clients, including counterterrorism, public health, and education briefs. This was culturally sensitive, earned-first thinking and storytelling, that delivered meaningful and measurable change.

- 'Educate Against Hate' (Home Office): Counter-extremism integrated campaign targeting teachers, parents and school communities. Led from brief to launch across editorial copy, web content and earned media. Result: 3m organic reach without paid media. Won at Cannes Lions, Graphis, Creative Review and more.

Creative Director | Head of Copy: M&C Saatchi, UAE

Led creative on the global relaunch of Etihad Airways, repositioning the airline as a lifestyle brand across one of the world's most competitive travel markets. Created brand, destination, and product work across multiple channels and audience segments whilst maintaining a coherent brand voice throughout. Result: Brand awareness rose from 10%. Over 3m views in first month, and 62m total impressions.

Associate Creative Director | Head of Copy: Saatchi & Saatchi, UAE
2012 - 2014

Handled P&G Pampers across EMEA and MENA, creating multi-channel content. The work connected emotionally across different regions and cultures whilst hitting consistent commercial objectives. Developed Brand TOV and creative campaign work for ADCB Bank and Mall of the Emirates.

Result: P&G Pampers' organic sales grew between 3-5% over consecutive quarters in 2012.
Result: Repositioned ADCB Bank with a TOV built for high-net-worth audiences.

Other Notable Roles:

Creative Director: VMLY&R (UAE) | Head of Copy: The Brand Union (UAE)
Senior Copywriter: DDB (Australia) | Creative Lead: Gravity Global (UK)
Senior Copywriter: APL/Lowe (UK) | Senior Copywriter: Havas (UK)
Freelance - Mother (UK) | Freelance - JWT (UAE) | Copywriter: DMB&B

ACHIEVEMENTS

Ranked No.1 Copywriter, Creative Pool (2024, 2025, 2026)

GOLD: Creative Pool - Print 'Bose'

GOLD: Serbian Festival of Creativity - Best Integrated Campaign 'Air Serbia'

GOLD: Serbian Festival of Creativity - Promotion 'Air Serbia'

SILVER: Campaign Poster - Poster 'Drink Drive'

SILVER: Dubai Lynx - Design & Branding 'Kizad'

SILVER: Graphis Design Annual - Print 'Educate Against Hate'

BRONZE: Cannes Lion - Design 'Educate Against Hate'

BRONZE: British Arrows - TV Commercial 'Drink Drive'

BRONZE: LIA - Radio 'Royal Mail'

BRONZE: Dubai Lynx - Design 'Mauzan'

BEST IN BOOK: Creative Review - Digital 'Educate Against Hate'

SITE OF THE DAY: AWWWARDS 'Educate Against Hate'

MERIT: Graphis, Design Annual - Print 'Educate Against Hate'

MERIT: Graphis, Design Annual - Print & Websites 'Educate Against Hate'

MERIT: Graphis, Poster Annual - Print 'Educate Against Hate'

MERIT: Graphis - Design Annual - Print 'Football for Peace'

FINALIST: Art Director's Club of New York - Commercial 'Drink Drive'

SHORTLIST: Creative Pool, Alzheimer's Society

SHORTLIST: Design Week - Website Design 'Educate Against Hate'

SECTOR EXPERIENCE

Automotive: Lotus Cars, Fiat, Citroen, Peugeot, Triumph Motorcycles, Vauxhall Cars, Bentley, VWFS, Rover

FMCG: Nike, P&G, Arla, Kraft, Tesco, Cadbury, Danone, Alberta Culver, McDonald's, Nestle, IKEA, Hovis, Thomtons, Rowntrees, Burger King, Reckitt Benckiser, COOP, Unilever, Aunt Bessies, Mars, Anheuser-Busch (Budweiser), Daily & Sunday Telegraph, Bachelors, Johnson & Johnson, St.Ivel, Bird's Eye Foods, Hasbro

Banking & Financial: Santander, Natwest, Al Hilal, HSBC, ADBC, St. George, Cahoot, PagoFX, BACS, Allica Bank

Public Sector: UK, Australian, and Dubai Governments, Transport for London, Dept of Transport (UK), Dept of Employment (UK), Dept of Education (UK)

B2B: Amazon, O2, Microsoft, Salesforce, GenPact, DXC, SAS, Sage

Healthcare: Locobase, Nurofen, Nicorette, Alcon, Bayer

Luxury: Sunseeker Yachts, Monitor Audio, Mall of the Emirates, Jumeirah Group, Mont Blanc, Burj Khalifa

Airline & Travel: Etihad Airways, Flydubai, British Midland, Continental Airlines, Airbus, Cosmos Holidays, Travelodge, Haven, Radisson Edwardian, SeaFrance
Broadcast: BBC, Sky

Telecoms: Vodafone, Nokia, O2

Charity Action on Addiction, Alzheimer's Society, NSPCC, Cancer Research

Master Planning & Investment: Limitless, Dubai Group, Saraya, Sorouh, Tatweer, Jumeirah Group