

# The Paid Piper: a cautionary (fairy) tale

 By [Richard Mulholland](#)

13 Dec 2010

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away, there was a big company called Hamelin. An evil witch came to the land and cursed the big company: "If you don't create some presentations/animate some adverts/make the corner of your logo curvy (pick applicable), everyone will have to work in dull cubicle farms for the rest of time."

"Oh no," said the people in the company, "what are we going to do?"

They tried everything but nothing would work, so they decided that the only way would be to bring in outside help. They picked up the *Yellow Pages*, and it opened on the page for an agency called The Pied Pipers.

## Found our heroes

"Yaaay," they cried, "we've found our heroes."

So they called The Pied Pipers. The agency arrived, listened to the brief and went away to its awesome cubicle-less office where it frantically worked night and day, delivering on the brief as best it could.

A short while later it returned to Hamelin and showed its work. The company was ecstatic; it knew that this would appease the wicked witch. Just to be sure, though, they entered in the Loeries, where it won a Grand Prix - hangovers were earned and vows were broken - what a night!

The next month, The Pied Pipers came back to Hamelin to collect payment.

"Oh, we can't pay you yet," said one of the workers, "we didn't issue a PO number."

Another chimed in, "And we're not happy with your terms, we'll pay 60 days from statement."

## Excuse after excuse

Excuse after excuse was thrown at the agency: "It's not my fault, I'm doing everything, you need to speak to accounts." Until finally: "I'm sorry, the person that you dealt with has left, we won't be able to pay this."

And so The Pied Pipers left Hamelin, tail between legs.

Now this is where the fairy tale analogy ends... see, in the original, the Pied Piper comes back and kidnaps the children of the people of Hamelin and they're never seen again (the good old days, eh?!).

In the real world, though, the agency simply grins and bears it, but there's a side effect - some love is lost. We're far less likely to burn the midnight oil and, while our brains may be in the work, our hearts aren't.

I don't want to be that guy.

I love the fact that when we take on a job for our clients, we really want it to be awesome. We want the clients to take stage and shine - and when they do, we're as proud as they are. It's a win-win situation.

### **Happy suppliers make kick-ass work**

Happy (paid) suppliers make kick-ass work. In the words of Jerry Maguire, "Help me... help you!"

My Christmas wish is not a branded bottle of wine from our clients; it's simply the respect that comes from acknowledging the work created by remunerating as and when was arranged. You get that right, and you will have our loyalty, and creativity, by the stocking load.

We all win, and we all live happily ever after.

Happy holidays...!

## **ABOUT RICHARD MULHOLLAND**

Richard Mulholland is the founder of Missing Link ([www.missinglink.co.za](http://www.missinglink.co.za)), a specialist conference and presentation strategy company. Rich's dynamic way of thinking took him from rigging lights at rock concerts to telling CEOs what and how they should present. A renowned speaker, strategist, creative thinker and capitalist punk, Rich is the guy you hire to make your presentation or conference rock. Email him on [rich@missinglink.co.za](mailto:rich@missinglink.co.za) and follow him on Twitter at [@RichMulholland](https://twitter.com/RichMulholland) and Missing Link at [@presorockgods](https://twitter.com/presorockgods).

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