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Business stories

Ovenden

The business needed an overarching brand that could encompass the whole organisation and appeal to an increasingly wide customer base.



Background

A second generation family business, the Ovenden group of companies specialises in haulage, plant hire, demolition and aggregate supply. With over 100 employees Ovenden was founded in 1966 and operates as four separate companies, each spearheaded by a family member.

The challenge

“Like many businesses our brand has developed organically over forty years,’ said Managing Director Mo Ovenden. “Our customer base has also changed. At any minute we are as likely to be supplying a home gardener with a bag of hardcore as hiring a 72 tonne excavator to a large contractor.

“In addition, each side of business had developed its own take on our strong red and yellow branding and these were becoming visually confusing and outdated in a strongly competitive marketplace. The business needed an overarching brand that could encompass the whole organisation and appeal to an increasingly wide customer base.”

The response


Through Business Link, Mo was introduced to Designing Demand, a programme developed by the Design Council and delivered by South East Design. Her allocated Design Associate, James Duguid, then brought the whole senior management team together to narrow down the direction the rebranding would take and ensure that the management, and therefore the extended family unit, were of one mind before creating a design brief.

“James asked three agencies to pitch for our rebranding and we chose Remedy Creative,” said Mo. “It proved to be an excellent decision. As well as their obvious skill in getting our new branding right, they have also proved adept at bringing the family together to work on this project”.

Remedy’s MD, Lisa Casson began the rebranding process by again bringing all the key players together to focus on how the brand strategy could help the company achieve its business strategy and identify the customers they were really trying to attract. They also had to address many of the issues commonly found within family businesses before being able to move the process forward. “With family businesses there are frequently huge emotional ties to existing branding,” said Lisa. “A successful business like Ovenden is no exception. In situations like this it is important to be able to bring the brand up-to-date without losing that historical perspective. Crucially this will only work if all parties are on board: our role initially can be as much about helping to create that consensus as developing the new brand.”

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their tonal qualities have been changed, creating a more upmarket feel. Additionally a new logo invokes a strong positive image. Remedy has also created a strap line for Ovenden, which clearly explains exactly what the company can offer its huge customer base: dig it – load it – clear it – move it.

Crucially, the branding has been designed to work across a vast range of applications, from large earth moving machines, to business cards and the new website. It is distinctive and completely up-to-date, without losing sight of the company's origins.

The outcome

"The new branding provides our customers with a much better understanding of how we operate and what we can offer," said Mo. "And it is much more inclusive, appealing to all our markets.

"It has taken eighteen months to get it right for the family and the business, and there have been some tricky times along the way, but James and Lisa have always been there as support, and it is impossible not to feel proud when you see the new branding being emblazoned on the latest piece of heavy machinery. It will be a gradual process and there is a lot to still do but I think we can all see the benefits now. We are already working on a new website and it won't be long before the new Ovenden brand is on everything. It looks professional and conveys exactly the message the Ovenden family has always tried to promote, 'We are the team you can trust to deliver what you need, when you need it - at the right price.

"Now the company really looks like it can deliver on that promise."

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▶ Mo rapidly took on the role of brand champion and has played a huge part in moving the process forward, yet she freely admits that it has been a steep learning curve.

"We have all had to engage in a culture which was initially quite alien to us," said Mo. "But we have come to see that there are indeed different shades of red and yellow and that some work better together than others. I am also far more aware of the differences of effect simply changing a typeface can make. Lisa was able to show us why our competitors branding worked. She then showed us the additional impact the Ovenden name could have with suitable rebranding. I think we were all surprised at the huge impact some fairly subtle changes could achieve".

There were other more substantial changes as well. The entire Ovenden group now trades using the Ovenden name. This in itself was a huge step for the family but one with immediate pay off, making the many facets of the business directly visible to a much wider customer base. Visually, the distinctive red and yellow brand colours have been retained but

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