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Origin
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Robertson Communications

thinkingbrands

CREATIVE SHOWCASE

The genius of a great brand resides in every touch: from the logo to the long-term customer relationship. Great brand management consists therefore of genius touches in every part of the organisation. Here's how four brand specialists are managing those touches.

Fit in. Stand out

Here's a test for your brand: can you make it fit in and stand out? Balancing the seemingly opposite skills of integration and transformation has become a new way to manage your brand



Do you know about FISO? It's shorthand for Fit In Stand Out, a management technique gaining ground in US leadership circles. From the 2005 book by the same name, the idea is simple: leaders must fit in to an organisation to gain respect and trust, but then stand out to challenge the status quo. Leadership is a balance between integration and transformation.

The same can apply to managing brands. The 'fit in' part is about making sure people know what your organisation actually does. Do you sell tyres? Coffee? Art? Food? Furniture?

Whatever it is, your customers need to know what you do. Which of their existing needs do you meet? What part of their life do you live in? The 'car maintenance' part? The 'feeling important' part? The 'indulging and I don't care' part?

Brands that don't fit in may make an impact, but they won't resonate with any of your customer's needs or wants. They will just be a curiosity noticed on the way to what the consumer thinks they really want.

On the other hand, many brands fit in too easily, without standing out. Commodity industries, like wool, never saw themselves as a brand, until a small, smart player like New Zealand created a new way of packaging and selling that commodity, and wool—New Zealand wool, at least—became a brand.

The 'stand out' side of branding is most easily seen in its visual expression. The most successful brands in the world know they need to create a specific look for every part of their business—from product design to in-store furniture to letterheads to the clothes staff wear.

In the book *Marks of Excellence*, designer and lecturer Dr Per Mollerup says companies use a brand or design programme to communicate consistently what they are like (or how they would like to be seen).

The visual look and feel is often backed by a strong, simple story. Though it's not seen as prominently as the visual expressions of a brand, the brand story adds depth and humanity to a brand.

Laurence Vincent argues in the book *Legendary Brands* that a brand's story makes the difference between inspiring loyalty simply because of price or quality, and appearing to consumers 'less like a product and more like a beloved friend'. That's the difference between well-known and legendary.

The next frontier in branding is experience. Companies have learnt that the best visual design and the best stories won't work if they don't ring true. A customer's perception of the brand comes from every interaction with a company. Brand design is no longer simply about look and feel; it's about the whole package.

As you'll see in two of the case studies in this issue, branding is just as important for employees of a company as for customers. The smartest companies realise that employees are their most important customers, because they convey the brand experience and message to customers. It's vital not just to keep them happy, but to ensure they have an accurate picture of what the company is about.

Does branding pay off? It certainly does. Sometimes the payoff shows in the share price of publicly traded companies such as Coca-Cola, for which brand value comprises nearly 70 percent of its market value.

Brands also pay off in terms of customer loyalty—strong brands attract fans who will not only buy from their favourite brand, but also enthusiastically sell to others. And strong brands don't need to discount, because in the best cases, they've created an entirely new category where comparison shopping is irrelevant.

In the next few pages you'll see how New Zealand companies are unleashing the power of brands internally and externally to achieve solid business goals. They've learnt how to fit in and stand out at the same time.

Have you?

Brand is no longer enough

How many businesses truly differentiate themselves?

Most innovation is quickly matched. Creating sustainable advantage requires true innovation at the 'big picture' level. Businesses (read brands) must increasingly transcend categories, challenge norms and 'happily' break the rules. This requires the application of 'creative thinking to the power of business rigour'. Here's how DNA has helped two brands transcend category rules.

Firestone Securing the future of an icon

We've all grown up with Firestone. And with 170 company stores and dealerships, Firestone Direct is market leader in New Zealand's increasingly competitive tyre sector.

Tyres are usually a 'grudge' purchase. Retailers often compete on price and TV advertising has traditionally built 'personality-led' brand profile. But the market is tight and consumer expectations are changing. Bridgestone New Zealand (Firestone Direct's parent) needed to protect and grow market share and a brand refresh was identified as key.

However, research confirmed customers now expect much more from a retail experience.

Younger women and urban groups in particular feel the 'tyre workshop' experience isn't good enough, with many 'out of their comfort zone'. The project's scope broadened with discussion.

If Firestone smartened its 'image' but delivered the same products and service, wouldn't the result be an expensive window dressing project? How could we translate investment into business growth?

Success demanded a combined business/brand planning exercise to review Firestone's whole offering. Comprehensive analysis was undertaken. Workshops were facilitated with a cross-section of staff and management, and the notion of the business and what it delivers actually being the brand was fully explored.

The result was a potent framework for taking Firestone forward. At the heart was new understanding around retail customer needs and the actions required to meet these (actions that will re-define the sector), captured in the new brand definition.

The thinking

Firestone needed to become much more than a tyre shop. Fuelling this was the key consumer insight that rising expectations are set by the

whole retail sector. Firestone is judged not just against other tyre shops.

As market leader it needs to be best at delivering care for both vehicles and customers. While price is fundamental, brands are about relationships, so superior customer experience is crucial to moving from the 'grudge purchase' perception to a positive, ongoing consumer relationship.

New extended brand offering

The answer lay in developing a new, extended 'combination' offering. Tyres are still core business but Firestone offers more.

A true retail experience New stores are being built and existing stores refitted to provide a radically improved experience. Now people-friendly reception areas feature internet, good coffee and kids' areas and lots of white usually associated with care-related environments. Large windows showcase your car being cared for in the re-vamped workshop.

Vehicle health An expanding range of products and services across the network enables Firestone to keep your vehicle healthy between mechanical servicing. The customer relationship is now built around pro-active vehicle care, with

many stores doing more than you'd expect.

Service delivery The critical component is consistently superior service. The new Brand Promise sets a high performance benchmark for all staff. Articulated externally as Firestone's '360° Price, Service and Care Promise' and 'It's Taken Care Of', this is where Firestone will really deliver.

Brand identity This has also been re-energised, focusing on the brand's equity. 'Direct' has gone, a retail-friendly colour pallet introduced and a strong visual language developed to tell the brand story.

The results

John Staples, Bridgestone general manager of sales and marketing, says "We're confident Firestone's expanded offering and evolved brand will secure long-term financial health for the business. In saying this we're aware of two key points. Firstly, this is a long-term strategy—it's not all about immediate returns. The work we're doing now is significant and will continue to grow the business over the next five or ten years. Secondly, we have to be cognisant of a question: how long would Firestone maintain market leadership if it hadn't undertaken a brand process that literally tested and evolved the company's thinking?"

HOLD Life on display

Legacy Timber is a fourth-generation Whangarei family company. Starting as a building supplies firm, it's been a builder, a pioneer of export timber mouldings, a supplier of beams for Japanese housing, and recently a manufacturer of clearwood laminate panels for high-end shelving products here, in Australia and Japan.

Realising the fragility of this market and its vulnerability to the exchange rate, Legacy had begun developing its own designed products when it approached DNA.

The thinking

Working with DNA led Legacy to realise beautiful raw material, a New Zealand story and a handful of products weren't enough to succeed in the international design market. The business needed to get out of the 'commodity bind' where price is always the issue. It had to become an ideas company, offering product that can't be replicated. This product development had to be driven by potent consumer insights to successfully build ongoing brand relationships.

DNA and Legacy worked together to

develop new products, forge new channels to market, craft a powerful brand structure and evolve an integrated research, development and design capability. The result is a new business that *is* the brand.

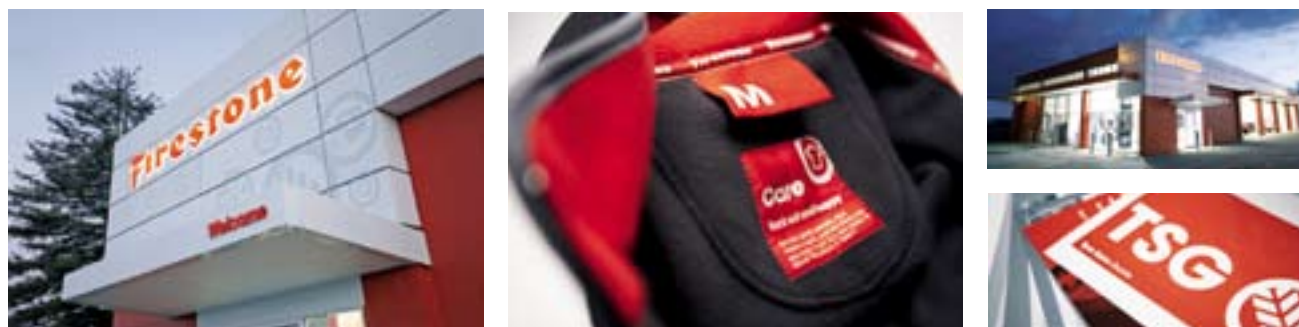
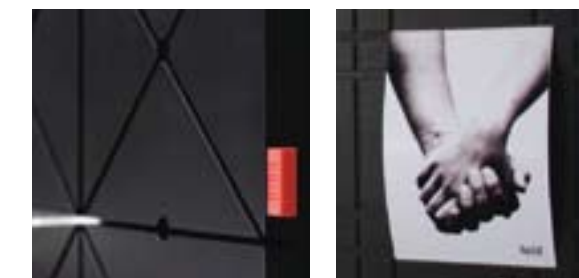
Revolutionised market offering

HOLD is the outcome—understanding the common human urge to collect 'stuff' (intrinsically valuable, sentimentally significant objects, images and artworks) and display them as expression of self.

HOLD is a growing collection of innovative products that facilitate managing the important, valuable 'stuff' in our lives.

The results

Product release through selected New Zealand outlets from late 2006 has delivered results far exceeding expectations. "It's early days and we know test results in New Zealand don't extrapolate directly to results offshore," says Legacy Timber's managing director, Hagan Provan. "But in the first few months, with new products, we've sold four times as many units as with the old range and twice as much as we expected." The complete Hold product range will hit New Zealand and the world in August.



Above: Redefining the customer experience and refreshing the visual identity have both been part of the process that will see Firestone become more than a tyre shop. Right: Interior design consultants and space planners Lloyd Sinton Design Associates partnered with Firestone and DNA on bringing the store interiors to life



Escaping the 'commodity bind' has revolutionised a traditional family business. Hold's future is now about design-led product development



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It's easy being green

Branding allows staff to make a difference

Something new is happening at Contact Energy's head office. As you wash your hands at the basin a sign on the towel dispenser reminds you the towels are made from trees. It doesn't tell you what to do, but prods you to think about how you do things.

Around the office you find only one rubbish bin for every four people. The kitchen has recycling bins, and an organics/composting bin as well. Recycling bins for plastics, cans, glass and paper are easy to spot—they're dotted all around the office. The printer automatically prints double sided and, again, you're reminded that the paper you use comes from trees.

None of this came about by accident. This deliberate campaign to cut waste and carbon emissions is delivering results.

Trina Stevens heads up Contact's newly-formed Green Office Team. "We've run the campaign on a number of fronts," Trina says. "Naturally getting our offices certified CarboNZero was a priority for Contact, given our challenge to the whole energy generation sector

to decrease its carbon emissions by 40 percent and our challenge to our own customers to decrease their own carbon emissions.

"Our photocopying paper consumption has decreased an estimated 40 percent since we changed all machines nationwide to double-sided printing, which is an amazing outcome for such a simple and commonsense step," she says.

"When we introduced recycling and composting, we reduced head office waste by 50 percent in just two weeks, which was an outstanding result.

"We're trying to make it easier for our employees to decrease their own carbon emissions. We've launched a carbon emissions calculator on our website, and our people can work out their own carbon emissions. If they choose to pay to off-set those emissions, Contact will match their contributions dollar-for-dollar. Basically it's really walking the talk."

Patrick Smellie, Contact's brand manager, agrees. Contact has a strong brand platform of leadership and individual accountability—giving

as much control as possible to the individual. Smellie says the 'I CAN' internal brand campaign used to promote the green initiatives is about how people within Contact behave.

"It's an extremely simple, powerful, flexible statement. It's also very strong graphically. So we've managed to create a lot of impact with the campaign.

"As far as I'm concerned this is branding at its most successful—when behaviour and belief are completely aligned, and then delivered through a really punchy, relevant, original graphic approach."

Winners don't get comfortable

Branding motivates a winning attitude at Zespri

Aligning an internationally-dispersed and culturally-diverse organisation around a single set of commercial objectives was also the challenge that faced Zespri when it recently

launched its new strategic plan for employees and stakeholders, using Auckland PR company Exceltium. Zespri needed to ensure its people understood the challenges ahead in remaining top of the game in an international market set to become more competitive.

Strategic plans can be boring and difficult to engage with, so choosing a message and a delivery medium that cut to the chase was vital.

'Winners don't get comfortable' was the campaign line, built on a sports analogy of the work involved in remaining a supreme international athlete. Within two months of the campaign's launch, every employee had developed new key performance indicators aligned to the new strategic plan.

The success of the campaign also derived from the close integration of image and copy. Strong headlines, close-up photography, well displayed facts and very direct copy left no room for apathy.

"The campaign had to be bigger and bolder than what Zespri had done before to underline

its importance," says Zespri's grower communications manager, Melanie Palmer.

"What's more, we needed universal images and language that would connect as powerfully in Europe as in Asia or New Zealand. That everyone's KPIs were aligned within two months was a significant step in getting everyone pointing in the same direction."

Origin Design developed the brand strategy and campaign execution for Contact Energy, and the brand direction and visual identity for Zespri.

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'I can' is a multi-faceted campaign to reduce waste and carbon emissions throughout Contact Energy

Zespri's new strategic plan is designed around the idea that 'winners don't get comfortable'



A fresh take

Red Cactus brings the flavour back into KFC packaging

When packaging design specialist Red Cactus was given the task of redesigning the packaging for KFC Australasia, the first thing staff did was to go down to their local KFC restaurant and buy the biggest bucket of chicken they could find.

Back at the studio the mouth watering smell of KFC permeated the office and the result was pandemonium. All work immediately ceased and designers came running into the kitchen with cries of hunger and cravings for hot chicken.

A result of this frenzied feast was the conception of an idea that broke the rules of traditional fast food packaging and provided a fresh new approach to the client's brief.

A new look for KFC

Yum! Restaurants International (Australia) came to Red Cactus with a brief to provide a confident and fresh new look for the company's packaging. Yum! Restaurants wanted a design

that reminded consumers why they chose KFC, and reinforced KFC's brand promise of unbeatable taste. KFC saw taste—whether from the 11 secret herbs and spices coating the chicken, or from the seasoning on the chips—as the one thing that set them apart above everyone else.

Packaging in the fast food arena needs to act differently from conventional pack design. Conventional packs sit next to each other, all working hard at saying that they're the strongest, fastest, tastiest or sexiest brand among their competitors. In fast food the rules change because consumers don't necessarily rely on the packaging to make their decision. Instead, the decision process is shaped by things like the menu board or point of sale material. So instead of designing packs that focused on the benefits of individual products, Red Cactus had to produce a design that engaged with the consumer and motivated them to tuck in.

A good idea emerges from some finger lickin'

As Red Cactus' design director Devin Fennell heard the design team's moans of delight as they 'researched' the buckets of chicken, the concept for the packaging came to life.

The idea was to use the consumer's language on the pack; statements of sensory delight that encapsulated what it was like to eat KFC. The team started listening to how consumers spoke about KFC, looking at online groups and speaking to hundreds of people in the street and in-store. What eventuated from this was a collection of 'hunger statements' from consumers—in their own words.

"People who eat KFC love it," says Red Cactus managing director Chris Chong. "They are passionate and emotional when they speak about it. What has come through in the language on our packaging is the emotion and

senses that are bought to life when people eat KFC," he explains.

Unlike most forms of fast food packaging, KFC's 'hunger statements' are from the perspective of the consumer, so instead of KFC or Colonel Sanders speaking, it was the consumers themselves. The aim was to form a connection with consumers and fuel their excitement about the product.

"KFC has taken a leadership position by changing the paradigm for fast food packaging," says account director Kate Imlach. "This project allowed us to design some bold, confident graphics that really broke the moulds of traditional packaging. We believe that this design is confident, unapologetic and moves the brand forward. It makes people pay attention to the packaging and most importantly it allows them to relate to it."

Using the consumer's own voice is part of an international trend. In the December

2005 issue of *Package Design Magazine*, Robert Walters says consumers are choosing products based on more than just brand name and price. The packaging is a product's voice and it must convey all that is unique about the brand. It's important to connect with consumers on a very personal level in order to become memorable.

In KFC's case, the idea went much further than just packaging; Yum! Restaurants recognised the opportunity to translate the idea through to in-store point-of-sale material. "Once we had developed the hunger statements, we started to think about how we could extend them into all of the touch-points in store," says Fennell. "We tailored the point of sale material—everything from entry and exit signs to counter mats—so you couldn't miss the story as you walked through the restaurant."

The result

The new packaging was launched in February 2007 and has since rolled out throughout Australia and New Zealand. The response from the client and store owners has been positive says Yum! Restaurants Marketing Director Jason Marker. "Red Cactus demonstrated real insight into the KFC brand, with the new packaging approach showing a true understanding of our consumers thinking and behaviour."

More importantly, stores are seeing consumers interact with the packaging. The new packs engage the consumer and have brought life into a functional item.

"We wanted to develop something that was in line with the brand tone and personality: energetic, fun, youthful and social," says Chong. "The new design has been a resounding success and something that Red Cactus is very proud of."



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When getting it right means everything

Catherine Robertson shares the inside story of two branding projects

At Robertson Communications, some of our most satisfying branding projects have been those we've developed for growing businesses.

That's because businesses that are growing or starting up have so much more at stake. The brand you develop is not just a visual reflection of some big corporation's committee-concocted 'brand values'. It represents real people, with real passions, ideals and ambitions.

So although these branding projects may be more satisfying, they're also much more daunting. What we develop will make a genuine difference to our client's business—if we get it right. Let's face it—a big corporation will still truck on, even if 80 percent of the staff and customers loathe the new logo. That won't be case with a growing business. The brand is the company. Getting it right means everything.

Here are two examples of branding projects for growing companies that gave us enormous satisfaction—Tabak Business Sales and The Immigrant's Son coffee.

Tabak Business Sales

Tabak sells businesses, and extremely successfully. The company has expanded to five branches nationwide and continues to achieve mightily ambitious growth targets. Tabak ranked 23rd in last year's Deloitte's Fast 50.

However, they had no brand presence, and no consistent collateral, advertising or marketing material. To be fair, growth had been their priority, but in 2006, the Tabak directors decided it was time to focus on the brand. And they chose Robertson Communications to help them with it.

Our first assessment was simple. The Tabak team, who were so successful at selling others' businesses, were grossly underselling their own. Their brand (or lack of it) in no way reflected the calibre of their company.

We focused first on getting to the truth of the Tabak story. When the brand is the business, there's no point trying to labour over 'values'. Instead we asked questions. Why did they start the business? What got them out of bed in the

morning? What pissed them off about their industry that they were determined to change? What did their customers really feel about them?

What we found was a principled, passionate and entrepreneurial group of people, who were determined to raise the bar for business sales in New Zealand. They dealt with only quality businesses and serious buyers, and genuinely believed that a good and fair result benefited not only the seller and the buyer, but also the whole New Zealand economy.

From that story grew the new-look identity, collateral, new website, direct marketing and advertising. As every branch needed to create tailored sales collateral often and quickly, we made it easy for them by keeping the 'brand rules' simple and supplying electronic templates. And this month, we will launch a nationwide advertising campaign.

Our greatest satisfaction is not with the work but with seeing how it boosts the company's pride and confidence. As Tabak director, Kevin Kerr, wrote to us recently:



"Tabak has now established a leading presence in the marketplace. We have created awareness of what we offer to potential clients and developed a strong sense of belief within the company. Thank you so much for believing in us and helping us develop a strong consistent brand that has enabled us to become the leaders in the business brokering sector."

The Immigrant's Son

For a new coffee roasting company, Wellington is a daunting market to break into. It is very well-served with long-established high-profile roasteries. And while each roastery would argue its coffee is superior, the real strength of each brand lies in the loyalty of its consumers. So any new brand has to stand out among the myriad on offer and encourage consumers to forgo their loyalties and try something new.

Andrew Meo approached Robertson Communications and told us he'd been tossing up between two options for a name for his new

coffee business. One was 'safe' and would sit comfortably amongst his competitors. The second option was more unusual, perhaps even a little risky. We knew immediately that this was the only choice. The name was The Immigrant's Son.

One of our branding principles is that emotion drives action. Jonathan Haidt, social psychologist at University of Virginia, recently wrote, "It is only because our emotional brains work so well that our reasoning can work at all."

Nothing makes an emotional connection like a story. We love stories—they make us laugh, gasp and cry; they power up our emotions, if you like. The more genuine emotion a story induces in us, the more we connect not only with the story but also with its teller.

Just as we did with Tabak, we worked first to find out the real story behind The Immigrant's Son. And the branding we developed takes storytelling to its literal extreme, by incorporating in it the tale of Andrew Meo's Italian immigrant father, his love

for well-made, real coffee, and his son's desire to continue that tradition.

Some of the reactions it has provoked are quite extraordinary.

"One client actually cried," says Meo. "I've had people stop outside my roastery and spend time reading the story from start to finish. Some will even make a point of coming in and saying how much they enjoyed it. People with European heritage have said how much it reminded them of their own upbringing."

While Meo does not wish to seriously challenge the biggest Wellington roasteries, he has been more than happy with the amount of business he has picked up from numerous cafes, offices, gourmet food shops (including Moore Wilson's) and individual customers.

"People have sought me out," he says. "And purely because they have heard my story from others and liked the sound of it. I've told my story and now people are telling it to each other."

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The new Tabak website reflects the energy of the company



A nationwide advertising campaign is about to launch



A true story about real coffee. An identity with a history

