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Get design working harder for your business



## Leading by design

Stepping  
outside the  
comfort zone

### Client

Outposts Ltd

### Designer

Mytton Williams

### Project summary

Although Outposts Ltd knew that design was important to business development, it wasn't high on the company's agenda. Leading by Design changed all that.

The South West Design Programme has grown out of the Leading by Design programme. Building on the goodwill and reputation established under Leading by Design, we continue to work with funding provided by the South West Regional Development Agency, helping small and medium sized businesses in the South West realise their potential through high quality design advice.

# Client summary

Outposts Ltd is a small but leading specialist in adventure holidays. The company was founded in 1998 by a husband and wife team to provide youth expeditions in South Africa. In 2000 the company merged with Outdoor Challenge to offer greater opportunities for worldwide expeditions, UK-based adventure activities, and team development courses.

The company has six core members of staff and two permanent instructors, based at their offices on the Quantocks near Taunton, supported by a team of freelance personnel, based all around the world.

Outposts Ltd's Team & Personal Development Clients include: GAP, KPMG, BAR Honda, Ford Motor Company, and its' School Clients are: Tormead, Eagle House, St Catherine's Bramley, The Elms, Tudor Hall, Lady Eleanor Holles School and Blundells.

Outposts Ltd has a huge product offering that includes:

- Individually designed / programmed adventure activity packages for individuals, schools, youth groups and people of all ages and abilities in the UK and adventure travel holidays in Africa. These can include mountain trekking, riding, canoeing, kayaking, white water rafting, fishing, shooting, surfing, Coasteering, rock climbing, caving, orienteering, survival, Duke of Edinburgh Award training / expeditions and abseiling.
- Challenging youth expeditions in selected locations all across the world.
- Fascinating expeditions (including a game ranger course) battlefield and cultural tours.
- Corporate and personal development training programmes.
- Charity-linked fundraising challenges. (Abseils, Survival weekends, Team Challenges.)

People can choose from a number of different activity packages which include a mix of the above activities, or create their own bespoke packages to suit their needs.

# Designer summary

mytton williams

Mytton Williams is a well-known design and communications consultancy established in 1996 and based in Bath. The company works with companies to create and manage their brand identities, through printed communications, editorial and technical information, website design, advertising, promotion, packaging, and signage.

It has seven employees and an impressive international client list, including the Environment Agency, Clarks, the Royal Academy of Dance, and KPMG.

## Design process

Outposts Ltd was keen to revisit its market strategy. The company knew that to create effective marketing and attract more business, it had to communicate its product offering in a very concise and targeted manner. So it turned to Leading by Design.

Key personnel from Outposts Ltd attended one of the Leading by Design workshops during the summer. Later they met with two Business Link Wessex Advisors who used a design diagnostic tool to review the company's current situation and establish its design needs.

Business Link Wessex then put Outposts Ltd in contact with three designers who it felt had the specialist expertise the company needed. Outposts went on to select Mytton Williams.

Despite the availability of a small grant through the project, Outposts Ltd found Mytton Williams' original quote too high. The company went to a Business Link website specialist for further advice and was put in touch with alternative designers.

After considering the options, and still impressed with the agency's outstanding credentials, Outposts Ltd decided to contact Mytton Williams again.

Outposts Ltd met Mytton Williams in November. And following discussions, Outposts are now using Mytton Williams on a consultancy basis to look at the company's project in four distinct stages.

To start the design process, Outposts Ltd shared with Mytton Williams background information about the company, its 'personality' and what it hoped to achieve through marketing.

Mytton Williams then developed a programme of work that would meet the client's brief. The designers suggested simplifying the company's product range and developing a smarter, more professional image, whilst retaining the company's personality. They also proposed adapting and developing the client's current website – with new templates to reflect a more corporate image – as well as creating new letterhead.

# Outcome

One of the biggest challenges Outposts Ltd and Mytton Williams faced was creating an identity that summed up Outpost Ltd's diverse specialisms:

- Schools and youth programmes
- Corporate training
- Adrenaline activities for adults
- Bespoke holidays in Africa

Four seemingly disparate services. One common factor: knowledge and expertise. Working together, Outposts Ltd and Mytton Williams clarified and streamlined the product range, creating both a more cohesive identity, alongside more effective ways of working and marketing.

It's been a valuable experience for both partners, as Outposts Ltd's DD Kingscote points out:

"There was no point spending money updating our website or designing new literature without working out who we were as a business. Bob Mytton's experience and overview helped us redefine our identity... and saw us realise how wasteful new materials would have been without a proper exploration of our brand and strategy".

And thanks to the strong relationship developed, Outposts Ltd plans to make good design an integral part of its business in the future.

## Key learning points

Design is often considered to lie outside the core needs of a business and is often viewed, particularly by small companies, as a major investment without a guaranteed return.

The Leading by Design initiative helped Outposts Ltd understand how important design was for the business. As co-owner of Outposts Ltd, DD Kingscote, explains:

“It is easy in a small company... to become too entrenched and to lose sight of how one is viewed by the outside world. There comes a time when one must make a leap of faith and enhance ones visual image to correspond with a growing reputation. As anyone knows with a small business, every penny must be accounted for and the opportunity of some financial help and design advice was very appealing. We hope that the end result and expense will pay dividends, not only with our identity but also by providing the opportunity to clarify “who we are” and “where we are going.”



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If you would like more information on the South West Design Programme, please call

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