

Business stories: TasteTech

TasteTech discovers that design is more than skin deep, gaining a coherent vision alongside its new identity

Introducing TasteTech

TasteTech is a specialist manufacturer and supplier of encapsulated ingredients and flavourings to the food industry – typically used in bakery, confectionery, and chewing gum. Over the past 17 years the business has grown from innovative start-up to international supplier, with 35 staff and a 31,000 sq ft factory. It has developed important technical processes including controlled release encapsulation, improved spray drying and liquid compounding which it employs to help customers solve their product and processing problems (for instance, extending product shelf life).

Quality is key to its offering: the business has gained ISO 14001, ISO 9001:2008 accreditation, plus Grade A status in the British Retail Consortium's Global Standard for Food Safety.

Background

TasteTech suffered a major shock in 2007 when founder and MD, Roger Sinton, died suddenly. Following the tragedy, Janis Sinton assumed a lead role, building on earlier business success to achieve significant sales growth.

She drove an internal business review focussing on sales strategy, staff development, internal communication and production efficiency. TasteTech's new focus? Becoming an international market leader, and achieving 'top ten' status in its field.

To achieve this target the business needed to improve communications, sample packaging and exhibition collateral. However, as an established and successful brand, any changes to original identity needed careful consideration.

Designing Demand input

After several exploratory meetings with the Designing Demand Design Adviser, Lynne Elvins, TasteTech agreed to meet with several design agencies to discuss the project and their capabilities. The company was particularly impressed by Bath-based designers Brand Tonic, and commissioned the agency to redesign their brand identity and new exhibition materials.

Brand Tonic were very aware that TasteTech had not changed its identity since start-up and fully recognised the difficulties of rolling out branding changes across all the company's activities.

Simon Rumble of Brand Tonic commented: 'Corporate identity work is a very cultural project. It is essential to get to know the client's business and to understand their sector and their competition.'

The agency toured the TasteTech factory, met the team and gained an understanding of the business before providing initial concepts. Options ranged from slight modifications to radical redesign.

Project deliverables

Brand Tonic delivered an updated identity, comprising of strapline, strong revised logo and a clear, fresh blue and white colour palette, all explained by clear brand guidelines.

Simon explains his agency's thinking: 'B2B brand identities are often very functional with a low emotive content. Most of TasteTech's competition comes from major impersonal corporations and we felt there was a real opportunity to show how they could offer a more personal, problem-solving technical service to differentiate them in the market. The brand encapsulates this sentiment, with a double T logo contained in a soft scientific bubble that is both modern and approachable.'

The success of the branding work created a close working relationship between TasteTech and the agency. In Simon's words: 'As well as looking outwards we also felt that it was important for the new identity to work well internally so that it was clearly understood, reflected the spirit of the company and helped to empower people.'

This identity has been rolled out across a range of materials, from website and stationery to exhibition collateral, and a new brochure, newsletter and corporate literature are all in discussion. In addition, TasteTech is developing increased internal confidence in using the brand guidelines to fulfil a range of marketing requirements.

The results

The new brand launched at the Food Ingredients Europe show in Frankfurt. TasteTech certainly made an impact, generating more interest and appointments than they'd ever expected.

And the experience has been an eye-opening one for the TasteTech team – it has brought the team together and helped them move forward strategically. Finally, they have gained a very different perspective of the value of design. Robert McCarthy, internal project manager, explains: 'At the outset, we thought all we needed to update was our packaging... but we soon discovered that we needed to pull back and address the company brand as a whole.'

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'I certainly think that our new branding helped us present ourselves in a much more professional, contemporary and modern way. It also ensured that we went to the show with consistent branding across all of our marketing materials and so anyone who visited got a very clean, corporate view of TasteTech.'

On reflection...

The company commented that the experience had shown them how design can improve business performance and increased their understanding of what a skilled designer can offer to companies. It has shown how subtle development and modernisation of a brand can retain key established values whilst refreshing and modernising it for their worldwide customer base.

Yet it wasn't an achievement they could have easily managed alone. In Robert's words: 'Getting a Designing Demand Design Adviser involved helped significantly. Lynne Elvins encouraged and lead us through what could potentially have been a very time consuming and stressful process with relative ease.'

'They (the South West Design Programme) helped us to take stock and look at our image from the outside, providing impartial advice to see us make the right decisions during the design process.'

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