



Designing Demand | Case Study | Crystal Spring

Crystal Spring's design make-over is a clear winner

Background

When reflexologist Sally Laird bought Crystal Spring in 2005 the company had a single – albeit successful – product, an alum-based deodorant. Since then Sally and her son Thomas have expanded the business, adding other natural healthcare products to the range.

The challenge

While the business grew significantly after Sally took over, escalating competition began to affect sales. When Thomas came on board in 2006 he recognised that the company image was dated and failed to promote the product benefits. He wanted to create a strong brand identity as well as formulate a growth strategy.

The response

An overhaul of the corporate identity is encompassing not just the visual appearance of packaging and marketing materials but also all written information – the tone is now more contemporary, informal and user-friendly. In addition, 'Crystal Spring' has become an umbrella brand under which other products are positioned.

The outcome

The new approach has resulted in very positive feedback and a marketing drive to boost awareness of the new brand is planned. The work is ongoing and will include a re-vamp of the company's website, but all the signs are that the new-look Crystal Spring is clearly a winner.

“ Sally and Thomas recognised that design expertise, combined with their own passion for their products and business acumen, would play a vital role in enhancing Crystal Spring's market position. ”

Re-design unites disparate brands into one 'family'

From a single product to a range of deodorants, detoxing footpads and organic arthritis oils, Crystal Spring has come a long way in three years.

The company was launched in 1992 to sell a solid deodorant stone imported from Thailand. With no significant competition the natural, alum-based product sold well through outlets like Holland and Barrett and Bioforce.

In 2005 Crystal Spring was bought by reflexologist Sally Laird who saw the potential in developing the natural product range. She was later joined by her son Thomas, armed with a degree in business management and a belief in the company ethos that matched his mother's.

As well as developing a liquid form of the popular deodorant, they introduced reflexology products and acquired a small company that produced an organic massage oil for arthritis and sports injuries.

Recognising the need to keep ahead of the game in the face of increasing competition, Sally and Thomas attended a free Designing Demand workshop in the summer of 2007. Developed by the Design Council, funded by SEEDA and delivered by Business Link, Designing Demand helps companies to make strategic design decisions and set up and run design projects.

"The workshop emphasised the importance of design in business," said Thomas. "We were also impressed with the Generate aspect of the programme, which offers help with formulating and implementing a business growth strategy, and decided to take the plunge."

Pradeep Sharma, one of a group of experienced designers recruited by the Design Council to mentor businesses on the Designing Demand programme, was assigned to oversee the project.

From several potential designers, Pradeep helped Sally and Thomas choose Southampton-based 3 Men & a Suit.

"This was a great decision," said Thomas. "Not only have they been brilliant to work with but the results have far exceeded our original expectations."

Graphic designer Brook Fabian relished the challenge of co-ordinating a brand identity for the range of products that were being presented in disparate packaging under various

names. Now Crystal Spring has become an umbrella brand under which the products brands of Salt of the Earth, Detoxology and JRub are positioned.

"We have worked hard to create a family of products that sit happily together and convey the ethical values of the brand through total product honesty and integrity," he said.

"By studying current marketing trends of leading FMCGs such as Innocent Drinks we have been working at a strategic level to maximise the creative and commercial potential of the products. New packaging for the core range is nearly complete and eventually packaging for all the products will be designed.

"We are also working on the website for which we have already developed a new visual style. Our aim is to not only improve its appearance but also to increase its functionality to give users an overall better online experience."

Thomas Laird pronounces the Designing Demand programme "brilliant".

He said: "We signed up because we wanted to improve the visual identity of our products but, thanks to the programme in general and to Pradeep in particular, we have been set on a path that, in under a year, has fundamentally changed our business for the better."

Jackie Walker, regional programme manager for Designing Demand at Business Link in the South East, said: "Sally and Thomas recognised that design expertise, combined with their own passion for their products and business acumen, would play a vital role in enhancing Crystal Spring's market position.

"This, together with the help they receive through the Generate project, is putting them on the road to greater success."



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