

Creditsafe

Consulting for a UK market leader

Brands are a conversation...

OK...that's great, but what on earth is a 'brand' ?

THE PROJECT

We were called in to review the user interface of the client's website, but we were soon asked to develop their new brand and supporting style guide.

THE CLIENT

As the leading online supplier of credit reports, Credit Safe is the most chosen by UK companies. Credit Safe was established 5 years ago in the UK and now employs over 160 people at its headquarters in Caerphilly.

Over 35,000 companies throughout Europe have benefited from their online business and consumer credit reports. The company's goal is to become Europe's leading supplier of online financial data, and their success in Scandinavia suggests it's not beyond their reach.

THE BACKGROUND

Despite a thriving customer base, Credit Safe has always been viewed as an industry outsider. Competitors initially branded them the jumped-up 'dot-commers' and had come to resent them for undercutting the market.

They built the business through a no-frills acquisition campaign, where telesales agents would approach Financial Directors and demonstrate the Credit Safe system in real time. With a highly effective no-risk proposition, agents would close a high percentage of business at the first attempt.

Inevitably, this approach was a great success with smaller companies, but it wasn't quite enough to convince the larger corporate clients.

"A demo concluding with sample credit reports couldn't make the inroads we needed, so we added risk tracking software and peer group analysis to show parity with our competitors."

Gareth Kear, Corporate Affairs Director, Credit Safe

THE CHALLENGES

New programmes were bolted onto the site without a supporting infrastructure, with the result that the product and customer interface were becoming unwieldy. We were called in to unpick the interface, and recommend improvements to the user experience.

THE SOLUTION

Our consultants set about reorganising the website, creating a more linear structure that could better support the flood of new

functionality. We also reviewed the user interface and made comprehensive recommendations aimed at simplifying the online search process. Our goals were to make sure that the user felt at home with the system and to build in a series of opportunities for cross-selling.

Meanwhile the larger corporations were still showing resistance. Credit Safe decided to review their image, and appointed us as brand & marketing consultants.

Our new task was to open doors in the blue chip sector. But rebranding was a delicate balancing act, of appealing equally to old customers and new prospects.

THE PROCESS

We began by asking questions. What does the company stand for? What values and aspirations govern their internal and external image? How would the company like to be viewed, and what's the current market perception?

We spoke at length with staff, managers and customers before developing a new brand identity.

A brand is about much more than just a logo. It's the embodiment of an organisation's values, mission and identity. Barring the services you supply, the quality of your people and the customers you work with, it's the most important part of your business.

THE CONCEPT

We found a way forward in the company's dormant values. Bridging the established brand and corporate expectations was just a matter of building on unwritten standards that were already in place.

We built on their innovative status by creating a sense of leadership. We used their competitive reputation to build trust in the brand. And we added warmth to their trademark enthusiasm to broaden their commercial appeal.

THE END PRODUCT

The new look was unveiled in early 2006, with the tagline "The Business Information Experts". The brand we created was a natural progression of the old standard, designed to sit in both camps - the blue chip market as well as the old faithful client base.

We backed up the new look with a set of detailed brand guidelines. We wanted all staff to "live" the new brand, and not just see a change of logo - so we explained the

evolutionary process and how this had unearthed a set of hidden company values.

As a next step, we offered practical instructions for brand implementation. These included RGB colours, logo and font regulations and a set of PowerPoint templates. We then appointed a team of Brand Guardians to guide staff in the best use of the new corporate image.

Finally we rolled out a 12-month marketing strategy in support of the new brand. This meant policing individual acquisition and upsell campaigns as well as producing a suite of supporting materials for use in the field.

THE DIFFERENCE

Our technical and creative teams worked together to improve Credit Safe's product performance and reputation.

The new brand has been well received and is soon to be rolled out across Europe. Meanwhile, Directors are planning a "coming of age" campaign to celebrate the company's rites of passage.

"Sequence made a critical difference to our branding and marketing strategy. The headway we've made together has equipped our sales people to make sizeable gains with the target market. Both technically and creatively, this project was managed with incredible energy and commitment."

Gareth Kear, Corporate Affairs Director, Credit Safe