

Taking action on stroke

Category
Corporate/brand identity

Sub-category
Design and
implementation costs
over £100,000

Client Company
The Stroke Association

Design Consultancy
The Team

Current date
28.06.2013

There are approximately 152,000 strokes in the UK every year. That is more than one every five minutes.

One in five strokes is fatal. Stroke causes about 7% of deaths in men and 10% of deaths in women. Stroke is a leading cause of adult disability. More than half of all stroke survivors are left dependent on others for everyday activities. For every cancer patient living in the UK, £295 is sent each year on medical research, compared to just £22 a year for every stroke patient.

The Stroke Association is the largest organisation combating stroke in the UK. It is at the forefront in the provision of medical research funding, services, support and information for the general public, stroke survivors, their families and carers and health professionals.



52% increase in appeal income

60% increase of online donations

200% increase in regular givers

Demand for services is on the increase, while donations to charities overall during the current economic climate are on the decline. Stroke is comparable to cancer in its prevalence, awfulness and socio-economic impact. To achieve its objectives The Stroke Association felt it is vital to be seen to be a major charity dealing with a major health issue.

The charity launched its refreshed brand with Action on Stroke month in May 2012. This encapsulated the brand idea helping to bust myths about stroke that were marginalising stroke survivors, and preventing people joining the stroke community and taking action on stroke.

The requirements of the brief were succinct and straight forward

- 1 Review what had already gone before and identify further research requirements
- 2 Set about a programme of comprehensive internal engagement
- 3 Development, testing and refinement of the positioning work already completed
- 4 Carry out an audit of visual and verbal identity
- 5 Develop and test creative responses
- 6 Support the charity in implementation, planned for Spring 2012
- 7 Measure and evaluate the programme



I couldn't have coped without the Stroke Association. They were always there.

Michael Bell,
Stroke survivor

The Stroke Association is the UK's largest charity dedicated to the provision of medical research funding, services, support and information for the general public, stroke survivors, their families and carers and health professionals.

As a diverse organisation, The Stroke Association wanted a brand that would benefit every aspect of its work from services to research to fundraising, while being instantly recognisable. It needed to bust some myths about stroke that were marginalising stroke survivors and preventing people joining the stroke community and taking action on stroke.

It embarked on a new five-year strategic plan in 2010. It was ambitious with challenging key performance indicators. The charity had achieved a great deal over the previous five years, yet perceptions were not where they needed to be. Brand positioning work had started within the charity in 2008 and culminated in an agency brief in June 2010.

Research showed that the old brand identity was fragmented and not building recognition as the UK's leading stroke charity. The verbal identity was not integrated and lacked clarity, urgency, humanity and relevance to people affected by stroke. Moreover, the charity spoke for stroke survivors, rather than giving them a platform to be seen and heard. With health high on the public and political agenda, the timing was right for leveraging maximum impact.

The result of the work would allow the charity to describe brand attributes and a promise that would clarify decision-making. It gave the charity confidence, consistency and contemporary professionalism to take its proper share of attention.

The core objective was to come up with a design answer that expressed a brand based on insight and is authentic. Other objectives were to:

- Be the change behind how the world addresses stroke
- Move to get the reputation the charity deserves
- Build advocacy based on a brand borne of genuineness
- To activate a stroke community with The Stroke Association at the catalytic heart
- Be a foundation upon which services would be revitalised and evolved
- Function as an organisation more relevant to its diverse audiences
- To be financially strong
- To renew service contracts with the NHS.

The objectives, which were seen to be ambitious, supported wider objectives within the five-year strategic plan, which was updated this year to reflect changing circumstances, particularly the effects of policy changes and the current economic climate. Many of the targets in the initial strategy were for 2015 and where possible this submission reports of progress where the brand process and the design of the identity has impacted on the objectives outlined.

Description

The Stroke Association was, back in 2010, coming up to its twentieth birthday. It was already the UK's largest charity dedicated to combating stroke with an annual turnover of £26m, 750 staff and offices and branches throughout the UK. Its services helped 35,000 people a year and its information service dealt with 20,000 enquiries.

The charity provides information, support and services to stroke survivors, their families and carers. It also supports and promotes research into stroke prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and long-term care. And it campaigns vigorously to ensure stroke is treated as a priority by Government and the health authorities.



The Stroke Association is the largest organisation combating stroke in the UK. Many overseas stroke organisations look to The Stroke Association as a model for operation. In the UK there are a number of other charities concerned with stroke, either wholly or partly. These tend be national (Scotland, Northern Ireland) and often tackle a wider remit including heart and lung disease, or focusing on speech and language therapy.

The Stroke Association also needs to compete with other major health charities, as well as charities more generally. Stroke is comparable to cancer in its prevalence, awfulness and social-economic impact. To achieve its objectives The Stroke Association felt it is vital to be seen to be a major charity dealing with a major health issue, despite being 90% smaller in income.

Stroke is no respecter of age or social class. It is the single biggest cause of disability in the UK. In 2010 stroke was the fourth largest cause of death in the UK after cancer, heart disease and respiratory disease, causing almost 50,000 deaths. Every five minutes, someone in the UK has a stroke. That's 152,000 people a year. In 2010, one in three of those people would have died, one will experience life-long disability and be dependent on others and one will recover, if not fully, at least significantly.



Volunteering has saved me and has given me back my confidence and a sense of self-worth. Having a stroke was devastating but it's good to know that I'm still good at something.

Lynn Scarth,
Stroke survivor





I would strongly encourage every GP to work with voluntary organisations like the Stroke Association as it is a great way of raising health issues within a local community.

Dr Richard Davies, Assistant Clinical Chair Redditch and Bromsgrove Clinical Commission

The charity also competes with other charities, and public and private sector organisations in the provision of services for the NHS. All these service contracts came up for renewal in March 2013.

Fundamentally, The Stroke Association needs to engage the following people:

- Those needing support practically and emotionally, for themselves or for those they care for
- Professionals in health and social care who can direct stroke survivors and their loved ones to The Stroke Association for support
- Researchers to help the charity achieve its vision of a world where there are fewer strokes and for more people to survive their stroke
- Anyone who has, or may consider, donating money to The Stroke Association
- Organisations looking for specialist support in delivery of local services, especially in the NHS
- Policymakers and government who have the resources and clout to make things happen, like public information campaigns and prioritising specialist stroke services.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations recently on its website from the most recently available figures (see table below).

Median and mean amounts given per month, per donor, 2004/05 – 2011/12 (£)

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Median amount per donor	10	10	10	10	10	12	11	10
Mean amount per donor	24	28	29	32	30	31	31	27

Similarly, statutory income and grants have declined, so competition in tougher economic times is increasingly hard to achieve an even greater share of the overall giving market.

There are approximately 152,000 strokes in the UK every year. That is more than one every five minutes.

There are approximately 1.1 million stroke survivors living in the UK.

Stroke is a leading cause of adult disability. More than half of all stroke survivors are left dependent on others for everyday activities.

High blood pressure is the most important risk factor for stroke, contributing to about 50% of all strokes.

One in five strokes is fatal. Stroke causes about 7% of deaths in men and 10% of deaths in women.

In 2010 stroke was the fourth largest cause of death in the UK after cancer, heart disease and respiratory disease, causing almost 50,000 deaths.

For every 1,000 patients who receive thrombolysis, a clot busting treatment, 80 will live more independently.

For every cancer patient living in the UK, £295 is spent each year on medical research, compared with just £22 a year for every stroke patient.



Project Launch Date	May 2012
Size of design budget research and engagement.....	£90,000
Staff and volunteer clothing	£15,000
Event material	£15,000
Overall budget	£120,000

Existing collateral and materials were managed so there was no waste and all other new material was introduced through existing budgets including the launch activity.

Our purpose

We are leading the fight against stroke

Our promise

To be your ally in stroke

Our principles

**Professional
Passionate
Innovative
Working together
Respectful
Open**

Our personality

**Determined
Expert
Caring
Spirited
Dynamic**

Research showed the old brand was not representative, lacking relevance to audiences, and creating barriers to engagement.

Staff, volunteers, donors and service users spoke consistently of the warmth, care and insight offered, yet the identity appeared cold, medical, unapproachable and old-fashioned, even as part of the NHS. There was low level support comparative to the numbers of people affected by stroke.

Interactive and creative workshops were ran with these audiences and health professionals across the UK to co-create a believable, achievable and credible brand idea. People told heart-wrenching stories honestly and plainly of sadness and loss, while others spoke of courage and daily battles against the effects of stroke.

It was clear people turned to the charity as it understood, cared and respected them. It was there as long as they needed them. The language of healthcare is famously wrapped in military metaphors, such as to "fight disease" and "stage war on cancer". It was the way people described their journey and their relationship with The Stroke Association. The charity is their 'ally in stroke'. This promise proved relevant to all audiences from politicians to the media, volunteers to clinicians.

Together we created a brand model that captured 'four Ps' (shown left). We tested the ideas extensively among staff, the senior team, and trustees. And we went back to all to those people who had participated in the design of the brand to make sure we were on track.

During this process we looked at the suitability of The Stroke Association's name. A strong alternative contender, Action on Stroke, became the campaigning idea for the charity. The Stroke Association is who we are. Action on stroke is what we do.

In developing the design solution, an iterative approach was taken. It is more cost effective involving clients more closely. The result is stronger because it is better designed.

Outline of design solution

The following ideas help the design meet the objectives sought and overcome the challenges faced:

- Charities often try to own one colour. We chose three for distinctiveness and stand out
- The personalised typeface, 'Action', made communications instantly recognisable. It is friendly and approachable, its inspiration in paint strokes, a common therapy for stroke survivors, suggests individuality and originality
- A fresh graphic treatment made heroes of people and their stories, with a fresh boldness of message and graphics
- Visual and verbal requirement audits ensured guidelines were fit for purpose and templates simple to implement.

A significant employee and volunteer engagement programme was undertaken including:

- building a brand ambassador network
- running a directors' roadshow across the UK
- sharing a film created in-house to allow staff to air concerns
- conferences to create brand ownership
- blogs on the intranet showing the new brand and values in action.

This allowed for a confident brand launch externally.



My husband had a massive stroke over 12 years ago at only 36 years old. As a designer myself I've been shocked at the lack of creativity generally with charity branding. Despite all of Malcolm's disabilities, the biggest challenges are that people understand so little about stroke and the support we all can give to stroke sufferers. Being unable to walk without a brace, having no use of one hand, partly sighted, barely able to talk but a few words and unable to read and write is a major life changing overnight nightmare. The logo is simple and direct and the campaign is spot on for us – it's all about not being heard and the desperation of often being unable to speak. This is bang on! Well done creative team! Let's hope it opens people's eyes to this life-line charity!

Allison Miles in Design Week
(comment on article)



Community Walk

Meet at Community Hall, Arundel
Tuesday 15th May, 2012
11am to 3pm
Refreshments available
Contact Jane on 0208 123 4567

Walk with
us to take
action
on stroke

Action on Stroke Month, May 2012
Stroke Helpline 0303 3033 300
stroke.org.uk

Stroke
association

Summary of results

Our measures

- A** Be the change behind how the world addresses stroke
- B** Move to get the reputation the charity deserves
- C** Build advocacy based on a brand borne of genuineness
- D** To activate a stroke community with The Stroke Association at the catalytic heart
- E** Be a foundation upon which services would be revitalised and evolved
- F** Function as an organisation more relevant to its diverse audiences
- G** To be financially strong
- H** To renew service contracts with the NHS



The flagship bike ride event increased participants by 35%



Russell Kane, wears 150 Stroke Solidarity strings on his arms to mark the European Stroke Awareness Day and to show his support for Action on Stroke Month.

Research indicates 80% of general public prefer the new brand, describing it as striking, modern, caring and easy to relate to. 87% of staff think it benefits their work and the organisation.

Feedback says that the impact of the visual identity is provided by the colour-combination – this is what provides the distinct stand-out and memorability. **B,C,F**

The original five-year business strategy was written prior to the impact of recession and government austerity measures being introduced. Like many charities, The Stroke Association needed to focus on retaining income rather than growth. Nevertheless, since the rebrand income has grown from £26m in 2010 to over £31m income for the year ending 2013. Overall an excellent achievement, £1.06m ahead of the original budget.

Since rebranding:

- Campaigners' network increased from 500 to 5,689 members **C,D**
- Its flagship bike-ride event increased participants by 35% **D,G**
- Broadcast, print and online news coverage increased by 73% **A**
- Proactive approaches by journalists increased by approx. 25% **A**
- Unique visitors to the website increased by 11% **A,B**
- Appeal income has risen by 52% **C,D,G**
- Online donations have increased by 60% **G**
- The number of regular givers has doubled **C,D,G**
- Twitter followers rose from 5,000 to 30,000+ **A**
- Retweets increased by 50% **A**
- Facebook followers increased from 7,000 to 15,000 **A**
- Calls to Helpline rose from 20,000 to 22,500 making the service at capacity **F**
- Household names from business and celebrities started supporting the charity **B,D**

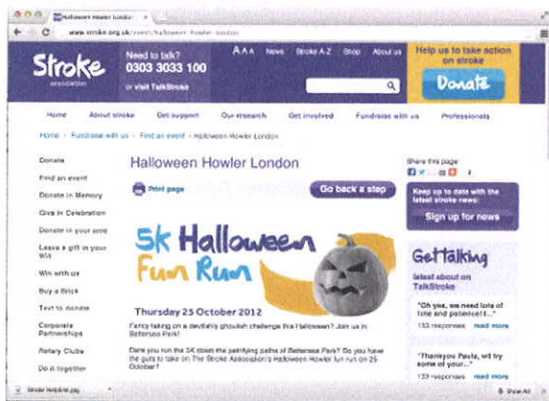
The Stroke Association is one of the highest risers in the Charity Brand Index (CBI), entering the top 50 for the first time. Familiarity with the brand has increased by 23% to 49%, relevance increased by 8%, trust increased by 19% (CBI) **B**

The Charity Awareness Monitor shows a 4% increase in propensity to support overall. Among people affected by stroke this rise is 7%, indicating that the charity's goal of increasing its relevance to people affected by stroke is working **B,C**

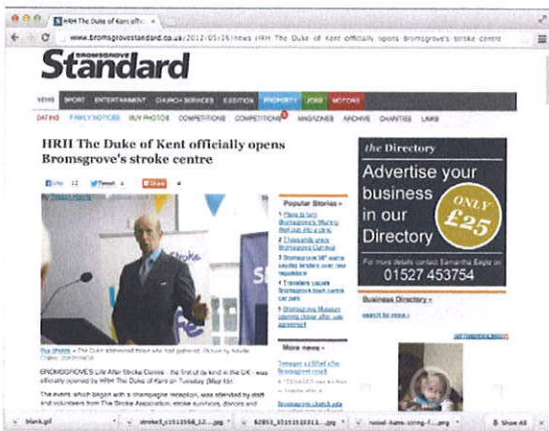
Despite swingeing cuts within the NHS, The Stroke Association has retained 99% of its service contracts and secured three new major contracts an amazing result given that the charity took a firm stand on quality and therefore were slightly more expensive than competitors. But its reputation and customer satisfaction levels won out. 88% of customers would recommend its services. This figure remains the same from March 2012 to March 2013 **A,E,F,G,H**

The Stroke Association has also developed a new service model based on the concept of being people-led to maximise relevance to the charity's core audience. The new service model is being rolled out late 2013 **E,G,H**

Summary of results



The Stroke Association website rallying for fundraisers



HRH The Duke of Kent officially opens
Bromsgrove's stroke centre



Stroke Helpline poster

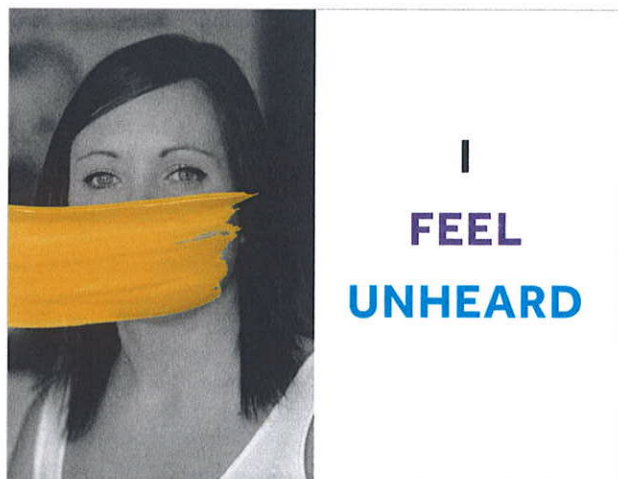
The latest charity barometer from media monitoring and evaluation service/ Metrica for May 2013 has prominently featured The Stroke Association.

The barometers allow organisations to benchmark themselves against competitors within their sector. The reports put monthly results in context to help organisations better understand media positioning, strengths and weaknesses in both social media and mainstream print media. The barometer does not take into account broadcast, which we know accounted for a lot of coverage in Action on Stroke month.

Action on Stroke Month has been a resounding success, in terms of both its media and social media work. The Stroke Association has climbed up an incredible 12 places in the all charity media volume chart from number 40 in April to number 28 for May. The Stroke Association's report on the emotional impact of stroke and the blood pressure hotspots stories were highlighted as significant stories for the month. Even more significantly, the charity was the fourth highest performer in the health sector behind Cancer Research UK, BHF and Alzheimer's UK and ahead of Diabetes UK and Parkinson's UK – no small feat for an organisation of its size.

Initial findings show that the value of the media coverage for this year's Action on Stroke Month is at £3.2m – up from £1.8m last year. This is an impressive level of growth and shows that the charity is now getting more quality coverage and not just passing mentions.

The Stroke Association has also performed well on social media, going up five places in the chart to number 37. Action on Stroke Month was a hot topic online.



Press ads

How the new branding fits with the mission

The charity's mission is to prevent stroke and be there for everyone affected by stroke so that they get the support they need. This means connecting with people. The new brand is an invitation to join the charity and the stroke community. It makes the charity noticeable, approachable and accessible, as evidenced by the increasing numbers of people engaging. It is building familiarity and trust in the charity that is critical to its mission.

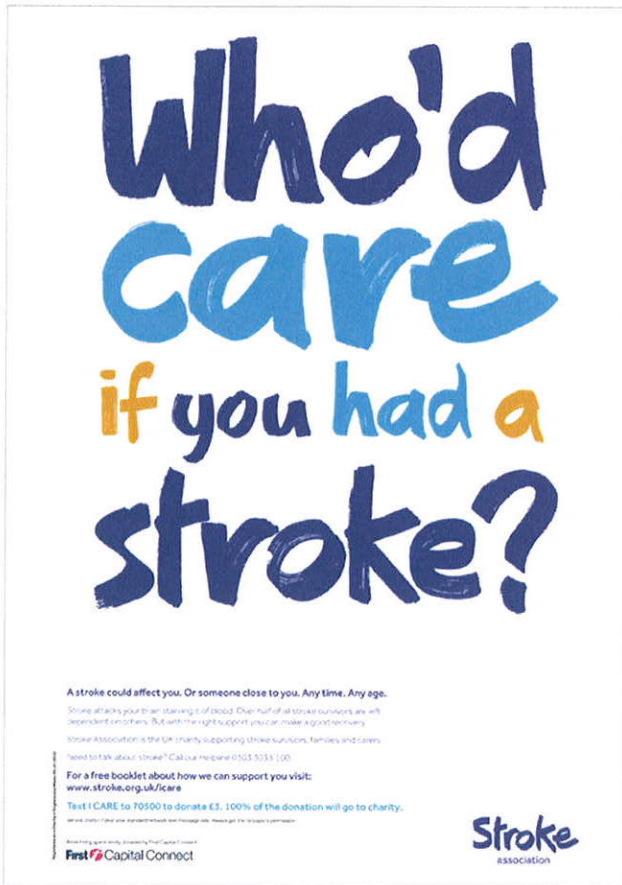
Making a real difference

40% of strokes could be prevented if high blood pressure was identified and treated. Increased standout and appeal have attracted more people to The Stroke Association's Know Your Blood Pressure events. In 2012/13 the charity delivered 900 prevention events and took 30,000 blood pressures. 25% of these were referred for further action: 19.3% routine GP follow up within a month, 5% urgent GP follow up and 0.1% advised hospital admission.

The people focus of the brand brought stroke survivors to the fore to tell their story, increasing outreach to others affected by stroke. Stroke Ambassadors were introduced advocating for the cause across the UK. The brand has become a platform for the stroke community, a new way of speaking brings the stroke community together, so that we speak with one voice and get heard.

What would have happened if The Stroke Association hadn't rebranded?

The fundamental question to be answered is 'what would have happened if The Stroke Association hadn't made this tremendous commitment and been brave in the execution of the design solution?' It can only speculate, but it is likely that hundreds, if not thousands, wouldn't be benefiting from the services The Stroke Association offers, thousands of fundraisers would be offering their support elsewhere, or to no one, the charity would have had to make employees redundant, and most significantly, thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of people will die prematurely or suffer the effects of stroke without needing to.



First Capital Connect poster



I didn't want to go [to Stroke Association's Positive Action for Stroke group] at first but I am so glad that my sister pushed me into going along. It's so nice to go to a group where everyone there knows what it's like to have a stroke. It's given me the determination to live my life the best I can. I now believe in myself again.

Eileen Matthews,
Stroke survivor

Although the charity benefits from advertising paid for by the Department of Health to highlight the risks of stroke – advertising it has lobbied for and advised on – The Stroke Association received no brand recognition for this activity. This advertising was repeated during the period since the rebrand, however its coverage didn't remotely touch previous campaigns.

Otherwise the charity has no resources for paid-for advertising. Some space has been kindly donated by First Capital Connect for station sites allowing the promotion of its fundraising events. If anything, resources have become slightly depleted as budgets have had to be revisited.

All other activities, including the launch of the brand, has been paid for out of existing planned resources.

The brand identity and its design are, without doubt, the only aspects that have changed. Its change has been so profound and beneficial, its impact so positive and energising, especially bearing in mind the current economic climate and the significant policy changes in health and care in the UK.

The strong visual identity provides instant recognition, within a flexible creative framework that keeps it engaging and dynamic. Its creative scope unifies a diverse organisation (the charity leads stroke research, prevention and support), overcoming the challenge of positioning with a broad offering to diverse audiences.

The brand is people-powered. With no budget for above the line, the charity made the strategic and cost-effective decision to brand-build through its people and grass-roots support with advocacy and co-production to engage the stroke community. The branding approach encourages others to belong to and champion the cause. Indeed, The Stroke Association is already seeing love for the brand.

The advocacy vehicle is to enable people to tell their stroke story with pride. The new tone of voice, clarified messaging and co-production making the charity more relevant to people close to the cause. The brand is a beacon and badge for every member of the stroke community. The Stroke Association utilised all of this to launch the brand with its hugely successful Action on Stroke month.