
Project Title

Croots Rebrand

Category:

Design and implementation
costs under £100,000

Client Company:

Croots

Design Consultancy:

WPA Pinfold

Date:

24.07.13

“In recent years, our reputation has grown from strength to strength but now, as we embark on a new decade, we are renaming our exclusive range of products, all handmade in England to make them more easily identifiable to our customers.

WPA Pinfold has completely transformed our company’s image and presentation, and laid the foundations for us to become a major English brand. We now have the brand that embodies our values of quality and craftsmanship.”

Allistair Croot, MD, Croots

New brand logo

Previous logo



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AC Supplies (original name) had been making canvas and leather shooting bags and accessories in their North Yorkshire workshops since the 1970's. They recognised the growing trend for authentic English products, both at home and abroad, and aimed to capitalise on this with a new name and brand.

As a trade supplier, the AC brand had no real equity beyond its core supply base, unlike some of its competitors who are established brands in their own right (e.g. Bill Amberg). The challenge was to create a proper brand for AC Supplies that would build on its reputation for quality, craftsmanship and English heritage, and extend its reach to the consumer market.

The design was inspired by the marquetry on shotgun barrels - leather gun bags and shooting accessories are Croots signature products. The launch of the new Croots brand was supported by a distinctive new product brochure, website (www.crootsengland.co.uk) for both consumers and trade, branded products and additional point of sale.

WPA Pinfold integrated the design across all media and the brand is also embossed into the leather bags, to give a lasting presence. The Exhibition stand build involved Croots manufacturing panels using their own facilities and materials, these panels also act as giant swatches for their leather and canvas finishes.

The culmination of the success of the rebrand was when Allistair Croot personally took a telephone order from Kate Middleton...

Executive Summary of Results:

Croots was rebranded during one of the worst and longest recessions in living memory, it has been a challenging journey.

- Increase in sales **+35%**
- Outperformed market **+686%**
- Increase in Export sales **+250%**
- Increase in retail sales **+17,963%** representing 15% of turnover
- Increase in web traffic **+152%**
- Net profit **+133%**
- Increase in trade accounts **x4 major global accounts,**
x4 major national accounts
- Return On Investment **1,395.7%.**



+152%

increase in web traffic



17,963%

increase in retail sales



+250%

increase in Export sales

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Outline of project brief

The brief was to rebrand AC Supplies and reposition the company to successfully compete in the country sports and luxury goods market. The brand needed to built on its reputation for quality, craftsmanship and English heritage, and establish a communications strategy that will support growth over the forthcoming years.

Key communication imperatives:

- Authentic quality
- Great craftsmanship
- Classic style
- English provenance
- ... and value for money.

Target Market is 30-65 year old, affluent consumers, interested in quality, style and image. They enjoy leisure pastimes such as golf, shooting, game fishing, all of these interests are as much about the networking as of the individual sport. Female interest in country sports is on the increase.

The idea was to build on its range of traditional shooting bags and accessories, and extend into luxury leather leisure ranges. The potential was to extend the reach overseas, especially countries such as Japan and USA – where consumers appreciate handmade English quality. This was a key area for future development and the new brand had to be viable worldwide.



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Project scope

The rebrand was carefully planned and implemented across:

- Name generation – A new brand name, based on the Croots family name.
- Brand identity – A new brand identity was required that builds on the attributes of the brand:
 - English provenance
 - Craftsmanship
 - Quality
 - Value for money
- POS – Point of sale support and literature to promote the product in store. There is often limited space for POS in retail outlets and it was important that the communications were practical (and cost effective).
- Collateral – Launch announcement and exhibition invitation. Stationery range featuring leather emboss effect stock and foil blocking.
- Website – A complete refresh and a complementary consumer website was also required.

Collateral – Launch announcement and exhibition invitation. Stationery range featuring leather embossed stock and foil blocking.



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Key objectives

- Rebrand and relaunch the business as a credible retail brand that competes with the best in field.
- Create a branded presence across its range of products that adds value and builds loyalty.
- Develop a brand communications strategy that appeals directly to the target market.
- Position the brand for growth in export market.

Description

AC Supplies (original name) had been making canvas and leather shooting bags and accessories in their North Yorkshire workshops since the mid 1970's. They recognised the growing trend for authentic English products, both at home and abroad. The business had grown organically from a one man business working part time from his back room, to become a serious contender in the field sports market.

As a trade supplier, the AC brand had no real equity beyond its core supply base, unlike some of its competitors who are established luxury leather brands (e.g. Bill Amberg). The company had no branding on its products and was treated largely as an OEM supplier by the trade and retailers. Despite this, AC had built up its reputation for quality and craftsmanship within the industry, especially with its leather products. Retailers (such as Browns London) were starting to recognise them for their quality and craftsmanship – and placing orders for leather fashion bags.

Brand illustration



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Key challenges

As a small business with limited marketing funds, it was important for Croots to ensure that investment was made where it would be most successful - routes to market and media channels had to be carefully planned.

Establishing a brand presence on all products required a lot of development and testing to ensure the integrity of the products was maintained and value was added.

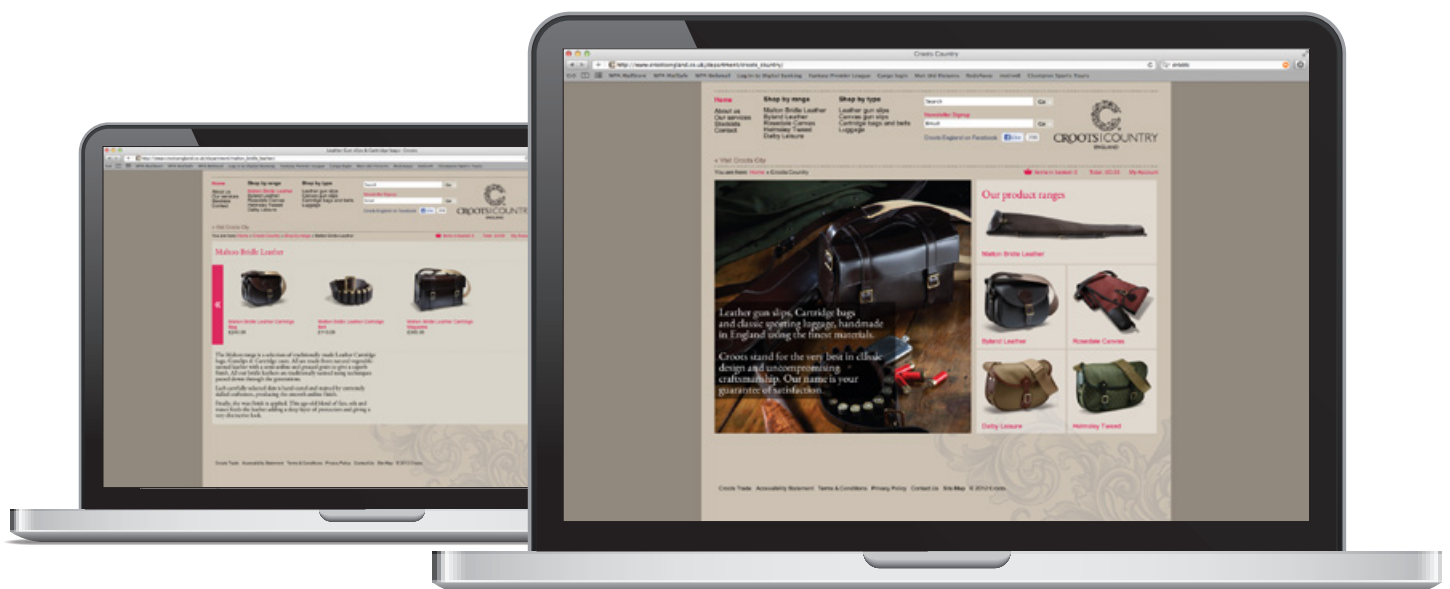
The transition of the company's name from AC Supplies to Croots required careful management, and the successful engagement and development of relations with key trade customers is a testament to this.

The biggest challenge was to enter the retail market and sell directly to consumers, without upsetting existing trade customers – this was achieved through careful communications, constant liaison with the trade and maintenance of premium pricing. However, it was the ultimate success of the rebrand for trade customers that gave them confidence – because they also benefited from the uptake in sales through their own retail outlets.

Overview of Market

The period of launch and roll out for the new Croots brand has been particularly challenging, during the longest and deepest recession in living memory. In addition, Chinese imports were flooding the market and this included luxury leather products. To survive, Croots had to punch above its weight and grow its market, beyond field sports, to luxury leather accessories and export.

Consumer website



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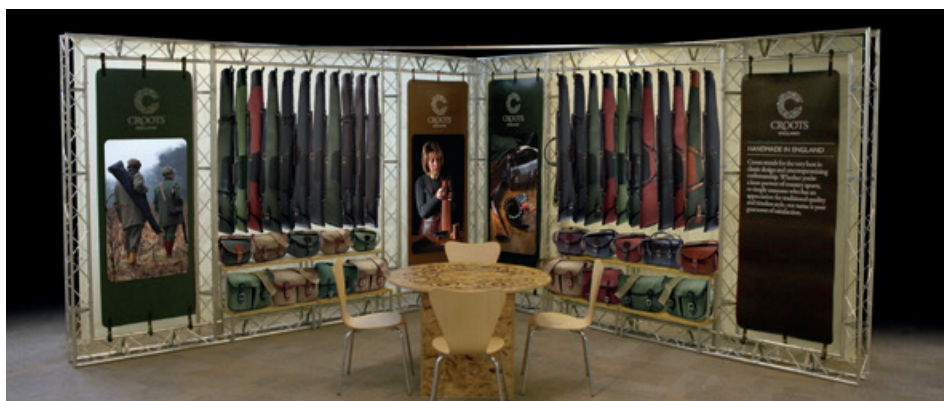
Office for National Statistics, Retail Sales

The textile, clothing and footwear sector (Croots' products are in this category) also provided a downwards contribution. The amount spent decreased year-on-year by 3.8% and the prices of goods increased by 0.2%. (Period April 2011-March 2012) In March 2012, average weekly sales were £0.7 billion. In this sector 11.1% of sales, £79.2 million, were made via the Internet.

Compared with September 2011, in September 2012 the amount of goods bought in the retail sector (all retailing seasonally adjusted sales volumes) was estimated to have increased by 2.5 per cent. Over the same period, the amount spent in the retail sector (all retailing seasonally adjusted sales values) was estimated to have increased by 3.2 per cent.

Looking at the monthly picture, it is estimated that the amount of goods bought in the retail sector (September 2012 compared with August 2012) increased by 0.6 per cent following a 0.1 per cent fall between July 2012 and August 2012. The amount spent was estimated to have increased by 1.1 per cent between August 2012 and September 2012 following a 0.2 per cent increase between July 2012 and August 2012.

POS materials and brand illustration



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Project Launch Date

Rebrand was initially launched at IWA, in Nuremberg, March 2010 and full roll out took more than twelve months, due to budget limitations.

Size of design budget

Name generation, new brand identity and concepts, grids and typographic templates for POS, catalogue, and website. Design of brand guidelines.

Website build – based on existing site plus complementary consumer area with simple e-commerce facility. Content built on Content Management (CMS) format for client to populate content. POS – posters and catalogue dispensers.

Catalogue – design layout for POS items and 28pp catalogue.

IWA stand design – design and production.

Launch – direct marketing.

£21,280.00

Presenter and POS

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Outline of Design Solution (204 words)

We re-named and re-branded AC Supplies to become Croots England - and built equity around its brand essence of authentic English craftsmanship. The name was based on the owners name and was simple, memorable and distinctive – and worked phonetically. We also developed the branding across their exclusive range of leather field sports accessories. The mark and visual language took its influence from the exquisite marquetry found on shooting rifles and the organic ‘C’ letterform perfectly complemented the luxury leatherwork of the company and was also ideal for embossing into the leather as a brand mark.

The brand strategy was based on communicating authentic English, craftsmanship and quality and the new brand application was managed across all media to communicate these values. A simple and striking colour palette of silver, grey and red was used and the brand illustration was also developed (based on the brand symbol) as an extension of the visual assets.

Roll out was carefully planned to maximise impact, (with limited marketing funds) and target key markets, to gain maximum return on investment.

The brand style and use of tactile material for offline communications perfectly suited the key markets of both luxury retail and export.

Brand imagery



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The investment has paid dividends with unprecedented positive feedback from customers, and a brand that has added significant value and positioned Croots as market leader in the country sports accessories market – with an international reputation that is second to none.

Increase in total sales +35%

The value of sales for the 12 months post roll out of the new Croots brand has increased to £742,500 from £550,000 prior to launch.
April 2009 – March 2010 (pre launch) – £550,000
April 2011 – March 2012 (post launch) – £742,500.

	2011 Sales	2012 Sales	Variation
Increase in total sales	£550,000	£742,500	£192,500

Outperformed market by +38.8 percentage points

In 2012 the Office for National Statistics reported a market decline of 3.8% for Textile, Clothing and Footwear sector compared to 2010. Croots growth in sales over this period, post the launch of the new brand, increased by 35%. Thus outperforming the market by 686%.

Increase in Export sales +250%

Prior to launch of the new Croots brand, exports had been relatively low (hovering around the £35,000 mark) despite attending the major trade show IWA in Nuremberg for several years. Post launch, the increase in visitors at IWA, for instance, was significant, with many new customers visiting who had been to previous IWA trade shows and not even noticed the client, when it was branded AC Supplies.

Overall export sales for 12 month period post launch was £122,600.

	2011 Sales	2012 Sales	Variation
Increase in Export Sales	£34,960	£122,600	£87,640



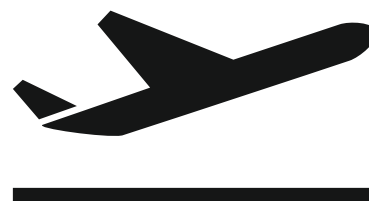
+35%

increase in total sales



+38.8%

Outperformed market by



+250%

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Increase in Croots direct retail sales 17,963% representing 15% of turnover

Croots was traditionally a trade and OEM supplier to the trade and a major consideration of the rebrand strategy and planning was how to create direct sales to the consumer without upsetting trade customers. A satisfactory transition was made by carefully managing communications with key trade customers as well as maintaining premium pricing, that acted as a benchmark for consumers. In addition, the quality and added value of the rebranding increased sales across the board – thus creating a win-win situation for both Croots and its trade customers.

April 2009 – March 2010 (pre launch) £620.00.

April 2011 – March 2012 (post launch) £111,375.

	2011 Sales	2012 Sales	Variation
Increase in retail sales	£620	£111,375	£110,755

Increase in web traffic +152%

April 2009 – March 2010 (pre launch) 7,508 unique visits.

April 2011 – March 2012 (post launch) 18,914 unique visits.

Net profit +133%

Net profit +133% Profitability for the twelve months immediately prior to launch compared to the twelve months post roll out of the rebrand increased by 133%. This was achieved during the longest running and deepest recession in memory.

Increase in trade accounts +4 major global accounts

The increase could be seen as soon as the rebrand roll out was complete trade outlets that had not previously been attracted to Croots became interested and engaged at trade shows and requested meetings. Also high end shops that would previously have purchased products from Croots under their own label are now happy to buy Croots branded products.

Low end (unprofitable) accounts have dropped off due to the poor performance of the economy and reduced sales. These accounts have been replaced by high end retailers, and additional countries reached include: Hungary, South Africa, Denmark, New Zealand, Australia, Japan & USA.

x4 major global accounts (Beretta Galleries Worldwide, Orvis USA, United Arrows Japan, 14oz Berlin)

x4 major national accounts (Harrods, William Evans, James Purdey, Farlows – London).

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Return on Investment 1,395.4%

The investment in renaming and rebranding Croots to improve its positioning has delivered an incremental increase in profit for the year since roll out.

High moment – Allistair Croot (MD) personally taking a telephone order from the then Kate Middleton for a personalised gun bag for Prince William.

Improved recruitment +27%

The area of North Yorkshire where Croots is based has traditionally been difficult to recruit skilled staff. The new brand and identity has had a significant impact and visibility amongst the local community and has enabled Croots to recruit additional quality employees.

Prelaunch Staff of 11 increased to 14.

POS standees



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“Our Company was purely a manufacturing house producing high quality leather bags and travel accessories with no identity or branding. We realised that just to manufacture a good product was no longer viable and needed to create our own customer brand.

WPA Pinfold’s rebranding enabled our Company profile to be recognised and moved us out of the impossible middle ground to a company seen as the best at what we do. Customers who we had approached over the last ten years, and tried and failed to interest, started contacting us, also countries around the world are recognising our brand.”

Allistair Croot, MD, Croots

Consumer catalogue



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“In the present times of austerity, it is refreshing to work on an added value brand that epitomises what English manufacturing and enterprise should be all about. Croots is recognised for its quality and English craftsmanship and our aim has been to reflect this with a brand that has status and adds value to its exquisite ranges. Our work speaks for itself.”

Myles Pinfold, MD, WPA Pinfold.

Swing ticket and woven
product label



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(No) Other influencing factors

All Croots annual marketing budget was invested into the rebrand and roll out. There was limited advertising in trade journals and these were designed as part of the rebrand collateral. The only consumer advertising was through point of sale material and this was also part of the rebrand collateral. There was no increase in sales staff/resource - the sales presenter was updated as part of the rebrand.

The website was rebranded as part of the roll out and there was no off-site Search Engine Optimisation, nor were there any pay-per-click campaigns.

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Office for National Statistics, Retail Sales stats.

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Declaration

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