
Project Title

Kirkstall Brewery
Rebrand

Category:

Design and implementation
costs under £100,000

Client Company:

Kirkstall Brewery

Design Consultancy:

WPA Pinfold

Date:

12.07.13

Kirkstall summary

Kirkstall Brewery was formed in 2010 by Steve Holt, a passionate advocate of craft beer. The opening of the brewery coincided with a period of deep economic recession, increasing beer tax and a record number of pub closures. In addition, there has been a boom in microbreweries and Kirkstall's core regional market (Yorkshire) has more microbreweries than any other region.

Creating a new craft brewery brand in this environment was particularly challenging, it had to stand out from the crowded market place in a credible way and build on the provenance of its name – inspired by Kirkstall Abbey and the brewing prowess of the Cistercian monks. In addition, the brand identity needed to add value at a time when the market has been flooded with microbreweries competing on price, and the price of a pint of beer has increased considerably.

The new brand identity has delivered on all counts and has been fundamental to the brewery success. This has culminated in Kirkstall's flagship beer (Dissolution Extra IPA) winning the Sainsbury's Regional Ale award for design and quality – giving the brewery guaranteed distribution across Sainsbury's regional stores.

Executive Summary Results

Increase in Sales 166%
Outperformed Market by 4,154%
Increase in profit 1,257%
Increase in Employees 320%
Return on Investment 1,075%

New brand logo



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Outline of Project Brief

The brief was to create a brand that has provenance and reinforces the craft and traditional brewing values of this regional brewery, as well as adding value and standing out in a very crowded and highly competitive market.

“Having a strong brand, image and reputation was essential for success. Strong design and branding also adds credibility with both the trade and consumers, as many of the small breweries tend to do their own designs and proliferate brands (a different beer every week in many cases). Poor design, confused branding and proliferation of brand names leaves many small breweries having to sell at low prices in order to get customers interested.

To achieve this, basic brand support materials are an important element particularly branded glassware and drip mats. Clearly those brewers relying on low price to sell their beers are unable to offer this support.”

Steve Holt, MD, Kirkstall Brewery

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Key Objectives

- Established Kirkstall Brewery as a leading brand locally (certainly the leading brand in recognised beer venues such as North Bar Group).
- Add value and maintain prices at the upper end of the market and focus on developing business with key retailers and gaining permanent installations.
- Create stand out at point of purchase and create engagement with the cask ale drinker.
- Increase recognition, sales and market reach.

Project Scope:

- New brand identity
- Uniforms
- Glassware and drip mats
- POS
- Displays
- Pump clips
- Packaging.



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Description

Kirkstall Brewery is based in Kirkstall Leeds and was inspired by both the original Kirkstall Brewery, that was borne out of the Victorian Industrial Revolution in North Leeds (closed in the mid 20th century) and the Cistercian monks who inhabited the Kirkstall Abbey nearby (now a ruin).

The brewery is part of a craft beer revolution, in which over 1,000 microbreweries have opened in the last decade. After a difficult first year, when Kirkstall struggled to establish itself in a highly competitive and overcrowded market, the business was totally transformed as the new brand identity gained traction.

The company specialises in brewing more unique beers than the mainstream ale market, and takes its influence not only from historic English ale recipes, but also from the new American craft brewers.

This is a small business with limited resource (people and finance) and it has relied on its brand image to build its reputation and sales.

Logo detail



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Overview of market

Kirkstall Brewery is operating in a crowded market which means it is highly competitive and very fragmented, particularly the 'guest ale' market. It is difficult to compare prices but we do know that brewers with lesser reputation, image and awareness are forced to sell their beers at considerable lower prices in order to get their beers on the bars. This does not always help them if the consumer demands the brands with better reputation and quality beer. This is why having a strong brand image and reputation are essential for success and all this is underpinned by having a strong design and brand presentation.

Strong design and branding also adds credibility with both the trade and consumers as many of the small breweries tend to do their own designs and proliferate brands (a different beer every week in many cases). Poor design, confused branding and proliferation of brand names leaves many small breweries having to sell at low prices in order to get customers interested.

This is particularly the case for Kirkstall's core market, Yorkshire, which has more small breweries than any other county in the UK and more are opening every month. Whilst Yorkshire is a large county, the number of breweries per capita is also the highest in the UK.

There are now over 1,000 breweries in the UK - the highest figure for 70 years. Cask Ale Report 2012/13

Looking to the future, the beer industry appears set to maintain a stable position, however growth is likely to remain low, at steady rates for the next 5 years. Key Note predicts year-on-year growth in value terms to continue, while production levels will most likely fall despite the increase in niche markets and small independent breweries. The peak of growth for the market is set for 2013, with an increase of 1.9%, followed by smaller growth levels for the next 2 years.

Key Note – Breweries & the Beer Market 2012
From 2010 – 2012 cask ale volume grew in the UK by 1.6%.
- Cask Ale Report 2011/2012

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Key Challenges

- Market it is being flooded with microbreweries, increase of 1,000 over last decade. New entries are far outstripping demand and cannibalising market share.
- Recent increases in the price of a pint, due to beer duty and raw material costs, has had negative impact on market growth.
- Trade is demanding better presentation at point of sale and stronger propositions and differentiation.
- Cask beer has a limited shelf life - reputation, quality and appeal of branding is critical.

Project Launch Date

The brand was first launched in June 2011 and, due to restricted budgets, roll out was not completed until March 2012.

Size of Design Budget

The design budget for creation of the brand and roll out to pump clips, packaging, glassware, POS, uniforms and signage was £10,320.

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Outline of Design Solution (301 words)

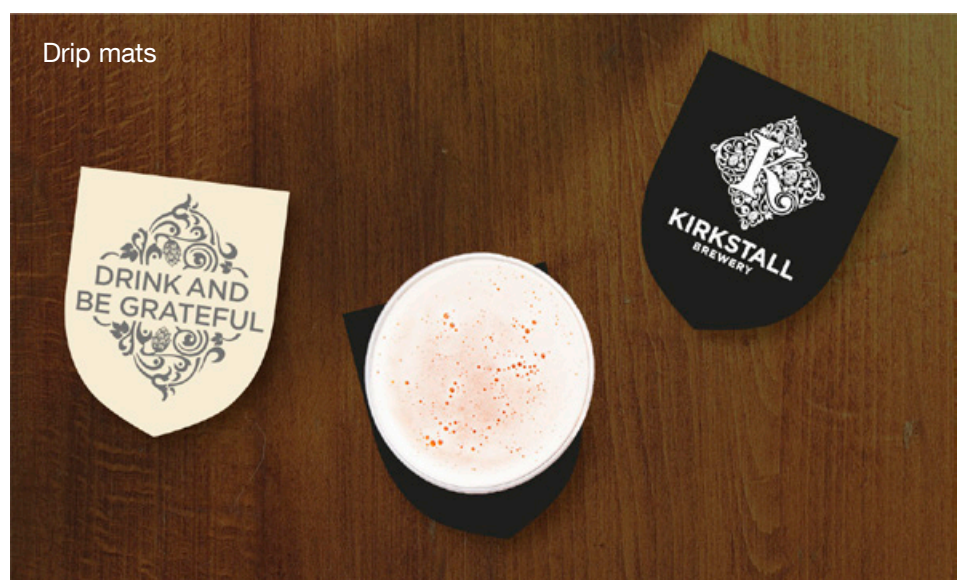
The brand design takes its inspiration from the style of manuscripts that would have been produced by the Cistercian monks who inhabited the Kirkstall Abbey, near where the brewery is located. The K monogram is embellished with intertwined hops (a key ingredient in Kirkstall's beers).

The designs for pump clips and bottle labels use a shield device that is inspired by the main entrance window of Kirkstall Abbey. Despite the brand's historical references, the overall design is deliberately crisp and clean – the colour pallet for the brand logo is black and silver or black and white to retain a contemporary look and feel. The application is deliberately confident and fresh with the use of simple typography and supporting imagery, and strong colours – to add value and create stand out in what are generally very cluttered and busy pub environments.

The beer market is full of visually complicated brewery brands and one-off beer designs that lack brand integrity, this results in confusion for the consumer and a lack of equity, in terms of building brand reputation. The new branding for Kirkstall has been designed specifically to address this issue.

The key objectives of the design were to deliver provenance and build on the brewing heritage of the Kirkstall area, that was developed over the centuries. The brand is designed to deliver added value both at point of purchase and on branded merchandise. Also, budgets are limited and an important factor in the design was the ability to implement the brand cost effectively and enable range extensions to be economically applied.

Ultimately, the Kirkstall brand design is about credibility, clarity and craft – and creating presence on the pub bar and retail shelf. The brand has integrity across all its applications and is immediately recognisable, helping to build a following of loyal ale drinkers.



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Summary of Results

Increase in Sales 166%

31.03.11 - 31.03.12 - £167,000
31.03.12 - 31.03.13 - £278,000

The brand was introduced partway through 2011 and was fully launched by March 2012. The increase in sales was due to largely organic growth and word of mouth. There was not the budget for advertising or other promotional activities.

Outperformed Market by 4,154%

From 2010 – 2012 cask ale volume grew in the UK by **1.6%** (source Cask Ale Report 2011/2012)
Increase in barrelage from 2011 (1,193 brls) to 2012 (1,986 brls), equates to an increase of 793 brls – increase of **66.5%**.

Increase in profit £1,257%

31.03.11 - 31.03.12 - £7,000
31.03.12 - 31.03.13 - £88,000.

Increase in profit was due to the increase in consumer and trade demand, this coincided with the launch of the new brand.

Increase in Volume – currently Kirkstall is brewing to full capacity (8 barrels), as a result, planned expansion is being brought forward to beginning of next year, this will increase brewing capacity by 500% to 40 barrels.

This is fantastic news for the brewery at a time when the UK has seen an explosion of microbrewers (over 1,000 and still growing fast), which has had a subsequent impact by putting pressure on individual breweries market share and growth potential.

Three swords pump clip



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Sainsbury's Great British Beer Hunt 2013

The Sainsbury's listing was a result of a competition where brewers from throughout the UK were invited to enter a bottled beer which had not been available in bottle previously.

The competition was open to all British brewers large and small. Kirkstall Brewery entered the North East/Yorkshire region and won a listing.

It is such a great result because it gets Kirkstall into high profile distribution and gives the brewery the economies of scale for bottling beer. It is the first step to producing packaged beers on a larger scale for both UK and export markets.



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Increase in Employees 320%

31.03.12 – 2.5 full time staff
31.03.13 – 8 full time staff

The increase in staff has been right across the brewery,
from brewing to delivery to sales and admin support.

Listings gained

Selected as the 'local hero' brand by Mitchells & Butlers (M&B),
the UK's leading multiple pub retailer.

Listing in Punch Taverns

Supply all the high profile/recognised beer venues in Leeds
area and are highly respected by them and their customers.

Return on Investment 1,075%

Design cost £10,320 vs increase in profit £111,000.

Other Influencing Factors

Kirkstall Brewery has limited finance and people resources
and the brand and design roll out was key to the success of
the brewery - there was no advertising. Local beer events were
attended, such as the Leeds Food and Drink Festival, however
feedback indicates that as well as the quality of the ale, it was
the quality and individually of the Kirkstall brand that resonated
with consumers and built awareness. There was limited regional
sponsorship and this comprised of simply applying the brand.

Research Resources

Cask Ale Report – 2012/13

Key Note – Breweries & the Beer Market 2012.

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Declaration

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