



*A  
CUT  
ABOVE*

**SUBMISSION TITLE**  
DRESS2KILL: A CUT ABOVE

**CATEGORY**  
1 CORPORATE BRAND IDENTITY

**SUB-CATEGORY**  
1.2 DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION  
COSTS UNDER £100,000

**CLIENT COMPANY**  
DRESS2KILL

**DESIGN CONSULTANCY**  
DESIGN BRIDGE

**SUBMISSION DATE**  
JUNE 2014

**DesignBridge**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cocking a snook at Savile Row from The Cut, Waterloo, Dress2kill takes a refreshingly irreverent attitude to bespoke tailoring. It's a brand that relishes its position outside of the establishment - but in 2012, with a price-war and a recession to contend with, it needed something more.

### A DELICATE BALANCE

Started in 1999 by one man who dared to think differently about the tailoring experience, it kicks back at the stuffy, intimidating, patronizing world of traditional tailoring.

Designed to appeal to the next generation of modern go-getters and alpha males, it's a brand that needs to express its irreverent attitude without undermining the quality reassurance that's so vital in this premium market. Getting this balance right was the real challenge of this project and the key to unlock commercial success.

### DARING TO CHANGE

The owner came to Design Bridge convinced that aspects of the brand identity, expression and behaviour were holding the business back. Working together, we believed that by unlocking and expressing the true heart of the brand, we could fight to not only regain margin lost in the recession, but to premiumise the entire brand and compete in a higher price tier.

### A BESPOKE SOLUTION

We needed to bring their inimitable attitude to life in a more powerful way across the full experience – from logo to fascia, fitting room to signature stitching on the suit. And we had to hit the sweet spot between attitude and aspiration, showcasing the craft and creativity of the modern tailor to drive premium perception at every touchpoint.

Sharp strategic thinking, cut-through creative and willingness to challenge convention made up all the ingredients of a great partnership – together we lifted the brand into a completely new premium tier (with a price point to match), enriched the consumer experience and grew sales volumes on the way.

Word count 310

Previous store front



New store front



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**+55.6%** INCREASE  
IN AVERAGE  
SUIT PRICE



“The work was exactly what we needed to raise our game. It has opened doors – and customers’ wallets – in exactly the right way.”

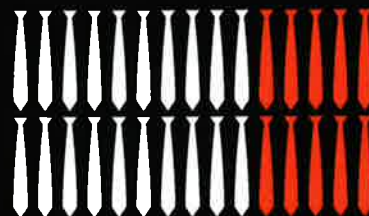
JAMES HIBBERT, FOUNDER

**×2** PROFIT  
(TO MORE THAN £300k NET,  
+£125k AFTER REBRAND)



**+50%**

TURNOVER INCREASE  
(FROM £2m TO CIRCA £3m)



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### OUTLINE OF PROJECT BRIEF

Dress2kill likes to push the boundaries. Not satisfied with being held back by the market-wide slowdown caused by the recession, and with margins worn threadbare by mid-market competitors, they were confident that they offered something uniquely different and compellingly delivered.

The only problem was, they weren't expressing that effectively to potential customers. Word of mouth was a great business driver, with loyal customers acting almost as brand ambassadors, but it wasn't enough. They needed to reach new (higher-spending) customers, and convince their existing customers that they were a brand worth paying more for. They needed a helping hand to turn their *shop* into a *Brand*.



BEAT THE RECESSION, BEAT THE PRICE-WAR

EXPRESS OUR UNIQUE CHARACTER

REVITALISE THE BRAND EXPRESSION 360°

#### BEAT THE RECESSION, BEAT THE PRICE-WAR

- Claw back lost margin and more by lifting the brand into a more premium position (and price point).
- Grow the brand counter to the category-wide (and nationwide economic) slowdown.

#### EXPRESS THE BRAND'S UNIQUE CHARACTER

- Capture and re-express the essence of the brand and the people that deliver it.
- Reinvent the brand's visual identity to reflect the new positioning and credibly reflect the more premium proposition.

#### REVITALISE THE BRAND EXPRESSION 360°

Turn a tailor's shop into a brand, by bringing a consistent visual language and tone of voice across all touchpoints:

- Signage & fascia
- Store environments
- Website
- Marketing literature
- Packaging
- Merchandise & accessories
- Communication
- Sponsorship & activation

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### DESCRIPTION

One of London's leading bespoke tailors, Dress2kill's flagship location is conveniently situated in the heart of Waterloo, on (appropriately enough) The Cut.

Beyond its flagship, it has opened a second tailors in the City and an e-commerce site that enables a simple customisation and ordering process. Its future growth strategy includes more central London sites and partnerships with leading high street retailers.

As 'the creative tailors who dare', Dress2kill challenges the notion that bespoke suits are exclusively for the wealthy elite by appealing to a younger, more ambitious kind of guy. They make bespoke tailoring more approachable, more affordable and simply more enjoyable.

Previous logo



New logo



**“Design Bridge really got under the carpet and had a good look around – they helped get the ideas out of my head and into reality. The confidence that the new brand brings to the team is massively inspiring.”**

**SAM ROWLEY, CREATIVE DIRECTOR**

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### OVERVIEW OF THE MARKET

Worth around £10.7bn in 2013, the UK men's outerwear market had enjoyed a 4% increase on the previous year (Intel). The £1.2bn formal menswear sector is massively polarized between super-premium Savile Row (and other) luxury bespoke tailors offering £3,500 suits and high-street retailers like M&S offering "Savile Row inspired" off-the-peg tailored suits for less than £300.

Pre-2012, Dress2kill operated in the lower-mid-market, an average suit price of around £450, alongside A Suit That Fits (ASTF) made-to-measure offer and King & Allen (bespoke). Throughout the recession, consumer spend had dwindled and volumes had dropped across the mid-market, hitting everyone's bottom line.

To make matters worse, ASTF started an unsustainable price war, and before too long, average suit prices were getting dangerously close to the £300 mark, with a disastrous impact on margin. ASTF went out of business, but not before they'd almost destroyed the lower-mid-market.

Meanwhile, M&S had recruited Savile Row tailor Richard James to add some sparkle to a new off-the-peg range at around £500. Suddenly Dress2kill were being squeezed from both ends. They needed to find a way to lift themselves into the upper-mid-market and leave the carnage behind.

At £700-800 average suit price, the upper-mid-market offered full works tailoring from Savile Row locations, but at much more affordable prices. Cad & the Dandy and Mark Marengo were enjoying great margins and incredible brand loyalty, and Dress2kill needed to do something dramatic to credibly compete with them.

They had the product and the service to compete, but they needed to credibly increase premium perception of their brand and somehow deliver the prestige of Savile Row but without the location.

They needed to stop their customers talking about price and make them believe in quality.

Word count 698

### PROJECT LAUNCH DATE

November 2012

### SIZE OF DESIGN BUDGET

£81,000

## OUTLINE OF DESIGN SOLUTION

### CLOSE FIT

To come to an audacious and effective solution we had to nail the chemistry between the creative teams at Design Bridge and Dress2kill. It turned out we had a lot in common – a passion for design, a unique sense of style and a desire to do things differently.



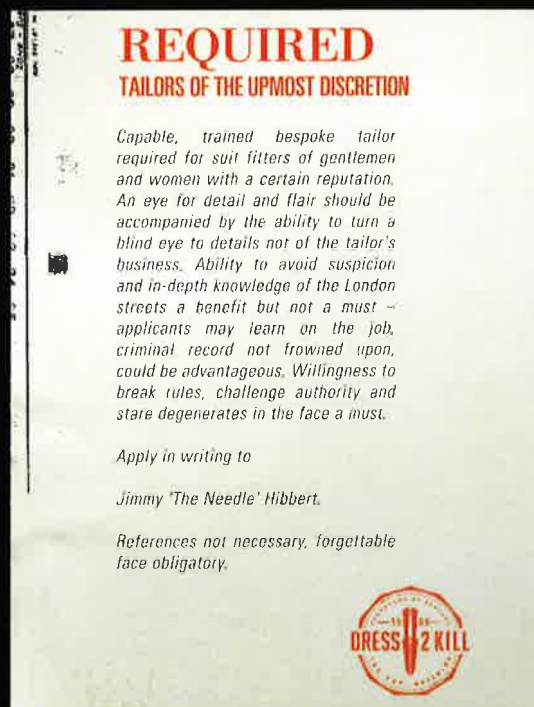
### UNPICKING THE IDEA

Together we crafted the brand idea 'The Creative Tailors Who Dare'. And, to really give it some more edge, our communications idea 'Rules are made to be broken', was a sharp piece of thinking that we stitched into the lining of all the work.

*Please use the secret knock to gain access (or alternatively just ring the bell).*

### STAMP OF AUTHORITY

Redesigning the central brand-marque was vital to the transformation of the identity. The previous logo undermined both the edgy spirit that the brand was meant to epitomise as well as the premium price perception that was so central to sustainable commercial success. A particular challenge was the typographic expression of the brand name, which had the potential to make or break the identity.



## OUTLINE OF DESIGN SOLUTION

### SEAL OF APPROVAL

Our new marque creates a lock up around the name, simultaneously capturing the edgy spirit of the brand and adding layers of depth, craft and story telling to the brand. Designed as a modern tailors seal, the central icon is a pair of bold red tailoring shears, which has a double take as a bespoke shirt and tie. So far we've created outdoor, online and press advertising, as well as direct marketing and an experiential event for the re-launch. Each communications piece has reflected the edgy Dress2kill style and its target audience of *"movers, shakers and troublemakers"*.





# OUTLINE OF DESIGN SOLUTION

## TOTAL IMMERSION

But more than anything, we've built on Dress2kill's already strong customer focus to develop an integrated and consistently engaging retail experience with a luxurious product to match. Customers are offered a glass of champagne or other drink of their choice on arrival. They are made to feel they can leave their concerns at the door and enjoy the relaxed, informal ambience. Dress2kill is not just about the final product purchase, it's about delivering an holistic experience for our customers. One that keeps them coming back, time and time again. And one in which price is very much an afterthought.

Word count 376



**WELCOME TO DRESS2KILL**

**RULES OF THE ESTABLISHMENT**

*It is compulsory for working life to be left at the door – the mind must be kept free of all unnecessary stresses and strains.*

*Magazines and books are available for the blatant stealing of sartorial style from persons of fame and good looks.*

*Open and frank discussion of preferences and opinions must be engaged in with your tailor.*

*The consumption of alcoholic drinks is strictly permitted.*

*Measurements will be taken without embarrassing silences, waxes of distress or moments of discomfort.*

*Snobishness, self-consciousness and adherence to stuffy tradition is strictly prohibited.*

*One must only leave the premises when fully satisfied with one's choice.*

**LEADING PURVEYORS OF BESPOKE GARMENTS TO GENTLEMEN AND WOMEN OF ALL REPUTES.**



## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Dress2kill is seen as a more premium proposition by more potential customers, with more spending power.

### INCREASE IN MARGIN

The **average suit price** increased by +55.6% (£450 to £700) as the brand shifted credibly from the lower-mid-market to the upper-mid-market tier. The new integrated and consistent brand identity brought the quality and attention to detail of the tailoring to life across every touchpoint. Customers believe in the quality before they even try the suit on. And they'll pay for that quality.



# +55.6%

INCREASE IN AVERAGE SUIT PRICE (£450 to £700)

### INCREASE IN PERFORMANCE

**Increased turnover** by +50%  
(from £2m previous year to circa £3m).

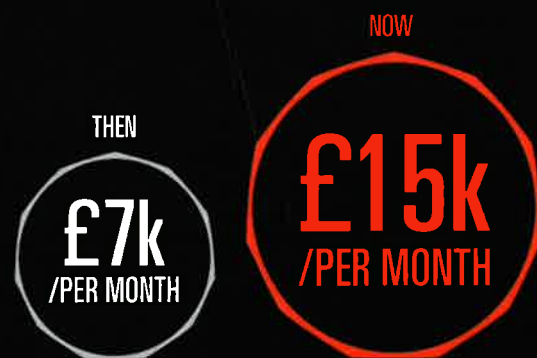
**Doubled profit** to more than £300k net;  
+£125K up from previous year.

**Increased profitability** by +33%;  
we're making more money per volume  
of goods than ever before.

The e-commerce site has enjoyed organic growth of around **+114.3% from £7k per month to £15k**, with no additional support other than more click-through from the revitalised brand site.

# +50%

TURNOVER INCREASE



+114.3% ORGANIC GROWTH OF E-COMMERCE SITE

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

### INCREASE IN PENETRATION

There are **more high value customers** than ever before. New customers with deeper pockets. The more premium brand has enabled exposure to a higher value network through discerning new premium partners and wealthy contacts who would not previously have considered Dress2kill. Existing customers are willing to spend more. The brand feels worth more; there's more on offer and it's worth paying extra for.

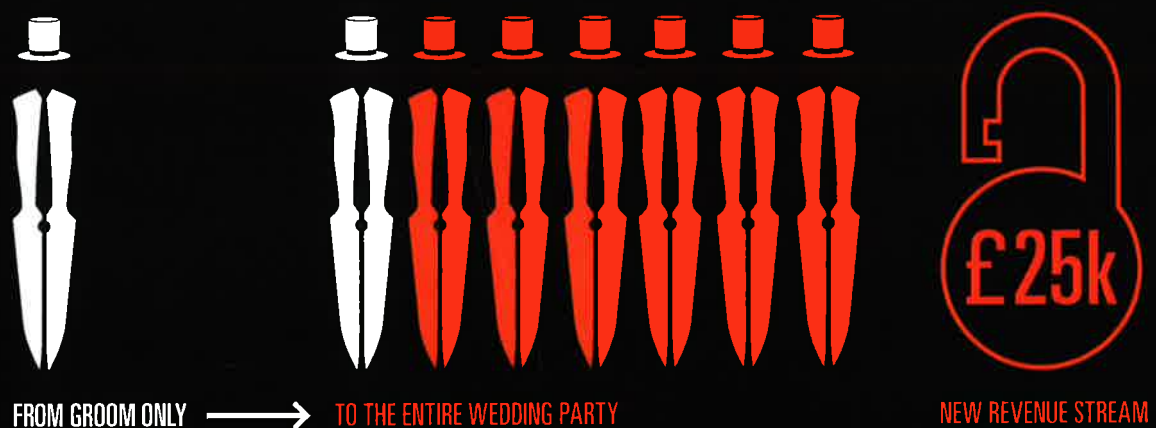
They've opened up a number of **new revenue streams**, primarily around their specialist bulk purchase offer. Very few bespoke tailors can credibly and confidently fit out dozens of customers at once, and Dress2kill have always built good relationships with sports teams and business that rely on them for quality tailoring.

But they were all personal contacts of the directors – they trusted the quality, and they overlooked the previously unsophisticated brand because they knew the people behind the scenes. The redesign imbued the brand with credibility and confidence that led to a number of other big relationships being formed, that would never have got off the ground before. Word of mouth has spread, beyond the original close core of valued customers, with interest in the brand snowballing.

They now service a number of new **sports teams and corporate clients**, worth around £50k each annually – and they're all high-value clients, with high value networks of members and employees.

And **wedding parties** make an impact to the bottom line too. They've gone from dressing the odd groom to fitting out entire groom's parties as part of a special "lock-in" event where customers commit to a minimum spend per head and spend an evening being fitted as a group (with appropriate refreshments) – worth around £25k annually, the start of an exciting new, experience-led source of revenue (and brand loyalty).

Not only do grooms trust the brand to deliver a quality product for all of their nearest and dearest, but they're willing to be literally locked in with it. The new design and identity have created a platform for engagement that transcends purchase and leads to true, immersive brand experience.



## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

### INCREASE IN PARTNERSHIPS

**New premium partners** that previously didn't consider the brand pre-redesign to be premium enough to fit with theirs:



Not only do they all add to the premium perception and credibility of the Dress2kill brand; they also offer incremental revenue streams through Dress2kill's retail channel.

**Longer contracts** - for example, Harlequins had previously only committed to a 1-year contract, but following the re-branding were willing to sign on the line for a full 3 years (worth £80k), fitting out the whole club, players and staff, every year, with reciprocal access to their marketing channels and high-net worth member base. The new brand positioning fits more closely and more credibly with Harlequins, and their network.

### INCREASE IN FOOTFALL

**Website hits have trebled** and since the web site is easier to navigate, plainer speaking, and more usable.

It's easy to use, it shows you what you need to see (and how much it costs). It has become a real brand portal, driving customers to both the store and to the e-commerce site.

**Passing trade has increased** noticeably to a steady stream of customers all year round - and with Dress2kill's excellent conversion track-record, more bodies through the door means more hands in pockets.

### IMPROVED STAFF MORALE

It's imbued the team on the shop-floor with **renewed confidence** in the brand, and in themselves. And confidence sells suits.

## OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

Ongoing ATL presence has been maintained at parity with the pre-rebrand campaign plan, but with new creative (driven by our new brand idea and comms line).

The launch ad-campaign lasted only 6 weeks. Sales volume growth was spiked by the campaign and has been sustained ever since, demonstrating the impact of the new identity.

Google AdWords spend has grown over the period in line with the growth of the company, i.e. maintained proportion of spend as before rebrand. So significant increases in sales volume can be attributed to the new positioning.

Most importantly, the design itself has allowed the brand to credibly reposition itself in a more premium price tier for the long term.

## RESEARCH SOURCES

Dress2kill sales data  
Intel UK Menswear report, 2013

*Thank you*