

BEAR:

the naked truth

Category:
1 Brand Identity

Sub-category:
1.2 Design & implementation
costs under £100,000

Client:
Urban Fresh Foods

Agency:
B&B studio

Date:
June 2013

For Publication

B&B



2. Executive summary



It's hard to believe that the much-loved BEAR brand was launched just four years ago on a shoestring budget raised from the sale of its founders' house. Today it can be found in every supermarket, and sales are on track to top £11m this year – a figure far beyond anyone's expectations.

But this story of super sales growth is a tiny part of BEAR's inspirational impact: this isn't simply a brand that makes money, it's a brand that has a positive effect on people's lives both in the UK and the developing world, and a brand that is changing the way supermarkets sell and consumers buy.

Here's how:

A pure and natural brand identity has convinced supermarkets to allow BEAR to sit in the unbranded fresh produce aisle. This is a major challenge to how branded and unbranded goods are traditionally divided and how dried fruit is merchandised, and has been instrumental in helping consumers recognise dried fruit as one of their five a day.

Crucially, this change in perception actively encourages healthy snacking, and it's BEAR's proudest achievement that **we delivered over 30m portions of fruit in the UK in 2012** – positive progress in a country where just 12% of people get their five a day.

Consumer demand for our fruit is changing lives overseas. In rural communities where women struggle to find work, **we've created fruit factories with 90% female staff by providing crèche and nursery facilities.**

Here are more of our headlines:

- **Achieved rapid sales growth from £0 to £6.4m in just 3 years**
- **Projected 2013 sales of £11m**
- **Smashed our 3-year sales target by 30%**
- **More than doubled our growth each year**
- **Increased our stockists from fewer than 500 to more than 10,000**
- **Won The Grocer SME Food & Drink Brand of the Year Award 2013**

300 words

3. Project overview

Project Brief

B&B was tasked with creating a family-focused dried fruit brand able to make healthy, no-compromise snacking more accessible and more desirable. The deliverables ranged from naming and tone of voice, to visual identity and packaging, to a broader brand world and consumer communications.

The design objectives of the brief were:

- **communicate natural ingredients and absolutely no additives**
- **change consumer perceptions of dried fruit**
- **challenge the market with a bold personality**

The business objectives of the brief were:

- **deliver the strength and standout to win over retail buyers**
- **enable the brand to break out of the dried fruit aisle**
- **meet bold sales targets of £5m in three years**

Description

BEAR began as a husband and wife team so obsessed with fruit that they sold their house and moved in with the in-laws to fund their dream of making healthy nibbles more widely available.

Today, BEAR's softly baked fruit snacks are made from nothing but naked nature, which means they're 100% pure fruit, picked fresh in season and gently baked with absolutely no added sugar, preservatives, concentrates or stabilisers — something of a rarity in the current dried fruit category. At under 100 calories, fat free, and one of your five a day, they're also a genuinely healthy option.

The range at launch comprised two flavours of fruit nibbles and four flavours of Yoyos – pure fruit rolls aimed more clearly at kids.

Overview of the Market

The dried fruit snacking category in the UK has seen steady growth in recent years, benefiting both from positive health perceptions and a major increase in supermarket own-label offerings. BEAR's key challenge therefore was to create consumer engagement in this commoditised category with a brand that offered clear emotional as well as functional benefits.

Thanks to this strategy, BEAR has become the fastest growing brand in healthy snacking.

Project Launch

BEAR launched in September 2009.

Design Solution

Positioning the brand as a healthy snack rather than a dried fruit was key to B&B's design strategy, but as creative innovators, we were keen to challenge the 'cute and cuddly' marketing that had become so expected in that category. Famous for his no compromise approach (he snarrrls at sulphites and grrrowls at gumming agents), the BEAR character was created to give voice to the brand's challenger opinions, while still attracting consumer love and loyalty. This straight talking and humorous tone has been instrumental in helping the brand promote healthy eating without feeling preachy or overly worthy, and it demonstrates a brilliant understanding of what kids really respond to.

As a character, BEAR is a larger-than-life brand ambassador. Working in a cave, deep in the woods, he has a story that transports kids to another world and quickly captures the consumer imagination. What's so remarkable is that all this depth emanates from what is, in actuality, a flat, two-dimensional logo.

And that's the secret of the BEAR brand – a simplicity of approach that gives consumers the freedom to engage and interact. The bravery of the identity is what commands respect from consumers and competitors alike.

With its handcrafted offbeat feel and unique forest locations, the brand epitomises natural values, while BEAR's conspicuous fig leaf brings wit and playfulness to the all-important concept of naked nature. From a strategic point of view, this overt naturalness has been the key driver in enabling BEAR to enter the fresh produce aisle – a crucial element of the brand's sales strategy. It also enables us to make health accessible and desirable, rather than complex and tiresome.

The brand identity played a vital role in winning over retailers – from the early days of going from independent shop to independent shop pack in hand, to setting up our beautifully designed trade show stand to attract the supermarkets and multiples. Dried fruit buyers told us that our bold and vibrant brand popped from the shelf, and was a real change from their usual wallpaper-style shelves. And the packaging has worked hard to win consumer loyalty too – right from the start every pack of Yoyos featured a collectable card as part of its actual structure – to date, we've created 239 unique designs for these cards and they've become an integral part of the brand's success.

From packaging to website, collectors' cards to trade stands, posters to outdoor events, the brand identity has benefitted from a clear consistency of application that ensures BEAR is recognised wherever he goes. **Highly strategic, yet blessed with effortless simplicity, it's a bold and campaignable identity that has proven to appeal to all demographics and all ages.**

442 words



Design Solution (cont.)

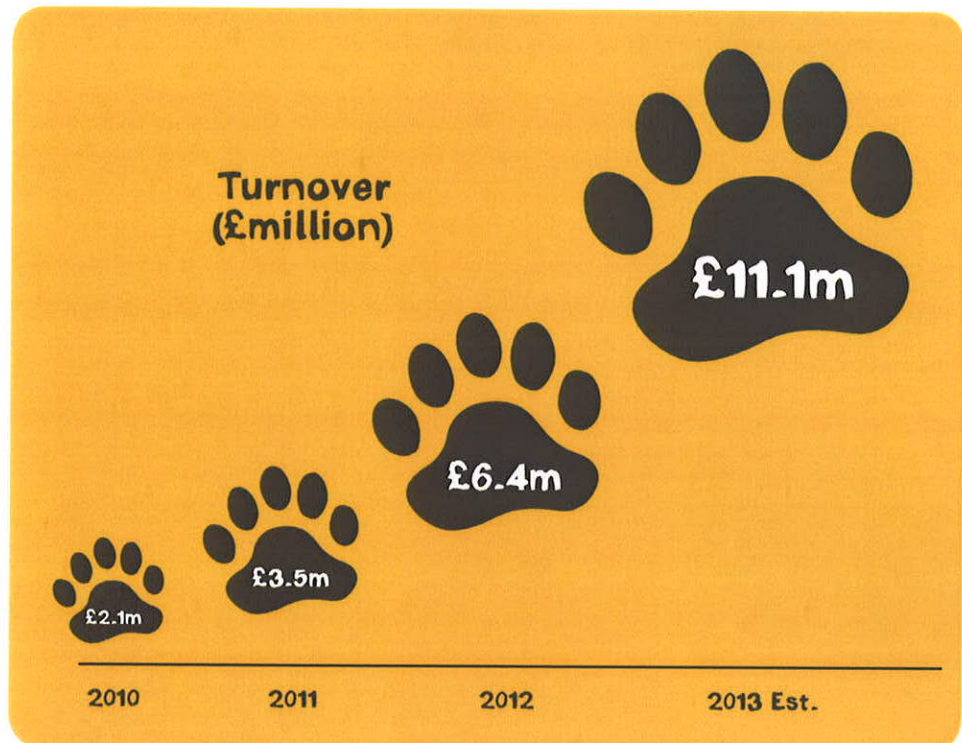
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4. Summary of results

Rapid sales growth: from zero to £6.4m in three years

During its first full year of sales (2010) BEAR's turnover hit £2.1m – impressively swift growth for a wholly new brand with no established category to lean on. But it's the next two years of sustained development that best demonstrate our continued impact: £3.5m in 2011 (a growth of 67%) and £6.4m in 2012 (a growth of 83%). Our estimated sales for 2013 are in excess of £10m – a growth in sales value of more than 376% from year one to year four.



BEAR's 2012 sales figure of £6.4m smashes the tough targets that we set for ourselves from day one. Indeed, at BEAR's launch in 2009, we stated our company's strategy in *The Grocer* magazine to reach £5m within 3 years – a target we've beaten by 30%.

Innovative sales strategy

Thanks to the trusted visual identity and positioning that B&B created, we've been able to convince Asda, One Stop and The Co-op to stock our brand in their unbranded fresh produce aisle – uncharted territory, and a feat that other retailers told us was impossible. While the simplicity of the packaging ensures the brand feels in keeping with this natural and healthy category, its personality reinvigorates what can be a neglected and tired space of the supermarket, and engages consumers all the more.

Increased distribution

In the first year of launch, BEAR boasted 467 stocking points in the UK. The brand is now available in over 10,000 outlets across the country, and we're starting to expand across Europe too.

Within its first year, BEAR won valuable listings in Waitrose and Ocado and was taken national by both Tesco and Sainsbury's. In 2012, Asda and Co-op made BEAR the only brand in their fresh produce departments. In 2013, our listings in both Waitrose and Sainsbury's have been doubled, where we're making in-roads into some of the more smaller format stores as a front-of-store, on-the-go snack.

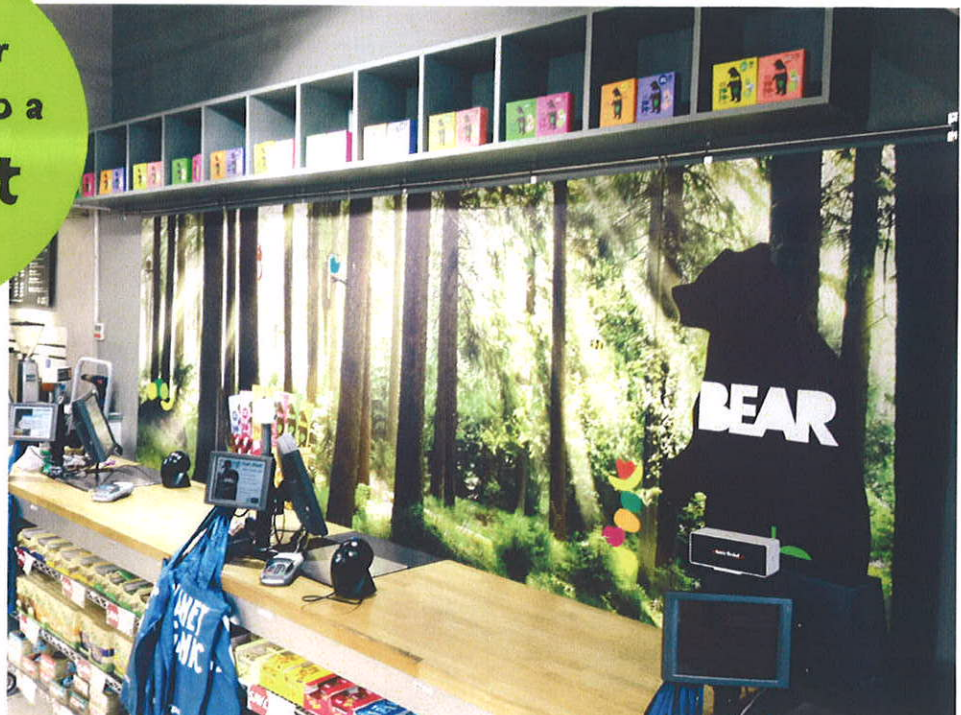
Today, our stockists also include Boots, Holland & Barrett, Somerfield, Morrison's, Planet Organic, Wilkinson's, One Stop, Compass Group, Garden Centre Group, London Zoo and over 2000 independents. We can also be found on the hallowed shelves of premium retailers Wholefoods and Selfridges, as part of the snack offer of Caffé Nero, and within the Picturehouse chain of cinemas. We are currently trialing the brand in Virgin Active Gyms too, who were specifically attracted to the brand thanks to its youthful and vibrant design.

Finally, we're really proud to announce that we've just been chosen by Subway to feature in Kidspak – a kids' meal package that's designed to offer parents a healthier alternative for their children. Subway chose BEAR because they saw us as an authentic natural brand that would bring instant validation to their offer.

Retailer confidence

Retailers are continually keen to benefit from the positive impact of BEAR's branding by giving us display space in-store that outstrips what would be expected for a brand of our size. In Wholefoods' flagship Kensington High Street store we were given a whole wall on which to promote our brand, while Planet Organic gave us a complete in-store takeover in January and February 2013.

Our in-store takeover
of Planet Organic led to a
275% uplift
in sales.

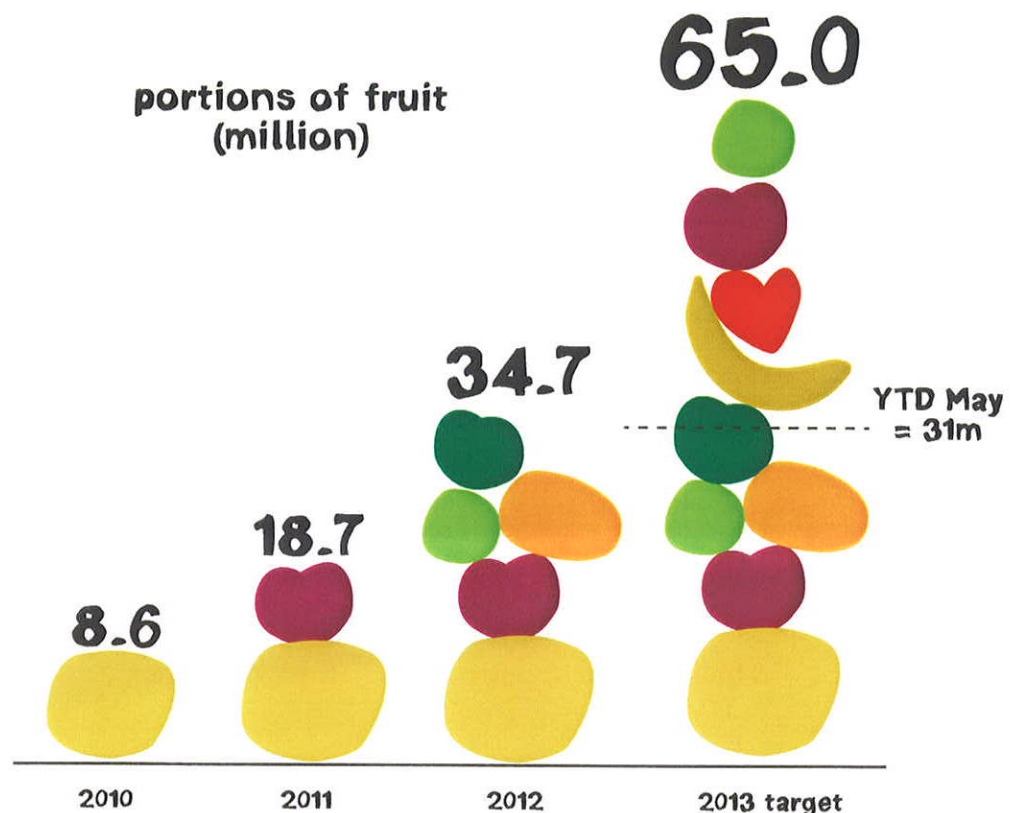


Change in consumer behaviour and attitudes

Our strategy of taking our product into the fresh produce aisle has been key in changing consumer attitudes towards dried fruit, helping them recognise its role as 1 of your 5 a day and a nutritionally-rich alternative to fresh fruit. The brand and its promise have been instrumental in changing consumer perception of dried fruit from a boring pantry product with questionable ingredients to a mainstream feel-good snack.

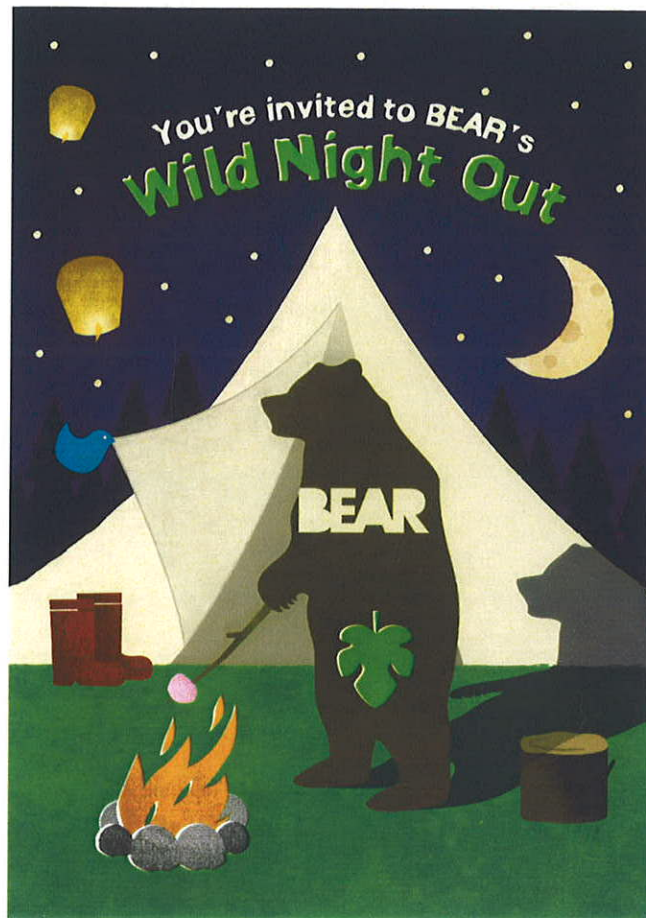
It's not a stretch to claim that our presence in the fresh produce aisle has also helped make healthy eating easier and more desirable. By bringing BEAR's bright, fun ranges into a plain and uncelebrated category traditionally associated with unappealing healthy eating, we've helped straddle the divide between necessity and desirability.

In fact, we delivered 34.7 million portions of fruit in 2012, and are on target to serve 65 million in 2013 – a significant achievement in a country where only 12% of adults and kids are eating their 5 a day.



Change in consumer behaviour and attitudes (cont.)

BEAR's mission to change kids' snacking behaviour is being taken seriously by schools up and down the country, who have started stocking our products in place of sweets and crisps. **We recently won a listing of 258 secondary schools, and we're even helping schools set up BEAR clubs where kids can learn more about healthy eating.** We also work in partnership with National Geographic Kids, who in February included a pack of our Yoyos in their kids' magazine. Together, we hosted Wild Night Out – a family event designed to promote the great outdoors.



It's worth noting here that our BEAR character has an enormous and significant impact on kids – he is genuinely loved, and receives around 100 letters a week from children who simply adore him. The fact that we use this influence responsibly – to share messages around healthy eating, forest protection, and enjoying the great outdoors – is one of our proudest achievements.

Environmental impact

BEAR is by nature a forest-friendly brand, so from the start we set out to create design with a limited environmental impact. **Our packaging is 90% paper, taken from FSC-accredited sources, and we've worked hard to reduce our use of plastic to a minimum.**

In contrast, our competitors in the category use plastic packaging, only using cardboard for their multipack outers – we're the only brand to use a largely paper format for our singles packs. The natural, naïve feel of our brand identity enables us to use a rougher, recycled board for 50% of our packaging.

The integrity built into our brand identity demands that we reduce, re-use and recycle in every other area of our business too, so **we never ever air-freight fruit and we've created a closed-loop system for our Yoyos' oven – it's powered by burning fruit waste.**

In addition to our own environmental initiatives, we are the only corporate partner of the Forestry Commission, with whom we organise the 'Go BEAR' programme of events. This partnership is a direct result of our branding and positioning that chimes so well with the Forestry Commission's ethos. Since 2011, we've worked paw in paw to promote the value of woods and forests to society, and to encourage people to get outdoors and take part in healthy activities. At one event organised for our 2nd birthday party, over 1,100 people came to Alice Holt Forest to meet BEAR and participate in our BEAR nature hunt for kids. Of course, every event we host is supported by brand design, including invitations, maps and games all designed by B&B.

Social impact

The runaway success of the BEAR branding has enabled us to increase our investment in the developing countries that provide our fruit, with a particular focus on providing employment for single mothers in rural communities.

In both Ecuador and South Africa, our fruit washing, chopping and baking factories employ over 90% women, most with young children, who would otherwise struggle to find work. Our provision of on-site crèches, nurseries and our ongoing support of local community projects has enabled this substantial increase in female employment.

All our fruit is grown with minimum impact on the planet – we've banned the use of harmful pesticides, and we plant hedgerows to encourage wildlife and biodiversity. Importantly, our commitment to our farmers goes way beyond paying them a fair, livable wage that's above the ongoing rate: we are friends, and that means we regularly visit them, whether it's to witness the first harvest, or celebrate a wedding or christening. It goes without saying that without the level of consumer demand our brand has created, we simply wouldn't be able to make such a difference to these people's lives.



Media impact

BEAR's engaging design and personality has achieved exceptional PR coverage with minimal outlay, estimated at a value of £2m to the brand. Our Facebook fans have doubled over the past six months, and our Twitter followers continue to grow (and now include @jesuschrist). As we now receive between 6000 and 8500 website visitors a month and 220 consumer contacts a week, we have hired a full time staff member (of a team of just 15) to deal exclusively with consumer feedback.

In addition, our BEAR collector's cards, found in our packs of Yoyos, have achieved cult status, being displayed on numerous tweets and Facebook updates, and even being sold on Ebay.



BEAR's recognition is such that we have recently made it onto the Cool Brands list – a snapshot of 175 British brands with significant social influence.



Wider recognition

We're proud to have received a number of product, business and leadership awards since the launch of BEAR, including:

Three Great TASTE awards

2010 The Grocer Sweet Snack of the Year, Gold and Silver

2010 Daily Mail Enterprise Awards, New Start Up, Winner

2011 Grocer Speciality Product of the Year, Gold

2011 HSBC Start Up of the Year, Regional Winner

2011 Metro Venture Candy Award, Winner

2011 Women of the Future Awards, Winner

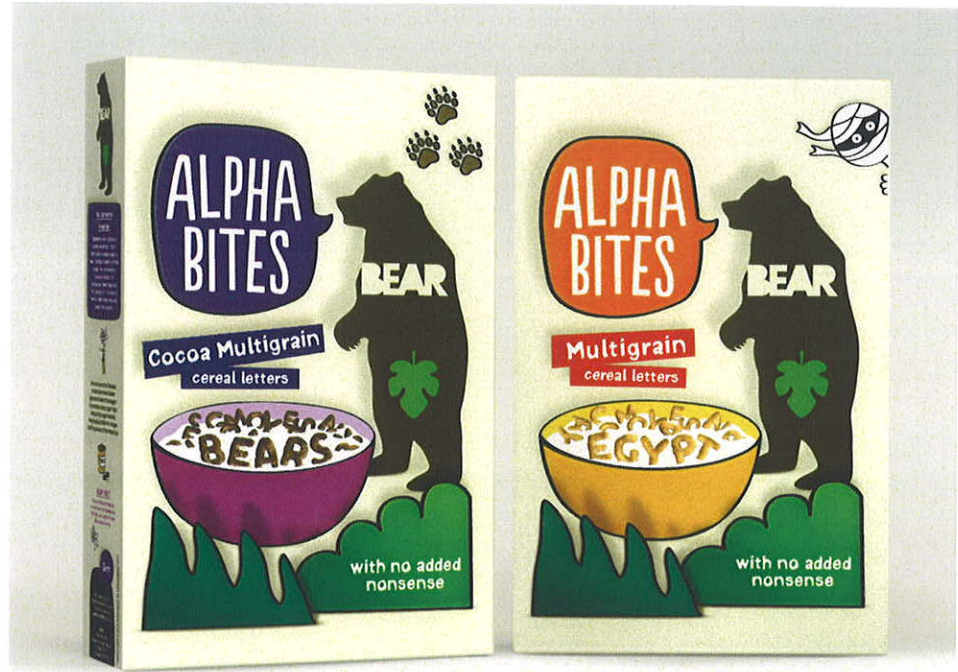
2012 NatWest Everywoman Awards, Winner

2013 Veuve Clicquot New Generation Award, Finalist

2013 The Grocer SME Food & Drink Brand of the Year Award

New product development

Thanks to the success of BEAR, we were able to launch two new Yoyos flavours in 2012 in response to consumer demand. This year, we've harnessed the strength of the brand to venture into two completely new categories: baby & toddler finger foods with our new Paws snack, and breakfast cereals with BEAR Alphabites, a multigrain cereal sweetened purely with sustainable coconut blossom nectar.



Improved recruitment

Inevitably, our creative and compelling brand identity attracts a huge response from prospective employees, and our doormat is always heavy with eager CVs. Due to the significant and swift growth of the brand, we've expanded our team from 7 in March 2012 to 18 by March 2013, and we expect to employ a team of 24 by the end of the year. BEAR HQ is a visible example of how important design is to the brand: called the Cave, it's adorned throughout with a forest mural featuring a Board of Fame with photos of all the kids who have collected 75 unique cards or more, and it helps us live the brand every day. For BEAR, our identity isn't a superficial layer to our product – it's at the heart of everything that we are.



And finally...

Crucially, BEAR's success has been achieved solely through our own investment and thanks to the remarkable strength of our brand identity. Our triumphs prove that an unbacked seeding start-up can bring a challenger brand to life without venture capital or private equity involvement.

5. Other influencing factors



Created without venture capital or big brand backing, BEAR has always relied on the strength of its creativity rather than a large communications budget. For that reason, every marketing investment since launch has relied heavily on the brand identity and harnesses its visual impact to capitalise on limited spend.

BEAR's only venture into ATL advertising comprised a contained 3.5 week campaign of outdoor media in London and the South East. In addition, we were able to run a giveaway offer in the Metro newspaper as we were given £50K of Metro advertising as our prize for winning the Venture Candy Best New Start-Up Award. Every single communication was designed by B&B and was a clear continuation of the brand identity project.

Similarly, all PR garnered for the brand has made extensive use of packaging shots and the overall BEAR brand personality. Our overall PR spend is minimal – not enough to justify a dedicated member of staff in-house – so it has been outsourced to date whenever we have an important story to tell.



BEAR is keen to avoid the promotional 'drug' of buy one get one free, and limits its in-store promotions to no more than 12-16 weeks a year with typical discount levels of 10-20% - for example, 2 for £4 on a Yoyo multipack (usually £2.29). Instead, BEAR focuses on offering the best overall value for consumers to encourage regular shopping habits rather than occasional sales peaks.

Research resources

IRI Marketing Data
BEAR internal figures