



# H.R.OWEN

“Calling Brands did a great job of identifying the mutual passion for cars at the centre of our customer relationships, and gave us a flexible and powerful brand identity to help bring this to life”.

Chris Harris, Marketing & Customer Director, H. R. Owen



**SUBMISSION TITLE**

H.R. OWEN  
BRAND REFRESH

**CATEGORY**

1.2 DESIGN &  
IMPLEMENTATION  
COST UNDER  
£100,000

**CLIENT**

H.R. OWEN

**AGENCY**

CALLING BRANDS

**DATE**

JUNE 2014

# In the world of luxury, brand is king

Unfortunately for H.R. Owen, London's oldest luxury car dealership, their brand was being overshadowed by the car marques they sold. Following a turbulent time in the financial crisis, revenues fell (2009 – down 13% year on year) and profits fell faster, leading to a wholesale change in the senior management team at the end of 2011.

In such a state of flux, H.R. Owen was in need of a strong brand strategy and identity to stabilise the group, uniting the different parts of the business and in so doing, create an H.R. Owen experience that both clients and employees would be proud to be a part of.

What began as a simple brand refresh, far outreached its original aims.

Within a year, car sales had risen by 29% and in the company's latest Final Year results, a 63% rise in operating profit was reported, along with a +71 average Net Promoter Score amongst employees and clients.



## H.R. OWEN

OFFICIAL DEALER

H.R. Owen  
Dealer Group  
of the Year 2013  
Motor Trader Magazine

### Key results after re-brand

**63%** Rise in operating profit in the latest Final Year results

**29%** Increase in new & used car sales, within the first year

**+71** Average Net Promoter Score among staff & clients

# H.R. Owen is one of the world's leading luxury and supercar motor dealers



H.R. Owen is one of the world's leading luxury and supercar motor dealer. Founded in Mayfair, London, the company first started dealing Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars in 1932. In 2000, they bought neighbouring dealership Jack Barclay to make them the largest Rolls-Royce and Bentley dealership in the world. They now sell 11 different car marques at 14 sites across the South of England and Manchester, with 370 employees and a turnover of more than £260 million in 2013.

The problem facing the brand was that it was all but invisible to the customer, with the car marques owning the relationship. The challenge was to reposition H.R. Owen to create more visibility and value in the eyes of the customer. We spotted the opportunity to build a stronger relationship between the brand, its marques and the customers.

H.R. Owen lacked visibility and value in the eyes of the customer

## THE BRIEF

- Create a visual identity befitting a luxury brand, displaying significant differentiation from other dealerships
- Elevate the H.R. Owen brand beyond its marques, giving the brand a clearly defined role in the relationship
- Grow sales, especially in the underdeveloped used car category, and improve company performance
- Increase customer interaction and brand engagement through a new website design, events structures and other experiential touch points

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## PROJECT OVERVIEW

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### OVERVIEW OF MARKET

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The luxury car dealership landscape has changed little over the years, with a few top traders owning the majority of conversations around prestige cars, plucky smaller dealerships selling where they can and online peer-to-peer sales catering only to the time-rich enthusiast. Amongst the major players, no one else has the same claim to true prestige as H.R. Owen, and there is little to differentiate them otherwise.

However, H.R. Owen had failed to capitalise on this unique position as a modern heritage automotive brand. In 2008–2009, they found themselves in a fragile car market, forcing the company to refocus its attentions on the luxury market and sell its mainstream franchises. Unfortunately the group still found itself invisible to its desired customer-base – a new breed of savvy High Net Worth consumers who placed greater worth on experience, brand and authenticity. A consistent and strong brand strategy and identity was at the root of the H.R. Owen's need for change, which was commissioned by a wholly new management team in 2011. In the process of the re-brand, there were certain challenges that had to be overcome:

- Engagement was varied amongst customers and satisfaction amongst those using aftersales was low
- Some confusion amongst what marques were offered, particularly amongst Bentley prospects and customers
- The marques had very strict brand guidelines that meant whatever we designed had to work within their rules
- Maintain Jack Barclay as a stand-alone brand, but align it within the H.R. Owen family, creating an identity system that works



**-13%**

H.R. Owen's  
revenue decreased  
year on year 2009

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### PROJECT LAUNCH DATE

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Brand Promise & Brand Identity  
January 2012

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### SIZE OF DESIGN BUDGET

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Design & Strategy budget £47,000

# Brand Positioning



Part of the brand refresh project involved a new organising thought. Up until then H.R. Owen had been a product-led brand, letting the marques dominate the conversation. Our insight was that the brand was unique amongst luxury car dealerships because of the quality of the 'experience' it offered to customers and employees. 80 years selling and servicing their marques had made H.R. Owen an authority on luxury cars, offering an experience of unrivalled expertise from its salesmen and engineers, an exceptional customer-oriented ethos and an excellent employer brand. All this forged H.R. Owen as a truly experiential brand and contributed in creating the brand promise.

Brand promise

“A peerless  
experience for  
the discerning car  
owner”

# Brand Identity

Positioning H.R. Owen as a luxury experiential brand, the new identity celebrated the brand's long motoring heritage and racing roots back to the 1930s. With classic modernist typography and a unique chequered motif inspired by the racing flag, the design solution worked in harmony with each of the marques, along with the famous sub-brand, Jack Barclay.



Old Logo

**H.R. OWEN**  
TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

New Logo



**H.R. OWEN**

OFFICIAL DEALER

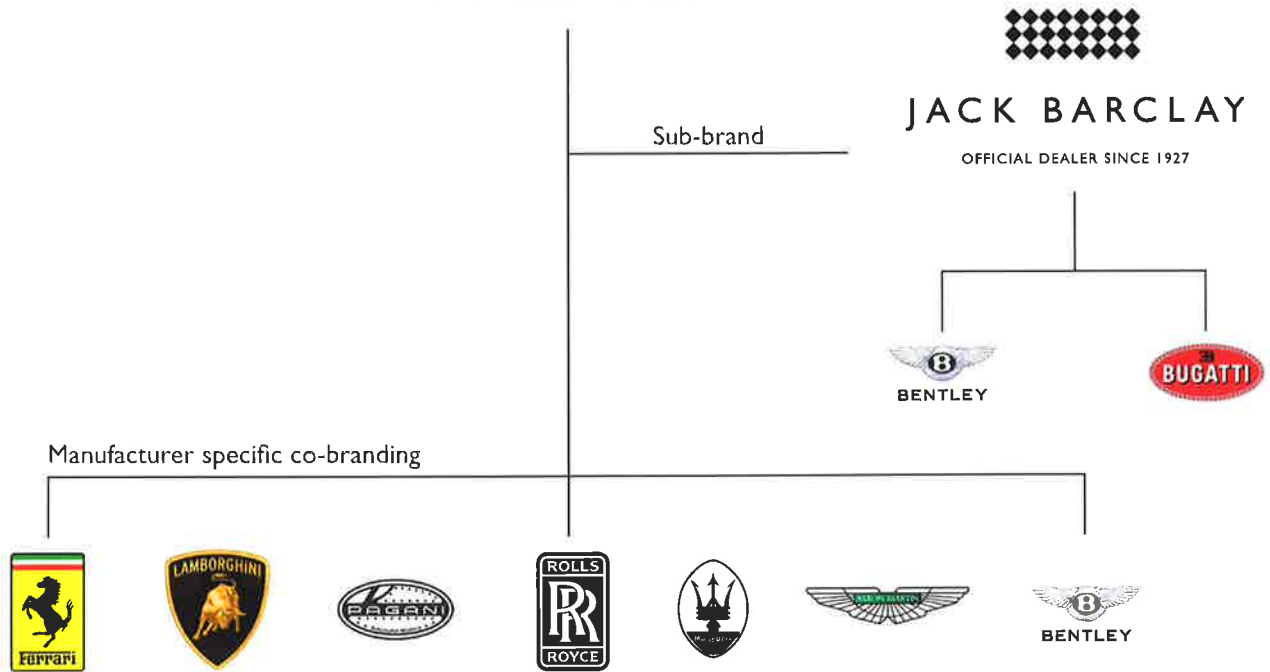
#### A Winning logotype

The refined Gill Sans has a strong heritage of use in travel brands in the hey day of luxury travel. Even the full points reflect the diamonds in the winners' flag.



# H.R. OWEN

OFFICIAL DEALER



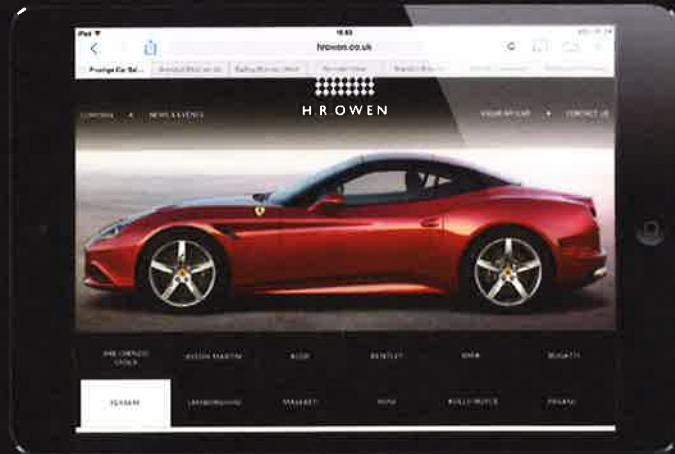
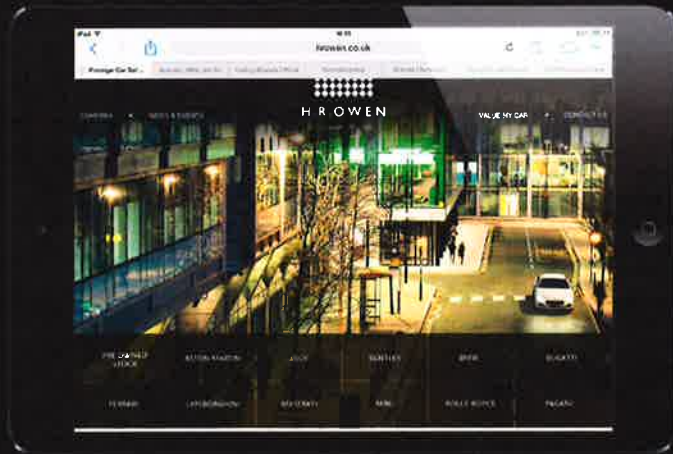
Jack Barclay was a robust heritage brand on its own, so in bringing it in line with H.R. Owen, we had to make sure its identity was not weakened but strengthened through the relationship between the two. The typeface and checkerboard motif were key to this, as was a clear hierarchy in the website design.



JACK BARCLAY

OFFICIAL DEALER SINCE 1927



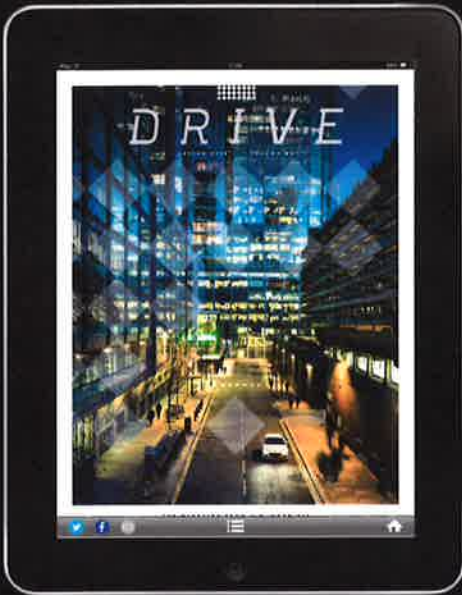


The H.R. Owen website is their largest forecourt and one of their main promotional tools. Previously a flat and unexciting platform, the website became the centrepiece of the refreshed brand, setting the tone with its stripped back, understated style – focussing fully on the cars and the luxurious driving experience. A desire to increase the used car sales was built into the design, which was later implemented by the H.R. Owen website team.



# Bringing the brand to life

H.R. Owen's driver-centric magazine, *Drive*, symbolises the peerless experience for its customer, with high quality visuals and paper emphasising the tactile luxury of the brand. The italic font of the typography signalling the excitement and forward motion of the journey.



# Bringing the brand to life



## Events & Merchandising

H.R. Owen worked with additional partner agencies to produce branded outfits, environments, gifts and stationery that helped employees embody the brand, owning the relationship between them and the customers.

We identified opportunities in the customer experience, engaging automotive brand heavy environments and prestige events. We wanted to lift H.R. Owen beyond its marques, expressing it as an authentic automotive brand and creating a real aftersales experience. As such, we designed the brand to feel like a club of like-minded enthusiasts. Member areas inside showrooms, customer driving days and VIP event invites were all designed to reinforce the idea of experiencing customers' cars to the full. Branded platforms were used by the events team to elevate the cars, giving them greater status in the space.

# 136% profit growth in 2 years

## RAPID GROWTH

In the year following the brand refresh, car sales revenue was £210m, an impressive 29% increase on the previous year, whilst aftersales revenue was £34m, an incredibly positive 15% increase.

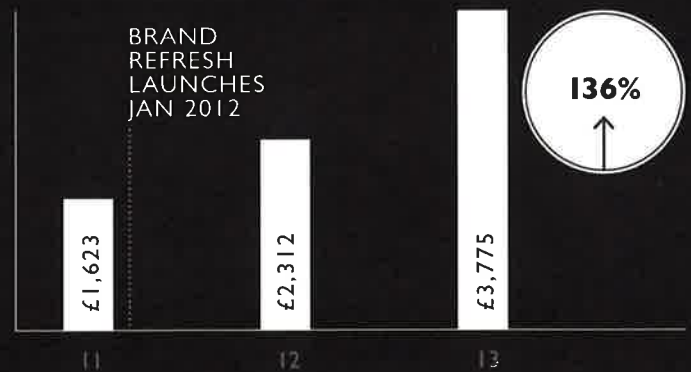
Meanwhile, the used car market was an opportunity H.R. Owen was keen to capitalise on. The refreshed Jack Barclay Bentley sub-brand achieved the highest used car sales figures in the world in 2013. Overall, from 2011 – 2013, H.R. Owen experienced a 91% increase in used car sales. In 2013, the Group sold 1101 used cars alone – a notable figure in the luxury market.

Historically the group had always lost money between June and December, but in 2012, the group reported a rise in sales and revenue during this period. So much so that in October of that year H.R. Owen told the market that it would beat expectations for 2012, prompting analysts to edge up revenue forecasts from £239m to £251m, a healthy 5% increase.

In the time period following the re-brand, H.R. Owen reported a 63% rise in operating profit from 2011 to end of year 2013. Shares in the company accelerated 15.5p to 162.5p after the company said that following a strong end to the year, it expects to exceed management expectations for 2013.

The headline target from the 2011 strategy review was to double profitability by 2014. This was achieved a year early.

## UNDERLYING TRADING PROFITS (/LOSSES) £M



Events became a far greater pull for clients after the rebranding, with new central resources having been developed. As a result, there's been a dramatic increase from virtually no events to an estimated 240 individual days of events this year alone. Last year, the Group hosted over twice as many customer events as in 2012. This has translated to an amazing 4432 new customers added to the H.R. Owen database last year – an increase of c.10%.

To support the events further, thanks to incredibly positive feedback *DRIVE* has reached a print run of 15,000.

In an extraordinary feat of client satisfaction, H.R. Owen received a +71 average customer Net Promoter Score, proving that a renewal of energy focussed around the client during the branding process was extremely valuable to the Group.

+71 Average  
Net Promoter  
Score among  
staff & clients

**4,432**

Number of new  
customers added  
to the HR Owen  
database in 2013.



# 250% increase in online visits

After the website was launched in September 2012, visits to hrowen.co.uk ran 42% ahead of the previous quarter (Jun – Sept 13 vs. May – Aug 12). The site attracted 2.5 times more online visits in 2012 than in 2011.

Traffic on hrowen.co.uk is up 39% year on year to end March 2014, with only 7% additional spend on digital advertising since the re-brand.

Enquiry levels have clearly correlated with visits to the website, with 354,000 extra visits year on year generating c.3,500 calls, which was why once again the website is cited as a significant factor in the Group's 63% profit increase for 2013.

As validation of the new website's success, H.R. Owen won the coveted 'Dealer Website of the Year' award from Motor Trader Magazine – commenting that they felt H.R. Owen was setting new industry standards for design.

**354,000**

Extra visits to  
the website  
year on year

**10%**

Increase in new  
customers on  
the database

'Dealer Website  
of the Year'  
Motor Trader Magazine

# H.R. Owen wins Dealer Group of the Year

As an overall marker of the progress made since the re-branding, the highest scoring question on the 2013 employee survey was "I am proud to work for H.R. Owen", followed by "I feel as much a part of the H.R. Owen group as my specific site or franchise", a strong recognition that a consistent and inclusive brand identity greatly benefitted the group, creating a peerless experience not only for the customers but also employees.

"H.R. Owen sets standards competitors would be proud to emulate". This was the citation from Motor Trader Magazine, when awarding H.R. Owen its coveted Dealer Group of the Year award 2013. Recognition from within the motor industry was just one of the indicators of progress that was set by the Company in the 2011 strategic review, successfully achieved thanks to H.R. Owen's refreshed identity.

## Other Influencing Factors

The new identity and strategy for the group fundamentally altered the brand's perspective of itself for its employees and customers, enlivening their approach to sales and CRM. This renewed vigour gave birth to a revamped system and handling of data management.


Another factor that contributed to the impact of the brand refresh was the ever-improving economic climate during the subsequent time period. However, it must be noted that H.R. Owen greatly outperformed the market, indicating that the economic environment was only one factor of many in the rebrand's success. Indeed, by the end of 2012, H.R. Owen recorded an 11% like-for-like increase in new car registrations, ahead of the 5% growth in the overall UK new car market.

## Research resources

H.R. Owen internal data

SMMT

Motor Trader



"H.R. Owen sets standards competitors would be proud to emulate".

Motor Trader Magazine

