

Project Title

Excellent Development
Rebrand

Category:

Design for Society

Client Company:

Excellent

Design Consultancy:

WPA Pinfold

Date:

06.07.13

“We are fast becoming recognised as one of the leading charities in our field and, having put in place a new vision and strategy for exponential growth, it was essential that we had a media partner to help us achieve this and capitalise on our potential. WPA Pinfold were the perfect choice.

They guided us through the brand strategy maze and helped us formalise our proposition, positioning and articulating our vision through a coordinated and planned brand roll-out. The new brand identity adds status and enables us to engage with NGOs, and significantly enhances our recognition by charitable trusts, public and corporate donors—and it looks brilliant on a t-shirt too.

The results have been fantastic, with several trusts and donors so impressed with the new brand identity and strategic direction of the charity, it’s renewing and increasing their support.”

Simon Maddrell, CEO, Excellent

Previous logo



excellent!
DEVELOPMENT.COM

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Excellent

Excellent is a small charity offering a unique service to rural communities in semi-arid areas of Africa. Over the last ten years, it has enabled 330 sand dams to be created, 14,000km of terracing to be dug and 850,000 trees to be planted. This has provided the local people easy access to clean water (they would normally walk for hours each day to collect it) and enabled them to grow enough food to eat and sell, creating thriving communities that no longer survive purely by subsistence, (at the mercy of the vagaries of the local climate).

Excellent had reached the point where it needed to make fundamental changes to the organisation and its way of communicating, if it was to achieve its future strategy of extending its reach, building on its success and delivering long-term growth. In essence, its current brand and communications were neither fit for purpose, nor capitalising on its unique offer.

The supply chain for Excellent Development goes from upstream donors to downstream beneficiaries, with Excellent acting as an enabler for a range of projects. The credibility and equity of the brand was critical in ensuring its future success with all its stakeholders and influencers – from Governments to donors and trusts, from NGOs to local communities in developing parts of the world.

We believe that Excellent is a worthy contender for a Design Effectiveness Award as it clearly demonstrates how strategic thinking, the creation of a properly aligned brand identity and cost effective, well designed communications can:

- Create a catalyst for change in perception and focus for Excellent (for both internal and external audiences), enabling it to meet and deliver to its ambitious growth targets.
- Address declining donations across the sector and enable Excellent to 'punch above its weight' in both providing sand dams in areas of deprivation and liaising with NGOs and Government bodies.
- Significantly contribute to the organisation's ten-year strategy by aligning the new, reinvigorated brand to a clearly defined growth strategy.

New brand logo



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*Experts in sand dam
technology, providing
sustainable solutions
for drylands.

The Brief

To re-launch Excellent Development and position it for future growth in line with its ten-year development plan - ensuring the brand identity is properly aligned to its brand positioning statement* and that it is fit for market.

Key Objectives

The brand and website were over five years old and there was a need to rename, refresh and reposition the Excellent Development (original name) brand and put in place the foundations for a brand and communications strategy that would help sustain and grow the organisation over the forthcoming decade – in line with its vision and mission. The new brand needed to support and help communicate effectively Excellent's mission:

- We enable disadvantaged rural communities in semi-arid Africa to transform their environment in sustainable ways and improve water supplies, food production, health and incomes.
- We enhance development and environmental awareness and education in the UK and worldwide.
- The new brand also needed to articulate its core offer by incorporating a strapline that properly communicated its proposition (this became 'Pioneers of Sand Dams').

In addition, Excellent needed to 'punch above it's weight' in a sector where the major charities have considerable resources and marketing expertise. Key deliverables included:

- Help establish Excellent as the leading expert in sand dams.
- Ensure Excellent is recognised as a professional and trusted charity by corporate donors and charitable trusts.
- Enable growth in donations from the general public – previously this had *not* been a key revenue stream.
- Build on status with Governments and NGOs.
- Create a brand that engages with communities in different parts of the world, where cultures and languages differ.

Excellent sub-brand logos



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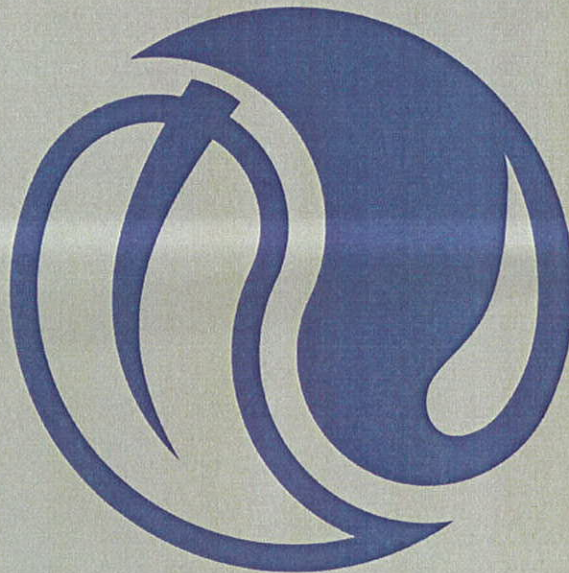
Key Challenges

- The recession and subsequent reduction in giving to charities has created an intensely competitive environment, where charities have had to significantly up their game in order to maintain their revenues.
- The rural water supply sector has seen an increase in charities operating in this area, thus threatening to undermine Excellent's status as a leading rural water supply specialist.
- Charitable trusts (a key revenue stream for Excellent) require professionally run charities that can prove they have well defined strategies. It was critically important that the new brand reflected Excellent's professional approach.
- A key growth area is building relationships with NGOs and it was important for Excellent to demonstrate its accessible, altruistic and focussed approach.

Rationale:

The water droplet and leaf motifs help to sum up aspects of what Excellent delivers through the development of sand dams. The leaf and water droplet are in harmony, and as a concept they should have the same relevance and resonance with different cultures across the world.

Brand icon



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Project Scope

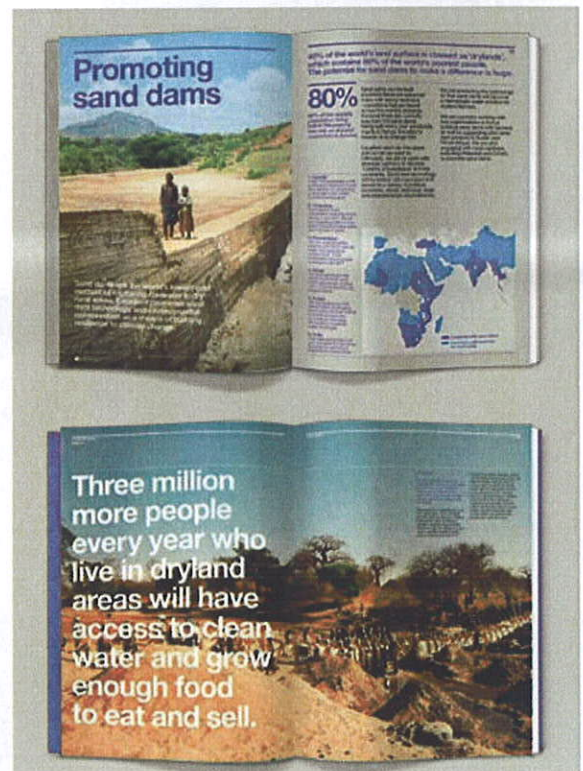
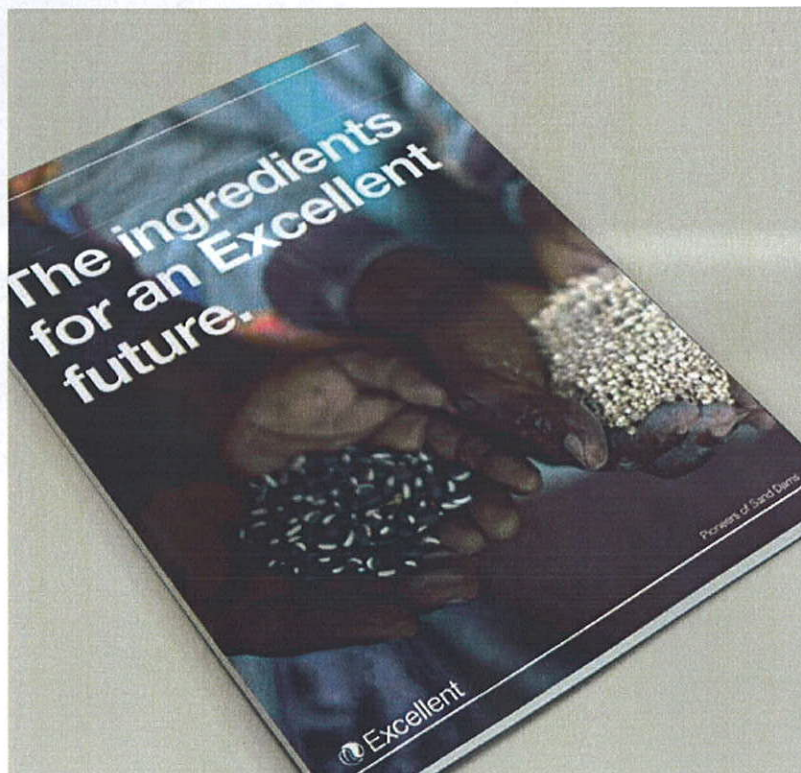
An extensive research, analysis and strategic review was carried out, including telephone interviews with key stakeholders and current and future target markets. A brand workshop was undertaken with key stakeholders to review the current status of the brand and its alignment with Excellent's strategic objectives - this included: benchmarking; exploring new opportunities and areas for growth; and future market threats. This helped all stakeholders understand the importance of brand and the need to align all communications with a common brand strategy that represents the vision and mission.

Key deliverables were:

- Strategic review development of Brand Positioning Statement.
- Clearly defined communications strategy.
- Name generation/realignment (Excellent) and description of proposition (strapline: Pioneers of sand dams).
- Brand identity - including tone of voice and direction for visual assets (photography).

The final design was delivered with a full communications template and sub-branding. This was summarised in comprehensive brand and design guidelines - design templates were also created to enable Excellent to carry out most of the ongoing communications work themselves.

Marketing communications



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The Market

The challenge for Excellent is to grow their market (both communities in need and donors) and achieve economies of scale – and survive through these recessionary times, where charity income streams are under threat.

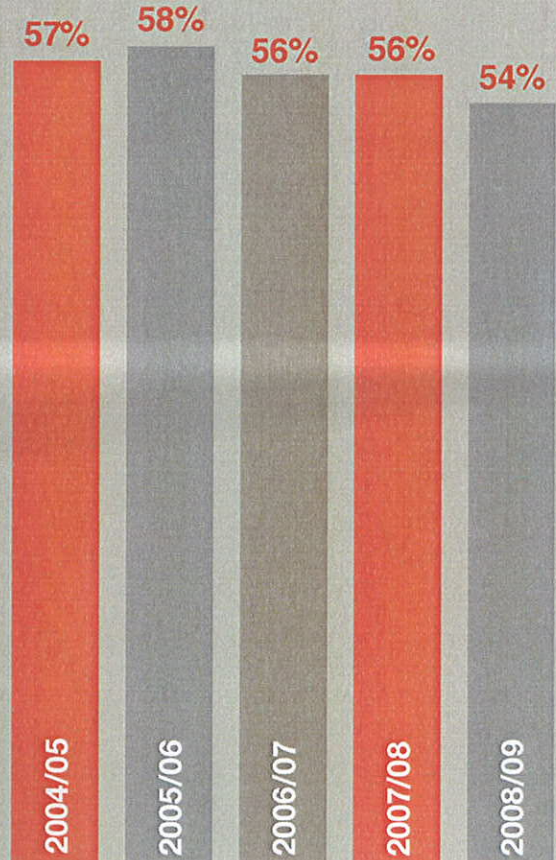
The recession and subsequent reduction in giving to charities has created an intensely competitive environment, where charities have had to significantly up their game in order to maintain their revenues.

In a decade of huge change for the voluntary and community sector, there has always been one constant: the central importance of giving. Giving matters to the sector not only as the most important source of finance, but also because it makes a statement about what we value as a society. The fact that so many people freely choose to give, to support the huge range of causes that matter to them, is a very positive reflection on our society. Where people see a need, they continue to respond to it by giving.

Poster campaign



Proportion of adults in the UK giving to charity, 2004/05–2008/09



Source: UK Giving 2011 report

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The Solution

The new identity is contemporary, dynamic and forward-looking; it has been designed to enable Excellent to 'punch above its weight' and compete with the best in market. As part of the design process, the name was simplified from Excellent Development to Excellent to make it more memorable and easier to identify in its countries of operation where English is not the first language. The logo font is friendly yet international, and the icon represents the harmony that is fundamental to the philosophy of Excellent – building sand dams that are at one with nature and have minimal impact on the immediate environment (or downstream communities); creating fertile land and delivering accessible clean water for the long-term benefit and prosperity of the local communities.

Excellent's new brand retains the elemental honesty of its roots whilst at the same time communicating a level of professionalism that reassures its audiences that this is indeed a worthwhile and trustworthy charity. Key investors are trusts and corporate organisations that tend to favour like-minded organisations that can demonstrate their ability to be both ethical and professional in their operation.

The old brand was not fit for purpose and the name was too complicated, and not memorable.

The new brand, communications and guidelines have enabled Excellent to grow in a declining market – where much of the charity sector is under threat – and deliver the first stage of its ten-year growth strategy, ahead of schedule.

Timings and Budget

The project commenced in March 2010 and the new brand was rolled out from February 2011.

The equivalent fee value for the work was over £30,000, the majority of which was completed on a pro bono basis.

Website design



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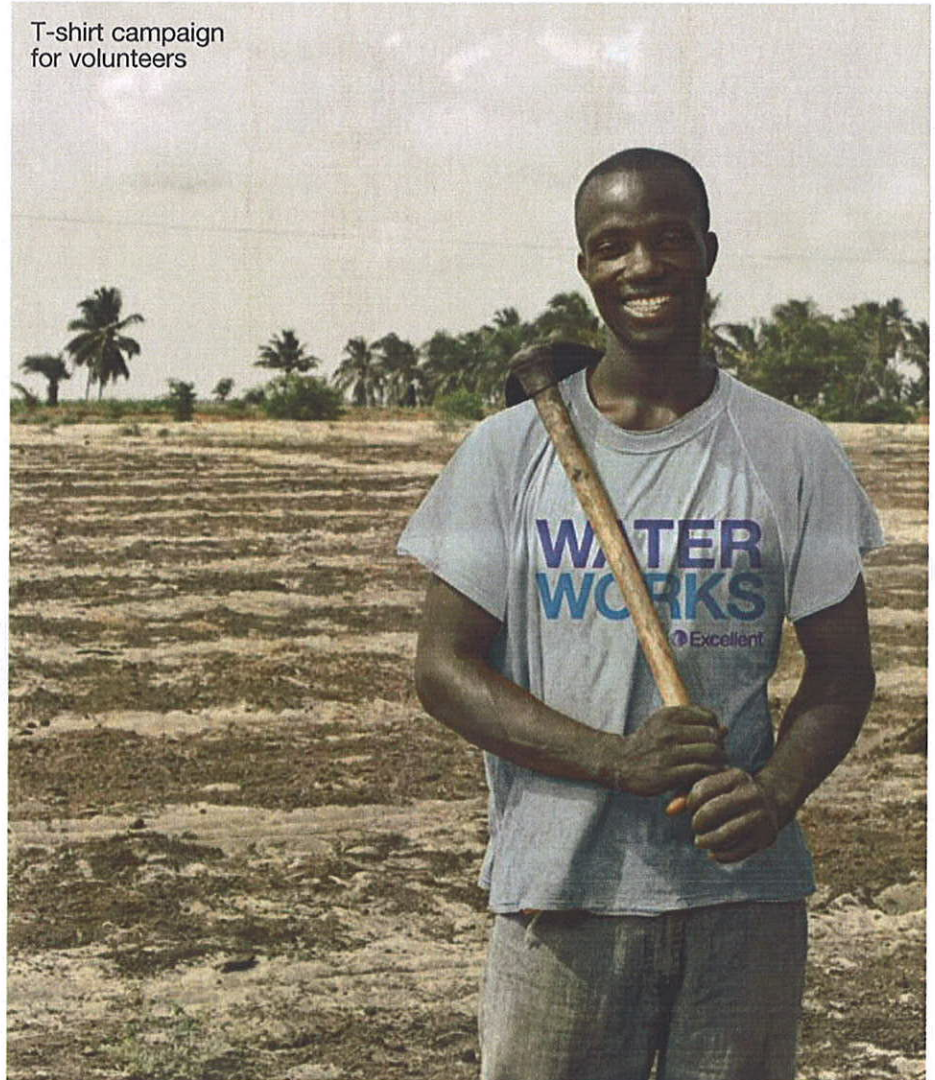
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Summary of Results 2011–2012:

The rebrand took Excellent Development, an obscure charity with an interesting story to tell, and positioned it as a world-class charity with a great and relevant story to tell about sand dams — how they can change the lives of whole communities for the better.

- Record donations since re-launch, both from trusts and individual donors +12% on previous year.
- General public donations increased since launch by 38%.
- Increase in number of staff by 31%.
- Attracted three new donations totalling over £50,000, as a direct result of the new brand and strategy launch.

T-shirt campaign
for volunteers



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Income Growth +12%

Income growth since launch is over 11% - against a backdrop of continuing decline in charitable giving (down -11% in 2008/9 and declining, CAF findings).

Revenue: £865,581 - 2010/11 £963,597 - 2011/12.

Increase in General Public Donations +38%

General public donations increased to 161,000 (2011) from 117,000 (2010) – an increase of 38%.

Three Instant Acquisitions

As a direct result of launching Excellent's new strategic direction and identity, Excellent immediately acquired three new donations totalling over £50,000.

Increased Visibility

Since the rebrand, and based on its raised profile, Excellent has started working with the local NGO in Zimbabwe and is also supporting Wateraid in Uganda –and carrying out feasibility studies in Ghana, Burkina, Faso and Ethiopia.

Increased Brand Awareness and Reputation

Increased awareness of Excellent's reputation (through the new brand) has resulted in the charity being invited to the Rural Water Supply Network Conference in Uganda to promote sand dam technology.

Increased Communication Channels

Under the new brand, Excellent attended and presented at the World Water Forum 6 in Marseille (March 2012) - promoting sand dams and specifically pioneering sand dam technology. This enabled Excellent to meet and engage with new NGO's and Governments (they are no longer solely raising money to build individual sand dams, but positioning themselves as the world authority and pioneers of sand dam technology).

Increase in Human Resource +31%

Increase in resource as a result of increased demand - average number of employees 10.9 in 2010/11 increased to 11 2011/12.

Increased Profile

As a result of its raised profile, Excellent won the opportunity to feature on the Radio 4 Charity Appeal, presented by John Humphries, where they raised over £60,000 – more than any other charity in the history of the appeal.

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Other Influencing Factors

As a charity, Excellent has limited resources and all its marketing activities were focussed on creating the new brand and its re-launch.

“WPA Pinfold supported us in translating our strategic plans into a strong brand. Shortening our name to ‘Excellent’ will help us become more memorable, and the tagline ‘Pioneers of Sand Dams’ emphasises our unique area of focus. The integration of water and food in our work is represented by the water drop and leaf motif, and the choice of purple marks us out as having an unusual approach to development and sustainability.

The sharper style will set us in good stead to widen our appeal and help us reach more people with news about sand dams.”

Sophie Bown, Communications Manager

T-shirt campaign

