

Astonish

THE PINNACLE OF CLEANING

FOR PUBLICATION



elmwood

CLIENT
Astonish

DESIGN CONSULTANCY
Elmwood

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Before

After



Astonish is a family-owned cleaning products business, with squeaky clean ethical credentials, but low brand awareness. Over 40 years ago, it started selling oven cleaning products door-to-door, and had grown its range to over 60 products, and its turnover to around £17m per annum.

Despite a good presence in the value retailers, Astonish had failed to gain listings in the major multiples, but it knew that if it was to deliver its growth ambitions, it needed to change perceptions not only amongst consumers, but also buyers, in order to secure increased distribution – a difficult challenge in a sector dominated by the power brands of Unilever, P&G and Reckitt Benckiser with their big above-the-line clout.

The company appointed Elmwood to create a distinct brand proposition, and articulate a unique role for Astonish in consumers' lives. Following a full immersion in the company, the agency delivered a distinct and clear positioning, and iconic brand assets that allowed Astonish to be seen as a credible household cleaning brand, with a clear role as the consumers' go-to brand for the ultimate cleaning performance and shine – every time.

Working alongside structural packaging designers, Elmwood brought the brand proposition to life across numerous packaging ranges, which subsequently opened up more meaningful conversations with the big retailers.

As a result, Astonish:

- ▶ **Is now stocked in 2 of the 'Big Four'** (despite them all having rationalised existing branded ranges, and cut overall product listings, in favour of own label)
- ▶ **Has gained increased distribution across several value retailers,** and
- ▶ **Has secured distribution in a major convenience retailer** as of 2019.

Production has increased to working overnight, and Astonish has employed an additional ten operatives to help deliver the increased demand and ensure that the company can accommodate further increases in capacity.

In fact, in October 2018, ten months after the increased distribution, **Astonish delivered its best ever month** with value sales up on the previous year by

+5%

#1

Add to that, the fact that across the value retailers, Astonish's Mould & Mildew remover became the **#1 mould removing brand** in December 2017, and it's proof that the brand now has **a solid new base on which to build.**

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

Outline of brief

The challenge

Astonish is a family-owned British cleaning products business that has been around for over 40 years. From humble beginnings selling its Original Oven & Cookware Cleaner door-to-door, the company had grown its range to over 60 products, and turnover had reached just short of £17m. However, turnover had plateaued, and the management team had huge ambitions for the Astonish brand to grow significantly.

Astonish did good business with the value retail buyers, but in order to achieve this type of growth, it needed to attract the major grocers while still retaining this existing revenue source. It had failed to secure listings with the major multiples in the past, due to its value proposition and jack-of-all trades / generalist perception.

Project scope

With that in mind, Astonish appointed Elmwood to create a defined brand proposition, and articulate a clear role for Astonish in consumers' lives. This meant delivering a new brand identity and range of iconic assets that would help to reposition Astonish as a credible household cleaning brand, beyond the value retail sector. It was to be brought to life through a strategic brand repositioning, expressed across a packaging redesign of its core range, plus four additional new products that were awaiting listings.



Previous identity

Key objectives

To create a credible household cleaning brand that could compete with the power brands in this category such as *Flash*, *Mr Muscle* and *Oven Pride*. Delivering a compelling strategic brand proposition that conveys the quality and performance of Astonish products was hoped to:

1



Encourage consumers and retailers to reappraise the brand.

To prompt the major retailers to have more meaningful commercial conversations with the business.

2



Gain the brand mainstream grocery listings.

To fast track an increase in revenue.

3



Provide a solid platform from which to build further growth.

And build solid brand equity on which to build for future NPD or expansion into new markets.

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

Strategic thinking

Astonish briefed Elmwood to develop a clear strategic brand proposition and define a unique role in consumers' lives. After a full immersion in the business, we identified the opportunity to reimagine and re-engineer the unique pastes as a range of specialist cleaning products.

We also advised the need for graphics and structural design to work seamlessly together with the proposition to help drive the reappraisal that was needed by both consumers and retailers



Description

About Astonish

Astonish is a family-owned British company based in Bradford, West Yorkshire. The brand prides itself on producing best in class cleaning products at great value for money, and has a loyal core consumer group, primarily in the value retail sector.

Background to the project

Astonish's range of quality products have proven performance, and are also approved by Cruelty Free International and the Vegan Society. The company had squeaky clean ethical credentials, but very little brand equity or evident brand assets. It also had an oven paste product that was unique in the marketplace, but it wasn't making the most of it, and it was consistently sold on a value platform.

With an ambitious growth strategy in place, the business recognised that further success could not be achieved by the team's experience and performance of the products alone. It needed to invest in leveraging what it had and elevating the Astonish brand.

Research carried out by the company had regularly proven that once consumers tried its products they quickly became advocates. But it needed much stronger shelf presence and standout to compete in a very crowded market, plus that all-important reason to believe.



CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

Design solution

Many leading brands present themselves as easy solutions to tough cleaning problems and tend to trivialise cleaning tasks – making them look easy and effortless. However, Astonish understands the real world of cleaning, and that sometimes a bit of elbow grease is needed.

With Astonish, the effort you put in will always be rewarded with astonishing results.

From this insight, Elmwood distilled the brand's distinct point of view and defined a clear role for the brand that could be expressed creatively in a memorable way:

In the real world of tough cleaning tasks, there's no room for compromise. Customers can always rely on Astonish to get the job done. Astonish delivers the ultimate performance and shine every time. It's this that makes Astonish the best there is, The Pinnacle of Cleaning.

The brand marque challenges existing category norms by avoiding the use of excessive power graphics, whizzes, flashes and illustrations of sparkling sinks. Instead Astonish focuses on the idea that cleaning is about neatly restoring

order in the home, and the idea that Astonish is the pinnacle of cleaning. The 'A' disrupts the consumer's scan of the busy fixture and makes Astonish the signpost brand of the category.



Astonish

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

Design solution

Visual cues such as facets and symmetry act as important neuro-triggers to evoke specific emotional responses in the consumer. The packaging brings a visual sense of calm and orderliness, contrasting with the existing visual agitation present in the fixture. Facets create clean lines and jewel-like surfaces that emphasise the feeling of power and high-performance.

Consistent use of the blue Astonish 'A' panel achieves powerful brand blocking, and the simple and clear hierarchy of information on pack enables the consumer to navigate and shop the range effortlessly.

The design framework can be flexed across numerous product sectors in the homecare category, as it borrows from product colour cues to compete with well-known branded alternatives but in an ownable way.



Facets in the structure and brand create jewel-like surfaces

Collaboration

Astonish was designed to win at the last six feet to purchase. People shop predominantly by use of colour and shape; therefore it was essential that Elmwood worked collaboratively with the structural packaging agency to deliver a unique and ownable physical footprint. The new 3D pack designs for all trigger and bottle formats elevate the over-arching brand idea of the pinnacle through physically creating facets and clean lines, while further differentiating Astonish from the plethora of similar structural packs in the fixture.



CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

Scope of work delivered

Brand positioning, identity, assets and guidelines, plus structural and graphic packaging design for floorcare, triggers, laundry care, cream cleaners, hob cleaner and stain removers. Plus the new extended range of pastes.

Overview of market

In 2016, the household and paper products category grew in volume by +8.2%, but despite this, value sales actually declined by almost £27m; that's a fall of 0.5% (*The Grocer, Jan 18*).

While branded products still contributed to just under 70% of value sales, own label accounted for 55% volume share, and grew ahead of the branded segment. Indeed, this growth came as no surprise, as retailers prioritised own label and started to cut branded ranges, with the assumption that their products could match that of the brands therefore negating the need to range as many in the category. This obviously made it even harder for Astonish to break through into the multiples, and retain the specialism of its offer.

The business faced many well-known competitors in the cleaning category, from *Mr Muscle* to *Cillit Bang* and *Flash*.

- ▶ *Flash* owns floor cleaning
- ▶ *Dettol* owns antibacterial cleaning
- ▶ *Windowlene* owns window cleaning
- ▶ *Hob Brite* owns hob cleaning, and
- ▶ *Mr Muscle* owns tough cleaning

Going back to the company's original roots, the major opportunity was for Astonish to own oven cleaning – a relatively small category within the total cleaning market, and often overlooked by the big brands, but still worth approximately £80m. *Oven Pride* was the #1 and received good reviews on the basis that it gets the job done, but there were very few brands to compete, so consumer choice was limited. The category had also seen no innovation or NPD for many years, but Astonish with its unique oven paste had the potential to shake things up a bit.

Key facts

- ▶ Project launch date – June 2017
- ▶ Design fees (not including production costs) – £200,000, including structural packaging



RESULTS

Results vs. objectives

1 Encourage consumers and retailers to reappraise the brand to prompt the major retailers to have more meaningful commercial conversations with the business.

The rebrand has been a hit with customers and retailers alike, with both groups praising the appearance of the products:

Consumers:

"Love the new logo – very stylish"

"Very smart, modern, fresh and clean – exactly what you want from a cleaning product"

"Loving the new packaging"

Retailers:

"A quantum leap forward"

"After four decades the makeover is utterly Astonishing! A change for the better always welcome."

"Elevates the brand out of the £1 sector"

"Really helps with brand blocking"

As a result, existing stockists such as *Home Bargains*, *Poundland* and *Iceland* **have all extended the range of products** taken from Astonish. And *Poundstretcher* has **listed the brand once again**, after a period not stocking any Astonish products.

2 Gain the brand mainstream grocery listings to fast track an increase in revenue.

As a result of the rebrand, **Morrisons** and **ASDA** both made the decision to stock Astonish in their main cleaning aisles next to the big brands, from January 2018.

The value, at recommended retail price (RRP) that these additional listings have delivered as of September 2018 is:

ASDA

£65,352

Morrisons

£231,490

TOTAL = £296,842

Additionally, a major convenience retailer is due to take stock of its first ranges of Astonish products in January 2019.

3 Provide a solid platform from which to build further growth and build solid brand equity on which to build for future NPD or expansion into new markets.

Growth in production capability

Due to the increased demand for product, Astonish now has to run manufacturing shifts through the night. It has also recruited new operatives to take the team from 72 to 82, to help deliver this demand, and set the business up for further growth.

Financial growth

Since the rebrand, Astonish has seen an **8% increase in volume sales** from the 15 months following the rebrand vs. the 15 months prior. This equates to a minimum retail sales price of £1.1m, with the products being sold for £1 on average.

With the growing customer base, and increased momentum, this figure is likely to grow further through the remainder of 2018. In fact, with Astonish's financial year running from June to May, the company has already seen value sales increase by +11% for the first 5 months, and has **experienced its biggest month ever in terms of sales out from the business**; +£1.9m in October, which is **the equivalent of 11% of the previous year's turnover in just one month.**

increase
in volume
sales

8%

+11%

sales
increase
for first
5 months

RESULTS

Increased cost efficiencies

Although it required investment in a shrink-wrap machine, the new shrink sleeve has enabled Astonish to move to 1 single white colour bottle across all triggers, when previously it was using 8 different coloured bottles, which has saved circa £41k per year.

There have also been fewer operating problems on the line due to having a single bottle, which has meant less downtime. A design factor that the structural agency took into consideration, having got under the skin of the manufacturing process from the start.

Growth in brand equity

Owner and Managing Director of Astonish, Howard Moss, says:

“We wanted a strong visual identity that would inspire retailers and consumers to reappraise our brand. This rebrand conveys excellence, and announces Astonish as a major player in the cleaning market.

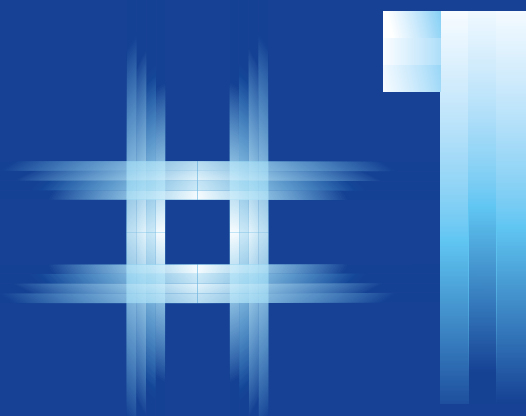
The new packaging is a visual disruptor on shelf and is easy to shop in a busy aisle. We're proud of our product and excited about how this work will help us achieve our ambitions for growth.”

Indeed, the new branding has disrupted so well that in the 52 week period to December 2017, Astonish's Mould & Mildew Remover became

the UK's #1 mould removing brand in the value retailers – outselling the next biggest brand, Cillit Bang, by 8 to 1

(Kantar Total Household Cleaners, 2017).

A fantastic new base on which to build.



RESULTS

Scale of effect and breadth of impact

Astonish has been able to achieve these strong results in a difficult market. All of the major multiples, and the big four in particular, fought 'tooth and nail with the discounters', and cut branded ranges to prioritise their own labels (The Grocer, Jan 2018). As a result, in the 52w/e 8 Oct 17, brands lost £96m at the tills – one of the sharpest branded declines in grocery over the year. Astonish was not only able to grow volume by 8% in the initial 15 months after rebranding, but also able to start the next financial year off on a positive footing with +11% YOY increase in value sales.

Other influencing factors

Was Astonish's success due to additional marketing support?

Additional support for the relaunched range has been minimal, with a small amount of activity on social media and both trade and consumer press. Unlike its competitors such as *Oven Pride*, who ran a big digital campaign throughout December 2017.

Was the success due to the NPD?

In terms of volume, the NPD unit sales contributed an equivalent minimum retail sales price of £613,280, which was approximately 55% of the additional sales.

But it was both the branding and the NPD that played a role in persuading buyers at *ASDA* and *Morrisons* to list. Sales from *Morrisons* in particular, show that the original products have been the most successful, for example – cream cleaners accounting for 22% of sales and Mould & Mildew Remover 16%, with Oven & Grill as the NPD line accounting for 9%.

Yes the new product innovation was important, however, without the clear branded proposition that was developed through the rebranding process, it is likely that the new products wouldn't have been taken on. This was certainly the case with the major convenience retailer, whose feedback was that it now looked more premium.

Was the increase in sales due

to the increased distribution?

Yes. But the biggest objective was to gain grocery listings, and with *ASDA* and *Morrisons* now stocking the brand and a major convenience retailer on the way, Astonish has delivered an additional minimum retail sales price of £1.1m – 27% of which was from *ASDA* and *Morrisons*.

Existing accounts, such as *Home Bargains*, *Poundland* and *Iceland*, also took on more product, and contributed to the overall financial growth.

Is the increase in sales due to pricing?

The everyday range has remained at the £1 price point even after the rebrand. The specialist cleaners and sponge range has gone into market at a £4 price point in fitting with competitor products on the market. While the specialist cleaners have been a success, the major growth has come from the trigger sprays. Additionally, the growth figures provided have been done so on a volume basis and their equivalent RRP to rule out any effect from a high price point.

Are Astonish's ethical credentials a contributing factor?

Astonish is proud to be a pioneer of animal-friendly household cleaning products and has never tested its products on animals or used animal ingredients. Although it is the only brand that is approved by *Cruelty Free International*, and *The Vegan Society*, that has always been the case and so nothing changed after the rebrand.

Is it because Good Housekeeping endorsed four of its products?

In August 2017, *Good Housekeeping* endorsed four Astonish products. While this is fantastic for the brand, ultimately the difference in terms of driving purchase decisions is minimal. People tend to look for, and pay more attention to, endorsements on higher value products where there is more risk associated. For products worth £1-4, risk is not really a factor.

References and sources of information

- ▶ *The Grocer* – 27 Jan 2017 – Spotless for less! Household Category Report 2017
- ▶ *The Grocer* – 27 Jan 2018 – Focus on Household & Paper products
- ▶ Internal sales data provided by Astonish