



Launching a brand  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the outset, people said it would be incredibly difficult to build a brand around a mattress. They said that people just buy them, put a sheet over them and forget about them. They were a commodity.

However, in under three years, eve sleep transformed from a big idea to a globally recognised lifestyle brand that broke all category norms. With worldwide collaborations, global press and media coverage, an ever-growing range of sleep products and over 53,000 social media followers, the UK's first 'bed in a box' now has a market value of over 140 million and an IPO listing.

While most entrepreneurs think about brand after the product, eve's design and branding strategy was at the forefront of its business agenda from the start. 'Every great day starts the night before' said the brief. The implications for design were clear – wake up a sleepy category with visual energy. More morning glass of OJ, less the cosy mug of bedtime cocoa. The eve always has an energy and an excitement that was captured in the brand identity, the tone of voice, the physical products and filtered through in to the ethos of the company. Our success was due to this single-minded creative idea, a brave team and big ambitions.

eve sleep products deliver the best quality for the best price with every aspect of the product and brand experience aimed at delivering a beautifully simple and simply beautiful experience.

We were the first brand in the UK to create a category language for a new generation of 'lifestyle' sleep brands, really optimising the original product and taking it to the next level. We turned a sleepy category into a truly desirable, aspirational one and had some seriously good fun on the journey.

- **FROM BRIEF TO LAUNCH IN 6 WEEKS**
- **0 – £12 MILLION TURNOVER IN 2 YEARS**
- **AVERAGE MONTHLY GROWTH RATE OF 35% IN YEAR 1  
25% IN YEAR 2**
- **YOY GROWTH OF 355% IN 2016**
- **START-UP TO IPO IN JUST 27 MONTHS**
- **1ST YEAR NUMBERS ALMOST 4 TIMES OVER WHAT WAS EXPECTED £206K TARGET VS £900K ACTUAL**
- **THE 1ST AND ONLY SLEEP BRAND EVER TO BE FEATURED AS PART OF COOLBRANDS**



## CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

### I. OUTLINE OF PROJECT BRIEF

After many years working in the industry, eve's co-founders knew that they had the tools to create the perfect mattress. However, they saw a lot of untapped potential in the relationships consumers had with their beds and an opportunity to move away from mattresses as a commodity and to create a uniquely positioned sleep brand – something that would create an emotional connection with consumers. They wanted to break conventions and turn things on their head.

Mattresses had traditionally been marketed in a – quite literally – sleepy manner, with people on advertisements whispering and talking about clouds. The colour palette was generally grey and white with lots of brands playing the same visual space. We decided to flip the category – throwing off the tropes and bringing an energy that would inspire consumers to engage, reappraise and desire them in a way they never had before.

The end goal was an award-winning calling card, a cult brand with an aspirational & desirable product range. A design, striking and stylish enough to be worth talking about – something literally 'remarkable'.

Their business ambition was fast, explosive growth and a projected figure of £260,000 for year 1.

Starting from scratch, we needed a full suite of brand elements, name, logo, look and feel, product design, packaging, tone of voice, website, comms material and PR collateral. Being an online mattress brand, the design would also have to work as our digital marketing, so our identity needed to be a design campaign not just a branding system.

### 1/ DISRUPT THE CATEGORY

### 2/ MAKE IT SIMPLE & BEAUTIFUL

### 3/ MAKE IT COOL & INTERESTING

### 4/ FAST, EXPLOSIVE GROWTH WITH REVENUE OF £260,000 IN YEAR 1





## II. DESCRIPTION

### STRATEGY & APPROACH

The mattress category was typically about getting a lovely, cosy night's sleep – snuggly, sleepy looking, all about turning the lights out and drifting into the land of dreams. It was a saturated market that was, in a word, forgettable.

'Every great day starts the night before' said the brief. The implications for design were clear – wake up a sleepy category with visual energy. More morning glass of OJ, less the cosy mug of bedtime cocoa. Sleep may be a passive experience but it has a huge impact on our next day, our active life, our health and well-being. It is something that should be taken seriously. The whole mattress industry talked in small zzzzz's and we wanted to say a big GOOD MORNING. This was the key insight that defined our point of difference. It was the start-point for our name, our identity, our TOV, our purpose and sums up the energy of the company today.

Working closely with the founders we came up with the name –bright, memorable, timeless enough to last and rooted entirely in our insight. Eve of the big day, eve of the science exam, eve of the big adventure....it had the flexibility to cover all the events that are worth waking up fresh as a daisy for.

### THE PROCESS

At its heart the ambition for eve was a simple, human brand and we wanted to reflect this in how our customers interacted with us and so we made the mattress-buying process, simple and beautiful. We brought smart and attractive design central to the whole experience; from carefully developed product and packaging to the simplicity of the website design, and the ease of ordering right through to the fast delivery. The advantage of being DTC was that we had complete control over all the details.

This is a high value purchase and something consumers were not used to buying without trial. While our 100-day home trial puts people at ease, our branding needed to be confident, trustworthy and professional.

### THE IDENTITY

We broke the rules of the bedroom with a core palette of bright sunshine colours, crisp simple graphics, playful copy and content that is all the product of an alert mind and wide-awake eyes. It all started with yellow – an eye-catching and zesty yellow as vibrant as your morning orange juice. No mattress brand owned a colour and we wanted to be disruptive, distinctive and memorable.

Our wordmark purposefully sits on the horizon line, reflecting the rising and setting sun. We also chose to reverse the second 'e' to create a palindrome inspired by a couple facing each other on their pillows.

This simple set of single-minded brand equities was then built into a richer identity to deliver a wide-awake attitude across every brand touchpoint. Crisp simple graphics, playful copy and content that is all the product of an alert mind and bright eyes. Such was our vision that we had a fully functioning brand book before we had any sales!

## THE PRODUCT

The product strategy was just as simple – just one design in various sizes.

Inspired by the red sole of Louboutin shoes, we branded our products in a way that would drive talk-ability and share-ability – an iconic look that people were proud to have in their homes. We gave our mattress a bright yellow surround, a confident flash of sunshine in the midst of white. A one of a kind mattress.

With start-up funds limited, we also developed a design campaign to give this online brand a pulse, using the mattress as a canvas for creativity. We created a series of limited edition mattresses that became canvases to share our unique philosophy – beautifully illustrated with inspiring quotes and much loved book classics like Huckleberry Fin and Peter Pan.

The brand then went on to collaborate with esteemed artists including David Shillinglaws, which shows his answer to the brief ‘show us your perfect start to your day’. Another edition used a bespoke alphabet by designer and artist Supermundane to create personalised monograms. The ideal initialised wedding gift for a couple setting out on their ‘perfect start’.

## THE PACKAGING

The packaging has always been, and still is, our most loved and shared equity. You could say eve’s first advertising campaign was the box. An easy-to-handle, crisp white box branded with a bright yellow eve logo rising and setting over the corners. Bringing a little joy directly to our consumer’s doors, the inside of the box lid shouts ‘wakey, wakey, rise and shine’, the bright yellow inner is printed with sleep related quotes that burst with cheerful optimism.

We also welcomed our consumers to the eve family with cheerful postcards and posters and surprised them with memory foam slippers and tote bags – laden with quotes of our daily cheer. A fried egg sticker tells you the mattress size, another component of a great morning!





### III. OVERVIEW OF THE MARKET

The whole industry around mattresses was very old school and archaic. Few mattresses were sold online and the “mattress store” was synonymous with expectations of a large warehouse-style location, often filled with similar-looking products and colourful signs out front boasting of sales — holdovers of a category that was built on a few early entrants and persisted in its original form through a long period of hardly any challengers. Sales strategies consisted of inflated prices and little innovation.

The consumer experience was also poor; bad returns processes, complexity of choice and long wait times for delivery. Products were being sold in an inefficient manner. eve was all about making every aspect of the experience better.

Despite being seemingly ripe for disruption, the industry posed many hurdles for newcomers — among them, the difficulty of shipping mattresses. The mattress in the box technology changed everything. It in itself is a beautiful piece of design. eve was the first ‘bed in a box’ to launch in the UK.

To give ourselves a competitive advantage the pressure was on to market this in a really distinctive way; build something that would resonate with consumers in the UK, something really different, something aspirational and cool!

### IV. KEY FACTS

Launch date – 14th February 2015

Design Fees – CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED DATA



## RESULTS

Success has been beyond the founder's wildest dreams. Just 2 years and 3 months after launch, eve sleep successfully raised £35 million in an initial public offering on AIM, valuing the business at £140 million.

*"In the first year of trading eve had a turnover of more than £4 million. We are over 5 times larger revenue wise than we predicted pre launch. We have grown 32% month on month. Octopus Investments think we are the fastest growing company they have ever invested in. I believe this growth is down to the power and strength of the brand – a brand that Studio Minerva were instrumental in helping us create"*  
Kuba Wieczorek, Founder, eve sleep.

*"Our brand is also what separates us from our competitors. Most mattress companies are quite literally sleepy."*  
Jas Bagniewski co-founder, eve sleep

### SALES / METRICS

- 1st year numbers almost 4 times above what was expected  
We had projected turnover of £260,000 but our actual turnover was £900,000
- 0 - £12 million turnover in 2 years
- 0 - 63,000 mattresses sold in 2 years
- Average monthly sales growth rate of  
35% in year 1  
25% in year 2
- YOY growth of 355% in 2016
- 1.9% of the UK mattress market & 19% of the UK mattress online market in 2 years
- 2017 winner in the [Start Ups 100](#)
- Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. We created a category.  
There are now over 15 online mattress brands offering very similar propositions – ie Casper, Emma, Leesa, Otty, Simba etc. Although eve was the very first in the UK, it's bold, bright, contemporary simplicity is still disruptive and impactful. It is the most searched for mattress brand online and has the highest brand awareness.

### FUNDING & INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

- Early investors in the company included renowned City fund manager Neil Woodford, Channel 4, venture capital fund Octopus, and former Capita CEO & chair of Purple Bricks Paul Pindar who also chairs the company.
- Start-up to IPO in just 27 months.  
Launched in February 2015 and floated just 27 months later on May 18th 2017.

### JOB CREATION

- From just 2 founders at launch to 100 employees at IPO float 24 months later
- Design has been a key factor in attracting talent to the business:

*"I was previously global head of PR at Mr & Mrs Smith – a very brand-led business. Moving to eve could be seen as a surprising choice, but it was the potential in eve's positioning that convinced me to join – its ambitions to do things differently and act as a design-led brand, not just a mattress company. The brand is uniquely positioned in the market to join up with the very best design innovators and promoting those partnerships is an exciting, important, and very relevant part of my job."*  
eve's Head of PR & Communications, Elizabeth Rhodes

*"When I interviewed, the thing that stood out for me was the energy, drive and excitement of the brand (led by Kuba, co founder). That belief in the brand and its potential was infectious. I loved that eve was taking a traditional product and doing things differently. It's hard to differentiate in retail, but eve has a point of view. The yellow isn't just a design aesthetic and colour choice, it's a lifestyle statement."*  
Clare Rydon, director of product sourcing. (Claire previously held roles at Soho House and Made.com).

## DIGITAL GROWTH & ENGAGEMENT

- Social media February 2015 – 2017  
+53,610 followers  
458,802 engagements  
1,478,063 clicks to the site from Social Media

*“eve’s packaging continues to deliver and is a huge asset to the brand – the quotes and simplicity of design resonate with our customers. It triggers organic social media that we simply wouldn’t get without it. The designs are intelligent, engaging and informative, as well as playful, and turn customers into brand advocates. Packaging is often overlooked as a marketing asset, but eve’s design proves it can have significant impact on furthering a brand’s message and positioning.”*

Mark Russell, head of social media at eve.

- eve is a social media favourite and regularly featured by bloggers and influencers...

*“The use of bold colour in eve’s branding sets them apart from the outset as a vibrant brand with an energy that puts a smile on our faces. We particularly loved their collab with design brand Custhom, which shows eve to be a forward-thinking brand with a great design edge”.*  
Russell Whitehead of 2LGStudio (instagram influencer in interiors).

*“From the bright yellow label on the mattress and bedding that says “hello” to the fun words on the inside of the packaging of the mattress: at eve, design is in the details. As a graphic designer myself, I love these kind of details because they make my home (and bedroom!) look and feel so much nicer. Their collaborations with young and talented designers like MIJO Studio show that the importance of design and keeping up with trends in home decor, are part of eve’s DNA”*

From Judith de Graaf, founder of Urban Jungle Bloggers (which is a huge blog with 730K Insta following and they’ve published a book called Urban Jungles)

## DESIGN LED BUSINESS ACCOLADES

- The 1st and only sleep brand ever to be featured as part of Coolbrands (2016)
- For the first time ever stylish magazines like Elle Decoration and Ideal home wanted to feature a mattress brand.  
*‘In a world where we’ve suddenly seen several boxed mattress companies launch at once, eve has set itself apart with its distinctive branding. The sunshine yellow edges, the luxurious quilting and the friendly font all make it seem like a brand you’d want to lie down on and relax into.’*  
Pip McCormac, contributing lifestyle editor, Red and commercial editor, ELLE Decoration
- Desirable & attractive branding allowed brand stretch into stylish home furnishings – pillows, sheets, duvet covers, dressing gowns, pyjamas, slippers.
- The iconic identity has enabled the brand to launch successful a variety of design-led collaborations and partnerships.  
Contemporary clothing company Folk - pyjamas, t-shirts, socks, bed linen  
Custhom - bed-linen  
Mijo - bed frames  
Design-led Leman Locke hotel – eve bedrooms
- Mattresses produced for an advertising campaign printed with a chapter of classic fairytales were so popular that we produced a limited range for sale. They were sold as an added value design proposition to the consumer and help us with tailored PR activations – an example being sponsors of Art Freeze London and providing mattresses to the X Factor house. They cost £80 more than the original mattress and 12 of them sold in 6 weeks. This activation is something we will look to repeat in the future.
- Now available via Dreams stores, the store manager in Tottenham Court road says at least 10 people per day come in and ask for the eve mattress, it is the only one referred to by name.

**NOTE:** For the purposes of this case study we have focused on the period from launch in February 2015 to IPO float in May 2017 as this period best demonstrates initial design impact and our close involvement.

More recently in 2018, a challenging consumer environment coupled with the announcement of a re-focused strategy to focus on a smaller number of three core markets has impacted eve’s share price. Following his appointment as CEO of the Company from September 2018, James Sturrock has, with the Board, carried out a detailed review of the business. The updated strategy refocuses on the core sleep markets of the UK, Ireland and France and will focus on the three core pillars of a differentiated brand positioning, expanded product range that builds a deeper repeat relationship with customers and lower friction customer experience.



## OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

Being an online mattress brand, digital marketing was a vital channel and a key point in our original brief. We needed to attract and convince a new wave of consumers that this was something they should and could buy online. Design was critical. **100%** of media across digital, print, and OOH featured either the product or the packaging along with the brand eve got significant attention from trade and organic consumer media from launch because it so disrupted the staid mattress category.

Digital MKT Spend in 2015: £1,199,264

There was minimal additional marketing support in year 1.

CPA £176

Digital MKT Spend in 2016: £7,841,715

Other Marketing Spend 2016 (OOH, podcasts, radio, print) £900,000

CPA £245

The first ATL and TV was not until July 2016. £2.6 million was invested over 1 year.

## RESEARCH SOURCES

Kuba Wieczorek – Marketing Director eve sleep

Josefina Garat – marketing and analytics director eve sleep

Elizabeth Rhodes – head of PR eve sleep

Eve internal data and website analytics

Sprout, social media management tool

The Telegraph, Telegraph Connect, Small businesses

[www.startups.co.uk](http://www.startups.co.uk)

[coolbrands.uk.com](http://coolbrands.uk.com)

Nielson data

Global Data

Forbes magazine

Goodstuff media

