



SOAPSMITH

CLIENT COMPANY
SoapSmith

BRANDING AGENCY
Bulletproof

DATE
November 2020

DBA DESIGN
EFFECTIVENESS AWARDS

CLEANING UP
SOAPSMITH'S ACT

FOR PUBLICATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"The Soapsmith brand is bold, daring, urban and soulful, and for the first time, it has a design identity that reflects this both visually and verbally.

"Working with the agency was a dream - from the rigorous strategic thinking to the beautifully crafted designs, no stone was left unturned, and the resulting strategic design work is beyond what I ever imagined it could be.

"BUT IT'S NOT JUST HOW MUCH IT MAKES US FORWARD VISUALLY: THE REDESIGN HAS CREATED A MASSIVE COMMERCIAL IMPACT IN OUR BUSINESS, FROM 75% REVENUE INCREASE TO IMPROVED PRODUCTION EFFICIENCY, AND THE CREATION OF ENOUGH NEW BUSINESS TO ENABLE US TO CREATE JOBS FOR THREE MORE PEOPLE SINCE THE NEW LOOK LAUNCHED. WE'RE REALLY ON A ROLL, SET TO ACHIEVE SIX TIME REVENUE GROWTH IN YEAR TWO OF THE REDESIGN."

SAM JAMESON, SOAPSMITH FOUNDER.

OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT

Founded in 2012 by Samantha Jameson, Soapsmith has created a loyal cult following for its crafted and uniquely scented handmade soaps and body care products.

Inspired by the character and vibrancy of London locations, Soapsmith has always used the highest quality, natural ingredients to deliver a superior product focussing on the excellence of the scent and fragrance. But they knew they needed to step up from their passionately humble, independent beginnings to take the next step in their journey towards realising their true potential.

The agency approached Soapsmith to review the business and the brand, rationalise the portfolio and streamline the business in readiness for a rebrand and relaunch through positioning, tone of voice and design, creating a brand world that would take Soapsmith to the next level.

+78.2% SALES INCREASE	3 NEW JOBS CREATED	SALES TARGETS EXCEEDED BY 150%
+86% PRESS COVERAGE	+1050% STOCKISTS	+30% AVERAGE SPEND



DESCRIPTION

Sam Jameson has a unique talent for conceptualising and blending one of a kind scents, inspired by places and memories:

"I was born and bred in London, and SoapSmith is very much a brand that takes inspiration from the culture, history and my personal experiences of this amazing city. For me, scents have got to mean something. The evocative power of smell can define and mark moments in time".

SoapSmith appeals to what the brand call "Aspirational Idealists," who connect with small-batch, handmade or hand crafted brands/products, that use natural, sustainable ingredients, and that are ownable and distinctive. They span a broad spectrum of demographics and life stages- from empty nesters with a healthy disposable income, to young, urban 24+ year olds who are no longer spending money on high-ticket items, but instead on products that connect with them and their values.

However, despite its existing customer and consumer base being fiercely loyal, there was a significant lack of brand awareness. SoapSmith knew that once someone tried their products, they were hooked. However lost in a sea of sameness and a highly saturated category, SoapSmith was struggling to stand out, create impact, and drive relevancy and discovery by new customers.

SoapSmith also comprised of over 50 SKUs: from soaps, to oils to bath bombs to candles! Each product was lovely in it's own right, however, with growth, the brand was losing it's identity and focus as a premium soap, bath & body care brand.

SoapSmith had an ambition to disrupt and challenge the category in a big way, as well as objectives for significant revenue growth by 2022. At a product level, SoapSmith had the courage to take centre stage and realise it's ambitions. However at a design level, the brand was stuck in the past, lacking the quality and distinctiveness reflected in the products, and was preventing SoapSmith reaching the next level.



Sam Jameson, Founder



The making of SoapSmith



Previous brand & pack design

OUTLINE OF PROJECT BRIEF

The agency was briefed to reposition and rebrand SoapSmith, by taking it from 'hidden local gem' status to a larger and more contemporary audience, challenging the category while delivering clean commercial success. Specifically, the aims of the brief were to:

- Achieve a 30% sales increase.
- Increase brand awareness and brand perception of SoapSmith as a boutique, luxury brand, measured by an increase in Instagram following and PR coverage.
- Create a cohesive, compelling brand story and visual identity system that ensures SoapSmith can expand the range with ease.
- Achieve the goal of being stocked in a reputable department store.

Soapsmith aspired to the appeal of more expensive brands in the premium soap, bath & body product market, a market which grew at a sub-inflation rate of 0.3% in 2017, accelerating marginally by 0.9% to an estimated £659 million in 2018, at the time of the brief.¹

Furthermore, these brands had long-standing distribution agreements in place with the high-end department stores that SoapSmith wanted to gain a foothold in, leaving little room for a relative newcomer, as SoapSmith had only been available online and in smaller independent stores at the time of brief. Compounded by the fact that high street retail is in decline, and retailers are looking to streamline and make cost efficiencies as a matter of priority, rather than take a risk by stocking new brands.

SIZE OF DESIGN BUDGET

COLLABORATORS INVOLVED

SCOPE OF WORK

- Design strategy
- Portfolio architecture
- Brand identity
- Packaging design
- Website design
- Point of sale design

OUTLINE OF DESIGN SOLUTION

"London is full of unique experiences, odd juxtapositions and sensorial moments that continue to inspire me. I blend all my scents to reflect and capture this vibrant cultural jamboree I call home. Each one of my products is created with natural ingredients, crafted to nourish and care for your skin.

THROUGH THIS REDESIGN PROCESS, I FINALLY FEEL CONFIDENT THAT OUR BRAND AND PACKAGING NOW REFLECTS THIS SENTIMENT: SOAPSMITH - PROUDLY HANDCRAFTED IN LONDON."

Sam Jameson, Soapsmith Founder.

After some serious research into the consumer and category, we soon realised that our consumers were faced with a sea of bland, faux-Scandi visual identities that lacked real depth and personality. We saw an opportunity to bring colour and personality back into the category and tell the Soapsmith brand story through a disruptive and bold redesign.

We also identified the need to rationalise the Soapsmith portfolio - simplifying the offer to return the brand to its heartland of quality, hand-crafted soaps, hand washes and body lotions. With this new focussed range, we were able to re-centre the brand's efforts and solidify what Soapsmith stands for.

With the honed portfolio in place, we turned our efforts to the core design idea. Centred around the concept of 'Urban Artistry' we sought to capture London's unique backdrop that inspires Soapsmith's scents and products; raw, gritty, urban juxtaposed with craft and creativity.

Stemming from this, our three design principles - Urban Raw, Hand Crafted Flourishes and Vibrant Expression - guide and inform everything we say and do:

URBAN RAW

Gritty, raw and real nature of the textures, places and people of London is translated visually into the design. Whilst subtle nods to the unseen everyday beauty of the city abound in the packaging.

HANDCRAFTED FLOURISH

Highlighting the premium quality and everyday luxury of Soapsmith, whilst cueing the care that goes into every one of our products, all handmade in London. Signified in design with touches of gold and premium materials.

VIBRANT EXPRESSION

Translating the bright, bold, vibrant scents into design through injections of colour. Whilst the dedication to the brand of our founder Sam to the brand, and the vivacity of her personality is represented with passionate brushstrokes.

Using these design principles as a foundation, we worked in collaboration with locally renowned illustrator Tom Abbiss-Smith to create bespoke illustrations for each of Soapsmith's seven unique scents. Each illustration was inspired by the architecture, history, colours, textures, signage, street art and other sensorial experiences unique to that area.

Our new logo and word marque combine inspiration from fashion house monograms and urban, industrial typography to create a strong, urban word marque that was balanced with a refined logo. Referring back to the core design principle of Handcrafted Flourish, a considered application of gold foil across the pack allowed us to add small touches of luxury that felt premium yet accessible.

The overall result is a bold and strikingly beautiful brand that reflects the quality and uniqueness of its handcrafted products and the London backdrop that inspired them.

INCREASE IN SALES

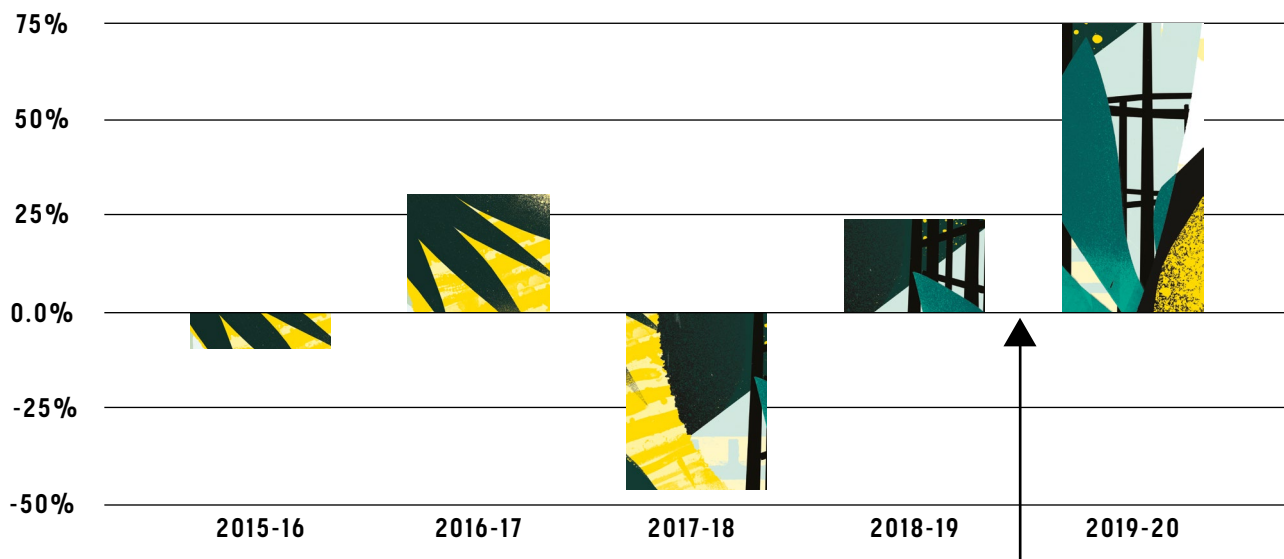
Soapsmith had suffered from unpredictable sales growth patterns since conception. But following the redesign, the brand saw a whopping **75% growth in sales**.

This represents the most significant leap in sales it had ever experienced and was triple the growth of the previous financial year, already a respectable 24%.

The commercial objectives for this project were to achieve a 30% uplift in sales. This **target was exceeded by 150%**.

[REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA]

SOAPSMITH SALES GROWTH 2015-2020



The redesign occurred between the 2018-19 and 2019-20 results periods.

PAYBACK PERIOD / ROI

This sensitive information has been redacted from the public entry.

INCREASED MARKET DISTRIBUTION

Perhaps one of the biggest wins for Soapsmith since the redesign has been winning listings at prestigious retail outlets including:



The redesign enabled a **1050% increase in the number of physical retailers that stock Soapsmith**. From just 4 London stores before the redesign, the brand is now stocked in 46 shops around the UK.

BUSINESS GROWTH

But the most exciting aspect is how the company continues to grow: Coming into year two following the redesign, Soapsmith has **already grossed 71% of their total annual sales from 2018/19, in just six weeks**.

[REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] it's clear that if sales stay on course, Soapsmith looks set to achieve **six times the revenue in year two of the redesign**, that the brand generated in the year before the redesign.

In response to the increase in demand Soapsmith has **taken on a second unit**, doubling their premises to keep up with demand.

The brands accelerated sales have enabled investment into a triple-milled soap machine. This will be installed in February 2021, facilitating the diversification of the product portfolio whilst staying true to the brand. Currently Soapsmith hand pours all their soap bars, and this will enable to increase productivity and profits.

INCREASED MARKET SHARE

There is no EPOS data as the brand is small, but there has been lots of qualitative evidence of Soapsmith reaching new audiences. The many high-end stores, such as Liberty, who have clamoured to stock Soapsmith following the redesign,

has allowed the brand to be prominently featured in the bath & body shop, standing tall and proud next to premium players such as Aesop and MALIN + GOETZ.

A particular coup was winning a full branded unit in the Fortnum & Mason Beauty department. Prestige doesn't get better than a brand exclusive in Piccadilly!

"Following the redesign, it's a pleasure to see Soapsmith sharing shelf space with competitors that previously felt unattainable to us as a small brand."

Samantha Jameson, Founder at Soapsmith

One of the biggest wins for the brand following the redesign is the ability it's given Soapsmith to go beyond the capital. Before the new look, the brand had never been available in physical retailers outside of the London North/South Circular Road. But thanks to a full distribution agreement with Anthropologie UK, Soapsmith is now **available in 11 towns and cities outside of central London.**

HIGHER PRICE POINT ACHIEVED

Soapsmith redesign enabled an average **increased price point of £2 per product.**

CHANGES IN SPENDING PATTERNS

Following the redesign, the average spend per purchase has increased by a massive 30%, with no other changes in marketing activities.

This amounts to an **increased spend of £7 per order.**

Even though Soapsmith has gained a lot of retail listings, online sales from soapsmith.com represent the highest profit margin for the brand. We're excited to report that post-redesign, **website sales have jumped by 75.8%** to represent a massive 51% of all Soapsmith stock sold.

"The impressive sales figures are indicative of something deeper, a genuine shift in business behaviour triggered by the redesign: We've gone from a small business which 'hustled' to break even each year, forced to keep costs low and chase sales channels in all directions. Now, we've developed into a brand with purpose, direction and a business with infrastructure, and a team who have a goal in mind and know how to get there."

Ella McKay, Business Development Lead, Soapsmith.

INCREASED PROFITABILITY

Before the redesign, the Soapsmith range comprised a whopping 54 products available for purchase. This unwieldy portfolio was a challenge for consumers to navigate, and for the Soapsmith team to keep freshly hand-produced.

The agency rationalised the portfolio as part of the redesign, simplifying and focusing on Soapsmith's unique selling point: scent.

The portfolio was reduced down by 157% to just seven best selling, most favoured scents, and extended them across a core range that customers most demanded: soaps, washes, lotions—a total of 21 SKUs.

EXPORT GROWTH

The redesign has enabled Soapsmith to be stocked outside of the UK for the first time. The very first overseas stockist was in China, at the 5* Macau hotel, fittingly named The Londoner.

"We've always had a lot of foreign stockists enquiries, however following the redesign, the type of enquiry has changed: Now we're being approached by specialist consultants wanting to export into high-end stores internationally, rather than small, independent boutiques approaching us directly as they did before the new look. While we've been too busy in the UK to take advantage of this so far, in 2021/22 our ambition is to grow internationally. We're confident that thanks to the redesign, we're in good stead to export with ease."

Ella McKay, Business Development Lead, Soapsmith.

NEW REVENUE STREAMS CREATED

Based on the success of the redesign, Soapsmith launched the Bath Soaks range of three new products in May 2020. This move added [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] in projected annual sales value to the brand, and a solid [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] additional sales realised in the year to date following the launch of this line. This range has contributed **26.9%** to the growth the brand has enjoyed in this year.

The brand now has a smart platform to launch seasonal products without distracting from the core range, like the Columbia Road Soap, produced for the 2020 Christmas season. This limited edition SKU alone is set to sell out [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA].

INCREASED AWARENESS/PROFILE

As mentioned previously, one of the critical KPIs for the redesign project was to increase brand awareness and brand perception of Soapsmith as a boutique, luxury brand, measured by an increase in Instagram following and PR coverage. Soapsmith's **reach on Instagram has risen by 58.9%** since the redesign, to 3785 people per post, and a **7.3% increase in engagement** too, indicative that the brand's new look is identifying with a higher number of people.

There has been a huge **46.5% increase in followers** on Instagram to 10,844 people. That's 66 new people per week who are discovering and identifying with Soapsmith via the platform.

But perhaps one of the most exciting aspects of the redesign's impact has been the number of people **clicking through to the site from Instagram, which has risen by a massive 2950%**, from just 4 to 122 clicks per post.

It's not just on social media either - Soapsmith's activity on Google Trends has seen a significant uplift since the redesign too. With a **43% increase in people searching for Soapsmith online** since the redesign launched in September 2019.

MEDIA IMPACT/REACH

Following the redesign, gaining press coverage for Soapsmith has become a smoother process.

Imagination PR's monthly reporting establishes that there was 86% increase in the press coverage that Soapsmith garnered following the redesign. And this isn't a passing trend, but is based on figures dating back to 2014 when the two companies started working together.

In this calendar year alone, between January 2020 to Oct 2020, there have been a total of 184 pieces of press coverage, and a reach of over 6 million consumers seeing Soapsmith in 'print'.

What do Imagination PR put this down to? Design:

"The redesign has made the press sit up and see Soapsmith as more aspirational than previously. The colourways also mean that the product really stands out on the page, so publications are more likely to photograph the product more, and make those images larger on the page."

Emily Lewis, Account Director, Imagination PR - Soapsmith's long-term PR incumbent

Furthermore, the brand has seen a massive uplift in the calibre of the publications that wanted to talk about Soapsmith. Coverage gained in the one year since the new look launched, has included almost all the most prominent magazines and newspapers that the brand's target audience consumer. Including the below, and more:

National Magazine brands including:

Woman & Home, OK!, Women's Fitness, You, Elle, Harper's Bazaar, Hip & Healthy, Marie Claire, GQ, Hello!, Good Housekeeping, Best, Glamour, Vogue, Stylist, House Beautiful, Black Hair & Beauty, Weightwatchers, Woman & Home, Glamour, Stella, Fabulous, Grazia, Saturday, Refinery29, Top Sante, Natural Health, Style, Heat, House Beautiful, Cosmopolitan, S Magazine, ES Magazine, Red, Prima, Country & Townhouse.

National newspaper brands including:

The Guardian Weekend, Metro, The Guardian, Daily Express, Daily Mail, The Independent, The Telegraph, The Observer, The Sun, Sunday Times, The Herald.

Soapsmith has had plenty of design industry recognition following the launch of the new look, winning:

- 2 Pentawards, the world's leading packaging design competition
- GDUSA American Package Design Award in 2020
- Winner at the World Brand Design Award 2020: Silver
- Finalist at the Drum Design Awards 2020

ATTRACTION OF HIGHER VALUE CUSTOMERS

Aside from the increase in price point and 75% rise in sales, demonstrating that the redesign has attracted higher-value customers, the brand has also shifted the calibre of their stockists.

Previously the brand achieved listings at a market stall in East London's Netil Market, on victoriahealth.com, lavenderhillclothing.com, and in Notting Hill indie boutique Ceramica Blue.

Whereas following the redesign Soapsmith is now available in the foremost lifestyle retailers, including:



PRODUCTION EFFICIENCIES

The portfolio rationalisation during the redesign increased the focus on liquid form products. In fact liquids now form 44% of Soapsmith's sales versus 16% prior to the redesign. This is significant because it **massively increases production efficiency** and volume output as it uses machine rather than hand production.

Furthermore the success of the redesign has enabled Soapsmith to develop their manufacturing capabilities with investment into tripled milled production facilities, enhancing the current portfolio, increasing efficiencies and profitability once installation is complete in February 2021.

CHANGES IN CONSUMER ATTITUDES

One of the critical KPIs for the redesign project was to increase brand awareness and brand perception of Soapsmith as a boutique, luxury brand. This snapshot of unsolicited feedback from customers following the redesign shows that they approve of the new look:

"I ARRIVED HOME FROM WORK TO FIND MY PARCEL HAD ARRIVED. I KNOW IT'S WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE THAT COUNTS BY MY GOODNESS, IT WAS PACKAGED SO BEAUTIFULLY. THE LOGO ON THE BOX AND EVEN ON THE PARCEL TAPE SHOWED SUCH ATTENTION TO DETAIL. THE STICKER ON THE TISSUE PAPER NEARLY TIPPED ME OVER THE EDGE. THESE MAY SEEM LIKE SMALL THINGS TO MANY, BUT TO ME, THEY REALLY DEMONSTRATED THE THOUGHT AND CARE YOU PUT INTO YOUR WORK."

"I'VE ALREADY OPENED MY BRICK LANE WASH AND CREAM AND ABSOLUTELY LOVE THEM - GORGEOUS SCENT - AND THE PACKAGING IS SO BEAUTIFUL (LOVE THAT YOU'VE USED GLASS :-)"

"THE JAR IS SUCH A GENEROUS SIZE, AND THE LABEL NOT ONLY LOOKS BEAUTIFULLY STYLISH, IT FEELS STYLISH WITH THE EMBOSSED ACCENTS."

And most flatteringly, SoapSmith was named winner of Women's Health Award 2020 for Camden Bath Soak. Impressive because this is an award that it's not possible to enter: it's based on nominations from beauty experts, and then judged by the public.

BUYER TESTIMONIALS

"WE CHOSE TO STOCK SOAPSMITH AS THE PACKAGING IS BEAUTIFUL, ELEGANT AND EYE CATCHING. WE LOVE THE FACE THAT EACH SCENT REPRESENTS A PLACE IN LONDON, AND THEY ALL SMELL DEVINE. IT'S ESPECIALLY IMPRESSIVE THAT THE BRAND IS ALL-NATURAL, VEGAN-FRIENDLY, AND CRUELTY FREE."

Lorna Werrell, Buying Admin Assistant
- Gift & Entertaining



SALES TEAM TESTIMONIALS

"Since the redesign launched, conversations with current stockists and future retailers of SoapSmith have become easier. Buyers are keen to stock the brand because it offers a premium quality design aesthetic that the consumer is looking for, it has a disruptive identity that cuts through at shelf against the rest of the category, and also represents a more competitive consumer price point than many of its competitors. Thanks to the redesign, it's a pleasure to support SoapSmith to secure more stockists."

Ian Slann, sales consultant, SoapSmith

DIGITAL GROWTH/ENGAGEMENT

The new-look website has brought the **bounce rate** online down by a whopping **30.6%**, to just **29.3%**. That's especially impressive compared to the e-commerce site industry average of 45%-65%.²

JOB CREATION/RETENTION

The uplift in sales since the redesign has enabled the SoapSmith team to **appoint three new members of staff** at HQ in Walthamstow. This is a crucial success given that the brand is based in the London borough of Waltham Forest, which is ranked 35th most deprived borough nationally and has a 6.2% unemployment rate compared to 4.9% in London overall.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The redesign had a very eco-minded goal, and it achieved phenomenal results. The new look SoapSmith packaging uses 100% less single use plastic (made up of just glass, paper containers, recycled paper labeling and biodegradable inks).

SOCIAL IMPACT

The success of the redesign has enabled SoapSmith to give back to their city from which they take their inspiration.

The brand is currently in conversations with Rethink, a mental health charity, to provide body care and soap products for those in critical or "step down" care, as well as to provide small uplifts of goodness to the carers of those with mental illnesses.

Once the collaboration is underway in 2021, SoapSmith will be **donating around £10,000 retail value of products per annum to Rethink**.

Even though the brand was reduced down to online sales only, the success of the redesign allowed them to support NHS workers overburdened by their work during the COVID 19 crisis.

As the pandemic hit, SoapSmith donated a bar of soap to NHS workers for every product sold on SoapSmith.com for eight weeks. That's the duration of lockdown 1, plus two additional weeks. The **brand donated £4,000 worth** of soap during that period.

OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

"To be honest, I would say design has contributed to 80% of our recent success! But to be precise:

- No additional ad spend
- An additional PR spend of just 25%
- The support of a sales consultant for first 6 months following the redesign"

Ella McKay, Business Development Lead, SoapSmith.

SOURCES

1. Mintel, Soap, Bath and Shower Products - UK, February 2019
2. SimilarWeb, June 2020
3. SoapSmith sales data 2018-2020