

**Thompson
Brand Partners**

JAMES HEAL.
SETTING THE
STANDARD.

INDUSTRY SECTOR
Industrial engineering

CLIENT
James Heal

DESIGN CONSULTANCY
Thompson Brand Partners

SUBMISSION DATE
30 June 2017

FOR PUBLICATION



Executive summary

British manufacturing has faced a torrid time over the last 30 years. Low cost overseas products have forced down prices, driving many companies out of business. Textiles has been hit particularly hard.

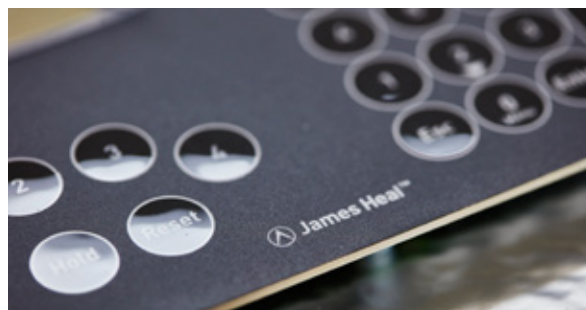
This is the story of how design helped one of the stalwarts of the Yorkshire industry not only to survive, but to prosper.

James Heal manufactures instruments that test the standards of new clothing. Whether for colour fastness, tear, abrasion or pilling, James Heal has developed instruments to test everything. **90%** are exported.

By 2010, the company faced a severe challenge. Its major competitor had shifted manufacturing to China; leaving James Heal under pressure to discount. This was despite the Company's product being perceived as the 'most reliable' and 'well-engineered' on the market. Turnover remained static, but profit was being eroded. The Company needed to quickly establish an alternative strategy and this is where Thompson came in.

"A huge thank you for creating such a fantastic new identity... I am sure it will add value for many years to come."

James Heal



Executive summary

The core problem we set out to solve was that the brand was ineffective at supporting the high quality instruments.

We recognised the potential of the brand and set about articulating what James Heal stands for, i.e. precision, quality, etc. This and a new identity, provided a flag for everyone to rally behind. It was much more than a name and logo change, as product signatures and behaviours were also updated, to reflect a more powerful, progressive company.

In the 6 years since the rebrand, the turnaround has been remarkable. Turnover and profit have grown substantially and confidence has returned. The owners successfully sold the business in 2014, to US buyers who continue to see the brand's potential.

With a newly-formed, dynamic and energetic Board, James Heal is protecting and strengthening its position in the textiles market, whilst pursuing growth in related sectors, with new found confidence and vigour.

(298 words)

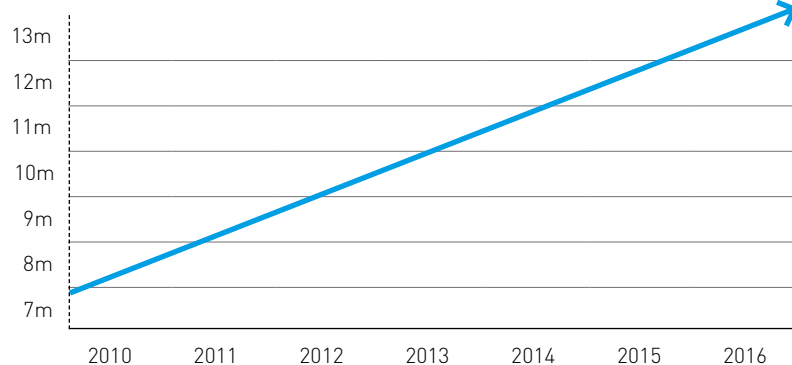
James Heal awarded

The Queen's Award
for Enterprise
in International
Trade in 2012.



Total annual sales increased from £7.75m to £13.04m, an increase of 68%

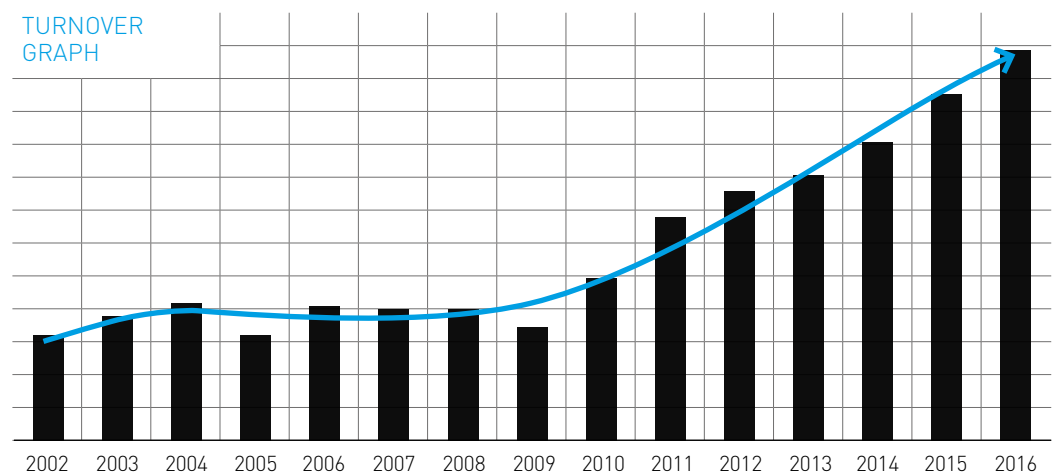
REBRAND



INCREASE OF
68%

This sales growth has been organic and sustainable.

TURNOVER
GRAPH



Project overview

Outline of project brief

In 2010, the brand of James H. Heal & Co. Limited was old fashioned, fragmented and ineffective at supporting the high quality instruments the company designed and manufactured.

With products often referred to as the 'Rolls Royce' of textile testing, the branding resulted in James Heal not being positioned where it should have been in relation to its competitors.

Our brief was to complete a strategic brand review. This included a brand audit to highlight opportunities to better position James Heal in the market. Then to create a new brand identity and guidelines, including a vision and strategy, clear consistent branding and a new product signature.

The business objectives were to:

1. Grow sales and profit, and position the business for sale.
2. Help James Heal charge premium prices for its premium products.
3. Develop a new product signature.
4. Inspire a culture of innovation.

Before the rebrand



90%

OF BUSINESS
IS OVERSEAS

Description

James Heal has been in the same business since 1872, set up in the heyday of the Yorkshire textile industry. The company specialises in textile testing instruments and supplies its equipment to fabric and garment manufacturers around the globe. These in turn supply leading retailers including Next, H&M, Adidas, Ralph Lauren, M&S, Tommy Hilfiger, Victoria's Secret and Louis Vuitton. 90% of business is overseas, exporting to over 60 countries, including Hong Kong and China, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Taiwan.

60

EXPORT TO OVER
60 COUNTRIES

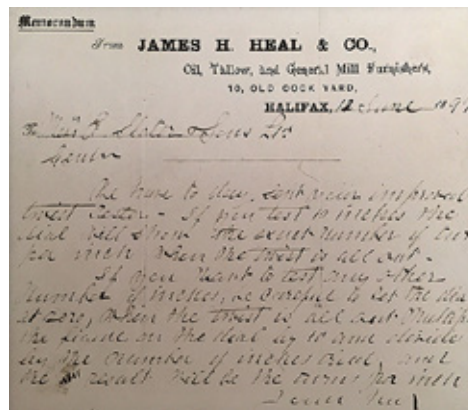


Project overview

With an ethos based on high quality design and innovation; all instruments are designed and manufactured from facilities in Halifax. Products and services are channelled across the globe through a network of carefully-selected local agents and distributors.



Prior to the rebrand, the business was split into three parts - James H Heal, Quality Assured Consumables and Healink. The holding company was called James H Heal & Company Limited (Halifax, England).



In 2011 James Heal faced five key challenges:

- Inconsistent links between the 3 core areas of the business.
- Insufficient focus on cross-selling, especially among the agents.
- Problems defending prices, even though knowledge and quality was superior.
- Difficulties gathering intelligence from customers, via the agents.
- Struggling to communicate strengths – i.e. knowledge, expertise, heritage and premium quality.

The key target audiences for the brand were as follows:

PRIMARY

Textile industry, agents and distributors, other related industries e.g. nonwovens, wood, etc, and suppliers

SECONDARY

Employees, standards committees, media, education and public sector institutions

TERTIARY

Competitors, service providers

Project overview

Design
Council

In 2011 James Heal was selected from a range of SMEs in Yorkshire to take part in the 'Designing Demand Immerse' programme. This is a support service run by the Design Council which helps companies grow by using 'design' as a business development tool. The programme identified that a key opportunity for improvement was the James Heal brand – its design, consistency, position and effectiveness.

Overview of market

The textile testing market is a niche, extremely competitive market, with a series of established international competitors:

- **SDL Atlas**
Globally recognised, but offering lower quality instruments (now manufactured in China)
- **SDC Enterprises**
Consumables leader, charity owned
- **Mesdan**
Italian manufacturer
- **Roaches/ADS**
UK manufacturer
- **Tinius Olsen**
American manufacturer

In addition, low cost and low-quality copy-cat instruments were being manufactured and distributed in Asia.

James Heal had a market share of between 8-10%. The market was growing slightly.

Potential new sectors for James Heal to diversify into included **automotive**, **rubbers** and **elastomerics**, **performance textiles**, **wearable technologies** and **smart textiles**.

Project launch date

The brief was issued in June 2010, with the rebrand launched in early 2011. The results included are principally for the years from **2011** to **2016**.

Size of design budget and production costs

The budget for the audit, brand strategy, identity, assets and brand guidelines was **£40,000**.

(611 words)

8-10%

MARKET SHARE



Outline of the design solution

The first stage of the Thompson process is to dig deep to fully understand the business we are working with. In the case of James Heal, this involved a factory tour, research into the market and competitors, one-to-one interviews with staff and conversations with the company's international agents and key customers.

The picture we found was of an established business with a good reputation, bags of heritage and textile knowledge, but which was facing increasing market pressures. The business and brand were internally focussed, inconsistent, very old fashioned and lacking customer-centricity. It's fair to say that the business owner needed to be persuaded of the power of design.

But amongst all we found, one customer quote stood out as an indicator of the potential of the brand.

**“When I walk into a lab and see it fitted
with James Heal instruments, I know my
day is going to get a whole lot easier!”**

Tracey Youmans, Adidas.

Working with the client, we agreed a five year vision and a proposition that positioned the brand as a global knowledge leader and first choice supplier in textile testing. This was supported by the strapline **‘Setting the Standard.’**

It made sense to the customers to combine the various names into a single name – James Heal. This might sound obvious, but for a company that traded under five different names and identities, this was a big step.

Our checklist when creating the visual identity was that it must be modern, have visible quality, look confident and be about precision and technology.

Drawing visual inspiration from technical instruments, a simple new mark was designed to lie at the heart of the brand. Complemented by bespoke type to form the logo, the identity represented everything James Heal was about. The brand stands for being the leader in its field and the modern mark helped to provide the confidence that the business was badly missing.



Outline of the design solution



PANTONE
PROCESS
CYAN



PANTONE 426

With a complementary colour palette and strong use of black, the new brand looked the part. Applications were modern and simple, encouraging James Heal to change its behaviours, be more confident and stand up to the price pressures of the cheaper alternatives and forgeries. James Heal had a good reputation and now had an identity to support this.

An important development for the brand was that of a new product signature for the instruments themselves. To help fend-off forgeries, James Heal knew that it had to develop its product design approach including a more impactful and recognisable product signature. This has involved significant investment in new manufacturing facilities and a much more modern approach to branding.

The new brand has been rolled-out across websites, product literature, uniforms, vehicles, internal and external communications, instrument documentation and consumable packaging. The factory in Halifax has also had a face-lift, with fixtures and fittings designed to reflect the new brand identity. All aspects and touchpoints of the business now totally reflect the new brand, and the team continues to behave like a leader.

(497 words)



Summary of results

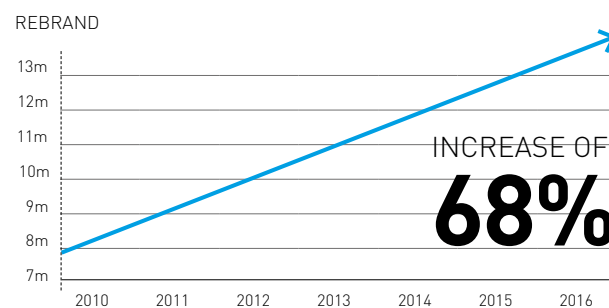
Since the rebrand in 2011, James Heal has set off on an unprecedented period of business growth. The owners were able to drive the company's value and successfully sell to a US private equity business. The purchasers saw the potential of the brand and have installed a new board to drive more growth. The company directors have driven the outstanding performance, returning James Heal to a position of global leader.

Against the specific business objectives, the results so far have been as follows:

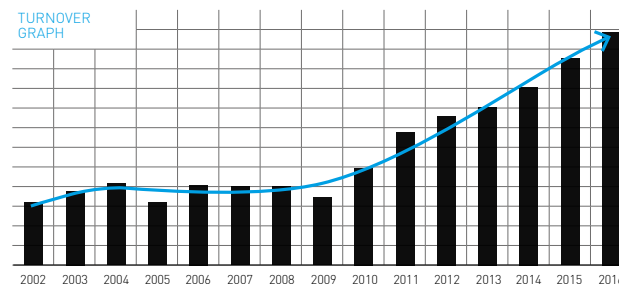
1. Grow sales and profit, and position the business for sale:

Sales have grown significantly since the rebrand in 2010. This helped achieve the sale of the business in 2014 at a significantly higher valuation than anticipated.

From 2010 to 2016, total annual sales increased from £7.75m to £13.04m, an increase of 68%.



This sales growth has been organic and sustainable.



In 2014, sales had increased to £10.94m, which helped to achieve a sale to Battery Ventures US.



James Heal awarded the Queen's Award for enterprise in international trade in 2012.

2. Help James Heal charge premium prices for its premium products:

In 2010, the discounting of instrument prices had been a very significant issue, resulting in static turnover and falling profit. Since the rebrand, James Heal has had renewed confidence and been able to significantly reduce discounting.

Summary of results

3. Develop a new product signature:

The design of the instrument range has been totally overhauled, creating an impactful product signature. This has been recognised by the industry.

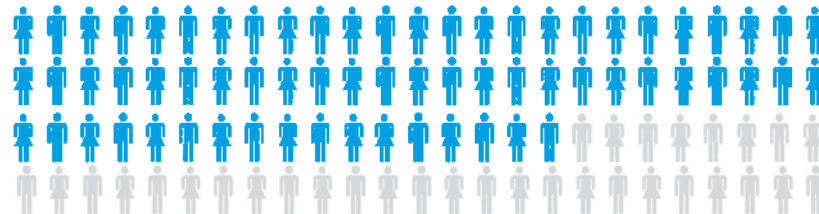
A major premium apparel brand was quoted as confirming the premium positioning at a major industry exhibition, TechTextil 2017:

“We want to align our brand with the very best in the global textile industry, and when we design our new laboratory, we will specify James Heal instruments.”



4. Inspire a culture of innovation:

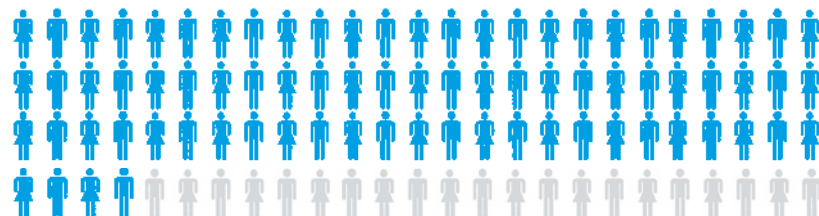
Of 108 members of staff, 72 are actively involved in innovation, that's 67%.



67%

ACTIVELY
INVOLVED IN
INNOVATION

The levels of colleague pride have increased substantially.



79%

CONSIDER JAMES
HEAL A GOOD
OR EXCELLENT
PLACE TO WORK

James Heal has diversified into new sectors including **automotive**, **rubbers** and **elastomerics**, **performance textiles**, **wearable technologies** and **smart textiles**.

Other influencing factors

During the period of the rebrand work and the 6 years since, the company has continued to spend a similar amount on marketing. Budgets increased in-line with turnover increases, but remained proportionately the same.

The Design Council work was completed by the time Thompson was appointed. This identified the opportunity and a Design Manager guided James Heal through the process of choosing the agency and then had a very light touch involvement as an advisor to the business owners.

Research resources:

All results and evidence has been provided and verified by James Heal.



“The rebrand of James Heal was a turning point in our company history. It created a solid foundation for the new Company Directors to continue on the upward growth trajectory; returning James Heal to the position of the ‘Rolls Royce’ of textile testing, whilst at the same time building a sustainable, profitable platform for the business to diversify into new market sectors. The business today is a modern, fast-paced environment; led by a dynamic and energetic Board of Directors with a strong vision for the future”

Amanda McLaren, Managing Director.