

Smarttalk

February 2012

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Work smarter...

Hello and welcome to 2012 – it doesn't seem two minutes since we were wondering how the year 2000 would look! Who could have predicted in the great years of the mid-nineties that we would have faced the economic crisis of 2008 and the continuing uncertainty we are still facing?

At Smart Ideas, we've been designing and branding since 1993 having started in another recession, so we've seen our fair share of poor economic climates. But in these troubling times new opportunities present themselves and it's those people willing to take action that win!

Without a doubt it's those companies in the marketplace that are taking action and moving forward that are the winners. The companies who sit there doing nothing and floundering without

clear vision and strategy are those that we'll see hit the headlines as another dead brand.

Now more than ever, design and brand is key to marking you out in your customers' minds. No longer is it good enough to think 'we have a great product, and good customer service', it's now imperative to not only resonate with your customers but also your shareholders, employees and financiers. All audiences play a part in the way your brand is perceived.

One of our New Year's resolutions is to better communicate with our clients and update you on latest projects, team news and you never know maybe even a funny joke here and there. 😊



Philippa

Advent Calendar campaign to reduce sewer blockages

Up close 

In order to reduce the number of sewer blockages on their waste water network, Severn Trent launched a campaign to change their customers' behaviour.

Blockages are the result of customers putting the wrong things into the sewers and can be caused by many things from the pouring of fat down the sink to mobile phones! Blockages are not only stressful to the network and Severn Trent's customers but there is a very real risk of flooding because in 85% of houses that suffered sewer flooding last year, the problem was due to blockages. Blockages really do matter and so the message is simple, 'watch what you flush!'

Their objective is to reduce blockages from 22,000 per year down to 16,800 by 2014. Smart Ideas worked with the Communications Team to really understand what the advent calendar needed to achieve. We designed a friendly online interactive

advent calendar which doubled as a quiz and each day of December asked a new question with the customer having a multiple choice for the answers. The calendar can be seen at www.stwaterchristmas.co.uk and was promoted internally to all employees and via social media.

The impact so far is demonstrated with the following site stats:

Total Hits **60543**
Total Page Views **33848**
Total Visits **1975**
Total Unique Sites **1098**
Total Unique URLs **413**
Total Unique Referrers **189**



www.stwaterchristmas.co.uk

New brand for the Anglesey Group



As part of a restructure, a number of properties were hived off from a large Cannock based property company into a new company, The Anglesey Group, and as such required a new brand which demonstrated their straightforward no-nonsense approach to sales and lettings of commercial and residential property.

Having dug deep, we created a clean and simple brand identity that easily conveys what they do and echoes the culture of the newly formed company.

We facilitated 2 small workshops with the executive team in order to understand the vision and strategy and who the stakeholders are. We then created a number of options for the team to choose from and the one chosen is the one shown below.

angleseygroup²

COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

Once agreed and approved the brand style was underway. The brand style had to be applied across stationery, website, banner stands, adverts, literature, pens, coasters, vans and hard hats.

So far anecdotal evidence suggests that the style is very impactful, clean and consistent and works across all marketing collateral.



"I've worked with Philippa for the last three months on a new branding project for the launch of a new venture/repositioning in the market place and the process from start to finish has been a great experience.... From the initial session of brainstorming to get the 'thought behind the business' to finalising the marketing collateral and promotional products, it's been fun, functional and an all-round great experience as both Philippa, James and Ashley are always on the ball and always willing to help. Thank you Ms Smart!"

Jonathan Pritchard
Managing Director, Anglesey Group

How to make your agency love you and save money!

Finalise the content before you send it

Changes are a fact of life for a designer but as business people we are concerned about costs. Ours and yours. One of the largest budget busters for any project in most cases are simple wording changes. Small changes on each page of a 64 page document can really add up quickly. If you have three or four managers that need to sign off on content, make sure they sign off on it before you send it and you will have just saved your company time and money.

Assign a project manager

Having two or three people commenting on graphics, changing layouts and revising copy becomes time consuming and expensive. And, if the changes come as separate fragments of information, the project not only gets expensive, but confusing at both ends. The best way to avoid this is to assign a project manager within your organisation and to funnel all of the information through that person.

Keep email communication simple and direct

Piecing together a string of emails with tiny fragments of information and subject lines that have little or no relation to the project at hand is time consuming and entirely frustrating for anyone. It usually evolves a string of clarification emails to nail down specifics of what is needed. Keep it simple and direct and you will save time and money.

Don't out create your creative team

Our clients hire us for many different reasons. I could go on and on and gush about how mind-blowingly wonderful our quirky little company is, but the big reason people come to Smart Ideas is, well, creativity and experience. Our aesthetics is what makes us different than any other creative company on the planet. You are paying us not only to produce your brochure (for example) but to infuse 20 years of design experience and knowledge into it. Knowledge about how the eye travels across a page, what colour

combination says you can trust my company and what font to use or not use for your banner stand or website. So, when we advise you to use a different image on the cover of that brochure or a different font for your email newsletter, know that there is a lot of hard won experience behind that decision.

Saving money with our low hourly rates

We offer single project hourly billing as well as monthly rates. For projects that have a defined start and end point like a brochure, logo package or web site, our hourly fees usually do the trick. For longer-term projects we recommend pre-paid time blocks for additional savings through our **SmartPlan** scheme.

Save even more with SmartPlan

For projects that have a longer life span our pre-paid time blocks are the way to go. Not every job is made up of tidily defined projects. Smart Ideas offers blocks of time that give you the freedom to brainstorm with us, collaborate on new ideas, and develop a plan without draining your budget. The more hours you buy, the more you save. You simply pre-pay for the hours you think you'll need, and we set to work with you, at your pace. Start with a small block of time, and if you need more, add more. No surprise invoices. No wasted time. Billing is monthly, so you can adjust it as your project and budget require.

We've found that buying blocks of time works best for our clients with large, long-term or hard-to-define projects. You may have a marketing department working on a new branding initiative, or a series of new products you're rolling out. Or maybe your marketing department is one person, and that person could use an extra set of brains and some help communicating visual ideas to the executive team. *We'll help you envision possibilities, expand your capabilities, and execute projects more efficiently.* Call us to find out more and how to save with SmartPlan.



Design FACTs

- For every £100 a design conscious business spends on design, turnover increases by £225.
- Almost half of UK businesses believe design contributes to some extent to increased market share (**46%**) and turnover (**44%**).
- On average, design alert businesses increase their market share by **6.3%** through design.
- For every **£100** a design alert business spends on design, profit increases by **£83**.

Source: Design Council - Value of Design Factfinder

Philippa and her team really get to grips with the issues and in my book go much deeper than other agencies in terms of getting the real brief out of us. They really make us think and without doubt it leads to a much better end result.

Susan Knights
Waste Water
Transformation Programme
Severn Trent Water

Let us handle your Social Media!

You can achieve real measured results by incorporating social media into your marketing plan as long as you're clear about your objectives. Social media can help you to:

- Connect with others interested in your subject matter
- Connect with other experts in your industry
- Keep up to date with what is happening with your competitors
- Create new business

Call us on **01902 797970** to ask about our social media packages – it's a great way to drive sales and brand awareness.



Spotlight on James...

Studio Manager

My name is James Merrick and that's me to the right! I'm out and about on Dartmoor in Devon taking photographs. I'm the studio manager at Smart Ideas and have been for nearly 8 years now.

When I left school I knew straight away that I wanted to get into the Art and Design industry; I enrolled on a BTEC National Diploma course in Graphic Design and over 2 years my passion, skills and confidence for the subject grew and grew. I passed the course with a Merit and decided Typography was the area I'd like to focus on further. Stafford had one of the most well recognised and highly acclaimed Typography courses in the UK so I was lucky to get a place! I was greatly influenced by some fantastic lecturers, one of which I still follow to this day. Tim Donaldson (www.timdonaldson.com) was and is a big influence as to why I got into design and typography. I completed my National Diploma in Typography with a Distinction in 2000 and added a further year at Wolverhampton University graduating with a 2:1.

Soon after, I got my first 'proper' job working as a New Media designer for fine art printers Chromograph. I gained all the valuable experience I needed and a year or so later was moved to Lichfield to De Montfort Fine Art working in their in-house marketing department.

I will fast forward to October 2004 and my interview for the position of Graphic Designer at Smart Ideas. I remember the

thing that struck me instantly was the beauty and idyllic nature of the converted church! Some of you will already know what it looks like but in case you don't book a meeting here - it's very striking. Needless

to say I got the job and almost 8 years later (and 5 stone lighter) I am still enjoying my job, interacting and building relationships with clients helping them achieve great results through design!

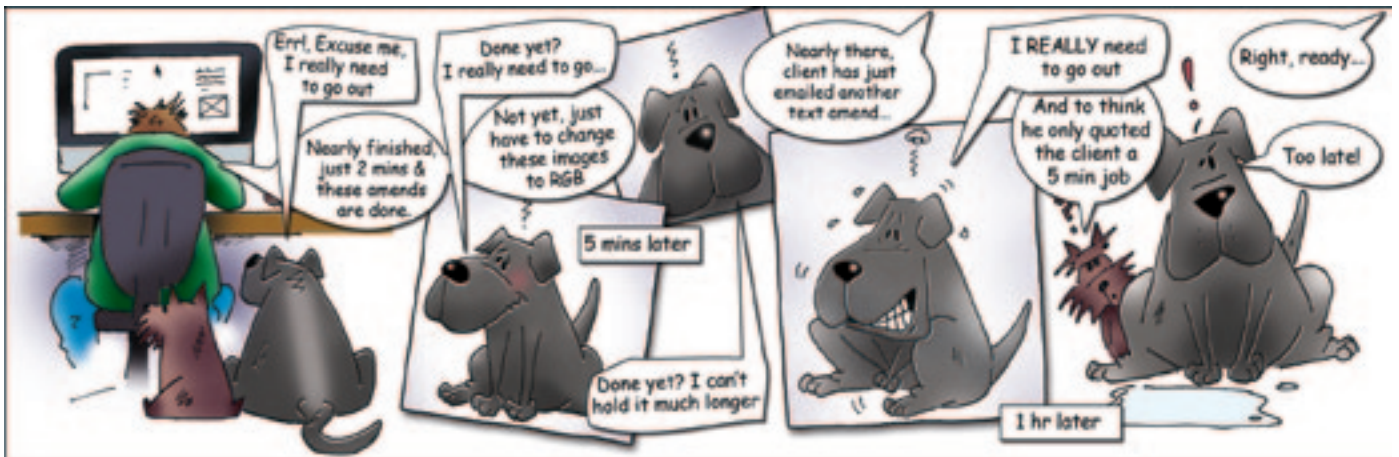
My role within the company is foremost the lead designer working day to day on projects. I also ensure the studio runs smoothly and projects leave on time, to a client's schedule and to a very high standard! Whether we have a problem with a printer, a mac decides to stop working or even if we have an issue with our phone system, I am on hand to sort the problems and make sure we run smoothly.

I really do love my job; as a company we have a strong portfolio built over the past few years which you can see at www.smartideas.co.uk/folio.html and it's a pleasure to work with a great team!

If you would like to email me for anything, even if it's just to say 'hello!' you can at james@smartideas.co.uk.



The Adventures of **DIXIE & CHARLIE** NO. 1



Caption Competition - win a FREE hours design worth £95

Send in your witty caption (keep it clean please!) for our pic of the week and the best entry will win a FREE hours design worth £95.

Email your answer with your full name, address and telephone number to james@smartideas.co.uk by **29th February 2012**. (T&Cs are on our website www.smartideas.co.uk/t&c)

